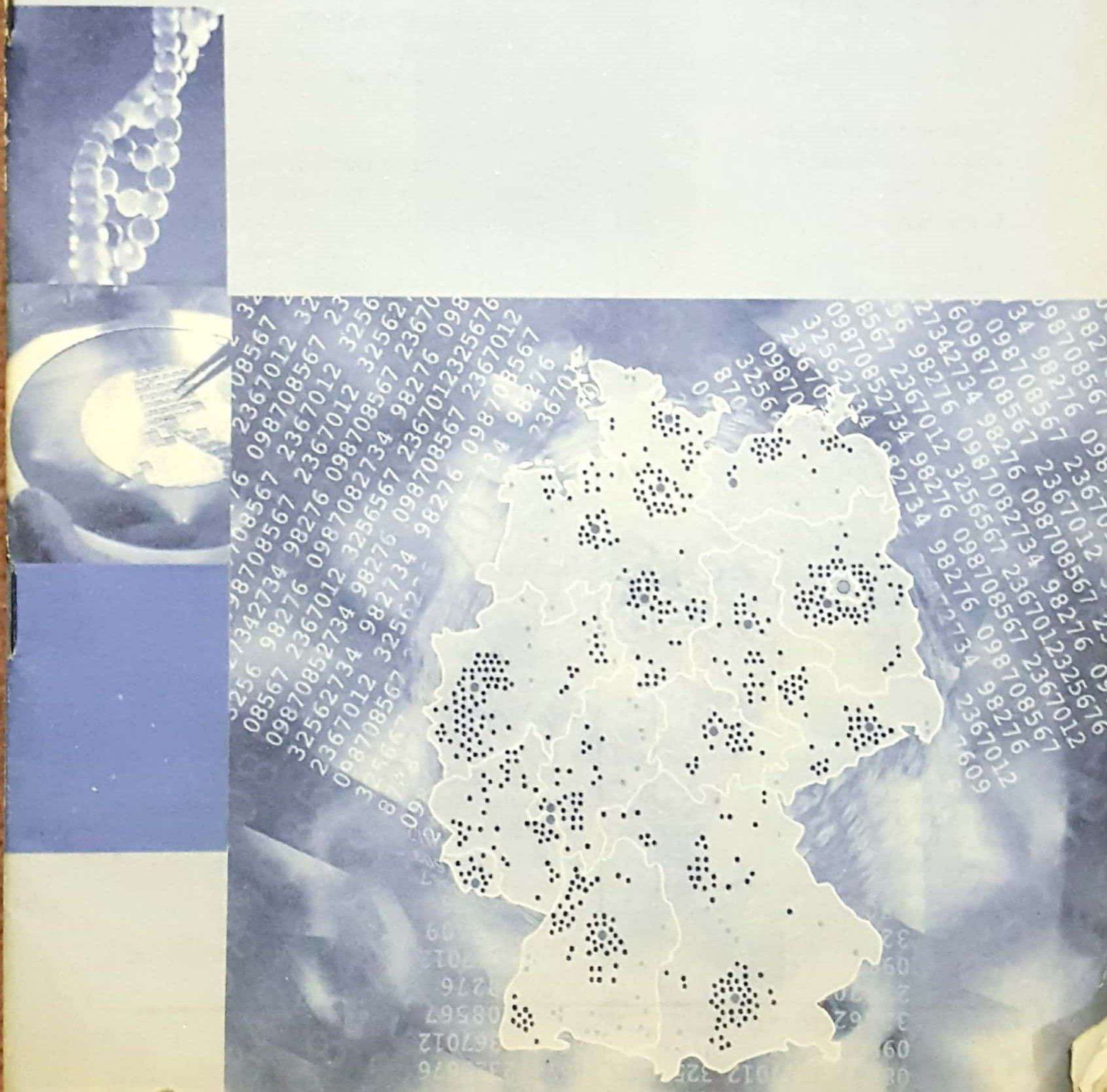


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Editor: Helmut Landes, Head of the
Press and Culture Sections.

Tel: (051) 2279430-5

Fax: (051) 2279436

e-mail: pregerem@isb.paknet.com.pk

Online Focus

IMPORTANT WEB SITES

www.bundesregierung.de

The web site of the German federal government with news, speeches, links to all federal ministries, and an English-language Internet Guide.

www.auswaertiges-amt.de

The web site of the German Foreign Office offers links to embassies and consulates.

www.goethe.de

The Goethe Institute, Germany's largest cultural organization, reports on events at its institutes around the world and developments on the German cultural scene. It also offers literary tips and an extensive collection of links.

www.daad.de

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) provides information on courses in Germany and abroad, and on scholarships and support programs.

www.gtz.de

The German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) works to improve the living standards of local people in 130 countries. Its site describes its activities.

www.ahk.de

Chambers of commerce abroad advise businesses about investment in and outside Germany.

www.dwelle.de

Deutsche Welle, Germany's international broadcasting organization, presents information about its programs and how to receive them.

www.magazine-deutschland.de

"Deutschland" publishes a selection of articles on the web in four languages.

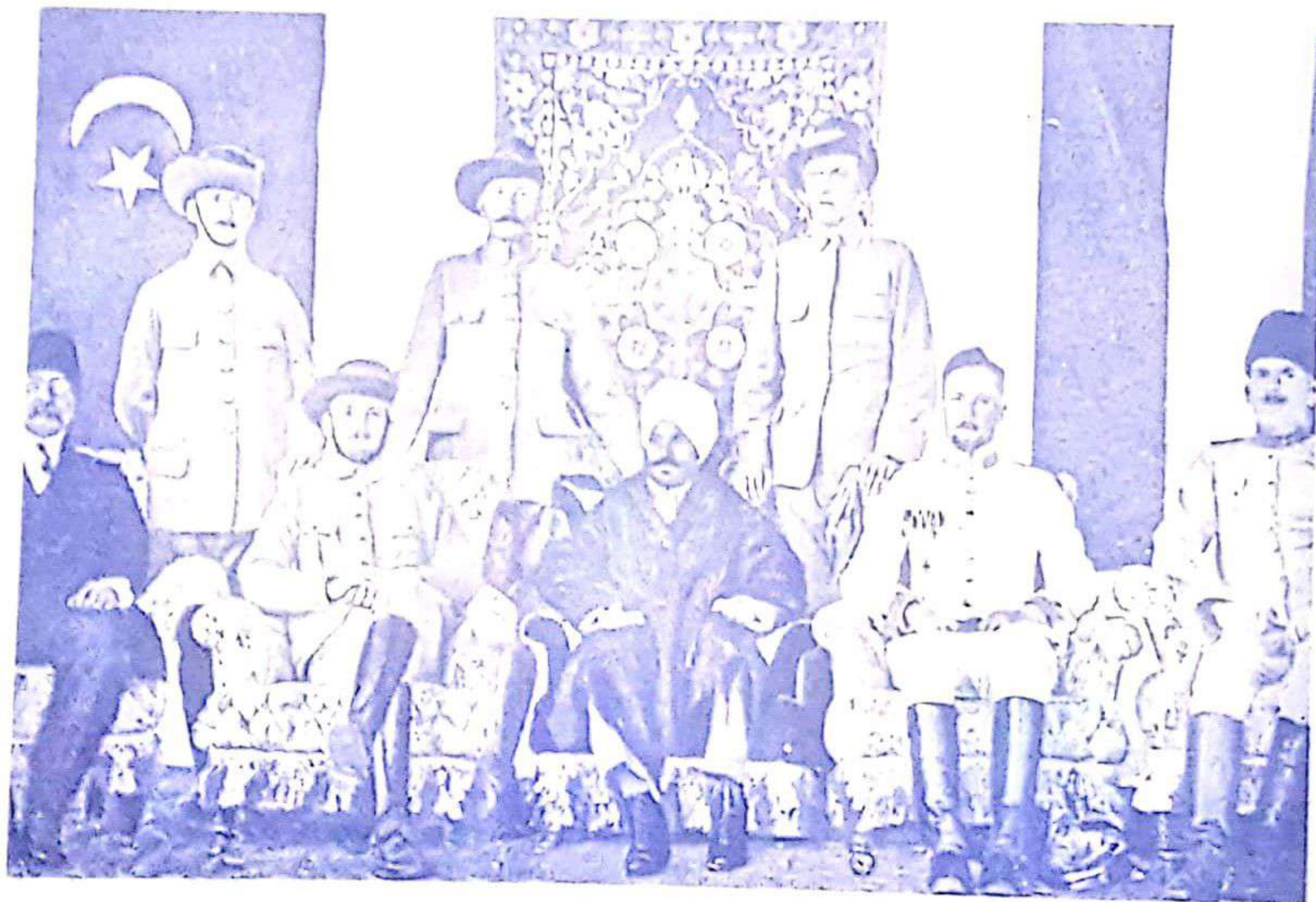
German Activities in the North-West Frontier Province During War Years (1914-1945)

The region designated by the British Colonial rulers as the North-West Frontier Province of India has always played a significant role in the making of Indian history owing to its crucial geo-political location. Once a passage of invaders, this land of the Pashtoons remained a subject of special interest and importance for historians, travellers, politicians, military-men and administrators in the past. It is

still a rich field for research to anthropologists, sociologists, historians and political scientists.

During my research on the socio-political history of the NWFP I found serious gaps in the earlier writings on the area, particularly on the tribal territories which remained the Frontier of British Empire during the first half of the Twentieth century.

In August 1914, World War I, broke out. Three months later, in November, Turkey declared its support for Germany against the British and also joined it. Long before the outbreak of the War, the military thinkers in Germany realised that in the event of war, India would be the largest reservoir of manpower in the British Empire. Would it not somehow be possible to prevent the departure of British and Indian



troops from India to the actual theatre of war. The influential military writer General Friedrich von Bernhardi spoke in his book *Germany and the Next War* (1911) of the necessity for close co-operation between Germany and the Indian revolutionaries against Britain and expressed the hope that Hindus and Muslims alike might collaborate to unseat the Raj. While not able to gain Persia as an ally, owing to the strong British and Russian presence, the German General Staff nevertheless quickly appreciated the strategic importance of Afghanistan as a buffer state dividing the British and Russian sphere of influence in Central Asia. Two expeditions to Kabul were simultaneously organised in 1915 (which later on was joined together as both were serving the same cause) with the support of the Turkish ally and by the German High Command and the Foreign Office's Special Information Bureau for Oriental Affairs (Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient). Intensifying its pan-Islamic propaganda, Germany and Turkey jointly sent this Turko-German Mission to Afghanistan, which reached Kabul, the Afghan capital, in mid-October 1915. The Mission was headed by Dr. Werner Otto von Hentig, a young diplomat, who entered German diplomatic service in 1911. When War broke out in 1914, he was on the staff of the German Legation at Teheran. He was sent to join his regiment and fought on

the Russian front. In March he was recalled to Berlin from military service and instructed to take charge of the diplomatic mission which was to proceed to Kabul and bring about the conclusion of a German-Afghan Alliance. It had allegedly brought messages from the Turkish Sultan and the Kaiser of Germany. The mission had two obvious objectives:

military and the political.

The **military** objective was to induce the Afghan ruler Amir Habibullah Khan to join the Central Powers in the War or at least to mobilise the Pashtoon tribesmen, the largest potential of guerrilla fighters in the world, in order to tie up the substantial numbers of British and Russian forces in the area. The **political** aim in support of this strategic objective was to direct from Afghanistan disruptive anti-British and pan-Islamic propaganda into India and to help foment local disorder and sedition among Indian troops. The situation at Kabul was in their favour. The pro-Turkish 'War Party', led by Sardar Nasrullah Khan, the younger brother of the Amir, had lent their full-fledge support to the Mission members. They were also joined by an influential section of the Afghan intellectuals led by Mahmud Tarzi and his son-in-law, Amanullah Khan, the young and energetic anti-British prince. Moreover, a large number of Pashtoon tribes and a considerable number of religious elements in the country also promised their

support to the Turkish cause.

The Amir, however, assured the British government time and again that he would remain neutral. The Amir, largely depending on British subsidies, was in no way prepared to annoy the British at any cost. On 6 July 1915 he was informed by the Viceroy of India of a number of hostile groups who had escaped from the Russian territory and were moving in small armed positions eastwards obviously trying their way to enter Afghanistan. The total strength of these parties, according to the same source were 26 Germans and Austrians, 43 Turks and Armenians, 23 Indians and 87 Persians; altogether 179 men armed with rifles and with two machine guns. He suggested to the Amir that these parties 'should at once be arrested, disarmed and interned, pending the conclusion of war'. The Amir promptly replied that 'Your Excellency need have no anxiety about the movements of those parties. ..., they will be disarmed at once. I assure your excellency and the Great British Government of the neutrality of Afghanistan during the present war'.

He also informed the Viceroy that he always preferred British friendship and they must trust him. On the other hand, the Amir professed his devotion to the Turkish cause, with the understanding, that the call for holy war was not yet vaild for him

because the world war had not been waged in Afghanistan.

The members of Turko-German Mission, however, sensed the Amir's duplicity. Realising about the failure of their Mission they left Kabul on 22 May 1961 without accomplishing their assigned task. Von Hentig returned to Europe via the Hindu Kush, the Pamirs, Turkestan, Kashghar, China and the USA. The Amir was praised by the Viceroy for his part which he played during the stay of the Mission members at Kabul. In lieu of his services he was sent a signed letter by the King-Emperor and his annual subsidy was raised by two lakhs rupees a year.

However, the Mission members succeeded in establishing a centre for the anti-British activities in Bagh (Tirah), in the tribal belt. In June 1916 two Turkish emissaries arrived in Tirah; one was Khired Bey, a staff colonel of the Turkish army and the other Mohammad Abid (alias Abidin), an Arab, a former employe of the Turks as a drill instructor at Kabul. Mir Mast, a local Afridi Pashtoon, an ex-Jamadar of the British Indian army, who had deserted in France accompanied the Turko-German Mission. He was already busy in propaganda against the British in Tirah. The 'uneasy feelings' in the tribal areas as a result of the intrigues of the Turko-German Mission were further intensified by Mir Mast's activities in the Khyber.

On their arrival in Tirah, the emissaries were welcomed by Mast. They delivered anti-British speeches and unfurled a flag, allegedly blessed and sent by the Turkish Sultan. By the middle of 1916 a large number of the Pashtoon soldiers, mainly deserters from the British Indian army had swelled the ranks of the Turkish emissaries. They started recruitment of the locals as well. By July 1916 the total number of Afridi recruits enlisted in the Turkish army was reported to have reached about four hundred. In August, Mahendra Pratap came to Tirah, bringing money from Nasrullah for distribution among the local *mullahs*.

As a result of the growing popularity of the Sultan's army in Tirah, Sir George Roos-Keppel, then Chief Commissioner NWFP, found the tribes being virtually divided into two camps: anti-British and pro-British. The former consisted of deserters and discharged soldiers from the Indian army and other pro-Afghan elements, while the latter was composed mainly of Maliks and elders who were in favour of maintaining friendly relations with the British in lieu of their allowances and other emoluments from the British Indian government. Roos-Keppel believed that the Turkish agents were responsible for creating the troubles in the tribal belt, but he could not ask the Government to take any stern

action against them lest he feared aggravation in the already tense situation. The pro-British elements came to government's rescue. They told the Turks that unless they saw the combined armies of Afghanistan, Germany and Turkey with their own eyes on the Indian frontiers the Afridis would never create any trouble against the British in the tribal territories. The Turks were further asked not to expect any help from the tribesmen unless the Amir of Afghanistan declared *Jihad* and himself led the Afghan army against the British. Moreover, they demanded very large quantities of arms, ammunition and money to be provided to the Afridis. In addition, the British government following its traditional policy of winning a section of influential mullahs to their side, succeeded in checking the pro-British propaganda in the tribal area. Eventually, in September 1916, the pro-British faction succeeded in driving away the Turkish emissaries from Tirah to Rajgal near the Afghan border. They remained there for about six months. In March 1917, one Malik Zaman Khan, an influential pro-British Afridi elder led a four hundred strong lashkar (a tribal force), attacked the Turkish emissaries, killed their contacts in the tribal belt and succeeded in ousting them from the tribal area. In June 1917 the Turkish agents crossed over to Afghanistan, Thus failing in their mission to stir a tribal rising against the British during the war period.

In order to check the influence of British imperialism in Afghanistan, during the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century, German government continued its efforts to establish close ties with the Afghan government. Amanullah Khan, the revolutionary young Amir of Afghanistan found in Germany a close and trusted ally of Afghanistan who was ready to invest in Afghanistan without even thinking for a while on commercial basis. In November 1937, Lufthansa German Airlines established a route between Berlin and Kabul via Tirana, Athens, Rhodes, Damascus, Baghdad and Tehran. It was more a political than an economic step on the part of the German authorities. This was taken as Nazi Germany's concerted drive to penetrate the Middle East politically, culturally and economically. It was followed by a flow of technical advisers and financial assistance. According to Ernest Fox, an American geologist who then worked in Afghanistan, 'One met German salesmen in Kabul, and German high-way engineers in the field. German steel was going into the new bridges on the high-ways. The Deutsche Lufthansa Co. was the only commercial airline [that] landed on the Kabul airport' By 1939, V. Gregorian pointed out, there were between 100 and 300 German Experts and technicians in Afghanistan, majority of them engineers working at road-building projects, hydroelectric plants and

factories. At various other departments and institutions, including the post, telegraph, telephone, police department, army and commercial projects, the presence of a large number of Germans was felt. Eventually in August 1939 Germany signed an extensive financial and commercial agreement with Afghanistan. She was given long-term credits for the purchase of German machinery and in return agreed to repay all advances over a ten years period by furnishing cotton to Germany. The Afghan ruling elite and intelligentsia, always apprehensive of colonialism, considered in it as a means of industrialisation and modernisation of the Afghan economy.

Both Britain and the Soviet Union, two powerful neighbours of Afghanistan were highly apprehensive of the German interest/advances in Afghanistan and were waiting for a favourable opportunity to stop the penetration of Germany into Afghanistan furthermore. Germany, however, on the contrary by supplying economic and technical assistance and helping the Afghans in their modest industrial undertakings, had hoped to secure the pro-German base there and forging a strong pro-German alliance against the British imperialism. On the outbreak of World War II there was a general fear in Afghanistan that its independence might be jeopardised or the country might become a battleground of

European diplomacy, even a theatre of war. The Afghan government, in order to safeguard the country's independence proclaimed its neutrality in September 1939. However, the Afghan nationalists were not happy with the government policy. They were advocating strong support to the Axis powers who had contributed in the present modernisation of Afghanistan.

During the war years (1939-1945) the Axis Powers tried their best to stir a tribal rising in the NWFP against the British. Their main purpose was to engage the British Indian army in the tribal belt to prevent Indian armed forces from being sent to the Mediterranean. After the war, as was revealed at the Nuremberg Trials, the Italians had planned, with the approval and full support of the Germans, to induce Mirza Ali Khan (Faqr of Ipi), the legendary anti-British Pashtoon religious warrior, to carry pro-Axis propaganda and to create troubles in the NWFP.

Indian Intelligence, suspecting that links between the Axis and the Faqr had existed for some time, first received concrete evidence in June 1941 after the arrest of Mohammad Aslam, the interpreter at the Italian Legation in Kabul, when he visited his relatives near Quetta. Aslam claimed in his statement that several members of the Italian Legation had visited the Faqr

between 1939 and 1941 and supplied him with money and weapons, including machine-guns and a wireless transmitting and receiving set. He also supplied the British with the names of the Afghan officials and army officers collaborating with the Italians and with the Faqir, which were then used to bring more pressure to bear upon the Kabul government. This was also confirmed in another way by Quaroni, the Italian Minister at Kabul. According to him the Faqir was visited during the war by the secretary of the Italian Legation, Enrico Anzilotti, who did so during June 1941. Anzilotti, who set out on 12 June, was away unnoticed for 22 days, covering the distance partly by lorry but almost on foot. As he was wearing Pashtoon dress the Afghan police failed to apprehend him, which greatly upset them, for they offered, 150,000 Afghani for his capture. Anzilotti spent three days at Gorwekht and returned safely to Kabul. He reported that the Faqir was in principle ready to start action against the British on the Frontier, but required money, weapons and ammunition, (According to Quaroni, the holy man from Waziristan had a quite definite idea about his requirements which he made known to the Axis Legations through his intermediaries in a form somewhat resembling a price list: 25,000 paid every other month to keep the pot boiling and to double the sum if tribal activities should be extended to other areas; in the

event of general rising on the Frontier the price would have to be tripled, not counting supplies of weapons and ammunition which the Faqir also required urgently). He stipulated the terms of cash payments and wished to have a wireless transmitter with a trained operator. The Germans, too, wanted to establish a direct link with Ipi. A few weeks after Anzilotti's return they sent to Gorwekht two of their agents with a small group of hired tribesmen. They never reached their destination, falling into a trap set up by the Afghan government.

On the night of 18/19th July 1941, a party of two Germans Dr. Oberdoffer and Brandt, in disguise, accompanied by twelve Jajis were moving on Logar road carrying munitions, money and papers for the Faqir. Afghani troops chased them and fired near Pul Alam (Logar), while crossing to the tribal belt to meet the Faqir of Ipi and hand him over arms including 7 machine guns, 70 bels of machine gun ammunition, 30 lakhs worth of Afghan notes, 10 lakhs of Indian notes and gold coins, 4 pistols to each man, 12 different kinds of tribal dresses and some addresses of various anti-British agents in India. Dr. Oberdoffer died on the spot while Brandt was arrested in wounded condition. It was followed by a strong protest from German government. Hashim Khan, the Afghan Prime Minister conveyed his regrets to the German

government, reiterating that they were acting on their traditional neutral policy in the present war.

The Faqir of Ipi consented to the Axis proposal of establishing a radio transmitter station in the tribal belt to intensify the anti-British propaganda. However, the paucity of funds and the negative attitude of the Afghan authorities prevented him from doing the 'right sort' of propaganda. In this regard, Quaroni, the Italian Minister at Kabul, had prepared a major plan for the popular rising in the tribal belt, later on to be extended to other parts of British India. The Italian Government communicated this plan to the German high command. In the belief that Britain was about to succumb anyway, the Germans shelved the project for the time being.

In 1941 Dr. von Hentig, the newly appointed German Minister to Afghanistan, (who never occupied his new assignment because of the strong protest from British Indian Government) was instructed by Ribbentrop to contact the Frontier tribes and their nationalists leaders. The Nazis hoped from Afghan government for permission to establish a short-wave radio transmitter in the Afghan-Indian border area, to allow inconspicuous German participation' in using the transmitter of Kabul radio and to tolerate a certain amount of smuggling of arms to the tribal territories to be used against the

British Indian government but failed due to the negative attitude of the Afghan authorities.

Both Britain and the Soviet Union were unhappy over the large presence of Axis nationals in Kabul which also included about 80 German nationals (including women and children the total non-official Axis population in Afghanistan was over 200). On 9 October 1941, the British Minister at Kabul met the Afghan authorities and demanded the expulsion of Axis nationals followed by a similar kind of demand presented by the Russian Ambassador at Kabul two days after. In less than a fortnight altogether 204 German and Italian nationals left Kabul for Peshawar in two batches, the first one on 29 October and the second on the following day, to proceed from there to Karachi and further via Iraq and Turkey to Axis-controlled territory.

There was a mixed reaction to the Allies demand : there was apprehension, bitterness and public outcry, resulting in reiterating the Afghan government's policy of observance of its strict neutrality. The Faqir of Ipi, as reported by the Intelligence Diary dated 10 November 1941 is said to be very much displeased at the Afghan Government's decision in expelling the Germans and Italians, and is now spreading propaganda against the Yahya Khel regime among his followers in the Southern Province'.

The next report of linkage between the German Legation at Kabul and the Faqir was given on 9 January 1943. The Deputy Director Intelligence, Peshawar reported that 'two Nazis recently visited Gorwekht bringing instructions and arms and ammunition for Ipi from the German Legation in Kabul.

Interestingly, on the British side of the Frontier, Sir George Cunningham, the NWFP Governor also tried to counter the German propaganda against the Allies. He won over the sympathies of some maulvis to British side who denounced Nazis and convinced the Pashtoons that British interests were identical with Islam. Initially, the attention of the progovernment maulvis was diverted towards the 'atheist Bolsheviks'. The Germans were denounced as the collaborators of the Russians. But with the Russian entry into the war on the Allied side, the situation changed. Cunningham was embarrassed when asked whether they really were helping their old enemies, the Russians. His reply was simple: that for the common purpose of the destruction of Nazism, they could co-operate with the Russians without accepting the ideas of Communism or the Soviet system. The Frontier government succeeded in switching over the propaganda from the Bolsheviks to the Germans.

For the remaining period during the war, however, the

NWFP remained 'calm and peaceful'. The inhabitants of the province were not interested. Perhaps in a distant theatre of war.

The purpose of this research is to explore various policies of the German authorities towards the Pashtoon area, hitherto neglected by the scholars. This research will be addressing the complex issues of fomenting unrest in the NWFP by the Germans against the British through various strategies. How did Germans succeed in establishing their contacts in the NWFP? What was the local response to the German war propaganda? The German High Command did send its representatives to urge the rulers of Afghanistan to support the Central/Axis Powers during the Wars. How far did the Germans succeed in keeping this part of the world under their influence? what were its repercussions on the global politics? Did the Axis Powers succeed in winning over the Pashtoon tribes to their side?

An answer to these and other related questions would be available after the completion of the present project. I would like to publish the findings thereafter to share them with scholars and general public who might have an abiding interest in that particular period and area.

Dr. Syed Wiqar Ali Shah
Quaid-e-Azam University

جره‌نی

سفراتجانه وفاقى جمهوريه اسلام آباد کاسه مائى معلومات عامه

جرنى - ۲۰۰۱ء

جلد ۴۰

