

John Bede. AFGHANISTAN IN ANGLO-RUSSIAN RIVALRY, 1830-1880. (Under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Stokes) Department of History, January 1965.

The purpose of this study is to reevaluate the role of Afghanistan in Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia from 1830 to 1880. Commanding as it does, the main passes of the Hindukoosh Mountains, through which have poured the invading hordes from Central and Western Asia on their way to India, Afghanistan has been destined to play a vital part in shaping the history of Central Asia and India.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, two European powers were struggling for control of the Hindukoosh. The British were interested in controlling the Hindukoosh in order to safeguard the security of their Indian Empire. The Russians were equally interested particularly since the control of the Hindukoosh would give them a direct line of attack on the British Indian Empire and hence would counter-balance the British naval and military might elsewhere. The ensuing Anglo-Russian struggle for mastery of the Hindukoosh proved disastrous for Afghanistan. A victim of the never-ending struggle of two powerful European nations for control of the Hindukoosh, Afghanistan suffered two invasions by the British, saw three of its rulers sent into exile in Russian or British territories, lost considerable portions of its territory, lost the control of its foreign affairs and in 1880 came very near to being completely disintegrated. Most of the material written so far, however, places the blame for a highly explosive situation on the Afghans. Reevaluation of the Afghan situation from 1830 to 1850, therefore, would seem to be in order.

In doing research for this study, all possible use of documentary material has been made. Hence The Parliamentary Papers, The British and Foreign State Papers and The Foreign Office Papers have played a vital part in this study.

The study, after a brief sketch of Afghanistan's historical and geographical aspects, takes up the events leading to the First Afghan War, 1839-1842, which was due to the British fear of a possible Russian attack upon India. Chapter three is concerned with Anglo-Afghan relations from 1850 to 1876. It emphasizes a strong desire on the part of the Afghans to forget their past mistreatment at the hands of the British and an honest desire to seek an alliance with the British Government to defend Afghanistan against an ever-increasing Russian menace. Chapter four is an analysis in some detail of the voluminous correspondence between Russia and England concerning Afghanistan and a declaration by Russia in 1873, that she considered Afghanistan as entirely beyond her sphere of influence. Chapter five emphasizes the Afghan belief that no reliance could be placed upon any treaty or agreement with the Russians and, therefore, a strong Afghan desire to enter into an offensive or defensive alliance with the British Government. The constant British refusal to enter into any kind of alliance resulted in friendly overtures by the Afghans to Russia and consequently a second British invasion of Afghanistan. The post-war settlements by which Afghanistan not only lost some vital portions of its territory, but also the control of its foreign affairs are discussed.

The findings of this study indicate that the case of Afghanistan in European imperial history has been a special one. The Russian and the British expansions in Asia, once started, were always justified by an excuse that some troublesome and barbarous Asiatic neighbor, bordering on Russian or British territories, was either attempting to invade such territories or was endangering trade and security of the border land. This was the prime motivation behind British expansion in India and Russian expansion in Central Asia. The history of Afghanistan, on the other hand, is the story of constant desire on the part of the Afghan rulers to have peaceful and friendly relations with both Russia and Britain. Disregarding such friendly gestures both Britain and Russia, distrusting each other, ruthlessly ignored the national sovereignty of an independent country, interfered in its internal affairs, caused two invasions of the Afghan homeland, imprisoned or exiled its rulers, annexed large portions of its territory and in the end, placed the blame for highly dangerous and potentially explosive situation in Central Asia on the Afghans.

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RIVALRY 1830-1880

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	iv
I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
Descriptive	1
Races of Afghanistan	5
Historical	9
Kingdom of Afghanistan 1750-1839	14
II. THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR 1839-1842	18
III. ANGLO-AFGHAN RELATIONS 1842-1873 AND THE RUSSIAN ADVANCES IN CENTRAL ASIA 1850-1873	34
IV. ANGLO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING AFGHANISTAN 1868-1873	46
V. THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR	54
Anglo-Afghan Relations 1873-1876	54
Disraeli's Forward Policy	57
The Second Afghan War and Postwar Settlements	70
VI. CONCLUSION	75
APPENDIX A	82
APPENDIX B	85
APPENDIX C	86
APPENDIX D	93
APPENDIX E	98
BIBLIOGRAPHY	99

PREFACE

Throughout history, Afghanistan, standing as it does between the sub-continent of India and the main mass of Eurasia, has been destined to play an important role in the shaping of Indian and Central Asian dramas. A long procession of nomadic or exnomadic migrant peoples have passed through Afghanistan from Central Asia en route for the sub-continent of India. The Aryans, the Persians, the Greeks the Kushans, the Huns, the Arabs, the Turks and the Afghans are just a few examples.

The Hindukoosh Mountains, which dominate a greater part of Afghanistan have provided an excellent base of operations against India for invasions from Central and Western Asia. The consolidation of the Hindukoosh before an eventual invasion of India has always been a rule without an exception. On the other hand the rulers of northern India constantly strived for the mastery of the Hindukoosh to safeguard India against invasions from beyond the Hindukoosh. This struggle for the mastery of the Hindukoosh, the outcome of which has been so vital to India and Central Asia alike, has been faithfully carried out through nearly four thousand years with varying results.

The struggle for the mastery of the Hindukoosh throughout the nineteenth century was resumed by two European powers. By the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Russians were vigorously extending their sway southeast of the Ural Mountains and east of the Caspian Sea. The British at the same time were pushing the frontiers of their Indian

Empire toward the Hindukooch in the northwest. The Hindukooch Mountains themselves were in the possession of the Kingdom of Afghanistan, founded in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The Anglo-Russian struggle for the mastery of the Hindukooch, assumed international proportions through the nineteenth century. The defense of India against a possible Russian invasion from the northwest now became a vital part of British foreign policy. The Russians in order to counter-balance the British naval and military power elsewhere now concentrated their efforts toward Central Asia and Afghanistan--an area forming an essentially weak link in the chain of defense of the British Empire. The weakness of British defenses in Central Asia and the constant Russian desire to take advantage of the situation proved very costly for Afghanistan.

The British attitude toward Afghanistan which resulted in two disastrous invasions of the Afghan homeland was characterized by a grave misunderstanding of the Afghans ability to handle their own affairs as well as by a correspondingly panicky and unstable policy. Ironically, however, most of the material written so far tends to justify the British position in regard to Afghanistan and furthermore places the blame for the highly explosive situation in Central Asia on the Afghans. The purpose of this report is to reevaluate the political situation of Afghanistan from 1830 to 1880 and to show as far as possible that the British rather than the Afghans were responsible for the difficult and unstable conditions in Central Asia throughout the nineteenth century. In final analysis the Afghans proved

to be better judges of the political situation in Central Asia than did the British. Although a victim of the never-ending Anglo-Russian struggle for the mastery of the Hindukush, Afghanistan survived through the nineteenth century as a nation largely through its own initiative and emerged as a sovereign state in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL

Descriptive

The modern Kingdom of Afghanistan lies in Central Asia between 29 and 38 degrees North Latitude and between 61 and 72 degrees East Longitude with a strip in the northeast, the Wakhan corridor, that reaches to the 75th degree East Longitude.¹ It is bounded on the west by Iran; on the north by the Soviet Union; on the extreme northeast by the People's Republic of China; on the east and south by Pakistan.

Within these political boundaries lies an area of some 250,000 square miles.² Much of this area is semi arid, precipitation varying from eleven to fifteen inches, but vast areas are drier. Although rainfall is both low and irregular, snowfall in the higher mountains is usually dependable.³ Highland temperature drops below zero in winter and there is also below freezing weather in the southern deserts.

The Hindukoosh Mountains dominate the entire country.⁴ This formidable mountain range with peaks up to 25,000 feet presents a

¹ Donald N. Wilber, Afghanistan, its People, its Society, its Culture, p. 24.

² F. W. McLoughlin (ed.), Lands and People, IV, 18.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The word "Hindukoosh" is composed of two persian words, "Hindu" and "Koosh," meaning the "Killer of the Hindus." According to a generally accepted tradition so many slaves brought from India died while crossing these mountains that the name Hindukoosh was permanently applied to them.

major barrier to communications and commercial relations between the northern and the southern regions of the country. These mountains traverse Afghanistan east to west for six hundred miles. The Hindukoosh proper takes off from the Pamirs and proceeds in a southwesterly direction gradually diminishing in altitude. The northeastern part of the Hindu-⁵koosh is heavily wooded with deodars, pine and larch. The middle stretch of the Hindukoosh has peaks up to 18,000 feet high. There are about ten passes in the middle stretch. The Khowak Pass 11,640 feet, the Qipchak Pass 13,900 feet, and the Shibar Pass 9,800 feet, are the⁶ most commonly used.

Afghanistan can be divided into four major portions corresponding with the four major river systems--the Oxus, the Kabul, the Helmand and the Hari Rud. The Oxus basin lying between the Oxus River and the Hindukoosh Mountains encloses long valleys and fertile land which require only water to make it rich and productive. The extreme northeast section of this region is dominated by the Pamir Mountains. In the central part of the region lies the historic city of Balkh (ancient⁷ Bactria), now in ruins. In the central southern part of this region

⁵ Jean and Frank Shore, "We Took The Highroad in Afghanistan," The National Geographic Magazine, XCVIII (1950), 673-706.

⁶ William O. Douglas, Beyond The High Himalayas, p. 250.

⁷ Bactria was the capital of the Graeco-Bactrian Empire which flourished in northern Afghanistan from 290 B.C. to about 130 B.C. Later it was one of the capitals of the mighty Kushan Empire. During the early part of the Middle Ages it was one of the chief centers of Islamic civilization. The famous English historian Arnold Toynbee,

lies the famous valley of Bamian, once a great Buddhist center of learning. The northwestern part of the Oxus basin is the home of the world famous Karakul sheep and is generally covered with rolling green pastures and swift streams.⁸ In the east central part of Afghanistan lies the famous Kabul Valley and also the city of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. The valley itself is surrounded by the central Hindukush Mountains in the north and by the Paropamisadae mountain range in the east.⁹ The Gorbund, the Panjshir, and the Kabul rivers make the valley fertile and productive.¹⁰ Kabul city is snow bound for three months of the year in spite of the fact that it's latitude is that of Sicily and Southern California.¹¹ Kabul's altitude is 6,100 feet. Right through the heart of the city runs the Kabul River. The city guards the main

who visited the ruins of Balkh in 1960, was greatly impressed. "I feel sure that visiting Alexandrians in the days when Balkh was the capital of the Graeco-Bactrian Empire will have been awe-stricken. And I also feel sure that visiting Romans in the days when Balkh was one of the capitals of the Kushan Empire, will have felt the same sensation. Anyway I myself was awe-stricken today." Arnold J. Toynbee, Between Oxus and Juma, p. 93.

⁸ Karakul is the native word for the Persian lamb which provides the famous Persian lamb skin.

⁹ The Graecised version of this ancient name is Paropamisus, and the original word is said to mean in the ancient Iranian language of Avesta, "a mountain loftier than the ceiling of even an eagle's flight." Toynbee, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁰ Alexander the Great founded a city called Alexandria-Kapisa on the banks of the Gorbund River at a spot where the waters of the Gorbund and the Panjshir rivers meet some forty miles north of the modern city of Kabul. Alexandria-Kapisa served as the capital of early empires until the pre-eminence of Kabul. Today the ruins of this ancient city are called Begram. W. K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia, p. 9.

¹¹ Lowell Thomas, Beyond Khyber Pass into Forbidden Afghanistan, p. 141.

invasion route to India. Almost immediately east of the city the land becomes barren and rocky and stretches two hundred miles to the east¹² until it finally reaches the fertile valley of Peshawar in Pakistan.

¹³
Pashtu and Persian are the two main languages of this area. The Halmand River valley and the city of Qandhar dominate southern¹⁴ Afghanistan. To the northeast the valleys are rich and productive, to the southwest, however, the country flattens and eventually turns into a desert stretching all the way to the Persian frontier. The Halmand, the Arghandab and the Tarnak rivers irrigate this region of Afghanistan. The area is famous for the production of dry fruit and pomegranates. The city of Qandhar guards the main approaches to India from southern Afghanistan. Pashtu is the main spoken language in this area.

In northwestern Afghanistan the Hari Rud River creates one of the most populated and richest provinces of Afghanistan. The city of Herat is located in the valley of the Hari Rud. The area is dominated by the low Parapomus Mountains which are actually the off-shoots of the western Hindukush Mountains. Rainfall here is considerable. The land is lush green and is covered with rich pastures, wild barley and

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Douglas, op. cit., p. 237.

¹³

Pashtu is a branch of the Persian language with considerable intermixture of Hindi and Sanskrit words. James W. Spain, The People of the Khyber, p. 23.

¹⁴

Qandhar served as the first capital of the Durani Empire of Afghanistan from 1747 to 1774. Oliver Rudston de Baer, Afghan Interlude, p. 195.

15 and oats. 16 Sheep and cows produce good milk. Persian is the main language of this area. The area is the home of the famous Abdali or Durani Afghans.

Afghanistan then is the country of the Hindukush. It is a country of extremes, of sun-baked deserts, fertile valleys, high barren plateau and high mountains. It is above all an extremely interesting country, with a history going as far back as 500 B. C. Throughout this period, due to its geographical location. Afghanistan has been the scene of some vital movements of history. The mountains of the Hindu-kush have served as a barrier to divert the course of migration or to break the force of invasion. These mountains also mark the ethnic, geographical and economic division between Central and Southern Asia.

Races of Afghanistan

Throughout the long history of Afghanistan, people from Central Asia have flowed into the country; some groups remained, others passed on to settle finally in Iran, Baluchistan, or the Indus Valley. The present population therefore contains diverse elements which in course of time have become absorbed into an older stock to form various more or less homogeneous types. No one knows who the original inhabitants of Afghanistan were; the Indo-Aryans thousands of years ago found Dravidians in possession, and perhaps also elements of an even older

15

Christopher Sykes, "Some Notes on a Recent Journey in Afghanistan," The Geographical Journal, LXXXVII (1934), p. 329.

16

Ibid.

race. On them were superimposed the Greeks, the Scythians, the Yueh-chi, the Kushans, the Ephthalites, the Arabs, the Mongols, the Turks, and the Iranians. This explains the existence of various tribes in Afghanistan as well as the different customs, languages and social organizations, peculiar to each one of them.

Pathans or "True Afghans."—Chief among the people of Afghanistan are the Pathans who describe themselves as the "true Afghans." These Pathans constitute an estimated fifty to sixty percent of the present population of Afghanistan.¹⁷ Though Pashtu is the main language of the southern and eastern Afghans, the Herati and the Kabuli Afghans speak Persian. The early Persian geographies of the tenth century describe the Afghans as "a small population inhabiting the region of the Sulaiman Mountains."¹⁸ Ibn-i-Batata (1304-1378 A.D.), a Moorish traveller who passed through Afghanistan on his way to India mentions the Afghans as inhabiting the areas around the Kabul Valley.¹⁹ It seems probable then, that between the tenth and the fourteenth centuries

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Afghanistan, Ministry of Planning, Afghanistan: Ancient Land with Modern Ways, p. 41.

18

Hadud-al-Alam, trans. V. Minorsky, II, 30, 91. (The work of an unknown Arab geographer who wrote it around 982 A.D.) Al-Biruni, one of the court historians of Mahmood of Ghazni, also mentions the Afghans. "In the mountains of the west of India there live various tribes of the Afghans which extend to the neighborhood of the Valley of the Sindh (Indus), "Al-Biruni, Tarikh-al-Hind, trans. Edward C. Sachau, pp. 21-22.

19

Ibn Batuta, Travels in Asia and Africa, trans. A. R. Gibb, p. 180.

the Afghans had penetrated the Kabul region, moving in a westerly direction. Mohammad Babar, the founder of the Moghul Empire of India, had considerable dealings with the Afghans and in 1519 married an Afghan lady. In 1586 the Afghan tribe of the Yusafzai felt powerful enough to close the Khyber Pass and to incite a general rebellion against Akbar the Great, Grand Moghul of India, 1556-1604 A.D.²⁰ During the reign of the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb, (1658-1707 A.D.) the Afghans in the eastern part of Afghanistan rose in a full scale national rebellion which was suppressed with difficulty.²¹ The Abdali or Durani tribe of the Afghans has played the key role in the history of Afghanistan.²² Scientific analysis of their physical character shows the Afghans to be of the Turko-Iranian type with a considerable mixture of Indian blood among the eastern tribes.²³

The Ghilzais.—The largest tribe of Afghanistan though not the most important is the Ghilzai. Their habitat lies in the southeastern part of Afghanistan. There has been some controversy as to the origin of this tribe. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Ghilzais are the decedents of the historical Turkish tribe of the Khalaj.²⁴ Others

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Vincent Smith, The Oxford History of India, 2nd ed., p. 340.

²¹

Ibid., p. 408.

²²

Some other famous Afghan tribes, living on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border include the Afridis, the Khattaks, the Mohmands, the Waziris, the Masoods, the Shinwaris and the Bangash. Spain, op. cit., chapters, VI-XIII.

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Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 9.

²⁴

The Khalaj tribe dominated most of eastern Afghanistan after the

insist that the Ghilzais have nothing to do with the Khalaj, but are
²⁵
 true Afghans. The Ghilzais came into prominence near Qandhar, when, in the seventeenth century Shah Abbas of the Safavid Dynasty of Persia transferred a large section of the Abdali tribe to Herat because of its turbulent behavior. The Ghilzais of Qandhar, successfully overthrew the Persian rule in the beginning of the eighteenth century and even occupied the Persian capital Isphahan for a short time.

The Tajeks.—This tribe, predominantly of Persian stock constitutes around twenty percent of Afghanistan's population. The Tajeks occupy
²⁶
 the mountainous region of northeastern Afghanistan. Their language is Persian similar to the one spoken in eastern Persia. The origin of the Tajeks is obscure, and it is possible that before the tenth century the Tajeks constituted the main population of Afghanistan. Most of the Tajeks living on the plains are skilled artisans and traders.

Other Races.—The remaining twenty percent of Afghanistan's population contains large numbers of Hazaras in south central Afghanistan and the
²⁷
 Turkoman-Uzbek-Kirghiz population in northern Afghanistan. All these

death of Mahmood of Ghazni in 1030 A.D. The Khilji Dynasty of Delhi (1288-1321 A.D.) was probably named after this tribe. Vincent Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

²⁵
 H. G. Raverty, *Notes on Afghanistan*, pp. 36, 52, 66. Raverty insists that the Ghilzais were a small tribe in the Sulaiman Mountains. Around 1220 A.D. they began a gradual westward movement. This controversy is also discussed in some detail in the article "The People of Afghanistan," *Central Asiatic Studies*, IV (1962), 42-44.

²⁶
 Tajek is an Arabic word, meaning non-Arab muslims. During the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries the word was applied to mean Persian speaking sedentary Muslim people as different from the Turks and Arabs. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, IV, 590-599.

²⁷
 The Turkomans, the Uzbeks and the Kirghiz living in Afghanistan

groups are the decedents of the Mongols who entered Afghanistan between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The Hazaras speak a form of Persian while the tribes north of the Hindukoosh generally speak Turki.

All these tribes, together with small numbers of Jews, Arabs and Baloochis, constitute about thirteen million people of Afghanistan.

Historical

Throughout history Afghanistan has been a highway for migrating peoples and for expanding civilizations and religions, and it has been a key point in the structures of many empires. Many movements of peoples, empires, civilizations and religions from the outside world into India and visa versa were movements across Afghanistan. A brief look at all these movements will illustrate the unique role of a roundabout which Afghanistan has been destined to play.

The Pre-Islamic Period, 500 B.C. to 700 A.D.---The Achaemenid Persian Empire which expanded across Afghanistan into the Indus Valley in and after the sixth century B. C. brought with it as one of its official languages, Aramaic, written in an alphabet derived from the Phoenician. From Afghanistan this language spread southward into India and north-eastward across the whole breadth of Asia. The persian domination also introduced Zoroastrianism into the area.

are related by race and language to the people of the Soviet Republics of Turkomenistan, Uzbekistan and Kirghizistan, lying north of the Oxus River. Richard J. Russell and Fred B. Kniffen, Culture Worlds, p. 227.

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The Aramaic language itself did not survive the overthrow of the Persian Empire as an international medium of communication. The Aramaic alphabet however was used for writing a local Iranian language, the

After the overthrow of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great, the Greek invaders felt at home again when they reached the southern approaches to the passes leading northward over the central Hindukush, and in Bactria in northern Afghanistan they planted their civilization so successfully that its influence lasted for many centuries. The introduction of Buddhism in India and Afghanistan during the third century B. C. gave rise to a curious blend of Indo-Greek civilization in Afghanistan. This civilization was characterized by Buddhist religion but Greek language, art and sometimes even Greek dress. Although the Greek domination over India and Afghanistan came to an end during the third century B. C., the successive empires for the next five hundred years continued to call themselves Philhellenes.

The missionary zeal of Buddhism pushed aside all physical barriers and used Afghanistan as a base to reach far-off places like Central Asia, China, and eventually Korea, Japan, and Southeast

Pahlavi. In northwestern India the Aramaic alphabet became the parents of Kharoshti, which was used for writing some of the Indian dialects stemming from Sanskrit. Toynbee, op. cit., p. 7.

Ashoka, (264 B. C.-226 B. C.) the famous Indian Emperor became Buddhist and helped spread Buddhism into Afghanistan.

Hugh G. Rawlinson, Intercourse between India and the Western World, From the Earliest Times to the Fall of Rome, pp. 167-168. Also William W. Tarn, The Greeks in India and Bactria, pp. 304-305.

The two most important empires following the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great were the Maurya Empire established almost immediately after the departure of Alexander and the Kushan Empire, established around the middle of the first century A. D. Both these empires claimed to be the true successors of the Greeks. Hugh G. Rawlinson, op. cit., pp. 33-68. Also Dr. F. N. Thomas, "Sakastana," Royal Asiatic Studies Journal, (January, 1906).

32

Asia. Afghanistan's role as a round-about has never been played to a greater effect. Throughout this period, Afghanistan was the crossroad of various Buddhist movements between China, India, and

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Central Asia. Numerous monasteries and rest houses were constructed and Buddhist art and culture flourished in Afghanistan and surrounding

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areas.

In the fourth century A. D. the ravaging invasions of the White Huns destroyed much of Afghanistan's Buddhist civilization. The Huns were finally driven away in the sixth century and much of Afghanistan passed into the hands of the Sassani Empire.

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Throughout the pre-Islamic period, then, the introduction of the Aramaic language, of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism and of Greek culture were the outstanding features of Afghan history. All these elements were to be permanently changed by the onslaught of the Arabs and the enforcement of Islam in Afghanistan in the eighth century A. D.

The Islamic Period, 700 A. D.-1747 A. D.--By far the most important event in the history of Afghanistan was it's conquest by the Arabs. After subduing Persia in the middle of the seventh century the Arabs

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George F. Moore, History of Religions, p. 301.

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Prabodh C. Bagchi, India and China, A Thousand Years of Cultural Relations, pp. 9, 45.

34

Stanley E. Brush, "Chinese Pilgrim Scholars of Fifteen Hundred Years Ago," Pakistan Quarterly, X (Winter, 1961), 37-41.

35

Olaf Caroe, The Pathans, p. 94.

pushed their conquests in Central Asia.³⁶ By 715, all Afghanistan,³⁷ except the Kabul Valley was effectively under their control. Although the Arab rule was replaced by the Turkish rule, the Arab conquest nevertheless permanently changed the religious, social and political character of Afghanistan. The majority of the people were converted to Islam by force. The Arabic alphabet and many Arabic words were introduced and the Quranic law was adopted for social and political purposes.

By the middle of the ninth century Afghanistan was able to shake itself loose from all central control of the Caliphate at Bagdad. From the middle of the ninth century to the beginning of the thirteenth century Afghanistan was ruled by various Turkish dynasties. It was during this period that Afghanistan was used as a base to establish permanent Islamic rule over northern India.³⁸

Throughout the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries Afghanistan remained under the yoke of the Mongols who had overrun all Central Asia, Persia, Western Asia, China and parts of Russia. The Mongols contributed little to Afghanistan except the grim memorials of ruins and devastation

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Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 209.

37

The Kabul Valley remained under the Hindu ruler of the Panjab till the middle of the tenth century. R. C. Majumdar and H. C. Raychaudhuri, An Advanced History of India, pp. 182-183.

38

The most famous of these dynasties were the Yamanids (962-1140 A. D.) and the Ghorids, (1170-1220 A. D.), Mahmood of Ghazni (died 1130 A. D.), the most illustrious ruler of the Yamanid dynasty carried out nine successful invasions of northern India. He made Ghazni in southern Afghanistan a great center of Islamic culture and civilization. Mohammad Ghorid of Ghorid dynasty incorporated northern India into his empire around 1190 A. D. S. M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India. pp. 22-36.

which they left behind.³⁹ During the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries Afghanistan was divided up between the Moghul Empire of India and the Safavid Empire of Persia, the former holding the eastern part including the Kabul Valley, and the latter holding the western part including the Herat Valley.⁴⁰ During this period as general peace prevailed in the Kabul and Herat valleys, trade, commerce and general condition of the people improved rapidly.

As general anarchy began to prevail in the Moghul and the Safavid empires almost immediately after the close of the seventeenth century, the Afghan tribe of the Ghilzais around the city of Qandhar declared its independence of Persia and even provided, for a shortwhile, two rulers for the throne of Persia.⁴¹ The Persians under their famous King, Nadir Shah (1732-1747 A. D.), however, drove the Afghans out of Persia and even invaded India in 1739.⁴² Nadir was murdered in 1747,

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The vast Mongol Empire was formed by Ghangiz (1162-1227 A. D.). Another Mongol conqueror was Tamur-i-Lang, known as Tamerlane, (1336-1404 A. D.). Throughout the fifteenth century Afghanistan was ruled by the descendants of Tamerlane who were known as the Tamurids. The Tamurids made the city of Herat in western Afghanistan a great center of Islamic learning. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 284; E. G. Browne, Literary History of Persia, III, chaps. IV, V.

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Zahir-ud-din Babar (1483-1530 A. D.), the founder of the Moghul dynasty of India, was the ruler of the Kabul Valley, before he undertook the successful invasions of India. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 426.

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The Afghans captured Isphahan, the Persian capital, in 1721. The Afghan rule lasted until 1729. J. P. Perries, History of the Afghans, pp. 33-50.

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Caroe, op. cit., p. 252.

and the Afghan commander of Nadir's bodyguards, Ahmed Shah Abdali, declared the independence of all the Afghans and had himself crowned as their ruler at Qandhar.

The Kingdom of Afghanistan

The history of Afghanistan, ever since its emergence as a separate nation, is basically the history of the Abdali or Durani tribe. Shah Abbas the Great of Persia had transferred a large portion of the Abdalis from Qandhar to Herat, because of the troublesome nature of this tribe. The two most powerful branches of the Abdali tribe were⁴³ the Sadozai and the Barkzai. The head of the Sadozais during the reign of Nadir Shah, was Ahmed Shah, and that of the Barakzai was Haji Jamal Khan. After the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, Ahmed Shah, had declared the independence of the Afghans and was elected their king⁴⁴ in Qandhar. One of his first actions was to assume the name of "Dur-i-Duran," or "Pearl of Pearls," since then; the Abdali tribe became generally known as the Durani.

Ahmed Shah immediately set out to build an Afghan empire upon the ruins of the Persian and the Moghul empires. It is evident that in so doing he was guided by a desire to emulate the conquests of his late master Nadir Shah and partly by the knowledge that the only way to win

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The suffix "Zai" in Pashtu language means, "son," hence the descendants of Sado and Barak.

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Ferrier. op. cit., p. 69. Ahmed Shah's election was facilitated by the withdrawal in his favor of Haji Jamal Khan.

the allegiance of the Afghan people was to lead them to war against their neighbors. India, after the Persian invasion and Persia, after the death of Nadir Shah, offered ample opportunities for the building up of an Afghan empire. By 1755 all of Afghanistan, as well as the Persian province of Khorasan, and the Indian provinces of Kashmir, Panjab and Sind had been successfully incorporated into the vast Durani Empire.⁴⁵ But it was a short-lived empire. Already in Ahmed Shah's lifetime signs were apparent that it was not possible to retain hold of northern India from a base in Qandhar, even though the Marhatta menace from northern India had been wiped out in 1761 after the Third Battle of Pani-Pat.⁴⁶ In 1761 Ahmed Shah gave up the central Panjab⁴⁷ to the Sikhs, while retaining under his control the northern Panjab.

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Ahmed Shah undertook nine invasions of the Panjab between 1747 and 1769, mainly against the ceaseless rebellions of the Sikhs. His fifth invasion, however, was directed against the Marhattas, who had annexed the Panjab which Ahmed Shah considered a part of his empire. At the Third Battle of Pani-Pat fought on January 14, 1761, Ahmed Shah dealt a crushing blow to the rising Marhatta power in India. Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, I, 131-158.

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The Marhattas were hill people around Bombay. Following the collapse of the Moghul Empire, the Marhattas had been able to build up an empire, which at its height included most of western and central India. By 1750 the Marhattas had invaded and annexed the Panjab. Ahmed Shah's victory over the Marhattas dealt a crushing blow to the Marhatta power in India and strengthened the position of the British against them. Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 510-526, 543-553.

47

The Sikh religion, a syncretism between Islam and Hinduism, and confined entirely to the Panjab was founded by Nanak in the early part of the fifteenth century. Originally meant to be a passive and non-religion, following religious persecutions by the Moghuls throughout the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Taking advantage of the decaying Moghul Empire, the Sikhs gradually began to consolidate their power in the Panjab during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The successors of Ahmed Shah were not as capable as he was and immediately after his death in 1773, a war of succession broke out which considerably weakened the Durani Empire. During the reign of Ahmed Shah's son, Timur Shah (1773-1793), the capital was transferred from Qandhar to Kabul and the province of Sind was lost.⁴⁸ The next twenty-five years following the death of Timur in 1793, saw a long series of disastrous wars of succession, characterised by confusion, weakness,⁴⁹ treachery and intrigue.

In 1818 the Sadozai Dynasty was finally overthrown by the Barakzai family. Peace, however, did not return to Afghanistan until 1846, when Dost Mohammad, youngest of the Barakzai brothers, finally established himself on the Afghan throne. During the course of these events Khurasan was lost to Persia and Kashmir, Lahore, Multan and Peshawar were lost to the Sikhs.⁵⁰ In 1835 when Dost Mohammad was finally able to turn his attention to foreign affairs he found the Sikhs too strong for him. In a desperate battle near Peshawar the Afghans

Moore, op. cit., pp. 351-354.

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After the death of Ahmed Shah in 1773 Timur's claim to the throne was challenged by his brother Sulaiman Mirza. The people of Qandhar supported this claim and in disgust Timur transferred the capital to Kabul. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 64.

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Timur left twenty-three sons. Zaman Shah the fifth son, after imprisoning the remaining brothers became the king. After a troublesome period of seven years Zaman was defeated and blinded by his brother Mahmood. Mahmood, was ousted in 1803 by another brother Shah Shujah, who was in his turn ousted by Mahmood in 1810 and fled to India. In 1818, Mahmood was ousted by the Barakzai family, and Sadozai Dynasty perished. Ferrier, op. cit., pp. 250-301.

⁵⁰

Singh, op. cit., I, Chaps. 15, 16.

suffered a crushing defeat by the hands of the Sikhs.⁵¹ In the spring of 1836 Dost Mohammed wrote a letter to the newly arrived Lord Auckland, Governor General of India 1836-1842, congratulating him on his assumption of office and asking his advice on how to deal with the Sikhs.⁵² This letter opened the doors to British intervention in Afghanistan.

51

For conflicting accounts of this battle see Caroe, op. cit., pp. 294-297, and Singh, op. cit., I, 262-265.

52

The text of the letter is given in John W. Kaye, History of the War in Afghanistan, I, 170.

CHAPTER II
THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR
1839-1842

As we have already noted, Amir Dost Mohammad's letter to Lord Auckland set the stage for British intervention in Afghanistan. It is now appropriate to take a brief look at the political situation of India at the time of Lord Auckland's arrival in India as Governor General.

By 1830 two paramount powers had been able to establish themselves in India, the British and the Sikhs. The East India Company's rule extended over all parts of the Indian Peninsula east of the Panjab.¹ West of the Satlaj river, the powerful religious confederacy of the Sikhs had managed to build up an independent empire at the expense of the Durani Empire. The Sikh empire ruled by Maharajah Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), at its height included the former Durani provinces of Peshawar, Kashmir, Lahore and Multan. In 1809, however, all these provinces, except that of Lahore, were in Afghan hands.

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The East India Company founded in December 1600 in London for Commercial purposes began to take active part in Indian political matters after 1730. Between 1780 and 1825, the Company was engaged in seven major wars in India and emerged as victor in every one of them. These were: The First Marhatta War (1779-1782), The First Mysore War (ended 1784), The Second Mysore War (1790-1792), The Second Marhatta War (1802-1805), The Gurkha War (1814-1815), The Third Marhatta War (1817-1818), and The First Burmese War (1824-1826).

The Napoleonic era, and particularly the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 between Russia and France, alarmed the British sufficiently to take steps against a possible Franco-Russian invasion of India. Accordingly the Indian Government deputed Mountstuart Elphinstone to the court of Shah Shujah, the ruler of Afghanistan, to arrange for a defensive alliance. A treaty was signed at Peshawar on June 17, 1809, between the British and the Afghan governments.² Sir Charles Metcalfe was sent to the Sikh Court. By the Treaty of Amritsar, signed on April 25, 1809, the Satlaj river was recognized as the boundary between the two empires. The British were not to interfere in any area north of the Satlaj river.³

The dynastic upheaval which prevailed in Afghanistan from 1810 to 1826, resulted in the loss of Peshawar, Multan and Kashmir to the Sikhs.⁴ The Barakzai Dynasty was established in eastern Afghanistan, but the city of Herat in western Afghanistan remained in the hands of a Sadozai prince by the name of Kamran.⁵ Shah Shujah, after an unsuccessful attempt to regain his throne fled to the Court of Ranjit Singh.⁶

² For the text of the treaty see Sir C. Aitchison, Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India, XII, 46.

³ Aitchison, op. cit., VIII, 144.

⁴ Multan was conquered in 1818, Kashmir in 1819 and Peshawar in 1826.

⁵ Kamran was the nephew of Shah Shujah, the last of the Sadozai rulers of Afghanistan.

⁶ It was during this period that Ranjit Singh secured the famous Indian diamond, "Koh-i-Noor," from Shah Shujah. The diamond had been carried away by Nadir-Shah from India in 1739.

In 1816 the ex-Shah reached Ludhiana in British India and there remained under the British protection. In October 1831, Lord William Bentinck, Governor General of India 1830-1836, arranged a meeting with the Sikh ruler at Rupar on the Satlaj, at which time assurances of friendship were exchanged.⁷

In 1833 the Sikhs offered to help Shah Shujah regain his throne if he would give up his claims to all the lands conquered by the Sikhs, as well as pay tribute to the Sikh Court at Lahore.⁸ The attempt to regain the Afghan throne was unsuccessful and Shah Shujah settled once more at Ludhiana, where a use was found for him five years later.

The Anglo-Persian relations in the meanwhile were far from cordial. By a treaty in 1814, the English had promised to protect the Persians against any foreign invasion; the Persian were to attack the Afghans if the latter invaded India.⁹ The Russo-Persian Wars of 1813¹⁰ and 1828¹¹ however, resulted in the loss of all areas north of the Caucasus

⁷ According to the Sikh historians the meeting was not at all fruitful. Sikh claims to the province of Sind and particularly to the city of Shikarpur were not accepted by the British. Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs. I, 274-275. The English were anxious to open the Indus and the rivers of the Punjab for navigation. To explore the possibilities of navigation on these rivers it was decided to send the Maharajah fine horses and a large size coach (carriage) up the Indus. The boats carrying these goods were to be equipped with instruments to record data for future navigation. These events preceded the meeting at Rupar by six months. Singh, op. cit., p. 275.

⁸ This treaty was the basis of the future Tripartite Treaty of 1838 between the Sikhs, Shah Shujah and the British.

⁹ Aitchison, op. cit., XII, 46.

¹⁰ Ended by the Treaty of Gulistan.

¹¹ Ended by the Treaty of Turkomanchai (1828).

12

Mountains to Russia. The British failed to help Persia. From this time the Russian influence grew in Persia, while English influence declined.¹³ Defeated and humiliated, it was natural that Persia would seek to regain her pride elsewhere. The city of Herat in western Afghanistan now became a target for Persian expansion in the east. Russia to relieve the Persian pressure from her southern frontier, as well as to gain a foothold in Afghanistan, naturally supported Persian designs on Herat.

The political situation in India and her western neighbors at the time of Lord Auckland's arrival as Governor General of India in 1836 was very complicated. In India itself the British and the Sikhs were firmly established, they were militarily strong and politically stable. In Afghanistan the Barakzai family had just established its power over eastern part of the country. In western Afghanistan a member of the Sadozai family still held Herat. The Persians with Russian backing were about to undertake the siege of Herat. The Sikhs and the British were strong allies. The Barakzai and the Sikhs were sworn enemies, so were the Barakzais and the Sadozais. The city of Herat would surely fall, since no help could be expected from the Barakzai rulers of Kabul and Qandhar. The British would like to protect Herat against the Russo-Persian encroachments, but in order to do that they would need the help of Dost Mohammed of Kabul whose territory lay between the British territory and the Herat. In 1834 Dost Mohammed had sent an agent to

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Sir Percy Sykes, History of Persia, II, 315, 318-319.

13

Cambridge History of the British Empire, IV, 490.

14
St. Petersburg to seek the Russian help against the Sikhs.

In the early part of 1836 the Government of India was informed by Mr. Henry Ellis, British Minister at the Court of the Shah of Persia, that overtures had been made by Dost Mohammed to the Shah of Persia for the conquest of the dominions of Prince Kamran, and further more that similar overtures had also been received from the chiefs of Qandhar.¹⁵ Dr. MacNeill, who replaced Mr. Ellis as British Minister to Tehran, saw in a Persian success nothing less than an outpost for Russia on the road to Kabul and the Khyber Pass, from which an attack could be launched against British India.¹⁶

In as much as it was known that Dost Mohammed was seeking the aid of the Russians and Persians against the Sikhs as well as the fact that the chiefs of Qandhar and Kabul had entered into negotiations with the Shah of Persia for an attack on Herat, the home authorities instructed the Indian Government to "raise a timely barrier against the encroachments

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Ibid.

15

Henry Ellis to Viscount Palmerston, British Foreign Secretary, February 15, 1836. Parliamentary Papers, 1839, XL, 8. The object of these overtures according to Mr. Ellis "had been to enter into an alliance offensive and defensive with the Shah and more especially to unite in the attack upon Kamran Mirza of Herat." Ellis to Palmerston, April, 1836, Parl. Papers, 1839, XL, 8.

16

The Russian successes in the Napoleonic Wars, the results of the Russian penetration in Asia at the expense of Persia, and the results of the Russo-Turkish War all contributed to the emergence of Russophobia. "The very changes in the winds of the heavens," wrote Lord Durham, British ambassador to Russia, 1835-1837, "are laid to Russian influence." Albert H. Imah, Lord Ellenborough, p. 80.

17

of Russian influence," by sending an agent to Kabul. In a dispatch dated June 25, 1836, the Directors of the Company requested Lord Auckland to consider:

what steps may be proper and desirable for you to take to watch more closely than has hitherto been attempted the progress of events in Afghanistan and to counteract the progress of Russian influence in that quarter which....could not fail if it were once established to act injuriously on the system of our Indian Alliance.¹⁸

Lord Auckland was given authority to "interfere decidedly in the affairs of Afghanistan," if he thought it were necessary for him to do so.

As has already been noted, Dost Mohammad had sent a letter to Auckland, congratulating him on his assumption of office and asking his advice on how to deal with the Sikhs. Consequently Lord Auckland deputed

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Captain Alexander Burns to the Court of the Amir. Burns was cordially received at Kabul and the Amir impressed upon him his wish to be a

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sincere friend of the English Government. The Amir admitted that he had sought the help of the Russians and the Persians against the Sikhs, but that he was willing to drop all connections with these nations if the British would help him recover the city of Peshawar from

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The Cambridge History of the British Foreign Policy, II, 86.

18

Dispatch dated June 25, 1836, from the Secret Committee to Lord Auckland, quoted in Sir Auckland Colvin, John Russel Colvin, The Last Lieutenant Governor of the North West Under the Company, pp. 87-88.

19

Burns, an Indian officer of great intelligence and enterprise, had made a famous journey through Afghanistan and Persia on a commercial mission a few years earlier.

20

Alexander Burns, Cabool, A Personal Narrative of Journey to and Residence in that city in the Year 1836, 7 and 8, pp. 131-135.

21

the Sikhs. Burns instructions however complicated the issue:

It must be nearly needless to say that you are in a position in which you should regulate your conduct marking the firm maintenance of our old alliance and friendship with Ranjit Singh as the avowed first principle of our duty and policy and bringing Dost Mohammed to his senses and a just measure of his most hazardous position.²²

Dost Mohammad informed Burns that he would even pay tribute to Ranjit Singh, if he could only hold the Peshawar city as an agent of the Maharajah.²³ Anxious though Lord Auckland was to see Herat saved

from the Persian hands, he was by no means ready to help the Afghans against the Sikhs.²⁴ All that Auckland would promise Dost Mohammad was to restrain Ranjit Singh from attacking any more territories

belonging to the Amir.²⁵ After protracted discussions with Burns, the Amir received the Russian envoy whom he had previously kept waiting for some weeks without giving an audience.²⁶ When in 1838 Dost Mohammad

21

Parl. Papers, 1859, XXV, 293-295.

22

Lord Auckland's instructions to Captain Burns, dated September 13, 1837, W. K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, A Study of Political Development in Central and Southern Asia., p. 93.

23

Parl. Papers, 1854, XIV, 43.

24

Auckland blamed the Persians for "throwing into confusion the countries of Herat, Kandhar and Kabul where all was more than sufficiently weak and unsettled before." Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 92.

25

Parl. Papers, 1859, XXV, 293-295. Dost Mohammad seemed to have realized that the restoration of Peshawar was not perhaps a matter to be settled immediately: "If the restoration of Peshawar required a longer time, there was no harm in saying so, but it was necessary that Captain Burns should give pecuniary assistance that we might be able to protect Herat and if unsuccessful certainly to save Qandhar. Captain Burns gave us no assurance on the above mentioned subjects." Henry Leishington. A Great Country's Little Wars, or England Afghanistan and Sindh, pp. 64-65.

26

Sir W. Kaye, op. cit., I, 189-190. The Russian Government in the

definitely refused a British request that he go to the assistance of Herat against the Persians, Lord Auckland summoned Burns home.

Lord Auckland's position was rather precarious. If Persia were able to take Herat and advance upon eastern Afghanistan, he thought there were three possible courses open to him:

The first to confine our defensive measures to the line of the Indus and to leave Afghanistan to its fate; the second to attempt to save Afghanistan by granting succour to the existing chiefships of Kabul and Qandhar; the third to permit or encourage the advance of Ranjit Singh upon Kabul under counsel and restriction, and as subsidiary to his advance to organize an expedition by Shah Shooje.²⁷

The first course, according to Lord Auckland, would strengthen the Russians and the Persians and the second would strengthen the enemies of the Sikhs (Afghans). As to the third course, Auckland was "very strongly in favor of it."

So Auckland had decided to use the Sikhs to dethrone Dost Mohammad and replace him with Shah Shujah. He was highly encouraged in his plans by a letter of Burns in which Burns had written that if Dost Mohammad had to be replaced on the Afghan throne, "The British Government have only to send Shujah-ul Milk, to Peshawar with an agent and two of its own regiments as an honorary escort, and an avowal to the Afghans that we have taken up his cause to ensure his
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being fixed for ever on his throne."

meanwhile asserted that the nature of the envoy's mission was purely commercial. Count Nesselrode (Russian Foreign Minister) to Pozzo di Bargo (Russian Ambassador at London), March 5, 1839, Parl. Papers, 1839, XL, 200.

27

Kaye, op. cit., I, 320.

28

Burns to Sir William Macnaghton, Chief Secretary to the Government

The Sikhs, as already noted, were already in treaty relations with Shah-Shujah, and his efforts to regain his throne had received their support in 1833. Consequently Ranjit Singh and Shah Shujah were consulted and the road was clear for the signing of the fateful
 29
 "Tripartite Treaty" of June 26, 1838. The Sikhs seem to have gotten the best of the bargain. Shah Shujah recognized the provinces of Kashmir, Peshawar, Multan and Lahore, as forming parts of the Sikh Empire. Shah Shujah was to give up all claims upon the province of Sind. Money payments were to be made by the Amirs of Sind to the British and handed over to the Maharajah. Payments were also to be made by Shah Shujah to the Maharajah of two lakhs of rupees a year under British guarantee, in return for assistance furnished. Ranjit Singh was to relinquish all claims to Sind. The Shah was not to negotiate with any foreign power without consulting the Sikh and the
 30
 British Governments. The treaty bore no reference as to how Shah Shujah was to get to Kabul or who was to keep him on this throne.

One of the interesting features of the plan is the manner in which during the course of the Summer of 1838 the role of leading actor was transferred from the shoulders of Ranjit Singh to those of Lord Auckland.

of India, June 2, 1838, quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 99.

29

Aitchison, op. cit., VIII, 154. Appendix A.

30

The Sikh Court was divided concerning the causes relating to Sind. The conquest of Sind had long been contemplated at Lahore. In the end the aging Maharajah won over the opponents of the treaty and checked the designs of the expansionist military commanders. Singh, op. cit., p. 287.

As we have seen, in May it was the Sikhs who were to supply the striking force; by August Lord Auckland had determined:

to give direct and powerful assistance of the British Government to the enterprise of Shah Shijah-ul-Mulk, in a degree which was not in the first instance contemplated by me. . . . The measure could not be trusted mainly to the support of the Sikh ruler and army without imminent hazards of failure and or serious detriment to the reputation of the British name among the Afghan people.³¹

There were those who opposed the proposed invasion of Afghanistan.

In June 1838, Burns wrote:

It remains to be reconsidered why we cannot act with Dost Mohammad. He is a man of undoubted ability and has at heart high opinion of the British nation; and if half you must do for others were done for him . . . he would abandon Russia and Persia tomorrow.³²

Sir Henry Fyne the Commander in-Chief had given very sensible advice in 1837. "Every advance you might make beyond the Satlaj to the Westward in my opinion adds to your military weakness."³³ Ironically the siege of Herat had been lifted nearly a month before the invasion of Afghanistan.³⁴ Lord Auckland, however, did not alter his plans, he declared that he would continue to prosecute with vigour:

The measures which have been announced, with a view to the substitution of a friendly for a hostile power in the Eastern provinces of Afghanistan and of the establishment of a permanent barrier against schemes of

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Lord Auckland to the Secret Committee, August 13, 1838, Parl. Papers, 1859, XXV, 294.

³²

Letter dated June 2, 1838, Parl. Papers, 1859, XXV, 251.

³³

Albert H. Imhah, Lord Ellenborough, p. 83.

³⁴

A British naval force from India landed troops on the island of Karrak in the Persian Gulf on June 19, 1838. This coupled with the warning to Shah of Persia that the British Government would consider the capture of Herat as a hostile act, forced the Persians to raise the siege.

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aggression against the North West Frontier.

The British army numbering around sixteen thousand troops gathered at Ferozpur on the Satlaj, at the end of November. The army marched through Sind suffering great difficulties due to heat and lack of

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supply. Nevertheless, by April 1839 the army had captured Qandhar.

No effective opposition was encountered and the army entered Kabul on

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August 6, 1839. The Barakzai monararchy for the time had perished.

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By the spring of 1841 it was quite clear that Shah Shujah could not keep up his throne without British assistance.

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The cost of occupation running to at least a million and a quarter pounds a year disrupted

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Indian finances. Retrenchment was imperative and this was carried

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Order by the Governor General of India, November 8, 1838, Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 110.

36

Ranjit Singh refused to let the British army pass through the Panjab which was the shortest and the safest path from India to Afghanistan.

37

The only major opposition was encountered in the storming and capturing of the fortress of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, situated near the city of Ghazni. It was considered impregnable by the Afghans.

38

In September, 1838 a Sikh force entered Kabul by way of the Khyber Pass. Singh, op. cit., p. 295. Dost Mohammad surrendered on November 2, 1840, and was sent into exile to India.

39

At the fall of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, Nawab Jabbar Khan, a son of Dost Mohammad, had made a remark about Shah Shujah which now was proved with deadly accuracy. "If," he said, "Shah Shujah is really a King, and comes to the Kingdom of his ancestors, what is the use of your army and name? You have brought him by your money and arms into Afghanistan, leave him now with us Afghans, and let him rule us if he can." The Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, 501.

40

This estimation is given in Imah, op. cit., p. 85.

out by reducing the garrison in Kabul and by cutting the subsidies paid to the Afghan chiefs. For almost two years general unrest in various parts of the country was becoming obvious but little was done about it. ⁴¹

On November 2, 1841, revolt broke out in Kabul, and Alexander Burns' house was attacked and he himself murdered. The Shah's treasury was looted and the guards killed. Shah Shujah sent a regiment of Indian soldiers to suppress the revolt with no results. ⁴² A few days later the commissariat stores fell into the Afghan hands. The British force stationed in Kohistan was completely destroyed. On November 23, the Afghans won a victory over the British near the Bamaru hills, overlooking the cantonment. ⁴³ Desperate messages for help were sent to Qandhar and Jalal-abad. On November 24 it was decided to negotiate. On December 23, Sir William Macnaghton, British Resident at Kabul, was killed by Akbar Khan, son of Dost Mohammad, during a heated argument while attempting to negotiate with the Afghans. ⁴⁴

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The Ghilzai tribe around the city of Jalal-abad in eastern Afghanistan revolted and for a time cut the communication between Jalal-abad and Kabul. In the mountainous region of Kohistan, some forty miles north of Kabul disturbances were widespread.

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A first hand account of the revolt of the Afghans against the British forces of occupation at Kabul, has been written by Lieutenant Vincent Eyre, in his book The Military Operations at Cabul, which ended in the Destruction of the British Army, January, 1842 with a Journal of Imprisonment in Afghanistan. Lieutenant Eyre was one of the British army officers serving with the army of occupation.

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Eyre, op. cit., p. 163.

⁴⁴

Sidney Low and L. C. Sanders, The Political History of England During the Reign of Victoria, XII, 88. One reason for the death of Macnaghton was his unsuccessful attempt to divide the enemy at the conference. The Cambridge History of the British Empire, IV, 509. Also Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 118.

The British now found themselves in the middle of a hostile country hundreds of miles away from the Indian frontier without adequate means of transport and communication, with their supplies in the enemy hands and no hope for any immediate reenforcement. General Elphinstone, in command of the Kabul forces, now ordered a retreat toward Jalal-abad. On January 13, 1842, Dr. Brydon, the sole survivor of sixteen thousand ⁴⁵troops, reached Jalal-abad. The rest perished in the defiles of Khurd-Kabul Pass between Jalal-abad and Kabul, mainly by Afghan bullets poured from every rock and cliff on the enemy below. Thus ended the first British attempt to dominate the country of the Hindukoosh.

In the autumn of 1842, British forces re-entered Kabul from both Peshawar and Qandhar, blew up the great bazar as a mark of retribution and secured the British prisoners. ⁴⁶After avenging their defeat the

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The number of the troops, the names of their regiments and the equipments they carried is given in some detail in Eyre, op. cit., pp. 256-275. One hundred and twenty persons were given to Akbar Khan for protection. Among these was General Elphinstone, commander of the British forces at Kabul.

46

In February 1842, Auckland was replaced by Lord Ellenborough as Governor General of India. Ellenborough was strongly in favor of evacuating Afghanistan. "The possession of Afghanistan, could we recover it, would be a source of weakness rather than of strength, in resisting the invasion of any army from the West, and therefore.... the ground upon which the policy of the advance of our troops to that country mainly rests has altogether ceased to exist." Ellenborough to the Commander-in-Chief, March 15, 1842. Imlah, op. cit., Ellenborough instructed the army to bring from the tomb of Mahmood of Ghazni in Ghazni, the gates of the temple of Somnath. Mahmood, the Turkish conqueror had destroyed the famous temple in Gujrat in western India and had carried its gates to Ghazni in the early part of the eleventh century. Later investigations proved that the gates were not authentic, and they long furnished to curious visitors a topic of wit at Ellenborough's expense. See Imlah, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

British hurriedly evacuated Afghanistan and allowed Dost Mohammad to resume his interrupted reign. Shah Shujah having been murdered the preceeding spring. The British restored the status quo but they could not restore what they had utterly destroyed--Afghan faith in British justice and fair dealing.

Looking back at the events leading to the First Afghan War it is possible to conclude that the war need not have taken place. The siege of Herat undertaken with the Persian and Russian backing was naturally harmful to the British interests in India, since it would have placed the Russian intrigue much closer to the Indian frontier. It was therefore logical for the British to attempt to dissuade Dost Mohammad from joining the Shah of Persia in his territorial aggrandizement. It was also to be expected that Dost Mohammad in return would ask for British assistance against the Sikhs for the restoration of Peshawar to the Afghan Kingdom. After Lord Auckland's positive refusal to interfere in any way in the restoration of Peshawar, Dost Mohammad had turned to Persia and Russia seeking help against the Sikhs.

The siege of Herat and its inevitable fall and the reception of the Russian envoy at Kabul seemed sufficient factors to Lord Auckland to undertake an invasion of Afghanistan. Ironically, however, the siege of Herat had been lifted before the invasion and the Russian envoy had also left Kabul without any kind of promises or treaty with the Amir. But the removal of Dost Mohammad and his replacement by Shah Shujah was foremost in Lord Auckland's mind. This replacement, according to Auckland, could remove a standing source of friction between Afghanistan

and the Sikh Empire, could remove the danger of the Russian and Persian intrigue and could strengthen the northwestern frontier of India.

In carrying out his objectives, by the replacement of a popular and stronger ruler by an unpopular ruler in exile, Lord Auckland showed an astounding lack of statesmanship and a corresponding lack of knowledge in regard to the Afghan people and their country. He overlooked the fierce national spirit of the Afghans, their love of liberty and independence and their ability and determination to fight the enemy particularly non-Muslim with every means available. It was quite clear to see that Shah Shujah who had been driven out of Afghanistan some thirty years earlier and had repeatedly failed to obtain the throne, although he might be friendly to the British and the Sikhs, could not be popular among his people if enthroned and sustained at Kabul with the aid of alien arms. Finally the geography of Afghanistan, unlike any other part of India, was most unsuited for military operations of an army trained to fight in India and most suited for any sort of guerrilla operations.

The British policy toward Afghanistan and Dost Mohammad was perhaps best summarized by William MacNaghton, himself a victim of that policy, when he said that "we ejected the Dost, who never offended us, in support of our policy of which he was a victim."⁴⁷

The results of the First Afghan war gave rise to the policy of non-intervention and "masterly inactivity" in Afghanistan which characterized the British attitude towards the country for almost

three decades. Even as the Russian advances in Central Asia during the fifties and the sixties assumed a somewhat rapid pace, the British completely bypassed the Afghan Government in the matters relating to the political boundaries in Central Asia. The Russians now fully aware of the high British stakes in Afghanistan directed their attention toward Central Asia and Afghanistan to counteract British influence and power elsewhere. This partly explains the rapid Russian advances in Central Asia in the years between the two Afghan Wars (1842-1881).

The First Afghan War effected every Afghan all along the frontier from the Pamir to the Persian desert with a suspicion and instinctive dislike of Europeans and their ways, so strong as to prevent closer contacts for many vital years to come.

CHAPTER III

ANGLO-AFGHAN RELATIONS, 1850-1873 AND

THE EXPANSION OF RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA, 1840-1870

The British and the Afghans

The First Afghan War was followed by two Sikh Wars, as a result of which all of the Panjab as well as Kashmir were annexed to British India.¹ This annexation had a profound affect on the Anglo-Afghan relations, for whereas the dominions of the Sikhs had separated the British territories from Afghanistan, now these two countries became immediate neighbors.

The Anglo-Afghan relations remained far from cordial. In 1854, however, the Crimean War was about to break out and Lord Dalhousie, Governor General of India, 1848-1856, thought to leave "nothing undone which would tend to make Afghanistan an effectual barrier against Russian aggression."² In the same year Herat was again attacked by the Persians. Herbert Edwardes, the Commissioner at Peshawar, perceived this opportunity to re-establish friendship with Dost Mohammad. Accordingly, Edwardes spent some time coaxing the Amir into making overtures to the British Government.³ Finally a treaty was signed at Peshawar on March 30, 1855. It contained

¹ After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a state of anarchy set in the Panjab. The proud Sikh army crossed the Satlaj River and invaded the British territory. In two hard fought wars, in 1844 and 1849, the Sikhs were defeated and their territory annexed to British India. Singh, op. cit., II, Chaps. II, IV.

² Quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

³ Edwardes, Lady Emma, Memorials of Sir Herbert Edwardes, I, 236.

three clauses. By it the Indian Government bound itself not to interfere in the territories of the Amir, while the Amir agreed to be "the friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies" of the Honourable

⁴ East India Company. Dost Mahammad had sought to extract a promise from the British never to send an envoy to Kabul. This was refused, the Afghan negotiator was to be assured that:

The Government of India has no intention of sending and no wish to send a representative to the court of Cabul; but it should be pointed out to him that this Government could not in prudence bind itself never to depute a representative to the Amir, for if Russia or other powers should be represented by envoys at Cabul, the interests of the British Government would plainly suffer injury if no envoy were present on its behalf.⁵

The Amir after signing the document exclaimed, "I have now made an alliance with the British Government and come what may, I will keep it till death."⁶ The British Government was very much satisfied with this treaty.⁷

⁸ During the Indian Mutiny, when the British rule seemed all but doomed, Sir John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of the Panjab, 1849-1859, advocated the restoration of all trans-Indus territory to Dost Mohammad. "It seems madness to me to endeavour to keep the outskirts of our dominions

⁴ Aitchison, op. cit., XIII, No. LV (Afghanistan). Appendix B.

⁵ Edwardes, op. cit., I, 242.

⁶ Bosworth Smith, Life of Lord Lawrence, I, ch. XV.

⁷ It is interesting to see Lord Dalhousie's comment on the treaty, "Dost Mohammad is very much delighted to see the treaty he has got though so favourable to us. His son writes to say that the Amir declares that, 'as long as he has life in his body and a soul of his own, he will be faithful to us.'" Letter dated July 22, 1855. G. A. Baird, ed., Private Letters of Marquess of Dalhousie, p. 348.

⁸ The first attempt on the part of the Indian people to rid them-

when it will be a desperate struggle to retain the latter at all." ⁹ This proposal was rejected by Lord Canning, Governor General of India during the Mutiny, in his dramatic telegram, "Hold on to Peshawar till the ¹⁰ last."

Lawrence was appointed the Viceroy of India in 1864. His policy in ¹¹ regard to Afghanistan has been called one of "Masterly inactivity." This policy was based on the advice Lawrence had received from Dost Mohammad; "Leave us and our country alone. We are poor in everything but stones and men. Never talk of sending a Resident at Kabul, for if I myself could not ensure his safety, much less will those who come ¹² after me." Dost Mohammad died in 1863. A prolonged war of succession followed. Lawrence, however, stuck to the policy of non-interference in Afghan affairs:

It should be our policy to show clearly that we will not interfere in the struggle, that we will not aid either party, that we will leave the Afghans to settle their own quarrels, and that we are willing to be on terms of amity and good-will with the nation and with their rulers de-facto.¹³

Accordingly Lawrence gave recognition to various pretenders who held any part of the country. Twice in 1866 Sher Ali asked for English help as

selves of British rule by armed insurrection was in 1857. The Indian historians prefer to call it the War of Liberation.

⁹ Bosworth Smith, op. cit., II, 121.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 122.

¹¹ J. W. Wylie, Essays on the External Policy of India., p. 115.

¹² Quoted in Bosworth Smith, op. cit., p. 500.

¹³ Charles Aitchison, Lord Lawrence, p. 180.

14
 did Afzal Khan. Lawrence ignored the former's letter and told the
 latter that if he could solidly establish himself, he might hope to
 be received into the English Alliance.¹⁵ As the pretenders now turned
 to Russia and Persia for help,¹⁶ Lawrence's policy of inactivity in
 Afghanistan was hastily ended. Lawrence now advised that foreign
 intervention in Afghanistan must be encountered by a supply of arms
 and money.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Sher Ali had by this time already established
 himself as the Amir of Cabul.¹⁸ On January 9th, 1869, it was officially
 announced that the Amir would receive one million, two hundred thousand
 rupees and a considerable supply of arms.¹⁹ Great harm however had
 been done. Sher Ali, Amir of Afghanistan 1868-1878, perhaps best
 expressed the feeling of his people as far back as 1867:

The English look to nothing but their own interests and bide their
 own time. Whosoever's side they see strongest for the time, they
 turn to him as their friend. I will not waste precious life in

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Dost Mohammad had designated Sher Ali as his successor.

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"The relations of this Government," wrote Lawrence to Afzal Khan, "will be with the actual rulers of Afghanistan. If your highness is able to consolidate power of Cabul....I shall be ready to accept your highness as such (a friend). But I cannot break the existing engagements with Ameer Sher Ali Khan, and I must continue to treat him as the ruler of that part of Afghanistan over which he retains control." Letter of Afzal Khan, quoted in Bosworth Smith, op. cit., II, 504.

16

Edwardes, op. cit., I, 239.

17

Dispatch, September 3, 1867, Parl. Papers, 1878-1879, LVI, 392.

18

For a detailed narrative of the war of succession in Afghanistan see J. W. Wyllie, op. cit., pp. 1, 99.

19

Sir Henry Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East, p. 294.

entertaining fake hopes from the English and will enter into friendship with other governments.²⁰

Abd-ur-Rahman, a nephew of Sher Ali and later Amir of Afghanistan 1881-1901, had to choose between Russia and India as a place of refuge in 1868. He chose Russia since he had "never seen the benefit of English friendship."²¹ Lawrence had offered to meet the Amir and discuss with him the political situation.²² The meeting did not take place, but in March 1869, Lawrence's successor Lord Mayo, Viceroy of India 1869-1872, met the Amir at Ambala in the Panjab. At Ambala Sher Ali had sought four objectives:

1. An offensive and defensive treaty.
2. A fixed annual subsidy and assistance in arms and men to be given whenever the Amir might think it needful to solicit it.
3. An agreement placing the British Government under obligation to support the Afghan Government in any emergency.
4. Recognition of Sher Ali's son, Abdulah Jan, as heir apparent.²³

The Amir could only extract a letter in which Mayo said that the Government of India would "view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of your rivals to disturb your position as ruler of Kabul."²⁴ The Amir on

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Sir Henry Rawlinson, "The Afghan Crisis," The Nineteenth Century, IV, (December 1878), 971.

21

Abd-ur-Rahman, Autobiography, I, iii.

22

Lawrence to Northcote (Sect. of State for India) October 10, 1868, Bosworth Smith, op. cit., II, 401.

23

William W. Hunter, The Earl of Mayo, p. 125. Also Parl. Papers, 1878-1879, LVI, 466.

24

Mayo to Sher Ali, March 31, 1869, Parl. Papers, 1878-1879, LVI, 464. "We have distinctly assured the Amir," said Lord Mayo, "that under

this occasion was furnished with ten thousand stands of arms and two
 25
 batteries of guns.

The Russians in Central Asia

So far we have traced the development of Anglo-Afghan relations for a period of about seventy years (1800-1870). We may now turn our attention to study the major factor responsible for the explosive nature of the political situation in Central Asia. This was the Russian expansion in that area.

Central Asia is such a large entity that generalizations are difficult. In the older days the whole area was called Turkestan loosely,
 26
 and it's distinguished marks were remoteness, aridity and inaccessibility. Today it consists of five Soviet Republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajekistan, and Karghizia. The region stretches all the way from the Urals and the Caspian to the borders of China and Mongolia, from the vicinity of Stalingrad in northern Caucasus to the borders of
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 Afghanistan. It faces the Pamirs and the Hindukush which merge into the Himalayas and form "the Roof of the World." Most of the region is an unending flat plain, and most of its rivers drain into inland seas,

no circumstances shall a British soldier cross his frontier to assist him in coercing his rebellious subjects. That no fixed subsidy or money allowance will be given for any named period....That no treaty will be entered into....We are willing to assist him with money, arms, ammunition and native officers and in other ways whenever we deem it desirable to do so." Hunter, op. cit., p. 125.

25

Henry Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East, p. 298.

26

John Gunther, Inside Russia Today, p. 464.

27

Ibid.

like the Aral Sea, the fourth largest lake in the world. Two of the most famous rivers are the Oxus and the Jaxartes.

Throughout history the region formed a part of various empires. The Persians, the Greeks, the Kushans and the Huns all incorporated
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Central Asia into their empires. With the advent of Islam, the cities of Samarkand and Bokhara flourished as great centers of Islamic
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learning and culture. The Mongols destroyed a greater part of Central Asian civilization but Tamerlane (1336-1405 A. D.), the great Turkish conqueror, once more restored Samarkand to its previous grandeur. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Central Asia managed to
30
stay independent of the Moghul and the Safavi domination. With the decline of the Moghul and the Safavi empires in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the area entered into a general state of decay, being cut off from the healthy association of Persia and India. By 1720 the three principalities or Khanates of Khiva, Bokhara and Khokand, had turned into mere robber states looting the caravans, raiding out-lying settlements of the neighboring countries of Khorasan, southeastern

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During the Kushan period when trade between China, India, Parthia and Rome was flourishing, Central Asia, lying on the Great Silk Road between China and Parthia, benefited handsomely. The Huns, however, destroyed a greater part of this prosperity during the fifth century. Richard N. Frye, The Heritage of Persia, pp. 194-195.

29

Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 394.

30

Moghul Emperors Babar (1525-1530 A. D.) and Shah Jahan (1527-1657 A. D.), both made unsuccessful attempts to incorporate Samarkand into the Moghul Empire. H. G. Rawlinson, India, A Short Cultural History, p. 337. Also Vincent Smith, The Oxford History of India, p. 320.

Russia and northwestern China and fighting among themselves.

Russian expansion in Central Asia was carried out between the reigns of Czars Alexander I (d. 1825) and Alexander III (d. 1894).³¹ The motives for this expansion were complex. There were perpetual difficulties arising with semi-civilized, misgoverned neighbors in Central Asia. The Russian desire to acquire secure frontiers was best explained by Prince Gorchakov, the Russian Chancellor, in his famous memorandum of November 21, 1864.³² The Russian position in Central Asia, it pointed out, "is that of all civilized states which come into contact with half-savage wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organization." It held that in the interests of security on the frontier and of commercial relations, "the more civilized state is compelled to take action against turbulent neighbors." British Prime Minister Gladstone was so convinced of the necessity of Russian expansion in Asia that in 1879 he openly declared that "Russia had been led on by causes in some degree analogous but certainly more stringent and imperative than the causes which have commonly led us to extend our frontiers in India."³³

As early as 1838 the Russians had advanced arguments in support of an active commercial policy in Central Asia. Commenting on the British activity in Afghanistan (First Afghan War), the Russian Foreign Minister observed:

³¹

Walther Kirchner, A Short History of Russia, p. 184.

³²

British and Foreign State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 768-773. (Correspondence between Great Britain, Persia and Russia, relative to the affairs of Central Asia). Appendix C.

³³

R. W. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question,

Whilst on our part we ask nothing but to be admitted to partake in fair competition the commercial advantages of Asia, English industry exclusive and jealous would deprive us entirely of the benefits which it pretends to reap alone; and would cause if it could, the produce of our manufactures to disappear from all the markets of Central Asia.³⁴

Personal aggrandizement also accounted for considerable expansion. Military governors could not look for rewards and promotions by peaceful administration. In 1869 General Kaufmann, appointed as first Governor General of Russian Turkestan, was defended by Gorchakov on the ground that he had already gained every honor that a Russian general could hope for.³⁵ But there was yet another more powerful reason for this expansion.

It was a political reason, and was best expressed in the instructions to the new Russian Ambassador, Baron de Staal, appointed to London in 1884:

Great historical lessons have taught us that we cannot count on the friendship of England, and that she can strike at us by means of continental alliances while we cannot reach her anywhere. No great nation can accept such a position. In order to escape from it, the Emperor Alexander II, of everlasting memory, ordered our expansion in Central Asia, leading us to occupy today in Turkestan and the Turkestan steppes a military position strong enough to keep England in check by the threat of invasion in India.³⁶

The Russian expansion in Central Asia was a part of the overall Russian expansion toward the Pacific, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics, p. 547.

³⁴ Nesselrode (Russian Foreign Minister) to Pozzo di Borgo (Russian Minister in London) October 20, 1838. Parl. Papers, 1838, LXVI, 629.

³⁵ Clarendon (British Foreign Minister), to Andrew Buchanan (British Ambassador at St. Petersburg), September 3, 1869, Parl. Papers, 1873, LXXV, 727.

³⁶ A Meyendorff, Correspondence Diplomatique de Baron de Staal, I, 26.

As early as 1649 Yermak, a Cossack had colonized Siberia and had helped
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 push the Russian frontiers to the Pacific Ocean. During the reign of
 Peter the Great, constant efforts were made to gain a foothold on the
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 Black Sea and on the Caspian Sea. These however accomplished very little.
 By 1830, Russia had acquired almost all the lands between the Black Sea
 39
 and the Caspian Sea at the expense of Persia and Turkey. Russian lands
 now touched the great Central Asian land mass in the north and in the west.

As early as 1717, Peter the Great had made an effort to subdue Khiva.
 The attempt, however, was an utter failure and the entire Russian expeditionary
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 force was treacherously wiped out by the Khivans. Almost a hundred years
 later, in 1839, when Britain was deeply involved in the First Afghan War,
 a Russian expedition was again sent against Khiva. The ignorance of the
 geography of the region as well as inadequate supplies forced the expedition

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Stuart R. Tompkins, Russia Through the Ages, from the Scythians to the Soviets. pp. 391-393.

38

The Russo-Persian War in 1722 resulted in the Russian acquisition of a part of the Caucasus Mountains. In 1735, however, the Persians under Nadir Shah (died 1747) retook all the lost territory. Lockhart, op. cit., p. 368.

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Persia ceded most of her Caucasus region to Russia after the two Russo-Persian Wars of 1812 (ended by the Treaty of Gulistan) and of 1828 (ended by the Treaty of Torkomanchai). Turkey ceded her part of the Caucasus to Russia at the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1828 (ended by the Treaty of Adrianople). See Sykes, History of Persia, pp. 114, 118.

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Peter's desire to get some share of the rich trade with India, rumors of great quantities of gold on the banks of the Oxus River, as well as a request from the Khan of Khiva for help against the Khan of Bokhara, led Peter to dispatch this fateful expedition. The expedition reached Khiva and the Khan accepted the protection of Peter. While the members of the Russian expedition were quartered in various sections of the town and were being entertained, the Khivans fell upon them and com-

to retreat back to Oranburg, situated about five hundred miles north
⁴¹ of the Caspian Sea. This expedition, however, demonstrated the defects
 of Oranburg as a base of operations against Khiva, and Aral Sea was now
 substituted for Oranburg. By a well planned and systematic advance
 Russia was able to get control of a greater part of the upper Onus and
 Jaxartes rivers. A chain of fortresses was completed in 1859, which
 connected the three great lakes of Central Asia, the Aral Sea, the
⁴² Baikal Lake and the Issikkul Lake. This chain of fortresses gave
 Russia a direct line of advance upon Central Asia.

In 1865 the Russians occupied the important city of Tashkand,
 provoking an armed conflict with the Amir of Bokhara. The Russians
 occupied part of his territories. In 1866, the extensive territories
 seized by Russians since 1847, were formed into a Governor-General-
⁴³ ship of Turkestan. General Kaufmann, one of Russia's great empire-
⁴⁴ builders, became its first ruler. During his proconsulship (1867-83)

pletely destroyed them. This account is given in Eugene Schuyler,
Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia II, 461. See also Ian Gray,
Peter the Great Emperor of All Russia, pp. 621-622.

⁴¹ The pretext given for this expedition was "to strengthen in
 that part of Asia the lawful influence to which Russia has a right and
 which alone can insure the maintenance of peace." Quoted in Sir Henry
 Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East, pp. 154-55.

⁴² Frances H. Skrine, The Expansion of Russia, p. 131

⁴³ Werner E. Mosse, Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia,
 p. 131.

⁴⁴ Kaufmann, who was a protege of Dmitry Miliutin, the Russian
 Minister of War 1861-1881, had from the start enjoyed full political
 and diplomatic powers for dealing with the independent states of
 Central Asia. Mosse, op. cit., p. 144.

the conquest of Central Asia was completed. Under his directions operations against the Khanates of Khokand and Bokhara were prosecuted with vigour. In 1868, the key cities of Samarkand and Bokhara fell to the Russians.⁴⁵ Khokand and Bokhara became Russian vassal states. In 1873, Khiva which had twice defied the Russian arms, was finally occupied by Kaufmann in person.⁴⁶ The Russian conquest of Central Asia was now almost complete.

The Russian expansion in Central Asia raised the question of a possible clash with Great Britain. As already noted, in a lengthy circular of November 1864, Gorchakov had tried to justify the Russian advance in Central Asia. Gorchakov had declared that Russia would not advance beyond the point of her farthest advance in 1864, yet Khokand, Bokhara and Khiva were occupied after this date.

The alarm felt by the Government of India was beginning to communicate itself to the British Government and to the British public opinion. Repeated inquiries from London and Calcutta finally forced the Tsar and Gorchakov to recognize the international implications of the Russian advance in Asia, culminating in the Agreement of 1873.⁴⁷

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Mosse, op. cit., p. 144.

46

J. A. MacGahan, Campaigning on the Oxus and the Fall of Khiva, pp. 183-226. MacGahan, correspondent of the New York Herald, actually accompanied General Kaufmann and the Russian force during the campaign against Khiva in 1873. He describes Kaufmann as a "man between forty-five and fifty, bald and rather small of stature for a Russian, blue eyes, moustache, no beard, and a pleasant kindly expression of countenance." op. cit., p. 158.

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Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING AFGHANISTAN 1868-1873

As the Russian advances in Central Asia after the Crimean War became a constant process, the British diplomats began unceasingly to reach for some agreement with St. Petersburg concerning the Anglo-Russian interest in that region.

Lord Lawrence as early as 1868 had advocated the idea that England and Russia should come to some kind of agreement concerning Central Asia:

The relations of the British and Russian Governments should be openly acknowledged and admitted as bringing them into necessary contact and treaty with the tribes and nations on the several sides of such a line. If an agreement of this nature were come to, the Government of India on one hand could look on without anxiety or apprehension at the proceedings of Russia on her southern frontier, while Russia on the other hand assured of our loyal feelings in this matter would have no jealousy in respect to our alliance with the Afghans.¹

In 1869 Lord Clarendon, the British Foreign Secretary suggested to Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador at London, that some territory should be recognized as neutral between the possessions of England and Russia.² Gorshakov, the Russian Chancellor, replied:

Si le cabinet de Londres comme nous l'esperons, est anime des memes convictions que nous, le desir timoine par Lord Clarendon se trouverait realise; nos possessions respectives en Asie, seraient separees par une zone independante qui les preserverait de tout compact immediat et les deux pays pourraient en toute securite se livrer a l'accomplissement de la mission civilisatrice qui leur est devolue chacun dans la sphere naturelle qui lui appartient en se pretant meme le mutuel concours qui resulte aujourd'hui de la diffusion

¹ Charles Aitchison, Lord Lawrence, pp. 183-84.

² Clarendon to Sir Andrew Buchanan, (British Ambassador to Russia), March 22, 1869, British and Foreign State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 657-58. (Hereafter referred to as State Papers).

generale lumieres et du progress.³

Gorchakov not only welcomed the idea of a neutral zone, but suggested that Afghanistan would form an appropriate neutral zone and would be "considered as entirely beyond the sphere in which Russia might be called upon to exercise her influence."⁴

The idea of a neutral zone was referred to the Indian Government. Lord Mayo quickly rejected it. "It is in our opinion essential to our strength and power in this country that we should be responsible to no foreign potentate for any of our dealings with people who inhabit our frontier."⁵ He suggested that if Russia would recognize and guarantee the independence of Khiva and Bokhara, and would "exercise over them friendly influence with an unquestioned power of punishing them on their subjects if they misbehaved," then Britain would in turn take the same position in regard to Afghanistan, Kelat and Yarkand.⁶

Replying to Gorchakov, Clarendon pointed out that since the frontiers of Afghanistan were ill defined, it would not fulfill the conditions of a neutral zone. He therefore suggested that "the Upper Oxus, which was south of Bokhara, should be the boundary line which no neutral power should permit its forces to cross. This would leave a large tract of country apparently desert and marked on the map as belonging to the Khan of Khiva

³ Gorchakov to Brunnow, March 7, 1869, State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 658.

⁴ Clarendon to Buchanan, March 27, 1869, State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 658.

⁵ Letter quoted in Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East, p. 301.

⁶ Ibid.

between Afghanistan and the territory already acquired by Russia."⁷

At a meeting at Wiesbaden in Germany, Clarendon and Gorchakov again discussed the question of a neutral zone. Clarendon again referred to the Oxus as the most desirable line of demarcation for the neutral⁸ zone. Gorchakov expressed the hope that the matter would not be pressed since a portion of the country south of the Oxus was claimed by the Amir of Bokhara and might lead to difficulties between England and Russia. He again proposed that Afghanistan should be looked upon as the neutral⁹ zone. Clarendon again rejected the proposal on the grounds that the frontiers of Afghanistan were ill defined.

The next phase of the negotiations was opened up by Mr. Douglas Forsyth, an officer of the Indian Administration who was sent by Lord¹⁰ Mayo to St. Petersburg to discuss questions of "mutual interests." M. Stremoukoff, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Asiatic Department, "very ably explained the idea of a neutral zone, which would include such tracts as Balkh and Koonduz and Badakhshan, but seeing that these provinces have become for periods more or less long incorporated with Afghanistan," he thought that all these provinces held¹¹ by Sher Ali should be recognized as parts of Afghanistan. Beyond

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Clarendon to Mr. Horace Rumbold, Foreign Office, April 17, 1869. State Papers, 1872-73. LXIII, 661.

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Clarendon to Buchanan, Wiesbaden, September 31, 1869. idem, 668-69.

⁹

Ibid.

¹⁰

Parl. Papers, 1878, LXXX (Central Asia No. 1), 35.

¹¹

Forsyth to Buchanan, Nov. 21, 1869. State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 676.

these limits Russia would not interfere.

What was this Afghanistan which the Russians had declared to be out of their sphere of influence? The Indian Government insisted that the "territories which acknowledged the sovereignty of Dost Mohammad and are of present under the Government of Sher Ali Khan" should be considered as forming parts of Afghanistan.¹² After asserting that in various campaigns between 1850 and 1863 Dost Mohammad had conquered all of Turkestan south of the Oxus, the Indian Government declared:

The northwestern boundary of what in our opinion ought to be considered Sher Ali's dominions runs in a southwesterly direction from a point on the Oxus between Khojah Saleh and Kerki skirting and including the provinces of Balkh, Maimanna, and Herat The northern boundary is the Oxus from the same point between Kerki and Khojah Saleh eastward to Panjab and Wakhan up to the point where the range of the Hindukoosh meets the southern angle of the Pamir Steppe.¹³

M. Stremoukoff accepted the boundaries as satisfactory except for Khojah Selah, the point from which the western boundary line was to commence on the Oxus, stating that Khojah Selah was represented on the Russian maps to be itself the western limit on the Oxus of Afghan Turkestan. He asked that a copy of the map be given to him to be forwarded to Kaufmann for his investigations concerning the exact political boundaries in Central Asia.¹⁴ Sir Andrew Buchanan, British Ambassador to Russia, first refused to give the map to M. Stremoukoff but on the

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Viceroy to the Duke of Argyll (Secretary of State for India) Simla, May 20, 1870. State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 722-725.

¹³

Ibid.

¹⁴

Buchanan to Earl Granville, July 13, 1870, State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 725.

instruction of Granville, the Foreign Secretary, finally handed it over.¹⁵

In June 1871, Granville instructed Buchanan to press for information concerning Kaufmann's investigations.¹⁶ Buchanan was informed that the delay was accounted for by the great distance from Tashkent (capital of Russian Turkestan) to St. Petersburg.¹⁷ Furthermore that Mr. Struve, the diplomatic agent of the Russian Foreign Office attached to Kaufmann,¹⁸ was on a mission to Bokhara. When the matter was again pressed by the British, Gorchakov replied that it would be better to wait for Kaufmann's investigations:¹⁹

The little native testimony that there is, is unworthy of credence. The maps are problematic, hypothetical and often contradictory. We are waiting for the result of the instructions we gave to him (Kaufmann). It is no question in the case of settling things for the moment but of insuring that the sound principles as to which the two Governments are so happily in accordance should be put into practice and eventually so developed as to make them the basis of stable and permanent policy.¹⁹

The British Government however decided to act alone. It reasserted that all the territories ruled by Dost Mohammad and now effectively under the control of Sher Ali would be considered as forming parts of Afghanistan. The British promised to respect the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and requested Russia to do the same. The following territories in their

¹⁵ Granville to Buchanan, July 30, 1870, idem, 727.

¹⁶ Same to Same, June 21, 1871, idem, 732.

¹⁷ Buchanan to Granville, June 30, 1871, idem, 732.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Gorchakov to Count Brunnow, November 13, 1871, State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 734-756. Also Lord Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, II, 283-4.

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opinion formed the northern frontiers of Afghanistan:

- (1) Badakshan, with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikal on the east to the junction of the Kokcha River with Oxus forming the northern boundary of this province throughout the entire extent.
- (2) Afghan Turkestan, comprising the districts of Kinduz, Khulin and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of Oxus from the junction of the Kokcha River to the post of the Khoja Saleh, inclusive on the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. Nothing to be claimed by the Afghan Ameer on the left bank of the Oxus below Khojah Saleh.
- (3) The internal districts of Akscha, Seripool, Maimenat, Shibberian and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the northwest, the desert beyond belonging to the independent tribes of Turcomans.
- (4) The Western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorasan is well known and need not here be defined.

The Russian Government replied that the data collected by Kaufmann

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was now available. It argued that since Dost Mohammad had left behind him a legacy of confusion, it was not possible to determine the limits of Sher Ali's dominions on the basis of his father's conquests. Therefore only those areas would be considered as forming parts of Sher Ali's dominions which were under his effective control. The data had indicated
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that no trace of Sher Ali's authority existed in Badakhshan and Wakhan.

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Granville to Loftus, October 17, 1872. State Papers, 1872-73, LXIII, 743-744. Also Parl. Papers, 1873, LXXI, 1-2, (Correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia). In 1872 Lord Augustus Loftus succeeded Air Andrew Buchanan as British Ambassador to Russia.

21

Gorchakov to Brunnow, December 7, 1872. State Papers, 1872-63, LXIII, 751-56. Also Parl. Papers, 1873, LXXV, 5.

22

Ibid.

On January 3, following the dispatch of a friendly Russian mission to England the Russian Government conceded that Afghanistan would consist of all areas outlined in the British declaration of October 17,

²³ 1872. On this occasion Gorchakov wrote:

We are the more inclined to this act of courtesy as the English Government engages to use all her influence with Sher Ali in order to induce him to maintain a peaceful attitude as well as to insist on his giving up all measures of aggression and further conquest. This influence is indisputable.²⁴

This concession on the part of Russia is generally known as the Agreement of 1873. It was a compromise between the wishes of the Russian Government, the British Government and the Indian Government. The Russian Government had desired to create Afghanistan as a neutral territory; the British Government wished for a neutral territory lying between the Oxus and Khiva; the Indian Government desired to create no neutral zones, but spheres of influence whose independence would be guaranteed by Russia and England. The agreement of 1873 marked the northern boundaries of Afghanistan, beyond which Russia promised not to interfere. It did not create any neutral zones, it did not place any restrictions upon further Russian expansion north of the Oxus and it was reached by Russia and England with more or less complete disregard as to the opinion of the Afghan Government.

²³

The mission was headed by Count Shavalov, who enjoyed the "special favor of the Czar." Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, 412.

²⁴

Gorchakov to Brunnow, January 31, 1873, Parl. Papers, 1873, LXXV, 15-16.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

Anglo-Afghan Relations 1873-1876

The agreement of 1873 did not check the ever-increasing Russian expansion in Central Asia. The last remaining independent Khanate of Khiva fell to the Russian arms in the middle of 1873.¹ To Sher Ali the omens were unmistakable, there were now only Merv and the Oxus left between him and the Russians and at any moment an influx of refugees might embroil him with his great neighbor to the north. He informed the native agent of the British Government at Kabul that the advance of the Russian boundary gave him great anxiety that weighted upon him day and night and that therefore he proposed to send one of his agents to wait² upon the Viceroy and ascertain his views. Accordingly the Amir sent his agent to meet Lord Northbrook who had succeeded Lord Mayo as the Viceroy.³ At Simla the Amir's envoy was informed of the recently concluded agreement between the Russian and the British governments.⁴ He was told that the Russians had promised to respect the northern boundaries

1

The fall of Khiva took place in spite of the assurances given by Count Shavalov of Russia, who had been sent on a special mission to England, that the emperor had given positive orders against the occupation of Khiva. Granville to Loftus, January 8, 1873, Parl. Papers, 1873. LXXV, 706.

2

Native Agent at Kabul, to Commissioner of Peshawar, April 14, 1873, Parl. Papers, 1878-9, LXI, 466.

3

Lord Mayo was assassinated in India in 1872. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 150-152.

4

Memorandum of conversation, July 19 and 20, 1873, Parl. Papers, LXI, 675-76.

5

of Afghanistan.

The envoy's reply was:

Whatever specific assurances the Russians may give and however often they might be repeated the people of Afghanistan can place no confidence in them, and will never rest satisfied unless they are assured of the aid of the British Government.⁶

The envoy therefore asked for a written assurance to the effect that if Russia, or any state of Turkestan or elsewhere under Russian influence should commit an aggression on the Amir's territories, or should otherwise annoy the Amir, the British Government would consider such aggressor an enemy, and that they would promise to afford the Amir promptly such assistance in money and arms as might be required until the danger should be passed or invasion repelled. Also that if the Amir should be unable to cope single handed with the invader, the British Government would promptly dispatch a force to his assistance by whatever route the Amir might require.⁷ Lord Northbrook would have liked to inform the Amir that "if he unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations, we will help him with money, arms and troops if necessary to⁸ expel unprovoked invasion. We to be the judge of the necessity."

This policy if adopted might have proved decisive in the development of the Central Asian question. Its rejection was as decisive as its

5

Ibid.

6

Lady Betty Balfour, Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, p. 13.

7

Memorandum of conversations, July 19 and 20, 1873, Parl. Papers, 1873-9, LVI, 675.

8

Telegram to the Secretary of State, July 24, 1873, idem, 482.

adoption might have been. The Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, who was largely under the influence of Lawrence's policy, rejected Northbrook's proposal on the ground that the Amir had no real cause for alarm and the Viceroy was allowed to inform the Amir that "we shall maintain our settled policy in Afghanistan." ⁹ With this astoundingly feeble solution to the major and pressing question under discussion the Amir's agent returned to Kabul and reported to his master that his mission had failed. ¹⁰

The Amir was bitterly disappointed. The ill-effects produced by the abortive Simla conference were emphasized by two other occurrences. The Government of India had undertaken the task of arbitrating on the boundary claims of the Persians and Afghans in Seistan. The decision ¹¹ went in some detail against Afghanistan. Worse still, the British Government failed to give recognition to Abdulah Jan, Sher Ali's favorite son, as heir apparent. This was one of Sher Ali's demands at the Ambala ¹² conference in 1869. The Government of India informed Sher Ali that his favorite son could look for no greater assistance than he himself had received before imprisonment, death, or exile had freed him from his ¹³ own rivals.

Although the British attitude toward Afghanistan was highly

⁹ Duke of Argyll to Northbrook, July 26, 1873, idem, 482.

¹⁰ Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 135.

¹¹ Parl. Papers, 1868-9, XLVI, 483-6.

¹² Chapter III, p. 38.

¹³ Dispatch to Argyll, Jan. 23, 1874, Parl. Papers, 1868-9, XLVI, 491.

unsatisfactory to Sher Ali, the Russian approach was much more tactfully carried out. Afghan relations with Russia may be said to have commenced in 1870, with a complementary letter, from General Kaufmann, the Governor General of Russian Turkestan.¹⁴ Sher Ali was informed that although his nephew Abd-ur-Rahman had taken refuge in Russian Turkestan, he would receive no assistance to wage war against his uncle. Abd-ur-Rahman at the same time was informed:

The present ruler of Afghanistan, Sher Ali, has been recognized as the lawful sovereign of that country by England which is friendly to us and until he breaks the peace and makes a disturbance on the frontier of Bokhara, I have no reason to see in him our enemy.¹⁵

After the fall of Bokhara, Kaufmann in a letter to Sher Ali pointed out that Bokhara was now under the protection of Russia and a neighbor of Afghanistan. "Therefore between us there cannot be any misunderstanding....I have no intention to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan."¹⁶ These letters were faithfully forwarded to the Government of India by Sher Ali. The Amir pointed out the fact that Russia had referred to Afghanistan as neighbor, notwithstanding the fact that Khiva intervened between them as an independent state and Bokhara had only accepted the protection of the Czar.¹⁷ The Indian Government replied that it had been repeatedly assured by the Russian Government that Afghanistan was out of Russia's sphere of influence and that Kaufmann's

¹⁴ Kaufmann to Sher Ali, March 28, 1870, Parl. Papers, 1881, XCVIII, 335.

¹⁵ Quoted in Eugene Schuyler, Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkestan, Khokand, Bukhara and Kuldja, II, 312.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁷ Balfour, op. cit., p. 10.

letters "will doubtlessly be, when rightly viewed, a source of satisfaction¹⁸ and an additional ground for confidence." When Sher Ali announced the nomination of his son Abdulah Jan as heir apparent, Kaufmann replied much more tactfully than had the British Government, "Such nominations" wrote Kaufmann, "tend to the comfort and tranquility of the Kingdom,"¹⁹ and he added, "I hope that after your death Sirdar Abdullah Jan will follow your example and make himself an ally and friend of the Emperor."²⁰ Between 1873 and 1876, the interchange of letters between Sher Ali and Kaufmann was increasing rapidly.

The Russian policy in Central Asia was perhaps best described by Baron-Rosen, member of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia:

In those days, I mean the early seventies of the last century our diplomacy was most active in connection with the affairs of Central Asia and the forward policy which our military commanders such as General Tchernaeff and Von Kaufmann had been inaugurating in Turkestan. This brought us into conflict with British or rather British Indian interests.²¹

Disraeli's Forward Policy

In 1874 the British Cabinet, which had supported Lord Lawrence's policy of non-intervention in the Afghan affairs, was replaced by the

¹⁸

Dispatch to Argyll, June 24, 1870, Parl. Papers, 1878, LXXX, 633.

¹⁹

Letter from Kaufmann to Sher Ali, Tashkent, Spring, 1873, Parl. Papers, 1881, XCVIII, 343.

²⁰

Schuyler points out the fact that all the letters of Kaufmann were accompanied by English translations perhaps due to the knowledge that they would be forwarded to the Indian Government. Schuyler, op. cit., II, 314.

²¹

Baron-Rosen, Forty Years of Diplomacy, I, 19.

Conservative Cabinet headed by Benjamin Disraeli. Lord Salisbury displaced the Duke of Argyll at the India Office, and before long Lord Lytton succeeded Lord Northbrook as the Viceroy of India.²² The change involved a sharp swing of foreign policy in the East. Disraeli was convinced that the Liberal Cabinet had lowered the influence of Great Britain in the world; he even went so far as to accuse the Liberals²³ of having attempted to disintegrate the Empire. "No minister in this country", said Disraeli, "will do his duty who neglects any opportunity of reconstructing as much as possible our Colonial Empire and of responding to those distant sympathies which may become the source of incalculable strength and happiness to this land."²⁴ He strongly advocated an active foreign policy. "A country and especially a maritime country, must get possession of the strong places of the world if it wishes to contribute to its' power."²⁵ "Power and influence we should exercise in Asia; consequently in Eastern Europe, consequently also in Western Europe."²⁶ This "spirited" or forward foreign policy was immediately²⁷ launched. The fall of Khiva to the Russians in 1873 in spite of Russian assurances that the emperor had given positive orders not to

22

Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, 412.

23

Speech of June 24, 1872. W. F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, V, 195.

24

Ibid.

25

Buckle, op. cit., IV, 335.

26

Disraeli to Derby, September 30, 1866, Buckle, op. cit., IV, 476.

27

Cambridge History of the British Foreign Policy, III, 79. Disraeli

28

29

annex that Khannate, reduced British faith in Russian promises.

The reasons for an active British policy in Central Asia were best expressed by Lord Dufferin, British Ambassador to Russia 1879-1881 and Viceroy of India 1884-1888:

It would be manifestly futile, to base the safety of the Northwestern frontier of India upon any understanding, stipulation, convention or treaty with the Imperial Government....I do not mean to imply that the Emperor and his ministers would willfully violate their engagements; but the authority of the Russian executive is so slight, the control it exercises over its distant agents and military chiefs is so unsteady and its policy is so designedly tentative, while the forces which stimulate the aggressive instincts of the nation are so constant that little reliance could be ultimately placed upon mere guarantees.³⁰

In February 1876 a letter from Kaufmann to Sher Ali caused further

31

anxiety to the British Government. The British Government, on

October 2, 1876, addressed the Russian Government through Lord Loftus:

In my dispatch to your Excellency of 6th ultimo, I enclosed a copy of the Cabul Diaries received from the Indian Government. You will find on page 10 of these diaries a letter addressed by General Kaufmann to the Amir of Cabul which appears to have been conveyed to its destination by an Asiatic agent, who still remains at Cabul and it is reported from other sources that his instructions are to induce Sher Ali to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with the Russian Government.³²

purchased the Suez Canal shares, proclaimed Queen Victoria as the Empress of India, and arranged for a visit of the Prince of Wales to India.

28

Granville to Loftus, January 8, 1873, Parl. Papers, 1873, LXXV, 706.

29

Lord E. Fitzmaurice, Life of Lord Granville, II, 409, 411.

30

Dufferin to Salisbury March 16, 1880, Foreign Office Papers, (Public Record Office), 1880, 75, 1099.

31

The letter is given in State Papers, 1875-76, LXVII, 731-35. It explained in some detail the conquest of the Khannate of Khokand. It was forwarded by the Indian Government to the Foreign Office.

32

Derby to Loftus, October 2, 1876, Parl. Papers, 1878, LXXX, 80.

Lord Loftus was further asked to remind the Russian Government that Afghanistan was out of Russia's sphere of influence and that no treaty could be signed between Russia and Afghanistan without the consent of the British Government. He was also asked to obtain a written disclaimer from the Russian Government to the above effect.³³ Lord Loftus did not obtain any written disclaimer but was informed by the Russians that they had no knowledge of any Russian agent having been sent to Cabul.³⁴ The Russians further asserted that the letter of Kaufmann was only complimentary. The Russian Government for the first time accused the British Government of aggressive tendencies along the Russo-Afghan border.³⁵

Salisbury now resolved to seek additional security in two directions, by occupying more commanding positions on the Afghan frontier itself and by inducing the Amir to accept British agents with his territories.³⁶ Accordingly, the frontier town of Quetta was occupied by the British.

33

Ibid.

34

Loftus to Derby, October 19, 1876, State Papers, 1875-1876, LXVII, 737.

35

Loftus to Derby, November 17, 1876, idem, 742. The British Government was accused of having sent shipment of arms to Herat for an attack on the city of Merv as well as of encouraging Afghanistan to annex a portion of Bokhara territory.

36

Quetta was the chief town of independent Baluchistan. In 1876 a civil war broke out between the ruler and the nobles. A British expedition was dispatched to establish peace. By the terms of an agreement, Quetta, lying very near to Qandhar in Afghanistan and commanding the invasion route from Qandhar to India, was permanently occupied. Parl. Papers, 1877, LXIV, 255-257, 314-316.

Salisbury was slow to formulate his other objective. As late as the summer of 1874, he was unconcerned about the Russian advances and was taking such advances for granted. "Russia must advance to Merv ultimately³⁷ and we have no power or interest to prevent it." This lack of power and interest in the case of Merv, was quite contrary to the great anxiety entertained by Sher Ali in regard to the possible Russian conquest of that city.³⁸ By the early part of 1875, we find Salisbury complaining about the lack of sufficient information from Afghanistan:

I am getting uneasy as to our lack of information from Afghanistan.... We have only a native agent who writes exactly what the Ameer tells him...I propose therefore to instruct Northbrook formally to take measures for placing a resident either at Herat or Gandhar.³⁹

Early in 1875 Salisbury wrote to Northbrook concerning the existing arrangement in Afghanistan:

It has the effect of placing upon our frontier a thick covert, behind which any amount of hostile intrigue and conspiracy may be masked. I agree with you in thinking that a Russian advance upon India is a Chimæra. But I am by no means sure that an attempt to throw the Afghans upon us is so improbable.⁴⁰

Consequently Northbrook was instructed to procure the assent of the Amir⁴¹ to the establishment of British Agency at Herat.

37

Letter to Northbrook, summer 1874. Lady Gwendolen Cecil, Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury, II, 70.

38

According to the Amir, the Russians would occupy Merv, the Turkomans would then have to take refuge in the Herat province of Afghanistan, whence they would harass the Russians. The Russians will hold the Amir responsible for this or will enter his territory to punish the Turkomans themselves. "Afghanistan" Westminster Review, CXI (January, 1879), 65.

39

Salisbury to Disraeli, January 2, 1875, Cecil, op. cit., II, 71.

40

Salisbury to Northbrook, February 19, 1875, Cecil, op. cit., II, 71.

41

Same to same, January 22, 1875, Parl. Papers, 1878-79, LXI, 502.

Lord Northbrook replied that the information supplied by the native agent was fairly accurate.⁴² Also that Lord Mayo had assured the Amir that no European officers would be placed in Afghanistan:

We attach great importance to the . . . friendly relations with Afghanistan and we should impress upon Her Majesty's Government our conviction that such relations will best be served by a steady adherence to the patient and conciliatory policy which has been pursued by the Government of India . . . and by making every reasonable allowance for the difficulties of the Amir even if he should be reluctant to accede to the views which we may entertain as to the measures which may be advisable equally for his own interests and for those of British India.⁴³

We see in the Viceroy's dispatch an understanding of the critical position of the Amir, "subject as he is to the risk of a revolution at home and apprehensive of attack from abroad." Northbrook therefore suggested that the time was not opportune for sending British officers in Afghanistan.⁴⁴

After a delay of five months, Salisbury in a lengthy dispatch to the Viceroy, reasoned that the policy of Russian frontier officials was very different from the one declared by St. Petersburg, and unless such actions were arrested by accurate information and action the situation would be out of hand even by St. Petersburg to control.⁴⁵ He therefore instructed Northbrook to find without delay "some occasion for sending

⁴² Dispatch to the Sect. of State, June 7, 1875, B. Mallet, Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook, p. 105.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Dispatch to the Government of India, November 19, 1875, Parl. Papers. 1878-79, LVI, 521.

a mission to Kabul and to press the reception of this mission very earnestly upon the Amir." His orders were to be carried out.⁴⁶

Northbrook resigned rather than obey, and Lord Lytton was appointed in his place.

Lytton's appointment marked the highwater mark of the forward policy. Lytton admittedly knew "nothing of India except its myths."⁴⁷ He was, however, not required to know much. In a letter to Queen Victoria written after Lord Lytton's appointment as Viceroy we get a glimpse of Disraeli's mind concerning his anxiety about the Russian advances in Central Asia:

It is Lord Beaconsfield's present opinion that in such a case Russia must be attacked from Asia, that troops should be sent to the Persian Gulf, and that the Empress of India should order her armies to clear Central Asia of the Moscovites and drive them into the Caspian. We have a good instrument for this purpose in Lord Lytton, and indeed he was placed there with that view.⁴⁸

Before reaching India, Lytton was profoundly affected by two events which undoubtedly strengthened his belief in a strong forward policy. The first was a visit of Count Shavalov, the Russian Ambassador in London. He showed two letters to Lytton, one from Kaufmann and the other from Gorchakov. Both letters expressed desire to establish direct contact between Calcutta and Tashkent (capital of Russian Turkestan). Kaufmann had suggested that England and Russia had a common foe in Central Asia,

⁴⁶

Ibid.

⁴⁷

Balfour, op. cit., p. 4.

⁴⁸

Disraeli to Queen Victoria, June 22, 1877, Buckle, op. cit., VI, 155.

Islam, and hence, both should divide all intervening states between India and the Russian possessions in Central Asia. Shavalove further informed Lytton that Kaufmann had sent a complimentary letter to Lytton via Afghanistan which Sher Ali was asked to deliver to the Indian Government.⁴⁹

The other incident took place at Suez where the famous M. de Lesseps, French diplomatist and the maker of the Suez Canal, suggested to Lytton a project to establish direct contact between Russian Central Asia and India.⁵⁰ "The intervening countries were to be divided between the two powers and their barbarous inhabitants, Afghans and the rest, were *faute de mieux*, to be swept away." De Lesseps informed Lytton that he had talked to Grand Duke Alexis of Russia and the Duke had highly approved the scheme.⁵¹

Lord Lytton carried with him a memorandum of instructions from Lord Salisbury.⁵² Salisbury pointed out that the maintenance of a strong and friendly power in Afghanistan had been the object of the British Government. The attainment of this object was to be now considered with due reference to the recent and rapid advances of Russia in Central Asia. The idea of a permanent British mission in Afghanistan was to be pressed upon Sher Ali. In return for this the Amir would

⁴⁹ This unusual meeting and conversation is given by Lady Betty Balfour (daughter of Lord Lytton) in her book, but is not recorded in any official paper. Balfour, op. cit., p. 35.

⁵⁰ This meeting is also described only by Lady Balfour. Balfour, op. cit., p. 43.

⁵¹

Ibid.

⁵²

Dispatch to the Viceroy, February 28, 1876, Parl. Papers, 1878-79, LVI, 530-534.

probably demand a fixed and augmented subsidy, recognition of his younger son Abdullah Jan as the heir apparent and a treaty guaranteeing material support in case of a foreign invasion. The first two could be granted without difficulty. As to the third, Salisbury was of the opinion that "with or without any such assurances, England would be compelled by her own interests to assist His Highness in repelling the invasion of his territory of a foreign power." Salisbury therefore authorized the Viceroy, if he considered it advisable, to give Sher Ali "a promise, not vague but strictly guarded and clearly circumscribed of adequate aid against actual and unprovoked attack by any foreign power. The means and timing to carry this policy into effect were left entirely to the Viceroy.

53

Lytton was determined to carry out the forward policy to its final conclusion regardless of Sher Ali's attitude:

One lesson he must learn, and that is that if he does not promptly prove himself our loyal friend we shall be obliged to regard him as our enemy and treat him accordingly. A tool in the hands of the Russians I will never allow him to become, such a tool would be my duty to break before it could be used.⁵⁴

In answer to the Viceroy's request for the reception of a mission, the Amir replied that all matters relating to the two states had been discussed at Simla and if there was anything new, he would send his agent to India.⁵⁵ The Amir further informed the British Government that he

53

Ibid.

54

Letter dated August 27, 1876. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

55

The Amir's letter to the Viceroy, actually written in Persian, verbose and extremely polite, is given in Balfour, op. cit., p. 57.

could not guarantee the safe conduct of the British agent, that the British might place some difficult proposal before him which might harm their relationship and that the Russians might make a similar demand.⁵⁶

The Amir's envoy came to Peshawar in India to confer with the British Government, when the British requests had assumed the nature of the threats.⁵⁷ The conference was held at Peshawar in the early part of 1877. It was destined to fail, due to Lord Lytton's attitude toward the entire issue. He was now ready to take steps "for the protection of the British interests without further reference to those of the Amir."⁵⁸ Lord Lytton also instructed Sir Lewis Pelly, the English agent representing the Indian Government at Peshawar, that unless the Amir gave his consent to the establishment of a British agency on the frontier as a basis of negotiations, it would be needless for him (the Amir) to depute his minister to India.⁵⁹ The Peshawar Conference was a complete failure. Lytton notified the Amir through Sir Lewis Pelly that the Indian Government would now look upon the Amir as an unsatisfactory neighbor.⁶⁰

⁵⁶

Account of the native agent at Kabul received on June 5, 1876, Balfour, op. cit., p. 58-59.

⁵⁷

In a letter to the Amir Lord Lytton had pointed out that while the Amir's agent was welcomed at anytime in India, the British agent was not welcomed in Afghanistan. He added that such relationship might be unhealthy. Letter to the Amir, July 8, 1876, Balfour, op. cit., pp. 60-63.

⁵⁸

Lord Lytton's Minutes, June, 1876. Balfour, op. cit., pp. 65-76.

⁵⁹

Ibid., p. 85.

⁶⁰

The cause of failure was the Amir's refusal to accept any British

In Europe the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878 A. D.) had re-opened the explosive Eastern Question. Disraeli, a few months after assuming the office of the Prime Minister, was hoping for "an opportunity for settling and strengthening our frontiers" in India.⁶¹ Lord Salisbury⁶² believed that only determined action in Afghanistan would stop Russia. When it seemed likely that Britain would join the war on behalf of Turkey,⁶³ Indian troops were dispatched to Malta. It was to be expected that Russia would initiate a similar movement in Afghanistan. The Congress of Berlin, however, removed the dangers of an Anglo-Russian conflict.⁶⁴ Both Disraeli and Salisbury were extremely anxious to see the Russian troops withdrawn from Turkish territory, and feared that a sudden flare-up of Afghan difficulties might endanger the execution of the Treaty of Berlin. No further pressure was allowed on Afghanistan.

Lord Lytton, however, took a very different view of the entire Afghan situation. A study of his voluminous correspondence indicates a rigid determination to carry out a well defined objective. The objective was to place the Indian frontier on the northern ridges of the Hindoekush with outposts on the Oxus valley beyond. The Viceroy, in order to

agents in Afghanistan. According to one author, the Amir had later instructed his agent to accept the British conditions. This instruction, however, came too late. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 141.

⁶¹

Buckle, op. cit., V, 416, 426.

⁶²

Lady Cecil, op. cit., II, 153-54.

⁶³

Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, 416.

⁶⁴

The Treaty of San Stefano which ended the Russo-Turkish War was extremely favorable to Russia and endangered the balance of power in the Balkans. The major European powers pressed Russia for a modification of

accomplish such an objective would either conclude a treaty with the Amir or failing that would break up the Afghan Kingdom, annexing as much of Afghanistan as possible. The limit of these objectives was "an outer line with the Oxus for ultimate boundary and Balkh, Maimana, Herat for its main posts."⁶⁵ There was no doubt in Lytton's mind as to the means by which this objective was to be carried out:

So long as peace lasts, we cannot use the sword, and our diplomacy is impotent. The declaration of war, therefore would be an opportunity which may never recur if we neglect it . . . I am persuaded that the policy of building up in Afghanistan a strong and independent state over which we can exercise absolutely no control has been proved, by experience, to be a mistake.⁶⁶

As has already been noticed a steady stream of correspondence had been in progress between General Kaufmann and Sher Ali. Sher Ali's refusal to accept an English mission was based on the fear that the Russian would also ask for a similar mission. This had caused Lord Lytton to conclude that the Amir had not only come to look upon the Russians as equal to but as more formidable than the English.⁶⁷

During the last phases of the Russo-Turkish War when the English intervention in the war seemed all but certain, Kaufmann dispatched a Russian mission headed by General Stolietov to the court of the Amir.

the terms of San Stefano. The resulting Congress of Berlin snatched away most of Russia's fruits of victory. Buckle, op. cit., VI, 1182-1215.

⁶⁵

Letter to Lord Cranbrook, Secretary of State, August 3, 1878. Balfour, op. cit., p. 250.

⁶⁶

Letter to Cranbrook, April 8, 1878, Balfour, op. cit., pp. 243-247.

⁶⁷

Lytton to Salisbury, June, 1876, Balfour, op. cit., p. 59.

Stolietov carried with him a letter to the Amir, "As I am unable to communicate my opinion verbally to you," wrote Kaufmann, "I have deputed my agent Major General Stolietov He will inform you of all that is hidden in my mind."⁶⁸ The reception of the mission at Kabul precipitated a crisis.⁶⁹ Stolietov had left Tashkent on June 13, 1878, the day the Berlin Congress met.⁷⁰ He carried with him a draft treaty. The treaty offered the recognition of the heir apparent and assistance against any external enemy.⁷¹

On August 14 Lytton wrote to the Amir informing him that an English mission would proceed to Afghanistan to negotiate a treaty with the Amir by the terms of which the Amir would not be allowed to enter into any foreign dealings, would receive British agents at Kabul at the discretion of the Viceroy, and would agree to the establishment of British agents at Herat.⁷² Abdullah Jan, the heir apparent died on

⁶⁸

Kaufmann to Sher Ali, June 1878, Roberts, op. cit., p. 556. Also Parl. Papers, 1881, XCVIII, 305.

⁶⁹

According to one authority "on hearing of the dispatch of the Russian mission Sher Ali was seized with panic and tried to stop it," however, according to The Cambridge History the mission "found at the frontier half hearted probably mere ostensible orders not to enter the country." See Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 144, and The Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, 417.

⁷⁰

Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, 417. For further details of the crisis, see Parl. Papers, 1878, LXXI.

⁷¹

The original copy of the treaty has been lost. The only copy of it was written by memory in the presence of Lord Roberts in 1880 by an Afghan who had actually read the original copy.

⁷²

Letter quoted in Balfour, op. cit., pp. 256-57.

August 17. Nevertheless, the Amir replied that the mission would be stopped but if conciliatory letters were sent according to his dignity then
⁷³ "all might be arranged." An English mission was nevertheless sent and was stopped at the border by the Afghan commander, on September 21, 1878.
⁷⁴ On November 2, an ultimatum was dispatched to Sher Ali, demanding the acceptance of the terms of the treaty offered to him on August 17, and an apology by November 20.
⁷⁵ No answer having been received by that date, the British forces were in consequence set in motion on November 21, 1878.

The Second Afghan War and Post War Settlements

The arrival of the Russian mission in Kabul had formed the subject of correspondence between the British and the Russian governments. The Russian ministers frankly avowed that the dispatch of this mission was due to the necessities of the situation arising from the imminent prospect of war between Russia and England.
⁷⁶ It was a temporary mission the need for which had now disappeared. It would be withdrawn as soon

⁷³

Ibid., pp. 266-267.

⁷⁴

G. W. Forrest, Life of Sir Neville Chamberlain, p. 470. Sir Neville Chamberlain headed the English mission.

⁷⁵

Lytton had been instructed by the British Cabinet to wait for an expected dispatch from Russia explaining the Russian position in Afghanistan before sending the English mission. He was also told not to send the mission through the Khyber Pass but through the Bolan Pass, where it would have less difficulty in getting through. Lytton disobeyed both orders. Buckle, op. cit., VI, 1259.

⁷⁶

Gorchakov to Disraeli, September 16, 1878. Buckle, op. cit., VI, 1248-1249.

as the British Government agreed that all engagements entered into between Russia and Britain with regard to Afghanistan remained in full force.⁷⁷ The Amir, in view of the threatening British attitude, had already applied to Kaufmann for help on the ground of "the old friendship and the recent alliance concluded through General Stolistov on part of His Imperial Majesty should any harm or injury, which God forbid, befall the Afghan Government the dust of blame will settle on the skirt of His Imperial Majesty's Government."⁷⁸ On November 4, Kaufmann had asked Sher Ali to make peace with the British.⁷⁹ In the meanwhile Kaufmann instructed the Russian mission to leave the Afghan territory in case of an English invasion of Afghanistan.⁸⁰

The campaign which began with the invasion of Afghan territory on November 20 was skillfully conducted and was speedily successful.⁸¹ Jalal-abad and Qandhar were occupied. On February 21, 1879, Sher Ali who had taken refuge in Russian territory died at Mazar-i-Sharif,⁸² in northern Afghanistan. Negotiations for a settlement were now opened with Yakub Khan, son of Sher Ali, leading to the treaty of

77

Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 145.

78

Sher Ali to Kaufmann, December 8, 1878. Parl. Papers, 1881, XCVIII, 353.

79

Parl. Papers., 1881, XCVIII, 355.

80

Lord Frederick Roberts, Forty One Years in India, I, 558.

81

The best account of military operations during the Second Afghan War is probably to be found in Roberts, op. cit., II, chaps. XIV sqq.

82

Balfour, op. cit., p. 313.

83

Gandamak signed on May 26, 1879. The principal clauses of the treaty were as follows:

1. The Amir was to conduct his relations with foreign states in accordance with the advice and wishes of the British Government.
2. The Amir was to receive a permanent British representative at Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan as required.
3. The British were to retain control of the Khyber Pass and of the districts of Kurram, Pishin, and Sibi.
4. The Amir was to receive a subsidy of 60,000 pounds a year.

On September 3, 1879, the British resident and his party were put to death by Afghan troops.⁸⁴ This event necessitated the renewal of the campaign.⁸⁵ Kabul was occupied by General Roberts on October 8. Yakub Khan abdicated and was removed to India.

As no suitable candidate for the Afghan throne could be found, and as the cost of occupation mounted, it was decided to disintegrate Afghanistan. Accordingly the Foreign Office opened negotiations with Persia in order to transfer Herat to the Persians.⁸⁶ In the meanwhile a representative of the Sadozai family, Wali Sher Ali Khan, was

83

For the text of the treaty see Parl. Papers, 1878-79, LXI, 691.

84

Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, 420. Roberts is of the opinion that this demonstration was actually staged by Yakub Khan's orders in order to show his inability to protect the English mission and hence to secure its withdrawal. Roberts, op. cit., II, 254.

85

Roberts, op. cit., II, 192 sqq.

86

Cecil, op. cit., II, 375.

87
 recognized as the ruler of Qandhar. Kabul was placed under the direct
 control of Mr. Lepel Griffin, an officer of the Indian Government
 88
 sent by Lytton. These arrangements were, however, quickly brought
 to an end by the appearance of Abd-ur-Rahman, grandson of the late
 89
 Amir Dost Mohammad and nephew of Sher Ali. Abd-ur-Rahman, a man
 of enormous will, had been living in Samarkand for twelve years under
 90
 the Russian protection. Early in 1880 hearing of the new develop-
 ments in Afghanistan, Abd-ur-Rahman, crossed the Oxus and entered
 91
 Afghanistan.

It was decided to negotiate with him and by an agreement Abd-ur-
 Rahman was recognized as the Amir of Kabul. Qandhar was placed under
 a separate ruler; the Amir was to receive an annual subsidy; the
 British were to retain the areas as specified in the treaty of Gandamak;
 the Amir was required to place the management of his foreign relations
 in the hands of the Indian Government; in case of an unprovoked

87

Balfour, op. cit., p. 376.

88

Ibid., p. 403.

89

Buckle, op. cit., II, 1357.

90

Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, (1899-1904 A. D.), who visited the
 court of Abd-ur-Rahman in 1894, has left us with a vivid and detailed
 impression of the Amir. "A large but in no wise unwieldy figure . . . ;
 a broad and massive countenance with regular features . . . ; luminous
 blackeyes . . . ; a black moustache . . . and a carefully trimmed and
 dyed black beard . . . ; above all a manner of unchallengable dignity
 and command." "This terribly cruel man could be affable, gracious and
 considerate to a degree." Curzon of Kedleston, Tales of Travel, pp. 63,
 64.

91

Curzon, op. cit., p. 57.

aggression the British promised to help the Amir; no British residents
⁹²
 were to be stationed in Afghanistan.

In July 1880, Ayub Khan, a son of Sher Ali, advanced from Herat
⁹³
 and inflicted a crushing defeat on the British forces at Maiwand.
 Ayub Khan was, however, defeated by General Roberts who had marched
 from Kabul to Qandhar. By 1881 Abd-ur-Rahman, was able to consolidate
 his position not only in Kabul but in Qandhar as well. One year later
⁹⁴
 he also brought Herat under his rule. In January 1881 the British
 forces marched out of Afghanistan. Thus ended the second British
 attempt to dominate the country of the Hindukush.

⁹²
 Memorandum of conversations, July 31, 1880. Foreign Office
Papers, (Public Record Office), 1880, 65, 1104. Appendix D.

⁹³
 Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 154

⁹⁴
 Curzon, op. cit., p. 59.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan, commanding as it does, the main invasion routes to India from the northwest, has been destined to play a decisive role and to a great extent to shape the history of India and Central Asia. During the nineteenth century, owing to the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia, this role of Afghanistan assumed international proportions.

The frequent domination of India by the foreigners from the northwest is a basic characteristic of the Indian history. This domination was set in more or less a regular pattern. All the would-be invaders of India always consolidated their holds of the Hindukush Mountains before descending upon the plains of northern India. Once the hold on India had been secured, the center of authority shifted from the country of the Hindukush to the plains of northern India, the land of the Hindukush merely becoming an outpost of the Indian empires. The tide of the conquest now began to flow from northern India towards the northwest. This pattern was faithfully repeated in Indian history due to the fact that all empires in northern India were driven forward by the necessity to secure and stabilize their northwest frontier and to safeguard their commerce. The Hindukush Mountains protected India from the full force of invading hordes and furnished it with a stable frontier.

Two main factors have been instrumental in bringing about an invasion of northern India: internal disorder, and the possession

of the Hindukoosh in a strong and hostile hand. No ruler of northern India therefore could tolerate the establishment of a hostile and potentially strong power in the Hindukoosh. The Hindukoosh have been well suited as an outpost of the Indian empires rather than their center of administration. Owing to this fact, any attempt to rule India over a long period of time from centers in the Hindukoosh has proved unsuccessful.

The creation of Afghanistan as a separate nation in the middle of the eighteenth century was mainly brought about by the breakup of the Moghul and the Safavi empires. As the Hindukoosh passed into the hands of a strong power, and anarchy prevailed in northern India, once again the stage was set for an invasion of India from the northwest. This invasion by Ahmed Shah Abdali in the middle of the eighteenth century resulted in the annexation of Kashmir and the Panjab to the Durani Empire. The center of authority now shifted from Delhi to Qandhar. Such a change, as already pointed out, has not always been healthy.

The Durani Empire was not destined to rule northern India for long. It was only a matter of time before a strong indigenous power would establish itself in northern India and would challenge the Durani rule. Such a power was forthcoming in the form of the powerful religious confederacy of the Sikhs. Driving out the Afghans in front of them, the Sikhs faithfully placed the Indian frontier at the foot of the Sulaiman Mountains. The control of the Hindukoosh, however, remained in the hands of a hostile but not necessarily a strong power.

By 1830, then, with the establishment of the British and the Sikh

powers in India, the tide of the conquest had begun to flow towards the northwest; the Hindukoosh were in the hands of a weak and unstable power; beyond the Oxus the ever-present danger of an invasion from the north was lurking in the background. The Central Asian stage had assumed a dangerous though a familiar pattern. The principal actors in this historic drama were neither Indians nor even Asiatics, but Europeans. The part they were assigned to play, however, was historically familiar.

Throughout the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century as a strong Central Asian power kept on an inexorable drive towards the Hindukoosh, and an expanding Indian power constantly attempted to push its frontiers to their logical conclusion, Afghanistan provided the pivot around which the defence of India and indeed that of the British Empire revolved. The role of Afghanistan, therefore, cannot be underestimated.

Prior to the First Afghan War, the main factors suitable for an invasion of India from the northwest were not present. The British and the Sikh empires were politically stable and militarily strong. The Hindukoosh were in the hands of a weak power. Lord Auckland's fear that the Hindukoosh might pass into the hands of a strong and hostile power from beyond the Oxus was historically justified. Auckland's desire to see the establishment of a strong and friendly power in Afghanistan had very reasonable bases. The means to carry this policy into effect, however, proved to be unwise and disastrous. Instead of creating a strong and friendly power in Afghanistan, the British attempt to substitute a strong and popular Afghan ruler with a weak and unpopular ruler

in exile by force of arms, accomplished just the opposite. It seriously upset the internal stability of the state and created a deep rooted hostility and suspicion in the minds of all Afghans toward their eastern neighbors.

The intervening years between the two Afghan Wars (1842-1878) witnessed some vital changes in the political map of Central and Southern Asia. In India the tide of the conquest continued to flow in the north-westerly direction. By 1850, the British after overrunning the Sikh territories, were in direct contact with Afghanistan. North of the Oxus, the inexorable Russian drive southward had placed the Russian frontiers at the doorsteps of Afghanistan. By 1870, Sher Ali, after a brief civil war had managed to establish himself on the Afghan throne. The struggle for the mastery of Hindukoosh was now only a matter of time. To Sher Ali the facts were too obvious; Afghanistan could no longer stand alone and must seek friends beyond the Oxus or east of the Khyber Pass. He chose the latter.

Sher Ali had two objectives: to strengthen the internal stability of Afghanistan and to safeguard it against external aggression. He therefore wisely asked the British to recognize the order of succession to the Afghan throne and to render him aid against an unprovoked Russian aggression. Now was the opportune time for the British to build a strong and friendly power in Afghanistan. This auspicious moment, however, was foolishly lost and a general policy of "masterly inactivity" was inaugurated. It was natural for Sher Ali to seek guarantees elsewhere. It was now decided to inaugurate a "forward policy" and to annex as much of Afghanistan

as was necessary to safeguard the northwestern frontier of India. The resulting war was the ultimate expression of the forward policy.

When it became clear, however, that Afghanistan could not be retained against the wishes of its people, the British, after signing an agreement with the new Amir, marched out of Afghanistan. The net result of the Second Afghan War was a doubtful goodwill of the new Amir and the hatred of the Afghan people. In the final analysis Dost Mohammad and Sher Ali both proved to be better judges of the situation in Central Asia than did the British. The Afghan rulers truly appreciated the delicate and important role which Afghanistan had been called to play. Their policy was characterized by extreme caution and great understanding. The British on the other hand had no fixed policy. Their relations with Afghanistan were characterized by an amazing lack of understanding and a touch of panic. Such a policy on the part of Britain, resulted in two unjust and costly invasions of the Afghan homeland. It furthermore created suspicion and hatred in the minds of the Afghans towards the British and therefore essentially increased the chances of the Russian influence in Afghanistan.

The effects of the Second Afghan War on Russia were twofold. Firstly, it clearly showed the Russians how far the British were willing to go to keep Afghanistan out of Russian sphere of influence. Secondly, the war strengthened the Russian belief that Afghanistan was a very vulnerable point in the British defence system.

As already noted, Abd-ur-Rahman had spent twelve years in exile in the Russian lands. We have also noted his anti-British attitude prior

to his exile in Samarkand. It is possible that these two factors were sufficiently strong for the Russians not only to permit Abd-ur-Rahman to leave the Russian territory but even to hope for his pro-Russian and anti-British policy after he became the Amir of Afghanistan. If such was the case, the Russians were mistaken. Abd-ur-Rahman remained pro-British until his death in 1901.

The Russian expansion in Central Asia was permanently checked in 1883, when after the capture of the Merv Oasis near Afghanistan, by the Russians, the British Government declared that any further Russian expansion toward Afghanistan would be met by force of arms. The Russo-Afghan frontier since then has not changed. Afghanistan remained out of Russia's political sphere until 1920, when as a result of the Third Afghan War, Afghanistan gained full control of its defence and foreign affairs.

APPENDIX A

THE TRIPARTITE TREATY OF 1838, CONCLUDED

BETWEEN THE BRITISH, SHAH SHUJAH AND

¹

MAHARAJA RANJETT SINGH

(Articles 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 omitted)

Article 1st. Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk disclaims all title on the part of himself, his heirs, successors and all the Suddozais to all the territories lying on either bank of the River Indus, that may be possessed by the Maharajah, vis., Cashmere, including its limits E.W.N.S., together with the Fort of Attok, Chuch, Hazara, Khebel, Amb, with its dependencies on the left bank of the aforesaid river, and on the right bank Peshawar, with the Busufzai Territory, Kheeteks, Hist Nagar, Meehnee, Kohat, Hungoo, and all places dependent in Peshawar, as far as the Khyber Pass, Banno, the Viziri Territory, Dow Tank, Gorang, Kalabagh, and Khushalgher, with their dependent districts, Derah Ismail Khan and its dependency together with Derah Ghazee Khan, Kot Mithan, Omarkote, and their dependent territory, Singher, Heren, Dajel, Hajeepore, Rajenpore, and the three Ketches, as well as Mankera with its district, and the Province of Multan situated on the left bank. These countries and places are considered to be the property and to form the estate of the Maharajah--the Shah neither has nor will have any concern with them. They belong to the Maharajah and his posterity from generation to generation.

¹

Aitchison, op. cit., VIII, 154.

Article 3rd. As agreeably to the Treaty established between the British Government and the Maharajah, no one can cross from left to the right bank of the Sutlej without a passport from the Maharajah, the same rule shall be observed regarding the passage of the Indus, whose waters join the Sutlej, and no one shall be allowed to cross the Indus without the Maharajah's permission.

Article 6th. Each party shall address the other on terms of equality.

Article 11th. In the event of the Shah taking an auxiliary force from the Maharajah, whatever booty may be acquired from the Barakzais, in jewels, horses, arms great and small, shall be equally divided between the two contracting parties. If the Shah should succeed in obtaining possession of their property without the assistance of the Maharajah's troops, the Shah agrees to send a portion of it by his own agent to the Maharajah in the way of friendship.

Article 14th. The friends and enemies of each of the three high powers, that is to say, the British and Sikh Governments and Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk, shall be the friends and enemies of all.

Article 15th. Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk engages, after the attainment of his object, to pay without fail to the Maharajah the sum of two lakhs of Rupees of the Namukshahie or Kuldar currency, calculating from the date on which the Sikh troops may be despatched for the purpose of reinstating His Majesty in Cabool, in consideration of the Maharajah's stationing a force of not less than five thousand men. Cavalry and Infantry, of the Mahomedan persuasion, within the limits of the Peshawur

Territory, for the support of the Shah, and to be sent to the aid of His Majesty, whenever the British Government, in concert and counsel with the Maharajah, shall deem their aid necessary; and when any matter of great importance may arise to the westward, such measures will be adopted with regard to it as may seem expedient and proper at the time to the British and Sikh Governments. In the event of the Maharajah requiring the aid of any of the Shah's troops, a deduction will be made from the Subsidy proportioned to the period for which such aid may be afforded, and the British Government holds itself responsible for the punctual payment of the above sum annually to the Maharajah so long as the provisions of this Treaty are duly observed.

Article 16th. Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk agrees to relinquish for himself, his heirs, and successors, all claims of supremacy and arrears of tribute over the country now held by the Ameers of Sinde (and which will continue to belong to the Ameers and their successors in perpetuity), on condition of the payment to him by the Ameers of such a sum as may be determined under the mediation of the British Government, fifteen lakhs of such payment being made over by him to Maharajah Runjeet Singh.

Article 17th. When Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk shall have succeeded in establishing his authority in Afghanistan, he shall not attack or molest his nephew, the ruler of Herat, in the possession of the territories now subject to his Government.

Article 18th. Shah Shooja-ool-Moolk binds himself, his heirs, and successors to refrain from entering into negotiations with any Foreign State, without the knowledge and consent of the British and Sikh Governments,

and to oppose any power having the design to invade the British or Sikh Territories by force of arms to the utmost of his ability.

The three Powers, parties to this Treaty, viz, the British Government, Maharajah Runjeet Singh and Shah Shooja-eol-Moolk, cordially agree to the foregoing Articles. There shall be no deviation from them, and in that case the present Treaty shall be considered binding for ever, and this Treaty shall come into operation from and after the date on which the seals and signatures of the three contracting parties shall have been affixed thereto.

Done at Lahore, this 26th day of June, in the year of our Lord, 1838, corresponding with the 15th of the month of Asark, 1895—Era of Bikarmajit.

Signed and sealed this 25th day of July, in the year A.D. 1838, at Simla.

(Signed) Auckland.

Seal of The
Governor General

Seal and Signature
of Runjeet Singh

Seal and
Signature of
Shah Shooja-
eol-Moolk.

APENDIX B

TREATY CONCLUDED BETWEEN SIR JOHN LAWRENCE, CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF
THE PUNJAB, AND SADAR GHULAM HYDER KHAN AT PESHAWAR, MARCH 30, 1855²

Article I. There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable East India Company and His Highness Dost Mohammed Khan, the Amir of Kabul, his heirs and successors.

Article II. The Honourable East India Company engages to respect and never interfere with territories now in possession of His Highness the Amir.

Article III. His Highness Dost Mohammed Khan engages on his part and on the part of his heirs and successors to respect the territories belonging to the Honourable East India Company, to be the friend of its friends, and enemy of its' enemies.

APPENDIX C

TRANSLATION OF PRINCE GORCHAKOV'S

MEMORANDUM

Dated St. Petersburg, 21 November 1864³

The Russian newspapers have described the military operation, which have been carried out by a detachment of our troops in the regions of Central Asia with remarkable success and vast results. It was inevitable that these events should excite attention in foreign countries, and the more so because their theatre lies in regions which are hardly known.

Our august Master has directed me to explain succinctly, but with clearness and precision, our position in Central Asia, the interests which prompt our actions in that part of the world, and the aims which we pursue. The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilised states which come into contact with half-savage, wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organization.

It invariably happens in such cases that the interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilized state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbours whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with. First, we have incursions and pillage to repress. In order to stop these we are compelled to reduce the tribes on our frontier to a more or less complete submission. Once the result is attained they become less troublesome, but in their turn they are exposed to the aggression of more distant tribes. The state is obliged to defend them against these depredations,

³ Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., pp. 319-323.

and chastise those who commit them. Hence the necessity of distant and costly expeditions, repeated at frequent intervals, against an enemy whose social organization enables him to elude pursuit. If we content ourselves with chastising the freebooters and then retire, the lessons is soon forgotten. Retreat is ascribed to weakness, for Asiatics respect only visible and palpable force; that arising from the exercise of reason and a regard for the interests of civilization has as yet no hold on them. The task has therefore to be performed over again.

In order to cut short these perpetual disorders we established strong places in the midst of a hostile population, and thus we obtained an ascendancy, which shortly but surely reduced them to a more or less willing submission. But beyond this line there are other tribes which soon provoked the same dangers, the same repression. The state then finds itself on the horns of a dilemma. It must abandon the incessant struggle and deliver its frontier over to disorder, which renders property, security and civilization impossible; or it must plunge into the depth of savage countries, where the difficulties and sacrifices to which it is exposed increase with each step in advance. Such has been the lot of all countries placed in the same conditions. The United States in America, France in Algiers, Holland in her colonies, England in India—all have been inevitably drawn into a course wherein ambition plays a smaller part than imperious necessity, and where the greatest difficulty is in knowing where to stop.

Such are the reasons which have induced the Imperial Government

to establish itself, on the one side on the Sri Darya, and on the other on the Lake of Issik-kul, and to consolidate the two lines by advanced forts which little by little have penetrated the heart of these distant regions, but have not sufficed to secure tranquillity on the frontier. The cause of this instability lies firstly in the existence between the extremities of this double line of forts of vast unoccupied tract where the incursions of robber tribes continue to neutralize our attempts at colonization and our caravan traffic. It is in the second place due to perpetual changes in the political aspect of the countries to the south of our border. Turkistan and Khokand are sometimes united, sometimes separated, but are always at war either with each other or with Bukhara, and offer no probability of settled relations or regular transactions with them.

Thus in our own despite the Imperial Government finds itself reduced to the dilemma already stated: it must allow an anarchy to become chronic which paralyzes all security and all progress, and involves distant and expensive expeditions at frequent intervals; or on the other hand it must enter on a career of conquest and annexation such as gave England her Indian Empire, in view of dominating in succession the petty independent states whose turbulent habits and perpetual revolts leave their neighbor neither truce nor repose. Neither of these alternatives is in consonance with the object of my august Master's policy, which aims at restricting the extent of the countries subject to his sceptre within reasonable limits, while it places his rule thereon on firm foundations, guarantees their security, and develops

their social organization, their commerce, well-being and civilization.

Our task therefore has been to seek a system fitted to attain the triple object. In this view the following principles have been formulated:--

(i) It has been considered indispensable that the two fortified frontier lines, the one stretching from China to Lake Issik-kul, the other from the Sea of Aral along the lower course of the Sri Darya, should be linked together by a chain of strongholds, so that each fort should be in position to afford mutual support and leave no space open to incursions of nomad tribes.

(ii) It was essential that the line of forts thus completed should be placed in a fertile country, not only in order to ensure supplies, but to facilitate regular colonization which alone can give an occupied country a future of stability and prosperity, or attract neighbouring tribes to civilized life.

(iii) It was a matter of urgency to fix this line in a definite manner in order to escape the danger of being drawn on from repression to reprisals which might end in a limitless expansion of our empire.

With this object it was necessary to lay the foundations of a system founded not merely on considerations of expediency but on geographical and political data which are fixed and permanent.

This system was disclosed to us by a very simple fact, the result of long experience, namely the nomad tribes which cannot be overtaken, punished or kept in hand are the worst neighbours possible; while agricultural and commercial populations, wedded to the soil, and given

and given a more highly developed social organization, afford for us a basis for friendly relations which may become all that can be wished.

Our frontier line then should include the first, and stop at the boundaries of the second.

These three principles afford a clear, natural and logical explanation of the recent military operations accomplished in Central Asia.

Moreover our old frontier stretching along the Sri Darya to Fort Perovski on one side and on the other as far as Lake Issik-kul, had the disadvantage of being almost at the edge of the desert. It was interrupted by an immense gap between the farthest points on the east and west. It offered very insufficient supplies to our troops, and left beyond it unsettled tribes with which we could not maintain stable relations.

In spite of our repugnance to give wider scope to our dominion these conditions were powerful enough to induce the Imperial Government to establish a frontier between Lake Issik-Kul and the Sri Darya by fortifying the town of Chimkent recently occupied by us. In adopting this line we obtain a twofold result. First the country which it includes is fertile, well-wooded and watered by numerous streams, it is inhabited in part by Khirghiz tribes which have already acknowledged our supremacy, and therefore offers conditions favourable to colonization and the supply of our garrison. Then it gives us the agricultural and commercial population of Khokand as our neighbours.

Thus we find ourselves confronted by a solid and compact social organization—one less shifting and better arranged. This consideration marks with geographical precision the limit where interest and reason

command us to stop. On the one hand attempts to extend our rule will no longer encounter such unstable entities as nomad tribes, but more regularly organized states and will therefore be carried out at the cost of great effort, leading us from annexation to annexation into difficulties the end of which cannot be foreseen. On the other hand as we have as our neighbours states of that description, in spite of their low civilization and nebulous political development, we hope that regular relations may one day in our common interest replace the chronic disorders which have hitherto hampered their progress.

Such are the principles which are the mainspring of our august Master's policy in Central Asia; such the final goal which His Imperial Majesty has prescribed as that of his Cabinet's action.

There is no necessity to insist on the palpable interest of Russia in restricting the growth of her territory and preventing the advent of complications in distant provinces which may retard and paralyse our domestic development.

The programme which I have just traced is in strict accord with the policy.

People of late years have been pleased to credit us with a mission to civilize neighbouring countries on the continent of Asia. The progress of civilization has no more efficacious ally than commercial relations. These require in all countries order and stability as conditions essential to their growth; but in Asia their existence implies a revolution in the manners of the people. Asiatics must before all things be made to understand that it is more advantageous to favour and

and assure trade by caravans than to pillage them. These elementary principles can penetrate the public conscience only when there is a public; that is to say a social organization and a government which directs and represents it. We are accomplishing the first portion of this task in extending our frontier to points where these indispensable conditions are to be met with. We accomplish the second when we undertake the duty of proving to neighbouring states by a policy of firmness as regards the repression of their misdeeds but of moderation and justice in the employment of armed strength and of respect for their independence that Russia is not their foe, that she cherishes no design of conquest, and that peaceful and commercial relations with her are more profitable than disorder, pillage, reprisals, and chronic warfare. In devoting herself to this task the Russian Cabinet has the interests of the Empire in view; but we believe that its accomplishment will also serve those of civilization and humanity at large. We have a right to count upon an equitable and loyal appreciation of the policy which we follow, and the principles on which it is framed.

Gorchakov

APPENDIX D

I

LETTER FROM MR. GRIFFIN TO S. ABDUR

RAHMAN KHAN

Dated 14 June 1880⁴

My friend, I have received your letter of 16th May by the hand of S. Ibrahim Kah, Sardar Bahadur, who arrived at Kabul on the 23rd May, and have fully understood its friendly sentiments, and the desire which it expresses for a cordial understanding between the British Government and yourself. This letter together with the memorandum of the Members of the mission, which was shown to you before dispatch, and which mentioned certain matters regarding which you desired further information, has been laid before His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India; and I am now commanded to convey to you the replies of the Government of India to the questions which you have asked.

Firstly. With regard to the position of the Ruler of Kabul to foreign powers, since the British Government admit no right of interference by foreign powers in Afghanistan, and since both Russia and Persia are pledged to abstain from all political interference with Afghan affairs, it is plain that the Kabul ruler can have no political relations with any foreign power except the English; and if any such power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the Kabul ruler, then the British

⁴ Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., pp. 324-326.

Government will be prepared to aid him if necessary to repel it, provided that he follows the advice of the British Government in regard to his external relations.

Secondly. With regard to limits of territory, I am directed to say that the whole province of Kandahar has been placed under a separate ruler, except Pishin and Sibi, which are retained in British possession. Consequently the Government is not able to enter into any negotiations with you on these points, nor in respect to arrangements with regard to the North Western Frontier, which were concluded with the late Amir Muhammad Yakub Khan. With these reservations the British Government are willing that you should establish over Afghanistan--including Herat, the possession of which cannot be guaranteed to you, though Government are not disposed to hinder measures which you may take to obtain possession of it--as complete and extensive authority as had been hitherto exercised by any Amir of your family. The British Government desires to exercise no interference in your internal government of these territories, nor will you be required to admit an English Resident anywhere; although for convenience of ordinary friendly intercourse between two contiguous states it may be advisable to station, by agreement, a Muhammadan agent of the British Government at Kabul.

If you should, after clearly understanding the wishes and intentions of the British Government, as stated in former letters and now further explained, desire these matters to be stated in a formal writing, it is necessary that you should first intimate plainly your acceptance or refusal of the invitation of the British Government, and should state

your proposals for carrying into effect friendly arrangements.

Sardar Wazirzada Muhammad Afzal Kahn has been ordered to leave Khanabad within five days after receipt of this letter, as it is necessary to understand from him by word of mouth, the position of affairs and your wishes and sentiments. Should your reply be sent by his hand it will prevent delay and will accelerate the conclusion of final arrangements, and consequently the Government trusts that you will be able to make use of his agency.

II

LETTER FROM S. ABDUR RAHMAN

KHAN TO MR. GRIFFIN

Dated 22 June, 1880

The kind letter, sent by the hand of Taj Muhammad Khan, telling me of your welfare and friendship, arrived on the 20th June, and caused me great pleasure. What was the wish and object of myself and people you yourself have kindly granted.

Regarding the boundaries of Afghanistan which were settled by treaty with my most noble and respected grandfather, Dost Muhammad, these you have granted to me. And the Envoy which you have appointed in Afghanistan you have dispensed with, but what you have left to be settled according to my wish is, that I may keep a Muhammadan Ambassador, if I please. This was my desire and that of my people, and this you have kindly granted.

About my friendly relations and communications with foreign powers,

you have written that I should not have any without advice and consultation with you (the British). You should consider well that if I have the friendship of a great Government like yours, how can I communicate with another Power without advice and consultations with you? I agree to this also.

You have also kindly written that should any unwarranted (improper) attack be made by any other Power on Afghanistan, you will under all circumstances afford me assistance; and you will not permit any other person to take possession of the territory of Afghanistan. This is also my desire, which you have kindly granted.

As to what you have written about Herat. Herat is at present in the possession of my cousin. So long as he does not oppose me and remains friendly with me, it is better that I should leave my cousin in Herat, rather than any other man. Should he oppose me, and not listen to my advice or those of my people, I will afterwards let you know. Everything shall be done as we both deem it expedient and advisable.

All the kindness you have shown is for my welfare and that of my people, how should I not accept it? You have shown me very great kindness to me and to my people.

I have written and sent letters containing full particulars to all the tribes of Afghanistan, and I have given copies of these papers to S. Muhammad Afzal Khan, for transmission to you, and I have communicated verbally to Afzal Khan certain matters.

Three days after this I will give him leave to start. Consider me also, the slave of the threshold of God, as having already arrived at

Parwan.

Send me back a verbal reply by Muhammad Afzal Khan so that he may reach me on the road wherever I may be. Dated 13th Rajab.

(PS. In Abdur Rahman's own hand.)

I have signed and sealed this envelope with wax.

In this letter and the former letters, all is written by the same hand, and there is no alternation anywhere.



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