

FURTHER PAPERS

RELATING TO THE

AFFAIRS OF AFGHANISTAN.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.



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CORRESPONDENCE.

No. 1.

TELEGRAM FROM SECRETARY OF STATE TO VICEROY.

SEND Home full text of conversations of 1869 between Amir and Mayo, and between Kabul Minister and others, and record of Amir's secret Council; also text of conversations of 1873 between Kabul Minister and Aitchison.

No. 2.

TELEGRAM FROM VICEROY TO SECRETARY OF STATE, dated Lahore, 5th December 1878.

YOUR telegram, 5th December, requiring papers, conversations of 1869. Have telegraphed Calcutta for records; will send whatever papers are found.

No. 3.

Foreign Department.—Secret, No. 147.

To the Right Honourable VISCOUNT CRANBROOK, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

MY LORD,

Camp, Lahore, 12th December 1878.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Lordship's telegram, dated 5th December 1878, calling for copies of various papers connected with Kabul affairs. I enclose duplicates of all the papers which it has been possible to collect.

I have, &c.
(Signed) LYTTON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 3.

SECRET COUNCIL held by the AMÍR in the FORT of LAHORE in the SAMMAN BURJ on the 17th March 1869.

His Highness the Amír of Kabul	-	-	President.
1. Syad Núr Muhammad Shah	-	-	} Members.
2. Ishak Akasi Sherdil Khan	-	-	
3. Mirza Muhammad Hussan, Mir Munshi-	-	-	

QUESTION put by the Amír.

Should the British inquire what is your object and desire, what reply should be given?

REPLY given by No. 1 Member.

"As far as possible, nothing should be said which would indicate want or covetousness. But only this should be said, that regarding the house of the British as your own house, it was necessary that you should have expressed your desire to meet the British authorities, and evinced your good-will and friendship towards the British Government; therefore, your Highness first intimated your desire to do so, and having been asked to come over, you have come down; that your Highness has been much pleased, and has no other object than that the British Government should treat you with patronizing kindness."

The Amír and the second and third Members:—" Yes; this would be the proper reply."

Ishak Akasi Sherdil, the second Member, said:—" Notwithstanding this, if the British authorities should insist and say that your Highness should nevertheless say what your desires are, and the Government would accede to them, then your Highness should say that you are much obliged for the assistance which Her Majesty has given you, without any wish to interfere with your Government. Your Highness should then go on to say that the British authorities should, in the first instance, inform you of their sentiments, and you would then give a reply."

The Amír and the other Members approved of this suggestion.

Syad Núr Muhammad Shah said—" Should the opening of the Khaibar route and the chastisement of the Afridi, Momand and Shanwari tribes be urged on you here also, as the Commissioner of Pesháwar said to some of our men, that the Amír should be persuaded to open out the Khaibar route and to make a road, it should be replied that these are matters of minor importance; the most important matter of all should be attended to, which is this: that Russia is daily extending its conquests and has come up to the confines of Balkh and Herát. The British Government should take measures openly for the protection of those borders; and you were prepared with your heart and property to oppose the Russians for the sake of protecting your country and in deference to the wishes of the British Government. Lastly, that your Highness would in no way fall short of evincing your good-will and friendship towards the British Government. Let the British Government state the measures they propose to take in this matter; the external enemy should be first attended to."

The Amír and the other Members concurred in, and approved of, this suggestion.

The Amír then said:—" Should the British authorities propose that a European Agent be stationed at Kabul itself, although I am myself agreeable to such arrangement, but the people of Kabul are turbulent and mischievous. Should such European Agent be injured in any way, which God forbid, I would be disgraced. The late Amír, my father, on these very considerations, refused to have a European Agent at his capital. But if an Agent be located in the interior, at places like Kaudahár, or Balkh, or Herat, there would be no objection. Such an arrangement would be advantageous to both the Governments; for instance, at the present time the people of Lower Seistán have commenced encroachments on the Candahár boundaries. Lower Seistán was formerly always attached to Afghánistán, and has been occupied by Persia only since a short time. We are not aware what agreement exists between the British and Persian Governments regarding Lower Seistán. If there should be a European Agent on the border, he would be possessed of the necessary information, and would be at hand to consult regarding affairs relating to territories beyond the borders."

All the Members approved of what the Amír had said.

The first and second Members said—" Doubtless, the reply to be given to the requests of the British authorities should be to the effect, that the object is to maintain cordial and sincere alliance between the two States. Your Highness can accede to the wishes of the British Government only so far as is compatible with the wishes of your people, your religion, and your authority, so that nothing may happen at any time opposed to the mutual friendly relations."

" The policy of your Highness should be in the first instance to ascertain the sentiments of the British Government. Should the authorities express themselves verbally, they should be asked to reduce them to writing, so that we may discuss them in our own Councils, and then your Highness could state your views after due deliberation."

After this the Amír sent for the treaties entered into between the late Amír and the British Government, and perused them.

His Highness then said that he approved of the determination come to in the Council.

I expect that the Amír will express himself to the above effect to the Government. I have ascertained the result of the discussion, and submit the same for the information of the Government.

His Highness individually is a sincere friend of the Government; but in regard to some matters he is suspicious of his brothers and the tribes.

(Sd.) X. Y.

The 18th March 1869.

Enclosure 2 in No. 3.

NOTES of the FIRST MEETING between His Excellency the VICEROY and His Highness the AMÍR OF KABUL, at 4 p.m., 29th March 1869.

Present :

1. His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General.
2. Sir Donald Macleod, Lieutenant-Governor.
3. His Highness the Amír.
4. The Minister of His Highness, Núr Muhammad, Syad.
5. The Foreign Secretary, W. S. Seton-Karr, Esq.
6. Captain Grey. Interpreter.

AFTER compliments, and an expression of His Excellency's hope that the Amír had been satisfied with his reception, the Viceroy intimated to him that it was the firm desire of the British Government to see established at Kabul a just, strong, and independent government, in whose administration the Government of India would exercise no interference, and which should not bear the appearance of being maintained mainly by extraneous aid. His Excellency added that this would, in a great measure, depend on the Amír himself.

The Amír, for some time, could not apprehend the exact force of His Excellency's words, and he kept on repeating that a great deal depended on the Government of India, and on the line of policy which it proposed for itself in future; that he was disposed to look to that Government in all things; and that assistance and support must be open in order to be useful.

After the views of the Viceroy had been fully and clearly explained to His Highness, His Excellency told him in pointed language that he must now state distinctly by what particular acts of ours we could help him to establish a strong and independent rule at Kabul.

To this the Amír replied that he had already committed his sentiments to writing; that he had explained his views both to Sir John Lawrence and to the present Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab; and that the friendship with his father was a "dry friendship" and one-sided; he seemed unwilling, though rather pressed on the subject, to give any more distinct or decided expression to his feelings and wishes, though his Minister at last explained that they were—*first*, guarantee of Amír and family against all comers whilst in actual possession of the throne; *second*, such present assistance in money and arms as could be given.

His Excellency again pressed the Amír to state distinctly the precise mode in which he thought we could help him, but he replied in general terms. At last he broke out, and with great vehemence declared that the premature recognition of Azim Kham in November 1867 had been the main cause of all the bloodshed and misery which had since occurred; that Azim Khan at that time did not hold the whole of Afghanistan; that he was not the lawful ruler; and that it was our recognition which enabled the usurper to hold his position for two years. The tardy recognition of himself in 1863 seemed also to rankle in his mind; and in regard to the treaty with the Dost in 1855 he said it was a one-sided treaty and a "dry friendship."

Sir Donald MacLeod here observed to me, in English, that he was extremely surprised at this statement; that he had been on most confidential terms with the Amír since his arrival, and that he had never in any way referred to the subject.

From this Lord Mayo at once saw the real object of his visit, which was to obtain from us a promise that in no case would we repeat the policy of 1867, and acknowledge a *de facto* ruler while any part of Afghanistan remained in his hands. He declaimed at great length on this point, and became very excited. His Excellency told him that they were not there to discuss past events; that their business was with the present, and to provide against evils for the future.

At length, after some hesitation and conversation in Pushtu with his Minister, Nur Muhammad, he declared that it was his earnest wish that the Government of India should recognize and acknowledge not only himself but his lineal successors, or

* *Nuslan ba'd Nuslan*, or generation to generation. successors in blood (*man-wa-áulad-i-man**), and this phrase he repeated several times with great earnestness and emphasis. He explained again, and at some length, that to acknowledge the ruler *pro tem.* and *de facto* was to invite competition for a throne, and excite the hopes of all sorts of candidates; that if the British Government would recognize him and his dynasty there was nothing that he would not do in order to evince his gratitude, and to comply with the wishes of the Indian Government in any particular and support them with his means and his life, it being understood that the slightest failure on his or his descendants' part should vitiate all engagements on ours.

The Viceroy here remarked that it was impossible to prophesy or to anticipate events, that we must deal with the present, and that His Highness could not expect him to enter into engagements as to a state of circumstances which might never occur.

At another period of the discussion he urged that friendship between nations and states could not remain hidden; and that a man might just as well try to extinguish the sun by putting his hand before his face; that whatever assistance was afforded to him by the British Government could not remain concealed, and would lose its value if it could, but must be known to all States in India and Asia.

To this His Excellency replied that mystery or concealment was the last course he should ever take; that the acts of the British Government must have shown His Highness that our friendship for him was open and warm; that his predecessor had, at a most critical moment, supplied him with money and arms; and that he himself had publicly admitted that to those acts he mainly owed his throne; that the splendour and consideration with which he had been received at Umballa would show to the world the estimation in which he was held; and that we had no intention to deviate from the course which we had adopted since he had last regained his throne; that we desired to see him firmly established as Ruler of Kabul; and that he should speedily establish tranquillity and good government throughout all his territories.

The Amír then said that the tranquillity of the country, which the Viceroy had so much at heart, would be the natural consequence of the security of his power and dynasty, and that all things, including the increase of trade (which results from the prosperity and wealth of a nation), which the British Government might desire, would follow from the establishment of a firm and permanent government.

After much conversation of this character, it was arranged that the Viceroy should send the Amír a letter the next day, in which the desire of the Government of India for a strong and independent rule would be set forth, as well as its deep interest in the affairs of Afghánistán, and its personal recognition of, and friendship for, himself; and he was informed that the Government, as circumstances would permit, would consider how, without direct interference, it could aid him in this paramount object—the formation of a strong and independent power.

This assurance seemed partly to satisfy him; and he was altogether, at this part of the conference, in a different frame of mind after the above incident than he was at first, when he seemed suspicious that our expressions meant more than appeared or than he understood.

His Excellency then directed his attention to trade and commerce, and the facilities of intercourse between India and Afghánistán, the Amír always replying that trade had been much impaired and interrupted by intestine wars, and that, with order and harmony, trade and commerce would flourish again.

As regards routes into India, he announced his determination of reviving the subsidy paid to the Khaibarís, and raising it to what it had been in the time of his father. He said that besides the route into India by the Khaibar Pass there are two other routes in the same range which turned off before the locality where the Khaibarís had the power of stopping the traffic; and there was also a road through the Kurram Valley, and another one into the Deraját; "Tatina" and "Kuruppa" through the Momunds, whose chief was connected with him by marriage, and under his entire influence, and which had always been safe; the "Peiwar," which he hoped to render practicable; the "Gwaleyri," which he could not do much in, but which was only the Povindah Pass, and always had been, and would be, traversed by those merchants with the strong right hand.

He spoke of the roads leading to Turkistán, generally recommending that *viá* Kandahár and Herát as safe and easy throughout its length. All routes through the Paropamisus were safe, but very difficult till they reached the plains of Balkh. The Khulum or Tashkurgán (Big stone) route, however, was habitually traversed, and, as being the shortest from Kabul and Pesháwar, would receive his attention.

All these would be kept open. He added that the custom dues had fallen off immensely since the time of his father, owing to these commotions and this warfare, and that he hoped they might again be raised to their ancient figure, which he put at 28 or 30 lakhs.

He was then told that the Government of India wished to present him with some artillery, and he was asked whether he would prefer a field battery or two siege guns and a howitzer. He expressed a great desire for *breach-loading* guns as striking terror into his enemies.

His Excellency told him that the Government would consider the matter.

The interview ended.

Enclosure 3 in No. 3.

MEMORANDUM ON CONVERSATIONS held with the Confidential Minister of His Highness the AMÍR SHERE ALI by Captain GREY, on Special Duty with His Excellency the VICEROY, on the 31st March 1869.

THE AMÍR is prepared to act on what he may see is the nature of the friendship the British propose to afford him—if, as hitherto, merely acknowledging the ruler of Kabul *de facto*, well and good; but if prepared to acknowledge and support him and the heir he may point out (acknowledges that any such must be distinctly brought forward now, the contrary having produced the present troubles), there is nothing he will not accede to.

He is open to any proposition for securing his northern border; while doubtful of any Russian Power for aggression for some years to come, still thinks precautions should be taken; would construct forts on his own part, or under our superintendence, and admit European garrisons if ever desired; would gladly see an Agent or engineer superintendent there* (in Balkh), Herat, or anywhere but actually in Kabul, which might lead to the supposition of his being a puppet. There would be no danger for such, did they respect the Afgháns and themselves, and Afghán enmity is far more bitter against Persians and their friends than ever it was against us at the bitterest; and, with us acting as their friends, they will co-operate with a hearty friendship and energy in the field which we can little imagine. Our troops would have no work save in the actual shock of battle; every other military duty would be performed, and requisites supplied so effectually that no thought or precaution on the part of columns or garrisons of ours would be required.

With regard to the western frontier he leaves it to our sense of our own dignity and his to oppose this infraction of the treaties of 1856–7, and rectify the border between Ghain and Lash Jowain to twenty farsangs (a farsang is three and a half miles) west of the latter, as it has been since the days that Dost Mahomed recaptured Kandahar and its appanages from Kohen Dil Khan. He would require nothing but arms and treasure, and would himself act against the Persians, thus showing his sincerity and the non-existence of relations between himself and them; he merely would ask that, under the terms of the treaty, we would, on reference to us, support him in objecting to its infraction by the Persians. The aggression is formidable from the commanding positions assumed on the communications, not from the value of the tract itself.

With regard to the eastern border, he would undertake to manage all the Berdooran tribes. He proposes to introduce a thorough reform into his administration, whereby his sons will not be independent princes as under the Dost, but governors of provinces; † and being more directly subordinate and weaker, will merely collect and remit his revenues and carry out his amelioration policy of direct collection and cash payments; the effects of this will eventually extend to the tribes; meanwhile he will make their principal men his own by allowances, and will also, by force if necessary, check every further attempt to give us trouble.

With regard to trade, he will undertake to make the principal routes safe; those of the Paropamisus are so; the Herat route always was so; and though the Khulum one is at present closed, his troops will clear Tukhtapool on his return. Through the Sulimanee Range he will secure the Khaibar, Tatara and the Gwaleyri route by “Mowajibs” (allowances). He recalls to the mind of the Government how that when Yakoob Khan’s mother’s brother, Sáadut Khan, was complained against merely by the Commissioner of Pesháwar he removed him, confined him, and he died in confinement, and the substitution of a safe man kept many thousand Mohmuuds out of the fray (Ambela). He appeals to this specimen of what he was willing to and could do when not bound to the Government in any way, as a proof of the friendship he can now display.

When the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab sent him written questions, he did not know his ground, and answered evasively; he now speaks openly and specifically; his wish is to return hearty friendship with entire confidence, and puts himself at the disposal of the Government. He himself has throughout sought our friendship; had it been extended three years ago, when the reasons which hold good now were equally strong, when his own case was better, and his cause stronger, three years’ affliction would have been spared. When the Wazir recommended him, after the refusal of 1867, to try once again, he determined he would not till he had recovered Kabul for himself, he did so, and then he wrote; now it is afforded he will show himself worthy of it. He will, with our help, arrange the country somewhat, and then commence any internal measures we may wish and receive any officers we may desire.

(Signed) H. GREY.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. S. SETON-KARR.

* On the northern border.

† This he has done.

Enclosure 4 in No. 3.

NOTES of a CONVERSATION held at UMBALLA on 1st April 1869; Present MR. SETON-KARR, Foreign Secretary; MAJOR POLLOCK, Commissioner of Peshawar; SYAD NUR MUHAMMAD SHAH, Minister of the Amír; MR. THORNTON, Secretary to Government, Punjab; and MR. GIRDLESTONE, Under Foreign Secretary.

THE Minister began the conversation with saying that he thought we wished him to commit himself. The Commissioner and the Foreign Secretary took considerable pains to re-assure him. I. What are His Highness' wishes with reference to trade between India and Afghánistán. The Minister then said—"You have given us guns, treasure, &c., &c. You would not do so without some special motive. What is your motive?" The Secretary answered—"In order that the Government on our borders may be independent and strong, just as Kashmir and Nepal are." As a proof of our good intentions, the late policy with respect to the Kashmir succession was explained to the Minister. Upon this the Minister said that he accepted the explanation, and would not credit us with ulterior motives. He hoped we should have a good understanding, and the advantage of it to us would be that were the Russians or other enemy to come, even though the Afgháns of themselves could not successfully keep them out of their country, they could harass them in every way. The fact of the good understanding will spread fast over Asia. Ten thousand will know it this year; twenty-thousand next year, and then a lakh, and so on. "We know the Russians," he continued, "to be great tyrants, and not so trustworthy as you. In old days in Afghánistán you showed a want of consideration to those who were most entitled to it." From the public reception at which he was present the other night he saw that this policy had been put aside, and that little Native princes of the Punjab, such as he had met, were fairly and honourably treated. "You do not want our country, and, were you to get it, there would be no profit to you."

Referring to the first question, the Minister said that kingcraft belongs to Kings, and trade to traders; but still the more trade prospers the greater will be the customs dues of the Kings. Any road by which we wish traders to pass to and fro into his country shall be maintained and be kept safe. The horses of Afghánistán go mostly to Bombay and Bangalore; they are passed by Committees into the Government service, and command prices from Rs. 500 to Rs. 600. The horse trade with Pesháwar has fallen off considerably owing to a less demand. If the merchants in one year sell a thousand at Government prices, a second year they would probably send fifteen hundred; and on the contrary, if no remounts were required for a year or two, merchants would have to sell their horses to private individuals for smaller sums.

At Mr. Thornton's request, under instructions from the Lieutenant-Governor, the question was put whether the Amír would object to the establishment of a public post for the benefit of traders and others. The Minister answered that there would be no objection whatever.

It is the wish of the British Government that on his return to Kabul the Amír, as soon as circumstances will permit, should indicate the passes which might be most adapted for trade, and should consider how he could make them safe and practicable, and the British Government, on receiving intimation to the above effect, will give general publicity to

This remark of the Minister was by the way. "the same for the trading public. "In the way of friendliness, and not in the way of enmity, I dread one thing." "You are," he said, "so very particular and exacting. I make a promise, and then, supposing I do not perform it to the day and hour, you are down upon me at once, and keep on writing letters to spur me on. I may have been breaking my heart probably to keep to my word, but you will allow nothing for change of circumstances."

The Minister referred to his answer already given to the Punjab Government, that when the Amír returned he would do all in his power to conciliate the tribes and keep the people in order, and said he considered this the best answer which could be given. By forbearance with the tribes confidence will be instilled amongst them, "but it is of no use for you to take a stick on one side and we on the other." The Amír is ready to encourage his subjects to resort to the fair at Pesháwar.

II. What can the Amír do, so far as his influence extends, to keep the wild tribes of the frontier in order? The Minister was told that if presently the Amír liked to send any of his great Ministers in a private capacity to England, every facility should be shown, so that they might see everything of interest. It was quite possible, he was told, that the British Government would appoint an officer in attendance, if men of rank went, and might contribute something towards the cost of the visit. There would be no fear that religious influence would be brought to bear on any persons going. Also the British Government would

forward the education of any young Afgháns whom the Amír might wish to send for the purpose of learning our military system, our manufactures, the science of telegraphy, railways, &c. The Minister said he would speak to the Amír. This, he said, might perfect our "Amezish" or intercourse, and those who had visited England would come back, comprehending the benefits of our civilization; and so there would be a greater binding of the two nations. But he would take the Amír's views clearly on this, as the above were his own sentiments only.

The Minister remarked that he did not wish to commit himself, and asked rather anxiously whether European Agents were intended, observing, at the same time, that it was no use to send any but Muhammadans; Hindus were of no good at all. He begged that his reply might not be put on paper. He said that he first distinctly wished to ascertain the Amír's sentiments. He mentioned that there was now a man named "Unwár" at Kandahar, who supplied information to the officer (Sir H. Green was the name he gave) on the Scinde frontier. But he added he was looking far forward, and the day might come when the "Russ" would arrive and the Amír would be glad not only of British Officers as Agents, but of arms and troops to back them.

The Minister, on being told that the British Government would allow Afgháns to come into India, to Rurki, Lahore, Calcutta, &c., to learn our arts and trades, answered that he would consult the Amír.

The Secretary remarked that in this morning's conversation he had reserved nothing, and had nothing to reserve, to which the Minister answered that he was in precisely the same condition, and that in fact, since the interchange of civilities, he felt as a man might feel who had changed his religion.

(Signed) C. GIRDLESTONE,
Under Foreign Secretary.

[Note.—In the Government of India Enclosure of 10th May 1877, sending home an Extract of above, Captain Grey was mentioned as having been present at this conversation, but this was apparently a clerical error.]

Enclosure 5 in No. 3.

MEMORANDUM of a CONVERSATION held at UMBALLA on April 3rd 1869.

Present :

W. S. Seton-Karr, Esquire, Foreign Secretary.
Syad Núr Muhammad Shah, Minister of the Amír.
T. H. Thornton, Esquire, Secretary to Government, Punjab.
Major Pollock, Commissioner of Pesháwar.
Charles Girdlestone, Esquire, Under Foreign Secretary.

REFERRING to the points which were reserved in the conversation of April 1st, 1869, the Minister said that there was no occasion to include Ghazni as a place of residence for a British Agent, as Ghazni was included in Kabul. The Amír was ready to have a writer to accompany him wherever he moved, and to allow of men in Turkistán and Balkh, when the country was more settled. The Minister himself considered Unwar, the present news-writer at Kandahár, to be "a thorough rascal." Any Agents so sent were to be merely for the sake of sending intelligence. The great danger of these Agents was, unless they were treated as they wished, they vilified the Government in their reports. As an instance, he quoted that when the Amír was defeated at Kandahár, Azím Khan sent to Unwar khillats, money, &c., and in return Unwar wrote false accounts of Shere Ali's proceedings, and flaming reports of Azím Khan's power and success. "If you do not believe me," he urged, "send for the diaries of that period from Jacobabad." As long as the Amír gave the news-writer *dilása* (smoothed him down) it was all very well. With these reservations the British Government has full power to send news-writers. If any news-writer was personally offensive to the Amír, the Secretary explained, of course the Government would not continue him in his post or insist on his retention.

The Minister, on being asked whether the Amír wished to send Afgháns to learn trades and so forth at Rurki and other places in our territory, answered curtly, "it cannot be done, you might write a whole book of objections about it, but if ever we change our minds on this subject we will let you know. The Amír has personally no objection, but fears the interpretation his people might put on the arrangements. The fruits of the Amír's visit to the Viceroy cannot be properly understood yet by

“ Afgháns. They would understand the aid given to their Sovereign to be conditional “ on Afghán youths being Anglicised.” The same reasons apply to sending Afgháns to Europe. After a few years, as suspicion gets dissipated, the Amír, if he thinks fit, will intimate his desire for men being sent. “ Just think,” he said, “ a short time ago “ such an interview as has taken place would never have entered into any one’s “ imagination. It has happened, what more can be said? And who could have “ expected, a year since, that I should have been sitting here alone, talking in a friendly “ manner to four English Officers.”

(Signed) CHARLES GIRDLESTONE,
Under Foreign Secretary.

At the close of the interview the Foreign Secretary took the Minister apart and clearly explained to him His Excellency’s instructions, that under no circumstances was the Amír to expect that British troops would cross the border to put down civil war or domestic contention.

This intimation was repeated to the Minister by the Foreign Secretary at a subsequent interview, and the Minister’s reply on both occasions was clear and satisfactory as to the Amír’s full understanding on this point.

(Signed) W. S. SETON-KARR,
Foreign Secretary.

Enclosure 6 in No. 3.

NOTES of the SECOND MEETING between His Excellency the VICEROY and GOVERNOR-GENERAL and the AMÍR of KABUL, held at 4 o’clock p.m. on the 3rd of April 1869, after which the AMÍR took his final leave of His Excellency.

Present :

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General.
The Amír Shere Ali Khan.
The Honourable Sir D. Macleod, Lieutenant-Governor.
Syad Núr Muhammad Shah.
W. S. Seton-Karr, Esquire, Foreign Secretary.
Major F. R. Pollock, Commissioner, Pesháwar.
Captain Grey, Interpreter.

THE Governor-General commenced by expressing his satisfaction at finding that his letter had gratified the Amír: to this he entirely assented, and expressed much gratitude.

The Governor-General then said that he trusted that the Amír would, when he had established himself in his Government, be able to assist in promoting the peace of the frontier, which the Amír promised he would do, sooner or later, according to his ability. As regarded the publication of my letter, he said he would, on reaching Kabul, or about a month hence, make it generally known, and explained that it would be impossible and undesirable to keep it secret from all in Afghánistán, high or low. He thought that we had better wait till then, which the Governor-General agreed to do, observing that it was most desirable that at some very early period the exact truth should be known to all States. He then said that the Afgháns, though suspicious at first of relations with the British, must now be pleased, but that they were a stupid race; but, any way, he would “ drive if he could not lead them.” He observed that “ you could not take in “ wisdom (*akl*) as you could sustenance—by eating a loaf of bread;” also he said that his neighbours, Persians and Russians, who had not hitherto interfered with him, might become the aggressors on learning that he had attached himself to us,—this was the first time he had mentioned either Russian or Persian to the Governor-General,—when the Governor-General expressed his hope that he would strive to spread civilisation among a people so distinguished for courage, high spirit, and sagacity; and quoted ourselves as an example of how a nation, by cultivating the arts of both war and peace, might rise from barbarism to the utmost heights of civilisation. The Amír replied that it rested with Providence; that God had indeed fitted *us* thus to improve, but had made the Afgháns, notwithstanding their many good qualities, crassly stupid; but that he was one himself, and knew how to manage them. The Viceroy explained to the Amír that, powerful as the British Government was in India, it had to regard the wishes of the Queen and Her Ministers at home, as well as the will of the nation, as expressed in

Parliament. After some explanation he seemed to take this in. It was therefore most desirable that His Highness should evince an interest in maintaining peace and encouraging trade, both of which would be gratifying to the British people. His Excellency also explained that, at this moment, England was on most friendly terms with all European Powers, and that there was no probability of any misunderstanding which could result in war. He then very shrewdly remarked that, with such terrible engines of war as were now invented, nations would not engage hastily in hostilities.

The Governor-General then pointed out Major Pollock as the channel for communication, which he trusted would be frequent; and the Amír said he regarded him as a near neighbour (*hamsáya*).

His Excellency introduced the subject of the succession, and said it would afford the British Government much satisfaction to be made aware of the heir whom the Amír might nominate, so as to avoid contentions for the future; to which the Amír pointedly replied that he would inform him on that head by letter on reaching Kabul.

The Governor-General then dismissed the Amír with best wishes for his return journey and success.

(Signed) W. S. SETON-KARR.

The 4th April 1869.

Enclosure 7 in No. 3.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATIONS between the FOREIGN SECRETARY and KABUL ENVOY on the 19th and 20th July 1873.

THE ENVOY was requested to state specifically the various points on which he wanted information or an explanation. His remarks, with the Secretary's replies, are given below:—

1. The Envoy drew attention to the passage marginally quoted, in Earl Granville's Despatch of the 17th October 1872, and observed that, the object of the correspondence between Russia and England being to secure "*peace and tranquillity*," he would wish it to be distinctly stated that the expression referred merely to external relations and not to the internal affairs of Afghánistán. That, for instance, the absence of security of life and property in Afghánistán itself would not be held to constitute a condition of affairs that would invalidate the arrangement entered into between Russia and England. The Envoy wished it to be clearly understood that the condition of affairs alluded to by the expression in question should be held to be *first*, that the countries on both sides of the recognized frontier should abstain from interference with each other either in the way of actual aggression or by proceedings liable to cause each other annoyance; *secondly*, that the Afgháns should be allowed to follow their own laws and customs in their own territories; *thirdly*, that the internal administration of the States on both sides of the frontier should be free from interference.

Answer.—The Secretary replied that in his opinion the expression alluded to embraced all these things and had no reference to the internal condition of the countries on both sides of the border. In all communications however that may take place with Russian officials or subjects, the Secretary added that it would be advisable for the Amír so to frame his communications and proceedings as to promote mutual trust and confidence.

2. Alluding to a further passage* in the same despatch from Earl Granville, the Envoy observed that His Lordship used the word *claims*, which is not applicable to an assertion of rights over territory of which the Amír has actual possession, and further went on to say that Bokhára admits these claims. In the event of Bokhára or any other country questioning the right of the Amír at any future time, the Envoy wished it to be understood that the settlement of the boundary is final, and that any future objection which might be made to it should not afford an opening for a reconsideration of the question.

Answer.—The territories referred to were now recognized by England and Russia as being in the actual possession of the Amír of Afghánistán. The admission of Bokhára as to the claim was quoted as evidence in the Amír's favor, and as strengthening his case. Now that the boundary has been actually accepted by Russia, no objections on the part of Bokhára or any other country can be entertained.

3. The Envoy observed that the recent correspondence between the English and Russian Governments regarding the northern boundaries of Afghánistán contained no assurances on the part of Russia against aggression on Afghánistán.

Answer.—The recent correspondence referred to related only to the particular question as to what territories actually belonged to Afghánistán. The Russian assurances as to non-aggression have already been fully quoted in the letters from Lord Mayo to the Amír, and are, moreover, contained in the letters which are printed at length in the collection of papers laid before Parliament, a complete copy of which will be furnished to the Envoy if he wished it.

4. The Envoy continued that whatever assurances the Russians might give the Amír would rely only on definite promises of assistance given by the British Government. He proceeded to explain the dangers which were apprehended by Afghánistán in consequence of the rapid advances made by the Russians in Central Asia. In a year or two, he said, it was certain they would take possession of Merv, whereupon the Turkomán tribes would take refuge in the district of Badghies* and the neighbourhood of Herat. When in Afghán territory the Turkománs, who know no other avocation but that of plunder, would certainly not forsake their predatory habits and would thus afford the Russians an excuse for

* The North-West district of Afghánistán watered by the River Moorghab and its tributaries.

calling on the Amír to restrain them. No proper control can be exercised by the Amír on these wandering tribes, and a demand would then be made by Russia to allow a force to be cantoned in Badghies for the purpose of controlling them. Again, the Russians will certainly advance beyond Bokhára and establish cantonments in Kerki, Charjooee, and other places near the Afghán frontier; and their next step will be to call upon the Kabul Government to enter into engagements for facilitating trade, and for the establishment of a Russian mission and agents as in other countries. It would be impossible for the Amír to accede to these requests, compliance with which would certainly lead to complications and troubles. In view then of these apprehended dangers, the Envoy said it was the expectation of the people of Afghánistán that the British Government will attentively consider their situation and suggest what reply should be made to the overtures of Russia, and at the same time that the British Government will state definitely what assistance would be given to Afghánistán in such an emergency.

Answer.—With regard to the fear of Russian interference with Afghánistán, the explicit assurances already given should quiet the Amír's apprehensions. The other matters referred to are all events in the unknown future and may never occur. In regard to them, therefore, no general directions could be laid down. If any of them were to occur, the advice to be given and the action to be taken would very much depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The best preventive which the Secretary could suggest against the apprehended dangers was that there should be at the Court of the Amír a British Officer of high standing, and in the full confidence of the Government of India, who could advise His Highness as to the circumstances of each case, and give advice with regard to the action which, in cases of emergency, it might be necessary to take till the Government of India could be communicated with. With regard to the location of Russian Agents in Afghánistán, the Envoy would learn from the printed papers that Prince Gortschakoff had expressed an opinion that, while he saw no objection to English Officers going to Kabul, he agreed with Lord Mayo that Russian Agents should not do so.

5. The Envoy said that the Russians have annexed territories close up to the frontiers of Afghánistán, and the Amír, believing the attitude they have assumed to be threatening to the peace of his territories, expects that the British Government will render him large present assistance in money and arms so as to enable him to strengthen his frontier. This request of His Highness is grounded, moreover, on the promises made by Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo.

Answer.—The Secretary replied that, in the absence of instructions from His Excellency the Viceroy, he was unable to reply to the specific request preferred by the Envoy. Lord Mayo, in his letter to the Amír, dated 31st March 1869, had said:—

“It is my wish, therefore, that Your Highness should communicate frequently and freely with the Government of India and its Officers on all subjects of public interest, and I can assure Your Highness that any representation which you may make will always be treated with consideration and respect.”

Any requests preferred by the Envoy would, therefore, certainly be treated with consideration and respect by His Excellency the Viceroy, but the Secretary was not in a position to state what view would be taken of this particular request.

6. The Envoy next observed that, in Lord Granville's letter of the 17th October 1872, His Lordship had said, with reference to the territories within the boundary now accepted, that the Amír "would have a right to defend these territories if invaded." This recognition of the Amír's right to defend his territories appeared, said the Envoy, to be qualified by what the Viceroy said in the course of the conversation of the 12th July with regard to the necessity for a reference to the Government of India in case of invasion. The Envoy, therefore, asked for an explicit explanation as to whether, in the event of a sudden invasion, the Amír would be authorized to repel it at once.

Answer.—Hostilities seldom, if ever, break out without some misunderstanding, which, before resort is had to arms, is generally the subject of explanation. If such misunderstanding were to arise, it would certainly be the duty of the Amír to seek the advice of the British Government; but if, during the course of negotiations, or at any other time, an actual invasion of His Highness' territories were to take place, the Amír would assuredly be at liberty to adopt such lawful measures as might be necessary for repelling it at once.

7. The Envoy asked that a written assurance might be given to him to the effect that if Russia or any State of Turkestan or elsewhere under Russian influence should commit an aggression on the Amír's territories, or should otherwise annoy the Amír, the British Government would consider such aggressor an enemy, and that they would promise to afford to the Amír promptly such assistance in money and arms as might be required until the danger should be past or invasion repelled. Also, that if the Amír should be unable to cope single-handed with the invader, that the British Government should promptly despatch a force to his assistance by whatever route the Amír might require the same, the said force to be employed against the invader and to return to British territory when the invasion was repelled. No return for the assistance above-mentioned to be required by the British Government from Afghánistán. Such assistance to be rendered solely out of friendship to Afghánistán, and with the view of protecting the integrity of the frontier, so that the existing friendship of both countries should be maintained.

Answer.—The Secretary replied that he felt sure the British Government would never agree to assert in general terms that any one interfering with Afghánistán would be declared an enemy. Government must hold itself quite free to decide what the circumstances of each case might require. In regard to the question of assistance to Afghánistán he was unable to add anything to the expressions used by His Excellency the Viceroy, by whom alone further explanation on the subject could be afforded to the Envoy. Doubtless, added the Secretary, much would depend upon two considerations, *viz.*, (1st) that the Amír should fully and unreservedly have accepted and acted upon the advice of the British Government in his foreign relations; and (2ndly) the circumstances and extent of the invasion or interference. If assistance were given by the British Government it would doubtless be such as, in their opinion, would be sufficient to meet the circumstances of the case.

8. The Envoy represented that in the conversation of the 12th July with His Excellency the Viceroy, invasion or aggression on the part of the Turkománs, Khiva, Bokhára, and other countries under Russian influence, had been alluded to, but Russia had not been specifically mentioned.

Answer.—There seems no objection to specify the case of an invasion by Russia in the paper to be eventually given to the Envoy.

9. The Envoy read out a letter just received from Kabul, stating that the son of Koshad Khan of Merv had presented himself before the Amír on the part of all the Turkománs and represented that the Russians had sent a message to the Tekkeh tribe to say that the Turkománs were an independent people and had no recognized head, and all that they (the Russians) required of them was an unmolested passage for their troops, in return for which they would undertake to leave the tribes alone. The Turkománs had replied that they considered the Amír of Afghánistán as their head, and through the son of Koshad Khan they now professed their allegiance to the Amír, and asked his advice as to whether they should attack the Russians or allow them a free passage. The Turkomán Envoy required an early answer, and the Amír was therefore desirous of ascertaining the views of the British Government before replying to him.

Answer.—The Secretary replied that the matter would be submitted for the consideration of His Excellency the Viceroy. The country of the Turkománs lies beyond the recognized limits of Afghánistán. The Russians have a just and legitimate quarrel with the Khan of Khiva, to punish whom their troops were marching through the Tekkeh country. If the Amír thinks it necessary to give them advice it should be to

the effect that the Turkománs should allow an unmolested passage to the Russians, and in no way whatever interfere with their operations. The Russian expedition to Khiva, however, was probably by this time over, and the circumstances were probably passed and gone under which the letter referred to had been written. It would be advisable for the Amír to abstain as far as possible from interference in the affairs of the Turkománs beyond his frontier and to disclaim the proffered allegiance. While maintaining with them relations of peace, he should on no account assist the Turkománs, or in any way countenance them in opposing the Russians.

The Envoy then said (in answer to the Secretary's question) that he had no other explanations to ask or representations to make on the question of the boundary and the general relations between the British Government and Afghánistán. In regard to Seistan he wished for further time to consider the matter. Accordingly Tuesday, the 22nd, was fixed as the date for discussing Seistan matters.

21-7-73.

(Signed) P. D. H.

21-7-73.

(Signed) C. U. A.

Enclosure 8 in No. 3.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATIONS between the KABUL ENVOY and FOREIGN SECRETARY on the 31st July and 1st August 1873.

At the interview of the 30th of July, His Excellency the Viceroy requested the Envoy to discuss with Mr. Aitchison the following subjects:—

- (1.) The location in certain towns of Afghanistan of British officers as representatives of their Government.
- (2.) The expectations of the Amír with regard to the present assistance to be rendered to Afghanistan for the purpose of strengthening that country against foreign aggression.
- (3.) The measures that should be taken for strengthening the Seistan frontier, and the expectations of the Amír in connection therewith.

As regards the first, the Envoy observed that without enquiring what are the motives of the British Government in desiring to locate their representatives in Afghanistan, he would, if required, state plainly what were his views on the subject. As the question had not previously been alluded to before his departure from Kabul, he had received no instructions on the subject, and could therefore only speak in his private capacity.

The Secretary observed here, that before going any further, it would be as well that the Envoy should clearly understand what is the object of the British Government in wishing to locate their representatives in Afghanistan. In the first place, there is absolutely no intention whatever of exercising any interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, though, of course, if consulted, the British representative would be always ready to offer his advice to the Amír. The first object in view was to obtain accurate information on all matters affecting the external relations of Afghanistan. In the recent correspondence regarding Seistan, for example, very contradictory accounts regarding occurrences in that province were received from Persia and Afghanistan. It is very important, looking to the responsibilities which England has now undertaken, that accurate information should be obtained by the British Government, and in many cases a British officer on the spot could settle differences which might otherwise give rise to serious complications and difficulties. Again, neither the British nor Russian Governments are in possession of very accurate information regarding the recently defined northern boundaries of Afghanistan. This was exemplified only the other day when a question arose regarding the Mir of Shignan. It is therefore very desirable that a British officer should visit those boundaries, so that Government may be in a position to reply authoritatively to any reference that may arise on the subject. It must also, added the Secretary, be obvious that if a British officer of high rank, and well acquainted with the views and policy of the British Government, was deputed to Kabul, the Amír would be able, in the event of any emergency arising, and when a reference to India was impossible, to consult the officer, and feel assured that he was not acting in opposition to the wishes of the British Government.

The Envoy replied that he understood the object of the British Government, and, personally, was well aware of the advantages that would accrue to Afghanistan from the presence of their representatives. Speaking, however, as a friend, and in the interests both of his own and the British Government, he could not recommend that a specific request should be preferred to the Amír for British officers to be stationed at certain

given places. His reasons were the following:—*First*, the Afghans are deplorably ignorant, and entertain an idea that the deputation of British Agents is always a precursor to annexation. *Secondly*, many proceedings of the Amír are such as would be disapproved by the British Government. Those who encourage the Amír in these would be only too ready to suggest to him that a British Agent would interfere to put a stop to such proceedings. *Thirdly*, there is a strong party at Kabul composed of the members of Dost Mahomed Khan's family, and of others in the confidence of the Amír, who are strongly opposed to His Highness entering into intimate relations with the British Government, which would have the effect of strengthening the Amír's hands in the administration of his country. The opportunity of these men is of course during a weak administration and in unsettled times.

Under the circumstances above mentioned, therefore, the Envoy was of opinion that to prefer a specific request to the Amír would give rise to mistrust and misapprehension. He would, therefore, recommend that in a separate letter, of which he would be the bearer, it should be suggested to the Amír that in view of the arrangements recently completed it would be highly desirable that a British Officer should inspect the western and northern boundaries of Afghanistan. That this Officer would proceed from Kandahar to the eastern extremity of the Northern Frontier, and, returning *viâ* Kabul, would communicate with the Amír regarding frontier matters. This Officer might, when at Kabul, have an opportunity of ascertaining the sentiments of the Amír with regard to the location of representatives, and might perhaps find that all difficulty had been removed. If necessary, however, the British Government might, on the return of such an Officer to India, again depute the same or another Officer to confer with the Amír regarding the results of the examination of the frontier. The visits of these Officers would familiarise the Amír and the people of Afghanistan with the idea of receiving a permanent British representative, and eventually the desired object might thus be attained.

The Secretary replied that the plan suggested by the Envoy appeared highly judicious, and he continued that the approaching deputation of a Mission to Yarkand afforded a favourable opportunity for carrying out the suggestion. It had previously been in contemplation by Government to direct Mr. Forsyth to return to India *viâ* Badakshan and Kabul, provided, of course, that the Amír had no objection to the measure.

The Envoy observed that as Mr. Forsyth's arrival in Afghanistan would probably not be for 18 months or two years, it would be advisable for the British Government in their own interests to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the recent boundary negotiations to suggest that an Officer should proceed at once *viâ* Kandahar to visit the eastern and northern frontier, returning by Kabul.

The Secretary then enquired whether, in the event of Mr. Forsyth's Mission returning *viâ* Badakshan, the Amír would be able to make the necessary arrangements for supplies, &c., in the north-east extremity of his territories. To this the Envoy replied that in the absence of any precise information regarding that portion of Afghanistan he could give no specific assurance, but there would be plenty of time before the return of the Mission to make all necessary enquiries.

The Secretary then suggested that the Amír might be asked to allow a British Officer to proceed to that portion of the frontier *viâ* Kabul, in anticipation of the arrival of the Mission, in order to make the necessary arrangements for them.

On the whole the Envoy thought it better that his previous suggestion of an Officer going round by Kandahar should be carried out. If, on arrival at Kabul, this Officer found that the Amír entertained no objection to the location of an Envoy there or elsewhere, there would of course be equally no objection to the Mission returning *viâ* Badakshan. On the other hand, if there were difficulties about the appointment of an Envoy, it would still be open to Government to allude to the return of the Yarkand Mission *viâ* Badakshan. He would suggest that in that case the Amír should be addressed on this subject in such a manner as neither to imply the possibility of refusal of permission, nor, on the other hand, as if the Mission would take that route without permission. At the same time the advantages of defining the Yarkand frontier in prolongation of that of Afghanistan should be pointed out to the Amír.

The Envoy professed himself anxious and willing, both in the interest of his own country and of the British Government, to secure compliance with the wishes of the latter in this respect. He would, after ascertaining the sentiments of the Amír, communicate, if required, with or without the cognizance of the Vakil at Kabul.

The next point discussed was that of the assistance to be given to the Amír, and first, with respect to the arms asked for by His Highness, the Envoy repeated the request

contained in the Kabul diaries, that the British Government should supply the Amír with 20,000 stand of arms, and he laid particular stress on 5,000 Sniders being included in the number. As regards pecuniary assistance, the Envoy was unable to name any specific sum, and he could only say that the Amír entertained hopes of being very largely assisted in this respect.

Next, with respect to the measures necessary for the defence of the Seistan frontier, the Envoy said that he was not in a position to do more than give a very rough estimate of the expenditure required. He had already mentioned the necessity for planting a colony at Tarakoo, and garrisoning that place, as well as Nad Ali, Killa Fath. For the irrigation of the lands destined to support that colony and the garrisons it would be necessary to excavate three canals leading from the Helmund to Tarakoo, Killa Fath, and towards Chuckunsoor. These would cost say ten lakhs. Then again the Tarakoo colonists would have to be paid their expenses to the colony, and for some time be supported by the Amír. They would also require advances to build houses, and to purchase agricultural implements and seed-grain. Altogether, perhaps, the measures necessary for the proper defence of the Seistan frontier would cost probably some 30 or 40 lakhs.

The Secretary explained to the Envoy that, of course, the British Government could not undertake to find the amount necessary for carrying out these measures. With reference also to the proposed excavation of canals he reminded the Envoy that by the arbitration no works are to be carried out on either side calculated to interfere with the requisite supply of water for irrigation on both banks of the Helmund.

The Envoy, however, remarked, with reference to this point, that the water for 20 such canals could be spared from the Helmund without decreasing the supply derived by Persia.

The Secretary then proceeded to say that Government were unable to share the apprehensions of aggression entertained by the Amír, and would not encourage him to launch out into any large expenditure for the purpose of guarding against this contingency. At the same time they were desirous to see the Amír strong, and were inclined to give him any reasonable assistance with this object. He invited the Envoy to state specifically his views in regard to the amount of assistance expected by the Amír. After considerable discussion, the Secretary informed the Envoy that Government was prepared to give the Amír, in addition to the arms which he had asked for, a present of ten lakhs in cash; this amount to include the five lakhs promised in Poona for indemnifying the sufferers from the Seistan raids. Five thousand stand of Enfield rifles would be given at once, and the remaining arms, including 5,000 Sniders, would be ordered from England.

The Envoy expressed an opinion that the Amír would not be satisfied with a present of 10 lakhs, which was so much below his expectations. Being pressed to state what amount would fulfil those expectations, he named 20 lakhs, adding at the same time that he had no authority for naming this figure, which was his own idea of the amount required.

The Secretary could hold out no hope of this amount being granted, but added that he would submit the matter for the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy.

On the 1st August the Secretary informed the Envoy that he had taken the orders of the Viceroy on the question of the pecuniary assistance to Afghanistan, and that His Excellency had expressed inability to offer a larger sum than 15 lakhs in all, including the value of the arms to be presented to the Amír. The question had been considered by His Excellency in a spirit of the utmost friendliness towards Afghanistan, and, looking both to the necessities of that country and the condition of the Indian finances, it was not considered necessary to fix a higher amount.

The Envoy was then informed in reply to his inquiries that 5 lakhs of the 10 was to be considered as a contribution towards the amount to be paid to the Seistan sufferers, and another 5 lakhs was to be considered as a contribution towards the general expenses of the Amír, which the Amír might, if he thought fit, expend in arrangements for the settlement of Seistan, or otherwise as he thought best. It was probable that the value of the arms would be about 4 lakhs, and any balance, therefore, that might remain from the other 5 lakhs would be sent to Afghanistan with the arms. If the Envoy considered it advisable orders would be at once given to have 10 lakhs ready at Peshawar to be forwarded to Kabul.

At the conclusion of the second interview the Secretary brought to the notice of Syad Nur Muhammad the conduct of Nowroz Khan, of Lalpura, in the matter of Arjan Khan, who in the year 1852 had attacked the Hushtnuggur Tahsil and murdered the Tahsildar and other officials. Since that event Arjan Khan had been an outlaw, and was only

heard of at intervals as a wanderer between Jellalabad and Swat, until the beginning of last year, 1872, when he made an attempt to settle himself at a place called Spinkwari, in the Ranizai country. The men of Totai and other Ranizai villages turned out and threw up for him the walls of two towers and several houses. The settlement of such a character on the British border being highly objectionable and dangerous to the peace of the border, the Ranizai Jirga were called to account by the British authorities, and shortly after the settlement was, in consequence, attacked and destroyed by the Uthman Khels of Prangar. It had recently been reported to Government that Nowroz Khan had called on the Uthman Khels to pay blood-money for the men killed in the attack on Spinkwari and to rebuild the fort and hamlet. The Secretary, therefore, requested that the matter might be enquired into on the Envoy's return.

The Envoy replied that he knew something of the facts of the case, and would make such arrangements on his return to Afghanistan as would in all probability insure a prompt and satisfactory settlement in future of all frontier matters between the British authorities and Nowroz Khan.

The Envoy made a special request that the present conversations should be considered as absolutely confidential.

P. D. H.
C. U. A.

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