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## “A Damnable Blaze”: John Loader Maffey, the North-West Frontier and the Abduction of Mollie Ellis, 1919 – 1923’

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### ABSTRACT

On 14 April 1923, an attack upon the bungalow of Major Ellis in Kohat on India’s North-West Frontier, resulted in the murder of Mrs Ellis and the abduction of their seventeen-year-old daughter, Mollie. Led by Ajab Khan Afridi, the abductors, fled into the independent territory of the Tirah Jowaki. The North-West Frontier represented a contested and strategically sensitive frontier open to both Russian encroachment and the machinations of the Amir of Afghanistan, whilst the Pathan tribal inhabitants were simultaneously characterised as ‘savages’ and independent warriors. Mollie Ellis’s abduction brought into sharp relief the governance and security of the region that pivoted on John Loader Maffey as Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province. Using the hitherto unpublished collection of papers and letters from Maffey to his wife, Dorothy Gladys Huggins, an assessment of the political, strategic and financial limits of British power through the lens of the man on the ground will be possible. In the final assessment, the abduction of Mollie Ellis demonstrated that Britain’s existence on this strategically sensitive frontier rested upon an uneasy coexistence between the Afghan Amir, the Frontier tribes and the limits of imperial endurance in both Delhi and London.

### KEYWORDS

British Empire; North-West Frontier; Mollie Ellis; John Maffey; abduction; Afghanistan; India

## Introduction

The end of the First World War and Britain’s acquisition of German and Ottoman territory saw Britain’s imperial reach extend over one-quarter of the globe. The defeat of her imperial rivals, however, papered over deep-rooted weaknesses. As John Gallagher writes: ‘Once the British Empire became world-wide, the sun never set upon its crises’.<sup>1</sup> Four years of war had left Britain financially weakened, fearing social unrest and grappling with a new international order. Bolshevism and Woodrow Wilson’s dictum of national self-determination transformed the political landscape and it was

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against this backdrop that the Empire was confronted with a series of crises between 1919 and 1922. In response to the Irish War of Independence; the Amritsar massacre; the Third Anglo-Afghan War; the Egyptian revolution; the Kurdish and Shi'ite insurrection against the British Army of occupation in Mesopotamia; and Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi's non-co-operation movement, British rule adapted. Southern Ireland was granted dominion status in 1921; the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 conceded a substantial measure of control over provincial government to Indian politicians; the Hashemite Prince Feisal was installed as King of Iraq in August 1921; and Egypt received nominal independence in 1922. John Darwin argues that these British responses 'were all designed to knock out the props'<sup>2</sup> supporting these nationalist challenges to Britain's position and demonstrates that 'considerations of imperial defence preserved an iron grip on the strategic imagination of ministers and their advisers'.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the collapse of Imperial Russia in 1917, British policymakers were provided little respite over the security of the North-West Frontier. The conquest of the Sind province in 1843 and the annexation of the Punjab between 1845 and 1849 by forces of the East India Company brought the British into contact with a plethora of predominantly Pashtun groups that inhabited the mountainous region between the Punjab and Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> Pathans who had lived under the distinct Sikh rule of Ranjit Singh's northwest state were transferred to regular British administration. These areas would form the 'settled districts' of Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. In the areas of Buner, Dir, Swat, Malakand, Bajaur, Khyber, Tirah, Kurram and Waziristan, Sikh rule had only exercised token control and consisted of 'independent' Pathan tribal populations of Mohmands, Afridis,<sup>5</sup> Orakzai, Wazirs and Mahsuds. Geographically, these regions comprised of a labyrinth of mountains and valleys. It was in this zone that successive governments in London and its representatives in Delhi and on the Frontier itself vacillated between the 'close border' and 'forward' schools of thought. 'Close border' advocates maintained that British rule should stop at the Indus River, where British economic and military power could form an impenetrable defensive system founded upon armed deterrence and underpinned by a society which bound together colonial rulers and indigenous subjects. It was held that this method of rule would resist the twin threats of intrigues promulgated by internal nationalist agitators on the one hand, and external enemies inciting unrest amongst the tribes, on the other. The 'forward' school, however, believed that a scientific line stretching from Kabul to Khandahar would be more effective, enabling British India to confront external threats at their source by projecting authority beyond its natural and administrative borders. This school of thought enjoyed a revival in the mid-1870s under the Conservative administration of Benjamin Disraeli (February 1874 – April 1880) in response to concerns over Russian moves toward Afghanistan

and resulted in the extension of British administration into Baluchistan in 1877 and the Second Anglo-Afghan War of 1878.

A perennial source of concern to British policymakers was the influence of the Afghan Amir over the frontier tribes. In an attempt to mitigate this unease, Sir Henry Durand, India Foreign Secretary, undertook a mission to Kabul in 1893 in order to delineate British and Afghan spheres of influence. The result was a 1,900-mile-long boundary known as the Durand Line that ran from the Persian Frontier to the Wakhan.<sup>6</sup> Its construction, however, did little to stem the level of tribal unrest in what was now British tribal territory, it represented an incongruous effort to transform an open frontier into a border, something that was to further bedevil British policymaking in the region. The appointment of Lord Curzon as Viceroy in 1899 heralded a further significant change in frontier policy. Curzon's extensive travels through Central Asia necessarily meant that he was mindful of the Russian threat and the bearing this had on policy formulation whilst also anxious over increasing military expenditure along the Frontier.<sup>7</sup> Curzon, therefore, sought to both streamline frontier policy whilst simultaneously reducing frontier costs with the creation of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in 1901. The 'settled' frontier districts of Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan were separated from the Punjab to constitute the NWFP. The tribal areas adjacent to these settled districts were also incorporated into the NWFP and either made into tribal agencies – Malakand, Khyber, Kurram and North (Tochi) and South (Wana) Waziristan – or recognised as independent tribal territory, such as the Tirah and Mohmand areas. These agencies and tribal territories were overseen by a Political Agent or Deputy Commissioner who, with the exception of Malakand, had no administrative duties. The Political Agents were to serve as a conduit between the independent tribes and the Government of India, thereby recognising the tribes as independent entities. All regular army units were withdrawn from the tribal belt and replaced by tribal levies (*khassadars*) and irregular scout units.<sup>8</sup> Tribal allowances, however, were maintained and continued to be distributed by tribal *jirgas* (councils). These payments were to provide pledges against the formation of *lashkars* (war parties) from attacking the settled areas through looting, arson, murder and kidnapping of British subjects.<sup>9</sup> At a local level, Curzon's reforms ended the strategy of the forward school and ushered in a 'modified closed border'.

A British victory brought the Third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919 to a swift end. The failure of Curzon's militias, however, coupled with continuing tribal unrest particularly in Waziristan by two of its principal tribes (the Wazirs and the Mahsuds) throughout 1919 and 1920, underscored the failure of the 'modified closed border' and the need for a revised approach. Indeed, as George Roos-Keppel, the experienced Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province between 1908 and 1919, commented that the Afghan

Amir had 'lit a fire [amongst the tribes] which will give us lots of trouble before we can put it out'.<sup>10</sup> Military opinion had long held that the only way to exercise control over the tribesmen was the domination of Waziristan coupled with extensive road construction.<sup>11</sup> The joint military and political committee of the India Office 'strongly supported' the Government of India's proposals for the occupation of Waziristan 'provided it is intended to be really permanent, and to mark the beginning of a definite and declared civilising policy'.<sup>12</sup> Whilst the present moment was judged to be financially 'inopportune [...] if considerations of policy are held to justify the forward movement' no financial objection was made to the proposals.<sup>13</sup> As Tim Moreman describes, the North-West Frontier 'combined a local and immediate problem of raiding and tribal control with a serious perceived external threat from Imperial Russia and Afghanistan'.<sup>14</sup> This was the circle that both the Political Officers of the Indian Government and Military Officers of the British and Indian Armies attempted to square.

The aim of this article, therefore, is to examine how policymakers responded to the new geo-political and strategic realities of the post-war world. John Loader Maffey, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier between 1921 and 1924, played a pivotal role in navigating this altered reality. Whatever the machinations between London and Delhi, between the Political and Military chiefs, it was the Chief Commissioner who was responsible for the day-to-day administration of the province and for responding to events. The abduction of Mollie Ellis, the seventeen-year-old daughter of Major Archibald Jenner Ellis, from their bungalow in Kohat cantonment adjacent to the Commanding General's, where there was a military guard, exposes the fragility of the British presence in this zone. It will, therefore, provide a lens through which to examine the foundations on which British frontier policy making were built; the political, strategic and financial limits of British power; and how, ultimately, the British position within the zone rested upon an uneasy coexistence between the Afghan Amir, the Frontier tribes and the limits of imperial endurance. For the first time, a detailed examination of the central figure of Maffey's thoughts and actions will be possible through his collection of papers and letters to his wife, Dorothy Gladys Huggins, and still held privately by the family. Access to these hitherto unexplored private thoughts and fears permits an evaluation of the role and actions of Maffey himself as well as the response of Maffey vis-à-vis his political and military superiors. Finally, the response to Mollie Ellis's abduction and its aftermath will demonstrate the bankruptcy of Frontier policy with the resumption of the cat and mouse game between Afghanistan, the Frontier tribes, and the British Raj.

### **The Abduction of Mollie Ellis and the North-West Frontier**

On 14 April 1923 it was reported that an attack had occurred at the bungalow of Major Ellis of the Kohat Station. Mrs Ellis had been murdered whilst Mollie

Ellis, the seventeen-year-old daughter, was kidnapped after her attempts to raise the alarm were drowned out by a violent storm. With Mollie Ellis secured, the abductors headed eastwards in the direction of Khush Algarh, reaching the hills east of Kohat and Kotal and south of the Peshawar-Kohat road. After laying hidden for the first day, the party continued their journey, frequently hiding in caves and ravines until, on the fifth day, they reached the independent tribal territory of the Tirah Jowaki. Whilst Maffey did not know the exact whereabouts, he believed Mollie was being held in the closely adjoining mountain strongholds of either Ajab Khan Bosti Khel or Sultan Mir Tirah Jowaki. He commented: 'this Kohat affair has lurched me sideways. I spent the day there directly after the tragedy. Then I have been moving things from the Khyber side and now dash back to Kohat tomorrow. It's a bloody business [...] nothing can make such a sordid affair anything but a bad show'.<sup>15</sup> He hypothesised: 'I suppose the idea is to hold the girl as a hostage for their own pardon and for the release of their relations in jail'.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the motivation for the abduction was believed to have been a police raid in February 1922 by the Frontier Constabulary which seized rifles and other articles that linked Ajab Khan and his brother Shahzada to the murder of Colonel and Mrs Foulkes in 1920. Ajab Khan and Shahzada had attempted to conceal the rifles by disguising themselves as women. The Frontier Constabulary, however, entered the women's quarters and revealed the concealment. Ajab Khan and Shahzada were taunted by the Afridi women for allowing this insult upon their sex and the brothers vowed their revenge.<sup>17</sup>

British conception of tribal culture infused with the idea of communal responsibility inevitably fed into the nature of British rule. The soft power or influence of the political officers alongside the military or hard power institution of collective punishment in the form of blockades, punitive expeditions and aerial bombardments were methods by which the British encouraged the tribes to work as their proxies. Mollie Ellis' abduction was no different and tribal pressure was mobilised. 'The whole countryside and troops are co-operating in efforts to trace the culprits' – roads and passes were blocked to ensure that any attempt to move Mollie Ellis would be unsuccessful. Although the situation was complicated by the beginning of Ramadan, Maffey advised: 'For the present we must now let our tribal pressure work. It has been stimulated on all sides and we can only hope for the best. If it fails, the position will be serious'.<sup>18</sup> More forceful methods 'we naturally have in mind notably against the Pass Afridis. But all their Elders and jirgas are away endeavouring to secure the release of Miss Ellis [...] and any] precipitate action might in fact endanger Miss Ellis'.<sup>19</sup>

Mollie Ellis' abduction underlined how the North-West Frontier region confronted the British with an imperial conundrum. In terms of Britain's global empire, the contested border was a strategically sensitive frontier open to Russian encroachment and the machinations of the Amir of Afghanistan

whilst the Pathan tribal inhabitants of this region were simultaneously characterised as ‘savages’ and independent warriors. The governance and security of such a region thereby necessitated a close collaboration between the Political officers of the Indian Civil Service and the Military commanders of the Indian Army. This relationship was often one of an uneasy alliance even more so after the First World War as financial resources, rising nationalist activities and tribal violence increasingly threatened the British Raj from within. In efforts to secure Britain’s strategic border and normalise relations with the autonomous tribes of the frontier, Christian Tripodi has argued that ‘it was not a lack of understanding, naïve ethnocentrism, Pashtun culture or tribal politicking’ that prevented the acquiescence of tribes to this political control ‘but a lack of policy and a lack of power’.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in *Edge of Empire* (2011) Tripodi reminds us that both the indigenous clans and Political officers were far more complex as individuals, their relationship occupying a far more nuanced space than perhaps the overly romanticised and caricatured ideals have portrayed.<sup>21</sup>

Maffey wears well the picture of an institutionalised figure that Tripodi paints. Appointed Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province in 1921, Maffey had succeeded Alfred Hamilton Grant. As Chief Commissioner, Maffey oversaw the daily administration of the province and reported directly to the Foreign Secretary of the Government of India. Born in Rugby on 1 July 1877, Maffey was educated at Rugby School and a scholar of Christ Church, Oxford. He entered the Indian Civil Service on 1 November 1900 and transferred to the political department in 1905.<sup>22</sup> Maffey’s transfer to this elite company was accompanied by glowing references from his superiors in the Government of the United Provinces. He was described as ‘manly and a gentleman, with pleasant manners and good common sense [... and] fitted for political employ’. In an accompanying questionnaire on Maffey’s attributes it was noted that he ‘is of very active habits. Keen on shooting and fishing. Plays a good game at cricket and was in his school eleven and so generally above the average in proficiency in manly sports [...] Is quite up to the average in horsemanship or perhaps a little above it’. Maffey was also perceived as being very popular with his ‘brother British officers [...] and also with those Natives of India [...] The former like him for his invariable good temper and pleasant manners and I have never heard the latter speak other than well of him [...] I believe him to be incapable of doing an ungentlemanly act’.<sup>23</sup> That being said, Maffey was not afraid to challenge both his political and military superiors.

Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading, succeeded Lord Chelmsford as Viceroy on 2 April 1921 and whilst the occupation of Central Waziristan, in conjunction with the necessary military measures and road construction, had been agreed as the best method of pacification of the region and of protecting the frontier in March 1920, by late 1921 and early 1922, financial stringency forced a reconsideration of frontier policy. At the same time, Henry Dobbys, Foreign Secretary



to the Government of India between 1919 and 1923, had been despatched to Kabul in the spring of 1920 to secure an agreement with the Amir of Afghanistan. The negotiations were seemingly interminable and the question of the frontier received short shrift from Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff between 1918 and 1922. In writing to Henry Rawlinson, Commander-in-Chief in India, Wilson stated:

Just as in the old days I never could see any use in the Afghans being a buffer state between us and the Russians, and then our having between ourselves and that buffer state a lot of turbulent tribes; just as in those days I always thought that our frontier and the Afghan frontier should be coterminous, so now that the Afghans are an independent people, made so by this wonderful Government of ours, I think that our frontiers should be coterminous with theirs, and, as regards our treatment of the Afghans, I am afraid that like all other people, black and white, deep down in their hearts they only believe in force. If they are more afraid of the Bolsheviks than they are us, and they are, then so much the greater shame for us. It puts the British Empire very low when we admit that the Bolsheviks can force a Treaty on the Afghans [the Afghans initialled an agreement with Moscow in March 1920] against our interests and we are unable to force a Treaty on the Afghans against the Bolshevik interest!<sup>24</sup>

A Frontier Committee was appointed to advise on policy for Waziristan. It comprised of: Baron Henry Seymour Rawlinson, Commander-in-Chief of India; Major-General Sir Andrew Skeen, Commander of the Waziristan Field Force between 1920 and 1921; Sir John Loader Maffey, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, Sir Armine Dew, Chief Commissioner of Baluchistan, Sir Henry Dobbs, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India between 1919 and 1923 and the Chief British Representative in Kabul in 1921, Sir Denys Bray, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, and Sir Steuart Pears, Resident for Waziristan between 1922 and 1923. The Committee were unanimous in their conclusion that the only real solution to the Waziristan problem was the permanent occupation and domination up to the Durand Line. Since this was, however, financially impossible, three alternative schemes were presented with the third option, the so-called Razmak scheme, as the preferred choice.<sup>25</sup> The Razmak scheme satisfied no one. Malcolm Hailey, the Finance member, advocated the complete withdrawal of regular troops from Waziristan whilst the Razmak scheme was judged to be a reversion to the old militia system which had broken down so disastrously at the beginning of the Third Anglo-Afghan War. London was also less than impressed and after consulting with Dobbs, Major-General Sir Archibald Montgomery, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, India, and the Military Departments of the India Office,<sup>26</sup> Arthur Hirtzel, deputy under-secretary at the India Office, advised Montagu that the Razmak scheme ought to be rejected. The India Office communicated their decision not to abandon the present policy of the occupation of Waziristan to the Viceroy on 22 February 1922.



The resignation of Montagu from the India Office on 9 March 1922, following his decision to publish the Indian Government's critical views of Britain's policies in Asia Minor, temporarily suspended the Waziristan debate. Montagu was replaced by Earl William Robert Peel as Secretary of State for India on 19 March 1922. This flux at home permitted a certain amount of consolidation on the frontier itself. Whilst in Rawalpindi for the Prince of Wales's tour, Rawlinson instructed both Major-General Sir Andrew Skeen, General Officer Commanding, Peshawar (1920-1922) and Major-General Torquil Matheson of the Waziristan Field Force, to continue on the assumption that regular forces would, at least, remain at Razmak. To Rawlinson, the recent disturbances at Wana was clear proof that levies and *khassadars* would not succeed unless regular troops were close at hand to provide support.<sup>27</sup> In April 1922 Peel considered the issue of Waziristan. The Committee of Imperial Defence Sub-Committee on Indian Military Requirements declared a preference for a full scheme of control of Waziristan and Peel himself emphasised that his decision had to take into account the 'uncertainty of our future relations with Afghanistan, and the general unsettlement throughout the Middle East, on the frontier, and in India'.<sup>28</sup> For Peel, the only scheme that afforded a sufficient guarantee of success and therefore any hope of economy in the future and the possible reduction in the strength of the Army, was the permanent control of Waziristan by military occupation. Peel declared it 'a fixed policy'.<sup>29</sup>

London's directive to continue with the occupation of Waziristan landed as a 'bomb-shell to the Council'.<sup>30</sup> London's hard-line was certainly down, in part, to Rawlinson's influential network within Whitehall, particularly on a Secretary of State just beginning to get to grips with his new job. Indeed, Rawlinson noted the work of Montgomery in London.

It is perfectly obvious that the orders of the Secretary of State [...] are the result very largely of the work that you and the 'rat' [Colonel Sidney F Muspratt] have been putting in at the India Office, and nobody appreciates this more than Sir Malcolm Hailey. [...] We called each other bad names in Council yesterday, and I do not intend to have anything more to do with him [...]<sup>31</sup>

For Rawlinson, Hailey was the leader of the opposition to the permanent control of Waziristan, and he was relieved Hailey was 'on his way home on three months' leave. He is a low fellow, and far from straight [...] I shall be heartily glad to have him out of the country for the next four months'.<sup>32</sup>

If Rawlinson thought he had secured some respite over the Frontier issue, he was mistaken. In August 1922, Maffey submitted a striking indictment of Frontier policy. Maffey's submission, an apparent *volte-face* to his earlier agreement of the occupation of Waziristan by the Frontier Committee, came as an unwelcome surprise and since Waziristan would be handed over from Army to civilian control, his opinion could not be disregarded. In Frontier policy, Maffey perceived a major problem and a minor problem. The major problem was 'of

Afghanistan, of Russia, of Bogeys, white, black and yellow – the riddle of the future, imminent or remote'. The minor problem, as Maffey saw it, was the belt of independent tribal territory, claimed but not held by Britain: 'We have got ourselves involved in the minor area on some vague theory that our position there would strengthen our arm against the major and more distant danger'.<sup>33</sup> In essence, Maffey believed that 'the freer you are from tribal trammels, the less powerful will be the blow of the outer enemy and the more readily will you parry it'.<sup>34</sup> For Maffey an occupation of Waziristan was not the answer. Instead, he proposed to keep clear of tribal areas, and hold it by good roads, the recreation of the Frontier Constabulary Force well served by sound communications and in touch with military garrisons. 'Our internal operations have not cured the Frontier Sore, but inflamed it. Well, give up surgery and try a poultice'.<sup>35</sup> This assessment of Frontier policy by Maffey certainly provides, as Tripodi argues, a 'reasoned response' to the British 'colonial encounter on the North-West Frontier'.<sup>36</sup> In fact, the Mollie Ellis case is a useful example of how the methods employed by the Politicals on the North-West Frontier – mediating through indigenous political systems, the payment of allowances, recruitment and use of indigenous policing units and the engagement of British military and air power against recalcitrant tribes – 'served to provide a relatively effective response to the problems of the tribes and the wider complexities associated with preservation of British rule in India'.<sup>37</sup>

What is interesting is that the North-West Frontier transforms into a region where every colonial official becomes 'a sort of frontline soldier against an endlessly insurrectionary colonial adversary, and where any means were justifiable in order to preserve the state against the enemy'.<sup>38</sup> This begs the question of how do you delineate between military personnel stationed on the Frontier for the fundamental purpose of defending India from outside aggression and the suppression of tribal uprisings through the use of force, as opposed to the Political officers whose purpose was to maintain the Raj's relationship with the indigenous tribes and to ensure smooth relations with the Amir of Afghanistan via civil means? That the line was very much blurred resulted in a real tension in the civil-military relationship. The expanded frontiers of the British empire post-First World War and the 'shift to controlling vast subject populations and guarding troubled imperial frontiers' necessarily required the 'development of new military skills and training to maintain law and order'.<sup>39</sup> As Moreman makes clear the 'sheer diversity of conditions encountered in the Empire and the short duration of most campaigns made it difficult to formulate lessons of universal and lasting importance'.<sup>40</sup> The Third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919 and the Waziristan Campaign of 1919–1920 are such examples leading Colonel Frederick Keen to state:

when adopting new weapons and new methods we must be careful that in achieving the purely military object, they do not endanger the more important political object [...] Coercion must be used as a stepping-stone to control.<sup>41</sup>

In considering the relationship between measures of military and political control, Elizabeth Kolsky focuses upon the race-gender hierarchy that permeated the contested imperial space of the frontier. Kolsky, in her article, also uses the abduction of Mollie Ellis as a representation of an ‘assault on the fictive image of white, male invincibility’.<sup>42</sup> Drawing upon the theory put forward by Sociologist Robb Willer to reconceptualise ‘our understanding of the colonial obsession with frontier security as an example of “masculine over-compensation”’, Kolsky argues that the ‘need to preserve a fictive image of white, male invincibility on the frontier, to sustain the “bluff” that was colonialism in the face of perceived masculinity threats, led colonial officials to overdo gender in ways that led to extreme violence’.<sup>43</sup> With this framework in mind, the use of Maffey’s personal letters to his wife provides a valuable lens to assess the imperial mind and the language of force in response to the tribal testing of British authority on this contested frontier.

### The Rescue of Mollie Ellis

A few days following her abduction, Mollie Ellis was able to send a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel C E Bruce, District Commissioner, Kohat, to say she was ‘alive and fairly well, but very weak from living on bread and potatoes’. The letter also detailed the demands of her captors:

I am in a village N.W. of the Samana. My captors tell me that the D.C. at Peshawar has offered a ransom for me. Is it true? If so, they are after it. They also want three or four men you took in connection with those rifles [a large number of stolen police rifles had been discovered] the other day. What can you do for me? If anything, will you comply with their terms at Hangu, as it is the nearest place from here. Could you give the bearer of this chit some warm clothes for me – coat, shoes and breeches – a skirt is no use to me, the way I shall have to travel.<sup>44</sup>

Mollie Ellis was unaware that her mother had been murdered. A further letter was received from her the very next day (21 April) acknowledging the basket of provisions and clothes from Major Heale and a chit ‘saying that he hopes to get my release soon’.<sup>45</sup> An increasing sense of desperation permeated this letter. The tribesmen now also demanded four sets of bedding ‘a ridiculous request, but what am I to do?’ She continued: ‘they are very threatening and won’t let me go till they have these things and money. They are frightening me more than ever and I am afraid I shall never get out of this. I can’t quite make out what they say, so I may be imagining worse than it is’.<sup>46</sup>

Maffey recognised that in independent tribal territory, no army could save Mollie Ellis - it may even precipitate her ill-treatment or ensure that she would be taken further into independent territory. One of the principal difficulties was to obtain accurate information as to her whereabouts. Maffey formulated a three-tiered scheme. First, Zaman Khan, one of the leading khans from the Khyber, had been despatched from Peshawar to raise a *lashkar*

from the local Afridi clans. His object was to bring pressure to bear upon the tribes to prevent the abductors from moving Mollie Ellis further into Afghanistan and, if necessary, 'to cut them off and to capture her by force'.<sup>47</sup> Second, on Thursday 19 April Khan Bahadur Kuli Khan, Political Assistant at Kurram, and accompanied by a representative deputation of elders from the Kurram valley left Sadda for Khanki Bazaar, the home of the influential Mullah Mahmud Akkundzake. Kuli Khan was able to secure an audience with the Mullah Mahmud and confirmed the rumours that Mollie Ellis was being held by Ajab Khan and his brother Shahzada of the Bosti-Khels in Khanki.<sup>48</sup> The third, and final, aspect of Maffey's plan involved Mrs Lilian Agnes Starr. Maffey wrote, 'after the anxiety and impotence of last week things are at last moving [...] It was an infernal conundrum, but I do really think I may claim to having had a little "imagination". I put in my thumb and pulled out a plumb [in the form of] Mrs Starr'.<sup>49</sup> Mrs Lilian Agnes Vernon H Starr was a well-known missionary sister attached to the Church Missionary Society Hospital in Peshawar. She had joined the hospital in 1913 and two years later married Dr Vernon Harold Starr, head of the hospital. Dr Starr, however, had been murdered on 17 March 1919, stabbed to death by two assassins who had come to his bungalow at midnight on the pretext of medical relief. Lilian Starr had returned to the mission hospital in December 1920.<sup>50</sup> Maffey approached Mrs Starr and asked whether she would be willing to form part of a rescue party to secure the release of Mollie Ellis. The inclusion of a woman within the rescue party would, have a 'very real political effect' in the projection of imperial power and the nature of British rule. Lilian Starr replied that she was 'only too glad' to be of use.<sup>51</sup> Maffey himself recorded that Lilian Starr agreed to anything likely to help 'her trust and pluck are extraordinary'.<sup>52</sup>

A rescue mission comprising of Lilian Starr, Rissaldar Mogal Baz Khan, Maffey's personal assistant,<sup>53</sup> and a number of Orakzai tribal members was formed. As the mission was being planned Maffey reported that there was 'no end of cold feet, official and tribal. But I meant to see it through'.<sup>54</sup> On Friday 20 April at 8am, Lilian Starr joined Maffey in the car as they travelled the ninety miles from Peshawar to the border. By 5pm on the same day, Maffey separated from the rescue party. 'It gave me a lump in the throat to see the cavalcade go on. The Rissaldar (stout fellow) riding ahead, then Mrs Starr; then the son of the Mulla of Karbagha in long white robes, also riding; and the armed rabble of Orakzais going with them. A loud "Coo-ee!!!" from us at the last bend of the road and they were out of sight'.<sup>55</sup>

After the first night at a friendly village, the rescue party met with reluctance on the part of the tribesmen to facilitate their journey any further. Indeed, the Mullah Mahmud had despatched a letter ordering them back. They pushed on regardless and the party reached Khanki Bazaar on the night of 21 April. Also on 21 April, Kuli Khan had persuaded the Mullah Mahmud to coerce the Afridi tribesmen

to surrender Mollie Ellis to his safe-keeping, pending negotiations. The following day, 22 April, was passed in a large *jirga* between elders and officials whilst Mollie Ellis alternatively slept and recounted her experiences to Mrs Starr. Tribal demands were repeated, but there was a growing feeling within the rescue party that since Mollie Ellis was now with them 'we don't mind waiting here rather than they should have all they want [...] even if it is a week or so'.<sup>56</sup> Mollie Ellis herself, was unharmed. As discussions were proceeding, the abductors learned that an Afridi *lashkar* had arrived in their village and were attacking their homes. In response, Shahzada, the suspected murderer of Mrs Ellis, threatened the safety of both Lillian Starr and Mollie Ellis. This action proved to be the turning point. The Mullah Mahmud was enraged at the insult to the sanctity of his roof and publicly cursed Shahzada and his companions. The balance had shifted. The demands for ransom and the concessions of a pardon were abandoned and the surrender of Mollie Ellis was swiftly arranged in exchange for the release of two men from the Bosti-Khel, held in Kohat jail for theft. As soon as news of their release was received, the party set out on their return journey on 23 April. At Shinawari Fort they were greeted by Maffey, Major Ellis and local officers. The following day, the whole party travelled to Peshawar. *The Times* reported that 'much admiration is felt for the bravery which Miss Ellis showed throughout her captivity, for the gallant assistance of Mrs Starr and for the courage and skill of Moghal Bah, Kuli Khan and the other Indian officers who helped them'.<sup>57</sup> Maffey, in a letter to his wife commented: 'It is always hateful to the independent tribes when we stick our finger into their midst. The despatch of a woman was a bit of *ju jitsu* which has thrown them out of their bearings. It establishes our prestige and gives them a chance of regaining some of theirs. "You have shown how damned badly you can behave to a woman. Here's another! See if you can do any better"'.<sup>58</sup> Maffey declared that 'once the party is out, I shall make it my special task to give these bloodthirsty ruffians a whiff of hell'.<sup>59</sup>

Maffey was effusive in his praise of the rescue party, referring to Lillian Starr as 'magnificent' and that what she has done 'ought to live in Frontier history'. He described her last report as a 'fearsome picture – the picture of her, the dainty English nurse, sitting at night in the house of the notorious Mulla[h] Mahmud with a pencil in her hand writing down in English what the Rissaldar [Moghal Baz] is saying and round them the three bloodthirsty ruffians who murdered Mrs Ellis, haggling for terms. (This ought to be done for the Royal Academy!)'.<sup>60</sup> Maffey praised the Rissaldar who had been 'splendid too [...] Any consolation one has been able to draw from this tragedy comes from the pluck of Mrs Starr and the loyalty of men like Rissaldar'.<sup>61</sup>

Lillian Starr was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal for Public Service in India<sup>62</sup> for 'fearless devotion' to the rescue of Mollie Ellis. Maffey had recommended to First Marquess of Reading, Viceroy of India 1921-1927, that Mogul Baz Khan and Kuli Khan each be awarded Rs. 1,000 per month for life. Reading objected.

This seemed to me to be ridiculously out of proportion to the honour granted to Mrs Starr who was most deserving, for not only was she a woman, but was under no obligation to make any movement and, moreover, had herself suffered from tribal crime by the murder some time ago of her husband in her presence. Maffey, who is a splendid officer, was rather emotional and went to the fullest length in praise of her conduct, which I agreed – as did you – and which received its reward from the King. I could not accept the view that his officers, who were under duty to do the utmost they could, should be rewarded in a manner so disproportionate as compared with Mrs Starr. Their conduct nevertheless was most admirable.<sup>63</sup>

Reading held an informal investiture for Lillian Starr, Mogul Baz Khan and Kuli Khan on 5 July and presented them with the Kaisar-i-Hind Gold Medal. He commented that Lillian Starr ‘really is an extraordinary woman, with tremendous grit’. The investiture was ‘very successful and it pleased me very much that these officers will go back full of the honour that has been done to them. We had quite a number of people present both British and Indian’.<sup>64</sup>

### The Aftermath of the Mollie Ellis Affair

Once returned to Government House in Peshawar, the congratulations on Maffey’s efforts were received. The Foreign Department of the Government of India telegraphed:

Your tactics are entirely approved by the Govt of India, and they commend the masterly fashion in which you have enlisted tribal public opinion on the side of the Government, and brought tribal pressure – our most effective weapon now and greatest deterrent for the future – to bear upon the miscreants. [...] We are all tremendously relieved and rejoice in your success.<sup>65</sup>

Maffey recorded the praise from Peel, General Birdwood, commander of the northern army in India, and the Council of the European Association and the like as ‘unexpected and therefore gratifying. It was quite enough to have got the job through. It has ended better than I had hoped for. When first getting the news I motored from Bannu to Kohat, my best hope was to get news that the girl’s body had been found’.<sup>66</sup> Requests from the London press asking for ‘personal narratives’ from those involved flooded in. Maffey noted that these ‘are the bane of my life and theirs [Mrs Starr, Major Ellis and Miss Ellis]’.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, Maffey commented that ‘the Press has been a perfect arse to us all, though more especially to Major Ellis’. Major Ellis had received a telegram from the *Daily Sketch* requesting that he receive their representative at Port Said, on their voyage home, who would ‘present him with a testimonial from the British public! God knows why, except that his wife has been fully murdered’. Mrs Starr did not escape the attention either and was repeatedly cabled to send her “personal narrative” by aeroplane! It is all stark lunacy. The local Press has [also] caught the infection’.<sup>68</sup> Maffey commented that ‘Mrs Starr has become one of the figures of Empire [...] She is a simple little

soul, pathetically grateful to me and rather overwhelmed by it all. We have had a job answering all her telegraphs. Thank God there's a Royal Wedding to attract attention now'.<sup>69</sup> He was less complimentary about Mollie Ellis. '[She] is not attractive to look at, tiny, pale, peaky, with huge black eyes, but lots of character. A marvellous escape!' Maffey reserved, however, his most caustic comments for the murdered Mrs Ellis. 'The one who will be least missed in that family (so I fancy) has been murdered. The link is between Father and Daughter'.<sup>70</sup>

Aside from the media attention, the abduction and rescue of Mollie Ellis prompted a rethink of the establishment of British settlements. For Maffey, the incident highlighted that ill-protected cantonments, such as Kohat, close up against the Frontier hills, required more thought than had been given to them, if British women and children were to be permitted to live there. Maffey noted that 'Kohat is dense with orchards and jungle. It has no proper barbed-wire perimeter. It has no proper lighting arrangements. All this in an age when we are trying to give blow for blow on the Frontier, and when the standards of conduct (particularly regarding the sanctity of women) have slumped back to the dark ages. We have learnt a terrible lesson. Thank Heaven, considering Milly [*sic*] Ellis' miraculous escape from molestation, it might have been worse'.<sup>71</sup> Birdwood was fully supportive of Maffey's suggestions regarding improvements to the cantonments. In writing to the Viceroy, Birdwood commented: 'It now remains for us to try and improve Kohat and Bannu in the way of clearing, lighting and wiring. Alas! It is a very expensive job, but perhaps with Inchape's [Earl Inchape, Chairman of the Indian Retrenchment Committee, 1922] back turned, a few extra rupees may be available'.<sup>72</sup> Reading reported to Peel that a proposal by Maffey was under examination by the Government of India for acquiring thick jungle land just outside the cantonments of Kohat and Bannu and for a much more extensive electric-lighting system under a barbed wire and other protection. The scheme was estimated at about fourteen lakhs, noted as 'a large sum in our present conditions of finance'.<sup>73</sup>

Official opinion regarded the murder of Mrs Ellis and abduction of Mollie Ellis as 'practically unprecedented acts by tribal raiders'.<sup>74</sup> The hidden hand of Afghanistan was suspected, if not in encouraging the crime then, at least, providing shelter to the perpetrators. 'There is no doubt that behind individual motives lies the spirit of fanaticism [...] and the prevalent feeling that the perpetrators of any outrage against the British Government are assured of a welcome and asylum with the Amir [of Afghanistan]'.<sup>75</sup> In many ways, the hard work now began for Maffey. At the beginning of May, Maffey spent two nights in Malakand, on 11 May, he travelled to Kohat in order to hold a *jirga* on the 12 May in order to press 'the Kohat case home [...] The really big cases like this need [...] taking over by oneself, but that is natural enough'.<sup>76</sup> Maffey ordered fifteen aeroplanes over the Orakzai country on 8 May 'as a



gentle demonstration (no bombing yet) and to help produce the right atmosphere for the *jirga*'.<sup>77</sup> The tension between the Chief Commissioner and the Indian Government continued to sour relations between the two and Maffey's lack of faith in the Foreign Department was evident. He complained:

Foreign are, as always, most unhelpful and full of ignorant criticisms. However, I continue to ignore them. They had a fit over Mrs Starr – till it worked out all right. It is sad that there should be this continual clash of methods between Foreign [Government of India] and C[hief] C[ommissioner]. It is an old story. However, we carry on without unpleasantness and that is the chief thing.<sup>78</sup>

Reading certainly praised the conduct and commitment of Maffey commenting 'He is a splendid officer in an emergency of this character'. A caveat was, however, added and Reading judged that Maffey 'is a little apt to be carried away by the excitement of the moment. Of course it is natural enough, when living in the atmosphere of the Frontier and especially with the responsibility of its administration, to jump to conclusions and wish to take drastic action. But of course you and I have to keep our minds calm notwithstanding the horror and indignation aroused in us by these crimes'.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, Maffey had been critical of the British Minister in Kabul, Sir Francis Humphreys and complained of the 'rather too complacent attitude on the part of our Legation at Kabul'.<sup>80</sup> Reading recognised that 'Humphreys will have a very difficult part to play' and advised that 'we must be largely influenced by his views'.<sup>81</sup> In contrast to his assessment of Maffey, Reading described Humphreys as a 'very calm person, [who] rather resisted the Maffey fulminations'.<sup>82</sup>

On 12 May Maffey oversaw 'two pretty hard days with the *jirgas* of Tirah [...] Result a beastly neuralgia head and eye ache'. At Shinawari, Maffey met a representative *jirga* of Khyber Afridis, Kohat Pass Afridi's, Orakzais and southern Jowakis under the political jurisdiction of Kohat, and of Hassan Khel Afridis under the political control of the Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar. The Pitao Alisherzai (Orakzai) under the Kurram Agency were also represented. C E Bruce, Deputy Commissioner, Kohat, and the Political Assistant for Kohat, as well as the Political Agents for Khyber and Kurram were also in attendance.

Maffey underlined the serious nature the Government viewed the Kohat murder and abduction and the grave consequences that would 'inevitably' follow. He called on the tribes to outline what action they proposed to take to exact reparation against the culprits in order to 'clear their own good name'. The Khyber Afridis replied that they had already destroyed the houses of the offenders in the Tirah Jowaki country whilst the Orakzai clans offered their determination not to give shelter to the offenders whose whereabouts they maintained were unknown to them. It was acknowledged that the murderers were in a difficult plight now and were possibly making their way for Afghan Ningrahar. If true, Maffey noted that 'there we can take up the game

with the Amir'. He continued: 'Anyhow they aren't likely to live long [...] We have used the Ellis case to rattle and shake Tirah from end to end'.<sup>83</sup> In an official communication to the Government of India, the link between the 'aerial demonstration' and the attitude of the *jirga* was made explicit. A 'definite improvement' was noted towards the close of the *jirga* 'notably in the case of the Orakzai who found a change of tone in keeping with their situation and surroundings'.<sup>84</sup> Maffey himself commented: 'I have never cursed a *jirga* so beastly in my life. The results were excellent [,] though less attributable to my eloquence than to a flight of 15 aeroplanes which I sent over Tirah 4 days before the pow wow'.<sup>85</sup> The representatives of the Orakzais and Afridis declared that the perpetrators of the murder of Mrs Ellis and abduction of Mollie Ellis: Shahzada Ajob Khan, Hairdar Shah, Punjabi, Gul Akbar and Sultan Mir, who were the Government's enemies were to be enemies of themselves. The tribal representatives also undertook that from now onwards, these men, and their families, would not be permitted to enter their country; if they did so, it would be the duty of the Section concerned to hand them over to the Government. If passage or shelter was provided by any Section or individual of the tribes, the Government would be permitted to take such action as it may think suitable by means of aeroplanes or otherwise.<sup>86</sup> The Afridis and Orakzais in joint *jirgas* and with officials in attendance, also set out to burn and destroy every tenement which the perpetrators had occupied during their retreat. Fines were also imposed as a form of punishment against the tribal sections that provided passage or harbourage to the offenders.

Satisfied with the progress made so far, Maffey wrote '[T]his is all really better than war. Under severe strain and much humiliation the tribal organisation has been made to work for us', adding wryly, 'But because I am satisfied, it doesn't follow that other people will be'.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the Indian Government, whilst on the whole were happy with the developments, noting that the 'Afridi-Orakzai *jirga* seems to have shaken the local outlaws', questions were raised over the emphasis placed on air control. 'The aerial demonstrations over Tirah is repeatedly stated to have had an excellent "lowering" effect: but it is almost equally constantly stated to have been very deeply resented'.<sup>88</sup> An interesting comment when placed into the context of cuts to the Indian army and the RAF's contention that they could take over the policing of the Frontier. In writing to Peel, Reading informed him that Maffey had just concluded a *jirga* with the Pass Afridis and 'he seems to have achieved remarkable success and must have handled the Maliks and tribesmen with great skill and with impressive severity'.<sup>89</sup> Regardless, in the autumn of 1923, the Government of India was considering him 'for some other post than that of Chief Commissioner of the North-West Province'.<sup>90</sup>

Following the *jirga* at Shinawari on 12 and 13 May, a representative party of Afridi Maliks and elders proceeded to the Tirah Jowaki country to search for the perpetrators of the Ellis abduction. While passing through the Orakzai

country, they learnt that they had fled after the aeroplane demonstrations on 8 May. A thorough search of the Jowaki country was conducted, but nothing was found. A *jirga* of the Alisherzai and Memozai Orakzai on 16 May at Garands decided to destroy the residence of Mian Hazrat Gul who had provided shelter for the perpetrators at Ghuza Ghund in their flight from Khanki Bazar. Hazrat Gul initially resisted but realising he was powerless against the assembled *lashkar*, he vacated his village which was then completely destroyed by the tribesmen. Soon after, it was learnt that the Mullah Mahmud Akhunzada had sent men with the fugitives as far as Wazin (near Bagh) and had handed them over to Sayed Anwar. Sayed Anwar, known as the Chief Afghan Agent in Tirah who collected and accompanied Afghan allowance holders to Jalalabad, escorted the perpetrators to Mandati, near Nazian, via Ghunza, Jowaki country, Wazin, Dwa Toi, Dwa Khula and Salemi. The group had travelled at night only and avoided all settlements.<sup>91</sup>

With the main groups of the Afridis and Orakzais settled, Maffey now had to face 'the concrete problem of the Pass Afridis, the dear Bosti Khel',<sup>92</sup> the principal offenders in the Ellis case. Maffey employed the usual Frontier tactics. 'Having now isolated them, I trust, and scared everybody else I have made arrangements to move in a military force from Kohat on 22 [May] into the Pass'.<sup>93</sup> In spite of the perpetrators having left the Bosti Khel country, the military force would, nonetheless, 'blow up all their towers, take a fine of 50,000 rupees (which means all their lands will be sold), forbid "outlaws" forever in the Adam Khel country, put telephone and telegraph lines through the Pass and broaden the road'. Three *khassadar* posts were also to be added on the road itself.<sup>94</sup> The tense relationship between Maffey and the Government of India was once again on display. 'I have told the Govt. of India I am going to do this. It remains to be seen whether they will try and interfere. They continue to be tiresome, but on the whole I can't complain. You will be amused at some of our examples of correspondence. I hope (and think) that there will not be any fighting'.<sup>95</sup>

On 21 May, Maffey presided over a full *jirga* of the Adam Khel clans at Kohat. He secured an undertaking, signed by their maliks, for: payment of a fine of fifty thousand rupees; the destruction of the fortified village of Ajab Khan and his relatives and Kawan Khan who had been implicated in the Foulkes murder of 1920;<sup>96</sup> the expulsion of all outlaws, except those who have married and settled quietly in Afridi country and for whose future good behaviour the maliks could give adequate assurance; an undertaking to harbour no outlaws in the future; admission of unfettered rights of the Government in the event of any sort of crime being traced to the Pass Afridis, or to outsiders living with them, to take any steps necessary, including counter-raids, search and arrest to recover property and to bring offenders to justice; admission of the Government's right to widen the road through the Pass; immediate erection of a telephone and telegraph line through the Pass from

Peshawar to Kohat with intermediate telephone stations; and the location of a small force of *khassadars* at three posts inside the Pass. To support this political settlement with military might, an armed force advanced from Kohat on 22 May to Kohat Kotal. The tribesmen, as agreed, burned down the houses of Ajab Bosh Khel and Kawan Khan.<sup>97</sup> As Maffey returned to Peshawar through the Pass, he himself witnessed the 'Bosti Khel houses and towns [...] blazing merrily, the Afridis themselves doing the job'.<sup>98</sup> The agreement Maffey had reached and the subsequent action elicited no comment from the Government of India. Maffey commented: 'No word from the G[overnment] of I[ndia] about my Tirah *jirga*. Nor about my little war in the Kohat Pass on 22nd. I suppose they have wisely decided to leave me alone and to jump on me only if things go wrong'.<sup>99</sup>

### The Murderers and Afghanistan

The perpetrators had fled to Afghanistan. Maffey attempted to exert 'all the squeeze I can put on the Amir by the Foreign Office. If we could only finish that bit of the business off it would be a grand slam. Somehow or other, we shall do it'.<sup>100</sup> For Maffey he had 'swept my front door clean. It remains for the Govt. of India and that namby pampy Humphreys to grasp the nettle. To encourage them I telegraph daily that lives of British officers on the Frontier are in danger till the Amir arrests the scoundrels. It worries them and it is true'.<sup>101</sup> In fact, the Amir's perceived inaction led to a significant amount of tension between Humphreys and Maffey. This tension was largely the result of a lack of timely communication between Maffey and Humphreys as events unfolded. Hirtzel commented that it was 'rather disturbing' that Humphreys had not received an official report on the Kohat outrage until 18 May'.<sup>102</sup> The India Office itself commented that much of the acrimonious correspondence between Humphreys and Maffey 'seems unnecessary',<sup>103</sup> and that it was 'not very edifying correspondence'. The India Office recognised that:

It has indeed been a complication of the rather involved three-sided telegraphic correspondence on this subject between the Minister at Kabul, the C.C.N.W.F and the G. of I. that acid comments of the first, on the second and *vice versa*, and interpretations of the third of what the first two did mean or should have meant have been interpreted in official messages.<sup>104</sup>

Regardless of the recriminations between Maffey and Humphreys, bringing the perpetrators to heel was not going to be easy. Progress on the collection of fines imposed on the Pass Afridis in connection with the Ellis case was slow and the Bosti Khel, despite the agreement reached, failed to pay their share by the due date.<sup>105</sup> British authorities in Kabul were increasingly unconvinced by Afghan attempts at co-operation in bringing the perpetrators, who had taken refuge in Afghanistan, to justice or to halt Afghan intrigue among the tribes on the

British side of the Durand Line. The British Minister in Kabul concluded that the Afghan attitude in its fulfilment of the 22 November 1921 Treaty of Neighbourly Relations between Britain and Afghanistan 'had been deliberately changed for the worst', from 1922 which had 'apparently been sincerely friendly, if not productive'.<sup>106</sup> As a result, the Government of India took the first in a series of steps designed to convince the Afghan Government that Britain would be prepared to sever diplomatic ties. The question of taking effective measures against the perpetrators remained under active discussion between the Afghan and British authorities but, up until the end of 1923 'conclusive evidence of a whole-hearted determination to co-operate with the authorities on the British side of the frontier in hunting down the gang has not been forthcoming'.<sup>107</sup> During the summer of 1923, British officials also 'established' that the Afghan authorities, who consistently attempted to maintain a connection with the 'hostile' elements amongst the tribes on the British side of the frontier, were found to have developed a system whereby these elements in Waziristan were regularly paid as members of an irregular Afghan force employed in British territory.

Following several protests against the Afghan failure to arrest the perpetrators of the Ellis case, the British Government exercised its treaty rights and refused transit through India of a consignment of munitions purchased in France. This was followed by a formal note on 11 November demanding proof of Afghanistan's 'neighbourly' intentions. With no result, at the beginning of December, Humphreys, intimated informally that, failing early satisfaction of these demands, the British Legation at Kabul would be withdrawn. To demonstrate that this was not merely an empty threat, the women of the British community were sent down to India. This cumulative pressure appeared to bear fruit as the Afghan Government took more energetic action against the perpetrators. Maffey recorded on 13 June that 'now at least things are moving in Kabul [...] I should dearly love to be still here when the Kohat blighters give us an opening'.<sup>108</sup> Around 12 January 1924, Ajab and two members of the Kohat fugitives surrendered to Afghan forces and were taken to Kabul for ultimate removal to Afghan Turkestan. Sultan Mir and his son Gul Akbar, the two remaining members, took up their abode in Tirah. The harbouring of these men was in direct contravention of the agreement reached at Shinawara on 12 May 1923 but the majority of Afridi opinion was in favour of allowing them to remain.<sup>109</sup> The work of Maffey was ultimately null and void whilst the cat and mouse game between Britain and the tribes on the frontier continued. On the day that Maffey's Indian Civil Service pension was due, he resigned from the service and left the North-West Frontier in 1924.<sup>110</sup>

## Conclusion

The immediate problem over the abduction of Mollie Ellis within the wider strategic context of policy on the North-West Frontier brings into sharp

relief the role of both the political and military officer on, as John S Galbraith defines, Britain's turbulent frontiers. While London did not initiate frontier policy in the wake of the Third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919, it was quite prepared to continue to support the military officers, despite the considerable cost and as against the advice of the political men-on-the-spot. It is rather interesting to note that despite the obvious shortcomings of the Indian military machine during the Mesopotamian campaign and Henry Rawlinson's, Commander-in-Chief, India, chequered performance on the western front, that the military continued to retain a primary position in decision-making on this frontier. The continuation of military dominance in the immediate aftermath of the First World War over policymaking is similarly evident in Egypt with General Sir Edmund Allenby as High Commissioner of Egypt and the Sudan. This dominance is perhaps a reflection of the growth and development of large military centres during the First World War coupled with the desire to 'push-back' against the 'frocks', in the context of continued calls for retrenchment as financial stringency became a reality.

The rescue of Mollie Ellis and the measures taken to punish the tribal authorities following her rescue demonstrate how Britain could project her power across the frontier in the short-term through a combination of political pressure, by utilising the tribal system, and military coercion with the application of air power. Longer-term consequences demonstrate the bankruptcy of British rule. That, despite the superior military technology, the construction of more secure cantonments and the capture of several of the perpetrators of the abduction, Britain could not secure its uncontested influence: two of the perpetrators returned to live in the Tirah country and the raiding of the settled districts resumed. The British underestimated the response and agility of the tribesmen themselves: their ability to evade the potential devastation of aerial warfare by modifying their tactics and the multifaceted nature of the frontier itself is perhaps a lesson that subsequent state-actors have failed to grasp.

## Notes

1. Gallagher, "Nationalisms and the Crisis of Empire," 355.
2. Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline?" 678.
3. *Ibid.*, 660.
4. Washbrook, "India, 1818-1860," 401.
5. The Afridi tribe inhabits the region between the Khyber – Kabul route and the Safed Koh mountains to the west and south of Peshawar. The Afridis were classified into six so-called clans by the British – the Kuki Khel, Kambar Khel, Kamar Khel, Malikdin Khel, Sipah and Zakha Khel. These were collectively known as the Khyber Afridis. The British also classified two outside clans, the Aka Khel who dwelt on the Orakzai border, and Adam Khel, who occupied the mountainous tract projecting into British territory between Peshawar and Kohat. The British identified that the Khyber and Kohat passes were commanded by the Afridis. The British used a

- hierarchical classification that began with the tribe, followed by the clan, the division of the clan, the subdivision of the division, the section of the subdivision and other minor fractions of the section. Murray, *Dictionary of the Pathan Tribes*, p. 6. Also, Agha, "Sub-imperialism and the Loss of the Khyber," 309.
6. Omrani, 'The Durand Line', p. 186.
  7. Curzon had travelled extensively during the late 1880s and early 1890s. A round the world journey in 1887 was followed by a visit to Russia and central Asia in 1888 and 1889, a long tour of Persia in 1889 and 1890, an expedition to the Far East in 1892 and an expedition through the Pamir to Afghanistan in 1894. These travels not only resulted in numerous articles for *The Times* whilst away, but he also authored *Russia in Central Asia* (1889), *Persia and the Persian Question* (1892) and *Problems of the Far East* (1894). These publications, well-received, ensured his reputation as Britain's 'most knowledgeable politician on Asiatic affairs'. D Gilmour, 'Curzon, George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859–1925), politician, traveller, and Viceroy of India', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, January 06, 2011. Oxford University Press. Date of access 11 Sep. 2019. <https://www-oxfordbnd-com.uea.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32680>. See also Tripodi, *Edge of Empire*, chapter 4.
  8. Marsh, *Ramparts of Empire*, pp. 21–25. See also, Tripodi in *Edge of Empire* p. 95 provides a useful summary of the terminology used in relation to frontier paramilitaries. 'The militias were officered by Indian Army officers on secondment (3–5 years with a second tour often undertaken) and recruited from the people in whose country they operated [...] Scouts were technically irregular forces similarly officered but partly recruited from locals and partly elsewhere [...] 'Levies' was the term used in Baluchistan and other administered areas for forces similar to Khassadars (tribal police), raised locally and used as armed police in their own areas', Tripodi, *Edge of Empire*, p. 95.
  9. Beattie, 'Hostages on the Indo-Afghan border', pp. 557–69.
  10. Roos-Keppel to Chelmsford, 3 June 1919, f. 452, Roos-Keppel Papers, MSS EUR D613/3.
  11. Minute by H W Cox, 11 October 1919, IOR L/MIL/7/15939.
  12. Note by the Joint Military and Political Committee, 21 April 1920, IOR/MIL/7/15939.
  13. Memorandum by Montagu, 'The North-West Frontier of India', 30 April 1920, CAB 6/4/116D. See also the note by the Financial Committee, 29–30 April 1920, IOR/MIL/7/15939.
  14. Moreman, *The Army in India*, xxi.
  15. Maffey to his wife, 16 April 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection. The British classified that the Bosti Khel and Jowakis formed sub-divisions of the Adam Khel Afridis. Murray, *Dictionary of the Pathan Tribes*, p. 54.
  16. Maffey to his wife, 18 April 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
  17. Starr, *Tales of Tirah*, 171–72. See also IOR/L/PS/10/1062.
  18. Maffey to his wife, 18 April 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
  19. Maffey to the Foreign Department, Simla, 21 April 1923, North-West Frontier Province, India 1922–1923, Aitken private collection.
  20. Tripodi, "Negotiating with the Enemy," 602.
  21. Tripodi, *Edge of Empire*, 3–7.
  22. Marsh, *Ramparts of Empire*, 23–24. The Political Service was a small corps of between 120 and 170 officers, two thirds of these officers were seconded from the Indian Army and the remainder from the Indian Civil Service. The Political Service came under the



- purview of the Foreign and Political Department and officers from the Political Service staffed Frontier administration.
23. George Bower, 25 June 1903, Personal file of Sir John Maffey 1925, IOR/R/1/4/1144. According to Maffey's school magazines, *Meteor*, he was a much better bowler than better for his School XI. See <http://rugbyschoolarchives.co.uk/Authenticated/Browse.aspx>. As a Political, Maffey was perceived as a high-flyer. He served with the Mohmand Field Force in 1908; was Political Agent, Khyber between 1909 and 1912 where it was remarked that he 'has all the qualities required for a successful Frontier Political Officer – a good manner, firmness, patience and [a] good physique'. [23] Maffey served as Deputy Commissioner Peshawar between 1914 and 1915, Deputy Secretary in the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India between 1915 and 1916 and served as private secretary to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, between 1916 and 1920. Chelmsford himself held Maffey in high esteem. On Maffey's appointment as Chief Commissioner Chelmsford wrote to Maffey and expressed his 'confidence in the correctness of my judgement' in selecting him as Chief Commissioner. Chelmsford to Maffey, 27 March 1921, Correspondence: Afghan papers, Aitken private collection. Following his resignation in 1924, Maffey returned to imperial administration with his appointment as Governor-General of the Sudan between 1926 and 1933; this appointment was followed by four years as permanent under-secretary of state for the Colonies between 1933 and 1937; and, finally, Maffey was Britain's first representation to Éire at the outbreak of the Second World War.
  24. Wilson to Rawlinson, 11 May 1921, No. 174 in Jeffery (ed), *Military Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, 1918–1922* pp. 265–66.
  25. A lakh is £100, 000. The average exchange rate between the rupee and sterling during this period was approximately £1 = Rs. 15/-. Marsh, *Ramparts of Empire*, p. 45. Rawlinson noted in his diary that the Frontier Committee Report was finished on 22 Jan. 1922. 'Skeen still busy with report. Pears and him [sic] have done most of it'. Rawlinson diary, 22 Jan. 1922 in Jacobsen (ed), *Rawlinson in India*, p. 87. The third scheme, estimated at 273 lakhs in 1922–23, 95 in 1923–34 and 40 thereafter advocated the occupation of Razmak which dominated the area, before 31 August. It was estimated that Razmak could be held by 500 Scouts while the road from Idak would be secured by *khassadars* and at strategic points by Scouts in protective towers. Besides the road from Idak to Razmak, the scheme included the construction of the Draband-Ghazni Khel road, an addition of 750 Scouts over and above those for Razmak, 3, 000 *khassadars*, the raising and probable doubling of tribal allowances, and an annual one lakh of rupees to strengthen the cis-frontier defence. Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 30 January 1922, No. 118S, IOR L/MIL/7/1769.
  26. See General Sir G Barrow to Major A L Moens, 20 February 1922, IOR L/MIL/7/1769.
  27. Rawlinson to Major-General Sir Archibald Montgomery, 9 Apr. 1922 in Jacobsen, *Rawlinson in India*, p. 97.
  28. Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, 12 Apr. 1922, No. 1538, IOR L/MIL/7/1769. The Indian Military Requirements Sub-Committee of the CID had begun their leisurely consideration of the Indian military situation in Nov. 1921. Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson commented to Rawlinson that: '[Lieutenant-General Sir Claud] Jacob is giving us a lecture this afternoon on the problem of the North-West frontier and the internal security of India. When I say 'us' I mean Austen's Committee. As neither Austen nor most of the members of the Committee have any idea at all of where India is, I am looking forward with some amusement to

- watching their faces!’ Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson to Rawlinson, 29 Nov. 1921 in Jacobsen, *Rawlinson in India*, p. 68.
29. Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, 12 Apr. 1922, No. 1538, IOR L/MIL/7/1769.
  30. Rawlinson to Major-General Sir Archibald Montgomery, 20 Apr. 1922 in Jacobsen, *Rawlinson*, p. 98.
  31. Rawlinson to Major-General Sir Archibald Montgomery, 20 Apr. 1922 in Jacobsen, *Rawlinson in India*, p. 99.
  32. Rawlinson to the Seventeenth Earl of Derby, 20 Apr. 1922, ff. 80–82, Derby Papers, Mss Eur D605. The Earl of Derby commented that ‘I think they have got a good man in Peel. I am sure he is a very able fellow and I think a strong man and you will probably find in him all the support that you want. Of course here rumour has it that Reading has very much lost his nerve and I am bound to say it looks rather like it. I naturally do not ask you to tell tales out of school but if there are any points on which you think you are not being properly supported I wish you would let me know as I might be able to do something’. Derby to Rawlinson, 27 Mar. 1922, ff. 83–85, Derby Papers, Mss Eur D605. Rawlinson had not always been so critical of Hailey. After his first meeting with Hailey in Nov. 1920, Rawlinson commented: ‘He [Hailey] is certainly intelligent, is in a difficult position as regards his budget and I told him I was out to do all I could to help him. I liked him as a man. He is evidently a Gent [...] I daresay we shall have some passages at arms but with a little give and take I am not unhopeful that we shall come to an agreement’. Rawlinson, ‘Indian Journal’, 27 Nov. 1920 in Jacobsen, *Rawlinson in India*, p. 22. Hailey was replaced by Sir Basil Blackett as Finance Member in late 1922 and once Hailey returned as Home member, Rawlinson was now faced with two opponents on Council who were, in turn, often supported by the Council’s Indian members. R Atwood, *General Lord Rawlinson. From Tragedy to Triumph* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), p. 222.
  33. Maffey, ‘Unsolicited Views on an Unsolved Problem’, 2 Aug. 1922, Afghan papers, Aitken private collection, pp. 2–4.
  34. *Ibid.*, 4
  35. *Ibid.*, 15.
  36. Tripodi, *Edge of Empire*, 7.
  37. Tripodi, *Edge of Empire*, 20.
  38. Condos, ‘Licence to Kill’, 489.
  39. Moreman, *The Army in India*, xvii.
  40. *Ibid.*, xviii.
  41. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
  42. Kolsky, ‘Gendered Violence and Masculine Authority’, 1.
  43. *Ibid.*, 6.
  44. Mollie Ellis to Lieutenant-Colonel C E Bruce, 20 Apr. 1923, North-West Frontier Province, India 1922–1923, Aitken private collection. The names of the men the tribesmen wanted released were: Alam Khan; Alia Khan; Sher Khan; and Thaa Khan.
  45. Mollie Ellis to Lieutenant-Colonel C E Bruce, 21 Apr. 1923, North-West Frontier Province, India 1922–1923, Aitken private collection.
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. Starr, *Tales of Tirah*, 199.
  48. *Ibid.*, 204.
  49. Maffey to his wife, 22 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
  50. *The Times*, 24 Apr. 1923. The subsequent police investigation concluded that Dr Starr had been stabbed by the father who exacted revenge ‘in true Pathan fashion’ for his

young son who had gone to the missionary hospital and wished to be Christian. The young man was given work and taught but had not been baptised. A year later, the father of the young man starved him to death for his faith and revenged his death on Dr Starr.

51. Starr, *Tales of Tirah*, 168.
52. Maffey to his wife, 22 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
53. Mogal Baz Khan had joined Maffey in Apr. 1922. Maffey described him as a 'refreshing personality to have about', Maffey to his wife, 25 Apr. 1922. In a letter to his wife on 5 May 1922, Maffey described Mogal Baz Khan as a 'good fellow' and described the following incident: 'Just as we [were] getting near Marden in our car he [Mogal Baz Khan] told me he had been anxious about his little son, aged two, but had just had a message the night before to say the boy was better. He lives at Marden. While I was having breakfast with Major Williams, Mogal Baz went out to his home and was ready an hour later to start with me. I asked him how his boy was. He replied "It is well" and talked quite naturally of other things. The next day I heard that on arrival at his home he had found his son dead and that he had spent that hour in attending the funeral. It was a wonderful exhibition of will power, as I know now that he felt the boy's death most deeply'. Maffey to his wife, 5 May 1922, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
54. Maffey to his wife, 22 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Lillian Starr, Report number 5, 22 Apr. 1923, Aitken private collection.
57. *The Times*, 26 Apr. 1923.
58. Maffey to his wife, 22 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection. See also, Kolsky, "Gendered violence and masculine authority", 1–36.
59. Maffey to his wife, 22 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. The Kaisar-i-Hind decoration was instituted in 1900 and styled the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal for Public Services in India. The medal itself was an oval-shaped badge or decoration in gold for the first-class, and in silver for the second class. *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Apr. 1923.
63. Reading to Peel, 23 May 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
64. Reading to Peel, 5 Jul. 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
65. Foreign Department, Government of India, to Maffey, No. 514/S, 23 Apr. 1923 and D.O. 977/F, 24 Apr. 1923, Vol. IV India, Aitken private collection.
66. Maffey to his wife, 25 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection. Birdwood in a letter to Reading noted: 'I have been in constant touch with Maffey throughout and he has I think done quite splendidly. He has been first class right through and has never spared himself. I am glad to say we have had him staying with us more lately – he is very well but much looking forward to his leave'. Birdwood to Reading, 31 May 1923, ff. 80–81, Reading (private) Papers MSS EUR F118/4.
67. Maffey to his wife, 25 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
68. Maffey to his wife, 29 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
69. Maffey to his wife, 29 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection. The wedding of Prince Albert, Duke of York and future King George VI, and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon on 26 Apr. 1923 at Westminster Abbey.
70. Maffey to his wife, 29 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
71. Maffey to his wife, 22 Apr. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.

72. Field Marshal William Riddell Birdwood to Reading, 31 May 1923, ff. 80–81, Reading (private) Papers MSS EUR F118/4.
73. Reading to Peel, 5 Jul. 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6. A lakh is £100, 000. The average exchange rate between the rupee and sterling during this period was approximately £1 = Rs. 15/-. Marsh, *Ramparts of Empire*, 45.
74. Reading to Peel, 26 Apr. 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
75. Intelligence Bureau, North-West Frontier Diary, no. 15, w/e 19 Apr. 1923 in Burdett, *Afghan Strategic Intelligence British Records*, 497.
76. Maffey to his wife, 7 May 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid. Nevertheless, it would appear that Maffey was rather exhausted by this continual struggle between the centre and periphery. 'I shall drop in on Simla before I come home: so as to make my return to India possible, if it should prove desirable from our point of view. But I'm not keen at present. Perhaps I am tired'. Ibid.
79. Reading to Peel, 26 Apr. 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
80. Maffey to Harcourt-Butler, 2 May 1923, ff. 39–41, Harcourt Butler Papers MSS EUR F116. Maffey may have been referencing the Landi Kotal murders where two British officers (Majors Orr and Anderson of the 2nd Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders) were killed by tribesmen. Due to a temporary breakdown in telegraphic communication which prevented Humphreys receiving more definite information of evidence regarding the complicity of the men who were seeking refuge in Afghanistan and who, in all probability, were Afghan subjects, his letter to the Amir was not as strong in tone as it could have been. Reading to Peel, 26 Apr. 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
81. Reading to Peel, 26 Apr. 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
82. Reading to Peel, 23 May 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
83. Maffey to his wife, 14 May 1923, Vol. IV India, Aitken private collection.
84. R E H Griffith, under-secretary to the Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, 19 May 1923, North-West Frontier Provincial Diary, No. 18, w/e 12 May 1923, P2310 IOR/L/PS/10/1083.
85. Maffey to his wife, 14 May 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
86. R E H Griffith, under-secretary to the Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, 26 May 1923, North-West Frontier Provincial Diary, No. 19, w/e 19 May 1923, P2400 IOR/L/PS/10/1083; also Maffey to his wife, 14 May 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
87. Maffey to his wife, 14 May 1923, Vol. IV India, Aitken private collection.
88. Minute, 29 May 1923, P 2310, IOR/L/PS/10/1083.
89. Reading to Peel, 23 May 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
90. Reading to Peel, 20 Sep. 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
91. R E H Griffith, under-secretary to the Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, 19 May 1923, North-West Frontier Provincial Diary, No. 20, w/e 26 May 1923, P2510 IOR/L/PS/10/1083.
92. Maffey to his wife, 17 May 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Colonel Thomas Howard Foulkes of the Indian Medical Service and brother of Major-General Charles Howard Foulkes, was shot dead in his bungalow on 15 Nov. 1920 by 'a number of tribesmen' in the Kohat district of the North-West Frontier Province. His wife was badly wounded. Foulkes had been appointed Durbar physician and surgeon, Mysore in 1912, entered the Indian Medical Service in 1893 and in 1899

- became district medical and sanitary officer, Madras. On the outbreak of the First World War, he reverted to military employment. *The Times*, 19 and 20 Nov. 1920.
97. R E H Griffiths, under-secretary to Chief Commissioner of North-West Frontier Province, North-West Provincial diary, w/e 26 May 1923, P2510, IOR/L/PS/10/1083.
  98. Maffey to his wife, 22 May 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
  99. Maffey to his wife, 18 May 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
  100. Maffey to his wife, 22 May 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection.
  101. Maffey to his wife, 26 May 1923, misfiled in Volume III India, Aitken private collection.
  102. Note by Hirtzel, undated, P2428, IOR/L/PS/10/1062.
  103. Note by the India Office, 16 Jul. 1923, P[2509] and P2607, IOR/L/PS/10/1062.
  104. Note by the India Office, 27 Jun. 1923, P2428, IOR/L/PS/10/1062.
  105. T Copeland, under-secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, North-West Frontier Provincial Diary, No. 24 w/e 23 Jun. 1923, P2895, IOR/L/PS/10/1083.
  106. Memorandum by Secretary of State for India, 'Afghanistan', CP 484(23), 20 Dec. 1923, IOR/L/PO/5/21.
  107. Ibid. The Treaty of Neighbourly Relations concluded between Britain and Afghanistan on 22 Nov. 1921 (the Dobbs Treaty) was for a duration of three years, but was terminable on twelve months' notice, which could be given by either party after 22 Nov. 1923. Memorandum by Secretary of State for India, 'Afghanistan', CP 46 (24), 1 February 1924, IOR/L/PO/5/21. The treaty provided for the 'exchange of legations and consulates, the right for Afghanistan to import arms and munitions through India so long as her intentions were friendly, exchange of information on the tribes, and, in a separate letter from [Mahmud] Tarzi, [Afghan Foreign Minister] the denial to Russia of consulates in Kandahar and Ghazni in return for customs concessions'. Talley Stewart, *Fire in Afghanistan*, p. 188.
  108. Maffey to his wife, 13 Jun. 1923, Volume IV India, Aitken private collection. Maffey departed India for leave in July 1923. Reading commented that Maffey had 'had a very strenuous time and has shown signs of feeling it'. Reading added that Maffey seemed 'much more reconciled to the policy of Razmak and the Circular Road upon which, you may remember, I had some difficulties with him. He is a first-rate officer, full of resource and action and courage, a little inclined, as I wrote to you recently, in time of stress to advocating somewhat too forcible measure; but I do not object for in the calmer atmosphere here and not living in the actual strain of events we can counsel moderation when necessary'. Reading to Peel, 5 July 1923, Reading Papers MSS EUR E238/6.
  109. General Staff, Summary of events in North-West Frontier Tribal Territory, 1 Jan. 1923–31 Dec. 1923, IOR/L/MIL/7/16944. In Nov. 1923 those responsible for the abduction of Mollie Ellis also attempted to abduct Mrs Watts, wife of Captain Watts of the Kurram militia from Parachinar. They were both killed. Beattie, *Empire and Tribe in the Afghan Frontier Region*, p. 125.
  110. In compiling the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Maffey, Gilbert Laithwaite received a detailed letter from Evelyn Cobb regarding Maffey's service on the North-West Frontier. He outlined that though the most able of Political Officers, Maffey suffered from several misfortunes:
    - 1 The Prince of Wales who behaved disgracefully throughout his tour in India complained to his father King George of his treatment by Maffey over trouble in Peshawar city, which Maffey could not risk in the circumstances. The King demanded an enquiry!' See also footnote 209 for further details and the opinion of Rawlinson.

- 2 'Maffey was bitten by a mad dog and had a very bad time at Kassali under great pain.
- 3 Maffey's daughter [Penelope] got "diabetes" and the doctor in London said that she and her Mother must not return to the East'.
- 4 The important question of the occupation of Waziristan. Maffey 'rightly' opposed it but the 'C in C persuaded the Viceroy to overrule him!'  
Evelyn Cobb to Gilbert Laithwaite, 18 Mar. 1971 Laithwaite Papers MSS EUR 138.

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