Theses and Dissertations   1. Thesis and Dissertation Collection, all items

2006-09

Exploiting tribal networks through conflict

Peterson, Joseph S.

Monterey California. Naval Postgraduate School

https://hdl.handle.net/10945/2609

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

EXPLOITING TRIBAL NETWORKS THROUGH CONFLICT

by

Joseph S. Peterson

September 2006

Thesis Advisor:	Anna Simons
Second Reader:	David Tucker

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		*Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188*
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.		
1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	**2. REPORT DATE** September 2006	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Exploiting Tribal Networks through Conflict		**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Joseph S. Peterson		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		**10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.		
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

In the current fight against Islamic extremism, the United States is challenged in its ability to isolate and target specific individuals and groups in *select* regional environments – efforts that are arguably symptomatic of broader shortfalls in US global influence and strategic reach. These particularly troublesome environments are characterized by a lack of State control and are populated with fiercely independent, largely Muslim, and decidedly anti-western communities.

Unable to consistently penetrate and influence these "ungoverned" regions, operational intelligence remains sporadic and opportunities limited. No broader, structural change has yet been made that would weaken or sever the links among Islamic extremists and their regional hosts over a sustained period or enable greater cooperation between the US or its allies with indigenous tribal populations. Accordingly, these regions continue to provide ideal locations for terrorist sanctuary, bases of support and operation, and freedom of movement. A *supplemental* US policy option is required.

The challenge thus becomes one of how to create more effective opportunities to gain influence and control over these select tribal regions while countering the influence of competitors over a sustained period. A policy of manipulating tribal fractures and rivalries in order to induce or heighten internal conflict could provide these opportunities.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Colonial North America, Creating Opportunities, Developing Dependencies, Disruption, Divide-and-Conquer, Factionalism, Global War on Terror, Influence and Control, Northwest Frontier, Supplemental Policy Options, Tribal Conflict, Tribal Manipulation			**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 83
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

EXPLOITING TRIBAL NETWORKS THROUGH CONFLICT

Joseph S. Peterson
Major, United States Army
B.S., University of Miami, 1993

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 2006

Author: Joseph S. Peterson

Approved by: Dr. Anna Simons
                   Thesis Advisor

                   Dr. David Tucker
                   Second Reader

                   Dr. Gordon McCormick
                   Chairman, Department of Defense Analysis

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

In the current fight against Islamic extremism, the United States is challenged in its ability to isolate and target specific individuals and groups in *select* regional environments – efforts that are arguably symptomatic of broader shortfalls in US global influence and strategic reach. These particularly troublesome environments are characterized by a lack of State control and are populated with fiercely independent, largely Muslim, and decidedly anti-western communities.

Unable to consistently penetrate and influence these "ungoverned" regions, operational intelligence remains sporadic and opportunities limited. No broader, structural change has yet been made that would weaken or sever the links among Islamic extremists and their regional hosts over a sustained period or enable greater cooperation between the US or its allies with indigenous tribal populations. Accordingly, these regions continue to provide ideal locations for terrorist sanctuary, bases of support and operation, and freedom of movement. A *supplemental* US policy option is required.

The challenge thus becomes one of how to create more effective opportunities to gain influence and control over these select tribal regions while countering the influence of competitors over a sustained period. A policy of manipulating tribal fractures and rivalries in order to induce or heighten internal conflict could provide these opportunities.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF MAPS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank my wife, Suhui, for her patience, support, and encouragement while I researched and developed this thesis. I would also like to thank her for reminding me of what is truly important in life and keeping me balanced throughout the year. I am similarly grateful to my parents who offered early feedback and critiques on both my ideas and written work.

I am also deeply indebted to my thesis advisor, Dr. Anna Simons, for her imagination, truly unconventional thought, and for having challenged me in so many ways. Dr. Simons was instrumental in focusing my efforts and assisting me in my research. Her personal attention, suggestions, and guidance were absolutely amazing.

Finally I would like to thank my second reader, Dr. David Tucker, for his assistance and instruction. His course in Analytical Methods proved invaluable in helping to structure my proposal and final product - and his feedback equally critical. Likewise, I must thank the staff and instructors at the Naval Postgraduate School. I feel truly privileged to have had an opportunity to attend the Defense Analysis program and am a better officer for it.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I.   INTRODUCTION AND MANIPULATION AS POLICY

> Sudden, eruptive changes…afford a favorable ground for the swift transformation of social institutions…and the emergence of radically different social forms.[1]

In the current fight against Islamic extremism, the United States is challenged in its ability to isolate and target specific individuals and groups in *select* regional environments – efforts that are arguably symptomatic of broader shortfalls in US global influence and strategic reach.

These particularly troublesome environments are characterized by a lack of State control and are populated with fiercely independent, largely Muslim, and decidedly anti-western communities. Examples include Somalia, the northern and southern Waziristan agencies of Pakistan, and the western deserts of Yemen.[2] Communities in these areas operate according to tribal and Islamic traditions and have aligned themselves, in part, with local and non-indigenous Islamic extremists. These alignments have taken different forms and are bound with varied degrees of commitment. However, with few exceptions, these linked social networks have proven difficult to disrupt and remain resistant to direct US influence.

To date, the United States has attempted to co-opt many of these regional communities through monetary incentives and rewards, developmental and humanitarian assistance, or coercion. Many of these efforts have been worked directly or indirectly through allied and local governments. Other programs have sought to build counter-

---

[1] J. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States* (Princeton: 1988), p. 93.

[2] F. T. Miko, ed., *Removing Terrorist Sanctuaries: The 9-11 Commission Recommendations and US Policy* (CRS Report for Congress, February 2005).

terrorism and paramilitary capabilities within the targeted States themselves or their neighbors. Regardless, these collective efforts have met with mixed results and few qualitative successes.[3]

Unable to consistently penetrate and influence these "ungoverned" regions, operational intelligence remains sporadic and opportunities limited. No broader, structural change has yet been made that would weaken or sever the links among Islamic extremists and their regional hosts over a sustained period or enable greater cooperation between the US or its allies with indigenous tribal populations. Accordingly, these regions continue to provide ideal locations for terrorist sanctuary, bases of support and operation, and freedom of movement. A *supplemental* US policy option is required.[4]

The challenge, then, is one of how to create more effective opportunities to gain influence and control over these select tribal regions while countering the influence of competitors over a sustained period. A policy of manipulating tribal fractures and rivalries in order to induce or heighten internal conflict could provide these opportunities.

Rather than engaging tribes as they now exist, I propose a policy of first fragmenting them from within along *existing* fault lines. This implies targeting latent and active tribal divisions and enmities, disrupting systems of mediation or reconciliation, and upending traditional sources (and balances) of power. Opportunities are then exposed as much as they are made, helping to set the conditions for subsequent and far more traditional and/or complementary engagement strategies by reducing current obstructions and tribal resistance.

---

[3] Note: This is the author's assessment following recent setbacks in both Yemen and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of northwest Pakistan. Specifically, it refers to current USAID/NDI efforts in tribal mediation and conflict resolution in Yemen which have met considerable resistance and produced little. Program coordinator Robin Madrid stated in recent *US News and World Report* interview the marginal and largely ineffectual gains made in dealing with the contentious tribal regions north and west of Sana'a. This has been despite monetary incentives, developmental aid, and third-party arbitration. Similarly, intelligence gained that led to the January 2006 UAV missile strike in South Waziristan failed to hit its principle target and has since prompted increased animosity and anti-Western coalescence among the tribes – effectively negating earlier gains associated with humanitarian assistance/support for earthquake relief . Furthermore, it was argued by RAND analyst Christine Fair in January 2006 that these Pakistani earthquake relief efforts were viewed as substandard and inconsequential when compared with parallel efforts conducted by regional extremists.

[4] This policy is an enabler. Through conflict, programs of intelligence collection, recruitment, direct action and related offensive operations, and other traditional engagement efforts would be facilitated – or complemented. It does not obviate the need for current efforts – it simply provides the means for their success and increased effectiveness.

Importantly, inducing internal conflict may also serve to focus regional participants inward and limit their participation in broader, transnational efforts. There is potentially less inclination to fight abroad or support those that do when domestic security considerations significantly outweigh foreign ones.[5] These would not be the struggles being fought in Iraq, post-Taliban Afghanistan, or Chechnya. Rather, they would be more like the relatively self-contained fights witnessed in present-day Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and the Aceh province in Indonesia.

In other words, conflict itself provides the means to influence and further manipulate otherwise hardened social networks – particularly those that unite in the face of direct external threats or pressure. This assumes the inherent corruptibility of all organizations and systems in times of severe crisis as each succumbs to motivations of fear and greed.[6]

Critically, too, conflict does not necessarily imply a pure contest of arms. It may center on an economic crisis, a sponsored pattern of betrayal and defection, or broad civil unrest. Whatever form it takes, it remains for the instigator a divide-and-*exploit* or divide-and-*distract* strategy that turns the enemy against himself, away from others, and exposes opportunities not otherwise available to an external State actor.

Sponsoring or encouraging internal conflict is not new. The idea of weakening one's opponents or affecting broader structural change through infighting, rivalry, and deception is well-documented.

The British, French, and Spanish colonials executed campaigns of tribal manipulation in their conquest of the Americas. The British executed similar policies in the Northwest Frontier of the Indian Subcontinent as did the Russians in Central Asia. More recently, the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 involved a loose confederation of northern Uzbek and Tajik tribes led by the United States against the Taliban and its contingent of Pashtun tribesmen.

---

[5] Data consolidated and analyzed by Dr. David Tucker underscore the fact that only 7% of the personnel involved in al-Qaeda linked attacks came from failed States. Data appears to suggest that those anarchistic or failed States "exported" the fewest participants in the global Salafist jihad presumably due to greater domestic considerations against the "near enemy."

[6] N. Kasfir, "Domestic Anarchy, Security Dilemmas, and Violent Predation," *Why States Fail*, ed. R. Rotberg (Princeton: 2004), pp. 53-72.

Yet perhaps it is the purported - and potentially ongoing - involvement of the US in sponsoring secular Somali tribal opposition against the rising Supreme Islamic Courts Council in Mogadishu which deserves closest inspection. Although the secularists appear unsuccessful as of August 2006, this clandestine (if not formerly covert) effort at countering the Islamic fundamentalists and their regional sponsors is likely far from over. Tellingly, a high degree of factionalism and ideological diversity still simmers in this embattled capital and further attempts by the Islamists to extend their control and initiate broader social reforms throughout Somalia could well provide the conditions for renewed hostilities in the near future.

Conceptually, this effort is then the most closely aligned with what I propose here – with the noted exception of Ethiopia's recent and likely counter-productive involvement. Though little has been disclosed or confirmed in terms of the US role specifically (or that of Egypt, Libya, and Iran), Somalia appears to represent the most recent example of a proxy fight involving regional tribes and competing external influences in an Islamic territory – a fight that lies at the heart of the Global War on Terror.

And yet, beyond these tribal fights, exploiting internal and even latent conflicts has also been observed on a far broader, international scale. The geo-strategic (and ideological) divisions existing among the communist powers of the former Yugoslavia, the USSR, and China proved fertile ground for US manipulation and Western containment efforts during the Cold War, for example.

Yet in all of its forms and degrees this concept is not without risk. Unintended consequences, a host of potential ethical and legal dilemmas, and unavoidable political liability must all be weighed and considered. Certainly, numerous US administrations over the last century have struggled with these very issues, generating a variety of reviews, proposals, and potential justifications.

One of the more famous products among these efforts is the formerly classified policy review known as NSC 68, first circulated in 1950. This document addressed a series of strategic challenges and national security considerations facing the United States in the wake of World War II and the onset of the Cold War. But more notably, the review

offered a broader – and decidedly unapologetic - justification for engaging in otherwise suspect activities in order to counter emerging threats and defend the homeland. The document and its author, Paul Nitze, stated:

> The integrity of our system will not be jeopardized by any measures, overt or covert, violent or non-violent, which serve the purposes of frustrating [our adversary], nor does the necessity for conducting ourselves so as to affirm our values in action as well as words forbid such measures, provided they are appropriately calculated to that end and are not so excessive or misdirected as to make us enemies of the people instead of the evil men who have enslaved them.[7]

Subsequently, the formerly classified Doolittle Report on covert CIA operations in 1954 followed with an assessment that "[W]e are facing an implacable enemy whose avowed objective is world domination…there are no rules in such a game."[8] To the degree a similar set of reviews or directives exist today that would support otherwise unconventional policy options in the Global War on Terror is uncertain. Regardless, it is an approach that I contend must be judged and justified by what it could accomplish – not simply by its means.[9]

If selectively applied, effectively executed, and carefully managed, this is a policy which could yield tremendous advantage. But to get to any such point requires a more detailed analysis of how this approach was executed by others, the context in which it occurred, and the results. In this way, applicable lessons can be extracted, methodologies understood, and a policy more effectively drafted to support the operational challenges and objectives of today.

To this end, two case studies have been selected and analyzed. The first case study describes European colonial and commercial efforts in North America from the early 16th century through the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. I evaluate both the French and British entry into the Continent and their commensurate rivalry and attempts at regional hegemony using native tribes. The second case details the British experience in the Northwest Frontier of the Indian Subcontinent and the deliberate recruitment of

---

[7] L. Gaddis,. The Cold War: A New History. Penguin Press, NY 2005. p. 164.

[8] Ibid., p. 165.

[9] J. Mill. *Utilitarianism* (1861) as appeared in extract titled *Happiness as the Foundation of Morality*.

Pashtun tribesmen, beginning in late 1846, during the period of the so-called close-border policy, and their use as irregular and paramilitary forces throughout the region.

Both case studies examine the *deliberate manipulation of tribal factionalism by a State power* and the implications for contemporary policy development. Both studies also demonstrate the fundamental – if not universal – points of leverage inherent in many acephelous tribal organizations, and how the State can gain initial access and advantage. What we find are select economic vulnerabilities and trade dependencies, omnipresent levels of inter-tribal competition and rivalry, and survival-driven decision-making.

And yet these have to also be viewed as unique cases as each illustrates the process of manipulation at different levels, one at the strategic and operational, the other tactical. Accordingly, it is the North American example that provides the wider view, focusing on the broader potential and theater-level impact of tribal manipulation. This particular study also illustrates what occurs when multiple State actors vie for advantage within a single conflict zone and why it is important to pay attention to the varied objectives, means, and the consequences of sponsored (or encouraged) inter and intra-tribal warfare as policy.

Specific objectives in this conflict included establishing and securing both territorial and commercial enterprises, weakening or countering the efforts of rival States, and eliminating native competition and facilitating gradual State expansion. The means included a complex interplay of economic interactions, hastened interdependencies, sanctions and rewards, deliberately induced political and military imbalances, social acculturation, and religious.

Finally, the costs of engaging in inter and intra-tribal warfare are examined, including the obligations of the victor to re-order and re-structure the environment if it is to support (and secure) long-term State objectives.

In short what this first example provides is a complete and illustrative "life cycle" for contemporary policy development: beginning with strategic analysis by the State actors involved, the establishment of State intent and objectives and how these were operationalized, and the extent to which the contested region itself was deliberately consolidated and re-ordered. This then sets the stage for a more selective, tactical

analysis of tribal manipulation involving Islamic networks and the unique challenges of initiating (and sustaining) influence among them.

Although categorically similar to North American tribes, penetrating the acephelous Islamic tribes of the Middle East and Central and Southwest Asia is nonetheless more challenging in a number of important respects, including their rugged and remote geographic locations, the significance of their religious and tribal codes of conduct, and the nature of Islamic kinship and bonds of trust. Yet none of this makes them immune. Therefore, the second case study specifically examines the means by which otherwise closed Islamic networks can be breached, tribesmen co-opted, and rivalries and social behaviors manipulated to a degree noted in other non-Islamic tribal engagements. Less attention is given to broader strategic or operational objectives. Instead, the focus is on those tactical efforts that have proven successful in the past and offer promise for today, particularly in those areas where the British have previously operated and where Americans are currently or likely to engage today.

Taken together, these two case studies then suggest a step-by-step and contemporary methodology for manipulating tribal factionalism by the State, one that is appropriately summarized and detailed in Chapter IV.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

II.   COLONIAL MANIPULATION OF NORTH AMERICA

> [British] goals of stability and security could be better achieved through policies that created and perpetuated a fragmented, weblike society with numerous poles of power… Joel S. Migdal[10]

For over three centuries and across an entire continent, European traders, colonists, and frontiersmen waged a fierce campaign for profit, survival, and conquest. It was a campaign involving multiple empires, numerous tribes, and an intricate web of social networks and shifting alliances.

For the British and French, it began along the Atlantic coastline of North America as early as the 1490s. Carefully avoiding the Spanish and Portuguese farther south, British and French fishermen sought profit and opportunity in the waters off of present-day Newfoundland, Labrador, and Nova Scotia. Anchored offshore, these nascent entrepreneurs ventured tentatively onto these northern beaches and islands where contact was first made with the Miramac and the Iroquois; for these Europeans, transatlantic trade had effectively begun.[11]

These early encounters between the northern Europeans and Indians were limited to bartered expendables, stunted social exchanges, and occasional enslavement of Indians caught on board ships that had drawn anchor.

By 1535, the French had penetrated as far inland as present-day Montreal, trading knives for furs and mapping the elaborate river systems. But it would not be until the end of the century that permanent trading posts would first appear along the north Atlantic coast and at the head of the St. Lawrence, followed soon after by fixed settlements, armed garrisons, and powerful commercial charters.[12]

---

[10] J. Migdal. p. 127. This quote specifically referred to British colonial efforts in West Africa; however, the concept is oddly relevant to earlier British efforts in North America.

[11] Both the Spanish and Portuguese preceded the British and French in exploitative and commercial enterprises in the Americas. However, for the northeast and sub-arctic regions of the continent, the British and French had made *their* first contact and began their respective trade and colonial efforts. Importantly, this is not to discount the arrival and activities of the Dutch and Swedes – simply, the focus remains on the larger British and French efforts.

[12] F. Jennings, *The Founders of America* (New York: 1993), pp. 167-185, 204.

For the British and French, the continent offered vast economic potential. Accordingly, both powers positioned themselves for competitive advantage and began aggressively extracting native resources.
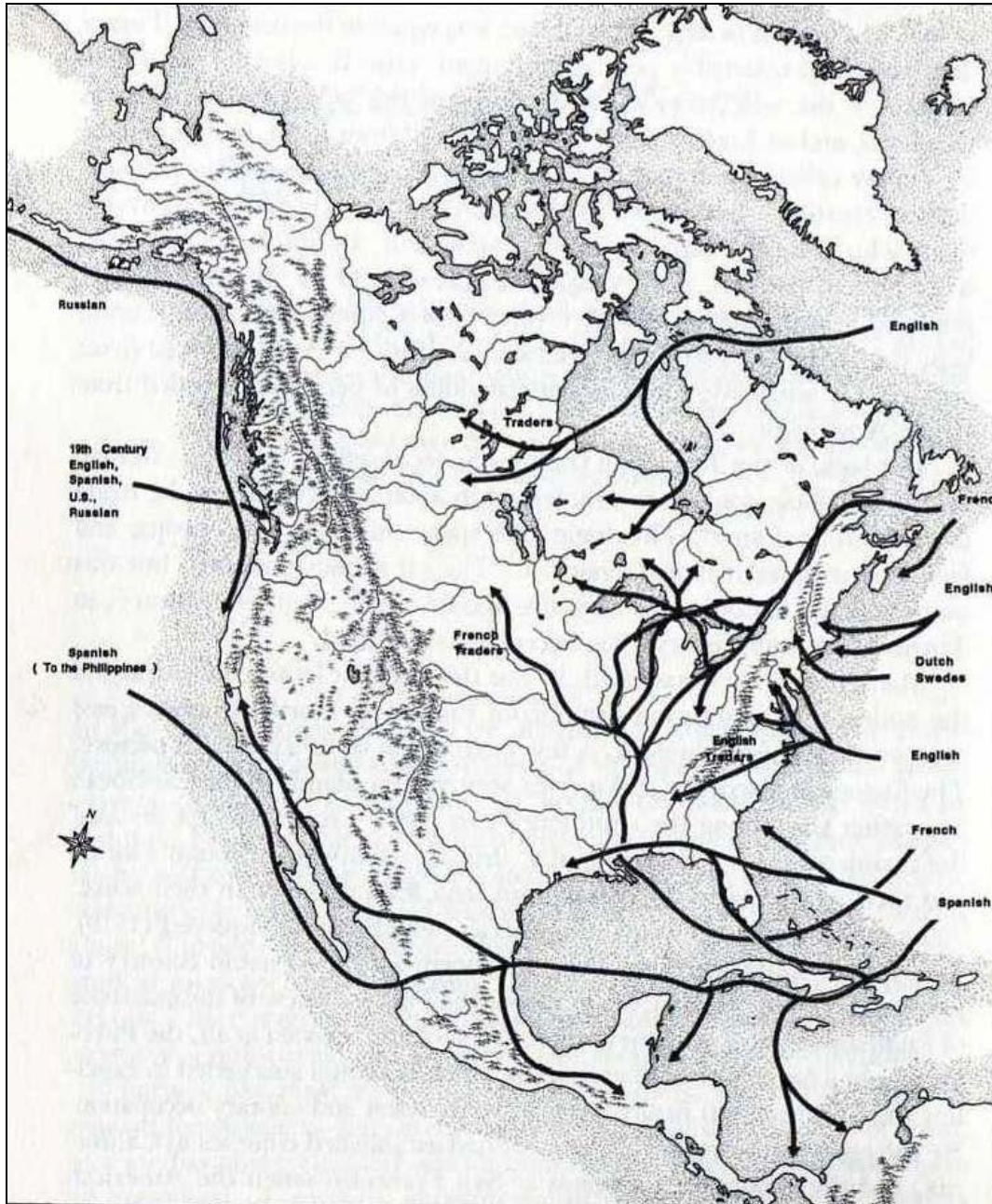
Map 1.   Early European routes and colonial progression into the Americas.[13]

[13] Map of Early European routes and colonial progression through Americas (Jennings, F. *Founders of America*, New York, NY: WW Norton and Company, 1993).

These efforts depended almost entirely on the cooperation or complicity of the indigenous tribes. Eliciting this tribal support then became central in the early British and French strategies for securing profit and expanding their markets.

Naturally, these strategies evolved over time. As new colonies took hold and inter-State competition heightened, Britain and France found additional roles for their Indian allies and sought new methods for ensuring their support. These roles now included protection of the European colonies and their frontiers, continued security of vital trade centers and lines of communication, and critical military support to ongoing British-French fighting.

Ironically, much of the protection the Europeans eventually required resulted from Indian resistance to unchecked colonial expansion and commercial exploitation. The Europeans, in other words, needed Indians to counter Indians, not simply other Europeans. Consequently, efforts at soliciting Indian tribes became complementary to those intended to weaken them.

NORTH AMERICA, 1750

Map 2.   Map of North America in 1750 depicting key colonial possessions.[14]

[14] Map of North America in 1750 depicting key colonial possessions. (Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson Longman, http://www.wps.ablongman.com. Accessed 01 March 2006).

Given an *initial* preference for peace the Europeans rationally sought to gain cooperation and secure alliances with their Indian neighbors whenever possible. Importantly, there was no humanitarian or enlightened intent in this preference. Rather, it was one of cost-benefit and a desire to avoid the disastrous efforts of Sieur de Roberval and Sir Walter Raleigh earlier in 1543 and 1585 respectively.[15] Excessive brutality, lack of restraint, and reckless unilateralism had doomed both of these French and British enterprises and their mistakes were not to be repeated.

To then elicit cooperation and allegiance, the Europeans needed to first understand the tribes. This process began with a general assessment of Indian strengths, economic potential, and receptivity to trade and negotiation. Then, through various means and with increasing sophistication, both powers actively sought a greater and more penetrating understanding of tribal society and inter-tribal networks. Based on these analyses, commercial partnerships were formed and territorial alliances entered.

Once aligned, the Europeans then attempted to strengthen their relationships through gradual economic dependency and social acculturation. Over time, great care was also taken to regulate tribal growth and military capacity in order to avoid any challenges to European patronage. Unsurprisingly, both the British and French also sought to actively undermine the efforts of the other.

Tactically, the French proved more adept at assessing, recruiting, and manipulating their aligned tribes. The British were more conservative and decidedly less subtle.[16] Regardless, both employed relatively similar techniques in using the tribes to achieve strategic objectives.

To begin, the Europeans often offered presents, alcohol, and tribute. Preliminary partnerships were formed and modest trade ensued. Through trade, persons of influence were identified, middlemen found, and indigenous trade networks exposed. Indian

---

[15] F. Jennings. pp. 167-168. Sieur de Roberval followed Cartier in 1540 and left in 1543. Cartier's earlier missions of enslavement and harsh treatment had left little for de Roberval to build on. Similarly, Ralph Lane – the commander of the Roanoke colony, ambushed and attacked neighboring Indians prompting fierce reprisals and the subsequent disappearance of this infamous British enterprise.

[16] M. Young, "The Dark and Bloody but Endlessly Inventive Middle Ground of Indian Frontier Historiography," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Pennsylvania: 1993), pp. 193-205.

villages relocated near commercial or colonial settlements. Formal alliances were then entered and mutual defense arrangements made.

Over time, many traders, colonists, and frontiersmen married Indian women.[17] Social networks were expanded and cultural bridges formed; trade intensified and economic interdependencies deepened.[18]

Catholic and Protestant missionaries were also introduced and muskets accrued to those who converted.[19] But perhaps most importantly, as the impact of European trade and weapons spread, latent and active inter and intra-tribal rivalries surfaced as each Indian group vied for European advantage. Tribal arms races, secessionism, and regional power imbalances quickly followed.[20]

Given the degree of Indian factionalism *prior* to European contact, however, it must be noted that this post-contact disruption was arguably inevitable, if only hastened by European interference – an otherwise natural extension of endemic tribal conflict under new circumstances.[21] Regardless, the opportunities that arose benefited many. By design and by fortune, the Europeans had exposed a variety of cracks and seams through which they could further influence tribal support and, as required, weaken or destroy unmanageable (or hostile) tribes and rival European proxies.

For the British, these opportunities were quickly seized upon as seen in their struggle to secure their New England colonies in the mid-1630s and again in the final

---

[17] *Houghton Mifflin Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, "Fur Trade" (2006). Due to both encouragement and the lack of French women, the French were more apt to marry Indians. The British were far more conservative. However, British frontiersmen, employees at the Hudson Bay Company, and other traders frequently took Indian wives as well.

[18] F. Jennings. pp. 203-207. Gradual shift among male population away from subsistence hunting and agriculture and toward commercial hunting and trade. Individualism began to rival collectivism due to profit motive inherent in mercantile lifestyle. Co-locating of Indian villages near colonial settlements further linked the tribes with European patronage and goods.

[19] F. Jennings. pp. 186-195. French frequently used the promise of muskets in exchange for Indian acceptance of missionaries and conversion.

[20] Ibid., pp. 186-195. The Huron were fractured early on by the French as muskets and religious conversion were given only to those who complied. This tactic unintentionally weakened and exposed the Huron to Iroquois aggression – a consequence the French then had to repair in earnest. Sioux and Iroquois also sought muskets to expand their power.

[21] R. White, "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (September 1978), pp. 319-343; and, Richard Metcalf, Who Should Rule at Home?, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (December 1974), pp. 651-665.

quarter of the 17th century.[22] For the French, it was the ambitious manipulation of the powerful Iroquois Confederation during the first half of the 18th century that occupied most of their efforts.

A.   DIVIDE-AND-EXPLOIT

It is their sweat which is to earn all the expenses of the war, and their blood which is to flow in expiation of the causes of it.[23]

The British example followed the early immigration and settlement of Puritan communities into Massachusetts and the Connecticut valley in the late 1620s. [24] Although the British forged initial partnerships with their Indian neighbors and engaged in modest exchange, by the end of the 1620s, many local tribes had turned decidedly hostile in the face of continued colonial expansion, rivalry over fur trade access, and concerns over recent British production of *wampum* – a commodity formally controlled and monopolized by Indians.[25] By 1634, a series of devastating Indian raids began.   The principle objective for the British then became one of survival and territorial security. Commercial profit was not inconsequential, but regional trade was limited by tribal animosity and lack of local stability. Moreover, the colonists were militarily weak and logistically strained – unable to defend their borders or sufficiently sustain their militias. Without assistance, the British communities were likely to fail.

To right these imbalances, the British relied heavily on their earlier alliance with the Narragansett, a coastal tribe still tacitly linked to struggling British markets and trade. The Narragansett were effective in deterring most local threats but were unable to counter the more powerful Pequot, the colonists' principle adversary. Opportunity to decisively combat the Pequot appeared in 1637 as an *intra*-tribal power struggle led to secession and betrayal.

---

[22] It must be noted, that the use of "British" collectively refers to Britain's colonies. Admittedly, these colonies were far from unified, often followed divergent objectives, and competed directly against one other. However, for generalization of policy and outcome, they are referred to simply as British.

[23] T. Jefferson. Obviously spoken well after the colonial struggles of the 17th century – but ironically applicable nonetheless.

[24] R. Metcalf. "Who Should Rule at Home?," The Journal of American History, Vol. 61, No. 3, December 1974, p. 654.

[25] Pequot War. *Wikipedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pequot_War. Accessed on 15 March 2006.

Among the Pequot, a young warrior known as Uncas had challenged the legitimacy of the current tribal *sachem* – a conflict resulting from several generations of kinship rivalry.[26] This challenge, now carefully coupled with British support, ultimately led to secession. Led by Uncas, the secessionists sought complete destruction of the Pequot – a tactical objective obviously shared by the British. Together, the British and the secessionists combined with Narragansett warriors and successfully destroyed their mutual enemy at the infamous Mystic palisade in Connecticut on May 26th 1637.[27] Those who survived were enslaved and divided evenly among the victors.[28] The Pequot had ceased to exist as a threat.

The New England colonies gained a key ally as a result of tribal in-fighting and calculated British support. The Pequot secessionists, now known as the Mohegan, were then formally bound to the colonists with the Treaty of Hartford, signed in 1638. Over the next two decades the Mohegan would prove instrumental in eliminating subsequent tribal threats – a service driven as much by British patronage and allegiance as by a quest for Mohegan tribal domination of the northeast coastline.

The British recognized the Mohegan political ambitions and manipulated them accordingly. Given the southeastern expansion of the Iroquois in the late 1650s, the Mohegan were naturally committed to the British defense (and to the survival of their own Mohegan "empire").

The Iroquois incursions followed earlier Iroquois success against rival tribes in the north and northwest. Now emboldened, the Iroquois were pushing in all directions. As a result, the New England colonists again found themselves needing to build effective alliances in order to complement their Mohegan allies. To this end, the British recognized existing tribal enmities toward the Iroquois among the Susquehannock, Mahican, and Abenkis tribes both to their south and north and sought to use them.

---

[26] R. Metcalf. "Who Should Rule at Home?," The Journal of American History, Vol. 61, No. 3, December 1974, p. 655.

[27] Pequot War. *Wikipedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pequot_War. Accessed on 15 March 2006.

[28] R. Metcalf"Who Should Rule at Home?," The Journal of American History, Vol. 61, No. 3, December 1974,. p. 656.

Map 3.   Map of the New England colonies in 1650.[29]

These particular tribes despised the British and resented colonial encroachment, but their fear and hatred of the Iroquois ran deeper.[30] Through supply of British arms and ammunition, the tribes successfully engaged and halted the Iroquois advance. In the process, however, they themselves were significantly weakened – a result not unanticipated by New Englanders.

In fact, with New England's borders stabilized and its enemies weak, the British renewed their territorial expansion. The Susquehannock – no longer needed - quickly fell to the British as did a number of marginal tribes along the southern New England frontier. The British and its colonials proceeded largely unchallenged until 1675 when a final stand was mounted by the Wampanoag tribe in a conflict known as King Philips War.[31] In response, the British again turned to manipulating other tribes to combat the threat and augment their colonial militias.

---

[29] Map of New England colonies in 1650. (Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson Longman, http://www.wps.ablongman.com. Accessed 01 March 2006)

[30] F. Jennings. p. 211. In 1642, Maryland colonists attacked Susquehannock settlements believing them responsible for earlier raids on Maryland trade routes. Unclear who was truly responsible given rivalries among the colonies themselves. Regardless, the Susquehannock were specifically and frequently targeted by Europeans.

[31] R. Johnson, "Finding a Usable Indian," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 64, No. 3, (December 1977), p. 625.

THE FIRST AMERICANS: LOCATION OF MAJOR INDIAN GROUPS AND CULTURE AREAS IN THE 1600s

Map 4.   Map of general Indian tribes and territory in 17th century North America.[32]

In concert with the Mohegans, the colonists coldly enlisted the aid of the recently blunted Iroquois. Now facing French pressure from the northwest and loss of Dutch patronage to their east, the Iroquois were particularly receptive to this sudden and unexpected British rapprochement. Subsequent Iroquois raids on Wampanoag allies on the colonial frontier and *the threat* of further attacks contributed directly to the enemy's eventual defeat and to a broader British victory.

As this phase of territorial expansion then closed, the British bound the newly-fragmented and beaten tribes into a loose confederation under British influence, nascent Iroquois political supervision, and eventual economic dependency – the so-called Covenant Chain. Thanks to their adroit political and also geographic positioning, the Iroquois would continue to play a central role in the British-French competition for North America, ostensibly committed to both powers by alliances of convenience and deception.

---

[32] Map of general Indian tribes and territories in 17th century North America. (Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson Longman, http://www.wps.ablongman.com. Accessed 01 March 2006).

In sum, opportunity had presented itself to the New England colonies in the form of tribal in-fighting, local political ambitions, and active regional enmities. The colonists seized on these opportunities in order to offset their own martial and logistic shortfalls and achieve their objectives of survival and territorial security. To this end, they encouraged Indians to fight Indians. The colonies were effectively defended and territory secured.

Importantly, inter-tribal conflict *created* opportunities as well: former adversaries, fragmented and now dependent on British support, became malleable and readily influenced; allies were similarly weakened and ultimately subsumed into the colonies; and, new markets and additional trade networks (including smuggling routes) were made accessible.

Through these combined opportunities, the colonies were *then* able to seek broader regional stability and commercial growth. Conflict had, in effect, permitted a radical restructuring of the environment by a numerically inferior foreign power.

B.   DIVIDE-AND-DISTRACT

> [Putting] these barbarians into play against each other is the sole and only way to establish any security in the colony because they will destroy themselves by their own efforts eventually.[33]

The French experience in tribal manipulation differed slightly from that of the British. By the mid-1640s, the French had integrated themselves fully into the Great Lakes region and the sub-arctic territories of present-day Canada. They had aligned themselves with the Huron, the Algonquin, and the Ottawa. Trade and resources flowed smoothly into and out of Montreal as French and Indian traders continued to extract furs, hides, and other valuable commodities for New France (and its eventual European markets).

Frenchmen frequently married Indian women, further expanding commercial opportunities and strengthening political alliances. Their offspring, collectively known as

---

[33] R. White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos*, (University of Nebraska Press, 1983), p. 50. Cited by a Frenchmen before the Council of Louisiana in 1753.

the Métis, would serve critical roles as inter-tribal mediators and inter-racial brokers.[34] Objectively, the French sought to maintain and protect their on-going commercial operations and burgeoning colonial enterprises. These aims, however, ultimately competed with similar British, Dutch, and Spanish efforts extending from the Hudson Bay to Spanish Florida. Consequently, as colonial and commercial efforts expanded and wars raged in Europe, New France also sought resources and Indian support in its fight against these colonial rivals.

Although numerically challenged, the French were arguably still more powerful militarily than their *northern* European competitors in the first half of the 17th century. This was not an advantage enjoyed in the south relative to Spain. Nor was it one that would survive into the 18th century. But in the mid-1600s, the French, coupled with strong Indian allies, were not pre-occupied with survival to the degree the British had been in New England. In turn, early French efforts at manipulating their tribes centered on accelerating religious conversion, increasing profit and exports, and combating the British through proxies.

Only two tribes elicited occasional French concern: the Teton Sioux and the Iroquois. To offset both, muskets and ammunition were denied to the Sioux and periodic raids organized against the Iroquois. In concert with these efforts, Huron and Algonquin tribes were armed and equipped to counter attacks and prevent disruptions of trade. Embargos against the Sioux were similarly enforced by other Indian middlemen and frontiersmen. The Sioux were relatively contained for the remainder of the century, the Iroquois were not.[35]

By 1649 the Iroquois, now clandestinely armed by the Dutch, renewed their campaign against the northern and western Huron tribes in order to secure profit and "market share" in the lucrative French trade.[36] The Huron began to suffer badly in a

---

[34] E .E. Rich, "Colonial Empire," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1950), pp. 317-325.

[35] R. White, "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (September 1978), pp. 319-343. The Sioux would eventually receive arms from the French – ending the monopoly held by the Cree, Assinibonne, and other Great Lakes tribes. This acquisition, however, would not occur until the 18th century.

[36] F. Jennings. p. 212. The Mohawks requested arms from the Dutch. The Dutch, in turn, provided 400 muskets at a "discount" price knowing the Mohawk were to use them against Dutch competitors.

conflict known euphemistically as the Beaver Wars. The French responded militarily with direct strikes against Iroquoian villages and crops. They then followed these strikes with an ambitious effort to fragment the Iroquois Confederacy from within and permanently weaken this growing threat.

To this end, the French attempted to co-opt the Iroquois' western-most tribe, the Onondaga, and turn them against their Seneca and Mohawk compatriots, two of the more powerful Iroquois tribes. Onondaga greed and ambition paved the way. With promises of exclusive French patronage and support, the Onondaga broke ranks. Catholic missionaries quickly moved in and a campaign of conversion, French muskets, and political alliances followed.

The Iroquois responded immediately. Seneca warriors moved into Onondaga villages and destroyed or enslaved everyone found. Although successful at separating the Onondaga from the rest of the Iroquois, the French were unprepared for the ferocity and speed with which the Seneca countered. Off-balance, the French waited for another opportunity to deal the Iroquois a decisive blow.

Over the following decades, Iroquois hostility and territorial conquest intensified. In turn, the Confederation spawned new and mounting enmities among its defeated neighbors. These enmities would provide the opportunity the French sought. Not unlike the British, the French then used these combined tribal enmities against the Iroquois in a broader campaign of containment and reprisal. Tribes with whom the French had shared little in the past or who had previously remained neutral were now joined in a common fight against a common foe. Fear had driven most; opportunity and greed the rest. Given these concerted efforts along with French military strikes and a profuse distribution of French arms and ammunition among the allied tribes, the Iroquois finally capitulated in 1701.

Map 5.   Map of North America and areas of colonial control in 1700.[37]

Unfortunately for New France, however, it had been significantly taxed in this lengthy struggle and now began a steady decline in power and influence. As Queen Anne's War would demonstrate just one year later, the French found themselves increasingly dependent on Indian support in both their fight against Britain *and* in maintaining regional French interests. These relationships were proving exhaustively expensive and increasingly unsustainable.

Thus, following continued British growth and the loss of key French territories and ports in 1710, New France initiated a more sophisticated campaign of tribal manipulation to offset these crippling strategic imbalances.[38] Although they did engage in sporadic raids into western New England and struck other British targets, the French

---

[37] Map of North America and areas of colonial control in 1700. (Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson Longman, http://www.wps.ablongman.com. Accessed 01 March 2006).

[38] USA History: Wars. *Queen Anne's War – The War of the Spanish Succession*. http://www.usahistory.com/wars/spansucc.htm. Accessed on 10 March 2006. The French lost numerous posts along Hudson Bay and ceded Newfoundland to Britain in the Peace of Utrecht.

proved more adept at striking indirectly rather than risking direct confrontation.[39] To this end, they recognized the pivotal role the Iroquois could play. Despite nearly two centuries of intermittent conflict with the French, New France now needed the Iroquois as an ally and not as a beaten enemy.

At the same time, New France was also aware of its limitations. Establishing and maintaining an alliance with the Confederation would be difficult and the risks of a reconstituted Iroquoia, hastily supplied and lacking appropriate control, would be extremely dangerous. Therefore, French strategy demanded the Confederation remain locally marginalized, French-aligned, and unaware of New France's economic and military shortfalls. In short, New France needed to keep the Iroquois sufficiently weakened *and distracted* in order to submit to northern French influence, yet still supplied and strong enough to challenge Britain (or at least not to give in to intermittent British solicitation). This dangerous campaign of tribute and deception would last for almost five decades until French withdrawal in 1763.

To manipulate the Iroquois, the French observed and identified a set of critical Iroquois vulnerabilities. Most were the product of near-continuous combat and post-conflict recovery. These vulnerabilities included: over-trapped and resource-depleted hunting grounds; a male population depleted by disease and war; re-armed and re-invigorated tribal competitors in the north and northwest; unstable and porous borders to the south along Pennsylvania; loss of the Dutch as a patron; and, relatively unpredictable British support.[40]

Accordingly, the French offered the Iroquois what they knew could be delivered: select trade, weapons, negotiated truces with the Algonquin and Huron, and a "warrior's path" south. [41] In exchange for these, the French were able to obtain Iroquois

---

[39] USA History: Wars. Queen Anne's War – The War of the Spanish Succession. http://www.usahistory.com/wars/spansucc.htm. Accessed on 10 March 2006. French strike refers to 1704 raid by French and Algonquin Indians into Western New England.

[40] F. Jennings. p. 214. The Dutch were lost as allies in 1664. Also, Richard Aquila, Down the Warrior's Path: The Causes of the Southern Wars of the Iroquoi*s,* American Indian Quarterly, Vol. 4, No. 3 (August 1978), pp. 211-221. Young Iroquois males needed to prove themselves in combat to assure necessary social status. The southern campaigns provided this outlet without the detrimental consequences of attacking into the stronger northern and northwestern tribes.

[41] Ibid.

cooperation despite the Confederation's purported neutrality. Then, skillfully playing to Iroquois male social pressures and promises of further material gain, Iroquois war parties were summarily deployed south to engage the British-allied Catawba and Creek tribes. These deployments disrupted British trade networks, frustrated further British attempts at tribal penetration in the southeast, and consumed the Iroquois in a conflict that effectively *distracted* them from New France. In effect, these engagements then satisfied both principle French objectives: overall weakening of British operations and the reorientation (and management) of the Iroquois.

This strategy of sponsored conflict served the French well. With the outbreak of King George's War in 1744, the southern Iroquoian campaigns proved a valuable adjunct to ongoing southern French manipulation of the Choctaw against the embattled Creek and Chickasaw, both then-British allies and key actors in control of the lower southeast.

In sum, opportunities to maintain control and influence rivals arose out of conflict. From conflict, critical social and economic vulnerabilities were exposed – vulnerabilities quickly recognized by the French. From these vulnerabilities, a carefully balanced campaign of patronage and deception was developed to offset French strategic weaknesses, inflict damage on their rivals, and protect key commercial and colonial interests.

For New France, this manipulation meant committing the Iroquois to a prolonged march south. It was a regional inter-tribal fight that served multiple French objectives. For one, Indians fought Indians. For the native combatants, these fights were intra and inter-tribal struggles fought out of fear, social obligation, or greed but *always in the mind of the Indians for a presumed tribal objective – not a European one*. For the Europeans, however, these fights proved ideal extensions of policy, ones that could be co-opted and harnessed. They were often encouraged and frequently perpetuated by Europeans. As far as the Europeans were concerned, tribal motivations were relevant only to the degree that they enabled continued colonial and commercial manipulation. Accordingly, great care was taken in understanding both Indian ally and adversary throughout.

In the end, all of the tribes – both allied and hostile – were weakened as a result of near-continuous combat, disease, and competition, prompting further tribal concessions, increased dependency on European patronage, and eventual defeat at the hands of the rising American republic.[42]

Although admittedly tragic on many levels, the conquest by the colonial powers clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of manipulating *existing* tribal factionalism to achieve select strategic objectives.

C. OBSERVATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Early colonial policy in North America was driven by two realities. First, neither profit nor survival could be assured without Indian cooperation or complicity. Second, each colonial power was in competition with the other. These realities then formed the core of each nation's strategy for commercial and territorial conquest.

A similar competition and need for support could be said to exist today. The United States is competing for influence in a number of critical and contentious environments – notably, those beyond clear State control and linked to the Global War on Terror. And there are competitors – al-Qaeda, regional extremists, and rival States – also seeking influence and advantage.

For the United States, conditions are currently such that direct or indirect appeals for support are ineffective in these particular regions. As a result, the environment itself must be disrupted in the short term and re-structured over the long term if opportunities for influence are then to be gained. As proposed, conflict provides the means for this disruption. It creates and exposes opportunities for further manipulation and regional re-structuring in order to support US foreign policy objectives.

For the British and French in North America, early disruption of tribal networks often occurred incidentally – largely the product of direct and indirect contact resulting

---

[42] Certainly disease (smallpox) and sickness played a significant role as well but its effects on European strategy and success are beyond the scope of this paper.

from trade, disease, and distribution of European arms.[43] But as each power developed a deeper understanding of the tribes and endemic factionalism became apparent, this disruption became increasingly more calculated, deliberate, and sophisticated.

The Europeans, in effect, discovered the strategic and tactical benefits of exploiting *existing* tribal fractures in support of European objectives. Conflict provided the means to further elicit support, weaken both allies and rivals, and create opportunities for broader commercial and colonial expansion not otherwise possible. Given the relative weaknesses of the British and French in 17th and 18th century-North America, these Indian-provided services were absolutely critical.

The process by which the British and French came to understand tribal networks and their vulnerabilities clearly took time. Blunt, unilateral, and overly-aggressive tactics often proved fatal. In contrast, modest trade, cooperation, and patience were the means of securing immediate survival and initial holdings. Over time, continued trade, discourse, and intermarriage eventually provided the depth of understanding required to meaningfully manipulate indigenous tribal networks. Extensive observation, experience, and communication were natural outgrowths of being *in situ*.

Admittedly, the British and French were embedded in their environments. The United States, on the other hand, lacks this degree of intimacy and interaction at present. It has no colonies or enclaves from which to engage the surrounding environment. Embassies and consulates are not - by themselves - effective substitutes. Moreover, the United States is beyond *first contacts*. Today's hardened environments are unequivocally hostile and extremely suspicious toward a *known* – even if misunderstood - US.

To fully understand these regions and accurately identify their internal vulnerabilities and fractures, the US requires meaningful ethnographic intelligence and access to potential surrogates and contacts.[44] Regional moderates, businessmen and

---

[43] Direct contact is defined as direct person-to-person contact. Indirect contact is defined as effects felt otherwise – trade goods circulated through numerous tribes and Indian middlemen and arriving without a European face attached, for example. Importantly, both direct and indirect contact can refer to the effects of disease that had cycled through multiple tribes and societal transformations that followed the introduction of horses and guns.

[44] A. Simons. "Seeing the Enemy (or Not)", Rethinking the Principles of War, 1st ed., ed. Anthony D. McIvor (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005). The concept of ethnographic intelligence gathering is well-described and developed by Dr. Simons and is referred to frequently in this thesis.

expatriates living abroad, extended family and social networks linking diasporas and their communities of origin, as well as black marketers, smugglers, and other likely illicit "brokers" can provide the access critical to deliberately or incidentally exploiting internal conflict in those regions relevant to GWOT.

Entering these particular networks and acquiring surrogates is difficult. For the United States it will mean soliciting or using those with whom we have already developed a measure of trust (including both those at home and abroad with dual-citizenship or naturalized status) and those with whom we have collaborated in the past or against whom we can directly strike, pressure, or coerce. Surrogates may also be drawn from non-governmental organizations, charities, religious foundations, or other groups possessing requisite access and ethnographic insight. Again, their cooperation may or may not be consciously or deliberately provided.

Lastly, entering these networks may also involve carefully advertising a willingness to support and empower internal, rival factions – or those likely to be most manageable and/or corruptible (susceptible to US incentives). As Mortimer Zuckerman notes in an editorial in *US News and World Report*, "there is, after all, a difference between a benign tumor and a malignant cancer."[45] Accordingly, US strategy may well involve employing the former to help strike at the latter.

Another technique involves social bonds. The French, for example, were able to influence third-party tribes and intermediaries through inter-racial marriage and adoption. Social networks were bridged and opportunities extended. It is a process strikingly similar to that already adopted by al-Qaeda.[46] Encouraging inter-ethnic and inter-racial marriage in support of foreign policy is not new. And its potential for improving regional understanding, exposing opportunities, and *monitoring local effects* are significant. Over the long-term, it is a tactic that may also improve or even accelerate social acculturation as well.

---

[45] M. Zuckerman, "In No Uncertain Terms," *US News and World Report*, Vol. 140, No. 10 (March 2006), p. 72.

[46] M. Sageman, Understanding Terrorist Networks (Philadelphia: 2004), p. 79.

With a requisite understanding of tribal factionalism, the British and French discovered the power of *deliberately* creating economic and military imbalances and using preferential engagement to support their objectives. Intra-tribal politics were manipulated, rivalries and enmities heightened, and Indian opportunism fueled. Importantly, these imbalances frequently followed the introduction or altering of key resources, commodities, or trade networks – or the promise of doing so. For the early Europeans, the favored commodities for manipulating the tribes were obviously the musket and alcohol. Admittedly, the degree of weapons proliferation today somewhat obviates the power of the arms trade. But other products and services – to include alcohol and narcotics - remain contentious and likely subject to external control.

In addition to understanding where fractures lie and how to exploit them, planners must also understand the need to eliminate existing systems of mediation and reconciliation in the targeted areas. Many tribal societies have well-developed systems of containing violence and low-level conflict already endemic in their regions. Accordingly, an effective policy of disruption includes removing those particular controls. Levels of conflict must rise above those with which the existing tribal structures can contend. Alternatively, as suggested by anthropologist Anna Simons, "introducing new and/or taboo forms of violence can also hinder traditional institutions designed to address expected or customary forms of violence" and prevent tribal efforts at containment. The British intervention in the Pequot secession illustrates this point. An intra-tribal dispute exceeded the Pequot's ability to mediate once the British entered the fray on Uncas' behalf. For the United States, this may involve the targeted removal of individuals known to serve in a mediating capacity.

Finally, once conflict has been initiated and needed opportunities seized upon, the initiator must eventually be prepared to pick up the pieces if long-term restructuring is to be achieved. The British in New England proved capable in this regard, as the Covenant Chain illustrated – the French less so. Despite superior integration skills and ethnographic knowledge, the French ultimately lacked the power to transition from a dependent State to a dominant one and suffered as a result. The British, through continued military and economic growth, gradually reduced the strategic role and importance of their Indian allies (though never eliminated them). As a result, survival and territorial integrity were

no longer purely a function of Indian cooperation and complicity as was the case during the early phases of colonization. Drawing the contrast more sharply, the British strategy of divide-and-exploit favored long-term development; the French strategy of divide-and-distract was decidedly short-term.

Similarly for the US, conflict must be followed with a substantial – and more traditional – engagement policy once the benefits of infighting have been exhausted. The British *built* on the effects of conflict and the US – directly or through continued use of surrogates – must do the same. In the absence of effective post-conflict engagement and exploitation, other competitors may well establish or *re-establish* themselves instead – another tactic obviously espoused by our current enemy.[47]

In sum, the British and French experiences in colonial North America offer a compelling example of tribal manipulation and the broader strategic effects that can be achieved. Yet a second case study is still required, one that addresses the seemingly distinct challenges of how to penetrate select Islamic tribes and develop a comprehensive and applicable methodology for use today. It is a study that then demonstrates the means by which even hardened Islamic networks can be entered and their behavior influenced, even if only on a local, tactical scale.   To this end, the following chapter details the deliberate recruitment and employment of Pashtun tribesmen by the British as irregular and paramilitary forces in the Northwest Frontier of the Indian subcontinent. These units included the original Order of Guides, the South Waziristan Scouts, and the Khyber Rifles among others.

These particular units and their tribal recruits were purposely designed to fight fellow Pashtuns, reinforce British defenses along their borders and key passes, and serve as the eyes and ears for a Western administration. They were clear and unmistakable extensions of the British Crown – yet Pashtuns willingly enlisted and loyally served.

Interestingly, one may also note that these British recruitment efforts and their operational objectives were remarkably similar to those pursued by General George Crook in 1871 – literally half a world away - when raising the Apache Scouts in New

---

[47] J. Brachman, W. McCants, *Stealing Al-Qaeda's Playbook*, Center for Counterterrorism (West Point: 2006). Specifically refers to citations from Abu Bakr Naji in his own book *The Management of Barbarism* (2004).

Mexico. In fact, Crook's efforts to enlist the White Mountain Apaches (or *Coyoteros*) preceded Sir Robert Warburton's enlistment of Afridi Pashtun tribesmen into the Khyber Rifles by only seven years.[48]

---

[48] C. Jones, "Apache Scouts," *Cobblestone*, Vol. 17, No. 8 (November, 1996), pp. 26-29.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. STATE MANIPULATION IN THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER

The British administrative experience in the Northwest Frontier of the Indian Subcontinent effectively began in 1846 following the First Anglo-Sikh War. Although British envoys and surveyors – as well as East India Company troops - had made earlier contact (and clashed violently) with various Pashtun tribes, their experiences were limited and British presence temporary.[49]

However, following the defeat of the Sikh Khalsa Dal at Sobraon in February of 1846, the British moved quickly to control the Punjabi administration, expand East India Company enterprises northward, and promote British interests regionally. This sudden administrative and commercial expansion now placed the British in direct and continuous contact with the new *ghairiliga* frontier and created a significantly new set of responsibilities.[50]

Importantly, formal annexation of the Punjab was deliberately avoided following the First Anglo-Sikh War. Instead, British control was exercised through a "shadow government" of British deputies and advisors rapidly embedded within the existing Sikh administration. This effort was strengthened by the threat of further British military action, the reduction of the Sikh Khalsa, and the silencing of senior Sikh leaders through political accommodation.[51]

---

[49] As Sir Olaf Caroe and historian George Allen have noted, the British understood and had established a system of tribute and issuance of bribes in order to gain unmolested access through the Khyber Pass while interacting with the kings and administrators in Kabul. Accordingly, contact had been made with the Afridi and Yusafzai tribes well before 1846. Critically, conflict had only ensued when British payments had been withheld. The rearward dispatch of British troops from Afghanistan in 1839 through the Khyber Pass, following Sir William McNaughton's decision (based in turn on East Indian Company fiscal limitations), ended in unmitigated disaster. With the outbreak of the First Anglo-Afghan War, the dispatch of the Army of Retribution and its eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan were marked with similar levels of violence and tribal predation on the passing troops. However, these British formations had been able to fight their way through and back again. Far earlier, Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone had moved among the various tribes in a diplomatic and survey-oriented mission and had recorded much about Pashtun structure, culture, and language. Apart from Elphinstone's mission and the tribute-based contact along the Khyber, little else had been initiated among the Pasthun.

[50] O. Caroe, *The Pathans* (New York: St. Martin's Press) p. 347. The term *ghairiliga* means unadministered territory.

[51] A significant concession made to the Sikh maharaja had been the promise of Hazara and the Afghan portion of Kashmir. The Sikh Gulab Singh was escorted and placed in command under armed British escort in the district capital of Srinigar. This placating effort was detailed by George Allen in his book *Soldier Sahibs*. In return for this territorial concession, the maharaja agreed to pay a large proportion of war debt following the Anglo-Sikh conflict and to recognize British administrators and deputies in the Punjab.

These combined efforts were carefully managed and executed by the British East India Company and its cadre of highly talented and resourceful frontiersmen. These company men were headquartered in Lahore but operated throughout the Punjab. As these

Map 6.   Indian subcontinent and general location of Northwest Frontier.[52]

British officers entered their Sikh districts, they found themselves unavoidably entangled with an enemy neither the Sikhs nor the Mughals before them had ever adequately contained – the Pashtun hill tribes. An uneasy peace existed along much of the Punjab border, but it was a peace frequently punctuated by deadly raids, ambushes, and

---

[52] *Indian subcontinent and general location of Northwest Frontier*. (Retrieved from: http://uk.geocities.com/aro_hill/india.html. Accessed 09 June 2006).

retaliatory strikes. Consistency and predictability were absent and new policies were required if British interests were to be adequately secured.

Accordingly, the British officers immediately began evaluating and re-surveying the borders Lord Mountstuart Elphinstone had walked almost a half-century earlier. Particular attention was given to the Bannu, Peshawar, and Hazara districts and the access they provided to the strategic passages into Afghanistan. A close-border policy would soon be adopted, defining this border as the "first contour lines west of the Indus."[53] The Frontier itself would remain something of a neutral zone – a natural buffer separating the Afghans to the far west from the Sikhs and the British to the south and east.

Sikh administrative procedures in governing these border territories were similarly assessed and found lacking. Excessive brutality, crippling taxation and extraction policies, and unapologetic prejudice had only exacerbated the violence and levels of animosity among the hill tribes, the settled natives, and the Sikh governors.

In this process of evaluation, the British also discovered an unexpected advantage. Though distrusted and disliked by the hill tribes, the British were initially received as a marked improvement over the Sikhs. Consequently, British moderation and administrative jurisprudence would prove to offer greater advantage and potential for the tribes than that which had been available under the Sikhs. Moreover, the British had done much to repair their image as a military power. The disasters of the 1839-1842 Afghan War were largely replaced with recent successes in the Punjab. For the Pashtun, success in combat and proof of martial competency were prerequisites for meaningful dialogue. "The fair-haired invaders had merited the tribes' highest regard. They could [now] do business with the British warrior race."[54]

In short, the image of victor was critical to Anglo-Pashtun relations. Following the formal annexation of the Punjab in 1849 after the Second Anglo-Sikh War, and the hard-fought victory in the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, this image would be further reinforced.

---

[53] This quote refers liberally to Sir Olaf Caroe and his description of the border: "…the line of administration stopped like a tide almost at the first contour of rough country…[and] British rule stopped short at the first shadow of the hills…." This appears on p. 330 in *The Pathans*.

[54] J. Stewart. *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd), p. 73.

Even so it remained a fragile image in the sense that it was built on the "last fight." Eventual British missteps and military setbacks preceding the Second and Third Anglo-Afghan wars would thus see many of the Pashtuns who had cooperated with the Empire turn and betray it.[55] Over time, the British came to understand that strength earned them respect while weakness elicited only scorn and predation. Fortunately, British military successes in the Frontier came early and provided needed access to tribal networks in the emergent phases of British expansion and close-border consolidation.

The young British officers and their commanders sought to reinforce their districts and bring visible British influence to bear along the border with the hill tribes – not just among the settled communities in the plains. These efforts were ostensibly conducted in support of the existing Sikh government, but British ambitions were difficult to mask. In truth, the British were intent on establishing their autonomy, supporting the Company, and protecting their most valued possession, India. This less-than subtle reality led these frontiersmen to anticipate and prepare for a possible resurgence of Sikh power and other potential challenges to regional British interests, including those from Afghanistan and Russia.

To this end, forward-deployed and flexible military formations – units nominally positioned within the settled Punjabi districts - coupled with strategically-placed fortifications and reaction forces were required. British and Indian units stationed southeast in Bengal or local units drawn from the recently-defeated and restless Khalsa were deemed poor substitutes and recognized as supplementary solutions at best. It would not be until after the Second Anglo-Sikh War that Bengal Native Infantry and Queen's Army troops would move permanently forward in large numbers along the close-border to assist in frontier maintenance and stabilization. And it would be far later still under the so-called forward policy that these formations would attempt to move further and deeper into the tribal areas themselves.

---

[55] In 1878, Afridi and Yusafzai tribesmen, in concert with Afghan forces, refused to allow a British diplomatic mission to Kabul setting off the Second Afghan War. Tribal resistance had followed Afghan instigation and was combined with tribal perceptions of expanding – though apparently weakened – British influence. Sensing opportunity, select tribes moved to engage the British envoys and ally with the Afghans. However, a punitive force of nearly 40,000 British returned and forced the passes open. Although British preeminence was eventually reestablished, it had been at great cost. Similar perceptions of weakness preceded the Third Anglo-Afghan War as well, seeing numerous tribesmen join Afghan forces in 1919.

Recognizing the operational and policy realities and the limitations imposed by the Sikh defeat in 1846, the Company officers in Lahore elected to establish a *new* Frontier force – a series of irregular infantry and cavalry formations composed of native tribesmen and led by British officers. The potential inherent in this was obvious. However, recruitment would require tribal interactions not yet begun (or still in their infancy) and networks not yet penetrated. Yet it was among these fierce and hardened tribes that the young Company officers clearly saw more than simply a threat – they saw opportunity.

The British had correctly assumed that any regional counterweight to the Sikhs (prior to 1849) would require Pashtun tribesmen and support. Similarly, they correctly assessed that any successes to be had against the Pashtuns themselves would require Pashtun cooperation. This cooperation would include control - or at least the means of denying - the strategic east-west and north-south passes to any potential Afghan or Russian invasion force. Obviously, stabilizing the fertile valleys from Dera Ismail Khan through Peshawar to Hazara remained key, but broader operational and strategic objectives were foremost in British planning. To this end, tribal recruitment was intended to "turn the poacher into the gamekeeper," co-opting otherwise hostile tribesmen into loyal servants of the Raj.[56] Their aim was to combine the talents and experiences of the Pashtun with the leadership and support capabilities of the East India Company. Superior knowledge of the terrain, fearlessness under fire, exceptional marksmanship and stealth, and unequaled intelligence-gathering skills were the very attributes the British sought to exploit – and those on which its officers would ultimately depend for their survival. These would be units drawn, forged and employed in an environment of near-perpetual conflict and violence.

---

[56] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd), p. 49. Although recorded by Stewart, this quote was actually made by Ian Hay while observing the Frontier Province in 1930.
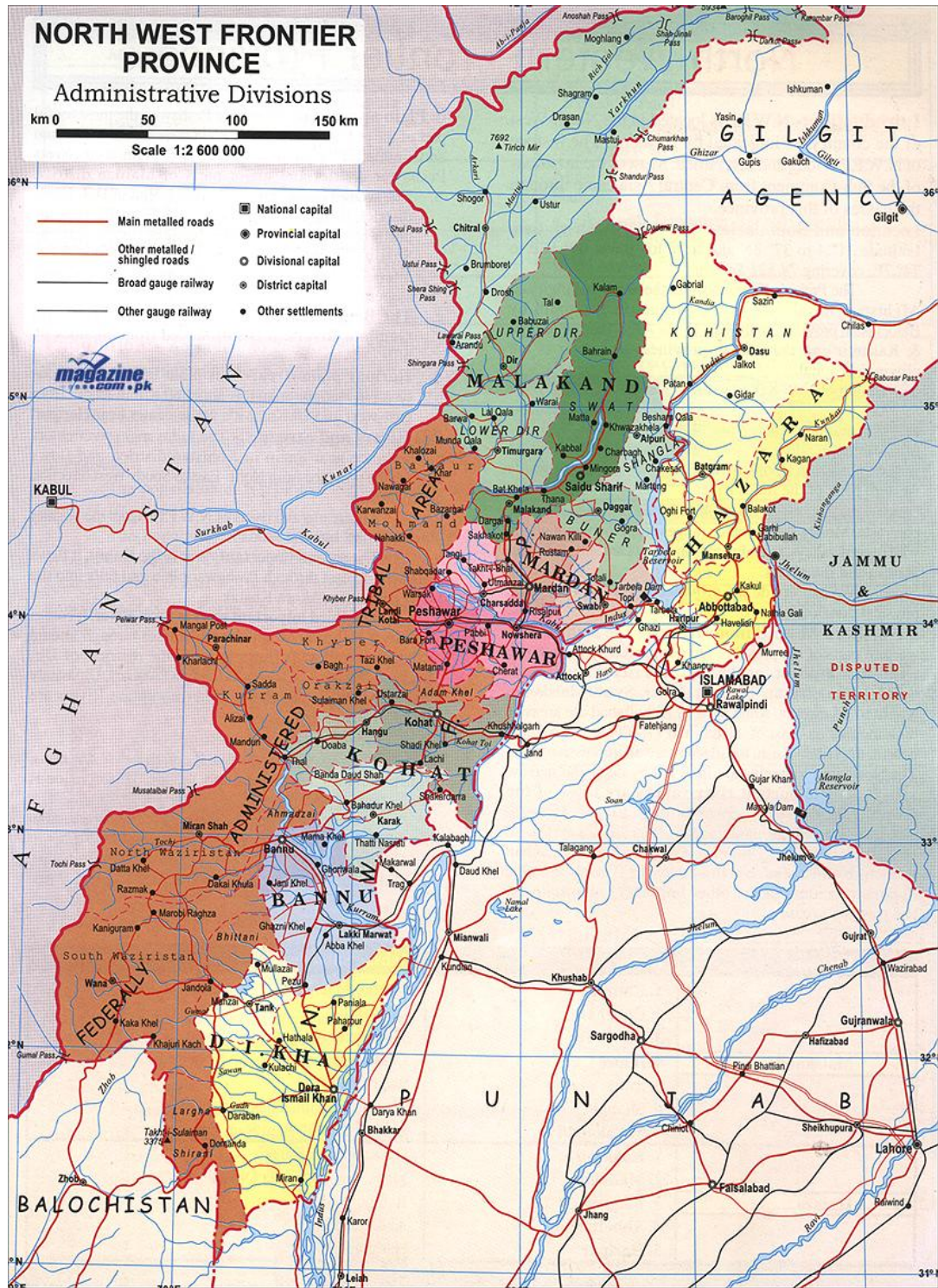
Map 7.   The Northwest Frontier and administrative divisions.[57]

[57] *The Northwest Frontier and administrative divisions.* (Retrieved from: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/modern/pakadmin/nwfpadmin.jpg. Accessed 07 June 2006).

But how could independent, ethno-centric, Muslim tribesmen be recruited? And more amazingly, how could they be drawn by Westerners into loyal service against their own kinsmen? As the Pashtuns themselves have often remarked, "We are content with alarms, and we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master."[58]

A. CONFLICT AND RECRUITMENT

The process officially began with Punjab Commissioner Sir Henry Lawrence's order to Lieutenant George Lumsden in late 1846 to form the Order of Guides in the Peshawar valley – the first of several units that would support emerging and long-term stabilization efforts and British political consolidation west of the Indus River.

The Order of Guides initially drew from a core of Yusafzai tribesmen, the principle bandits and highwaymen surrounding the rich Vale of Peshawar. These men were, as later Guide commander Henry Daly remarked, "notorious for desperate deeds, leaders in forays…and never seen in the plains except for murder and plunder."[59] The Yusafzai were decidedly unconventional recruits. Yet they were effectively lured through a combination of monetary incentives, appeals to honor and glory (or ego), and raw opportunism.

This combination of incentives, appeals, and opportunities was effectively enabled by the conflict-repressed and ecologically-stunted environment in which they were received. Employment opportunities and monetary incentives were extremely attractive and a willingness to betray others far more acute. The region clearly encouraged and continues to perpetuate predatory and opportunistic behavior among those within it. As commander Sir Robert Warburton noted when describing his Afridi recruits in the Khyber Rifles, "every individual [is] a thief, raider or robber by birth, [an] inclination and habit carried down for many centuries." [60] The Yusafzai were no exception – having been born to a region that produced little else.

Lieutenant Lumsden had arrived in late 1846 into this environment and fell under the command of Sir Henry Lawrence's younger brother, George, then-commissioner of

---

[58] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd),. p. 72.

[59] C. Allen, *Soldier Sahib* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers), p. 99.

[60] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd), p. 107.

Peshawar. George Lawrence had issued a series of appeals and decrees to quickly establish the position (and authority) of the Company relative to the existing Sikh administration and to the tribes. Continuing to ride the success of their victory at Sobraon, Lawrence convinced the Yusafzai maliks to deal with him and his young deputy, Harry Lumsden.

Significantly, many of these early connections between the British and the hill tribes were worked through intermediary tribesmen – most of whom were drawn from the settled areas along the close-border. These intermediaries played an invaluable role during initial negotiations and discussions but would soon prove limiting. The British relied on these agents only until direct contact had been established with the elusive tribes themselves hiding deep in the interior.

With contact made and with Sir Henry Lawrence's guidance, Lumsden began his recruitment with little more than his word, his image as a fighter, and his keen understanding of tribal socio-economics and the Pashtun ethos. Lumsden recognized three initial points of leverage: the tribes' collective need for income, the male Pashtuns' obsession with self-image and honor, and an unrelenting drive for territorial security and strategic advantage over rival tribes. Or put more simply, he identified three base motivations which he could use to advantage: greed, ego, and fear.

First, by offering employment, the Guides provided a steady flow of revenue through the recruit to his family and/or clan. This was a particularly straightforward and direct arrangement that complemented similar tributes and payments – *mawajib* - that would be dispensed by the Company over time. Money was undeniably important and quickly secured early approval from the local maliks. [61] As former Peshawar commissioner Frederick Mackeson described the Afridi tribe in 1853, "The Afridi are a most avaricious race, desperately fond of money…Their fidelity is [in fact] measured by

---

[61] O. Caroe, *The Pathans* (New York: St. Martin's Press), pp. 349-350. Interestingly, journalist-historian Jules Stewart also notes the differences in amount paid to different tribes. Although the process was similar, the more hostile or recalcitrant the tribe, then obviously the larger payment provided. The Zhaka-Khel clan of the Afridi is a case in point – receiving significantly more than its less violent neighbors.

the length of the purse of the seducer."[62] Certainly some tribes were more focused on monetary compensation than others, but this was only a matter of degree. All the tribes responded greedily to currency in hand.

Once bought, tribal approval essentially meant "releasing" or permitting a clan's young men to enlist for the agreed amount of rupees and designated period of service. Occasionally, maliks themselves even enlisted – often in return for British political backing and support following their time in the unit. Again, methods and agreements differed slightly among the various tribes, but remained relatively consistent in form throughout.

Monetary incentives also began to lay the foundation for greater fiscal dependency over time. The impact of withheld funds, tribute, and payment would prove extremely useful as select tribes and clans slowly became dependent on State patronage, often having also forfeited land or access for increased revenue. This was particularly true among Mashud and Wazir clans living immediately along the borders of the Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu districts.

Employment also offered an opportunity for the Pasthun to fire his weapon, fight, and within limits plunder without engendering a broader blood-feud or even personal retaliation. "The Pathan tribes loved nothing better than a good gun battle…this was their overriding passion, to shoot at somebody."[63] But it also represented more. Campaigning was honorable and the martial lifestyle itself was something admired and coveted. Service in the Guides and the later Frontier units not only provided an outlet for Pashtun aggression, but an opportunity to demonstrate one's mettle, build a reputation, and sharpen one's skills as a warrior.

---

[62] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd), p. 82.

[63] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd), p. 64.
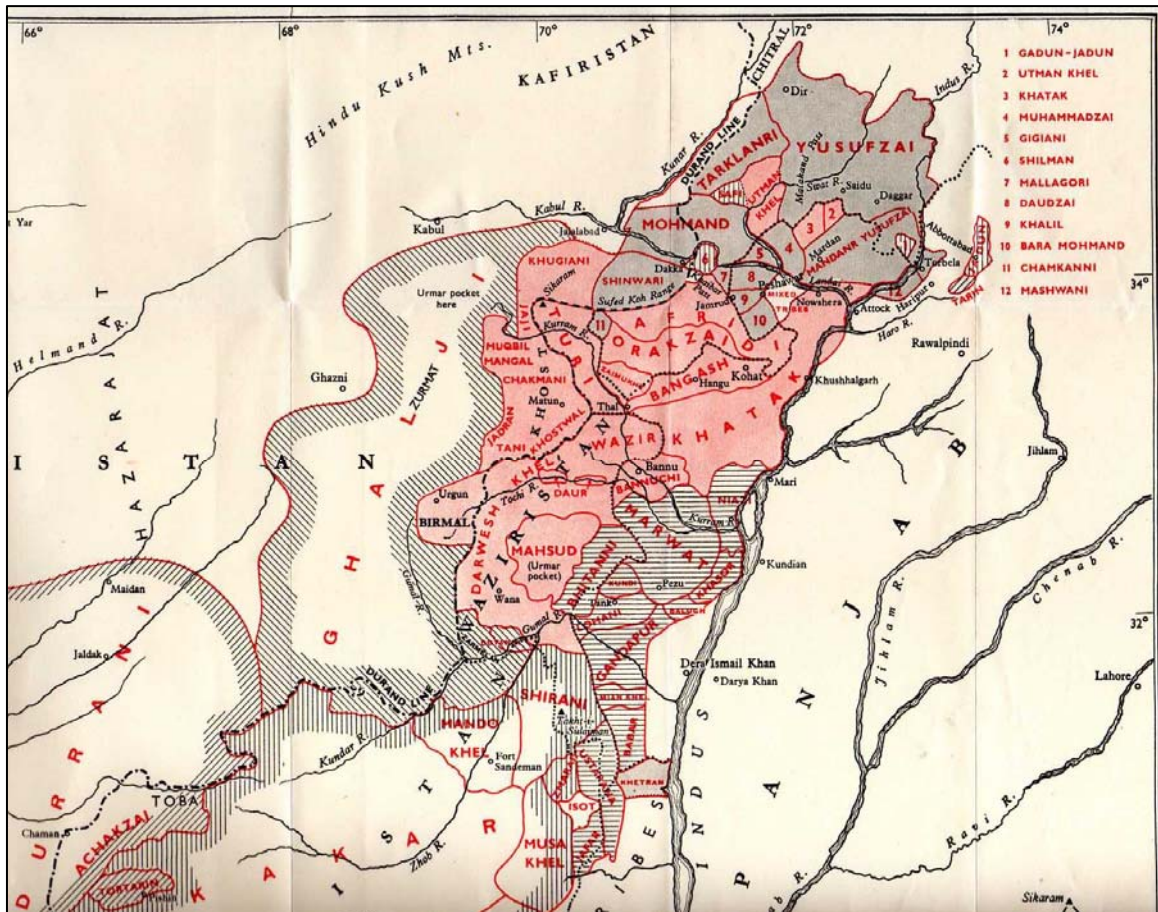
Map 8.   Pashtun tribal areas within the Northwest Frontier.[64]

Though strongly resistant to assimilation per se, these recruits were nevertheless drawn to the military discipline and esprit-de-corps the British infused in the ranks. Few turned away follow-on enlistment. On this point it is also worth noting that the Guides – and those units that followed – were rarely assembled or employed as conventional formations in the field. Rather, most operated in a highly decentralized and dispersed manner, maximizing the skills and abilities of the tribesmen relative to their rugged environment. Lacking any significant change in terms of tactics employed, the Pashtuns were relatively easy to inculcate into service life.

Another means of influencing tribal recruitment and behavior was to manipulate the concept of collective duty and responsibility. Here there existed a natural extension of general tribal philosophy which emphasized the importance of the group over the

_____

[64] *Pashtun tribal areas within the Northwest Frontier* (Caroe, O. The Pathans, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1965).

individual thereby subordinating the individual to a tight, cohesive organization. In turn, recruits proved far easier to assemble, motivate, and direct when they believed they were acting within the expectations of their immediate group – or more broadly, when acting *collectively* rather than individually. Despite the egalitarianism among individual Pashtuns, group obligations and sensitivities ran deep. This was further reinforced by the segregation of fellow tribesmen into distinct tribal platoons within a larger unit. Fielding an all-Afridi platoon or pure Yusafzai one, for example, was a common organizational technique that encouraged group cooperation and integrity.

Moreover, collective action – coupled with sanctioned enlistment (meaning approval given by a malik or assembled jirga) - appears to have provided a critical defense of sorts for the individual tribesman. Personal liability and culpability were arguably absent within this group framework and the recruit was then able to operate without excessive burden or doubt (and often with little inhibition) in the field. These British-raised levies – in contrast to the native tribal lashkars - also benefited from clearly defined leadership roles. Individual tribesmen recognized the unit as a permanent organization with consistency in word and deed often lacking among the traditional lashkars.

This was enhanced by the fact that the bitter rivalries and suspicions that frequently tore the tribal confederations apart were notably absent under the careful watch and patronage of the British officers. Decisions made were not influenced by the whims of individuals or local political machinations (despite the concerted efforts of some maliks to use the levies to their advantage). Rather, decisions were purely British in origin. And although British officers were certainly not above manipulating tribal politics, they nonetheless presented a general guise of neutrality and even-handedness within the ranks that no tribesman could have duplicated. This appearance of neutrality appealed to both tribal leaders and to the recruits they dispatched into British service. Group relationships and commitments became especially salient when it came to fighting members of one's own clan or family.

Cousins murdering cousins, sons killing fathers, and other violent behavior were not uncommon among the tribes. As Jules Stewart notes when describing the Afridi along

the Khyber, "Blood feuds between rival clans and even families within the same tribe are as commonplace today as in centuries past."[65] Winston Churchill remarked similarly that "…the Pathan tribes are always engaged in a private or public war…nothing is ever forgotten, and very few debts are left unpaid."[66] In fact, it was often acceptable and even demanded under certain circumstances to kill members of one's own family. The issue was not one of morality or hesitancy of action – it was one of adequate justification.

Justifying fratricide most often centered on a perceived or acknowledged loss of individual honor – or *nang* – due to the actions of a member or subgroup within the individual's kin network. Indecent or inappropriate conduct with women, direct verbal or physical assaults on the Pasthun himself, or a variety of far more nuanced attacks on the individual or other family members' status and reputation were frequently met with violent retaliation and bloodshed.

Because individual blood feuds and revenge-based killings were well-observed and understood, the British wisely chose not to agitate or routinely motivate their recruits along these highly-charged lines. Rather they preferred – and certainly found greater benefit – in exploiting the individual's sense of honor, but only *as it related to collective service and group obligations* – not in terms of individual affronts. Like initial recruitment, collective traditions were again the target.

Admittedly, this collective approach did not stir quite the same vengeful passions associated with a feud over a woman, for instance – but it was no less powerful in its overall effect on the male Pashtun ego and his individual sense of self-image and status. Oaths of fealty were taken to a group and its commander – *oaths frequently taken on the Koran.* And it was through these inviolable pacts, framed by unit expectations and peer social pressures, that recruits most likely rationalized having to kill both kin and former allies when necessary.[67]

---

[65] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd), p. 59.

[66] Ibid., p. 64.

[67] Jules Stewart notes this dramatic act of fealty when describing the enlistment of Walli Muhammed Khan – a member of the fierce Zhaka-Khel clan - by Sir Robert Warburton into the Khyber Rifles. Mohammed swore an oath on the Koran to be a faithful servant to Warburton. Mohammed would go on to command tremendous respect and serve in the highest ranks of the Rifles. He stood fast in the face of continued assaults of fellow tribesmen during the Pathan uprisings of 1897 and 98. His example inspired many others.

Although a series of later tribal uprisings and their mullah sponsors would challenge this concept, particularly as it pertained to British leadership and instigation, it would appear that tribesmen serving in the various Frontier units were nonetheless recognized as legitimate fighters by their kinsmen – not as traitors even as they followed a *kafir* Englishman or attacked fellow clansmen. There is little to suggest that family members of recruits were routinely targeted or ostracized for joining the ranks. The savagery exhibited toward captured recruits or those found wounded on the battlefield did not qualitatively differ among combatants, regardless of their background.[68]

Service in these units eventually also acquired a cross-generational appeal as the sons of soldiers found themselves compelled to "be as their fathers were" and "live as their fathers lived" – an unequivocal endorsement of an honorable occupation.[69]

Beyond money and honor, Lumsden also recognized a third factor key to successful Yusafzai recruitment – political opportunism. The Yusafzai, for example, felt that they would be in a position to more effectively counter their rivals, the Zhaka-Khel clan of the Afridi tribe, through direct British patronage and support – particularly as this applied to land disputes. The weaker Yusafzai recognized an opportunity to limit, if not stop, Zhaka-Khel advances and territorial gains by involving the Guides, thereby taking advantage of the British advisors' willingness to act as a neutralizing or buffering force. These inter-tribal politics were never lost on the British officer corps and gamesmanship of this type occurred across the Frontier.

In addition, it would, in fact, be select Yusafzai clans that would find themselves armed, equipped, and encouraged by the British to invade and conquer rival Islamic tribes in the northeast Kohistani territories of Dir and Swat toward the end of the 19th century.[70] Although independent of Guide involvement, this surrogate fight nevertheless

---

[68] Historian George Allen describes the horrific deaths delivered to serving British soldiers, civilians, as well as tribal porters in numerous conflicts along the Frontier. Practices of flaying victims alive, castration, and other violent acts were prevalent and uninhibited. When tribal recruits were found wounded or dead, their bodies were treated similarly – again, seemingly without regard for their background or purpose. Jules Stewart does note, however, the realization held by many Khyber Rifles recruits that no mercy would be shown for them in a fight with fellow tribesmen. But apparently neither were the tribesmen held as *takfir* – simply another opponent that would be shown no quarter.

[69] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd).

[70] L. Keiser, *Friend by Day, Enemy by Night: Organized Vengeance in a Kohistani Community* (Belmont: Wadsworth Group), p. 8.

illustrated broader British efforts to manage the Frontier tribes through manipulation of enmities and introduction of power imbalances. Again, tribal greed and opportunism overrode any religious or ideological bonds the Yusafzai may have shared with the Kohistani.

In terms of recruitment, the Guides also provided amnesty for fugitives and wanted men. Lumsden very coolly enlisted the services of well-known kidnappers, murderers, and thieves, retracting bounties and threats of capture for loyal (and extended) service in the Guides. Given their talents, these outlaws were invaluable in helping establish secondary networks of spies and informants for the British political officers. Furthermore, while in the service of Britain, they were working for – not against – the Crown.

The final – and arguably most critical - component needed to draw and bind these tribal "soldiers" was the commander himself. As noted earlier, the Pashtun only respected those who knew how to fight and fight well. Lumsden provided this leadership as did others in similar command positions. Lumsden was physically imposing, an expert shot and a highly skilled swordsman. No Pashtun in his command could best him. Through strength of will, fluency in local dialects, and courage under fire the tribesmen followed him and swore their allegiance to him. He was a warrior first – and an Englishman second. For the Pashtun – and the modern strategist – recognizing this prioritization of identities is critical.

As historian George B. Scott remarks, "…the Pathans worshipped [only] strong men."[71] This is what allowed Muslim tribesmen to follow a Christian soldier. Certainly money could buy initial favor and cooperation – and was key in doing so - but it could not alone buy loyalty and discourage betrayal over time. Nor could it alone force tribesmen to swear allegiance on the Koran. Strong leadership thus allowed the units to develop that broader sense of group identity, commitment, and collective obligation that proved critical to motivating and controlling its recruits in combat and in garrison. In turn, leadership held together what otherwise might have been a band of subordinate tribal elements loosely-bound to British direction and authority. Strong leadership also

---

[71] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd), p. 73.

allowed the units to become more than simply collections of mercenaries and hired guns – even if that was all that may have been required. Pre-Islamic tribal affections clearly outweighed contemporary Islamic ones in forging these hybrid organizations. However, in addition to being a strength this also represented a potential weakness. In the absence of strong, respected leaders units sometimes fragmented or broke apart in times of crisis, as many did during the Pasthun uprisings of 1897 and 1898. With a "strong man" in place, however, the loyalty of the recruits tended to run very deep.

Following the formation of the Guides in 1846 and their celebrated performance on behalf of the Empire in the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, additional Frontier units were quickly enlisted. These units would eventually include the famous Khyber Rifles, the South Waziristan Scouts, and the Kurrum Militia. Collectively they become known as the Punjab Frontier Force – or Piffers. A similar and complementary collection of tribal constabularies was also created.

Recruitment followed patterns similar to those established by Lumsden and the original Guides: economic vulnerabilities were identified and targeted, maliks and clans were financially accommodated, appeals to individual honor were made, and strong cult-of-personality style leadership was reinforced.

Operationally, these units performed exceptionally well. Even when the Afghan *amir* attempted to consolidate the Afridi and Yasufzai tribes, first in 1878 and then later in 1919 in opposition to the British, those tribal units not abandoned by their English officers proved steadfast under fire and fought valiantly throughout the Frontier. Devoutly Islamic tribesmen stood by their Christian leaders.

In short, the Guides and these later units proved an effective model for exploiting local talents, manipulating regional ambitions and enmities, and using tribal codes of conduct in an intense, highly-competitive conflict environment in order to benefit the State. Guide recruitment and employment demonstrated that Muslim and Christian interactions could occur and relationships form based solely on shared (and manipulated) concepts of greed, respect, egotism, and fear. Due largely to pre-Islamic tribal affiliations and traditions, hardened Islamic networks had proven vulnerable and susceptible to Western influence.

B. OBSERVATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Conflict was and continues to be an integral part of the Northwest Frontier. Consequently, opportunities for manipulation have been described. For the British, these opportunities largely followed in the wake of the Anglo-Sikh Wars, but were also the products of centuries of violence and criminality among local warring tribes.

Ironically, the British wanted stability on the Frontier, but it was really the lack of unity and stability that served them best during the early phases of consolidation. Instability afforded clear socio-economic points of entry and the means for gaining (and exercising) influence. Perhaps even more importantly, the British entered a strategic environment that rewarded indirect engagement with the tribes and punished those who sought to rule directly. The British close-border policy of the mid to late-19th century addressed these realities and the British benefited accordingly.

Prior to 1893 England sought to rule from the margins – not the interior – and therefore avoided much of the tribes' direct ire. Company and Crown alike interacted with ethnocentric Islamic tribes exactly as non-Muslim external actors (with no territorial ambitions) should: through proxies, surrogates, and hybrid organizations.

The instability of the Northwest Frontier during this period of close-border administration complemented the region's geography, providing a highly effective buffer zone for the British and fertile ground for selective tribal manipulation. Its indigenous tribesmen owed no one permanent allegiance and any efforts at forming such alliances were summarily undermined by the tribes' fractured political and social structures. Only the east-west and north-south passes demanded special attention. Consequently, neither the Afghans, the Mughals, nor the Persians before them were ever able to depend on a unified Frontier.[72] This was – and remains - a territory that deals openly with a variety of powers and regimes simultaneously – one in which groups and individuals seek tribal advantage and personal reward wherever possible and often at the expense of their rivals.

---

[72] Jules Stewart provides a quote by historian George B. Scott that follows "[the Northwest Pashtun] had never given more than shadowy allegiance to the *amirs* of Afghanistan at any time, had raided their neighborhoods on both sides and caused much friction with the Indian government." This quote appears on pg 45 of Stewart's *Khyber Rifles*.

However lawless and unpredictable as this environment has been, it offers a perverse flexibility when dealing with its indigenous population.   It was this unpredictability and underlying factionalism that the East India Company (and later the Crown) was able to use in developing its native levies and establishing its indirect foothold in the tribal areas.

Recognizing the early British successes in enlisting native support, we can distill a set of principles about how to enter similarly hardened societies and interacting with them, principles that complement those addressed earlier in the North American example.

To begin, a non-Muslim, non-tribal power must operate from the margins as the British did during its close-border period. The most severe tribal uprisings occurred only after the implementation of the forward-policy in 1893 and the annexation of the Frontier in 1901.   There cannot be a foreign, external aggressor against whom the tribes can collectively unite. Groups within the region must be allowed (and encouraged) to turn on themselves.   Only when internal rivalries outweigh external considerations will meaningful opportunities then appear for the State.

The interior had been most effectively monitored and contained through the use of tribal levies and constabularies and the periodic threat of larger punitive expeditions as required. Certainly some of the British punitive campaigns were successful when deployed into the interior, but without the capability of sustaining themselves - and given the ensuing alignment of otherwise fragmented tribes against them - these incursions were frequently limited and proved largely ineffectual (and counter-productive) over time.

From the margins, the external State actor can likewise pursue further enlistment, specialized recruitment, and establish other supporting relationships as it moves to affect broader tribal behavior without creating a focal point for xenophobic animosity or religious opportunists. As noted earlier, early and indirect entry of tribal networks may well need to occur in dense urban centers, markets, along the periphery of select tribal areas, or among immigrant communities in settled districts wherever tribesmen have sought employment and trade.   Certainly the British proved successful in directly engaging tribal maliks deep within the interior – but these interactions only occurred in

the wake of months (if not years) of effort by tribal intermediaries and trusted agents. And even then, direct interactions were discreet, highly-scripted, and conducted by particularly capable and carefully selected men.

Other types of peripheral interactions may involve deliberate efforts at inter-marriage (perhaps involving second-generation European or American Muslims) in an attempt to blur tribal lines and/or familial distinctions over time – a technique previously suggested in the North American case study – and one that may also ease future source development and contacts. Yet as a general rule, all of these efforts – both direct and indirect - must primarily target groups, not individuals. Collectively, group decisions can be made and actions taken that would otherwise be impossible for the individual to make alone without lethal consequences. It is the group, then, that can excuse otherwise deviant, non-traditional, or non-conformist behavior as long as it benefits the entire organization in the process – not simply an individual seeking personal gain or opportunity. This would certainly apply to any efforts that reward collaboration or enlistment of tribesmen into non-tribal service. The soliciting of local maliks by the British prior to their recruiting individual tribesmen illustrates the effective application of this principle. On this point, it is also worth noting that individual appeals may well be viable (and indeed, demanded) when dealing specifically with criminal or fringe elements as opposed to more traditional kin-based networks.

Methodologically, the *process* for manipulating Islamic tribes in the Northwest Frontier was similar to the efforts of the British and French in North America as select tribes were used to combat and weaken other tribes. Both sets of efforts involved a gradual process of evaluation, selective entry, tribal accommodation, and then exploitation. Although differences lay with each State's ultimate objectives and the regionally specific techniques required to achieve them, the *means* – developing economic interdependencies, manipulating social pressures and egos, encouraging political opportunism and greed, and introducing sudden power imbalances (as the British arming of the Yusafzai to combat the Kohistani demonstrated, for instance) – were common to both sets of experiences.

And as with these examples, no one factor was sufficient by itself to decisively affect individual or group behavior over time – all were required in varied degrees. For example, simply engaging a target group economically without complementary pressures or deliberately manipulative agendas often devolves into an arrangement sociologists George Devereux and Edwin Loeb describe as the "borrowing of means without the borrowing of goals."[73] The target group receives, but does not respond in kind. This is why dependencies must be seeded in the process and economic vulnerabilities exploited to gain further political and social leverage. In other words, the effort cannot be about simply giving away money or resources or providing attractive trade opportunities.

Furthermore, when crafting a policy of manipulation in these Islamic regions, one is again reminded that humans must still meet their basic requirements – independent of any ideology or preference. Interactions outside of the tribe must – and do – occur. Geographic isolation and harsh terrain often mean limited agricultural output, poor manufacturing potential, and finite natural resources. This certainly holds true for the Northwest Frontier. Consequently, trade, relative profit, and access to select services not otherwise available demand a degree of interaction – however indirect - with those on the "outside" if the tribes are to survive and compete. No one is *truly* isolated or self-sufficient.

As the British discovered, the hill tribes of Waziristan, the Afridi encircling Kohat and the Khyber, or the Yusufzai and Mohmand in Peshawar and Hazara, were highly dependent on crops, tolls extracted, and trade goods (including weapons and ammunition) available from their "settled" neighbors in the plains and valleys below, as well as from those traversing the narrow passes of the Khyber and Malakand or patronage received directly from Kabul or Delhi.

Frequent raids, theft, and occasional bartering provided that which the hill tribes lacked. Muzzle-loaded *jezails* and magazine-fed Kalashnikovs, for example, are simply not mass-produced in the mountains of the FATA – nor are significant stores of food products. Admittedly, local manufacturing, including home-made rifles and pistols, takes

---

[73] G. Devereux and E. Loeb, "Antagonistic Acculturation." *American Sociologists Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (April 1943), pp. 133-147.

place in the workshops of Darra Adam Khel and similar Khyber village-markets, but the vast majority of goods remain imports – both licit and illicit.[74]

This somewhat parasitic relationship observed by the West for over two centuries has changed little over time. Perhaps the most noteworthy exception being the current extraction of timber by the tribes within select Frontier provinces – a resource sold by the tribes and then purchased by the Pakistani government and contracted industry. Apart from these permit-managed harvesting operations, however, more has traditionally gone in (or traversed) than come out.

Meanwhile, as tribal populations increase and local non-renewable resources are consumed or prove insufficient in quantity, tribal interactions with non-tribal members will only grow in frequency. The continued rise in the number of Wazir tribesmen, for example, immigrating to Quetta, Karachi and other urban centers attests to this reality. Importantly, this economic interaction has opened the door in the past and could (and even should) provide the critical means for contact and access today.

Next, it must be remembered that the marriage of Islam with select pre-Islamic tribal traditions has never been a seamless one – a condition clearly noted in this case study. As such, there were and continue to be inconsistencies and opportunities for division. As Sir Olaf Caroe, the last British governor of the Pathan Northwest Frontier Province noted in 1958 when describing the Mahsud tribe of South Waziristan, "…I do not think any Mahsud would regard it as other than truthful, and even flattering, to be told he was a Mahsud first and a Muslim afterwards."[75]   Moreover, as former British political officers like John Nicholson and George Lumdsen discovered in the mid-1850s, Pashtunwali itself is not wholly antithetical or incompatible with certain Western values

---

[74] J. Stewart, *The Khyber Rifles* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd.), p. 135. Stewart notes that local manufacturing of fire arms had first been discovered by the British during the 1863 Black Mountain expedition. Stewart notes that "hundreds" of fire arms had been discovered. Although telling, this production rate pales by comparison with the arms trafficked from Oman through Iran, Afghanistan, and then into the Frontier. Similarly, weapons captured, stolen, or bought at local markets include British, Russian, and US manufactured ones which appear far more frequently in the hands of tribesmen than those produced in the local workshops and encampments.

[75] O. Caroe, *The Pathans* (New York: St. Martin's Press), p. 397. Caroe goes on to state that the Mashud never hated the British because they were not Muslim. Rather, their relationship was based almost entirely on respect and "toughness." Similarly, the Mashud did not ally with the Afghans or other bordering populations simply because they were Muslim either. Tribal needs came first, framed by a pre-Islamic tribal identity unique to the Mahsud. A similar prioritization of tribal identities is found among other Pasthun tribes as well.

or methods. In fact, many otherwise impossible relationships were built entirely on shared pre-Islamic concepts of honor, respect, and duty – often bypassing disapproving mullahs and Muslim sensibilities altogether.[76] Similar bonds were forged between T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Bedouin during World War I.

When these concepts are then taken together, the British experience in the Northwest Frontier provides a critical example of how hardened Islamic tribal networks - *when deliberately "put into play against one another"* – can ultimately prove as vulnerable to influence and manipulation as the non-Islamic tribes of North America.

---

[76] Both Caroe and historian Charles Allen describe an event involving British officer John Nicholson and a local mullah in the Bannu district in the early 1850s. Nicholson had happened to pass the mullah in a small village and noticed the man's scowl and apparent show of disrespect toward Nicholson, the new sahib and District *haquim*. Confirming the man's show of disrespect with his tribal entourage, Nicholson ordered the mullah's beard shaved off as punishment. A clear affront and insult to Islam, this particular punishment was nevertheless understood and condoned by the Pasthun public. In fact, Nicholson was more respected afterward for making such a decision. Nicholson was deemed to have every right to avenge the mark made on his honor (*nang*) and personal image (*iqbal*). Pashtun tribal custom had clearly superseded orthodox Koranic law.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV. METHODOLOGY FOR MANIPULATING TRIBAL CONFLICT

Confronted with so many that are not good…[you] must learn to be able not to be good…according to necessity. Machiavelli[77]

The two preceding case studies have suggested a set of key planning considerations and procedural guidelines necessary for developing a policy of manipulating tribal conflict in order to achieve broader State objectives. Combining these considerations and guidelines, a sequenced methodology then emerges – one that provides both planner and decision-maker alike with a clear template for action.

This template specifically addresses the policy "life cycle" described in Chapter II (see *Observation and Policy Implications)*, yet incorporates all of the relevant observations and lessons learned from the Northwest Frontier experience as well. It is a 10-step process that begins with the development (or recognition) of the State's objectives and intent, continues through initial entry and policy implementation in a given tribal region, and concludes with the demands of re-ordering or reconstructing the conflict area itself.

Step 1.   Determining the State's strategic and operational objectives.

This first step assumes that the State is already challenged or is confronted with an imminent or emerging threat which it must counter. At present, this challenge is Islamic extremism and transnational jihadi networks as part of the Global War on Terror.

Recognizing the threat, the State must then determine what near and intermediate-term objectives are needed to support an overall strategy that (presumably) promotes long-term goals of State security and stability. Specific to the current threat of Islamic extremism, these near and intermediate-term objectives may include, but are not limited to:

---

[77] F. Gaddis, The Cold War: A New History. p. 165, quote extract from Machiavelli.

a. Denying safe havens and bases of support for transnational jihadis;

b. Denying future safe havens and bases of support for the emerging generation of transnational jihadis (for example, those that return from Iraq and may be denied entry into their own countries of origin);

c. Limiting the "export" of human, financial, and/or resource-based capital to transnational jihadi networks

d. Reduction of terrorists' ability to grow organizationally or ideologically; and,

e. Long-term re-structuring of contentious regional environments and the setting of conditions for more traditional and development-based engagement strategies.

Once these near and intermediate-term objectives are identified (along with the States, regions, and/or networks with which they are associated), the State must then evaluate how appropriate or effective current methods and policies have been, are, or are likely to be in achieving them. Should shortfalls be noted, supplemental policies or significant adjustments will be required.

Step 2. Identifying and evaluating appropriate regions for implementation.

Here it must be recognized that no policy – primary, supplemental, or otherwise - is universally applicable. Manipulating internal conflicts is certainly no exception. Therefore, as policies are proposed, particularly those with exceptional degrees of risk or uncertainty, they must (obviously) be rigorously re-evaluated against the specific area or region in which they will be implemented. In short, the State's objectives must be met and the most appropriate means of achieving them pursued.

Admittedly, these may simply include an increase in financial assistance or more diversified developmental aid, or – the situation may demand more unconventional methods and sensitive proposals as this thesis suggests. Specific to *manipulating tribal conflict* this then begins with an initial assessment of the presence and extent of existing tribal factionalism and division within the target area and the degree to which current policies have proven ineffective or counterproductive. As suggested earlier, there are select hardened tribal regions relevant to the GWOT that are sufficiently fractured to be

well-suited - and in my estimation, demand - manipulative engagement by the US; and then there are those that are not appropriate for this type of approach.

Next, the State must attempt to determine the degree to which these internal conflicts – if encouraged or sponsored - can remain isolated and/or relatively contained. This may mean engaging only those specific areas lying along the "edges" of more developed regions or those largely removed from major byways or modern commercial centers and routes. These cannot be conflicts that are assessed as having a high probability of spawning larger regional fights or even inter-State warfare, as we feared in the Balkans in the 1990s or more recently in Lebanon prior to the August 2006 cease-fire – unless, of course, this is the State's intent.

Furthermore, the State must also identity its likely competitors, additional stakeholders, and/or external counter-influences in the region. These include those groups or individuals who may attempt to escalate the conflict or disrupt efforts at controlling or manipulating it by the principle instigator. Inherent in this step is a simultaneous assessment of media and/or access to information and connectivity in the conflict environment. To what degree can information be filtered, denied, or otherwise regulated in support of the State's efforts? Likewise, how vulnerable is the State, its proxies, or others to the efforts of competitors in the information and strategic communications realm?

Step 3.   Identifying initial points of entry.

After evaluating a given tribal region and determining its geo-political viability and potential for internal disruption, the State must then begin to develop an entry plan. This effort will build on earlier surveys and assessments, but will also need to draw on far more detailed and pointed analyses of specific social and functional networks and a marked increase in HUMINT collection activity. The intent of this must be to locate cracks, seams, and initial points of leverage. It also seeks to measure any likelihood for

tribal *fusion* or the establishment of latent or inactive tribal partnerships that could frustrate State efforts at fragmentation.[78]

Next the State must identify and evaluate licit and illicit trade networks, sources, causes and the extent of existing internal and external dependencies (including economic, military, health, and/or resource-based relationships), detail political and social inter/intra-tribal fault-lines, and conduct other more inclusive ethnographic intelligence gathering activities.

Through these efforts, individuals, groups, specific organizations, and/or tribal "choke points" will reveal themselves – points of inherent vulnerability – that will help the State focus its attempts to *indirectly* enter the targeted environment. Simultaneously, a second category of key individuals, groups, or organizations to be isolated, marginalized, or removed must be identified. These targets are obviously not limited to simply those found within the conflict environment itself, but may also include individuals and networks found in bordering States, regions or far more remote locations. Priorities are subsequently assigned for who is to be approached or who is to be eliminated and in what order and sequence.

This process must be well-calculated, carefully measured, and likely clandestine (or covert) in nature. And, depending on the extent of prior interactions or the degree of already-embedded or developed sources of information within the region, it is a process that may require significant time and patience to effectively complete.

Step 4.   Defining the campaign.

As detailed information about the operational environment is gathered, the State must then determine what level of conflict or disruption is required (and possible) to achieve its objectives. Or rather, it must assess what level of social disorganization – as a result of infighting, economic degradation, or civil unrest – the society must be reduced to in order to afford needed opportunities and to achieve broader strategic success. This will obviously be predictive in nature and will depend in part on the type of objectives

---

[78] This consideration was suggested by Dr. Anna Simons. Though many organizations may well break down during a crisis, there may also be unforeseen partnerships or alliances of convenience with which the State must now contend.

sought and the current sources (and balances) of tribal power observed. Encouraging large inter-tribal fights, for example, may alone prove sufficient if the aim is to influence or affect regional trade or the movement of resources or funds. But, when seeking to extract specific concessions – locating high-value tribal targets, collaborating with local militias, denying key facilities or routes, or conducting specialized recruitment – the environment may require further fragmentation, reducing it to clan against clan, or households against individuals, depending on which level of authority (and subsequent cooperation) the State must target.

Importantly, the State must also acknowledge during this process that in some regions desired conditions may already exist – they simply require removing embedded systems of conflict mediation among the tribes and/or thwarting traditional methods of reconciliation or conflict resolution. Of course, for other areas, far more significant levels of effort may still be required.

Therefore, when determining the degree of disruption needed, the State must look beyond what is currently observed and envision an environment beyond the ability of any one tribe – or its subordinate elements - to control. Endemic fighting alone does not necessarily enable State manipulation. Despite seemingly chaotic, violent, or anarchic behavior, the State must recognize that an underlying order *may* exist - one that must be deliberately reduced if meaningful opportunities are to be exposed. This applies to environments with observed or ongoing fighting as well as to those with latent or simmering tensions and rivalries. In this way, tribal combatants are forced to abandon the status quo, scramble for new partnerships or alliances, and engage in activities not otherwise tolerated or condoned for the sake of survival (or in order to compete) in a new operational context.

Step 5.   Determine acceptable levels of risk and legal jurisprudence; prepare information (or perhaps more appropriately, disinformation) campaign

With both an operational assessment and a concept for implementation complete, the State must then make a final determination of acceptable levels of risk and any self-

imposed constraints it feels are necessary for its own domestic (political and legal) protection. State allies, if involved, are also engaged.

Initial assessments of geo-political risk should be revisited at this point and domestic considerations carefully reviewed. Unintended consequences need to be assessed and branch plans developed. Supporting information – or disinformation – campaigns must be developed and may well precede early recruitment and initial entry operations.

Step 6.   Directly or indirectly enter social, political, and trade networks through those critical points of vulnerability identified in Step 3.

With approval then given and final preparations complete, the State would then initiate recruitment of requisite proxies, surrogates, or intermediary agents. Prior to or during this effort, those individuals, groups, or organizations identified in Steps 3 and 4 as obstacles or impediments are removed as needed in order to facilitate this process. Information campaigns, once begun, would be followed by further operational assessments and planning refinements based on recruit feedback and performance.

Step 6 is intended to more fully develop the State's understanding of the inter-relationships and dynamics of the target environment. Additional contacts should be sought and opportunities exposed. Passive information collection would need to be replaced with active and fully-embedded personnel capable of not only receiving, but communicating within their respective networks as well. This would require establishing a critical set of clandestine pipelines for data exchange, resource introduction, or movement of funds throughout the environment and the means of controlling them by the State.

Step 7.   Introduce or aggravate a critical imbalance and develop/exploit latent or nascent dependencies through those networks entered in Step 6.

Once having entered and/or allied itself with social, political, and trade networks, the State would then target specific rivalries or fissures by introducing or aggravating a critical imbalance by, with, or through its proxies, surrogates, or intermediary agents.

This may involve altering trade patterns or methods, introducing or denying key resources, technologies, or commodities, or sudden (and disproportionate) military empowerment.

Through these imbalances, the State would create opportunities for further manipulation and influence by either exploiting conflict as it then exists (without any internal controls) or encouraging it to rise to new levels. Furthermore, the State then seeks to accomplish select near or intermediate-term objectives, and – perhaps most importantly - begins to develop those dependencies critical to long-term influence and structural change. In fact, this is the point in the campaign that most often determines eventual State success or failure when exploiting internal conflicts.

Here, Israel provides a relevant – if not also timely – example of potential pitfalls when appropriate dependencies are not successfully seeded among those targeted by the State. Specifically, we can look at Israel's encouraged expansion in the early 1980s of the Gaza-based Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood – intended to counter the more secular PLO. [79] Tellingly, the Brotherhood had required critical Israeli complicity and an undetermined degree of direct support during its early development in order to survive PLO repression and political competition. However, no lasting dependencies were embedded by the Israelis into the Brotherhood during this period – Israel simply allowed the militia to evolve largely unchecked as it grew to compete with, if not weaken, the more threatening PLO. Consequently, pitting the two Palestinian factions against one another *did* prove advantageous in the near-term - but only to a point.

But then after the first Palestinian *intifada* and the internal reorganization of the Brotherhood into Hamas in 1987, Israel proved unable to contain the very organization it had passively supported and tacitly encouraged. [80] Internal political structures had changed and Israel itself found with no leverage and unable to maintain influence. What lesson was learned? Israel needed to do more than simply permit or encourage conflict. It needed to have aggressively built its own controls or chokepoints within it as well.

---

[79] G. Robinson. "Hamas as Social Movement", Islamic Activism: Social Movement Theory Approach (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), pp. 119-123.

[80] "Muslim Brotherhood" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood. Accessed on 15 August 2006.

Creating or fostering conflict during this step *must* involve a complementary process of developing or exploiting latent/nascent dependencies so that the patron – the State – retains sufficient leverage over the client. This did not occur under the Likud policy relative to the Brotherhood. Similar failings, nearly two centuries earlier, were clearly noted among the French colonists in the years leading up to the Seven Years War, as the North American case study illustrated.

Step 8. **Pursue strategic objectives through resulting conflict.**

This step is no more than realizing and exploiting the State's efforts to fragment and weaken the target region, thereby continuing to achieve named objectives and prepare for long-term re-structuring or environmental re-organization. This is also likely the longest step in the process, one that will require tremendous patience, resolve, and attentiveness.

Step 9. **Determine when benefits of conflict have been maximized or exhausted; determine when conditions are created to resume (or initiate) traditional engagement.**

Conflict is not an end unto itself. It is an enabler. As such, manipulated internal fights are intended to be temporary in nature. When State objectives are achieved and conditions created that permit appropriate constructive and/or developmental engagement, internal conflict must be arrested or a status quo regained.

Step 10. **Initiate long-term restructuring or re-building of environment as required.**

This final step capitalizes on the dependencies, weaknesses, and opportunities created through earlier conflict and tribal manipulation. It does not imply territorial occupation or radically new forms of government – though these may result if pursued. It does, however, imply a radical change in regional relationships and newly established levels of cooperation and complicity among the tribes and the involved State. These changes may well result in something resembling the British-sponsored Covenant Chain or perhaps something farther reaching.

The bottom line is the State must consolidate the fragments and strengthen its position relative to the tribes if long-term success is to be achieved. This would be a process not unlike the efforts of Truman and Eisenhower in rebuilding Europe, Japan, and South Korea in the wake of major conventional war. Though these conflicts were not begun by the Allies for this purpose, post-World War II reconstruction was nevertheless intended to similarly deny other global competitors the fertile ground conflict had provided for radical socio-economic or political change. Whether competing influences are Communist or Islamic – or something else altogether - the State must be prepared to not just rebuild but reshape and "inoculate" what it has broken down.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

V.   CONCLUSION

[W]e are facing an implacable enemy whose avowed objective is world domination…there are no rules in such a game.[81]

The United States continues to face a set of threats and challenges that are unlikely to diminsh in the near future. Through selective political and economic engagement, military posturing and intervention, and diplomatic gamesmanship the US has sought to counter these threats and challenges and promote domestic security and a measure of relative stability – but significant policy shortfalls remain.

Select regions have in fact proven resistant to US influence and unresponsive to an array of incentives and coercive pressures. Moreover, many of these regions continue to feature prominently in the Global War on Terror and cannot be ignored. Where current policy options have proven ineffective, supplemental ones may be required.

Manipulating internal tribal conflicts is such a policy option, especially since it offers a measure of coverage currently lacking. As a supplement, it is intended to facilitate (and enable) other primary US policy efforts. The aim would be to break down existing barriers and tribal resistance currently frustrating traditional engagement by disrupting tribal balances (and sources) of power in the near-term, and enabling restructuring or reordering of the environment over the long-term. This option proposes that tribal networks can be effectively fractured along existing fault lines, turning groups and individuals against one another in an internal competition for survival and advantage – one which the US or its allies can exploit from afar. This is an obvious derivative of a divide-and-conquer strategy – yet neither territorial conquest nor indirect rule is necessarily sought. Rather, divide-and-*exploit* or divide-and-*distract* would be more applicable for the US today.

As noted in both the North American and Northwest Frontier case studies, the efforts of others in manipulating tribal conflicts were often highly successful.   Entire continents were affected through strategies of exploiting internal divisions. Similarly, otherwise hardened and xenophobic networks were breached and organizations created

---

[81] F. Gaddis, The Cold War: A New History, p. 165.

63

by leveraging fierce rivalries and individuals' all-consuming desires for material gain, security, or political advantage. Even today, fear, greed, and egotism continue to dominate human behavior during periods of intense crisis or hardship and this manipulative strategy proposed here targets and encourages these motivations in order to support broader State efforts. Harvard anthropologist Steve Caton recorded an apt Yemeni proverb in the midst of an inter-tribal fight that illustrates this reality: "[As] catastrophe spreads…mercy contracts".[82] Ideologies frequently melt away, partnerships and relationships are re-evaluated or discarded, and personal preferences quickly seconded behind those that guarantee survival. As internal conflicts then rise to levels indigenous institutions can no longer control, critical vulnerabilities and opportunities for influence are created or exposed. Through these vulnerabilities and opportunities, the US can gain advantage.

The potential of this policy option is enormous and admittedly so are the consequences and the risks. But given national security interests and in light of our current threat, it is a proposal that deserves further review and honest consideration. As President Dwight D. Eisenhower remarked in 1955 when considering the Soviet Union:

> I have come to the conclusion that some of our traditional ideas of sportsmanship are scarcely applicable in the morass in which the world now flounders…Truth, honor, justice, consideration for others, liberty for all – the problem is how to preserve them when we are opposed by people who scorn these values.[83]

However counterintuitive or unpalatable, *promoting* local disruption and instability in select tribal regions could, in fact, prove key to helping us achieve our security objectives in the near and long-term. Exploiting tribal networks through conflict certainly falls outside of, as Eisenhower suggests, our traditional ideas of sportsmanship. Yet importantly, our values do not have to be forfeited in the process.

---

[82] S. Caton, Yemen Chronicle, p. 193.

[83] J. Gaddis, The Cold War A New History, p. 165.

I believe our values and unconventional policy options such as this are compatible and can co-exist. As John Stuart Mill noted nearly a century and a half ago:

> The early difficulties in the way of spontaneous progress are so great, that there is seldom any choice of means for overcoming them; and a ruler full of the spirit of improvement is warranted in the use of any expedients that will attain an end, perhaps otherwise unattainable. Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion.[84]

Mill thus advocates the concept of the greater good and how means can be justified by the ends. My proposal is similar. Fomenting or encouraging internal conflict is simply an enabler, a means of ultimately promoting (or enhancing) stability over time. But should the US pursue such a strategy, it must take great care and thoroughly evaluate and appropriately scale every action - otherwise ethical justification may well be lost. Although this policy admittedly encourages unrest and the manipulation of others, it does so for the greater benefit of the United States and its citizens.

In sum, given both our lack of alternatives and the clear successes of past efforts, *Exploiting Tribal Networks through Conflict* should be incorporated into our national security strategy today. The threats we face are real and every option to combat them must be considered. We must be aggressive, pro-active, and regionally-engaged, however direct or indirect these efforts may be. In turn, we must not only maintain *but improve* our *local* influence and reach if we are to remain a *global* superpower - the policy described here would do both.

---

[84] J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* [1859], extracts from Chapters. I, II, III, and IV. .

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

Ahmed, A. *Resistance and Control in Pakistan,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Allen, C. *Soldier Sahib*, New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2000.

Barthorp, M. *The Northwest Frontier: British India and Afghanistan 1839-1947*, Dorset: Blandford Press, 1982.

Brachman, J., McCants, W. *Stealing Al-Qaeda's Playbook*. Center for Counterterrorism, West Point, NY: West Point, 2006.

Caroe, O. *The Pathans,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965.

Caton, S. *Yemen Chronicle*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2005.

Devereux, G., Loeb, E. "Antagonistic Acculturation." *American Sociologists Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (April 1943), pp. 133-147.

Houghton Mifflin Encyclopedia of North American Indians. "Fur Trade," http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_012800_furtrade.htm. Accessed on 26 February 2006.

Jennings, F. *The Founders of America*. New York, NY: WW Norton and Company, 1993.

Johnson, R. "Finding a Usable Indian," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 64, No. 3, December 1977.

Jones, C. "Apache Scouts," *Cobblestone*, Vol. 17, No. 8 (November, 1996), pp. 26-29.

Kasfir, N. "Domestic Anarchy, Security Dilemmas, and Violent Predation," *Why States Fail*, ed. Robert Rotberg. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: 2004.

Keiser, L. *Friend by Day, Enemy by Night: Organized Vengeance in a Kohistani Community*, Belmont: Wadsworth Group, 2002.

Metcalf, R. "Who Should Rule at Home?," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 61, No. 3, December 1974.

Migdal, J. *Strong Societies and Weak States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Miko, F. T., ed. "Removing Terrorist Sanctuaries: The 9-11 Commission Recommendations and US Policy." *CRS Report for Congress*: Washington, DC, February 2006.

Mill, J. *On Liberty* [1859], extracts from chs. I, II, III, and IV. Selection from online edition @Bartelby.com, as accessed on 8 April 2000 at http://www.bartleby.com/130/. Acquired as handout provided through the Naval Postgraduate School, 2006.

_____. *Utilitarianism*, Happiness as the Foundation of Morality, 1861

Rich, E. "Colonial Empire," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1950.

Robinson, G. "Hamas as Social Movement", *Islamic Activism: Social Movement Theory Approach* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), pp. 119-123.

Sageman, M. *Understanding Terrorist Networks*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Salzman, P. "Ideology and Change in Middle Eastern Tribal Societies," *Man*, Royal Anthropological Institute, New Series, Vol. 13, No. 4, December 1978.

Simons, A. "Seeing the Enemy (or Not)", *Rethinking the Principles of War*, 1st ed., ed. Anthony D. McIvor (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press), pp. 323-343.

Stewart, J. *The Khyber Rifles*, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 2005.

Titus, P. "Honor the Baluch, Buy the Pashtun: Stereotypes, social organization, and history in western Pakistan." *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 32, No. 3 (July 1998).

USA History. *Wars: Queen Anne's War – The War of the Spanish Succession*. http://www.usahistory.com/wars/spansucc.htm. Accessed on 10 March 2006.

White, R. "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 65, No. 2, September 1978.

_____. *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos*. University of Nebraska Press: 1983.

Wikipedia. "Muslim Brotherhood". http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood. Accessed on 15 August 2006.

_____. "Pequot War". http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pequot_War. Accessed on 15 March 2006.

Young, M. "The Dark and Bloody but Endlessly Inventive Middle Ground of Indian Frontier Historiography," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 13, No. 2. Pennsylvania, 1993.

Zuckerman, M. "In No Uncertain Terms," *US News and World Report*, Vol. 140, No. 10, March 2006.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1.   Defense Technical Information Center
        Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2.   Dudley Knox Library
        Naval Postgraduate School
        Monterey, California