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ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS  
CONCERNING AFGHANISTAN  
1837-1907

BY  
WILLIAM HABBERTON

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## PREFACE

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The question of Anglo-Russian relations concerning Afghanistan is a complicated one, involving not only England, Russia, and Afghanistan, but quite directly Persia, less directly Turkey, and indirectly France and all the European Powers whose interests in the nineteenth century were directed to the affairs of the Levant and beyond. Its intricacy is, of course, not unique. Indeed no fact is more constant, as every student of the history of European activities in Asia knows, than that of the subtle connections between European politics and the expansion of European interests and sovereignty in the Orient. My problem, therefore, of extracting from the elaborate pattern of diplomacy, even that part of it in which Great Britain and Russia definitely predominate, the single thread of which this essay treats, has been a difficult one, and has caused me to apprehend with new clarity the classic statement of Sir Frederick Pollock, "Such is the unity of all history that any one who endeavours to tell a piece of it must feel that his first sentence tears a seamless web." It is with full recognition of the narrow, segmentary character of this study that I present it, hoping, nevertheless, that it may cast some light on the obscurities of that larger segment, for the designation of which historians have agreed upon the rubric, "Central Asian Question."

I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to a number of persons who have materially aided me in the present study. My friends Mr. A. O. Sarkissian and Mr. G. L. La Fuze have been very helpful in giving bibliographical suggestions; Professor F. S. Rodkey has kindly made available unpublished materials collected by him in the British Foreign Office; my wife has read and typed the manuscript, and has in many ways assisted in its preparation. To Professor A. H. Lybyer I am particularly indebted and grateful, not only because of his counsel and criticism in connection with this essay, but because of the constant inspiration that association with him has afforded throughout the period of my graduate study.



## CONTENTS

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I. THE GENESIS OF THE AFGHAN QUESTION . . . . .	9
II. THE "INTERMEDIARY ZONE" AND THE AGREEMENT OF 1873. . . . .	23
III. THE CRISIS OF 1878 AND THE GENESIS OF THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR . . . . .	37
IV. THE PENJDEH INCIDENT AND THE DELIMITATION OF THE NORTHWESTERN AFGHAN FRONTIER, 1884-1888 . . . . .	49
V. THE PAMIRS QUESTION AND THE AGREEMENT OF 1895 . . . . .	58
VI. THE AFGHAN QUESTION AND THE ENTENTE OF 1907 . . . . .	68
VII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	82
APPENDICES . . . . .	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	94



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## CHAPTER I

### THE GENESIS OF THE AFGHAN QUESTION

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"He alone can be Emperor of Hindostan who is first lord of Kabul."  
—Old Indian proverb.

The Afghan question as a distinct factor in Anglo-Russian diplomacy originated during the Whig Ministry of Lord Melbourne, who became Prime Minister in the spring of 1835. Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary, and Sir John Cam Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton) presided over the Board of Commissioners for Indian Affairs. Palmerston was an ardent Russophobe, and his suspicions concerning the purposes of the Russian Government were shown particularly in his solicitude for the safety of India. For Governor-General the undistinguished Lord Auckland was nominated (at the instance, it was thought, of Lord Palmerston),<sup>1</sup> notwithstanding the fact that Lord Heytesbury, a nobleman of approved diplomatic skill, had been chosen shortly before by the Peel Ministry and had taken the oath of office. Palmerston's opposition to Heytesbury seems to have grown out of the fact that he had been Ambassador to Russia, and was known to be an admirer of Tsar Nicholas.<sup>2</sup> As Minister to Persia Palmerston selected Dr. John McNeill, a well-known Russophobe, to succeed Mr. Ellis. McNeill had been attached as a medical officer to the British Mission at Teheran, but was later assigned diplomatic duties. It was apparently a tract of his, *Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East*, published in 1836, that attracted the favorable attention of the Foreign Secretary and won for him his appointment in that year to the court of the Shah.

The anxiety entertained by the London Government concerning the state of affairs in Central Asia—the equivocal allegiance of Persia (bound to England by the alliance of 1814),<sup>3</sup> the divided and unsettled condition of Afghanistan, the growth of Russian influence<sup>4</sup>—as well as its determination to overcome these conditions, is brought out in a letter to

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<sup>1</sup>See Bulwer, *Life of Palmerston*, II, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, II, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup>By the Treaty of Teheran, Persia engaged to prevent the passage through her territory of any European army marching toward India, and to use her influence to induce the rulers of Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand to oppose in like manner the march of an invading army toward India through these territories. Henceforth "the limits of the two States of Russia and Persia were to be determined according to the admission of Great Britain, Persia, and Russia." In the event of war, Great Britain and Persia were mutually to aid each other. In the event of war between England and Afghanistan, the Shah would place a Persian army at the disposal of the English. In a Perso-Afghan war, on the other hand, England agreed not to interfere, and to use her good offices only at the request of both belligerent states. (Text of treaty in *British and Foreign State Papers*, I (1812-1814), pp. 261-264.) See Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, pp. 35 ff.

<sup>4</sup>On returning to Persia McNeill wrote: "Nothing has struck me more forcibly since my return to Persia than the evidence I everywhere find of the increase of Russian influence over the Government since I was formerly here, and the almost unaccountable decline of our own." (*Memoir of Sir John McNeill*, p. 193.)

Lord Auckland dated June 25, 1836: On the basis of information received from Mr. Ellis<sup>5</sup> it was known that overtures had been made by Dost Mohammed of Kabul to the Shah of Persia for the conquest and partition of the territories of Prince Kamran of Herat; that a similar overture had been received by the Shah from the chiefs of Kandahar; and also that there was a rumor that the Khan of Khiva had entered into an agreement with the Russian Government.<sup>6</sup> Such facts were "clearly indicative" of a disposition on the part of the rival chiefs of Afghanistan to engage the Shah in their views of personal aggrandisement; and in view of the well-known ambition of the Shah with respect to Herat, there was reason "to apprehend that he may be disposed to countenance any scheme which may facilitate the accomplishment of a favorite object of his ambition, encouraged as he will doubtless be by the Russians to extend his influence, and through him their own, in the countries bordering upon our Indian possessions."<sup>7</sup>

To prevent any such contingency, Lord Auckland was charged with the responsibility of counteracting the progress of Russian influence "in a quarter which, from its proximity to our Indian possessions, could not fail, if it were once established, to act injuriously on the system of our Indian alliances," and possibly disturb the tranquillity of British territory. The manner of dealing with this important question, "whether by despatching a confidential agent to Dost Muhammad of Kabul merely to watch the course of events, or to enter into relations with this chief, either of a political or merely, in the first instance, of a commercial character," was to be left to Lord Auckland's discretion, as well as any other measures that might appear desirable to counteract Russian influence "in that quarter." If Ellis' statements should later be confirmed by Lord Auckland's own agents or those of McNeill on his arrival in Persia, some "interference might doubtless be requisite, either to prevent the extension of Persian dominion in that quarter, or to raise a timely barrier against the impending encroachments of Russian influence."<sup>8</sup>

Lord Auckland's instructions suggested that he might send an agent to Kabul to watch the course of events. In September (1836) he issued orders to Captain Alexander Burnes to pay a visit to Kabul, nominally on a commercial mission.<sup>9</sup> Proceeding by way of Sind and Peshawar, the journey required almost a year, and it was September 20, 1837, when he arrived at his destination. He was cordially received by Dost Mohammed,

<sup>5</sup>Ellis to Palmerston, February 25, 1836, and same to same, April 1, 1836. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup>Letter quoted in Colvin, *John Russell Colvin*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>9</sup>Shortly after arriving at Kabul Burnes wrote to a friend: "I came to look after commerce, to superintend surveys and examine passes of mountains, and likewise certainly to see into affairs and judge of what was to be done hereafter, but the hereafter has already arrived." (Quoted in Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, I, p. 176.)

who in a series of conferences with him expressed the high esteem in which he held the English and sought their active friendship.<sup>10</sup> Burnes had not been long in Kabul when a competitor arrived on the scene, a Russian agent, Captain Vicovich.

If the Burnes mission to Kabul was symptomatic of British fears of Russian aggression in Central Asia, the sending of Vicovich was indicative of similar apprehension on the part of the Russians concerning the British. A number of facts contributed to their anxiety. In the 1830's Afghanistan was not, as has been inferred, a unified state, but a group of independent Khanates, of which the most important were Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat. In the two former the rulers were of a new dynasty of the tribe of Barakzais, while in the third a restoration of the old ruling group, the Sadozais, had occurred. A fourth Khanate, Peshawar, had been seized by Ranjit Singh, ruler of the Punjab, during the turmoil attendant upon the breakup of the Afghan monarchy in the early years of the century. He had also overthrown Kashmir, which had earlier been considered an Afghan province. Now the British were the allies of Ranjit Singh, and were thought by the Russians to favor his aggression in Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup> It was believed also that in the event of his death, the Punjab and its dependencies would go over into English hands<sup>12</sup>—a thing which shortly came to pass. Further, there resided in India (under the surveillance of the Indian Government) Shah Shuja, head of the discarded Afghan dynasty, whom it would be possible for the English to use, should occasion render it desirable, against the Khans of the new dynasty.<sup>13</sup> Add to these facts what was probably a more important one, that the trade routes of Central Asia led from Kandahar, Kabul, and Peshawar toward India, the products of which country arrived by returning caravans, not only at these Khanates, but also at Khokand and Bokhara, and reason enough is given for the Russian apprehension lest the English, following up all their potential advantages, cause Russian influence in the Middle East to collapse.<sup>14</sup> The Imperial Government did not intend that it should be so; and in seeking to overcome British advantages, it resorted to methods essentially British: the dispatching of agents, the sending of letters, the making of treaties, the payment of money.

In September, 1837, Count Simonich, Russian Ambassador at Teheran, sent Captain Vicovich to Kabul bearing complimentary letters to Dost Mohammed, one from himself, another purporting to have come

<sup>10</sup>Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 175 ff., and Burnes, *Cabool: A Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in That City, in the Years 1836, 7, and 8*, pp. 141 ff.

<sup>11</sup>Schiemann, *Geschichte Russlands unter Kaiser Nikolaus I*, III, p. 297.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 298.

from the Tsar, but unsigned.<sup>15</sup> Vicovich reached Kabul on December 19, three months after the arrival there of Captain Burnes.<sup>16</sup> In the winter of 1837, therefore, Russian and British agents in Afghanistan began in that remote place a contest to determine which of the two rival Powers, Russia or England, should exercise the controlling influence in the mountains of Iran.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile events of importance were shaping themselves in Persia, which was the center of gravity in the Anglo-Russian dispute, and it is necessary to note the situation there, bearing as it did directly on the Afghan problem.

As has been said, Mr. Ellis (later superseded by Mr. McNeill) had warned the Home Government of Russian activity in Persia, alleging that Russian agents were encouraging the Shah's project against Herat. In personal conversation with Count Simonich, Mr. Ellis stated a position which in general was that of the British Government throughout the period during which the Afghan question was a recurring important issue in Anglo-Russian diplomacy, and it is well, therefore, to quote Ellis' report of it as given to Palmerston:

As I heard that the Russian Minister had earnestly urged the Shah to persist in the Herat expedition, and would be prepared to give him, if necessary, his professional advice on the conduct of it, I called upon Count Simonich this day, and I now report to your Lordship the substance of our conference.

I commenced by stating that Afghanistan must be considered as frontier to our Indian Empire; that no European nation had relations, either commercial or political, with that country; that accordingly I could not conceive that the British Government would view, otherwise than with jealousy, any interference, direct or indirect, in the affairs of Afghanistan. I trusted that the exposition of this principle would excuse me to the Russian Minister for inquiring from him whether there was any foundation for the statement that had reached me, of the Russian Government having offered a body of troops to assist the Shah in the projected expedition against Herat, or aid of any description.<sup>18</sup>

Ellis had emphasized two points: first, Afghanistan must be *considered* frontier to the British dominions in India. Actually, it was not; for Sind and the Punjab were still ruled by independent Sovereigns, though both countries were soon to be brought under British control.<sup>19</sup> Secondly,

<sup>15</sup>Kaye (*op. cit.*, I, pp. 189-190) says: "The letters of which Vickovich was the bearer, like those brought by Burnes, were purely of a commercial tendency. One was from the Emperor himself; the other from Count Simonich—written in the Russian and Persian languages. The authenticity of the letter from the Emperor has been questioned. The fact is, that it was one to be acknowledged or repudiated, as most convenient. It was intended to satisfy Dost Mahomed on the one hand, and to be suspected by the European allies of Russia upon the other. That it came from the Cabinet of St. Petersburg there is now little reason to doubt." Cf. George Rawlinson, *Memoir of Sir Henry Rawlinson*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>16</sup>Of the arrival of the two agents the *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy* (II, pp. 203-204) says: "He [Burnes] was ordered to proceed thither by way of Sind and Peshawar. The journey by this route took a long time, and he did not reach Kabul till September 20th, 1837. By that date the Russian agent, Captain Witkiewicz, had appeared in the neighbourhood." The authority (cited in a footnote) is Kaye. Strange to say, Kaye does not at all indicate that Burnes was preceded "in the neighbourhood" by the Russian agent, but says quite plainly that the latter reached Kabul, as noted above, on December 19. Burnes had then been in Kabul for almost three months.

<sup>17</sup>Adapted from Schiemann, *op. cit.*, III, p. 296.

<sup>18</sup>Ellis to Palmerston, April 16, 1836. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup>Sind, 1843; the Punjab, 1849.

no *European* nation had relations, either commercial or political, with Afghanistan. The statement exempted India; and it was through India from first to last that the British conducted their relations with Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> But with the increasingly close integration, as time passed, of Indian affairs with those of the British Empire, the distinction implied came to be quite nominal save as its correlative, the relations of Afghanistan with India, was sedulously and consistently maintained. Indeed it would seem that the policy outlined by Ellis was, as Count Nesselrode later said, an aggressively exclusive one, and it is not surprising that the Russian Cabinet was indisposed agreeably to accept its tenets.

The situation as described by Ellis aroused Lord Palmerston, however, and he addressed the Imperial Government through Lord Durham, British Ambassador, concerning the alleged activities of the Russian Minister at Teheran. Was Count Simonich acting in accordance with instructions from St. Petersburg in urging that the Shah undertake a winter campaign against Herat? Such a campaign would be so injurious to the Shah's best interests and "so contrary to all the professed principles and declared system of the Russian Government," however, it must be presumed that Simonich was *not* acting on Government instructions. If such were the case, "Her Majesty's Government cannot doubt that the Russian Cabinet will put a stop to a course of conduct, so much at variance with its own declared policy, and so adverse to the best interests of an ally, for whom the Russian Government professes friendship and goodwill."<sup>21</sup>

In answering Lord Palmerston's inquiry, Count Nesselrode assured the British Ambassador that if the Russian Minister had acted in the manner described by Mr. Ellis, he had not only done so on his own initiative, but had violated very positive orders "to dissuade the Shah from prosecuting the war at any time and in any circumstances."<sup>22</sup> As a matter of fact, Nesselrode was convinced that Simonich had not given the advice attributed to him, and quite agreed with the British Government as to "the folly and impolicy of the course pursued by the Persian Monarch."<sup>23</sup>

If the Russian Minister *did* oppose the Persian enterprise against Herat,<sup>24</sup> his influence was insufficient to dissuade the Shah from advanc-

<sup>20</sup>That is, throughout the period covered in this account. The arrangement was modified by the treaty of 1921, and Afghanistan now has direct representation at London.

<sup>21</sup>Palmerston to Durham, January 16, 1837. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 17. The term "ally" refers to the close relations between Russia and Persia established by the Treaty of Turcoman-chai, 1828.

<sup>22</sup>Durham to Palmerston, February 24, 1837. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>Schiemann, who had access to the Russian documents, holds that the Shah acted contrary to the advice of the Russian Minister in undertaking the campaign against Herat. (*Op. cit.*, III, p. 298.) Bourgeois, on the other hand, avers that "Les czars, après avoir arraché à la Perse, au traité de Tourmonk-Tchaï (1828), le monopole de la Caspienne, l'Arménie avec Eriwan, et le Daghestan avec Derbent, avaient commencé d'établir leur autorité sur le Shah Mahammed qu'ils poussèrent dès 1837 à l'occupation d'Herat et de l'Afghanistan. Effrayé, le souverain de ce pays à son tour se donna aux Russes." (*Manuel historique de politique étrangère*, III, pp. 232-233.) As a matter of fact it does not seem possible to determine what is the exact truth with regard

ing on the Afghan city in the autumn of 1837.<sup>25</sup> To the British the situation appeared critical. Strategically, Herat was deemed extremely important. As Sir John Hobhouse declared in the House of Commons, "the best authorities had laid it down as an indisputable fact that that city and its immediate dependencies are the most important of all the cities and States of Central Asia, and that the master of Herat is in a position, both with reference to Persia and to the Affghan States, to hold the balance, if it has any considerable power, between the parties who might control for empire much further and with much greater proximity to India."<sup>26</sup> Standing in a fertile oasis, rich in the materials for military supplies, Herat "was a starting point of routes to Kabul on the one hand and to Kandahar on the other, from both of which run natural lines of invasion into India."<sup>27</sup>

Palmerston's diplomacy brought ready promises from St. Petersburg, but for the time being no more tangible results. In June, 1837, he wrote McNeill, "We drove Russia to the wall about Count Simonich; the Emperor had no choice but to recall him and to acknowledge that Nesselrode had been telling a series of untruths."<sup>28</sup> A year later, however, Simonich not only still remained at his post, but had followed the Persian army to Herat and, according to Kaye, was virtually directing its attack upon the city.<sup>29</sup>

In March, 1838, McNeill wrote to Lord Auckland, urging that an expeditionary force be sent to the Persian Gulf, with the object of forcing the Shah to listen to British representations.<sup>30</sup> Not content with this, he proceeded in April to the Persian camp outside Herat, entered the fortress, and succeeded in arranging a draft treaty between Kamran Mirza, the Sadozai ruler of Herat, and Shah Mohammed.<sup>31</sup> The Shah did not ratify, however, ostensibly because the presence in the Persian camp of Count Simonich with his suite of Russian officers and his free distribution of Russian roubles raised the Persian morale and their hope of ultimate victory.<sup>32</sup> The siege of Herat continued, and McNeill, failing

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to these matters—that is, the advice given the Shah concerning the projected attack on Herat, and the responsibility of the Imperial Cabinet for Count Simonich's part, if the Russian Minister did, as the British believed, encourage the enterprise. That Russian influence was an important factor in determining the action of Shah Mohammed, there is little doubt. Its precise character remains conjectural.

<sup>25</sup>The siege began on November 23. See Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 218-219.

<sup>26</sup>Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, LXIV, p. 475.

<sup>27</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, II, p. 204.

<sup>28</sup>*Memoir of Sir John McNeill*, p. 210. The date given is "10th June, 1827"—an obvious error.

<sup>29</sup>*Op. cit.*, I, p. 250. See also Mohan Lal, *Life of the Amir Dost Mohammed Khan*, I, p. 285.

<sup>30</sup>*Memoir of Sir John McNeill*, p. 200.

<sup>31</sup>A translation of the draft treaty is given in *Parl. Papers*, 1830, XL, p. 94.

<sup>32</sup>See Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, p. 250, and the *Memoir of Sir John McNeill*, p. 215. When McNeill was in St. Petersburg in February, 1830 (he was then returning to England) he discussed the question of the treaty with Nesselrode. A "note of the interview" is given in the *Memoir* (pp. 239-240). It follows in part: "H. E. [Count Nesselrode] said that he had seen that draft of a treaty, and much regretted that the Shah had not accepted it. I said, as H. E. had seen it, he must be aware that it contained all the satisfaction for the past and all the guarantees for the future that could be well desired. H. E. admitted that it did, and again expressed his regret that the Shah had not accepted it. I then informed H. E. that I feared that the course pursued

in his efforts to effect a reconciliation between the contending parties, and learning that Burnes's efforts at Kabul had likewise failed, left the Persian camp and set out for Tabriz. Writing to Palmerston some time later (August 3), he "painted the situation in the most gloomy colors. The united influence of Persia and Russia was on the eve of complete dominance in Afghanistan. No means, therefore, must be neglected to guarantee the defence of British India."<sup>33</sup>

While Simonich and McNeill were contending at Teheran and before Herat for the upper hand, a similar contest was ensuing in Kabul, ultimately with similar results. From Burnes's correspondence it appears that Dost Mohammed was at first distinctly inclined to the British side, even suggesting, on hearing of the approach of Vicovich, refusal to receive him.<sup>34</sup> Burnes was without political authority, however, and was unable to meet the demands of the Amir in connection with Peshawar, which he sought to have restored to his control, or to promise to strengthen him in his local authority.<sup>35</sup> Later, when Burnes received instructions from the Indian Government, he was definitely charged to make no concessions: Peshawar must remain in the hands of the Sikhs. "Then, but not till then, a change came over the conduct of Dost Mahomed, and the Russian Mission began to rise in importance."<sup>36</sup> Having failed to obtain the support of the British, the Amir turned to Vicovich. Burnes left Kabul on April 26, 1838, leaving the field to his Russian adversary.<sup>37</sup>

Vicovich did not scruple to make the most of his opportunities. He promised "everything that Dost Mohammed wanted—engaging to furnish money to the Barukzye chiefs, and undertaking to propitiate Runjeet Singh."<sup>38</sup> Leaving Kabul and going into western Afghanistan, he

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by Count Simonich had much contributed to the rejection of that treaty. He said that Count S. had acted contrary to his instructions. I observed that it was a great misfortune that the accredited agents of the Russian Government should have persevered for nearly two years after H. E. had announced the views of the Russian Government to Lord Durham, to act in a sense directly opposed to those views, and it was remarkable that they had done so more openly and decidedly after the announcement than before it. That it was incredible to me that Simonich should have hazarded such a deviation from his duty without some prospect of support, and as that support could not be from the Emperor or H. E., I could only infer that there was some other influence, at variance with that of the Government, which was exercised with sinister intentions, for that I conceived that any man who sought to bring about a misunderstanding between Russia and England could be no loyal subject of the Emperor. H. E. said: 'We are speaking of things that are past; Simonich has, you see, been recalled.' I said that I was aware that he had been replaced. He repeated that he had been recalled, and added, 'Let us look to the future.'

<sup>33</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, II, p. 205. Palmerston was greatly concerned about the outcome of the siege, and wrote to Lord John Russell: "The Success of the Shah in Afghanistan would be full of danger and embarrassment to us in India . . . He is acting avowedly as the tool of Russia; and the Proceedings of Russia in Afghanistan are certainly as direct approach to British India as it is at present in her power to make." (Quoted in Guedalla, *Palmerston*, p. 220.)

<sup>34</sup>See Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, p. 188.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 181 ff. See also *The Times* of June 25, 1842.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 196. It does not seem, as one might infer from Kaye, that the Amir had any predilection for the English as English, but simply thought that his own interests might be served better by them than by the Russians, particularly as regards Peshawar. See Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, I, p. 260.

<sup>37</sup>Kaye, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.* For the extravagant statements attributed to Vicovich, see Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 304 ff. Among other things, "The Russian agent . . . issued a report that fifty thousand men of Russian regiments were in readiness to land in Astrabad, in order to keep peace in the rear of Mohammed Shah, who would then march towards the Panjab; that such movements would rouse all the discontented chiefs of India to rebel; and that the English, who are not soldiers, but merely mercantile adventurers of Europe, would not dare to assist Ranjit Singh, knowing that the Afghans are succoured by the warlike nation of Russia."

arranged a draft treaty between the rulers of Kandahar and the Shah, according to which Herat should be bestowed upon the Kandahar brothers on the fall of that city to the Persians, the arrangement being guaranteed by the Russian Plenipotentiary at the court of the Shah.<sup>39</sup>

On October 26, 1838, Palmerston dispatched a lengthy note to be presented by the Marquess of Clanricarde (who had succeeded Lord Durham as British Ambassador) to Count Nesselrode, in which he recounted the activities of the Russian agents in Persia and Afghanistan ("studiously concealed from the British Government, and planned in a spirit hostile to her interests"), and pointed out that they were contrary to the assurances given the British Government in February, 1837.<sup>40</sup> He concluded with the following strong and characteristic language:

The British Government readily admits that Russia is free to pursue with respect to the matters in question, whatever course may appear to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg most conducive to the interests of Russia; and Great Britain is too conscious of her own strength, and too sensible of the extent and sufficiency of the means which she possesses to defend her own interests in every quarter of the globe, to regard with any serious uneasiness the transactions to which this note relates. But the British Government considers itself entitled to ask of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, whether the intentions and policy of Russia, towards Persia and towards Great Britain, are to be deduced from the declarations of Count Nesselrode and M. Rodofnikin to the Earl of Durham, or from the acts of Count Simonich and M. Vicovich; and the British Government thinks itself also justified in observing, that if from any cause whatever, the Russian Government has, subsequently to the months of February and May, 1837, altered the opinions which were then expressed to the Earl of Durham; and if that Government has in consequence thought fit to give to its Ambassador in Persia instructions diametrically opposite to those which were then described by Count Nesselrode and M. Rodofnikin, and which M. Rodofnikin offered to exhibit to the Earl of Durham,—then, and in such case, the system of unreserved reciprocal communication upon Persian affairs, which of late years has been established between the two Governments, gave to the British Cabinet a good right to expect, that so entire a change of policy on the part of Russia, together with the reasons on which it was founded, would have been made known to Her Majesty's Government by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, instead of being left to be inferred from the acts of Russian agents in Persia and Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup>

In reply to Palmerston's note Nesselrode sent a skilfully worded dispatch in which he reviewed the situation in Central Asia from its inception and stated the position held by the Russian Government concerning it. The salient points in the dispatch follow<sup>42</sup>:

The origin of the war between Persia and Herat lay in the ancient claim of the former to exercise authority over the latter, and the incessant elements of disturbance and revolt growing out of the incursions of the Afghans into Persian territory<sup>43</sup> and the carrying into slavery of subjects of the Shah. Far from encouraging the Persian enterprise, however,

<sup>39</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 85. See also Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 200-201.

<sup>40</sup>See above, p. 13.

<sup>41</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 180.

<sup>42</sup>Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, November 1, 1838. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, pp. 187-190.

<sup>43</sup>See Noyce, *England, India, and Afghanistan*, p. 121.



whatever may have been the merits of the Persian claims, the Russian Government had opposed it as "unseasonable and hazardous." The Shah had not seen fit to regard the Russian warnings. Were it requisite to offer proof of Russian sincerity in the matter, a single fact, "that the Emperor had called upon the Persian Government to send back the battalion of Russian deserters, and that too at a moment when we were not ignorant that the battalion constituted the principal force of the troops assembled in the camp before Herat," would be sufficient.

While going to insist on the above demand, Count Simonich applied for and obtained authority to join the Shah. On arriving at the Persian camp and seeing the distress of the Persian forces, "he did not think he ought to refuse his assistance to the Shah when that Sovereign earnestly entreated him to examine the works of the siege." His attitude was just what any English officer's would have been under similar circumstances.<sup>44</sup>

As for the arrangement alluded to between Persia and the chiefs of Kandahar, it would, had it actually taken place, "have had for its basis the *independence of Afghanistan*, by imposing on the Shah, 'the formal obligation in no way to assail the integrity of the tribes of which they are the Chiefs.'" Such an arrangement would have served, "according to all appearance," to strengthen the internal peace of Afghanistan and put a stop to dissensions.

Concerning the Russian agent at Kabul, Captain Vicovich, Nesselrode held that the motives that had prompted his being sent were purely commercial, and that his presence in Kabul indicated not "the smallest design hostile to the English Government, nor the smallest idea of injuring the tranquillity of the British possessions in India."

The essence of the dispatch is a strong statement of principles and policy, the validity of which Palmerston was subsequently constrained to admit,<sup>45</sup> and reiterations of which occurred throughout the following decades of Anglo-Russian relations:

Whilst on our part we ask nothing but to be admitted to partake, in fair competition, the commercial advantages of Asia, English industry, exclusive and jealous, would deprive us intirely of the benefits which it pretends to reap alone; and would cause, if it could, the produce of our manufactories to disappear from all the markets of Central Asia: witness the remarks of Burnes, and the tendency of English travellers who have followed his steps to the very gate of Orenburg. [Nevertheless, the Russian Government does not blame the British *Government* for these things, since it does not impute to the Government responsibility for the actions of "unrecognized individuals."]

Great Britain, like Russia, must have at heart the same interest, that of maintaining peace in the centre of Asia, and of avoiding the occurrence of a general

<sup>44</sup>Rather strange to say, Nesselrode failed to mention the fact in this connection that it was an English officer, Eldred Pottinger, who throughout the period of the siege of Herat directed the operations of the Heratees, encouraged them at times when capitulation seemed imminent, and was one of the chief factors in their ultimately victorious defence. It must be said, however, that in the earlier phase of the siege he had no official connection with the British or Indian Government, as Simonich had with the Russian. For the circumstances under which Pottinger went to Kabul and the part that he took in the defence of Herat, see Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 212 ff.

<sup>45</sup>Palmerston to Pozzo di Borgo, December 20, 1838. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 193.

conflagration in that vast portion of the globe. But, to prevent that great calamity, it is necessary to maintain the tranquillity of the immediate countries which separate the possessions of Russia from those of Great Britain. To consolidate the tranquillity of those countries; not to excite them against each other by nourishing their mutual animosities, to be contented with competing in industry, but not to engage in a struggle for political influence; finally, beyond everything else, to respect the *independence* of the immediate countries which separate us, such is, in our opinion, the system which the Cabinets have a common interest to pursue, in order to prevent the possibility of a conflict between two great Powers, which, that they may remain friends, require not to touch each other, and not to come into collision with each other in the centre of Asia.

A later note<sup>46</sup> (March 5) dealt more specifically and fully with certain aspects of the Afghan situation, particularly the draft treaty between the Shah of Persia and Kohundil Khan, by which the latter was to receive the city of Herat in the expected event of its being taken by the Persians. Count Simonich, considering that he was acting in the interests of the Shah, had taken upon himself the responsibility of giving "to that Act a guarantee which the Persian Government and the Sirdar of Kandahar unanimously required of him, as a pledge of the reliance which they might thereafter have to repose in their mutual obligations. Full of suspicion, each of the other, they equally felt the necessity of appealing to the impartiality of a third party. This motive decided our minister not to refuse his guarantee, which was demanded from him by both parties as an indispensable condition to their engagements."

A draft of the convention had reached the Russian Cabinet in April, 1838, and though it contained nothing indicating an aggressive or hostile design, the Emperor refused to confirm the guarantee, and on April 26 (1838) ordered Count Simonich "to abstain from making himself guarantee [*sic*] to a transaction to which our Cabinet thought it right to remain completely a stranger."<sup>47</sup> So that there could be no question as to the position of the Imperial Government concerning this treaty, General Duhamel, Count Simonich's successor, was given definite orders "to declare to the Shah, as well as to the Affghans, that the compact which his predecessors had guaranteed" had not received the sanction of the Tsar, and, so far as the Imperial Government was concerned, was without effect.

In addition to the rejection by the Russian Government of the guarantee extended by Simonich, his successor had orders to make it clear

That the intention of the Emperor has been, and will continue to be, not to maintain with Affghanistan any other than purely commercial relations:

That his wishes have been ill-expressed or ill-understood, if any political tendency has been attributed to them:

Finally, that Russia will not take any part in the civil wars of the Affghan Chiefs, nor in their family feuds, which have no claim to our intervention.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, March 5, 1839. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, pp. 200-204.

<sup>47</sup>For a further consideration of the question of the Russian guarantee, see Schiemann, *op. cit.*, III, p. 299.

Thus, the British Government succeeded in obtaining from the Imperial Government a repudiation of the work of its Persian Minister and his agent in Afghanistan,<sup>48</sup> and a positive statement that Russia would have no political relations with Afghanistan. This was not accomplished, however, by diplomacy alone. The failure of Mr. McNeill to effect a settlement between the Persians and the Heratees and to bring the siege of Herat to an end, was followed by the dispatching of a British expedition (as McNeill had advised) to the Persian Gulf, and the occupation of Bushire and the island of Karrak.<sup>49</sup> This was in June, 1838. Fortified by news of the action of the Indian Government (greatly magnified, says Kaye, by the time it reached the Persian camp before Herat),<sup>50</sup> McNeill, then making his way to the frontier, sent Colonel Stoddart back to the Persian camp with a message for the Shah. "The language of the message was very intelligible and very decided."<sup>51</sup> The Shah was informed that the occupation of Herat or of any part of Afghanistan would "be considered in the light of a hostile demonstration against England; and that he could not persist in his present course without immediate danger and injury to Persia."<sup>52</sup> Colonel Stoddart arrived in the Persian camp on August 11, and within a month the Persian army had commenced its retrograde march toward Teheran.<sup>53</sup>

As for the sequel to the British efforts in Afghanistan, the story is very different. The Burnes mission having failed, Lord Auckland resolved upon intervention, and in preparation for it concluded with Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja a tripartite treaty.<sup>54</sup> The tragic history of the First Afghan War is not germane to this study. It had for its purpose the placing on the throne of Kabul of a ruler who would be amenable to British authority; the tool of its accomplishment was to be Shah Shuja, an unpopular and rejected claimant to the throne, who proved to be a

<sup>48</sup>Kaye (*op. cit.*, I, p. 200) gives the following interesting and revealing account of the tragic end of Captain Vicovich: "What befel the unhappy agent after this, it is painful to relate. When he returned to Persia, in 1830, after giving a full report of his mission to M. Duhamel, the new minister at Teheran, he was instructed to proceed direct to St. Petersburg. On his arrival there, full of hope, for he had discharged the duty entrusted to him with admirable address, he reported himself, after customary formality, to Count Nesselrode; but the minister refused to see him. Instead of a flattering welcome, the unhappy envoy was received with a crushing message, to the effect that Count Nesselrode 'knew no Captain Vickovich, except an adventurer of that name, who, it was reported, had been lately engaged in some unauthorized intrigues at Kabul and Candahar.' Vickovich understood at once the dire portent of this message. He knew the character of his government. He was aware of the recent expostulations of Great Britain. And he saw clearly that he was to be sacrificed. He went back to his hotel, wrote a few bitter, reproachful lines, burnt all his other papers, and blew out his brains."

<sup>49</sup>"This action," says Prince Lobanov-Rostovsky (*Russia and Asia*, p. 115) "was a break of The Definite [*sic*] Treaty between England and Persia, for in that treaty it was clearly specified that Great Britain would not interfere in a war between Persia and Afghanistan." (See above, p. 9, note 3.) The action of the British, advised by McNeill, was justified by him in a note to Palmerston dated April 11, 1838. He held that since the "avowed original object" of the treaty was to give "additional security to India" against the "designs of the only Power which threatened to disturb us in that quarter," the alliance of Persia with that Power (Russia) absolved England from her obligations toward the Government which had thus "flagrantly violated" its treaty commitments. (McNeill to Palmerston, April 11, 1838. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, XL, p. 85.)

<sup>50</sup>*Op. cit.*, I, p. 272.

<sup>51</sup>Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, p. 273. The text of McNeill's note is given in the *Memoir*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>54</sup>The text of the treaty is given in Kaye, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 319-323.

weak and inadequate, if not a treacherous ruler during the brief period of his British-supported reign. If the English were determined to take a hand in Afghan affairs, it was Dost Mohammed, as Burnes had urged and time was to prove, whom they should have supported.<sup>55</sup> The historian Keene says that the only parallel to Auckland's policy "was Louis XIV's endeavouring to expel William of Orange to make room for James Stuart. Yet of this policy a Liberal Cabinet approved warmly."<sup>56</sup> The policy failed, and in the end Dost Mohammed became the ruler of an Afghanistan reunited under his strong hand.

The events of the years 1837-1840 mark the beginning of a long and significant diplomatic battle between the Governments at London and St. Petersburg for primacy in the lands lying beyond the passes of the north-west Indian frontier. Sensitive indeed were the English to every Russian move in the direction of that frontier; and always there was a party to propagate the fearsome thought, "India in danger." True, among this group there were differences of opinion as to how that danger might best be averted. In the opinion of some it should be by "masterly inactivity"; according to others, by active advance. The question at times was made a party issue; but the exigencies of a given moment and a given situation transcended party lines.

In Russia, Schiemann tells us, news of the British debacle in Afghanistan was received with deep satisfaction, which was not to be concealed by formal expressions of regret. The report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 1842 no doubt expressed popular as well as official sentiment when it triumphantly recorded that the British had been forced to evacuate the country, retire to the old frontier, and abandon the "tyrannous and exorbitant" policy to which they had committed themselves, of founding in the heart of Asia a powerful State, of which they should be the masters.<sup>57</sup>

Before leaving this early phase of the Afghan question, it may be well to note a series of events intimately connected with it. It has been indicated that as early as 1836 there were rumors of a Russian expedition against the Khan of Khiva. The expedition did not immediately materialize; but in November, 1839, while the English were in Afghanistan, it was announced by General Perovski. Though the objects of the campaign, according to Baron Brunnow, Russian Ambassador at London, were not at all political, but only to obtain the release of Russian prisoners held by the Khan and to exact promises of future good conduct,<sup>58</sup> Perovski in his proclamation had spoken of strengthening "in that part of Asia the lawful

<sup>55</sup>For a consideration of this question from the point of view of British policy, see *The Times* of November 12, 1840, and June 25, 1842. The anti-administration zeal of *The Times* was vented particularly in its denunciation of Palmerston's Central Asian policy.

<sup>56</sup>*History of India*, II, p. 164. Cf. *The Greville Memoirs*, I, p. 241, and Colvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 122 ff.

<sup>57</sup>Schiemann, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 28.

<sup>58</sup>Palmerston to Clanricarde, January 24, 1840. F. O. Russia, 65/258.

influence to which Russia has a right, and which alone can insure the maintenance of peace."<sup>60</sup> Palmerston did not like the situation. It looked to him as though the Russians were seizing the opportunity "to redress the balance so rudely shaken" by the British advance on Kabul.<sup>60</sup> He warned that the loss of Khivan independence would be considered injurious to British interests, and might result in a counter-move across the Hindu Kush. Occupation of Khiva would give Russia access to the lower Oxus, and England might consider the command of the upper course of the river necessary "as a measure of precaution and defence."<sup>61</sup>

The Russian expedition, which was originally fixed for April, 1840, left Orenburg in November, 1839.<sup>62</sup> It did not reach Khiva, but after a desolating march during what seems to have been an unusually severe winter, was obliged to retrace its steps to Orenburg, with heavy loss of life.<sup>63</sup>

Reports of Perovski's discomfiture were received by the British in headquarters at Kabul in April, 1840, with a feeling of intense relief, Sir Henry Rawlinson tells us,<sup>64</sup> for the English "were then preparing to occupy Syghan on the northern slope of the Hindu Kush," and a "further advance on Bokhara . . . was being much canvassed."<sup>65</sup> It seemed, as Baron Brunnov is said to have remarked to Hobhouse, that "the Sepoy and the Cossack were about to meet on the banks of the Oxus."<sup>66</sup> The collapse of the Khivan enterprise prevented such an untoward occurrence.

The British were so impressed with the dangers inherent in the Central Asian Khanates, that they made a special effort to overcome the grievances, admittedly all too palpable, which might provoke a renewed Russian intervention. Particularly was Khiva a danger spot, for added to the depredations of its Khan was the fact of a frustrated Russian effort at redress. British agents were therefore dispatched to the Khanates, and one of them, Captain Shakespeare, who was sent to Khiva, was successful in bringing about the liberation of several hundred Russian slaves<sup>67</sup> and in effecting a peace between the Khan and the Russian Emperor. The Russians were, not unnaturally, sensitive about this British interposition. But Palmerston for once was tactful, and warned against any parading of the influence by which English officers had succeeded where the Russians, largely by force of circumstance, had failed.<sup>68</sup>

The failure of the Russians in the Khiva expedition came at about the same time as the British reverses in Afghanistan. Both Powers seem

<sup>60</sup>Quoted in Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>61</sup>Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

<sup>62</sup>Palmerston to Clanricarde, March 24, 1840. F. O. Russia, 65/258.

<sup>63</sup>Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 159. A "Personal Narrative" of Shakespeare's romantic exploits appeared in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* for June, 1842. (Vol. LI, pp. 691-720.)

<sup>69</sup>Palmerston to Bloomfield, November 16, 1840. F. O. Russia, 65/259.

to have recoiled. The English, it is true, avenged the opprobrious and annihilating defeats of the first invasion and retrieved the prisoners—most of them women—whom they had left at Kabul. But the memories of 1842 remained, and for a long time after the war they studiously avoided all intercourse with that country. The Russians too had learned their lesson, and for many years Central Asia was not a dangerous field of contention between the two Powers. As to whether this was due in part to some secret agreement concerning the Nearer East, as Goryainov would have us believe,<sup>69</sup> we need not here inquire. We do know that Tsar Nicholas was greatly pleased with the overthrow of the Whigs in 1841, and welcomed the return to power of “persons whose principles are the same with his own; and among whom (Wellington) he counted his personal friend.”<sup>70</sup> Even the Crimean War and the Mutiny were passed without serious reverberations on the Indian frontier, and a new generation of statesmen was in control when the issue was revived.

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<sup>69</sup>Goryainov's thesis was presented in the *Russian Review* (Liverpool) in 1912 under the title “The Secret Agreement Between Russia and England” (Vol. I, No. III, pp. 97-115; No. IV, pp. 76-91). It was later elaborated by Vernon J. Puryear in his monograph entitled *England, Russia and the Straits Question, 1844-1856*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1931.)

<sup>70</sup>Rothschild to Aberdeen, November 22, 1841. F. O. Russia, 65/273.

## CHAPTER II

### THE "INTERMEDIARY ZONE" AND THE AGREEMENT OF 1873

The "long peace" between England and Russia concerning Central Asia was not broken until after the Crimean War. During the 1860's, however, the Russian advance in the Middle East was resumed, with the inevitable concomitant of renewed friction. In 1864 Russian authority was extended to the borders of Khokand,<sup>1</sup> Bokhara, and Khiva; in 1865 Tashkent was occupied; in 1867 the new province of Russian Turkestan was created, and Bokhara became a "subsidiary ally" of the Tsar;<sup>2</sup> in 1868 Samarkand, previously "temporarily occupied," was annexed.<sup>3</sup> Such a growth of empire was itself a matter of sufficiently grave import to many Englishmen; but the situation as regards Afghanistan was rendered especially delicate by reason of its strategic geographic position and its uncertain boundaries. Statesmen in India, while differing in some fundamental questions of policy, were agreed in regarding the northwest frontier as the "Empire's greatest source of anxiety, and Afghanistan, lying as it did between two great rival Powers, as the weakest link in an imperfect chain of defence."<sup>4</sup> It was this concern for the safety of India which caused a revival of the Afghan question and occasioned intermittent, frequently acrimonious, negotiations between Great Britain and Russia for a period of forty years.

As early as September, 1867, the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, suggested to the Home Government the desirability of entering negotiations with St. Petersburg concerning the frontier questions, so that the relations of the British and Russian Governments would "be openly acknowledged, and admitted as bringing them into necessary contact and treaty with the tribes and nations on the several sides of such a line. If an understanding . . . of this nature were come to, the Government of India on the one hand could look on without anxiety or apprehension at the proceedings of Russia on her southern frontier, and welcome the civilising effect of her border Government on the wild tribes of the Steppe and on the bigoted and exclusive Governments of Bokhara and Khokand; while Russia, on the other hand, assured of our loyal feeling in the matter, would have no jealousy in respect of our alliance with the Afghan and

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<sup>1</sup>The invasion of Khokand by the Russians was explained and justified by Prince Gortchakoff in his now famous Circular of November 21, 1864. The text is given in *Parl. Papers, 1873, LXXV* ("Appendix"), pp. 72-75.

<sup>2</sup>*Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V, pp. 407-408.

<sup>3</sup>The annexation of Samarkand particularly created great consternation in England. See Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville, George Leveson Gower, Second Earl of Granville*, II, p. 408.

<sup>4</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, III, p. 72.

neighbouring tribes, or of our negotiations to repress Persia in her designs upon the tracts which border upon her eastern frontier."<sup>5</sup>

The Government's first reaction to Lawrence's suggestion was one of indifference: no anxiety was entertained regarding Russia's movements; indeed it was felt that the establishment under her auspices of order and civilization was to be preferred to a continuance of the chronic anarchy which existed in the border states.<sup>6</sup> This point of view was altered, however, with the further advance of the Russians and later more urgent requests from Lawrence that the Russians be given to understand, "in firm but courteous language," that they would not be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan or any of the states contiguous with the Indian frontier.<sup>7</sup> Lord Clarendon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Gladstone Cabinet, discussing the Central Asian question with Baron Brunnow in the early part of 1869, recommended the recognition of some territory as neutral between the possessions of England and Russia, "which should be the limit of those possessions, and be scrupulously respected by both Powers."<sup>8</sup> Brunnow communicated the suggestion to his Government, which considered it favorably, and replied that it was quite in harmony with the idea always held by the Tsar that the two Powers should not become contiguous in Asia.<sup>9</sup> Writing to Baron Brunnow (March 7, 1869) Prince Gortchakoff said: ". . . sa Majesté Impériale considère l'Afghanistan comme entièrement en dehors de la sphère où la Russie peut être appelée à exercer son influence. Aucune intervention ou ingérence quelconque, contraire à l'indépendance de cet Etat, n'entre dans ses intentions."

He added:

Si le Cabinet de Londres, comme nous l'espérons, est animé des mêmes convictions que nous, le désir témoigné par Lord Clarendon se trouverait réalisé; nos possessions respectives en Asie seraient séparées par une zone indépendante qui les préserverait de tout compact immédiat, et les deux pays pourraient, en toute sécurité, se livrer à l'accomplissement de la mission civilisatrice qui leur est dévolue, chacun dans la sphère naturelle qui lui appartient, en se prêtant même le mutuel concours qui résulte aujourd'hui de la diffusion générale lumières et du progrès.<sup>10</sup>

Gortchakoff's suggestion of Afghanistan as an appropriate neutral zone was referred to the Indian authorities. They quickly rejected it.<sup>11</sup> The Viceroy, Lord Mayo, said, however, that the Government of India was prepared "to give a definite form to this policy [of maintaining a neutral zone] by supporting the independence of Kelat, Afghanistan, and

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence*, pp. 183-184.

<sup>6</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, III, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup>Aitchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>8</sup>Clarendon to Buchanan, March 27, 1869. *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1872-1873, LXIII, p. 658. (Hereinafter cited as *State Papers*.)

<sup>9</sup>Gortchakoff to Brunnow, March 7, 1869. *Ibid.*, pp. 659-660.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>See the letter of Lord Mayo dated June 10, 1869, for an expression of the Viceroy's opposition. Quoted in Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, p. 309.



Yarkend, and they wished that Russia should be invited to adopt the same action in regard to Khiva, Bokhara, and Kokand."<sup>12</sup>

When answering Gortchakoff's letter of March 7, the English Foreign Secretary took a somewhat different line from that of the Government of India, and in doing so unquestionably weakened the British position. He said that Afghanistan would not fulfill the conditions of a neutral territory such as the two Governments desired to establish because its frontiers were ill-defined, that this uncertainty was sure to lead to disputes between the Russians and the Afghan chiefs and force Russia, however unwillingly, to disregard the arrangement she had entered into. He proposed the Upper Oxus, which was south of Bokhara, as the limitary line which neither Power should permit its forces to cross. "This . . . . would leave a large tract of country, apparently desert and marked on the map . . . . as belonging to the Khan of Khiva, between Afghanistan, and the territory already acquired by Russia, and, if agreed to, would, it is hoped, remove all fear of future dissention."<sup>13</sup>

With this agreement as to the *principle* of a neutral zone, but disagreement as to its location, the matter rested for a while. The subject was renewed, however, in September, 1869, when Lord Clarendon and Prince Gortchakoff met at Heidelberg. In a conference which lasted several hours,<sup>14</sup> Clarendon again alluded to the Oxus as the most desirable line of demarcation for a neutral ground between the Russian and British possessions. But Gortchakoff demurred, and expressed the hope that that line would not be pressed, since a portion of the country south of the Oxus was claimed by the ruler of Bokhara and its inclusion in the neutral zone might lead to differences between Great Britain and Russia. He urged that Afghanistan be looked upon "as constituting the neutral ground which it was expedient to establish."<sup>15</sup> Clarendon reiterated his objection to Afghanistan because of its uncertain frontiers, and added that the Amir "might attempt to bring under subjection the different Khanates which had formerly belonged to Afghanistan," and which were considered by Russia to be quite independent. Gortchakoff replied that the Amir was at perfect liberty to pursue such a policy, so long as he did not attack the Amir of Bokhara or commit any acts which might be interpreted as hostile to Russia.<sup>16</sup> With this the question of the neutral zone was dropped.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>13</sup>Clarendon to Rumbold, April 17, 1869. *State Papers, 1872-1873, LXIII*, p. 661.

<sup>14</sup>Of the meeting at Heidelberg Clarendon wrote (September 7, 1869): "I have done my Gortchakoff, having met him at Heidelberg as a place equidistant between here and Baden. The conference lasted 3½ hours, and we agreed that it *must* lead to a right good understanding between the Lion and the Bear. Be that as it may, I am glad I went, as we certainly arrived at agreement upon several points. Perhaps, however, the crafty man was only practising upon my youth and innocence." (Quoted in Maxwell, *Life and Letters of the Fourth Earl of Clarendon*, II, p. 361.)

<sup>15</sup>Clarendon to Buchanan, September 3, 1869. *State Papers, 1872-1873, LXIII*, pp. 670-671.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 671.

<sup>17</sup>See Granville's letter to Gladstone, September 30, 1873, given in Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 413-414.

The question being closed so far as direct negotiations between the two Governments were concerned, it was reopened at St. Petersburg in November (1869) by Mr. Douglas Forsyth, an officer of the Indian Administration, who had been sent by the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, to consider with the Russian authorities "questions of mutual interest."<sup>18</sup> The conversations were largely concerned with the idea of the neutral zone and the frontiers of Afghanistan. The former was "very ably explained" by M. Stremoukoff, Director of the Asiatic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who believed that the neutral zone would include "such tracts as Balkh and Koonduz and Badakshan"; but, "seeing that these provinces have become, for periods more or less long, incorporated with Afghanistan," he thought it would be well to accept as Afghanistan all the provinces then in the possession of Shere Ali, Amir of Kabul.<sup>19</sup> Beyond this limit—that of the region controlled by the Amir—the Russians would not interfere nor seek to exercise any influence. On the other hand it was hoped that the English would attempt to restrain the Amir "from all thought of aggression."<sup>20</sup>

These conversations of Mr. Forsyth with the Ministers of the Tsar opened the second phase of the negotiations concerning Afghanistan during the years 1869-1873. It consisted largely of a protracted effort to answer—advantageously to both sides, if not to Afghanistan—the question, What *was* this Afghanistan which the Russian Government had declared to be beyond its sphere of influence? It is to be noted that the idea of a "neutral zone" continued to be associated with Afghanistan; and it is not recorded that in his conversations at St. Petersburg Mr. Forsyth repudiated the association, notwithstanding Lord Mayo's earlier strong opposition to it, and Lord Clarendon's formal rejection of Afghanistan as a "neutral zone" between British and Russian possessions.

In a dispatch dated May 20, 1870, the Viceroy's Government indicated what were believed to be the "limits of the territories which acknowledged the sovereignty of Dost Mahomed and are at the present time under the Government of Shere Ali Khan." This was apropos of the suggestion of M. Stremoukoff that measures be taken to ascertain such limits. The true northern boundary of Afghanistan (the Indian Government held) was marked by the course of the Oxus River "from the district of Balkh on the west to the extreme east of Badakshan." This claim was based on the fact that the various Khanates between the Oxus and the Hindu Kush had acknowledged the sovereignty of Dost Mohammed, and had since recognized the rule of Shere Ali. After reviewing the conquests and rule of Dost Mohammed, the Indian Government said:

The north-western boundary of what, in our opinion, ought to be considered Shere Ali's dominions, runs in a south-westerly direction from a point on the Oxus

<sup>18</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 35.

<sup>19</sup>Forsyth to Buchanan, November 2, 1869. *State Papers*, 1872-1873, LXIII, p. 676.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

between Khojah Saleh and Kerki, skirting and including the provinces of Balkh, Maimana with its dependencies of Andkoi, etc., and Herat with its dependencies between the Murghab and Herizrood. The northern boundary is the Oxus from the same point between Kerki and Khojah Saleh eastward to Punjab<sup>21</sup> and Wakkan, and thereafter the stream which passes Wakkan up to the point where the range of the Hindu Koosh meets the southern angle of the Pamir Steppe.<sup>22</sup>

M. Stremoukoff accepted as generally satisfactory the boundaries indicated in the Viceroy's statement, but expressed doubt as to the point from which the boundary line should commence on the Oxus, since Khojah Saleh was represented on the Russian maps to be itself the western limit on the Oxus of Afghan Turkestan.<sup>23</sup> He requested that a copy of the dispatch (the contents of which had been verbally given him) be communicated to the Russian Cabinet so that it might be forwarded to General Kaufmann, Governor-General of Turkestan, for his guidance.<sup>24</sup> Buchanan at first declined to comply with this request, but later did so on receiving permission from Lord Granville, who had succeeded Lord Clarendon at the Foreign Office in London.<sup>25</sup>

Concerning the objection of Stremoukoff as to Khojah Saleh, the British Government agreed, should that place be admitted to be Afghan territory, not to object to a definition of frontier "by which the right of Bokhara should be determined to commence at a point upon the left bank of the Oxus, immediately below that place."<sup>26</sup> Stremoukoff believed that no objection would be raised to the inclusion of Khojah Saleh within the Afghan frontier, but he added that great care must be exercised "in tracing a line from thence to the south, as Merve and the country of the Turkomans were becoming commercially important."<sup>27</sup> The full significance of this remark was to be comprehended by the British some years later.

On June 21, 1871, Granville requested Buchanan again to address the Russian Government concerning the Afghan boundary question and obtain, if possible, General Kaufmann's opinion relative to the matters referred to him.<sup>28</sup> No answer had been received from Kaufmann. The delay was to be accounted for, it was explained, not only by the great distance of Tashkent from St. Petersburg, but also by the fact that M. Struve, Diplomatic Agent of the Russian Foreign Office attached to the Governor-Generalship, was at the time on a mission to Bokhara.<sup>29</sup> It was promised by the Russian Cabinet that the matter would be brought again

<sup>21</sup>The word "Punjab" is evidently a misprint for Panjah. The Indian Government apparently referred to the River Ab-i-Panjah or to one of the towns of similar name on its banks. See *Russia's March Towards India*, I, p. 225.

<sup>22</sup>Mayo to Argyll, May 20, 1870. *State Papers*, 1872-1873, LXIII, p. 724.

<sup>23</sup>Buchanan to Granville, July 13, 1870. *Ibid.*, p. 725.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Granville to Buchanan, July 30, 1870. *Ibid.*, p. 727.

<sup>26</sup>*Memorandum* (Inclosure in Buchanan to Granville, August 18, 1870). *State Papers*, 1872-1873, LXIII, p. 720.

<sup>27</sup>Buchanan to Granville, September 21, 1870. *Ibid.*, p. 730.

<sup>28</sup>Granville to Buchanan, June 21, 1871. *Ibid.*, p. 732.

<sup>29</sup>Buchanan to Granville, June 28, 1871. *Ibid.*

to the attention of Kaufmann, with a request for an early statement from him concerning the questions involved.

Shortly before resigning his post at St. Petersburg in the fall of 1871, Buchanan once more pressed the question of the Afghan frontier, and in response Gortchakoff laid down three principles to govern its delimitation: The territory in the actual possession of Shere Ali, "at the present moment," should be considered the limits of Afghanistan; beyond such limits the Amir should not attempt "to exercise any influence or interference," and the English should undertake to prevent any aggressive action on his part; the Russian Government assumed a similar responsibility as regards the Amir of Bokhara, whom it would seek to restrain from any aggressive action against Afghanistan.<sup>30</sup>

Concerning the assumption of the English that the frontiers of the Afghanistan of Shere Ali were coincident with those established by his father, Dost Mohammed, the Russian Government demurred, asserting that it was insufficiently supported by available evidence. Its own position was summarized as follows:

In the first place, all the data we have to rely on respecting those regions are very vague and uncertain. The little native testimony that there is, is unworthy of credence. The maps are problematic, hypothetical, and often contradictory. No country offers less resource to the inquirer into its historical and geographical conditions past or present.

In the second place, it had been agreed that General Kaufmann, whose position in contact with those countries enabled him to throw much light upon these questions, should be commissioned to collect all the information possible respecting their political situation. We are waiting for the result of the instructions we gave to him.

Lastly, it is the belief of the Imperial Cabinet—a belief that we trust is shared by the Government of Her Britannic Majesty—that it is no question in this case of settling things for the moment, but of insuring that the sound principles as to which the two Governments are so happily in accordance should be put into practice, and eventually so developed as to make them the basis of a staple [*sic*] and permanent policy, such as may be a guarantee for the security of their respective interests and relations, as well as for the peace and prosperity of the countries which lie between their respective frontiers.

Such being our views, we consider that the essential thing was not to precipitate matters at the risk of compromising the result, by basing it on incomplete and conjectural data, which might lead eventually to differences of interpretation. We were, on the contrary, of opinion that after once laying down the general principles, the most important point was to make a most careful study of the ground to which they were to be applied, so as to avoid all danger of future misunderstanding, and thus give sound practical effect to the sincere and loyal intentions of the two Governments.

Sir A. Buchanan having, however, at the moment that he was leaving Russia, reverted in a pressing manner to the subject, we are unwilling to delay any longer in making the Government of Her Britannic Majesty acquainted with our views on a question which is one of equal interest to both Governments.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Loftus, *Diplomatic Reminiscences*, II, p. 282.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 283-284.

With this statement from Gortchakoff negotiations were again broken off, their resumption being postponed by the tragic death of Lord Mayo.<sup>83</sup> In 1872 Lord Augustus Loftus, who in that year succeeded Sir Andrew Buchanan as British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, again revived the question. General Kaufmann was in the capital for a protracted visit, and his presence there seemed to make the time particularly opportune for carrying forward the negotiations to a definite conclusion.<sup>84</sup>

On October 17, 1872, Granville addressed a lengthy note to Loftus for the attention of the St. Petersburg Government. Since the British Cabinet had yet received no communication of the report which so long since General Kaufmann had been instructed to make concerning "the countries south of the Oxus which are claimed by the Ruler of Afghanistan," it had determined no longer to delay making known the conclusions arrived at by the London Cabinet after weighing all available evidence.<sup>84</sup>

Asserting that the Amir of Kabul had fully established his right of possession of the territories "up to the Oxus as far down as Khoja Saleh," the British Cabinet believed it now in the power of the Russian Government, "by an explicit recognition of the right of the Ameer 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 in maintaining peace in these regions and in removing all cause of uneasiness and jealousy between England and Russia relative to their respective positions in Central Asia.<sup>85</sup>

For the "more complete information" of the Russian Government, Lord Granville indicated what were considered by the English to constitute the "territories and boundaries" fully belonging to the Amir of Kabul:

(1.) Badakshan, with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikal (Woods Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha River with the Oxus (or Penjah), forming the northern boundary of this province throughout its entire extent.

(2.) Afghan-Turkestan, comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm, 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 the Khoja Saleh, inclusive, on the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. Nothing to be claimed by the Afghan Ameer on the left bank of the Oxus below Khoja Saleh.

(3.) The internal districts of Aksha, Seripool, Maimenat, Shibberjan, and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to the independent tribes of Turcomans.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 42. Mayo was assassinated in February, 1872. He was succeeded by Lord Northbrook (1872-1876).

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>Granville to Loftus, October 17, 1872. *Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV ("Correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia"), p. 1.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*

(4.) The western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorassan is well known and need not here be defined.<sup>86</sup>

Replying to the British communication of October 17, Prince Gortchakoff reviewed the various phases of the negotiations between the two Governments directed toward the securing of peace and the consolidating of friendly relations between them. To this end they had come to an agreement that it was expedient to maintain a certain "intermediary" zone, for the purpose of "preserving their respective possessions from immediate contact. Afghanistan seemed well fitted to supply what was needed. . . ." <sup>87</sup> As to the limits of Afghanistan, however, (and therefore the limits of the "intermediary" zone), a doubtful point arose. The founder of the Afghan State, Dost Mohammed, had left behind him so much confusion that the territorial extension which his country had enjoyed at certain times during his reign could no longer be accepted as the basis for delimitation. It had been agreed, therefore, that no territories should be considered as Afghan but those which, having one time been under the rule of Dost Mohammed, were now under the effectual control of his successor, Shere Ali.<sup>88</sup> It had thus become necessary to ascertain, as accurately as possible, what those territories were. This task had been assigned to General Kaufmann, who, by reason of his proximity to the regions in question and his knowledge of the situation, seemed particularly well fitted for it. The information which the Governments desired had been "collected on the spot,"<sup>89</sup> and was now available. On the basis of this information the Russian Government offered its opinion as to the Afghan frontiers.

The data indicated that to the north the Oxus "forms, in fact, the proper frontier of Afghanistan, from its confluence with Kouktcha" as far as Khojah Saleh. This was as Lord Granville's dispatch of October 17 had defined it. On the other hand, to the northeast, Kaufmann's data gave the confluence of the Oxus with the Kokcha as the limit of the districts over which Shere Ali exercised undisputed sovereignty. Beyond that limit, particularly as regards Badakshan and Wakhan, no traces of his sovereignty had been observed; indeed all evidence tended to prove that

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>87</sup>Gortchakoff to Brunnow, December 7, 1872. *Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV ("Correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia"), p. 5.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup>The information had not, in fact, been "collected on the spot," as Kaufmann frankly admitted in a letter of November 20, 1872, to Prince Gortchakoff. It follows in part:

"I confess that these data are far from being complete.

"Personal investigation and observation, exercised on the very spot, are in Central Asia the only means of obtaining enlightenment on any question whatever, political or geographical. I have not, as yet, had recourse to these means. To have sent a Russian official into these countries, even on the pretext of a scientific mission, might have created a panic in Afghanistan, and would have awakened suspicions and apprehensions on the part of the Government of India. It was my duty to avoid anything that might in any way have disturbed the satisfactory state of our relations as established by the friendly and sincere exchange of ideas which has taken place between the Imperial Government and that of Her Britannic Majesty." (*Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV ("Correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia"), pp. 8-9.)

these districts should be regarded as independent.<sup>40</sup> Retaining their independence indeed, they would form a barrier between the "Northern and Southern States of Central Asia," and would effectually prevent "any dangerous contact" on the part of the Russians and British.<sup>41</sup>

As for the northwest boundary starting from Khojah Saleh, the Russian data likewise threw doubts upon the *de facto* possession by Shere Ali "of the towns of Aktchi, Seripool, Meimané, Chibirgan, and Andkoi." These districts, however, were separated from Bokhara by desert country, and their incorporation in Afghanistan would not, therefore, be open to the same objections as those offered concerning the region to the northeast.<sup>42</sup> Because of this fact, and because of the desire of the Imperial Cabinet to meet the wishes of the British Government, Gortchakoff agreed that these districts should be acknowledged as part of Afghanistan.<sup>43</sup>

The dispatch of Gortchakoff's message of December 7 was followed by the friendly gesture of the sending on special mission to England of Count Schouvaloff, "a statesman enjoying the full confidence" of the Tsar.<sup>44</sup> England was very sensitive at this time concerning Russia's advance in Asia, her dilatory diplomacy in connection with the Afghan question, and particularly, at the moment, the constant rumors, evaded, denied, but persistent, that Russia was contemplating the conquest of the Khanate of Khiva.<sup>45</sup> It was the task of Schouvaloff to mollify and reassure England concerning these matters. In conversation with Lord Granville he expressed the "great surprise" of the Tsar occasioned by his learning from various sources "that a certain amount of excitement and susceptibility had been caused in the [English] public mind . . . on account of questions of Central Asia."<sup>46</sup>

Granville did not attempt to deny the existence of these feelings. The English people were, he said, decidedly in favor of peace, "but a great jealousy existed as to anything which really affected our honour and interest; that they were particularly alive to anything affecting India. . . ." <sup>47</sup> So far as the Afghan question was concerned, the only essential point of difference between the English and Russians (as Count Schouvaloff had pointed out) concerned Badakshan and Wakhan, which, the

<sup>40</sup>Gortchakoff to Brunnow, December 7, 1872. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 409.

<sup>45</sup>Alleged plans for an attack on Khiva were rumored, and denied by the Russian Government, as early as the fall of 1869. (Buchanan to Clarendon, December 1, 1869. *State Papers*, 1872-1873, LXIII, pp. 684-685.) At the time of Count Schouvaloff's visit in London (January, 1873) it was admitted that a small punitive expedition had been decided upon, but that "not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it, and directions given that the conditions imposed should be such as could not in any way lead to a prolonged occupation of Khiva." (Granville to Loftus, January 8, 1873. *Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV ("Correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia"), p. 13.)

<sup>46</sup>Granville to Loftus, January 8, 1873. *Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV ("Correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia"), p. 12.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

English believed, "historical facts proved . . . were under the domination of the Sovereign of Cabul."<sup>48</sup> In view of this small difference, it was urged that an early decision be reached, and a final solution of the question at issue be effected.<sup>49</sup> Schouvaloff was prepared to make the concession which the English sought to obtain. Whatever might be the merits of the Russian position concerning Badakshan and Wakhan as elaborated by Prince Gortchakoff, the Tsar "was of opinion that such a question should not be a cause of difference between the two countries, and he was determined that it should not be so."<sup>50</sup>

This concession on the part of the Tsar's personal representative was followed (January 31, 1873) by an official confirmation from Prince Gortchakoff. Expressing gratification that the English Cabinet "continues to pursue in those parts the same object as ourselves, that of ensuring to them peace, and, as far as possible, tranquillity," he relinquished the claim so long held by the Russian Government that Badakshan and Wakhan lay outside the true limits of Afghanistan. This was done, he said, in consideration of the "difficulty experienced in establishing the facts in all their details in those distant parts," "the greater facilities which the British government possesses for collecting precise data,"<sup>51</sup> and, above all, because of the desire of the Russian Government "not to give to this question of detail greater importance than is due to it." Gortchakoff concluded:

We are the more inclined to this act of courtesy as the English Government engages to use all her influence with Shere Ali, in order to induce him to maintain a peaceful attitude, as well as to insist on his giving up all measures of aggression and further conquest. This influence is indisputable. It is based not only on the material and moral ascendancy of England, but also on the subsidies for which Shere Ali is indebted to her. Such being the case, we see in this assurance a real guarantee for the maintenance of peace. . . .

We are convinced that Lord Granville will perceive in it [the Russian concession relative to the disputed territories] a fresh proof of the value which our august Master attaches to the maintenance and consolidation of the most friendly relations with the Government of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.<sup>52</sup>

This dispatch of Prince Gortchakoff concluded the discussions and correspondence which had begun in 1869, and constituted what is known as the Agreement of 1873. What was included in the agreement? Definitely only two things: first, the northern and northwestern frontiers of Afghanistan were established by the European Powers most concerned with the fate of that country. The boundaries, however, were not com-

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup>Argyll, *The Eastern Question*, II, p. 289.

<sup>51</sup>It will be remembered that the Governor-General of Turkestan had originally been commissioned to investigate the Afghan boundary question because of his proximity to and knowledge of the situation, and the delay upon the part of the Russian Government in making a definite statement was due to its desire to arrive at a deliberate and accurate judgment based on the findings of General Kaufmann. (See above, p. 30.)

<sup>52</sup>Gortchakoff to Brunnow, January 31, 1873. *Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV ("Correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia"), pp. 15-16.



plete, not definitive, not laid down "on the spot." Secondly, England obtained from Russia repeated and positive commitments to the effect that Afghanistan was wholly outside her sphere of influence—a declaration which was later invoked by the English with wearisome frequency and which consistently the Russians avowed.

There is a third point concerning which there has been, and continues to be, much confusion. It is regarding the neutral or "intermediary" zone. The following paragraph from Alexis Krausse's *Russia in Asia* (p. 227) is typical of books of its kind:

The progress of these events [the advance of Russia in Central Asia] caused an amount of uneasiness in England and India which was not to be disarmed by the assurances reiterated from St. Petersburg that the Tsar 'had no desire to add to his dominions.' The news of the fall of Tashkend and Samarcand produced a sensation throughout the breadth of India, where the conquests of Russia were spoken of with bated breath, and the future fate of Hindostan under Russian rule was speculated on. These developments were not wasted on the Government of India, and the notifications made to the Home Government resulted in a formal communication between Lord Clarendon and Prince Gortchakoff as to the desirability of some definite understanding on the subject of future Russian expansions. Lord Clarendon made a proposal which for its absurdity has probably never been surpassed by a Foreign Minister. He urged the desirability of constituting Afghanistan a neutral zone. Gortchakoff jumped at the proposal, replying that the Tsar looked upon Afghanistan as completely outside the sphere within which Russia may be called upon to exercise her influence.

Krausse's statement is quite contrary to the facts, and may be dismissed as "that kind of misrepresentation which is the natural result of strong antipathies or of overmastering hobbies."<sup>53</sup> So may many similar statements be so dismissed. On the other hand we read in so authoritative a work as the *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*:<sup>54</sup> "The principle of a neutral zone having been accepted, the boundary of Afghanistan had to be fixed." Here the assertion is not definitely made that Afghanistan was created a neutral zone; but one hardly surmises other than that the boundary which "had to be fixed" was that of the country to be constituted the neutral zone.

As for contemporary opinion, there is considerable evidence of a general belief that a neutral zone had been created. In February, 1873, the Cabinet was questioned in Commons as to whether it was intended "to call upon the Russian Government to define a line beyond which they will not make a permanent advance towards the intermediate zone."<sup>55</sup> It was Disraeli who later pointed out that "the idea that Great Britain and Russia agreed to establish a neutral zone between their respective empires, and that Russia had all this time systematically violated that neutral zone. . . ." <sup>56</sup> was deeply implanted in the British public mind. As for

<sup>53</sup>Argyll, *op. cit.*, II, p. 304.

<sup>54</sup>Vol. III, p. 75.

<sup>55</sup>Hansard, *Parl. Debates*, Third Series, 1873, CCXIV, p. 1034.

<sup>56</sup>Quoted in Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 414.

Russia, the Government itself held in 1875 that an "intermediate" zone had been created in Afghanistan when that country was delimited by the negotiations of the years 1869-1873. This position was very definitely stated in a memorandum of April 5 in which it sought to justify its actions in Khiva on the ground that that Khanate "fell completely within our sphere of action" by reason of the agreement by which England and Russia had established "a neutral zone between . . . their possessions."<sup>57</sup>

Was a neutral zone created or not? If so, was Afghanistan the neutral zone? In spite of the affirmative answers cited (and the number might be greatly increased) the writer ventures to answer both questions negatively, and will presently cite documentary evidence in support of his position. First, however, it may be inquired, Why the confusion concerning what would appear to be a matter of objective fact not subject to speculation or controversy? At least three explanations present themselves.

The first is one of terminology. What was meant by "neutral" zone, and what was meant by "intermediate" or "intermediary" zone? Were the terms synonymous? Did they have definite connotations in the minds of those who used them? Apparently not. There is much evidence of confusion, a tell-tale use of quotation marks, debates as to whether a "neutral" zone in Central Asia is the same thing as in Europe. To put the matter bluntly, after reading the correspondence concerning the question, one has a definite feeling that the statesmen may not have known just what they were talking about.

The second possible explanation lies in the responsibility or non-responsibility of the British Home Government for the actions of representatives of the Government of India. In the summer of 1869 Sir Andrew Buchanan assured Tsar Alexander, when the latter expressed apprehension concerning the alleged aggressive activities of the Indian Government, "that the Government of India was now under the immediate control of the Government of the Queen. . . ."<sup>58</sup> Now it will be recalled that after the question of the neutral zone had been "definitely closed" by the Home Government, it was reopened by Mr. Douglas Forsyth, a representative of the Viceroy, who discussed with members of the Imperial Cabinet the delimitation of the Afghan frontiers, with which was associated the neutral zone idea. Was the British Government to be bound in any way by these conversations? They held that they were not; for, "whatever may have been the nature of the personal communications between Mr. Forsyth and the Imperial Cabinet, it formed no part of his instructions to reopen the question of a 'neutral zone'. . . ."<sup>59</sup> The fact

<sup>57</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 37.

<sup>58</sup>Buchanan to Clarendon, July 26, 1869. *State Papers*, 1872-1873, LXIII, p. 665.

<sup>59</sup>*Memorandum. Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), pp. 58-59.

of the English assurance remains, however, and it can not be postulated that the tacit acceptance by Forsyth of the neutral Afghan idea did not continue in the minds of the Russian Ministers and influence their subsequent dealings with the London Government relative to the Afghan frontier.

The third possible explanation is one that is connected with the commonly accepted implications of the word "diplomacy." The writer, while quite at variance with those Russophobes who saw only virtue in British diplomacy and "satanism" in the Russian, must acknowledge that the trusting attitude<sup>60</sup> of the Duke of Argyll (Secretary of State for India during the period under consideration), however refreshing by way of contrast with the excited Russophobia of the time, was hardly justified by the facts. In brief, Russian diplomacy in the nineteenth century was none too reliable, though it may certainly be asked with reason how responsible was the nagging attitude of the London Government for the very dissimulations which it thought to be peculiarly the genius of Russian statesmanship. And certainly the searching light of post-War criticism, if it has done anything, has made it impossible for even English writers ever again to claim perfect rectitude for the statesmen of Great Britain. Be all this as it may, it is obvious that it was convenient for Prince Gortchakoff and his colleagues to interpret the negotiations of the years 1869-1873 as having eventuated in the creation of a neutral zone, because such an arrangement implied the priority of Russian interests on her side of the zone, just as she avowed her exclusion from the zone itself. We have seen that almost immediately after the consummation of the agreement of January, 1873, she annexed Khiva, notwithstanding repeated denials of her intention to do so, and then used the agreement as a justification. It is difficult indeed to avoid the opinion, though it is not capable of documentation, that the increased friendliness of tone which characterized the later dispatches, the sending on special mission of Count Schouvaloff, and the final concession concerning Badakshan and Wakhan, were the result of an anticipated move against Khiva, concerning which the Russian Government hoped to moderate the inevitable storm of British resentment and protest.<sup>61</sup>

However this may be, the Russian Government admitted in February, 1876, that no neutral zone existed, and the phase of the relations of the

<sup>60</sup>See Argyll, *op. cit.*, II, *passim*, especially Chap. XIV.

<sup>61</sup>The Russian point of view is presented in the following comments from Loftus (*op. cit.*, II, p. 55): "The *Moscow Gazette* . . . contested in its columns the right of England to make any representations to Russia respecting her extensions in Central Asia, and the *Golos* and other Russian newspapers adopted the same tone and followed in the wake of the *Moscow Gazette*, seeking to invalidate and render nugatory the agreement which had been entered into between the two Governments in regard to the Afghan frontier, and to nullify the formal assurances therein given by the Imperial Government. The language held by the military, scientific, and literary persons of note who took an interest in Central Asian affairs, tended to prove that they viewed the agreement between the two Governments as being of no value, and worthless in regard to restricting the policy of Russia in Central Asia. Even a high official in the Asiatic Department of the Imperial Foreign Office designated it as '*un pain a cacheter sur une voie d'eau.*'"

two Powers treated in this chapter may be concluded with the following statement from Prince Gortchakoff:

Have the goodness to inform his Excellency, [the British Foreign Secretary] by order of our august Master, that we entirely agree in the conclusion [of the British Government] that, while maintaining on either side, the arrangements come to as regards the limits of Afghanistan, which is to remain outside of Russian action, the two Cabinets should regard as terminated the discussions relative to the intermediate zone, which have been recognized as impractical; that, while retaining entire freedom of action, they 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 by any collisions between the Asiatic States placed within the circle of their influence.<sup>62</sup>

This dispatch immediately followed the occupation by Russia of the Khanate of Khokand. Only Afghanistan separated the empires of Tsar and Queen in Asia.

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<sup>62</sup>Gortchakoff to Schouvaloff, February 15, 1876. *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 69.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CRISIS OF 1878 AND THE GENESIS OF THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

The Granville-Gortchakoff Agreement of 1873 did not settle the Afghan question, nor make an end of the voluminous correspondence of England and Russia concerning that Asiatic State. Indeed the overthrow of the Gladstone Government in 1874 and the return to power of the Conservatives under Disraeli marked the beginning of a period of increased activity, characterized, so far as the Indian frontier was concerned, by the "forward" policy. In Disraeli's Cabinet Lord Derby was for four years Foreign Secretary and Lord Salisbury, for the same period, was Secretary of State for India. Later (March, 1878) Salisbury took over the Foreign Office and was superseded at the India Office by Lord Cranbrook. For Viceroy Lord Lytton was chosen—an appointment which surprised the recipient, so he averred,<sup>1</sup> quite as much as the English public, to whom he was known rather as a man of letters than as a statesman.<sup>2</sup> Lytton's inexperience in Indian affairs, however, made him a particularly available man for the Viceroyalty; for the Government that he was to represent had its own policies, Indian as well as Imperial, and the ruler of India was but to put these into effect.<sup>3</sup> The latter (Imperial) was to be "spirited," and was to be reflected in the former (Indian) which was to be "forward."<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the Disraeli Government aimed to reverse the policy of the Gladstone Government: the Liberals had sought by diplomacy to limit the Russian advance; the Conservatives purposed themselves to advance and thus preclude the further approach of the Russians toward India. Lord Lytton's instructions, while leaving considerable discretion as to the means by which the policy was to be carried out, were quite explicit as to its object.<sup>5</sup> Briefly, the Viceroy was to concede the demands made by the Amir in 1869 and 1873, and, making these concessions, was to insist upon the reception of a British mission in return.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lady Betty Balfour, *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Marriott, *The English in India*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>3</sup>Describing in a letter to Queen Victoria (June 22, 1877) the measures that were to be taken if war broke out with Russia because of her apprehended occupation of Constantinople, Disraeli wrote: "It is Lord Beaconsfield's present opinion that in such a case Russia must be attacked from Asia, that troops should be sent to the Persian Gulf, and that the Empress of India should order her armies to clear Central Asia of the Muscovites, and drive them into the Caspian. We have a good instrument for this purpose in Lord Lytton, and indeed he was placed there with that view." (Monypenny and Buckle, *Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, VI, p. 155.) See also Gwynn and Tuckwell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke*, I, p. 263.

<sup>4</sup>Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>The instructions are given in Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-93.

<sup>6</sup>Shere Ali had sought on the occasions referred to (the conferences at Ambala and Simla with Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook respectively) to obtain an alliance with the British to bind them to support him against external attack, and a promise that the British would never

Lord Lytton's participation in the Afghan question began before he sailed for India. A few days before he left London he paid a visit to Count Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador, who had expressed a desire to confer with him.<sup>7</sup> Schouvaloff informed Lytton that he had made to the British Government, through Lord Derby, the proposal that "some permanent means of direct and confidential communication should be established between the Russian military forces in Central Asia and the Viceroy of India." He said that the St. Petersburg Cabinet was seriously alarmed by the critical condition of its relations with England in regard to Central Asian affairs, and that the Tsar was desirous of remaining on good terms with the English, and of restraining the "greed of territory" evinced by his own military officers. It was in hope of avoiding future misunderstandings that the Russian Government made the present suggestion.

Schouvaloff had previously spoken to Lytton on this subject, and suggested that communication might conveniently be opened through a special agent accredited on a complimentary mission to the new Viceroy from General Kaufmann. He had sent a report of this conversation to the Russian Chancellor, whose reply he now read to Lord Lytton, together with a confidential letter from General Kaufmann to the Russian Minister of War.

The purport of these letters was that though the Russian Government had no intention of approaching Afghanistan, it might be compelled to do so in order to protect the Tekke tribe ("which acknowledged the authority and claimed the protection of the Czar") from the depredations of the Turkomans, who, though presumably under the influence of the Amir of Kabul, were unrestrained by him. Whether it should be necessary for the Russians to make such a move, involving possibly the temporary occupation of Merv (in any case temporary) really depended more on the Government of India than upon Russia, by reason of the influence of the former over the Afghan ruler. Said General Kaufmann: "England and Russia . . . had in Central Asia a common interest and a common foe.

acknowledge "any friend in the whole of Afghanistan save the amir and his descendants"—that is, recognize his dynasty and refuse to recognize *de facto* rulers, other than the Amir's own chosen, who might establish themselves in power. In the Ambala Conference Lord Mayo had avoided specific promises, saying that the Government of India would "view with severe displeasure any attempts on the part of your rivals to disturb your position," and that it would "further endeavour . . . to strengthen the government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor." (Mayo to Shere Ali, March 31, 1869. *Parl. Papers*, 1878-9, LVI ("Afghanistan"), pp. 90-91.) In the Simla Conference Lord Northbrook proposed assuring the Amir "that if he unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations, we will help him with money, arms, and troops, if necessary, to expel unprovoked invasion. We to be judge of the necessity." (Telegram to the Secretary of State, July 24, 1873. *Parl. Papers*, 1878-9, LVI ("Afghanistan"), p. 108.) Lord Northbrook's proposals were rejected by the Duke of Argyll at the India Office, and the "settled" policy concerning Afghanistan was continued. For a further statement concerning these conferences, see Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, pp. 304 ff., and pp. 362 ff., and Argyll, *The Eastern Question*, II, Chapters XIV and XV.

<sup>7</sup>The details of this remarkable conversation which is here summarized are given in Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 33 ff. The communications were verbal on both sides, and were not officially recorded.

The interest was civilisation, the foe was Islamism . . . . Every other was a bugbear. . . .” The wise policy, therefore, was for Russia and England to form an alliance, cordially and openly to effect, as soon as possible, “the disarmament of Afghanistan and the Mohammedan populations of all the States intervening between India and the Russian possessions of Central Asia, and the division of those territories between the two powers.” As for the British fear of Russian aggression, that attitude was the result of a misconception of the whole situation, which direct communication between Tashkent and Calcutta would, Kaufmann trusted, serve to rectify. Animated by such convictions, the Governor-General had already prepared a complimentary letter to the new Viceroy, which he proposed to dispatch through Afghanistan in care of Shere Ali, with instructions that it be forwarded to Peshawar so that Lord Lytton would find it at Calcutta on his arrival there. Kaufmann had refrained from sending the letter until he could ascertain, through the Russian Ambassador in London, how it would be received by the Viceroy.

The suggestion elicited from Lytton the inquiry as to what means were at the disposal of Kaufmann for sending a letter to Shere Ali, and what assurance there was of the Amir’s obedience to instructions. “The ambassador, who seemed a little embarrassed by the question, replied: ‘I suppose that we must have, just as you have, safe and easy means of private communication with Sher Ali. But I don’t know what they are. That is Kaufmann’s affair.’”

Replying to these communications, Lord Lytton said that since the Russian Ambassador desired a frank statement of his views, he would say that the British Government would “tolerate no attempt on the part of General Kaufmann to obtain influence in Afghanistan or in any of our frontier States, and that we should absolutely refuse to co-operate with Russia in any anti-Mohammedan crusade as that which had been suggested. We regarded, he said, Afghanistan and Beloochistan as the porches of British India; we should defend them with all our power against aggression by any foreign State; we should never knowingly allow Russia to enter into any relations with those States which might have the effect of undermining our influence over their rulers or their people, and would never become a party to any injury to our Mohammedan allies or subjects.”

While rejecting the Russian proposals thus emphatically, this interview with Count Schouvaloff, so Lady Betty Balfour tells us, left on the mind of Lord Lytton the conviction that Russia was desirous of coming to an understanding with England that would have led to the absorption of the states intervening between the Russian and British possessions, the partition of Afghanistan, and the establishment of a common frontier between

the two empires.<sup>8</sup> He did not intend that these things should come to pass.

Arriving in India, Lord Lytton found the relations between the Indian Government and that of the Amir in a highly unsatisfactory state. A number of factors had conspired to widen the breach between them and to make easier the wedge which the Russians were thought to be driving in the territory avowed by them to be outside their sphere of influence. One was the arbitration by the Indian Government of a boundary dispute between the Amir and the Shah of Persia concerning Seistan, with a settlement that was unacceptable to the Amir.<sup>9</sup> Another was the refusal of the Indian Government to promise its support to Abdullah Jan, installed by the Amir as heir-apparent in preference to an older son, Yakub, who was in revolt against his father. In both instances the Indian Government was placed in an awkward position; for however equitable the settlement of the Seistan boundary question might be, it was sure to be unsatisfactory: indeed equity was the very thing that would make it so.<sup>10</sup> As for Abdullah Jan, his qualities were at best uncertain; and a real danger was involved in an agreement to support, to the exclusion of others, *any* candidate for the Afghan throne. A third and perhaps most important factor was the refusal of the British unequivocally to guarantee the territories of the Amir against external aggression. Such a guarantee the Amir had repeatedly sought in vain, and now the exigencies of the time made it seem to him to be increasingly necessary.

Whether or not the British had pursued a justifiable policy in these matters, the Amir was disgruntled, and the Russians were the logical recipients of the negative sort of friendship that resulted from his feelings. They were naturally not averse to exploiting the advantage which they had so fortuitously gained; and there developed between them and the Amir a correspondence the cordiality of which grew with the increased estrangement of his relations with the British and theirs with the Russians.<sup>11</sup> The existence of such a friendly correspondence between Russian officials and Shere Ali had been intimated by Count Schouvaloff in his conversations with Lord Lytton before the latter's departure for India.

The Viceroy called the attention of the Home Government to the fact that whereas the Amir had at first sought the advice of the British concerning the replies that should be sent to General Kaufmann, he had

<sup>8</sup>See the private letter of Lord Lytton to Lord Cranbrook (August 17, 1878) given in Gathorne-Hardy, *Gathorne Hardy, First Earl Cranbrook, a Memoir*, II, pp. 85 ff.

<sup>9</sup>See Argyll, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 316 ff.; Holdich, *The Indian Borderland, 1880-1900*, p. 391; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>10</sup>The Shah seems to have been equally dissatisfied with the settlement. See Sykes, *Sir Mortimer Durand*, p. 83.

<sup>11</sup>For a statement concerning the origin of these relations, as well as the text of a number of interesting letters exchanged, see Schuyler, *Turkistan*, II, pp. 312 ff. The letters cited were taken by Schuyler from Terentief's book, *Russia and England in Central Asia*. Schuyler notes (p. 315): "It is worthy of remark that all the letters of General Kaufmann to Shir Ali are accompanied by an English translation, for the greater convenience of the Indian authorities, to whom it is expected they will be transmitted." See also Roberts, *Forty-one Years in India*, II, pp. 247 ff.; Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 ff.; Gathorne-Hardy, *op. cit.*, II, p. 86.



ceased to do so, and was reported to be holding conferences with the persons by whom the letters were dispatched.<sup>12</sup> He submitted that the time had come when it was expedient that the attention of the Russian Government be seriously called to this correspondence, and that "steps should be taken by Her Majesty's Government to prevent a continuance of proceedings which we cannot but regard as altogether inconsistent with the assurance given by Prince Gortchakow to Lord Clarendon in 1869, and, since then, frequently renewed by the Cabinet at St. Petersburg, that Afghanistan is regarded as 'entirely beyond the sphere of Russian influence.'"<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the reports of friendly correspondence between the Amir and the Russian officials in Turkestan came rumors that the bearers of the letters were remaining in Kabul and were acting in the capacity of agents of the Russian Government. Their alleged purpose was the establishment of treaty relations with the Amir. On October 2, 1876, the Earl of Derby addressed (through Lord Loftus) the Russian Government concerning these allegations as follows:

In my despatch to your Excellency of the 6th ultimo, I enclosed a copy of the Cabul Diaries received from the Indian Government.

You will find on page 10 of those diaries a letter addressed by General Kaufmann to the Ameer of Cabul which appears to have been conveyed to its destination by an Asiatic agent, who still remains at Cabul, and it is reported from other sources that his intentions are to induce Shere Ali to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with the Russian Government as well as a Commercial Treaty.

Although the tone and insinuation of General Kaufmann's letter appear to Her Majesty's Government to be undesirable, the letter itself does not contain any statement of a distinctly objectionable character. Your Excellency will address a note to the Russian Government, reminding them that 'Afghanistan is completely outside the sphere within which Russia may be called upon to exercise her influence,' and you will endeavour, if possible, to obtain from the Russian Government a written disclaimer of any intention on their part to negotiate Treaties with Shere Ali without the consent of Her Majesty's Government.<sup>14</sup>

Lord Loftus failed to obtain the "written disclaimer" that was desired. On the other hand M. de Giers, in conversation with the British Ambassador, held that he had no knowledge of any Russian agent's having been sent to the court of the Amir,<sup>15</sup> and subsequently Prince Gortchakoff reiterated that "there was no Russian Agent at Cabul so far as he knew."<sup>16</sup> As for General Kaufmann's letters, they were purely compli-

<sup>12</sup>Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup>Lytton to Salisbury, September 18, 1876. *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia, No. 1"), pp. 83-84. It was added:

"In venturing to suggest this course for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, we would represent that the issue more or less involved in the continuance, or discontinuance of the [Russian] correspondence . . . is not one of merely local or Indian, but of Imperial interest, affecting as it does the important question whether the influence of England is to be superseded and replaced by that of Russia at the Court of the Ameer." (*Ibid.*, p. 84.)

In the same dispatch attention was called to the postscript to Sir A. Buchanan's letter to Lord Clarendon, dated November 2, 1869, that Prince Gortchakoff then agreed with Lord Mayo that Russian agents should not visit Kabul. (*Ibid.*, p. 83.)

<sup>14</sup>Derby to Loftus, October 2, 1876. *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 80.

<sup>15</sup>Loftus to Derby, October 19, 1876. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup>Same to same, November 15, 1876. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

mentary and had no political significance. At the same time Gortchakoff denied current rumors to the effect that the Russians were contemplating an expedition against Merv.<sup>17</sup>

These informal denials of the presence of a Russian agent at Kabul and Russian efforts to negotiate treaties with the Amir received formal confirmation in a letter of M. de Giers to Lord Loftus dated December 1, 1876. In addition to an emphatic repudiation of the charges of any improper conduct in Afghanistan on the part of the Russian Government or its agents, a counter charge was brought against the English:

The care which the Cabinet of London devote to watching over the strict observance of the understanding established between them and Russia in 1872 relative to Afghanistan induces the Imperial Ministry, on their side, to mention some information which has reached them from Tashkend, having reference to a simultaneous movement of troops of the Indian army, on the one hand, into the States of Almand Sahib, Ruler of Swat, and of Afghan detachments, on the other hand, into Darvaz, a small independent State beyond the frontiers of Badakshan and Vakhan, and bordering on the north-east on Karategin, both provinces being vassals of the Ameer of Bokhara.

We learn at the same time that considerable armaments are taking place at Herat, in view of an expedition against the Turkomans of Merv.

If these facts received any confirmation,<sup>18</sup> they would constitute a direct infraction of the understanding of 1872, by which Great Britain engaged to dissuade the Ameer from any aggression beyond the zone recognized as being under Afghan dominion.

The Imperial Ministry do not doubt that the British Government will employ all its influence at Cabul to prevent encroachments of this nature.<sup>19</sup>

Interchange of this sort continued: news from India concerning Russian correspondence with the Amir far exceeding "the requirements of courtesy," with its bearers, "regarded and treated by the Amir as agents of the Russian Government,"<sup>20</sup> almost constantly at Kabul; protestations of the innocuous character of such letters ("once or twice a year," according to custom) and denials by the Imperial Government of all knowledge of Russian agents.

Meanwhile events in Europe were running their dramatic course. The Balkan problem led to the Russo-Turkish War and the intensifying of the Anglo-Russian antagonism. Whatever may have been the intentions of the Russian Government as to Central Asia before the events of 1877, there can be no doubt that the British intervention which deprived Russia of the fruits of San Stefano, the dispatch of Indian troops to Malta and the later occupation of Cyprus, caused an increased and specificized activity there. An article appearing in the *Moscow Gazette* of July 19, 1878, reflects the Russian attitude of the time:

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Such confirmation was not received, and later the Russian Government conceded that the information alluded to was based wholly on rumor. (Giers to Loftus, March 5, 1877. *Ibid.*, p. 106.)

<sup>19</sup>Giers to Loftus, December 1, 1876. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>20</sup>Lytton to Salisbury, May 3, 1877. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

The time has arrived for Russia to establish her influence over the whole of Central Asia, and this is all the more easy as the Ruler of Afghanistan is not on good terms with England—our foe in Central Asia. The concentration of our influence on the frontiers of the territory of the Empress of India would be a natural answer to the English seizure of Cyprus and all the approaches to India. Such may be the unobtrusive, even peaceable, object of the military operation undertaken by the troops of the Turkestan military circuit. As our correspondent at Berlin remarked the other day—'In Asia there are two political Powers confronting each other, and they must inevitably come into collision.' England wishes to be Russia's nearest neighbour in Asia Minor, and it is only natural, therefore, that Russia, in her turn, should desire to approach somewhat nearer to the English frontiers in India.<sup>21</sup>

In accordance with the "forward" policy of the Lytton Government and the aggravated state of Anglo-Russian relations, a conference was held at Peshawar early in 1877 between representatives of the Governments of the Viceroy and the Amir. The purpose of the meeting, so far as the British were concerned, was to obtain Shere Ali's promise to accept a British mission to replace the Moslem agent of the Indian Government (an Afghan), who wrote, so Lord Lytton thought, "exactly what the amir tells him."<sup>22</sup> As early as 1875 Salisbury had written the Viceroy (Lord Northbrook): "It [the unreliability of the information given by the Moslem agent] has the effect of placing upon our frontier a thick covert, behind which any amount of hostile intrigue and conspiracy may be masked. I agree with you in thinking that a Russian advance upon India is a chimera. But I am by no means sure that an attempt to throw the Afghans upon us is so improbable."<sup>23</sup>

The Peshawar discussions were fruitless. Shere Ali refused to receive an English mission, and cited among the reasons for his refusal the belief that its presence in Afghanistan would be utilized by the Russians as a pretext for dispatching a similar Russian mission.<sup>24</sup> This argument was interpreted by the British as confirming their fear of a loss of influence, for the Amir had apparently come to regard the Russians as on an equal footing with them.<sup>25</sup> For Shere Ali the situation was a most delicate one. Ardently desirous of remaining free from foreign domination, circumstances were apparently going to force him to decide which was the more objectionable, subservience to the British or to the Russians. It was rumored that he was contemplating summoning all the chiefs and leading men, to consult with them as to with which of the two Powers it was desirable that he should ally himself.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Translated in *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 141. See also Meyendorff, *Correspondance diplomatique de M. de Staal*, I, pp. 40-41, and Tcharykow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>22</sup>Salisbury to Disraeli, January 2, 1875. Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, II, p. 71. Cf. Argyll, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 374-375.

<sup>23</sup>Salisbury to Northbrook, February 19, 1875. Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *op. cit.*, II, p. 72.

<sup>24</sup>Enclosure 18 in Northbrook to Salisbury, May 10, 1877. *Parl. Papers*, 1878-79, LVI ("Afghanistan"), p. 181. For an extended and critical account of this conference, see Argyll, *op. cit.*, Chap. XVIII.

<sup>25</sup>*Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V, p. 416.

<sup>26</sup>Extract from Peshawar Diary of Major Cavagnari, June 7, 1878. *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 138.

Meanwhile relations between Shere Ali and General Kaufmann had become increasingly intimate, and culminated in June, 1878, in a letter written by the latter informing the Amir "that in these days the relations between the British Government and ours with regard to your Kingdom require deep consideration. As I am unable to communicate my opinion verbally to you I have deputed my agent, Major-General Stolietoff," an officer high in the favor of the Emperor. "He will inform you of all that is hidden in my mind. I hope that you will pay great attention to what he says, and believe him as you would myself, and after due consideration you will give him your reply; meanwhile be it known to you that your union and friendship with the Russian Government will be beneficial to the latter and still more so to you. The advantages of a close alliance with the Russian Government will be permanently evident."<sup>27</sup>

The Government of India was informed of Stolietoff's mission and of the draft treaty which he was said to have with him,<sup>28</sup> and further representations were made by the Home Government concerning them. On July 2, 1878, Lord Loftus interviewed M. de Giers, inquiring whether any Russian representative had been instructed by the Imperial Government at St. Petersburg or by the Governor-General of Turkestan to proceed to Kabul. M. de Giers replied definitely that no such mission had been or was intended to be sent to Kabul, either by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann.<sup>29</sup>

The mission of General Stolietoff was, in fact, then on its way, and arrived at Kabul on July 22.<sup>30</sup> It was said that the Amir had protested

<sup>27</sup>Kaufmann to Shere Ali, June, 1878. *Parl. Papers*, 1881, XCVIII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 16.

<sup>28</sup>Two versions of this treaty have come to the attention of the writer. One is that of the British agent at Peshawar (whose information had "been received from an authentic source"); the other is that given by Lord Roberts in his *Forty-one Years in India* (II, p. 477) as "written from memory by Mirza Mahomed Nabbi." Concerning it Lord Roberts writes: "When I inquired of Yakub Khan what had become of the correspondence which must have been carried on between his father [Shere Ali] and the Russians, he declared that he had destroyed it all when on his way to Gandamak; nevertheless, a certain number of letters from Generals Kauffmann and Stolietoff came into my possession, and a draft of the treaty the latter officer brought from Tashkent was made for me from memory by the man who had copied it for Sher Ali, aided by the Afghan official who was told off [*sic*] to be in attendance on Stolietoff, and who had frequently read the treaty." (*Op. cit.*, II, p. 248.) Both versions contain promises of the recognition of the heir-apparent chosen by the Amir and Russian assistance in the event of external attack on Afghanistan; but that of the British agent provides for the quartering of Russian troops in Afghanistan, and, "if it becomes desirable that the Russian Government should send an expedition to wage war in India, the Ameer should furnish supplies to the Russian troops," as well as free passage. (*Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 159.)

<sup>29</sup>Loftus to Salisbury, July 3, 1878. *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 132.

<sup>30</sup>Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

Although de Giers, acting in Gortchakoff's stead during the Chancellor's absence at Berlin, was apparently guilty of unmitigated mendacity, it can not be shown that his misrepresentation of the facts was intentional. Concerning the situation Lord Salisbury wrote to Lord Odo Russell (November 27, 1878):

"Schouvaloff gives a terrible picture of the disorganization of the Russian services—or rather their mutual independence—if one is to believe him. The Emperor is represented as having heard with horror and despair that any one in his service had been guilty of such an offence as fostering rebellious sentiments in the Bulgarians of Macedonia. As for the embassy to Cabul, it appears to have been self-generated. Schouvaloff had heard nothing of it the whole time he was at Berlin—nor during the three weeks afterwards spent at St. Petersburg. Only when he got to Willbad he saw it in the newspapers. He immediately rushed to Gortchakoff and asked, 'Has there been any mission to Cabul?' Gortchakoff, putting his hand to his brow and reflecting,—'Non, je ne crois pas.'" (Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *op. cit.*, II, p. 345.)

Emphasizing the same idea of the lack of coordination on the part of the Russian services, Lord Dufferin wrote to Lord Salisbury (March 16, 1880): "It would be manifestly futile to base

against the coming of the mission,<sup>31</sup> but he took no military steps to prevent its advance, and received the Russians with honor.<sup>32</sup> According to Lord Roberts' account, on the day before his arrival at Kabul (that is, July 21) Stolietoff received a dispatch from Kaufmann informing him of the settlement at Berlin and warning him not to make any positive promises to the Amir.<sup>33</sup> If such was the case, the warning was disregarded.

The reception of the Russian envoy at Kabul precipitated a crisis.<sup>34</sup> The situation, as brought out in a letter of Shere Ali addressed "to the Russian Emperor," was not unlike that of forty years previous, when the late Amir, "led by sound judgment, preferred the friendship of your Imperial Majesty to that of the English Government,"<sup>35</sup> and was made to suffer for his choice in the events of the following years. As for the Indian Government, it sought and obtained permission for the Viceroy's insisting upon the reception by Shere Ali of a British mission.<sup>36</sup> It happened that the letter announcing the Government's determination to send a mission was received on the same day (August 17) on which occurred the death of Abdullah Jan, the heir-apparent to the throne, and because of this the Amir requested that the matter be deferred.<sup>37</sup> According to the information later given Lord Roberts by Yakub Khan, Stolietoff urged the Amir to prevent the British mission from reaching Kabul while he went to Tashkent to communicate with Kaufmann, who

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the safety of the North-Western Frontier of India upon any understanding, stipulation, convention or treaty with the imperial government. I do not mean to imply that the emperor and his ministers would wilfully violate their engagements; but the authority of the Russian executive is so slight, the control it exercises over its distant agents and military chiefs is so unsteady, and its policy is so designedly tentative, while the forces which stimulate the aggressive instincts of the nation are so constant, that little reliance could be ultimately placed upon mere verbal guarantees." (Quoted in *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V, p. 414.)

See also Schuyler's excellent statement on "the peculiar constitution of the Russian Government" (*op. cit.*, II, pp. 262 ff.) and that concerning the extraordinary powers of the Governor-General of Turkestan (pp. 269-270), and Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 315 ff.

<sup>31</sup>Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

<sup>32</sup>The Duke of Argyll held that it was not at all a matter of choice which led the Amir to receive the mission. In a letter to Mr. Gladstone dated November 4, 1878, he wrote: "The *Times* correspondent from Darjeeling today says the Amir deliberately preferred a Russian alliance. Now, I have seen the official account sent to Lytton of the circumstances under which the Amir received the Russian Mission, and it shows that he did not 'deliberately' receive it. On the contrary, he was very reluctant to receive it, and was only bullied into it." (*Autobiography and Memoirs*, II, p. 330.)

<sup>33</sup>Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 110-111: "On the eve of the day that the Mission entered Kabul, Stolietoff received a despatch from General Kauffmann giving him the heads of the Berlin Treaty, with the following commentary in the handwriting of the Governor-General himself: 'If the news be true, it is indeed melancholy;' adding, however, that the Congress had finished its sittings, and that, therefore, the Envoy in his negotiations with the Amir had better refrain from arranging any distinct measures, or making any positive promises, and 'not go generally as far as would have been advisable if war with England had been threatened.'"

<sup>34</sup>It must be noted that the dispatching of missions such as that of Stolietoff was not an extraordinary occurrence, but a more or less regular part of Russian diplomatic activity in Central Asia. See Schuyler, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 270-271.

<sup>35</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1881, XC VIII ("Central Asia. No. 1."), pp. 19-20.

<sup>36</sup>Beaconsfield deplored the "headstrong counsels" which prevailed during the summer and early fall of 1878 and which were for forcing the hand of the Amir. He wrote (October 9 or 10) to Lady Bradford: "This critical state of affairs need not have happened, and cd. not have, if my orders had not been disobeyed. This makes it the more grievous. I wrote to you, a month ago I shd. think, that I hoped I had settled the Afghan business, but alas! I did not reckon on distant and headstrong counsels . . ." (Quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 384.)

<sup>37</sup>Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, p. 113: "This untoward event was taken advantage of to delay answering the Viceroy's letter, but it was not allowed in any way to interfere with the progress of the negotiations with Russia."

in turn would communicate with the Tsar to the end that Great Britain be forced to desist from her demands.<sup>38</sup> On August 23 Shere Ali addressed General Kaufmann, saying that Stolietoff had reduced to writing the verbal representations, the object of which was to strengthen the friendly relations between "the illustrious government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and the God-granted government of Afghanistan," and would soon return with his reply.<sup>39</sup> Two days earlier the British mission, under Neville Chamberlain, had been prevented by Afghan troops from passing Ali Mesjid.

The British Cabinet was divided on the Afghan question. Lord Beaconsfield, who had achieved "peace with honor" at Berlin, feared that too aggressive a policy in the Middle East might prevent the withdrawing of Russian troops from Turkey; and Salisbury "severely attacked Lytton's conduct and urged the expediency of curbing his future proceedings."<sup>40</sup> Cranbrook, now Secretary of State for India, on the other hand, staunchly supported the Viceroy.<sup>41</sup> Lytton and Cranbrook's views finally prevailed. On November 2 an ultimatum, expiring on the twentieth, was dispatched to Shere Ali.<sup>42</sup> The Amir sought the aid of the Russians; but in vain: Kaufmann advised him to make peace.<sup>43</sup> In fact, the Russians "had fallen into the pit which they had dug for others. Reckoning too hopefully on the approach of an Anglo-Russian war, they had led Sher 'Ali into relying on their support, at the moment when they found themselves unable to accord it."<sup>44</sup>

It is not germane to this essay to recount the events of the Second Afghan War. A few facts, however, may be profitable. After a series of defeats Shere Ali announced his retirement into Russian territory, where he died the following year (1879).<sup>45</sup> The British, after a rapid campaign,

<sup>38</sup>Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, p. 469.

<sup>39</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1881, XCVIII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 350.

<sup>40</sup>*Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V, p. 418. See also Monypenny and Buckle, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 380 ff.; Lady Gwendolen Cecil, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 337 ff.; Buckle, *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, II, p. 641.

<sup>41</sup>Gathorne-Hardy, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 100-102.

<sup>42</sup>The ultimatum demanded an apology and an undertaking to receive a permanent British mission within Afghan territory, failing which the Amir's intentions were to be regarded as hostile and he was to be treated as a declared enemy of England. (See Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-294.)

<sup>43</sup>See Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-307, for the correspondence between Shere Ali and General Kaufmann. "On December 8 the Amir addressed to General Kaufmann a renewed appeal on the ground 'of the old friendship, and the recent alliance concluded through General Stolietoff on the part of His Imperial Majesty . . . .' Should any harm or injury . . . befall the Afghan Government, the dust of blame will certainly settle on the skirt of His Imperial Majesty's Government."

<sup>44</sup>*Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V, p. 419.

<sup>45</sup>Lady Betty Balfour, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

"Before leaving Kabul, on December 13, the Amir addressed a letter to the officers of the British Government in which he informed them that he departed with a few attendants to lay the whole history of the transactions with the British Government before the Czar at St. Petersburg.

"He also proclaimed the cause and purpose of his departure to his own subjects in a firman dated December 22, addressed to the Governor of Herat and other notables there: 'We have received,' said the Amir in his firman, 'letters from the Governor-General and from General Stolietoff, who, being with the Emperor at Livadia, writes to us as follows: "The Emperor considers you as a brother, and you also, who are on the other side of the water (that is to say the Oxus), must display the same sense of friendship and brotherhood. The English Government is anxious to come to terms with you through the intervention of the Sultan, and wishes you to

opened negotiations with Yakub, Shere Ali's son, who had been imprisoned by the Amir but who was now released and placed in command on the latter's abdication. The result was the Treaty of Gandamak, signed on May 26, 1879.<sup>46</sup> By this treaty the Amir (Yakub Khan) assigned to the British the districts of Kurran, Pishin, and Sibi; agreed to accept a permanent British representative; and promised to conduct his foreign affairs in accordance with the advice of the Viceroy of India.<sup>47</sup> In brief, the British "forward" policy had for the time being prevailed.

Yakub did not reign long. The murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari, who had been sent as the British envoy, resulted in the reopening of hostilities.<sup>48</sup> Yakub had shown himself to be an inadequate ruler and an untrustworthy ally, and the English were constrained to accept as his successor the capable and energetic Abdurrahman Khan, a nephew of Shere Ali, who had been living at Samarkand under Russian protection, and who now returned, with Russian permission, to Afghanistan.<sup>49</sup> Abdurrahman was installed as Amir on July 22, 1880, after his acceptance of the Treaty of Gandamak with two changes: Kandahar was to be under a separate rule, and the admission of a British agent was not to be pressed, "though it was suggested that by mutual agreement a Moham-medan Agent of the British Government might be stationed at Kabul for convenience of intercourse."<sup>50</sup> Subject to his compliance with these condi-

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take his advice and counsel. But the Emperor's desire is that you should not admit the English into your country; and, like last year, you should treat them with deceit and deception until the present cold season passes away; then the will of the Almighty will be manifest to you—that is to say, the Russian Government having repeated the Bismillah, the Bismillah will come to your assistance." "

Lord Lytton said that he himself had read Stolietoff's letter, and the Amir's firman accurately reproduced it, but actually did not do justice to its incredible phraseology. (*Op. cit.*, p. 308.)

As indicated, however, once the British ultimatum was received and war begun, Shere Ali's appeals to Kaufmann were in vain.

"On November 26 General Kaufmann wrote to the Russian General Razgonoff [Stolietoff had left Kabul in the middle of August] at Kabul: 'The Amir knows perfectly well that it is impossible for me to assist him with troops in winter, therefore it is necessary that war should not be commenced at this unseasonable time. If the English, in spite of the Amir's exertions to avoid the war, commence it, you must then take leave of the Amir and start for Tashkend, because your presence in Afghanistan in winter is useless. Moreover at such a juncture as the commencement of war with Afghanistan you ought to come here and explain the whole thing to me, so that I may communicate it to the Emperor. This will be of great benefit to Afghanistan and Russia.'" (*Op. cit.*, p. 308.)

<sup>46</sup>The text of the treaty is given in *Parl. Papers*, 1878-9, LVI ("Afghanistan. No. 6"), pp. 3-5.

<sup>47</sup>Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, p. 173. The British also retained control of the Khyber and Mishni passes.

<sup>48</sup>Lord Roberts had held that the Treaty of Gandamak was premature, that the peace "would not be a lasting one, and would end in worse trouble in the near future. 'They will all be murdered,' said Lord Lawrence, 'every one of them.' Men who, like Roberts, were experienced in Afghan affairs, knew that the treaty was not worth the paper it was written on, but it had to be made for party purposes at home. It enabled Lord Beaconsfield to tell the City magnates at dinner that 'an adequate and scientific frontier had been accomplished and achieved with a precision of plan and a rapidity of execution not easily equalled in statesmanship.' On the penultimate day of the session the debate on the Afghan treaty ended in a count out. The House of Commons were warned 'that the real difficulties were only coming, and had yet to come,' but they were satisfied with a reassuring statement made by a young undersecretary, and dispersed for the vacation. The difficulties came sooner than was expected." (Forrest, *The Life of Lord Roberts*, p. 82.)

<sup>49</sup>Lord Ripon described Abdurrahman as "the most Russian" of the candidates for the Afghan throne, but the inevitable choice, since he was the only one who could maintain "even a semblance of order." (Gwynn and Tuckwell, *op. cit.*, I, p. 321.)

<sup>50</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, III, p. 90. For an account of the negotiations between the British and Abdurrahman leading to his accession, see Mir Mahomed Khan, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, I, pp. 190 ff. (Hereafter referred to as *The Life of Abdur Rahman*.)

tions, the Amir was to receive a guarantee of protection against external aggression. There was added, too, the payment of such a sum of money within a maximum of ten lakhs "as was thought necessary to meet his present wants."<sup>51</sup>

As for Kandahar, that city did not long remain out of the hands of Abdurrahman. Occupied by the British under General Roberts during the summer of 1880 and shortly afterwards evacuated by them, it came under the Amir in the autumn of that year. The Afghan Kingdom was thus once more united under an effective rule.

It is difficult, in conclusion, to avoid noting some remarkable comparisons between the two Afghan wars that have been mentioned. Both were brought on by reason of British susceptibilities concerning real or alleged Russian intrigues in Afghanistan, rather than by any fundamental differences existing between the Governments involved in the wars; in both instances questions of the succession were involved; in both demands were made for the reception of British missions. After both wars, however, the British accepted other than their own candidates to the throne, and after both relinquished their claims to representation at the court of the Amir. Whether anything was actually accomplished by the British in either war was seriously questioned by not a few Englishmen. On the part of the Liberals there was a strong feeling that the Government had gone too far. Militarists and Imperialists were equally inclined to think that it had not gone far enough—that Kandahar, surely, should have been permanently retained.<sup>52</sup> And there were some of various political affiliations and creeds, even in that heyday of imperialism, who on moral grounds took offense at a great Power's attacking a small, weak nation because the Government had decided on a line of action that was to be "spirited" and "forward."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup>Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, p. 329.

<sup>52</sup>Among these was the Queen. See her correspondence with Mr. Gladstone on this subject given in Guedalla, *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, II, pp. 133 ff.

<sup>53</sup>See Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, I, p. 289. There was a great deal of bitter contemporary comment on Beaconsfield's policies both as to the Balkan question and Central Asia. Mme. Olga Novikoff in her *Russian Memories* (p. 81) quotes Carlyle as referring to English politics as "a sore subject nowadays with our damnable premier."



## CHAPTER IV

### THE PENJDEH INCIDENT AND THE DELIMITATION OF THE NORTHWESTERN AFGHAN FRONTIER, 1884-1888

As will be remembered, the British sought in the latter 'sixties and the early 'seventies to reach with Russia some agreement concerning the northern frontier of Afghanistan, and succeeded in having the Oxus accepted as "indicating broadly the limit of the Ameer's sphere of influence."<sup>1</sup> The boundary, however, was not delimited on the spot, was incomplete, and was lacking in the definiteness which would preclude possible misunderstanding in the future. There was, consequently, a disposition to uneasiness on the part of the British and the Afghans when any new Russian advance occurred, and the mutuality of their fears was signaled in 1883 by the formal renewing by the British of their promise of aid to the Amir in case of unprovoked aggression.<sup>2</sup>

The Russians were very active in Central Asia during the 1880's, taking advantage, some have thought, "of the numerous external difficulties of the Gladstone government, and fortified by a secret treaty with Germany. . . ."<sup>3</sup> In the winter of 1880-1881 the Tekke Turkomans were subjugated,<sup>4</sup> and early in 1884, Merv, which was deemed by military men a place of great strategic importance,<sup>5</sup> and which the Russian Government had repeatedly declared to lie outside its range of influence or desire,<sup>6</sup> was occupied and its chiefs were induced to tender their allegiance

<sup>1</sup>Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, III, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup>The Viceroy to Abdur Rahman Khan, February 22, 1883. *Parl. Papers*, 1884, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), pp. 72-73. See also *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, II, pp. 127-128.

<sup>3</sup>Cambridge History of the British Empire, V, pp. 422-423. Fitzmaurice says (*The Life of Granville*, II, p. 422): "Although at the time all the facts were not fully known even at the Foreign Office, the situation had been correctly appreciated by Lord Granville as a whole. It hinged on the secret treaty of neutrality which in 1884 Prince Bismarck had concluded with Russia, without the knowledge and behind the backs of the other parties to the Triple alliance, viz. Austria-Hungary and Italy. It was intended to protect Germany in the event of Austria-Hungary becoming reconciled with Russia, or of the long talked-of alliance between France and Russia taking effect. Russia, however, interpreted this treaty, which secured her western frontier, as also giving her a free hand in Asia, and Prince Bismarck gave a tacit approval, as part of the new policy, to a system of persisting annoyance against Great Britain." On this point see the illuminating letter of Bismarck to the German Emperor dated May 27, 1885. (*Die Grosse Politik*, IV, pp. 124-126.)

<sup>4</sup>This was the work of the illustrious General Skobelev, who, in the taking of Dengehil Tepe and the pursuit of the fugitives after its capture, was responsible for the death (according to his own estimate) of 20,000 men, women, and children. See Rose, *Development of the European Nations, 1870-1914*, II, p. 126; Baddeley, *Russia in the 'Eighties*, p. 96; Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, I, pp. 317-318.

<sup>5</sup>Vambéry (*The Coming Struggle for India*, p. 51) calls attention to the fact that "all the Asiatic conquerors who burst forth from Central Asia with the open intention to attack and conquer India" had previously occupied Merv, and gives the opinions of a number of prominent English officers in support of his own estimate of the importance of the oasis.

There was obviously great misapprehension in England as to just what Merv was. It continued to be associated by some with the "Queen of the World" idea; by others with the Marghiana of classical antiquity. As a matter of fact there was at the time no city of Merv at all, and there had been none, previous to the Russian conquest of the Turkomans, for more than a hundred years. See Dobson, *Russia's Railway Advance into Central Asia*, p. 172, and Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 105 ff.

<sup>6</sup>The last important diplomatic assurance of the reign of Alexander II was that given by M. de Giers to Lord Dufferin as to Russia's resolution not to occupy Merv: "Not only do we not want to go there, but, happily, there is nothing which can require us to go there." (Quoted in Rose, *op. cit.*, II, p. 127-128.) As late as April, 1882, M. de Giers assured Sir Edward Thorn-

to the Russian Emperor.<sup>7</sup> Feeling against Russia again became intense in England, where there existed a special concern for the fate of Merv which the Duke of Argyll was pleased to call "Mervousness."<sup>8</sup>

Although the Gladstone Government was generally mild in its attitude toward Russia<sup>9</sup> and not inclined to be stampeded into precipitate action by an alarmist press, Lord Granville thought it "fair" to inform the Russian Ambassador, Baron Mohrenheim, that "the news [concerning Merv] had not been received . . . with indifference," and added that he proposed to send to St. Petersburg an "expression of our views."<sup>10</sup> The "expression" proved to be a lengthy historical recitation of the promises made by Russia since 1873, and ended with a request that no time be lost "in communicating to Her Majesty's Government the proposals which the Russian Government may have to make to them in order to provide against the complications to which this further extension of Russian sovereignty in the direction of the frontiers of Afghanistan may give rise."<sup>11</sup>

The Imperial Government justified its action in Merv in seeming contravention of its repeated promises by the declaration that the Merv chiefs had themselves suddenly resolved to request the protection of Russia, and Russia had in turn but exercised her freedom of decision in accepting their proffered submission. In view of these facts, the Imperial Government had "no formal proposals to make," and added that, considering the interpretation put upon their former assurances, they would be, in the future, very careful concerning any fresh assurances that might be demanded of them.<sup>12</sup> In more conciliatory vein, however, M. de Giers, adverting to "arrangements previously concluded between the two Governments," suggested that should the London Cabinet "find it useful and practicable to complete these arrangements by a more exact definition of the condition of the countries which separate the Russian possessions from the boundaries of Afghanistan, we can only recall to them the proposal which the Ambassador of His Majesty the Emperor was ordered to make in 1882. That proposal was to continue from Khodja-Saleh westward the line of demarcation agreed upon in 1872-1873."<sup>13</sup>

ton "not once, but several times . . . that Russia had no intention whatever at present of advancing towards Sarakhs or Merv, or of occupying with her forces any territory in that region beyond what was already in her possession." (Thornton to Granville, April 29, 1882. *Parl. Papers*, 1884, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 13. Within three months British agents were in possession of documents showing that the Russians were seeking to obtain the submission of the Merv chiefs. (*Parl. Papers*, 1884, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), pp. 31 ff.)

<sup>7</sup>Thornton to Granville, February 15, 1884. *Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 4. See also Tcharykow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, pp. 160 ff.

<sup>8</sup>Argyll, *The Eastern Question*, II, p. 370.

<sup>9</sup>See Guedalla, *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, II, pp. 342-343. That the Russian Government was aware of the general intransigence of the Conservatives and the amenability of Gladstone is repeatedly brought out in the correspondence of M. de Staal, Russian Ambassador at London from 1884 to 1901. See, for instance, the dispatch from M. de Giers dated July 5, 1884. (Meyendorff, *Correspondance diplomatique de M. de Staal*, I, p. 42.)

<sup>10</sup>Granville to Thornton, February 28, 1884. *Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>Same to same, February 29, 1884. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>12</sup>Giers to Thornton, March 29, 1884. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.* See also Holdich, *The Indian Borderland*, p. 95.

As indicated in M. de Giers's dispatch, conversations relative to the delimitation of the Afghan frontier had been opened in London as early as 1882,<sup>14</sup> but had been discontinued without results. The progress of Russia in Central Asia, however, particularly the occupation of Merv, accentuated in the minds of the English the desirability of a more accurate delimitation, and the conclusion of an agreement with Russia so unmistakable in character that violations of it would be unequivocal and incapable of explanation by even Russian diplomats.

As a matter of fact there was much justifiable apprehension as to what Russia's next move might be. Shortly after the annexation of Merv there appeared a new map, prepared by the War Office at St. Petersburg, indicating the Merv boundaries stretching southward to the Heri Rud, and touching that river near Herat<sup>15</sup>—Herat, which was the "key to India." Furthermore, reports reached London that Russian agents were operating in the districts of Penjdeh and Maimeneh,<sup>16</sup> both of which were held by the British to be Afghan territory, the latter definitely Afghan by the Agreement of 1873. In view of these facts the British Government felt that an increased importance was given to "the question of the definition of the boundaries" of Afghanistan, and was "prepared to accept the proposal put forward in 1882, and now repeated by M. de Giers, for the delimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khodja Saleh westwards."<sup>17</sup> It suggested that the principal points in the boundary should be laid down on the spot by a Joint Commission, including an Afghan representative, and that operations should begin the following autumn.<sup>18</sup>

The Russian Government, while being "quite ready" to cooperate with the British in the delimitation, found a number of objections to any immediate accomplishment of the task. It opposed the British suggestion that an Afghan official be a member of the Commission,<sup>19</sup> it objected to the suggested meeting of the Commissioners at Sarakhs,<sup>20</sup> and urged in an extended correspondence that before sending the Commissioners to the place of their activities "the two Governments should exchange views on the general bases of the future delimitation, so as to prevent as far as possible the differences of opinion and misunderstandings which might arise between the Commissioners and delay the progress of their labours."<sup>21</sup> What the Russian Government had in mind, as was later disclosed, was that an ethnical basis for the delimitation be adopted, rather than a geographic one, and the Imperial Government was desirous of

<sup>14</sup>Granville to Thornton, February 22, 1882. *Parl. Papers*, 1884, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>Thornton to Granville, March 26, 1884. *Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Granville to Thornton, April 24, 1884. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>17</sup>Same to same, April 29, 1884. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>Giers to Thornton, May 3, 1884. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>20</sup>Same to same, June 18, 1884. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

obtaining the adherence of the British Government to this principle. Now the ethnical basis better suited the Russian interests; for, after the conquest of the Tekke Turkomans, the Russians could contend with much cogency that the tranquillity of the Turkoman country was impossible of accomplishment unless *all* the Turkomans were brought under their control. Specifically, it was held that should the Sarik population in the East remain independent or under Afghan rule, their nomad habits and plundering instincts would certainly result in complications between Russia and Afghanistan, and render impossible a settled rule among those tribes that had already recognized Russian authority.<sup>22</sup>

While there was much to be said in favor of this point of view,<sup>23</sup> it held its dangers for a country in which the populations were not settled, but nomadic both by reason of custom and necessity.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore the English critics of Russian policy were not slow to perceive that the twenty-year Russian march in Central Asia had produced a pragmatic change in the point of view of the Russian Government, which in 1864 had expressed a strong belief in "les conditions géographiques et politiques qui sont fixes et permanentes."<sup>25</sup>

The British, eager to effect with Russia a binding agreement, appointed as their Chief Commissioner Sir Peter Lumsden, a member of the India Council and an officer of long standing. The Russian Government after some delay named General Zelenoi.<sup>26</sup> The work of the Boundary Commission, however, did not begin auspiciously. Lumsden and his party arrived on the spot in the fall of 1884, as arranged, but they found no Russian delegation there. Instead they found at Put-i-Khatun, some forty miles south of Sarakhs, a picket of Russian cossacks.<sup>27</sup> Zelenoi's failure to arrive at the appointed time was explained by the St. Petersburg Government as being due to illness<sup>28</sup> (a strictly diplomatic one, the British suspected),<sup>29</sup> and later it was learned that because of the lateness of the season nothing could be done before the following spring.<sup>30</sup>

In December the Russian Government sought to obtain British agreement to the essential points of a series of proposals, among which was the claim that Penjdeh should be independent of the Afghan Amir.<sup>31</sup> This fertile district was regarded by the British as lying within the

<sup>22</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 148 (Inclosure in No. 182), and Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, I, p. 145.

<sup>23</sup>See Chamberlain's letter to Dilke (April 4) quoted in Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, I, p. 571.

<sup>24</sup>Lyaill, *op. cit.*, II, p. 87.

<sup>25</sup>See the Gortchakoff Circular of 1864.

<sup>26</sup>Other members of the British delegation were Colonel Patrick Stewart and Colonel J. West Ridgeway, Foreign Under-Secretary to the Indian Government. In the Russian group, in addition to Zelenoi, were Major Alikhanoff and M. Lessar.

<sup>27</sup>Lumsden to Granville, November 9, 1884. *Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 102.

<sup>28</sup>Granville to Thornton, October 24, 1884. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>29</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 421.

<sup>30</sup>Thornton to Granville, October 2, 1884. *Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 87.

<sup>31</sup>Granville to Thornton, December 9, 1884. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

Afghan sphere, evidence to that fact having been collected and presented to the Russian Government on the first intimations that Russia desired it to be included within its own sphere.<sup>32</sup> At the same time complaints were made by the Russians of Afghan encroachments in the Turkoman country.<sup>33</sup> Granville took the position that all such questions should be settled by the Delimitation Commission. The Russians, on the other hand, insisted that a definite zone should be established by the Governments at London and St. Petersburg and that the Commissioners should confine their activities to that zone. As time went on the differences between the British and Russian points of view, notwithstanding minor concessions on the part of the British, created a deadlock, and for a time it looked as though the efforts at delimitation would completely break down.

Meanwhile the Russian forces had been advancing along the Afghan frontier, occupying a position near the town of Penjdeh and establishing a post at Put-i-Khatun. Later the Zulfikar Pass was occupied. The Russians refused to withdraw from these positions,<sup>34</sup> where their proximity to the Afghan troops caused the English to fear collisions between them. Nor was the London Government greatly tranquilized by M. de Giers's expression of confidence that a collision would not occur unless the Afghans attacked the Russians;<sup>35</sup> for it was known that the Afghans were restive and would not be inclined to permit the Russians to advance farther without resistance.<sup>36</sup> By March, 1885, the situation had become acute. Queen Victoria sought to prevent a conflict by the interposition of her personal influence, and telegraphed Tsar Alexander (March 4) asking him to do everything possible to avoid the misfortunes that might follow an engagement between the Russian and Afghan troops.<sup>37</sup> At the same time the Indian Government received orders from London to have an army corps in readiness with which to defend Herat should the course of events justify such action,<sup>38</sup> and Sir Peter Lumsden was informed that the Government held that any further advance of the Russian troops should be resisted by the Afghans.<sup>39</sup>

On March 30 the apprehended collision occurred. The Afghans occupied a position from which they refused to withdraw,<sup>40</sup> and in the

<sup>32</sup>Russian investigations revealed, on the other hand, that a year previous "no single Afghan" was found at Penjdeh, and "Russia has therefore a right to expect that the oasis of Penjdeh should become hers." (From an article in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, quoted in Baddeley, *op. cit.*, p. 211.)

<sup>33</sup>Granville to Thornton, December 9, 1884. *Parl. Papers*, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 116.

<sup>34</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 423.

<sup>35</sup>Thornton to Granville, March 5, 1885. *Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 164. See also Guedalla, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 340-341.

<sup>36</sup>Lumsden to Granville, March 1, 1885. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>37</sup>"Je fais appel à vos bons sentiments, cher frère, pour dire tout ce qui vous est possible pour prévenir les malheurs qui pourraient s'ensuivre d'un conflit armé entre les troupes Russes et Afghans." (Quoted in Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 424.)

<sup>38</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, III, p. 189.

<sup>39</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 421-422. See also Holdich, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 ff., and Gwynn and Tuckwell, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 115 ff.

<sup>40</sup>Holdich, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

battle which ensued they were driven out of Penjdeh with a loss of life estimated at five hundred.<sup>41</sup> While rashness and provocation were alleged on both sides,<sup>42</sup> from the British point of view the battle was the inevitable culmination of a persistent aggressive movement to which the Russians had committed themselves and from which they had refused to desist. "War is inevitable," declared the British Ambassador when the news reached St. Petersburg;<sup>43</sup> and Gladstone, to whom the attack upon the Afghans bore "the appearance of an unprovoked aggression,"<sup>44</sup> on April 27 proposed a vote of credit of £11,000,000 "of which six millions and a half were to meet the case for preparations rendered necessary by the incident of Penjdeh."<sup>45</sup>

The first reaction of the Russian Government was one of defiance.<sup>46</sup> M. de Giers even wired M. de Staal for the information of the British Cabinet that the Afghan commandant at Penjdeh had indicated his desire to live in peace with the Russians, but that the Amir had ordered him to obey the British officers who were attached to his forces and who, unfortunately, forbade him to execute the demands of the Russian General.<sup>47</sup> M. de Staal's instructions with regard to the alleged responsibility of the English officers were revoked, however, on the following day,<sup>48</sup> apparently after the receipt by Giers of a telegram from Staal admonishing the Russian Cabinet of the coming vote of credit and the seriousness of British intentions.<sup>49</sup>

The Russian Ambassador, who labored for peace during the crisis, sought to "assist the liberals to retain office at the cost of something less than war."<sup>50</sup> Nor did the Russians want war if their objects could be achieved without it. On the British side it was proposed that if Abdurrahman must give up Penjdeh, he should at least retain the Zulfikar Pass<sup>51</sup>—a proposal in which the British were aided by the Amir himself, who at the time of the Penjdeh incident was attending the Durbar of the Viceroy at Rawal Pindi,<sup>52</sup> and who there expressed himself as attaching small importance to Penjdeh, and "treated the skirmish as of small ac-

<sup>41</sup>Baddeley, *op. cit.*, p. 217. See Mr. Gladstone's speech of April 9. (Hansard, *Parl. Debates*, Third Series, 1885, CCXCVI, p. 1162.)

<sup>42</sup>*Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, III, p. 189.

<sup>43</sup>Baddeley, *op. cit.*, p. 217. See also Freycinet, *Souvenirs*, II, pp. 300 ff.

<sup>44</sup>Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, 1885, CCXCVI, p. 1162. Mr. Gladstone later moderated his statement. "Whose was the responsibility," he said, "is a matter of the utmost consequence. We only know that the Afghans suffered a loss in life, in spirit, and in repute. We know that a blow was struck at the credit and authority of a sovereign—our protected ally—who had committed no offense. All I can say is, we can not in that state of things close this book and say, 'We will look into it no more.' We must do our best to have right done in the matter." (Quoted in Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, III, pp. 183-184.)

<sup>45</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 440. For a foreigner's estimate of the seriousness of the situation created by the Penjdeh incident, see Count Münster's letter to Count Herbert Bismarck dated May 4, 1885. (*Die Grosse Politik*, IV, pp. 120-121.)

<sup>46</sup>*Die Grosse Politik*, IV, p. 112.

<sup>47</sup>Giers to Staal, April 21, 1885. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, I, p. 200.

<sup>48</sup>Same to same, April 22, 1885. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>49</sup>Staal to Giers, April 22, 1885. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>50</sup>*Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V, p. 424. See also Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 189 ff.

<sup>51</sup>The British had definitely promised Zulfikar to the Amir. See Buckle, *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, p. 681.

<sup>52</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 441.

count."<sup>58</sup> The Russians gladly embraced the British proposal, since, according to their own authorities, Zulfikar would have for them no great value.<sup>54</sup> As for the attack on Penjdeh, the Tsar positively refused the British demands that an inquiry into the conduct of the Russian commander, General Komaroff, be made.<sup>55</sup> The London Cabinet pressed the matter, pointing out that refusal meant war. That the question was merely one of satisfying an aroused public opinion was tacitly admitted by Lord Granville, who assured M. de Staal that he had no intention of subjecting "valiant officers to trial."<sup>56</sup> Under such equivocal conditions, unknown to the British public, arbitration was agreed upon; just *what* was to be arbitrated seems to have been a matter of doubt.<sup>57</sup> The Russian Government had its way as to the arbitrator. Lord Granville desired the German Emperor.<sup>58</sup> The Imperial Government, on the other hand, insisted upon the King of Denmark; and the Gladstone Government, hard pressed at home and abroad, acquiesced.<sup>59</sup>

Thus war, which for a time appeared so imminent,<sup>60</sup> was averted, and on May 2 at the Royal Academy dinner Lord Granville was able to say, "The peace of Europe will not be disturbed."<sup>61</sup> Had too dear a price been paid for its preservation? Many in England thought so. The Government was denounced by irresponsible critics "as a set of cowards and the murderers of those who had fallen at Penjdeh,"<sup>62</sup> and in the House of Commons a hostile motion was lost by only thirty votes.<sup>63</sup> In both England and Russia the press was particularly vitriolic during this period; so much so, says Baron Korff, that "one sometimes wonders how peace could have been maintained. . . ."<sup>64</sup>

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>Staal to Giers, April 15, 1885. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, I, p. 191. Cf. Tcharykow, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

<sup>55</sup>Giers to Staal, April 28, 1885. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, I, p. 204. M. de Giers wrote: ". . . Sa Majesté ne saurait admettre aucun semblant d'enquête sur les actes du général Komaroff, étant seul juge de leur conformité à ses ordres."

<sup>56</sup>Staal to Giers, May 5, 1885. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>57</sup>See Professor Langer's statement relative to this question in *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890*, p. 315.

<sup>58</sup>See *Die Grosse Politik*, IV, pp. 120 ff.

<sup>59</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 442-443.

<sup>60</sup>How near the two Powers were to a state of war is indicated by Fitzmaurice (*op. cit.*, II, p. 440): "On April 26 the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Governments were notified that the British fleet had occupied Port Hamilton, off the southern coast of Korea, and that the Admiral had orders to hoist the flag if the Russian fleet appeared." See also the correspondence of the Queen and Mr. Gladstone given in Guedalla, *op. cit.*, II, p. 344.

<sup>61</sup>Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 440.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.* On May 4 Münster wrote from London to Count Herbert Bismarck: "The thought that there will be no war gives universal satisfaction here, but with the reservation that it is impossible to trust the Russians, and that the time for peace-rejoicings is not yet. The Opposition is furious, and Lord Randolph Churchill made a speech which greatly impressed the House. The statements by Gladstone and Granville were received in both Houses in dead and chilly silence. This morning the news vendors had quite a good joke about Churchill's speech. They cried 'War declared against Russia,' and then, in a low voice, 'By Lord Randolph Churchill!'" (*Die Grosse Politik*, IV, pp. 120-121. Dugdale's translation.)

<sup>64</sup>*Russia's Foreign Relations During the Last Half Century*, p. 33. Baddeley says (*op. cit.*, p. 220): "The press on either side lashed itself into ungovernable fury, and if war was ultimately averted it was in spite of the utmost efforts of these precious 'organs of publicity.' Mr. Stead was, admittedly, an exception; but unfortunately, his personality and methods more than nullified his endeavours in favour of peace, while the caustic writing of his ally O. K. (Mme. de Novikoff) in all probability made more enemies than friends for Russia; the average Britisher being neither a Gladstone, a Froude, nor a Kinglake."

Precariously surviving its problems in Asia and Africa,<sup>65</sup> the Gladstone Ministry was defeated on a budget question and resigned in June, 1885. Upon Lord Salisbury's taking office the consideration of the Afghan question was resumed. Prolonged and involved discussions ensued concerning the area denoted by the name "Zulfikar,"<sup>66</sup> which, by the consent of the Russian Government, was to be included within the Afghan territory. Specifically, the question was, How far to the north of the pass should the Afghan frontier lie? The British Government had made commitments to the Amir on the basis of the Russian promise, and now demanded that the Russians accept a limitary line that would make their fulfilment possible.<sup>67</sup> The Russians were pertinacious, and by August it looked as though another impasse had been reached.<sup>68</sup> A compromise was effected, however, and incorporated in a Protocol which was signed by Salisbury and Staal on September 10.<sup>69</sup> The projected arbitration concerning the Penjdeh incident, which had served its purpose during Gladstone's administration, was suffered to lapse and was not heard of again.<sup>70</sup>

Salisbury's short-lived Government came to an end in November and Gladstone returned to Power. Defeated on the question of Home Rule, however (July, 1886), he was again superseded by Salisbury; and it was during the period of Salisbury's second Government that the question of the northwestern frontier of Afghanistan was finally settled on the basis of the Protocol of September, 1885.

For the task of delimitation on the spot Colonel Ridgeway was appointed to succeed Sir Peter Lumsden, whose relations with the London Government had not been amicable,<sup>71</sup> and, on the Russian side, Colonel Kuhlberg succeeded General Zelenoi. The reconstituted Joint Commission began its work at Zulfikar on the Heri Rud in the fall of 1885, and continued till the following summer.<sup>72</sup> By that time the group had nearly reached Khojah Saleh on the Amu Daria; but due to irreconcilable differences of opinion as to the exact point at which the line should meet the river, the Governments concerned agreed to recall the Commissioners

<sup>65</sup>The Gladstone Ministry was seriously disrupted by the strain of African and Central Asian affairs, threats of resignation coming from first one Minister, then another. See Morley, *op. cit.*, III, p. 185, and Gwynn and Tuckwell, *op. cit.*, II, p. 117.

<sup>66</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 4"), pp. 41-72, and Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 227 ff.

<sup>67</sup>Salisbury to Thornton, July 1, 1885. *Parl. Papers*, 1884-85, LXXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 4"), p. 50.

<sup>68</sup>Holdich, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>69</sup>See Appendix II.

<sup>70</sup>See Baddeley, *op. cit.*, p. 223, and Gwynn and Tuckwell, *op. cit.*, II, p. 121.

<sup>71</sup>Lumsden, who seems to have favored a declaration of war immediately after the Penjdeh incident, was recalled soon after it occurred. His attitude of insubordination was sharply rebuked by Lord Granville, who "thought it right to tell Sir Peter that the tone of many of his communications had been such as in a rather long official experience he never remembered as between an officer employed and his official chief." (Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.*, II, p. 441.)

<sup>72</sup>The details of the delimitation are recorded in *Parl. Papers*, 1887, LXIII ("Central Asia. No. 2"). It has not seemed desirable, if indeed possible, even to summarize the highly technical questions with which the Joint Commission dealt, such as water supply, pasturage, topography, shifting populations, etc.



and, on the basis of the data collected on the spot, to enter upon direct negotiations for the purpose of solving the pending questions.<sup>73</sup> Differences were composed, and on July 22, 1887, the final Protocol was signed at St. Petersburg by Colonel Ridgeway and M. Zinovieff, Head of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>74</sup> An exchange of notes on August 3 rendered the instrument operative.<sup>75</sup>

After the signing of the Protocol there yet remained the task of the local demarcation by a Mixed Commission of the frontier agreed upon,<sup>76</sup> and the rectification of certain portions of the frontier not admitted in the Protocol to be definitive. This work was accomplished by a Commission of which the chief members were Lieutenant-Colonel Yate and Captain Komaroff, and the Protocols signed by them were confirmed by an exchange of notes between the British and Russian Governments on June 12, 1888.<sup>77</sup>

The northwestern Afghan frontier was thus established after a long period of diplomacy, research, and technical execution. The actual work of delimitation and demarcation required almost four years and involved the labor of hundreds of men. The idea of the delimitation, however, had been conceived much earlier, and had had its first substantive results in the agreement of January, 1873, the purport of which, it was constantly agreed, should be observed in the later delimitation procedure.<sup>78</sup>

On the whole the work seemed well done. If the British had been forced to make what appeared to some to be unwarranted and humiliating concessions, they had at least obtained the much-desired "hard granite of a legal compact" with their adversary in Central Asia, and the sense of security that accompanied it. The Russians had every cause for gratification, with their extended frontiers and their almost uninterrupted series of diplomatic victories. Even the Amir, so innocent a party to the whole affair, expressed his approval and warmly thanked those who had added this measure of definiteness to his territorially uncertain dominions.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup>Morier to Vlangaly, August 24, 1886. *Parl. Papers*, 1887, LXIII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), p. 166.

<sup>74</sup>The text of the Protocol is given in *Parl. Papers*, 1887, LXIII ("Central Asia. No. 1").

<sup>75</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1887, LXIII ("Central Asia. No. 2"), pp. 377-378.

<sup>76</sup>Article VI of the Protocol reads: "The frontier agreed upon shall be locally demarcated by a Mixed Commission, according to the signed Maps. In case the work of demarcation should be delayed, the line traced on the Maps shall nevertheless be considered binding by the two Governments." (*Parl. Papers*, 1887, LXIII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), p. 7.)

<sup>77</sup>*Parl. Papers*, 1888, LXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), pp. 2-3.

<sup>78</sup>That is, that "Afghanistan" was conceived as comprising such territories of the Amir Dost Mohammed as had been under the effective rule of his successor Shere Ali, and second, that Afghanistan was recognized as being outside the Russian sphere of influence.

<sup>79</sup>The Amir to the Viceroy, August 16, 1887. *Parl. Papers*, 1888, LXXVII ("Central Asia. No. 1"), pp. 20-21. See also *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, II, pp. 152-153.

## THE PAMIRS QUESTION AND THE AGREEMENT OF 1895

With the signing of the Protocol in 1886 and the subsequent demarcation considered in the previous chapter, the most pregnable frontier of Afghanistan—the northwest—was definitely established, and it was hoped that the "Afghan question," so far as it concerned the relations of England and Russia, was permanently closed. But for only a short time the question was in abeyance, it being revived during the administration of Lord Lansdowne as Viceroy, which began in 1888. The relations of the Viceroy and the Amir were consistently unfriendly<sup>1</sup>—a situation which experience had shown was likely to be attended by complications involving Great Britain and Russia. So it was in the 1890's.<sup>2</sup> The new phase of the question was raised in a quarter which, by reason of its supposed inaccessibility, had been thought to lie outside the danger zone.

It will be recalled that when the agreement of January, 1873, was concluded, the northern limits of the Amir's dominion were defined with a considerable degree of laxity, due to the avowed lack of accurate geographic data with respect to the territories involved.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, a considerable part of the northern frontier was left in this indeterminate state after the delimitation effected in the '80's, which established only the boundary between the Heri Rud and the Oxus. The region to the east remained undemarcated and largely unknown, the lofty heights of the "Roof of the World" affording, the British believed, a natural barrier against attack that was practically absolute.<sup>4</sup>

As a matter of fact the Russians had for some time been active in the Pamirs. As early as 1876 the Russian officer Skobelev had conducted an expedition to the Alai Mountains as a result of which the northern portion of the Pamir region was annexed to the Tsar's dominions.<sup>5</sup> After

<sup>1</sup>The specific source of irritation between the Viceroy and the Amir grew out of the former's refusal to negotiate concerning the newly constructed British railway to Chaman ("right on the borders of Afghanistan"), which, together with British "fortifications and preparations," aroused fears in Afghanistan "that the English railway was going to enter Kandahar, and the English army was making a Charhai (an attack) on Kabul." (*The Life of Abdur Rahman*, II, p. 135.) Lord Lansdowne's position relative to the matter is given in a letter to Lord Cross (Secretary of State for India) quoted in Newton, *Lord Lansdowne*, pp. 67-68. Lansdowne had a very low opinion of the Amir, and on one occasion referred to him as a "cantankerous and suspicious old savage." (Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 106.)

<sup>2</sup>Lady Gwendolen Cecil maintains that the influence of Bismarckian diplomacy was an active factor in the revival of Anglo-Russian antagonism in Central Asia in the 1890's: that "British interests supplied the sacrificial offering" on the altar of Russo-German conciliation. (*Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, III, p. 221.) For the documentary basis for Lady Cecil's statement, see *Die Grosse Politik*, VII, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>See Chap. II.

<sup>4</sup>The Amir did not think so, and at Rawal Pindi (1885) urged the British occupation of the Pamirs to prevent their occupation by the Russians. (*The Life of Abdur Rahman*, II, p. 131.) Lord Curzon spoke of the passes as "lofty but available." (*Russia in Central Asia*, p. 297.)

<sup>5</sup>For an account of the Russian advance in this quarter, see Vambéry's articles, "Russia, India, and Afghanistan" (*Quarterly Review*, Vol. CLXXV, pp. 507-537) and "The Russian Advance in the Pamirs" (*New Review*, Vol. VII, pp. 262-270). Vambéry, one of the most prolific writers on the Central Asian question, must be read with caution, however. While he was fairly accurate as to the facts of the case, his extreme Russophobia detracts from the value of his many interesting articles and books dealing with the Middle East.



OROGRAPHICAL MAP OF  
**AFGHANISTAN & BALUCHISTAN**

COMPILED BY SIR THOMAS H. HOLDICH, K.G.I.E., C.B.

SCALE 1 INCH = 60 MILES

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180 200 220 240 MILES

Lines of British Occupation





OROGRAPHICAL MAP OF  
**AFGHANISTAN & BALUCHISTAN**  
 COMPILED BY SIR THOMAS H. HOLDICH, K.C.I.E., C.B.

SCALE 1 INCH = 96 MILES  
 0 20 40 60 80 100 150 200 250 300 MILES  
 Lines of British Occupation - - - - -



that time Russian agents were busily engaged in exploring the head waters of the Oxus and adding to the scant geographic knowledge of that rugged country.<sup>8</sup> With characteristic thoroughness the explorations were prosecuted, and "glowing accounts of the benefits of Russian rule and the power of the Great White Czar"<sup>7</sup> were spread among the peoples occupying the Pamir region. The Pamir itself having been explored, the Russians pushed farther afield, and a Cossack officer, Grombchevsky, "even marched across the Hindu Kush and began to intrigue with the petty chieftains on the northern borders of Kashmir."<sup>8</sup>

These explorers attracted but little attention until the fall of 1891. At that time an English officer, Captain Younghusband, who was on special duty in the Intelligence Department of the Indian Government and who was at the time engaged in exploring the country to the north of the Himalayas, met a Russian force under Colonel Yanoff in the Wakhan Valley at the deserted village of Bozai Gumbaz.<sup>9</sup> The first meeting of the English and Russian officers was friendly, but pleasant relations were soon terminated when Yanoff announced that he had received orders from the Governor-General of Turkestan to arrest Younghusband and conduct him to Marghilan, unless he gave written promise to leave the neighborhood at once and "not to travel in what the Russian officer styled 'newly acquired Russian territory.'"<sup>10</sup> Yielding to superior force, Younghusband left Bozai Gumbaz and returned to the Taghdumbash Pamir, where he learned that the Russians had crossed the Hindu Kush by the Korabhut Pass, and after journeying for some distance through the Yakhun Valley district of Chitral, had recrossed the Hindu Kush and traveled northward through Afghan territory to the Alichur Pamir.<sup>11</sup>

The news of Captain Younghusband's expulsion was angrily received in England,<sup>12</sup> and denounced as a "distinct breach of the promises made by the Russian Government, and an infringement of the boundary line as agreed to between England and Russia in 1873."<sup>13</sup> For whatever may have been the ambiguities of the frontier agreed upon at that time, it was held that Russia could not, by any possible interpretation of the

<sup>8</sup>Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia*, pp. 180-181. The question of the source of the Oxus seems to have been almost as controversial a one among geographically minded persons in the latter nineteenth century as that of the source of the Nile at a somewhat earlier date. Lord Curzon conducted a thorough investigation during his explorations in 1894, as did the Joint Commission in 1895. Lord Curzon's findings are given in his monograph entitled, "The Pamirs and the Source of the Oxus," which appeared serially in the *Geographical Journal*, July, August, and September, 1896 (Vol. VIII); a summary of the Report of the Boundary Commission appeared in the same journal (January, 1899, Vol. XIII, pp. 50-56) under the title, "The Proceedings of the Pamir Boundary Commission."

<sup>9</sup>*Russia's March Towards India*, II, p. 258.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.* See also Roberts, *Forty-one Years in India*, II, p. 446, and the *Annual Register* for 1892, pp. 243-244.

<sup>11</sup>*Russia's March Towards India*, p. 259.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 260. See also Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, p. 446.

<sup>13</sup>*Russia's March Towards India*, II, p. 260. See Meyendorff, *Correspondance diplomatique de M. de Staal*, II, p. 150. (Morier to Giers, January 25, 1892.)

<sup>14</sup>Morier to Giers, January 25, 1892. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 157-160.

<sup>15</sup>Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, p. 446.

Agreement of 1873, lay claim to territory lying south of the branch of the Oxus "which takes its rise in Lake Victoria (Sir-i-kul)."<sup>14</sup> From the point of view of international law, the Russian officer had violated "les règles les plus élémentaires";<sup>15</sup> and what was worse, had ostensibly done so on the order of the Imperial Cabinet.<sup>16</sup>

The immediate result of the episode was a British campaign against the Chief of Hunza, who had declared himself in favor of Russia;<sup>17</sup> the more consequential was the reopening of the Central Asian question in 1892, and the beginning of a series of negotiations which, though contentious and protracted, led the English and Russians one step further in their progress toward colonial conciliation.

The situation during the years 1892-1895 is interesting as showing in more striking fashion than previous ones the antithetical views of those whose desires were peaceful and conciliatory, and embraced considerations of international scope, and of those whose point of view was determined by immediate practicality and expediency. Specifically, in a more emphatic way than previously the demands of military circles made themselves felt, and clashed with the pacific sentiments of civil authorities. Prince Lobanov-Rostovsky speaks of Anglo-Russian relations as "illuminating" from this angle, and as revealing "a changing trend in Russian foreign policy."<sup>18</sup> This change he attributes to the death of Alexander III and to the advent of new and less able Ministers, and a consequent break in the "methodic cautiousness" that had characterized Asiatic policy during the time of Gortchakoff and Giers.<sup>19</sup> The conflicting aims of the War Ministry and those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are repeatedly brought out in the *Correspondance* of M. de Staal. In the midst of the Pamirs discussion (August, 1893) Count Kapnist, temporarily in charge of foreign affairs, referring to the War Minister, Vanovsky, wrote in exasperation, "L'animal est souvent obstiné comme un âne!"<sup>20</sup> Indeed the letters exchanged between the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg and the Russian Ambassador at London are replete with personalities.

The events alluded to indicated the desirability of effecting a "délimitation légale" in the new danger zone, and M. de Giers agreed with Sir Robert Morier that an agreement was necessary "pour constituer un

<sup>14</sup>*Russia's March Towards India*, II, p. 261. See also Schuyler, *Turkistan*, II, pp. 267-268.

<sup>15</sup>Morier to Giers, January 25, 1892. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, II, p. 158. On February 10, 1892, M. de Staal wrote to Count Kapnist, Chief of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "Pour ce qui est de l'affaire des Pamirs, je partage . . . votre opinion. . . . L'expulsion des officiers anglais a été un abus de force absolument gratuit." (Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, II, p. 155.)

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>17</sup>Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, p. 446.

<sup>18</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* The latter was in ill health during the period of the Pamirs negotiations, which were conducted for the most part by subordinates. He died in January, 1895.

<sup>20</sup>Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, II, p. 223.

territoire sur lequel on peut revendiquer des droits."<sup>21</sup> He admitted further that a serious situation existed concerning territorial possessions and spheres of influence which could be definitely settled only by a commission of delimitation—a thing "que nous demandons depuis longtemps."<sup>22</sup>

If, as ten years previous, the Russians readily agreed to cooperate with the English in a delimitation of the Afghan frontier—indeed, proposed such action—they also, as previously, delayed the ready accomplishment of the task. In the summer of 1892, during the progress of the Anglo-Russian discussions, the Russian Foreign Office and War Office agreed, on the urgent demands of the latter, to establish Russian dominion over the whole of the Pamirs.<sup>23</sup> M. de Staal recognized the danger to amicable relations between the two countries inherent in such an undertaking, and thought it in conformity with Russian interests to avoid provocation.<sup>24</sup> His plan was, therefore, to continue the conversations, placating the English by assuring them of the perfect discipline of the Russian troops, which would prevent untoward action against the Afghans,<sup>25</sup> and at the same time to seek to moderate the demands of the Russian War Office. In accomplishing the former, Staal felt that he was being aided by the political crisis in England, which, he believed, would for the time being obscure the issue of the Russian advance "dans la région des Pamirs."<sup>26</sup>

The "political crisis" referred to resulted in the coming to power of the Liberals; and conversations between M. de Staal and Lord Rosebery, who assumed the Foreign Office, were begun. Rosebery at first evinced little interest in the Pamirs, and freely admitted that though he had located the region on the map, his knowledge of the question did not extend beyond that.<sup>27</sup> Staal explained to him that the chief reason for the Russian advance was the Chinese encroachments "dans ces parages."<sup>28</sup> He added that he considered it extremely desirable that the two Powers prevent their frontiers from touching—that that was the only way in which conflict could be avoided, and a feeling of "sécurité réciproque" be established.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Morier to Giers, January 25, 1892. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>22</sup>Giers to Morier, January 29, 1892. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>23</sup>Staal to Giers, July 12, 1892. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>25</sup>Staal to Chichkine, July 27, 1892. *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>26</sup>Staal to Giers, August 9, 1892. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>27</sup>Same to same, August 23, 1892. *Ibid.*, p. 183. Lord Crewe in his *Rosebery* leads us to believe that the Foreign Minister (later Prime Minister) was never seriously concerned with the question of Russian advance in Central Asia, and makes no specific reference to the Pamirs question. (See Chaps. XIV-XVII, *passim*, especially p. 412.) The extensive correspondence of M. de Staal forces one to a contrary view.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.* For a consideration of the possible connection between Yanoff's expedition to the Pamirs and the general diplomatic situation in Europe, particularly the Bulgarian question, see Langer, *The Franco-Russian Alliance*, pp. 267-268.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*



The idea of maintaining a buffer between the English and Russian possessions was thus continued in the thinking of representatives of the two Governments. It was further expressed by Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for India, who thought the too great proximity of the Powers brought about by the Russian advance in the Pamirs productive of "alarmes à chaque pas et de continuel froissements."<sup>30</sup> Why should the Powers expose themselves to these dangers, when "un peu de bonne volonté et d'esprit de conciliation"<sup>31</sup> would suffice to preclude such injurious and unnecessary friction? M. de Staal said that the Russians were in perfect agreement with Lord Kimberley. He added, however, that they (the Russians) were remaining within the limits established by "nos arrangements antérieurs,"<sup>32</sup> and were actuated only by a desire to protect their newly acquired territory and maintain their prestige by proving themselves "pas indifférents aux impiétements des Afghans ou des Chinois."<sup>33</sup>

In January, 1893, Lord Rosebery again brought up the subject of the Afghan delimitation, citing among other reasons for the immediate necessity of an agreement the forthcoming appearance of the *Blue Books* and the unfavorable impression on Parliament of their silence concerning the Pamirs question.<sup>34</sup> At this time he expressed the opinion that British interests, while not extending beyond the chain of the Hindu Kush, necessitated British control of the northern as well as the southern slopes,<sup>35</sup> and reiterated his belief that the importance of the question demanded that a mixed commission be dispatched as soon as the season would permit.<sup>36</sup> He added that should the Imperial Government refuse to collaborate in such a project, the British would feel justified in undertaking it alone.<sup>37</sup> Sir Robert Morier had been instructed so to inform the Russian Cabinet.<sup>38</sup> M. de Staal replied that if such a step were taken, the Russian Government would be obliged to reserve full liberty of action.<sup>39</sup>

At St. Petersburg the Ministry of Foreign Affairs consulted in March, 1893, with representatives of the Ministry of War on the line to follow. M. de Staal was present at these negotiations and acted, so Meyendorff tells us, along with Giers, Chichkine, and Kapnist, in the rôle of mediator between England and the Russian War Ministry.<sup>40</sup> At the same time it

<sup>30</sup>Staal to Chichkine (not dated, but "probablement octobre 1892"). Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, II, p. 187.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>Staal to Chichkine, January 25, 1893. *Ibid.*, p. 201. The British Cabinet was under fire at this time, being accused of secret diplomacy (which had "produced the First Afghan War") and of indifference to the interests of Afghanistan and China in relation to the Pamirs question. (Hansard, *Parl. Debates*, Fourth Series, 1893, VIII, pp. 673-674, and XI, pp. 1775 ff.)

<sup>35</sup>Staal to Chichkine, January 25, 1893. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, II, p. 202.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 194. ("Sommaire," 1893.)

appears that Lord Rosebery, impatient to conclude the negotiations, found himself in an analogous position relative to the India Office, which Staal suspected of desiring the failure of the *pourparlers*.<sup>41</sup>

On returning to London Staal resumed his conversations with Rosebery, a summary of which he telegraphed to his Government on April 25. Unfortunately Meyendorff has not seen fit to include it in the *Correspondance*. But Rosebery's claims were evidently deemed extravagant, for the communication plunged Kapnist "dans la stupeur,"<sup>42</sup> and elicited from him comments that were clearly not intended to be complimentary: "Votre télégramme . . . . prouve une chose que nous savons depuis longtemps: combien les Anglais, même sans être chauvins, sont impudents dans leurs exigences."<sup>43</sup> Concerning the threatened "commission britannique d'exploration dans les contrées du Pamir," Rosebery moderated his earlier declaration, since he had received from the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg assurance that the Russian Government would dispatch no further expeditions to the Pamirs during the period of the negotiations.<sup>44</sup>

A later conversation was devoted to the more general question of British and Russian spheres of influence in Central Asia. Lord Rosebery said to M. de Staal that the British Government was not disposed to admit "que tout ce qui se trouvait en dehors des limites afghanes revenait, *ipso facto*, à la sphère d'influence de la Russie."<sup>45</sup> Staal replied that the Russians had in reality made no such claim, but did reserve liberty of action in the rest of Central Asia.<sup>46</sup> When Rosebery observed that such was also the case with England, Staal said that it was this fact, that the possessions of the two countries were gradually approaching each other, which necessitated their "liberté réciproque" being limited by means of an "*entente commune*." Only such an arrangement, based on the interests of the two countries, could insure stability.<sup>47</sup> To Staal's proposition Lord Rosebery recalled a suggestion, previously made by him, of a delimitation having "pour base une ligne qui se dirigerait du lac Victoria vers l'Est pour aboutir à la frontière chinoise."<sup>48</sup> Such a line, he thought, would answer the conditions outlined by the Russian Ambassador.<sup>49</sup>

Count Kapnist considered M. de Staal unnecessarily generous in averring that the Russian Government did not claim, *ipso facto*, "tout au moins dans la sphère de notre influence, les territoires n'appartenant pas à l'Afghanistan."<sup>50</sup> Such a condition, he thought, was the logical im-

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>Kapnist to Staal, April 27, 1893. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>44</sup>Staal to Chichkine, May 3, 1893. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>45</sup>Same to same, May 31, 1893. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup>Kapnist to Staal, June 8, 1893. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

plication of the Agreement of 1872-1873.<sup>51</sup> Since that time the Russians had pushed their dominion to the Afghan frontier, without menacing the British position and with no conflict resulting.<sup>52</sup> Now, since Rosebery had apparently admitted the necessity of the Amir's evacuation of Shogan and Roshan (that is, had offered "la ligne de Pajindji [Oxus] comme base de délimitation"),<sup>53</sup> under whose influence were these territories to fall? As for Rosebery's suggestion of the line east of Lake Victoria as the line of limitation, Kapnist demurred, believing Rosebery's line not intended, as previously indicated by Sir Robert Morier, to mark territory that "shall be acknowledged as being *within the sphere of British influence* and . . . not to be disposed of without [*sic*] their will and consent," but to constitute the *British frontier*.<sup>54</sup> The possession by the British of territory north of the Hindu Kush was inadmissible to the Russian Government, since that would constitute "une menace contre nos frontières, relativement parlant ouvertes."<sup>55</sup> Kapnist concluded his rather remarkable letter: "Je termine ma lettre par une observation générale. L'Angleterre n'entrera certes pas en conflit avec nous pour les Pamirs si nous sommes prudents, *et nous le sommes* en ne dépassant pas militairement le Mourgab. Mais dans la négociation, il faut, comme disait Danton, de l'audace, de l'audace, et encore de l'audace! La victoire sera à celui qui ne se laissera pas intimider."<sup>56</sup>

Conversations and correspondence continued, with objections to mutual concessions coming from both the Russian War Ministry and the Government of India.<sup>57</sup> Chichkine believed that ultimately an agreement would be reached (though when, "Dieu seul le sait"),<sup>58</sup> and Kapnist expressed faith that the Tsar, though he found himself in the embarrassing position of having to decide between two Ministers with conflicting opinions, "est au fond avec nous."<sup>59</sup>

The Russian Ministry distrusted Lord Lansdowne, but it was his action in the fall of 1893 that paved the way for the entente toward which the Foreign Offices of England and Russia had been working for so long but the consummation of which so persistently eluded them. In September a mission under Sir Mortimer Durand was sent to Kabul for the purpose of composing the differences between the Indian Government and the Amir, and, more important, informing the Amir "that the Russian Government insisted on the literal fulfilment of the Agreement of 1873, which defined the north-eastern limits of Afghanistan."<sup>60</sup> This in-

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup>Chichkine to Staal, August 19, 1893. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>58</sup>Same to same, August 17, 1893. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>59</sup>Kapnist to Staal, August 30, 1893. *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>Sykes, *Sir Mortimer Durand*, p. 210. See also Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

volved the withdrawal of the Afghans from trans-Oxus Roshan and Shignan, but "included the acquisition by the Amir of cis-Oxus Darwaz, then in the possession of Bokhara."<sup>61</sup> Durand was sensible of the fact that the Amir's withdrawal from these territories would be unpalatable to him; but he was "empowered to make considerable concessions" in order to secure the success of the negotiations.<sup>62</sup> He was aided in accomplishing his object by recent border skirmishes between the Russians and Afghans in the region with which the negotiations were concerned,<sup>63</sup> and he used these incidents as an object lesson to the Amir as indicating the dangers involved in his efforts to retain the controverted country.<sup>64</sup> In the end he obtained the Amir's consent to withdrawal.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand it was necessary for Durand to persuade the Amir to *retain* Eastern Wakhan, which experience had taught him to be, from a military point of view, indefensible.<sup>66</sup> Accepting suzerainty of it was in fact an important service to the British, making possible a continuation of the policy of keeping their possessions separated from the Russian.<sup>67</sup>

The year 1894 saw the retirement of Gladstone and the relinquishing of the Foreign Office by Rosebery, who became Prime Minister. During the course of the year Lord Lansdowne was succeeded as Viceroy by Lord Elgin—an appointment which met with the warm approbation of M. de Staal, who pointed out the conciliatory character of the new ruler who sought to avoid "le moindre incident de nature à nous être désagréable."<sup>68</sup> Pressing questions of internal politics largely occupied the London Government, and the correspondence of the Russian Ambassador indicates but little attention to the question of the Pamirs delimitation. In December, however, he was able to write M. de Giers:

Il me semble . . . que le Cabinet anglais a fait droit à toutes nos demandes. Il ne resterait plus, dès lors, qu'à clore cette longue négociation par un échange de notes constatant l'accord intervenu entre les deux Puissances dans l'affaire de la délimitation de leurs sphères d'influence en Asie centrale.

Cette constatation me paraît d'autant plus opportune que la situation parlementaire en Angleterre se présente en ce moment sous un aspect assez peu favorable pour le Gouvernement actuel. Une dissolution de la Chambre et des élections générales entraîneraient probablement la formation d'un nouveau Cabinet, ainsi que de nombreux délais dans le règlement des questions que nous avons à traiter en commun. . . .<sup>69</sup>

The exchange of notes, between the Earl of Kimberley (Lord Rosebery's successor in the Foreign Office) and M. de Staal, occurred on March 11 of the following year. By the agreement<sup>70</sup> thus reached, "The

<sup>61</sup>Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 211. See also Noyce, *England, India, and Afghanistan*, p. 141.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.* The "concessions" proved to be an increase in the Amir's subsidy from 12 to 18 lacs of rupees.

<sup>63</sup>For an account of the Somatash incident referred to, see *The Times* of November 7, 1892.

<sup>64</sup>Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 213. See also *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, I, pp. 285 ff.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>68</sup>Staal to Giers, September 4, 1894. *Meyendorff, op. cit.*, II, p. 249.

<sup>69</sup>Same to same, December 26, 1894. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>70</sup>See Appendix III.

spheres of influence of Great Britain and Russia to the east of Lake Victoria" were to be divided "by a line which, starting from a point on that lake near its eastern extremity," should follow a mountainous course to the Chinese frontier. The line was to be marked out "and its precise configuration" settled by a "Joint Commission of a purely technical character, with a military escort not exceeding that which is strictly necessary for its proper protection." The British Government was to "arrange with the Ameer of Afghanistan as to the manner in which His Highness shall be represented on the Commission." The essence of the agreement is contained in Clauses 4 and 5:

4. Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia engage to abstain from exercising any political influence or control, the former to the north, the latter to the south, of the above line of demarcation.

5. Her Britannic Majesty's Government engage that the territory lying within the British sphere of influence between the Hindu Kush and the line running from the east end of Lake Victoria to the Chinese frontier shall form part of the territory of the Ameer of Afghanistan, that it shall not be annexed to Great Britain, and that no military posts or forts shall be established in it.

The execution of the agreement was "contingent upon the evacuation by the Ameer of Afghanistan of all the territories now occupied by His Highness on the right bank of the Panjah, and on the evacuation by the Ameer of Bokhara of that portion of Darwaz which lies to the south of the Oxus." The British and Russian Governments agreed to "use their influence respectively with the two Ameer."

As has been pointed out, Sir Mortimer Durand's mission in 1893 had resulted in the concessions by Abdurrahman which the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1895 predicated as requisite to "the execution of the Agreement." It was not to be supposed that the Amir of Bokhara, whose sovereignty had been for years a fictitious one, would effectually oppose the cession of territory south of the Oxus held by him. The way was clear, therefore, for the demarcation by the Joint Commission, and this work was completed with dispatch before the end of the year. The error of sending a veritable army with the Commission, as in 1884, was avoided alike by the British and the Russians, and the work proceeded with "a feeling of good-fellowship between the two camps which was never . . . . disturbed, whatever might be the changes and deviations of the political weather cock."<sup>71</sup> Writing picturesquely of the completion of the work, Sir Thomas Holdich, chief surveyor for the British group, says that having carried the demarcation eastward as far as the difficult terrain of the country would permit, it was "thence officially projected into space where . . . no pillars or markstones could be raised to witness it. Amidst the voiceless waste of a vast white wilderness—20,000 feet above

<sup>71</sup>Holdich, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

the sea, absolutely inaccessible to man and within the ken of no living creature but the Pamir eagles—there the three great empires actually meet. It is a fitting trijunction. No god of Hindu mythology ever occupied a more stupendous throne."<sup>72</sup>

The Agreement of 1895 and the demarcation for which it provided constituted the last step in the delimitation of the Afghan frontier. By the agreement of that year the buffer principle was continued: Eastern Wakhan, as Durand had gotten the Amir to agree in advance, was constituted Afghan territory. "Not an imposing buffer," says Holdich, "this long attenuated arm of Afghanistan reaching out to touch China with the tips of its fingers";<sup>73</sup> but nevertheless the territory of a sovereign ruler, violation of which might be regarded as *casus belli*.

The Pamirs Agreement, though of itself probably not an important diplomatic event, must be regarded as a link in an important chain of events.<sup>74</sup> Notwithstanding hostile voices that opposed *rapprochement* and preached the impossibility of colonial accommodation between Great Britain and Russia, another amicable agreement *had* been reached, and another step taken toward an ultimate *entente cordiale*, the importance of which was to dwarf the train of events out of which it grew.

<sup>72</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 293-294. There was, in reality, no trijunction, and the three empires do not "actually meet." The buffer prevented that.

<sup>73</sup>Holdich says of the "long attenuated arm": "It is only eight miles wide at one part, and could be ridden across in a morning's ride. It presents no vast physical obstacle to an advance of any sort; physical obstacles, however, are not wanting, but they lie in the Indian side, and they are rude enough and difficult enough to answer all possible purposes. It is a political intervention—a hedge, as it were—over which Russia cannot step without violating Afghanistan, and the violation of Afghanistan may (or may not) be regarded as a 'casus belli.'" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 284-285.)

<sup>74</sup>See the statement of Tcharykow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, p. 188. Cf. Spender, *Fifty Years of Europe*, p. 139.

## THE AFGHAN QUESTION AND THE ENTENTE OF 1907

The years following the Russian advances of 1884 and 1885 were marked by a rapid development of the Russian railways in Central Asia, which culminated in the junction of the Trans-Caspian and Orenburg-Tashkent lines at the Kushk on the Afghan frontier.<sup>1</sup> The construction of these railways was observed with customary disquietude by the English, who regarded them as strictly strategical,<sup>2</sup> since the Afghan trade of Russia was known to be small and of itself insufficient to warrant them. No serious incident, however, grew out of this "railway advance"; and with the settlement of the Pamirs question in 1895, there was no further room for disputes concerning the Afghan boundaries. The years that followed were, indeed, accompanied by a gradual relaxation of the Anglo-Russian tension, though this was more perceptible in Europe than in Asia, and was attended by "spasms of vehement distrust at Tashkent and Calcutta."<sup>3</sup>

The year 1900, however, witnessed the revival of the Afghan question, at a time when Great Britain was seriously involved in the South African War. It had been repeatedly shown that the problems of Central Asia were inseparable from Imperial exigencies elsewhere, and it seems not improbable that the Russians were availing themselves of the British pre-occupation to further their interests in a quarter where they had already won so many diplomatic victories.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it was well known that the relations of the British and the Amir Abdurrahman were not cordial, notwithstanding the settlement effected by Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893.<sup>5</sup> On the whole the time seemed ripe for broaching a question which the Russian Cabinet had for some time considered: the establishment of direct relations with Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, II, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup>Gooch, *History of Modern Europe*, p. 373. Cf. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 373.

<sup>3</sup>*Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V, p. 426. On October 29, 1895, however, Prince von Radolin wrote from St. Petersburg to Prince von Hohenlohe: "In every circle in St. Petersburg there is evidently very strong displeasure against England. All that England does fills the Russians with suspicion, and the public assumes that any joint action with England must be to Russia's disadvantage from the start. . . . It is remarkable that side by side with this animosity against England, there is unmistakably a certain feeling of fear of her. They watch with the greatest tension and anxiety every indication pointing at a rapprochement of England towards Germany, or vice-versa." (*Die Grosse Politik*, X, pp. 93-94. Dugdale's translation.)

<sup>4</sup>That the Russian Government was keenly interested in the course of the war, and sensible of the implications of the British reverses, is well brought out in the *British Documents on the Origins of the War* (hereinafter cited as *British Documents*), IV, pp. 512 ff. Neither was the Amir unaware of the British defeats. See Hamilton, "Indo-Afghan Relations Under Lord Curzon," *Fortnightly Review*, LXXXVI, p. 985.

<sup>5</sup>See above, pp. 64 ff. The Amir (who died in 1901 and was succeeded by his son Habibullah) desired to be admitted to direct relations with the London Government. The proposal, put forward by his second son, Nasrullah, who visited England in 1895, was refused. See *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, II, p. 139, and Buckle, *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, Third Series, II, pp. 532, 536, 543.

<sup>6</sup>*British Documents*, I, p. 307.

In a Memorandum dated February 6, 1900, the Russian Government stated that it regarded "comme indispensable le rétablissement des rapports directs entre la Russie et l'Afghanistan pour ce qui concerne les affaires de frontière."<sup>7</sup> The need for direct relations grew out of the completion of the Trans-Caspian railway and the creation in 1885 of a coterminous frontier of several hundred versts in extent.<sup>8</sup> The old arrangement whereby frontier questions were settled by reference to the British Government was no longer satisfactory, and there was a need for the regularization of the relations between the Russian and Afghan Governments. So far as the Agreement of 1873 was concerned, Russia regarded it as being still in force, and as placing Afghanistan outside her sphere of action.<sup>9</sup> As for the suggested direct relations with Afghanistan, they were to have no "caractère politique."<sup>10</sup>

Lord Salisbury refrained from discussing the Memorandum at the time of its presentation, sending it on to the Indian Government for consideration and advice.<sup>11</sup> The reply of the Viceroy's Government was received in May. Gratified by the recognition on the part of the Russian Government of the continued validity of the Agreement of 1872-1873, by which "Afghanistan is entirely outside the sphere of Russian action," it pointed out that "these engagements were . . . renewed in 1874, 1876, 1878, 1885, 1887, and 1888, the later of these assurances being subsequent to the date when Russo-Afghan boundaries became coterminous. To this chain of frequently renewed obligations must now be added the date of 1900. Rarely, if ever, has a formal and voluntary engagement been invested, by dint of constant reiteration, with greater solemnity or a more binding force."<sup>12</sup> As for the Russian proposal of February, if it involved the sending of an envoy to Afghanistan, the Indian Government deprecated ("with all the earnestness" in its power) any alteration of the *status quo*.<sup>13</sup> Such a move on Russia's part would infallibly result in the "growth of a condominium at Cabul, and would ultimately involve the sacrifice of the exclusive control by Great Britain of Afghan external policy—the sole *quid pro quo* for British outlay and engagements; while if the Government of India made the suggested proposal to the Ameer, he would regard it as evidence of culpable weakness."<sup>14</sup> The Indian Government suggested that the Russian Cabinet be invited to explain more clearly the means by which "it would propose to attain the desired non-political objects."<sup>15</sup>

At a somewhat later date (June 28, 1900) the India Office communicated dispatches from the Government of India, "in which they [the

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 311.



Government of India] explained at some length their insuperable objections to direct representation of Russia by Agents in Afghanistan."<sup>16</sup> At the same time the India Office enclosed a copy of a letter written on February 21 by the Russian Political Agent in Bokhara, M. Ignatieff, to the Afghan Commercial Agent, and communicated by Abdurrahman to the Government of India. In this letter Ignatieff "expressed a sincere desire that his letter might be the first step towards the establishment of direct friendly relations between Russia and Afghanistan, and gave an assurance that the Russian Government had not, and never had had, hostile feelings towards Afghanistan."<sup>17</sup>

A copy of Ignatieff's letter reached London not long after reports had been received there that considerable bodies of Russian troops were being concentrated in the vicinity of the Afghan frontier.<sup>18</sup> Though this report was held by Count Mouravieff, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, to be a gross exaggeration of the facts, that the only reinforcement of troops in the neighborhood of the Afghan frontier was a single brigade of four batallions,<sup>19</sup> Lord Salisbury was inclined to disregard for the time whatever validity the original Memorandum of February 6 might have. On July 4 he wrote Sir C. Scott that he did not consider the moment propitious for entering on a discussion of the Russian proposal concerning direct relations with Afghanistan. He suggested further that the British Ambassador refrain from mentioning the subject at St. Petersburg unless it were first alluded to by the Russian Foreign Minister.<sup>20</sup>

The question could not be settled, however, by so negative a treatment; and the India Office pointed out the possible dangerous consequences of not pressing the Russian Government to disavow (as Count Lamsdorff seems at first to have been disposed to do)<sup>21</sup> M. Ignatieff's letter to the Amir. Silence might seem to give consent, and certainly the India Office did not desire any misunderstanding of the British position.<sup>22</sup> In October (1901) M. de Staal, about to terminate his long ambassadorship at London, in conversation with Lord Lansdowne, raised the whole question of direct communications "upon purely local and commercial matters";<sup>23</sup> and in the following January Lansdowne furnished Scott with instructions for a verbal communication to Lamsdorff which admitted, in a guarded way, the force of the Russian arguments in favor of direct communication between frontier authorities on matters of local detail—"a category under which," it was added, "M. Ignatieff's letter

<sup>16</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 512. See Poltz, *Die Anglo-Russische Entente, 1903-1907*, p. 198.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 513.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 512. Abdurrahman in his *Life* (II, p. 285) speaks of this augmenting of Russian troops along his frontier and says that they "are only waiting for my death or some convenient time" to use them.

<sup>19</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 512.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 513.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 514.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

could hardly be said to come."<sup>24</sup> It was to be understood by the Russian Government that arrangements for such relations must be *granted* by the British Government, which controlled Afghan foreign relations.<sup>25</sup> Before such permission were given, "it seemed essential to have more precise explanations in regard to the method which the Russian Government would desire to see adopted for the exchange of such communications, the limitations to be placed on them, and the means of insuring that those limitations would be observed."<sup>26</sup> The British Government would be glad to consider and discuss any communication from the Russian Government on these points.<sup>27</sup> When, in conversation with the British Ambassador, Count Lamsdorff dropped a remark to the effect that he had never quite understood why the foreign relations of Afghanistan were in the exclusive charge of the British, Sir C. Scott was properly fortified, and handed the Russian Minister a copy of "Russian Assurances with regard to Afghanistan, 1869-1885."<sup>28</sup> Lamsdorff assumed a non-committal attitude with regard to the general question under consideration, confining himself to Ignatieff's letter.<sup>29</sup>

While the British were thus seeking to effect a precise agreement with Russia on the basis of a special privilege extended by them, reports reached India that the Governors of Trans-Caspia, Ashkabad, and other Russian frontier officials were sending letters to the Governor of Herat.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, at the Durbar held at Kabul by Habibullah in September, 1902, the following communication from the Russian Government was read by the Amir:

In the opinion of the Russian Government the time has now come for closer commercial relationship between Afghanistan and Russia. The Afghans have nothing to fear from Russian aggression, since the friendliness existing between England and Russia would be endangered if further annexations were made by the Government of the Czar. . . . The Russian Government, therefore, invites the Amir to throw open to Russian caravans the trade routes between Khushk and Herat, and Khushk and Kabul.<sup>31</sup>

In return for this concession the Russian Government would permit the Afghans to trade without restriction in Russian territory. At the same time it was pointed out that the British Government had already been approached on this subject and that a favorable reply from the Amir would "greatly strengthen the Russian case."<sup>32</sup> The letter having been read, the Amir asked the opinion of the Durbar as to what action should be taken

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 518.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 518.

See also Boulger, "Cabul and Herat," *Contemporary Review*, LXXVII, p. 40.

<sup>32</sup>Quoted in Hamilton, "Indo-Afghan Relations Under Lord Curzon," *Fortnightly Review*, LXXXVI, p. 993.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

concerning it. The temper of its members was hostile,<sup>33</sup> and the Amir ordered his Secretary of State, while acknowledging receipt of the Russian communication and expressing willingness to discuss the matter, to request that in the future all communications be made through the Indian Government, "in accordance with the precedent established by his father, the Amir Abdur Rahman."<sup>34</sup> It does not appear that this act of apparent loyalty to the British was due to any affectionate regard for them on the part of the Afghans, but to the inveterate suspicion of foreign influence, the effect of which Russia and Great Britain were made to feel impartially.<sup>35</sup>

Discussions relative to the matter of direct relations between Russia and Afghanistan continued, Lord Lansdowne suggesting to the India Office the recognition of the right of correspondence (which Count Benckendorff believed could not in any case be prevented),<sup>36</sup> while seeking to obtain from Russia an assurance that she would abstain from steps "towards the dispatch of Russian Agents into Afghanistan without previously consulting His Majesty's Government, and affording them an opportunity of discussing the matter fully with the Ameer and the Russian Government."<sup>37</sup> It was evident that if such a promise could be obtained, the well-known aversion of the Amir to the reception of *any* foreign agents would subserve the British desire to exclude the Russians. The British astutely employed the obligation that they owed the Amir not to agree to anything that might prove displeasing to him. "It would be impossible," they said, "for us to make an arrangement with regard to trans-frontier relations without the concurrence of the Ameer, and this was the reason why it was of such importance to arrive at a clear understanding with the Russian Government as to the scope and nature of their proposal."<sup>38</sup> How easily this position could be modified, when modification became expedient, will presently be seen.

During the period of these discussions, friction had arisen between Russian and Afghan officials over the alleged destruction of boundary

<sup>33</sup>Hamilton, in the article cited (p. 993), says: "When the letter had been read out, the Amir asked for the opinion of the Durbar, the temper of its members being illustrated by Ali Yar Khan, who said: 'Let this Turki dog who carries messages for infidels be beaten on the head with shoes till his hair falls off. That ought to be our answer to the Russians.'"

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 994.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 998-999. Lord Curzon thought otherwise, and feared that an alliance between Russia and the Amir might be concluded. On November 27, 1902, he wrote the Secretary of State for India: "All that I have meant to say to-day is that if the Amir breaks faith and deserts us, there is an alternative policy to inaction, and that is a policy which, though not without risk, seems to promise more benefit than injury to British interests. What I maintain that you cannot possibly do is to sit still and let the entire policy and outlay of the past 20 years, nay the last 60, be wiped out before your eyes. If this breakdown occurs, it will be due to open perfidy on the part either of the Amir, or of Russia, or of both. If you do not like to tackle Russia, then at least punish the Amir. If you allow a man and a State of his calibre to flout the British Empire, then we had better put up our shutters and close business." (Quoted in Ronaldshay, *op. cit.*, II, p. 267.) The Home Government was strongly opposed to any "forward" action such as that implied in Curzon's letter, and so irreconcilable were the opinions of the Viceroy and of the London Cabinet that a rupture probably would have occurred had Habibullah definitely broken with the Government of India. (See Ronaldshay, *op. cit.*, II, p. 268.)

<sup>36</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 515.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 516.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 517.

pillars near Herat.<sup>39</sup> The British Government held that questions relating to the maintenance of a frontier demarcated by British and Russian officers could not be considered "non-political," and should therefore certainly be settled by representatives of the two Governments<sup>40</sup> responsible in the first place for the creation of the frontier. Should further questions of such character arise, Sir C. Scott was instructed to suggest that the Russians handle them through the medium of the British Consulate-General at Meshed<sup>41</sup>—a more direct and presumably a more satisfactory arrangement than the circuitous one which the English had previously prescribed<sup>42</sup>—rather than through Afghan officials, as, for instance, the Governor of Herat, with whom they were treating concerning the boundary pillars.

Count Lamsdorff's response to Scott's inquiries and suggestions was at first evasive. But the Russian Cabinet being pressed concerning the matter, definitely rejected the British proposals; and in language that was "peremptory in tone" and "deeply resented" by the British,<sup>43</sup> bluntly reiterated the position, first formally stated in the Memorandum of February 6, 1900, that direct relations with Afghanistan had become necessary.

La question de rétablissement des piliers ne touchant en rien à l'ordre général des choses dans des parages, le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères ne peut que réitérer sa ferme décision de suivre le procédé indiqué dans ses communications antérieures et se fait un devoir d'ajouter qu'après les explications franches qu'il était à même de donner à ce sujet il considère la question dont il s'agit comme définitivement close.<sup>44</sup>

The autumn of 1903 witnessed something like a new Anglo-Russian crisis,<sup>45</sup> to which Russia's "peremptory tone" in connection with the Afghan discussions no doubt contributed. In October Mr. Spring-Rice, British Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, summed up the correspondence in one sentence: "Russia has notified her intention of sending, when she pleases, her Agents into Afghanistan."<sup>46</sup> The British Cabinet felt, therefore, that if any further proposals were made, they should proceed from the Russian Government.<sup>47</sup> On November 5 Spring-Rice was instructed to inform Count Lamsdorff "that in the event of any frontier

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 518-519.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 518.

<sup>42</sup>The Russians, adhering strictly to the agreement which gave the British exclusive control of Afghan foreign affairs, would handle questions relating to Afghanistan as follows: A Russian frontier official would report to the Governor-General of Turkestan, who would report the matter to St. Petersburg; the Cabinet at St. Petersburg would communicate with the London Government, which would take up the matter with the Government of India; the Viceroy's Government, through its Mohammedan agent, would present the problem at Kabul and attempt to reach some solution; the results of such negotiations would then, perchance, by the reverse of this route, become known and effective at the point of their origin.

<sup>43</sup>*British Documents*, IV, pp. 186-187, 519, 621.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 621.

<sup>45</sup>Poltz, *op. cit.*, p. 200. See also the letter of M. Bompard, French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to M. Delcassé, dated August 28, 1903. (*Documents diplomatiques français*, Second Series, III, pp. 546 ff.)

<sup>46</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 519.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 520.

incident arising, owing to an attempt on the part of Russian frontier officials to force the Afghan authorities to enter into direct relations with them, the responsibility for any such incident and its consequences must rest entirely with the Russian Government."<sup>48</sup>

The tension thus created was relieved, however, when the Russian Ambassador, Count Benckendorff, returning to his post after a visit in St. Petersburg, gave Lord Lansdowne such "cordial assurances" of the desire of the Russian Government "to come to an amicable understanding with His Majesty's Government upon this and other questions," that the Foreign Secretary telegraphed Mr. Spring-Rice to refrain from presenting to Count Lamsdorff the contents of his letter of November 5.<sup>49</sup> Later the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg was asked to express the satisfaction of the London Government "at receiving these friendly communications," which produced an entirely different impression of the attitude of the Russian Government from that conveyed by the correspondence of the last three years.<sup>50</sup>

The conciliatory tone of these latter interchanges restored more friendly relations between the two Powers as the Far Eastern war clouds hovered over Russia. The Russo-Japanese War began in February, 1904, and Lord Lansdowne agreed with Count Benckendorff that further negotiations would be impracticable during the period of hostilities.<sup>51</sup>

The Afghan question was not lost sight of, however, even during the war. When it was again raised early in 1905, it was because of Russian susceptibilities, rather than British. In February of that year Count Benckendorff inquired of Lord Lansdowne whether the current British negotiations with the Amir portended any change of policy on the part of the British Government toward Afghanistan, or indicated any intention to annex or occupy Afghan territory.<sup>52</sup> The negotiations to which Benckendorff adverted, and which he admitted to von Bernstorff, Councillor of the German embassy in London, to be the subject of serious concern on the part of the Russian Cabinet,<sup>53</sup> were those of Mr. (later Sir) Louis Dane, who had been sent to Kabul late in 1904 to reach an agreement with Habibullah, who, since his accession in 1901, had shown an attitude of independence that was very disconcerting to the British in India. Especially vexatious were his repeated refusals to accept the Viceroy's invitations to visit India.<sup>54</sup> Dane was still in Afghanistan at the time when Benckendorff's question was asked. The Russian Ambassador was assured that British policy had undergone no change whatever, and

<sup>48</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 520.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>*Die Grosse Politik*, XIX, pp. 657-658.

<sup>54</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 520. Cf. Isvolsky, *Recollections of a Foreign Minister*, p. 34.

that there was no intention on the part of the British of appropriating Afghan territory or of interfering with the internal affairs of the country.<sup>55</sup> The Foreign Secretary did not fail to embrace the opportunity, however, of declaring once more that the British Government "continued to claim that Afghanistan should remain free from the influence or interference of any foreign Power and that the Amir's relations with other countries should remain in their hands."<sup>56</sup> Lansdowne then asked Benckendorff whether, in return for a formal assurance by the British, the Russian Government would be willing to state in writing that its "policy and intentions in regard to Afghanistan also remained unaltered," that Afghanistan continued to be regarded by the Russians as outside their sphere of influence.<sup>57</sup> If so, he was authorized to confirm, on the part of the British Government, the provisional assurances previously given concerning the interchange of communications between Russian and Afghan officials on "non-political questions of a local character."<sup>58</sup>

Count Benckendorff did not consider the time auspicious ("when it was necessary for the Russian Foreign Office to proceed with the utmost circumspection") to enter anything of the nature of a formal agreement. As for Lord Lansdowne's verbal statement of policy, the Russian Government likewise desired that Afghanistan should remain a buffer state, and would therefore continue to abstain from any interference with its independence or integrity.<sup>59</sup> Benckendorff apparently attached considerable importance to the expression "a buffer State," and Lansdowne accepted the term as "an appropriate description of the position which both Governments desired to assign to Afghanistan."<sup>60</sup> This conversation was recalled by the Russian Government in 1907.

Since the opening of the discussions in 1900 a number of diplomatic incidents had occurred which had an important bearing on Anglo-Russian relations. Great Britain's treaty with Japan, first concluded in 1902, was renewed in 1905, but modified so as to obligate the signatory Powers to help each other in the event of an unprovoked attack by one Power, rather than by two Powers as the 1902 agreement stipulated. Furthermore, the sphere of action to which the treaty applied was extended to the northwest frontier of India. Though the treaty (like all treaties) had a "purely pacific purpose," no great acumen on the part of the Russians was required to discern that it was directed against them.<sup>61</sup> England's policy of "splendid isolation" was further broken in 1904 by the *entente cordiale* with France, Russia's ally since 1894. The Anglo-Japanese al-

<sup>55</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 521.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup>Lamsdorff observed that everyone from the Tsar down regarded the treaty as directed against Russia. (Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 384.) Cf. Newton, *Lord Lansdowne*, p. 271.

liance was not calculated to improve the relations of the London and St. Petersburg Governments, severely strained as they were by allegations of non-neutrality and the untoward incidents of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>62</sup> But in the end the sorry showing of Russia in the war, including the destruction of her fleet, probably made it seem more desirable that friendship with England be cultivated, particularly after the breakdown of the Kaiser's fitful efforts at *rapprochement*.<sup>63</sup> Certainly, on the other side, the new direction of British policy had as its "natural complement" a friendly understanding with Russia.

The Afghan question, always associated with the general trends of European diplomacy, became an integral part of it with the coming of the Liberals to power in England in 1905. Sir Edward Grey, the new Foreign Secretary, believed that an understanding with Russia was necessary if England were to get out of the "old, bad rut" in which the rival Powers had so often found themselves and which had so often led them to the verge of war;<sup>64</sup> and since Russia was the ally of France, he believed that England "could not pursue at one and the same time a policy of agreement with France and a policy of counter-alliances against Russia."<sup>65</sup> Since in the Anglo-Russian rivalry the Indian frontier was the most "sensitive and dangerous" point, it was concerning the Central Asian countries that an agreement should be reached as a step toward the establishment of a cordial understanding and the dissolution of the "mists of suspicion" which, unabated, must eventually lead to war.<sup>66</sup>

In Russia also the ministerial changes attendant upon the turmoil of 1905 and the creation of the Duma advanced the cause of Anglo-Russian *rapprochement*. "Russia will now take a new turn," said Aehrenthal, the Austrian Ambassador, on hearing of Isvolsky's appointment to the Foreign Ministry, "for he leans towards England."<sup>67</sup> Assisting in the implementing of the "new turn" were Sir Arthur Nicolson, who became the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and Count Benckendorff, who, as Russian Ambassador at St. James's, was *persona grata* and a consistent proponent of Anglo-Russian friendship.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>62</sup>The Dogger-Bank incident is treated at considerable length in Taube, *La politique russe d'avant-guerre*, Chap. I. See also Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 313 ff., and Spender, *The Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, II, pp. 155 ff.

<sup>63</sup>In the Kaiser's efforts to ingratiate himself with the Tsar, he suggested in 1904, as an "excellent expedient for cooling British insolence," a military demonstration on the Perso-Afghan frontier, "where they think you powerless to appear with your troops during the war. Even should your forces not suffice for a real attack on India, they would do for Persia, which has no army; and pressure on the Indian frontier from Persia will have remarkably quieting influence on the hot-headed Jingoos in London." (Quoted in Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 382.) See also Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 318 ff., Isvolsky, *op. cit.*, Chap. II, and Taube, *op. cit.*, Chap. II.

<sup>64</sup>Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, I, p. 147.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>67</sup>Quoted in Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 391. See also *British Documents*, IV, p. 522, and Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-308. Count Witte in his *Memoirs* (edited by Yarmolinsky), p. 433, says that it was due to his opposition that the Anglo-Russian agreement was not concluded before 1907. Cf. Lee, *King Edward VII: a Biography*, II, pp. 309-310.

<sup>68</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 522; *Documents diplomatiques français*, Second Series, III, p. 520.

In March, 1906, Mr. Morley, Secretary of State for India, raised the question of what guarantees should be demanded of Russia if "some sort of understanding" were reached with her—"a hypothesis which may be many hundred miles off realisation."<sup>69</sup> Lord Minto, to whom the question was addressed, took counsel with Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army.<sup>70</sup> The report of the Viceroy's Government was distinctly hostile to the idea of an agreement with Russia, particularly an agreement concerning Afghanistan.<sup>71</sup> It suggested that, if an entente must be entered, "let us bargain elsewhere."<sup>72</sup> The difficulties that had subsisted between India and Afghanistan having been adjusted, Minto thought it "infinitely more important to keep on friendly and controlling terms" with the Amir than "to enter into any bargain with Russia which might lessen our influence with him, or alienate him from us."<sup>73</sup> The Viceroy especially deprecated the bases for an arrangement suggested by Morley, which, among other things, called for the suspension for a period of ten years of railroad construction along the Asiatic frontiers of the two Empires, and the permitting of communication between Russian and Afghan officials on local matters.<sup>74</sup> As to the first stipulation, Minto objected that the Russians had already completed their frontier railways, whereas the British had not; the second he considered a dangerous door to intrigue and an unnecessary sacrifice of power.<sup>75</sup>

Minto closed his communication of June 12 with a statement that drew rather acrid comments from Morley: "I have only given you my own views in answer to your letter, but I certainly think that, for reasons affecting the internal administration of India independently of imperial foreign policy, the Government of India should be fully consulted before any agreement is entered into with Russia."<sup>76</sup> Writing on July 6, Morley reminded the Viceroy that foreign policy would be determined by the Home Government<sup>77</sup>—as regards an agreement with Russia, *had* been determined; for "His Majesty's Government, with almost universal support in public opinion, have decided to make such attempt as Russian circumstances may permit to arrange an entente."<sup>78</sup> Regarding Minto's suggestion of "bargaining elsewhere," Morley held that "an entente with Russia that should leave out Central Asia would be a sorry trophy of our diplomacy indeed. Anyhow, H. M.'s Government have determined on their course, and it is for their agents and officers all over the world to accept it."<sup>79</sup>

<sup>69</sup>Morley, *Recollections*, II, p. 167.

<sup>70</sup>Buchan, *Lord Minto*, p. 225.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 226. Cf. Morley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 178.

<sup>73</sup>Buchan, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

<sup>77</sup>Morley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 179; Buchan, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>78</sup>Buchan, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>79</sup>Morley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 178. Sir Edward Grey held that though the Far East was the theater of the most recent difficulties with Russia, "Russian advances towards the Indian frontier



The policy of the Liberal Government was definitely settled on. It was to be *rapprochement* with Russia; the sphere for its accomplishment, Central Asia. To the carrying out of this policy every energy was directed.<sup>80</sup> It was not easy to create friendship between England and Russia, for the antagonism of each toward the other was deep-rooted and of long standing.<sup>81</sup> Added to the animosities growing out of long colonial conflict was the fundamental incompatibility of the institutions and spirit of the two countries, modified but temporarily by the abortive movement toward constitutional reform instituted by the Tsar in the fall of 1905.<sup>82</sup>

Although Nicolson let it be known soon after his arrival in St. Petersburg that he had been instructed by his Government to "exchange views on several important matters,"<sup>83</sup> Isvosky's reserved manner indicated the necessity of a patient and cautious procedure. Indeed, so far as the Afghan question was concerned, definite negotiations were not instituted until February, 1907.<sup>84</sup> In that month Nicolson handed Isvolsky an "outline of views" of the British Government concerning an agreement, it being understood that any arrangement entered upon must first be sanctioned by the Amir.<sup>85</sup> This statement, which was not to be considered in any sense as a "Draft project of a Convention," consisted of five points: Russia was to acknowledge Afghanistan as outside her sphere of influence and "under British guidance in all matters of external policy"; on matters of a non-political and purely local character, the British Government would "raise no objections to the establishment of direct communications between Russian officials and officials designated by the Ameer of Afghanistan"; no Russian agents should be sent into Afghanistan; Russia should discontinue giving "bounties in subsidies to Russian trade in that country"; the British Government "would raise no obstruction in the way of the same facilities being accorded to Russian trade with Afghanistan as British and British-Indian traders now enjoy in the territory of the Ameer."<sup>86</sup> Nicolson expressed the hope that since the negotiations were attracting the notice of the press, and incomplete information with regard to them was "oozing out," an early agreement might be reached.<sup>87</sup>

were the most sensitive and dangerous point." (*Twenty-five Years*, I, p. 147.) In 1903 Lord Curzon had said: "The geographical position of India will more and more push her into the forefront of international politics. She will more and more become the strategical frontier of the British Empire." (Quoted in Ronaldshay, *op. cit.*, II, p. 262.)

<sup>80</sup>Sir Edward Grey told Count Benckendorff that if a "friendly agreement" between England and Russia proved impracticable, he would feel constrained to resign, for to him no other policy was possible. (*Twenty-five Years*, I, p. 164.)

<sup>81</sup>Grey, *op. cit.*, I, p. 149. Cf. Nicolson, *op. cit.*, pp. 152, 161 ff.

<sup>82</sup>Grey, *op. cit.*, pp. 149 ff. See Spender, *The Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, II, pp. 263-264.

<sup>83</sup>Nicolson, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>84</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 522.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 525.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 526.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 527.

The Russian Cabinet, however, was not disposed to hurried action, and found a number of objections to the British proposals. These were brought out in the Russian draft of a convention, given to Nicolson on May 15. The Russians were particularly careful to continue the "buffer state" idea, which, it will be recalled, had been verbally accepted by Lord Lansdowne.<sup>88</sup> Article I of the Russian draft stated: "L'Afghanistan constituera un Etat-tampon (buffer state) entre les possessions respectives des deux Puissances contractantes."<sup>89</sup> It was also stipulated that Great Britain should not annex or occupy any part of Afghanistan nor interfere in its internal affairs.<sup>90</sup>

On June 17 M. Isvolsky was handed a British counter-draft. The expression "buffer state" had been deleted ("as hardly one," Nicolson explained, "to be used in a solemn Convention"),<sup>91</sup> and alterations made in the categorical article of the Russian draft concerning British intervention in Afghanistan, since such an unqualified statement might lead the Amir to a feeling of freedom inimical to the security of the Indian frontiers. The British draft made non-interference dependent upon the fulfilment by the Amir of his engagements under the Treaty of Kabul, signed on March 21, 1905. As for the question of occupation and annexation, the British insisted that it must be treated bilaterally.<sup>92</sup> The Russians again delayed, pointing out that, according to the British draft, the prohibition placed upon Russia as to non-interference was absolute, while that imposed upon the British was conditional; that, whereas the provisions of the convention that were beneficial to Russia (that is, the matter of frontier relations) depended upon the sanction of the Amir, all the *obligations* assumed by Russia became operative on the signing of the convention.<sup>93</sup>

Though minor changes in the draft were suggested by the British which made the instrument acceptable to Isvolsky and the Tsar, persistent opposition, emanating apparently from the War Ministry, continued. Sir Edward Grey was eager to close the negotiations. On August 26 he telegraphed Nicolson:

I hope Russian Government will bear in mind that larger issues are indirectly at stake even than those directly involved in these agreements, for it has throughout been our expectation and belief that an agreement as regards Asia worked in a friendly manner would so influence the disposition of this country towards Russia as to make friendly relations possible on questions which may arise elsewhere in the future. Without such an Agreement this expectation must be disappointed.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>88</sup>See above, p. 75. See also Poltz, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>89</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 542.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.* See also Nicolson, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>91</sup>See Grey's statement on this point made in Parliament on February 17, 1908. (*Speeches on Foreign Affairs*, p. 69.)

<sup>92</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 545.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 548.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 565.

The points of disagreement were finally composed, and the "Convention Relating to Persia, Afghanistan, and Thibet" was signed at St. Petersburg by Nicolson and Isvolsky on August 31. The convention concerning Afghanistan,<sup>95</sup> which had been the last part to be concluded, consisted of five articles. The British Government declared that it had no intention of changing the status of Afghanistan, while Russia, on her part, renewed her assurances that she considered the territories of the Amir to be outside her sphere of influence. Great Britain agreed not to encourage the Amir to take any measures threatening Russia—a stipulation which seems to have been the outgrowth of a fear on the part of the Russian Ministry that Afghanistan might be transformed from a "buffer state" (the term to which the British had taken exception) into an *avant-garde* of the Indian Empire.<sup>96</sup> By the convention Russia, while agreeing to conduct all political relations with Afghanistan through the intermediary of Great Britain, was conceded the right to settle local questions of a non-political character with Afghan officials. As for trade with Afghanistan, the principle of equality of opportunity was agreed upon, to the great disgust of many in England.<sup>97</sup>

The last article of the convention proved to be an unexpectedly serious stumbling block. It reads:

Les présents arrangements n'entreront en vigueur qu'à partir du moment où le Gouvernement Britannique aura notifié au Gouvernement de Russie le consentement de l'Emir aux termes ci-dessus stipulés.

M. Isvolsky desired that the publication of the convention should take place as soon as possible, and Sir Edward Grey decided that, although publication should not occur before the Amir *received* the text from the Government of India to which it was communicated, it would not have to await the *consent* of the Amir to its contents.<sup>98</sup> The instruction to the Viceroy to have the agreement verbally explained to the Amir was sent on September 6.<sup>99</sup> Morley's private letter of September 7 to Nicolson stated that the Amir was sixteen days from Simla, so that he had not had time to receive communication. He hoped that the Amir would not be troublesome, though he might be slow.<sup>100</sup> In order to give ample time, in spite of Russian importunity, publication was delayed until September 26.<sup>101</sup>

The Amir was not only slow: he refused to give his assent. He *never* gave it.<sup>102</sup> What was the effect of the Amir's refusal on the Anglo-

<sup>95</sup>The text of the Convention is given in *British Documents*, IV, pp. 618-620, and in the *Parl. Papers*, 1908, CXXV, Cd. 3753.

<sup>96</sup>Poltz, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>97</sup>Davies, *The North-west Frontier*, p. 172.

<sup>98</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 573.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 574.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 587.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 574. See *The Times* of September 26 and the following days for press comments on the Anglo-Russian Convention.

<sup>102</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 577. Lord Minto had predicted that this would be the case. Indeed, during the period of the negotiations he wrote King Edward to this effect. "The King

Russian Convention concerning Afghanistan? In the strictest sense, it must be said (as Sir Arthur Nicolson did say)<sup>103</sup> that the convention was a dead letter; and, although the situation did not "necessarily lead to the abrogation or suspension of the Persian and Thibetan agreements," since the "Convention concernant l'Afghanistan" formed an integral part of the whole, it was clear that its non-execution must have a definitely weakening effect on the entire convention. There were those who contended that the Russian Government foresaw the difficulties which the British would have in obtaining the Amir's consent, and purposely framed an instrument to which the Amir must infallibly take exception.<sup>104</sup> Such a belief was discredited by Nicolson, who held that Russia would have accepted the agreement without reference to the Amir.<sup>105</sup>

In reality the consent of the Amir was probably not of great importance, since the Russian Government later quite definitely stated that it considered the convention in force without the Amir's sanction.<sup>106</sup> The strength of the convention depended in the last analysis upon much less academic considerations—namely, the vitalizing of the new friendship which its conclusion signalized. The fundamental importance of the Anglo-Russian entente of 1907, even more than that of the Anglo-French entente of 1904, was potential rather than substantive. Its significance depended upon its diplomatic *milieu*, whether favorable or unfavorable. Sir Arthur Nicolson put it cogently, when he wrote to Sir Edward Grey in July, 1908:

There is one more consideration, which to my mind is of great importance. Essential as a friendly Afghanistan may be to our position in India, equally essential, I submit, is a friendly Russia to our general international position, both as regards the actual situation, and also in respect to that in the not distant future. If we wish, and I presume that we do wish, in the interest of peace, to avert the possibility of any Power assuming a position from which she could dictate to others, a close understanding with France and Russia is, I submit, an object for the attainment of which every effort should be made. We have secured an undertaking with France. That with Russia is in its very early infancy, and will require, for reasons which I need not explain, careful nurture and treatment. Any serious check to this infant growth may kill it before it has advanced in years, and its disappearance would doubtless eventually react on our relations with France. . . .<sup>107</sup>

As it turned out, the Asiatic agreement between the two Powers, though denounced by certain groups both in England and in Russia,<sup>108</sup> became the final vehicle of the Triple Entente. For the proper sustenance *was* provided with the passing of those seven years of fitful peace that yet remained before the Great Catastrophe.

sent the letter to Grey, who replied that he hoped that the Amir would acknowledge the projected agreement, but that in any case the agreement must stand." (Lee, *op. cit.*, II, p. 570.)

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 575.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 576.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 576-577; Grey, *Speeches on Foreign Affairs*, p. 192.

<sup>107</sup>*British Documents*, IV, p. 576. See also Nicolson, *op. cit.*, pp. 190 ff., and Grey, *Speeches on Foreign Affairs*, p. 75.

<sup>108</sup>Lee, *op. cit.*, II, p. 572. The opposition in Parliament was led by Earl Percy. See Grey, *Speeches on Foreign Affairs*, pp. 55 ff.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

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With the conclusion of the entente in 1907 the Afghan question ceased to be an important factor in the relations of Great Britain and Russia. By reason of the location of the country it was inevitable that questions relative to it should occasionally arise; but as we have repeatedly seen, it was the trend of European affairs which determined the character of Anglo-Russian relations in Central Asia, whether they should be active or quiescent, antagonistic or friendly. With the consolidation of the "good understanding" established by the Convention of 1907, the Afghan question passed into the background, not to re-emerge in any serious form until the events of the War again gave it prominence. It may be noted in passing that when it did reappear, the result was what it had been on two previous occasions—hostilities between the British and the Afghans.<sup>1</sup>

Before bringing this study to a close, it may be well to summarize its salient points and to make some generalizations concerning the subject that it treats. The writer has no predilection for either the British or Russian position in this long controversy. As for the ethical implications of imperialism, there seems to him little to choose between the parties to the argument. One may, indeed, easily permit himself to conceive prejudices against the English by reason of their annoying habit of assuming airs of moral superiority, which appear to the outsider quite unwarranted by the facts; and their proneness to consider the earth and the fulness thereof the rightful heritage of the British Empire is undeniably irksome. So far, however, as basic principles are concerned, it is doubtful whether the Russians can be absolved of the malefactions of imperialism any more than their British rivals. In the heated controversies of the century, London and St. Petersburg were much given to reciprocal accusations of bad faith, ruthlessness, exclusive self-interest; and there are few disinterested persons today who care to question the justification for such charges from whichever side they may have come.

Putting aside such considerations, to which we have all become habituated by reason of the long and perhaps rather fruitless discussion of War guilt, let us review the situation out of which the Afghan question arose and trace the chief steps in its evolution.

The British had been in India since the early seventeenth century, and for two hundred years had been consolidating their position there. In the nineteenth century an important part of their problem was concerned with

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<sup>1</sup>The Third Afghan War occurred in 1919. By the Treaty of Rawal Pindi which closed the war, Afghanistan was released from the British control of her relations with foreign States. In 1921 she concluded a treaty with Russia, one of the first negotiated by the Soviet Union.

the Indian frontiers. These must be made safe, and they could not be safe, it was thought, unless the territories surrounding them—what has been spoken of as the “imperial environment”—were fairly well ordered and secure. This meant that the British must to some degree control them, populated as they were by semi-civilized tribes of nomadic and predatory habits. To this end there grew up in Central Asia a sort of Monroe Doctrine,<sup>2</sup> which embraced in its application those parts of the continent which immediately surrounded India or with which India was associated by treaty. As the United States by the Monroe Doctrine claims a special political *influence* extending far beyond its political *dominion*, so the British claimed exclusive influence far beyond the confines of India. Afghanistan was, by this “doctrine,” held to be within the British sphere of influence.

The nineteenth century was a period of tremendous imperialistic impulse, with Africa and Asia constituting the chief areas for its expression. In Africa Great Britain, France, and Germany were the principal actors; in Asia Russia was added to the group. In the Middle East Great Britain and Russia became the chief antagonists. The former was largely concerned with the problem of achieving “scientific” frontiers and the consolidation of her sovereignty among the native states of India. The latter, on the other hand, was occupying vast new areas—the Caucasus, the Trans-Caspia, Turkomania, the Khanates of Central Asia—and exhibiting an expansive force which a perturbed contemporary likened to that of a great, irresistible glacier. This advance in Asia brought Russia into the sphere of British interest, into striking distance, some thought, of India itself.

If the rationale of the Russian advance was plausibly presented by Prince Gortchakoff in his Circular of 1864 as being the outgrowth of geographic necessity, it can not be questioned that it came to have very definite *political* implications. The Russians were not annexing new territories in Asia simply because they wanted them, nor even because they needed them for purposes of protection or stability. They were animated also, as M. de Giers pointed out to M. de Staal in 1884,<sup>3</sup> by motives of retaliation against Great Britain, and by the desire to put themselves in a more strategic position for striking the British antagonist where they knew him to be susceptible to threats, if not open to positive, effectual attack. That is, the Russians followed a fairly consistent policy of utilizing the Central Asian situation as a counterweight to the European.

What were the possible solutions of the problems produced by the Russian advance in Central Asia as they presented themselves to the

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<sup>2</sup>The writer is indebted for this analogy to an article appearing in the *Edinburgh Review* of January, 1886, entitled “England, Afghanistan, and Russia.” (Vol. CLXIII, p. 3.)

<sup>3</sup>Meyendorff, *Correspondence diplomatique de M. de Staal*, I, p. 40.

British? An obvious one was to fight Russia, to cripple her, and to render her incapable of further menacing the British position. There were always plenty of jingoes who believed this to be the only final solution, who believed that the postponement of war with Russia was the postponement of the inevitable. Another possible solution was for the British to advance and absorb the territories, which, it was held by some, must otherwise certainly fall into the hands of the antagonist. This would mean that the British and Russian empires would eventually meet, an idea which was generally frowned upon. A third was for the British to fortify their position in India by building up a strong defensive military establishment there, but to refrain from any external aggression. This was, in general, Lord Lawrence's policy of "masterly inactivity." A fourth was to accept the inevitability of the Russian advance, but to exact from the Imperial Government unequivocal promises that the advance must cease once it had reached a certain limitary line somewhere beyond the frontier of India. Still another was to make a treaty with Russia for the partition of the lands lying between the British and Russian possessions—an arrangement suggested by Count Schouvaloff in 1876,<sup>4</sup> and later more or less seriously considered by the English.<sup>5</sup> It is to be noted that the problem was primarily a British problem. It was they who had first established themselves in Central Asia. Theirs it was to devise means whereby their position might be insured and their interests protected. It was the British, therefore, who were on the diplomatic offensive during most of the period embraced in this study—they who were inquiring, reminding, scolding, threatening.

It has been remarked that the British can not be said to have had a foreign policy in the nineteenth century, unless the very *absence* of one constitute a policy. Certainly this lack of any continuing line of action<sup>6</sup> is well illustrated in their handling of the Afghan question; for nearly all the possible lines of action suggested above were followed at one time or other, all of them strongly urged by one Minister or another. War indeed was not made. But as regards that final arbitrament of nations, the writer believes that it is not generally known how near Great Britain and Russia were to it as a result of the crisis of 1885. As matters turned out, the English twice during our period fought the Afghans as a less hazardous alternative to war with Russia. In general, however, it was some version of the buffer idea which dominated the thinking of British statesmen in relation to the Central Asian question; and we have seen

<sup>4</sup>See above, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup>See Gwynn and Tuckwell, *Life of Dilke*, I, p. 533.

<sup>6</sup>This was changed in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and the change is illustrated particularly in the first decade of the twentieth, when the Liberals, under Grey, adopted the line in foreign affairs originated during the régime of Lord Lansdowne at the Foreign Office. (For a recent discussion of this point, see Professor Knaplund's Introduction in Grey, *Speeches on Foreign Affairs*.)

how it was that Afghanistan, by reason of its location with reference to the Indian frontier, came to serve in the capacity of a buffer state. We may summarize the steps in the evolution of this policy.

In 1869 Prince Gortchakoff, on being questioned by Earl Granville concerning Russian activity in Central Asia, volunteered the statement that the Russian Government regarded Afghanistan as outside the sphere in which Russia might be called upon to exercise her influence. This declaration was apropos of the British suggestion of a "neutral zone"; and though, as we have seen, the constituting of Afghanistan as a neutral zone was rejected by the British Cabinet, Gortchakoff's statement was repeatedly invoked when Afghanistan seemed to be endangered by reason of some new Russian advance, and was frequently reiterated by the Russians as binding upon them. In 1873 was effected the Granville-Gortchakoff Agreement, by which the northern frontier of Afghanistan was roughly defined as the Oxus river. This produced the argument concerning the "neutral zone"—Was Afghanistan a neutral zone, and was the territory on the Russian side of Afghanistan *ipso facto* within the Russian sphere of influence?—questions which became purely academic after the Russian occupation of the controverted areas was accomplished. The frontiers of Afghanistan were completed and made definitive in the northeast and northwest by action of the Joint Commissions delegated by the British and Russian Governments in the 1880's and 1890's. That is, the Commissions delimited the country which was avowed by Russia to lie outside her sphere of influence and in which she recognized the special interest of Great Britain.

The last phase of the question was opened when the Russian Government in 1900 expressed its intention of initiating direct relations with the Afghans on matters of a non-political and purely local character. The British claimed exclusive control of the foreign relations of the Amir, and interpreted this control as precluding his correspondence with, or his receiving of agents from, other Governments than that of India. The question was settled by the Convention of 1907, which dealt entirely with Central Asian questions, but which was destined to become the concluding link in the Triple Entente. In the agreement concerning Afghanistan, though the expression "buffer" was excluded at the request of the British, the principle was practically maintained by British promises to refrain from interference in or annexation of the territories of the Amir.

It has been the purpose of the writer to avoid, so far as possible, any consideration of Anglo-Afghan relations as opposed to Anglo-Russian relations concerning Afghanistan. British policy toward the Amir was as fluctuating and uncertain as British policy toward Russia.<sup>7</sup> At one time

<sup>7</sup>Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 356: "For fifty years there has not been an Afghan Amir whom we have not alternately fought against and caressed, now repudiating and now recognising his sovereignty, now appealing to his subjects as their saviours, now slaughtering them as our foes."



it was to exercise a firm control over Afghan affairs; at another time studiously to abstain from any relations whatever. At one time it proclaimed a desire to see the country united and strong under a powerful ruler; at another it favored partition. In 1838 the British went to war to prevent Herat from falling into the hands of Persia; after the Second Afghan War they considered *giving* Herat to Persia.<sup>8</sup> As has been noted, however, whatever means may at the moment have been employed, the purpose of the British Government was the same: to achieve security for India. When, in time, the British adopted the buffer principle, and Afghanistan, by reason of the Russian advance to its frontiers, must perforce constitute the buffer state, then a settled policy of maintaining a strong Afghanistan was followed, supported not only by subsidies, but by the promise of armed assistance in the event of attack.

Lord Curzon once remarked of Afghanistan that it is a state which owes its existence wholly to its geographic position. This seems to be a fair statement of the case. The Punjab, Sind, Khelat were absorbed by India; Tashkent, Khiva, Bokhara, Khokand were absorbed by Russia. But Afghanistan remains on the map of Asia, a sovereign State. Wedged in between two great empires, either might have annexed it. But neither did annex it, because expediency dictated otherwise. Such are the fortuitous circumstances that have determined the fate of small nations.

As it has been said concerning Luxemburg, so it may be said of Afghanistan: "Il est des pays qui, par leur situation et par leurs conditions stratégiques, sont appelés à jouer dans les combinaisons de la politique . . . un rôle considérable que ne justifie ni le chiffre de leur population, ni la superficie de leur territoire."<sup>9</sup> It is one of those countries which, insignificant of themselves, have been made the instrument of high policy and the tool of imperial plans.

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<sup>8</sup>See Sir Henry Rawlinson's article in the *Nineteenth Century*, VII, pp. 197-215.

<sup>9</sup>Rothan, *L'Affaire du Luxembourg*, p. 3. (Paris, 1884.)

## APPENDIX I

### THE GRANVILLE-GORTCHAKOFF AGREEMENT OF 1873

Earl Granville to Lord A. Loftus.  
Foreign Office, January 24, 1873.

My Lord,

Her Majesty's Government have attentively considered the statements and arguments contained in Prince Gortchakow's despatch of the 7/19th December, and the papers that accompanied it, which were communicated to me by the Russian Ambassador on the 17/29th December, and to your Excellency by Prince Gortchakow on the 29th of that month.

Her Majesty's Government gladly recognise, in the frank and friendly terms of that despatch, the same spirit of friendliness as that in which, by my despatch of the 17th of October, I desired to convey through your Excellency to the Russian Government the views of that of Her Majesty in regard to the line of boundary claimed by Shere Ali, the Ruler of Cabul, for his possessions of Afghanistan.

Her Majesty's Government see with much satisfaction that, as regards the principal part of that line, the Imperial Government is willing to acquiesce in the claim of Shere Ali, and they rely on the friendly feelings of the Emperor when they lay before him, as I now instruct your Excellency to do, a renewed statement of the grounds on which they consider that Shere Ali's claim to the remainder of the line of boundary, referred to in my despatch of the 17th of October, to be well-founded.

The objections stated in Prince Gortchakow's despatch apply to that part of Shere Ali's claims which would comprise the province of Badakshan with its dependent district of Wakhan within the Afghan State. The Imperial Government contend that the province of Badakshan with its dependency, not having been formally incorporated into the territories of Shere Ali, is not legitimately any portion of the Afghan State.

To this Her Majesty's Government reply that the Ameer of Cabul having attained by conquest the sovereignty over Badakshan, and having received in the most formal manner the submission of the chiefs and people of that province, had the right to impose upon it such a form of government as he might think best adapted to the position of affairs at the time. In the exercise of this right he appointed a local governor, and he consented experimentally to receive a fixed portion of the revenues of the country, instead of taking upon himself its general financial and other administration. But the Ameer expressly reserved to himself the right of reconsidering this arrangement, which was, in the first instance, made only for one year, of at any time subjecting Badakshan to the direct Government of Cabul, and of amalgamating the revenues thereof with the general revenue of the Afghan State. Her Majesty's Government cannot perceive anything in these circumstances calculated to weaken the claims of Shere Ali to the absolute sovereignty of Badakshan. The conquest and submission of the province were complete; and it cannot reasonably be urged that any experimental form of administration which the Ameer, with the acknowledged right of sovereignty, might think fit to impose on Badakshan, could possibly disconnect the province from the general territories south of the Oxus, the sovereignty of which the Russian Government has without hesitation recognised to be vested in the Ameer of Cabul.

Her Majesty's Government have not failed to notice in portions of the statements of the Russian Government to which I am now replying, that its objection to admitting Badakshan and Wakhan to be under the sovereignty of Shere Ali is rested in part on an expressed apprehension lest their incorporation with the remainder of Afghanistan should tend to disturb the peace of Central Asia, and

specifically should operate as an encouragement of the Ameer to extend his possessions at the expense of the neighbouring countries. I alluded in my despatch, of the 17th of October, to the success which had attended the recommendations made to the Ameer by the Indian Government to adopt the policy which had produced the most beneficial results in the establishment of peace in countries where it had long been unknown; and her Majesty's Government see no reason to suppose that similar results would not follow on the like recommendations. Her Majesty's Government will not fail to impress upon the Ameer in the strongest terms the advantages which are given to 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.

Her Majesty's Government cannot however but feel that, if Badakshan and Wakhan, which they consider the Ameer justly to deem to be part of his territories, be assumed by England or Russia, or by one or either of them, to be wholly independent of his authority, the Ameer might be tempted to assert his claims by arms; that perhaps in that case Bokhara might seek an opportunity of acquiring districts too weak of themselves to resist the Afghan State; and that thus the peace of Central Asia would be disturbed, and occasion given for questions between Great Britain and Russia, which it is on every account so desirable to avoid, and which Her Majesty's Government feel sure would be as distasteful to the Imperial Government as to themselves.

Her Majesty's Government therefore feel that the Imperial Government, weighing these considerations dispassionately, will concur in the recognition which they have made of Shere Ali's rights, as stated in my despatch of October, and by so doing put an end to the wild speculations, so calculated to distract the minds of Asiatic races, that there is some marked disagreement between England and Russia, on which they may build hopes of carrying out their border feuds for purposes of self-aggrandisement.

Her Majesty's Government congratulate themselves upon the prospect of a definite settlement as between the two Governments of the question of the boundaries of Afghanistan, the details of which have been so long in discussion.

Your Excellency will read and give a copy of this despatch to Prince Gortchakow.

I am, &c.,

Granville.

Lord A. Loftus.

Prince Gortchakow to Count Brunnow.—(Communicated to Earl Granville by Count Brunnow, February 5.)

St. Petersburg, le 19/31 Janvier, 1873.

M. le Comte,

Lord Augustus Loftus m'a communiqué la réponse du Principal Secrétaire d'Etat de Sa Majesté Britannique à notre dépêche sur l'Asie Centrale, sous la date du 7/19 Décembre.

Je joins ci-près une copie de cette pièce.

Nous voyons avec satisfaction que le Cabinet Anglais continue à poursuivre, dans ces parages, le même but que nous, celui d'y assurer la paix et autant que possible la tranquillité.

La divergence de nos vues consistait dans les frontières assignées aux domaines de Shir Ali.

Le Cabinet Anglais y fait entrer le Badakshan et le Vakhan, qui, à nos yeux, jouissaient d'une certaine indépendance. Vu la difficulté de constater, dans toutes

ses nuances, la réalité dans ces parages lointains, vu le plus de facilité qu'a le Gouvernement Britannique de recueillir des données précises, et surtout vu le désir de ne point donner à cette question de détail plus d'importance qu'elle ne comporte, nous ne refusons pas d'admettre la ligne de démarcation Anglaise.

Nous sommes d'autant plus portés à cet acte de courtoisie que le Gouvernement Anglais s'engage à user de toute son influence sur Shir Ali pour le maintenir dans une attitude pacifique et insister sur l'abandon de sa part de toute agression ou conquête ultérieure. Cette influence est incontestable. Elle repose non seulement sur l'ascendant matériel et moral de l'Angleterre, mais aussi sur les subsides dont Shir Ali lui à l'obligation. Nous pouvons, dès lors, y voir une garantie réelle pour la conservation de la paix.

Votre Excellence voudra bien faire cette déclaration à M. le Principal Secrétaire d'Etat de Sa Majesté Britannique et lui remettre une copie de cette dépêche.

Lord Granville y verra, nous en sommes convaincus, une nouvelle preuve du prix que notre auguste Maître attache à entretenir et à consolider les meilleures relations avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine Victoria.

Recevez, &c.,

Gortchakow.

Le Comte Brunnow.

Earl Granville to Lord A. Loftus.

Foreign Office, February 5, 1873.

My Lord,

The Russian Ambassador communicated to me today Prince Gortchakoff's despatch of January 19/31, in reply to my despatch to your Excellency of the 24th of January respecting Central Asia; and I said that I should have great pleasure in communicating it to my colleagues.

I am, &c.,

Granville.

Lord A. Loftus.

## APPENDIX II

### THE PROTOCOL OF 1885

(Translation)

The Undersigned, the Marquis of Salisbury, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, &c., and his Excellency M. Georges de Staal, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias at the Court of Her Britannic Majesty, &c., have met together for the purpose of recording in the present Protocol the following agreement which has been arrived at between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias:—

1. It is agreed that the frontier of Afghanistan, between the Heri-Rud and the Oxus, shall be drawn as follows:—

The frontier will start from the Heri-Rud about 2 versts below the fort of Zulfikar, and will follow the line marked in red on the Map No. 1 attached to the Protocol as far as the point K in such a manner as not to approach nearer than a distance of 3,000 English feet to the edge of the scarp of the western defile

(including the crest marked L M N of the northern branch of that defile). From the point K the line will follow the crest of the heights bordering on the north the second defile, which it will cut a little to the west of the bifurcation at a distance of about 850 sajens from the point where the roads from Adam-Ulan, Kungrueli, and Ak-Robat meet. The line will then continue to follow the crest of the heights as far as the point P marked on Map No. 2 attached to the Protocol. From thence it will run in a southeasterly direction nearly parallel to the Ak-Robat road, will pass between the salt lakes marked Q and R, which are to the south of Ak-Robat and to the north of Souma Karez, and leaving Souma Karez to the Afghans, will run to Islim, where the frontier will cross to the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk, leaving Islim outside Afghan territory. The line will then follow the crests of the hills which border the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk, and will leave Chemen-i-Bid outside the Afghan frontier. It will in like manner follow the crest of the hills which border the right bank of the Kushk as far as Hauzi Khan. From Hauzi Khan the frontier will follow an almost straight line to a point on the Murghab to the north of Maruchak, fixed so as to leave to Russia the lands cultivated by the Sariks, and their pastures.

Applying the same principle both to the Turkomans subject to Russia and to the subjects of the Ameer of Afghanistan, the frontier will follow east of the Murghab a line north of the valley of the Kaisor, and west of the valley of the Sangalak (Ab-i-Andkhai), and leaving Andkhai to the east will run to Khoja Saleh on the Oxus.

The delimitation of the pastures belonging to the respective populations will be left to the Commissioners. In the event of their not arriving at an understanding, this delimitation will be settled by the two Cabinets on the basis of the Maps drawn up and signed by the Commissioners.

For the sake of greater clearness the principal points of the frontier-line are marked on the Maps annexed to the present Protocol.

2. It is agreed that Commissioners shall forthwith be appointed by the Governments of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, who shall proceed to examine and trace upon the spot the details of the Afghan frontier as fixed by the preceding Article. One Commissioner shall be appointed by Her Majesty the Queen and one by His Majesty the Emperor. The escorts of the Commission are fixed at 100 men at most on either side, and no increase shall be made without an agreement between the Commissioners. The Commissioners shall meet at Zulfikar within two months from the date of the signature of the present Protocol, and shall at once proceed to trace the frontier in conformity with the preceding stipulations.

It is agreed that the delimitation shall begin at Zulfikar, and that, as soon as the Commissioners shall have met and commenced their labours, the neutralization of Penjdeh shall be limited to the district comprised between a line to the north running from Bend-i-Nadir to Burdj-Uraz-Khan and a line to the south running from Maruchak to Hauzi Khan, the Russian and Afghan posts on the Murghab being respectively at Bend-i-Nadir and Maruchak. The Commissioners shall conclude their labours as quickly as possible.

3. It is agreed that in tracing this frontier, and in conforming as closely as possible to the description of this line in the present Protocol, as well as to the points marked on the Maps annexed thereto, the said Commissioners shall pay due attention to the localities, and to the necessities and well-being of the local populations.

4. As the work of delimitation proceeds, the respective parties shall be at liberty to establish posts on the frontier.

5. It is agreed that, when the said Commissioners shall have completed their labours, Maps shall be prepared and signed, and communicated by them to their respective Governments.

In witness whereof, the Undersigned, duly authorized to that effect, have signed the present Protocol, and have affixed thereto the seal of their arms.

Done at London, the 10th September, 1885.

(L.S.)

Salisbury.

(L.S.)

Staal.

### APPENDIX III

#### AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA WITH REGARD TO THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE REGION OF THE PAMIRS

The Earl of Kimberley to M. de Staal.

Foreign Office, March 11, 1895.

Your Excellency,

As a result of the negotiations which have taken place between our two Governments in regard to the spheres of influence of Great Britain and Russia in the country to the east of Lake Victoria (Zor Koul), the following points have been agreed upon between us:—

1. The spheres of influence of Great Britain and Russia to the east of Lake Victoria (Zor Koul) shall be divided by a line which, starting from a point on that lake near to its eastern extremity, shall follow the crests of the mountain range running somewhat to the south of the latitude of the lake as far as the Bendersky and Orta-Bel Passes.

From thence the line shall run along the same range while it remains to the south of the latitude of the said lake. On reaching that latitude it shall descend a spur of the range towards Kizil Rabat on the Aksu River, if that locality is found not to be north of the latitude of Lake Victoria, and from thence it shall be prolonged in an easterly direction so as to meet the Chinese frontier.

If it should be found that Kizil Rabat is situated to the north of the latitude of Lake Victoria, the line of demarcation shall be drawn to the nearest convenient point on the Aksu River south of that latitude, and from thence prolonged as aforesaid.

2. The line shall be marked out, and its precise configuration shall be settled by a Joint Commission of a purely technical character, with a military escort not exceeding that which is strictly necessary for its proper protection.

The Commission shall be composed of British and Russian Delegates, with the necessary technical assistance.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government will arrange with the Ameer of Afghanistan as to the manner in which His Highness shall be represented on the Commission.

3. The Commission shall also be charged to report any facts which can be ascertained on the spot bearing on the situation of the Chinese frontier, with a view to enable the two Governments to come to an agreement with the Chinese Government as to the limits of Chinese territory in the vicinity of the line, in such manner as may be found most convenient.

4. Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia engage to abstain from exercising any political influence or control, the former to the north, the latter to the south, of the above line of demarcation.

5. Her Britannic Majesty's Government engage that the territory lying within the British sphere of influence between the Hindu Kush and the line running from the east end of Lake Victoria to the Chinese frontier shall form part of the terri-

tory of the Ameer of Afghanistan, that it shall not be annexed to Great Britain, and that no military posts or forts shall be established in it.

The execution of this Agreement is contingent upon the evacuation by the Ameer of Afghanistan of all the territories now occupied by His Highness on the right bank of the Panjah, and on the evacuation by the Ameer of Bokhara of the portion of Darwaz which lies to the south of the Oxus, in regard to which Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia have agreed to use their influence respectively with the two Ameers.

I shall be obliged if, in acknowledging the receipt of this note your Excellency will record officially the Agreement which we have thus concluded in the name of our respective Governments.

I am, &c.

(Signed)

Kimberley.

(The acknowledgment of M. de Staal, March 11, 1895, repeats in French the contents of Lord Kimberley's note.)

#### APPENDIX IV

#### THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION OF AUGUST 31, 1907

##### *Convention concernant l'Afghanistan*

Les Hautes Parties Contractantes, en vue d'assurer la parfaite sécurité sur les frontières respectives en Asie Centrale et le maintien dans ces régions d'une paix solide et durable, ont conclu la convention suivante:

##### ARTICLE I.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique déclare qu'il n'a pas l'intention de changer l'état politique de l'Afghanistan.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique s'engage en outre à exercer son influence en Afghanistan seulement dans un sens pacifique et il ne prendra pas lui-même en Afghanistan et n'en couragera pas l'Afghanistan à prendre des mesures menaçant la Russie.

De son côté, le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie déclare qu'il reconnaît l'Afghanistan comme se trouvant en dehors de la sphère de l'influence russe, et il s'engage à se servir pour toutes ses relations politiques avec l'Afghanistan de l'intermédiaire du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique; il s'engage aussi à n'en voyer aucuns Agents en Afghanistan.

##### ARTICLE II.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ayant déclaré dans le traité signé à Kaboul le 21 Mars 1905 qu'il reconnaît l'arrangement et les engagements conclus avec le défunt Emir Abdur Rahman et qu'il n'a aucune intention de s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure du territoire Afghan, la Grande Bretagne s'engage à ne pas annexer ou occuper, contrairement au dit traité, une partie quelconque de l'Afghanistan, ni à s'ingérer dans l'administration intérieure de ce pays, sous réserve que l'Emir remplira les engagements déjà contractés par lui à l'égard du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique en vertu de traité susmentionné.

##### ARTICLE III.

Les autorités Russes et Afghanes, spécialement désignées à cet effet, sur la frontière ou dans les provinces frontières, pourront établir des relations directes réciproques pour régler les questions locales d'un caractère non politique.

## ARTICLE IV.

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de Russie déclarent reconnaître, par rapport à l'Afghanistan, le principe de l'égalité de traitement pour ce qui concerne le commerce et conviennent que toutes les facilités qui ont été ou seront acquises à l'avenir au commerce et aux commerçants anglais et anglo-indiens, seront également appliquées au commerce et aux commerçants russes. Si le développement du commerce vient à démontrer la nécessité d'agents commerciaux, les deux Gouvernements s'entendront sur les mesures à prendre, eu égard bien entendu aux droits souverains de l'Emir.

## ARTICLE V.

Les présents arrangements n'entreront en vigueur qu'à partir du moment où le Gouvernement Britannique aura notifié au Gouvernement de Russie le consentement de l'Emir aux termes ci-dessus stipulés.



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## INDEX

- Abdullah Jan, 40, 45  
 Abdurrahman, Amir of Afghanistan,  
 47-48, 54, 66, 68, 70, 72  
 Afghan Wars, 19, 46-47, 82, 86  
 Agreement of 1873 (Granville-Gortcha-  
 koff), 32, 37, 42, 50-51, 57-58, 60,  
 64, 69, 85.  
 Agreement of 1895 (Pamirs), 66-67, 69  
 Alexander II, Tsar of Russia, 23-24, 26,  
 31-32, 34, 38, 44-46  
 Alexander III, Tsar of Russia, 53, 60  
 Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902), 75  
 Anglo-Russian Convention (1907), 80-82,  
 85  
 Argyll, Duke of, 35, 50  
 Auckland, Lord, 9-10, 14, 19-20  
  
 Badakshan, 26, 29-32, 35, 42  
 Balkh, 26-27, 29  
 Barakzais dynasty, 11, 15  
 Beaconsfield, Earl of, 33, 37, 46  
 Benckendorff, Count, 72, 74-76  
 Bokhara, 9, 11, 21-31 *passim*, 42, 64-66, 86  
 Brunnow, Baron, 20-21, 24  
 Buchanan, Sir Andrew, 25, 27-29, 34  
 "Buffer state" (see "intermediary zone")  
 Burnes, Captain Alexander, 10-12, 15, 17,  
 19-20  
 Bushire, 19  
  
 Cavagnari, Sir Louis, 47  
 Chamberlain, Sir Neville, 46  
 Chichkine, 62, 64  
 Clanricarde, Marquess of, 16  
 Clarendon, Earl of, 24-27, 33, 41  
 Cranbrook, Lord, 37, 46  
 Curzon, Lord, 86  
 Cyprus, 42-43  
  
 Dane, Sir Louis, 74  
 Derby, Lord, 37-38, 41  
 Disraeli, Benjamin (see Beaconsfield)  
 Dost Mohammed, Amir of Afghanistan,  
 10-11, 14-15, 20, 26, 28, 30  
 Duhamel, General, 18  
 Durand, Sir Mortimer, 64-68  
 Durham, Lord, 13, 15-16  
  
 Elgin, Lord, 65  
 Ellis, Henry, 9-10, 12-13  
*Entente cordiale* (1904), 75  
 Forsyth, Douglas, 26, 34-35  
  
 Gandamak, Treaty of (1879), 47  
 Giers, Count de, 41-42, 44, 50-51, 53-54,  
 60, 62, 65, 83  
  
 Gladstone, William E., 24, 37, 49-50,  
 54-56, 65  
 Gortchakoff, Prince, 23-25, 28-33, 35-36,  
 40-42, 60, 83, 85 (see also Agreement  
 of 1873)  
 Granville, Earl, 27, 29-32, 50, 52-53, 55,  
 85 (see also Agreement of 1873)  
 Grey, Sir Edward, 76, 79-81  
  
 Habibullah, Amir of Afghanistan, 71, 74  
 Herat, 10-19, 27, 30, 42, 51, 53, 71, 73, 86  
 Heri Rud, 27, 58  
 Heytesbury, Lord, 9  
 Hindu Kush, 21, 26-27, 59, 62, 64, 66  
 Hobhouse, Sir John C., 9, 14, 21  
 Holdich, Sir Thomas, 66-67  
  
 Ignatieff, Count, 70  
 "Intermediary zone," 23-26, 30, 33-36, 75,  
 79-80, 85-86  
 Isvolsky, Count, 76, 78-80  
  
 Joint Commission of Delimitation (1885-  
 1886), 51-53, 56, 85  
 Joint Commission of Delimitation (1895),  
 66, 85  
  
 Kabul, 10-47 *passim*, 69, 71, 74  
 Kamran Mirza, 10, 14  
 Kandahar, 10-18 *passim*, 47-48  
 Kapnist, Count, 60, 62-64  
 Karrak, 19  
 Kashmir, 11, 59  
 Kaufmann, General, 27-30, 38-41, 44-46  
 Khelat, 24, 86  
 Khiva, 10, 20-21, 23, 25, 31, 34-35, 86  
 Khojah Saleh, 27-29, 30-31, 50-51, 56  
 Khokand, 11, 23, 25, 36, 86  
 Kimberley, Earl of, 62, 65  
 Kohundil Khan, 18  
 Komaroff, Captain, 55, 57  
 Kuhlberg, Colonel, 56  
 Kunduz, 26, 29  
  
 Lamsdorff, Count, 70-71, 73-74  
 Lansdowne, Lord, 58, 64, 70, 72, 74-75, 79  
 Lawrence, Sir John, 23-24, 84  
 Loftus, Lord, 29, 41-42, 44  
 Lumsden, Sir Peter, 52-53, 56  
 Lytton, Lord, 37-40, 43, 46  
  
 Malta, 42  
 Mayo, Lord, 24, 26, 29  
 McNeill, Sir John, 9-10, 12, 14-15, 19  
 Melbourne, Lord, 9  
 Merv, 27-28, 38, 42, 49-51  
 Minto, Lord, 77



- Mohrenheim, Baron, 50  
 Morier, Sir Robert, 60, 62, 64  
 Morley, Lord, 77, 80  
 Mouraviëff, Count, 70  
 Murghab, 27, 64  
 Nesselrode, Count, 13-19  
 "Neutral zone" (see "intermediary zone")  
 Nicholas I, Tsar of Russia, 9, 12, 14, 18, 22  
 Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia, 78  
 Nicolson, Sir Arthur, 76, 78-81  
 Northbrook, Lord, 43  
 Orenburg, 17, 21  
 Oxus, 21-30 *passim*, 49, 58-60, 64, 66, 85  
 Palmerston, Lord, 9, 12-21  
 Pamirs, 27, 50, 58-68 (see also Agreement of 1895)  
 Penjdeh, 51-55  
 Perovski, General, 20-21  
 Persia, 9-19 *passim*, 24, 30  
 Peshawar, 10-12, 15, 39, 43  
 Pottinger, Eldred, 17  
 Protocol of 1885, 56-58  
 Protocols of 1888, 57  
 Punjab, 11-12, 27, 86  
 Ranjit Singh, 11, 15, 19  
 Rawal Pindi, Conference of, 54  
 Rawlinson, Sir Henry, 21  
 Ridgeway, Colonel, 56-57  
 Roberts, Lord, 45, 48  
 Rosebery, Lord, 61-65  
 Russo-Japanese War, 74, 76  
 Russo-Turkish War, 42  
 Sadozais dynasty, 11, 14  
 Salisbury, Lord, 37, 43, 46, 56, 69-70  
 Samarkand, 23, 33, 47  
 San Stefano, Treaty of (1878), 42  
 Sarakhs, 51-52  
 Schouvaloff, Count, 31-32, 35, 38-40, 84  
 Scott, Sir C., 70-71, 73  
 Seistan, 40  
 Shah Mohammed, 14, 16-19, 40  
 Shah Shuja, 11, 19  
 Shakespeare, Captain, 21  
 Shere Ali, Amir of Afghanistan, 26, 28, 30, 32, 39-41, 43-47  
 Simonich, Count, 11-18  
 Sind, 10, 12, 86  
 Skobelev, General, 58  
 Spring-Rice, Sir Cecil A., 73-74  
 Staal, Baron de, 54-56, 60-63, 65, 70, 83  
 Stoddart, Colonel, 19  
 Stolietoff, General, 44-46  
 Stremoukoff, 26-27  
 Tashkent, 23, 27, 33, 39, 42, 45, 68, 86  
 Teheran, 9, 11, 13, 15, 19  
 Tekke tribes (see Turkomans)  
 Triple Entente, 81, 85  
 Turchomanchai, Treaty of (1828), 13  
 Turkomans, 27, 29, 38, 42, 49, 52  
 Vicovich, Captain, 11-19  
 Victoria, Lake, 60, 63-64, 66  
 Victoria, Queen, 32, 53  
 Wakhan, 27, 29-32, 35, 42, 65, 67  
 Yakub, Amir of Afghanistan, 40, 45, 47  
 Yanoff, Colonel, 59  
 Younghusband, Captain, 59  
 Zelenoi, General, 52, 56  
 Zulfikar Pass, 53-56

