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## DEFENCE IN THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE\*

By GENERAL SIR KENNETH WIGRAM, G.C.B., C.S.I

**A**LTHOUGH the subject matter of this lecture is Defence in the North-West Frontier Province, you all know the Frontier well enough to realize that the problem of Frontier defence is by no means peculiar to that province, and includes the defence of Baluchistan. Thanks to Sir Robert Sandeman's energies the problem there is not nearly so acute. I do not, therefore, propose to spend time on the Baluchistan problem; suffice it to say that generally speaking the principles which apply to the N.W.F.P. apply equally to Baluchistan.

By the Durand settlement of 1894, all the tribes inhabiting the territories east of the Durand Line were recognized as belonging to a British "sphere of influence." The Frontier as demarcated was an arbitrary topographical line which for the most part followed watersheds and bore little or no relation to ethnographical conditions. This has raised complications on more than one occasion. Whatever may be the modern interpretation of a "sphere of influence," I personally have no doubt in my mind that both parties, and probably the world in general, recognized that in fact the settlement constituted tribal territory as British territory and the tribes as British subjects. I mention this because, thanks to a somewhat loose use of the term "Independent Territory," I have on more than one occasion heard it stated that tribal territory is not British territory, that the tribesmen are not British subjects, and that we have no right to enter their territory or to control their destinies. That, in my opinion, is a dangerous doctrine, since it serves as an excuse to avoid the announcement of a long-term policy and encourages opportunism.

My contention is that British territory extends up to the Durand Line, that the tribesmen are British subjects, and that both in their interests and in our interests our aim should be to establish some form of control up to the Durand Line in order that we may improve the economic and political conditions under which these tribesmen live and move and have their being.

\* Lecture given on November 18, 1936, Field-Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode, Bt., in the Chair.

*In support of this contention may I quote an eminent statesman :*

“ I take it to be an axiom of Frontier administration that a tribe or group of tribes situated between two comparatively powerful States must be under the influence of one or other of these States.”

The tribesman himself is usually regarded as an arch villain, Satan in disguise, and is described as dirty, cruel, unreliable, and treacherous. Cruel he certainly is, as is proved by his punishment for an unfaithful wife. He cuts off her nose. There is a wonderful lady doctor, a medical missionary working in Tank. Her main line of business is to give these dear ladies new noses and she has a large practice in this line. She was rather shocked when I told her she was encouraging immorality. And yet at the same time there is something likeable about the tribesman. He is a man, with an amazing power of endurance, and a whimsical sense of humour. He never ceases bluffing and roars with laughter when his bluff is called. He is a fine fighter with an innate military instinct and is a foe worthy of our steel. He is proud of himself, of his clan, of his country. He possesses both the will and the skill to resist, the former by reason of his love of independence, the latter by reason of his rifle. In mentality he is a true oriental in that he loves intrigue; wishes always to be on the winning side and therefore prefers to sit on the fence until he sees which way the cat is going to jump; and is always on the look-out for some means of saving his face. It is these two characteristics which render speed both in decision and action of such importance in our dealings with the tribesmen, and inaction so dangerous. And yet how common is inaction! It is so easy, it does not involve the assumption of responsibility, it postpones the necessity for decision. Inaction, especially in the East, never has got and never will get anyone anywhere except into a mess.

The formula which always guided me in giving advice about our dealings with the tribesmen was: Fear, fence, face, fanaticism.

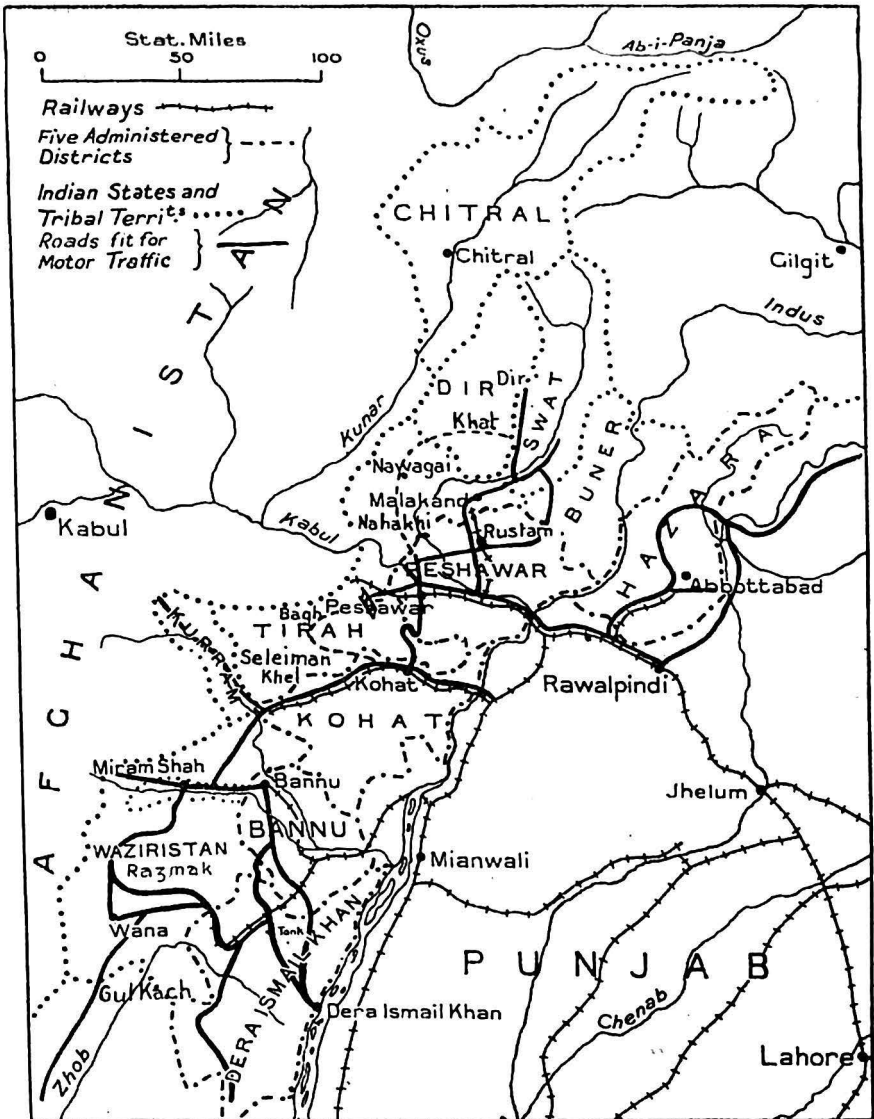
Fear, in that the tribesman is in no sense of the term a superman and is, like anyone else, anxious to preserve his life and subject to fear of losing it.

Fence. With the exception of the immediate offenders, the neighbouring sections will as a rule sit on the fence in the critical stages waiting for the result of the opening engagement.

Face. They are always on the lookout for some excuse to save their faces.

Fanaticism. Once Jihad is proclaimed they become mad dogs and reason goes to the winds.

The problem is to provide them, and as rapidly as possible, with the



means of saving their faces, and so induce them to come down on our side of the fence, and the means, surely, an early display of adequate force.

I should like to read you the Mahsud boast which is typical of the mentality of the tribes.

“While kingdoms and dynasties had passed away, they alone of all Afghan tribes had remained free, and armies of kings had never penetrated their strongholds. They recognized no law or rule but their own. From generation to generation the plains of India had been their rightful hunting ground.”

In temperament they are mercurial, and one never knows from day to day what the morrow will bring forth. Only this last spring the Wazirs kidnapped a Hindu girl from Bannu. The police got hold of her and took her back for safe custody. Within two days no less than 3,000 armed Wazirs had collected within 25 miles of Bannu, threatening to attack, loot, and burn the city unless she was given back. Just one Hindu prostitute! and Razmak brigade and the Scouts turned out and the Bannu garrison standing to.

The two factors which, perhaps more than any others, complicate our dealings with the tribes are their attitude towards Kabul and the blood feud.

Although jealous of control by Kabul, and ready at times to raid and to commit acts of aggression into Afghanistan—for example, in the recent incursion into Khost, when some 12,000 of our tribesmen crossed the border and attacked Matun—they consider themselves bound by their own code of honour and religion to protect Afghan territory against invasion by the Ferenghi. Again, having of their own motion offended against the Government of India, they do not hesitate to appeal to Kabul for help against Government forces which may be sent to exact reparation—for example, during the Mohmand operations in 1933 and 1935 the Afghan border ran some six to ten miles to the west of our line of advance. We knew that largish contingents of Afghan Mohmands were fighting against us. We also knew that our Mohmands were using Afghan territory as a sanctuary—in all our dealings with the tribes, therefore, the international aspect perforce looms large, and military considerations have frequently to give way to political expediency.

The only remedy I can see to the blood feud is to remove the means by which it is kept alive—namely, the rifle. I shall have more to say about this later.

Up till 1919 our general policy on the Frontier was to avoid any new responsibility unless absolutely required by actual strategical necessities, and by the protection of the British-Indian border, and to refrain

from any unnecessary interference with the tribes; a policy of inaction where circumstances permitted and action only when necessity compelled. During that period the action was limited to blockade or to punitive expeditions of the burn and scuttle type which merely left a legacy of hate and created a desire for revenge.

That, thank God, has been changed, and in place of the punitive expedition we have substituted occupation and the establishment of political control as in Waziristan, and a big road construction programme into areas in which we at present exercise no control—*e.g.*, Bajaur and Tirah. In furtherance of this policy it is now generally agreed that if and when we find ourselves compelled to send a military force into tribal territory, that force will not withdraw without leaving a road behind it. As an example of this I should like to draw attention to the Mohmand operations of 1933 and 1935, when in 1933 we made a road to Yusuf Khel in the Gandab Valley and in 1935 extended that road to Nahakki.

This road policy is inclined to be criticized on the grounds, first, that there is no advantage in making roads unless we are prepared to protect and maintain them and, second, that if we do protect and maintain them we shall be committed to heavy recurring expenditure. Personally, I am inclined to disagree with this view. Once you have cut a road along a hillside, that road will always remain and nothing the tribesmen can do will render it impassable for long. In 1935 Badshah Gul and his merry men spent ten days destroying the road to Ghalanai unmolested. On the third day of our advance we were able to pass 6-in. Hows. to Ghalanai under their own steam. As for protection, I personally am inclined to query the wisdom of applying the rules regarding the sanctity of roads which are essential in the Khyber, in the Kurram, and in Waziristan, to roads in these back areas by insisting that offences committed on these roads are offences against Government and will be punished, for that commits Government to taking action and at once, however inconvenient it may be, or to losing face if action is not taken. Although a firm believer in speed and hard hitting in all our dealings with the tribes, I dislike being dictated to by the tribes and being forced to take military action solely in order to discharge a threat when our bluff is called.

Our motto should be reparation certainly, but reparation in our time and at our pace.

Although perhaps not so effective as military occupation in that it may involve some delay in the establishment of political control and

retard the rate of the processes of civilization by means of the provision of amenities in the shape of hospitals and schools, the new road construction programme recently introduced by the Government of India at the instigation of Field-Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode bids fair to prove of the greatest service in enabling Government to extend the sphere of political control into areas hitherto denied, and to despatch a military force into tribal territory at very short notice should necessity arise.

The main features of this programme include the construction of motor transport roads from the Swat Valley to Rustam through the Buner country—a nasty inaccessible block of tribal territory on the flank of our main line of advance to the Malakand which would form our line of communication in operations north of the Swat River; from Dir territory via Khar and Nawagai to join the existing road at Nahakki—a road of the utmost importance enabling us to get behind the Shamozaï and Utman Khel, to deal direct with the Salarzai and other Bajaur tribes, and to converge on the Mohmand country from the north in conjunction with a movement via the Gandab Valley from the south; from Ali Masjid to China Bazar; from Bara to Bagh and round to join the existing road in the Marai Salient. The final alignment of this road is not yet decided. It may be extended from China Bazar to Bagh, though this would be difficult as it runs across the grain of the country. In addition, the Razmak-Wana road will be bridged throughout, and bridges will be provided over the Gomal at Gul Kach and over the Zhob at Sandeman. When complete the system will provide an all-weather motor road from Dir to Quetta with spurs through Bajaur and Tirah.

There are some who argue that the programme fails in that it does not visualize the permanent occupation with military forces of Bajaur and Tirah, and that without such occupation effective control can never be exercised. However desirable occupation may be, and I am the first to admit its efficacy in Waziristan, occupation in sufficient force of these enormous areas would not be a practical proposition with the army in India at its present size, for nothing would be more conducive to tribal unrest than weak garrisons without any hitting power. Although the last to advocate any reduction of our garrison in Waziristan, I am also the last to advocate permanent garrisons in Bajaur and Tirah, and knowing that entry is assured by a good road, I would prefer to keep my forces fluid ready to operate in either area when the call came than to lock up more troops in permanent garrisons.

The changes in Waziristan during the past twelve years are little short of remarkable. In 1924, when I visited Waziristan for the first time, every man carried a rifle, and what is more brought it down to the ready with his finger on the trigger the moment he saw your car. One never saw any women or children; they only moved about after dark. Now only about 50 per cent. of the men carry rifles at all, and of these 75 per cent. carry them in covers. The women move freely about the roads and work in the fields. The children either throw stones at the cars when moving or flock round them when halted and demand "Baksheesh." Buses crammed with tribesmen, the majority of whom are armed, run daily to the cities in the plain. The standard of living has risen—all drink tea and smoke cigarettes. The style of clothing has improved both amongst men and women. Smart waist-coats, silk lungis, gaudy shirts and blouses, trinkets. But it is amongst the children where we are doing our best work by creating a generation who have no fear of the white man and who regard him as a friend.

Now in considering the defence of the Frontier we have to consider two separate problems which, though intimately interrelated, each require special treatment.

First there is the normal day to day administration and maintenance of law and order, which includes the settlement of family, section and tribal disputes, the arrest of offenders and outlaws, the rounding up of raiding gangs, and other cognate matters which may be classified as normal peace-time duties of watch and ward. These are the functions of the political officer, who has at his disposal certain civil armed forces consisting of scouts, militias, levies, khassadars and Frontier constabulary. These forces are in no way under the Commander-in-Chief or the local Military Commander in peace, nor is the Governor or the local political officer under any obligation to consult them about their activities. During this phase the regular forces stand by ready, and I may say eager, to act in aid of the civil power, and the political officer has the right to call for their services at his discretion. The degree of liaison maintained depends to a certain extent on personalities, though, generally speaking, it is of the closest order, and the system works well. As a matter of principle there is, however, one important objection to the system—namely, that the civil armed forces may at any time find themselves committed to a task which is beyond their capacity to deal with alone, may find themselves opposed by a formidable concentration of tribesmen, and may have to withdraw in a hurry, or even



worse, may suffer a reverse. Incidents of that kind cannot be ignored or be allowed to go unpunished and Government may find itself committed to a military expedition. In this respect the system is defective.

The second phase comes into being when, the situation having passed beyond the control of the political officer and his civil armed forces, the military are called in. At this stage control of the operations, including political control and control of the civil armed forces, passes to the Military Commander working under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief. In practice the transfer of political control is not automatic, each case being judged on its merits—*e.g.*, during the Khost incursion political control did not pass to the military. During the Mohmand operations political control only passed when the force advanced from Ghalanai. The procedure is as follows: The Governor, who is also agent to the Governor-General, after consulting his military and air commanders, puts up to the Government of India a recommendation as to the object and scope of the operations he considers necessary, and the Government of India in their turn delegate to the Commander-in-Chief the control of such operations.

Should a state of war be declared the control of operations would automatically devolve on to the Commander-in-Chief concurrently with the issue of the order to mobilize.

On the Frontier, more perhaps than in other regions, speedy and reliable information is of vital importance, since serious trouble can often be averted by anticipatory action in the shape of a display of force. During the past few years there has been established in Peshawar a combined Intelligence Bureau subordinate to the Criminal Investigation Department, and consisting of officers drawn from the police, the political department, the army and the air force. Though still in its infancy, this bureau is shaping well, and the volume and quality of information it produced during the Mohmand operations was of a high order.

Now I should just like to draw your attention to what I like to call the Constitutional aspect of the Defence of the Frontier.

The responsibility for the defence of India is at present vested in the Governor-General in Council, working through the Commander-in-Chief, who is himself a Member of Council. Under the new Constitution the responsibility for defence rests with the Governor-General alone, the Commander-in-Chief being the supreme commander of all the forces and the technical adviser of the Governor-General on ques-

tions of strategy, war preparation and the conduct of war. He will have no political status.

Early in this century that portion of British India which lies trans-Indus and which marches with tribal territory was part of the province of the Punjab. Lord Curzon realized that it was impracticable for Government effectively to discharge their particular responsibility when working through the medium of an intermediary Provincial Government. He consequently separated the area trans-Indus from the Punjab and constituted it a new province—namely, the North-West Frontier Province—under a Chief Commissioner who was also agent to the Governor-General. This brought Government in direct touch with Frontier affairs.

Some four years ago the status of the North-West Frontier Province was raised to that of a province with its own Governor. The Governor, however, continued to act in the dual capacity of Governor and agent to the Governor-General.

In essence this is a reversion to the old system since it has interposed a Provincial Government between the Government of India and the Frontier. In practice there has been but little change, though I personally have noticed indications of increasing reluctance on the part of the Government of India to disagree with and openly to disapprove of advice tendered by the Governor. This is only natural since a Governor carries far bigger guns than a Chief Commissioner.

As I see it this situation may become still more aggravated when the North-West Frontier Province becomes an Autonomous Province under the new Constitution since, with the best will in the world, the Governor will not be able to avoid being influenced, to some extent at any rate, by the provincial aspect, and we may find defence subordinated to provincial requirements. Moreover, as Governor of an Autonomous Province, his word will presumably carry even more weight than as Governor of a province subordinate to the Government of India.

It is interesting and not perhaps entirely irrelevant to examine very briefly the system practised by the French in Morocco under Marshal Lyautey, the soldier administrator, since in many respects there is a marked resemblance between their problem and ours.

In essence the French system comprises a deliberate policy of nibbling followed by systematic absorption by peaceful penetration. Military command, including intelligence and subsequent territorial control, was concentrated under a single authority. Military disposi-

tions consisted in strong concentrations at nodal points. Military action was regarded merely as a prelude to civilization in the shape of the development of roads and telegraphs and the improvement of economic conditions such as agriculture, housing and the general standard of living. Their methods were first the establishment of confidence by political contact; next, occupation by military forces which also assumed responsibility for the protection of the loyal elements; and, finally, the economic development of the area, including the provision of amenities such as markets, hospitals and schools.

What appeals to me is the unqualified recognition of the objective; the unwavering determination to reach that objective; the orderly way in which they set to work to do it; and, finally, the unity of command and control in both the political and military spheres. As to methods, the salient points are the avoidance of risk of reverse by the display of overwhelming force; insistence on the disarmament of the tribesmen; the importance attached to the opening up of markets; and no withdrawal from territory once occupied. It is, however, only fair to state that the French sphere of influence does not march with a sovereign state which is also a member of the League of Nations.

In comparing the French system with our system you will, I think, admit that, in accepting the new road construction policy, Government has taken a definite step towards recognizing as their objective the extension of control throughout their sphere of influence. That, however, is bound to be a slow process. Meanwhile certain anomalies exist which, from an administrative point of view, are even now inconvenient, and may become more so under provincial autonomy, and which, from a military point of view, are a handicap if not a menace to our defence dispositions. I refer particularly to that intrusion of a belt of tribal territory east and west through the Kohat Pass which renders direct communication between Peshawar and Kohat unreliable, and from which raiding gangs can operate with impunity against our lines of communication.

Disarmament has frequently been discussed and as frequently dismissed as impracticable. In spite of that it still remains the crux of the problem, for it is the possession of arms more than anything else which keeps alive the blood feud, which provides the means by which the tribesman can exercise his skill to resist, and which encourages him to practise his will to resist. It is argued, in all good faith, that a prelude to disarmament must be the provision of adequate protection against marauders from Afghanistan and from our own tribes over whom we

do not exercise sufficient control to enforce disarmament. It is also argued that we ourselves have no control over the sources of supply to make disarmament effective. In themselves these arguments are valid, but to me they savour of defeatism. We pay thousands of Khassadars annually to protect our roads. Disarm the tribes and the roads will no longer need protection, and the Khassadars will be free to protect the country generally against marauders. That, in essence, was the way the Wali of Swat effected a measure of disarmament. It would involve a fairly large capital outlay since the existing rifles would have to be purchased, but that money would be invested in land, and this should tend to stability since it would increase the number of individuals with a stake in the country. In any case the matter is, in my opinion, of such supreme importance that the presence of difficulties is, in itself, no excuse for doing nothing.

To set up unity of command and control under a single authority will prove a far more difficult matter. *Prima facie* is it really wise to attempt to deal with a problem in which the transition from peace to war and back again to peace is generally fortuitous and always rapid, and in which considerations of defence must always be paramount, by divided responsibility and by dual control? So long as the trans-Indus area was under a Chief Commissioner directly responsible to the Government of India, the internal administration of this area was controlled by an executive authority, and the "close border" policy—indirect control of tribal territory from without—was the order of the day, the system worked, mainly because those responsible for working it made it work. Consider for a moment the changed conditions. The "close border" policy abandoned, and replaced by a modified "forward policy"; regular military forces in occupation of large tracts of tribal territory; the administration of the province controlled by Indian ministers responsible to the Governor. Even in the régime of a Chief Commissioner the interests of Government and the interests of the province were at times in conflict, but the scales were weighted in favour of Government. When a Governor's province was created the balance was, to some extent, changed in favour of the province. With an autonomous province with its own ministers may it not be that the balance will still further be changed, and that in future the scales may be weighted in favour of the province? In my opinion, and I merely give it for what it is worth, I consider that with provincial autonomy the administration and control of tribal territory will have to be separated from the province. I further suggest that when that

separation does take place the administration and control of tribal territory should be placed under a Military Governor who would command all the forces both regular and irregular, and who, assisted by political officers, would be responsible for the political work with the tribes.

A Governor's job under the new Constitution is going to be a whole-time job, and more particularly so in the N.W.F.P. I believe he is to have a deputy for tribal territory. That may relieve the Governor of some of the detail, but it adds one more link in the chain of communication between the Frontier and the Governor-General.

Although our hope is that under the new Constitution India will learn to sink her communal differences and will emerge as a single nation, it would be unwise to ignore completely the ethnographical distribution of communities implicit in the new Constitution, or to refuse even to consider the possible implication of this distribution. In a very short time we shall see set up in the north-west a Muslim *bloc* comprising three predominantly Muslim provinces with Muslim majorities—Sind, the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province—and one controlled area, also predominantly Muslim—namely, Baluchistan. Although the Muslim population of this *bloc* may not represent a majority of the whole Muslim population of India, I venture to predict that, comprising as it will the dynamic and bigoted element of Muslims, it will take a leading part and will exert considerable influence on the destinies of Muslims as a whole throughout India. I further suggest that this *bloc* will not hesitate to take full advantage of its geographical position by establishing the closest liaison, and possibly even a "gentleman's agreement" with its co-religionists in tribal territory, in Afghanistan, in Persia and even further afield. Whither this may lead I won't attempt to prophesy. I venture to suggest, however, that it represents a line along which the future may develop, a bulwark which may be set up against that dreaded domination by Hindu-Brahmin rule.

In conclusion, I wish to touch lightly on the future, but feel that in doing so I must walk warily. First let me assure you that anything I do say is my personal opinion only, is in no way inspired, and would probably not receive any support from serving officials either civil or military.

The Instrument of Instructions for the new Constitution recognizes that defence must become more and more the concern of the Indian people. Time and again leading Indians have criticized the new Con-

stitution on the ground that, shorn of responsibility for the defence of the country, self-government is a misnomer, and the new Constitution an empty farce. The rate of Indianization has been accelerated, and though it is early yet to assign to this experiment any specific military value, there are no reasons to anticipate failure. The seeds of a purely Indian portion of the defence forces have been sown and will, in time, reach maturity. With provincial autonomy will also come the transfer of responsibility for law and order to Provincial Governments.

Now these are all signs and portents which point the way to possible changes in the future. What form these changes will take no one can say. May I be so bold as to throw out certain suggestions?

The desire to administer and to control the defence forces, or even a portion of these forces, will grow stronger and stronger as the Federal Cabinet gets more and more into the saddle. The Indian portion of the defence force will, in effect, be the nucleus of that Dominion Army with which Indians hope eventually to defend their country. In order to satisfy their desire may it not be expedient to transfer the administration and control of the Indian portion to an Indian minister who is also a member of the Cabinet?

Again, although the maintenance of law and order is to be the responsibility of Provincial Governments, the only resources at their disposal for the discharge of this responsibility will be the civil police. We know by experience that these are seldom adequate, and how often the military have to be called in. May it not be regarded as somewhat *infra dig.*, and will it not in fact be a confession of failure for a Provincial Autonomous Government to have to appeal to the Governor-General for help to enable it to discharge its own peculiar responsibility?

My own view is that as time goes on we shall find autonomous provinces more and more inclined to raise their own local defence forces to support their civil police in order to avoid the indignity of having to rely upon Federal forces to discharge their own particular responsibility.

In the meantime the big problem—namely, the defence of India—remains not only as an Indian problem but also as an imperial problem, since, under the new Constitution defence is a reserved subject, and the special responsibility of the Governor-General. This task, as I see it, will be assigned to an imperial force constituted on the lines of the existing army in India, and paid for from Indian revenues.

To sum up, the organization as I see it will consist of :

- (a) An imperial force for the defence of India.
- (b) A dominion army under an Indian minister gradually learning its job.
- (c) Provincial armed forces for the maintenance and restoration of law and order.

BRIG.-GENERAL MOBERLY: I would like to ask if the autonomous Indian forces to which the lecturer referred are to be composed of British or Indian troops?

GENERAL SIR K. WIGRAM: I do not think you can visualize British forces serving under the Provincial Governments. After all, they must run their own affairs, and I imagine such a force would be their own affair.

BRIGADIER SANDILANDS: In what has been said this evening there is no point with which I disagree, but there is one which I think is relevant to General Wigram's lecture, which perhaps might have been brought forward. I am encouraged to mention this the more since, at a meeting at the United Service Institution a week or two ago, I heard you, sir, if I understood you rightly, express the opinion that a force organized and equipped for European warfare was not the most suitable for employment on the North-West Frontier of India. Any who have served on that frontier know that the special conditions that obtain there demand special training for the troops, for though the tactics involved are themselves simple, their application is a matter of extraordinary difficulty. I suggest, therefore, that great advantage could be obtained by the more or less permanent location in the province of a force specially equipped and trained for that type of warfare, whether for dealing with tribal disturbance or for the duties of the Covering Force in more serious eventualities. But there are other considerations. General Wigram's lecture is entitled "Defence *in* the N.W.F.P." He claimed that the area occupied by the trans-border tribes is British territory, but it surely cannot be rightly called part of the North-West Frontier Province. To me Defence *in* the N.W.F.P. means the maintenance of law and order in the province: that is the contribution that can and must be made by the province to the defence of the frontier, unless we are to be involved in serious difficulties. In its relation to the tribesmen, it can be taken as an axiom that guerillas cannot hope to operate with success except in their own country, but in 1930, when the Afridis crossed the border, propaganda had created such sympathy with them among the people of our

villages as to render the Peshawar district the tribesmen's own country in all but name. As I have said before to the members of this Society, if the Afridis had on that occasion shown one quarter of the courage and determination of the Boers in South Africa, the damage they could have done would have been incalculable. What serious dislocation would arise from the province being in a similar condition when large-scale operations were being undertaken on the Frontier I leave to the imagination of the audience, and I contend that a permanent force, whose officers would be in intimate association with the villagers, would tend to prevent the recurrence of such a grave situation.

A MEMBER: There are only two points I wish to touch on. The first is the disarmament of the tribesmen. This is too large a question to be discussed here. There is only one aspect which I wish to discuss here. It has been said that disarmament would put an end to blood feuds and lead to the establishment of law and order. Actually the settled districts in the N.W.F.P. have been disarmed for a long time, but the blood feuds continue and the number of murders is eighty times as great as it is in England in proportion to population. It is probably greater than anywhere else in the world. In fact it has been argued more than once that there are more murders in the settled districts than there are in tribal territory.

My second point is a constitutional one. It was suggested that each self-governing province should have its own defence force. Under the present law any force for the maintenance of law and order must be part of the regular police force under the Inspector-General of Police. I do not know if something of the nature of the State militias in the U.S.A. is what is proposed. If it is I would point out that if such semi-military bodies were set up, paid for by, and under the orders of, the Provincial Governments, and not part of the regular army under the Commander-in-Chief, very dangerous possibilities would arise.

SIR FREDERICK WHYTE: May I reinforce the last speaker's question? As I understand the circumstances, the local militias of the United States of America were military forces already in existence before the creation of the Federal Union, each State possessing them being an independent political unit. When the Federal Government came into being, the Constitution only authorized the President to issue orders to those militias in certain circumstances, and the Government had thus to make the best of a situation in which it did not, in fact, command the whole military force of America. This situation has not, in



fact, proved awkward or dangerous in America; but where, as in India, there are already powerful centrifugal forces at work, it would surely be asking for trouble to set up a provincial militia which in a crisis might be used against the Federal Centre or against neighbouring provinces.

LIEUT.-GENERAL BORRETT: The more I listened to the lecture this evening, the more convinced I became that the problem of the North-West Frontier of India should be divorced entirely from the Government of India. It is an Imperial problem, not a local one, and should be treated as such.

Last night at the British Empire Society I heard Lord Lugard deliver an address which was chiefly concerned with the problem of the government of the South African Colonies. He was followed by half a dozen Governors and ex-Governors who unanimously thanked God that, instead of forcing our ideas wholesale on the nations of those countries, we were governing them through their own laws and customs, and grafting on to that some of our Western ideas. Is there any possibility of the North-West Frontier Province having our Western ideas grafted on to their "jirga" rule, and so being saved from the Westernized and unwanted form of government which is being forced on to the rest of India?

On the subject of roads: There are two kinds of roads. The man who laid down the axiom that roads are a civilizing influence had in his mind economic roads, not military roads. The advantage of military roads is obvious, but they are not necessarily civilizing. Is there any scheme for building economic roads or trade routes in the North-West Frontier?

THE CHAIRMAN: May I personally answer one or two of these questions?

Why was the professional frontier force which remained always stationed there not revived? They used to be nicknamed the "Piffers" (Punjab Frontier Force).

Every Commander-in-Chief since the Piffers were done away with has had that question put to him. It has always been turned down for a very good reason. The North-West Frontier is one of the best training grounds we have in the world—troops there are always "on their toes" and never know when they may not have to turn out at a moment's notice and fight for their lives. Efficiency is a vital necessity. Under the system of reliefs in India, every unit, British and Indian, as far as possible spends some time in the Frontier. They pass

from Internal Security duties to the War Divisions and from them to the covering troops on the actual Frontier.

On the second point, I think the audience mistook the Lecturer on the question of Indianizing troops. At the moment they have not nearly finished Indianization and are not yet fit to take their place as purely Indian troops on the Frontier. He and I both agree that they will have to get more officers of the right standing before they can be trusted to do that.

He also envisaged the possibility of certain purely Indianized troops taking the place of the present units and being raised by the provinces and permanently stationed in the provinces as a backing for the police.

Sir Kenneth Wigram has had as hard a task this evening as is possible to imagine—that of compressing into one hour's talk an account of 650 miles of the most important land frontier of the Empire—with all the hundreds of difficult problems which it has given rise to. I think you will agree he has acquitted himself very well indeed. (Applause.) I think we owe him a very hearty vote of thanks for an immensely interesting lecture.

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