

‘From the Black Mountain to Waziristan’: Culture and Combat on the North-West Frontier

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In civilized warfare force is directed against the armed enemy and his defensible positions but not against his country and subjects who may be morally unconcerned in the hostilities and innocent of offence. *But this is not civilized warfare*; the enemy does not possess troops that stand to be attacked, nor defensible posts to be penetrated, robber fastnesses to be scaled, and dwellings containing people, all of them to a man concerned in hostilities, there is not a single man of them who is innocent, who is not, or has not been, engaged in offences, or who does not fully support the misconduct of his tribe, who is not a member of the armed banditti. The enemy harass the troops as they approach, threading the defiles, and leave their village, carrying off everything that can be carried, abandoning only immovable property - walls, roofs, and crops. What are the troops to do? Are they to spare these crops and houses, losing the only opportunity they are ever likely to have of inflicting damages on the enemy, marching back to their quarters without effecting anything, amidst the contempt of the hillmen? ...To spare these villages would be as unreasonable as to spare the commissariat supplies or arsenals of a civilised enemy.

Richard Temple, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Punjab, 1856¹

Between 1849 and 1914, imperial troops undertook more than 60 expeditions against the tribes of the North-West Frontier.² Partly because of their inability to pacify the region, the specificities of frontier warfare occupied officers, officials and commentators throughout the colonial period. As Temple's account makes clear, frontier combat was regarded as distinctive: the ecology of the frontier region, and the supposed truculence of the tribal populations who lived there, were thought to require particular strategic and tactical adaptations. By 1914, a host of publications had emerged offering histories of, and instruction in, frontier conflict: the Governments of Punjab and India issued increasingly sprawling official histories in 1873, 1874 and 1907, while a variety of compendium volumes were published either side of 1900, including Charles Callwell's oft-cited *Small Wars* in 1896, and H.C. Wylly's *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan* in 1912.³ Following Wylly, this chapter examines colonial engagements on the Black Mountain, and in Waziristan, during the late nineteenth century. The chapter offers a cultural reading of colonial campaigning, arguing that combat on the frontier was shaped, in important ways, by a cultural exchange: strategic, tactical and logistical calculations reflected ideas and assumptions about the frontier, its population and their relationship to colonial power.⁴ By tracing the development of specific rationalities for frontier conflict through a series of deployments, the chapter reveals the intersection of colonial culture and imperial military power, confirming Nicholas Thomas's assertion that colonial violence was always 'mediated and enframed by structures of meaning'.⁵

The dialogue between colonial culture and operational practice is most clearly signalled in the conspicuously *performative* logic of frontier campaigning.⁶ According to Callwell, the 'great principle' for fighting small wars was 'that of overawing the enemy by bold initiative and resolute action, whether on the battlefield or as part of

the general plan of campaign'.⁷ Boldness and vigour were the essential qualities for colonial soldiers facing 'savages and guerillas' for, as Callwell explained in his analysis of an expedition against the Chitralis in 1895, 'moral force is even more potent than physical force in compassing their downfall'.⁸ Frontier expeditions were thus conceived and executed as performances which sought to instantiate colonial authority through the penetration and occupation of tribal territory. Situating colonial culture and colonial combat in the same analytic field, allows us to explore more effectively how military praxis was shaped by overlapping and mutually reinforcing ideas about tribal opponents and colonial authority.⁹ In short, it helps us to see how culture shaped not only the attitudes of colonial soldiers, but also how it informed their strategic and tactical decision-making. Reading colonial expeditions as cultural projects also allows us to better understand the limits of colonial military power on the frontier. While most frontier operations provided few direct engagements with enemy forces, emphasizing the 'moral' effects of colonial interventions obscured the inability of colonial troops to force decisive engagements with tribal opponents. As Temple made clear in 1856, the penetration of 'rough hills' and destruction of crops and houses, were typically the only means of punishing 'savage' enemies. The cultural rationale for these actions helped to empower colonial officers to do *something* and so to disguise their inability to effect decisive encounters with tribal opponents. The rhetorical emphasis on the supposed 'truculence' of the frontier tribes, which was codified in a corpus of colonial ethnography, reflected the same limits on colonial authority; essentialising discourses of Pathan fanaticism served to obscure the failure of colonial schemes to settle the frontier.¹⁰

Situating the history of frontier conflict in these contexts helps us to better understand the role of the military in representing empire in the metropolis, not least

because this approach illustrates how the instrumentalist concerns of the imperial military are sedimented in the colonial archive.¹¹ Colonial accounts of frontier warfare – such as those offered by Temple, Callwell and Wylly – were deeply implicated in attempts to secure imperial authority. H.C. Wylly conceived *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan* to address a specific weakness of colonial (military) knowledge: to provide a single volume to impart to British officers knowledge of both the ‘wild men’ they could expect to encounter on the frontier and the ‘equally wild country in which operations were to be conducted’.¹² The instrumentalist genealogy of colonial counter-insurgency is overlooked in much of the historiography: though there is a considerable literature on the North-West Frontier, there are few detailed, scholarly analyses of nineteenth century frontier conflicts.¹³ Much of the extant work traces the emergence of a doctrine of frontier warfare to the turn of the twentieth century, a periodization which reflects the slew of publications which emerged in the aftermath of the protracted, and expensive, operations of 1897-98.¹⁴ This framing overlooks the way in which twentieth century texts drew on existing ideas and practices: Wylly’s text, like Callwell’s, articulated the specificity of frontier warfare in ways that built directly on the cultural readings provided by Temple and others in the previous century. Thus, while a doctrine of frontier warfare was codified only around the turn of the century, the genealogy of ‘savage warfare’ can be traced through various forms, from at least the 1850s.¹⁵ To explore this genealogy, and its relationship with colonial military praxis, let us follow Wylly, first to the Black Mountain, and then to Waziristan.

Lying in the Hazara district, on the very edge of imperial territory, the ‘Black Mountain’ comprised a series of peaks rising from a ridge punctuated by deep intervening glens. The inhabitants of the region – mostly Hassanzai, Akazai and Chagarzai Pathans– were regarded as impoverished and largely insignificant, if occasionally troublesome.¹⁶ Between 1852 and 1892, five ‘punitive’ expeditions were dispatched against the Black Mountain tribes. On each occasion, imperial troops confronted the ecology of the frontier as well as the tribesmen who resided there: as Wylly’s preface makes clear, colonial understandings of ‘wild men’ and ‘equally wild country’ were mutually reinforcing. As we will see, military commanders frequently equated subduing the country with subduing the population.

The first punitive expedition against the Black Mountain tribes was prompted by an incident in 1851 in which Hassanzai tribesmen killed two customs officials undertaking (unauthorized) survey work near the border. The principal objective of the campaign, which began in 1852, was to drive tribal forces from the crest of the Black Mountain, a region which was, in effect, a shared (or contested) dominion.¹⁷ To seize the ridge, the expeditionary force was disaggregated, and three columns advanced independently with the objective of clearing and occupying the mountain’s heights. This show of force was duly achieved, while other regular troops were left in reserve ‘to make demonstrations’ on surrounding positions.¹⁸ Operations continued until early January, by which point a host of Hassanzai villages had been destroyed and up to twenty tribesmen killed.¹⁹ The campaign was deemed a success, and colonial troops were withdrawn. In his report on the operations, Lieutenant-Colonel F. Mackeson, the Commanding Officer, remarked that: ‘the fact of the highest summits of the Black Mountain having, when clad with snow, been climbed by British and Kashmir troops in the face of all the opposition that its mountain defenders, prepared

and resolute to oppose them, could bring them against them, needed no amplification.’²⁰

While there few direct encounters with tribal forces, Mackeson’s summary suggests there was a significant performative element in the operations: occupying the crest, demonstrating on surrounding peaks and destroying ‘hostile’ villages were calculated attempts to project colonial force against the tribes *and* the ecology of the mountain itself. The colonial sources suggest that tribal responses frequently worked in a similar register: the tribesmen made a conspicuous show of confronting the expeditionary troops, ‘waving flags and flourishing sabres’ and following up colonial forces as they withdrew. Though colonial accounts of the expedition emphasized the range and effect of the operations, the transient nature of the occupation and the inevitability of a very public retreat, clearly afforded those who opposed the expedition space for alternative readings of the engagement. Indeed, the ability of tribesmen to challenge performances of colonial power – by ‘following up’ withdrawals and publicly contesting imperial dominion – was a frequent cause of concern for commanders and commentators.²¹

The 1852 expedition did little to ‘pacify’ the Hazara frontier; the Black Mountain tribes were implicated in disturbances throughout the 1850s and the 1860s. In 1868, a large body of tribesmen attacked a police post in the Agror Valley, prompting the dispatch of a second, and more substantial, expedition. As in 1852, the operations reflected an explicitly performative logic: the force disaggregated, and columns were dispatched to assert dominion over the Black Mountain.²² Wilde, commanding, believed that the ascent of the mountain – ‘where no roads existed... through dense forest, and over slopes broken up by huge masses of rock’ – had surprised the tribes. Having secured the ridge, pioneering and reconnaissance

operations were pushed forward and troops then destroyed a number of Pariari Syad villages. According to Wilde, colonial mobility, allied to the use of mountain artillery, apparently for the first time, had contributed to the ‘overawing’ of the tribesmen.²³ When tribal representatives submitted to colonial terms, F.R. Pollock, the Commissioner, compelled senior tribesmen to accompany colonial troops on a march through tribal territory– ‘in a token of submission, and as hostages for their good behaviour during our march’.²⁴ The penetration and occupation of tribal territory was invested with specific cultural significance: Pollock reported that this was ‘called, in oriental phraseology, “lifting up their *purdahs*”, explaining that ‘the aims and objects of Government were fully attained when our troops, at a slight sacrifice of human life, established themselves on the most commanding position in the enemy’s country.’²⁵ As Pollock made clear, particular understandings of tribal culture shaped both the nature of the operations and the measures by which their success was weighed. Following a similar rationale, the Government of India was optimistic about the operations and their likely effects, concluding they would ‘doubtless convince the border tribes that they cannot inflict annoyance on our frontiers without rendering themselves liable to punishment, despite the almost inaccessible situation of their villages’.²⁶ While the material effects of the expedition may have been ‘limited’, the Governor General reported that ‘the exhibition of our ability to penetrate into the heart of their country and to inflict chastisement, if rendered necessary, has produced considerable effect and tends to a subsequent respect of our power and of our territories’.²⁷

In fact, the Hazara frontier was ‘disturbed’ through the 1870s and 1880s and a third expedition was dispatched following an attack on a colonial survey party in 1888 that left two British officers and four sepoy dead.²⁸ Though it transpired that the

party was conducting unauthorized reconnaissance in contravention of standing orders, the attack confirmed the sense that the Hazara frontier was beyond control. Colonial outrage was compounded by the stripping of the bodies, and further by a series of ‘threatening demonstrations’ adjacent to the colonial frontier. Confirming the performative and dialogic nature of the frontier encounter, one officer concluded: ‘no doubt the tribes have flattered themselves that we were frightened off by these demonstrations, and in consequence are more than usually pugnacious and contemptuous’.²⁹ The disturbances forced a reevaluation of the once-lauded 1868 expedition: the Government of India reported that the effects of the 1868 campaign had proved ‘very transitory’, while the Government of Punjab concluded that ‘the expedition [of 1868] failed to convince the tribes of the strength of the British government and encouraged them in their belief in the accessibility of their villages to a punitive force’.³⁰ James Lyall, the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, concluded that that there was no prospect of settlement ‘until military action had proved to the Khan Khel Hassanzais and the Akazais that their country was not beyond our reach, and that we had the power to punish them’.³¹ The Punjab Government reported that ‘the prestige of the British government on the Hazara border had sunk to a dangerously low ebb’.³² These re-readings make clear, once again, how frontier conflicts were framed in cultural terms.

The 1888 expedition was one of the largest punitive expeditions of the nineteenth century, involving nearly 10,000 troops. Operating in four columns, the force began coordinated advance into tribal territory on 4 October. The expedition lasted for a little over one month, in which time there was only one significant engagement— at the village of Kotkai on 4 October, where Hassanzai tribesmen and a group of the so-called ‘Hindustani fanatics’ opposed the initial advance of the fourth

column.³³ Colonial troops deployed Gatling Machine Guns to good effect, halting advancing swordsmen before they could reach British positions.³⁴ Mountain artillery cleared tribesmen from fortified positions before the village, while a further assault, supported by artillery and machine guns, captured the village itself.³⁵ Enemy dead were estimated at more than 200, while just five colonial troops were killed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the engagement on 4 October was the only occasion on which tribesmen and their allies sought to engage colonial troops at close quarters. Thereafter, the Black Mountain *lashkars* (tribal war bands) offered very little direct resistance: there were some reports of sporadic guerrilla activity but the despatches record only one other hostile action by the tribesmen.

Unable to force further engagements with the tribes, the expeditionary forces manifested the colonial presence in other ways. Road building operations were pushed forward to create a material infrastructure which would, according to the Adjutant-General, 'impress the tribes... with a sense of their insecurity against a hostile visit, should they offend again'.³⁶ Requisitioning of crops and fodder, and the signal destruction of settlements, compounded the disciplinary penetration of tribal territory. Villages were selected for signal destruction for a variety of reasons: sometimes because their inhabitants were suspected of being involved in specific acts of hostility (recent or long passed), sometimes simply because of their putatively 'inaccessible location.' Thus, mountain artillery was increasingly used to attack villages at greater distances: General W. Galbraith, commanding the Second Brigade, wrote to the Quarter-Master General, to report that the bombardment of the hitherto-unvisited Kand villages had immediate 'good effect, inhabitants clearing out with goods and cattle'.³⁷ In lieu of direct engagements with tribal forces, these kinds of spectacular operations were conducted with the intention of 'proving' the ability of

colonial troops to penetrate tribal territory. Thus, Garhi, a Parari stronghold at which tribal forces had gathered in strength and with standards, and Kopra, thought to be the ‘most inaccessible of the Parari villages’, were ‘selected for destruction in order to show the tribe that we had the power of moving anywhere in their country’.³⁸ To underscore this point, the Government of India then approved a march on Thakot – the most northerly of the Parari villages – and a location hitherto unvisited by colonial troops. In fact, a column of troops had been dispatched to Thakot in 1868, but the advance had been abandoned, giving ‘the inhabitants an exaggerated idea of the security of their position, which it was now necessary to correct’.³⁹ The Governor of the Punjab wrote that the advance on Thakot was intended ‘as a demonstration and to exact satisfaction’.⁴⁰ Despite precipitous terrain on the approach to the village, a mixed force of imperial troops reached Thakot, unopposed, on 28 October. The village was spared, save for a promenade through the village by imperial troops, accompanied by the pipes of the Seaforth Highlanders playing ‘You’re o’er lang in coming, lads’. The symbolic and performative registers of frontier conflict could hardly be clearer.⁴¹

After their conclusion, Punjab Government reported to the Government of India that the 1888 expedition had been successful: ‘it has been demonstrated to these tribes once and for all that their country can be traversed by British forces... the whole of the Hazara border has been thoroughly cowed’. In summing up the effects of the operations, the Secretary to the Government of Punjab reported ‘that the effects of the Expedition have been far reaching and are likely to last in the same way as the effects of the Expedition of 1868 have lasted, but with exactly the contrary tendency, the Lieutenant-Governor feels no doubt. All along the Peshawar border the effect has been great [...] and there is no doubt that the effect will extend to Kohat...’⁴²

Anticipating ‘the fear inspired along the border by our operations’, the Deputy Commissioner at Peshawar speculated that ‘no doubt the account of the ease with which we worked over this rugged country, our improved weapons, telegraphic and heliographic appliances and other arrangements has spread far and wide’.⁴³ The optimism was, once again, misplaced: when colonial troops set out to ‘prove’ their authority by marching along the crest of the Black Mountain in autumn 1890, large numbers of tribesmen gathered in the now-familiar ‘threatening demonstrations’. After snipers fired on imperial troops, the promenade was abandoned. Even the abandoning of the march, however, was weighed in performative terms: McQueen, commanding, was reluctant to retreat under fire and thus commenced his retreat having first ascended a spur in the mountain’s foothills, a strategic sleight of hand he hoped would disabuse the tribesmen of any notion that imperial troops had been forced into retreat.⁴⁴

Thus, yet another expedition was sanctioned in and in March 1891 a colonial force once again marched against the tribes of the Black Mountain. The pattern of operations was repeated: despite many ‘threatening demonstrations’ tribesmen refused opportunities to engage colonial troops leaving the ‘Hindustani fanatics’ to provide the only close-quarters resistance.⁴⁵ While the expedition was declared successful, troops were in action on the Black Mountain again the following year and the region remained disturbed throughout the rest of the decade. While operations were intended to ‘make a show’ of colonial authority –confirming, once again, the spectacular and performative nature of colonial frontier warfare – the pattern of engagement on the Black Mountain highlights the limits of colonial military power. While Callwell praised the ‘great moral effect’ of operations in the region, the fact that none of the five expeditions dispatched to the region seem not to have delivered

the much-anticipated 'pacification' suggests there was significant scope for alternative 'readings' of the encounter.⁴⁶

At the other end of the North-West Frontier, a similar pattern of engagement unfolded in Waziristan, where five punitive expeditions were undertaken between 1849 and 1902. The Waziristan frontier extended for more than 100 miles, from the Gomal Pass in the south to the fertile valleys and peaks of Tochi in the north. The official and semi-official histories of Waziristan present a familiar narrative of raiding and tribal truculence.⁴⁷ According to Wylly, the Waziris were 'an especially democratic, and independent people... even their own mullahs have little real control over them'.⁴⁸ The Mahsuds, who occupied the centre of Waziristan, were said to boast that 'the armies of kings had never penetrated their strongholds'.⁴⁹ The Mahsuds confirmed their reputation as notorious robbers by launching a series of substantial raids on colonial territory in the decades after annexation, most notably in 1860 when a 3,000-strong Mahsud force raided the town of Tank in the Derajat. According to colonial commentators, the raid on Tank demonstrated that the Mahsuds were 'emboldened by years of immunity, and [by a belief] that they could successfully oppose any attempt to penetrate their mountains'.⁵⁰

As a corrective to tribal assumptions about territorial inviolability, and in punishment for the raid on Tank, the Government of India ordered a punitive expedition against the Mahsuds in 1861. As on the Black Mountain, the cultural frameworks that mediated colonial relationships with the frontier and its population informed tactical assessments and operational planning. It was anticipated, for example, that the tribesmen would make a stand and oppose a colonial advance in

order to ‘avoid the shame’ which, it was thought, a colonial ingress into tribal territory would imply. In the event, no such resistance was offered, and tribal forces chose to engage the expedition only sporadically, at times of their own choosing and in locations better suited to their own capabilities. So, having offered little resistance against the advance of colonial forces, on the night of 22 April tribesmen made a determined attack on the expedition’s principal camp at Palosi, killing 63 and wounding 166 colonial troops. Though Wylly conceded that the assault was carried out with great gallantry and determination, he elided the logic of Mahsud strategy by explaining that the raid was carried out ‘in the true Afghan style – dashing, but ill-judged and ultimately failing for want of support and assistance’.⁵¹ Similar, orientalist ideas informed colonial engagements with the tribe throughout: in a calculated show of colonial paternalism, tribesmen were invited to collect the bodies of their dead following an early skirmish.⁵² The offer aimed ‘to mitigate, as far as possible, the bitterness of hostilities’ and though the Mahsuds did not send for the bodies, it suggests the way in which forms of cultural knowledge – real or imagined – were mobilized in attempts to signify the nature of colonial authority (and its putative benevolence).

Culture appears to have mediated the military encounter for belligerents on both sides of the frontier: when a group of Mahsud *maliks* (tribal headmen) arrived to negotiate terms with a view to settlement, they were solicited to pay a large fine and provide hostages for good behaviour or to submit to the unopposed march of colonial troops through their territory, a condition which, as we have seen, was also imposed on the Black Mountain.⁵³ According to the Intelligence Branch’s history, the *maliks* pleaded that ‘we should allow them some *pardah* (or screen for their honour), meaning that we should spare them the disgrace of submission, or of having an army

march into the country'. In answer to this, 'it was fairly objected that we also required some *pardah*; an army had marched into the country to demand reparation for years of unprovoked injury and trustworthy security for the time to come...'⁵⁴ Whether authentic or not, cultural knowledge provided an idiom through which the colonial encounter on the frontier was negotiated. While the penetration and occupation of tribal territory may have been invested with symbolic significance this was often part of a consciously negotiated strategy pursued by both colonial officers and tribal representatives. When the *maliks* refused to submit to the terms proposed, colonial troops struck out for the outlying settlement at Kaniguram, a site specifically selected to demonstrate the range of the imperial military. After reaching Kanigoram on 5 May, the troops performed 'an orderly march' through the town. According to the official history, one of the town's inhabitants called out 'Well done! British justice!' Though Kanigoram was spared the bagpipes, the promenade reflects the same performative logics demonstrated in the march on Thakot in 1888. In attempting to make colonial authority intelligible, and then to render tribal subordination in visible and public forms, colonial officers sought to weaponize understandings of tribal culture to constitute their authority in specific and meaningful ways. As the example above suggests, the tribesmen too negotiated resistance to colonial authority in cultural, as well as in military, forms.

That frontier campaigns operated in a cultural register should not detract from the very significant material destruction effected by colonial troops; rather, material and cultural effects overlapped and reinforced each other. Hunger was an important weapon in fighting uncivilised enemies, as Temple's early account of 'savage warfare' made clear.⁵⁵ While Kaniguram was spared on payment of a fine, Makin, a neighbouring town, was destroyed, as were other surrounding settlements. In

accounting for these measures, Chamberlain, the commanding officer, cited the peculiar imperatives of ‘savage warfare’, quoting extensively from Temple’s 1856 report.⁵⁶ Overlooking the fact that the expedition had failed to extract submission from the Mahsuds, colonial accounts emphasized the ‘remarkable fact’ that: ‘a comparatively small British force did successfully enter a most difficult mountain country, and there, though cut off from all supplies, all communications, did successfully punish the enemy, drive them from their strongest passes, and return, with comparatively little loss, to its own territory.’⁵⁷

In positioning territorial and material performance as the measure of the expedition’s success, these accounts obscured colonial inability to establish military superiority over the tribesmen. The supposed peculiarities of tribal culture thus provided a convenient means of effacing the obvious limits on colonial military power.

Notwithstanding Chamberlain’s optimism, it is perhaps unsurprising that the 1860 expedition appears to have had limited impact on the Waziristan frontier. In 1879, another large raid on Tank compelled the Government of India to revisit their assessment of the 1860 expedition. The earlier optimism gave way to a more pessimistic conclusion: that ‘the Mahsuds’ stubborn and haughty refusal to make formal submission’ in 1860 reflected the tribe’s view that colonial troops were unable to penetrate ‘their fastnesses’ or ‘force the rugged defiles leading to their homes’.⁵⁸ Another expedition was ordered and when colonial troops returned to Waziristan in 1881, they set out to prove their ability to penetrate and occupy trans-frontier territory: the commanding officer was instructed to ‘traverse and explore as much of the Mahsud hills as possible... your operations should be deliberate and free from all appearance of haste’.⁵⁹ As we have already seen, this framing anticipated the inability

of colonial troops to force decisive engagements against the tribes. As in 1860, there were few direct encounters between the expeditionary forces and the Mahsuds again chose to avoid prolonged engagements. In lieu of such engagements, colonial troops set about the symbolic and epistemological opening of the frontier, occupying outlying villages and undertaking extensive surveying operations. In fact, in the absence of direct encounters with the enemy, one of the measures by which the expedition's success was calculated was the scale of survey work undertaken: according to the Punjab Government's Military Secretary, 'much new country has been unveiled'.⁶⁰ Military surveying served overlapping purposes, at once practical and symbolic: cartography inscribed the penetration of tribal territory in the colonial archive and aided the planning and preparation of future operations.⁶¹ As on the Black Mountain, the epistemological opening of the frontier was directly equated with the symbolic 'lifting of the *purdah*' which the operations aimed to effect. In summarizing the lessons of the operations, *The Pioneer* opined that:

There is no measure which tends to the ultimate pacification of our frontier more thoroughly than the occupation by our troops of the remoter portions of the country inhabited by tribes who defy our authority. For it is only by such means that the conviction can be forced upon them that no strongholds which they possess are inaccessible to our arms. The course, which they themselves rather graphically describe as "lifting the *purdah*" of the tribe or section concerned, is essential to the permanent success of our military expeditions;...⁶²

While surveying was a mechanism for ‘opening out’ the frontier – often with significant practical consequences – such operations were typically pursued only in the absence of opportunities to engage tribal *lashkars*. Thus, if frontier operations were often about ‘unveiling’ tribal territory, this was principally because colonial forces had no effective mechanism for forcing a decisive engagement. While cartography was often marshaled to evidence the range of colonial power – particularly by commanders and officers anxious to represent and quantify the fruits of their labour – it is worth noting that, before the 1881 expedition commenced, the Government of India explicitly reminded Kennedy, the commander of the 1881 expedition, that surveying *was not* one of the objectives of the operations, an instruction they subsequently repeated to Brigadier General Gordon during the expedition.⁶³ Whatever symbolic and practical effects military surveying bestowed, cartographic conquests assumed prominence only when decisive military engagements proved illusive.

The 1881 operations lasted a little under a month. When colonial troops withdrew, no submission had been received from the tribes and none of the principal conditions for settlement had been met. Despite this, the colonial archive records significant optimism about the effects of the expedition. The official report was laudatory and the Lieutenant-Governor anticipated that the punishment inflicted would ‘secure for a long time to come the peace and quiet on this part of our north-western border’: ‘To the whole Waziri nation from Kuram to the limits of Baluchistan, has been held up the spectacle of a tribe, numbered amongst the proudest and most powerful, compelled to permit a British army to traverse unopposed the length and breadth of its country, while from the summit of Prighal and the heights of

the Shuedar surveyors mapped and explored valleys and mountains hitherto regarded as asylums inaccessible to invasion.’⁶⁴

Reprocessing the official narrative, H.L. Nevill underlined the same point, diverting attention from the palpable failure of the operations – at least in terms of the narrow military criterion established at their outset – by emphasizing the cartographic and symbolic successes of the operations: ‘Much valuable survey work was accomplished during these operations, the purdah had been effectually lifted and the tribesmen overawed’, though he acknowledged, that ‘the absence of any decisive military success somewhat discounted the value of these results’.⁶⁵

The results were indeed discounted: despite the optimism recorded at the conclusion of the expedition, hostilities with the Waziris resumed in 1894, when a colonial force working to delimit the ‘Durand Line’ was attacked at Wana. The attack, which killed 45 colonial troops, prompted yet another expedition to be dispatched into Mahsud territory.⁶⁶ Like most of its predecessors, the Waziristan Field Force of 1895 encountered little direct resistance.⁶⁷ Evelyn Howell, British Resident in Waziristan in the 1920s, reported that, ‘as in 1881 there was little or no fighting’.⁶⁸ In the absence of other engagements, the Field Force targeted valleys which ‘had never been visited by our troops, and were looked on as the strongholds of the Mahsud tribe’.⁶⁹ While the ‘visit’ of colonial troops meant significant material losses in property and crops, the strategic significance of these operations was explained in cultural terms: ‘the fact of our having lifted their “pardah” in these remote glens will doubtless itself have a good effect on the tribe’.⁷⁰ When operations were brought to a close in March, the expedition was said to have been ‘absolutely successful’. According to the official history: ‘All sections of the Mahsud tribe concerned in the attack on the British camp at Wana were severely punished... From the map, which accompanies this history, it

will be seen that Waziristan was traversed from one end to the other, and that our troops penetrated into the remotest glens of the Mahsud country, and lifted the “purdah”, from the enemy’s most inaccessible strongholds.⁷¹

If the spectacular nature of these operations is clear, it should be noted that, as in previous campaigns, the performance of imperial dominion in these terms – through signal destruction, promenading and survey operations – was a response to the Mahsuds’ calculated decision *not* to oppose the advance of colonial troops. While the absence of tribal resistance was sometimes taken as evidence of submission or deference, other readings are possible. The casualty lists from the 1894 operations indicate that while only four colonial soldiers were killed by enemy action, fully 171 died of pneumonia before the operations were wound down. If these data help us to understand why ecology was so central to colonial visions of frontier conflict, they may also help us to better understand the strategic calculations which guided tribal responses to colonial incursions. Retreat, obfuscation and delay served tribal ends by exploiting the epistemological and logistical weaknesses of the imperial military: exposing their relative lack of mobility, straining parlous supply lines and confounding the temporal discipline of colonial interventions. These actions were not the product of inalienable tribal culture or of cowardice; they reflected calculated and rationale choices which can be understood as such.

From this perspective, we may also better understand the pattern of colonial engagements on the frontier. Despite the confidence recorded as the 1895 expedition was wound up – and in spite of a body of troops remaining in the Tochi Valley – the Waziristan frontier remained disturbed.⁷² A further punitive expedition was undertaken in the Tochi in 1897-98, and Mahsuds continued to confound colonial authority through 1898 and 1899. A further round of operations was commenced in

1900 and yet another expedition was undertaken in 1901-1902. In spite of all the operations and despite the optimism recorded in the colonial archive, the pacification of the Waziristan frontier seemed as distant in 1900 as it had in the 1850s. In 1912, Wylly concluded, glumly, that despite the efforts of the previous half century, the Mahsuds remained ‘almost as turbulent as ever’.⁷³

Colonial engagements on the Black Mountain and in Waziristan share a number of common features. Indeed, it was precisely to elucidate these features that officers, officials and subsequently historians began to assemble the first synthetic analyses of frontier campaigns. As we have seen, the imperial military played a central role in constituting colonial power on the North-West Frontier, though this process was always contested, as the patterns of military engagement surveyed here suggest. Contrary to claims made in many of the colonial sources, resistance to colonial expansion prompted expeditions more often than wanton raiding did: attacks on police posts and survey parties suggest calculated resistance, not unthinking fanaticism. Moreover, despite the confident assertions of finality offered by commanders, military interventions were seldom decisive: the operations in 1860 and 1881 failed to secure submission from the Mahsuds, and the settlements reached on the Black Mountain in 1888 and 1891 were broken months after they were agreed. The iterative nature of frontier campaigning suggests the importance of the military to the process of colonial consolidation but also the limits on imperial military power. The ability of commanding officers to effect decisive encounters with tribal opponents was seriously prescribed, most importantly by the ability of tribal antagonists to deflect, evade and contest colonial violence. The tactical and strategic

calculations of tribal opponents – in playing for time, in attacking camps and baggage operations in the rear, in retreating before colonial advances – imposed significant limits on colonial military power on the frontier.⁷⁴

Faced with these limits, and with other resistance, colonial campaigns on the frontier developed wider and alternative means for ‘punishing’ tribal enemies. These included the destruction of crops and property, as well as the penetration and occupation of tribal territory. These acts were increasingly understood as a form of punitive cultural transgression equated with the symbolic ‘lifting of the *pardah*’. Considered more ‘modern, and certainly more effectual’ than the ‘burn and scuttle’ approach favoured earlier in the century, these methods were equally contingent on specific understandings of tribal culture: while Chamberlain asserted in 1860 that ‘savages cannot be met and checked by the rule of civilized warfare’ so subsequent attempts to ‘lift the *pardah*’ appropriated a notion of tribal honour as a means of constituting tribal punishment. Of course, as we have seen, these rationales also disguised the inability of the imperial military to compel their opponents to engage. The cultural framing of frontier conflict reflects this reality as much as it does the weaponizing of tribal culture. In this sense, the history of colonial frontier campaigns tells us more about colonial visions of self than it does about the tribes against whom operations were directed. The opening up of frontier territory, and the gendering of colonial dominion suggested by the *pardah* metaphor, drew on a series of wider oppositions which were fundamental to colonial rule. The performative logic of frontier campaigning – distilled by Callwell into a chapter on ‘boldness and vigour’ – reflects the instrumentalism of these oppositions.⁷⁵

In ‘lifting the veil’ from the tribes, and the frontier itself, military technologies acquired specific cultural resonances which directly shaped the ways in which

operations were organized and evaluated. Culture was central not only to the representation of combat on the frontier but also to the ways in which that military engagements were planned and executed. By facilitating the performance of colonial military power, survey and pioneering operations helped to inscribe the colonial presence on the frontier, and also to render the frontier as a presence in the colonial archive. Military technologies thus intersected with, and gave material form to, the cultural frames through which engagements were mediated. As we have seen, pioneering, mapping and communications were conceived as explicitly political technologies because their operational significance *was accentuated and understood in terms of* the particular cultural effects associated with the penetration of tribal territory. If military technologies helped commanders to ‘over-run’ and ‘open up’ the frontier’s contested spaces, this was in large part because the pacification of the frontier was conceived in cultural terms.⁷⁶ Though the relationship between military technology and colonial expansion has been much studied, less attention has been paid to the cultural frameworks which informed attitudes towards, as well as deployments of, military technologies.⁷⁷ While military technologies could provide potent means for expressing the range and effect of colonial power, colonial culture shaped the ways in which military power was imagined and projected.⁷⁸ One consequence of the cultural rendering of frontier campaigns was to obscure the limited effects of military interventions and disguise the obvious limits of colonial power on the frontier.

Historians have found it difficult to conceptualize the relationship between culture and combat on the frontier partly, perhaps, because the instrumentalism of the colonial sources is widely overlooked. If much military historiography evinces a ‘preference for the empirical’, empiricist readings of the colonial archive inevitably

recycle colonial framings, offering what Gyan Pandey called, in another context, ‘a view of the observable’.⁷⁹ Thus, even detailed and careful reconstructions of the colonial conflicts, reproduce much of the essentialism found in colonial sources.⁸⁰ As the sources surveyed here make clear, colonial accounts of the frontier, and of the military engagements which occurred there, were invariably implicated in and thus shaped by colonial power. Empiricist readings of colonial sources reproduce this complicity. More importantly, perhaps, they disguise the reciprocal and dynamic cultural exchange which is inherent to combat, and is perhaps especially significant in colonial conflict.⁸¹

A more critical approach to the colonial archive, and its absences, helps to reveal the central role of culture in shaping colonial military policy on the frontier. The absence of a formal, codified doctrine for ‘hill warfare’ does not mean that the specificities of frontier conflict were marginal or insignificant during the late nineteenth century. Narrowly empiricist readings of frontier doctrine – which begin with the formalization and codification of instruction around the turn of the century – overlook the wider histories on which these doctrines drew, and the deeply-rooted assumptions which helped to sustain them. As the examples above attest, and as Callwell himself admitted, *Small Wars* gave concrete and didactic form to practice which had existed – and indeed had been written about – for many years.⁸² Though the doctrine of savage warfare was of relatively late development, warfare on the frontier *always* reflected the cultural frameworks through which the colonial encounter was rendered, mediated and understood. This was not simply about justifying violence through an assertion of the otherness of the colonized, it was also about manifesting violence in forms which reflected the alterity of tribal belligerents. Viewed from this perspective, we can better understand the dialogic role that culture

played in framing and delimiting colonial military operations on the frontier. Frontier operations both reflected, and helped to give particular form to, a cultural idiom which mediated engagements between colonial forces and their tribal opponents. The highly symbolic and performative aspects of these operations were expressed in strategic and tactical planning, as well as in the discourses used to narrate and rationalize campaigns. Framing frontier warfare in this manner helps us to see how culture and military praxis intersected, and to appreciate how frequently the latter was made legible in terms of the former. Here again, cultural and military analyses need to be engaged on the same analytic field: we need to recognize the cultural referents that mediate conflict in order to reveal the centrality of the military in the production of complex imperial subjectivities.

Specific notions of ‘tribal culture’ were vital in shaping how colonial campaigns were conducted, and in determining how such interventions were evaluated and historicized. Tribal culture was invoked to explain the circumstances which precipitated military intervention, the forms of intervention most appropriate to secure colonial ends as well as to account for the effects, and more rarely the failures, of colonial operations. Military engagements on the colonial frontier reflect the negotiated and contested process of imperial expansion. Violence was central to this process and so too was culture, for culture shaped both the institutions and apparatus of colonial conflict, as much as it endowed moments of violence with specific, though contested, meanings.

Understanding the connections between culture and combat on the frontier seem all the more urgent in light of renewed interest in the region since 2001.⁸³ Indicatively,

the return of western troops has prompted a resurgence of interest in colonial ‘counter-insurgency’, including a number of attempts to recuperate the ‘strategic insights’ of colonial doctrine, notably Callwell’s prescriptions for fighting ‘small wars’.

Somewhat paradoxically, re-readings of Callwell have emphasized the importance of winning ‘hearts and minds’ by the ‘judicious’ application of ‘butcher and bolt’ operations.⁸⁴ The cultural knowledge which helped Callwell to explain the history of colonial violence, and to offer prescriptions on how such violence might be organized in the future, were themselves products of colonialism.⁸⁵ Attempts to recuperate Callwell reflect a double, and circular, failure of analysis: ignoring the specific historical conditions in which *Small Wars* was authored obscures the contingency of Callwell’s strategic thinking and the structural racism of his text.⁸⁶ This reading reproduces colonial binaries, locating reason in the colonial military archive, while fixing and ventriloquizing culture as the marker of tribal difference. Little wonder then that so much work on colonial conflict continues to reproduce the tropes, and explanations offered by colonial authors. These accounts fundamentally misunderstand the role of culture in mediating – and shaping – the worldviews of both colonial and tribal belligerents. As this essay has tried to show, culture shaped the ideas and practices of colonial soldiers at least as much as it did their tribal opponents. Colonial ethnography bestowed culture on the frontier tribes as a way of depoliticising their resistance, and recent attempts to harness colonial expertise recirculate precisely the same oppositions. The persistence of these oppositions and the ways of thinking they sustain confirm Gayatri Spivak’s suggestion that the texts of ‘soldiers and administrators’ did much to construct the reality of India.⁸⁷ As we

continue to live with this construction, and the violence which it begets, this truth behoves us to do more to understand it.

Endnotes

¹ Government of India. Foreign Department, *Report Showing the Relations of the British Government with the Tribes, Independent and Dependent, on the North-West Frontier of the Punjab, from Annexation in 1849 to the Close of 1855* (Calcutta: T. Jones, Calcutta Gazette Office: 1856), p. 60.

² Colonial understandings of tribal society were shaped by attempts to know and control those societies. Though I follow the colonial sources in describing engagements with ‘Pathans’ and ‘frontier tribes’, I am conscious that colonial ethnography flattened and essentialised understandings of tribal societies and tribal customs. For more, see Magnus Marsden and Benjamin Hopkins, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2012), pp. 3-10, esp. p. 217.

³ William Henry Paget and A.H. Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab* (London: Whiting & Co., 1884); India, Army, Intelligence Branch, *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*. vol. I: *Tribes North of the Kabul River* (Simla: Govt. Monotype Press, 1907); C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (1896, reprint London: Printed for H.M. Stationery Office, by Harrison and Sons, 1906); G. J. Younghusband, *Indian Frontier Warfare* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co., 1898); Harold Carmichael Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan: Being an Account of the Border Countries and the More Turbulent of the Tribes Controlled by the North-West Frontier Province, and of Our Military Relations with Them in the Past* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912); Army Headquarters, *Frontier Warfare: 1901* (Simla: Superintendent Government Printing, 1901).

⁴ I take culture to refer to shared and dynamic modes of understanding. There is a wealth of literature on the cultural turn in the humanities. For a useful summary of cultural readings of empire, see Catherine Hall (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). On culture, orientalism and military analysis, see Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (London: Hurst, 2009), pp. 55–82.

⁵ Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*. (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), p. 2.

⁶ On performativity, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London; New York: Verso, 2009).

⁷ Callwell, *Small Wars. Their Principles and Practice*, p. 24.

⁸ ‘After driving the hillmen from their formidable position at Chokalwat... he pushed on and completed his day’s march as if nothing had happened. This sort of thing bewildered the Chitralis. They did not understand it.’ See *Ibid.*, 80.

⁹ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), p. 4.

¹⁰ See, for example, R.T.I. Ridgway, *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Pathans* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent Government Printing, 1910); Sir Olaf Kirkpatrick Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1958).

¹¹ On the colonial archive and its relationship to imperial rule, see Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 107-23.

¹² Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan*, Preface, p. vii. Indicatively, Wylly's text followed earlier works, including the official histories, in describing the geographic and ethnographic peculiarities of the frontier region before detailing specific engagements. This common format suggests the close relationship between military histories and instrumentalist forms of colonial knowledge.

¹³ Kaushik Roy, *The Army in British India: From Colonial Warfare to Total War 1857 – 1947* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 39.

¹⁴ T.R. Moreman, 'The British and Indian Armies and North-West Frontier Warfare, 1849–1914', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 20, no. 1 (January 1992), pp. 35–64; T. R. Moreman, '“Small Wars” and “Imperial Policing”: The British Army and the Theory and Practice of Colonial Warfare in the British Empire, 1919–1939', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 19, no. 4 (1996), pp. 105–31; T.R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Brandon Marsh, *Ramparts of Empire: British Imperialism and India's Afghan Frontier, 1918-1948* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: AIAA, 2014); Daniel Whittingham, "“Savage Warfare”: C.E. Callwell, the Roots of Counter-Insurgency, and the Nineteenth Century Context', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 23, nos. 4–5 (October 2012), pp. 591–607; Ian F.W. Beckett, 'British Counter-Insurgency: A Historiographical Reflection', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, no. 23, nos. 4–5 (2012), pp. 781–98. After the protracted 'frontier uprising' of 1897-98, the specificities of frontier warfare received considerable attention in the military periodicals. See, for example, J.A.H. Pollock, 'Notes on Hill

Warfare', *Journal of the United Services Institution of India*, No. 131 (April 1898), pp. 137-47. The *Journal of the United Services Institution of India* carried multiple articles on the subject in each of the following eight issues. The subject remained a staple of the Journal until the 1940s.

¹⁵ Government of India, Foreign Department, *Report Showing the Relations of the British Government with the Tribes, Independent and Dependent, on the North-West Frontier of the Punjab, from Annexation in 1849 to the Close of 1855*. The idea of savage warfare had pan-imperial inputs, and also reflected imperial engagements in Africa. See, for example Samuel White Baker, 'Experience in Savage Warfare', *The Royal United Services Institution Journal*, vol. 17, no. 75 (1873), pp. 904–21; J.C. Gawler, 'British Troops and Savage Warfare, with Special Reference to the Kafir Wars', *The Royal United Services Institution Journal*, vol. 17, no. 75 (1873), pp. 922–39.

¹⁶ Paget and Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab*, p. 34.

¹⁷ Even in the late 1880s, it was acknowledged that the border region was, in effect, out of bounds to British officials and troops.

¹⁸ For a breakdown of the troops, see Paget and Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab*, p. 35.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Callwell, *Small Wars. Their Principles and Practice*, pp. 211–25.

²² Paget and Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab*, pp. 50–52.

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- ²³ Major General A.T. Wilde, to Quarter-master General, dated 5 October 1868, No. 450. National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A, 404-496, No. 450.
- ²⁴ Paget and Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab*, p. 54.
- ²⁵ Paget and Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab*, pp. 54–55.
- ²⁶ Paget and Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab*, p. 59.
- ²⁷ Colonel A. Broome, Offg. Secy. to Govt. of India, Military Dept., with G.G. to Lieutenant-Colonel P.S. Lumsden, Quarter-master General, No. 206, dated 10th October 1868, No. 460, NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A, 404-496.
- ²⁸ India. Army. Intelligence Branch, *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, vol. I: Tribes North of the Kabul River*, pp. 144–45.
- ²⁹ See Enclosure No. 24, From Officiating Secretary to the Government of Punjab, to the Secretary to Government of India, dated Simla, 30th July 1888 in Papers Relating to the Expedition against Certain Tribes Inhabiting the Black Mountain, Parliamentary Papers, 1888 [C.5561], 139.
- ³⁰ See No. 163, Letter from Government of India to Secretary of State, dated 24 September 1888 in Papers Relating to the Expedition against Certain Tribes Inhabiting the Black Mountain, Parliamentary Papers, 1888 [C.5561], 3.
- ³¹ India, Army, Intelligence Branch, *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, vol. I: Tribes North of the Kabul River*, p. 145.

³² See No. 96, From C.L. Tupper, Secretary to Government Punjab to H.M. Durand, Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department', dated Lahore, 16 November 1888', NAI, Foreign Department, Frontier A, Dec 1888, No. 27-101.

³³ The 'Hindustani Fanatics' were a group of émigré Muslims – most of whom originated from British India – who established a colony on the frontier in the 1820s. Having initially contested Sikh rule, the group were subsequently implicated in a largely implausible anti-colonial 'Wahabi conspiracy'. The Indian Army engaged members of the colony on several occasions but, by the 1880s, the group was viewed as an irritant rather than as a serious threat to the colonial order. For a contemporary military account, see *Report on the Hindustani Fanatics*, Compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Quarter-Master General's Department, by Lieutenant Colonel A.H. Mason, (Simla, 1895). IOR: L/MIL/17/13/18. For an excellent critical history, see Marsden and Hopkins, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier*, pp. 75–100. David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 2, 30. The 'Hindustani fanatics' had opposed the British in many of their previous operations on the Hazara border, and it is significant that during both the 1888 and 1891 expeditions, the only opponents forces to attempt a decisive engagement were the so-called 'fanatics'. It is possible, as David Edwards has argued, that the 'deeper, cultural threat that the colonial vision of progress and civilization represented' to such groups produced a particularly virulent opposition. It may also/alternatively be that military support for the tribesmen was negotiated in return for the tribe's residence at Sitanna. See Marsden and Hopkins, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier*, p. 241. fn. 48. See also Note No. 576, From the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Punjab, to the Commissioner and Superintendent, Peshawar Division, dated 25th September, 1888, For Frontier Dec. 1888, 27-101.

India, Army, Intelligence Branch, *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, vol. I: *Tribes North of the Kabul River*, p. 150.

³⁴ No. 101, Field Operations, 4th Column, Hazara Field Force, Major-General W. Galbraith, Comdg. 2nd Brigade, Hazara Field Force to The Major-General Commanding Hazara Field Force. No. 389, p. 206, India Office Records (IOR), British Library, London: L/MIL/17/13/75, No. 384-90A.

³⁵ No. 101, Field Operations, 4th Column, Hazara Field Force, Major-General W. Galbraith, Comdg. 2nd Brigade, Hazara Field Force to The Major-General Commanding Hazara Field Force. No. 389, pp. 207-8, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/75, No. 384-90A.

³⁶ 'Report of the Operations of the Hazara Field Force', No. 191-F-C, dated Headquarters, Lala Musa, 27 Nov. 1888 to The Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department. No. 384, p. 2, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/75, No. 384.

³⁷ Telegram No 22-B, dated 8 October, 1888. From the General Officer Commanding 2nd Brigade, Hazara Field Force to The Adjutant-General in India, No. 222, p. 84, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/75, No. 222.

³⁸ 'Report of the Operations of the Hazara Field Force', Maj-Genl. J.W. McQueen, C.B., A.D.C., Comdg. Hazara to the Adjutant General in India, Dated Abbottabad, 19 Nov 1888, No. 384, p. 7. IOR: L/MIL/17/13/75, No. 384.

³⁹ Hugh Lewis Nevill, *Campaigns on the North-West Frontier* (London: John Murray, 1912), p. 100.

⁴⁰ Preliminary report by the Punjab Government of the progress of the Military operations against the tribes of the Black Mountain and their political results'. No. 706, dated Lahore, 16 Nov 1888. From C.L. Tupper, Esq., Secretary to Government of

Punjab and its Dependencies, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, No. 391, p. 215, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/75, No. 391A.

⁴¹ *Expedition Against the Black Mountain Tribes by a Force Under Major-General J.W. McQueen, C.B., A.D.C.*, in 1888. IOR: L/MIL/17/13/52, p. 30. Nevill, *Campaigns on the North-West Frontier*, p. 102.

⁴² See, No. 96, From C.L. Tupper, Secretary to Government Punjab to H.M. Durand, Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department', dated Lahore, 16 November 1888', NAI, Foreign Department, Frontier A, Dec 1888, No. 27-101. pp. 5-6.

⁴³ 'Report of the Operations of the Hazara Field Force', Appendix E: No. 5330-P, dated Abbotabad, 17 Nov 1888, From: Colonel E.L. Ommaney, Chief Political Officer, Hazara Field Force, to Maj-Genl, J.W. McQueen, C.B., A-D-C, Comdg. Hazara Field Force, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/75, No. 384, p. 45.

⁴⁴ The Commander-in-Chief had issued strict instructions to McQueen, who lead the operation, that the exercise was 'merely intended to prove our right under the treaty to march along the crest, and [was] not intended to develop under any circumstances into a large expedition'. *Expedition Against the Hassanzia and Akazai Tribes of the Black Mountain, by a force under the command of Major-General W.K. Elles, C.B., in 1891* (Government Central Printing Office, Simla: 1894), IOR: L/MIL/17/13/53, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Major-General W.K. Elles, C.B., late commanding the Hazara Field Force, to the Adjutant-General in India (No. 305-H, dated Murree, 22 June 1891), NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Frontier B, July 1892, No. 6, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Callwell, *Small Wars. Their Principles and Practice*, p. 110.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Paget and Mason, *A Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes, since the Annexation of the Punjab*, p. 506.

⁴⁸ Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan*, p. 425.

⁴⁹ Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan*, p. 426.

⁵⁰ Brigadier General N. Chamberlain, C.B., to Major G. Hutchinson, Military Secretary to the Punjab Government (No. 852, dated Sheik Boodeen, Dera Ishmael Khan District, the 7th July 1860), No. 100, p. 6, NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A, November 1862, 99-101; see also India, Army, Intelligence Branch, *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, vol. I: Tribes North of the Kabul River, p. 366.

⁵¹ Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan*, p. 449. Wylly's account is largely reproduced from *Report on the Mahsud Waziri Tribe, Compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Department by Captain A.H. Mason, D.S.O., Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General* (Simla: Government Central Printing Office, 1893), IOR: L/PS/20/B104, p. 39.

⁵² Brigadier General N. Chamberlain, C.B., to Major G. Hutchinson, Military Secretary to the Punjab Government (No. 852, dated Sheik Boodeen, Dera Ishmael Khan District, the 7th July 1860), No. 100, p. 9, NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A, November 1862, 99-101.

⁵³ Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan*, p. 452.

⁵⁴ Mason, *Report on the Mahsud Waziri Tribe. By Cpt A H Mason, Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General Simla: Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Dept, 1893*, p. 40.

⁵⁵ Ironically, perhaps, Temple is best known for his parsimonious administration of relief during the Madras famine. See Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London; New York: Verso, 2002), pp. 36-43.

⁵⁶ Brigadier General N. Chamberlain, C.B., to Major G. Hutchinson, Military Secretary to the Punjab Government (No. 852, dated Sheik Boodeen, Dera Ishmael Khan District, the 7th July 1860), No. 100, p. 22, NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A, November 1862, 99-101. Similar readings were processed into early colonial historiography: see, for example, Pashtuns and the 1850s in Charles Rathbone Low, *Soldiers of the Victorian Age*, vol. II (London: Chapman, 1880), pp. 402-3.

⁵⁷ Lieutenant Colonel H.B. Lumsden C.B., Commanding Detachment to Captain Graydon, Staff Officer. Punjab Irregular Force (Dated Camp Puloseen, 25 April 1860, p. 22, NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A, November 1862, 99-101.

⁵⁸ Military Department, No. 43, February 1881, No. 2, dated Lahore, 3rd January 1881. W.M. Young, Esq., Secretary to the Government of the Punjab to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department. IOR: L/MIL/17/13/107, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁹ The punishment was 'held over' because much of the Indian Army was already deployed in Afghanistan, a fact which may further evidence the strategic context for, and logic of, tribal calculations. Letter No. 1575, dated Lahore, 13 April 1881. From Colonel S. Black, Secretary to Government of the Punjab, Military Department to The Brigadier Commanding Mahsud-Waziri Expeditionary Force', IOR, L/MIL/17/13/107, p. 47.

⁶⁰ *The Mahsud-Waziri Expedition of 1881*, Diaries of Officers of the Quarter Master General's Department in India attached to the Mahsud-Waziri Expeditionary Force (Simla: Government Central Press, 1884), IOR: L/MIL/17/13/107, p. 85.

⁶¹ For a wider discussion of the relationship between cartography and imperial expansion in South Asia, see Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The*

Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁶² 'The Lessons of the Waziri Expedition', *Pioneer*, 20 June 1881. Reprinted in: *The Mahsud-Waziri Expedition of 1881*, Diaries of Officers of the Quarter Master General's Department in India attached to the Mahsud-Waziri Expeditionary Force (Simla: Government Central Press, 1884), IOR: L/MIL/17/13/107, p. 94.

⁶³ No. 1526a. Memorandum, Submitted for the information of the Government of India, with reference to Military Department No 10300K dated 7th May 1881, NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political B, August 1881, Nos. 138-9.

⁶⁴ Letter from the Punjab Government, No 61 dated Lahore 23rd Feb 1882, From W.M. Young Secretary to the Government of Punjab to C. Grant, CSI, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, NAI: Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A, July 1882, 8-40, No. 8.

⁶⁵ Nevill, *Campaigns on the North-West Frontier*, p. 92.

⁶⁶ For a detailed breakdown of the attackers/dead (which shows that they were from a variety of sections), see *Operations Against the Mahsud-Wazirs by a force under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir W.S.A. Lockhart, K.C.B., C.S.I.* in 1894-95, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/108, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan*, p. 465.

⁶⁸ See Sir Evelyn Berkeley Howell, *Mizh: A Monograph on Government's Relations with the Mahsud Tribe* (Simla: Government of India Press, 1931), p. 9, IOR: V/27/273/3.

⁶⁹ *Operations Against the Mahsud-Wazirs by a force under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir W.S.A. Lockhart, K.C.B., C.S.I.* in 1894-95, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/108, p. 36.

⁷⁰ Operations Against the Mahsud-Wazirs by a force under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir W.S.A. Lockhart, K.C.B., C.S.I. in 1894-95, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/108, p. 46.

⁷¹ Operations Against the Mahsud-Wazirs by a force under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir W.S.A. Lockhart, K.C.B., C.S.I. in 1894-95, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/108, p. 62.

⁷² See Sameetah Agha's illuminating reading of the 'Maizar' incident in this volume.

⁷³ Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan*, p. 474.

⁷⁴ As Randolph Cooper has noted, the strategic logic of those who opposed colonial forces has often obscured by the 'historiographic control' exerted by those who constructed the first histories. See Randolph G. S. Cooper, 'Culture, Combat, and Colonialism in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century India', *The International History Review*, vol. 27, no. 3 (September 2005), p. 546.

⁷⁵ Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, pp. 71–83.

⁷⁶ See, for example, the emphasis given to the 'natural difficulties of the country' in the Intelligence Branch history of the operations: *Expedition Against the Black Mountain Tribes by a Force Under Major-General J.W. McQueen, C.B., A.D.C.*, in 1888, IOR: L/MIL/17/13/52, p. 39.

⁷⁷ Older accounts include Daniel R. Headrick, 'The Tools of Imperialism: Technology and the Expansion of European Colonial Empires in the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 51, no. 2 (1979), pp. 231–63; on the frontier specifically, see T.R. Moreman, 'The Arms Trade and the North-West Frontier Pathan Tribes, 1890–1914', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 22, no. 2 (May 1994), pp. 187–216; elsewhere, see Chris Vaughan, "'Demonstrating the Machine Guns": Rebellion, Violence and State Formation in Early Colonial Darfur',

The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, vol. 42, no. 2 (15 March 2014), pp. 286–307; also Kim A. Wagner, ‘Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in British Counterinsurgency’, in *Cambridge University Press World History of Violence*, Vol. 4. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2018)

⁷⁸ See, for example, Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 128-31.

⁷⁹ G. Pandey, ‘A View of the Observable: A Positivist understanding of Agrarian Society and Political Protest in Colonial India’, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1980), pp. 375-83.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Rob Johnson’s thoroughly-researched *The Afghan Way of War*, which claims, inter alia, that Pashtuns and Britons thought about warfare and honour in similar ways, and that negotiation was an integral part of Pashtun culture. While textual support for these claims can be found in the colonial sources, they reflect the ‘counter-insurgent code’ described by Ranajit Guha. Robert Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War: Culture and Pragmatism* (London: Hurst, 2011), pp. 7-8, 36; Ranajit Guha, ‘The Prose of Counter-Insurgency’, in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 45–84.

⁸¹ As Patrick Porter has suggested, military praxis – at strategic and tactical level – is shaped by a reciprocal and dynamic exchange which is inherent to combat. See Porter, *Military Orientalism*, p. 65.

⁸² Where Callwell proposed revisions to extant practices, his recommendations often invoked the specificities of ‘savage’ culture. Callwell objected to ‘burn and scuttle’ operations because he believed that the inevitable retreat of colonial forces

encouraged ‘truculent highlanders... [to] think that they have got the best of the transaction’. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, p. 301.

⁸³ See, for example, Andrew M. Roe, *Waging War in Waziristan: The British Struggle in the Land of Bin Laden, 1849-1947* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010); Matt Matthews, *An Ever Present Danger: A Concise History of British Military Operations on the North-West Frontier, 1849-1947* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, US Army Combined Arms Center, 2010). See, also, the ‘Tribal Analysis Center’: <http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/Home.html> [Accessed May 2016].

⁸⁴ Whittingham, “‘Savage Warfare’”, p. 604.

⁸⁵ For more, see Wagner, ‘Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in British Counterinsurgency’.

⁸⁶ Though he defined ‘small wars’ to include all campaigns in which adversaries possessed ‘palpably inferior’ armament, organization or discipline, Callwell’s framing reproduces colonial [ie. modern] assessments of self/other and thus replays the hierarchies encoded in such analyses. [ie. it assumes that technologies, institutions and training are the mark of the modern/advanced and, by contrast, those lacking these are therefore primitive or, in Callwell’s own terms, ‘barbaric’. Put simply, it assumes that the reader is a colonial soldier fighting anti-colonial enemies. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, p. 22.

⁸⁷ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives’, *History and Theory*, vol. 24, no. 3 (1985), pp. 247-72.