

**EMERGENCE OF AFGHANISTAN AS A BUFFER
BETWEEN TSARIST RUSSIA AND BRITISH
INDIAN EMPIRE (19TH C.)**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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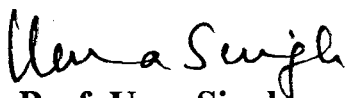
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This is to certify that the dissertation titled “**EMERGENCE OF AFGHANISTAN AS A BUFFER BETWEEN TSARIST RUSSIA AND BRITISH INDIAN EMPIRE (19TH CENTURY)**” submitted by **Ajit Kumar Singh** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is his own work and has not been previously submitted for degree of this or any other university.

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It goes without saying that whatever mistakes and shortcomings are left in the dissertation belong to me and I bear the full and final responsibility for the last ~~product~~.

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PREFACE

The modern day Afghanistan has always been the playground for the superpowers. Earlier it was the British India & Tsarist Russia which were the active participations of the Great Game in the region, apart from France under Napoleon for sometime. It resulted into the emergence of Afghanistan as a buffer between the two imperial powers in 1907. Afghanistan played the role of a buffer for these two powers successfully and got independence in 1919.

Later in the 20th century United States of America became a dominant power and it took the place of Britain and the Great Game continued. At present Afghanistan is under turmoil.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The introductory chapter discusses the theme of the topic. The second chapter deals with the expansion of the Tsarist Russia toward Central Asia. It discusses the different stages and reason behind the expansion.

The third chapter talks about different policies adopted by Britain to fulfil its interest in Afghanistan. The process of evolution of Afghanistan as a buffer state has been discussed in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter concludes the dissertation.

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CHAPTER- I

Introduction

The history of Afghanistan dates back to early periods. But Afghanistan which we presently know has come into being only in the middle of the 18th c. The Islamic society of Afghanistan is constituted of several ethnic groups and tribes. Pushtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Turkman are influential forces. Before 18th century, people of Afghanistan had never been firmly united to claim a separate political identity. A measure of unity was achieved during the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani, 1747-75. He was a powerful war-lord and a capable politician. After his coronation, he took the title of “Durr-i-Durran” (Pearl of The Age). But once he left the scene the country once again lost its way, which made it vulnerable to outside forces. The Tsarist Russia and British India took advantage of it.

The Russians made many attempts to gain influence in Afghanistan and to capture the territory south of Oxus. This was the logical next move to its Central Asian conquests. To forestall an invasion of India, the British promoted strife among the Afghans and urged Iran to recover the long lost province of Herat from the Afghans. The British succeeded in preventing an invasion of India in spite of changes of fortune and reversal of alliances. Yet their fears on that score never entirely disappeared. From then onwards, they looked upon the land of Afghans as either a buffer against, or a political base for, such an invasion.

The removal of Napoleon from the scene, who was the first one to draw Afghanistan into modern international politics, complicated the Afghan syndrome. The British & Russian positions shifted from that of an alliance against France to rivalry between both the imperial powers. Gradual expansion of Tsarist Russia towards the Caspian and Asia Minor was viewed by the British rulers as an eventual threat to India. According to the British planners, Tsarist incursions into Afghanistan and finally into India would occur through Iran via Herat and Kandhar.

The first move of the Britishers to counter the Russians, therefore, was to encourage the Iranian monarch Fatah Ali Shah Qajar to attack the Russian positions. He was encouraged to attack the Russian positions around the Caspian in order to recover his lost territory. On the Afghan front the British signed a mutual defence treaty with Shah Shuja in 1809. The treaty ensured British support to Afghan King against external aggression and also obtained Afghan assurance of leaving the British alone in India.

Iranian Qajars fought two major wars with the Russians in 1812 & 1826 and lost both. The Russians forced them to sign the Treaty of Turkamanchia (1828). It sealed the fate of Persians as West Asian or Middle Eastern Power. They lost it to the Russians.

Having acquired tremendous influence in the Persian court, the Russians turned their attention towards Afghanistan. In 1837, the Persian troops attacked

the western Afghan province and took siege of the city of Herat. They were aided by a Russian regiment under the command of General Sampson. While keeping their military pressure on a major Afghan city, the Russians also showed an eagerness to send an envoy to Kabul to seek political concessions from the Afghan ruler.

The developments in western Afghanistan were serious enough to upset the British. The defiant attitude of Amir of Kabul added to their distress. Amir Dost Mohammad, a powerful and shrewd Khan from Barkzai pushtun, governed Afghanistan. Shah Shuja had lost throne soon after he signed the treaty of mutual defence with Mountstuart Elphinston. He was living in India as an exile. To settle their differences with Amir Dost Mohammad, British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, and his Governor-General in India, Lord Auckland, sent Captain Alexander Burnes to Kabul in 1837. Apparently it was to investigate the potentials of commercial relations between India and Central Asia, but in reality it was to negotiate British-Afghan differences, and to conclude a mutual security agreement with the Amir, based on the 1809 treaty.

Getting an inkling of the British mission, the Russians sent their envoy to Kabul, Captain Ivan Victorivich. He, too, came to discuss “commerce”, but his real purpose, like that of Burnes, was also political. Amir Dost Mohammad showed preference towards the British, but he was getting nowhere in enlisting the British support to recover his territory from the Sikhs. Similarly, Burnes failed to

extract the anti-Russian treaty from the Amir. At one time, Burnes issued ultimatum to Dost Mohammad.

With this ultimatum, British-Afghan negotiations ended in a deadlock, and as the British envoy turned to India, the Amir opened talks with the Russian envoy. Earlier the Amir had informed the British about the subjects he had been discussing with the Russians; now he informed the latter the substance of his conversations with the British. The Russians too offered an alliance to the Afghan ruler. But as the British won't promise him Peshawar, the Russians declined any statement over Herat's settlement.

In the meantime, Lord Palmerston and Auckland were running out of patience over the Herat situation. Consequently, an ultimatum was served on the Persian Shah to the effect that the British regarded his Russian aided siege of Herat as a potential threat to India, and that if the siege was not lifted, the British would declare war on Persia. The ultimatum worked. Qajar Shah and his Russian allies packed up and returned home.

However, that was not enough. To secure India against the Russian threat, the British must have had an Amir of their own choice in Kabul who would toe the imperial line. Therefore, it was decided to remove the independent-minded Dost Mohammad and install the old Shah Shuja, who was virtually a British captive.

Under instructions from London, Lord Auckland raised an army consisting of British and Indian soldiers to invade Afghanistan. The invading troops were

christened as the army of Indus and put under the command of General Sir John Kean.

The first Afghan War had begun. General Kean led his troops through Sind, interestingly the Sikhs had refused passage through Punjab, into Baluchistan and crossed into Kandhar by April 1839. The Afghan army led by Haider Khan, son of Amir Dost Mohammad, met the army of Indus at Ghazni. Haider Khan fought bravely, but lost and the British moved into Kabul. Dost Mohammad fled towards the north. Shah Shuja, the British puppet, was installed as Amir of Afghanistan. The Army of Indus stayed on to keep the puppet on the Kabul throne.

As history has demonstrated repeatedly, a puppet ruler anywhere is seldom able to gain support and command the respect of his people. It is almost impossible to do so in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, tribal customs regard bravery, manhood and independence as essential virtues of a chief or an Amir. As the British troops stayed on, resentment built-up against them and their underling Shah Shuja. The British fled from the Afghan capital in a hurry. In the ensuing days, Shah Shuja was assassinated and the British completely withdrew from Afghanistan. Their old antagonist Dost Mohammad regained power. Thus the first Afghan war failed to destroy Afghan independence and thereby the Britishers failed to gain strategic advantage over the Russians.

As the British had viewed every Russian advance in Central Asia as potential threat to the British Indian Empire, the Russians interpreted the British

invasion of Kabul as a threat to their Asian exploits. Thus in 1839, the Tsarist troops invaded Khiva, a Muslim Khanate 500 miles North of Kabul, which they had tried but failed to conquer earlier on.

Interestingly the Russian expedition to Khiva met the same fate as did the British in Afghanistan. Out of 5,000 men, 10,000 camels and 12,000 Kirghiz porters, only 1,000 men survived the Khiva adventure.

The reverse suffered by the two great powers between 1839 and 1842 postponed their confrontation in Central Asia leaving a buffer zone of independent states between the Russian in the Kirghiz steppes and the British in India. In the next decade, the Ottoman Empire was the theatre of the Anglo Russian Conflict, leading the two powers to the Crimean war. As a consequence of Russia's defeat, its activity in Balkans declined.

The "Pendulum Theory" of Russian expansion referred by the scholars and diplomats states, "when checked in West, Russia turns east and vice versa". After the Treaty of Paris, Russian expansion towards west was no longer possible. It was only beyond the Caspian sea, i.e. in the east that Russia could expand without fear of European intervention".

Within two decades after the Treaty of Paris, the Russian invaders trampled the great Islamic Khanates of Central Asia. In 1865, the important city of Tashkent was occupied; in 1868, the two outstanding cultural centers of Islam, Bokhara and Samarkand were subjected; Khanates of Khiva fell in 1873 and Khokand in 1876.

Prince A. M. Gorchakov, a well known Russian diplomat of that era, put forth the theory to justify Russian advances in Central Asia. The Tactical Theory propounded by Prince Gorchakov brought the Russian troops at the doorsteps of Afghanistan. The worried Amir Sher Ali urged the British to assist. Sher Ali asked for two things.

- i. Guarantee of his boundaries against Russian advance and,
- ii. Recognition of his descendants as the legitimate heirs of Kabul throne.

British Viceroy's response for both these demands was vague and indefinite. Lord Mayo was the Viceroy. On the other hand, the British Foreign office sought and obtained an assurance from Russian Ambassador Prince Gorchakov in London that Afghanistan laid "completely outside the sphere which Russia might be called upon to exercise influence." This assurance was given in 1869, and four years later, in 1873, a roughly drawn boundary was agreed upon. According to the agreement, Oxus or the Amu Darya was to form the boundary in the North. As to the borders on the south, a separate commission would deal with that.

Despite the border agreement, Sher Ali remained skeptic of the Russian intentions and made another attempt to secure British Support, in writing, against possible aggression from the North. The British, however, had more faith in the 1873 border agreement than the Amir. Disappointed by the British, Amir Sher Ali turned to the Russians and tried in vain to improve ties with the rival power.

In the meantime, the government was changed in England. It introduced new concepts. Earlier the British government had no truce with the “masterly inactivity” school. Instead it launched what came to be known as the “Forward Policy” for the containment of Russians beyond Afghan frontier. The basic elements of the new policy were-

- Establish permanent British presence in the principal Afghan cities to watch the Russian moves.
- Annex Afghan areas near the Indian frontier and convert those into strong military bases.
- Control and guide Afghan foreign policy.

The Amir Sher Ali was asked to accept British mission in Herat. He refused to do so citing different reasons. Viceroy Lytton was busy arguing back and forth with Sher Ali.

In the meantime, the Russians attacked Turkey. To demonstrate opposition, the British dispatched 5,000 Indian troops to Malta. The Russians replied by dispatching a mission to Kabul. It was accompanied by large scale military activity on the Afghan border. The Pendulum Theory was at work. The alarmed Afghan Amir was forced to receive the Russian mission in Kabul. The British could not be left far behind.

Lytton arranged to dispatch his own mission to Kabul with a warning to Sher Ali that “refusal to grant it a free passage and an honourable reception as has been accorded to the Russian mission will be considered as a hostile act.” Sher Ali rejected the warning and again refused to receive the British. Insulted and infuriated Lytton resorted to military action. Afghanistan was attacked. The second Anglo-Afghan war started in 1878.

Upon the news of defeat reaching Kabul, Sher Ali’s authority collapsed and he fled northward to Afghan Turkistan. On 26 May 1879, his Son Yakub Khan signed a treaty with British at a place called Gandamak. The Treaty of Gandamak had apparently yielded the desired objective of “Forward Policy.”

Both the first and second Afghan wars were designed to checkmate the Russians, but both were ironically fought against the Afghans and not the Russians. Aftermath of the Second Afghan war was no different than the first. Afghan people rose again under the leadership of Mushak-i-Alam Akhondzadah. The throne of Kabul fell to the lot of warrior statesman Amir Abdur Rehman (1880-1901). The British immediately extended recognition to the new Amir.

Encouraged by the set-back to their rivals, the Russians started new adventures around Afghanistan. In 1880, the Russians marched into Turkoman but were defeated. In 1884, the Russians broke through the Tekke formations and captured their city and fort of Merv. The British strategist who had long held the view that Russian invasion of India would come from the western side of

Afghanistan via Herat, were shaken by the fall of Merv. The distance to Herat from Central Asia was now shortened.

There were now only two options opened to the British: Meet the Russians in force at Merv or draw a mutually agreed boundary line which the Russians won't cross. The new British Government under Gladstone chose the latter course. It was supported by the Indian establishment.

British overtures on the demarcation of boundary found positive response from the Russian foreign office, and both sides agreed that the boundary between Merv and Afghanistan be delimited by a commission on the spot.

In the meantime, Russians started advancing towards Panjdeh and finally occupied it. It generated angry reverberations from Kabul to London. The situation became volatile. As the pressure mounted the Russians agreed to neutralize Panjdeh until the Boundary Commission finds a solution.

A boundary line after protracted negotiations was drawn in 1885. It was known as the "Ridgeway Line". It divided Afghan territory and Russian Turkomania on the northwest, as an earlier line (1873) had separated the two countries in the northeast.

The border between India and Afghanistan was too agreed in 1893. Durand, who enjoyed personal relations with Amir Abdur Rehman, was able to negotiate the border agreement within four weeks. It came to be known as "Durand Line".

The actual boundary line was drawn in 1895. An independent and well-defined state of Afghanistan came into existence. With the demarcation of these boundaries, the British extended recognition to the Russian conquests in Central Asia. Similarly the Russians conceded the paramountcy in the territories lying east of Russian Afghan border. With the demarcation of Indo-Afghan border, expansion of British India to the north had come to an end, as had the Russian Afghan boundary ended the expansion of Tsarist Russia towards the East. Thus the power vacuum, which had made possible the expansion of both the empires, was eliminated. Along with this, what Kipling called "The Great Game" seemed over. Afghanistan emerged as a buffer between the two powers.

CHAPTER-II

Tsarist Russian Expansion Towards Central Asia

F. H Skrine describes the extent of Tsarist Russian expansion as follows: “The Russian Empire was an organism unique in world history. It embraced an area greater than Alexander’s conquests, than the solid dominion built up by Rome, than the realms overrun by Chinghiz or Timur; it was surpassed only by Greater Britain. Given a people with a colonizing instinct and schooled by their environment to endure and conquer; given an absolute power with its roots set deeply in vital religion; and Tsarist Russia was the inevitable result.”¹

A glance at the map of Russia will show that she belongs geographically to Asia. The lines marked out by nature for Russia’s advance lie southwards and south-eastwards of Moscow. Its rationale is to be found in-

- The colonising instinct which prompted the communities settled on the river banks of ancient Muscovy to overflow and plant offshoots in all directions.
- The nomad instinct grafted on the national character by its strain of Tatar blood.

¹ F.H. Skrine; *The Expansion of Russia (1815-1900)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1915; p.1.

- The blind impulse of a rapidly growing population to burst from ice-bound coasts. They were in search for warmer waters. These attainable by Russia are the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and the Pacific Ocean.

The westward movement of Russia in 1813-15 seems to belie this theory. In this case, the impetus was not given by the genius of the Russian people. These memorable campaigns were undertaken by Alexander I at a time when his spirit was stirred to its depths by the French invasion. With this sole exception, the course of Russian Empire held its way eastwards throughout the last century.²

Russia's expansion into Asia began in the sixteenth century. The Muscovite Grand Duchy began its march on Asia as soon as it had overthrown the Mongolian yoke. In 1552, Ivan the Terrible occupied Kazan and in 1556, Astrakhan, on the Volga Delta. The Pacific was reached at the end of the seventeenth century.³ The Cossacks, who undertook this expansion, met little resistance from the primitive tribes and the latter were soon outnumbered by Russian settlers. It moved southward from Siberia in the eighteenth century, first into the steppe region, and later into Turkestan. Russia's expansion into the steppe region may be said to have begun in 1730 with the acceptance of Russian control by Abulkhair, the Khan of

² Ibid., pp. 5-6.

³ Devendra Kaushik, *Central Asia in Modern Times: A History from Early Nineteenth Century*, Moscow: Progress Publishers; 1970; p.40.

the Lesser Horde. Its advance towards the Khanates began chiefly in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The incorporation of the Kazakh steppe and western Turkistan into the Russian Empire during the six decades ending in 1885 was the last chapter into the Russian State built before 1917 revolution. As such, it was the culmination of a centuries-old process whereby a Muscovite/Russian state growing in strength expanded its territory at the expense of neighbouring societies that were at a much lower level of technological and organizational development or that had lost their former capacity to deal with Russia as equals or superiors. The logic and justification of this advance was set out in a memorandum of the Russian chancellor, Prince Gorchakov in 1864.

Stages of Expansion

The advance of Russia towards Central Asia towards east may be considered to have begun in 19th century. Both the Tsars, Paul and Alexander I, were interested in the idea of attacking British India. In 1800, Paul dispatched Count Orlov from Orenburg with an army of 35,000 men. This shows that he had no idea of the difficulties involved. But Orlov had actually marched 450 miles before Paul's death. Paul's death saved him from proceeding further with his suicidal expedition.⁴

⁴ Graham Stephenson, *History of Russia: 1812-1945*; London; McMillan; 1969; p. 279.

In 1824, a “scientific” expedition was sent to conduct a barometric study of the Caspian and Aral Sea areas, supported by half a battalion of Cossack infantry and six cannons.⁵ In 1834, a military base was established at fort Novo-Alexandrovosk on the north-eastern coast of the Caspian.

In November 1839, the Governor, of Count Pervosky, in command of 3000 infantry, 2000 Cossacks, and powerful artillery, started from Orenburg on a march of 900 miles across the desert on the Khiva expedition. He carried supplies on an enormous column of baggage columns. But the lack of forage and the cold, which killed off his camels by hundreds, forced the column to retreat before even reaching the Ust Utr plateau, situated midway between the Caspian and the Aral Seas. The column, which suffered heavy losses, returned to Orenburg in June 1840. So, this expedition, like the previous ones under Bekovich and Muravyov, was unsuccessful.

Preparation for a second expedition started immediately and the Khan of Khiva, on hearing it, asked for peace. In 1844, Russian explores reached sea of Aral, an inland Sea, and, in 1847, the Governor of Orenburg occupied the mouth of Syr-Darya near the Aral Sea, by the erection of a fort termed Aralsk, where a fleet of ships covered the advancing Russian columns.

⁵ Devendra Kaushik; n.3; p. 40.

Russia was now operating in Khokand territory and naturally excited the hostility of that state by her occupation of the mouth of Syr-Darya.⁶ In 1853, General Pervosky captured AK-Masjed, a fort belonging to Khokand, situated 220 miles up the river. The fort had been strengthened in the previous year and was only assailable by regular approaches. However, a breach was effected by the explosion of a mine and AK-Masjed was stormed. The Khokandis made repeated efforts to recover AK-Masjed but failed and for the next eight years, Russia was fully occupied in consolidating her position. During this period, the Crimean War also stopped all progress.

In June 1865, Chernayev captured Tashkent. Tashkent was captured by Chernayev with a total Russian loss of 25 killed and 89 wounded, resistance being very limited. At first, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, denied the intention of incorporating Tashkent into the Russian Empire. It favoured turning Tashkent and its surrounding territory into a separate Khanate under complete control of Tsarism, playing the role of a buffer state between the Russian Empire and the Bukhara. This view was opposed by Chernayev, but it was supported by Kryzhanovsky, the newly appointed Governor-General of Orenburg. In 1866, Tashkent was declared part of Russia.

In 1867, the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan was established with its headquarters at Tashkent and General K. P. Kufman as the first Governor-General.

⁶ Percy Sykes; *A History of Afghanistan*; Vol. II; London: Macmillan; 1940; p. 85.

In March 1868, Bokhara declared a holy war against the Russians. General Kufaman stormed Samarkand in April 1868 and by defeating the troops of Bokhara entered the city on May 2. Bokhara was humbled by the capture of Samarkand and the imposition of a treaty, which reduced the Khanate to a vassalage.

During 1864-68, the two most important Central Asian Khanates, Khokand and Bokhara, were completely defeated. The decision to annex them was rejected for diplomatic reasons. Peace treaties were concluded in 1868 with Khan Khudayar Khan of Khokand and Emir Muzaffar-Eddin of Bokhara, whereby they relinquished the lands actually conquered by Russia, confirmed their dependent status and gave Russians highly favourable trade terms.

In 1869, Russia established herself at desolate Krasnovodsk, now the starting-point of the Central Asian Railway and shortly afterwards, occupied Chikishliar, situated near the mouth of river Atrek. In the spring of 1873 Khiva was overrun by Russia and forced to accept terms dictated by Russia.

Thereafter the Russians turned towards Tekke Turkmens who inhabited the Atrek Valley and the Sarrakhs of the Merv Oasis. The Khiva Subjugation marked a new era in the history of Russian advance. The last semblance of organized opposition to the Russian onslaught disappeared. The Tsar found himself the unquestioned master of the great Khanates. Russian influence was firmly implanted in the Caspian part of Krasnovodsk, which was founded in 1869 by

General Stoletov. The Amu-Darya marked the new limits in the west. But the tract between the Amu-Darya and the Caspian was still unvanquished. There was no organized state here and the region was the abode of the Turkmens, the story of whose subjugation forms the final chapter in the history of the Russian conquest of Central Asia.

But before Russia could march against the Turkmens, a hostile movement spread in Khokand. The rebellion headed by Nasiruddin, the son of Khan Khudayar Khan, was quelled and the Khanate of Khokand was absorbed into the Russian Empire on 2 March 1876. It was renamed the province of Ferghana.⁷

In 1874, General Lomakin, the newly appointed Governor of Krasnovodsk, issued a proclamation to the Yamuts, who occupied both banks of the Atrek, and to other Turkmen tribes who inhabited the country as far as Merv and the Oxus, inviting them to send delegates to meet him.⁸

In 1877, Lomakin made an attempt to occupy the Tekke fortress of Kizil Arvat, 200 miles east of Krasnovodsk, but had to retreat in the face of stiff resistance. In 1879, Lokamin renewed his advance into the interior. He made an attempt on Dangil-Tepe in the district of Geok-Tepe in the Akhal Oasis, but the Turkman warriors foiled it. His artillery inflicted serious losses on its defenders,

⁷ Devendra Kaushik; n.3; p. 47.

⁸ Percy Sykes; n. 7; p. 89.

but his attempt at storming the fortress was repulsed and he retreated suffering heavy losses in men, material and prestige.

In 1880, Skobeloff who had been appointed to avenge this disaster, made a reconnaissance in force and then retired to Caspian where he completed his preparations. Skobeloff, unlike Lomakin who had relied on the use of camels, which perished by the thousand in the long difficult march, invoked the help of steam. A special railway battalion was formed and keeping pace with the progress of the campaign preceded the construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway. A distillery was established at Krasnovodsk for a plentiful supply of drinking water.

All preparations having been made, he reappeared on the scene with a force of 7000 men and 60 guns. The fortress at Dangil-Tepe was consisted of a quadrilateral enclosure with walls 35 feet thick at the base and 25 feet thick at the top. On this wide top were constructed an inner and outer parapet with loopholes and a large number of traverses, designed to protect the defenders. The Tekke made desperate sorties, but the bombardment by heavy artillery and the explosion of mines, followed by a storming party captured the stronghold. The beleaguered Turkmans fought gallantly and Geok-Tepe was conquered after heavy fighting. With its fall, the Akhal Oasis fell into Russian hands.

Now Merv alone remained to be annexed. The latter was added to the Russian Empire by skilful diplomatic efforts of an astute Caucasian Muslim, Alikhanov, who had an ally in Gul Jamal, the widow of the last great Turkman

tribal Chieftain Nur Vedi Khan. In January 1884, the Turkmen Tribal Chiefs met at Ashkhabad and swore fidelity to the Tsar. Soon afterwards the Sarik tribe south of Merv yielded and the conquest of the whole region was then completed. The Tsar became the master of Central Asia.⁹

An enlightened Russian colonial administrator could write in his memoirs after the Russian annexation of Transcaspia -

“The entry of Russia into Central Asia, followed by the introduction of European methods of civilization, brought a breath of fresh air to a land despoiled and impoverished by centuries of Asian Despotic rule. The reader, accustomed to differentiate between what he has been taught to regard as western civilization and conditions in Russia, may fail to appreciate the magnitude and effect of the changes brought in the life of Central Asia by Tsarist and autocratic Russia. Slavery was brought to an end; the arbitrary legislations of the Khans, Emirs, and their puppets, the Beks, who controlled a large part of their master’s wealth, such as their flocks, was superseded by Russian law, under which all the inhabitants, irrespective of their standing, were equal. Hitherto enslaved captives from every race in Asia, emancipated overnight, hastened home to spread the news of these wondrous

⁹ Devendra Kaushik, n.3; p. 48.

changes, introduced by a humane administration, upheld by one universal writ, and enforced by Russian arms. Henceforth, the verdicts of the Kadis (Judges) in the local courts were based on the wide adaptation of the Sharia't (the holy law of Islam) to the Russian conception of justice.¹⁰

Now Russia was at the door of Afghanistan. On the other hand Britain, too, had moved up to the Afghan boundary. At last both these powers reached to an agreement to create a buffer zone in between their area of influence to stop any direct hostility towards each other. Afghanistan emerged as an independent country. Thus, the Russian advance towards east was stopped.

Reasons behind Russian Expansion

Each stage of expansion had different reasons and therefore different policies were being advocated.

Russia, under Tsar Paul and Alexander I, was interested in attacking British India and therefore Paul dispatched Count Orlov on an expedition. It was a suicidal expedition. More cautious steps were taken by Nicholas I. In 1824, a "scientific" expedition was sent to conduct a barometric study of the Caspian and Aral Sea.



¹⁰ John C. Griffith; Afghanistan; London: Pall Mall Press; 1967; pp. 45-46.

In 1834, Russia wanted to improve its trade with Khiva and therefore established a military base at fort Novo-Alexandrovsk. But the Uzbek Khan of Khiva had different ideas. He had long been a most unsatisfactory neighbour. He had encouraged raiding for slaves, cattle and other loot, and the number of Russian prisoners whom he held and ill-treated were considerable. But apart from these justifiable reasons for a punitive expedition, the British occupation of Kabul probably provided an incentive to the Russian frontier officials, if not the Government, to undertake an important advance towards India.¹¹ In 1839, an expedition was dispatched which failed.

Russia's aims were mainly commercial, if a dispatch dated 20 October 1838, from Count Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, to his Ambassador in London is to be believed. It refers to -

“... indefatigable activity displayed by English travellers in spreading disquiet among the people of Central Asia, and in carrying agitation even into the heart of the countries bordering on our frontier; while on our part we ask nothing but to be admitted to (Share) in fair competition the commercial advantages of Asia. English industry, exclusive and jealous, would deprive us entirely of the benefits which it (claims) to reap alone; and would cause, if it could, the

¹¹ Percy Sykes, n.7; p. 83.

produce of our manufacturers to disappear from all the markets of Central Asia.¹²

Preparations for second expedition started but Khiva asked for peace. A formal treaty was signed. But Khiva still persisted in her hostile attitude towards Russia. The Khan openly sided with the Kazakh rebels and instigated them against Russia. The Russian government now changed its methods of dealing with the Central Asian Khanates. It decided to proceed slowly but methodically instead of sending a sweeping military expedition across the desert which was doomed to failure.

The failure of the Khiva expedition made Russia realize the importance of occupying the great Kirghiz desert which spread from the Ural Mountains to the Sea of Aral.¹³ It reached this inland sea in 1844 and occupied the mouth of Syr-Darya.

During this period the Khanates, which Russia was about to annex, had fallen from their former greatness. Arminium Vambery, who made his celebrated journey to Central Asia in 1863, describes the Khan of Khiva as being in appearance so frightfully dissolute and as presenting in every feature of his countenance the real picture of an enervated imbecile and savage tyrant.¹⁴

¹² John C. Griffith; n.11; pp. 31-32.

¹³ Percy Sykes; n.7; p. 85.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Of Bukhara he writes: "The wretchedness of the streets and houses far exceeded that of the meanest habitations in Persia, and gave but an ignoble idea of Bukhara the Noble."¹⁵

There was overall moral degradation. Misgovernment, corruption, bigotry were prevalent. There was decrease in the volume of the rivers on which the life of the crops depended. Under these conditions, the absorption of the Khanates in the Russian Empire was done with remarkable ease.

In 1853, Russia captured Ak-Masjed in Khokand. Here the Russian expansion stopped for the time being due to the Crimean war. Russia was fully occupied in consolidating her position

The Russian government now changed its method of dealing with the Central Asian Khanates. It decided to proceed slowly but methodically instead of sending a sweeping military expedition across the desert which was doomed to failure. In 1846, the Governor of Orenburg established a fort on the Syr-Darya near the Aral Sea where a fleet of ships covered the advancing Russian columns. The Kazakh revolt under Kenissary had been suppressed by then. In 1853, General Perovsky captured Ak-Masjed, a fort belonging to Kokand. Here the Russian advance stopped for the time being due to the Crimean War.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Devendra Kaushik, n. 3; p. 41.

Russia was defeated in the Crimean war. Now Russian interest transferred from the Balkans and the Near East to the Far East and Central Asia. The path of the Russian Empire in Europe, as Karl Marx wrote, was now barred. The policy makers in St Petersburg were divided in the decade after the Crimean war.¹⁷

In January 1856, General Blaramberg declared that the future of Russia does not lie in Europe and that she must therefore turn her interest to Asia. In 1857, Y. A. Gagemeister noted that Russia's growth rate of trade with Asia was much higher than with Europe and that while manufactured goods formed an insignificant portion of her exports to Europe, they constituted half her exports to Asia. He recommended the annexation of Central Asia for economic reasons. The region was ideally suited to cultivation of cotton and the Syr-Darya was navigable up to the vicinity of Tashkent.¹⁸

The works of A. Semyonov concerning the Russian Empire's foreign trade and industry as well as the works of others roused in Russia a great interest in Central Asia. Journals like *Russky Vestnik*, *Morskoi Sbornik*, and *Ekonomicheskyy Ukazatel* devoted many pages to the developments in Central Asia. A. Shipov, a famous industrialist & trader, emphasized the developments in Central Asia as a potential supplier of raw materials, especially cotton, to Russia (Kazakhstan).¹⁹

¹⁷ Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara & Khiva, 1865-1924; Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1968; pp. 14-17.

¹⁸ Devendra Kaushik; no. 3; p. 42.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Instructions sent in 1858 by A. Gorchakov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire to the Russian Ambassador in London, Brunnow who reflected this policy change. He stressed the desire to obtain full freedom of action for Russia in the East. Britain was quite firmly told that she must give due consideration to Russia's interests in Asia if she wanted to live in peace with her. The instructions to the Russian Ambassador in London laid down "the strengthening of the influence of Russian industry, trade and culture in Asia" as the main object of Russian policy.²⁰

There was a favourable response from the ruling circles to this wide campaign for incorporation of Central Asia into the Russian Empire. In 1856, the Caucasian commander A. I. Barvatinsky submitted a project for construction of a railway line from the Caspian to the Aral Sea. This was to replace the old caravan routes. He was concerned at the British activities in Iran. His proposal was meant to counteract their effect. The project came up for discussion. An Extraordinary Committee after having long discussion approved the project despite the opposition of Gorchakov and General Perovsky. The Committee adopted the plan of establishing direct communication from the Caspian to the Aral Sea and further to the Amu- Darya and Syr-Darya. But its execution was postponed for a more suitable time.

Even before the Crimean War, industrial firms, trading companies and transport organisations engaged in commerce with Central Asia were making their

²⁰ Ibid. p.41.

appearance. The government gave encouragement and support to Mercury Steamer Company (established in 1849) and the Trade House of Baranov and Yelizaro. Kokorev, a leading Russian industrialist, and Khrulyov, the hero of Sevastopol, submitted a memorandum on the Caspian routes and pointed out their special importance for trade with the Central Asian Khanates. The Trans-Caspian Trading Society was organized with a capital of two million rubles. It had the backing of Baryatinsky and the Grand Prince Konstanin Nikolayevich. In 1858, Benardaki put forth the suggestion of establishing a fishing centre at Krasnovodsk. He also outlined a plan for trade with Turkmen people which was approved by the Governor-General of Orenburg. This, however, could not be implemented at that time.²¹

An all-inclusive study of the neighbouring countries was made and the way prepared for the expansion of Tsarist Russia into Central Asia. Commercial, political and intelligence missions were sent in 1858 to Iran, Khanates of Central Asia and Kashgar. The three missions- a scientific expedition, an official diplomatic mission, a Muslim trader- though different in nature, had the common object of making an intensive study of the prevailing political and economic conditions in neighbouring countries. These missions collected valuable information about the people of Khorasan, East Iran, Central Asian Khanates and West China, and also about the British penetration of these regions.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

All these missions also tried to increase Russian influence there. After the return of the Ignatyev mission from Khiva and Bukhara, the Tsarist government began active preparations for direct expansion in Central Asia. The joining of the Orenburg line with that of West Siberia was favoured by Ignatyev and also by Katenin, the Governor-General of Orenburg. In 1860, the Tsarist government sent intelligence missions to Issyk Kul and Pishpek area.²² In 1861, Major-General Tsimmerman reported the conditions in the Khokand Khanate. He recommended increased pressure on the Khanate to permit increased circulation of Russian commodities in the Central Asian market.

Another powerful advocate of vigorous action against Khokand was D. A. Milyutin, the Minister of War, who acted on the advice of General Bezak, the Governor-General of Orenburg. Bezak visited the Syr-Darya line in 1861 and formed the opinion that Tashkent should be captured as soon as possible. He thought that Russia would thus secure a convenient frontier with Khokand, while her control of Tashkent would facilitate promotion of trade. Trade routes from Bukhara, China and Russia passed through Tashkent. Therefore, Russia's occupation of this city was apt to increase trade with these countries, particularly with Chinese Turkestan, as well as strengthen her influence on Bokhara.²³

²² Ibid., p.43.

²³ Ibid, pp.43-44.

There was a fear that an over-active policy in Central Asia would antagonize Britain. Bezak, however, felt that Britain would not display any extraordinary sensitivity towards Russian expansion up to the Syr-Darya. Although the Tsar approved Bezak's views, another four years were to elapse before Tashkent was brought under Russian control. Tashkent was finally captured in 1865 by the prompt and largely unauthorised action of the local commander, General Chernayev.

Chernayev made his first unsuccessful assault on Tashkent in October 1864. The expediency of such a step was categorically rejected. It was believed that it would inevitably involve in Russian Empire in all Central Asian disputes. But there were many equivocal statements in the official Foreign Office memoranda disclaiming desire "to extend the limits of Russian influence by conquest". Thus, while the plan of operations in Central Asia approved by the Tsar in November 1864 emphasized the necessity of refraining from further advances in Central Asia, the statement about the "inevitability" of capturing the whole of the Khokand Khanate made no sense of the entire talk about the inexpediency of "the further extension of the imperial domains".

Chernayev captured Tashkent in June 1865. According to Khalfin, he was taking action "which in fact fully corresponded with the ideas both of the government and the military-feudal aristocracy of the Russian Empire, and of commercial and industrial circles". He understood perfectly well that the repeated

appeals by the diplomatic department for the cessation of further advance in Central Asia were a special kind of manoeuvre, a smoke-screen, resulting from fears of protests from Britain. Chernayev took advantage of the strong support of expansionist elements in the capital and among his own close associates. He knew that not only he would be taken to task for his 'independent' action, but that on the contrary, he could count on receiving decorations and promotion.²⁴

After Tashkent, Bukhara fell in 1867. In 1869, Russia established herself at desolate Krasnovodsk, the starting point of the Central Asian Railway or Transcaspian railway. The declared object of Russia was the opening up of a trade route to Central Asia, a policy which was partly inspired by the desire to gain contact with the province of Turkistan from the west. In 1881, Geok Tepe was captured and finally Merv in 1884. The advance towards east came to an end.

Consequences of Expansion

The expedition sent by Tsar Paul under Court Orlov from Orenburg in 1800 turned out to be a suicidal one. During the reign of Nicholas I, Russian peasants were starting to settle in Kazakh steppes. This provoked an anti-Russian movement among some of the Kazakhs. They found a good leader in Kenesary Kazymov (1837-47) who resisted the Cossack formation sent against him. Fortified towns were built in the steppes, well forward from the eighteenth century line.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 45.

The 1839 Khiva expedition was unsuccessful. There were heavy losses of men and material. This expedition, although it ended in disaster, alarmed Major Todd, Great Britain's representative at Herat. Under his instructions Captain James Abbot, followed later by captain Richmond Shakespeare, crossed the desert 700 miles wide to Khiva where they explained to the Khan the extreme danger of flouting Russia. Not content with this, Richmond Shakespeare induced him to release all his Russian slaves, and personally conducted them, numbering four hundred men, women and children, to Orenburg, a truly remarkable feat.

Before the second Khiva expedition, the Khan of Khiva asked for peace. He tendered his submission and in 1842, he agreed to a treaty, by the terms of which slave-dealing was abolished in Khiva, and raiding prohibited. He released all Russians imprisoned in Khiva and threatened to impose death penalty on those of his subjects who attacked Russian merchants. But Khiva still persisted in her hostile attitude towards Russia. The Khan openly sided with the Kazakh rebels and instigated them against Russia.

The failure of Khiva expedition made Russia to realize the importance of occupying the great Kirghiz desert. In 1847, it occupied the mouth of the Syr Darya. Russia in 1853 occupied Ak-Masjed in Kokand and for next eight years it consolidated her position.

Meanwhile, the Crimean War took place and it gave Russia an additional motive for its expansion towards Central Asia. The "Pendulum Theory" came into

existence. According to this theory, when checked in West, Russia turns East and vice-versa. After the treaty of Paris, Russian Expansion towards West was no longer possible. It was only beyond the Caspian Sea, i.e., in the east that Russia could expand without fear of European intervention.

The great Islamic Khanates of Khokand, Bokhara and Khiva fell one after another. Before that Tashkent, the key city in Turkestan, was captured. Finally the city of Merv fell.

Russia reached at the gate of Indian sub-continent and threatened the British interest in India. Now Britain had to take appropriate decision that how to stop the Russian advance. It had two options- military and diplomatic. It went for the second one. The diplomatic relation between the two powers was given importance. They decided to delimit the Afghan boundary.

The boundary commission which had been given the task of delimiting the boundary of Afghanistan was asked to speed up its work. The delimitation of the boundary finally took place in 1895. With this, both Russia and Britain got their area of influence in a well defined manner. Now there was no confusion. Both these powers stopped their aggressive posture towards each other and ended their rivalry in the Central Asian region. Russia stopped further expansion towards Central Asian region.

CHAPTER-III

British Policy Towards Afghanistan

A. H. Bilgrami describes the British India's interest in Afghanistan as culmination of historical relations between the two countries as follows: "The relations of Afghanistan with India are as old as history itself. The valleys and mountain passes of Afghanistan acted as channels for currents and cross-currents of history that had continually flowed from Central Asia into India, changing the colour and character of the Indian people and moulding the course of their destiny. This process continued till the establishment of British hegemony in India. And it was under the British that Afghanistan came to occupy a commanding position in the political and military consideration of their Indian Empire."¹

Afghanistan has got immense importance due to its strategic location. It has provided the historical invasion routes to the Indian sub-continent.* It emerged as an important region for the Britishers when Zaman Shah invaded India in 1793-1800. And from then on Britain started taking interest in Afghan affairs.

There are several reasons behind British interest in Afghanistan. The prominent among them being -

¹ Asghar H. Bilgrami; *Afghanistan & British India, 1793-1907*; New Delhi: Sterling Publications; p. 1.

* It has also provided the Indians an outlet to venture into the Central Asian region and the areas beyond.

- British India was looking for a 'scientific frontier' to safeguard its dominion in India. The strategic location of Afghanistan made it viable for that purpose.
- The Britishers wanted to consolidate their position in India. They were very much worried about the Afghan raids, which were taking place at regular intervals and jeopardizing their activities in India.
- The North-West Frontier of British India was always under the threat of foreign powers- Russian, French and Persian. The Britishers therefore had to defend it.
- Afghanistan's prominence was also because of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Persia. This rivalry had great impact upon Anglo-Russian rivalry in Afghanistan.
- The Britishers didn't want Russia to come close on the heels of Afghanistan. They wanted to keep them out of the orbit of Afghanistan.

Strategic location of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is bounded in the north and east by immense mountain ranges and on the South-West by vast tracts of sandy desert. These physical features constitute formidable natural defences for the country. Afghanistan has a common frontier with Russia in the North. To its north-east and south lies Pakistan which was the part of British India upto 1947. Iran lies in the west and south-west of Afghanistan.

This location of Afghanistan made it strategically very important. It was accessible to foreigners through a limited number of passes. Most of them on the Russian, Persian and Indian (now Pakistani) side remain intractable in winter. So, the Britishers were interested in Afghanistan as it provided a secure North-West Frontier. Britain was interested in territorial expansion in Central Asian region (inner Asia). For this it needed physical control over Afghanistan as through Afghanistan only could it easily advance into the Central Asian region. It was easy for Britain to establish its garrison in Afghanistan to help its advancing forces in Central Asian region. The other route through Kashmir & Tibet was hazardous and very difficult to overrun. By establishing control over Afghanistan it could have easily monitored its enlarged territories in that area.

The vast resources of Central Asian region had also attracted the Britishers. They were very much interested in the commercial exploitation of the conquered territories. Once again the strategic location of Afghanistan gave it immense importance in the eyes of the Britishers. They came to realise that the trade route to Central Asia led from Afghanistan–Kandahar, Kabul and Peshawar to India. The returning caravans carried the products not only to these Khanates but also to Khokand and Bokhara.

This strategically important region came to the attention of the Britishers only after the threats of invasion of their empire in India by Zaman Shah became real.

British Consolidation and Afghan Raids

The European powers in the beginning of the imperialist stage were trying to colonise and extend their control over all those territories which they considered were governed by the weak, corrupt and unpopular rulers of Asia. Britain was doing the same. After annexing large territories in Asia and establishing the empire in India Britain was looking to consolidate. This consolidation was very much needed. A sizable area upto the 'Scientific Frontier' was controlled by the fighting and hostile people. These people include the Rohillas, the Marathas, the Jats and the Sikhs. The foreign powers like the French were also creating problems for the Britishers. Therefore the British were trying to consolidate their rule near Delhi to meet the internal and external challenges. For this only they were attempting to expand the sphere of their influence further on to the North-West in their search for a safe 'Scientific Frontier' - a frontier which was easy to protect as it is well defined and is carved out keeping geo-strategic location in view. This search ended with the emergence of Afghanistan as that frontier.

On the other hand Zaman Shah (1765-1863), the ruler of Afghanistan had different ideas. He wanted to invade and thereby conquer India. He marched across the Frontier eager to expand the territory of his kingdom to the banks of the Ganges. But he had to retreat as his own throne fell in danger in his absence This

was the case every time. Although he could never advance beyond Lahore, the fear of his expeditions kept the British India in a state of unrest.²

After the first abortive crossing of the Indus in 1795, when he was compelled to hasten back to Kabul to set his own house in order, Zaman Shah started making detailed plans for 'his descent upon Hindustan'. He sent emissaries to enlist the co-operation of the Indian rulers in crushing the enemies of every one of the rulers so contacted. He also sent out spies to incite the Muslims to rise against the Sikhs and the Marathas at the time of his invasion. After receiving a mission from Tipu Sultan Zaman Shah twice crossed the Indus to reassert the claims of Ahmad Shah's empire. It is also evident from the circumstances prevailing that Zaman Shah was trying to buy safety for his western frontiers before embarking upon India.³

The news of Zaman Shah's invasion created an unprecedented panic among the people of India. The Mughal Empire at Delhi sent a mission to Zaman Shah with a promise to pay a large sum of money (tribute) if the Afghan monarch could come and expel the Marathas from Delhi and thus help the Mughal throne. The British Governor- General had already received Zaman Shah's communication which sought the co-operation of the British in crushing the Marathas. On the other hand, the British were greatly perturbed by the 'wild Afghan hordes pouring

² Ibid. p. 15.

³ Ibid.

down in their territory from their mountain fastness; and couldn't make up their mind whether it was in the British interest to support the Afghans against the Marathas.⁴

Afghan ruler could not advance beyond Lahore. Yet this much advance, only, created a strong sensation throughout India. The Indian Muslims looked upto the Afghan ruler as their deliverer. Every Muslim anxiously looked forward to the coming of the 'Champion of Islam'. The rumours of another invasion of India created an unusual air of expectancy among the rulers of India. The agents of 'Asafuddaulah of Oudh' urged upon his Afghan Majesty that all Muslims would gladly hail him as a deliverer. Tipu Sultan had encouraged the Afghan Monarch to move further north inside India with an indication that his own army would join him in crushing the Marathas and driving the British out of India.⁵

The British-Governor General in India Wellesley sought to forestall an invasion of India by Zaman Shah, the Afghan ruler. In particular, the British feared that Afghan incursions into politically weak India might stir up the Indian Muslims and lead to a revival of Moghul power or the reestablishment of Afghan rule in the strategic Punjab, which might then become a base for French activity in

⁴ Ibid., p.16.

⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

India. This would have been a disaster for the Britishers' who were trying to neutralize the French in India.⁶

Distance and a lack of knowledge concerning the strength of the Durrani Empire, combined with the French presence in Egypt and diplomatic activities in the Ottoman Empire, Persia and India, magnified British fears of an Afghan invasion of India. Wellesley wrote that Zaman Shah's heralded invasion had "created the liveliest sensation throughout India", adding that "every Mahomedan even in the remotest region of the Deccan, waited with anxious expectation for the advance of the champion of Islam."⁷

Fears were expressed by various India experts, who (despite grave doubts voiced in England about the feasibility of such Alexandrian schemes) foresaw disastrous consequences for British interests in any combination of alliances that linked the Ottoman Empire, Persia, or Afghanistan with France and Russia.

Thus the attempts by Afghanistan to invade India, which had the tacit support of France and Russia, made the Britishers curious about this territory. They started taking interest in Afghanistan. They considered it as the gateway of India and in their eyes the safety and integrity of this land was in their (British) own interest.

⁶ P. E. Roberts; India Under Wellesley, Gorakhpur, Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan; 1961; pp. 143-150.

⁷ Bilgrami; No. 1; p. 16.

Safety of North-West Frontier

After establishing their empire in India the Britishers went for consolidation. They looked for a safe Frontier in the North-West as they had come to know that if ever India could be invaded by any rival power it would be through this vulnerable Frontier only. They had got the historical evidence to back their belief. Afghanistan had to play a very important role in the safety of their North-West Frontier.

The Britishers were very much interested in the safety of this frontier due to various factors. The important among them being —

- Britain was essentially a sea-oriented power. On the other hand Tsarist Russia had a very strong army and could have been a threat to British Indian domain.
- France under Napoleon was interested in invading India and exploiting the resources of India. He wanted to expel the Britishers from India. He made several attempts, but couldn't succeed.
- Persia was always forced by the other powers like Russia and France to invade via Afghanistan. These Persian misadventures created panic among Britishers.
- Russia was expanding rapidly towards Central Asia. This rapid advance of Russia if not stopped would have endangered British domain in India.

Britain was essentially a sea-oriented power. They followed the sea-route to reach India. They were in search of some natural stronghold and therefore they expanded from south-east to North-West. This natural stronghold was needed to defend their Indian empire against the land-based Russian power. Maintenance of the link with base in England was also basic to Indian defence, which required the protection of the British 'Imperial life line' through the Mediterranean and preventing the Russian power from entering either the Mediterranean or gaining a foothold in the Persian Gulf. All this made the Britishers sensitive about the defence of their North-West frontier.

In 1798, a new chapter in Afghan history opened with the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon. This expedition of Napoleon had three major objectives:

- To cut a canal through the isthmus of Suez;
- To "ensure to the French Republic the free and exclusive possession of the Red Sea"; and
- "To combat the Satellites of the English government there... (and) drive the English from all their Oriental possessions", by reopening the Mediterranean - Red Sea route to India.

These objectives were not new; Leibnitz had drawn the attention of Louis XIV to the importance of Egypt and the benefits to be derived from a reopening of the Red Sea trade route to India. There had been suggestions of a joint Franco-

Russian expedition to India. Peter the Great had reportedly proposed in 1717 that the two powers cooperate in establishing a continental route to India through Central Asia and Afghanistan. During the course of the century, other plans had been advanced both in Russia and in France for bilateral or unilateral expedition to India via Bukhara and Afghanistan or Mesopotamia or via the Persian Gulf. In all these plans a major role was envisaged for Persia in anticipation of her acquiescence.⁸

Napoleon contemplated several plans for a military expedition to India, one of the more fanciful of which required the co-operation of Paul I of Russia for an invasion of India through Afghanistan. The plan was abandoned when Paul died; Alexander I, his successor, refused to consider the venture.⁹ Napoleon then contemplated a unilateral invasion of India. His thought was to use the French outposts in India, to secure the alliance of local ruler there, and to send a maritime expedition around the Cape. This plan, too, came to naught. But the recurring French threat forced the British to take interest in the safety of its North-West Frontier.

The British Indian North-West Frontier was also in danger from time to time due to the Persian misadventures. Persia made attempts to gain influence in Afghanistan and thereby in India. It took the help of other European powers for its

⁸ Alexis Krausse; *Russia in Asia: 1558-1899*; New York; Grant Richards; 1899; p. 149.

⁹ *Ibid*; pp. 149-152.

misadventures. The Franco-Persian alliance, the Russo-Persian alliance and for some-time the triple alliance of Russia, France and Persia had endangered the North-West Frontier of British Indian Empire. The Britishers were forced to thwart this design of Persia and therefore they had to provide shield to their North-West frontier.

With the exit of Napoleon it seemed that the British Indian Empire's North-West Frontier has attained the safety for which they had been trying so hard for so long. But the Russians had different ideas. They in fact aggravated their advance and came knocking at the door of Afghanistan. Britishers had a lot at stake in their dominion in India and they could have done whatever possible to thwart any designs of the Russians to challenge their supremacy in India. By this time the Britishers had realised the importance of Afghanistan. The Britishers in fact had invaded Afghanistan (1838-42) to guard their empire by controlling the strategic routes against possible invaders. They went to war for the second time with Afghanistan. Once again their aim was to thwart any Russian design to get influence in that territory which was strategically very important. The continuous Russian advance endangered the British interest in India. They were endeavouring for the safety of the North-West frontier.

Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Persia

British Indian Empire's interest in Afghanistan had a lot to do with the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Persia. Russia had its influence mostly felt on Persia well

before it manifested itself on the frontier of Afghanistan. It encouraged Persia to get compensation at the cost of Afghanistan: a Russian success against Persia was followed by a Persian thrust against the Afghans. This was a recurrent pattern.

The Russian power, it seems, was mainly directed towards the Persian Gulf while the pressure on Afghanistan was to keep the British occupied and concede Russia a warm water outlet. For the British, however, it was much easier to have a naval demonstration in the Persian gulf, both to relieve Afghanistan from Persian pressure and prevent Russia from gaining such an outlet. The demonstrations took place in 1838, 1857 & 1903.

Both Russia and British India tried in different ways to strengthen their hold in Persia. On the part of Russia, the Treaty of Gulistan played an important role in strengthening its position in Persia. Shortly after the Gulistan treaty the Britishers negotiated the Treaty of Tehran with the Persians and thereby strengthened their own position. However in 1826 Persia once again came close to Russia. The war between Persia and Russia once again worsened their relation and the Treaty of Turkomanchi was a humiliation for Persia. For Russia the advantages under the treaty were professedly moderate, while for Persia the disadvantages were entirely humiliating.¹⁰ And it has been remarked that under this treaty Persia was delivered, bound hand and foot, to the court of St.

¹⁰ Bilgrami; No.1; p. 54.

Petersburg. Britain withdrew from its commitment to Persia which it has made to it in the Treaty of Tehran for the sake of better relation with Russia.

But the rivalry in between these two imperialist powers for getting stronghold in Persia went on. And in this situation Afghanistan emerged as an important area as it had to play an important role in British designs to get influence in Persia. Afghanistan due to its geographical closeness with Persia could have greater influence on it (Persia) and the Britishers decided to influence Persia through Afghan territory. And therefore grew British interest in Afghanistan.

Eastern Question

The 'Eastern Question' played an important role in developing British interest in Afghanistan. The Russian projection in Asia was considered a reaction to her involvement in the East Asian region. In the thinking of the British Government and their European allies, the Ottoman Empire had come to be regarded as an essential part of the European structure. Consequently, they looked upon Russia, when she made war on Turkey, as subverting the security and peace of Europe.¹¹

Britain was interested in preserving the life of Ottoman Empire, so, it tried to arrest the disintegrating tendencies in the Balkans. For that it opposed Russian

¹¹ J. Norris; *The First Afghan War: 1838-42*; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1967; p. 36.

expansionism. Central Asia attracted the attention of the Russians after they being checked in Europe. Persia was the first to receive their unwelcome attention. When her ingress towards the Mediterranean was blocked, she changed her direction towards the warm waters of the Persian Gulf. As this constituted a threat to Britain's position in India, she consistently moved to checkmate the Russian designs. In this process it moved upto the Frontiers of the Afghanistan. It realised that if it has to put any sort of pressure on Russia in dealing with the Eastern Question it would have to make its presence felt in Afghanistan. By doing that the Russian designs could have been thwarted. And this led to the emergence of British interests in Afghanistan.

To Keep Russia out of Afghan Orbit

Afghanistan had emerged as an important area in the eyes of the British strategists. They wanted to gain influence in this area so that they could keep other rival powers, especially the Russians out of the orbit of this territory. They had realised that Afghanistan was very important for their political, economic, social and geographical prosperity in India and the area beyond the Afghan region, particularly, Central Asia and its adjoining areas.

But once Russia and other European powers started gaining influence in this strategically important region the British interest in their Indian dominion was in danger. To safeguard its interest in India and the areas beyond they needed to

keep these powers outside the Afghan orbit and for that purpose they had to take interest in Afghan affairs.

Thus all the above mentioned reasons together had great impact on forcing the Britishers to take interest in Afghanistan. It will be very difficult to single out one particular reason. But the one reason which had the most important bearing is that of the security of the North-West Frontier from the invading forces.

British Policy towards Afghanistan

Great Britain, Russia and France had chosen Asia as the field of their operation in 19th century. The Franco-Russian advance towards India had endangered the British dominion in India. With the exit of Napoleon Bonaparte from the French political scene the alliance came to an end. But the Russian advance did not stop, rather it advanced more rapidly. To begin with, the British sought co-operation of Iran and Afghanistan to prevent the march of hostile forces through their territories. Through this, Britain wanted to combat the mounting menace of Russian aggression. But lack of British assistance to Iran in the hour of its danger forced her to become a subordinate ally to the Tsar. British India was left then with the sole alternative of depending on Afghanistan for the security of its territory. British Afghan policy grew out of this need.

Thus British policy towards Afghanistan was largely shaped by the considerations of Indian defence. The following were the policies which were adopted by the Britishers to fulfil their interest in Afghanistan—

- The Britishers formulated a Long-Range policy. This policy called for an accelerated consolidation of British power in Asia
- Later on Lord Wellesley pursued a policy of fostering discord among the Afghan as well as encouraged Persia to attack Afghanistan. It was called the Dual Policy.
- When the Britishers found that things were not going their way they started Diplomatic Overtures. They got a little bit of success.
- The most prominent among the policies adopted were the Forward Line policy. In fact, it was this policy which fulfilled British interest in Afghanistan.
- Some of the policy makers in Britain were against the Forward Line Policy and opposed it. They demanded for Stationary Policy.
- Masterly Inactivity or Non-Intervention Policy was the policy which suggested the government not to interfere at all in Afghanistan's internal affair. This policy had an important say in Afghanistan's independence.

Long Range Policy

The French Invasion of Egypt heralded a new chapter in the annals of Afghan history. The British Government and East India Company reacted to the French designs on India and the Indian-Mediterranean trade. They formulated a Long-Range Policy designed to contain any threat to their interests in the area.

This policy called for an accelerated consolidation of British power in India and an extension of British political influence in nearby countries.

The British Governor-General in India, Lord Marnington (later Marquis Wellesley), with the co-operation of the East India Company, decided to neutralize the French in India. He unseated Tipu Sultan, the pro-French ruler of Mysore and attempted to check the establishment of French influence in the Persian Gulf. In this connection the British East India Company gained control of the conduct of foreign relations in Muscat, in the Arabian Peninsula.

Dual Policy

In order to prevent an Afghan invasion of India and overcome the hazards “to which the British interests would be exposed by a connection between the court of Persia and those European powers whose views have long been directed to this quarter of the British dominion”, Wellesley pursued a dual policy: he fostered discord within Afghanistan and, at the same time, encouraged the Persians to attempt to reestablish their sovereignty over the province of Khorasan. Both moves were successful. Renewed civil strife in Afghanistan and the threat of a full-scale war with Persia placed the Afghan ruler in critical position and undermined his Indian plans.

Policy of Diplomatic Overtures

Through Diplomatic activities at the Persian Court, notably the mission of Capt. John Malcolm in 1800-1801, the British managed to consolidate their position in Persia. They secured an anti-Afghan, anti-French treaty. In a firman the Shah of Persia exhorted his provincial governors that they are at full liberty to disgrace and slay the intruders.¹²

Meanwhile, the British made diplomatic overtures to the Afghans, the Amir of Sindh, and the Sikhs. Their intention was to use Afghanistan and Sindh as buffers against Persian encroachments and the Sikhs as a buffer against the Afghans and the Sindhis. In 1809, Elphinstone secured an agreement from Shah Shuja that stipulated joint action in case of Franco-Persian aggression against Afghan or British dominions. The two governments pledged eternal friendship and agreed in no manner to interfere in each other's country.¹³ Later on also from time to time Britain continued this policy of diplomatic overtures.

Forward Line Policy

By 1828, Russia got substantial diplomatic, political, and economic gains in both the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Indian Board, was convinced that a Russian army could advance southward to

¹² J. W. Kaye; History of the War in Afghanistan; vol. 4 (1); New Delhi; Bhavna Books and Prints; 2000; pp. 6-10.

¹³ Ibid. pp. 83-85.

Kabul and into India, though he felt that the initial Russian threat would be economic and political, rather than military: "Russian commerce would be utilised to prepare the way for Russian armies" in Afghanistan. Russian threat to the Ottoman Empire as well as the danger of its influence in the borderlands of India was also stressed. It was also propagated that aside from the political threat Russia represented, she might well challenge Britain's predominance in the commerce of Central Asia and Persia and thus reduce Britain's Indian revenues. John McNeill, like Wellesley, argued that Persia must be considered the forward line of defence for British interests on the Indian subcontinent. Palmerston also shared the views. By 1814 Palmerston adopted Wellesley's policy of treating Persia as the first line of defense against an invasion of India; the assumption was that as long as Persia remained an ally there was nothing to be feared from European intrigues in Central Asia.

This policy was aimed at securing British hegemony in Persia and Afghanistan: Afghanistan was henceforth to be considered the 'Frontier' of India; no European nation would be permitted to carry on commercial or political activities there or interfere, directly or indirectly, in Afghan affairs. Palmerston also tried to neutralise Russian influence in Persia against the eventuality of an Afghan defeat at Persian hands. In his view, the independence of Persia was as essential as the territorial integrity of Afghanistan; both were necessary to ensure peace in Asia and Europe. To this end Palmerston was ready to grant a British

subsidy for the modernisation of the Persian army, provided an agreement could be reached with Persia that would secure British economic interests, contain Russia, and safeguard Afghan defence.¹⁴

But the policy of Palmerston had some adversaries, too. A few different policies were adopted in between. But finally it was the “Forward Line Policy” which emerged out as victorious as Russia was forced by the circumstances engulfed to adopt this policy once again.

The objectives of the Forward Policy were to preclude Russian gains in Central Asia, to provide India with a “scientific frontier”, and to bring Afghanistan under tighter British supervision and control. Frere, one of the policy’s chief exponents, declared in a famous memorandum written in 1874-

“Our policy hitherto has been not only stationary and nominally- though I think very imperfectly- defensive; it has also been purely negative. We are ready enough to say what we will not do, but all efforts by any of the other Asiatic powers concerned have hitherto failed to elicit from the Government... any declaration of what it will do under any given or conceivable combination of circumstances. This peculiarity in our policy will at once explain to anyone who knows Orientals, or, in fact, to anyone who knows mankind in general, the inherent weakness of our policy, as compared with that of the Russians... Orientals

¹⁴ Public Record Office, F. O. 60 (Persia), pp. 42-47; Palmerston to McNeill, June 2 & 13, 1836; Ellis to Palmerston, April, 16, 1836, in Parliamentary Papers, XL (1839) 101.

generally misunderstood our present inaction. They suspect some deep design, some secret understanding with Russia. If it is once understood that nothing will move us till the Russians appear on our frontier we shall certainly hasten that event by a great many years... Nothing, I believe, will be effectual to resist Russian progress towards India till we have British Officers stationed on the Indian-side of a well-defined frontier exercising an effective control over the politics of the Indian side of a well-defined frontier exercising an effective control over the politics of the semi-civilized races on our side of such a border, and in constant frank diplomatic communication with Russian officers on the other side.”

To achieve these objectives, Frere proposed that the Afghan ruler be notified of British intentions to stop all occasions for Russian advance in Afghanistan; that they intended to place the forward post of the British frontier army at Quetta (in Baluchistan) as an excellent strategic point overlooking southern Afghanistan, to extend the railway system to the foot of the Khyber Pass, and to station carefully selected English agents at Kabul, Herat and Kandahar.

Frere later on elaborated his Afghan policy. He suggested the British to establish permanent diplomatic representation and the closest possible relations with the Afghans in order to create a buffer between the British possessions in India and the Russian frontier.

A permanent diplomatic mission, either accepted by the Afghan, or imposed upon them, was thus one of the focal points of the conservative

government's India policy. In this connection, the British, at first, tried negotiation and persuasion. But this policy could not become fruitful. Now, Lord Lytton saw only two alternatives: to secure a forcible or negotiated diplomatic settlement with the Afghan Amir that would permanently assure British influence in Afghanistan or failing that, to break up the Afghan Kingdom and conquer as much Afghan territory as was necessary to secure Indian frontier.¹⁵

In the end, the British were unable to negotiate or wrest a settlement from the Amir. That failure of diplomacy, coupled with the arrival of a Russian mission in Kabul seeking to conclude a mutual assistance treaty,¹⁶ precipitated a major crisis. The result was a second Anglo-Afghan war.

By 1879, Disraeli had succeeded in turning Baluchistan into a protectorate, bringing Afghanistan under "forcible surveillance", and giving India a "scientific frontier". Unfortunately for the proponents of the forward policy, however, the predictions of Lord Lawrence and other non-interventionists were borne out. The new Afghan ruler lacked a hold over his people and could not prevent the outbreak of a general uprising against the British, during which the members of the British political mission were killed. British Indian troops were again sent into Afghanistan. The chances of a solution of the Afghan problem appeared remote,

¹⁵ Lady Betty Balfour, *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876-1880: An Untold History*, Delhi; Gian Publications; 1965; p. 255.

¹⁶ *Parliamentary Papers*, LXXX (1878), 1 (Central Asia), p.159.

and a protracted and costly war, possibly including a general uprising along the Indian frontier was imminent.

Now the Britishers were forced to reexamine their policy towards Afghanistan. One alternative was to partition Afghanistan into various principalities and make Persia, rather than Afghanistan, the main bulwark in the defense of India.

Several other proposals were also put forward. Some called for military annexation of Kandahar, arguing that this would increase Indian trade with Persia and Central Asia, and give British India a strategic hold over Afghanistan. Some suggested for creation of a new, non-Afghan state. Others called for giving Herat to Persia. Lord Salisbury supported this view. A tentative agreement on a Persian occupation of Herat was reached.

But after sometime, the plan to partition Afghanistan was shelved. It had a number of reasons. Most important of all, however, was the return of the Liberals to power in England. The partition of Afghanistan came to be regarded as a highly questionable and unrealistic course of action that would simply hurt the Afghans, annoy the Russians, and do nothing to strengthen the Persians. According to Vincent Smith, the proponents of the forward policy ignored too many fundamental factors—

“The country was too arid to support an army and too hostile to dispense with one. The distances which precluded large Russian concentrations in

Afghanistan equally forbade large British movements beyond the Hindukush. Above all, it went against the known Afghan passion for independence which made the position of every force and the life of every envoy precarious. British control of Afghanistan would have meant Russian concentration on the Oxus, followed by the building up of British armies at Kabul and Herat. The policy would have been financially ruinous in any case; it was fortunate for India that the Afghans' rising demonstrated its unsoundness, before it exacted the penalty of bankruptcy."¹⁷

After lot of consideration, the Liberals in England and Lord Ripon in India took a bold step to achieve a political settlement of the Afghan question. The liberals forged a new Afghan policy whose goals were a well-defended Indian frontier and an independent Afghanistan under British Control. Afghanistan became a unique client state. During the following years, Afghanistan continued to be a major preoccupation of British diplomacy.

Stationary Policy

Many British political and military experts disagreed with Palmerston on the advisability of meeting a Russian military threat against India in Persia and Afghanistan. Sir Charles Metcalfe and others advocated a "stationary" policy, a consolidation on the northwestern frontier of India along the Sutlej River. They argued that this would assure Britain an effective government in India, promote

¹⁷ Vincent Smith; *The Oxford History of India*; Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1958; p. 697.

trade, and provide, greater security, thus ensuring a better and more economical hold over India.¹⁸ They held it unwise to ignore natural barriers that would confront a Russian army marching through the steppes of Central Asia or through rugged Afghanistan, and, therefore, a forcible or even an amicable occupation of any post or tract beyond the Trans-Indus foothills was opposed on the grounds that instead of strengthening the power of England either for attack or defence, it would only mean a heavy expenditure and burdensome taxation on the Indian population, apart from fresh military and administrative commitments.

The 'Stationary Policy' was in the consideration alongwith the 'Forward Line Policy'. But the British policy makers tried to somehow reconcile these two opposing views and formulate a delicate Afghan policy. To resolve this dilemma, the British authorities in India decided to continue to seek a balance of power in the area. They would tolerate an Afghanistan strong enough to resist Persian attempts to seize Herat but not strong enough to reduce Sikh power. According to H. W.C. Davis, it was in pursuit of this policy, that the British government in India adopted measures destined to keep the Afghan weak and divided.

Meanwhile, Palmerston embarked on a diplomatic offensive. This diplomatic offensive at last led to the first Anglo-Afghan war. Once again Britain was forced to change its policy towards Afghanistan.

¹⁸ Parliamentary Papers, LXXX (1878), p. 44 "Consideration on the Invasion of India", pp. 18-24.

Policy of Masterly Inactivity

Britain for a long period of time between 1855 and 1874 pursued a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Lord Lawrence, one of the major architects of this policy, was a spokesman for the stationary school. He opposed the British presence or interference in Afghanistan. He also opposed the "Forcible or amicable" occupation of any territory beyond the Indian frontiers. Lord Mayo also supported this view of non-intervention. He suggested that a policy of non-intervention be accompanied by a policy aimed at cultivating the friendship of the Afghans: "By assuring them that the days of annexation are passed.... [we should] make them know that they have everything to gain and nothing to lose by endeavoring to deserve our favour and support... We should make them feel that although we are all powerful, we desire to support their nationality.

This policy came under attack when anarchy prevailed in Afghanistan after the death of Dost Mohammad. The conservatives and Russophobes castigated non-intervention as a policy of "masterly inactivity" and political myopia and urged that it be replaced by a forward policy. Despite these rumblings Britain continued to follow a policy of consolidation in India and non-intervention in Afghanistan. As a part of this policy, they adopted a strategy of divide and rule in tribal belt.

Meanwhile, the division among British foreign policy experts had grown sharper, as a result of further Russian advance in Central Asia. Some experts started re-introduction of the 'Forward Line Policy'. They wanted to make Afghanistan as a friendly frontier state.

Such views were opposed by the non-interventionists on the ground that the Afghan rulers would be unreliable allies. Sir Charles Wood, one of the non-interventionists, cited "the fickleness and faithlessness of most Orientals" as a reason why the British could not expect to maintain durable friendly relation with the Afghans. The advocates of non-intervention held that questions of conflicting Anglo-Russian interests should be settled in St. Petersburg and London, and that Russian assurances of non-intervention in Afghanistan should be reaffirmed.

The views of non-interventionist and stationary school prevailed for sometime. But with the revival of the Anglo-Russian Rivalry and change in power in England this policy gave way to the "Forward Line Policy".

Thus to conclude, we can say that Britain had taken deep interest in Afghanistan. There were various reasons, which we have discussed in detail. But the most prominent among them being the safety and integrity of its North-West Frontier. Britain had a lot at stake in India and it could have been satisfied with whatever it gained in India. So, to say that it wanted to control Afghanistan and thereby venture in the Central Asia region is debatable. In fact it wanted to create Afghanistan as a buffer between its Northern Frontier and Tsarist Russia to avoid

any direct hostility between the two powers which could have hampered its progress in India. A buffer state is nothing but a small land locked country between two large countries. It plays the role of a wall between the frontiers of the two large powers that are at loggerheads. In present day situation, Nepal plays the role of a buffer between India and China while Mongolia does the same between Russia and China.

Britain to fulfil its interest in Afghanistan adopted several policies, as the circumstances demanded. The prominent among them were the policy of non-intervention and forward line policy. Actually it was the forward line policy which had the final say. This policy helped Britain fulfil its prime motto in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER-IV

Emergence of Afghanistan As a Buffer

Afghanistan, the country of Afghans, is located in the heart of Asia. It is a land-locked country having no access to sea. Yet it is strategically located. In the 19th century it played the role of a 'Buffer' between the two imperialist powers, namely, Tsarist Russia and British India.

In the 19th century when both these imperialist powers were expanding their territories they came close on the heels of Afghan border. Both of them wanted to gain influence over Afghanistan for their own benefit. But neither Tsarist Russia nor British India wanted to have direct control over Afghanistan for a number of reasons –

- The topographic conditions of Afghanistan are not so friendly for foreign occupation. It has large number of terrains, valleys and mountains. Once it had better road linkages but in the 19th century it was not easily accessible. So, both these countries stayed away from occupying the land and were interested in influencing Afghanistan from outside.
- The climatic condition of Afghanistan once again poses challenge. Its chilly winter receives very little rain. It makes agricultural activities more difficult as the country does not have more rivers. This is also the reason why these powers were not interested in direct control of Afghanistan.

- The political conditions of Afghanistan have always been full of uncertainty. The different tribes and ethnic groups fight among themselves to gain superiority. It is this volatile political condition, which made the task difficult for two imperialist powers to intervene and influence the conditions there.
- The economic health of the country in ancient times was much better than in the later ages. Being situated on the all-important Silk Route it drew attention of the ancient world and was highly benefited by trade, which was taking place at that time. But once Vasco-da-Gama discovered the sea-route to India the flourishing Afghanistan economy took the U-turn. It lost its importance in world economic affairs and has since been suffering. This was also one of the reasons for the two powers to stay away from Afghanistan and carving it out as a buffer.
- The Afghans are very rich both in social as well as cultural affairs. They are hard working and independence loving people. They do not want any one to rule over them. They have always fought to remain independent and whosoever has tried to rule them they have shown them the door. Once again a matter of grave concern for Tsarist Russia and British India and therefore they remained outside Afghanistan as they were aware of the consequences.

This is why they looked to carve a 'buffer' in form of Afghanistan rather than to have direct control over it.

Evolution of Afghanistan As A Buffer

For as the Russians moved south, the British moved north-west. By the thirties, the two imperial powers were beginning to come into contact with one another in Central Asia and this added yet another conflict to their already poisoned relations. Ambitious Russians hoped to weaken the British grip at the straits by threatening their Indian Empire. Ambitious Britons hoped to defend India by setting up client states in Central Asia. Thus began what Kipling called the 'Great Game' in this hitherto neglected area.¹

This Great Game resulted in the emergence of Afghanistan as a buffer state between the two imperialist powers. This was a gradual process as both these powers were very cautious in their approach in dealing with this delicate affair. Afghanistan was such a zone where the territorial interests of both Britain and Russia clashed.

Recognising the importance of the location of Afghanistan, British were determined to make it an (semi-) independent buffer state. In all probability, the absence of which could have encouraged Russia to expand far beyond the Oxus, when the British fortified themselves along the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line. On the contrary, the Russians wanted to reach up to the Indian Ocean in search of warm water and for that they had to cross over Afghanistan. This made this Great Game very interesting.

¹ Graham Stephenson, *History of Russia, 1812-1945*; London; McMillan; 1969; p. 278.

It can also be argued that while Britain was expanding in Central Asia, they were not in favour of any partners or rivals in their design of exploiting the commerce of Central Asia. On the contrary, the Russian territorial expansion along with the extension of the Trans-Caspian Railway countered this and resulted in the isolation of British Commercial interests in Central Asia.²

The genesis of rivalry began with the Franco-Russian design on the Indian sub-continent. However, the withdrawal of French interest in Persia in 1807, with the withdrawal of Napoleon from the Egypt, eliminated the possible threat of invasion, yet this did not prevent Russia from expansion in the Central Asia region.

The steady encroachment by Russia on the Persian speaking Uzbekistan and the failure of British assistance to the latter compelled Britain to consider and depend upon Afghanistan for security.³ Britain formulated its Afghan policy. It fought three wars with Afghanistan. Finally it culminated in the emergence of Afghanistan as a buffer state. This was achieved only after the international boundaries of Afghanistan were defined and the Russian threat faded away.

The territorial expansion of Great Britain and Russia in Central Asia was dominated by their political and commercial need and the struggle between the two powers for supremacy was inherent in the logic of events, as were the British

² George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, 2nd ed.; London; Longman; 1889; pp. 283-88.

³ D.C. Boulger, *England and Russia in Central Asia*, Vol. II; London; W.H. Allen; 1879; p. 340.

fears over Russian advances. Therefore, in order to check wherever they could, the British created. "... an imaginary line stretching from Constantinople through Persia to Central Asia and China."⁴ At the same 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 aroused the Russians."

Both these European powers were interested in the commercial exploitation of the conquered territories. Therefore, the role played by existing traditional trade routes between the various Khanates was important. With the same logic, it was obvious that Russian apprehension was implicit in the fact that "... British, following up their potential advantage, caused Russian influence in the Middle East to collapse.⁵ On the contrary they isolated the British commercial interest in Central Asia.

Under such circumstances Afghanistan became the focal point of power rivalry. Aware of the growing Russian influence,⁶ Britain once again redefined Afghanistan as a frontier of India.

⁴ A Lobonov-Rostovsky, *Russia in Asia*; London; McMillan; 1933; p. 133.

⁵ Alexander Burns; *Cabool: A Personal Narrative of a Journey and Residence in that City in the Year, 1836, 1837 and 1838*; London; John Murray; 1840; p. 58.

⁶ By the Treaty of Teheran, Russia was not only able to compel the Persians to confirm their territorial expansion in the Persian Central Asia but also brought them under their commercial orbit, thereby bringing a stiff opposition to the British commerce in the region.

A striking similarity in the approach of both Britain and Russia was more or less evident if we analyse the territorial advances made by these two powers. This advance was both political as well as geographical. The Russian expansion up to Tashkent in Central Asia was answered with the British expansion into the Cis-Himalayan region. The frontier military outposts of Russia at Samarkand and beyond the Syr-Darya were corresponding to British advance up to Peshawar in Trans-Enclus- region. The river Oxus formed the boundary between the two. Bokhara on the one side of the Oxus administered the areas around it peacefully due to political calm. On the other hand, the unstable political condition in Afghanistan did not allow such a healthy situation to persist on the other side of the border. Perhaps it was the tenacity of the negotiators who brought about an amicable solution to the boundary dispute favourable to Afghanistan.

Given a definite check in Europe, Russia rapidly expanded in Central Asia. By 1865, Tashkent Udas occupied. The Trans-Caspian Railway was extended to Samarkand in 1867. With this, the pivot of Russian advance shifted from Orenburg to Tashkent. It became the capital of the province of Russian-Turkestan, which was created in 1867. Now Russia was in a position to exert a dominant influence on Afghanistan. It was also able to dominate the course of events to arouse equal if not more British apprehension.

The pivot area of Russian Central Asia shifted from Tashkent to Askabad with the Russian annexation of Turkestan. This shift of the administrative and

military capital was geographically significant for “the cradle of policy, the starting point of action ... (was Tashkent) ... It was from Tashkent that ... (Russia expanded) ... via Samarkand Jam, on the Bokharan frontier, in order to menace, and, if necessary, to invade Afghanistan...”⁷ Askabad, on the other hand, with its forward military outposts at Geok Tepe, Sarakhs, Merv and Panjdeh provided more easy access to Russian penetration of Herat.

Britain had to take effective measures to check the rapid Russian advance. It proposed for delimitation for spheres of influence in Central Asia between the two in 1864. But this effort of Britain failed in doing so. Once again, due to rapid Russian expansion, Britain was conscious of the necessity of asking for such delimitation of spheres in 1869. The negotiations started the same year. It was proposed to create buffer state. But the negotiation did not go further than the recognition of the spheres of influence.

Both Russia and Britain were bent upon creating a buffer zone(s) between them. Bokhara dependent upon Russia served as effective barrier; on the same lines as Afghanistan served as an effective neutral zone for the British. When Bokhara became a tributary to Russia this arrangement came in controversy because only Afghanistan remained the neutral zone between the two. With this the concept of creating a neutral zone was dropped. Instead it was emphasised that it be allowed to strengthen its uncertain frontiers and bring under its control the

⁷ Bisheshwar Prasad, *Foundation of India's Foreign Policy, 1860-1882*; Bombay, Longman 1955; p. 46.

Khanates, which formerly belonged to it. This was accepted by Russia only to the extent that the Amir Sher Ali, the ruler of Afghanistan, refrained from any activity against Bokhara.⁸ It was based upon the fact that the true northern frontier of Afghanistan was marked by the river Oxus from Balkh to Badakhshan, which had acknowledged Amir Dost Mohammad Khan's sovereignty.

Russia, however, 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, they argued that "this would leave a large tract of country apparently desert, and marked on the map as belonging to Khan of Khiva, between Afghanistan and the territory already acquired by Russia, and if agreed to remove all fears of sovereignty."⁹

Russia refused to recognize the validity of Amir Sher Ali's claim, while they stressed on Bokharan territories south of the Oxus. Yet, "Bokhara had no territories south of Oxus save Kerki and Charjui further west and that under Dost Mohammad, Afghanistan possessed the whole tract of the country up to the Oxus. Not only did Sher Ali have a right to inherit all that territory but now has effective control of it."¹⁰

⁸ Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice; *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower; Second Earl Granville*; vol. II; London; Longman Green & Co.; 1905; pp.400-8.

⁹ William Habberton; *Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, 1837-1907*; Urbana: University of Illinois Press; 1937; p. 5.

¹⁰ G. J. Alder; *British India's Northern Frontiers: A Study in the Imperial Policy, 1865-95*; London; Longman for the Royal Commonwealth Society; 1963; p. 168.

Mayo was quite clear about his objective on the Afghan question. These were “The creation of a strong and independent government in Afghanistan, complete abstinence from direct interference in the internal affairs of that country, the development and protection of trade with Central Asia...”¹¹ The policy of Mayo did not include British advance up to Quetta. It emphasized upon the extension of British commerce northwards to counter Russian advances.

The Forsyth mission to St. Petersburg in 1869 was successful in eliciting assurances from Russia regarding their non-interference in Afghanistan.¹²

It was agreed that “...neutral zones was to include such tracts as Balkh, Kunduz and Badakhshan; but since then these provinces have become for period more or less incorporated with Afghanistan, all the provinces, then, in possession of Amir Sher Ali... Beyond this limit that of the region controlled by the Amir-Russia would not interfere nor seek to exercise any influence.” It requested the government of India to define the Afghan frontiers.¹³

Meanwhile, the divergence of views between the Home and Indian Governments on Russia and Afghanistan began to act rapidly. In 1871, Britain had proposed that—

¹¹ S. Gopal, *British Policy in India, 1858-1905*; 1st Indian edn.; Madras; Orient Longman; 1965; p. 67.

¹² Habberton, n. 9, p. 26.

¹³ S. Gopal; n. 11; p. 71

- Badakhshan with the dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikal (Wood's Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha river with the Oxus (Panjab) forming the northern boundary of the province through its extent;
- Afghan Turkestan, comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of the Oxus, from the junction of the Kokcha river to the past of Khoja Saleh, inclusive of the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. No claims were made the left of the bank of the Oxus, below Khoja Saleh.
- The internal district of Akcha, Seripol, Mamana, Shibberghan and Andhkoi, the latter being the extreme Afghan frontier territory in the northwest, the desert beyond belonging to the independent locals of Turkomans.
- Western Afghanistan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorasan is well known.¹⁴

The proposal was based upon the assumption that Sher Ali had fully re-established his right of possession of territories up to the Oxus as far down as Khoja Saleh. This Afghan possession was also admitted by Bokhara; all other evidence pointed towards the actual possession of these territories by Sher Ali.¹⁵

¹⁴ G. P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch*; Delhi; D.K. Publishing House; 1973; p. 170.

¹⁵ Habberton; n. 9; p. 29.

It was the Turkoman country (Turkmenistan), which formed an intermediary zone between Afghanistan and Bokhara prior to 1871. River Oxus clearly marked the boundary of Turkomania. It was the Russian occupation of Khiva which distorted this position in relation to Afghanistan's north-western boundary. They contested the Afghan claim on Akcha, Seripol, Maimana, Shibberghan and Andhkoi. However, they agreed for an intermediary zone. This agreement was valid till the delimitation of the Afghan northern frontiers was finalized in St. Petersburg.

This concept of intermediary zone was undermined by Russian doubts on Afghan's claim. They insisted that

- Territory under Sher Ali's actual control be, for a time being, considered as Afghanistan's northern limit;
- Sher Ali should not exercise political control beyond it; and
- Britain should prevent aggression by Sher Ali against Bukhara vice-versa.

Despite this, the extent of the frontier remained debatable. Russian contention was that Amir Dost Mohammad had left much confusion regarding the actual territorial extent of Afghanistan and therefore it could not be the basis for the boundary delimitation.

The process of determinations of political affiliation of various Khanates, particularly in the north-eastern part of Russo-Afghan frontier got complicated. It

happened due to the acceptance of the river Oxus as the boundary between the two. It was argued that Sher Ali's claim to Shignan which was debatable because, as "...more than half of the population of Shignan which was claimed by the Amir, was from ancient times a dependency and feudatory of Badakhshan, dwelt beyond the river... Oxus."¹⁶ In addition, commenting upon the boundary agreement, Lord Salisbury stated that it was merely "... drawing lines upon the maps where no human foot has ever trod... giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other... only hindered by small impediment that we never know exactly where those mountains and rivers and lakes were."¹⁷

The inherent weakness of the agreement was that it was based on information collected by Russia. The boundary claims, thereby, became politically oriented and maps were doubtful to produce correct geographical appraisals. However the line of Ab-i-Panja formed the boundary. The boundary had separated the ethnological distribution and the traditional territorial limits.

However the explorations carried out to define the sphere of influence between Russia and Great Britain could not identify the river dividing Afghanistan & Bokhara. Russia took an ambiguous stand. It indicated its lack of reliable information about the area under question. Though much of the data was collected through Russian advance, it can be positively argued that "... in the first place, al

¹⁶ Tate, No. 14; p. 83.

¹⁷ Ibid.

the data we have to rely on respecting those regions are very vague and uncertain. The little native testimony, that there is, is unworthy of credence. The maps are problems and often contradictory.”

The data collected, limited the Afghan frontier in the north-east; which accordingly, was to start from the confluence of the Kokcha River with the Oxus to Khoja Saleh on the Oxus in the West. However, Russia accepted the British stand on the north-west and north-eastern frontier of Afghanistan. This resulted in final settlement of boundary dispute in 1873, which started in 1869 in St. Petersburg. The agreement took place between Granville and Gortchaveoff in 1873. The two main features of this agreement were—

- Afghanistan’s frontier with Russia was delimited; thereby checking the rapid Russian advance in Central Asia, and
- That Afghanistan remained under British sphere of influence.

The Russian annexation of Khiva invalidated the treaty without much delay. On the other hand Amir Sher Ali consolidated his power and authority firmly over Afghanistan. His spontaneous preference to Great Britain¹⁸ and his grasp of Afghanistan’s indispensable position vis-à-vis Anglo-Russian relations

¹⁸ P. E. Roberts, *History of British India under the Company and the Crown*; Ed. III; compiled by TGP Spear; London; Oxford University Press; 1976; pp. 424-9.

were important features. However, in 1874, the change in the Home Government led to a major shift in the British policy towards Afghanistan.¹⁹

After subjugating Khiva Russia commenced its gradual advance into the steppes occupied by the Tekke Turkoman people (inhabitants of Tekke region in Turkmenistan. The British fear towards Russia further augmented. This nervousness became apparent with the arrival of Lord Lytton to India.²⁰ The advancement of Russia in Central Asian region went on simultaneously with that of the extension of Trans-Caspian Railway. This for the first time gave direct communication with St. Petersburg. The acquisition enabled Russia to pressurize Turkomans from Khiva and Bukhara as well as from, the Caspian and Afghanistan.

The northwest frontier of Afghanistan witnessed similar sort of events. The 1873, agreement failed to perceive the frontiers of Turkomans with either Bukhara or Afghanistan. It remained arbitrary commencing from Khoja Saleh on the Oxus to Sarakhs on the outer point of Persian frontier of district of Meshad, but lack of geographical information about the region rendered the treaty nebulous & uncertain. It was acknowledged that to be a line connecting Khoja Saleh with Persian frontier at Sarrakhs.”²¹ Khoja Saleh was mentioned as a post on the Oxus.

¹⁹ Gopal; n. 11; pp. 73-77.

²⁰ Prasad; n. 7; pp. 113-14.

²¹ T. H. Holdich; *The India Borderland: 1880-1900*, Delhi, Gian Publishing House; 1987, pp. 338-348.

Though Sarrakhs was able to be identified, the mention of Khoja Saleh was available only from the records of Alexander Burns.²²

In 1876, the British decided to occupy Quetta. Strategically Quetta "... Occupies a position of extraordinary natural strength and of commanding strategic importance in the Centre of the highland part of Baluchistan. Protected on the Southwest by the lofty Chihilton range, on the northeast by the Zarghun plateau, it dominated all the southern approaches to the Indus Valley.

With the occupation of Quetta in 1878 Britain became less dependent upon Afghanistan. Britain had animosity with Sher Ali as he coveted British territory.²³ In view of this the British proposed to establish a forward outpost in the Kurram Valley.²⁴ Britain followed the pro-Turkish policy. It resulted in the Russian mission of Stolietoff to Kabul and Sher Ali's refusal to entertain British mission to Kabul.

All these development led to the second Anglo-Afghan war, 1878-80. Russia was now able to manoeuvre the British in such a way, that they were in advantageous position both in Central Asia and in Europe. The war resulted in the signing of the treaty of Gandamak. According to this treaty, Britain would guide Sher Ali in foreign affairs and in return they would protect him against any

²² Alexander Burns; Travels into Bokhara; London; Longman; 1834, pp. 190-191.

²³ Gopal; n. 11; p.83.

²⁴ Ibid.

aggression. They also retained the control of the Khybar and Mishmi passes and of all regions with the independent people in the near vicinity.²⁵

Lytton's proposal of annexation of Kabul, Kandahar and other neighbouring areas was not accepted. The question of scientific frontier was taken up and was based on the steady Russian expansion in Central Asia. It was decided that the politically united Afghanistan could serve as a 'Buffer' between the two.

However Russia in spite of repeated assurances not to advance in the direction of Merv and Herat broke its promise by annexing the Turkoman country of Merv. This expansion can be debated as to be coterminous with British advance to the frontiers of Afghanistan as to be similar - compelled by political and commercial interests.²⁶ The British apprehension against Russian expansion further increased by the introduction of new maps indicating the boundaries of Merv, southwards up to the Hari Rud and meeting point of the river near Herat.

Britain was reluctant to assure Afghanistan the safety. This reluctance indicated its failure to formulate an effective and definite Afghan policy. Britain & Russia started negotiation to set up a joint boundary commission. Britain was content to check the Russian advance in direction of Herat. They also knew that in the event of failure to defend Herat, they could easily defend the mountain passes or fall back on river Indus.²⁷

²⁵ Ibid; pp. 88-89.

²⁶ D. K. Ghose; *England & Afghanistan: A Phase in their Relations*; Calcutta; World; 1960; p.26.

²⁷ Ibid.; pp. 185-86.

Russia started annexing Sarrakhs in the late 1884. On the other hand Afghanistan consolidated itself at Panjdeh. The British apprehension arose from the Russian occupation of Merv, as they considered Merv as the key to Herat, as Herat was for Kandahar, and finally Kandahar through the Bolan-pass was the key to India.²⁸ On the other hand, it was argued that it was the advanced line of frontier outposts of Sarrakhs,²⁹ and Pul-i-Khatun (late Panjdeh) which were important for future Russian territorial expansion towards Herat, instead of Merv. This was based on the location of Merv at the junction of trade routes.³⁰

With these inherent advantages, Russia proposed the need for the definition of the zones to be surveyed by the boundary commission. Britain accepted the proposal. But it put some conditions. According to the conditions put forward, Russia should withdraw from Pul-i-Khatun and Panjdeh. On the same basis Afghanistan was asked to withdraw from Sari Yaza. The entire British contention rested on the fact that earlier, Russia had accepted the neutrality of Panjdeh and they should evacuate them to their former advanced outposts halfway down to Merv.³¹ Rejecting the proposal, Russia demanded the Afghan withdrawal from Panjdeh, as both Pul-I-Khatun and Panjdeh remained outside the Afghan influence.³² This clearly indicated that they would rather prefer an ethnic basis for

²⁸ Curzon; n. 2; p. 120.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.; p. 118.

³¹ C.E. Yates; Northern Afghanistan or Letters from the Boundary Commission; Edinburgh; William Blackwood; 1888; p. 3.

³² Ghose; n. 26; pp. 185-86.

delimitation rather than geographic. Both Russia and Afghanistan began stretching their line of advance as much north as it was south in the debated area in view of the essential differences.

Now the strategic situation changed with the impasse. Russia managed to reach 170 miles nearer to Herat. On the other hand the British could manage to reach only up to Quetta, a distance of 500 miles from Herat. The British were convinced that the Russian stand was a prelude to further expansion towards Afghanistan. The relation between the two imperialist powers worsened. Before British could assume a defensive posture, Russia evicted the Afghans and annexed Panjdeh. At the same time in order to forestall any further Russian reaction, Britain had restrained Afghans from reinforcing their position in Shignan and Roshan; they suggested that the northern limit of Afghanistan in this sector being located at Panja and Northern Panja.³³

The Amir was also suggested that he had no definite frontier in the direction of Merv and Sarrakhs. They added that the frontier between the Hari Rud and Khaoja Saleh on the Oxus should be determined and carefully laid down.³⁴ Afghanistan occupied the territories east of the Hari-Rud at the time of its withdrawal from trans-Oxiana region. It was strategically important for the road leading from Sarrakh to Herat though Badghis was essential for Herat.³⁵ In the

³³ G. P. Tripathi; Indo-Afghan Relations 1882-1907; New Delhi; Kumar Brothers; 1973; p.28.

³⁴ Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec. F, March 1884, Nos. 145-197, No. 195.

³⁵ Ibid.

process, it was decided to demarcate in consent with Russia, the entire northern border of Afghanistan from the Hari Rud to the borders of Kashgar.³⁶

The demarcation of north-western boundary from Khoja Saleh to Tejend was proposed by Russia.

Sir Peter Lumsden was appointed to represent the joint boundary commission. Britain insisted that the boundary dispute between the Hari Rud and Murghab should be settled at the beginning. Russia was delaying the work of the joint boundary commission. It counter-proposed the need for definite principles for delineating the boundary and argued whether it will be ethnographical, topographical or geographical or all the three.³⁷ It was finally decided to start the boundary demarcation from the Hari Rud north westward to the Oxus. The British considered "...Afghan territory to extend to a point on the Hari Rud in the neighbourhood of Sarrakhs... (but they withheld any definite understanding before the joint commissions had investigated it)³⁸... According to Britishers the primary duty of the commission was to identify and determine the true frontiers of Afghanistan. And therefore the commission would have to be guided in defining the Amir's authority by his relations with the tribes. Such a step was necessary to avoid future boundary dispute between the two.

³⁶ Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec. E, September 1884, Nos. 377-395, No. 387.

³⁷ Foreign Dept. Progs., Sec. F, September 1884, Nos. 449-460, No. 455.

³⁸ Ibid. No. 460

The disputed Panjdeh area was two miles due south of Merv. Even before the final decision was taken about Panjdeh, Lumsden stated that the surrender of Panjdeh and the abandonment of the forward posts of Ak-Tepe would be taken as giving up the key to Herat to Russia.³⁹ Lumsden was recalled and was succeeded by Sir West Ridgeway as the British representative in the joint boundary commission.

The completion of the process of the north-western boundary of Afghanistan brought definite territorial advantage to the Amir in the form of an agreement from Hari Rud to the Oxus River.

One of the problems which beset the Anglo-Russian boundary commission was the definition and the exactness of the geographical location of places mentioned in 1873 treaty. The inaccurate and hypothetical maps had contributed significantly to the loose nature of the definitions.

The process of delimitation began. It began with the process of delimitation from the Hari Rud to the Oxus, the boundary was settled for Zulfikar or the Hari Rud and then to the Murghab. This section of the boundary followed fairly prominent features, which could not be easily mistaken.⁴⁰

The dispute over Zulfikar pass was both geographical and strategic. For “... it is simply a gorge or break in the line of cliffs that surround the valley of Hari

³⁹ Tripathi; n. 33; p. 42.

⁴⁰ Survey of International Affairs 1920-23, Royal Institute of International Affairs; London; p. 169.

Rud on the east and almost all the way up to Pul-I-Khatun to Kara Elias. Zulfikar pass is the only possible communication route between the valley of the Hari Rud and the country above it.”⁴¹ The geographical advantage of the pass was strategic as it gave an easy access to the valley of Hari Rud and Khushk Rivers.

When the delimitation advanced towards the valley of Shorab and Islim, Russia put some claim before the commission. Such a claim was meant to deprive Afghanistan of the perennial source of water, in a region, which had very few sources of water. This was settled and enabled Afghanistan to extend from Kera Tepe to Kara Tepe Khurd.⁴²

Till the Khushk River the boundary strictly adhered to the treaty. The ambiguous terms and definition became a source of continuous irritation but ultimately provided vast geographical information about the area.⁴³ By June 1886, the Afghan north-western boundary from Zulfikar on the Hari Rud to Dukchi, a group of wells north of Andhkri and 40 miles of the Oxus was delimited.⁴⁴ The significant aspect of the northwest boundary springs from the established limits of pasture of Turkomans.

⁴¹ Yates; n. 31; p. 75.

⁴² Ibid; p. 104.

⁴³ T. H. Holdich; The Use of Practical Geography by Recent Frontier Operations; *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 13, no. 5, May 1899, pp. 465-80.

⁴⁴ C. U. Aitchinson, A Collection of Treatises, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries; Vo. 5, 7,8, 10, 13,14; Delhi; Manager of Pub.; 1929;

With the boundary delimitation, the unsettled part of the frontier was favourably concluded. Later, in 1888, Yates and Peacocke,⁴⁵ completed the demarcation of revised portion of the frontier between the Dukchi and the Oxus. The final protocol was signed at St Petersburg.

The advantage gained by the settlement of the north-western frontier essentially lay in the fact that there was a definite frontier from the Hari Rud to the Oxus River. Further by restoring rights to the Sarikhs, the district of Khamiab was retained by Afghanistan.⁴⁶ The British succeeded in making Russia accept a boundary, whose transgression in the future would have been open violation of the convention of July 1887.

Now Britain which was committed to Lytton's policy of containing Russia which had threatened to overflow the Himalayas made attempts to stop Russia from doing so. With a firm grip on Afghan affairs, Lytton suggested the occupation of Yasin.

Lytton in 1879 managed to formulate the basis of Britain's northern frontier of India. The natural boundary of India is formed by the convergence of the great mountain ranges of the Himalayas and of the Hindukush which here extend northwards up to their junction. Within the angle thus formed lie the territories of Chitral Darel, Yasin, Hunza and other petty dependencies.

⁴⁵ Ibid; p. 217.

⁴⁶ Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec. F. August 1887, Nos. 34-46, No.44.

Russia was determined to assert its claim on the Pamirs. The increasing Russian activities in the Pamirs became a source of concern to the British. The British despite having inadequate geographical information regarding the Sino-Afghan boundary encouraged the Chinese claim up to the Russo-Afghan boundary in order to ward off the encroachment of any third party in the region. At about the same time, China consolidated its western and southern frontier in Turkestan. Encouraged by Young Husband's mission to Kashgar China gradually expanded in the Pamirs. Thus the settlement of the boundary called for British, Russian, Chinese and Afghan co-operation in the Pamirs. This led to mutual suspicion regarding each other's territorial advances. The situation in the Pamirs became complicated when Sino-Afghan dispute at Somatash surfaced.

According to Britain the 1873 agreement would be of no help in defining the boundary east of Wood's Lake as there was no effective Afghan or Chinese occupation. On the other hand in 1893, Russia began to insist upon 1873 agreement. Meanwhile, negotiations continued at St. Petersburg on the subject of the Pamirs. But a deadlock was created. The deadlock which arose in the demarcation of the north-eastern boundary of Afghanistan, can be described as "...that part of the undefined Russo-Afghan frontier... is bordered by the disputed main stream or streams of the upper Oxus, and contested Khanates of Shignan and Wakhan, etc. The misunderstanding arose through the utter ignorance of the

country upon which the first Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873, as to this region of the frontier, was based.

The most important question of Afghanistan's north-eastern frontier was the exchange of trans-Oxus Roshan and Shignan for Cis-Oxus Darwaz. Despite all the misunderstandings the 1813 line traversed through the Kokcha Junction along the Oxus to Lake Victoria. It was confirmed in 1895 and continued eastwards across the Pamirs to the Chinese frontier which was taken as the boundary between Afghanistan and Russia in the Pamirs.

Now another boundary mission, under Durand was formed. The Durand mission went to Kabul, which apart from securing Amir's approval also negotiated Indo-Afghan boundary. Ultimately, in 1895, the Anglo-Russian agreement on the Pamir was concluded. The river Oxus, which for nearly 960 km, acts as a boundary between Afghanistan and Russia, was essentially an anthropogeographic boundary: Its main drawback lay essentially in this and instead of assimilating the politico-ethnic features of the region, it had provided a sharp political contrast between them and had divided the existing ethnic distribution.

The western boundary of Afghanistan with Persia (Iran) was comparatively stable. It had involved minimum of friction. The primary cause of the boundary dispute between Afghanistan and Persia lay essentially in the complex nature of the history of region with a desert environment. The dispute was upon the

important cities, which formed part of the strategic communication route connecting Central Asia and Asia Minor with the Indian sub-continent.

This dispute was solved by the deliverance of the award on 11th November 1903 by McMahan. Persia and Afghanistan ratified the McMahan award in 1903 and 1904 respectively. The end of 1904 completed the process of demarcation.

Now the boundary between British India and Afghanistan remained to be delimited. The frontier question had to face the controversy between the forward and non-intervention schools of Imperial expansion. The policy of non-annexation and non-intervention floundered as gradual Russian territorial aggrandisement in Central Asia began to threaten the British interest. The second Afghan war impressed the need for establishing a scientific frontier along Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis. The question of tribal policy as well as the true frontier of India in the northwest became the debatable issues. In these discussions, the scientific frontier, the Durand line and the river Indus became the focal points. Finally, the development of better communication facilities and the acquisition of a strategic position along the frontier were agreed upon as the possible alternative, which not only justified the strategic interests but also was also financially more advantageous.

On the other hand, at the same time, there was a move to pressurise the Amir to limit his claims and forestall any move, which he might take to avoid reaching only definite understanding with them regarding the boundary. Thus

keeping in view the defence of India, the British had created the triple frontier.

They were-

- the northern boundary of Afghanistan;
- the Durand line and;
- the administrative boundary (the Indus river was also considered).

Between the Durand line and the administrative boundary was the tribal belt. But this frontier of the tribal belt between Afghanistan and British India "... is not sound from geographical point of view...it is not a frontier defined by watershed or big rivers. The only natural frontier to the westward is the waterless desert of eastern Baluchistan and the highest ridges of some of the western Himalayas in the far north. From ethnic point of view frontier politics are a jumble of interests."⁴⁷

According to Fraser Tytler, "The Durand line...(was)...not conterminous with the administrative frontier."⁴⁸ This agreement had clearly indicated that the tribal area between the Durand line and the British administrative frontier was to be under the British influence. But evidently what the Durand line had overlooked was that "for the settlement of new frontier lines, the problems are different and call for a complex solution, considering frontiers not only as an accomplished fact

⁴⁷ E. Howard; India's Defence as an Imperial Problem, *Journal of Central Asian Society*, London, Vol. 13, pt.2, 1926; p.112.

⁴⁸ W. K. Fraser- Tytler; *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Development in Central Asia and South Asia*, rev. by M. C. Gillet; London; Oxford University Press; 1967; p. 293.

but also the frontier in the process of making and ease with which it can be survived and marked out upon the ground becomes an important fact.”⁴⁹

The British concept of the Durand line was strategically oriented. The British thought as to the desirability of a northern or westwards deflection of the Durand line. But the Durand line clearly indicated that the history of the region has been an important factor in determining its course. This historical factor has “sometimes even superseded the physiographic factor...(which)...always interacting with all the other factors, those working for persistence as well as those working for change.” For example, the Kunar has long remained strategically important as a gateway from the conquest of the plains of Indus.⁵⁰ The British recognized the importance of the Durand line and in their attempt to decide upon the most appropriate alignment for their border, experimented with numerous possibilities. Therefore “the Durand line is very much a compromising solution based upon British strategic and administrative experience and not upon treaties and customs.”⁵¹

The Indian government was determined to settle the Indo-Afghan frontier. In the process of settlement, the Amir was allowed to retain Wana and other places. This was done, with a view that it would give adequate opportunity to the

⁴⁹ Alastair Lamb, *The Geography of International Frontier of the British Empire*, JRCAS, Vol. 53, 1966, p. 253.

⁵⁰ The tribes were subjugated by the invading armies.

⁵¹ Alastair Lamb; no. 49; p. 248.

Amir to represent his claims on this side of the frontier. Reluctance of the Amir to meet Lord Roberts finally led to the suspension of boundary talks.

In the meanwhile, the Amir disputed the British claim to Gomal and the Kakar country. However, the Indian Government regarded the land inhabited by the Waziris as important. For, "It commanded the Gomal pass, the Mashud country, and different routes leading into Afghanistan, and therefore the Amir was keen to keep that place under his control, while the British were anxious to deprive him of that position of advantage."⁵²

Over the Bajaur region issue the relation between the two further deteriorated. Britain considered the importance of consolidating their authority over the independent tribes, and therefore pursued a frontier policy advantageous to them vis-à-vis Russia.

The independent tribes settled on the eastern fringe of Afghanistan became the target of the Afghans. "The natural outlet for the superabundant energy of the Afghan army is on the frontiers of Afghanistan."⁵³ The need for a boundary was not only to define the boundary between British India and Afghanistan but also to establish a second line of defence against a possible Russian threat. The extension of railway communication to New Chaman across the Khojak Hills in the

⁵² Tripathi, n. 33; p. 68.

⁵³ Holdich, n. 21; p.226.

southeastern frontiers of Afghanistan was considered as a British attempt to extend their frontier arbitrarily.

The Amir's procrastination for delimitation finally compelled the British to bring the frontier tribes under their influences as well as to extend the railway beyond New Chaman for strategic reasons.

Now apart from settling the Pamir boundary, the Durand mission also negotiated the settlement of the eastern and southern frontier. With specific objectives, Durand was authorized to make certain concessions to the Amir regarding the boundary dispute: about the intention of the Indian Government to extend the railway through the Khojak mountains to New Chaman as well as the necessity (importance) to maintain direct relation with the frontier tribes. The Amir agreed to the definition of sphere of influence between the Government of India and Afghanistan and gave up the suzerainty over the independent frontier tribes.⁵⁴

As a compromise, Durand accepted the Amir's authority in Asmer, Kunar Valley and Birmal tract. Amir agreed not to interfere with the Bajauris, Affairs, Waziris, Kakars and other frontier tribes and also renounced his claim on New Chaman and Chageh. The agreement between Durand and the Amir was finally concluded and signed on 12th November 1893. It was also agreed that the process of demarcation should be taken up without delay. Thus, on the face of growing

⁵⁴ Tripathi; no. 33; p. 103

Russian threat, Britain was able to successfully manoeuvre delimitation and demarcation of international frontiers of Afghanistan. Later on in 1895, the Pamir agreement took place.

The 1907 Anglo-Russian convention was the final chapter in the delimitation of Afghanistan's international boundary. With this ended the rivalry between the two imperialist powers- Britain and Tsarist Russia-in the Central Asian region. Both these powers got their area of influence under their control, leaving apart Afghanistan with its boundaries more or less well defined.

Afghanistan after that played the role of a buffer between these two powers who got themselves engaged in other areas being assured of hostility free zone in Central Asian. Afghanistan played the role of a buffer (a small country between two powers separating them or providing them some space in between their frontiers to avoid any direct hostility) and was rewarded for its role. It became an independent country in 1919.

CHAPTER-V

Conclusion

Ahmad Shah Abdali, 1747-72, was the true founder of Afghan state. He created a tribal empire in Afghanistan and northern India. Later on, the growing clash of interests between an expansive Tsarist Russia and ambitious British East India Company meant that a sovereign Afghanistan provided a convenient buffer zone between the two rival powers. They tried for it and finally succeeded in carving out a buffer state between them. Later on in 1919 under Amanullah, Afghanistan became an independent state.

The time span between the emergence of modern Afghan state in 1747 as a tribal empire and Afghanistan as an independent country in 1919 is very long. During this period, Afghanistan was the epicenter of European imperialist rivalry in Asia, especially in Central Asia. This rivalry had great impact upon Afghanistan of that time. The contemporary Afghanistan also finds the roots of existing problems in the happenings of that period and therefore, the solutions should also be searched out there only.

It is difficult to assess the overall impact of European imperialism on the socio-economic development of Afghanistan from an historical point of view. Afghan historians and statesmen attributed country's backwardness to imperialism and capitalism. For instance, in 1959, former Prime Minister Daud declared:

“After a long struggle against capitalism, a struggle to attain and preserve national independence, the Afghan people have only in the past few years acquired an opportunity of making efforts to liquidate our backwardness and to concentrate on moral and material progress as well as on the development of our country”.¹ In general, Comintern spokesman and Soviet historians (the Pokrovskii School) also contend that Anglo- Russian imperialism greatly impeded the cultural and economic development of the region.

The majority of the nineteenth century western writers, on the other hand, either ignored altogether or minimized the harmful effects of the Anglo-Afghan wars and the diplomatic duels of England and Russia. In fact, some English writers placed great emphasis upon the so-called endemic Afghan national traditions of “misrule, pillage, and destruction, “and proposed the extension of a redemptive British imperialism as the answer to the socio-economic plight of Afghanistan. Others, however, have argued, with some justification, that Anglo-Russian rivalry contributed to the maintenance of Afghanistan as an independent buffer state, and that the threat of foreign interference and invasion encouraged the Afghans to achieve national unity.²

¹ Soviet Embassy, News Bulletin; Kabul; No. 97; May 24, 1954 and Mohamad Ali; Afghanistan: The Mohammadzai Period; Kabul; 1959; p. 304-5.

² William Habberton; Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, 1837-1907, Urbana: University of Illinois Press; 1937; p. 86.

The political structure and social order of Afghanistan were profoundly affected by the diplomacy of imperialism. Afghanistan was subjected to two major wars and foreign occupation because of colonial rivalries. Its economy was dislocated and some of its territories annexed. On the positive side, it helped sustain Afghan rule over northern Afghanistan and the province of Herat. A potent force in Afghan nationalism was unleashed by the Anglo-Afghan wars. It inculcated an ardent love of fatherland and national pride among the Afghans. The exposure to European military technology generated change and made a socio-political reorganization of the country, and especially a reorganization of the armed forces, necessary. The rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Britain led to xenophobia and isolationism in Afghanistan. It consolidated the position of both - the Afghan tribes and the Afghan religious establishment. It greatly influenced the course and character of Afghan reforms and modernization.

Afghanistan was a country which had very little connection with the outside world from the middle of the nineteenth century until the early twentieth century. Its sole political link was with the British government in India. It was only after 1879 that Great Britain succeeded in obtaining and maintaining the diplomatic isolation of Afghanistan. British permission had to be obtained to send an emissary to Afghanistan. Even the Ottoman sultan, the Caliph of Sunni Muslims who was politically close to the British at that time had to do so. The Afghans adopted isolationism as a national policy. According to them, this would

give them the guarantee of their independence. It would be a defense against the threat of an occupation or fragmentation of their country by the British or the Russians or both.

Afghanistan hoped that its natural barrier and primitive communications, underdeveloped economy and political isolation, would be assets in preserving its independence.³ According to them, inaccessibility would permit the most effective use of the Afghan fighting forces and traditional tactics of warfare. Difficult communications would make the operation of foreign armies in Afghanistan both costly and precarious. Economic underdevelopment might defer the 'greedy temptations' of British India and Russia.

The ruling elite of Afghanistan believed that the most effective way to control an anti-European, anti-foreign national sentiment was barring foreign residents and foreign investments. They thought that this sort of sentiment could easily endanger their own lives as well as those of foreigners.

They feared that the introduction of capitulations and European sponsored technological and economic improvements would impose an 'open door' policy on Afghanistan. It would bring in its wake extra-territoriality and most-favoured-nation agreements with various European powers, especially England and Russia. These privileges might then provide the foreign powers ready pretext for intervention.

³ Pannikar, K. M., *Afro-Asian States and their Problems*; London; George Allen & Unwin; 1959; p. 79.

The country's meagre economy, especially the urban economy was seriously damaged by the two Afghan wars. The population and the economy of Kabul and Kandahar region declined sharply; the province of Herat also suffered enormous material losses.⁴ The modest achievements of Sher Ali & Dost Mohammad were undone. Perhaps the best illustration of this sad state of Afghanistan could be illustrated by the mournful words of Yakub Khan. According to him, "Afghanistan is ruined; the troops, the city (Kabul) and surrounding country have thrown off their yoke of allegiance. The workshops and magazines are totally gutted. In fact, my kingdom is ruined."

It was the urban centres of eastern Afghanistan rather than the Afghan tribes that were most severely damaged by these wars. This fact is of great historical significance. The nationalist, anti-British struggle was led primarily by the Afghan tribes and the religious establishment because of the weakened position of the urban sectors. Later on it became a religious as well as a nationalist war. Islam became a potent national force, a unifying force that overrode, to a great extent, ethnic, racial, and linguistic divisions, a force used by the Afghan rulers to mobilise popular opinion and enlist the support of the masses in their struggle against the Sikhs and against British imperialism.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers; LXX (1880): "Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Afghanistan", no. 1; pp.19-25.

On one hand, the religious character of the Afghan wars had positive effects. It contributed greatly to Afghan nationalism and political consciousness and bolstered the Afghan's will to defend their country. On the other hand, the transformation of the struggle into a religious war also had negative effects. It resulted in a strengthening of the social position of the traditionalist ulama and promoted Afghan xenophobia and cultural isolationism. The introduction and adoption of major socio-economic and cultural innovations resisted by many of the religious leaders. They disposed them as alien to the spirit and tenets of Afghan traditions. Such innovations were associated with the Christian enemy; to reject European civilization was to reject European imperialism.

The consolidation of Afghan feudalism and tribalism was the result of the Anglo-Afghan wars. Afghan monarchy was deprived of an important economic asset with the loss of Peshawar and the Punjab to the Sikhs on the eve of the first Afghan war. The Afghan rulers were forced to become increasingly dependent on Durrani clans and the other tribes for the defence of the country and maintenance of the dynasty. The position of the tribes within Afghanistan got strengthened because of the military importance of the independent frontier tribes. Tribalism was thus preserved at the expense of the Afghan monarchy and the growth of national institutions.

A wide array of European institutions and technology were introduced to the Afghans as a result of the wars and foreign occupation. They were, for the first

time exposed to modern armies, an advanced military technology, western mores, and European diplomacy. These experiences could not help but create a certain amount of social ferment. Some members of the Afghan ruling class favoured the introduction of limited reforms and elements of European military technology despite the resistance of traditionalists. European and American adventurers, deserters from the British army in India, and Pathan tribesmen who had served with the British troops introduced new military techniques, and the warlike Afghan tribesmen borrowed from or copied captured European weaponry.⁵

The greatest impact of the rivalry, however, was on the Afghan monarchy itself. The Afghan elite saw in limited modernization an instrument to strengthen their own position as well as the defines of Afghanistan. Despite the opposition of die-hard traditionalists, the Afghan monarchs continued to pursue a policy of centralization and limited modernization. They looked for a modern army, some government-controlled industry, a politically and economically united country.

The difficulties faced by the Afghan elite class in implementing their policies were enormous. They wanted to develop Afghanistan only enough to secure its defenses without opening it to extensive foreign influences or inviting English or Russian intervention. They, therefore, tried to combine a policy of secluded independence with one of indigenous, self-sufficient modernization and

⁵ Masson. C.: *Narrative of Various Journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab*, Vol. I, London; Oxford University Press, 1974; p. 391.

limited reform. Their distrust of European imperialist countries and Europeans in general led them to cut themselves off from needed capital and expertise.

There were many other problems which were faced by the Afghan rulers in implementing reforms. One was the country's landlocked position, the result of the definite loss of the Khanate of Kalat. Another was the need to accommodate the important Afghan tribes. This kept the army feudal in character dependent on tribal and feudal levies. Still another was the great self-confidence and self-reliance of the Afghans themselves. The traditional methods of Afghan warfare not altogether discredited: the Afghan preserved their independence and forced the British out of Afghanistan. They thus believed that their fighting spirit and will to resist, together with their country's rugged terrain, more than made up for their technological inferiority. This self-acclaimed success boosted the national confidence of Afghans, but it did little to encourage popular acceptance of the necessity of fundamental socio-economic reform and modernization.

All these developments had great impact upon 20th century Afghanistan. The socio-political-economic development of Afghanistan was not smooth and in the last quarter of the century, it once again came under the yoke of Russian forces. But by that time, a lot of harm had been done. Afghanistan was no longer in a position to regain its glory of ancient past. In fact, the situation got worsened.

The Taliban emerged on the scene. The conditions further deteriorated. At the turn of the century, Afghanistan emerged as the epicentre of global terrorism.

It became the hotbed of Islamic fundamentalist forces. The September 11 incident changed the scenario of Afghanistan. Now a little bit of normalcy is returning. But a lot of work in the form of national reconstruction is still to be done.

The world community will have to come together to help Afghanistan. We will have to analyze the problems of present day Afghanistan and for that, great emphasis have to be given on the study of developments of 19th century conditions in Afghanistan. This will enable us to understand the nature of the problems of present day Afghanistan and help us in solving it.

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APPENDIX - I

The Treaty of Gandamak

Treaty between the British Government and his Highness Mahommed Yakub Khan, Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, concluded at Gandamak on the 26th May, 1879, by his Highness the Amir Mahommed Yakub Khan on his own part and on the part of the British Government by Major (afterwards Sir Louis) P. L. N. Cavagnari, C.S.I.

- (1) From the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present Treaty there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government on the one part and his Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, and his successors, on the other.
- (2) His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies engages, on the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, to publish a full and complete amnesty, absolving the all his subjects from any responsibility for intercourse with the British forces during the war, and to guarantee and protect all persons of whatever degree from any punishment or molestation on that account.
- (3) His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies agrees to conduct his relations with Foreign States in accordance with the advice and wishes of the British Government. His Highness the Amir will enter into no engagements with Foreign States, and will not take up arms against any Foreign State, except with the concurrence of the British Government. On these conditions the British Government will support the Amir against any foreign aggression with money, arms, or troops, to be employed in whatsoever manner the British Government may judge best for this purpose. Should British troops at any time enter Afghanistan for the purpose of repelling foreign aggression, they will return to their stations in British territory as soon as the object for which they entered has been accomplished.

- (4) With a view to the maintenance of the direct and intimate relations now established between the British Government and his Highness the Amir of Afghanistan, and for the better protection of the his Highness's dominion, it is agreed that a British Representative shall reside at Kabul, with a suitable escort, in a place of residence appropriate to his rank and dignity. It is also agreed that the British Government shall have the right to depute British Agents with suitable escorts to the Afghan frontiers, whensoever this may be considered necessary by the British Government in the interests of both States, on the occurrence of any important external fact. His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan may on his part depute an Agent to reside at the Court of his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and at such other places in British India as may be similarly agreed upon.
- (5) His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies guarantees the personal safety and honourable treatment of British Agents within his jurisdiction; and the British Government on its part undertakes that its Agents shall never in any way interfere with the internal administration of his Highness's dominions.
- (6) His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies undertakes, on behalf of himself and his successors, to offer no impediment to British subjects peacefully trading within his dominions so long as they do so with the permission of the British Government, and in accordance with such arrangements as may be mutually agreed upon from time to time between the two Governments.
- (7) In order that the passage of trade between the territories of the British Government and of his Highness the Amir of Afghanistan may be open and uninterrupted, his Highness the Amir of Afghanistan agrees to use his best endeavours to ensure the protection of trades and to facilitate the transit of goods along the well-known customary roads of Afghanistan. These roads shall be improved and maintained in such manner as the two Governments

may decide to be most expedient for the general convenience of traffic, and under such financial arrangements as may be mutually determined upon between them. The arrangements made for the maintenance and security of the aforesaid roads, for the settlement of the duties to be levied upon merchandise carried over these roads, and for the general protection and development of trade with and through the dominions of his Highness, will be stated in a separate Commercial Treaty, to be concluded within one year, due regard being given to the state of the country.

(8) With a view of facilitate communications between the allied Governments and to aid and develop intercourse and commercial relations between the two countries, it is hereby agreed that a line of telegraph from Kurram to Kabul shall be constructed by and at the cost of the British Government, and the Amir of Afghanistan hereby undertakes to provide for the protection of this telegraph line.

(9) In consideration of the renewal of friendly alliance between the two States which has been attested and secured by the foregoing Articles, the British Government restores to his Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies the towns of Kandahar and Jelalabad with all the territory now in possession of the British armies, excepting the districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi. His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies agrees on his part that the districts of Kurram and Pishin and Sibi, according to the limits defined in the schedule annexed, shall remain under the protection and administrative control of the British Government: that is to say, the aforesaid districts shall be treated as assigned districts, and shall not be considered as permanently severed from the limits of the Afghan kingdom. The revenues of these districts, after deducting the charges of civil administration, shall be paid to his Highness the Amir.

The British Government will retain in its own hands the control of the Khyber and Michni Passes, which lie between the Peshsawar and Jelalabad districts and of all

relations with the independent tribes of the territory directly connected with these passes.

(10) For the further support of his Highness the Amir in the recovery and maintenance of his legitimate authority, and in consideration of the efficient fulfillment in their entirety of the engagements stipulated by the foregoing Articles, the British Government agreed to pay to his Highness the Amir and to his successors an annual subsidy of six lakhs of Rupees.

Done at Gandamak, this 26th day of May 1879, corresponding with the 4th day of the month of Jamadi-us-sani, 1296 A.H.

Amir Mahommed Yakub Khan
N. Cavagnari, Major

APPENDIX-II

The Protocol of 1885

(Translation)

The undersigned, the Marquis of Salisbury, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs etc., 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, etc., 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 Russians:—

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 that defile). From the point K the line will follow the crest of the heights bordering on the north the second defile which it will cut a little to the west of the bifurcation at a distance of about 850 sajens from the point where the roads from Adam-Ulan, Kungrueli, and Ak-Robat meet. The line will then continue to follow the crest of the heights as far as the point P marked on map No. 2 attached to the Protocol. From thence it will run in a southeasterly direction nearly parallel to the Ak-Robat road, will pass between the salt lakes marked Q and R, which are to the south of Ak-Robat and to the north of Souma Karez, and leaving Souma Karez to the Afghans, will run to Islim, where the frontier will cross to the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk leaving Islim outside

Afghan territory. The line will then follow the crests of the hills which border the right bank of the 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 Maurchak, fixed so as to leave to Russia the lands cultivated by the Sariks, and their pastures. Applying the same principle both to the Turkomans subject to Russia and to the subjects of the Ameer of Afghanistan, the frontier will follow east of the Murghab a line north of the valley of the Kaisor, and west of the valley of the Sangalak (Abi-Andhkoi), and leaving Andhakoi 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.

For the sake of greater clearness the principal points on the frontier-line are marked on the Maps annexed to the present protocol.

2. It is agreed that Commissioners shall forthwith be appointed by the Governments of her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russians, who shall proceed to examine and trace upon the spot the details of the Afghan frontier as fixed by the preceding Article. One Commissioner shall be appointed by Her Majesty the Queen and one by His Majesty the Emperor. The escorts of the Commission are fixed at 100 men at most on either side, and no increase shall be made without an agreement between the Commissioners. The Commissioners shall meet at Zulfikar within two months from the date of the signature of the present Protocol, and shall at once proceed to trace the frontier in conformity with the preceding stipulations.

It is agreed that the delimitation shall begin at Zulfikar, and that, as soon as the Commissioners shall have met and commenced their labours, the neutralization of Penjdeh shall be limited to the district comprised between a line to the north running from Bend-i-Nadir to Burdj-Uraz-Khan and a line to the south running from Maruchak to Hauzi Khan, the Russian and Afghan posts on the Murghab

being respectively at Bend-i-Nadir and Maruchak. The Commissioners shall conclude their labours as quickly as possible.

3. It is agreed that in tracing this frontier, and in conforming as closely as possible to the description of this line in the present Protocol, as well as to the points marked on the maps annexed thereto, the said Commissioners shall pay due attention to the localities, and to the necessities and well-being of the local populations.
4. As the work of delimitation proceeds, the respective parties shall be at liberty to establish posts on the frontier.
5. It is agreed that, when the said Commissioners shall have completed their labours, Maps shall be prepared and signed, and communicated by them to their respective Governments.

In witness whereof, the Undersigned, duly authorized to that effect, have signed the present Protocol, and have affixed thereto the seal of their arms.

Done at London, the 10th September, 1885.

(L.S.) Salisbury.

(L.S.) Steel.

APPENDIX-III

DEMARCATIION OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER OF AFGHANISTAN PROTOCOL NO. 4.

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

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. 1 and No. 19 and the pillars No. 36 and No. 65, is considered as definitely settled. The trigonometrical points on the portion of the frontier line described above and included between pillars No. 19 and No. 36 are likewise admitted as definitive; the description of this part of the frontier, as well as the part to the eastward of the pillar No. 65, may be completed after the demarcation.
2. Leaving pillar No. 19, the frontier shall follow a straight line up to 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 domination of "trigonometrical station of Kara Tape" (latitude $35^{\circ} 17' 49''$, longitude $6^{\circ} 15' 17''$). Further on the line shall descend the crest of the hills, being directed from this point towards the confluence of the Kushk and the Moghur pillar No. 2, shall be placed on a point of 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-northeast of the Ziaret of Chihil- Dukhtar. From pillar No. 23 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 $35^{\circ} 14' 30''$, 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 Senicha 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 this 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, the frontier descending the thelweg of the Murghab, shall join 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 Afhans; the point C about midway between the east and west wells of Katadbadji; 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-Deria, that is to say, that the inhabitants of Khemiab shall retain all their lands and all their

pastures, including those which are east of the local frontier marked E, F, G, on maps No. 9 and 10 annexed to the protocol. On the other hand, the inhabitants of 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 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 Dukhter which were not in use at that time, remain 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 Dukhter; but the waters of the Moghur belong exclusively to them, and they may carry out any works they may thin 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. Zinoviev having expressed the wish that the obligation imposed on the Amir 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 late 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 Bend-i-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.

10th (22nd) July 1887.

W. Ridgeway.

J. Zinoviev.

APPENDIX-IV

Annex to Protocol No. 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE Afghan frontier between the Hari-Rud and the Oxus (Amou-Daria)

The frontier begins on the right bank 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 Pas. Pillar No. 2 is placed on the top of the neighbouring 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 detailed portion of the cliff. From thence the frontier runs in a 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 a 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. 6. 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 miles distant from the bifurcation of the four roads converging at the eastern extremity of the defile of Zulficar. 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 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-Robet and Sumbakarez, and thence to pillar No. 14, situated at a distance of 2 miles to the east on the top of hill.

Pillar No. 15 is about 9 miles from Ak-Robat, on the road leading to An-Rohak, from thence the frontier runs in a straight line towards pillar No. 16, placed on the more easterly and the higher of the two mounds of Koscha-Tehinguja, 5 1/2 miles north of 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 of miles south of Islim. Pillar No. 38 is placed on an elevated point of the "Ghul" 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-shor, 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 Parandes. Following this line in a northerly direction the frontier reaches pillar No. 45 situated 3 miles south-west of the well of Beshdara. From thence it follows in a north-easterly direction a branch of the watershed, and arrives at Pillar No. 46, situated at 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 Kassaw-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 placed near the road from Jalaiour on the Kaissar to Jalgun-Koudouk and Kera-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-Hassara-Kouduk 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 extended between the depression of Kui-Sarai and that in which the well of Khwaja Ahmad is situated. From his pillar the frontier runs in a straight line north-wards 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 Maruchak, from thence it proceeds to pillar No. 57, two half 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 Andkhoi; the frontier then turns rather more to the east towards pillar No. 59, placed on a low sandy hill about 2 1/4 miles of the east-south-east of the wells of Sari 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 Andkhoi to Sechanchi; thence following the same direction, it reaches pillar No. 62, placed on a well-defined sandy mound known by the name of Madlai-Koum; the frontier line then reaches in an east-north-easterly direction pillar No. 63, placed to the north of Oikul, an elliptically shaped valley 3,600 feet in length, and at the bottom of which are situated two "Kaka" or basins of fresh water, which remain within Afghan territory. Turning then in an east-north-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 direction as far as pillar No. 65, placed on the high road between Andkhoi and Dugchi and Karki, at a point $4\frac{1}{4}$ miles to the south of Dugchi and $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles to the north of Sultan Robot.

10th (22nd) July 1887.

APPENDIX-V

Relevant Sections of the 'Durand Agreement' – 1893

1. Agreement Signed At Kabul on the 12th November, 1893

Whereas the British Government has represented to His Highness the Amir that the Russian Government presses for the literal fulfillment of 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 Kokeeha with Oxus, and whereas the British Government considers itself bound to abide by the terms of this Agreement, if the Russia Government equally abides by them, His Highness Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, G.C.S.I., Amir of Afghanistan and its Dependencies, 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. And Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, hereby declares on the part of the British Government that the transfer to His Highness the Amir of the said districts lying to the south of the Oxus is an essential part of this transaction, and undertakes that arrangement will be made with the Russian Government to carry out the transfer of the said lands to the north and south of the Oxus.

(Signed)

H. M. Durand

12 th November, 1893.

(2nd Jamadi-u-awal 1311)

Kabul

(Signed)

Amir Abdur Rahman Khan

12 th November, 1893.

(2nd Jamadi-u-awal 1311)

Kabul

2. Agreement Signed at Kabul on the 12th November 1893.

Whereas certain questions have arisen regarding the frontier of Afghanistan on the side of India, and whereas both His Highness the Amir and the Government of India are desirous of settling these questions by a friendly understanding, and of fixing the limits of their respective spheres of influence, so that for the future there may be no difference of opinion on the subject between the allied Government, it is hereby agreed as follows:

1. The eastern and southern frontier of His Highness's dominions, from Wakhan to the Persian border, shall follow the line shown in the map attached to his agreement.
2. The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of Afghanistan, and His Highness the Amir will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of India.
3. The British Government thus agrees to His Highness the Amir retaining Asmer and the valley above it, as far as Chanak. His Highness agrees on the other hand that he will at no time exercise interference in Swat, Bjaaur, or Chitral, including the Arnawai or Bashgal valley. The British Government also agrees to leave to His Highness the Birmal tract as shown in the detailed map already given to His Highness, who relinquishes his claim to the rest of the Waziri country and Dawar. His Highness also relinquishes his claim to Chageh.
4. The frontier line will hereafter be laid down in detail and demarcated, wherever this may be practicable and desirable, by joint British and Afghan Commissioners, whose object will be to arrive by mutual understanding at a boundary which shall adhere with the greatest possible exactness to the line

shown in the map attached to this agreement, having due regard to the existing local rights of villages adjoining the frontier.

5. With reference to the question of Chaman, the Amir withdraws the objection to the new British Government and concedes to the British Government the rights purchased by him in the Sirkai Tilerai water. At this part of the frontier the line will be drawn as follow:—

From the crest of the Khwaja Amran range near the Psha Kotal, which remains in British territory, the line will run in such a direction as to leave Murgha Chaman and the Sharobo spring to Afghanistan, and to pas half-way between the new Chaman Fort and the Afghan outpost known locally as Laskhar Dand. The line will then pass half-way between the railway station and the hill known as the Mian Baldak, and, turning southwards, will rejoin the Khwaja Amran range, leaving the Gwasha Post in British territory, and the road to Shorawak to the west and south of Gwasha in Afghanistan. The British Government will not exercise any interference within half-a-mile of the road.

6. The above articles of agreement are regarded by the Government of India and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan as a full and satisfactory settlement of all the principal differences of opinion which have arisen between them in regard to the frontier; and both the Government of India and His Highness the Amir undertake that any differences of detail, such as those which will have to be considered hereafter by the officers appointed to demarcate the boundary line, shall be settled in a friendly spirit, so as remove for the future as far as possible all causes of doubt and misunderstanding between the two Governments.
7. Being fully satisfied of His Highness's goodwill to the British Government, and wishing to see Afghanistan independent and strong, the Government of India will raise no objection to the purchase and import by His Highness of munitions of war, and they will themselves grant him some help in this respect. Further, in order to mark their sense of the friendly spirit in which

His Highness the Amir has entered into these negotiations, the Government of India undertakes to increase by the sum of six lakhs of rupees a year the subsidy of twelve lakhs now granted to His Highness.

(Signed)

H. M. Durand

12 th November, 1893.

(2nd Jamadi-u-awal 1311)

Kabul

(Signed)

Amir Abdur Rahman Khan

12 th November, 1893.

(2nd Jamadi-u-awal 1311)

Kabul

APPENDIX-VI

Articles of the Anglo-Russian Agreement as Affecting Afghanistan

The high contracting parties being animated with a sincere desire to assure the perfect security of their respective frontiers in Central Asia and to maintain there a solid and lasting peace, have decided to conclude a Convention to that effect.

Article I- His Majesty's Government declare that they have no intention of changing the political status of Afghanistan; His Majesty's Government further engage to exercise their influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense and will not themselves take in Afghanistan, and will not encourage Afghanistan to take any measures threatening Russia. The Russia Government on their part declare that they recognize Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence, and they engage that all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government. They further undertake not to send any agents into Afghanistan.

Article II- His Majesty's Government having declared in the Treaty signed at Kabul on the 21st March 1905 that they recognized the Agreement and the engagements concluded with the late Amir Abdur Rahman and that they have no intention of interfering in the internal government of Afghanistan. His Majesty's Government engages not to annex or to occupy in contravention of that Treaty any portion of Afghanistan or to interfere in the internal administration of the country, provided that the Amir fulfils the engagements already contracted towards His Majesty's Government under the above-mentioned Treaty.

Article III- The Russian and Afghan authorities specially designated for the purpose on the frontier or in the frontier provinces may establish direct reciprocal

relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character.

Article IV- The British and Russia Governments declare that they recognize as regards Afghanistan the principle of equality of treatment in matters concerning commerce and agree that any facilities which may have been, or shall be hereafter obtained for British and British Indian trade and traders shall be equally applied to Russian trade and traders. Should the progress of commerce establish the necessity for commercial agents; the two Governments will agree as to the measures to be taken, due regard being had to the Amir's Sovereign rights.

Article V- The present arrangements will only enter into force from the moment when the British Government has notified to the Russian Government the consent of the Amir to the terms above stipulated.

APPENDIX-VII

Chronological Sketch of Afghan History

1747- Nadir Shah, a Turcoman bandit, conquers Persia with an army composed largely of Afghans. Sacks Delhi and is assassinated in camp on return from India. Sirdar Ahmed Khan, an Afghan cavalry general of the Saddozai section of the Abdali Afghans, seizes the treasure near Kandahar and has himself crowned king of the Durani with the title of Ahmed Shah, Duri Duran. With Ahmed commences history of Afghan nation as an independent kingdom. He builds Kandahar shortly afterwards, calling it Ahmed Shahior Ahmed Shahr. (These events occur about 1747.) Ahmed Shah reigns twenty-six years. He replenishes his treasuries of frequent invasions of India. He is succeeded by his son Timour Shah.

1773- Timour Shah's succession to the throne. He removes the seat of government from Kandahar to Kabul. He reigns twenty years and dies 1793, leaving three sons:

- (i) Zaman Shah, who reigns four years, living chiefly at Peshawar. He is deposed by his half-brother, Mahommed, and blinded as retaliation for having caused to be executed Wazir Surfaraz Khan Barakzai (called Painsah Khan).
- (ii) Mahommed, who is attacked and imprisoned by
- (iii) Shah Shujah, full brother of Zaman Shah. He ascends the throne of Kabul, but lives principally at Peshawar.

1800- Proposed invasion of India by the emperors Paul and Napoleon.

1807- Scheme of Indian invasion by the emperors Alexander and Napoleon.

1809- News having been received that Emperor Napoleon and Tsar Alexander had agreed to invade India through Persia, Mr. Elphinstone is sent as an ambassador to Kabul, meets Shah Shujah at Peshawar, and concludes a treaty.

1818- Murder of Fateh Khan by order of Shah Mahommed and his son Kamran. Country again convulsed with anarchy. Mahommed and Kamran retire to Herat, the rest of the country being divided between the brothers of Fateh Khan, the murdered Wazir, amongst whom Dost Mahommed Khan got Kabul, Jelalabad, and Ghazni.

1826- Accession of Dost Mahommed, Amir of Afghanistan.

1832- Lieutenant A. Burnes' journey to Kabul, Bokhara, Merv, and Meshed.

1833- Unsuccessful Persian expedition against Herat.

1837- Persian, instigated by Russia, marches against Herat.

1837- Siege of Herat and defence by Eldred Pottinger, November 1837 to June 1838.

1837- Mission of Sir Alexander Burnes to Kabul to make peace between Dost Mahommed and Ranjit Singh, September 1837.

1837- Russian agent, Vitkievitch, at Kabul, December 1837.

1838- Wood explores the Upper Oxus to Lake Siri-kol..

1838- Rupture of relations with Dost Mahommed. Recall of Burnes.

1838- Beginning of first Afghan War, November 1838.

1839- Capture of Kandahar.

1839- Capture of Kabul, flight of Dost Mahommed, and restoration of Shah Shujah (August).

1840- Rising of Dost Mahommed (September).

1840- Defeat and surrender of Dost Mahommed at Bamian (November).

1841- Assassination of Sir A. Burnes at Kabul (November).

1841- Murder of Sir W. Macnaghten at Kabul (December).

1842- Siege of British forces in Kabul (December 1841, to January 1842).

1842- Retreat and massacre of British army (January).

1842- Advance of British relief column under General Pollock (April).

1842- March of General Nott from Kandahar to Kabul (August to September).

1842- General Pollock re-enters Kabul (September).

1842- Evacuation of Afghanistan (October).

1842- Dost Mahommed restored to throne.

1854- Meeting between Ghulan Hydel, Envoy of Dost Mahommed and Sir John Laurence at fort Abbotabad to discuss question of alliance.

1855- First treaty between Great Britain and Dost Mahommed (January).

1856- Surrender of Herat to the Persians (October).

1857- Meeting between Sir John Laurence and Dost Mahommed at Peshawar.

1857- Second treaty between Great Britain and Dost Mahommed (January).

1857- Grant of subsidy to Dost Mahommed of 12 lakhs.

1857- Mission of Major Lumsden to Kandahar (March to April).

1857- War between Great Britain and Persia upon behalf of Afghanistan (November 1856 to March 1857).

1857- Appointment of British agent to Kabul. Removal to Kandahar.

1857- Treaty of Paris between Great Britain and Persia (March).

1858- Recall of Kandahar Mission: agent remains.

1858- Russian Mission of Khanikoff to Herat.

1858- Death of Ghulam Hyder, son of Dost Mahommed; and Shir Ali nominated successor to Dost Mahommed.

1863- Death of Dost Mahommed (June) Accession of Shir Ali; return to Kabul with British Agent from Kandahar.

1863- Requests recognition of Mahommed Ali; treaty of peace, and grant of 6000 rupees.

1863- Civil War in Afghanistan.

Consequent upon the nomination of Shir Ai, serious dissension occurred in the family of Dost Mahommed. Upon the succession of Shir Ali, rebellion broke out, and Azim, brother to Shir Ali by a different mother, fled into British territory. Afzal, the brother of Azim, serving as Governor of Balkh, also revolted. Shir Ali defeated Afzal, imprisoning him in August 1864. Abdur Rahman, the son of Afzal, was pursued by Shir Ali. Abdur Rahman was joined by Azim, the two

marching on Kabul, released Afzal and attacked Kabul in 1866. Shir Ali fled to Kandahar, Afzal entering Kabul as Amir on May 21, 1866. Recognized by the Government of India, he died suddenly in 1867. He was succeeded by Azim, who was never recognized officially by the Government of India. Shir Ali then marched against Azim in 1869, defeating him. Azim died in flight to Teheran, the final triumph and the concluding act of the rebellion being the accession to the throne of Shir Ali Khan in 1869.

1865- Mahommed Ali killed.

1869- Flight to Abdur Rahman Khan to Samarkand.

1869- Shir Ali endeavours to obtain recognition by British Government of his son Abdullah Jan as successor. Refused.

1869- Umballa Conference between Lord Mayo and Shir Ali (March).

1869- First overtures from Lord Clarendon to Prince Gortchakow about Afghanistan.

1872- Gortchakow-Granville Agreement as to boundaries of Afghanistan (October).

1872- Seistan Boundary Commission.

1873- Evidences of estrangement of Shir Ali from Government of India.

1873- Abdullah Jan proclaimed heir-apparent. Yakub Khan revolts. Flight to Herat.

1874- Imprisonment at Kabul of Yakub Khan.

1876- Cool reception of Mission from Lord Lytton to Kabul.

1876- Quetta occupied.

1877- Abortive Conference at Peshawar between Sir L. Pelly and the Prime Minister of Shir Ali, Nur Mahomet Shah (February).

1877- Estrangement of Shir Ali completed.

1878- Kauffman threatens invasion of Afghanistan and India (June).

1878- Pamir column dispatched under General Abramoff (June).

1878- Arrival of Stolietoff mission at Kabul (July).

1878- Refusal of Shir Ali to allow the Mission under Sir Neville B. Chamberlain, Commander of the Madras army, to enter Afghanistan. Major Cavagnari and party threatened with attack at Ali Musjid if progress through Khyber Pass maintained (September 20 and 21).

1878- Advance continued, November 21.

1878- Colonel Gradekoff's ride from Samarkand to Herat (October to November).

1878- Denunciation of alliance with Dost Mahommed by Lord Lytton (November 21).

1878- Second Afghan War begun (November).

1878- Flight of Shir Ali from Kabul and release of Yakub Khan.

1879- Death of Shir Ali in February and accession of Yakub Khan (February).

1879- Treaty of Gandamak with Yakub Khan (June 8).

1879- Assassination of Sir L. Cavagnari at Kabul, Dr. Ambrose Kelly, Lieut. Hamilton, and Mr. Jenkins and others (September 3 and 4).

1879- Third Afghan War begun (September 6). March of General Robert on Kabul.

1879- General Roberts arrives at Kabul (September 28), and occupies Dakka (September 22).

1879- Execution of murderers of Sir L. Cavagnari (October 20-24).

1879- Twenty-five thousand Afghans defeated by Generals Roberts and Gough (December 23).

1879- Kabul deserted by Afghans; re-occupation by British (December 26).

1879- Yakub Khan deported to India (December).

1880- Recognition of Abdur Rahman Khan as Amir (July).

1880- Disaster of Maiwand (July 27). Defeat of General Burrows by Ayub Khan.

1880- March of Sir F. Roberts to the relief of Kandahar (leaving Kabul August 8, arriving Kandahar August 31).

1880- Rejection of Ayub's terms by Sir F. Roberts and defeat of Ayub at Mazra (or Battle of Kandahar on September 1).

1881- Evacuation of Kandahar and entry of Abdur Rahman (September 30).
1882-1883- Surveys of Lessar.
1882- Moslim agent appointed to represent British Government at Kabul.
1882- Quetta district handed over on a rent to the British.
1882- Prince Lobanoff converses with Lord Granville re Prince Gortchakow's circular of 1873.
1883- Occupation by Russia of Tedjend casis (October).
1883- Quetta district ceded to Great Britain.
1883- Shignan and Roshan occupied by Abdur Rahman Khan.
1883- Abdur Rahman passes a law concerning the status of women.
1883- Subsidy of 12 lakhs, granted by Lord Ripon to Abdur Rahman, due.
1884- Frontier negotiations between Great Britain and Russia. Sir Peter Lumsden proceeds with British Mission to Herat to demarcate Northern Boundary of Afghanistan.
1884- Recommencement of Quetta Railway.
1884- Sir P. Lumsden sent as British Boundary Commissioner (October 1884).
1884- The Russian occupy Pul-i-Khatun (October).
1885-The Russians occupy Zulfikar and Akrobat, and advance upon Pendjeh (February).
1885- Fight between the Russian and Afghans at Tash-Kepri on the Kushk (March 30).
1885- Rawal Pindi conference between Lord Dufferin and Abdur Rahman Khan., Amir received. K.C.S.I. (April)
1885- War scare in Great Britain (April).
1885- Sir P. Lumsden recalled. Colonel West Ridgeway remains on the scene of activities of Mission.
1885- British and Russian Boundary Commissioners meet again. First boundary pillar formally erected (November 12).
1886- Bolan Railway constructed to Quetta.

- 1886- Demarcation of Afghan boundary up to separation of Commission (September).
- 1886- Return of British Commission through Kabul to India (October).
- 1887- Occupation of Karki by Russia (May).
- 1887- Negotiations at St. Petersburg continued and concluded (July).
- 1887- Final settlement and demarcation of Afghan frontier (winter).
- 1887- Escape of Ayub Khan from Persia; failure of rebellion in Afghanistan.
- 1887- Surrender of Ayub Khan to General Maclean, Viceroy's Agent at Meshed, and detention in India.
- 1888- Quetta Railway continued to Kila Abdulla (January).
- 1888- Revolt of Is-hak Khan against Abdur Rahman Khan (July to September)
- 1888- Retreat of Is-hak Khan to Samarkand.
- 1889- War scare on the Oxus boundary (February to March).
- 1891- Abdur Rahman introduces the Oath of Allegiance on the Koran among his councilors.
- 1891- Abdur Rahman appoints Habib Ullah to hold public Durbars.
- 1893- Sir Mortimer Durand goes to Kabul to explain drift of negotiations between Great Britain and Russia in connection with Northern frontier and Pamir region.
- 1893- Durand Agreement.
- 1893- Increase of subsidy granted to Abdur Rahman by six lakhs, and permitted to import munitions of war as required.
- 1893- Abdur Rahman recognises British protectorate over Chitral and agrees to respect Bajor and Swat.
- 1893- New Chaman occupied as railway terminus.
- 1894- Abdur Rahman invited to England by Queen Victoria; unable to accept.
- 1895- Abdur Rahman abolished slavery in Afghanistan.
- 1895- Oath of Allegiance accepted from whole of the State of Afghanistan by Abdur Rahman.
- 1895- Abdur Rahman adopts title Zia-ul-Millat-ud-Din.

- 1895- Visit of Nasr Ullah Khan, second son of Abdur Rahman, to England.
- 1901- Death of Abdur Rahman (October 1). Halib Ullah proclaimed (October 3).
- 1902- 1903- Re-erection of boundary pillars on Perso-Afghan border.
- 1903- Construction Quetta-Nushki Railway begun.
- 1903-1904-1905- McMahon Mission for limitation of Seistan boundary.
- 1904- Opening of the Orenburg-Tashkent Railway.
- 1904- Visit of Sirdar Inayat Ullah to India.
- 1904-1905- Mission of Sir Louis Dane to Kabul.
- 1905- Opening of the Quetta-N ushki Railway (November).
- 1905- Resignation of Lord Curzon of Kedleston. Appointment of Earl Minto as Viceroy of India. Kitchener-Curzon controversy.
- 1905-06- Extension of railway to Dakka.
- 1906- Shah rejects the award made by McMahon Mission in respect of the waters of the Helmund.
- 1906- Rumours of autumn. Visit of Habib Ullah to India.
- 1907- Afghanistan emerged as a buffer state.

