THE UPPER OXUS BOUNDARY.

COMPILLED BY
CAPTAIN F. E. YOUNGHSBAND.

CALCUTTA:
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING, INDIA.
1890.
PRECIS OF PAPERS REGARDING THE UPPER OXUS BOUNDARY.

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I.—The advance of Russia induces Government to come to an understanding with her as to her designs.

The gradual advance of Russia in Central Asia had for some years been occupying the serious attention of both the Government of India and the Home Government, when in 1868 Sir H. Rawlinson wrote a memorandum in which he pointed out that what we had to fear most was, not an invasion of India, but the disturbing influence on the people and Princes of India which would follow were Russia to come in contact with our possessions, and that it was, therefore, desirable that measures should be taken towards counteracting the rapid spread of Russian influence in Central Asia. This memorandum was carefully considered by the Government of India, and, when the opinions of several responsible officers had also been asked, a despatch was written to the Secretary of State in which it was recommended that endeavours might be made to come to some clear understanding with the Court of St. Petersburgh as to its projects and designs in Central Asia, and that it might be given to understand in firm but courteous language that it cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, or in those of any State which lies contiguous to our frontier.

2.—A neutral zone proposed but abandoned.

Shortly after the receipt of this despatch by the Home Government, Lord Clarendon suggested to the Russian Ambassador in London the idea of a neutral zone between the possessions of Russia and England. The Russian Government approved of the idea, but the Government of India on being consulted raised decided objections to such a course. The idea was then abandoned, and attention was turned towards the establishment of an understanding that Russia would respect the independence of the neighbouring States on her border, just as England was prepared to respect that of the States on her frontier.

3.—An "honourable understanding" that Afghanistan is outside Russian influence.

Much negotiation followed with, perhaps, not very definite results beyond an "honourable understanding" between the two Governments that Afghanistan was beyond the sphere of Russian influence, and that the limits of that country should be considered as those actually in the possession of Shere Ali.

4. The Government of India suggest a boundary for Afghanistan.

The Government of India was then asked to define the boundaries of Afghanistan. They accordingly addressed the Secretary of State in a despatch dated March 11th, 1870, in which they laid down the northern boundary of
Afghanistan as "the Oxus from a point between Kirki and Khoja Saleh eastward to Punjab and Wakhan, and thereafter the stream which passes Wakhan up to the point where the range of the Hindu Koosh meets the southern angle of the Pamir Steppe." This boundary they admitted might not be perfectly accurate, but considered it sufficiently so for all practical purposes. This despatch was communicated to the Russian Government, but was not discussed by them for some time as they wished to consult General Kaufmann, Governor General of Turkestan, on the subject.

5.—The Russians object to Badakshan and Wakhan being included in Afghanistan.

In October 1871, however, our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh at last got into communication with the Russian Minister on the subject, and he was then told that the Imperial Government had very serious objections to Badakshan being included within the dominions of Shere Ali, "as from the geographical configuration of that province it stretched in a wedge-like form towards the north, coming in contact with Khokand, Bokhara and Kashgar, and might, therefore, in the hands of a powerful and ambitious Prince, become a source of danger to the tranquility of those three States, as occasions for conflicts with them would scarcely fail to occur. Wakhan was a dependency of Badakshan, and if Shere Ali could really establish his authority in the latter, which he had not yet done, it was in the nature of things that he would endeavour to extend it to the former, and the idea of the river forming a boundary was erroneous, for the Oxus there consisted of several streams, and it would be impossible to decide which was the main one."

6.—Our Indian authorities prove that the claim to Badakshan, etc., is just.

This objection of the Russians was submitted to the Home Government, and Sir H. Rawlinson drew up a memorandum in which he pointed out that Shere Ali had inherited his right to Badakshan from his father; he also showed that there were some difficulties regarding the northern frontier of Badakshan as it was possible that part of Darwaz might be on the south bank of the Oxus; and he further brought to notice that it would be advisable in future to adopt the right (or Wood's) branch of the Punjab, instead of the left as the northern frontier of Wakhan.

On these papers being submitted to the Government of India they pointed out that, as early as 1869, they had reported that the Chiefs of Kunduz and Badakhshan had, after a temporary deflection, again acknowledged the Amir as their sovereign; and they reminded the Secretary of State that the Bokhara Ambassadors at St. Petersburgh had admitted to Mr. Forsyth that ever since the capture of Herat by Dost Mohammed, Badakshan had belonged to Cabul.

7.—A despatch accordingly sent by Lord Granville showing in detail the boundary of Afghanistan.

Having awaited in vain for the promised report from General Kaufmann, Her Majesty's Government now thought it advisable to no longer delay making known to the Russian Government the conclusion at which they had arrived, and Lord Granville accordingly directed the Ambassador at St. Petersburgh in a despatch dated October 17th, 1872, to communicate the following important statement to the Imperial Government:

"In the opinion then of Her Majesty's Government the right of the Amir of Cabul (Sher Ali) to the possession of the territories up to the Oxus as far down as Khoja Saleh is fully established, and they believe
and have so stated to him, through the Indian Government, that he would have a right to defend these territories if invaded. On the other hand, Her Majesty's authorities in India have declared their determination to remonstrate strongly with the Amir should he evince any disposition to overstep these limits of his kingdom.

Hitherto the Amir has proved most amenable to the advice offered to him by the Indian Government, and has cordially accepted the peaceful policy which they have recommended him to adopt, because the Indian Government have been able to accompany their advice with an assurance that the territorial integrity of Afghanistan would in like manner be respected by those Powers beyond his frontiers which are amenable to the influence of Russia. The policy thus happily inaugurated has produced the most beneficial results in the establishment of peace in the countries where it has long been unknown.

Her Majesty's Government believe that it is now in the power of the Russian Government by an explicit recognition of the right of the Amir of Cabul to these territories which he now claims, which Bokhara herself admits to be his, and which all evidence as yet produced shows to be in his actual and effectual possession, to assist the British Government in perpetuating, as far as it is in human power to do so, the peace and prosperity of those regions and in removing for ever by such means all cause of uneasiness and jealousy between England and Russia in regard to their respective policies in Asia.

For your Excellency's more complete information I state the territories and boundaries which Her Majesty's Government consider as fully belonging to the Amir of Cabul, viz.:—

(1) Badakshan with its independent district of Wakhan from the Sarikul (Wood's Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha River with the Oxus (or Panjah) forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire extent."

* * *

8.—General Kaufmann's reply.

On receipt of this statement the Russian Government again objected to Badakshan being included within the limits of Afghan territory, and shortly afterwards, in November 1872, General Kaufmann's long expected report arrived. In this he pointed out that the guarantee asked for by us from the Russian Government for Shere Ali's possessions within the limits proposed by Lord Granville would give him a considerable prestige, and he would at once endeavour to make himself master de facto of territories which would thus be conceded to him. Above all, his attention would be turned from the side of Badakshan and Kokcha to a prey which would be at once the most easy and the most accessible.

"By the acquisition of these two territories (Badakshan and Kokcha) he would prolong the line of contact with Bokhara, and would find himself side by side with Karategin from which Khokand is within easy reach. Finally he would, on the north-east boundary, touch the possessions of Yakub Beg*. And there you have a road which leads straight to a collision with Russia."

General Kaufmann attempted to prove from statements made to him by Abdul Rahman Khan and other Afghan refugees, that "with the exception of a very small number of Afghan adventurers, neither officers nor troops of the Amir of Cabul were to be found in Badakshan," and that Shere Ali could not claim Badakshan as an inheritance of his father, and had not yet established his authority in the country.

With regard to Wakhan, General Kaufmann found that it was administered by a Chief of its own, but was dependent upon Badakshan, whose Chiefs, however, abstained from interfering in the internal affairs of the country, and he said there was no direct communication between Wakhan and Afghanistan.

In forwarding General Kaufmann's memorandum to the Russian Ambassador in London for communication to Her Majesty's Government, Prince Gortchakoff remarked with regard to Badakshan and Wakhan that "it had been impossible to lay hold of any traces of even a semblance of authority," and "as to Wakhan, that country appeared, up to the present time, to have

* Kashgar and Yarkand.
remained even more out of the reach of all direct action by the Chiefs of Afghanistan."

**Considering** this state of things Prince Gorchakoff said the Imperial Cabinet entirely agreed with General Kaufmann that the claims of Shere Ali over Badakshan should not be allowed.

9.—**General Kaufmann’s objections considered by our Indian authorities.**

The reasons for the Russians objecting so strongly to the recognition of Afghan authority over Badakshan and Wakhan appear to have been—

(i) Fears that the Amir of Afghanistan would at once occupy Badakshan and Wakhan with the view of establishing his sovereign authority in those provinces.

(ii) Fears that the aggressive position of Wakhan might give the Amir an appetite for conquest, and thus produce a collision which would be fatal to the peace and tranquility of Central Asia.

The Russian case was now fully considered by the Home authorities, and several memoranda were drawn up on the subject. Sir J. W. Kaye and Sir H. Rawlinson proved the incontestable right of Shere Ali to Badakshan, and the latter writer also pointed out what he thought might be a clue to Russia’s persistence on the subject of Badakshan. He shewed that Wakhan had always been politically and geographically a part of Badakshan, and through it ran the only high road to commerce between west and east of Central Asia, "so that, if the Amir of Cabul were shut out of Badakshan and Wakhan, Russia might have complete and exclusive command of the great line of communication between Western Asia and China. Another important consideration," adds Sir H. Rawlinson, "in connection with this subject refers to the communication with India. The natural high road which conducts from the plains of India to the great plateau of Chinese Turkestan, a road incomparably superior in every respect to the mountain track across Tibet*, follows the Chitral Valley from the Cabul tributary to the Indus, and debouches on the valley of the Oxus in Wakhan, so that a foreign power in possession of Wakhan would not only command the great trade route from west to east of Central Asia, but would also hold the "Gates of India."

10.—**The British Government adheres to its former opinion, but undertakes to control the Amir from aggression.**

Lord Granville then announced to our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh in a despatch dated January 24th, 1873, the conclusion at which Her Majesty’s Government had arrived, and directed him to communicate the contents to the Russian Government. In it we adhered firmly to our former decision to include Badakshan and Wakhan within the limits of Afghanistan, but in answer to the fears expressed by the Russians that the admission of these provinces being within the sovereignty of the Amir of Cabul might encourage him to extend his possessions still further, Lord Granville said that “Her Majesty’s Government would not fail to impress upon the Amir in the strongest terms the advantages which are gained by him in the recognition by Great Britain and Russia of the boundaries which he claims, and of the consequent obligation upon him to abstain from any aggression on his part, and Her Majesty’s Government will continue to exercise their influence in the same direction.” This statement, in view of what has since happened, is worthy of particular notice.

* Sir H. Rawlinson probably means Little Tibet, Ladak.
11.—The Russian Government finally accepts our definition of the boundary.

In reply to this despatch Prince Gortchakoff in a letter addressed to the Russian Ambassador in London finally agreed to the frontier line suggested by Lord Granville, though the agreement was in the somewhat vague terms, "we do not refuse to recognise the English line of demarcation," and Prince Gortchakoff made the most of the statement of Lord Granville regarding the influence we should exercise over the Amir of Cabul to restrain him from aggression. "We are the more disposed," runs the Russian despatch, "to this act of courtesy, seeing that the British Government undertakes to use all its influence over Shere Ali in order to keep him in a peaceful attitude, and to insist upon an abandonment on his part of all aggression or ulterior conquest. That influence is incontestable. It rests not merely upon the material and moral ascendancy of England, but also upon the subsidies for which Shere Ali is indebted to her. We are able, henceforth, to see in it a real guarantee for the preservation of peace."

12.—The Amir is informed of the agreement with Russia.

The Amir of Cabul was now informed of the issue of the negotiations, and was told that "Her Majesty's Government had felt no hesitation in undertaking to use their influence to impress upon His Highness the importance of maintaining a peaceful attitude, and of allowing no considerations to tempt him to entertain any designs of conquest or aggression beyond the country described in Lord Granville's letter of 17th October 1872 (see p. 2). The Russian Government have, as His Highness was informed in Lord Mayo's letter of 24th June 1870, undertaken, on their part, to use their best endeavours to restrain the States over which they have any influence from transgressing the limits of Afghan territory."

The Amir, however, appeared to be by no means satisfied with these arrangements. He said that "it cannot be concealed that it is impossible for the Russians to remain always firm in their negotiations. For instance, they could not remain firm in their engagements about the Crimea even for a short period." He asked for money and arms and, if necessary, the aid of British troops to resist an invasion, as otherwise he would not be satisfied for the safety of his kingdom.

13.—Interpretation put upon the agreement by Her Majesty's Government.

The interpretation put upon the arrangements with Russia by Her Majesty's Government will be learnt by the following extract from a speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone:—

"England had undertaken to impress upon the Amir in the strongest terms his obligation, in consideration of Russian recognition of his boundaries, to refrain from any aggression and to continue to exercise our influence in this direction. Russia naturally attached value to this undertaking, and he would not extenuate its import. Prince Gortchakoff had given his own version of it in which he spoke of England as engaging to use its influence with the Amir to maintain a peaceful attitude and give up all measures of aggression or further conquest. Even if Prince Gortchakoff had placed the construction on our engagement that it bound us to coerce the Amir, and become responsible for his conduct, we should not be bound by this, unless it were a construction flouted in our face, in which case we should have been called upon to repudiate it; but Prince Gortchakoff had done nothing of the kind; the fact that the argument turned entirely on the use of the word 'influence' showed that moral influence was meant, not an engagement to use force.

"The engagement referred solely to the moral influence necessarily possessed by Russia and England in the East; Russia engaging to abstain from any attempt to exercise it in Afghanistan and England engaging to use it for a pacific purpose,"
14.—Views of the Indian Government.

The views of the Indian Government as to the obligations which would devolve upon them may be gathered from the following extract of a despatch to the Secretary of State, dated 30th June 1873:—

"The Earl of Mayo informed the Amir of Afghanistan at Umballa, in the spring of 1869, that although the British Government did not desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, yet considering that the bonds of friendship between the Government of India and His Highness had lately been more closely drawn than heretofore, we should endeavour, from time to time, by such means as circumstances might require, to strengthen the Government of His Highness; and that we were willing to assist him with money, arms, ammunition, and in other ways whenever we deemed it desirable to do so. The hands of the Government of India were left absolutely free as to the occasions on which, and the circumstances under which, such assistance was to be given to, or withheld from, the Amir. He was given clearly to understand that the assistance then or hereafter to be given him was solely for the purpose of establishing a just and merciful, as well as a strong, Government in Afghanistan, and that the continuance of our support must always depend upon the pleasure of the Amir.

Our advice in his relations with his neighbours, he was told, would be given towards him in accordance with the action he may take, in the same way as the case of need, in the strongest manner, our friendly advice, and to govern our relations with Afghanistan as in all respects satisfactory, and in accordance with the opinions and principles laid down by Her Majesty's Government."

"This statement will suffice to show the nature of our relations with Afghanistan. Our influence has been exercised with the Amir to encourage him in the peaceful policy which he has hitherto pursued towards his neighbours, and we believe that it will in future be sufficient to secure that most desirable object. Indeed, we are confident that the Amir himself will appreciate his obligation, in consideration of the recognition by Russia of the boundaries of his territory, to refrain from any aggression; but we have never desired to interfere with the independence of Afghanistan, and therefore, we can undertake no further responsibility with regard to the action of the Amir than to press upon him in case of need, in the strongest manner, our friendly advice, and to govern our relations towards him in accordance with the action he may take, in the same way as the Russian Government have engaged to act with regard to Bokhara.

"18. Although we have abstained from entering into any treaty engagement to support the Amir by British troops, in the event of Afghanistan being attacked from without, yet the complete independence of Afghanistan is so important to the interests of British India that the Government of India could not look upon an attack upon Afghanistan with indifference. So long as the Amir continues, as he has hitherto done, to act in accordance with our advice in his relations with his neighbours, he would naturally look for material assistance from us, and circumstances might occur under which we should consider it incumbent upon us to recommend Her Majesty's Government to render him such assistance.

"19. The assurances given by the Russian Government of their determination not to interfere with Afghanistan have been clear and positive throughout the whole course of these negotiations. We unreservedly accept those assurances, and we are satisfied that this frank explanation of the position of the Government of India as regards Afghanistan will not be misinterpreted.

"20. Both Powers have now publicly avowed their adherence to the policy of not further extending their territorial possessions in the southern portion of Central Asia. They have pledged themselves reciprocally that, so far as their influence extends over the States lying between their respective frontiers, that influence will be exerted in the interests of the general peace to restrain those States from aggression upon each other. As regards Afghanistan, the boundary recently settled is to be the limit of the Amir's dominions; while, on the one hand, the Government of India are to use all the influence they possess with the Amir to prevent him from transgressing that boundary, Russia will, on her part, use all her influence over Bokhara and the other States to which her influence extends to restrain them from aggressions on Afghanistan. Therefore, so long as the Amir confines himself to the boundary now defined, he need fear no molestation from Russia or the countries under her influence."
15.—Views expressed in Parliament.

The views of our Indian authorities were still further explained in Parliament by the Duke of Argyll, then Secretary of State for India, and by Mr. Grant-Duff, the Under Secretary of State, who, on February 21st, 1873, said:—

"What we have done is this—

"We have recognized Shere Ali's rights up to the Oxus and to the Northern Oxus—the Oxus flowing out of Wood's Lake. We have not recognized in him any right to territory beyond the Oxus, because even if it could be proved that he has a title to certain hut-villages, if such hut-villages exist, it would have been a very cruel kindness to him to have encouraged him to stand on them. The Oxus from Wood's Lake down to Khojah Saleh presented a clear, definite boundary, the same being the boundary of the land inherited from Dost Muhammad by Shere Ali. All the northern side of the Oxus basin, till you get to the Bokhariot territory, belongs to a number of independent Potentates, Chiefs of Shighnan, Roshan, Darwaz, and what not, some smaller and some larger, of all of whom Europeans know absolutely nothing."

16.—Russian views of the agreement.

The Russian views of the agreement will now be considered. In March 1873, our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh wrote that he had learnt from a confidential and perfectly reliable source that M. de Stremounkoff, the Director of the Asiatic Department, had recently expressed his opinion that the agreement between England and Russia respecting the boundaries of Afghanistan was calculated to provoke the very collision which it had been the desire of the two Governments to avert. "England," he said, "had not weighed well the responsibility she had undertaken under the agreement, for it would be no easy matter to restrain the Afghans who might give much trouble under the rule of an active and enterprising successor to Shere Ali. There was danger, for instance, in the direction of Hissar, the deposed ruler of which State was at present in Afghanistan watching an opportunity for his return to power. We should in that case," said His Excellency, "address ourselves to the English and say, dear friends, will you be kind enough to cause the Afghans to desist from their plans and actions with respect to Hissar. The English will remonstrate with the Afghans, but the Amir will probably not listen to them, particularly if he has had time enough to put by a store of English sovereigns out of his subsidy from the Indian Government." Where will then the agreement be, asked M. de Stremounkoff?

His Excellency further stated that the Amir of Cabul had no right whatever to the possession of Badakshan and that it was very doubtful whether Badakshan had any right over Wakhan. He insisted that General Kaufman's information under this head was more reliable than that obtained by the Indian Government.

When asked why, under such circumstances, the Russian Government had consented to the terms proposed by England, M. Stremounkoff replied:—

"The English were very violent on the subject, and even threatened us with war. There was, therefore, nothing else for us to do."

17.—Erroneous views of the Russians corrected by a further despatch.

Our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh also noticed that not only newspaper articles, evidently officially inspired, attempted to shew that Mr. Gladstone in his speech, quoted on p. 5, had repudiated any engagement on the part of England in respect to the conduct of the Amir, and that, therefore, the Russians would be free to act as they pleased, but also that the opinions of these articles were supported and fully approved by two of the immediate Councillors of the
Chancellor in the Foreign Department. It was, therefore, high time that the matter should be noticed, and accordingly on the 7th May 1873, the English Foreign Office addressed a despatch to the Ambassador at St. Petersburgh in which it was stated that Mr. Gladstone, "by no means repudiated the existence of any engagement between the two countries; but, on the contrary, maintained it while defining its character. Though controve\r\n\r
Oran's Precis, p. 30.

* * * *

18.—The Russian Government admit that the influence to be exercised over the Amir by us is to be only "moral."

On the contents of this despatch being communicated to Prince Gortchakoff, he charged our Ambassador to inform Her Majesty's Government that "nothing was changed as regards the disposition of the Imperial Government, or the engagements taken by them in the late negotiations between the two Governments; and he admitted that the engagements taken by Her Majesty's Government merely implied the exercise of a moral influence over the Amir of Afghanistan."

19.—Our obligations to Afghanistan discussed through an Envoy at Simla.

Our obligations towards Afghanistan were now more fully discussed through an Envoy sent by the Amir of Afghanistan to His Excellency the Viceroy in July 1873, when the Viceroy observed that—

"The British Government would be prepared to use their best endeavours to maintain the frontier intact, so long as the Amir or the Ruler of Afghanistan follows their advice as regards his external relations, and abstains from encroachment and aggression on his neighbours. If, for example, troubles should arise and the boundary in question were violated by neighbouring countries, or by any tribes under Russian influence, the natural course would be for the Amir to refer to the British Government, and every effort would be made by that Government to bring about a satisfactory settlement."

The Viceroy also distinctly set before the Envoy that in the event of the Amir asking us for assistance the British Government were to be the judges of the propriety of the request, and that the reference to the British Government in case of actual or threatened invasion was a preliminary and essential condition of the British Government assisting him. Endeavours would then be made to settle the matter by peaceful means, and if these failed—

"The British Government were prepared to assure the Amir that they would afford him assistance in the shape of arms and money, and would also, in case of necessity, aid him with troops. The British Government held itself perfectly free to decide as to the occasion when such assistance should be rendered, and also as to its nature and extent; moreover, the assistance would be conditional upon the Amir himself abstaining from aggression, and on his unreserved acceptance of the advice of the British Government in regard to his external relations."
In addition to these statements to the Envoy, the Viceroy also wrote a letter, dated September 7th, 1873, to the Amir in which he reminded His Highness of the assurances which the Russians had given that there was no intention of interference with Afghanistan, and added—

"It has been a source of much satisfaction to Her Majesty’s Government that Your Highness has more than once expressed your determination, in accordance with the advice given by the late Earl of Mayo, to abstain from all interference in the affairs of States and tribes beyond the borders of Afghanistan. Her Majesty’s Government have, therefore, felt no hesitation in undertaking to use their influence to impress upon Your Highness the importance of maintaining this peaceful attitude, and of allowing no considerations whatever to lead to any designs of conquest or aggression beyond the limits described in Lord Granville’s letter of the 17th October 1872. On the other hand, the Russian Government have undertaken, on their part, to use their best endeavours to restrain the States over which they have any influence from transgressing the limits of Afghanistan as above described."

In the autumn of 1873 the Government of India received information that the Governor of Badakshan had summoned the Chief of Shighnan to meet him. Fearing that, if Shighnan was north of the Oxus, this action might lead to complications with Russia, the Foreign Secretary telegraphed to the Commissioner at Peshawar to inform the Amir that "no interference with territories north of the Oxus, or outside boundaries recently fixed, should be countenanced or permitted on any account whatever." On this being communicated to the Amir by our Agent at Cabul, His Highness observed that he "did not at all desire to interfere with the countries situated across the Oxus; that the territory of Shighnan, which was from ancient times a dependency and feudatory of Badakshan, lay this side of the Oxus, and that only two or three of its small villages were situated on the other side of the Oxus in a waste desert."

The Amir forwarded, for presentation to Government, a map of Badakshan and Shighnan, and the Foreign Secretary explained to the Amir's Envoy who was then at Simla that "all was right so long as the Amir kept his operations south of the Oxus boundary agreed upon between England and Russia."

Subsequent news showed that the Chief of Shighnan had come in and the matter here ended.

21. The Russians communicate a further despatch explaining their views.

In 1875 some further correspondence took place between Her Majesty’s Government and the Russian Government concerning our relations in Central Asia. Prince Gortchakov addressed a despatch to the Russian Ambassador in London enclosing a memorandum summarising the whole course of our relations with Russia regarding Central Asia. This memorandum, he said, showed clearly "that the limits of the influence to be exercised by the two Governments are distinctly defined by the agreement arrived at between them. While we are resolved strictly to observe the limit thus fixed, we consider that the two Governments have maintained their full liberty of action in the countries adjacent to them, and placed outside this line. They have each of them, in this respect, to consider only their own interests and necessities." He then went on to say that the Emperor had no intention of extending his frontiers in Central Asia, as such a proceeding would be opposed to their own interests. With regard to the memo-
random itself, the chief points to be noted are that Prince Gortchakoff tried to show that, though the Russians had advanced their frontiers, this had not been done with the object of pursuing a policy of conquest, but had been forced upon them by the course of events, and that therefore we had no reason "to conclude that the Imperial Cabinet had failed to observe their formal promises," and that the Cabinet of London must not infer "that it is the right and duty of England to take on her side measures to restrain Russian action, to paralyse Russian influence and to secure herself against eventual aggression." "It has always been understood," Prince Gortchakoff said, "that either party retained entire liberty of action and of judgment with respect to measures necessitated for its own security," and among the points which had been agreed to between the two Governments he stated that it had been established "that the two Governments in their respective spheres of influence, England with the Amir of Afghanistan, and Russia with the Khans of Bokhara and Khokand, should employ themselves reciprocally in preventing all aggression on the part of any one of these chiefs against the independence and security of the other."

22. The British Government reserve to themselves liberty of action for securing the integrity of Afghanistan.

The Secretary of State however took exception to the full liberty of action claimed for Russia over the country intervening between the Russian possessions and Afghanistan, and this and other points having been fully discussed by the Government of India, the Secretary of State and the English Foreign Office, a reply was sent to the Russian Government in which it was stated that "however sincere the desire of the Russian Government to avoid future extension of territorial responsibilities, Her Majesty's Government cannot regard the present line of Russian frontier as fixed and immovable. The recurrence of similar causes may lead to similar results, and Her Majesty's Government could not regard with indifference, and as a matter with which they have no concern, further occupation and absorption by Russia of the regions which still separate Afghanistan from Russian territory."

The memorandum goes on to say that the maintenance of the integrity of Afghanistan is "an object to which Her Majesty's Government attach the highest importance, and they must reserve to themselves the most complete liberty of action under all future circumstances as to the measures which may, in their opinion, be necessary to secure it."

23.—The Russian Government assent.

Prince Gortchakoff in replying to this said the Russian Government entirely agreed in the conclusion that the two Cabinets "while retaining entire freedom of action, should be guided by a mutual desire to pay due regard to their respective interests and necessities, by avoiding as far as possible any immediate contact with each other, and any collision between the Asiatic States placed within the circle of their influence."

24.—The Amir's suspicions being aroused by Russian exploring parties in Shighnan and Wakhan he occupies those districts.

For the next few years no question seems to have arisen regarding the Upper Oxus boundary, till in 1883 two Russian exploring parties visited the regions of the Upper Oxus and thoroughly examined Darwaz, Shighnan, Roshan and the Pamirs. It will be noticed, on reference to a map, that the greater part of Shighnan and Roshan are on the right bank of the Oxus, and consequently
beyond the limits of Afghan authority laid down in Lord Granville’s despatch of October 17th, 1872, but these States had always been to a certain extent tributary to Badakshan, and the Amir Abdul Rahman Khan evidently considered that his authority extended to them, for on hearing that the Russian party had entered Shighnan he wrote to the Chief of that State to expel them, but his orders not being carried out he despatched a force and occupied the country. This action of the Amir was communicated by him to His Excellency the Viceroy in a letter dated August 22nd, 1883.

For similar reasons Wakhan was also occupied by the Amir’s troops, and brought under the direct control of the Cabul Government, the fact being announced by the Amir in a letter to his Agent, dated September 25th, 1883.

25.—Attention aroused in Russia to this action.

These actions on the part of the Amir naturally roused attention, not only in England, but in Russia, and our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh wrote that the Beg of Shighnan having fled to Bokhara the Khan of that country had applied to the Russians for advice and assistance.

27.—The Indian Government discuss the matter.

The matter was then fully discussed in the Foreign Office. As regards Wakhan, Colonel Ridgeway remarked upon its importance as shown by Sir H. Rawlinson (see p. 4), but pointed out that though the 1873 Agreement intended it fully to belong to Afghanistan the boundary had been made to run along the branch of the Oxus flowing from Wood’s Lake (Sarikul) which the subsequent explorations of the Yarkand Mission had shown would in reality divide Wakhan into two parts, as there were villages on the northern bank which would consequently, if the Agreement were followed, be considered as outside the limits of the country. This error would certainly be observed by the Russian exploring parties.

The Government of India accordingly addressed a despatch dated November 27th, 1883, to the Secretary of State, the following extract from which will show the opinion they held upon the subject:

"In the arrangement come to in the year 1873 with the Russian Government, the territory which was to be considered to belong fully to Afghanistan was thus defined in Lord Granville’s despatch of the 17th October 1872:—

“Badakshan with its dependent district of Wakhan, from the Sarikul (Wood’s Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kookha River with the Oxus (or Panja), forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire length.”

"But information since received and of a more certain and reliable character than was at that time available has shown that the district of Wakhan is not properly limited on the north by the river Oxus (or Panja), but extends to some distance to the north of that river, and that Wakhan is separated from Shighnan not by the river, but by a mountain range north of it. Moreover, it is now apparent that further down the course of the Oxus the districts of Darwaz and Roshan, which seem to be undoubtedly dependent on Bokhara, extend slightly to the south of the river.

"4. It will be observed that the definition of the territories assigned in Lord Granville’s despatch quoted above to the Amir of Afghanistan distinctly gave the whole of Badakhshan and Wakhan to the Amir, though the Oxus was spoken of as forming the boundary of this part of Afghanistan. There is, undoubtedly, some ambiguity in this definition now that the facts are more accurately known, but we are of opinion that the equity of the case would be met by assigning to Afghanistan the whole of the district of Wakhan and of the two smaller districts of Ish Kashim and Gharan, over which the late Amir, Shere Ali,
certainly exercised jurisdiction, and accepting the Oxus as the northern boundary of the Afghan State from the point where it issues from Gharan. It seems to us that it would be very desirable to arrive at a clear understanding with the Russian Government on the subject of this part of the Afghan boundary. But we would not at present make any allusion to the district of Shighnan, unless Russia should advance the claim of Bokhara thereto, in consequence of the recent action of the Amir, Abdur Rahman. Should this claim, however, be advanced, it would require further consideration in view of such evidence as might be produced in support of the historical right of Afghanistan to the supremacy over Shighnan.

28.—The Secretary of State asks for full information about Shighnan.

This communication crossed a despatch from the Secretary of State asking for full information regarding recent events on the Upper Oxus, and drawing attention to the fact that Shighnan was claimed by Shere Ali in 1873 as part of Afghanistan*, and that the Beg of Shighnan had in the previous year acknowledged subordination to the present Amir. Careful consideration was also invited to an accompanying memorandum by Sir H. Rawlinson in which he suggested that if the Russian Government addressed a serious remonstrance to us regarding Shighnan it might be sufficient to reply that that State, having always been an acknowledged dependency of Badakshan, was subject to Afghan jurisdiction, under the Granville Agreement of 1873; but he shewed that if the Russians asked us to state categorically how far the Amir's authority extended in the valley of the Oxus we should find it very difficult to give an answer, not only because the line of delimitation laid down in the 1873 Agreement was vague and unsatisfactory in its geographical bearing, but also because it was impracticable for a river-bed, which is easily crossed, to constitute a territorial limit. He therefore proposed that it would be best to simply name the limitary districts on either side, which thus come under the respective influence of Russia and England. “On the Bokhara side there would be Kulab, Karategin and Darwaz, and on the Afghan side there would be, 1stly, Badakshan with its dependencies of Roshan and Shighnan, and, 2ndly, Wakhan with its dependencies of Gharan and Shakh-dara. This distribution of the frontier districts by name would amply suffice for all local purposes, since the limits of each district are well defined by usage, but it would leave untouched the great political question of the nationality of the Pamirs.” This question, Sir H. Rawlinson went on to point out, was one of considerable importance as the Russians had lately been exploring the whole of that country “possibly with ulterior political objects,” and were getting into perilous proximity to the passes leading into Gilgit and Chitral, so that it was necessary for us to watch her further movements in this direction.

The same despatch also contained an extract from Sir H. Rawlinson's work "England and Russia in the East," in which he showed that a clerical error in the despatch defining the frontier of Badakshan made the meaning somewhat obscure. The passage in question is as follows:—

“Badakshan, with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikul (Wood's Lake) on the East, to the junction of the Kokcha River with the Oxus (Panja) on the West, the stream of the Oxus thus forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire length.”

Here the words italicised were omitted in the despatch as communicated to the Russian Government, and Sir H. Rawlinson was of opinion that if these words were re-inserted, we might claim the Murghab as the boundary, seeing that this river was considered the main feeder of the Oxus.

He therefore suggested that the Amir should be invited to catalogue the Badakshan and Wakhan districts with their dependencies as detailed above and
forward the list to India, "with a view to the better definition of his frontier in this direction and its possible official recognition by the British Government."

29.—The matter is further discussed by the Government of India.

On receipt of the despatch the matter was very carefully considered by the Indian Government, Captain de Laessose first noted on Sir H. Rawlinson's memorandum and showed that there were two questions to answer.

* * * * *

(1) Is it possible to argue that the Murghab and not the Northern Panja is the river referred to in the Agreement?

(2) Did England or Russia in 1873 consider Shighnan or the northern part of Wakhan as forming part of Afghanistan, or if not, could it be fairly argued that they ignored the existence of Shighnan and did not know that part of Wakhan had been cut off from Afghanistan?

"With reference to the first question, it may be remarked that it would be at least unusual to pretend that a clerical error committed in 1873, and never before brought to the notice of the Russian Government, should be a sufficient reason for introducing a considerable change in the Agreement; but even if Russia should consent to the insertion of the words omitted, this would not improve matters. The Murghab may be the main feeder of the Oxus, but it has never been known under the name of Oxus or Panja. Besides, the maps of 1873 clearly show that it is not the river referred to in the Agreement.

"As regards the second question, it may be said that if Shighnan had formed an integral part of Badakshan, it would be quite fair to argue that it must belong to Afghanistan, but Shighnan is a dependency of Badakshan absolutely in the same way as Wakhan. Now Wakhan is mentioned in the Agreement, while Shighnan is not mentioned. As to Wakhan, Sir H. Rawlinson says himself that the Agreement was criticised mainly because it separated the northern part of Wakhan from the southern, thus showing that the position of Wakhan was well known at the time. That Shighnan was equally known as a dependency of Badakshan is shown by Amir Shere Ali's letters of 1873.

"We have, however, definite proof to show that Shighnan and the northern part of Wakhan were deliberately excluded from Afghanistan in 1873.

"When the Agreement was made known to the Government of India, they asked the Secretary of State for a map. This map was forwarded, and it marked Shighnan and the northern part of Wakhan as excluded from Afghan territory. A few months later the War Office issued a map which seemed to show that Shighnan belonged to Afghanistan. The Government of India called attention to this mistake, and asked the Secretary of State for an explanation*. It was then explained that this map was issued for a special purpose, and that it was not intended as an illustration of the Agreement, besides "a green tint round Shighnan and Roshan placed them in the same category with Kulaf Darwas,†" i.e., territory under Russian influence.

"At the same time a Russian map was published excluding Badakshan and Wakhan from Afghanistan. Her Majesty's Government complained of this, and the next Russian map was satisfactorily corrected showing the boundary as marked on the official English and Indian† maps, i.e., following the Northern Panja up to Victoria Lake. It may here be remarked, with reference to para. 5 of the Secretary of State's letter, that the boundary shown on our Turkistan map has not varied since 1873, and is in accordance with the instructions then received from the Secretary of State.

"In Lord Granville's despatch of 1872 it is said that 'Her Majesty's Government consider as fully belonging to Afghanistan.' The word fully might be taken to indicate the existence of other territories than those mentioned, and not fully, but only partially, belonging to Afghanistan. A reference to the correspondence shows, however, beyond doubt, that the word fully was accentuated merely because Russia did not consider Badakshan and Wakhan as fully belonging to Afghanistan.

"It is thus scarcely possible to doubt that Her Majesty's Government referred to the Panja coming from Victoria Lake, when they in 1873 promised to impress on the Amir, in
the strongest terms, his obligation to refrain from aggression and to continue to exercise their influence in this direction.”

Mr. Durand in a note dated January 20th, 1884, pointed out that though the Amir's claim to Shighnan might have some justice in it, yet "whenever Russia desires a pretext for giving us trouble, she can put us in the wrong about the Amir's trans-Oxus possessions." To meet the difficulty he therefore proposed that we should "invite the Russians to co-operate and to recognise, as finally binding, some line laid down with their knowledge and consent." It was better, he thought, to have some understanding of this sort, however unsatisfactory it might be in some respects "than to leave Russia altogether free, without any practical restraints at all." In conclusion of his note Mr. Durand shows the importance of the question of the Oxus frontier in the following passage:—

"This is a very important point, for even if it be admitted that a Russian advance in the direction of Chitral and Kashmir is impossible, the shortest and easiest line of permanent pressure on India is from the Oxus on the non-Afghan country down to the Hindu Koosh. In the event of war Russia would of course aim at Herat; and having taken it she would doubtless discover practicable military roads through the Hazara country to Cabul and round to Afghan Turkistan by Maimena. But admitting all the value, for such purposes, of the Caspian base, and of the carefully prepared line of communication by the north of Persia, it is evident that whatever her present influence in Teheran, Russia has always on this side a long exposed flank, which British enterprise might succeed in assail- ing. Moreover, for operations of this kind Russia must have open war, and she must put forward her full strength. Up to the Oxus she is secure from all interruption, and beyond it, to within little more than 50 miles of Cabul, or 250 of Peshawar, lies a stretch of non-Afghan country. It is unnecessary to point out with what formidable effect, even without open war, or the development of large military means, Russia could play on the fears and hopes of India from a position in that country where she would be welcome. Therefore we should be thoroughly alive to the importance of the northern frontier and should not allow that frontier to remain as it now is, undetermined and open to encroachment.”

39.—Further news from the Amir shows that his troops had entered Shighnan.

Several letters were now received by the Government of India from the Amir showing the course of events on the Upper Oxus. On November 1st, 1883, the Russian Captain Putyiata had written a letter to the Governor of Badakshan saying his party wished to visit Chitral, and asking permission to return from there through Shighnan. They had also applied, he said, to the Khans of Wakhan and Shighnan to be allowed to pass through their territories but had been told that they could not be given permission till the consent of the Amir had been obtained. The Governor of Badakshan had replied to this letter that they must await the instructions of the Amir.

A later letter from the same Governor said that "40 or 50 of the white Czar's officials had arrived in Roshan, and had taken up their quarters there," and in consequence of this and from fear of an attack from Bokhara he had collected a force in Badakshan. At the same time a Bokhara official wrote to the Governor of Faizabad in Badakshan to say that the people of Shighnan had applied for assistance to the King of Bokhara and "His Majesty had been pleased to order 40 or 50 of the officials of the white Czar, the conqueror of the world" to go to Roshan, and that he (the writer) had been deputed to Shighnan, and a few regiments of the King of Bokhara had been despatched to Kila-khum in Darwaz. Further news from the Governor of Badakshan stated that the Shignhis "had risen in revolt, probably at the instigation of Russia, as they had sent the message that they would stretch out their hands and catch hold of the
skirt of the Russian Government." On this he collected his forces, and a letter from the Amir dated January 8th, 1884, informed us that the victorious troops had captured the Fort and entered Shighnan.

31.—The Government of India warn the Amir against taking any action in trans-Oxus Shighnan.

Matters were becoming serious, and on the receipt of the above information the Government of India addressed a warning to the Amir. "His Excellency regrets to hear that the state of affairs in the neighbourhood of Badakshan is such as to demand attention and watchfulness on the part of the Amir. The Viceroy, however, is confident that the Amir will be very careful not to take any steps which could have the effect of bringing His Highness into conflict with the authorities in Bokhara."

32.—The warning arrives too late, the Amir having formally taken over Shighnan.

This warning, however, arrived too late to prevent the Amir establishing his authority on the northern side of the Oxus, and in a letter from him dated February 2nd, 1884, he informed us that the inhabitants of Shighnan and Roshan had first sent him "a Koran to which they had affixed their seals, declaring themselves to be the subjects of the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, and to be friends of its friends, and enemies of its enemies," but that shortly afterwards they had revolted again, and in consequence the Governor of Badakshan had sent troops to Roshan. The Amir added: "The matter has now gone out of my hands, and what has occurred has occurred."

This letter was followed by another written on February 9th to his Agent in which he said:—

"Roshan has been annexed to Badakshan, and has formed a part of Afghanistan. Should I let Roshan fall into the hands of an outsider to-day, I must waive my claim tomorrow to Shighnan and to the places below it, viz., Badakshan territory itself."

"In regard to what the British authorities have stated that the northern boundaries have not yet been defined and Bokhara territory has not up till now been divided from Afghan territory, and that the water of the Amu is apparently the line which separates the two States from each other, the country lying on the other side of the river belonging to the Khanate of Bokhara and that on this side of it to Afghanistan, I authorize you to ask them what they say in respect to Kirki and Charjui, which are situated on this side of the Amu. We should not then, I think, let those two places remain in the possession of the ruler of Bokhara."

"In a word I never venture upon a project which, if executed, may lead to complications; but when I am not let alone, and when my possessions are intruded upon, I cannot sit quiet and remain as a looker-on."

33.—The Russian Government send an official note drawing attention to the Amir's action.

Meanwhile the Russian Government had moved officially in the matter and on December 31st, 1883, had presented our Ambassador at St. Peteburgh with a note of which the following is a translation:—

(Translation.)

At the end of the month of August last the Imperial Cabinet of Russia was informed by a telegram from Tashkend that, according to rumours current at that place, the Khanate of Shighnan had been suddenly invaded by the Afghans, and that the hereditary Chief of Shighnan, Shah Youssouf Ali Khan, had taken flight and had sought refuge in the district of Marguelan.
Shortly afterwards a second telegram from Tashkend brought the news that Shah Youssouf Ali Khan, in the attempt to return to his country, had been arrested by the Afghans, and sent a prisoner to Cabul.

This information was closely followed by the complaints of the Amir of Bokhara, who, thinking that his interests were suffering from the military enterprises of the Afghans, found himself obliged to seek the intervention of the Russian authorities of Turkestan in order to re-establish the status quo ante.

Before coming to any conclusion on this point, the Imperial Government decided to order Lieutenant-General Tchernaieff, at that time in St. Petersburg, to collect information on his return to Tashkend upon the events of which the principality of Shighnan was said to have been the scene.

The reports of General Tchernaieff have just confirmed the correctness of the information given above. They prove that the possessions of Shah Youssouf Khan have in fact been invaded by an Afghan troop from Badakshan, whose Chief, in addition, sent to Shighnan a Lieutenant charged with the administration of that principality in his name, and that the changes which have resulted from the frontier south of Bokhara are of a nature to threaten the security of the States of Amir Mazaferred-din. The Governor General of Turkestan adds that the authorities of Badakshan have for some time adopted a threatening attitude towards Bokhara, that armed Afghan vessels at this moment navigate the Amu Daria, that a corps of Afghan Cavalry have been assembled on the left bank of the river, and that horsemen have even constantly crossed it. General Tchernaieff is of opinion that this state of things will, before long, certainly provoke unfortunate complications in that neighbourhood, and finally insists on the necessity of requesting the Khan of Badakshan to withdraw his troops from Shighnan, and cease the hostile demonstrations directed against the Khanate of Bokhara.

The Imperial Cabinet finds it impossible to deny the justice of these views.

The principality of Shighnan and Roshan, which is contiguous not only to Bokhara, but also to the Russian province of Fergana, has always enjoyed an independent existence, and although it has not escaped the consequences of the revolution of which this part of Central Asia was once the scene, it has never ceased to be administered by native rulers. On the other hand, it is not among the number of those provinces which were recognized by the arrangement arrived at in 1873 between Russia and England as forming part of the possessions of the Amir of Afghanistan, and this circumstance is the best proof that the invasion of Shighnan by the Khan of Badakshan is an arbitrary act in flagrant violation of the terms of the arrangement in question, and that it might give rise to misunderstandings and complications between Bokhara and Afghanistan.

Themselves desirous of preventing such complications, the Imperial Cabinet are firmly convinced that Great Britain, on her side, will not remain indifferent to a state of affairs which threatens the bases of the arrangement established in 1873 between the two States, an arrangement which has greatly contributed to the maintenance of peace for a period of ten years in this part of Central Asia. Under these circumstances, the Imperial Cabinet hope that, in conformity with the terms of the arrangement in question, the Government of Her Majesty the Queen will employ all their influence to induce the Amir of Cabul to withdraw as soon as possible from Shighnan and Roshan the Lieutenant and the Afghan garrison now in that principality, and to renounce for ever all interference in its affairs.

34.—The Government of India express their views of the question.

On receipt of this note by the Home Government the Secretary of State telegraphed its contents to the Government of India, and the matter was still further discussed by the latter. Colonel Ridgeway drew up a note recapitulating the whole case and shewing that in addition to the arguments used by Captain de Laessoe (see p. 13), the declarations made in Parliament (see p. 7) conclusively proved that we intended the Panja to be the northern limit of the Afghan dominions, and he referred to our correspondence with Shere Ali in 1873 (see p. 9) regarding Shighnan as showing that the Amir virtually acquiesced in this view. “Therefore,” says Colonel Ridgeway, “we are bound to adhere to these views until we have induced Russia to agree to a revision of the settlement and we are also bound, as solemnly as words can bind us, to use our utmost endeavours to prevent the Amir from crossing the Oxus.” With regard to a
revision of the Agreement by which the Amir's right to territories across the Oxus might be recognised he pointed out that this arrangement would give him no definite boundary beyond it.

"It is difficult to conceive," says Colonel Ridgeway, "an arrangement more fatal to his interests or more calculated to bring him in collision with Bokhara and Russia.

"A river is doubtless in many ways a bad boundary, but it has the great advantage that it is a definite boundary which cannot be mistaken—it is an outward and visible sign which cannot be ignored or effaced—and if it be violated, it must be openly, not stealthily, violated.

"We desire to limit the responsibilities of Afghanistan as much as possible; the further she extends, the greater will be the complications and dangers which she will incur and which we shall have to put right. Our policy undoubtedly should be to make Afghanistan as compact, as defensible, as centralised as possible. In the direction of Merv we may have to extend her frontier further than is altogether convenient to us in order to give her possession of important strategic positions, and to interpose uninhabited tracts between her and Russia. But by the adoption of Sir H. Rawlinson's proposal we shall attain neither of these ends in the north, for we shall abandon a definite and comparatively defensible frontier for an indefinite and indefensible one, and we shall bring Afghanistan into closer proximity with Bokhara and Russia.

"There is no doubt that the Oxus—always an obstacle—is for a considerable distance a formidable obstacle to invasion. At the confluence of the Kokcha, the river I believe is never less than 700 yards wide; 25 miles above this point at Jankala there is a somewhat dangerous ford only practicable for three horsemen abreast. From this point to Roshan there are apparently no fords, but there is a ferry at Samti where the river is about 600 yards broad with a rapid current. Above Samti the banks are generally precipitous, and the road along the river is very dangerous and difficult. The Havildar says that the channel in Darwaz is narrow and precipitous with a strong current. In Roshan and Shighnan the river cannot be fordedit during the summer. In early spring there are three fords between the Murghab and Patar. The river varies in breadth from 200 feet to one mile, but the main channel is said to be very deep everywhere except at the fords. Above Patar the river appears to be difficult to pass, at least as far as Kila Panja.

"On the whole, so far as our information goes, the boundary proposed in our despatch No. 158 of 27th November last seems far the best, unless indeed we were to make the Panja from Patar the boundary, surrendering the parts of Ishkashim and Gharan, as well as Shighnan, which lie on its right bank.

"But this is not a question which can be safely settled by theorists. If we are to have a satisfactory settlement, it must be effected on the spot by competent officers after a careful survey. In 1872 General Kaufmann, when reporting on the subject of the northern boundary of Afghanistan, wrote with reference to the data on which he based his opinion—

"These data, I confess, are far from being complete. In Central Asia, investigation or personal observation exercised on the spot is the sole means of obtaining information on any question, whether political or geographical. Hitherto, I have not been able to have recourse to those means."

"We are now enduring the consequences of having taken a leap into the dark, and the difficulty of our position should surely be a lesson not to repeat the experiment.

"If the settlement of 1873 is to be revised, opportunity should be taken to settle the very important question of the nationality of the Pamir. At present the northern boundary of Afghanistan terminates at Lake Victoria, and any opportunity should be seized for prolonging it to Neza Tash on the border of Sarikul, which Colonel Gordon has shewn to be the natural boundary."

On February 29th, 1884, the Government of India despatched the following telegram to the Secretary of State:

"We have carefully considered the whole subject, and while fully aware of the many difficulties and complications which may arise out of any attempt to lay down that frontier, we are unanimously of opinion that, under existing circumstances, it has become absolutely necessary to endeavour to come to a clear understanding with Russia as to exact line of entire Northern and North-Western Frontiers of Afghanistan. We, therefore, strongly
urge that Russian Government should be invited, without delay, to agree to appointment of joint Commissioners consisting of representatives of the British, Russian and Afghan Governments and, so far as may be necessary, of Persia, for the purpose of demarcating those frontiers on the spot. It is expedient that we should have a reply as soon as possible, as the Commission, if appointed, should commence work in early autumn and preliminary arrangements, including negotiations with Amir, will take time. Meanwhile we will do what we can to restrain Amir who has moved troops into Roshan. We have already addressed him, but warning arrived too late."

This telegram was followed by an important despatch dated March 11th, 1884, in which the Government of India acquainted the Secretary of State with their views on the questions raised. This despatch ran as follows:

"2. Since 1873, when the northern and north-western boundaries of Afghanistan were the subject of negotiation between England and Russia, the latter Power has rapidly absorbed the independent territory which then separated Afghanistan from her own dominions; and at the present moment, both on the north-west and north-east of Afghanistan, the Russian and Afghan territories seem likely, before long, to come into actual contact. In the meantime the Amir has been assured that so long as he conforms to our advice he will be assisted in repelling unprovoked aggression, and Her Majesty's Government have declared that they do not intend to permit interference by any foreign Power with the internal or external affairs of Afghanistan.

"3. The responsibility thus undertaken by Her Majesty's Government is not light, and it is incumbent on us to weigh the circumstances under which we are likely to be called upon to discharge it. But at the threshold of the consideration of this important subject we find ourselves confronted by the fact that Afghanistan which England is under certain circumstances pledged to assist and protect has no defined boundaries on the sides whence encroachment is easiest, and that the exact point where the Amir's dominions begin or end is unknown to him, to us, and to Russia. This fact has not been overlooked by the Amir, and His Highness has pressed upon us the necessity of telling him definitely what his exact frontiers are. On the 26th March 1883 His Highness wrote: I anxiously wish to have in my possession a very valid document and a map ratified and assented by the Royal Seal of the most glorious Government of Her Majesty the Queen of England, which may show the boundaries between Afghanistan and Russia and Persia. In that document and map the boundaries of Afghanistan should be so plainly and clearly marked as divided from those of Russia and Persia that the frontier officers of this Government may be able to know their own boundaries from those of others and distinguish well between them, in order that they may properly guard their frontiers, may not encroach upon those of others, and at the same time may not allow foreigners to frequent theirs. In reply His Highness was told that though the arrangement of 1873 settled the boundary of Afghanistan between the Oxus and the Heri Rud, yet the boundary had never been laid down accurately on any map, and the country had not been examined on the spot with that view. We enquired what districts His Highness understood to be described by the arrangement in question and exactly what he considered to be the boundary defined by it. The Amir's reply forms enclosure No. 10 of this despatch. Your Lordship will observe that the information therein given is very vague and untrustworthy. Its principal points are the assertion of His Highness' claims to Shighnan, apparently up to the Russian frontier at Karakul: his silence regarding Roshan and the Pamirs and his acknowledgment that the Bokharian district of Darwaz extends south of the Oxus. In the Viceroy's letter of 11th March, 1884 (enclosure No. 14 of this despatch), His Highness was told that we are in communication with Her Majesty's Government regarding the exact demarcation of the boundaries of his dominions, and meanwhile His Highness has been urged to recall to the south of the Oxus a force which he has lately sent into Shighnan and Roshan.

"4. In our opinion the time has come when this difficult question must be faced and settled. It is essential, we firmly believe, to the existence of our present friendly relations with the Amir, as well as to the prevention of serious complications with Russia, that a frontier line should be precisely defined and laid down, within which the Afghans shall be free to manage their own affairs without interference from any foreign Power.

* * *

* Quoted in the Appendix.
"13. (a) By the arrangement of 1873 the northern frontier of Afghanistan was defined as follows:

"1 Badakshan with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikul (Wood's Lake) on the east, to the junction of the Kokcha river with the Oxus (or Panjah), forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire length.

"2 Afghan Turkestan comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulon, and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of the Oxus from the junction of the Kokcha river to the post of Khoja Saleh inclusive, on the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. Nothing to be claimed by the Afghan Amir on the left bank of the Oxus below Khoja Saleh.

"14. After carefully searching the correspondence which preceded that arrangement, we are doubtful whether it is fully understood at the time of the negotiation that a considerable part of Shighnan, Gharan, Ishkashim, and Wakhan extended to the north of the Oxus. But however this may be, we are convinced, by the correspondence in question, and especially by the reports of the declarations made by Her Majesty's Ministers in Parliament on the 17th and 21st February 1873*, that the Oxus, with its Panjah affluent was intended by the contracting powers to be the northern boundary of Afghanistan. Such undoubtedly was the belief of the Government of India. We would refer Your Lordship to the despatch of the Government of India, No. 45 of the 22nd May 1873, and the connected correspondence regarding the publication by the War Office of a map "which carries the Afghan border north of the Oxus, so as to include the district of Shighnan and a considerable strip of territory on the right bank of the river north of Wakhan," and also to the correspondence in enclosure No. 9 of this despatch, which shows that when Lord Northbrook's Government remonstrated with Amir Sher Ali Khan regarding the interference of the Governor of Badakshan with Shighnan, "His Highness declared that he does not at all desire to interfere with the countries beyond the Oxus; that the territory of Shighnan, which is from ancient times a dependency and a feudatory of Badakshan, lies this side of the Oxus," and that only two or three of its small villages are situated the other side of the Oxus. His Highness subsequently sent through his Envoy to the Government of India a rude map illustrating these remarks. The Foreign Secretary explained to the Envoy, when the map was presented, that all was right so long as the Amir did not extend his operations to the north of the Oxus boundary agreed upon between England and Russia.

"15. We cannot, therefore, avoid the conclusion that we are bound, in discharge of the obligation entailed upon us by the arrangement of 1873, to do all in our power to restrain the Amir from crossing the Oxus. Unfortunately the Amir, in his recent operations against Shighnan and Roshan, regarding which we are addressing Your Lordship in another communication, sent troops across the Oxus before our warning that he should abstain from doing so had reached him. The Viceroy has now advised His Highness to re-call his troops to the left bank of the river.

"16. It might indeed be possible to induce Russia to agree to a rectification of the present northern boundary of Afghanistan, especially as some portion of territory owning allegiance to Bokhara lies within that boundary, if, in the interests of Afghanistan, a revision were desirable. On this point we are unable to give any decided opinion, so scanty, and untrustworthy is the available information regarding the districts north of the Oxus over which the Amir desires to assert his authority. There are undoubted advantages in having the Oxus as a frontier. According to the information at our disposal the river is always an obstacle—sometimes a formidable obstacle—and during the only season when military operations are possible, the Panja, except at occasional fords, is difficult to cross as far up as Kila Panja. We do not attach much importance to an impediment of this kind so far as actual invasion is concerned, but at all events the river is a boundary which cannot be ignored or effaced, nor can it be easily encroached upon. If transgressed it must be transgressed openly and deliberately.

"17. On the whole, we are not inclined to travel beyond the recommendations made in our despatch, No. 158 of 27th November 1883, according to which the whole of Wakhan and the two smaller districts of Ishkashim and Gharan were to be assigned to Afghanistan, the Oxus being its northern boundary from the point where it issues from Gharan.

"18. We would, however, again remind Your Lordship that our views are based on information, which, although the best available, is meagre and unsatisfactory, and we deprecate practical effect being given to those views until further enquiry has been made."

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* See p. 7.
35.—The Government of India address a letter to the Amir on the whole subject of his frontier, and warn him that they cannot be responsible if he oversteps his boundaries.

The Amir of Afghanistan was also at the same time addressed in a letter dated March 11th, 1884, of which the following are the more important extracts:

"In the first place I observe that Your Highness apparently includes in your possess-
sions portions of Shighnan and other districts lying north of the Oxus, and I have since learnt, with much misgiving, that Your Highness' troops have crossed the Oxus to enforce this claim and even to attack Roshan which is, or was very recently, occupied by Bokharian troops.

"This is a very serious matter, as Your Highness will understand when you have read the following remarks: Until 1873 the northern frontier of Afghanistan was not defined, and her right to Badakshan and other districts south of the Oxus was strenuously denied by the Russian Government. The question was the subject of protracted negotiations, and at last the Government of Russia gave way to the contention of the English Government that the cultivated districts south of the Oxus, as far as Khoja Saleh, should belong to Afghanistan. Accordingly it was agreed between the two Governments that the Panja and Oxus should be the northern boundary of Afghanistan from Wood's Lake to Khoja Saleh, whence a line should be drawn to the Heri Rud.

"This Agreement was communicated to Amir Shere Ali Khan in the letters of which I enclose copies for Your Highness' information. As it restored to Afghanistan all that Dost Muhammad Khan had ever possessed, it was accepted by the Amir.

"When in July 1873, Naib Alam Khan, Governor of Badakshan, summoned Yusuf Khan of Shighnan to Faizabad, the Amir was reminded that there should be no interference with territory north of the Oxus. In reply His Highness said that he did not at all desire to interfere with the countries beyond the Oxus, but that the territory of Shighnan lay on this side of the Oxus, and that only two or three of its small villages were on the other side. It was then explained to His Highness' Agent by the Foreign Secretary that all was well so long as His Highness' operations were confined to the south of the Oxus, which was the boundary agreed upon. Matters have thus continued till recent events induced Your Highness to send troops across the river. This proceeding has elicited a remonstrance from the Russian Government, who appeal to the Agreement of 1873 referred to above.

"Out of this state of things serious difficulty may arise. The British Government has promised that if Your Highness conforms to their advice, they will assist Your Highness against unprovoked aggression; but, on the other hand, they are pledged to regard the Oxus as the northern boundary of Your Highness' dominions. Therefore, when Your Highness' troops cross the Oxus in opposition to the wish of the British Government, and the Russian Government complains that by doing so the Agreement of 1873 has been broken, what reply can be made? It is impossible that, under the circumstances, the British Government could support Your Highness, and were a collision to take place between Your Highness and the Bokharian troops, the consequences might be very serious.

"Your Highness is a wise ruler, and will, doubtless, recognize the necessity of avoiding this danger by ordering your troops to withdraw behind the river.

"Should Your Highness consider that you have been deprived by the Agreement of 1873 of any districts to which you are entitled, and should Your Highness explain the nature of your claims and the evidence on which they rest, I will not fail to give my most careful attention to the matter. But I would first invite Your Highness to consider whether there is any advantage to be gained by abandoning so good a frontier as that of the Oxus, and by advancing beyond it. Beyond are sterile mountainous countries inhabited by intractable people, who will have to be controlled by Your Highness' troops. In such a country there can be no clear and definite frontier, and, consequently, there will be disputes, while the distance from your capital is so great that it will be difficult for Your Highness to control your officials. On the other hand, the Oxus is a definite boundary which cannot be encroached upon or crossed without Your Highness' knowledge. I am persuaded that, unless there are reasons and considerations which I know not of, it would
not be wise, even if it were possible, to disturb the arrangement of 1873, and to give up that boundary in favour of any other."

36.—The Amir's Reply.

To this the Amir replied on March 28th, 1884—

"Acting up to Your Excellency's kind advice I wrote, immediately after receipt of your letter, to the Governor of Badakshan, strictly enjoining him to withdraw his troops to this side of the river, if Roshan be situated on the other side of it."

"In regard to the Punj (Punja), mentioned in Your Excellency's letter, I cannot make out what five* rivers you call the river Punj. Whereas I see some difficulty about the Punj, and fear lest the Russian Government should, at any time, call the rivers on this side of the Amu the river Punj and fix it as their boundary. Herewith I beg to forward Your Excellency a map of that river (Punj), so that the British authorities being thoroughly acquainted with the real fact may not overlook the abstruse points on the question. Amir Shere Ali Khan had not considered the matter carefully when he answered that he did not desire to interfere with the countries beyond the river, as it is not clear which of the five rivers he meant, when he said he had no desire to interfere with the countries beyond the river. Amir Shere Ali Khan was a friend of the Russian Government with whom he was in constant communication, so he acquiesced in what was beneficial to their interests and prejudicial to those of the Afghan Government."

"What Your Excellency has remarked in your cordial letter, that if I pass beyond my own limits it is impossible that the British Government could assist me against unprovoked aggression, as they have promised, is true and appropriate. But I must know my own limits and have in my possession a State document. I do not know what my boundaries are and how they are denominated (defined). The Russian Government always bring forward fresh claims and are never wanting in pretence."

37.—The Government of India again address the Amir.

To this the Government of India replied on May 5th, 1884, as follows:—

"In the first place Your Highness informs me that immediately after the receipt of my letter of the 11th March you wrote to the Governor of Badakshan and ordered him to withdraw his troops to this side of the river, if Roshan be situated on the other side. I thank Your Highness for this prompt compliance with my suggestion, and I feel sure that, in following my advice on this point, Your Highness has done what was best for the interests of Afghanistan."

"But Your Highness further remarks that you are unable to make out what five rivers I referred to when I wrote of the river Panja as forming a portion of the boundary recognized by the British and Russian Governments in 1873, and afterwards by the Amir Shere Ali Khan. You forward a map showing the position of certain rivers in this region, and you point out the necessity for a clear understanding upon this matter in order that there may be no complications about it hereafter. You refer also to the dispute between Afghanistan and Bokhara regarding Kirki and Charjui, and to the possibility of certain other places south of the Amu being claimed by the Russians. Finally you repeat your request for a document showing precisely the limits of the territory now in your possession, such a document being required for the information of your frontier officers."

"With regard to this part of Your Highness' letter I must begin by pointing out that the portion of your northern boundary which was referred to in my letter of the 11th March, as being formed by the Panja and Oxus, was that portion only which lies east of Khoja."

With Your Highness' advice I now proceed to this point. As I have already explained in my letter No. 166 of 1883 to the late Governor of the Punjab, the five rivers he means, when he said he had no desire to interfere with the countries beyond the river, were the Panj, the Amu, the Wakhsh, the Surkhab and the Nihan, which fall into the Amu, and are called Panj."

"On the cover of the map there is a note to the effect that the Amir evidently confounds "Punj" and "Panja", not knowing that Panja is the name applied to the upper course of the Amu proper."

(Sd.) K. S. AHMAD.

Secret E., May 1884, No. 92.

The Amir, the Wakhsh, the Kafir Nihan, the Kokoeh and the united stream of the Ghori and the Talikhan, which falls into the Amu, are called Panj.

The Ghori river is on our maps called Kundur river. After its junction with the Talikhan, it takes the name of Akserai and joins the Amu 50 miles below the Wakhsh. The Amir evidently confounds "Punj" and "Panja", not knowing that Panja is the name applied to the upper course of the Amu proper.

The Ghori river is on our maps called Kundur river. After its junction with the Talikhan, it takes the name of Akserai and joins the Amu 50 miles below the Wakhsh. The Amir evidently confounds "Punj" and "Panja", not knowing that Panja is the name applied to the upper course of the Amu proper.

K. S. AHMAD.
Saleh, between Khoja Saleh and the Sarikul Lake. I did not say that the Oxus formed your boundary throughout its length. It is clear that Your Highness is in no way concerned with Urganj or other places so distant from Afghanistan; and since Kirki and Charju have long been in the hands of the King of Bokhara, those places also are regarded as lying outside the limits of your dominion. From about Khoja Saleh your frontier leaves the Oxus and runs westward to the Heri Rud. This line has not as yet been exactly defined, but the words which I have used will enable Your Highness to understand approximately the views of the British Government upon the question.

"I now proceed to answer your enquiry regarding the Panja. This fortunately is easy for me to do, because the map forwarded by Your Highness shows the position clearly. On that map you mark, as the Oxus proper, the stream which is joined near Hazrat Imam by the Kokcha, and which passes round by the north of Rustak and Chiab to the Sarikul Lake. This is the stream which on the English maps is called the Panja.

"The exact definition of Your Highness' frontiers is, as Your Highness knows, a matter to which I am giving my earnest attention, and I hope that before long I may be able to address Your Highness again upon this matter."

* * * * *

38.—The views of the Government of India are discussed at home by Sir H. Rawlinson who, in view of the ambiguity of the 1873 Agreement, advocates a Commission being sent to the Upper Oxus.

The important despatch from the Government of India of March 11th was on receipt fully discussed at home, and Sir H. Rawlinson drew up a memorandum of which the following extracts may be given:

"The state of affairs on the Oxus in the districts of Shighnan and Roshan threatens to create serious embarrassment, and requires, therefore, to be carefully considered. Russia complains that Cabul, in sending troops across the river to the right bank, has violated the arrangement concluded between the British and the Russian Governments in 1873, and calls upon us accordingly to obtain the withdrawal of the Afghan troops to the left bank of the Oxus. The Government of India consider the Russian complaint to be well-founded, and have therefore written very strongly to the Amir on the subject, with what result is at present unknown, but in the meantime it may be convenient to recapitulate the circumstances which have led to the misunderstanding. As soon as the late Shere Ali Khan was firmly settled on the throne of Cabul—in about 1859—negotiations were opened between England and Russia with a view to their joint recognition of the northern boundary of Afghanistan. The only question relating to this boundary, which was much disputed, was, whether it should, or should not include the district of Badakshan. England maintained that as Dost Muhammad Khan had rendered the district tributary to Cabul, in 1859, and had imposed on it conditions of dependence, the territory came, in the natural course of descent, into Shere Ali's possession with the rest of the Afghan dominions. Russia, on the other hand, regarded Dost Muhammad's conquest of Badakshan as temporary and exceptional, and desired that the district should now revert to its old condition of independence. Ultimately Russia conceded the point, not by any formal contract or convention, but simply by acknowledgment and as an act of courtesy; and it is the true meaning and validity of the arrangement thus rudely drafted that we have now to determine. Probably a territorial delimitation between the dependents of two such Powers as England and Russia was never before discussed in such an irregular manner, or formulated in such loose and unintelligible language. England, it must be observed, had no delegated authority from Cabul to accept new possessions or to alienate old ones. All that the Foreign Office could do, acting as amicus curiae, was to state, for the information of our Ambassador at St. Petersburg, that 'Her Majesty's Government considered certain territories and boundaries as fully belonging to the Amir of Cabul'; to which Russia replied in an equally guarded manner, 'we do not refuse to accept the line of boundary laid down by England.' This was all that passed, and when we come to examine the clause itself, which stated the Afghan case, and which it must be remembered is the only Government document on which Russia can rely for the 'arrangement of 1873,' we find the definition of the frontier to be so ambiguous and contradictory as to be almost incomprehensible. The text of the clause is as follows:—'1. Badakshan, with its dependent district Wakhan, from the Sarikul (Wood's Lake) on the east, to the junction of Kokcha.
River with the Oxus (or Panja), forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire extent. It has been stated that the confused construction of this paragraph is owing to a clerical error, and the explanation is probably correct; but until such an error has been set right under official authority, and duly notified to Russia, I submit that the words ‘forming the northern’ boundary, &c., are meaningless and of no value.

"Assuming, however, that sooner or later the text will be restored, and that it will be found to state, as it has been hitherto generally understood, that the Panja or Oxus is considered to be the northern boundary of Afghanistan, then I would observe that such a condition is incompatible with the preceding part of the paragraph. It must be borne in mind that the discussion which had been maintained for three years with the Russian Government, referred especially to the nationality of the district of Badakshan, not to the detail of frontier by which that district was limited; and that the final award must therefore be taken in the same sense. Badakshan and its dependency of Wakhan were adjudged by this award to be Afghan, and, in consequence of such a decision, the Oxus, it was said, became the boundary of Afghanistan, but this was a false conclusion. The Oxus did not become the national boundary, in consequence of Badakshan being adjudged to Afghanistan, for a large portion of that district was situated beyond the river. The only safe ruling then that can be drawn from the so-called arrangement of 1873, is that Russia, having conceded the main question of the Afghan right to Badakshan and Wakhan, is bound to accept the established frontiers of those districts as the line of demarcation which limits the dependencies of Bokhara, or the territory of independent Pamir to the south.

"The next point to be considered is, what are the established frontiers of Badakshan and Wakhan. It is evident that when the Government of India first proposed the line of the Oxus for the Afghan frontier—the proposal having originated in the Indian Foreign Office—they were profoundly ignorant of the geography of the upper part of the river. They were certainly not aware that many villages of Wakhan and Ishkashim, together with the greater portion of the Badakshan districts of Gharan, Shighnan, and Roshan, were situated on the right bank of the Oxus; and the Home Government, content with having secur- ed Badakshan for Shere Ali Khan, do not seem to have bestowed much attention on the minor question of the frontier by which that district was bounded. It is obvious, however, whatever may have been the admissions or declarations subsequently made, that neither party could have originally intended to confiscate Shere Ali’s possessions beyond the Oxus for the benefit of the wandering Kirghiz of the Pamir, and I submit, therefore, that wherever Abdur Rahman Khan can now make out a clear hereditary title to mines, or villages, or pastures, as part of the Badakshan territory beyond the river, he is entitled to retain possession, the arrangement of 1873 notwithstanding.

"The Government of India seem to be unfavourable to Abdur Rahman’s claim to the disputed districts, irrespectively even of our being committed by the correspondence of 1873. They would prefer to join Roshan with Darwaz in dependency on Bokhara. They would willingly indeed cut all trans-Oxus Shighnan adrift, and they seriously argue in favour of a river boundary as the most convenient of all lines of demarcation. I propose then to give a brief abstract of the evidence which unites Roshan with Shighnan in direct dependency on Badakshan, and I will subsequently state the political grounds on which I submit that this territorial status should be maintained."

Sir Henry Rawlinson then proceeds to give details of the positions of the boundaries as far as they were known, and then goes on:—

"It can hardly be disputed, I think, after the concensus of opinion thus recorded by British, Afghan and Russian authorities as to ancient rights and modern practice, but that the attempt to limit Afghanistan by the course of the Panja river was a most arbitrary, and at the same time a most short-sighted proceeding. The Government of India are rather disposed to favour the arrangement, on the general ground of convenience, merely recommending that in the early portion of the line, where the violation of right would be more flagrant, some rectification of frontier should be attempted; but it may be noted that as far as principle is concerned, there is absolutely no distinction between the cases of Wakhan, Ishkashim, Gharan, Shighnan, and Roshan. These districts are, one and all, bisected by the Panja, and they should, therefore, be all mutilated under the operation of arrangement of 1873, or all preserved in the status quo ante by simply cancelling that abortive project."
"There are certain points which it is indispensable to bear in mind before we approach a definite settlement. First and foremost we must consider that the trans-Oxus territory, if detached from Afghanistan, cannot possibly be left as a derelict at the mercy of the wandering Kirghiz of the Pamir. The sheltered lands in the river valleys running down to the Panja will assuredly be peopled by refugees from the neighbouring Tajik and Uzbeg States, and there is every reason to believe that these communities would place themselves under the protection of Russia. That Power, indeed, has been displaying the greatest energy for several years past in surveying the Pamir, and extending her name and influence up to the very sources of the Oxus. The expeditions which were last year launched from the Ferghanah base were directed to include Wakhan and Eastern Badakshan in their operations, and even to cross the great range into the Cashmerian Valley of Chitral, and it was only owing to the energy of Abdur Rahman Khan, who barred the way in Roshan and Shighnan, that this grand scheme of tapping the Anglo-Indian frontier failed. There can be no doubt that Russia was much irritated at Abdur Rahman having sent Badakshan troops to arrest Yussuf Ali Shah, the Shighnan ruler, whose only offence was that he had permitted Dr. Regel and his party to reside for some months in Roshan, and it is to this irritation probably that we may trace the recent protest addressed to England against the appearance of Afghan troops on the right bank of the Oxus. If then we accept this protest, and insist on the withdrawal of the Afghan troops, Russia will, in all probability, entrust the abandoned district to the brother of the Mir, who is now a refugee at Samarcand, and thus secure a permanent footing in an advanced and most important strategical position. From the southern skirts of the Pamir, indeed, Russia would keep up communication in one direction with her military stations of Kokand and Samarcand, while to the east she would hold in check the Chinese of Kashgar, who seem inclined to challenge her supremacy in the Steppe, and to the south she would command access by the easy Baroghil Pass, both to Cashmir and Cabul, through the open valleys of Gilgit and Chitral.

"If, then, I were asked to suggest a means of escaping from the present difficulty, without giving serious offence to Russia, I would venture to propose that her protest should be answered in the following manner. We might profess the utmost anxiety to meet her wishes in maintaining tranquillity on the Afghan province of Badakshan. The sheltered lands in the river valleys running down to the Panja will assuredly be peopled by refugees from the neighbouring Tajik and Uzbeg States, and there is every reason to believe that these communities would place themselves under the protection of Russia. That Power, indeed, has been displaying the greatest energy for several years past in surveying the Pamir, and extending her name and influence up to the very sources of the Oxus. The expeditions which were last year launched from the Ferghanah base were directed to include Wakhan and Eastern Badakshan in their operations, and even to cross the great range into the Cashmerian Valley of Chitral, and it was only owing to the energy of Abdur Rahman Khan, who barred the way in Roshan and Shighnan, that this grand scheme of tapping the Anglo-Indian frontier failed. There can be no doubt that Russia was much irritated at Abdur Rahman having sent Badakshan troops to arrest Yussuf Ali Shah, the Shighnan ruler, whose only offence was that he had permitted Dr. Regel and his party to reside for some months in Roshan, and it is to this irritation probably that we may trace the recent protest addressed to England against the appearance of Afghan troops on the right bank of the Oxus. If then we accept this protest, and insist on the withdrawal of the Afghan troops, Russia will, in all probability, entrust the abandoned district to the brother of the Mir, who is now a refugee at Samarcand, and thus secure a permanent footing in an advanced and most important strategical position. From the southern skirts of the Pamir, indeed, Russia would keep up communication in one direction with her military stations of Kokand and Samarcand, while to the east she would hold in check the Chinese of Kashgar, who seem inclined to challenge her supremacy in the Steppe, and to the south she would command access by the easy Baroghil Pass, both to Cashmir and Cabul, through the open valleys of Gilgit and Chitral.

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"If such a letter were sent, and Russia thus became aware of the defective character of the document on which she has hitherto relied, perhaps the whole question might be allowed to 'slide'; otherwise, if she insisted on a definite declaration of frontier, then we must strain every nerve to maintain the principle of 

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39.—Our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh is in trust to suggest to the Russian Government that a Boundary Commission should be sent.

These views were submitted to the Foreign Office, and the following instruc-
tions were then sent to our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh from the Foreign Office:—

"The matter has been carefully considered at the India Office, and a memorandum on the claims of the ruler of Afghanistan to Shighnan and Roshan has been drawn up by Sir H. Rawlinson, of which I send you a copy.

"You will see that the view of the question which he takes differs from that of the Indian Government, and that he is of opinion that the territories in question form part of Badakshan, and therefore belonging to the Amir notwithstanding the fact that portions of them are situated to the north of the Oxus.

"When reference was made in the arrangements of 1872-73 to the Oxus as the northern boundary of the Afghan province, Her Majesty's Government were under the impression that Badakshan and its dependencies were entirely to the south of that river; and they would be very unwilling to admit any interpretation of those arrangements which would deprive the Amir of districts to which the more correct information we now possess shows him to be entitled.

"It would, however, be undesirable at the present moment to engage in a controversy with Russia on the subject, and Your Excellency will, in replying to M. de Giers' complaints as to the proceedings of Afghan troops in Shighnan, confine yourself to stating that Her Majesty's Government are most anxious to meet the wishes of the Russian Government in maintaining tranquillity on the Shighnan-Darwaz frontier; but that the Amir considers that Shighnan and Roshan are part of Badakshan, which was formerly declared in 1872-73 to belong to Afghanistan; that the information in the possession of the Indian Government is not sufficient to enable them to pronounce a decided opinion on the subject, but that Her Majesty's Government would be happy to consider the question in concert with the Russian Government, and to send a Commissioner to make an investigation on the spot jointly with Russian and Afghan Commissioners."

40.—The Russian Government insist that the 1873 Agreement must be adhered to.

Our Ambassador did not, however, for fear of compromising some other negotiations which were in hand, at once act on these instructions, but on being reminded again on June 23rd by the Russian Government of the subject of their previous note, Sir E. Thornton replied in the same words as used in the last paragraph of his instructions. Mons. de Giers replied insisting upon the terms of the arrangement of 1873, as deciding that the course of the Oxus from Lake Sarikul to its junction with the Kokcha was to be considered the northern frontier of Afghanistan, and stating, with regard to the proposal to send a Commissioner to those regions, that he would consult with the Governor General of Turkestan, but that if the proposal were agreed to, it could only be on the condition that the arrangements of 1872-73 would be the basis of action.

The note was as follows:—

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Asian Department,
June 23, 1884.

M. l' Ambassadeur,

"In answer to the memorandum which M. de Vlangaly gave your Excellency in December 1883, you have been good enough to inform me in your note of the 13th (25th) instant that the Amir of Afghanistan considers Shighnan and Roshan as forming part of the province of Badakshan, which, in virtue of the arrangement of 1872-73, has been recognized as an Afghan possession. The Indian Government, according to this note, is not in possession of sufficient information to pronounce definitely on this question, and in this condition of affairs Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that it would be as well to send to Shighnan and to Roshan an English Commissioner, who in conjunction with the Commissioners nominated by Russia and Afghanistan, would be entrusted with the duty of collecting information on the spot.
"I must remark, M. l' Ambassadeur, that the hesitation of Her Majesty's Government to pronounce on the question which forms the subject of the above-named memorandum of the Imperial Ministry leads me to suppose that the arguments contained in that document have not been appreciated at their proper value, seeing that Her Majesty's Government would otherwise immediately have recognized that the pretensions of the Amir Abdur Rahman Khan were irreconcilable with the arrangement agreed upon between Russia and Great Britain in 1872-73.

"According to the despatch from Lord Granville to Lord A. Loftus, dated the 17th October 1872, the northern frontier of Badakshan and Wakhan, which is also that of Afghanistan, is formed by the course of the Oxus (Panja) from the Lake of Sarikul on the east to the point of its junction with the river of Kokcha. The provinces of Shighnan and Roshan, which are not mentioned in the above-named despatch, are outside this line of frontiers, and this circumstance affords quite sufficient evidence that the pretensions of the Amir Abdur Rahman Khan to the possession of the above-mentioned districts, and their invasion by the Governor of Badakshan, are in contradiction with the arrangement of 1872-73.

"I do not think it superfluous, moreover, to remind you, M. l' Ambassadeur, that at the time of the negotiations which preceded this arrangement, doubts had been raised by the Imperial Government as to the validity of the rights of the Amir Shere Ali Khan over even Badakshan and Wakhan; that the information collected on this subject by the Governor General of Turkestan was not at all in harmony with the results of the investigations set on foot by the order of the British Government, and that many indications pointed to those two districts as entirely independent of Afghanistan. The Imperial Cabinet only consented to desist from its objections from their desire to show deference to the wishes of Great Britain.

"The endeavour of Her Majesty's Government to obtain the recognition by Russia of the rights of Shere Ali Khan over this district of Wakhan would have had no motive, if Shighnan and Roshan, which separate this district from Darwaz and Ferghana, were Afghan possessions, for in that case Wakhan could only be considered as an internal province of Afghanistan.

"In laying these considerations before you, I must beg you, M. l' Ambassadeur, to be good enough to bring them to the notice of Her Majesty's Government, who will not, as I trust, hesitate any longer to recognize that the Amir Abdur Rahman Khan's claims are without foundation, and to bid him to respect the arrangement come to between the two Powers.

"With reference to the Commission which Her Majesty's Government proposes to send to the spot, I shall not fail to consult the Governor General of Turkestan as to the manner in which he thinks that it would be possible to contribute to the realization of this proposal. But, meanwhile, I consider it my duty to remark that, in view of the above considerations, the proposed Commission cannot be instructed to examine the pretensions of the Amir of Afghanistan, and that their task must be confined to tracing on the spot the boundary line agreed upon in 1872-73, as well as to the study of the partial modifications which might be made in it in the common interest of the contracting Powers, without trenching upon the principles on which the delimitation is based.

"I do not think it superfluous to add that the despatch of the Commissioners to the spot must be preceded by the re-establishment of the status quo ante in those districts, in virtue of which the Amir must re-call from Shighnan and Roshan the Afghan officials and soldiers who are now there."

41. — Her Majesty's Government agree that the principles of the 1873 Agreement be adhered to.

Our Ambassador at St. Petersburgh was then instructed to inform the Russian Government that we were willing to take the principles of the 1873 Agreement as a basis, but that investigation by a Joint Boundary Commission was the only sure way of settling the difficulty, and with reference to the last paragraph of M. de Giers' note Her Majesty's Government could not pronounce upon the question whether the status quo ante had been departed from without the local investigation which they desired.

Negotiations regarding the North-Western Frontier were being carried on about this time, and our Ambassador appears never to have communicated the
above to the Russian Government and the question between us was allowed to drop.

42. The Government of India urge the demarcation of the line along the Oxus.

While these negotiations were being carried on the Government of India telegraphed to the Secretary of State that they considered the demarcation of the line eastward along the Oxus as very important "having regard especially to indefinite position of Shighnan and Roshan, and trans-Oxus Wakhan."

To this the Secretary of State replied by telegram on February 7th that he thought it "unadvisable to address Russia, until prospect of Lumsden's Commission clearer; but that in any case it was desirable that portion of the Indian party should return that way to ascertain limits of Afghan territory in that quarter."

The demarcation of the North-Western portion of the frontier was soon afterwards commenced, and on September 5th, 1885, the Secretary of State telegraphed to the Government of India that the Russians wished to postpone the signature of the final Convention until the delimitation of the whole frontier of the Upper Oxus was finished. To which the Viceroy replied that it seemed desirable if possible to complete the line up to the Chinese border. The Secretary of State again telegraphed, on September 23rd, that the Foreign Office had been asked to commence negotiations about the demarcation of the Upper Oxus frontier, and that, if Russia refused or procrastinated, he was in favour of ourselves delimiting that frontier on our own account.

43. Subsequent unsatisfactory conduct on the Amir's part alters the question.

Shortly afterwards, on October 23rd, a telegram was sent by Colonel Ridgeway to say that the Amir's Agent had received a letter from the Amir "telling him not to allude to the North-East frontier; (as) if there had been no Commission he would have kept Panjdeh and if there be a Commission he would lose Shighnan."

On receipt of this telegram the Foreign Secretary drew up the following note on the case:—

"The argument in favour of going on with the demarcation is that, if we do not go on, we leave openings for trouble in Shighnan and Wakhan, the whole of which the Amir claims to possess, and that we also leave untouched a gap of 70 or 80 miles between the Afghan and Chinese border. Our line of frontier is not complete unless we demarcate up to the Neza-tash Pass, and the Russians deny the Afghan claim to any part of Shighnan and Wakhan north of the Oxus. In this they are borne out by the letter of the Agreement of 1873. It is evident that, if the object be, as it was, to lay down a line, beyond which Russia should be bound not to pass, our work will be unfinished unless we go on eastward from Khoja Saleh. Our boundary ends in the air, and the eastern portion of it, even as far as it goes, is still in dispute between the Russians and Afghans.

"On the other hand, it is argued that the only result of going on with the demarcation will be to deprive the Amir of his trans-Oxus districts. He sees this, and therefore is now opposed to the completion of the boundary, that the expediency of extending the Afghan frontier from Wood's Lake to the Chinese border is in itself objectionable; and finally, that as the Amir has not fairly thrown in his lot with us, and will not have our officers on his frontier, the whole policy of connecting ourselves with the definition of that frontier has now become doubtful. On these grounds Colonel Ridgeway would leave the matter alone, unless Russia will consent to revise the Agreement of 1873, and seek a better frontier than that of the Upper Oxus."
"I think there is a good deal to be said for this view of the case—more particularly for the argument drawn from the unsatisfactory attitude of the Amir. Under the present circumstances there is not the same urgent necessity for defining the northern frontier of Afghanistan as there was two years ago, when the theory was that we are bound to assist the Afghans against encroachment. The Amir has put it out of our power to take proper measures for guarding against encroachment, and he has clearly shown us that he will not let us assist him effectually when difficulties with Russia have arisen. The situation is very different from what it would have been, had he fairly placed himself in our hands, and let us manage the Russian question for him. Perhaps this is fortunate for us; but whether fortunate or not, the change in the situation is undeniable. The arguments which applied a year or two ago do not apply now in a precisely similar degree.

"Nevertheless, if the Russians will consent to a revision of the Agreement of 1873, or as Sir Henry Rawlinson would put it, if they will consent to act on the essence of the Agreement instead of on the letter, I should still be inclined to carry the line round. Even so there will be difficulties. The Afghans will probably not get all they claim, and if they do not, they will be discontented with the proceedings of the Commission, as they are now. Moreover, it may be true that they had better not, for their own sakes, get territory beyond the Oxus, or have their frontier extended towards China. But this is not certain; and it must be remembered that if we avoid bickerings on the spot by closing our demarcation at Khoja Saleh, we do not necessarily avoid the odium of depriving the Amir of his trans-Oxus possessions. We have already told him to keep behind the Oxus; and the Russians will most certainly endeavour in the final Convention to bind us down on this point. The discussions on the Protocol clearly point to this, and they have the letter of the Agreement in their favour. When we send him a copy of the Convention, and a map of his frontier, we shall, unless we fight the point now, have to tell him that he has no claim to trans-Oxus-Shighnan and Wakhan. We may avoid unpalatable declarations to this effect by merely confirming in general terms the disputed Agreement of 1873 but this is not a satisfactory course. Altogether I should feel disposed to go on with the demarcation, if the Russians will not stand on the letter of the Agreement. If they do stand on it, the expediency of going on with the demarcation is more than doubtful. I am not perfectly certain even in that case that it would not be worth while to go through with the thing and get a complete frontier, but on the whole I think this need not be pressed."

44.—Government of India suggest that the North-East frontier should not be demarcated unless the 1873 Agreement is revised.

A telegram was then sent to the Secretary of State reporting the Amir's fears regarding Shighnan, and adding that, if the work was to proceed, Russia should consent to act upon the spirit, not the letter, of the Agreement of 1873. In this the Secretary of State concurred, but asked the Viceroy's opinion as to whether the demarcation should proceed, and the latter replied as follows in a telegram dated March 3rd, 1886:

"If Russia agree to act on the spirit, not the letter, of the Agreement of 1873, I see no reason to suppose Amir would refuse full assent to any boundary laid down to North-East. At present he naturally fears further demarcation because he knows we have held ourselves bound by terms of that Agreement. On the whole, therefore, I would prefer to try whether the demarcation cannot be carried on. I may mention that Ney Elias, who recently crossed from Yarkand into the Upper Oxus districts, found trans-Oxus-Shighnan and Wakhan occupied by Afghans, and that on the other hand he reports a large district on south of the Oxus, containing some 24 villages, to be still in possession of Darwaz. Therefore, in practice, the Agreement of 1873 is not respected on either side. If further demarcation on revised basis proves impracticable, I would allow question to drop."

In answer to this the Secretary of State telegraphed on March 31st that Her Majesty's Government did not intend proposing to Russia the continuance of the demarcation beyond Khoja Saleh, and that if Russia made overtures we might point out "objection to proceed without preliminary understanding as to interpretation of description of frontier in 1873 Agreement."
45.—The demarcation is abandoned but a survey party is to be sent.

Sir West Ridgeway was then instructed to take a small party round by the Upper Oxus and survey the Afghan frontier, but he was cautioned not to push Afghans forward into doubtful ground from which they might hereafter be ejected; but to try to cover the Pamirs by the Afghan boundary if that could be done safely.

46.—The Amir obstructs the survey party.

Sir West Ridgeway, accordingly, on receipt of these instructions, made arrangements for carrying them out; but on May 6th he had to inform the Foreign Secretary that the Amir's Agent had received a letter from the Amir ordering that no officer should be allowed beyond Balkh, till the Khoja Saleh question on the North-Western Frontier had been satisfactorily settled.

Thereupon a strong letter of remonstrance was addressed to the Amir by the Viceroy, and he was told that it was very desirable that Colonel Ridgeway should be able to examine the country north-east of Balkh; that though it was not probable that there would be any demarcation of the frontier in that direction, yet a great deal of trouble had arisen of late years from the fact that in 1873 the frontier country was little known to either Englishmen or Russians, and it would be unfortunate, therefore, if the English Commission returned without having gained full information, “for, in case the Russians should hereafter advance any further claims, the British Government would be at a disadvantage in defending your (the Amir's) interests.”

47.—The Viceroy warns the Amir that in consequence the Indian Government would not be responsible for the North-East Frontier.

To this the Amir replied that Mr. Ney Elias had recently been exploring all through Shighnan and Badakshan, and must be fully acquainted with the condition of those countries. The Viceroy, however, would not accept the excuse, but reiterated his statement that the Government of India would not be responsible if misunderstandings arise hereafter regarding, for example, the boundaries of Shighnan and Wakhan, about which Russia may at any time raise a discussion, you must blame your own agents, not the officers of the British Government.”

To this the Amir replied that Mr. Ney Elias was not a professional surveyor, and moreover he had not the time or opportunity to thoroughly explore and map these countries.

48.—The survey of the North-East Frontier is abandoned.

Matters were in this unsatisfactory state when on June 25th, Sir West Ridgeway telegraphed that he had gathered from M. Lessar, the Russian Commissioner, that Russia meant to insist upon
the literal fulfilment of the understanding of 1873; that Bokhara would evacuate the left bank of the Panja (Oxus), and that it would then be impossible for us to support the Afghan claim to his trans-Oxus territories. Under these circumstances he wished to know if he should carry out the proposed survey of the North-East Frontier. Doing so, he said, might entail some responsibility for the Afghan claim. Only a fraction could now be done; and the Amir had evidently ordered that only frontier, and not internal, surveys were to be made, and great restrictions were being enforced. Under these circumstances it was decided to abandon the survey of the North-East Frontier, and Sir West Ridgeway received orders to return to India.

49.—The Amir afterwards asks that the Upper Oxus boundary should be formally demarcated.

On the final settlement of the North-West Frontier being announced to the Amir he wrote on August 9th, 1887, that he wished to be informed what decision had been arrived at regarding the settlement of the Pamir boundary, and in another letter, dated August 16th, he expressed a wish that “the boundary of Afghanistan and Russia from the Oxus as far as the Pamir may be demarcated.” To this the Viceroy replied that he would carefully consider the subject.

A memorandum was then drawn up in the Foreign Office by Lieutenant Manners-Smith, in which the arguments for and against the proposed further demarcation were thus briefly stated—

1. It was most important there should be no gap in the barrier between our possessions in India and those of Russia in Central Asia.
2. The Amir was anxious for a definitely recognised boundary, and we had promised to consider his claims.
3. As Sir Henry Rawlinson wrote in 1872 another important subject refers to the communication with India. The natural high road which conducts from the plains of India to the great plateau of Chinese Turkestan, a road incomparably superior in every respect to the mountain track across Tibet, follows the Chitral valley from the Kabul tributary of the Indus, and debouches on the valley of the Oxus in Wakhan, so that a foreign power in possession of Wakhan would not only command the great trade route from west to east by Central Asia but would also hold the gates of India.

The arguments against the further demarcation were shown to be—

1. With regard to the demarcation of the Western Frontier, we agreed to accept the settlement of 1873 as a basis; and the Russians were likely therefore to insist on the same with regard to the eastern portion, and Her Majesty's Government would probably acquiesce.
2. In this case, the Amir would lose territory to which he considers, and probably with reason, that he has a historical right, and we should get blamed for the cession.
3. The result of a demarcation on the letter of the Agreement of 1873 would be the disintegration of the Upper Oxus districts, which would no longer retain their natural and existing boundaries.

50. The Government of India deprecate any formal demarcation.

A despatch was subsequently addressed to the Secretary of State, in which the Government of India deprecated our instituting any action towards demarcating the Upper Oxus frontier, but
in order to fill up the gap which existed between Afghan and Chinese territory they suggested that the position should be explained to the Amir, and if he spontaneously extended his effectual occupation up to the Chinese border, they would not interfere. This despatch was dated December 27th, 1887, and ran as follows:

"In our Secret Despatch No. 148, dated the 19th September 1887, we invited Your Lordship's attention to the wish expressed by the Amir of Afghanistan that the demarcation of his frontier should be extended along the Upper Oxus, and we promised to address Your Lordship separately on the subject when we had considered the existing situation in detail.

"2. There appear to us to be two strong reasons against our instituting any action at present in this direction, and we desire to submit them for Your Lordship's consideration.

"3. "In the first place we understand that Her Majesty's Government is not prepared to insist upon the spirit, rather than the letter, of the Agreement of 1873; and no doubt such a course might afford to the military party at St. Petersburg a dangerous opportunity of endeavouring to repudiate the Agreement altogether. But if the letter of the Agreement be adhered to, The Amir of Afghanistan would inevitably, as a preliminary to demarcation, be called upon to withdraw from all territory now in his possession to the north of the Oxus. Such a contraction of his dominion might not be an unmixed evil, but he would naturally resent the request, though it is in accordance with advice already given to him.

"4. In the second place it must be remembered that the frontier, so far as the Agreement of 1873 defines it, terminates at the Victoria or Wood's Lake, from which point to the Chinese frontier at Aktash there is a gap of undefined territory. The Chinese and Afghans are believed to regard the boundary between their respective dominions as being formed by the Aksu, the upper waters of the Murghabi from Aktash to where the Kara-su joins it; but Mr. Ney Elias, who visited the country in 1885, ascertained that the Afghans had never taken formal possession of any point on their side of that part of the river, nor had they done any act which could be held to show that they more than tacitly accepted the river as their frontier. We believe that negotiations for a settlement of the frontier in this direction would lead the Russians to deny all Afghan rights east of Wood's Lake and to insist upon being allowed a free hand from that point to the Chinese boundary. This claim, made on the strength of the Agreement of 1873, would at the present time be the more difficult to resist from the fact that the Afghans are in effective occupation. The Russians have long been aware that the tract is practically unclaimed, and ten years ago Colonel Kostenko wrote that the belt of "no man's land" referred to must, sooner or later, be included in Russian dominions.

"5. Thus, though some risk of the Russians pushing through this gap may be incurred by leaving the boundary undemarcated, and the country uninhabited, the risk would be aggravated by an unsuccessful attempt to demarcate according to theoretical possession. Once through the gap the Russians would be on the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush, in practical possession of certain Passes, and in close proximity to Hunza, a position from which they could cause us considerable trouble.

"6. Under these circumstances we are of opinion that the best course is to explain the position to the Amir. We would not suggest to him that he should extend his effectual occupation up to the Chinese border on the Aksu, but if he spontaneously adopted that policy we would not interfere. If, when the demarcation is hereafter forced upon us, we can point to a recognised Afghan occupation of some years' standing, we shall have a strong position, and, while we should be justified in insisting upon the Amir surrendering to Russia his present trans-Oxus possessions, we could, in return, insist upon the Afghans being left in undisturbed possession of that tract of country east of Wood's Lake, which is not touched by the Agreement of 1873.

"7. We are of course aware that a weak Afghan occupation will be powerless to oppose the advance of Russia in time of war; but the same can be said with equal force of the country already demarcated. What can be guarded against by the action indicated in the preceding paragraph, as it has been further west, by the demarcation of a boundary between the Hari Rud and the Oxus, is unopposed territorial and political encroachment in time of peace."

In replying to this the Secretary of State said that the Foreign Secretary agreed with him that it would have been preferable to abstain altogether from addressing the Amir on the sub-

Sec. F., Aug. 1888, No. 168.
ject, but that, as the Viceroy had told him that he would consider the subject, the answer to be sent him should be confined to an explanation of the difficulties and objections which stand in the way of a demarcation of the North-East Frontier of Afghanistan; and "it was not desirable that the Amir should make any immediate or obvious attempt to extend his frontier."

The Government of India then decided that as Her Majesty's Government would prefer that the Viceroy should abstain from writing any letter to the Amir on the subject, they would let the question stand over, until the Amir wrote again. This, however, he has never done, and so the matter rests at present. It may, however, be remarked that in the summer of 1889 the Amir conducted some further military operations against Shighnan and stationed a permanent garrison there.

Sec. F., Aug. 1888, No. 172.
Sec. F., Oct. 1889, No. 69A.
Sec. F., Nov. 1889, No. 132.
APPENDIX.

The position of the Afghan and Chinese Frontiers on the Pamirs.

(1) The Eastern Boundary of Afghan territory as described by the Amir.

The Amir addressed a letter to the Viceroy, dated 16th November 1883, in which he stated what he considered to be the boundaries of his territories as defined to him by the most trustworthy authorities at his disposal.

The eastern boundary of Badakshan was defined by the historian Rashidi as follows:—

"Towards the east, the extreme point of Wakhan, Sarigh-Choyan; Barwaz the extreme point of the Shakh-dara of Shighnan to the east; and Sar-Rez, the extreme eastern dependency of Tagab-Ghund in Shighnan."

The Mullah Ashur, Akksal of Wakhan, gives the boundaries which he said he had seen mentioned in a book at Kashkar as follows:—

"The eastern boundary extends in two directions—one as far as the 'hauz' (lake) of the little Pamir, which 'hauz' belongs to Wakhan, and is six days' journey from the farthest inhabited part of Wakhan. The Pamir extends beyond the lake as far as Sarikol, which belongs to Yarkand. In the other direction the eastern boundary is the lake (hauz) of the great Pamir, which extends from Kala-i-Wakhan to the large lake (hauz). Seven days' journey beyond the lake is an island* (jazira) which belongs to Sarikol of Yarkand. The country on this side of 'hauz' belongs to Wakhan."

"The north boundary extends to the Mach Pass, which belongs to Wakhan. The country beyond it belongs to Shakh-dara in Shighnan."

Ali Mardan Shah, the Mir of Wakhan, Kasji Sarur, and Mahmadd Aziz, the Akksal, gave the boundaries as follows:—

"Towards the east in Langar, a desert inhabited by Nomads. Beyond Langar is the little Pamir, which is destitute of inhabitants. At ten days' journey from Langar is the island (?) of Sarikol, otherwise called Tash Kurgan, one of the villages belonging to Yarkand. The country lying between Langar and Sarikol, viz., the little Pamir has been inhabited from time immemorial, and is said to belong to Yarkand."

"Wakhan extends towards the north as far as the Mach Pass, beyond which is Joshan-gaz, a place above the Shakh-dara on the border of Shighnan. This Pass is two days' journey from Wakhan."

Shah Yusuf Ali Khan, the former Chief of Shighnan, and his Akksal gave the eastern boundaries of Shighnan as follows:—

"The eastern boundaries of Shighnan are Tajab Shakh-dara and Ghund, the extreme points of which are Joshan-gaz and the Geok-bai Pass, the country beyond which belongs to Cathay (China). The other eastern boundary district of Shighnan is Ghund, which terminates at the hauz-i-Murghabi including Neza-tash† and Jahadar-tash‡, which belong to Ghund in Shighnan. Beyond the hauz-i-Murghabi is Chinese territory. The stream Bartang in Roshan takes its rise from the Neza-tash."*

(2) The Eastern Boundary of Afghan territory as described by English authorities.

In 1885 Mr. Ney Elias was sent to the Upper Oxus region with orders to collect information regarding the position of the boundaries of Afghan and Chinese territories. He found that the Chinese, fearing an Afghan advance from the direction of Shighnan, had collected all the Kirghi within the line of the Murghabi—"implying in this way that the Murghabi formed the Chinese frontier." He also ascertained that "the Murghabi, from Aktash downwards, is considered by all the people in this region, including the Afghans, to be the

* By this is meant the town of Tash Kurgan.
† Evidently the Neza-tash Pass leading on to the Alichur Pamir—not the Neza-tash Pass between Tash Kurgan and Aktash.
‡ Chadir-tash on the Alichur Pamir.
frontier between Chinese territory and the provinces of Shighnan and Wakhan. The act of the Chinese, Mr. Elias goes on to say, 'in thus practically pointing out what they hold to be their frontier, must be considered an important one in a region where all frontiers are so loosely defined as on the Pamirs. It is, moreover, an undisputed frontier for the present, for the Afghans recognise it, and as far as one can judge from their actions, seem willing to accept it as the line which ancient usage has laid down as the limit of the Tajik provinces. Still they have never taken formal possession of any point on the left bank of the Murghab, nor performed any act that can be held to show that they do more than tacitly accept it as their frontier. Indeed no Afghan official, as far as I am aware, has ever shown himself above the settled villages of Roshan, Ghund, Shakh-dara or Wakhan, during the two years that these provinces have been in the Amir's possession. It may be noted, too, that Mr. Ney Elias found that Sardim was the highest inhabited point in Afghan territory, and that he was not met by Afghan officials till he reached Chahirism where he saw the remains of a fort which had been built there a few years previously "for the defence of the frontier."

3. The Western Boundary of Chinese territory.

We have no definite statement on Chinese authority what they consider to be their frontier, but a few facts put together may give some idea of the probable position of the western boundary of Chinese Turkestan.

As has been stated above, Mr. Ney Elias found that the Chinese practically set down the Murghabi or Aksu as their boundary. This may, however, have only been a temporary measure taken in view of possible operations by the Afghans, for the hearsay information which Captain Younghusband collected during his visit to the Taghdum-bash Pamir in 1889, was to the effect that Chinese authority now extended up to the watershed which divides the two branches of the Aksu river; that is, up to the Oi-kul or Little Pamir Lake, the water parting near Lake Victoria or Wood's Lake on the Great Pamir and the Neza-tash Pass on the Alichur Pamir. Captain Younghusband was even informed by two officials from Kashgar that a new post had that year been established by the Chinese near Lake Yeshil-kul on the Alichur Pamir."

On the Little Pamir the French traveller Bonvalot, in 1887, found the Kirghiz inhabiting the country west of Aksht up to the sources of the Aksu, dependent to the Chinese (see Through the Heart of Asia, Vol. II, pp. 173 and 203).

Higher up nearer the Russian frontier Mr. Ney Elias found the Chinese considered the district round Lake Rang-kul as belonging to them. They told him indeed that they had a post stationed there; but though this was found not to be the case, Mr. Ney Elias says that the Kirghiz inhabitants acknowledged the claim of the Chinese to the district.

The acts of the Chinese in attending the Russian Expedition of 1883 in the Rang-kul district and Captain Grombtschovsky in 1889 near Akstah also serve to show that the Chinese consider and have asserted their claims to territory at least as far westward as the Aksu or Murghab as belonging to them.

4. The Afghan and Chinese boundaries according to Russian authorities.

A reference to the latest Russian map of Central Asia in possession of the Government of India, dated 1884, shows that, as has been frequently stated by Russian authorities, they consider the Afghan territory not to include trans-Oxus-Shighnan and Roshan, and not to extend further eastward than the lakes of the Little and Great Pamirs, i.e., they do not recognise any Afghan claims beyond the limits laid down by the 1873 Agreement. While as to the Chinese boundary all Russian maps place it along the watershed immediately east of the Aksu river, and accordingly do not recognise Chinese claims to the valley of the Aksu river or the Rang-kul.

A gap is consequently left by the Russians between Afghan and Chinese territory. Colonel Kostenko calls this a "no man's land" which must some day belong to Russia; and it is noticeable that in the Russian map of 1884 it is coloured in dotted purple in continuation of the purple boundary of Bokhara; while on the map which Captain Grombtschovsky showed Captain Younghusband in 1889 the tract was specially marked with a broad red border.

* It should be noted, however, that Captain Younghusband's information, though corroborated by several independent witnesses, is only hearsay, while Mr. Elias' was obtained on the spot.