

**The British-Indian Way in Warfare in Afghanistan and North-
West Frontier, 1839-1919**

Thesis Submitted to Jadavpur University for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In Arts

By

ARKA CHOWDHURY

Registration Number: A00HI1100517

Department of History

Jadavpur University

Under the Supervision of

Prof. Kaushik Roy

Department of History

Faculty of Arts

Jadavpur University

Kolkata, West Bengal

2024

Certified that the Thesis entitled

The British-Indian Way in Warfare in Afghanistan and North-West Frontier,
1839-1919

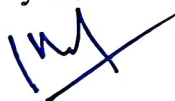
submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur
University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of Prof. Kaushik Roy,
Guru Nanak Chair Professor, Department of History, Jadavpur University.

And that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or
diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

Countersigned by the

Supervisor:

Date:



14.11.2024

Candidate:

Dated:

Aseka Choudhury

14.11.2024

Dr. Kaushik Roy
Guru Nanak Professor
Department of History
Jadavpur University
Kolkata - 700032

Document Viewer
Similarity Index
0%

PH. D THESIS: The British - Indian Way in Warfare

By: Arka Chowdhury

As of: Nov 2, 2024 9:12:11 AM
97,253 words - 4 matches - 3 sources

14.11.2024

N. D. 14.11.2024

sources:

179 words / < 1% match - from 14-May-2024 12:00AM
ia801605.us.archive.org
102 words / < 1% match - from 09-Dec-2023 12:00AM
deriv.nls.uk

54 words / < 1% match - Publications

Ashutosh Kumar, Kaushik Roy. "Warfare and Society in British India, 1757-1947", Routledge, 2022

Head
Department of History
Jadavpur University
Kolkata- 700 032

Professor
Department of History
Jadavpur University
Kolkata - 700 032

paper text:

Title of the thesis: The British-Indian Way in Warfare in Afghanistan and North- West Frontier, 1839-1919
Arka Chowdhury Registration Number: A00HI1100517 Department of History Jadavpur University Kolkata
Introduction Is it possible to trace a cogent rationale underlying the seemingly chaotic nature of frontier warfare in colonial India? Can the multifaceted nature of the British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of India [henceforth NWF] be brought under an overarching yet coherent notion of a British-Indian way in warfare? These are the central questions around which the thesis revolves. It comprehensively examines the different aspects of the British-Indian Army's warfare, such as strategy, tactics, logistics, command mechanisms and state formation, using environmental, technological and political factors as entry points. Furthermore, the thesis delves into studying how the imperial imagination of the frontier reconciled with the socio-cultural and political intricacies of the region. The thesis also explores the gulf between textual theory and practice in the British-Indian Army's warfare. Navigating Through the Literature on the British Way in Warfare A British military officer, Basil Liddell Hart, introduced the idea of a 'way in warfare' in the first half of the twentieth century. His views were a reaction to British strategy in the First World War. He aimed to devise a substitute for the attritional strategy advocated and implemented from 1914 to 1918 on the Western Front. Liddell Hart held that such a strategy led to a significant loss in manpower and material without yielding much success. It was singularly focused on the defeat of the enemy through a direct military approach. Liddell Hart ascribes this strategic ineffectiveness to the interpreters of Clausewitz, such as Marshal Foch. He criticised them for successfully subverting conventional British strategic calculations by adopting a method centred on concentration and direct engagement of the enemy's principal force in battle. In essence, Britain and its allies adopted a fight-to-a-finish approach in the First World War. In contrast, the British 'historic' tradition depended on indirect techniques grounded on movement and unpredictability. Liddell Hart argues that Britain should have adopted a defensive posture on land while pursuing an aggressive strategy at sea by capturing the enemy's foreign territories. It would have diminished the opponent's capacity to wage warfare on land, and Britain would have emerged from the conflict as affluent as the enemy was impoverished. This method aligned with Britain's historic practice based on economic pressure exercised through sea power. He held that the British naval body comprised two arms: the first was financial, which subsidised and provisioned her allies militarily, and the second was military, which took upon the task of naval expeditions against the enemy's vulnerable points. According to Liddell Hart, the British Empire was built through this method. This indirect strategy safeguarded Britain at its weakest point and exerted its strength when and where the enemy was weakest. Although this approach was thoroughly established by 1748, the British or its allies did not implement it in the First World War. It led to a stalemate

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of more than seven years of research, and it would not have come to fruition without the guidance and support of several individuals and institutions. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor and teacher, Prof. Kaushik Roy, for opening the doors of Military History to me. Without his guidance, endless patience, trust and persistent support, this thesis would have remained incomplete. His dynamism, vision, sincerity and motivation have deeply inspired me. Besides my supervisor, I am also grateful to my Research Advisory Committee members, Prof. Nupur Dasgupta and Prof. Rup Kumar Barman, for their guidance and support. I am also obliged to Jadavpur University for giving me the opportunity to engage in doctoral research.

I extend my gratitude to the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Indian Council of Historical Research, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi and Society for Army Historical Research, UK, for their generous support, without which this extensive research would not have been possible.

I thank my friends and colleagues for making my life joyous and easy. I am grateful to Dr. Moumita Chowdhury for years of friendship and intellectual camaraderie. We truly are trench mates.

I am eternally indebted to my family and in-laws for providing a loving home and their steadfast support throughout this journey. Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my wife. Thank you for giving me the time, support, and refuge to complete my research. You are the reason why I have come this far; you are all my reasons.

Arka Chowdhury

Contents

<i>List of maps</i>	i
<i>List of tables</i>	ii
<i>List of abbreviation</i>	iv
<i>Glossary</i>	vi
Introduction	1
1. The Anxious Empire: Afghanistan, North-West Frontier and the Security of British-India.....	17
2. British-Indian Army in the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan: A Tactical Study.....	99
3. Logistics of the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan and North-West Frontier, 1839-1920.....	161
4. The British-Indian Army's Command in Afghanistan, 1839-1900.....	221
5. The Fallacy of State-building in Afghanistan, 1839-1919.....	277
Conclusion	341
<i>Bibliography</i>	347

Maps

Map 1.1	Russia and Central Asia in the nineteenth century	29
Map 1.2	Afghanistan and North-West Frontier	30
Map 1.3	Russian conquest of central Asia in the nineteenth century	47
Map 1.4	North-West Frontier and eastern Afghanistan	68
Map 2.1	British-Indian Army storms the Ghazni Fort	110
Map 2.2	Battle of Ali Masjid	114
Map 2.3	Battle of Peiwar Kotal	115
Map 2.4	Battle of Ahmad Khel	117
Map 2.5	Battle of Maiwand	119
Map 2.6	Third Afghan War, theatre of operations	123

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Comparative Strength of Mobilisation of the British-Indian and Russian Army	72-73
Table 3.1	Availability of different food items in the British-Indian Commissariat godowns in NWF in September 1842 and daily consumption of supplies feed the force under Major-General Pollock.	174
Table 3.2	Amount of supplies requisite for the combined forces under Major-General Pollock and Nott's command.	175
Table 3.3	Diets for Hospitals of European Troops in all three presidencies in India in 1857.	179
Table 3.4	The scale of hospital diet for Indian troops and public followers on foreign service in 1865.	180
Table 3.5	Diet of British Soldiers in India in the 1860s.	181
Table 3.6	A comparison of the scale of diet for Indian troops on foreign service as per the Madras Commissariat Code of 1874 and the Indian Commissariat Code of 1882.	182-83

Table 3.7 Quantity and price of food items supplied by Afghan contractors in Kabul in 1880.

190-91

Table 3.8: Tables depict the proposed scale of ration for the British troops in 1919.

207-08

Table 3.9 Proposed ration for Indian troops and camp followers 1919.

208-09

Table 5.1 The following table shows the amount of revenue extracted by the Afghan Amir from the different regions of Afghanistan and NWF in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Table 5.2 Dost Muhammad's revenue collection before the First Afghan War. 288-89

Table 5.3 The income and expenditure of the Afghan state in the 1870s. 290-92

Table 5.4 The strength of the Afghan Army before the Second Afghan War. 311-12

Table 5.5 Arms and ammunition provided to Amir Abdur Rahman by the GOI. 313

Table 5.6 Strength and Distribution of the Afghan Army in 1892. 325-26

Table 5.7 Strength of the Afghan Army in Afghan Turkestan and Badakshan in the late 1880s.

330-31

Abbreviations

AHQ	Army Headquarters
APAC	Asia, Pacific and Africa Collection
BL	British Library, London
CIC	Commander-in-Chief
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COS	Chief of Staff
EIC	East India Company
FD	Foreign Department
FDP	Foreign Department Proceedings
FPD	Foreign and Political Department
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOI	Government of India
GOP	Government of Punjab
<i>JRUSI</i>	Royal United Service Institution
lb	Pound
LOC	Line of communication
MD	Military Department
MDP	Military Department Proceedings
MDPKE	Military Department Proceedings of Kabul Expedition
NAI	National Archives of India
NAM	National Army Museum, London
NWF	North-West Frontier

NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
PFF	Punjab Frontier Force
Progs.	Proceedings
PGIMD	Proceedings of the Government of India, Military Department
PGPMD	Proceedings of the Government of Punjab, Military Department
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew
PWD	Public Works Department
RAF	Royal Air Force
R.M.L	Rifled Muzzle Loading
USI	United Service Institution, India

Glossary

<i>Abbasi</i>	20 Afghani <i>paisa</i>
<i>Amir</i>	A variant spelling of Emir. A ruler, chief, or commander in Islamic countries.
<i>Atta</i>	Wheat.
<i>Baniahs</i>	A caste of Hindu businessmen, found chiefly in northern and western India.
<i>Batta</i>	An extra allowance paid to soldiers in the British-Indian Army to cover expenses during field service.
<i>Bazaar</i>	A market.
<i>Bhoosa</i>	Crushed straw.
<i>Chittak</i>	A precolonial unit of weight in India that is equal to approximately 59 grams. Often used as a unit of land measurement in India.
<i>Dam</i>	A copper coin in India introduced by the Mughals.
<i>Dasta</i>	A unit of the Afghan Army. The strength of a dasta was 100 men.
<i>Dhal</i>	Pulses.
<i>Farsakh</i>	A Persian unit of distance equal to about 4 miles.
<i>Ghaza</i>	Religious war, going forth to battle.

<i>Ghee</i>	Clarified butter.
<i>Jihad</i>	Struggle for the cause of Islam. Often interpreted as a ‘holy war’ against the infidels or non-believers. It has often been interpreted in a more complicated manner, which states that ‘greater jihad’ is the struggle against the lower self – the struggle to purify one's heart.
<i>Khalsa</i>	Refers to both a community that considers Sikhism as its faith, as well as a special group of initiated Sikhs. The Khalsa tradition was initiated in 1699 by the Tenth Guru of Sikhism, Guru Gobind Singh.
<i>Maharaja</i>	Title of a Hindu king.
<i>Malik</i>	A tribal chieftain in certain areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially among the Pashtuns. Often held as a village representative.
<i>Maund</i>	A unit of weight. In India, a maund is 37.4 kilograms.
<i>Nullah</i>	A watercourse.
<i>Nawab</i>	A Muslim ruler.
<i>Paisa</i>	One hundredth of an Indian rupee.
<i>Parwana</i>	A grant deed.
<i>Pie</i>	One-third of an Indian paisa.
<i>Powindah</i>	A nomadic tribe residing in Afghanistan and NWFP. They are primarily Ghilzais.
<i>Purbias</i>	Brahmins and Rajputs from Bihar and Awadh.
Quart:	$\frac{1}{4}$ of a gallon or around 950 ml.

<i>Rakhs</i>	A preserve for grass.
<i>Sanar</i>	Ten Afghani <i>paisa</i> .
<i>Shahi:</i>	Five Afghani <i>paisa</i> .
<i>Seer</i>	A seer is a unit of weight used in India that is equal to 1.25 kilograms or 2.75 lbs.
<i>Sonutha</i>	A shrub.
<i>Tehsildars</i>	Indigenous revenue officer in India.
<i>Vakeel</i>	A native lawyer or agent.

Introduction

Is it possible to trace a cogent rationale underlying the seemingly chaotic nature of frontier warfare in colonial India? Can the multifaceted nature of the British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of India [henceforth NWF] be brought under an overarching yet coherent notion of a British-Indian way in warfare? These are the central questions around which the thesis revolves. It comprehensively examines the different aspects of the British-Indian Army's warfare, such as strategy, tactics, logistics and command mechanisms, using environmental, technological and political factors as entry points. This thesis also takes into account the impact of warfare on the Afghan State by analysing the veracity of the discourse of state-building in Afghanistan. Furthermore, it delves into studying how the imperial imagination of the Indian frontier reconciled with the socio-cultural and political intricacies of the region. This thesis paints a holistic picture of warfare beyond the Indus in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by exploring the gulf between textual theory and practice pertaining to the conduct of war.

Afghanistan and NWF, as a gateway to the Indian subcontinent, is a unique theatre of conflict where great power-meddling has led to constant unrest in the socio-political sphere. It is unique because of the diverse fighting conditions, harsh climate and the nature of the tribal resistance. Due to its strategic location, Afghanistan became involved in the 'Great Game' between the British Empire and Russia in the nineteenth century. The Russian threat prompted the British Empire to establish a 'Scientific Frontier' along the lines of Hindu Kush, Kabul and Kandahar. The British Raj had mobilised considerable resources from time to time to protect their prized imperial possession of the Indian subcontinent. Therefore, it had to simultaneously engage in conventional and unconventional warfare, including Counterinsurgency campaigns [henceforth COIN] in the NWF and Afghanistan. Thus, the British-Indian way in warfare in the rugged lands of Afghanistan and NWF needs to be brought under the scanner as it witnessed

the introduction of new strategic, tactical and logistical postulation and innovation. This thesis focuses on the 'edge of the empire' and sets the Anglo-Afghan Wars as well as the frontier warfare in a global historical perspective.

Navigating Through the Literature on the British Way in Warfare

A British military officer, Basil Liddell Hart, introduced the idea of a 'way in warfare' in the first half of the twentieth century. His views were a reaction to British strategy in the First World War. He aimed to devise a substitute for the attritional strategy advocated and implemented from 1914 to 1918 on the Western Front. Liddell Hart held that such a strategy led to a significant loss in manpower and material without yielding much success. It was singularly focused on the defeat of the enemy through a direct military approach. Liddell Hart ascribes this strategic ineffectiveness to the interpreters of Clausewitz, such as Marshal Foch. He criticised them for successfully subverting conventional British strategic calculations by adopting a method centred on concentration and direct engagement of the enemy's principal force in battle. In essence, Britain and its allies adopted a fight-to-a-finish approach in the First World War. In contrast, the British 'historic' tradition depended on indirect techniques grounded on movement and unpredictability. Liddell Hart argues that Britain should have adopted a defensive posture on land while pursuing an aggressive strategy at sea by capturing the enemy's foreign territories. It would have diminished the opponent's capacity to wage warfare on land, and Britain would have emerged from the conflict as affluent as the enemy was impoverished. This method aligned with Britain's historic practice based on economic pressure exercised through sea power. He held that the British naval body comprised two arms: the first was financial, which subsidised and provisioned her allies militarily, and the second was military, which took upon the task of naval expeditions against the enemy's

vulnerable points. According to Liddell Hart, the British Empire was built through this method. This indirect strategy safeguarded Britain at its weakest point and exerted its strength when and where the enemy was weakest. Although this approach was thoroughly established by 1748, the British or its allies did not implement it in the First World War. It led to a stalemate situation on the Western Front and a massive loss of manpower due to attritional warfare.¹

Liddell Hart advocated blockades as a crucial mechanism of the 'indirect effort,' asserting that this method was responsible for the Allied triumph in the Western Front in 1918.² He lambasted British continental commitments, which were disastrous for its resources and manpower in the long run. Liddell Hart held that the British had veered off course from their historic 'businessman-like approach' to the conduct of war being consumed by a growing romantic habit. His idea of victory was in total contrast to Clausewitz's. Liddell Hart remarked that 'victory, in the truer sense, surely implies that one is better off after the war than if one had not made the war'.³ He advocated the development of a small, highly professional army. He also argued that mechanisation and comprehensive reform of British military mentality and tactics were essential to transform the British military into an imperial constabulary. The British Army was plagued by a 'tactical arthritis,' an excessive and uncritical adherence to continental approaches. Guerrilla warfare served as an excellent assessment of talent and a mechanism for imparting tactics to cure such a problem.⁴ Nicholas Rodger contends that naval warfare influenced England and Scotland's national fate throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. The naval heritage is embedded in the nation's historical framework. Therefore, it has evolved into a method for analysing the British national character and, specifically, how they see themselves⁵

Liddell Hart's ideas were inspired by two thinkers preceding him, A.T. Mahan, a United States naval officer and Julian Corbett, a British naval historian. Mahan noted that British maritime supremacy and a significant reduction in the naval capabilities of its principal European

adversaries facilitated Great Britain's rise as the preeminent military, political, and economic force globally. He also suggested that Britain scarcely deployed her armed forces in wars on the continent, providing financial aid to its continental allies instead. Her growing colonial empire and burgeoning trading apparatus aided her in this endeavour. According to Mahan, this system of subsidising Britain's allies reached its greatest extent within half a century of the Napoleonic Wars. It enabled them to maintain their war efforts to a great extent. Ultimately, he contends that Britain's success was secured not by extensive continental military campaigns but by dominating the seas, which enabled her to control vast territories beyond Europe.⁶ On the other hand, Julian Corbett, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, is often credited with formulating the concept of maritime strategy. He differentiated between the German or the continental school of strategic thought and the British or the maritime school. He held that 'the continental strategists fell short of realising fully the characteristic conception of the British tradition'. He followed the Clausewitzian paradigm instead of the Jominian, adopting the former's concepts of unlimited and limited wars. In the former kinds of warfare, the political objective remains highly crucial to the warring parties, and they tend to use their utmost strength to secure it. However, in the latter kind, the political object is not worthy of unlimited sacrifices of manpower and material to the belligerents. Corbett held that during the eighteenth century, Britain successfully participated in a series of 'limited wars' owing to the impressive strength of the Royal Navy, which effectively deterred enemies from invading the British Isles. The British employed their naval forces not only to secure their opponents' complete annihilation but also to emerge from the conflict with certain concrete advantages, including colonial or overseas territories.⁷ But, Britain deviated from its historic approach in the First World War at its peril.

Neither Mahan nor Corbett contended that Britain had engaged in exclusively maritime warfare. They acknowledged that Britain required an army for domestic security due to the

inadequacy of the naval force in detecting small expeditions against the British Isles. The ground forces needed to be robust enough to drive an adversary to approach Britain with sufficient numbers to be intercepted at sea. Both agreed that Britain attained the most success by deploying its soldiers abroad in an amphibious capacity to raid the enemy coast, effecting a withdrawal of enemy forces while simultaneously debilitating the enemy fleet by annihilating its naval bases.⁸

Writing in the early 1970s, Correlli Barnett and Michael Howard criticised Liddell Hart's conception of the British way in warfare. He held that Britain had been a naval power and its naval fleet, to a great extent, assured its survival. However, it did not exert much influence in formulating national policy in Europe or overseas. An essential prerequisite of maintaining the balance of power on land is the existence of field armies; hence, Britain has been forced to mobilise expeditionary troops throughout history. However, the need for field armies was forgotten due to Britain's immunity from continental threats before the twentieth century afforded by its geographical location. Therefore, Barnett believes that a British way in warfare based on its 'blue water' naval capabilities is strategically flawed. He adds that Britain rarely succeeded by employing only its naval fleet and restricting its war efforts to small expeditions. Britain had to deploy its armed forces against France and Germany on the continent to prevent them from establishing hegemony in Europe. Lastly, the success of British involvement in European military matters was contingent upon transforming its expeditionary forces into a sustained field army, prepared and eager to engage in major battles with its continental opponents.⁹

When Barnett criticised Liddell Hart's overemphasis on the British naval arm, Michael Howard refuted his denouncement of continental alliance formation. Howard's Neale lecture (1974), entitled *The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal*, was an extensive critical analysis of Liddell Hart's work. He contended that Liddell Hart was eager to curtail any British continental

commitment after the horrors of the First World War. Howard reproached Liddell Hart and his supporters, asserting that reliance on sea power alone never facilitated a decisive triumph for Britain in Europe. To achieve this end, either a continental ally or the deployment of a British invasion force on the continent was necessary. According to Howard, Liddell Hart's conceptualisation of a British approach to warfare was relevant only to restricted conflicts, and even then, it included technical complexities and associated challenges of amphibious operations. He argues that the foundation of British security was inextricably linked with its continental neighbours. However, Britain has often been preoccupied with the empire's defence at the cost of its continental commitments. According to Howard, this was the dilemma of the British defence policy between the two world wars.¹⁰

David French intervened in this debate in the last decade of the twentieth century. He argues that there have been three paradigms in the analysis of British defence policy since 1688. He has termed them as peacetime, wartime, and mixed paradigms. The peacetime paradigm attempts to analyse British policies relative to other continental powers. In contrast, the wartime paradigm focuses on the British approach to wars involving great powers. French holds that the former is the most widely used analytical tool of British defence policy. The peacetime paradigm suggests that Britain's security greatly depends on a stable European balance of power. Britain intervened in continental matters only when a single power or a coalition of powers attempted to establish their hegemony over Europe and disrupt this balance. Otherwise, she dedicated her resources to expanding her sphere of influence outside Europe and refrained from engaging in European alliances. French argues that Britain maintained such a policy from 1688 to 1850 because 'the Hundred Years' War had cured the British of any desire to acquire continental territory'. Moreover, she could sustain such a policy because of her geographic separation from the European mainland and the strength of the Royal Navy. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain lost its relative power vis-à-vis her European

neighbours and the United States as industrial technology greatly impacted naval power. Continental powers like Germany also developed a strong navy, and the British Navy lost its edge. Therefore, Britain had no other option but to intervene in the European system of alliance.

He argues that the analysis of the wartime paradigm should start with Clausewitz's ideas, and he posited Mahan, Corbett, and Liddell Hart within this paradigm. French further contends that scholars like Michael Howard and Paul Kennedy attempted to provide a 'mixed paradigm', which accepts the naval lobby's argument that the growth of sea power was inextricably connected to the growth of national wealth and the acquisition of overseas colonies. Nevertheless, they do not think Britain could ensure its security without engaging in any continental alliance. However, French argues that any one paradigm falls short when analysing the intricacies of British defence policies as it is adaptive and dynamic in nature. The policymakers set their dominant objectives and followed the course which best suited their interests at a minimum cost. According to French 'British defence policy was consistent only in its apparent inconsistency'. From the beginning of the eighteenth century until the American War of Independence, British defence policies closely aligned with Liddell Hart's conceptualisation of a British way in warfare; however, Britain engaged in continental alliances. Subsequently, Britain resumed the reconstruction of alliances following the defeat of its allies in 1792–1815 and 1939–45. Rather than following an immutable policy, 'Muddling through'¹¹ brought success for the British.¹²

The idea of a national way of waging war was not confined to only the British. Robert Citino introduced the concept of a German way of war in the early twenty-first century. His theory posits that Germany had to adopt a specific method of warfare mainly due to its geographic location and availability of limited manpower and resources. Rapid manoeuvres to deliver a decisive blow to the enemy by concentrating their attack against a focal, decisive point (*Schwerpunkt*), underlined the German way of war. Germany has always preferred to fight

‘short and lively wars’, as protracted conflict involved a massive loss of manpower and materials. In order to capitalise on the opportunity to attack the enemy, German commanders were given considerable autonomy on the battlefield. This is known as the mission-oriented command or *Auftragstaktik*. According to Citino, German aggression in warfare stemmed from a sense of collective vulnerability of the Germans as larger and wealthier neighbours surrounded them. From the triumphs of Frederick the Great at the Battle of Warsaw in 1656 to the initial stage of Operation Barbarossa in 1941, Citino delineates several German military commanders who exercised autonomy on the battlefield. Citino further argues that, instead of methodical and thorough strategic deliberations, the German approach to warfare was predicated on engaging the enemy at the earliest feasible opportunity. Therefore, the German army depended on speed and agile manoeuvres to deliver a concentrated attack on the enemy. This dynamic method of waging war aimed at swift and decisive victory underlined the German way of war.¹³

Even before the conceptualisation of a German way of war, academic inquiry into the American approach to waging war began in the early 1970s with the publication of Russell Weigley’s *The American Way of War*. Examining how war was perceived and practised by key U.S. military and political figures from George Washington to Robert McNamara, Weigley concluded that the American way of war centred on the pursuit of a crushing military victory over its adversary, either through a strategy of attrition or one of annihilation. U.S. military thinking typically saw the destruction of an opponent’s armed might and the occupation of his capital as marking the end of a war and the beginning of postwar negotiations. Thus, unlike many of their European counterparts, Americans considered war an alternative to bargaining rather than part of an ongoing bargaining process, as in the Clausewitzian view. In other words, the American concept of war rarely extended beyond winning battles and campaigns to the gritty work of turning military victory into strategic success. Consequently, the American approach to war

can be considered more of a way of battle than an actual way of war.¹⁴ In this context, Brian Holden Reid argues that in contrast to the 'American way of war,' the British way in warfare does not reflect warfare techniques, as in how a battle or a war is fought. It is not a discourse about the British armed forces' specific conduct of military operations. There is, in fact, little discourse on the mechanics of warfare and its practice, focusing primarily on the realm of grand strategic thinking.¹⁵

In conceptualising a British-Indian way in warfare, this thesis takes a middle path between the way in warfare and the way of war approach. Rather than delving solely into either the macro theoretical or the micro practical dimension of warfare, it presents a holistic picture of the British-Indian Army's warfare beyond the Indus by combining the strategic and tactical dimensions. This thesis analyses the British and British-Indian perception of warfare in NWF and Afghanistan and its conduct.

The Lacunae in Existing Literature and the Scope of the Work

From the above survey of the existing literature, it is evident that scholars have given considerable thought in formulating the defining characteristics of the British way in warfare. However, their approach has been entirely Eurocentric. Undoubtedly, Britain was a European power, and the primary focus of her defence policy would be the homeland. However, we cannot lose sight of Britain's vast colonial empire, the defence of which was an integral aspect of British policymaking. As already mentioned, Britain did not take upon itself the entire responsibility of defending its colonies. Instead, it raised colonial armies from the host societies, the British-Indian Army being a prime example. The warfare waged on the fringes of the empire significantly differed from the European context. Therefore, such a diverse nature of warfare should not be subsumed within a single British way in warfare. The existing

literature fails to highlight the intricacies and distinctiveness of the warfare on the Indian frontiers. The thesis intervenes in this historiographical vacuum and formulates a British-Indian way in warfare in Afghanistan and NWF. The concept of the British way in warfare focuses primarily on strategy and policy formation. However, apart from strategic considerations, this thesis integrates crucial elements of warfare, such as tactics, logistics, and command, into the concept of a 'way in warfare'.

There are certain elements of the British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and NWF that the existing literature fails to articulate in a compelling manner. The descriptive military histories of the Anglo-Afghan Wars produced by scholars like Brian Robson¹⁶ fail to posit the British-Indian Army's tactical evolution within the broader conceptual development of pacification and COIN in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The thesis argues that the use of violence in British COIN cannot be effectively explained within the binary of minimum or maximum force. The situation on the ground was more complex than generally understood. The logistical efforts of an invading force traversing a great distance over mountainous, rugged terrain are daunting. However, scholars have not given it due consideration. The thesis analyses how environmental factors influenced military supply and transport in NWF and Afghanistan. By scrutinising the British-Indian Army's logistics beyond the Indus, the thesis seeks to unveil the differences of opinion in the British-Indian military organisation and the synergy between the civil and military authorities that brought them success.

Most global works on technology and warfare did not consider the effects of technological developments in the colonies and the changes that occurred in warfare. Sporadic attempts have been made to compare the technological advancement of the British-Indian Army with that of its Afghan counterpart. However, the inextricable link between the British-Indian Army's technological evolution in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the changing intensity of warfare in Afghanistan has remained outside the purview of scholarly attention. The second

half of the nineteenth century witnessed considerable progress in military technology. However, it has remained a *terra incognita* in historical scholarship, and this is where the thesis intervenes. It aims to fill this gap by scrutinising the micro and macro technological changes in the British Indian armed establishment.

The British-Indian Army's command mechanism is a field untouched by the existing literature. The prevalent works argue that the British Army had a top-down command system where military decision-making was the monopoly of the higher authorities and filtered down to the lower-level officers. The thesis challenges this argument and refuses to see the British-Indian armed establishment as a monolithic structure. It seeks to portray both the vertical and horizontal dissemination of opinions and how the volatile situations on the frontiers enabled the local officers to attain greater autonomy. I argue that command on the Indian frontiers involved not only military but also political responsibilities.

The complex issue of warfare and state-building has been analysed in a fragmented manner. Seen from the invaders' perspective through a Eurocentric lens, such an approach misinterprets and ignores the inner dynamics of the Afghan political system, which was striving for limited centralisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The omnipresence of geographical and ecological factors in the conduct of warfare beyond the Indus has not been taken into account. The thesis will trace these missing links and comprehensively analyse the campaigns. It aims to analyse how the contours of the Afghan state system were altered by British-Indian occupations. It will be enquired whether the invasions aided or disrupted the Indigenous process of state-building in Afghanistan.

Stabilising the volatile region of Afghanistan is a pressing issue even in the twenty-first century. United States and coalition forces, with their surge COIN tactics, alienated Afghan society *en masse*. Meanwhile, the British-Indian forces in the nineteenth century adopted a comparatively

humane approach and registered greater success in that region. Apart from being a significant addition to the military history of the British Empire, the work will appeal to global scholarship, transcending its immediate academic audience of South Asia.

The thesis seeks to place the Anglo-Afghan confrontation within the broader context of the history of the British Empire. From conventional battles to COINs, the Afghan theatre witnessed diverse fighting techniques within two centuries. Therefore, the precept of placing such a diverse nature of warfare under an overarching categorisation of ‘small wars’ will be challenged. The thesis depicts the crucial role played by the ‘men on the spot’ in the frontiers. It portrays how the local military and political officers in NWF and Afghanistan greatly influenced if not dictated, the tactical thinking of the British-Indian Army. The thesis also aims to analyse the British-Indian Army's learning mechanism and how its tactical evolution on the frontiers instilled an essence of dynamism in the organisational matrix. The thesis explores the continuity and break paradigm within the three conventional and numerous punitive campaigns conducted by the British-Indian Army. Innovations do not take place in a vacuum. The thesis traces the roots of some of the military innovations designed for specific use in colonial conditions against an adversary utterly different from European standards.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter revisits the imperial narrative of Russophobia, which was instrumental in the British Empire's decision to intervene in Afghanistan. It will try to answer whether the British government and the GOI overreacted from their fear of a Russian invasion. Furthermore, this chapter also seeks to gauge how far the theme of security was central to the GOI's decision-making process in the NWF and Afghanistan. This chapter reevaluates the ‘Scientific Frontier’ debate and unearths the multiple opinions instrumental behind the British Empire's decision-making. The global dimension of the Anglo-Afghan conflict will be portrayed. Lastly, this chapter introduced the GOI's concept of a ‘glocal’ strategy regarding NWF.

The second chapter delves into the tactical evolution of the British-Indian forces since the First Afghan War; in this light, it will address whether warfare in Afghanistan and NWF can be seen through a distinct prism. The British-Indian Army fought a diverse nature of warfare in the Indian frontiers. Conventional battles require tactics that are far different from those used in conducting COIN operations. The British-Indian Army had to undertake politico-military tactics to pacify the tribal areas of the frontier. The Afghan and frontier environs were crucial in tactical thinking and evolution. By analysing the numerous punitive campaigns conducted by the invading forces during and between conventional wars, this chapter attempts to explain the evolution of British-Indian COIN. The British-Indian Army's approach of identifying the local power holders in the tribal territories and developing tribal levies from the host society ensured some form of success in their attempts at pacification. The advocates of the population-centric COIN argue that to gain success, the common populace should be cut off from the insurgents. The British-Indian Army, by combining their soft approach of convening tribal *jirgas* and paying off local *maliks* with the stern mechanism of systematically destroying the strongholds of the insurgents by burning towers, houses and lifting cattle, were to some extent successful in identifying and alienating the 'offenders' from the general tribal population. The contemporary coalition forces in Afghanistan couldn't solve the riddle of the insurgent's capability to hurt the invaders and hide among the local population.

The Commissariat is entrusted with the task of sustaining the army in the theatre of battle by supplying the necessary provisions. The third chapter evaluates the logistical efforts of the British-Indian Army, which faced the wrath of nature to the greatest extent. It examines how far the invading army adapted to the changing scenarios and improvised as situations demanded. This chapter answers questions such as: did the technological edge of the invaders, which they acquired over time, influence the nature of warfare? Did it help the British-Indian

Army overcome the geographical hindrances? This chapter introduces the idea of micro-technological inventions in the sphere of logistics.

The command mechanism of the British-Indian Army is uncharted territory in existing scholarly works. The fourth chapter re-evaluates the prevalent notion of a top-down command system in the British Army. It argues that command in Afghanistan and NWF combined politico-military responsibilities. This chapter scrutinises whether there was an inversion of command mechanism in the frontiers where local officers attained greater autonomy due to communication problems and the fluid nature of the frontier societies.

The last chapter reevaluates the prevalent idea of British state-building in Afghanistan. This chapter traces the historical development of the Afghan state and its interactions with the GOI from the first half of the nineteenth century till the end of the third Afghan War in 1920. It examines the veracity of the concept of state-building in Afghanistan through foreign intervention. I argue that the British-Indian Army's military intervention in Afghanistan weakened the process of Afghan state formation by denigrating the authority and legitimacy of the Afghan Amir and arresting the development of the Afghan political economy. The GOI's decision of direct military intervention in Afghanistan to establish a subservient regime stemmed from a flawed understanding of the Afghan socio-political matrix.

This thesis is based on multi-archival research in India and England. An array of archival records, such as private papers, secret records, general orders, campaign reports and parliamentary papers, have been consulted. Apart from official archival records, printed primary sources such as memoirs and first-hand documents of the wars by different commanding officers have been utilised. The memoirs and private correspondences of the important figures in the politico-military echelon in Britain and India open a window into their inner mental realm, which the official records often fail to represent. This work refrains from

historical generalisation by rejecting the idea that the British response to the Afghan threat and vice versa remained more or less unchanged during the campaigns. Instead, it traces both continuity and changes by considering sweeping and long-term factors, such as the role of the environment and small contingent factors, such as tactical, technological and managerial innovations to suit the needs of warfare. This thesis considers the Afghan environment to be instrumental not only behind the nature of society and state structure but also in the uniqueness of warfare practised. Despite the importance given to geographical factors while analysing the elements of warfare, this work will not adhere to a structural approach. It will not be argued that the Afghan state was doomed to failure because of the centrifugal forces emanating from the deficit economic structure. To analyse how the British invasions affected the state-building process in Afghanistan, attention will be given to the resilience of the indigenous efforts towards the same. The thesis will draw a conceptual framework from Political Science in this context. By analysing the unique characteristics of the British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and the NWF this thesis attempts to answer the question if there was a British-Indian way in warfare.

¹ B.H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1932), pp. 13-38.

² Brian Holden Reid, "The British Way in Warfare: Liddell Hart's Idea and Its Legacy", *The RUSI Journal* 156, Issue 6 (2011): p. 72.

³ Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare*, pp. 37-41, 150-161

⁴ Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare*, pp. 150-161, 211-238.

⁵ Reid, "The British Way in Warfare", p. 70.

⁶ Captain A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1898), pp. 58-66.

⁷ Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918), pp. 11-76.

⁸ David French, *The British Way in Warfare, 1688-2000* (1990; reprint, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), p xv.

⁹ Correlli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army: A Military, Political and Social History of the British Army 1509-1970* (1970; reprint, London: Cassell & Co., 2000) pp. xvii-xix, 148-150, 187-188.

¹⁰ Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment: The Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of the Two World Wars* (London: Temple Smith, 1972), pp. 9-10; Michael Howard's views, as mentioned in Hew Strachan, "The British Way in Warfare Revisited", *The Historical Journal* 26, No. 2 (1983), pp. 451-452.

¹¹ The theory of muddling through or disjointed incrementalism recognises that government policymaking can be slow, incremental and deeply pragmatic. Charles E Lindblom coined the term 'muddling through' in 1959. The idea has stood the test of time, with many academics and practitioners drawing on it to describe or understand policy processes.

¹² French, *The British Way*, pp. xi-61, 119-145, 225-240.

¹³ Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005), pp. xi-62, 148-158, 253-258, 306-312.

¹⁴ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1973).

¹⁵ Brian Holden Reid, "The British Way in Warfare: Liddell Hart's Idea and Its Legacy", *The RUSI Journal* 156, Issue 6 (2011): p. 70.

¹⁶ Brian Robson, *The Road to Kabul: The Second Afghan War 1878-1881* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007)

Chapter 1

The Anxious Empire: Afghanistan, North-West Frontier and the Security of British-India

“We cannot be very brave unless we be possessed of a greater fear”.

-Brigadier-General Reginald E. Dyer in his statement during the enquiry into the Amritsar massacre in 1919.¹

Between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, terms such as fear, anxiety and insecurity were not usually associated with the seemingly unending expanse of the British Empire. However, beneath the apparent mighty presence of the imperial edifice, a shimmering stream of powerlessness persisted during this period. This continued perception of insecurity of the British Empire has often been explained with the idea of ‘imperial overstretch’². Aggressive territorial expansion pushed the British Empire's frontiers to the borders of other global or local powers. Therefore, politico-military friction along her fluid frontiers was a continued feature of the imperial existence. Consequently, the British dreaded external attacks. On the other hand, scholars occasionally claim that the British Empire's insecurity was due to the absence of uniform consent from host societies of the colonised states.³ The ‘domination of strangers without hegemony’ (long-term mastery of an alien population without an all-pervasive hegemonic device) kept the British officials in India conscious of their relative powerlessness. However, scholars sporadically attempted to analyse the extent of vertical and horizontal permeation of this insecurity within the politico-military apparatus of the British Empire. Moreover, imperial anxiety has often been perceived as a problem that stemmed from within the British dominions, and its external aspects have rarely received scholarly attention. Furthermore, the strategic repercussions of imperial anxiety require thorough analysis, which

has not been attempted hitherto. By examining the evolution of strategic thinking within British and British-Indian politico-military circles regarding Afghanistan and the NWF, this chapter aims to answer the question: was the British Empire truly anxious about its colonial existence in India?

Much has been written on the defence of British-India. However, a long-term analysis of its strategic security mechanism, the rationale behind the British and Government of India's [henceforth, GOI] threat perception and the translation of strategic thinking into policymaking have scarcely been undertaken. Martin Ewans analyses the issue of British-Indian security in the second half of the nineteenth century in his book. He held that central Asia's topographical challenges would have resulted in insurmountable logistical difficulties for an army marching towards the Indian borders. Therefore, any chance of a Russian invasion of British-India was remote. However, he considers the three decades between 1865 and 1895 crucial in ensuring India's security vis-a-vis Russia, as two significant events marked this period. Firstly, the storming of Tashkent by General Cherniaev marked a shift in Russia's 'stationary policy' in central Asia, and she embarked on further conquests. Secondly, the Pamir Agreement of 1895 marked the final forming of the two power's frontier negotiations. Ewans holds that the Tsar wanted peace between Britain and Russia. Nevertheless, he ordered the Russian Army to occupy a military position in central Asia to neutralise Britain's invulnerability elsewhere. He further remarked that the Russian design to avenge their humiliation in the Crimean War and the traumatic British memory of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 fueled British anxiety regarding Indian security.

Moreover, there was a legacy of mistrust between the two powers, exacerbated by a steady Russian advance towards India. Finally, misreading and over-reading each other's intentions widened the diplomatic gulf between Russia and the GOI.⁴ Though Ewans' book can be credited with harnessing a wide range of sources in both English and Russian, he has confined

himself to an intensive analysis of the diplomatic relations between the two powers for only thirty years in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hence, the genesis of British Russophobia and its evolution from a long-term perspective is missing.

Malcolm Yapp argues that European concerns were of foremost importance to British foreign policy, and India's defence was assigned a secondary position in British strategic thinking from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. He holds that Russophobia in Britain and India emerged from Britain's continental commitments and alliances in Europe. Therefore, Yapp argues that British-Indian defence was always seen through the prism of the more extensive and crucial European security system. He added that up to 1849, the 'British strategy' towards the defence of India could be divided into four eras. From 1798 to 1838, Iran was at the centre stage in the whole discourse of the defence of India. However, after understanding the futility of the 'Iranian Buffer', Britain started looking for alternatives. Consequently, the new Indus policy was devised, which concentrated on the region along and beyond the Indus.

Britain's subsequent system of defence centred on Afghanistan, and she also looked to stretch her influence up to Turkestan. Finally, after the First Afghan War, Britain sought to consolidate its frontiers rather than aiming to form a buffer state in Afghanistan. This resulted in the annexation of Sindh and Punjab, according to Yapp.⁵ He further holds that the most significant influence on British-Indian strategic thinking was exercised by the 'politicals', such as envoys, political agents, British residents, etc. They tried to gain prominence within the British and British-Indian political hierarchy by amplifying the problems they were dealing with. They also connected local issues with the larger Imperial strategy, which would invite more attention and resources. Therefore, Yapp stresses the importance of the 'men on the spot'. However, his Eurocentric stance fails to perceive the subtle difference between British foreign policy emanating from their continental commitments and British-Indian strategic thinking that

hinged on local issues to a great extent. He argued that Russophobia germinated from Britain's European interests. However, it fails to explain the GOI's fear of an Afghan invasion.

Edward Ingram holds that the 'Great Game' in Asia began in 1798 when France invaded Egypt. He defined it as 'strategies devised by the British to forestall and later to counter the expansion of European Empires into the Middle East...'.⁶ Like Yapp, he argues that the European 'big power' contest in the East was subsumed under their continental rivalry. The European powers tried attacking the British Empire in Asia to gain leverage in Europe. Since neither the Royal Navy nor the British-Indian Army could protect India from any European invaders, the British searched for allies in the Middle East. Like Yapp, Ingram also considers administrative, political, and military positions in Asia as a path to gaining a fortune, which, to a great extent, prompted imperial decision-making in India. Ingram also supports Yapp by saying that Great Britain attempted to find an alternative to its military weakness through diplomatic means in the Middle East, which is greatly exemplified by the background of the First Afghan War. Despite these similarities in their opinions, Ingram differs from Yapp's understanding of the Great Game. He asserts that a considerable number of British administrators were afraid of the Russian advance towards India, and they believed that they had come up with a viable response to the same in the 1830s, though briefly.⁷

David Fromkin remarks that one of the most important determining factors of British foreign policy in the nineteenth century was the fear of Russia. However, moving away from the strategic dimension of the Anglo-Russian contest, he focused on its economic dimension. In the 1830s and 1840s, Turkey was the third-largest buyer of British goods. Hence, maintaining trade relations with Turkey was imperative for Britain. However, Russia erected a massive tariff wall in Turkey, which was detrimental to British economic interests. Furthermore, Russian attempts to dominate Persia with its seacoasts would have harmed Britain's trade interests in South Asia. He held that from the mid-nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth

century, Britain had as many as eleven reasons to oppose Russian expansion in Asia. Russian success in Asia, according to Fromkin, would have disrupted the balance of power in Europe and hindered the lucrative British trade with Asia. In addition, a Russian invasion of British-India would have encouraged the Indians to rise in arms against their colonial masters. Unlike Yapp and Ingram, Fromkin held that Russia made considerable advances in central Asia, and the British fear of an impending Russian invasion was not irrational.⁸ It can be argued that writers like Yapp and Ingram omitted the NWF within the British strategic thinking and confined their discussion until the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, they failed to grasp how local strategic thinking was entangled with the larger military strategy of the GOI and, in turn, connected to British grand strategic thinking.

In Christopher M. Wyatt's analysis of the defence of the British-Indian Empire, Afghanistan is given centre stage. He opines that diplomacy, rather than military engagements, played a prominent role in ensuring Indian security. He holds that the 'men on the spot' as diplomats were the prime agents in British-India's foreign relations. Furthermore, he expressed a cynical view of the British-Indian army's involvement in Afghanistan, which failed to understand the geography of the country adequately. Also, logistical difficulties were not given proper consideration. Furthermore, the socio-political intricacies of Afghan society were never given much importance by the British, as the former was seen through the lens of Victorian racial stereotypes. Therefore, they were never translated into policy. Furthermore, the GOI, being overconfident about their army, underestimated the capacity of the Afghan resistance.

However, the present thesis challenges Wyatt's assumptions. An array of memorandums and reports on the geographical conditions in Afghanistan and NWF can be found in multiple archives. Additionally, reports by military commanders and government officials in Britain and India are replete with logistical concerns regarding Afghan campaigns. Furthermore, it can be argued that had the British-Indian Army been overconfident about their chances of attaining

success in Afghanistan, the whole issue of insecurity of the empire and defence of India would not have surfaced. However, it can be accepted that the socio-economic intricacies of Afghanistan and tribal lands were not altogether correctly understood. Nevertheless, it is quite understandable from the reports that there were attempts to understand tribal society. The political officers posted on the frontier played the most crucial role in this context.⁹

While analysing the security-insecurity complex in British and British-Indian strategic thinking, Mark Condos holds the 'British colonial rule in India' as 'a fundamentally anxious and insecure endeavour'. Citing the example of the Jallianwala Bagh incident in 1919, Condos claims that displays of brute force were, in essence, manifestations of the British sense of vulnerability. Hence, the idea of colonial superiority and invincibility was an illusion and a 'deep-seated, pervasive, and permanent sense of insecurity' underlined British Empire-building efforts in India. He further adds that the British colonisers in India considered themselves weaker than they actually were and acted accordingly to increase their sense of security.¹⁰ Engaging with the same theme, Kim Wagner also holds that a sense of vulnerability and fear was intrinsic to British colonial rule. The spectre of the mutiny of 1857 and its memory created an endemic fear within British rule in India. Citing the example of the 'mud-daubing panic' in 1894 (the appearance of roughly circular mud patches on trees in certain districts of Bihar, which was, in reality, an invitation to the *sadhus* or religious ascetics to go the *mela* or fair in Janakpur) Wagner asserts that fear psychosis of the British authorities regarding India created an ambience of insecurity which was further fuelled by the British press. He also held that the panic proved the limitation of British knowledge formation about India even after 150 years of colonial rule. This absence of proper knowledge, in turn, sustained such hysteria.¹¹ However, this chapter suggests that insecurity and anxiety were an inextricable aspect of British rule in India long before the Mutiny occurred. Furthermore, apart from internal

insecurity, fear of external invasion was a significant driving force of British colonial policies in India.

Scholars like Rajnarayan Chandavarkar and Ranajit Guha delved into the internal fear and anxiety of British colonial rule in India, which emanated from their sense of vulnerability. The fear of being vastly outnumbered amid an alien population was compounded by the idea of ruling without consent. It was a constant reminder of their vulnerability, leading to pervasive anxiety. Furthermore, to maintain imperial prestige, excessive use of force to quell disorder stemmed from their insecurity. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre is an example.¹² Even Thomas Metcalf contends that the way in which the Raj retaliated against the rebellious sepoys in 1857 unveils their inherent weakness.¹³ It appeared as if the British were under siege by the unfriendly population in India. Condos argues that the so-called perception of anxiety and fear of the British in India was utilised to increase the importance of the empire.¹⁴ W.W. Hunter referred to the British authorities' reaction to the Santhal Rebellion of 1855–6 and justified it by arguing that a beleaguered foreign community of rulers would naturally panic and overreact if they felt threatened. Hence, the overreaction of the GOI stemmed from its insecurity.¹⁵ However, the scholars mentioned above focused solely on the internal insecurities of the Empire. They did not focus on its implications for foreign policy or whether it germinated from within or outside.

James Hevia stands on the other side of the spectrum within this intricate conceptualisation of the security-insecurity complex. He suggests that the British Empire in Asia ensured its security by producing, categorising and ordering information. Practical manifestations of military knowledge formation in Asia can be traced to the creation of the Intelligence Department, composition of route books, production of cartographic information, etc. According to Hevia, the creation of this large volume of documents by the security regime made the east, central

and south Asia a 'legible space'. So that the military planners and strategists could read the space of Asia, an arena of contestation between big powers.¹⁶ Hevia further asserts that 'military intelligence was a product of the new mechanisms of state formation...that transformed European states in the second half of the nineteenth century into militarised polities.'¹⁷ Hevia argues that since the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution created a 'techno-managerial elite' in the armies across Europe. Apart from the bureaucratisation and proper organisation of the diplomatic corps, the armed administration was also transformed. Consequently, the accumulation of intelligence regarding the enemy and possible theatre of combat became very important.

This chapter attempts to intervene in this historiographical vacuum. The existing literature on the diplomatic, political and military manoeuvres in Afghanistan and NWF follows a monotonous chronological progression of events. This chapter departs from the existing literature by thematically dividing the multilayered British and British-Indian strategic thinking.

This chapter posits that the central Asian problem remained a challenge for the British imperium throughout the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries. The existing historical narrative depicts that there were broadly two schools of thought regarding how the Russian steamroller could be tackled. The first was the 'forward policy', and the second was the 'policy of masterly inactivity' or passive resistance. However, this chapter argues that British and British-Indian strategic thinking regarding India's defence was multi-layered in nature. Several factors, such as the political environment in the metropole, individual and collective threat perception within the British and British-Indian politico-military apparatus, changing international circumstances, etc., were instrumental in GOI's policy formation. Therefore, an array of opinions underwent modifications and reconciliations before being translated into policy. Hence, categorising the imperial strategic thinking within the binary of

offensive or defensive approach fails to properly scrutinise the official minds in Britain and British-India. This chapter illustrates that the object of British fear of external attack changed from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. However, the all-pervasive anxiety and insecurity of the British Empire regarding India remained constant. It does not aim to answer whether the British fear of a Russian invasion was justified. Instead, it dives deep into the collective and individual threat perception in Britain and British-India. It aims to answer the question of how far this sense of vulnerability determined, if not dictated, the strategic perceptions of British-India.

Before delving into the strategic thought of the British Government and the GOI, a definition of the word strategy and its various levels needs to be discussed. The etymological origin of the word strategy can be traced to the Greek word *strategía* or *strategiké*, which meant the art of generalship. During the fifth and sixth centuries CE, a new concept of ‘tactics’ (*taktiké*) germinated in the Constantinian Byzantine Empire. It denoted the science behind the orderly organisation and manoeuvring of armed men. In a hierarchical framework, tactics were intricately connected to strategy but subordinate in scope and scale.¹⁸ The concept of strategy is not monolithic. This multidimensional concept can best be understood if we define its various levels, such as grand strategy and military strategy. Liddell Hart defined strategy as ‘the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy’. He further commented that strategy is not confined to the movement of troops. It takes into account the effects of such movement. Liddell Hart commented that tactics are the practical implementation of strategy at a more specific level. He placed the concept of strategy below the level of grand strategy. While grand strategy is sometimes used interchangeably with the policy that directs the conduct of war, it specifically emphasises the execution of policy. Grand strategy involves coordinating and directing all the resources of a country or a group of countries. Its purpose is to achieve the political objective of war, which is defined by the fundamental policy of a country or alliance.

Moreover, it is essential to note that although the scope of strategy is limited to the context of warfare, grand strategy extends beyond immediate conflict and includes considerations for the succeeding period of peace.¹⁹

Some scholars have defined grand strategy as ‘arguably the highest form of statecraft’ and a ‘theory of victory’ for a state. It conceptualises that a state would deploy the means at its disposal to attain ‘national ends’. Grand strategy pervades both the field of military and politics. The degree to which strategy is associated with war decides how far the line between grand and military strategy is blurred. Furthermore, if the concept of grand strategy is distanced from military strategy, then it enlarges to include the entire sphere of politics. The idea of grand strategy is also related to national policy. It is often perceived as a conceptual tool that, on the one hand, rationalises state policy and, on the other, makes it coherent.²⁰ While delineating the relation between grand strategy and policy, Edward Mead Earle contended that strategy could be defined as the skilful management and utilisation of resources of a nation or a coalition. It includes its military strength, with the ultimate objective of successfully advancing and safeguarding a nation’s essential interests in the face of opposition. Grand strategy encompasses harmonising a nation's policies and military hardware in such a way that the need for engaging in warfare is either eliminated or, if required, pursued with the highest probability of achieving success. He further argues that strategy is intricately connected to diplomacy, and the same relation exists between military power and political commitments. A nation's foreign policy must acknowledge an inseparable relationship between these concepts.²¹ In this context, Paul Kennedy remarks that ‘the crux of grand strategy lies in policy’. It is the ability of a nation to harness and integrate both its military and non-military capabilities in safeguarding and advancing its best interests in the long term.²²

Both Basil Liddell Hart and Carl Von Clausewitz considered war to be an extension of politics. However, the former advocated adopting an indirect approach as opposed to the latter’s

advocacy of decisive battles geared towards destroying the belligerent army. While advocating for 'indirectness', Liddell Hart contended that it could have multiple avenues, such as strategic, tactical and even psychological. Furthermore, these indirect methods can be employed to gain a decisive victory. This approach was predicated on the astute use of military forces to establish a position of advantage that, once discernible, prompted the opposing party to adopt a more conciliatory stance.²³

Military strategy, on the other hand, can be placed below the level of grand strategy. It refers to the systematic approach to diminish the opponent's physical capabilities and will to engage in combat, persistently pursuing this objective until the desired outcome is attained. The phenomenon occurs both during periods of armed conflict and tranquillity and may include using coercion or force, either overtly or covertly, to intimidate the adversary. The goal may be accomplished by establishing a significant advantage in military capabilities, either in terms of quantity or quality, far in advance of the potential outbreak of hostilities.²⁴

It can be deduced from the above discussion that the concepts of strategy and grand strategy are highly contested, and a multitude of opinions exist regarding their scope and expanse. However, this chapter does not intend to delve into the depths of this theoretical debate. Instead, by introducing the basic precepts of this conceptual maze, this chapter argues that the idea of security reigns supreme among a nation's 'best interests'. A grand strategy is a blueprint as well as the 'means' to achieve the 'ends' of ensuring security in war and peace. Effectively formulating and implementing a well-defined and actively pursued grand strategy significantly enhances the ability to engage in purposeful and calculated policy planning.

The GOI and the British government's endeavour to ensure British-Indian security was subsumed within the greater scope of British grand strategy. Therefore, any attempt to synthesise a grand strategy of a colonial government would be imprudent and flawed because

they performed mainly within the politico-military apparatus of the home government. In addition, the political and military means employed by the GOI for the defence of India should not be explained with a broad concept of strategy. Instead, scrutinising British and British-Indian strategic thinking unveils several strata of interconnected schemes or approaches. Therefore, the different strategic considerations of the British government and the GOI have been categorised into a higher diplomatic strategy, a military strategy, and a local strategy that is enmeshed in global affairs. In this context, this chapter introduces the concept of glocal strategy²⁵. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first and largest section places central Asia and Afghanistan within the higher diplomatic strategic thinking of the British Empire. This section deals primarily with diplomacy-oriented manoeuvrings based on collective and individual threat assessment. The following section delves into the military strategic considerations of the GOI. The section pivots on the discourse on the defence of India and the actual military mobilisations during the three Afghan wars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The final section emphasises the glocal strategic concerns of the GOI in the NWF.

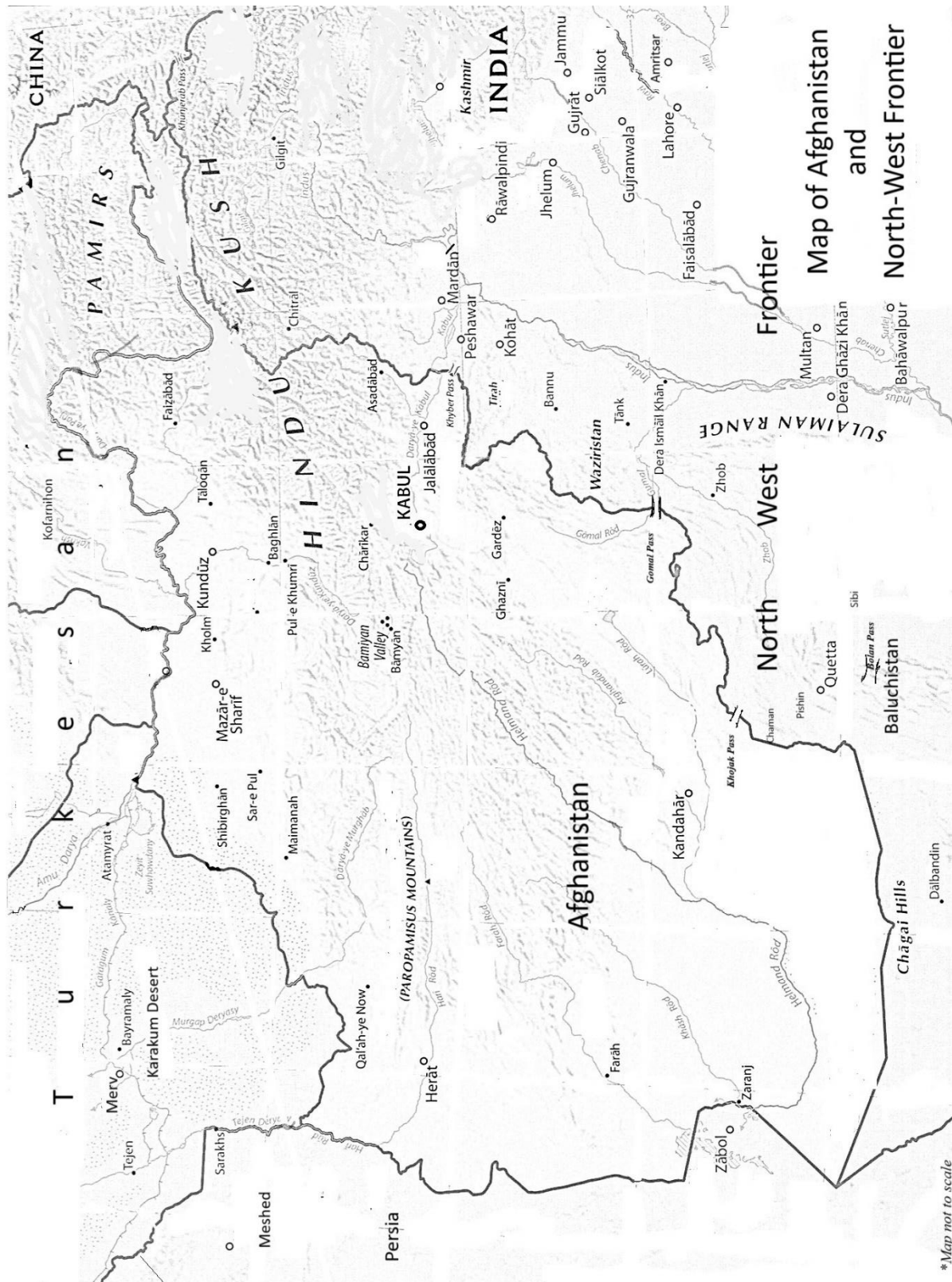
I

“If, however, by laxity, by blindness, or by cowardice, we permit the slow absorption of the Afghan kingdom as we have necessarily permitted the absorption of the Khanates in central Asia; if Russian strategic railways are allowed to creep dangerously close to our own immediate frontier, then this country will inevitably pay for its supineness by having to preserve a continental possession by rivalling continental armies....Without foresight and without courage they will surely come upon us...”

- Arthur James Balfour²⁶



Map 1.1 Russia and Central Asia in the nineteenth century.



Map 1.2 Afghanistan and North-West Frontier.

Before the First World War, the British Empire had only one ‘real military frontier’, i.e. the NWF in India. The GOI’s problem with NWF and Afghanistan was actually a conglomerate of four subsidiary problems. Each of these problems is important in its own right, having a chain of minor concerns attached to it. However, they cannot be studied in isolation. Firstly, there was the Afghan problem, her relationship vis-à-vis India and its international dimension. Secondly, the issue of India’s military defence of the NWF. Thirdly, the political question of controlling and containing the tribes in the independent territories and their relationship with Afghanistan. Finally, the problem of administering the settled districts in the frontier, namely Peshawar, Bannu, Kohat, Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan. Consequently, due to the diversity of the problems, it was impossible to curate one fundamental solution for the protection of British-India.²⁷

This chapter places British-Indian Afghan policy in the broader dimension of the struggle in central Asia instead of confining it within Afghanistan or NWF. Therefore, it seeks to rework the categorisation mentioned above. The strategic thinking concerning the defence of British-India encompassed a lot of factors other than the Afghan problem. The Persian and central Asian complications figured prominently in the discourse of the defence of India. Furthermore, these factors were not constant, and the gravity of their presence in British and British-Indian strategic thoughts varied in the *longue duree*. This chapter argues that India’s defence had three elements. The theoretical strategic vision, the diplomatic-military manoeuvres in defence and deterrence, and actual military mobilisations for war. It also holds that military, political, diplomatic and administrative postulations and praxis were intricately connected while defending British-India in NWF, Afghanistan, and even central Asia.

The transition from Gallophobia to Russophobia

central Asia held a significant position in the Russian grand imperial design because it was the only region in the world where Russia could project the full panoply of its military force to put pressure on Britain.²⁸ It can be argued that Russia was a continental power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Britain had always been a naval power. British-India was invulnerable from the sea due to British maritime mastery of the oceans. Therefore, the land route to India through central Asia gave Russia an edge as it would have neutralised British naval superiority.

It has been held that the fear of a Russian invasion of India emerged during the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century when reports of a joint Russo-French design to threaten India came to the fore.²⁹ However, according to a different opinion, Russia turned its attention to the central Asian route to India long before the nineteenth century. The southward expansion of Russia may be traced back to the sixteenth century during the reign of Tsar Ivan IV when the Islamic Khanate of Kazan was captured. Later, in 1801, Catherine the Great annexed Georgia, and the Russian Empire came to deal with the Ottomans and Persians in central Asia.³⁰ Often, individually or in tandem with Russia, several other European powers conceived such a plan. Prince Nassau Siegen presented a plan drawn up by a Frenchman to Catherine of Russia in 1787, which outlined a scheme of marching an army through Bokhara and Kashmir to Bengal to oust the British and re-establish the Mughals. This plan was not forgotten in Russia thereafter.³¹

Russophobia dominated the discourse on the defence of India in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, scrutinising the British anxiety regarding the external invasions of India unearths other aspirants of this grand project. In addition to the European rivals of the British, other Asian nations also contemplated the prospect of invading India. Marquess Wellesley, the

Governor-General of India from 1798 to 1805, received incoming reports of Afghan Amir Zaman Shah's approach towards India at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There was also an opinion that Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, had invited Zaman to invade India from the north-west in a coordinated attack against the British-Indian Army. Major-General Sir James Craig, a British military officer and colonial administrator, was an alarmist. He held that if Zaman reached Delhi, then by dint of his exploits, he would also gather the support of several petty chiefs of India. The latter would take Zaman's success as inactiveness and incompetence on the part of the British. The Rohillas and other disaffected *rajas* bordering the Maratha region would look up to Zaman as the deliverer and protector if he attained initial military success against the British.

Wellesley concurred with Craig and stressed the imperative of opposing this advance as soon as possible. He adopted a diplomatic path rather than a military one. He considered the Sikhs and Rajputs as an effective barrier between British-India and Zaman's invading army. Furthermore, the idea of a 'defensive league' with the Sindhis, the Rajputs and the Sikhs was also conceived. Major-General Craig was of a similar opinion. Externally, Wellesley sought to use Persia as a counterpoise against Afghan ambitions. He authorised the East India Company's [henceforth EIC] Resident at Bushire, Mehdi Ali Khan, to carry out the required diplomatic manoeuvres. As a result of this arrangement, Persian forces marched into Afghanistan and Khorasan in 1798 and 1799, respectively. The invasion of Afghanistan headed by Mahmud and Firuz, two brothers of Zaman Shah, was inconsequential. However, the Shah of Persia's advance into Khorasan yielded results, and Zaman retreated to Peshawar from Lahore. This, in turn, released the pressure of invasion on the British-Indian territories.³² Hence, it can be argued that the notion of a buffer between any invading army and the British possessions in India existed long before the Anglo-Russian contestations unfolded. Furthermore, before the British

Empire in India grew in military strength, a diplomatic defence of India was preferred over military manoeuvres against external attacks.

Martin Ewans makes an interesting argument in this context. Until the end of the eighteenth century, British-Indian authorities did not feel threatened by an invasion through NWF because their strongholds were far removed from that area. However, when Wellesley embarked on a mission of expansion, the EIC's dominions in India reached the NWF. Hence, fear of an attack from that quarter emerged. Malcolm Yapp's argument is almost along the same line as Ewans'. He held that up to 1818, the fear of attack by native Indian states reigned supreme in the British psyche. Time and again, they felt that they were amidst 'powdered-magazine'. Hence, the British portrayal of confidence and military success was essential to deter the native powers from fomenting unrest. Ewans further remarks that Wellesley was advised by his generals not to meet any invading army in proximity to the Indian borders. The prospects of a foreign power challenging British rule in India could have instigated the native powers to follow suit. Therefore, Ewans considers Wellesley to be the first proponent of the 'forward policy'.³³ However, such interpretations are open to criticism. It is true that before neutralising the Mysorean and Maratha challenge, the GOI was preoccupied with ensuring their internal security. But official correspondences are replete with an apprehension of invasion and possible diplomatic manoeuvres. Next, even if we take the term 'forward policy' very loosely, Wellesley cannot be held as its proponent. Rather than just the wisdom of meeting an invading army far from Indian borders, the policy encapsulated forming a defensive and defensible border supported by road and railway networks.

Several diplomatic actions were also carried out to ensure the security of British-India from the Afghans. Captain Malcolm's political expedition to the court of Tehran in 1800 had the immediate goal of advancing a Persian force on Herat to prevent Zaman from making his long-intended attack on India. Later, Malcolm also acted to protect India from a supposed French

invasion. However, Sir Henry Rawlinson later held that British ‘gallophobia’ (abhorrence or fear of France or French ways or institutions) was highly exaggerated due to Malcolm’s inflated representation of the French threat.³⁴ Nevertheless, we should acknowledge the difference between strategic decision-making with limited diplomatic intelligence coloured by insecurity and a retrospective analysis after the event unfolded when the writer could afford to go through pages of official correspondence.

Later, Malcolm also wrote about the chances of a Russian invasion of India in 1801. He conceived that Russia could attack via two routes. Firstly, the Russian Army could advance from an eastern port in the Caspian towards the banks of the Indus. Secondly, she could send her armies through Tartary from the seaport of Orenburg to Bokhara. They could then overrun the Indian borders through Punjab and Multan or move towards Bombay. Afghanistan and Persia were already within the British equation in the perceived struggle, as it was thought they could aid any incoming Russian Army.³⁵

When Zaman Shah was deposed from the Afghan throne by an internal conspiracy in 1800, the fear of an Afghan invasion withered away. However, it became known that Alexander I of Russia and Napoleon Bonaparte signed a treaty at Tilsit in 1807 to join forces against England. Hence, due to the trepidation of a joint Franco-Russian or Franco-Persian invasion, the EIC’s Secret Committee of the Court of Directors tried to impress upon Lord Minto, the then Governor-General, the imperative of devising a plan to defend India. The issue of garnering the support of the native rulers of India reverberated in the report of the Secret Committee. It was calculated that with Persian assistance, a Russian force proceeding from Astrakhan to Asterabad would be able to reach the Indus with little difficulty and within a very short time. To meet the challenge with a diplomatic manoeuvre, Sir Harford Jones was sent to the court of Persia. On the other hand, at the military level, the Secret Committee advised bolstering the

army in India with European reinforcements. Moreover, the Governor-General was also advised to raise a large body of irregular horses commanded by European officers.³⁶

Consequently, a series of treaties followed to secure Britain's position in the East. While Malcolm failed to secure an alliance with Persia, Sir Harford Jones, at the head of the British mission to Tehran, secured a treaty with the Persians in 1809. It helped the GOI to expel French influence from Persia, and the Shah promised that no European forces hostile to the British Empire would be allowed to pass through the country. In return, the British would provide arms, ammunition and training. Furthermore, in 1814, GOI concluded a treaty of mutual assistance with Persia in case of invasion by any third party. On the other hand, Mountstuart Elphinstone signed a treaty with Shah Shuja of Afghanistan in 1809. Albeit short-lived due to the dethroning of Shuja, the treaty ensured the non-interference of foreign powers in Afghanistan. Finally, the same year, Charles Metcalf secured the Treaty of Amritsar with Ranjit Singh. A mission to the Amir of Sindh was also sent.³⁷ It can be argued that the capacity of British-India's military power projection towards the west from India was relatively limited at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Apart from the insufficient military strength of the GOI, the existence of multiple intervening powers between the British dominion and Persia, such as the Sikhs, can explain the dependence on diplomacy. Hence, it was the age of a 'diplomatic forward policy' distinct from a more military-centric forward policy adopted decades later by the GOI. Moreover, rather than Afghanistan, Persia was the bulwark in the defence of India scheme, as perceived by Britain and the GOI in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

However, this multi-layered defensive alliance was not very efficacious. It has been opined that the failure of the British ministry to secure a permanent and decisive treaty with Persia between 1809 and 1812 opened the path for Russian influence in Persia after that of France. The French Excellency-General, Deccan, and Captain-General and Governor of the Isle of

Mauritius and Bourbon gave a call to oppose their colonial masters in a declaration to the Indian chiefs. It cited the misconduct of the British towards the Indians and reminded them of the meagre number of British troops present in India.³⁸ Consequently, the British invasion alarmists continued projecting their anxiety. A sense of fatalism can be detected in the tone of General Charles Stuart, a British-Indian Army officer when he commented in 1800 that ‘the present interest, the ancient rivalry, and the fixed ambition of the French nation will perpetually incite them to drive us from this country’. Furthermore, he alluded to the greater acceptability of the French to the native princes of India than the British.³⁹ Therefore, the fear of external invasions was amplified by the British sense of rejection from the host society in India. John Crockatt, a clerk on the staff of the Board of Control, was also an alarmist. In the 1810s, he echoed the significance of cultivating strategic alliances with powers such as the Turks, Persians, Afghans and Sikhs. He also stressed procuring intelligence through the envoys from the court of these powers so that any hostile move on their part could be pre-empted. It can be said that the envoys were the first line of defence in the first decades of the nineteenth century when the British-Indian army was preoccupied with establishing the British Empire in India on a firm footing.⁴⁰

Along with the alarmists, there were also optimists from time to time. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Sir John McNeill (a British diplomat), Lord Castlereagh (Foreign Secretary of Britain) and John Kinneir (a Scottish Army officer in the EIC) held that a large Russian Army could never attack India due to logistical difficulties. Furthermore, a small army would prove inconsequential in front of British-Indian defence. All of them alluded to the topographical difficulties an invading army had to surmount to reach the gates of India.⁴¹ Therefore, the British and British-Indian politico-military elite were not unanimous in their threat assessment. It will also be seen later that those posted near the contested arena in the ‘East’ were relatively more alarmed of impending danger to the British Empire in India than

the higher authorities in the metropole. It can be explained either by their greater situational awareness due to their proximity to the theatre of conflict or their intended inflation of the threat to prove the worth of their work and position in India.

After Horatio Nelson defeated the French fleet at Trafalgar in 1805, the immediate French threat to India receded. With the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799 and the Treaty of Seringapatam, Wellesley successfully neutralised the Mysore menace, an ally of France in India. But the short-lived 'Gallophobia' soon gave way to 'Russophobia', which was central to British and British-Indian threat perception and fear psychosis throughout the nineteenth century. Russian expansionism in the Caucasus established her as an aggressor and an expansionist power to the British. Through her treaties with Persia in 1814 and 1828, Russia gained a strong foothold in central Asia, capturing the Caspian and establishing the line of river Arras (Araxes) as her frontier towards Persia. However, it has been argued that Russian interest in central Asia, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century, was commercial in nature. But the British misread Russian intentions, which in turn gave birth to an exaggerated sense of fear of an invasion.⁴²

By the late 1820s, the British realised that they had failed to provide adequate support to Persia to develop it as the first line of defence against external invaders of India. Hence, the fears of a Russian invasion of India became re-entrenched in the British psyche. As the Russian bugbear attained the centre stage of British and British-Indian strategic thinking, diplomatic and military safeguards began to be devised. The moral effect of an external invasion on the native princes of India worried Lord Ellenborough of the India Board far more than its politico-military effect. The realisation that force was the mainstay of the British colonial mastery of India, at least till the first decades of the nineteenth century, coloured the British psyche repeatedly. They were suspicious that a rebellious outbreak would occur in India if a foreign power came close to her borders and challenged their empire in India, which was still in the making. Therefore,

Ellenborough wrote to the Governor-General, Lord Bentinck, that the British-Indian forces should endeavour to stop any Russian movement towards India. The strategic significance of central Asian powers like Bokhara and Khiva was also acknowledged, as control of those areas would have enabled Russia to march towards Kabul in a single campaign. Therefore, constant monitoring of these central Asian players through intelligence gathering was recommended. Ellenborough advocated decisive politico-military manoeuvres to contest any Russian advance in Asia.⁴³ It hints at a cautious yet strong and decisive policy.

This chapter argues that in the first half of the nineteenth century, the frontiers of European powers and British-India were far apart, with multiple buffers between them. There were the central Asian states, Persia, Afghanistan, the Amir of Sindh and finally, Ranjit Singh's Sikh kingdom. But, as both powers expanded their frontiers, these buffers reduced in numbers, and the contesting borders drew closer. In the second half of the century, Afghanistan became more critical to the British authorities in India. Despite taking into cognisance the need for a firm policy, cautiousness on the part of the Home Government was apparent. Hence, the Governor-General was advised that any counteraction by the GOI should be cautious about possible repercussions in Europe. In addition, the GOI was instructed not to engage in political or military manoeuvres without London's approval.

As already indicated, not all British politicians were possessed by Russophobia. Russia publicly embraced the arrival of Afghan envoys and their aim of establishing commercial relations with the states in the Caspian. But Lord Heytesbury, an English politician and diplomat, was convinced that Russia's internal weakness would desist her from embarking on a massive undertaking such as marching towards India. Interestingly, apart from Russia's material weakness, he alluded to her civilisational backwardness, which was an obstacle to attaining military superiority.⁴⁴ The imperial racial discourse colouring the British perception of their colonies can be held as a truism. However, it is intriguing that even their European

competitor was subsumed under this paradigm. While Heytesbury was explaining Russian weakness through her civilisation backwardness, C.E. Trevelyan traced her expansionist mentality within the same. He held that the Russian aggression and expansionism stemmed from her 'unwieldy military force'.⁴⁵ Hence, with its riches and weaknesses, India was Russia's natural target. Trevelyan's recommendation for the defence of India echoed the importance of having buffers between Russia and British-India. Instead of Persia, the importance of Afghanistan as a bulwark against a Russian advance came to be recognised in the 1830s because of its strategic location. Herat in western Afghanistan acquired a crucial position in the British and GOI's strategic discourse. Having the Afghan Amir on the British side now became imperative. Consequently, GOI's involvement in Afghan politics commenced.

Like prior commentators, Trevelyan advocated what can be called diplomatic surveillance of the countries between the Indus and Caspian through the gathering of intel. Arthur Conolly, a British intelligence officer and explorer, was appointed as the envoy⁴⁶ to whom the first use of the term 'Great Game' could be attributed. In the second edition of his two-volume book 'Journey to the North of India', he used the term in his letter to his friend Henry Rawlinson. Probably John Kaye, the biographer of Arthur Conolly, widened the meaning of the term 'Great Game' and its connotation from being an individual pursuit, as expressed by Conolly in his letter to Rawlinson, to a geo-political struggle in central Asia.⁴⁷

It should be noted that the distance between Russia and India in the 1830s was considered an obstacle to their Indian invasion. But, later in the century, we would see that distance was significantly reduced, and Russia penetrated the northern borders of Afghanistan. Therefore, can it be said that the increasing British paranoia had some element of substantiality within it? A closer scrutiny of British strategic thinking unveils their perception that any Russian encroachment in the direction of India would have rocked the status quo in the 'East' and tilted the balance towards Russia. It was thought that if Russia were allowed to extend its sphere of

influence, it would one day attain the power to destabilise India's British Empire. Therefore, the GOI was engaged in a preventive war against Russia. It can also be posited that when the Russian Army got too close to the Indian borders later in the century, the discourse on a 'Scientific frontier' gained momentum. Up to that point, the GOI's perceived line of defence kept receding. At first, it was Persia, then Herat and then the eastern part of Afghanistan.

GOI-Afghan Relations and the Background to the First Afghan War

Apart from the geopolitical importance of Afghanistan, her relation with the GOI, decided the tribal demeanour in the NWF to a great extent.⁴⁸ Several events in the trans-Indus and Perso-Afghan political scenario in the 1830s made Afghanistan a hotbed of politico-military contestations. In 1834, Ranjit Singh wrested control of Peshawar from the Afghan Amir. He also erected mud forts at Khairabad and Nowshera. Later, in 1837, the Afghan Amir Dost Muhammad failed to recapture Peshawar. The year 1837 was also significant for two other reasons. Firstly, it marked Alexander Burnes' mission to Afghanistan to bring the Afghan Amir to the British side. Secondly, Persia besieged Herat in November 1837, backed by Russian support. The factor of Russian intervention, to a great extent, fuelled GOI's apprehensions.⁴⁹

Therefore, it can be argued that a triad of factors prepared the path for the British-Indian Army's first invasion of Afghanistan in 1839. Firstly, the siege of Herat by Persia aimed to push onto Kandahar and Kabul. Secondly, the active assistance of the Russian diplomats and engineers extended to Persia and the intrigues of the Barakzai *sirdars* of Afghanistan with the Persian court. Finally, the British suspicion of a Russian advance towards India. Moreover, excitement and assumptions in the native states regarding the invasion of India from the north-west fuelled the GOI's insecurity regarding their possession in India, which in turn bolstered their general anxiety.⁵⁰

In context of the GOI's Afghan policy, the local British-Indian actors' agency should be considered apart from the higher strategic decision-making. Mr. M'Neill, the British minister at the Persian court, wrote a confidential dispatch to Captain Alexander Burnes when he was sent to the Afghan Amir Dost Muhammad's court in 1837. He favoured a relatively strong Afghanistan under the Amir-ship of Dost Muhammad, supported generously by the GOI. But not all 'men on the spot' felt the same. Captain Claude Martine Wade, the British Agent in the NWF, in a letter to Mr. Colvin, the private secretary of the Governor-General, held that a divided Afghanistan would serve the British purpose better than a united and strong one. Later, the initiative proposed by Mr. M'Neill to consolidate the Afghan Empire received little support from the GOI.⁵¹

While evaluating the agency of Alexander Burnes in Afghanistan, he has often been criticised for overstepping his responsibilities. When tasked with facilitating a commercial arrangement with the Amir of Afghanistan, he took it upon himself to initiate negotiations to conclude a formal treaty between Dost Muhammad and Ranjit Singh. However, from a different perspective, it has also been said that rather than overstepping, Burnes' mission was actually powerless to execute any settlement. Burnes failed to meet Dost's expectations, leading to the mission's demise in 1838. He only made one-sided demands and could not promise anything viable in return. In 1837, Ivan Vitkeveich, a Russian officer, arrived in Kabul to present the Afghan Amir with an alternate option to British assistance. The Russians were not passive in their approach during this period. Moreover, the Governor-General, Auckland, exhibited a notable degree of suspicion about the situation, ultimately leading to the commencement of the First Afghan War.⁵²

Interestingly, the then Commander-in-Chief (henceforth CIC) of India, Sir Henry Fane, argued against advancing beyond the Indus due to the military weakness of the EIC's forces in India. Not only Fane but also other authorities in London were opposed to the advance of the Army

of the Indus. Both the Duke of Wellington and Wellesley talked about the futility of conquering the barren lands of Afghanistan and the long-term troubles it would invite. Furthermore, Sir Charles Metcalfe held that meddling in the affairs of Afghanistan would open the door for Russia to the borders of India. Mr Elphinstone highlighted the logistical challenges of supporting an Afghan Amir and the possibility of alienating the 'neutral' Afghans through a military expedition.⁵³

But the dye was cast. On October 1, 1839, Auckland's Simla Declaration set out and justified the reasons for the GOI's intervention in Afghanistan in support of Shah Shuja. Interestingly, the fear of a Russian bogey was not mentioned. What was more striking was that despite the Persian retreat from Herat, the plan of Afghan invasion was set in motion.⁵⁴ The Army of the Indus achieved the political objective of dethroning Dost Muhammad and establishing Shah Shuja on the Afghan throne on 7 July 1839. Shuja entered Kabul with the support of the British-Indian Army. However, Auckland made a strategic mistake in assuming that the Afghans would accept Shah Shuja's authority and he would be able to command their allegiance. This flawed perception emanated from an erroneous understanding of Afghan society, which will be dealt with later in the thesis. Consequently, disturbances and rebellions occurred throughout the country. These local resistances posed a severe challenge to the British-Indian Army and, more importantly, eroded the legitimacy of Shah Shuja, if there was any. Finally, Kabul experienced a popular uprising on 2 November 1841, which led to the death of Alexander Burnes and some other British officers. Meanwhile, the political environment in Britain shifted, and a conservative Tory government headed by Sir Robert Peel came to power. As a result, Lord Ellenborough replaced Auckland as Governor-General.⁵⁵

Lord Auckland tried to justify his decision to intervene in Afghanistan to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the EIC. From his observations, it can be gauged that there were stimuli from both internal and external to Afghanistan. Burnes' correspondences from Kabul

gave rise to the conviction that Persian and Russian influence increased to such an extent in Afghanistan that it might harm British-Indian interests. Persian advance towards Afghanistan produced 'extraordinary excitement' in Afghanistan and Punjab. With Russia offering assistance to Persia, the balance of power had shifted to a great extent against the British. This two-pronged influence on the Amir of Afghanistan alienated him from the offers of Auckland. Internally, the Afghan political problem was not homogenous. There were principally three centres of power that had to be dealt with. Firstly, the Afghan Amir, acting as a centripetal force, wanted to annex Peshawar. Secondly, as a centrifugal force, the chiefs from Kabul and Kandahar sided with the Persians and the Russians. Finally, Herat, the furthest outwork, needed assistance from a Persian attack.⁵⁶

Externally, Afghanistan was trapped in a tri-polar military-diplomatic contest between Russia, Persia, and the Sikh Kingdom under Ranjit Singh. The two former powers wanted to assert their dominance within Afghanistan. In comparison, the Afghan Amir wanted to recapture Peshawar from Ranjit Singh. Lord Auckland's desired strategic objective was to resist the Russo-Persian forces and not to alienate Ranjit Singh. He found the answer to this puzzle in Shah Shuja, an aspirant to the Afghan throne. On the other hand, Auckland also informed the Court of Directors that he may have to act independently regarding Afghanistan due to the exigencies of the situation. This self-proclaimed autonomy was a watershed as it reversed the earlier dictum from Ellenborough regarding London's superordinate authority in matters of war and peace-making. It can be argued that the Persian advance towards the Indian borders was not perceived as merely an external threat to India. The GOI assessed that the larger Muslim population in India could ally with the Persians.⁵⁷ Hence, besides influencing strategic thinking, the GOI's internal insecurity now translated into external politico-military proactiveness.

When the Secret Committee received intelligence that some Afghan chiefs made an overture to the Shah of Persia, who in turn was supposedly backed by Russia, they advised Auckland to intervene in Afghanistan decisively. Auckland's earlier demand for autonomy was also given due consideration. He was given the authority to decide whether to bring Kabul and the Amir under surveillance through a confidential agent or enter into a political or commercial relationship with the Afghan chiefs. Military intervention in Afghanistan was sanctioned to prevent the extension of Persian influence and to erect a preventive barrier against an impending Russian intervention in that region.⁵⁸

The GOI first attempted to bring Persia to their side to meet the Russian challenge. But when Persia besieged Herat and threw in their lot with the Russians, the authorities in Calcutta made overtures to Afghanistan. However, Burnes' mission failed in Afghanistan, and he informed the Governor-General that the Russians were trying to outbid the British. Furthermore, the arrival of Russian envoys at Kabul and the British inability to give in to Dost Muhammad's demand of recovering Peshawar from the *Khalsa* kingdom alienated the Afghan Amir. Finally, the gulf between British-India and Afghanistan became unbridgeable when Governor-General Lord Auckland supported Ranjit Singh instead of the Afghan Amir. It pushed Afghanistan towards Russia and made the First Afghan War inevitable. It has been argued that Auckland's decision to invade Afghanistan was taken in unison with the British government in the metropole.⁵⁹ However, the Foreign Office asked Auckland to try to bring Dost to his side one last time. But the letter arrived too late. The 'Army of the Indus' was already marching.

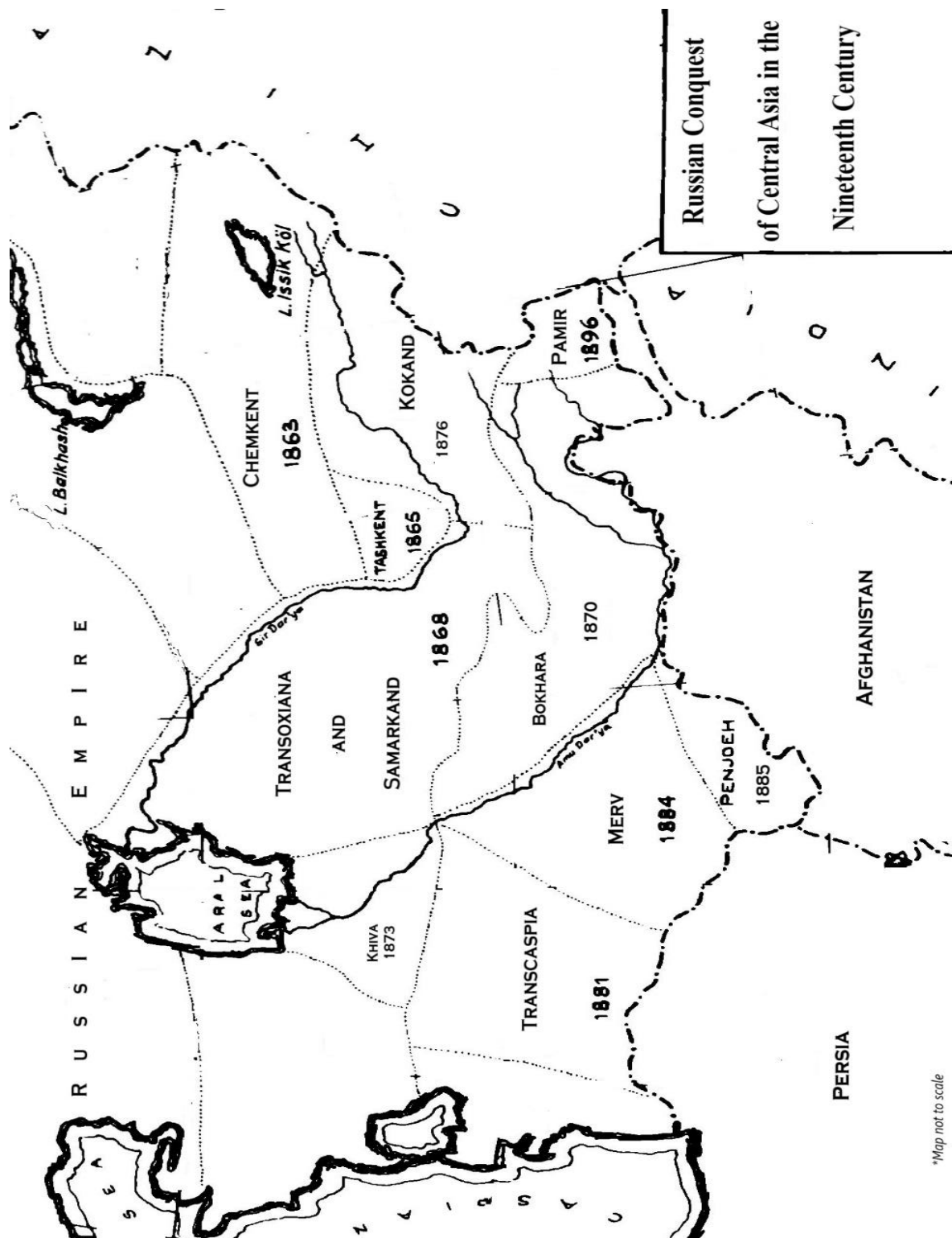
The GOI's policies leading to the First Afghan War (1839-1842) had been vehemently criticised. Years later, Lytton found Auckland's panic unreasonable. Furthermore, the sovereignty and autocratic authority of the Afghan Amir were thoroughly overestimated as he was in no position to impose any political settlement with British-India throughout Afghanistan. In addition, the ability of the tribals to disrupt any permanent British-Indian

settlement was underestimated. The First Afghan War is seen as a failure of the British-Indian military and diplomatic policies and a temporary power projection without any long-term impact. The lessons of the war led to a shift in British-Indian policies towards Afghanistan. Willing cooperation of the powers beyond the Indus was sought afterwards as a countermeasure against any foreign invasion rather than imposing a political arrangement on them.⁶⁰

The existing historiography frequently evaluates the First Afghan War as ‘Auckland’s folly’. But it was not so. Auckland took a conscious strategic decision to support Ranjit Singh and depose Dost Muhammad. He tried balancing between them. Hence, the Burnes mission was sent to Afghanistan. But to Auckland, Ranjit’s friendship was far more critical than that of Dost. He realised that Dost Muhammad would not give up his demands for the territories annexed by the Sikhs. Hence, Auckland needed an Afghan actor who would not contest the Sikhs. Therefore, he supported Shah Shuja, who gave significant concessions to the Sikhs through the tripartite treaty in 1838. Auckland weighed Ranjit and Dost and favoured the first. He had minimal options. Had he supported Dost Muhammad, the GOI would have had to start the First Afghan War sooner- a Hobson’s choice. However, the GOI committed a strategic mistake by supporting Shah Shuja. It emanated from a flawed understanding of the Afghan polity. Shah Shuja was a British pensioner and weighed down by his failed attempt to capture Kandahar. Therefore, he never commanded any political authority in the eyes of the Afghans. It will be dealt with in detail in the last chapter.

Russian Expansionism

After the First Afghan War, the GOI adopted a policy of non-interference in tribal affairs. The Secretary to the Punjab Government and Foreign Secretary to the GOI, Thomas Henry Thornton, wrote in 1895 that the calamities of the Afghan conflict and the sorrowful incident



Map 1.3 Russian conquest of central Asia in the nineteenth century.

at Khelat vividly marked the collective British memory. Consequently, a prevailing sentiment emerged, vehemently opposing any political intervention in foreign territories. The approaching menace of Russia and the absence of a treaty with the Afghan Amir prompted the GOI to prioritise defence of the frontier while minimising engagement with tribes and the states beyond.⁶¹

However, after the First Afghan War, Ranjit Singh's passing presaged unrest in the Punjab. At the same time, Sindh was exhibiting clear signs of anti-English sentiment. These circumstances ultimately paved the way for the English to make more advantageous territorial acquisitions than their occupation of Afghanistan. As a result, Sir Charles Napier conquered Sindh between 1842 and 1844, and the English government completely subjugated Multan and Punjab between 1846 and 1849 before focusing all its efforts on consolidating its rule in India.⁶²

Regarding the Anglo-Russian contestation, many held the 'Russophobia' of the British-Indian authorities to be unfounded and the result of paranoia. Furthermore, after the First Afghan War and the Russian campaign of Khiva in 1839-1840, a sort of *détente* surfaced between the two powers. However, this chapter depicts that Russian advance continued in central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Up to 1847, Russian expansion was limited to the Kirghiz Steppe. But after that, she advanced to the Jaxartes from Orenburg and furthered her borders to the southern limit of the steppe. Therefore, the spectre of an advancing Russian Army towards the border of British-India did not dissipate from the official minds of the GOI. Between 1853 and 1863, notwithstanding the interference of the Crimean War, Russia gradually worked her way from the Aral Sea through the marshes of the lower Jaxartes. The most detailed plan of a Russian invasion of India was prepared by General Chikhachev in 1854.

But Lord Loftus, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, was confident that the Russian empire was not eager to extend its frontiers in central Asia. Even the Russian Foreign Minister

Prince Gorchakov voiced against annexing the central Asian states.⁶³ On 28th January 1874, the Russian Chancellor told the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg that Afghanistan was beyond the sphere of their political action.⁶⁴ Prince Gorchakov further confirmed it in a dispatch addressed to Count Brunnow, which was communicated to the British Government on 17 February 1874. Even before, in 1869, Gorchakov expressed to Sir A. Buchanan, the then British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, his concurrence with Lord Mayo's views that Russian agents should not visit Kabul.⁶⁵

Despite talks of limiting further advance by the Russians, Chemkend was occupied by 1864, and Turkestan also capitulated in the same year. Hostilities were also resumed upon the Jaxartes early in 1865. Furthermore, Bokhara accepted its dependency upon Russia by 1870.⁶⁶ It can be said that before 1865, Russia's policy in central Asia was to consolidate her existing gains along the Syr Darya and not extend further. However, General Cherniaev took Tashkent in 1865, and the Tsar approved his venture in ex post facto. The following moves by Russia in central Asia had two main strategic objectives: firstly, to pressurise Britain in India and secondly, to use their advances in central Asia as leverage to bargain in Europe and the Near East.⁶⁷

An overview of Russian advance in central Asia in the nineteenth century depicts that she advanced her frontiers slowly but steadily. Russia captured Khiva in 1873 and Kokand in 1876. Merv joined the Russian Empire voluntarily in 1884 after Colonel Kuropatkin seized Ashgabat. Finally, Russian forces annexed Panjdeh Oasis from the Afghan forces in 1885. Therefore, she successfully penetrated the northern Afghan frontier in the 1880s.⁶⁸ Upon reaching the southern border of Kazakhstan, Russian foreign minister Gorchakov announced that Russia does not intend to expand further. From the 1860s to 1880s, Gorchakov and the Russian Minister of War, Dmitry Milyutin, debated the aims and directions of Russian expansion in central Asia.⁶⁹ Though the military generals pushed for the acquisition of territories, Milyutin acknowledged

the importance of keeping Afghanistan independent to preserve the equilibrium between Britain and Russia in Asia.⁷⁰ It has been opined that Russian expansion in central Asia, to a great extent, had been driven by the pugnacious Russian generals like General Chernaiev, who were often defiant of orders from St. Petersburg. Therefore, it can be argued that the influence exerted by the ‘men on the spot’ had been a common theme of British and Russian activities in their frontiers.

Regarding the Anglo-Russian contestation, scholars often considered Europe as the primary theatre of conflict between England and Russia.⁷¹ Being primarily European powers, the British and Russian continental interests reigned supreme in their foreign policy. Additionally, though the ‘central Asian Question’ attained a global dimension for both the imperial powers, it has been held that their eastern concerns were subsidiary to their European commitments. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that their imperial and global commitments tied their European engagements inextricably to Eastern affairs.

Despite the steady progress of Russia towards the borders of British-India, Malcolm Yapp argues that there was no significant Russian threat to India, and Russia never intended to conquer Afghanistan at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the British-Indian fear of the Russian threat was deceptive in nature.⁷² However, one should understand that rather than the conquest of Afghanistan or NWF, the existence of Russia on the Indian frontiers would have been perceived as the weakness of the British-Indian Army. To a colonial power that was insecure about its position in India, any perception of weakness by the host society would be detrimental to its interests.

GOI-Afghan relations and the pretext of the Second Afghan War:

On the British side of the story, the First Afghan War failed to comfort the British anxieties regarding the extending Russian frontier in central Asia. It can be argued that with the conquest of Sindh in 1843 and the annexation of Punjab in 1849, the expanse of British-India extended further and became adjacent to the higher plateaus of Afghanistan and Khelat. Therefore, the matter of Indian defence now got mixed up within the whirlwind of the greater central Asia politics. By the onset of the second half of the nineteenth century, it became apparent that Afghanistan would act as the bulwark of British-Indian defence. Persia had lost its importance in British strategic thought.

After the First Afghan War, Dost Mohammad Khan was allowed to return to Afghanistan and assumed power in 1843 as an independent Amir. He ruled the country until his death in 1863 and passed on his throne to the heir-apparent, Sardar Sher Ali Khan. However, his nascent rule was subjected to a rebellion by the provincial governors, which he overcame in 1868 with the help of his son Mohammad Yakub Khan. During his reign, Sher Ali embarked on a policy of organising his administration and introducing some reforms in the path of nation-building. On the other hand, the GOI adopted a policy of conciliation towards Afghanistan. John Lawrence became the Viceroy of India in 1864 and adopted a non-interventionist policy towards Afghanistan and minimal interaction with the trans-Indus tribes. This approach is popularly known as ‘masterly inactivity’. Sher Ali received monetary help from Lawrence and a cache of arms in 1868. Next year, the Afghan Amir received a grand reception when he visited Ambala for a diplomatic ‘conference’.⁷³

The Amir, in turn, also expressed his apparent friendly demeanour to the GOI. He requested the Governor-General to give an assurance of non-intervention in Afghanistan.⁷⁴ However, the Government of Punjab (henceforth, GOP) was sceptical about the demeanour of the Afghan

Amir. They thought the Amir did not like the British and would not change his attitude shortly. The GOP prescribed exchanging *vakeels* (an agent or representative) with Afghanistan to forge a good relationship rather than just stationing one from the British-Indian side in Kabul. Nevertheless, the GOP was cautious regarding intervention in the internal politics of Afghanistan.⁷⁵ Interestingly, the Commissioner and Superintendent of Punjab held that the Amir wanted the support of the GOI to extend his cause rather than forging a friendly relationship with the British.⁷⁶ It depicts the presence of myriad strategic opinions at the individual and collective level, from the individuals posted at the edge of British imperial control to the highest authorities in the metropole. In this era of cautious policy towards the defence of India, Britain and GOI again employed their diplomats. Therefore, sending an envoy to Khiva with gifts was recommended to counteract Russian influence in central Asia.⁷⁷

Despite the advocacy of ‘masterly inactivity’ towards trans-Indus politics, Lord Mayo, in 1871, expressed his concerns regarding Russian advances against central Asian states such as Khiva. He recommended despatching a confidential British officer to Khiva to gauge the circumstances. Hence, gathering intelligence regarding the central Asian polity was as crucial as in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁸ Though Mayo was concerned about the Russian position in central Asia, he refrained from sending an envoy to Khiva to protect the status quo and the military-diplomatic *détente* in central Asia and Afghanistan. Instead, he sought a formal acknowledgement from Russia regarding the Afghan frontiers as settled by the GOI.⁷⁹

Mayo’s successor, Northbrook,⁸⁰ attributed the long prevailing peace with Afghanistan to the result of GOI’s isolation policy towards the land beyond the Indus. He cited the example of Dost Muhammad’s disapproval of receiving a British envoy. It can be argued that since there was a strong anti-British lobby in Kabul, acceptance of any British envoy would have eroded the sovereignty and authority of the Afghan Amir in the eyes of his political elite and the general Afghan populace. Northbrook also found the staunch criticism of Russia in the English

press when they sent a mission to Kabul in 1878 to be exaggerated and xenophobic in nature. He attempted to justify and rationalise the behaviour of Russia and the Amir by saying that their actions were reactive to the changing political circumstances in the East.⁸¹

What was initiated by Lawrence and continued by Mayo and Northbrook was a strategic alignment with the broader Gladstonian liberal British foreign policy. The intellectual underpinning of this policy, championed by William Gladstone, the British Prime Minister from 1868 to 1874, was to curtail British overseas commitments and reduce escalating military expenditure. However, the shift in power to a conservative government in London in 1874, led by Benjamin Disraeli, marked a significant change in British foreign policy. This led to the adoption of a more assertive policy in dealing with the Afghan problem. When Lord Lytton assumed the Viceroyship of India in 1876, the GOI followed suit. London also authorised Calcutta to adopt an active ‘forward policy’ for India’s defense.⁸²

Departing from the GOI’s policy towards the NWF till 1875, Disraeli entrusted Lytton with the task of securing land beyond the Indus with strong and proactive measures. The primary objective was to establish a ‘scientific frontier’ that could be defended at a relatively lower cost. The origin of this concept has been attributed to Disraeli. In his Lord Mayor’s Day Speech in 1878, Disraeli remarked that the British Government did not fear any Russian invasion crossing the NWF given the logistical difficulties involved with such a campaign. However, he also acknowledged that such an expedition by Russia was not impossible.⁸³ There can be two interpretations of these seemingly contradictory statements. Either the British Government was attempting to obfuscate the public with their Russian or Afghan policies, considering the constantly changing European affairs. Or, since Disraeli’s government was deviating from a long-standing policy of inactivity, they were trying to demonstrate the apparent flexibility of their policy.

Though the Home Government in London entrusted Lytton to secure the frontier, in many cases, decisions were taken by the GOI without prior consultation with London or often against its wishes. This scenario goes against the usually accepted notion of top-down command structure within the British politico-military apparatus. In this context, there is a commonality between the British Governor-Generals and Viceroys in India and their Russian counterparts in central Asia. Many of them operated in their domains with considerable autonomy, and their proactive politico-military ventures were approved by the Home Government, often quite reluctantly. Disraeli advocated a firm Afghan policy in a letter to Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India and later the Foreign Secretary. Disraeli held that the GOI should maintain its robust stance despite the possibility of Russia leaving the politico-military contest for Afghanistan. It can be argued that the apparent peace between the two powers in the Treaty of Berlin (1878) and the resultant assurance by Gorchakov of no further demonstration towards Afghanistan made Disraeli optimistic about Russian departure from the Afghan scene. However, such optimism would soon prove misplaced when Russia annexed Panjdeh from Afghanistan in 1885. But right before the commencement of the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1878, Disraeli, under the light of the recent thaw in tension, attempted to persuade Lytton to pause GOI's proactive stance towards Afghanistan for a while. However, it was too late. Lytton's endeavour to secure the western flank of the Indian empire, the original objective Disraeli and Salisbury's administration entrusted with him, was already in motion. In the second half of the nineteenth century, as India's defensive line had already receded to Afghanistan, Lytton approached the Afghan Amir to secure a friendly relationship. Though he failed to settle with Amir Sher Ali, he signed the Treaty of Jacobabad with the Khan of Kelat in 1876. It brought Baluchistan within the orbit of British-India and secured the right to garrison Quetta, which could be used as a springboard for military action towards Kandahar. Furthermore, Lytton sent a mission to Afghanistan headed by Neville Chamberlin to overtrump

the Russian mission accepted by the Amir. He was supported by the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Cranbrook (Salisbury's successor to the office).

Disraeli earlier expressed his unflinching support to Lytton in a letter to Salisbury. But both of them considered Lytton's move to be hasty. Moreover, in a later telegram to Cranbrook, Disraeli sharply criticised Lytton for disobeying orders. Both Disraeli and Salisbury held that if any British-Indian mission was to be sent to Afghanistan, it should be directed towards Kandahar. But Lytton pressed the Chamberlain Mission (1878) through the Khyber towards Kabul. When the mission was sent back from Khyber, Lytton issued an ultimatum to Sher Ali. Disraeli was furious with Lytton's pro-activeness in Afghanistan when a status quo was reached with Russia in Europe through the Berlin Congress. Due to the gravity of the matter, the cabinet had to be convened in London. But it was too late, and there was little that London could do to reverse the path taken by Calcutta. Salisbury remarked that the Viceroy was 'forcing the hand of the Government'. Lytton was criticised for his tunnel vision concerning only India and, from that consideration, indirectly dictating the broader British policy regarding Russia and Turkey.⁸⁴ Hence, similar to the First Afghan War, the final decision by the GOI to mobilise the British-Indian Army for a war in Afghanistan was not taken in unison with the British Government. It depicts the cautiousness-proactiveness dichotomy of the British and British-Indian strategic decision-making.

In late 1878, the GOI mobilised almost 35,000 men to penetrate the borders of Afghanistan and dethrone the Afghan Amir. This political objective was half achieved in 1879 when Sher Ali fled from Kabul and his son Yakub Khan succeeded him. The Treaty of Gandamak was signed between the new Amir and the GOI in May 1879. By the terms outlined in the treaty, the Amir relinquished authority over Afghan foreign relations and consented to establish a British Mission in Kabul. The British were granted jurisdiction over the Kuram and Pishin valleys, the Sibi area, and the Khyber Pass. The pact facilitated the expansion of business interactions and

the creation of a telegraph connection between Kabul and British-India.⁸⁵ However, peace was short-lived as Yakub's authority was never strong and political upheavals in Afghanistan necessitated a force of retribution under General Roberts to capture Kabul. Finally, after more than two years of fighting, in July 1880, the Afghan throne was offered to Abdur Rahman, a nephew of Sher Ali. He agreed to abide by the terms of the Treaty of Gandamak.

The declared objectives of the Anglo-Afghan settlement in 1880 were establishing a friendly ruler on the Afghan throne, preserving a united Afghanistan, ensuring the prosperity of the country and promoting commerce. Hence, the GOI's political aim of starting the military campaign in 1878 was achieved, and the GOI started devising an exit strategy.⁸⁶

Three broad factors influenced the strategic decision to pull out the British-Indian Army from the Afghan theatre. Firstly, the increasing expenses of the war. Secondly, the difficulty of keeping Afghanistan under unified rule. Finally, political change in England with the liberal triumph in the election of 1880.⁸⁷ There had also been a debate regarding the political prospects of Afghanistan after the war. Despite desiring a strong and unified Afghanistan, General Frederick Roberts advocated its Balkanisation due to the absence of a robust Afghan figure to assume the role of Amir.⁸⁸ However, two factors led the GOI to follow a different path. They found a friendly and reliable person in the figure of Abdur Rahman. Also, the new Gladstonian government in London hastened the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Therefore, when decisive military defeat was inflicted on the Afghan Army in 1880, withdrawal from the theatre of combat became a priority rather than establishing a viable regime and pacifying the countryside.⁸⁹

Post-Second Afghan War GOI-Afghanistan Dynamics

After the Second Afghan War, the British-Indian Army was withdrawn from the northern frontiers of Afghanistan. At the same time, Afghan control was eliminated from Khyber and Kuram and the British-Indian position in Baluchistan was enormously strengthened. The aim was to turn Afghanistan into a defensive outwork interspersed with mutually supportive strategic garrisons supplied by strategic railways. I argue that such schemes were part of the GOI's efforts at deterrence-building through the rapid concentration of troops. However, the Afghan Amir had to be kept in good faith to achieve this objective. Therefore, an arrangement was reached between the GOI and Afghanistan in the 1890s. This was achieved by exchanging letters between the Amir and Sir Lepel Griffin, the Foreign Secretary to the GOI. The crux of the arrangement was that the GOI would control Afghanistan's foreign policy without any interference in Afghan polity. Therefore, this settlement afforded the GOI apparent strategic control over Afghanistan. Support of the British-Indian Army in the case of foreign intervention in Afghanistan was also promised.

The Afghan Amir accepted the delimitation of his eastern and southern frontiers with the two agreements in connection to the Durand Mission of 12 November 1893. The agreements further added that the GOI would not prohibit Afghanistan from importing arms. Instead, they would aid Afghanistan in procuring munitions of war. Amir Habibullah ascended the throne after Amir Abdur Rahman passed away in 1901. By the Kabul Treaty of March 1905, he formally accepted the same agreement with the GOI that existed under his predecessor. To ensure the friendly demeanour of the Afghan Amir after the Second Afghan War, the GOI started subsidising him, which increased over time. The subsidy in June 1883 was Rs. 12,00,000, which increased by Rs. 6,00,000 considering the Amir's 'friendly spirit'. Later, in 1897, it was further increased by Rs. 50,000 for the administration of eastern Wakhan. Amir Habibullah received the same amount of subsidy, and in 1915, an additional two lakh rupees was added to

reward the neutrality of Afghanistan during the First World War. Finally, in July 1918, the Governor-General decided to grant the Afghan Amir a lump sum of one crore rupees to show the British Government's friendship and to assist in the expenses of maintaining neutrality.⁹⁰

From a strategic point of view, it was important for the GOI that with the British-Indian assistance in delimiting the Russian frontier, Abdur Rahman held Afghanistan together. However, the policy of allowing the Amir to carry out his business led to a severe and exhausting rule. He crushed the Hazaras, and Turkestans suffered at his hand. W. Lee Warner, the Secretary of the Political and Secret Department, felt that the Kafirs were also on the path of decimation. According to him, these events, to a great extent, reduced the status of Afghanistan as a buffer state. This assessment raises the question of why the GOI and British authorities were sceptical about the Amir consolidating his power. The answer probably lies in Afghanistan's strategic position within the grand narrative of India's defence. It can be argued that a weak Afghan Amir dependent on the GOI politically, economically and militarily would have given the latter greater strategic control over the contested terrain. A dominant and strong Amir would have shaken the superordinate position of GOI vis-a-vis Afghanistan. Here lies the fallacy of the conception of 'state building in Afghanistan', which will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

However, Amir's cooperative demeanour in the early 1890s soon evaporated, and he contested the work of the British-Indian frontier parties and even hesitated to ratify the agreement. Therefore, the GOI's hopes were not fulfilled. The Amir's agreement of non-interference in the British-Indian sphere of influence was disregarded. Conditions of trade did not improve, nor did the position of British-Indian representatives at the Afghan court. Furthermore, at the higher strategic level, western Afghanistan was open to Russian attack through Khorassan. The Amir received a large subsidy and unlimited munitions of war but, in exchange, did not remain friendly. Therefore, the withdrawal of the subsidy and arms was prescribed as a penal measure.

However, such measures were not implemented as they could have entailed further serious complications, such as pushing Afghanistan into the Axis or Bolshevik fold.⁹¹

Russo-British Contestations after the Second Afghan War

Russian expansion in central Asia continued in the 1880s. The Akhal-Teke Turkmans were defeated in 1881, shortly after which Merv was annexed in 1884. The very next year, the Russian Army knocked at the gates of Afghanistan by expropriating the Afghan military from the Panjdeh oasis.⁹² In 1888, Russia quietly absorbed the territory of the Sultan of Bokhara. Furthermore, to improve their logistical capabilities, railways were completed as far as Samarkand, roads towards Afghanistan were built, and communication with Meshed was pushed forward. Russia increased the Caspian naval and commercial fleet to augment its military establishment. Moreover, military stations were established on the Persian and Herat frontiers, and the army headquarters of the Turkestan command was transferred from Tashkent to Samarkand. It should be noted that explorations and military reconnaissance progressed simultaneously in central Asia, indicating the Russian aim of further expansion. The Governor-General of Trans-Caspia, Kuropatkin, energetically pushed Russian interest and renewed Russian activity on the Afghan border by erecting new outposts, barracks, and extension of roads and telegraph lines. Russian detachments were also dispatched to the Pamirs. The British assumed that the insurrection at Kilanau in around 1892 among the Sunni Hazara tribe stemmed from the Russian intervention in that region. In 1892, the Russian Army in Trans-Caspia numbered approximately 14,000, and the Turkestan army was 32,000 strong. The Trans-Caspian railway brought the region into close communication with the Caucasus and Europe.⁹³

The GOI did not wait as a spectator while Russia crept closer, and their military position improved significantly since 1887. Frontier defences before Quetta, at Sukkur and Attock, were

created and advanced to New Chaman. Regarding the plan of mobilisation, logistical supply and funds allotted, the British-Indian Army advanced significantly.⁹⁴ Cart roads were also prepared in central Asia to supply the British-Indian Army if deployment became imperative. E.C.R. Thomson, the British Vice-Consul for Khorassan and Seistan, informed that the Meshed-Ashkabad cart road was almost complete in 1890. Furthermore, the difficult road up and around the steep hill about a *farsakh* (Persian unit of distance equal to about 4 miles) on the other side of Dur Badam was also completed.⁹⁵

The Discourse on the Diplomatic Defence of India:

Despite the above-mentioned progress mentioned above in central Asia, the GOI assessed that unlike in 1880, Russia could take Herat and Turkestan when she pleased in the mid-1890s. Under those circumstances, the British-Indian ‘diplo-military’ (employing diplomatic and military measures in tandem) strategy would be limited to protecting the Kabul-Kandahar alignment. Hence, the earlier British aim to meet Russia in central Asia had been minimised. It was thought that the British-Indian Army might only protect the eastern part of Afghanistan if Russia attacked the western half.⁹⁶ Therefore, since the first part of the nineteenth century, the GOI’s strategic line of defence gradually receded. It will be seen later that after the Third Afghan War in 1919, rather than central Asia, Persia, Herat or Afghanistan, the NWF became the last and the only line of defence for British-India proper.

Regarding the diplomatic defence of India, Lord Roberts held that the position of Russia in central Asia and the attitude of the frontier tribes had changed in the decade and a half after 1869. As the CIC, he commented that the British-Indian Army was far from ready to undertake a war against Russia. Therefore, the existing scheme of India’s strategic defence needed revision. The ‘masterly inactivity’ regarding the Russian approach, Afghanistan and the

frontier tribes earlier espoused by John Lawrence was no longer tenable. It can be argued that Roberts understood the essence of the Afghan polity, which was diametrically opposite to the centralised western state structure. The country's population was not homogenous, and the Amir was far from being an absolutist ruler of the Western style. Therefore, he thought it was necessary to decide if an arrangement directly with the Amir would be sufficient or if the GOI needed to come to arrangements with the tribes simultaneously. Roberts felt that the Afghan tribes preferred British-Indian friendship and protection over that of the Russians. However, the Amir was against the British-Indian Army entering Afghanistan, as it led to the erosion of his power and legitimacy.⁹⁷

Like Roberts, Lord Kitchener criticised institutions such as the GOI and the British government and personalities like the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for India for constant revisions in political and military policies regarding the defence of the NWF and Afghanistan. Writing in 1905, Lord Kitchener refuted the idea that the threat of the 'Russian bogey' had subsided for a considerable time. Russia did lose a significant portion of its naval fleet, but its army was intact. Hence, he believed that Russia intended to establish itself in Afghanistan sooner or later, and this fact was generally accepted by all. Kitchener held that Russia would attempt to compensate for her loss of prestige in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) by advancing towards India. Therefore, rather than the inherent weakness of Russia desisting her in any advance in central Asia, Kitchener argued that it would propel it.⁹⁸ Kitchener and Lord Curzon had similar premonitions regarding the Russian advance towards India. Curzon held that Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War may induce her to exert more significant pressure upon the Indian frontiers. Furthermore, the impression of an impending Russian steamroller encroaching upon the Persians and the Afghans would only make them much more menacing for British-Indian security.⁹⁹

It has been mentioned earlier that the British-Indian politico-military edifice was not a monolithic structure. Therefore, when personalities like Durand, Roberts, Curzon and Kitchener were proactively charting the course of the GOI's counter moves against Russia, Sir. A.C. Lyall (a member of the India Council) refused to ascribe any strategic importance to Russian deployment near Afghanistan. He considered that it was Russia's natural line of operations to threaten or invade Afghanistan. Furthermore, he deprecated the commitment of any long-term obligation to the Afghan Amir.¹⁰⁰

In British grand strategic calculations, Russia would retrace its steps in central Asia if her advance into Afghanistan was to be followed by a war with the Triple Alliance and the Naval power of England. But there was no assurance that the Triple Alliance would make the Eastern quarrel its own during its existence. Turkish help in England's struggle with Russia was also not likely; therefore, it was assumed that England could not oppose the advance of Russia in a western theatre of war. However, the Russian advance against Afghanistan was delayed due to certain internal factors. Hence, it was gauged that Russia was not in any better position than England in carrying out an operation in central Asia.¹⁰¹ The nineteenth century ended with this strategic assessment, which manifests the global dimension of the central Asian struggle.

Developments in the Twentieth Century and the Third Afghan War:

An assessment of Afghan armed strength at the beginning of the twentieth century revealed some military modernisation. However, they lacked a proper army.¹⁰² It's worth noting that Afghanistan was still at the centre stage of British and British-Indian diplomatic-military strategy. Therefore, the Amir's demeanour would have decided the course of events to a great extent if Afghanistan became the arena of contestation between Russia and British-India.

Writing in 1906, H.A. Deane held that a Russo-Afghan collaboration was only possible if the latter acted as an aggressor. The old Akhund of Swat¹⁰³, who fought the British-Indian Army in Ambala in 1863, pronounced that in case of a war between England and Russia, it was the duty of 'all good Muhammandans' to fight for England. Deane considered that this pronouncement held strong among his successors as well. Therefore, if the British-Indian Army did not pose as the aggressor, the sentiment of the tribes would side against the Russians. However, if the Afghan army acted alone and started mobilising vigorously against the British-Indian outposts, then the tone of tribal response would be completely different. Therefore, such an aggression was to be neutralised by a counter-move by the British-Indian Army on Jalalabad towards Kabul.¹⁰⁴

While evaluating the policy of British assistance towards Afghanistan, it was assessed that the GOI did not enjoy any of the advantages to which their financial and military commitments entitle them. The GOI could not obtain information regarding local conditions or the Amir's military resources by sending officers; there was no commercial convention with Afghanistan. Furthermore, on political matters, the Afghan Amir corresponded with the Russians, which was directly against the Amir's declaration. Hence, the GOI's arrangements with Afghanistan post-1880 were considered one-sided. There were heavy liabilities with no substantial return. However, it should be remembered that despite criticisms, the arrangement stood the strain of the First World War. The factor of Bolshevism in Russia towards the end of the 1910s was a new appendage to the larger British strategic discourse. However, with the decline of Tsarist Russia, it was assumed that any imperialist ambition towards India from the North-West had subsided for the time being.¹⁰⁵

It was also considered that between 1893 and 1905, the British-Indian Army dealt with Afghanistan as a protected power that sought assistance and support from India. The Afghan Amir Habibullah was assassinated in February 1919, and Amanullah ascended the throne. The

young Amir was inexperienced and exposed to tremendous religious and racial pressure from central Asia and Afghanistan. He tried solving his domestic problems by channelling tribal unrest and aggression towards the invasion of British-India. The mass upsurge in Punjab in 1919 gave him the hope that a situation of mass rebellion in India had developed. Furthermore, the Bolshevik intrigues somewhat bolstered Amanullah's dream of a greater Afghanistan.¹⁰⁶

Considering the changing dynamics of the Afghan state, three alternatives were conceived regarding GOI's relations with Afghanistan. Firstly, a British protectorate over Afghanistan was created through a new treaty. Secondly, the older arrangements were re-established with the new Amir. Finally, the termination of all special relations with Afghanistan, discontinuation of Amir's subsidy and retreat from the GOI's obligation to provide military assistance to Afghanistan. Despite the aggression manifested by Amanullah, it was considered that a complete withdrawal of British support would push Afghanistan to Russia or Germany since it was an economic deficit region. A breach with the Afghan Amir would have also had an unsettling effect on the frontier tribes. The Secretary of the Military Department, GOI, concurred with the Political Department. that the Afghan Amir should be given the bare minimum assistance so that he could 'save his face'.¹⁰⁷

With the onset of the twentieth century, Britain and Russia looked forward to resolving the geo-strategic conflict in central Asia. On the British side, the Second Boer War (1899-1902) entailed huge expenses and dealt a blow to the British sense of security. Furthermore, the Anglo-Japanese agreement in 1902 and the Anglo-French treaty in 1904 lessened the British burden of ensuring its Far Eastern, Middle Eastern and African security responsibilities. On the other hand, the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 and the subsequent turmoil due to the revolution in 1905 resulted in curtailment of military spending. This mutual concern to reduce the environment of conflict in central Asia led to the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention in 1907. Consequently, a status quo was established in the border zones

of Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet by formalising ties between the two rival countries in central Asia. It is often considered that this agreement brought the 'Great Game' in central Asia to a conclusion. However, it has also been suggested that this contest continued until the conclusion of the Bolshevik Revolution and the First World War.¹⁰⁸

Anglo-Russian tension in the East was generally thawing at the end of the 1920s. Because Russia was yet to emerge as a strong military power under Bolshevism its internal affairs demanded much more attention than the external ones. Furthermore, fighting in the First World War sapped Russian military strength significantly. However, Lord Montagu advised that the British-Indian Army should not let its guard down in ensuring Indian security. He predicted that small Bolshevik armies in Eastern Turkestan could be reinforced and reorganised shortly and could be ordered to march towards India.¹⁰⁹ Major-General Sir A.A. Montgomery and the CIC, General Sir Charles Monro, strongly concurred with Montagu. They held that the forward policy of Russia in central Asia was to continue even after 1920, and there were possibilities of Russian intrigue in Afghanistan.¹¹⁰

It can be argued that after the coming of Bolshevism, Russia's object in threatening India was no longer marching a massive army towards its frontiers. Instead, they aimed at penetrating India internally by creating a nexus with the anti-British movement in India, which attained pace in the 1920s. Therefore, the need for a diplomatic defence of India took a back seat as the 'Raj' geared towards ensuring the maintenance of internal order in India.

II

This section analyses the military strategic considerations of the GOI regarding Russia and Afghanistan, dividing it into two segments. The first focuses on the broader discourse of India's military defence. While the second delves into actual strategic military deployments during times of war. Though the second segment tends to tread more in the sphere of 'operations', this division enables an analysis of the theory and praxis side by side.

Military Defence of India

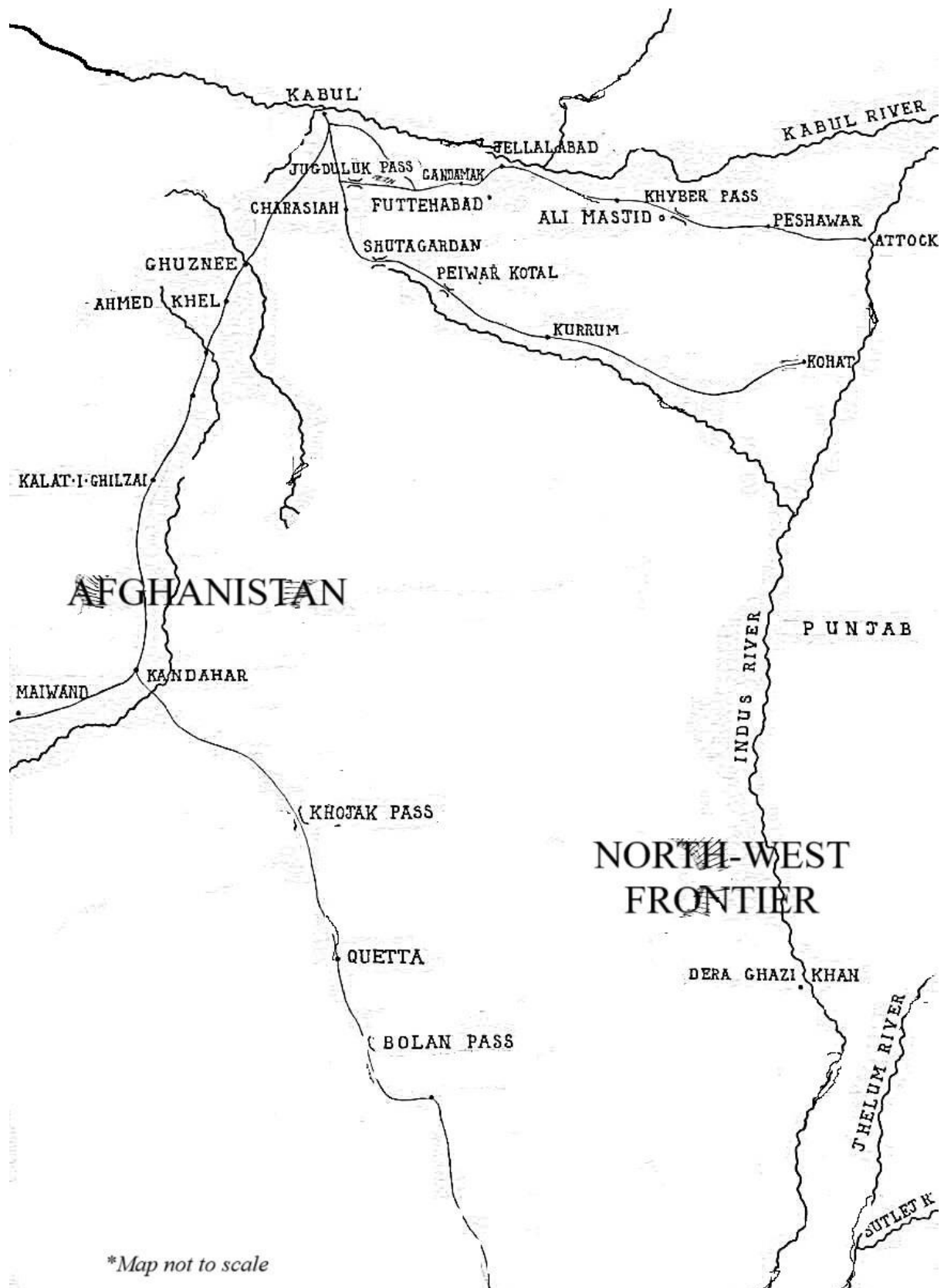
During the second half of the nineteenth century, two schools of thought influenced the strategic thinking centred on India's defence. The 'Sind School' looked to Sir John Jacob as its founder and had distinguished personalities such as Sir Henry Rawlinson, Sir Lewis Pelly, Sir Bartle Frere, and so on in its rank. They believed in extending British-Indian military control up to Herat and Kandahar. Some of them even advocated active intervention in Afghan political and military affairs. Hence, they can be considered the hawks within the British and British-Indian politico-military apparatus. They perceived that stationing British envoys in chief Afghan cities, training the Afghan Army and occasionally supporting the Afghan Amir through military and political means would afford the GOI proper control over Afghanistan. Therefore, the proponents of the Sind school preached a proactive and forward military-diplomatic policy. They believed the 'scientific frontier' was no longer the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line. Instead, India was to be defended militarily at Herat and diplomatically in Europe.

On the other end of the spectrum, John Lawrence headed the Punjab School from 1864 to 1869. He was firmly against military intervention in Afghanistan because frequent armed expeditions were quite costly. Furthermore, campaigns in a country with an inhospitable environment were believed to exert unnecessary pressure on the British-Indian army. From an Afghan point of

view, these expeditions were detested and contested by her tribal population. Lawrence and his followers can be termed as the doves. Strategically, Lawrence favoured the Indus line of defence because of logistical feasibility and the advantages afforded by the river. He thought that the Russian threat to India was illusory. Furthermore, he justified his policy of leaving Afghanistan open to external attacks with the idea that if the Russian Army pierced the Afghan borders, the latter would appeal for help to the GOI and act as an ally rather than an enemy.¹¹¹ It can be argued that Lawrencian pacifism failed to understand the military strategic imperative of denying Russia any foothold in Afghanistan.

In the second half of the 1870s, the GOI concluded that it would be detrimental to British interests in the East to allow Russia's occupation of strategically significant positions towards India. They perceived three strategic lines where the two contending forces could meet. Firstly, the northern boundary of Afghanistan. Secondly, the Hindukush line continued eastward to the Karakoram and Westward to Herat. And finally, the existing British-Indian frontier. Among these, the Hindukush was a natural rampart of India. However, it was not easy to hold as the line had to be covered with outworks (a section of a fortification or system of defence in front of the main part). Hence, this line was militarily untenable from a topographical perspective as the mountain's ridges would cover the defending and attacking forces. Therefore, the outer or the Oxus line and the inner or the existing Indian frontier were to be considered. Hence, it can be argued that the physical geography of Afghanistan and central Asia largely dictated the military strategic blueprint for India's defence.¹¹²

Finally, it was decided that holding the Ghazni, Kabul, and Jalalabad alignment was the most practicable way to defend India. However, it was predicated upon Afghanistan's friendly demeanour. Herat was to act as the outwork of the British possessions, to be held by the Afghans and supported by British-Indian officers and military hardware. However, the GOI was not eager to station the British-Indian Army at Herat. The main objective of the military



Map 1.4 North-West Frontier and eastern Afghanistan

strategic assessment was to absorb the first blow of the Russian Army and delay their further approach. The second defensive position would be the Ghazni-Kabul-Jallalabad triangle, which was the key to the defence of the NWF. A 'purely defensive' policy against Russian advances was vehemently deprecated because the GOI held India with 'moral force and the prestige of continued success than by actual strength'.¹¹³ Internal insecurity of the GOI necessitated frequent external power projection. Therefore, vigorous military action and early success were deemed a strategic necessity.

It has already been mentioned that as the Russian Army drew closer to the Indian borders in the second half of the nineteenth century, India's military defence took precedence within the strategic thinking of the GOI. In the 'defence of India' discourse, Major-General Charles Macgregor has often been held as a pioneer in scientifically studying the strategic considerations associated with Indian security.¹¹⁴ Writing in 1884, he expressed the gravity of the Russian threat to India. Macgregor estimated that Russia could mobilise around 185,000 men, 40,000 cavalry and 191 guns towards India. Furthermore, by tapping into the resources of tributary states like Serbia and Bulgaria, Russian numbers could swell up to 691,000 men with 955 guns. He argued in favour of denying Russia the command of Herat because any advance towards Kabul or Chitral would then become practicable for Russia.¹¹⁵

Macgregor recommended seizing commanding positions such as Herat, Kabul and Chitral. While rejecting any defensive measure to meet the Russian challenge, he commented, 'The passive defensive.....would end in defeat and disaster'. He maintained that three divisions were to be mobilised by the British-Indian Army to hold successive strong points, such as Herat, Kandahar, and Quetta, keeping a reserve division in India. Upon closer scrutiny, it can be argued that Macgregor's comprehensive offensive-defensive plan against the Russian forces comprised multi-layered local and global diplo-military manoeuvres. Firstly, he endorsed a deterrent move to warn Russia that any attempt on their part to cross the Afghan would be a

casus belli for the British-Indian Army. Next, he recommended forming an offensive-defensive alliance with countries like Germany, Austria and Turkey to contain Russia in Europe. Furthermore, allying with China was also suggested to threaten Russian possession near the Amur and Kulja. The third measure was to despatch British officers to Herat and Persia to fortify the defence of the former, using the latter as an advance reconnaissance outpost. It would have also enabled the British-Indian Army to launch an offensive towards the Caspian and denude Khorasan of any supplies the approaching Russian Army could use. The fourth manoeuvre focused on local conditions. It involved garnering the support of the tribes, such as the Ghilzais, and instigating the Turkomans or the people of the Khanates against the Russians. The final measure was to command territorial units such as Herat, Wakhan, Chitral and Yesin with sufficient military assets.¹¹⁶

Interestingly, the Strategic Committee of 1887, as well as General Brackenbury and Major-General Newmarch, did not hold Herat as indispensable for Indian defence. Instead, they advocated garrisoning Kandahar and Jalalabad if Russia succeeded in establishing itself at Herat. A railway line to Kandahar was also prescribed to provide logistical support. The committee also held that being on the offensive was essential to manifest strength to the Indians and command their allegiance. Brackenbury strongly insisted on the inviolability of the present Anglo-Russian border. According to him, any breach by Russia would mean ‘war with England all over the world’. Therefore, he ascribed a global importance to the affairs of the ‘East’. But Lord Salisbury believed that was nothing but an empty phrase. Rather than defeating Russia decisively, he was in favour of a more attritional strategy of making it impossible for a Russian Army to live within reach of India.¹¹⁷

General Roberts vehemently criticised the policy of masterly inactivity. He ascribed great strategic value to Kandahar as it covered all the roads to India. Therefore, its occupation and garrison were paramount.¹¹⁸ Later, when he became the CIC, he advocated holding the Kabul-

Kandahar alignment. To that end, he urged reinforcing the British and the native army.¹¹⁹

Roberts and the Governor-General of India, Lord Dufferin, stressed the need for reinforcement from England in the case of a war with Russia. Furthermore, a joint plan of action between England and India was considered an absolute necessity.¹²⁰

Sir Richard Temple, Private Secretary to John Lawrence in Punjab and later Governor of the Bombay Presidency reiterated the importance of Kandahar as the site where the British-Indian Army should give battle to Russian forces if they attacked India via the south-western route. The desert to the left of Kandahar and the river to the right would have protected the British-Indian Army from being outflanked. Furthermore, Kandahar had in its rear a very resourceful country. Therefore, the task of supplying the defending army would be easy. Finally, due to Kandahar's distance from the Indian mainland, no political upheaval in India was expected. Military control of Khyber was also recommended.¹²¹

In this context, it should be mentioned that the demarcation of the Durand Line in 1894 can be considered a watershed regarding the forward and defensive policies. The Durand Line Agreement delineated the frontier between Afghanistan and British-India. Earlier, the 'forward policy' meant leaving the actual Indian frontier and advancing into the tribal territories in the NWF to hold a defensive line. In contrast, the 'backward' or defensive policy meant non-interference in the tribal affairs. However, the Durand line afforded the British-Indian authorities a limited but definite sphere of influence and control. Hence, the 'Forward policy' now meant realising the British-Indian responsibilities up to the Durand line. Meanwhile, the 'defensive policy' now bore the connotation of non-expansion beyond the British-Indian sphere of influence or, in an extreme case, retreating to the Indus line.¹²²

This multitude of opinions represents the difference between the strategic vision of a political personality, such as the British Prime Minister and a military practitioner. A gulf between the

cautiousness of the political elite in London and the general boldness of the military officers in the colonies existed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It can be argued that the inviolability of British-India's post Second-Afghan War frontier with Russia was stressed because the capture of Herat and northern Afghanistan would have provided a springboard to Russia for advance further. It would have also enabled them to augment their military infrastructure at the gates of India.

Now, suppose we shift our attention from theory to practice. In that case, the following table illustrates the comparative mobilisation capabilities of the Russian and British-Indian forces at the turn of the twentieth century in the strategic sectors of Afghanistan and NWF.

Table 1.1

Comparative Strength of Mobilisation of the British-Indian and Russian Army

Strategic Zones	Strength of Russian Mobilisation	Russo-Afghan joint strength of mobilisation (If Afghanistan sides with Russia)	British and Afghan strength of mobilisation
Oxus and Peshawar Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 90 days of mobilisation, 20,000 troops on the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Afghanistan sides with Russia, then within 90 days of mobilisation, almost 12,000 Russian troops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A British-Afghan alliance could mobilise almost 30,000 men of the British-Indian Army along with 80 guns from India, which would be reinforced

		could arrive at or near Kabul.	by a similar number of Afghan troops on the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush.
Herat and Quetta zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40,000 Russian troops could reach Herat within 35 days of mobilisation. • They could further maintain 90,000 men on the Farah Rud by the 160th day of mobilisation. 	Afghan assistance to Russia would be inconsequential in this zone as the former's forces were too few to prevent the British-Indian forces from reaching Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 35 days of mobilisation, 30,000 British-Indian troops could be placed in Kandahar. They could be further reinforced with 15,000 Afghan troops. • A combined Anglo-Afghan force of 1,00,000 combatants could capture Khash Rud. But if Afghanistan joined Russia, this force would materially decrease.

Source: A Study of the Existing Strategical Conditions on the North-West Frontier of India.

Simla: GSI, 1909-12, IOR/L/MIL/17/13/7/1, APAC, BL, London.

Railway and the Military Defence of India:

The aforementioned mobilisation capabilities of the contending armies were estimated to a great extent based on their respective railway-carrying capacities. Scholars such as Martin Van Creveld have analysed the use of railways in conventional wars in Europe and Asia. Though Creveld held that the victory of the Prussians against France could not be attributed to their railway networks, Michael Charney has depicted the efficiency and importance of railroads during the Burma Campaign in the Second World War.¹²³ This thesis argues that technological advancement shaped the strategic calculation of the 'Great Game' to a great extent from the 1880s onwards. Similar to the 'Dreadnaught Battle'¹²⁴ between Britain and Germany before the First World War, the former was engaged in what can be termed a 'railroad rivalry' in central Asia with Russia. The undisputed importance of the railways was firmly established in the second half of the nineteenth century. It has often been termed as the 'great age of railway'. Hence, this piece of military hardware was considered in military-strategic assessments. The British Strategic Committee, in its 1889 report, pointed out that the extension of the Russian strategic railway to Samarkand would have significantly strengthened her position in central Asia. Furthermore, upon completing the Trans-Caspian Railway, Russia could move directly and simultaneously to Kabul and Kandahar. They further remarked that Russia's first objective would be Herat and Balkh. Upon capturing these areas, they would aim to complete their railway connections. These two strategic locations would then be used as a base of operation for their further advance upon Kandahar and Kabul, which was their second objective. Finally, they would also demonstrate towards Chitral and Gilgit by the Eastern passes of the Hindu Kush. The committee estimated that Russia could push 60,000 troops on the Kandahar line and 30,000 on the Kabul line. However, they acknowledged that the rigour of the climate and the

difficulty of supplying a large force to occupy Kabul would check the number of men Russia could sustain on the field.¹²⁵

The British authorities estimated that the Trans-Caspian Railway would enable a unification of the Turkestan forces with the Trans-Caspian and Russian Forces in Europe by the end of 1887. Furthermore, Samarkand, which was the HQ of the Turkestan troops, would be connected to St. Petersburg. In 1887, Russia was working on two railway branches that were to move southeast. The first branch would start from the Tejend station (Kar-i- Band), running up the right bank of the Tejend (Hari Rud) to reach Russian Sarakhs, covering 80 miles. Another route would commence at Charjui up the left bank of the Oxus, intended to reach Bosaga, covering almost 160 miles.

Comparatively, the main baseline of British-Indian railway system in that region was from Karachi to Lahore, which ran parallel to the British-Indian front. Two branches struck this line at right angles. One was from Sukkur to Pishin, and the other was from Lahore to Peshawar, both covering 250 miles. The direction in which these powers extended their railway network reveals a pattern. They can be clubbed as the northern or Kabul lines and the southern or Kandahar lines. These two would be the main line of attack for the Russian forces. The Kandahar line was considered the favoured line of attack by the Russians, leading to vigorous action on the part of the GOI to connect the British-Indian defensive positions in the vicinity of Pishin with India by rail. Hence, the GOI secured the Pishin entrance to India by enlarging its military infrastructure. Notably, the extension railway line through the Kwaja Amran mountain enabled the British-Indian forces to reach Kandahar more easily. Reserve railway material was collected at New Chaman. On the other hand, considerable advance was made by the occupation of Zhob and the opening of the Gomal Pass.¹²⁶

However, upon closer inspection, it was estimated that GOI was at a disadvantage in the northern sector (Kabul Line), and the Russians outperformed them. Furthermore, upon completion, the Russian railway network would have enabled her to occupy a strong strategic position with only twenty days of preparation. Moreover, this line would have politically broken the united Afghan kingdom by dividing it into eastern and western halves. The British-Indian countermove in the southern sector was either to permanently occupy Kandahar and Kabulistan directly or indirectly through the occupation of Ghazni and Jalalabad. It was concluded that the northern branch needed to be developed to bring the British railway system to an equal footing with the Russians. Either it had to be extended beyond Peshawar or the Sind-Sagar system was to be stretched beyond the Indus to Bannu and Tochi.¹²⁷

After the Khyber Pass, the Kuram valley was the second most important path to invade India. To safeguard this strategic location, a railway from the military post at Rawalpindi to Kushalgarh had been completed by 1888, and it was roughly 60 miles in length. This railway gave the British-Indian Army the ability to deploy troops up to 80 miles beyond the Indus rapidly. From there, Kohat was only 30 miles away. Furthermore, a road was constructed to the mouth of Kurram valley at Thull to enable swift mobilisation. Curzon also mentioned about the Sind-Pishin railway from Jacobabad and the famous Quetta railway in the second sector. The railway from Ruk to Sibi was also mentioned in his note, the construction of which began during the Second Afghan War. Due to topographical challenges, the Bolan route for railway traffic was rejected during the Second Afghan War. However, the later Russian advance, specifically the 1885 event, led to the construction of a railway line to Quetta in 1886 when the British-Indian engineers performed in an overdrive mode.¹²⁸ Therefore, it is evident that military hardware in the form of railways exerted considerable influence on the discourse of Indian defence and the actual mobilisation.

Military Strategic Objectives in the Afghan Wars:

On orders by the Governor-General Lord Auckland to form an army to invade Afghanistan on Sept. 10, 1838, the CIC in India, General Sir Henry Fane, issued orders to compose an army to rendezvous at Kurnal. Thence, it was to march to Ferozepore. The total strength of the British-Indian Army for operations in Sindh and Afghanistan was calculated at just under forty thousand. It came to be known as the 'Army of the Indus'.¹²⁹ To secure the political objective of installing Shah Shuja, the Army of the Indus aimed to capture the Kandahar-Ghazni-Kabul alignment. Therefore, the British-Indian Army penetrated the Afghan border through the Bolan and Khojak Passes. Capturing Kabul was the ultimate strategic aim.¹³⁰ During the Second Afghan War, Lytton was aware of the problems an invading army was bound to face in Afghanistan. The rough terrain and challenging climate posed significant obstacles in front of the British-Indian Army. Furthermore, the distances to be traversed were also significant. Herat was almost 800 miles from the Indus, and Kabul was almost 200 miles from Peshawar and 300 miles from Kandahar.¹³¹ The lessons of the First Afghan War unveiled that the dynamics of the Afghan state was utterly different from its Western counterparts. The occupation of large cities and the capital might not have destroyed the Afghan Army or forced its surrender. Therefore, the GOI's planners also faced the problem of finding strategic military objectives. Apart from the regular army, hundreds of tribal bands expressed allegiance to the *qaum* (community) rather than the state. Without the occupation of the entire country, which was impossible, it was hard to subdue them. These problems led Lytton to opt for a limited objective. His understanding of the situation made him believe that the Kandahar and Kuram valley occupation would exert enough pressure on the Amir to make him accept a British mission.¹³²

It is interesting to note that the strength of the invading British-Indian Army remained almost the same in the Second Afghan War.¹³³ In 1878, the GOI aimed at simultaneously capturing

the three strategic objectives of Kandahar, Jalalabad and Kabul. Therefore, three British columns invaded Afghanistan via the Bolan Pass, Khyber Pass and the Kuram Valley.¹³⁴ The CIC Frederick Haines recommended the reinforcement of Quetta against any Afghan attack and to bring the garrison to a strength of some 5,400 men. The force to occupy and retain Kandahar was to be deployed in 2 divisions with a strength of approximately 13,000 men and 45 guns, including a siege train.¹³⁵ A confidential memo from the Secretary of the Foreign Department, Government of India, A.C. Lyall, to the Military Department bears testimony to this proposal.¹³⁶ According to Haines, Sukkur, on the Indus, was to be looked upon as the depot for all troops from Bombay and Madras, while Dera Ghazi Khan was to provide supplies for the Bengal Army.¹³⁷

Interestingly, a shift in the GOI's military strategic thinking was noticed in 1916, when Kabul, as the seat of the Afghan government, was identified as the primary strategic objective. It was considered the surest way of bringing the organised Afghan forces to battle. It can be argued that due to the efforts of Amir Abdur Rahman, Afghanistan was relatively more centralised than before. As the British-Indian Army was better equipped to fight a conventional war, the military strategic objective of drawing the Afghan Army to battle would have given them tactical superiority in the theatre of operations. If Afghanistan commences hostilities, an advance to Jalalabad and Kabul was recommended. Furthermore, it was assumed that an occupation of the Jalalabad plain would enable the British-Indian Army to intervene between the Afridi and Mohmand sections and between the tribes and Kabul. It would increase the prestige of the British-Indian Army, diminish that of the adversary and provide a springboard for further advance. The Afghan forces available to meet the British-Indian advance in the vicinity of Basawal were estimated to be around 10,000 men and 18 guns by the eighth day of Afghan mobilisation. It could increase to 40,000 men and 200 guns by the 40th day of mobilisation.

Furthermore, the adversary's ranks could be swelled by tribal gatherings, which may amount to as many as 20,000 men, mostly infantry, armed with breechloading rifles. It was considered that to ensure speedy and crushing success, the British-Indian Army should have the strength of at least two divisions and 100 guns by the time the Afghan concentration reached its maximum strength. It is interesting to note that given the international conditions during the First World War and the premonitions of an attack on India from NWF, the British-Indian military authorities also considered reinforcements from Egypt.¹³⁸

During the Third Afghan War, the role of the British-Indian Army reversed from the role of the attacker to that of the defender. Consequently, their military strategic objective was confined to defeating the Afghan detachments that penetrated the Indian borders. Intermittent hostilities transpired inside the tribal districts of Chitral located in the northernmost region, although effective measures were implemented to confine and manage the situation. Conversely, the conflict primarily revolved around the principal mountain passes connecting British-India and Afghanistan. Despite facing a scarcity of military personnel, as well as a limited supply of artillery and machine guns, a division from Peshawar successfully overcame a larger Afghan contingent that had taken control of Bagh and launched an assault on Landi Kotal, situated at the western terminus of the Khyber Pass. The Afghan population was compelled to retreat across the border in the direction of Jalalabad, with the occupying forces successfully taking control of Dakka on 13 May 1919. The British forces effectively conducted a military operation on 27 May 1919, capturing the Afghan stronghold known as Spin Baldak, located in the southern region of Baluchistan. The most significant Afghan onslaught occurred inside the geographical region of the Tochi-Kurram valley. Furthermore, the conventional Third Afghan War was immediately followed by tribal disturbances in Waziristan. Therefore, the British-Indian Army had to undertake a multi-axis military operation in NWF.

It can be argued that the GOI never aimed at long-term military control of Afghanistan. Instead, they aimed at political control over the Afghan Amir. Hence, the GOI's military strategic objective was not the destruction of the Afghan army. During the First two Afghan Wars, important strategic locations were captured only to oust the existing Amir and install a friendly one on the Afghan throne. Therefore, the military strategic objective was subservient to the greater political objective of keeping Afghanistan under a friendly ruler.

III

The issue of imperial defence in India was closely connected to the tribal belt or tribal territories located in the NWF region, which was inhabited mainly by Pashtun ethnic groups. Based on its topography, the region was delineated as a strategically crucial defensive zone. It also had significant geopolitical and geostrategic importance for the British colonial administration in India. The GOI faced a complex and diverse security challenge while dealing with the frontier tribal belt during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Maintaining peace, stability, and effective control in this highly sensitive region was of utmost importance in ensuring India's security and defence.

The historical perception of the NWF of India is synonymous with state-tribe interactions. There were many forms through which the state-tribe exchanges were expressed. The tribal settlements were political in character. In contrast, the punitive expeditions were purely military in nature. The existing literature deals with either frontier expeditions focusing on British-Indian COIN campaigns or political settlements struck by the GOI, which is centred on the broader issue of frontier management.¹³⁹ However, how the control of NWF was subsumed within the broader strategic considerations of the British Government and the GOI remained

outside the ambit of these works. This chapter aims to differentiate between the strategic and tactical control of NWF. The latter will be dealt with in the next chapter. Furthermore, NWF has not received separate attention in the analysis of the defence of India. Since this chapter analyses the different interconnected yet separable layers of British and British-Indian strategic thinking, it departs from the existing literature in highlighting the significance of NWF as a 'glocal' issue.

A usual definition of the NWF in the nineteenth century was the whole tract of country that ran from the Hindu Kush mountains in the north to the northern border of Baluchistan in the south. It was bordered on the west by Afghanistan and east by the Indus. It included the five regularly administered territories of Bannu, Kohat, Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara.¹⁴⁰ However, as per the GOI's strategic assessment, the NWF of India extended from the Russian railheads in central Asia to the British railheads in India and this region was divided into four zones. The first was the Oxus zone, which was located between the Russian railheads in Bokhara and the Hindu Kush. It included Badakhshan and Afghan Turkistan. Next was the Herat zone from the Russian railway outpost in Transcaspia to Helmand. The third was the Peshawar zone extending from the British railway terminal in the Northwest Frontier Province (henceforth, NWFP) to the Hindu Kush. Finally, the Quetta zone extended from the British railheads in Baluchistan to the Helmand.¹⁴¹ This division manifests the importance of railways as zones were divided as per the railway networks of Russia and British-India. Furthermore, it also hints at the intricate strategic connection of NWF to central Asia.

NWF, from Kashmir to Karachi, was essentially entwined with central Asian politics. This contested terrain witnessed how local strategic thinking was enmeshed in global strategic calculations when the British government and the GOI chalked out the blueprints for holding NWF. While enunciating the region's importance, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Montagu remarked that it was the only land frontier in the whole of the British Empire, which

necessitated the deployment of a strong military power in the early twentieth century.¹⁴² I argue that from a strategic point of view, the affairs of NWF should not be considered solely from a local viewpoint. Any plan of opposition to a Russian scheme for the invasion of India must take the factors of Afghanistan and the border tribes fully into account. Hence the strategic control of NWF was crucial to British-Indian security.

British-Indian NWF policies were primarily determined by two factors. Firstly, Russian southward expansion and secondly, the unruly character of the inhabitants of Afghanistan and the fierce tribes who lived on the frontiers and in central Asia. It has been mentioned before that NWF figured in the GOI's global strategic considerations from the second half of the nineteenth century. A British-Indian artillery officer, John Adye, held that the affairs in central Asia and the 'rumours' of the threat emanating from therein were so distant that before 1836, they did not exert any profound influence on the British-Indian policy in the NWF.¹⁴³ Furthermore, the existence of buffer states is another factor that should be added to this causation. Prior to the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1849, the brunt of the 'tribal problem' was faced by the *Khalsa* Kingdom. However, after GOI annexed Sindh (1843) and Punjab (1849), they had to negotiate the challenges emanating from NWF. Later, in the 1890s, the issue needed to be approached not purely from the point of view of local administration and the tranquillity of the border but also from the imperial standpoint of the probable attitude of the tribes in the event of an advance by Russia towards India.¹⁴⁴ For the GOI's military power projection into Afghanistan and beyond to protect India, the land beyond the Indus had to be controlled. The pacification of the NWF was a logical corollary to this strategic aim, and this politico-military challenge will be discussed in the next chapter.

Following the conclusion of the First Anglo-Afghan War, the GOI faced persistent challenges in the form of tribal raids in NWF. Archival records are replete with such incidents.¹⁴⁵ The GOI implemented a 'closed border' policy from 1843 to 1875 in response. It has been argued that

during this period, the British policymakers regarded the land beyond the Indus as *terra incognita*, thus absolving British-India of any administrative responsibility over them.¹⁴⁶ This policy was further bolstered by the Governor-General of India, John Lawrence, when he embarked on a ‘masterly inactivity’ towards Afghanistan. The political ramifications of the electoral change in Britain and its reflections on the GOI’s policies have already been discussed in the first section of this chapter. Hence, only brief references to them will be made in this section to contextualise the multivarious glocal strategic thinking that came to the fore since the Second Afghan War.

Just like the diplo-military strategic considerations, there were many opinions regarding the glocal issue of the position of NWF in India's strategic defence. In 1888, Lord Curzon remarked that utter ignorance was shown by the members of the House of Commons regarding Afghanistan’s geography. He refuted the criticism of Mr. John Slagg, a liberal British politician and a member of the House of Commons, that the contemporary policy followed in the NWF was quite aggressive in nature. Curzon opined that the policy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century focused only on the defence of the British-Indian outposts on the frontier and did not conceive any attempt at military power projection beyond. He also remarked on rampant misconceptions regarding the frontier in England. It reflects the friction between the British politico-military elite in London and those stationed at the colonies. Curzon espoused dividing the frontier into three sectors to prepare for the defence of India in the NWF. The first sector was from Peshawar to Dera Ismail Khan, stretching almost 150 miles. The area from Dera Ismail Khan to the old frontier station of Jacobabad was conceived by Curzon as the second sector, which was roughly 350 miles. The third sector stretched from Jacobabad to Karachi, which was another 350 miles.¹⁴⁷

Lord Roberts, as the CIC, held that in order to safeguard British-India, it was imperative to maintain control over the strategic northern access points of the mountain passes. Tribal

disposition towards the GOI was perceived as a fundamental element of any strategy to safeguard India in the NWF. He commented, 'If they are with us, we need to have no anxiety; if they are against us, we shall be in serious straits'. Advocating a reversal of the GOI's policy regarding the NWF, Roberts urged forging greater contact and closer relations with the frontier tribes.¹⁴⁸ From a military point of view, Roberts dismissed the idea of defending the passes with fortifications as that would require huge expenses and manpower.¹⁴⁹ It is already mentioned in the first section of this chapter that he vehemently criticised the Lawrencian 'masterly inactivity' and assessed that holding the Indus line was untenable.¹⁵⁰

In 1892, Sir Mortimer Durand advocated pursuing an active policy concerning the independent tribes in the NWF. He further argued in favour of opening the tribal country for troop movement. He also espoused organising the tribals to advance against an external enemy. Therefore, it can be contended that as Russia breached the northern borders of Afghanistan in 1885, the NWF came to be perceived as the last line of defence of the British-India proper.

Developing a military railway network in the NWF attained considerable significance in the global strategic considerations. It was estimated that extending the Indian railway system towards the NWF would not be commercially remunerative. The railway project was envisioned almost entirely out of politico-military exigencies. From the Secretary of State to the Governor-General, from the officers in Royal Engineers to the Quartermaster General, the British and British-Indian politico-military edifice unanimously recognised the need to extend the railways towards Afghanistan.¹⁵¹

Curzon wrote to the Secretary of State for India in 1899 that the military railway from the left bank of the Kabul River at Nowshera to Dargai would enable the British-Indian Army to support the Malakand garrison promptly and effectively. It is very interesting to note that the latter wanted to know the opinion of the political officers regarding the railway line. Hence,

tribal sensibilities were given importance while charting the strategic blueprint for the NWF. A 2-foot 6-inch gauge was recommended after a prolonged discussion where frontier officers weighed in.¹⁵² Therefore, it can be argued that in the context of glocal strategic considerations, the agency of small actors became more crucial than grand imperial players. That was one of the rationales for carving out the significance of NWF from the larger discursive paradigm of defence of India.

Now, let us shift attention from the Governor-General to a military officer who served in Afghanistan and NWF. Sir William Lockhart held that the best means of holding the Khyber Pass was to improve the communications between the British-Indian frontier outposts and the supporting stations behind them. It was considered the only means by which a rapid concentration of military force was possible. He advocated the immediate extension of the North-Western Railway system to Kohat and Bannu on the west and to Landi Kotal and Dargai, below the Malakand on the north. The CIC of the Bombay Army, Sir Charles Nairne, concurred with Lockhart. Apart from this, the main routes of railway extension were the Kuram route advocated by Lytton and the routes through the Khost valley and Jalalabad espoused by Frederick Haines, the then CIC and Edward Collen.

While determining the railway routes necessary in the NWF for India's defence, Sir Edward Collen's memorandum in 1898 mentioned that for 'higher strategical conditions', a permanent line through Jalalabad or Gandamak as far as Kabul was essential. Nevertheless, the partial fulfilment of this objective could be achieved by the construction of a railway line connecting Peshawar, Jamrud, Ali Masjid, Landi Kotal and Landi Khana line and by holding in reserve adequate material for speedy completion of the line to Jalalabad and Gandamak. Whereas local defences of the frontier could be met in 1898 by constructing the following lines: Nowshera to Dargai, Kushalgarh to Kohat, Kotal to Thal, Kalabagh to Bannu or Kohat to Bannu and finally, Dera Ismail Khan to Gomal Pass. Adding a rider to these proposals, Sir W. Bisset, an army

officer, considered the Khyber Pass route more critical than the Kabul River route as the former would have enabled the British-Indian Army to control the Afridis better. Furthermore, a significant strategic advantage was ascribed to the Zhob Valley railway as it would connect the nerve centres of the GOI's frontier military outposts, i.e. Punjab and the Quetta-Kandahar front. It would have also given additional strength to the military position by the power it gives of transferring troops from the right to the left front or vice versa as may be required.¹⁵³ Considering the strategic importance of frontier railways, GOI's demand for the construction of military railways in the NWF was approved by the Secretary of State for India, George Hamilton.

From the Second Afghan War to the Pathan uprising in 1897, a forward policy dominated the British-Indian approach to the tribal question in the NWF. To this policy, the British-Indian Army owed their control of Chitral, Tochi and Wana and occupation of tracts adjoining the Pamirs. However, tribal reactions to the constant forward movement of the army were manifested in the frontier outbreak in 1897. Consequently, the House of Commons engaged in a debate on the whole tribal question in 1898. A policy for the future management of the frontier was declared on the following lines:

1. The existing British-Indian positions were to be maintained.
2. It was recommended that all forward movement by the British-Indian Army be stopped.
3. Efforts were to be made to extend GOI's influence on the tribes without interfering in their affairs more than what was absolutely necessary.¹⁵⁴

However, the looming Russian threat to India led to the resurfacing of global strategic concern in the NWF in the twentieth century. It was estimated that after her defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Russia might push towards the Indian borders to compensate for her losses. GOI's threat assessment gauged that if Russia were to advance towards India, the British-Indian Army could

reach the northern theatre of conflict on the NWF through the following lines of communication:

1. Peshawar-Kabul
2. Kohat-Kuram-Peiwar-Kabul
3. Kohat-Kharlachi-Gurdez and thence either to Ghazni or Kabul through the Altimur Pass

It is crucial to note that in the recommendations of individual military or political officers or the General Staff, the NWF was never considered a composite and monolithic geographic and demographic space. In 1906, it was to be divided into three zones of sectors:

1. Chitral, Dir, Swat, Bajaur, the Mohmands, Boner and the connected Yusufzai clans
2. Waziristan
3. The tribes between the Kuram and Kabul rivers

The first section of the frontier was considered the most satisfactory regarding the disposition of the tribes vis a vis the British-Indian Army was concerned. Hence, it was prescribed that they should be encouraged to resist any Russian advance with gifts of arms and money. The second territorial unit of Waziristan was to be dealt with by posting regulars from the British-Indian Army assisted by irregulars raised from tribal societies. Mashud and Darwesh Khel attacks were to be neutralised by placing a column of 3,500 men on the Dera Ismail Khan border and 4,000 at Bannu, assisted by the existing militia. While Wazir raids on the Kuram communications were to be countered by the 4000-strong Bannu Force holding Miranshah or the neighbourhood of Thal. Finally, the tract between the Kuram and Kabul rivers could be pacified by placing well-equipped movable columns of British-Indian troops at Kohat and Peshawar.¹⁵⁵

Apart from the Russian threat, when the first global conflict in the twentieth century seemed imminent, British strategic ruminations in the east were bound to experience its repercussions.

During the First World War, the British government in India encountered many intricate and diverse issues and obstacles in the tribal region. These difficulties included the actions and dissemination of propaganda by the Central Powers, particularly the Germans and the Turks. The potential ramifications of Afghan Amir's influence and the emergence of Pan-Islamism in the area were significant and concerning factors that had the potential to produce a dire scenario for the British, not just in the NWF but across India as a whole.

Hence, keeping in view the probability of war across the NWF, two proposals were forwarded in 1912 regarding the extension of railways. The first proposal advocated the construction of a light railway from Dakka to Jalalabad, which spans roughly 40 miles. The second urged the connection of the broad-gauge railway at Jamrud with Dakka by a light railway up the Khyber. At the very outset, Captain C.F. Birney from the Royal Engineers outrightly rejected the second proposal as he considered the construction of a light railway up the Khyber would be practically impossible due to challenging topography with steep gradients. On the other hand, the general rise and topography of the Dakka-Jalalabad route were favourable for railway construction. However, the latter route also had its challenges. A large number of bridges were to be constructed for this line as several *nallahs* (some fairly large) were to be negotiated. Furthermore, there were earlier reports of water scarcity in some parts of the route. Finally, mechanised transport vehicles like motor lorries and tractors were scarce to feed the railway depots in northern India. Due to the challenges of the overland railway routes, Captain Birney also proposed consideration of the Kabul River waterways. Therefore, it can be argued that the topography in the NWF played an essential role in the logistical considerations. It influenced the GOI's military infrastructural augmentation, which, in turn, affected strategic thinking.¹⁵⁶

Before the Third Afghan War in 1919, the policy enunciated by the Secretary of State for India, Sir George Hamilton, held sway. It deprecated undertaking any new territorial and political responsibility unless it was necessary to protect the British-Indian borders. Secondly, non-

interference within tribal matters was advised. The crux of the policy can be summarised in the following words, 'stationary where circumstances permit and forward one only when necessity compels'. However, the futility of this policy became apparent when the Third Afghan War broke out as the entire NWF experienced a general mood of tribal uprising. After the First World War, an array of factors emerged in British-Indian global strategic thinking regarding the NWF. The Afghan Amir's attempt to foster a spirit of nationalism within the Afghans and the frontier tribes was considered threatening to the security of India.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, the Third Afghan War raised several issues. Waziristan's occupation, reorganisation of frontier militias, the occupation of the Khyber Pass and construction of a railway were prominent among them. The lessons derived from the previous frontier rebellion prompted the endorsement in 1920 of a comprehensive reversal of the policies implemented during the preceding two decades. The policy involved the withdrawal of regular troops from the inhospitable and unprofitable regions between the administrative frontier of British-India and the political frontier of India, i.e. the Durand Line. Moreover, the troops were to concentrate at convenient bases in British territory, and they were to be substituted by tribal forces commanded by British officers under the orders of the civil power.¹⁵⁸

Taking into consideration the continued importance of the NWF in India's defence, the Chief of General Staff in India, Lieutenant General G.M. Kirkpatrick, held that Afghanistan in the twentieth century had the possibility of becoming the outwork of a Pan-Islamic or Pan-Turanian federation extending from the Caspian to China. Hence, the NWF became strategically more important for the protection of British-India. Afghanistan was no longer a buffer and a possible theatre of conflict between GOI and Russia. After the Third Afghan War, the British-Indian global strategic considerations had to plan for future Afghan attacks. The NWF then, indeed, became India's last line of defence. Kirkpatrick divided the Durand line frontier of British-India into the following strategic zones:

- The region between Chitral and Kabul rivers, in which the main roads between Afghan and British territories are from north to south.
- The Kunar River valley leading to Chitral
- The Nawagai-Lakarai route into Bajaur, and the Utman Khel country
- Finally, the Dohai Dag valley in the Mohmand country.

From a defensive point of view, it was considered that among them, the southern route through Bohai Dag to the northern border of Peshawar plain at Shabkadr most directly threatened British-Indian territory. From the review of the frontier zones, two locations were ascribed great strategic value. Firstly, Peshawar, because the Bohai Dag, Khyber and Bazar routes all started from the Jalalabad-Ningrahar plain and converged on the Peshawar plain. Therefore, these routes allowed any attacking Afghan army to concentrate with considerable force against Peshawar. Hence, the loss of Peshawar meant a retreat to the Indus. While from the Afghan point of view, the key to these routes was Jalalabad. However, due to the distance from the British-Indian border, forestalling any Afghan aggression by a quick and sustained advance to Jalalabad was impossible for the British-Indian Army. Therefore, the Durand line frontier was considered to be too far east to stop any Afghan concentration. On the other hand, from an offensive point of view on the part of the British-Indian Army, the Khyber and Kuram zones in the north and the Quetta-Pishin zone in the south were held to be most important for any advance on Jalalabad and Kabul in the north or Kandahar in the south.¹⁵⁹

Waziristan witnessed military operations in the aftermath of the Third Anglo-Afghan War. Without the strategic control of Waziristan, India could never have been successfully defended in the NWF. Hence, the mastery of Waziristan was an issue to be reckoned with. Sir George Roos-Keppel, the Chief Commissioner of the NWFP, recommended permanent occupation of Waziristan in 1920. However, the then Governor-General's proposals somewhat deviated from

Roos-Keppel's. The former advocated permanent occupation of the commanding position in Central Waziristan instead of the former method of controlling the territory by two widely separated lines stretching out to Datta Khel and Wana. On the other hand, the General Staff, India, in light of the experience of the British-Indian Army during the Third Afghan War, considered the permanent military occupation of the Khyber to be crucial.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, the general opinion within the GOI's politico-military edifice favoured the extension of British-Indian political and military responsibilities to greater part of the NWF.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I argue that a multiplicity of factors influenced and shaped British and British-Indian strategic thinking for the defence of India. From the 'great men' or the British political elite, such as the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General, to the 'men on the spot' such as the political and military officers in India, assessed the threats towards India and devised and deployed their countermeasures. However, their strategic concerns were not monolithic and uniform. Rather, they were highly diversified and can be categorised into several strata. The diplomatic defence of India was the realm of higher politics, which was unperturbed by the topography of the contested terrain and largely influenced by 'higher' British and British-Indian strategic calculations. The global dimension of Indian defence is apparent in this context. The influence of the European powers and the pressure it might exert on Russia was always at the back of the mind of the British policymakers. However, geographical factors and local intricacies were pre-eminent in the military defence of India. This chapter also asserts that though Russophobia was at the forefront of British and British-Indian strategic thinking, other global and local contenders also had to be dealt with. Furthermore, a synergy of diplomatic and military manoeuvres could be traced in GOI's endeavour to ensure India's external security since the second half of the nineteenth century.

This chapter started with a question: Was the British Empire anxious about India's security? Despite deploying the politico-military instruments at its disposal, a deeply embedded anxiety coloured British thoughts. It emanated from a lack of confidence in their rule over India, which was bolstered by fear of external attacks. The GOI was aware that their rule in India was not built upon the consent of the host society. Therefore, a constant display of military strength was paramount for sustaining the British Empire in India, as weakness and defeat could have set precedents for the native powers to follow. Hence, the GOI's anxiety towards Indian security was not irrational. It stemmed from factors internal and external to India, which necessitated diverse diplo-military manoeuvres that protected the Indian borders.

This chapter argues that fluidity and flexibility characterised the diplo-military strategic calculations of the GOI and the Home Government. Despite several shifts in British political current in GOI's leadership and even with the existence of myriad strategic opinions, the exigencies of India's defence never took a back seat. Therefore, Lord Palmerstone remarked in 1848, "We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow".¹⁶¹ Finally, for a long time, there has been a misconception that British-Indian military power projection in Afghanistan or the NWF was futile as it never yielded decisive and long-term military success. Such a conclusion stems from misreading the object of British and British-Indian strategic thought. They were neither defending central Asia nor Herat and Afghanistan. They were defending India at those strategic locations. Tactical military defeats were inconsequential to the larger strategic object of ensuring India's security.

-
- ¹Report of the Disorderly Enquiry Committee, 1919-1920 (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing India, 1920), p. 44.
- ² The term has been popularised by Yale University historian Paul Kennedy. But he used this conceptual tool to portray the overexpansion on American politico-military commitments in the last part of the twentieth century. See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of The Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1989), p. 515; For an application of this idea to the British Empire, see, Andrew Gordon, "The admiralty and imperial overstretch, 1902-1941", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 17, issue 1 (2008), pp. 63-85.
- ³Jon E. Wilson, *The Domination of Strangers Modern Governance in Eastern India, 1780-1835* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 45-74; Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. ix-xv.
- ⁴ Martin Ewans, *Securing the Indian Frontier in Central Asia: Confrontation and Negotiation, 1865-95* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 1-3.
- ⁵ M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp.1-2.
- ⁶ Edward Ingram, *In Defence of British India: Great Britain and the Middle East, 1775-1842* (London: Frank Cass, 1894), p. 2.
- ⁷ Ingram, *In Defence of British India*, pp. 1-6, 204-218.
- ⁸ David Fromkin, "The Great Game in Asia", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 58, no. 4 (1980), pp. 938-948.
- ⁹ Christopher M. Wyatt, *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 1-24, 208-221.
- ¹⁰ Mark Condos, *The Insecurity State: Punjab and the Making of Colonial Power in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 3-10.
- ¹¹ Kim A. Wagner, "Treading Upon Fires": The Mutiny'-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India", *Past & Present*, vol. 218, issue 1 (2013), pp. 159-97.
- ¹² Ranajit Guha, "Not at Home in Empire", *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1997), pp. 482-484; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c. 1850-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 215-220.
- ¹³ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 44.
- ¹⁴ Condos, *Insecurity State*, p. 13.
- ¹⁵ W.W. Hunter, *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, vol. 1 (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1868), pp. 241-2.
- ¹⁶ James Hevia, *The Imperial Security State: British Colonial Knowledge and Empire Building in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 153.
- ¹⁷ Hevia, *Imperial Security State*, p. 5.
- ¹⁸ Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 3-5.
- ¹⁹ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (1954; reprint, New York: Meridian Book, 1991), pp. 321-322.
- ²⁰ Thierry Balzacq and Ronald R. Krebs, "The Enduring Appeal of Grand Strategy" in *The Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy*, eds. Thierry Balzacq and Ronald R. Krebs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 1-10.
- ²¹ Edward Mead Earle, "Introduction" in *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, ed. Edward Mead Earle (1945; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. vii-x.
- ²² Paul Kennedy, "Grand Strategy in War and Peace: Towards a Broader Definition" in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy (London: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 5.
- ²³ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 134-139; Brian Bond, *Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought* (1976; reprint, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1977), p. 56.
- ²⁴ Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Military Strategy: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 1.
- ²⁵ The term 'glocalization' was coined by sociologist Roland Robertson at the end of the 20th century. He used the term in the sphere of global business and marketing. However, I am using the idea in the field of strategy and defence policy.
- ²⁶ Arthur James Balfour, *Imperial Defence: A Speech Delivered in the House of Commons*, (London: Longman, Greens and Co., 1905), p. 31.
- ²⁷ "The Indian Frontier Problem", *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 16, issue 61 (1925), pp. 96-97.
- ²⁸ Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, p. 1.
- ²⁹ G. E. Wheeler, "Russophobia in the Western World: A brief case history", *Asian Affairs*, vol. 15, Issue 2 (1984), p. 138.

³⁰Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, pp. 4-5.

³¹ John McNeill, *Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East* (London: John Murray, 1836), pp. 48-49.

³² The Earl of Mornington to Major General Sir James Henry Craig, 'Enquiry as to Military Precautions to be Taken Against Zemaun Shah's Threatened Invasion', Sept. 16, 1789, in *A Selection from the Despatches, Treaties and Other Papers of the Marquess Wellesley During His Government of India* ed. Sidney J. Owen (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1877), pp. 592-594; Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1951), pp. 298-299; Sir Henry Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East: A Series of Papers on the Political and Geographical Condition of Central Asia* (London: John Murray, 1875), pp. 5-9; "Memoir, with Observations on the probable invasion of Zemaun Shah", by Major-General Sir James Craig, ed. Montgomery Martin, *The Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley During His Administration in India* (London: John Murray, 1836), pp. 671-681.

³³ Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, p. 6; Yapp, *Strategies*, pp. 11-12.

³⁴ Sir Henry Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East: A Series of Papers on the Political and Geographical Condition of Central Asia* (London; John Murray, 1875), pp. 5-9.

³⁵ From John Malcolm to the Earl of Elgin, March 23, 1801, in Sir John Malcolm's mission to Persia: Copies of his letters and enclosures to the Governor-General, IOR/G/29/26, Asia Pacific and Africa Collection (henceforth APAC), British Library (henceforth, BL), London.

³⁶ Letter from the Secret Committee to the Governor-General in Council, September 24, 1807, in English Historical Documents 1783-1832, eds. A. Aspinall and E. Anthony Smith (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), pp. 909-911; The Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, EIC, "An Assessment of the Combined Franco-Russian Threat to India Following the Treaty of Tilsit" in *The Great Game: Britain and Russia in Central Asia*, vol. 1, ed. Martin Ewans (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), pp. 57-59.

³⁷ James Morier, *A Journey Through Persia, Armenia, And Asia Minor, to Constantinople, In the Years 1808 And 1809; In Which Is Included, Some Account of The Proceedings of His Majesty's Mission, Under Sir Harford Jones, Bart. K. C. to The Court of The King of Persia* (London: Longman, 1812), pp. viii, 202; Sir John Adye, *Indian Frontier Policy: An Historical Sketch* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1897), p. 3; Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, p. 8; J.A. Norris, *The First Afghan War* (1967; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 13-14.

³⁸ Enclosures to a Letter from the Acting Resident at Poona, "French Incendiary Proclamation to the Chiefs of Hindostan", February 20, 1804, in *A Selection from the Despatches, Treaties and Other Papers of the Marquess Wellesley, K.G. During His Government of India*, ed. S.J. Owen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1877), pp. 578-579.

³⁹ Copy of a private paper from General Stuart to Henry Dundas, "Danger of Foreign Invasion by Land and Sea. Importance of Securing the Whole Sea-board. Commercial Policy" in *A Selection from the Despatches*, ed. Owen, pp. 567-577.

⁴⁰ Thoughts on the external defence of India from the projected Invasion of the French and Russians, 28 Jan 1808, MSS EUR D1070, John Crockatt papers, APAC, BL, London.

⁴¹ Major W. Hough, *A Narrative of the March and Operations of the Army of Indus: In the Expedition to Afghanistan in the Years 1838-1839*, (London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1841), pp. xii-xvi; John Macdonald Kinneir, *Journey Through Asia Minor, Armenia, And Koordistan, in the Years 1813 And 1814; With Remarks on The Marches of Alexander, And Retreat of The Ten Thousand* (London: John Murray, 1818), pp. 512-539.

⁴² Hough, *Army of Indus*, pp. xii-xvi; Ewans, *The Great Game*, pp. 3-4, 14-15.

⁴³ Lord Ellenborough, "The Board of Control of the EIC Expresses Concern to the Governor General about Russian Designs in Central Asia" in *The Great Game*, ed. Ewans, pp. 69-7

⁴⁴ Despatch from Lord Heytesbury to the Earl of Aberdeen, "Remarks Upon the Position and Conduct of Russia with Respect to British India", January 18, 1830, FO 65/185, Secret and Confidential, Public Record Office (henceforth PRO), Kew; Heytesbury to Aberdeen, no. 9, January 18, 1830, PRO FO 65/185, PRO, KEW.

⁴⁵ C. E. Trevelyan and Arthur Conolly, "Advice on the Likelihood of a Russian Invasion of India" in *The Great Game*, ed. Ewans, p. 79.

⁴⁶ C.E. Trevelyan to Lord William Bentinck, March 15, 1831, National Archives of India (henceforth NAI), Foreign Department (henceforth FD), Secret Consultations (henceforth, SC), November 25, 1831, nos. 7-10, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Hevia, *Imperial Security State*, pp. 10-11

⁴⁸ "Indian Frontier Problem", p. 101.

⁴⁹ Kaushik Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans, 1500-2013* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.72-73.

⁵⁰ John William Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), pp. 289-291.

⁵¹ Kaye, *Afghanistan*, pp. 303-308.

⁵² Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, pp. 10-11; Kaye, *Afghanistan*, pp. 308-309.

- ⁵³ Adaye, *Indian Frontier Policy*, pp. 7-8.
- ⁵⁴ T. A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (1980; reprint, Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007), pp. 24-25.
- ⁵⁵ Roy, *War and Society*, pp. 82-85; Heathcote, *Afghan Wars*, pp. 44.
- ⁵⁶ Minutes by Lord Auckland, May 12, 1838, L/PS/5/139, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁵⁷ To Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the EIC from Lord Auckland, no. 1, May 22, 1838; Minute by the Governor-General, May 12, 1838, enclosure 1, in Lord Auckland to Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the EIC, no. 1, May 22, 1838; To W.H. Macnaghten From H.W. Torrens, May 15, 1838, enclosure 2, in Lord Auckland to Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the EIC, no. 1, May 22, 1838; To the Secret Committee from Lord Auckland, August 13, 1838, no. 2, Afghanistan Papers 1839-43, IOR/L/PARL/2/87A, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁵⁸ Secret Committee's despatch to Lord Auckland, June 25, 1836, IOR/L/PS/5/586, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁵⁹ Roy, *Afghanistan*, p. 73.
- ⁶⁰ John Dacosta, *A Scientific Frontier; or, The Danger of A Russian Invasion Of India* (London, W. H. Allen & Co., LTD, 1891), pp. 12-13; Lady Betty Balfour, *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton*, vol. II (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1906), p. 29.
- ⁶¹ Thomas Henry Thornton, *Colonel Sir Robert Sandeman: His Life and Work On Our Indian Frontier* (London: John Murray, 1895), pp. 14-15.
- ⁶² *A Narrative of the Russian Military Expedition to Khiva Under General Perofski* (Calcutta: Office of Superintendent Government Printing, 1867), pp. 32-33.
- ⁶³ Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, pp. 15-18
- ⁶⁴ To Lord Tenterden, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Department, from Sir Louis Mallet, Under Secretary of State for India, GOI, Foreign Secret Supplement, January 1879, Progs. no. 26, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶⁵ From Mallet to Tenterden, Foreign Secret Supplement, Kabul Affairs, January 1879, no. 26
- ⁶⁶ Extracts from the Memorandum on the Central Asian Question, no. 12B in Correspondence Respecting the Relations Between the British Government and That of Afghanistan Since the Accession of The Ameer Shere Ali Khan, *Parliamentary Papers*, Afghanistan (1881) no. 1. (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1878), pp. 31-33.
- ⁶⁷ Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, p.2
- ⁶⁸ To Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, August 1873, Prog. no.88, Foreign Secret, NAI, New Delhi; Wyatt, *Afghanistan*, pp. 1-24.
- ⁶⁹ William C. Fuller, Jr., *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), pp. 289-292.
- ⁷⁰ "Relation Between Britain, Russia and Afghanistan, 1872-80", *Central Asian Review*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1958), p. 221 (This article is an abridged translation of a paper by F. Kh. Yuldashbayeva, which was published in 1955 in Trudy Sagu (Central Asian State University) (History of Eastern Countries), no. 68, and which was titled 'The Ruddo-Afghan Demarcation and the Intensification of British Aggression in Central Asia and Afghanistan (1872-1880)').
- ⁷¹ Ewans, *Central Asia*, p. 2.
- ⁷² Ewans, *Indian Frontier*, p. 16.
- ⁷³ Roy, *War and Society*, pp. 93, 101.
- ⁷⁴ Translation of a letter from the Amir of Kabul to the Governor General of India, June 28, 1869, progs. no. 72, Foreign Secret, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁵ Note from the Punjab Govt., in Ameer of Cabul's Attitude Towards the British Government and the Proposed Withdrawal of the British Vakeel from Cabul, May 1868, progs. no. 96-101, Foreign Political A, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁶ To Secretary to Govt. of Punjab from Commissioner and Superintendent, Peshawar Division, progs. no. 97, April 15, 1868, Foreign Political A, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁷ Letter to Herman Merivale from Odo Russell, progs. no.99, Foreign Secret, September 1871, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁸ Letter to E. Hammond, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from M. E. Grant Duff, July 1, 1871, progs. no. 85, Foreign Secret, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁹ To Argyll from Mayo, September 1, 1871, progs. no. 93, Foreign Secret, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁰ Northbrook was not the direct successor to Mayo. John Strachey and Francis Napier took the office very briefly before him.
- ⁸¹ *The Afghan Question: Speech of the Earl of Northbrook, in the Guildhall, Winchester, on the 11th of November 1878* (London: National Press Agency Limited, 1878), pp. 1-16.
- ⁸² Roy, *War and Society*, p. 96.

- ⁸³ Dacosta, *A Scientific Frontier*, pp. 10-11.
- ⁸⁴ William Flavelle Monypenny, George Earle Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1929), pp.1241-1276
- ⁸⁵ Roy, *War and Society*, p. 102; H.B. Hanna, *The Second Afghan War 1878-79-80: Its Causes, Its Conduct and Its Consequences*, vol. 2 (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd, 1904), pp.336-345.
- ⁸⁶ Memorandum on British relations with Afghanistan, Jan 24, 1896, IOR/L/PS/18/A109, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁸⁷ Ali Ahmad Jalali, *A Military History of Afghanistan* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2017), p. 234.
- ⁸⁸ Lord Roberts, *Forty-one Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief* (London: Richard Bentley and Sons, 1897), p. 312.
- ⁸⁹ Jalali, *Afghanistan*, pp. 235-236; Roy, *War and Society*, p. 111.
- ⁹⁰ Afghanistan, Question of Future Relations, June 23, 1919, IOR/L/PS/18/A178, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁹¹ Memorandum, IOR/L/PS/18/A109, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁹² Alexander Morrison, *The Russian Conquest of Central Asia: A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 409-410.
- ⁹³ Major General E.H.H. Collen, Memorandum on the Central Asian question and our future policy, June 18, 1892, Military Misc. B, no.159, p. 1-2, p.4.
- ⁹⁴ Collen, *Memorandum*, pp.5-7
- ⁹⁵ Note on Meshed-Ashkabad cart-road by E.C.R. Thomson, Progs. no. 90, 1890, Foreign Secret Frontier, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁶ Memorandum IOR/L/PS/18/A109APAC, BL, London.
- ⁹⁷ Frederick Roberts, The Defence of the North-West Frontier of India, June 1, 1886, 1971-01-23-162-16, Roberts Papers, National Army Museum (henceforth NAM), London.
- ⁹⁸ Lord Curzon, *A Note on the Military Policy of India* (Simla: Government Monotype Office, 1905) in 1971-01-23-170, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ⁹⁹ From Lord Curzon to John Brodrick, February 11, 1904, no. 8, Mss Eur F111/163, Curzon Papers, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁰⁰ Minute by Sir A C Lyall, Sep 2, 1896, IOR/L/PS/18/A111a, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁰¹ Collen, *Memorandum*, p.6
- ¹⁰² Notes on the probable attitude of the frontier tribes and of Afghanistan in the event of an attempted invasion of India by Russia and on the Frontier policy in connection therewith, Jul 13, 1906- Sept. 15, 1907, IOR/L/PS/18/A166, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁰³ Abdul Ghafur, or the Akhund of Swat, was a prominent religious saint and the founder of the city of Swat.
- ¹⁰⁴ Notes on the probable attitude, IOR/L/PS/18/A166, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁰⁵ Afghanistan, IOR/L/PS/18/A178, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁰⁶ Strategical Considerations Affecting the Alignment of the North-West Frontier of India, June 11, 1919, L/MIL/17/13/10, APAC, BL, London; "The Indian Frontier Problem", pp. 107-108.
- ¹⁰⁷ Afghanistan, IOR/L/PS/18/A178, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁰⁸ Jennifer Siegel, *Endgame: Britain, Russia and the Final Struggle for Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), pp. xv-xviii,
- ¹⁰⁹ From Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, Oct. 6, 1919, in The North-West Frontier of India, Apr. 30, 1920, IOR/L/PS/18/A189, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹¹⁰ North West Frontier Policy, L/MIL/17/13/11, APAC, BL, London
- ¹¹¹ R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, vol 2 (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1883), pp. 570-575.
- ¹¹² Memorandum on Military Aspect of the Central Asian Question, June 1876, IOR/L/PS/18/C82, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹¹³ Central Asian Question, IOR/L/PS/18/C82, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹¹⁴ Adrian Preston, "Sir Charles Macgregor and the Defence of India, 1857-1887", *The Historical Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1969), p. 58.
- ¹¹⁵ Macgregor, The Defence of India, p. 51.
- ¹¹⁶ Macgregor, The Defence of India, pp. 183-210.
- ¹¹⁷ Collen, *Memorandum*, pp. 1-2, 11-12
- ¹¹⁸ Roberts, North-West Frontier, 1971-01-23-162-16, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ¹¹⁹ Collen, *Memorandum*, p. 13.
- ¹²⁰ Collen, *Memorandum*, P. 1-2
- ¹²¹ Sir Richard Temple, "The Present Situation on the Indian Frontier", *RUSI Journal*", 1899, 43:251, pp. 1-17.
- ¹²² Arthur Vincent, The Defence of India (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), pp. 47-59.

- ¹²³ Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (1997; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 75-95; Michael W. Charney, *Imperial Military Transportation in British Asia: Burma 1941–1942* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 1-15.
- ¹²⁴ It is a term used to denote the naval rivalry between Germany and Britain prior to the First World War. See Matthew S. Seligmann, “The Anglo-German Naval Race, 1898–1914”, *Arms Races in International Politics: From the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Thomas Mahnken *et. al.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 21-40.
- ¹²⁵ Collen, Memorandum, p. 2
- ¹²⁶ Secret Memorandum on ‘The Advances of the Two Powers by their Respective Railway System’ Military Miscellaneous, no. 171, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹²⁷ Memorandum, Military Miscellaneous, no. 171, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹²⁸ George Curzon, *The New Scientific Frontier of India*, Mss Eur F111/19/2, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹²⁹ W. Hough, *March and Operations*, pp. xxvii-xxxv, 1-7; Roy, *War and Society*, pp. 72-73.
- ¹³⁰ Roy, *War and Society*, pp. 72-84.
- ¹³¹ Robson, *The Road to Kabul*, p. 68
- ¹³² Robson, *The Road to Kabul*, pp. 69-70
- ¹³³ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80; Abridged Official Account*, Produced in the Intelligence Branch Army Head-quarters, India (London: Intelligence Branch AHQ, India, 1908), pp. 2-3
- ¹³⁴ Jalali, *Afghanistan*, pp. 187-200.
- ¹³⁵ Brian Robson, *The Road to Kabul; The Second Afghan War 1878-1881* (Chalford: Spellmount, 2007), p. 69
- ¹³⁶ To The Military Department from A.C. Lyall, Esq., Secretary to the Govt. of India, GOI, Foreign Secret Supplementary, December 1878, no. 116. NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹³⁷ To The Military Department from A.C. Lyall, no. 116, FD, SS, December 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹³⁸ Plan of Operations Against Afghanistan, General Staff Branch, 1916, Military Dept. Misc., no. 5, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹³⁹ See Sameetah Agha, *The Limits of Empire: Sub Imperialism and Pakhtun Resistance in the North-West Frontier* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2020); Kaushik Roy, *Frontiers, Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies in South Asia* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015); Hugh Beattie, *Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan* (2002; reprint, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2014).
- ¹⁴⁰ “The Indian Frontier Problem”, p. 98.
- ¹⁴¹ A Study of the Existing Strategic Conditions on the North West Frontier of India, Part I (Simla: Government Central Branch Press, 1909), IOR/L/MIL/17/13/7/1, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁴² From Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, Oct. 6, 1919 in *The North-West Frontier of India*, IOR/L/PS/18/A189: 30 Apr 1920, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁴³ Adye, *Indian Frontier Policy*, pp. 1-10.
- ¹⁴⁴ Notes on the probable attitude of the Frontier tribes, IOR/L/PS/18/A166, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁴⁵ Roy, *Frontiers*, p. 20
- ¹⁴⁶ Christian Tripodi, *Edge of Empire: The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North-West Frontier 1877–1947* (2011; reprint; Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 16.
- ¹⁴⁷ George Curzon, *The New Scientific Frontier of India*, Mss Eur F111/19/2, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁴⁸ Frederick Roberts, Memorandum on The Desirability of Making A Military Road Through The Kohat Pass, dated August 17, 1886, in Notes on the Central Asian Question and the Coast and Frontier Defences of India, 1971-01-23 – 95, Lord Roberts Collection, NAM, London.
- ¹⁴⁹ Roberts, North-West Frontier 1971-01-23-162-16, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ¹⁵⁰ Roberts, North-West Frontier 1971-01-23-162-16, Roberts Papers, NAM, London
- ¹⁵¹ Minute titled Frontier Railway, no. 9906, dated October 19, 1898, IOR/L/MIL/7/14840, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁵² From Lord Curzon *et. al.* to Lord Hamilton, no. 43, March 23, 1899, IOR/L/MIL/7/14840, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁵³ Frontier Railway, no. 9906, IOR/L/MIL/7/14840, APAC, BL, London; Indian Frontier Railway, Note by Sir W. Bisset in North West Frontier Railway extension for Strategic purposes and for local defence., IOR/L/MIL/7/14840, APAC, BL, London; Memorandum on Frontier Railways, Enclosure no. 1 to Military Despatch no. 149, dated Sept 22, 1898, IOR/L/MIL/7/14840, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁵⁴ Notes on the probable attitude of the Frontier tribes, IOR/L/PS/18/A166, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁵⁵ Notes on the probable attitude of the Frontier tribes, IOR/L/PS/18/A166, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁵⁶ Railway Schemes to be Undertaken in the Event of War Across the North-West Frontier of India, Railway Department, (verify) General Staff Branch, File no. 26, 1912, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁵⁷ Strategic Considerations Affecting the Alignment of the North-West Frontier of India, June 11, 1919, L/MIL/17/13/10, APAC, BL, London.

¹⁵⁸ From Viceroy, Army Department, to The Secretary of State, Jan 22, 1920; From Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, to The Secretary of State for India, Jan 22, 1920 in *The North-West Frontier of India*, Apr. 30, 1920, IOR/L/PS/18/A189, APAC, BL, London.

¹⁵⁹ *Strategical Considerations Affecting the Alignment of the North-West Frontier of India*, June 11, 1919, L/MIL/17/13/10, APAC, BL, London.

¹⁶⁰ From Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, to The Secretary of State, 22 December 1919 in *The North-West Frontier of India*, IOR/L/PS/18/A189, APAC, BL, London; From Viceroy, Army Department, to The Secretary of State, Jan 22, 1920; From Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, to The Secretary of State for India, Jan 22, 1920 in *The North-West Frontier of India*, Apr. 30, 1920, IOR/L/PS/18/A189, APAC, BL, London.

¹⁶¹ Speech, House of Commons, 1 March 1848 in *The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple Viscount Palmerston*, Evelyn Ashley, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1879), p. 62.

Chapter 2

British-Indian Army in the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan: A Tactical Study

Introduction

Small wars, pacification, COIN, conventional, unconventional warfare, frontier warfare, mountain warfare, savage and uncivilised warfare, or a combination of all these, how best to define and characterise the British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and the NWF of India in the nineteenth and early twentieth century is the central question of this chapter. Answering this question would require navigating through this complex jungle of terminology and conceptual frameworks to analyse the British-Indian Army's tactics in the geographical zone under the scanner. The Imperial troops waged a multifarious warfare over a great stretch of land beyond the Indus under trying circumstances for more than a century. On the one hand, they had to oppose the Afghan regulars, and on the other hand, they countered the tribal irregulars. Therefore, the British-Indian Army's tactics was not monolithic. While combating the Afghan regulars during the three Afghan wars, the military aspect reigned supreme in the British-Indian Army's warfare. However, pacifying the tribes required both military and political manoeuvres. Therefore, this chapter argues that a conceptual framework that only highlights one or some of the aspects of such a diverse nature of warfare falls short of analysing and characterising it. Hence, it attempts to develop a conceptual tool to help bring together the varied tactical ideas employed in defeating and pacifying the enemy beyond the Indus.

Since this chapter deals with warfare in Afghanistan and NWF for around a century, it refrains from delving into the minute details of the multitude of military engagements. Instead, by scrutinising those engagements, the continuity and brake paradigm in the British-Indian Army's

tactical evolution would be assessed. It is argued that the greater strategic goal of the GOI, environment, evolution of military technology, and the British perception of the enemy, these four factors exerted considerable influence on the tactical thinking of the imperial troops. Hence, they would be used as entry points to examine what tactical changes appeared over time. This chapter will also enquire about the quantum of military force used by the British-Indian Army and their learning mechanism in frontier warfare.

Before analysing the tactics employed by the imperial forces, the idea of tactics needs to be defined. Furthermore, the terms mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, such as small wars and pacification, need to be explained for clarity and a holistic understanding. 'Tactics is a term used to describe the art of fighting on or near the battlefield'. Throughout history, the tactical art comprised four interrelated battlefield functions: firepower, manoeuvrability, protection or security, and shock action. The role of tactics is to regulate the sequence and balance of firepower and manoeuvre in battlefield scenarios.¹

Clifford J. Rogers argues that 'Tactics... comprises both the deployment and the employment of troops in actual fighting'. He brought into his analysis the "operational level of war", which refers to the movements and logistical considerations that occur beyond the battlefield level and are considered central components of warfare in the twentieth century. While differentiating the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war, he argues that strategy establishes specific objectives for the military to achieve through a mix of combat and manoeuvring to attain the intended political objective. Operational plans are designed to strategically deploy the armed forces to defeat the adversary's resistance and achieve specific goals. Meanwhile, tactics encompass the immediate preparations for combat, such as battlefield disposition of troops and combat itself.² It has also been opined that strategy is the skill of waging war on a map, whereas tactics is the skill of waging war on the actual battlefield. 'Tactics decides the manner of execution and the employment of the troops'.³

While defining modern military tactics, Lieutenant D.C. Walker of the British Army mentioned in the middle of the nineteenth century that the art of tactics lies in the most efficient and effective deployment of an army. A tactician must envisage the deployment in such a way that the greatest number of forces under him can meet smaller bodies of the enemy.⁴ Hence, he confined the realm of tactics to the battlefield disposition of troops. On the other hand, Carl von Clausewitz, one of the most celebrated military theoreticians of the modern era, remarked that the art of defeating one's enemy in combat is the most essential thing in warfare.⁵ He held that warfare consists of several activities, each complete in itself. He named them engagements. These 'engagements' receive the most attention in warfare, and time and space are essential elements of engagements. While explaining the difference between strategy and tactics, he mentioned that tactics concern the utilisation of the armed forces in engagement. While strategy is the use of engagements to achieve the objectives of the war. In Clausewitz's schema, the spheres of strategy and tactics are very closely interwoven and often challenging to differentiate. Moreover, for him, tactics was not merely deploying and manoeuvring the armed forces in battles. Pre-battle marches and even setting up camps were included within the realm of tactics.⁶

To discern the nature of British-Indian warfare in Afghanistan, we have to refer to Colonel C.E. Callwell's writing, which attributes the term 'Small War' to British imperial campaigns in Afro-Asia during the nineteenth century. At the very outset of his monograph, he points to the origin of the term 'small war' in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is actually an overarching categorisation which includes "all campaigns other than those where both the opposing sides consist of regular troops". In its essence 'Small Wars' were wars of asymmetry. The campaigns carried out by disciplined soldiers against 'semi-civilised' races to quell rebellions, and guerrilla warfare fit within Callwell's categorisation. Callwell has specifically termed the

campaigns of the British-Indian army beyond the Indus as ‘hill warfare’, which, in his opinion, was a special branch of military art.⁷

A contemporary of Callwell, Major G. J. Younghusband depicted the geographical variations while enumerating the essence of Indian frontier warfare. Based on the difference in topography and fauna, he largely divided warfare in the Indian frontier into mountain warfare and forest warfare. He argued that the tribal mode of fighting was entirely different from the ‘civilised’ warfare, and the broad principles of European warfare needed to be modified to suit local conditions of the Indian frontier. Like many of his contemporaries, Younghusband stressed on the need for the tactical military initiative by the conventional forces to achieve success in ‘Asiatic warfare’.⁸

Celebrated British military general and theoretician JFC Fuller remarked that while ‘great wars’ are fought between organised forces of civilised nations, small wars in opposition are usually waged against tribes having loosely organised community ties. He claimed that while fighting uncivilised enemies, the conventional forces of the European nations had to adapt the tactics used by tribals who possessed a low civilisation. Consequently, combat in small wars was bound to be brutal in nature.⁹ Writing after almost four decades of Callwell and Younghusband, Major-General Sir Charles W. Gwynn focused on the policing duties of the army and how its nature changed under modern conditions. He held that imperial policing was comprised of three main elements. According to the paradigm established by Gwynn, policing duty also included waging small wars, ‘deliberate campaigns with a definite military objective, but undertaken with the ultimate object of establishing civil control’. Such campaigns were purely militaristic in nature and characterised by unhindered use of military force. The next two categories elucidated by Gwynn included the responsibilities of the army in aid of civil control. Notably, when the military dispenses its duties ‘in aid to the civil power’, they are bound to stick to the

minimum power needed to attain its objective. During policing duties, civil authorities and the army had to cooperate closely, and often, civil officials worked under military authorities.¹⁰

Therefore, tactics can be defined as ‘the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other’. At the tactical level of war, battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives.¹¹ It is centred on the organised positioning and movement of military units. Strategic and operational levels provide the framework within which tactical operations take place. The realm of tactics is much more dynamic and fluid in nature than that of strategy. Tactics is case specific and subject to constant adaptation and improvisation to suit the battlefield scenarios.

After the concept of tactics has been established, we can venture into the historiographical treatment of the British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and the NWF. Kaushik Roy termed the imperial process of co-opting the indigenous population to prevent insurrections as pacification. Furthermore, he differentiated pacification from small wars. While defining the latter, Roy remarked that military campaigns of imperial expansion into stateless territories held by tribes or clans fit this categorisation. Furthermore, while also bringing in the concept of COIN, Roy argues that pacification of the British-Indian Army ‘was occasionally punctuated by small wars/COIN’. He differentiated COIN and pacification by claiming that the former was a more militarised imperial expression while the use of non-kinetic elements characterises the latter and focuses on imperial policing. According to Roy, pacification occurred in the aftermath of small wars and low-level conventional campaigns.¹² However, such differentiation and categorisation of pacification and COIN is somewhat flawed. This chapter posits that pacification was the goal of the GOI in the Indian frontiers, and COIN was one of its means.

In the context of eighteenth-century Carnatic and Bengal, G.J. Bryant argues that the methods of pacification were employed by the EIC to transmit the idea that it unwillingly resorted to

military action to restore order among a disorderly or confused population that had been incited to revolt by defiant elements such as political dissidents or criminals. Bryant further remarks that the EIC's officials understood the importance of creating an administrative apparatus apart from using military force to establish social order and do away with the anxieties of constant revolts. During the pacification of western Midnapore in Bengal, the recalcitrant elements were encouraged to cultivate land to rid them of their inclination towards plundering. Hence, according to Bryant, using the military in a quasi-policing duty backed by administrative conciliation formed the basis of British pacification.¹³ It can be argued that the British-Indian pacification in the NWF significantly differed from that of the Indian mainland. An extensive and intensive administrative apparatus enabled the GOI to incorporate the masses in mainland India much more efficiently and effectively. At the same time, the NWF did not experience an all-encompassing, politically pervasive and socially penetrative administrative machinery. Hence, the GOI lacked a hegemonic tool on the frontier to pacify the tribes, unlike India.

In his analysis of frontier warfare, Tim Moreman depicts how trans-border operations of the British-Indian Army in south Asia differ from European military requirements. He asserts that imperial troops had to deal with almost all possible geographical situations, such as deserts, jungles, open plains and mountains. The nature of the enemy, too, varied greatly, from their weapons to organisation and fighting techniques, which required different sets of skills. Many of these operations were the first of their kind and demonstrated great difficulties in the fields of communication, intelligence, and supply. Moreman shows how the Punjab Frontier Force devised their own doctrine of fighting in the hilly terrains for almost four decades. However, the presidency Armies were not so lucky to obtain the valuable experience of the Frontier Force, as the need to disseminate such a doctrine was never realised.¹⁴

The conceptual framework of COIN as a response to insurgency emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. COIN is defined as 'simply the label used to describe the totality of

actions aimed at defeating irregular forces’. It is a fluid concept that is dependent on circumstance’. Civil-military cooperation is an essential element in successful COIN operations. It is imperative for a government tackling insurgency to identify the causes of unrest among the populace and try to resolve those combating the insurgents. Rather than conventional military tactics, a decentralised and small unit approach is crucial in COIN. It has also been proposed that the concept of COIN is not monolithic. Hence, the measures in a COIN operation were predicated on the character of the insurgency it battles. Therefore, success in COIN requires flexibility.¹⁵ The quantum of military force employed by the British Army in COIN operations is a highly contentious matter. The advocates of the population-centric COIN argue that the British Army only used the minimum force necessary to quell insurgencies. However, the idea that the British Army attempts to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the populace amidst COIN faced scathing criticism from a group of scholars. They argue that the British Army’s lesser technology-oriented and more manpower-intensive approach to COIN operations is a chimera. Without delving deep into this debate, it should be stated that the two extremes of maximum or minimum force cannot effectively characterise the British or the British-Indian Army’s approach towards COIN. There was a gulf between theory and praxis, and due to the complexities of the theatre of operation, it was difficult for the British-Indian Army to follow a straightforward approach to COIN.¹⁶

Despite the existence of an array of scholarly work on the British-Indian Army’s warfare beyond the Indus, a long-term analysis of their evolving tactical ideals has rarely been undertaken. The existing literature also fails to highlight the racial-ideological impetus behind tactical thinking on the one hand and the impact of the new technological breakthroughs on the other. As depicted in the first chapter, the GOI conceptualised Afghanistan and the NWF as a buffer against foreign invasion and a springboard for launching operations towards central Asia. To achieve that strategic end, the British-Indian Army fought the regular Afghan army

during the three Afghan wars, as well as refractory tribal elements to pacify the country and bolster the Amir's authority. Hence, the GOI did not undertake the responsibility of long-term pacification in Afghanistan. They expected a friendly Amir on the Afghan throne and tried to support his authority with money and materials. Therefore, the British-Indian Army's military power projection in Afghanistan can be considered as an amalgam of waging a sub-conventional to conventional warfare backed by small-scale military operations against recalcitrant tribal irregulars. However, to develop the NWF as a defensive barrier and keep the routes to Afghanistan open, the GOI's larger goal in that region was to maintain order. To that end, the multitude of tribal populations were to be kept pacified. The GOI, in turn, employed military force in the form of low-intensity operations to defeat and break off large-scale tribal congregations during insurrections, punitive expeditions and military blockades from time to time. In addition, political interactions with the tribes were continued through political officers and governors. Such military-politico manoeuvres can be identified as the British-Indian Army's COIN in NWF. Therefore, instead of being separate comparable categories, British-Indian COIN in the NWF was actually subsumed within the larger goal of pacifying the region. Pacification was not an operation or a campaign. It was a method of achieving the GOI's strategic objectives. While COIN was part of its *modus operandi*.

I argue that the tactics of the British-Indian Army's warfare in NWF and Afghanistan was not only military in nature but also politico-economic. Tactical military victory, either in Afghanistan or in NWF, was not enough. It had to be backed up by political arrangements to transform it into a strategic success. This chapter consciously confines itself to analysing military tactics supported by short-term political arrangements during a campaign or an expedition. The long-term politico-economic programmes of the GOI will be dealt with in chapter five. This chapter is divided into three segments. The first segment deals with the conventional military operations of the British-Indian Army during the three Afghan wars. In

contrast, the second part focuses on the unconventional warfare waged in Afghanistan and NWF. The final segment attempts to analyse, on the one hand, the ideological impetus behind military technological evolution and its impact on the realm of tactics on the other. The thesis departs from Callwell's categorisation of small wars. Warfare on the Indian frontiers was complex and diverse, and categorising them under one umbrella term tends to oversimplify and often confuse the readers. I argue that COIN and pacification are not comparable separate categories. COIN in NWF and Afghanistan was part of the GOI's aim at pacification. Pacifying the warlike tribes in the NWF and Afghanistan was imperative to achieve the strategic goal of developing the frontier as a defensive belt for India. To this end, the GOI conducted COIN operations backed by long-term political settlements.

I

Conventional warfare can be defined as a form of warfare fought between two or more states using conventional weapons (weapons other than chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons). While waging conventional warfare, the primary aim is to weaken or destroy the adversary's conventional fighting capabilities by targeting its military. Conventional warfare is fought between regular troops. The British-Indian Army, during the three Afghan Wars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, fought primarily against the regular Afghan army as well as their supporting tribal levies. However, they had to engage in several unconventional small-scale punitive military campaigns during their stay in Afghanistan. This section delves into scrutinising the tactics of the British-Indian Army in the wars fought against the Afghan regulars.

The army detailed for the invasion of Afghanistan in 1839 came to be known as the Army of the Indus. The expeditionary force, which was to march into Afghanistan, was supported by

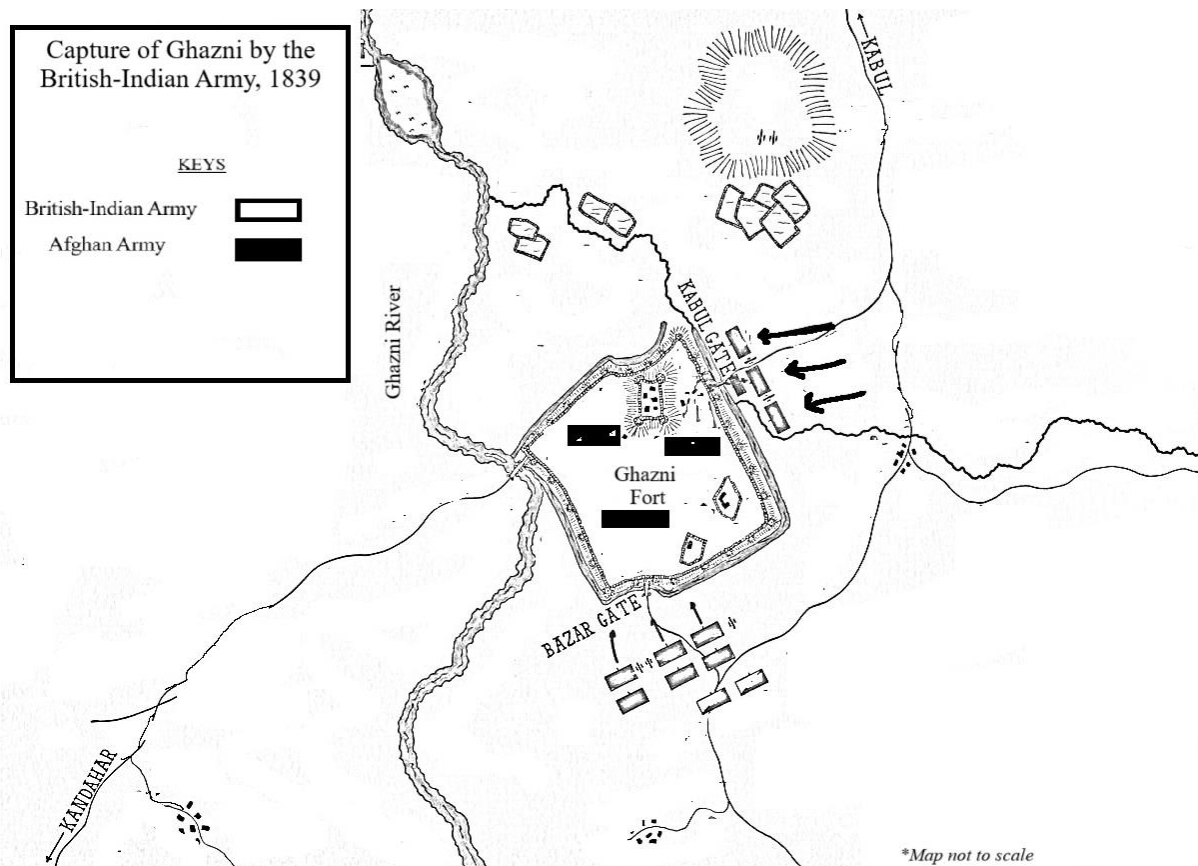
strategic reserves that were concentrated in Peshawar, Sindh and Ferozpur. The Army of the Indus comprised British-Indian soldiers from the Bengal and Bombay presidency armies, a contingent of Shah Shuja and finally Sikh and Prince Timur's forces. The combined strength of the army was around 39,000 soldiers.¹⁷ On the other hand, the strength of the contending Afghan army was Around 13,000 cavalry and almost 2,500 infantry armed with *jezails*. Furthermore, the artillery wing of the Afghan military comprised around 50 cannons and several guns captured from the Sikhs in 1837. The Afghan Army was paid either in cash or in kind. The 9,000-strong Afghan cavalry was well-trained.¹⁸ Therefore, the regular Afghan Army was a force to be reckoned with.

The military force designated for the invasion of Afghanistan gathered at Ferozpur in late November 1838. Thence, the advancing army force proceeded in a south-westerly direction, passing through Bahawalpur, and crossed the Sindh frontier at Sabzalkot, in order to reach the banks of the Indus River. The plan was to cross the river at Sukkur. From there, the route travelled in a north-westerly direction, passing through Shikarpur, Bhag, and Dadar until it reached the Bolan Pass. Continuing across the pass, the route leads to Quetta and then proceeds along the Khojak to Kandahar.¹⁹ Since the British-Indian Army ventured into Afghanistan for the first time in 1839, keeping in line with the dictums of mountain warfare, a network of agents and spies was established to find collaborators within the Afghans and gain crucial intelligence regarding the route of the march and political scenario in key Afghan cities.²⁰ On 8 May 1839, Shah Shuja entered Kandahar, supported by the British-Indian Army. A garrison was left to protect the city, and the rest of the troops marched towards Kabul via Ghazni.²¹

The British-Indian Army reached the outskirts of the fort of Ghazni on 21 July 1839, when they experienced the first conventional military engagement in the First Afghan War.²² The fort was quite well-defended. It was surrounded by substantial walls and bastions on all sides. Furthermore, it was protected by nine guns and a 56-pounder field gun known as the *zabur*

zang. Besides innumerable wall pieces, *jezails* and other matchlocks protected the fort. The garrison was assumed to have consisted of no less than 2,000 men, including 1,500 of Dost Muhammad's peaked swordsmen. Before storming the fort, careful reconnaissance was carried out to find a blind spot that could be exploited to breach its walls. The skirmishers played an essential role in the opening bouts of the capture of Ghazni as they dislodged a number of the enemy from the walled garden and orchards before the fort. During the siege of the fort, the British-Indian Army encircled it while their right flank captured the heights which commanded the place. However, their flanks were threatened by thousands of Ghilzai cavalry and foot soldiers who descended on the camp of Shah Shuja from the nearby heights. They received supporting artillery fire from inside the fort. However, Major John Nicolson countered the attack with Shah Shuja's cavalry, supported by British-Indian artillery. Following this, Captain James Outram outflanked the attackers with a cavalry action.²³

Interestingly, the commander of the Army of Indus, John Keane, left their battering guns at Kandahar due to flawed intelligence regarding the fort's condition. Upon reaching Ghazni, the error in this decision was realised as the walls of the Ghazni fort were quite strong. However, under cover of fire from their brethren, the engineers crept up to the eastern gate and deposited around 200 lbs. of gunpowder. A saucission (a long tube of waterproof canvas packed with gunpowder and used for lighting a mine) was used to blow up the gate. I argue that the British-Indian Army lacked a vital siege weapon at Ghazni. However, their quick thinking and tactical flexibility neutralised this disadvantage. The fort's garrison was stated to have consisted of 2000 men. Upon entering the fort, the British-Indian troops defeated the defenders inside in close-quarter combat with bayonets.²⁴



Map 2.1 British-Indian Army storms the Ghazni Fort.

The British-Indian troops entered Kabul on 7 August 1839, and Shah Shuja was established on the Afghan throne. However, he failed to command the allegiance of the Afghans and faced considerable opposition within Kabul itself. Consequently, local uprisings emerged in many parts of Afghanistan. Therefore, the tactical victory of the British-Indian Army in restoring Shah Shuja as the Afghan Amir did not translate into strategic success.

While the invaders faced an insurrection in Kabul, Major-General W. Nott had to defend Kandahar. In May 1840, he had to dispatch a force under Captain W. Anderson to suppress the Ghilzais and secure the communication between Kandahar and Ghazni. To that end, he captured the Qalat-i-Ghilzai fortress with the help of a detachment. In August 1842, Nott faced the army of the Afghan governor of the fortress of Ghazni, Shamsuddin, who appeared before

his camp at Gonin, 38 miles southwest of Ghazni, with a strong force of about 12,000 men. The enemy disposition was a long line supported by two 6-pounder horse artillery guns. They attacked Nott's brigade with small arms fire accompanied by a light artillery barrage. However, when the British-Indian column advanced and engaged the forces of Samsuddin steadily and with vigour. Consequently, they were routed, and their guns, tents and ammunition were captured.²⁵ Defeating a 12,000-strong tribal congregation was not a very easy task. However, an inherent nature of Afghan fighting was that they could not withstand long-term, steady and vigorous attacks from conventional forces. Nott's engagement with Samsuddin's force was no exception.

The tactics behind Nott's success in defending Kandahar was offensive in nature. He realised the 'Asiatic enemies' could not face the British-Indian Army in open plains. Therefore, whenever challenged, such as in May 1842 by upwards of 8,000 troops, Nott attacked the enemy with 1,000 infantry, 250 cavalry and artillery pieces and routed them. Initiative in attacking the enemy was an essential element of success in mountain warfare, as espoused by its practitioners. However, he was cautious to send out small detachments.²⁶

Major-General Robert Sale's defence of Jalalabad while the British contingent was being massacred during their march from Kabul in January 1842 was a daring venture. Earlier in 1841, Sale, at the head of the 13th Light Infantry Battalion, helped in subduing the Eastern Ghilzais.²⁷ In a letter to General Pollock, Sale mentioned the fort's dilapidated condition and the effort being taken to prepare the defences. He also outlined the shortage of supplies at Jalalabad. He employed the troops under him to dig a deep and wide ditch around the fort, as repairing the walls would have proved time-consuming and expensive. To safeguard his contingent against harassing night attacks launched by the Afghans, Sale posted sentries and pickets, which, as already established, were important tactical positions in mountain warfare

against a tribal opponent. Furthermore, adopting Afghan fighting techniques, he also constructed breastworks or *sangars* to provide cover to the British-Indian soldiers.²⁸

On 11 November 1842, the British-Indian Army commenced its withdrawal from Afghanistan after the Army of Retribution under General Pollock entered Kabul and burned its *bazaar* in retaliation to Afghan insurrections and the assassination of the British agent William Macnaghten. Dost Mohammad recaptured the Afghan throne and the British-Indian strategic objective remained elusive.²⁹

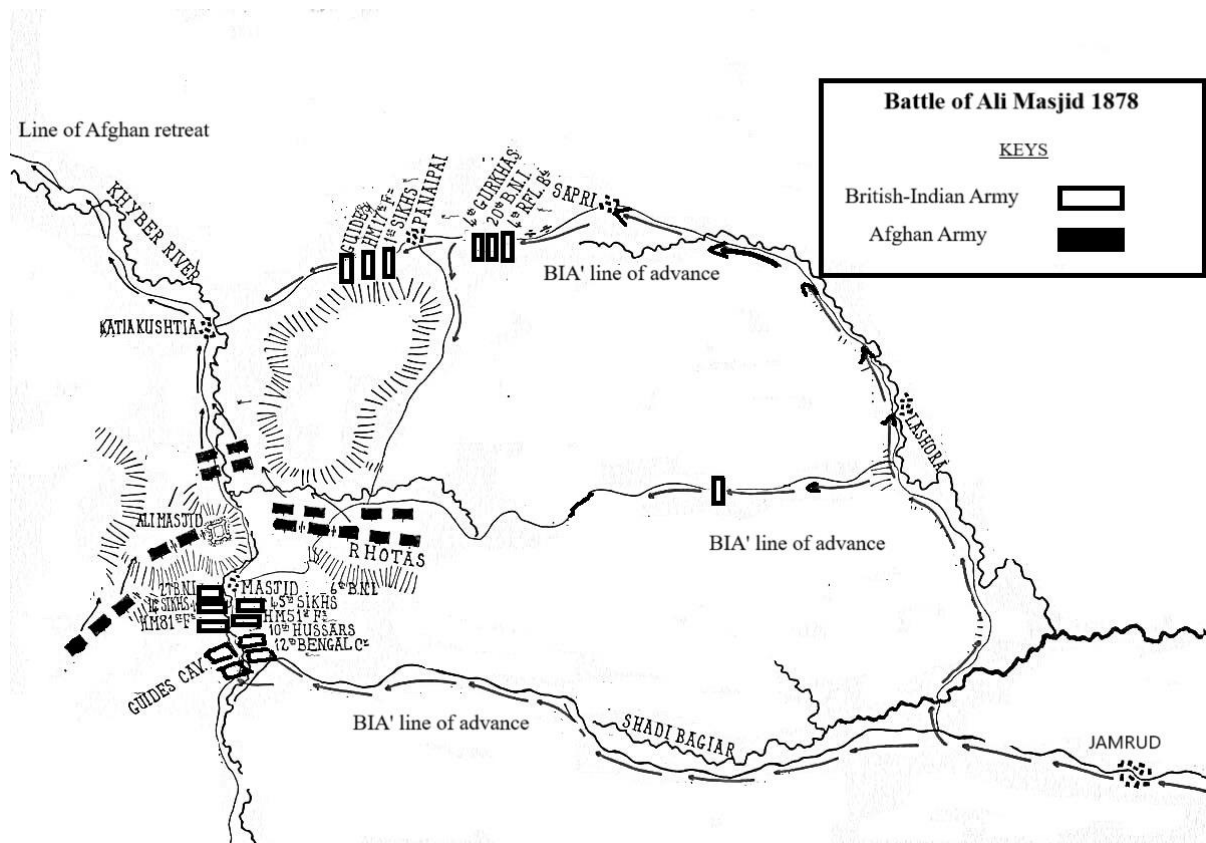
The British-Indian forces met their Afghan counterparts in conventional battles again during the Second Afghan War. In 1878, they were mobilised in three columns: the Peshawar Valley Field Force, the Kuram Valley Field Force, and the Kandahar Field Force. The total fighting strength of the invading army was just above 43,000 men and 181 guns.³⁰ On the other side, in 1879, the Afghan Amir Sher Ali commanded an army with a strength of 56,173 troops, divided into 73 regiments of infantry, 42 regiments of cavalry and 48 batteries of artillery.³¹ The strongest wing of the Afghan Army was the artillery, armed with 273 guns. Sherpur, Chaman and Bala Hissar were well protected by artillery, each of these outposts having 44, 36 and 19 guns respectively. Apart from the regular infantry, there were almost 25 dastas of irregular Infantry, each dasta comprising 100 men, so Sher Ali had almost 2,500 irregulars who could be deployed in wartime³². Russian aid to Afghanistan in arms and ammunition also bolstered Sher's army.³³ Therefore, it can be gauged that the strength of the regular Afghan Army under Sher Ali had considerably increased since the days of the First Afghan War.

Mobilisation began on the 20 November 1878. In August 1878, the CIC suggested that the Peshawar Field Force should make a military demonstration early in the campaign by advancing along the Khyber route.³⁴ The fort of Ali Masjid was the gateway of the Khyber Pass. The Peshawar Valley Field Force was entrusted with capturing the fort as the opening

measure of the campaign and thence to proceed to Dakka. Before commencing the attack, the enemy's position and the territory east and north-east of the Ali Masjid fort were reconnoitred by a party of the Guides and Sir Sam Browne. The Afghan garrison consisted of approximately 3,700 men, including infantry and cavalry, and had 24 guns on high grounds in detached hills.³⁵ The pass at Ali Masjid was quite narrow, making any army approaching from the south fall easy prey to the Afghan artillery. Hence, the Afghan position was tactically sound.

The British-Indian Army's tactic in the battle of Ali Masjid involved envelopment based on a turning movement and a three-pronged attack. Commanding the heights to the east, north and north-east of the fort, which were the spurs and cliffs of the Rhotas and neighbouring hills, formed the basis of Sam Browne's plan. Two brigades under Brigadier-General Herbert Macpherson and Brigadier-General J.A. Tytler were to work their way to the rear of Ali Masjid to cut off Afghan retreat and thence to proceed to the heights at the enemy's left in their search for a position which commanded the fort itself.³⁶ Meanwhile, the main column under Browne was to deliver a frontal attack. The heavy and field batteries were positioned on a ridge at the front of the fort, and they were to open fire at the commencement of the British-Indian attack. Colonel H.B. Hanna of the Punjab Frontier Force has shown that speed was essential to the operation's success, and the challenge posed by the terrain was incredible. Therefore, to outmanoeuvre the enemy tactically, the troops left tents, bedding and baggage behind to be transported later.

With the commencement of the Battle of Ali Masjid, the British-Indian advanced parties captured nearby heights, which dominated the Afghan position.³⁷ The Afghan artillery could not inflict significant damage as the British-Indian troops avoided their line of fire by sheltering themselves in the ridges.³⁸ It points to their tactical ingenuity. It is also noteworthy that the topography of Afghanistan exerted a considerable influence in this engagement as the 1st and



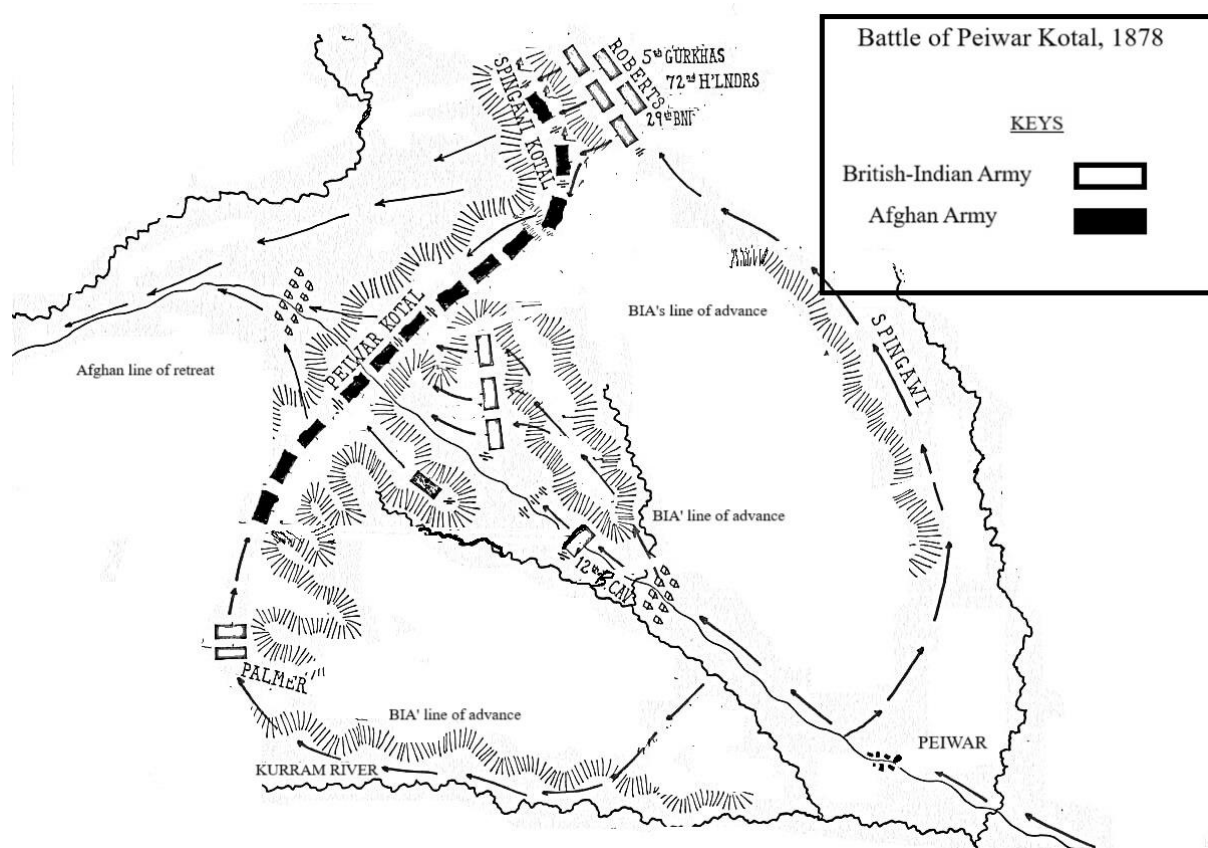
Map 2.2 Battle of Ali Masjid

2nd Brigades, who were entrusted with turning the enemy's flank and rear, could not attain their objectives in time due to the challenges of the march. Interestingly, though the Afghan position was quite formidable, they deserted the fort following the attack by the British-Indian Army.³⁹ Lessons were indeed learnt from the engagements of the Second Afghan War, as Major G.M. Bullock, writing in 1893, mentioned about maintaining observation parties on high ground while a troop was on the march, flanking and cutting the retreat of the enemy in 'Oriental fighting' while feinting a frontal push⁴⁰, all of which were carried out during the engagements in Ali Masjid and later in Peiwar Kotal.

Following the Battle of Ali Masjid, the Kuram Vallery Field Force under Major General Frederick Roberts was entrusted with the task of engaging and driving the Amir's army from Kurram Valley. Roberts ascribed great importance to collecting proper intelligence regarding

the enemy's strength and position, which displays his familiarity with the requirements of mountain warfare. The enemy's strength was nearly 18,000 infantry and eight guns.⁴¹

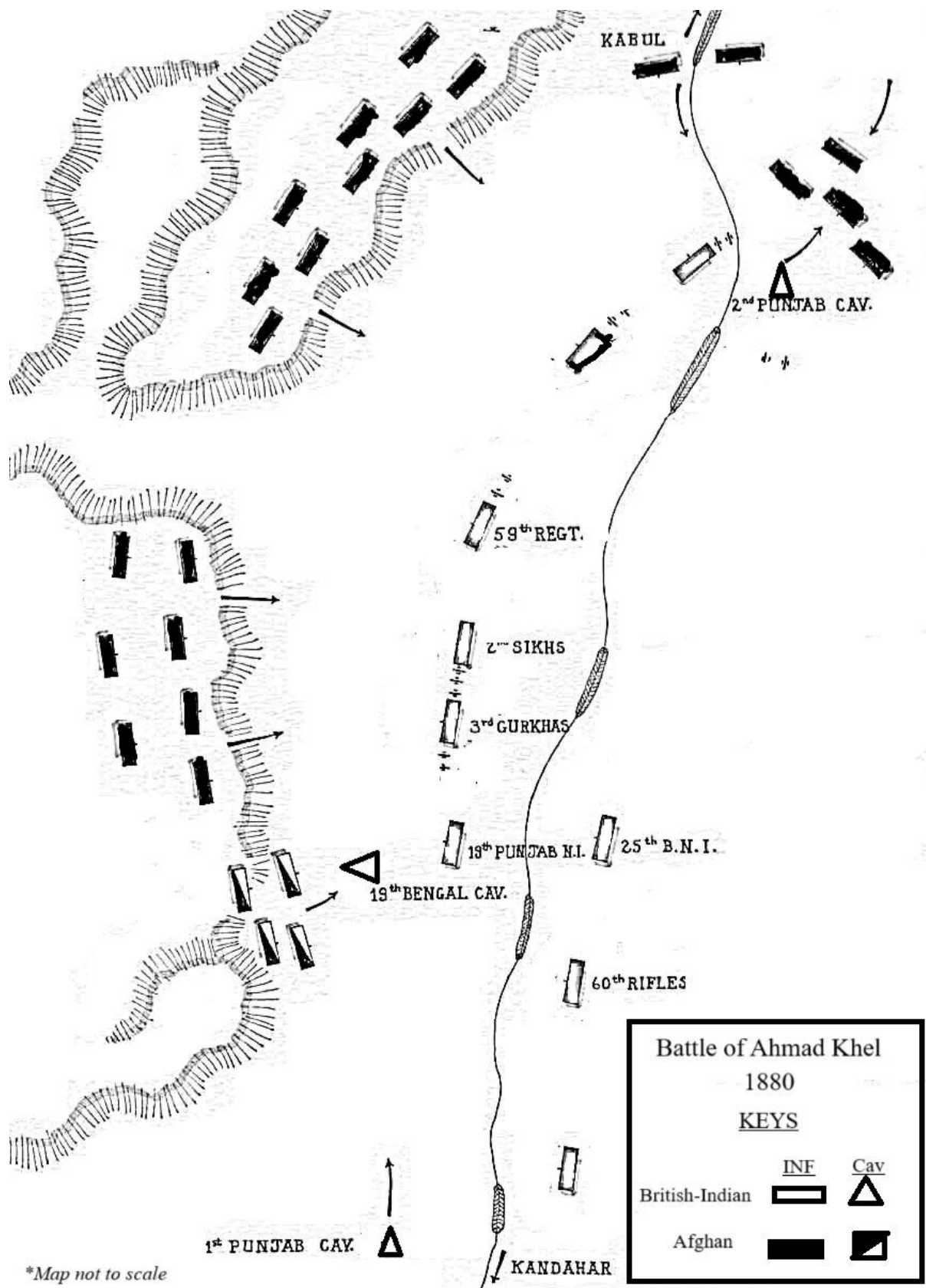
A long and expansive examination of the whole setting at Peiwar convinced Roberts that the Afghans had positional and topographical advantage. Therefore, any direct attack up the pass would make the British forces vulnerable to flanking attacks. He intended to make a turning movement to outflank the enemy with the majority of his troops, while a direct attack on the enemy's position would act as a diversion.⁴² When the Afghans realised Roberts' intention to cut off their retreat, the enemy started a total retreat. The position was finally captured with a loss of 20 dead and 72 wounded on the British side.⁴³ The British victory at Peiwar underlines the importance of intelligence in warfare. To retain the element of surprise, which was crucial



Map 2.3 Battle of Peiwar Kotal

for success, Roberts took utmost care to keep the battle plans undisclosed. Furthermore, the first two engagements also manifest the vulnerability of the Afghan troops against flanking measures and manoeuvre warfare.

During the winter of 1879, Roberts fought against regular and irregular Afghans in the vicinity of Kabul to maintain the British-Indian hold on the Afghan capital and keep the routes to India by Khyber open. Therefore, a strong British-Indian force was to march to Kabul under the command of Sir Donald Stewart. The strength of the troops under Stewart was over 7,000 soldiers and 22 guns.⁴⁴ Stewart's force was vastly outnumbered in the Battle of Ahmad Khel on 19 April 1880. He was facing around 12 to 13,000 tribal foot soldiers and 1000 cavalry. Before the British-Indian battlefield deployment could be completed, a vast mass of tribal infantry and cavalry engulfed both their flanks and threatened their rear. The tribals used the topography to their advantage and rushed on the British-Indian ranks from a hill's slopes, giving them great momentum. However, the troops under Stewart did not lose cohesion, and the Gurkhas formed rallying squares and started pouring rounds of volleys on the enemy. Though heavily pressed initially, the British-Indian cavalry managed to charge the enemy's cavalry on the right flank, enabling guns to be redeployed. This combined-armed tactics slackened the rush of the tribesmen and turned their retreat into a rout.⁴⁵ The discipline and cohesion of the British-Indian Army, though being heavily outnumbered, was the deciding factor in this engagement. In the face of great odds, they formed squares and poured volleys on the enemy. The efficient command of General Stewart was also an important factor behind the British-Indian victory. He constantly sent tactical reinforcements to weakened sections of the battle line and kept a reserve to protect the baggage at the rear, denying the tribals the opportunity to attack them from behind.



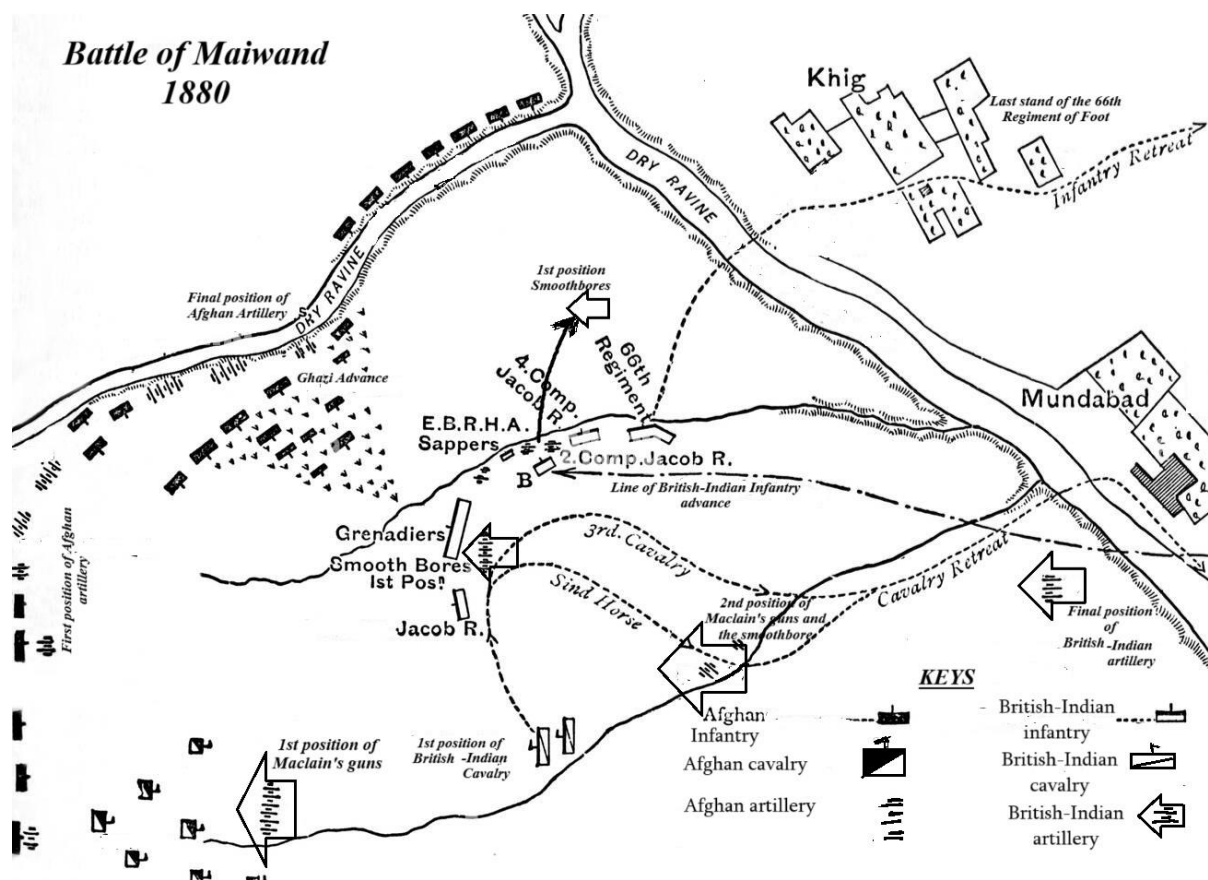
Map 2.4 Battle of Ahmad Khel

While the initial engagements manifested the importance of scouting, skirmishing, and flanking manoeuvres, the Battle of Maiwand on 27 July 1880 proved the fallacy of a frontal engagement against a numerically superior Asiatic adversary possessing a considerable number of artillery pieces.⁴⁶ In June 1880, the GOI received reports of Ayub Khan's intentions to march to Kabul via Kandahar to seize the Afghan throne. He had already assembled around 4,500 regular infantry and cavalry troops and six artillery batteries. Also, 4,000 tribal horsemen had assembled to bolster his force.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, a division of British troops, composed of two infantry brigades and one cavalry brigade, was posted at Kandahar under the command of Lieutenant-General J.M. Primrose. There were also 6,000 friendly Afghans. To block Ayub's march, the Wali of Kandahar entrenched his troops at Girishk on the Helmand River. However, he requested British support, concerned about his army's ability to oppose Ayub.⁴⁸ Accordingly, a British-Indian brigade was sent under Brigadier General George Burrows. The total strength of the British-Indian troops was 2599 soldiers, six 9-pounder cannons and about 3000 service and transport personnel. Furthermore, the Wali had under him 6000 soldiers, four 6-pounder British smoothbore guns and two 12-pounder smoothbore howitzers. Unfortunately, the Afghan infantry and artillery mutinied and joined Ayub, while most of the cavalry remained loyal.⁴⁹

Ayub tactically outmanoeuvred Burrows' force and interposed himself between the British-Indian troops and Kandahar. Therefore, the latter had to relocate the troops under him and move towards Maiwand, anticipating Ayub's advance.⁵⁰ The army headquarters gave General Burrows full liberty to attack Ayub if he was strong enough. Furthermore, he was informed that GOI considered it of the greatest political importance that Ayub's force be dispersed and prevented from being passed on to Ghazni.⁵¹

The action on the left was initiated without proper authorisation by two guns of E-B, Royal Horse Artillery, accompanied by a troop of Sind Horse under Lieutenant A. M. Monteith. This forced General Burrows into a battle on unfavourable terrain, and he did not intentionally select

against an enemy that had not been thoroughly surveyed. This significantly undermined his likelihood of victory since the position he hastily assumed was utterly exposed, with both sides vulnerable to far larger forces.⁵² Afghan irregulars led by the *ghazis* heavily contested the British right. Meanwhile, Ayub's cavalry tried to outflank the British left. Already heavily pressed, the British-Indian forces reached the threshold of defeat when thirty Afghan artillery pieces appeared on the battlefield. In comparison, Burrows' artillery ran out of ammunition after engaging the enemy guns for a while. Due to the fire of the Afghan guns, the British-Indian infantry lost its tactical mobility. Under the cover of guns, swarms of *ghazis* reached the ranks under Burrows, which led to a rout.⁵³ Such fierce close-quarter combat resembles the Soviet bear-hugging tactics in the Second World War. Search tactics aims at closing the gap with the enemy to neutralise the advantage of their superior firepower.



Map 2.5 Battle of Maiwand

British-Indian defeat in the Battle of Maiwand can be attributed to the tactical imprudence in initiating the engagement over unreconnoitered terrain, having no concrete intelligence regarding the enemy's strength. Furthermore, the numerical superiority of the Afghans, both in terms of men and artillery pieces, tipped the balance in their favour. Finally, Burrows' brigade had no tactical support or reserves to fall back upon, which enabled the Afghans to pursue the British-Indian forces for a considerable distance.⁵⁴ The Second Afghan War ended after Ayub Khan was decisively defeated by General Roberts's troops in the Battle of Kandahar in late 1880.

The Third Afghan War was the last time the British-Indian troops met the Afghans in conventional warfare. This engagement was particularly important in the context of the First World War. Due to the British army's continental commitments, many veteran and experienced British-Indian troops were unavailable in India in 1919 when the Third Afghan War commenced. However, luckily, several British military officers were detained in India who were en route to England from Mesopotamia, awaiting demobilisation. They were deployed during the Third Afghan War to compensate for India's lack of experienced military personnel.⁵⁵ In 1919, the Afghans turned into aggressors and, under the leadership of Amir Amanullah, invaded British-Indian territories. They aimed at attacking the Dakka, Khost and Quetta axis. In retaliation, the GOI ordered a general mobilisation to defend the integrity of the British-Indian frontier in May 1919. The most significant Afghan attack took place in the Tochi-Kurram Valley area. The situation there became critical when the militia in adjacent Waziristan, stirred up by the Afghan government, rebelled against their British employers.

The Third Afghan War witnessed the introduction of a new piece of military technology that altered the tactical realm of the British-Indian Army in the NWF and Afghanistan for years to come. With the introduction of air power on the NWF, a new dimension was added to Indian frontier warfare. The Royal Air Force (henceforth RAF) played an important role in aiding the

British-Indian Army during the Third Afghan War. One of the central issues of the British-Indian Army's task of pacifying the NWF was to control the tribal lands effectively without complete occupation. Occupying tribal areas would have been very costly, and the GOI always preferred to adopt a policy to control the region that would incur the least amount of cost. In this context, controlling tribals with the army did not appear prudent as it required a considerable amount of manpower. Therefore, the GOI was searching for a method of controlling the tribal lands during peace and embarking on punitive campaigns in retaliation to tribal insurrections. In this context, airpower became very pertinent as it provided a very technologically advanced method of surveillance of tribal lands at a relatively lower cost.

According to Air Vice Marshall John Salmond, the inherent qualities of the air arm were speed, range, and inviolability. Furthermore, they had a great destructive effect and swift punitive capabilities compared to the ground forces. Finally, air bombing produced a great moral effect on the enemy. It served as a constant reminder to the tribals of the power of the GOI. The flying range of RAF aircraft in 1920 was 250 miles, and they had a speed of 100 miles/hour. Therefore, according to Salmond, an aircraft could traverse the entirety of Waziristan, Zhob, Kurram, and Afridi country. He held that 'The moral effect of bombing on scattered bodies has always been greater than the destructive effect'.⁵⁶

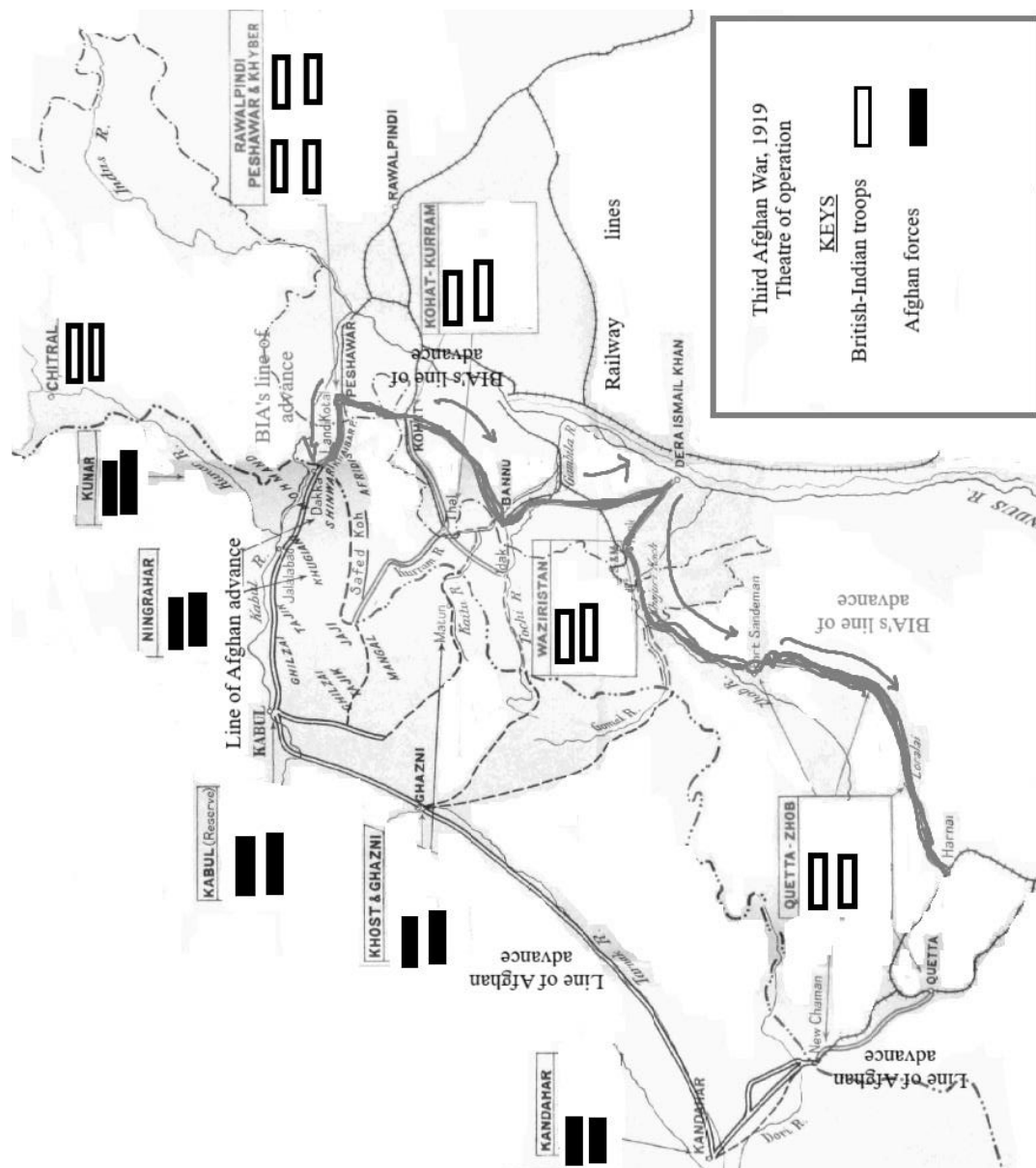
RAF aircraft were engaged in close reconnaissance missions during the Third Afghan War. Nevertheless, the execution of long-range assaults on Dakka and Jalalabad throughout May substantially impacted tribal morale.⁵⁷ Aerial bombardments were also conducted on both civilian and military targets. On the evening of May 20, 1919, a nocturnal assault was conducted, during which four incendiary bombs were dropped on the Amir's palace. Concurrently, an air strike targeted the Afghan troops, who were engaged in a parade. Approximately fifty individuals suffered casualties. The town of Kabul was bombarded with two metric tonnes of explosive ordnance. The air strikes had a dual impact, both on the enemy's

morale and on the ability of Afghan soldiers to manoeuvre freely. The Afghans were compelled to vacate their encampments and seek shelter in dispersed rural settlements. Kabul, serving as the political centre, was subjected to persistent aerial bombardment. Multiple accounts document the efficacy of aerial bombardments carried out during the Third Afghan War. On 12 May 1919, a pair of bombing attacks were executed with success in the neighbourhood of Darband and Chora, where 480 pounds of explosive ordnance were dropped. The air operations resulted in the reported intimidation of the insurgent tribesmen and militia deserters situated in the elevated terrain around Hindu Bagh, therefore confining them to the border region.⁵⁸

One of the most notable actions by the RAF during the Third Afghan War was the bombing raid that concluded the war. On 24 May 1919, Captain Halley launched an assault on Kabul with the only aircraft at his disposal, successfully striking Amanullah's palace with four direct hits. Amanullah was disturbed by this event, leading him to promptly agree to an armistice on 3 June. Subsequently, a peace treaty was signed on 8 August. This was a significant milestone as it was perhaps the first instance when peace was established solely via the use of air force. The primary function of the RAF, specifically the army cooperation squadrons, was to provide protection for scout and army columns operating in tribal territory. Additionally, bomber squadrons played a punitive role in military operations and frequently engaged in photographic mapping activities during times of peace. They also performed patrol duties between distant army outposts.⁵⁹ Due to a combination of ground force manoeuvre and air attacks, the Afghan Amir urged for peace, and the war was concluded on 8 August 1919.⁶⁰

The British-Indian Army's tactics in conventional warfare in the nineteenth century remained, unchanged to a great extent. The experience gathered by the troops serving in the NWF and Afghanistan enabled better tactical manoeuvrability in the Second Afghan War compared to the first campaign. However, the general principle remained almost the same. Nevertheless, the introduction of air power during the Third Afghan War significantly changed the British-Indian

Army's tactics on the frontier. Rather than the earlier mechanism of costly expeditions, the air arm opened a new era of tribal control.



Map 2.6 Third Afghan War, theatre of operations.

II

Since the first half of the nineteenth century, the British-Indian Army was primarily engaged in three kinds of unconventional military operations in Afghanistan and NWF. Firstly, in support of conventional military campaigns with the goal of short-term pacification of Afghanistan. Secondly, low to medium-scale military operations in response to tribal insurrections to defeat and subdue large tribal congregations. Finally, small-scale, primitive expeditions in retaliation to tribal transgressions such as raiding and plundering. The thesis argues that the last two kinds of operations fit within the categorisation of COIN.

It should be noted that mountain warfare in the Indian subcontinent was not a monolithic idea. The mountain warfare experienced by the British-Indian Army in the NWF was quite different from that of the North-east Indian theatres. The Pathans were more robust and well-armed than the tribes of Chin Hill or Burma.⁶¹ The tribesmen of the NWF were often considered braver than those of the North-east Frontier. The former could also assemble in large numbers, which the latter could not. The NWF tribes were also well-trained in guerrilla warfare. Furthermore, there was a general militancy within Afghan society, which was fuelled by ideas such as blood feuds.⁶²

When the British-Indian Army moved against a section of the tribe or tribes, they faced three kinds of opposition. Some of the tribal groups submitted without any opposition. Next were those who were subdued after a minor military power projection. In some cases, some sections of the tribes retained a hostile attitude, and they had to be thoroughly punished and subdued with proper military punitive measures such as the destruction of towers or villages, capturing prisoners, weapons and cattle and finally, imposition of a fine.

Apart from fighting the regular Afghan army and capturing strategic locations during the First Afghan War to affect regime change, the British-Indian Army had to carry out small-scale

military operations backed by political arrangements to pacify the countryside. Lieutenant Nicholson accompanied Captain Outram and Major McLaren in an expedition against some Shiljee predatory tribes. Macnaghten, the Political Agent at Kabul, suggested establishing police outposts on all the passes to pursue and apprehend robbers. He also prescribed specific measures for the general pacification of Afghanistan. Through negotiations with the tribal *maliks*, the contention over water sources in Afghanistan among the tribes had to be solved, and their allegiance towards the Durani monarchs and Dost Mohammed had to be secured. Macnaghten further advocated imposing collective responsibility on the *maliks* for the transgressions committed by the tribal populace under them. Therefore, as the Afghan Amir's authority was limited, the *maliks* were identified as mediators in the GOI's attempt at pacification.

Furthermore, in the more 'wilder' regions such as the Khyber, where clear tribal headmen could not be identified, Macnaghten prescribed the system of conciliation and enlistment of the wild tribes. He ordered raising an 800-strong Khyber Hills Levy and instructed Lieutenant F. Mackeson to supervise the corps.⁶³ Later, in early December 1839, reports were received that the method of conciliation rather than military force worked wonders with the Khyberis, and political arrangements were struck with them. Consequently, they relinquished all claims to tolls and every other mode of exaction, undertaking to provide for the safety of the road and pay compensation if the responsibilities at their end were not upheld. To establish the GOI's influence more firmly in that quarter, Macnaghten proposed to raise a corps of Khyberis and Kohistanis. It can be argued that due to the rugged topography of the region, military suppression of the tribes in the Khyber region would have required upwards of 7,000 British-Indian troops, and three columns were to be posted at Chora, Tirah and Ali Masjid. Furthermore, using the landscape to their advantage, the tribes could evade pursuit after committing a crime. Therefore, military occupation of the Khyber would have required long-

term presence by the British-Indian Army, which the GOI did not desire. Finally, the Khyberis were identified as more amenable than the Ghilzais. Hence, a consolidated measure towards them was prudent. At the same time, in October 1839, Major McLaren was entrusted with the task of coercing the refractory Ghilzai chiefs. After their chief Shahbudding's fort was destroyed, the whole country from Kelat-i Ghilzai, Zoomut and Kutiwas became quiet.⁶⁴

However, subsequent military measures against the Ghilzais became necessary because they were determined to contest the authority of the Afghan Amir. Consequently, their forts were demolished, and the insurgent chiefs sought refuge in the highlands or surrendered. It was also decided a military presence would be maintained in the Ghilzai region to sustain the peace that had been created. As a result, the construction of military bases and the reinforcement of certain strongholds became a top priority.⁶⁵

At the end of 1840, under the leadership of Akhtar Khan of the Alizai tribe, an insurrection occurred in the Zamindawar district, located in the greater territory of northern Helmand. In this context, General Nott remarked that military operations yielded positive results for the pacification of the area from the entry of the Bolan Pass to Kandahar. However, to quell the insurrection, the political agent in Kandahar, Major H.N. Rawlinson, first took a political step. He sent rival chiefs of the Alizai tribes to Zamindawar backed up by a strong demonstration on the part of the local government in the hope that it would result in desertion in Akhtar Khan's ranks. Furthermore, Akhtar was promised security of life and property. However, due to his non-cooperation, at the beginning of 1841, Captain Farrington was sent as the head of a detachment to chastise Akhtar Khan. A combination of artillery barrage with shrapnel and grape shots, an infantry attack and finally, a cavalry charge routed Akhtar's ranks. Following this, his stronghold was stormed, and his guns were captured.⁶⁶

The Ambala Campaign was an important example of the British-Indian Army's unconventional warfare in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was directed against the tribesmen in Sittana. The Yusafzai Field Force under General Sir Neville Chamberlain only attained success when they took to the offensive and defeated the enemy congregation at Lalu and Ambala by moving down the Chamla valley. The campaign taught that a comparatively unknown mountainous region should never be forced with a hastily equipped force. Furthermore, in terms of tactics, the campaign portrayed the immense advantages of offensive tactics against 'Asiatic' enemies.⁶⁷

Similar to the First Afghan War, the GOI aimed at simultaneous military demonstrations against the tribes in Afghanistan and the NWF alongside the conventional campaigns during the Second Afghan War. The main aim of these expeditions was to keep the lines of communication open and to pacify and subdue the tribes. Therefore, at the end of 1879, the Zaimusht expedition was underway. The Zaimushts are a Pathan tribe residing in the hills south of the Orakzais, between the Miranzai and Kurram valleys. They are categorised into two primary factions: the Mamuzai, also known as the Western Zaimushts, and the Khoidad Khel, also known as the Eastern Zaimushts. Their combined fighting strength consisted of around 3,500 individuals.⁶⁸ The expedition was aimed at chastising the Zaimushts in retaliation for the many depredations made by them into British-Indian territory and the attacks on individuals and small groups of travellers. The greater aim of the expeditions was enforcing submission to the British-Indian authority, restoring order, and establishing some sort of control from Kurram. Furthermore, it was hoped that the expedition would collect revenue as well as induce the tribal headmen to open negotiations.⁶⁹

An interesting feature of the British-Indian Army's COIN operations was that the Zaimushts were not dealt with as a monolithic bloc. The Western Zaimushts embraced four sections: Manattiwal, Mandan, Wattizai and Daudzai. The Manattiwal submitted right away after the

troops penetrated their territory. They agreed to pay fines, surrendering weapons and burning of their towers as punitive measures. The Mandan section also surrendered to the GOI's terms. While the Wattizai section retained a hostile attitude and, in retaliation, eight of their villages were destroyed, 50 cattle were captured along with 30 prisoners. After the burning of the principal stronghold of the Zaimushts, along with the aforementioned punitive measures, this section also sued for peace.⁷⁰ I argue that such a case-specific approach was possible because of the non-adherence of the British-Indian army to any rigid doctrine. On the one hand, it afforded them tactical suppleness and, on the other, resulted in extensive military knowledge formation.

While punishing the Atchazai tribes in the neighbourhood of Kojak, troops from the 2nd Brigade of the Kabul-Kandahar Division were deployed, moving from Chaman into the Toba district. Upon reconnoitring the entire region, it was ascertained that the Atchazais fled their villages to hide in the distant hills. In the absence of any tactical objective to accomplish in punishing the tribe, some prisoners were taken, and a considerable number of their cattle were also captured. A total of 2,300 sheep and goats, 49 camels, 28 bullocks and 10 donkeys were captured, which were used by the brigade marching into the tribal territory, and the surplus was handed over to the commissariat officer at Kila Abdullah. It, on the one hand, added to the supplies of the invading British-Indian Army and, on the other, denied the tribes of their own logistical apparatus.⁷¹ It can be argued that, unlike in conventional warfare, conventional armies are denied the advantage of capturing strategic objectives in COIN campaigns. Furthermore, the tribes also lacked an organised army, defeating which the campaign could be brought to an end. Therefore, the conventional forces had to target their logistical infrastructure, such as houses, crops, etc, in punitive campaigns.⁷² It was accepted wisdom in the treatises on mountain warfare that the tribes were to be hurt at their most prized possession: crops and cattle. It was considered that attacking their material possession was an important

method of weakening the tribes.⁷³ Hence, the best time to undertake punitive expeditions was during the harvest seasons when burning crops would hurt the tribes the most. However, caution was to be maintained in dispensing such punishment as wonton cruelty against the tribes, especially against their women and children was vehemently forbidden by the GOI and the British government.⁷⁴

If we look at British military textual theory, Charles Callwell and Younghusband favoured destroying tribal crops as an efficient tactical move as decisive battlefield victory was a mirage in small wars.⁷⁵ But when the tactical objective was to gain a friendly demeanour from the tribes, inflicting material damage was not advocated. In that case, for Callwell, ‘the most satisfactory way of bringing such foes to reason is by the rifle and sword, for they understand this mode of warfare and respect it.’⁷⁶ However, if circumstances do not permit such a course of action, conforming to the savage mode of warfare remains the last option. Callwell even espoused the destruction of villages with women and children while talking about the Pathan country.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, he warned against exasperating the enemy as it would only make their resistance more resolute.

During the Second Afghan War, smaller tribe clans were warned by the British-Indian Political Officer of swift retribution in case of any tribal attack on the British-Indian camp. Despite such political deterrence, several thousand Mangals and other hillmen of the area surrounded the British-Indian camp at Matun in January 1879. When the Matun camp followers were murdered, baggage animals were carried off, and British-Indian troops were fired upon from nearby villages by the Manglas, exemplary and swift punishment was deemed necessary by Major-General Roberts, the then Commander of the Kuram Field Force. As a result, those villages were burned and looted in retaliation. Some prisoners were also taken. Roberts remarked that the retribution was not indiscriminate, as neutral villages were spared.⁷⁸ Finally, at the end of the Second Afghan campaign, when the British-Indian forces were engaging

Ayub's forces at Kandahar, Brigadier General Henderson ventured into Baluchistan, leading 200 infantry and six cavalry against the Maris at Mal near Mittri. They faced more than 500 tribal fighters. They were attacked with volley firing and then vigorously pursued through the hills leading to their retreat. Around 1300-1400 cattle were recovered from the Maris.⁷⁹ Inflicting swift retribution to tribal transgressions was an essential aspect of the GOI attempt at pacification through COIN operations.

However, not all tribal misconduct would be dealt with in short-term measures. As mentioned, the GOI strategic objective in NWF differed from that of Afghanistan. Hence, long-term measures were required to pacify the region. Waziristan was a 5,000-square-mile region with well-defined ranges that protected the country's interior, making military penetration into the country highly challenging. The chief inhabitants of the region were the Darwesh Khel Wazirs, the Mashuds, the Dauris, and the Bhattannis. The first two were the more prominent inhabitants of the area, and they were infamous for their strong inclination for raiding and hiding using the landscape. The democratic nature of the tribes, particularly the Mashuds, had a considerable drawback from the perspective of the GOI. Their jirgas had limited control over the more unruly members and thus did not accurately represent the opinions of the entire tribe.⁸⁰

The Mashuds proved to be a permanent source of headache for the GOI, a blind spot for British-Indian pacification. With years of experience fighting in the NWF, General Sir Andrew Skeen identified the Mashuds as the best tribal fighters in the NWF. Skeen was part of the Malakand Field Force (1897) and later fought during the Third Afghan War (1919-20). With tremendous tactical mobility and using the topography to their advantage, the frontier tribal fighters were a force to be reckoned with.⁸¹ The Mashud and the Waziris were part of the Karlani Pashtun confederacy and inhabited the Waziristan region. Following the Mashud attempt to sack the town of Tank on the Waziristan border, Brigadier General Chamberlain marched up the Tank Zam and down the Khissora Pass in 1860 to punish the Waziris. They were defeated in two

severe engagements at Palosin and Barara Tangi. Their entire country was visited and surveyed. Makin and other Waziri settlements were destroyed and burnt. Only Kanaigoram, the nominal capital of the Umars, who were less culpable than the Waziris, was spared after paying a fine. Due to the severe infliction of punishment in the form of destruction of property, villages, and towers, different sections of the Mashuds agreed to terms. However, they soon veered off course, and by 1872, the Mashuds committed at least 20 murders and more than 500 cases of highway robbery and burglary. The GOI made strenuous efforts to improve the situation through political arrangements with the Shaman Khel and Balolzai sub-divisions. The GOI ousted the *Nawab* of Tank as a political intermediary to forge a direct relationship with the Mashuds.

With the province's Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Henry Davis's recommendation in 1875, the GOI stripped the *Nawab* of executive powers and police jurisdiction. Moreover, Tank was amalgamated with the district of Dera Ismail Khan, and the regular police posts were established at Gomal, tank and Mullazai. Therefore, the men on the spot considerably influenced the British-Indian military-political tactics in NWF. It is worth noting that in 1876, the Bhattanis who interposed between the British-Indian territories and the Mashuds were made responsible for the watch and ward of all those passes on the frontier from Marwat to the south of Tank. They were enlisted within local militias raised by the GOI, and in return, they accepted responsibility for all plunders carried out in the locality. Similar arrangements were made with this tribe on the Bannu border and with the Mianis and Ghorazais on the skirt of the Gomal valley. This principle of dealing separately with the different sections of the tribes initially yielded positive results, and from 1873 up to 1878, the number of misdeeds committed by the Mashuds decreased year after year.⁸²

However, their abduction of a child impacted a shift in the GOI's attitude. A collective responsibility now came to be imposed on the entirety of the tribe. Consequently, a general

blockade of six months was imposed. The Mashuds felt the pressure and abstained from committing offences against the GOI for some time. Nevertheless, the peace was soon broken when almost 3000 Mashuds conducted a great raid on Tank. Following this, a general scenario of unrest emerged throughout the area. Due to the scale of the insurrection, the different tribal clans were again dealt with separately. The *Powindahs*⁸³ faced the wrath of the British-Indian Army, and around 70 of them were killed. They also had to pay nearly 60,000 rupees as a fine. The Bhattanis were punished by the withdrawal of their lucrative service in the border militia and by a fine of 10,000 rupees. The ringleaders of the Mianis and Ghorazais were captured and sentenced to long-term imprisonments and also had to pay a considerable amount of fines. Therefore, one single method for British-Indian COIN operations could not be followed over time. Hence, a case-specific approach was adopted. Due to the volatile political conditions in the NWF and the fluid attitude of the tribes, the military-politico measures adopted by the British-Indian Army had to be diverse. As previously mentioned, it prepared the path for tactical fluidity, a crucial prerequisite in the successful pacification of the frontier.

Before initiating another military campaign, the GOI presented terms to the Mashud asking for the surrender of stolen property and their headmen and payment of a fine. Interestingly, the GOI's proclamation issued to the Mashud *maliks* mentioned the British government's desire to only exact justice.⁸⁴ However, they never formally accepted the terms presented to them.⁸⁵

Consequently, a punitive expedition was launched. The British-Indian troops were instructed to destroy all the forts of the headmen, blow up all towers and seize tribal property. Furthermore, certain villages and a considerable quantity of crops were to be destroyed to inflict loss upon the enemy and thereby induce them to submit. Notably, the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab advocated targeted surgical raids by visiting the households of the principal men of the tribe. He also alluded to the responsibilities of the British-Indian Frontier Force while fighting the tribes akin to policing duties. A force of all arms, cavalry, infantry, and

mountain artillery was mobilised. Brigadier-General T.G. Kennedy, commanding the Punjab Frontier Force, marched to the Mashud country via the Khisora Pass as it offered fewer natural obstacles.⁸⁶

Instead of a single column entering the Mashud Waziri territory in 1860, two columns penetrated their country in 1881. One advanced from Tank, and the latter operated from Bannu. Along the lines of the British-Indian approach to coin, political and military measures were adopted in tandem. Consequently, right after the commencement of the march of the tank column on 18 and 19 April, five out of the six chiefs of the Waziris surrendered. The last chief's house was visited, and his crops were used by the animals of the British-Indian column or destroyed. However, all other nearby crops were spared, including those of the already surrendered chiefs. Therefore, it can be argued that the British-Indian Army manifested restrained use of force rather than indiscriminate destruction of tribal property. Both the British-Indian columns faced enemy assemblage during their march. However, the tribes did not offer battle and were dispersed with some shots fired. Nevertheless, the tribes fired at the British-Indian columns and moved parallel to their flanks. Therefore, the flanking parties and rear guards of the invading forces played a vital role in ensuring the security of the main body.⁸⁷ Several contemporary military practitioners have appreciated the work of flanking parties in Mountain Warfare. They protected the army's flanks on the march as the tribal hit-and-run tactics found the flanks to be their most favoured targets as the concentration of troops there was limited. An attack on that point gave the tribes ample opportunities to retire without being subjected to heavy fire from the main body.⁸⁸

Political arrangements were struck during the military operation to clear a pathway for the main body of the army or to gather important intel regarding the rebellious sections. While the refractory groups of the Mashuds who offered resistance faced the wrath of the British-Indian Army. The towers of the Sodagar, Samethai, Taneer and Golmast chiefs were completely blown

up. However, all the other houses were spared, pointing to the use of the principles of restrained and exemplary force. As a positive reinforcement, helpful tribal sections were awarded. These military-politico tactics proved successful as the chiefs of the Waziri, who also took part in the action against Brigadier General Kennedy's column, came in and surrendered. Notably, the political officer decided that the tribal crops used by the British-Indian columns had to be valued, and they were credited to the accounts of the tribal groups who were supposed to pay the fines. Therefore, some of their fines were reduced. It manifests an essential aspect of the British-Indian Army's COIN methods. Even while inflicting punishment, there was a sense of legality, and every measure was taken not to aggrieve the groups who remained neutral.⁸⁹ It separates them from their surge tactics-oriented modern American counterparts.

The Zhob expedition undertaken in the 1880s manifests the impact of greater strategic considerations on military-politico tactics. The Zhob in Baluchistan and the adjoining Bori Valley needed to be pacified adequately because the strategic roads from Kandahar and Kelat-i-Ghilzai to the north of the Khozak Amran range and Ghazni, Kabul to India via the Gomal Pass ran through this region.⁹⁰ Exploring and surveying the Gomal Pass and opening the Zhob region for military expedition was strategically crucial for the British-Indian Army to move unhindered into Afghanistan if needed. Notably, conducting repeated survey operations was an essential feature of the GOI's operations beyond the NWF, mostly in lands not well mapped earlier.

The Zhob Valley Expedition aimed to retaliate against a series of violent acts carried out by the Kakars and Musa Khel of the Ghilzai tribes. They lived north of the Thal-Chotiali District and followed the direction of Shah Jahan, the chief of Zhob. It was deemed essential to establish friendly relations or gain surrender from the hostile Zhob, Bori, Kibzai, and Musa Khel tribes inhabiting the vast areas next to the Quetta Hurnai Railway, which was being built at that time. The chief villages of importance in Zhob are Mena and Hindoo Bag.⁹¹ With the commencement

of the Zhob Valley Expedition, similar to some of the Mashud sections, the principal Zhob *maliks* expressed their intention to surrender. Those he refused faced punitive actions in the form of destruction of crops and towers, etc. Apart from punitive measures, in many instances, tribal gatherings were broken down by swift tactical engagement by the cavalry or the infantry.⁹²

The Agent to the Governor General of Baluchistan, Sir Robert Sanderman, advocated a military blockade of the Musa Khels to pressure their *jirga* into accepting the GOI's terms. But the Commissioner and Superintendent of the Derajat Division, as well as the Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan, argued that any strict and hasty implementation of a blockade was bound to hurt the Khetrans of Vehowa, who had close ties with the Musa Khel. Therefore, the Punjab government and the Baluchistan agent had to exercise every caution possible.⁹³ Finally, a stringent blockade was not imposed. Rather, simultaneous military and political action was carried out against the different refractory clans, and *durbars* were held at regular intervals. Therefore, by the end of the campaign, most of the tribal chiefs of the tribes who committed crimes against the government of Punjab, as well as the GOI, accepted settlements forwarded to them by the political officer.

It is very interesting that the military-political tactics implemented in Zhob and Bori Valleys were diametrically opposite. Shahbaz Khan, a local chief in Zhob, had considerable authority in the region. The GOI found a point of contact in his figure through which a political settlement could be effected in the region. In return, Shahbaz wanted the GOI to acknowledge his authority and establish him as the principal chief of the area. Meanwhile, in the Bori Valley, due to the multiplicity of tribal clans and their headmen, it became difficult for the British-Indian government to effect a political settlement in the region. Hence, the pacification required a British-Indian military presence in the form of a cantonment.⁹⁴

It is interesting to note that during the Zhob Valley Expedition of 1884, it was realised that compared to the stretch of the valley, the agricultural output was quite limited; however, as the valley offered excellent grazing grounds, the inhabitants possessed thousands of cattle. Therefore, the British-Indian Army preferred lifting cattle over destroying crops as a method of punishment. Therefore, the environmental conditions greatly dictated the nature of tribal possessions at the frontier and the material targets of the British-Indian Army.⁹⁵

Waziristan experienced another military expedition in 1894-95 when the GOI's border delimiting party aiming to fix the Afghan border on the side of Waziristan was attacked without provocation. Rather than just one column penetrating the Mashud country, it was enveloped by three columns on three sides this time. It afforded them an operational advantage as the different invading columns could deal with the different tribal sections simultaneously.⁹⁶ It manifests the effectiveness of the British-Indian Army's learning mechanism. It realised from their previous engagements that penetrating the tribal country with a single column yielded limited success.

At the onset of the campaign, General William Lockhart convened *Jirga* and explained to the Maliks of the Waziri tribes the gravity of their transgressions and the generosity of the GOI in offering them terms. Nevertheless, when they were not accepted, military mobilisation began. It was emphatically mentioned that the army would retire from the country once the border demarcation was complete. From a perspective of command, the political as well as military control was bestowed on Lockhart. This points to the institutional and organisational flexibility of the British-Indian Army.⁹⁷

The GOI demanded the banishment from the country of *Mullah Powindah*⁹⁸, the leading spirit in the hostile movement, and finally, the surrender of every rifle, every horse, and all the money stolen from the British camp at Wana. Upon the expiry of the extended deadline on 12

December 1894, three brigades of all arms moved from the north, east and south to inflict punishment on the tribes. Leaving the 20th Bengal Infantry to garrison Wana, the 1st Brigade marched to Kanaguram via the Sarawangal Kotal. The 2nd Brigade moved from Jandola to Makin via the Tank Zam. Finally, the 3rd Brigade moved from Miriam via the Kaiser Valley to Razmak. Therefore, the movement aimed to envelop the strongholds from all sides.

Interestingly, the second brigade, while on the march, blew up several towers belonging to the hostile sections of the tribe and the village of Marobi, which belonged to Mulla Powindah. But the mosque was spared by Lockhart's order. Therefore, even while inflicting punishment on the hostile sections of the Masood Waziris, the British-Indian Army's commander took note of the religious sensibilities of the people. Though they did not meet any organised resistance, camps and pickets were fired into, and small bodies of the enemy often harassed the rearguards. The usual punitive measures continued against different sections of the Mashud Waziris, such as Abdul Rahman Khel and Langar Khel. The continued presence of the British-Indian forces under Lockhart till March 1895 resulted in compliance by the Waziris to all the demands of the government of India.⁹⁹

The British-Indian Army arguably faced its greatest challenge on the NWF in 1897 when a rebellion by almost all of the border's Pathan tribes occurred. Partly driven by apprehensions over the Durand Line, which they saw as a forerunner to full British annexation. The Afghan religious officials also instigated the tribes and provoked the insurrection. Various remote fortresses and military outposts were attacked, leading to the need to carry out several simultaneous military engagements. Among them, Major-General A. Yeatman-Biggs' campaign against the Afridis and Orakzais tribes in the Kohat area and Lockhart's large-scale military operation in Tirah are noteworthy. The gravity of the situation was such that nearly the entire strength of the British-Indian Field Army was mobilised. Over 59,000 regular troops

supported by 118 guns and 4,000 imperial service troops ventured into different parts of the Pathan borderland.¹⁰⁰

The chief objective of the Tirah expeditionary force was the exaction of reparation for Afridi and Orakzai attacks on the Peshawar and Kohat borders against British-Indian frontier posts and the resultant damage in life and property. Notably, the Tirah country was a *terra incognita* for the British-Indian Army prior to this campaign. The expeditionary force marched to Tirah from Shinaori to Samana Shuk, Dargai and Karappa through the Chagru Kotal Pass. Thence to the Tirah country through the Sampagha and Arhanga Pass. Further entering into Maidan and Bagh. The three forts, i.e. Fort Lockhart, Fort Gulistan and Fort Saragarhi were situated within the triangle of Hangu, Shinaori and Karappa.

The Afridis and Orakzais attacked British and British-Indian frontier posts on the Samana and also on the Sadda camp in August-September 1897. Major-General Biggs, commanding the troops in Kohat-Kuram, engaged the enemy and repelled their attack. He sent out scouts to ascertain the Afridi movements and their strength. The convoy of two days' supply that Major-General Biggs ordered out from Hungu faced repeated attacks by the enemy and the rear guards. Engagement such as these represents a classic example of mountain warfare. During the relief of Fort Gulistan, a combined arms approach employing infantry, cavalry and artillery, along with a combination of frontal attack and turning movement, routed almost 6,000 Orakzais. Who held a strong position with lines of Sangars.¹⁰¹ Therefore, despite the numerical superiority of the tribal fighters, tactically, they were still vulnerable to the British-Indian Army's turning movements.

As the British-Indian Army faced a numerically superior enemy scattered over a vast stretch of land, it captured and garrisoned tactically important locations to deny the tribal fighters command of these areas. This also prevented the tribes from cutting off the British-Indian Army

from the rear. As they were marching deep into the tribal country, this was a crucial prerequisite for success. In this campaign, the key to success for the British-Indian Army was a multi-pronged attack on enemy positions and constant cooperation between the mutually supportive columns. The topographic challenges influenced the tactical manoeuvres to a great extent, and in many instances, the main column of attack had to be halted to let other detachments join them. For example, while the main column under Lockhart was marching towards Dargai, it had to be stopped to allow the Gordon Highlanders and the 15th Sikhs to close in and join the ranks. Following the precepts of mountain warfare, the commanding height of the marching route was captured frequently to allow the main column to march unmolested. Scouts were pushed, pickets were formed to repel night attacks and keep a tab on the enemy's movements.

Upon penetrating the Tirah country in November 1897, a proclamation was issued to the several clans of the Afridi and Orakzais, urging them to send their representatives to strike a settlement and accept the conditions forwarded by the GOI. Simultaneously, military actions against smaller to medium enemy gatherings continued. As punitive measures, the defences of many Zakhm villages were destroyed, and a large quantity of forage and grain was collected. Interestingly, the house of Mullah Syed Akbar was located and destroyed. He was one of the central figures to have given religious instigations to the Afridis to rebel. This hints at the effective intelligence gathering and knowledge formation of the British-Indian Army during the campaign. At the end of the campaign in December 1897, the Orakzais were subdued entirely, and the Afridis Expressed their intentions of resuming their former friendly relationship with the GOI. Lockhart commented that they expressed remorse for their misconduct and acknowledged the justice of their punishment. The expedition traversed to all the tactically vital locations within the Oracle and Afridi country, and for the first time, Tirah was accurately surveyed.¹⁰²

The Tirah campaign gave an important tactical lesson. During the campaign, an assault was launched to recapture the Dargai Heights, which was abandoned a couple of days ago by the British-Indian forces. This attempt at recapturing the position was done through a direct assault without any turning or outflanking manoeuvres. Consequently, the heights were captured with a considerable loss of men. The casualty of this particular engagement on the British-Indian side was 200 men, which was pretty high by the standards of frontier warfare. Hence, a purely frontal attack against a well-armed and strongly posted enemy would entail significant loss of life.¹⁰³ It can be argued that an important feature of the whole Tirah campaign was the splendid performance of small detachments engaging different sections of the enemy. In irregular tribal warfare, as it is tough to find and impose a decisive defeat on the whole of the enemy's strength as they rarely offer a pitched battle, smaller to medium sections of the enemy had to be dealt with regularly. Therefore, the work of small unit engagement was crucial for success.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the fighting strength of the Zakka Khels was estimated to be around 5,900 men armed with 740 breach-loading rifles. In 1908, a 7,000-strong British-Indian force was deployed against them in the Bazar Valley. It is interesting to note that in order to secure the whole line of March and thence the theatre of operation, certain tactical locations were found necessary to hold, such as Lala China (the junction of the Khyber and Chora roads), Chora, China (the central point in Bazar), Mangal Bagh Pass (to block the main route from Africa territory into bazaar), Tibai, Sisobi Pass and Bazar Kandao (to block the passes into Afghanistan), and finally, Karamna (to hold the junction of the roads from Bori and Alachai Passes). The base of operation was determined to be Peshawar, and two battalions of the Native Infantry Brigade were to be deployed on the line of communication.¹⁰⁴

Similar to the bestowing of both military and political power in the figure of Lockhart during the Waziristan campaign at the end of the nineteenth century, the general officer commanding the Zaka Khel Expedition in 1908 was also vested with complete political control.

Nevertheless, the Political Agent, Khyber, accompanied him as the Chief Political Officer to advise him and afford every possible assistance in political matters. Rather than the method of collectively punishing the entire tribe, it was deemed necessary to punish only the persons implicated in the numerous raids within the borders of British-India.¹⁰⁵ Similar to earlier COIN campaigns, military and political measures were taken simultaneously.¹⁰⁶

In mountain warfare in the Indian context, taking the offensive against the enemy through the rapidity of movement has been considered a crucial element. The Zakka Khel operation was no exception. The general officer commanding the Bazaar Valley Field Force reported that the rapid advance of the British-Indian Army took the Zakka Khel entirely by surprise and enabled them to seize a position dominating the Bazaar Valley. However, they rarely offered any organised resistance. Therefore, forts-towers in China and some other structures that Khwar and Sarmundo Hamlets were destroyed. Furthermore, in a direct military engagement on 18 February, the Zakka Khels suffered considerable casualties. Therefore, both direct infliction of casualties and indirect damage to properties were continued, which was bolstered by political arrangements.¹⁰⁷ Finally, the combined politico military measures paid off, and at the end of February, around 300 Zakka Khel Afridis came in through an Afridi Jirga numbering 1100 men and deposited their rifles as a symbol of surrender.¹⁰⁸

After the conclusion of the Third Afghan War, cost-effective tribal control on the frontier became essential to the GOI. During the interwar period, airpower as a force multiplier, enhanced the GOI's military power projection capability. It increased the tactical mobility of the British-Indian Army on the frontier to a great extent. It also amplified their surveillance capacity, thus aiding in policing duties. Airpower also reduced the army's logistical concerns, which were a corollary to earlier ground expeditions.¹⁰⁹ For effective tribal control, the Agent to the Governor General and Chief Commissioner in Baluchistan, Mr H.R.C. Dobbs, urged that at least two good aeroplanes be kept at the disposal of the political department for maintaining

civil administration. He claimed that visits by political officers to tribal headquarters yielded positive results in Mesopotamia. Therefore, the same could also be applied to the NWF. Furthermore, contacts with other political agents in the area were also crucial during unrest.¹¹⁰ Brigadier General F.G. Stone of the Royal Artillery emphatically mentioned the air service's importance for political and military intelligence and communication in the NWF. Apart from dealing with tribal insurrections, he held that proper organisation of the RAF in the NWF was necessary even against a formidable conventional enemy in the form of Germany and Bolshevik Russia, who were looking to threaten India through central Asia.¹¹¹

Notably, there were also cynics regarding the use of aeroplanes against tribal insurrections. The Chief Commissioner of NWFP, George Roos-Keppel, held that the moral effect of aircraft was bound to reduce over time as the tribals would learn to adapt to air operations. Despite recognising the importance of the air arm in frontier warfare, he refuted the idea that aeroplanes would 'solve the frontier problem'. Furthermore, He argued that due to the nature of the topography and scattered tribal settlements, it would be challenging for airmen to hit actual targets. During the World Wars, European cities and industrial areas presented identifiable targets for the bombers. However, the situation was completely different in NWF and Afghanistan. Large towns of European or, for that matter, Indian standards did not exist on the frontier. Furthermore, strong air currents in the valleys would make it very difficult to reach closer to the ground while bombing. However, Roos-Keppel clearly mentions that his inhibitions were regarding the tribal territories and not regarding Afghanistan.¹¹²

There was a difference of opinion regarding the employment of aircraft in political and civil duties in the NWF, which was closely connected to the GOI's aim of pacification. There was unanimity among the AVM John Salmond and some of the chief commissioners posted in the NWF that aircraft can be used effectively against tribal insurrections. However, the employment of airpower in political and civil duties became a matter of contention. The Chief

Commissioner of Baluchistan, Colonel Armine Brereton Dew, believed that aircraft were more useful for peaceful penetration and rapid communication than as a punitive weapon. He also emphasised aircraft's capability to safely transport political officers during unrest. However, the Chief Commissioner of NWFP, A.H. Grant, was sceptical of the independent use of aircraft by the Political Departments and Political Officers of the NWF. Furthermore, he opined that Salmond assigned exaggerated importance to the value of aircraft for pacifying the frontier tribes, given the stage of development of the specific military technological piece in 1920. He argued that rather than replacing the ground forces in COIN, airpower should complement it. The Political Agent, Khyber, Major F.E. Humphreys, was no exception in identifying the importance of air operations to pacify recalcitrant tribes in the NWF. He was optimistic in saying that the RAF in India would be of great importance in managing tribal affairs on the frontiers. Nevertheless, he was cynical regarding the condition of the aircraft and the RAF in India in 1920. But he urged that every modern piece of military equipment, including the aircraft, must be brought to bear upon the Pathans and the Afghans because they already possessed modern rifles. Furthermore, due to its range and speed, the RAF could better match the mobility of the tribals as opposed to the army.¹¹³ This era witnessed the beginning of the use of military technology in tribal control, a break with the past.

The lessons of the Third Afghan War and the subsequent crisis in Waziristan manifested the need for constant negotiation with the tribes. However, from the very start, the Political Agent of Tochi was completely cut off from communication with the tribe. It was immensely challenging for him to undertake the return journey of 364 miles by road between Miranshah and Thal. Conversely, completing the same journey by air took only an hour. This remarkable difference between air travel and travel demonstrates the efficiency of the air arm. If the Political Agent at Tochi had an aircraft at his disposal, it would have been easier to strike a settlement with the Kabul Khels promptly and efficiently. The political agent could also consult

the Deputy Commissioner, Kohat, the Political Officer, Orakzais or the Political Agent, Kurram, within two to three hours.¹¹⁴ This shared knowledge would have helped the ‘men on the spot’ to assess and contain the insurrection on the NWF.

Despite the scepticism regarding the RAF’s role in NWF, its effectiveness against tribal insurrections was already recognised by the early 1920s. Therefore, in retaliation to the Waziri attack on the Wana post, repeated air bombing was carried out in April 1922 on a gathering of tribal *lashkar*. The enemy casualties inflicted were 11 tribesmen and 406 animals. Consequently, the tribal lashkars were dispersed.¹¹⁵

III

This section delves into analysing the British-Indian Army’s military-politico tactics employed in Afghanistan and NWF. It considers diverse aspects such as tribal tactics, the perception of the enemy by the British authorities and military commanders, the impact of military technology on tactics and the issue of the use of force. The theoretical approach to mountain warfare would be used as an entry point.

Major A.C. Yate of the 2nd Baluch Battalion commented that the Pathan tactics in the First Afghan War remained unchanged even after 60 years during the Afridi uprising in 1897. On the other hand, Major George Broadfoot remarked that the Afghans were masters in mountain warfare.¹¹⁶ The tribal fighters rarely attempted to contest the march of the conventional forces head-on and in a pitched battle. Their main tactic was to engage the British-Indian Army in skirmishing, threatening their flanks and the transport train. Furthermore, they also attempted to attack the baggage and hang onto the British-Indian rear guards.¹¹⁷

While discussing the general tactical principles of war with the frontier tribes, Colonel J.P.C. Neville mentioned that the tribes had some advantages as opposed to the British-Indian Army. Their innate topographical knowledge of the country, their physical capabilities, and their proximity to the battlefield afforded them agility and an opportunity to hide themselves within the landscape as well as the populace. Furthermore, due to the general militancy in the society, such as the tradition of blood feuds, they were expert skirmishers skilled in using rifles or jellies. Finally, in most cases, they would have numerical superiority against the British-Indian Army. In opposition, the British-Indian Army had topographical, numerical and logistical difficulties. Furthermore, due to the nature of tribal irregular warfare, constant reconnaissance, scouting, picketing and flank-protecting manoeuvres were necessary to keep the invading army safe. Finally, pre-consulted tactical movements were difficult due to continuous unforeseen contingencies. Hence, there was a constant need for improvisation. However, being a conventional army, the British-Indian forces were disciplined, drilled, and, in most cases, technologically superior to their tribal counterparts.¹¹⁸

General Andrew Skeen gave a vivid description of the tribal patience through the narration of a tribal raid on a small British-Indian picquet¹¹⁹ of 60 men overlooking the Tochi River and entrusted with the task of holding a long stretch of road near Miranshah in 1919. A small band of tribal soldiers observed the slackened nature of picketing by the British-Indian contingent for more than five days and seized the opportunity one night when the picket was particularly weary and unvigilant.¹²⁰ Therefore, constant vigilance on the part of the conventional troops was a maxim for success.

The tribal fighters excelled in stratagem and ambushes. Their innate love for independence and individual freedom and their attitude of taking leniency and forbearing as weakness and timidity was something that influenced the British-Indian Army's attitude towards them. Contemporary military practitioners remark that the tribal fighters had no organisation.

However, this was true of the unconventional military engagements against one or several tribes.¹²¹ However, The British-Indian Army was fighting conventional and unconventional warfare simultaneously. The regular Afghan army had minor organisation as well as artillery and transportation. The Afghan artillery manifested its excellence in battles such as the Battle of Maiwand. Therefore, the British-Indian Army adversaries did not follow a monotonous tactical approach. The regular Afghan army offered battle and, in some cases, such as in the Battle of Ali Masjid, resorted to tactical retreat. While the irregular tribal fighters mostly hurt the regular invading troops with hit-and-run tactics and hid using the landscape of the populace as a canvas.¹²² In wars of asymmetry, the unconventional force never tries to out-power the conventional troops on the battlefield. Instead, they try to stay in the conflict long enough when the conventional force, due to economic pressure, international scenario and public opinion in the home country, would have no other option but to withdraw.

Major A.C Yate held that military contact with the Pathans in NWF, the Zulus, and the Soudan Arabs led to the idea that 'special tactics' for the British-Indian Army were required outside conventional military training elucidated in the drill books. He also noted that the lessons of frontier warfare since the First Afghan War were never codified and made available to the British-Indian Army, so some of the mishaps during the 1897 campaign could have been avoided.¹²³ General Lockhart remarked that the enemy the British-Indian Army was facing in Tirah were skilled marksmen, exceptionally active, and well-armed. Furthermore, they were experts in guerrilla warfare. But, the British-Indian Army's discipline, cohesion and valour made them a class apart from their tribal adversaries. It enabled them to overpower the tribal advantages.¹²⁴

On numerous occasions, contemporary practitioners have mentioned the importance of proper training in order to achieve efficiency in mountain warfare. Proper reconnaissance, selection of routes, different marching formations on diverse landscapes and protection of camps were

some of the important principles a soldier on the frontier had to imbibe. Gaining proper topographical knowledge of the theatre of operation was essential for military commanders.¹²⁵ The methods and manoeuvres of European warfare were irrelevant to the British-Indian Army's campaigns in NWF. The principle of deploying one's force on a broad front right after the enemy is sighted would not work in the northwest frontier due to the rough terrain lacking broad roads.¹²⁶ Furthermore, the European precept of charging at the double towards the enemy on a rugged topography for a conventional force carrying a considerable weight on his back wasn't possible.¹²⁷ It can be argued that due to the lack of a doctrinal development of mountain warfare in India, the knowledge of fighting in the hills could never permeate the institutional memory of the British-Indian Armed Institution. Rather than a compilation of official training pamphlets, the learning experience was passed on through lectures and treatises written by individual practitioners through an informal channel.

To impart proper training in mountain warfare, Lord Roberts prescribed performing peace manoeuvres by concentrating troops to properly train officers and rank and file of the British-Indian Army. Like many contemporary military practitioners, F.C. Carter of the Northumberland Fusiliers remarked on the British-Indian Armed Establishment's lack of proper drill and training for mountain warfare. Notably, the infantry drill books up till 1890 didn't have any separate sections on the subject of jungle Desert and mountain warfare. Only in the 1896 edition can we find a brief note on 'savage warfare'. Due to the absence of uniform instructions, each military commander had to devise his unique plan of attack. This resulted in the rank and file being subjected to fresh instructions whenever the commanding officer changed. Hence, he advocated outlining at least the basic and general principles for attack and defensive manoeuvres in mountain or jungle warfare.¹²⁸

The infantry drill manual instructed that the tactical disposition of the troops should be such that in savage warfare, the most efficient fire could be directed towards the enemy. The nature

of the topography and the armament of the tribals were also to be considered by the commander of a conventional army while deciding upon the formation. A closed formation was prescribed against an untrained and indifferently armed savage enemy. The formation would be square or in an echelon, in a way that the enemy is forced to attack as small a front as possible so that the midst of intense fire could be delivered on them. Rather than deploying the guns in a dispersed formation as such in pairs, their massed use was recommended placing them outside the square formation.¹²⁹ However, it should be remembered that the actual situation on the battlefield was much different. In most cases, the commander deployed his men in a much different disposition than what was recommended in the drill books. Take, for example, the battle of Ahmad Khel, where the guns were deployed at the flanks of the British-Indian lines instead of their concentrated deployment advocated in the books.

Some military practitioners preferred to inculcate tactical knowledge through experience rather than learning theoretical ideas from drill books. The physical preparedness of the British-Indian Army, efficient collective and individual shooting, elasticity of movement, and situational awareness were essential qualities to imbibe.¹³⁰

Military technology has considerably influenced the outcome of battles since the ages. The impact of revolutionising military technology in large-scale conventional European warfare was much greater than that of the Indian frontiers. However, it cannot be denied that the evolution of military technology left its mark on frontier campaigns and often resulted in tactical changes. In the Ambala campaign, the British Brown Bess muskets were outmatched by the Afghan *jezails*, who had a better range. Consequently, the tribes North of the Kabul River combined to hold up fair-sized British-Indian forces for several weeks. The arrival of first Snider, then Martini-Henry, and later Lee Metfords with smokeless powder tipped the balance in favour of the GOI's conventional army. During the 1897 disturbance, the Bunerwals at Tanga Pass were overawed by the use of new rifles by the British-Indian troops. However,

there were reports of the tribals using long-range rifles from the end of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, mostly from 1915, the tribals got hold of long-range rifles and smokeless powder, which aided their ability to remain undetected while inflicting damage from a long range. This technological progress was beneficial for the tribal fighters both in offence and defence. The results were shown in the actions against the Mashuds in the frontier uprising in 1919-20. General Skeen experienced the fighting first-hand, and though they were up against as many as 5,000 men, only twice did he witness smoke from their rifle's black powder.¹³¹

It has been mentioned that arming the Punjab Frontier Force (henceforth PFF) with breech-loaders increased their efficiency in the proportion of three to one. In hill warfare, a British or Indian soldier bearing a breech-loading rifle was considered twice as effective as their predecessors in 1860. On the other hand, it was also believed that, unlike the Afridis, the Mashud Waziris did not learn the importance of quick-loading and long-range rifles. Hence the latter did not strive to arm themselves with modern rifles.¹³²

At the end of the nineteenth century, the tribesmen had access to new and improved technology in the form of long-range rifles, which they could use to inflict severe damage on the British-Indian troops from the safety of their hill-top concealments.¹³³ Neville mentioned that the British-Indian Army did not command unquestionable superiority in terms of modern weapons and ammunition. As already mentioned, by the end of the nineteenth century, the tribes had long-range rifles. It is interesting to note that by the end of the nineteenth century, electronic lamps illuminated balloons were introduced in the Indian frontiers. These electric searchlights covering the principal salients of the defence would have given the British-Indian Army an upper hand over their adversaries. Machine guns were relatively more effective in repelling night attacks than artillery.¹³⁴ Major Younghusband held that the introduction of the breechloading rifles, artillery pieces and the widespread use of railways have significantly changed the circumstances in which Indian campaigns were conducted. However, ascribing

such gross technological superiority to the British and British-Indian forces has been refuted by Major A.C. Yate. He argued that railways only facilitated the transportation of British-Indian soldiers and supplies and facilitated communication between the base of operations and the actual theatre of combat. Therefore, it had strategic and logistical implications but not tactical. On the other hand, the introduction of the breech-loader and magazine rifle not only empowered the conventional armies but also provided the tribes of NWF with a very effective weapon. The impact of this was evident during the Tirah campaign.¹³⁵ Major-General W.F. Gatacre, commanding the Eastern District in the NWF, also acknowledged the constant increase and improvement in firearms among the NWF tribes.¹³⁶ However, not all tribal clans possess modern rifles. Brigadier General Kennedy reported during the Zakka Khel expedition that the Mashuds had only a few long-range rifles in 1881. Therefore, this stands in direct opposition to the claims by some writers that the tribes were arming themselves with long-range rifles by the end of the nineteenth century.¹³⁷

The mountain gun was a piece of military technology specifically suited for mountain warfare. It played a very important role in the relief of Fort Gullistan under Major-General Biggs. The guns shelled the enemy's marksmen at Tsalai at a range of 900 yards. Furthermore, a combined arms approach, along with a combination of frontal attack and turning movement, routed almost 6,000 Orakzais, who held a strong position with lines of Sangars. The mountain guns provided cover for the British-Indian infantry to engage the enemy.¹³⁸ Mountain artillery allowed the British-Indian Army to dislodge the enemy from the heights at Sampagha Pass. They made excellent practice as far as 2200 yards. This enabled the British-Indian Army to inflict considerable damage upon the enemy from a safe distance. It did not allow the tribal fighters to come in contact with the British-Indian ranks, nullifying the former's numerical superiority.¹³⁹ During the capture of the Arhanga Pass, 6 British-Indian Mountain Batteries bombarded the enemy's defences accurately. The concentrated fire of the 2.5-inch guns

demoralised the already feeble defenders of the passes, and British-Indian casualties were next to nil.¹⁴⁰ The use of machine guns at Chakdara during the Tirah Campaign in 1897 manifested great moral and physical effects on the tribals.¹⁴¹ Artillery, in general, and mountain guns, in particular, separated the conventional British-Indian troops from their tribal irregular enemy. Though the latter possessed several modern rifles by the end of the nineteenth century, the former had complete superiority in terms of field, mountain and siege guns. However, the regular Afghan army had a considerable number of artillery pieces, and they were put to good use in the three Afghan Wars, as manifested in the Battle of Maiwand.

The tactics employed by the British-Indian Army in NWF and Afghanistan, the development of weaponry and the application of military force in COIN campaigns were largely determined by the British-Indian Armed establishment's perception of its enemy. This perception was coloured by the imperial discourse on race. This provided an ideological impetus behind technological development on the one hand and tactical evolution on the other. The discourse on 'savage' or 'uncivilised warfare' emphasised the civilisational difference between the British and their tribal adversaries. It acted as a justification for the use of tactics that lay outside the domain of conventional warfare.

Charles Callwell prescribed a moral domination of 'uncivilised' enemies through the use of severe punishment. He held that 'butcher and bolt' expeditions were the most effective way to subdue 'savage' tribal adversaries.¹⁴² The British Army's Field Service Regulation, 1909, mentioned that 'the susceptibility of this class of enemy to moral influences is a most important factor in the campaign.... A vigorous offensive, strategical as well as tactical, is always the safest method of conducting operations'. While engaging in campaigns against Indigenous populations, it was deemed necessary to adapt the weapons, tactics, and characteristics of the opponent.¹⁴³

The impact of racial ideology on military technological development can be clearly seen in the context of expanding bullets, in the late nineteenth century. Expanding bullets are specifically designed projectiles that increase in size upon contact, causing more severe damage to a live target. Official records indicate that during the Chitral Campaign in 1895, it was observed that the Lee-Metford rounds often failed to incapacitate the enemy. However, the Dum Dum bullet (an expanding round) proved far more successful due to its higher stopping power, which is the ability of a handgun to cause deep penetrating ballistic injury that renders a victim unable to continue fighting.¹⁴⁴ Surgeon-Major-General J. B. Hamilton said that civilised folks are more vulnerable to injuries than 'savages'. In contrast to civilised troops, fighters from the primitive tribes would continue fighting even after suffering severe injuries.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, though the other European nations were prohibiting expanding rounds, its use against the tribals was justified.

It led Kim Wagner to argue that the British never aimed to employ only the minimum force necessary in their small wars. They had shown a reluctance to restrict the amount of brutality in combat.¹⁴⁶ However, such generalisation is flawed. It has already been depicted that the GOI exercised every caution possible not to incite the friendly tribes during their COIN operations. The British-Indian Army, in most cases, refrained from inflicting indiscriminate punishment on the tribes during punitive operations. Since political negotiation always preceded and followed military action, using restrained force was the only option for the military commanders. Therefore, the thesis argues that instead of using only military force, the British-Indian Army employed military-politico manoeuvres in conventional and unconventional campaigns beyond the Indus.

Salmond argued that before commencing direct punitive action on any tribe, they should be given the chance to surrender and come into negotiation. The method of dropping propaganda pamphlets and then sending a second warning through harmless dropping of bombs in the

neighbourhood of the tribal settlement was espoused. Salmond also harped on the absolute helplessness of the tribes in preventing attacks from aircraft, which constituted the moral effect that he so emphatically brought to the fore. He went to the extent of arguing that due to the coming of this new piece of military technology, the whole frontier policy of the GOI needed to be reviewed. Earlier, the GOI had to recognise the nominal independence of the frontier tribes. To interfere with this idea implied military pressure by expedition and or occupation, both of which incurred considerable expenses. However, this limitation was entirely removed by the coming of the air-arm. Since the aircraft under the political officers could be effectively used to control the tribes and force them to agree to the conditions of peace by the GOI, expensive military punitive expeditions would seldom be required. Furthermore, it would obviate the need for tribal militias, which also caused a drain on the GOI's exchequer.¹⁴⁷ It can be argued that the RAF was to act as an imperial panopticon in the NWF, keeping the tribal propensity for insurrection in check.

It can be argued that mountain warfare in the NWF and Afghanistan entailed tactics different from European conventional warfare and from that of the Indian mainland. Proficiency in such warfare also required specific training. It has been mentioned time and again that the drill books fell short till the end of the nineteenth century to impart the proper knowledge required to wage war in mountainous countries. However, it should be noted that the performance of the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan and NWF was more than satisfactory despite being constantly trained in conventional European mode of fighting. One can say that this precluded the necessity for the go to train their army separately in the art of mountain warfare.

Conclusion:

The British-Indian Army waged conventional and unconventional warfare simultaneously in Afghanistan and NWF. Their main objective against the Afghan regulars was to defeat them on

the battlefield. However, rather than simply defeating the tribals, GOI aimed to control them and contain their insurrections. Therefore, a composite tactics was required that would, on the one hand, establish the military superiority of the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan and, on the other hand, pacify the tribal lands. When the Afghan regular army met the British-Indian forces on the battlefield, they were mostly outmanoeuvred by turning movements, outgunned by volley firing and artillery barrage and outwitted by feinting and tactical decoys. However, when dealing with tribal opponents, they aimed to disperse tribal congregations with small arms and artillery fire, surgically target tribal possessions through punitive actions and convene *jirgas* for negotiation. Therefore, the British-Indian Army tactics was not only military but military-politico-legal. The military commanders and political officers were not only men on the spot but prime agents of British-Indian pacification. Military technology, to a great extent, influenced the minor tactics of warfare till the introduction of air power. However, the latter technology significantly altered the methods employed for tribal control.

The imperial perception of the enemy beyond the Indus was greatly influenced by their racial discourse, which defined the tactical realm of British-Indian COIN. Ascribing savagery to the tribal populace justified the use of tactical means which were not employed on the mainland of India. However, indiscriminate infliction of damage to the tribal property was not advocated and carried out as the primary aim of the GOI was not to exterminate but to control them. Furthermore, by convening *jirgas* and striking political settlements, a legal dimension was given to the British-Indian COINs. Therefore, the British-Indian Army's COIN was marked by the tactics of coercion-negotiation-withdrawal till the onset of the first two decades of the twentieth century. Following this, it was transformed into surveillance-coercion-negotiation.

-
- ¹ Mungo Melvin, "Tactics" in *The Oxford Companion to Military History*. ed. Richard Holmes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 893.
- ² Clifford J. Rogers, "Strategy", in *International Encyclopaedia of Military History*, ed. James C. Bradford (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1233-1238.
- ³ Chas W. Raymond, R.R. Raymond, "Strategy and Grand Tactics", *Professional Memoirs, Corps of Engineers, United States Army, and Engineer Department at Large*, vol. 7, No. 34, 1915, pp. 469-472.
- ⁴ Lieutenant D.C. Walker, "On Military Tactics", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 1, issue 3 (1857), p. 257.
- ⁵ Carl Von Clausewitz, *Principles of War* (New York: Dover Publications, INC, 2003), p. 15.
- ⁶ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 102- 130.
- ⁷ Colonel C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), p. 21, 286
- ⁸ G. J. Younghusband, *Indian Frontier Warfare* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, 1898), p. 1-10.
- ⁹ Colonel J.F.C. Fuller, *The Reformation of War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1923), p. 191.
- ¹⁰ Charles W. Gwynn, *Imperial Policing* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939), pp. 1-9.
- ¹¹ *JP 3-0, Joint Campaigns and Operations*, Joint Publications Operations Series (Published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, United States, 2011)
- ¹² Kaushik Roy, "Small Wars and Pacification in the British Empire: A Case Study of Lushai Hills, 1850–1900", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, volume 51, issue 2, (2023), pp. 1-10.
- ¹³ G.J. Bryant, "Pacification in the early British Raj, 1755–85", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1985, vol 14, no 1, pp. 1-14.
- ¹⁴ T.R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998)
- ¹⁵ Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60* (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 1-10; David H. Ucko, "Whither Counterinsurgency: The Rise and Fall of a Divisive Concept" in *Routledge Handbook of*

- Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, eds. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (London: Routledge, 2012) p. 68; David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 183.
- ¹⁶ Arka Chowdhury, "Debating the Doctrine of 'Minimum Force': Small Wars in the North-Western Frontier of India and Afghanistan, 1860–1920" in *Warfare and Society in British-India, 1757–1947*, eds. Ashutosh Kumar, Kaushik Roy ((Oxon: Routledge, 2023), pp. 158-181.
- ¹⁷ Kaushik Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans 1500-2013* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 73.
- ¹⁸ Mohan Lal, *Life of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan of Kabul*, vol. 1 (1846; reprint, New Delhi: Asian Education, 2004), pp. 239-241.
- ¹⁹ *Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India: Compiled in the Intelligence Branch*, vol. 3, *Baluchistan and the First Afghan War* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1910), p. 305.
- ²⁰ Ali Ahmad Jalali, *Military history of Afghanistan: From the Great Game to the Global War on Terror* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2017), p. 104.
- ²¹ Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan*, pp. 77-78.
- ²² Lieutenant-General Sir George Lawrence, *Reminisce of Forty-three Years in India* (London: John Murray, 1874), p. 14.
- ²³ Captain James Outram, *Rough Notes of the Campaign in Sind and Afghanistan in 1838-39: Being Extracts from a Personal Journal Kept While on the Staff of the Army of the Indus* (Cornhill: J. M. Richardson, 1840), pp. 108-111.
- ²⁴ Newsletter September 10, 1839, 'Army of the Indus', vol. 332, Foreign Miscellaneous, NAI, New Delhi.
- ²⁵ From Major-General W. Nott to T.H. Maddock, Secretary to the GOI, dated August 31, 1842, Military General Orders, July-December 1842, NAI, New Delhi.
- ²⁶ From Major-General Nott to Major-General Pollock, May 30, 1842; From Nott to Major-General England, April 18, 1842; Letter from Nott, September 17, 1842, Pollock Mss., MSS EUR F 439/3, APAC, BL, London.
- ²⁷ Mowbray Morris, *The First Afghan War* (London: Simpson Low, 1878), pp. 74-75.
- ²⁸ From Sale to Pollock, January 22, 1842, MSS EUR F 439/3, APAC, BL, London.
- ²⁹ Roy, *War and Society*, p. 87.
- ³⁰ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, p. 7; Sydney H. Shadbolt, *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880* (London: Sampson Low, 1882), pp. 4-5
- ³¹ Robert Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War; How and Why They Fight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 98
- ³² To A.C. Lyall, Esq., from Sir Frederick Roberts, GOI, Foreign Secret Supplementary, December 1879, No. 1, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³³ To Marquis of Salisbury from Lord A. Loftus, GOI, Foreign Secret Supplement, January 1879, No. 21, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁴ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, p. 7
- ³⁵ Colonel H.B. Hanna, *The Second Afghan War 1878-79-80: Its Causes, Its Conduct and Its Consequences*, vol. 3 (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1910), pp. 9-10
- ³⁶ Shadbolt, *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880*, p. 6
- ³⁷ Hanna, *The Second Afghan War*, pp. 2-3.
- ³⁸ Shadbolt, *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880*, p. 7
- ³⁹ Telegram from Major Cavaganri, GOI, Foreign Secret Supplementary, December 1878, No. 183, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴⁰ Major G.M. Bullock, 'Mountain Warfare as Applied to India', *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 22, No. 107 (1893), pp. 304-330
- ⁴¹ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, pp. 92-98; Lord Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1901) pp. 348-354; Brian Robson, *The Road to Kabul: The Second Afghan War 1878-1881* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007), p. 81.
- ⁴² Shadbolt, *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880*, p. 22
- ⁴³ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, pp. 111-112
- ⁴⁴ Jalali, *Afghanistan*, pp. 225-227.
- ⁴⁵ Letter from Lieutenant General D.M. Stewart to the Adjutant General in India in a letter from Major-General G. R. Greaves, Adjutant General in India to Colonel Allen Johnson, Secretary to the GOI, MD, dated 19 May 1880, progs. No. 11502, Military Department Proceedings of Kabul Expedition, (henceforth MDP, KE) August 1880, NAI, New Delhi; Copy of Letter, dated. 3 June 1880, 1969-04-03, TSC, NAM, London; Shadbolt, *Afghan Campaign*, pp. 79-81.
- ⁴⁶ Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War*, p. 129.
- ⁴⁷ Letter from Lieutenant T. Hope, Under Secretary to the GOI, MD, to Colonel Allen Johnson, Secretary of GOI, MD, progs. No. 12188, July 1880, MDP, NAI, New Delhi.

- ⁴⁸ Robson, *The Road to Kabul*, p. 222.
- ⁴⁹ Richard J. Stacpoole-Ryding, *Maiwand: The Last Stand of the 66th (Berkshire) Regiment in Afghanistan, 1880* (Stroud: The History Press, 2008), p. 53; Ali A. Jalali, Lester W. Grau, "Expeditionary Forces: Superior Technology Defeated, the Battle of Maiwand" in *The British Army 1815-1914*, ed. Harold E. Raugh, Jr (2006, reprint; London: Routledge, 2018), p. 72.
- ⁵⁰ Robson, *The Road to Kabul*, p. 226.
- ⁵¹ Shadbolt, *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880*, p. 95.
- ⁵² From Major-General G. R. Greaves, Adjutant-General in India, to the Secretary to the GOI, MD, progs. No. 5351-A. "Kabul," 25th September, 1880, MDP, KE, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵³ Shadbolt, *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880*, p. 97.
- ⁵⁴ "An Historic Reverse in Afghanistan: Maiwand, 1880", extracts from the diary of Lt.-Col. H. Anderson, *The Journal of The Royal Service Institution*, vol. 78, No. 512 (1933), pp. 756-760.
- ⁵⁵ *The Third Afghan War 1919: Official Account Compiled in the General Staff Branch*, p. 18.
- ⁵⁶ 'Memorandum on the possibilities of the employment of Royal Air Force by the Foreign and Political Department' in a letter from W.G.H. Salmond, Air Vice Marshal, Commanding RAF, Middle East to The Chief of General Staff, AHQ, India, October 31, 1919, progs. No. 13, FDP, Frontier A, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁷ AIR 5/1329, Resume of Operations against Afghanistan 18th May to 31st May 1919, PRO, Kew; AHQ General Staff Branch, India, *The Third Afghan War 1919 Official Account* (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publications Branch, 1926), 35.
- ⁵⁸ From the Officer Commanding 31 Squadron, RAF, Rissalpur to the GOC, HQ, RAF India, Simla, dated 12 May 1919, diary No. 35650, WDA, vol. 1, No. WW1/55/H, Military Department, NAI, New Delhi; From the A.G.G., Baluchistan, to the FPD, Simla, dated 9 July 1919, diary No. 58991, WDA, vol. 5, No. WW1/59/H, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁹ A. J. Young, "Royal Air Force North-West Frontier, India, 1915-39", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 127, issue 1, 1982, p.60.
- ⁶⁰ Roy, *War and Society*, p. 128.
- ⁶¹ A Frontier Soldier, "Notes on Mountain Warfare", *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 25, No. 124, 1896, pp. 19-24.
- ⁶² Lieutenant Colonel H.H. Hart, "The Tactical Principles and Details Best Suited to Warfare on the Frontiers of India", *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 38, July 1899, No. 136, pp. 244-249.
- ⁶³ Newsletter, November 8, 1839, 'Cabool', Foreign Miscellaneous, vol. 332, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶⁴ Newsletter, November 30, 1839; Newsletter, December 20, 1839, Foreign Miscellaneous, vol. 332, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶⁵ J.H. Stocqueler, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Major-General Sir William Nott, G.C.B.* vol. 1 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1854) pp. 184-185.
- ⁶⁶ Stocqueler, *Sir William Nott*, pp. 272-282.
- ⁶⁷ Major F. C. Carter, "On Mountain Warfare: India", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 39, issue 213, (1895), pp. 1071-1100.
- ⁶⁸ Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, vol 2, (New Delhi: Low Price Publication, 2004), p. 285.
- ⁶⁹ Zaimusht Expedition, Instructions to General Watson, November 1879, progs. No. 67, Foreign Secret Supplementary, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁰ Expedition Against the Zaimusht and Other Tribes, progs. nos. 13-21, January 1880, Foreign Secret Supplementary, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷¹ Expedition Against the Atchakzais, November 1880, progs. No. 39, Foreign Secret Supplementary, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷² *Field Service Regulations, Part I, Operations* (London: HMSO, Harrison and Sons, 1914), p. 106; Hart, "Tactical Principles", pp. 244-249.
- ⁷³ Carter, "On Mountain Warfare" India", pp. 1071-1100.
- ⁷⁴ Frontier Soldier, "Notes on Mountain Warfare", pp. 19-40.
- ⁷⁵ Younghusband, *Frontier Warfare*, p. 25.
- ⁷⁶ Callwell, *Small Wars*, p. 41.
- ⁷⁷ Callwell, *Small Wars*, pp. 42, 310.
- ⁷⁸ Copy of papers relating to the proceedings of Maj-Gen Roberts in the Khost Valley on the 7th and 8th days of January 1879, Parliamentary Papers (HOC) 1878/9, IOR/L/MIL/17/14/35, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁷⁹ Defeat of the Maris Near Mal in August 1880, by Major Douglas, 4th Bengal Native Infantry, progs. No. 15018, MDPKE, December 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁰ *Operations in Waziristan, 1919-1920* (Delhi: Government Central Press, 1923), pp. 1-6, MISC/4330/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸¹ General Sir Andrew Skeen, *Passing It On: Short Talks on Tribal Fighting in the North West Frontier of India* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd., 1932), pp. 2-5.

- ⁸² From W. M. Young, Secretary to GOP to the Secretary to the GOI, FD, January 3, 1881, in From Colonel S. Black, Secretary to Government, Punjab MD to Colonel G. Chesney, Secretary to the GOI, MD, February 24, 1881, progs. No. 1, Waziri Expedition, MDP, 1881, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸³ The *Powindahs* are a nomadic tribe residing in modern-day Afghanistan and north-western Pakistan (previously NWF). They were primarily Ghilzais. See Captain J.A. Robinson, *Notes on Nomad Tribes of Eastern Afghanistan* (Quetta: Nisa Traders, 1978).
- ⁸⁴ From Lt.Col W. Ridgeway, Assistant Secretary to the GOI, FD to Lt. Col. O.R. Newmarch, Officiating Secretary to the GOI, MD, April 27, 1881, progs. No. 252, Waziri Expedition, MDP, 1881, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁵ From W. M. Young, Secretary to GOP to the Secretary to the GOI, FD, January 3, 1881, in From Colonel S. Black, Secretary to Government, Punjab MD to Colonel G. Chesney, Secretary to the GOI, MD, February 24, 1881, progs. No. 1, Waziri Expedition, MDP, 1881, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁶ From Colonel S. Black, Secretary to Government, Punjab MD to Colonel G. Chesney, Secretary to the GOI, MD, February 24, 1881, progs. No. 1, Waziri Expedition, MDP, 1881, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁷ From Greaves to Chesney, July 2, 1881, progs. No. 380, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁸ Frontier Soldier, "Notes on Mountain Warfare", pp. 19-40.
- ⁸⁹ From Greaves to Chesney, July 2, 1881, progs. No. 380, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁰ From Lieut. Col. Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent to the GG in Baluchistan to the Secretary to the GOI, FD, December 23, 1884, progs. No. 283, Foreign External A, 1885, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹¹ Captain S.M. Congreve-Schneider, *The Zhob Valley Expedition* (London: WM. Dawson and Sons, 1889), pp. 9-15.
- ⁹² From Major-General TD Baker Adjutant General in India to Colonel G. Chesney secretary to the GOI, MD January 17, 1885, progs. No. 678, Zhob Operations 1884, IOR/L/MIL/7/14979, BL, London; From Brigadier General O.V. Tanner to The Quartermaster General in India, October 26, 1884, progs. No. 19-S, Zhob Operations 1884, IOR/L/MIL/7/14979, BL, London.
- ⁹³ From The Commissioner and Superintendent Derajat Division to Officiating Secretary to the Government of Punjab October 23, 1884, progs. No. 267, Foreign External A, 1885, NAI, New Delhi; From the Deputy Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan to the Commissioner and Superintendent Derajat Division, October 22, 1884, progs. No. 268, Foreign External A, 1885, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁴ From Lieut. Col. Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent to the GG in Baluchistan to the Secretary to the GOI, FD, December 23, 1884, progs. No. 283, Foreign External A, 1885, NAI, New Delhi; From H.M. Durand, Officiating Secretary to the GOI, FD to the Agent to the GG in Baluchistan, February 25, 1885, progs. No. 297, Foreign External A, 1885, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁵ Crawford McFall, *With the Zhob Field Force 1890* (London: William Heinemann, 1895), pp. 1-14.
- ⁹⁶ From Colonel W.M. Less, Deputy Secretary to the GOI, MD to the Quartermaster-General in India, March 9, 1881, progs. No. 7, Waziri Expedition, MDP, 1881, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁷ From Secretary to the GOI to the Chief Secretary to the GOP [henceforth GOP], Nov 29, 1894, progs. No. 1, Military Department Proceedings [henceforth MDP], Waziristan 1895, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁸ Mullah Powindah was a religious figure from the Pashtun tribe during the nineteenth century. He utilised the Tochi Valley in North Waziristan as his operational base and incited the local populace to insurrection in Jihad against the British.
- ⁹⁹ From Major-General Morton, Adjutant-General in India to the Secretary to the GOI, MD, April 13, 1895, progs. No. 904, MDP, Waziristan, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁰ Moreman, *The Army in India*, p. 68.
- ¹⁰¹ Despatches from Major-General Yeatman-Biggs, Commanding Kohat-Kurram, on the measures taken to repel the attacks made by the Afridis and Orakzais on the frontier posts on the Samana in August and September 1897 and on the Attack on the Sadda Camp on the 16th and 17th September 1897, progs. No. 1621, MDP, Tirah Expedition 1897-98, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰² General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 18th to 31st October, 1897, progs. No. illegible; General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 1st November 1897 to the 26th January 1898, progs. No. 2619; General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 27th January to the 5th April 1898, progs. No. 2631, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰³ Colonel H.D. Hutchinson, "The Story of Tirah, and the Lessons of the Campaign", *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 27, no. 132 (1898), pp. 234-235.
- ¹⁰⁴ From the Chief of the Staff to the Base Commandant, Peshawar, February 13, 1908, diary No 208, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁵ From the GOI, FD to the GOI, Army Department, February 13, 1908, diary No 213, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁶ From Lieutenant-Colonel Deane, Chief Commissioner and Agent to the GG in the NWFP to the Foreign Secretary, Peshawar, February 12, 1908, in diary No. 213, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁷ The General Officer Commanding [Henceforth GOC] Bazaar Valley Field Force to the CIC February 19, 1908, diary No 361; from GOC to the Chief of Staff (henceforth COS), February 20, 1908, diary No 363; from the CIC to the GOC, February 20, 1908, diary No 364, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁸ From the GOC to the COS, February 27, 1908, diary No. 436, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁹ Moreman, *The Army in India*, p. 167.

¹¹⁰ From H.R.C. Dobbs, Agent to the Governor General and Chief Commissioner in Baluchistan to Denys Bray, Foreign Secretary to the GOI in Foreign and Political Department (henceforth FPD), September 1, 1919, progs. No. 6, Foreign Political, Frontier A, May 1921, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹¹ F.G. Stone, "The Air Service and the NW Frontier", extracts from the Pioneer dated January 29, 1920 in progs. No. 6, Foreign Political, Frontier A, May 1921, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹² From George Roos-Keppel, Chief Commissioner, NWFP to The Secretary to the GOI in the FDP, Delhi, February 17, 1919, progs. No. 3, FDP, Frontier-A, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹³ Instructions relating to the use of aeroplanes by political officers in the NW Frontier Province and Balochistan, FPD, Frontier-A, May 1920, progs. No. 6-14, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹⁴ Instructions relating to the use of aeroplanes by political officers in the NW Frontier Province and Balochistan, FPD, Frontier-A, May 1920, progs. No. 6-14, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹⁵ Report on the Air Operations at Wana, Waziristan, 1922, IOR/L/MIL/7/16921, APAC, BL, London.

¹¹⁶ A.C. Yate, "Sixty Years of Frontier Warfare", *RUSI Journal*, 1900, vol. 44, issue 265, p. 225.

¹¹⁷ Colonel H.D. Hutchinson, "The Story of Tirah, and the Lessons of the Campaign", *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, 1898, vol. 27, no. 132, p. 242.

¹¹⁸ Colonel J.P.C. Neville, "The Tactical Principles and Details Best Suited to Warfare on the Frontiers of India", *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 38, No. 136, July 1899, pp. 192-195.

¹¹⁹ A small group of soldiers performing a particular duty, especially one sent out to watch for the enemy

¹²⁰ Skeen, *Passing It on*, pp. 2-5.

¹²¹ Hart, "The Tactical Principles", pp. 244-249.

¹²² Scott Gates *et. al.* "Continuity and Change in Asymmetric Warfare in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans" in *War and State Building in Afghanistan: Historical and Modern Perspective*, eds. Scott Gates, Kaushik Roy (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 21.

¹²³ Yate, "Sixty Years of Frontier Warfare", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 44, issue 265 (1900), p. 225.

¹²⁴ General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 18th to 31st October, 1897, progs. No. illegible; General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 1st November 1897 to the 26th January 1898, progs. No. 2619; General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 27th January to the 5th April 1898, progs. no. 2631, NAI, New Delhi.

¹²⁵ Carter, "On Mountain Warfare" pp, 1071-1100; Lieutenant Charles Metcalfe Macgregor, *Mountain Warfare: An Essay on the Conduct of Military Operations in Mountainous Countries* (London: Nissen and Parker, 1866), pp. 1-25.

¹²⁶ Colonel J.P.C. Neville, "The Tactical Principles and Details Best Suited to Warfare on the Frontiers of India", *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 38, July 1899, no. 136, p. 192.

¹²⁷ Major-General W.F. Gatacre, "A Few Notes on The Characteristics of Hill-Fighting in India, and The Training of Infantry Necessary for the Same, Possible in England", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 43, issue 260 (1899), pp. 1065-1067.

¹²⁸ Captain F.C. Carter, "On the tactical training in district concentration, best fitted for preparing the army in India for war- a) Against a Civilized Enemy b) Against Savage Tribes in Mountain or Jungle Warfare", *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, 1894, vol. 23, no. 117, pp. 144-151.

¹²⁹ *Infantry Drill, 1896* (London: HMSO, 1896), pp. 127-129, RAMC/1100, Royal Army Medical Corps Muniments Collection, Welcome collection, London.

¹³⁰ Gatacre, "Characteristics of Hill-Fighting in India", pp. 1065-1067.

¹³¹ Skeen, *Passing It On*, pp. 12-14.

-
- ¹³² From Colonel S. Black, Secretary to Government, Punjab to Colonel H.K. Burne, Secretary to the GOI, dated March 13, 1879, progs. No. 6906, MDPKE, January 1880, NAI, New Delhi; From Colonel S. Black to Colonel H.K. Burne, dated March 24, 1879, progs. No. 6907, MDPKE, January 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹³³ Yate, pp. 231-232.
- ¹³⁴ Neville, "The Tactical Principles", pp. 192-223.
- ¹³⁵ Yate, "North West Frontier Warfare", p. 1173.
- ¹³⁶ Gatacre, "Hill Fighting", pp. 1065-1067.
- ¹³⁷ From Greaves to Chesney, July 2, 1881, progs. No. 380, Field Operation, Zakka Khel, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹³⁸ Despatches from Major-General Yeatman-Biggs, Commanding Kohat-Kurram, on the measures taken to repel the attacks made by the Afridis and Orakzais on the frontier posts on the Samana in August and September 1897 and on the Attack on the Sadda Camp on the 16th and 17th September 1897, progs. No. 1621, Military Department Proceedings of Tirah Expedition 1897-98, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹³⁹ General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 18th to 31st October, 1897, progs. no. illegible; General Sir William Lockhart's despatch describing the operations of the Tirah Expeditionary Force from the 1st November 1897 to the 26th January 1898, progs. No. 2619.
- ¹⁴⁰ Hutchinson, "The Story of Tirah", pp. 231-252.
- ¹⁴¹ Neville, "The Tactical Principles", pp. 192-223.
- ¹⁴² Callwell, *Small Wars*, pp. 41-42.
- ¹⁴³ *Field Service Regulation*, pp. 191, 197.
- ¹⁴⁴ Dum Dum bullet: Parliamentary Questions and medical reports on wounds, IOR/L/MIL/7/12020, 1895-1899, APAC, British Library, London.
- ¹⁴⁵ Surgeon-Major-General J. B. Hamilton, "The Evolution of The Dum-Dum Bullet", *The British Medical Journal*, no. 1, May 14, 1898, pp. 1250-51.
- ¹⁴⁶ Kim A. Wagner, 'Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency,' *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 85 (2018), p. 229.
- ¹⁴⁷ 'Memorandum on the possibilities of the employment of Royal Air Force by the Foreign and Political Department' in a letter from W.G.H. Salmond, Air Vice Marshal, Commanding RAF, Middle East to The Chief of General Staff, Army HQ, India, October 31, 1919, progs. No. 13, FPD, Frontier A, NAI, New Delhi.

Chapter 3

Logistics of the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan and North-West Frontier, 1839-1920

Introduction

Improved weapons technology, tactical ingenuity and rigorous training may ensure success in combat. However, the sustenance of an army depends on the commissariat's ability to feed and equip its men through the procurement and transportation of supplies. Failure in this colossal endeavour can immobilise an army, draining its vitality. However, the predominance of the War and Society approach in analysing the British-Indian Army's warfare has overshadowed this critical aspect. This chapter attempts to overcome this lacuna. It revolves around the central question: how did the British-Indian Commissariat adapt to the ever-changing situations in Afghanistan and NWF? This chapter underscores the adaptability of the British-Indian Commissariat, a quality that was crucial in overcoming the logistical challenges. Furthermore, the connection between logistics and tactics is also examined. The chapter uses the organisational matrix and learning mechanism of the British-Indian Commissariat as entry points into the larger framework of the British-Indian armed establishment.

Supplying a conventional army during a campaign is demanding, particularly in a locale with rugged terrain and harsh climate. With its challenging landscape, Afghanistan is a prime example of such a scenario. Logistics is perhaps the sphere of military activity which is impacted by environmental factors to the greatest extent. The British-Indian Commissariat's ability to navigate these unique challenges and sustain the army's fighting capabilities is a testament to its adaptability and resilience. This chapter will enquire whether the technology available to the

British-Indian Army enabled them to overcome the environmental constraints in Afghanistan and the NWF. Furthermore, it would also delve into the continuity and brake paradigm in analysing GOI's logistical efforts. The impact of environmental factors on logistics is a complex challenge that the Commissariat had to navigate, and this chapter aims to highlight the complexity of these challenges.

Martin Van Creveld is one of the earliest scholars to delve into the analysis of military logistics. He defined logistics as 'the practical art of moving armies and keeping them supplied'. According to Creveld, one of the first things a military strategist needs to consider while drawing the blueprints of a campaign is the quantity of supplies required for the troops and the modes of transportation necessary to carry them to the battlefield. During a military campaign, logistical issues appear at regular intervals. These problems are often solved only to reappear in a different guise later. Hence, it probably represents the best example of Clausewitz's 'friction of war.'

According to Creveld, there was a continuity in the logistical apparatus and efforts of the European armies from the mid-17th century to the onset of the First World War. He refutes the accepted historical notion that the Napoleonic military system witnessed logistical transformations. Furthermore, Creveld holds that if any change in the logistical apparatus could be observed since 1914, it was because with the industrialisation of warfare since 1914, ammunition, fuel, and sophisticated engineering materials replaced food items as the most supplied and transported article in warfare. Despite his pioneering and sweeping analysis of three centuries of military logistics, Creveld is limited by his Eurocentrism. He did not pay any attention to the long tradition of warfare in Asia. In defence of his continuity thesis, he argues that railways had a nominal impact on the logistics of the Prussian campaign against France.¹

John Lynn has refuted Creveld's continuity thesis. He argues that railways might not have played a crucial role in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars in the second half of the nineteenth century. Still, along with steam-driven river transport, railroads exerted considerable influence on the American Civil War, which was more protracted than the former two. Lynn advocates changes and variations in logistics regarding the supply of food. Since the late Middle Ages, an evolution can be seen from a crude form of foraging to a regular supply through an organised method of 'living off the land'. A change was again noticed during the Napoleonic Wars when a different foraging method was practised.²

In his book *The Lifeblood of War*, Julian Thomson argues that the primary cause behind less scholarly work on military logistics is not the lack of knowledge regarding the importance of supply and transportation in warfare but a reluctance to acknowledge its significance. He has traced the etymological origin of the word logistics within the pre-revolutionary French military position *Marechal de logis*, which translates to Quartermaster General in English. Though Thompson steps away from the Euro-centrism of Creveld, he has kept low-intensity operations outside the purview of his book. The rationale behind it has been explained in the preface. Thomson remarks that though logistics is essential in such warfare, it rarely dictates the outcome of such conflicts. Compared to conventional warfare, where the European army is involved, low-intensity operations witness much lower ammunition expenditure and fuel consumption. However, he fails to understand that the parameters of analysing the logistics of conventional warfare should not be employed in evaluating low-intensity operations. In unconventional conflicts like those in Afghanistan and NWF, logistics may not have dictated the outcome of a conflict. But it certainly brings out the intricacies of the British-Indian armed administration. An analysis of such a campaign would not depict the expenditure of millions of shells and bullet cartridges. Still, it unveils the nitty-gritty of sourcing and supplying the army on the march.

Kaushik Roy has written extensively on the logistics of the British-Indian Army. However, save two of his articles, the rest are campaign-specific. He argues that from ancient to modern times, the challenges of providing supplies to military troops significantly shaped the progress of campaigns. He further remarks that the British military's control over India may be attributed to their effective integration of the elements of armed forces developed during the Military Revolution in early-modern Europe with some aspects of the pre-existing military system on the Indian subcontinent. He has referred to this combination as a military synthesis. Furthermore, Roy concludes that the British-Indian Army's supply mechanism in the second half of the nineteenth century can be characterised both by continuity and change. After 1859, the British disregarded certain aspects of the old Indian military culture and put more faith in the managerial proficiency of the Commissariat. It also employed newer technologies at the end of the nineteenth century to efficiently provide for the army. However, certain earlier elements continued, such as giving *batta* to the soldiers.³

What Roy termed as military synthesis in his earlier piece found a more comprehensive expression in his ideation of a hybrid logistical system in his recent article on the logistics of the Chin-Lushai Campaign (1888-1892). According to him, this mechanism was developed by the British-Indian Army by combining indigenous south Asian elements, such as coolies and contractors, with European components, such as steamers, sappers, western medicine etc. He claims that the logistical apparatus of the Imperial Army in the North-East Frontier (henceforth NEF) was different from that of the NWF, and hybridisation was necessary due to the unique ecological characteristics of the former theatre. In his analysis of the logistics of the British Imperial Army during the Second Afghan War, Roy identifies three main traits. Firstly, acquisition and use of animals from India; secondly, collaboration with local elements to gather and transport supplies; and finally, managerial innovations that made the whole endeavour

successful. He argues that the British-Indian Army's logistics during this war mostly depended on animal labour and that the soldiers 'marched on the hooves'.⁴

Overall, it could be said that scholarly writings on the British-Indian Army's logistical efforts in Afghanistan and NWF are meagre. Though Roy has written on the subject, the organisational aspect of the British-Indian Commissariat and the evolution of the food items of the British and Indian troops has received scattered attention. Furthermore, the importance and efforts of preparing roads for transporting supplies have not been addressed. The analyses of military technology in the existing literature are mostly confined to the sphere of weapons technology. However, the chapter shifts from the existing historiography by unveiling and scrutinising the technological innovations within the Commissariat's works, albeit at a smaller scale.

Since the onset of the 'Total War' in the 20th century, the military-industrial complex fed the military machines of the great powers. When we think of warfare today, machines, metals, and missiles come to mind. However, before the age of mechanisation, animals bore the brunt of the logistical endeavours of armed establishments throughout the world. This chapter addresses how far the human-animal complex, rather than the military-industrial complex, provisioned the British-Indian war machine in the second half of the 19th century in NWF and Afghanistan. It delves into studying the efficacy of employing biological forces, i.e. animal assets, in Indian frontier wars.

This chapter progresses chronologically and focuses primarily on three elements of the British-Indian Army's logistical efforts. Firstly, the collection of supplies with particular reference to the diet of the British-Indian Army. In the realm of rations, small-scale innovations and improvisations can be noticed. Secondly, the preparation of roads along the marching route of the army via the NWF to Afghanistan. Without proper roads for the marching columns and the

carriages, transportation of supplies to the field of battle can be very challenging. Lastly, the means and modes of transporting supplies to the forward base of operation. Warfare in the nineteenth century required three distinct kinds of transport. Firstly, transport for the conveyance of munitions of war of all types, including siege and engineer strain ammunition and warlike stores. Secondly, the transport necessary for collecting and distributing food for the men, horses and cattle. Finally, transport for carrying the sick, wounded and hospital equipment. In this context, the use of animal labour will be examined. When we think of warfare today, machines, metals, and missiles come to mind. However, before the age of mechanisation, animals bore the brunt of the logistical endeavours of armed establishments throughout the world. I argue that the British-Indian Army's logistical efforts in Afghanistan and NWF led to triumph through trials. Furthermore, they were characterised by three principles: flexibility, organisational and managerial adaptiveness, and cooperation. Constant improvisation and adoption of simplistic solutions marked the resilience of the British-Indian commissariat and their inclination to 'learn on the job'.

Logistics in the First Afghan War

The Commissariat in British India was established in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was expected to supply the requirements of an army, including animals such as horses and other equipment for war. The Commissary General was initially entrusted with controlling the whole expenditure of the Commissariat. However, this responsibility was transferred to the Military Board in 1821.⁵ Against the backdrop, the British-Indian Army's logistical efforts beyond the Indus were first put to the test with the onset of the First Afghan War in 1839. As mentioned in the second chapter, around 39,000 British-Indian soldiers were deployed at the

beginning of the campaign. Even before entering Afghanistan, the Governor-General had given considerable attention to arranging supplies for the different columns of troops in their march to the Indus. Consequently, the British-Indian troops arrived in good condition and without facing any severe challenges before crossing the frontier. In order to acquire supplies for the Army of the Indus, the GOI sought and received ample cooperation from the princely states. *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh of Punjab and *Nawab* Bahawal Khan of Bahawalpur actively cooperated and supplied large stocks of grains to British agents. The government granaries at Multan had been opened to the British-Indian Commissariat officers. These supplies were essential for feeding the depots at and in advance of Shikharpur in Sindh. Apart from supplies, carriages were also provided to them to transport the Commissariat supply. Interestingly, the GG remarked that due to the discipline and soldier-like conduct of the troops during their march, they attracted an abundance of articles for sale in their camps. However, since the onset of the First Afghan War, mortality among camels rose right after their passage through Bahawalpur due to fatigue and exposure to a new forage.

Crossing the Indus with a large force was a significant challenge, but the GOI's logistical planning and execution skills were evident in successfully applying two methods. The troops under Shah Suja were ferried across the river without a single accident despite the limited number of boats, which required considerable exertion from the officers. However, they executed the task perfectly. Upon crossing the Indus, the Shah's troops marched directly to Shikharpur, where an encamping ground was already prepared for them. The division of the Bengal Army under Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton reached the Indus a few weeks later. Given the larger size of the troops and their equipment, bridges of boats over two channels of the river were built instead of ferrying them, a decision that was executed successfully.⁶

Major Robert Leech of the Bombay Engineers was tasked with procuring supplies, digging wells for water, and inducing cooperation from the local petty chiefs to facilitate the advance of the Army of the Indus. Apart from collecting supplies, transportation was also an important issue. In 1839, the means of communication within Afghanistan were very limited. There was only one proper road for communication, which extended from Herat to Kandahar and then from Ghazni to Kabul. Therefore, the preparation of roads for marching troops and carriages for supplies became necessary. Captain (later became a Lieutenant-Colonel) Frederick Mackeson, stationed at Peshawar, constructed a military road through the Bahawalpur state for the movement of the British-Indian Army. Apart from preparing roads, ensuring the security of the line of communications (henceforth LOC) was crucial. To this end, the British-Indian Army negotiated with the Afghan indigenous chiefs. In lieu of the recognition by the GOI as the ruler of Kalat, Mir Mehrab Khan guaranteed friendship to the British. Furthermore, after receiving rupees 2,000, which was a portion of his annual subsidy (his annual subsidy was decided at 2 lakh rupees), Mehrab accepted the responsibility of keeping the Bolan Pass open for the Army of Indus. However, the arrangement did not pay off, as he failed to provide the supplies for the British-Indian troops and the animals that he promised. Mehrab even instigated several attacks on the British-Indian Army's LOC. Because of the many outrages and murders committed under his leadership, the GOI finally decided to depose him from the seat of Kalat.⁷

The conducive marching conditions of the British-Indian troops up to the Indus changed once they crossed the frontier and marched towards Afghanistan. The distance between Shikharpur and Dadur was 146 miles. A stretch of desert existed on this route, and the heat, even in February, was intolerable, and water was already scarce.⁸ While crossing the Bolan Pass, Captain Cotton's carriage animals suffered many depredations during a severe storm and paucity of water, resulting in considerable casualties. Therefore, the Afghan environment exerted huge pressure on the

supply arrangement, especially on the health of the animals.⁹ Complicating the situation even further, Major Leech's efforts to collect supplies were unsuccessful. Consequently, while marching through the Bolan Pass, the British-Indian troops had only a month of supplies at their disposal. Emerging from the past into Quetta did not change the situation. The supplies collected from Quetta were sufficient for only a few days.¹⁰

The problem of procuring supplies and transporting animals for the Army of the Indus in the early days of the First Afghan War can be mainly attributed to the administrative decentralisation of the British-Indian Army, which led to confusion and inefficient orders during the march to Afghanistan. There were three distinct presidency armies in India up till 1895. The responsibility of feeding, quartering and equipping local armies rested on the local governments, and each of them had their own military departments. Nevertheless, during mobilisation, the GOI had to assume responsibilities. However, its administrative services were not geared towards this task in peacetime. Therefore, the administrative gap between war and peace logistical apparatus hindered their efficacy to a great extent.

During the early days of the First Afghan War, the Bengal Army forwarded its pioneers two or three stages in front of the main column of the force to prepare a road for its march. However, the Bombay division did not take such a decision, and when they were marching towards Larkhanu, they found a road already prepared, to their surprise. Due to the absence of a centralised command mechanism, the Bombay Army could not yield the fruits of its sappers and miners that their Bengal counterparts could. Furthermore, the columns engaged in unhealthy competition instead of collaboration. Hence, we see that Sir Willoughby Cotton was charged with making an unauthorised head start in the hope of leaving the Bombay Division sufficiently far behind so that the latter could not drain his supplies. A sort of 'commissariat competition' began

between the Bombay and the Bengal troops, wherein the Bengal Correspondents accused the Bombay Division of weighing them down.

The problem of separate commissariats was also evident when the Bengal troops received 3,000 camels across the Jaisalmer desert through the shortest route from Ajmer to Roree. But the Bombay Division received their camels through a much longer route of 700 miles via Bhuj and Sindh. Despite the existence of a shorter route, Colonel Pottinger chose to supply the Bombay Column via a much longer route. Therefore, the Bombay Division's advantage of procuring their supplies from Gujarat and Marwar and transporting them swiftly was nullified. In order to put an end to this 'commissariat competition', the GOI advised the Bengal division to March by Shikharpur and through the Bolan Pass while the Bombay Division was to march via Gandava and, if possible, the Gandhava Pass.¹¹

Due to the topography of Afghanistan and the absence of good-quality roads, the British-Indian Army had to depend on mostly pack animals for transport. Mules, bullocks, and camels were primarily used during the First Afghan War. Very often, elephants were also employed. The carrying capacity of a bullock was two *maunds*, or around 75 kgs, while a mule or a pony could carry 2.5 *maunds*. Camels had a much larger carrying capacity of five *maunds*. An elephant could be used to drag heavy siege guns as its carrying capacity is almost two and a half times that of a camel. However, using elephants in large numbers would have required an enormous amount of forage and water, neither of which were amply available in Afghanistan. As opposed to elephants, camels primarily consume scrubs and bushes, which are available plenty in Afghanistan. Therefore, this animal was considered the most effective in rugged mountainous terrains.¹²

The Army of the Indus initially had 30,000 camels, almost half of which carried supplies for the army, while the other half had to carry ordnance stores and baggage. These camels were mostly

drawn from Punjab, Rajasthan, and Sindh. The Government Stud Establishment also provided certain brood camels.¹³ Hence, the Afghan environs greatly determined the nature of transport animals that could be employed in large numbers to feed the British-Indian Army.

The supply of ammunition was distinctly more challenging than that of food and other equipment. The latter could be collected either by living off the land or purchasing it locally from Afghanistan, but ammunition had to be sent from the British-Indian Army's base at Peshawar. Brigadier-General Robert Sale was besieged in Jalalabad from November 1841 to April 1842. To collect food and fodder, Sale had to attack and disperse the enemy who laid siege to the fort. But he had to depend on ammunition supplies from Peshawar. His lack of ammunition, want of carriage, and increasing number of sick troops forced him to adopt a defensive tactics rather than marching onto Kabul when requested. As there was not a single depot of provisions on the route between Jalalabad and Kabul, the means under his disposal were insufficient to force the passes of either Jagdalak or Khurd Kabul. Therefore, it can be argued that logistics exerted considerable influence at the tactical level. Furthermore, drawing all the supplies from the base at Peshawar also necessitated a large force to keep the LOC open and the supply trains protected, which was a further drain on the British-Indian Army's fighting strength.¹⁴

In this context, a question might arise as to why did the British-Indian Army not try to live off the land in Afghanistan. The answer to this question can be found in the fact that the British Political Agent William Hay Macnaghten was murdered in December 1841. Following this, a state of general insurrection developed throughout Afghanistan, fuelled by the grievances of the common Afghans regarding the protracted occupation by the British-Indian Army. Consequently, it became increasingly difficult for the British-Indian forces to gather supplies from the country. To ease the situation, the CIC of India, General Sir Jasper Nicolls, suggested sending supplies,

treasures, and ammunition to Jalalabad via the Khyber Pass from India.¹⁵ However, supplying the British-Indian garrisons in Afghanistan from Ferozepur was not an easy task. It was calculated that upwards of 3,000 camels would be required to transport ammunition, camp equipment, treasures and limited quantities of private baggage through the Khyber Pass. The situation was further complicated when the *sarwans* of the hired Rewaree camels declined to proceed onwards to Jalalabad even when threatened. Therefore, attempts were made to induce them to march into Afghanistan with great concessions and promising a liberal indemnification for the cattle that would perish. Meanwhile, Captain Mackeson, entrusted with supplying Jalalabad, established depots of grains at Lalpura, by the Tattara Pass. These depots were to be supplied by mules, ponies and donkeys. Thence, small quantities could be transported to Afghanistan, which required a smaller escort and drew less attention than a large supply train. Such measures improved the situation to some extent. In February 1842, Jalalabad reported having three months of wheat supply and one month of *bhoosa*, which was better compared to their condition at the end of 1841.¹⁶ Therefore, the British-Indian Army witnessed constant managerial improvisation to support its logistics in Afghanistan.

Major-General William Nott defended Kandahar since the year the First Afghan War commenced. Serving in Afghanistan for more than three years took a toll on the health of the troops and the transport animals under him. At the end of September 1842, Nott reported facing a serious challenge in obtaining warm clothing for the Europeans and Indian troops as winter was approaching, and the Afghans deserted the city of Kabul and its outskirts after the Army of Retribution burnt the Great *Bazaar* of Kabul to inflict punishment. As mentioned previously, the lack of supplies often thwarted tactical manoeuvres during the First Afghan War. Nott's Kandahar Force joined Major-General Pollock in Kabul in September 1842. When the latter asked Nott to send a brigade towards Bamiyan, he described the dilapidated condition of his

transport animals. Furthermore, he was short of supplies for both the European and Indian troops. Nott was also weighed down by the challenge of carrying a great number of sick troops with him. As a result, he could send out a small detachment, which, according to him, would be disastrous as the Afghan tribes tended to prey on smaller contingents.¹⁷

With time, the Afghan excitement following Macnaghten's murder subsided to some extent, and in the last year of the campaign, supplies were collected locally through purchase. Due to the good treatment of the Afghan traders and the punctuality of payment by the Commissariat, the Afghan natives were induced to bring up supply. However, the amount that could be procured through this method was not enough to meet the requirements of the Army of Retribution under the leadership of General Sir George Pollock, which was tasked to punish the Afghan for murdering Macnaghten.¹⁸ Pollock defeated Akbar Khan at Jagdalak and Tezin, finally reaching Kabul in September 1842.

Apart from managerial improvisation and political negotiation, micro-innovations were carried out to efficiently transport articles of supply. Twelve presses for compressing fodder were prepared to be carried with the force under General Pollock. These presses were light and portable, making them convenient for a pony to carry. The load for a camel beyond the Sutlej River was restricted to four *maunds*. But with the aid of these presses, five *maunds bhoosa* could be turned into two packages the size of a camel trunk. It minimised the dimension of the *bhoosa* while keeping its volume intact, aiding transportation on a camelback.¹⁹

Food for the British-Indian troops comprised a large portion of the supplies required in Afghanistan. Durgadas Bandyopadhyay, a clerk in the Bengal Army, remarked in his memoir that the diet of a common soldier in the first half of the nineteenth century consisted of only *dhal*

(lentil soup) and *roti* or *chapati*. No animal protein, such as fish or meat, was consumed by the *Purbiyas* or north Indian high-caste Hindu sepoys. Moreover, the type of vegetables that they could consume was also very limited, comprising mostly of taro root. Daily food consumption of a common high-caste Bengal Army soldier consisted of about 125 grams of pulse, one *chittak* or 59 grams of *ghee* (clarified butter), one-fourth *chittak* or 15 grams of salt and about one *seer* of rice.²⁰

The following table shows the availability of different food items in the commissariat godowns on 15 September 1842. It also exhibits the daily consumption and the number of days the supplies could feed the force under Major General Pollock.

Table 3.1

Camp Kabul, 15 September, 1842

	Attah	Wheat	Rice	Dal	Barley or Mote	Ghee	Salt	Boosah	Firewood	Rum	Coffee	Sugar	Meat
In Store	1144 M 25 S	232 M 2 S	578 M 38 S 4 C	145 M 26 S 8 C	167 M 8 S	28 M 18 S	28 M 27 S			800 Quarts	3600 lbs	80 Md	
Daily Stores	319 M 12 S 14 C	71 M 2 S	5 M 7 S	45 M 32 S	470 M	12 M 13 S 9 ½ C	7 M 19 S	564 M 20 S	180 M	79 Quarts	116. 10 lbs	2. 12 Md	1920 lbs
For Days	5			3 ¼		2	2	4		10	30	27	

M: *Maunds*, S: *Seer*, C: *Chittak*, Quart: ¼ of a gallon or around 950 ml.

Source: Miscellaneous Papers of Major-General Sir George Pollock: Intelligence Reports, Papers on Troop Movements, Logistics, and Other Matters of Military Administration, January, 1842-January, 1843, MSS EUR F439/3, APAC, BL, London

The following table depicts the supplies requisite for the combined forces under the command of Major-General Pollock and Major-General Nott.

Table 3.2

Description of Articles	General Pollock's Force			General Nott's Force			Combined Forces for One Day			For 15 Days			Remarks (Number of carriage animals required for transportation)
	M	S	C	M	S	C	M	S	C	M	S	C	
<i>Atta/ wheat</i>	433			350			783			11,745			3995
<i>Dhal/pulses</i>	65			50			115			1,725			575
<i>Ghee/ clarified butter</i>	14			15			24			435			145
Salt	6	31		11			17	31		266	25		90
Tea	lbs 116			lbs 70			lbs 186			lbs 2,790			10
Sugar	lbs 204			lbs 130			lbs 334			lbs 5,010			31
Rum	Quarts 97			Quarts 75			Quarts 70			Quarts 2580			51 Camels
Barley or Grams	500			700			1200			18,000			6000
Bhoosa	965			1400			2365			35,475			11825
Firewood	210			156			366			5,490			1830
													23771 Bullocks
													2371 Spare 25082 Bullocks or 18863 Camels

Source: Miscellaneous Papers of Major-General Sir George Pollock: Intelligence Reports, Papers on Troop Movements, Logistics, and Other Matters of Military Administration, January, 1842-January, 1843, MSS EUR F439/3, APAC, BL, London.

The British-Indian troops' choice of food was influenced by their various cultures, and the GOI attempted to respect and not disrupt the culinary practices of the different communities. Therefore, the Commissariat had to undertake the responsibility of collecting various items of food for the British and Indian troops. It widened their scope of operation and responsibility.

The First Afghan War manifested an array of problems in the supply and transport mechanism of an invading army in Afghanistan. The occupation of Afghanistan during the campaign took the form of disconnected garrisons in places such as Kandahar and Jalalabad. Hence, procuring supplies became extremely difficult, which had a great impact on the health of the troops and led to severe mortality among the animals. Without the relief provided by the Army of Retribution under General Pollock, the situation would have turned grim. However, improvisation on the part of the Commissariats can be noticed, and it will be seen later that the GOI learned from its mistakes in the first campaign to some extent.

Continuity and Change Between the First and Second Afghan War

Since 1843, a considerable portion of the commissariat's work was placed under the Military Board. Consequently, the Commissary General was made a member of the Board. However, Lord Dalhousie abolished the Military Board in 1854, and the scope of work of the Commissariat Department enlarged considerably. The First Afghan War and subsequent campaigns in Sulej and Punjab brought certain shortcomings regarding the supply and transportation of the British-Indian Army to the fore. To address these issues, a commission in 1852 recommended forging uniformity in the logistical efforts of the GOI. The separate supply

and transport system of the three presidency armies (Bengal, Bombay and Madras) hindered exercising unified and central command regarding logistics.

After the First Afghan War, the CIC of India took proactive steps to improve the rations provided to the European soldiers in India in 1844. India's hot and moist climate was taking a toll on the European troops, necessitating minor changes in their diet. It was recommended that the quality of bread should be equal to hospital standards. Mutton was to be issued twice a week instead of beef, whenever the latter could be procured in sufficient quantity. Finally, coffee was to be substituted for tea at the discretion of the soldier. The European soldiers, exposed to the heat in India, required a variety of red meat, which was easier to digest than beef. This adaptation to the Indian environment significantly impacted the diet of the European troops. However, beef consumption continued in the second half of the nineteenth century.

To ensure the soldiers' good health in the British-Indian Army, compensation was provided whenever the price of a commodity in their ration was higher. This allowed them to purchase the necessary items and maintain their nutrition. Wheat was a crucial part of the native troop's diets, especially those from the northern and northwestern parts of India. When the price of wheat in the market was higher in the 1840s, a *seer* per day was granted to the native troops as compensation. In 1844, the GOI extended the compensation to several minor articles composing the native soldier's rations, such as *dhal* or lentil, *ghee* or Indian clarified butter, and salt. If lentil was sold in the market at the rate of above ten *seers* per rupee, then compensation was provided at the rate of two *chittacks* per day per man. Similarly, if *ghee* was priced above two *seers* per rupee, compensation was one *chittack* per day per man. Finally, if the price of salt was above eight *seers* per rupee, $\frac{1}{3}$ *chittack* per day per man was provided. The extension of compensation to these minor articles demonstrates the fairness and consideration of the policy. Initially, the amount of compensation was fixed irrespective of the fluctuation in the market, but in the year 1845, it was decided that if the purchasing price of the

articles of ration crossed the aggregate price of 3 ½ rupees per month, only then would compensations be provided.²¹

The following comparative study (Table 3.3) of the food consumed by the Indian and British troops during field service and in hospital establishments at the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century reveals continuity in most cases and change in a few.

Table 3.3

Table of Diets for Hospitals of European Troops in All Three Presidencies in India in 1857.

Meal	Full Diet	Half Diet	Low Diet	Spoon or Fever Diet	Milk Diet	
Breakfast	Tea ... ½ oz Bread... 1 lb Butter... 1 oz Sugar...3/4 oz	Tea...½ oz Bread...1 lb Butter...1/2 oz Sugar... ¾ oz	Tea...1/2 oz Bread...8 oz Sugar...3/4 oz	Tea...1/4 oz Tea...¾ oz	Tea ... ½ oz Bread... 1 lb Butter... ½ oz Sugar...3/4 oz	N.B.-- In both these cases, the meat from which the broth is prepared is given to the patient.
Dinner	A pint of broth with rice, barley, greens and onions, and 1 lb. of meat, either mutton or beef.	A pint of broth with rice, barley, greens or onions, and 8 oz. of mutton of good and edible quality, or a pint of chicken soup, with vegetables as above; a chicken or half a fowl, weighing when ready for being dressed not less than 8 oz.	A pint of mutton or chicken broth.	Bread ½ lb., to be made to panado or pudding, or 4 oz. of sago, when ¾ oz. of sugar.	A pint of milk (new), or a pint of rice and milk with ¾ oz. of sugar.	
Supper	A pint of rice gruel, with ¾ oz of sugar, season with ginger or nutmeg, and glassfull of wine, should be allowed him	Ditto ditto	Ditto ditto	The same as at Breakfast	The same as at dinner.	

Source: General Orders by the Governor in Council, Fort St. George, 26 June 1857, no. 194, MD, General Orders, 1857, NAI, New Delhi.

1 lb: .453 kg.

1 lb: 16 oz (ounces)

1 pint: .473 litre.

In comparison to the above table, the following table reveals the scale of hospital diet for Indian troops and public followers on foreign service in 1865.

Table 3.4

Articles composing the different heads of hospital diets for a day				
	Spoon	Milk	Low	Full
1	Sago 4 oz	Bread 12 oz Or Rice 12 oz	Mutton or fowl in broth 6 oz	Mutton or fowl for curry 6 oz
2	Sugar 2 oz	Milk 2 pints	Bread 12 oz	Bread/Rice 8 oz
3	Milk 6 oz	Sugar 2 oz	Butter 1 oz	Curry powder ½ oz
4	Rice 2 oz	Rice 2 oz	Onions 1 oz	Country vegetables 4 oz
5	Salt 2 drachm	Salt 2 drachm	Barley ½ oz	Hoppers ²² no. 6 (Hoppers to weigh 2 oz each when cooked)
			Flour ½ oz	Bread 8 oz
			Salt 1 oz	Butter 1 oz
				Salt 1 oz

Source: General Orders by his Excellency the Governor in Council, Fort ST. George, 30th June 1865, no. 244, MD, Madras, General Orders, 1865, NAI, New Delhi.

From the comparison, it can be concluded that the diet of the European troops was much more elaborate and included various items as opposed to the hospital diet of the Indian troops.

Now, if we shift our attention to the regular diet of the British and Indian troops in the second half of the 19th century, we will see that British soldiers in India were supplied with a full ration at every station. The following (Table 3.5) comprised their diet in 1863:

Table 3.5

Diet of British Soldiers in India in the 1860s		
Items of rations of British troops	Quantity provided in England	Quantity provided in India
Meat	$\frac{3}{4}$ lb.	1 lb.
Bread	$1\frac{1}{4}$ lb.	1 lb.
Coffee	$\frac{1}{3}$ oz.	$1\frac{3}{7}$ oz. or
Tea	$\frac{1}{6}$ oz.	$\frac{5}{7}$ oz.
Sugar	$1\frac{2}{3}$ ozs.	$2\frac{1}{2}$ oz.
Salt	1 oz.	1 oz.
Pepper	$\frac{1}{24}$ oz.	-
Vegetables		1 lb.
Rice	-	4 oz.
firewood	-	3 lbs.
		The European soldiers in India also received an additional 'spirit ration; amounting to about one gill and a half of rum daily.
	For this ration, the soldier paid a stoppage of 6d. per diem from his daily pay of 1s. 1d.	
Additional items purchased by the individual soldiers	1 lb. of vegetables, beer worth 1 penny and a spent trifle on milk	
1lb.= 16 oz.		

Source: Diet' in Report of the Commissioners; Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Commissioner Appointed to Enquire into the Sanitary State of the Army in India, Friday, 2 December 1859, Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India, Vol. 1, *Report of the Commissioners* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode for HMSO, 1863), pp. lvi-lvii, 72-73.

The standard ration of the British troops in India was beef and bread. When available, mutton was issued in place of beef twice a week. Vegetables consisted of potatoes when procurable, and carrots, onions, pumpkins etc. 'The Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Sanitary Condition of the Army' (1858) reported that there were complaints regarding the small quantity of mutton issued. Furthermore, very often, vegetables could not be procured in sufficient quantity. Therefore, we will see that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the diet of the British and Indian troops evolved to a great extent. The soldiers had three meals

daily: breakfast at seven or eight in the morning, consisting of tea or coffee with bread and often meat. Dinner was served at one pm and tea at about five, sometimes with meat. The Commission also remarked on the influence of Indian environs on the food habits and proper ingredients for the diet of the British troops. Soldiers were recommended to engage in outdoor toil in cold climates. However, for the Indian situation, ‘There is a certain exhaustion produced by the climate and the manner in which the soldier passes his time, which makes the present ration apparently no more than sufficient’. The Commission also expressed their concern regarding the emphasis on animal protein in the diet of the British troops in a hot and humid climate such as India, which made them prone to intestinal and biliary diseases.²³

A comparison of the scale of diet for Indian troops (Table 3.6) on foreign service as per the Madras Commissariat Code of 1874 and the Indian Commissariat Code of 1882 would depict how it has changed over the years. It also reveals the variations in regional and central systems of supply.

Table 3.6

	Items of Ration as per the Madras Commissariat Code	Quantity provided	Amount allotted	Items of Ration as per the Indian Commissariat Code	Quantity provided	Amount allotted
1	Rice	2 lbs.	1 anna ³ / ₈ pie	Rice	1½ lbs.	N/A
				or <i>Atta</i> or wheat	2 lbs	N/A
2	<i>Dhall</i> or lentil	3 oz.	1 pie	<i>Dhall</i> or lentil (moong or arhar)	4 oz.	N/A
3	Salt	12 dr	¹ / ₂ pie	Salt	² / ₃ oz	N/A
4	<i>Ghee</i> or clarified butter	2 oz	6½ pies	<i>Ghee</i> or clarified butter	2 oz	N/A
5	Tobacco	1 oz 4 dr	1½ pies			
6	<i>Haldi</i> or turmeric	2 dr	¹ / ₈ pie	<i>Haldi</i> or turmeric	¹ / ₆ oz	N/A
				Onions	1 oz.	N/A
				Chillies	¹ / ₆ oz	N/A
				Pepper	¹ / ₆ oz	N/A
				When meat was issued, even on special occasions, the ration of		

				atta or rice was to be reduced to half.	
--	--	--	--	---	--

Source: Lt. Colonel B.N. Majumdar, *History of the Army Service Corps*, Vol. 2, 1858-1913 (New Delhi: Sterling Publisher PVT LTD, 1976), pp. 82-94.

* 1 dr (dram or drachm) = $\frac{1}{16}$ of an oz or $\frac{1}{256}$ of a lb or 1.772 grams.

1 oz (ounce) = $\frac{1}{16}$ of a lb or 28.35 grams.

The Madras Commissariat Code continued the system of providing compensation to native troops even in the 1870s. Therefore, it was decided that if the local markets could furnish sufficient ration items, grain would not be stored for issue in kind. Rather, it was preferred that the troops draw compensation for the difference in price as prescribed above. A comparison of these two commissary codes brings out the regional variations in food habits induced by environmental and cultural variations. The use of wheat in the southern portion of the Indian subcontinent was lesser compared to its northern counterpart. Hence, the Madras Code did not have any provision for supplying wheat to the soldiers under its presidency army. With the composition of the Indian Commissariat Code of 1882, some changes were introduced to this scale of ration for the Indian troops during foreign field service.²⁴

Therefore, it can be argued that the food items of both the British and the Indian troops during field service and in hospital establishments remained almost the same from the 1850s to the 1870s. However, compared to the ration mentioned by Durgadas Bandyopadhyay earlier, many new food items were introduced after the First Afghan War. It can be argued that the British-Indian Commissariat took great care in providing the 3,000 calories needed for the troops to function properly. Moreover, according to local circumstances, some new food items were also introduced during deployment in expeditions. For instance, pre-made and packed food was introduced during the Second Afghan War.

Logistics in the Second Afghan War

In the Second Afghan War (1878-80), the combined strength of the British-Indian invading forces was 43,000 men. According to the CIC of India, General Frederick Haines, Sukkur on the Indus was to be looked upon as the depot for all troops from Bombay and Madras, while Dera Ghazi Khan was to provide supplies for the Bengal Army.²⁵ Smaller supply depots were also formed along the marching route of the invading force. It was decided that British-Indian troops marching from Dera Ghazi Khan to Quetta would carry eight days' supplies from Bandowala to Lehri. After the formation of supply depots at Bugti Dera and Lehri, regiments were to carry three days' supplies from Bandowala to Bugti Dera and five days' supplies from Bugti Dera to Lehri.²⁶ The formation of the supply depots eased the pressure on the soldiers to carry supplies, which translated into better mobility of the troops. Furthermore, it can be argued that at the very onset of the campaign, the supply depots for different army columns were designated separately to avoid confusion. Hence, the GOI learned from their mistakes during the First Afghan War so that the different marching columns do not engage themselves again in a commissariat competition.

During the initial days of mobilisation, certain routes were identified to function as the lifeline of the invading army. Making those routes practicable for wheeled traffic was of utmost importance. The Kuram Vallery Field Force under General Frederick Roberts was to advance through the Kuram Valley towards Kabul. Kohat, currently situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was the base of operation for the Kuram Force. Therefore, the GOI and the GOP were highly anxious about the dilapidated state of the road between Rawalpindi and Khushalgarh Ghat on Kohat.²⁷ Under orders from the CIC and desired by the GOI, the repairs of the road and the bridge at Kushalgarh were undertaken without delay. The implication of entrusting the Public Works Department (hereafter PWD) for the task instead of the Military Department (hereafter

MD) was the underlying synergy between the military and the civilian administration. This cooperation, particularly the role of the PWD, accelerated the war effort by easing the pressure on the already overburdened military establishment due to the mobilisation.

The need to repair roads quickly demanded the introduction of new technology. Indurated red clay was initially applied, protected by a thin coating of light grass. This made the road firm, and the grass coating protected it from erosion. Another challenge for the engineers was preparing the Rawalpindi-Kohat-Thal road for both fast and heavy traffic, i.e., mail and country carts. The former required a light and level road, while the latter demanded a rough and rude track because the heavy carts were likely to churn up a light road. To solve this puzzle, the PWD stationed men with drag ropes and spare bullocks at steep ascents, mainly at the *nullah* (watercourse) crossings.²⁸ Such an innovation required the coordination between biological and technological forces to surpass the challenge of terrain. This points to the learning mechanism of the British-Indian Army and their swiftness in reacting to a need. This flexibility was the cause of why the logistical chain did not break down in Afghanistan.

Due to the ruggedness of the Afghan terrain and the greater number of forces that required supply, the British-Indian Army faced unforeseen contingencies. That, in turn, led to tactical alterations during the campaign. Additionally, logistical efforts witnessed significant adjustments in plans and execution time and again. Deviation from the predetermined course of action called for improvisations and sometimes revealed the gaps in the organisational edifice. Difficulties in procuring a large number of camels made wheeled carriages a necessity between Rawalpindi and Thal.²⁹ Consequently, preparing a road along this route involved a considerable expenditure in money and manpower.

The physical geography and climate of the lands beyond the NWF were omnipresent in the logistical considerations of the military authorities in India. Marching routes for the army and supplies had to be carefully selected, taking into account the natural conditions. Major-General Michael Biddulph was the commander of the 2nd Division of the Kandahar Field Force, which was to establish a base for the British-Indian Army in southern Afghanistan. Difficulties experienced by him in the passage of the Dera Bugti Road in Baluchistan towards Kandahar demonstrated the unsuitability of that route for wheeled carriage. Therefore, precedence was to be given to the Sukkur-Jacobabad line, which was in a much better state.³⁰ The Dera Bugti route was also impracticable between May and October, owing to the scorching heat and the absence of drinking water at Kabrodani, Mundu Khund, and Soti. Due to the environmental challenges, this route was finally given up in January 1879. The Jacobabad route towards Kandahar was also not entirely feasible due to the flood of the Indus River. Finding a third, all-weather route to connect British territories with southern Afghanistan was the need of the hour. After exploration, the Thal-Chotiali route as far as Pishin appeared as a viable option. The country from Dera Ghazi Khan to Thal Chotiali was open, and water was abundant. Forage and grain for the animals could also be procured at every stage of the road.³¹

On the other hand, in northern Afghanistan, Khyber Pass was the gateway to Kabul. Therefore, improving the road via Khyber Pass up to Ali Masjid was essential to reach the Afghan capital. The task was entrusted to the Superintendent Engineer at Rawalpindi, who was to work in cooperation with the Commanding Engineer of the 1st Division, the Field Engineer attached to the 2nd Division, and the companies of Sappers of the Peshawar Valley Field Force, who had local knowledge.³² Making these routes traversable by the marching columns of the British-Indian Army and their transport columns was crucial as it ensured a smooth and steady penetration of the Afghan borders.

After selecting, preparing and securing the marching route of the British-Indian column, the Commissariat was to ensure ample supplies to the soldiers operating in Afghanistan. When the blueprint for the Afghan invasion was being drawn up, the Adjutant-General in India considered the establishment of ordnance parks and depots for supplying ammunition and material to the troops in the field of the utmost importance. The CIC realised that the campaign's success depended greatly on the proper supply of materials and ammunition.³³ When the troops were being mobilised, it was recommended that Kohat, Multan and Quetta be regarded as multiple bases of operations, whence the respective columns and divisions would operate into enemy territories. Discerning the amount of supplies to be procured at different depots and the number of carriages required for their transport at the advanced bases of operation was a priority.³⁴ To that end, civil officers from the Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Multan and Derajat districts were ordered to assist in collecting supplies and carriage. The Commissary-General was requested to state the numbers of each kind of carriage required, the quantities of supplies and the places where the depots could be established. The Finance Commissioner of Punjab also decided that the staff officers in the districts of Rawalpindi, Kohat, Multan, and Dera Ghazi Khan should be maintained to their full strength to better assist the efforts to augment supplies.³⁵ I argue that this intra and inter-departmental cooperation was integral to the managerial improvisation of the British-Indian logistical apparatus.

The needs of the invading force had to be efficiently understood by the civil authorities, and to that end, they had to be furnished with information regarding the movements of the regiments so that depots of stores could be formed.³⁶ This was no simple task, as it entailed a complex interplay of different departments of the GOI. For example, the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab requested the Foreign Department (hereafter FD) to give instructions to civil authorities regarding the collection of supplies and to extend assistance to the Commissary-General.³⁷ It was decided that the Deputy Commissioners would collect supplies at the encamping grounds

within their districts. The Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan was to arrange for supplies along the route through the Bugti Hills as far as Lehri. Beyond this point, the Governor-General's Agent in Baluchistan was to make necessary arrangements. The Commissary General was entrusted to take over supplies from the civil authorities.³⁸ Interestingly, in one exceptional instance, a civil officer was empowered to act on behalf of the Commissariat Department due to the absence of a Commissariat officer on the spot.³⁹ It exhibits the organisational flexibility and adaptiveness of the GOI. The synergy between the civil and military authorities was essential for readying the British-Indian Army at this phase, the absence of which could have thwarted the entire invasion. Therefore, it can be argued that, unlike the First Afghan War, the Second campaign was characterised by GOI's departmental cooperation.

The magnitude of the logistical efforts during the Second Afghan War can be understood by taking a glimpse at the diverse articles that were to be collected and, in turn, carried by the British-Indian Army. To a great extent, the ecology of Afghanistan determined the nature of the food consumed by the British-Indian Army during the campaign. Fresh vegetables were hard to procure, and scurvy threatened the fighting men in certain areas. The GOI came up with a solution by introducing the idea of a regimental garden and provided monetary as well as infrastructural assistance to that end.⁴⁰ But, the Afghan landscape limited the chances of the same being translated into reality. Therefore, as an improvisation, lemon juice was authorised for occasional use at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ (.5) oz. per man per day, to be increased to one oz. when fresh vegetables were not at all procurable. The supply of a protein-rich diet was essential to maintain the fighting strength of the armed personnel, and a regular meat ration was the norm, but supplying the ration during the campaign was challenging. When it was impracticable to supply a full meat ration, portable food was supplied. The troops in the field used Erbswurst's soup and Whitehead's Army Food, while Whitehead's variegated soups were given to the sick

in the field and base hospitals, either as extra or as a substitute for a half ration of meat. It was recommended that 50,000 lbs of Erbswurst's soup and 5,000 lbs of Whitehead's Army Food be obtained from England instead of the 60,000 lbs of German meat biscuit.⁴¹ Even when meat was procurable, salted beef and pork were ruined due to the weather. Therefore, micro-innovation in the form of tinned beef and mutton came as a solution.⁴²

Apart from food, fuel and grass were essential articles for the soldiers of the British-Indian Army. Fuel was required for cooking and saving oneself from the biting cold of Afghanistan and had to be carried in significant amounts. From the end of October 1878, when troops began marching towards the frontier, supplying adequate amount of fuel posed a challenge. The Commissioner and Superintendent of Rawalpindi Division suggested that the Forest Department reserve portions of the government range at Khairi, Murat, and Kalachitta, from which '*sonutha*' shrubs could be taken. He also recommended empowering district authorities to cut grass in the government *rakhs* (a preserve for grass) to replenish the stores at various camping grounds.⁴³ The answer to the fuel problem was found through the permit system,⁴⁴ which enabled the Conservator of Forests, Rawalpindi Division, to maintain a sufficient supply of firewood. Additionally, a significant amount of grass was procured with the assistance of the villagers near Rawalpindi under *tehsildars*' (indigenous revenue officer) orders.⁴⁵

Given the harshness of the Afghan climate, clothing was an important element of commissariat supply. Apart from supplying clothes and uniforms to the enlisted men, the GOI also had to take into account the public followers. Indeed, at certain stages, animals had to be dressed up as well to withstand nature's wrath. The amount of extra field kits issued to the British and the Indian troops indicates how widespread the service that the commissariat catered to was. As an additional kit, Indian troops were given one jersey, two pairs of warm socks, one pair of mittens,

one blanket and one waterproof sheet. In comparison, the British troops received the same items and an extra blanket.⁴⁶

Initial arrangements for supplying the army were elaborate and well-organised. But early signs of trouble appeared soon after the British-Indian Army stormed the gateways of Afghanistan. Rapid success in Ali Masjid and Peiwar Kotal was soon transformed into prolonged, attritional warfare.⁴⁷ Owing to the insufficiency of transport animals, a large quantity of supplies were stuck at Jacobabad.⁴⁸ The inability to supply the siege train with fodder and food in the Bolan Pass and at Quetta forced the Governor-General of Quetta to recommend halting at Dadur or Sibi until the arrival of spring.⁴⁹ Despite the British-Indian Army's propensity to learn from their earlier mistakes, some environmental and topographical challenges could not be circumnavigated. Therefore, we see that, like the First Afghan War, the problem of collecting supplies arose for the forces destined for Kandahar via Quetta. When the British-Indian Army penetrated deeper into Afghanistan, it became increasingly difficult to provide them with supplies from far-off bases at Rawalpindi and Peshawar. The arduous task of maintaining the overstretched logistical line necessitated changes in the supply effort and put greater reliance on a local collection of supplies.

To ensure a steady supply of food items for the army, contracts were let with local contractors on 9 March 1880 in Kabul to supply the following items:

Table 3.7

Quantity and Price of Food Items to be Supplied by Afghan Contractors in Kabul in 1880

Items	Quantity	Price
Tea	20,000 lbs	Rupees 1-2 per <i>maund</i>
Crystalised Sugar	1,00,000 lbs	Rupees 34 per <i>maund</i>
Rice	2,000 <i>maunds</i>	Rupees 11.7 per <i>maund</i>

Wood	40,000 <i>maunds</i>	Rupees 12 per 16 <i>maund</i>
Wheat	30,000 <i>maunds</i>	7 <i>seers</i> per Rupee
Pulses	6,500 <i>maunds</i>	4 <i>seers</i> per Rupee
Clarified Butter	2,000 <i>maunds</i>	1 <i>seer</i> per Rupee
Salt	1,150 <i>maunds</i>	5 <i>seers</i> per Rupee

Source: PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, Copy of a letter dated Kabul, the 16 April 1880, From Colonel J.I. Willies, Commissary General, Bengal to Lieutenant-General Sir M. Kennedy, Controller-General of Supply and Transport, Proceedings (henceforth Progs.) no. 4400, NAI, New Delhi.

In consultation with the Political Officer, Major Alexander Badcock, the Deputy Commissary General of Kabul, entered into an agreement with Sirdar Wali Mahomed. It was a wise decision, as supplies for the troops stationed in Kabul were drawn largely from the city's markets, and as the governor, he was in the best position to supply the maximum amount of necessary articles. Supplying the troops along the Khyber Line and in Kabul created a sharp divergence of opinion among the military authorities in India and those deployed in Afghanistan. A careful examination of the official documents from the first quarter of 1880 reveals a triangle of conflicting opinions regarding the mode of supplying the British-Indian Army. Considering the difficulties associated with the transportation of supplies, the Controller-General of Supply and Transport and the CIC advocated exploiting local resources to the utmost.⁵⁰ Major-General Frederick Roberts was also an exponent of the idea of living off the land, considering the transportation cost of supplies from Peshawar to be much greater.⁵¹ The decision to obtain supplies locally was a practical choice, given the contingencies arising from long-distance transportation, but it proved to be not viable. Out of the 1,20,000 *maunds*⁵² of supplies required for the third section of the Khyber Line Force until 31 October 1880, only about 70,000 *maunds* were procured locally. The rest had to be brought from the base. The desiccated Afghan ecology limited opportunities to obtain forage for the transport animals.⁵³ Thus surfaced an alternative

proposal to continue supplies from Peshawar, advocated by the Commissary-General of Bengal.

Amidst this debate, a third opinion now appeared on the horizon, which negated the grim situation of logistics. Despite facing difficulties in collecting supplies, Lieutenant-General Donald Stewart, the Commander of the Kandahar Field Force, considered the supplies in Kabul to be plentiful when he reached the Afghan capital in May 1880. He further asserted that the GOI had no grounds to be anxious about supplies. With the harvest in progress, Stewart judged one month's supply of grain in stock to be enough and, therefore, opposed overstocking the posts along the line.⁵⁴ One month's supply was to be laid in for the Khyber Line and one day's supply at each post on the lines for the 1st and 2nd divisions.⁵⁵ Upon Stewart's recommendation, the GOI modified the order to store supplies for six months on the Khyber Line. Interestingly, despite the top-down nature of the command mechanism in the British-Indian Army, the men on the spot were given considerable latitude, and their advice was duly considered and acted upon.

Even after preparing the line of communication and selecting the nature, scale, and sources of supplies, logistical work was incomplete until the provisions were transported to the forward bases of operation and thence to the battlefield. Without proper carriage, the movement of an army was bound to be affected. Construction of roads, nature of provisions and type of transportation were influenced by and complementary to one another. It has already been mentioned that wheeled traffic could be used only in certain tracts. Therefore, pack animals had to bear the brunt of most transportation. So, even after almost four decades since the conclusion of the First Afghan War, the British-Indian Army still had to depend on biopower (biological forces, i.e. animals) to transport their supplies.

During preparations for the invasion, it was felt that a bullock train between Rawalpindi and Kohat via Khushalgarh was required to supply the Kuram Field Force. Notably, country carts were recommended instead of post office carts because the former were better suited for the road.⁵⁶ Often, indigenous, primitive modes of transportation were better suited to the Afghan environs. The bullock train between Kohat and Thal was to transport 60 *maunds* daily at an operational cost of Rupees 3,459 monthly.⁵⁷ But, after carrying almost 1,000 *maunds* of provisions daily, the supply train's condition between Jhelum and Rawalpindi deteriorated in April-May 1879. Severe cattle disease in the districts between Jhelum and Peshawar caused such a disruption.⁵⁸ Exertions of march and poor quality of water might have contributed to the death of cattle. Therefore, recommendations were made to employ camels instead of bullocks for transportation. Camels are tough creatures, mainly suited for rugged landscapes. Not only could they carry more weight, but making the roads practicable for camels was much easier than for carts.⁵⁹ Due to their effectiveness, many camels were requisitioned from the Bahawalpur state. However, the transition from bullocks to camels was not altogether an effortless and smooth process. Employing plain camels in the hilly terrain of Afghanistan had disastrous consequences,⁶⁰ as between November 1878 and May 1879, 68 per cent of the 13,840 camels in the Kuram Line perished.⁶¹ The total number of camel casualties in the entire theatre of Afghanistan was much greater, creating serious impediments to the transportation of supplies and greatly impairing the mobility of the army in the Quetta Line.⁶² The camels of the plains were vulnerable and unaccustomed to cold, moist environments and rugged, hilly terrain. In contrast, the hill camels of the Powindah and Waziri⁶³ varieties were best suited for these conditions. Majority of the camels in India belonged to the first category, and a great number of them died from the want of acclimatisation.⁶⁴

Selecting the proper breed of animal for transportation was not enough. The animals were only as good as their attendants, but the latter were unaccustomed to the restraints of a regular system. Moreover, they had no stake in the efficient working of the transport department and were only concerned with their payment. Therefore, it was recommended that the Transport Department employ Cattle Sergeants. They were to be entrusted with tasks such as allotting animals to detachments as well as overseeing them. They were to be selected from the ranks of the British non-commissioned officers who were to discharge duties considered insignificant for a British officer and above the ranks of his native counterpart. This was yet another aspect of the British-Indian Commissariat's managerial innovation. Besides bullocks and camels, mules and Deccani ponies were also used for transportation, and good results were yielded.⁶⁵

At times, the technological edge of the British-Indian Army in the field of arms and ammunition gave them an upper hand on the battlefield.⁶⁶ However, in the sphere of logistics, they did not have a superior technology at their disposal. Due to hilly terrain railway lines could only be laid up to the base of supplies. Without mechanised transport, transport carts, mail carts, and animals had to bear the brunt of the arduous journey. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that wheeled carts were unsuited for most of the LOC due to the poor road conditions. By extension of the same logic, mechanised wheeled transport would have also been deemed immobile. On the other hand, steamers were extensively used to cross the Indus and Chenab. But rapid currents, steep banks, and the rocky bed of the Indus were neither suited for chain-towed boats nor large steamers. Demands were thus made for ordinary country ferries.⁶⁷ Country ferries, a piece of relatively backward technology, had lesser kinetic energy, but they were best suited to frontier environments.⁶⁸ It can be argued that improved technology often cannot overcome the geographical constraints. The climate and topography of the theatre of a campaign, to a great extent, determine the nature of military technology that can be deployed. During Operation

Barbarossa, the technologically superior *Wehrmacht* experienced severe challenges in the Russian winter. Without proper road networks, the German tanks and other armoured vehicles bogged down in the marshes of Russia. In comparison, relatively primitive modes of transportation, such as dog-driven sledges, provided mobility to the Russian Army.⁶⁹ Therefore, superior technology does not always guarantee effective military power projection.

Though the British-Indian Army learned considerably from its mistakes during the First Afghan War, General Roberts felt that the GOI took no lesson from the past campaign and failed to take steps to organise transport service in peacetime properly.⁷⁰ Certain recommendations were therefore made to improve the efficacy of the transport efforts. There was a demand for greater autonomy for transport officers to operate independently of the Commissariat Department, which had hitherto kept the officers of the former branch under the command of the latter,⁷¹ overburdening the commissariat and hindering the ability of the transport officers to react to changing local scenarios.⁷² Apart from that, the appointment of a ‘Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General for Transport’ and ‘Head Assistants’ for clerical work was also recommended. For the well-being of the transport animals and supervision of the mule drivers, a ‘Superintendent of Transport and Road Commandant’ was to be appointed in the Khyber Brigade.⁷³ Finally, it was felt that a central nucleus of the transport department should be created in peacetime, which would gather adequate knowledge of the availability of transport for future campaigns.⁷⁴ Minor reshaping of the organisational edifice of the British-Indian Army was imperative in the face of trying situations.

Post-Second Afghan War Organisational Changes and Frontier Operations

During the second phase of the Second Afghan War, the Controller-General of Supply and Transport, General Michael Kennedy, and the Assistant Controller-General, Lieutenant-General E.H. Collen, consolidated control over the British-Indian Army's logistical efforts and eliminated the evils of separation of services. This enabled them to employ the entire resources of India for the supply of the army. The Army Organisation Commission of 1879 took note of this lesson from the Second Afghan War and recommended the amalgamation of different divisions under the Commissariat Department. Ultimately, in 1885, this recommendation was translated into reality. The unified Commissariat Department was to act under a Commissary-General in Chief. The department became more closely associated with the military commands, and its military character developed.

The organisation of military transport was also transformed after the Second Afghan War. Transport came to be divided into three categories. Regimental transport was in the first category. Brigade, divisional or departmental transport comprised the second, and general transport comprised the third and final category. However, these recommendations to reorganise the transport of the British-Indian Army were not approved by the CIC, who considered such a reorganisation to be over-elaborate.⁷⁵ Consequently, The British-Indian Army experienced problems in transport during their mobilisation in 1885 over the NWF.

The Second Afghan War also brought to the surface several medical and dietary issues. In 1880, the death rate of the Punjab Frontier Force (henceforth PFF) on field service was 48.57 per 1,000 compared to that of the British troops, which was 27.73 per 1000. Surgeon-General A. C. C. De Renzy, while enquiring into the medical conditions of the British and Indian troops, attributed the higher mortality among the native troops during the Second Afghan War to unsuitable food, improper clothing and defective hospital arrangements. During the war, the

GOI's sanctioned ration for Indian troops included one *seer* of wheat, two *chittacks* of pulses, and one *chittack* of *ghee*. De Renzy mentioned that this diet was insufficient for the Indian troops to maintain a good state of fighting efficiency. The Indian soldiers became rapidly scorbutic on it and lost their health in many other ways. However, the CIC in India disagreed with De Renzy. Instead, he attributed the excessive death rate in some regiments during the Afghan War to the unhealthy conditions of some stations. He backed up his argument by saying that many regiments who marched through healthy stations did not exhibit abnormal amounts of sickness.

Furthermore, he found the quantity of ration to the native troops as laid down in the Commissariat Code and the Kabul Scale of clothing to be sufficient. However, he did accept that the poor quality of 'country' clothing articles (as opposed to warm and stout blankets) that were issued to the Indian troops in Afghanistan was not sufficient. Finally, he concurred with Dr DeRenzi regarding the ineffective hospital arrangements. According to the CIC, the absence of any authorised hospital diets and medical comforts retarded the recovery of patients during the Second Afghan War, which was addressed later in 1883. He also recommended more autonomy to the General Officer Commanding (henceforth GOC) during a campaign to order whatever ration was necessary.⁷⁶

It has been previously mentioned that a civil-military collaboration characterised the British-Indian Army's logistics beyond the Indus. This trend also continued in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and the Waziri Expedition of 1881 was no exception. It was undertaken to punish Mashud transgressions that continued since the Second Afghan War. To that end, the GOI dispatched upwards of 5,000 British and Indian troops and an equal number of animals for artillery, ammunition and baggage.⁷⁷ The Deputy Commissioner of Bannu collected considerable supplies for the army to march into Waziristan. He gathered supplies for the Indian troops and grains for cattle by employing contractors. These were, in turn, taken over by the

Sub-Assistant Commissary General with the commencement of the expedition at Bannu and Mirian.

The Deputy Commissioner also took responsibility for supplying carriage for the food supplies for Indian troops and fodder, for which he collected some 3,000 camels, which the transport officers took over. As the blueprint of the expedition was drawn up quickly, collecting and using commissary transport would have taken considerable time. Instead, the transport used consisted entirely of hired camels, government mules, and ponies with a few pack bullocks. The GOC of the expedition, Brigadier General T.G. Kennedy, ordered all regiments and corps to be supplied with sufficient carriage to carry four days of rations with them. Furthermore, the Commissariat Department stored twelve days of supplies for the whole force. For efficient dispersal of the articles of supply, a day's supply was sent to an advanced location on the line of the march before the movement of the main body. Articles of food such as wheat, pulses, *ghee*, salted meat, and grams were issued to the soldiers, both European and Indian, and the followers free of cost.⁷⁸

Since the transport of this expedition depended entirely on pack animals, their survival and good performance, to a great extent, determined the rapidity with which the column could penetrate the Waziri country. The mules sent from Peshawar Jhelum, Meean Meer and Multan arrived in Bannu in good condition. Camels were mainly hired from Dera Ismail Khan. The experiences of the Second Afghan War depicted the importance of hill camels in mountainous countries. Similarly, some Powindah camels were also employed in the Waziri campaign. Therefore, it can be argued that the British-Indian Army's learning mechanism was quite effective. Interestingly, the mules received only around one *seer* of grain each, which was significantly below their requirement. However, their health did not deteriorate due to the availability of good-quality fodder. Therefore, the animals mainly were fed off the land during the expedition.⁷⁹

Following the Zhob Valley Expedition in 1884-1885, a considerable number of men of the British-Indian Army were ordered to move into Baluchistan. The total approximate strength of the army corps for service was 27,000 men of all arms, 28,000 followers, 6,000 horses and 28,000 transport animals. Similar to earlier expeditions, supplies were stored in multiple locations in Baluchistan. One month's supply was collected each at Rindli and Killa Abdullah. In addition, three month's provisions were kept at Quetta, and one week's supplies were collected at each of the fourteen stages from Rindli to Killa Abdullah. Since the Second Afghan War, demands for processed food for the British-Indian Army in the NWF increased steadily. Hence, 182,000 lbs. of Australian meat or Chicago beef, more than 34,000 lbs of preserved potatoes and compressed vegetables and around 40,000 lbs of Erbswurst's soup, Whitehead's army food and Whitehead's variegated soup were ordered. Due to the scarce availability of fresh vegetables in NWF and Afghanistan, issuing lime juice and *amchur* (dry mango powder) as antiscorbutic to soldiers and even the followers in the British-Indian Army became a common practice. Therefore, upwards of 9,000 gallons of lime juice and 460 maunds *amchur* were ordered during the collection of troops at Baluchistan in 1885.⁸⁰

The GOI still had to depend on animal labour for transport. Consequently, to complement animal importation from India, arrangements were struck with Brahui *sardars* to transport supplies from Rindli to Quetta and thence to Killa Abdullah. Through this arrangement, it was expected to employ at least 10,000 camels to transport the articles of supply, which would carry up to 3,500 *maunds* daily from Rindli to Quetta and Killa Abdullah.⁸¹ Furthermore, a considerable number of animals were also purchased from northern India, Bengal, Sindh region and Madras. Upwards of 1,200 bullocks, 2,654 camels, 1,200 mules and more were purchased from these areas. Along with animals, very few coolies were also employed.⁸²

The organisational cooperation of the British-Indian armed and civil administration was yet again reflected through the assistance afforded by the Government of Punjab and the

employment of civil officers in purchasing animals.⁸³ However, the efforts to arrange for transport were not free of friction. In June 1884, the Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan reported unhealthy competition between different departments, such as the MD and the PWD, regarding hiring camel transports. The officers of these departments were acting independently of each other. As a result, they were bidding against one another. Therefore, the hiring rates increased to a great extent. Instead of the ordinary rate of 3 pie/month/mile, the rates reached seven pie/month/mile. The Agent to the Governor-General, therefore, recommended the intervention of the GOI to implement united and centralised rules regarding hiring camels in Baluchistan. He stressed two issues: firstly, fixing a schedule of rates and secondly, prohibiting the forcible seizure of animals. Both were deemed essential for the smooth functioning of the transport service in the NWF.⁸⁴

The lack of transport animals in Baluchistan was felt during the mobilisation. In this context, the Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan remarked on the need for horses. Therefore, besides purchasing and hiring animals from different parts of India and the frontiers, the GOI sanctioned 160 Rupees/month to maintain four stallions for horse-breeding purposes in Baluchistan. Given the smaller number of stallions requisitioned for breeding, it can be guessed that the whole project was aimed at transporting local troops rather than provisions.⁸⁵

Due to the mobilisation in 1885, the GOI finally acknowledged the need to reorganise the transport service. It was decided that the British-Indian Army's transport would be divided into two categories: depot transport for General Army service and regimental transport. A Commissary-General was appointed for unified and centralised transport service operations. He was to work with the Quartermaster-General during peace and war. Therefore, the problem of separate transport administration during peace and war was addressed. A very elaborate system of procuring transport was laid down. The Chief District officers were furnished with a list of the transport resources of their districts. While the district staff officers had lists of

officers who were entrusted with the task of purchasing transport. Upon receiving orders from the Adjutant-General, these officers went to the Collecting Centres in the districts under them and purchased the animals the civil authorities had brought. Drivers were engaged at equipping stations and in the districts. In addition, native cavalry soldiers took charge of the batches of animals to the equipping stations where they were organised and equipped.⁸⁶

The Chitral Campaign in the 1890s again tested the British-Indian logistical efforts on a rugged topography. Over 43,000 transport animals were mobilised during the campaign, of which almost half were hired. Among them, around 11,000 came from government transport, and almost 9000 were purchased. The transport animals comprised camels, mules, ponies, donkeys, and pack bullocks. The Commissary General, A. R. Badcock, expressed his satisfaction with the commissary of transport work during the Chitral Campaign. Therefore, it can be argued that the reorganisation of the transport service in 1886 was a highly successful endeavour. It manifests the organisational adaptiveness of the British-Indian armed administration. Hence, it was not a rigid edifice. Instead, it was inclined to change with time.

Badcock, however, opposed the system of purchasing and keeping vast quantities of articles of supply in reserve. Instead, he preferred to issue clothing to the British-Indian troops in stages at each station of entrainment or concentration from the commissariat godown. This system was supported by sending forward all food supplies from the various stations for an army column on the march. The articles of supply were to be restored by short-term contracts. He mentioned that if large stores for a longer time were purchased at once, then on many occasions sufficient quantities could not be procured, and prices were intentionally increased by the sellers. However, if short-term purchases were made, then prices of supply articles from various sources could be checked and inspected, and then a decision could be taken on procurement. He also advocated the use of regimental transport rather than a centralised apparatus providing transport from large depots for the British-Indian Army. Badcock's opinion represents the

multilayered opinions within the British-Indian armed administration. Nevertheless, he remarked that the government mule transport performed well during the Chitral Campaign. An important factor behind this was the efficient and admirable loading of the transport of pack animals. It was made possible as the handlers of the animals dealt with them in the long term in a regiment. Like mules, Badcock prescribed the establishing Camel and Donkey Corps. The Quartermaster-General in India also took pride in announcing the healthy condition of the troops during the Chitral Campaign, attributing it to efficient transport and supply arrangement and proper medical facilities. In terms of transport arrangements, the Chitral Relief Force stood out because it maintained a transport line of 200 miles solely based on pack animals. Wheeled carriages could not be used because of the ruggedness of the terrain in the region around Chitral.⁸⁷

With the growing need of frontier warfare and the raging debate regarding the legality of the system of impressment (the act of seizing for public use or of impressing into public service) of animals for war, the GOI was forced to undertake the task of reorganising the transport service at the very end of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the Rawalpindi Transport Committee was constituted in 1896 and presided over by Septimus Thornburn. The committee concluded that, firstly, Punjab possessed a sufficient number of transport animals to meet the requirements of war to a great extent. Secondly, the lack of animals was not the actual problem. It was the complete absence of an organisation to deal with the large-scale mobilisation of the British-Indian Army. The committee also remarked that impressments were legal throughout British India other than Punjab through the existing transport codes. However, rather than abolishing the system, it recommended starting a transport animal registration scheme to streamline animal procurement. Registration of animals was to be organised within at least four regions in northern and northwestern India, such as Delhi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Derajat. An inspecting transport officer was to be in charge in each of these regions.⁸⁸

The Rawalpindi Committee was followed by the formation of the Sanford Transport Committee in 1898. The committee took up the question of reorganising the transport service against the backdrop of the massive frontier conflagration in 1897-98. During these two years, the transport service had to mobilise around 80,000 animals in various fields of operation. The Tirah Expeditionary Force alone demanded more than 16,000 camels, more than 45,000 mules, and around 12,000 bullocks. In comparison, at the beginning of 1897, the GOI had around 19,000 mules, 5,000-6,000 camels and around 7,000 bullocks. Therefore, the need to collect and maintain a much greater number of animals for service on the NWF was felt. The Sanford Committee agreed with its predecessor regarding the need for an organised transport system manned by trained and disciplined officers and individuals. Furthermore, it also supported the registration system to make the animals quantifiable and open to inspection by transport officers. The committee stressed Infrastructural augmentation in the NWF for prompt and organised mobilisation of animals and supplies. Supply depots were to be established at strategic locations such as Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Jhelum to facilitate rapid mobilisation. These depots were to be connected by railway networks. In addition, the creation of a permanent active-duty transport corps was also recommended. Silladar units were to be formed to organise camel transport better. Each unit would comprise 356 Sarwans and 1,068 camels. Forming a mule corps with 19,512 active mules and 2,244 reserve animals was recommended.⁸⁹

It can be argued that, departing from the existence of decentralised supply and transport services in the first half of the nineteenth century, the GOI was moving towards centralised and uniform command to streamline its logistical efforts. In this context, it should be mentioned that the GOI took a significant step in its administrative centralisation in 1895 when the presidential armies and the presidential control were abolished, and the CIC was made the head of the British-Indian Army. Under him, there would be four Army Commanders who had

considerable administrative powers. However, the Army Headquarters would control all the major issues and policies.⁹⁰

Changes in the Twentieth Century and the Third Afghan War

Followed by the efforts to overhaul the administrative edifice of the Commissariat at the turn of the twentieth century, the CIC submitted a scheme of reorganisation and redistribution of the Army in India. The scheme aimed at utilising the whole of the British-Indian forces, training the troops efficiently in peacetime and mobilising them rapidly during war. The scheme also entailed changes in the supply and transport organisation. Supplies were divided into two categories. Firstly, food supplies for men and animals and secondly, clothing and other equipment. It recommended increasing the existing scale of supplies stored at Peshawar and Quetta to meet the demands of four divisions. So far, tinned meat was imported from England. However, the scheme of reorganisation proposed the establishment of a factory in India to produce tinned meat. This proposal stemmed from the growing use of tinned meat in frontier expeditions since the Second Afghan War. It was calculated that the Field Army would require 2,704,000 lbs of tinned meat for a year's campaign. Given the considerable volume of the article, a local unit of production could have certainly aided its supply. The scheme also recommended increasing the scale of emergency ration and compressed vegetables from the existing standards.⁹¹

With the onset of the First World War, the NWF attained greater importance in the scheme of Imperial defence. In 1915, The GOI had to deploy a considerable number of troops on the NWF to hold the frontier and fight against the tribes if required. Apart from the existing garrisons of Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Kohat, Bannu, and other frontier posts, the equivalent of two divisions was further mobilised.⁹² However, the next year, the War Committee of the British

Cabinet further bolstered the frontier force to four divisions, three frontier brigades, and four cavalry brigades to defend NWF. Therefore, it can be gauged that the forces detailed for the protection of the NWF required considerable supplies and transport.

The Third Afghan War, which commenced in May 1919, saw significant preparations in NWF. Recognising the strategic importance of the only fully metalled road on the NWF, which ran from Peshawar through the Khyber, the GOI invested a substantial one million lbs sterling to prepare roads for mechanical transport. This decision was not made lightly but was the result of meticulous planning and operational foresight. Additionally, key roads between Jamrud and Landi Kotal, Kohat and Parachinar, Bannu and Miranshah, Dear Ismail Khan and Tank, were upgraded to facilitate wartime traffic, highlighting the importance of the British-Indian Army's frontier communications.⁹³ However, the road prepared in the Khyber line did not perform well under the pressure of mechanical transport. Therefore, a separate road for animal convoys was advised to be used.⁹⁴

During the subsequent operation in Waziristan, the GOI sanctioned a scheme to employ the Mashhuds to repair the roads between Mad Hassan and Spinkai in South Waziristan, which had operational importance. The proposal was to give the contracts to the three main Mashhud clans, who were expected to arrange the required labour and provide sustenance. While the Mashhud chiefs were receptive to the scheme, the Mullahs, who sought to maintain their power within the Mashhud society, resisted it. This resistance, despite the favourable reception from the chiefs, underscores the challenges in maintaining an amicable relationship with tribal authorities. Although the scheme did not achieve the desired results, it represented a continuity of the GOI's policy of employing tribal labour in the infrastructural augmentation on the frontier.⁹⁵

The standard operating procedure regarding supply reserves in the Third Afghan War was keeping a sixty-day stock at supply depots. Half of this stock was placed in forward positions

west of the Indus, and the other half was in the base depot at Lahore and at the ports of Bombay and Karachi. Within three days of mobilisation, the reserves at the ports were dispatched according to a prearranged schedule to Lahore and the forward areas on the frontier. Supplies were collected in different strategic locations. At Thal, provisions for more than sixty days were stored for the garrison operating in that axis. On the other hand, almost the same quantity except New Zealand Bacon, salted jam and condensed milk were kept at Parachinar for the men of the British-Indian Army. However, *bhoosa* and grains for animals were available for only thirteen and ten days, respectively.⁹⁶ This implies that thorough preparations were not made for the maintenance of animals.

The Waziristan Campaign, followed by the Third Afghan War, presented the British-Indian Army with significant logistical challenges. It was initially calculated that three weeks of supplies were needed for operations in the Khaisora Valley. However, the rising water level of the Indus and the continuous floods in the Gomal River made such supply arrangements impossible. This necessitated a change in plans, with the British-Indian Army having to consider the Shahur route after concentrating on Jandola. This adaptability in the face of unforeseen challenges is a testament to the administrative resilience of the British-Indian Army.⁹⁷

The changes made to the military establishment of the British-Indian Army during the First World War were reflected in the Third Afghan War, showcasing the army's evolution. Consequently, the improvement of the field service of British and Indian troops was being considered at the Army HQ in India. Accordingly, recommendations were made for the daily issue of 'field service ration' for the British and Indian troops, as well as a provision for a special 'operation scale' of ration.

The two following tables depict the proposed scale of ration for the British, Indian troops and camp followers in 1919.

Table 3.8

Proposed Ration for British Troops in 1919						
Items for Daily Issue	Quantity of Daily Issue	Quantity of 'Special Operation Scale' at a Daily Basis	Items for Weekly Issue	Quantity of Weekly Issue	Items Issued Three Times a Week	Quantity of Items Issued
Bread	1 lb.		Pepper	1-7 oz	Oatmeal	3 oz
Biscuit		12 oz	Mustard	1-7 oz	With condensed milk	1 oz
Meat	1 lb.		Tobacco or	2 oz	Rice	2 oz
Preserved meat		12 oz.	Cigarettes	40	With curry powder	$\frac{1}{8}$ oz
Bacon	3 oz.	3 oz	Small Indian cigars (Dumpies) or	20	Butter (winter only)	2 oz
Potatoes	10 oz.	6 oz	Sweets	4 oz	Fresh lime-juice	$\frac{1}{2}$ fluid oz
Onions	6 oz.		Matches	2 boxes	Rum was also issued during winter, under the authority of the Divisional Commander.	
Fresh vegetables (other than onions)	8 oz.	$\frac{1}{3}$ oz				
Tea	$\frac{3}{4}$ oz.					
Sugar	3 oz.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz				
Jam	3 oz.					
Condensed Milk	2 oz.	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz (in winter) 1 oz (in summer)				
Tinned or dried fruit	2 oz.	2 oz (in summer only)				
Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	$\frac{1}{4}$ oz				
'Cootine' or	1 oz.					

Vegetable oil (for cooking)						
Cheese (winter only)	3 oz.	2 oz				
Soup (winter only)	2 oz.					
Fuel (wood)	3 lbs.					

Source: From the Quartermaster-General in India to the GOC, NWF Force and GOC, Baluchistan Force, dated May 6-7, 1919, Diary 34591, Afghan War Diary, Vol. 2, WW1/56/H, NAI, New Delhi.

Table 3.9

Proposed Ration for Indian Troops and Followers						
Items for Daily Issue	Quantity of Daily Issue	Quantity of 'Special Operation Scale' at a Daily Basis	Items for Weekly Issue	Quantity of Weekly Issue	Items Issued Three Times a Week	Quantity Items Issued Three Times a Week
Wheat	12 oz.	12 oz. or rice 4 oz and wheat 8 oz	Tobacco or	2 oz	Ground nuts (summer only)	2 oz.
Pulses	3 oz.		Cigarettes	40		1 oz
Fresh Meat (Including bone)	8 oz.	4 oz.	Sweets	4 oz		
Clarified butter	2 oz	2 ½ oz	Matches	2 boxes	Clarified butter	2 oz
Potatoes	2 oz.	2 oz			Fresh lime-juice	½ fluid oz
Onions	2 oz.				Rum was also issued during winter, under the authority of the Divisional Commander.	
Fresh vegetables (other than onions)	1 lb	⅓ oz				
Tea	⅓ oz.	⅓ oz				

Sugar	2 1/2 oz	2 1/2 oz				
Condensed Milk	2 oz	1 oz.				
Mixed condiments	3/4 oz	3/4 oz				
Salt	1/2 oz	1/4 oz				
Fuel (wood)	2 lbs.	12 oz.				

Source: From the Quartermaster-General in India to the GOC, NWF Force and GOC, Baluchistan Force, dated May 6-7, 1919, Diary 34591, Afghan War Diary, Vol. 2, WW1/56/H, NAI, New Delhi.

Among these proposed ration items, most were sanctioned by the GOI. In addition to this, ice and mineral water were also provided to the British and Indian troops, which gave them relief in the intense summer heat of the NWF. In the initial days of the campaign, ice had to be brought up from Lahore and Rawalpindi. However, with the enlargement of the factories at Nowshera and Peshawar and the establishment of new ones at Landi Kotal, Kohat and Thal, the need to transport ice from Rawalpindi ceased. Moreover, Dakka and Kohat saw the establishment of dairies, and the existing one at Peshawar was greatly enlarged, providing pasteurised milk for the hospitals. Vegetable gardens were also planted at Quetta.⁹⁸

It can be argued that compared to the Second Afghan War, the food rations of both the British and Indian troops became much more organised. Furthermore, new items were added that were highly satisfactory from a dietary point of view. Greater reliance on processed food can also be seen among the British troops. In previous frontier campaigns, the British-Indian units had been left to make their own arrangements for canteen supplies. However, relying on the *baniahs* and canteen contractors for British units was unsatisfactory. For an efficient and centralised supply system, a general contract was made with a Calcutta firm with extensive experience and reputation, which was given special railway and transport facilities. This arrangement proved satisfactory and was undoubtedly an improvement on the former arrangement.

To mitigate the hardships inseparable from a long journey to and through the frontiers in the Indian summer, rest camps were established in areas such as Peshawar, Nowshera, Rawalpindi, Lahore, etc. In addition, tea rooms were also opened for the particular use of Indian troops not only at the chief railway stations but also at all standing camps within the forward areas. These arrangements Manifest a significant improvement in the GOI's frontier war efforts over their previous campaigns.⁹⁹ Therefore, the logistical apparatus of the British-Indian Army evolved greatly in terms of food supplies.

Among the articles of supply, water is an essential item for any armed forces on the march. For the mobilisation of the British-Indian Army across the NWF, water supply was established at some key locations on the Northern Front during the Third Afghan War. Peshawar had a steady supply of water from the Bara River. Hence, it never experienced any serious water shortage during the mobilisation of the British-Indian Army in 1919. Ali Masjid and Dakka also had sufficient water supply as they were near a perennial spring and the Kabul River, respectively. However, right after crossing Peshawar at Kacha Gharay and Jamrud, the water supply was insufficient. The former drew water from the Bara River, which was then channelled via two pipelines to Jamrud. The drinking water supply became a concerning issue in northern Afghanistan during the Third Afghan War. The Afghans at Bagh cut the main Tangi water supply line, the primary water source at Landi Kotal. Consequently, a severe shortage of water was experienced by the 8,000 British-Indian troops there.¹⁰⁰ Hence, Bagh in NWF was identified as a pivotal position for the British-Indian Army, as it controlled the water supply to the Khyber Line. Therefore, the GOI instructed the GOC, Northern Command and Peshawar Division to commence emergency water supply in the Khyber Line and at Landi Kotal. Water was supplied through pipes from nearby reservoirs. For this purpose, almost 22,000 feet of pipes of different dimensions were collected at Lahore.¹⁰¹ This reveals the British-Indian Commissariat's ability to meet unforeseen challenges through improvisation.

However, the alternate supply of water was not sufficient. Due to the shortage of the authorised scale of water supply (3 gallons/day/man) at locations such as Kohat, Ali Masjid and Landi Kotal, the Indian troops and followers were forced to drink from water channels and other contaminated sources of water which led to a serious outbreak of cholera among them. The outbreak's severity could be gauged from the fact that on 8 July, there were 1,663 cases, including 566 deaths, mainly among the followers.¹⁰² Therefore, the expulsion of the Afghans from Bagh and the strong defence of Landi Khana were deemed essential. Such tactical manoeuvre would have secured water supply for the imperial troops while depriving the invading Afghans of the same. Coupled with the debilitating effects of the summer heat, denying water to the Afghan forces would have limited their manoeuvrability. Consequently, on 9 May, the British-Indian troops, led by Brigadier-General George Crocker, launched a successful attack on Landi Kotal. They drove the enemy from the Tangi water supply and spring, a significant tactical victory in the Third Afghan War.¹⁰³ Therefore, similar to the First and Second Afghan Wars, logistics played a crucial role in shaping the British-Indian Army's tactics during their third campaign in Afghanistan.

The Third Afghan War witnessed the employment of animals and mechanical transports, such as lorries and railways, to transport troops and supplies. Pack and draught animals bore the burden of carrying supplies on the Indian frontiers in the nineteenth century. However, due to the demands of the First World War, the British-Indian Army's animal resources in India were considerably drained. The supply of mules was completely exhausted. Complicating the situation even further, the supply of camels in India was also at the brink of exhaustion due to the continued heavy demands of operating in Persia along with the ravages of the disease of *surra* or Trypanosomiasis. As a result, the GOI had to depend on ponies and bullock corps during the Third Afghan Campaign. Though the ponies performed to the best of their abilities, they were Greatly inferior to the mule in general utility and endurance. Therefore, the animal

transport assembled initially was sufficient only for the first stage of mobilisation of the British-Indian Army. As a result, serious scarcities started to surface within a while.¹⁰⁴

An important feature of the GOI's war efforts in 1919 was the assistance sought from the native princess. Hence, the Bahawalpur Transport Corps, Indore Imperial Service Transport Corps, and Gwalior Transport Corps were requested to be deployed for the GOI's war efforts.¹⁰⁵ Mechanised lorries were used to compensate for the scarcity of animal transport. To increase their numbers, vehicles were purchased locally. Moreover, Ford Company chassis received from America were equipped with van bodies locally. Therefore, similar to the British-Indian Army's war efforts in the 19th century, their ability to constantly improvise during a campaign ensured the sustenance of their logistical framework. Notably, similar to the requirements of unconventional warfare, during the Third Afghan War, the lion's share of the supplies that were transported to the battlefield comprised food and fodder. Food items for the British-Indian troops and fodder for the animals comprised the majority of all articles of supply, almost 87%. In comparison, ammunition and ordnance comprised only around 10%.¹⁰⁶

With a combination of animal and mechanical transports, upwards of 500 tonnes of supplies in stores were transported daily from Peshawar and Jamrud through the Khyber. Despite the depiction of favourable conditions of transport on the NWF in post-war official reports, a lack of transport was repeatedly reported in the War Diaries. The GOC, Baluchistan, reported a lack of transport in late May 1919. Despite the use of mechanical transport, pack and draught animals were mostly used for transport in Baluchistan as the former was not available in sufficient quantity.¹⁰⁷ To that end, similar to the Second Afghan War, foraging expeditions were undertaken from Dakka, to aid the efforts of collecting supplies. It resulted in an average daily collection of around 400 *maunds* of untrusted grain from the Afghan villages. Furthermore, the Mohmands inhabiting the north of the Kabul River also brought in supplies, mostly fresh vegetables, despite their hostile stance. These efforts at collecting supplies locally ameliorated

the grave situation that arose from the lack of transport.¹⁰⁸ Apart from the internal combustion engines, other technological innovations were utilised towards British-Indian war efforts during the Third Afghan War. For example, as mobilisation began for the British-Indian Army, the Director General of Military Works recommended the installation of a ropeway line between Jamrud and Loe Dakka to replace mechanical transports. The ropeway line's transportation capacity was estimated at 200 tons per day.¹⁰⁹

In addition to road transport, in May 1919, 637 special military trains were run over the North-Western Railway system to aid the mobilisation of the GOI's forces. Despite the GOI's attempts to improve its railway carrying capacity for military purposes on the NWF, the railways failed to act as an efficient transport system during the Third Afghan War. Railway engines and wagons were available in sufficient numbers. However, the arrangements at railheads were far from satisfactory. The extension from Peshawar to Jamrud was a single line which was roughly laid and poorly ballasted. There was no bridge, and the line was affected by the floods of the Narai Stream. Furthermore, there was no siding at Jamrud. As it was a single line, a siding line was necessary when two trains were to pass in opposite directions over the same track. It allowed a train to deviate from the main line and wait while the other train passed. However, its absence made railway transport for military supplies between Peshawar and Jamrud impossible. Therefore, mechanical transport was used between these two locations when it was supposed to work ahead of Jamrud. Hence, its carrying capacity was curtailed. The railhead at Kohat was also not complete. Further worsening the situation, railway communication between Bannu and the Tank was even more precarious. Due to the absence of bridges in this line, transporting stores and troops became an extremely arduous and time-consuming effort. Therefore, it can be argued that the advantages of using railways to swiftly transport vast quantities of supplies were nullified due to the lack of proper infrastructure. This, in turn, affected the British-Indian Army's mobilisation efforts.¹¹⁰

Despite the GOI's efforts, the frontier railways proved inadequate for carrying supplies. This was mostly due to the scarcity of trains and their poor condition. Due to its faster speed, it was expected to transport perishable items efficiently. However, such was not the case, and even rations for troops were seldom transported in accordance with the authorised scale. A 2'6" gauge line was not sufficient to provide for large bodies of troops during mobilisation, and a broader gauge was required. In addition, this line was not uniformly laid across the frontier and there were changes in gauge at Nowshera, Kohat and Mari. As a result, trains had to be changed at these stations, and the loading and unloading of goods caused further delays.¹¹¹ It manifests infrastructural unpreparedness on the part of the GOI.

Despite the challenges of supply and transportation, the British-Indian Army's logistical network did not break down during the Third Afghan War and in the subsequent operations in Waziristan because of its managerial flexibility and knack for improvisation. Whenever one mode of Transportation fell short of supplying adequate provisions, local and short-term arrangements were made to complement and/or supplement it with the other means available. It can also be argued that improved military technology at the disposal of the British-Indian Army compared to the nineteenth century could not empower them to overcome the geographical constraints posed by the frontier and Afghan environs. Pieces of military technology such as bridges and internal combustion engines provided only occasional and localised relief for the British-Indian Army. However, primitive methods such as animal transport and country carriages yet again bore the brunt of the GOI's logistics.

Conclusion

The logistical efforts of the British-Indian Army in NWF and Afghanistan in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a colossal endeavour. Environmental factors such as the rugged character of topography, harsh climate and the nature of flora and fauna influenced the realm

of supply and transport to a great extent. The military technology available to the British-Indian Army could not overcome the environmental challenges completely. However, they definitely aided the supply and transport efforts since the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, their importance cannot be outrightly written off.

Compared to boat bridges over the waterways in the NWF, more improved and permanent bridges helped in the swift mobilisation of the troops. These were formed over some of the rivers and in railway lines since the twentieth century. Furthermore, with the employment of mechanical transport in the form of lorries and railways stores of supplies were often transported promptly. However, the expanse of mechanical roads and railway networks was limited. Therefore, the primitive system of pack and draught animal transport continued even during the 1920s. Additionally, the nature of topography often necessitated the employment of primitive means of transportation. Since technologically superior modes of transportation required infrastructural development, which was expensive and time-consuming, the British-Indian Army had to take recourse to animal transport more often. It can be argued that only the Third Afghan War witnessed a limited symbiosis of biological and mechanical transports.

Therefore, rather than superior military technology, the British-Indian Army's logistics depended on efficiently managing the means at their disposal, improvising whenever possible, and cooperating with civil authorities and even with the tribal population. It should also be noted that British-Indian logistics on the frontier was characterised by their inclination to learn from their mistakes in the long run. Therefore, I argue that rather than the large-scale technological innovations of the European standards in the twentieth century, we need to pay attention to the micro-innovations in British-Indian logistics. These small-scale innovations were primarily evident in the field of the soldier's diet in India. These proved to be quite effective in adapting to the environmental and medical exigencies in NWF and Afghanistan.

Finally, the supply and transport requirements of the British-Indian Army necessitated the establishment and maintenance of an extensive administrative structure, which became more complex and intricate over time. From the decentralised and presidential logistical system in the first half of the nineteenth century, a unified and centralised apparatus emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. Therefore, the British-Indian logistics on the Indian Frontier was not an unchanging and rigid enterprise. From an organisational and administrative perspective, British-Indian logistics manifested flexibility, adaptiveness, and resilience, which enabled them to adapt to the changing circumstances at the frontier. Therefore, stepping outside the binary of change and continuity, I argue that the concept of evolution can best characterise the British-Indian Army's logistics in NWF and Afghanistan.

¹ Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (Reprint; 1977, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 1-20, 231-237.

² John Lynn, ed., *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 9-30.

³ Kaushik Roy, "Feeding the Leviathan: Supplying the British-Indian Army, 1859-1913", *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. 80, no. 322 (2002), pp. 144-161.

⁴ Kaushik Roy, "Logistics and British Imperialism: Supplying the British Imperial Army during the Second Afghan War, 1878-1880" in *Warfare and Society in British India, 1757-1947*. eds. Ashutosh Kumar, Kaushik Roy (London: Routledge, 2023) pp. 182-199.

⁵ Lieutenant-General E.H. Collen, "Supply and Transport in India", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 52, issue 367 (1908), p. 1218.

⁶ From the Governor-General to the Secret Committee, dated 13 March 1839, no. 1, *Indian Papers: Papers Relating to the War in Affghanistan*, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 21 January 1840.

⁷ Mohan Lal, *Life of the Amir Dost Mohammed Khan of Kabul: With His Political Proceedings Towards the English, Russian, and Persian Government, Including the Victory and Disasters of the British Army in Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1846), pp. 193-200; Captain Bruce Hay, "The First Afghan War, 1838-1842", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 55, no. 396 (1911), p. 195; From T.H. Maddock, Officiating Secretary to the GOI, with the Governor-General to the Secret Department, dated 4 December 1839, no. 7 in Richard Hartley Kennedy, *Narrative of the Campaign of the Army of the Indus, in Sind and Kaubool, in 1838-9*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1840), pp. 291-292.

- ⁸ Lal, *Life of the Amir Dost Mohammed*, pp. 183-185; Lieutenant-General George Lawrence, *Reminiscences of Forty-Three Years in India* (London: John Murray, 1874), p. 6.
- ⁹ From the Bombay Government to the Secret Committee, dated 8 May 1839, no. 8, *Papers Relating to the War in Affghanistan*, 21 January 1840.
- ¹⁰ *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India: Baluchistan and the First Afghan War*, vol. 6 (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1910), pp. 308-309.
- ¹¹ Kennedy, *Army of the Indus*, vol. 1, pp. 183-190; Captain Henry Havelock, *Narrative of the War in Affghanistan in 1838-39*, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1840), pp. 204-208.
- ¹² Kaushik Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans, 1500-2013* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 80-81.
- ¹³ Brigadier Humphry Bullock, *History of the Army Service Corps, 1760-1857*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers PVT LTD, 1976), p. 113.
- ¹⁴ From the Governor-General of India in Council to the Secret Committee of the EIC, dated 22 December 1841, no. 1; From Major-General Sale to Captain Paton, dated 15 November 1841, no. 13; From Captain Mackeson to Mr. Maddock, dated 28 November 1841, no. 59, *Papers Relating to the Military Operations in Afghanistan*, IOR/L/PARL/2/87A. APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁵ From General Sir Jasper Nicolls to the Governor-General in Council, dated 27 December 1841, no. 87, IOR/L/PARL/2/87A. APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁶ From Brigadier Wild to Major-General Lumley, dated 6 January 1842, no. 113, no. 87; From Major General Pollock to Mr. Maddock, dated 16 February 1842, no. 188, IOR/L/PARL/2/87A. APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁷ Letter from Major General W. Nott to Major General Pollock, dated 17 September 1842; Letter from Major General W. Nott to Major General Pollock, dated 27 September 1842, MSS EUR F439/6, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁸ Letter to Major General Sir G. Pollock G.C.B., Commanding Division Dinapore from N.G. Thompson, Assistant Commissariat General, Afghanistan Field Commissariat Officer of Accounts, dated May 2, 1843, no. 3946, MSS EUR F439/3, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁹ From Captain H.B. Bagley, Commander of Ordnance Delhi to Captain Durand, Private Secretary to the Governor-General, 26 August 1842, MSS EUR F439/3, APAC, BL, London.
- ²⁰ Durgadas Bandyopadhyay, *Bidrohe Bangali ba Amar Jibon Charit* (Calcutta: Indian Associated Publishing Co. Private LTD., 1957), pp. 54-55.
- ²¹ Letters from the Court of Directors, progs. no. 18, 7 August 1850, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ²² Thin, bowl-shaped pancakes named for the pan that gives them their form.
- ²³ 'Diet' in *Report of the Commissioners; Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Commissioner Appointed to Enquire into the Sanitary State of the Army in India, Friday, 2 December 1859, Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India*, vol. 1, *Report of the Commissioners* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode for HMSO, 1863), pp. lvi-lvii, 72-73.
- ²⁴ Lt. Colonel B.N. Majumdar, *History of the Army Service Corps*, vol. 2, 1858-1913 (New Delhi: Sterling Publisher PVT LTD, 1976), pp. 82-94.
- ²⁵ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80, Abridged Official Account* (London: Intelligence Branch, Army Head Quarters, India, 1908), p. 7.
- ²⁶ Proceedings of the Government of the Punjab in the Military Department (henceforth PGPM), Kabul Expedition (henceforth, KE), Deputy Commissioner, Dera Ghazi Khan to Military Secy., Punjab, Progs. no. 6K, 4 Oct. 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ²⁷ Major-General, F.S. Roberts, V.C., C.B., Commanding Kurram Field Force, to the Secy. to Govt., Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 6, 30 Sept. 1878, PGPM, (KE), Oct 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ²⁸ Apr 1879, Instructions by Major-General C. Pollard, R.E., Chief Engineer, Punjab, for the improvement of the Rawalpindi, Kohat and Thal road, dated 29 March 1879, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ²⁹ From the Commissary-General, Lahore to the Secy. to Govt., Punjab, MD, progs. no. 383, 16 January 1879, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁰ From Captain A. Crookshank, Officiating Deputy Secy. to the GOI, MD to the Quartermaster-General in India, progs. no. 211K.C., 6 Dec. 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ³¹ From F.W.R. Fryer, Esquire, Officiating Deputy Commissioner, Dera Ghazi Khan to the Secy. to Govt. Punjab, progs. no. 4K, 19 Dec. 1878 PGPM (KE), Jan 1879; From Lepel Griffin, Esquire, Secy. to Govt., Punjab to the Secy. to the GOI, FD, 25 Dec. 1878, PGPM (KE), January 1879; From Johnson to the Secy. to Govt., Punjab, MD, progs. no. 260 F.C., 22 January 1879, PGPM (KE), March 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³² From Crookshank to the Secretary to GOI, PWD, progs. no. 382K.C., 15 December 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ³³ Extracts of a letter dated 10 Oct. 1878, from Adjutant-General in India, to the Secy. to the GOI, MD, progs. no. 542, PGIMD (KE), Dec 1878, NAI, New Delhi.

- ³⁴ From Commissioner, Peshawar to Punjab Military Secy. Simla, Progs no. 711C, 24 Sept 1878 PGPM (KE), Sept. 1878; Punjab Military Secy., Simla to Commissioner, Peshawar, 25 Sept. 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁵ From Colonel S. Black, Secy. to Govt., Punjab, MD, to the Commissioners and Superintendents, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Multan and Derajat, Progs. no. 677-682C, 24 Sept. 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁶ From Colonel S. Black, Secretary to Govt., Punjab, MD, to the Quartermaster-General, Progs. no. 701C, 26 Sept. 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁷ First Quetta Reinforcement, Colonel H.K. Burne, C.B., Secy. to the GOI, MD, to the Secy. to Govt. Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 32K, 23rd Sept. 1878, PGPM (KE), Sep. 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁸ From Colonel S. Black, Secy. to Govt., Punjab, MD, to the Secy. to the GOI, MD, Progs. no. 763C, 1 Oct. 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁹ From T.W. Rawlins, Esquire, Officiating Accountant-General, Punjab, to the Secy. to Government, Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 15882, 27 Nov. 1878, PGPM (KE), Dec. 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴⁰ Dec. 1879, From Lieut.-Col. G.A. Prendergast, Commanding 15th Bengal Cavalry and Commanding at Vitkari, dated 12 September 1879 to the Deputy Adjutant-General Royal Artillery, Simla, Progs. no. 6425, Proceedings of Government of India, Military Department (henceforth, PGIMD) Kabul Expedition (KE), NAI, New Delhi.; Roy, 'Feeding the Leviathan', p. 148.
- ⁴¹ From Colonel A.W. Montagu, for Commissary-General, Bengal, dated Simla, the 10 Nov. 1879 to Colonel Allen Johnson, Secy. to the GOI, MD, Progs. no. 6215, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴² Roy, 'Feeding the Leviathan', p. 154; PGIMD (KE), Jan 1880, From Major-General P.S. Lumsden to Burne, Progs. no. 6679, 22 July 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴³ From D.C. Macnabb, Esquire, Commissioner and Superintendent Rawalpindi Division, to the Secy. to Govt. Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 4062, 24 Oct. 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴⁴ Assistant Commissioner of Rawalpindi, Captain Wood, came up with this idea. He recommended issuing and checking permits for cutting firewood, whereas grass was to be cut through the agency of the district officials
- ⁴⁵ From C.F. Elliott, Esquire, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Rawalpindi Division, to the Conservator of Forests, Punjab, Progs. no. 8K, 29 Nov. 1878, PGPM (KE), Dec. 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴⁶ From Colonel H.K. Burne, Secy. to the GOI, MD, to the Adjutant-General in India, Progs. no. 789K, 9 Nov. 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴⁷ Roy, 'Feeding the Leviathan', p. 154.
- ⁴⁸ Telegram from Commissary-General, Lahore, dated 22 Dec. 1878, to the Secy. MD, Calcutta, Progs. no. 9675, PGIMD (KE), May 1880, Part II, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁴⁹ Telegram from Agent Governor General, Quetta, dated 2 January 1879, to the Secy. FD Calcutta, Progs. no. 9736, PGIMD (KE), May 1880, Part II, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁰ Copy of a telegram from Controller-General of Supply and Transport, dated 6 June 1880, to General Stewart, Kabul, Progs. no. 4438, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, NAI; copy of a telegram from Controller-General of Supply and Transport, dated 9 June 1880, to General Stewart, Kabul, Progs. no. 4445, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, NAI.; From Lieutenant-General Sir M. Kennedy, K.C.S.I., Additional Secretary, to the GOI, MD, 11 June 1880, to the Quartermaster-General in India, Progs. no. 4448, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵¹ From Commissary General, Simla, 25 April 1880, to Major A.R. Badcock, Deputy Commissary General, Northern Afghanistan Field Force, Progs. no. 4401, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵² Provisions for men was calculated at 23,000 *maunds* and grains for horses, transport animals, bullocks etc. was 97,000 *maunds*.
- ⁵³ From Burlton, to the Chief Director of Transport, Safed Sang, 30 May 1880; PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, Tucker to Kennedy, Progs no. 4436, 31 May 1880, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁴ From Telegram from Stewart to Quartermaster-General, Simla, 23 June 1880, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁵ From Lieutenant General Sir M. Kennedy, K.C.S.I., Additional Secy. to the GOI, MD, to the Quartermaster-General in India, Progs. no. 4472, 7 July 1880, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁶ From Roberts to the Secy. to Govt. Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 4, 30 Sept. 1878, PGPM (KE), Sep. 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁷ From Roberts to the Secy. to Govt. Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 143, 28 Oct. 1878, PGPM (KE), Nov. 1878, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁸ From Quartermaster-General in India to the Secy. to Govt. Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 1540A, 18 April 1879, PGPM (KE), NAI; From Lieutenant-Colonel, W.M. Lane, Postmaster-General, Punjab to the Secy. to Govt. Punjab, MD, Progs. no. 63, 8 May 1879, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁵⁹ Extract paragraph 4 of a letter from the Postmaster-General, Punjab to the Director-General of the Post Office in India, Progs. no. 423-6106C, 30 Sept. 1878, PGPM (KE), Oct. 1878, NAI; Black to the Secy. to the GOI, MD, Progs. no. 853C, 10 Oct. 1878, PGPM (KE), NAI, New Delhi.

- ⁶⁰ From Major-General P.S. Lumsden, C.B., C.S.I., Adjutant General in India, to Burne, Progs. no. 6415, 3 May 1879, NAI; PGIMD (KE), May 1879, Part II, Telegram from Commissioner, Karachi, to Secy. MD, Progs. no. 9687, 1 January 1879, PGIMD (KE), Dec. 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶¹ Copy of a letter from Captain A.R. Badcock, Chief Commissariat Officer, Kuram Field Force, to Assistant Quartermaster-General, Kuram Field Force, in Eteson to Secy. to the GOI, MD, Progs. no. 9582, 26 July 1879, PGIMD (KE), May 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶² From Colonel T.H. Sibley, Deputy Commissary-General, to Commissary-General, Progs. no. 339, 27 January 1879, PGIMD (KE), May 1880, Part II, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶³ Lieutenant-Colonel F. Eteson officiating Deputy Adjutant-General to Colonel H.K. Burne, Progs. no. 9581, PGIMD (KE), May 1880, NAI; Alexander Morrison, 'Camels and Colonial Armies: The Logistics of Warfare in Central Asia in the Early 19th Century', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2014, vol. 57, issue 4, p. 474.
- ⁶⁴ Captain F.C. Carter, 'Mountain Warfare as Applied to India', *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, 1893, vol. 22, no. 110, p. 430; Major G.M. Bullock, 'Mountain Warfare as Applied to India', *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, 1893, vol. 22, no. 107, p. 308.
- ⁶⁵ From Lieut.-Col. E.J. McNair, Director of Transport, Kuram Field Force, to the Controller-General of Supply and Transport, Progs. no. 3139, Military Proceedings of Supply and Transport Branch, MD, July 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶⁶ Robert Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 99.
- ⁶⁷ PGIMD, (KE), Dec. 1879, Black, Secy. to Burne, Progs. no. 6598, NAI, New Delhi.; Dewey, *Steamboats on the Indus*, pp. 13-194.
- ⁶⁸ Clive Dewey, *Steamboats on the Indus: The Limits of Western Technological Superiority in South Asia* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 13-48.
- ⁶⁹ See David Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- ⁷⁰ Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief* (London: Macmillan and Company Ltd., 1901), p. 349.
- ⁷¹ PGIMD (KE), May 1880, Badcock to Assistant Quartermaster-General, Kuram Field Force, in Eteson to Secy. to the GOI, MD, Progs. no. 9582, 26 July 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷² Stewart to Lumsden, 26 Nov. 1878, in G.R. Elsmie (ed.), *Sir Donald Stewart G.C.B., G.C.S.I., C.I.E.: An Account of His Life Mainly in His Own Words* (London: John Murray, 1903), pp. 225, 234.
- ⁷³ PGIMD (KE), January 1880, Burne to Quartermaster-General in India, Progs. no. 6734, 6 Sept. 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁴ PGIMD (KE), May 1880, From Major A.R. Palmer, Superintendent of Transport, Kuram Field Force, to the Chief Commissariat Officer, Kuram Field Force, in Eteson to Secy. to the GOI, MD, Progs. no. 9584, 26 Aug. 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁵ Collen, "Supply and Transport", pp. 1219-1224.
- ⁷⁶ From Surgeon-General A.C.C. DeRenzy to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India, dated 14 March 1884; From Secretary of State for India, no. 95 (para 1), dated 3 April 1884, Progs. no. 1397, MD, Progs. A, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁷ *The Mashud-Waziri Expedition of 1881, Diaries of Officers of the Quarter Master General's Department in India attached to the Mashud-Waziri Expeditionary Force* (Simla: Government Central Branch Press, 1884), pp. 17-20.
- ⁷⁸ Commissariat Arrangements in Connection with the Mashud Waziri Expedition, Progs. no. 390, Waziri Expedition, June 1881, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁹ Commissariat Arrangements, Progs. no. 390, Waziri Expedition, June 1881, MD, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁰ From the Commissary-General, Bengal to the Assistant Secretary to GOI, MD, Simla, dated 7 April 1885, Progs. no. 530, Military Department Proceedings of Quetta Expedition (henceforth MDPQE), 1885, NAI, NEW Delhi.
- ⁸¹ Telegram from Agent to the Governor-General, Quetta to the Secretary, MD, Rawalpindi, dated 9 April 1885, Progs. no. 532, MDPQE, 1885, NAI, NEW Delhi.
- ⁸² From the Commissary-General, Transport to the Secretary to the GOI, MD dated 1 April 1885, Progs. no. 777; From Officiating Deputy Secretary to GOI, MD to Secretary to GOP, dated 3 April 1885, Progs. no. 779, MDPQE, 1885, NAI, NEW Delhi.
- ⁸³ Cooperation of the Punjab Government in the Purchase of Transport Animals, Progs. no. 908, MDPQE, 1885, NAI, NEW Delhi.
- ⁸⁴ Camel transport in Baluchistan, Progs. no. 191-202, October 1885, Foreign, External-A, NAI, New Delhi.

- ⁸⁵ Horse-breeding operations in Baluchistan, Progs. no. 169-183, August 1885, Foreign, External-A, NAI. New Delhi.
- ⁸⁶ Collen, "Supply and Transport", pp. 1224-1225.
- ⁸⁷ Chitral Expedition 1895, IOR/L/MIL/7/6896, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁸⁸ James L. Hevia, *Animal Labour and Colonial Warfare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 161-164.
- ⁸⁹ Hevia, *Animal Labour*, pp. 168-172.
- ⁹⁰ Major-General Sir George Macmunn, "The Quartermaster-General's Department and the Administrative Services in India from the Mutiny to the Present Time", *Royal United Services Institution. Journal*, vol. 70, Issue 477, 1925, pp. 104-105.
- ⁹¹ Preparations of the Army in India for War, dated 17 February 1904, no. 473 M.C., CAB 38/7/126a, PRO, KEW, Surrey.
- ⁹² The Military Situation in India and the Middle East, Memorandum by General Sir E.G. Barrow, Military Secretary, India office, 24 November 1915, CAB 24/1/46, PRO, Kew, Surrey.
- ⁹³ Despatch by His Excellency General Sir Charles Carmichael Monro, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., A.D.C., Commander in Chief in India on the Third Afghan War 1919, WO/106/58/5, PRO, Kew, Surrey.
- ⁹⁴ From the War Section, Army HQ, Simla to the GOC, NWF, 15 May 1919, diary no. 36996, Afghan War diary, vol. 1, WW1/55/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁵ *Operations in Waziristan 1919-1920* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1921), pp. 32-33; Despatch by Charles Monro, WO/106/58/5, PRO, Kew, Surrey.
- ⁹⁶ From the GOC, Kohat to the GOC, NWF, dated 27 May 1919, diary no. 42439, Afghan War diary, vol. 2, WW1/56/H, NAI, New Delhi; Despatch by Charles Monro, WO/106/58/5, PRO, Kew.
- ⁹⁷ *Operations in Waziristan*, p. 44.
- ⁹⁸ *The Third Afghan War 1919*, pp. 130-131.
- ⁹⁹ Despatch by Charles Monro, WO/106/58/5, PRO, Kew, Surrey.
- ¹⁰⁰ *The Third Afghan War 1919: Official Account* (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1926), pp. 126-127.
- ¹⁰¹ From the War Section, Simla to the GOC, Northern Command and GOC Peshawar Division, dated 5 May 1919, diary no. 31892; Agent to the Governor-General and Chief Commissioner in NWFP to the Secretary to the GOI in FPD, dated 5 May 1919, diary no. 31980; The War Section, Army Head Quarter (henceforth AHQ), Simla to GOC, Kohat Brigade, dated 6 May 1919, diary no. 32009, Afghan War diary, vol. 1, WW1/55/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰² *The Third Afghan War 1919*, pp. 128-129.
- ¹⁰³ From Agent to the Governor-General and Chief Commissioner in NWFP to the Secretary to the GOI in FPD, dated 6 May 1919, diary no. 32226; Appreciation no. 2, 10 May 1919, Appendix 190, Afghan War diary, vol. 1, WW1/55/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁴ From the Quartermaster-General in India to the GOC, NWF Force, dated 22 May 1919, diary no. 40 783, Afghan War diary, vol. 2, WW1/56/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁵ From the Political Secretary to the GOI in the FPD to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab, dated 9 May 1919, diary no. 34332; From the Secretary to the GOI, FPD to the Agent to the GOI, Central India, dated 9 May 1919, diary no. 34337, Afghan War diary, vol. 1, WW1/55/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁶ From the Quarter-Master General in India to the GOC, NWF, dated 10 May 1919, diary no. 36784, Afghan War diary, vol. 1, WW1/55/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁷ From the GOC, Baluchistan to the War Section, AHQ, Simla, dated 20 May 1919, diary no. 59585; From the Chief of General Staff to the GOC, Baluchistan, dated 21 May 1919, diary no. 40000; From the GOC, NWF, Peshawar to the War Section, AHQ, dated 22 May 1919, diary no. 40512, Afghan War diary, vol. 2, WW1/56/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁸ Despatch by Charles Monro, WO/106/58/5, PRO, Kew, Surrey; *The Third Afghan War 1919*, p. 49.
- ¹⁰⁹ From the Director-General (henceforth DG) of Military Works to the GOC, NWF Force, dated, 16 May 1919, diary no. 37847, Afghan War diary, vol. 2, WW1/56/H, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹¹⁰ *The Third Afghan War 1919*, pp. 125-126.
- ¹¹¹ *The Third Afghan War 1919*, p. 136.

Chapter 4

The British-Indian Army's Command in Afghanistan, 1839-1900

Introduction

Command has been defined as an indispensable function for an army. It needs to be exercised consistently for an army to operate properly. An effective command mechanism enables an armed institution to assess a situation quickly and efficiently and determine the objectives. It also distributes the resources needed to attain the objectives and thereby acts as a 'force multiplier', which can compensate for other weaknesses of an armed institution.¹ Command and control is the exercise of authority by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces to accomplish a mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations to accomplish a mission.

I define command as the art of directing armies to attain strategic, operational and tactical objectives. Military units would be incapable of achieving their objectives without a proper command mechanism. An efficient commander may not guarantee victory on the battlefield, but he can certainly increase the probability of success in combat. I argue that command is a multilayered and hierarchical concept, and each layer is intricately connected to the other. The top echelons of command mechanisms usually consist of the heads of the states or armed forces. At the same time, small unit commanders are the bottom rung of the system. Each layer is subjected to command by its superordinate authority while commanding its subordinates. This

chapter looks into individual command in Afghanistan rather than the whole command mechanism of the British-Indian armed forces.

This chapter delves into the command mechanism of the British-Indian forces in Afghanistan in the nineteenth century through a comparative analysis of Field Marshal George Pollock and Field Marshal Frederick Roberts's command during the First and Second Afghan War, respectively. It argues that command in the British-Indian Army's warfare beyond the Indus was not only military but also political in nature. Both Pollock and Roberts had to perform military and political duties during the Second Afghan War. A combination of military and political command is an integral aspect of the British-Indian way in warfare in Afghanistan and NWF. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section scrutinises General Pollock's approach to command, while the second section examines General Roberts's take on that matter.

Command has multiple aspects, and the most important is leadership. In this context, the relation between the commander and those commanded becomes relevant. It is said that a military general's approach towards commanding his army determines whether the soldiers would be cheerful and willing to obey a command or attain a slavish, servile position. The first approach ensures undaunted discipline and inspires men to do heroic feats while facing significant challenges. This approach also creates an environment within the armed forces conducive to learning and character-building. The second approach, on the other hand, reduces fighting men to the status of enslavement and, thus, is not favourable for the growth of an army as an efficient fighting unit.² However, I argue that a military general needs to find the right balance between these two approaches, i.e. between positive and negative reinforcements for an effective command. In this context, the leadership capabilities of the commander become crucial.

In order to be effective on the battlefield and exploit the strategic success gained, an army needs tactics characterised by the decentralisation of decision-making, rapid movement, and allowing small units to take the initiative in combat. However, if a tactical system hinges more on set-piece battles, follows a rigid schedule for achieving objectives and exercises tight control over small units, it hinders their capacity to exploit battlefield successes. According to German General von Schlieffen, the primary task of a military commander is to exploit the inevitable errors committed by the enemy to the fullest. The German military considered that rigidity towards a conceived strategic plan would be unsuccessful in warfare. In contrast, a flexible approach enables a commander to adapt to changing circumstances. Therefore, the latter approach is more likely to bring success in combat. In contrast, the British Army's structured approach towards combat emphasises the steady progress of centralised planning and the maintenance of order.³

The relationship between the complexity of the command mechanism, the demands it is expected to fulfil, and the increasing size of the army is proportionate. Martin Van Creveld holds that the responsibilities of command are mainly twofold: firstly, the arrangement and coordination of the means an army needs to sustain itself, from logistical supplies to its system of military justice. Second, command enables an army to carry out its mission by gathering and processing intelligence and drawing up an operational blueprint. The command mechanism is also expected to monitor the development of operations and make tactical changes accordingly. According to Creveld, prompt and continuous procurement of information and its analysis is the most crucial part of the command mechanism. Finally, Creveld argued that the functions of command remained more or less the same from the Stone Age to the Nuclear Age. However, the means at the disposal of command mechanisms, such as the military organisation, procedure (distribution of reports within military headquarters) and communication

technology, evolved over time and exerted considerable influence on the whole command system.⁴

According to Crevel, uncertainty reigns supreme in warfare, and the command mechanisms of all the world's armies must cope with the 'fog of war'. Therefore, rigid control of troops from the very top echelons of the military organisation limits the fluid manoeuvre of armed forces on the battlefield. Historically, armies that allowed subordinate commanders considerable autonomy yielded more success. Hence, mission-oriented command, such as the German *Auftragstaktik*, allowed considerable latitude to lower-level commanders. A constant vertical and horizontal flow of information is necessary to exercise rigid control over even the smallest of the units of an army. However, due to the limitations of communication technology and the uncertainty of war, such a flow of information is not always possible.⁵

John Keegan focuses on individual commanders and looks into the factors that ensure efficiency in command. He holds that scholars usually use the concepts of 'traits' and 'behaviours' of generals as analytical tools in explaining the intricacies of command. According to Keegan, an efficient general would be confident, energetic, and decisive in his approach. These traits positively influence the men under him. Furthermore, scholars who delve into behavioural studies emphasise certain roles played by commanders, such as encouragement, dissuasion, and coercion. Keegan argues that the art of command has changed as warfare has evolved to a great extent through the ages. However, many commanders throughout history have often manifested similar characteristic traits and behavioural patterns. He further remarks that the idea of generalship is much larger than command. According to Keegan, military leadership has always needed to align with the unique values, customs, and culture of the society that formed a particular army. Therefore, military commanders manifested a persona to the men they commanded, which is quite different from their behavioural traits.

In order to explore the enigmatic nature of generalship, the author examines the careers of four renowned individuals. Alexander the Great, described as a supreme hero and skilled actor, seamlessly merged his personal identity with his performances. In the Alexandrian heroic ethos, command was subsumed within the art of governance. On the other hand, the Duke of Wellington is portrayed as an anti-hero due to his methodical and pragmatic approach to warfare in service of a constitutional monarchy. Ulysses S. Grant, in contrast, is praised by the author for his consciously unheroic leadership style, which was deemed suitable for a democratic society. With the bureaucratisation of warfare through the establishment of a military class, the modern age moved away from heroic command and witnessed isolation from political power. Lastly, Hitler, despite his yearning for transcendent glory, was compelled to engage in false acts of heroism due to the destructive capabilities of modern weapons, which prevented him from taking the necessary risks to achieve the traditional ideal. Through an analysis of Keegan's writings, two primary models of generalship can be unveiled: heroic and managerial.⁶

Scholars often compared the British Army's command structure with the German Army during the Second World War. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the German Army, unlike its British counterpart, has incorporated a system of directive military command. This system of command led to the devolution of tactical control on the battlefield to subordinate commanders. Professor John Gooch argues that Britain did not have an established General Staff and an intellectual tradition to accompany it. According to him, British generalship was characterised by rigidity and inflexibility in planning. Furthermore, the senior commanders were reluctant to interfere in the way in which their subordinates handled divisions or corps. Martin Samuels compared the German and British Armies as examples for historical study. He highlights the structural and functional contrasts between them since the last part of the nineteenth century through the First World War.⁷ Samuels argues that the differences in British

and German philosophy resulted in differences in effectiveness. The Germans believed that combat was inherently chaotic and that in order to be effective, an army needed to navigate through this uncertain environment. However, the British considered combat to be essentially structured, and, according to them, effectiveness could be achieved through maintaining order. The German military operated under a system of 'directive command,' which encouraged flexibility, independence, and initiative. In contrast, their British counterparts adhered to a 'restrictive control system', characterised by rigidity, conformity, and a strict reliance on exact orders.⁸

In his authoritative analysis of the late Victorian Army, renowned researcher Ian F.W. Beckett concludes that the British soldier, like any other professional, was driven by the need for cash compensation and opportunities for career progression. He examines the late Victorian officer corps as a case study to evaluate the differences between British soldiers and civilians within the framework of discussions on the history of Victorian professions and the nature of military professionalism. Beckett explores the influence of personality, politics, and patronage on the process of selecting and promoting officers. He also examines the internal and external factors that stemmed from the media and public opinion, as well as the competition between groups of supporters of prominent people like Garnet Wolseley and Frederick Roberts.

Beckett presents a compelling portrayal of authority, asserting that the system that developed in the late Victorian Army after eliminating the purchase system was the most optimal choice, particularly due to the army's societal position. Furthermore, he argues that the military profession in this era was not fundamentally distinct from other professions in Victorian Britain. Beckett examines the level of professionalism within the British Army during the late Victorian era, particularly in relation to other professions of the nineteenth century.

Beckett demonstrates the distribution of military expertise throughout the army and examines an officer's pursuit of pecuniary rewards, honours, and decorations. His book provides a detailed examination of the intricate procedure of selecting and appointing individuals to positions of authority. It delves into the numerous factions or groups within the officer corps, sometimes referred to as 'rings', and explores the diverse external influences that impact this selection process, including political, public, and royal pressures.⁹

Several scholarly works on the command mechanism of European armies exist, but they shed no light on the British-Indian Army's command in Afghanistan during the two Anglo-Afghan Wars. This chapter attempts to fill this historiographical vacuum. It is accepted wisdom in the existing literature that the British Army maintained a top-down command mechanism where directives and orders came from the top layers of the military hierarchy to the bottom. However, while fighting on the Indian frontiers, the military commanders enjoyed considerable autonomy. A comparative analysis of Pollock and Roberts's command will show how the British Army's top-down mechanism was reversed while fighting in Afghanistan and NWF. In addition to using official records of the British-Indian Army, this chapter also scrutinises the personal diaries and memoirs of the military generals who fought alongside the two military generals. Personal diaries often reflect certain opinions of the writers that cannot be expressed in official records and, therefore, offer a nuanced understanding of an individual under scrutiny.

I

The First Afghan War commenced in 1839. In August that year, the British-Indian Army reached Kabul and installed Shah Shuja on the Afghan throne, ousting Dost Muhammad. However, the new Amir lacked political legitimacy, and insurrections broke out throughout Afghanistan. Kabul experienced one such uprising in November 1841, in which Captain Sir

Alexander Burnes, the GOI's representative at Kabul, was murdered along with his guards. Later, Major-General W.K. Elphinstone, the commander of the British-Indian troops in Afghanistan, started retreating from Kabul in January 1842 with more than 16,000 British and Indian personnel. However, they were massacred by the Afghans on their way to the Indian borders, and many were taken prisoner. At this juncture, Major-General William Nott, responsible for maintaining peace and security in Western Afghanistan, held Kandahar with his forces. At the same time, Major-General Sir Robert Sale was at Jalalabad, short on supplies and surrounded by enemy forces.¹⁰

After considerable debates and deliberations among the British government and GOI's officials, it was decided that an Army of Retribution would be sent into Afghanistan. Initially, its objectives were limited, but they expanded over time. The GOI required an officer of good military reputation, unquestionable energy, and excellent judgment to command this avenging army. The CIC, Sir Henry Fane's first choice, was Sir Edmund Williams, while the Governor-General, Auckland, nominated Major-General Lumley. However, the latter's health had deteriorated, and the British Government did not prefer the former's appointment. Hence, the responsibility fell upon Major-General George Pollock, who was well-versed in the ways of the Indian sepoys due to his appointment in India. Furthermore, due to his association with the East India Company's European Artillery, he was also aware of the management of British soldiers. Therefore, it has been considered that Pollock was at the right time and place.¹¹

General Pollock received his military education at the Woolwich Academy. He entered the Indian army as a lieutenant of artillery in the year 1803 during the Anglo-Maratha War. From this time, he held different regimental staff appointments until 1817. Pollock also took part in the Anglo-Napalese War, commanding the artillery with General Wood's force. In 1818, he was appointed Brigade-Major and, subsequently, held the rank of Assistant-Adjutant-Generalship of Artillery up to the year 1824. He commanded the Bengal Artillery in the First Anglo-

Burmese War. He received the honour of the Companionship of the Bath for his services during the war.¹²

At the very outset of Pollock's appointment as the commander of the avenging British-Indian troops, the responsibilities he was expected to carry out were outlined in the words of the CIC. He remarked that the commander, apart from his military duties, 'should also be an envoy-a Malcolm, Close or Ochterlony'.¹³ The Governor-General was also eager to invest Pollock with political authority. It testifies to the argument of this chapter. Captain George Broadfoot (who became a Major later) accompanied General Pollock's force to Kabul in 1842. With the selection of Pollock as the commander of the Army of Retribution, Broadfoot expressed his happiness as Pollock was considered a 'safe and cautious officer'. He also remarked that Pollock had proper knowledge of the ways of the Indian soldiers. Furthermore, According to Broadfoot, when Pollock reached Peshawar to take command, he found that the British-Indian Army assembled there was utterly demoralised and deplorable. He ameliorated the situation with vigour and skill to make the army march-worthy.¹⁴

On 15 December 1841, Major-General Pollock received the original instruction from the office of the outgoing Governor-General, Lord Auckland. His task was to ensure the safety of Robert Sale's force, who was besieged at Jalalabad. Additionally, the GOI wanted to make a powerful military demonstration on the Peshawar frontier (possibly to deter the forces under Mohammad Akbar Khan, the son of Dost Muhammad, who was instrumental in the massacre of General Elphinstone's forces). The decision on whether to hold the advance post of Jalalabad with his force, depending on a secure command of the Khyber and other passes, was left to Pollock. His control of Jalalabad was crucial, as it could have given the GOI leverage in their negotiations with the Afghan chiefs. However, on 31 January 1842, it was conveyed to Pollock that the GOI did not wish to hold and control Jalalabad in the face of Afghan challenges. Hence, after securing the safety of the garrison at Jalalabad, Pollock should strive to withdraw towards India

and assemble his force at or near Peshawar. Rescuing the British-Indian prisoners in Afghanistan was not part of the objectives presented to Pollock.¹⁵

Later, when Lord Ellenborough assumed the office of Governor-General in India, revised instructions were sent to Pollock in March 1842 to clarify the GOI's stance. It was mentioned that the GOI was not inclined to afford monetary support to Shah Shuja as requested by him to Captain Charles Macgregor. Furthermore, the GOI deprecated any direct negotiation with Mohammad Akbar Khan for releasing the British-Indian captives in Afghanistan and advocated only indirect communications with him. In addition, The GOI '...recommended to Major-General Pollock the greatest caution in avoiding any positive plan or course of policy which had not already received our sanction; and we informed him that we should not consider it prudent, except for very special reasons, to disclose in any manner our probable eventual purposes with regard to Afghanistan'. Pollock was also instructed to observe the developments within Afghanistan, collect the most accurate information on the state of affairs, and report the same to the GOI upon securing the safe withdrawal of the Jalalabad contingent. The Governor-General was also anxious regarding any impending Sikh attempt to annex portions of Afghanistan, taking advantage of the anarchy in that country. Pollock was to repress all dispositions that would have encouraged the Sikhs to tread such a path.¹⁶ Therefore, it can be seen that Pollock was yet to receive any official instructions regarding his march to Kabul.

Pollock assumed command of the British-Indian forces at Peshawar in February 1842. However, their morale was dwindling. Brigadier Wild's army, consisting of four Native Infantry regiments, had been defeated while trying to cross the Khyber Pass in December 1841, which negatively impacted the soldiers. Some exhibited mutinous behaviour, many were hospitalised due to illness, and some officers had a defeatist attitude. Pollock diligently remained there for two months, anticipating reinforcements, enhancing morale, and planning

his offensive. I argue that it manifests Pollock's methodical and bureaucratic nature of command.

Brevet-Major M. Smith of the 9th Foot Regiment, who was given the post of a Brigade-Major under Pollock, commented on the positive steps he took to revive the morale of the British-Indian Army at Peshawar. Interestingly, General Paolo Avitabile, the Governor of Peshawar, considered the force under Pollock inadequate to force the Khyber Pass. Pollock's position before the march through the Khyber Pass was quite tricky as, on the one hand, there were desertion and demoralisation among the Indian troops and regular requests from Sale's beleaguered garrison at Jalalabad to come to its relief. Sale informed Pollock of his depleting supplies, including food and forage, and the dilapidated conditions of the Jalalabad Fort amidst the threat of enemy attack. Sale repeatedly expressed his doubts about holding on to the fort for long. Therefore, he requested prompt relief of his garrison and remarked that not only the safety and ultimate triumph of the garrison of Jalalabad but also the British-Indian interests and prospects in that part of Afghanistan chiefly depended on the promptitude and vigour with which Pollock could prosecute his relief.¹⁷

Despite such repeated requests from Sale, Pollock waited for reinforcements to join his ranks from India before venturing into Afghanistan. This depicts his cautious approach. Nevertheless, Brevet-Major Smith argued that such measures were necessary as a further reverse of the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan would jeopardise the attempt at regaining British prestige. He also remarked that the arrival of the reinforcement consisting of the 3rd Dragoons, 1st Bengal Cavalry and a contingent of Horse Artillery and 33rd Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry yielded positive results in Pollock's camp. Consequently, the menace of desertion was reduced to a great extent, and a soldier-like spirit returned to Pollock's camp.¹⁸

Pollock's methodical command was also visible during his army's march from Kowulsur to Jamrud at the end of March 1842. His subaltern officers were made to rehearse the plan, which would be adopted further in the advance of the British-Indian Army. Therefore, Pollock marched the army in three parallel columns protected by the advance and rear guards. Flanking parties were on both sides of the main body of the troops, and all the heights along the marching routes were also crowned to protect the army. The Brigade-Major Smith gave great credit to Pollock for his calm and composed demeanour and steady pursuit of his plans while facing organisational and logistical difficulties.¹⁹

Passing through the Khyber Pass was the first significant challenge for Pollock's forces. On 5 April, Pollock proceeded to the entrance of the Khyber route, where the Afridis had erected a formidable defence in the valley, occupied strong positions, and constructed redoubts on the elevated terrain on both sides of the pass. During the attack on Afghan positions on the Pass, Pollock enveloped the enemy with a combined unit approach. The British-Indian guns attacked the barriers the Afghans had erected to defend the pass. Then, two small columns attacked the heights crowned by the defenders on either side of the pass. Pollock realised that dislodging the defenders from the heights was crucial since they covered the Afghan positions in the pass. It enabled the main body of the British-Indian forces to carry the pass when the guns opened it for penetration. Captain E. Buckle, the Assistant Adjutant-General of the Bengal Artillery, held that 'the arrangements of General Pollock were admirable'.²⁰ Pollock's tactics was to crown the heights by sending pickets to capture the hill-tops that dominated the pass. Hence, I argue that he learned the art of mountain warfare well and defeated the Afridi tribesmen at their own game.

In the context of an attack on the Khyber Pass in 1842, Major-General Charles MacGregor, an officer of repute in the British-Indian Army, held that the arrangements of Pollock were perfect and complete, which deserves praise. Pollock realised that flanking manoeuvres were essential

in carrying the pass. Therefore, apart from the main body of the force under him, he organised two flanking columns, each consisting of two European companies, eighteen companies of native infantry, around 300 to 400 *jezailchis* and some sappers. In the tactical realm, employing a flanking manoeuvre and feinting to divert the enemy's attention had become almost an axiom against Afghan regulars during the Second Afghan War. However, Pollock employed such a manoeuvre nearly four decades earlier. Therefore, Pollock can be considered as a tactical innovator. Notably, he also positioned one of the artillery batteries opposite the mouth of the pass to divert the enemy's attention from the flanking columns. Macgregor has shown that Pollock gave unambiguous and precise orders to the marching columns. He also ensured that every man under his command clearly understood his responsibilities, and he conversed with the individual commanders to ensure that his orders were correctly comprehended. Therefore, Pollock was very methodical in his command. Apart from marching towards Kabul via the Khyber Pass while returning to India with his force, General Pollock also maintained his caution and crowned the heights in the marching route of his army. He took other precautions to protect his troops from ambush and denied the tribal fighters any opportunity to occupy commanding grounds of a pass or defile. Consequently, while returning from Kabul, his forces were never once attacked. In comparison, General Nott and McCaskill failed to maintain these cautions and were frequently harassed by enemy fires.²¹

Establishing effective communication between a military commander and the different columns deployed in an engagement is a crucial component of command. The communication technology available to Pollock was very primitive compared to the modern standard. But he used it quite effectively. As he marched from Peshawar to the Afghan borders, Pollock ordered that a bugler or trumpeter be attached to each commanding officer of the several columns. It was further ordered that if the march of a column was impeded by an accident or any form of emergency, the commanding officer should make the halting sound through bugle. The same

was to be repeated by other buglers, resulting in the halting of the entire operation. Until the difficulty was removed, the other columns would remain on stand-by.²² In the next section of the chapter, we will see that Pollock's methodical and cautious approach is diametrically opposite to that of Roberts, who often moved ahead with his troops without waiting for columns that were lagging behind.

Pollock arrived at Jalalabad in mid-April and relieved Sale's garrison. However, upon hearing rumours that Pollock's forces had been blocked from crossing the Khyber Pass, Sale launched a comprehensive diversionary assault on Akbar Khan's army on 7 April 1842 and broke the siege by Akbar Khan. Pollock remained in Jalalabad for some months to collect sufficient cattle and supplies for his further advance to Kabul. Frederick Abbott, the Chief Engineer of General Pollock's army, remarked that When General Pollock advanced through the Khyber Pass, his only instruction from the GOI was to relieve the garrison under Robert Sale at Jalalabad. However, certain events bolstered the hopes of General Pollack to strike at Kabul and redeem the British honour. Firstly, due to Shah Shuja's murder, there was a political vacuum in Afghanistan. Secondly, with the defeat of Mohammad Akbar Khan by the Garrison at Jalalabad, there was confusion and panic among the Afghans. However, Abbott mentioned the shortage of money for carriage and siege guns. Furthermore, he also mentioned the strategic imperative of marching on to Kabul in concert with the British-Indian Army at Kandahar under General Nott. The GOI had yet to send any concrete order for Pollock's army to march towards Kabul.

While at Jalalabad, Pollock dispatched a 2,300-strong column under Brigadier Monteith into the Shinwari Valley for a punitive operation against its inhabitants, who looted a gun and some property from the British-Indian columns in 1841 during their fateful retreat from Kabul. The spirit of vengeance reigned supreme within the column of this operation, and they began to set fire to the village at Ali Boghan, where they found certain plundered property, which triggered

their memory of the massacre of their brethren last year. However, the rank and file were restrained by their officers. In his letter to the Governor-General, Pollock refuted the charge of inflicting excessive atrocities by his troops. He regretted the incident at the village of Ali Bogan; however, he tried to justify the conduct of his men by characterising the event as an extenuating circumstance as shreds of the massacred British-Indian soldiers' uniforms were discovered. Pollock also mentioned that Brigadier Monteith immediately intervened, and no such incident occurred further during the operation.²³

On the other hand, to punish the tribes at Pesh Bolak, their mulberry orchard, vineyards and peach trees were cut down, which were considered to be of great value by the tribes. A young lieutenant under Pollock considered it 'a barbarous mode of carrying on war'. It can be argued that later in the nineteenth century, such methods of punitive actions became very common in British-Indian COIN to punish an 'elusive enemy'.²⁴ However, Lieutenant Joseph Greenwood of the HM 31st Regiment, who served under General Pollock, mentioned that the people of Pesh Bolak were penitent and offered money to redeem themselves from their misconduct. However, the tribes of Goulai, three miles from Pesh, had all absconded. Therefore, the smaller forts in the villages were destroyed, and their watering wells were also blown up with gunpowder. Furthermore, their mulberry trees were cut down. Lieutenant Greenwood considers that the people of this area deserved such harsh treatment because they behaved most treacherously and infamously against Captain Ferris and General Sale. From Goulai the British-Indian troops made short marches in various directions to levy contributions and to destroy the strongholds of the refractory tribes. Notably, the tribal groups who remained friendly were rewarded and protected. The operations in the Shinwari Valley yielded plenty of forage. Having punished all the refractory tribes except the Shinwari, the British-Indian forces proceeded to Mezina. It was located about eight miles from the stronghold.²⁵

Apart from conducting COIN campaigns, Pollock also corresponded with General Nott from Jalalabad. Nott was anxious to support Pollock's troops as he marched towards Ghazni. However, he deprecated the GOI's order to move towards the Khojak Pass. He also expressed his displeasure at the GOI's delay in sending him money and supplies, primarily cattle, which had been completely depleted. Nott's frustration regarding the state of affairs in Afghanistan and the indecisive policies taken by the GOI became manifested in his personal letters to his children. He wrote,

'The people in power are all mad or providence hath blinded them for some wise purpose. I am very tired, tired of working, tired of this country, and quite tired of the folly of my countrymen, and I long more than ever for my day-built cottage. My soldiers are four months in arrears; there is not one rupee in the Candahar Treasury, and no money can be borrowed. I have no medicine for the sick and wounded, I have no carriage cattle for the troops, nor money to buy or hire, and therefore cannot move. I have no good cavalry and but little ammunition. I have been calling for all these for six months, but not the least aid has been given me!'.²⁶

Nott also remarked 'I am without instructions from the government and know not their intentions regarding this country. Whether reinforcements are to be sent here from Sind or not'. The GOI directed him to retire but left it to his best judgment to select the route for his retirement, either by the Bolan Pass or via Ghazni and Kabul. He further mentioned that he selected the latter route. Despite these challenges, Nott's determination to uphold the honour of the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan was unwavering, leading him to march to Kabul on his way to India.²⁷ Ellenborough's instructions to Pollock regarding his conduct in Kabul were also ambivalent. He asked Pollock to inflict 'just retribution', which would leave a lasting mark on the Afghan nation. However, he was cautioned against wanton violence and to uphold the British and British-Indian Army's humane approach to warfare.²⁸

The GOI's indecision and lack of clear strategic guidance added to the challenges faced by the military leaders in Afghanistan. This indecision was evident in the case of Nott and Pollock. The former repeatedly expressed his concerns over his depleting provisions and lack of proper strategic guidance by the GOI regarding Afghanistan.

After months of indecision and vague instructions, on 4 July 1842, the Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, addressed both General Pollock and Nott. His opinion regarding withdrawing the British-Indian Army to India remained the GOI's primary objective. However, he suggested that Nott may retire from Kandahar to India via the Ghazni, Kabul and Jalalabad route. In addition, he also mentioned that Pollock may assist the retreat of the Kandahar force by moving forward upon Kabul.²⁹

As mentioned earlier, Pollock had to collect supplies at Jalalabad. He sent escorts from his camps to procure supplies such as grain and *bhoosa*. To that end, Captain Broadfoot was sent with two hundred Sappers and Miners and two hundred of the Irregular Horse on 25 July to Killa Muhammad Husain Khan, a fort fifteen miles from Pollock's Camp. The fort was situated towards Gandamak and Fatehabad, the route for Pollock's march to Kabul. Therefore, Pollock ordered ample grain and *bhoosa* to be stored in the fort. However, Broadfoot encountered Afghan opposition. Considering his forces to be too weak to withstand an attack by the Afghans, he immediately went on the offensive. He defeated the enemy through swift and abrupt manoeuvres, resulting in the capitulation of those in the vicinity. However, Broadfoot's daring offensive actions alarmed Pollock as he felt unsafe for such a little contingent to be far from reinforcements. Consequently, Broadfoot was prohibited from engaging in offensive manoeuvres and reinforcements were assured. Hence, Major William Broadfoot, the Royal Engineers and the author of the biography of George Broadfoot (the military general under discussion), considered Pollock 'a cautious rather than a dashing commander'.³⁰

By the first half of August 1842, Pollock had made up his mind to march towards Kabul and negotiate for the release of the British-Indian prisoners. However, as cautious as he was, Pollock considered the tactical importance of marching on to Kabul with Nott's force so that the numerical superiority of the Army of Retribution would protect them from being overwhelmed by the Afghans. Pollock, in his letter to Mr Robertson, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, on 10 August 1842, mentioned that his movement depended on Nott's ability to meet his forces before marching onto Kabul. He also expressed his scepticism reading Nott's intentions. However, all doubts were put to rest when Nott replied from Kandahar on 27 July that he had determined to take the route via Kabul and Jalalabad to India.³¹

Therefore, Pollock left Jalalabad and moved towards Kabul. Upon reaching Gandamak on 23 August 1842, Pollock learnt from his reconnaissance that enemy forces under chiefs Hadji Ali and Khairullah Khan occupied the village and fort of Mammu Khel, about two miles from Gandamak. Pollock decided to take to the offensive and attack the enemy. A scrutiny of the engagement reveals that he ordered a detailed and prudent disposition of the British-Indian Army. He divided the infantry into two columns, with a wing of Her Majesty's 9th Foot at the head of each and skirmishers in front. Furthermore, Captain Broadfoot's corps was ordered to advance to the right. Pollock also placed his cavalry to the right to cut off the enemy's retreat. Apart from infantry and cavalry, Pollock employed British-Indian artillery, which considerably impacted the enemy as they retired with their approach. After that, Pollock ordered the left and the right columns to march towards the fort of Mammu Khel and Kukli Khel, respectively.

With his tactical ingenuity, Pollock realised the importance of dislodging the enemies from their commanding positions in the nearby hills of Mammu Khel and ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor and Captain Broadfoot to execute the task. They carried the enemy's positions with success. Upon dispersing the enemy, Pollock ordered setting up the British-Indian camp

at Mammu Khel to deny the enemy any opportunity to regain their positions. Interestingly, he ordered the destruction of Kukli Khale and the fort and village of Mammu Khel by fire. Furthermore, he also cut down several trees that were valuable to its inhabitants.³² Therefore, I argue that Pollock conducted smaller COIN operations to pacify Afghanistan. Such punitive methods of COIN were extensively used by the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan and NWF in the second half of the nineteenth century and later in the twentieth century as well. Having dispersed the enemy and punished the villagers of Mammu Khel, who had harboured them, Pollock retired from the village on 30 August and took up his position at Gandamak. There, he busied himself with collecting supplies and making all the necessary arrangements for the advance on Kabul.³³

The march of Pollock's Army in two divisions from Gandamak to Kabul was arduous. Gandamak was the last point where forage of any kind was procurable. Furthermore, marching an army through the narrow passes between Gandamak and Kabul was also very challenging because, in certain areas, the army could march only in single file. Therefore, the passage of the whole body took several hours. Complicating the situation even further, The Second Division was subjected to a continuous and fierce attack by the tribes due to its numerical inferiority. For a military general, it is extremely difficult to maintain the army's cohesion under such circumstances. It took almost fourteen to fifteen hours to cover a ten-mile march on this route, while the rear guards needed at least twenty-four hours to complete this distance. This was the route which witnessed the massacre of General Elphinstone's army in 1841, which served as a reminder that any expression of weakness by the British-Indian troops would lead to catastrophe. The first division under Pollock set out from Gandamak on 6 September, while the second division started its march the next day. The first march was till Soorkab, and thence, Pollock's forces moved off towards the Jegdalek Pass.³⁴

When Pollock approached the Jegdalek Pass, he observed that the enemy held the summits of the hills that commanded the road through the Pass. The Afghan position was strong, and it was difficult for the British-Indian Army to approach it. The strength of the Afghan defence and their resolute stance could be gauged from the fact that despite heavy casualties from the British-Indian artillery barrage, they did not relinquish their positions. However, Pollock decided to attack the different Afghan positions simultaneously. This attack by the British-Indian Army in tandem dispersed the enemy. Nevertheless, Pollock wanted to complete his victory by dislodging the last remnants of the Afghan defences from the summit of a high mountain. Therefore, he commanded some infantry units to scale the heights under the cover of artillery fire, which led to the retirement of the Afghans from their positions. Defeating the Afghans in this engagement was significant, as several Ghilzai chiefs were present among the enemy's ranks. Hence, Pollock remarked, 'It gratifies me to be enabled to state that we have thus signally defeated with one division of the troops the most powerful tribes and the most inveterate of our enemies, the original instigators, and principal actors in those disturbances, which entailed such disasters on our troops last winter.'³⁵ The Governor-General praised the prudent arrangement by General Pollock in this engagement. He also held that Pollock's movement of his force and his manoeuvres aided the British-Indian Army in attaining the victory on 9 September 1842.³⁶

Pollock continued his march towards Kabul, and his army arrived at Tezin on 11 September 1842. Pollock decided to halt at Tezin to give the animals of the 2nd Division rest from the fatigue of a forced march. This depicts the general's methodical and cautious approach. Here, Pollock faced a great congregation of Afghans, described in his report as having the strength of almost 16,000 men. The Afghans attacked the British-Indian pickets and, after being driven back, took positions in the neighbouring hills. Pollock took a tactically sound decision and despatched Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor with a small party to dislodge the enemy from those

commanding positions. The small contingent executed their task to perfection. Consequently, the Afghans shifted their concentration of attack to the British-Indian right, where a small picket of only 80 men held them off.

The next day, Pollock realised that the enemy had taken positions on some of the heights encircling the Tezin Valley. Judging by his tactical prudence, he marched towards the mouth of the Tezin Pass to engage the enemy. Therefore, it can be argued that though he was cautious, he was not afraid to take the tactical initiative when needed. He left some men and two guns at that position and deployed enough men to protect the baggage, which was attacked by the enemy cavalry with great force. However, Pollock's forethought desisted the Afghans from capturing the British-Indian baggage. As per Pollock's report, Mohammad Akbar Khan took significant measures to turn the natural defences to Afghan advantage. Despite the strong positions taken by the enemy, Pollock engaged each section of the enemy and dispersed them. Furthermore, he realised the importance of capturing the enemy artillery. Hence, he dispatched a squadron of Dragoons with two horse artillery guns in pursuit of the enemy, who succeeded in capturing the gun.³⁷

The British-Indian victory at the Battle of the Tezin Pass was necessary for several reasons. First, Pollock faced the largest congregation of Afghans since the onset of his campaign and defeated them. Second, apart from Mohammad Akbar Khan, Muhammad Shah Khan, Amin Ullah, and many other Afghan chiefs were leading the enemy's ranks. Therefore, by defeating them, Pollock virtually broke the Afghan opposition to the Army of Retribution. He continued his march towards Kabul and encamped at Khurd Kabul without further opposition. Notably, Pollock took methodical care in pointing out the contributions of his subaltern commanders down to the very bottom of the officer corps. He also mentioned with great detail the British and the Indian outfits that executed their task to perfection.

Lieutenant C. F. Trower of the 33rd Bengal Native Infantry, who was deployed during the First Afghan War, remarked in his diary that Pollock's march to Kabul was not easy. His army suffered from the need for carriages to carry their provisions. Consequently, he could not bring any tents for the Indian troops and could take only seven days' provisions. Futteh Jung, the nominal ruler at Kabul and the son of Shah Shuja, escaped from Kabul and was received at General Pollock's camp with a royal salute. He also gave the impression that if the British-Indian Army would move towards Kabul, all the chiefs would surrender.³⁸ Therefore, Pollock realised the importance of attaching Afghan leaders to his camp, which would, in turn, provide his force with some legitimacy. I argue that since the British Envoy and his escorts were murdered in Kabul in 1841, the Army of Retribution needed to have a quasi-legal and political authority to avoid a whole-scale opposition in and around Kabul. Attaching Afghan chiefs to his force was a prudent political solution. It testifies to my argument that commanding military forces in Afghanistan also entailed dispensing political duties.

Despite Pollock's success, he had his critics. Trower mentioned General Pollock's indifference to the privations of the troops under him. According to him, 'he (Pollock) neither knows, not from all accounts care much for what happens in his rear'. Finally, Trower also mentions that though Pollock would be praised for recapturing Kabul and accolades would be bestowed upon him for reinstating the prestige of the British Empire, the soldiers who toiled would know how much credit he deserved. Therefore, his diary reflects the severe hardship inflicted on the rank and file in their march towards Kabul, which is critical of Pollock's command. He also held Pollock to be an extremely lucky general, given his successes and the poor arrangements he made to achieve them.³⁹

After defeating Mohammad Akbar's force in the Battle of Tezin, the last hurdle before reaching Kabul was successfully cleared. On 14 September 1842, the army marched to Budhak via the Khurd Kabul Pass. Despite defeating the enemy decisively, Pollock was cautious in crowning

the heights of the pass to deny the Afghans the remotest opportunity to harass the marching British-Indian columns. Upon arriving at Budhak, Pollock ordered the men under him to prevent violence in Kabul. He mentioned that the whole army's existence would be endangered if the inhabitants of Kabul were made to flee, as supplies would then become unprocurable. Some British-Indian prisoners who were at the hands of the Afghans came to Pollock's camp at Budhak and later in the camp set just before Kabul. Finally, Kabul was reached on 16 September; Pollock carried out a ceremony to mark their success. Furthermore, he ordered the hoisting of the British flag on top of Bala Hissar as an official marker of the British-Indian Army's reconquest of Kabul.⁴⁰

Fateh Jung, the son of the deceased Amir Shah Shuja, was installed on the Afghan throne two days later. Ghulam Muhammad Khan Popalzai was appointed as his vizier.⁴¹ General Pollock and Nott's armies rendezvoused at Kabul on 17 September. Earlier on 25 August, several British-Indian prisoners were hurried off towards Bamian under an escort of 300 Afghans by Akbar Khan. General Pollock sent his Military Secretary, Sir Richmond Shakespeare, at the head of the 600 Kizlibash Cavalry to rescue them. Pollock wanted to ensure the security of the prisoners and Shakespeare's contingent who went into pursuit. Therefore, he asked General Nott if he could send a brigade toward Bamiyan because he received the news that Muhammad Akbar Khan had gone towards Kohistan with a force of around 1,000 to 2,000. Pollock's decision to ask Nott to send his troops was tactically sound because the latter general's camp was ten miles closer to Bamiyan than the former. However, Nott protested against Pollock's decision, citing the scarcity of supplies, fatigue of his troops, and increasing cattle mortality. Pollock quickly realised that Nott was not inclined to send his men to bring back the prisoners, and he swiftly ordered Robert Sale to reinforce Shakespeare's contingent. However, luckily, the prisoners bribed their custodians and ensured their freedom and were already on their way back to Kabul.⁴²

Apart from the issue of rescuing the prisoners, General Pollock and Nott differed on other issues as well. Pollock consistently opposed any looting or other excesses by his soldiers, although Nott was less stringent in this matter. He saw every Afghan, even the Kizilbash, as a formidable adversary and refused to meet Khan Shereen Khan, the leader of that amicable tribe. He also refused to acknowledge Futeh Jung's elevation to the Afghan throne. In his letter to Pollock on 22 September 1842, Nott remarked that he was short on supplies and that the people of Kabul were not inclined to sell items to his soldiers even at the highest price offered. Therefore, to save his soldiers from starvation, he sent parties and seized whatever items would be sufficient to take his army to Jalalabad. Later, Fateh Jung's minister and the chief of the Kizlibash complained in a joint letter to Pollock about the excesses committed by Nott's troops. However, the latter general denied such accusations.⁴³ I argue that such measures are manifestations of Pollock's political sensibilities. He was inclined to reestablish the prestige of the British-Indian Army and the GOI, but he did not let the urge for vengeance get the best of him.

Notably, Pollock did not resort to wanton violence as a method of punishment in Kabul. Instead, in the early days of October 1842, Pollock decided to destroy the large *bazaar* in the city as a mark of retribution. The inhabitants were also warned of the impending destruction. Later, the tomb and mosque of Dost Muhammad's grandfather, which was located near Beimaru Heights, were also destroyed. Hence, many Afghans deserted the locality. Therefore, the destruction was more symbolic rather than punitive.⁴⁴

Regarding the destruction of the *bazaar* and mosque in Kabul, there were outcries in the British newspapers. However, Pollock, in his reply to the Governor-General, refuted the accusations against the British-Indian troops of inflicting atrocities against the Afghan population. He also expressed that atrocities, if any, inflicted by the British-Indian Army could be explained by their sense of vengeance against the misdeeds of the Afghans and the brutal murder of the

British Agent and his escorts. Furthermore, Pollock also mentioned that the destruction of the Kabul *bazaar* did not come as a surprise to the inhabitants of the city as the local chiefs were notified two days in advance of the intended plan, and even the chiefs assisted the British-Indian parties entrusted with the task of the destroying the *bazaar*.⁴⁵

In conclusion, John Willliam Kaye's opinion regarding Pollock can be mentioned. He held that the appointment of General Pollock gave the greatest satisfaction to the Supreme Government, and not even a murmur of disapprobation arose from the general body of the army. The nomination of this old and distinguished Company's officer was believed to be free from the corruption of aristocratic influence and the taint of personal favouritism. The selection had been made solely on the grounds of individual merit. He was not what is called a dashing officer; 'he shrunk from anything like personal display and never appealed to the vulgar weaknesses of an unreflecting community. But beneath a most unassuming exterior lay a fund of good sense, innate sagacity, quiet firmness and collectedness. He was equable and temperate'.

He was thoroughly conscientious. If the GOI looked upon him as a safe man, it was not merely because he always exercised a calm and dispassionate judgment but because he was actuated in all that he did by the purest motives and sustained by the highest principles. He was essentially an honest man. There was a directness of purpose about him which won the confidence of all with whom he was associated. They saw that his one paramount desire was a desire to do his duty to his country by consulting, in every way, the welfare and the honour of the troops under his command. They knew that they would never be sacrificed, either on the one hand by the rash ambition or on the other by the feebleness and indecision of their leader.⁴⁶

General Pollock was honoured with the first class of the Order of Bath for his distinguished service in the First Afghan War. Both Houses of the British Parliament also thanked him for his service.⁴⁷ I argue that an individual commander must balance motivating his troops and

coordinating the operation. A commander must assume an inspirational leadership role to motivate the forces under him. However, comprehensive and in-depth operation coordination requires a more methodical approach. Many of Pollock's contemporaries characterised him as a dull but efficient officer. Though Pollock was not as dynamic as Napoleon to many, he displayed resoluteness and competence when the new Governor-General of India, Lord Ellenborough, lacked the determination to reinstate the prestige of the GOI in Afghanistan.⁴⁸

II

Frederick Roberts came to India in 1852 after training at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and later the East India Company's military college at Addiscombe. His first posting was to a battery at Peshawar under the command of his father, who led the Peshawar Division at that time. In 1854, Roberts was transferred to a horse artillery troop at Peshawar, which was his only unit command. During the Indian Mutiny of 1857, Roberts served as a staff officer, first under the mobile column formed under Neville Chamberlain and later during the siege of Delhi. He also acted as a battery officer. He joined the staff of the force under the CIG Sir Colin Campbell, who was entrusted with the task of the second relief of Lucknow. During the mutiny, Roberts earned the Victoria Cross for saving the life of an Indian sepoy. Due to his deteriorating health, he had to return to England on leave, handing over his staff appointment to Garnet Wolseley. However, his performance during the mutiny earned him a reputation as an efficient and gallant officer. After returning to India, Roberts joined the Quartermaster-General's Department in 1859.⁴⁹

The Quartermaster-General of the Army performed a role that almost resembled that of the Chief of the General Staff. It was yet to become the body that would deal mainly with the army's logistics. Until the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the department dealt mainly

with intelligence, which included strategic plans and movements. Therefore, this appointment was critical to Roberts's career because it brought him closer to India's leading British civil and military personalities. He became a captain in 1860 and, three years later, saw active service on the NWF briefly during the Ambala campaign in 1863. In the early 1870s, he organised the logistics of the British-Indian Army's Lushai campaign. In 1875, he was promoted to the rank of substantive Colonel and became the Quartermaster-General of India. He also attained the temporary rank of Major-General. In 1874, the political tide in Britain was changing, and the Conservative Party came into power, both of which helped Roberts climb the military hierarchy in British-India. Robert was an ardent supporter of the forward policy, and the Governor-General of India, Lord Lytton, found in Roberts someone who would support his strategic considerations. Right before the Second Afghan War, Roberts was appointed as the Commander of the PFF in April 1878.⁵⁰

With the onset of the Second Afghan War, Major-General Roberts took command of the Kurram Valley Field Force on 22 October 1878. Similar to Pollock, the GOI also instructed him regarding his operational objectives. First, he was to engage and disperse the Afghan troops deployed in the Kurram Valley and occupy it. Second, Khost Valley was to be reconnoitred and later occupied. Lastly, he was entrusted with the task of exploring the roads beyond Khost. It is noteworthy that when Roberts assumed command, the condition of the Kurram Valley Field Force was not satisfactory as it was poorly equipped and lacked adequate transport to carry out its objectives. However, with great zeal, Roberts plunged into solving the inadequacies and deficiencies of the force, including transport. In this context, his cordial political connection with the Governor-General helped him to a great extent. In addition, he took active measures towards preparing cart roads, stocking provisions, and improving hospital arrangements for the troops. Therefore, from the start, Roberts led from the front and inspired his troops. In this

endeavour, we find a similarity to Pollock, who also took active steps to organise his army into an efficient fighting unit.

Colonel Charles Macgregor was appointed the Adjutant and Quartermaster-General of the 1st Division, Peshawar Valley Field Force. Later, he was given command of a brigade under Roberts during the march of the British-Indian Army to Kabul to avenge the death of Major Sir Louis Cavagnari. Macgregor was critical of the way Roberts handled the organisation and transport arrangements of the Kabul Field Force. In his diary from Kurram and later Karatiga and Ali Khel camps in September 1879, he complained that Roberts was quite aware of the inadequacy of the number of carriages. And yet, he was in a hurry to march to Kabul. Macgregor also wrote that Roberts was 'very jumpy and wants of steadying'. He was thoroughly antagonised by Robert's disinclination to organise the logistics for his army properly. Macgregor repeatedly complained that, in most cases, the orders that Roberts gave were in haste. He tended to deviate from his plan quite often. Another cause for Macgregor's disenchantment with Roberts was that the latter rarely disclosed his detailed plans or the method of their execution. Therefore, 'the whole thing is quite happy-go-lucky'.⁵¹

Henry Bathurst Hanna, a British military officer and a contemporary of Roberts, is generally considered to be critical of Roberts's endeavours. Hanna noted that Roberts fared poorly as the Quartermaster-General of India as the logistical arrangements of the British-Indian Army at the onset of the Second Afghan War were in shambles. Furthermore, there was scanty intelligence about the marching routes.⁵² However, in his more detailed analysis of the campaign, compiled a few years later, Hanna completely changed his opinion on this matter. He commented: 'It is impossible to speak too highly of the energy, clearheadedness and practical knowledge displayed by General Roberts during those busy weeks of preparation. That his Force took the field fully equipped is, in itself, the highest possible testimony to the quality and quantity of his work'.⁵³ It is difficult to explain the diametrically opposite stance taken by the same author

within a few years. Without venturing further into the dichotomies of Hanna, it can be said that other sources stand testimony to Roberts's initiatives at the early stage of the campaign.

Roberts's first military engagement in the Second Afghan War was the Battle of Peiwar Kotal. Robert's tactical prudence can be gauged from the fact that before engaging the enemy, he gave the utmost importance to reconnoitring the pass. This enabled him to understand the strengths and vulnerabilities of the enemy's disposition and set his plan of attack accordingly. The British-Indian victory at Peiwar underlines the importance of intelligence in warfare. Just as proper information regarding the enemy would enable a commander to prepare the blueprints of assault or defence, the incorrect decision might lead to disaster. Here lies the greatness of Roberts as a commander. Though he received false reports regarding the enemy's flight from the pass, he never acted hastily. News of the enemy in flight can always tempt one to launch an all-out assault. However, Roberts did not give in to such temptations and ascertained the whereabouts of the opposition first before launching any attack.

Understanding the topographical strength of the Afghan position, Roberts concluded that launching a direct assault up the pass would expose the British troops to the risk of being attacked by the Afghans, who flanked them from both the northern and southern spurs. Furthermore, they would have also been subjected to frontal gunfire along the main ridge. Seeing the formidable strength of the Afghan resistance, Roberts decided to postpone any assault in order to let his forces recover and plan for a flanking manoeuvre. He ascertained that the Spingawai Kotal, on the enemy's extreme left, was far easier to attack than their main position on the Peiwar Pass. Therefore, he did not hasten the attack.

Roberts also recognised the importance of the element of surprise. He, therefore, planned a secret night march on the Spingawai to outflank the enemy's position. It has already been mentioned in the second chapter that Roberts took the utmost care to keep his plan of attack a

secret so that the enemy could be taken by complete surprise by the turning movement. Moreover, a feint in the form of a frontal attack was also undertaken to deceive the enemy and make them commit to this line of attack. This diversionary attack was dexterously carried out by placing batteries along the front of the *kotal*, strengthening the picquets and videttes and dedicating a portion of the cavalry to the task. This concealed the true objective of the British-Indian Army.

Roberts did not issue any marching order until just an hour before the attack. The engagement at Peiwar Kotal demonstrates the clarity and precision of Roberts's command. We find clear and precise orders being passed on to his subordinates. Moreover, there was a fluid disposition of the British-Indian Army throughout the engagement as they were constantly redeployed to different locations. Roberts never allowed the British-Indian attack to slacken and bombarded the enemy's camps with mountain batteries, resulting in the Afghans retreating. He also used heliographic communication efficiently, which was crucial in coordinating with the two brigades and the artillery batteries deployed in the battle.⁵⁴

In addition to the time-consuming reconnaissance, the well-chalked-out plan of the turning movement, and the elaborate preparation to deceive the enemy, some small contingent factors turned the tide on the battlefield. In his proposal to the GOI regarding a campaign in Afghanistan, CIC Sir Fredrick Haines warned the authorities that religious and ethnic sensibilities might foment dissatisfaction and defiance among some regiments of the British-Indian troops who shared the same religious and ethnic identities with the Afghans. Therefore, every measure was to be taken so that they may not tremble from their fidelity. Haines recommended that the British, Gurkha, and Sikh soldiers predominate the invading army. Roberts was also quite sceptical of the loyalty of the Pathan sepoys. Still, he chose the 29th Punjabis, headed by Colonel John Gordon, to lead the march of the turning movement, as the regiment had earned a good name for themselves. Despite his scrupulous calculation regarding

the time needed for the night march, Roberts observed that they were running behind schedule. An enquiry revealed that the Pathan sepoys had slowed down the pace of the march, and rumours of treachery among them were in the air. What followed could have sealed the fate of the turning force. Two consecutive shots were fired from the Pathan companies. As a prudent general, Roberts didn't waste any time in finding the offenders as he couldn't afford to waste any time and 'decided to change the order of the march by bringing one company 'of the 72nd Highlanders and the 5th Gurkhas to the front'. Furthermore, he warned Lieutenant-Colonel Brownlow, in command of the 72nd, to keep a watch over the Pathans with his three remaining companies...'.⁵⁵

I argue that Roberts's command in Peiwar was diametrically opposite to Pollock's command at Khyber Pass. Roberts was more proactive and often autocratic in his leadership than Pollock. In the aftermath of the British-Indian victory at the battle of Peiwar Kotal under the leadership of Roberts, Lytton boasted about how he had handpicked Roberts and guided him on military matters. Moreover, he also told Mrs Roberts that victory was attained at Peiwar 'due to accurate insight and faultless command'. These remarks reflect the cordial relationship between Lytton and Roberts.⁵⁶

After securing victory in battle, the soldier who had fired the first shot was court-martialled and sentenced to death. The *jemadar*, who tried to conceal his identity, was imprisoned for seven years, while the sepoy firing the second round received two years of imprisonment. Roberts believed that he needed to make an example of the offenders by punishing them, as many from that regiment had deserted the army with a number of their rifles. Therefore, Roberts represented a strong leadership, and he was not in favour of sparing the rod as discipline was one of the bedrocks of the armed forces.⁵⁷

Lieutenant C.G. Robertson of the King's Regiment, who fought under Roberts in the Second Afghan War, remarked after the victory at Peiwar that Roberts's operations were marked by prudence and audacity. As a skilful general, he inspired the soldiers under his command. Furthermore, he was confident and bold when needed but careful in surveying the battlefield and the enemy's dispositions. Finally, during the engagement, he delivered a succession of sudden and effective blows on the enemy, which led to their dispersal.⁵⁸

In a letter written to the Secretary of State for War, Lord Cranbrook, on 5 December 1878, the Governor-General, Lytton, remarked on the strategic importance of Roberts's victory at Peiwar. On the one hand, the Afghan Army's ability to oppose the British-Indian approach between Kabul and Shutar Gardan was destroyed. On the other, the thorough defeat of the Amir's forces at the opening salvo of the Second Afghan War had a considerable moral effect on the Afghans.⁵⁹

After winning at Peiwar, Roberts marched down Khost Valley towards the Afghan capital, their strategic objective. Despite the success and prompt movement of Kurram Valley Field Force, Roberts was criticised for his operations in Khost Valley. The *Times*, 18 February edition, London, reported that under Roberts's command, numerous villages were burnt and looted. Furthermore, rather than taking prisoners during the cavalry charge at Matun, he instead dealt with them very harshly. Many of them were tied together, and some were attacked when they tried to escape. The matter was even discussed in the British Parliament. Maurice Macpherson, who accompanied Roberts's force as the correspondent of the *London Standard*, wrote about the agony of the prisoners as well as the poor treatment meted out to the soldiers of the Kurram Valley Field Force as they were subjected to forced and pointless marches.⁶⁰

In his official statement to Colonel C.C. Johnson, the Officiating Quartermaster-General in India, Roberts explained the inaccuracies and exaggerations of these statements and justified

his actions. He defended the looting and burning of the villages as necessary and clarified that a warning through a *parwana* was sent to the Mangal tribesmen and inhabitants of Khost Valley beforehand to prevent them from assembling in groups. Despite this warning, several thousand tribesmen had positioned themselves on three sides of the British-Indian camp, ready to attack the British-Indian soldiers. Understanding the exigencies of the situation, Roberts inflicted signal punishment on them as a deterrent to stop them from attacking the forces under him in the near future. He also explained that the idea of him not being inclined to take prisoners was a misinterpretation of his orders. Roberts also claimed that the charge of inflicting atrocities on the prisoners was exaggerated. Rather than any clear-cut instructions to kill prisoners, the fog of war was blamed. Several prisoners tried to escape with British-Indian rifles amid a probable night attack on their camp. Therefore, the native officer in charge of guard duty had to take action. Hence, Roberts defended him in his report and claimed that the wounded prisoners were cared for. This has been testified by Major F.W. Collis, commanding the 21st Regiment Punjab Native Infantry (henceforth PIN) and by Surgeon W.E. Griffiths, who was in medical charge of the 21st PIN. Both of them also defended Roberts's conduct during the engagement.⁶¹ Of course, on his part, Roberts also took steps to avoid such a public spectacle of his conduct in the future. He used his political connections to remove the correspondent Macpherson.⁶²

I argue that the burning and looting of villages to deter local inhabitants was a standard *modus operandi* of the British-Indian COIN Campaigns in Afghanistan and NWF. Therefore, Roberts's actions were not against Victorian military morality. As mentioned in the first section, Pollock followed the same method during the First Afghan War. Furthermore, Roberts's bold movements, deemed unnecessarily risky by the newspaper correspondent, were nothing more than calculated risks. Therefore, in the realm of military tactics, they were pretty justifiable.

As already mentioned, commanding forces in Afghanistan and NWF entailed both military and political responsibilities. Roberts's leadership and command are classic examples that illustrate

this argument. After Amir Sher Ali was deposed from the Afghan throne, the Treaty of Gandamak was signed in May 1879 with the new Amir, Yakub Khan. The treaty officially ended the first phase of the Second Afghan War, and Major Sir Louis Cavagnari was appointed as the British Envoy for the court of the Afghan Amir in Kabul. The new Amir also agreed to leave the Afghan border districts, including Kurram Valley, under the GOI's administrative control. At this juncture, Roberts used conciliatory political means to consolidate the military gains from the speedy victories achieved in the first year of the Second Afghan War. Consequently, he invited the neighbouring clans of Ali Khel to a parade of his troops on 24 May 1879, organised on the occasion of the Queen's birthday. A marksmanship competition was also held to help forge associations with the local tribal chiefs. In the evening, men of all ranks under Roberts enjoyed a huge bonfire while enjoying an open-air concert. This was Roberts's attempt to blend with the local political scenario in order to strengthen the forces' acceptability. It also helped him forge a cordial relationship with the troops under him.⁶³

I argue that such measures inculcated a 'buddy feeling' among the soldiers, an essential element of combat motivation. Roberts's measures helped foster a sense of camaraderie and companionship among the troops. They boost morale and create a positive and supportive environment. The importance of such measures can be understood in the fact that the 'buddy system', introduced in the US Army's infantry platoons in the twentieth century, helped foster cohesion, interpersonal linkages, reciprocity, and mutual support.⁶⁴

Roberts's political foresight regarding the situation in Afghanistan can also be gauged from his comment after the Treaty of Gandamak. Though there was an apparent sense of calm and peace in Afghanistan, his remark regarding the fate of Cavagnari, his escort, and the treaty was full of scepticism. His 'mind was filled with such gloomy forebodings as to the fate of these fine fellows...'. He held that '...peace had been signed too quickly, before, in fact, we had instilled that awe of us into the Afghan nation which would have been the only reliable guarantee for

the safety of the Mission'. His premonitions became true when Cavagnari and his escort were brutally murdered in an insurrection in Kabul in September 1879.⁶⁵

After the death of the British Envoy, when Roberts was ordered to march to Kabul to punish the offenders and restore order, E.G. Hastings was the Chief Political Officer attached to his force. Meanwhile, Mortimer Durand, the architect of the Durand Line⁶⁶, was to act as Roberts's political secretary. Mohammad Hayat Khan and Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan were the native assistants. Rodney Atwood argues that despite these political officers presenting Roberts with a pool of experience working on the frontiers, he was not eager to be over-influenced by their actions.⁶⁷

To avenge the death of Cavagnari, the GOI decided to march on to the Afghan capital and restore the might and prestige of the British-Indian Army. Therefore, it was decided that Major-General Bright, at the head of a division, would occupy Jalalabad. The available troops under Major-General Donald Stewart were tasked to occupy Kandahar and threaten Ghazni if necessary. Furthermore, General Roberts was given the command of the Kabul Field Force to advance on Kabul via the Shutar Gardan Pass immediately. It comprised a cavalry brigade, two infantry brigades and artilleries with a total strength of 7,500 men and around 6,000 camp followers. Brigadier-General Dunham Massy, Brigadier-General Herbert Macpherson, and Brigadier-General T.D. Baker commanded the brigades, respectively. Two more infantry brigades under J.F. Tytler and T.F. Gordon were tasked with protecting the line of communication. While Roberts was making his way to Kabul through Ali Khel and Shutar Gardan, the commander of the Afghan forces at Kabul, Sardar Nek Mohammed, was preparing to engage the advancing British-Indian columns.⁶⁸

On 5 October 1879, upon reaching Charasiab, which is 11 miles south of Kabul, Roberts pushed reconnoitring parties of cavalry forward along the three roads leading towards the city of Kabul.

The reconnaissance revealed a considerable number of Afghans attempting to oppose the advance of the British-Indian Army. Thirteen regular Afghan regiments gathered at Charasiab, further aided by contingents from Kabul and neighbouring villages. Consequently, the Afghans outnumbered the forces under Roberts to a great extent. By the enemy's disposition, Roberts concluded that Afghan regulars were also among them. The enemy took strong positions in the heights between Charasiab and Kabul. Furthermore, the Afghans also threatened the British-Indian Army's rear, and its link with the brigade of General Macpherson was also severed. With time, the Afghans attempted to envelop the British-Indian camps by crowning the hills on both sides. Roberts realised that time was of the essence and similar to the initial engagements, took the attack to the enemy. Roberts's decision was crucial because the enemy numbers were increasing. This tactical initiative helped the British-Indian forces break free from the Afghan attempt to envelop them. During the attack, Roberts followed a similar pattern of a feint on the left flank of the Afghans while driving the main attack to their right. A combined cavalry and infantry attack routed the enemy.⁶⁹

Colonel Hanna criticised Roberts for his recklessness in marching onto Kabul and maintained that the Kabul Force was not adequately organised. At the same time, he criticised Major-General Sir Charles Macgregor's argument that Brigadiers Thomas Baker and George White deserved the accolades for the British-Indian Army's victory at the Battle of Charasiab. Instead, Hanna argued that Roberts's command inspired the rank and file and the officers under him, and his indomitable courage and confidence set a great example of leadership.⁷⁰

After defeating the Afghan forces at Charasiab, Roberts entered the Bala Hissar fortress in Kabul on 12 October 1879. A few days later, the gunpowder magazine housed in the fortress exploded, causing immense damage. The British-Indian forces eventually evacuated Bala Hissar. An essential feature of the command mechanism of British-Indian troops in Afghanistan, which separated it from the conventional concepts of command in the West, was

that it entailed both military and political responsibilities. The nature of warfare in Afghanistan and NWF deemed it crucial that the commanders exercise military and political command. While commanding the Army of Retribution, Roberts kept in close touch with the local Afghan chiefs and kept them with his camps. He even employed local chiefs like Sardar Mohammad Hasan to collect supplies and maintain order in Maidan. It points to Robert's political prudence as keeping local Afghan chiefs with his contingent gave the invading British-Indian forces an amount of legitimacy.⁷¹

When Robert marched towards Kabul, his responsibilities included not only defeating the Afghan forces that had assembled on the route to Kabul but also restoring order and inflicting punishment on the people responsible for the murder of the British envoy. The second task entails a considerable political responsibility. To that end, Roberts issued several proclamations addressed to the Afghans during his march to Kabul. On 16 September 1879, Roberts addressed the people of Kabul, Ghazni, the neighbouring tribes and the headmen in Logar Valley through two proclamations. He informed them that he was marching towards Kabul because a British envoy was murdered in the city and that he intended to strengthen the authority of the Amir and restore order. Furthermore, he assured the people of Afghanistan that he would punish only those associated with the insurrection in Kabul. Roberts had hoped that the proclamation would clear any doubts in the Afghan mind regarding his intent and facilitate logistical arrangements. Moreover, Roberts also expected that some tribal chiefs would visit his camp and accompany his forces, which would, in turn, give the Kabul Force a sort of legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghans. Consequently, they would not be treated entirely as a foreign body.⁷²

In late September, Roberts issued another proclamation to the people of Kabul after Amir Yakub Khan visited his camp and expressed his concerns over the non-combatant population residing in Kabul. In this proclamation, Roberts spoke directly to the people of Kabul, asking for their cooperation in taking control of the city and reminding them of the retribution that

would follow if they did not comply. He emphatically expressed the intention of the GOI not to wage war on women and children. Furthermore, he mentioned his intention to treat people of all classes in Kabul with justice. He took into consideration the spectre of the 1841 insurrection when he issued an order to the soldiers of the Kabul Force to refrain from forging personal relations with the people of Kabul. He also impressed upon them the need to maintain military discipline in the city.⁷³

The official instructions to Roberts regarding his dealings with the people of Kabul once he reached the city were as follows. Militarily, he was to secure complete command over the city and enforce the surrender of fortified posts. Furthermore, Roberts was to disarm the Afghan troops and the people of the town and ensure procurement of supplies. Politically, he was to secure the personal safety of the Amir and initiate an inquiry into the Cavagnari's assassination and the massacre of the British troops. The foreign secretary instructed Roberts to meet out a speedy and significant punishment without being indiscriminate or prolonged. Furthermore, the people of the city were to be impressed by the idea that the GOI would treat all classes with justice.⁷⁴

However, almost three weeks prior to this official instruction, the Governor-General, Lytton, sent a confidential personal letter to Roberts delineating his unofficial instructions. He asked Roberts to strike terror swiftly and deeply but to avoid a reign of terror. He asked Roberts to refrain from carrying out lengthy enquiries and trials and promptly execute all the soldiers of the Herati regiment and other people in the city complicit in the murder of the British envoy and troops. Retribution and not justice were to be inflicted on the murderous elements of the city. It should be noted that Lytton was also mindful of public opinion in England, and he thus advised Roberts to inflict death only in the execution of a judicial verdict. This was to give the British retribution a legal stamp of approval. Later, in a letter to Roberts, Lytton requested him to keep his unofficial instructions secret and private.⁷⁵

After taking command of Kabul, Roberts instituted two commissions. Major-General Macgregor and Surgeon-Major Bellew headed the first, assisted by Mohammad Hayat Khan. They were entrusted with the responsibility of investigating the men accused of the attack on the British residency and recommending suitable punishment. The second commission was headed by Brigadier Massy, who was responsible for trying the accused.⁷⁶ Roberts also issued a proclamation on 28 October 1879 announcing the abdication of the Amir and justifying the occupation of Kabul. He also mentioned that the GOI would allow all the Afghan chiefs to continue their functions in maintaining order. While the service of those assisting in maintaining peace would be newly recognised, those attempting to disturb order would meet with harsh punishment. Rodney Atwood argues that this proclamation was much harsher than the earlier two, as Roberts introduced martial law within ten miles of the city and announced that anyone carrying a weapon within five miles of Kabul would be summarily executed. According to Atwood, Roberts mentioned his intention of appointing a military governor at Kabul and levelling certain buildings interfering with the British force's safety.⁷⁷

Macgregor, now commanding a brigade under Roberts, vehemently criticised his acts in Kabul. He went to the extent of calling Roberts '...the most bloodthirsty little beast I know.' He repeatedly complained in his diary that Roberts did not care for proper investigation and evidence and was out only to inflict extremely harsh punishment on the people of Kabul. He claimed to have saved the lives of a few men in the city against whom proper evidence could not be furnished. According to Macgregor, Roberts was driven by the thirst for vengeance rather than the prudence to impart justice. He held that clear testimonies were not available in most cases, and many innocent Afghans had fallen prey to British vengeance.⁷⁸

In the face of mounting criticism in Britain, Roberts maintained that he derived his legal authority from the GOI and the British Government and his obligation to act on behalf of the Afghan Amir to suppress the insurrection in Kabul. However, the credibility of this assertion

was weakened by the prevailing doubt over the Amir's complicity in the assassination of the British Envoy and later his abdication.⁷⁹ However, Howard Hensman, the war correspondent accompanying the Kabul Force, expressed diametrically opposite opinions to that of Macgregor. According to him, '...nothing can be fairer than the course taken by Sir Frederick Roberts to punish such as deserve death for their past actions in the early weeks of September; and in the face of it there is none of that reckless blood-spilling which we may get the credit for'. Furthermore, he also claimed that those who were executed deserved such a harsh punishment due to their complicity in the heinous act of murdering the British envoy and the troops posted at Kabul.⁸⁰

Therefore, without getting into a debate, it can be concluded that Roberts wanted to inflict an exemplary punishment on the people of Kabul as a deterrent so that the people in and around the city would refrain from repeating the same act. Robert knew he had to occupy Kabul for months to come, and his decisions were influenced by the horrors of 1841.

Meanwhile, after one of the magazines in Bala Hissar exploded, Roberts decided to destroy the fortress, which was the historical seat of the Afghan kings. Following this, the British-Indian contingent at Kabul moved to the Sherpur cantonment, a mile north of Kabul. Roberts's decision to hold the Sherpur cantonment instead of Bala Hissar points to his tactical and logistical ingenuity. Logistically, the latter was not sufficiently large to afford shelter for the entire British-Indian force, camp followers and transport animals under him. Therefore, it would have been imperative to divide the force and keep a portion of it outside Bala Hissar, which would have made it vulnerable to Afghan attacks. Given the numerical superiority of the enemy, Roberts very prudently avoided dividing his troops. The cantonment afforded a tactical concentration of his troops. During a siege, the besieged army cannot venture outside their position to procure essential supplies such as water. Sherpur commanded ample drinking water sources. Hence, logistically, Sherpur was a much better choice than Bala Hissar. Furthermore,

the latter housed a vast magazine that had exploded a few months back, and a larger magazine still existed. Housing his troops in close proximity to such a large amount of gunpowder ran considerable risks. Lastly, the cantonment was situated on the side of Kabul, which was nearest to the British-Indian communication with India. The cantonment was quite vast; however, Roberts calculated that its natural and artificial defensive positions were considerable enough to hold successfully against an attack. Therefore, tactically, Sherpur was a better choice than Bala Hissar.

From a military perspective, to have an open field of view around the cantonment, the destruction of certain villages and walled enclosures was deemed essential to create an esplanade. However, Roberts could not dedicate enough men to clear the structures around the cantonment as the collection of supplies and provisions for shelter took precedence, which required considerable manpower. In his papers, he documents how the destruction of these structures could have enraged the people of Kabul and, in turn, increased the number of enemies that the British-Indian Army had waiting for them. He maintained that 'it has been my constant endeavour from the first to make our occupation of the country as little irksome to its inhabitants as the safety and welfare of my troops permitted'.⁸¹ Therefore, despite facing imminent attack from a numerically superior tribal congregation, Roberts exercised political caution, an integral aspect of his command mechanism in Afghanistan.

In the first week of December, Roberts received intelligence that three Afghan forces were marching towards Kabul to envelop it from all sides and descend on the British-Indian troops. Roberts gathered intelligence that the Afghans intended to gain possession of Kabul and Bala Hissar. Furthermore, they also planned to occupy the numerous villages in the neighbourhood of Sherpur surrounding the cantonment. To attain this end, tribal fighters from the Logar, Zurmat and Jidran districts and intervening Ghilzai country were tasked to advance from the south of Kabul and seize the range of hills which extended from the city towards Charasiab.

On the other hand, the Kohistanis were advancing from the north to capture the heights north of Kabul. Finally, fighters from Maidan, Wardak, and Ghazni were to descend upon the city from the west. Therefore, they planned to encircle the city, capture the hills and forts, and besiege the British-Indian Army at Sherpur. Obtaining intelligence is an essential aspect of command in warfare, and it is evident that Roberts gathered sufficient information to prepare for the defences of Sherpur.⁸²

In the engagements around Kabul and later in the siege of Sherpur, Roberts faced the largest congregation of tribal fighters in the entire Second Afghan War. In Robert's own words, the situation of the British-Indian Army at Kabul in December 1879 resembled that of the British contingent during the First Afghan War, who marched from Kabul towards India and were nearly annihilated. The Afghans believed that what had occurred in 1841-42 could again be repeated. Roberts realised the gravity of the situation and took the tactical initiative to deliver pre-emptive strikes on the Afghans. His aim was to disperse the tribal fighters marching from different directions before they could merge near Kabul, which would have disastrous consequences for the British-Indian Army as the former outnumbered the latter to a great extent. Therefore, Roberts dispatched Brigadier-Generals Macpherson and Baker to meet the different bodies of tribal fighters and defeat them. At the same time, Brigadier-General Massy was also despatched with a force under him. But he was not to engage the enemy until Macpherson or Baker had engaged the enemy. Hence, Roberts gave clear directives to his subaltern officers.

However, when neither Macpherson nor Baker was unsuccessful in resisting the Afghan advance, Roberts left Sherpur intending to take command of their united forces. Clearly, Roberts did not hide behind the walls of the cantonment and appeared on the battlefield to lead by example. During the second week of December 1879, Roberts constantly attempted to engage different columns of the enemy advancing towards Kabul. His primary objective was

to break and disperse the combination of Afghan forces against the British-Indian forces or at least prevent them from commanding the hills north and west of Kabul. However, after repeatedly engaging the enemy, he soon realised that their numerical superiority was too overwhelming for the small force under him. He, therefore, withdrew all the isolated contingents under his command and concentrated the entire force at Sherpur, abandoning the city of Kabul and Bala Hissar. Consequently, it can be argued that Roberts's command was pragmatic as he took tactical offence when he thought that initiative was required. Still, realising the numerical superiority of the Afghan fighters, he soon adopted defensive tactics. Therefore, Roberts exercised a flexible and fluid command. I also argue that Roberts's command mechanism can be characterised as inspirational: he took to the field when the Brigadier-Generals under him were facing the heat of the possible outcomes. During the second week of engagement and the withdrawal to Sherpur, the British-Indian forces lost several artillery pieces and animals. Communication between Roberts and the three contingents engaging the Afghans often broke down, leading to confusion on the battlefield. However, Roberts maintained his command as much as possible while facing a highly numerically superior enemy.⁸³

There was a lull in the Afghan attack in the week following the withdrawal of the British-Indian forces to Sherpur on 14 December 1879. Notably, despite being confined within the cantonment, Roberts continued to gather important intelligence on enemy, which led him to conclude that there was little cohesion among the insurgents and, therefore, little prospect of their joining the people of the city of Kabul and swelling their ranks. Furthermore, their attacks were desultory and unconnected, and the Afghans lacked recognised leaders. On 23 December, from the reports gathered on the enemy, Roberts concluded that the Afghans would push for a final decisive act. He, therefore, directed all the troops to be under arms very early on 23 December. The information seemed correct when heavy firing from the enemy commenced

against the southern and eastern faces of the Sherpur Cantonment after a signal fire was lit on Asmai Heights. During the third week of December, Roberts remained on the defensive within the walls of Sherpur as he realised the topographical disadvantages of attempting to deliver an effective blow. Due to the topography, the insurgents found excellent cover up to the walls of the cantonment, and they could afford to fall back to Kabul if attacked. However, once the Afghan attack commenced on 23 December, Roberts sent out Major W.R. Craster and Lieutenant-Colonel B. Williams to outflank the enemy since an effective fire could not be brought to bear upon the enemy from the defence of the cantonment. This changed the tide of the engagement, and by the evening, the entire Afghan line was in retreat. They left the city of Kabul and dispersed in all directions. Therefore, I argue, Roberts exercised a pragmatic command characterised by crucial reconnoitring, fluid offensive-defensive tactics, and political prudence.

After dispersing the large Afghan contingents, Roberts concluded that no further attack on the British-Indian forces in the next couple of months was unlikely as winter was approaching. This allowed the British-Indian forces to regain control of their lost positions. However, Roberts knew that holding the field under cold weather would entail great suffering for the troops, resulting in considerable loss of life for the men and animals. Therefore, he decided to suspend all military operations till the end of winter. This clearly shows that Roberts was not stubborn and dogmatic in his command. Considering the logistical challenges in a wintery Afghanistan, he did not take unnecessary risks. He refrained from pursuing the enemy, a decision informed by environmental and logistical awareness.⁸⁴

Some scholars have argued that Roberts committed tactical errors while engaging the tribal conglomeration. That the plan he adopted was not built on proper intelligence about the enemy. Furthermore, some argue that the force under Roberts was inadequate and could not defeat such a vast number of Afghan fighters, that his execution lacked coordination and manifested poor

leadership. It has also been claimed that a tactical defeat of the British-Indian forces, because of an underestimation of tribal fighting capabilities and overestimation of Roberts's capacity to defeat them, had forced Roberts to withdraw to the cantonment. It has even been suggested that Roberts overreached his abilities. Had Brigadier-General Macpherson not attacked the flank and rear of the enemy and dispersed them, Roberts's command could have faced destruction. Finally, Roberts has been criticised for exaggerating the number of enemies he faced in December 1879.⁸⁵

In this context, I argue that Roberts took calculated risks in engaging the three tribal congregations marching towards Kabul before they could merge. An experienced military practitioner could recognise that the number of tribal fighters and their confidence tended to increase proportionately in unconventional warfare in Afghanistan and NWF. Roberts was an excellent judge of battlefield circumstances. Therefore, his plan was to attack the branches separately and disperse them. It has been repeatedly mentioned in the second chapter that contemporary military practitioners, such as Callwell, advocated taking the initiative in 'uncivilised warfare'. I also argue that Roberts's tactical offensive was both pre-emptive and preventive. It was a preemptive attack, as the individual tribal armies would have eventually attacked the Sherpur Cantonment. In addition, it was a preventive attack because if the three tribal armies had merged before the cantonment unopposed, their ranks would have swelled to a great extent. Had both these scenarios played out, Roberts's numerically inferior force would have been utterly incapable of defeating the Afghan forces. Therefore, Roberts held his nerve in the face of imminent attack and inflicted as many casualties on the enemy as possible before the tribal forces could come together. Finally, even if one accepts that Roberts might have exaggerated the enemy numbers in official reports to amplify his glory, this can be explained by the idea of the 'bullfrog effect'. Military commanders often exaggerate the number of their

opponents to glorify their victories on the battlefield. Even if Roberts is guilty of embellishing enemy numbers, his bold leadership and inspirational command remain untarnished.

It is noteworthy that defeating the tribal congregation militarily did not conclude Robert's responsibilities in Kabul. After the Battle of Sherpur, Roberts realised that armed coercion was impracticable for the moment, and he took political steps to restore order and reassert British-Indian authority. The headmen of the neighbouring tribes and districts were summoned to Kabul, and those willing to comply were used to exert pressure on the outlying districts from which the attackers hailed. He also drew up a blueprint to appoint governors at places like Ghazni. By employing the local chiefs, Roberts was able to alienate a large portion of the population in Kabul and the outlying areas from the insurgents. Roberts maintained that 'by their aid, and that of the Kazzilbashs, it should be possible in time to bring over, and attach to our interests, a considerable part of the population, whose welfare clearly lies on the side of peace and order. But it is nonetheless evident from the events of the past month that the prospect of British rule is distasteful to the bulk of the Afghan people and that the resentment roused by the Durani tyranny is not a feeling from which we can hope to draw much permanent advantage'. Therefore, I argue that a proper understanding of the Afghan political situation characterised Roberts's military and political command. Furthermore, he understood the essence of fighting within the people. Alienating the masses from the insurgents is identified as an essential element of 'population-centric COIN'. To that end, Roberts issued a proclamation on 26 December 1879 in Kabul promising complete forgiveness to those who attacked the British-Indian contingent except the four principal leaders and invited all the chiefs and men of importance in Kabul and adjoining areas to visit him personally.

In this context, it must be mentioned that before engaging the Afghans around Kabul, Roberts consciously abstained from entering into any monetary engagements with the tribal chiefs when passing through Ali Khel in September 1879. Roberts realised that one of the primary

causes of the insurrection in 1841 was either the entire discontinuance or the considerable reduction of the subsidies previously paid to the tribes. However, it should be noted that Robert did engage in monetary transactions with Padshah Khan and his brother Alauddin, representatives of the Ahmadzai section of the Ghilzais because he depended on them for transport and supplies during the critical passage of the Shutar Gardan.⁸⁶

Roberts's political manoeuvres in Kabul did not go uncriticised. Mortimer Durand expressed his difficulties as a Political Secretary in a letter to Lyall in January 1880. He remarked:

‘Not long after joining my appointment I found that many of the views prevailing here were altogether out of accord with what I thought right... Hastings was always in favour of moderate and careful measures, but he had no influence whatever with the General... The General himself was almost always ready to let me have my say and hear me out patiently; but on almost every point he thought me totally wrong... In fact, the views of the soldiers were absolutely predominant, and other counsels had no chance.’ However, after the Battle of Sherpur and the widescale insurrection around Kabul, Durand mentioned that ‘The late insurrection produced a change in the General’s views on many points. Since then, he has, I think, come to the conclusion that I was not always utterly wrong. My position has entirely changed, and for the future, in all probability, I shall be able to write as I please without feeling that I am undermining his views.’⁸⁷

Despite Durand’s grievances, Parsi Sykes defended Roberts saying Durand had no practical experience in dealing with the Afghans before the Second Afghan War. In contrast, Roberts had studied them for many years. Sykes also mentioned how political principles in peacetime often had to be radically modified to suit operational conditions.⁸⁸ I argue that Roberts dismissed Durand’s opinion at the early stages of the war. But he started giving importance to political

officers. This shows that Roberts was not guided by rigid dogma. Rather, he was susceptible to change and flexible in his command.

In May 1880, Stewart assumed control of the Kabul command from Roberts after arriving in Kabul from Kandahar with an additional 7,200 men. Following the British-Indian brigade's loss at the Battle of Maiwand in Kandahar on 27 July 1880, Roberts was assigned as the leader of the Kabul and Kandahar Field Force. He was given the responsibility of leading a military expedition to Kandahar to fight the soldiers of Ayub Khan, who wanted to become the ruler of Afghanistan.

The march from Kabul to Kandahar was 318 miles long. It was accomplished in twenty-three days, including two halts. The 134 miles between Ghazni and Khelat-i-Ghilzai were traversed in eight days, marching an average of $16\frac{1}{4}$ miles daily. Almost 10,000 men, including officers, and 18 guns were under Roberts's command. They had to overcome many challenges on their march, as the armed body had been formed very quickly; they had no base to fall back on in case of a reverse. Furthermore, supplies were scant, there were no wheeled carriages, and the route was dotted with hostile populations. The CIC, Sir Frederick Haines, drew the attention of the GOI towards the discipline and morale of the troops during the arduous march, as reported by General Roberts. Neither fatigue, privations, nor the minor attacks and ambushes by the Afghans leading to the death of some of their brothers-in-arms shook the discipline of the British-Indian troops. A great share of this credit goes to the GOC for his excellent handling of troops under trying circumstances.

Roberts understood the importance of mobility in military operations, and the success of the whole enterprise reaching Kandahar depended to a great extent on the speed of the road march. To this end, Roberts judiciously lightened the baggage carried by both British and native troops. Also, Roberts consciously decided not to carry wheeled artillery with the marching column as

the main road would have to be abandoned if Ayub's army from Kandahar opposed the marching British-Indian column at Ghazni or towards Kabul. Therefore, wheeled artilleries would have found it difficult to traverse rough terrain and, in turn, would have delayed the march. Thus, the British-Indian force only carried mountain guns with them on their road march, with batteries of field and horse artilleries joining them once they reached Kandahar. This informed decision demonstrates Roberts's military foresight. Animals, albeit in small numbers, were purchased during the march, and supplies were procured en route.

On reaching Kandahar, Roberts secured a position that gave him an assured supply of water, which was crucial for the army, and also placed him within striking distance of Ayub Khan's camp. Roberts's knack for reconnaissance was once again reflected in Kandahar, where he gathered intelligence on the enemy's position before deploying his forces. An important feature of Roberts's command of the British-Indian Army in Afghanistan was the recognition he gave to his subaltern officers and the rank and file of both British and Indian origin. The engagement at Kandahar also manifested the clear-cut, precise commands given by Roberts to the officers entrusted with tasks such as reconnaissance, flanking manoeuvres, guard duties, etc.⁸⁹

The personality of a military commander greatly influences his leadership skills. Roberts has been defined as intelligent and charismatic. He was friendly, courteous, and an effective team player. Roberts was also considerate and encouraging towards his subaltern officers.⁹⁰ It has also been said that, as an organiser, Roberts was efficient and emphasised maintaining discipline within the armed forces and institutions. He 'led by example' and 'got things done'.⁹¹ Brian Robson considers him the ablest military commander since Arthur Wellesley. Roberts quickly read and understood the battlefield and made bold and definitive decisions accordingly. Furthermore, his calm composure and confident resolve in the face of challenges made him more efficient in combat. However, Robson also claims that Roberts had the propensity to take risks, specifically in the field of logistics, and that he had a tendency to underestimate his

opponents often. Moreover, proficient and compelling in written communication, Roberts wasn't the best communicator in verbal arguments. He did not possess a fundamentally innovative mindset, preferring to progress by building upon existing ideas based on prior experience.⁹²

Roberts also met his fair share of criticism and opposition during his time with the British-Indian Army. The twice Secretary of State for War and later the British Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, considered Roberts an intriguer and a self-promoter who vied for important positions. Moreover, Roberts's political opinions regarding British-India and the British government as a whole were completely flawed.⁹³ Campbell-Bannerman's political standing can explain his vehement criticism of one of the most celebrated British military generals. He was a liberal politician who became a Secretary of State for War during the prime ministership of William Gladstone and Archibald Philip Primrose. Both prime ministers belonged to Britain's Liberal Party, and Roberts's political opinions leaned toward conservatives.

A contemporary of Roberts, Colonel Henry Bathurst Hanna, was also an ardent critic. Hanna served as an officer in the British-Indian Army during the mutiny and was also posted on the NWF. As mentioned in the previous section, he criticised Roberts's conduct during the Second Afghan War. Roberts earlier denied him the post of Quartermaster-General. This personal rivalry might have won Roberts Hanna's enmity. Despite being critical of Roberts, Hanna was often forced to recognise Robert's contribution to the British-Indian Army's military victories during the Second Afghan War.⁹⁴ Some scholars have suggested that Roberts had been quite lucky in terms of his career progression and the publicity he received, for it awarded him important military positions, which in turn prepared his path to fame. Andrew Wessels mentions Roberts being given command of the Kurram Field Force, the smallest but best of the three invading British-Indian columns, at the start of the Second Afghan War. After the

assassination of the British Political Agent Cavagnari, Roberts assumed command of the only force that could swiftly move towards Kabul to inflict retribution. Moreover, the news of an impending all-out attack by the Afghans on the besieged British-Indian contingent at Sherpur after the capture of Kabul reached Roberts via a servant. This information helped him to defeat the Afghans decisively. Finally, Roberts is remembered for his famous march from Kabul to Kandahar. He was fortunate to be entrusted with the task as Lieutenant-General Stuart could have personally commanded the force as he was the Supreme Military Commander of the British-Indian forces in northern Afghanistan. It has also been claimed that the Governor-General of India, Lord Lytton, positively impacted Roberts's career. Lytton was a champion of the forward policy with regard to the defence of India espoused by the conservative Disraeli government in Britain. Lytton found in Roberts a person who held similar views vis-à-vis the need for a proactive stance to defend India against Russian aggression.⁹⁵

However, I argue that the assumption that Roberts was given the command of the most organised column of the British-Indian forces at the onset of the Second Afghan War is flawed. It has already been shown how logistical deficiencies and organisational mismanagement plagued the Kurram Valley Field Force and Roberts's prompt and positive action towards ameliorating the column's situation. Therefore, Roberts was not given the command of a properly organised force on a platter. Furthermore, small contingent factors often greatly influence the larger outcomes of a military campaign. The disposition of the Kurram Valley Field Force being within striking distance of Kabul was indeed a matter of luck for Roberts. However, his journey from thence to Kabul and his success in defeating the tribal conglomeration did not result from just luck. Instead, his sheer military and political brilliance ensured the triumph of the British-Indian Army. Roberts adopted a strong and assertive leadership approach, which was considered the most effective way to guarantee the dominance and reputation of the British and British-Indian Army. Throughout his career, Roberts

emphasised the need to avoid prolonged operations that benefited an insurgency. Therefore, his command was characterised by bold and swift military manoeuvres backed by political arrangements. Roberts was an excellent battlefield commander, an efficient administrator, a pacificator and a 'political general'.

Conclusion:

The evaluative analysis in the preceding sections of the two generals' approach to command and their styles of leadership unveils many differences and only meagre similarities. Both Pollock and Roberts were quite proactive in organising their forces while assuming command of their respective forces venturing into Afghanistan. Their efforts changed the sorry state of affairs of the armies, which induced confidence and uplifted morale. Both of them also used the military technology available to them to their greatest advantage. While Pollock used bugles to communicate with his troops, Roberts yielded the fruits of technological innovations and used heliographs for communication. Pollock negated the technological advantage of the *Afghan jezails* by ordering his troops to close in on the enemy and use bayonets in close-quarter combat. In comparison, Roberts used mountain artillery and breech-loading rifles efficiently. Moreover, both were efficient tacticians. However, there were significant differences in their approach to command.

Roberts had one advantage over Pollock. The GOI enthusiastically supported him in reestablishing the might of the British-Indian Army by inflicting signal punishment. His personal connections with the Governor-General also enabled him to adopt a bold military operational plan. However, Pollock, in this respect, was at a great disadvantage. He had a very limited strategic objective in front of him when he set out from Peshawar. Furthermore, the GOI's indecisive instructions posed great hindrances for him. Pollock salvaged the situation by

halting for a considerable time at strategically important locations. He kept his troops occupied by conducting COIN campaigns and collecting supplies. At the same time, he had to feel the pulse of the GOI and his brother general at Kandahar. It explains, to some extent, his cautiousness. However, the precarious condition of the British-Indian prisoners in Afghanistan never left his mind. It seemed at times that he was the only person among the political and military authorities of the GOI who cared about them.

Though both Pollock and Roberts had to perform political duties along with their military responsibilities, the latter's political engagement in Afghanistan was more intensive and significant. Furthermore, Roberts was also given a wide latitude in dealing with the political and military matters in Afghanistan. Compared to Pollock, Robert's command better manifests how the British-Indian top-down command structure was inverted on the Indian Frontiers.

Finally, their leadership styles were significantly different. As mentioned earlier, Pollock was more methodical and cautious, while Roberts was proactive, dashing, and often autocratic. Roberts inspired his troops through a 'can-do' attitude and swift action, while Pollock inspired his troops not through his personal charisma but through his systematic and bureaucratic arrangements. This gave his troops a sense of assurance and stability.

¹ Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 1-16.

² Colonel von Spohn, "The Art of Command", *Royal United Services Institution. Journal*, vol. 53, issue 371, 1909, p. 56.

³ Allan R. Millett *et al.*, "The Effectiveness of Military Organizations", *Military Effectiveness*, vol. 1, eds. Allan R. Millett, Williamson Murrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-10.

⁴ Creveld, *Command*, pp. 1-16.

⁵ Creveld, *Command*, pp. 268-272.

⁶ John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 1-11, 311-314.

⁷ Martin Samuels, *Command or Control? Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), pp. vii-viii.

⁸ Samuels, *Command or Control?*, pp. 1-5.

-
- ⁹ Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms: The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), pp. 3-13.
- ¹⁰ Kaushik Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans, 1500-2013* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 82-86.
- ¹¹ Charles Rathbone Low, *The Life and Correspondence of Field-Marshal Sir George Pollock* (London: W.H. Allen & CO., 1873), pp. 212-214.
- ¹² John William Kaye, *History of The War in Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1858), pp. 19-23.
- ¹³ Rathbone Low, *Sir George Pollock*, pp. 212-214.
- ¹⁴ Major W. Broadfoot, *The Career of Major George Broadfoot, C.B.: In Afghanistan and the Punjab* (London: John Murray, 1888), pp. 81-82.
- ¹⁵ Letter from the Governor-General of India in Council to the Secret Committee, dated 19 February 1842, no. 132 in *Papers Relating to Military Operations in Affghanistan: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament, By Command of Her Majesty* (London: T.R. Harrison, 1843), pp. 103-109.
- ¹⁶ Letter from the Governor-General of India in Council to the Secret Committee, dated 22 march 1842, no. 174 in *Papers Relating to Military Operations in Affghanistan*, pp. 145-149.
- ¹⁷ Letter from Major-General Robert Sale to General Pollock, dated 22 January 1842 in Miscellaneous Papers of Major-General Sir George Pollock: Intelligence Reports, Papers on Troop Movements, Logistics, and Other Matters of Military Administration, Pollock Mss., MSS EUR F439/3, APAC, BL, London; Brevet-Major M. Smith, "Sketch of Major-General Pollock's Campaign in Affghanistan in 1842", *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal*, 1844, Part 3, pp. 11-14.
- ¹⁸ Smith, "Campaign in Affghanistan", pp. 11-14.
- ¹⁹ Smith, "Campaign in Affghanistan", p. 14.
- ²⁰ Captain E. Buckle, *Memoir of the Services of The Bengal Artillery: From the Formation of the Corps to the Present Time, with Some Account of its Internal Organisation* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1852), pp. 443-444.
- ²¹ Lieutenant Charles Metcalfe Macgregor, *Mountain Warfare: An Essay on the Conduct of Military Operations in Mountainous Countries* (London: Nissen & Parker, 1866), pp. 41-43.
- ²² Order issued by Major-General George Pollock, Commanding the Troops Proceeding to Afghanistan, dated 30 March 1842, Pollock Mss., MSS EUR F439/3, APAC, BL, London.
- ²³ Charles Rathbone Low, *The Afghan War, 1838-1842: From the Journal and Correspondence of the Late Major-General Augustus Abbott* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1879), pp. 304-316.
- ²⁴ Lieutenant Edward William Bray, *Journal of the Affghan War in 1842* (London: Nelson and CO., 1865), pp. 49-53.
- ²⁵ Lieutenant Greenwood, *Narrative of the Late Victorious Campaign in Affghanistan, Under General Pollock: With Recollection of Seven Years' Service in India* (London: Henry Colburn, 1844), pp. 178-181.
- ²⁶ J.H. Stocqueler, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Major-General Sir William Nott, G.C.B.*, vol. 2, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1854), pp. 32-34.
- ²⁷ Copy of Letter from Major-General William Nott, dated 14 February 1842, Letter from Nott to Major-General Pollock, dated 4 June 1842, Letter from Nott to Pollock, dated 10 August 1842, Original Letter from Nott, in Letters from Major-General William Nott, Commander of the Army at Kandahar, MSS EUR F439/6, APAC, BL, London.
- ²⁸ P.J.O. Taylor ed., "The Army of Retribution: Letters from Peshawar, 1842", *Journal of Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. 81, no. 326 (2003), pp. 114-115.
- ²⁹ Kaye, *Afghanistan*, vol. 2, pp. 554-557.
- ³⁰ Letter from Pollock to Maddock, dated 25 July 1842, no. 440 in *Papers Relating to Military Operations in Affghanistan*, 1843, pp. 353-354; Broadfoot, *The Career of Major George Broadfoot*, p. 129.
- ³¹ Low, *Pollock*, pp. 333-334.
- ³² Letter from Pollock to Major-General Lumley, dated 25 August 1842, no. 470, *Papers Relating to Military Operations in Affghanistan*, 1843, pp. 374-376.
- ³³ Low, *Pollock*, pp. 348.
- ³⁴ Greenwood, *Narrative of the Late Victorious Campaign in Affghanistan*, pp. 190-195.
- ³⁵ Copy of a Letter from Major-General G. Pollock, Commanding Troops in Afghanistan to Major-General Lumley, Adjutant General of the Army, dated 9 September 1842 in *Memorials of Affghanistan: Being State Papers, Official Documents, Dispatches Authentic Narratives, Etc. Illustrative of the British Expedition to and Occupation of Affghanistan and Scinde, Between the Years 1838-1842*. J.H. Stocqueler (Calcutta: Messers. Ostell and Lepage, 1843), pp. 25-252.
- ³⁶ General Orders by the CIC, 23 September 1842, MD, General Orders, July-December 1842, NAI, New Delhi.

- ³⁷ Letter from Pollock to T.H. Maddock, Secretary to Government, Political Department (henceforth, PD), dated 17 September 1842 in MD, General Orders, July-December 1842, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁸ “Diary of Lieutenant C. F. Trower, 33rd Bengal Native Infantry, During the Afghan War of 1842”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 60, issue: 440, pp. 443-446, DOI: 10.1080/03071841509419301.
- ³⁹ “Diary of Lieutenant C. F. Trower”, pp. 448-450.
- ⁴⁰ Low, *Pollock*, pp. 384-390.
- ⁴¹ Ali Ahmad Jalali, *A Military History of Afghanistan: From the Great Game to the Global War on Terror* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas 2017), p. 162.
- ⁴² Low, *Pollock*, pp. 394-402.
- ⁴³ Letter from Nott to Pollock, dated 22 September 1842, MSS EUR F439/6, APAC, BL, London; Low, *Pollock*, pp. 404-408.
- ⁴⁴ Bray, *Affghan War*, pp. 86-90.
- ⁴⁵ From Major-General Sir G. Pollock to the Right Honourable Lord Ellenborough, Governor-General of India, dated 2 April 1842,
- ⁴⁶ Kaye, *Afghanistan*, vol. 2, pp. 19-23.
- ⁴⁷ Buckle, *Bengal Artillery*, p. 450.
- ⁴⁸ Taylor, “The Army of Retribution”, pp. 114-115.
- ⁴⁹ Brian Robson, “Roberts, Frederick Sleigh, first Earl Roberts (1832-1914)” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*. vol. 47, eds. H.C.G. Matthew, Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.156-157.
- ⁵⁰ Robson, “Roberts, Frederick Sleigh”, pp. 156-157.
- ⁵¹ William Trousdale, *War in Afghanistan, 1879-80: The Personal Diary of Major General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), pp. 90-92, V26150, Rare Books, BL, London.
- ⁵² Colonel H.B. Hanna, *Lord Roberts in War: A study for the Day* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and CO. LTD., 1895), pp. 6-9.
- ⁵³ *The Second Afghan War, 1878-80 Official Account: Produced in the Intelligence Branch Army Headquarters, India* (London: John Murray, 1907), pp. 92-94; Colonel H.B. Hanna, *The Second Afghan War, 1878-79-80 Its Causes, Its Conduct and Its Consequences*, vol. 1 (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1899), pp. 326-332.
- ⁵⁴ Detailed Account of the Capture of the Peiwar Kotal on the 2nd December 1878 by the Kurram Valley Field Force, Army HQ, Simla, 12 September 1879, MDPKE, February 1880, NAI, New Delhi; *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, pp. 105-106; From Major-General F.S. Roberts to the Quartermaster General in India, dated 5 December -1878, in General Orders, Military Department, Fort William, 31 December 1878, 1971-01-23-154-1, Roberts Collection, NAM), London
- ⁵⁵ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, pp. 3-4; Field Marshal Lord Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1901), p. 358.
- ⁵⁶ Lady Betty Balfour, *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1906), pp. 132-133.
- ⁵⁷ Rodney Atwood, *The Life of Field Marshal Lord Roberts* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p.80.
- ⁵⁸ Charles Gray Robertson, *Kurum, Kabul and Kandahar: Being A Brief Record of Impression in Three Campaigns Under General Roberts* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1881), pp. 41-42.
- ⁵⁹ Balfour, *Personal and Literary Letters*, pp. 130-131.
- ⁶⁰ Copy of Papers Relating to the Proceedings of Major General Roberts in the Khost Valley on the 7th and 8th days of January 1879, IOR/L/MIL/17/14/35, BL, APAC, London.
- ⁶¹ Proceedings of Major General Roberts in the Khost Valley, IOR/L/MIL/17/14/35, BL, APAC, London.
- ⁶² Brian Robson, *The Road to Kabul: The Second Afghan War, 1878-1881* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1986), p. 94; Atwood, *Lord Roberts*, p. 82.
- ⁶³ Lieutenant-Colonel C. Greenhill Gardyne, *The Life of a Regiment: The History of the Gordon Highlanders from 1816 to 1898, Including an Account of the 75th Regiment from 1787 to 1881*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1903), p. 123.
- ⁶⁴ Anthony King, *The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 67-68.
- ⁶⁵ Roberts, *Forty-One Years*, pp. 380-383.
- ⁶⁶ The Durand Line was established in 1893 as the international border between the Emirate of Afghanistan and the British Indian Empire.
- ⁶⁷ Atwood, *Lord Roberts*, p. 84.
- ⁶⁸ Jalali, *A Military History of Afghanistan*, pp.207-208.

- ⁶⁹ From Major-General F.S. Roberts to the Chief of Staff, Army HQ, Simla, dated 20 October 1879, no. 1125 in *The London Gazette*, 16 January 1880, no. 24801.
- ⁷⁰ Colonel H.B. Hanna, *The Second Afghan War, 1878-79-80 Its Causes, Its Conduct and Its Consequences*, vol. 3 (London: Constable and Co., 1910), pp. 77-79; Lady Macgregor, *The Life and Opinions of Major-General Sir Charles Metcalfe Macgregor*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1888), p. 125.
- ⁷¹ From Roberts to A.C. Lyall, Secretary to the GOI, FD, dated 30 December 1879, no. 74, 1971-01-23-154-1, March-October 1880, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ⁷² Roberts, *Forty-One Years*, pp. 390-391.
- ⁷³ Roberts, *Forty-One Years*, p. 397.
- ⁷⁴ Telegram from Foreign Secretary, India to Roberts, 29 September 1879, no. A-506 in *Roberts in India: The Military Papers of Field Marshal Lord Roberts*. ed. Brian Robson (Dover: Army Records Society, 1993), pp. 127-128.
- ⁷⁵ Confidential letter from Lytton to Roberts, 9 September 1879, Telegram from Viceroy to Roberts, 13 September 1879 in *Roberts in India*. Robson, pp. 119-124.
- ⁷⁶ Atwood, *Lord Roberts*, p. 90.
- ⁷⁷ *The Second Afghan War*, pp. 239-240; Atwood, *Lord Roberts*, p. 90.
- ⁷⁸ Trousdale, *War in Afghanistan*, pp. 108-114.
- ⁷⁹ Rob Johnson, "General Roberts, the Occupation of Kabul and the Problem of Transition, 1879-1880", *War in History* vol. 20, issue 3 (2013): pp. 301-302.
- ⁸⁰ Howard Hensman, *The Afghan War of 1879-80* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1882), pp. 111-112.
- ⁸¹ From Roberts to the Adjutant-General, dated 23 January 1880, no. 1027, 1971-01-23-154-1, August 1878-March 1880, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ⁸² From Lieutenant-General F.S. Roberts to the Adjutant-General in India, dated 23 January 1880, no. 1027, 1971-01-23-154-1, August 1878-March 1880, Roberts Papers, NAM, London; Jalali, *A Military History of Afghanistan*, pp. 213-214.
- ⁸³ From Roberts to Adjutant-General, 23 January 1880, no. 1027; From Roberts to Lyall, 30 December 1879, no. 74, 1971-01-23-154-1, March-October 1880, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ⁸⁴ From Roberts to Lyall, no. 74, 1971-01-23-154-1, March-October 1880, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ⁸⁵ Jalali, *A Military History of Afghanistan*, p. 215; Atwood, *Lord Roberts*, pp. 94-96.
- ⁸⁶ From Roberts to Lyall, dated 18 February 1880, no. 160; From Roberts to Lyall, no. 74, 1971-01-23-154-1, March-October 1880, Roberts Papers, NAM, London.
- ⁸⁷ Durand to Lyall, January 1880 as quoted by Brigadier-General Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand: A Biography* (London: Cassell and Company LTD, 1926), pp. 111-112.
- ⁸⁸ Durand to Lyall, in Sykes, *Mortimer Durand*, pp. 111-112.
- ⁸⁹ Defeat of Sirdar Mahomed Ayub Khan of Herat, near Kandahar, 1st September, 1880, progs. no. 14428, PGIMD, KE, December 1880, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹⁰ Byron Farwell, *Eminent Victorian Soldiers: Seekers of Glory* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), pp. 156-179.
- ⁹¹ Andre Wessels, "Frederick Roberts" in *Victoria's Generals*, eds. Steven J. Corvi, Ian F.W. Beckett (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2009), p. 171.
- ⁹² Brian Robson, "Roberts, Frederick Sleight, first Earl Roberts (1832-1914)" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*. vol. 47, eds. H.C.G. Matthew, Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.156-161.
- ⁹³ Robson, "Roberts, Frederick Sleight", p.156.
- ⁹⁴ Farwell, "Victorian Soldiers", p. 162.
- ⁹⁵ Atwood, *Lord Roberts*, pp. 69-72; Wessels, "Frederick Roberts", p. 173.

Chapter 5

The Fallacy of State-building in Afghanistan, 1839-1919

State building in Afghanistan has been a daunting and intricate process due to its history of external interventions, ethnic fragmentation, internal conflicts, and economic challenges. Over the past several centuries, Afghanistan has experienced various forms of governance, from tribal structures to limited centralised regimes, only to see these structures collapse under internal strife and foreign interference. In the last two decades, Afghanistan has been at the centre of international efforts to establish a stable state. However, these efforts have been marred by persistent violence, corruption, and political instability. This chapter traces the historical development of the Afghan state and its interactions with the GOI from the first half of the nineteenth century till the end of the third Afghan War in 1920. It examines the veracity of the concept of state-building in Afghanistan through foreign intervention. I argue that the British-Indian Army's military intervention in Afghanistan weakened the process of Afghan state formation by denigrating the authority and legitimacy of the Afghan Amir and arresting the development of the Afghan political economy. The GOI's decision of direct military intervention in Afghanistan to establish a subservient regime stemmed from a flawed understanding of the Afghan socio-political matrix.

Theories of State and State Formation

Max Weber defined the modern state as the 'human community that successfully claims a legitimate monopoly over the means of coercion in a given territorial area'. The state comprises a core set of institutions such as a political executive, legislature, judiciary, army,

public administration, etc. Legitimacy and sovereignty are two important signifiers of a state. Following the views of Weber and some of his contemporaries, the state has been defined as the ‘territorialisation of political authority’. This entails the convergence of politically organised coercive and symbolic authority, a well-defined core region, and a stable population subject to collectively binding political choices.¹ Predating Weber, Thomas Hobbes regarded power and force as fundamentally significant to the state. He remarked, 'Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all'. There is a notable consensus regarding one aspect of Hobbes' philosophy: state power is generally perceived as coercive. The notion that governments must employ force or that their authority is inherently coercive is prevalent in political discourse. John Rawls asserts in the twentieth century that “political power is inherently coercive, supported by the government's application of sanctions, as only the government possesses the authority to employ force in enforcing its laws.”² Therefore, it can be understood that coercion is an essential factor in the development of states.

State formation refers to the processes through which political entities evolve from simple, tribal, or communal societies into complex, organised states with centralised authority, governance structures, legal systems, and territorial boundaries. Understanding state formation has been the subject of extensive debate and inquiry across anthropology, sociology, history, and political science. Numerous theories have been proposed to explain why and how states emerged. The most prominent among these are the coercion theory, the voluntaristic theory, the hydraulic theory, and the economic theory of state formation. Apart from these, there are the feminist and post-modernist approaches to the issue of state formation. Each theory offers a different perspective on the factors and processes driving the establishment of centralised political power and institutions. The theories that are most relevant to the current work are elucidated below.

One of the most influential explanations for the emergence of states is the ‘bellicist theory’. Bellicism is the advocacy of war, and a bellicist is someone who supports war and opposes pacifism. This theory, associated with scholars such as Charles Tilly, posits that states are formed primarily through warfare and conquest. As human societies grew in size and complexity, conflict over resources such as land, water, and labour intensified, leading to violence and warfare between different groups. According to this theory, the state emerged as a means to control violence and manage internal and external conflicts. Tilly famously argued that “war made the state, and the state made war” In this view, states developed to enable organised warfare, as rulers needed to extract resources from their populations to fund armies and maintain control over territories. Coercion, taxation, and military conscription became tools for state leaders to consolidate power. Over time, states monopolised violence, establishing standing armies and formal legal systems to maintain order and defend against external threats. The rise of military technology, including fortifications, professional soldiers, and advanced weaponry, also contributed to the centralisation of authority and the growth of state structures.

Tilly does not completely disagree with the economic interpretations of state formation that hold that the way in which the classes are organised in a state, along with its other internal structures, Are crucial factors in the development of a state. However, he asserts that it was not the primary impetus for the development of the state. Instead, the organisation of various classes within a state affects only the way rulers exact the means, such as taxes, necessary to engage in coercive efforts. Moreover, regions that remained only capital-intensive and could not employ their coercive apparatus did not completely evolve into states. The growth of these regions remained limited to the stage of city-states. Hence, the primary impetus for state creation is the gearing up for and involvement in warfare. The most successful rulers in consolidating and amassing coercive resources fostered conditions conducive to state growth.³

Critics of the coercion theory, however, argue that it overly emphasises violence and conflict while downplaying the roles of cooperation, trade, and diplomacy in state-building. In contrast to the coercion theory, the voluntaristic or social contract theory of state formation emphasises the voluntary nature of human political organisation. Associated with thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke, this theory suggests that states formed when individuals or communities willingly ceded some of their personal freedoms and resources to a central authority in exchange for security, protection, and social order. In this model, the state emerges as a collective response to the need for governance and cooperation in larger societies. As populations grew and human interactions became more complex, maintaining order and providing public goods such as defence, justice, and infrastructure required formal governance structures. The social contract theory suggests that individuals, motivated by rational self-interest, agreed to form states to achieve these collective goals. A key element of this theory is the idea of legitimacy: the state's power is derived from the consent of the governed. Unlike the coercion theory, which views state power as imposed by force, the social contract theory holds that state authority is granted through mutual agreement. States are seen as serving the common good, providing security and enabling individuals to pursue their own interests in a stable environment.⁴

Lastly, Marxist theory provides a unique viewpoint on the formation and evolution of the state, emphasising the interplay between economic frameworks, class conflicts, and political authority. Grounded on the theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Marxist perspectives on state formation highlight the influence of economic factors in the development of political institutions and contend that the state mainly functions as a tool of class oppression. Marxist theorists assert that the state did not arise as an impartial mediator of social problems but as a tool to safeguard the interests of the ruling class's interests. A fundamental principle of Marxist philosophy is the notion of 'base and superstructure'. Marx

and Engels contended that the economic base, consisting of the means of production (factories, land, labour) and the relations of production (the dynamics between workers and owners), serves as the basis for all social and political structures, referred to as the superstructure. Within this perspective, the state constitutes a component of the superstructure, with its creation and functions dictated by the foundational economic basis. In a society where a certain class controls the means of production, the state functions as an instrument of that class to sustain and bolster its supremacy. The state is not an unbiased entity reflecting the interests of all individuals but rather a vehicle that facilitates the ongoing exploitation of one class by another. This conception of the state as a tool of class domination is fundamental to Marxist ideology. According to Antonio Gramsci, the state combines political and civil society. He holds that the state's power can be best explained through the idea of 'hegemony armoured by coercion'. The ruling class exercises political and moral leadership to garner the dominated populace's active consent. According to Gramsci, this is hegemony. On the other hand, the state employs coercive mechanisms to ensure the compliance of the populace.⁵

I argue that neither the Weberian model of state nor the Tillian applies to Afghanistan. The Afghan state could never monopolise the means of coercion, which hindered its attainment of absolute authority. Furthermore, due to the existence of numerous fissures within the Afghan society and several power pockets, the state in Afghanistan could never garner the consent of the society. Therefore, neither the bellicist theory nor the contract model can explain the process of state formation in Afghanistan. Due to primitive economic formations and tribal groupings, the Afghan state was also not an instrument of class oppression. However, economic factors did play a great role in the formation and evolution of the Afghan state.

Characterising the Afghan State

Bernett Rubin introduced the concept of a 'rentier state' in the context of Afghan state formation. He argues that social and economic integration is often minimal in rentier regimes, and social class is not a dominant expression of identity. Social systems in Afghanistan are localised and based on familial or religious disparities. Rubin holds that following the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80), Afghanistan became integrated into the framework of the modern state system as a buffer zone between the British and Russian empires. The construction of a central state relied heavily on foreign help since no ruler could extract enough resources as Afghanistan is an economic deficit zone. The GOI was the leading provider of economic and material aid in exchange for control over the country's external relations. When Afghanistan became independent in 1919 until the Cold War, little to no such economic assistance was available. Dwindling foreign aid and the decline of state apparatus in Afghanistan were proportionately related. In the 1950s, Prime Minister Muhammad Daud Khan used Afghanistan's restored position as a buffer state between the USSR and the U.S.-backed Baghdad Pact (subsequently CENTO) to develop an enlarged state machinery with foreign assistance from the USSR and the United States. Therefore, since 1957, Afghanistan has functioned as a rentier or 'allocation' state, with almost forty percent of its annual income sourced directly from foreign contributions. He also holds that the rentier state in Afghanistan could be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century when Abdur Rahman Khan was the Afghan Amir. According to Rubin, a rentier political structure cannot develop infrastructural apparatus because it requires state monitoring and guidance rather than just coercion. For a state to penetrate the civil society, infrastructural capacity building is essential.⁶

Thomas Barfield argues that Afghanistan journeyed through a change from the beginning of the nineteenth century to its end. At the beginning of the century, the Afghan government was decentralised and fragmented, and the idea of political legitimacy depended on and was rooted heavily in the past. Furthermore, the government had to depend on feudal levies to project its power. However, by the end of the century, Afghanistan was on its way to becoming a nation-state, where a central governmental power, with the help of its bureaucratic structure, replaced the regional individual power holders. Moreover, tribal levies give way to a regular Afghan Army. Barfield states that the impact of the two Afghan wars was greatly instrumental in these changes. Nevertheless, despite such sea changes in the Afghan political structure, the existing political elite, such as the ruling dynasty, did not lose power.⁷

Apart from characterising state formation in Afghanistan based on external assistance, attempts have been made to delve into the socio-political intricacies of the Afghan state. When the Pashtun tribesmen formed a state in Afghanistan in 1747, Islam was the dominant religion. However, the Afghan state did not have *Sharia* or Islamic Law as its judicial basis and allegiance to the Amir was not enforced by the dominant or other trivial religious traditions. According to T.R. Moreman, *Pashtunwali*, the Pashtun code of honour, governed Pathan society, embodying tribal law inside each village and guiding interactions between tribes and factions. Tribal society emphasises equality and the entitlement of people to use violence for conflict resolution and the advancement of personal power, prestige, and honour. Moreman adds that the tribes rejected leadership beyond the little authority exerted by tribal elders through *jirgahs*. To a significant extent, each individual operated as a law unto himself, vigorously pursuing personal objectives without constraint from community regulations. Consequently, the trans-border Pathan tribes resided in a condition of continuous internal strife, referred to by anthropologists as 'organised anarchy.' Moreman and Kaushik Roy hold that the persistent requirements of the Pathan code of honour and the system of feuds militarised tribal

life, leading to continuous tribal and sectional conflict and pervasive personal vendettas. This constant conflict was a defining feature of the Afghan state.⁸

However, Afghan scholar-politician Ashraf Ghani refutes such an understanding of Afghan social intricacies through a Western lens. He contends that *Pashtunwali* established the social and legal rules of conduct among the Pashtun tribes. The law prioritised mediation and resolution of issues above adjudication and the imposition of penalty. While specific systems for resolving disputes among individuals, lineages, clans, and tribes were present, the prevailing trend at all levels was defined by mediation.⁹ Soon after the state was established in Afghanistan in 1747, petty chieftains emerged as an alternate power source as the state expanded. Finally, a unified monarchy emerged in Afghanistan in 1863. However, the monarchs engaged in a struggle with rival power sources about the overarching issue of centralisation. The tribal aristocracy, royal lineages and families, religious establishment, and foreign forces may be seen as the primary obstacles to the centralising policies of the monarchs from 1747 to 1880.¹⁰

The tribe has been an essential factor in the configuration of the Afghan state. The Pathans residing in NWF have ethnic, linguistic, and religious connections with the people of Afghanistan, to whom they gave nominal loyalty. The tribal culture was profoundly democratic and staunchly resisted any incursions into their lands, considering them as threats to their way of life. Different tribes, such as the Afridis, Yusufzai, Mohmands, Wazirs, etc., were unified by a common language; nevertheless, they were otherwise fragmented and could not combine owing to religious, ethnic, and political disparities. Each tribe was split into smaller portions or clans, further organised into familial groupings.¹¹ I argue that the tribal groupings and clan-based solidarity in Afghanistan played the role of a centrifugal force. It greatly hindered the process of a centralised state formation in the region.

Seen through the prism of war, society, and state-building, Kaushik Roy tends to conceptualise Afghanistan as a 'multilayered political cake' with shifting territorial boundaries and fluid communal identities. This multilayered political order formed in the face of external pressure and was composed of a variety of social and communal forms typical of a weak state.¹² Elsewhere, Scott Gates and Kaushik Roy argue that the Afghan state 'represented a fragile fabric based on a complex network of tribes, sub-tribes, and clans whose positions and loyalties were continuously fluctuating with time and context—thereby hardly constituting a state at all'.¹³ According to them, Afghanistan's physical geography, social, and cultural matrix remained unchanged throughout the ages. Consequently, the COIN and state-building policies implemented by big powers in Afghanistan, such as constructing military outposts, subsidising the tribes and recruiting them in local militias, are more or less unmodified. It has also been seen that rebellion broke out whenever the Mughals or the GOI tried to reduce or stop subsidies. Gates and Roy state that the centralisation of power in Afghanistan faced challenges from local clan-based opposition. The Pathans held sway over the Afghan throne. Among the Pathans, the Abdalis, the Durrani, and the Ghilzai confederacy held primacy. Interestingly, Gates and Roy claim that Afghan resistance to the invaders does not depend much on Islam in general or *jihad* in particular.¹⁴

The nature of Afghan resistance played an important role in defining warfare in Afghanistan. While dealing with the crucial question of the Islamic framework of the Afghan resistance, Rob Johnson comprehends that religion has been the rallying point for many communities, and Afghanistan is no exception. Islam is used selectively by Afghans to justify and legitimate a variety of actions in war. But he has also claimed that Islam can motivate but does not determine how and why Afghans fight.¹⁵ I argue that religion can indeed be a unifying bond and the medium of articulation of resistance ideology in a semi-literate or illiterate society. It acts as a lightened matchstick on the heap of gunpowder, as can be seen by the call of *jihad* given by

several Afghan Amirs and *mullahs* to wage war against the British-Indian Army at times. However, ethnic identity in Afghanistan acts as a more potent bond than religion. Furthermore, due to scarce resources, the tribes often resisted the British-Indian Army or looted its residency to gain a fortune.

Johnson, in his attempt to unveil the Afghan side of the story, argues that Afghan fighting techniques, including mutilation and massacre, as has been manifested in the writings of various British officials, reflect less a savage nature than the best available methods to encourage invaders to depart. His monograph cites various Western historians and authors describing the fluidity of the Afghans to change sides and realign their loyalties, when necessary, as being without honour. However, from the Afghan perspective, the same behaviour would be seen as a coping mechanism in a land of fierce clan rivalry and scarce resources. From a face value level, it seems that Afghan violence was not restrained by any logic, such as the pursuit of wealth. Rather, violence is seen as an expression of Afghan backwardness and lack of restraint. However, Johnson has shown that violence was a method used by the Afghans to send a signal to their adversaries, asking them to come to negotiation.¹⁶

Bringing the focus on foreign intervention, Roy argues that political negotiations with the refractory elements of the Afghan society, supported by organised violence, constituted the mechanism of maintaining order in the Raj's peripheral regions. He also adds that numerous punitive campaigns carried on by the British-Indian Army were reactionary to the challenge posed by the 'stateless communities'.¹⁷ According to Gates and Roy, when the GOI failed at its original endeavour of conquering Afghanistan and ruling the country with a puppet Amir, it shifted to maintaining its influence on the land through political manoeuvres and economic elements such as bribery. It also exerted latent military power. Roy and Gates argue that these policies were more successful than their original method. I refute their first assumption. The GOI never expressed their inclination to conquer Afghanistan as it entailed a huge expense of

money and manpower. Their strategic motives have been explained in detail in the first chapter. The stakeholder-centric analysis of COIN argues that the concept of a monolithic and unified state with a strong central power, in other words, a Weberian model of state, cannot be applied to Afghanistan. The Afghan State has a historical tradition of weak central authority challenged by a strong periphery and complicated by a dynamic clan connection.¹⁸

Though scholars have characterised the Afghan state from various perspectives, the recent understanding of state formation in Afghanistan analyses the process from the standpoint of big powers. In doing so, they make the critical mistake of denying the Afghans the agency to build their own state, resulting in constant direct intervention into the country's affairs. This chapter seeks to give back the agency to the Afghans in the process of state formation. Therefore, the chapter's main focus would be on the indigenous impetus to developing a state apparatus in the country. The evaluation of the Afghan state is not done following Western parameters. The chapter posits Afghanistan within the paradigm of pre-modern states and holds its revenue extraction mechanism and expansion of the army as essential signifiers of the capacity of the state.

Dost Muhammad, First Afghan War and the Afghan State

The period under consideration in this thesis commences with Dost Muhammad's accession to the throne in 1826, which marked the onset of the Barakzai Dynasty. However, due to clan rivalries, he faced internal challenges since the inception of his rule. The Sadozai group refused to acknowledge him as the Amir. It has also been argued that Dost was not confident in his hold over the throne. Hence, instead of the title *Shah* (following the Persian tradition), he took the title of Amir. The dynastic prestige of Ahmad Shah Durrani remained so potent that only his

direct descendants were considered entitled to assume the title of shah. Since the expulsion of Shah Shuja from the Afghan throne in 1818, the Barakzais have adhered to the custom of installing nominal Sadozai descendants to the throne, a practice prevalent among Turko-Mongolian regimes. Dost Muhammad diverged from that tradition in 1826 by governing directly under his own name with the title of Amir after his coronation as *padshah* in a ceremony intended to mirror Ahmad Shah's ascension to power in 1747.¹⁹

A comparative assessment of the revenue extraction by the Afghan Amir since the end of the eighteenth century would give us an idea of the state's capacity.

Table 5.1

The following table shows the amount of revenue extracted by the Afghan Amir from the different regions of Afghanistan and NWF in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

	Kashmir	Dera Ghazi Khan	Dera Ismail Khan	Multan	Peshawar	Sind
Under Zaman Shah						
Revenue assessment from the region	40 lakh rupees		400,000 rupees	350,000 rupees	700,000 rupees	
Income of the Amir through revenue farming	24 lakh rupees	700,000 rupees	225,000 rupees			
Amount of net revenue				200,000/300,000 rupees	100,000 rupees	
Under Ahmad Shah						
Revenue assessment						50,00,000 rupees

from the region						
Income of the Amir through revenue farming						
Amount of net revenue						15,00,000 rupees
Under Timur Shah						
Revenue assessment from the region						
Income of the Amir through revenue farming						
Amount of net revenue				200,000 rupees	180,000 rupees	12,00,000 rupees
Under Shah Shuja's first reign						
Revenue assessment from the region					Almost the entirety of Peshawar was parcelled out as <i>jagir</i> grants.	
Income of the Amir through revenue farming						
Amount of net revenue	No regular income.			No regular income.		No regular income.

Source: Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 268-269.

From the schematic mentioned above, it can be argued that after Zaman Shah's removal from power in 1800, the Sadozai regime in Afghanistan weakened in strength, and the local governors were unwilling to pay their dues. However, we see that under Dost Mohammed, the situation is improving. Following the incorporation of Jalalabad and Ghazni into his dominion, the Amir's financial resources amounted to 2.5 million rupees. Mohan Lal, an Intelligence Agent for the GOI, made this calculation by culling data from the records of the Chief Collectors of Dost Muhammad, Mirza Syed Hussain, Diwan Mitha, Diwans Birbal, and Daya Ram.

Table 5.2

The following table shows Dost Muhammad's revenue collection before the First Afghan War:

Sources of Revenue/Places from which Revenues were Collected	"Asal" or just Amount of the Revenue.	"Bidat" or unjust Amount of the Revenue.	Total Sum in Kabul Rupees
Duties from Custom House....	207,580 Rupees	92,340 Rupees	299,920 Rupees
Vajah Shahganj. Arghande, &c. &c. .	109,054 Rupees and 2 abbasi	11,920 Rupees and 1 sannar	120,975 Rupees

Bilok-i-Kohdaman, Char Yakar, and Lahogar	389,914 Rupees and 3 shahis	23,635 Rupees and 1 shahis	413,549 Rupees and 1 abbasi
Istalif	24,834 Rupees and 1 abbasi	1,525 Rupees and 6 shahis	26,360 Rupees
Khalsah, Government Land....	159,179 Rupees	.....	159,179 Rupees
Rezah Kohistan and Bulaghain.	18,831 Rupees	2,805 Rupees	21,636 Rupees
Ghorband.....	23,480 Rupees	2,732 Rupees	26,212 Rupees
Tajakyah Maidan.....	21,825 Rupees	921 Rupees and 5 Shahis	22,746 Rupees
Charkh	23,306 Rupees	1,000 Rupees	24,306 Rupees
Ghilzai....	222,595 Rupees and 1 sannar	7,631 Rupees and 1 shahi	230,226 Rupees and 3 Shahis
Behsud and Bamian...	69,964 Rupees	.....	69,964 Rupees
Ghazuin...	397,971 Rupees and 7 shahis	37,451 Rupees and 3 shahis	435,423 Rupees
Taefah Kharauti, Shinvari, and C...	18,321 Rupees	740 Rupees	19,061 Rupees
Zurmat, Gardez, and Kharvar...	64,240 Rupees and 2 abbasi	950 Rupees	65,190 Rupees and 8 shahis
Hazarah Turkam, and Parsa....	6,599 Rupees	.....	6,599 Rupees
Khurm and Khost....	95,000 Rupees	.....	95,000 Rupees

Jalalabad and Lamghan-i-Tajakyah.	435,588 Rupees	29,940 Rupees	465,528 Rupees
“Darkat-i- Mut-faraqah Havai”..	5,870 Rupees	3,850 Rupees And 6 Shahis	9,720 Rupees And 6 shahis
Total	2,292,380 Rupees	216,902 Rupees	.....
Grand Total	..	..	2,509,282 Rupees

1 Afghan Rupee: 60 *paisa*

Shahi: 5 *paisa*, *Sanar*: 10 *paisa* and *Abbasi*: 20 *paisa*

Source: Mohan Lal, *Life of the Amir Dost Mohammed Khan of Kabul: With His Political Proceedings Towards the English, Russian, and Persian Government, Including the Victory and Disasters of the British Army in Afghanistan*, Vol. 1 (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1846), pp. 232-233.

From the above table, it can be ascertained that Dost Muhammad collected more than twenty-five lakh or 2.5 million rupees as revenue prior to the First Afghan War. Writing in 1839, Mountstuart Elphinstone put forward a much larger number. He held that the Kabul government yielded an annual revenue of almost three crore rupees or three million pounds sterling. One-third of the revenue collection went towards a grant to several highly autonomous princes in the country. Another one-third was used for *tiyul* or *jagir* grants, maintenance of *mullahs* and other religious leaders, and charity. Almost ninety lakh rupees were left with the Amir. The principal source of the revenue demand came from land. The land revenue was assessed on the produce according to a fixed proportion. The Afghan tribes who inhabited areas far from Kabul

were not part of the revenue assessment and paid a fixed sum to the Amir annually. Other sources of income were local taxes and customs, the yield from the royal demesne, and the proceeds from penalties and forfeitures. Apart from these, there was another source of income for the Amir, which was not as fixed as the land revenue. Each district and tribe had to furnish a specific number of troops for the Amir. Districts that failed to do so, commutation in money in lieu of the troops provided the Amir with another avenue of income. There was a mechanism for collecting the revenue as well. The headmen of each village were entrusted to this task, and land revenue was sometimes paid through the head of the tribe and often directly to the *hakim* (a governor or administrator) or his agents. The *hakims* also practised revenue farming and submitted their account statements once a year, which were passed through various officers before reaching the Amir. The King's primary expenditures are the remuneration of the military, the domestic staff, the court apparatus, and the clergy. The *mullahs* were paid either by *jagir* grants or cash salary directly from the Treasury. Apart from the last-mentioned expenditure, the Afghan Amir had to spend around half a crore rupee for the other heads.²⁰ Therefore, by the 1840s, Dost Mohammed established a proper mechanism for revenue assessment and collection.

Apart from streamlining the institution of revenue assessment and collection, Dost Muhammad attempted limited administrative centralisation. In the principality of Kabul, the Amir sought to consolidate the administration of justice. A *kotwal* used to direct the administration of police. Meanwhile, a *kazi* presided over the *Sharia* court and resolved disputes. Nonetheless, the resolution of all substantial matters was required to be presented to the Amir, who assumed direct responsibility for the administration of justice by exercising his prerogative to override the religious courts. He aimed to diminish the political power of the religious establishment through a calculated modification of the allowances previously designated for the mullahs by his predecessors.²¹ The Amir was also inclined to listen to the complaints of the common

populace and took measures for their redressal.²² Therefore, it can be said that Dost Mohammed attempted to garner popular support for his reign by resolving public grievances.

The Amir fostered interregional and international trade, issuing gold, silver, and copper coins to elevate the significance of Kabul and his dynasty within Afghanistan. All governmental and commercial dealings were carried out in Kabuli Kham rupees. He sought to systematise the chaotic customs framework of the country. By streamlining customs duties, Dost attempted to reduce the power of numerous chieftains who used to pay these charges to Kabul as per their will. The Amir also introduced further regulations concerning exports, imports, and goods in transit. These measures, aimed at ensuring a stable income from the trade routes connecting India, Kabul, and Central Asia, were managed by the officials appointed by the Amir.²³

To expand the financial base of his regime and to establish his authority on the different sections of Afghan society, Dost Muhammed forcibly collected outstanding taxes from the non-Durrani tribes who had discontinued their payments. The Hazara, Turi and other tribes were systematically obligated to fulfil their assigned tax responsibilities. The Suleiman Khels were forced to pay a tribute of one camel for every 40 soldiers to the Amir. At the same time, the Amir sought to establish a practical arrangement with the powerful and independent border tribes beyond his administrative control, nurturing friendly relations with the influential Mohmand and Yusufzai leaders. It appears that his motivations were influenced by two primary considerations: the interconnectedness of the defences of the border tribes and those of Afghanistan and a wish to prevent the establishment of an anti-Barakzai political coalition involving the transboundary tribes. He judiciously moved to assert his authority over the Durrani by levying taxes on their *hamsaya*²⁴. The Amir wished to set up a uniform taxation system to halt the increasing irregularities and abuses involved in collecting taxes.²⁵

The measures employed by Dost to consolidate his reign were visible to outside travellers. Dr. James G. Gerard was a part of Alexander Burnes's mission to Afghanistan in 1832. He commented that,

‘Kabul is rising into power under his republican spirit of government and I should say is destined to an importance... It is astonishing how much the country is relieved by the overthrow of the royal dynasty and with respect to the latest reigns of Timur's family.... In Shah Shuja's haughty career there was little security in all we most value, and robberies and bloodshed disgraced the precincts of his court. Dost Muhammed's citizen-like demeanor and resolute simplicity have suited the people's understanding; he has tried the effect of a new system, and the experiment has succeeded’.²⁶

It gives an idea of the apparent tranquillity established by Dost.

On the eve of the British-Indian Army's invasion during the First Afghan War, Dost Muhammad attempted to gain support on religious grounds against the GOI's candidate for the Afghan throne, Shah Shuja. He declared that Shuja was a puppet in the hands of the GOI, who were essentially infidels. Furthermore, he extracted a *fatwa* from the ulema of Kabul, which refuted Shah Shuja's claim to the throne. His son Muhammad Akbar Khan attempted to resist the British-Indian forces from entering the Khyber Pass. To this end, he received support from some prominent Pathan leaders from the Mohmand, Orakzai and Ghilzai tribes. However, the British-Indian Army eventually captured Ali Masjid, and Dost lost control of eastern Afghanistan. Later, he tried to resist the army of being *das* at Ghazni, strategically the most important location on the way to Kabul. He deputed two sons, Ghulam Hyder Khan and Mohammad Abdul Khan, to defend the city. However, it soon fell to the invading army on 23 July 1839. He fled Kabul when he realised the British-Indian Army would soon reach its gates. Nevertheless, he never left the political scene entirely and attempted to garner support to regain

his kingdom. Endeavours to gain assistance in Bukhara, Turkistan, and Hazarajat failed. But he received ample support from the Uzbek rulers of Kunduz and Tashqurghan and later from Kohistan. He took the field against the British-Indian Army for the last time at Parwan on November 2, 1840. After being defeated in the battle, he surrendered to the British envoy on November 4.²⁷

Shah Shuja, the GOI's candidate, ascended the Afghan throne on 7 August 1839. Consequently, the GOI increased its intervention in Afghanistan's political and economic affairs to secure and strengthen the reign of Shuja. Hence, the British-Indian Envoy, William Hay Macnaghten, was instructed to do away with the politico-social abuses that had long reigned supreme in the country. He was also directed to vigilantly watch over all the causes and instances of oppression and maladministration and interpose decidedly to introduce the requisite remedy. The GOI was desirous of introducing long-term reform in Afghanistan, and Macnaghten was to send reports of the work done to that end. By April 1841, Nizam-ud-Daula was appointed as a minister for the administration of the districts between Jalalabad and Ghazni. Furthermore, the practice of oppressive revenue farming was removed in Kandahar. The GOI was convinced that tranquillity in Afghanistan could only be preserved by a strong British force's presence and frequent employment.²⁸ Therefore, can it be argued that the GOI saw Afghanistan as a semi-military state protected by a garrison in 1840?

Due to its distance from Kabul and its proximity to Persia control of Herat has always been a headache for the Afghan Amir. Hence, the GOI deputed Major E.D. Todd on a mission to Herat in May 1839 to negotiate with the ruler Shah Kamran Durrani of the Sadozai dynasty, his wazir Yar Muhammad, and the chief officers of the state. The object was to secure Herat's friendly disposition toward Shuja. To that end, Todd was directed to ascertain the causes of Herat's dissatisfaction with the GOI even after receiving their aid. He was also instructed to impress upon the authorities in Herat to maintain an alliance with the GOI and enter into a treaty for

mutual security. The mission was to secure the rule of Shah Shuja, which was the aim of the GOI, and to fix the boundaries between the territories of Shah Shuja and Shah Kamran. A draft treaty was also prepared to be presented to Shah Kamran. The essence of the treaty was to maintain peace between Herat and the GOI. The latter agreed to recognise the former government and provide monetary and other aid in exchange for Herat's friendly demeanour to Shuja.²⁹

It is interesting to note that the GOI incorporated the Afghan tribal population into tribal militia during the First Afghan War. This is an essential method of population-centric COIN, as it gives them a stake in the country's ruling regime. To that end, the Bolan Rangers were created as a militia by enlisting Bolan tribes, chiefly of the Kakars and Brahuis. Macnaghten appointed Lieutenant Ogilvy as a subaltern to the corps of Bolan Rangers and proposed the appointment of Lieutenant Hammersley as second in command of the corps. Captain J.D.D. Bean, the Political Agent commanding the Bolan Rangers, remarked, 'The advantages derived in all civilized country by the formation of local corps are too conspicuous to need any remarks from my humble pen, and in a country like this, where the inhabitants are so little removed from a state of barbarism, no measure is better calculated to promote civilization than the formation of such in this neighbourhood'. Interestingly, the commander mentioned that the Kakars were wilder than the Brahuis. Nevertheless, both tribes provided valuable services and assisted small British contingents since September 1839 in minor tasks such as dragging guns in the Khojak Pass, tracking other tribal miscreants and resisting plunderers. The Bolan Rangers were continually employed in and from locations like Dadar and Kila Abdullah to perform tasks such as protecting camels.³⁰ The GOI's representatives in Afghanistan often raised smaller contingents for specific military purposes. For example, the Secretary of the GOI advised Macnaghten to raise a body of Afghan infantry not exceeding 200 in number to hold the Fort of Girishk.³¹ Therefore, it can be argued that since the First Afghan War, the GOI has

implemented an essential method of COIN aiming at the pacification of Afghanistan, which would come to be widely acknowledged by population-centric COIN theorists in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Despite the GOI's efforts to maintain order in Afghanistan and strengthen Shah Shuja's authority, different regional political figures denounced him as the Amir. Shah Shuja, in his address to the Governor-General, mentioned the peculiarity of Afghanistan. 'Every country and city has a different peculiarity. It is the peculiarity of the soil of this country that however strenuously I strive for their propensity and happiness; the inhabitants will not be roused to a sense of propriety save by punishment'. It is interesting to note that Shuja remarked that the Durrani leaders in Kandahar Were not happy with the new revenue administration imposed by the GOI with the help of the Amir. The Durrani complained of the injustice of the revenue manager. To suppress the Durrani intrigues in Kandahar against him, Shuja sent his Head of the *Hurkara* or the Afghan Postmaster-General. However, the latter sided with the rebels and instigated them. As previously mentioned, Dost Muhammad also propagated ideas of Islamic resistance against the 'infidel' invading army. The Governor-General assured Shuja that Macnaghten was authorised to aid the Afghan government by every means in his power.³²

Therefore, I argue that its regional politico-tribal leaders did not welcome the GOI's intervention within Afghanistan's political and economic fabric. Furthermore, the GOI miscalculated the authority Shuja commanded and the allegiance he could muster. Shuja could never command the loyalty of the diverse political and tribal leaders in Afghanistan due to the peculiar nature of the Afghan state, which was distinctly different from the Weberian state structure. This misapprehension was at the root of the flawed British-Indian attempt at strengthening the state in Afghanistan under the aegis of their preferred candidate, Shuja.

The GOI presumed that Dost's surrender would be the final act in the First Afghan War. Furthermore, apart from posting a contingent of British-Indian troops in the vicinity of the Ghilzai country, the entire country was expected to be tranquil as the opposition to the Shah's ascension to the throne was subdued. However, it has been claimed that a sufficient number of troops were not posted in Afghanistan, and instead of pacifying the hill tribes with ample allowances, good faith was not kept with them. Furthermore, too much confidence was placed in Shah Shuja's hold upon his subjects while unwed by the presence of a large army and vigilant political agents.³³

The Afghans plotted a large-scale insurrection against the British-Indian Army stationed in the country since early 1841. The principal figures were Sultan Muhammad Khan, the brother of Dost Muhammad Khan, who governed Peshawar and Kohat in the 1820s and 30s. Furthermore, there was Gul Mohammad Khan of the Ghilzais who, along with Sultan Muhammad, swore to drive the *kafirs* out of the country. The latter also reached out to a tribal leader, Mehtar Musa, and Nasur Khan of Kohat. The nerve centre of this incipient insurgency was the Zamindawar district, and they opened communication with the Ghilzais. The primary aim of the insurgents was to garner the support of the *Sardars* in Kandahar, which would have furnished them a centre of power against Shah Shuja in Kabul.³⁴

Major H.C. Rawlinson, the Political Agent in Kandahar, in February 1841, advocated simultaneous political and military manoeuvres to suppress this nascent insurgency at its bud. He requested the GOI to send a contingent of British-Indian troops from Kabul to Mukur and keep them on standby to deal with possible outbreaks in Ghilzai country. Furthermore, he suggested that Major E.P. Lynch visit the Ghilzais and ascertain their true motives. However, Macnaghten, the GOI's envoy at Kabul, expressed his limitations regarding available troops and thereby declined Lynch's request. Rawlinson also intercepted letters from Akhtar Khan to several discontented chiefs in Dehrawat, Nith and Tihirin. Based on this, he concluded that the

Zamindar insurgents had a Nexus with the leaders of Herat. The insurgency was given a religious character of 'holy war' against the infidel British rather than a combination to resist the oppressive measures of the officers entrusted with the revenue administration in Kandahar. Given the expanse of the insurgency, Rawlinson requested to reinforce the British-Indian Army's positions at Helmand and repeated his earlier request to take prompt military and political action. Rawlinson also expressed his suspicion that the Barakzai leaders would join the insurgents against the Sadozai Shah Shuja if the rumour of the arrival of Dost Mohammad spread in Siestan.³⁵

Notably, the British Envoy Macnaghten received considerable warnings regarding an impending insurrection in Kabul by the end of October 1841.³⁶ However, along with Alexander Burns, he believed that Afghanistan was settling down under Shah Suja's rule, supported by the GOI.³⁷ Such ideas represent the flawed understanding of the Afghan socio-political system by members of the British-Indian Politico military apparatus. Eventually, an insurrection broke out in Kabul in early November, and a mob murdered Burnes. Later, in December 1841, Macnaghten met his end at the hands of Dost Mohammed's son, Akbar Khan. The British-Indian columns started their fateful march from Kabul towards the Indian borders on 6th January 1842. Only a meagre number survived. The GOI decided to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan on 11 November 1842 after the army of retribution reached Kabul. Eventually, Dost Muhammad reclaimed his throne.³⁸

The First Afghan War effectively stymied Dost's pre-war modest reformatory measures and further strained Afghanistan's already fragile economy, particularly within the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar area. In January 1843, a French newspaper, *Journal des Debats*, mentioned that British-India '...introduced disorder and made war there for three years, and left anarchy which may last for ages'. It also criticised the demeanour of the British-Indian Army during the second half of the First Afghan War and claimed that the spirit of vengeance moved them. The Army

of the Indus was charged with inflicting atrocities in places like the village of Istalif, situated between Kabul and Charikar, Jalalabad and also in Kabul. The newspaper compared the French Army's campaigns in Algiers with those of their British-Indian counterparts in the First Afghan War. It claimed that the latter committed cruelties and excesses way beyond that of the French Army. Nevertheless, Joseph-Pierre Ferrier, a French traveller and the Adjutant-General of the Persian Army refuted several claims made by the newspaper. However, he agreed with the fact that the first Afghan War wreaked havoc within the socio-political metrics of Afghanistan and led to disorder.³⁹

Dost failed to undertake any comprehensive reforms in his second reign to bolster the initiatives he had previously initiated. Historians from Afghanistan, including Said Qasim Reshtia, contend that during Amir's two-decade reign, he secured political dominance over much of the country; however, he either lacked the initiative or the desire to leverage these advantages and implement significant reforms.⁴⁰ In this context, Christine Noelle argues that the consolidation of Dost Muhammad Khan's rule did not coincide with a parallel development of political and economic centralisation. The Amir's government structure reflected and extended the established power dynamics that had solidified throughout the Sadozai era. Dost Muhammad diverged from the practices of his Sadozai predecessors by diminishing the influence of the Pashtun elite in the administration of his government. Nonetheless, the consolidation of almost all administrative and military authority within his immediate family did not enhance his capacity to exploit local resources for cash and personnel. The allocation of provincial governorships and military divisions among the Amir's sons resulted in a degree of decentralisation comparable to, if not surpassing, that of the Sadozai era.⁴¹ However, given Dost's position, we must acknowledge the constraints he was operating under. It can be inferred that his dethronement by the GOI might have left a deep imprint on his mind. Hence, he

concentrated on augmenting his political and military strength rather than introducing further socio-economic reforms.

Similar to his first reign, Dost Muhammad attempted political consolidation after reclaiming the throne. The Ghilzais had earlier challenged the Amir's authority and tried to establish control over them. He also made a prudent diplomatic manoeuvre by signing a treaty of friendship through his son with the British Chief Commissioner of Punjab in Peshawar, which ensured the security of his eastern kingdom. Meanwhile, Kuhandil Khan, who held Kandahar, died, leading to a political vacuum in the city. Consequently, a power struggle commenced between the Kandahar *Sardar*. Dost capitalised on the opportunity and captured Kandahar in November 1855.⁴² In the 1850s, he also subdued several autonomous khanates in Northern Afghanistan, including Balkh, Kunduz, and Badakhshan.⁴³

Though the first Afghan War did not yield any positive political-military results for the GOI, Afghanistan never got obscured from their strategic calculations. In the 1850s, the GOI attempted to strengthen the Dost's regime through indirect means. When Persia captured Herat in October 1856, Dadin Jiji Lord Canning provided a considerable number of muskets and ammunition to the Afghan Amir and also provided him with a subsidy of 5,00,000 rupees. It was followed by an Anglo-Afghan Treaty the next year. Through this treaty, Dost received an additional Subsidy of 1,00,000 rupees per month and 4,000 muskets. In return, he accepted a British-Indian mission known as the Kandahar Mission, which was entrusted with supervising the expenditure for modernising his army. From August 1856 to October 1858, Dost received a considerable sum of 26,00,000 rupees from the GOI and military equipment and ammunition worth another 1,64,115 rupees.⁴⁴

The GOI's non-interventionist policy of constructive assistance towards Afghanistan yielded positive results for Indian security. Dost Muhammad's disposition towards the GOI during the

1857 mutiny was praiseworthy from the British perspective. Had Dost attempted to take advantage of the situation in India in 1857 and attacked Punjab from the West, the British-Indian Army would have had to lift the siege of Delhi to resist the Afghan invasion. This would have put the GOI in a precarious situation. Instead, Afghanistan remained an ally and a friend, which was invaluable to the GOI's Indian possessions.⁴⁵

During his interviews with Major Harry Lumsden and Lieutenant Peter Lumsden of the Kandahar Mission in 1857, Dost maintained that as a true believer of the faith, his duty was to 'sweep unbelievers from the face of the earth'. However, he was pragmatic enough to acknowledge that it was not possible and practicable. Therefore, he sought the GOI's support against Persia and remarked that 'having made an alliance with the British Government, happen what may, I will keep it faithfully till death'. His words were put into effect shortly. Excitement was spreading in Afghanistan regarding the rumours of a British defeat in the 1857 mutiny, and the ex-*kazi* of Kandahar Ghulam Khan, who was also the leader of the Kandahari brothers, declared that Amir's alliance with the British savoured of infidelity against Islam. Dost Mohammad immediately arrested this man and kept him in custody until he paid a considerable fine. Despite the strong measures of the Amir, he was constantly pressured by orthodox *mullahs*, such as the high priest Hafiz Ji, and his followers. Consequently, a *darbar* was held in Kandahar in September 1857. Dost was pressed upon to undertake a religious war against the British, supported by Afghan *Sardars* Sultan Mohammad and Pir Mohammad. However, wisdom prevailed through the intervention of his second son, *Sardar* Mohammad Azim. He reminded his father that failure in this risky venture would cost him his kingdom. Despite the pressures exerted on Dost Muhammad when dealing with the GOI, he tried his best to establish and maintain his authority. Therefore, we see that he requested the representatives of the GOI to make arrangements regarding the hill tribes, such as the Khybaris, only through him and engaged in what can be called diplomatic haggling. It is interesting because the

Khybaris have always maintained their independence. However, such claims were the Amir's efforts or at least his attempt to strengthen his authority.⁴⁶ Therefore, I argue that like many premodern empires, The orthodox ulemas in Afghanistan exerted considerable influence and pressure on the ruler, and Dost Muhammad tried his best to maintain the balance between his authority, the pressure from the orthodox elements, the centrifugal tribal forces and the two great powers at his frontiers.

In 1857, following the acquisition of Qandahar and various regions of Afghan Turkistan, Dost Muhammad Khan estimated his total revenue to be 3,008,800 rupees. He claimed to have derived 2,222,000 rupees from Kabul, 444,000 rupees from Qandahar, and 342,800 rupees from Turkistan. Therefore, it can be argued that he increased his revenue collection to a considerable extent in his second reign. It signifies the consolidation of the Amir's authority.⁴⁷ Consequently, the Afghan armed establishment expanded. In the 1850s, the Afghan Army had the strength of seventeen or eighteen regiments of regular infantry and three regiments of cavalry dressed, drilled, and equipped to imitate the British-Indian Army. The Afghan Army also wore discarded uniforms of their British-Indian counterparts, which they had bought from frontier stations. In addition to the regular troops, there were three or four regiments of irregular and a handful of artillery pieces, which numbered approximately 100. Interestingly, these brass guns were made in Afghanistan. Though the army's central command remained in the hands of the Amir, regimental commands were distributed among the royal family members and regional governors. However, they lacked military qualifications, and most could not dispense command. Like their uniforms, their arms were mostly derived from the British, which were old flintlock muskets or smooth-bore percussion guns. Notably, two grooved rifles and carbines were produced in limited numbers in Kabul and Kandahar. However, they face difficulties in the supply of percussion caps for them.⁴⁸ Therefore, it can be argued that the Afghan Amir was

slowly trying to augment the military infrastructure. We will see that later in the century, the number of Afghan soldiers and their arms and ammunition increased to a great extent.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that an increased strength in the army is a signifier of a state's increased authority only if it has a proper command mechanism imbued with a professional ethos. Else, an undisciplined army with decentralised command often acts as a centrifugal force rather than a centripetal one. Therefore, using the extensive Afghan militia was a double-edged sword for the Afghan Amir. On the one hand, the militias enthusiastically harassed and troubled the British-Indian Army when the tide of the battle favoured the Afghans. However, they were quick to disperse in case of trouble. Furthermore, beyond the battlefield, due to the lack of a centralised command mechanism and hierarchy, they owed their allegiance to the tribal chiefs as their immediate commanders. 'As a mass, they are little, if at all, under the control of the king or his government, and are, moreover, divided among themselves according to the opposing interests of their different tribes and clans.....Indeed, from the fact of there being more or less under the direct control of their own tribal Chiefs, they look to themselves as their real masters and accordingly espouse their cause, whatever it may be'.⁴⁹ Major Lumsden mentioned that punishment for infractions in the Afghan military was severe and 'fear alone prevented mutiny, the slightest symptom of which was punished by instant death without a shadow of a trial'.⁵⁰

Despite limitations, constraints, and challenges, the Afghan Amir improved the conditions of the Afghan Army. Therefore, the troops of the Afghan heir-apparent, *Sardar* Ghulam Haider Khan of Kandahar, appeared to Major Lumsden as a fine body of men when he inspected them in 1857-58. He even found them relatively equal in skill, drill and armament to any British-Indian corps serving at that moment. He mentioned that 'against such men our troops must be armed with something better than an old-pattern musket'.⁵¹ Notably, 80% of the Afghan revenue collection was spent on the army before the First Afghan War.⁵² Following the

conquest of Herat in 1863, the Afghan Amir's revenue extraction increased to almost 7,000,000 rupees, and more than 60% was allotted to the army.⁵³ I argue that since most of the revenue had to be spent by Dost Muhammad for his military infrastructure before 1840, Afghanistan became a quasi-garrison state⁵⁴. Military augmentation was required to consolidate political authority and fend off the pressure of external powers. However, a very meagre amount of revenue remained to be spent in any other domain, significantly hindering the growth of civil infrastructure. It, in turn, limited the state's capacity to penetrate the society. However, in his second reign, due to an uninterrupted rule of almost twenty years, Dost Muhammad could increase his revenue collection to a great extent. A significant amount of revenue compared to that in the 1840s remained in his hand to be spent in other areas.

In this context, a letter by Major Lumsden of the Kandahar Mission to the Governor-General in 1857 becomes quite relevant. He mentioned that 'My diaries will have shown your lordship that, up to this date, everything has gone smoothly with our party, and that the Afghans have everywhere evinced the strongest inclinations to show us respect and win our good opinions. This is the effect of direct orders from the Amir, who appears to have a much firmer hold of his people than we have hitherto given him credit for, and certainly the general safety of the roads has completely taken me by surprise.

People go about their ordinary avocations unarmed, while travellers pass up or down, by day or night, in the most perfect confidence. His system appears to be to divide the country among his sons, allowing each to govern his district in his own fashion, but holding him responsible for its tranquillity, the Amir himself being accessible to the meanest of his subjects, whose complaints are frequently listened to'.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, Christine Noelle argues that the revenues flowing into the royal treasury were trivial compared to the taxes gathered locally by the provincial governors. Furthermore, all the

revenue-assessed areas did not generate constant income. The peripheral regions of Dost Muhammad's domain exhibited a heightened propensity to resist governmental interference.⁵⁶ An all-encompassing authority remained a chimera for Dost Muhammad. It has been argued that Dost Muhammed never intended to implement fundamental reforms. His accomplishments during the second reign remained limited to the political unification of Afghanistan, the establishment of relative internal stability, and the maintenance of a standing army. He made minimal contributions to enhancing the health standards of the country. No educational or cultural achievements are documented during Dost Muhammed's rule. In contrast to Timur Shah, his court did not present itself as a cultural centre and experienced no notable structural changes; it maintained its resemblance to a tribal jirga.⁵⁷

Dost Muhammad's last crucial political act was the annexation of Herat in 1863, which brought the entire country under Barakzai rule. He systematically extended his political hold over most of Afghanistan but failed to institute meaningful reforms to the administrative framework established during the Sadozai period. Like his Sadozai predecessors, the Amir's capacity to exert direct influence was primarily confined to the districts that formed the core of his realm. Alongside the integration of new factions like the Tokhis into the framework of governmental control, his wealth was predominantly amassed from the regions surrounding Kabul and the key trade routes emanating from his city.⁵⁸

The Impact of the Second Afghan War on the Afghan State

One of Dost Muhammad's sons, Sher Ali, ascended the throne at his father's death in 1863. The first chapter details his diplomatic exchanges with the GOI and the prelude to the Second Afghan War. The Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar and later the British Envoy at Kabul, Major N. Cavagnari, held that Amir Sher Ali's rule was markedly oppressive and that misgovernment reigned supreme in Afghanistan. Interestingly, Sher Ali did not experience a

revolution or popular demonstration of any kind, and Cavagnari held that the principal reason was the want of a leader to organise and direct any such movement. The Amir prudently employed men with no family influence as governors in principal provinces. Afzal Khan was the only exception at Kandahar. Furthermore, these governors also had no significant personal ambition. On the other hand, the chief appointments in the army were conferred on men of no great social position, such as Hussain Ali Khan, Safdar Ali Khan, and so on. These men fully recognised that the retention of their posts depended entirely on the Amir. Therefore, Sher gave these men a stake in his rule. He also attempted to garner the support of the Afghans by creating religious excitement along the British-Indian frontier in preparation for a holy war after the closing of the Peshawar Conference in 1877. However, the Amir was unsuccessful in this endeavour because the Akhund (an Islamic scholar or religious leader) of Swat openly declared that Sher Ali was trying to auction himself to the highest bidder of the two European powers, the British and the Russians. Therefore, it can be seen that Sher Ali could muster little support behind his position as Amir.

Consequently, he turned to the British and then the Russians to gain support for his rule. As the first chapter shows, when the GOI failed to deliver Sher's demands, he made a complete overture to the Russians. Cavagnari held that in the face of Russian expansionism in Central Asia, the GOI's best bet on the Afghan throne was the current Amir Sher Ali, given the authority (although limited) he had in Afghanistan. Cavagnari identified that several governors and military generals of strategic locations in Afghanistan, such as *Sardar* Umar Khan at Herat and Ghulam Haidar Khan at Dacca, were also loyal to Sher. However, if he maintained a stance against the interest of the British-Indian government, a passive-aggressive policy of diplomatic manoeuvres backed by a threat of military demonstration was advocated.⁵⁹ However, I argue that though this understanding of the internal political situation in Afghanistan was correct, the solution prescribed was flawed. Given the nature of the Afghan tribesman and the idea of

legitimacy and authority in Afghanistan, an Amir established on the throne with the support of an invading foreign army could not give rise to a sustainable state system. This policy did not recognise the existence of diverse political actors in Afghanistan, as well as the multilayered stakeholders such as the tribal bodies and the religious leaders. Without addressing their aspirations, the GOI thought of aiding the military-political consolidation of the Afghan monarch. However, this understanding and the methods proposed were flawed. Because the concept of legitimacy in Afghanistan is very different from the Western standard. Politico-military authority in Afghanistan depended on the support of power groups such as tribes and ulemas to a great extent.

Tribal groups in Afghanistan's marginal areas resisted incorporation into state systems, owing to their egalitarian social structures and strong kinship ties. These tribes often unified in the face of external threats yet fractured internally once the threat diminished. The rugged geography and limited economic resources allowed these groups to maintain autonomy and resist state authority effectively. Thomas Barfield examines the changing nature of legitimacy in the nineteenth century, particularly during the Anglo-Afghan Wars. The British attempted to impose their own rulers, believing that elite politics alone would ensure stability. However, they underestimated the growing involvement of the Afghan population in the resistance against foreign invasion. The First and Second Afghan Wars demonstrated that external occupation could provoke widespread resistance, transforming the population from passive subjects to active participants in shaping political legitimacy.⁶⁰

Henry Walter Bellew, a British medical officer with years of experience working in Afghanistan, held that there were three prominent claimants to the Afghan throne after Amir Sher Ali. They were *Sardar* Abdullah Khan, the youngest son and nominated heir-apparent of the Amir. Next in line was *Sardar* Yakub Khan, Sher's second surviving son. Lastly, there was *Sadar* Abdur Rahman Khan, the eldest son of the late Amir Muhammad Afzal Khan. Abdur

Rahman was the eldest of the three. Although first in line, Abdullah had a delicate constitution and did not present himself as a strong monarch before the Afghans. Nevertheless, both Abdullah and his mother were well inclined towards the British. Meanwhile, Yakub Khan stood very high in the estimation of the Afghans and was brave, a victorious soldier, and proved to be a firm ruler. Altogether, he was the most popular of the young chiefs in Afghanistan. However, he was imprisoned due to his rebellion against the Amir. Bellew held that the severity of his imprisonment increased public sympathy for him. Yakub also had the support of a strong party both in Kabul and in Herat because of the popularity and reputation he gained between 1866 and 1869 while fighting to reinstate his father on the throne. Lastly, Abdur Rahman was considered a good soldier and an able governor and was generally popular amongst his own tribesmen. However, he did not have many followers in the country as a whole, and as he had been living on the bounty of the Russians in Turkey for several years, his acceptance in Afghanistan was reduced to some extent. Interestingly, Bellew concluded that neither of the claimants could maintain the Afghan government without material aid and countenance from abroad.⁶¹

Shirali also attempted to streamline his revenue administration like his predecessor. Analysing his revenue collection and expenses for the army unveils a familiar pattern. Obtaining the exact figures of revenue extraction by the Afghan state and the other avenues of its income and expenditure on a yearly basis is extremely difficult as a meagre number of such official documents have survived. Therefore, we have to come to an approximate figure by comparing the income and expenditure of the Afghan state within a decade.

Table 5.3

The following table depicts the income and expenditure of the Afghan state in the 1870s.

Approximate Income	Provinces		Amount (in Rupees)	Approximate Expenditure	Provinces	Amount (in Rupees)
	Kabul (1877-78)	Land Revenue and other charges payable with revenue: 34,84,180 Rupees	44,78,858		Kabul, 1874	52,31,239 (The expenditure for the army did not include the expenses for the Afghan troops at Herat, Kandahar, and Turkestan)
		Extractions from Kabul City by sales and forms of taxes and rights to recover dues: 8,89,215 Rupees			Kandahar	6,98,000
		Fines and forfeitures in the Kabul provinces: 1,05,463 Rupees			Jalalabad	2,60,056
	Kandahar		15,93,970		Herat	7,45,510
	Jalalabad		6,97,038			
	Herat		7,66,395			
	Pusht-i-Rud, including		4,60,680			

	Zamindawar and Girishk			
	Total income of the Afghan State	79,96,941		Total expenditure of the Afghan State
Approximate total surplus: 10,62,136 Rupees				

Source: Income and Expenditure of the Kabul State, FDP, Secret Supplement, January 1880, Progs. No. 542, NAI, New Delhi.

It can be seen that after the expenses, Sher Ali was left with a minimal amount in the treasury to invest in social developmental projects. Notably, out of the total expenses, around 60% (approximately 38,20,000 rupees) was allocated for the maintenance of the Afghan troops, including the pay of the regular army and irregular levies, arsenal expenses, and the cost of uniforms. It is pretty similar to the second reign of Dost Muhammad. To put things into perspective, if we compare the revenue extraction of the Afghan state with other premodern states in South Asia, we will see that the former lagged far behind in its revenue resources compared to the latter. The revenue extracted by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 was 30,17,96,864 Rupees or 1207,18,76,840 Dams.⁶² Therefore, even almost 170 years ago, the Mughal Empire could extract nearly forty times the revenue than the Afghan state. Limited extraction of Afghan revenue hindered the expansion and consolidation of the state authority. Due to the looming threats of external invasion, Sher Ali had to expand his military administration, worsening the situation even further.

Table 5.4

The following table represents the strength of the Afghan Army before the Second Afghan War.

Type of Troops		As per Police Report, No. 27, 1877	Total Strength	As supplied by General Daud Shah and furnished by Major-General Roberts	Total Strength	
Regular Troops	Infantry	62 regiments	37,200	58 ¹ / ₂ regiments	35,100	
	Cavalry	16 regiments	9,600	16 regiments	9,600	
	Artillery	306 guns (including elephant batteries, mule mountain batteries, bullock batteries and horse artillery)		273 guns (72 guns lacked gunners)		
Irregular Troops	Foot levies	8,000	24,000 men	25 <i>dastas</i> and 31 men	2,531 men	
	Mounted levies	16,000		-		

* The strength of a regiment was 600 men

* The strength of a *dasta* was 100 men

Source: From Sir Frederick Roberts to A.C. Lyall, Secretary to the GOI, FD, dated 1 December 1879, Progs. No. 2, Foreign Secret Supplement, NAI, New Delhi; Papers Connected with Kabul Affairs Sent to Secretary of State, December 1878, Progs. No. 245, Foreign Secret Supplement, NAI, New Delhi.

Sher Ali 'dedicated his life and soul' to modernising the Afghan Army. He was the first Afghan ruler to organise a large regular army. The Amir induced the royal princes to serve the army to popularise it.⁶³ After visiting India in 1869, Sher Ali planned to modernise his army. His scheme was aided by the cordial relationship he had with the GOI. Consequently, he received a siege train consisting of four 18-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers, a mountain battery of six guns, 5000 Snider rifles, 15000 Enfield rifles and no less than 1,000,000 rounds of ball ammunition. Therefore, since Dost Muhammad's time, the GOI continued its policy of supporting the Afghan regime with weapons. Lieutenant Naval Chamberlain, the Extra Assistant Political Officer in Afghanistan, drafted a report that manifests the rapidity with which guns were manufactured in Afghanistan, rifles were imitated, and many cartridges were produced. He also employed gunsmiths to manufacture brass guns and gave them advance to learn the craft from Peshawar. Therefore, he attempted to improve the gun-making technology in Afghanistan, striving for self-reliance. There were initial challenges to producing artillery pieces in Afghanistan; however, with perseverance, Sher Ali could create a very small-scale proto-industrial structure in Afghanistan that could produce iron guns, which the British-Indian gunners hailed. A small number of brass guns for mountain batteries were also produced. The old ornaments available in Afghanistan were broken up, and the new guns were cast in the Bala Hissar Arsenal. At the same time, the boring and polishing was done at Deh-i-Afghan watermills. Gunpowder was also abundantly available in Kabul as the Aamir employed six contractors to produce the quantity needed. Each mill could produce two *maunds* of gunpowder a day, and the total production in time of emergency reached even 1000 lbs. A notable improvement in the military administration of Sher Ali was the introduction of a clothing department tasked to produce equipment for his soldiers, such as proper uniforms.⁶⁴ I argue that the reform in the Afghan military was reflected in the first two engagements in the Second

Afghan War, where the Afghan gunners fired efficiently on the British-Indian troops in the Battle of Ali Masjid and Peiwar Kotal.

Despite Sher Ali's endeavours, his envisioned military modernisation faced a number of challenges. Firstly, the gunpowder produced in Afghanistan was inferior to the British-Indian standard, as the Afghans could not understand the process of glazing, which strengthened the composition of the gunpowder. Furthermore, the shorts and shells of the guns were copied from the specimens brought from India; however, they could not manufacture and use time fuses. It was only during the Second Afghan War that attempts were made to manufacture fuses in the Bala Hissar without success. Complicating the situation further, the Afghan copies of the British Sniders and Enfield Rifles met many difficulties. Though a Kabuli Gunsmith, Qutubuddin, produced around 2,000 Sniders and 8,000 Enfields in the Bala Hissar Arsenal, these were imperfect and mostly malfunctioned. Besides the technological constraints, Sher Ali's military organisation lagged far behind the British-Indian standards. Due to the lack of proper military education, efficient commanders, Commissariat and technical officers, he could not effectively expand his army.⁶⁵

The GOI's Police Reports ascertained that during a war with the GOI, most of the Afghan troops would either defect to the British-Indian side or disperse. Though Amir's books recorded many irregular soldiers, it was ascertained that only 8,000 were kept during peacetime. However, this branch of service was highly elastic. In the hour of trouble, every headman and chief of every clan or tribe was called upon and made to furnish levies. The artillery was considered the most important branch of the army and received the best pay. In the late 1870s, the Amir received munitions of war from Russia. In 1878, the GOI received reports that the Russians presented 14,000 muskets with ample ammunition to the Afghan Amir. There were also suspicions that the Afghan passes were armed by Russian artillery sent from Samarkand. Hence, it can be seen that in terms of arms and ammunition, the Afghan Army was primarily

dependent on supplies from either India or Russia. In this respect, the Afghan state lacked the crucial ability to manufacture standardised munitions of war. This inability stemmed from the lack of revenue, technological backwardness and the limited centralisation achieved by the Afghan state. It denied the Afghan Amir the opportunity to monopolise the means of violence and thereby consolidate his powers. The Afghan Army was posted in strategically important locations such as Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat, Kurram, Balkh and Maimana.⁶⁶ However, tribal communities, mainly in the frontiers, remained outside the sphere of the Amir's authority and their affairs were settled by the elders through *jirgas*. Thus, within the autonomous communities in rural areas, anarchy and order co-existed, and the government intervened only when the general order of the kingdom was disrupted.⁶⁷ I argue that the Afghan state lacked efficient and extensive policing capabilities. Therefore, the Amir had limited control over areas without army garrisons. His 'parcellised sovereignty' stemmed from the geographical division of the country and the state's restricted access to economic resources.

Finally, challenges in military recruitment also hindered the Army's efficiency. Sher Ali urged the Muhammadzais and his aristocracy to take up martial service, but they showed little interest. Apart from that, there were very few Durrani and Zirk Pashtuns or minorities in the army as they had taken part in the rebellion of 1863-69 and were considered to be disloyal to the throne.⁶⁸ The Afghan militia, mostly the Ghilzais, were believed to possess martial skills but didn't perform well under restraint, and the Amir knew he couldn't control these forces. Thus, Sher Ali could never command a national army in the Western sense. Tribal communities, mainly in the frontiers, remained outside the sphere of the Amir's authority and their affairs were settled by the elders through *jirgas*. Thus, within the autonomous communities in rural areas, anarchy and order co-existed, and the government intervened only when the general order of the kingdom was disrupted.⁶⁹ Though Sher regarded the irregulars of Afghanistan as a useful buffer against the British, these elements started to veer away once the British-Indian

forces entered the country due to the lack of cohesion, discipline and drill. Due to the ethnic rivalry, there was very little cooperation among the regiments recruited from different localities. Moreover, the infrequent and irregular pay to the soldiers encouraged desertion.⁷⁰ These two factors proved to be a significant hindrance to the effectiveness of the Afghan troops. To strengthen his army in the face of foreign threats, the Amir levied four Kabuli rupees on each male in 1878. But it led to a general discontent.⁷¹ Thus, fighting the war caused Sher Ali to lose whatever authority and popularity he had gained.

When the British-Indian Army penetrated the Afghan borders during the first phase of the Second Afghan War, Sher Ali left Kabul and sought political and military assistance from the Russian Empire. He perished at Mazar-e Sharif while attempting to reach the Russian border, bequeathing the kingdom to his son, Mohammad Yaqub Khan. Yakub Khan professed friendship with the GOI, and the Treaty of Gandamak was signed at a *darbar* in Kabul. Consequently, Louis Cavagnari was received by the Afghan Amir as a British-Indian resident in Kabul.⁷² By leaving Kabul, Sher Ali significantly undermined his political authority, and politico-tribal fractions subdued under his centralisation drive resurfaced. Yet again, an Afghan monarch's attempts at limited centralisation and expansion of the state apparatus came to a halt due to foreign intervention.

The Treaty was generous from the British side as the Amir didn't formally lose any territory. Kurram Valley, Sibi and Pishin came under the protection and administrative control of the British Government. The control of the Khyber and Michni Passes remained in British hands. The foreign policy of Afghanistan went into the hands of the British, and a British representative had to be accepted in Kabul. Yakub Khan received an annual subsidy of six lakhs of rupees and a guarantee of protection against external aggression.⁷³

Seen from the British perspective, peace was achieved; thus, the forces operating in Afghanistan were preparing to return to India, and honours and medals were being awarded, little aware of the inner intricacies of the Afghan social psyche. Louis Dupree has shown that the Afghans considered Gandamak a “Condemned Treaty”,⁷⁴ as the British would maintain their presence in districts like Zhob, Loralai, Pishin, Quetta, etc. This event significantly undermined Yakub's authority in the Afghans' eyes. Thus, the whole British enthusiasm for leaving Afghanistan in friendly hands was shattered spectacularly, and the British-Indian forces, instead of returning to India, were to operate in the country for another year and a half.

“...I thought that peace had been signed too quickly, before in fact, we had instilled that awe of us into the Afghan nation which would have been the only reliable guarantee for the safety of the Mission. Had we shown our strength by marching to Kabul in the first instance, whether opposed or not, and there dictated the terms of the treaty, there would have been some assurance for its being adhered to; as it was, I could not help feeling there was none, and that the chances were against the Mission ever coming back.”⁷⁵

These are the words of General Roberts just after the conclusion of the Treaty of Gandamak and Cavagnari's selection as the British envoy in Afghanistan. He held that the Afghans were not decisively defeated. Despite the triumph over the Afghan regulars at Ali Masjid and Peiwar Kotal, they never faced severe loss. Thus, the people around Kabul, at Balkh, Ghazni, Herat, etc., considered themselves undefeated and, more importantly, capable of facing the British-Indian Army. The defeat of the Afghan regulars at the opening round of the campaign was not seen as the defeat of the whole army. Instead, numerous tribes, with their freedom-loving nature and almost no acknowledgement of the state system, considered themselves outside the sphere of British influence. Roberts' anxiety was thus based on firm grounds, and his worst nightmare soon became a reality.

Early in the morning of Friday, 5 September 1879, news reached the GOI that the British-Indian Residency in Kabul was attacked yesterday by three Afghan regiments who had mutinied for their pay. Later, they were joined by a portion of six other regiments.⁷⁶ The Amir Yakub Khan sent a letter explaining the situation. He remarked that the troops assembled at Bala Hissar for their pay suddenly broke out into mutiny and assaulted the British Residency. Troops from outlying cantonments and the common populace of Kabul joined them. Yakub also mentioned that he tried to protect the residency but failed.⁷⁷

In his telegram to the Governor-General, Cavagnari had earlier mentioned reports of rebellious behaviour of the Herati Regiments lately stationed at Kabul. Cavagnari himself considered the reports to be “alarming”. Revolts also broke out in Turkestan and Badakshan. At Herat, the officers lost control of the Kabul and Kandahar Regiments. The whole country was descending into anarchy. Lord Lawrence was another figure who shared Roberts’ premonition regarding the future of the British Mission and cried in vain, “They will all be murdered, every one of them”⁷⁸, and he believed that India’s relation with Afghanistan would only yield negative consequences for the latter. In contrast, Lytton considered the Treaty of Gandamak as the beginning of a sound and rational policy and thought that Cavagnari would successfully bring Afghanistan under British influence. It manifests the flawed understanding of the Afghan polity by the authorities of the GOI. Lytton’s enthusiasm was shared by many in the British Ministry.

Mr. Christie, the Political Officer of Kurram, informed the Secretary to the GOI in September 1841 that the real cause of discontent among the Afghan regiments was the presence of a British Mission in Kabul. After procuring their arms, the Afghan troops did not pounce on the officers of the Amir, to whom they demanded their payment, but instead rushed to the British Residency. The common masses of Kabul probably were also cynical about the mission and, hence, joined the ranks of the mutineers.⁷⁹ Colonel Henry Hanna, in this context, has opined that the presence of the British Mission couldn’t fulfil the hopes it evoked. The Afghans

perceived the mission's presence as a sign of the shifting authorities from the Amir to the agents of the GOI. Cavagnari represented the wealth of the British Empire to the Afghans, but not its power, and somehow, the Afghans considered him their actual paymaster. It is strange to note Cavagnari's own pessimism about the gloomy prospect of the Mission, which he never made apparent to the governmental circle. When he left for Kabul, he told his close friends that he might never return from his mission.⁸⁰

The written statements of Jellal-ud-din Khan, who brought the first news of the assault on the Residency at Ali Khel and his servant Mirza Niyaz Tajik of Panjsher, give us a glimpse of the events on that fateful day. According to their statements, three of Amir's regiments from Herat returned to Kabul and encamped at Bala Hissar. Their pay was due, and when they were offered one month's pay, they refused it and demanded their arrears. Then they assaulted their officers, pillaged the armoury and made a rush for the palace. When they found the gates of the palace closed, their rage had befallen the Residency.⁸¹ *Sardar* Wali Muhammad, in his memorandum, said, '(From the very) first day the Amir arrived at Kabul from Gandamak, he preached to the people and counselled them, that he and they being Mahomedans and the faithful, should, night and day, endeavour to keep in view the policy of religious war. He sent letters on the subject in all directions'. The Wali claimed that the Amir instructed the Herati troops to wage a holy war against the British in Kabul.⁸² Nakhshband Khan stated that while marching in order on the streets of Kabul, the Herati troops abused the Envoy and asked him about his purpose in coming to Afghanistan. They also talked about murdering Cavagnari and condemned the Kizilbashs due to their inactivity against the British Mission. Wali Muhammad also said that when three of the six Herati Regiments asked for their three months' salary, the Amir denied that on the ground that "...they didn't perform any service or any religious act, or protect the honour of this country....", so they rushed against the Residency saying that they would now engage in a religious conflict.⁸³ I argue that these various statements point to the complete breakdown of

political authority in Kabul and the grievances of the Afghan soldiers as well as the common Afghans towards the British mission. Furthermore, similar to the first Afghan War, the Amir had resorted to religious orthodoxy to oust the invaders and garner support.

The political officer at Kurram, Mr Christie's report, opens up a new trajectory by claiming that the massacre of the Residents preceded Eid, and it took place within the month of Ramzan. He also remarked that religious excitement was at its height, and the Amir might have been called upon to assume his position as head of the military power of Islam, the commander of the faithful, or to be proclaimed an unbeliever and treated accordingly. Had that been the case, the Amir would have had no other option but to flow in the stream of religious fanaticism.⁸⁴ Finally, Wali Muhammad informed the GOI that three of the Herati Regiments who had attacked the Residency were later deputed to Kohistan after being paid three months' wage.⁸⁵ It is difficult to ascertain if the Afghan Amir was complicit in the massacre of the British Resident and his escorts. However, it can be said that Sher Ali's efforts at state formation got derailed with the onset of the Second Afghan War. Yakub Khan yielded next to no authority in Kabul as he ascended the throne with the help of an invading army.

Following the massacre at Kabul, disturbances broke out in Turkestan against Afghan General Ghulam Haider Khan. The Kabuli troops at Herat also mutinied, demanding arrears. Three Afghan regiments were sent to Ghazni to collect revenue. But they deserted *en masse* after receiving the news of the massacre. Moreover, the people of Afghanistan who used to pay revenue to the Amir refused to make any payments to the collectors. These, without doubt, uphold a picture of a complete breakdown of political order and the authority of the Amir. A member of the GOI's Survey Department, Mr G.B. Scott's conversation with a mullah months after the event revealed that Kabul's orthodox religious elements had provoked the Kabul commoners to rise against the British. The mullah also mentioned that some Afghan troops held that Cavagnari had the authority to pay them, so they rushed to the Residency.⁸⁶ Therefore,

it can be inferred that the political order in Kabul was very confused and that Yakub Khan did not command the allegiance of the Afghan Army and became a prisoner of political upheaval and religious orthodoxy. Consequently, Yakub Khan abdicated the throne, left Kabul and surrendered to General Roberts.⁸⁷ The GOI was trying to conclude their second campaign in Afghanistan as soon as possible in 1880. Therefore, they negotiated with Abdur Rahman to take the Afghan throne.

An important claimant to the throne in 1880 was Ayub Khan, a brother of Yakub. Ayub's centre of power was Herat. However, his authority was not unquestionable. In September-October 1879, GOI received news that some Kabuli regiments at Herat had mutinied and killed their general, Fakir Ahmad. When Ayub tried to disarm them, they resented and refused to march unless their arrears were given. It was also reported that the Kabuli soldiers had made him a prisoner.⁸⁸ On 26 November 1879, the political officer at Kandahar informed the GOI that the soldiers were putting pressure on Ayub to attack Kandahar and, in return, would abandon their demand for arrears. There were also numerous reports regarding the tussle between the Kabuli and the Herati troops.⁸⁹ This points to the fact that the minimal Afghan military organisation established by Sher Ali had utterly fallen apart. On 22 January 1880, disturbances again broke out in Herat, and Ayub was imprisoned while Abdul Kazi Khan assumed authority. In the face of a rumoured Persian invasion of the city, Ayub used Islamic sentiments as a cementing factor among his troops to do away with the faction fights. He proclaimed a *jihad* against the foreigners similar to the Afghan Amirs before him. Hence, on 22 March, the political officer at Kandahar reported that Yusuf Khan of Farah had been writing seditious letters to all the chiefs of Zamindawar, earnestly inciting them to rise against the British and declaring that Ayub Khan was ready to commence a *ghaza*.⁹⁰ Ayub had to supplement his loss of political authority with a force that would bind the different factions in a primitive society. Hence, he resorted to the call of *jihad*. The regular troops of Ayub gave him a choice between paying their arrears or

marching to Kandahar.⁹¹ They probably hoped to gain fortunes in Kabul as spoils of war. Yakub Khan at Kabul and Ayub Khan at Herat were both captives in the hands of their armed forces (though the contexts were quite different).

The two Afghan Wars significantly undermined the nation's already tenuous economy, especially the urban sector. The demographic and economic conditions of Kabul and the Kandahar region experienced a notable decline; the province of Herat likewise endured considerable material damage. The modest achievements of Amirs Dost Muhammed and Sher Ali were foiled. The unfortunate state of Afghanistan is perhaps best illustrated by the poignant expressions of Yakub Khan. In a letter to Major-General Frederick Roberts, Yakub Khan remarked, 'Afghanistan is ruined; the troops, city, and surrounding country have thrown off their yoke of allegiance. Daud Shah is not expected to recover; all his attendants were killed. The workshops and magazines are totally gutted - in fact, my kingdom is ruined. After God, I look to the Government for aid and advice'.⁹²

Before the First and Second Afghan Wars, the Afghan state mustered enough strength to keep the internal centrifugal forces at bay. However, due to the destabilising effects of the wars, the centralising tendencies took a hit, and non-state actors, such as local chiefs, accrued power. Eventually, they took over the resistance against the invaders, weakening the state structure and fuelling the conflict between the Afghan Amir, tribal chieftains, and religious establishment.⁹³

The Reconstruction of Afghanistan

The reign of Abdur Rahman Khan, known as the "Iron Amir," marked the beginning of the first substantial and organised endeavour to restructure the country. The new Amir took over a

country weakened by war and foreign dominance and shattered by internal strife throughout its history. The urban economy was weakened, while the rural economy and trade networks faced continual threats from tribal plundering and incursions. The power of the Afghan central government, which was already limited, had been taken over by feudal landlords and tribal chieftains. At the same time, the religious establishment had assumed a more prominent role in the daily lives of the Afghan people. The work for the new Amir became all the more challenging because his authority was yet to receive any definite recognition from the many *Sardars* in the country. Dealing with these centrifugal forces was a major challenge for Abdur Rahman.⁹⁴ He understood the situation and commented that ‘...every priest, mullah and chief of every tribe and village considered himself an independent King, and for about 200 years past, the freedom and independence of many of these priests were never broken by their sovereigns. The Mirs of Turkestan, the Mirs of Hazara, the chiefs of Ghilzai were all stronger than their Amirs, and, so long as they were the rulers, the King could not do justice in the country. The tyranny and cruelty of these men were unbearable’.⁹⁵

Abdur Rahman invoked divine sanction for his kingship to solidify his authority. His predecessors, such as Dost Muhammad and Sher Ali, used Islam or Islamic Jihad as a tool against foreigners only in times of emergency. However, Abdur Rahman invoked Islamic authority from the beginning of his reign.⁹⁶ He deftly used the theme of imminent external danger and the need for national unity within a religious framework. He announced himself to be the protector of Islam and the saviour of Afghanistan from the rule of "infidel and foreign" forces. In a royal proclamation issued in 1887 in the context of the Ghilzai rebellion, Abdur Rahman emphasised the Anglo-Russian threat and the internal strife among the Afghan people. He did this by invoking the Afghans' sense of patriotism, Islamic zeal, and xenophobia. The need for national solidarity was articulated in the following words:

‘The country of Afghanistan is a mere spot under the compass of two infidels. This is quite apparent. And it is closely besieged; yet although imprisoned men are always thinking of their release, you are indifferent to your bonds. Although you suffer embarrassment at their hands, you think the present circumstances quite satisfactory. But they will not leave you there. One from the east and the other from the west will by various artifices possess themselves of our country. Before the people they will say, ‘who are senseless, that they intend to take Hindustan?’ They disbelieve in the saying that the country of God is not circumscribed, and they consider Afghanistan as their passage and lull us in the sleep of the hare’.⁹⁷

Therefore, Abdur Rahman rallied the support of the divergent elements within Afghanistan. Interestingly, his xenophobic propaganda was carried out in tandem with a successful negotiation with the GOI. He was willing to forge a friendly, mutually beneficial relationship with the GOI. Abdur Rahman also expressed how he attempted to align the interests of the various Afghan tribes with those of the GOI.⁹⁸ As a result, he received considerable monetary and military aid from the GOI.

Table 5.5

The following table shows the arms and ammunition provided to Amir Abdur Rahman by the GOI.

Arms and Ammunition Presented to the Afghan Army in the Nineteenth Century			
Since Abdur Rahman’s Accession Up till 1883			
Artillery	Shells and Shots	Small Arms	Small Arms Ammunition
20 pieces of ordnance	8,886 rounds (including common shells, shrapnel,	5,500 Enfield rifles and Cavalry Carbines	4,682,950 rounds of Snider, Enfield,

(Including 6, 9 and 12-pounder howitzers)	case and round shots)		Brunswick, musket balls etc.*
Arms and Ammunition Presented to the Amir after the Rawal Pindi Darbar of 1885			
12 pieces of ordnance, including S.B. Guns and R.M.L. Guns	960 rounds	30,000 rifles and carbines (Enfield, Snider and Martini-Henry)	9,000,000 rifle ammunition
In addition, gunpowder equivalent to 25,00,000 rounds of blank muzzle-loading ammunition was also provided. Moreover, 28 pieces of ordnance and 14,000 rounds were given expressly for the fortification of Herat.			
Arms and Ammunition Presented to the Amir in 1887-88			
Machine guns	Machine gun ammunition	Small arms ammunition	The Amir was permitted to purchase the following weapons
14 two-barrelled Gardner machine guns with carriage and 56 sets of harnesses.	140,000 rounds	4,000,000	4,112 Martini-Henry rifles
			4,000 Muzzle-loading rifles with bayonets
			700 Cavalry carbines
			110 Artillery Carbines
			4,221 Revolvers
			And 9,000,000 rounds of ammunition (including 3,700,000 unloaded rounds)
In total, including 12 Hotchkiss guns, there were 86 pieces of ordnance, 40,000 rounds of ammunition for the artillery, 45,000 rifles and carbines, and 26 million rounds of small-arms (including machine-gun ammunition) ammunition.			

Source: Lieutenant W.R. Robertson, *Note on the Afghan Army: Compiled from Information Supplied by the Afghan Boundary Commission and Other Sources* (Simla: Government Central Printing Office, 1893) in Strength, Distribution and Armament of the Afghan Army, dated 10 January 1893, Progs. No. 227, Foreign Secret-F, NAI, New Delhi.

* In addition to this, 1000 unloaded 'Express Cartridges' were also sent to Kabul at the request of the GOI's Agent in Kabul, *Sardar* Muhammad Afzal Khan, to be presented to the Amir. Notably, since the Amir requested these cartridges, the GOI's Foreign Department's Registrar expedited manufacturing them with a special request to Messrs R. B. Rodda in Calcutta.⁹⁹ Moreover, when the Afghan Amir stopped the British-Indian agent Afzal Khan's subsidy, the GOI instructed him not to take up this matter with Abdur Rahman and advised him to accept any subsidy that the Amir would press upon him.¹⁰⁰ Such efforts by the GOI depict their sincerity in maintaining a cordial relationship with Amir Abdur Rahman.

Interestingly, the number of arms and ammunition presented to the Amir after 1883 was significantly higher than before. I argue that there was a substantial shift in the British-Indian policy towards the Afghan state since the mid-1880s. The GOI now endeavoured to strengthen the administration of Amir Abdur Rahman with much more commitment and dedication. Such a policy modification stemmed from the experiences in the Second Afghan War and the advancement of the Russian Army towards Afghanistan. It has been mentioned in the first chapter that since the second half of the nineteenth century, the GOI started looking at the NWF as the last line of Defence for British-India. Instead of greater intervention in Afghanistan, they strengthened it with money and materials. Besides providing arms and ammunition, the GOI gave a 1,00,000 rupees monthly subsidy to Abdur Rahman.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Afghanistan became an aid-receiving state in the late nineteenth century.

When Russia pierced the northern borders of Afghanistan and captured Panjdeh in 1885, the GOI advocated the policy of fostering and preserving the strength of Afghanistan as an

independent principality. Since Russia would take every advantage of Afghan domestic problems in extending its powers, the GOI strived to undo any political upheavals in Afghanistan. The GOI supported the claim of Abdur Rahman and furnished him with large subsidies of money and munitions of war, which enabled him to firmly establish himself on the throne after a brief struggle with his cousins for the position of Kandahar.

By 1886, Abdur Rahman had raised a regular army, which was estimated at 60,000 men of all arms. The GOI furnished him with some rifles and a siege train to be placed in the fortifications of Harat. When Amir's health deteriorated to some extent in the mid-1880s, it was advocated that the GOI should strive to guarantee his son's undisputed and smooth succession to the throne after him. Moreover, if Ayub Khan attempted to take Kandahar, the British-Indian Army would oppose his advance at once and hold Kandahar to give the new Amir some time to establish himself on the throne firmly.¹⁰²

As mentioned before, Amir Sher Ali's flight from the throne during the Second Afghan War disintegrated his armed organisation. Abdur Rahman took up the task of modernising the army, which came to be organised according to the British model. A scrutiny of the army's composition shows that the Ghilzais comprised most of the infantry. However, Parsiwans and Kizlibashs were prominent in the cavalry. Meanwhile, the Turkistan Army was primarily recruited locally. The Uzbeks were numerous in the infantry, and the Hazaras were also enlisted. Despite attempts by Abdur Rahman to reorganise the army, the problem with the lack of proper command mechanism and the officer corps remained. It was reported that the officers did not have much control over their men, and the practice of harsh punishment continued. Abdur Rahman's Military forces were also largely supplemented by local levies of horse and foot (*khassadar*). The mounted levies mainly were the retainers of great chiefs. The Amir granted two 100 Kabuli Rupees a year for each horseman. In return, the trooper had to maintain his mount and arm and avail himself of service whenever the army required. Writing in 1886,

Colonel P.J. Maitland remarked that the army's condition under Abdur Rahman was not much better than that of Sher Ali. The Afghan military possessed a rudimentary knowledge of drills but was utterly ignorant of tactics. Nevertheless, he concluded that the Afghan Army 'contains good stuff both in men and material and if the Amir would allow it to be trained by British officers it might one day do him good service'.¹⁰³

By the 1880s, magazines for the army were established in Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif. When Maitland visited the latter place, he was informed that 700 men were employed there who produced smooth-bore guns, muzzle-loading muskets, swords, and bayonets of every description. Furthermore, any breech-loading rifle could be repaired there, and ammunition could be produced, but not rapidly. Saddlery and strong, serviceable gun carriages were also manufactured in Afghanistan. Regarding the armament of the Afghan Army, there was not much difference between the days of Sher Ali and Abdur Rahman. The artillery continued to be an essential arm of the Afghan Army, having six guns in each battery. Interestingly, the Amir procured some machine guns, mostly from the GOI.¹⁰⁴

Table 5.6

Strength and Distribution of the Afghan Army in 1892

Divisions	Cavalry	Infantry	Khassadars	Guns
Kabul	3,572	15,180	1,000	-
Kandahar	846	6,256	2,000	-
Herat	470	4,968	800	72
Turkestan	1,786	6,736	900	-
Not known	376	-	-	288

Total	7,050	33,140	4,700 (This number was considered to be incorrect, and the real strength was probably around 10,000)	360
-------	-------	--------	--	-----

Source: Lieutenant W.R. Robertson, *Note on the Afghan Army: Compiled from Information Supplied by the Afghan Boundary Commission and Other Sources* (Simla: Government Central Printing Office, 1893) in *Strength, Distribution and Armament of the Afghan Army*, Progs. No. 227, February 1893, Foreign Secret-F, NAI, New Delhi.

Table 5.7

Strength of the Afghan Army in Afghan Turkestan and Badakshan in the late 1880s.

Strength of the Afghan Army	Regular Infantry	Regular Cavalry	Irregular Cavalry	Khassadars	Guns	Remarks
In Afghan Turkestan (Posted in locations such as Maimena, Sar-i-pul, Akcha, Balkh, Takht-i-pul, Naibabad etc)	8 battalians	5 regiments	2,000	35 companies (<i>bairak</i>)	61 manned by 1,000 gunners. (The guns included mountain guns, heavy guns, field and siege batteries)	A total of 13,996 men, out of which 8,380 were regulars
In Afghan Turkestan	4 regiments	10 troops		13 <i>bairak</i>	25 (The guns included mountain guns, screw guns,	The strength of infantry regiments was between 600 and 700 each, and each

					and horse artillery)	troop of cavalry had 100 men. Meanwhile, a bairak of Khassadars contained 100 men. Hence, the total strength was around 5,000, excluding the gunners.
--	--	--	--	--	-------------------------	--

Source: Strength of Afghan Troops in Turkestan and Badakhshan, IOR/L/PS/18/A70, APAC, BL, London.

The regular infantry and cavalry were recruited from among the Kabulis, Afghans living in Hashda Nari, and other tribes residing in Afghanistan. The irregular cavalries consisted of Khawanins and Mulkis. The Afghan governors in different provinces mostly acted as the commander of the troops in that region. In terms of armament, the Afghan troops in Turkestan and Badakhshan used an array of weapons. The Ardal Battalions posted in Mazar in Turkestan used Russian Berdans and Sniders. The Berdans were bought in Samarkand in 1884, while the Sniders were procured from Kabul in 1885. The Khassadars were mostly armed Enfield Rifles. Nevertheless, some of them carried locally produced flintlocks and matchlocks. The cavalry carried smooth-bore carbines and swords. Only a handful of infantry had Martini-Henries. The artillery consisted of smooth-bore brass guns of different calibres.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, it can be argued that Abdur Rahman failed to create a standardised system of weapon manufacturing, relying primarily on British or Russian-made weapons. In contrast, the East India Company in India

standardised arms and ammunition manufacturing, which gave them an edge over the local powers. Furthermore, the organisation of the Afghan Army was still feudal in nature.

Nevertheless, Amir Abdur Rahman's reign of twenty-one years, from 1880-1901, witnessed considerable attempts at centralisation. The Amir did not attempt to dismantle the tribal chieftaincy or the religious institution. His measures aimed to restructure both groups to guarantee their obedience to the central authority and loyalty to him. The centralising policies encompassed the coercive subjugation of all regions previously possessing a measure of autonomy and the imposition of taxes on landowners who had been exempt or reluctant to comply. Furthermore, Abdur Rahman started the enforcement of conscription across all tribal factions. Most importantly, he introduced the complete eradication of local dispute resolution mechanisms. They now came to be supplanted by Shari'a courts, whose procedural rules were formulated by the Amir himself and whose officials he appointed personally.¹⁰⁶

It has been previously mentioned that the tribes functioned as a decentralising force in Afghanistan, which was an important obstacle in the Amir's consolidation of authority. Abdur Rahman used coercion and conciliation simultaneously to deal with the tribal problems. On the one hand, he used military measures against the Shinwari tribes, and on the other, he employed negotiated means like matrimonial alliance bribes to strengthen his ties with non-Afghan ethnic groups. To this end, his measures were similar to the British-Indian Army's COIN techniques. He also very cleverly exploited the rivalry between the Durrani and the Ghilzais to suppress the rebellion of the latter. Moreover, Abdur Rahman took the help of religious injunctions against them, and the rebel leaders were often put to the gallows.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the Shia Hazaras rebelled in 1888. To suppress this rebellion, the Amir appealed to the orthodoxy of the Sunni Muslims and garnered huge support. He appealed to the patriotism of the Afghans and evoked the memories of the Durani Empire's greatness. He also very shrewdly invited tribal leaders in Kabul and subsidised them to tame their antagonism. Simultaneously, he destroyed

their strongholds in the countryside. Apart from achieving political consolidation in his regime, Abdur Rahman instituted a number of administrative, legal, and economic reforms. He streamlined provincial administration, systematised government record keeping, and established a general consultative assembly. Furthermore, he also established new judicial courts and strengthened the police force, which was necessary to exert social control. He understood the importance of economic prosperity and encouraged trade and commerce.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile, the GOI refrained from direct intervention in the affairs of Afghanistan's affairs. However, certain matters of contestation existed between them. In 1896, the Durand Commission established a common border between India and Afghanistan without consulting the Afghan Amir. Therefore, many in the Afghan government did not recognise the border.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, to effectively control the NWF, the GOI took extensive steps to expand its railway network in the tribal territories. This issue emerged as a bone of contention between the GOI and the Amir as Abdur Rahman strongly resisted the expansion of the British-Indian railway network to Afghanistan.¹¹⁰ In all probability, the Afghan Amir was sceptic regarding the railway expansion because he feared it would open up his country for rapid invasion by the British-Indian Army.

By the end of his reign in 1901, the Amir Successfully achieved Afghanistan's political, economic and administrative unification. He also pacified tribal resistance, curtailed the power of religious orthodoxy and modernised his army. However, his fiscal and administrative reforms were not backed by long-term changes in the socio-economic sphere. Therefore, the Afghan economy did not improve much. Though he successfully pacified the centrifugal forces, the features within the Afghan society did not evaporate, and it stood as a hindrance in modernising Afghanistan.

Abdur Rahman was succeeded by his son Habibullah Khan. Rather than depending on his father's authoritarian tactics, Habibullah sought to expand his influence by ameliorating the tense ties between the monarchy and the Afghan tribes, favouring collaboration over compulsion. He alleviated the system of mandatory military conscription and established a Council of State to manage tribal matters, duly acknowledging the desires and interests of tribal chiefs. Despite adopting these changes, Habibullah continued many of his father's reformist policies. However, he intervened in the areas where Abdul Rahman lagged behind. Habibullah understood the importance of improving Afghanistan's infrastructural capacity and public health and education. To that end, he took measures to import Western technology into his country, established centres of education, and attempted to modernise health care in Afghanistan. The Amir also improved the country's road network to facilitate trade and commerce. Interestingly, like his father, Habibullah was against the extension of British-Indian Railway networks to Afghanistan.¹¹¹

Meanwhile, the GOI continues to subsidise the Afghan Amir as a pretext to maintain a cordial relationship with him. To this end, the GOI's Foreign Secretary, Louise Dane, was sent to Kabul to negotiate with Habibullah in 1904. It came to be known as the Dane Mission. In 1905, Dane and Habibullah signed a treaty which reaffirmed the subsidy arrangement established in 1893. This treaty was important for Afghanistan in two respects. Firstly, Habibullah received 4,00,000 pounds as arrears for his subsidy, and the GOI implicitly guaranteed the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Secondly, the Afghan Amir asserted his authority vis-a-vis the GOI through this treaty. Hence, the latter was refused trade concessions. Moreover, the GOI's attempts to introduce railway networks in Afghanistan were also thwarted. Therefore, to the GOI, the Dane-Habibullah Treaty appeared as a renewal of the Durand Agreement. British sentiment about the Dane-Habibullah Treaty was polarised. Some believed that the Amir, by imposing his own terms, had terminated Afghanistan's role as a buffer state. Some said that the

pact was a prudent measure that did not compromise Great Britain's essential interests. However, the critics of the treaty were eventually pacified by the Amir's 1907 tour to India, which strengthened Anglo-Afghan relations and significantly influenced Amir's choice to maintain neutrality throughout World War I. Habibullah preserved the nation's neutrality throughout World War I against vigorous attempts by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and a German military expedition in 1916 to secure Afghanistan's allegiance.¹¹² Therefore, I argue that rather than military intervention in Afghanistan, political conciliation and economic aid guaranteed Afghan neutrality during the 1857 Mutiny and the First World War, two of the most important defining moments of the British Empire in India.

Habibullah's successor, Amanullah, was anti-British and broke faith with the GOI by invading British-Indian borders in May 1919, initiating the Third Afghan War.¹¹³ However, it was a short war, and the British-Indian Army soon drove the Afghan forces back. The war ended with the signing of a peace treaty between GOI and the Afghan Amir on 8 August 1919.¹¹⁴ Amanullah remained the Afghan Amir till 1929, and Afghanistan recognised the Durand Line.¹¹⁵

Conclusion:

Despite the Amirs' attempts at reforms throughout the nineteenth century, the Afghan government remained incapable of governing the whole country directly. Instead, it governed only important cities and regions where military contingents were deployed. Tribal communities, particularly in border areas, enjoyed autonomy and resisted the imposition of state authority. Tribal matters were resolved mainly through *jirgas* in accordance with the norms of Sharia and *Pashtunwali*. Historical context, social customs, and Islamic principles endorsed loyalty to the Amir; nonetheless, the relationship between him and his people remained personal rather than institutional. Consequently, loyalty to their successors was not

inherently bestowed; the successor needed to earn it. Hence, tribalism and feudal tendencies restricted the Afghan state's authority.

Despite these constraints, the Afghan Amirs attempted to expand and strengthen the state apparatus throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the First and Second Afghan Wars had a negative impact on the Afghan state. Due to a flawed understanding of the Afghan socio-political structure, the GOI attempted to impose authority from above in Afghanistan without success. Instead, when allowed to develop independently, the Afghan state system registered limited centralisation and expansion of its authority with the help of subsidies and other aids. Hence, the GOI's policies were not entirely negative and some of its aspects aided the growth of the Afghan state system. This understanding of the uniqueness of the Afghan state system is relevant even today. The US and coalition forces failed to comprehend the uniqueness of the Afghan state and left Afghanistan unceremoniously in 2020-2021. Therefore, the narrative of state-building in Afghanistan through direct military intervention needs to be reworked.

¹ Bob Jessop, "The State and State-Building" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, eds. R.A.W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder, Bert A. Rockman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.111-114.

² Hobbes and Rawls as quoted by Christopher W. Morris, "State Coercion and Force" in *Social Philosophy and Policy*, vol. 29, issue 1 (2012), pp. 28 – 29.

³ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 16-37, 67-86; Hendrik Spruyt, "War and State Formation: Amending the Bellicist Theory of State Making", in *Does War Make States? Investigations of Charles Tilly's Historical Sociology*, eds. Lars Bo Kasperen, Jeppe Strandsbjerg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 73-97.

⁴ Patrick Riley, "Social contract theory and its critics" in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, eds. Mark Goldie, Robert Wokler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 347-368.

⁵ Jessop, "The State and State-Building", pp.111-117.

⁶ Barnett R. Rubin, "Political Elite in Afghanistan: Rentier State Building, Rentier State Wrecking", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1992), pp. 77-79; Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (1995; reprint, London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 9, 12-14, 19.

⁷ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 110-111.

- ⁸ T.R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998), pp. 3-4; Kaushik Roy, *Frontiers, Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies in South Asia, 1820-2013* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015), p. 15.
- ⁹ Ashraf Ghani, "Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society in Afghanistan: 1880-1901", *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1978), p. 269.
- ¹⁰ Ghani, "Islam and State-Building", pp. 270-271.
- ¹¹ Moreman, *Frontier Warfare*, p.4.
- ¹² Kaushik Roy, *Frontiers, Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies in South Asia* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015) pp. 1-9; Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans 1500-2013* (New Delhi: OUP, 2015), pp. 1-12.
- ¹³ Gates, Roy, "State in Afghanistan", pp. 5-6.
- ¹⁴ Scott Gates, Kaushik Roy, "Introduction: Armies, Warfare and the State in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans" in *War and State-Building in Afghanistan: Historical and Modern Perspective*, eds. Scott Gates, Kaushik Roy (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 1-4.
- ¹⁵ Robert Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War; How and Why They Fight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 9.
- ¹⁶ Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War*, pp. 1-38.
- ¹⁷ Roy, *Frontiers*, p. 1.
- ¹⁸ Gates, Roy, "State in Afghanistan", pp. 5-6.
- ¹⁹ Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan* (1997; reprint, London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 15-16.
- ²⁰ Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and Its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary and India; Comprising A View of the Afghaun Nation and A History of the Dooraunee Monarchy*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), pp. 258-261.
- ²¹ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (California: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 78.
- ²² John Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1857), pp. 122-123.
- ²³ Lal, *Amir Dost Mohammed*, vol. 1, pp. 233-236.
- ²⁴ Smaller tribal divisions of clans who seek protection from a larger tribal group.
- ²⁵ Godfrey Thomas Vigne, *A personal narrative of a visit to Ghuzni, Kabul, and Afghanistan, and of a residence at the court of Dost Mohamed, with notices of Runjit Sing, Khiva, and the Russian expedition* (London: Whittaker & CO., 1840), pp. 105-107, 230-240; Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab & Kalat, During a Residence in those Countries*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1844), pp. 140-143; Kaye, *War in Afghanistan*, vol. 1, pp. 121-122.
- ²⁶ Gerard, James G. "Continuation of the Route of Lieut. A. Burnes and Dr. Gerard from Peshawar to Bokhara", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* vol. 2, no. 1 (1833), pp. 2-3.
- ²⁷ Noelle, *State and Tribe*, pp. 43-45.
- ²⁸ From T.H. Maddock, Secretary to the GOI, Secret Dept to Sir W.H. Macnaghten, Envoy and Minister at Kabul, dated 5 April 1841, no. 392, in Secret Foreign, Kabul, consultation no. 47, dated 5 April, NAI, New Delhi.
- ²⁹ From The Envoy and Minister at the Court of H.M. Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk Forwarding Letter of Instructions to Lieutenant Todd, with Draft of Treaty with Herat, and Letter to Shah Kamran, and Authorising Extra Allowance While of This Duty, dated 21 August 1839, consultation no. 36, Foreign Secret, Kabul, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁰ From the Envoy and Minister at Kabul forwarding Copy of a Despatch from the Political Agent in Shawl, Containing Suggestions for the Reorganization of the Bolan Rangers on a More Efficient System. Recommends the Fortification of Kirta, and Alludes to the Employment of Lieutenant Ogilvy in the Bolan Pass, dated 5 April, consultation no. 48-49, Foreign Secret, Kabul, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³¹ From T.H. Maddock, Secretary to the GOI, Secret and Political Department to Macnaghten, dated 5 April 1841, no. 391 in Foreign Secret, Kabul, 5 April 1841, consultation no. 89, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³² The Envoy and Minister at Kabul Forwards with His Observations, a Khurreetah to the Address of the Governor General Together with an Abstract Translation of the same regarding the Chaoosh Bashee or Head of the Hurkaru Establishment in Foreign Secret, dated 12 April, consultation no. 45-46, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³³ J.H. Stocqueler, *Memorials of Affghanistan: Being State Papers, Official Documents, Dispatches, Authentic Narratives, Etc.* (Calcutta: Messrs. Ostell and Lepage, 1843), p. 139
- ³⁴ From Macnaghten to Maddock, dated 24 February 1841, in Foreign Secret, Kabul, dated 5 April 1841, consultation no. 54-55, NAI, New Delhi.

- ³⁵ Correspondences written by Major H.C. Rawlinson, Political Agent at Kandahar to various political and military personalities like Macnaghten, Major-General W. Nott, Lieutenant E.K. Elliot, in Political Charge, Girishk in Foreign Secret, Kabul, dated 5 April 1841, consultation no. 56-65, NAI, New Delhi.
- ³⁶ Roy, *War and Society*, p. 84.
- ³⁷ Florentina Sale, *A Journal of the First Afghan War*, ed. Patrick Macrory (1969; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 9.
- ³⁸ Roy, *War and Society*, pp. 84-87.
- ³⁹ J. P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), pp. 374-380.
- ⁴⁰ Gregorian, *Modern Afghanistan*, pp. 80-81.
- ⁴¹ Noelle, *State and Tribe*, pp. 288-289.
- ⁴² Noelle, *State and Tribe*, pp. 241-43.
- ⁴³ Gregorian, *Modern Afghanistan*, pp. 80-82.
- ⁴⁴ Noelle, *State and Tribe*, pp. 244-50.
- ⁴⁵ Notes by Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan on our future policy in Afghanistan, IOR/L/PS/18/A71, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁴⁶ General Sir Peter S. Lumsden, George R. Elsmie, *Lumsden of the Guides: A Sketch of the Life of Lieut.-Gen. Sir Harry Burnett Lumsden, K.C.S.I. C.B., With Selections from His Correspondence and Occasional Papers* (London: John Murray, 1899) pp. 137-138, 187-188, 219-221.
- ⁴⁷ Noelle, *State and Tribe*, p. 273.
- ⁴⁸ H.W. Bellew, *Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan, in 1857, Under Major Lumsden, With an Account of the Country and People* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1962), pp. 42-44.
- ⁴⁹ Bellew, *Journal of a Political Mission*, pp. 43-45.
- ⁵⁰ Lumsden, Elsmie, *Lumsden of the Guides*, pp. 162-163.
- ⁵¹ John Martineau, *The life and correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1895), p. 229; Bellew, *Journal of a Political Mission*, pp. 241-244.
- ⁵² William Hough, *A narrative of the march and operations of the Army of the Indus in the expedition into Afghanistan in the years 1838-1839* (Calcutta: W. Thacker and CO., 1840), p. 288.
- ⁵³ Noelle, *State and Tribe*, p. 276.
- ⁵⁴ The concept of garrison state is used to describe a country where military power dominates political authority and significantly influences various aspects of society, economy, and governance. In a garrison state, the government prioritises defence and security concerns above all else, often at the expense of civil liberties, democratic institutions, and civilian oversight. This can lead to a society that is highly militarised, with military leaders or institutions playing a prominent role in decision-making. Political scientist Harold Lasswell popularised the term in 1941, using it to predict how some states might evolve under pressures like external threats or internal insecurity. Garrison states often maintain a constant war footing, where national resources are directed towards the military, and citizens may be expected to sacrifice personal freedoms for the sake of national security. See Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005).
- ⁵⁵ Letter from Major Lumsden to Lord Canning, dated 23 April 1857 in Lumsden and Elsmie, *Lumsden of the Guides* (London: John Murray, 1899), pp. 152-153.
- ⁵⁶ Noelle, *State and Tribe*, pp. 273-275.
- ⁵⁷ Gregorian, *Modern Afghanistan*, pp. 80-82.
- ⁵⁸ W. Wilson, Resident, Persian Gulf, sends "Masson's Journal" to Charles Norris, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, dated 11 September 1830 in *Selections from the Travels and Journals Persevered in the Bombay Secretariat*. ed. George W. Forrest (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1906), pp. 104-106; Lieutenant James Sutherland Broadfoot, "Reports on parts of the Ghilzai country and on Some of the Tribes in the Neighbourhood of Ghazni and on the Route from Ghazni to Dera Ismail Khan by the Ghwalari Pass", Royal Geographical Society, Supplementary Papers 1, part 3 (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street), pp. 154-163; H.W. Bellew, *Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan, in 1857, Under Major Lumsden, With an Account of the Country and People* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1962), p. 175.
- ⁵⁹ Memorandum of Afghanistan by Major Cavagnari, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, dated 29 July 1878, Foreign Notes, progs. no. 1123, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶⁰ Thomas J. Barfield, "Problems of Establishing Legitimacy in Afghanistan", *Iranian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2004, pp. 263-293.
- ⁶¹ H W Bellew, Confidential Memorandum on The Afghan question, dated 26 Jul 1878, IOR/L/PS/18/A126, APAC, BL, London.
- ⁶² Edward Thomas, *The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India, From A.D. 1593 to A.D. 1707: A Supplement to the Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli* (London: Trubner & CO., 1871), pp. 49-50.

- ⁶³ M. Hassan Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan, 1863-1901* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 16-17.
- ⁶⁴ Howard Hensman, *The Afghan War of 1879-80* (London: W.H. Allen & CO., 1882), pp. 320-326.
- ⁶⁵ Hensman, *The Afghan War*, pp. 324-328.
- ⁶⁶ Papers Connected with Kabul Affairs, December 1878, progs. no. 245, Foreign Secret Supplementary, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁶⁷ Kakar, Afghanistan, p. 22
- ⁶⁸ Robert Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 98-99.
- ⁶⁹ Kakar, Afghanistan, p. 22
- ⁷⁰ Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War*, p.102
- ⁷¹ Kakar, Afghanistan, p. 19
- ⁷² Roberts, Forty-One Years in India, pp. 353-369; Roy, *War and Society*, p. 193.
- ⁷³ Robson, *The Road to Kabul*, p. 111
- ⁷⁴ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 425.
- ⁷⁵ Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India*, p. 380
- ⁷⁶ Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India*, p. 383
- ⁷⁷ From Lytton to Cranbrook, progs. no. 202 of 1879, Foreign Secret Supplementary, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁷⁸ Hanna, *The Second Afghan War*, pp. 20-25.
- ⁷⁹ From A. Christie to A.C. Lyall, Foreign Secret Supplementary, Kabul Affairs, progs. no. 317, October, 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁰ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, p. 184
- ⁸¹ From Lytton et al, to Cranbrook, progs. no. 202 of 1879, Foreign Secret Supplementary, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸² Memorandum of Sardar Wali Muhammad Khan, Foreign Department, Secret Supplementary, Kabul Affairs, progs. no. 199 of October, 1879, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸³ *The Second Afghan War 1878-80*, pp. 183-185.
- ⁸⁴ From Christie to Lyall, progs. no. 317 of October, 1879, Foreign Secret Supplementary, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁵ Memorandum of Sardar Wali Muhammad Khan, progs. no. 199 of October, 1879, Foreign Secret Supplementary NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁶ Hanna, *The Second Afghan War*, pp. 31-33.
- ⁸⁷ Roy, *War and Society*, p. 107.
- ⁸⁸ Intelligence Regarding the Movements of Sardar Ayub Khan, Foreign Secret Supplementary, Kabul Affairs, August 1880, progs. no. 134, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁸⁹ To Secretary to the GOI from Primrose, MDP, progs. no. 12180, December 1880, NAI, New Delhi
- ⁹⁰ From Primrose to the Secretary to the GOI, MDP, progs. no. 12180, December 1880, NAI, New Delhi
- ⁹¹ Kabul Affairs, Secret Supplementary, August 1880, progs. no. 134, NAI, New Delhi.
- ⁹² Letter from the Amir to General Roberts, dated 4 September 1879 in Field Marshal Lord Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1901), pp. 388-389.
- ⁹³ Ghani, "Islam and State-Building", pp. 270-271.
- ⁹⁴ Angus Hamilton, *Afghanistan* (Boston: J.B. Millet Company, 1910), pp. 223-224.
- ⁹⁵ Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan, *The Life of Abdur Rahman: Amir of Afghanistan*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1900), p. 217.
- ⁹⁶ Munshi, *Abdur Rahman*, vol. 2, pp. 80.
- ⁹⁷ Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman* (London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1895), pp. 248-249.
- ⁹⁸ Complimentary letters from the Amir of Afghanistan to Marquis of Ripon and Earl of Dufferin and the latter's invitation to His Highness to visit India, progs. no. 15, March 1885, Foreign Frontier-A, NAI, New Delhi
- ⁹⁹ Present of 1000 Express Cartridges to the Amir, progs. no. 12-19, June 1883, Foreign-A, General-E, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰⁰ Discontinuance of the subsistence allowance made to the British Agent at Kabul by the Amir, progs. no. 12, April 1883, Foreign A, General-E, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰¹ Statement Showing the Manner in Which the Several Instalments of the Subsidy of His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan for the Year 1887 Were Ordered to be Paid, progs. no. 18, November 1888, Foreign Frontier-A, NAI, New Delhi.
- ¹⁰² Notes by Sir Robert Sandeman, IOR/L/PS/18/A71, APAC, BL, London.
- ¹⁰³ Lieutenant W.R. Robertson, Note on the Afghan Army: Compiled from Information Supplied by the Afghan Boundary Commission and Other Sources (Simla: Government Central Printing Office, 1893) in Strength, Distribution and Armament of the Afghan Army, dated 10 January 1893, progs. no. 227, Foreign Secret-F, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁴ Note on the Afghan Army, dated 10 January 1893, progs. no. 227, Foreign Secret-F, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁵ Afghan Troops in Turkestan and Badakhshan, IOR/L/PS/18/A70, APAC, BL, London.

¹⁰⁶ Ghani, "Islam and State-Building", pp. 271-272.

¹⁰⁷ Munshi, *Abdur Rahman*, vol. 2, pp. 12-14; Sir Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan and Co. LTD, 1940), pp. 190-191.

¹⁰⁸ Gregorian, *Modern Afghanistan*, pp. 132-142.

¹⁰⁹ Andrew M. Roe, *Waging War in Waziristan: The British Struggle in the Land of Din Laden, 1849-1947* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010), p. 3.

¹¹⁰ Munshi, *Abdur Rahman*, vol. 2, pp. 60, 77, 208-209.

¹¹¹ Gregorian, *Modern Afghanistan*, pp. 181-205.

¹¹² Angus Hamilton, *Problems of the Middle East* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909), pp. 256-257; Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, vol. 2, p. 222; C. Collin Davies, *The Problems of the North-West Frontier, 1890-1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. 167-168; Robert Strausz-Hupe, "The Anglo-Afghan War of 1919", *Military Affairs*, vol. 7, Issue 2, 1943, p. 89.

¹¹³ Strausz-Hupe, "Anglo-Afghan War", p. 92.

¹¹⁴ Roy, *War and Society*, pp. 127-128.

¹¹⁵ Michael Barthorp, *Afghan Wars and the North-West Frontier 1839-1947* (1982; reprint, London: Cassell, 2002), p. 157.

Conclusion

The British-Indian way in warfare in the Indian frontiers was, in many respects, different and distinguishable from the British way in warfare, as conceptualised by Basil Liddell Hart or David French. The direct-indirect dichotomy has been the primary analytical tool for scholars to explain the way in which the British waged war. The bone of contention is between indirect naval manoeuvres backed by economic measures and a more direct continental commitment, which entailed military deployment on the European mainland. Therefore, this concept restricts itself to the grand strategic realm, failing to delve into other intricacies of warfare, such as tactics, logistics, command and its impact on state structures. On the other hand, the German way of war, as conceptualised by Robert Citino, focuses mainly on warfare techniques such as tactics, technology, and logistics. However, it does not straddle the sphere of strategy and state formation. The notion of the British-Indian way in warfare on the Indian frontiers, as introduced in this thesis, brings together these diverse aspects of the British-Indian Army's warfare to paint a holistic picture.

The strategic significance of the British-Indian Army's military operations in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier extends beyond the region, attaining global relevance. It saw the application of both diplomatic and military means in ensuring the security of British-India. The British Imperial anxiety, a palpable tension that permeated the era, was expressed through the British government and the GOI's strategy considerations regarding the region, which stretches up to central Asia. NWF is usually seen as an area where the British-Indian Army conducted COIN operations, and the GOI implemented political measures to administer the region directly or indirectly. However, the global significance of the region has been expressed by the GOI's global strategical thinking regarding the tribal belt as the last line of defence for British-India

since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The GOI employed an indirect diplomatic approach and direct military intervention in tandem. Therefore, it is distinct from the Eurocentric concept of a British way in warfare, which is expressed through the binary of direct and indirect approaches. The GOI's military operations against the indigenous powers in the mainland of India, such as Mysore or Maratha, never attained a global significance as their frontier operations. The primary aim in devising their diplomatic, military and global strategy was to ensure the security of their Indian possession. A sense of vulnerability underlined the GOI's administration and exerted considerable influence on its strategic thinking regarding Afghanistan and the NWF. To resist the Russian steamroller to reach the Indian frontier, it was aimed to devise a strategy that would incur the least cost while securing the frontier. The British-Indian diplomats played a crucial role in this context, collecting critical intel regarding Russian advances and other regional powers such as Persia, often fuelling the GOI's anxiety. A multiplicity of opinions in the British and British-Indian politico-military apparatus underlined the GOI's plan to defend India. Consequently, its approach also evolved through time. Initially, the focus was on diplomacy, gradually shifting towards a hybrid diplomatic-military approach, finally transcending to a militaristic defence mechanism. Hence, the strategic realm of the British-Indian way in warfare is a blend of indirect and direct approaches and, therefore, unique.

The tactical thinking of the British-Indian Army's warfare in the region under discussion evolved with the impact of the environment, technological progress, imperial racial ideas, and the nature of the resistance they encountered. It also manifested an effective learning mechanism that characterised the British-Indian military establishment and the efficiency of their training, drill, and discipline efficiency. The GOI had to conduct both conventional and unconventional warfare beyond the Indus. On the one hand, they fought against Afghan regulars; on the other, they had to tame the tribal fighters. The nature of the resistance they

offered to the invading army varied to a great extent. Consequently, the tactical thinking of the British Indian Army in Afghanistan and NWF was also multilayered and flexible. Their tactical aim was to defeat the Afghan regulars in battle and pacify Afghanistan and NWF by conducting COIN operations backed by long-term political settlements. Therefore, their tactics were not only military in nature but also political. It was flexible and case-specific as it did not adhere to any rigid doctrine. Another unique feature of the British-Indian Army's way in warfare on the Indian frontiers was the informal dissemination of military-political knowledge. As mentioned in the second chapter, several pamphlets and treatises were written on mountain warfare since the second half of the nineteenth century; however, this knowledge was disseminated informally within and among the regiments. Interestingly, despite the existence of such a fluid institutional memory of the British-Indian Army, they never appeared unprepared in their military engagements throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, it guaranteed flexibility and dynamism. With its strategic bias and euro-centric approach, the concept of the British way in warfare fails to consider the diverse and intricate tactical formulation that emerged beyond the Indus. British-Indian Army's composite tactics of waging conventional and unconventional warfare simultaneously was not firepower intensive and not influenced by high levels of technologies such as dreadnaughts and railways. Instead, the British-Indian Army's warfare was manpower intensive and never brought to bear the full scale of its military force on the host society. The tactical realm did not witness much change in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, small-scale developments in the field of military technology, such as the wide use of mountain artillery and the introduction of breech-loading handheld rifles, did exert some influence on minor tactics of the British-Indian Army. However, with the introduction of air power in the twentieth century, the tactical realm witnessed considerable change as warfare became three-dimensional.

The British-Indian way in warfare did not adhere to inflexible and stringent guidelines. The political and military officers at the frontier took a case-specific approach to the politico-military morass in the frontier, leaving room for improvisation. Similar to the strategic realm, diverse opinions were at play; however, the metropole did not always dictate the GOI's policies. The 'men on the spot' on the frontier were better situated to evaluate insurgencies, and their insights led to the formation of a fluid idea that guided British-Indian COINs.

The work of the commissariat ensures the sustainability of an army in the theatre of operation. However, the concept of the British way in warfare does not shed light on this 'lifeblood of war'. Compared to the other aspects of the British-Indian Army's frontier warfare, logistical endeavours were impacted by environmental factors to the greatest extent. The Afghan and frontier topography and climate presented significant challenges for the GOI in ensuring adequate supplies reached the men on the battlefield. Similar to the tactical realm, logistics on the Indian Frontier was also not influenced by a high degree of technology. Instead, micro-technological innovations such as new developments in road making and new methods to preserve food influenced and aided the British Indian Army's logistics to a great extent. It manifested civil-military cooperation and the effective use of animal resources. British Indian military establishments' inclination to learn on the job can also be witnessed through their logistical work.

It is an accepted scholarly wisdom that the British Army follows the top-down command structure. However, the British-Indian Army's command mechanism in NWF and Afghanistan challenges this precept, unveiling the uniqueness of the British-Indian way in warfare. Due to the distance from the military and political headquarters and communication challenges, the commanders were given considerable latitude in determining their course of action. It is a unique nature of the British-Indian Army's command in this region that it entailed both military

and political responsibilities. The commanders' individual personalities and leadership styles brought considerable variations to the command mechanism of the British Indian Army.

The notion of the British way in warfare does not consider warfare's impact on state formation. However, British-Indian Army's warfare beyond the Indus directly impacted the edifice of Afghan state. Scrutinising the state formation process in Afghanistan through the lens of the big powers who meddled in the region is flawed. The GOI's military intervention in the region made the same mistake and considered military intervention as a method of stabilising the Afghan state. It failed to understand the inner dynamics of the Afghan political realm and viewed the state formation through a Eurocentric perspective. Therefore, since the conclusion of the First Afghan War, the GOI failed to realise the futility of military intervention in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, they learnt from their mistakes and, since the last decade of the nineteenth century, focused more on providing monetary and military aid to Afghanistan than directly intervening in the region. The British-Indian Army's invasion in Afghanistan in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrates that rather than consolidating the rule of the Afghan Amir, it tended to destabilise his authority, thereby reducing his legitimacy and authority. Therefore, the thesis redefines the entire notion of state-building in Afghanistan by focusing on the negative aspects of the British-Indian Army's invasions.

Formulating a British-Indian Army's way in warfare in Afghanistan and NWF is necessary to bring to the fore this diverse and unique approach to warfare. It was characterised by organisational flexibility, multi-layered, fluid and dynamic tactical thinking, micro-technological innovations, etc. It witnessed both continuity and break. The strategic domain witnessed the preference being shifted from an earlier diplomatic aspect of the strategy to a more military aspect. The basic tenets of conventional and unconventional warfare in Afghanistan, as waged by the British-Indian Army, remained to a great extent similar in the nineteenth century. However, they started changing with the appearance of air power as a force

multiplier. The field of logistics maintained its continuity with its reliance on animal labour. Nevertheless, micro-technological innovations often brought minor changes.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Sources

British Library, London

Asia, Pacific and Africa Collection

Curzon Mss. Papers of George Curzon, Mss. Eur F111.

John Crockatt Mss. Thoughts on the external defence of India from the projected Invasion of the French and Russians': paper, dated 28 Jan 1808, Mss Eur D1070.

Pollock Mss. Papers of George Pollock, Mss Eur F 439

East India Company Factory Records, Persia and the Persian Gulf

Sir John Malcolm's mission to Persia: copies of his letters and enclosures to the Governor-General, Fort William, IOR/G/29/26

Parliamentary Branch records, IOR/L/PARL/2

Political and Secret Department Records

Secret Correspondence with India L/P&S/5

Political and Secret Home Correspondence L/P&S/7

Political and Secret Library L/P&S/20

Records of the Military Department

Compilations and Miscellaneous L/MIL/5

Military Collections L/MIL/7

Military Department Library L/MIL/17

Rare Books

William Trousdale, *War in Afghanistan, 1879-80: The Personal Diary of Major General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985) V26150.

Public Record Office, Kew

Air Ministry Records, AIR/5

Cabinet Office Records

Committee of Imperial Defence: Photographic Copies of Minutes and Memoranda, CAB 38/7/

Foreign Office Records

Foreign Office and predecessor: Political and Other Departments: General Correspondence before 1906, Russian Empire, FO/65

War Office Records

Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence, Afghanistan: His Excellency General Sir C.C. Monro, GCB, GCSI, GCMG, ADC, on operations and events in the Third Afghan War. WO/106/58/5.

The National Army Museum, London

Roberts Mss. Papers of Sir Frederick Roberts, 1971-01-23

National Archives of India, New Delhi

Foreign Department Records:

Foreign Department Proceedings

Foreign Secret Consultations

Foreign Secret Supplement Files

Foreign Secret Frontier Files

Foreign Political Department Files

Foreign Miscellaneous Records

Military Department Records:

Military Department Proceedings

Military Department Proceedings, Field Operations and Expedition Volumes: Kabul, Mohmand, Zakka Khel, Tirah, Tochi, Quetta, Waziristan.

Military Department Proceedings of General Orders by the Commander-in-Chief

Military Miscellaneous B Records

Military Department War Diaries of Third Afghan War, WW1/55/H-WW1/62/H.

Published Primary Sources

Articles in Periodicals

A Frontier Soldier, "Notes on Mountain Warfare", *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 25, No. 124 (1896), pp. 19-43.

"An Historic Reverse in Afghanistan: Maiwund, 1880", extracts from the diary of Lt.-Col. H. Anderson, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 78, issue 512 (1933), pp. 755-760.

Broadfoot, Lieutenant James Sutherland, "Reports on parts of the Ghilzai country and on Some of the Tribes in the Neighbourhood of Ghazni and on the Route from Ghazni to Dera Ismail Khan by the Ghwalari Pass", *Royal Geographical Society, Supplementary Papers* vol. 1, part 3 (London: John Murray, 1885), pp. 341- 399.

Bullock, Major G.M., 'Mountain Warfare as Applied to India', *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 22, no. 107 (1893), pp. 304-330.

Carter, Captain F.C., 'Mountain Warfare as Applied to India', *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 22, no. 110 (1893), pp. 414-466.

Carter, Major F. C., "On Mountain Warfare: India", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 39, issue 213, (1895), pp. 1071-1100.

Carter, Captain F.C., "On the tactical training in district concentration, best fitted for preparing the army in India for war- a) Against a Civilized Enemy b) Against Savage Tribes in Mountain or Jungle Warfare", *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 23, no. 117 (1894), pp. 144-176.

Collen, Lieutenant-General E.H., "Supply and Transport in India", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 52, issue 367 (1908), pp. 1218-1234.

"Diary of Lieutenant C. F. Trower, 33rd Bengal Native Infantry, During the Afghan War of 1842", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 60, issue, 440 (1915), pp. 442-468.

Brevet

Gatacre, Major-General W.F., "A Few Notes on The Characteristics of Hill-Fighting in India, and The Training of Infantry Necessary for the Same, Possible in England", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 43, issue 260 (1899) pp. 1065-1086.

Hamilton, Surgeon-Major-General J. B., "The Evolution of The Dum-Dum Bullet", *The British Medical Journal*, no. 1 (May 14, 1898), pp. 1250-51.

Hart, Lieutenant Colonel H.H., "The Tactical Principles and Details Best Suited to Warfare on the Frontiers of India", *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 28, no. 136 (1899), pp. 244-272.

Hay, Captain Bruce, "The First Afghan War, 1838-1842", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 55, issue 396, (1911), pp. 195-218.

Hutchinson, Colonel H.D., “The Story of Tirah, and the Lessons of the Campaign”, *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 27, no. 132 (1898), pp. 227-262.

Macmunn, Major-General Sir George, “The Quartermaster-General’s Department and the Administrative Services in India from the Mutiny to the Present Time”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 70, issue 477 (1925), pp. 101-126.

Neville, Colonel J.P.C., “The Tactical Principles and Details Best Suited to Warfare on the Frontiers of India”, *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, vol. 28, no. 136, (1899), pp. 191-223.

Smith, Brevet-Major M., “Sketch of Major-General Pollock’s Campaign in Affghanistan in 1842”, *Colburn’s United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal*, part 3, (1844) pp. 11-22.

Spohn, Colonel von, “The Art of Command”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 53, issue 371 (1909), pp. 56-58.

Temple, Sir Richard, “The Present Situation on the Indian Frontier”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 43, issue 251, (1899), pp. 1-17.

“The Indian Frontier Problem”, *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 16, issue 61 (1925), pp. 96-114.

Walker, Lieutenant D.C., “On Military Tactics”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 1, issue 3 (1857), pp. 253-267.

Yate, A.C., “Sixty Years of Frontier Warfare”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 44, issue 265, (1900), pp. 223-247.

Young, A. J., “Royal Air Force North-West Frontier, India, 1915-39”, *RUSI Journal*, 127:1, pp. 59-64.

Biographies, Memoirs, Official and Quasi-Official Publication

A Narrative of the Russian Military Expedition to Khiva Under General Perofski (Calcutta: Office of Superintendent Government Printing, 1867)

Adye, Sir John, *Indian Frontier Policy: An Historical Sketch* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1897).

Ashley, Evelyn, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple Viscount Palmerston*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley and Sons, 1879).

Aspinall, A. and E. Anthony Smith eds. *English Historical Documents 1783-1832* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959).

Balfour, Arthur James, *Imperial Defence: A Speech Delivered in the House of Commons*, (London: Longman, Greens and Co., 1905).

Balfour, Lady Betty, *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1906).

Bellew, H.W., *Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan, in 1857, Under Major Lumsden, With an Account of the Country and People* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1962)

Bray, Lieutenant Edward William, *Journal of the Affghan War in 1842* (London: Nelson and CO., 1865)

Broadfoot, Major W., *The Career of Major George Broadfoot, C.B.: In Afghanistan and the Punjab* (London: John Murray, 1888).

Buckle, Captain E., *Memoir of the Services of The Bengal Artillery: From the Formation of the Corps to the Present Time, with Some Account of its Internal Organisation* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1852).

Callwell, Colonel C.E., *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906).

Congreve-Schneider, Captain S.M., *The Zhob Valley Expedition* (London: WM. Dawson and Sons, 1889).

Correspondence Respecting the Relations Between the British Government and That of Afghanistan Since the Accession of The Ameer Shere Ali Khan, Parliamentary Papers, Afghanistan (1881) no. 1. (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1878)

Dacosta, John, *A Scientific Frontier; or The Danger of a Russian Invasion of India* (London, W. H. Allen & Co., LTD, 1891).

Elphinstone, Mountstuart, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and Its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary and India; Comprising A View of the Afghaun Nation and A History of the Dooraunee Monarchy*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1839).

Farwell, Byron, *Eminent Victorian Soldiers: Seekers of Glory* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985).

Field Service Regulations, Part I, Operations (London: HMSO, Harrison and Sons, 1914)

Ferrier, J. P., *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858).

Forrest, George W., ed., *Selections from the Travels and Journals Preseversed in the Bombay Secretariat* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1906).

Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India: Compiled in the Intelligence Branch, vol 2, (New Delhi: Low Price Publication, 2004)

Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India: Compiled in the Intelligence Branch, vol. 3, Baluchistan and the First Afghan War (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1910).

Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India: Baluchistan and the First Afghan War, vol. 6 (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1910).

Gardyne, Lieutenant-Colonel C. Greenhill, *The Life of a Regiment: The History of the Gordon Highlanders from 1816 to 1898, Including an Account of the 75th Regiment from 1787 to 1881*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1903).

Greenwood, Lieutenant, *Narrative of the Late Victorious Campaign in Affghanistan, Under General Pollock: With Recollection of Seven Years' Service in India* (London: Henry Colburn, 1844).

Gwynn, Charles W., *Imperial Policing* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939).

Hamilton, Angus, *Afghanistan* (Boston: J.B. Millet Company, 1910).

Hamilton, Angus, *Problems of the Middle East* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909).

Hanna, Colonel H.B., *Lord Roberts in War: A study for the Day* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and CO. LTD., 1895).

Hanna, Colonel H.B., *The Second Afghan War, 1878-79-80 Its Causes, Its Conduct and Its Consequences*, vol. 1 (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1899)

Hanna, Colonel H.B., *The Second Afghan War 1878-79-80: Its Causes, Its Conduct and Its Consequences*, vol. 2 (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd, 1904).

Hanna, Colonel H.B., *The Second Afghan War 1878-79-80: Its Causes, Its Conduct and Its Consequences*, vol. 3 (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1910).

Hart, B.H. Liddell, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1932).

Havelock, Captain Henry, *Narrative of the War in Affghanistan in 1838-39*, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1840)

Hensman, Howard, *The Afghan War of 1879-80* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1882).

Hough, Major W. *A Narrative of the March and Operations of the Army of Indus: In the Expedition to Afghanistan in the Years 1838-1839*, (London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1841).

Hunter, W.W. *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, vol. 1 (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1868).

Indian Papers: Papers Relating to the War in Affghanistan, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 21 January 1840.

Kennedy, Richard Hartley, *Narrative of the Campaign of the Army of the Indus, in Sind and Kaubool, in 1838-9*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1840).

Kaye, John William, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851).

Kaye, John William, *History of The War in Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1858).

Khan, Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed, *The Life of Abdur Rahman: Amir of Afghanistan*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1900).

Kinneir, John Macdonald, *Journey Through Asia Minor, Armenia, And Koordistan, in the Years 1813 And 1814; With Remarks on The Marches of Alexander, And Retreat of The Ten Thousand* (London: John Murray, 1818).

Lal, Mohan, *Life of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan of Kabul, With His Political Proceedings Towards the English, Russian, and Persian Government, Including the Victory and Disasters of the British Army in Afghanistan*, vol. 1 (1846; Reprint, New Delhi: Asian Education, 2004)

Lal, Mohan, *Life of the Amir Dost Mohammed Khan of Kabul: With His Political Proceedings Towards the English, Russian, and Persian Government, Including the Victory and Disasters of the British Army in Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1846).

Lawrence, Lieutenant-General Sir George, *Reminisce of Forty-three Years in India* (London: John Murray, 1874).

Low, Charles Rathbone, *The Afghan War, 1838-1842: From the Journal and Correspondence of the Late Major-General Augustus Abbott* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1879).

Low, Charles Rathbone, *The Life and Correspondence of Field-Marshal Sir George Pollock* (London: W.H. Allen & CO., 1873).

Lumsden, General Sir Peter S. and George R. Elsmie, *Lumsden of the Guides: A Sketch of the Life of Lieut.-Gen. Sir Harry Burnett Lumsden, K.C.S.I. C.B., With Selections from His Correspondence and Occasional Papers* (London: John Murray, 1899).

Macgregor, Lieutenant Charles Metcalfe, *Mountain Warfare: An Essay on the Conduct of Military Operations in Mountainous Countries* (London: Nissen and Parker, 1866).

Martin, Montgomery, ed. *The Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley During His Administration in India* (London: John Murray, 1836).

Masson, Charles, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab & Kalat, During a Residence in those Countries*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1844).

McFall, Crawford, *With the Zhob Field Force 1890* (London: William Heinemann, 1895).

McNeill, John, *Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East* (London: John Murray, 1836).

Monypenny, William Flavelle, George Earle Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1929).

Morier, James, *A Journey Through Persia, Armenia, And Asia Minor, to Constantinople, In the Years 1808 And 1809; In Which Is Included, Some Account of The Proceedings of His Majesty's Mission, Under Sir Harford Jones, Bart. K. C. to The Court of The King of Persia* (London: Longman, 1812).

Morris, Mowbray, *The First Afghan War* (London: Simpson Low, 1878).

Morrison, Alexander, *The Russian Conquest of Central Asia: A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Norris, J.A. *The First Afghan War* (1967; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Operations in Waziristan 1919-1920 (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1921).

Outram, Captain James, *Rough Notes of the Campaign in Sind and Afghanistan in 1838-39: Being Extracts from a Personal Journal Kept While on the Staff of the Army of the Indus* (Cornhill: J. M. Richardson, 1840).

Owen, S.J. ed. *A Selection from the Despatches, Treaties and Other Papers of the Marquess Wellesley, K.G. During His Government of India*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1877).

Papers Relating to Military Operations in Affghanistan: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament, By Command of Her Majesty (London: T.R. Harrison, 1843).

Rawlinson, Sir Henry, *England and Russia in the East: A Series of Papers on the Political and Geographical Condition of Central Asia* (London: John Murray, 1875).

Report of the Disorderly Enquiry Committee, 1919-1920 (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing India, 1920).

Roberts, Lord Frederick, *Forty-one Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief* (London: Richard Bentley and Sons, 1897).

Robertson, Charles Gray, *Kurum, Kabul and Kandahar: Being A Brief Record of Impression in Three Campaigns Under General Roberts* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1881).

Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India, vol. 1, *Report of the Commissioners* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode for HMSO, 1863).

Sale, Florentina, *A Journal of the First Afghan War*, ed. Patrick Macrory (1969; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Shadbolt, Sydney H., *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880* (London: Sampson Low, 1882).

Skeen, General Sir Andrew, *Passing It on: Short Talks on Tribal Fighting in the North West Frontier of India* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd., 1932).

Smith, R. Bosworth, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, vol 2 (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1883).

Stocqueler, J.H, *Memorials of Affghanistan: Being State Papers, Official Documents, Dispatches Authentic Narratives, Etc. Illustrative of the British Expedition to and Occupation of Affghanistan and Scinde, Between the Years 1838-1842.* (Calcutta: Messers. Ostell and Lepage, 1843).

Stocqueler, J.H., *Memoirs and Correspondence of Major-General Sir William Nott, G.C.B.* vol. 1 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1854).

Stocqueler, J.H., *Memoirs and Correspondence of Major-General Sir William Nott, G.C.B.* Vo. 2, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1854).

Sykes, Sir Percy, *A History of Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan and Co. LTD, 1940).

Sykes, Percy, *A History of Persia* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1951).

Sykes, Percy, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand: A Biography* (London: Cassell and Company LTD, 1926).

The Afghan Question: Speech of the Earl of Northbrook, in the Guildhall, Winchester, on the 11th of November 1878 (London: National Press Agency Limited, 1878).

The Mashud-Waziri Expedition of 1881, Diaries of Officers of the Quarter Master General's Department in India attached to the Mashud-Waziri Expeditionary Force (Simla: Government Central Branch Press, 1884).

The Second Afghan War 1878-80; Abridged Official Account, Produced in the Intelligence Branch Army Head-quarters, India (London: Intelligence Branch Army Head-Quarters, India, 1908).

The Third Afghan War 1919: Official Account (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1926).

Thomas, Edward, *The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India, From A.D. 1593 to A.D. 1707: A Supplement to the Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli* (London: Trubner & CO., 1871)

Thornton, Thomas Henry, *Colonel Sir Robert Sandeman: His Life and Work on Our Indian Frontier* (London: John Murray, 1895).

Vigne, Godfrey Thomas, *A personal narrative of a visit to Ghuzni, Kabul, and Afghanistan, and of a residence at the court of Dost Mohamed, with notices of Runjit Sing, Khiva, and the Russian expedition* (London: Whittaker & CO., 1840),

Vincent, Arthur, *The Defence of India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1922).

Wheeler, Stephen, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman* (London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1895).

Younghusband, G. J., *Indian Frontier Warfare* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, 1898), p. 1-10.

Primary Sources Originally Published in Languages other than English

Bandyopadhyay, Durgadas, *Bidrohe Bangali ba Amar Jibon Charit* (Calcutta: Indian Associated Publishing Co. Private LTD., 1957).

Secondary Sources

Articles

Barfield, Thomas J., "Problems of Establishing Legitimacy in Afghanistan", *Iranian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2, (2004), pp. 263-293.

Bryant, G.J., "Pacification in the early British Raj, 1755–85", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol 14, no 1, (1985), pp. 3-19.

Fromkin, David, "The Great Game in Asia", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 58, no. 4 (1980), pp. 936-951.

Ghani, Ashraf, "Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society in Afghanistan: 1880-1901", *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1978), pp. 269-284.

Johnson, Rob, "General Roberts, the Occupation of Kabul and the Problem of Transition, 1879-1880", *War in History*, vol. 20, issue 3 (2013), pp. 300-322.

Morris, Christopher W., "State Coercion and Force" in *Social Philosophy and Policy*, vol. 29, issue 1 (2012), pp. 28–49.

Morrison, Alexander, 'Camels and Colonial Armies: The Logistics of Warfare in Central Asia in the Early 19th Century', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 57, issue 4 (2014), pp. 443-485.

Preston, Adrian "Sir Charles Macgregor and the Defence of India, 1857-1887", *The Historical Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1969), pp. 58 – 77.

Ranajit Guha, "Not at Home in Empire", *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1997), pp. 482-493.

Raymond, Chas W. and R.R. Raymond, "Strategy and Grand Tactics", *Professional Memoirs, Corps of Engineers, United States Army, and Engineer Department at Large*, vol. 7, no. 34 (1915), pp. 469-472.

Reid, Brian Holden, “The British Way in Warfare: Liddell Hart’s Idea and Its Legacy”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 156, issue 6 (2011), pp. 70-76.

“Relation Between Britain, Russia and Afghanistan, 1872-80”, (An abridged translation of F. Kh, Yuldashbayeva, “The Russo-Afghan Demarcation and the Intensification of British Aggression in Central Asia and Afghanistan, 1872-1882”, *Trudy Sagu*, no. 68) *Central Asian Review*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1958), pp. 205-228.

Roy, Kaushik, “Feeding the Leviathan: Supplying the British-Indian Army, 1859-1913”, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. 80, no. 322 (2002), pp. 144-161.

Roy, Kaushik, “Small Wars and Pacification in the British Empire: A Case Study of Lushai Hills, 1850–1900”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 51, issue 2, (2023), pp. 265-299.

Rubin, Barnett R., “Political Elite in Afghanistan: Rentier State Building, Rentier State Wrecking”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1992), pp. 77-99.

Strachan, Hew, “The British Way in Warfare Revisited”, *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 2 (1983), pp. 447-461.

Strausz-Hupe, Robert, “The Anglo-Afghan War of 1919”, *Military Affairs*, vol. 7, issue 2 (1943), pp. 89-96.

Taylor, P.J.O., ed., “The Army of Retribution: Letters from Peshawar, 1842”, *Journal of Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. 81, no. 326 (2003), pp. 114-131.

Wagner, Kim A., ‘Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency,’ *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 85 (2018), pp. 217-237.

Wagner, Kim A. “Treading Upon Fires’: The Mutiny’-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India”, *Past & Present*, vol. 218, issue 1 (2013), pp. 159–197.

Wheeler, G. E. “Russophobia in the Western World: A brief case history”, *Asian Affairs*, vol. 15, issue 2 (1984), pp. 138-143.

Chapters and Articles in Edited Volumes

Balzacq, Thierry and Ronald R. Krebs, “The Enduring Appeal of Grand Strategy” in *The Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy*, eds. Thierry Balzacq and Ronald R. Krebs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 1-21.

Chowdhury, Arka, “Debating the Doctrine of ‘Minimum Force’: Small Wars in the North-Western Frontier of India and Afghanistan, 1860–1920” in *Warfare and Society in British India, 1757–1947*, eds. Ashutosh Kumar, Kaushik Roy (Oxon: Routledge, 2023), pp. 158-181.

Edward Mead Earle, “Introduction” in *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, ed. Edward Mead Earle (1945; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. vii-xi.

Gates, Scott, *et. al.* “Continuity and Change in Asymmetric Warfare in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans” in *War and State Building in Afghanistan: Historical and Modern Perspective*, eds. Scott Gates, Kaushik Roy (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 21-42.

Gates, Scott and Kaushik Roy, “Introduction: Armies, Warfare and the State in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans” in *War and State-Building in Afghanistan: Historical and Modern Perspective*, eds. Scott Gates, Kaushik Roy (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 1-20.

Jalali, Ali A. and Lester W. Grau, “Expeditionary Forces: Superior Technology Defeated, the Battle of Maiwand” in *The British Army 1815-1914*, ed. Harold E. Raugh, Jr (2006; reprint, London: Routledge, 2018)

Jessop, Bob, “The State and State-Building” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, eds. R.A.W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder, Bert A. Rockman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 111-130.

Kennedy, Paul, “Grand Strategy in War and Peace: Towards a Broader Definition” in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy (London: Yale University Press, 1991)

Melvin, Mungo, “Tactics” in *The Oxford Companion to Military History*. ed. Richard Holmes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 893-898.

Millett, Allan R. *et al.*, “The Effectiveness of Military Organizations”, *Military Effectiveness*, vol. 1, eds. Allan R. Millett, Williamson Murrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-30.

Riley, Patrick, “Social contract theory and its critics” in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, eds. Mark Goldie, Robert Wokler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 347 – 376.

Robson, Brian, “Roberts, Frederick Sleigh, first Earl Roberts (1832-1914)” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*. vol. 47, eds. H.C.G. Matthew, Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Rogers, Clifford J., “Strategy”, in *International Encyclopaedia of Military History*, ed. James C. Bradford (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1233-1238.

Roy, Kaushik, “Logistics and British Imperialism: Supplying the British Imperial Army during the Second Afghan War, 1878-1880” in *Warfare and Society in British India, 1757-1947*. eds. Ashutosh Kumar, Kaushik Roy (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 182-202.

Spruyt, Hendrik, “War and State Formation: Amending the Bellicist Theory of State Making”, in *Does War Make States? Investigations of Charles Tilly’s Historical Sociology*, eds. Lars Bo Kasperen, Jeppe Strandsbjerg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 73-97.

Ucko, David H., “Whither Counterinsurgency: The Rise and Fall of a Divisive Concept” in *Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, eds. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 67-79.

Wessels, Andre, “Frederick Roberts” in *Victoria’s Generals*, eds. Steven J. Corvi, Ian F.W. Beckett (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2009), pp. 165-193.

Books

Agha, Sameeta, *The Limits of Empire: Sub-Imperialism and Pakhtun Resistance in the North-West Frontier* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2020).

Atwood, Rodney, *The Life of Field Marshal Lord Roberts* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

Barfield, Thomas, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Barnett, Correlli, *Britain and Her Army: A Military, Political and Social History of the British Army 1509-1970* (1970; reprint, London: Cassell & Co., 2000).

Barthorp, Michael, *Afghan Wars and the North-West Frontier 1839–1947* (1982; reprint, London: Cassell, 2002).

Beattie, Hugh, *Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan* (2002; reprint, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2014).

Beckett, Ian F.W., *A British Profession of Arms: The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018).

Bond, Brian, *Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought* (1976; reprint, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1977).

Bullock, Brigadier Humphry, *History of the Army Service Corps, 1760-1857*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers PVT LTD, 1976).

Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c. 1850–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Charney, Michael W., *Imperial Military Transportation in British Asia: Burma 1941–1942* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019)

Citino, Robert M. *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

Clausewitz, Carl Von, *Principles of War* (New York: Dover Publications, INC, 2003).

Clausewitz, Carl Von, *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

Condos, Mark, *The Insecurity State: Punjab and the Making of Colonial Power in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918).

Creveld, Martin Van, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

Creveld, Martin Van, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (1977; Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Creveld, Martin Van, *Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to the Present* (London: The Free Press, 1989).

Davies, C. Collin, *The Problems of the North-West Frontier, 1890-1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

Echevarria II, Antulio J. *Military Strategy: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1-10.

Ewans, Martin, *Securing the Indian Frontier in Central Asia: Confrontation and Negotiation, 1865-95* (London: Routledge, 2010).

Ewans, Martin, ed., *The Great Game: Britain and Russia in Central Asia*, vol. 1, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004)

Freedman, Lawrence, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

French, David, *The British Way in Warfare, 1688-2000* (1990: reprint, Oxon: Routledge, 2015).

Fuller, Colonel J.F.C., *The Reformation of War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1923).

Fuller Jr., William C., *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992)

Gregorian, Vartan, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (California: Stanford University Press, 1969).

Guha, Ranajit, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Headrick, Daniel R., *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Heathcote, T. A. *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (1980; reprint, Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007)

Heuser, Beatrice, *The Evolution of Strategy Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Hevia, James, *Animal Labour and Colonial Warfare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).

Hevia, James, *The Imperial Security State: British Colonial Knowledge and Empire Building in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Howard, Michael, *The Continental Commitment: The Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of the Two World Wars* (London: Temple Smith, 1972).

Ingram, Edward, *In Defence of British India: Great Britain and the Middle East, 1775-1842* (London: Frank Cass, 1894).

Jalali, Ali Ahmad, *A Military History of Afghanistan* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2017).

Johnson, Robert, *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Kakar, M. Hassan, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan, 1863-1901* (Leiden: Brill, 2006)

Keegan, John, *The Mask of Command* (London: Penguin Books, 1987).

Kilcullen, David, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

King, Anthony, *The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Liddell Hart, Basil Henry, *Strategy* (1954; reprint, New York; Meridian Book, 1991)

Liddell Hart, Basil Henry, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1932).

Lynn, John, ed., *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1993).

Mahan, Captain A.T. *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1898).

Majumdar, Lt. Colonel B.N., *History of the Army Service Corps*, vol. 2, 1858-1913 (New Delhi: Sterling Publisher PVT LTD, 1976).

Martineau, John, *The life and correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1895).

Metcalf, Thomas R. *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Mockaitis, Thomas R., *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

Moreman, T.R., *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998).

Newton, Richard D., *The RAF and Tribal Control: Airpower and Irregular Warfare Between the World Wars* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2019).

Noelle, Christin, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan* (1997; reprint, London: Routledge, 2016).

Robson, Brian, *Crisis on the Frontier: The Third Afghan War and the Campaign in Waziristan, 1919-20* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2004).

Robson, Brian, *The Road to Kabul: The Second Afghan War 1878-1881* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007).

Roe, Andrew M., *Waging War in Waziristan: The British Struggle in the Land of Din Laden, 1849-1947* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

Roy, Kaushik, *Frontiers, Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies in South Asia* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015).

Roy, Kaushik, *War and Society in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans, 1500-2013* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Rubin, Barnett, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (1995: reprint, London: Yale University Press, 2002).

Samuels, Martin, *Command or Control? Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918* (London: Frank Cass, 1995).

Siegel, Jennifer, *Endgame: Britain, Russia and the Final Struggle for Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

Stacpoole-Ryding, Richard J., *Maiwand: The Last Stand of the 66th (Berkshire) Regiment in Afghanistan, 1880* (Stroud: The History Press, 2008).

Thompson, Julian, *Lifeblood of War: Logistics in Armed Conflict* (1991; reprint, London: Brassey's, 1998).

Tilly, Charles, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

Tripodi, Christian, *Edge of Empire: The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North-West Frontier 1877–1947* (2011, Reprint; Oxon: Routledge, 2016).

Weigley, Russell F., *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1973).

Wilson, Jon E. *The Domination of Strangers Modern Governance in Eastern India, 1780–1835* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Yapp, M. E. *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

Wyatt, Christopher M. *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011)

Wyatt, Christopher M. *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011)

Ajeka Chondhury
14.11.2024