

**RUSSO - AFGHAN RELATIONS
(1837—1895)**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled 'Russo-Afghan Relations' (1837-1895) submitted by Mr. MD. MOJAHID-ISLAM for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy is bonafide and original work to the best of my knowledge, carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

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C O N T E N T S

	PAGE NO.
PREFACE	1
Chapter - I POLITICAL CONNECTIONS	14
Chapter - II TRADE RELATIONS	42
Chapter - III CULTURAL CONTACTS	57
Chapter - IV CONCLUSION	67
SLECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	73

PREFACE

Afghanistan is located at the crossroads of Central, South and West Asia and is close to the crisis-prone zone like the Indian Ocean and Middle East. It is bordered on the north by Soviet Central Asian Republics of Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan and Turkmenia. On the west and south west are Iran, on the south and south east are Iran on the South and South east are Pakistan and Pak-occupied territory of Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. In the northeast a long slender salient of Afghan territory, namely Wakhan touches the People's Republic of China. Thus Afghanistan shares 2,384 Kms long border with the Soviet Union, 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 importance of Afghanistan in the geopolitical of the entire region.

Afghanistan was carved as an independent political entity by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1747 A.D. when he united various principalities into an organised state. Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul, Peshawar and Herat constituted the territorial nucleus of Durrani state. From there Ahmad Shah later on spread his power and influence to the neighbouring areas of north western India, eastern Iran and Southern

Turkistan. The Durrani State under Ahmad Shah was one of the largest States in the middle east. The trade routes linking Iran, Central Asia and Eastern Turkistan with the States of South Asia ran through its territory. Ahmad Shah maintained diplomatic relations with several countries. In the years of his rule the Russian government made the first attempt to establish equal and friendly relations with Afghanistan. After his death in 1773, Afghanistan witnessed a series of internecine feuds for succession to the Afghan throne, resulting in political instability. At the beginning of nineteenth century the provincial heads in Baluchistan, Bahawalpur, Seistan, Khorasan and Southern Turkistan were acting independently of Kabul. By that time Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab had subdued Kashmir and the lands upto the Indus. In 1823 he occupied Peshawar. This process of political destabilisation in Afghanistan stopped in 1826 with the ascendance to power of Dost Mohammad Khan who succeeded in uniting most part of the country into one kingdom.

With the ascendance of two rival European powers- Britain and Russia in Asia, Afghanistan became the focal point of Anglo-Russian rivalry in the nineteenth century. During this period the political developments in Afghanistan got inextricably linked up with the Anglo-Russian rivalry.

This rivalry was a direct result of the expansion of British and Russian empires from two opposite directions. Tsarist Russia had been pushing forward its borders southwards into Central Asia, while the British had conquered Punjab and Sindh by first half of the nineteenth century. In this way both the rival European powers found themselves face to face with Afghanistan wedged in between. Despatch of any diplomatic mission or conducting political intrigue in Afghanistan on the part of one power was matched by a similar or even stronger reaction by the other side. It is no coincidence that the imposition of first two wars on Afghanistan (1838-42, 1878-80) by the British was preceded by the despatch of powerful Russian diplomatic missions to Afghanistan in 1837 and 1877. It is in this context that the bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Russia during such a critical period of history have been examined in this study.

Domestic political situation in Afghanistan played a decisive role in shaping its foreign relations particularly with its giant neighbours - Tsarist Russia and British India. Sandwiched between the two rival European powers, Afghanistan was drawn into the orbit of Anglo-Russian rivalry. The British pursued a policy of extending commercial and political influence in Central Asia with an object of substituting Russian commerce and political

influence with their own. The British viewed the Russian advance in Central Asia as threat to the British hegemony in Asia. Moves were therefore set afoot to bring Afghanistan under the British influence. The Russians considered Central Asia within their purview of their own logical and natural sphere of expansion, as was India for the British. To effectively counter the British moves, the Russians tried to make their presence felt in Afghanistan, so as to preclude the former from interfering into the latter's zone of operation. The Russians succeeded in transferring their confrontation with the British from Central Asia to Afghanistan when Persia on their countenance laid a seige to Herat in 1837. The Russian emissary Vitkevich arrived at Kabul with the purpose of frustrating the designs of the British envoy, Alexander Burnes and aligning Dost Mohammad Khan with Persia and Russia against the Sadozai ruler of Herat. He advised the Amir to demand from Burnes a written commitment on the part of the British Government to protect Kabul and Kandhar against Persian designs and also to exercise influence upon Ranjit Singh to give up the Afghan territory he had annexed with the British connivance and if the British could not give them such guarantee, the Amir would have no alternative but to align with Persia and Russia, who were unconditionally and without reservation offering to recover Peshawar. The presence of Russian agent,

Vitkovitch, armed with letters from the Tsar Emperor, adversely affected the task of British agent Burnes in Kabul and complicated the conduct of Anglo-Afghan parleys. On his part, Dost Mohammad Khan, conscious of his position as a buffer between the two competing empires, started flirting with Persia and Russia in order to coax the British to support him. He communicated the same grievances to the rulers of Russia and Persia, as he had conveyed to the British Governor General. In this way, the Amir of Kabul was playing one power against the other in a bid to preserve the independence of Afghanistan and to consolidate his own rule.

Dost Mohammad Khan was the first Afghan ruler to make overtures to the Russians. Realising that the British were not prepared to help him get back Peshawar from the Sikhs and that they continued to support Shah Shuja thereby impeding the process of unification of Afghanistan, Dost Mohammad sent Afghan emissaries to the Russian Governor at Orenburg with a letter addressed to the Russian Tsar Nicholas I. This was the first endeavour on the part of Afghanistan to establish friendly relations with Russia. The Afghan ruler was seeking Russian help against the Sikhs who were supported by the British. Dost Mohammad expressed his fears that the British would destroy trade between Moscow, Bukhara and Kabul. Reciprocating the sentiments of the Afghan ruler, the Russian Governor at Orenburg sent his

aide-de-camp I.V. Vitkevich to accompany the Afghan envoy to St. Petersburg. Vitkevich was soon after sent on an official mission to Kabul. And he was to assist in the reconciliation between Afghan Chiefs, that is Dost Mohammad Khan and Kohandil Khan, the ruler of Kandhar. Vitkevich was also entrusted the job of exploring the possibilities of expanding Russo-Afghan trade. Vitkevitch arrived at Kabul in December 1837 and succeeded in reaching an understanding with Dost Mohammad Khan on expanding trade between Russian and Afghanistan. He also promised Russian help in Kabul's struggle for recovery of Peshawar. On his part, the Afghan ruler tried to use the presence of Vitkevitch as a bargain to induce the British Indian government to commit on his side against the Sikhs. The stage was being set for the first Anglo-Afghan war (1838-42), which proved disastrous for the British.

In the 1850s and early 1860s Dost Mohammad Khan succeeded in consolidating his rule in Afghanistan particularly in the north. Russia too had expanded into Western Turkestan thereby reaching in proximity to Afghanistan's northern borders. With the death of Dost Mohammad Khan in 1863, Afghanistan was again plunged into the mess of internecine feuds. The new ruler Sher Ali Khan was challenged by his brothers. Mohammad Afzal Khan, one of

the estranged brothers, tried to establish friendly contacts with Russia in a bid to secure reliable support. With the consolidation of his authority over Kabul by Sher Ali Khan in 1868, one of his nephews Abdur Rahman Khan went to Bukhara and then to Samarkand in self exile. He spent more than 10 years in Russian territory of Central Asia, receiving generous grants from the Tsarist authorities. He had developed personal contacts with Kaufmann, the Russian Governor General of Turkestan. Notwithstanding the Anglo-Russian understanding on maintaining the independence of Afghanistan, General Kaufmann started corresponding with Sher Ali Khan in a bid to woo the Afghan ruler out of the British influence, much to the discomfiture of the British. The deterioration in Anglo-Afghan relations, particularly after Lytton pursued 'forward policy' towards Afghanistan, in early 1870s was matched by a corresponding increase in the cordiality between Afghanistan and Russia. So much so Russia despatched a diplomatic mission headed by General Stoletov to Kabul in 1878, carrying a letter from Kaufmann. The letter pointed to the advantages of a close alliance with Russia. The reported offer of Russian subsidy, guarantee of the integrity of Amir's dominions and supply of arms and ammunition, perturbed Lytton. The subsequent events and the refusal of Sher Ali to receive a similar British mission at Kabul precipitated the crisis leading to the

second Anglo-Afghan war. The new Amir, Yakub Khan signed Gandamak Treaty with British in May 1874, by which he promised to conduct his foreign relations only with the advice of British Indian Government. But Yakub Khan could not reign for long. Now Abdur Rahman Khan appeared from his exile in Russian Central Asia. He did not allow his long association with the Russians during his stay in Samarkand to come in the way of establishing a workable relationship with the British. He secured the British consent to cancel the provision of the treaty of Gandamak on the presence of a permanent British Resident in Afghanistan, but he pledged to conduct his external relations only through the Viceroy of India. Abdur Rahman tried to use Anglo-Russian contradictions to his benefit and to consolidate his authority over the whole of Afghanistan. His rule witnessed hectic negotiations between British and Russia over the demarcation of northern frontier of Afghanistan. Abdur Rahman steered clear of any involvement in the hostilities between Russia and Khanates of Khiva and Bukhara which had sought his support. Abdur Rahman's astute policy helped a lot in the peaceful resolution of the 'Panjdeh' crisis of 1865 and the Anglo-Russian understanding on the north-western frontier of Afghanistan. The Pamirs Boundary Agreement of 1895 finally fixed Afghanistan's modern frontiers. Throughout this critical phase, Abdur Rahman

persued a policy of utilising the Anglo-Russian rivalry for achieving the independence of Afghanistan and expand and consolidate his possessions in northern Afghanistan. The 1895 Pamirs Boundary Agreement delimited the northern boundary of Afghanistan once and for all. Before his death in 1901, Abdur Rahman had succeeded in unifying the country politically and establishing the first thoroughly centralised regime.

Afghanistan carried on its trade with Russia through the intervening territory of Bokhara, which was the main commercial centre in Asia during the nineteenth century. Copper, steel, iron and lace of Russia were supplied to the whole of Afghanistan through the distant deserts of Tartary. Blue paper was used throughout the whole Afghan state. Mohan Lal who travelled in disguise to Bokhara during the 1830s did so under the protection of a Nazir of the ruler of Kabul who was proceeding to Moscow to recover the forfeited property of his late brother. That this Nazir carried a letter of recommendation of Dost Mohammad Khan to the Emperor of Russia points to the close understanding between Afghanistan and Russia in matters of commercial interest. The carvans of Bokhara and Kabul which in summer passed successively to Khulum and rendered it very populous and rich, the former usually bearing Russian articles and

the latter goats' skin of Kabul and Indian commodities. The carvans of Bokhara consisted of not less than two hundred camels each besides numerous ponies loaded with commercial articles. Bokhara's merchants used to bring the great quantities of silk and Russian lace, sugar and paper. Kabul also supplied Bokhara with valuable shawls of Kashmir as well as English manufactured goods and in return merchants used to take great quantity of Russian sugar, paper, lace and famous horses of Turkistan.

The cultural relations between Afghanistan and Russian dominions in Central Asia were as old and as strong as trade relations. The cultural interaction between the two sides was facilitated by the existence of common religion, dress and custom. The traders from Kabul in Afghanistan and Central Asia used to go to Orenburg and Tashkent and from there people came to Afghan territory. Bokhara and Samarkand played an important role in promoting this cultural interaction because these towns had developed into important centres of Islamic education. Apart from the religious factor, the Persian literary texts were commonly sung, heard and narrated in this region. A sidelight on the tenacious effects of the Persian literary tradition is that these ideas were expressed by the Central Asian writers in Persian literary idiom. The stay of Abdur Rahman in Russian Central

Asia brought the Afghan ruling elite close to the Russians, which acted as a moderating influence particularly during Abdur Rahman's rule in Afghanistan and which proved to be a stabilising factor in the consolidation of Afghanistan as a unified and independent country with its borders well defined and recognised by both the giant neighbours - Britain and Russia.

This study seeks to analyse the extent and pattern of Russo-Afghan relations, both in political, commercial and cultural fields. Since Afghanistan shared its borders with those of Russian Central Asia and a lucrative trade was being carried between the two sides, the trade relations have been examined in the second chapter. Similarly the cultural interaction between the two regions, with particular reference to stay of Afghan Chiefs in Russian Central Asia in exile has been studied in the third chapter. The scope of this study is limited to the period 1837-1895, that is when the first Russian mission led by Vitkevitch arrived at Kabul in 1837, upto 1895 when Pamirs Boundary Agreement was reached between Britain and Russia fixing the northern boundary of Afghanistan permanently. The study has followed a descriptive a historic-analytical methodology and is based on such primary sources as the diplomatic proceedings preserved in the National Archives of India,

contemporary accounts, secret diaries, memoranda and reports. These have been supplemented by the study of secondary information gathered from books and journals.

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18 July, 1990

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CHAPTER - I

Political Connections

The period beginning with 1837 to 1895 A.D. marks an important phase in the Russo-Afghan relations as it witnessed many ups and downs in Afghanistan's foreign relations. Caught up between the two expansionist European powers, Tsarist Russia and the British in India, Afghanistan and its political leadership found it very difficult to strike a balance between the pulls and pressures from either side. The British viewed the Russian expansion in central Asia as a direct threat to north and north west frontiers of India. On the other hand Russia was consolidating her position in Central Asia and was eager to develop political relations with Afghanistan. Russian overtures to the rulers of Kabul were viewed with extreme suspicion by the British.

In the year 1837, when Persia laid siege to Herat on the west, Dost Mohammad, the ruler of Afghanistan was confronted with a tricky situation. While as he was engaged with Shah Shuja, Ranjit Singh of Punjab had occupied Peshawar and had driven out Sultan Mohammad and his brothers to Jalalabad.¹ As a result of these debacles Dost Mohammad -

1. Percy Sykes, A History of Afghanistan. London, Macmillan 1940 Vol.1 page 397.

sought support of Lord Auckland, the British Governor General of India against the "Sikh aggression". In his letter to Auckland, Dost Mohammad proposed that the Indus should constitute the boundary between the two States and offered in return for this concession to abandon his rights on Kashmir in favour of the Sikhs.² Brushing aside the Afghan ruler's proposals, Auckland replied that it was not the practice of the British government to interfere in the affairs of other independent states but he assured that he would request Maharaja Ranjit Singh to restore the government of Peshawar to Sultan Mohammad, who happened to be the most bitter foe of the Amir of Kabul. At the same time Auckland notified his intention to depute some emissaries to the Amir's court to discuss matters of commercial interest. The curt refusal of Auckland to accede to Dost Mohammad's request convinced the Amir of Kabul the importance of seeking support of Russia.³

VITKEVITCH MISSION TO KABUL, 1837

Lord Auckland did send Alexander Burnes on a mission to Dost Mohammad "to make peace between Dost Mohammad and the Maharaja of Punjab, and to inform the

2. Ibid. p. 398.

3. Ibid.

Governor General of the view and policy of the Amir".⁴ Dost Mohammed frankly told Burnes that he wanted to recover Peshawar on the east and Herat on the west and that he would send an army to rescue Herat and he "would be the devoted ally of the British".⁵ Whereas Burnes who had not been authorised to make any promises to the Amir of Kabul, agreed with Dost Mohammad's proposals, the British Governor-General of India "had no intention of acceding to the proposals of the Amir."⁶

Mohan Lal, the Indian assistant who had accompanied Alexander Burnes to Kabul, informs us that Dost Mohammad had written letters to the Shah of Persia and Tsar Emperor of Russia, expressing his desire to develop close contacts with Russia, in the same manner as Mohammad Shah had done. Dost Mohammad pleaded for Russian support against the Sikhs, stating that the Sikhs "who were allies of the British, would overpower him and that the British, under the guise of merchants, would destroy the trade between Moscow, Bokhara and Kabul."⁷ Thus Dost Mohammad made open overtures to Russia in a bid to secure her support against the Sikhs, after having failed to get the same from the British. While

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4. Ibid. P. 402.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid. p. 406..
 7. Ibid.p.No. 403.

Mohanlal, "Life of Dost Mohammad Khan" Vol 1 p.260. the negotiations between Dost Mohammad and Burnes were proceeding, a Russian commercial agent, namely Captain Vitkevitch bringing two letters, one from Tsar and the other from Count Simonitch, the Russian Minister at Teheran, arrived at Kabul in December 1837.⁸ Tsar of Russia in his letter expressed his satisfaction over Dost Mohammad's offer of friendship. He wrote "In a happy moment the messenger of your highness, Mirza Hussain, reached my court, with your friendly letter... It flattered me very much, and I was satisfied with your friendship to my everlasting government. In consequence of this, I shall always feel happy to assist the people of Kabul who may come to trade into my kingdom."⁹ Dost Mohammad who was disappointed over the British response to his proposals, entered into serious negotiations with the Russian emissary. Vitkevitch promised Russian support to the Barakzai brothers and proposed to visit Ranjit Singh on their behalf. He also drew up a draft Treaty between the Kandahar brothers and the Shah of Persia, which was forwarded to the Russian Ambassador in Persia. To quote Percy Sikes, the Russian Ambassador returned it to the Sardars with these words : "Muhammad Shah has promised to give you possession of Herat; I sincerely tell you that you

8. Ibid. p. 404, Foreign Political Secrets 30 Oct. 1837. 33-34.

9. Percy Sykes p.404.op.cit.

will also get Gorian, on my account, from the Shah."¹⁰ But - this assurance was promptly rejected by the Tsar Emperor.

Responding to his urgent request for help sought by despatching a trusted emissary, Haji Hussain Ali, Count Simonitch, the Russian Ambassador at Teheran had sent Vitkevitch to meet Dost Mohammad at Kabul. Vitkevitch was required to personally deliver letters from Tsar Emperor of Russia and Count Swionich which were in reply to the letters sent by Dost Mohammad to Russia.¹¹ Count Simonitch informed the Amir about the illness of Haji Hussain Ali, who had therefore to stop at Moscow and that a good physician had been attending to cure him as soon as possible.¹² Count Simonitch requested Dost Mohammad to treat Vitkevitch "like myself and take his words as if they were from me. In case of his detention at Kabul you will allow him often to be in your presence and let my master know there about your wishes that anxiety may be removed."¹³ Simonitch lamented that the great distance was hampering the continuance of correspondence with Kabul, but he expressed his readiness to "repsect and serve your friends to show my friendly opinions

10. Ibid. p.407

11. Foreign Political 9 May 1839. 826

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

towards you".¹⁴ In token of his friendly gestures Simonitch also despatched several gifts including gold and silver cloth that were especially acquired from Russian Imperial -- stores for presentation to Dost Mohammad, the Ammir of Kabul.¹⁵ The British Political Agent at Ludhiana, Capt. Wade was informed by D.B. Lord (then in Afghanistan) that the Russian envoy Vitkevitch presented 10,000 Budkis (Russian currency) to Dost Mohammed and had also assured him of Persian and Russian support in taking Herat.¹⁶

According to Burnes, Captain Vitkevitch was authorised to "offer money to the Amir of Kabul to wage war against the Sikhs."¹⁷ Count Simonich, the Russian Ambassador in Tehran, had desired the Afghan ruler to treat the envoy "with consideration and entrusted with his secrets."¹⁸ Speaking both Persian and Turkish languages quite fluently, Vitkevitch who had also travelled in Bokhara, was a natural choice for being sent to Kabul. Though he worked as an Aide de Camp to the Russian General Commanding at Orenburge, he had given out his name as Omar Beg to facilitate his movements in Afghanistan.¹⁹

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Foreign Secret 16 Oct. 1839. 67 (D.B. Lord to Mayor Wade to E.M. Wade Political agent, Ludhiana, dated December 1838.)

17. W.H. MacNaughten, Secretry, Political Deptts. Govt. of India 13th January 1838. Foreign P.C. 14 Feb. 1838-56.

18. Ibid.

19. Foreign Political 30th Oct. 1837. 33-34.

Obviously Vitkevitch's task was to frustrate Burnes' intrigues in Kabul and bring the Amir closer to Russia. In the course of his discussions with Dost Mohammad, Vitkevitch explained that the British had been disciplining the Persian army and assured that the Russian Troops could move from Bukhara and drive the Kafir sikhs from the territory of the Afghans.²⁰ When this information reached Captain Wade, he wanted his government to be prepared for the joint Russo- Afghan advance on Peshawar.²¹ In this manner the British relations with Dost Mohammad deteriorated further, as they considered it necessary to support Maharaja Ranjit Singh if Afghans were supported by Russia in their advance on Peshawar. The British government took serious notice of Vitkevitch's proceedings in Kabul. Lord Palmerston sent a note to Count Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister in October 1838 pointing out that this was contrary to the assurance given to Britain in 1837.²² Nesselrode replied in a friendly tone that the mission of Vitkevitch was purely commercial and it did not contain the smallest design hostile to the English Government, nor the smallest idea of injuring the tranquility of the British possessions in India.²³ When Vitkevitch sought an audience at

20. Foreign Secret 17th Oct. 1838. 71-82.

21. Ibid. Note by Capt. Wade dt. 8 July 1838.

22. Percy Sykes op. cit. p.405.

23. Cited in Ibid.

St. Petersburg with Nesselrode, it was refused. Instead Nesselrode disclaimed any knowledge of this Russian emissary who was now alleged to have been "engaged in some unauthorised intrigues at Kabul and Kandhar"²⁴ Disappointed by this behaviour of his former employer Vitkevitch committed suicide which caused serious setback to the establishment of the bilateral relations between Russia and Afghanistan. Though the exchange of the envoys between Russia and Afghanistan upset the British, Lord Auckland the Governor General of India was not prepared to attack the Sikhs for the sake of Dost Mohammad. Finally on February 21, 1838 Burnes received letters from Auckland which clearly stated that the Governor General did not accept Dost Mohammad's proposal, that Peshawar must be left to Ranjit Singh and that the dismissal of Vitkevitch must be demanded: With this final reply negotiation between Kabul and British India broke off. It was now decided to replace Dost Mohammad with some one who would accept British advice and also accept Maharaja Ranjit Singh's occupation of Peshawar. Shah Shuja was ready to play this role. It is against this background that the first Anglo-Afghan war was imposed on Afghanistan. Dost Mohammad was defeated and Shah Shuja was installed as the new Amir of Afghanistan by the British.

24. Ibid., 407

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Subsequent events proved disastrous both for Shah Shuja and the British garrisons in Kabul.

Kaufmann's overtures to Sher Ali

Whereas Lord Auckland's forward policy towards Afghanistan met a disastrous end, his successor Ellenborough decided to withdraw the British army from Afghanistan. In pursuance of new policy, Dost Mohammad Khan was allowed to "resume his interrupted reign in Kabul."²⁵ Now he began to consolidate his dominions. Afghan Turkistan was annexed by him in 1850 and Kandhar was incorporated within his dominions in 1855.²⁶ Finally by signing an alliance of "perpetual peace and friendship" with the British Indian government on 30 March 1855, Dost Mohammad openly aligned himself with the British. Later while signing the Peshawar Treaty of 1857, Dost Mohammad exclaimed: "I have now made an alliance with the British Government and come what may I will keep it till death".²⁷ That the Amir did keep his words, becomes evident from his refusal to receive the Russian envoy Khanikoff in January 1858.²⁸ Dost Mohammad Khan continued to reign as Amir of Afghanistan till 1863 A.D. when he designated his younger son, Sher Ali as his

25. A.H.Bilgrami, Afghanistan and British India. p.112.

26. Ibid. p. 114.

27. Ibid. p. 123.

28. Ibid.

successor. With the death of Dost Mohammad in 1863 ensued a period of uncertainty in Afghanistan with rival factions struggling for power. The British followed a cautious policy of non-interference in the internal strife in Afghanistan. Abdul Rahman Khan, son of Afzal Khan (the elder half-brother of Sher Ali) sought refuge in Russian Turkistan and soon developed friendly contacts with the Governor of Russian Turkistan. He was presented with a robe of honour and also given the title of Mir Afghanee.²⁹ Abdur Rahman Khan lived in Russian Turkistan for more than ten years and was paid pension by the Russian government. On his part Sher Ali Khan turned down a request from the Amir of Bukhara for help against the Russian incursions.³⁰ By this time, Russians had firmly established their supremacy in Central Asia. A Russian Governorate General of Turkistan was set up at Tashkant in 1867 and General K.P. Von Kaufmann was the first Military Governor of Russian Turkistan. Soon after he incorporated Samarkand within Turkistan and humbled Bukhara into a subsidiary ally. Whereas the Russian Foreign Minister, Gortchakov in his memorandum circulated in 1864 announced the intention of Russian government to stop its advance before the limits of Afghanistan, the Russian Military Governor of Turkistan, General Kaufmann, was

29. Foreign Political A. May 1866, 210-211 (C.Allison to Viceroy of India dt. 16 May 1866.)

30. A.H. Bilgrami, op.cit. p.128.

persuing his forward policy in Central Asia with much vigour. Kaufmann also engaged in friendly communications with Sher Ali, the new ruler of Afghanistan.

The question of Afghanistan was discussed in detail in a "tete-a-tete" between Lord Clarendon, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Gorchakov, Russian Foreign Minister at Heidelberg in September 1869.³¹ A broad understanding was reached between the two sides that Afghanistan was outside the Russian sphere of influence. In fact Gorchakov did not oppose Sher Ali's moves to consolidate and expand his kingdom of Afghanistan provided that he did not encroach upon the territory of Amir of Bukhara or do any acts that would be hostile to the Russian interests.³²

In view of this Anglo-Russian understanding on Afghanistan, Russians did not use the presence of Abdul Rahman in Tashkent to stage intrigues against the British supported Amir of Kabul, Sher Ali. In fact General Kaufmann was reported to have explained this position in a letter to Sher Ali that Abdul Rahman Khan's presence at Tashkent had been permitted "from mere feelings of hospitality",³³ towards

31. A.H.Bilgrami, op.cit. p.150.

32. Ibid. p.151.

33. Foreign S.H. July 1870. 178-81. (Andrew Buchanan, Her Majesty's Ambassador, St. Petersburg to Clarendon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London dated 15 June 1870.)

the unfortunate, but not from any intention of supporting him as rival to the Amir. Kaufmann also expressed the desire of the Russian government to cultivate the same friendly relations with Sher Ali as existed between England and Russia.³⁴ Earlier, Kaufmann had made it clear to Abdul Rahman, who had sought Russian support for his claims to Afghan throne in exchange of which he had offered to increase Russian influence there, that Russia was determined to abstain from all interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan and any negotiations with him would be useless.³⁵ The British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Buchanan was confident that Russians "would again decline categorically both his offers and requests and declare to him that he can only be granted an asylum in the territories of Russia on condition of his abstaining from intrigues and political projects, for the realization of which he will also be told that he must not in any way reckon on assistance from Bokhara."³⁶ Though the British Indian government found solace in Kaufmann's refusal of assistance to Abdul Rahman and that Amir Sher Ali had not "given any cause for dissatisfaction"³⁷, it felt embarrassed over the exchange of correspondence between Kaufmann and Sher Ali.

34. Ibid.

35. Foreign, S.H. May 1870. 120-128.

36. Ibid.

37. Foreign S.I. 1870, 384. (C.U. Aithison Secretary Government of India, Foreign Deptt. to Secy. Punjab Govt. 30 Sept. 1870.)

Kaufmann's gesture of refusing assistance to his rival Abdul Rahman, must have obliged Sher Ali to maintain the minimum possible friendly contact with the neighbouring power. On his part, Kaufmann sought to keep Sher Ali informed of the Russian successes in Central Asia, apparently to convince him of the Russian might. Kaufmann had by a letter informed Sher Ali about the Russian victory at Kuldja. At the same time he sought to dissuade Sher Ali from any misadventures in Bokhara territory.³⁸ In reply, Sher Ali sent his congratulations to Kaufmann for Russian success at Kuldja and also promised not to deviate from the arrangements about Bukhara, made through friendly correspondence.³⁹ Kaufmann did not confine himself to writing letters on non-political matters. In February 1872, the Russian Governor General of Turkistan informed Sher Ali about the departure of his nephew, Sikander Khan, from St. Petersburg for his native country after having spent four years in the Russian imperial service.⁴⁰ Kaufmann used the occasion to request the Afghan ruler to reinstate Sikander Khan "in his former position and to be put in possession of his ancestral possessions and also to have the honour of entering your

38. Foreign Secret. June 1872. 135-149. (Translation of a letter from the Amir of Kabul to General Kauffmann dated 10 Rube-ool-awal 1289 A.H.)

39. Ibid.

40. Foreign Secret June 1872, 135-149 (Translation of Letter from General Kauffmann to the Amir of Kabul dated of Feb. 1872.)

Highness's service."⁴¹ Kaufmann made a personal request to Sher Ali on behalf of his nephew to "receive him and regard him with your royal favour".⁴² To continue this friendly correspondence, in the winter of 1873 Kauffman wrote to the Amir a long letter describing the subservence of Khanate of Khiva to Russia and release of slaves including 400 Afghan nationals from Khiva.⁴³ Sher Ali in his reply sent in January 1874 congratulated the Governor General upon his great military success and also wrote a separate letter in which he announced that Abdulla Jan had been nominated his heir apparent.⁴⁴ Since Kaufmann was then not in Tashkent, the acting Governor General of Turkistan was prompt to send a congratulatory letter to Sher Ali on the nomination of Abdulla Jan. He further wrote: "I wish perpetual possession of your kingdom by you and your hiers, and hope that after your death Sir Abdullah Jan will follow your example and make himself an ally and friend of the emperor".⁴⁵

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Foreign Secret, March 1874. 7-24.

44. Percy Sykes op.cit Vol. II. p. 98.

45. Foreign Secret April 1874, 58-75 (Abstract translation of Murrasila from the officiating Governor General at Tashkent to the Amir dated 25 Feb. 1874.)

As already stated, the Russian authorities including General Kaufmann never used the presence of Abdul Rahman at Tashkant to destabilise the political situation in Sher Ali's kingdom. Both Gortchakov and General Kauffmann had assured the British that if "Abdur Rahman Khan was discovered entering into any illicit correspondence dangerous to the peace of Afghanistan he would be instantly removed from Samarkand and interned in the interior of Russia".⁴⁶ On his part Sher Ali was satisfied about Kaufmann's promise that "no officer of His imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Russia will make any inroads into Afghanistan, nor will any assistance or counsels be given to its enemies."⁴⁷

With the passage of time, Sher Ali, the Amir of Afghanistan became increasingly dissatisfied with the passive British attitude towards him. Though Sher Ali had at first sought the counsel of the British Indian government regarding the replies that he should send to Kaufmann's letters, he had ceased to do so later. He was even reported to be holding meetings with the persons through whom Kaufmann used to send his letters. In this manner the non-political formal correspondence between the Russian Governor

46. Foreign Secret April 1874, 180-256. (Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Peterburgh to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London, 25 Nov. 1873).

47. Foreign Political A. 1870. 340-347.

General of Turkistan and Sher Ali developed into closer friendly relations. The cordiality of their correspondence" grew with the increased estrangement of his relations with the British and theirs with the Russians".⁴⁸ Lytton, the new viceroy of India was getting worried over the increasing Russian influence at the court of Kabul. The British news agents in Kabul reported that there was "continuous flow of correspondence between Kaufmann and Amir Sher Ali for exceeding the requirements of courtesy and its bearers were being regarded and treated by the Amir as agents of the Russian government".⁴⁹ The matter was actually brought to the notice of the Russian Government by Lord Loftus, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg in October 1876. Though Loftus failed to obtain a written disclaimer of any Russian intention to negotiate treaties with Sher Ali, M. de Giers disclaimed any knowledge of Russian agent having been sent to the court of the Amir.⁵⁰ The Russians explained that Kaufmann's letters were of no political significance, as they were sent only once or twice a year as customary complements from one neighbour to another.⁵¹ Whatever the case, Lytton decided to tighten his grip over Sher Ali, who was now asked to accept the British mission in Afghanistan,

48. A.H. Bilgrami, op.cit p.174.
49. Ibid. p. 174-175.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid

which the Kabul ruler refused to do. Sher Ali's reply that if he admitted a British mission then he would not be able to refuse a similar request for a Russian mission, further embittered his relations with the British.

STOLEITOV MISSION TO KABUL, 1878

The Afghan ruler had apparently no cause for any complaint against the Russians, as Kaufmann used to approach him on the basis of equality. But he felt irritated over the attitude of the British who treated him as their subordinate ally. Sher Ali openly gave vent to these feelings in the course of conversations with K.M.M.E Effendi, a Turkish envoy in September. 1877. Whereas Sher Ali wanted to retain his friendship with the British, he was against allowing the British agents inside Afghanistan. But Lytton, who had forsaken the policy of 'masterly inactivity', was adamant on having the British agents stationed in Afghanistan to keep an eye on the Russian movements. It was in this atmosphere of deep mistrust between the British and Sher Ali, that Kaufmann accelerated his interest in Afghanistan.

In June 1878, the Russian Governor General of Turkistan sent a highly important letter to Sher Ali, informing him about the deputation of Major General Stolietov to Kabul to convey his secret message verbally.

Kaufmann informed Sher Ali that Stolietov was " a dear friend of mine and who was held in regard by the Russian Emperor for his services."⁵² The Amir was asked to pay great attention to the message and give a considered reply. The letter concluded with these words, "Your union and friendship with the Russian Government will be beneficial to the latter and still more so to you. The advantages of a close alliance with the Russian Government will be permanently evident".⁵³ Obviously, Russia was seeking to forge a friendly alliance with the ruler of Afghanistan and to outwit the British in this region.

An Idea of Stolietov's proceedings in Kabul can be had from the account published in a Russian newspaper "Golos" of 8(20) Dec. 1878. The paper reported that Stolietov and his party entered Kabul on 29th July (10 August) 1878. and were lodged in the Balahissar palace. Next day Stolietov called on the Amir of Kabul riding on a horseback and escorted by 12 cossacks and a detachment of Afghan guards. The mission was cordially received in presence of high dignitaries by the Amir. And in the evening the arrival of the Russian mission was celebrated by the display of fireworks and illuminations. The paper reported that Stolietov and the highest Afghan Minister, Dabir-ul-

52. Foreign, S.S. November 1879,, 140-151.

53. Ibid.

Mulk, negotiated the terms of treaty of Russo-Afghan friendship for several days. But the paper dismissed the British allegations of the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance between Russia and Afghanistan as a pure invention on the part of British press. However, the paper admitted that in the treaty Russia "binds herself to support the integrity and independence of Afghanistan. It becomes clear that Stolietov had succeeded in weaning away Sher Ali from the British influence. In fact Sher Ali sought his advise whether or not he should allow a British mission to Afghanistan, to which Stolietov replied that "the simultaneous presence of the missions of two powers which had almost hostile relations, would not be convenient". Subsequently Sher Ali communicated his refusal to Lytton's proposal to send a British mission to Kabul.

During his stay in Kabul, Stoleitov reviewed the Afghan troops and presented two letters one from Kaufmann and the other from Tsar of Russia to Sher Ali. In the course of his private interview with the Amir Stolietov is reported to have discussed a draft treaty, the terms of which are supposed to have been as follows.⁵⁴

1. That the Amir should permit the location of Russian agents at Kabul and other places in his territory where

54. An Indian officer, Russian march towards India. Vol.II. 1894, pp.73-74.

it might be deemed necessary to locate such agents of Russian nationality and these agents be vested the powers of consuls.

2. That permission be accorded for the location of Russian troops at four convenient points on the frontiers of Afghanistan and that the Amir should engage to protect such garrisons.
3. That the Russian govt. should be permitted to construct roads from Samarkand to Kabul via Katti Kurghan, Khoja Saleh and Bulkh to Herat via the course of Oxus river, the plain of And Khui, Bala Murghab, Maruchak, Panjdeh and Firoz Koh; and also from Herat to Kandhar by the Garmsir route.
4. That when necessary the Kabul govt. would permit the passage of Russian troops proceeding to India by such routes as might be considered desirable.
5. That telegraph wires might be set up between Samarkand, Katta Kurghan, Balkh, Kabul, Kandhar and other places where the Russians agents were stationed.
6. That when necessary Russian troops should be supplied with provisions and transport on payment of reasonable prices.
7. That if it became desirable that the Russian Government should send an expedition to wage war in India, the Amir should furnish supply to the Russian troops on

payment and that the Afghan government should establish agents at the capital of Russia and in Tashkand. In return for the above mentioned concessions the Russians promised.

1. To guarantee the continuance of the country of Afghanistan to the representatives, successors, and heirs of the Amir in perpetuity, in accordance with the will of the last Sovereign and legal rights.
2. In no way to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan or in administration of the country.
3. Always to afford assistance for the maintenance of peace in Afghanistan and against the external or internal enemies of Principality.
4. To consider the enemies of the Amir as their own.

The rumor of such a treaty being negotiated between Sher Ali and Stoleitov caused deep resentment in the British circles. Lytton insisted on the reception of a British mission by Sher Ali at Kabul. With the prevention of the mission by the Afghan troops from entering Afghanistan, Lytton started implementing his 'forward policy'. Whereas the scenario for second Anglo-Afghan war was being created, General Stoleitov left Kabul. The Russian government formally informed the British that the Stoleitov mission was sent to Afghanistan "when there was tension between England

and Russia. It is withdrawn due to improved relations, in future it will have no relation with that Government."⁵⁵

On his return journey to Smarkand General Stoleitov was accompanied by an Afghan envoy and his suit. The Afghan mission consisted of Mirza Magdazan, Minister of War, two colonels and a Secretary⁵⁶. They were received at Tashkant by the Governor General Kauffmann, at his residence at Turkistan and given soem presents like silver mug, silver goblet, silver cups, cigar case, cloth etc. Fearful of the imminent British attack, Sher Ali sent Moonshi Mohammad Hassan, the Dabirul Mulk of Amir to Russia to seek subsidy and arms as was promised to the Amir by stoleitov for fighting the British government. But the Russian Governor General of Turkistan, Kauffmann, did not find amy ground for giving money or anything else to the Afghans⁵⁷. The Russians refused to get involved in amy way in the Anglo-Afghan conflict. Obviously in reply for his pleadings for aid Kauffmann sent a written communication to Sher Ali explaining his position, "you asked me to send as many troops as could be got ready, I have written to you a letter to the effect that the Emperor on account of your troubles

55. CountSchounaloff to Salisbury, 7. Dec. 1878.

56. Foreign Secret May 1877: 104-272. Extract from Kabul Diary from 22nd to 24th August 1876 inclusive.

57. Foreign Secret June 1879, 56-63. Translation of a letter from the Correspondent at Herat, dated 23rd Dec. 1878.

had communicated with the British Government and that the Russian Ambassador at London had obtained a promise from the British Minister to the effect that they would not injure the independence of Afghanistan."⁵⁸ He further clarified that it was now impossible to send military assistance. Instead the Russians proposed to Amir to come to an understanding with the English and make an agreement. It was under these circumstances that Sher Ali having failed to resist British attack fled towards north leaving his son Yakub Khan as Regent of Kabul. He soon died at Mazar-i-Sheriff on February 21, 1879. Russians were quick to send congratulatory letter to Yakub Khan and also his condolences on the death of ex-Amir Sher Ali.⁵⁹ In another letter General Ivanov, the Governor of Zarafshan Province reiterated the Russian friendship with Afghanistan and wished an early end to war there.⁶⁰

But Yakub Khan could not rule for more than ten months. The British after a swift campaign negotiated with Yakub Khan the treaty of Gandamak on May 26, 1879. By its

58. Foreign Secret s Nov. 1879, 140-51 (General Kauffann to Amir Sher Ali received at Mazar-i-Sherif on 17th January 1879.

59. Foreign Secret S. Aug. 1879, 241-56.

60. Foreign Secret S. Dec. 1879, 13-15.

terms the British agreed to protect Afghanistan against external attack, while it was stipulated that there were to be no direct communication by that country with other powers. But disorder broke out at Kabul in which the British envoy, Louis Cavagnari was murdered. Hostilities were reopened by the British and Yakub Khan abdicated as Amir. Abdul Rahman Khan who had been living in exile in Samarkand for the last ten years finding the political climate in Kabul suitable for his entry set out for Kabul. He soon entered into negotiations with the British on the terms of Anglo-Afghan alliance. Subsequently in July 1880 Abdul Rahman was formally acknowledged and recognized by the British government as Amir of Kabul. The new Amir bound himself not to allow any foreign interference other than the British in Afghanistan. Thus a new phase of political relationship between Afghanistan and Tsarist Russia began with the advent of Abdul Rahman Khan.

The Punjdeh Crisis, (1885) and its aftermath.

The Russian occupation of Merv in 1884 greatly unerved the British and also the Afghans who became worried over extension of Russian control towards the borders of Afghanistan. Now Abdul Rahman Khan and the British showed eagerness to settle the boundary of Afganistan with Russia so as to prevent any mishap on the border. In the meantime

Russian troops established a post at Pul-i-Khatun and also occupied the Zulfikar pass. Afghan troops too had taken up their position at Panjdeh as too had closed the Kushk river.⁶¹ Both sides were thus poised for an imminent clash. General Komarov, the Russian, Governor of Akhal oasis, marched with a strong Russian force and camped at Kizel Tepe. He asked the Afghans to withdraw "within your former lines on the right bank of the river Kushk."⁶², which the Afghan General, Shamsuddin refused to do. The die was cast and on 30th March 1885 the Russians attacked the Afghan force and drove it out of Panjdeh. Thus the Panjdeh oasis, to which Afghanistan had no real claim was taken by Russia and the Anglo-Afghan prestige suffered a blow. Amir Abdul Rahman, who was then in India reacted in a cool manner. He attached very little importance to the loss sustained by the Afghans in terms of men, materials and prestige. The British recognised Panjdeh oasis as a part of Russia. In return, Russia promised to return to Afghanistan the Zulfikar region. A protocol to this effect was signed in London on 10 September 1885. During 1886-88 the Russo-Afghan boundary was demarcated by a joint Anglo-Russian commission on the spot, to which Afghanistan also consented. Final protocol dealing with the Russo-Afghan boundary from the Hari Rud to the Oxus

61. A.H. Bilgrami, *opcit.* p 208.

62. Percy Sykes, *opcit.* Vol.2 p 164.

was signed in 1887. This frontier settlement was respected by all parties concerned.

Once the Panjdeh episode was resolved, the communication channels between Russian and Afghan frontier officers were resumed. General Kuropatkin, the Russian Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Merv informed Sad-ud-din Khan, the Governor of Herat, by a letter dated 21 February 1891 that "with a view to the maintenance of peace and security and protection of Russian subjects against the interference of such evil disposed Afghans as yet not reduced to order, military posts have been established along the Russo-Afghan border. Two companies of the infantry regiment are stationed at Pule-Khatun to the post at Kushk."⁶³ Kuropatkin therefore wanted the Afghan Governor of Herat to be informed of this so that there did not arise any misunderstanding on this score.

He also notified his intention to visit this frontier in March 1891 for inspecting the military posts and expressed his desire to meet the Governor of Herat at the

63. Foreign Secret F. June 1891, 1-33.

border.⁶⁴ General Kuropatkin further assured him that he entertained " sincere affection for the people of Afghanistan and shall do my utmost to protect them."⁶⁵ However, in 1891 there arose some dispute between the Russian and Afghan frontier officers over the distribution of water from Kushk river to the Russian territory. The Russians wanted the Afghans "not to monopolise the Kushk water but to allow half of the supply to flow into Russian territory."⁶⁶ Russia took up the matter of Kushk water with the British. The Russian government complained to the British that the Afghans had constructed "dams at four different points, and on their being destroyed the Afghans blocked the Kushk river above Chahil Dukhtaran so as to completely deprive the fields of the Russian cultivators of water."⁶⁷ The Viceroy of India in a letter to Amir Abdul Rahman of Afghanistan dated 25 May 1892 pointed out that it was the violation of the Protocol of July 1887 and warned that if its provisions were not strictly observed by the Afghans, "serious consequence will result".⁶⁸ In 1893 Russians attacked the Afghan post at Somatash. In order to settle once for all the north-eastern frontier between Afghanistan and Russia,

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Foreign Secret F. Nov. 1891, 2-33

67. Foreign Secret F. June 1892, 206-242.

68. Ibid.

negotiations between Britain and Russia started. The Russians insisted upon the Afghan withdrawal from Shignan and Roshan, which lay north of the Oxus. So, Lansdowne, the Viceroy of India despatched in September 1893 a mission led by Mortimer Durand to Kabul to apprise Abdul Rahman of these developments. Durand apprised the Kabul ruler the dangers involved in Russo -Afghan skirmishes which were due to his desire to retain the territory lying across the Oxus. Durand succeeded in obtaining Amir's consent to his withdrawal from Shignan and Roshan and for retaining Wakhan. Finally an Anglo -Russian agreement was reached in 1895, by which Shignan and Roshan were given to Russia and a part of Darwaz was surrendered by Bokhara to Afghanistan. The sphere of influence of Britain and Russia to the east of lake Victoria was divided by a line which starting from a point on that lake near its eastern extremity followed a mountainous course up to the Chinese frontier. As such a narrow strip of Wakhan was created between the Russian and British Indian empires and it was made part of Afghanistan. The Pamir Boundary Agreement of 1895 marked the end of Anglo-Russian or Russo-Afghan tensions on the question of Afghanistan. Infact this agreement paved the way for the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 on Afghanistan.

CHAPTER-II

TRADE RELATIONS

Trade connection between the Tsarist Russia and Afghanistan were somewhat stable and strong during the nineteenth century, because of the contiguity of borders between Afghanistan and Russian Central Asia. This trade was carried by pedlars and caravan traders. Bokhara Khanate of Central Asia, played a key role in sustaining trade relations between Afghanistan and Russia. Bokhara was the trade entrepot where the products of Russia and Afghanistan were exchanged. The Trade was generally carried through the following routes.

- 1] From Khira and Bokhara via Miamena to Herat.
- 2] From Bokhara via Karshi, Balkh and Khulm to Kabul.

Apart from the above routes there used to be open communication between Russian Turkistan and Afghan Turkistan. According to a contemporary traveller, Mohan Lal Hudees or bills were taken by traders from Kabul and got encashed in Russian Turkistan. Copper, steel, iron and lace of Russia and Russian blue paper was supplied to the whole of Afghanistan through the distant deserts of Tartary.¹. Mohan Lal was told by a Shikarapari merchant at Kabul that

1. Mohan Lal's Travell's, London, 1846, p.46

the Russian goods worth 200000 rupees were yearly sold in Kabul, as against English goods worth 300000 rupees only.². The carvans from Bokhara and Kabul passed successively to Khulm in summer, the former usually bringing Russian articles and the latter goat skins and Indian commodities and pieces of stamped silver, which came from yarkand to be used in mints of Kabul and Bokara. Mohan Lal personally saw a caravan of Bokhara which consisted of two hundred camels, besides numerous ponies, loaded with commercial articles. The merchants of Bokhara used to visit Kabul twice or thrice a year bringing with them great quantities of silver and Russian lace sugar etc.³.

In the second half of the 19th century both Britain and Tsarist Russia found themselves face to face in Central Asia, especially in Afghanistan. Both powers tried to develop their trade in that country. British India tried her best to get the right to sail in the Indus river with a view to promote her trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia. In the same way the Russian missions came to Kabul to promote her trade by offering to conclude commercial alliance with Kabul. However, as compared to the British the Russians were more successful in flooding the markets of Afghanistan with

2. Ibid. p.46

3. Ibid. p.74

Russian goods. This was largely due to the existence of an old caravan trade between Afghanistan and the Territories lying to its north. Following were the main Russian exports to Afghanistan :-

1] Ducats⁴

These were gold coins which were known as Boodkee in Afghanistan. These were taken extensively to India by the Lohani and other merchants in exchange for the British and Indian goods. Boodkees were estimated to be two lacs of rupees worth imported into Afghanistan and re-exported to India.

The value of a Ducat used to be about 6 to 7 rupees (Indian) in Kabul. These were brought by traders secretly into Afghanistan on account of the Kabul ruler's imposition of a duty of 1 per cent on the import.⁵ Apart from Boodkis, Tillas the gold coins of Bokhara and Turkistan were also imported into Afghanistan.

2] Gold Dust⁶

Gold Dust also came from via Russia and was reexported

4. Foreign Secret, 11 July 1838 A No.6
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

to India to the tune of 60000 to 1,30,000 rupees annually.

3] Pistols and Muskets⁷

Pistols and Muskets too came from Russia. Though the Muskets were of good quality but were highly priced of a good fashion. Those of superior types were purchased by the chiefs and other nobles.

4] Gunlock⁸

Gunlock came in large quantities from Russia, there being a great demand for this article in Kabul. However, preference was given to English locks.

5] Padlocks⁹

Since no good locks were made in Afghanistan, these were extensively imported from Russia. The Russian locks were rather stronger than good locking.

6] Knives and Razors¹⁰

The knives that came from Russia were clumsy but better than that the indizenous ones. The Russian razors were

7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.

good resembling those of English manufacturers and well polished but not so superior in quality.

7] Iron and Brass Wares¹¹

Iron and brass ware was imported from Russia for making strings of guitar, sentoor and other musical instruments and for making earrings worn by the poor. It was also used in manufacture of armour for the body.

8] Copper¹²

Allmost all the copper that ws found in the bazar of Kabul was imported from Russia. It came in the form of thin quadrangular plates or of a smaller size. it ws later manufactured into cooking utensils, water pots and was sold at 10 rupees per seer. About 100 loads or 20,000 rupees worth of it used to come annually.

9] Russian Boxes and Snuff Boxes¹³

Various kinds of Russian boxes were found in Kabul these were made of a sort of light wood. These were used for keeping paper, ornaments, or precious articles. These were imported to the value of 900 to

11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

1000 rupees annually. The Afghans also consumed snuff boxes that came partly from Russia.

10] Needles¹⁴

Russian needles used to come to the extent of 6000 rupees a year.

11] Glass Spectacles Mirrors¹⁵

More than 4000 rupees worth of Glas, spectacles and mirrors were imported every year into Kabul.

12] Procelain¹⁶

Procelain of Russian manufacture used to come yearly into Kabul to the extent of 4000 rupees. It consisted mainly pots, cups saucer plates, bowls, dishes elegently flowered. These were used for common purposes such as drinking water, tea, sharbat and for dining. Russian pottery was very dear and was usually purchaed by the rich people, the poorer classes purchases a very inferior types that was made locally.

14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

13] Flints¹⁷

Flints also used to come from Russia; though it came from India too. There was a considerable demand for this article in Afghanistan.

14] Beads & Coral¹⁸

Glass beads that were imported from Russia were much used for women's ornaments such as bracelets and necklaces. Coral also came from the same country worth about 3000 rupees yearly and was used for the same purpose.

15] Fishbone & Shirmahee¹⁹

Fishbone and Shirmahee was a kind of fish bone (probably of the whale) and was imported from Russia to the amount of 1000 rupees a year. It had a smooth surface and shining white colour. It was used for making handles of knives, daggers and sword hilts. A good bone was not to be had at less than 20 rupees.

17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.

16] Paper²⁰

Russian paper was found of two kinds, polished and unpolished and white smooth and rough. It was of follscapsize but not so good. Annual imports valued more than 5000 rupees annually. Paper tht came from Kokand and Kashmir was much used.

17] Tea²¹

Tea came from Ruissia was called 'Bunkabha' was of a superior quality. It had a strong and pleasing flavour. It was costly and its price was as 100 rupees per ser.

18] Saleb, Misree²²

Saleb Misree was a medicine that came from Russia. It was considered as a good nutritient and was for this purpose taken with milk. It was in the form of flat oval pieces of abolut 80 grains each and was not easily procurable in Kabul. It ws sold at 2 or 3 rupees per ounce.

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.

19] Kimsan²³

Kimsan a kind of prepared leather in Russia, was imported to the value of about 1000 rupees annually. It was used for making sandals bags etc.

20] Cochineal²⁴

Cochineal came from Russia to the amount of about 10,000 rupees a year and was like that imported from India. It was a very valuable dye and imparted a bright and durable crimson colour to silks.

21] Iron Troys²⁵

A small quantity of iron troys were also imported from Russia and used for house hold purposes. The nicely painted and flowered small ones were sold at 2 to 4 rupees each, while larger ones sold at 8 to 10 rupees each.

22] Kulabatoon²⁶

Russian Kulabaton or wire mainly of two sorts original and imitation, was imported. The original gold wire had

23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.

a superior degree of luster but the false one was sometimes such as could not be distinguished except by able judges. While as yellow wire of gold was sold at the same rate size from 1/2 to 3/4 of rupee per miscal or about 4/2 and 5 rupees per ounce. False wire was very cheap and much consumed. It was used for ornamenting in almost all kinds of apparel, caps, etc. for making tape lines and for winding round Hooka pipes. Gold wire was most extensively employed in embroidery the Afghans being very fond of ornaments of a showing nature. A great many persons were daily at work with it in the Kabul Bazar adorning gold flowers, wreaths on garment. It was annually imported into Kabul to the extent of 34000 rupees and was of pure Russian manufacture.

23] Simgote²⁷

Simgote was a kind of thin flat lace and differed from Kalabatoon which was a wire in form and texture only but not in the substance. It was also of two kinds, false and original but the former sort was imported in the greatest quantity and much employed in use by the poorer classes of Afghans. It was used for the same

27. Ibid.

purpose as Kalabatoon. The value of its imports exceeded 20000 rupees a year.

24] Broad Cloth²⁸

The broad cloth of Russia was rather dearer and was imported by Lohanee and other merchants. But the increasing imports of English made cloths from India affected the sale of Russian cloth in Afghanistan. However, Russian broadcloth continued to come to the amount of 4000 rupees a year and was sold at from 10 to 20 rupees per yard.

25] Chintz²⁹

Russian Chintz was imported annually to the extent of 20,000 rupees and was liked on account of its having less starch and being much more durable than the English. Chintz which was of a very thin texture and lasted not even a year while the former lasted for 2 to 3 years. But English patterns were more beautiful and alluring. However, Russian chintz was dearer than English and was therefore not much consumed.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

26] Valvet³⁰

Russian valvet was used formerly in great quantities to the extent of more than 5000 rupees annually. But since the introduction of British velvet its demand in Kabul decreased. Russian valvet was very thin and of an inferior quality.

27] Altas³¹

Russian Altas or Satin was preferred to the English make for the latter was worn away soon being of thin texture. Russian satin was sold at 5 rupees per yard.

28] Khooft³²

Khooft was a kind of soft and finely ornamented silk cloth made in imitation of shawls. It came from Russia to the value of about 1000 rupees.

29] Nanka³³

Nanka was imported in the greatest quantity from Russia and was used for making the outer garments for the people who had a great liking to it. It was imported every year to the value of about 50,000 rupees and was

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.

sold at half a rupee per yard. It was partly sent on to India and the Punjab, where it was used mainly by Sikhs.

30] Handkerchief³⁴

The Russian made handkerchiefs were also imported in to Afghanistan and were liked by both the rich and poor people.

So far as exports to Russian territory from Afghanistan, these were mainly of Indian origin. Indian tea, spices, muslin, indigo, Kashmir Shawls and some provisions were exported to Bukhara by the caravan traders. Besides there was a regular exchange of commodities between the people of border areas of Afghanistan adjoining Russian Central Asia. They traded sheep, grains etc. with Russian products.

Apart from export of India tea, Chinese tea brought from the Indian ports was also exported to Bokhara, Samarkand and Russian Turkistan. Since there was scarcity of grains particularly wheat and barley in Russian Territory bordering Afghanistan, the same was imported from Afghanistan by the Russian troops stationed in Central Asia

34. Ibid.

against cash payment. Similarly sheep were exported in large numbers to that quarter. ~~See~~ Seeing that Afghans used to sell large quantities of wheat and sheep to the Russians on high profit, the ruler^{of} Afghanistan imposed a prohibition on export of grains, so as to avoid the risk of scarcity in his own kingdom.

The Russian envoy captain Vitkovitch reached Kabul on May 19, 1837 bearing two letters for Dost Mohammad Khan from the emperor of Russia and the Russian ambassador at Tehran. The letter was both political and commercial in which the imperial Majesty states that he will feel always happy to assist the people of Kabul who may come to trade with his country.³⁵

The Russians were eager to promote trade relations with Afghanistan. The society for encouragement of Russian trade and industry held meetings to discuss ways and means of developing this trade. It was proposed in 1875 to establish a company with a capital of one million roubles in Moscow with an object of opening direct trade relations with Afghanistan.³⁶ In conclusion one can say that due to their - Michel). peoples inhabiting the borders of Afghanistan and

35. Foreign Political, 14 February, 1838. 56

36. Foreign Secret, March 1875. 5-11.

Russian Central Asia, there existed substantial trade contacts between the two regions. Besides, the presence of a large number of Russian troops near the Afghan frontiers presented a big market for consumption of grains, sheep and daily necessities which were procured from the Afghans. Afghanistan also served as a transit route for export of Indian commodities to Bokhara and other parts of Russian Central Asia. This trade was mainly in the hands of Powindahs who were Ghizais, Lohanis, Waziris and Kakars. They banded together twice a year in large armed caravans often mustering several thousand armed men and pedalled between Bukhara and the Indus³⁶. Notwithstanding the inhibiting influence of Anglo-Russian rivalry, the volume of trade between Afghanistan and Russia increased during Abdul Rahman's rule. This was due to a series of economic reforms introduced by him in his country. These measures included the abolition of a complicated system of tolls that was earlier in vogue in different provinces, creation of a caravan bureau which saw to the safety, supply and transportation needs of travellers and caravans³⁷. Besides, he fixed a uniform tax on imports and exports. With the result normal trade began to flow through Afghanistan. But

36. Vartan Gregorian. "The Emergence of modern Afghanistan". Stanford, 1969. p.144.

37. Ibid.

with the Russians imposition of strict restrictions on imports of British Indian commodities in Russian Central Asia, the flow of Indian goods into Central Asia via Afghanistan declined by 80 per cent³⁸, severely damaging Afghanistan's position in the transit trade. However, towards the end of nineteenth century exports from Afghanistan to Russian territory started rising in value, as these comprised chiefly of local products mainly raw wool, hides, fruits, horses, etc. Now the balance of trade stood in favour of Afghanistan, as is evident from the following figures³⁹:-

Russian Trade with Afghanistan (in roubles)

Year	(Export to Afghanistan)	Imports from Afghanistan
1888	3,983,270	3,944,568
1889	3,307,000	1,597,400
1890	4,059,000	1,612,000
1891	2,555,300	1,468,000
1892	1,971,000	801,000
1895	702,304	842,302
1896	906,571	2,093,366
1897	479,278	1,576,751

The absence of any treaty arrangements to regulate its trade with Russia was partially responsible for the decline in Russo - Afghan trade. However, with the conclusion of Soviet - Afghan treaty of 1921 this trade scaled new heights.

38. Ibid 146.

39. Cited in Ibid. p.146.

CHAPTER - III

CULTURAL CONTACTS

Owing to the geographical contiguity between Afghanistan and Russian territory, existence of strong trade ties and similarity in terms of dress, customs and religion among the peoples of Afghanistan and Russian Central Asia, the cultural relations between the two sides continued to be on traditional lines. They had similar food and drinking habits. The use of Persian, Pushto and Turkish languages manifested yet another evidence of the closeness of these relations. Kabul, Balkh, Bokhara, Samarkand, Tashkant and Khiva had developed into important Central Asia centres of trade and Islamic culture. The construction of minarets in Herat, Kabul, Balkh, Bokhara, Samarkand, Tashkant showed close resemblance. Similar was the case with the domes of mosques and tombs in all the above cities. The Holy book Quran and Hadith were read by the people of Central Asia and Afghanistan. Mosque was the centre of all religious activity in both the regions. Syeds and Pirs of Bukhara were respected in Afghanistan. Both the peoples had common names on Islamic pattern. Bukhara which was a centre of Islamic learning attracted students and others interested in Islamic education from Afghanistan. Sufi orders came from Fargahana, Samarkand and Turkistan to Afghanistan. The Haj pilgrims¹

from Russian Central Asia travelled via Afghanistan on their way to Mecca for performing the Haj. The titles of Chughtai, Beg, Shaikh etc. came into usage in Afghanistan under Central Asian influence.

The cultural contacts between the two regions were consolidated during the reign of Dost Mohammad (1837-1863). The Russian Governor General of Turkistan, Kauffmann had frequent exchange of letters with the Amir of Kabul, Dost Mohammad. Both the Afghan mercenaries and artisans had free access to the Russian territory. The Afghans were employed in the armies of Tsarist Russia and certain Central Asians were employed in the Afghan. There was a regular exchange of traders between the two sides. The despatch of certain Russian "scientific expeditions"² to Afghanistan and the arrival of numerous travellers played an important part in the development of cultural relations during this period.

Bokhara played a key role in sustaining a close cultural relationship between the two regions. Both, Dost Mohammad Khan and his Successor Amir Sher Ali maintained cordial relations with Russian authorities in Central Asia.

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1. Foreign Secret F November 1891, 2-33.
 2. Foreign Secret political, June, 1874, 45-47.

They also tried to get material assistance from the ruler of Russia. It was during their reign that two Russian missions led by Vitkevitch³ and Stoleitov visited Kabul, the details of which have been given in the first chapter. The Russian and Afghan authorities used to exchange costly gifts as a token of friendship. The Stoleitov mission was accorded a salute of 13 guns on its arrival at Kabul and he was received by Sher Ali in person at a considerable distance from Kabul⁴. On his return to Samarkand, Stoleitov was accompanied by the Afghan envoy and his suit, The Afghan mission consisted of Mirza Magdazam.⁵ Minister of War, two Colonels and a Secretary. They had an escort of twenty one Afghans. From Samarkand the Afghans proceeded to Tashkant, where they were received by the Governor General. Amir Dost Mohammed too reciprocated by sending his emissary, Haji Hussain Ali.⁶ as an agent with his message. Hussain Ali spent some time in Russia where he was treated hospitably. Kauffmann the Governor General of Russian Turkistan used to exchange friendly communications with the ruler of Afghanistan. In this way amicable good personal rapport was established between the ruler of Kabul and Russian authorities.

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3. Foreign Secret, 1 August, 1838, 22.
 4. Foreign Secret, F. January, 1879, 22-92.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Foreign political, May 1839, 826.

The cordiality of relations between the two sides is evident from the fact of Kaufmann having posted the Amir of Kabul with important events in Russian Central Asia. As Kaufmann informed Sher Ali on December 1, 1874 that after the conquest of Kiva, the Khan of Khiva was asked to set at liberty all the slaves.⁷ Among the slaves released were 400 Afghans who had been detained there. These liberated Afghans returned to their country, some through Bokhara, some through Balkh and some through Maimena.

Considerable number of Central Asian people particularly Russian Uzbeks and Tajiks had settled in northern Afghanistan and got assimilated in the Afghan society. This was a direct result of close trade and cultural relations between the two sides. A large number of families bearing such names as Qadri, Pirzada, Akhun, Beg, Kashgari, Turki, Bukhari, Nakshabandi, Mughal, Gani, Mirza, Qazikash, Baba, Jilani, Hamadani etc. were living example of cultural assimilation that took place as a result of immigration from Bokhara, Samarkand, Tashkant, Khiva and Russian Turkistan into Afghanistan⁸. Amir Abdul Rahman Khan made Aishan Abdul Rahim Khawja of Tashkant his Pir

7. Foreign Secret, March 1874, 52-62.

8. K. Warikoo, Central Asia and Kashmir, N. Delhi, 1989, p.99.

(Spiritual adviser)⁹ when he was at Tashkant and Samarkand. The pir played an important role in cultural interaction between the two countries. Mazar-i-sharif in northern Afghanistan held a prestigious position as one of the important Muslim shrines. Devotees from Balkh, Badakhshan, Russian Turkistan, Khiva, Samarkand, Tashkand, Ashkabad and Kabul paid their visits to Mazar-i-sharif. Aishan Khawja Buzurg Samarkand¹⁰ the Russian envoy arrived at Mazar-i-sharif with three or four servants in 1875. The people from both Afghanistan and Russian Central Asia went to Bokhara to learn Arabic language and Islamic theology.

Russian gold Ducats were commonly prevalent in Afghanistan which were also being worn by women folk. For making ornaments Russian gold dust was used mainly.¹¹ Similarly Russian pistols and muskets generally small, were used by Afghan Sardars and other nobles.¹² Other Russian commodities of daily use like gun locks, pad locks, knives, razors, iron and brass wares for making strings of guitar santoor and copper ware were freely used in Afghanistan.¹³

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9. Foreign Secret F July 1885, 640-41
 10. Foreign political, November, 1875, 161-193.
 11. Foreign Secret 11 July 1838A, 6.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Ibid.

Russian boxes and snuff boxes, needles, glass spectacles, mirrors, procelain consisting of pots, cups, saucer plates, bowls, dishes for drinking water etc. were commonly used.¹⁴ Beads and coral were used for women's ornaments worn as necklaces. Fish bone was used for making handles of knives and dagger.¹⁵ Two kinds of Russian paper, polished and unpolished were imported into Afghanistan.¹⁶ The tea that came from Russia was called Bankabha and it was of a superior quality with good pleasing flavour. "Slab Misree" a medicine, which was considered a nutritive was brought from Russia. ¹⁷ Kimsan a kind of prepared leather was used for making bags and saddles.¹⁸

The people of Afghanistan used Russian broadcloth and chintz as their dress materials. Russian Kalabatun and Seemgot were commonly used for ornamenting their apparels. The Russian "Atlas" or Satin was liked by the local people. Khoodbaft, a silk cloth made in imitation of shawls came from Russia. Handkerchiefs too were imported from Russia.¹⁹ These above daily use articles which were manufactured in

- 14. Ibid.
- 15. Ibid.
- 16. Ibid.
- 17. Ibid.
- 18. Ibid.
- 19. Ibid.

Russia, were used by both the people of Russia and Afghanistan. The Afghan made shawl were exported to Russia. Mullah Rahim used to go to Russia with Kashmiri shawls which were in great demand there. Lapis Lazuli, of Badakhshan were exported to Russia in considerable quantities. The merchants of both countries played a vital role in maintaining the cultural relations. Besides such ties were reinforced by the regular exchange of envoys between the two countries for promoting trade and friendly relations.

The intimacy of bilateral contacts is evidenced by the frequent visits of Afghan Sardars and nobles to Russian territory, either in times of distress or on official missions. But in most cases these Afghans were treated well by the Russian authorities and they were even employed in various Imperial services. Sikander Khan was employed in Russian Army in Turkistan. Similarly Abdul Rahman, who later became the ruler of Afghanistan, spent ten years of his fugitive life in Russian Turkistan. On his arrival in Turkestan, Abdul Rahman was presented with a robe of honour and given the title of Meer Afghanee.²⁰ Similarly when on 15 February 1892, the Afghan envoy Sarhang Mohammad Khan visited the Russian camp at Shaikh Junaid, he was presented

20. Foreign political A - May 1866, 210-211.

with two bottles of wine, a box of sweet meats, and some biscuits. Captain Sultan Beg²¹ of Samarkand visited Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul and he was a guest of the Ameer for about 20 days. At the time of his departure from Kabul the Ameer of Kabul gave him a gold decoration and also sent through him some presents for General Vrevsky and his Deputy, Esumovitch. During the month of Rebi-as-sani (September-October 1892) the Amir sent four sealed covers - one for the Toar, one for the Governor General of Turkistan and one each for the Commissioners of Tashkant and General Bibikoff at Samarkand, an old friend of Amir Abdul Rahman. In return the Russians sent 16000 roubles to the Amir. The Amir also sent to Tashkant, through Abdullah Jan 60 Astrakhan furs for presentation to Colonel Pkoloff, Deputy Governor of Samarkand at that time. Some Russian officers posted in the frontiers near Oxus used to be on friendly terms with their Afghan counterparts. Some Russian citizens who came to Afghanistan were welcomed. For instance one deserter of an Infantry Regimst who was skilled in shoe-making in Russia, was appointed to make shoes in the shoe factory at Kabul. When some Russian jews arrived at Herat and produced Russian

21. Foreign Secret F January, 1894. 353-354.

passports, they were allowed to reside in that territory. Similarly the Russian authorities gave refugee to several Afghans like Sardar Mohammad Ishak Khan²², ex-Governor of Afghanistan, in Russian Turkistan. Due to the oppression of Naib Mohammad Alam Khan of Balkh some 14000 families had migrated to Russian territory, where they settled.

The long stay of Abdul Rahman Khan in Russian territory and his personal friendly relations with the Russian authorities was an important factor in maintaining friendly relations between the two countries even at critical times. It was in 1860s, following his failure to gain power in the struggle with Sher Ali, that Abdul Rahman sought refuge at Samarkand²³ where he was kindly received by the Russian authorities. He used to pay visits to the Governor General at Tashkant. Abdur Rahman was provided with a house, garden and subsistence allowance at Samarkand where he lived from 1870 to 1880. The Russian government had granted 18,000 gold Tillas to him. (one tilla = Rs.6-8).²⁴ While granting asylum and other amenities to Abdul Rahman, Russians never encouraged him in his adventures against Sher Ali, the then ruler of Kabul, thereby maintaining cordial

22. Foreign Secret F. April 1893, 92-100.

23. Percy Sykes, Vol. II, P. 124.

24. Foreign political A August, 1870, 25-37. Kabul Diary from 6th to 9th May, 1870 inclusive.

relations with Afghanistan. Abdul Rahman held the position of Mir. Akhor Bashi (Chief Master of the horses) in the Russian service at Samarkand. When Abdul Rahman returned to Kabul and became its ruler, he had become wiser in political affairs owing to his interaction with the Russian officers in Central Asia. He provided a comparatively stable government to his country and remained calm and cool even in critical times like Panjdeh and Saomatash incidents. Instead, he used the occasion to press his British masters to finalise the demarcation of Afghanistans boundary with Russian Turkistan.

To sum up the cultural contacts between the two countries were rich and varied. The Russian dimension in the traditional cultural contacts between the people of Afghanistan and Central Asia enriched the experience of Afghans in social and political spheres.

CONCLUSION

With the ascendance of the rival European powers - Britain and Russia in Asia, Afghanistan gained importance in international politics during the nineteenth century due to its geographical contiguity to both the British and Russian empires in Asia. The rulers of Afghanistan found themselves sandwiched between the two rival powers who were expanding towards Afghanistan from two opposite directions whereas both Britain and Russia were playing intrigue and counter intrigue for promoting their interest in Afghanistan, the Afghan rulers vainly tried to play the two powers against each other in order to maintain their independence. Thus we find Amir Dost Mohammad making friendly overtures to the Russians seeking their support in his proposed expeditions against the Sikhs, after he had reviewed a firm refusal for each help from the British Governor General of India, Lord Auckland. The Russians responded promptly by despatching Vitkevitch mission to Kabul alongwith letters of good will from the Tsar Emperor and the Russian Foreign Minister for the ruler of Afghanistan. There is reason to believe that Vitkevitch was assigned the task of minimising British influence in Kabul and frustrate

Burne's attempts to increase the same. But the Russian quickly disowned responsibility for Vitkevitch's proceedings in Kabul after England made a protest. Similarly when Sher Ali, the succeeding ruler of Afghanistan got dissatisfied with the passive British attitude towards him, he turned towards Russia for active assistance. He was already maintaining friendly communications with the Russian Governor General of Turkistan, Kaufmann, who had taken enough care not to support the exile Afghan leader Abdul Rahman's attempt for a coup. Feeling agitated over Lytton's overbearing attitude towards him the Afghan ruler, Sher Ali, received a high power Russian mission led to Stoleitov. At the same time he refused to receive a similar British mission, which finally resulted in the second Anglo Afghan war.

On its part Russia was content to allow Afghanistan the rule of a buffer between Russian possession in Central Asia and the British India empire. The Gortchakov declaration of 1864 that Afghanistan was outside the Russia sphere of influence, was followed by the subsequent agreement with the British on the delimitation of northern boundary of Afghanistan adjoining Russian that is why Russia cold-shouldered the Afghan requests for armed assistance

against the Sikhs and the British during the first and second Anglo-Afghan wars. Not only that, Russians did not use the presence of Aboul Rahman in Russian territory for more than a decade, for guiding their axe in Afghanistan. Instead they opted for maintaining good neighbourly relations with the Afghan rulers at the same time consolidating their hold over their possessions in Central Asia. It was towards the end of the 19th century that the frontiers of Afghanistan were 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 promised to consider Afghanistan as outside her sphere of influence and agreed to conduct relations with Afghanistan through Britain.

The Russo-Afghan trade which was conducted by caravan traders and pedlars was an extension of Indo-Central Asian trade carried through Punjab, Kabul and Bakhara. The main entrepot of this trade was Bokhara where the products of Russia and Afghanistan were exchanged. For their daily requirements such as gold wire used for embroidery, pottery, snuff boxes, padlocks, knives, copper, brass and iron wares, leather, needles, paper, cloth etc. Afghans depended on the Russian

goods received overland through Central Asia. As against this, Afghans and Central Asian traders took supplies of Indian tea, spices, muslim, indigo, shawls etc. for sale in Central Asia wherefrom these were also carried to Russia proper. The Russian interest in developing her border trade with Afghanistan is evidenced by the despatch of Vitkoritch and Stolietov mission to finalise commercial alliances with Kabul. There existed substantial trade contacts between the two regions during the nineteenth century. The literal trade, however, scaled new heights after the conclusion of Soviet-Afghan Treaty in February 1921.

Due to geographical contiguity between Afghanistan and Russian territory and cultural affinity between the people of two regions in terms of religion, customs, dress and food habits, relations between the two sides remained as strong as before. Bokhara, Sameerchand Tashkant, Khiva, Kabul and Badakshan were the main centres of Trade and Islamic culture. The construction of mosques and minarates in these important towns was made in the same architectural style. The Islamic Centres of learning (Madarasas) in Bokhara attracted students from Afghanistan. Such titles as Chughtai, Beg, Sheikh came to be used in Afghanistan under Central Asian influence. Their cultural contacts

developed further during reigns of Dost Mohammed Khan and Sher Ali Khan, when the Afghan ruler and Russian authorities exchanged friendly letters. Besides the Afghans had free access to Russian territory and the same was true to Russian subjects in Afghanistan. As a result of close trade and cultural relations considerable number of Russian subjects particularly Uzbaks and Tajaks settled in northern Afghanistan and got assimilated in the Afghan society. The decade long stay of Abdul Rahman Khan in Russian Central Asia and his cordial relations with the Russian authorities there further cemented the friendly contacts between the Afghan nobility and their Russian counterparts. Their new exposure to Russian way of life and style of functioning of Russian officer enriched the experience of Afghan rulers particularly Abdur Rahman Khan in dealing with tricky situations as arose during the prime of Anglo-Russian rivalry.

Notwithstanding the tightened British control over Afghanistan foreign relations during the period of this study, both the Afghan rulers Dost Mohammad and his succesor Sher Ali did maintain friendly contacts with Russian authorities in Central Asia. Similarly Amir Abdul Rahman who was installed with the British support

did not embitter his relations with the Russian neighbours. Besides, the traditional trade and cultural contacts between the two sides continued as before inspite of the inhibiting influences of the Anglo-Russian rivalry.

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