

TITLE.

"Anglo-Afghan Relations, 1798 - 1878,
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Policy in Central Asia and on the
North-West frontier of India."

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MUNAWWAR KHAN.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the difficulties in the way of historical study is the practice of attaching "labels" to men and policies. We read of the "forward" policy on the North-West frontier of India and, by contrast, of the policy which is variously described as the "non-intervention" or the "backward" policy or, in Wyllie's phrase, the policy of "masterly inactivity". We read of the Punjab School and the Sind School. Sometimes it is almost made to appear, for journalistic convenience, as though there could be only two possible policies for the British and Indian governments to pursue in respect of the North-West frontier and Central Asia; that these policies retained their identity in all circumstances; and that a man who had elected to follow one - who had, so to speak, picked his side - was certain to follow it for the rest of his life.

The history of British rule in India affords evidence enough of the influence which one man or a small group of men could exert. The decision to crush Tipu Sultan, for example, was very much the personal decision of Wellesley.

But it was a decision which he took after considering facts which he believed or knew to exist. Political policies are seldom, if ever, advanced for the sake of advancing them. Men embark on policies because they believe in them; not, as they might tell a story or make a joke, to provide amusement or pass the time. The facts on which they base their policies may be wrongly understood and variously interpreted; the deductions from them may differ widely. These considerations are relevant to an assessment of the wisdom of a particular policy; but it is quite another thing to suggest, as is sometimes done, that the non-intervention and the forward policies were the creation, the patent or the whim of certain individuals; of Lord Lawrence and Lord Lytton, for example. It is equally idle to be dogmatic about schools of opinion. John Jacob's plan for the British occupation of Quetta is often regarded as the first sign of the re-emergence of the forward policy after the disasters of the first Afghan War; and since this plan was also substantially that of Frere and Green, both Sind men, it is regarded as the peculiar mark of the "Sind School" and therefore as antipathetic to the "Punjab School". And yet, as we shall see, it was also held by two very notable members of the "Punjab School", Edwardes and H.B.Lumsden.

Another danger in dealing with the subject of this

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thesis is to imagine that the problem of British relations with Afghanistan and Central Asia was sui generis, involving considerations which were utterly peculiar to it. Yet no Governor-General of India had an infinite choice of alternatives. The alternatives which came to be known as the forward policy and the non-intervention policy in respect of the North-West frontier existed, for example, in respect of Mysore in 1798-99. Indeed, they are among the most elementary of political choices. In an area so fluid as India in the eighteenth century a particular Power was bound either to go forward or to halt. Each course had its own dangers. This condition of fluidity existed in respect of Afghanistan and Central Asia after it had ceased to exist in respect of India. The dangers anticipated from Russian intervention in and through Persia and Afghanistan were roughly paralleled by the dangers (to which Wellesley was so sensitive) of French intervention in and through Mysore. Those who later pointed to the difficulties which the Russians would have encountered in Afghanistan might have supported their case by a letter which Arthur Wellesley wrote to John Malcolm on 20th June 1803:

"The more I see of the Mahrattas, the more convinced I am that they could never have any alliance with the French. The French, on their arrival, would want equipments, which would cost money, or money

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to procure them; and there is not a Mahratta in the whole country, from the Peshwa down to the lowest horseman, who has a shilling or who would not require assistance from them".

The danger of thinking that policy in respect of Afghanistan differed from policy in respect of every other country was very strongly put by Henry Lawrence in his Defence of Macnaghten (1843). Lawrence was concerned to point out that what had happened at Kabul was not something which could not happen anywhere else: it could easily happen, for instance, in Delhi.

"I wish, moreover, to point out that the mode of operation so pertinaciously styled "the Afghan system", and currently linked with the name of the late envoy, as if, with all its errors, it had originated with him, is essentially our Indian system; that it existed with all its defects when Sir William Macnaghten was in his cradle, and flourishes in our own provinces now that he is in his grave".¹

It is worth while observing, also, that the temptation to intervention or annexation is the greater if the supreme authority in the "victim" state is precarious or challenged. It was the failure of the Peshwa to maintain his authority, especially after the death of Nana Farnavis in 1800, which led to the Treaty of Bassein (1802) and British intervention. It was the disintegration of the authority of Ranjit Singh which precipitated the first Sikh War after his death in

1. J.L.Morison: Lawrence of Lucknow, p.335 (1934).

1839. The roles of puppet king and nationalist pretender, of Shah Shuja and Dost Mohammad, were only too easy to fill.

It will be obvious from what follows that the policy of the Indian government was bound to be affected, however indirectly, by what happened in countries as far removed as Poland and Armenia. It is important to remember, also, how much Indian policy was affected by British party politics; by the result of general elections in which India was not in the least degree an issue. If Peel's government of 1834-35 had lasted longer Lord Heytesbury and not Lord Auckland would have gone out to India as Governor-General. Both the first and the second Afghan Wars ultimately became important issues in British politics, and the policies followed, in the one case by a Whig and in the other by a Conservative government, were none the better for that.

There only remains one more point to make in this introductory chapter. The wisdom of a policy depends upon what could be known or reasonably anticipated at the time when the policy was formed or executed. The mere fact that Auckland was in error in 1838 does not necessarily mean that Lytton was in error in 1878. The growth of the Russian empire in Central Asia, the development of railway communication in India - these and many other factors make it necessary to judge every policy on its merits as they existed at the time.

BRITISH RELATIONS WITH PERSIA AND AFGHANISTAN, 1798 - 1838

When in 1809 Theophilus Metcalfe arrived in Calcutta it was to find his brother Charles (afterwards Lord) Metcalfe "negotiating with a semi-fabulous chieftain on the edges of Central Asia". The phrase is that of the most recent biographer of Lord Metcalfe¹ and it is not clear whether or not it was ever used by Theophilus Metcalfe. But it has the merit, since Charles Metcalfe's mission was to Ranjit Singh, of taking the Punjab out of its later geographical context as part of British India and putting it in its true contemporary place as part of the Central Asian structure.

This structure was as fluid, and therefore as menacing or as alluring, from the British point of view as that of Central or Southern India had ever been. The two major powers at the end of the eighteenth century were Persia and Afghanistan, and although a detailed history of their relations is unnecessary here, a brief survey of them is desirable. In 1747 Nadir Shah of Persia - "terrible to Asia and the undoubted arbiter of the East", in the words of the English traveller, Jonas Hanway - was murdered. His conquests, of Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, Peshawar, Sind,

1. Edward Thompson: The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe, p.104 (1937).

Bokhara and Khiva, had restored and extended Persian power sufficiently to justify Hanway's phrase; and he had raided successfully as far as Delhi. In his later years an Afghan contingent had been among his most loyal supporters and it was very much in the hands of these men, on their return to Kandahar, that the choice of an Afghan ruler lay. The choice fell on Ahmad Shah of the Abdali tribe, a name which he forthwith changed to Durani, and the rise of Afghanistan as a nation can properly be dated from his reign.¹

The immediate consequence was a drastic change in the balance of power in Central Asia. Ahmad Shah, after securing Kabul, Ghazni and Peshawar, attempted an invasion of the Punjab in 1748, only to be defeated at Manipur. A second and more successful attempt in 1748-49 led to his securing the promise of tribute. In 1750-51 he captured Herat, Meshed and Nishapur and a third invasion secured him the cession of the Punjab and Multan in 1751-52. To Afghanistan, however, the Punjab was at best a tributary kingdom which might be ceded, lost, conquered and re-conquered but could never be securely held. By 1757 it had fallen under the sway of the Mahrattas, and although Ahmad Shah defeated them at Paniput in 1761, the ultimate gainers from

1. Sir Percy Sykes: A History of Afghanistan, 2 vols., (1940); cited as Sykes, Afghanistan.

that battle were rather the East India Company than the Afghans. Meanwhile, there had been growing up in the Punjab, from the later fifteenth century, the power of the Sikhs; at first as a religious and then, under persecution, as a military sect. Ahmad Shah defeated the Sikhs in 1762 but on his inevitable retirement they gradually rallied and although he retained Peshawar he, in effect, abandoned the central Punjab to them.

When Ahmad Shah died in 1773 he was succeeded by Timur Shah during whose twenty years' reign Afghan power weakened and contracted, notably by the virtual independence gained by Sind. Nevertheless, his successor, Zaman Shah, was the ruler of an empire which included Kabul, Kandahar, Kashmir, Peshawar, Lahore, Balkh, Kulu, Multan and Herat, with claims over Kalat, Baluchistan and Sind. He invaded the Punjab in 1796 and 1797 and, so far as it is possible to assign a date to such developments, it is from this time that we may date the beginning - the very tentative beginning¹ - of British policy in Central Asia.

1. "So incurious was the Government of India about the North that the Himalayas remained unexplored until 1810, and the official map-makers, down to and including Major James Rennell, relied almost entirely upon the reports of Jesuit missionaries. The geography and politics of Persia and Afghanistan were similarly neglected ..."
 H.W.C.Davis, "The Great Game in Asia (1800-1844):
Proceedings of the British Academy, 1926, p.228.

Wellesley, the Governor-General, was always sensitive to any "outside" threat and in his view such a threat seemed to be developing when in 1798 Zaman Shah desired, or rather required, British co-operation in the Punjab, where he had reappeared.

"He should consider our not joining his royal standard, and our not assisting him in the restoration of Shah Allum and in the total expulsion of the Mahrattas, in the light of an act of disobedience and enmity".¹

Wellesley, who quoted thus, had his own plans, shortly to be put into execution, for dealing with the Mahrattas; and they were not meant for the benefit of Afghanistan. Zaman Shah he regarded not as a potential ally but as a potential enemy, who might very well try to penetrate as far as Lucknow. In Wellesley's view the Sikhs, the Rajputs and even the Mahrattas could form a useful barrier against Afghan designs. But another obvious check to Afghanistan was Persia, and Wellesley employed Mehdi Ali Khan, the Company's resident at Bushire, to induce Persia to distract Zaman Shah's attention. Enough was done by Persia, which aspired to recover Herat and Kandahar, for this purpose and in January 1801, two Anglo-Persian treaties were concluded through the agency of John (afterwards Sir John)

1. M.Martin: Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence of The Marquis Wellesley, Vol.I, p.262. Wellesley to Sir James Craig, 16th September 1798 (5 vols., 1838-37).

Malcolm.¹ One was commercial. The other was designed against both the Afghans and the French. If ever the King of the Afghans should "show a resolution to invade India" the Persian army "overthrowing mountains, furnished with all warlike stores" would lay waste the Afghan dominions: should any Afghan or French power commence war against Persia, Britain should send "as many cannon and warlike stores as possible" to one of the Persian ports: should a French army attempt to attack Persian territory a "conjunct" Anglo-Persian force would attack it.²

In point of fact the Afghan threat to India was diminishing. Zaman Shah's appointment of Ranjit Singh as Governor of Lahore in 1799 was an admission of failure and in the following year Zaman Shah himself was blinded and deposed. Mohammad Shah, his successor, had reigned only three years when he was defeated and deposed by his brother Shuja-ul-Mulk, the Shah Shuja whose fortunes were to be so long and so disastrously entwined with those of the British. As the civil war between the members of the reigning Saddozai family prepared the way for the victory of the Barakzai the

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1. 1769-1833. Entered Company's service 1782; secretary to the Commander-in-Chief 1795-98; missions to Persia, 1799 - 1801, 1808, 1810; Governor of Bombay 1826-30; author of a History of Persia (1818) etc.
 2. C.U.Aitchison: A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, Vol. II, pp.106-117. 7 vols., Calcutta, 1862-64; cited as Aitchison, Treaties.

danger to be apprehended from Afghanistan diminished in British eyes. But that from France seemed to be growing. In 1807 Napoleon I planned a highly ambitious design against India, which was to have included land expeditions through Central Asia and Egypt and a sea expedition round the Cape of Good Hope. For the land expeditions the help of Persia was essential and, to secure it, a mission under General Gardane was sent to Tehran. To Persia, the immediate danger was Russia, which had acquired Georgia in 1801. Since Russia was also, as a member since 1805 of the Third Coalition, an enemy of France, Gardane's arrival was opportune and his reception gratifying. On 7th May 1807 he was able to conclude the Treaty of Finkenstein by which Napoleon guaranteed the integrity of Persia and undertook to try to secure the restoration of Georgia: the Shah, on his part, binding himself to break off relations with the British and thus, in effect, join the Continental System. But when the Treaty of Tilsit was concluded shortly afterwards without any reference to Georgia it gradually became apparent to the Persians that they were being used as the mere tools of the French.

To the British, Tilsit, with its combination of a French and a Russian threat, was ominous; and in 1808 four missions were despatched to the several parts of the vast area

involved. One of them, that of Alexander Seton to Sind, calls for little mention here: it produced the Treaty of 22nd August 1809 by which the authorities of Sind bound themselves not to allow the settlement of "the tribe of the French" in their territories.¹ Metcalfe's mission to Ranjit Singh made his reputation and was recognized to be a success of the first order. The substantive provision of the Treaty was contained in Article I - "the British Government will have no concern with the territories and subjects of the Rajah to the northward of the River Sutlej".² By implication this allowed the Company to extend its protection over the Cis-Sutlej chiefs.

Malcolm was the obvious choice for the mission to Persia but when he arrived he found that Persian hopes of French assistance had not been entirely dissipated and he was prevented from entering Tehran. This left the field open to Sir Harford Jones, representing not the Company but the British Crown, who, biding his time, presently secured the admission denied to Malcolm. The immediate result was the Treaty concluded on 12th March 1809.³ This was specifically described as a preliminary Treaty and was followed on 14th March 1812 by a "definitive" treaty, negotiated on the part

1. Aitchison, Treaties, Vol.VII, pp.34,35.

2. Ibid., Vol.II, pp.237-238.

3. Ibid., Vol.VII, pp.117-121.

of His Majesty's Government by Sir Gore Ouseley, Harford Jones' successor. There is no need to set out the detailed provisions of those two treaties¹ since they were embodied in or superseded by those in the definitive treaty of 25th November 1814. This last treaty was concluded in the year after, and had to take account of, the Russo-Persian Treaty of Gulistan which ended the war of 1811-13 and inter alia cost Persia territory on the shores of the Caspian: its provisions are sufficiently important for some of them to be set out.

Article I

"The Persian Government judge it incumbent on them, after the conclusion of this definitive treaty, to declare all alliances with European nations in a state of hostility with Great Britain null and void, and hold themselves bound not to allow any European army to enter the Persian territory, nor to proceed towards India, nor to any of the ports of that country, and also not to allow any individuals of such European nations entertaining a design of invading India, or being at enmity with Great Britain whatever, to enter Persia. Should any of the European powers wish to invade India by the road of Kharizen, Taturistan, Bokhara, Samarkand, or other routes, His Persian Majesty engages to induce the kings and governors of those countries to oppose such invasion, as much as is in his power, either by the fear of his arms or by conciliatory measures."

Article 4

"It having been agreed by an Article in the preliminary Treaty concluded between the high contracting parties that in case of any European nation invading

1. Ibid., Vol.VII, pp.121-127.

Persia, should the Persian government require the assistance of the English, the Governor General of India, on the part of Great Britain, shall comply with the wish of the Persian government by sending from India the force required, with officers, ammunition and warlike stores, or, in lieu thereof, the English Government shall pay an annual subsidy, the amount of which shall be regulated in a definitive Treaty to be concluded between the high contracting parties; it is hereby provided that the amount of the said subsidy shall be two hundred thousand (200,000) Tomans annually. It is further agreed that the said subsidy shall not be paid in case the war with such European nation shall have been produced by an aggression on the part of Persia; and since the payment of the subsidy will be made solely for the purpose of raising and disciplining an army, it is agreed that the English minister shall be satisfied of its being duly applied to the purpose for which it is assigned".

Article 5

"Should the Persian government wish to introduce European discipline among their troops, they are at liberty to employ European officers for that purpose, provided the said officers do not belong to nations in a state of enmity or war with Great Britain".

Article 6

"Should any European power be engaged in war with Persia when at peace with England, His Britannic Majesty engages to use his best endeavours to bring Persia and such European power to a friendly understanding. If, however, His Majesty's cordial interference should fail of success, England shall still, if required, in conformity with the stipulations in the preceding Articles, send a force from India or, in lieu thereof, pay an annual subsidy of two hundred thousand Tomans for the support of a Persian army so long as a war in the supposed case shall continue and until Persia shall make peace with such nation".

Article 8

"Should the Afghans be at war with the British nation, His Persian Majesty engages to send an army against them in such force and in such manner as may be concerted with the English Government. The expense of such army shall be defrayed by the British Government in such manner as may be agreed upon at the period of its being required".

Article 9

"If war should be declared between the Afghans and Persians, the English Government shall not interfere with either party unless their mediation to effect a peace is solicited by both parties".

It does not require a very close reading of this treaty of 1814¹ to see that the advantage lay with Britain. Persia was bound to go to war if the Afghans were at war with Britain: Britain was not bound to go to war, indeed was explicitly prevented from going to war, with the Afghans if they were engaged in hostilities with Persia. Persia was bound to prevent any European army passing through Persian territory towards India: Britain was not bound to assist Persia in the event of hostilities with a European power if such hostilities had been produced by Persian aggression. It is perfectly clear that Britain was not prepared in 1814 to regard Persia as a buffer-state against Russia or as a counterweight to Afghanistan by

1. Ibid., Vol.VII, pp.127-134.

defending Persian territory in any circumstances. Article 3, indeed, described the purpose of the treaty as "strictly defensive", "aggression" as "an attack upon the territories of another State" and Russian and Persian territories as being determined "according to the admission of Great Britain, Persia and Russia".

To return to the missions of 1808. The fourth of them, that of Elphinstone to Shah Shuja, was not allowed to proceed further than Peshawar: its fruit was a re-insurance treaty directed against a possible Franco-Persian combination which Shah Shuja engaged to prevent from passing through his territory; Britain bearing the cost of such opposition.¹ It is interesting to observe that he was designated not as the King of Afghanistan but simply as the "King of Cabool" and that the rulers of Sind and Lahore were treated as independent sovereigns, without any mention of their remote allegiance to Afghanistan. It would seem that the Afghan state was regarded as non-existent, except perhaps in the treaty with Persia: at the same time Britain was obviously disinclined to commit herself very far for or against any of the three powers of Russia, Persia and Afghanistan.

While Elphinstone was at Peshawar, news came of the capture of Kandahar by Mohammad, whom Shuja had spared from

1. Ibid., Vol.VII, pp.34,35.

execution and who had afterwards escaped. It was followed by the news of the defeat of an army sent to restore Afghan authority in Kashmir. A direct clash between the forces of Shah Shuja and those of Mohammad was now inevitable. It took place at Gandamak in 1809 and resulted in the defeat of Shuja and the restoration of Mohammad to what may be called the throne of Afghanistan. Shuja, after many vicissitudes, including a spell of imprisonment by Ranjit Singh at Lahore, sought asylum in British India while Fatheh Khan ruled Afghanistan in the name of Mohammad. He was successful in restoring Afghan authority over Baluchistan, over Kashmir and, for a time, over Sind. In the operations in Kashmir the Sikhs assisted the Afghans and, not receiving their promised reward, seized Attock in lieu; defeating an Afghan force under Dost Mohammad. It was Dost Mohammad who was the occasion of his brother, Fatheh Ali's, fall. In 1816, Firoz-ud-din, a brother of Mohammad, who had been governor of Herat since 1800, appealed for help against the advance of Persian forces. The help came, under Fatheh Ali, but Dost Mohammad, who was with his army, violated the harem of the governor. In consequence of the anger aroused at Kabul, particularly on the part of Mohammad's son, Kamran, Fatheh Ali on his return was disgraced, blinded and eventually flayed alive. The revulsion against this act led to the

downfall of the Saddozai dynasty in 1818; save that Mohammad and Kamran found sanctuary in Herat. The rest of Afghanistan fell into the hands of the Barakzai, Dost Mohammad and his brothers.¹ Dost Mohammad succeeded in establishing himself at Kabul. Kaye, after balancing his merits and defects, pronounced him as "towering above" his contemporaries: "no Affghan prince in the present century has shown himself more fit to govern". It is essential, however, to understand that Dost Mohammad was not at this time King of Afghanistan in the sense in which George IV was King of England: he was one of the chiefs of the reigning (and strictly speaking usurping) family; at the best primus inter pares, constantly threatened by the treachery of his brothers and by the efforts at restoration on the part of the exiled Shah Shuja.

The foregoing narrative is both tedious and complicated but it may serve to indicate the extremely complex situation to which the British had to adapt a policy. Of the four states with which the Company was immediately concerned, Sind, the Punjab, Afghanistan and Persia, the first was

1. Sykes, Afghanistan, Vol.1, C.XXVII; and v.an article by Sir John W.Kaye in the Calcutta Review, Vol.VII, pp.5-66, January 1847, on "Dost Mahommed Khan". Fatheh Ali was the eldest and Dost Mohammad the twentieth son of Paizanda Khan, chief of the Barakzai who had risen to high authority under Timur Shah but had been executed by Zaman. The blinding and deposition of Zaman was primarily an act of revenge for the death of his father on the part of Fatheh Ali.

suspect and the other three in a condition of violent activity. In 1826, Persia went to war again with Russia, her action in doing so being sufficiently "aggressive" to exempt Britain from participation under the treaty of 1814. She was obliged to conclude the humiliating Treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828. Thereafter, as was only natural, Russian influence grew in Tehran as British influence declined. It was apparently the object of Russia, at this stage, to use Persia as a catspaw or what would be called today a "puppet". That, at least, is the view of Kaye, who spoke of the Russian design

"to use the resources of the Persian State in furtherance of its own ends without overtly taking possession of them, and thus bringing itself into collision with other powers".¹

Kaye was a sober historian and if he believed, as he did, that the Persian expedition against Khorassan in 1832 was probably instigated by and certainly coincided with the wishes of Russia, he was not reflecting the view of an isolated alarmist. Alarm deepened when in 1833 Mohammad Mirza prepared an attack on Herat. It was interrupted for the moment by the death of the Shah, who was succeeded, after

1. J.W.Kaye: History of the War in Afghanistan, Vol.I, p.154. 3 vols., 1878. This is the fourth edition, the first being published in 1851. Cited as Kaye, Afghanistan.

a very short intervening reign, by Mohammad Mirza, a Russo-phil, himself. In 1835 Palmerston instructed Ellis, the Minister at Teheran, "to warn the Persian Government against allowing themselves to be pushed on to make war against the Afghans";¹ but there was no obvious way of making that warning effective.

To the east the situation was complicated not only by the internal anarchy of Afghanistan after 1818 but by the course of relations between the Afghans and Ranjit Singh. Metcalfe's treaty of 1809, whether by accident or design, had diverted Ranjit Singh's ambitions to the north. In the ensuing years the Sikhs had established themselves in Attock and Multan, to some extent in Kashmir and had twice, in 1818 and 1823, seized Peshawar. On the second occasion Ranjit Singh had left an Afghan governor there. The Sikh possession of Peshawar was one of the two or three most important factors in the situation. There were many who believed that it entailed more risk and expense than Ranjit Singh cared for and that he might well have been willing at any time to entrust it to a tributary governor. At the same time it provided a standing temptation for him to support a claimant to supreme authority in Afghanistan who, as the price of that support, should guarantee him continued possession

1. Kaye, Afghanistan, Vol.I, pp.159,160.

(whether through an Afghan governor or not) of the city. It was also arguable, from the British side, that the further Ranjit Singh became committed in Afghanistan the less was he likely to interfere in Sind or to the south of the Sutlej. A claimant to the throne of Afghanistan existed in British territory in the person of Shah Shuja, living at Ludhiana on a pension of £5,000 a year paid by the Company. At Ludhiana, too, was the British resident, Captain Claude Wade,¹ whose residency was in effect the advanced diplomatic headquarters for relations with Afghanistan and the Punjab; Persia being the immediate concern of the Foreign Office.

There were, broadly speaking, three alternative lines for British policy in the north-west of India in the eighteen-thirties. Metcalfe, who became Acting Governor-General in 1835, represented the views of the Wellesley school which may be summarized as the extension and consolidation of British power to the south and east of the Sutlej. This had been shown, in the course of the wars

1. J.D.Cunningham's A History of the Sikhs, contains a great deal of first-hand material, based on letters written by and to Wade; to whom Cunningham was appointed assistant in 1837. Wade's admiration for the Sikhs and for Ranjit Singh is strongly reflected by Cunningham. The first edition of the book was published in 1849. The edition used here and cited as Cunningham, Sikhs, is that of 1918, edited by H.L.O.Garrett.

against Tipu Sultan and the Mahrattas, to imply the subjugation of any native state that stood in the way, but it did not imply a policy of indefinite expansion. Incidentally, Metcalfe illustrates very well the danger of using such a word as "interventionist" or "annexationist" as though it were an accurate and permanent description of some human species. He had been an annexationist and an interventionist in his day in respect of certain states but by 1830 he had a clear limit in his own mind and was not to be frightened out of it. In October of that year he wrote as follows:

"Twenty-two years ago the writer of this minute was empowered to negotiate an alliance against a French invasion with a Native State beyond our north-western frontier. A French invasion was our bugbear then, as a Russian one is now. Abdullah Mehrou, at the head of a French army, was reported to have reached Ispahan. But the Spanish insurrection broke out. Sir Arthur Wellesley beat the French at Roleia and Vimiera. The vision of Abdullah Mehrou and his legions vanished, and we thought no more of a French invasion. If, therefore, I were asked what is best to be done with a view to a Russian invasion, I should say that it is best to do nothing until time shall show us what we ought to do, because there is nothing that we can do in our present blind state that would be of any certain benefit."¹

It may very well be that such a man as Metcalfe, who had been in India continuously since 1801, did not appreciate

1. E. Thompson, op.cit., pp.283,284. The exact date of the Minute is not given. The opinion of the commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Fane, in 1837, was almost exactly the same as Metcalfe's. v. Cambridge History of India, Vol.V,p.497(1929).

the full force of the Russophobia which was developing in England. This is not a criticism of his views but there may be ground for criticism on another point. Metcalfe seemed to assume the existence of a Sikh state which would be both stable and friendly. Ranjit Singh, on the whole, had observed his treaty of 1809 loyally; but he would not live for ever and it was very difficult to say what would happen in the Punjab or what would be the course of Sikh ambitions after his death.

The second possible line of policy, based on an admission of the danger from Russia and on unwillingness to depend indefinitely on the goodwill of the Sikhs, would have adopted Dost Mohammad as the ruler of an Afghan buffer-state and a protection against Russo-Persian designs. This policy has, in retrospect, certain obvious merits but they were not quite so obvious at the time. Dost Mohammad was not yet the ruler of Afghanistan: he was only one among the candidates for that distinction; support of him might be wasted and might alienate some other candidate who was ultimately to be successful. In the second place, it was almost certain that he would want to recover Peshawar; and British assistance in or condonation of such a project would probably involve a breach with Ranjit Singh who, whatever might happen to him in the future, was very much to be reckoned with in the present.

It was not outside the bounds of possibility that some agreement might be made through British mediation on the subject of Peshawar. But this would have demanded the most delicate negotiation; just as the discovery of Dost Mohammad's merits in the early 'thirties would have demanded an unusual degree of penetration.

But could the policy of using Afghanistan as a friendly buffer-state be framed in such a way as to accord with Ranjit Singh's own designs? Or, to put it another way, could Ranjit Singh be given encouragement in designs which would keep him to the north of the Sutlej and would, at worst or at best, result in no more than a continuance of the anarchy in Afghanistan? Something like this line of reasoning appears to have been adopted in respect of Shah Shuja's attempt to recover his throne in 1833-34. The ex-King had first to buy off the Ameers of Sind and Ranjit Singh, which he did by promising the one their formal independence (though for all that he had eventually to fight his way through Sind) and the other the continued possession of Peshawar. But he also needed money. He was now allowed an advance of a third of his annual pension and no warning was given him, as had been done in 1832, that if he failed

he could not return to British territory.¹

"Such an act", Sir Henry Durand was to write later, "could not fail in the East of being construed into a material and effectual countenance of the Shah's designs".² It certainly could not, in the East or anywhere else. The scheme as a whole provided the basis for that of 1838, just as the treaty concluded between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja provided the basis for the better-known Tripartite Treaty of 1838. In justice to Lord Auckland it is only fair to remember that the policy of 1833-34 was that of his predecessor, Lord William Bentinck. To describe it as a policy, indeed, is to praise it beyond its merits: it was no more than a piece of opportunism and like most of such actions it was only half-heartedly supported, as though its sponsors were ashamed of it. The question which it naturally occurred to Dost Mohammad to ask Wade was whether the first

1. Cunningham, Sikhs, p.198. Cunningham makes it clear how anxious the Company was to divert Ranjit Singh from Sind, e.g. p.203. The opening-up of the Indus to commerce was one of the fashionable ambitions of the day.
2. Sir Henry Durand: The First Afghan War and its Causes (1879), p.19. This book was written rather over thirty years before its publication and constitutes one of the most trenchant criticisms of British policy and operations in Afghanistan. Durand himself had taken a distinguished part, as an engineer officer, in the earlier stages of the operations. He subsequently became private secretary to Lord Ellenborough, political agent at Gwalior and in Central India during the Mutiny, member of Council in 1859, foreign secretary in 1867 and lieutenant-governor of the Punjab from 1870 to his accidental death in the following year. v.Sir Mortimer Durand.

evidence of British support of Shah Shuja was to be followed by others and more substantial ones. "Wade replied that the Government of India had taken no part in the expedition but that Shah Shuja had their best wishes".¹

In these circumstances Dost Mohammad could only conclude that his rival would get no more support from his backers and might be opposed with impunity so far as the British were concerned. Shah Shuja, after defeating the Ameers of Sind in January 1841 and making his way through the Boolan Pass, was besieging Kandahar when Dost Mohammad's relieving army appeared. In the ensuing battle Shah Shuja was defeated and fled, ultimately finding his way back to Ludhiana. Dost Mohammad's prestige was correspondingly increased but it is significant that he did not yet feel himself in the position when he might properly be proclaimed king: he contented himself with taking the title of Ameer-ul-Muminin, "Commander of the Faithful". The precarious nature of his power was soon made evident. Ranjit Singh, taking advantage of Shah Shuja's incursion, had occupied Peshawar again. Dost Mohammad set out on an expedition to re-conquer the city but his army melted away as his sardars yielded themselves to the bribes offered by Ranjit Singh

1. Sykes, Afghanistan, Vol.I, pp.395,396. Sykes describes Wade's reply as "a most improper letter for a British official to have written".

through the agency of an American adventurer, Harlan. Dost Mohammad was obliged to retreat and although his son, Akbar Khan, turned on a Sikh force and defeated it at Jamrud in 1837, Peshawar remained in Sikh hands.

Thus threatened by the Sikhs on the east and, more remotely, by the Persians on the west, with the most flagrant evidence of disloyalty and enmity all around him in Afghanistan, it was not surprising that Dost Mohammad should seek, despite the late activities of Shah Shuja, to place himself on good terms with the Government of India. He wrote, therefore, to Lord Auckland on 31st May 1836.

"The late transactions in this quarter, the conduct of the reckless and misguided Sikhs and their breach of the treaty are well known to your lordship. Communicate to me whatever may now suggest itself to your wisdom, for the settlement of the affairs of this country, that it may serve as a rule for my guidance".¹

Auckland's reply was written on 22nd August 1836. It was in part a plain refusal to offer advice or accept responsibility of any kind.

"You are aware that it is not the practice of the British government to interfere with the affairs of other independent states; and indeed it does not immediately occur to me how the interference of my Government could be exercised on your behalf".

So far, perhaps, so good, but Auckland added that he would

1. Kaye, Afghanistan, Vol.I, p.170; Parl.Papers, (1839) (2), Vol.XL, p.3.

probably soon "depute some gentleman" to discuss certain commercial topics with Dost Mohammad.¹ Here, if neutrality were really his aim, the Governor-General was proceeding into dangerous ground: he must at least make sure that the "gentleman" despatched to Kabul was one who would restrict the range of his discussions. The agent selected was Alexander Burnes, who arrived in Kabul in September 1837.

The character and merits of Burnes have been very variously assessed. The scandalous and indefensible action of the Whig Government in omitting from the Parliamentary Papers published in 1839 communications from Burnes favourable to Dost Mohammad and thus favourable to the accuracy of Burnes's judgment has created a natural desire to do full justice to a man whose actions were misrepresented.

"I cannot, indeed, suppress the utterance of my abhorrence" - said Kaye - "of this system of garbling the official correspondence of public men - sending the letters of a statesman or diplomatist into the world mutilated, emasculated - the very pity and substance of them cut out by the unsparing hand of the state-anatomist. The dishonesty by which lie upon lie is palmed on the world has not one redeeming feature ... The character of Dost Mahomed has been lied away; the character of Burnes has been lied away. Both, by the mutilation of the correspondence of the latter, have been fearfully misrepresented - both have been set forth as doing what they did not, and omitting to do what they did ... The

1. Kaye, Afghanistan, Vol.I, pp.170,171.

cause of truth must be upheld. Official documents are the sheet-anchors of historians - the last court of appeal to which the public resort. If these documents are tampered with; if they are made to misrepresent the words and actions of public men, the grave of truth is dug and there is seldom a resurrection".¹

Every word of this is true but it does not mean that Burnes was a man whose life and career were beyond reproach. Kaye noticed his instability.

"He was a man of an eager impulsive temperament; the slightest vicissitudes of the political atmosphere readily affected his mercurial nature; and he did not always think before he spoke. Hence it is that such varying opinions have been attributed to him - all perhaps with equal truth".²

A man who, though capable of sharp flashes of insight (as Burnes was), is yet fundamentally unstable, was the last man in the world to be sent on such a mission as that to Kabul in 1837; or, perhaps, to be given serious diplomatic work at all. It was a grave reflection on the government of India that they chose Burnes; an almost equally grave reflection if they had no one else to send. They were now paying the penalty for not having built up a body of reasonably accurate knowledge about trans-Indus affairs: the result was that they were only too eager to snatch at such information as was offered them and at the services of men who seemed to possess

1. Ibid., Vol.I, pp.203,204.

2. Ibid., Vol.III, pp.173,174.

that information. As late as 1828 the reports of such travellers as Moorcroft had been neglected: Burnes's account¹ of his travels through Afghanistan to Bokhara and Tehran made him a marked man. It stimulated his immense ambition, the ambition which led him to defy and reverse his own judgments and to magnify the importance of the activities in which he was engaged.²

The situation which Burnes found at Kabul needed the coolest judgment because it abounded in factors which were, superficially, of the gravest import. A Persian army was on its way to the siege of Herat, which opened in November 1837. The sardars of Kandahar, chief among them Kohun Dil Khan, a brother of Dost Mohammad's, were known to be in

1. Travels into Bokhara, 3 vols., 1834.

2. Thus, Burnes, after presenting a point of view favourable to Dost Mohammad, accepted the appointment of assistant to Macnaghten as political agent in an expedition designed to drive Dost Mohammad from power. On his arrival at Kabul in 1837 Burnes almost immediately transformed his mission from a commercial to a political one and, in the opinion of Sir Henry Durand, a bitter critic, performed his duties deplorably. "Burnes's conduct at Kabul was no less wanting in decorum, which in a Mussulman country is seldom departed from, than in diplomatic caution and reserve. His behaviour in this respect, coupled with his undignified bearing, speedily lost him the respect of the chiefs and people". Durand cites Masson (whom he met in January 1839) to the effect that the Afghans would have been ready to laugh at Vitkevich's pretensions had not Burnes himself taken them so seriously. The First Afghan War and its Causes, p.42 and n. Cited as Durand, First Afghan War.

communication with the Persians. On 19th December 1837, a Russian officer, Captain Vitkevich, entered Kabul, in the character of an official Russian agent; a character which was afterwards repudiated and which, very probably, he never possessed. Throughout the winter of 1837-38, Dost Mohammad, now engaged in negotiations with Burnes from which all commercial pretences were removed, was trying to get substantive assistance from the British on one point or another. Herat, it would seem, was not his most immediate concern, since it was held by his enemy Kamran; he was more interested in Kandahar and still more in Peshawar. By March 1838 his demands were rising: he wanted British protection of Kabul and Kandahar from Persia and the surrender of Peshawar by Ranjit Singh. Burnes's conduct of his mission had been such as to encourage Dost Mohammad in the belief that some tangible evidence of British support would be given him, but it was now evident that Burnes had acted without instructions or in excess of them. He was empowered to offer nothing tangible and on 26th April 1838 he concluded a mission which had merely raised expectations that could not be fulfilled. It was natural that Dost Mohammad should turn, in some degree, towards the Russians and the Persians; however reluctantly.

This was a moment when British India needed, above all

else, a ruler who would impose his intellectual and moral authority. It did not possess such a ruler in Auckland. Sir Henry Durand, in a telling phrase, described Auckland as "afloat on a sea of conjecture". This was true and there were men enough to supply the conjectures - Burnes, Wade at Ludhiana, Macnaghten, Colvin and Torrens in the secretariat. Other conjectures, suggestions, warnings, came from the Home government, now extremely anxious over Russo-Persian machinations; and, in the background there was a widespread fear, vague but real, that British power in India, in default of some positive and strikingly successful action, was in danger of catastrophe.¹

In the face of this apprehension a policy of pure neutrality in trans-frontier affairs was not easy, certainly for such a man as Auckland, to maintain; although it seems

1. cf. Cunningham, Sikhs, p.218. "The rumours of a northern invasion were eagerly received and industriously spread by the vanquished princes of India, and the whole country vibrated with the hope that the uncongenial domination of the English was about to yield to the ascendancy of another and less dissimilar race. The recall of Capt. Burnes from Kabul gave speciousness to the wildest statements; the advantages of striking some great blow became more and more obvious ...". Cunningham adds, in a note to the same page, "The extent to which this feeling" (of the impending fall of the British) "was prevalent is known to those who were observers of Indian affairs at the time, and it is dwelt upon in the Governor-General's minute of the 20th Aug.1839".

to have been his policy at least as late as February 1838.¹ In a sense that was Wade's policy too, but for him neutrality meant not mere inaction but a constant (and possibly unscrupulous) balancing of forces. Wade had no particular objection to Dost Mohammad retaining Kabul but if he showed signs of greater aspirations then, in Wade's view, "friendly assurances to the Kandahar brothers, and a hint that the Sikhs were at liberty to march on Kabul, would have given Dost Mohammad a proper sense of his insignificance".² The danger to which this policy might lead arose from the very different positions of Dost Mohammad and Ranjit Singh: the one was weak and only a remote threat to British India; the other was strong and might constitute a real threat if he chose to turn his attention to the south of the Sutlej. It was not beyond the bounds of possibility that some modus vivendi might have been arrived at between Ranjit Singh and Dost Mohammad over Peshawar but the Indian government would not take the risk of putting pressure upon Ranjit Singh to this end. Except in so far as Dost Mohammad might serve as a barrier to Russo-Persian designs the Government of India appears to have had no particular use for or interest in him

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1. v. his letter of 8th February 1838, Parl. Papers, 1859 (2) XXV, 283.
 2. Cunningham, Sikhs, p. 218 and note, referring to Wade's letters of 15th May and 28th October 1837.

at this time. The possible exception brings us back to the subject of Herat.

It was widely assumed, both in England and in India, that Herat represented a position from which a successful attack could be launched upon Afghanistan and, through Afghanistan, upon India. Unfortunately, the belief that Persia, in attacking Herat, was supposed to be acting in the interests of Russia, blinded many contemporaries to what would be called today the "logistics" of the situation. The more they thought about Herat the more important it seemed.

"The advance from the figurative opinion of the British envoy in April 1836, who thought Persia a Russian first parallel of attack against India, to the assumption in April 1837 of Herat as our western frontier, marks the rapid progress of diplomatic alarm and rashness".

So Sir Henry Durand wrote some ten years later. He went on to argue that the Persian attack on Herat, though it might be unpalatable to Britain, "could not legitimately be construed into a hostile breach of a definitive treaty" and that Herat was useless to Persia. It took the Shah's forces, he pointed out, three months to reach Herat from Tehran. From Herat to Kandahar the distance was 370 miles, from Kandahar to Ferozepore 870 miles. Durand's conclusion was perfectly clear.

"Fortresses so much in advance of the main territories and strength of a country as are Ghorian and Herat, with respect to Persia, add neither to the offensive nor defensive powers of a State, but compromise a certain portion of its strength in men and means by isolating them at a vast distance from support in the midst of a hostile country".¹

But only a man of singular strength of mind would have cared to imperil his reputation and his career in 1837 by arguing, either in London or Calcutta, that the fate of Herat was irrelevant to British interests in India. McNeill² (Ellis's successor) from Tehran, Burnes from Kabul, Leech (one of Burnes's assistants) from Kandahar, Palmerston from the Foreign Office, Auckland from Calcutta, alarmed

1. First Afghan War, pp.31,63-65. Durand quoted at length (pp.27,28) from a despatch sent by Ellis, Minister at Tehran, on 15th January 1836. Ellis was convinced that "Herat, once annexed to Persia, may become, according to the Commercial Treaty, the residence of a Russian consular agent, who would from thence push his researches and communications, secret and avowed, throughout Afghanistan. Indeed, in the present state of the relations between Persia and Russia, it cannot be denied that the progress of the former in Afghanistan is tantamount to the advance of the latter and ought to receive every opposition from the British Government that the obligations of public faith will permit". On the other hand, Ellis held that Britain had no rights of interference under the treaty of 1814.
2. Sir John McNeill (1795-1883); A Company's surgeon in Bombay 1816-36; appointed to Tehran 1836; negotiated treaty of 1841; concerned with the supervision of the Scottish Poor Law 1845-78; one of the commissioners to enquire into the conduct of operations in the Crimea, 1885.

themselves and each other into a state of the utmost excitement and indignation. Contrary to Ellis's opinion of January 1836 and contrary, as far as one can see, to the plain words of the treaty of 1814,¹ McNeill and Palmerston had convinced themselves that the Persian action was a breach of that treaty, and on 13th April 1838 McNeill presented himself at the Persian camp before Herat and told the Shah that the Persian proceedings constituted a breach of treaty. Great Britain would be justified in denouncing the treaty and "in taking active measures to compel the withdrawal of the Persian army from Herat". The despatch on 19th June of a force from Bombay which seized the Persian island of Karrack was evidence that Palmerston and McNeill meant what they said but for the moment McNeill's influence faded before that of the Russian Minister, Count Simonich, who had

1. v. the Articles of that treaty quoted supra. No European nation had invaded Persia; the Afghans were not at war with Britain; and in the case of a war between the Persians and Afghans Britain was bound to abstain from interference unless its mediation was sought by both parties. It was doubtful how far the Persian attack on Herat was an attack on the "Afghans". From the Persian point of view Herat was Persian and in any event Persian territories were to be determined, according to Article 3 of the treaty, "according to the admission of Great Britain, Persia and Russia". Kamran, the nominal ruler of Herat, was at enmity with the reigning dynasty in Afghanistan and some members of that dynasty, the chiefs of Kandahar, were in favour of Persia.

followed him to Herat and, after his departure in the first week of June, put for the moment some life into the siege.¹

Such was the political and military situation in the trans-Indus region which Auckland had to consider in the early summer of 1838. In May of that year he was at Simla, where he was deprived of the advice of his Council and, in

1. Simonich's actions may well have been dictated and, in part, justified by the fact that an English officer, Lieutenant Eldred Pottinger of the Bombay army was in Herat, assisting, so far as he was allowed, in the defence. Pottinger's personal intervention may have saved the situation on the occasion of the Persian assault on 24th June. Otherwise, his advice was seldom asked and more seldom taken. Pottinger subsequently succeeded to the position of political agent at Kabul after Macnaghten was murdered and, having been made a hostage, escaped with his life in debacle of January 1842; only to die in the following year. The siege of Herat in 1837-38 was casual and ill-conducted on the Persian side and the Afghan defence was not a great deal better.
- An appendix in "Itinerary of the Route from Candahar to Herat", prepared by Captain Edward Sanders, Royal Engineers, in 1839, throws an interesting light on contemporary ideas of the importance of Herat. "The city of Herat is capable of being better fortified. This place, in the hands of Persia, would, from its geographical position, have a great influence over any expedition sent from Russia in the direction of India as an ally. It would keep in awe the peoples of Bokhara, Balk and Kandahar, and, by preserving its communications with the rear, permit it to advance without fear to conquest, but occupied by an enemy it could cause insurmountable obstacles". (p.12). An editorial note to this passage says that "this view of a political position seen as existing some years ago in a country with which we have since had so much to do is by no means destitute of retrospective interest". The Itinerary is in a bound volume of Tracts on Afghanistan (n.d.) in the Library of King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne.

all probability, thrown upon that of his secretariat, of whom Macnaghten was the chief. On 12th May 1838 Auckland set out in a Minute the views which he had come to hold. Of what he regarded as the three possible courses before him

"The first to confine our defensive measures to the line of the Indus and to leave Afghanistan to its fate; the second to attempt to save Afghanistan by granting succour to the existing chiefships of Caubul and Candahar; the third is to permit or to encourage the advance of Ranjit Singh's armies upon Caubul, under counsel and restriction, and as subsidiary to his advance to organize an expedition headed by Shah Shooja, such as I have above explained. The first course would be absolute defeat, and would leave a free opening to Persian and Russian intrigue upon our frontiers. The second would be only to give power to those who feel greater animosity towards the Sikhs, than they do against the Persians, and who would probably use against the former the means placed at their disposal; and the third course, which in the event of the successful resistance of Herat would appear to be most expedient, would, if the State were to fall into the hands of the Persians, have yet more to recommend it, and I cannot hesitate to say that the inclination of my opinion is, for the reasons which will be gathered from this paper, very strongly in favour of it ..."¹

The first assumption here is that Afghanistan had to be "saved" from the Persians and the Russians. It might have been more prudent to wait to see the effect of the expedition against Karrack which was to be launched in June and of

1. Kaye, op.cit., pp.318,319.

Palmerston's representations conveyed through McNeill but it is only fair to Auckland to say that he was not alone in suffering from the contemporary Russophobia and that the Home Government had shown no signs of attempting to wean him from it or of warning him that Russians and Persians were not politically synonymous. But if Afghanistan had to be "saved", what was the objection to "saving" it by assisting the Afghan rulers of Kabul and Kandahar? The thin one that they would be more likely to use assistance granted them against the Sikhs than against the Persians. Then, was some other Afghan chief to be supported, who could be trusted to be more hostile to the Persians than to the Sikhs? Shah Shuja was the obvious candidate for this role but it is to be observed that his expedition was only to be subsidiary to the main expedition, that of Ranjit Singh; and that the expeditions were to be sent even if the resistance of Herat was successful. The introduction of the Sikhs was probably the result of Wade's influence: his suggestion that "a hint that the Sikhs were at liberty to march on Kabul would have given Dost Mohammad a proper sense of his insignificance" comes at once to mind. But two changes had come over policy since Wade wrote. A subordinate expedition under Shah Shuja was to be substituted for "friendly assurances to the Kandahar brothers" and the events at Herat, as well as the ground-swell

of discontent in India, had both enlarged the scope of the project and given it an air of necessity and urgency. The effect of the Russian threat on Auckland's own mind is amply illustrated by what he said in a letter to Hobhouse, President of the Board of Control, on 13th October 1838.

"It will be for others to judge of my case and I will say nothing of it except that I could have made it stronger if I had not had the fear of Downing Street before my eyes, and thought it right to avoid any direct allusion to Russia".¹

The "case" to which Auckland referred in this letter was the so-called "Simla manifesto" of 1st October 1838 and it is necessary to go back a little to see how this came into being and what had happened in the months between Auckland's Minute of 12th May and its issue. From 31st May to 13th July Macnaghten was in attendance on Ranjit Singh. According to Kaye, Macnaghten tended to deprecate the existence of any palpable danger to be feared from the Russians, the Persians or the Barakzai sardars and attempted to inveigle Ranjit Singh into acting alone. This Ranjit Singh, who was not enthusiastic about the project and doubted whether his Sikhs would advance from Peshawar through the Khyber Pass, declined to consider. Macnaghten then agreed that there should also be an expedition under Shah Shuja, and the Tripartite Treaty

1. Cambridge History of India, Vol.V, p.498, citing B.M.Add. MSS, 37694, f.69.

was prepared.¹

There is, however, a passage in Cunningham's History of the Sikhs² which must be noticed. "It was not", said Cunningham, referring to Ranjit Singh, "until he was told that the expedition would be undertaken whether he chose to share in it or not, that he assented to a modification of his own treaty with Shah Shuja"; and in a note Cunningham added,

"That Ranjit Singh was told he would be left out if he did not choose to come in, does not appear on public record. It was, however, the only convincing argument used during the whole discussions, and I think Major Mackeson was made the bearer of a message to that effect".

Kaye tones this down to a statement that Ranjit Singh was told that the British might have to undertake the restoration of Shah Shuja themselves if the Sikhs failed to offer their co-operation.³ It is not easy to reconcile the view that independent British action was used as a threat to secure Ranjit Singh's co-operation with the view⁴ that Ranjit Singh got the better of Macnaghten and got the British committed to the major share in the enterprise. What is clear, however, is that Ranjit Singh took a great deal of persuading into doing anything at all.

1. Kaye, op.cit., pp.321-331.

2. p.220.

3. op.cit., p.329 n.

4. Advanced in the Cambridge History of India, Vol.V., p.495.

Eventually, however, the draft of a treaty was agreed upon between Ranjit Singh and Macnaghten on 26th June 1838. It purported to revive and add to "with the approbation of and in concert with" the British Government the treaty concluded between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja in 1833. It bound Shah Shuja (who had not hitherto been consulted on the question of its revival) to disclaim title to all territory on either bank of the Indus which was possessed by Ranjit Singh, including Kashmir and Peshawar, and pay a subsidy of two lakhs of rupees for the maintenance by the Sikhs of a supporting force in Peshawar after "the attainment of his object" (Articles L, 16). Shah Shuja was also bound, by Article 13, to relinquish all claims to supremacy and arrears of tribute on the part of the Ameers of Sind, on condition of their payment to him of a sum to be settled by the mediation of the British Government. Article 17 precluded him from attacking or molesting the ruler of Herat, his nephew, and Article 18 from "entering into negotiation with any foreign state, without the knowledge and consent of the British and Sikh Governments" and obliged him "to oppose any power having the design to invade the British and Sikh territories by force of arms, to the utmost of his ability".¹

1. The text of the treaty is given by Aitchison, Treaties, Vol.II, pp.251-256; by Kaye, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.332-335; and by Cunningham, op.cit., pp.389-393.

It is not too much to say that the treaty consisted mainly of obligations or restrictions upon Shah Shuja in favour of his allies and it is not surprising that when Macnaghten, who arrived at Ludhiana on 15th July, began to read the draft the Afghan's comments were, in Kaye's words, "frequent and emphatic". He objected to the cession of Peshawar and still more to the obligation to pay two lakhs of rupees to the Sikhs, its possessors. But the temptation of regaining his throne, combined with Macnaghten's blandishments, led him to accept the treaty within two days.

It was signed by Auckland at Simla on 25th July but in the interval of Macnaghten's absence, first at Lahore and then at Ludhiana, the project had had the benefit of further discussion to which Burnes, Wade, Colvin and Torrens contributed. Burnes was still in favour of supporting Dost Mohammad but, since official opinion had set hard against that policy, he accepted the alternative of the consolidation of Afghanistan under Shah Shuja. His views prevailed over those of Wade who believed that an unconsolidated Afghanistan was better from the British point of view. The resources of Shah Shuja were only too obviously inadequate to the important role cast for him, even though he would recruit his contingent in British India, and Burnes suggested that the Indian government send two of its own regiments as an "honorary escort".

Burnes did not expect that they would have to fight: their purpose was to make fighting unlikely by showing the Afghans, beyond any possibility of doubt, that Shah Shuja had British support. It was apparently from this suggestion that direct British participation in the Afghan enterprise is to be traced, though even Macnaghten may have realized that it was necessary if such an alliance as he had constructed was to have any effect. In any event, as soon as British military participation was considered the opinion of the commander-in-chief became decisive. Sir Henry Fane, as we have seen, had expressed himself against trans-Indus enterprises in the previous year. But now that the decision in favour of such an enterprise had been taken and British troops were to take part in it, it fell to him to decide how many were necessary. He had little difficulty in securing Auckland's acquiescence and on 13th September he issued a general order for a rendezvous of the corps selected at Karnal. On 1st October Auckland followed with his manifesto.

It began by representing the original object of Burnes's mission to Kabul as purely commercial, designed to gain the aid of the de facto rulers of Afghanistan in the opening of the Indus to navigation and commerce. But immediately, it appeared, Burnes had been obliged to turn aside to deal with political difficulties. One of these arose from the "sudden

and unprovoked attack" by the troops of Dost Mohammad on those of "our ancient ally, Maharajah Runjeet Singh". The other arose from the actions and intrigues of Persia. Dost Mohammad, instead of accepting British mediation in his quarrel with the Sikhs had, on the contrary, advanced "the most unreasonable pretensions"; "chiefly in consequence of his reliance upon Persian encouragement". He had also "avowed schemes of aggrandisement and ambition injurious to the security and peace of the frontier of India" and had "openly threatened, in furtherance of those schemes, to call in every foreign aid which he could command". As long as the Barakzai chiefs, disunited and unpopular as they were, had refrained from "proceedings injurious to our interests and security" the British Government had respected their authority. When their conduct dictated a different policy, that of having "on our western frontier an ally who is interested in resisting aggression", the choice naturally fell on Shah Shuja, whose cause the Governor-General from the sense of a "pressing necessity, as well as every consideration of policy and justice" had resolved to support. The position of Ranjit Singh as well as his "undeviating friendship towards the British Government" made it just and proper that he should be offered participation in the contemplated

operations. The result of Mr. Macnaghten's mission had been the conclusion of a "triplicate" treaty. "His Majesty, Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk will enter Afghanistan, surrounded by his own troops, and will be supported against foreign and factious interference by a British army". When he should be secured in power "and the independence and integrity of Afghanistan established", the British army would be withdrawn. The security of British territories had dictated these measures but the Governor-General would "be enabled to assist in restoring the union and prosperity of the Afghan people".¹

It is scarcely necessary to attack a document which no historian has come forward to defend. In its day it established the record, perhaps, in sophistry and disingenuousness. Macnaghten, who signed it, paid for his lies, or Auckland's lies, with his life. Yet one last chance of abandoning the project was offered, when the news came that the siege of Herat had been lifted, on 9th September. There is no need to try to determine whether the British seizure of Karrak and McNeill's formal warnings to the Shah of the consequences of his action were the cause of the Persian withdrawal or only an excuse for it. The fact of the

1. v. Kaye, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 369-374 for the full text.

withdrawal was more important than the reasons for it. The question was whether the confirmation of it would lead Auckland, at the eleventh hour, to reconsider his policy. The answer to this question was contained in an Order published on 8th November.

- . "In giving publicity to this important intelligence, the Governor-General deems it proper at the same time to notify, that while he regards the relinquishment by the Shah of Persia of his hostile designs upon Herat as a just cause of congratulation to the Government of British India and its allies, he will continue to prosecute with vigour the measures which have been announced, with the view to the substitution of a friendly for a hostile power in the eastern province of Afghanistan, and to the establishment of a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression upon our north-west frontier".¹

The only amendment in Auckland's plans caused by the news from Herat was that effected by Fane, who reduced the number of troops to be employed and entrusted Keane, in lieu of himself, with the command of the forces. It was not to be expected that the political strategy would be altered or abandoned. Neither Auckland nor Macnaghten had the type of mind which can divide a problem into its several parts and assess the importance of each. They had apparently convinced themselves, if they had not convinced the world at large, that "justice", "necessity", consideration for the

1. Kaye, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.383,384.

"frontier" and for "the security of the possessions of the British Crown" dictated the policy on which they had embarked. If they were right, if they were using such terms accurately, they could not be expected to turn aside because one factor in the situation no longer existed. It is quite possible, indeed it is likely, that Auckland and his immediate advisers had by this time come to the conclusion that the restoration of Shah Shuja would have the effect of the waving of a magic wand; would interpose a barrier against Russia and Persia; would harmonize and stabilize British relations with Ranjit Singh; and would restore the prestige of the government in British India. They had become, in fact, the victims of their own propaganda.

CHAPTER 3

ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, 1815-36

The despatch of 25th June 1836 which instructed Auckland to "raise a timely barrier against the encroachments of Russian influence" was typical of the attitude of the Home Government at the time. The fear and suspicion of Russia which prevailed in Britain in the eighteenth-thirties does not excuse the ends which Auckland and Macnaghten sought. Still less does it excuse their means; but it does make their actions intelligible as actions which might be described as defensive in respect of Russia.

The degeneration of Anglo-Russian relations in the twenty years after Waterloo was one of the most obvious facts in European politics. Britain's long struggle against Napoleon had been maintained with the object of preventing any one nation from dominating the continent. The great

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1. Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol.2, p.203 (1923).
 2. "Yet the triumph of Russia was evident and complete. Simple human nature had this time proved greater than any military organization; endurance under reverse showed itself more powerful than genius ... Russia was taken to possess something that made her stronger than the empire of Napoleon. From this followed in Europe an altogether extravagant estimate of her power". Sir Bernard Pares: A History of Russia, p.305 (New edition.n.d.). Cited as Pares, Russia.

part played by Russia in the events of 1812-14 had left a legacy in the shape of an exaggeration of Russian military strength which was to persist until the Crimean War: there was little gain in freeing Continental Europe from the domination of Napoleon if he was to be succeeded by the Czar. The project of Paul I in 1800-01 for the invasion of India by a force of Don Cossacks starting from Orenberg in conjunction with a French expedition under Massena¹ from the Danube might be dismissed as the idea of a madman. Even the Treaty of Tilsit might be regarded as a ruse on the part of Alexander I to gain time and, so far as it contained implications hostile to British power in India, they had been developed by the French rather than by the Russians. On the other hand, the attempt of Russia to secure a position in the Mediterranean, such as the Ionian Islands, had disturbed British diplomatists and the project of Alexander at Vienna to compensate Prussia with the whole of Saxony had momentarily driven Britain, Austria and France together. The Holy Alliance, moreover, introduced an incalculable and unnecessary factor into European politics. On the other hand, it was Alexander who, more than any other man, insisted on carrying the Allied forces into Paris in 1814: Russia, as

1. Pares, Russia, p.284; Prince A.Lobanov-Rostovsky, "The Shadow of India in Russian History", History, Vol.XIV, p.220 (October, 1929).

a signatory to the Treaty of Chaumont, was a pillar of the European system; and Alexander's generous treatment of Poland seemed to point to him as the leader of liberal nationalism and to distinguish him sharply from Metternich. On the whole, although those most closely in contact with the Czar were bound to regard him as very much of an enigma, Russia emerged from the Napoleonic War with a substantial capital of favour standing to her credit in the British mind. How was this capital dissipated?

Most obviously in relation to Turkey but even here it is not to be supposed that the strongly-held and clear-cut views with which Britain at large entered the Crimean War existed in such distinctness thirty years earlier. The Greek revolt excited much interest and sympathy in Britain, especially among the classically-educated upper classes, and the attitude of Russia could be interpreted as a desirable breach on her part with the Holy Alliance and the principle of legitimacy. Stratford Canning was one of those who at this time were so strongly sympathetic to the Greek cause as to be unperturbed about Russia: George Canning was perturbed but he believed that the best way of binding Russia and of restraining her from dangerous independent action was to work in conjunction with her. The result was the Treaty of London of 6th July 1827 and, perhaps, the battle of Navarino but even if Canning

had not died so soon as he did it is unlikely that his policy of "binding" Russia would have succeeded in view of the established tradition of penetration of the Black Sea coasts. As lately as 1812, after the Russo-Turkish war of 1806-11, Russia had obtained Bessarabia by the Treaty of Bucharest and in April 1828, largely owing to Turkish provocation, war began again. This meant that Canning's policy, at least as interpreted by his successors, had failed. Neither Russia nor Turkey wanted Britain as a mediator. In these circumstances the British government decided to adhere to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire as an objective but to take no practical steps, such as war with Russia, to protect that integrity.¹ A brilliant though hazardous campaign in 1829 brought the Russians to Adrianople and the Sultan, moved as much by fear for the internal security of his regime as by fear of Russia, concluded the Treaty of Adrianople on 14th September of that year. Russia gained the command of the Danube delta; the free passage of merchant ships through the Bosphorus; "independent national governments" whose "prosperity" she would "guarantee" in the

1. cf. Aberdeen, Foreign Secretary - "The existence of Turkey as a European power was essential to the preservation of that balance of power in Europe" - with Peel - "When Turkey gave Russia a fair justification for hostilities on what account could we interfere?" H. Temperley, England and the Near East; the Crimea, p.54 (1936). Cited as Temperley, Crimea.

principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia; a similar independence for an enlarged Serbia; and, for herself, Poti and Anapa, with some adjacent territory, on the south-eastern (Circassian) coast of the Black Sea. In addition, Turkey adhered to the Treaty of London of 1827 and the Protocol of 22nd March 1829 in respect of Greece and recognized the territorial cessions made to Russia by Persia in the Treaty of Turkomanchi of 22nd February 1828.¹

The most alarming feature about the Treaty of Adrianople from the British point of view was not so much the territorial gains which Russia had made as the very strong position which she had secured for future action in respect of the semi-independent Balkan states and the way in which she had tied together her gains at the expense of both Turkey and Persia.

In 1722-23 an expedition of Peter the Great had carried him as far as Baku on the Caspian but in 1732-35, in the heyday of Nadir Shah, the Russian gains had been lost and the Russian frontier had been once more withdrawn to the Terek; though the possibility of a Turkish invasion of the eastern Caucasus had been checked. Appeals from Georgian Christians

1. Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol.II, pp.101-102; Temperley, Crimea, p.56.

to Russia as the great Orthodox power, were renewed later in the century and eventually Georgia passed into Russian hands in 1801. As a result of the next Russo-Persian war Persia was obliged to recognize Baku and most of eastern Caucasia as Russian, while the war of 1826-28 resulted in the gain to Russia of the Azerbaidzhan highlands and Persian Armenia. Meanwhile the Russians had been moving from Tiflis against the Turks in the western Caucasus and by 1810 had absorbed the smaller Georgian principalities. By the Treaty of Turkomanchi the Russian frontier with Persia was advanced to the Araxes, only a hundred miles from Tabriz, while on the Black Sea coast Persia was left with nothing north of Batum.¹

The Russian policy which culminated in the Treaty of Adrianople was one of calculating moderation. It might have been possible for Russia to capture and hold Constantinople and European Turkey. There was a body of opinion in Russia in favour of that but for the moment the official course was different. Nesselrode, the Chancellor, expressed it in a letter of 22nd September 1879.

"Is the preservation of the Ottoman Empire hurtful or useful to Russia?", he asked. "The idea of hunting the Turk out of Europe and re-establishing the worship of the true God in St. Sophia is

1. B.H.Sumner: Survey of Russian History, pp.290-293 (1944).

certainly very fine and, if realized, would make us all live in history. But what will Russia gain by it? Glory, undoubtedly, but at the same time she would lose all the advantages offered by being a neighbour to a state weakened by a fortunate series of wars and she would have inevitable struggles with the chief Powers of Europe".¹

It was Russian policy, therefore, to maintain and dominate a weak Turkey rather than to force a break-up of the Ottoman empire in which other states, such as Austria and Britain, would demand to share.² A similar policy was adopted in respect of Persia.

The growth of the power of Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, posed a problem both for Russia and Britain. Each had to consider the effect of an Egyptian success on the future of the Ottoman empire and each, though for different reasons, ultimately decided to support the Porte. Russian assistance, however, was given first, and in a dramatic form. In October 1831 Mehemet Ali's forces under his son Ibrahim advanced against Palestine. In the summer of 1832 Ibrahim defeated the Turks at Homs and occupied Syria. At the

1. Temperley, Crimea, p.57.

2. It is essential to remember that from 1829 to between 1859 the main preoccupation of Russia was the real, as distinct from the nominal, conquest of the western Caucasus. The Moslem mountaineers of Circassia, ably led by Shamil and with some assistance from the Turks, put up a long and spirited resistance. Shamil was captured in 1859 and the "pacification" was concluded by 1864. Sumner, op.cit., pp.293-294.

beginning of November, between the battle of Homs and the still more severe defeat inflicted on the Turks at Konieh the request of the Sultan for British naval assistance reached London. Palmerston, the foreign secretary since 1830, was not yet the strong Russophobe which he subsequently became; nor had he yet acquired his later belief in the possibility of regenerating Turkey. The British reply to the Sultan, delayed until 7th March 1833, promised only diplomatic assistance and only in May were orders sent for a British naval squadron, in conjunction with a French one, to lie outside the Dardanelles. Before that the Sultan had sought and found help elsewhere. If Britain would not assist him, Russia would: in February 1833 a Russian squadron arrived in the Dardanelles and 15,000 Russian troops crossed to the Asiatic shore to prevent the advance of Ibrahim Pasha on Constantinople. On 8th July 1833 the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, to last for eight years, was concluded between Russia and Turkey. It provided for the mutual defence of the dominions of the signatories and, specifically, for Russian aid to Turkey (if requested) against Mehemet Ali: a secret clause, soon revealed, bound Turkey to close the Dardanelles to armed ships when Russia was at war.

The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi was of decisive importance

in that it imbued two men of great energy and influence, Palmerston and Stratford Canning, with the anti-Russian and pro-Turkish sympathies which they never thereafter lost and which constituted one of the causes of the Crimean War. Palmerston's suspicions, not merely of the Treaty but of Russian policy as a whole, were strengthened by the Convention of Munchengratz concluded on 18th September 1833 between the representatives of Russia, Austria and Prussia; the Czar, the Austrian Emperor and the Prussian Crown Prince being present. The Convention was primarily an agreement on the part of Russia and Austria to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman dominions against Mehemet Ali, though it also provided a basis for the concerted action of those two states should the Turkish empire break up despite their efforts.¹ Palmerston was mistaken in thinking that the Convention was directed against Turkey - there he seized hold of the wrong end of the stick - but he was better justified in seeing it as the reunion of the "reactionary" eastern powers against the "liberal" Franco-British entente. Throughout 1834 Palmerston's suspicions of Russia deepened until they were only less than those of such convinced Russophobes as David

1. Temperley, Crimea, pp.66-74; C.S.Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations, 1815-40" in the Cambridge Historical Journal Vol.III, No.I, pp.46-73 (1929); cited as Crawley.

Urquhart¹ and Lord Ponsonby, the British ambassador at Constantinople from 1833 to 1841. On 10th March 1834

1. David Urquhart (1805-1877) gained his first acquaintance with the Near East in 1828-29 when he fought for the Greeks against the Turks. He acted as confidential agent for Stratford Canning at Constantinople in 1831-32 and on his return to England published his book on Turkey and its Resources (1833) which provided one necessary element in the formation of anti-Russian opinion, the belief that Turkey could and would become the kind of state which Britain could support with credit and profit. In August 1833 Urquhart was officially supplied with funds for an extended tour in Central Europe and the Near East. In conjunction with Ponsonby he pressed on Palmerston the necessity of supporting Turkey against Russia and in 1834 got in touch with the Moslem patriots in Circassia, for whom he drafted a declaration of independence. He was recalled in October 1834 and returned to London, still with Ponsonby's backing, to advocate his anti-Russian views in a pamphlet on England, France, Russia and Turkey, published in 1834, and later in a weekly, The Portfolio, which began publication in November 1835. By Ponsonby's influence Urquhart was appointed Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople and with Ponsonby's backing he encouraged a British ship, the Vixen, to trade with the Circassians at Soujouk Kale in the hope that the Russians would arrest it and so provoke an Anglo-Russian war. The ship was arrested but Palmerston and the Czar settled the trouble without war. In consequence of these activities and of his disagreement with Ponsonby (who accused him of "going native") Urquhart was recalled in March 1837 and his belief that Palmerston was at best a dupe and at worst a paid tool of Russia dates from this time. In his work The Foreign Affairs of Great Britain as administered by Lord Palmerston he described Palmerston as "the Minister of Russia" and he took advantage of his membership of the House of Commons from 1847 to 1852 to pursue his attacks. Urquhart's over-vehemence recoiled against him but he became notable for his efforts to interest the public at large, and especially working-men, in foreign affairs and foreign policy. v. Gertrude Robinson: David Urquhart (1920); V.J. Puryear; England, Russia and the Straits Question (Berkley, California, 1931); G.H. Bolsover: "David Urquhart and the Eastern Question", in the Journal of Modern History, Vol. VIII, pp. 444-467 (December 1936).

Palmerston sent to Ponsonby the famous "discretionary order" which authorized him to comply with any request of the Porte for protection "against any threatened attack of the Russians" by calling upon the Mediterranean squadron, whose commander was to comply "provided that, in a naval point of view, he should consider his force equal to the emergency". Nothing better illustrates the acute dread and suspicion of Russia which Palmerston and, to a lesser degree, his colleagues in the Cabinet felt at this time than this order which in effect allowed a man so pronouncedly anti-Russian as Ponsonby to involve Britain in a war with Russia at his own discretion. One of the first acts of Wellington when he was in temporary charge of the Conservative government in 1834 was to cancel this order. When the Whigs returned to office in 1835 Palmerston furnished Ponsonby with a new "discretionary order" but this time advised discretion in its use and added the warning that there was no immediate danger.¹

A debate in the House of Commons on 19th February 1836 afforded the occasion for a review of British opinion towards Russia. Lord Dudley Stuart, who moved for papers, drew a picture of Russia which, if it had been true, would have meant that she was invincible. He credited her with an army

1. Temperley, Crimea, pp.76-78.

of 700,000 men and with one thought animating the whole nation - "that of advancing the province of their country and its superior power over the rest of the world". "If therefore they looked at the state of Russia now and in 1815 would any man say that the balance of power continued? No, it was destroyed ... Our Indian empire was called an empire of opinion ... Let Russia take away that opinion, let her undermine it, let her lessen the hold England had upon the opinion of the people there and what would become of her? That empire would melt away and escape from her grasp". Stuart was supported, and indeed overreached by Thomas Attwood. "If the Government did go to war", Attwood said, "the people of England would support them". Palmerston, he held, ought to have "pawned the Crown jewels rather than suffer the character of this great nation to fall" - as he had done in 1833. "Let them have war rather than be trampled on by Russia." No one else went so far as Attwood but only one member ventured to doubt whether Russia could invade India successfully and the rest of the speakers were all, to a greater or lesser extent, anti-Russian. Palmerston took a middle line. He did not want war, but he was not afraid of Russia and the "integrity and independence" of Turkey must be maintained.¹ This debate amply illustrates the point

1. Parliamentary Debates, 3rd series, xxxi, 614-669.

made by Temperley that "the materials for a war were thus ready-made in public opinion and henceforth England depended on the discretion of her statesmen to avoid it".¹ Palmerston himself possibly reached the height of his suspicion of Russia, in this period, in 1833-34, through his anger at the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi and the Convention of Munchengratz, but his suspicion never really died down very far and, of course, it was fed by McNeill's reports from Persia.² The despatch to Auckland of June 1836, noted at the beginning of this chapter, was entirely in keeping with Palmerston's frame of mind.

It was not only, or perhaps chiefly, the actual or suspected designs of Russia on Turkey, Persia or India which worked upon the mind of the British public. In other than official quarters the events in Poland in 1830-32 had probably a greater influence. In British eyes one of the most popular acts of Alexander I had been the creation of the "Congress Kingdom" of Poland in which the officials and the official language were to be Polish and which was only united to Russia in the sense that there was a common sovereign.

1. Crimea, p.74.

2. McNeill's published contribution to the prevailing Russo-phobia, The Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East, appeared in 1836.

The constitution provided for an elected Diet and a Polish army; freedom of the press and of the person were guaranteed. There is no reason to doubt Alexander I's initial sincerity though his enthusiasm for his creation was only sustained with difficulty during his lifetime and Russian opinion never approved of the settlement. Increasingly the Poles complained of infringements of their constitutional rights, especially by police action and surveillance. On the night of 28th November 1830 a rising broke out in Warsaw, actuated partly by the rumour that the Polish army was to be sent to France to fight against the new Orleanist regime. The withdrawal of the governor, the Grand Duke Constantine, and the fact that the Poles possessed a trained force allowed the rising to assume the dimensions of a large-scale revolt. After it had been crushed and Warsaw recaptured, the Organic Statute of 1832 abolished the Polish army and Diet and almost abolished the constitutional guarantees. The universities of Warsaw and Vilna were closed; the Russian language was introduced into both secondary and primary schools; Russian officials administered the country; and the Roman Catholic religion was subjected to persecution.¹

The Polish revolt only gradually dawned upon the mind of

1. Pares, Russia, pp.309-310, 325-327.

the British public, which was preoccupied in 1830-32 with Parliamentary reform and it was not until Polish emigres began to arrive in considerable numbers in the later part of 1832 that widespread sympathy awoke, both in Britain and France. Once created, this sympathy was shared to a remarkable degree by all parties and all classes. Thomas Campbell, the poet, was the leading literary supporter of the Polish cause, which was represented in the House of Commons and in society by such men as Lord Dudley Stuart and Cutlar Fergusson. Palmerston made the point to Russia that the "Congress Kingdom" existed by virtue of the Vienna settlement and that its abolition was a breach of that settlement. His representations and those of the French government produced no effect, except that of irritation, in Russia; and beyond pensioning some of the Polish emigres the British government could do nothing more. Its helplessness intensified the popular anti-Russian feeling in Britain, from which hardly anyone of note except Lord Durham and Richard Cobden was exempt. The exigencies of diplomacy might from time to time dictate co-operation with Russia, as against Mehemet Ali and France but to the mass of the people the Russia of Nicholas I became and remained the police state par excellence, the enemy of the liberal civilization of western Europe. This feeling was to persist until it found its expression in the

Crimean War. Coinciding from time to time with more material anxieties over Russian action in respect of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and India, stimulated by the works of Urquhart, McNeill, de Lacy Evans¹ and other publicists, it produced by the middle of the eighteen-thirties a state of mind in which any action that could be classed as anti-Russian, even that of Auckland, seemed to have a prima-facie justification.

1. Evans (1787-1870) was a combination, rare in his day, of the successful professional soldier and the Radical politician. He served in India, the Peninsula, America and at Waterloo; commanded the British Legion in Spain, 1835-37; and distinguished himself as a divisional commander in the Crimean War. For most of the period from 1830 to 1865 he was a member of the House of Commons. His relevant works were

THE LIQUIDATION OF LORD AUCKLAND'S POLICY

It is not necessary to describe in detail the course of the first Afghan War.¹ The decisive action in the first campaign was the capture of Ghazni on 23rd July 1839. This led directly to the falling back on Kabul both of Dost Mohammad's own forces and of those under his son, Akbar Khan, which had been opposing the passage of Wade, with his native levies and the Sikhs, through the Khyber Pass. Treachery among his followers made it impossible for Dost Mohammad to stand and fight before Kabul, which was occupied by the British forces, including Shah Shuja's troops, on 7th August; Wade's column joining on 3rd September.²

Auckland was now faced with a direct issue of policy. Shah Shuja had been replaced on the throne of Afghanistan; Dost Mohammad was a fugitive. Were the British forces to be withdrawn? The Bombay column did, indeed, begin its withdrawal on 18th September but nearly all the Bengal troops remained. Why was not the opportunity taken at this stage

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1. The military history of the first Afghan War is dealt with in Sir John Fortescue: A History of the British Army, Vol. XII, chapters XXII to XXIX (1927), cited as Fortescue.
 2. Ranjit Singh died on 27th June 1839.

to make the British withdrawal complete? According to Macnaghten, Shah Shuja had been received in Kabul "with feelings nearly amounting to adoration" and although no one else appears to have noticed this, there was point in the questions asked by one of Dost Mohammad's sons.

"If Shah Shuja is really a king, and come to the kingdom of his ancestors, what is the use of your army and name? You have brought him, by your money and arms, into Afghanistan, leave him now with us Afghans and let him rule us if he can".¹

The answer perhaps turns on what the word "king" signifies. Afghanistan was not a kingdom in the sense of being a highly centralized state with a long tradition of obedience to a strong monarchical power. Where such a power exists the capture of a very few men and the seizure of the central machinery of government can mean the effective control of the whole country. Afghanistan, however, was an utterly uncentralized country where such central power as existed was only maintained on the fluctuating loyalties of individual chieftains and tribes. It had been so under Dost Mohammad and the treachery which made it impossible for him to defend Kabul was bound to operate against Shah Shuja. If Shah Shuja were dethroned in his turn the prestige of the

1. Cambridge History of India, Vo.V., p.501.

British, who had put him on the throne, would suffer. It is highly arguable, of course, that British prestige ought never to have been involved in the maintenance of a protege whose position was certain to be difficult in the extreme. It had been so involved, however, and there was a case for holding that it would be best to support Shah Shuja some little time longer, until the initial difficulties in his way had been removed and he could be left with a somewhat better chance of survival. Auckland's whole policy contained so many gross mistakes that it is easy to assume that every single decision of his was mistaken. Possibly the decision to retain a British force in Afghanistan over the winter of 1839-40 was not one of these.

One reason for the retention of such a force was that Dost Mohammad was still at large. He had sought asylum with the Ameer of Bokhara and had been more fortunate than some of the enforced guests of that monarch in making his escape. An expedition under Dr. Lord occupied Bamian and, as an outpost, Saighan. Dost Mohammad then succeeded in raising a small force and re-occupying Saighan; only to be defeated by Dennie in a fight at the entrance to the Bamian Valley in September 1840. After that action Dost Mohammad re-appeared in Kohistan and on 2nd November fought another engagement at Purwandana, where he gained some measure of success. 'But

very soon afterwards he surrendered personally to Macnaghten and on 12th November 1840 he left, as an honoured captive and a great favourite of the regimental messes, for India.

Another reason for the temporary retention of a British force in Afghanistan was the activities of the Russians. The boundary of Asiatic Russia ran at that time up the Ural River to Orenberg, thence to Omsk and Semipalatinsk; roughly in the shape of an arc of a circle. Within that circle was the Uzbek kingdom or khanate of Khiva, against which the Russians had justifiable grounds of complaint for slave-raiding and attacks on caravans. An expedition against Khiva had been under consideration for some years. It was finally determined on in March 1839, to start not later than the spring of 1840. That date was fixed to allow of "the settlement of English matters in Afghanistan", so that Britain, having made "conquests" herself, would no longer have the right to demand an explanation of Russia's action. In the end, however, the expedition left Orenburg under Perovski as soon as November 1839; partly because it was thought better to traverse the steppes in winter than in the heat of summer and partly because of the Russian fear of British influence increasing in Central Asia. Great care appears to have been taken in fitting out the expedition but nevertheless it failed to make headway against the appalling weather conditions on

the Ust-Urt plateau between the Aral and the Caspian Seas. Perovski decided, on 1st February 1840, to turn back: on 13th March the failure of the expedition was announced in the Russian Press and at once communicated to England by the British ambassador.¹

The incident threw some light on views held on Anglo-Russian relations. Burnes, writing from Kabul in December 1839, believed that the British occupation of Afghanistan had "hastened the great crisis". "England and Russia", he said, "will divide Asia between them and the two empires will enlarge like circles in the water till they are lost in nothing". Macnaghten, too, assumed the early and inevitable contact of the British and the Russian spheres. "Had we not been here", he wrote on 15th April 1840, "they (the Russians) would by this time have established themselves without the slightest opposition or difficulty in Afghanistan".² Another view and another policy were those of Major Todd, then

1. Sykes, Afghanistan, Vol.II, pp.83-84; H.S.Edwards: Russian Projects Against India, chapters iv-vi (1885). Edwards' was a "popular" work but he apparently drew freely on translations of Russian official papers. His references, however, are quite inadequate. Still, it does appear that the British intelligence service in Central Asia at this time was better than the Russian; British travellers being either more daring or having less basic hostility to encounter.

2. Kaye, War in Afghanistan, Vol.II, pp.37,45n.

engaged in his mission to Herat. Todd appreciated that the Russians had good grounds for their expedition, quite apart from what the British had done in respect of Afghanistan, and he sent two officers in succession to Khiva, not to stimulate the Khan against the Russians but to try to induce him to remove the Russian grounds for complaint. He took a justifiable pride in the outcome of his efforts. One of his officers, Shakespear, succeeded in having some four hundred Russian slaves and captives liberated and in conducting them personally to Orenburg; and in 1842 the Khan, by a treaty with Russia, bound himself to stop slave-trading and slave-raiding. For the moment Russia had got what it wanted and was not obliged to renew its attack on Khiva. "Had we been satisfied with the tales of Sir Alexander's agents", Todd wrote, "we should now have believed the Russians 300,000 strong and to be within a short distance of Kabul".¹ Unfortunately, there were not enough men as cool and judicious as Todd.

Macnaghten and Burnes, by contrast, were in the full excitement of playing the "great game"; and for Macnaghten in particular the British position in Afghanistan was only a jumping-off ground. The internal government of the country,

1. Kaye, loc.cit., Vol.II, p.112n.

including the collection of revenue, was entrusted (with the most unhappy consequences) to Shah Shuja: Macnaghten was responsible for its external relations and for relations with disaffected or rebellious chiefs. His first act had been an expedition against Kalat, which was stormed by Willshire's force, on its way back to India, on 13th November 1839.¹ Mihrab Khan, the ruler, (who had befriended Shah Shuja in earlier days) was killed sword in hand and the incapable Shah Nawaz was set up in his place to rule territories diminished by the annexation of Shal, Mastung and Kachhi to Afghanistan. Further opportunities for Macnaghten existed in respect of Herat and Bokhara.

The situation at Herat showed the utter unreality of the view by which that city appeared an outpost of Afghanistan and therefore, in a sense, of Britain against Persia and Russia. It was atrociously governed by the Vizier, Yar Mohammad, who was engaged on the one hand in trying to extort money from the British resident, Todd, and, on the other, in stirring up disaffected Afghan chieftains and in intriguing with the Persians. When he was discovered to be proposing to the Persian governor of Meshed a plan to expel the British mission and to seize Kandahar by joint action Todd terminated his mission and Macnaghten proposed to attack Herat and

1. Fortescue, Vol.XII, pp.98-100.

incorporate it in Afghanistan. But on this point at least Auckland was adamant. Todd was sent back, in disgrace, to his regiment and the strictures which Auckland visited upon him would have been better reserved for Macnaghten.

"What we have wanted in Afghanistan" - Auckland wrote - "has been repose under an exhibition of strength and he (Todd) has wantonly, and against all orders, done that which is most likely to produce general disquiet, and which may make our strength inadequate to the calls upon it. I look upon a march to Herat as perfectly impracticable ... in the mean time, the state to which things have been brought is a cause of much anxiety and apprehension to me".

Macnaghten was also meditating an expedition against Bokhara, where a British officer, Colonel Stoddart, had been detained by the Ameer since 1838. On 23rd February 1840 Macnaghten was judging an expedition against Bokhara "to be conveniently feasible if entered upon at the proper season of the year" and in the following April he was contemplating the annexation of Cis-Oxus provinces to Afghanistan". One of his questions - "May not the contingency upon which the home authorities direct an advance, be said to have arisen should the Russians establish themselves at Bokhara?" - shows how far his imagination had ranged.¹ And Bokhara was not at the limit

1. No expedition was sent to Bokhara but Arthur Conolly was sent to Khiva and later went on to Bokhara where both he and Stoddart were murdered at the order of the Ameer.

of it. "The Sikhs" Macnaghten wrote to Auckland on 20th July 1840, "should no longer be suffered to throw unreasonable obstacles in the way of our just and necessary objects"; and elsewhere he spoke of "macadamising" the Punjab. "We have a beautiful game on our hands", Macnaghten wrote in another letter, "if we have the means and inclination to play it properly". The game was nothing less than the creation of a Greater Afghanistan, with Herat, Peshawar and Bokhara annexed to it; a state whose external policy Macnaghten would direct.¹

It might be a beautiful game but Auckland, as he amply demonstrated in the instance of Herat, had neither the means nor the inclination to play it. What he wanted was "repose under an exhibition of strength". There had been the exhibition of strength. It had not produced repose. In the summer of 1840 British forces were engaged, for the moment successfully, against the Ghilzais at Tazi and against the Kachis in the neighbourhood of Quetta. In August Kalat was temporarily re-captured by insurgents and at the very end of that month a convoy was successfully attacked in the Bolan Pass. General Nott restored order and re-captured Kalat but it was evident that "repose" was a mirage in Afghanistan.

1. Kaye, loc.cit., Vol.II, pp.42-48.

Such was the situation when the news of the failure of the Russian expedition against Khiva was followed by Dost Mohammad's surrender. The issue of the future of the British occupation was clearer now than it had been a year before. There could be no immediate threat either from Russia or from Dost Mohammad. Had the time not come at length when the British forces could be withdrawn? The project was costing India some £1,250,000 a year and Auckland, unlike Macnaghten, was not anxious to make Afghanistan a jumping-off ground for further adventures in Central Asia. The recent defeat of the Ghilzais and the re-occupation of Kalat left the British in a position when their withdrawal from the country could not be regarded as in any sense equivalent to expulsion: the surrender of Dost Mohammad might seem to provide the opportunity. In Durand's words,

"No more striking event could be conceived for an honourable termination to the armed occupation of Afghanistan, and for the triumphant return of the Anglo-Indian army to its own frontier. By furnishing so un hoped an occasion Providence removed all reasonable ground of excuse or hesitation, and afforded the Indian Government the very moment which it professed to await".¹

Of this moment Auckland declined to take advantage and he still held to his view at the end of March 1841 in the face

1. Durand, op.cit., pp.325-326.

of the very clear intimation of an opposite opinion on the part of the authorities in England. As late as the following September Macnaghten was calculating on an occupation to last for "a few years hence" until "the present generation of turbulent intriguers" had been swept away and Shah Shuja was strong enough to stand on his own feet.¹ The only effect of criticism from England was on the financial side and this, taking the shape of a drastic reduction in the amount of the subsidies paid to the Afghan chiefs, precipitated the outbreak of that widespread rising in which Shah Shuja and the British were engulfed.

The outbreak, which began with a local insurrection in Kabul on 2nd November 1841, in the course of which Burnes was killed by a mob, had to be judged as a military movement to be met by a military counter-movement. But for this the British forces were singularly ill-placed² and ill-led. They were too widely scattered and in Kabul they had neglected to occupy the one position, the Bala Hissar, which almost certainly would have ensured their safety. The

1. Kaye, War in Afghanistan, pp.146-152.

2. Durand, op.cit., pp.247-248 notes, for the winter of 1839-40, the distribution of troops among the following posts: Kabul, Ghazni, Bamian, Jellalabad, Kandahar, Girishk, Kalat and Quetta. Fortescue emphasizes the constant interference with military policy of junior officers acting in a political capacity.

commanding officer, Elphinstone, was physically and therefore morally unequal to his responsibilities. Perhaps the most striking thing was the speed of the catastrophe. At the beginning of November 1841 the British appeared to be in effective control of most of the country. When Lord Ellenborough, Auckland's successor, landed at Madras on 21st February 1842 Macnaghten was dead, Shah Shuja was dead, nearly the whole of the Kabul force, with thousands of camp-followers were dead and Elphinstone was dying in captivity; Sale was besieged in Jellalabad and, despite his reputation as a fighting-man, had been near surrendering it; Nott was under pressure at Kandahar; the garrison of Ghazni had been driven into the citadel and was on the point of surrender; Pollock, at Peshawar, was trying to bring into fighting trim the forces there, some of whom were still suffering from the effects of a failure to force a way through the Khyber Pass in the preceding month.

Yet by the end of the summer another change, almost as rapid, had taken place. On 5th April Pollock began his march through the Khyber Pass and on the 16th he reached Jellalabad. After a delay there to assemble transport he resumed his march and entered Kabul on 15th September. Two days later he was joined by Nott, who had marched from Kandahar, re-occupying Ghazni without opposition on the way.

On 12th October the British forces began their march back to India. The remarkable thing about these operations was the comparatively slight and ineffective nature of the opposition encountered. Carelessness was always likely to incur punishment, as it did during the final retirement through the Khyber Pass in October, but the only considerable engagement fought was that of 13th September when Akbar Khan attempted to bar Pollock's way into Kabul.¹ The little garrison of Kalat-i-Ghilzai held out with great spirit until relieved. It was evident that British and Indian troops, reasonably well led (and neither Pollock nor Nott pretended to be a military genius) and adequately supplied with transport could defeat any Afghan army in the field. Did this mean that too much importance had been or was to be attached to the events of November 1841 to January 1842; that only a quite unusual combination of ill-luck and worse management could have produced those catastrophes? Not necessarily. The task of an army unencumbered by political considerations, with no more than the duty of fighting its way to a particular point and then returning, was far easier than that of static forces entrusted with the control of a country, which meant a considerable degree of dispersion and

1. Fortescue, Vol.XII, pp.264-280.

a subordination of military to political considerations. It might be admitted that British forces could fight their way into and out of Afghanistan when they cared to do so; provided, of course, that expense was no object. It did not follow that the occupation of Afghanistan for any length of time was practicable. If an active policy in Central Asia depended upon the occupation of Afghanistan, then such a policy was impracticable also.

Lord Ellenborough, under whose governor-generalship the military successes of 1842 were achieved, had come to that office with much more experience of Indian affairs than most of his predecessors or successors. He had been President of the Board of Control under Wellington from 1828 to 1830 and again under Peel in 1834-35. He had resumed that office when Peel came into power in 1841 and was appointed directly from it to the governor-generalship; taking with him to India, as a result of his official experience, a very strong prejudice against the East India Company and a firm belief that Indian affairs should be under the immediate control of the Crown. No man could have been a more striking contrast to Auckland who, but for his mistakes, would have gone down to history as one of the most colourless of governors-general. Ellenborough, on the other hand, would have made himself known in the most obscure office. He was erratic,

but from the very strength of his impulses and not, like Auckland, from weakness and indecision. Above all, his policy, for good or bad, was his own. He would tolerate no Macnaghten as the power behind his throne. "I believe I can do now what I like in India", he wrote on one occasion; and, on another, "I will govern the country as if I were its sovereign".¹

Ellenborough had given the question of relations with Afghanistan a considerable amount of thought before he returned to the Board of Control in 1841. Law's book contains (pp.1-9) a "Memorandum on Afghan Affairs" dated 23rd April 1839 in which Ellenborough argued that Russia had as much right as Britain to cultivate political and commercial relations with Afghanistan and that

"their proposition that neither Power should seek to establish influence there is one to which we must ultimately accede, or engage in a ruinous contest to be carried on thirteen hundred and fifty miles from our frontier".

Any attempt on the part of Britain to retain Afghanistan would be met by the use by Russia of Persia and the Persian

1. To the Earl of Clare, 3rd October 1842, 26th March 1843; Sir Algernon Law, India under Lord Ellenborough, pp.40, 64 (1926); cited as Law. This book, as well as Lord Colchester's History of the Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough (1874), contains some useful documents and letters but neither is really satisfactory and Ellenborough still awaits a biographer.

army.

"To keep down the subjects of Shah Shuja of whom many would adhere to the family of Dost Mahomed, and at the same time to make head against a Persian army disciplined by Russians, would be required a force of 25,000 or 30,000 men".

Reserves would bring this force up to 50,000 and the expense involved would paralyse our administration in India. He did not criticize the warning delivered to Persia by McNeill but, in his opinion, the proper measures to follow it would have been "pecuniary aid to the Chiefs of Kabul and Candahar in the event of their marching to the Chief of Herat"; a disclaimer of Shah Shuja; and "the offer of good offices to settle the disputes between the Afghans and Ranjit Singh". He had also attacked the policy of the government in the House of Lords on 28th February 1839 when he traced it to Shah Shuja's British-sponsored expedition of 1833-34 and called for papers on that subject.

Ellenborough went to India, therefore, with the strongest prepossession against Auckland's policy and there was some danger that a man so impulsive, and placed in the circumstances which he found in February 1842, would order a headlong retreat of all the British forces from Afghanistan, thus emphasizing the reverses they had already suffered. What he eventually did was different. He repeated his orders to Pollock and Nott to retire to India but he suggested that they

might feel disposed to conduct their retirement by a roundabout route which would take them by Kabul. Of this mode of issuing orders Kaye is bitterly critical.

"Lord Ellenborough's instructions to the Generals were so worded - whether by accident or design I do not presume to determine - as to cast upon them all the onus of failure, and to confer upon the Governor-General, or at least to divide with him, all the honour of success. One thing at least is certain - the letter of the 4th of July, addressed to General Nott and signed by the Chief Secretary, ought not to have been written. It is either from first to last a masterpiece of Jesuitical cunning, or it indicates a feebleness of will - an infirmity of purpose - discreditable to the character of a statesman entrusted with the welfare and the honour of one of the greatest empires in the world".¹

It is only fair to point out, however, that it may be neither Jesuitical nor infirm to leave a general operating at a long distance to be, within certain limits, the judge of his own actions and when Pollock said that he felt the full benefit of being unshackled there is no reason to suppose that he was speaking sarcastically.

On 1st October 1842 Ellenborough wrote a manifesto, in the very room in which Auckland had written his four years before. The fact that it was dated 1st October, though not immediately issued, is practically a proof that Ellenborough meant to denounce his predecessor's policy in the most striking manner possible. In this he succeeded, though it

1. Kaye, War in Afghanistan, Vol.III, pp.288-289 and n.

is doubtful if British prestige gained by his grandiloquent censures. The two points which he emphasized were the ultimate invincibility of British arms and the utter impolicy and injustice of Auckland's actions.

"To force a sovereign upon a reluctant people, would be as inconsistent with the policy as it is with the principles of the British government, tending to place the arms and resources of that people at the disposal of the first invader, and to impose the burden of supporting a sovereign, without the prospect of benefit from his alliance ... The enormous expenditure required for the support of a large force, in a false military position, at a distance from its own frontier and resources, will no longer arrest every measure for the improvement of the country and of the people".

As for the future:

"The Governor-General will leave it to the Afghans themselves to create a government amidst the anarchy which is the consequence of their crimes ... The Governor-General will willingly recognize any government approved by the Afghans themselves, which shall appear desirous and capable of maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring states".

This document did not escape, and could not expect to escape criticism. But it excited less than the famous proclamation of 16th November 1842, addressed to "all the Princes and Chiefs, and People of India" and beginning,

"My Brothers and Friends,
Our victorious army bears the gates of the temple of Somnauth in triumph from Afghanistan, and the despoiled tomb of Sultan Mahomed looks upon the ruins of Ghuznee".¹

1. Ibid., Vol.III, pp.378-381.

In a long letter to the Secret Committee on 23rd March 1843 Ellenborough defended his action.

"I wrote that address not for England but for India. I spoke to men under the excitement of recent victories following unparalleled disasters".

He went on to add a further consideration which did him honour.

"I deemed it to be further necessary to endeavour at this time to give a new character of Nationality to the Government by identifying it with the national feeling - to prove by some decisive act that we sympathised with the people, and regarded, as we did our own, the Honor of Hindoostan ... The war in Afghanistan had assumed as no other war had done, a national character. It had been my object to confirm that character and to give to the transmission of the trophies through the centre of India the appearance not of a religious but of a National triumph".¹

In any event, too much attention can be (and was) directed to Ellenborough's words. The views which Wellington and he exchanged are of more importance. On 30th March 1842 Wellington stated his opinion at some length. He believed that the first necessity was to "consider maturely our main position in Hindostan".

"Looking at our position in the North-West, I see upon the river Sutlej a short line of defence, covered by the Punjab and its rivers, with the

1. Law, pp.53-57.

Government of which country we are in alliance. It is true that the Sikh Government is in an unsettled state, and not what it was when governed by Runjeet Singh at the commencement of the war in Afghanistan. But the weakness of the government or the absence of all government in the Punjab, and the possibility of hostility in that part of the Sikh State, would be an additional inducement to attend to the defences of our weakest frontier, even if the consequences of the state of confusion in the government of the Punjab should eventually require the active interference of the British Government in order to settle the government of a country where tranquillity is so essential to its own protection and safety".

Ellenborough's views on the role of the Sikh state were given in a letter to Wellington of 7th June 1842.

"I have at the same time not discouraged another folly of theirs - that of advancing their frontier towards Cabul. I have not objected to their moving forward on the left bank of the Cabul River, and I have acquiesced in their wish to occupy Jellalabad when we leave it. If they accede to this arrangement, and endeavour to carry it out, we shall have placed an irreconcilable enemy to the Afghans between them and us, and hold that enemy to the Afghans, occupied as he must be in defending himself against them, in entire subjection to us by our position upon the Sutlej, within a few marches of Umritsir and Lahore".

His views on Sind he expressed in a letter to the Secret Committee of 26th June 1843. He had had, he said, to decide whether the armies should everywhere resume the positions

they had occupied before the Afghan War and had decided that, although Afghanistan must be evacuated, certain positions on the Lower Indus should be held; partly on grounds of prestige since one retirement was enough and partly because he did not want to leave open "to the ambition of the Sikhs or of a European Power that route of which we had demonstrated the practicability and importance".

By the time this last letter was written the Ameers of Sind had been overthrown by Napier; and Wellington's letter pointed, if only indirectly, to a similar contest with the Sikhs. In view of these preoccupations and of the absence of any ostentatious advance eastward on the part of Russia it was not surprising that a definite policy towards Afghanistan in the years 1842-53 can scarcely be said to have existed. The internal history of Afghanistan during this period can therefore be dealt with shortly.

The Afghan captives had been released when the British army reached the Indus and Dost Mohammad returned, not to the throne of Afghanistan but to the position of Ameer of Kabul. Kandahar was under the rule of his brother, Kohundil Khan; Herat under that of Yar Mohammad, the former Vizier of Shah Kamran whom he had murdered early in 1842. Dost Mohammad had emerged from his captivity with a remarkable

lack of bitterness against the British and a respect for British strength; but his son and Vizier, Akbar Khan, who added to his own ambition the reputation he had gained as the leader of resistance to the British forces, had other views and a strong popular following. In 1846 Akbar Khan and Yar Mohammad formed a species of alliance directed against Kohundil Khan and indulged in negotiations with Persia, directed against the British. The death of Akbar Khan, however, allowed his father to regain his authority, which he asserted against the Ghilzai rebels in 1847. Previously, in 1845, Akbar Khan had sent a small force to assist the Sikhs in the first Sikh War. In 1848 Dost Mohammad was obliged, less from his own wish than from popular demand, to give further assistance to the Sikhs in return for the promise of the restoration of Peshawar and he himself took part, with a cavalry force, in the battle of Gujarat on 21st February 1848. The total defeat of the Sikhs put an end to the Afghan hope of recovering Peshawar but it did make possible the Anglo-Afghan treaties of 1855 and 1857. These, as well as the Persian imbroglio, fall to be dealt with later but it may be noted here that Dost Mohammad succeeded in annexing Kandahar after the death of Kohundil Khan in 1855 and in capturing Herat within a few

days of his own death in 1863.¹

It must remain doubtful whether it would have been possible, politically, to carry out the evacuation of 1842 and to pursue the negative policy towards Afghanistan and Central Asia in general which marked the years 1842-53 had Anglo-Russian relations not improved. The failure of the Russian expedition against Khiva in 1839-40 and Russian preoccupation with the Caucasus were balanced against the British failure in Afghanistan and British preoccupation with Sind, the Punjab and, later, the Mutiny. Russian territorial gains to the eastward at this time were small and local. Explorers reached the Aral Sea in 1844 and in 1847 the fort of Aralsk was built where the Sir Daria or Jaxartes River flows into that sea; in 1853 the Russians, pushing up the river, stormed the Khokand fort of Ak Masjid but the subjugation of the surrounding district occupied them for the next eight years. It was not until 1854 that a major decision of policy was made, to connect the Siberian and Orenburg lines. This almost necessarily involved the subjection of Khiva, Khokand and Bokhara but the execution of the project was postponed by the outbreak of the Crimean War.²

1. Sykes, Afghanistan, Vol.II, pp.61-68.

2. Sykes, Afghanistan, Vol.II, pp.85-86; M.Romanovski: Notes on the Central Asian Question, Chapter I (Calcutta, 1870).

The comparative inaction of Russia in Central Asia at this time made Anglo-Russian understanding more easily possible but there were other and more positive factors working to the same end. Both the ambitions of Mehemet Ali and the determination of the Porte to resist them had increased since 1839. On 21st April 1839 a Turkish army crossed the Euphrates; on 24th June it was completely defeated by Ibrahim at Nezib; on 29th June the Sultan died and was succeeded by a boy of nineteen; on 7th July it became known in Constantinople that the Turkish admiral had sailed his fleet into Alexandria and had handed it over to the Egyptians. At first it seemed that the Five Powers (Britain, Russia, Austria, France and Prussia) would act together but in the end it was only Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia which concluded the Convention of 15th July 1840, binding themselves to compel Mehemet Ali to conform to their wishes; France was not a party to it and in the summer of 1840 there was a serious danger of an Anglo-French war. But action against the Egyptians was too speedy and too successful to allow of French intervention on their behalf. The forces of the Convention Powers - a British fleet, a handful of Austrian marines, Turkish land forces and Lebanese insurgents - carried all before them. Beirut was bombarded and captured on 9th October; on the 10th, Ibrahim was

defeated at Ardali; on 3rd November Acre was bombarded and captured; on 8th December Mehemet Ali yielded his unconditional submission. France was thus faced with the alternatives of helpless isolation or adhesion to the Straits Convention of 13th July 1841; she took the course of adhesion.¹

The years 1839-41 had thus shown Britain and Russia acting in close co-operation in the major international question of the day and the Straits Convention abrogated the special position vis-a-vis Turkey which Russia had gained by the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. There still remained in the background of the English mind a rooted distrust of Russia, which tended to increase rather than to diminish as time went on but it was less feverish than it had been five or six years earlier and it was discouraged by the British statesmen in power. The Whigs tried to defend Auckland's policy in Afghanistan and continued to abuse Ellenborough's. On 1st March 1843 J.A.Roebuck, the Radical M.P., moved for a Committee "to enquire into the circumstances which led to the late hostilities in Afghanistan, to report the evidence and their observations thereon". Lord John Russell, the Whig leader, made a weak reply but the Whigs were rescued by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, who refused a Committee.

1. Temperley, Crimea, Chapters III-V.

It is significant that one of his grounds for refusal was the "impolicy of disturbing the present friendly relations with Russia by again discussing the causes of jealousy which her conduct may have afforded to the English Government in bygone transactions".¹

Those friendly relations were gratifying to Peel and his pacific Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, but the main impulse to them came from the Czar Nicholas I who showed himself, both during his visit to England in 1844 and in his famous "conversations" with the British ambassador, Seymour, in 1853, extremely - and apparently sincerely - anxious for the closest co-operation with Britain. It would be a mistake to describe even Palmerston as anti-Russian in the late 'forties. He looked upon Russia as one of the barriers against European revolution in 1848 and although he co-operated with France to protect the Hungarian refugees in Turkey in 1849 he had raised no objection to the despatch of a Russian army to assist the Austrians against the Hungarians. The Crimean War did not come out of a clear sky but it was not, on the other hand, the inevitable culmination of a steadily increasing Anglo-Russian tension. Until the eve of war Anglo-Russian relations were better than they had been

1. Henry Law to Ellenborough, 13th March 1843. Law, pp.60-61.

in 1833-38 and this was undoubtedly one of the circumstances which allowed of the negative policy pursued by Britain towards Afghanistan in 1842-55.

ANGLO-AFGHAN RELATIONS 1853-63

Colonel H.B.Hanna's chapter on "The Genesis and Growth of the Forward Policy" in the first volume of his work on The Second Afghan War¹ is perhaps responsible for tracing the origin or revival of that policy to John Jacob's proposal of 1856 for the occupation of Quetta. Sir Henry Rawlinson's book England and Russia in the East, published in 1875, and his influence on the Indian Council may have had much to do with the inception of the second Afghan War. But it is an unhistorical way of looking at things to assume that the forward policy was bound to result in the actions of Auckland and Lytton and to imagine that such men as Jacob and Rawlinson deliberately sought the repetition of the events of 1839-42. Jacob was very careful to say that

"there is nothing in the arrangements proposed by me in the least degree resembling our first proceedings in Affghanistan. History has now justly decided that the former measure was in itself at the very outset a great crime and a great error".²

It is arguable that Jacob did not sufficiently distinguish

1. 1899. Cited as Hanna.

2. Views and Opinions of Brigadier-General John Jacob, ed. Lewis Pelly, p.383 (2nd edition, 1858).

between what he thought of his own proposal and what the Afghans might think, but it is unfair to read into his proposal in respect of Quetta the intention to subvert Afghan independence.

Similarly, Rawlinson's first published contribution on the Central Asian question¹ was not what one might have expected of a man afterwards known as a protagonist of the forward school. On the contrary, it contained a searching though temperate criticism of Auckland's policy.

"The justice of the expedition seems now to be pretty generally abandoned; and the expediency of it, on which ground alone the defenders of the war are obliged to rest their case, is made to depend upon the fact of an imminent danger, threatening the security of British power in the East in 1838, which could be averted, or which at any rate seemed to be evitable, by no other means".

The fall of Herat, he admitted, would have created "a certain amount of positive danger to India" and would have increased the internal agitation there; but the amount of danger did not justify a war, especially one which "violated all the acknowledged principles of military and political guidance".

1. Our Political Relations with Persia, Calcutta Review, Vol. XII, 1849. The references to this and other papers, notably the memorandum of 1868, are taken from England and Russia in the East in which they were collected. Rawlinson (1810-1895) was one of the officers seconded to Persia in 1830-39. He had then served as Political Officer in the later stages of the Afghan War and in 1843 had been appointed political agent in Turkish Arabia.

In any event the siege of Herat, which would have been raised without any demonstration on the part of Britain, was raised, to Auckland's knowledge, before the expedition started. The object which remained to Auckland, "the substitution of a friendly for a hostile power in the Eastern provinces of Afghanistan", certainly had an abstract value but was "hardly more urgently needed in 1838 than in 1878, or than at any intermediate period".

"We still cannot help suspecting, that it was owing in a great measure to the bureaucratic machinery of the Governor-General's camp, that the troops were finally set in motion".

Rawlinson then went on to examine the progress made by Russia since the Afghan War and concluded that its slowness was due partly to the Caucasus entanglement and partly to the fact that Russia had drawn a salutary warning from what had happened at Kabul in 1841-42. As for the future, he concluded that Russia would continue for some years longer her same course of gradual advance: he did not anticipate any sudden or general action.

"By what measures on the part of England the armed intervention of Russia in the north or in the east of Persia, if it ever should take place, would require to be met, would depend, not less upon the European combinations, to which in the meanwhile the election of Louis Napoleon to the Presidency of the French Republic, or other causes, might have led, than upon the state at the time of the finances of India, and upon the degree of fixity and security which might have been obtained for

our North-Western Frontier".¹

Assuming that a forward policy did not necessarily mean a policy of going forward indefinitely it could almost be deduced from what Rawlinson said that the establishment of a strong North-West frontier might remove one major cause for intervention in Afghanistan or Central Asia. It was to the problem of such a frontier that Jacob addressed himself but before we notice his proposals in more detail it will be convenient to give the story of relations between Britain and Persia and between Persia and Afghanistan up to date.

Nasir-u-Din, who as a boy of sixteen had succeeded to the Persian throne on the death of Mohammad Shah in 1848, had for a few years the benefit of the services as Vazir of Amir-i-Nizam, whom Sykes describes as "the most remarkable Persian of his generation".² The murder of the Vazir early in 1852 had disastrous effects both upon the internal and the foreign policy of Persia. In the previous year Yar Mohammad, the ruler of Herat, had died. His son and successor, Syed Mohammad, was a half-imbecile youth, who, when threatened by the Herat chieftains, appealed for support to Persia and offered his allegiance to the Shah. Rawlinson, at that time and later, considered that it would have been

1. Rawlinson, op.cit., pp.56-59, 67-69, 78-79.

2. Sir Percy Sykes: Persia, p.127.

rather to the British advantage than otherwise that Herat should go to Persia but "conformably", as he said, "to the Foreign Office tradition ... the integrity of Herat was to be maintained at all hazards".¹ It was maintained by obliging Persia to conclude the treaty of 25th January 1853. By the terms of that treaty² Persia was bound, so long as Britain did not interfere herself in the internal affairs of Herat, not to interfere nor accept subjection or allegiance. Persia was also bound not to send troops "on any account" to Herat, except when troops from Kabul or Kandahar or "any foreign territory" should attack the place. This treaty was resented by the Persian Court and the course which the Crimean War took further lessened British influence in Tehran. The expected Anglo-Turkish offensive to aid Shamil in the Caucasus never took place and the capture of Sebastopol was far less important in Persian eyes than the failure to relieve Kars.* It was not unnatural, in these circumstances, that despite the treaty of 1853, Persian ambitions should again turn towards Herat. The desposition of Syed Mohammad

1. Rawlinson, op.cit., pp.84-85. Article on "Our Political Relations with Persia", written in 1874 as an appendix to the article of 1849 cited above.

2. Aitchison, Treaties, Vol.VII, pp.149-151.

* It is believed that Russia delayed the evacuation of Kars to bring about the desired effect on Anglo-Persian relations.

at Herat and the substitution of Mohammad Yousuf, who had been a refugee in Persia, made the realisation of these ambitions easier. In December 1855 the British Minister, Murray, was obliged to leave Tehran after a series of insults and in March 1856 Persia sent an army to Herat which was admitted by Mohammad Yousuf. Very soon afterwards Mohammad Yousuf changed his mind, expelled the Persians and called for the assistance of Dost Mohammad. Eventually, however, on 25th October 1856, Herat was surrendered to the Persians.¹

We shall have to note presently the effect of Persian action upon British relations with Dost Mohammad but for the moment it is better to pursue the narrative. The Persian occupation of Herat was followed by war with Britain. An expeditionary force from India, under Outram, landed on Karrak on 4th December 1856, went on to capture Bushire and defeated the Persian forces in two or three not very desperate engagements. Peace was signed at Paris on 4th March 1857. Somewhat to the surprise of the Persians no indemnity was demanded and no territory claimed. Persia was obliged to withdraw from "Herat and every other part of Afghanistan", to relinquish all claims on those territories and to accept British mediation in any disputes with

1. Rawlinson, op.cit., pp.87-93.

Afghanistan and Herat.¹ Persia did withdraw her forces, in conformity with the letters of the treaty, but as the new ruler of Herat, Ahmed Khan, a nephew of Dost Mohammad, with whom he had quarrelled, reigned for the next five years as a vassal of the Shah, the result of armed British intervention was not obvious.

It was the Persian threat to Herat which led Jacob, then Acting-Commissioner of Sind, to address himself to Lord Canning in 1856. The territory under Jacob's charge marched with Kalat. By the treaty of 1841² the Khan had bound himself to allow British troops to occupy any positions in Kalat in any force and to confide the conduct of his foreign relations to the Indian government; which, in its turn, guaranteed the integrity of his dominions and undertook to assist him in preserving internal order. This treaty had formed part of the diplomatic background of operations in Afghanistan and after they were concluded, although it was not abrogated, it was disregarded by the Indian government. The Khan, left unsupported, was unable to keep order, to protect British subjects or to prevent his own nominal subjects from raiding into British territory.

1. Aitchison, Treaties, Vol.VII, pp.155-160.

2. Aitchison, Treaties, Vol.VII, pp.75-76. Article I explicitly described the Khans of Kalat as the vassals of the Kings of Kabul. In the treaty of 1854 Kalat was treated as an independent state.

The policy of reviving or implementing the treaty was initiated by Jacob, with the approval of his chief, Sir Bartle Frere, Chief Commissioner of Sind from 1850 to 1859.

Lord Dalhousie, in a letter to Outram of 7th October 1853, had expressed his disbelief in the expediency of "subsidizing the Khan, either in the hope of obtaining renewal of transit duties or to sustain his power".¹ Nevertheless, Jacob persevered and in the following year was empowered to meet the Khan. The result was the treaty concluded on 14th May 1854 and ratified on the 2nd June following.² The new treaty annulled that of 1841 and bound the Khan "to oppose to the utmost all the enemies of the British government ... and to enter into no negotiations with other States without its consent"; to allow the stationing of British troops in any part of Kalat; to prevent plundering or outrage by his subjects in or near British territory; and to protect the passage of merchants between British territories and Afghanistan. The Indian government bound itself, so long as these agreements were observed, to pay the Khan an annual subsidy of 50,000 rupees.

Two considerations arise from this treaty. Dalhousie

1. A.I.Shand: General John Jacob, p.186 (1900).

2. Aitchison: Treaties, Vol.VII, pp.77-79.

was pleased with it and in a letter of 28th May said, "The treaty is a good treaty. I wish I could get as good a one from the Dost".¹ This accords with the view of relations with Afghanistan which, as will be shown later, he imposed upon John Lawrence. The more immediate point is that the treaty gave Jacob the opportunity to put forward proposals based on the right to station British forces in Kalat.

Jacob's proposals were presumably those (or a shorter version of those) entitled "Suggestions towards a Permanent Defence of the North-West Frontier of India" and "A Memorandum of Proposed Arrangements in case of a British force being stationed at Quetta, or at any other convenient spot above the Bolan Pass".² He began by assuming the intention of Russia to place Persia, her tool, in possession of Herat, Kandahar and a great part of Baluchistan - an assumption upon which Rawlinson, with much more information at his disposal, had not made in 1849. If, Jacob went on, Russia succeeded in these designs, she "might then soon be in possession of the Punjaub and Sind". His plan for a strong North-West frontier was based on the argument that "at present, it appears to me that we are in a great measure in the position of a mighty army without outposts of any sort".

1. Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, ed. J.G.A. Baird, p.301 (1910).

2. Views and Opinions, pp.375-398.

The only two routes by which a foreign army could march into India were by the Bolan and the Khyber Passes: a British force at Quetta, in the territory of Kalat, could block the Bolan and also strike at the flank and rear of an army going through the Khyber. Once established at Quetta, with a good road made through the Bolan to Dadur and, ultimately, a railway from Dadur to the sea, the British might then "subsidize the Afghans with advantage so that they would come to consider their interests identical with ours". The result of this and of our much increased power to assist the Afghans at Herat and perhaps at Kandahar would be to gain "by moral influence a full control over Afghanistan". We have noticed Jacob's disclaimer of reviving the policy of the first Afghan War; but he argued, at the same time, that "we should not view this question with the eyes of men who served in Afghanistan during the Affghan War". The changes in the last ten years, he believed, had removed the drawbacks to his policy which might have existed then. He concluded

"You wish the red line of England on the map to advance no further. But to enable this red line to maintain its present position - to prevent its being driven back or erased from the map - it is, it appears to me, absolutely necessary to occupy posts in front of it".

It was unfortunate for Jacob that the man whose opinion on his proposal Canning sought was one of those who had served

in the Afghan War and, more than that, the man who was perhaps the bitterest critic of Auckland's policy. Henry Durand had lately returned from England, where he had written the book published much later under the title of The First Afghan War. He was at this time soured by the official neglect which he believed he had experienced since his patron, Lord Ellenborough, left India and he no doubt welcomed the opportunity of being consulted by Canning.

In his first memorandum, written on 8th October 1856, he put forward three objects to Jacob's proposal. If adopted, it would strip India of troops; Persia could be far more easily coerced by a sea-borne attack than by an expedition to Herat; and "whatever the disposition of the Khan, every Afghan and Belooch will take a clear matter-of-fact view of our advance, and will know that once above the passes and in occupation of Afghanistan it will be a permanent military occupation". In a second memorandum, of 16th October 1856, he argued that "to call things by their right names, the proposal is on the one hand the invasion of Persia and on the other the invasion of Afghanistan ... once launch armies into the heart of Persia or above the passes of Afghanistan, and events will entirely pass out of your control". These opinions Durand repeated in subsequent letters and conversations during the remainder of the year,

insisting that "the march of a British army across Afghanistan, whatever our intentions, would be thoroughly unpopular, and would infallibly lead, sooner or later, to a collision with the Afghan people, and the occupation of the country".¹

Here was the fundamental difference between Jacob and Durand. Their interpretations of Afghan psychology differed radically. Jacob's reading of the lessons of the first Afghan War allowed of the Afghans coming to appreciate an identity of interest between themselves and the British and being helped to that appreciation by subsidies and assistance at Herat and Kandahar against the Persians. Durand's deduction from the first Afghan War was that the proclaimed purpose of the entry of British troops into a position in Afghanistan was immaterial, since two consequences would inevitably follow from their entry: their original purpose would be overborne by others; and the Afghans would look

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1. H.M.Durand: The Life of Major-General Sir Henry Marion Durand, Vol.I, pp.180-194 (2 vols.,1883).
 2. Wyllie, Essays on the External Policy of India, p.92, spoke of the "vitality of popular error" in the plans of Jacob and Green for the occupation of Quetta. His editor, W.W. Hunter, consulted and quoted one of the leading soldiers in India who agreed with Jacob to the extent that the Bolan ought to be defended from Quetta, which he regarded as far healthier for troops than any station in Sind. He considered, however, that the case for the occupation of Quetta rested very much on the state of the communications behind it and that, as they were in 1856, they made Jacob's plan impracticable then. Loc.cit., 119n.

upon them as invaders. Two other arguments could be urged against Jacob's suggestion of 1856. As the war in the following year proved, Persia could be easily and effectively invaded by sea; and, until communications were much improved, the expenditure of resources in maintaining the garrison at Quetta would have been too heavy.

In a letter of 18th October 1856 Canning set out his objections to Jacob's proposal; objections which, as Jacob's biographer admits, were "in the meantime ... unanswerable". Canning pictured the unhappy situation of 5,000 troops "isolated and at a distance of 200 miles from their resources", with "a difficult pass in their rear" and competing with the inhabitants for the scanty foodstuffs of the region. "Military occupation long continued in such a country", he added, "must carry with it civil government and civil government is sovereignty. The red line on the map would be again pushed further forward, and without finding so good a resting place as now".¹

The administrators of Sind and those of the Punjab did not always see eye to eye and Jacob, on one occasion in 1854, in answer to a suggestion that a contingent from the Punjab should co-operate with the Sind Horse against the Murrees wrote, "All these people, military and civil, are minus

1. Shand, op.cit., pp.252-254.

quantities of large amount. Their proceedings now, close to us, are in defiance of all common sense ..."¹ Yet it is interesting to see that Jacob's views on the Bolan were echoed by two of the most notable of the "Punjab School". When H.B.Lumsden, of the Guides, was engaged in his mission to Kandahar in 1857-58 a good deal of correspondence passed between him and H.B. (afterwards Sir Herbert) Edwardes, Commissioner of Peshawar. This correspondence will be quoted later on the subject of policy towards Afghanistan but the reference in point at present is to a letter of Edwardes's to Lumsden of 20th April 1858.²

"I am inclined to agree with you that it would be wise for us to occupy the Bolan. It is a greater strategical point I think than the Khyber, for it commands two lines of operations, to Herat or Cabul, and would enable us either to meet Russia or turn the Afghans. You would see, however, that it would be opposed by Sir John with all his might ..."

The picture here is not quite the usual one of John Lawrence

1. Ibid., pp.188-189.

2. Sir Peter S.Lumsden and G.R.Elsmie: Lumsden of the Guides, p.242 (2nd edition, 1900). But later in 1858 Edwardes said he had learnt with regret and astonishment "that the authorities in Sindh have advocated the friendly occupation of Quetta, above the Bolan Pass, as a preliminary to subsidizing the Afghan nation and ultimately occupying Herat. So vast a pile of impracticable schemes seems more like some dream of conquest than a sober system of imperial defence". ibid., pp.282-283. Edwardes's views could change quickly and were not always easy to reconcile with each other.

leading a solid body of opinion in favour of inaction and of Jacob leading another solid body in favour of a policy which was to terminate in the second Afghan War. The true picture is rather that of a number of men who wished to take a certain though not an indefinite move forward¹ and of John Lawrence as a somewhat isolated opponent of all advance. Lawrence's position will be made clearer by an examination of policy towards Afghanistan under Dalhousie.

The first point to be made about Dalhousie's policy is that it was not actuated by fear of a successful Russian invasion of India either in his day or in any future which should be foreseen. "But for the bother of it", he wrote on 29th January 1854, "I don't care if they do come. They would get a precious thrashing ..."² And on 13th June of the same year he wrote to the President of the Board of Control, Sir Charles Wood,

"That if Russia should invade India with all the power she can command at present, her army would be exterminated, even if it ever reached the borders of India, is quite certain ..."³

It did not follow, for him, that no action with regard to the countries beyond the North-West frontier of India was

1. Sir Charles Napier, the commander-in-chief, seems to have been alone (in 1849) in anticipating "the day, and come it will, when we shall conquer Afghanistan and occupy Kandahar". Sir William Lee-Warner: The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie K.T., Vol.I, p.320 (2 vols., 1904).
2. Private Letters of the Marquis of Dalhousie, p.285.
3. Lee-Warner, op.cit., Vol.II, p.72.

desirable; but it did follow that no action was so urgently desirable that it must be undertaken at all costs. His views were set out at length in another letter to Wood of 31st May 1854. He believed that the Central Asian Powers, or one of them, might be made an effective natural barrier against Russia. The events of 1839-42 did not prove that Afghanistan might not be made such a barrier; they only proved "the error which was committed in the way we went to work". Afghanistan was a defensible country with a fighting population: it would be worth while going to some expense in keeping it in a condition when it might be serviceable to India. "The results of the policy which closed with 1843 disinclined us to have anything to say to the country in any way" but the revival of Persian designs upon Herat gave us the opportunity of coming to some form of agreement with Dost Mohammad. Such an agreement must be no cause for being drawn into the internal affairs of Afghanistan and the more general, the less detailed the agreement should be, the better. In the meantime Dalhousie saw no reason either to court or to bully Dost Mohammad. In 1850 it had seemed that Dost Mohammad was about to make overtures for forgiveness for his participation in the second Sikh War and Dalhousie was pleased at the prospect, since he considered that "the absence of all relations between the Governments"

was mischievous in every way and especially in its effects on the border tribes. No further step, however, was taken at the time. In 1853 Dalhousie decisively turned down a suggestion to support an intrigue, if not positive action, against the Dost. He was careful, in fact, to keep a cool head and free hands, but ready to take advantage of a favourable opportunity for establishing relations on his own limited terms.¹

It does not admit of doubt that Dost Mohammad's anxiety over Herat provided the opportunity: it is not clear from whom, on the British side, the first initiative came.

Dalhousie's biographer traces that initiative to a letter of his to Edwardes of 7th February 1854; Lady Edwardes, in the Memorials of her husband's life, says (but without giving any date) that "he wrote to Lord Dalhousie, and explained his views to him fully, asking him to tell him how far they accorded with his own".² They accorded reasonably well, though Dalhousie apparently thought Edwardes somewhat over-enthusiastic and over-optimistic.

Such differences as there were between the views of Dalhousie and Edwardes were chiefly on tactics; Edwardes being willing to make overtures to Dost Mohammad and

1. Ibid., Vol.II, pp.77-82.

2. Ibid., Vol.II, p.82; Memorials of the Life and Letters of Sir Herbert B. Edwardes, Vol.I, p.235 (2 vols., 1886).

Dalhousie at first unwilling. There was, however, another opinion to be reckoned with, that of John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of the Punjab. By Dalhousie's order Edwardes corresponded with him directly, instead of through Lawrence, on the matter of the Afghan treaty; but Lawrence was kept apprised of developments and there is no evidence that he was annoyed by this direct contact between his own chief and his own subordinate. In a letter to Dalhousie of 24th March 1854 Lawrence argued that friendly relations with Dost Mohammad would be useful in border politics but that they were not essential. From the fact that they were not essential he went on to argue against "the extreme measure of making overtures to the Ameer". He added advice against sending any Europeans to Kabul and against aiding Dost Mohammad with money "in any circumstances". He suggested that Dost Mohammad be given to understand, "indirectly", that the Indian Government was "willing to forget the past and enter into friendly relations, should he desire it". In his reply of 11th April 1854 Dalhousie took broader ground. "It is wise for us to have regard to public opinion beyond the Five Rivers". In view of that opinion it was also wise to make "some exertion"; and he did not necessarily accept Lawrence's view that nothing should be done before a direct overture had been received from Dost Mohammad. Lawrence was not convinced. He saw that parliamentary opinion ought to

be conciliated but he grumbled that such conciliation ought not to entail any real sacrifice. He was still, on 4th May, against subsidizing Dost Mohammad and he did not believe that any subsidies could enable the Dost to defend Afghanistan against a determined Russian attack.¹

In March 1854 one Nazir Khairullah, a father-in-law of Dost Mohammad, presented himself to Edwardes and a channel of communication with Dost Mohammad was opened. It was a channel that was nearly choked on several occasions during the next few months as various Afghan negotiators asked more from Edwardes - an offensive and defensive alliance, for example - than he was empowered to offer. Another difficult matter was the desire of Dost Mohammad that the Indian government should give a guarantee never to have a representative at Kabul. To this, Dalhousie declined to agree: he was, however, prepared to repudiate all wish to have such a representative unless the representatives of other Powers should be admitted. The letter of 25th January 1855 in which instructions on this point were conveyed to Edwardes assumed that he would be empowered to negotiate the treaty

1. The discussions between Dalhousie, Lawrence and Edwardes can be followed fairly well in Lee-Warner, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.82-88; Memorials of the Life and Letters of Sir Herbert B. Edwardes, Vol.I, pp.235-240 (2 vols., 1886) and R. Bosworth Smith: Life of Lord Lawrence, Vol.I, pp.449-454. Unfortunately, Lady Edwardes was very sparing with dates in the Memorials.

and was accompanied by the draft terms. But when it appeared that Dost Mohammad had chosen his heir-apparent, Ghulam Hyder Khan, as his agent and had requested that he should deal with the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, Edwardes, who had worked so hard for a treaty, was obliged to yield place to Lawrence.¹

The negotiations began at Peshawar on 23rd March 1855. Lawrence had the advantage as a negotiator that he had no belief in the usefulness of a treaty and was all the more easily able to refuse Ghulam Hyder's suggestions for the restoration of Peshawar to Afghanistan or a guarantee of the Afghan title to Herat.² The treaty concluded on 30th March 1855 and ratified on 1st May was a short and colourless document. In Article I Dost Mohammad was described at his own wish as the Walee rather than as the Ameer of Kabul. By Article 2 the Company engaged "to respect those Territories of Affghanistan now in His Highness's possession, and never to interfere therein". Article 3 bound Dost Mohammad to a corresponding obligation in respect of the Company's territories and "to be the friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies" of the Company; no obligation parallel to the latter being undertaken by the Company.³ On the

1. Lee-Warner, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.89-101.

2. Bosworth Smith, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.455-462.

3. Aitchison, Treaties, Vol.II, pp.428-431.

surface, at least, the outcome was satisfactory. A treaty had been concluded but not one which implied any detailed obligations. The fact of the treaty was in accord with the initiative of Dalhousie and Edwardes: its contents were so negative as to satisfy John Lawrence. "The treaty has been signed", he wrote to Nicholson, "and there is no harm in it".¹

Nevertheless, the treaty was important. There is all the difference between doing something on however small a scale and not doing it at all. A writer in the Cambridge History of India² has drawn attention to the increasing degree of control which improved communications allowed the British government in the second half of the nineteenth century to exert over Indian foreign policy and has added, "Unfortunately external policy was the one aspect of Indian political affairs which was capable of exciting interest in Great Britain". The Crimean War and the threat (however distant in Dalhousie's opinion) of Russian development in Central Asia had been the ultimate motives behind the treaty of 1855. Without substituting anything in its place it undermined, or the factors behind it undermined, the Anglo-Russian understanding of 1844 when it had been agreed that the khanates of Central Asia should "be left as a neutral

1. Bosworth Smith, op.cit., Vol.I, p.462.

2. H.H.Dodwell: Vol.VI, pp.403-404 (1932).

zone between the two empires in order to preserve them from a dangerous contact". Those empires were still far from being near a dangerous contact but the resumption of the Russian advance eastward in the years after the Crimean War was bound to make such a contact more probable. So long as there was no binding Anglo-Russian understanding covering Central Asia matters were bound to be left very much to the accidents of geography and of individual policy. Time would show that the Russians had one great advantage: the khanates of Central Asia could not only be conquered but could, as a political and military fact, be held. Afghanistan might be conquered by the British - not even John Lawrence or Henry Durand doubted that - but it would be difficult to hold, as a merely military operation, while a permanent occupation (involving as it must a very heavy drain on Indian resources) would be politically almost impracticable.

In the meantime the course of events at Herat, which had provided the opportunity for the treaty of 1855, continued to draw the Indian government into closer relations with Dost Mohammad. Herat, as we have seen, passed into Persian hands in October 1856 and "at the close" of that year¹ (as Lady Edwardes rather vaguely put it) Edwardes recommended that more active aid should be given to Dost Mohammad. This

1. Memorials, Vol.I, p.260.

recommendation was probably in answer to a request from the Dost made in the autumn of 1856 upon his return to Kabul from the capture of Kandahar with his victorious but starving army. At all events, Edwardes was in favour of further negotiations; Lawrence against them. "It appears to me", wrote Lawrence, "that we shall get nothing out of the Ameer except by paying through the nose for it ... Even if we give him twenty or thirty lacs of rupees, we can feel no assurance whatever, we have no pledge that he will take an active part in the Herat affair ..."¹ These preliminary discussions appear to have taken place just before the completion of the Persian occupation of Herat but at a time when that event was obviously imminent. When it happened, Edwardes went so far as to suggest the immediate despatch of British troops to Kabul and Kandahar. This gave Lawrence the opportunity to state his views at some length both to Edwardes and to the new Governor-General, Lord Canning.²

Writing to Edwardes on 25th November 1856 he deprecated in strong terms the idea of sending a force into Afghanistan. He believed that Russia was at the bottom of the attack on Herat but the battle of India, he said, was "to be fought on this side of the Soliman range and not on that". To Canning

1. Bosworth Smith, op.cit., Vol.I, p.513.

2. Ibid., Vol.I, pp.514-517.

he wrote on the following day at greater length. "It would be a fatal error", he said, "for us to interfere actively in Central Asia" ... He admitted that

"the interests of the Afghans are, at present, identical with ours but it does not follow that such will always be the case ... If we send an army into Afghanistan, it must go prepared for all contingencies, to meet all comers, to depend solely on its own means and its own resources, and, at Herat, it would be many hundred miles from our frontier and from any effective support ... If we send a force to Candahar, it will eventually necessitate the re-occupation of the country. Afghanistan will then become the battle-field for India, and the cost of maintaining our position will render India bankrupt; and should we meet with reverses we shall have to retrace our steps, with an exhausted treasury and a dispirited army. Whereas, on the other hand, if we leave Afghanistan alone, we should meet an invader, worn by toil and travail, with a weak Artillery and distant from his resources, as he debouched from the passes. Under such circumstances defeat would be certain, and defeat would be annihilation".

The question which Lawrence left unanswered was whether there was not some middle course between sending an army into Central Asia and waiting for a foreign army to enter India; in other words, whether diplomacy could not play some part. In point of fact, a middle course was being sought and through the agency (though not at the wish) of Lawrence himself, who had been instructed to meet Dost Mohammad. The meeting took place on 1st January 1857 and negotiations began at Peshawar on 5th January. Lawrence, who had previously opposed the payment of any subsidy to any Afghan, was now obliged to

consent to this course but by deflecting Dost Mohammad from his scheme for a large and therefore expensive attack on Herat and by insisting that the Afghans adopt a defensive policy towards Persia he was able to keep the amount of the subsidy within reasonable limits. The subsidy was fixed at one lakh of rupees a month, beginning on 1st January 1857 and continuing, unless the Governor-General otherwise determined, until peace should be made between Britain and Persia. Dost Mohammad, on his part, was bound to maintain a specified number of troops and to admit British officers to Kabul, Kandahar or Balkh to see that the subsidy was applied to its proper purposes. They were to be withdrawn when the subsidy ceased but thereafter "a Vakeel, not a European officer", could be sent by the Governor-General to represent him at Cabul. The question of British representation, both temporary and permanent, had been the only real source of difficulty at the Peshawar Conference. The Afghans represented that the presence of any British officers would outrage Afghan national feeling, especially if they were sent to Kabul. Lawrence insisted that the formal right to send British officers to Kabul, Kandahar or Balkh should be embodied in the treaty but he gave assurances that they should, in fact, be sent only to Kandahar; and he was in agreement with the Afghans that British representation at

Kabul should be entrusted to a native Wakil and not to a European. He also promised that Afghanistan would not be "left in the lurch" when an Anglo-Persian treaty of peace was concluded.¹

The British mission to Kandahar, composed of the Lumsden brothers, Harry and Peter, and Dr. Bellew was not despatched until 13th March 1857. In a letter of instructions to H.B. Lumsden, dated 19th January 1857, the Governor-General had told him,

"You cannot impress too strongly upon every man you meet that the British Government does not desire to send into Afghanistan a single man, armed or unarmed, except with the full consent of the Afghans themselves; that you are there for a temporary purpose only, that of assuring your Government that the aid which it has bound itself to give is turned to good account, and that if the war were to cease to-morrow your mission would be at an end".²

The task of these officers was dangerous, for even at Kandahar, where fanatical hatred of the English was less than it was at Kabul, they were by no means safe. They appear to have had little or no opportunity of seeing how the subsidy was spent and, indeed, if the terms of the treaty had been strictly enforced on the part of the Indian government payment would have ceased when the Anglo-Persian treaty

1. Ibid., Vol.I, pp.517-523. The text of the treaty is given by Aitchison, Treaties, Vol.II, pp.431-433.

2. Lumsden and Elsmie, op.cit., pp.141-143.

of peace was concluded in March 1857. In fact, payment was continued until 30th September 1858, a sum of £260,000 being disbursed in all.¹ The outbreak of the Mutiny in the spring of 1857, however, was the best of reasons for the continuance of the payment. Even if it was a bribe rather than a subsidy, by that time it was a bribe very well worth paying since it assisted Dost Mohammad to maintain his resolve (much as he was pressed to abandon it) not to support the rebels in India or to invade the Punjab.

Edwardes's own views were set out in a memorandum which he wrote on Lumsden's Report on the Candahar Mission. "I have myself", he said, "arrived very decidedly at the conclusion that our true military position is on our side of the passes just where an enemy must debouch into the plain".² He believed that this would remain true even if Russia absorbed all the territory between her present border and India, including Afghanistan. This view might well have been presented by Lawrence. It is, in fact, very difficult to

1. H.C.Rawlinson, op.cit., p.92. Later, Lord Lytton was to argue that Article 7 of the 1857 treaty, which provided for the withdrawal of the British officers when the subsidy ceased and the appointment of a wakil at Kabul was, with the other provisions, transitory; and had lapsed with the lapse of time, so that the Indian government was not restricted to a non-European representative. Afghanistan, No.1 Parl.Papers 1878-79, Vol.56, p.216. But the phrase "at the pleasure of the British government" implied a continuing obligation, and, to that extent, a restriction.
2. Memorials, Vol.I, pp.279,281.

attribute any fixed and final views to Edwardes on this matter. In 1856, as we have seen, he suggested that British forces should be sent to Kabul and Kandahar. On 18th March 1858 he wrote to H.B.Lumsden,

"I coincide in all your views as to the impropriety of retaining your mission so long after the specified time in Afghanistan, also in "the less we have to do with them the better" - i.e. that we are more likely to remain friends without any permanent political missions than with them."¹

But this very letter suggested that there was an advantage in remaining friends with the Afghans, and presumably this end called for means of some sort. Lumsden's opinion (with which, according to Lady Edwardes, her husband was in agreement) was to the effect that

"Afghanistan alone seemed still to be independent of Russia and to keep it so should be our aim. Friendly and intimate intercourse should be maintained with the de facto Government of Cabul. The internal administration should not be interfered with, the Afghans being left to manage their home affairs in their own way without interference by Persia or by any other power".²

Obviously, again, some positive measures would be necessary to keep Afghanistan independent of Russia and to maintain "friendly and intimate intercourse" with the Kabul government. Such a policy, however, temperately pursued, was not the same thing as waiting for a Russian force to appear, ready for

1. Lumsden and Elsmie, op.cit., p.240.

2. Ibid., p.244.

massacre, on the Indian frontier. The great difficulty, of course, was in deciding how far a policy which was at all positive ought to go. By 1866, as we shall see, Edwardes was able to be somewhat more specific.

The six years between 1857 and 1863 do not demand much examination, so far as Afghanistan was concerned. Dost Mohammad may well have felt that he had gained little in respect of Herat by the treaty of 1857 but he remained loyal to his engagements. Those engagements did not, however, prevent him attacking Herat himself; although the Indian government did not want him to do so and when he did so, in 1862, withdrew its wakil from Kabul. Dost Mohammad nevertheless persisted in his design and captured Herat, nine days before his own death in May 1863.¹ At the end of November of the same year John Lawrence was told that he was to succeed Lord Elgin as Viceroy. With his landing at Calcutta on 12th January 1864 this chapter may properly close.

1. H.C.Rawlinson, op.cit., pp.99-105 drew attention to the almost completely negative policy of Britain towards Persia in these years, evidenced by the British refusal to put any pressure on Dost Mohammad (save by the withdrawal of the wakil at Kabul) or to offer mediation under Article 6 of the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1857 in the matter of the conflicting claims of Persia and Afghanistan to Seistan.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF LORD LAWRENCE

However hard one may try to dismiss a phrase which has once lodged in one's mind it is not easy to do so completely, and the description of Lawrence's policy as "masterly inactivity"¹ is bound to recur. But the temptation to ask whether Lawrence was, or could be, inactive; whether his inactivity, if he achieved it, was masterly; whether inactivity could ever be masterly, and so on, is one to be resisted. It is the plan of this chapter to set out certain specific developments in Afghanistan and Central Asia and then to describe Lawrence's policy with respect to them and

1. The phrase was popularized, if not actually invented, by J.W.S. Wyllie (1835-70) who finished his short career in India as Under-Secretary of the Foreign Department. He wrote three important articles: "The Foreign Policy of Lord Lawrence" (Edinburgh Review, January 1867); "Masterly Inactivity" (Fortnightly Review, 1st December 1869); and "Mischievous Activity" (Fortnightly Review, 1st March 1870); the last one a rather hasty criticism of Lord Mayo's policy. These articles, with others, were collected after the author's death and published under the title Essays on the External Policy of India (1875). The references given are to this book. It is perhaps significant of the way in which views on Central Asian policy were already beginning to run on party lines that Wyllie stood for Parliament as a Liberal and his essays were published in Liberal or Liberal-Radical periodicals while Rawlinson's article on "The Russians in Central Asia" was published in the Conservative Quarterly Review in October 1865, although he was still regarded as a moderate Liberal in politics.

the problems they raised. In some instances, for convenience, the developments will be traced to a date beyond 1869 and will form the background for the consideration of the policy of Lawrence's successors.

Upon Dost Mohammad's death his heir designate, Sheer Ali, had succeeded him but in April 1864 Sheer Ali's elder half-brothers, Mohammad Afzal and Mohammad Azim, rose in rebellion. They were defeated but in the spring of the following year there was another rebellion led by Sheer Ali's own brothers, Mohammad Amin and Mohammad Shareef. They too were defeated, at Kujbaz, in June 1865, when both Mohammad Amin and Sheer Ali's heir, Mohammad Ali, were killed. Mohammad Shareef thereupon sued for peace and was pardoned: Mohammad Azim fled to British territory. Almost at once a third rebellion followed, that of Abdur Rahman, the son of Mohammad Afzal, who had fled across the Oxus in 1864 and now returned, with assistance from Bokhara. Abdur Rahman, joined by Mohammad Azim, captured Kabul in February 1866 and defeated Sheer Ali at Sheikhabad in May 1866. Following upon this Mohammad Afzal was released from captivity and proclaimed Ameer. In January 1867 Sheer Ali made an attempt to restore his fortunes but being defeated at Kalat-i-Ghilzai retired to Herat. Another attempt, based on Afghan Turkistan, was thwarted by Abdur Rahman in September 1867.

In October 1867 Mohammad Afzal died and was succeeded by Mohammad Azim. Abdur Rahman, who had witnessed this without enthusiasm, set off on an expedition to pursue Sheer Ali to Herat but failed to effect his purpose. Sheer Ali collected another force, aided by the unpopularity of Mohammad Azim, and his son, Yakub Khan, re-captured Kandahar. The tide turned so quickly that Mohammad Azim, receiving no help from Abdur Rahman, fled from Kabul in August 1868. In the face of this some measure of co-operation between Mohammad Azim and Abdur Rahman was renewed but it was quite ineffective and their forces were completely defeated by Sheer Ali at Zurmat, near Ghazni, in January 1869. Upon this Abdur-Rahman, accompanied by Mohammad Azim (who died, however, in the course of their wanderings) set off on a long and hazardous journey which brought him to Persia, Khiva, Bokhara and ultimately to Samarkand, by this time a Russian possession. He met the Russian commander, General Kaufmann, and although he did not receive the support he wanted he was given hospitality and resided at Samarkand from 1870 to 1880.¹

In March 1869 Sheer Ali, then relatively secure upon the throne of Afghanistan, met Lord Mayo, the Viceroy of India, at Ambala. In 1870 Yakub Khan, whom his father refused to recognize as heir-apparent, rose in rebellion and in May 1871,

1. Sykes, Afghanistan, Vol.II, chapter xxxiv.

with the help or connivance of the Persians, captured Herat. His position there, however, was even more precarious than that of his father at Kabul and in September 1871 a reconciliation was effected between father and son, Yakub Khan being appointed Governor of Herat.

The second factor which had to be taken into account in the formation of British policy was the advance of Russia into Central Asia. We have seen that before the Crimean War the Russians had established themselves on the shores of the Aral Sea, had built a fort at Aralsk (subsequently re-named Fort No.1) and had, in 1853, captured Ak-Masjid, higher up the Jaxartes, which was re-named Fort Petrofski in honour of its captor. Further penetration up the Jaxartes led to the establishment of a fort at Julek in 1861.

In the meantime a parallel development was taking place to the south-east, where Fort Vernoe was built in 1854 some fifty (English) miles to the north of Lake Issik-Kul. The years 1854 to 1862 were devoted to capturing or establishing a line of outposts westwards, or backwards, at first along the line of the River Chu and then along and behind the Talas. In the course of these operations the Khokand posts of Susak and Chulak fell into Russian hands but the extension of Russian power did not stop there. Turning southward, the Russians captured Hazret-i-Turkestan early in

1864 and then, moving south-eastwards, Chemkend in October of that year.

The extent of the Russian conquests was apparently sufficient, in the eyes of Prince Gortchakoff, to induce him to send, on 21st November 1864, a circular despatch to all Russian embassies and legations. Its object was to explain and justify the conquests and to reassure hostile critics of them.

"La position de la Russie dans l'Asie centrale est celle de tous les Etats civilisés qui se trouvent en contact avec des peuplades à demi-sauvages, errantes, sans organisation sociale fixée. Il arrive toujours, en pareil cas, que l'intérêt de la sécurité des frontières et celui des relations de commerce exigent que l'Etat plus civilisé exerce un certain ascendant sur des voisins que leurs mœurs nomades et turbulentes rendent fort incommodes ... L'Etat se trouve donc dans l'alternative ou d'abandonner ce travail incessant et de livrer ses frontières à des désordres perpétuels qui y rendent toute prospérité, toute sécurité, toute civilisation impossibles, ou bien d'avancer de plus en plus dans les profondeurs de contrées sauvages où, à chaque pas qu'il accomplit, les distances accroissent les difficultés et les charges auxquelles il s'expose.."

Gortchakoff then likened the action of Russia to that undertaken by the French in Algeria and by the British in India; and went on to justify the fortification of the line from the Aral Sea to Lake Issik-Kul. Finally he sought to make it clear that Russia had reached the limit of her territorial extensions - "nous accomplissons la première partie de cette tâche en portant notre frontière à la limite où se recontrent

ces conditions indispensables" - and appealed for the sympathy of other nations - "le cabinet imperial ... a droit de compter sur une appreciation equitable et loyale de la marche qu'il poursuit et des principes qui le guident".

It very soon became apparent, however, either that Gortchakoff had sought to practise deception with regard to Russian intentions or that the government at St. Petersburg was wholly unable to control its commanders on the frontier. In June 1865 Tashkent was captured; in 1868 Bokhara was brought under Russian control. In 1869 the Russians established a fortified position at Krasnovodsk on the eastern coast of the Caspian and, after making the necessary surveys and reconnaissances, captured Khiva in 1873. By the treaty which the Khan was obliged to conclude on 12th August of that year Khiva, as Bokhara had done, placed its external relations in the hands of Russia, and, moreover, ceded to Russia the right bank of the Oxus from Kuketili north to the Aral Sea.

In view of the rapidity of the Russian advance the suggestion (made, for instance, by Rawlinson) that the Oxus should form the frontier between the British and the Russian spheres of influence in Central Asia would now represent a concession on Russia's part. It was a concession which she was not in the least disposed to make and one which Gladstone's government made only the feeblest efforts in the

years 1869-73 to extort from her. The Russians agreed, in principle, that a neutral zone should exist between their sphere and that of Britain; but they claimed that Afghanistan represented such a neutral zone and that they had the right to extend their area of control up to the Afghan borders. Their ultimate object does not directly concern us here. It might be an attack on India, but it is more likely that it was the power to put pressure on Britain by being in a position to threaten an attack on India. This, at least, is the clear implication of the instructions issued to the Baron de Staal when he was appointed Russian ambassador in London in 1884.

"Great historical lessons have taught us that we cannot count on the friendship of England, and that she can strike at us by means of continental alliances while we cannot reach her anywhere. No great nation can accept such a position. In order to escape from it the emperor Alexander II of everlasting memory ordered our expansion in Central Asia, leading us to occupy to-day in Turkestan and the Turkestan steppes a military position strong enough to keep England in check by the threat of intervention in India".¹

But whatever view is taken of the motives for the Russian

1. Cambridge History of India, Vol.VI, p.408. The Russian advance into Central Asia is treated, critically, by Rawlinson, op.cit., chapters iii, v and vi, and by A. Vambéry in Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Frontier Question (1875). An account of the capture of Khiva; generally sympathetic to Russia, was given by an American journalist, J.A.MacGahan, in Campaigning on the Oxus and the Fall of Khiva (1876). y also D.C.Boulger: Central Asian Questions (1885), and General Romanovski, op.cit.

advance into Central Asia it was arguable that British interest in Afghanistan was bound to increase, or ought to increase, with every mile that Russia moved eastward.

Wyllie's first article, on "The Foreign Policy of Lord Lawrence", published in 1867, was written in 1866 "at the express request" of Lawrence¹ himself. Bosworth Smith, writing later, also had ample opportunities of discovering Lawrence's personal views; and the works of these two writers may be taken as being generally in accord with Lawrence's own opinions. They are, however, general descriptions rather than detailed expositions, and they make relatively little use of direct quotation.

Wyllie's summing-up in his first article was as follows:

"We do not shrink from the conclusion to which these arguments all point. We believe that with respect to Central Asia the Indian Government can do no wiser thing than fold its hands and sit still. By all means let it obtain information, detailed and accurate, regarding the course of events beyond the mountains; but let no decisive action of any kind be taken until England can see more clearly what there is she should do. The materials are not wanting for the formation of an effective intelligent department. There is a news-writer at Kabul, whose diaries, on the whole, give a faithful picture of all that passes in Afghanistan; and, as regards tidings from the other States of Central Asia, there are Panjabi merchants and travellers, whose somewhat hyberbolical accounts can from time to time be checked by the despatch of specially selected scouts.

1. Wyllie, op.cit., xx.

Presuming that Lord Lawrence must have already pressed these sources of information into his service, we think there is nothing more at present to be done. We should be quiet now, in order that we may act with greater vigour when the time for action comes. Every day of peace and economy that India enjoys strengthens our moral and material hold on the country".¹

A few pages earlier Wyllie had described three schools of opinion. There was, in the first place, that which was actuated by "the vague alarm which a quarter of a century ago hurried us into the blunder, guilt and miserable discomfiture of the Afghan War" and now pressed for an "immediate reoccupation of all Afghanistan". In the second place, there were "politicians of another and far higher stamp" who, without seeing any proximate danger from Russia, feared the effect upon Indian opinion of a first-class Power established on the Indian frontier and dreaded that India, "won and held ... by an alien sword" should be a battle-

1. Ibid., pp.68-69. It is only fair to observe that whether "inactive" is used as a term of praise or blame the policy of Lawrence's immediate predecessors had not been active. In the Minutes of Lord Canning and his Council of 5th February 1857 (published by Order of the House of Commons, 25th February 1879) it was said: "I trust the maxim that Herat shall remain in its own state of independence will not again be proclaimed as an object to be contended for, or even to be desired by the British Government. I believe the independence to be visionary and unattainable ...". And on Afghanistan: "I will go to the length of saying that under no circumstances can it, in my opinion, consist with sound policy that a British army should cross the frontier of Afghanistan".

ground. The members of this school, among whom Wyllie listed Jacob, Rawlinson and Sir Justin Sheil,¹ were convinced that "sooner or later we ought to occupy certain positions beyond our present frontier as outworks of the empire" - Quetta, possibly Kandahar and Herat.

"The majority of the British public", Wyllie continued, "appear to favour a third view of the question. Under the inspiration of a generous optimism, rather than from any discriminate appreciation of the dangers to which the Indian empire is exposed, they scout Russo-phobia as an exploded fallacy. In the interests of humanity they rejoice that a dayspring of Christian civilization is spreading through the horrible blackness of barbarism in which Central Asia has hitherto been wrapped and they positively grudge the interval that must yet elapse before India can have a neighbour whose dealings with her will be conducted on the clear principles of European good faith, and whose settled government will offer new openings for trade. Their vision of the future is the Cossack and the Sepoy lying down like lambs together on the banks of the Indus".²

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1. 1803-71; secretary to the British legation in Tehran, 1836-44; minister to Persia, 1844-54.
 2. Wyllie, op.cit., pp.60-64. Evidence of the "generous optimism" to which Wyllie refers can be found in a pamphlet entitled Russia, Central Asia and British India: by a British Subject, published in London in 1865. The writer gave special emphasis to "the dawn arising in Russia", illustrated by the liberal and reforming regime of Alexander II. He was anxious (p.40 n.) to "let bygones be bygones" with respect to Poland and argued (p.41) that "Englishmen ought to study Russian progress in Asia; not, as now, in the mere military aspect, but in its effect in opening out roads for trade in the desert, bringing European light and civilization, suppressing slavery and Mussulman intolerance". Wyllie was probably correct in saying that such views were held by "a majority of the
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It will now be appropriate to consider what Lawrence did and did not do in respect of Central Asia and Afghanistan during his vice-royalty. He did not, naturally, find a clean slate awaiting him. One important development had taken place before his arrival in India in January 1864. Upon his father's death Sheer Ali announced his own accession to Lord Elgin; doubtless with the hope that his position would be strengthened by a cordial acknowledgment of it on the part of the Indian government. No reply was sent until 23rd December 1863 when the acting Governor-General, Sir William Denison (Lord Elgin having died in November) wrote to Sheer Ali.

"I sincerely trust that under your rule Afghanistan may possess a strong and united Government

2. (Continued from previous page).

English public". cf. Quarterly Review, April 1865: "It is assuredly a great boon to humanity that some of the most fertile countries in the world should be restored to life and touched by the breath of material progress. It is a matter of thankfulness that bad and cruel tyrannies, held disgraceful among the Asiatic nations themselves, should crumble to dust at the first blow from the northern giant". Even in India similar opinions existed. cf. Allen's India Mail, 6th April 1865 (quoted by "A British Subject") "Instead, therefore, of expressing either fear or regret at Russian progress in the East, it would be both more liberal and rational to rejoice that light is dawning in dark places, and to render every assistance in our power to develop a result as creditable as it will be beneficial to all concerned in bringing it to pass".

and that the good understanding and friendship which prevailed during the lifetime of the late Ameer, your predecessor, may continue to gain strength and stability under your own administration".¹

The delay in recognizing Sheer Ali was at the time and afterwards an object of strong criticism. Both the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab and the Commissioner of Peshawar had been pressing for earlier recognition. The latter, writing on 14th November 1863, had said,

"What appears to me the evil of our not acknowledging the de facto ruler of the country is that the other Sirdars, to whom the fact of our keeping the matter in suspense is well known, will be inclined to think that we have other intentions, that we have in fact selected some successor other than the present one whom we mean to favour; and such a belief can only foster distrust and dissension while it will greatly weaken the present Ameer's hands".²

Wyllie defended or excused the delay on three grounds and although Lawrence had incurred no responsibility for it he must be taken, in view of Wyllie's close relations with him, to have assumed some responsibility for the defence. The delay, according to Wyllie, arose partly from accident, "the length of time that necessarily elapsed before authentic information of the death and the dying wishes of Dost Mohammad could travel from the distant camp at Herat to the viceregal lodge at Simla" and "from the check which Lord

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1. Afghanistan, No.I Parl.Papers 1878-79, Vol.56, pp.77-8.
 2. Ibid., p.381.

Elgin's mortal illness was then inflicting on every wheel of the state machiner". In the second place, the Indian government was under no obligation to recognise Sheer Ali or anyone else as Dost Mohammad's successor. In the third, delay in recognition of Sheer Ali's succession "had no more effect in rousing or quelling the force of Azim Khan's revolutionary ambitions than it could have upon the motion of the planets in heaven".¹

This defence is not entirely convincing. That the machinery of state should be halted, over an important matter, by the illness and death of the Viceroy does not argue a very efficient machinery; while the delay in receiving authentic news from Afghanistan does not suggest such an efficient intelligence service as Wyllie had spoken of. If the sources of news from Afghanistan were so slow or so poor that the Indian government had to wait for six months to obtain information it could trust, its intelligence service was bad. It is doubtful, on the other hand, if Elgin's illness and death were more than an excuse for delay. He himself had written to Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, on 28th July 1863 to say that he was awaiting further information before acknowledging Sheer Ali as Dost Mohammad's successor. If good information had been

1. Ibid., p.377.

available or if there had been the will to use such information as there was, recognition could have been given in July. Elgin's further argument that the continued presence of the vakil at Kabul would show that the Indian government was disposed to recognize Sheer Ali does not bear examination. The vakil was not a diplomatic agent: his presence in Kabul did not constitute proof of the recognition of any Afghan ruler. As for the second of Wyllie's arguments, it is certainly true that the Indian government was under no legal obligation to recognize Sheer Ali; but this was a matter of policy and not of international law. In the third place, there is some evidence that the delay in recognition did encourage Sheer Ali's half-brothers to foment rebellion against him, despite the allegiance which they had pledged on the Koran; since it was during the period of non-recognition that Mohammad Azim made overtures to the Indian government. Finally, it has to be remembered that Dost Mohammad had, during the last and most successful part of his reign, been in treaty relations with the Indian government. This suggests the propriety of an early recognition of a successor who had been recognized as such, for the moment, by other possible claimants and the Afghans at large.

It was not long before Lawrence had the opportunity of making amends for Elgin's or Denison's delay. In February

1864 Sheer Ali asked for the recognition of his son Mohammad Ali as his heir and a gift of 6,000 muskets. Recognition was granted; the muskets were not. In April 1864, as we have seen, Sheer Ali was faced by the first of those rebellions against which he fought, at first successfully and then unsuccessfully until this phase of the civil wars ended with his defeat at Sheikhabad in May 1866¹ and the installation of Mohammad Afzal as Ameer. Following upon that, Mohammad Afzal sought the friendship of the Indian government. Lawrence's reply, of 11th July 1866, included the following passages:

"But while I am desirous that the alliance between the two Governments should be firm and lasting, it is incumbent on me to tell your Highness that it would be inconsistent with the fame and reputation of the British Government to break off its alliance with Amir Sher Ali Khan, who has given to it no offence, so long as he retains his authority and power over a large portion of Afghanistan. That Amir still rules in Kandahar and in Herat. My friend, the relations of this Government are with the actual rulers of Afghanistan. If your Highness is able to consolidate your Highness's power in Kabul, and is sincerely desirous of being a friend and ally of the British Government, I shall be ready to accept your Highness as such; but I cannot break the existing engagements with Amir Sher Ali Khan, and I must

1. In June and July 1864 Sheer Ali made three more requests for arms. His first letter was delayed; the second and third were regarded as forgeries and no answer was sent to his application. Wyllie, op.cit., p.77. Once more, British intelligence about Afghanistan seems to have been bad.

continue to treat him as the ruler of that portion of Afghanistan over which he retains control ..."¹

Lawrence's letter is said by Wyllie to have produced consternation at Kabul, where the recognition of Mohammad Afzdl as the ruler of Afghanistan had apparently been counted on. If this is true, if the recognition of the Viceroy of India could carry so much weight, it suggests that the long delay in recognizing Sheer Ali in 1864 must have been of far greater importance than Wyllie allows. On 10th September 1866 Sheer Ali adressed yet another appeal to Lawrence, for money and 6,000 muskets. This appeal was left unanswered; on the grounds, according to Wyllie, that Lawrence "abided as firmly as ever by his determination to abstain from aiding either Sheer Ali against Azim Khan or Azim Khan against Sheer Ali, so long as each of them respectively maintained a similar quiescence towards British India".

The year 1867 was the nadir of Sheer Ali's fortunes in this period and it opened with his heavy defeat at Kalat-i-Ghilzai in January. On 3rd February British recognition was again sought for Mohammad Afzul and this time, with the support of Macleod, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, it was accorded in part; though in terms which were unflattering to its recipient.

1. Wyllie, op.cit., p.48.

"My friend!" - Lawrence's reply of 25th February ran - "The British Government has hitherto maintained a strict neutrality between the contending parties in Afghanistan. Rumours, I am told, have reached the Kabul Darbar of assistance having been granted by me to Sher Ali Khan. I take this opportunity to request your Highness not to believe such idle tales. Neither men, nor arms, nor money, nor assistance of any kind have ever been supplied by my Government to Amir Sher Ali Khan. Your Highness and he, both equally unaided by me, have fought out the battle, each upon your own resources. I purpose to continue the same policy for the future. If, unhappily, the struggle for supremacy in Afghanistan has not yet been brought to a close, and hostilities are again renewed, I shall side with neither party. My friend! as I told your Highness in my former letter, the relations of the British Government are with the actual ruler of Afghanistan. Therefore, so long as Amir Sher Ali Khan holds Herat, and maintains friendship with the British Government, I shall recognize him as ruler of Herat and shall reciprocate his amity. But, upon the same principle, I am prepared to recognize your Highness as Amir of Kabul and Kandahar, and I frankly offer your Highness in that capacity the peace and the goodwill of the British Government".¹

A little later a messenger from Sheer Ali brought to the Commissioner of Sind yet another request for assistance, coupled with the threat that, if assistance was refused Sheer Ali would be bound to look for it to Persia or Russia. The only answer was to return by the messenger a copy of the letter to Mohammad Afzul.

The September of 1867 saw yet another defeat of Sheer Ali; in the following month Mohammad Afzul died and was

1. Ibid., p. 99.

succeeded by his brother Mohammad Azim. On 13th November Lawrence formally recognized Mohammad Azim as Ameer of Kabul and Kandahar. He did so before being asked, according to Wyllie, because he desired to have a representative of standing and not a mere vakil at Kabul and could not send such a man (Atta Mohammad Khan was his selection) until the government to which he would be accredited was recognized. Before another twelve months had passed, in August 1868, Mohammad Azim was a fugitive from Kabul and in January 1869 Sheer Ali won the decisive victory of Zurmat. Upon this, Lawrence not merely recognized Sheer Ali but sent him £60,000 and told him that if this money did not suffice a further supply, including a certain amount of help towards the maintenance of a standing army would be forthcoming.

"I therefore wrote to the Amir" - said Lawrence - "and told him what were my views - that I was willing to help him still further in a moderate way; that I could not bind myself by any treaty, which would involve obligations on the part of Her Majesty's Government to assist him; but that I was willing, from time to time, as circumstances might suggest, and as his own conduct might show that he deserved it, to give him some further assistance hereafter, as I had already done ... I suggested that my successor should act on the same policy; that he should make no treaty or engagement by which we should be bound in any way, either directly or indirectly, to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan; but until the Amir should recover his authority, and consolidate his authority, that we might from time to time assist him".¹

1. Wyllie, op.cit., pp.134-136.

Wyllie, more fanatically devoted to the Lawrence policy in its purity than Lawrence himself, complained, in his article of 1st March 1870, that Lawrence had violated his own engagement not to help one of two contending parties in Afghanistan; and did not, moreover, recognize how far he had departed from his earlier principles. Logically, Wyllie was right. Lawrence, though he had continued recognition of Sheer Ali as long as possible, had refused to give him aid in 1864-66; he now gave him such aid, and promised him more when his position could not yet be assumed to be stronger than it had been at least in 1864-65. It might thus appear that there was not one "Lawrence" policy, but two; one of 1864-68 and one of 1869. Before we consider the validity of this view it is necessary to note two instances of what even Wyllie was bound to regard as the true Lawrence policy in its purity.

In 1866 a variant of Jacob's plan for the occupation of Quetta was put forward by one of his pupils and disciples, Sir Henry Green, his successor in Sind. Green's suggestion, which was supported by Sir Bartle Frere, at that time Governor of Bombay, was not for the direct and sudden establishment of a position at Quetta but for measures which should lead almost imperceptibly to such a position. In addition to the military reasons which Jacob had advanced for such a move

Green argued that British knowledge of what was happening beyond the mountain barrier would be slow and inadequate until a British position was established beyond the mountains.

Green's memorandum of 16th August 1866 met with a discouraging reception. Lawrence said that he had fully considered Jacob's previous proposal and had concurred in the decision reached on it. He denied that the advance proposed by Green would be productive of better or quicker information about Central Asia and he expressed his belief that

"if the course of events should ever bring us to a struggle with the Northern Power on our Indian frontier, the winning side would be the one which refrained from entangling itself in the barren mountains which now separate the two Empires, and that the Afghans themselves, foreseeing this result, were likely, in the end, to throw their weight on the same side".

The commander-in-chief, Sir William Mansfield, expressed his disapprobation of Green's proposal, on military grounds. At the worst, in the event of a war with Russia, he believed that the Bolan could best be defended from its eastern and not from its western end. The occupation of Quetta would demand double the force which Jacob had originally estimated and such a force would be some 257 miles beyond the nearest point on the Indus. It could not be reinforced or reprovisioned in the hot season and it would always be in

danger of having the Bolan Pass closed behind it. Finally, Mansfield believed that the occupation of Quetta would inevitably lead to an attempt to occupy the whole of Afghanistan.¹

The other instance of Lawrence's inactivity or his refusal to act. In January 1867 an emissary from the Ameer of Bokhara presented himself to Lawrence; seeking, on behalf of his master, who had been heavily defeated by the Russian forces in the preceding summer, an offensive and defensive alliance. That, at least, was his purpose but, according to Wyllie he scarcely made even a formal attempt to carry it out; having learnt on his journey that a similar request from the Ameer of Khokand had been refused three years earlier. He presumably expected, therefore, the reply which he received from Lawrence.

"I am, therefore, neither sufficiently well acquainted with the causes which have unfortunately produced a state of hostilities between Bokhara and Russia, nor with the present state of your Majesty's affairs to give your Majesty useful advice. And, therefore, though I am willing to be on friendly terms, and am desirous of the peace of your dominions, and am anxious to hear of the prosperity of your Majesty's rule, I am not able to render you effective aid, either by advice or in any other form".²

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1. Central Asia and Quetta: Parl. Papers, 1878-79, Vol. 77, pp. 2-6, 13-19.
 2. Wyllie, op. cit., pp. 92-96.

There is little doubt that Lawrence's policy, at least until almost the end of his viceroyalty, met with the general approval of the Government and the public in England. The quotations given by Bosworth Smith, though they are undated, sufficiently prove the point as far as the opinion of the Government and of the governing class generally are concerned.¹ As for the attitude of the public and the Press, there is the evidence of the Hungarian traveller and writer, Vambery. In a paper on "Fresh Advances of Russia in Central Asia", published in 1868, he wrote:

"Whilst, during the year 1867, the whole press, or at any rate the greater part of the press in England, and the official papers in India, indulged in somewhat violent expressions against my political views, and the Pall Mall Gazette honoured me even with the title of chief alarmist; now, after the lapse of a year, since my paper upon the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia has appeared in the columns of Unsere Zeit, a strange turn has taken place in political views -

1. e.g. Sir Charles Wood - "I am altogether against trying to set up a permanent influence, as it is called, at Cabul... Perfect neutrality and non-intervention are the rules I should act upon as much as you can"; Lord Cranborne (afterwards Lord Salisbury), Secretary of State for India, 1866-67, who approved "whole-heartedly" of Lawrence's Afghan policy; Sir Stafford Northcote (afterwards Lord Iddesleigh), Secretary of State for India, 1867-68 - "We are very reluctant to intermeddle in any way with these complicated civil wars, and hope you will adhere to your policy of entire neutrality". Bosworth Smith, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.582-583; Lady Gwendolen Cecil: Life of Lord Salisbury, Vol.I, p.206 (1922).

a turn which surprised me as much as it will do many of my readers. While the Times of January 1867 applauded the Indian Viceroy's policy of "masterly inactivity", and ridiculed the plan then entertained of occupying Herat, we read in the same paper of 10th July the opinion 'It would be difficult for anyone to prove that the Russians had no designs on British India'; it is as if I were hearing the echoes of the words expressed by myself in 1864 and at that time ridiculed by this very Times ... It was the beginning of April 1868 that the slumbering lion began to show signs of waking".¹

Some Englishmen, however, though they were then in a minority, had shown signs of alarm before 1868 and the most notable of these was Sir Henry Rawlinson. Since his first written contribution to the Central Asian question in 1849 he had established a solid reputation in the learned world, both as an Assyriologist and a geographer; he had been made a K.C.B. in 1856; from 1858 to 1859 and again from 1865 to 1868 he was a member of Parliament; he had served for a short time as a member of the Council of India and he was to be re-appointed to that body in 1868. The views which he expressed in an article on "The Russians in Central Asia", published in the Quarterly Review of October 1865 were thus the views of a man whose opinion was bound to carry weight.

He believed that the nearer approach of Russia to India

1. A.Vambéry: Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Frontier Question, pp.104-105. This book, published in 1875, consisted of papers published between 1867 and 1873.

was "not desirable in the interests of either one country or the other". In particular, from the British point of view, it was already creating uneasiness, and might create disaffection in the native mind. But how could further Russian advance be prevented? He did not consider that an agreement could be reached on the basis of immobility within present limits, because the native peoples of Central Asia represented too incalculable a factor. Nor did he believe in the practicability of an agreement with Russia setting prospective limits to further advance. Such an agreement could not go beyond Prince Gortchakoff's circular letter of 1864 and, in the second place, an agreement on the basis of uti possidetis would be manifestly unfair to Britain. For the moment, he thought, and so long as Bokhara and Khiva preserved their independence, it might be enough for Britain to do no more than try to oblige Russia to implement the promises in Gortchakoff's circular letter. But if these Uzbek states were to fall under Russian control, then it would become a matter for serious consideration "whether, leaving Cabul and Ghazni, the scene of our old disasters, to struggle on in isolated agony, it may not be incumbent on us to secure a strong flanking position by the reoccupation of the open country of Shaul, of Candahar and even of

Herat".¹

In June 1868 Rawlinson, still a member of Parliament (though he was very soon to resign his seat on appointment to the Council of India) prepared a speech on Central Asian affairs. As it happened, he had no opportunity for delivering the speech; and so he amplified his views in a memorandum, dated 20th July 1868, which he submitted to the Secretary of State for India. He argued, in the first place that it must be taken for granted (despite Gortchakoff's circular letter) that nothing could prevent the extinction of the three independent governments of Khokand, Bokhara and Khiva and the consequent extension of the Russian frontier to the Oxus. The resulting new distribution of power in Central Asia would be bound to affect British interests in India adversely, even while Britain and Russia were at peace. "Every chief throughout Northern India who either has, or fancies he has, a grievance, or who is even cramped or incommoded by our orderly Government, will at once commence intriguing in the hopes of relieving himself from our oppressive shadow". The deduction was that "Lord Auckland's

1. Op.cit., pp.136-204, and especially pp.200-204. The Quarterly Review of April 1865 had argued for an Anglo-Russian agreement upon certain limits to be maintained immutably by the moderation and mutual good understanding of the two countries.

famous doctrine of establishing a strong and friendly power on our North-Western frontier" had always been the true policy for India, "though of late years too often neglected and once fatally mismanaged in execution". To carry out this policy Sheer Ali should be secured to the British interest without delay. The price to be paid for this would depend upon the extent to which Sheer Ali was already entangled with Russia: it might vary from a subsidy and moral support to the furnishing of arms and officers and even an auxiliary contingent. The question of the re-establishment of a British mission in Kabul was one which must be decided on the spot. The diplomatic ground lost of late years in Persia must be recovered, to prevent Russia using that country as a tool; and military communications to the Afghan frontier improved, especially by the construction of a railway from Lahore to Peshawar. Finally, Rawlinson dealt with the question of the establishment of a fortified position at Quetta. It would be a useful sign of activity on the part of Britain but it was an enterprise that ought to be subordinated to political considerations. It was not worth while carrying out if it alienated the Afghans - as it probably would: it might be worth while if they were sufficiently attached to the British interest already to look upon the occupation of Quetta as an assistance to them.

Rawlinson's memorandum¹ was sent by the Secretary of State to the Indian government and he believed, probably with justification, that it played an important part in forming the last phase of Lawrence's policy. That consisted in the despatch of congratulations to Sheer Ali on 2nd October 1868 and of the gift, in December of six lakhs of rupees. Lawrence also suggested to the Secretary of State that the Indian government might be authorized, at its discretion, to supply the de facto ruler of Afghanistan with arms, ammunition and pecuniary aid.

This last phase of Lawrence's policy, this apparent abandonment of "masterly inactivity", was what moved the over-faithful Wyllie to protest. Yet a study of Lawrence's political testament suggests that the departure of which Wyllie complained was more apparent than real; that if Lawrence's policy up to December 1868 had been the right one, it remained the right one after the gift to Sheer Ali in that month; conversely, that if it had been the wrong one its faults were not cured.

In his final memorandum, or "covering despatch",²

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1. Rawlinson, op.cit., pp.263-292. Edwardes, in a letter to Lawrence of 2nd July 1866, had pleaded for "a diplomatic understanding with Russia, that she might come up to the Oxus if she liked, and be welcome, so long as she left our Cabul ally alone" and for "taking some steps to mediate between the contending children of Dost Mohammad". Lady Edwardes, op.cit., Vol.I, p.286.
 2. Bosworth Smith, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.584-585.

Lawrence reiterated his objection to "any active interference" in Afghan affairs either by a British mission or by the occupation of any post in that country. Such measures would decrease the difficulties in the way of Russia, if she seriously thought of invading India, by compelling Britain to meet her half way, in the midst of an exasperated population. In other words, the state which interfered last with Afghanistan was the state which would profit most. Lawrence does not appear to have regarded the present of the six lakhs of rupees to Sheer Ali in December 1868, followed by a further gift of the same amount in January 1869, as constituting "active interference". He was careful to point out, in the letter of 9th January 1869 which conveyed the promise of the second gift, that it would lie with successive administrations to determine, year by year, what practical assistance should be given.

One question was this. The assistance given to Dost Mohammad in 1857-58 had evoked some gratitude on the part of the recipient or had at least caused him to recognize that his interests were in part identical with the British. Was assistance to Sheer Ali, withheld when he so badly needed it in 1864-66 and now granted on what was explicitly a temporary basis, be sufficient to bind him to the British interest; especially in view of the great strides eastwards which Russia

had made in the last ten years and was still making? That question raises another. If Sheer Ali was to be bound to the British interest, would not substantial and permanent assistance be needed? Would not Britain be obliged to cultivate close relations with him than with a mere de facto ruler of Afghanistan?

But could this be done at such a distance? Was not the establishment of a permanent British mission in Kabul necessary for the exercise of effective British influence as well as for the collection of accurate and up-to-date information? In nothing was Lawrence more consistent than in his opposition to such a measure. But without such a measure could British influence in Afghanistan ever be effectively exercised? Was Britain, by declining to send or insist on sending a mission, not admitting either a bad conscience or acquiescence in a position of diplomatic inferiority?

Vambery certainly thought so. In his paper of 1867 on "The Rivalry of Russia with England in Central Asia" he said:

"The English are like a child who, when it has once burnt itself at the fire, will not for a long time venture to go near the warmth. The catastrophe of the Afghan campaign, and the thirty millions sterling which it cost, are even at the present day, after the lapse of quarter of a century, still so terribly alive in the memory of every Briton, that he trembles even at the idea of political influence beyond the Hindukush".

He went on to point out that thousands of Afghans habitually crossed and recrossed the frontier of British India and that the Russians, sending ambassador after ambassador to the states of Central Asia, somehow managed to secure respect for them. "The Afghans ... so long as they are not brought into closer and peaceful intercourse with Englishmen, will never understand what England or Russia may be able to do for their weal or woe, and which friendship may be more conducive to their good".¹

There was probably more risk in sending a British mission to Kabul than Vambéry imagined: the events of 1839-42 had not faded from Afghan memories. Nevertheless, it was highly arguable that unless that risk was taken British influence in Afghanistan could never be effective; and the gifts to Sheer Ali in December 1868 and January 1869 did argue a wish that it should be effective. Moreover, it is difficult to resist Vambéry's conclusion that the terrible failure of Auckland's policy had become an idée fixe with both the British and the Indian governments. Certainly, there is no evidence that such men as Lawrence or Henry Durand attempted to analyse Auckland's policy so as to see where and why it had diverged towards disaster. It could be argued, for instance, that where Auckland had been wrong

1. Op.cit., pp.42-51.

was not in helping an Afghan ruler but in choosing Shah Shuja as the object of his help and making an enemy of Dost Mohammad. The alliance with Ranjit Singh, moreover, had influenced British policy in 1838 in a way which could not be paralleled thirty years later. There was also the question how far the ultimate disaster in Afghanistan had been due to personalities rather than to policies, to the headstrong ambition of Macnaghten and the incompetence of Elphinstone. At all events, there was a case for stripping Auckland's policy of the mere accidents and errors which ruined it and for seeing whether the establishment of a strong and friendly Afghanistan must in every set of circumstances be regarded as hazardous or impracticable. This was so even though such writers as Boulger, in the 'eighties, went too far in the other direction, by arguing that the disasters in Afghanistan in 1841-42 were due merely to the failure of the military command.

It may be urged against Lawrence that he never disentangled or attempted to disentangle Auckland's ends from his means. In one sense Lawrence was a fatalist. War between Britain and Russia would either come or would not come; a Russian invasion of India would take place or it would not take place. If it took place it could best be met and broken within the Indian frontier: mere diplomatic activity

beyond the frontier would not avert it and, combined with military activity, would increase the chances of its success.

In other words, Lawrence, by temperament an administrator and not a diplomatist, had very little use for the weapons of diplomacy. To the argument that the Russian advance in Central Asia would cause unrest and disaffection in India he opposed a notable and in many ways a noble defence, counting not merely on "a compact, highly equipped and disciplined army" but on "the contentment, if not the attachment of the masses"; in the gradual increase in the sense of security, the construction of public works, "in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources".¹ Two final criticisms may be offered. A modest expenditure of money and a prudent degree of diplomatic activity in Afghanistan would not have been a serious drain on the finances of India. More important, Lawrence did not appreciate the danger that although he himself was not tempted to use the weapons of politics and diplomacy to any serious extent beyond the north-west frontier his successors, or British politicians or the British public, might not always be so restrained. Suppose that, viewed from London (and Indian policy was being more and more determined by the

1. Bosworth Smith, op.cit., Vol.II, p.385.

view taken in London) the contrast between British inactivity and Russian activity suddenly appeared a source of grave peril. Was it not likely, or at least possible, that there would be a precipitate rush from the policy of inactivity to the other extreme? Was there a case for a prudent attempt to make British influence permanent and substantial in Afghanistan; to avert the risk that under the stress of excitement which the degeneration of Russo-British relations elsewhere might cause this object might be attempted imprudently?¹

C H A P T E R 7

LORD MAYO AND THE BROADENING OF POLICY

When Rawlinson's memorandum reached India it was laid by Lawrence before his Council. Their views and his own are set out in some detail in Appendix I but a summary of them must be attempted here. That is the easier task because there was comparatively little divergence on the main issues. The conclusions which emerged were these:

The Russian advance through Central Asia admittedly created difficulties for India and one of these was the possibility that it might lead to or foment unrest and disaffection. That possibility could not be ignored but it could easily be exaggerated. Such unrest was not likely to be great because the Russians were feared and hated rather than admired. The British had cause for confidence in their own strength and the more they improved the lot of their Indian subjects by a prudent and economical administration, the less reason had they to dread Russia. If the worst came to the worst they could meet and defeat the Russian forces on Indian territory.

At the same time, however, positive measures to limit the danger from Russia were not to be ruled out. Support

of and reliance on Persia were not among these, for Persia was bound to be the creature of Russia. One major positive measure would be agreement with Russia on the respective spheres of the two Powers in Central Asia. Such an agreement might be reached either by negotiation or by fixing a line beyond which Russia must not advance, on peril of a general war. The other measure was the creation of a friendly and well-disposed Afghanistan. This objective, in its turn, had its positive and negative implications. It implied a certain degree of support to the de facto ruler of Afghanistan provided that such a person could be discerned and provided that his conduct appeared to merit such support. It did not imply the presence of a British mission or British officers, with or without a contingent, in Afghanistan; nor the occupation of trans-frontier posts such as Quetta or Herat; nor the acquisition of border territories such as Kurram and Khost. Such measures would not only fail to advance the desired policy: they would ruin its chance of success since they would arouse in the Afghans suspicions of conquest and annexation.

One very significant feature in these opinions was the remarkably high degree of unanimity reached. This meant that Lawrence's successor, if he wished to make any marked change in the foreign policy adopted by Lawrence and his two immediate predecessors, would have to encounter the

criticism if not the opposition of his Council; of the men who would normally and naturally be his right hand. A new Viceroy was unlikely to do this unless one or both of two conditions were fulfilled: unless he had come to India with a policy which he was determined to carry out; and unless he had the active support of the home government for a new departure.

Neither of these conditions was fulfilled in Lord Mayo. He was a moderate Conservative whose Parliamentary career had been almost entirely devoted to the affairs of Ireland. Both as Chief Secretary and in Opposition he had an honourable record, especially on the agrarian problem. But although he had had some opportunity of studying Indian affairs between the time of his appointment and the time he sailed he did not pretend to come out to India as an expert and there is no evidence that he had formed any deep convictions which called for a change in Indian foreign policy. Indeed, his previous lack of acquaintance with India and the fact that he had been appointed by a government which was in serious difficulties and soon to fall exposed him, at first, to considerable criticism.¹

1. Sir W.W.Hunter: Life of the Earl of Mayo, Vol.I, Chapter IV (2 vols., 1875). Mayo met Rawlinson on 5th November 1868 and noted, without comment, Rawlinson's views. At that time Mayo was an anxious student of Indian affairs, desirous of acquiring all the information he could; not merely or chiefly on foreign policy but on irrigation, finance, railway building, land settlement, prisons etc.

The policies of successive British governments towards Russia, and in particular the efforts to reach agreement on a delimitation of spheres will be noted later. It is sufficient for the moment to say that there was nothing in those policies or those efforts to encourage the new Viceroy to effect any drastic alteration in Indian foreign policy. Both his Council in India and the Cabinet (soon to be a Liberal Cabinet) at home were satisfied with the existing policy.

Mayo landed at Bombay on 20th December 1868 and assumed office at Calcutta on 12th January 1869. His meeting with Sheer Ali at Ambala took place in March of the same year: obviously, no time was lost. The first interview was held on 27th March but Sheer Ali had started from Kabul on 3rd February and it was sufficiently evident that the Viceroy, in inviting him, conceived himself to be following, as indeed he was, the policy of his predecessor.

Mayo, just before leaving Calcutta for Ambala, had stated his views in the following terms:

"I think any treaty or promise of permanent subsidy most unadvisable. At the same time, we must not shut ourselves out altogether from assisting Sheer Ali if we find it advantageous so to do. I am convinced that the checking of hostile advances by other nations is mainly to be done by pushing our commerce northwards. I hope that sensible men will not advocate either the extreme line of absolute inaction, or the worse alternative of

meddling and interfering by subsidies and emissaries. The safe course lies in habitual watchfulness, and friendly intercourse with neighbouring states and tribes".¹

Sheer Ali, on the other hand, entered upon the negotiations with much higher expectations and much fewer reservations. According to a note made on 31st March 1869 by the Viceroy's interpreter, Captain Grey, of his conversations with Sheer Ali's confidential Minister,

"The Ameer is prepared to act on what he may see is the nature of the friendship the British propose to afford him; if, as hitherto, merely acknowledging the Ruler of Kabul de facto, well and good; but if prepared to acknowledge and support him and the heir he may point out (acknowledges that any such must be distinctly brought forward now, the contrary having produced the present troubles), there is nothing he will not accede to".²

The latitude which he allowed himself no doubt permitted Sheer Ali to reconcile himself to the very modest gains he received from the Ambala Durbar; but he had hoped for far more. According to Hunter he wanted a treaty; a fixed annual subsidy; assistance in arms or in men "to be given

1. Hunter, op.cit., Vol.I, p.258.

2. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877, pp.1,2. This title covers the State Papers, Foreign Office memoranda, correspondence etc., bound as one volume in the Library of King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne. Grey noted, however, that one reservation had to be made to the Ameer's willingness to accede to anything: "he would gladly see an Agent or Engineer Superintendent in Balkh, Herat, or anywhere but actually in Kabul, which might lead to the supposition of his being a puppet". Ibid. Grey's note, however, is not necessarily to be taken as accurate. v. Appendix 2.

not when the British Government might think fit to grant, but when he might think it needful to solicit it"; a well-defined engagement "laying the British Government under an obligation to support the Afghan Government in any emergency; and not only that Government generally but that Government as vested in himself and his direct descendants, and in no others"; finally, some constructive act of recognition in favour of his younger son, AbdullahJan".

The last of these wishes or suggestions was not allowed to become a subject of discussion: to the other four Mayo firmly declined to accede. What he did offer, and what Sheer Ali was obliged to accept, was "the most open and absolute present recognition ... every public evidence of friendly disposition, of respect for his character and interest in his fortunes ... all the moral support in our power and, in addition ... money, arms, ammunition, Native artificers ...". But all these evidences of support were governed by the next phrase, "whenever we deem it desirable so to do". Mayo summed up his own view in these words:

"We must assist him, but we assist him in a way that neither entangles us in any engagements which may prove embarrassing hereafter, nor weaken his independence".¹

1. Hunter, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.258-259; quoting a minute by Sir John Strachey, 30th April 1872.

Mayo hoped (in the event, with considerable justification) that the impressions which Sheer Ali would gain of the strength and prosperity of India, as well as the magnificence of the ceremonials in which he was treated as an equal, the subsidy of £120,000, the arms and the private presents which he received, would compensate him for his failure to gain more.

"Although", Mayo wrote to Sheer Ali at the end of the negotiations, "as already intimated to you, the British Government does not desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, yet, considering that the bonds of friendship between that Government and your Highness have been more closely drawn than heretofore, it will view with severe displeasure any attempts on the part of your rivals to disturb your position as ruler of Cabul and rekindle civil war. And it will further endeavour, from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the Government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignity and honour of which you are the lawful possessor. It is my wish, therefore, that your Highness should communicate frequently and freely with the Government of India and its officers on all subjects of public interest; and I can assure your Highness that any representations which you may make will always be treated with consideration and respect".¹

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1. Hunter, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.260-261. Mayo, through his Foreign Secretary, W.S.Seton-Karr, was very careful to impress upon the Ameer's Minister that "under no circumstances was the Ameer to expect that British Troops would cross the border to put down civil war or domestic contention". v.memorandum of C.Girdleston, Under Foreign Secretary, 3rd April 1869. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877, p.3. Hanna, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.20, 21 argues that Lawrence would have been more generous with money and less generous with fair words than Mayo was.

The phrase, "view with severe displeasure", aroused some criticism in England from the more extreme protagonists of inaction; but Lawrence was not among the critics. "I believe", he said in his maiden speech in the House of Lords on 19th April 1869, "that Lord Mayo has done no more than act on the principles I suggested". In one sense the Ambala Durbar was the high-water mark of Lawrence's policy. It had not merely impressed Sheer Ali; it had impressed his subjects and almost certainly proved of assistance to him in asserting his authority in Afghanistan. And all this had been done without the incurring of any permanent commitments. It may be that Mayo, a younger man than Lawrence and without Lawrence's chronic suspicion of the Afghans, was better suited to add the final touch than Lawrence himself.

By 1869 it has become increasingly difficult to discuss the Afghan and Central Asian policy of either the British or the Indian government without constant and bewildering reference to that of the other. This is the more true because, as we have seen, Lawrence and his Council looked to some agreement with Russia for the diminution of the threat of Anglo-Russian conflict over Central Asia; and such an agreement must form the subject of negotiation by the Foreign Office. It may, nevertheless, be convenient to defer the consideration of these negotiations for a little longer and to notice now some other aspects of Mayo's policy

and views. He was gratified by the success of the Ambala meeting.

"Our influence", he wrote in a private letter, "has been considerably strengthened, both in our own territories and in the States of Central Asia, by the Ambala meeting; and if we can only persuade people that our policy really is non-intervention and peace, that England is at this moment the only non-aggressive Power in Asia, we should stand on a pinnacle of power that we have never enjoyed before".

Yet he did not usually believe, and he had shown that he did not believe, in a purely passive or negative policy. The rapid advance of Russia through Central Asia was a fact, whatever differences there might be about the significance to be attached to it. Mayo himself was not an alarmist. "We cannot view with any feelings of alarm the advance in Asia of a civilized Christian Power, and the establishment of its influence over wild and savage tribes". He considered that British strength in India had grown faster, however, than Russian strength in Asia; "That it is the very feeling of power which justifies us in assuming that passive policy which, though it may be occasionally carried too far, is right in principle". At the same time he realized that Russia had secured a position in Asia which she might use, and indeed showed signs of using, to "turn the flank of the Eastern Question". He did not believe that any hard-and-fast

agreement with Russia on Central Asia was desirable or practicable. What he apparently had in mind was that while Britain and Russia should act independently (as local circumstances obliged them to do) they should so act in conformity with certain agreed principles. These principles did not include that of a "neutral zone": it was not possible, in Mayo's opinion, for two such powerful modern States as Britain and Russia to maintain such an artificial conception as a belt of territory, deliberately left uncivilized, between their empires.

His alternative was the maintenance, by deliberate action, of an intermediary belt of independent States.

"We believe that, as it is for the interests of both countries that a wide border of independent States should exist between the British frontier and the Russian boundary, it would be desirable that Russia should be invited to adopt the policy with regard to Khiva and other kindred States (Bokhara and Kokand) that we are willing to pledge ourselves to adopt towards Kelat, Afghanistan and the districts round Yarkend. A pledge of mutual non-interference of this kind, unratified by treaty, would be alike honourable to both nations, and would be better suited to the position in which civilized powers must ever stand towards wild and savage tribes than specific treaty engagements could ever be".¹

The first implication of this argument was that the British position vis-a-vis Afghanistan and Kalat must be the same as

1. Quoted, Rawlinson, op.cit., p.302 and n. Despatch of 3rd June 1870.

that of Russia vis-a-vis Bokhara and Khiva. But why should Russia make such a concession? It proved possible for the Russians to subjugate Bokhara in 1868 and Khiva in 1873 while a British subjugation, not perhaps of Kalat but certainly of Afghanistan, was certain to prove far more difficult. In fact, when Mayo sent this despatch in 1870, Bokhara had been and Khiva was soon to be reduced to a position of merely nominal independence. Was Britain to reduce Afghanistan to the same level? If she did not, her position would necessarily be weaker than that of Russia. Was she obliged, therefore, if an Anglo-Russian agreement on Mayo's terms was not made, or having been made was not kept, or was made on the basis of the status quo (which favoured Russia), to strengthen her influence in Afghanistan until it became equal to that of Russia in Bokhara?

Mayo did not bring himself so far as to accept that conclusion but he seems to have advanced, both in principle and in action, some distance towards it.

"We should establish with our frontier States of Kilat, Afghanistan, Yarkand, Nepal and Burmah, intimate relations of friendship. We should make them feel that although we are all-powerful, we desire to support their nationality. That when necessity arises we might assist them with money and arms, and perhaps even in certain eventualities with men. We could thus create in them outworks of our Empire, and by assuring them that the days of annexation are passed, make them know that they have everything to

gain and nothing to lose by endeavouring to deserve our favour and support. It may take years to develop this policy, but if it is once established, our Empire will be secure".¹

On this argument two criticisms fall to be made. The countries which Mayo named represented political problems for the Indian government which differed widely in their complexity. Did he imply that what might be (and as the event proved was) possible in respect of Kalat, was possible also in respect of Afghanistan?² The difficulties in the way of his policy are illustrated not only by what happened in Kalat but by what happened in respect of Burma - annexed in 1886. The subsequent course of events made it clear that it was very far from easy to make such frontier states at once friendly, strong and independent. If they were really independent they might not be friendly; and if they were not strong neither their friendliness nor their independence was likely to avail much. In the second place,

1. Hunter, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.283-284.

2. In the later stages of the second Afghan War both Colonel Charles McGregor, successively Chief of Staff to Roberts and Primrose, and Mortimer Durand, the Political Officer, came to the conclusion that nothing short of annexation or, at least, of military occupation, could establish the dominant influence of Britain on a permanent basis in Afghanistan. Lytton's arguments for the disintegration of Afghanistan was founded on a similar distrust of the lasting effects of presents, subsidies, good offices etc. In one sense, extremes could meet - the extremes of complete inaction and annexation. Each had a good deal to be said for it but it was natural that most men should seek one or other of the middle causes which existed in such bewildering variety.

could Mayo's object be secured by such negotiations as those at Ambala, by a resolute refusal to be drawn into commitments. Possibly, in the letter just quoted, he did go a little way beyond the Ambala line;, but not very far. It was doubtful whether the governments of the states concerned would be much impressed by the knowledge that when necessity arose they might be supported with money and arms "and perhaps even in certain eventualities with men"; according as they had endeavoured "to deserve our favour and support". It was not going to be easy to secure allies on such one-sided terms. Indeed, it may be argued that while in Europe it was possible for one Power, merely by maintaining its independence, to be the "outwork" of another (as the Netherlands has been of Britain), such a delicate arrangement was hardly likely between the Indian Empire on the one hand and the poor, ill-organized Oriental states which Mayo named.

Nevertheless, Mayo appears to have believed sincerely that his policy was practicable, on the negative basis of non-aggression and the positive basis of good offices. It remains now to notice some examples of his policy which, if it did not differ consciously or deliberately from that of Lawrence, came gradually to be far more active over a much wider field.

We have noticed that the Ambala meeting might properly

be described as the high-water mark of Lawrence's policy. It was not the high-water mark of Mayo's, for whom it represented a beginning rather than an end. The remainder of his short term of office (he was murdered while on a visit to the Andaman Islands in February 1872) Mayo worked to implement the policy which had been in his mind at Ambala. The chief characteristic of these years was not so much the decisiveness as the range of his actions. In some instances they did no more than scratch the surface for his successors: in others they had importance even in his own day.

Policy towards Kalat fell into the first of these classes. The root of the troubles in Kalat, which inevitably had repercussions upon the contiguous British territory of Sind, lay in the conflict between the Khan and his chiefs. It was more than a personal conflict for it raised an important constitutional question. Was the Khan, as he maintained, an absolute ruler; or was he, as the chiefs maintained, merely the head of a confederacy, the subordinate members of which possessed rights of their own? Since 1854 the Government of India had held to the first of these contentions: it limited itself to such "friendly counsel and advice" as was compatible with non-interference, and its officers were strictly forbidden to cross the frontier.

In 1868 Lieutenant Sandeman (as he then was) violated

this prohibition and the fact that his action was condoned showed at least that there was the possibility of a change in policy and in 1869 the British Agent, who had been withdrawn in 1864, was re-appointed. His presence gave the chiefs the opportunity of laying their claims before him. These claims met with the support of Colonel (afterwards Sir Robert) Phayre, Political Superintendent of Upper Sind but were disapproved of by the Chief Commissioner of Sind, Sir William Merewether. The conflict of opinion, in which Sandeman was active on Phayre's side, led to a conference being held at Mittankot in February 1871 when the whole question was examined. At this stage Merewether's opinion prevailed, although some increase in Sandeman's powers and the employment of tribal horsemen to protect trade-routes were slight concessions to the advocates of a more active policy.

In the autumn of 1871 civil war in Kalat rose to new heights. Phayre described it as "a national uprising against oppression"; Merewether wrote it down as "a local emeute ... encouraged by ... our frontier officers"; but it appeared serious enough to the Government of India to lead to the despatch of 11th January 1871 which suggested mediation in the Kalat disputes so as to give the principal chiefs "a due share in the government of the country and an interest in the

maintenance of order". Mediation was accepted. Since the mediator was Merewether it was not surprising that his decision was substantially in favour of the Khan. He declined to suggest any new constitutional arrangements, leaving it to the Political Agent to induce the Khan so to behave as to win the support of the chiefs. Merewether's conclusions were approved by the Indian government (by that time under Lord Northbrook) on 30th May 1872.¹

1. T.H.Thornton: Sir Robert Sandeman, pp.34-60 (1895). It may be convenient at this point to summarize the subsequent developments in policy towards Kalat. Civil war continued without interruption after 1872 and the internal disorganization led to raids on British territory. Merewether advocated the policy of non-interference, varied by punitive expeditions when things became too bad: Sandeman pressed for effective mediation and was officially allowed to cross the frontier in November 1875 to see what he could do. Merewether purported to recall him but Sandeman was upheld by the Foreign Office and Merewether was relieved of responsibility for Kalat. Sandeman's first mission effected little but he was despatched on a second in March 1876. In the course of this he was able to arrange terms between the Khan and the chiefs but he realized that this settlement would prove transitory unless supported by the continuous supervision of the Indian government. The Viceroy, by this time Lord Lytton, was thus presented with an unavoidable choice between alternatives. He and his Council decided in favour of Sandeman's policy; being actuated partly by "possible contingencies in Central Asia" and evidence of "foreign intrigue" in Kalat. The Treaty of Jacobabad was concluded in December 1876. The first three articles renewed the treaty of 1854, with the difference that the chiefs as well as the Khan were now introduced as parties. By the fourth and fifth articles the Political Agency was permanently established at the court of the Khan and the

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In respect of Kalat no more than a beginning of the "new departure", if that, had been made under Mayo; although his good offices in settling the frontier between Persia and Kalat in 1871-72 have also to be borne in mind. This settlement was a fundamental part of his policy. He had been much impressed by Rawlinson's arguments in favour of strengthening British influence in Tehran (though he was resolutely opposed to the employment of British officers in the Persian service): he was still more convinced of the necessity for that general pacification in which boundary settlements were bound to play an important part.

"It is for the best interests of all the States concerned" - he wrote in 1869 - "that steps should be taken to define the eastern boundaries of the Persian Empire. The condition of things that has existed for some years past can only serve to engender irritation and alarm, and to afford to Persia, and possibly to other Powers, a pretext for encroachments or interference with

1. (Continued from previous page).

British government was constituted the final referee in disputes between the Khan and the chiefs. Article 6 provided for the location of British troops in Kalat and later articles for the construction of railways and telegraphic communication. A small force of occupation had been established in Quetta before the treaty was concluded. v.Thornton, op.cit., Chapters VIII,IX,X; Parl.Papers,1877, "Papers relating to the Treaty concluded with the Government of India and the Khan of Kelat on the 8th December 1876", and particularly Lytton's despatch of 23rd March 1877 in which policy towards Kalat was related to policy towards Central Asia generally and the phrases, quoted above, about "possible contingencies" and "foreign intrigue" appeared.

the affairs of countries over which they have no right to exercise control. Nor can such pretensions be regarded with indifference by the British Government in the East whose aim it is to see independent and friendly Powers established between its own frontiers and the regions of Central Asia ... The present uncertain state of affairs opens a wide field for intrigue and occasions that feeling of uncertainty which among Orientals invariably gives rise to vague rumours, and to the uneasiness which reports about alliances on the part of the intermediate States with Russia, Turkey or any other European Power, will always occasion".¹

It was in accord with these principles that Mayo extended the range of his action to Eastern Turkestan, where a great Moslem rising against the Chinese had resulted by 1869 in the establishment of the State of Yarkand under Yakub Kushbegi. In compliance with the wish of this ruler Douglas Forsyth was sent to him on a complimentary mission in April 1870. When Forsyth found, in the existence of hostilities in Yarkand, evidence that the ruler's power had not been consolidated he felt obliged by the nature of his instructions to return; but his second mission led to the conclusion of a commercial treaty on 2nd February 1874.

Much more important, of course, was Mayo's concern with

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1. Hunter, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.285-286.
 2. Ibid., Vol.I, pp.297-305. v. also Wyllie, op.cit., pp.174-244 (article on "Western China", Edinburgh Review, April 1868, brought up to date (1874) by his editor).

Afghanistan. One aspect of it was demonstrated when Yakub Khan rose in rebellion against his father, Sheer Ali, in September 1870 and, after some preliminary failures and a period as a refugee in Persian Seistan, captured Herat in May 1871. The reconciliation between father and son which was effected in September 1871, by the terms of which Yakub Khan was appointed Governor of Herat, was assisted by the good offices of Mayo who realized that the disintegration of authority in Afghanistan would be fatal to the objects which he was working so painstakingly to bring about. The other aspect concerned efforts to determine the frontiers of Afghanistan.

The territory in issue between Persia and Afghanistan (apart from Herat) was Seistan, an area of some 7,000 square miles, of which only that in the vicinity of the River Helmand and its tributaries was cultivated or cultivatable. Seistan had been brought under Persian authority by Nadir Shah: after his death it fell more or less under Afghan control. In the eighteen-sixties Persia had repeatedly asked for British assistance against the extension of Afghan power in Seistan but all the comfort it received then was the suggestion in 1863 that the Foreign Office "must leave it to both parties to make good their possession by force of arms".

This position, the very acme of inactivity, was not likely to be maintained in the face of gradually changing opinion and in 1870 the British Government, acting under the provisions of Article 6 of the Treaty of 1857, offered its mediation; which was accepted by both parties.

The duty of mediation was entrusted to Sir Frederic Goldsmid and his mission arrived at Nasratabad in March 1872, where they were met by the Persian Commissioner, the Afghan Commissioner joining them in the following month. It was obvious from the disrespect with which the Persians treated Goldsmid that they were resolved to put every possible obstacle in his way: the conduct of the Afghans, by comparison, had been pacific and reasonable. Sheer Ali had refrained from retaliating against the extension of Persian control in Seistan in recent years and even against occasional raids into the territory of Kandahar.

Goldsmid, in his award, distinguished between what he called "Seistan Proper" and "Outer Seistan". The latter, a narrow strip of territory stretching about 100 miles from north to south along the right bank of the Helmand, he awarded to Afghanistan; the former, to Persia. Neither party was satisfied: the Persians were angry at being obliged to withdraw from the positions which they had secured on the right bank of the Helmand: Sheer Ali, who had hoped for a settle-

ment substantially in his favour (a hope in which Mayo had probably concurred), was bitterly disappointed.¹ It was unfortunate for Anglo-Afghan relations that the Seistan award, intended to form part of Mayo's policy of general pacification, had this unlooked-for effect.

The last, and in a sense the most important, aspect of Mayo's concerned the negotiations between Britain and Russia over the northern boundary of Afghanistan. These may perhaps be most conveniently dealt with here; though at the risk of abstracting them from the wider negotiations between London and St. Petersburg which were going on at the same time, and from the anticipated Russian attack on Khiva, the preparations for which were known to be going on in 1869. The territory in issue would in any event have presented considerable difficulty. Thus, Badak^hshan had been acquired by Dost Mohammad in 1859 but after his death in 1863 the ruler had attempted to throw off Afghan authority and had sought to enlist the support of the Khan of Bokhara in his efforts.² The Russians throughout the negotiations showed an anxiety to preserve the dominions of the Khan of Bokhara, now their satellite, and used his alleged claims as a

1. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 91-96.

2. D. Forsyth to Sir A. Buchanan, 5th November 1869. Parl. Papers, 1873. Correspondence respecting Central Asia, p. 15 (Central Asia, No. 1, 1873). Forsyth had been sent from India to take part in the negotiations.

bargaining weapon to preclude any Afghan claims on Merv.¹ They also endeavoured to insist that the boundaries of Afghanistan must be taken to include only those territories which were, at the time, under the control of Sheer Ali; as distinct from those which had been held by Dost Mohammad and lost since his death.² As late as 18th December 1872 Gortchakoff told the British ambassador, Lord Augustus Loftus, that Badakshan and Wakhan were independent states and that their junction to Afghanistan "would bear the nature of an annexation and would disturb existing relations in Central Asia".³ Eventually, however, the Russian government agreed that these two territories formed part of Afghanistan and on 10th January 1873 the Viceroy's Council expressed their concurrence in the settlement arrived at.⁴

Starting from the narrow basis of Lawrence's policy, Mayo had given it a far wider range and a deeper content. One may, indeed, go so far as to say that he had made as much of it as could be made. The eulogy pronounced on him by Sir John Strachey was deserved:

"Honestly proclaiming and showing by his acts that the sceptre of annexation was laid for ever, he taught our neighbours that they have nothing to

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1. Buchanan to Granville, 21st September 1870. Ibid., p.51.
 2. Brunnof to Granville, 1/13 November 1871. Ibid., pp.54-57.
 3. Loftus to Granville, 19th December 1872. Ibid., pp.65-66.
 4. Ibid., pp.68-69.

fear from us. By bringing about a common understanding between the countries on our frontier as to their mutual boundaries, he sought to remove every pretext for war and aggression. By assisting the rulers of these States to strengthen their internal government, and by bringing both his own personal influence and the moral support of the British Government to bear in putting down rebellions and revolutions, he endeavoured to establish firm, just, and merciful government. By the encouragement and development of trade, he hoped to break down the barriers which isolate those countries from us, and to create, both within and beyond our frontier, a permanent interest in the maintenance of good order. By free and friendly communication, he desired to remove that ignorance as to our policy and that jealousy of our intentions which in past years have been so fruitful of mischief. And, lastly, by endeavouring through frank and amicable discussion with the Russian Government to secure the adoption on their part of a similar policy in the countries on the Russian frontier in Asia which are subject to Russian influence, it was his hope that he would be instrumental in securing some degree of peace and prosperity to the exhausted countries of Central Asia, and in removing the causes of disquietude as to the designs of England and Russia, which have been so prominent in the public mind in both countries".¹

Of Mayo's benevolence there can be no reasonable doubt. What remained to be seen was whether his policy and the premises of Victorian Liberalism on which he acted could stand the strain of very different tendencies, of Russian aggression and Afghan disappointment; still more, the strain of Anglo-Russian hostility in an acute form in Europe with its consequent exacerbation of feeling both in the British

1. Hunter, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.306-307.

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Cabinet and in the country at large.

FOREIGN OFFICE NEGOTIATIONS, 1869-1874

Two quotations may serve to introduce this chapter. The first comes from a conversation which Mortimer Durand held with Aitchison, head of the Foreign Department of the Indian government, apparently just before Lord Lytton succeeded to the viceroyalty in 1876. Durand reported Aitchison's views as follows:-

"His view is that we cannot check the Russian advance from this side. He would advocate a strong policy at home, but not any attempt to make our influence more directly felt at Kabul. He argues that any such attempt defeats its own object. The more we court the Amir the more his ideas of his own importance will rise, and until he feels himself in danger he will make no response. When he feels himself in danger he will come to us anyhow. Till then we must not shove ourselves on him in any way. Aitchison quoted as "perfectly just" Lord Lawrence's view on the matter. "Whichever power first occupies Afghanistan in force is certain sooner or later to have all the Afghans against her. He admits that we can march through the country as we could through India, and that we could hold it if we had no one else to deal with; but he thinks that the attempt to hold a position at Herat with 700 miles of enemy's country behind us must end in disaster. Russia's advance must be stopped by the ordinary operations of European diplomacy, not by any demonstrations in Asia. "Tell her that the moment she reaches such a point, we send our fleet into the Black Sea and raise her Asiatic subjects, but don't attempt to settle yourself in Herat, for the

only result of that is to raise the Afghan against you and play Russia's game".¹

Aitchison obviously took the Russian advance across Central Asia seriously but he indicated no role for India in arresting it - not even the role of "good neighbour" to which Mayo aspired. The whole burden of resistance was to be thrown upon the Home Government. There was much to be said for using Britain's most effective weapon, the Royal Navy; but, on the other hand, there were difficulties in the way of Aitchison's suggestion which he does not seem to have been aware of. Was it politically possible for a British government to launch the nation into a major war because they knew, or had reason to believe, that Russian forces had crossed an arbitrary line drawn on a map across a desert? Could a country which possessed representative and responsible government go to war in defence of a barbaric Central Asiatic state, such as Khiva, of which the great majority of the electors had certainly never heard?

The other quotation is from Disraeli's famous speech in which he insisted that "the key of India is in London". He did not mean that India itself was to be inactive; he contemplated, rather vaguely, the occupation of some advanced position (knowing, perhaps, how a place can

1. Sir Percy Sykes: Sir Mortimer Durand, p.84 (1926).

symbolize a particular policy for an electorate which cannot appreciate the policy itself); but he realized that the defence of India rested in the last resort upon the temper of the public mind in Britain.

An increasing measure, not merely of responsibility but of control, was coming to rest on the Home Government in respect of Indian foreign policy; and such men as John Lawrence and Aitchison were content that it should so rest. The results of this development after 1874 fall to be considered later: this chapter is concerned with British policy under Gladstone's ministry when the Home government was still committed substantially to Lawrence's policy. The suggestion that direct negotiations should be opened with Russia had been Lawrence's own.

Previous negotiations, or discussions, conducted in 1865¹ had not been effective in hindering, or even in delaying

1. The Journal de St. Petersburg of 19th June/1st July. 1865 drew favourable attention to an address given by Sir Roderick Murchison as President of the Royal Geographical Society on 22nd May in which he ridiculed the charges of aggression made against Russian policy in Asia and declared that Russia only sought consolidation by means of peace, commerce and industry. This article was supposed to emanate from the Russian Foreign Office which was strong in such declarations. Earl Russell, in a despatch of 31st July 1865 to A.S. Lumley at St. Petersburg, that the British government completely shared Murchison's sentiments but, as circumstances might so arise as to give cause for anxiety, "friendly explanations ... based on the present state of affairs" might profitably be exchanged.

the Russian advance across Central Asia. On 27th March 1869, therefore, Lord Clarendon, as Foreign Secretary, wrote to Buchanan pointing out that the Russian advance, while it did not alarm the British government, did alarm considerable sections of the British and the Indian public. He recommended "the recognition of some territory as neutral between the possessions of England and Russia". He had made this suggestion to Brunnow, the Russian ambassador in London, who had produced a despatch of Gortchakoff's of 24th February/

1. (Continued from previous page).

Gortchakoff, when seen by Lumley on 10th August, said that Russia desired no extension of territory in Central Asia; but that he did not himself see what purpose an interchange of declarations could serve. However, it could be made but for the aggression of Bokhara against Khokand. Russell, in his despatch of 16th September 1865 to Sir Andrew Buchanan at St. Petersburg, showed that he still hankered after an exchange of declarations; but, if he could not get it, was "quite ready to believe that legitimate desires for the extension of commerce and the security of the Russian frontiers, and no wish for territorial aggrandizement, guide the proceedings of the Government of Russia". In the same month the Tsar assured Buchanan that his empire was sufficiently large and that his sole purpose in Central Asia was to encourage commerce and civilization; although it was impossible altogether to prevent collisions between his troops and the "inhabitants of those distant and barbarous countries". Gortchakoff, in December, told Buchanan that he believed the explanations given would be sufficient to remove any misgivings felt in England about the recent Russian operations in Turkestan. Appendix No.1 to Central Asia, No.1, "Correspondence Respecting Central Asia", Parl. Papers, 1878, C-2164. The difficulty was that although Gortchakoff's "explanations" might have satisfied Russell in 1865 they could not cover the rapid extension of Russian territory and influence which followed.

7th March which accepted the idea of a neutral zone. This was to be formed by the Russian declaration that Afghanistan was completely outside her sphere of influence, complemented by a similar declaration on the part of the British government.¹ Clarendon, having consulted the Council of India, replied that Afghanistan would not make a suitable neutral zone, partly because its frontiers were ill-defined, and abandoning the idea of a neutral zone, suggested the upper Oxus as the boundary line "which neither Power should permit their forces to cross".² To this Gortchakoff objected, though without making it clear whether he still wanted a neutral zone or whether he considered the suggested boundary line unsuitable as unfair to Bokhara which, he certainly suggested, was threatened by Afghanistan. He added that he hoped that Britain would use her influence with Sheer Ali to keep him "within bounds".³

On 2nd September 1869 Clarendon had a long talk with Gortchakoff at Heidelberg, in the course of which he pointed to the very rapid advance of Russia in the last five years and reiterated his suggestion of a neutral zone; simply on the ground that Russian progress was apt to keep the Indian

1. Parl. Papers, 1873, C-704, "Correspondence Regarding Central Asia" (Central Asia, No.2 (1873), Nos.1,2.
 2. Clarendon to Rumbold, 17th April 1869. Ibid., No.3.
 3. Rumbold to Clarendon, 2nd June 1869. Ibid., No.7.

mind in a ferment. As to Sheer Ali, Clarendon said that the assistance given to him had no connection with Russian policy but was simply intended to assist Britain by maintaining order in Afghanistan. When Clarendon repeated his suggestion of the Oxus as the best line of demarcation Gortchakoff countered, as before, by suggesting that Afghanistan might be neutralized.¹ Meanwhile, at St. Petersburg, Forsyth was discussing the practicability of Mayo's policy of a range of intermediate, independent States. Some of the Russian soldiers and officials with whom Forsyth talked regarded Mayo's scheme as workable, Russia putting influence on Bokhara and Britain upon Afghanistan but the question was raised - suppose Bokhara proved recalcitrant to such Russian influence. Would Russian action be regarded as aggressive by Britain. Forsyth thought it would not, even if pushed to the point of the occupation of the whole country, so long as the integrity of Afghanistan was respected.²

On 30th November Buchanan saw Gortchakoff again, partly about the rumours of a projected Russian expedition against Khiva, based on Krasnovodsk as being partly commercial and partly intended to serve as a warning to the Khan. Generally speaking, according to Gortchakoff, Russia wanted no more

1. Clarendon to Buchanan, 3rd September 1869. Ibid., No.11.
 2. Forsyth to Buchanan, 2nd November 1869. Ibid., Inclosure in No.15, Buchanan to Clarendon, 2nd November 1869.

territory and the Tsar even talked of retiring from the advanced positions already occupied, for instance in Bokhara. But when Buchanan sought assurances on this point he was told that guarantees from Bokhara must first be obtained.¹ He was by no means satisfied of the pacific intentions of Russia towards Khiva and having received information which led him to believe that the conquest of that country was being contemplated and prepared for, called again on Gortchakoff on 29th December. Gortchakoff repeated his denial, explained the activities at Kradnovodsk by saying that it was becoming an important commercial town and the rumours of a military expedition as originating in a possible project for restoring the Oxus to its former bed.² Buchanan was still far from assured but the language of the Russian Foreign Office continued to be smooth and complaisant. When Buchanan spoke of the British wish to create on the frontiers of India "a series of influential but not tributary or neutralized states", Gortchakoff's Head of the Asiatic Department, Stremouⁿoukoff, remarked, "What you have read is our programme and describes exactly what we desire".³ By the beginning of March, however, Stremoukoff was telling Buchanan that the attitude of the Khan of Khiva, despite the

1. Buchanan to Clarendon, 1st December 1896. Ibid., No. 21.
 2. Buchanan to Clarendon, 29th December 1869. Ibid., No. 25.
 3. Buchanan to Clarendon, 8th February 1870. Ibid., No. 34.

Russian reluctance to go to war, was causing him "uneasiness".¹

During the next few weeks, when Buchanan was disturbed by the increasing probability of Russian action against Khiva and by reports of Bokharan raids on Afghanistan he was gratified by a communication to the effect that General Kauffman had repulsed the offer of Abdur Rahman's influence in Afghanistan.² For the moment the situation was satisfactory and Mayo, in Council, expressed on 20th May 1870, his pleasure at finding that "the policy of Russia ... coincides so entirely with that laid down by us at Umballa".³ When Lord Augustus Loftus, Buchanan's successor, met Gortchakoff on 5th March 1872 it was to be told that "happily there was nothing going on in the political world".⁴ Negotiations over the frontier of Afghanistan were continued, not without difficulties but without insuperable difficulties; and Loftus was assured on 4th November that "Russia required peace in Central Asia". He took the opportunity to give his views on the subject of the proposed neutral zone, which had latterly fallen out of discussion.

"I replied, that the neutral zone, as far as I understood the idea, merely referred to those

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1. Buchanan to Clarendon, 8th March 1870. Ibid., No. 40.
 2. Buchanan to Clarendon, 19th April 1870. Ibid., No. 51, with inclosures.
 3. Ibid., inclosure in No. 60.
 4. The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus (2nd series), p. 8 (2 vols., 1894); cited as Loftus.

independent States lying between the frontier of Afghanistan and the Russian frontier, and that this idea would be perfectly represented by Bokhara in the north and even, perhaps, by Afghanistan south of the Oxus. Further than this I could see no object in creating a neutral zone".¹

On 19/31 January 1873 Brunnow was instructed to give formal Russian recognition to the line of the Afghan frontier as suggested by Great Britain. The recognition was deliberately represented as reluctant.

"The English Cabinet includes within them (the suggested frontiers) Badakshan and Wakhan which, according to our views, enjoyed a certain independence but, considering the difficulty experienced in establishing the facts in all their details in those distant parts, considering the greater facilities which the British Government possesses for collecting precise data and, above all, considering our wish not to give to this question of detail greater importance than is due to it, we do not refuse to accept the line of boundary laid down by England".

Arising partly from a critical article in the Morning Post of 15th February 1873 the subject was debated in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister, Gladstone, repudiated the idea that any "engagement" had been entered into with Russia.

"The engagement referred solely to the moral influence possessed by England and Russia in the East; Russia engaging to abstain from any attempt to exercise it in Afghanistan and England engaging to exercise it for a pacific purpose".

1. Loftus to Granville, 12th November 1872. Central Asia, No.2 (1873). No.92.

In answer to a criticism by one of the leading Conservatives, Sir Stafford Northcote, of the use of the expression "neutral zone", Gladstone explained that that expression, used in the early stages of the negotiations, had not been meant in a formal sense but simply for the sake of convenience. It had been merely a general, and somewhat indefinite, method of expressing views entertained on both sides. Later, those views had been given specific form and the expression did not appear in the later despatches and conversations. The negotiations, Gladstone went on, had proceeded on the assumption that England and Russia naturally stood in a position of relative superiority to the Asiatic States. A certain amount of influence would naturally flow from this position. The negotiations and the correspondence referred solely to the existence of that influence and its geographical limits. As concluded, the negotiations included the express agreement of Russia to consider Afghanistan outside her zone of influence; a settlement of the northern boundary of Afghanistan; and an agreement on the part of Britain to use her influence (but not physical force) to restrain Sheer Ali from aggression.¹

1. Parl. Debates, 3rd series, 15th March, 22nd April, 15th May 1873. The Moscow Gazette of 16th May 1873 argued that Gladstone's speech had restored complete liberty of action to both Powers and that the recent negotiations could only be considered as a mere exchange of friendly views. Translation in F.O.65/878.

Meanwhile, the Russian intention - at last officially disclosed - to advance against Khiva, had been discussed in London between Granville and the Russian emissary, Count Schouvoloff. It was to be carried out, Schouvoloff said, in the following spring, the force employed consisting of some four-and-a-half battalions. The Tsar, he added, was of opinion that

"such a question ought not to be a cause of difference between the two Governments, and His Imperial Majesty was determined it should not be so".

Granville had replied that if the expedition was undertaken and carried out as described Her Majesty's Government would not remonstrate against it; although it would no doubt excite public attention and making the settlement of the boundaries of Afghanistan the more important for the purpose of keeping the peace in Central Asia.¹

On this occasion the Russian expedition against Khiva was easily successful. By the treaty concluded on 19/24 August 1873 the Khan was obliged to renounce "all direct and friendly relations with neighbouring Rulers and Khans"; to give special facilities to Russian merchants; to pay an indemnity of 2,200,000 roubles (£300,000); and to cede to Russia the right bank of the Amou Daria. A copy of the treaty was forwarded to the Foreign Office on 20th December

1. F.O.65/875. Granville to Loftus, 8th January 1873.

and on 7th January 1874 Granville reviewed the implications of it and the Central Asian question generally in a long despatch to Loftus.

Granville expressed himself as disinclined to examine "too minutely" how far the provisions of the treaty were in accord with previous explanations of the Russian government about the object of the expedition or to share "the exaggerated apprehensions which have at times been expressed in this country as to the danger to British rule in India which may arise from the extension of Russian influence in Central Asia". He noted, with sympathy, the difficulties which were bound to face Russia, in contact with barbarous peoples.

"As soon as one territory is subdued, and the population immediately bordering on it are reduced, more or less to subjection, fresh aggressions are committed by more distant tribes. Fresh expeditions against these become necessary and to give these expeditions any lasting effect, fresh annexations and occupations are required".

He then went on to note, without comment, certainly without any hint of criticism, that the Russians had not fulfilled their suggested intention of retiring from Samarkand and concluded that

"it would be unwise not to contemplate the possibility that considerations of self-defence, or the necessity of punishing acts of plunder and hostility, may eventually give occasion for a Russian expedition against the Turkoman tribes".

The possibility of such an attack on Merv, said Granville, had alarmed Sheer Ali. He had been told that Afghanistan was "perfectly secure from any hostile designs on the part of Russia"; but Her Majesty's Government thought it "right to state candidly and at once that the independence of Afghanistan is regarded by them as a matter of great importance to the welfare and security of British India and to the tranquillity of Asia". Gortchakoff replied in a despatch of 21st January, which was communicated to Granville by Brunnow on 17th February 1874 that in his opinion the understanding was complete.

"It rests not only upon the loyalty of the two Governments but upon mutual political advantages which are palpably evident".

The two governments would "exercise their ascendancy over the States placed within the range of their natural influence in order to deter them from all aggression"; the Russians towards the Khanates and the British towards Afghanistan.

"So long as they both act together with a feeling of mutual confidence and good will, the tranquillity of Central Asia will be sufficiently guaranteed against all eventualities".¹

In effect, a bargain had been concluded. In return for implied British consent to the subjugation of Khiva the

1. Parl. Papers 1874, C-919. "Correspondence Respecting Central Asia", Russia No.2 (1874), Nos.2,3.

Russians had recognized Afghanistan as within the British sphere of influence and outside her own. From Granville's language the Russian government was entitled to draw the conclusion that Britain would raise no objection to the extension of her influence up to the frontiers of Afghanistan as settled in January 1873. But here, at once, was a source of danger. Russian influence, as exerted upon Khiva or Bokara, was a different thing altogether from British influence as exerted upon Afghanistan. In the one case, the use of force was fundamental; in the other the use of force had been explicitly ruled out; for example by Gladstone. Another consideration of the highest importance was this: in so far as British interests in Central Asia¹ had been contracted by Gladstone's government to the maintenance of the independence of Afghanistan, that country was bound to assume what would be called today a very high degree of priority in British-Indian policy. Consequently, a very slight degree of Russian interference in Afghanistan - Stolietoff's mission, for example - might produce results out of all proportion to its significance. It was clear, within a very short time, that either of two developments was capable of impairing the harmony of Anglo-Russian relations - a refusal

1. Including, for this purpose, Persia. v. Appendix 3 for evidence of British acquiescence in the overwhelming superiority of Russian influence there.

on the part of the British government to disinterest themselves in the Russian domination of Central Asia up to the frontier of Afghanistan and a refusal on the part of the Russian government to disinterest itself in Afghanistan. Danger was the more likely to arise from this source if a period of acute Anglo-Russian hostility followed - as it did - a period when Central Asia was the only cause of such small friction as existed between the two countries. Such agreement as had been reached was not associated with any "neutral zone": it depended on the willingness of the two governments concerned to observe certain negative rules of action; a willingness that could not be depended upon if their major interests conflicted elsewhere. Meanwhile, the outcome of these five years' negotiations made an answer to one question more urgent - what use would Britain make of the admittedly privileged position which she held in respect of Afghanistan?

SHEER ALI; THE KAUFMANN CORRESPONDENCE AND
THE SIMLA CONFERENCE

It is unlikely in the extreme that Gladstone, Clarendon or Granville, if they had been asked, would have admitted that they contemplated any departure from Lawrence's policy. Nevertheless, the position in respect of Central Asia and Afghanistan was not, in 1874, what it had been in 1869. The independence of Afghanistan had become or been allowed to become an integral part of British interests. The first enquiry to make is how far this development had been followed by a correspondingly closer development of relations between Afghanistan and India. If "inactivity" had been interpreted in the literal sense of doing ^xnothing whatsoever there would have been no reason for close relations. But, as we have seen, the exponents of "inactivity" had, at the most, confined its operation to India and had expected a good deal of activity on the part of the Home Government. Mayo, moreover, had by the end of his term of office transformed Lawrence's policy into something a great deal broader and more positive. In other words, two lines of thought, not quite identical, had converged upon Afghanistan. It was to be independent but at the same time it was to be - to some

undefined extent - under British influence.

It would not have been easy for any state to fill the role for which Afghanistan was cast; to be, in Mayo's words, one of that fringe of "strong, independent, friendly, though not altogether neutral States".¹ For such a country as Afghanistan it was the more difficult. It is a possible criticism of Mayo that his high-minded policy of pacification assumed that the countries with which he dealt were already at the more than elementary stage of civilization and international intercourse to which he wanted to bring them.

For whatever reasons, the fact remained that relations between Sheer Ali and the Indian government showed no development or consolidation comparable to the increased importance of Afghanistan in British-Indian policy. On the contrary, they tended to degenerate rather than improve after the Ambalga Conference or, at least, after Mayo's death. From the British point of view, one source of danger existed, possibly though not necessarily, in the correspondence carried on between Sheer Ali and General Kaufmann, the governor and commander-in-chief of Russian Turkestan. That correspondence began with a letter from Kaufmann to Sheer Ali, written in March 1870, in which Kaufmann explained the

1. Mayo to Frere, 27th May 1869. John Martineau: The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere, Vol.I, p.49 (2 vols., 1895).

circumstances under which Abdur Rahman had been received at Tashkent and disclaimed any intention of meddling with Afghanistan, for two reasons: Sheer Ali had shown no signs of meddling with Bokhara and had given Kaufmann no cause of dissatisfaction. Not unnaturally, Sheer Ali was disturbed by this letter, with its implied threat of what might happen if he were thought to be meddling with Bokhara or giving the Russians cause for dissatisfaction;¹ and he sought Mayo's advice on the reply he should send. Aitchison, to whom the question was referred, regarded Kaufmann's letter as "a most insidious one", containing the implication "that any interference by Shere Ali in Bokhara would be ground for Russian interference in Afghanistan". He advised a reply to the effect that Sheer Ali was guided in his policy by the British government and that therefore it would be "most convenient and tend most to obviate all misunderstandings if General Kaufmann would in future make his views and wishes known to his Government in St. Petersburg for communication to the Ameer through the British Government". Mayo, however, in a

1. The exact words were, "Je ne desire pas de me diverger de vous parceque votre efficacite n'a donne aucun sujet de mecontentement". v "Note and Correspondence connected with the Mission to Cabul" (Private Secretary's Office, Simla, 12th June 1876); Memorandum on the Correspondence between General Von Kaufmann and the Ameer of Cabul, pp.1-3. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877, King's College Library.

minute of 5th June 1870, dissented from Aitchison. He did not regard Kaufmann's letter as "so very insidious" and did not attach "any very great importance to it". He declined to support Aitchison's suggestion that Kaufmann should be asked to address Sheer Ali in future via the Russian and British governments, though he thought it "desirable that the Ameer should be made fully aware that should Russia at any time assume a more aggressive position than she does now such an attitude would not be approved of by the British Government". In Mayo's view, Kaufmann had probably been instructed from St. Petersburg to make generally known in Central Asia "the perfect understanding existing between Great Britain and Russia in respect of those countries". The Home Government concurred in expressing its satisfaction at the "amiable tone" of Kaufmann's letter.

Kaufmann's second letter arrived in Kabul on 3rd March 1871. It expressed gratification for Sheer Ali's "pacific" reply and reiterated the Tsar's desire to live in peace and harmony with his neighbours. Sheer Ali passed on the letter to the Indian government and requested an accurate translation (into Persian). This he was given, with the advice to send a friendly reply; which he did.¹

1. Ibid., p.3.

On 28th October 1871 Kaufmann sent his third letter. He explained the causes which had led to the military operations against Kulja; observed that if Sheer Ali's officers would carry out strictly his orders not to interfere with Bokhara, friendship between Russia and Afghanistan would increase; and congratulated the Ameer on his reconciliation with Yakub Khan, adding that his sympathy in this matter had been with the father throughout. Aitchison, who received the letter in December 1871 from the British agent in Kabul, was slightly disturbed at what he regarded as the hint that Sheer Ali had had more sympathy in his quarrel with Yakub Khan from Russia than from Britain. By Aitchison's advice the translation which Sheer Ali had asked for was accompanied by a friendly letter from the Acting Viceroy, Lord Napier.¹

Sheer Ali sent a polite reply to Kaufmann and on 19th May 1872 sent a copy of his reply to the Viceroy together with a fourth letter of Kaufmann's written in February 1872: he did not, however, on this occasion ask for a translation or the draft of an answer. This fourth letter of Kaufmann's dealt with an apparently small point but Aitchison was disturbed and in a minute of 29th May 1872 advised that a

1. Ibid., pp.3,4. The letter suggested by Aitchison was sent on 1st May 1872. The slowness of action and communication is noticeable. Kaufmann's third letter was dated 28th October 1871: Sheer Ali was not instructed how to answer it until 1st May 1872.

translation and a draft reply be sent to Sheer Ali, though he had not asked for them; and added,

"It would be well if by some means this correspondence between General Kaufmann and the Ameer could be quietly brought to a close".

The new Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, apparently dissented from Aitchison's opinion: he directed that Sheer Ali be informed of his desire to maintain friendly relations with Afghanistan but that no translation or draft reply to Kaufmann be sent.¹

Kaufmann's fifth letter was dated 16th June 1872 and was received from Sheer Ali, via the Punjab government, on 31st July. Kaufmann remarked that the interchange of letters was both evidence of and an assistance to the growth of good feeling between Russia and Afghanistan but there were two passages in the letter which might be taken to imply a veiled threat. The Ameer was informed that "God willing", it was hoped that no change would take place regarding the frontier between Bokhara and Afghanistan -

"for the slightest change causing displeasure to both parties manifestly destroys the comfort of both".

1. Ibid., pp.4,5. Thomas George (Baring) 1st Earl of Northbrook (1826-1904) had held subordinate office in England, including that of Under-Secretary for India, 1859-64. He was almost the model mid-Victorian Liberal statesman: pacific, economical, with the highest sense of public duty. His biography, Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook (1908), by Bernard Mallet, hardly devotes enough space or detail to Northbrook's Viceroyalty and is less useful than Hunter's book on Mayo or Lady Betty Balfour's on her father, Lord Lytton.

In the second place, Kaufmann pointed out that the people within his charge were "all comfortable" and added,

"Your wisdom and sagacity will doubtless have taught you by the study of history that the Great God wishes that King to rule who preserving his subjects in comfort maintains friendship with his neighbours".

Was there a suggestion here that if Sheer Ali failed to provide as much comfort for his subjects as the subjects of Russia received at Kaufmann's hands, or failed to maintain friendship with his neighbours, the "Great God" might cease to wish him to rule? Such, at least, was the interpretation put on the letter at Kabul where it was received on 19th July, and whence it was sent to India on the following day. In a covering letter the agent at Kabul expressed the fears entertained there. If Bokhara and Khiva fell to Russia

"and their frontier is extended without the intervention of any buffer to the limits of Afghanistan, which may, indeed, be truly styled the frontier of Hindostan, God only knows what line of policy or demeanour they will adopt towards Afghanistan, and what troubles may be in store for the Afghan and English Governments".

Aitchison, in a minute of 6th August 1872, suggested that Sheer Ali should be advised to send a friendly reply and informed that the British Government had full confidence in the assurances given by Russia. These suggestions were adopted by Aitchison's third suggestion -

"It is a delicate matter to meddle with, but if

General Kaufmann could be got to stop the correspondence of which he is so fond, it would be a satisfactory thing"

- was not acted on, in the reply sent to Sheer Ali on 7th September 1872.¹

In the meantime Kaufmann had written two more letters, one dated 13th August 1872 to Sheer Ali and the other dated 15th August to Naib Mohammad Alum, the governor of Balkh. There was nothing much in these letters beyond general professions of friendship but it was the fact of the letters and not their content which disturbed Sheer Ali and, according to the Kabul agent, made him ask why,

"notwithstanding that the Russian authorities are well aware that the Government of Afghanistan is united with the British Government, they openly write unsolicited letters for the promotion of their friendship with Afghanistan and do not relax in the frequency of their communications, and now they have commenced to send letters to the Governor of Balkh also".

The agent at Kabul was instructed on 7th September 1872 to tell Sheer Ali that the Indian government saw no reason for apprehension in Kaufmann's letters but, rather, evidence of Russian amity. Aitchison noted, however, that the Ameer was evidently "very nervous about the continued correspondence".

In fact, Sheer Ali was so apprehensive that on this occasion he departed from the Viceroy's advice. He left

1. Ibid., pp.5-8.

Kaufmann's letter of 16th June 1872 unanswered and in his answer (postponed until 28th November 1873) to Kaufmann's letter of 13th August 1872 referred to a much earlier letter, the first, of 28th March 1870, which he pointedly interpreted as

"your promise that no Russian officer will interfere with the affairs of Afghanistan, and that no advice or assistance will be given to the enemies of the kingdom which will be turned against it".

In reply, Kaufmann's deputy, Kolpakovski, sent on 18th December 1873 a letter which contained some remarkable passages:

"I consider it my duty to express to you my satisfaction as regards the feelings of friendship and devotion which you set forth in your letter ... In despatching the same to the High Governor-General for his favourable consideration I entertain the hope that he will not refuse your request... continue to follow the same straight road along which you have hitherto gone, and you will become convinced that it is the right and advantageous road as regards both yourself and the welfare of your people".

This letter, which was forwarded to India in the usual way by the Kabul agent, was considered sufficiently interesting and the word "request" sufficiently ambiguous for a photographic copy to be taken and sent to England for verification of the translation. The translation was sent back to Kabul and the attention of the Secretary of State for India was drawn, in a despatch of 1st May 1874, to the tone of Kolpakovski's

letter.¹

At the end of January 1874 Sheer Ali notified Kaufmann of his nomination of his son, Abdulla Jan, as heir-apparent: Kolpakovski, who replied on 25th February mentioned the recent marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh to a daughter of the Tsar. To Sheer Ali this information brought not the gratification it was presumably intended to bring but the suspicion that Britain and Russia, so closely allied, were contemplating the partition of Afghanistan.²

In the first week of September 1875 a new departure was taken when, in lieu of the previous system of passing letters over the frontier, another letter of Kaufmann's was brought to Kabul by a Russian agent or messenger. This letter repeated the news of the Anglo-Russian matrimonial alliance and aroused further apprehension in the Afghan Durbar. The Kabul agent, in sending a copy to India (no British advice was sought) noted the current belief that

"This time the Russian Government has made itself partner in the protection of Afghanistan. This para. is of a new tone. God knows what State secrets are concealed in it".³

Nevertheless Sheer Ali not merely sent a polite reply but invited the continuance of the correspondence - "the despatch

1. Ibid., pp.8-11.

2. Ibid., p.12.

3. Ibid., p.13.

of friendly communications should be considered one of the principles of our friendship". This letter produced a speedy reply from Kaufmann, of 27th October 1875, giving, "through real friendship", a narrative of his recent expedition to Khokand. Sheer Ali, in a fulsome answer of 3rd February 1876 expressed his hope that "if God pleases, nothing will interfere with the progress of friendship between Russia and Afghanistan" and added that "the favour of your continuing to write to me about your good health is requested".¹

In a minute of 12th August 1876 Lytton gave his view of the correspondence between Sheer Ali and Kaufmann.

"I am also most reluctantly led to the conclusion that our previous toleration of a correspondence, in which the Russian General, not even confining his remarks to the foreign interests of Afghanistan, has already made very significant reference to the internal affairs of that country, in a sense decidedly opposed to the language then held towards the Ameer by the Government of India - makes it now very difficult for us to remonstrate with adequate effect against proceedings which I cannot but regard as a gross violation of the assurances solemnly given by Prince Gortchakoff to Lord Clarendon, and since then frequently renewed by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg".²

In 1870 Sheer Ali, almost shivering with apprehension, was sending the originals of Kaufmann's letters to India and wondering what sinister motive was behind this unwelcome

1. Ibid., pp.14-15.

2. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877.

correspondence: in 1875 he was sending only the copies of letters, asking for no advice on answering them and soliciting further letters from Kaufmann. He might be as suspicious of Russia as ever - it was difficult for a man in his position not to be suspicious of everything and everybody - but he was obviously anxious to conciliate her. In these five years Britain had allowed the very special position which she had occupied in respect of Afghanistan in 1870 to go by default: she had taken no steps to prevent the infiltration of Russian influence. If she desired to exercise no influence upon Afghanistan or to stand in a special relation to that country, well and good. But, in fact, one of the outcomes of the negotiations concurrently conducted between London and St. Petersburg was to give Afghanistan a very considerable importance in British policy. Another outcome was to draw from Russia the most precise and positive assurances that Afghanistan was outside her sphere of influence.¹ It was difficult to believe that this was true in 1876 or not to regret that Mayo had not followed Aitchison's advice in 1870 and insisted on Kaufmann's letters being sent via St. Petersburg, London and India; in which case they would

1. An appendix of declarations made by the Russian government in respect of Afghanistan was prepared by F. Henvey, Under-Secretary in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, dated 23rd July 1876. It is given as Appendix 4.

probably not have been sent at all.¹

It will have been observed that Sheer Ali's letters to Kaufmann and his attitude towards Kaufmann's letters to him changed after the end of the year 1873. In January 1874 he took the initiative by announcing the nomination of his heir-apparent and in September he invited the continuance of the correspondence. It would in any event be inherently probable that something specific had occurred to account for this change but there is, in fact, ample evidence both of what that was and what its effects were. As to the latter, Lord Roberts related what Yakub Khan afterwards told him.

"I had several interesting conversations with Yakub Khan, and in discussing with him Shir Ali's reasons for breaking with us, he dwelt on the fact that his father, although he did not get all he wished out of Lord Mayo, was firmly satisfied and content with what had been done for him, but when Sayyid Nur Muhammad returned from Simla in 1873, he became thoroughly disgusted, and at once made overtures to the Russians, with whom constant intercourse had since been kept up".²

On 23rd March 1873 the Indian government learnt that Goldsmid's award in the Seistan arbitration had been confirmed

1. On the other hand, Sheer Ali had been greatly impressed by Mayo's personality and it may be that the degeneration in Anglo-Afghan relations would not have taken place had Mayo lived longer; not so much on account of what he did as on account of his impressive personal qualities.
2. Forty-One Years in India, Vol.II, p.247 (2 vols., 1897). And cf. Roberts' Notes on the Central Asian Question, p.20 (1877):- "I had frequent opportunities when in Afghanistan of discussing, with those best able to form an opinion, our relations with Sher Ali: they all pointed to 1873 as the date from which the Amir became estranged",

in London and it immediately proposed, through the Kabul agent, to send an official of high rank (McNabb, the Commissioner of Peshawar) to explain the details of the award to Sheer Ali. It would be the envoy's secondary duty to explain the agreement reached with Russia over the northern boundary of Afghanistan in the previous January. Sheer Ali, though he did not elaborate on the objections to the reception of a British envoy which (according to the Kabul agent) had been discussed in Durbar, preferred, at that stage at least, to receive the information through an envoy of his own sent to India. To that course the Indian government agreed and the Afghan envoy, Synd Noor Mohammad Shah, arrived in Simla, had his first meeting with Northbrook on 12th July 1873. Northbrook began by speaking of the frontier settlements effected and said (according to the same envoy's statements to Sir Lewis Pelly in February 1877),

"It is necessary that the Ameer be informed that since the country of Afghanistan is situated between the territories of the English and the Russian Governments, it is therefore advantageous that the Government of Afghanistan should be strong and independent".

Northbrook was careful to make it plain that British influence would only be used in respect of the external and not of the internal affairs of Afghanistan but he added that if British influence failed to avert aggression from without it was probable that Britain would afford Sheer Ali material

assistance. The interview closed with the envoy's stating the greater reliance of the Afghans upon the British rather than upon the Russians and their desire for a promise of aid against the steadily approaching Russian advance.

Thereafter the envoy held several meetings with the Foreign Secretary, Aitchison, when the details of the Seistan award and of the agreement on the northern boundary of Afghanistan were explained to him. He heard of the former with distaste which he made no attempt to conceal and of the latter with scepticism: he had no faith, he said, in Russian promises, either direct or indirect; only in the assurance of British aid. When he was given to understand that no such aid had been promised by Mayo or Lawrence he declared that if a new agreement were made it would have to be much different from the old one. Britain would have to declare, publicly, that Russia, or any state under her influence, would be regarded as an enemy if guilty of acts of aggression against Afghanistan and would have to supply Sheer Ali with arms, money and, if necessary, troops; the last to be sent along the routes indicated by Sheer Ali and withdrawn when the invasion had been repelled.

On 26th July the envoy had a second interview with Northbrook. It is necessary to notice, at this stage, that Northbrook's hands were by no means free. Before the Afghan

envoy arrived at Simla Northbrook had cabled, on 27th June, to the Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, arguing that it was in the interests of peace that Russia should know of British relations with Afghanistan and that circumstances might arise which made it incumbent on Britain to afford the ruler of Afghanistan material assistance. This he proposed to tell the envoy. On 1st July, Argyll replied. He did not object to the general sense of what Northbrook said about Russia, as a communication to be made from the Foreign Office to the Russian government; but "great caution" was necessary "in assuring Amir of material assistance which may raise undue and unfounded expectation". In the light of this cable Northbrook had obviously gone as far as he was expected to go, and possibly further, in what he said to the envoy on 12th July. On 24th July he cabled again to Argyll:

"Amir of Kabul alarmed at Russian progress; dissatisfied with general assurances and anxious to know definitely how far he may rely upon our help if invaded. I propose to assure him that if he unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations, we will help him with money, arms and troops, if necessary to repel unprovoked invasion. We to be the judge of the necessity. Answer by telegraph quickly".

This was less than the envoy had asked of Aitchison¹ but it

1. It is only fair to Northbrook to point out that he went as far as Lord Cranbrook was willing to go in 1878. cf. a letter of Cranbrook's to Lord Beaconsfield, 13th September 1878: "The defence of Afghan territory must be very

was more than the Home Government were willing to commit themselves to. Argyll replied on 26th July.

"Cabinet think that you should inform Amir that we do not at all share his alarm and consider there is no cause for it. But you may assure him that we shall maintain our settled policy in Afghanistan, if he abides by our advice in external affairs".

Beyond these instructions Northbrook could not and did not go, although he saw the Afghan envoy on two or three occasions between 26th July and 30th August and proposed to make Sheer Ali a gift of ten lakhs of rupees, in addition to five already promised; five of these ten to be used for paying for the 20,000 stand of arms for which Sheer Ali had asked.

It was sufficiently obvious that no responsible British statesman would or could give a "guarantee" to any Afghan ruler in the sense of promising to defend his territory in all circumstances and to go to war whenever and with whomsoever he did. Was there a substantial difference between what Northbrook suggested - "money, arms and troops, if necessary to repel unprovoked aggression" - and what Argyll allowed, the maintenance of "our settled policy"? The

1. (Continued from previous page)
strictly limited, and the particular boundaries defined. All must be founded on his acting on our advice, for we could not be responsible for what he may bring upon himself by independent action". A.E.Gathorne-Hardy: Gathorne Hardy, First Earl of Cranbrook, Vol.II, p.84 (2 vols., 1910).

answer must be that there was, and that it would appear still more substantial in the eyes of Sheer Ali. What he feared more than anything else was the advance of Russia until her frontier marched with that of Afghanistan; a series of frontier "incidents"; and then invasion. The "settled policy" of Britain had done nothing to stop the eastward advance of Russia and since it was based on what seemed to him to be a false assumption, that the good faith of Russia could be depended on, it was bound to appear very ill-founded. "Money, arms and troops, if necessary to repel unprovoked aggression" would have represented, for Sheer Ali, a substantial advance upon the "settled policy". The fundamental error of Argyll and the Cabinet arose from a lack of imagination, from the failure to understand the necessities of a ruler, none too secure on his own throne and faced with the approach of a great Power advancing towards his country with giant strides. Such a man, in such a position, might be highly suspicious and highly unreasonable; but if his actions were likely to have an important effect upon British interests it would have been prudent to pay more attention to his suspicions and to take more pains to convert him to reason.¹

1. The Simla Conference is recorded in Parl. Papers, 1878-89, Vol. 56. The two most important items, Northbrook's cable of 24th July and Argyll's reply of 26th July are given under No. 482.

Whether Sheer Ali was or was not justified in being disappointed with the outcome of the Simla Conference it very soon became obvious that he was bitterly disappointed. His reply to Northbrook's letter of 6th September 1873 was, in its way, a masterpiece of irony; but the irony of a man who feels that he has been betrayed.

"This humble suppliant at the Divine Throne renders his thanks to God, and expresses his gratitude that, praised be God the Almighty, lasting peace and tranquillity are established in all Governments, and doubts and oppositions from all sides have been removed; and such security has been attained in all kingdoms that no one will transgress his own frontiers, and nobody will dispute or discuss with anybody within their own limits, and the word "enmity" no longer is used in State papers and documents, and tranquillity and security are enjoyed by all nations at large".

He wanted, he said, no further engagements: he would be content if the policy of "Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo" continued to be pursued. More significant still, he did not draw on the ten lakhs of rupees at his disposal at Kohat.

It was the more unfortunate that the attempt which Sheer Ali made to settle the succession led to a further degeneration in Anglo-Afghan relations. In November 1873 he nominated his favourite son, Abdullah Jan, as heir apparent; notifying the Viceroy and Kaufmann of his action. The replies he received were very different. That from the Government of India was

"designedly couched, as nearly as circumstances admit, in the same language as that in which in 1858 the Punjab Government were instructed to reply to the letter of Dost Mohamed Khan intimating the selection of Sher Ali as heir apparent".¹

If Sheer Ali recollected - and he could scarcely forget - his own efforts to establish himself after his father's death, this letter could not be construed as holding out much encouragement to Abdulla Jan. Kolpakovski's reply of 25th February 1874 was in striking contrast.

"I congratulate you on this selection. Such nominations tend to the comfort and tranquillity of the kingdom. I wish perpetual succession of your kingdom by you and your heirs and hope that after your death Sirdar Abdulla Jan will follow your example and make himself an ally and friend of the Emperor".²

It may be that Kolpakovski meant little or nothing by his flowery language; but Sheer Ali was in the mood when words could mean a great deal to him. His nomination of Abdulla Jan had naturally provoked the anger of Yakub Khan who, however, unable to launch a rebellion, eventually went to Kabul under a safe-conduct granted by his father. The safe-conduct was forthwith violated and he was immediately imprisoned. Upon hearing of this Northbrook instructed the Kabul agent to tell the Ameer that "as his friend and well-wisher", he trusted the report of the arrest was untrue and

1. Lytton to Argyll, 23rd Jan. 1874. Parl. Papers, 1878-79, Vol. 46, 491.

2. Parl. Papers, 1881.C-2798: Correspondence Respecting Central Asia; Central Asia. No. 1 (1881). Inclosure No. 17 in No. 1.

to urge the necessity of observing the conditions under which Yakub Khan had come to Kabul. By so doing Sheer Ali would maintain his good name and the friendship of the British Government. Sheer Ali strongly resented this intervention in an internal, and family, matter and denied that the British government had any right to withdraw their friendship so long as he was guilty of no violation of his engagements to them.¹

The situation which existed by 1874 can be summarized thus: the integrity Afghanistan had, rightly or wrongly, come gradually to be regarded as highly important to British interests and it had become part of British policy to act as the exclusive protector of Afghanistan in her external relations. This meant a marked change from the policy of ten years earlier. The change, however, had not been accompanied by a corresponding increase of British influence in Afghanistan. For a time, indeed, following the Ambala Durbar, the personality of Mayo had lent an appearance of solidity, from the Afghan point of view, to Anglo-Afghan relations. Northbrook suffered in the eyes of Sheer Ali from the fact that he was not Mayo - even though the Seistan Award, for which he was blamed, arose out of Mayo's initiative. Britain had done nothing to check the Russian advance eastward:

1. Parl. Papers, 1878: Afghanistan, No.1, pp.126-127.

she had allowed the correspondence begun by Kaufmann to continue. The Simla Conference had, compared with that of Ambala, been an anti-climax. Sheer Ali, for these and more personal reasons, had gradually moved towards a consideration of two alternatives: that there existed a secret purpose, shared by Britain and Russia, for the partition of Afghanistan; and that Britain would fail him in the event of Russian aggression. He had not, in 1874, made up his mind between these alternatives; but each of them counselled him to make his terms with Russia.

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND LORD NORTHBROOK,
1874-1876

In the last week of January 1874 polling began in the general election and it soon became evident that there was a strong reaction in England towards the Conservative party, which eventually secured a majority of 50. On 17th February Gladstone resigned and on the 18th Disraeli was commissioned by the Queen to form a government. In his Cabinet, Lord Derby was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Marquis of Salisbury Secretary of State for India until Derby resigned on 27th March 1878 and Salisbury, succeeding to his office, was himself succeeded at the India Office by Gathorne Hardy who, on 3rd May 1878, was raised to the peerage as Viscount Cranbrook. For the sake of convenience it may be proper to add at this point that Lord Northbrook remained as Viceroy of India until April 1876, when he was succeeded by Lord Lytton.

It is tempting to assume that Disraeli's government represented so clean a break with Gladstone's that the events of 1878, the challenge to Russia over the Treaty of San Stefano, the occupation of Cyprus, the Congress of Berlin and the invasion of Afghanistan, were inherent in its policy

from the very beginning of its course. That, however, is an assumption which cannot safely be made. The first shadow of the new phase of the Eastern Question was not cast until the revolt against Turkish rule which broke out in Herzegovina in July 1875. There followed the British rejection of the Berlin memorandum of 13th May 1876, the declaration of war on Turkey by Serbia in July 1876 and by Montenegro in August, and the publication in September by Gladstone of his pamphlet on The Bulgarian Horrors - the massacres of Christians by Turkish irregulars which, though they had begun in May, had only come to the general knowledge of Europe in the middle of the summer. The abortive Constantinople Conference sat from 12th December 1876 to 20th January 1877. War between Russia and Turkey began on 24th April 1877. Until almost the end of that year the Russians were held up by the gallant defence of Plevna but its surrender on 10th December was quickly followed by the Russian capture of Sofia on 3rd January 1878, of Philippopolis on 17th January and by a major Turkish defeat at Senova on 9th January: on 20th January Adrianople was occupied by Russian troops. On 23rd January the Mediterranean squadron was ordered to proceed through the Dardanelles to Constantinople and although the order was countermanded a vote of £6,000,000 for military preparations was asked for and war fever in England rose to

its height in the form of "jingoism". On 23rd March 1878 the preliminaries of the Treaty of San Stefano were communicated to the British government: on the 27th the Cabinet decided to call out the Reserves and to despatch an Anglo-Indian force to occupy strong points in the Levant; on 1st April Salisbury issued his Circular Note, criticising the provisions of the treaty, with the result of enlisting the sympathy of Austria-Hungary and Germany, and, perhaps, of leading to the Convention which he and the Russian envoy, Schouvaloff, concluded on 30th May: the first session of the Berlin Congress was held on 13th June 1878 and the last on 13th July. It remains doubtful whether Disraeli¹ ever intended to go to war with Russia and certainly the period of acute Anglo-Russian friction lasted - so far as the respective governments were concerned - only for a few months in the winter of 1877-78. Obviously it influenced British policy in respect of Afghanistan but it was not long enough to account for that policy in its entirety.²

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1. Disraeli was raised to the peerage as Earl of Beaconsfield on 12th August 1876 but references to him will be continued to be made under his better-known surname.
 2. v Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol.III, chapter I (II and III) (1923). The contributor, W.H.Dawson, concludes that "a study of the diplomatic despatches and conversations which passed between the Foreign Office and the Porte at that time, and of Lord Beaconsfield's concurrent correspondence with the Queen, his colleagues and his friends, makes it impossible to resist the conclusion that all the admonitions, remonstrances and veiled threats which were addressed to Russia on the subject of Constantinople were a gigantic piece of bluff". p.126.

With regard to Central Asia and Afghanistan two quotations will serve to suggest that British policy as it existed in 1878 had not been formed in 1874-75. "Russia must advance to Merv ultimately", Salisbury wrote to Northbrook in the summer of 1874, "and we have no power or interest to prevent it. Herat is quite another matter".¹ And on Disraeli, as late as May 1875, there is Lord Napier's comment, contained in a letter to Frere written on the 28th of that month.

"Mr. Disraeli sees no popular call for more active measures, and things which would have caught his eye and fired his fancy twenty years ago fail to move him now".²

Derby's first concern, after taking office in 1874, was directly with Persia and only indirectly with Afghanistan. The Foreign Office was concerned with a circular letter sent by General Llamakin to the Turkoman chiefs, in which he claimed appointment as "the supreme authority on the Attrek and Goorgan". Loftus was instructed to point out that this area was Persian but he got small comfort from de Westmann, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, who told him that the incident was of little importance in itself and solely

1. Lady Gwendolen Cecil; Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury, Vol. II, p. 70 (5 vols., Vols. I and II, 1920).
 2. Martineau, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 63.

concerned Russia and Persia.¹

On 12th May 1875 Derby had a long conversation, personal rather than official, with the Russian ambassador, Schouvaloff.

"Count Schouvaloff then proceeded to explain at some length what he described as his personal views on the subject of the extension of Russian power in Central Asia, as to which it is sufficient to say that they were unfavourable to fresh annexations. He asked me whether he was right in supposing that there was no inclination on the part of England to advance farther in the direction of the Russian possessions, unless such advance were considered by us necessary for defensive purposes, in order to protect our actual dominions, I said that his view was undoubtedly correct, and that, so far from desiring to annex any part of Afghanistan, we should deprecate such a result as bringing only increased cost and trouble without advantage. We wished to be on good terms with the Afghan ruler, and to exercise a friendly influence over his policy, but his independence was not likely to be menaced by us. The only case in which I could conceive an advance of British troops westward as probable was in the event of any Russian movement tending to the occupation of Merv. I reminded Count Schouvaloff that I had warned him some months back of the great importance which the Indian Government attached to Merv, and of the danger to our relations which would ensue if it were meddled with. He said that he remembered what I had told him on that subject, and had communicated it to his Government. He quite saw the danger which might arise if the two Powers were brought face to face in the neighbourhood of Herat. "Was he justified", he asked, "in assuming that our action in this matter would depend on that of Russia, that England

1. Parl. Papers, 1878. C-2164. Correspondence Respecting Central Asia: Central Asia, No. I (1878), Nos. 20 (copy of Llamakin's circular), 23 (Loftus to Derby, 17th November 1874).

would not move if Russia did not?" I said I thought he might feel safe on that point: we only desired the maintenance of the status quo, and certainly should not be the first to take steps that might be considered aggressive. He said his Government would be perfectly satisfied with this expression of intentions from me, hinting that the language of some of our newspapers had created distrust and suspicion in Russia".¹

On 5th April 1875 Gortchakoff sent to Schouvaloff a despatch and a long memorandum, which were communicated to Derby on 11th May. The despatch said that

"His Imperial Majesty has no intention of extending the frontiers of Russia, either on the side of Bokhara or on the side of Krasnovodsk and of the Attrek. We have no inducement to do so. On the contrary the Emperor deems any extension of our frontiers in those parts as being opposed to our own interests. We shall cause those frontiers to be respected, and shall protect our commerce, we shall punish any act of violence or pillage in such manner as to prevent their recurrence, we shall endeavour to extirpate brigandage, and to establish the security of our possessions".

The despatch concluded by requesting Her Majesty's Government to exert their influence on the Ameer of Kabul to dissuade him from "any inconsiderate act of a kind to excite or encourage the Turkomans".²

The memorandum was, in the main, an attempt to relate Russian action in Central Asia to Gortchakoff's circular despatch of 1864 and to describe and explain what had happened

1. Ibid., No.26. Derby to Loftus, 19th March 1875.

2. Ibid., No.29.

since that time.

"Unhappily the continually recurring difficulties, which result from the contact of a regularly constituted Power with semi-savage neighbours, soon compelled us to overstep the limits which we had voluntarily assigned to ourselves".

Gortchakoff then went on to examine the negotiations over the Afghan boundary, insisting on the magnanimity of the Russian government in yielding to British obstinacy on that point. As regards the expeditions against Khiva and the Turkomans, they were, said Gortchakoff, "forced upon us by a state of things impossible to foresee, and by necessities independent of our wishes". Unfortunately, the British government appeared to think that such actions were a breach of some definite engagements which the Russian government had contracted whereas, in fact, there was no such engagement, either party having "entire liberty of action and judgment with respect to measures necessitated for its own security". In Gortchakoff's view an understanding¹ had been reached between Britain and Russia, covering five heads: (1) antagonism between the two countries would be contrary to their mutual interests; (2) it was desirable to preserve an intermediate zone to avert immediate contact; (3) Afghanistan

1. It is difficult to reconcile Gortchakoff's view that each country had preserved entire liberty of action with his detailed analysis of the agreement which he held to exist.

should constitute this intermediate zone "if its independence were secured on either side from all encroachment;

(4) that the limits of Afghanistan should be recognized in accordance with the line agreed on; (5) Britain would exert its influence upon Afghanistan and Russia upon Bokhara and Khokand to prevent acts of aggression. Near the end of the memorandum was the significant sentence,

"this understanding, which leaves us complete liberty of action over the territory situated between our frontiers and those of Afghanistan".¹

A copy of the despatch and of the memorandum were sent by Derby to Salisbury on 26th May 1875 and Salisbury replied, through his Under-Secretary, Lord George Hamilton, on 22nd June. He dissented from the memorandum on two matters of fact: the idea of the "neutral zone", which Gortchakoff was representing as having been agreed upon under the title of "intermediate zone", had been abandoned in 1869-70; the recognition by Russia of the northern frontier of Afghanistan was not an act of courtesy but a mere recognition of an existing fact. He then went on to deal with the concluding part of the memorandum. If the Russian claim to complete freedom of action between the Russian frontiers and those of Afghanistan were admitted, the admission might lead to serious complications, affecting Indian interests, in respect

1. Ibid., inclosure in No.29.

of Merv. He suggested that "a liberty of action in all contingencies and in all circumstances" ought to be reserved to and by the British government, as full as that claimed by Russia.¹

The British reply to Gortchakoff's memorandum, in the form of a shorter memorandum, was sent to the charge d'affaires in Russia on 25th October 1875. It used Salisbury's suggestions regarding the history of the negotiations over the neutral zone and the Afghan frontier. It did not go quite as far as accepting Salisbury's claim to complete liberty of action for Britain but, after mentioning "the integrity of Afghan territory", it went on:

"This is an object to which Her Majesty's Government attach the highest importance, and they must reserve to themselves the most complete liberty of action under all future contingencies as to the measures which may, in their opinion be necessary to secure it".²

It was obvious that the British and Russian governments were by no means agreed either in their interpretations of past negotiations or in their understanding as to the existing

1. Ibid., No.32.

2. Ibid., inclosure in No.54, Derby to Doria, 25th Oct.1875. It was significant that, on the suggestion of the government of India, the Russian government had been formally apprised of the provisions of Article 4 of the treaty with the Khan of Kalat of 14th May 1854 - "Should it be deemed necessary to station British troops in any part of the territory of Khelat, they shall occupy such positions as may be thought advisable by the British authorities". Ibid. No.43. Derby to Doria, 15th Sept.1875, with inclosure.

position. The Russian government claimed complete liberty of action up to the frontiers of Afghanistan, as defined in 1873; though it agreed to respect the integrity of Afghanistan. The British government, starting from the integrity of Afghanistan, claimed complete liberty of action to sustain that integrity. This might conceivably mean action beyond the Afghan frontiers - with the risk of a collision with Russia in the area in which she claimed liberty of action. Gortchakoff, however, in a despatch of 3/15 February 1876, which was communicated to Derby on 25th February, glossed over the differences and contented himself by dismissing the scheme for an intermediate zone as "unpractical" and "agreeing" that "while retaining entire freedom of action", the two Powers should try to avoid any immediate contact with each other and any collision between the Asiatic States placed within their respective circles of influence.¹ It was evident that the British government was beginning to take a stronger line but that did not prevent Disraeli making an important speech in May 1876 in which he said that the understanding between the British and Russian governments had never been more complete; an announcement which was hailed with pleasure by sections of the Russian Press not usually disposed to look with favour on Britain.²

1. Ibid., No.62.

2. Ibid., No.68. Loftus to Derby, 12th May, 1876.

It is now time to turn to Salisbury. We have seen that whereas in the summer of 1874 he had attached no importance to the possible occupation of Merv by Russia he was taking, by June 1875, a grave view of such a possibility. Between those two dates he had made up his mind that a British resident ought to be placed in Herat or Kandahar; ruling out Kabul as "too fanatical to be quite safe". In an explanatory letter to Disraeli of 2nd January 1875 he complained that he was "getting uneasy as to our lack of information from Afghanistan". "It is very uncomfortable to think that for all we know Russia may have covered the country with intrigue... We have only a native agent who writes exactly what the Ameer tells him. Consequently we know nothing". Having obtained Disraeli's approval, Salisbury pressed his suggestion upon Northbrook in a number of private letters. On 19th February 1875 he wrote,

"Our position with respect to Afghanistan is so anomalous that some steps must soon be taken to set it right. It is the only Power on the face of the earth that, professing to be friendly, will not admit a representative in its territory from us. The evil is not merely a formal one. It has the effect of placing upon our frontier a thick covert, behind which any amount of hostile intrigue and conspiracy may be masked. I agree with you in thinking that a Russian advance upon India is a chimera. But I am by no means sure that an attempt to throw the Afghans upon us is so improbable".

Another letter of 23rd April 1875 warned Northbrook that

"We must not be seduced into solving a difficult question by the attractive alternative of doing nothing ... We cannot leave the keys of the gate in the hands of a warder of more than doubtful integrity, who insists, as an indispensable condition of his service, that his movements shall not be observed".¹

Before we examine Northbrook's reaction to Salisbury's proposal it is necessary to notice some of the influences which were certainly beginning to work upon Salisbury at this period. Among the members of the Council of India, a consultative and not an executive body, were Sir Bartle Frere, an ex-Governor of Bombay, and Sir Henry Rawlinson, whose views, down to 1868, we have described. Frere, who had supported the proposals of Jacob and Green for the occupation of Quetta, on 12th June 1874 wrote to Sir John Kaye of the India Office repeating the plea for the

1. Cecil, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.71-72. Salisbury, particularly at this stage of his career, had little use for the judgment even of his own senior staff and it must have irked him beyond endurance to be dependent for information about what was happening in Afghanistan upon a native agent. As well as that, Salisbury's relations with Northbrook were not good. Lady Gwendolen Cecil says that her father believed in "constant and intimate communication ... and found Lord Northbrook difficult to get into touch with in this respect. Op.cit., Vol.II, p.66. Mallet sees the difficulty as constitutional rather than personal, arising from the determination of Northbrook to defend what he regarded as the proper authority of the Viceroy against interference from home. "I take it", Northbrook wrote on 25th February 1876, "that a Governor-General gets a high salary for the sake of doing his duty and a very important part of it seems to me that he should tell the truth to the Secretary of State when he thinks a wrong thing is going to be done". Op.cit., pp.112-114.

occupation of Quetta; recommending that British agencies should be established in Afghanistan (with or without the Ameer's consent); and suggesting that a beginning be made by establishing a mission at Herat.¹ This letter, from the argument of which Lord Lawrence strongly dissented, was communicated privately by Salisbury to Northbrook. Frere replied in a second letter of 11th January 1875. It is likely to be more than coincidence that this same month of January saw Salisbury's letter to Disraeli of the 2nd and his instructions to Northbrook on the 22nd to proceed with the establishment of a British agent at Herat where, he said, Sheer Ali had agreed to receive one.

The other influence was the still weightier one of Rawlinson who, having added a final chapter on "The Later Phases of the Central Asian Question" to his previous articles and memoranda, published the whole under the title of England and Russia in the East. In his preface, dated January 1875, Rawlinson explained that the essential feature of the last chapter and, indeed, of the whole book, was the principle that

"if Russia should overstep certain limits in her approach to India, she must be checked by an armed resistance, even at the risk of producing war between the two countries. Herat, which has justly been named the "key to India" must,

1. Martineau, op.cit., Vol.I, p.491.

in my view, be secured against Russian occupation at all hazards, even though it should be necessary to march a force from India for its protection" (viii).

In his carefully-argued and well-documented final chapter Rawlinson put forward the view that the continuous advance of Russia towards India was certain and her occupation of Merv inevitable. From Merv the route to Herat was easy and "Russia in possession of Herat would have a grip on the throat of India". At the very least her position there would oblige Britain to increase her frontier forces by 20,000 men. "So long as she Russia held aloof from Merv, we should hold aloof from Herat; but if she deliberately threw down the gauntlet, she must expect it to be taken up". By taking up the gauntlet, Rawlinson meant the sending of an expeditionary force of 10,000 men (the majority of them Europeans), of whom 5,000 would garrison Herat; 3,000 Kandahar; 1,000 Quetta and Peshin; the remainder holding the line of communications between Kandahar and Herat. It was quite conceivable that Sheer Ali, if his present ill-humour were dissipated, might welcome such a force: in any event most of the inhabitants of western Afghanistan would do so and in the military sense the expedition would be no more than a promenade.

Salisbury's despatch of 22nd January 1875 was received in India in the middle of February. Northbrook replied by

cable on 18th February to the effect that he believed the time and circumstances were unsuitable for doing what Salisbury had instructed should be done; that there were no records in the Foreign Department to show that Sheer Ali had ever agreed to have a British agent at Herat or elsewhere; and that his refusal to have one now was no proof of disloyal intentions on his part. We have noticed the further arguments which Salisbury adduced in the following months. In the meantime Northbrook had set on foot two investigations, one into Sheer Ali's attitude at Amballa on the question of a resident British agent in Afghanistan and the other into the effect of appointing such agents, their probable usefulness and the efficacy of the existing system.¹ Having

1. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, the Commissioner of Peshawar, the Commissioner of Amritsar, the acting Commissioner of Dehra Dun, the acting Deputy-Commissioner of Peshawar (Cavagnari) and the Secretary to the Punjab Government were consulted on the following points: (1) Would Sheer Ali willingly consent to the appointment of resident British agents at Herat, Kandahar or elsewhere?; (2) Would the presence of such agents be advantageous to the British government?; (3) Were they satisfied with the sufficiency and accuracy of the intelligence sent by the native agent at Kabul? To the first question a unanimous answer, in the negative, was returned. On the second there was virtual unanimity, to the effect that such an agent, forced on the Ameer without his consent, could effect little or no good. On the third question there was a good deal of variety of opinion but more doubt about the sufficiency of the agent's information than about its accuracy. The investigation into Sheer Ali's attitude at Amballa in 1869 (v. Appendix 2) revealed a conflict of testimony: it certainly was not proved that he had consented to receive a British agent elsewhere than at Kabul. Hanna, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 57-93, quoting Parl. Papers 1878, Afghanistan No. 1 (1878).

collected his information, and with the support of his Council, Northbrook gave his considered answer to Salisbury in a private letter of 20th May 1875.

"We settled yesterday the opinion we have to give as to the agency at Herat. After a full examination of what took place at Umballain 1869 we do not think it can be fairly said that the Ameer ever accepted the proposal of a British officer at Herat. We think moreover that he may have reasons for objecting to the proposition quite consistent with loyalty to the British Government. All those best qualified to form an opinion say that the Ameer strongly objects to the presence of British officers in Afghanistan, and this view is confirmed by his proceedings since I have been in India. We think it would be very desirable to place an officer at Herat if it can be arranged with the cordial consent of the Ameer, but that, if done against his will under pressure, the officer will have no real power of being of use and his presence is as likely as not to occasion a break some day between us and Afghanistan. Unless therefore it is the desire of the Government at home to change the policy with regard to Afghanistan, and to show less desire to keep on cordial terms than has hitherto been thought advisable, we cannot recommend a formal announcement to the Ameer that we desire the establishment of a British Agent at Herat".¹

The argument between Salisbury and Northbrook was continued throughout the following months. Northbrook held to his opinion that

"to do anything to force him the Ameer to receive agents of ours in his country against his will is likely to have an opposite effect to that which you desire, and to subject us to the risk

1. Mallet, op.cit., p.102.

of another unnecessary and costly war in Afghanistan before many years are over".¹

It was not that Northbrook was by any means an out-and-out pacifist. "There is", he wrote to Mallet, the permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office on 29th January 1875, "a point upon which I would fight, and I should let the Russians understand this very clearly".² Salisbury, however, had an answer to this kind of argument. He had become convinced that there existed an undoubted conflict between the declared policy of the Russian government and the actual conduct of its frontier officials. Whether the government meant what it said or whether it was merely using smooth words to cloak the activities of its agents, there was need for accurate and speedy information.

"The case is quite conceivable in which Her Majesty's Government may be able, by early diplomatic action, to arrest proceedings on the frontier which a few weeks, or even days later, will have passed beyond the power even of the government of St. Petersburg to control".

The despatch of 10th November 1875³ in which this sentence occurs contained definite instructions that Salisbury's proposals should be carried out. They were not, however, to be carried out by Northbrook. On 12th September 1875 he had asked to be relieved of office in the following spring; on

1. Northbrook to Salisbury, 30th September 1875. Mallet, op.cit., p.105.

2. Ibid., p.101.

3. Parl. Papers 1878-79, Vol.56, 147. c-2190

the ground that there was no paramount public duty in the way of his fulfilling his private duty in going home. He reiterated his request on 7th January 1876 and although his disagreement with the Home Government over the question of British agents in Afghanistan no doubt contributed to his unwillingness to remain it is inaccurate to say that he "resigned rather than obey" Salisbury's instructions on this point.¹

1. As is said in the Cambridge History of India, Vol.VI,p.415. The agency was not the only matter on which Salisbury and Northbrook had differed. Their contest over the cotton tariff was just as important and received much more publicity.

C H A P T E R 11

LORD LYTTON'S VICEROYALTY: (I) TO THE PESHAWAR CONFERENCE

It was not easy to find a successor to Northbrook and although Disraeli had felt, on 8th June 1875, that "somehow or other Northbrook's reign" would soon terminate, he considered, in October, that it was unfortunate that Northbrook did not wish to fulfil his term. He was perhaps the more inclined to this opinion because, at that time, he seems to have been impressed, not so much with Northbrook himself as with his arguments.

"I am quite prepared" - he wrote to Salisbury - "for acting with energy and promptitude in the direction of Herat, if we could only come to a bona fide understanding with Afghanistan. But can we? If a movement on our part, which is only to secure our Empire, but to preserve their independence, is actually used by Russia to create ill-feeling between us and Afghan(ista)n, that would be a deplorable result".

Salisbury had been obliged to argue his case carefully.

"The dilemma is simply this. It concerns us much to have an agent in Afghanistan. We want to guide the Ameer and to watch; for there is the double danger that he may play us false, or, remaining true, may blunder into operations which will bring him into collision with Russia. It would also be a great security for peace if we were able to keep the Czar, who wishes for peace, informed of the intrigues of his frontier officers, who do not. But on the other hand it is of great importance - I quite admit it - not to irritate the Ameer. But this is a sort of

difficulty which the Indian Government has had constantly to meet. Diplomacy has been a real power in Indian history - because of the moral ascendancy which British officers have acquired over the Princes at whose Courts they were placed. I do not propose to send a mission to Afghanistan against the Ameer's wishes; but I propose to tell the Government of India to make the Ameer wish it. It cannot, of course, be done straight off - by return of post; but by the exercise of tact in the choice of the moment and the argument I feel sure that it can be done. The Ameer is genuinely frightened of the Russians; and every advance they make will make him more pliable, until their power on the frontier seems to him so great, and he is so convinced of our timidity, that he thinks safer to tie himself to them than to us".¹

In the same letter Salisbury expressed some alarm at Disraeli's wish to nominate the Earl of Powis, an excellent but undistinguished country gentleman, as Northbrook's successor. Powis, however, declined; so did Disraeli's old friend, Lord John Manners; so did Lord Carnarvon. In the end, with Salisbury's approval, the post was offered to and accepted by Lord Lytton. Lytton, the son of Bulwer-Lytton the novelist, was himself a poet by inclination and a diplomat by profession: when he was offered the Viceroyalty he was forty-five years of age and had been serving as

1. W.F.Monypenny and G.E.Buckle: The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (6 vols.). The volumes used here are Vols.V and VI (1920) by G.F.Buckle. Disraeli's letter of 15th October 1875 is printed in Vol.V, pp.433-434 and Salisbury's of 31st October at p.434. Salisbury's argument was not a weak one but it would have been more forceful in 1869 than in 1875.

Minister at Lisbon since 1872. His appointment has been criticized on the ground that he was unacquainted with India but that is a criticism which applied, in the first place, to a good many Viceroys who subsequently proved their worth; to Mayo, for example. Where Lytton differed from most Viceroys was in the fact that he had received no training in administrative duties in subordinate office at home. He was a diplomat - and Salisbury had said that diplomacy was a real power in Indian history.

Salisbury evidently snatched at the opportunity which the appointment of a new Viceroy gave him to state his policy in detail, and Lytton took out with him to India a very full set of instructions. He was to begin by opening communications with Sheer Ali through the Commissioner of Peshawar and then to send a mission to Kabul by way of Quetta; unless the Ameer raised insurmountable objections, in which case the mission would only go to Kalat and the whole line of policy respecting Afghanistan might have to be re-considered. Salisbury did not blind himself to the difficulties which the envoy would encounter if he got to Kabul¹ - the hopes of Sheer

1. It would be unfair to suggest either that Salisbury thought that his policy contained no difficulties or that he courted war with Russia or Afghanistan. He believed that it was the diplomat's duty to make such arrangements as would prevent a war arising from a popular panic. cf. his letter to Northbrook, 14th Jan. 1876: "I have no fear of

Ali which it would be impossible for him to satisfy and the fears which it would be dangerous to confirm. He thought that the Ameer would probably ask for three things: a fixed and augmented subsidy; a more decided recognition of Abdullah Jan as heir-apparent; and "an explicit pledge, by treaty or otherwise, of material support in case of foreign aggression". The first of these questions was only of "secondary magnitude" and Lytton would decide according to circumstances; possibly by augmenting the subsidy without making it permanent. On the second, there could be no harm in a "frank recognition of a de facto order in the succession established by a de facto Government". The third was more difficult. Even if no assurances were given to the Ameer, Britain would be bound in her own interests to repel the invasion of Afghanistan by a foreign Power. Indeed, Northbrook had said as much at the Simla Conference; unfortunately without carrying conviction to Sheer Ali.

"Her Majesty's Government are therefore prepared to sanction and support any more definite declaration which may in your judgment secure to their unaltered policy the advantages of which it has hitherto been deprived by an apparent doubt of its sincerity. But they must reserve to themselves entire freedom of judgment as to the character of circumstances involving the

1. (Continued from previous page).

our being tempted to move troops into Afghanistan unless further onward steps of Russia should some day drive people here into a panic. But the more inactive we are now, the more we increase the danger of that panic".

Cecil, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.72-73.

obligation of material support to the Amir, and it must be distinctly understood that only in some clear case of unprovoked aggression would such an obligation arise".

It would seem, from this paragraph, that Lytton was empowered to go as far as making a treaty for the defence of Afghanistan, although its provisions would only be brought into effect on the decision of the British government. In return, the Ameer must afford every reasonable facility for precautionary measures - access for British agents to the frontier positions and adequate means for confidential communication.

"Territories ultimately dependent upon British power for their defence must not be closed to those of the Queen's officers or subjects who may be duly authorized to enter them".

The alienation of Sheer Ali's confidence in the British government could not be dismissed as impossible: in that event, "no time must be lost in reconsidering from a new point of view the policy to be pursued in reference to Afghanistan".¹

Before he left for India Lytton had a conversation with Schouvaloff, who suggested that it would be useful if some means were found of establishing direct communication between the Viceroy and General Kaufmann. The suggestion had

1. Lady Betty Balfour: The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876 to 1880, pp.88-93 (1899).

apparently originated with Kaufmann, who had complained of British intrigues with Yhokand, but it was supported by Gortchakoff. Lytton declined to consider it, on the ground that any such communications would have to pass through Afghanistan. When Schouvaloff said that Kaufmann had already prepared a complimentary letter to Lytton, to be forwarded through Afghanistan, Lytton asked him what means Kaufmann had for sending a letter to Sheer Ali and what guarantee he had that it would be forwarded. Schouvaloff, who seemed to Lytton "a little embarrassed by the question", replied,

"I suppose that we must have, just as you have, safe and easy means of private communication with Shir Ali. But I don't know what they are. That is Kaufmann's affair".¹

Lytton, as a result of this conversation, came to two conclusions: that Russia was aiming at a partition of Afghanistan with Britain; and that the continuance of Kaufmann's correspondence with Sheer Ali was undesirable.

"The Russian Government" - he wrote to Salisbury on 26th February 1876 - "has established those means of direct, convenient and safe communication which Shir Ali refuses to us, although we openly subsidize His Highness. At the same time the Russian Chancellor holds us responsible, as a matter of course, for the exercise of an authority over the Amir which we neither possess nor know how to acquire... I cannot conceive a situation

1. Balfour, op.cit., pp.33-39.

more fundamentally false or more imminently perilous".¹

When Lytton left England on 1st March it was with the strongest conviction that the Ameer must be induced to receive a British agent. Indeed it is possible that he now regarded this matter as more important or at least more urgent than Salisbury did. Salisbury was not in an extreme hurry. In a letter to Lytton of 22nd August 1876 he contemplated the possible failure of the Kabul mission and suggested that it might be wise to give "great prominence and emphasis to the Khelat mission". And again, on 24th February 1877, he wrote, of Sheer Ali,

"If he refuses, no harm has been done. A strong position has been secured in Beloochistan, and after a few months' reflection the Amir will see that it is not in his interest to deprive himself of the prestige of our support".²

Although Lytton was to be much occupied in the winter following his arrival with the proclamation of the Queen's

1. Ibid., pp.39-40.

2. Cecil, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.74-75. The reference to Baluchistan, of course, is to the treaty with the Khan and Sardars of Kalat, concluded at Jacobabad in December 1876. Sandeman had started on his second mission before Lytton reached India and Lytton, who thought that all frontier questions should be treated as parts of a single whole, asked Northbrook to recall him. Fortunately, Northbrook refused to do so. Lytton sent his military secretary, Colonel (afterwards Sir George) Colley to get in touch with Sandeman and, reassured by his report, adopted Sandeman's policy. Lytton's original idea had been that Sir Lewis Pelly, the officer whom he had designated as the envoy to Kabul, should also conduct the negotiations at Kalat. Balfour, op.cit., pp.94-105; Thornton, op.cit., pp.76-87.

new title as Empress of India and with the great Delhi assemblage of December 1876-January 1877, he lost no time in initiating his Afghan policy. He proposed that the first mission, under Sir Lewis Pelly, should be one of pure courtesy, to open the way for future negotiations. The letter containing this proposal was delivered to Sheer Ali by a Moslem officer, Ressaldar-Major Khanan Khan, one of the Viceroy's A.D.C's, on 17th May. Sheer Ali's reply of 22nd May reached Peshawar on 1st June. It was, in effect, a refusal to receive the proposed mission. All questions affecting the two States, he said, had been sufficiently discussed in 1873: if "any new parleys" were necessary they had best be conducted by an envoy of the Ameer coming to India.

It was known to the Government of India that Sheer Ali and his advisers understood perfectly well that the mission was only to be the prelude to further negotiations and, if possible, to the establishment of a British mission in Afghanistan. The native agent at Kabul, writing on 22nd May to the Commissioner of Peshawar, set out three reasons which had influenced Sheer Ali to decline the British mission. He could not guarantee the safety of the British officers; if the mission made an important proposal which he was obliged to decline the result would be a breach of Anglo-Afghan

friendship; and - most important of all - the admission of a British mission would be followed by a Russian demand for a like concession.

"In other words, their way too would be opened; and in the opening of that road there is good neither to the State of Kabul nor to the English Government".¹

Sheer Ali's reply was put into Lytton's hands on 5th June. The question was then considered by the Viceroy in Council, when Salisbury's instructions were produced. With the support of a majority of the Council, in Lady Betty Balfour's words, or, perhaps, more exactly, with the acquiescence (in some cases the reluctant acquiescence) of a number of the Council, a second letter to Sheer Ali was drafted and despatched on 8th July 1876. Sir Henry Norman was doubtful about sending the second letter but was influenced by Lytton's opinion that it was in accord with Salisbury's instructions of 28th February. Sir William Muir agreed with him, both on this point and on the inexpediency of withdrawing the native agent from Kabul. Sir Arthur Hobhouse thought that the instructions "portended war" but was satisfied with Lytton's acceptance of amendments to the

1. Balfour, op.cit., pp.53-57. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877, "Notes on the Steps taken by the Viceroy to carry out the Proposed Mission to Cabul", including Pelly's memorandum to Khanan Khan, 2nd May 1876; text of letter delivered by Khanan Khan; report of agent in Kabul, 21st May, 22nd May; Sheer Ali's reply, 22nd May.

original draft of the second letter.¹

There were, in fact, two letters; both from the Commissioner of Peshawar, one to Sheer Ali and the other to the native agent. Sheer Ali was told that his reluctance to receive a British mission was "much to be regretted" and that his proposal to send an envoy to India could not be accepted when he had declined to receive the British envoy. The letter to the native agent dealt with the three points which Sheer Ali had had in mind as objections. Danger to the British officers sent would be averted by the fact that the Ameer could choose the place of their reception. The Ameer's fear of discord was "quite groundless" and it was impossible for the British government to protect the independence and integrity of Afghanistan "under conditions quite incompatible with the ordinary intercourse between friendly Courts". As to the third objection: Russia had given pledges not to interfere either directly or indirectly in the affairs of Afghanistan and therefore the admission of a British envoy could not necessitate the admission of a Russian envoy. The letter concluded with a grave warning.

"If the Ameer, after deliberately weighing all the considerations now commended to his serious attention, still declines to receive the Viceroy's Envoy, the responsibility of the result will rest entirely on the Government of Afghanistan, which

1. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877.

"will have thereby isolated itself from the alliance of that Power which is most disposed, and best able, to befriend it".¹

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Lytton was hurrying on these negotiations at a faster pace and perhaps in a harsher tone than Salisbury contemplated. His mind at this time can be seen fairly well in the light of the available evidence. In a private letter he told Salisbury that Sheer Ali looked upon the active Power, Russia, as more formidable than the passive Power, Britain; and if he had to offend one of the two it was Britain that he was the least afraid of offending.

"The Government of a great empire which, in a matter closely concerning its own interests, suffers itself to be addressed with impunity by a weak barbarian chief who is under accumulated obligations to its protection and forbearance in terms of contemptuous disregard, cannot be surprised if its self-respect and powers of self-assertion are under-rated by such a correspondent".²

In a long and closely-reasoned Minute of June, evidently prepared with the doubts of Norman, Hobhouse and Muir in mind, Lytton had set out to present the definitive case for his policy. He began by criticizing the "waiting policy".

1. Ibid.

2. Balfour, op.cit., p.60. No date is assigned to the letter but it does provide evidence of Lytton's highly sensitive dignity - a quality natural, perhaps, to a man who had spent his life in cultivated European capitals and was now for the first time brought into touch with a weak, half-civilized but intractable oriental Power.

"A policy of waiting is, by the essential nature of it, a policy destined and intended to merge, at some period in the course of events, into a policy of action, or at least of attainment ... it behoves us to consider whether the inadequate result of our waiting be due to our not having yet waited long enough, or to our having already waited too long".

He had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that the waiting had been too long. It had "not been productive of a single result which" was not "eminently unsatisfactory"; the Ameer, cordial in 1869, was now indifferent. Certainly, if he were attacked by Russia he would accept British assistance on British terms.

"But that is precisely the contingency which it is our interest to prevent. The alliance of the Amir will have lost much of the value we may even still accord to it when, instead of enabling us to make better provision for the defence of our territory, it obliges us to rush, unprepared, to the rescue of his".

Suppose, on the contrary, that Russia did not immediately attack Afghanistan: she could use the interval to establish a dominating political influence at Kabul. Still, if there were only Afghanistan to be considered in isolation it might be necessary, considering past experiences, to put up with the churlishness of Sheer Ali. The situation, however, was different from what it was when the "waiting policy", with some justification, was first applied. The neighbour to be feared now was not Afghanistan but Russia. The Russian power in Central Asia could not, and would not despite

Russian professions, remain stationary; and if Sheer Ali did not gravitate towards Britain he must gravitate towards Russia.

"He is practically free to negotiate with Russia as he pleases; we are practically unable to negotiate with him. Such a position is not only undignified; it is, in our present circumstances, positively dangerous".

Could it be bettered, since it was now "not a question of letting well alone but of letting bad alone"? A permanent British mission at Kabul was not Lytton's object. He did not desire the British envoy to make a single proposal to the Ameer; only to listen to the Ameer's proposals and, as far as they had been foreseen, answer them decisively.¹

At the same time Lytton was having a precis of the correspondence between Sheer Ali and Kaufmann prepared, as well as the statement of Russian acknowledgments of Afghan independence which forms Appendix 4. When these were ready he circulated them to his Council with a minute of his own, dated 8th July 1876. In that minute he argued that while the Tsar's influence was in favour of peace and against indefinite extension of the Russian Asiatic possessions it was only a temporary influence, dependent on the life of one man: the national and military aspirations were, on the

1. Balfour, op.cit., pp.65-77.

other hand, permanent, exuberant and indicative of a strong tendency to become more and more intense". The possession of Afghanistan would give the Russians a potent purchase over India.

"A Russian attack upon India is not, in my opinion, an imminent probability. I fully believe that it will never occur so long as we are at peace with Russia in Europe; but it would doubtless form part of Russian tactics if the British Government were compelled, in defence of its interests in Europe, to go to war with the Government of Russia ... It is ... a contingency against which the British Government is bound to make timely preparation".¹

Lytton then went on to notice the Kaufmann correspondence, the previous toleration of which (as we have seen) he considered regrettable.

On 3rd September 1876 Sheer Ali's reply to the letter of 8th July reached Simla. It contained a proposal that the native agent in Kabul should report to his own government, "expound to them the state of affairs at Kabul and hear from them all their desires and projects". To this, since it was not unreasonable in itself and was not an explicit refusal to receive a British envoy, Lytton agreed. The agent, Atta Mohammad Khan, reached Simla on 6th October 1876.²

At this point it may be convenient to notice a despatch on the subject of the Kaufmann correspondence which was sent

1. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877.

2. Balfour, op.cit., pp.80-81.

on 18th September to Salisbury, with the precis of the correspondence enclosed.

"We now desire to submit" - it ran - "for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, that the time has now arrived when it is expedient that the attention of the Russian Government should be seriously called to the fact of this correspondence, and that steps should be taken by Her Majesty's Government to prevent a continuance of proceedings which we cannot but regard as altogether inconsistent with the assurances given by Prince Gortchakow to Lord Clarendon in 1869, and since then frequently renewed by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, that Afghanistan is regarded as 'entirely beyond the sphere of Russian influence' ... The communications with His Highness, now systematically carried on by the Russian military authorities in Central Asia, are plainly irreconcilable with the above-mentioned assurances".

The despatch also drew attention to the fact, reported by the Kabul agent, that in addition to the original Russian messenger or agent who had brought Kaufmann's letter in the autumn of the previous year and who still remained in Kabul, a second had arrived in Afghanistan via Balkh in August.¹

1. Central Asia, No.1 (1878). Inclosure I in No.78. This despatch was communicated by Derby to Loftus on 24th Oct. (No.80). Loftus saw de Giers of the Russian Foreign Office who described the correspondence as "apochryphal" but promised to consult Kaufmann. On 15th November Loftus saw Gortchakoff who denied that Russia was contemplating an expedition against Merv and that there was any Russian agent in Afghanistan and described Kaufmann's last letter to Sheer Ali as merely complimentary (No.86). On 17th November Loftus saw de Giers who denied that Kaufmann had any intention of entering into political communication with the Ameer and told Loftus of a rumour of a projected Afghan expedition against Merv (No.87). On 1st December de Giers told Loftus that the Russian government had no

At Simla, Atta Mohammad had two interviews with the Viceroy and also saw and was questioned by Pelly and Colonel Burne, the Viceroy's private secretary. He described Sheer Ali as disappointed at the results of the Simla Conference of 1873 from which he had hoped to receive a definite treaty of alliance; a guarantee that he would receive arms and money in the event of external aggression; a disclaimer of any intention on the part of Britain to support a pretender; and a permanent subsidy. One very interesting thing that Atta Mohammad told Lytton was that the reluctance of Sheer Ali to admit British agents arose less from fear that they would be in danger than from fear that they would attract allegiance from him and become the resort for all dissidents

1. (Continued from previous page).

knowledge of the correspondence but had sought information from Kaufmann (Inclosure in No.92). On 16th December Loftus sent to Derby (No.83) a note from de Giers of the 15th, enclosing a letter from Kaufmann of 9th November. In this letter Kaufmann said that his correspondence with Sheer Ali had been "limited to exchanges of civility" and "pure courtesy" and had had the Tsar's approval. Salisbury, to whom Kaufmann's reply was communicated in the fourth week of December, replied on 27th January 1877 (No.97) to the effect that he did not accept Kaufmann's description of the correspondence and that, in any event, correspondence so open to misconstruction ought to be discontinued. Derby instructed Loftus in almost Salisbury's exact words on 7th February 1877 (No.99) and Loftus wrote to de Giers in this sense on 22nd February (No.101). In his reply of 5th March, forwarded to Derby by Loftus on 7th March (No.103) de Giers stuck to his description of the correspondence as that of "pure courtesy".

with grievances. In a conversation with Captain Gray, Atta Mohammad described the present requirements of Sheer Ali as the negative one that no Englishman should reside in Afghanistan or, at least in Kabul, and the positive ones of recognition and support of Abdullah Jan as heir-apparent, support with money and troops against all external aggression; a permanent subsidy; an offensive and defensive alliance. In his own remarks to Atta Mohammad, Lytton did not mince matters.

"The Ameer had apparently come to the conclusion that, having nothing to hope from us, and, at the same time, nothing to fear, he may safely stand aloof from the British Government; confident that in the event of external attack we shall be obliged to help him for the protection of our own interests, even if we are under no contract of obligation to do so ... But the moment we cease to regard Afghanistan as a friendly and firmly allied state, what is there to prevent us from providing for the security of our own frontier by an understanding with Russia, which might have the effect of wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether. If the Ameer does not desire to come to a speedy understanding with us, Russia does; and she desires it at his expense ... The Viceroy then said that if the Ameer remained our friend the military power could be spread round him as a ring of iron and, if he became our enemy, it could break him as a reed ... 'This', said His Excellency, 'is the man who pretends to hold the balance between England and Russia, independent of either. His position is rather that of an earthen pipkin between two iron pots'".¹

1875. Nevertheless, Lytton told Atta Mohammad that, on certain conditions, he was prepared to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with Sheer Ali; to support him with men, arms and money in the event of unprovoked aggression and to assist him in fortifying his frontiers; to recognize Abdulla Jan as his successor; and to provide a yearly subsidy. The conditions were that Sheer Ali should refrain from provoking his neighbours and hold no external relations without British knowledge, decline all communications with Russia and refer Russian agents to the Indian Government; that British agents should reside at Herat or elsewhere on the frontier; that a mixed Anglo-Afghan Commission should demarcate the Afghan frontier; and that arrangements should be made for the free development of trade and, if possible, for the establishment of telegraphic communication. Lytton consented to forego the establishment of a permanent British mission on Kabul on condition that Sheer Ali deputed an envoy to him and received special missions when requested: he made it plain, however, that the establishment of a British agent on the frontier was a pre-requisite to the negotiations on which he invited Sheer Ali to embark. Lytton believed that he was now offering to Sheer Ali everything which he had wanted in 1869 and

1873.1

Atta Mohammad left Simla on 14th October 1876 and reached Kabul on 1st November, only to find official business dislocated by an outbreak of cholera, which gave Sheer Ali a reason or an excuse to decline to transact business. About 22nd November a series of discussions on Lytton's proposals began, however, between Sheer Ali and his advisers. These continued until 4th December when Atta Mohammad was received and told that the Durbar had unanimously recommended that the British proposals be declined.² Atta Mohammad was aware that Lytton's condition that British officers be stationed on the frontiers was the stumbling-block: he argued the seriousness of the refusal with Sheer Ali and, in a renewal of the discussion on the morning of 5th December, felt that Sheer Ali was inclined to yield. More discussions in Durbar

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1. Balfour, op.cit., pp.81-85. The draft treaty which was to have been discussed at Peshawar is printed in Parl.Papers (Afghanistan No.I) 1878-79, Vol.56, pp.182-192; and given as Appendix 5, below. Pelly had been disposed to question the wisdom of making the establishment of a British agency even in Herat a pre-requisite but Lytton insisted on that and advised Pelly to ask for the establishment of agencies at Kandahar and Balkh also; though as a bargaining point which might be waived. Lytton to Pelly, 17th October 1876. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877. Lytton was also extremely anxious that Sheer Ali should attend the Delhi Durbar on 1st January 1877.
 2. India: Central Asia and Afghanistan to 1877. McNabb (Commissioner of Peshawar) to Lytton, 19th Nov.1876; McNabb to Foreign Secretary, 1st Dec.1876; Atta Mohammad to McNabb 23rd Nov.1876, 4th Dec.1876.

followed.¹ On 11th December Atta Mohammad reported that he had been told privately, by members of the Durbar, that "yielding to necessity and in view of the continuance of the friendship existing between the two Governments, the location of British officers on the border may be approved of; but some condition in regard to their residence must be fixed for the future".² This was confirmed, but Sheer Ali insisted on sending representatives of his own, with Atta Mohammad, to discuss with the Indian government the precise conditions attaching to the residence of British agents. Atta Mohammad believed that the four points on which the Afghan representatives would try to insist were: (1) If the British Residents were injured in person or property, Afghan customs as to compensation and punishment should be followed; (2) the duties of the Residents should be strictly defined and no interference with internal Afghan affairs should be allowed to him; (3) If Russian agents entered Afghanistan, the British themselves must undertake to stop them; (4) If British assistance fell short of Afghan expectations the Afghans must be allowed to decline it, while allowing the agencies to be continued.³

1. Ibid., Atta Mohammad to McNabb, 5th Dec.1876.

2. Ibid., Atta Mohammad to McNabb, 11th Dec.1876.

3. Ibid., Atta Mohammad to McNabb, 21st Dec.; McNabb to Foreign Secretary, 26th Dec.1876.

Eventually the meeting, known as the Peshawar Conference, was arranged and opened on 30th January 1877; Pelly, with Dr. Bellew as his secretary, representing the Government of India and Syud Noor Mohammad Shah (who had attended at Simla in 1873) and the Mir Akhor Ahmed Shah representing Sheer Ali. Since the Conference proved entirely abortive it will be unnecessary to set out its history in the fullest detail.

It began badly. On 28th January 1877, before the meetings were formally opened, Bellew went to see Noor Mohammad Shah and found him in what seems to have been a highly exasperated state, so that Bellew reported him as saying that,

"The Amir now has a deep-rooted mistrust of the good faith and sincerity of the British Government, and he has many reasons for this mistrust".

Noor Mohammad then went on to elaborate those reasons, some of them trivial. But prospects of any agreement seemed black when he asked,

"Now, why all this pressing to send British officers to Afghanistan? It has roused the suspicion of the Amir, and his suspicion is confirmed by the arbitrary acts of your Government, and he is now convinced that to allow British officers to reside in his country will be to relinquish his authority..."¹

At the first formal meeting on 30th January Pelly said that

1. Ibid., Pelly to Lytton, 29th January 1877.

Lytton had concluded, from the fact of Sheer Ali having deputed envoys, that the sine qua non condition "that British officers may reside on the Frontiers of Afghanistan for the purpose of watching external events" had been accepted.

On this point, Pelly said, he himself had no discretionary authority at all.¹ On 1st February Pelly took a drive with Noor Mohammad in the hope of having some useful private conversation but nothing important was said then and meetings during the following few days produced nothing. Pelly came to the conclusion that the anti-English party had prevailed at Kabul during Noor Mohammad's absence, that his instructions had been altered and that he had written for more.² From time to time Noor Mohammad Shah threatened to embark upon a history of Anglo-Afghan relations from 1855 - "We are now sitting in conference", Pelly noted on 8th February, "and the Envoy is pouring out his review of the past". During this time Noor Mohammad was frequently ill: Dr. Bellew, visiting him on one occasion, found him interested in the Near Eastern question and curious to know why Russia was allowed to retain her ambassador at Constantinople while Russians were fighting against Turkey in the Serbian army. "The review of the past", begun on 8th February, was continued on the 10th and on the

1. Ibid., Pelly to Lytton, 30th January, 1877.

2. Ibid., Pelly to Lytton, 6th February, 1877.

12th. Pelly thought that Noor Mohammad was trying to show that the Ameer was not dissatisfied with the results of the 1869 and 1873 meetings but with other things, such as the British interest in Yakub Khan and the result of the Seistan award. It was on the 12th that Noor Mohammad at last raised directly with Pelly the matter of the British agencies; but it was only to put forward the objections already made on the Afghan side. On the 15th Pelly said that the difficulties which had arisen in the past were largely due to the want of "frequent, cordial and confidential communications"; that the Viceroy was now willing to afford Sheer Ali open and active support against interference from without, insisting only on having those facilities - such as British agencies - which were necessary to enable him to fulfil his objects. On the 19th, the meetings having again been interrupted by Noor Mohammad's illness, Pelly asked for a definite reply to the question - was the Viceroy's sine qua non condition acceptable or not? The Afghan envoy again embarked on a long historical disquisition, the object of which was apparently to show that Sheer Ali was satisfied with the existing engagements between the two governments, wanted no more and therefore saw no necessity for the presence of British agents. Pelly took this as a rejection of the sine qua non condition. This was the last of the formal meetings,

Noor Mohammad being by this time too ill to attend any more.¹

On 3rd March 1877 Lytton wrote to Pelly at length. He noticed, with regret but with dignity, Sheer Ali's refusal to admit British agents - a course, he said, "which the British Government has no desire to force on his unwilling acceptance". What puzzled Lytton was what Sheer Ali wanted. He seemed dissatisfied with what was done in the past and equally dissatisfied with the proposals now put before him; he had no counter-proposals; and it appeared that no basis for further negotiations existed.

"If the Ameer has made up his mind that he has no reason to desire a definite alliance with the British Government on the above-mentioned basis, it only remains for the Envoy to say so plainly and without hesitation".

In case, however, that Sheer Ali believed that Britain was bound to defend him against any foreign or domestic enemy it was as well that the envoy should be reminded that the only treaty subsisting, that of 1855 (the 1857 treaty having lapsed as "contracted for a special and limited purpose"),² contained no obligation of this sort at all.

"It would appear ... that His Highness now no longer desires our alliance and protection. The British Government does not press its alliance and protection upon those who neither seek nor appreciate them. This being the case,

1. Ibid., Pelly to Lytton, 8,10,12,15,19th February 1877.

2. This, of course, was only Lytton's view: it is not necessarily confirmed by a reading of the 1857 treaty.

it only remains for the Viceroy to withdraw, at once, the offers made to the Ameer in the month of October last ... This Government repudiates all liabilities on behalf of the Ameer and his dynasty ... but at the same time it will scrupulously continue, as heretofore, to respect the Ameer's independence and authority throughout those territories which, up to the present, it has recognized as being in the lawful possession of His Highness ..."

Lytton's letter was, in effect, the epitaph of the conference. Noor Mohammad was by this time mortally ill. Pelly from time to time informed Lytton of his condition but most of his attention was directed to investigating charges of disloyalty on the part of Atta Mohammad and the widespread rumours that Sheer Ali was organizing a jehad in conjunction with the Akoond of Swat.¹ On 15th March, presumably for the sake of complying with the formalities, Pelly wrote to Noor Mohammad in terms of Lytton's letter of the 3rd. On the 26th Noor Mohammad died and on the 30th Lytton instructed Pelly to close the conference and fix a date for leaving Peshawar as soon as conveniently possible "in order to shew that we are in earnest and avoid further entanglement".

1. On the other hand, there were also rumours that the Akhund of Swat had declined to declare a holy war on the ground that Sheer Ali was in alliance with the Russians. Letter from Cavagnari, enclosed in Pelly to Lytton, 23rd March 1877.

LORD LYTTON'S VICEROYALTY: (II) THE GENESIS OF THE SECOND
AFGHAN WAR

The position of Britain vis-vis Afghanistan, after the failure of the Peshawar Conference, was a curious one. On the one hand, Lytton had told Sheer Ali that Britain repudiated all liability on behalf of him and his dynasty. On the other, the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Afghanistan remained a declared object of British policy and when a Russian force under Llamakin was reported as operating against the Tekke Turkomans and likely to move on to the occupation of Merv, Derby instructed Loftus to protest against the operations; partly, on the ground that they were bound to cause apprehension in Afghanistan.¹ But, as against this, Lytton recalled Atta Mohammad from Kabul, thus leaving India and Afghanistan without even semi-official means of communication. He relied, instead, for Afghan intelligence on Cavagnari, now Deputy-Commissioner of Peshawar, and in a letter to Cavagnari of 19th May 1877 he sketched the attitude which he wished to see adopted towards Sheer Ali.

1. Derby to Loftus, 13th June 1877. Central Asia, No.I (1878), No.112. The Russians countered with a story of a Turkish envoy who had been allowed to pass through India to preach a holy war against the Russians to the Moslems of Central Asia. Loftus to Derby, 12th Sept.1877. Ibid., No.123.

"I feel sure you will be careful to abstain from any word or sign which, if reported to the Amir, would convey to his mind the impression that we care three straws about what he may now do or not do, or that we have the least desire to re-open negotiations with him. I doubt if our present relations with His Highness will ever be satisfactory; but the only chance of improving them is to let him first thoroughly realize the difficulties of the position in which he has now placed himself" ... A few months, possibly a few weeks will, I think, suffice to show him that he is not strong enough to play this game successfully. I trust that we shall never allow Afghanistan to fall into the hands of any other Power. But between Afghanistan and the present Ameer there is a practical distinction. We can get on without Sheer Ali; he cannot get on without us. Ere long he must either go to shipwreck altogether, or else return to his old moorings on the Peshawar side in a temper chastened by sharp experience. In the former case our hands will be completely free to deal with the new situation which will then arise. In the latter case we shall be able to replace both the Amir and ourselves in what is our true, and should always be our permanent, relative position towards each other. The wrecks come to shore; the shore does not go to the wrecks".¹

There were, however, not - as Lytton thought - two, but three alternatives open to Sheer Ali. The third was alliance, or at least a much closer relation with, Russia. How far such an alliance was practicable would depend far more on what was thought at St. Petersburg than on what was thought at Kabul. Unless European affairs were in a condition when war seemed imminent it was unlikely in the extreme that Russia would take a step in complete violation of her repeated declarations that

1. Balfour, op.cit., pp.161-162.

Afghanistan was outside her sphere of influence. In the meantime, Lytton was busy enough for the remainder of 1877 in trying to re-cast policy towards the frontier tribes and in dealing with the Madras famine.

It will be remembered that the Russo-Turkish War began in April 1877. Salisbury was not unduly alarmed.

"I cannot" - he wrote to Lytton on 27th April 1877 - "go very far with those who dread the Russians. Except the size of the patch they occupy on the map, there is nothing about their history or their actual condition to explain the abject terror which deprives so many Anglo-Indians and so many of our military party here of their natural sleep".¹

In June he wrote to Lytton at length about the implications for India of an Anglo-Russian War; which he considered possible but not probable. If Lytton believed the soldiers, nothing was safe. It was not that they were wrong about Russia's ultimate objectives but that they were "crowding up into the next few years - or less - events which will take a generation to complete". In any event, where could they be stopped? Threatening messages from the Foreign Office to St. Petersburg were useless. And what was the good of fixing a line somewhere, at Merv, for instance, which the Russians must not cross - on pain of being attacked by a British force hundreds of miles from its base? "The suggestion seems to me visionary". If a line had to be drawn it must be drawn nearer

1. Cecil, op.cit., Vol.II, p.142.

India.

"Directly real danger is discernible, Candahar ought to be in our hands". It might well have been asked why, if this comparatively simple step was all that was needed, Salisbury had troubled to launch Lytton into those intricate and unsuccessful negotiations for British agencies in Afghanistan. His defence would presumably have been found in the next sentence. "The awkward result of the Lawrentian policy is that we may, at the moment when it least suits us, have to deal both with the Amir and the Russians".¹ Despite this awkwardness, Salisbury kept his head, advised (on 11th June 1877) the use of large-scale maps - "say, on the scale of the Ordnance Map of England"; and lamented (on 6th July) that "you must either disbelieve altogether in the existence of the Russians or you must believe that they will be at Candahar next year".²

In respect of India Salisbury steered, not apologetically but authoritatively, a middle course. He warned Lytton that he must walk warily on the matter of the North-West frontier, in view of the opinion held by retired Anglo-Indians. The "Quettiles" were at the moment in a minority.

"If I had foreseen the complications which the Russian

1. Salisbury to Lytton, 22nd June 1877. Cecil, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.153-164.

2. Ibid., pp.155-156, 159.

war would produce ... I should have advised you to locate your Khelat escort at some place not far from Quetta - but which was not Quetta. It is a name to conjure with - and its precise virtue is to make respectable elderly gentlemen go very mad".

Earlier in the same month of October 1877 he has told Lytton that

"Lord Lawrence occupies the same position in the Anglo-Indian world which a month ago Thiers occupied in France - the shadow of a great name under which a motley assemblage of wild follies and respectable truisms are trustfully lying down together".¹

On the other hand, although he was willing to support Lytton over Quetta, he was utterly opposed to the suggestion from India of immediate action in Central Asia. He besought Lytton, on 3rd August 1877, to make sure that "the muskets do not go off of themselves" and warned him "not to leave the military men the chance of becoming practically the arbiters whether there should be peace or war". He made it perfectly clear that his authority must be considered dominant, in the last resort, over Lytton's.

"Whichever is abstractly right" - he wrote on 10th August - "the English feeling ... must govern ... At all events, I hope you will not stir a soldier beyond the frontier (treating Khelat as within it) without obtaining our view on the matter".²

It remains a matter for speculation as to what would have

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1. Ibid., Salisbury to Lytton, 22nd June-25th October 1877. Cecil, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.159-160.
 2. Ibid., Vol.II, pp.157-158.

happened had Salisbury remained at the India Office: as it was, he was replaced by Cranbrook and went to the Foreign Office on Derby's resignation in March 1878. It had long been a current supposition that if Russia were involved or likely to be involved in war against Britain in Europe she would attempt a diversion against India through Central Asia. This proved to be correct in principle but the vast distances to be covered and the slowness of communication made co-ordination of Russian action in Europe and Asia a problem of the greatest difficulty. The critical moment in Europe was at the end of March 1878. The orders which were to result in Stolietoff's mission may have been given then. On 13th May 1878¹ the Government Agent at Peshawar reported the wish of the Russians to conclude a treaty with Afghanistan but it was not until some time in June that Kaufmann wrote his fateful letter to Sheer Ali.

"Be it known to you that in these days the relations between the British Government and ours with regard to your kingdom require deep consideration. As I am unable to communicate my opinion to you verbally I have deputed my agent, Major-General Stolieteff ... He will inform you of all that is hidden in my mind ... The advantages of a close alliance with the Russian Government will be permanently evident".²

This intention on the part of Kaufmann became known to the Indian Government almost at once - possibly before formal

1. Central Asia, No.I (1878). Inclosure 4 in No.143.

2. Parl.Papers, 1881. C-2798: Central Asia, No.I (1881). Inclosure 30 in No.1. This letter was among the papers discovered after the capture of Kabul.

intimation was made to Sheer Ali. An unofficial communication from Peshawar gave the news on 5th June and on the 16th Cavagnari reported Russian preparations for moving 80,000 troops, some via Khiva and the rest via Tashkent towards the Afghan frontier. He noted the rumour that the Russians denied that they were dependent upon Sheer Ali and were cultivating Abdur Rahman. It was on 13th June - the day when the Berlin Congress met - that Stolietoff left Tashkent and on 22nd July that he entered Kabul. The news of his entry was sent to the Indian Government at least as early as 3rd August and was supplemented by constant reports from Cavagnari's well-organized intelligence service.¹

On 8th April Lytton had written a long letter to Cranbrook.² He was sure, he said, that in the event of war with Russia, Britain would not have the alliance of Afghanistan. Sheer Ali's policy would be to play off Russia against Britain but as he was "not only a savage ... but a savage with a touch of insanity" and a hatred of Britain he might well begin operations against India. British military action against Russia from India could not be offensive but

"we ought at once to commence such preparations as will enable us, in case of need, to punish promptly

1. Central Asia, No.1 (1878). Inclosures 3 and 4 in No.144. The identity of the Russian envoy was not known in India at this time.
2. Balfour, op.cit., pp.243-247.

any act of aggression by the Amir of Kabul".

Surveying the wider problem, Lytton appeared to welcome the prospect of war.

"So long as peace lasts we cannot use the sword and our diplomacy is impotent. The declaration of war, therefore, would be an opportunity, which may never recur if we neglect it, for India to make safe all those outworks of her empire which must otherwise fall, sooner or later, into the hands or under the influence of Russia ... One last word. I am persuaded that the policy of building up in Afghanistan a strong and independent State, over which we can exercise absolutely no control, has been proved by experience to be a mistake".

He concluded by sketching a scheme for the disintegration of Afghanistan, with a dependent prince ruling a Western Afghan kingdom including Herat, Balkh, Merv and Kandahar and a British station in the Kur²um Valley. In those circumstances it would be a matter of no importance what happened at Kabul.

In another letter to Cranbrook of 3rd August Lytton gave it as his opinion that there were only three courses of action now open. They were, in order of merit, (1) to secure, by hope or fear, such an alliance with the present Amir as would effectually and permanently exclude Russian influence from Afghanistan; (2) to withdraw all countenance from the Amir, to break up the Afghan kingdom and to put a dependent sovereign in the place of Sheer Ali; (3) to conquer and hold as much Afghan territory as would be necessary for the permanent maintenance of the North-West frontier. A passage which

follows makes it perfectly clear that Lytton was not in the least alarmed about what Russia or the Russian envoy in Kabul could do at the moment: what he was anxious to do was to make the most of the opportunity which Russian action and Sheer Ali's acquiescence presented him with.

"The conclusion of peace in Europe has freed our hands and destroyed, at the same time, all hopes on his part of complications to us, or active assistance to himself, from Russia".

In pursuance of the first of the three possible policies he had outlined Lytton proposed to send a mission to Sheer Ali under Sir Neville Chamberlain. If the mission were not received or proved abortive it would be necessary to "upset Sher Ali or pare his claws".¹

The first official news which the Home Government received of the probable visit of a Russian envoy to Kabul was contained in a telegram from Lytton to Cranbrook, dated 7th June. It expressly said that the news required verification and probably for this reason it was not until 24th June that it was passed on to the Foreign Office. Salisbury, on the 26th, directed Loftus to ascertain if there was any truth in the report.

1. Balfour, op.cit., pp.249-261. In another letter to Cranbrook of 17th August Lytton emphasized the point of "opportunity" e.g. "I believe it to be quite possible to retrieve the whole situation ... Nay more, I think the present opportunity, which is probably our last, is a very favourable one for doing this". Later in the same letter he spoke of seizing "the present fortunate and favourable opportunity". Gathorne-Hardy, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.85-96.

Loftus, replying on 3rd July, reported a conversation on the previous day with de Giers, Head of the Asiatic Department.

de Giers had said that

"there had been a moment when war appeared to be almost imminent and ... under those circumstances no doubt the military Commanders conceived it to be their duty to take such measures as might be necessary and serviceable to their country".¹

But he denied that any such mission "had been or was intended to be sent to Cabul either by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann".

On 3rd August the Cabinet gave telegraphic approval to Lytton's proposal to send a British mission to Kabul. On the 14th the charge d'affaires in St.Petersburg, Plunkett, had a talk with de Giers who told him,

"Everything has been stopped. The political as well as the military precautions which we thought ourselves justified in taking against you - everything has been stopped".²

This despatch of Plunkett's was received on 19th August, the day on which Salisbury addressed another despatch to him asking him to point out to Gortchakoff that the despatch of a Russian mission, backed by armed forces, to Kabul would be inconsistent with Russian declarations and requesting that if such a mission had been sent it should be at once withdrawn.³ Plunkett only received this despatch of the 19th on 26th August: he at once

1. Central Asia, No.I (1878). Nos.136 (with inclosure), 138,140.

2. Ibid., No.151. Plunkett to Salisbury, 14th Aug.1878.

3. Ibid., No.152.

wrote to de Giers but de Giers was just on the point of leaving or had just left St.Petersburg and did not reply until 8th September when he admitted that, owing to "political conditions" the Russian "dispositions" regarding Central Asia had been altered: they were now restored to their former state; the mission to Kabul was "of a provisional nature and one of simple courtesy". Plunkett sent de Giers' letter, with a covering despatch, on 13th September to Salisbury, who received it on the 18th.¹

Cranbrook, though he had asked on 13th August for a Foreign Office remonstrance to be sent to St.Petersburg, had never been informed if it had been sent or what answer, if any, had been received. He himself was shooting in Ross and bound for Balmoral when he received a letter from Disraeli which told him of the diplomatic communications going on, followed by a telegram from Salisbury asking that the mission to Kabul be delayed until an answer had been received from de Giers. In a letter written to Disraeli, probably on 15th September, Cranbrook said that he was sorry that Lytton had "so ostentatiously proclaimed his intentions". The mission, he was convinced, must be sent, though its instructions would be modified and, because of Salisbury's telegram, orders had been sent to arrest it for the moment. He concluded by sketching

1. Ibid., Nos.158 (with enclosure), 162 (with enclosure).

the terms which he thought the Ameer should be offered - a subsidy, "very qualified recognition of his successor" and a very strictly limited defence of defined Afghan territory, conditional upon Sheer Ali acting on British advice. Disraeli, writing again on 17th September, said that he agreed with Lytton's general policy, having always deplored masterly inactivity, and thought that there should be no delay in sending the mission.¹

There was even less delay than Disraeli imagined, for Lytton had disregarded the telegram of 13th September. Chamberlain had arrived at Peshawar, ready to start, on 12th September and Lytton was unwilling to keep him "waiting indefinitely" on the Afghan frontier, in a position which "we could not possibly accept with either dignity or safety". As for the expected telegram,

"It was perfectly obvious that no communication from St.Petersburg ... could have the smallest practical effect upon the previously recognized necessity for the mission we were sending to the Amir".

It might necessitate a modification of Chamberlain's instructions but that could be carried out long before he reached Kabul. Lytton did go so far as to delay the advance of the mission for a few days but, hearing no more from Cranbrook

1. Gathorne-Hardy, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.82-83, 96-97. The telegram sent to Lytton on 13th September ran, "Official reply to remonstrance from St.Petersburg on way to London. Important to receive this before Chamberlain starts".

(who did not return from Scotland until 1st October) he started Chamberlain's mission on 21st September. On the same day it was refused passage by the small Afghan force at Ali Musjid and returned to Peshawar.¹

It was inevitable that the news of Lytton's action should provoke serious criticism; especially as he was considered to have sent the mission by the most provocative route, that through the Khyber, when it could just as easily have been sent through the Bolan and the less fanatical country to Kandahar. Salisbury wanted to avoid further collision with Russia, at least until Russian forces had withdrawn from Turkey and the Treaty of Berlin was in a fair way to being executed. He hoped that no attempt would be made to force the Khyber or take Kabul. As something must be done he suggested a march on Kandahar, which would probably be unmolested, with the intention of retaining it permanently.²

Disraeli's own attitude was apt to vary from day to day. On 26th September, in a letter to Cranbrook, he criticized Lytton strongly for his disobedience. As for the next step, it would be a perilous business to force the Khyber and take Kabul; but Kandahar might be occupied and retained with ease. To Salisbury he expressed the view on 3rd October (when

1. Balfour, op.cit., pp.270-281.

2. Cecil, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.341-342.

announcing that he had reluctantly called a Cabinet) that Lytton's writings were "admirable both in their grasp and detail" and that his policy was perfectly fitted to a state of affairs in which Russia was Britain's assailant.

"But Russia is not our assailant. She has sneaked out of her hostile position, with sincerity, in my mind, but scarcely with dignity, and if Lytton had only been quiet and obeyed my orders, I have no doubt that, under the advice of Russia, Shere Ali would have been equally prudent".

The matter could not be left where it was but action ought to be moderate.

"It is not a casus belli, after the withdrawal of Russia, and if we had been quiet we need have done nothing ... I think it is a case for 'material guarantee'".¹

Lytton, on the other hand, asked permission to issue a manifesto setting out the cause of offence and fixing the responsibility on Sheer Ali; expelling the Afghan troops from the Khyber Pass; occupying the Kur^eum Valley; and advancing from Quetta towards Kandahar.² These were the proposals which the Cabinet considered on 25th October in what Disraeli called "one of the most remarkable meetings" he remembered. Cranbrook began by advocating the adoption of the measures asked for by

1. G.E.Buckle, op.cit., Vol.VI, pp.381-383. If Disraeli had read Lytton's letters with as much care as admiration he would have understood that the withdrawal or non-withdrawal of the Russian mission from Kabul (Stolietoff was back in Tashkent by 21st September) was quite irrelevant in Lytton's eyes.

2. Balfour, op.cit., pp.291-292.

Lytton. Cairns, the Lord Chancellor, took the other side. Lytton's manifesto would, in effect, be a declaration of war - without a casus belli. Sheer Ali had been reluctant to receive the Russian mission: when all the members had left (some had remained after Stolietoff's departure) he would probably have received a British mission. Sir Stafford Northcote, the leader of the House of Commons, and Cross, the Home Secretary, expressed themselves as in entire agreement with Cairns. Salisbury attacked Lytton for thinking only of India and, by its means, dictating the foreign policy of the government in Europe and Turkey. The Viceroy, he said, had twice disobeyed precise orders - in sending the mission when told to wait and in sending it by the Khyber - and, unless curbed, would bring about "some terrible disaster". Cranbrook replied at this point, arguing that the casus belli was the aggregate of hostile incidents on the part of Sheer Ali and then, silence falling, Disraeli gave his opinion.

A demonstration of power, he said, was necessary but he did not wish to call Parliament to sanction a war unless the casus belli was unimpeachable. The Chancellor had said that Lytton's projected manifesto was equivalent to a declaration of war. A better course, then, was to occupy the Kūram Valley, explaining that this was not an act of war but merely the taking of a 'material guarantee'. This course was approved

by the Duke of Richmond, by Salisbury, Cairns, Northcote and Cross. But Cranbrook, a strong man, dissented. His own opinion was for war, which he believed to be inevitable sooner or later: the taking of a 'material guarantee' was a half-measure for which he would not be responsible. Rather than take such a course he would be prepared to wait until larger forces could be collected. "After this extraordinary statement", as Disraeli termed it, "there seemed only one course to take". The military preparations were ordered to be continued on a larger scale while, in order to strengthen the case for Parliament, another message (which was to be submitted to the Cabinet before transmission) was to be sent to Sheer Ali.¹

The "message" in question was the ultimatum which was sent on 2nd November 1878. It demanded, as the "last opportunity of averting the calamities of war, the full and plain acceptance not later than 20th November, of the following terms: a full and suitable apology in writing by Sheer Ali, tendered on British territory by an officer of suitable rank; the establishment of a permanent British mission in Afghanistan; an undertaking that no injury should be done to the tribes who acted as guides to Chamberlain's mission.² On 4th November

1. Disraeli to Queen Victoria, 26th Oct. 1878. Buckle, op.cit., Vol. VI, pp. 386-388.

2. Balfour, op.cit., pp. 292-294.

1878 Kaufmann had written to the wretched Sheer Ali advising him to make peace with the English if they offered it. Sheer Ali, replying on 20th November, said that the British Government would never withdraw their enmity and would listen to no overtures for reconciliation.¹ He sent no reply to the ultimatum. At 10 p.m. on the same day, 20th November 1878, Lytton, being informed that no reply had come in, gave orders for the three British columns to advance next morning. He himself wrote to Cranbrook next day, "Jacta est alea!"²

1. Parl. Papers. Central Asia (No.1) 1881. Inclosures No.39 and 40 in No.1.
2. Balfour, op.cit., p.295.

CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSION

Salisbury once said, of the exponents of "masterly inactivity" that the disasters of 1842 had entered like iron into their souls. Yet, forty years after the beginning of the first Afghan War, British troops were once more engaged in hostile operations on Afghan soil. Superficially at least there were many likenesses between the two wars. Each consisted of three parts: a comparatively easy advance to the desired objectives; an Afghan revolt; the crushing of that revolt, followed by the withdrawal of the victorious British forces. The murder of Burnes and Macnaghten was paralleled by the murder of Cavagnari and his companions. In the background, in each case, was the threat from Russia; and in each case the crisis of that threat, the siege of Herat and the danger of war over the Eastern Question, was past before hostilities were begun. Each war ended in a way which seemed, at the outset, highly improbable: with the establishment of the authority of an exile, Dost Mohammad in the one case, Abdur Rahman in the other. There were even personal similarities: like Macnaghten, if not like Auckland, Lytton had a taste for manifestos and proclamations.

There were differences too, of course. Lytton was a greater man than Auckland and a more honest man than Macnaghten. No comparison between Roberts and Elphinstone would be worth making. Nevertheless, the similarities between the two wars are so many that it is tempting to assume that the judgments which apply to the one apply also to the other; that, as Auckland was wrong, so was Lytton; that wisdom, by contrast, was exemplified only in the policy associated with the name of John Lawrence.

An historical problem, however, unlike an arithmetical problem, has no "answer" which is not merely "right" but is the only "right" one. Auckland's fundamental error was not so much an error of means (bad as the means were) but of ends: the situation in his day did not demand the action he took; the problem could safely have been ignored. In the days of Salisbury and Lytton that was no longer true. With the Russian advance across Central Asia, Anglo-Afghan relations presented serious difficulties which no responsible statesman could ignore. This is not to suggest that Lytton's policy was necessarily or even probably "right"; but some attempt to deal with the Afghan problem was "right".

To say this is not to condemn the policies of such men as John Lawrence. It was not necessary for Lawrence to do more, in his day, than he did in respect of Afghanistan. That does

not mean, however, that his policy was perfect; in comparison, say, with the imperfections of Lytton's it was adequate for the time being. But it was in itself a source of future danger because it came to be viewed as the only "right" solution not merely for the problem as it existed in Lawrence's own day but as it existed at any time. Action attracts criticism, especially if it is accompanied, as it was in Lytton, with a tendency to rhetorical explanation. But inaction is not necessarily a virtue and it may be that if the British position in respect of Afghanistan had not been allowed to degenerate under Gladstone up to 1874 Salisbury and Lytton would not have felt obliged to try to restore it so hurriedly. The writer of a thesis on such a subject as this, covering so many years, is alternately annoyed by complacency and shocked by impetuosity. Only occasionally does he see such a satisfactorily complete piece of work as Sandeman's in Baluchistan. He is more likely to see blind adherence to a policy and the rejection of all criticism; a lack of co-ordination between the Home and the Indian Government; or party spirit swaying the destinies of India. Such a man as John Lawrence, who was an administrator and not a diplomat, in days when an administrator and not a diplomat was needed, was fortunate. Yet it was not so fortunate for Britain or India, or, indeed, for Afghanistan that an aura of sanctity came to

surround Lawrence's policy. Taking the long list of governors-general and Viceroy, of Presidents of the Board of Control and Secretaries of State as a whole, it may be that the best were those whose policies were adequate in their own day but yet were not so firmly set or so publicized as to become political myths.

A P P E N D I X 1

Rawlinson's memorandum was forwarded to the Government of India by Sir Stafford Northcote, Secretary of State, without enclosing his own remarks or those of Her Majesty's Government. The Viceroy accordingly collected the opinions of various members of his Council and other responsible officers and after subjoining his own remarks despatched them to the Secretary of State for India, by that time the Duke of Argyll. It is desirable, so that the reader may understand the attitude of the Indian Government of that day, to give these opinions in some detail.

(a) Minute by R.H.Davies, 27th December 1868.

In the opening lines of his minute Davies criticised the memorandum as being inconsistent with itself; for while Rawlinson dismissed the idea of an invasion of India, he nevertheless hinted at the possibility of a descent of 50,000 Persian Surbазs supported by Russian troops.¹

Davies argued that it would be foolish to interfere with Afghanistan. Past experience bore testimony to this. Nor was he very hopeful about the Persian question and he pointed out that when Persia went to war in 1832 with Turkey, in 1826 with Russia, in 1832, 1836 and 1837 against Herat, she in each

1. Afghanistan No.1, Parl.Papers, 1878-79, Vol.56, C-2190, p.78.

instance did so contrary to the remonstrance of the British Minister, and in the case of Mohammad Shah, commenced hostilities immediately after the British Government had aided the accession to the throne. Davies asked if there was any new hope of the efforts and expeditions being more effective. "Shall we find" he asked, "less slippery material to work with, - instruments more reliable than Dost Mohammad and the Kandahar brothers, or the Vainglorious Shah's by-gone?"¹

He further stated that the position of Russia in Central Asia in no way lessened the enormous difficulties of the route to Kabul by Bamian or to Kashmir by the Karakoram. In the case of Persia, Russia "has been any time during the past thirty years as well able as she is now to aid Persia in the siege of Herat. She has refrained from doing so. She refrained even at the time of the Sepoy Mutiny".²

Davies urged upon the Viceroy the impolicy of any further advance or interference in countries beyond the frontier of India, while the internal condition of India itself required attention. He regretted that there was no bridge on the Indus at Attok nor was there any communication system with Kohat and no place of refuge to the Khyber to fall back upon. "Surely any funds we have to spare" he said, "might better be devoted

1. Ibid., p.78.

2. Ibid., p.79.

to the tardy reparation of these deficiencies than engulfed in the profitless abyss of Afghan revolutions".¹ Such measures, he thought, were the best way of checking any encroachment and creating confidence in the hearts of the natives and respect for British power in the eyes of Russia and Persia.

In conclusion he stated -

"To conclude, I regret that I cannot regard Sir H. Rawlinson's proposals otherwise than as an entire renewal of the policy of 1838, which nearly ruined the Empire, and the effects of which we are still to get over".²

(b) Minute by W.H. Norman, 8th December 1868.

(Norman had served on the frontier from the first occupation of Peshawar in March 1849 till 1855 and again in part of 1856. During nearly the whole of this period he was principal staff officer to the troops and thoroughly acquainted with the problems of the frontier.)

Norman did not share in the "exaggerated" fears of Russian advance and condemned the method advocated by the followers of the forward policy as leading to disaster. He was firmly convinced that the occupation of Herat would not end in itself but

"To occupy Herat involves occupying many other places,

1. Ibid., p.79.

2. Ibid., p.79.

and also would render it necessary to keep other troops in readiness at all times to support those in advance".¹

Nor did he believe that the occupation of Quetta or Jallalabad would materially alter British positions and thus serve as a check on further Russian advance.

"The occupation of Quetta or Jallalabad, or both, could exercise no more sensible influence on Russian alliance than does the existing occupation of Peshawar or Jacobabad. If political necessity arises, both can be occupied with rapidity, but there is no political necessity whatever, and to carry out the measures without strong reasons seem to me most inexpedient".²

Norman was averse to the idea of having an envoy at Kabul and a contingent of native troops at that place. Speaking of the two proposals he expressed his opinion thus -

"The presence of either would be likely to drag us into difficulties, and would in no way strengthen us or aid us in checking Russian advances".³

Norman shared the views of Lawrence that it would be inexpedient to place British officers with the Persian army on the grounds that

"the presence of British Officers would not be able to influence the course of Persian policy and the British Government would be forced to dismiss those officers at the pleasure of the Persian Government (in the event of Persia siding with Russia)".⁴

1. Ibid., p.70.

2. Ibid., p.71.

3. Ibid., p.71.

4. Ibid., p.71

He objected to the proposal for the occupation of Kurram (advocated by H.B.Lumsden) - such a measure in his opinion was expensive and likely to irritate the Ameer.

"That Kurram is a few marches nearer to Kabul than any of our present garrisons, seems to me an argument of no force. Circumstances are not likely to require us to move to Kabul so suddenly that a difference of a few days will be any importance but if, contrary to all reasonable expectations, such circumstances did arise, the force we could ordinarily keep at Kurram would not be strong enough to move up to Kabul for any useful purpose without re-inforcements joining from Peshawar, while troops from Peshawar itself, replaced rapidly from Rawalpindi and Tehlem, could in respectable strength reach Kabul direct, at least as soon as they could by joining the Kurram troop, and proceeding to Kabul by that route".¹

It was much better, in Norman's opinion, to strengthen the existing frontier, keeping troops in readiness and within easy reach, rather than throwing them away unnecessarily in advanced position surrounded by hostile and warlike tribes.

"If Russia presses on so seriously to menace us, we should be in a position to go to war with unwasted resources. I will say nothing of all that we might do against Russia elsewhere than in India, but we would collect 70,000 or 80,000 good troops on our frontier, and, if necessary, advance into Afghanistan with a force likely to be superior in number, equipment, and condition to any Russian force we can contemplate on being brought there".²

Commenting on the argument of some who had pointed out that the increase of Russian influence would cause dissatis-

1. Ibid., p. 71

2. Ibid., p. 71

faction within India itself and make the task of an invader easy, he stated that, in the Sikh wars, British-Indian troops had, after two months of severe fighting, failed to drive them out, but there was no sign of any disorder or dissatisfaction among the natives.

"Surely there is no reason to suppose that the natives of our provinces would sympathise more with the Russians than with Sikhs".¹

Norman was averse to any kind of interference with Afghanistan and mingling up with the tribes whom he thought were difficult to control.

(c) Minute of G.N.Taylor (first Ordinary Member), 12th December 1868.

From this minute it would appear that the Government of India had contemplated aid to Sheer Ali before Rawlinson's memorandum reached them.

"The measures which were in contemplation before the Government left Simla, and which His Excellency still recommends should be carried out when the proper time arrives, have for their object to strengthen the position of Sheer Ali and to place our relations with reigning Ameers on a firm and solid basis. Such measures will, I believe, conduce to results so obviously desirable and forcibly advocated by Sir H.Rawlinson - the consolidation of a strong and friendly Government in Afghanistan".²

(d) Minute of the Commander-in-Chief (Sir W.R.Mansfield) 27th December 1868.

"I think the argument is complete against a British

1. Ibid., p. 71

2. Ibid., p. 74

occupation of Quetta, as an advance on Afghanistan, unless a real casus belli should arise in our relations with that country".¹

But, on relations with Afghanistan,

"I hold very strongly, that those relations should not be left to chance, or to be determined according to a distrustful or hostile attitude on our part, but that we should encourage diplomatic intercourse with the Court of Kabul, and, while testifying something like a genial sympathy towards the Government de facto, we should by political pressure and the practical testimony of our own good offices, bring about a reciprocity of good feeling towards ourselves".²

And the attitude to the de facto Government,

"But I think it is obvious that such a policy of passiveness should be limited by the pressing necessity of actual Civil War, and that so soon as we are able to assign something like firmness and stability to the de facto Government, we should not only speak to it with civility, but we should give it moral, and even material support".³

Mansfield put great stress on the necessity for the pacification of the tribes and to make them understand that they could either be friends or enemies. At the same time he urged the Government to keep watch on the movements of Russia, strengthen itself within its own limits and endeavour to arrive at a definite conclusion with Russia as regards Central Asia. For the rest he assured the Government of India that it had no reason to fear any power in the world.

1. Ibid., p.75.

2. Ibid., p.75.

3. Ibid., p.75.

"We are simply invincible in that country against all of the powers in the world, provided only we are true to ourselves. If we choose to commit ourselves to a policy of aggression, we can go and establish ourselves where we like. If, on the other hand, being guided by a true and sound policy, we restrict our ambitions and fortify ourselves by the continuance of good Government and careful attention to the efficiency of our military establishments, without extravagance on the one hand, or unwise cheapness on the other, we not only do that which is best for the Great Empire committed to our charge, but we comply with the conditions requisite for security and freedom from political anxiety. Reasoning from this point of view, I would repeat that we are bound to organise our Asiatic communications with Russia on a proper diplomatic and consular footing".¹

Mansfield would welcome any proposal having for its objects the improvement of the country at large - improvements of the means of communication, improving the lot of the Indians and bringing them security, peace and prosperity. He could not see any reason why some people advocated the throwing away of men and money in advanced, barren and fruitless position, while there was need for them inside India. He concluded his minute with the following remarks - "It appears then finally to me that the whole of Indo-Asiatic policy requires revision, but in a sense opposite to that outlined by Sir H. Rawlinson".²

"Then I would put aside jealousy and antagonism towards

1. Ibid., p.75.

2. Ibid., p.76.

other provinces, but would frame all our measures on a basis of international communications of peaceful character, of confidence instead of distrust, suspicion and ignorance".¹

(e) Minute by Sir Donald McLeod, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, 10th October 1868.

As regards Rawlinson's argument that the rapid advance of Russia might have an adverse effect on the minds of the inhabitants of Northern India, McLeod stated that the best information and intelligence showed that throughout Central Asia the steps of Russia were watched with suspicion and hatred, and the more intelligent and best informed of the people of India regarded them as unscrupulous and aggressive. Rawlinson had stated that the Afghans considered themselves to have a national feud with the British. On this McLeod remarked -

"I believe they now fully appreciate the uniform civility and protection which their traders and travellers experience in our territory, and the bearing of Ameer Sheer Ali Khan, since he has regained the throne of Kabul, certainly shows anything but a disinclination to be on friendly terms with us so far as he has hitherto pronounced himself".²

McLeod shared the opinion of Lawrence that every step that Russia took in advancing her frontiers would have the effect of increasing her difficulties, and in due course of time would expose to the light the aggressive character of

1. Ibid., p.75.

2. Ibid., p.47

her policy and thereby cause a reaction in Asia of public opinion against her movement.

He strongly condemned those newspapers, whether English or vernacular, and such writers as misrepresented the relations between Russia and Great Britain, spoiling the public mind and ultimately leading to animosity between the two Powers.

He deprecated the idea that Russia might play on the cupidity of the tribes in a joint descent on the plains of Hindustan. But if such an emergency ever arose, the population of India would realise their interest and stand firm with the British in India against the common enemy.

As regards Afghanistan and the question of aiding the de facto ruler, McLeod stated,

"while deprecating any rash interference in the civil strifes of Afghanistan, I believe that both consideration of good policy as regards our own interest, and of friendliness of those of Afghanistan, require that we should assist and show our sympathy with the rightful ruler, when satisfied that he is the most acceptable of existing candidates to his nation generally, and this may, I think, be emphatically stated at the present time in respect to Sher Ali".¹

Speaking of the proposal for the occupation of Quetta, McLeod stated -

"I by no means advocate the occupation of Quetta

1. Ibid., p.49

on a strategic military position, however advantageous the position may be deemed by some from a political point of view. Sir Henry Rawlinson admits that we should not be justified in taking the step if we should thereby run the risk of the loss of our friendly intercourse with either Kabul or Baloooshistan. And as I feel fully convinced that it would cause extreme suspicion and uneasiness on the part of the former at all events, I would deprecate all *thought of* through this or any analogous scheme for obtaining a footing in foreign territory until it shall be absolutely forced upon us by aggression and by the occurrence of a state of things not now existing".¹

(f) Minute by the Hon. Sir Richard Temple, 8th December 1868.

Sir Richard Temple was of the opinion that although Great Britain had no right to question what Russia was doing in Bokhara, she had a right to ask, for her own interests and safety, that she abstained from all interference in Afghanistan and Yarkand. He said that as Great Britain was on friendly terms with Russia, the best course was to make diplomatic representations to Russia on the subject. At the same time the native courts of Afghanistan and Yarkand should be informed that the Indian Government respected their independence and as well would help maintain that independence. Apart from that he did not favour any alliances, offensive and defensive or guaranteeing the ruler of the day against the wishes of his subjects.

1. Ibid., p. 49.

He welcomed the idea of sending native agents to the courts of Afghanistan and Yarkand on the ground that these agents excited no jealousy. But he was strongly averse to the appointing of British officers.

"I deprecate the sending of a single British officer or a single British soldier into Afghanistan, in time of peace at all events".¹

He observed that the study of British political affairs in Asia generally and on the North West frontier of India in particular was impressing him with a sense of the onward tendency - so long as some rigid bounds were observed it was just possible to check that tendency. But once those bounds were overpassed the tendency became irresistible. If British agents crossed the Afghan border, troops would follow in their train. If one part of Afghanistan was occupied the occupation would spread to other parts until the whole was occupied or some tremendous consequence occurred.²

He was against the formation of an Afghan contingent.

"The formation of an Afghan contingent is beset with difficulties. If it is to be paid for by us even through the agency of the Ameer, the payment will be irregular; then a series of disputes would arise with the Ameer, and the trouble in this respect, so well known at Hyder Abad and elsewhere in India, would be repeated at Kabul. If it is to be paid for by the British Government through a British officer, then it will be regarded by the Ameer as a body of foreign troops, and jealousy or disquietude must follow ..."³

1. Ibid., p.68.

2. Ibid., p. 6a

3. Ibid., p. 6a

As regards the proposal to induce the Ameer to lease the Districts of Kurram and Khost (advocated by Lumsden) Sir Richard Temple remarked -

"As to the leasing of the districts of Khost and Kurram from the Ameer, - firstly he would never consent to lease them to us, or if he did consent in words, in his heart he must necessarily be dissenting. Similarly the people would regard our position there as an invasion of their country. We know but too well how they have regarded such steps in the past; why should they regard this in any other way?"¹

Of the proposed occupation of Quetta, Temple spoke on the following lines.

"There would be a cause of fear to Kelat, and it would be regarded as a menace by Kandahar. Here again we should have the disadvantage of inspiring the Afghans with distrust till the war with Russia comes, and when that does come we shall be obliged to move on from our advanced post at Quetta, instead of selecting our own ground near the mouth of the Boolan Pass".²

Sir Richard Temple's second objection to the occupation of Quetta was that such a project would require extra troops to be raised - hence an increase in the number of the native troops, which the Government of India had decided not to increase beyond a certain limit.

(g) Memorandum by Lord Lawrence, 4th January 1869.

In his memorandum, Sir Henry Rawlinson had pointed out

1. Ibid., p.69.
2. Ibid., p.69.

with much confidence that the Afghan Civil War would not have assumed that tangible shape if from the beginning, the Government of India had, contrary to the will of Dost Mohammad Khan to leave the Afghans alone to settle their quarrels, given immediate moral and material support to Sheer Ali Khan.

But Lawrence repudiated that belief and argued that the misfortunes which came over Sheer Ali ^{were} ~~were~~ due to his own defective character and misrule. Moreover it was not an easy task to select with success any chief out of the whole lot. As to the danger arising from Russian action in Central Asia:

"No one, of course can deny that the advance of Russia in Central Asia is a matter which may gravely affect the interest of England in India. No person can doubt, I admit, that the approach of Russia towards our North-Western frontier in India may involve us in great difficulties ..."¹

The first step to counteract that danger was "to endeavour to maintain a thoroughly friendly power between India and the Russian possession in Central Asia". This would have the effect of creating a barrier against further encroachments, as well as preventing the two big Empires from becoming limitrophed. To attain this desirable end it was necessary to show goodwill to the Afghans, and to endeavour to convince them that the Government of India had no wish for further aggrandisement;

1. Ibid., p.61.

to help them to consolidate their power and refrain from interfering in their affairs. Lawrence however, could not speak with any degree of certainty about the attainment of that desirable end, but stated that there was great danger, "that some of the necessary measures which Sir H. Rawlinson recommends towards securing that object may lead to the opposite result".¹ His own policy was not to attempt much beyond the frontier of India. The next measure was to reconcile the people of India to the ruler of the day; to give them the best Government in our power, to improve the conditions of the country which need immense development, rather than pursue a policy which reckless of the consequence, was all and all for advance.

The other measure which Lawrence thought might be useful, was to come to some understanding with the cabinet of St. Petersburg. But if all these failed the Government of India should clearly state to Russia that beyond a certain limit she was not permitted to advance. Lawrence declared this policy thus -

"We might also endeavour to come to some mutual agreement, and to an understanding with Russia, and failing that, we might give that power to understand that an advance towards India, beyond a certain point, would entail on her war, in all parts of the world, with England".³

1. Ibid., p.61.

2. Ibid., p. 61

3. Ibid., p.61.

He admitted that Russia had made great advances in Central Asia and might make still more. But he could not see any reason why the British-Indian Government should openly question or impede this Russian advance so long as it did not affect British interests. He was quite optimistic about danger from Russia and expressed his hopes that the danger some anticipated might not arise but even if it did arise he still was not prepared to meet that danger by active measures on the part of the Indian Government in Afghanistan. This step, he believed, would lead eventually to the occupation of Afghanistan as was the case in 1838.

"Possibly the danger which some anticipate may never arise, but admitting that it may, any serious attempt to restrain Russia's advance by active measures on our part in Afghanistan would seem to me certainly to lead to a policy resulting in our eventual occupation of that country, as was the case in 1838".¹

He stated that most people would deprecate this result and would affirm that this would be the last object they desired. But the real point, he thought, was, whether an interference in Afghanistan, however moderate and limited in character in the first instance, was or was not, likely to lead to such a result? Lawrence's answer was in the positive sense. For he was convinced that the occupation of certain parts of Afghanistan such as Herat or Kandahar were not ends in themselves but means

1. Ibid., p.61.

to an end - the occupation of the whole country.

While the difficulties which the vicinity of Russia might have upon India had been presented in vivid and graphical terms, Sir H. Rawlinson had certainly forgotten about Russia's own difficulties resulting from such a gigantic project. The Government of India had after all a choice of difficulties. The first choice was to accept the slight political unrest and disturbance which might be expected from the close proximity of Russia and the second, of course, was to be ready for the difficulties arising out of the advance into Afghanistan and the best and prudent course was to examine and determine on which side the difficulties preponderated.¹ But, he asked,

"Would not Russian difficulties increase in proportion as she enlarged her borders? If danger and complications may be anticipated from the approach of Russia to our North Western frontier in India, will not Russia likewise be met by similar difficulties in her possessions in Central Asia?"²

Sir Henry Rawlinson had recommended (a) the transfer of the Persian Mission to the control of the Secretary of State for India and the appointment of British officers in the Persian army (b) the occupation of Quetta if it was not looked upon with suspicion by the Afghans (c) subsidising and strengthening of Sheer Ali. Lawrence himself was in favour of the transfer of the Persian Mission to the India Office, if that arrangement

1. Ibid., p. 62

2. Ibid., pp. 61-62.

was permanent, but he was entirely averse to the proposal for the appointment of British Officers to the Persian army on the ground that, in the first instance it was an extra burden on India's revenues and secondly that it would not strengthen British influence in Persia. Persia, he remarked, was so weak from various causes that she was practically under the control of Russia and utterly unable to resist the influence of that power.

Lawrence was convinced that -

"in any great struggle connecting Afghanistan, Persia would certainly follow the behests of Russia, even though unwilling on some grounds to do so".¹

As to the occupation of Quetta, Lawrence was emphatically averse to such a step on moral, political and military grounds. He made it clear that such a project would be not without inviting the hostility and suspicion of the Afghans and the Baluchis. "It would assuredly be looked on by the Afghans as the forerunner of our advance to Kandahar, and, perhaps, to Herat".²

Lawrence was not very sure if the force at Quetta, unless very large, would be able to stand on its own

"and unless that force were large, and composed of a considerable proportion of British troops,

1. Ibid., p. 62
2. Ibid., p. 63.

placed in a strong fortified position, it would, in the event of a formidable invasion, be likely to be cut off. Under such circumstances we should have to occupy Sind".¹

Lawrence then turned to the question of the formation of a contingent for service of Afghanistan. He asked whether the British Officers, with a native contingent, at a distance from any material support in the shape of British troops, would be able to exercise their influence on the soldiers. He was of the opinion that a contingent composed purely of native soldiers would be "a dangerous force to our own representatives at Kabul, and a source of distrust and irritation to the rulers of the country".²

Moreover, argued Lawrence, the contingent, if paid directly by a British officer, would be regarded by the Ameer as a body of foreign troops. The Ameer's enemies would try to tamper with them, in order to employ them to subvert his power. Under such circumstances the Ameer would regard the British agent as his rival rather than as a friend.³

Lawrence thought it highly impolitic to do more than generally renew the engagements of 1857 between the British Government and that of Afghanistan and he would on no account recommend that the Indian Government should accede to a request, which it was felt the Ameer would make, for an

1. Ibid., p.63.

2. Ibid., p. 43

3. Ibid., p. 43

offensive and defensive alliance. At the same time he declared that he would not consent to any engagements which might imply responsibility on the part of the British Government for the maintenance of the Ameer's authority. Nor was he ready to promise an annual subsidy for a term of years. This would have had the effect of binding the Indian Government, which was Lawrence's object to avoid. He was, however, ready to give the Ameer a certain annual subsidy (10 to 12 lakhs of rupees) for so long as the Indian Government were satisfied with his conduct towards them. But for all this Lawrence was not for attaching any condition beyond general fidelity in his (Ameer) relations towards the Indian Government, in accordance with the terms of the treaty of 1857. At the same time the Ameer was to be led to understand that those conditions were essential to the subsidy.¹

The conditions were not merely professions of amity to the British Government and courtesy to native agent accredited to the court, but an earnest endeavour on the part of the Ameer to exercise such a control over the tribes, subject to his authority, as to prevent them from making raids on British-Indian territory.²

To sum up his strong aversion to any extension of the

1. Ibid., p.65.

2. Ibid., p. 65.

territory, under whatever pretence, Sir John Lawrence remarked -

"If any change in our Western frontier is desirable it is to reduction rather than extension of its limits that I should look. It is altogether a mistake to suppose that the occupation of Jallalabad would strengthen our position. Whatever might be the first impression in the minds of the people at such extension of our frontier, the move being a false one, the defects would soon become apparent. It would greatly enhance our present difficulties. It would at once entail a considerable addition to our troops, British and native, while it would revive in the minds of the Afghans the fear of our encroachment, which is now partially at rest".¹

We now come to the joint opinion of the Government of India on the subject. There was no dissent recorded.

In their despatch to the Duke of Argyll, the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India expressed in the most clear terms their entire rejection of the proposal contained in the memorandum of Sir Henry Rawlinson forwarded, under Sir S. Northcote's instructions, in Kaye's letter of 21st August 1868. The Government of India could not see any reason for any departure from the then existing policy. They were convinced that the translations into actions of any of the proposals given by Sir H. Rawlinson would have brought results opposite to those desired. The Government of India, therefore,

1. Ibid., p. 64.

could not be persuaded to depart from the settled policy they had been pursuing towards the frontier states.

"A careful perusal of the memorandum forwarded to us, and a further discussion of the subject in all its bearings, has not led us to recommend any substantial alteration in the course of policy to be adopted on the frontier, or beyond it. On the contrary, the closer and more constant the attention which the subject receives at our hands, the more settled is our conviction that any serious departure from the principles which we have already enunciated, would be the cause of grave political and financial embarrassments and would probably involve us in doubtful undertakings, the issue or duration of which statesmen could hardly venture to predict".¹

"We object to any active interference in the affairs of Afghanistan by the deputations of a British officer with or without a contingent, or by the forcible or amicable occupation of any post or tract in that country beyond our own frontier, inasmuch as we think such a measure would, under present circumstances, engender irritation, defiance, and hatred in the minds of the Afghans, without in the least strengthening our power either for attack or defence".²

The Government of India believed that the object which it had at heart, in common with all interested in India, might be best attained by an attitude of readiness and firmness on its own frontier, and by giving all care and spending all resources for the attainment of practical and sound ends over which they could exercise an effective and immediate control.

In addition the Government of India recommended certain measures to the Secretary of State for India. The first was

1. "Causes of the Afghan War" 1879 (London) p.19.
2. Ibid., p.20.

(301)

to endeavour to come to some understanding with Russia as regards the respective possessions of the two powers in Central Asia.

A P P E N D I X 2

In 1875 the Viceroy, then Lord Northbrook, being concerned with the question of sending European agents to Afghanistan, caused an enquiry to be made about the attitude which Sheer Ali had shown towards this possibility at Ambala in 1869. The most important evidence on one side came from Grey who had acted as the Viceroy's interpreter and who (as quoted above) described Sheer Ali's attitude as follows:

"He ... would construct forts on his own part or under our superintendence, and admit European garrisons if ever desired; would gladly see an Agent or a European Superintendent in Balkh, Herat or anywhere but actually in Cabul, which might lead to the supposition of his being a puppet ..."

Grey had derived this view from conversations between Seton-Karr, the Foreign Secretary, and Sheer Ali's chief Minister, Noor Mohammad. Seton-Karr himself, however, had no recollection of Sheer Ali having waived objections to receiving European agents in Afghanistan, outside Kabul. Girdlestone (Seton-Karr's Under Secretary) and Colonel Burne (who had been Mayo's military secretary) supported Grey.

The point is not very important in itself. It may be that Sheer Ali would have gone so far as allowing European agents to enter Afghanistan as the price for what he wanted. There is no evidence that he was prepared to do so for what

Mayo offered him. An Afghan ruler, whose authority at this time was so much decentralized, was bound to reckon with the possibility that a British agent stationed, for instance, at Herat, would fall under the influence of the governor of Herat and tend to misrepresent the government at Kabul. What is perhaps most significant is the anxiety of the Indian government in 1875 to discover what Sheer Ali's views had been in 1869.

A P P E N D I X 3

RUSSO-PERSIAN RELATIONS 1869-1875

As in the case of the Khanats of Central Asia the predatory habits of the tribes served as an excuse for Russian intervention and ultimate absorption of those regions, so also in the case of Persia the incursions and inroads of the Turkomans, both on Persian and Russian territory, coupled with the sheer impotency of the Persian Government to protect its own frontiers, provided Russia with a good excuse in her campaign of encroachments on the northern frontiers of Persia.

Still worse was the uncertainty and confusion over the Perso-Turkoman boundary. In 1834, Arrowsmith published a map to illustrate Burnes' travels in Persia and he placed the Persian boundary to the north of the River Attrek. In 1841 a map was published in Berlin by C. Zimmermann in which the Persian boundary was placed some distance above the Attrek. This was nothing different from Sansen's Atlas published in 1700 which placed the boundary at the same place. In 1863 Murray published a map to describe Vambéry's travels in Persia. In this map the Rivers Attrek and Goorjan are given to Turkoman and the Kara Su is described as forming the northern boundary of Persia near the Caspian.

In 1869, an understanding was come to between the Persian government and the Russian government regarding the Attrek. This understanding was based on an explanation and assurances requested by the Shah from Beger, the Russian Minister in Teheran; an explanation of the purpose for which the Russians had built a fort at Krasnovodsk and an assurance they (the Russians) should undertake to build no more forts at the confluence of the Attrek and the Goorjan, and should undertake not to interfere with the affairs of the Turkoman and with Persian territory. Beger, in December 1869, after communicating with his government informed the Persian government that the Tsar "recognises the authority and sovereignty of Persia up to the banks of the Attrek river" and had "no intentions to construct any forts".¹ The Russian government further explained that their occupation of Asharodha was meant to protect the caravan from the inroads of the Turkomans. The Persian government accordingly informed the Governor of Asterabad that the Russians were not to cross the Attrek which was Persian, while on the other side of the Attrek the Russians were at liberty to build whatever they liked.²

It also became evident that the Persian government had

1. F.O.65, Vol.991 (inclosure in Thomson's No.10 of 29th Jan. 1873).

2. Ibid., Thomson's No.21, 7th Feb.1870.

agreed to act in concert with the Russians to punish the Turkoman and the Asterabad agent reported to Dickson that the Asterabad Governor was instructed that the Attrek was to be the Persian boundary line with Russia and that the Russians would punish the Turkomans for their depredations into Persian territory.¹

But later on it was learnt that the arrangements come to in 1869 could only have reference to the territory bordering on the Caspian sea and the whole course of the Attrek was not accepted by the Persian government as the northern boundary of Persia.²

In 1873, certain articles appeared in the English press and more especially in the Morning Post suggesting that a secret treaty had been signed between Russia and Persia by which the latter had ceded to the former the valley of the Attrek. This was, however, denied officially by the Persian minister in London. The Persian Prime Minister informed Thomson (Secretary of the Legation) that in 1869 when the Russians were about to occupy Krasnovodsk on the Caspian, an official declaration was issued by the Russian minister at Teheran announcing that the sovereign "rights of Persia to territory extending as far as the Attrek" was recognised by

1. Ibid., Dickson's No.13, 18th May, 1872.

2. Ibid., Lord A.Loftus' No.52, 5th Feb.1873.

the Russians".¹

On the 5th February 1873 Lord A. Loftus reported that M. de Stremounhoff, the Director of the Asiatic Department of the Russian Foreign Office, had denied the existence of any secret treaty between Russia and Persia, supporting his statement by claiming that in the past a sort of understanding had come to pass between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia to respect Persian integrity and territorial sovereignty. Stremounhoff further stated that confusion existed over the boundary line and very frequently the Turkoman had taken advantage of it in making raids on the Persian territory. To put a stop to these acts of brigandage on the part of the Turkoman, a proposal to make the Attrek the northern boundary of Persia instead of Kuja Su (which was further to the south) was made to the Persian government. The Persian territory consequently had increased rather than decreased. For the purpose of watching the movements of the Turkoman a Russian encampment was established at Chikishlar at the corner of the Caspian sea.

Just about this time, the Persian government began to view with suspicion the movements of Russia along the course of the Attrek. Intelligence of the intention of the Russians to occupy Kizil-Arwaḍ, Barani and Baorma caused the Persian

1. Ibid., (inclosure in Thomson's No. 10 of 29th Jan. 1873.)

Minister in London to express his Government's anxiety on the subject and to enquire whether the time had not yet come for recognising the integrity of Persia as well as Afghanistan. Granville informed the Persian Minister that an understanding between England and Russia of 1834 existed upon the subject of the independence of Persia. This understanding had been confirmed by Lord Palmerston in 1838.

The Persian government could not seriously and openly remonstrate against Russian activities and thus expose itself to the full burst of Russian anger. Indeed, its fears were at times cancelled by hopes that Russia would become its protector. This vacillation is characteristic of all those weak countries who seek foreign protection. The Russians on their part by one excuse or another were busy in their schemes of encroachment on the Persian territory. When the British press revealed its suspicion of Russia in her dealings with Persia, Stremocounhoff bitterly complained to Loftus of the continual distrust and suspicion with which Russia was charged.¹ But nevertheless on 10th March 1873 a detachment of the Russian troops crossed the Attrek and attacked the Yemot Turkoman within 8 miles of Asterabad. When the Persian government asked for an explanation, it was told that the action in question was one of necessity and could not be avoided as it

1. Ibid., Loftus's No.92, 5th March 1873.

had left the Persian frontier unguarded and the Russian authorities felt it their duty to punish the Turkoman. It was stated, however, that the act was not one of aggression and Russia renewed her assurance that she fully recognised Attrek as the northern boundary of Persia.¹

It must be here observed that so far the negotiations passed between Persia and Russia had chiefly referred to that portion of the Persian territory which abutted on the Caspian sea. Although Russia had always asserted the Attrek as the northern boundary of Persia, the Persian government itself had claimed that the Attrek was the boundary of Persia as far as its mouth on the Caspian was concerned, but not as constituting in its entire length the northern boundary of Persia. The Shah of Persia while at St. Petersburg (May 1873) most emphatically declared to Gortchakoff that Persia had only agreed to the mouth of the Attrek as forming the northern boundary of Persia and not the whole course of that river.²

But as has been said before, Persia's impotency had reached such a stage that she could not do anything without Russia and had become a mere tool in the hands of that power.

1. Ibid., Loftus's No.147, 5th April 1873, No.150, 16th April 1873, No.157, 23rd April 1873 and Thomson's No.30, 16th March 1873. See also the letter of the Russian Minister at Teheran to the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 13th April 1875. F.O.65, Vol.878.
2. F.O.65, Vol.991, Loftus's No.213, 27th May 1873.

While Malcarm Khan was lamenting and pouring out his grief to Lord Derby (8th April 1874) at the Russian activities in Central Asia, the Persian Government as far back as October 1873, was renewing its proposals to the Russian government for a joint military action against the Turkoman in the neighbourhood of Attrek.¹

The Russian Government having gradually assumed the right to punish the Turkoman took a bolder step when General Lamakin landed with a number of soldiers at a place called Shah Kadem eight stages from Asterabad and issued a circular to the Yemot Turkoman telling them that from the Goorjan river (which is three miles from Asterabad) as far as Khiva, belonged to Russia. The contents of the circular were to call upon the Turkoman to adopt peaceful habits and refrain from molesting Russian trade. The political significance of this distinct step was the assumption by Russia of authority over the Turkoman and over the Attrek and Goorjan.

On 6th November 1874, Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, directed Loftus² to call the attention of the Russian government to General Lamakin's circular in which he had styled himself as the commander over the Turkoman, and to point out that the territory between the Attrek and Goorjan unquestionably

1. Ibid., Loftus's No.429, 24th November 1877 to Lord Derby.
2. F.O.65, Vol.904.

belonged to Persia, so that the interference of Lamakin's could not be justified.¹

In the absence of Gortchakoff, Loftus sought an interview with de Westman, the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, who informed him that the circular of General Lamakin had been the subject of prolonged correspondence between the Persian and Russian governments and that the explanations given by Russia had been considered by Persia as perfectly satisfactory. De Westman added that General Lamakin had generalised the tribes instead of applying the proper names to them. The whole circumstance, he stated, was due to wrong translations which had been happily and satisfactorily rectified by the Persian government. Having stated this, de Westman said that he was astonished that the British government should ask for an explanation regarding an incident which did not concern them. If, he said, there was any room for protest it was for Persia to do so and not for the British government. He cited the case of Kashgar as an example of an independent state separated from India. Although information of an unsatisfactory nature regarding the late Mission of Forsyth had been reaching the Imperial Government, it had refrained from asking the British Government for explanations because it considered it not its business to do so.²

1. Central Asia No.1 (1878) pp.20,21.

2. F.O.65, Vol.904, Loftus to Derby, 17th November 1874.

On 10th September 1874, Thomson reported that General Lamakin with 600 men and two guns had gone to occupy Karakala on the Attrek. The British government naturally felt some anxiety at this movement of the Russian troops as they considered the occupation of any strategic point on the Attrek as a first step towards the occupation of Merv, and the beginning of constant intrigues in Afghanistan. On 12th December 1874, Thomson telegraphed from Teheran suggesting moral support for Persia in her protest against the Russian movements. The Foreign Office, realising that past experience had shown that no reliance could be placed on the Persian government in matters affecting Russia, and that the Persian frontiers were ill-defined and confused, informed Thomson that "As regards the present advance of the Russians to Karakala, H.M. Government fear that, in the present ill-defined state of the Russian frontier, Persia would not be justified in protesting against this act, and still less would H.M. Government have the right to interfere".¹

Meanwhile, the Russian government adopted a conciliatory policy towards the Turkomans to secure their confidence and prepare the way for their complete absorption. This policy brought favourable results and in some cases the Turkoman not only showed submission but inclination to assist the Russian

1. F.O.65, Vol.991, Derby to Thomson, January 1875.

troops. In the summer of 1875, the Russians were reported (11th August 1875) to have landed building material at Kizzil Sou for the purpose of constructing a fort at Bezat-Hajee on the Attrek about 90 miles east of Harsan Kooli. About the same time, General Lamakin started from Krosnovodsk on the so-called scientific exploration of the ancient bed of the Oxus and on 21st July he passed Kizal Arwad to attack the Tekke Turkoman. In September 1875, the Journal de St. Petersburg announced that the Akhal Tekke tribe submitted to the Russian rule.¹

On the 26th December 1874, the Russia Minister at Teheran was sent a note by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, regarding the line of the Attrek. The Russian Minister had repudiated the Persian claim to exercise authority over the tribes and the Persian Minister reminded him that "the arrangement of 1869 was sudden and telegraphic, the heads of the matters were stated, but details were not entered into. It does not follow that because all the old established rights of Persia were not inserted therein they should be made a subject for doubt and refutation".

The Russian Minister replied on 5th March 1875, rejecting the repeated complaints of the Persian government. He stated

1. Ibid., Loftus to Derby, 2nd September 1875.

that the arrangement of 1869, though it was a telegraphic (communication), was nevertheless an arrangement concluded after long discussion, and both governments considered it as perfectly clear and sufficient.¹

The Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs replied on 7th March 1875 stating that action such as Lamakin's address to the Turkoman tribes was done in direct opposition to that very arrangement of 1869, and further if the Russian Minister referred to his own letter No.82 of 21 Ramzan 1286 which after 3rd Dec.1869 the telegraphic reply from the Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs, he had addressed to the Persian Foreign Department, he would perceive "that the essential and high object of the Persian Government has been, and is still, the maintenance of their ancient sovereign rights over the Turkoman tribes".²

1. F.O.65, Vol.927.
2. F.O.65, Vol.927.

RUSSIAN DECLARATIONS IN RESPECT TO AFGHANISTAN: 23 JULY 1876

1. Gortchakoff to Brunnow, 24 February/7 March 1869.

"Vous pouvez donc, Mon Cher Baron, re-itérer au Principal Secrétaire d'État de S.M.B. l'assurance positive que S.M. Impériale considère l'Afghanistan comme entièrement en dehors de la sphère où la Russie peut être appelée à exercer son influence. Aucune intervention ou interférence, quelconque contraire à l'indépendance de cet État n'entre dans ses intentions".

2. Loftus to Granville, 28 January 1874.

"As regards Afghanistan, His Highness (Prince Gortchakoff) repeated to me that the Imperial Government considered that kingdom to be beyond the sphere of their political action and that, happen what might, in the internal state of that country, the Imperial Government would not interfere".

3. Gortchakoff to Brunnow: communicated by Brunnow to Granville, 17 February 1874.

"J'ai réitéré à Lord A. Loftus l'assurance positive que le Cabinet Impérial persiste à considérer l'Afghanistan comme entièrement en dehors de sa sphère d'action".

4. Gortchakoff to Schouvalov, 5 April 1874.

"Dans sa dépêche responsive en date du 21st Janvier, 1874, Son Altesse le Prince Gortchakov réitéra l'assurance positive que le Gouvernement Impérial persistait à considérer l'Afghanistan comme entièrement en dehors de sa sphère d'action".

5. Gortchakoff to Schouvalov, 3/15 February 1876.

"Veuillez dire à S.E. d'ordre de notre Auguste Maître que nous adhérons entièrement aux conclusions d'après lesquelles en maintenant, de part et d'autre, l'arrangement convenu quant aux limites de l'Afghanistan, qui demeurerait en dehors de la sphère d'action de la Russie, les deux Cabinets considéraient comme closes les discussions reconnues peu pratiques relatives à la zone neutre et à la zone intermédiaire".

A P P E N D I X 5

DRAFT TREATY FOR THE PESHAWAR CONFERENCE.¹

The principal articles are the following:-

Article 2. "Between the British Government and that of the Ameer, Sheer Ali Khan ruler of Afghanistan, his heirs and successors, there shall be perpetual peace and friendship. The friends of the one government shall be the friends of the other; and the enemies of the one government shall be the enemies of the other".

Article 3. "In the event of the territories now possessed by His Highness the Ameer, Sheer Ali Khan, being invaded by a foreign enemy, the British Government will aid His Highness in the defence of those territories with men and materials of war; it being clearly understood and hereby provided, that the conduct of the Ameer and his government shall, at the same time, be in strict conformity with the declarations contained in the above Article 2; and that His Highness shall have refrained from all provocation of aggression on, or interference with those states and territories beyond his present frontiers, save with the knowledge and consent of the British Government".

1. v. Parl. Papers 1878-79 (Afghanistan, No.1), Vol.56, ^{c-2190} pp.182-192.

Article 4. "In accordance with this understanding, His Highness the Ameer agrees to conduct his relations with foreign states in harmony with the policy of the British Government".

Article 5. "For the better protection of the Afghan frontier it is hereby agreed that the British Government shall on its part depute accredited British Agents to reside at Herat and such other places in Afghanistan as may be mutually determined by the High Contracting powers; and that the Ruler of Afghanistan shall on his part depute an Agent to reside at the Court of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and at such other places in British India as may be similarly agreed upon".

Article 9. "In proof of its desire to see the Government of His Highness Sheer Ali Khan consolidated, and undisturbed by domestic trouble, the British Government hereby agrees to acknowledge whomsoever His Highness, may nominate as his heir-apparent and to discountenance the pretensions of any rival claimant to the throne".

Article 10. "The British Government, its Officers and Agents, will, as heretofore, abstain from all interference in the domestic administration and internal affairs of Afghanistan; except in so far as their assistance may, at any time, be required, and invoked, by the Ameer, his heirs, and successors, to avert from that country the calamities of a civil war, and

protect the peaceful interests which this treaty is intended to establish and promote.

In that case, the British Government will afford to the Government of Afghanistan such support, moral and material, as may, in its opinion, and in general accordance with the foregoing declaration, be necessary for the assistance of the Ameer, his heirs, and successors, in protecting equitable authority, national contentment, and settled order, from disturbance by the personal ambition of unlawful competitors for power".

Article 11 and 12 provided for the selection, maintenance and guarding of trade routes and the fixing of tariffs by a joint Commission.

Article 13. "His Highness the Ameer Sheer Ali Khan furthermore engages, on behalf of himself, his heirs, and successors, to support the British Government in checking and suppressing the trade in slaves and to prohibit the practice of kidnapping, or seizing, Human Beings within his dominions for the purpose of selling them into bondage".

Article 14. "For the further support of His Highness the Ameer in the permanent maintenance of his authority, and the efficient fulfilment of the engagements undertaken by His Highness on behalf of himself, his heirs, and successors, in accordance with this Treaty, the British Government agrees, on condition

of a faithful performance of the obligations herewith contracted, to pay His Highness, his heirs and successors..."

The following points were made in an accompanying Aide Memoire,

Article 3. "Invaded by a foreign enemy" to include European as well as Asiatic enemies.

Article 4. The Ameer to abstain from "discussion of political, international, or state matters with any Foreign Government, save in friendly concert with the British Government, to whom His Highness will unreservedly communicate all correspondence, or overtures, of this nature".

Articles 5 and 6. Unless and until mutually arranged, only a Native Agent need reside at Kabul City. Whenever, in the Viceroy's opinion, it may be necessary to communicate direct with the Ameer on matters of an important or confidential character, a special British Envoy to be deputed on a temporary mission to the Ameer's Court. Principal duty of the British Agent or Agents shall be to watch events outside the frontiers of Afghanistan, and to supply timely information to the British and Afghan Governments of any political intrigues, or dangers, threatening the peace, stability or integrity of the Afghan dominions.

Article 8. No British subjects to enter Afghanistan without the authoritative and written permission of their Government

"based on a mutual and cordial understanding between the two Governments".

Article 10. The British Government not desiring in any way to change its settled policy of non-interference with the internal affairs, or independence of Afghanistan, will only afford material assistance to the Ameer, his heirs etc., at their express request; that request to be accompanied by adequate and timely information and the British Government to be "the sole judge of the manner, time and expediency of furnishing such assistance".

Article 14. The British Government to pay to the Ameer 20 lakhs of rupees on the ratification of the present treaty and afterwards an annual sum of 12 lakhs of rupees in addition to such other material assistance in officers, men or money as may be from time to time deemed beneficial for the interests of the two Governments.

An interesting comparison with this draft treaty is that printed in Parl.Papers, Central Asia, No.1 (1881), inclosure 32 in No.1, under the title, "Treaty between the Russian Government and Ameer Shere Ali Khan, written from memory by Mirza Muhamud Nubbee". This latter provided for (1) Russian recognition of any person nominated by Sheer Ali as heir-apparent; Abdulla Khan having died; (2) Russian Government, if asked for assistance by Ameer on account of attack by a

foreign enemy upon Afghanistan, to repel such enemy "either by means of advice or such other means as it may consider proper"; (3) Ameer not to wage war with any foreign Power without consultation with and permission from Russian Government; (4) Ameer to report "in a friendly manner" to the Russian Government what goes on in his kingdom; (5) Ameer to communicate "every wish and important affair" to General Kaufmann; (6) Russian protection for Afghan merchants trading and residing in Russian territory; (7) Provision for Afghans to be sent to Russia to learn trades etc., and for their good treatment while there.

CONTAINS PULLOUTS