

Insurgency as an instrument for strategic offence: A century of Pashtun history.¹



Waziri tribesman the mid-1930. (<http://www.beikey.net>)

¹ Developed from the XXXVI CIHM Amsterdam congress paper: The Development and Employment of a Cradle of Insurgency: From a century of Pashtun rebellions.

The studies preparing for the writing of the article led to the clear conclusion that the efforts in Afghanistan from 2001 onwards have been hampered by strategic tunnel vision driven by a combination of opportunism, expediency and unrealistic hopes. On the other hand the opposition to the international campaign is nourished by basically faulty perceptions of the roots of the local resistance.

First a quotation to highlight that the root problem of the border land was foreseen and understood long time ago. A British 1932 study of the Indo-Afghan border insurgencies quoted a letter from the Afghan Emir Abdurrahman Khan from 1892 where he warned the government of British India of the likely negative influence of the border - the Durand Line - that would come into place the following year: *"... In your cutting away from me these frontier tribes, who are people of my nationality and my religion, you will injure my prestige in the eyes of my subjects, and will make me weak and my weakness is injurious to your Government."*²

In 2006 the reality had started to dawn among the more open minded observers in Washington. In a presentation on 12th December after a visit to the region, the well informed analyst Anthony H. Cordesman noted:

- *"Little doubt Pakistani government now tolerates Al Qa'ida, Taliban, and other insurgent operations.*
- *Peace agreement with tribal leaders on September 5th in North Waziristan appears to be de facto surrender.*
- *India, Kashmir, Baluchi separatism, Pashtun question, support of native Islamists have higher Pakistani government priority than war on terrorism.*
- *Taliban and other factions act as de facto governments in parts of Eastern Pakistan.*
- *Some Madrassas are Taliban and Al Qa'ida bases, some virtually on border with Afghanistan.*
- *Parts of Army ... do seem committed to opposing Al Qa'ida and Taliban.*
- *Pakistani ISI is divided but some elements appear to aid insurgents."*³

The new Obama administration appointed the tough speaking diplomat Richard Holbrooke of Balkans fame as its Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, but otherwise the realisation did not influence the narrow Afghanistan strategy focus of the U.S. and the allies. Holbrooke died late 2010, only weeks before the demonstration in early 2011 of Western failure to stabilise and use Pakistan.

The article will give a quick walk through the history of more than a hundred years of insurgencies and counterinsurgency efforts in the Indo-Afghan/Pakistani-Afghan borderland to illustrate why the insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan should not be regarded and treated as separate. Instead, they must be handled as one - forever shifting - Pashtun borderland uprising that has been available for employment as a rather blunt and independently acting strategic instrument from the other side of the border. The trouble from the area has nearly always been catalysed, used and supported by interested powers from inside and outside South-Central Asia.

To understand this fact is essential for any counterinsurgency that is not to remain a vain drive to contain symptoms. However, the necessary combination of military, economic and political steps required to succeed is going to meet hard resistance in an international framework where the borders and

² Op. Cit. C. Collin Davies: The Problem of the North-West Frontier 1890-1908. With a survey of policy since 1849. London 1932, p.160f

³ In the Center for Strategic and International Studies briefing "Winning in Afghanistan: How to Face the Rising Threat" Slide 35: Pakistan's Dangerous Role.

sovereignty of present states are considered sacrosanct. That is one more reason why the present combined effort is most likely to fail.

This focus also implies a deliberate shift of the narrative away from what directly or subconsciously nourishes the opposition to the international campaign against the present Pashtun led insurgency in Afghanistan. To illustrate the common understanding of the roots of the problem one only needs to pick a random sample of the latest books about the conflict in an Amazon literature search:

- *An Ordinary Soldier: Afghanistan: A Ferocious Enemy. A Bloody Conflict. One Man's Impossible Mission.*⁴
- *Wars Involving Afghanistan ...: Afghan Civil War, Anglo-Afghan Wars, Soviet War in Afghanistan, Afghan Civil War, Anglo-Afghan Wars.*⁵
- *Afghanistan: Land of Conflict and Beauty: A History of Conflict.*⁶
- *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War against the Taliban.*⁷
- *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan.*⁸
- *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers.*⁹

The understanding of the problem presented by these titles – not necessarily by the narratives and conclusions of the listed books - *is firstly the almost complete focus on Afghanistan* within its international borders and *secondly*, implicitly, that *any attempt to civilise and pacify the Afghans is doomed to failure*. Pacification has been tried in vain before by so many empires.

Without making this clear, the reason for failure is understood to be the character of the average Pashtun man. He is presented and respected as the supreme, incorrigible, noble savage: an unalterably wild, primitive, independent minded, automatically xenophobic, conservative, fanatically religious warrior - somebody fundamentally different from us, an alien. The difference makes any civilising project both futile and arrogant.

The only problem with this picture is that it contradicts both the historical evidence from British administrators involved in the development of the tribal areas in the Interwar Period, the current evidence of soldiers and reconstructions workers on the ground, and the scrutiny and conclusions of the best contemporary analysts: outsiders like David Loyn¹⁰ and as well as insiders like Ahmed Rashid¹¹ and Imtiaz Gul.¹²

⁴ Doug Beattie, 2009.

⁵ 2010.

⁶ John C. Griffiths, 2009.

⁷ Stephen Tanner, 2009.

⁸ Seth G. Jones, 2009.

⁹ Peter Tomsen, 2011.

¹⁰ David Loyn: Butcher & Bolt. Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan. Rio Vista, Texas 2009.

¹¹ Ahmed Rashid: Descent into Chaos. The World's most Unstable Region and the Threat to Global Security. London 2008

¹² Imtiaz Gul: The Most Dangerous Place. Pakistan's Lawless Frontier. London 2009. Gul is less critical of Pakistan's present effort than Rashid and tries to justify his country's present double strategy, which he does not acknowledge, with geo-strategic arguments. However, in his analysis of the local social-economic roots, he agrees with Rashid.

The border zone



The main insurgency zone circling east part of Pashtun majority areas. (temi.repubblica.it)

For close to two centuries war and insurgencies has been the fate of every generation in this border area, the fighting pulsing from being localised and sporadic to regional and periodically intensive war. Most the trouble had its centre in the tribal mountain areas on both sides of the present international border line. However, the fighting has also been nourished, supported and inspired locally from the more settled Pashtun areas on both sides of this border zone. Regional powers and the outside world were involved for more than half that time, projecting ideologies, ambitions, threat perceptions and general conflicts into the area of the Pashtuns.

In order to better understand the roots of the present situation it is important to keep in mind that this extended border zone only differs in one respect from other similar wild, multi-ethnic tribal zones between empires such as the Caucasus, the Balkans, Central Asia north of Afghanistan and native American tribal land between the British, Spanish and French parts of North America: The lands of the Pashtuns was never brought under full control by any of the forward moving great powers. When the over-extended British Empire half-heartedly expanded its security presence north-westward in India to avoid a Russian controlled Afghanistan, it had chosen a cheap layered approach adjusted to the local conditions: The inner, eastern layer consisted of the more settled Pashtun majority areas in the plain between the Indus River and the hills. They could be controlled by mobile military forces and were to remain administered directly. The

North-West Frontier Province established for that purpose in 1901 with its centre in Peshawar was also to monitor and indirect control of the next layer: the wild hilly likewise mainly Pashtun populated areas up to the international border, named after Sir Mortimer Durand, who forced the Afghan Emir to agree to the border line in 1893. That line was not guided by a consistent military-geographical logic, it divided several of the dominating border tribes, and the British tacitly accepted that the Emir maintained some role in relation to the border tribes on the eastern side of the line by economic sponsorship of his favoured tribal leaders.

The Pashtun majority areas in the northern part of Baluchistan, the thinly populated area between British India and Persia, were left out of the two-layered North-West Frontier Province arrangement. However, the Pashtuns dominated the district where Quetta, the new garrison town, was built to control the main western route between Afghanistan and British India.

The Emir also maintained a level of influence in the autonomous tribal belt east of the Line because he was the leading Muslim prince of the area. He had been forced to accept British control over the foreign policy of his country, and he used all his remaining influence over the border tribes to weaken that control whenever possible. He encouraged fundamentalist Muslim leaders and clergy to undermine the authority of British sponsored tribal heads.

The Emir's first such discreet effort to inspire problems followed just four years later, in 1897. Another effort came in 1908, when the developing co-operation between the two bordering empires undermined his possibility to use the threat of Russia to reinforce his hand in his dealings with British India.¹³

It is important to notice that a strategic "*Great Game*" had created opportunities and sources of income for the Pashtuns as the outsiders competed in buying influence. Without a strategic motive investment in infrastructure and the economy of the tribal areas has consistently been very low, and throughout the 20th Century the constant population growth combined with the lack of development created a constant migration of Pashtun tribesmen to large regional cities like Karachi. The diaspora has maintained close contacts to their families and tribes and developments in the border zone.¹⁴

As early as in the 19th Century the bad economic conditions had led to a Pashtun diaspora to corners of the Empire as far away as Australia, and from the 1970s onwards the now quickly growing population in both the Northwest Frontier Province and the Tribal Areas created a massive emigration of male Pashtuns. Most failed to find work inside Pakistan. Hundreds of thousands sought an income as contract workers, especially in the Gulf States. Large groups of Pashtuns settled in Europe and North America. In the early 1980s thousands of refugees from the war in Afghanistan were added to the Pashtun communities in the large Pakistani cities.¹⁵

The large Pashtun internal emigrant urban communities later made it impossible for the Pakistani government to contain the trouble and terrorism in the border areas. It has local supporting expatriate groups in all significant population centres of the country and will get finance and carry out support

¹³ For a still valid description of the complexity of the situation and motives behind the development: C. Collin Davies: *The Problem of the North-West Frontier 1890-1908. With a survey of policy since 1849.* London 1932.

¹⁴ See the discussion in Feroz Ahmed's dated Marxist-Leninist analysis in: *Focus on the Baluchistan and Pushtoon Question.* Lahore 1975.

¹⁵ See Robert Nichols: *A History of Pashtun Migration 1775-2006,* Oxford 2008, pp.111-134, 140-172.

operations both there and elsewhere in the world. The role of Wahhabism as well as Sufism among Pashtun tribes undermines the potential of moderate Muslim authorities, even if that tool were to be employed.¹⁶

Using John Mackinlay's acute insight about the "*Insurgent Archipelago*"¹⁷ of popular rebellions employing a universalist ideology in our globalised world, it becomes clear that the archipelagic character of the migration coupled with the character and role of Islamist revival means that all the world is going to remain directly influenced by the Pashtun border zone insurgency. The Western governments will have serious difficulties developing and sustaining the necessary complex architecture of the counterinsurgency responses, given the combination of simplifying role of media and impatience of home public opinion. The problems become acute because the insurgency not only motivates and inspires the young frustrated Pashtuns and other Pakistani expatriates in the West. Large number of young Muslim second or third generation immigrants from other parts of the world - such as Indonesia, China, former Soviet Republics and the Middle East - have become passive, active or militant supporters of the border insurgency.



On 19 October 2009 Pakistani police present some of weapons found in a cache among Mashud Pashtun Taliban supporters in Karachi. (islamizationwatch.blogspot.com)

With the present fighting on both sides of the Durand Line, it becomes essential to confront the idea that the local conditions and the character of the Pashtun tribes are really so special, so conservative and impossible to influence with civilisation and anachronistically warrior-like that traditional counter-insurgency efforts are meaningless. If this were really the case and the main root to our counterinsurgency problems, any effort to pacify and develop the region would fundamentally futile. Then a withdrawal from

¹⁶ Sana Haroon: *Frontier of Faith. Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*. London 2007, gives an excellent modern adjustment by adding an in-depth analysis of the impact of Islamic revivalism and Sufism in tribal behaviour of the North-West Frontier Province of British India and early Pakistan.

¹⁷ *The Insurgent Archipelago*. From Mao to bin Laden, London 2009.

the area would be sound and logical, especially if the tribes could and would block further use of their area as a base for the international insurgency.

If, on the other hand, the stereotype is as flawed and anachronistic as all other such attempts of simplifications, we have other options. If it is the lack of development in the Pashtun tribal areas that remains the core of the problem - the situation that drove so many to migration - our actions should be different and could achieve positive result for both the Pashtuns and ourselves. The already mentioned 1932-vintage analysis of conflicts in the region must be read as supporting this latter view. From a close study of the tribes that analysis concluded that there was no fundamental difference between these tribes and the rest of humanity: *“Perhaps the most important lesson of all, and one that should profoundly affect our future frontier policy, is that savage and bloodthirsty tribes become less barbarous and more reconciled to peaceful pursuits under a settled administration.”*¹⁸



One of many schools destroyed by the Taliban in the Swat valley. (www.bloggernews.net)

In search for a deeper understanding of the roots of present events it is relevant to focus on four periods of the last hundred years. The first covers from 1919 to 1939 and starts with the Third Afghan war. The second is the 1970s with the combined political crises in Pakistan and Afghanistan that led to radicalisation and the open conflicts of the following decade. The third is the 1980's. The final period covered is the last two decades on both sides of the Durand Line starting with the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan. Thereafter the current development of Western counterinsurgency doctrine will be outlined and used as a prism for the discussion of the present situation on both sides of the Line.

¹⁸ The Problem of the North-West Frontier 1890-1908, Quoted from p.70. The argument is made in a totally convincing way by Ahmed Rashid: Descent into Chaos.

When “Butcher and Bolt” was still – but only just – acceptable to home public opinion



British Indian troops in Waziristan 1935 (<http://www.beikey.net>)

As already outlined, the Afghan Emir had challenged the Durand Line in both 1897 and 1908 by breeding rebellion in the tribal areas. As a consequence he had been forced to accept not only the Line, but a humiliating limitation of Afghani sovereignty by committing his country to following British advice in his country's foreign relations. In the winter of 1919 a new Emir, who acceded to the crown after the murder of his predecessor, gambled that the British post World War I military weakness would allow Afghanistan to gain advantages by war that included at least full independence and possibly the undermining of the British will to support the Durand Line border. In May that year the Afghan regular army crossed the Line in offensives against Peshawar from the northwest and west, into Waziristan from Khost, and against Quetta from the north.¹⁹ The invasion was to become reinforced by a general uprising of the diverse tribes across the Line. The British, however, mobilised 350.000 men and 158.000 transport animals to meet the combined external and internal threat, and within a couple of months British Indian forces had entered Afghanistan in several places in counter offensives. The effective response also included a symbolic strategic air bombardment of an un-defended Kabul and led to a peace agreement in August.

The British had been forced to focus their efforts on containing the uprising in several border districts and therefore accepted a fully independent Afghan foreign policy. The Afghan side formally repeated its acceptance of the Durand Line, but tribal rebellions continued from northern Baluchistan all the way to Chitral in the far north. Regaining a minimum level of control of the very difficult mountainous Waziristan required the employment during the winter and spring of 1920 of 83.000 troops and supporting civilians, modern artillery plus a significant air force of light bomber aircraft. More limited punishment operations in

¹⁹ For the official British history of the war see: General Staff Branch, Army Headquarters, India: The Third Afghan War 1919. Official Account. Calcutta 1926.

Waziristan, mainly using aircraft, continued until 1925. The young Royal Air Force wanted to secure its continued independence from the British Army by replacing, “*substituting*”, slow and expensive army operations with promptly applied and less costly and risky airborne firepower.²⁰ The concept of disciplining rebellious tribes by “*butchering*” their camels, cattle, sheep and goats and destroying their crops and villages during an army raid followed by the units quick “*bolt*” back to settled areas should be replaced by the quick, safe and cheap option of doing the same with aircraft in “*air control*”.²¹ The mirage of counter-insurgency by air power unfortunately survived into the 21st Century.

During the next 10 years until the mid-1930s pacification of the rebellious tribal districts only succeeded by a balanced combination of military, economic and military means. The main centre of tribal trouble moved north to the area closer to the Khyber Pass.

In the meantime the local militias were thoroughly reorganised to make it possible to withdraw the regular brigades deployed during the main insurgency in Waziristan to garrisons now built adjacent to new roads. The new infrastructure supported economic development and it could facilitate a military redeployment if necessary. The British administration of the districts was reinforced and improved to allow directed application of justice rather than collective punishment of serious crime. The new system remained backed-up by the threat of air power.

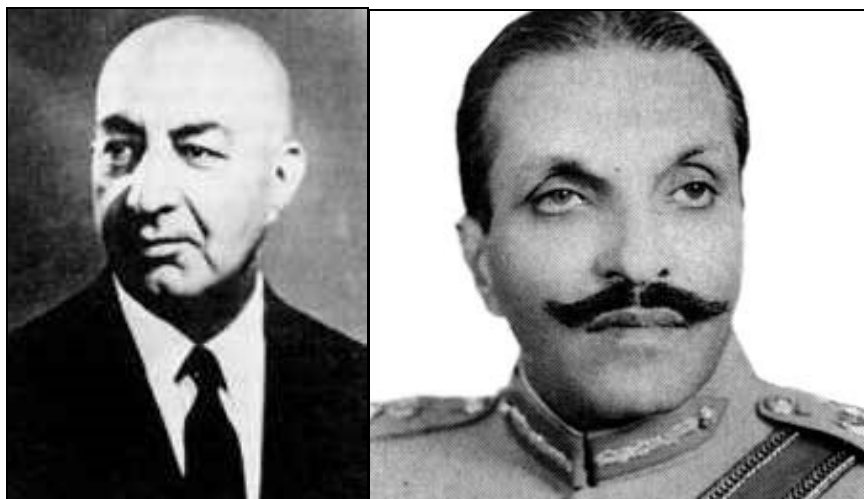
However, this politico-military system started to collapse in the mid-1930s, when it became evident that the British were beginning to take steps to leave India. The approaching departure of the foreign rulers encouraged local political preparations and manoeuvring for the power struggle ahead. The growing political resistance against the waning British rule in the area thereafter centred on Peshawar: the administrative capital of the frontier province. At the same time the threat of punishment from the air was losing credibility and trouble returned to Waziristan. The tribes were learning countermeasures against the aircraft at the same time when the traditional application of collective punishment in suppression of rebellions by butchering and burning became unacceptable to the increasingly well informed, liberal and pacific British home public opinion.²²

²⁰ For a short clear description of the Interwar RAF logic see: John Robert Ferris: *The Evolution of British Strategic Policy, 1919-1926*. London 1989, pp. 88ff, 169ff. James S. Corum & Wray R. Johnson: *Airpower in Small Wars. Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, Lawrence, Kansas, 2003, pp.51-66, 81-86, gives a general evaluation of the effectiveness of the concept.

²¹ For the official British history of the Waziristan operations see: General Staff, Army Headquarters: *Operations in Waziristan 1919-1920*. Second Edition, Delhi 1923.

²² The best modern account of the post-WW1 war and insurgency is: Brian Robson: *Crisis on the Frontier. The Third Afghan War and the Campaign in Waziristan 1919-20*. Stroud in Gloucestershire 2004. The collapse of the 1920 system is described by C. E. Bruce in: *Waziristan 1936-1937: the Problems of the North-West Frontiers of India and Their Solutions*. Aldershot, probably in 1937. Bruce underline in his argument that even the most warrior-like Pashto respond to good strong government, justice and economic opportunities in the same way as everybody else. The Imperial War Museum has recently reprinted the official history for the interwar operations in: *N.W. Frontier of India 1920-35. Official History of Operations. Part I, II and III*. London 2004.

Trouble north and south of the border



Præsident Mohammed Daoud Khan (www.embassyofafghanistan.org) og General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq (obit-mag.com)

In Pakistan the break-away of Bangladesh in 1971 led to autonomy movements in both Sind, Baluchistan and among the Pashtuns, and a long period of serious civil unrest brought Mohammed Zia ul-Haq's military takeover in 1977. Thereafter the military and security services consolidated their control over the state by allying themselves to the fundamentalist Islamic forces in the country, moving it from being the home and sanctuary for South Asia's Muslims that the founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah had created to becoming a semi-Islamic state, ignoring the wishes of the popular majority. From then onwards the Muslim leaders of the country were allowed to conduct a campaign of hatred against the West and especially the U.S. that has poisoned public opinion both in Pakistan itself and among Pakistani expatriate communities in Europe and North America. This became one of the significant sources of our present troubles.

In Afghanistan the development had moved in the opposite direction. The Kabul Western or Soviet educated intellectual elite pressed for a centralisation of power to accelerate social and economic reforms. The first step was the ouster of the slowly reforming Afghan king Mohammed Zahir Shah by his cousin Mohammed Daoud Khan in 1973. The coup removed the legitimate ruler of the country. Daoud sought to enhance his popularity by intensifying Afghan support for the Pakistani Pashtun and Balochi independence claims.²³ However, Daoud's internal position remained weak, and to consolidate power he sought the support of the two Communist Party fractions: the "*Khalg*" (Masses) and the "*Parcham*" (Banner). With the communists behind him he moved against the still weak fundamentalist leaders, including the later Mujahidin leaders Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and Ahmad Shah Massoud. They fled and were received with open arms by both the unstable Pakistani Bhutto government that tasked the Frontier Corps to give support. The refugees also found sympathy and help from Pakistan's Islamic politicians. The Pakistani leaders repaid

²³ Frontier of Faith, pp. 185-194 covers Afghan rejection in principle of the Durand Line during the first fifteen years of Pakistani. Focus on the Baluchistan and Pushtoon Question analysis the question at the time of Daoud's campaign.

Daoud's support for the Balochi and Pashtun separatists by giving support to an unsuccessful rebellion in Afghanistan.²⁴

In spring 1978 Daoud was killed in a coup and replaced by the Khalg leader Nur Muhammed Taraki who in his place was murdered in September 1979 on the initiative of his rival and Prime Minister, Hafizullah Amin. The local rebellion against Daoud in summer 1975 had been smashed quickly; however the full communist takeover in spring 1978 provoked a general uprising in Afghanistan outside Kabul in May, the month after the coup. From the beginning the rebellion was controlled from a political and military headquarters in Peshawar in Pakistan and its main base became the camps around that city where hundreds of thousands of refugees from the fighting were settling into camps. In early 1979 the Afghan government had lost control and repeatedly asked for a direct Soviet military intervention within the framework of the co-operation treaty signed in December 1978. Soviet military advisory and material assistance had increased in stages since 1972,²⁵ and limited Soviet forces were already in place. After some months of hesitation the Soviet Politburo decided to stabilise the situation with an operation modelled on the 1968 intervention into Czechoslovakia. The air landing and over-land operations took place without problems over a couple of days in late December 1979. Amin was killed by his Soviet Special Forces guards and replaced by Babrak Kamal, the leader of the less hard line Parcham Afghan Communist Party fraction.

Early that month Zia ul-Haq had made a public declaration of the intention to move Pakistan towards Islamisation.²⁶

Thereafter the scene was set for a new "Great Game" over the Durand Line, this time with the Russians over-extended into Afghanistan and with the active operations from the mountainous and desert core Pashto tribal areas in a north-western direction rather than into the Indus plain.

²⁴ Imtiaz Gul gives a good sketch of the initial Pakistani response in the mid-1970s in his: *The Most Dangerous Place*, Chapter 1: Pakistan's Dangerous Game.

²⁵ When the author stayed in Hotel Kabul in mid-March 1976 in transit home from Pakistan, he had been one of only two Western guests. The rest were Soviet military in uniform.

²⁶ The description of the developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan is to a high extent based on: Ahmed Rashid: *Descent into Chaos*. For the Soviet operations here and later: Lester W. Grau & Michael A. Gress (eds): *The Russian General Staff: The Soviet-Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost*. Lawrence (Kansas) 2002, and Gregory Feifer: *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*. New York 2009.

Pashtun core areas as anti-Soviet bases



Soviet airborne soldiers in Afghanistan (englishrussia.com)

The key role of the border area, the under-developed Pashtun districts on both sides of the Pakistani-Afghan border became clear shortly after the Soviet forces that entered Afghanistan in late 1979. The invading army was fundamentally unsuited to conduct anything but massive offensive mechanised operations in Western Europe or Manchuria. Successful counter-insurgency either requires a combination of massive force and the extreme brutality required to commit semi-genocide or the combination of extreme patience, self-discipline, political sensitivity, minimum use of force, low level initiative, all level flexibility and ability to subordinate the military to other agencies was described above. The Soviet Army was too thin on the ground and too weakly supported by the Soviet leadership and people to do the former, and they did not have the resources, leadership and morale to do the latter. The Afghan Army that they came to support had to a large extent deserted during the Taraki and Amin regimes, so the Soviet units had to learn to do the job themselves. With heavy use of special forces and other elite units they gradually developed an ability to carry out deliberate tactical “*cordon and search*” (called “*block and sweep*”), raiding, ambush and convoy operations – combined with punishment by destruction of property and terror attacks on civilians – actually “*Buchering and Bolting*” as the British Indian operations from 1897 to 1937, but at a far larger scale and destructive level and far less accurately directed than the British operations then. The combination of very limited force strength, low morale and discipline and brutal in indiscriminate use of firepower made around five million Afghans flee to Pakistan and Iran and turned the rest of the population away from the Communist government in Kabul.

The refugees in the Pakistani and Iranian camps supplied recruits for the insurgent Mujahidin forces that operated as mobile units from training areas and bases beyond the Durand Line, entering Afghanistan to conduct major attacks to supplement local resistance forces and thereafter again seeking refuge abroad to avoid destruction in a “*block and sweep*” response operation. The unofficial Soviet General Staff analysis developed two decades after the withdrawal does not seem to recognise that the de facto recognition of a safe haven in the Pashtun core areas of Pakistan (as well as in Iran) for the forces of counter-revolution

probably doomed their limited effort from the start, in spite of the rather narrow popular base of the resistance allowed by the Pakistani leaders.

Zia ul-Haq's military coup and his policies of deliberate Islamisation to prop-up his political position had made his country an international outcast when the Soviet moved. However, the Soviet invasion quickly tempted the West to move-in to exploit the Soviet over-extension, and the Saudis arrived to support and recruit and develop fellow-Islamists. Zia was even allowed to block direct Western sponsorship of any part of the Afghan resistance not suitably motivated by radical Islam. Support was channelled through the now vastly expanded Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence Agency (ISI) that decided who to assist with what: seven Islamic resistance groupings were selected as worthy; secular nationalistic and democratic were left out, the more radically Islamic, the better. A very significant part went to the organisation of the brutal extremist Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Thereby Zia indirectly consolidated the power of the fundamentalist Islamic forces in his own country that he had chosen to legitimise his continued rule. The substantial training, military and subversive structure required to support Pakistan's war beyond the Durand Line by selected Afghani proxies had to be established in the Pashtun majority core areas in FATA and northern Balochistan to become effective.

After a "*surge*" in force level to achieve a quick military victory in 1986 by the same type of ineffective counter-insurgency operations as those conducted previously, the Soviet strategy changed during the next two years to one of transferring operations to the Afghan forces and "*national reconciliation*", where a new Afghan government under Mohammed Najibullah decentralised the armed forces by giving a greater role to structures developed from local militias, by opening the political system to the moderate part of the Islamic opposition and by trying to save part of the modernisation reforms within a more Islamic constitution. In winter 1988-1989 the Soviet forces left.²⁷

²⁷ As note 12.

Pakistani geo-strategic use of the Pashto core areas



Kabul when captured by the Taliban with Pakistani support in 1996 (www.dailykos.com)

Much would have been different later had the U.S. led and orchestrated full international support to the UN sponsored effort to create and manage a stable transition government in Afghanistan that followed the Soviet withdrawal. It would only have required something similar to the effort that led to the Bonn Agreement in December 2001. Instead a serious effort was deemed futile and bureaucratic inertia led to a short period of continued American support via ISI to Pakistan's "Great Gaming". It was an unfortunate mistake that would be repeated a decade later when another Bush Administration shifted its focus fully to Saddam Hussein and lost any interest in the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan.

ISI used its specialists and bases in the FATA supported by the Pashto manned paramilitary Frontier Corps in a double offensive to improve Pakistan's geo-strategic position in its confrontation with India. Guerrillas trained here infiltrated into Kashmir to initiate and fuel the open insurgency that had lasted from 1989 up to the open limited war in 1999 close to the Leh road between the then nuclear armed Pakistan and India. The original Pakistani invasion of Kashmir in autumn 1947 had also been conducted by Pashtun tribal irregular militias.

The direct offensive in spring 1989 to replace Najibullah's government with a Pakistani-friendly and fundamentalist one under Hikmatyar failed initially: Even if Pakistani artillery and communication specialists were employed in direct support of the offensive via Jalalabad towards Kabul, the attempt ended in defeat, and it took three years before the collapse of the Soviet Union and a worsening economic crisis led to Najibullah's fall. Together with the lack of American interest the competition between the former government and resistance military leaders, now de facto war lords, meant that no stable government could be created.

In January 1993 the full-scale civil war started with Hikmatyar's bombardment of Kabul. Nearly all modernization, national cohesion and infrastructure developed during the previous century was destroyed in the fighting that followed and led to the formation of the young puritan Pashtun Taliban movement in

the refugee religious schools in the Quetta area in northern Baluchistan. With its success in battle and support from a war weary Afghan population it had achieved control of nearly all of the country five years later. At the end of the 1990s the Pakistan military leadership under Pervez Musharraf and ISI had shifted their direct support and co-operation from Hikmatyar to the Taliban. Indirectly the ISI supported the sophisticated leaders of Al Qa'ida that had moved to Afghanistan and increasingly defined and dominated the foreign policy views and actions of the naïve Taliban. With contacts and local knowledge from the FATA and bordering Afghan areas from their co-operation with the Mujahidin in the 1980's, Al Qa'ida quickly took over and ran the formerly directly ISI-managed fundamentalist training facilities for local and international Muslim militants in the border area. The second Clinton administration saw the growing threat, but it could only react in a symbolic way with long range air weapons. There was no willingness to move even to air "*butcher and bolt*" strikes until after the events of 11 September 2001.²⁸

²⁸ Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, and David Loyn: *Butcher & Bolt*. For an analysis of the development towards war-lordism: Antonio Giustozzi: *Empires of Mud. Wars and warlords in Afghanistan*. London 2009.

To get the monster genie back into the bottle



US Marines from 24th MEU on patrol in Helmand Province (www.captainsjournal.com)

“The war in Iraq drained resources from Afghanistan before things were under control, and we never recovered. We never looked back.”²⁹

Neither the British in the two invasions in the 19th Century nor the Soviet in their intervention into the Afghan civil war in 1979 had expected to end up in demanding and protracted counter-insurgency operations. However *“Operation Enduring Freedom”*, the U.S. invasion that started in November 2001, differed from both the British and Soviet invasions of central Afghanistan went further in its narrow military naïvety by not considering *any* significant post-invasion deployment essential or even relevant for the regular American military forces. The very name of the operation highlighting the shallow roots and depth of the pre-invasion strategic analysis. A *“light footprint”* would be sufficient.

It was several years before the crisis in Iraq brought the successful bureaucratic rebellion of senior officers of the army and marine light infantry against the ruling military paradigm and the introduction of a new counterinsurgency doctrine. According to the then Pentagon understanding, its armed forces should smash the enemy military quickly with overwhelming, scientifically distributed, accurate firepower and thereafter redeploy to bases ready for the next operation leaving lesser qualified allies and civilian agencies to pick up the pieces and maybe leaving some special force elements for a time to train the locals.³⁰ The economically attractive *“footprint”* was made dependent on a use of air power very similar in concept and motive to the British Royal Air Force *“air control”* policy for the border zone in the interwar period.

²⁹ Richard Armitage, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State 2001-2005 in October 2007. Seth G. Jones: *In the Graveyard of Empires. America’s War in Afghanistan*. New York 2009, p.127.

³⁰ Ucko: *The New Counterinsurgency Era*, and Richard Duncan Downie: *Learning from Conflict. The U.S. Military in Vietnam, El Salvador, and the Drug War*. Westport (Connecticut) 1998.

Due to the failure to capture Osama bin-Laden and continued low-level problems on the border, especially opposite FATA, a light army division size force remained, however most of the large country was cynically left to the re-emerging warlords and allies not capable of the American Way of modern warfare. No American example or pressure was applied on the world community to live up to and realise the American president's spring 2002 promise of a "*Marshall Plan for Afghanistan*" to support reconstruction of the demolished country.

The Musharraf-chaired Pakistani generals used the U.S. dependence on Pakistani bases to extricate and bring both Taliban fighters and Pakistani volunteers and ISI agents back to safety followed by reorganisation and re-training in FATA and northern Baluchistan. The new Afghan president, Hamid Karzai's, return to the old Emir tradition paying stipends for peace to the local tribal leaders in FATA failed to have effect,³¹ probably because his efforts were undermined politically from Islamabad, because his money was more than balanced by other donations, and because the U.S. had shifted to Iraq, where she had become fully committed in a rather clumsy learning process that indirectly instructed Islamic militants everywhere how the West should be resisted. All saw how to fight modern Western forces with minimum own risks. With no significant U.S. leadership in Afghanistan, the inferior Western militaries only committed very limited forces and other assistance to improve security and accelerate reconstruction.

In 2005, after the ISI-supported expansion and retraining, the different mainly Pashtun militants stepped-up operations into southern and eastern Afghanistan from their Pakistani bases, however, the worsening security situation had already led to the *Médecins sans Frontière* to withdraw from the country in summer 2004. A couple of the insurgent organisations now employed to destabilise Afghanistan had actually been created in the early 1990s to fight against the Indians in Kashmir.

The U.S. responded by sending armed drones into FATA airspace on cadre assassination missions, a superior successor to more blunt "*air control*" "*butcher and bolt*" operations, but ISI continued its combination of direct support to the Taliban, including the bombing of the Indian Kabul embassy in July 2008, and the rather limited support for U.S. and other western operations. Western forces now expanded into southern Afghanistan to contain and roll-back the so-called new-Taliban offensive.

The increasingly and understandably self-confident militants in the border provinces who could get support from tribal members in the large Pakistani cities now started a terror offensive to destabilise the political system in Pakistan itself as well as the training of discontented members of the vast Pakistani and other Muslim expatriate communities in the West. The problem had worsened because Punjabi militants had joined the Pashtuns in the border zone and for operations elsewhere.³² The murder of the opposition leader Benazir Bhutto in late 2007 did not change the situation and neither did the terror attacks in Mumbai one year later. An adjustment of policy only came when militants targeted Pakistani military and ISI installations, and after new governments had taken over in both Islamabad and Washington the destabilisation campaign directed against both countries from the border zone *may* finally be seen as the indivisible problem it has been for more than a century after the Pashtuns were divided by the Durand Line and left to their own sponsored chiefs and poverty.³³

³¹ Imtiaz Gul: *The Most Dangerous Place. Pakistan's Lawless Frontier*. London 2009, pp. 24f.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.18-20.

³³ Mainly built on Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, which, however, is supported by Cordesman's December 2006 presentation (see note 2). The period is well covered from a U.S.-Afghani perspective by Seth G. Jones: *In the Graveyard of Empires. America's War in Afghanistan*. New York 2009.

So far the limited Pakistani counterinsurgency efforts have been concentrated against first Swat and then Waziristan, and they have been given the form of “*offensives*” unlikely to have any lasting effect. The sanctuaries in the west have been left fully operational, making NATO and Afghani operations in Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan both difficult and very risky. The only change has taken place in Swat and Waziristan, where the Al Qa’ida leaders are hiding, the base area for attacks against the U.S. forces across the border, because it was from here that the insurgents started an offensive slide towards Islamabad. Even the fact that U.S. has now taken the leading role in the counterinsurgency in South Afghanistan has still not led to any Pakistani effort to close the Taliban bases in northern Baluchistan.



The still untouched sanctuary. Pro-Taliban protest in Quetta against the military offensive against the Taliban in FATA.(www.guardian.co.uk)

One reason for the lack of an effective effort in Western Pakistan could be that the best regular infantry units of the Pakistani Army are the Balochi and Frontier Force Regiments with the latter recruited among the Pashto. Another cause could be the lack of counterinsurgency training in the regular army which is explained and reinforced by a fundamental unwillingness of the army to transfer more forces from the borders with India and prepare them for a new, in most generals’ mind , secondary task.

There are only few, if any, indications that can challenge the suspicion that the main motive behind cross-border operations against NATO and the Afghan government structures in South Afghanistan remains the wish of elements in ISI and the Pakistani armed forces to destabilise Afghanistan and remove the risk of any continued Western and possibly Indian influence here. Thus they hope to succeed in their geo-strategic “*Great Gaming*” by the resilience of their trainees. The insurgents retraining and reequipping around Quetta and then dispatched into Afghanistan are different from those further north-east by being overwhelmingly local – Afghans and Pakistanis. They are not Al Qa’ida-foreigners. The U.S. has so far not done much to empower the Pakistani civilian political leaders to force the Pakistani security forces to throttle the war against itself and its allies in Southern Afghanistan.³⁴

³⁴ For a recent, balanced analysis, after the leak of the Pentagon documents, see: Afghanistan war logs: whose side is Pakistan on? Wikileaks reports have galvanized opinions of some Americans who view the Pakistani military with suspicion. guardian.co.uk, Monday 26 July 2010.

Now the Pakistani government has been weakened by the disastrous Monsoon floods. As the International Institute for Strategic Studies observed on 20th September 2010: *“If Pakistanis' disappointment with their governing institutions were to become even more active and widespread, it is possible that relationships between Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line could develop even further, leading to the revival of a movement towards 'Pashtunistan'.”*³⁵

³⁵ In the Strategic Comments, Volume 16, Comment 29: Pakistan's floods: broader implications.

The framework of current Western doctrine of counterinsurgency



David Galula 1956 (coincidental.wordpress.com) and David Petraeus 2007 (upload.wikimedia.org)

“The counterinsurgent force must separate the insurgent from the rest of the populace. This is best accomplished through the effective use of populace and resources control. Care must be taken to ensure that civilians are not injured or mistreated as a result of counterinsurgent operations”³⁶

“Every country is divided for administrative and military purposes into provinces, counties, districts, zones, etc. The border areas are a permanent source of weakness for the counterinsurgent whatever his administrative structures, and this advantage is usually exploited by the insurgent, especially in the initial violent stages of the insurgency. By moving from one side of the border to the other, the insurgent is often able to escape pressure or, at least, to complicate operations for his opponent.”³⁷

An army, be it Soviet, American, Pakistani or even colonial British, will primarily organise, equip and train for conventional operations against other regular armies, and the emphasis in tactical behaviour will normally be on destroying the enemy forces in a combination of offensive manoeuvre and use of overwhelming firepower. Where air forces are involved, they will focus on the ability to destroy the enemy command, forces and supporting infrastructure by bombardment - hopefully accurate.

When armed forces have been employed in counterinsurgencies during the Post-World War II period, the focus has invariably been on large scale offensive sweep operations where any resistance was overwhelmed by artillery and air bombardment followed by measuring the number of killed by the

³⁶ FM 3-24.2 (FM 90-8, FM 7-98) TACTICS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY, 21. April 2009, 2-118, Table 2-1. Insurgent strengths and countermeasures.

³⁷ David Galula: Counterinsurgency Warfare. Theory and Practice. Westport, Connecticut 1964, Chapter 2: The Prerequisites for a Successful Insurgency: The Border Doctrine. Contrary to Galula, Sir Robert Thompson: Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences in Malaya and Vietnam. London 1966, did not consider early border control essential for the success of the counterinsurgency campaign (see chapter 13 “Jungle and Frontiers”).

explosives or caught in the sweep. That the positive perception of the result of such operations was fundamentally flawed became clear when the insurgency worsened. The U.S. Army and Marine Corps only started to re-learn that the professional gut-feeling was nonsense when the situation in Iraq went from bad to desperate in 2004-2005.

Thereafter U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps used the classical counter-insurgency learning developed on the basis of French understanding of their 1954 Indochina defeat³⁸ and British promotion of their Malaya success.³⁹ They combined those ideas with both their own, deliberately suppressed lessons from the second part of the Vietnam War and the actual painful experience from Iraq.⁴⁰ The studies and discussions of the two land combat services quickly led to a modern Counterinsurgency Field Manual and due to the critical situation in Iraq they succeeded in having it approved in mid-December 2006 in spite of Pentagon's, half the army's, the air force's and navy's continued frustrations and bureaucratic resistance.⁴¹ The fundamental change in operational paradigm that the new manual meant can best be illustrated by a slide text from the presentation by Doctor Conrad C. Crane from the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute from October 2006. Crane does this clearly by highlighting the "*COIN Paradoxes*":

- *The more you protect your force, the less secure you are*
- *The more force you use, the less effective you are*
- *The more successful you are, the less force you can use –and the more risk you must accept*
- *Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction*
- *The best weapons for COIN do not shoot*
- *The host nation doing something tolerably is sometimes better than us doing it well*
- *If a tactic works this week, it might not work next week. If it works in this province, it might not work in the next*
- *Tactical success guarantees nothing*
- *Most important decisions are not made by generals*⁴²

However, the Iraqi context of the new manual was clear in the very superficial and halfhearted way it covered the border problem underlined by Galula as quoted above. It only mentioned that an insurgency could be "*transnational*", but illustrated this by the example Al Qa'ida, and it underlined optimistically that the insurgent's dependence on support from sanctuaries across a border was a weakness that could be exploited, as he could not control the border area, and because modern precision weapons made him vulnerable even across the border.⁴³

However, when the U.S. Army had completed the development of a Field Manual for Counterinsurgency Tactics in spring 2009, the border problem was taken far more seriously, probably because of the reality in Afghanistan. It noted that "*Ethnic or religious communities in other states may also provide a form of external support and sanctuary, particularly for transnational insurgencies. Access to external support influences the effectiveness of insurgencies*" and that insurgent training centres could be in another

³⁸ Galula: Counterinsurgency Warfare.

³⁹ Thompson: Defeating Communist Insurgency.

⁴⁰ Douglas S. Blaufarb: The Counter-Insurgency Era. U.S. Doctrine and Performance 1950 to the Present. New York 1977 and David H. Ucko: The New Counterinsurgency Era. Transforming the U.S. Military for Modern Wars. Washington (DC) 2009

⁴¹ FM 3-24/MCWP3-33.5 COUNTERINSURGENCY, 15. December 2010

⁴² The Evolution of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine. Dr. Conrad Crane. 10 October 2006

⁴³ FM 3-24, 1-77, 1-87 and 1-99.

country.⁴⁴ In the first paragraph of a section dedicated to border area issues the manual underlined that *“In addition to the typical external support, usually supplies that an insurgent group may receive from across a border, insurgents may also establish sanctuary base camps and conduct cross-border operations from adjacent countries”*. This meant that the border control was unlikely to take place in an effective way without significant U.S. involvement. *“Physically sealing the border may be impossible, since doing so could increase the requirement for forces and materiel beyond available resources. Placing forces or barriers at every crossing and entry site may also be impossible.”* The 2006 optimism had vanished. By the suggestion: *“Establish or convene a village or tribal council from both sides of the border to identify and solve issues”* the manual actually recognised the reality of counterinsurgency divided by the Durand Line.⁴⁵



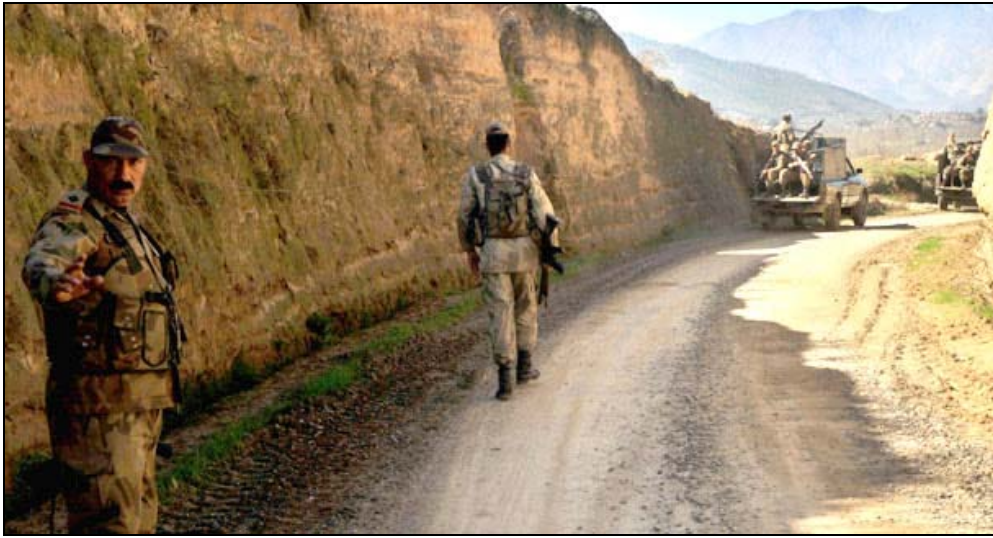
From the Kunar border district in late autumn 2009. Scouts from 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) provides security during a search operation (politifront.files.wordpress.com)

However, even if the manual has now been amended to include a better understanding of the trans-border problems, this does not really improve the situation very much. One cannot realistically hope to prevail with even the ideal tactical manual as long as a realistic strategy that covers both Afghanistan and Pakistan is missing, with inter-agency and inter-allied efforts that remain fundamentally unbalanced and uncoordinated, and with a Pakistani effort south of the border controlled by a contradictory strategic and anachronistic tactical logic.

⁴⁴ FM 3-24.2, 2-53 and 2-79

⁴⁵ Ibid., Border Areas, 3-69 to 3-83

From optimism towards collapse.



A belated and limited effort now about to end: Pakistani soldiers in continuing “sanitizing” “operations” in South Waziristan this summer (2010). (south-waziristan-news.newslib.com)

“Time affects everything and influences all decisions.”⁴⁶ “The border is our albatross.”⁴⁷ “Time. The final dimension ... is ... so obvious this it invites neglect by theorists ... ‘time’ is undoubtedly the least forgiving of error among strategy’s dimensions.”⁴⁸

Crucial time has been wasted by the international community in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the best case it still remains an open question if the insurgency in both Afghanistan and the central parts of Pakistan linked to the wild Pashtun border area can still be contained. Using Gil Merom’s analysis in *“How Democracies Lose Small Wars. State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam”*⁴⁹ as the basis, there is not much hope. According to Merom modern liberal democracies are nearly certain to fail in protracted, limited wars. First the South Koreans and now the Dutch withdrew from Afghanistan after the collapse of political will. The difficulties of the governments of Germany, France, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and the U.S to sustain public support for their deployment mean that only a few more years are available to make Afghanistan stable and strong enough to defend itself.

The constantly used, but totally flawed argument, that we have tried and failed since 2001 (rather than 2006) reinforce the pressure for early withdrawal as does the constant use of the word “victory” as an

⁴⁶ FM 3-24.2 (FM 90-8, FM 7-98) TACTICS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY, 1-29.

⁴⁷ Senior officer from the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division in March 2008: Seth: In the Graveyard of Empires, p.258.

⁴⁸ Colin Gray: Modern Strategy. Oxford 1999, pp.42-43.

⁴⁹ Cambridge 2003

objective. However, the constant intensification of the fighting, especially in south-western Afghanistan, with increased NATO losses drives the perception that the effort is hopeless.⁵⁰

Late 2010, there still seemed to be a small window of opportunity left. Firstly, as mentioned initially, there is nothing that indicates that the tribal Pashtun in Afghanistan and Pakistan are fundamentally different from the majority of other humans. They too seek improved opportunities for their children, better healthcare, improved infrastructure, better opportunities for employment and fair and just treatment from the local representatives of the rulers – at the same time as they combine their aspirations with a sound, sceptical, “*conservative*” attitude to change and with a natural wish to be able to influence local development. The only likely difference is that Pashtun experience with local and central rulers will tend to make them both justly extra sceptical and grateful for even small convincing and stable improvements. The challenge is to be able to supply that little extra better government and the peace to achieve progress. It should not be impossible to compete with the Taliban and other groups that have nothing more to offer than a strict application of the Sharia law and regression to a utopian past. The initial reactions of the people of Waziristan liberated by the Pakistani Army did confirm again that Pashtuns are like everybody else.⁵¹

The other positive development then were the indications of the increasing willingness of the U.S. from 2008 onwards to use its leverage to convince all sides and especially Pakistani security agencies to stop “*Great Gaming*” and thereafter to see and treat the insurgency as well as the counter-insurgency campaign as one. It was not easy, because it would require the total termination of more than three decades of naïve support of the Pakistani armed forces that had only been ended gradually since 2004. A key obstacle to progress even if this happened, however, was that the coordinated and combined effort could not bring real progress if it remained limited to a security (military, intelligence and police) effort. To have a lasting effect it must extend to political reforms, good local government and some economic development in the Pashtun tribal areas on both sides of the line. The daily news from summer 2010 underlined that we were still far from that stage, even in the area where the Pakistani security forces then made a visible effort due to the rebellion’s proximity to Peshawar – and Islamabad.⁵²

Now, in early 2011, the continuation of effective Pakistani security operations against radical Islamists in the Borderland seems highly unlikely. The assassination of the Punjabi Governor Salman Taseer early 2011 and the open public support for his murderer in the younger part of the Pakistani elite has castrated the PPP government and demonstrated that the rebellion is gaining control of the core parts of the country. It is a development that even another military take-over is unlikely to control, considering the 35 years long alliance between the army and the radical clergy. The source of the main security problem for the West and the Afghan government is no longer the Pashtun Borderland. It is the chaos and likely Militant Islamic control of a nuclear armed Pakistan still allied to China.

⁵⁰ Charles A, Miller: Endgame for the West in Afghanistan? Explaining the Decline in Support for the War in Afghanistan in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, France and Germany.

⁵¹ Briefing Waziristan: The last frontier. The Economist, January 2nd 2010.

⁵² E.g. the news items about American drone strikes and Pakistani offensives by Syed Shoab Hasan in BBC News, Karachi on 24.6.2010, in NEWKERALA.COM on 30.6.2010 and DAWN.COM on 11.7.2010.

Final remarks



Salman Taseer's assassin Malik Mumtaz Hussain Qadri arrives to the Rawalpindi courthouse with rose petals from his supporters (<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/>)

To conclude the article's short sketch: for more than a hundred years we have witnessed the employment of tribes from the Indo-Afghan Borderland as rebel auxiliaries , deliberately keeping the area backward in the development of good government and the local economy:

- 1) By the Emir against the British, employing religious activism then as later.
- 2) By the British as a potential guerrilla against a Russian forward move.
- 3) By the Germans without success in World War I.
- 4) Thereafter again by first the Emir and thereafter the Indian Congress Party against British control.
- 5) Then by the Pakistanis in a failed coup attempt to gain full control of Kashmir.
- 6) Then again by the leader of the new republican Afghanistan against a weakened Pakistan.
- 7) Thereafter by the Pakistani military leaders with massive U.S. and Saudi support against the Soviet invaders consolidating their domestic hold on power by a deliberate alliance with the radical Islamic forces in Pakistan and among the Pashtuns on both sides of the border.

- 8) After the withdrawal of Soviets the Pakistani security elite employed the now available resources to seek a subservient regime in Kabul for the “Great Game” against India, an effort that succeeded with the Taliban victory of 1996 and the use of the training bases in the Pashtun Borderland in the insurgency in Kashmir that culminated in the open war of 1999.
- 9) This policy of the Pakistani security elite continued after 2001 in parallel with the official support for U.S. and other Western operations to pacify and rebuild Afghanistan, now with an additional insurgency centre in the Taliban core area around Quetta. Nothing really changed until a couple of years back when the Islamic insurgency turned against its Pakistani elite supporters and Western interests in the large cities, where terrorist cells could operate from their “emigrant” labour Pashtun communities. With the assassination of Salman Taseer and the clear and effective public support for his assassin, the problem is no longer limited to the borderland.

Looking back on the past century, the only novelty is the regional and even global ambitions and reach as well as the power of the insurgency from the cradles in the Pashtun areas.