

Pakistan's Western Frontiers in Tumult: Olaf Caroe's Lengthening Shadows

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This is the second and final installment of a two-part article; the first part appeared in the March 27 issue.

Pakistan's western provinces, Balochistan, the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), are in the midst of a violent upheaval caused immediately by the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in the Winter of 2001. The U.S. invasion, which was joined later by a number of NATO countries, and some assistance from a few non-NATO nations, was designed to capture, or eliminate, the alleged masterminds behind the 9/11 attack in the United States, and also to remove the Afghan Taliban regime that had provided shelter to the al-Qaeda militants.

The invasion failed in the sense that the al-Qaeda militants moved eastward across the undefined Durand Line that separates Afghanistan from Pakistan, and the Afghan Taliban dispersed from Kabul and other cities, to rural areas where they have fully re-built themselves, posing a serious threat to the foreign troops inside Afghanistan.

The al-Qaeda militants, now inside Pakistan, began to carry out operations along the border areas inside Afghanistan to harass the foreign troops. They were soon joined by the tribal groups from FATA. Islamabad, under President Pervez Musharraf, which had joined the Bush Administration's War on Terror, could not prevent its citizens along the border areas from opposing the War on Terror. As a result, a very difficult situation developed when Islamabad, under pressure from the Bush Administration's hardliners, represented by Vice President Cheney, was forced to deploy troops and paramilitary forces to counter the FATA militants helping the Afghan Taliban.

Within a very short time, the situation worsened. Aided by Saudi funding, to spread Wahhabi-led jihad inside the tribal areas, and huge sums of cash generated by the opium explosion inside Afghanistan, militants

almost paralyzed the Pakistani troops inside the FATA, and Islamabad was unable to maintain law and order in the area. As it stands today, Islamabad's writ is virtually lost in the FATA, and weakened vastly in Balochistan and the NWFP.

The Swat Valley, located at the northeastern part of the NWFP (**Figure 1**), has already become autonomous, and has imposed Wahhabi-style Islamic Sharia law, in violation of Pakistan's constitution. For all practical purposes, Islamabad has handed the Swat Valley over to the Saudi-funded Wahhabis. Since all these developments have occurred within the short span of eight years, one wonders what caused such rapid deterioration. Where are its roots?

The answers to that question can be found in the almost 60-plus years of British rule in that part of the Subcontinent, prior to the formation of Pakistan in 1947, and in the continuance of British colonial policy towards that area, by Pakistani leaders.

By pursuing the old colonial policy towards the Baloch people and the tribal areas, Pakistani leaders have opened a floodgate to various forces in Britain, who would like the area separated from Pakistan, to form a buffer between oil- and gas-rich Central Asia; to the Saudi-funded Wahhabis, who are on a rampage recruiting terrorists and setting up Islamic schools (madrasahs) to convert moderate Muslims to hard-core Salafism in Pakistan and Central Asia, with the plan to set up an Islamic Ummah (nation) under a caliphate; and the Americans, who with their short-term geopolitical objectives in mind, have formed self-destructive alliances with both the British and the Saudis.

British Raj in Balochistan

Much of Balochistan was under the control of the King of Iran and the autonomous principality of Kalat, a part of Balochistan, when the British wrested control away from the Khan of Kalat in the early 1840s. The

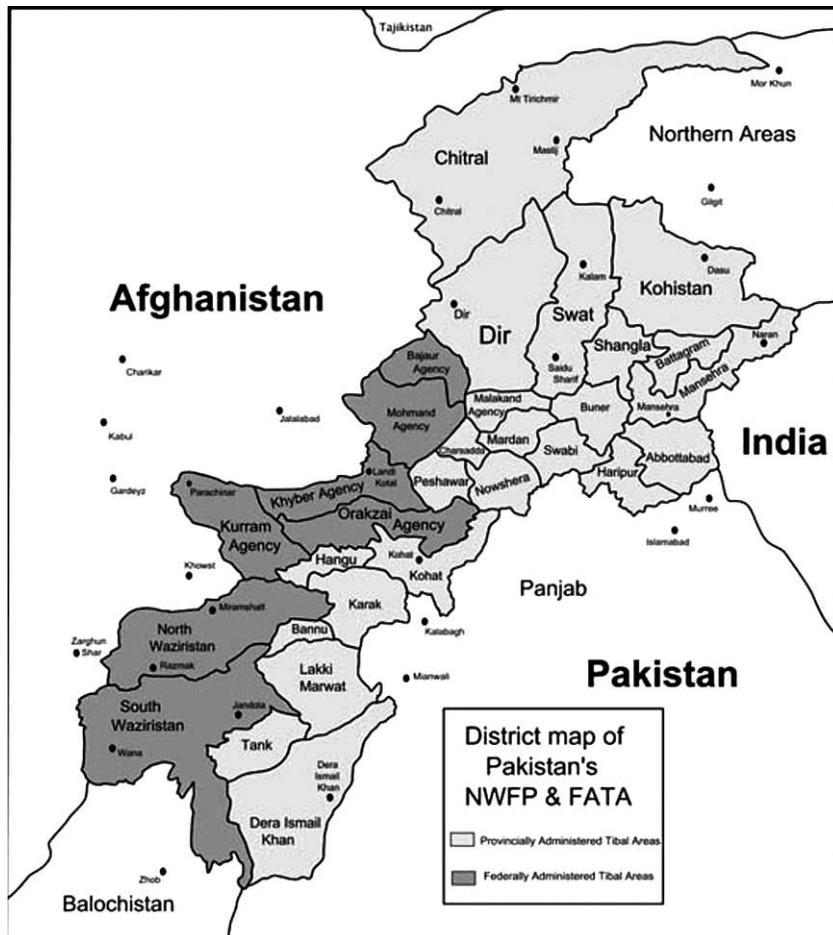
British objective at the time, was to set it up as a staging ground for various Afghan-British wars that took place in the latter half of the 19th Century. The 1876 treaty between the Khan of Kalat and Robert Groves Sandeman, an administrative officer of the British Raj, accepted the independence of the Kalat as an allied state with British military outposts in the region, according to Pakistani historian Sudhir Ahmad Afridi. After the 1878 Afghan War, the British established Balochistan as a provincial entity, centered on the municipality of Quetta, while Kalat, Makran, and Lasbela continued to exist as princely realms.

It was evident that the British had the intention to keep various tribes with their feudal chiefs separated from one another, and except for a train track, and the development and settlement of British holdings, the tribal population was excluded from all economic activities. Around the 1930s, Baloch nationalist parties emerged to fight for freedom from British rule. They took the princely state of Kalat as the focal point of a free and united Balochistan. Baglar Begi Khan declared the independence of Kalat on Aug. 15, 1947.

It was evident from the outset, that Baglar Begi Khan, a powerful chieftain, was not acting on his own. He had the support of Olaf Caroe, who was very knowledgeable about the area and was posted by the then-Viceroy of the British Raj, Lord Wavell, as governor of the NWFP. Caroe, a quintessential colonialist, whose policy was to keep all groups divided and fighting each other, in order to assert control over them, had been foreign secretary in Delhi from 1939-46, serving two Viceroy, Linlithgow and Wavell. His objective was to forestall alleged Soviet expansionism in Afghanistan, Xinjiang, and the region of the Persian Gulf. Caroe defined his task as to insure that the “lengthening shadows from the north” (i.e., the Soviet Union), did not reach the “wells of power” (i.e., the oil wells of the Persian Gulf), nor cast a shadow over Afghanistan.

Caroe agreed with Churchill’s concept at the time, that an independent entity in the northwest of India

FIGURE 1



should remain linked to Britain, and serve as an area from which London could exercise its influence over Afghanistan. In 1945, Churchill’s Cabinet debated the possibility of detaching Balochistan to maintain military bases there, in Quetta, the area of the Bolan Pass, and along the Makran coast near the entry of the Persian Gulf.

In March 1948, the Pakistani Army entered Balochistan, and forced Baglar Begi Khan to accede to Pakistan, ending the British game. Nonetheless, neither the British, nor Olaf Caroe, could get over that “loss.” After his retirement from the British Foreign Office, Caroe toured the United States, speaking on behalf of the somewhat depleted British Empire. These lectures were later put together in the form of a book, *The Wells of Power*. He pointed out in his lectures that the Port of Karachi and the coastline of Balochistan (the Makran coast, through which the bulk of Afghan opium and heroin travels to Europe today), standing at the mouth

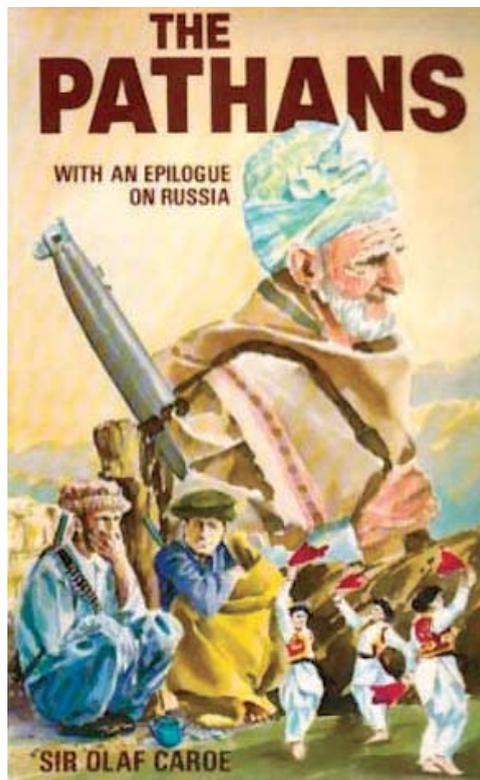
of the Persian Gulf, were “vital to British reckoning.”

Caroe’s Shadow and Policy in Force

Caroe went on to claim that the British base in India—now in Pakistan—had maintained stability in the Middle East since 1801, defying Tsar Paul’s ambitions. He said “the Indian anchor is lost,” but Pakistan, “a new India,” has emerged, a Muslim state that could help to establish a defense community of Muslim states, and “show the way for reconciliation between the Western and Islamic model.”

From the very outset, it was evident that that Pakistani leadership (at the beginning, it comprised of Urdu-speaking Muslim leaders who migrated from the then-Indian state of United Province) had no understanding of the Baloch situation. They could neither speak the Baloch language, nor did they have any familiarity with the Baloch customs and traditions. The annexation by force of Balochistan by Caroe’s “new India,” immediately provided the British, and the Baloch, a stick to beat up the Pakistani leaders from time to time. One of the descendants of Baglar Begi Khan, Khan Suleman Daud, the 35th Khan of Kalat, is still in Cardiff, Wales, and is seeking asylum in Britain.

In Britain, the 60th anniversary of the Pakistani invasion, annexation, and occupation of the independent state of Balochistan, was commemorated on April 1, 2008. The British intelligence-linked Amnesty International, and Soros-linked International Crisis Group, among others, were shouting themselves hoarse over the years on behalf of the British Crown about Pakistan’s human rights violations in Balochistan. The British news daily, *The Guardian*, claimed on that occasion, that Pakistan illegally occupies Balochistan, and Islamabad has looted Balochistan’s natural resource. It also said: “Thousands of Baloch people have been mas-



Sir Olaf Caroe, governor of the North West Frontier Province (1946-47), was “a quintessential colonialist, whose policy was to keep all groups divided and fighting each other, in order to assert control over them,” especially over the “wells of power”—the oil wells of Persian Gulf. Shown: Caroe’s 1958 book on the Pashtuns (the British prefer the term “Pathan”).

sacred, hundreds of thousands made refugees, and thousands more have disappeared or been tortured and jailed, often without trial. Pakistan is guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

In June 2006, during President Musharraf’s regime, Pakistan’s Senate Committee on Defence accused British intelligence of “abetting the insurgency in the province bordering Iran” (Balochistan). Reports indicate that ten British MPs were in a closed-door session of the Committee, regarding the alleged support of Britain’s Secret Service to Baloch separatists.

The history of the British Empire indicates that Britain has not changed, and therefore, its present role in Balochistan is no surprise at all. But two other things happened to worsen the situation. First, the American role: Having been manipulated into an anti-Iran policy, beginning in 1979, and then seizing upon the opportunity to whip the reckless Soviet Army invading Afghani-

stan in 1979, Washington joined hands with the British, carrying all the dirty laundry. Washington brought in a lot of money to maintain the British assets, and to develop their own assets, whom they promptly dumped, after the Soviets turned tail in 1989.

The outcome of this insane policy is now bearing fruit in Afghanistan and in the western part of Pakistan. The Bush Administration, until its final days, backed the anti-Iran Jundullah terrorists who operate from Balochistan, while carrying drugs for the British and destabilizing Pakistan, a key ally in the U.S.-led War on Terror.

Pakistan’s Adoption of Colonial Policies

The other factor contributing to Pakistan’s deterioration, one which is perhaps even more important than the historic British role, was Islamabad’s adoption of the British policy in dealing with its citizens living

along the Afghan borders. To begin with, instead of integrating Balochistan with the Republic in order to uproot a deep-rooted feudal system, which is sheltered by the British, Pakistan's powers-that-be have treated their own citizens in Balochistan as unwanted foreigners.

In 1954, Islamabad merged the four provinces of West Pakistan—Balochistan, NWFP, Punjab, and Sindh—into “One Unit.” This was done to counter the population strength of East Pakistan (which later became Bangladesh). One Unit was formed without adequate dialogue and, as a result, an anti-One Unit movement emerged in Balochistan. To overcome this opposition, the Pakistani Army was deployed, and the Khan of Kalat was arrested, but not before the Baloch oppositionists to the One Unit had engaged the Pakistani Army in pitched battles.

In 1973, following his visit to Iran, then-Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, dismissed the elected provincial government of Balochistan. The pretext for dismissal was that a cache of 350 Soviet submachine guns and 100,000 rounds of ammunition had supposedly been discovered in the Iraqi attaché's house, and were destined for Balochistan, according to Ray Fulcher in his Nov. 30, 2006 article, “Balochistan's History of Insurgency.” Other reports indicate that Bhutto acted that way because the Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, had warned him against allowing nationalist movements on Iran's border.

The ensuing protest against the dismissal of the duly-elected government brought in another wave of the Pakistani Army—78,000 men, to be precise—supported by Iranian Cobra helicopters. The troops were resisted by some 50,000 Baloch. The conflict took the lives of 3,300 Pakistani troops, 5,300 Baloch, and thousands of civilians, Fulcher pointed out. That 1973 invasion created deep divisions between the Baloch people and Islamabad, and made the Baloch vulnerable to London's machinations.

However, Islamabad's British colonial-like policy towards Balochistan did not end in 1973. As the Baloch internal security situation deteriorated, following the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Islamabad, under President Musharraf, began to become uneasy. Between December 2005, when the Pakistan military launched its most recent assault on Balochistan, and June 2006, more than 900 Baloch were killed, about 140,000 were displaced, 450 political activists (mainly from the Baloch National Party) disappeared, and 4,000 activists

were arrested, some reports indicate. There were also reports that the Frontier Corps (FC)—a creation of the British Raj that remained intact in Balochistan, the NWFP, and the FATA—has been responsible for indiscriminate rocket, artillery, and helicopter gunship attacks causing significant destruction of civilian areas.

FATA: The Legacy of Colonial Britain

The FATA, which borders Afghanistan, is now a hotbed of Wahhabi-influenced jihadi movements. It is divided into seven districts called agencies: Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan. The population of about 3 million is predominantly Pushtun and tribal. Contrast this with Pakistan's total population of about 170 million, and it becomes clear that the FATA is very thinly populated; it also has a very rough terrain. The total Pushtun population in Pakistan and Afghanistan is about 36 million (31 million in Pakistan and 5 million in Afghanistan). Cross-border ties are strong, and movement is hardly restricted by the non-demarcated Durand Line, a line in the sand, drawn arbitrarily by the British Raj, more than a hundred years ago.

The NWFP, along with Balochistan, was brought under British control in 1880, after the second Afghan War (1878-80), when some of the Afghan areas were wrested from Afghanistan, which brought the British-controlled territories within 50 miles of Kabul. In 1893, the British Raj drew the Durand Line, which was never accepted by Kabul. Following that, the British divided up the Pushtun tribes within the Raj territory. Britain maintained at least 10,000 troops in the area, afraid that the tribes would break away.

The administrative system that prevails today, more than 60 years following the formation of Pakistan, is almost identical to that which originated under the British Raj. The FATA is officially under the President's directive, who has empowered the governor of neighboring NWFP as his representative. The governor, in turn, appoints an “agent” for each agency of the FATA.

These agents are senior administrators in their region, and are governed by rules established by a British Act of Parliament in 1901. This set of rules is called the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR).

The FCR comprises a set of laws enforced by the British Raj in the Pushtun-inhabited tribal areas in Northwest British India, as it was called then. The laws were devised especially to counter the fierce opposition of the Pushtuns to British rule; their main objective was

to protect the interests of the British Empire. The FCR dates back to the occupation of the Pushtun-inhabited frontier districts by the British in 1848. The regulation was re-enacted in 1873, and again in 1876, with minor modifications. Over time, the Regulation was found to be inadequate, and new acts and offences were added to it to extend its scope.

According to the FCR that prevails in FATA, despite the presence of popularly elected tribal representatives, parliament can play no role in the affairs of the area. Article 247 of the Pakistani Constitution provides that no Act of Parliament applies to the FATA, unless the President so desires. Only the President of Pakistan is authorized to amend laws and promulgate ordinances for the tribal areas.

The FCR used to apply to the greater part of Pakistani territory, the NWFP until 1963, and Balochistan until 1977. The Indian Independence Act of 1947 technically made the FCR null and void, yet it was maintained by Pakistan's government in exchange for greater autonomy for the affected region, and the removal of national troops from the FATA. Under this set of regulations, FATA tribesmen have no recourse to the constitutional and political rights granted to others in the country.

Fossilized FATA

Although they were part of Pakistan, the tribal areas did not have an adult franchise until 1996, when the late Premier Benazir Bhutto gave them that right. The Pakistani Police do not have the authority to enter and operate inside the FATA.

Traditionally, the role of maintaining security in the FATA has been assigned to the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC), a legacy of British rule. The FC is recruited from the FATA tribal people, while officers are recruited from the regular Pakistan Army.

Under the Raj, the British opted to employ the locals as soldiers, and placed British officers in command of these formations. The British rulers deliberately designed the Frontier Corps as an internal security force, whose prime objective was maintaining law and order in the volatile tribal belt, and ensuring the safety of all strategic communication routes.

What is astonishing, is that the Frontier Corps has remained virtually fossilized since the British era. Most of the outposts and garrisons of the Frontier Corps are located in areas through which strategic communication routes pass, or in areas where tribes are known to

be unruly and are controlled by force.

Although Pakistan has gone through immense changes, materially and politically, since its formation in 1947, the FATA has remained untouched. One government after another left it alone, putting no effort into integrating this crucial area within Pakistan. It was particularly important to do so, because the Pakistani leaders were well aware that Pushtuns inside Pakistan have long aspired to form a Greater Pushtunistan (or, Pakhtoonistan) in collaboration with their Afghan cousins.

More important, perhaps, is the issue of economic development. Pakistani historians point out that the British accomplished more infrastructure development in the FATA areas, than the Pakistani government had done since independence. The British Raj developed some infrastructure within the FATA in order to ensure security and collect taxes. On the other hand, Pakistani governments utilized the same infrastructure and did very little to improve the lot of these tribal people.

Criminalization of the FATA

While the rules and regulations that control the FATA have remained virtually the same as those imposed by the British Raj, the lack of economic development has brought about very many negative aspects. To begin with, the FATA has become a major center of smuggling. The Lahore-based *Daily Times* pointed out recently that remittances by FATA workers in the Gulf, funneled through the notorious *hundi* (money-laundering) system, have financed smuggling of a vast array of goods, such as automobiles, consumer durables, electronics, and cloth, all of which can now be purchased in, or ordered, via the tribal belt. This has badly undermined the country's industrial and tariff policies. Industry is deprived of legitimate protection, and the treasury has lost huge revenues in recent years.

Even more dangerous, is the flow of opium and heroin through FATA. In the 1990s, FATA itself became a major producer of opium, producing about 800 tons annually. An American intervention through monetary enticement, and Islamabad's law enforcement intervention, has led to the end of opium cultivation in most areas. However, the explosion of opium on the other side of the Durand Line has criminalized the FATA tribal people, and has accompanied the rise of the Pakistani Taliban.

No less diabolical to the body politic of the country as whole, is gun-running in the FATA. Long gone are the days of World War II replicas, hammered and chis-

eled in little Darra hamlets reminiscent of the Wild West. The standard fare now is Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers, and sophisticated explosives, the *Daily Times* reported.

Islamabad must remember that the FATA was a handmaiden of the British colonial rulers, and until they left, they had aspired to make it, along with the Pushtun areas of Afghanistan, a part of Greater Pushtunistan. History shows that Gen. Robert Lockhart, who replaced Olaf Caroe as the governor of the NWFP, in his last reply to Louis Mountbatten, the then-Viceroy to British India, on July 12, 1947 (just about a month before India was partitioned and British rule ended) wrote: "Pakhtoonistan is being vigorously advocated and the idea, I think, proving attractive to many Pathans [the British choose to use the word "Pathan" to describe a Pushtun]. Rumours and reports of the Fakir of Ipi flow in details [Ipi wanted to proclaim himself Amir of Waziristan]...."

The British objective, as expressed at length by Churchill and Caroe, prior to the partition of India, to set up an independent state, comprised of Balochs and Pushtuns, was an attempt back then, to set up a buffer nation, between the Subcontinent's large nations and the "wells of power." But when that became impossible, as nationalist Indian leaders, such as Nehru, Gandhi, and Azad, among others, opposed further "balkanization" of India, the British adopted Pakistan as the "new India," which would protect the British interests in the Middle East.

It seems Britain cannot depend on Pakistan any longer on that score, and now, it once more wants to set up a buffer state between the Indian Subcontinent and the "wells of power."

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