RAF INTER-WAR OPERATIONS ON THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

By Wing Commander Dr Andrew Walters

Biography: Wing Commander Andrew Walters joined the RAF in 1982. He completed 13 operational deployments on the Tornado GR1/4 as a Qualified Weapons Instructor, Electronic Warfare Instructor and Targeteer. Following Staff College, he was awarded a Portal Fellowship researching the RAF's inter-War operations on the North-West Frontier of India, for which he was awarded a PhD in 2017.

Abstract: India's North-West Frontier was the one area where the British Raj could suffer a knockout blow from either Russian invasion or tribal revolt. Despite the RAF's operational efficacy in 1920s Iraq, air control was never implemented on the Frontier and air power's potential was never fully exploited. Instead, aircraft were employed to enhance the Army's traditional battlefield capabilities, resulting in efficient tactical co-ordination during the 1930s Waziristan campaign. This article examines the relationship between the Armies in India and the RAF and its impact on the RAF's subsequent strategic bombing policy. It concludes that India's Armies were slow to recognise the conceptual shift required to fully exploit air power. This was reinforced by inter-Service rivalry and the threat of aircraft replacing land forces with a concomitant loss of political standing.

INTRODUCTION

The RAF's Centenary provides the opportunity to reflect upon significant events in our Air Force's past, some of which have been overlooked in the annals of history. One such lacuna was the RAF's inter-War operations on the North-West Frontier of India (NWF). Between the First and Second World Wars, RAF(India)'s strength exceeded any other overseas Command and its squadrons undertook significant combat operations throughout the period.[1] Frontier defence was amongst the greatest burdens during India's inter-War years of financial austerity. Yet, although the RAF demonstrated significant operational and financial efficacy in 1920s Iraq, air control was never implemented on the NWF and air power's potential was never fully exploited.[2] Instead, aircraft were employed to enhance the Army's traditional battlefield capabilities, resulting in efficient tactical co-ordination during the 1936-39 Waziristan campaign, the RAF's most operationally-active theatre leading up to the Second World War. Nevertheless, there is no official history of RAF(India) and most authors have focussed on tactical air-land co-operation rather than operational and strategic issues, and important enduring lessons have never been officially recognised.

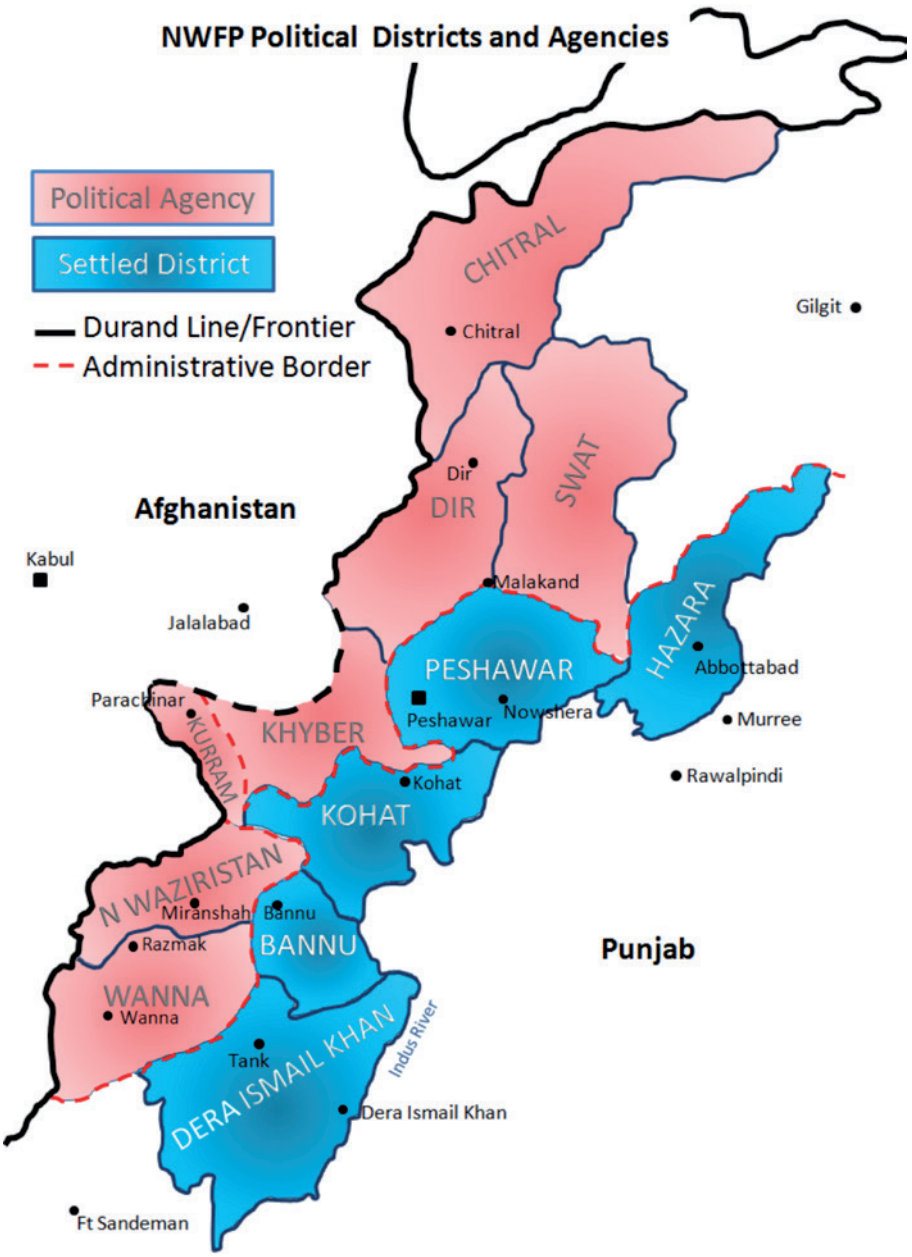
Operation	Date
Third Afghan War	1919
Waziristan	1919-1921
Pink's War	1925
Mohmand Disturbance	1927
Kabul Airlift	1928-29
Red Shirt-Inspired Incursions	1929
Chitral Relief	1932
Upper Mohmands Operation	1933
Bajaur Operations	1933
Loe Agra Campaign	1935
Mohmand Campaign	1935
Waziristan – The Fakir of Ipi's Insurgency	1936-39

Significant NWF inter-War Operations.

INDIA AND THE NWF ISSUE

The NWF was a vital Imperial border. Afghanistan formed the buffer zone between the competing Russian and British Empires' 'Great Game'. The barren, mountainous NWF also marked a cultural, political and economic discontinuity which generated long-lasting unrest within the fiercely independent, rifle-armed tribes. The British fixated on Frontier problems, from the threat of conventional Russian invasion (the 'major' threat) to irregular warfare by the indigenous Pathan tribesmen (the 'minor' threat).[3]

In 1893, the British coerced the Afghan Amir into delineating Afghan and British spheres of influence along the Durand Line, limiting Afghan trans-border meddling. The NWF Province developed into two very different areas. To the west of the 'Administrative Border' were the mountainous, loosely-controlled 'political agencies'; to the east were the settled, fully-administrated 'districts' of the fertile Indus plain.[4]



Initially, under the 'Modified Close Border Policy', the NWF agencies were unadministered. They had no police force and there was little attempt to enforce law. Instead, each agency's government-appointed Political Agent acted as a referee, settling disputes between the tribes. Intransigent tribes were traditionally dealt with by the Army. A typical punitive column comprised a reinforced brigade, whose vulnerable logistical tail varied from four to twelve miles in length as it wound through the mountain passes.[5] The hilltops had to be 'picquetted' by riflemen to suppress hostile tribesmen, slowing the columns to a mere eight miles a day off road. When a hostile village was captured, it was normally demolished, especially the prized wooden roof beams, watch-towers and water channels.[6]

The 1919 Third Afghan War shattered over two decades of relative tribal accord. The subsequent tribal uprisings lingered, on and off, until 1921. The tribes were ultimately subdued by garrisoning two brigade groups across the Administrative Border (one at Razmak and the other at Wana) and two more just east of the Administrative Border.[7] The ensuing Modified Forward Policy was a contentious compromise. Although occupation was expensive, it was forecast that future economies could be made by using the RAF.[8] The new policy required a new method of enforcement: 'control from within' rather than direct rule or the previous lawlessness.[9] The British leveraged the existing *malik* system of democratically elected tribal leaders. Under the principle of collective tribal responsibility, the *maliks* were held responsible for the actions of their tribesmen in return for Government stipends, even though they sometimes had little influence. If necessary, the two garrisons could quickly switch from 'watching' to deploying a mobile column, enabled by a new, costly network of roads.[10] Roads were very much a double edged sword; while they enabled trade and were 'the great carriers of civilisation' for some, the tribes perceived them as facilitating the movement of troops. As such, road building increased tribal unrest.[11]

Frontier strategy balanced three interconnected issues: the 'Great Game' with Russia; Afghan intrigue; and tribal unrest. Imperial strategy was periodically preoccupied with potential Russian advances through Afghanistan against India.[12] Britain went to extreme lengths to ensure that Afghanistan remained within its Imperial sphere of influence (and outside Russia's), resulting in the 1838, 1878 and 1919 Afghan Wars. Although the Russian revolution reduced the threat, it never disappeared. As late as 1926, Russia's occupation of an Afghan island generated Cabinet concern over Russia's expansionist intent, during which the UK Government observed that 'The Air forces[sic] in India are dangerously small'.[13] This prompted India's Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C(India)) to develop an ambitious plan to occupy much of Afghanistan should Russia invade Afghanistan. This 'Blue Plan' was formulated in isolation from London, yet relied on Imperial reinforcement from Britain. It was replaced in 1931 by the less-ambitious, defensive 'Pink Plan' which relied heavily on air power. This allotted six of RAF(India)'s eight squadrons to a strike force against Kabul to seize the initiative and 'force AFGHANISTAN

to sue for peace', with the remaining two squadrons supporting the Army.[14] This counters the perception that the RAF's NWF role was predominantly one of tribal control. Nonetheless, coordination of war plans between India and London remained poor. As late as 1939, London's Chiefs of Staff Committee noted that it had 'not been kept fully informed of India's plans for local defence' and recommended that plans should be subject to the closest consultation between India and the Committee for Imperial Defence.[15]

RAF SMALL WARS TACTICS[16]

Early RAF 'small wars' tactics were based largely on the application of overbearing force, akin to the Army's punitive column. The Air Staff stated publicly in 1921 that 'The attack with bombs and machine guns must be relentless and unremitting', and it was believed that the sharp application of lethal force would rapidly achieve tribal submission.[17] However, by 1922, the RAF's capstone doctrine manual, *CD22*, emphasised that force should only be resorted to when peaceful measures had failed and that women and children should be spared 'whenever practicable'.[18] By 1924, emerging doctrine recommended demonstration flights to overawe tribesmen and the disruption of daily routine to reduce the tribes' morale and force their compliance, rather than inflict casualties.[19] Unlike punitive columns, aircraft denied tribesmen both a fair, sporting fight and the prospect of acquiring loot.[20] The Air Staff also investigated and promoted the psychological and morale implications of bombarding 'semi-civilised' people and the civilising influence of air-delivered medical services.[21] Despite much ignorance-based rhetoric about indiscriminate bombing (exemplified by Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, as 'the bomb that falls from God knows where and lands on God knows what'), RAF(India) developed a thorough understanding of non-kinetic effect.[22] Squadron-strength demonstrations of aircraft, were often flown overhead negotiations between Political Agents and tribal leaders as shows of strength to increase the psychological pressure on the tribes to comply with Governmental demands.

By 1928, the Air Staff were openly publicising air power's ability to inflict intolerable inconvenience on tribes by driving them from their villages, using minimum force to coerce them into compliance.[23] This minimum force ethic aimed to rebut accusations about the brutality of air power. In 1930, the Air Staff highlighted the incompatibility of the air and land methods. Land operations endeavoured to make tribesmen stand and fight (in favour of their preferred guerrilla activities) where they were vulnerable to massed Western firepower. In contrast to this punitive land action, the 'air blockade' employed escalatory coercive techniques to disperse tribesmen: negotiation; leaflet dropping; demonstration flights; and the bombing of selective buildings to force tribesmen to abandon their villages. Expelled from their homes, it was theorised that tribesmen would move through moods of defiance, to squabbling, then boredom and helplessness, coercing them to concede to terms. At this point, the Government would fly in medical parties and defuse unexploded ordnance.[24] However, it was vital to determine

whether the RAF or Army would have primacy, to determine which strategy (coercive or punitive) would be employed.[25] However, this sophisticated Air Staff doctrine was largely ignored by India, where air power was normally directed by the Army.

Nonetheless, RAF(India) proved adept at employing a variety of weapons to achieve different effects. Practice bombs were used to encourage lingerers to leave their villages during air blockades, followed by small bombs to deter tribesmen from returning. Heavier bombs, followed by incendiaries, were used in punitive operations to cause physical destruction.[26] The Army often criticised the RAF for not causing sufficient damage.[27] Such comments miss the point, as the blockade's effect was moral, rather than physical. Nonetheless, air action could cause considerable damage to buildings when required and RAF(India) often appealed to the Army to suspend punitive bombing because there was nothing left to bomb.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN AIR POWER

India's military was swift to recognise the aircraft's 'vast possibilities and its future importance'. By 1914, an Indian Central Flying School had been established.[28] However, at the Great War's outbreak, all India's aircraft deployed overseas.[29] The next year, the Viceroy requested aircraft for the NWF as 'one of the most valuable' measures of mitigating his garrison's depleted strength.[30] Although this was initially rejected, 31 Squadron deployed to India in November 1915, followed by 114 Squadron in 1917.[31] In July 1918, the India Office (IO) requested two additional squadrons:[32]

> Recent frontier warfare has shown their extreme value... aeroplanes can bring about a decision in our favour on the frontier more quickly than anything else, and... save many lives, considerable bloodshed, and much money.[33]

Resource limited, the Air Staff was unable to divert any additional squadrons to India.[34] However, it is clear that Army officers recognised the aircraft's potential in both tribal control and deterring the Russian threat, especially when troops were in short supply.

The Armistice catalysed a *volte-face* from both the Air Ministry and IO. The Air Ministry recommended that India establish a twelve-squadron force, its thinly veiled agenda, as it faced the possibility of re-absorption into its parent Services, being to retain as much force structure as possible at India's expense.[35] The IO agreed to a smaller force, resulting in 20, 48, 99 and 97 Squadrons forming in India in 1919.[36] The same year, Trenchard proposed eight squadrons for India 'not as an addition to the military garrison but as a substitute for part of it'.[37] A few months later, 1 and 3 Squadrons formed in India with Sopwith Snipes, but the logistical burden resulted in many aircraft becoming permanently grounded. This first RAF call to substitute aircraft for troops rankled India's established military hierarchy and, without informing the Air Staff and much to their annoyance, the IO withdrew the Snipe squadrons.[38]

Flying magazine front cover, 20 August 1938, ©Time Inc. UK

The British had an almost romantic view of the 'noble Pathan savage'. In his 1938 article in the boys' aviation magazine, *Flying*, *Biggles* author W E Johns described recalcitrant hill tribesmen as 'dusky gentlemen' for whom conflict offered 'both business and pleasure' - 'very good fellows' who 'have occasionally expressed their displeasure with their knives on sundry prisoners' but whom also displayed 'a degree of chivalry seldom encountered in countries so-called civilised'.

In 1924, RAF(India) was allowed to conduct a 51-day independent operation to subdue the Abdur Rahman Khel Mahsuds.[39] Following the successful conclusion of what became known as Pink's War, the Secretary of State (SoS) for India asked the RAF to prepare a scheme for implementing air control on the NWF.[40] The Air Staff cautiously submitted a plan whereby seven squadrons would control the Frontier under an AOC, with two additional squadrons in reserve.[41] Trenchard warned that this paper was likely to generate 'a great deal of controversy with the Army'.[42] This proved correct. The Indian Army's Deputy Chief of the General Staff (CGS(India)), besmirched Pink's War: 'the RAF have the sublime impertinence to try and claim all the credit because they squashed a few villages and inflicted eleven casualties'.[43] This focus on casualties indicates he did not appreciate the 'minimum force' nature of the air blockade, viewing it as an airborne version of a punitive expedition.

The 1928/29 Kabul Airlift, when 586 diplomatic staff were evacuated from the besieged British Legation during an Afghan civil war, was an early demonstration of the strategic influence of air mobility. The RAF and politicians drew significant lessons.[44] SoS(Air) concluded: 'the Air Force became the favourite in the family'; aircraft had proven to be 'an instrument of real help and benefit to the British Empire and to humanity at large'.[45] Air power was temporarily finding favour and, in 1929, 11(B) and 39(B) Squadrons deployed to India with their long-awaited Westland Wapitis, finally bringing RAF(India)'s strength to the long-envisaged eight squadrons. However, the enthusiasm appears to have been largely amongst airmen and politicians, as the Kabul airlift went unmentioned in the GoI's *Official History*.

The Air Ministry's most contentious inter-War proposal was Trenchard's 1929 'Swansong'. Based on nearly eight years' RAF experience of air control, it recommended the widespread substitution of troops by aircraft in 'semi-civilised' Imperial regions. As Slessor reflected, 'By far the most drastic proposals, for which we foresaw would meet with the heaviest opposition, concerned India'.[46] Trenchard proposed substituting five or six squadrons for twenty-five-to-thirty infantry battalions and ten artillery batteries, with the Frontier commanded by an AOC reporting to the GoI, saving £2 million annually.[47] It is likely that, in his twilight as Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Trenchard saw this as 'unfinished business'. Slessor reflected:

> This paper fairly took the gloves off and declared unequivocally the belief of the Air Staff that real economies with at least no less efficacy could be secured by the substitution of Air Forces for other arms over a very wide field.[48]

The other Services reacted aggressively. SoS(War) declared himself in complete disagreement and both the Admiralty and War Office questioned the need for a separate air force, something which was only quashed at Prime Ministerial level.[49] This third formal proposal for NWF substitution found no traction with C-in-C(India) and undermined

Army-RAF relations until at least 1935. With hindsight, the staffing of Trenchard's Swansong was less than ideal. Although its drafters had Army backgrounds, they had not consulted the War Office or India's General Staff (GS(India)), leaving their proposal open to tactical criticism. At the strategic level, Trenchard published his proposal as a Cabinet Paper, circumventing and annoying London's Chiefs of Staff Committee, whom he reluctantly informed only the day before. Trenchard's timing was also poor. Published as he left office, when he could no longer defend or promote it, he left his successor, Salmond, with the dilemma of either pursuing the proposal under great inter-Service criticism, or dropping it and risking criticism from Trenchard's loyal staff.[50] Furthermore, India had consistently recognized air power's utility as a force multiplier when troops were in short supply.[51] Therefore, if Trenchard's proposals had been submitted at a time when the Indian Army was hard-pressed, it may have found more traction.

Civil unrest associated with the arrest of Peshawar-based 'Red Shirt' ringleaders during April 1930 brought the relatively benign late-1920s Frontier period to an end.[52] A series of *lashkars* of armed tribesmen crossed the Administrative Border heading towards Peshawar. The subsequent military action revealed a lack of coherent strategy over the control and co-ordination of land and air power. During this unrest, the Chief Commissioner retained operational control, with the Army and RAF commanders advising him and acting independently, attracting criticism from several Army officers.[53] Aircraft were initially constrained to targeting the *lashkars* alone, which merely fixed the tribesmen in caves. However, when the GoI finally sanctioned targeting the leader's villages to 'humanely interrupt tribal life and cause a nuisance' under the auspices of collective responsibility, many *lashkar-walas* immediately dispersed.[54] Nonetheless, political indecisiveness often complicated military affairs, as demonstrated in June 1930 when the Chief Commissioner forbad air action against a 700-strong *lashkar* until it had reached the outskirts of Peshawar.[55] Although subsequent air action inflicted heavy casualties, aircraft tended to disperse the *lashkar* into small bodies, denying the Army the opportunity to inflict a decisive defeat and complicating subsequent co-operative air-land action.[56] This demonstrates the incongruent characteristics of air and land power; air action tended to disperse hostiles, thwarting Western land-based firepower that was optimised against massed formations. The RAF and Army drew different conclusions. To the RAF, difficulties in targeting *lashkars* emphasised the importance of blockading villages, something the Politicals supported.[57] The War Office commissioned a critique aimed at discrediting air power's role, probably to undermine Trenchard's recent Swansong, describing the 'punitive' bombing of villages as 'distasteful to all concerned'.[58] In contrast, the GS(India) noted the lack of serious damage to villages, recommending 'prolonged bombing with the heaviest types of bombs'.[59] The War Office's incorrect use of the term 'punitive' and the GS(India)'s preoccupation with physical damage indicates that they failed to appreciate the air method's coercive, minimum-force nature.

The GoI and Army's inconsistent strategy in the application of air power during a series

of short punitive campaigns in the early 1930s and, in particular, the 1933 Bajaur operation, was criticised both by London's Air Staff and India's Legislative Assembly.[60] At the time, the action was defended by the Indian Army Department's Secretary on the grounds of its economy, low casualties and material damage. However, in 1935, C-in-C(India) retrospectively criticised the operation, attempting to dissociate the Army from this action and leaving the RAF's reputation tarnished.[61]

The appointment of Sir Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt as AOC(India) in March 1935 marked a watershed for in-theatre Army-RAF relations. Having previously been AOC Iraq and Deputy CAS, he was well-suited for this post. He cultivated improved relations with the Viceroy and C-in-C(India) and, whilst against substitution, he appreciated that air action was liable to be met on all sides by bias and prejudice. Similarly, when Slessor arrived as OC 3(Indian) Wing at Quetta from Camberley the same year, he swiftly focussed on developing army co-operation tactics, despite believing that 'in nine cases out of ten, these tribal disturbances... could best be dealt with by... the Air Method'.[62] Slessor soon had the opportunity to practice his tactics with the advent of the 1936-39 Waziristan Campaign.

Operations in the later 1930s revolved around the Fakir of Ipi's insurgency in Waziristan which ultimately involved 61,000 Imperial troops and almost all RAF(India)'s squadrons.[63] Although air support was initially undervalued, its contribution quickly became critical. In the opening gambit, only a single flight of aircraft had been allotted to support two, 15-mile separated columns, and were forbidden from engaging hostile tribesmen, even in self defence, unless directed by the columns.[64] Despite initial issues, the need for operational success during the subsequent escalating counter-insurgency campaign led to good air-land integration at the tactical level, as noted by several authors.[65] Generally, the Army's General Officer Commanding (GOC) was vested with full control of land and air operations, while responsibility for air operations was devolved to OC 1(Indian) Group, side-lining AOC(India). As a result, even when aircraft became the predominant striking element after regular Army units became fixed on defensive road protection duties in early 1937, independent air action was generally restricted to punitive bombing or 'proscription' (whereby an area was prohibited to tribesmen, who were liable to attack if detected). Nonetheless, the politicians' strategy nested comfortably with air power. To stabilise unrest, political pressure was first applied on the *maliks*, followed by progressive punitive and proscriptive air action.[66] These operations were 'punitive' in that, although warnings were always dropped at least 48 hours beforehand, the notices lacked terms of compliance; instead, tribesmen were merely informed that bombing would commence, so could not be coerced into compliance, as there were no terms to comply with.

Following the ambushing of forty-nine lorries in the Shahur Tangi defile in April 1937, most resupply convoys were suspended, leaving the Wana garrison reliant on resupply by the Bomber Transport Flight, demonstrating the use of air transport as a force protection measure.[67] In punishment for the Dargai Sar ambush, six villages were

proscribed or punitively bombed for a month.[68] The Air Staff expressed caution that this 'air proscription without terms' would 'never be permitted by an A.O.C.' and might attract accusations of inhumanity.[69] It did. The German press highlighted Britain's barbaric bombing of Crown citizens.[70]

Lahore's Bomber Transport Flight's expansion to squadron strength was frequently discussed but never funded.[71] Its aircraft could not only transport troops and cargo, but could also loiter for long periods, armed with a variety of bombs. In May 1937, the Flight enabled a daring night troop advance through the Iblanke Pass which outflanked and decisively defeated the Fakir of Ipi's *lashkars*, parachuting rations the next morning to the lightly-equipped troops.[72] Following this joint air-land action, many tribesmen left Ipi's cause and large-scale fighting ceased. Thereafter, the Fakir reverted to subversion and terrorism rather than organised military resistance.[73] Convoys recommenced, but the permanent road picquetting tied-up large numbers of troops, requiring army co-operation aircraft to escort trains.[74]

The improving in-theatre situation abated neither the Army's caution over air power's decisiveness nor the Air Staff's disapproval of the Army's air strategy. The punitive destruction of four insurgent villages in July 1937 led to the tribe conceding.[75] Nonetheless, the Army refused to accept their final terms until a column visited the area.[76] The Air Staff's Indian liaison officer described the operation as 'curious':

> It would be difficult to imagine more confused action than this. Constant suspensions of operations took place, there was no true air blockade & the aims & terms were constantly changing.[77]

In contrast, C-in-C(India) noted that 'close and cordial relations between the land and air forces were a marked feature of the campaign'.[78] Thus, while the imperatives of combat were forging closer in-theatre tactical co-operation, the Air Staff remained steadfast in advocating pure RAF doctrine, despite the Army's increasing use of bombing as their primary tactic. In particular, the Army's heavy punitive bombing contrasted with the Air Staff's 'minimum force' doctrine.[79]

During 1938, insurgents increasingly avoided direct confrontation, instead relying on improvised explosive devices against roads, railways, parade grounds and airfields, even damaging a taxiing aircraft at Miranshah.[80] The RAF increasingly became the main offensive weapon.[81] This was, in effect, Army-imposed substitution driven by troop shortages, albeit with air power directed by Army commanders in an unsophisticated, reactive, punitive manner in contrast to the Air Staff's doctrine designed for independent, coercive operations to control tribal behaviour. The Air Staff noted that 'Until control of air operations in India is made over to an Air Staff, misuse of aircraft will continue'.[82]

Over 1938's summer, air operations surged as a multitude of areas were proscribed to deter the Fakir, using a new locally-developed tactic termed 'tactical air proscription'.[83] The Air Staff described this as 'an objectionable form of air action' because it neither imposed terms nor invoked tribal responsibility, concluding that 'trouble appears to be more widespread than ever... an alteration in frontier policy is urgent'.[84] These operations illustrated that, despite effective air-land co-operation and tactical successes, the effect of both punitive columns and aerial proscription was temporary and required constant engagement to counter insurgent activity.

The harassment of Ipi required 300% more sorties in Spring 1939 than the previous year.[85] The GoI simultaneously imposed a successful, forty-three-day air, ration and financial 'blockade' on the transgressing Madda Khel tribe.[86] In London, the Air Staff's new India desk officer, just returned from India, described the blockade as 'an epoch making event so far as air power in India is concerned'.[87] Conceptually, the Madda Khel operation was a stepping-stone between the Army's policy of purely punitive proscription and the Air Staff's endorsed doctrine of coercive air blockading, differing only in that the terms were somewhat vague. By April 1939, the constant aerial harassment and action against Ipi's supporting tribes had nullified his influence, leaving the tribes wanting peace and allowing Waziristan aircraft strength to reduce to peacetime levels.[88] After two years of Army control, the Governor re-assumed political control of Waziristan. Although low-intensity air operations continued, by this stage the Fakir and his supporters were conditioned to react to leaflet-dropping by fleeing, making them unwelcome lodgers to the local tribes, a response acquired through the experience of previous, repetitive harassment.[89]

In an epilogue to the inter-War period, following the partition of India, Pakistan adopted the recommendations of a 1944 Frontier Commission, withdrawing all regular forces from the tribal agencies.[90] Thereafter, effective security was provided by irregular forces backed by the Pakistan Air Force until the events of 9/11 changed the paradigm.[91] This was, in effect, the implementation of the Modified Close Border Policy that India had abandoned almost three decades previously.

FUNDING IMPLICATIONS - THE COST OF MONEY...

Although India has been called the 'jewel of the Empire', the trade slump and exchange rate crash that followed the First World War placed India in financial crisis. Defence consumed over 51% of India's 1920-21 budget, largely on the NWF, a trend that continued until the Second World War.[92] Yet, although the costly Modified Forward Policy had been predicated on anticipated savings from the introduction of air power, and despite the demonstrable savings resulting from the implementation of air control in Iraq and Aden, air power's maximum potential was never realised on the Frontier.

Throughout the inter-War period, Britain and India clashed over India's Imperial role. Britain viewed India's forces as a strategic reserve for Imperial defence. The GoI,

constrained by increasing nationalism, financial austerity and NWF unrest, passed the 1919 Government of India Act which placed India's defence as the Army's priority.[93] In the same year, Churchill announced that 'The first duty of the Royal Air Force is to garrison the British Empire' adding, pivotally, that the cost of the Indian squadrons would be borne by India.[94] This, *de facto*, gave India complete control over RAF(India), but with little money to support it.

As a result, severe cuts were made in the Indian air budget with an embargo on spares, causing a deteriorating serviceability rate and a concomitant impact on RAF morale; towards the close of 1921, 'the Royal Air Force in India almost ceased to exist as a fighting service'.[95] Pressure from a national press campaign, House of Commons questions, and Air Staff protestations resulted in an in-theatre review by Air Vice-Marshal Jack Salmond.[96] Salmond received scant, if any, cooperation from the Indian Army, suspecting C-in-C(India) to be the perpetrator, and although the embargo was lifted, aircraft serviceability only improved marginally.[97]

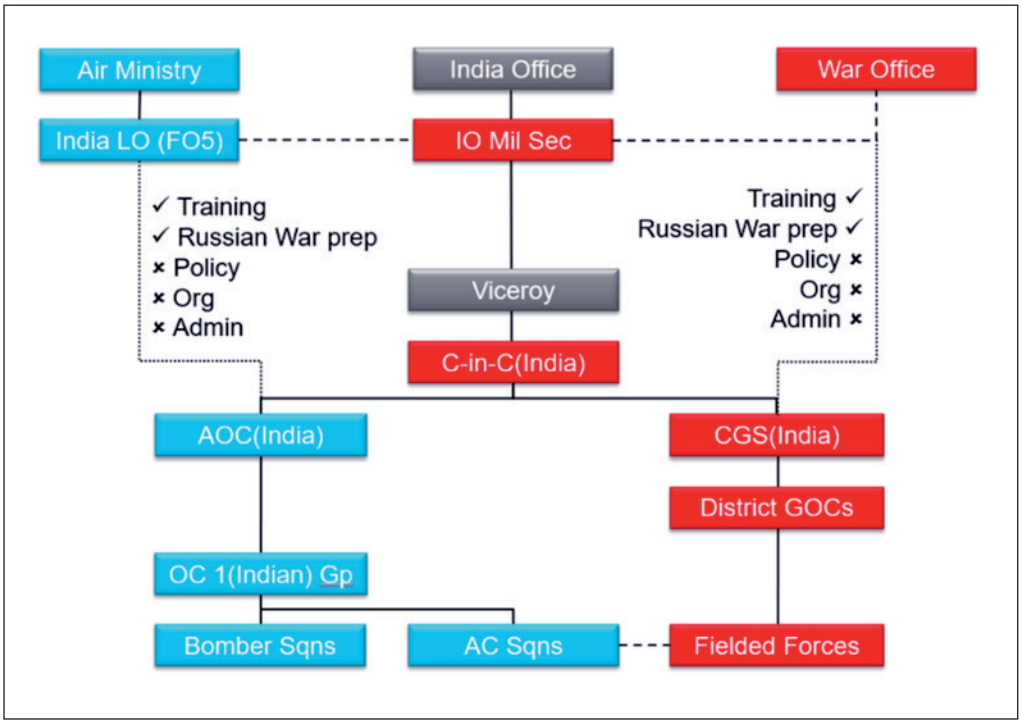
Nonetheless, the Air Staffs in both London and India were wary of RAF(India)'s increasingly obsolescent equipment and inability to counter the Russian threat. London's Defence of India Sub-Committee's 1928 plan for war against a Russian invasion of Afghanistan relied on the assumption that RAF(India)'s squadrons would be modernised. This was partially reconciled by the 1933 Garran Tribunal which made India responsible for internal security while Britain provided £1.5 million/year towards maintaining an Imperial Reserve. Nonetheless, the Sub-Committee emphasised in 1934 that RAF(India)'s essential re-equipment had not happened and that 'types should be selected more with a view to their employment against long range targets in the Central Asian military district than to meet the immediate requirements of frontier operations'. Both the Air Ministry and AOC(India) agreed the next year that RAF(India)'s aircraft were incapable of supporting India's contingency plans against a Russian invasion.[98] By 1938, the GoI had finally recognised the growing Japanese threat but declared to the IO that it was unable to bear the cost of military modernisation;[99] in particular, India stated that the need for modern aircraft 'may well be said to take precedence over all other proposals'.[100] The Air Staff, however, noted that 'this view is not reflected in the [RAF's 4.7%] apportionment of [India's] Defence Budget, nor can I see any possibility of this situation being remedied until the R.A.F. vote ceases to be filtered by the Commander-in-Chief'.[101] Furthermore, CAS (Newall), highlighted RAF(India)'s inability to meet its Imperial commitment to provide two squadrons for the defence of Singapore and four for the Middle East.[102] Interestingly, when Newall suggested that London's Joint Planning Committee should examine India's Imperial role, the War Office objected because the Committee's Naval member might raise the issue of why the Indian Navy was only allocated 1% of India's defence budget.[103] The Air Ministry unsuccessfully proposed directly administrating the Indian squadrons as an 'agency', with an RAF-funded independent RAF(India) Command, an RAF Army Co-operation Wing (funded by

the RAF, but subsidised by the GoI) and a GoI-funded Indian Air Force Wing, the latter two dedicated to India's defence.[104] AOC(India) highlighted that the Forward Policy's requirement for ever-increasing military penetration of the tribal areas and its concomitant increased military expenditure were inconsistent with the financial savings required by the GoI and that the increased use of air power was the solution.[105] Unknown to the Air Ministry, C-in-C(India) commissioned an internal review chaired by Auchinleck, Deputy CGS(India), because 'the Army in India has remained virtually unchanged since the end of the Great War' and 'must be rescued from obsolescence'.[106] Auchinleck's 1938 Modernization Committee lacked any RAF representation yet suggested a drastic reduction in RAF(India)'s strength to fund India's armies. CAS subsequently commented that 'It is astonishing... that quite so narrow a view should have emanated even from so antiquated a military edifice as Army H.Q., Delhi'.[107] After much debate and several reviews, the British Government agreed in 1938 to fund the cost of modernising RAF(India)'s four bomber squadrons, but not the cost of updating India's aerodromes.[108] Nevertheless, C-in-C(India) procrastinated over lengthening India's runways to accommodate the new aircraft. India's defence was still being discussed in Cabinet as late as July 1939, but world events swiftly overtook the modernization plans. Within a month, the Cabinet had authorised the dispatch of two of India's NWF Bomber squadrons to Singapore and dispersed the remaining squadrons into coastal defence flights.[109]

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The 1919 decision that the GoI should fund RAF(India) resulted in command and control arrangements that were dysfunctional from an RAF and Imperial perspective. India lacked London's tri-service coordination committees, such as the Committee for Imperial Defence (CID). Furthermore, due to India's largely independent status, the UK-based defence committees had almost no influence over India; even the CID's Defence of India Sub-Committee, established in 1927, had no remit to examine India's internal defence.[110] Constitutionally, responsibility for the defence of India rose up from C-in-C(India) to the Viceroy and SoS(India) in London to the British Government.[111] However, when a defence issue could not be resolved within India and was raised to Cabinet level, it was often simply referred back to the Viceroy, as happened in 1939, for example, when the CID highlighted India's lack of bomber squadrons and AOC(India)'s limited access to the Viceroy.[112] London's lack of influence was partially due to the growing 'Indianization' of India's Legislative Assembly, which made the IO and GoI increasingly sensitive to anything that could be interpreted as dictation from London.[113] Indeed, a senior IO official commented in 1938 that 'every Secretary of State for India has the greatest difficulty in practice in imposing his views on defence on the Viceroy and Government of India'.[114] This situation placed C-in-C(India) - the Viceroy's *de facto* minister for defence - in a uniquely pivotal and autonomous position. As the IO, rather than the Air Ministry or the War Office, were responsible for India's defence, the Air Ministry had to pass any concerns over the employment of Indian air power to the IO who would then pass it down through the Viceroy to C-in-C(India). Indeed, correspondence between the

Air Ministry and RAF(India) was strictly limited to intelligence, training and preparation for war, with the IO copied-in; direct correspondence concerning RAF(India) policy, organisation and administration was specifically prohibited.[115] This had a catastrophic impact, as the Air Ministry had to rely on AOC(India)'s monthly reports to C-in-C(India) to gain an understanding on how India's squadrons were being employed, the issues they faced and the degree of success they achieved. As these monthly reports were written by AOC(India) for his superior, rather than the Air Staff, they rarely criticised the Indian chain of command.



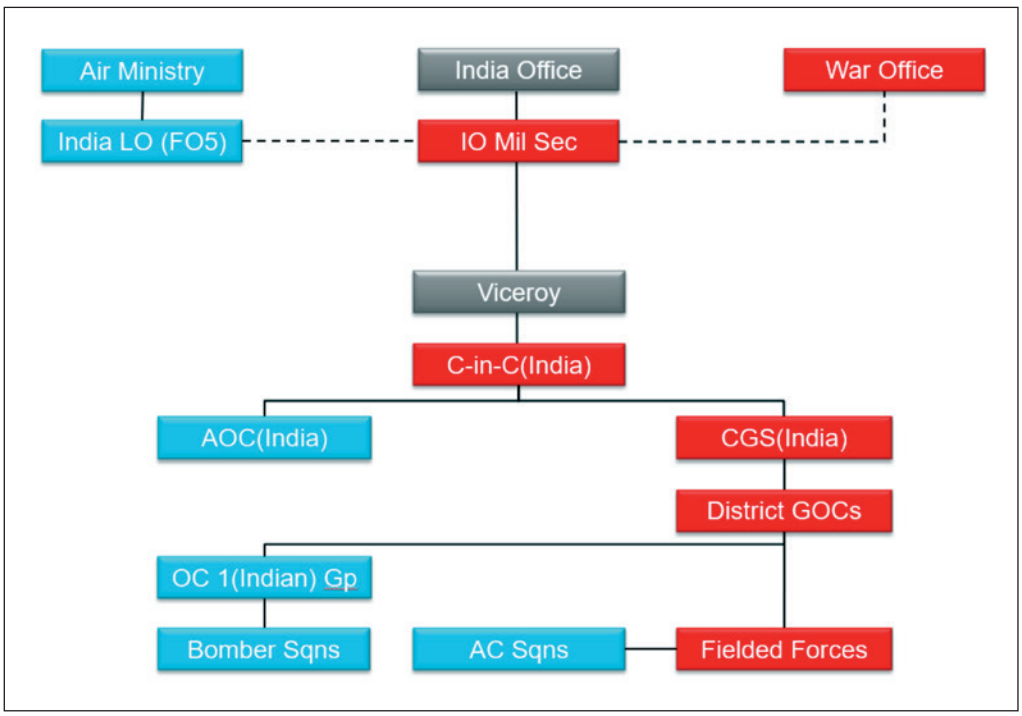
Liaison between the UK and RAF(India).

Furthermore, the Air Staff often lacked an understanding of the context of NWF operations, which sometimes led them to draw incorrect lessons from AOC(India)'s reports. For example, on his return from India to the Air Ministry in 1937, Group Captain Slessor criticised the Air Staff's Indian liaison officer for describing the support of Army columns as 'wasted effort & misemployment of aircraft'.[116] Another enduring issue was AOC(India)'s lack of direct access to the Viceroy. Trenchard first raised the issue through SoS(Air) in 1921, something which the IO and Viceroy opined was 'entirely opposed to constitutional practice'.[117] In 1922, SoS(Air) recommended that AOC(India) be given the right of access to both the Viceroy and the Air Ministry, as was the case with CGS(India) and the War Office.[118] In his 1922 report on the state of RAF(India), Salmond highlighted RAF(India)'s need for a separate, independent budget, informing the Viceroy that:

> In every part of the world, with the exception of India, the recognition of the Royal Air Force as a separate service, the junior indeed but "inter-pares" of the three fighting services, is complete : in India I doubt if all the members of Your Excellency's Council are even aware that such is the fact.[119]

It was eventually agreed that AOC(India) could access the Viceroy, but only if C-in-C (India) vetoed an air submission, something the British Cabinet later commented 'was likely to lead to friction'.[120] Indeed, as late as 1937, the issue had not been fully resolved, despite AOC(India) having finally been recognised as an ex-officio member of C-in-C(India)'s Military Council.[121] However, the Air Staff sometimes drew the wrong conclusions due to lack of information; in 1938, CAS was about to officially complain about RAF(India)'s lack of latitude to apply appropriate air power when the Acting AOC(India) had to assure him that the facts 'do not warrant a protest', assuring him that he had access to C-in-C(India) and CGS(India) and had been consulted 'on all material occasions', despite occasional over-rulings by the Political Authorities.[122]

Another point of friction with the command and control of Indian air power arose at the tactical level. While Army Co-operation squadrons were allocated to the GOCs on a day-to-day basis, Bomber squadron remained under AOC(India)'s control. However, during joint Army/RAF operations, Bomber squadrons were often allocated under the



RAF(India) operational Air command and control.

direct control of the local Army commander, side-lining RAF commanders who often complained about their misemployment. For example, during the biennial relief of the Chitral garrison in 1932, GOC Peshawar directed that the villages along the route that were suspected as having sniped at the Army column should be heavily bombed. The RAF Group and Wing Commanders objected strongly, recording that 'It was not apparent to [the GOC] that, the more you bomb a target the harder it is to damage it'.[123] RAF(India) was subsequently criticised for the cost of this operation, something AOC(India) subsequently rebutted by highlighting the GOC's role.[124] The Indian Army's habit of misdirecting the use of air power, and then subsequently criticising the RAF for its actions, was an enduring theme through the inter-War years.

CHALLENGES TO THE APPLICATION OF AIR POWER

During the inter-War years, the Air Staff consistently thought that 'air forces have been grossly mishandled under military control' due to 'the ignorance and gross prejudice of senior military officers'.[125] This was set against the background of financial austerity and international calls for the abolition of aerial bombing, with pressure groups berating that 'there is to most of us something peculiarly revolting in reprisals from the air'.[126] Most parties in India appreciated the utility of air power; the enduring disagreement revolved around who should control it. Nevertheless, the RAF had to rebut consistent Army charges that aircraft generated more tribal resentment than punitive columns.[127] From the early 1920s, the Viceroy recognised that aircraft could be readily misused by political officers, something that was mitigated by controlling air power centrally.[128]

One of the multi-faceted NWF paradoxes concerned the speed of decision making. Despite speed being a primary characteristic of air power (especially compared with the time taken to organise and deploy an Army punitive column), its agility was constrained on the NWF. For example, the need to avoid accusations of brutality drove Air Staff doctrine towards a minimum-force ethic. The resulting air blockade tactic took time to coerce the population into compliance, something that drew criticism from C-in-C(India) after Pink's War, who thought that joint action would have shortened the operation.[129]

RAF(India)'s subordination under C-in-C(India) rankled the Air Staff. The Air Ministry wanted to demonstrate a unique, independent capability, thereby justifying the RAF's continued existence as an independent Service. Conversely, the Indian Armies viewed air power as an auxiliary to support their traditional operations. CGS(India), for example, told AOC(India) in 1937 that 'all operations on the Frontier are combined operations and that the Army as predominant partner must always be in control', an attitude which compromised the post-1935 improving in-theatre inter-Service relations.[130] Under the in-theatre hegemony, the RAF often felt disempowered and misemployed by Army commanders who did not understand air power.[131] While the conservative Indian hierarchy certainly showed hubris towards the RAF, it also felt threatened by the Air

Staff's repetitive calls for substitution, fearing a loss of status. The Air Staff often failed to fully appreciate the context of NWF operations; starved of information by restrictions on Indian correspondence and viewing the theatre from an air perspective, they sometimes drew wrong conclusions and made proposals that were open to criticism. The dysfunctional communications between the Air Ministry and India hampered mutual understanding and coordination. Much of this could have been resolved if the Air Staff's liaison officer had been based in the IO, alongside the IO's Military Secretary.

Another point of friction was the Army's apparent reluctance to publicise RAF exploits. Here was another paradox. The Air Staff had developed what they considered to be an ethically defensible, minimum-force doctrine that they actively publicised. In contrast, under Indian Army direction, air power was generally applied punitively, often with maximum lethality. The Indian authorities often baulked at publicising such action and, when scrutinised, the Army sometimes tried to dissociate themselves from the outcome. This frustrated RAF personnel, who saw air power being misdirected and were then blamed for the outcome.

Personality played a significant part in policy. Some C-in-C(India)s were particularly sensitive about outside advice. In 1931, C-in-C(India) complained personally to the Viceroy on a Sunday because the Air Staff had approached the IO about his application of air power. The Viceroy wrote to SoS(Air) explaining that only the CID could advise the GoI, a statement that even the IO thought went 'too far'.[132] Certainly, the relationship at that time between C-in-C(India) and AOC(India) was not constructive.[133] Similarly, Trenchard's poorly-timed 1929 Swansong soured relations until a new AOC(India) arrived in 1935; Ludlow-Hewitt built a pragmatic, conciliatory relationship with his Army colleagues, as did Slessor as OC 1(Indian) Wing. This markedly improved Indian inter-Service relations, albeit forged by the necessity of combat with the Fakir of Ipi.

The Army consistently criticised the air method for its inability to discriminate between the guilty and their women and children, stating that it was 'aimed against the whole population'.[134] The RAF consistently argued from 1924 that the aim of the air blockade was not to cause casualties, but to dislocate daily life using the minimum force necessary. Furthermore, warning notices minimised the risk of women and children remaining in a village while it was bombed. The RAF unswervingly contended that aircraft caused less casualties to both sides than land operations.[135]

Public opinion also influenced the IO to restrict offensive action. Most UK complaints came from workers' parties, women's organisations and peace groups, who were readily dismissed. Nonetheless, they highlighted the perceived hypocrisy concerning Britain's 1937 criticism of air action by the Italians in Abyssinia and Spanish Fascists while the RAF bombed Crown subjects on the NWF.[136] The Air Staff considered the IO to be overly sensitive to adverse press coverage and went to lengths to investigate and rebut

criticism, which was often based on hearsay rather than fact.[137] Nevertheless, the Air Council and War Office did censor tribal casualties during Pink's War.[138]

The IO was also sensitive to the diplomatic ramification of bombing. Although the Air Staff took pains to explain their position, many diplomatic enquiries were directed at the IO who, lacking an in-house air expert, often failed to appreciate the intricacies of coercive air power. Although calls by the international community for the abolition of bombing at the 1932 Geneva World Disarmament Conference for the abolition of bombing ultimately came to nothing, they nevertheless increased the scrutiny on NWF air operations, as did the growing influence of both Axis anti-colonial propaganda and American idealism in the late 1930s.

In India, the Government often shied from using coercive aerial methods, as this required the early determination of terms of compliance, which reduced the diplomatic freedom of action; air power could be applied more quickly than the GoI could define their terms. Additionally, once defined, terms could become a yardstick of success, and any softening of the GoI's stance risked losing face with the tribes. In contrast, punitive air action had no associated terms and could be stopped at any time. Ever increasing scrutiny by Indian political parties, the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Indian press all restricted the latitude for using offensive air power. This was in contrast to areas such as Aden where there was less external oversight and the AOC had more freedom to employ air power.[139]

IMPLICATIONS AND LEGACIES

Unsurprisingly, three years of intense air-to-ground warfare in the late 1930s influenced subsequent RAF doctrine. Unfortunately, many NWF lessons did not translate well into European peer-on-peer warfare and the RAF's Second World War Strategic Bomber Campaign. The lack of an air threat on the Frontier reinforced the belief that 'the bomber will always get through'; it allowed bombers to aim their weapons without having to manoeuvre to evade fighters or effective ground fire, while minimising the effects of crosswind. Furthermore, the refinement of precision bombing was stymied by the lack of necessity – RAF(India) targeted villages because they were large enough to be susceptible to the available technology and, since operations were generally successful, there was little incentive for improvement. These successes, with bombs being aimed by locally-trained ground crew acting as part-time 'air gunners', obscured the need for specialist bomb aimers. All these factors allowed simple, unstabilised bomb sights to produce satisfactory results. Furthermore, as Government forces generally held the initiative in all but ambushes, operations could be largely confined to daylight and good weather. This downplayed the importance of precision navigation, especially at night. Furthermore, as the only two operations where the 'aerial method' of coercive, independent air power was allowed to be used were deemed to be successful, this reinforced the belief in the ability of bombing to decisively influence a population.

The Second World War swiftly illustrated the vulnerability of bombers to high-performance fighters, largely denying daylight operations. The lack of investment in night navigation and the absence of a stabilised bombsight manned by specialist bomb aimers significantly reduced bombing accuracy. This drove Bomber Command into night area bombing against a population who proved to be resilient against coercive bombardment. India's airmen should not be blamed for this. They achieved impressive results with the limited tools at their disposal during a time of financial austerity, while simultaneously balancing the Air Ministry's formal doctrine against local tactics dictated by the Army, all set against the exigencies of combined air-land insurgent warfare. However, their results, viewed in London through the lens of poor inter-theatre communications which denied an understanding of the NWF context, merely reinforced the Air Staff's 'matter of faith' belief about the effectiveness of coercive bombing.[140]

While these factors were similar across most Imperial regions outside Europe, the intensity of the long campaign against the Fakir of Ipi provided substantial evidence and concomitant influence. Had inter-Service relations been improved by embedding the Air Staff's Indian liaison office within the India Office, the invaluable opportunity to thoroughly test independent air power prior to the Second World War might not have been squandered.

NOTES

[1] From 1929, RAF(India) had eight squadrons and a Bomber-Transport Flight, contrasted with four in Middle East Command, one in Transjordan, six in Iraq and one in Aden (see *The Monthly Air Force List*, (London: HMSO, 1929)).

[2] Although 'air control' is a broad term, it technically referred to a system of control whereby the Air Ministry assumed responsibility for the defence or internal security of a particular region under an Air Officer Commanding (AOC)-in-Chief. When air control was implemented in Iraq in 1922, the cost of garrisoning the country dropped from £20-million in 1922 to under £2-million in 1928. See D J P Waldie, "Relations Between the Army and the Royal Air Force, 1918-1939" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, King's College London (University of London), 1980), 205.

[3] The archaic term 'Pathan', rather than 'Pashtun' is used throughout this article to describe the Pashto-speaking people of the region, as this is the term used in the primary sources of the period.

[4] Olaf K Caroe, *The Pathans - 550 BC - AD 1957* (London: MacMillan & Co Ltd, 1958), 463; Andrew M Roe, *Waging War in Waziristan - The British Struggle in the Land of Bin Laden, 1849-1947* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 3.

[5] General Sir Andrew Skeen, *Lessons in Imperial Rule: Instructions for British Infantrymen on the Indian Frontier* (London: Frontline Books, 2008), 26. The punitive column used in the 1929 Staff College Mountain Warfare exercise required 568 mules, 20 ponies and 14 camels (see Army Staff College, Camberley, "Mountain Warfare Exercise," *Senior Division Directing Staff Lecture Notes* (1929): File 26, Annex A).

[6] Camberley Army Staff College, "Mountain Staff Tour, DS Notes on Exercise No 3," *Senior Division Directing Staff Lecture Notes* (1923); Army Staff College, "North West Frontier Warfare VI: L of C Defence, Permanent Piquets, Destruction of Villages. Future Operations", paragraph 16; AIR 23/5370, India Defence Department, *Frontier Warfare - India (Army and RAF)*, 1939, 169-72.
[7] Christian Tripodi, *Edge of Empire: The British Political Officer and the Tribal Administration of the North-West Frontier, 1877-1947* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 133.
[8] See Brandon D. Marsh, "Ramparts of Empire: India's North-West Frontier and British Imperialism, 1919-1947" (University of Texas at Austin, 2009), 41-48. With defence already consuming 59% of Indian central expenditure, the Viceroy's Finance Member campaigned for the evacuation of Waziristan because India was on the verge of bankruptcy and garrisoning the tribal agencies was unaffordable (see Marsh, "Ramparts of Empire", 37-42).
[9] Lt Col Charles E Bruce, *Waziristan, 1936-1937: The Problems of the North-West Frontiers of India and their Solutions* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd, 1938), 4. The Modified Forward Policy was also known as the 'watch and ward' policy.
[10] Brig D E Taunton in G Moore, *Just as Good as the Rest: a British Battalion in the Faqir of Ipi's War, Indian NWF, 1936-37* (Huntingdon: published privately by the author, 1981), 3.
[11] J Coatman, *Years of Destiny: India 1926-1932* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), 130; Bruce, *Waziristan, 1936-1937*.
[12] Not everyone recognised the Russian threat; in 1877, Perry observed: 'A Russian statesman would laugh at one in the face if the possibility was suggested of their occupying Afghanistan' (see IOR/L/PS/18/A17, Sir E Perry, *Memo commenting on 'Political Despatch to India No 119'*, 1 August 1877).
[13] CAB 23/53/19, *Cabinet Conclusion 49 (26) 8: Afghanistan*, 30 July 1926, 10. See also: CAB 24/180/15, Earl of Birkenhead, *Cabinet Paper 246(26): Afghanistan*, 17 June 1926, CAB 6/5, Earl of Birkenhead, *Afghanistan (CID 142-D)*, 17 June 1926, CAB 6/5, CID Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee, *Afghanistan (CID 143-D)*, 12 July 1926; and CAB 6/5, Earl of Birkenhead, *Afghanistan - Second (Interim) Report (CID 145-D)*, 29 July 1926, 8.
[14] IOR/L/MIL/17/14/21/4, Air Staff (India), *Pink Plan - Plan of Operations in the Event of War with Afghanistan:* Sections I & II - Appreciation and Plan, 1, 5; Ibid., Part XI - RAF 1933, 5.
[15] CAB 24/278/22, *CID Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee Report 874: Report of the Expert Committee on the Defence of India, 1938-39*, 12 May 1939, 2, 4, 20.
[16] For an overview, see A J C Walters, "Air Control: Past, Present, Future?", *RAF Air Power Review* Vol. 8, No. 4 (2005).
[17] Wg Cdr John A Chamier, "The Use of the Air Force for Replacing Military Garrisons", *JRUSI* LXVI, No. 462 (1921), 209-210, 213.
[18] Air Council, *CD 22: Operations Manual, RAF* (London: Air Ministry, 1922), 128.
[19] AIR 9/28, AM Sir John Salmond, *ASM 16: Statement by AM Sir J M Salmond of his Views upon the Principles Governing the Use of Air Power in Iraq*, January 1924, 4.

[20] Flt Lt C J Mackay, "The Influence in the Future of Aircraft upon Problems of Imperial Defence", *JRUSI* LXVII, No. 466 (1922), 298-300.
[21] AIR 9/28, Air Staff, *ASM 19: Memorandum by the Air Staff on the Psychological Effects of Air Bombardment on Semi-Civilised Peoples*, February 1924; AIR 9/28, Air Staff, *ASM 21: The Civilising Influence of Medical Service Advanced by Aid from the Air*.
[22] Slessor, *The Central Blue*, 66.
[23] Wg Cdr R H Peck, "Aircraft in Small Wars", *JRUSI* LXXIII, No. 491 (1928), 542-46.
[24] Air Cdre C F A Portal, "Air Force Co-operation in Policing the Empire", *JRUSI* LXXXII, No. 526 (1937).
[25] AIR 9/28, Air Staff, *ASM 46: Notes on Air Control of Undeveloped Countries*, 24 March 1930, 13-14.
[26] See AIR 20/5480, *Air Staff (India) Memo No. 1: Tactical Methods of Conducting Air Operations Against Tribes on the North-West Frontier of India (draft), April 1935*, 4-5; "Official History of Operations on the N.W. Frontier of India 1920-35", (Delhi: Manager of Publications Government of India Press, 1945), 194.
[27] The Viceroy wrote in 1925 that 'Experience has now shown that the damage to personnel and even to material that air operations can inflict... is very small'. See IOR/L/PS/12/3260, Viceroy Earl of Reading, *Letter to SoS(India): Principles to be Adopted in Flying on the Frontier*, 15 October 1925.
[28] Norman Macmillan, *Sir Sefton Brancker* (William Heinemann, 1935), 19; "Flying School for India", *Flight*, 11 April 1914. For a good description of the development of Indian air power, see: also Clive Richards, *Origins of Military Aviation in India and the Creation of the Indian Air Force, 1910-1932, Part One: The Origins of Military Aviation in India, 1901-1918*, Manuscript from Author, 2007, 2; Richards, "Origins of Military Aviation in India and the Creation of the Indian Air Force, 1910-1932, Part Two", *RAF Air Power Review* Vol. 11, No.1 (2008).
[29] Michael Paris, "Air Power and Imperial Defence 1880-1919", *Jrnl of Contemporary History* 24, No. 2 (1989): 218.
[30] AIR 1/31/15/1/165 E2, Under SoS(India), *Copy Telegram from Viceroy to SoS. Dated 20th August 1915*, 28 August 1915.
[31] AIR 1/31/15/1/165, B B Cubitt, *Letter, Assistant Secretary to the War Office to Under SoS(India)*, 2 October 1915; James J Halley, *The Squadrons of the RAF & Commonwealth, 1918-1988* (Tonbridge: Air-Britain (Historians), 1988), 190.
[32] AIR 2/68 (A1179), Air Council Secretary, *Letter to Under SoS(India)*, 29 July 1918.
[33] AIR 2/68 (A1179), Lt-Gen Sir Herbert Cox, *Letter, Secretary, Military Department, IO, to Secretary, Air Ministry*, 11 July 1918.
[34] AIR 2/68 (A1179), Air Council Secretary, *Letter to Under SoS(India) Office*, 29 July 1918; AIR 2/68 (A1179), IO Military Secretary, *Letter to Secretary, Air Ministry*, 8 August 1918.
[35] AIR 2/68 (A2177), H W W McAnally, *Letter, Assistant Secretary, Air Council, to IO*, 20 November 1918.
[36] AIR 2/68 (A2177), E15, Sir W A Robinson, *Letter, Secretary, Air Council, to Under SoS(India)*, 6 March 1919; AIR 2/68 (A2177) E16, Lt-Gen Sir Herbert Cox, *Letter,*

Military Secretary, IO to Secretary, Air Ministry, 10 March 1919; Wg Cdr C G Jefford, *RAF Squadrons: A Comprehensive Record of the Movement and Equipment of all RAF Squadrons and their Antecedents since 1912* (Shrewsbury: Airlife), 31, 40-41, 53; Bowyer, *RAF Operations 1918-1938*, 153; James J Halley, *The Squadrons of the RAF*, 57-58, 106, 169, 171. In 1920, 48 Squadron remustered as 5 Squadron; 97 Squadron remustered as 60 Squadron; 99 Squadron remustered as 27 Squadron; and 114 remustered as 28 Squadron.

[37] "The Permanent RAF", *Flight*, 18 December 1919, 1622.

[38] AIR 8/40, E1, AM Sir Hugh Trenchard, *Memo: 'Status of the RAF in India', circulated by SoS(Air) to the Committee on Indian Military Requirements*, 8 December 1921; Jefford, *RAF Squadrons*, 23-24.

[39] For comprehensive descriptions of Pink's War, see Bowyer, *RAF Operations 1918-1938*, 170-180 and Roe, "'Pink's War'". The operation derives its name from Wg Cdr Richard Pink, OC 2(Indian) Wing at Risalpur.

[40] Waldie, "Relations Between the Army and RAF, 1918-39", 184.

[41] AIR 1/2399/283/1, Air Staff, *The Progress of the Development of Air Power in India, Appendix A: Outline Scheme for the Control of the NWF of India by RAF*, July 1925.

[42] Waldie, "Relations Between the Army and RAF, 1918-39", 184.

[43] Montgomery-Massingberd Papers, Maj-Gen Walter Kirke, *Deputy CGS (India) to Lt-Gen Sir Archibal Montgomery-Massingberd*, 10 June 1926, quoted in Waldie, "Relations Between the Army and RAF, 1918-39", 185.

[44] For detailed descriptions of the Kabul evacuation, see: Anne Baker and Sir Ronald Ivelaw-Chapman, *Wings Over Kabul: The First Airlift* (London: William Kimber, 1975); Anne Baker, *From Biplane to Spitfire: The Life of ACM Sir Geoffrey Salmond* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2003); and Roe, "Evacuation by Air".

[45] Viscount Templewood, *Empire of the Air: The Advent of the Air Age 1922-1929* (London: Collins, 1957), 213, 295.

[46] MRAF Sir John Slessor, *The Central Blue: Recollections and Reflections of MRAF Sir John Slessor* (London: Cassell, 1956), 70. Other regions covered included Sudan, East and West Africa, the Red Sea and Persian Gulf.

[47] IOR/L/MIL/17/13/37, Lt-Gen C J Deverell, *CID: Defence of India Sub-Committee (Enquiry into the Extended Use of the RAF on the NWF of India): Memo by the GS(India)*, 30 October 1930, 4; Slessor, *The Central Blue*, 71.

[48] Slessor, *The Central Blue*, 70.

[49] CAB 24/207, Thomas Shaw, *CP 356(29)*; CAB 24/207, First Lord of the Admiralty, *CP 369(29): The Fuller Employment of Air Power in Imperial Defence: Memo by the First Lord of the Admiralty*, 20 December 1929; CAB 23/63/185, *CC 13 (30) 4: Imperial Defence: The Fuller Employment of Air Power in Imperial Defence*, 5 March 1930.

[50] Trenchard Papers, RAF Museum, MFC 78/23/1, Col Sir Maurice Hankey, *Personal letter to Viscount Trenchard*, 26 February 1936, 3.

[51] This had been demonstrated during the First World War and would occur again in 1937 during the Waziristan counter-insurgency campaign when the regular Army

became fixed on defensive road protection duties and had to rely on air power to deal with outlying areas. See "Official History of Operations on the N. W. Frontier of India 1936-37", (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1943), 38 and AIR 23/688, AM Sir Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt, *Letter, AOC(India), to Sir Edward L Ellington, CAS*, 5 March 1937, 4.

[52] The 'Red Shirts' were an anti-British Pathan movement. The GoI broke up several meetings in Peshawar, resulting in significant rioting and bloodshed in April 1930, which spread widely within the NWF.

[53] Charles W Gwynn, *Imperial Policing* (London: Macmillan, 1936), 254.

[54] AIR 5/1332, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 138: May* 1930, 1; Air Cdre H le M Brock, "Air Operations on the N.W.F., 1930", *Jrnl of The Royal Central Asian Society* 19, No. 1 (1932): 27-28, 42.

[55] Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 282-284; Brock, "Air Operations on the N.W.F., 1930": 35-36.

[56] AIR 5/1332, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 139: June* 1930, 1; Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 286-287.

[57] AIR 5/1325, Olaf K Caroe, *Letter, Chief Secretary to Government, NWFP, to Foreign Secretary to the GoI, Foreign and Political Department*, 25 October 1933, 4.

[58] WO 32/3526, Minute 1, Maj-Gen J R E Charles, *Minute, Director of Military Operations and Intelligence to Col K D Murray, MO2*, 5 August 1930.

[59] WO 32/3526, GS(India), *The Action of the RAF on the NWF during the Disturbances of 1930*, 11, 19-21.

[60] AIR 5/1322. Chapter 22, Sqn Ldr A S Bishop, *Memo to Deputy Director Operations and Intelligence*, 26 April 1934, 1.

[61] AIR 5/1322, Chapter 22, P Mason, *Letter from Under Secretary to the GoI to the Secretary, Military Department, IO*, 22 March 1934. See also: AIR 5/1325, Sqn Ldr L Darvall, *Paper for Deputy Director Operations (Gp Capts R H Peck and A T Harris): Air Power on the NWF of India*, 16 October 1935, Annex C: Operations in Bajaur 1933; and AIR 23/687, FM Sir Philip Chetwode, *Letter, C-in-C(India), to Viceroy*, 20 August 1935, 2.

[62] Slessor, *The Central Blue*, 120-121.

[63] The Fakir of Ipi was a charismatic, anti-Government religious preacher attributed with magical powers who united the disparate tribes against the British by calling for a *jihad* against a 'war on Islam'. For an overview of Ipi's campaign, see Hauner, "One Man against the Empire", available on-line at **http://www.khyber.org/publications/021-025/faqiripi.shtml**. For good land-power perspectives of the air campaign, see: Col Andrew M Roe, "The Troublesome 1930s" and "Aviation and Guerrilla War"; Andrew M Roe, Brian Cloughley, and Lester W Grau, *From Fabric Wings to Supersonic Fighters and Drones: A History of Military Aviation on Both Sides of the NWF* (Solihull: Helion & Company Ltd, 2015); and Roe, *Waging War in Waziristan*.

[64] AIR 75/31, Wg Cdr J C Slessor, *Operations in Waziristan. 24 November 1936 to 15 January 1937*, January 1937, 3-5.

[65] Coningham, for example, concluded that the strategic differences between the RAF and Indian Army did not inhibit the development of 'outstanding' close support.

See Simon Coningham, "Air-Ground Cooperation between the RAF and the Indian Army in Waziristan 1936-37", 4, 7.
[66] A good example of this was the progressive punitive bombing of three Madda Khel villages by Bomber squadrons for the murder of two British officers in February 1937 which secured the surrender of three accomplices. See AIR 5/1335, AOC RAF(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 220: March* 1937, 4-6.
[67] See: AIR 5/1335, AOC(India), RAF(India) *Monthly General Summary of Work No 221: April 1937*, 8-9; AIR 5/1335, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 222: May* 1937, 3, 9-10; AIR 5/1335, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 223: June* 1937, 3; AIR 5/1335, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 226: September* 1937, 4.
[68] AIR 5/1336, AOC(India), RAF(India) *Monthly General Summary of Work No 233*, 6-7; AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 234*, 8; Gen R A Cassels, "Report on Operations in Waziristan, 16th December, 1937 to the 31st December, 1938", *Supplement to The London Gazette*, 15 August 1939, 5668.
[69] AIR 5/1336, Sqn Ldr L Darvall, *Minute to RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 234: May* 1938.
[70] Alan Warren, *Waziristan, the Faqir of Ipi, and the Indian Army: The NWF Revolt of 1936-37* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 215.
[71] Initially termed the Heavy Transport Flight, its expansion from a two-aircraft flight to a ten-aircraft squadron was still being discussed in 1938. See CAB 24/287/16, AIR 8/255, Lord Chatfield, *CP 133(39): Report of the Expert Committee on the Defence of India, 1938-39 [Chatfield Report]*, 30 January 1939, 41-43. See also AIR 23/687, Air Staff, *Proposal to Form a Bomber Transport Squadron*.
[72] See AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 222*, 3, 6; "Official History of NWF Ops, 1936-37", 89-95, 98; General R A Cassels, "Report on Operations in Waziristan, 16th January, 1937 to 15th September, 1937", *Second Supplement to The London Gazette*, 15 February 1938", 1060.
[73] Rob Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War: Culture and Pragmatism: A Critical History (London: Hurst & Co, 2011)*, 197-198; "Official History of NWF Ops, 1936-37", 111-113, 116.
[74] "Official History of NWF Ops, 1936-37", 96. 28(AC) Squadron escorted nine trains during May and nineteen in June 1937 (see AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 222*, 8, AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 223*, 4 and "Official History of NWF Ops, 1936-37", 103-105).
[75] AIR 5/1335, AOC(India), RAF(India) *Monthly General Summary of Work No 225: August* 1937, 4-5; AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 226*, 8; AIR 5/1335, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 227: October* 1937, 5-6; "Official History of NWF Ops, 1936-37", 178.
[76] AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 227*, 5-7.
[77] AIR 5/1335, Sqn Ldr L Darvall, *Minute to RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 227: October* 1937.

[78] Cassels, "Report on Ops in Waziristan, 16 January to 15th September 1937", 1062; "Official History of NWF Ops, 1936-37", 169.
[79] For example, 51 tons of bombs had been dropped on four villages. See AIR 5/1335, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 224*, 4-5; AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 225*, 4-5; "Official History of NWF Ops, 1936-37", 178.
[80] AIR 5/1336, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 230: January* 1938, 3; AIR 5/1336, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 232: March* 1938, 3; AIR 5/1336, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 236: July* 1938, 3.
[81] By May, all six 1(Indian) Group Squadrons and the Bomber Transport Flight were involved. See AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 234*, 4.
[82] AIR 5/1336, Sqn Ldr L Darvall, *Minute to RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 234: May* 1938.
[83] AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 236*, 10-11; AIR 5/1336, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 237: August* 1938, 7; AIR 5/1336, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 238*, 7.
[84] Darvall, *Minute to Summary of Work No 236*.
[85] There were about 600 sorties in February/March 1938 vs about 2200 sorties in February/March 1939 (see AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 246: May* 1939, 9).
[86] See AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 243: February* 1939, 11-12; AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 244: March* 1939, 13; AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 245: April* 1939, 7-8.
[87] AIR 5/1337, Wg Cdr B E Embry, *Minute to RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 245: April* 1939.
[88] See AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 245*, 3-5; AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 246*, 4; AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 247: June* 1939, 4; AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 248: July* 1939, 4; AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 249: August* 1939, 5; AIR 5/1337, AOC(India), *RAF(India) Monthly General Summary of Work No 250: September* 1939.
[89] AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 250*, 4.
[90] Lt Col H E M Cotton, "Operation Curzon - The Evacuation of Waziristan", *The Royal Engineers Jrnl* 62 (1948); IOR/L/PS/12/3266, *Tuker Frontier Committee Report*, July 1945.
[91] Renfrew, *Wings of Empire*, 250; Warren, *Waziristan, the Faqir of Ipi, and the Indian Army*, 263.
[92] B R Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj, 1914-1947: The Economics of Decolonization in India* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1979), 109; Marsh, "Ramparts of Empire", 37-38.
[93] Elisabeth Mariko Leake, "British India versus the British Empire: The Indian Army and an Impasse in Imperial Defence, circa 1919–39", *Modern Asian Studies* 48, No. 1

(2014): 1, 4. The military perspective is well described in Brian Bond, *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 110-126.
[94] House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, *Pay of the Air Force*, Vol. 123, 15 December 1919, col 102 and col 137, 131.
[95] Air Staff, *The Progress of the Development of Air Power in India*, 2.
[96] Bowyer, *RAF Operations 1918-1938*, 163; AIR 8/46, E4, SoS(Air), *CP 4179: Shortage of Equipment of the RAF in India*, September 1922, 2; John Laffin, *Swifter than Eagles: a biography of MRAF Sir John Salmond* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1964), 152-153; IOR/L/MIL/7/19272, Capt Frederick E Guest, *Memo from SoS(Air) to Indian Military Requirements Committee: Status of the RAF in India*, 8 December 1921.
[97] See: Dudley Saward, *'Bomber' Harris* (London: Sphere Books, 1984), 33; Slessor; *The Central Blue*, 34-35; MFC-76-1-138, AVM Sir J M Salmond, *Personal Correspondence to CAS*, 22 June 1922. For an in-depth analysis of the Army's attitude to Salmond during his review, see Waldie, "Relations Between the Army and RAF, 1918-39", 174-180.
[98] AIR 2/2637, Gp Capt R H Peck, *Minute, Deputy Director of Operations and Intelligence to Deputy CAS*, 15 November 1935; CAB 16/84, Viscount Peel, *Committee of Imperial Defence: Defence of India: Second Report of the Sub-Committee (DI-38/CID 172-D)*, 10 April 1929, 4; CAB 6/6, Adm Sir Ernle Chatfield, Gen Sir Archibald Montgomery-Massingberd, and ACM Sir Edward Ellington, *CID: Afghanistan: British Policy: Defence of India Plan: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee (CID 185-D/COS 326)*, 23 February 1934.
[99] See: CAB 24/278/22, C MacI G Ogilvie, *CP 187(38) Annex 1: Letter, Secretary to the GoI to the Secretary, Military Department, IO*, 9 February 1938, 11; CAB 24/278/9, T W H Inskip, *CP 174(38): Committee of Defence of India: Interim Report*, 18 July 1938, 3. For another perspective on subsequent events, see Waldie, "Relations Between the Army and RAF, 1918-39", 214-218.
[100] AIR 8/1086, C MacI G Ogilvie, *Letter, Secretary to GoI to Military Secretary, IO*, 9 February 1938, 5, 18.
[101] AIR 8/255, Air Staff, *Memo, Necessity for the Independence of the RAF in India, both Administrative and Operational* 1939.
[102] AIR 8/1086, ACM Sir Cyril Newall, *Minute, CAS to SoS(Air)*, 25 March 1938.
[103] AIR 8/1086, Viscount Swinton, *Letter, SoS(Air) to Prime Minister*, 31 March 1938; AIR 8/1086, Marquess of Zetland, *Letter, SoS(India) to SoS(Air)*, 11 April 1938; AIR 8/1086, Marquess of Zetland, *Letter, SoS(India) to Prime Minister*, 11 April 1938. See also AIR 8/529, ACM Sir Cyril Newall, *Letter, CAS to SoS(Air)*, 1 April 1938; AIR 8/529, ACM Sir Cyril Newall, *Report by DCAS on First of the Informal Talks with Indian Delegation on Defence Requirements of India*, 24 April 1938.
[104] AIR 8/529, ACM Sir Cyril Newall, *Directive for AOC(India) (AM P B Joubert de la Ferte)*, 17 September 1937; Pownall, *Pownall Report*, 34.
[105] AIR 23/5388, AM Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferte, *Letter, AOC(India), to AM C L Courtney*, 29 November 1938.
[106] IOR/L/MIL/17/5/1801, Maj-Gen C J E Auchinleck, *Report of the Modernization*

Committee, October 1938, 3-4.
[107] AIR 8/529, ACM Sir Cyril Newall, *Letter, CAS to AM C L Courtney*, 10 December 1938, 3, 1.
[108] CAB 23/94, *CC 35 (38) 6: INDIA: Defence Questions*, 27 July 1938, 8, 17-18.
[109] CAB 23/100, *CC 39 (39) 11: INDIA: The Defence of*, 26 July 1939, 18-20; AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 250*, 4.
[110] In the UK, the CID acted as the defence planning agency for the British Empire. Chaired by the Prime Minister, its membership included Ministers and the Service Chiefs of Staff. It had several sub-committees including the Overseas Defence Committee, the Chiefs of Staff Committee and its supporting Joint Planning Committee.
[111] CAB 24/287/16, AIR 8/255, Lord Chatfield, *CP 133(39): Report of the Expert Committee on the Defence of India, 1938-39*, 30 January 1939, 41-43 (also published as ID(38)10 in CAB 27/654), 8.
[112] CAB 23/100, *CC 34(39) 3: INDIA: The Defence of*, 28 June 1939 3, 6-8, 14, 10-12, 14; CAB 24/287/21, T W H Inskip, *CP 138(39): Report on the Report of the Expert Committee on the Defence of India*, 23 June 1939.
[113] CAB 16/87, Committee of Imperial Defence: Defence of India Sub-Committee (Enquiry into the Extended Use of Air Power), *Minutes of the First Meeting (DI(AP) 1st Meeting)*, 26 June 1930, 2-3.
[114] AIR 8/529, The Earl Winterton, *Memo to SoS(Air) and CAS*, 1938.
[115] AIR 8/110, Sir Walter F Nicholson, *Air Ministry Office Memo 389: RAF in India - Correspondence*, 3 January 1928. The WO was subjected to the same technical limitations. However, since C-in-C(India) was a British Army officer, he had a far closer, demi-official relationship with the War Office than the Air Staff.
[116] Covering minute to AOC(India), *Summary of Work No 221*.
[117] Guest, *Status of the RAF in India*.
[118] SoS(Air), *CP 4179*, 1-2.
[119] AIR 8/46, E1, AVM Sir J M Salmond, *Report by AVM Sir John Salmond on the RAF in India*, August 1922, 15-21.
[120] *CC 34(39) 3*, 11-12.
[121] AIR 2/2051, Enclosure 20A, Sqn Ldr L Darvall, *Note on Meeting at IO with Military Secretary*, 24 November 1937, 2; AIR 23/5388, G R Tottenham, *Letter, Secretary of the GoI to CGS, Adjutant General in India, Quartermaster General in India, Master General of Ordnance in India and Financial Adviser, Military Finance*, 8 March 1937.
[122] AIR 23/688, AM Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferte, *Letter, AOC(India), to Senior Air Staff Officer, India, Air Cde Richard Peck*, 16 June 1938; AIR 23/688, Air Cdre Richard H Peck, *Letter, SASO, India, to AOC(India)*, 21 June 1938.
[123] AIR 23/687, OC 1(Indian) Group, *Extract, letter, OC 1(Indian) Group to SASO, HQ RAF(India) (Air Cdre A S Barratt)*, April 1932.
[124] AIR 23/687, AM Sir Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt, *Bombing Policy*, 9 September 1935.
[125] AIR 9/12, E33, Air Staff, *Instances of Misemployment of Air Forces in India by GOC*, 28 May 1930, 5.

[126] C F Andrews, *The Challenge of the NWF: A Contribution to World Peace* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937), 120-121.
[127] See, for example, AIR 9/12, Enclosure 57A, Air Plans, *Fallacies of "Inhumanity" and "Rancour"*, October 1932.
[128] CAB 6/5, *Earl of Reading, Principles to be Adopted in Flying on the Frontier: Despatch from the GoI (Foreign and Political Department), (No. 11 of 1925), to SoS(India) (CID 141D)*, 15 October 1925.
[129] Gen Sir Claud Jacob, "An Account of the Recent Operations by the RAF against certain Recalcitrant Sections of the Mahsuds in March, April and May, 1925", *The London Gazette*, 17 November 1925, 7595.
[130] Joubert de la Ferte, *AOC(India) to SASO(India), 16 June 1938*. Trench recorded another, tactical, example whereby an outspoken Frontier Officer attending a high-level operations conference by a 'very senior' officer on air control responded with: 'Listen, chum, your job is to drive the f_____g aeroplane' (see Charles Chenevix Trench, *Viceroy's Agent* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987), 77).
[131] Slessor reflected of his 1921 Indian flight commander tour that 20 Squadron was 'hampered by absurd restrictions based... largely on ignorance and prejudice, not untinged by jealousy'. See Slessor, *The Central Blue*, 36.
[132] IOR/L/PS/12/3260, Earl of Willingdon, *Letter from Viceroy India to SoS(Air)*, 3 December 1931.
[133] FM Sir Philip Chetwode and AM Sir John Steel.
[134] See, for example, IOR/L/PS/12/3171, Lt-Gen Kenneth Wigram (CGS(India)), *General Staff Criticism of the Tribal Control and Defence Committee*, 19 May 1931, 5.
[135] For example, during a 1925 operation, it is estimated that there were only 11 humans killed and wounded after 154 tons of bombs and 100,000 rounds of ammunition had been expended. See IOR/L/PS/12/3260, Viceroy Earl of Reading, *Letter to SoS(India): Principles to be Adopted in Flying on the Frontier*, 15 October 1925.
[136] IOR/L/PS/12/3251, *Policy: Correspondence with Members of the Public Regarding Policy (including Air Action) on the NWF*, 1935-42.
[137] AIR 2/2065, MRAF Sir Edward L Ellington, *Minute, CAS to SoS(Air)*, 23 June 1937. As an example of 'fake news', see the series of exchanges in the 1935 *Manchester Guardian* in AIR 9/12, E97.
[138] AIR 5/298 Part II, Sir Walter F Nicholson, *Letter, Secretary of the Air Ministry to The Under SoS, Military Department, IO*, 17 August 1925; Trenchard, *CAS to Deputy Director Operations and Intelligence, 27 August 1925*; AIR 5/298 Part II, Col W E Wilson-Johnston, *Letter, IO to Secretary, Air Ministry*, 2 September 1925.
[139] See, for example, AIR 23/708, E10, Wg Cdr G C Pirie, *Letter from Air Ministry to AOC, Aden Command*, 4 February 1937.
[140] For detailed accounts of the development of the RAF's inter-War bombing policy, see: Sir Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, 1939-1945*, 4 vols., Vol. I: Preparation (Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, 1961); and John Terraine, *The Right of the Line: The Role of the RAF in World War Two* (Barnsley: Pen &

Sword Military, 2010). Webster and Frankland's excellent work is an embellished version of the RAF's Air Historical Branch Narrative, AIR 41-39, RAF Air Historical Branch, *RAF Narrative: The RAF in the Bombing Offensive Against Germany: Volume I: Pre-War Evolution of Bomber Command, 1917 to 1939* 1948 and AIR 41-40, RAF Air Historical Branch, *RAF Narrative: The RAF in the Bombing Offensive Against Germany: Volume II: Restrictive Bombing, September 1939 to May 1941* 1948.