

Synopsis

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Synopsis

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.

Literature Review

Seen through the western lens, Afghanistan constitutes a rugged land, featured by mountains and deserts and inhabited by fractious, tribal people. The war and society approach with scholars like Thomas Barfield brings to the fore the idea of fluid nationalities when Afghanistan is put under the scanner. In the absence of a strong central power, two groups in a local context may pose as rivals but their ethnic solidarity can be manifested at the regional or national level.¹ According to Barfield the age-old matrix of the Afghan society was shattered by the British invasion which had upset the traditional standards of legitimacy. Gavin Rand on the other hand while providing a cultural analysis of the colonial campaigns in the North-West Frontier, focused on their performative and symbolic nature.² Robert Johnson³, Ivan M. Arraguin-Toft,⁴ Ali Ahmad Jalali⁵ in their attempt to unveil the Afghan side of the picture; try to break the stereotypes associated with an empire centric approach. Robert Johnson in his attempt to formulate a cogent Afghan way of war has reinstated the agency to the Afghans, which was long denied. He argued that rather than merely reacting to the invasions, they are capable of devising their own way of coping with the invading military forces. While dealing with the crucial question of the Islamic framework of the Afghan resistance and warfare, Johnson has portrayed 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 was the motivational and not determining factor in the way the Afghans fight.

Seen through the prism of war, society and state-building, Kaushik Roy tends to conceptualize Afghanistan as a multi-layered political 'cake', with shifting territorial boundaries and fluid communal identities.⁶ There existed a multilayered political order which was formed in the face of external pressure and was composed of a variety of social and communal forms typical of a weak state. While analyzing the management of peripheral regions by the Raj, he argues that political negotiations with the refractory elements of the Afghan society, supported by organized violence constituted the mechanism of maintaining order. He also adds that numerous punitive campaigns carried on by the British-Indian Army were reactionary to the challenge posed by the 'stateless communities'. In order to unearth the roots of tribal militancy, the Socio-cultural and economic world of Afghanistan and NWF has been traversed. The deficit economic nature of the land due to its rugged landscape has spawned an unquenchable thirst for pillage and plundering among its people. The '*pashtunwali*' code on the other hand with its elements such as the tradition of blood feud has permeated to the very core of the Afghan society, in turn militating it.

The relationship between warfare and technology has polarized historians. There are vehement advocates of the notion that warfare is governed by technology.⁷ On the other hand, while analyzing imperial development through the prism of technology, Daniel R. Headrick⁸ and Clive Dewey⁹ stand at two opposite poles. The former identifies European technological development as the prime mover behind western imperialism. Whereas the latter contends that the technological superiority of the British failed to project its military might in challenging environmental conditions. In this context, Robert Johnson attributes technological edge to the British-Indian Army over their Afghan counterparts.¹⁰ The more powerful British mountain pieces tended to break the enemy defences easily. Moreover, the

introduction of mechanized transport and the air arm of the British-Indian Army gave them a definite advantage on the battlefield. But Brian Robson thinks that the British and their Afghan adversaries were almost at par in terms of armament.¹¹ Kaushik Roy asserts that the British-Indian Army started gaining an upper hand only since the last quarter of the nineteenth century over its Afghan counterparts. The introduction of the Martini-Henry and Snider rifles outgunned the Afghan *jezails* in terms of range, accuracy and rate of fire. Therefore, in terms of both hand-held weapons and field pieces, the invading forces were in an advantageous position. However, he claims that the advanced technology of the British-Indian forces failed to overcome the geographical constraints.¹²

Within the overarching framework of 'Small Wars' the Anglo-Afghan confrontations have been identified with 'Hill Warfare' by Charles Callwell¹³ and as 'Uncivilized Warfare' by G.J. Younghusband.¹⁴ These represent attempts at theorizing the unconventional conflicts without proper analysis. Tim Moreman sought to redress this issue by bringing in the idea of 'Frontier Warfare'. But rather than delving into the strategic, tactical and logistical analysis, he concerned himself with the 'institutional memory' of the British-Indian Army. He has focused on how they remembered and learned from their experiences on the frontier or failed to do the same. His preoccupation with the military learning process failed to grasp the larger British strategic imperative of state-building in Afghanistan.¹⁵

Regarding the complex issue of war and state-building in Afghanistan, the edited volume by Roy and Scott Gates has touched upon certain debates. Firstly, the nature of Counterinsurgency campaigns [hereafter COIN] conducted in the colonies. Secondly, to what extent was the doctrine of minimum force deployed in Afghanistan was effective etc.¹⁶ Scrutinizing Afghanistan from a *longue duree* perspective it has been portrayed that the basic elements of warfare in Afghanistan have remained unchanged since the time of the Mughals and Safavids.

The academic circle tends to view British Army's approach to COIN within the binary of minimum or maximum force. The advocates of minimum force theory argue that the British Army opted for the minimum necessary force in dealing with insurgencies in the twentieth century. Rod Thornton and Thomas R. Mockaitis are vehement proponents of this theory. In their opinion, the British Army refrained from employing the entire quantum of force at its disposal in COIN. This approach differentiates the British Army from its technology-oriented and firepower intensive American counterpart.¹⁷ Both Mockaitis and Thornton trace the development of the British approach to COIN in the colonial era. Mockaitis claims that several factors like the completion of imperial conquest and the condemnation of violence by the British public affected the imperial stance towards counterinsurgency.¹⁸ Thornton traces the origins of the British ideology of minimum force to the second half of the nineteenth century. According to him, Victorian values like individual liberty; Protestant evangelicalism, and the revival of medieval chivalry and Romantic tradition cemented the British stance towards applying minimum force in resolving conflicts. He also highlighted the role of public schools and popular media in disseminating the idea of 'gentlemanly conduct' in British popular culture.¹⁹ Alexander Alderson argues that the British army's propensity to learn on the job, instead of strictly adhering to rigid doctrine; civil-military cooperation during COIN campaigns, and importance on training specific to irregular warfare led to the creation of minimum force philosophy.²⁰

But the historical consensus that British success in COIN was the result of 'winning hearts and minds' approach came to be challenged in the last decades of the twentieth century. Revisionist historiography unmasked the brutal aspects of British COIN and shed light on the degree of force employed by the British Army.²¹ Scholars like Huw Bennett, Matthew Hughes strongly refute the notion of uniform dissemination and application of the concept of minimum force at all levels of the British Army in COIN.²² Bennett uses the concept of

‘exemplary force’ in analyzing the complex issue of violence in British COIN in the twentieth century. He argues that the idea of minimum force was perceived in varied ways within the organizational structure of the British army and ultimately it was the ‘man on the spot’ who decided the quantum of force to be employed. By critically analyzing British COINs in the twentieth and twenty-first century, Bennett strikes against the ‘sacred view’ of British doctrinal and moral superiority in COIN and challenges the idea of the low-technology intensive British approach to conflict resolution.²³ Matthew Hughes contends that the use of violence by the British Army should be explained from a maximal perspective. He firmly asserts that the British army never used minimum force in either imperial policing or COIN.²⁴ David French suggests that the doctrine of ‘minimum force was not the army’s default setting’ and ‘coercion was always the basis of British counterinsurgency campaigns’.²⁵

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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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.²⁸

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.²⁹

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.³⁰

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'³¹ brought success for the British.³²

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.³³

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.³⁴ 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.³⁵

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.

Lacunae in the existing literature and justification of the proposed research

There are some aspects of the British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and NWF that the existing literature fails to articulate in a cogent manner. The descriptive military histories of the Anglo-Afghan Wars produced by scholars like Brian Robson fail to posit the British-Indian Army's tactical evolution within the broader doctrinal development of pacification and counterinsurgency in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The proposed 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 is a daunting task. However, scholars have not given it due consideration. The proposed thesis analyses how environmental factors influenced military supply and transport in NWF and Afghanistan. Through a scrutiny of the British-Indian Army's logistics beyond the Indus, the thesis seeks to unveil the differences of opinion in the British-Indian military organization, and the synergy between the civil and military authorities that brought them success.

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 in the frontiers enabled the local officers to attain greater autonomy.

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 complex issue of warfare and state-building has been analysed in a fragmented manner. It has been seen from the perspective of the invaders, who ignored the inner dynamics of the Afghan political system, which was striving for limited centralization in the nineteenth century. The omnipresence of geographical and ecological factors in the conduct of warfare in the lands beyond the Indus has not been taken into account. The proposed work will trace these missing links and comprehensively analyze the campaigns.

Stabilizing the volatile region of Afghanistan is a pressing issue even in the 21st century. Lately, the coalition forces, with their surge COIN tactics, alienated Afghan society *en masse*. In contrast, the British-Indian forces in the nineteenth century, with a comparatively humane approach to winning over the 'hearts and minds' of the population, registered greater success in that region. This is where the proposed thesis seeks to intervene. 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. It will consult certain previously untapped official documents that will shed new light on the whole matter.

Objectives of the proposed thesis:

- The proposed work seeks to place the Anglo-Afghan confrontation within the wider context of the history of the British Empire building. British-Indian Army's warfare in Afghanistan and NWF will be brought under the scanner as it witnessed strategic, tactical and logistical evolution, atypical of the European theatres.
- The objective of this research is to analyze how the contours of the Afghan state system was altered by British-Indian occupations. It will be enquired whether the invasions aided the indigenous process of state-building in Afghanistan or disrupted it.
- The synergy between physical geography, climatic conditions and military campaigns will be explored extensively, which will give the work a unique edge.
- Did the innovations in the field of military technology ensure qualitative superiority for the British Indian Army? How did it impact Tactical evolution, atypical of the European theatres?
- From conventional battles to COINs and operations of pacification, the Afghan theatre witnessed diverse fighting techniques within two centuries. Therefore, the precept of placing such diverse nature of warfare under an overarching categorization of 'small wars' will be challenged.
- The thesis aims to depict the importance of the 'men on the spot' in the frontiers. It seeks to portray how the local military and political officers in NWF and Afghanistan, to a great extent, influenced, if not dictated, the tactical thinking of the British-Indian Army.
- The thesis also aims to analyze the learning mechanism of the British-Indian Army in NWF and Afghanistan.

- The proposed theme will explore the continuity and break paradigm within the three conventional and numerous punitive campaigns conducted by the British-Indian Army.

Chapterisation and methodology

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 Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 120.

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³ Robert Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War; How and Why They Fight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴ Ivan M. Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁵ Ali Ahmad Jalali, *A Military History of Afghanistan: From the Great Game to the Global War on Terror* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2017).

⁶ Kaushik Roy, *Frontiers, Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies in South Asia* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015); Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan: From the Mughals to the Americans 1500-2013* (New Delhi: OUP, 2015)

⁷ Martin Van Creveld, *Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to the Present*, (New York: The Free Press, 1989), pp.1-3.

⁸ Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

- ⁹ Clive Dewey, *Steamboats on the Indus: The Limits of Western Technological Superiority in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014)
- ¹⁰ Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War*, p. 99
- ¹¹ Brian Robson, *The Road to Kabul: The Second Afghan War 1878-1881* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007)
- ¹² Roy, *War and Society in Afghanistan*, p. 81.
- ¹³ Callwell, *Small Wars*.
- ¹⁴ G. J. Younghusband, *Indian frontier warfare*, (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & co., Ltd., 1898)
- ¹⁵ T.R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998)
- ¹⁶ Scott Gates and Kaushik Roy (ed.), *War and State-Building in Afghanistan; Historical and Modern Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)
- ¹⁷ Rod Thornton, "The British Army and the Origins of its Minimum Force Philosophy," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 15, no.1, (2004) p. 83.
- ¹⁸ Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60*, (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1990), 17-19
- ¹⁹ Thornton, "The British Army," pp. 85-94.
- ²⁰ Alexander Alderson, "Britain", in *Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges*, ed. Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney (2010, reprint, New Delhi: Routledge, 2011), pp.28-45.
- ²¹ David French, "Nasty not Nice: British Counter-Insurgency Doctrine and Practice, 1945-1967," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, no. 4-5, (2012) p. 745.
- ²² Huw Bennett, "Minimum Force in British Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 21, no. 3, (2010) pp. 465-66.
- ²³ Bennett, "Minimum Force", pp. 465-69.
- ²⁴ Matthew Hughes, "Introduction: British Ways of Counter-Insurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, nos. 4-5, (2012) pp. 580-81.
- ²⁵ French, "Nasty not Nice", pp. 749, 757.
- ²⁶ Captain A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1898), pp. 58-66.
- ²⁷ Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918), pp. 11-76.
- ²⁸ David French, *The British Way in Warfare, 1688-2000* (1990; reprint, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), p xv.
- ²⁹ 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.
- ³⁰ 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.
- ³¹ 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.
- ³² French, *The British Way*, pp. xi-61, 119-145, 225-240.
- ³³ 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.
- ³⁴ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1973).
- ³⁵ Brian Holden Reid, "The British Way in Warfare: Liddell Hart's Idea and Its Legacy", *The RUSI Journal* 156, Issue 6 (2011): p. 70.

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