

RUSSO-AFGHAN BORDER DISPUTE AND ITS SETTLEMENT, 1869-1907

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Certificate

Certified that the dissertation entitled **Russo-Afghan Border Dispute and Its Settlement, 1869-1907** submitted by **Atul Singh** is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University, or any other University and is his own work.

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PREFACE

Afghanistan, a land locked country is situated in the heart of Asia. To its north lies the former Soviet Central Asian states, to its north-east the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China, to the west Iran, to the south Pakistan and to the south-east the Pak-occupied territory of Indian state of J&K. Thus, Afghanistan shares 2,384 kms, long border with central Asian states of Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkemenistan, 75 kilometers with the people's Republic of china, 120 kilometers with India, 2,180 kilometers with Pakistan and 820 kilometers with Iran. This signifies the strategic location of Afghanistan in the geopolitical context of the region.

Due to its strategic location Afghanistan became the focal point of intense rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Britain during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This rivalry was the direct result of the expansion of British and Russian empires in Asia from two opposite directions. Whereas Russia had expanded southward into Central Asia, the british were moving northwards in India. In this situation Afghanistan assumed a crucial role for the British who perceived it as a frontier outpost to promote the British commercial and political interests in Central Asia and also

to forestall any Russian incursions into India. On their part Russians continued to move forward southwards upto Oxus, thereby creating tense moments in Anglo-Russian and Russo-Afghan relations. Uncertain and unstable state of northern frontiers of Afghanistan facing Russia, was perceived as security threat by the British in the light of Russian forward moves in Central Asia. Similarly, Russia was concerned about Afghan claims on Bukharan territory north of the Oxus, which were seen as anti-Russian moves. the issue of northern frontiers of Afghanistan assumed a crucial role in the overall Anglo-Russian negotiations over the question of; (i) Afghanistan as a neutral zone. (ii) Afghanistan being outside Russian sphere of influence. these issues could be mutually decided only after the northern border of Afghanistan was defined and demarcated by several boundary commissions as a result of Anglo-Russian negotiations. Finally, the Anglo-Russian convention was signed in 1907 under which Russia agreed to consider Afghanistan as outside her sphere of influence and also to conduct relations with Afghanistan through Britain.

The issue of Afghanistan's borders touching Russia came to the fore in 1869 when Sher Ali re-established his authority in Afghanistan. By this time Russian had reached

Asia which brought them in proximity to Afghanistan lent urgency to the final definition of northern limits of Afghanistan. The Panjdeh episode in early 1885 clinched the matter and in September 1885, both Britain and Russia signed a protocol laying down precisely the Russo-Afghan boundary from the Oxus towards Zulfikar pass. Now, onwards the focus of attention shifted to the Pamirs area and with the conclusion of Pamirs Boundary Agreement in March 1895 all disputes concerning Afghanistan's northern borders were finally settled. In early 20th century Russia started pressing their demand for direct dealings with Afghanistan, which was resented by the British who looked after the external relations of that country. Finally, the Anglo-Russian Convention on Afghanistan, Tibet and Persia was signed in 1907, whereby Britain undertook not to occupy or annex any part of Afghanistan and Russia recognised the country as outside her sphere of influence.

When we look at the Russo-Afghan border problem and its dimensions, one finds it intimately linked to larger issues of the British policy to use Afghanistan as a front line state to stall Russian moves in Central Asia, and also with the Anglo-Russian rivalry in that region. since it was in

the interest of both these rival powers to define the borders of Afghanistan, the same was done after a series of negotiations. This put a stop to any further Russian expansion beyond the Oxus and ensured the existence of Afghanistan as a buffer state between British India and Russia. As such, the study of this problem is important as it will help in a better understanding of the unstable and uncertain state of affairs in the northern borders of Afghanistan which have once again become tense and live.

Chapter 1: This chapter will discuss the geostrategic importance of Afghanistan and review the Anglo-Russian rivalry over Afghanistan in the light of Russian expansion in Central Asia. It will also trace the state of northern frontiers of Afghanistan during 19th century, with particular reference to the extent of Afghanistan's political control over Balkh, Badakhshan, Shignan, Roshan and Wakhan.

Chapter 2: This chapter will focus on rival border claims in the northern areas of Afghanistan. Amir Sher Ali's claim to Ishkashim, Shignan, Roshan and the Russian response will be analysed in detail. The impact of Merv, Panjdeh and Pamirs incidents over Russo-Afghan border dispute will also be examined.

Chapter 3: It will discuss the British response to rival Afghan and Russian claims to the northern borders of Afghanistan near and across the Oxus, in the light of overall British policy towards Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Chapter 4: This chapter will deal with the series of Anglo-Russian negotiations over the issue of definition and demarcation of northern borders of Afghanistan, which started in 1869 and finally culminated in 1907 with the signing of an Anglo-Russian accord on Afghanistan, Tibet and Persia. It will critically review the Gochako-Clarendon agreement of 1873, Anglo-Russian accord of 1887, and also the Pamirs Boundary agreement of 1895.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan inherited two essential geopolitical considerations from its history. These were both strategic and born out from her physical configuration and location in Central Asia. First, great trade route passes through Afghanistan, became the foothold of various invaders for the invasion on the Indian sub-continent. Secondly, since the rise of Russia as a great power and the British overseas colonial, economic and political expansion, this zone was prone to political and armed conflicts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The great powers were not covetous to the resources of Afghanistan, but inclusion of this zone would have tilted the balance of power between the major powers. These factors suggest and demonstrate that "... the location of a country... is always the supreme geographical fact in its history...",¹ and that even if the natural environment gives definite basic characteristic to the state, [... the political value and implication of ... (its location is) ... continuously changing."²

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1. Ellen Churchill Semple, Influence of Geographic Environment, London, 1911, p.129.
 2. Hans W.Weigart, et.al., The Principles of Political Geography New York, 1957, p.174.

Geopolitics of Afghanistan

Afghanistan's land area (650,000 Kms.) is second only to Mongolia and has largest population among the landlocked states in Asia. It is situated in the heart of Asia. To its north lies the former Soviet Central Asian states, to its north-east the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China, to the West Iran, to the South Pakistan and to the South-east the Pak-occupied territory of Indian state of J & K. Thus, Afghanistan shares 2,304 Kms long border with Central Asian states of Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, 75 kms. with People's Republic of China, 120 kms. with India, 2180 Kms with Pakistan and 820 Kms with Iran.³ Afghanistan is surrounded by so many countries which signifies the strategic location of her in the geopolitical context of the region.

The impact of interior location has remained apparent ever since it emerged as an independent state in 1747. The vacuum, created after the downfall of Persian, Moghul and Uzbek surpluses was filled by the new emerging independent Afghan State. Afghanistan could not focus its attention towards the threat posed by the territorial ambitions of Britain and Russia in Central Asia and was, caught in the

3. Israel, Johnson, Wood, World Geography Today, New York, 1980, p.275.

whirlwind of territorial expansion of these two powers. Active forward policies of Britain and Russia created such indigenous and exogenous forces, which sapped the stability as well as survival of Afghanistan as an independent state.

Afghanistan commanded few routeways which linked it with developed areas. The most interconnectable terrain in Afghanistan were close to the sea and major commercial and agricultural regions were far away from the marine contact and communication. Underdeveloped southern half of the country was dissociated from the developed northern Afghanistan due to these topographical features of Afghanistan.⁴ Cast upon such a geopolitical situation and with the resurgence of regional individuality and consciousness among the inhabitants of the state, the efforts of the Afghan rulers to consolidate their power were frustrated. Within the state itself, the links between the various provinces and regions were tenuous and weakened by distances and physical barriers.

Afghanistan's central location was in the nature of a serious political disadvantage. The failure of the Afghan regimes to incorporate Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier into its own territory in the nineteenth century

4. Ibid.

can be regarded as the singlemost obstacle to its subsequent external relations.⁵

Apart from locational disadvantage, Afghanistan was culmination of different cultural and ethnic groups. Afghanistan could not combine to form an effective political unit because of internal subdivisions. Whenever, the central authority was weak or contested by rival claimants, various regions and political units asserted political separation. Political intrigue and conspiracy, turmoil and threatened secession whether Kabul and Kandhar or Afghan Turkistan and Herat - was a general phenomenon in Afghan political history. The dubious character of the various Afghan regimes necessitated the maintenance of some degree of regional ethnic and social balances. These in turn became the indicators of the struggle to appease the pressure groups and the various other factions, dominating the national and regional political scene.

Besides this factor, internal and external communication networks formed the weakest link of the Afghan political and economic geography. Along with the impact of physical relief, it remained as the single most obstacle for the economic and political development of the state. There

5. G.P. Tate, The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch, D.K. Publishing House, 1911, 1973, p.9.

was no marked determination in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Afghanistan to connect the various regions with rail or road network nor was any attempt made to link the country with external communication network.⁶

The Impact of Geographical Environment

Influence of geographic environment, has been persistently felt in the Afghan history. It had remained as a physical basis of its evolution as a state. The spirit of political freedom and independence among the various Afghan tribes or their periodic defections, are all probable defects of the geographical remoteness. The locational proximity had also helped in shaping its history. The weakening of Central authority and the necessity of aggressive forward policies to maintain internal political stability, as a consequence, remained a recurrent theme of the Afghan history.

The physical environmental conditions have more or less determined all the major aspects of the Afghan society and the nation state. The local regional variations of these elements have not only influenced the level of man-land

6. Israel, Jhonson, Word, - World Geography Today, New York, 1980, p.275.

relationships but also has influenced the separate regional, political and social development. As a result of divergent but distinct regional interests, the attempts made on political and economic unification as well as the establishment of stable political system has been obstructed.

The Hindukush and its westward extension served to divide the westward migrating Central Asian tribes into two streams; diverting one westward to Herat and Iran and the other southward to the Indian subcontinent through the seasonally open passes of the Hindukush. It served as much to write as to divide Central Asia from the Indian subcontinent. Yet "... the story of Hindukush... neither of peripheral remoteness nor of the disconnected comings and goings of people and ideas merely... the wild mountains that are the backbone of Afghanistan not only divided Central and Southern Asia, the Oxus and Indus but also always interconnected the two parts of Asia into a system of interrelations..." ⁷ Hindukush was a barrier as well as a carrier of currents and of uniting the historical process of the Asiatic heartland with the Indian subcontinent.

7. J.P. Singh Uberoi, Between Oxus and Indus: A Local History of the Frontier, 500 B.C. to A.D., 1925, Indian Horizon, New Delhi, Vol.XXII, No.1, January, 1973, p.81.

The mountain system have tended to prevent any sort of cultural exchange between various diverse social groups inhabiting Afghanistan. As territories of each social groups was physiographically limited from others, the social groups developed their own traditional political conception and organization on the basis of modifying influences of the physical environment they inhabited. Similarly in the lower order of the hierarchy of social groups, tribes and sub-tribes were separated from one another and established a general framework of relationship within themselves as well as with other social groups. The pattern of relationship which emerged was as follows:-

Social groups	State area
Major tribal groups	Major geographical region
Sub-tribes	Primary sub-divisions or provinces
Clans	Local areas or districts
Extended families	Sub-districts
Families	Villages.

However, the unequal physical division between northern and southern Afghanistan enabled the geopolitical interrelationship to have far-reaching impact upon Afghanistan. The influence of natural environment upon the boundaries of Afghanistan was also evident. Although it shows

certain degree of similarity and coincidence with the physical landscape, the boundaries have largely overlooked and have divided the geographical unity of the state. The variation between the demarcated and the geographical boundary, was also partially clear and was suggestive of the greater or lesser completeness of the physical barrier between the various ethnic groups, who were collectively (within Afghanistan) were known as Afghanistan. Due to the spatial physical pattern and the distribution of social groups, the concentration and diffusion of power in the divided areas had decisive influence in the unity and stability of the state. It also enabled the emergence of regional core areas as rival political centres.⁸

The prevalence of semi-arid conditions enabled the northern half of the country to weave its own distinct geopolitical relationships. The social and economic landscape was markedly influenced by the availability of water for irrigation. This became a crucial factor for power equation in the region. The struggle for irrigation channels was the struggle for power⁹ and was concentrated in

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8. The ethnic map has been adopted from H.F.Schurman, The Mongols of Afghanistan: An Ethnography of the Moghals and Related Peoples of Afghanistan, The Hague, 1962.
 9. Jan Myrdal and Gun Kessle, Gates of Asia: A Diary of Long Journey, London, 1972, pp.76-77 and 169.

the cities, particularly in northern Afghanistan. The relationship of these cities of the Oxus plain with rest of the country was tenuous and weak; it was influenced and often dominated by forces of trans-oxus region. This peripheral influence upon the region was ultimately broken in the late nineteenth century, when the regional nuclear area of Balk was transferred to Mazar-i-Sharif¹⁰ and was effectively incorporated in the state.

Southern Afghanistan was divided into eastern and western halves which was both physical as well as economic and political division. Although the region is predominantly inhabited by Pushton tribes (unlike the northern half), the geographical elements contrived to equate the power balance between the major nuclear areas of Herat, Kandahar and Kabul. The confrontation between the nuclear areas in the region is evident from the compromise location of the capital of the Afghan empire (in eighteenth century) at Kandahar, a Durrani area. The subsequent transfer of the capital of the empire to Kabul not only suggested an effort to break from regional influence on the empire but also indicated the minimization of the impact of external forces by bringing the state into effective political unity.¹¹

10. Ibid.

11. T.H. Holdich India, London, 1904, p.73.

However, the importance of Kabul was to bring serious repercussions to the Afghan state. Though it was able to establish a framework of political unification of the different regions of the state, it was undermined by the external forces. Therefore, the fluctuations of political climate in Kabul not only enabled the regional core areas to separate but also enabled the external forces to separate the Pushton territories. This latter aspect accentuated the disruptive forces within the state.

Thus, above analysis shows that the geographical factors have played a significant role in shaping the national character and political outlook of Afghanistan. It inherited a harsh terrain and austere climate as well as the consequences arising from the crossword location in Central Asia. These influences were impressed on the Afghan society and was expressed in the form of survival and strong sense of independence among the tribes within the overall pattern of ethnic and culturally heterogeneous population. The environmental factors remain to hamper the Afghan attempts to build a strong political system and viable economic state.

Anglo-Russian Rivalry Over Central Asia

Internal political imbalances, problem of communication

and outlet to the sea had mainly affected to the Afghan foreign relations. Afghanistan was compelled to accept the inappropriate distribution of territory because of its political instability coupled with the external political and territorial pressures. The definition of boundaries (1873-1907) and the subsequent boundary adjustments between Afghanistan and the colonial powers reflected the strategic, administrative and economic conveniences of the two great powers, viz. Britain and Russia.

It is noted that the native Asian states could not play effective role in the Asian affairs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as European powers were responsible for it. The Asian states retained their importance because of their strategic and geographical locations. The rivalry between European powers, almost halted the expansion of traditional empires, while the colonial powers expanded at the cost of native Asian states. The colonial powers clashed among themselves and the intermittent territory became a zone of contention and of conflicting interests.¹²

Afghanistan was such a zone, where territorial interests of Britain and Russia clashed. This rivalry was the direct result of the expansion of British and Russian

12. V.K. Chandra, India, Britain, Russia: A Study in British Opinion, Delhi, 1967, p.5.

empires in Asia from two opposite directions. Whereas, Russia expanded southward into Central Asia, the British were moving northwards in India. In this situation Afghanistan assumed a crucial role for the British who perceived it as a frontier outpost to promote the British Commercial and political interests in Central Asia and also to forestall any Russian incursions into India. On their part Russians continued to move forward towards South upto Oxus, thereby creating tense moments in Anglo-Russian and Russo-Afghan relations. Uncertain and unstable state of northern frontiers of Afghanistan facing Russia, was perceived as security threat by the British in the light of Russian forward moves in Central asia. Similarly Russia was concerned about Afghan claims on Bokhara territory north of the Oxus, which were seen as anti-Russian moves. The British were determined to make (i) Afghanistan a (semi)-independent buffer state, (ii) Afghanistan being outside Russian sphere of influence. In all probability, the absence of which could have encouraged Russia to expand far beyond the Oxus, might have endangered the British interests in the region. So the British fortified themselves along the Kabul-Ghazhi-Kadahar line.¹³

13. Asghar H. Bilgrami, Afghanistan and British India 1793 - 1907, New Delhi 1972, p.60.

The origin of this rivalry can be traced with the Franco-Russian design on the Indian subcontinent. However, the France started to take interest in Persia since 1807, which eliminated French design in India. But, Russia did not leave her design to expand in Central Asia. Russia, encroached into the Persian Central Asian state steadily, and the British failed to help the latter. Now, Britain was compelled to consider and depend upon Afghanistan for security of her Indian possession in the meantime, Kabul, Herat and Kandahar emerged as independent states due to unstable political conditions in Afghanistan. This upheaval in this policies of this region made it more prone to Russian design, when Russia was gradually expanding in the Central Asia.

Both, Britain and Russia were desirous to expand in Central Asia because of political and commercial interests were existing. The struggle for supremacy was logical, as British fears over Russian moves towards India. British wanted to check Russian advances, therefore they created ".....an imaginary line stretching from constantinople through Persia to Central Asia and China."¹⁴ At the same

14. A Lobonov - Rostovsby, Russia and Asia, New York, 1951, p.113.

time, the Russian attempt to establish a natural frontier was met "... at every point along the southern and eastern borders...(by)...British power. time and again Russian advances called for British fears and hostility, while British measures in turn assured the Russians.¹⁵

The traditional trade routes between various Khanates played important role because Britain and Russia, both were interested in the commercial exploitation of the region. The trade route to the Central Asia led from Kandahar, Kabul and Peshawar to India. The returning Karvans carried products from India, not only to these Khanates but also to Khokand and Bokhara. This trade enriched British India. On the other hand, Russia was thinking that "...British following up their potential advantage, caused Russian influence in the Middle East to collapse."¹⁶ Russian territorial conquest and extension of the trans-caspian railway countered British move and isolated Britain from taking part in Central Asian commerce.

15. Waren B.Wash, *Russia and the Soviet Union*, Ann Arbor, 1950, p.216.

16. Alexander Burns, *Cahool: A Personnal Narrative of a Journey and Residence in that City in the Years, 1836, 1837*, London, 1840, p.50.

Thus, Afghanistan became a Centre of superpower rivalry, under such circumstances. Britain was aware of growing Russian influence in the region and once again she redefined Afghanistan as frontier of India. After the culmination of Second Anglo-Sikh War, they actively participated in the frontier politics. Their north-Western boundary being superimposed upon the Sikh boundary with Afghanistan.

When, Russia was stopped to westwards expansion in Europe, it rapidly expanded in Central Asia. The Uzbek Khan of Khiva had long been a most unsatisfactory neighbour. He raided for slaves, cattle and other loot, and the number of Russian prisoners whom he ill treated. These were justifiable reasons for Russia to take punitive action against Khiva in 1839-1840. British occupation of Kabul valley was reason behind Curzon and Russian frontier officers thought it necessary to advance towards India.

Though expedition against Khiva ended in disaster. Russia decided to despatch a second expedition against Khiva, but before its commencement the Uzbek Chief submitted due to mediation of British agents as they were alarmed of Russian designs. In 1847, Russia occupied the mouth of Sir-Daria by erection of a fort named Aralob. Russia was now operating in the territory of Khiva. In 1853 she attacked

the fort of Ab-Masjid and occupied it. By 1865, Russia occupied Tashkent and Trans-Caspian railway was extended to Samarband in 1867. A new province of Russian-Turkestan was created in 1867, and Tashkent was made its capital. Now, a centre of Russian politics was shifted from Orenburg to Tashkent. By this position, Russia exerted influence and dominated the course of events in Afghanistan.

When Russia occupied Turkestan, centre of Russian Central Asian Politics shifted from Tashkent to Askabad. This shift was significant for the cradle of policy, the starting point of action (was Tashkent).... It was from Tashkent that... (Russia expanded).....via Samarband to Jam, on the Bokharan frontier, in order to menace, and, if necessary, to invade Afghanistan..."¹⁷

These Russian moves made anxious to Britain. Now, it became imperative for Britain to take effective measures to check the rapid Russian advance. The Indian Government was authorized to act as an Asian power.¹⁸ The Governor General was allowed to incur expenditure freely in taking measures to counter the Russian advance; but he was not given the

17. Bisheshwar Prasad; Foundation of India's Foreign Policy, 1860 - 1882, London, 1955, p.46.

18. J.A.Norris, The First Afghan War, 1830-1842, Cambridge, 1967, p.31

discretion to march an army against the Russians without prior instructions from London.¹⁹

The first act of the Governor-General was to despatch Captain Connolly and Alexander Burnes on mission to Afghanistan and Central Asia,²⁰ for exploring these regions and collecting information about the principalities lying in between India and Russia, and more importantly, to find out in detail the nature and context of the Russian interests and activities, and the extent to which the foundations of their political intercourse, had succeeded.²¹ The British Foreign Office, likewise instructed to the British Ambassador in St.Petersburg to send back similar informations. The reply of the British Ambassador Heytesbury,²² to the Foreign Office, as well as the first-hand information collected by the agent of the Indian Government, gave the lie to the apprehensions nourished by the British regarding the aggressive intensions of the Russians operating from Central Asia and also about the very

19. Ibid.

20. Foreign Miscel No.261, Remarks by E.C. Ravenshaw on a memorandum on Afghanistan and Central Asia, dated 23 August 1851.

21. Ibid.

22. Heyteshury to Aherdeem, 18 January 1830, cited in Norris, op.cit., p.39.

practicability of an invasion of India there from.²³

The information also revealed the lack of capability on the part of the Russians to launch an army over the West inhospitable expanse of the arid steppes, inhabited by the warring and tumultuous people over whom the Russians, till then, had but little control.²⁴ And, it was also estimated that the Russian empire as yet had not been in possession of sufficient material means to give effect to their expansive projects,²⁵ even if they had a desire to reach the northern borders of Afghanistan. But still the British thought in terms of Russia seeking political gains under the guise of commercial intercourse through which they were likely to exercise a disruptive influence against the interests of Britain.²⁶ Thus, the British devise a policy of opening up Central Asia to British Commerce through the navigation of Indus by which they sought to engage themselves in repelling with Russian commerce and Russian political influence from Kabul, Khina and Bokhara, and substituting it with that of their own.²⁷

23. Foreign Miscel, No.209, 'Invasion of Russia' by John Malcom, 18 March 1830. p.7.

24. Foreign Miscel, No.261.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

Innumerable British agents were commissioned to thoroughly explore the entire region lying between the Indus and the Oxus from all possible angles - commercial, political and strategic. An intelligence system was also developed, and intelligence agents were dispersed throughout Central Asia to keep the government informed with the day to day developments obtaining in that area. The reports and information received from these agents were continually dissected and analysed by government officials; who, after drawing their own conclusions, advised the government on policy orientation and suggested courses of action to be taken on particular matters and in given situations.²⁸

All these preparations were done because of British anxiety to check the rapid Russian advance and the views expressed by Lumsden and Lawrence's rejection of forward policy coincided with the British failure in proposing of delimitation of spheres of influence in Central Asia between the two in 1864. Britain was conscious of the necessity of asking for such delimitation of spheres in 1869 due to rapid Russian advance. The issue of northern frontiers of

28. The following memoranda and opinions of the officials have been used in the study; Bonamy's Indus and its defence in 1830's (Foreign, Miscel, 205); John Malcom's 'Invasion of Russia' (Foreign Miscel, 209); E.C. Ravenshaw, 'Afghanistan and Central Asia' (Foreign Miscels. 961, 262); Burnes 'India and Russia' (Foreign Miscel, 305).

Afghanistan assumed a crucial role in the overall Anglo-Russian rivalry and negotiations over the question of; (i) Afghanistan as a neutral zone, (ii) Afghanistan being outside Russian sphere of influence. These issues could be mutually decided only after the Northern borders of Afghanistan were defined and demarcated by Boundary Commission, as a result of Anglo-Russian negotiations. Finally, the Anglo-Russian convention was signed in 1907, under which Russia agreed to consider Afghanistan as outside her sphere of influence and to conduct relations with Afghanistan through Britain. The rivalry between the two over Central Asian question, thus came to an end.

Northern Boundaries of Afghanistan During 19th Century

The whole tract of country between the Oxus and the Hindu-Kush was from early ages the field of quarrel and strife.

In 1751, Ahmed Shah, in forming the new kingdom of Afghanistan, annexed to it the provinces of Maimana, Andkhai, Akhtcha, Shebborghan, Balkh, Seripol, Khulum or Tashburgan, Bamian and Badakshan, and appointed governors over each.²⁹

29. G.P. Tate; The Kingdom of Afghanistan; Delhi, 1973.

In 1789 the inhabitants of Balkh and Akhtcha, at the instigation of Sultan Thurad Khan, Ameer of Bokhara, revolted against their Afghan governors. Timur Shah, the son and successor of Ahmed Shah, took the field in person to punish them, but owing to the rivalry of his sirdars the expedition failed and he was obliged to retreat, leaving a great portion of army behind him. Timur Shah, although obliged to evacuate 'Mavera-ul-Nuhr', managed to preserve a feeble appearance of authority in Balkh & Akhtcha³⁰, although the Afghan supremacy in these provinces gradually dwindled away, till the last when Dost Mohammed Khan succeeded to the throne, the Afghan authority only really extended over the country from the Hindu-Kush to the south of Ghazani, and from Bamian to the Khyber Mountains.³¹

During the Dost Mohammed's detention in India, his Minister, Mirza Sumce Khan, remained near Balkh and acquired considerable influence over the Uzbeks and Turbomans, so that when Dost returned, he represented to him that if he wished to annex the former provinces in Turkestan, the inhabitants would gladly receive him. In 1854-55, Afzal Khan, brother of Dost Mohammed and governor of Turkistan, firmly established his authority in Turkistan,

30. Ibid., p.32.

31. Foreign Dept. Progs., Secret. 1869, Nos.68-91, No.71.

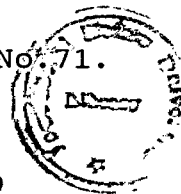
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annexed the whole of 'Movera-ul-Nehr', excepting the province of Maimana. In 1859, he further conquered the neighbouring Badakshan.³²

In fact from 1850 to 1859, Bokhara lost all influence, jurisdiction, or possession south of the Oxus, except Charjoi and Kerbi.³³

The northern boundary of the province extended along the right bank of the Oxus to the fort Hadge Salib, where the Bokharian Province of Kerbi terminates. There was a place better known as Alambagh. At this place both Afghan and Bokhara Governments had their posts. Proceeding in a southerly and westerly direction, the boundary extended to Kajer Killa, on the border of Maimana.³⁴

The submission of the more western portion of Afghan-Turkistan, inhabited by wild and unsettled tribes of Turkomans, acknowledging no master, was little more than nominal.

Maimana deserves special mention. Two years before his death, Yar Mohammed, of Herat succeeded in reducing Maimana

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

and levied a 'nuzzer-nama' of some camels and a money payment. But it lasted only two years, when the province again lapsed into its old state of independence. Sher Ali Khan, however on succeeding the Dost appears to have been on friendly terms with Maimana, and addressed the chief as "his son". He afterwards transferred the State to Herat, whilst he left the remainder of Afghan-Turkistan under the Governorship of Afzul Khan.

Noor Mohammed, the Minister of Sher Ali, told Captain Grey, Persian Interpreter at Umballa that Shere Ali, when he got into difficulties, promised the Meer of Maimana to recognise his independence of Afghanistan as regards tributes, should he assist him against his rivals, and consequently the only Chief that loyalty held out in 1865, when Turkistan revolted against him, was the Meer of Maimana. Subsequently, when Shere Ali was to all appearance gaining back his influence, and the weaverling Fail Mohammed (then Governor of Turkistan under Abdul Rahman Khan) declared formally in his favour, "the resources of Maimana were by the latter (Shere Ali) placed at his disposal."³⁵

In 1868, when Abdul Rehman Khan made his way through Turkistan and advanced to subdue Maimana, he called upon the

35. Ibid.

chief of that place to give her a large sum of money, and a big gun called 'Jehangeer'. On the refusal of the Meer to comply with this demand, a battle ensued, in which Abdul Rehman was defeated. Abdul Rehman reorganised his army, and laid seige to the town. The resistance was stern - but at length the brave Meer was obliged to make terms, although he did not profess to give his allegiance to him.³⁶

Thus, the position of Maimana was friendly and loyal to shere Ali Khan, but according to the compact referred to, independent of Afghanistan so far as payment of tribute is concerned.

In 1859, the Afzal Khan, conquered the neighbouring the Badakshan. Shignan, Roshan and Wabhan were dependencies of Badakshan. Badakshan was tributary to Afghanistan. Due to this tributary status of Badakshan, Aminshere Ali always laid claims over Shignan, Wabhan and Roshan.

In 1871, the affairs of Badakshan were in a very disturbed state; the people rose and expelled Mir Jehandar from Chiefship and the country.³⁷ When, news reached Kabul, the Amir sent Naib Mohammed Alum to settle matters and appoint an Afghan nominee as ruler of Badakshan.³⁸

36. Ibid.

37. Foreign Dept. Progs, Secret, August 1871, Nos. 21-23.

38. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Secret, August 1871, Nos.137-146.

After the death of Amir Shere Ali Khan, the inhabitants of Badakshan became refractory towards the Afghan Government. They called in the son of Saraj Shah and expelled the Afghans.³⁹

Very soon after this Mir Baha Khan, son of Jehandar Shah, expelled the son of Saraj Shah and assumed the Chiefship. Soon after this again, Shah-Zada Hasan, brother of Jehandar Shah and Mohammed Umar Khan, son of Yusuf Ali Khan, and cousin of Jehandar Shah, who had been with Sirdar Abdul Rahman proceeded to Shignan with the avowed purpose of fetching their families.⁴⁰

On arrival there they declared their intention of taking possession of Badakshan; the population on hearing this, turned against Baha Khan and declared Shahzada Hasan to be their chief.⁴¹ The brothers, Muhammed Umar Khan and Sultanshah, captured Mir Baba Khan and were made rulers of Rostab. Against the will of Shahzada Hasan they determined to kill Baha Khan, but Shahzado Hasan hearing of their intention marched against them, exiled them, and appointed Baha Khan ruler of Rostab. Two months later Sirdar Abdul

39. Foreign Dept. Progs., Secret., October 1880, Nos. 137-140.

40. Ibid.

41. Foreign Dept., Progs., Secret., January 1880, Nos.1-39.

Rahman took leave of the Russians and came to Kolab, where he found Muhammed Umar Khan and Sultan Shah. Abdul Rahman wrote a murasila to Shahzada Hasan saying that he had come with the intention of proceeding to Kabul, that he would in no way interfere with Badakshan, and asking for help in way of money and supply.⁴²

But, events took turn and Baba Khan joined with Muhammad Umar Khan and Sultan Shah and invited Abdul Rahman to Rostab. On hearing of the Sirdar's approach, Shahzada Hasan was much alarmed and fled from Badakshan, after this Baba Khan became chief. On arrival at Khanabad, Sardar Abdul Rahman sent for Mir Baba Khan and Muhammad Umar Khan. On their arrival, he imprisoned Baba Khan and deported him to Takht-i-pal, while he appointed Muhammad Umar Khan Mir of Badakshan, and his brother, Sultan Shah, Governor of Rostab.⁴³

After this, Muhammad Umar Khan subdued Shignan and made a prisoner of Yusuf-Ali-Shah shah of Shignan. The later was charged of disloyalty and intention to transfer his allegiance from Badakshan to Bokhara.⁴⁴ Similarly, Roshan

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Foreign Dept., Progs; Secret, October, 1880, Nov.138-139.

and Wabhan which were considered dependencies of Badakshan were brought under influence.

Thus, we may observe that state of affairs in the northern parts of Afghanistan were always chaotic. This instability, inspired Russians to interfere in the politics of the region.

Finally we can say the Central Asia was always prone to the rival expansion and claims of Britain and Russia, due to unstable conditions and its geo-strategic location. Besides this, Afghanistan was trying hard to maintain its existence and was also battling to grab as much area as possible in the northern parts of Afghanistan, on the both side of Oxus. Afghanistan claimed various regions, which were readily contested by Russia. This state of affairs finally came to an end after the boundary settlements, which will be discussed in details in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 2

RUSSO-AFGHAN BORDER DISPUTE: A REVIEW

Afghanistan as a modern political territorial unit emerged in stages and so did its international boundaries. The political upheavals and wars which conquered the history of indigenous empires of Afghanistan undoubtedly left their impress upon the frontier states. It was bound to be difficult during the nineteenth century to demarcate a precise political boundary. In areas where there were segmented societies, the extreme intermingling in N.W.F.P. and other areas, created intractable problems and border disputes in the matter of demarcation.

Claims over Shignan, Roshan and Wakhan

The issue of Afghanistan's borders touching Russia came to the fore in 1869 when Sher Ali re-established his authority in Afghanistan. By this time Russians had reached in proximity to Afghanistan's northern borders, which was viewed by Amir Sher Ali as a direct threat to the security of Afghanistan. On their part Russians were irked by Afghan claims to Shignan, Roshan and Wakhan¹ which actually lay outside the Oxus line that was agreed to be the Afghan frontier by the British and Russian Governments, in the

1. Foreign, Dot. Progs: Secret. October, 1880, No.237.

agreement of 1872-73. By this agreement England was bound to look on the countries north of the Oxus as beyond the radius of his influence and protection, while the same conditions are imposed on Russia as regards countries south of the Oxus.² River Oxus was fixed as a formal boundary between Russia and Afghanistan.

The agreement was made as it was considered expedient, to have a certain intermediary zone for the purpose of preserving the respective possessions of the two countries from immediate contact. Afghanistan seemed well suited to supply what was needed, and it was consequently agreed that the two Governments should use all their influence with their neighbouring States to prevent any encroachment on this intermediary zone. It therefore became necessary to decline what were the territories actually in the possession of Amir Sher Ali Khan.³

The Russian Government at first objected to including Badakshan and Wakhan in the possessions but subsequently, on the remonstrance of England, it was agreed to include these two regions as part of the intermediary zone.⁴

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

But, Afghan claims were based on the premise that Shighnan, Roshan and Wakhan were dependencies of Badakshan, which was tributary to Afghanistan. And the formal acceptance of the river Oxus as the boundary between Afghanistan and Russian Turkistan further complicated the issue. For example, more than half of the population of Shighnan which was claimed by Amir of Afghanistan as being a dependency and feudatory of Badakshan by across the Oxus.

Amir Sher ali claimed the sovereignty over Badakshan and its dependencies like Shighnan. Roshan and Wakhan. His contention was that Badakshan paid tribute to Afghanistan, so Afghanistan had ever rights over Badakshan and her dependencies. But Russia questioned Sher Ali's sovereignty over Badakshan, as she felt that acceptance of Sher Ali sovereignty over it, might lead the Amir of Kabul to disturb the peace of Central Asia, that he might be tempted to encroach upon the territories under the influence of Russia.⁵

Roshan was occupied in the early 1884 by Abdullah Khan, Governor of Badakshan, which was deeply resented by Russia. The contention of Abdullah Khan was that, "Roshan is situated in our territory, as its extreme point is Wazhu and

5. East Granville to Lord Loftus, Foreign Office, January 24, 1873.

the Kushlak of Roshar and that the Panjah river intervenes, that what lies on the other side of that river belongs to Dorwaz, that the people of Roshan are settled on this side of the river, and that the country as far as the junction of the Ali-e-Shiwa with the Panjah belongs to Roshan. To sum up:- the country on the other side of the river (Panjah) belongs to Darwaz, and on this side to Roshan".⁶

This development occurred when efforts for establishing a Boundary Commission were going on. Thornton informed Giers that Her Majesty's Government were most anxious in maintaining tranquillity on the Shighan and Darwaz frontiers but it seemed that the Amir of Afghanistan considered that Shighan and Roshan were part of Badakshan which was formally declared in 1972-73 to belong to Afghanistan and so the questions would be decided by the investigation on the spot by Russian and Afghan commissioners.⁷ In reply to this M. de Giers stated that according to the despatch from Lord Granville to Lord A Loftus dated the 17th October 1872, the northern frontiers of Badakshan and Wakhan, which was also that of Afghanistan, was formed by the course of the Oxus (Panjdeh) from the lake of Sarikul on the east to the point

6. Foreign, Dept. Progs: September 1884, Nos. 54-58, No.50.

7. Central Asia No.2 (1885) Enclosure No.52.

of its junction with the river of Kokcha. The provinces of Shignan and Roshan which were not mentioned in the despatch were outside this line of frontiers and this circumstance afforded quite sufficient evidence that the pretension of Abdul Rahman to the above mentioned districts and their invasion by the Governor of Badakshan were in contradiction with the arrangement of 1872-73. Therefore, the Amir must recall their officials and soldiers who were still in Roshan and Shignan.⁸

By the Agreement of 1873 the Afghan Government was bound to the Panja line which included trans-Oxus Roshan and Shignan and if this line was crossed it was to be remonstrated.⁹ Afghan Government had done what was best for the interest of Afghanistan by ordering the Governor of Badakshan to withdraw his troops from the other side of the Oxus.¹⁰

According to the Treaty of Gortchaboff and Clarendon in 1872-73, Russia had agreed that Badakshan and Wakhan be included in Afghanistan. These two place commanded the roads from Russia towards India and consequently Russia was

8. Central Asia No.2, 1885, Enclosure No.57.

9. Foreign, Dept. Progs.; Secret E June 1884, K.W.No.2.

10. Foreign Dept. Progs; Secret. May, 1884, No.92.

anxious to obtain their possession.¹¹ At the time of the settlement of Afghan boundary in 1887, the Amir had desired that the question of Roshan and Shignan be also decided as he wanted to legalise the retention of these two places, but the British felt that there was no necessity to open the question.

Russian activities between 1870 to 1884

Russia had long covetous eyes over Khiva. Russia claimed that Khiva remained outside the Afghan influence. The nature of this stand arose from the British proposal of upper Oxus which was south of Bokhara as the boundary between the two. Limiting this expansion, British argued that this would leave a large tract of country apparently desert, and marked on the map as belonging to the Khiva. Without responding to the proposal Russians stressed on Bokharan territories South of the Oxus. Yet, Bokhara had no territory south of the Oxus, and that under Dost Mohammad, Afghanistan pressed the whole tract of the country up to the Oxus. Not only did Sher Ali had a right to inherit all of that territory, but he had effective control of it.

Russia was searching opportunity for annexing Khiva, which was provided by the Khan of Khiva. He imprisoned some

11. Foreign, Dpt., Progs., Secret. September 1891, No.242.

Russians, who were involved in illegal activities. Khan's relations with Russia were in a very unsatisfactory state. He had sent two embassies to negotiate with the Russian Government. The Russian Government had made known to the Khan that no negotiations would be entered until the Khan had released the Russian prisoners in this hands.¹² Russian Government required from the Khan of Khiva that commerce should not be endangered by the hostile tribes, which infest the Khanate, and that Russian subjects should not be exposed to illegal seizure and imprisonment.¹³ In spite of, assurances made by Khan, Russia attacked and occupied Khiva in 1873. This Russian move was deeply resented by the British as Russia was always claiming that she had no intention of annexing Khiva.

However, prior to 1871, Turkoman country formed an intermediary zone between Afghanistan and Bokhara. The boundary of Turkoman was clearly marked by the river Oxus. The Russian occupation of Khiva in 1873, distorted this position in relation to Afghanistan's north-Western boundary. Russians contested Amir Sher Ali's claim of Akcha, Maimana, Shibbergham and Andboi, all falling in the

12. Foreign, Dept., Progs. Secret. December 1872, Nos.323-350, No.324.

13. Ibid.

intermediary zone between Afghanistan and Bokhara. Russian occupation of Kokand in 1876 and Tekke Turkomans in 1881 made the matter worse.

Russo-Afghan border dispute became intense after the Russians activities in Merv, Panjdeh and Pamirs.

Occupation of Merv

Merv Oasis lies at Kushk about 160 miles north of the former Soviet Union-Afghan frontier. It was one of the most fertile areas in Central Asia. The Oasis changed rulers many times. The forces of Amir of Bokhara destroyed it and laid waste at the end of the eighteenth century. When Alexander Burnes passed through it in 1832, it was in possession of Khiva. After some time, when Tekke Turkmen moved northwards under Russian pressure from the Hari-Rud, they took possession of the Oasis.

After the assimilation of Khiva by Russia in 1873, there was a short interval. Further, Russian expansion south or south-Westwards was hindered by the desert and Kara Kum sands, although a battalion had marched from the post of Krasnovodsk, which was recently acquired, to assist in the operations against Khiva, a direct advance eastward against so hardy people like Turkmen was no easy matter. However, it was inevitable sooner or later. In 1877 and 1870, Russians

penetrated by force to a point some fifty miles beyond Bizil Arnat but returned without much significance.¹⁴ In June 1879, General Lomakin made a more determined expedition and reached Gok Teppe in the Akhal Oasis, but, it was defeated by the Turkmen with severe losses. The difficulties of transport were mainly responsible for this defeat. Again, in January 1881, the Russians attacked the main Turkmen force in their entrenched camp at Gok Teppe and defeated them with heavy losses. The Russian captured the Akhal Oasis and the local Turkmen tribes surrendered.

These events caused great anxiety in London. From 1866 onwards, when British ambassador at St. Petersburg wanted to enquire 'where it was the intention of Russia to stop'. Prince Gorchakov never gave satisfactory reply. Whenever, the question was raised at St. Petersburg, London always got evasive replies and assurances, which were broken as soon as given. When so many promises and assurances were broken down, it was difficult to believe on Russia and more particularly since no one knew exactly where the north-western boundaries of Afghanistan were.

In the meanwhile Second Anglo-Afghan War was going on and there was strong probability that British would shortly

14. Memoranda on Russia in Central Asia, Part I, p.100.

push their frontiers forward to Herat and Hindu-kush stimulated the Russians in their advance to the Akhal Oasis. They reached it, while British were still at Kandahar. By the time Russians had consolidated their hold and were ready for fresh advance to Merv, they learnt that British far from advancing to Herat, had decided to retire from Kandahar. The necessity for immediate action disappeared, and the future of Merv remained unsettled three more years, while there were less assurances and Russians desire to control the whole Turkmen country increased.¹⁵ At last on 14 February 1884 the Russian Government announced the submission of the last of the Turkmen and the annexation of Marv Oasis.¹⁶

After occupation of Merv Russia came into closer contact with the north-west frontier of Afghanistan. Now, the British were worried about the security of Herat. Besides, integrity and independence of Afghanistan was necessary for the British as they had assured the Amir of Kabul to help him.¹⁷ British felt that it would be impossible to check Russia by force, could be done only by diplomatic remonstrance. In the process, the Government of

15. Memoranda on Russia in Central Asia, Part III.

16. Ibid., Part IV.

17. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.E., 1884, No.391.

India had decided that it was necessary to come to clear understanding with Russia about the definition of north-Western frontier of Afghanistan. The necessity was felt to invite Russia immediately to agree to the appointment of Joint Commission.¹⁸ No desire was felt to limit the claims of Amir, unless might seem expedient to keep him within his territory over which he could exercise efficient measure of authority. These limits and exact line of boundary over which Amir could establish his authority were to be discovered by local investigations.¹⁹ But, British warning to Russia not to interfere in Afghanistan, imposed an obligation over British to make Amir royal neighbour and Ripon compelled Amir Abdul Rahman to withdraw his troops which has crossed the Oxus.²⁰ Russia agreed to a British proposal for a joint commission to determine the boundary between Russia and Afghanistan.²¹

Panjdeh Crisis

In the meantime, when talks regarding frontier

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18. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.E March 1884, No.194.
 19. Foreign Dept. Progs. Sec.E. June 1884, No.394.
 20. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec., March 1884, Enclosure 14 of the Despatch of the Govt. of India to Amirs 11th March 1884.
 21. Foreign Department Progs. Sec.F. September 1885, No.103.

delimitations were going on, the Russian Foreign Office on the 21st June 1885 raised a protest against reported intention of Amir to occupy Panjdeh forcibly, which was inhabited by the Sarib Turkomans. This attitude was against the understanding between the two powers for the settlement of the frontier.²² Sir E. Thornton argued that Panjdeh was always considered within the territory of Afghanistan and if Amir thought about sending force, he was correct as he deemed it expedient. But, M.De Giers contested Afghan claim and said that it was never under the rule of Amir and if it was doubtful, under whose jurisdiction it really was, the decision of the question had better be left to that Commission.²³ M.de Giers had contended that Panjdeh Oasis must be included within the Russian sphere of influence as Sarik Turkomans resided in this area, and whose fellow-Tribesmen had already submitted to Russia and the division of this tribe would not be allowed.²⁴

British Government argued that Panjdeh and Badghis formed part of Afghanistan ever since Afghanistan became a kingdom. These were dependency districts of Herat, which was

22. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec.F., September 1885, No.194.

23. Foreign Dept. Progs. Sec., August, 1884, K.W. No.12.

24. Foreign Dept., Progs.,Sec., September 1885, Nos 62-1052.

under Sher Ali rule. The tribes which settled in Panjdeh during the last quarter of the century acknowledged the sovereignty of Afghanistan. They had paid revenues to the authorities of Herat.²⁵

This reply did not satisfy the Russians who still contended that these territories might belong to Afghanistan 200 years ago, but at present century, Afghanistan did not hold valid jurisdiction over it.²⁶ They complained according to the reports received from Askabad that Afghan posts had been established at Zulfibar and Sariyazi and such advance are against the agreement of 1872-73.

Sir, E.Thornton asserted that Russians committed wrong first by occupying Old Sarabhs and then Pul-i-Khatun and refused to withdraw from these places, then how can she expect from Afghanistan to retire from Sariyazi.²⁷

British Government suggested Amir that movement of troops should not take place in the disputed territory, until an agreement was reached. They should not try to

25. Central Asia No.2 (1885) - Enclosure in No.226.

26. Foreign Dpt. Progs, Sec. September 1885, Nos. 62 -1052

27. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec. F. September 1885, No.76.

dislodge Russians from the existing position by attacking them any further advance by Russia should be resisted, subjected to military considerations.²⁸ The Russian Government was requested to give similar instructions to her officers. M.de Giers, assured that a conflict will be avoided if the Afghans restrains themselves and said that strict orders had been issued to the officers to avoid any such collision.²⁹

The situation was such, that Afghan forces were at Pul-i-Kishti and Russian army at Kazal Tape, at a distance of one mile from each other. The British gave assurances to the Amir that Russians could not dare to attack until his forces did not advance from their point and if Russians attacked then it would be a breach of convention between the two powers and Russia would be answerable for it.³⁰

Sir E. Thanton again warned M.de.Giers that any attack by Russians on Panjdeh would end any negotiations regarding frontier between the two powers and if Russian troops try to occupy Herat, would be treated as declaration of war.

28. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec. F. September 1885, No.15.

29. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec. F. September 1885, No.59.

30. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec. F. July 1885, No.64.

The Russians made every attempt to arouse the Afghans to start the conflict. On 29 March 1885, the Russians issued an ultimatum to the Afghan General that every man of your army should withdraw to the former lines on the right bank of the Kushk. The Afghan General declared that it is impossible to withdraw from Pul-i-Kishti as it is like a 'Bridge of Heavens' for Afghans and they would defend it till death.

On March 30 Afghan army had taken up position on the left bank of Kushk river, the Russian General Kamroff demanded their withdrawal and on its refusal by Afghans, Russians attacked them; defeated Afghan army and drove back with heavy losses. Russians occupied Panjdeh and declared it Russian land and stationed their troops to the former positions. The Britishers who were stationed a few miles away the site retired to Tirpul on the Hari-Rud. ³¹

The Russians asserted that they were provoked by Afghans' act of hostility. They argued that Afghans committed two mistakes, first was the detention of a Russian Turkoman, which was caught in the Afghan lines; second, the Afghan patrol of firemen to the vicinity of two Russians Vedethes, to whom they addressed defiant language, British,

31. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec. F. July 1885, No.125.

held responsible to Russians for Panjdeh incident as Russian General advanced with a large troop to the place which was already occupied by the Afghans. 32

Pamir Dispute

Though, the proposed joint commission had settled the boundaries between Russia and Afghanistan in 1887 from Zulfikar pass to the Oxus, but it was still undecided to the east of Khamiab, which created considerable friction. Russia, Britain and Afghanistan were not only involved, but China also laid claims to portions of the Pamirs.

Russia was determined to assert its claim on the Pamirs and also on areas which were regarded as Afghan territory. It was also felt that the Amir of Afghanistan should not persist in excluding the British in the region, for it would clearly result the Russian absorption of territories right up to the Indian border. In 1891, Russia claimed the whole of Roshan and Shignan and suggested that the northern boundary of Afghanistan ran straight from Lake Victoria to the junction of Kokcha with the Oxus; thereby increasing their claim to Badakshan north of Faizabad.³³ Contesting

32. Central Asia No.5 (1885) -No.64.

33. Foreign Dept., Progs. Secret. F. September 1891, No.85.

the claim, British asserted that according to the 1873 agreement, it was accepted that both Badakshan and Wakhan belonged to Afghanistan. It was argued that the Russian claim was based on the fact that region of Pamirs was a tribe of Khokand and as the latter formed a part of Russia, so the former became a part of Russia.

At about the same time, China consolidated its Western and Southern frontier in Turkestan. Encouraged by Younghusband's mission to Kashgar, China gradually expanded in the Pamirs. Thus the settlement of the boundary called for British, Russian, Chinese and Afghan cooperation in the Pamirs. This led to the mutual suspicion regarding other's territorial advances. The situation in the Pamirs became complicated when Sino-Afghan dispute at Somatash surfaced.

The Russian movements in the region of the Pamirs inspired the Amir to request India to lay down the boundary in that region in consultation with Russia. Earlier a mission under Captain Younghusband to the Pamir was despatched by the Viceroy³⁴ with a view to ascertaining the exact limits of Chinese authority. When Captain was doing his work, he received the news that Colonel Yanoff, the commandant of the Russian regiment at Marginal, with a party of sixty infantry and forty cavalry had for the Pamirs on

34. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec. F. August 1891 Nos.105-117.

the same day when he himself left Kashgar. Colonel Yauoff, met Captain Younghusband at Bozai Gumbaz after arousing Pamirs on August, 1891.³⁵ In spite of Captain's assurances Yauoff, that he was not on the Russian territory, the latter insisted upon the removal of former from Bozai Gumbaz to the Taghdumbash Pamir, and did not allow Younghusband to proceed to Chitral territory. Bozai Gumbaz lay in Wakhan territory, which belonged to Afghans as agreed by the agreement of 1873. Nine days later, the British Lieutenant Davidson, who was sent to which the movements of Yanoff, and had joined Younghusband at Kashgar, was asserted by Yanoff.³⁶ At the same time Yanoff removed the General Chang from Samatosh. His highhandedness reached to the water-mark, when he ordered the massacre of small Afghan force, which pushed back Chinese from Samatosh, which was a disputed territory between Afghanistan and China. This incident irked the Amir and he protested again to the British to withdraw from Wakhan territory. The British did not want the evacuation of Wakhan by Afghans, they pressed Russia for tendering apology for the misdeeds of her officials and emphasised to demarcate the disputed territory.³⁷

35. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec. F. September 1891, Nos.72-126.

36. Ibid.

37. D.P. Singhal, India And Afghanistan, 1982, New Delhi, p.147.

Yet, because of the nebulous state of frontiers and lack of adequate geographical knowledge, the Afghans lost Alichur Pamirs to Russia in 1893. The Amir's demand resulted in an assurance of early demarcation of the boundary. In the process, the Amir was restrained from vacating eastern portion of Wakhan. However, the growing Russian activity in the Pamirs compelled the Amir to negotiate with the British. The British interest in the tribal areas south of the Hindukush was strategic, although they allowed the Chinese to advance into the Pamirs, they distinctly identified the Karakoram ranges as the neutral boundary between Hunza and Chinese territory of Sing-biyan. For to the north to Hunza, it stretched towards the junction of the muztagh and the Hindukush was divided only by a narrow wedge of Afghan territory repeatedly from the Russian Pamirs. Its importance and relation was obvious.

However, Russia wanted to enclose the Oxus watershed and to be in contact with the range forming the water partings from the river Indus. But the British proposed that Afghan territory should be extended to one hundred and twenty-eight kilometers to meet nezatash in Chinese Turkistan as a neutral limit of Afghanistan in the north-east.³⁸

38. Ibid.

At this stage, Amir Abdul Rahman withdraw his occupation from north to Murghah and eastwards of the upper water of the river (Murghah) and confined himself to 73°E longitude. The significance of this is evident from the fact that, while reliaising territory on the wrong side of the Oxus in the north, he (the Amir) had renounced parts of Wakhan to which he was entitled by the 1873, and by so doing had laid bare the Dora group of passes into Chritral, which so far Russians had been unable to approach.

The whole question of Afghanistan's north-eastern frontier began to focus around the question of the exchange of trans oxus Roshan and Shignan for cis-Oxus Darwaz. Despite all misunderstanding the 1873 line traversed through the Kokcha Junction along the Oxus to Lake Victoria, which was confirmed in 1895, and continued eastwards across the Pamirs to the Chinese frontier which was taken as a boundary between Afghanistan and Russia in the Pamirs. Durand got the Amir's approval. After eliciting necessary assurances from the British, the Amir gave up all the districts held by him to the north of the Oxus, on condition that he received in turn all the districts now held by him to the north of the Upper Oxus.³⁹

39. Ibid., p.148.

After the settlement of frontier at Pamir, all border disputes between Russia and Afghanistan came to an end, when Anglo-Russian convention was signed in 1907, the integrity and independence of Afghanistan was fully restored, and there was no threat to the British interests in India.

CHAPTER 3

BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS RUSSO-AFGHAN BORDER PROBLEMS

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, British imperialism was at its apogee. British firstly used the tool of commerce for infiltration then followed by annexation of the territories all over the world. The immediate problem after annexation was consolidation of gains, which were threatened by other powers. Indian occupation was the greatest imperial achievement of British in Asia. To preserve and consolidate this achievement from internal revolt or external aggression was the first priority of British government. Recognizing the importance of the location of Afghanistan, British were determined to make it a (semi) independent buffer state to secure their Indian possessions from Russian menace. In all probability, the absence of which could have encouraged Russia to expand far beyond the Oxus, while the British fortified themselves along the Kabul-Ghazni - Kandahar line.¹ British policy towards Central Asia was also guided by their commercial interests in that region. They opposed Russian expansion as they did not like any rival in their design of exploiting the commerce of Central Asia.

1. C.C. Davies, Frontiers; A Study in Imperial Policy, p.1.

British Policy (1850-1869)

An important influence of the rapid Russian expansion, compelled the British empire builders to have a fresh look at their frontier policy. Two school of thought had been originating since 1850's. Both schools had conflicting views regarding, what should be the exact limit of British frontier. The Sind School which had been founded by Major Jacob and expounded in the time of Lord Lawrence by Green and Henry Rawlinson favoured a forward policy. The exponent of this policy were in favour of a 'Scientific frontier'. They argued that the present frontier running along the foothills was not strategically safe because it is inhabited by the wild tribes.

The advocates of this policy, therefore, wanted to move forward and fix the frontier on the Hindu Kush.² According to Green, Hindu-Kush wa a strategical point remarkably adapted for meeting all comers, as friends and foes, from the West towards the east." According to this school, there was a real danger from Russia to the British in India, and if Russia invaded this country, there would be thousands to support her in Central Asia and thousands to welcome her in India. This policy which had already started taking shape in

2. Dharam Pal, The North-West Frontier (1843 - 1947), Bombay 1947, pp.6,9-10, 21-22.

1854, was kept alive by its supporters, Sir Bartle Frere and received the needed impetus from Sir Henry Rawlinson's Memorandum of July 20, 1869.³ Rawlinson felt that Russian position on the Oxus can be converged on the northern frontier of Afghanistan and may endanger the British position in Southern Asia. He, therefore, warned his government, that, it is impossible for Russia to retreat from the present position as well as she can not remain passive without interfering in the affairs of independent country Afghanistan. He was also convinced that Russian move towards Afghanistan was inevitable if not immediate. He argued that Auckland's policy of making a strong friend in the north-West frontier was right but a more active and positive policy towards Afghanistan and Persia should be followed in place of 'Masterly Inactivity'. Thus Henry Rawlinson concluded that in the interests of peace, commerce, for moral and material improvement, it is our duty to interfere in Afghanistan, and that any moderate outlay or responsibility we may incur in restoring order at Kabul will prove, in the sequel, to be true economy.

The policy could be true reply to the Russians, who induced the Gorbachev Memorandum. The language of the document is as such:-

3. C.H. Philips, The Evolution of India and Pakistan (1850-1947). Oxford, London, 1962, pp.442-4.

The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilised states which come into contact with half-savage wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organisation...in such cases the interest of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilised state to exercised a certain ascendancy over neighbours whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with. First,.. to rude the tribes on our frontier to a more or less complete submission...the state is obliged to defend...against an enemy whose social organisation enables him to elude pursuit. Retreat is ascribed to weakness for Asiatics respect only visible and palpable force; civilisation has yet no hold on them... But beyond this line there are other tribes which soon provoked the same dangers. The state then find itself on the horns of a dilemma: either abandon the incessant struggle which renders security and civilisation impossible: or indulge in expensive repression. Such has been the lot of all countries placed in the same conditions. The United States in America, France and Algiers, Holland in her colonies, England in India all have been inevitably drawn into a course wherein ambition plays a smaller part than imperious necessity, and where the greatest difficulty is in knowing where to stop.

Such are the reasons which have induced the Imperial Government to establish itself - but the dilemma continues: it must allow an anarchy to become chronic which paralyses all security and all progress, and involves distant and experience expeditions at frequent intervals; or on the other hand it must enter on a career of conquest and annexation such as gave England her Indian Empire.

My august Master's policy... places his rule on firm foundations, guarantees, security and develops social organisation, commerce, well-being and civilisations..... that nomad tribes.... their low civilisation and nebulous political development...given a more highly developed social organisation, afford for us a basis for friendly relations which may become all that can be wished.

These principles afford a clear natural and logical explanation of the recent military operations accomplished in Central Asia. People of late years have been pleased to credit us with a mission to civilize neighbouring countries on the continent of Asia. The progress of civilisation has no efficacious ally than commercial relations...in devoting herself to this task the Russian cabinet has the interest of the Empire in view; but we believe that its accomplishment will also serve those of civilisation and humanity at large. We have a right to count upon an

equitable and loyal appreciation of the policy which we follow, and the principles on which it is framed.⁴

The Indian Government, still followed the policy of 'Masterly Inactivity', did not make hurry because it would be the cause of grave political and financial embarrassment and would involve in doubtful undertaking.⁵ Government thought that it would not be in the interest of India to meet Russia by forward policy. Therefore, she suggested to the Secretary of State, that London Government should deal directly with the St. Petersburg and strongly opposed to the Rawlinson's policy. However, the Indian Government was ever ready to oppose any Russian influence in the Government of Afghanistan.

Opposed to the Sind school was the Panjab school of thought prounded before the mutiny by Lawrence himself, and supported by Herbert Edwards and Harry Lumsden.

Edwardes held that if the British wanted to save Afghanistan from going over to Russia, the best policy would be 'to show them we ourselves want nothing in Afghanistan'. Sir John Lawrence chief exponent of this school pointed out

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4. Text in Appendix of A. H. Bilgrami, Afghanistan And British India 1793 - 1907, New Delhi, 1972.
 5. C.H. Philips, op.cit., pp.444-5.

that Indus would be considered a suitable frontier. His argument was also supported by Sir James Outram, who held that Indus was the natural and impregnable boundary of the Empire. Lord Canning was, however, opposed to this as he thought, and rightly perhaps, that a river could not form a good line of defence.⁶

Hence, the basic principles of the policy which Lord Lawrence desired to follow during his Viceroyalty in India were to strengthen the ruler of Afghanistan without interfering in the internal affairs of that country; to maintain Afghanistan as a friendly power between India, Russia, and clearly demarcating the sphere of influence of India and Russia in Central Asia, the latter country to be informed that while she was free to do as she liked in her own sphere of influence; and while strictly refusing to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with the ruler of Afghanistan, to be interested still in the security of his dominion. Sir Lawrence stressed upon the need of Afghanistan remaining a buffer state, and meeting Russia on the north-West frontier if at all she was inclined to invade India.⁷ That Russia had no such inclination was supported by

6. Dharm Pal, op.cit., p.8.

7. Dharam Pal, op.cit., pp.20-21.

a report in the Moscow Gazette.⁸

Lawrence was convinced that there was no possibility of Russian advance into India. In case Russia invaded India, meeting her on the Oxus would entail British meddling with Afghan affairs and quarreling with Sher Ali Khan.⁹ He believed that by meeting Russia in the half way would lessen her difficulties. It is improper to face her in the country unsuited for military operations. It would be better for British to secure them by a compact, highly equipped, and disciplined army stationed within our own territory.¹⁰ Further, Lawrence suggested his Government to define the respective spheres of influence of the two empires, after consultation with St.Petersburg. With this completion, Great Britain would have little danger from Russia, and then no nation would have any right to object to Russian expansion.¹¹

The underlying aim behind Lawrence policy was to protect British interests. He was convinced that British

8. Foreign Department, Progs., Sec., February 1869, Nos.23-25.

9. Text in Philips, op.cit., pp.444-5.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

interest could not be served by interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan but keeping the Amir friendly by providing him assistance, when the British deemed it necessary.¹²

Policy between 1869 to 1876 - Ambala Conference

Before leaving India Lawrence made some suggestions to the Secretary of State, which formed the basis of the policy pursued by his successor, Lord Mayo, were briefly as follows:

First, he advised the Government to start a direct dialogue with the St.Petersburg regarding Central Asia and to toll the Russian Government that it can not be permitted to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan or those of the state which has contiguous to our frontiers; Secondly, the ruler of Kabul may be given assistance to deal his arch rival and enemies including moral support against external threat and finally Amir Sher Ali would be invited to meet with Governor General in person to discuss the matters of mutual interests.

He suggested the British Government that British should impress on the Sher Ali Khan so that he could be able to

12. Ibid.

erase the memories of first Afghan war from people's minds. Such efforts would help to the growth of British - Afghan relations.¹³

British accepted the advice of Lawrence and Lord Mayo was briefed to act according to the instructions given by Lawrence. In the meantime relation of Amir Sher Ali with the British were improved and he was able to accept Lord Mayo's invitation for a meeting at Ambala in March 1869. Amir was happy with the friendly attitude of his host and was also impressed with the British might. Amir wanted British Government not to acknowledge any friend in Afghanistan, save the Amir and his descendants and he wanted that British should acknowledge his favourite son Abdullah Jan as his only legal heir. Lord Mayo would not promise all that. He politely refused to enter into any definite treaty but gave him money, arms and ammunition and promised aid in case of external aggression.¹⁴ Sher Ali did not get all he had asked for, but he thought it better to remain calm as he was very much afraid of Russian moves and thought it in his own interest to work in harmony and friendly with the British.

13. P.E. Robers, History of British India, Oxford, 1958. p.62.

14. G.S. Chhabra; Advanced Study in the History of Modern India, Vol.2 (1813-1919), New Delhi, 1971. p.341.

The Russian occupation of Tashkand and Samarkand worried the British. British thought to arrest further Russian March towards India, and that could best be done by asking her to recognise Afghanistan and Kashgar as neutral zone between her and the British possessions. Lord Clarendon, the then Secretary of State started correspondence with the Russian Foreign Ministry to this effect.

The proposal to create a neutral zone, however was different from that of recognising the respective spheres of influence. And Lord Mayo in a despatch dated 3 June 1869, made the matter clear. He told Lord Clarendon in that despatch: "The policy which we believe the Government ought to exercise with regard to frontier nations is to endeavour to show the rulers of these states, and to the world, that in respect to them our policy of annexation had passed away; that it is the desire of the British Government to assist them in becoming strong and independent; that their safety against foreign aggression lies mainly in an alliance with Great Britain; and that by just and good administration it is within their power to command the willing allegiance of their own subjects and the respect of the neighbouring states."¹⁵

15. S.Gopal, British Policy in India(1818-1905), Cambridge, 1965, p.71.

Mayo wrote that what was needed was not a neutral zone, but a definite sphere of influence. For in the former case they would have completely to write off these states but in the latter case the British awe would remain and nothing would stand in their way to bend before them an unwilling and headstrong tribe. In the former case these states might approach a foreign power against the British sense of justice was the only guarantee for to cross their borders to chastise or even to conquer. In short, a sphere of influence would always be within the British reach directly to annex, although they had no wish ever to do so, while a neutral zone would give them no power on these states, and would give Russia a status of equality with possibilities of intrigues and desires to spread their sway. Under Lord Mayo's scheme of things, "Russia was to be given a free hand with regard to Khiva and the kindered states, just as the British would have in Kalat, Afghanistan and the Eastern Turkistan.

As a result of this explanation Lord Clarendon changed his approach to the subject, and sent Douglas Forsyth to St. Petersburg to negotiate in the later part of 1869. The agreement that emerged from these negotiations, placed Bokhara and Khokand within the Russian sphere of influence, while Afghanistan was recognised within that of British.

Both powers were to restrain their respective states from aggressions beyond their frontiers. Upper Oxus was roughly to be the dividing line between the two spheres and Russia was assured that the British had no hostile intentions towards Eastern Turkistan.¹⁶ Afghanistan, however, was definitely safe for the British and it was decided that her northern frontiers should be delimited so as to avoid any confusion. The British proposal was that the Afghan territories should comprise all those which Dost Muhammad had possessed. Russia agreed and asked Kaufmann, Governor - General of the Russian Turkistan to submit a report on the subject. The British awaited this report for long, but when it did not arrive, towards the close of 1872 they made a unilateral declaration with regard to the northern frontiers of Afghanistan. Russia was thus faced with an accomplished fact. For a time she objected to the inclusion of some territories like Balakh, Badakshan and Wakhan within the Afghan kingdom, but ultimately she acquiesced.

One may say that this unilateral declaration with regard to Afghan borders on the north was a diplomatic victory of the British, and their influence within those borders became solid and marked as Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad

16. G.S. Chhabra, op.cit., p.351.

believes.¹⁷ Sher Ali also could now busy himself in internal developments without fear of a foreign aggression. But the British did not know that it would have some adverse effects too. For Russia recognised no difference between a simple sphere of influence and direct occupation of the states which fell in it. Soon, therefore, she busied herself in annexations and what the British wanted to keep as Russian sphere of influence, become directly a part of Russian empire. Nothing on the part of the British could resist this course of action. While within Afghanistan the things developed in different manner. The British did not annex it, not because they did not want to do so, but they found themselves incapable of doing so. Sher Ali had become friend with the British after his meeting with Mayo at Ambala, but he was soon disillusioned with them. and whereas the territories which Russia had annexed after their unilateral declaration went completely beyond the British possibility to interfere with, Russia could still exploit the British failings in Afghanistan and create a situation which later led to the Third Afghan war.¹⁸

17. Biseshwar Prasad, The Foundation of Indian Foreign Policy, 1860-1882, Bombay, 1955, p.49.

18. G.S. Chhabra, Op.cit., p.352.

It is difficult in these circumstances to say that the unilateral declaration of the British was their diplomatic victory, clear and plain. For one could say with equal emphasis that by making this declaration they played into the hands of Russia and the ultimate victory in the real sense of the term belonged to her, not to the British.

Lord Mayo was succeeded by Lord Northbrook as the Governor General of India in 1872, and within a short time after this the expansionist policy of Russia in Central Asia led to the absorption by her of the Khanate of Khiva, which led Sher Ali to believe that his own power in Afghanistan was threatened. In 1873, therefore, he made one more effort to reach an accord with the British whereby he could feel himself safe on his throne. A conference was held at Simla between an Afghan envoy and Lord Northbrook, wherein the envoy requested a written assurance that in case of Russian attack or an attack of any other power on Afghanistan, the British would send a force to help the Amir by whatever route the Amir might require,¹⁹ The Viceroy felt the proposal to be reasonable, and proposed to the Secretary of State for "assuring him 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

19. Ibid.

unprovoked invasion. We to be the Judge of the necessity." The Secretary of State, however, rejected ring the Amir of material assistance which may raise undue and uninformed expectations. He already shows symptoms of claiming more than we may wish to give."²⁰ This incensed the Amir and accepting the present of 5,000 rifles, he refused the proffered sum of Rs.10 lakhs from the Viceroy.

This bad effect on Sher Ali was made worse by two other occurrences. The Indian Government had accepted the thankless task of arbitrating on a boundary dispute in Siestan between Afghanistan and Persia in the time of Mayo, though knowing fully well whatever way the dispute was decided, the other party was bound to get hostile. Yet the decision went against Afghanistan. And secondly, Sher Ali desired his son Abdullah Jan to be recognised as his successor, superceding his eldest son. The British perhaps wisely desisted from committing themselves when they were not sure of Abdullah Jan's abilities but, they blunded in letting it be known that the Amir's successor would get no better treatment than what he himself had got.

Amir now was convinced that the best solution of this problems lay in establishing a friendly contact with Russia.

20. Bisheshwar Prasad, Op.cit., p.139.

Russia in fact had already been making her efforts to woo Afghanistan. Kaufmann, The Governor of the Russian Turkistan, had informed the Amir in a friendly way in 1870 that the Amir's nephew, Abdur Rehman, taking refuge in Tashkent would receive no help. The Amir still under the charm of Lord Mayo's friendship, forwarded this letter to him as a mark of courtesy. Moreover, the Russian reply to the Amir's announcement of the nomination of Abdullah Jan as his successor more tactful. All this proved to Sher Ali that Russia was prepared to meet him more than half the way. Henceforward the interchange of letters between Russia and Afghanistan therefore became more frequent.²¹

Lord Northbrook in his relations with Afghanistan in fact proved to be a far greater follower of the policy of 'masterly inactivity. than Lord Lawrence himself was. This was done by him rather to a fanatic extent. It not in 1869, by 1873 at least the Amir had definitely proved himself able, and an enlightened ruler, judged by the Afghan standard. He had definitely realised that it has essential for him to enter into a closer relationship either with Russia or the British, and he had spontaneously and deliberately given his preference to the latter. But the British not only rejected a definite opportunity of securing

21. G.S. Chhabra, Op.Cit., p.351.

their interests in Afghanistan, but Northbrook also seriously offended the amir by rebuking him for treacherously putting his eldest son, Yabub Khan, into prison.²²

In March 1874, the Cabinet in England was changed. Disraeli replaced Gladstone as the Prime Minister, while Salisbury replaced Argyll as the Secretary of State for India. The new Prime Minister was convinced that his predecessor had lowered the prestige of England in central Asia. In 1873, Russia had assured Great Britain that She was not interested in the occupation of Khiva, but shortly after this she did exactly the reverse. On 10 May 1874 General Lomakin was appointed as the military Governor of this new Southern province, and promptly he issued a circular letter to all the Turboman tribes, claiming a supreme authority over them. Meanwhile, Kaufmann's correspondence with Sher Ali increased, and when the British protested, they were told that it was only a complimentary correspondence. When Salisbury desired this also to be discontinued, he got a schurff.

Unfortunately the new Cabinet took a very serious view of the situation. Instead of taking a stiff line of attitude with Russia herself, to which there are definite reasons to

22. Ibid.

believe that she should have responded, the cabinet took the view that even if the Russian Emperor and ministers did not violate with fully their engagements with the British, their authority on the distant agents and military chiefs being very slight, the Russian policy was bound to be only tentative. The forces stimulating aggressive instincts existed constantly and not much reliance could be placed on the mere verbal guarantees of the Russian authorities. The best solution of the problem under the circumstances, they concluded, would be to change the old policy of Lord Lawrence and seek additional security in two directions,²³ first, that England should secure a more commanding position in Afghanistan, and second that the Amir should accept a British agent in his country. Towards the first direction negotiations were started with the Khan of Kalat for the dual object of occupying Queta and for the appointment of a British agent at Kalat which might be the forerunner of the other British agents in Central Asia in case the Amir of Afghanistan refused to accept one. A treaty was ultimately signed with the Khan in 1876, whereby the British secured the occupation of Queta.

Towards the second direction, the Secretary of State Salisbury, suggested to Northbrook that a British agent

23. Bisheshwar Prasad, Op.Cit., pp.144-163.

should be placed at Herat and possibly at Kandahar with the object of supplying "that more exact and constant information." which was "necessary to the conduct of a mere circumspect policy at the present junctures." Lord Northbrook held a dispassionate enquiry among those who were best qualified in the matter, and then wrote to Salisbury: "After a full examination of what took place at Umballa in 1869 we do not think it can be fairly said that the Amir ever accepted the proposal of a British Officer at Herat. All those best qualified to form an opinion say that the Ameer would strongly object to the presence of British officers in Afghanistan....Unless therefore it is the desire of the Government at home to change the policy... and to show less desire to keep on cordial terms than was hitherto been thought desirable, we cannot recommend a formal announcement to the Ameer that we desire the establishment of a British Agent at Herat."²⁴

The proposal of a British Agent was indeed strange. In 1869 and 1873 when the Amir had approached the British for a defensive alliance, he was told that the Russian danger did not exist, but now all of sudden it was proposed to convince him that the Russian danger did after all exist and

24. Ibid.

that he should admit a British Resident within his territory against his will. Lord Northbrook saw no logic in this proposal and he wrote to the Secretary of State, "I cannot agree with your suspicions about the Amir, they are not confirmed by anyone of the authority." But the Secretary of State was not in a mood to listen to Viceroy and repeated his proposal of sending a mission saying "there would be many advantages in ostensibly directing it to some object of smaller political interest which it will not be difficult....to find or, if need be, to create."²⁵

Under these circumstances, therefore, there was no alternative before Northbrook but to resign. But before he did so he warned the Secretary of State that an attempt to impose a mission on Afghanistan against the will of the Amir was bound to subject the British "to the risk of another unnecessary and costly war in Afghanistan before many years are over."²⁶

British Policy since 1876 Onwards:

Lord Lytton, who succeeded Lord Northbrook as Viceroy in 1876, was determined to change the old policy of Lawrence

25. Bernard Mallet, Thomas Gorge Earl of Northbrook (1908), p.91.

26. Ibid., p.105.

and destined to bring about the second catastrophe precisely on the lines of the first. He came to India with specific instructions the Sher Ali was to be given what he had asked for in 1873. Or in other words, his younger son Abdulla Jan was to be recognised as the heir to his throne, the Amir was to get a definite pledge of the British help in case of a foreign aggression, and he would get a fixed and augmented subsidy. And in return for this, the Amir was to agree to admit a British resident at Herat.

The first thing Lytton did was to ask Sher Ali to receive a complimentary British mission which was politely refused, the Amir forwarding that there was no necessity of doing so. In the meanwhile through the native British agent at Kabul, the Amir let it be known to the British that the main reasons for his refusing to receive a mission were firstly, that if he received a British mission he would not be able to refuse a similar mission from Russia and secondly that the character of his people was such that he would not be able to protect the mission from them. Lytton however was not satisfied with the reply which he termed as a 'contemptuous disregard of the British interests in Central Asia'. In October Lord Lytton's interview with the British Muslim agent at Kabul was arranged at Simla where the agent was told that Afghanistan was like an earthen pipkin

between two iron pots, i.e. Russia and the British, and that if the Amir remained on good terms with the British their military power could be spread around him as a ring of iron and if he became our enemy, it could break him as a reed.²⁷

In the meanwhile, the British had carried on their negotiations with the Khan of Kalat with whom a treaty was signed in 1876 whereby the British were able to secure Queta which commanded the Bolan Pass, and which has been used by their army as a base during the First Afghan War. Sher Ali naturally felt that the occupation of Queta was a step towards the British occupation of Kandhar itself, and he still continued his resistance against accepting a British mission. Sayyad Nur Muhammad, a minister of Sher Ali, was sent for a conference with Sir Lewis Pelly in January 1877 at Perhawar, where the minister politely told that "the British nation was great and powerful, and the Afghan people could not resist its power, but the people were self-willed and independent and prize their honour above life." And if Amir wanted to retain his throne in Afghanistan, he could not afford to let it be known to his people that it was ruling with the help of a foreign power. Unfortunately in March, when the conference was still going on, Sayyad Nur

27. C.S. Chhabra, *op.cit.*, p.386.

Mohammad died. Lytton got his chance, and despite the fact that a successor to Nur Muhammad was on his way from Kabul, he declared the conference at an end. All communications with the Amir were stopped, though Lytton declared to the Afghans that so long as they were not excited by their ruler or others to acts of aggression upon the territories or friends of the British government, no British soldier could ever be permitted to enter Afghanistan uninvited.²⁸

These assurances of Lytton, however, were dishonest and not meant to be kept. For simultaneously with them he started the policy of "gradual disintegration and weakening of the Afghan power." as he himself admitted. He developed his contacts with the north-west frontier tribes and through their territories he tried to push the English outposts towards the borders of Afghanistan.

In the meanwhile certain developments took place in Europe. There were troubles in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875, and the Serbians and the Montenegrins rose in arms against the tottering Turkish Empire in 1876. In sympathy with the insurgents Russia declared war against Turkey and secured certain advantages from her on the Black Sea by the Treaty of San Stefano signed in March 1878. Great Britain,

28. Ibid.

as it is well known, was averse to Russia developing any influence over her access - route to her eastern empire. She refused to recognise the treaty, and occupying the Cyprus with Turkish permission, prepared for a war against Russia. The war catastrophe was however averted by the German mediation, and the Congress of Berlin held in June and July 1878 dispossessed Russia of her advantages. In the meanwhile great provocations had been given to Russia by irresponsible utterances of some British authorities and by the movement of some Indian troops to Malta by the Suez Canal. Determined to weaken the British Power in Europe, Russia therefore tried to develop some outlet for the warlike energies of the Indian Government towards Afghanistan.²⁹ It was a Russian game to busy England in a war against Afghanistan, though she could not draw any advantage out of it, she succeeded in her plan of an Anglo-Afghan war.

In June 1878 Kaufmann proposed to the Amir of Afghanistan a treaty on similar terms as offered to him by Lytton. The Ameer refused, but determined to carry the policy through, on 13 June, the very day of the opening of the Congress of Berlin, General Stoleloff left Tashkent for Kabul, supported by three columns of troops. Sher Ali's

29. Ibid., p.397.

protests and appeals were all brushed aside, and he was threatened by the Ysar that if any harm came to Stoleloff, he would be held responsible, and that his nephew and rival Abdur Rehman would be supported for the Afghan throne. Sher ali had to yield with reluctance, and signed a definite treaty for a permanent and perpetual friendship with Russia.

The arrival of a Russian mission in Afghanistan was a signal for Lytton to take desperate decision with the approval of the Home authorities, to impose a treaty and a British mission upon Afghanistan immediately. Lytton's letter reached the Ameer on 7 August, proposing that an envoy would be sent, and that Afghanistan would have to agree not to enter into negotiations with any other state without the British permission, and that it would have to admit a British agent at Herat for a permanent residence, and to agree that the British had a right to send a British officer for a conference with him at any time they chose.³⁰ On the same day, Abdullah Jan, the heir apparent died, and threw the Amir into utter despondency. The Russian agent urged upon the Amir to delay his reply till the Russian Emperor was informed and he made England desist from her action. Lytton however was not going to be intimidated. On

30. Foreign Department, Progs., Sec., 1878.No.59 and 93.

30 August he despatched a Muslim envoy to Kabul to announce the approach of the British mission. Sir Neville Chamberlain who headed the British mission, set out from Peshawar. But the advance escort was met by an Afghan officer at Ali Masjid, and told politely but firmly that they could not be permitted to proceed without an order from the Amir. The British envoy therefore had to return to Peshawar. Lord Lytton soiled with rage. He wrote to the Home Government falsely reporting that the British mission had been forcibly repulsed", and requested them to sanction the declaration of war.

He issued an ultimatum on 2 November requiring of the Amir to reply by 20 November consenting to a permanent British mission in his country, and a "full and suitable apology", failing which he would have to face the calamities of an invasion. Though late, the Amir's reply dated 19 November reached Lord Lytton on 30th November, wherein he announced his willingness to accept a British mission. But the reply was declared to be inadequate, as it offered no "full and suitable apology". Moreover, Lord Lytton had ordered his forces to march on the very day the ultimatum expired.³¹

31. Foreign Dept.. Progs., Sec., October, 1878, No.66.

Sher Ali Khan had by then realized his stumbling position and sought the aid of his Russian friends but in vain. He released his son Yakub Khan, from captivity and himself retired towards Central Asia, where he died in early 1879. Yabub Khan was proclaimed the Amir instead. The British, after a swift campaign negotiated with Yakub Khan the Treaty of Gandmak on May 26, 1879. By the treaty, Yabub Khan assigned the districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi, to the British; a permanent British representative at Kabul and he promised to carry on his foreign relations according to the advice of Viceroy of India.³² Soon, bulk of the British army was pulled out from Afghanistan.

For the time being, it appeared that British succeeded in their forward policy. But Yakub Khan could not remain in power long. Disorder broke out at Kabul in which Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British Envoy, was murdered in September 1879. British reopened the hostilities, after which the abdication of Yakub Khan was accepted. Now, British installed Abdur Rehman Khan as a new Amir who was in exile in Russian Central Asia.

32. Lady Balfour Lord Lytton's Indian Administration (1876-1880), p.301.

33. Arnod Fletcher, Afghanistan, New York, 1966, p.p.137 and 141.

Lytton's Afghan War was exercising a telling influence on Disraeli's Conservative Government. In the forthcoming General elections in Britain, the Afghan policy and losses due to this policy were highlighted.³³ Gladstone's liberal party won a big majority in April 88. This government viewed against the predecessor's Afghan policy. Lord Harlington, the new Secretary of State for India feared that if Lytton wa allowed to continue he would do some 'mischief'. Lord Lytton resigned in difference to the change of Government at London.

There was a lot of controversy in Britain regarding frontier policy among scholars and administrators. Finally Government decided that the defence of India did not lay in the acquisition of strategic positions near or away from Indian frontier, nor in a competition with any other power in Central Asia but in the good government resources, strong military organisation and efficiency of the army:³⁴

Though peace between the British and Afghans was restored, the British conflict with Russia still continued. Russia had annexed the Khanate of Khoband finally in 1876, and the Tebbe Turcomans' territories were occupied in 1881. After this the British learnt that Russia was seeking

34. Dharm Pal, op.cit., p.28.

submission of the chiefs of Merv, about 130 miles away from the frontiers of Afghanistan. When Gladstone was embarrassed by Mahdi in Sudan, Russia coerced these chiefs into submission, which caused much popular excitement in England, so much so that there developed the possibility of a serious clash with Russia on the issue. The situation however was somehow saved.

Russia had proposed a joint commission to demarcate the north western frontiers of Afghanistan.³⁵ But though Lord Ripon appointed an Indian official Sir Peter Lumsden to lead the British mission and also invited the Amir to send his qualified officer, assuming that Russia really desired to cooperate, the Russian response was discouraging. They in fact wanted to delay the matter, and in the meanwhile to realise their ambitions in the area. Their aim rather was to establish a control over the entire body of the nomad Turkoman tribes, and therefore, the Russian government proposed the name of General Zelenoi to lead their mission. But he being ill had to recover and be given time before he could proceed for the place much later, i.e. in October 1884, only a month before the next Viceroy Lord Dufferin arrived in India, but the matter was not taken up seriously before February 1885.

35. Foreign Dpt. Progs., Sec.E., March 1884, No.194.

The occupation of Merv by Russia created an embarrassing situation for the British. There were Russian generals in Turkistan who busted after laurels of territorial conquests. One of them, Skobelve, declared: "Our position in Turkistan is most formidable, and the apprehensions of the British are not groundless. Russia had only to fling a column of 15,000 men across the Hindu Kush, and India would rise in rebellion; the Indian army would be so absorbed in keeping order that the passes of the North-West Frontier would be left wide open. If we were successful in our enterprise, we should entirely demolish the British Empire in India; and the effect of this in England cannot be calculated. Competent English authorities admit that an overthrow on the frontiers of India might even produce a social revolution in England... In a word, the downfall of the British supremacy in India would be the beginning of the downfall of England." Again: "The stronger Russia is in Central Asia, the weaker England is in India and the more conciliatory she will be in Europe".³⁶ The Russian Press, in fact, was not content intervening territories of Panjdeh, and onward, to occupy Herat and thereby obtain a window to the south-east. From there they could advance to the Indian ocean, and fulfill the historic destiny.³⁷ Under Ripon a

36. Arthur Swinson, North-West Frontier, pp.198-199.

37. Ibid., p.201.

joint commission had been appointed to demarcate the boundary of Afghanistan.

But in the meanwhile, shortly after the arrival of Lord Dufferin in India, Russia claimed that Panjdeh should be independent of the Amir of Afghanistan. Vainly did the British claim that the definition of the Afghan boundaries here too should be left to the commission. By April 1885, the discussions between the commissioners reached a deadlock. Lumsden, the British Member of the Commission, reported repeated aggression by Russian soldiers, on 9 April received the belated news that the Russians had attacked and driven out a challenge to the British. The popular opinion in England was excited beyond limit, and the conservatives attacked Gladstone for having shown weakness towards Russia. Gladstone also turned the situation as grave, and easily obtained a note of credit for eleven millions for special military preparations. Military reserves were called out. But neither the British nor the Russians wanted a war. Lord Dufferin handled the situation tactfully; a silent understanding was reached and the Amir was prevailed upon to say that Panjdeh did not really belong to Afghanistan and that he was prepared to waive his claims upon the territory if his claims on Zulfikar, which lay about 80 miles to the west, were accepted. Since the Russian wanted the first and not the second, and since the public

opinion in England was not much educated in the Central Asian geography, the ministry of Gladstone was able to present this a graceful Russian concession to the British wishes. Thus, the Russian moves on Panjdeh, were conceded, and the clash was avoided. On 10 September a protocol was signed by Saholury after the downfall of Gladstone, which covered only Zulfiabar.³⁸

The negotiations between the commissions to settle the northern boundary of Afghanistan continued. After some time Lumsden had been recalled and replaced by Sir West Ridgeway. And the Commission ultimately settled the boundary line between Hari Rud which lay over the spurs of the Poropamisus, and the low ground of the Oxus Valley. But no agreement could be reached over the exact point where the line touched the Oxus. The negotiations continued between Russia, Persia and the British, and it was ultimately in July 1887 only that the matter was settled by a protocol signed at St. Petersburg. By the demarcation of the frontiers upon the line of the Oxus, the British felt to have definitely limited the Russian advance towards Herat. And this was followed by six years of peace, which was broken at last by the rival disputes upon the Pamirs.

38. Foreign Dpt., Progs. Sec.F., October 1886, No.981.

The 1887 protocol signed at St.Petersburg had demarcated the Russo-Afghan boundary upto Khojasabh. From this place to Lake Victoria the line was determined by the unwritten agreement of 1873 which was still under dispute because of the claims and counterclaims of territories on either side of the border. East of the Lake Victoria across the Pamirs there was complete confusion. Here there was a big gap between the Afghan and Chinese territories which could almost be called no-man's land. This was an area which was inhabited by a wandering population. The greatest anxiety of the British here was to keep the fact from the Russians lest they should try to occupy this gap and come close to the frontier tribes of India which could easily be inflamed.

These are the areas where no grain grow, and where water supply is extremely difficult. Even at places like Gilgit, nearer home, the supplies came entirely from Kashmir. Any Russian invasion from this side was not therefore easy. Still no one could deny that the Russian moves on this side could detract the British and keep them busy when their attention was needed in Europe obviously, therefore, the British would never like that Russians should infiltrate into these areas. But like the British the Russian explorers also had been busy in these territories for quite sometime and as early as 1880 an official

publication at St.Petersburg declared: "The extent of country between the most southern portion of the province of Fergana and the (Darbot) Pass... lies in the Pamirs and belongs to no one... this belt of no man's land must probably, sooner or later be included in Russian dominions, which will thus being immediate contact with the range forming the water-parting from the Indus".³⁹ A map prepared by Gromchevsby marked this line in red. This came to the notice of the British in 1889 and they got anxious that this gap should either be filled up by Afghanistan or by China so that it does not fall into the Russian hands. Efforts were made in 1891 to persuade the Chinese authorities at Kashgar to send their armed parties to establish claim on the Pamirs. But to the utter astonishment of the British they later on discovered that a secret exchange of views with the Chinese to this effect was intimated by the Chinese themselves to the Russians and provided them with an opportunity to occupy these areas before the Chinese reached even half-way.

Younghusband, a British officer who had gone for explorations to the Pamirs suddenly ran into a Russian party at Bozai Gumbaz on 13 August 1881.⁴⁰ The Russian presence

39. Quoted, G.J. Alder, British India's Northern Frontier (1865-1895), p.220.

40. C.S. Chhabra, op.cit., p.475.

in the Pamirs was something which the British could not easily swallow. The situation in the Pamirs was indeed difficult. The British themselves did not want to go so far as to occupy the Pamirs, but at the same time they were anxious not to permit these territories to fall into the Russian hands. The question was, to whom did these hands belong? This problem was also intimately solved when finally in the time of Lord Elgin in March 1895 a formal agreement with Russia was reached.⁴¹ Under this agreement it was decided that the Russian boundary from Lake Victoria was to the east upto the Chinese frontier and that between this line and the Hindubush the territories (which previously belonged to no one) now belonged to Afghanistan.

Now there was the problem of filling up two more gaps between China and Ladakh and between China and Afghanistan on the Pamirs. The British were anxious that China should extend her claim right upto the Kashmir boundaries so that Russia does not find yet another place to infiltrate close to the territories in the British sphere of influence. In 1889 Younghusband visited these areas claimed by none. His activities there, however, soon alarmed the Chinese at

41. C.U.Aichison: A Collection of Tracties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and the neighbouring Countries, Volume XIII, p.271.

Kashgar and to the pleasant surprise of the British they protested against Younghusband's presence among the people who acknowledged Chinese suzerainty.⁴² Chinese claims were encouraged and recognised, and in 1890 Landsowne's Government instructed their officials in Kashmir to consider the Karakoram watershed as the northern limit of the Kashmir territory and southern boundary of China.

In 1892, China was found erecting her boundary pillars on the agreed line and the British were happy that one problem was solved. The gap between China and Afghanistan on the Pamirs was the other problem. But this was also solved by the final Anglo-Russian agreement of 1895 by which Russia agreed to extend the line east of Lake Victoria right upto the defacto Chinese frontier.

In the time of Lord Minto far reaching developments took place in the British relations with Central Asia. On 31 August 1907 an Anglo-Russian convention was signed, which disposed of all the points of conflict between the two countries about Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia.

Now, we can say, that the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 was a very important development which entirely excluded the possibilities of a clash between these two countries on the subjects dealt with here. A serious source of friction between the two was removed, both recognizing

their respective interests and rights distincts from each other, busied themselves in peaceful developments within them.

42. C.S.Chhabra, op.cit., 470.

CHAPTER 4

SETTLEMENT OF THE FRONTIER: ANGLO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS AND ACCORDS

The Russian expansion in Central Asia was resumed in the 1860s. In 1864, the Russia extended its authority to the borders of Khokand, Bokhara and Khiva; she created a new province of Turkistan in 1867; Bokhara was made subsidiary ally and Samarband was finally absorbed in 1868. These Russian move created tense moments in Anglo-Russians and Russo-Afghan relations. Uncertain and unstable state of northern frontiers of Afghanistan facing Russia, was perceived as security threat by the British in the light of Russian forward moves in Central Asia. Similarly, Russia was concerned about Afghan claims on Bukharan territory north of the Oxus, which were seen as Anti Russian moves. The British were worried about the security of their Indian Empire because of Russians forward. The Russian policy was getting harbour because of unsettled northern frontiers of Afghanistan. The suggestion made by Sir John Lawrence to deal directly with Russia regarding the Russian and British sphere of influence in Central Asia was taken up by the London Government which continued for nearly forty years.

Agreement of 1869 and 1873

After examining various alternatives, London authorities decided to enter into negotiations with Russian

authorities. In 1869, Lord Clarendon, the secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Gladstone Ministry was discussing with Baron Bunnow regarding Central Asian question; in the meanwhile Russian Ambassador proposed to make a neutral zone between the possessions of Russia and Britain and would be respected by both the powers.¹ Russian Ambassador indicated that his government would treat Afghanistan beyond her sphere of influence. Lord Clarendon and Chancellor Gorchakove also discussed this question in detail in September 1869. Lord Clarendon proposed the Oxus the most desirable line of demarcation for a neutral place between British and the Russian sphere of influence. Gorchakove objected that the territory south of the Oxus is claimed by the Bokharan ruler would lie in the British sphere of influence, might become the cause of tension between Russia and England. He suggested that Afghanistan should be treated as neutral zone. This proposal was resented by Mayo because he wanted a strong and friendly Afghanistan with having Russia the equal status to that of British in Afghanistan's court.

The dialogues at Russian Capital converged on two points: the idea of neutral zone and the exact limits of the

1. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Clarendon to Buchanan, 27 March, 1869.

boundary's of Afghanistan. Stremoukoff, in charge of the Asiatic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, opined that areas like Balkh, Kunduz and Badakshan are included in neutral zone. But when he saw that these areas are included in the territory of Afghanistan, he stressed that entire Afghanistan might be treated as a neutral zone.² But the British wanted Afghanistan inside their sphere of influence and a neutral zone beyond the northern frontiers of Afghanistan i.e. on the upper Oxus. Thus the dialogues which started for creating a 'buffer state' was diverted to create the limit of sphere of influence.

Agreement of 1872-73

However, in 1869, Russia declared that Afghanistan lay outside her sphere of influence. The upper Oxus was roughly accepted as the boundary dividing the British and Russian spheres of influence. Now question arose to delimit the northern frontier of Afghanistan. In his dispatch of May 20, 1870 Lord Mayo indicated the limits of those territories which were under the dominions of Dost Mohammad Khan and at that time in the Empire of Sher Ali Khan. British considered the north-western boundary of Sher Ali's Empire ran from a point on the Oxus between Khoja-Saleh and Kerbi in a south-

2. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Forsyth to Buchanan, 2, November 1869.

easterly direction, including Balkh, Maimana and Andkoi etc. the northern boundary from the same point between Khoja-Sakh and Kerki eastward to Punjab river valley and Wakhan, and thereafter the stream which possess Wakhan up to the point where the range of the Hindubush meets the Southern angle of the Pamirs.³

Stremoukoff formally accepted the boundaries but at the same time expressed doubt about the point from which the boundary line should commence because in Russian Map. Khoja Saleh was shown as the Western limit of Afghan Turkistan on the Oxus.⁴ He asked a copy of despatch for verification and examination and to know about the territorial extensions of Shere Ali Khan. Buchanan firstly refused but gave a copy, when he got permission of Lord Granville who replaced Lord Clarendon as Secretary of State.⁵ Stremoukoff believed that Russian authorities would raise no objection regarding Khoja Sahah's inclusion in the Afghan frontier but great care is needed in tracing of line from thence to the north.⁶

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3. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Mayo to Argyil, 20 May, 1870
 4. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Buchanan to Granville, 13 July, 1870.
 5. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Granville to Buchanan, 21 July, 1871.
 6. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Buchanan to Granville, 18 August, 1870.

The Russian showed no interest with the British regarding the mutually agreed and defined frontier of Afghanistan. This attitude of Russian exhausted British patience. The Russians were continuously avoiding the definition of a frontier as British wanted. Frustrated by Russian attitude, the British unilaterally declared the limits of the dominions of Amir Shere Ali Khan. The decision of the British Foreign Office was communicated by the British Ambassador to Russian Government in which Lord Granville indicated the acceptance of British Government regarding territories and boundaries belonging to the Amir of Kabul.

1. Badakshan, with the dependent district of Wakhan from the Sare Kal on the east to the junction of Kokcha River with the Oxus (or Punjah), forming the northern boundary of this province throughout into entire extent.
2. Afghan - Turkestan comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm and Blakh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of Oxus from the junction of the Kokcha River to the post of Khojah Saleh inclusive on high road from Bokhara to Balkh.⁷

7. C.V. Aitchison; A collection of Treaties, Engagements and sands relating to India and the neighbouring countries, Vol, XII, p.214.

3. The internal districts of Akcha, Siripool, Maimana, Shibbergan and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans.⁸

4. The Western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorasan is well known and need not here be defined.⁹

The British Foreign Secretary declared that these territories belonged to the Amir Shere Ali and he had natural right to defend these territories if they are attacked or threatened. The Russians, firstly did not accept this unilateral declaration of British but finally they accepted it. Russian government sent a special mission under Count Schounaloff to London to counter the diplomatic offensive launched by Lord Granville. He was entrusted to reassure the British Government concerning these issues. Count Schounloff's dialogue with the British brought to surface only one point of difference between Russians and British i.e. the question of Badabshan and wakhan. British believed that Badakshan and Wakhan were under the

8. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.F. March 1884, No.195.

9. Central Asia No.2 (1885) Enclosure in No.226, p.169.

sovereignty of Kabul as proved historically.¹⁰

Lord Granville, in his letter to Lord Loftus, stated the reason why the Russians questioned the sovereignty of Sher Ali over Badakshan and Wakhan. He stated, '.... 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 Amir to extend his possessions at the expense of the neighbouring countries..... Her majesty's government cannot, however, but feel that, if Badakshan and Wakhan, which they consider the Amir justly to deem to be part of his territories, be assured by England or Russia, or by one or either of them, to be wholly independent of his authority, the Amir might be tempted to assert his claims by arms;.... 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...¹¹

10. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Granville to Loftus, 8 January 1873.

11. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec., Granville to Loftus, January 24, 1873.

The declaration made by Lord Granville and the subsequent correspondence between these two countries, ultimately led to an agreement in 1873, by which two things were settled; the northern frontiers of Afghanistan were accepted by not delimited on the spot and secondly Russia assured that Afghanistan absolutely lay outside her sphere of influence.¹² Henceforth, British had good opportunity to delimit the Afghan boundaries properly. But this agreement was almost invalidated, without much delay, by the annexation of Khiva in spite of several assurances made by Count Schouvaloff to Granville that there was no intention to annex Khiva. Every time the British Government was easily outmanoeured by the peaceful assurances of St.Petersburg; every time Russia could violate its promises and make relentless acquisition of territories without remorse because it had never bound itself to a policy of non-aggression.

Protocol of 1887

However, after the post-war settlement (1879-80) in Afghanistan the British Government renewed their efforts for the delimitation of frontiers between Afghanistan and Russia. In February 1882 Granville discussed this ticklish

12. Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Afghanistan, 2 Vols. MacMillan, 1940, p.88.

problem with the Russian Ambassador Prince Lebanon, and desired that the two countries should come to some agreement regarding their policy and position in Asia. In July 1882, the Amir of Afghanistan expressed a desire to visit India and confer with the British authorities personally", in order to settle completely the question of Afghanistan.¹³ It seems quite probable that Amir Abdur Rahman was apprehensive of Russian designs towards Afghanistan, and was keen to request the government of India to come to a speedy settlement with that power regarding the Russo-Afghan frontier.

The British Government wanted to keep Russia, as far away as possible from the frontiers of Afghanistan, but Russia's secret activities and intrigues did not spare Merv which was ultimately absorbed into the Russian Empire in a peaceful manner. On 12 February 1884, the Khan's twenty-four representatives of the four tribes of Merv Turkomans presented themselves at Ashkabad, took the oath of allegiance to the Czar, and invited Russia to Govern them.¹⁴ Under these circumstances, the Government of India wrote to the Secretary of State, that it had become absolutely

13. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.E, September, 1882, Nos.501-510.

14. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.E, May, 1884, Nos.12-51

necessary to come to clear understanding with Russia as to the exact line of entire northern and north-Western frontiers of Afghanistan.¹⁵

In the meanwhile in 1883, the Amir had moved his troops to Shignan and Roshan. The Russia objected to this move of Amir. The British asked to Amir that it would not be possible for the Government of India to come to Amir's assistance, because his troops had crossed the river Oxus in opposition to the wishes, and had broken the agreement of 1873.¹⁶ The Afghan ruler was told to avoid the danger of coming into collusion with the Bokharan troops by ordering his forces to withdraw behind the river. Besides the Indian Government wrote that in the direction of Merv and Sarabhs the Amir had no definite frontier, and as the Russians and Persians were close to Afghanistan on that side, it was very desirable that his frontier from Khoja Saleh to the Hari Rud should be exactly and carefully laid down.¹⁷ a demarcation of the Afghan frontiers was essential, in order that Russia might know the boundaries of Afghanistan, and

15. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.E, March, 1884, Nos.145-197.

16. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.E, ,June 1884, Nos.377-95, K.W.No.I.

17. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.E, March, 1884, Nos. 145-197.

avoid any encroachment upon the frontiers of that kingdom. The Amir was also advised to withdraw his troops from the northern parts of Roshan and Shighnam to this side of the Oxus and occupy the country east of the Hari-Rud/¹⁸ This move was important because of two reasons: First, occupation of the country east of the Hari-Rud was essential for the safety of Herat, which was regarded as the key to the gate of India. Second, Indian Government was responsible for foreign relations of Amir, so Amir should act on the advice of that government regarding matters pertaining to the external affairs. Moreover, the British did not want to provide any excuse to St.Petersburg for making further territorial acquisitions in the direction of Afghanistan.

The Russian Government put forward a proposal before British Government in 1882, for the dilimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khoja Saleh westwards.¹⁹

This proposal was repeated by M.de Giers in 1884. The British ambassador Thornton met M.de. Giers on 5 May 1884, and conveyed him of the acceptance of Russian proposal for the demarcation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khoja

18. Ibid.

19. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.E, August, 1884, Nos.74-110

Saleh westwards. Shortly after, Thornton in his despatch 17 May 1884, conveyed reply of Russian Foreign Minister to Granville, regarding delimitation of Afghanistan's boundary from Khoja Saleh to Tejen. M.de Giers disclosed his government's intention to appoint a Commissioner who would accompany a British Commissioner the areas in question and should find with him the elements of a line of frontier which might shoot both the powers. At the same time the Russian Government opposed to the appointment of an Afghan representative should be appointed in the capacity of an expert, who could give local informations when asked for it by the commission.²⁰ British Government paid heed to the suggestions of M.de Giers and asked Thornton to propose M.de Giers that the Commissioners would meet on 1 October 1884, at Sarakhs on the left bank of Hari-Rud.

Meanwhile, as far as the activities of the Anglo-Russian Boundary Commission were concerned, Amir was not willing to permit Indian contingent to go to the appointed meeting place via Afghanistan. Therefore, Indian Government informed to the Agent of Amir through a paper that Lumsden had been appointed to represent the British government and would travel through Afghanistan by way of Persia.²¹ He was

20. Foreign Dpt., Progs., Sec.E, July, 1884, Nos.186-219.

21. Ibid.

conveyed that Lumsden would meet Russian Commissioner near Sarakhs on or about 15 October. Lumsden was instructed from London, not start the work of the commission until he was joined by the party of officers, who knew well the affairs of Afghanistan.

It seems that the Russians, were not interested to start the work of Boundary Commission very early. They adopted delaying tactics, in order to gain further territorial acquisitions. Russia raised several issues to delay the proceedings of the Commission. Firstly, there was a controversy over the starting point, from where the Commission was to start his work. M.de Giers wanted that work of the Commission should be started from Khoja-Saleh. The British Government was not agree with this proposal, because owing to the distance with which the Commission would have to travel before arriving at Khoja - Saleh and the severity of the winter season, the arrangement would be tantamount to postponing the commencement of operations until next year.²² Besides this, British thought that the boundary of Khoja Saleh was already fixed by the agreement of 1873 and there is no need of raising the issue again. Secondly, M.de Giers was disappointed that the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had not laid down any

22. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. September, 1884, Nos.59-61.

principles which might guide the Commissions in the Boundary delimitation.²³ In the meanwhile, M.de. Giers told Thornton that General Zelenoi had been accepted the Russian Commissioner by Zar. ²⁴

On 30 July 1884, M.de Giers conveyed Thornton that Czar was ready to give his assent that Commission should start his work from a point on the Hari-Rud.²⁵ But assent of Czar was conditional on two terms, first, fixing the point, from where the Commission had to start his work, second, the principles, which would guide the commission should be constituted.²⁶ This activated the British Government, who informed the Russians that point had been fixed tentatively near the Saraks on the Hari Rud, but also made it clear that we should not presuppose such type of things because such subjects come under the jurisdiction of Commission will be to ascertain the limits of Afghan territory,²⁷ and they must therefore be guided in defining the Amirs jurisdiction by the political relations of the tribes occupying the

23. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. September, 1884, Nos.449-60.

24. Ibid.

25. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. September, 1884, Nos.458.

26. Ibid.

27. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. September, 1884, Nos.460.

country; but whilst recognizing all legitimate rights of the Amir, the Commission should bear in mind the importance, in order to reduce the to a minimum the risk of future complications of not imposing upon him obligations which he would be unwilling to assume, or could not in practice fulfil."²⁸

The Amir of Afghanistan conveyed the British Commission about the appointment of his representative, named Kazi-Sad-din.²⁹ On their part, the Russians were trying to delay the operation of Boundary Commission. The British Government received the information that, the Russian Commission would be unable to meet his British counterpart on 7 November 1884 as his preparations were incomplete. M.de Giers suggested the date of meeting on 27 January 1885. The Russians considered Saraks as objectionable place of meeting and suggested that the place should be like Pul-i-Khatun. They proposed that both contingent should be reduced because of difficulty of supplies. British replied to Russian Government about inability of reducing the contingent. About the meeting place, the British could not accept any other place as Russians had formally agreed to Sarakhs.³⁰

28. Ibid.

29. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. December, 1884, Nos.368.

30. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. December 1884, Nos.370

General Zelenoi, the Russian Commissioner advised that both the Government should be agreed upon about a certain zone, then Boundary Commissioner would decide about Afghan's north-west frontier in that particular zone. The commission should not be allowed to go beyond this limit. he insisted the British Government to act on this suggestion in spite of Thornton's reply that Commission should not be allowed to go beyond this limit. He insisted the British Government to act on this suggestion in spite of Thornton's reply that Commissioner by prescribing the extent of territory outside which he could not carry his explorations and enquiries. In further communications Thornton received a memorandum from Russian Government on 21 October 1884, in which it was said that Russian Commissioner could not join before 27 January next. It agreed to Sarkhs being the place of meeting and it was expected that the British would not traverse the territory occupied by the Salor Turkomans on the right bank of the Hari-Rud. It also added that strength of the Russian contingent would be equal to that of British. It also argued that duties and work of the Commission should be laid down properly and carefully.

The Crowns of both the Power met at St.Petersburg on 24 December 1884. Here it was decided that the frontier line must be traced at 110 Kilometers from Herat, in order to include Panjdeh and Zulfikar Pass, the Russian troops should

hold this line but not to proceed further. But the Russian occupation of Zulfikar stunned both England and Afghanistan. The London Government asked the Russians to withdraw their advance posts from Sari Yazı and Zulfikar.³¹ But the Russians did not pay heed to it. On 4 March 1885 the British Government advised the representative of Amir that the Afghans should follow the policy of maintaining status quo, pending negotiations with the Government of Russia.³²

In March Russian Government made it clear that it was the Afghan occupation of Panjdeh and not the Zelenoi's delay, which prevented the negotiations, the Russian Government was bent upon appropriating Panjadeh which was considered as lying within the Afghan sphere. British Government informed St.Petersburg that Pul-i-Khatun and Panjdeh lie in the Afghan frontier but considered that those questions must be settled by the Commission on the spot.³³ Russians continued their aggressive designs, and on 30 March 1885, they defeated Afghan force and drove it from Panjdeh. At the time of Panjadeh incident the Amir had come to meet the viceroy at Rawalpindi. Before leaving India he was very angry and talked about taking retaliatory measures

31. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. June 1885, Nos.549-50.

32. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. July, 1885, Nos.573.

33. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. July, 1885, Nos.381.

against Russia.³⁴ But the Government of India pursued him the necessity of not complicating the situation, and asked him to act in concert with them.³⁵ Finally,, he agreed that he was bound by an agreement with the British Government not to deal directly with any foreign power, but only in correct with them. ³⁶ Two things are clear from it, one is either British forced the Amir to give up the cause of Panjdeh or Amir wanted to save Afghanistan from being a theatre of war of the two Imperialist Powers. The Afghan troops were demoralised due to Panjdeh incident and Afghan authorities became unfriendly towards the Boundary Commission.³⁷

Lumsden proposed to Granville on 29 April, 1885, that the definite limit of Afghanistan should be fixed in London on the basis of reports and surveys which had been prepared because spot delimitation might cause humiliation to the Commission as likely repercussions of the incident on the Afghans. The British accepted Lumsden proposal³⁸ and

34. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F.July, 1885, Nos.125-207.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec.F. October, 1886, Lumsden to Granville 4th May 1885.

38. C.U. Aitchison, A collections of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and the Neighbouring Countries, Vol.XIII, page 216.

Lumsden was recalled to resume negotiations in England and Col. Ridgeway was appointed, to take charge of the Commission in Afghanistan.³⁹

At the time the Government was changed in England. Lord Salisbury came to the power. He wanted to avoid conflict with Russia, therefore, her majority's government proposed the Russia to resume the negotiations regarding the main points for delimitation and the details would be examined and ascertained on the spot.⁴⁰ M.de giers agreed to resume negotiation in London. Meanwhile the Viceroy wrote to Abdur Rahman that the Russians had agreed to leave Zulfikar in lieu of Panjdeh⁴¹. The Viceroy wanted to have the Amir's consent and Amir assented to Viceroy. After receiving the consent of Amir, the Viceroy wanted the evacuation of Zulfikar by the Russian Government. The Russian, firstly did not want to evacuate it, as it was an important link between A.K. Robat and the Russian possessions in the North.⁴² Colonel Ridgeway took a strong stand with the Russian Government over this question and it

39. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., July, 1885, No.215.

40. Central Asia No.5 (1995) - From Granville to M.de. Staal, 4th May 1885.

41. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., October, 1886, No.981.

42. Ibid.

was finally agreed that while Russia had actual possession of Panjdeh pending final settlement, the Afghans were to be left with Gulran, Zulfikar and Maruchak. In fact, on the 16th of April, 1885, The Russian Government was agreed to what was virtually an exchange of Zulfikar passes for Panjedeh and informed the British authorities that Afghan frontier would start from 'a point on the Hari-Rud a little to the north of Zulfikar.'⁴³ This was a distinct gain on behalf of the Amir in this phase of the negotiations.

The transmission had a very important effect as far as the Amir's authority in Afghanistan was concerned. It had a psychological effect and raised the prestige of Amir in the eyes of his subjects.⁴⁴ After this Viceroy Dufferin won the goodwill and gratitude of Amir. The difficulties in the demarcation of frontier were not ended. While for some months the work continued smoothly, a difficulty arose in March 1886, regarding to the definition of Khoja Saleh which had been mentioned in the agreement of 1872-73. The matter was further complicated by terming Khoja Saleh a fort, a ferry, a village, and a post. There was a considerable uncertainty about this, but after a while the matter was resolved by a decision that the frontier line between Dukchi

43. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., October 1885, No.444.

44. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., October, 1885, No.685.

and the Oxus was to be settled on governmental level after some exchange of correspondence.⁴⁵ Negotiations were to be resumed at St.Petersburg and Col.Ridgeway reached there with his staff on the 11 April, 1887.⁴⁶ There were further questions, like rights of the Saraks in the valleys of Kushk and Kashans, others to Shignan and Wakhan, and still others to Kham-i-ab on the Oxus. the Kham-i-ab was a matter of importance to the position of Amir and Ridgeway himself was not reluctant to give up Kham-i-ab,⁴⁷ the Amir's sensitivity on the subject⁴⁸ became a governing factor for the British negotiator. The Russians on the other hand demanded Chaihal, Dukhataran and Maruchak.

The entire question was discussed thoroughly for all nooks and corners as there were a lot of difference at various points. The concession and counter concessions had to be given and taken, and in the series of negotiations, Colonel Ridgeway was served by the study of various authorities like, Burnes, Kaufmann and Faiz Baksh. etc.⁴⁹ During negotiation, British commissioners took all

45. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., July, 1886, No.624.

46. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., July, 1887, No.463.

47. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., June, 1887, No.328.

48. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., October, 1886, No.864.

49. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., July, 1886, No.583.

possible care of gains of Afghanistan. There was a mixture of assertiveness and amicability on the part of Col. Ridgeway and entire frontier, part by part, had been settled through series of negotiations, the terms were finally put down in a formal agreement on 22 July 1887. The Amir was formally informed of the settlement on 22 July 1887⁵⁰ and his assent was quickly obtained.

Settlement of Roshan and Shignan

According to the "Treaty of Gortchakoff and Clarendon in 1872-73, Russia had agreed that Badakshan and Wakhan be included in Afghanistan. As Roshan and Shignan formed a part of Badakshan, they were under the Government of Afghanistan. These two places commanded the roads from Russia towards India and consequently Russia was anxious to obtain their possession.⁵¹ At the time of the settlement of Afghan boundary in 1887, the Amir had desired as he wanted to legalise the retention of these two places, but the British felt that there was no necessity to open the question unnecessarily.⁵²

50. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., August 1887, No.42

51. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., September 1891, No.242.

52. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., October 1886, No.983.

For some time past communications had been going on between the Russian and the British governments regarding their respective sphere of influence on the Pamir on the Agreement of 1872-73 making the river Oxus the north-eastern boundary of Afghanistan up to Lake Victoria. The boundary on the Oxus had been fixed at that time in an insufficient infraction and it had subsequently been discovered that Roshan and Shignan which were situated to the north of the Oxus formed part of Badakshan under Afghanistan, while the district of Darwaz which was south of the river was a tributary to Bukhara under Russia. This was a peculiar situation according to Russia and not in keeping with the Agreement of 1873.

The demand made by Russia were firstly to adhere strictly to the time of the Oxus as the boundary and secondly to fix a frontier east of Lake Victoria.⁵³ According to the Russains, Roshan and Shignan which were situated on the other side of the Oxus were required to be abandoned by the Amir so that the Khans whom he had dispossessed might return and these places were to remain under the Russian influence though not necessarily in Russian occupation. With regard to the part of Darwaz which

53. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., June 1893, No.157.

was on the Afghan side of the Oxus, they said that it had belonged to the Bokhara before the agreement of 1873, but it was not known then that the Oxus had taken a course which had placed a portion of Darwaz on the Afghan side. However the Imperial government could consider the transfer of the territory in question from the possession of Bukhara to Afghanistan.⁵⁴ The arrangement suggested regarding the frontier east of Lake Victoria (Sarikul), the Russians claim would give the British the possession over the northern slopes of the Hindu-Kush.⁵⁵

The Government of India expressing its views to the British Government stated that the Agreement, even if it was read as laying down that the stream of the Oxus throughout its length from Wood's Lake on the east to the junction of the Kokcha and the Oxus on the West formed the boundary of Afghanistan, could not reasonably be interpreted as giving to Russia those portions of Roshan, Shignan and Wakhan, which were on the right bank of the river. The Amir had been in effective occupation of the country for about ten years and had a right to be treated with consideration as its defacto owner⁵⁶. The government of India regarded the

54. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., June 1893, No.145.

55. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., June 1893, No.157

56. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., January 1894, No.207.

acceptance of the Russian proposal with gravest apprehension as it thought that such a decision would deprive the Amir of a large extent of the territory and would give him a portion of Darwaz. By this arrangement the Amir would be left in possession of a useless and narrow strip of Wakhan which it would not be advisable for the Amir to hold.⁵⁷

In the spring of 1893 the Russian Government urgently demanded the withdrawal of the Amir from the trans Oxus. Roshan and Shignan and it was clearly realised that a withdrawal would be unpalatable to the Amir.⁵⁸ The Viceroy was of view that unless Her Majesty's Government had conferred with the Amir it might be better not to arrange definitely the transfer of Roshan and Shignan.⁵⁹ He said that it would be possible to persuade the Amir to agree to evacuate Roshan and Shignan by speaking to him to the Agreement of 1873 and showing him that under the same Agreement Russia was prepared to evacuate Darwaz.⁶⁰

It had therefore become necessary to send a British officer to Kabul and Sir M. Durand was deputed for the purpose. He was instructed by British Government to acquaint

57. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., July 1893, No.548.

58. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., August 1893, No.399.

59. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., August 1893 No.313.

60. Ibid.

the Amir that the Russian Government insisted on the literal fulfilment of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1872-73 and that British Government did not consider it possible to resist the claim. This meant the Amir's withdrawal from Trans-Oxus Roshan and Shignan which he had for the last ten years occupied against the advice of the Government of India. The Amir was also to be assured that the effect of this withdrawal would be to give him a definite frontier on the north-east, a point concerning which the Amir had more than once expressed his anxiety. His frontier on the upper Oxus would be as secure as on the lower Oxus.⁶¹

On reaching Kabul, Sir Mortimer Durand satisfied the Amir that the claim of the Russians was reasonable and inevitable, according to the Agreement of 1872-73. The Amir consented to act in compliance with the wishes of British government and accepted their decision in acknowledgement of his obligation to follow the British advice in matters affecting his relations with foreign powers, consequently the following Agreement was signed by the Amir and Sir M. Durand on November, 12, 1893.

"Whereas the British Government has represented to the amir that the Russian Government presses for the literal

61. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., October 1893, No.1.

fulfilment of the Agreement of 1873 between Russia and England by which it was decided that the river Oxus should form the northern boundary of Afghanistan from Lake Victoria (Wood's Lake) or Sarikul on the east to the junction of the Kokcha with the Oxus, and whereas the British Government considers itself bound to abide by the terms of this Agreement, if the Russian Government equally to abides by them. Abdur Rahman wishing to show his friendship to the British Government and his readiness to accept their advice in matters affecting his relations with foreign powers, hereby agrees that he will evacuate all the districts held by him to the north of this portion of the Oxus on the clear understanding that all the districts lying to the South of this portion of the Oxus and not now in his possession, be handed over to him in exchange. Sir M. Durand declares that the transfer to the Amir of the said districts lying to the south of the Oxus is an essential part of this transaction and undertaken that arrangements will be made with the Russian Government to carry out the transfer of the said lands to the north and south of the Oxus."⁶²

For the Indian Empire, this successful Agreement constituted the most important achievement of external

62. C.U. Aitchison: A Collection of Treaties,, Engagements and Sonads Relating to India and the neighbouring countries, Vol.XIII, p.255-56.

policy during 19th century. Not only did it stop the further advance of Russia towards India but it removed a constant source of misunderstanding and irritation with that power.

Settlement : Over Pamir

The 1887 protocol signed at St.Petersburgh had demarcated the Russo-Afghan boundary upto Khoja Saleh. From this place to Lake Victoria the line was determined by the unwritten agreement of 1873 which was still under dispute because of the claims and counter claims of territories on either side of the border. East of the Lake Victoria across the Pamirs there was complete confusion. Here there was a big gap between the Afghan and the Chinese territories which could almost be called no-man's land. This was an area which was inhabited by a wandering population. The greatest anxiety of the British here was to keep the fact from the Russians best they should try to occupy this gap and come close to the frontier tribes of India which could easily be inflamed.

The Russians were interested in the Pamir area as it is clear from the official publication of 1880, at St.Petersburg declared: The extent of country between the most southern portion of the province of Fergana and the (Darbol) Pass...lies in the Pamirs and belongs to no

one...this belt of no--man's land must probably, sooner or later be included in Russian dominions, which will thus be in immediate contact with the range forming the water-parting from the Indus."⁶³ A map prepared by Gromchevsky marked this line in red. This came to the notice of the British in 1889 and they got anxious that this gap should either be filled up by Afghanistan or by China so that it does not fall into the Russian hands. Efforts were made in 1991 to persuade the Chinese authorities at Kashgar to send their armed parties to establish claims on the Pamirs. But to the utter astonishment of the British they later on discovered that a secret exchange of views with the Chinese to this effect was intimated by the Chinese themselves to the Russians and provided them with an opportunity to occupy these areas before the Chinese reached even half way.

The situation in the Pamirs was indeed difficult. The British themselves did not want to go so far as to occupy the Pamirs, but at the same time they were anxious not to permit these territories to fall into the Russian hands. The question was, to whom did these lands belong? If they were to be neutralised, who would guarantee their neutrality. The Russians claimed that the Pamirs belonged to

63. Quoted G.J.Alder, British India's Northern Frontier (1865-1895), p.220.

them on the basis of the rights that Khokand had earlier enjoyed over them. In vain did the British dig extensively into their records. They could find no arguments to support their case, till they suddenly discovered that on 22 May 1884 Russia had signed a Protocol with China, the third clause of which stated: " This valley (Uzbed) is the terminus of the boundary turning south-west, and the Chinese boundary due South." This made it clear that at least in 1884 the Russians did not consider the territories under dispute their own.⁶⁴

The discovery by the British of the existence of this Protocol was a shock to the Russians. When making use of it the British attacked the Russians claims on the Pamirs and protested against the insult of their officers at their hands, the Russians began to consider their case weak. This made the British yet more bold and they declared in December 1891 ".... the northern slopes of that range (the Hindukush) (formed, as it were, the glacis of the fortress and to suppose that we should allow, powerful and rival nation to effect a lodgment on this glacis, and that in the free and easy manner contemplated by Colonel Ianov was not a wide proceeding... (and would lead to) very great trouble.⁶⁵

64. G.S. Chhabra, Op.cit., p.477.

65. Quoted G.J. Alder, British India's Northern Frontier, 1865-1895, p.220.

There was a lengthy correspondence between the two governments and ultimately the Russians had to agree that the action of their officer was illegal and therefore regrettable. The whole matter was closed after a full apology from Russia and a suggestion that after a joint topographical survey a delimitation of the territories may be made.

This was a great diplomatic victory for the British. Russian claims on this gap of no-man's land ceased to exist, but there was a question, to whom should the territory between the accepted line and the Hindubush belong, so that Russia is not able to lay her claims any more? This problem was also ultimately solved when finally in the time of Lord Elgin in March 1895 a formal agreement with Russia was reached. Under this agreement it was decided that the Russian boundary from Lake Victoria was to the east upto the Chinese frontier and that between this line and the Hindubush the territories which previously belonged to no one) now belonged to Afghanistan.⁶⁶

This question was thus decided. There was the problem of filling up two more gaps between China and Ladakh and

66. C.U. Actchison, A collection of treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and the neighbouring countries, volume XIII, p.271.

between China and Afghanistan on the Pamirs. The Kashmir maps showed their boundaries running along the Yarkand river while the Chinese after their reoccupation of Sinkiang in 1878 claimed their territories only upto the possess of Kilian, Kogyar and Sanju. The intervening territory of Kuen-lun was claimed by none. The British were anxious that China should extend her claims right upto the Kashmir boundaries so that Russia does not find yet another place to infiltrate close to the territories in the British sphere of influence. In 1889 Younghusband visited these areas claimed by none. His activities there, however, soon alarmed the Chinese at Kashgar and to the pleasant surprise of the British they protested against Younghusband's presence among the people who acknowledged Chinese suzerainty. Chinese claims were encouraged and recognised, and in 1890 Landsowner's Government instructed their officials in Kashmir to consider the Karakoram watershed as the northern limit o the Kashmir territory and Southern boundary of China. In 1892, China was found erecting her boundary pillars on the agreed line and the British were happy that one problem was solved.⁶⁷

The gap between China and Afghanistan on the Pamirs was the other problem. But this was also solved by the final Anglo-Russian agreement of 1895 by which Russia agreed to

67. G.S. Chhabra, op.cit., 477.

extend the line east of Lake Victoria right upto the defacto Chinese frontier.⁶⁸ Although actual topographical surveys on the basis of these decisions on paper created some serious difficulties and the British did not find it easy to reconcile their armchair claims to the actual physical existence, yet the paper decision held good, and the 1895 agreement solved one of the thorniest problems.

Anglo-Russian Convention 1907

Finally, an Anglo-Russian convention was signed on 31st August 1907, which disposed of all the points of conflict between the two countries about Tibet; Afghanistan and Persia.

The Treaty of Lhasa with Tibet after Younghusband expedition, had been signed in 1904, but to this a formal assent of China, the suzerain of Tibet was still required. A convention was held at Peking which concluded in April 1906, and which added two more clauses to the Treaty of Lhasa already signed.⁶⁹ One of these clauses bound the British neither to anne any of the Tibetan territories, nor to

68. Aitchison: A collection of treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and the neighbouring countries, Volume XII, p.271.

69. G.S. Chhabra, op.cit., p.478.

interfere in its internal affairs. And by the second clause China pledged to impose like restrictions on all other powers. The inclusion of these new clauses was made possible only as a result of the Secretary of State John Morley's determination to disentangle the strong desire of the Indian Government to stick to the Treaty of Lhasa as originally concluded. It was due to his insistence should be paid by China instead of Tibet, and should be done in three years. Again, by 1908 the indemnity having being paid, China requested the evacuation of the Chumbi Valley; the Indian Government objected arguing that the Tibetans had not carried their part of the commitments faithfully, but on the orders of the Secretary of State the valley had to be evacuated immediately, and thus the British became completely disconcerned with the internal affairs of Tibet.⁷⁰

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 also worked towards the same direction in relation to Tibet. By this convention both the parties bound themselves not to interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet, nor to send their emissaries to Lhasa. Both bound themselves to conduct their relations with Tibet only through China.

70. Ibid.

After these developments, China established a strong hold over Tibet, practically deposing the Dalai Lama and passing the administrative control of the country into the hands of the Chinese Resident. Peking summoned the Dalai Lama in July 1908, and made him feel the absolute supremacy of China over his country; so much so that on his return to Tibet, the Dalai appealed to the British for help in 1910, Tashi Lama had fled his country and taken refuge in India in 1905-6, and the Dalai did so in February 1910. Lord Minto granted him an interview, but the Dalai vainly made entreaties for help which was not forthcoming; the British being determined not to violate their pledges to China and Russia.

Morley declared that the only aim of Younghusband's expedition into Tibet had been to exclude Russian interests. And that being now completely done, they had no other political interest in that country.

With regard to Afghanistan the Anglo-Russian convention did not go beyond recognising the status-quo. Russia bound herself to conduct all her relations with Afghanistan only through the British, while the latter committed themselves not to alter the political position of that country in any way.⁷¹ Both the countries were to enjoy equal commercial

71. Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec.F., August 1908, No.111.

privileges in Afghanistan. The clause relating to the Afghanistan in the convention were however to come into effect only after securing the Amir's assent to them, which however, he later refused. Habibullah, the Amir, had already been unpopular in his country due to his efforts to westernise it, and now to have accepted the clause regarding the conclusion of which he had not been consulted previously, was bound to injure the popular national sentiment.

The more important subject dealt with in the convention was, however, Persia, where chaotic conditions had been developing since 1805, due to the germinating Western spirit of democracy and constitutionalism among the people, and due to several other causes. The arrangement reached between the two countries with regard to Persia, therefore, saved both from unnecessary troubles which were bound to arise so long as their respective spheres of influence in the country were not demarcated.

The convention, though binding the two parties to respect the political independence and integrity of Persia, separated its northern part which the British agreed to under the Russian sphere of influence, and South-eastern part which Russia agreed to be under the British sphere of influence.

The Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 was a very important development which entirely excluded the possibilities of a clash between these two countries on the subject dealt with here. A serious source of friction between the two was removed, and both recognizing their respective interests and rights distinct from each other, buried themselves in peaceful development within them.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As it is well known Afghanistan is a landlocked state and situated in the heart of Asia. It is surrounded by many countries, which signify its strategic location in the geopolitical context of the region. Active forward policies of Russia and Britain created such forces which sapped the stability as well as independence of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's central location was in the nature of serious political disadvantage. Apart from locational disadvantage, Afghanistan was a culmination of different cultural and ethnic groups. Afghanistan could not continue to form an effective political unit because of internal subdivisions. Besides this factor, external and internal communication network formed the weakest link link of the Afghan political and economic geography.

Geographic environment also affected the Afghan history. The spirit of political freedom and independence among the various Afghan tribes or their periodic defections are all the effects of the geographical remoteness. The locational proximity had also helped in shaping its history. The weakening of central authority and the necessity of aggressive forward policies to maintain internal political

stability, as a consequence, remained a recurrent theme of the Afghan history.

The internal political imbalances, problem of communication and its land locked affected to the Afghan foreign relations. The Asian states were important to the European powers because of thier strategic and geographical locations. The colonial powers clashed among themselves and the intermittant territory became a zone of contention and of conflicting interests.¹ Territorial interests of Britain and Russia clashed over Afghanistan.

Britain and Russia, both colonialist poweres were fast approaching towards opposite directions. Russia had desire to take possession of central Asian states, British wanted to treat Afghanistan as their frontier out post, to extend their commercial and political interests in central Asia, they, also wanted to stop further Russian incursions into India. The northern frontiers of Afghanistan were unstable and uncertain, which were prone to the Russian forward policy. This situation posed a direct threat to the British Indian possession. So British wanted to make Afghanistan a semi-independent buffer state and it should not fall under

1. V.K.Chanda, India, Britain, Russia, : A study in British Opinion, Delhi, 1967. P.5

the Russian sphere of influence. To make them secure, British fortified themselves along the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line.² As mentioned in the introduction, the state of affairs in the northern part of Afghanistan were always chaotic. This situation inspired Russians to interfere in the politics of the region. Apart from this, Afghanistan was also trying to maintain its independent existence and was also desirous to grab as much as possible in the northern parts of Afghanistan, on the both side of the Oxus. Afghanistan claimed various region which were hotly contested by Russia. These issues could be finally settled after several boundary agreements.

There were several issues, which caused friction between Afghanistan and Russia. These issues came to the fore in 1869, when Sher Ali re-established his authority. By this time, through her expansionist policy, Russia reached to the proximity of northern frontiers of Afghanistan. Sher Ali, thought it as a direct threat to the security of Afghanistan.

Badakshan, Roshan, Shignam were always bone of contention between the two. Sher Ali claimed the sovereignty over Badakshan and its dependencies like

2. Asghar H. Bilgrami, Afghanistan and British India, 1793-1907, New Delhi 1972, p.68.

Shignan, Roshan and Wakhan. His contention was that, Badakshan always paid tribute to Afghanistan, so Afghanistan had ever rights over Badakshan and her dependencies. But, Russia objected Sher Ali's claim over Badakshan, as she felt that acceptance of Sher Ali claims, might lead the Amir to disturb the peace of Central Asia, that he might be tempted to encroach upon the territories under the influence of Russia. Roshan was occupied in the early 1884 by Abdulla Khan, governor of Badakshan, which was deeply resented by Russia.

Besides, this Russian activities between 1870 to 1880 further aggravated the friction between Russia and Afghanistan. Russia had long covetous eyes over Khiva. She was searching opportunity, which was provided by Khan of Khiva. He detained some russians, found it illegal activities. Russian government required from Khan of Khiva that commerce should not be hampered and no imprisonment of Russian subjects. In spite of assurances by Khan, Russia attacked and occupied Khiva in 1873. Turkoman country formed intermediary zone between Afghanistan and Russia. This position was distorted by the Russian occupation of Khiva. The Russians contested Amir Sher Ali's claim of Akcha, Maimana, Shibbergham and Andkoi, all falling in the intermediary zone between Afghanistan and Bokhara. Russian occupation of Kokand in 1876 and Tekke Turkonans in 1881

made the matter worse. Akhal Oasis was occupied in January 1881. At last on 14 February 1884, Russia announced the submission of the last of Turkomen and the annexation of Mer Oasis.³

After occupation of Merv, Russia came closure to the frontiers of Afghanistan. British were worried about the independent existence of Afghanistan. They thought that it is impossible to check Russia by force, so they tried to follow the course of diplomatic way. British government invited Russia to appoint a joint commission to demarcate the north-west frontier of Afghanistan. After some hesitation, the proposal was accepted by the Russian government. Besides this, Amir Abdur Rahman was compelled to withdraw his forces, which had crossed the Oxus to create a better understanding with Russia.

Panjdeh crisis, further heightened the tension in the area. On 21st June 1885, the Russian Foreign Office raised a protest against the reported intention of Amir to occupy Panjdeh forcibly. Russia was always finding an excuse to incorporate a new area in her empire. Russia advanced their armies and situation was such, that Afghan forces were at Pul-i-Kishti and Russian army at Kazal Tape, at a distance

3. Memorandum on Russia in Central Asia, Part III.

of one mile from each other. The Russians attempted to arouse the Afghans to start a conflict. On 29 March 1885, the Russians issued ultimatum to Afghans to withdraw to the former lines on the right bank of Kushk. The Afghans refused to be complied on. On 30th March Russians attacked Afghan army, defeated them and drove it back with heavy losses. Russians occupied Panjdes, declared it Russian land and stationed their troops to the former positions.⁴

Now Russians tried to justify their action by burdening responsibility on Afghanistan's shoulder. The Russians asserted that they were provoked by Afghan's act of hostility. They argued that Afghan committed two mistakes, first was the detention of a Russian Turkoman; second, the Afghan patrol of firemen to the vicinity of two Russian vedettes, to whom they addressed defiant language. British held responsible to Russians for Panjadesh incident.⁵

Pamir was another area of bone of contention. It involved not only Russia, Britain and Afghanistan but also China. Russia was determined to assert its claim on the Pamirs and also on areas which were regarded as Afghan territory. Encouraged by Younghusband's mission to Kashgar,

4. Foreign Dpt. Progs. Sec F. July, 1885, No.125.

5. Central Asia No.5 (1885), No.64.

China gradually expanded in the Pamirs. The Russian movements in the region of the Pamirs inspired the Amir to request India to lay down the boundary of consultation with Russia. The British interest in the tribal areas south of the Hindu-Kush was strategic, although they allowed the Chinese to advance into the Pamirs as British did not want Russia in that region.

British policy towards Afghanistan was largely shaped by the considerations of Indian defence. Its various facets are: Forward Policy, policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan known as Masterly Inactivity, attempts to constitute a neutral zone' or buffer state' between the British and Russian possessions, and the continued British attempts to control the foreign and defence policies of Afghanistan.

Russian expansion towards Afghanistan compelled the British to have a fresh look at their frontier policy. Since 1850's there originated two schools of thought. Sind School favoured a forward policy, whenever the Panjab School was in favour of strengthening the ruler of Afghanistan without interfering in the internal affairs of that country, to maintain Afghanistan as a friendly power between Russia and India, and demarcating sphere of influence of Russia and British India in central Asia. Between 1869 to 1876, the

policy of Panjab school was followed but altered by Lytton in 1876, who followed forward policy, which culminated into second Anglo-Afghan war with disastrous results for the British. Rippon again followed policy of Panjab School.

One serious shortcoming of the British policy has been that it was mainly directed to provide against the possibility of Russian aggression, and, in so doing, it failed to take full cognizance of the internal compulsions on the Afghan rulers, and their susceptibilities. This was mostly the case when the 'Forward Policy' was in motion. Afghanistan was treated merely as a pawn to subserve the interests of India's security. When the full significance of Afghanistan was recognised, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the British, in cooperation with Russians, contrived to get its boundaries demarcated. This, in turn, contributed to the maintenance of internal stability in Afghanistan and provided security to India in a larger measure than before.

The main object of British policy was to keep Afghan state out of the orbit of Trarist - Russia and within that of India. The two wars which the British fought with Afghanistan did contribute in promoting, if not achieving, that objective. The British impressed upon the Russians their readiness to use arms to keep Afghanistan within their

influence as an essential part of India's security. The wars also made it clear to the Afghans that they could not be allowed to endanger India by getting away from the British tutelage to that of Russia. The extent of success the British achieved in their objective can be gauged from the stipulations of the Anglo-Russian convention whereby Afghanistan was excluded from the Russian sphere of influence.

British thought that it would be unwise to make use of force to bring Afghanistan under her sphere of influence. They also knew that Russia could not be checked by force, so they adopted the course of diplomacy and started talk with Russia to appoint boundary commission to demarcate the northern frontiers of Afghanistan. By this way only. Russia could be stopped and Afghanistan be brought under her sphere of influence. During the Viceroyalty of Ripon a joint commission had been appointed to demarcate the frontier. The Panjdeh incident speeded up the process of demarcation.

However, before the final settlement there were several formal negotiations between Britain and Russia. By agreement of 1869, the upper Onus was, roughly accepted as the boundary deviding the British and Russian sphere of influence. Badakshan and Wakhan were accepted within the sovereignty of Afghanistan in the agreement of 1872-73. But

this was always contested by Russia, until the issue was finally settled in 1893 by the efforts of Mr. Durand. The protocol of 1887, settled the north-western boundary of Afghanistan and left no scope for further conflict in the region. However, north-eastern boundary over Pamir, in which China was also involved could be settled in 1895. The Anglo - Russian Convention of 1907 brought an end to the rivalry of both the imperialist powers, i.e. Britain and Russia in Central Asia.

The convention, however was a milestone in the Afghan struggle for independence from foreign control. Amir sher Ali's was the first attempt in that direction in 1870's. It proved abortive, largely, because the Amir failed to anticipate the extent to which the British were prepared to allow the Afghan ruler to go. The inability of the British to hold Afghanistan, as evidenced during the war (1878-1880), helped Abdur Rahman to usher in an era of peaceful but steady existence to British interference in Afghan affairs. It was Habibullah Khan, who, by refusing to have anything to do with the convention on the ground that he was not consulted in its deliberations, laid the foundation of Afghanistan's sovereignty and independence in foreign relations.

APPENDIX I

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

Her Majesty's Government have attentively considered the statements and arguments contained in Prince Gortchakoff's dispatch of the 7/19 December, and the papers that accompanied it, which were communicated to me by the Russian Ambassador on the 17/29 December, and to Your Excellency by Prince Gortchakoff on the 29 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 October, to be well-founded.

The objections stated in Prince Gortchakoff's despatch apply to that part of Shere Ali's claims which would comprise the province of Badakshan with the dependent district of Wakhan within the Afghan State. The Imperial Government contend that 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 consented experimentally to receive a fixed portion of the revenues of the country, instead of having 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 neighboring countries. I alluded in my despatch of the 17th 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 obligation upon him to abstain from any aggression on the 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 assured 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; 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 1872, 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 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 Gortchakoff.

APPENDIX II

The Protocol of 1885 (Translation)

The undersigned, the Marquis of Salisbury, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and His Excellency M. George de Staal, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the Emperor..., of All the Russians at the Court of Her Britannic Majesty, 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 scarp of the western defile (including the crest marked L.M.N. of the northern branch of the defile). From the point of 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 Islion, 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 Sarika, 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 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 Government 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 commission shall be appointed by her majesty the Queen's 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.
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.

Done at London, the 10th September, 1885.

Agreement between the Government 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, March 11, 1895

As a result of the negotiations which have taken place between our two Governments in regard to the spheres of east of Lake Victoria (Zor Koul), the following points have been agreed upon between us:

1. The spheres of influence of Great of 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 latitude of the lake as far as the Bendersky and OrtaBel 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 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 territory of the Amir of Afghanistan, that it shall not be annexed to Great Britain, and that no military post 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.

APPENDIX III

Afghanistan No. IX-1887

Demarcation of the north-west frontier of afghanistan .

Protocol No. 4

Sitting held at St. Petersburg, 10th (22nd) July 1887.

Aitchison, C.U. A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads etc., Vol.XIII, pp, 248-250.

1. The frontier, the description of which is contained in the Annex to the present Protocol under the letter (A) and which is included between the pillars No.19 and the pillars No. 36 and 65, is considered as definitely settled. The trigonometrical points on the portion of the line described above and included between pillars No.19 and No.36 are likewise admitted as definitive; the description of this part of frontier, as well the part of eastward of the pillar No.65, may be completed after the demarcation.
2. Leaving pillar No.19 the frontier shall follow a straight line upto the summit of the hill marked 2,740 on map No.1 annexed to the present protocol. this point, where pillar No.20 shall be placed is known under the denomination of "trigonometrical station of Kara Tape" (latitude $35^{\circ} 17' 49''$, longitude $62^{\circ} 15' 17''$). Further on the line shall descend the crest of the hills, being directed from this point of towards the confluence of the Kushk and the Moghur pillar No.21 shall be placed on a point this crest or of its slope, so as to be seen from the confluence above mentioned. A straight line shall connect No. 21 with No. 22 placed in the valley of Kushk on the left bank of the river, 900 feet to the north of the confluence of the Kushk and the Moghur (about 6,300 feet from Masari Shah Alam, indicated on map No.2 annexed to the protocol).

Leaving pillar No. 22 the line shall ascend the thalweg of the Kushk to pillar No.23, placed 2,700 feet above the head of the new canal on the right bank, of which the water-supply is situated about 6,000 feet to the north-north-east of the Ziaret of Chihil-Dukhter. From pillar No.23 a straight line shall be traced to the point marked 2,925 on map No. 3 annexed to the present protocol (latitude $35^{\circ} 16' 53''$ longitude $62^{\circ} 27' 57''$, pillar No. 24) whence the frontier shall follow the line of the water-parting passing through the following points: the point 3,017 (Bandi Akhamar, latitude $35^{\circ} 14' 21''$, longitude $62^{\circ} 25' 48''$, pillar No.26) the point 3,198 (latitude $35^{\circ} 14' 30''$, longitude $62^{\circ} 41' 0''$,

pillar No.27 and the point Kalari 2 (latitude $35^{\circ} 18'21''$, longitude $62^{\circ} 47'18''$), and shall run on to the point marked No. 29 on map No.4 annexed to the present protocol. The frontier shall cross the valley of the River Kashan in a straight line between pillars No.29 and No.30 (trigonometrical station of Tori Scheikh latitude $35^{\circ} 24'51''$, longitude $62^{\circ} 59'43''$) and shall follow the line of the water-parting of Sanicha to the point (pillar No.31 of map No.3); where it meets the line of the water-parting of the Kashan and the Murghab, shall pass on to this latter and shall follow it up to the trigonometrical station of the Kashan (latitude $35^{\circ} 38'13''$, longitude $63^{\circ} 6'4''$, pillar No.32). From the station a straight line shall be traced to a point on the Murghab (pillar No. 35 situated 700 feet above the canal-head of the canal Yaki-YuZ (or Yaki-Yangi). Further on, frontier descending the thalweg of the Murghab, shall joint pillar No.36 of the frontier demarcated in 1885-86.

To the east of pillar No. 65 the frontier shall follow the line marked A, B, C, D, on map No. 8 annexed to the present protocol, the point A being situated at a distance of 3,500 feet south of the wells of Imam Nazar; the point B being near Kara-Tape Khurd-Kak, which remains to the Afghans; the point C about midway between the east and west wells of Katabadji; and lastly, the point D about midway between the wells Ali Kadim and the wells marked Chahi. The wells of Imam Nazar, Kara-Tape-Khurd, west Katabadji, and Ali Kadim remain outside of Afghan territory. From the point D a straight line shall be traced as far as the commencement of the local frontier demarcated between Bosagha and Khamiab, which shall continue to serve as frontier between the two villages, with the single reservation that the canals of Bosagha along all their course, that is to say, as far as Konili (point H) shall be included in Russian territory. In other words, the present demarcation will confirm the existing rights of the two parties on the banks of the Amou-Daria, that is to say, that the inhabitants of Khamiab shall retain all their lands and all their pastures, including those which are east of the local frontier marked E, F, G, on maps Nos. 9 and 10 annexed to the protocol. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the Bosagha shall retain the exclusive enjoyment of their canals as far as Konili, with the right of repairing and supplying them in accordance with the customs in force in regard to those of Khamiab, when the waters of the Amou-Daria are too low to supply directly the canal-heads of Konili. The officers who shall be charged to execute on the spot the provisions of the present protocol between the above-named pillars shall be bound to place a sufficient number of

intermediate pillars, taking advantage for this purpose as much as possible of the salient points.

3. The clause in Protocol No. 4 of the 14th (26th) December 1885, prohibiting the Afghans from making use of the irrigating canals in the Kushk Valley below Chihil Dukchter which were not in use at that time, remains in force, but it is understood that this clause can only be applied to the canals supplied by the Kushk. The Afghans shall not have the right to make use of the waters of the Kushk for their agricultural works north of Chihil Dukchter; but the waters of the Moghur belong exclusively to them, and they may carry out any works they may think necessary in order to make use of them.
4. The clauses in Protocols No. 4 of the 14th (26th) December 1885, and No. 15 of the 1st (13th) September 1886, relative to the construction of a dam on the Murghab, remain in force. M. Zionview having expressed the wish that the obligation imposed on the Amir of Afghanistan to give up for this purpose a tract of land on the right bank of the Murghab under the conditions stipulated in the said protocols, should be extended to the whole course of the river below the canal-head of Yaki-Yuz, Colonel Ridgeway is of opinion that the necessary steps to obtain the assent of the Amir might delay the conclusion of the present arrangement; but he is nevertheless convinced that the assent of the Amir to the cession, under the same conditions, of a tract of land on the right bank can be obtained without difficulty, if later on the Imperial government should inform Her Britannic Majesty's Government of their intention of proceeding to the construction of a dam above the canal-head of Bendi-Nadiri.
5. The British Government will communicate without delay to the Amir of Afghanistan the arrangements herein agreed upon, and the Imperial Government of Russia will enter into possession of the territory adjudged to them by the present protocol from the 1st (13th) October of the present year.
6. 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.

APPENDIX IV

ANNEX TO PROTOCOL NO. 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE AFGHAN FRONTIER BETWEEN THE HARI-RUD AND THE OXUS (AMOU-DARIA)

Aitchison, C.U.: A Collection of Treaties Engagements and Sanads etc., Vol. XIII. pp. 251-253.

The frontier begins on the right banks of the Hari-Rud at a point marked on the map by pillar No. 1 about 8,500 feet distant from a small tower situated on a mound at the entrance of the Zulfikar Pass. Pillar No. 2, is placed on the top of the neighboring rock which commands pillar No.1. From pillar No.2, the frontier turns to the north for a distance of about half a mile as far as Pillar No.3, which is situated on an eminence at the western extremity of a detached portion of the cliff. From thence the frontier runs in the straight line towards the top of a steep hill about a mile and a half distant in an east-north-easterly direction and reaches pillar No.4, placed on a low mound in the plain. Beyond this pillar the frontier, taking a more easterly direction, runs for a distance of 4 miles as far as pillar No. 5, placed on an eminence, and well in view of the second line of heights on the northern side of a natural cavity in the rock. From this point the frontier runs in a south-easterly direction along the crest of the second line of heights as far as pillar No.6, placed on the ridge of the northern cliff of the eastern defile, at a distance of about a mile from the centre of the defile. Pillar No.7, is placed below pillar No.6, near the road in the middle of the pass, and pillar No.8 is on the top of southern cliff facing pillar No.10. The frontier then descends the crest of the second line of heights in a southerly direction and crosses the path leading to Karez-Elias and Abi-Charmi at a point about 2 1/4 miles distant from the bifurcation of the four roads converging at the eastern extremity of the defile of Zulfikar. Pillar No.9 is placed to the east of the path on a small rock which overhangs it. From this pillar the frontier gradually ascends the line of water-parting as far as the highest summit of the range of Deugli-Dagh, marked by pillar No.10. At the eastern extremity of this range stands pillar No.11. At a distance of about 9 1/2 miles in a south-easterly direction are three low hills. On the middle one is placed No.12. Again turning somewhat to the east the frontier runs towards pillar No.13, placed beside the road about half-way between Ak-Robat and Sumbakarez, and thence

to pillar No.14, situated at a distance of 2 1/2 miles to the east on the top of a hill.

Pillar No.15 is about 9 miles from Ak-Robat, on the road leading to An-Rohak. At about the same distance to the north-west of the spring of Islim, stands pillar No.17 placed on a flat-topped hill; on the side of the road between An-Rohak and Islim, on a gentle slope, is placed pillar No.18 and about 3 miles west of Islim, on the southern side of the stream. Pillar No. 19 is placed on the rounded crest of a small chain of heights 3 miles south of Islim.

Pillar No. 38 is placed on an elevated point of the "Chul" at about 11 miles from the Valley of Meruchak. The frontier from thence continues in an east-north-easterly direction towards pillar no.39, situated about a mile south-east of the spring of Khwaja-Gongourdak; after that in a straight line and with north-easterly direction towards pillar No.40 on an elevated point of the "Chul" from thence east-north-east towards pillar No. 41, situated on a height about 12 miles north of Kilawali; further on the frontier follows an east-north-easterly direction towards pillar No.42, placed on a height 2 miles west of the Pakana-Sho, and continues in the same direction as far as pillar No.43. From this pillar the frontier runs in a south-easterly direction towards pillar No.44, placed on the most elevated point of the water-shed between the basins of the Kara Baba and the Kaissar, known by the name of Beli-Parandas. Following this line in a northerly direction the frontier reaches pillar No.45 situated about 3 miles south-west of the well of Beshdara. From thence, it follow in a North easterly direction a branch of the wastershed, and arrive at pillar No.46, situate a distance of more than a mile to the South-West of the well of Beshdara. It runs from thence in an easterly direction irregularly towards pillar No.47, situated about 4 1/2 miles from the point where the road from Khwaja-Gachai and Kassawa-Kala crosses the Shor-Egri. From thence the frontier runs to the north-east along a secondary watershed towards pillar No.48, and follows the same line as far as pillar No.49 which is placed at the highest point of the watershed north of the Shor-Egri and about 6 miles to the west of the confluence of the Shor-Gandabulak and the Shor-Egri. From thence the frontier runs in a straight line to the north-east, crossing the Shor-Gandabulak at pillar No.50, which is placed on a hill with two peaks, rising from the line of water-parting between the Shor-Gandabulak and the Shor-Tara-Kui. Following the same direction it reaches Shor-Tara-Kui, where pillar No.51 is placed near the road from Jalaiour on the Kaissar to Jalgun-

Koudouk and Kara-Baba. The frontier passes thence in a north-easterly direction to pillar No.52 at a point a mile to the north of the well of Alini. From this pillar the frontier runs north-north-east towards pillar No. 54 crossing the Daulatabad-Hasara-Koudouk road near pillar No.53. Pillar No.54 is placed on the highest point of a group of sandy hills 2 miles north of the well of Katar-Koudouk; from thence the line of the frontier runs for about 10 miles with a slight inclination to the north-north-west towards pillar no.55, placed on a mound at the end of a chain of hills which extends between the depression of Kui-Sarai and that in which the well of Khwaja-Ahmad is situated. From this pillar the frontier runs in a straight line northward for a mile and a quarter towards pillar No.56 which is situated on a natural elevation a few feet south of the road between jalanguir and Meruchak, from thence it proceeds to pillar No.57, 2 1/2 miles to the north-north-west, and situated on the top of the heights which form the northern limit of the depression Kui-Sarai. From this point the frontier runs to the north-north-east towards pillar No. 58, placed on one of the sandy mounds of the heights which command the plain extending to the west of Andkhoy; the frontier then turns rather more to the east towards pillar No.59, placed on a low sandy hill about 2 1/4 miles to the east-south-east of the wells of Sarai Mat. It next reaches in a north-north-westerly direction, pillar No.60, placed between the wells of Chichli and Gokchah, about a quarter of a mile to the west of the wells of Chichli. Leaving Gokchah to Russia, and Chichli to Afghanistan, the frontier runs in a straight line to pillar No. 61, placed 300 feet to the east of the road which leads from Andkhoy to Sechanchi; thence, following the same direction, it reaches pillar No.62, placed on a well-defined sandy mound known by the name of Madali-Koum; the frontier line then reaches in an east-north-easterly direction pillar No.63, placed to the north Oikul, an elliptically shaped valley 3,600 feet in length, and at the bottom of which are situated two "Kaks" or basins of fresh water, which remain with Afghan territory. Turning then in an east-south-easterly direction the frontier reaches in a straight line pillar no.64, placed on a sandy hill known by the name of Gichi-Kumi, and continues in a north-easterly directions as far as pillar no.65, placed on the high road between Andkhoy and Dugchi and Karki, at a point 4 1/4 miles to the south of Dugchi and 2 3/4 miles to the north of Sultan Robot.

10th 22nd July 1887

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