

A POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN 1863-1901

BY

M. HASSAN KAKAR



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To my teachers and professors especially the late Najm al-Din Tarakay of the high school in Laghman and Malcolm Edward Yapp of the University of London.

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PREFACE

My first work in English entitled, *Afghanistan, A Study in Internal Political Developments*, was published in 1971. It covered only sixteen years of the 21-year reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan (pronounced Abdur Rahman) and was based only on the unpublished and published documents of the British Government of India, which I had collected from the India Office Library and Records in London (now a part of the British Library Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections), for my M.Phil. thesis.

In the following years of the 1970s, I overhauled the entire 1971 publication on the basis of new source material that I had obtained from the archival centers in Kabul and New Delhi. The Afghan official chronicle, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, became another valuable source which was not available to me in London. I completed the revision of the 1971 work at Princeton and Harvard universities where I served as a visiting Fellow. These new sources enabled me to cover the entire reign of the amir, not only politically but diplomatically also, and to add some new topics as described in the Introduction of the present study. Subsequently, I revised the previously overhauled 1971 text on the basis of two important books: Sirdar Abdul Qadir Effendi's *Royals and Royal Mendicant* (1948?) and Major General Sir Charles M. MacGregor's *War in Afghanistan, 1879-80* (1985).

I have performed the revision of my original study over an extended period of time, in line with the advice of Socrates, who had advised that "... the lover of inquiry must follow his beloved wherever it may lead him."¹ As a result of the thoroughness of this revision, the excellence of the historical sources, and my specialist knowledge of the subject, it is now possible to state that the national as well as the local history, of Afghanistan during this period (1863-1901) has become clearer than its history, during any other comparable period.

I would like to express my thanks to Stanley Barton for reading the entire manuscript and offering valuable editorial suggestions.

¹ Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, Translated by Grube, C. M. A., Hackett Publishing Co. Indianapolis, Cambridge, 1975, 18.

OTHER BOOKS AND TRANSLATION OF BOOKS BY M. H. KAKAR

In English

- Afghanistan, A Study in Internal Political Developments, 1880-1896 (1971)
- Government and Society in Afghanistan, The Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan (1979)
- Afghanistan, The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-1982 (1995)

In Pashto

- The Geneva Compromise on Afghanistan (1988)
- Afghans in the Spring of 1987 at War with the Russians (1990)
- Light and Defense or Essays on the Population, History and Current Affairs of Afghanistan, Editor (1999)
- Journey to the Homeland; The Taliban and Islamic Fundamentalism, (2004)
- The Reign of King Aman Allah Reconsidered (2005)

In Dari

- Afghan, Afghanistan and Afghans and the Organization of the State in India, Persia and Afghanistan (1978)
- The Second Anglo-Afghan War (1989)

Translation

(Pashto or Dari)

- Gorky on Literature (1961)
- What is History? E. H. Carr, author (1968)
- The Real World of Democracy, C. B. McPherson, author (1971)
- An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, 2 vols., M. Elphinstone, author (1982)
- Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, George Knelle, author (2002)

Manuscript in Pashto

- Journal of Political Developments, 1979-1982

ABBREVIATIONS*

ARAMFA	The Archives of the Royal Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kabul
BACA	Biographical Accounts of Chiefs, Sardars and others of Afghanistan, Calcutta, 1888
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
CD	Chitral Agency Diary
DSCD	Dir, Swat, Chitral Agency Diary
GAK (1895)	Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Kabul, pt. 4, 1895
GD	Gilgit Agency Diary
IGA	Imperial Gazetteer of India, Afghanistan and Nepal, (Calcutta, 1908)
IOL	India Office Library, Commonwealth Relations Office, London
HD	Herat Diary
Kand. D.	Kandahar Diary
KD	Kabul Diary
Kh.D.	Khyber Agency Diary
Mala. D.	Malakand Agency Diary
MM	Monthly Memorandum
MRA	Military Report on Afghanistan, (Calcutta, 1906)
MRA (1925)	Military Report on Afghanistan, (Delhi, 1925)
NAI	National Archives of India, Delhi
PD	Peshawar Agency Diary
PNEA	Papers relating to Afghanistan, Narrative of Events in Afghanistan, 1878-1880
PSLI	Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures Received [in London] from India

* References to the records without ARAMFA or NAI indicate records of the India Office Library, and Commonwealth Relations Office, now a part of the British Library, London.

Archival sources are cited without special marks while their volumes and pages are cited only by their numbers. The pattern of the archival sources varies toward the end of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman's reign. Siraj al-Tawarikh without the mention of volume refers to its third volume which is devoted entirely to the sixteen years of the amir's reign.

- SJD Sawal wa Jawab-e-Dawlati (Amir 'Abd al-Rahman's interviews with the viceroy of India), Mohammad Nabi, (author), Kabul 1915
- (T) Telegram



Amir Sher 'Ali Khan (1823-1879).
Source: Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman*, 1895.



Amir Dost Mohammad Khan (1791-1863).
Source: Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman*, 1895.

INTRODUCTION

This work begins with the death of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan in 1863 and ends with the death of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan in 1901. It is an in depth study of the political history and external relations of Afghanistan during the second reign of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan and the entire reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan (pronounced Abdur Rahman), who ruled from July 20, 1880 to October 2, 1901. The reigns of these two amirs were characterized by their efforts in centralizing and consolidating state order as never before. It was also during their reigns that the boundaries of Afghanistan were internationally agreed for the first time in its long history albeit to its disadvantage. The centralization efforts also became significant because they became a model for their successors.

The introductory remarks of this study begin with the reign of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, who founded the Mohammadzay dynasty following a long period of civil war, which broke out after the Sadozay dynasty fell from power, in 1818. He was the father of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, and the grandfather of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, and these three figures were the giant players of nineteenth-century Afghanistan. The Sadozays and Mohammadzays, who played a pivotal role in the history of modern Afghanistan for almost two and a half centuries (1747-1978) were respectively sections of the Popalzay and Barakzay divisions of the Pashtun Durranay tribal confederation, while the Pashtuns have dominated the political scene of the country in modern times.¹

¹ The Pashtuns (or Pakhtuns) also called the Afghans, and the Pathans are among the ancient inhabitants of Afghanistan, constituting linguistically fifty five percent, and genealogically sixty two percent of the present population of the country. The Tajiks, the Hazaras, the Uzbeks, the Turkmen, the Char Aimaq and others are the other ethnic groups of the country. (Wak Foundation of Afghanistan, *The Ethnic Composition of Afghanistan*, Sapay Center for Pashto Research and Development, Peshawar, 1998, 62, 73).

The name 'Pashtun' is probably the 'Pakthas' of the Vedic period, which Herodotus in the fifth century B.C.E. recorded as 'Pactyes', in describing the inhabitants of "the Pactyic country, north of the rest of India," who, he states, "live much like the Bactrians." The word Afghan appears in ancient Indian, Persian and Chinese

Dost Mohammad Khan assumed power first as the governor of Kabul in 1826 and later as the amir of Afghanistan, in 1834, but the British deported him to India in 1840 after they had invaded Afghanistan in 1838. The invasion resulted in a full-scale war

sources as 'Asvaka', 'Asva-Ghana', 'Abgan', 'Apakan', 'Avagana', 'Ap-o-kien' and, finally, 'Afghan'. The Persian-speaking people still pronounce 'Afghan' as 'Aoghan'. In modern times the word 'Afghan' has come to signify all of the inhabitants of Afghanistan.

According to many authors, the name 'Pathan' is derived from 'Pakhtana', the plural of 'Pakhtun'. However, this does not seem to be true as the name has come into use since the twelfth century in India when some Pashtuns settled in the Patna district in the Bahar province. The Indians then called them, according to the historian Firishta, as 'Pathan' after Patna.

Although the Pashtuns are genealogy-conscious they have no written records of their ancestors. Herodotus mentions Gandaharii, Aparytae, and Sittagydae, names that may refer to the inhabitants of Gandahara, Apriday (or Afriday), and the Khattak. But according to one legend, the present-day Pashtuns are the descendants of a person known as Qays, who may have lived in and around the Kisay Ghar, or in Ghor, in western Afghanistan in the seventh century. This Qays, according to the legend, visited the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, who named him Qays 'Abd al-Rashid.

The name 'Qays' is probably the Arabicized form of 'Kisay', a name that signifies a series of ranges that came to be known in the Islamic period the 'Sulaiman Mountains', described by Morgenstierne "as the earliest known home of the Afghans." 'Kisay' was probably also the given name of the person in question, and that he changed it to Qays 'Abd al-Rashid under the Islamic impulse, as was common practice in Islamic Afghanistan. The change of Isapzai or Asapzai to Yusufzay is another example of this type.

Groups of people have also related themselves to the Arabs. The Shinwaray Pashtuns, for example, formerly called themselves *sayyeds*—that is, the descendants of the Prophet, Muhammad, through his daughter, Fatima. Even Pashto has been considered by some to be a Semitic language. The Kam tribe of the former Kafiristan too believed that they were related to the Quraysh tribe to which the Prophet, Muhammad, belonged. These associations were made because in Islamic Afghanistan the *sayyeds* were (and still are) respected, and the government paid them as well as the mullas and religious leaders (*pirs*) allowances. Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, however, compelled the *sayyeds* to present the firmans on the basis of which they received allowances. Since only a few could, he discontinued the allowances, saying, "I am tired of these Soyids (sic). How is it that the soyids are found in such large numbers everywhere? I can not accept the genealogical table of any of them". In general, it is probably impossible for Afghan *sayyeds* to prove that they are Arabs by descent.

Qays 'Abd al-Rashid had four sons: Beett (or Beetnai), Ghorghasht, Sarbun, and Korla. The contradiction is obvious between these names and the name 'Qays 'Abd al Rashid'. If 'Qays' had converted to Islam, as the legend says he had, he certainly would have given his sons Muslim names, not purely Pashto names such as these. Also, how can the descendants of one person multiply in the course of fourteen centuries to about forty million known souls of the present day Pashtuns, who now live on both sides of the Durand Line? Recently (1976), Afghan historian, Ahmad 'Ali Kohzad, has advanced the view according to which Beett, Ghorghasht, and Sarbun were the illustrious ancestors and heroes of the Pashtuns in the Avestan

(1838–1841) that came to be known in the Afghan sources as the First Anglo-Afghan war and in the English annals as the Afghan war. After the British had lost more than 16,500 soldiers and their Indian camp followers, and that the war had ended, they allowed Dost Mohammad Khan to return to Afghanistan. Upon his return home in 1843 he assumed power once again as an independent amir and ruled the country until his death in June 1863. By the time of his death he had reunited the fragmented country more by statesmanship than by force, and reorganized the shattered economy and the government along traditional lines. The Afghanistan that he ruled stretched from the Oxus River (Amu Darya) to the territories up to Peshawar. Dost Mohammad Khan was assisted by his numerous sons and grandsons some of whom served as provincial governors, known as sardars ('persons in command; general'), and governed almost autonomously, subject only to Amir Dost Mohammad Khan.

After the heir-apparent, Sardar Sher 'Ali Khan (b. 1822), became amir some of the provincial governors rebelled. The rebellion lasted intermittently for four years (1864–1868) during which time Afghanistan

period who were then known respectively by the names of Atratt, Gharshasib, and Sarand.

According to the aforementioned legend, the present-day divisions of Pashtuns have descended from the first three sons: for example, the Durranaes (formerly called Awdaul or Abdaul), the Barezh, the Tarin, the Ghoryakhel, and the Yusufzays are said to be descended from Sarbun; the Kakars, the Daways, the Babis and others from Ghorghast; and the Ghilzays, the Lodays, the Suris, the Niazaes and others are descended from Beett. Korla is said to have had no issues. (For details see, Neamat Ullah, *History of the Afghans*, Trans. from Persian into English with annotations by Dorn, Bernard, Vanguard Books (PVT), Lahore, 1999 (Reprint), 26–42. Herodotus, *The History*, Translated by Grene, D., The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, London, 1987, 3–91, 3.102, 7.67, 7.85. Khattak, *Tarikh-e-Murasa'* (in Pashto), *A General History of the Pashtuns*, ed. Kamil Momand, D. M., University Book Agency, Peshawar, 606–624. Afzal Khan Khattak was a grandson of the great poet and warrior Khushhal Khattak. Morgenstierne, G., "The People; The Pashto Language: Pashto Literature", *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 1, 1960, 216–221. Duranay, Sultan Mohammad, *The History of Sultani*, (in Dari) Bombay, 1298 H. Q., 11–23. Kakar, M. H. *Afghan, Afghanistan and the Afghans and the Organization of the State in India, Persia and Afghanistan*, (in Dari), Kabul University Press, 1978, 1–37. Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, The Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, 1880–1901*, Texas University Press at Austin, 1979, 157–158. Kohzad, Ahmad 'Ali, *Gharghasht ya Gharshasib*, (in Persian), [Gharghasht or Gharshasib], Kabul, first published in 1976, reprint by the Daunish Book Store, Peshawar, 1999. Siyal, Mira Jan., *Da Zeeno Pashtano Qaba'ilo Shajaray aw da Hugho Mainay aw Lund Tarikh*, (in Pashto) [*The Genealogy of Some Pashtun Tribes and Their lands and Short History*], University Book Agency, Peshawar, 1986. I am grateful to Dr. Zamin Mohmand for lending me this important book.

was plunged into a war in which many sons and grandsons of the late amir participated. In the course of the war Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, the only son of the eldest son of the late amir, distinguished himself by helping his father and his full-uncle to the throne one after the other. Amir Sher 'Ali Khan became a fugitive within his own country, but did not give up the fight. Finally in September 1868, he regained the throne with the help of his eldest son, Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, and Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan fled to Samarqand in Central Asia after his father and his full-uncle had died one after the other. In Samarqand Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan remained on a Russian pension for eleven years.

During his second reign, described in Chapter One, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan organized his administration, and introduced some reforms, which put Afghanistan on the road to becoming a nation-state. However, the British, in the pursuit of their Forward Policy of the 1870s, occupied the country once again in 1878. This occupation resulted in the Second Anglo-Afghan war, and it destroyed all that Amir Sher 'Ali Khan had accomplished. The viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, even decided to break up the country, and help the fugitive Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman ascend the throne of what he called "Northern Afghanistan."

Lytton opposed the rise to power of any member of the house of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, after the Afghans had massacred the personnel of the British embassy in Kabul in an uprising. However, subsequent events obliged him as well as his immediate successor to abandon the scheme of fragmentation. His successor even assisted the new ruler, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, in reuniting the whole country. This occurred after Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, a son of the late Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, had inflicted a stunning defeat on the British army at Maiwand, threatening the position of the British as well as that of the new amir. To overcome the common foe, the British assisted the amir, not only with money and weapons, but also by handing him over the province of Kandahar, which they had officially declared independent in the name of a local ruler as part of their scheme of fragmenting the country. To the relief of the British the amir expelled his rival cousin to Persia, and succeeded in reuniting the country. But the reunification was incomplete since the British retained the Khyber and the Michni Passes, along with the districts of Kurram (Kurma), Pishin and Sibi that they had acquired by the treaty of Gandumak, of 1879. Additionally, the

British were to conduct the external relations of the country, and later by the Durand Agreement or the Kabul Convention of 1893, they even deprived the amir of ruling over a vast region in the eastern hinterland.

As amir, 'Abd al-Rahman Khan began the work which his predecessor, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, had begun, but focused more on state building than nation building. Consequently, he concentrated on order and security, and drastically curtailed the traditional liberty that the Afghans especially their rural magnates enjoyed. He had reasons for doing so. Externally, by then Afghanistan had been encircled almost entirely by the British and Russian empires. They also curbed the amir's drive for regaining the territories that Afghanistan had lost previously, and also seized additional territory. Later in his reign they even reached an understanding between themselves and made Afghanistan a buffer state. The amir suspected both powers, and made their understanding a further justification for consolidating the government and his dynastic power, thereby demanding sacrifices from his subjects. Internally, the amir also had problems not less demanding. He was to establish his rule in the face of opposition of dynastic rivals. The more popular son of the late amir, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, proved a formidable rival, as noted above. While Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan succeeded in expelling him to Persia in 1881, his struggle with him, as well as his close ties with the British, alienated from the amir the Durranays and most of those who had fought the British during their occupation of Afghanistan. In 1888 the amir's full-cousin, Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan, the virtual autonomous governor of Afghan Turkestan, rebelled, but failed to unseat the amir. The defeated sardar took refuge in Samarqand a second time and the expansionist empires of Britain and Russia became homes to his dynastic rival cousins, including the former amir, Mohammad Ya'qub Khan.

The external threats coupled with those from dynastic rivals as well as potential threats from provincial magnates convinced the amir that for Afghanistan to survive as a country it must have a strong central government with a strong military force. But this scheme required the allocation of a large proportion of financial resources and the curtailment of traditional autonomy of tribal communities and elders. Considering the country's meager resources and the unwillingness of its people to live under a police state this was a most stupendous task that the amir set for himself. This scheme

resulted in over 40 rebellions of which I have studied only the major ones. The pacification of Hazarajat and the conquest of Kafiristan for the first time were different in nature. All of these events as well as the encirclement of the country by the British and Russian empires, and the demarcation of its boundaries make the reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan as the most formative period in the history of modern Afghanistan.

In view of their importance to the history of Afghanistan, Afghan relations with the British Government of India and with Russia constitute the major part of this study. Britain and Russia which had started the so-called Great Game to dominate the Central Asian lands much earlier in the century had finally besieged Afghanistan in the period under discussion. To them Afghanistan was a land without borders, an alibi for their forward movements. On the other hand, it was the policy of Afghan rulers in particular Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan to restore to Afghanistan the outlying territories she had previously lost. Afghanistan became, thus, a theatre for these powers to carry on their forward policies in opposite directions. All this made the period not only rich in events internally but also internationally. I have studied the external developments in particular the Durand Agreement and the Russian occupation of Panjdeh in detail mainly in reference to the internal politics of Afghanistan, the kind of study no other scholar has previously attempted.

The foundation of the present study is my M.Phil thesis entitled *Afghanistan, A Study in Internal Political Developments, 1880-1896*, published privately in Lahore in 1971. This work was narrower in scope and covered only the sixteen years of the twenty-one-year reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. After its publication I located a great number of new sources particularly while performing research for my Ph.D. thesis, entitled, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan*. Published in 1979, this work, as its title indicates, is a study of the government structure and some aspects of society to the exclusion of political and diplomatic history.

The source materials drawn upon in the present study, as well as my previous works, are varied and extensive, and have been evaluated in detail in my 1979 publication. Among the new unpublished sources that I have consulted for the present work are those that I collected from the National Archives of India, in New Delhi. I have also collected source materials from the India Office Library and Records, in London, (now part of the British Library Asia Pacific

and Africa Collections), and in the Royal Ministry of External Relations, in Kabul, where I was the only scholar to be given access to the files relating to the reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. Among a number of official and un-official printed sources in Persian, mention should be made of volume three of *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, (*The Lamp of Histories*) and the works of Mohammad Yusuf Riyazi. As an official chronicle, the first covers in minute detail the first sixteen years of the reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan while the second addresses the events of the period in a general way. These works I was unable to consult before.

An especially important and rare work not consulted previously is *Royals and Royal Mendicant* by Sirdar Abdul Qadir Effendi (b. 1888), the eldest son of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan. Based on family archives it is a biographical account of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan and Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, as well as that of the hero of Maiwand, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan. It is the first major book of its kind in which an educated prince describes events surrounding his fallen dynasty, and is noteworthy for the author's objectivity, and critical attitude. In his own words, "With these exposures I feel proud that I have got nothing hidden from the reader. I would never sacrifice truth for any consideration."² I remain permanently grateful to Sardar Mohammad Yahya Effendi, a relation of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan and now a retired army officer in Rawalpindi in Pakistan, for granting me a copy of it. Mention should also be made of an unpublished pamphlet, *Reminiscences: A Short History of an Era, 1869-1881* by Mahmud Tarzi (1865-1933) who was a grandson of a brother of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan. As a patriotic poet, a prolific author, and a distinguished journalist and diplomat, Tarzi influenced his contemporary politicians and intellectuals, and as the minister of external affairs in the reign of King Aman Allah Khan he played a leading role in state affairs. His account, although brief and sometimes unreliable contains some useful information and insights. I am grateful to Dr M. Ibrahim Majid Seraj, a grandson of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, for providing me with a copy of its English translation.

² Effendi, Sirdar M. A. K., *Royals and Royal Mendicant, A Tragedy of the Afghan History, 1791-1947*, Lion Press, Lahore, year of print unknown (1948?), 284. Effendi was the eldest son of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub and a grandson of Amir Sher 'Ali.

One important work in English is *War in Afghanistan, 1878-80*, the Personal Diary of Major General Sir Charles Metcalf MacGregor, published only recently (1985) with an introduction by Dr. William Trousdale. As the compiler of the *Gazetteer of Central Asia* (a large part of which is devoted to Afghanistan) MacGregor, who served as the Chief of Staff of the British forces in Kabul was well informed. His diary is in sharp contrast to the official statements and published reports of the British government officers of the era which were composed within strict limitations. Although "... clumsy in matters of diplomacy and hopeless in strategy and realpolitik, in all of which he mistakenly believed he excelled ... but he had, nonetheless, telling insights into personalities and issues."³ The diary complements the official reports as well as *Royals and Royal Mendicants*. While the latter is a valuable source about the Mohammadzay rulers and princes and elders, MacGregor's diary is a valuable source with regard to their British counterparts in Kabul. I remain grateful to Dr. Trousdale for giving me a copy of this important work.

It is due to the excellence of source materials, both Afghan and non-Afghan, that this work meets the requirement of historiography. These materials are not only abundant but also highly reliable, given the complexity of human affairs and the limitations and fallibility of those who record them. The sources, as well as my specialist knowledge of the subject, have enabled me to give a balanced and proportionate account of the whole story. Now and then during the past thirty years or so I have revised and developed as well as compressed the entire text of the original work, especially the chapter on the former Kafiristan. The Introduction is entirely new as is Chapter I as well as the following subsections: Waziristan, Bar Duarranays and Afghanistan, Maymana, Roshan and Shighnan, Wakhan, and International Significance of the Conquest of Kafiristan. Part Two, which deals exclusively with external relations, is likewise an entirely new addition as is the Conclusion.

³ Trousdale, W. Introduction, in MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan, 1879-80, The Personal Diary of Major General Sir Charles, Metcalfe MacGregor*, with an Introduction by Trousdale, W., Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1985, 68.

CHAPTER ONE

THE REIGN OF AMIR SHER 'ALI KHAN

The Accession

After Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, the founder of the Mohammadzay dynasty, died of asthma on June 9, 1863 at the age of seventy-two, his ambitious sons from among his twenty-seven sons and twenty-five daughters born of sixteen wives fought among themselves in a conflict that lasted intermittently for four years. During the 21 years of his second reign, which had begun in 1843, the amir had succeeded in reunifying the fragmented country which stretched from the Oxus River to the plains of Peshawar mainly through statesmanship and strategy. From an early age, during the Sadozay rule (or the Durranay Empire), he held high official posts along with his many brothers, most of whom also served the dynasty.

The Sadozay dynasty had been founded by Ahmad Shah Durranay, who ruled from 1747 to 1773. Following the dynasty's fall, in 1818, Dost Mohammad Khan distinguished himself greatly in the ensuing struggle for power even though he was one of the youngest of his brothers, and born of a Sipahmansur Qizilbash mother, from a minority Turkoman ethnic group. Of the twenty-one sons of Sardar Payanda Khan, called the Barakzay or Mohammadzay sardars, it was the eldest, Wazir Fatih Khan, and one of the youngest, Sardar Dost Mohammad Khan, who played the most important roles in the downfall of the ruling Sadozay dynasty. While the former acted as a state minister (*wazir*) and promoted his brothers to high posts the latter finally grabbed the throne when the former had died. In 1826 Sardar Dost Mohammad became the governor of Kabul, and in 1834 he became amir. During this long period of civil war he, along with his brothers, first overcame members of the former dynasty and afterward sidelined his own rival brothers. Some of his rival brothers had already died of natural causes. However, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan's first reign did not last long as the British deported him to India in 1840, after they had invaded Afghanistan in 1838. During his second reign, which began in 1843, his many sons and

grandsons helped him extend his authority throughout the country. Known as the great amir (*amir-e-kabir*), he died in Herat shortly after he incorporated that province into his kingdom. Herat had been autonomous since 1818.¹

At the time of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan's death his third son, Sardar Sher 'Ali Khan held the position of heir—apparent (*wali'ahd*). The amir had designated him as such after the two heirs-designate—Sardar Mohammad Akbar Khan and Sardar Ghulam Haydar Khan had died one after the other in 1847 and 1859 respectively. Just before his own death the amir "... pulled himself together to don the turban [of rulership] on the head of our hero, the "Lion of 'Ali"² after which he was called Amir Sher 'Ali Khan. On the subject of state power, however, Pashtun princes have seldom heeded the words of their dead fathers. It is alleged that even before the late amir was buried the new amir's "... youthful brother [Sardar Mohammad] Aslam intended to dispatch him [to the grave] with a pistol bullet, when the enlightened elder brother Sardar [Mohammad] A'zam prevented regicide."³ However, the "enlightened elder brother" was among the first to raise the standard of rebellion.

The Civil War

Amir Sher 'Ali Khan ruled in relative peace for two years with the exception of minor expeditions such as the one undertaken against Sardar Mohammad A'zam Khan, the governor of Zurmula (Zurmut) who was exiled to India. In 1864, the amir undertook the first major expedition against his eldest half-brother, Sardar Mohammad Afzal Khan, the governor of Turkestan, who had refused to pay revenue and read the Friday sermon (*khutba*) in the amir's name. This was an open act of rebellion as reading *khutba* in the name of the reigning amir as well as paying revenue was the obligation of a governor. The amir feared that he might claim the throne, since he was the eldest of their father's sons, and further, possessed an army of

¹ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 72. According to Fayz Mohammad, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan had 27 sons and 25 daughters born of 16 wives. *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, vols. 1 and 2 in one cover, Kabul, 1331 H.Q., 250.

² Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 81.

³ Ibid.

twenty-five thousand troops, and had ruled the important frontier region for almost ten years after it had been pacified in 1835. A former British officer, William Campbell, re-christened Sher Mohammad, who had been taken prisoner in a battle that Dost Mohammad Khan had waged against Shah Shuja' east of Kandahar, in 1834, had helped Sardar Mohammad Afzal Khan in organizing his army. All of these events influenced Amir Sher 'Ali Khan to reconcile himself with his rebellious brother after their armies had fought inconclusively in Bajgah, in June 1864.

However, Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, the only son of Afzal Khan, worked against this arrangement because "... he could not bring himself to see his father's legitimate right of succession as the eldest son of Dost [Mohammad Khan] trampled."⁴

While [Sardar Mohammad] Afzal and the amir were walking hand in hand in the shrine [of 'Ali in Mazar] to endorse [the] peace, 'Abd al-Rahman exposed his mala fide to arrest the king and shoot the crown prince [Sardar Mohammad 'Ali Khan]. Sher 'Ali was convinced that the father and the son had resolved to end the ruling house.⁵

The amir then seized his brother and took him to Kabul in custody, while the latter's son, Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman, fearful for his life, had already escaped to Bukhara. In 1865 Amir Sher 'Ali Khan set out for Kandahar at the head of his army. At the time his younger full-brother, Sardar Mohammad Amin Khan, the governor of Kandahar, had rebelled, and, further, had occupied Kalat-e-Ghilzay. In the fighting that took place at Kajbaz in June 1865 the rebel governor, the crown prince, Sardar Mohammad 'Ali Khan, as well as many others were killed. The deaths were too much for the amir to bear, and losing all interest in world affairs he took refuge in the *khirqa* (the location of the reputed robe of the Prophet, Muhammad) in Kandahar just as Shah Mahmud Hotak had become a recluse after his conquest of Persia, in 1722. Repeated pleas from officials failed to move Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, and his opponents, led by Sardar Mohammad A'zam Khan and Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, who had earlier fled to India and Bukhara respectively, proceeded toward Kabul and occupied it. They then helped the imprisoned

⁴ Ibid., 84.

⁵ Ibid., 87.

Sardar Mohammad Afzal Khan become amir in Kabul, in May 1866. Only then did Amir Sher 'Ali Khan leave the *khirqa* and dedicate himself to organizing an army. In a short time he succeeded in doing so, but his army suffered defeats in Sayyedabad in May 1866, in Muqur in January 1867, and in Panjsher in September 1867 by the armies of his opponents. In the battle of Sayyedabad alone "the belligerents sustained casualties to the tune of eight thousand warriors."⁶ If true, this was indeed an enormous toll. Amir Sher 'Ali Khan retreated to Herat, and Amir Mohammad Afzal Khan died in October 1867. The latter was succeeded by his full-brother, Amir Mohammad A'zam Khan. Sher 'Ali Khan, still did not resign, but instead he doubled his efforts in regaining the lost throne. His son, Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan (b. 1849), and several of his full-nephews helped him in his endeavor. However, his efforts to march on Kabul via Balkh failed, and he returned to Herat and planned to recover Kabul by way of Kandahar.

The first successful step in this recovery was taken by Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, who expelled from Kandahar the sons of Amir Mohammad A'zam Khan who ruled over it despotically. Sher 'Ali followed his triumphant son and proceeded from Kandahar toward Kabul, engaging Amir Mohammad A'zam Khan in a battle near Ghazni. It was at this time that a few sardars in Kabul, tired of Amir Mohammad A'zam Khan's tyranny, occupied the capital city for Amir Sher 'Ali Khan. Having lost the capital city and failed in overcoming their opponent in military engagements Amir Mohammad A'zam Khan and Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan left Afghanistan once again. A'zam Khan died on the way to Tehran, and Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan took asylum in Samarqand where he lived as a Russian pensioner for eleven years. Sher 'Ali Khan entered Kabul on September 8, 1868 and began to rule as amir for the second time.⁷

There were particular reasons why the sons and grandsons of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan fought among themselves. The amir had divided his kingdom among his sons, just as Timur Shah Durranay

⁶ Ibid., 92.

⁷ For the best account of the civil war, see Mawlawi Nur Ahmad Nuri, *Gulshan-e-Amarat*, [The Garden of the Amirate], History Association, Kabul, 1334/1956. Nuri was a contemporary of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan.

had done earlier, and they, therefore, regarded themselves as autonomous rulers, subject only to their father. Each of these governors had his own military force, and the authority to collect taxes and send the surplus to Kabul after deducting his own expenses; and each ruled his province as he pleased, and consequently, each looked upon it as his own domain. Another serious problem was the lack of unity among Amir Dost Mohammad Khan's numerous sons, who were the progeny of many mothers of different ethnic background. Princes born of the same mother joined forces against their rival half-brothers, but sometimes even they fought against each other in disputes over inheritance and power.

The rivalries between those born of different mothers may be explained by the fact that full-brothers and half-brothers were brought up in different milieus under different tutors (*lalas*). Also, in the competitive atmosphere of dynastic circles mothers in general, and co-wives in particular, raised their sons with a view to making them manly, competitive, partisan, and contentious. Only with these qualities, as well as skill in horsemanship, was a prince able to compete effectively in the hard and unpredictable profession of politics. Rivalry was always present in the families of the sardars, among whom it "... would start with the governors and pages and end up with their ladies." The rivalry and all that was connected with it "... would then spread among the sardars and the sons of lesser nobles, resulting in ever growing feuds over power and inheritance."⁸ However, competitiveness and rivalry were not confined to the families of the governing sardars; they were characteristics of the Pashtuns among whom it was said that in the tribe you may not be without cousins, among cousins not without brothers, and among brothers not without sons. All this is due to the custom of *turburi* or rivalry among paternal cousins that exists among them with force even to the present day.

The immediate causes of the civil war were personal. Sardar Mohammad Afzal and Sardar Mohammad A'zam felt that their father had wronged them by passing over them in the succession. As the eldest sons of their father, they believed that it was their

⁸ Tarzi, M. Reminiscences, "A Short History of an Era, 1869-1881," Trans. from Persian into English by Wahid Tarzi, Unpublished manuscript, 4.

"natural and legal rights"⁹ to succeed him, one after the other. They felt especially wronged since as governors, they had proved themselves to be able administrators and soldiers, though not as able as Amir Sher 'Ali had been. They were, however, the sons of a provincial Pashtun mother, whereas Amir Sher 'Ali Khan was the son of a Sadozay mother, connected to the inner dynastic circle. This is not to suggest that the mother of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan had directly influenced the great amir in his decision. It is said that "Amir Dost Mohammad Khan was too strong a character to be swayed by the gust of love for woman."¹⁰ Besides, "Sher 'Ali's mother was too ugly to appeal to a man with aesthetic taste."¹¹ But the great amir had "...stupendous regards for her" as she had been the mother of Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan, the 'Liberator of Afghanistan.'¹² By all accounts "...it was the astounding qualities of Sher 'Ali, which led his father away from the path of justice".¹³ The unjust path, however, "...not only knocked the bottom out of his house, but opened a wide chasm in the fidelity and the faith of the people, which unfortunately still [as of 1948] endure[s] and emit[s] a nasty smell of a festering sore."¹⁴ Thus, the death of the great amir followed by a civil war as the death of Timur Shah Durranay (who had also shown a preference for his third son as his successor) had been.

During the civil war many other sardars also played roles, since, by custom, each commanded contingents of private soldiers, enjoyed rent-free lands, and received allowances in return for military services in times of emergency. Some of these sardars, who had been deprived by the amir of many of their privileges, entered the war, as did tribal and community elders. However, during the entire period of this struggle, the triumphant Mohammadzay sardars did not treat their fallen rivals brutally as some of the triumphant Sadozay princes had done earlier. Nor did they treat harshly the sardars who had changed sides and by doing so had contributed to the prolongation of the war. With the one exception of the execution of a

⁹ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 84.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

non-Mohammadzay general, Mohammad Rafi' Ludin, they only imprisoned or expelled their fallen opponents. Among a people whose high politics were associated with violence this was indeed an achievement. This was perhaps because the Mohammadzay sardars viewed the war as a dynastic struggle, and they considered the punishment they inflicted on their fallen opponents to be fitting for disloyalty to a member of their own dynasty, rather than to a ruler representing heaven, the fatherland, the people, or the state.

The Reforms

The civil war in Afghanistan coincided with the gigantic stride of Russia in Central Asia, as a result of which it became coterminous with Afghanistan for the first time. (See Chapter Eleven). Understandably, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan feared that Afghanistan would be probably Russia's next target. To forestall this danger, he tried to consolidate his government at home and gain the support of the British Government of India.

First, on November 12, 1868, he ordered the expulsion under guard of Sayyed Jamal al-Din Afghani (1830s-1897) via Kandahar and Quetta to India, in opposition to his own desire to proceed to the Russian-dominated Bukhara. As an instigator of the Muslim world determined to oppose the European domination of the Muslim countries and working for the revival of Islam, Afghani advocated the Pan-Islamic movement as well as the overthrow of the Muslim absolutist rulers. However, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan charged that "... this person has an object of his own in view," and consequently considered his continued residence in Afghanistan "to be full of hazard to the country."

Afghani had entered Herat in 1866, and since October 1867 had lodged at the Bala Hissar in Kabul. There, as a leading member of Amir Mohammad A'zam Khan's Privy Council he advised him "to follow an anti-British course." Apparently, he also intended to advise the new amir to follow a similar line. In the words of his biographer, "It is plausible that Jamal al-Din, who had already evinced a strong hostility to the British, was simply trying to marshal all the persuasive power he could to turn the amir to an anti-British policy." However, this much was known that in addition to being an Anglophobe he was also a Russophile, and in response to his desire

for the conclusion of an alliance between "the Russian and Afghan Governments" Amir Sher 'Ali Khan had bluntly told him that "I perfectly know my neighbors, and am well acquainted with the circumstances of the Russian Government; your further residence in this country is contrary to my pleasure."¹⁵

Second and more importantly, early in 1869 the amir visited India officially, and held meetings in Ambala with the governor-general and viceroy, Lord Mayo, who received him well, but did not share his fear of Russia. However, he granted him weapons, and the latter, in addition, brought back with him "... many Indian [Muslim] artisans and retired non-commissioned officers of the Indian Army" as well as "scores of workers to train his forces and trim his subjects."¹⁶ Thus, it is clear that the reforms the amir introduced began during his visit to India, which

... convinced him that a primitive Afghanistan will scarcely expect to be treated on terms of equality by the two powerful neighbors, Russia and England, nor will she remotely command recognition and respect abroad.¹⁷

The amir would openly say that "... all people are advancing in the arts of peace and civilization. It is we Afghans who remain the ignorant asses we have always been."¹⁸

The amir's reforms had many dimensions, and the military attracted most of his attention. According to Effendi the amir "... dedicated

¹⁵ Keddje, N., *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani", A Political Biography*, University of California Press, Berkeley, London, 1972, 37, 58. Roy Mottahedeh has characterized the great instigator of the Muslim world in the following words: "He had a madrasah education both in Iran and Iraq. He also acquired training in 'erfan from an Iranian teacher and himself wrote a treatise on Islamic mysticism. From then on he shifted from country to country and role to role in an attempt to revive Islam as a political force. At the court of the Ottoman emperor, the Egyptian khedive, in exile in Paris or British India or czarist Russia he proved a tireless and fearless adopter of roles and philosophies, to many of which he proved inconstant: he was at various times a Scottish freemason, a defender of Islam against European materialism, an advocate of parliamentary government within Islam, and an admirer of the messianic politics of the mahdi of the Sudan." *The Mantle of the Prophet, Religion and Politics in Iran*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1985, 183.

¹⁶ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 130. Ghobar, Mir Ghulam Mohammad, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh [Afghanistan along the Highway of History, or A General History of Afghanistan]*, Kabul, 1967, 596. For a description of the workshops in Kabul where weapons were made in the reign of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan see Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan*, 193-194.

¹⁷ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 130.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

his life and soul" to the military and viewed it as a "private religion".¹⁹ Toward the end of his decade-long reign the amir had organized a large regular army. Thus, he became the first Afghan ruler to do so, while his predecessors had relied mainly on irregular army and the notables of the land. Based on the British model, the regular army of 56,173 troops was grouped into 42 regiments of cavalry, 73 of infantry, and 48 batteries.²⁰ The British Supreme Commander, General Frederick Roberts, reporting from Kabul in 1879, stated the following:

Before the outbreak of hostilities last year [1878] the amir had raised and equipped with arms of precision, 68 regiments of infantry and 16 of cavalry. The Afghan artillery amounted to nearly 300 guns. Numbers of skilled artisans were constantly employed in the manufacture of rifled cannon and breach-loading small guns. More than a million pound of powder and, I believe, several million rounds of homemade snider ammunition, were in the Bala Hissar. Swords, helmets, uniforms and other articles of military equipment were stored in proportionate quantities.²¹

The amir had turned Kabul into a military city where "... shouts, marches and trumpets were heard everywhere."²²

Amir Sher 'Ali also attempted to popularize the army by inducing royal princes to serve it. He "... enlisted Crown Prince 'Abd Allah to don the apron of a shoe-maker, while his favorite grandson Ahmad 'Ali would discharge his duty with a pair of scissors to be a good cutter of the soldiers uniforms."²³ The amir "... would admonish the royal clan of the Mohammadzays to take to martial

¹⁹ Ibid., 135.

²⁰ Figures on the army of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan are many and at variance with each other. Those noted by J. Lambert are probably accurate, because he had compiled them from the official pay rolls in Kabul when the British had occupied it in 1879. These I have cited in the text. Lambert, J. "Statement of the Revenue and Expenditure of Afghanistan, 1877-78," Pros. Sept. 1886, Nos. 161-166, 1886, Foreign Department, Secret-F, The National Archives of India, New Delhi (Henceforth, NAI). Mahmud Tarzi's figures also tally with them when he states that "... the army was organized into about 80 battalions of 800 soldiers." *Reminiscences*, 7.

²¹ Roberts F., (from Kabul), to Alfred C. Lyall, Secretary to the Government of India, 22 Nov. 1879, Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures Received (in London) from India, (Henceforth PSII), vol. 23, p. 1579. India Office Library, London. Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 139.

²² Tarzi, *Reminiscences*, 7.

²³ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 137.

life and hard work, while to the aristocracy to cut off from ease and see his hearth and home well protected".^{23a} However, the Mohammadzais and the aristocracy showed little interest in the military service.

In order to train officers in the science of war, the amir set up a military academy where mathematics, geography, map-reading and strategy were taught. The manuals of instruction were translated into Pashto in which words of command and military titles, as well as decrees were also issued. These words of command are still in use. Lingual reform became necessary as the Pashto-speaking Ghilzais and Wardaks, and their notables dominated the army, and held high civil and military posts. The amir regarded Persian as "borrowed feathers", and therefore felt that it was necessary to replace it with Pashto, the language of the overwhelming majority.

During this period, the large tract of Pashtun land up to Peshawar was still a part of Afghanistan. According to Effendi, "Soon the grateful monarch found himself in a position to claim Pashto, to be the national language of his countrymen."²⁴ The reform was well received, since the Pashtuns constituted the great majority of the population, members of the dynasty still spoke Pashto, and the Persian-dominated bureaucracy was only limited. Qazi 'Abd al-Qadir (Yusufzai), known as Qazi Qadiro, whom the amir had brought with him from Peshawar assisted him in his reforms. A competent tradesman, well-versed in Pashto, English, Urdu and Persian and privy to the innermost circle of the Afghan court, Qazi Qadiro "would always point out the path of progress to his powerful master." Through his devotion and skill he "had so won his master's mind that he sat safe against attackers."²⁵ In 1876 The Qazi had even supervised the enumeration of the residents of the city of Kabul, which then had a population of 140,700 men and women. To author Abdul Qadir Effendi, Qazi Qadiro was "a genius." Contrary to the assertion of some scholars it was not Jamal al-Din Afghani, but Qazi Qadiro, who had advised the amir to introduce the reforms.

Military service was for life on a voluntary basis²⁶ and soldiers were paid in cash instead of by drafts (*barat*) which had been the

^{23a} Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 135.

²⁵ Ibid., 130.

²⁶ Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh*, 612.

practice previously.²⁷ The military expenditure strained the economy, since out of the yearly income of over thirteen million Kabuli rupees over five-and-a-half million (or nearly forty-three percent) were spent on the army.²⁸ The military expenses made it necessary for the amir to revamp the system of taxation.

Information on the overall system of taxation is not available. However, reports on certain districts indicate that the revenue on land was assessed either on the basis of *se-kot* [one-third] or *jam' bast* [assessment on a tribal community]. Under the former system, the government took one-third of the produce, and this was usually farmed out, while under the latter a fixed lighter amount was assessed. The rate of revenue on the state land (*khalisa*) was, of course, higher.²⁹ For revenue purposes, districts were classified on ethnic lines. Various other types of taxes were also imposed, as was the custom duty of two-and-a-half percent on the original price of merchandises. Further, occasionally additional taxes were also levied. In 1878, when the amir believed that Afghanistan was threatened by foreign powers, he levied four Kabuli rupees on each male to strengthen the army. This led to general discontent,³⁰ and eroded the good will that the amir had caused to generate when he had abolished payment of land revenue by landowners and various other types of taxes collected three months in advance of the actual produce taken from the land.³¹

Meanwhile, the amir took some austerity measures, and even decreased the allowances of the royal household including those of his wives so that "every penny saved would go to strengthen the country's defense, which was that patriotic sovereign's one and only desire."³² Through this and other measures the budget, which was in deficit in the first years of the amir's rule³³ remained in surplus towards the closing years of his reign.³⁴ State revenue was then

²⁷ Sykes, Sir Percy, *A History of Afghanistan*, London, 2, 78. Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masiri-e-Tarikh*, 594.

²⁸ Lambert, "Statement of the Revenue," 7.

²⁹ Hastings, Major, "A Short Account of the Ghazni District," 4, PSLI, 26, Pt. 3, 358.

³⁰ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, [*The Lamp of Histories*], Kabul, vol 3, 339.

³¹ Nuri, *Gulshan-e-Amarat*, 186.

³² Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 134.

³³ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 336.

³⁴ Lambert, "Statement of Revenue," 7. The total surplus for the year 1877-78 was 1,482,062 Kabuli rupees.

increased by over five million Kabuli rupees from the annual total at the end of the reign of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan. In the latter's reign state revenue was eight million Kabuli rupees.³⁵

Amir Sher 'Ali Khan also envisaged opening a naval base to deliver the country from isolation and lay the ground for prosperity:

He made neither a mistake nor a secret of his cherished ambition to have Gawadir, the forlorn harbor of southern Baluchistan, on the entrance to the Persian Gulf, for a naval base, where-from his strong, small but smart navy should proudly emerge, to show his royal standard of the head of the Bengal tiger, on a crimson background, to all countries and all climes.³⁶

At the time Baluchistan was a part of Afghanistan.

The amir also introduced administrative reforms by setting up a twelve-member state council composed of civic leaders and military officers, whom he himself selected.³⁷ After Ahmad Shah Durrani, Amir Sher 'Ali was the first Afghan ruler to do so, but his council was only consultative. Additionally, although the council was devised to be permanent³⁸ toward the latter years of his reign it was not heard of. Instead, the amir acted in consultation with a few trusted advisers from the royal court and the executive branch of government the latter of which he had enlarged in 1873 on the occasion of the festivities that were held that year in honor of the official nomination of his younger son, Sardar 'Abd Allah Jan, as heir apparent.

Also on the occasion of the official nomination, Amir Sher 'Ali promoted officials to ministerial positions with prestigious titles, in Pashto: Nur Mohammad Shah Foshanji as *loy mukhtar* (prime minister), 'Asmat Allah Khan Ghilzay as *loy mayan de ghro mulk* (minister of home affairs), Aersala Khan Ghilzay as *loy mayan de baunday* (minister of foreign affairs), Habib Allah Khan Wardak as *loy mulk* (minister of finance), Hussayn 'Ali Khan as *tol mishr* (minister of war), Ahmad 'Ali Khan Timuri as *loy tolawunay* (minister of treasury), and Mohammad Hassan Khan (Qizilbash) as *loy kishil* (chief secretary to the amir). The amir adopted the title of Assistant to the Religion (*Mo'in al-Din*) for himself.³⁹ No one from the royal dynasty was made

³⁵ Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh*, 575.

³⁶ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 135.

³⁷ Nuri, *Gulshan-e-Amarat*, 186.

³⁸ Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh*, 595.

³⁹ Riyazi, 'Ayn al-Waqayi' [Events Observed] in *Kulliyat-e-Riyazi* (in Persian) [The

a member of the ministerial cabinet, and the amir gave full weight to the principle of personal qualification. The standing army enabled him to do so as it freed him from traditional dependence on the Mohammadzay sardars as well as the magnates. The system worked, and during the critical days before and after the amir's death some of these officials, especially Prime Minister Nur Mohammad Khan Foshanji and Mustaufi Habib Allah Wardak, distinguished themselves.⁴⁰

Out of "expediency" the amir did not abolish polygamy, but he would exercise his full powers, to secure her [widow] the freedom of [re] marriage and the guardianship of her brood [sic] from her deceased husband. . . . Polygamy had made life intolerable to the parties concerned, and would cultivate antagonism from generation to generation."⁴¹

Also, out of "expediency" the amir did nothing to abolish slavery even though both men and women "would be bought and sold like so many chattels, to perform [domestic duties] and labor under shocking conditions." In particular, "The slave-girls would satiate the lust of their masters, to be mercilessly punished by their jealous mistresses."⁴² However, slavery was practiced on a small scale in Afghanistan.

Other measures included the establishment of postal services, the building of the Sherpur (also Sher Abad) cantonment, and the setting up of a lithographic printing press in which *Shams al-Nahar*, the first official periodical in Afghanistan, was published. Coins were issued bearing the verses: "By the favor of the Eternal Creator, the money of Sher 'Ali has found circulation", and "Through the abundant kindness of the Beneficent King of Heaven, Amir Sher 'Ali coined money like the bright, full moon."⁴³ Previously, coins bore the names of rulers with anonymous titles such as *sahib-e-zaman* (lord of the age) or *Sahib-e-mulk* (lord of the land). Also, important was the use of the word "Afghan" on his coins.⁴⁴ Additionally, for the first

Collected Works of Riyazi], Mashhad, 1904, 173. Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masiri-e-Tarikh*, 595. Rishtia, *Afghanistan Dar Qarn-e-Nuzdah* [Afghanistan in the Nineteenth Century] 273.

⁴⁰ Riyazi, *Ayn al-Waqay'i*, 173. Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masiri-e-Tarikh*, 595. Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 332.

⁴¹ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 133.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Gulzad, Zalmay A., *External Influences and the Development of the Afghan State in the Nineteenth Century*, Peter Lang, New York, San Francisco, 1994, 70.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

time the government opened a school along with a military academy. The schools were, of course, in addition to the madrasas (traditional seminaries) which had existed in Afghanistan since the time of Emperor Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, in the eleventh century.

Even after it had been reformed the government was still unable to rule directly over the entire country. It controlled only cities, towns and their dependencies as well as those areas where contingents of troops were stationed. Tribal communities, especially those of the frontier regions, remained self-administered as before, and their affairs were settled by elders mainly through *jirgas* in accord with the Shari'a and *Pashtunwali* (Pashtun code of behavior). In cases in which disputes between individuals and tribes were unsettled the conflicting parties often resorted to violence. Thus, in these rural autonomous communities anarchy and order co-existed, and the government intervened only when general order was disrupted.

In the new state that emerged from these reforms the most important force was the amir himself. History, social conventions and Islam sanctioned allegiance to him, but the ties between him and his subjects were still personal in character rather than institutional. Thus, allegiance to his successor was not automatically transferred; rather, the successor had to command it, and the moment the reigning amir disappeared for whatever reason, powerful forces were ready to assert themselves. Among these forces, personal ambition was the most important, while the forces of regionalism and tribalism were still strong against which centralism and modernism had begun to operate on a large scale for the first time. As previously noted, the most important instrument of power in the hands of the government was the army. However, the army itself was organized along tribal and regional lines. Even districts were organized in this way. Likewise names which referred to region and ethnicity such as Kandaharay, Heratay, Tajik, Wardak and so forth, were widespread and emotionally charged.

Amir Sher 'Ali Khan was the first Afghan ruler to organize (or reorganize) the state or more specifically the government along relatively modern lines. He started an extremely important movement, which his successors strengthened. It is then fitting to describe him an enlightened and a visionary ruler, and also relate him to the "beginnings of a new Afghanistan", as some historians have done.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Gregorian, Vartan, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1968, 93.

The Sons against the Father

Despite his successful reforms Amir Sher 'Ali experienced serious problems with his two eldest sons: Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan (b. 1849) and Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan (b. 1858). As previously noted, in 1873, the amir nominated his minor son, Sardar 'Abd Allah Jan (b. 1866) as heir-apparent in a grand ceremony. By doing so, he provoked his eldest sons, and demonstrated that he was unable to run his family affairs smoothly.

Amir Sher 'Ali's troubles have been traced to his unequal treatment of his wives, and the recalcitrance of Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan. The amir favored the mother of the heir apparent to the mother of Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, and he had provided the former with five hundred Kabuli rupees a month as allowance, while the same amount was provided for the latter for the whole year "because of the rebellions of her sons."⁴⁶ However, Effendi states that his grandfather was a "misogynist" and that the reason he bypassed his eldest son was due to his "vindictiveness." However, while the amir may have been a "misogynist" as Effendi claims he was still open to the influence of the mother of heir-apparent. This may have been due to the fact that she was a woman of the dynasty, whereas Qamar Jan, the mother of Sardar Mohsammad Ya'qub and Sardar Mohammad Ayyub, was the daughter of Sa'adat Khan, the Khan of the frontier tribe of Mohmand.

Further, Effendi also states that in Herat Ya'qub Khan had accorded a "rude reception [to] his fugitive father", and that later in Kabul he had associated himself with a party, known as "Yakubzais", which had, for its purpose, the unseating of his father. He describes the situation thus:

A party hostile to the amir for their [sic] ends, was secretly forming under the intriguer Bahadur Khan Kabuli, with the grandiose title of Yakubzais. Bahadur had earmarked premiership with dictatorial powers for himself while his lieutenant Shahpisand Khan Barakzai was appeared to be the commander-in-chief of the Afghan army. Yakub was to be a mere puppet while Shere Ali had either to end [his] days as a blind prisoner in jail or be banished from hearth and home."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicants*, 134.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

The intrigue surfaced when Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan "set out for rebellion at the head of six thousand irregular horse", warning his father with a bluff that "he would raise piles of skulls of the dead if he was pursued" while he was on his way to Herat of which province he took control after some vicissitudes.⁴⁸

Surprisingly, after his brother, Mohammad Ayyub joined him in Herat, Mohammad Ya'qub Khan reappeared in Kabul and sought a pardon, which his father granted him and sent him back to his post in Herat. The amir, thus, pardoned him, but had lost hope in him to succeed him. In 1873, the amir bypassed him as well as his full-brother, and nominated his seven-year-old son, Sardar 'Abd Allah Jan, as his heir—apparent (*wali'ahd*). According to Effendi, "Yakub again kicked his traces", but the amir "immediately summoned [him] to account for his misdeeds, which had become too much to tolerate."⁴⁹ On the condition that he would not be "molested" which the amir apparently granted, Mohammad Ya'qub Khan appeared before his father yet again, but this time he was detained "in solitary confinement in the royal palace."⁵⁰ The amir did so because he also suspected him of making "Herat an independent principality under the protection of Persia."⁵¹ Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan fled to Mashhad in Persia. Thus, the amir got rid of his troublesome sons, but he also deprived himself as well as the country of the services of the most able and dynamic members of his house.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 108.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 160.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BRITISH AFGHAN WAR AND THE ACCESSION OF AMIR 'ABD AL-RAHMAN KHAN

Prelude to War

After Lord Edward Robert L. B. Lytton assumed power as governor-general and viceroy in India, in 1876, Indo-Afghan relations worsened. Lord Lytton came to India with explicit instructions to deal with Afghanistan in line with the aims of the 'Forward Policy' that will soon be described. In India "Lytton won the grudging support of his Council and set in motion a diplomatic policy toward the Amir Sher 'Ali [which] he knew could only culminate in the Indian army's advance into Afghan territory."¹ This subject has been described in Chapter Ten. In order to obviate the assumed Russian advance on India via Afghanistan, Lord Lytton formulated a policy the purpose of which was to establish actual control over Afghanistan. This required a military advance on Afghanistan similar to the one that his remote predecessor, Lord Auckland, had undertaken forty years earlier. As a result of that invasion the British had lost almost an entire army, but Lord Lytton was not deterred by that defeat. Instead, he made a strenuous effort to implement the new Forward Policy the advocates of which

...believed not only that England had no choice but to meet this Russian challenge, but that there was an implicit obligation in the Administration of the Indian subcontinent to extend that form of government to the numerous fragmented tribal groups who would be the ultimate beneficiaries of European values and civilization.²

In reality, the notion of the importation of "European values and civilization" was a screen for expansion and domination. Afghanistan had a history that extended back thousands of years, and the country

¹ Trousdale, W., *Introduction, in War in Afghanistan*, 49. This topic is discussed in Chapter Ten.

² *Ibid.*, 48.

CHAPTER TWO

already possessed a rich culture, including the attributes of Islamic civilization. Further, under Amir Sher 'Ali Khan a central government had been instituted on modern lines. (See Chapter One). As William Trousdale states:

For most of the Forward Policy believers, the Scientific Frontier was a temporary screen for their real aim. If the [British] government would support annexation of the southern half of Afghanistan [Kandahar and Herat] it would in time tolerate annexation of the whole.³

To reach this goal, Lytton took certain steps, among them, the occupation of the city of Quetta, as part of a treaty, which India concluded with the Khan of Qalat in Baluchistan, a feudatory of Afghanistan, in 1876. The viceroy was willing to conclude an offensive and defensive treaty with Amir Sher Ali Khan, provided he placed his external relations under him, and accepted British officers stationed around the frontiers of his country. In return, Lytton was willing to officially recognize the young heir-designate, 'Abd Allah Jan, and thus ensure the amir's dynastic rule. Since Lytton's proposal was meant to turn the independent country of Afghanistan into the protectorate of the British, whom the Afghans considered "infidels", the amir did not accept the proposal, and a stalemate prevailed over Indo-Afghan relations.

At this juncture General Constantine P. von Kauffmann, Russia's governor-general in Tashkand, forced a mission of his own, under the command of General Stolietoff on the amir. After its arrival in Kabul in the summer of 1878, the mission was said to have concluded a defensive and offensive treaty with him. However, the real purpose of the mission was for Russia to embroil the British in Afghanistan, so hoping that the latter would recall the Indian troops that they had sent to Malta in support of the Ottomans, with whom Russia was then at war.

The Second Anglo-Afghan War

The Kaufmann scheme succeeded, and this provided an excuse for Lytton to force his own mission under Neville Chamberlain. However, when the Afghans blocked the mission's entry at the Khyber Pass,

³ Ibid., 49

he declared war on Afghanistan, on November 21, 1878. The Second British War with Afghanistan began as simple as that. Three columns of the British army overran some frontier cities and districts on their way to Kabul, Kandahar, and Jalalabad in the first phase of the Second British Afghan War or the Second Afghan War, as the British sources describe it.⁴

Amir Sher 'Ali Khan did not opt to fight the invaders with his own army, telling his people "I am leaving in order to unite with the Russians and acquire financial and military assistance so that I may return to avenge myself." He also said that "The British have not accepted our right to freedom and independence, and want us in captivity."⁵ After touring the city, and while he had already sent "the families, luggage and the multitudes of soldiers" he left for Mazar in the north of the country to seek the help of Russia. Surprisingly, Kauffmann refused to extend Russia's assistance, instead advising the amir to come to terms with the British, and even refused him entry into his domain. Russia had duped Amir Sher 'Ali Khan. He remained in Mazar where because of "... his chronic ailments of gout and tuberculosis, which for years had obliged him to move around in his special litter, suddenly recurred with such severity that" he died on February 21, 1879.⁶

Before his departure for Mazar Amir Sher 'Ali Khan had, as requested by the courtiers, released Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan from prison and introduced him to a specially convened *darbar* (court) "in regal uniform as regent." The young heir-designate, 'Abd Allah Jan, had already died. Following Amir Sher 'Ali Khan's death, Mohammad Ya'qub Khan became amir, in Kabul. However, he was no longer the enterprising man that he had been. His imprisonment (1874-1878) had taken its toll and he had become "all pale with poor eyesight and no strength to walk straight."⁷ Additionally, he had dynastic rivals, each of whom had a faction of his own. Weakened

⁴ Among the many books dealing with the Second Anglo-Afghan War those that describe it in detail are Kakar, M. H., *Jang-e-Dowom Afghan-Englis*, (Persian) [*The Second Anglo-Afghan War*], The National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, Peshawar, 1989. Forbes, A., *The Afghan Wars*, London, 1892. Hanna, H. B. *The Second Afghan War, 1878-79*, 3 Vols. London, 1899-1910. Hensman, H., *The Afghan War of 1879-80*, London, 1881.

⁵ Tarzi, *Reminiscences*, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Kakar, *Jang-e-Dowom-e-Afghan-Englis*, 41.

by imprisonment, and also fearing that his rivals would outbid him in dealing with the British, he accepted the advice of his "pro-British" companions who "would say to him that it is all over; you must surrender to the British so that at least, as the amir, you may continue in luxury and success."⁸ He then accepted Lytton's demands by concluding a treaty with Major Pierre Louis N. Cavagnari, an envoy of the British government of India, on May 26, 1879.

The treaty was concluded in a British military camp in the Safed Sang village in Gandumak, in eastern Afghanistan, where the last troops of the British army retreating from Kabul had perished, in 1842. Its main points were the control of Afghanistan's external relations by the British, and the stationing of British officers in Afghanistan. The British were also to control the Khyber Pass and Michni Pass, and, for only administrative purposes, British India, was assigned the populous districts of Kurma (Kurram), Pishin and Sibi. All of these concessions were made in return for British support against foreign aggression on Afghanistan, plus a small subsidy and a promise of non-interference in the internal affairs of the country.

Since the treaty had made the 'infidels' preponderant in Afghanistan and transformed the country's ruler into their vassal, it was bound to turn most Afghans against it even though there were some who "[i]n their sectarianism, preferred non-Muslims to Sunnis." They were mostly the Shi'i Qizilbashs, who lived in Chindawal, a distinct quarter in the city, protected by strong walls and a moat.⁹ This explains why the amir did not make the treaty public, and why he disclosed its contents to only a few of his courtiers. The author D. P. Singhal, in his book, *India and Afghanistan, 1876-1907*, states that the aim of the treaty was to reduce Afghanistan into principalities.¹⁰ This does not seem to be the case, since the treaty had no provision by which to split Afghanistan. Actually, Lytton intended to rule Afghanistan through the amir as he hoped that his power "... would gradually be transferred to the British envoy."¹¹ In this way, the country was

⁸ Tarzi, *Reminiscences*, 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰ Singhal, D. P. *India and Afghanistan, 1876-1907, A Study in Diplomatic Relations*, The University of Queensland Press, Australia, 1971, 46. Based mainly on official records of the British Government of India, this is a specialized and highly commendable book. It covers the external relations of Afghanistan during the reigns of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan and Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

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¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

war. They occupied the city of Kabul in early October after Afghan warriors unsuccessfully resisted them in Char Asia. Fearing humiliation in front of his rivals for his failure to save his British allies, the amir was said to have offered his resignation to General Frederick Roberts, Supreme Commander of the occupying forces in Kabul.¹⁴ Later in India, Ya'qub Khan claimed that he had been unjustly forced to resign, and that Britain had no right to force him to do so.¹⁵ While it is true that the British did not have the right to force the amir to resign, they had the might to do so. At first they kept the amir in custody pending a decision on his fate, but it was soon clear that he had become a prisoner. As Sir Charles M. MacGregor, Chief of Staff of the British forces in Kabul, notes in his *War in Afghanistan, 1879-80* "Had meant to examine the amir tomorrow, but Bobs [Roberts] said we had better not awhile, as he might look as if he was a prisoner, which he is,"¹⁶ Further, the amir himself "...complained of having been made a prisoner and being badly treated."¹⁷ The British also detained some senior officials except for General Dawud Shah, the Commander-in-Chief, who tried to save the lives of the British.

On October 12th, Roberts held a public darbar in Kabul. There, in the presence of some pro-British Mohammadzay sardars, he proclaimed that, as the chief civil and military administrator, he had appointed Major General Sir James Hill-Jones as the military governor of Kabul, and a few sardars as governors of provinces. Among them were Sardar Wali Mohammad Khan and Sardar Mohammad Hassan Khan, who were proclaimed as the governors of Turkestan and Maidan respectively. Both were brothers of the late Amir Sher 'Ali Khan.

The takeover of the government and the brutal punishment of those who had been implicated or assumed to be involved in the destruction of the embassy created the impression that the British intended to stay in Afghanistan, and rule the country. While there

¹⁴ According to Riyazi, Roberts imprisoned Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, and compelled him to resign. *Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 188.

¹⁵ Kakar, *Jang-e-Dowom-e-Afghan-Englis*, 76.

¹⁶ MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 108.

¹⁷ Roberts, F., Siah Sang, Kabul, 9 Oct. 1879, 9 (909), Dispatches from the Government of India Containing a Statement of the Cases Tried before the Military Commission, London, 1880.

is no official policy pronouncement to confirm this, the British officials in Kabul behaved as if it was actually the case. MacGregor for one is explicit about it in the following passage,

... under the present juncture of affairs, the thing to do is to say to the Afghans. You shall give in, you have killed Cavi[gnari], and his 100 men, but we are sending another representative with 10,000 men, and he shall stay there whether you like it or not. We wish one thing from you, and that is friendship, but whether we get this or not, we will have your obedience, you may chafe as much as you please, but we will be your masters, and you will find that the only escape from our heavy hand will be your entire submission.¹⁸

Next, Roberts arranged for the execution of those had been implicated or assumed implicated in the destruction of the embassy. In his own words: "Every soldier and civilian who took part in the massacre of the British Embassy on the 3rd of September last will be executed."¹⁹ It was, of course, impossible for him to execute all of those who had participated in the massacre, but about those who were apprehended "... he gave an order that the prisoners were to be tried and hung."²⁰ The word "hung" indicates that Roberts had already decided to hang all those who were caught whether tried or not. This and other similar actions led MacGregor to conclude that "... Bob is the most bloodthirsty beast I know."²¹ Roberts' order made the political commission that had been set up to determine who had taken part in the massacre almost meaningless. However, some officials, including MacGregor, saved the lives of a few Afghans who would otherwise have been.

As an alien non-Muslim military despot, Roberts had a logic of his own which was to employ force in order to intimidate the Afghans into submission and also to inflict revenge. Even as early as September 14th, which was about a month before his arrival in Kabul, he had decided to do so. At that time, writing from Ali Khel to General Baker, he stated the following:

Until we have proof that any soldiers actively befriended the Embassy, we must consider all as belonging to the one lot, and, get rid of them,

¹⁸ MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 77.

¹⁹ Roberts, Siah Sang, Kabul, 9 Oct. 1879, 9 (909), *Dispatches from the Government of India* containing a Statement of the Cases Tried before the Military Commission, London, 1880.

²⁰ MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 111.

²¹ *Ibid.*

whether their regiments were in Kabul or not—for soldiers caught with arms in the field trial is unnecessary. A bullet will do if you are pressed for time otherwise hanging, which does not waste ammunition.²²

This was why, according to Trousdale the "... vengeful hangings at Kabul were far more indiscriminate than Roberts cared to admit." Also, MacGregor "... knew that innocent and guilty alike were hanged in that autumn of retribution, that the military tribunal was a sham."²³ He also states that he "[f]ound that men were being simply murdered under name of justice,"²⁴ and that Roberts "... has shot some 6 men already in cold blood." Further, MacGregor states that "*I have saved three from his clutches already.*"²⁵ According to an official report, eighty-nine suspected persons, including Mohammad Aslam Khan, chief of the security forces (Kabul Kotwal), and those who had shot some Qizilbashs for their cooperation with the British were hanged.²⁶ But Hayat Khan, an Indian Muslim member of the commission, has been quoted as saying that "... 170 men were hung and that 70 of them were for fighting against us."²⁷

It appears that Roberts resorted to brutal punishment because, according to MacGregor, as a "favorite of fortune" he "... *was like an active flea, and jumped whichever way the Viceroy ordered.*"²⁸ Lytton had instructed him that

[f]or such a crime the whole Afghan nation should be held responsible, and that the punishment for such an act should be inflicted not only on the Afghan nation, but also on every individual who had taken part in the event.²⁹

While it appears that Roberts was simply carrying out the instructions of his superior, in reality he himself held a similar view even before he received Lytton's instructions: Lytton's instructions were dated September 29th, while Roberts had already—made up his mind about the punishment by September 14th, as previously noted.

²² Roberts quoted in MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, n. 167.

²³ Trousdale, Introduction in *War in Afghanistan*, 60.

²⁴ MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 112.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁶ Roberts, Siah Sang, Kabul, 9 Oct. 1879. 5 (905), *Dispatches from the Government of India Containing a statement of the Cases Tried before the Military Commission*, London, 1880.

²⁷ MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 192.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁹ Kakar, *Jang-e-Dowom-e-Afghan-Englis*, 79.

The instructions strengthened him still further in his resolve, since he then committed excesses in affecting the killing of so many Afghans that news of this outraged the liberal press in India, as well as England. Fredrick Harrison argued that the punishments were illegal and unlawful for the simple reason that people can not be considered guilty for defending their country.³⁰ The public in Britain was also outraged and this in part contributed to the defeat of the government in the general election that was held later, in April 1880.

The executions were followed by the deportation to India of the amir, and his principal advisers, among them Sardar Yahya Khan (the amir's father-in-law), Shah Mohammad Khan, Minister of External Affairs; and Sardar Zakria Khan. Only Mustaufi Habib Allah Wardak (b. 1828), the minister of financial affairs was not deported, but was left in Kabul because the authority needed his skills in administrative and financial affairs. In addition, in Kabul, the family of the deported amir was placed under house arrest. Also, MacGregor "[g]ot orders out for the occupation of the Sherpur Cantonment and the destruction of the Bala Hisar."³¹

The Bala Hissar citadel, which was the seat of Afghan rulers after 1776, had been the scene of an explosion in which some Gorkha soldiers were killed on October 16th. Afterward, the British destroyed it because Cavagnari and others had been massacred there, and because MacGregor believed that it would be difficult to guard after the army moved to the Sherpur Cantonment. The well-cultivated Cantonment had water ducts running through it, large halls, broad verandas, and substantial gateways, and it could accommodate over twenty thousand men.³² The destruction of the Bala Hissar, which was associated with the glory of the kingdom, contributed even more to the anger of the people.

The Afghan Response

The takeover of the administration, the brutal punishments, the deportation and the house arrest of the amir's family aroused the Sunni population of the regions around Kabul to action. They believed

³⁰ Ibid., 81.

³¹ MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 110.

³² Ibid., 103.

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general retreat.³⁶ This is a scapegoat view of history. A more likely explanation for this is that after they restored Kabul the Afghans preferred to loot the quarters of the pro-British Qizilbashs, the Hindus³⁷ and the houses of the rich pro-British Mohammadzay sardars to defeating the invaders.³⁸

For ten days the insurgents left the besieged army almost unmolested, even though it was vulnerable at the time. Only General Mohammad Jan Wardak proposed to the besieged General Frederick Roberts that the British evacuate Afghanistan, and surrender their weapons,³⁹ presumably in return for a safe passage. The proposal was similar to the one that Sardar Mohammad Akbar Khan had made to the besieged British army in Kabul forty years earlier. However, while Mohammad Akbar Khan had succeeded in his plan, Mohammad Jan Wardak did not. His proposal as well as the delay gave Roberts and his officers time to fortify their position. On December 23, 1879, the Afghan warriors, who were either unarmed or lightly armed,⁴⁰ assaulted the besieged army but failed to overcome it. The British soldiers, whose officers were informed of the planned attack in advance, drove them away by their counter-shelling fired from superior artillery and rifles.⁴¹ Ultimately, the cold, the shortage of provisions, and the lack of a unified command contributed to the retreat. More importantly, as MacGregor has noted the Afghan "... power is a good deal broken and we have got most of their arms and ammunition and nearly all their guns."⁴² It was,

³⁶ Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh*, 630. Rishtia, S. Q. *Afghanistan Dar Qarn-e-Nuzdah*, 253.

³⁷ Forbes, *The Afghan Wars*, 255.

³⁸ Riyazi, 'Ayn al-Waqay', 190.

³⁹ Hensman, *The Afghan War of 1879-80*, 245.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁴¹ Riyazi, 'Ayn al-Waqay', 190. Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, [The Lamp of Histories] vol. 1, Kabul, 1915, 358.

⁴² MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 111. For details and different versions of the campaigns see Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh*, 623-633. Riyazi, 'Ayn al-Waqay' 186-193; Hensman, *The Afghan War of 1879-80*, 218-259; Hanna, *The Second Afghan War*, 111, 168-25; Forbes, *The Afghan Wars*, 202-265; and Kakur, *Jang-e-Dowom-e-Afghan-Englis*, 90-105.

Fayz Mohammad alleges (*Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 1, 358) that during the anti-British campaigns, General Mohammad Jan Wardak accepted a bribe from the British. This is not true. In the first place, I have found no such a reference either in the unpublished or published British official records. In the second place, such an accusation can not be true because Wardak was the most dynamic leader of the campaigns and for this the people revered him as a saint and a hero. He is the first

however, only a retreat, not a defeat. Thereafter, the insurgents continued their resistance, though intermittently, until the invading army left Afghanistan (short of Kandahar) in August 1880.

The insurgents, who have been described in the British official papers as constituting "the bulk of the Afghan people,"⁴³ chose Ghazni as their temporary center after they drove away from there the Hazaras who had occupied it at the instigation of General Roberts, when he and his army were besieged in Sherpur. Represented by the Ghazni Party or the National Party, as it was referred to in the British official reports, they chose Sardar Musa Jan, a young son of the exiled amir, as the new amir. The National Party did not have a single leader, but several leaders of equal status, and wanted to restore the former amir and observe the "old engagements,"⁴⁴ a reference to the treaties of 1855 and 1857 concluded between Amir Dost Mohammad Khan and the British Government of India. In these treaties, the amir had agreed to be "the friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies of the British."

The "New Order" for Afghanistan

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mir of Badakhshan, Shahzadah Mohammad Hasan, opposed the entry of Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman. Eventually, however, the *mir* was driven out of his domain to Gilgit by his rivals, Mir Baba and Mohammad 'Omar, who brought Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman to Fayzabad, the capital city of Badakhshan.⁵⁰

In the middle of March Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan left for Qataghan where by a stroke of luck he was joined by a detachment of the Afghan army, which had been sent there by General Ghulam Haydar Wardak from Mazar to chastise Sultan Murad, the *mir* of Qataghan. This was a turning point for the sardar. Among the predominantly non-Pashtun inhabitants he became the acknowledged leader of a regular army. His power increased still further when the whole army of Mazar joined Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan, who supported the cause of 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. Ishaq Khan was a full-cousin of Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, and like the latter, had been in exile in Samarqand. Afterward, Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan doubled his efforts in extending his influence throughout the country.

In Kabul, opposition to the occupation lasted longer than the British had anticipated. The British government, in London, was getting restless, and was unwilling to continue to sanction the war.⁵¹ Further, the executions in Kabul had aroused fury, even in England, as previously noted. Under pressure, Lord Lytton decided to evacuate 'Northern Afghanistan' by the following autumn, and this made it necessary for him to make new arrangements. As part of his plan, he replaced General Roberts with General Donald M. Stewart as the supreme commander of 'the Northern Afghanistan Field Force.' No reason was given for the replacement, but MacGregor maintained that "... our misfortune was in having a man like Bobs, when we wanted a strong, honest and able man."⁵² This implies that General Stewart whom MacGregor viewed as "... a masterful man, a real commander"⁵³ would have succeeded where Roberts had failed. This was highly unlikely because, as the massacre and the resistance

⁵⁰ Kushkaki, B., *Rahnomay-e-Qataghan wa Badakhshan*, [A Guide to Qataghan and Badakhshan], Kabul, 1302/1924, 171.

⁵¹ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 59.

⁵² MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 171.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 184.

demonstrated, the Afghans opposed the occupation of their homeland whether it was by Cavagnaris, Roberts, Stewarts or any other representative of a foreign power.

Lytton placed under Stewart a skillful diplomat, Sir Lepel H. Griffin, to undertake negotiations with a prospective claimant to the kingdom of 'Northern Afghanistan.' In line with the guidelines that he had issued to Griffin, Kandahar was to be separated from 'Northern Afghanistan' and a suitable individual, other than the deported amir, was to be approached.⁵⁴ In truth, Lytton was against the coming to power of any member of the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, as he believed that no member of the family would go along with his scheme. Further, he held a grudge against the entire family because of the massacre, even though the Investigation Commission had declared Mohammad Ya'qub Khan only "inculpably negligent." The difficulty of Griffin can be appreciated in the context of this melodrama, in which the views of the Afghans and of Lytton were poles apart.

In Kabul, the search for a ruler aroused various factions to action. The strongest party was probably that of Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan, a cousin and brother-in-law of the deported amir, but the National Party did not trust him, and the British withdrew their support when they began negotiating with Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. The *wali* of Kabul also aspired to the throne, although it was known that without the British military support he could not succeed. With regard to the choice of a ruler the National Party was the most influential voice, and it would support only a member of the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali Khan. Although it opposed the occupation vehemently, it still preferred a closer relationship with British India to one with Russia.

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with neither, and consequently, he was unwilling to ally himself with Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan against the British, instead opting to come to terms with them. On June 9, 1880, about three weeks before 'Abd al-Rahman Khan set out for Kabul, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan left Herat for Kandahar. Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan thought that if his rival cousin came to Kandahar, the Durrana's and Ghilzays would rally behind him. He also feared that his rival might negotiate with the British before he did. 'Abd al-Rahman was eager to become a ruler, while Mohammad Ayyub Khan was first and foremost concerned with ousting the invaders. This explains why the former speedily appeared near Kabul and accepted the British terms. The Ghilzays supported the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, but their opposition to the invaders was stronger than their loyalty to the family. Consequently, in the absence of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, they accepted Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan at the last minute.

Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman did not have a substantial support among the Mohammadzay sardars in Kabul. Amir Sher 'Ali Khan had suppressed those sardars who had supported the family of Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman in the civil war. The other sardars were either 'Cavagnarizays', or Ya'qubzays, or had ambitions of their own. Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan bypassed them all, and appealed directly to the people. It is a tribute to his insight and skill that he gained the support of those who had opposed the British along with the support of those who had been committed to the family of the late amir, while at the same time successfully negotiating with the British. However, by accepting only 'Northern Afghanistan' he went along with the British scheme to divide Afghanistan. Further, he surrendered the external independence of the country for which his compatriots had fought.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AFGHAN VICTORY AT MAIWAND AND THE REUNIFICATION OF AFGHANISTAN

The negotiations conducted between the British officials and Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan in 1880 resulted in the establishment of the latter's rule in northern and eastern Afghanistan. In western Afghanistan, Kandahar and Herat remained outside his domain. The British, who had stationed a contingent of troops in Kandahar, had formally placed it under Wali Sher 'Ali Khan, while Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan ruled Herat independently. This chapter describes how after the British had evacuated Kandahar as a result of the defeat of their army at Maiwand, Ayyub Khan occupied it and soon afterward lost it in a military encounter with the new amir, 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. The victory made it possible for the amir to occupy Herat, and to reunify the whole country.

Kandahar a Separate Principality

Of all the provinces of Afghanistan, Kandahar was the most important, since it was large, fertile, and the home mainly of the Durranay tribal confederation with its main divisions of Popalzay, Barakzay, Alkozay, Achakzay, Nurzay, Alizay, Ishaqzay, Khugianay and Maku. The Durranays were formerly called Audaul (or Abdaul). Ghilzays, Qizilbashs (or Parsiwans) and other groups also lived there, and it was the Ghilzay elder, Mir Wais Hotak who liberated Kandahar from the Safavi occupation in 1709. After his death, first his brother and afterward his son ruled over it until 1738. However, in 1747 the Durranays, under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Durranay, following the death of Nadir Shah Afshar, founded a more permanent rule that lasted for about two and a half centuries, until 1978. Thus, Kandahar was associated with the ruling dynasties of the two most important divisions of the Pashtuns.

Kandahar was the site of human settlement from prehistoric times. Alexander the Great founded a city there too, as did Nadir Shah

Afshar in the eighteenth century. The modern city of Kandahar was founded in 1761 by Ahmad Shah Durranay, and it remained the capital city of imperial Afghanistan until Timur Shah Durranay transferred the capital seat to Kabul, in 1776. Having produced emperors and kings, the Durranaies looked upon themselves as a proud people, calling other inhabitants of the city *opras* (strangers).

In 1880, Viceroy Lord Lytton in line with the "divide-and-rule policy" which the British reputedly applied in their colonies intended to separate Kandahar from Afghanistan and subject it to the British rule. He considered Kandahar to be necessary for India strategically and commercially. To secretary of state for India, Lord Cranbrook, he wrote,

Although our primary reason for holding and improving this route [Quetta-Kandahar-Herat-Central Asia] is, no doubt, the undisputed command of southern Afghanistan and the means for forestalling Russian influence at Herat, we cannot lose sight of the fact that this route has been at all times one of the main tracts of Central Asian traffics.¹

To maintain a hold over the province of Kandahar, Lytton arranged to link it to India by a railway, the construction of which had already begun, and was scheduled to be completed by the end of 1880.²

Sardar Sher 'Ali Khan, a son of Sardar Mehrdil Khan, was a cousin of the late Amir Sher 'Ali Khan. Following his accession, Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan appointed him the governor of the province. He was still the governor when a British army under General Donald Stewart occupied it in 1879. The governor threw in his lot with the British in return for their recognition of him as *wali* (governor) of the province. Lytton even went so far as to hold that the *wali* was "... well able to hold his own entirely subject to our control."³ On May 11, 1880 Sardar Sher 'Ali Khan was recognized officially in a public *darbar* as the "Wali of Kandahar and its dependencies." In a letter that was read on the occasion the viceroy addressed had him thus: "I have the pleasure in announcing to you that Her Majesty the Queen-Empress has been pleased to recognize Your Highness as an independent ruler of Kandahar."⁴

¹ Lytton to Cranbrook, 20 Nov. 80, PANEA, 110.

² Ibid.

³ Balfour, *Lytton's Indian Administration*, 382.

⁴ PANEA, 109.

Colonel St. John, the Political Representative was more eloquent in a statement that he read in Persian, stating the following:

Under the just rule of the Wali Sher 'Ali Khan, and under the protection of England, Kandahar will, if it pleases God, remain free from foreign aggression, and will rise to such a height of wealth and prosperity that it will be the envy of the whole of Islam.⁵

The *wali*'s rule was declared hereditary, but his foreign relations were to be conducted by a British political representative quartered in Kandahar. The *wali* was allowed to have the Friday sermon (*khutba*) read and coins issued in his name, and he was also granted weapons and money. He was, thus, allowed to enjoy the appearance of an independent ruler.

However, the *wali*'s dependence on the British soon turned his countrymen against him. Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan and the mullas (religious functionaries) denounced him as a 'kafir' or 'infidel'.⁶ The latter also declared their support for Mohammad Ayyub Khan, and their opposition to the *wali*.⁷ Except for a few Barakzay relatives of the *wali* the bulk of the Durranays of Kandahar boycotted him, and even his mother and family advised him to oppose the British.⁸ Only the Ghilzays of Qalat paid him revenue, but most of the inhabitants of Kandahar refused to do so, and, also, defied his authority. The *wali*, nevertheless, remained loyal to the British, and organized an army.

In June 1880 the *wali* moved with his army to Girishk west of Kandahar to fortify his frontier and, further, incite people in Taimani and Farah against Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, who was rumored to be advancing on Kandahar. However, the *wali* made it clear to the British that he needed their military support if he was to move beyond Girishk. When, in late June, Ayyub Khan's advance became certain, a British force 2,400 strong under Major General G. R. S. Burrows, was dispatched to Helmand, near Girishk.

⁵ Wheeler, S., *The Ameer Abdur Rahman*, New York, 1895, 94.

⁶ PANEA, 118.

⁷ Kandahar Diary (Kand D), 1-8 June 80, PSLI, 25, 1025.

⁸ Stewart to Lyall, 12 May 80, PSLI, 25, 1025.

Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan at Herat

After having spent four years and four months in Mashhad, in Persia, where he "cultivated a great taste for politics, history and poetry" Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan (b. 1858) returned to Herat with the permission of the shah of Persia, and in possession of seventy-five-thousand Persian qirans (roughly half of rupees). He had gone to Mashhad after his father, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, had imprisoned his full-brother, Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan (See Chapter One). In Herat, Ayyub Khan had already received "... military training from one Colonel Mehdi Khan, a Russian convert to Islam, who was finally banished for espionage."⁹ Toward the end of his life when he had traveled from Lahore to Kashmir and Japan Ayyub Khan composed diaries in Persian that were "... simple, lucid and full of useful information and observations, though replete with grammatical errors and idiomatic slips." He was, however, so much conservative that he had become, according to his son, "the creature of the clergy"¹⁰ and his "narrow-mindedness" shut him off from "... things which are at once the master keys to human advancement and progress." However, this Ayyub Khan came to impress the image of a real hero in the minds of Afghans by inflicting a most stunning defeat on the British invaders. As his son correctly states, the "secret of his prominence [lay] in his patriotism, for which he sacrificed everything and spared nothing."¹¹

Early in 1879 Ayyub Khan assumed the administration of Herat after his full-brother, Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, had become amir in Kabul. As the result of having had little contact with his father, when he was young, and because he had overseen his own entourage from an early age, the sardar had developed an independent personality. He was so sensitive about his independence that even the command of his brother, the amir, irritated him much, despite the fact that all along he had been his "true brother and henchman."¹² In response to his brother's "bossing" him "which was too much for the pride and the prestige of Ayyub"¹³ he deliberately stirred a rebellion in the army in which the Herati regiments battered

⁹ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 166.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 173, 235.

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¹³ *Ibid.*

Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan at Herat

After having spent four years and four months in Mashhad, in Persia, where he "cultivated a great taste for politics, history and poetry" Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan (b. 1858) returned to Herat with the permission of the shah of Persia, and in possession of seventy-five-thousand Persian qirans (roughly half of rupees). He had gone to Mashhad after his father, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, had imprisoned his full-brother, Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan (See Chapter One). In Herat, Ayyub Khan had already received "... military training from one Colonel Mehdi Khan, a Russian convert to Islam, who was finally banished for espionage."⁹ Toward the end of his life when he had traveled from Lahore to Kashmir and Japan Ayyub Khan composed diaries in Persian that were "... simple, lucid and full of useful information and observations, though replete with grammatical errors and idiomatic slips." He was, however, so much conservative that he had become, according to his son, "the creature of the clergy"¹⁰ and his "narrow-mindedness" shut him off from "... things which are at once the master keys to human advancement and progress." However, this Ayyub Khan came to impress the image of a real hero in the minds of Afghans by inflicting a most stunning defeat on the British invaders. As his son correctly states, the "secret of his prominence [lay] in his patriotism, for which he sacrificed everything and spared nothing."¹¹

Early in 1879 Ayyub Khan assumed the administration of Herat after his full-brother, Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, had become amir in Kabul. As the result of having had little contact with his father, when he was young, and because he had overseen his own entourage from an early age, the sardar had developed an independent personality. He was so sensitive about his independence that even the command of his brother, the amir, irritated him much, despite the fact that all along he had been his "true brother and henchman."¹² In response to his brother's "bossing" him "which was too much for the pride and the prestige of Ayyub"¹³ he deliberately stirred a rebellion in the army in which the Herati regiments battered

⁹ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 166.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 173, 235.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹² *Ibid.*, 178.

¹³ *Ibid.*

The first British shell caught the scarlet umbrella held over the prince, and the Afghans responded with a general frontal assault. They doubled [sic], while the adversary was searching every corner of the battlefield with perfect impunity. The passive resistance of the Afghans was due to their muzzle loading fire-arms, which were no match to the Martini Henry and the Snider rifles of the adversary. One battery of the Armstrong alone kept the kettle boiling, while the rest of the Afghan guns [said to be 30 or 35] kept mum. This state of affairs placed the endurance of the warriors of the crescent to a most severe test. Their condition was worsened with Loynab's retreat at the head of 4,000 Herati irregular cavalry. For a while victory awaited the English with open arms, when the Afghan officers in utter desperation rushed their men with drawn swords against the enemy squares. Though their death rate cost them appalling casualties, yet it, nonetheless, sealed the fate of the enemy. The attackers [Afghans] tightened the cordon and their smooth bore guns, confident of their range, belched out with the perceptible result of British lines swinging to and fro. In spite of the tenacity of their officers, an orderly retreat seemed impossible to perform.²⁹

Toward the end of the battle

a handful of the British infantrymen, . . . , literally fought to the last man and the last shot, to uphold the honor of the British flag, which won them the ever-lasting appreciations of their adversaries . . . They kept the Afghans at bay, and held their standard high, till the last man fell.³⁰

Many of those "... who were hiding in streams, wells, and gardens perished at the hands of women, who, from the roofs hurled heavy objects such as millstones, rocks, well-pulleys and stone mortars at them."³¹ Effendi states: "Thus the entire British forces were annihilated [in four hours] with the exception of three scores, who were destined to reach Kandahar, to relate the tale of woe."³²

According to St. John the Afghans killed and wounded numbered 2,150, and the English about 1,100. Ayyub's army was made up of 4,555 infantry, about 3,200 cavalry, and 4,000 *ghazis* [fighters against the 'infidels'] many of whom were *talibs* (students of Islamic studies), while that of General Burrows made up of 2,800 regular with 2,000

²⁹ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 187-188.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 188-189.

³¹ Tarzi, *Reminiscences*, 14.

³² Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 189.

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²⁹ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 187-188.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 188-189.

³¹ Tarzi, *Reminiscences*, 14.

³² Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 189.

Khan probably felt that he either could not force the British army, or because of the presence of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, he saw it advisable to come to terms with the British from a position of strength. Whatever the truth, despite the fact that the negotiation bore no fruit, the Maiwand battle dealt a deadly blow to the British scheme of dividing Afghanistan.

Battles are organized by generals and fought by warriors. When the battles are won the generals are viewed as heroes, and the warriors are forgotten perhaps because people want to have heroes and forget about those who have actually made them. That is why Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan is known to this day as the hero or victor of Maiwand, and the actual fighters are forgotten, although it was they who fought the battle with a fierce determination, at an enormous cost, to the point of final victory. Of course, they did so when a dynastic prince led them to the battlefield to defend the fatherland, Islam, and independence. The Maiwand victory compares with the victory that was won over forty years earlier in Kabul against a strong British army and camp followers from among whom only about three hundred survived, and only one, Surgeon William Brydon, escaped. Both damaged the reputation of the British, a superpower of the time. But at Maiwand according to Sir Charles M. MacGregor it was not "... so bad in the way of the losses..." but worse for our honor as they [the British soldiers] ought all to have been killed."³⁹ On the other hand, both victories established the reputation of Afghans as Spartans and rescued them from being conquered by a European colonial superpower. That is why they left a deep mark not only on Afghans of the time, but on Afghans of the future generations as well.

The victory in Kabul was the outcome largely of the statesmanship and generalship of Ghazi Mohammad Akbar Khan, and that in Maiwand largely of the efforts of his nephew, Ghazi Mohammad Ayyub Khan. These individuals as well as the memory of Maiwand have come to symbolize Afghan gallantry and patriotism. Both have contributed much toward consolidating the Afghans as a nation, a notion actually inherited from Mir Wais Hotak and Ahmad Shah Durranay. Emotionally evocative, all these names have become the ingredients of Afghan culture. However, in the long run, the victories

³⁹ MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 217.

at Kabul and Maiwand kept the Afghans isolated from the currents of science and technology, and other progressive aspects of modern life, and they also contributed to a legacy of xenophobia.

The Zimma Meeting

The British officials in Kabul feared that the Afghan victory at Maiwand would upset the arrangement that they had made with Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. Griffin wired the foreign secretary, Alfred Lyall the following message:

The Kandahar news alters the position here and unless Ayyub can be beaten decisively and quickly, may cause all arrangements to collapse. Amir will not be able to stand against Ayyub, victorious. Many of his adherents will abandon him and his troops here and in Turkestan may mutiny. If he marches to Ghazni, the country will join him.⁴⁰

The amir himself shared this fear, and he and Griffin agreed to cooperate. During a two-day meeting in Zimma⁴¹ just north of Kabul, on July 31–August 1, 1880, the amir pressed Griffin to conclude a treaty with him. However, Griffin was not authorized to do so, because at the time, the British Government of India viewed the amir's position as precarious. Alternatively, in order to help the amir consolidate his position, the Government granted him a few light guns and nearly two million rupees which actually belonged to the Afghan treasury. More importantly, Griffin promised him that the British troops would leave soon, a promise that enabled the amir to tell his people that he was sending the invading army away.

In return for the British assistance, the amir promised to persuade the Ghilzay elders to allow a British force to pass through their land on the way to Kandahar. A select army of ten thousand strong, with artillery guns and nine thousand camels appeared to be for the purpose of evacuating Kabul, but in reality had been sent to relieve the besieged army in Kandahar, as the British found it difficult to send troops there from their nearest base, in the city of Quetta. Starting

⁴⁰ Griffin to Lyall (T), 28 July 80, PSLI, 26, pt. 3, 47.

⁴¹ For the text of the Zimma meeting, see Kakar, *Afghanistan, A Study in Internal Political Developments, 1880–1896*, Punjab Educational Press, Lahore, 1971, 256–281.

on August 7, the army, under General Roberts, covered 324 miles in twenty-three days, which was a remarkable feat, although the army was traveled unhindered, and MacGregor who had accompanied it, states, "People, civil, they say apologetically by order."⁴² As previously noted, the amir had asked their elders not to molest the British army.

The army arrived at Kandahar on August 31 and found that the besieged British officers there had been under tremendous pressure. According to MacGregor, as they had lost over 200 men, with eight officers, in an unsuccessful sortie, they were "looking very cheap."⁴³ On September 1, 1880, the British army, commanded by General Roberts, defeated the army of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan in an engagement in the Baba Wali Pass, near the city, with a loss of about 200 to the British and about the same number to the Afghans.⁴⁴ Ayyub Khan returned to Herat on September 22, 1880, and Roberts and his army left Kandahar for India for good. As William Trousdale states,

Roberts' . . . defeat of [Sardar Mohammad] Ayub near Kandahar was vengeance for the British, but the true victory belonged to Abdur Rahman who was thus spared the necessity of defeating Ayub Khan in a military challenge for the crown.⁴⁵

The Collapse of the Scheme of Partition

The Afghan victory at Maiwand dealt a deadly blow to the 'independence' of Kandahar, and Lord Lytton's 'new order' for Afghanistan. Foreign Secretary Alfred Lyall, who visited Kandahar shortly after Maiwand to assess the situation, concluded that, ". . . the Durrani of Kandahar are much opposed to the occupation, either directly through [Wali] Sher Ali or any other nominee, or directly through our officers."⁴⁶ The British government then decided to hand over

⁴² MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 232.

⁴³ Ibid., 239.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Officially, the British casualties were 35 killed and 229 wounded. The Afghan losses are difficult to ascertain, and estimates vary from 700 to 1,200. It is to be noted that since the Baba Wali battle was not a major one these figures appear to be high.

⁴⁵ Trousdale, Introduction in *War in Afghanistan*, 63.

⁴⁶ Lyall on Kandahar, Nov. 90, PSLI, 27, 547.

Kandahar to the amir despite the strong opposition of the viceroy's council,⁴⁷ but since Ayyub Khan was "... the most popular candidate for rule in southern Afghanistan"⁴⁸ the amir did not want to occupy it immediately.⁴⁹ However, the British were anxious to withdraw their troops before the summer heat hit the region, and on April 16, 1881 they handed over Kandahar to the amir's officials along with weapons and money, but let themselves meet the feared challenge of the victor of Maiwand. Shortly afterward, they left the city for good. Wali Sher 'Ali Khan, who had been guaranteed 'dynastic hereditary rule' was granted an allowance for life, settled in Karachi, and faded into obscurity. Thus, the Second British War on Afghanistan came to an end. It was fought with the utmost ferocity, had an enormous death toll, weakened economics and disrupted the normal ways of Afghan life. The war also stained Britain's reputation and doomed its Forward Policy. What the British gained from this and their first Afghan war was the everlasting bad will of Afghans.

Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan and the Heratis

Upon his return to Herat Mohammad Ayyub faced a major rebellion which forced him to postpone his early march on Kandahar.⁵⁰ The Heratis, that is, the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Parsiwans, the nomadic and semi-nomadic Char Aimaq (Jamshedis, Firozkohis, Taimanis and the Sunni Hazaras of Qal'a-c-Nao) and others—were sick and tired of Kabul rule. When the position of Ayyub Khan had been weakened, 'Northern Afghanistan' had formed the amir's kingdom, and Kandahar was still controlled by the British, the Heratis felt that the time had come for them to rule Herat themselves. Animosity had first appeared in Mazar between the Herati and Kabul troops.

⁴⁷ For details see Memoranda on Kandahar, PSLI, 27: 541, 547, 566, 1354, 1143, 1137, 1141.

⁴⁸ Lyall on Kandahar, Nov. 80, PSLI, 27, 547.

⁴⁹ Mahomed, *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, 1, 208.

⁵⁰ My description of the relations of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan with the people of Herat, featured in my book (1971), is basically the same as that provided by Riyazi in *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*. While my 1971 account is based on reports from the Kandahar Diary, my present account is based mainly on the work of Riyazi, a native of Herat.

during the anarchy that followed the death of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan. This and the tyranny exercised over the Heratis by the Kabuli troops prompted them to initiate an uprising. They declared Fayz Mohammad Khan as their ruler and Colonel Yar Mohammad Khan Alkozay as their military leader.

According to Mohammad Yusuf Riyazi, a contemporary native chronicler, "165,000" ordinary men and artisans from "every class and tribal sections" took part in the uprising. On the day of the action a small number of people from the army joined them, but the leaders were not up to the task. The Kabuli troops of Ayyub Khan commanded by seasoned Ghilzay officers and armed with superior weapons and artillery suppressed the rebels.⁵¹

Sardar Ayyub Khan had already crushed the Jamshedi and Qibchaq tribes by disposing of their elders, Khan Agha Jamshedi and Qazi Jahandar Khan Qibchaq for their pro-British policies, even though the former was his father-in-law.⁵² Sardar Ambia Khan, elder of the Taimani tribe, also refused to pay revenue and, in addition, showed loyalty to the British.⁵³ Of the Char Aimaq tribes only the Hazaras of Qal'a-e-Nao, under their elder, Mohammad Khan Nizam al-Dawla, remained loyal and fought on the side of Ayyub Khan.⁵⁴ Thus, the sardar asserted his rule over the people of Herat, but they became alienated, and the alienation later became fatal to his rule.

Ayyub Khan's next step was to recover Kandahar, and he began to build up his army for the purpose of doing so. However, he needed to raise money, and was, therefore, compelled to exact taxes and customs dues. He was also in need of war materials, since the British had pressured the shah of Persia to prohibit their export to Herat.⁵⁵ Still, the sardar was able to build up an army of 4,400 men,⁵⁶ made up of the Kabuli, Herati and Uzbek regiments, in addition to a large number of Herat and Qibchaq feudal cavalry.⁵⁷ In early July 1881 the sardar, accompanied by his officers, set out

⁵¹ Riyazi, *Ayn al-Waqayi*, 200-205.

⁵² Ibid., 195. MacGregor writes of Khan Agha Jamshedi whom he had met while on the way to Kandahar: "I had a long talk with him, he was very anxious for us to go to Herat, saying it was ours." *The War in Afghanistan*, 228.

⁵³ Sardar Ambia Khan to St. John, Kand D, 28 Mar. 80, PSLI, 28, 767.

⁵⁴ Riyazi, *Ayn al-Waqayi*, 200, 209.

⁵⁵ St. John to Lyall, 15-21 Jan. 81, PSLI, 27, 1039.

⁵⁶ St. John to Lyall, 19 July 81, PSLI, 29, 508.

⁵⁷ Riyazi, *Ayn al-Waqayi*, 206.

for Kandahar. After his advance force encountered a setback in Girishk, it defeated in Girishk the amir's larger force at Karez-e-'Atia. Subsequently he entered Kandahar without a military encounter.

The War of Reunification

The occupation of Kandahar set Sardar Mohammad Ayyub in direct opposition to the amir. The sardar, who had the superior claim and more public support still did not march on Kabul even though the amir's position there was said to have been "... extremely critical."⁵⁸ Instead, he stayed in Kandahar and waited for the amir to confront him there. He did so because his Durranay supporters did not show enthusiasm for marching on Kabul. Also, from a vague letter addressed to him by St. John, then the Political Agent in Baluchistan, Ayyub Khan suspected⁵⁹ that if he marched on Kabul the British forces at Quetta might occupy Kandahar. In contrast, the amir acted boldly to meet the first challenge to his rule. After holding consultations with elders of the eastern Ghilzays and the Tajiks of Kohistan he set out for Kandahar in early August 1881. On the way, he won over the support of the southern Ghilzays mainly by presenting gifts and cash to their elders and the promise of a just government to all. He also provided free cooked food for the public. It was during this time that he demonstrated the greatest generosity of his life time.

Although he was the legal ruler, the amir was only able through presents and money to persuade the mullas to denounce Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan as a 'rebel'. In contrast, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub, though only a claimant to the throne, declared jihad against what he called the "*farangi* amir." The mullas of Kandahar went even further, denouncing the amir as a "kafir" and calling on Muslims "... to fight against the nominee and coadjutor of the infidels."⁶⁰ The legal rulings (*fatwas*), thus, justified bloodshed between cousins and Muslims of the same denomination, and showed that the sardar enjoyed more public support than the amir. Still, Ayyub Khan expressed willingness to negotiate with the amir, proposing an alliance

⁵⁸ AB, Kabul Correspondent, 4 Aug. 81, PSLI, 29, 771.

⁵⁹ St. John to Ayyub Khan, 10 Aug. 81, PSLI, 29, 721.

⁶⁰ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to Ripon, 22 Shawal 1298, PSLI, 33, 86.

with him against the British. He also proposed that Afghanistan be ruled in effect as a confederation by the six surviving princes whose fathers had ruled provinces under their grandfather, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan.⁶¹ However, the amir refused either to forge an alliance with him or rule the country in association with his peer cousins in spite of the fact that at the Zimma meeting he had shown no desire either for Kandahar or Herat.⁶² The matter was, thus, left to be settled by the sword.

St. John, who widely reported on the developments in southern Afghanistan, described the confrontation between the rival cousins as a war between the two "hereditary foes"—the Ghilzays and Durranays whose "ancestral animosity" he considered to have been "... by far the strongest political passion in southern Afghanistan."⁶³ He concluded that the Durranays flocked to Ayyub Khan, "... the representative of the Durranay against the Ghilzays [to defend] their city against the Ghilzay invader."⁶⁴

Although the southern Ghilzays were traditionally on bad terms with the Durranays, the conflict was not inter-tribal, but shaped more by religion, fear of foreign domination, and the hope of the acquisition of rewards. The Ghilzays took part on both sides; while the Tarakay Ghilzays supported Ayyub Khan, and closed the road behind the amir as a sign of rebellion,⁶⁵ the Hotak Ghilzays were divided in their loyalty. As the name indicates, the Qalat regiment, which went over to Ayyub Khan in Girishk, was, in all probability, composed of the Ghilzays. Further, many of Ayyub Khan's senior officers were Ghilzays, although most Ghilzays supported the amir, but he bought their service with money and the promise of plunder. The amir's army also had two thousand Kandahari horseman, most of whom were Durranays, although the Durranays flocked to Ayyub Khan in the belief that he was 'a champion of Islam' and the amir 'a creature of the British.' This was because they opposed the idea of being ruled by another puppet which they believed the amir to be. This also accounts for the presence of many mullas and talibs (students of Islamic studies) in the army of the sardar. Further, as

⁶¹ St. John to Foreign, (T), 5 Sept. 81, PSLI, 29, 977.

⁶² Griffin to Stewart, 4 Aug. 80, PSLI, 26, pt. 5, 869.

⁶³ St. John to Lyall, 22 Sept. 81, PSLI, 30, 117.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶⁵ St. John to Lyall, 22 Sept. 81, PSLI, 29, 1063 a.

already noted, the Maiwand battle had made Ayyub Khan an unquestionable hero.

The sardar had a larger army—seventeen thousand versus the fourteen thousand of the amir's army—with more experienced officers—Sipah Salar Hussayn 'Ali Qizilbash, Na'ib Salar Hafiz Allah Ghilzay, Sardar 'Abd Allah Nasir, and General Taj Mohammad Ghilzay. However, the sardar had fewer guns than the amir had because he had lost many guns to the British.⁶⁶

On the day of the battle (September 22, 1881), the prevailing impression was a victory for the sardar's army. Indeed, at the start of the encounter, his army made advances against its adversary, but all of a sudden it retreated and dispersed; this occurred when some of the sardar's troops from the rear fired on the main body of the army. This was apparently the result of the discord that existed between the officers of the sardar about some unreliable troops; some officers wanted to disarm them, while others were against doing so.⁶⁷ In the heat of the battle, these troops, which according to one source, were the three Kabuli regiments that had surrendered in the battle of Karez-e-'Atta,⁶⁸ and according to another⁶⁹ were the Herati and Kabuli regiments, fired on the Kandahari troops and the mullas and talibs. The latter constituted the core of the army of the sardar.

The retreat and dispersal of Ayyub Khan's troops were also due to the discord of his officers that the sardar's army had been withdrawn from inside the city to a suburb near Chilzeena, close to the old city (Shahr-e-Kohna) where the armies fought. The relocation, which was intended to save civilians from being killed and property from being destroyed, created fear among the troops of the sardar while, conversely, it emboldened the amir's troops.⁷⁰ The relocation was looked upon as a retreat for the army of the sardar and an advance for that of the amir. Also, unlike the amir who "was everywhere deploying and reinforcing his troops" and was "in full control

⁶⁶ Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'* 206. According to Mohammad Hashim, a native agent of the British, the total number of the amir's army was 14,000 while that of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan was 17,000. Hashim to St. John, 26 Sept. 81, PSLI, 30, 8. But Sultan Mahomed's figures for the former are 22,000 and for the latter are 20,000. The Life of Abdur Rahman, I, 212. The figures noted by Hashim seem to be more accurate.

⁶⁷ Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 211.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 208.

⁶⁹ Mohammad Hashim to St. John, 26 Sept. 81, PSLI, 30, 81.

⁷⁰ Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 211.

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⁶⁷ Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 211.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 208.

⁶⁹ Mohammad Hashim to St. John, 26 Sept. 81, PSLI, 30, 81.

⁷⁰ Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 211.

on that account had made it a sanctuary.⁷⁴ With the exception of the province of Maymana which was pacified in 1884, all of Afghanistan was, thus, brought under the control of the central government, and reunited.

As the result of his victory at Maiwand, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan had become so popular that his presence even in Mashhad was considered a threat to the amir's rule. The British once again helped the amir; in order to neutralize the danger, and also to keep the amir under pressure the British Government of India, in 1887, persuaded Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan as well as Persia to make a deal in which Ayyub Khan agreed to live in India. India granted Persia a handsome sum of money in return for this deal. In 1888, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, accompanied by over eight hundred followers, arrived in Karachi via Iraq (where the author Effendi was born) and settled in Lahore on an allowance. The British never before or afterward had such an Afghan dignitary with so many followers in India.

As a resident of India, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan was not the same person that he had been in his native land. According to his son, "While in Afghanistan and Iran he was virile and active, in India he became morose and reserved."⁷⁵ Content with the life of a 'Royal Mendicant' he kept his distance from the British officials, declining even "... to draw the increment in his allowance, which rendered his financial position deplorable" and also affected his twelve sons and seven daughters and several wives.⁷⁶ In 1907, he visited first Kashmir and later Japan. Living with the dignity of a fallen hero among his conservative followers, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, who was the epitome of Afghan patriotism, "died in his sleep of heart failure, caused by chronic blood pressure" in 1914, at the age of fifty-seven.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30.

⁷⁵ Effendi, *Royals and Royal Mendicant*, 272.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 231.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PACIFICATION OF EASTERN AFGHANISTAN

The preceding chapters have described the events that led to the establishment of the rule of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. This and the following chapters describe how he extended the government authority throughout Afghanistan.

Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, who was well experienced in the politics of his people and their intractable elders; knowledgeable about the willingness of elders of some minority ethnic groups to undergo foreign domination; and concerned about the presence of dynastic rivals in the neighboring lands as well as about the danger to Afghanistan posed by the Russians and the British, took a wide range of measures for the institution of a centralized government in order to safeguard the country as well as to ensure his dynastic rule. This two-pronged program made it necessary for him to build up a strong army and create sources of income by imposing a wide range of taxes. All of these measures enabled him to rule the country directly through government officials. He was, thus, the first Afghan ruler to do so in a country where people resented government control of their autonomous communities. The people most of whom were small landowners and landless peasants living within an agrarian economy opposed the taxes, as well as the amir's absolutist style of ruling. The amir, nevertheless, pushed his program, and this resulted in over forty uprisings of which I have studied only the major ones.¹

¹ The minor failed rebellions not studied in the present study are, as follows, and the source of all references to this entry is *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, vol. 3: a rebellion in Panjsher in 1881 (111, 384); a rebellion in Sedrah in Nijrao in 1881 (385); a rebellion in Rustaq and Badakhshan until crushed in 1882 (395); a rebellion by the Nurzays of Dehrawud in Kandahar in 1881 (398); a rebellion by the inhabitants of Khost in 1881 (401); a rebellion by Patanzay Achakzays in 1881 (406); a rebellion in Katawaz and Zurmula (Zurmut) in 1882 (407); a rebellion in Farajghan in Laghman in 1882 (401); a rebellion in the Ghassak valley in Nijrao in 1882 (413); a rebellion in Chaghanserai in Konarr in 1882 (413); a rebellion by the Achakzays in 1883 (416, 417); a rebellion in the upper part of the Alishing valley in Laghman in 1883 (441); a rebellion in Waigal, Kulman and Sao in Laghman in 1885 (443); a rebellion in Pasha in the district of Jalalabad in 1885 (592); a rebellion by the Sapays of Konarr in 1886 (490); a rebellion in Baghran in 1886

ivers, while those of the Lower Mohmand reside in the northwestern corner of the relatively fertile Peshawar plain.

The city of Peshawar is in the Mohmand country, and members of the Khalil and Khwaezay divisions are conspicuous among its inhabitants. Both parts of Mohmand are divided into the main divisions of the Tarakzays, Baezays, Halimzays and Khwaezays. These divisions are the descendants of the Masayzay, who, along with Uthmanzay and Dawaizay are the descendants of Mohmand, known as Mohmand Baba. The Mohmands like the Durranays and Yusufzays are the descendants of Sarbun. The first known dwelling place of the Mohmands was Murgha, east of Kandahar from which they, like many other divisions of eastern Pashtuns, migrated first to Ghazni and then to their present land, in the sixteenth century. It was after their settlement here that they were divided into the two parts.

In both parts the very strict Masayzay code known as *dode grando* (Code of Grando?) is applied in criminal cases such as theft, homicide, adultery, rape, etc. In these matters this code rather than the Shari'a is applied even though the latter is the law of the land, and the clergy enjoy considerable influence among the Mohmands. In controversial cases, the Masayzay code specifies that certain households in both parts of the Mohmand are authorized to act as courts of appeal. Their verdict is final with no right of appeal.²

The inhabitants of the two parts of Mohmand did not have much dealing with each other. Strangely, the inhabitants of the Lower Mohmand were mild by comparison to those of the Upper Mohmand who were warlike. Also, the power of the khans of the Upper Mohmands had developed greatly, and, among them the khan of Lalpura was the most important, and the other khans of significance were those of Pandiali and Goshta. Carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, barbers, and potters lived in almost all of the villages of the Mohmands, as in those of other tribes; a special group of people, the Parachas, carried on trade among them.

The only khan (head of a tribe with feudal privileges) who retained his position throughout the reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan was the khan of Lalpura, Mohammad Akbar Khan. Lalpura was

² For details see, Siyal, Mira Jan, *Mohmand Baba*, (in Pashto), University Book Agency, Peshawar, 1950. I am grateful to Dr. Zamin Mohmand for lending me this book.

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Even though the Upper Mohmands were a poor people owing to the shortage of arable land except for that along the Kabul River the office of their khanate was more developed than those of "... the little republics of Safed Koh and Tirah" as well as that of the Lower Mohmands. This was due more to the strategic location of their country than to its tribal structure. As guardians of the Khyber, the khans of Lalpura collected tolls on the Jalalabad-Peshawar road at Dakka, and levied dues on the rafts on the Kabul River. The significance of the Mohmands in the area can be understood from the fact that, as Moutstuart Elphinstone had noted in the early part of the century that "A single Mumand will pass a whole caravan" through the Khyber. For the same reason Kabul paid the khans of Lalpura allowances for keeping the Kabul road safe as well as for providing militia in times of emergency. All of this may account for the existence, especially among the khans, of a destructive sense of competition and the custom of *badal* (revenge). This destructive custom was so prevalent among the Mohmands that important individuals perished at the hands of rivals than due to natural causes.

In December 1879 the people of the Upper Mohmand rose in protest after the British in Kabul deported Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan to India. Soon a split occurred among elders of the uprising and Mohammad Akbar Khan accepted the position of ruling the Upper Mohmand from the British "... on condition of his loyalty and good services to the British Government."⁶ In return, Akbar Khan supplied the British forces with provisions and opposed the jihad movement against them,⁷ so keeping the intractable Mohmands in as well ordered as could be expected.⁸

After the withdrawal of the British forces from Afghanistan, the amir gradually stripped Akbar Khan of his privileges by taking over the management of the road,⁹ and in 1883, confiscating the Lalpura tolls.¹⁰ Before that Akbar Khan's annual income amounted to about one hundred thousand rupees. Afterward the amir paid him allowances in return for his agreement to serve the state with militias in times

⁶ Biographical Accounts of Chiefs, Sirdars and Others of Afghanistan, Official publication, Calcutta, 1888. Henceforth BACA, 31.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 80, PS LI, 33, 512.

⁹ Peshawar Diary (PD), 18 Sept. 80, PS LI, 34, 9.

¹⁰ Mohammad Akbar Khan to Peshawar Commissioner, 30 Nov. 83, PS LI, 38, 999.

of emergency.¹¹ Akbar Khan had no alternative but to comply: first, his request "... for the intervention of the British Government"¹² met with the reply that he comply with "... the orders received from ... the amir,"¹³ second, among his many peers, Akbar Khan was only the first among equals, and had brothers and cousins, who were formidable rivals.

The Pacha of Konarr

For centuries the long and narrow valley of Konarr (Kunar) with Pashat as its main town had been ruled by a Pashtunized reputedly sayyed family of 'Arab descent. Sayyed 'Ali Termizi, known as the Pir Baba, who had accompanied Mohammad Zahir al-Din Babur from Termiz, was the founder of the family. His shrine in the village of Paucha in Bonair is venerated to the present day. Emperor Humayun, who was the son and successor of Babur, had granted him Konarr free of revenue. His descendants known locally as *de Konarr pachayaun* (rulers of Konarr) as well as *de Konarr sayyedaun* (sayyeds of Konarr) gradually became secular. They took the revenue at the rate of one-third of the production of the land¹⁴ and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries their annual income fluctuated between sixty thousand and eighty thousand rupees.¹⁵ According to Malcolm Yapp, they

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¹¹ PD, 31 May 83, PSLI, 44, 860. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan*, 183.

¹² BACA, 32.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Statement by Sayyed Mahmud, 1893, PSLI, 67, 1078. Siyal, *De Zeeno Pashtano Qaba'lo Shajarey*, 86.

¹⁵ Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan*, 193.

¹⁶ Yapp, M. E., "Disturbances in Eastern Afghanistan, 1839-42", BSOAS, xx, pt. 3, 1962, 504.

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to Kandahar to oust Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan.²¹ Fearful of his son's defection as well as of his own partisanship of the house of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, Mahmud Pacha refused a summons to Kabul unless he obtained an assurance of his safety from the British Government. The pacha also reminded Griffin, who was then the Viceroy's Agent in the Central Province of India, of the services that he had rendered the British Government. The pacha wrote to him that

Up to date as far as lay in my power, I had served the Government, and incurred a bad name among my clansmen. The service was not rendered with the object that it should bear good fruit in the next world.²²

The British Government of India and the amir exchanged several letters on the subject. In one letter, Foreign Secretary Alfred Lyall even addressed the amir in an unusually complimentary language, stating that the viceroy "is assured that the feelings of justice for which Your Highness is so distinguished will make you hesitate of visiting upon Syud Ahmad [Sayyed Mahmud] the sins of his son."²³ This failed to impress the amir as in reply he wrote that if the pacha

... comes with the purity of heart to pay his respect to me... I will not punish him for the sins of his son. Should his actions prove contrary to his professions, I shall have no other course but to drive him away.²⁴

When it had occupied Afghanistan, the British Government of India considered Konarr as well as Kandahar, strategically important. Consequently, it gave explicit guarantees to the rulers of both. Like Kandahar, Konarr was situated on a road leading ultimately to Central Asia and western China. Also, from the upper part of Konarr, one road led to Chitral and another to the territories of the tribes along the northwestern parts of India, territories that were part of Afghanistan but at that time were not under centralized administrative control. From the lower part of Konarr was a road leading to Jalalabad. Despite the strategic importance of Konarr the Government of India reneged on its promise to the ruler of Konarr,

²¹ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to Ghilzay elders, AB (in Ghazni), 16 Aug. 81, PSLI, 29, 1014.

²² Sayyed Mahmud to Griffin, PSLI, 33, 514.

²³ Lyall to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, 12 Jan. 82, PSLI, 33, 514.

²⁴ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to Lyall, 1 Feb. 82, PSLI, 33, 414.

CHAPTER FOUR

just as it had to the ruler of Kandahar. It did so because, due to much wider considerations, it had pledged to assist the amir in the consolidation of his rule, and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of his kingdom. Nevertheless in the same manner that the government of India had backed away from Kandahar it likewise backed away from Konarr. It did so because, due to much wider considerations, it had pledged to assist the amir in the consolidation of his rule, and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of his kingdom. The viceroy then left the fate of the pacha to the amir's mercy, arguing that because of its geographical location

... the possessions of the Badshah are so situated as to render it impossible to give him any active assistance without the violation of the amir's territory in a manner amounting practically to an act of war.²⁵

In November 1882, after an advance was made against him by a contingent of the government army, the pacha, who had been abandoned by his British ally, and was opposed by his own people for his pro-British activities, fled first to Mittai and later in 1886 to Hassan Abdal, in India. Soon afterward, Kabul established direct control over Konarr. During his residence in India, the pacha lived on a British allowance, and returned to Konarr after the amir had died in 1901.

The Shinwarays

Kabul treated the Shinwarays more leniently than it treated other tribes because they kept the road to the Khyber pass open. Kabul also allowed them to levy tolls on the road to Peshawar and, in addition, paid allowances to them.²⁶ It even exempted two of their divisions—Sangu Khel (or Sun Khel) and Sipai—from paying revenue. The Shinwarays have four main divisions, the others are Ali Sher Khel and Mandozays. The Shinwarays, though a very important tribe, had no one khan or elder as influential as that of the Mohmands.

Kabul changed its policy in 1882, when Amir 'Abd al-Rahman garrisoned Dakka²⁷ Prior to the rebellion, the Shinwarays sent a jirga

²⁵ Ripon to Hartington, 23 Dec. 82, PSLI, 34, 221.

²⁶ Jenkyns, W., A Report on the District of Jalalabad, Chiefly in regard to Revenue, Calcutta, Official publication, 1879, 12-15.

²⁷ PD, 18 Dec. 82, PSLI, 34, 9.

(a council or deputation of elders) to the amir to discuss the restoration of what they called their 'rights'. The amir imprisoned the jirga and executed some of its members. During this time he declared the introduction for the first time in the whole of the eastern province, including the Shinwar (land of the Shinwarays) the three-portion system of taxation on land (*se-kot*) whereby landowners were demanded to pay one third of their revenue to the government.²⁸ The Shinwarays opposed the new measures, but in 1883 they were defeated in a battle with the government army, led by General Ghulam Hayder Khan Orakzay.

The battle hardened the attitude of the Shinwarays, especially when more radical younger members assumed leadership after some of their elders were killed in the battle.²⁹ The new leaders rejected the concessions which required them to pay a tithe ('ushr), or one-tenth of their revenue, to the government, instead of one-third, provided they agreed to be disarmed and hostages taken from them.³⁰ Several battles were fought in many of which the Shinwarays were routed. They then fled to the upper part of the Spin Ghar Mountain, but still persisted in their demand that the amir should completely annul the revenue. The victorious army burned their houses and destroyed their crops. The Shinwarays resorted to robbery, announcing, "We have no mind to return to our country, and we do not care for the amir. We will support ourselves by plunder and robbery."³¹

In 1885, Ghulam Haydar Khan Charkhay, the Sipah Salar, (commander-in-chief) took over the administration of the eastern province in both civil and military affairs. His arrival signaled hope for a settlement as he sent many *jirgas* to the Shinwarays. Although the jirgas failed to bring about a settlement, they caused dissension among the Shinwarays.³² Some of the Shinwarays stood for a settlement, while others opposed it. During the uprisings of the Ghilzay in 1886 (See Chapter Five) and of Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan in 1888 (See Chapter Six), the amir adopted a conciliatory attitude

²⁸ Gazetteer of Afghanistan, pt. 4, Kabul, Official publication, Calcutta, 1910, 495. Henceforth GAK.

²⁹ GAK, 488.

³⁰ PD, 1 June 83, PSLI, 36, 1549.

³¹ Shinwaray elders to General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay, 11 May 85, PSLI, 44, 1079.

³² Monthly Memorandum (Henceforth MM), Sept. 86, PSLI, 48, 511.

toward the Shinwarays. During these periods, many *jirgas* attempted a settlement, but failed to produce a substantial result.

Although the Shinwaray elders agreed to pay revenue in proportion to the quality of the land,³³ and although the Sangu Khel section accepted the payment of a tithe and the stationing of a government—appointed judge (*qazi*) in their region,³⁴ the bulk of the tribesmen rejected the agreement, because they had lost faith in the amir. Compelled by the tribesmen the elders wrote to the amir, stating,

We are ready to submit to Your Highness's authority . . . but two things prevent us from carrying these wishes into effect: first, that we are in poverty and are compelled to commit depredations; allowances should be fixed upon us; secondly, Your Highness's subjects are in great straits; both days and nights arrests are made. Most of the Khugianis and Mohmands have fled on account of oppression. How can we be consoled and assured that we will be treated well?³⁵

However, the Shinwaray elders made this plea too late, for by then the tribesmen had lost their unity.

After the other, more serious uprisings elsewhere had been put down, the amir began to pressure the Shinwarays to submit to his authority. Toward the end of 1888 he dispatched tribal militias from other parts of Ningrahar³⁶ and the district of Tagao³⁷ which, together with government troops and some Afridays and Shinwarays of the occupied areas, defeated the Sangu Khel, the most determined of the Shinwarays.³⁸ Although they were still far from being defeated, their position had actually become untenable, since by then they had been driven to the upper parts of the Spin Ghar Mountain, and the Sangu Khel were living under extremely harsh conditions. Exhausted, they finally agreed to pay half a rupee per half acre of land (*jarib*) as revenue.³⁹ However, the Sangu Khel still held out until 1892, when the tribe as a whole settled down.⁴⁰

The extension of the government authority in Shinwar illustrates how the government tried to extend its authority elsewhere, especially

³³ Col. 'Atta Allah, British agent in Kabul, 17 Feb. 88, PSLI, 52, 1073.

³⁴ PD, 22 Feb. 88, PSLI, 52, 768.

³⁵ Shinwaray elders to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, 16 Mar. 88, PSLI, 53, 511.

³⁶ PD, 28 Nov. 88, PSLI, 55, 1243.

³⁷ PD, 22 Dec. 88, PSLI, 55, 1368.

³⁸ MM, Mar. 89, PSLI, 56, 1072.

³⁹ Col. 'Atta Allah (in Mazar), 5 Nov. 89, PSLI, 58, 849.

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while Bajaur itself was a dependency of Jalalabad.⁴⁴ Importantly, Asmar held a key position in the territories further east and because of this significance it can be compared to the Khyber Pass, as a gate to India.

Over two thousand three hundred years ago, Alexander the Great of Macedonia chose Konarr, not Khyber, for his advance on India. The people he encountered there, as well as in Bajaur and Swat, during his military campaign, from November 327 BCE to February 326 BCE, were called Aspasians and Acvaka [the Asva-Ghana of Sanskrit and Abgan of the middle Persian] from which the names Yusufzay and Afghan have evolved. In the words of the historian Peter Green,

... most of the tribesmen he came against proved themselves first class fighters. During one engagement he got an arrow through his shoulder; and by the end of the campaign his condition can perhaps best be described as jittery.⁴⁵

In 1892, the easy pacification of Konarr and the stationing of government troops in Asmar under Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Charkhay became a signal for the pacification of Bajaur and the regions further east. Because of the conflicting policies of the *khans* of Bajaur, there was even a strong impression among its inhabitants that their *khans* might accept the amir's rule.⁴⁶

Bajaur, Dir and Swat

The vast territories of Bajaur, Dir and Swat were autonomous principalities or khanates commonly known as *yaghistan* (the land of rebels), to the east of the Konarr valley from which they were separated by a rocky mountain. Numerous divisions of the Pashtun Yusufzay and Mandir tribal confederation, their clients (*hamsayyas*), and others populated the three khanates. The relatively fertile region of Bajaur is

⁴⁴ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 749.

⁴⁵ Kakar, *Afghan, Afghanistan and the Afghans and the Organization of State in India, Persia and Afghanistan*, (in Persian), Kabul University Press, 1979, 17. Kohzad, Ahmad Ali, *Afghanistan Dar Shahnama*, (in Persian) [*Afghanistan in the Shahnama*], Baihaqi Book Publishing House, Kabul, 1976, 288. Green, Peter, *Alexander of Macedon 356-323 BC, A Historical Biography*, University of California Press, 1992, 382.

⁴⁶ PD, 23 Feb. 93, PSLI, 65, 722.

comprised of the five valleys of Charmang, Babuqara, Sur Kamar, Rud and Mamund (or Watalai). Nawagai, the seat of the khanate, lies in the Sur Kamar valley. Bajaur is peopled principally by the Yusufzay Tarkanays, but Mohmands, Sapays, Uthman Khel and others also live there. Although outnumbered by other groups of people, the Yusufzays and Mandirs were supreme in the region as a whole on account of owning the land and were as important there as the Durranays were in Kandahar. (The Durranays and Yusufzays are descendants of a common ancestor, the Sarbun.)

A khan ruled over a khanate, maintained some troops, and collected revenue on the basis of a tithe (*'ushr*). However, his power was limited by a *jirga* (council) of the heads of clans among whom the khan was the first among equals. No khan's position was secure or permanent, though some were khans because their fathers had been khans. On the whole, a khan was powerful when he had a strong character and many relatives with a substantial following among the minor khans under his jurisdiction. Only with the approval of the elders did he have the right to levy a tithe as tax and recruit men for military service in times of war.⁴⁷

During the period under discussion, 'Omara Khan (Umra Khan) of Jandol emerged as the most powerful khan. Situated between the Bajaur and Panjkora rivers, Jandol had many khans known as Mast Khel. Among them 'Omara Khan, son of Aman Khan Tarkanay, finally emerged victorious, and by 1890 he made himself the khan of Jandol as a result of a decade-long struggle.⁴⁸ He scored the victory that made him powerful in 1890 when he occupied Dir, and expelled Mohammad Sharif Khan. The defeated khan who was a member of the ruling house founded by Mulla Ilyas, known as the Akhund Baba, took refuge in Swat. By expelling the khan of Dir, 'Omara Khan threatened the *mehtar* (ruler) of the principality of Chitral. By the middle of 1891, he likewise threatened Nawagai and, to a lesser extent, Swat.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Momand, M. J. Siyal, *Da Zeeno Pashtano Qaba'ilo Shajaray*, 97. Yapp, M. E., "Disturbances in eastern Afghanistan, 1839-42", reprinted from the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. xxv, part 3, 1962, 500. Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan*, 178.

⁴⁸ *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, North West Frontier Province*, Calcutta, 1908, 129. Henceforth GNWFP.

⁴⁹ MM, Apr. 91, PSLI, 63, 120. Siyal, *Da Zeeno Pashtano Qaba'ilo Shajaray*, 92.

'Omara Khan's rapid rise to power turned many khans against him. Safdar Khan, the khan of Bajaur, made an alliance with Mohammad Sharif Khan, the exiled khan of Dir.⁵⁰ Additionally, Mian Gul 'Abd al-Wadud of Swat incited the people in his domain against 'Omara Khan;⁵¹ his support was important because he was the son of 'Abd al-Ghafur Khan, who was known as the Akhund of Swat, as well as the Ghous (Saint) of Saido or the Babajee of Swat, and was the most celebrated former ruler of Swat. Among his many disciples some were as influential as he himself was such as Mulla Mushk-e-'Alam, and Mulla Najm al-Din. The Mohmands of Mittai likewise supported the khans who were against 'Omara Khan in their endeavors.⁵²

The amir supported Safdar Khan with larger allowances, and even expressed willingness to support him with troops if necessary.⁵³ The concentration of troops at Asmar under the command of Chuham Haydar Khan Charkhay, himself a Yusufzay Pashtun, had changed the balance of power in favor of the latter, in particular after his troops scored a victory in Shurtan, in Bajaur.⁵⁴ The defeat of 'Omara Khan and the extension of the amir's rule in Bajaur seemed imminent. However, at this juncture the Government of India warned the *sipah salar* as well as 'Omara Khan not to move against each other. Specifically, it warned the former that his advance into Bajaur would be "... regarded as an act of hostility to the Government of India."⁵⁵ The strong tone of the warning indicated the resolve of the British to implement its Forward Policy, which culminated in concluding the Durand Agreement in 1893 (See Chapter Ten).

Although the amir maintained his claim to Bajaur, he instructed the *sipah salar* not to advance on it. As for 'Omara Khan, the British finally forced him to flee to Afghanistan after he, in conjunction with Sher Afzal, the pro-Kabul exiled brother of the *mehtar* of Chitral, occupied that principality in 1895. Thus, a remarkable khan, the so-called 'Napoleon of Bajaur' was forced out of the region. He had,

⁵⁰ MM, May 91, PSLI, 63, 497.

⁵¹ PD, 21 July 91, PSLI, 63, 1068.

⁵² PD, 13 June 91, PSLI, 63, 624. In 1917, Mian Gul was acclaimed as the ruler of Swat, and later in 1926 recognized by the British as the wali of Swat. Siyal, *De-Zeno Pashtanao Qaba'ilo Shajaray*, 89.

⁵³ PD, 8 Aug. 91, PSLI, 63, 1183.

⁵⁴ PD, 28 June 92, PSLI, 67, 308.

⁵⁵ PD, 28 June 92, PSLI, 67, 308.

through statesmanship and military action, carved out a kingdom that comprised Dir, Jandol, and Chitral and, like the amir, he had been determined to overrun Bajaur and Kafiristan. The exiled Mohammad Sharif Khan became the khan of Dir once again, this time with the additional title of *nawab* (ruler). This occurred in 1897 through an agreement with the British in which they undertook to pay him a regular allowance and grant him weapons in return for his keeping the road to Chitral open. He ruled the khanate until he died in 1904.⁵⁶

Kurma

From late 1891 onward, Kurma (Kurram), inhabited by Shi'ī 'Alī Khel Pashtuns, commonly known as the Turis (the Blackened), was frequently raided by the neighboring Sunni tribal elders and mullas, who had been encouraged to do so by Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan.⁵⁷ Finally a widely known adventurer, Sarwar Khan of Chinarak, nicknamed Chikkai, who had given much trouble to the British at Kohat, occupied Lower Kurma (Kuz Kurma) and the Turis paid him revenue.⁵⁸ This occurred after Chikkai and his armed men returned from Kabul where the amir had received him "... with unusual honor."⁵⁹ Having given up hope of recovering the territory⁶⁰ the Turis concluded a truce with Chikkai, according to which they agreed to let him retain Lower Kurma, while he agreed to make no further advances.⁶¹

The amir tried to make the Turis his subjects, but he wanted to do this through a proxy to avoid antagonizing the Government of India, which had already told him that Kurma would not be restored to Afghanistan.⁶² By the treaty of Gandumak Kurma had first been conditionally assigned to the Government of India, and later annexed

⁵⁶ Siyal, *De Zeeno Pashtano Qaba'ilo Shajaray*, 92.

⁵⁷ Derajat Confidential Diary, 15 Dec. 91, PSLI, 65, 513. Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawakhk*, 826.

⁵⁸ KD, 4-8 Dec. 91, PSLI, 69, 1706.

⁵⁹ MM, Oct. 91, PSLI, 66, 1324.

⁶⁰ MM, June 91, PSLI, 66, 1323.

⁶¹ MM, May 92, PSLI, 66, 884.

⁶² Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 82.

by it. After the Government of India exchanged some correspondence with the Amir on the subject, British troops forced Chikkai and others out of Kurma, in October 1892, and affected a settlement there.⁶³ The amir remained silent.

The Afridays

Settled in high walled forts and villages in the Khyber, Akhor, Kowwatt and Tirah from ancient times the Afridays or Apridays are the most important Pashtun tribe of the historic twenty-three-mile-long Khyber Pass extending from Jamrud to Dakka. The Afridays are probably the people known as Aparaytae, described by Herodotus. Due to their mountainous territory, and their hard style of living they have lived beyond the pale of government authority even to the present day. Parts of the Khyber valley are also inhabited by the Mohmands and Shinwarays, but the Afridays are the predominant tribe. As the guardian of the Khyber, these tribes were collectively referred to as the Khyberays. They were, thus, singularly important because as a gateway of Central Asia to South Asia, the Khyber Pass served as the shortest thoroughfare for the passage of caravans, conquerors, merchants and people. Additionally, the Khyber Pass directly connected the cities of Peshawar and Jalalabad.

The Khyberays became famous in the latter stage of the Roshaniyya movement when they rose several times in rebellion under the leadership of Aimal Khan Mohmand and Darya Khan Afriday against the Mughal rulers of India. Aimal Khan "who was a born general, declared himself king, struck coins in his name and invited all the Pathan tribes to take part in the national struggle." For four years he kept alive the independence struggle of the Afghans from Kabul to Peshawar. In the Khyber area in 1672, the Pashtuns under his leadership killed "... a large number of soldiers and officers of the [Mughal] empire... and enslaved thousands of them." According to the Imperial Gazetteer of India, the entire Mughal army numbering 40,000 soldiers perished in this encounter. The Afridays are divided into the eight distinct divisions of Malik Din Khel, Qambar

⁶³ Harris, L., *British Policy on the North West Frontier of India, 1889-1901*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis at London University, 1960, 88.

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Just as other tribes in eastern Afghanistan, the Wazirs of Waziristan also looked on the ruler of Afghanistan as a Muslim sovereign of their own ethnic stock. In 1883, they invited the amir's officials to their land, but when the officials arrived there the Kabul Khel section of the tribe drove them away⁷⁰ even though a militia of Kabul had been stationed in Wana, a town in Southern Waziristan. Subsequently, however, the Wazirs and Dawars agreed to pay a tithe, but the Biland Khel section incited the *speen gund*, as opposed to the *tore gund* against the amir.⁷¹

Among the Wazirs, as among some other Pashtun tribes, the *speen gund* (white bloc) and *tore gund* (black bloc) were two leagues of tribes traditionally at odds with each other. Although the existence of the leagues should have made it relatively easy for the government to penetrate the Wazirs, it actually made this more difficult. The schism between the two leagues was so pronounced that even the amir's marriages with the daughter of Malik Rahmat Khan and the sister of Malik Tirin Khan did not help him extend his authority in Waziristan. These maliks were probably associated with the *tore gund*, as one Shahzada, a leader of the *speen gund*, went so far as to invite Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan to return, promising him the support of "sixty-thousand" families of the Wazirs and Tanays to unseat the amir.⁷² Actually, Shahzada resented the allowances, which the amir paid to his relations, fearing that the allowances would strengthen his opponents.

⁶⁹ GNWFP, 243-255. Siyal, *De Zeeno Pashtano Qaba'ilo Shajaray*, 275-281. The word Wazir is derived from Wadair, denoting a subdivision of the Sapay (Sapi or Safi) tribe, the other being the Gurbuz, and the Massyd. Sections of the Sapays also lived in Konarr, Laghman, Tagao, Paktia, Ghorband and other localities inside Afghanistan. Dr. Nasir Ahmad Sapay, personal communication, California, 2004.

⁷⁰ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 414.

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Probably, as Fayz Mohammad, the official chronicler states, Mulla 'Abd al-Karim was declared something similar to *badshah* (ruler).²⁰ Whatever the truth, by inviting Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan the rebels planned to oppose the amir more effectively.

The Sulaiman Khel and the Andar took the first step toward rebellion by looting a Durranay army contingent in the Muqur area,²¹ and afterward marching on the city of Ghazni. However, in late October 1886, at Talkhakzar [Talkha Guzar?] the army led by General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay defeated them, and the general sent the heads of about two thousand fallen rebels to Kabul where, after the fashion of Timur Lane, a tower of skulls (*kala munar*) was displayed as a warning to others.²² The leading rebels escaped to the country of the Kakars in the British territory.

Confrontation and Suppression

After the victory, the amir instructed General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay to disarm the Andar and their allies. He also instructed him to stop the allowances that the government paid to religious scholars, to sell the lands and underground irrigation canals of those who had escaped, and to confiscate the lands of the Qarabagh region. In addition, he instructed the general to build a fort in Ataghar in the heart of the Hotak land.²³ With the exception of the latter the instructions were carried out, the Ghilzays were harshly treated, and their women insulted. The uprising appeared to have been suppressed, although it was the winter that created that impression.

Meanwhile, the amir tried to isolate the Ghilzays as a whole while he appealed directly to their elders to submit. He also tried to win the support of his own tribesmen, the Durranays, who, until then, were on bad terms with him, warning them that the Ghilzays were after their ruling position.²⁴ The Ghilzays had, after their looting of the Durranay contingent, made it known that they had risen against

²⁰ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 516.

²¹ MM, Nov. 86, PSLI, 49, 75.

²² The Amir to Colonel 'Ata Allah, British Agent, KD, 2 Nov. 86, PSLI, 48, 117.

²³ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 531.

²⁴ KD, 29 Oct. 86, PSLI, 48, 1173.

the amir only, and that they had no quarrel with the Durranays. However, the amir still continued to incite them against the Ghilzays, just as he had done the opposite when he was engaged in the fight against Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan. Further, the amir let them enjoy their lands free of revenue as before, whereas prior to the Ghilzay uprising he had ordered them to pay it.²⁵

Ultimately, the amir failed to win over other people against the Ghilzays. He succeeded only in weaning the Hazaras from the Ghilzays with the help of the Qizilbashs,²⁶ but failed to win the support of the Tajiks of Ghazni and Kohistan. The amir's notable failure was with the 'ulema (Sunni religious scholars), as only a small number of them condemned the Ghilzays as rebels, while most sat on the fence by declaring that he was justified in fighting those who were dangerous to Islam.²⁷ This reference could not apply to the Ghilzays because a distinguished scholar, Mulla 'Abd al-Karim led them in the campaigns against the amir. More importantly, the amir failed in his efforts to calm the rebel leaders, even though he promised them that he would lower their rate of revenue if they desisted from rebelling.²⁸ The rebel leaders rejected his overtures, and Mulla 'Abd al-Karim declared that the amir's tyranny "had exceeded all bounds,"²⁹ and that he was "... an infidel, the extirpator of Islam, worshipper of himself, and the friend of an alien Government."³⁰ The non-Durranay Pashtuns of the neighboring lands, including the Kakars, supported the Ghilzays, but among the latter the Tokhays did not participate in the rebellion.³¹

The uprising took formidable proportions during the following spring. The total number of the rebels was reported to have increased from twenty thousand in March 1887³² to one hundred thousand in April.³³ However, after their initial successes in Qalat and Ataghar,³⁴ the rebels were defeated at Ataghar,³⁵ Qal'a-e-Katal, and still later

²⁵ Kand D, 25 Jan. 87, PSLI, 48, 487.

²⁶ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 539, 527, 541.

²⁷ KD, 29 Oct. 86, PSLI, 48, 1137.

²⁸ PD, 7 Apr. 87, PSLI, 50, 244.

²⁹ PD, 8 Jan. 87, PSLI, 49, 283.

³⁰ PD, 29 Mar. 87, PSLI, 49, 1320.

³¹ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 539.

³² MM, Mar. 87, PSLI, 49, 1281.

³³ PD, 7 Apr. 87, PSLI, 50, 243.

³⁴ BACA, 178.

³⁵ KD, 20 May 87, PSLI, 50, 879.

in other unspecified places,³⁶ by the government army under the command of General Ghulam Haydar Khan Orakzay. In its final phase the uprising found support in an unexpected quarter. The Ghilzays in the army at Herat, who had earlier risen in support of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan,³⁷ arrived and joined their recalcitrant kinsmen, and inflicted the final defeat on the army and recovered Nawa in July 1887.³⁸ However, thereafter with the onset of winter and against the well-organized army which was continually reinforced they could no longer fight, and the uprising petered out. About twenty-four thousand Ghilzays were killed in all the clashes.

The Ghilzay uprising provided an opportunity for Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan to try his luck once again. However, he traveled in the wrong direction, and failed to arrive at the Afghan border until late September when the uprising was over. Thus, the sardar lost his final opportunity to enter Afghanistan, as by then the amir had fortified the frontiers, and the Persian Government, under pressure from the British Government, had ordered his seizure.³⁹

The Ghilzay uprising was essentially a war between the government and the Ghilzay landowners, whose power the amir had resolved to break. Among the provocative measures that the amir took, he imposed heavy taxes on the landowners, resulting in the uprising led by the Ghilzay elders. The elders were actively supported in their stand by almost all of their own tribesmen, while others responded with good will. The amir had neither, as he failed to send tribal militias against them, or to obtain a legal ruling (*fatwa*) from the 'ulema to denounce them as rebels as he had done in response to other rebellious tribes. However, since the Ghilzay elders had poor weapons and no other means of fighting, they had no chance of success against the well-disciplined and well-equipped army. The uprising illustrated the ineffectiveness of a popular uprising against a well-organized military power.

After their defeat, the amir intentionally disabled the Ghilzay by impoverishing them economically and weakening them politically, doing so with a view to preventing future uprisings. What the amir

³⁶ MM, June 87, PSLI, 50, 1239.

³⁷ Riyazi, *Ayn Waqay'i*, 262.

³⁸ KD, 5 July 87, PSLI, 50, 283.

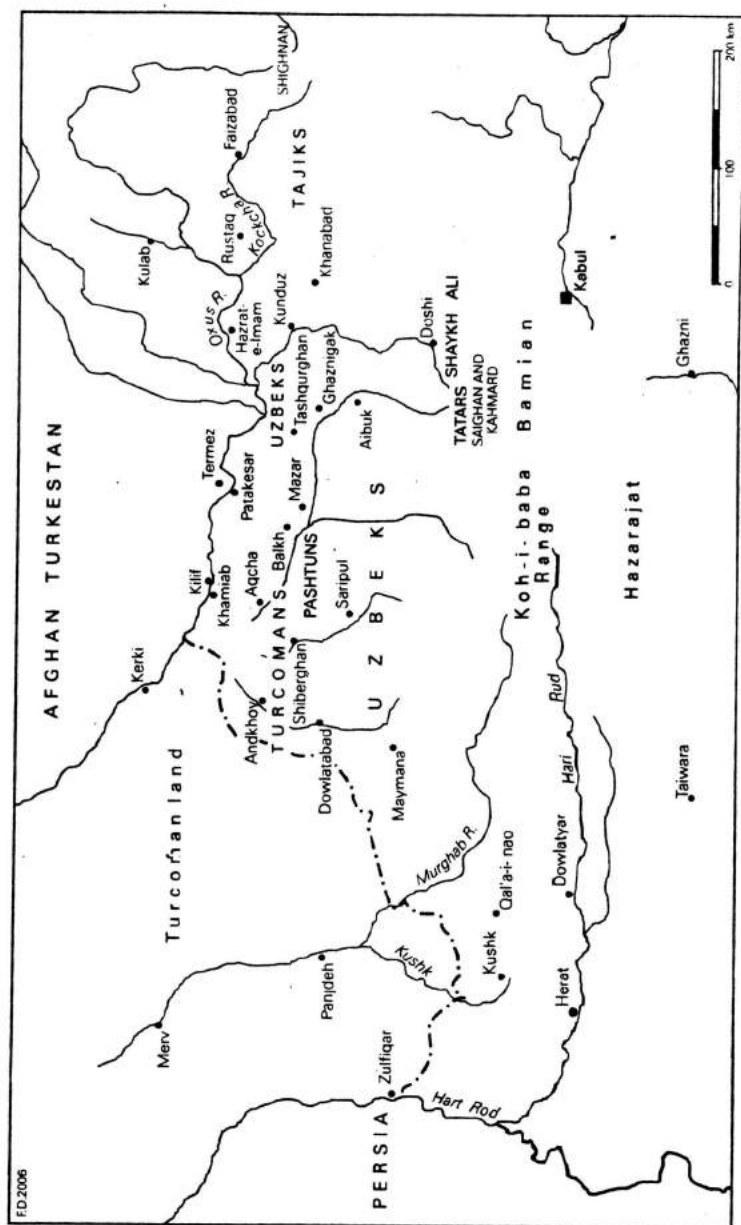
³⁹ For detail see, Riyazi, *Ayn al-Waqay'i*, 226-232. Riyazi had met Sardar Mohammad Ayyub when the latter was on his way to Afghanistan.

had once believed about the Andar he now believed about the entire tribe, stating that "when they [Andar] have no money left with them, [they] will not again raise disturbances."⁴⁰ He proved correct in his prediction, and the Ghilzays never rose en masse again. The uprising also had another important consequence; after its suppression the amir drew closer to his own Durranay tribe—in particular, to the Mohammadzay section to which he belonged. He provided annual allowances to its members residing in Kabul whether female or male and treated the whole section as a partner of the state (*sharik-e-dawlat*).

⁴⁰ The Amir to Na'ib Kotwal of Kabul, KD, 7 Dec. 86, PSII, 49, 149.

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Afghan Turkestan

With its excellent cotton and wheat, Balkh was still a kingdom, though a dependency of the Achaemenian Persia, when Alexander the Great invaded it in 330 BCE. Its ruler, Bessus, and his successor, Spitamenes, waged "a nationalist war, with strong religious overtones", and "between them they gave Alexander more continuous trouble than all the embattled hosts of Darius."³ Afterward, in the Hellenistic Greco-Bactrian period, "Bactria occupied much of modern Afghanistan", a country then known as "the land of a thousand cities." The Greek colonists of the post-Alexander period had contributed to this development by fraternizing with the native population so much that, according to Frank Holt, nineteenth century European scholars "... saw in Bactria the best of all ancient worlds."⁴ It was for its grandeur that in the Islamic times Bactria was called *umm al-bilad* (the mother of cities), as well as *janat al-arz* (the paradise of the earth), and *khair al-turab* (the best of soil).⁵ However, the city of Balkh was totally destroyed in the Chingizid onslaught of the thirteenth century as were all other cities of Afghanistan. During the second reign of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, the governor of Turkestan, Sardar Mohammad Afzal Khan, transported the debris of Balkh to Takhtapul. During the second reign of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, the Shi'i governor of the region, Na'ib Mohammad 'Alam Khan, enlarged Mazar-e-Sharif (the noble mausoleum) at the expense of Balkh. Mazar was (and still is) assumed to be the site of the shrine of 'Ali, the fourth caliph of Islam, and the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad.⁶ There also lie the graves of Ghazi Mohammad Akbar Khan and Amir Sher 'Ali Khan.

³ Green, P., *Alexander of Macedon*, 338. Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, transl. by A. de Selincourt, Penguin Books, 1958, 229-232. That the inhabitants of Bactria were patriotic is evident from a statement by Zoroaster as, according to him, instructed by Ahura Mazda: "I have made every land dear to its people, even though it had no charms whatever in it: had I not made every land dear to its people, even though it had no charms whatever in it, then the whole living world would have invaded the Airyana Vaego. The first of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created was the Airyana Vaego." "Selections from the Zend-Avesta", Transl. by Darmestetter, James in *The Sacred Books of the East*, the Colonial Press, New York, MDCCCXCIX, 67.

⁴ Holt, Frank L., *The Thundering Zeus, The Making of Hellenistic Bactria*, University of California Press, 1999, 9-20.

⁵ Leiner, Dardistan, 10.

⁶ McChesney, R. D., *Waaf in Central Asia, Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 148-1889*. Kakar, *Government and Society of Afghanistan*, 141.

By the 1830s, Balkh still functioned as a city, but afterward was completely replaced by Mazar as the political and commercial center of the region, and Turkestan comprised all of the territories lying between the Oxus, the Hindu Kush, the Pamir steppe and Herat.⁷ However, under Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan (b. 1851) Turkestan—inhabited by Uzbeks, Arabs, Hazaras, Tajiks, Pashtuns and others with its capital at Mazar, comprised only the plains south of the Oxus between Andkhoy and Badakhshan.

Estrangement of Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan

As early as 1881, Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan asked the amir to recognize him as "... the exclusive owner of Turkestan." Unwilling to provoke the sardar, the amir promised him that he would do so "When all our anxieties and troubles [are over];"⁸ the "anxieties" he spoke of were caused by the presence of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan in Herat. However, the demand strained relations between the amir and the sardar. When Kandahar and Herat fell in late 1881, and Ayyub Khan was expelled, Ishaq Khan asked the amir to appoint his younger brothers as governors there. The amir refused to do so and instead trusted the sardar with vast power and the authority to keep the revenue of the province to himself. Further, the amir even sent him money from Kabul to consolidate his position in this important frontier province.

Consequently, Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan had *de facto* independence in Turkestan, although, like all governors, he also sent valuable presents, especially horses, to the amir from time to time. The presentation of gifts by provincial governors to the Kabul ruler was a custom of the land, as was the reading of Friday sermon (*khutba*) in his name. In Kabul, the amir kept the sardar's three younger brothers apparently as his 'guests', but they were actually hostages.

In 1884, the fall of Maymana proved crucial in the relationship between the amir and Ishaq Khan. Because the latter had undertaken an expedition against Maymana, and because the district had

⁷ Wheeler, J. T., *Memorandum on Afghan-Turkistan*, Calcutta, 1869, *Gazette of Afghanistan*, Part 2, Afghan Turkistan, Calcutta, 1912, i-xii.

⁸ BACA, 107.

often been a part of Turkestan, the sardar expected that the amir would give him jurisdiction over it after it was pacified. However, the amir did not do so.

Following his disappointment over Maymana, Ishaq Khan tried to consolidate his position still further and gain more popular support. Reports are unanimous concerning the popularity of the sardar with the people under his jurisdiction. In fact, even in 1880, the people themselves had chosen the sardar as their governor after he crossed the border from Samarqand where he, like the amir, had been in exile. More importantly, the sardar's administration was mild in sharp contrast to that of the amir which was rigid. The contrast between the two men was apparent even more in their characters; the sardar was gentle and pious whereas the amir was stern and rigid.

Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan's adherence to the Naqshbandiyya mystic order of Islam had drawn him closer to the Uzbeks who observed Islam in its "minute detail",⁹ and to the Turkmen in particular, among whom the order was widespread;¹⁰ he had first adhered to the order while he was living in exile in Samarqand. He was also popular with his army which he paid regularly.¹¹ Because Turkestan was a frontier province, and because it was under the apparent threat of Russia the amir had allowed the sardar to raise a large army, and, in addition, from time to time sent him money from Kabul to meet the expenditure.¹² Thus, the sardar had not been obliged to exact money from the people and make himself unpopular with them.

For the reasons cited, relations between the amir and Ishaq Khan were far from cordial. The amir's efforts at affecting conciliation with the sardar through some influential dynastic members failed to bear fruit. While the amir maintained the facade of good relationship, he tried to remove the sardar from Turkestan. Several times he invited him to come to Kabul. The summons was not unusual, and in line with the amir's policy of removing governors in disgrace before they became wealthy and influential, and then giving their posts to non-Mohammadzay sardars, or head servants of the royal court. Governors from influential families, including those from among the Mohammadzay sardars, were especially subject to this policy.

⁹ Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, 2, 188.

¹⁰ Sultan Mahomed, *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, 1, 265.

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By 1884, when Ishaq Khan was disappointed in his scheme, he drew still closer to the people, and became popular, whereas the amir was not. The latter's oppressive rule, which was evident from the desertion of the army and the acceptance of the rebel sardar's claim by the people of Turkestan and Badakhshan helped him in his bid for the amirate of the whole land. Had he shown courage and resoluteness in the critical hour of military confrontation he might have unseated the amir, and changed the course of Afghan history. However, during the fateful hour of the battle, he revealed cowardice and a lack of sound judgment. He fled precipitously, and his flight left the people of Turkestan and Badakhshan at the mercy of the amir who went to Mazar the next year.

For about one year of his stay in Mazar, the amir took very stern measures against all those who had supported the rebel sardar. Meanwhile, he stepped up anti-Russian rhetoric and arranged for the fortification of military posts along the border, especially in Dehdadi. More important in the long run, the amir encouraged Pashtun and other ethnic groups from the densely populated regions south of the Hindu Kush to settle in the sparsely populated regions north of the Hindu Kush, and to cultivate the plots of state land which the government granted them on favorable terms.³⁹ This land grant continued to be issued until recently as part of the population relocation policy. In particular in the 1930s, Sher Khan Kharotay and Mohammad Gul Khan Mohmand became, as the nationally-known governors of Kunduz and Mazar respectively, overzealous in implementing the policy. As a consequence, from demographic perspective, northern Afghanistan became largely mixed and transformed from a dependency into an integral part of the country.

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the wali asked the Russian officials in Merv to occupy Maymana,¹² but they were unable to do so because of the intervening of the Salor and Sarik Turkmen of Panjdeh, who were still independent. However, the Russians were reported to have given the *wali* arms, and in return, the *wali* hoisted their flag in Maymana.¹³

Meanwhile, the *wali* tried to fortify his position. He was reported to have bought five hundred breach-loading rifles from the Turkmen.¹⁴ He also asked the Sarik Turkmen of Panjdeh to join him against the Afghans, and as a token of his good will toward them, he reduced tolls on their merchandise destined for Maymana.¹⁵ Next, the *wali* also asked Fath Allah Khan, head of the Firozkohi tribe of Herat, to come and settle with his tribesmen in Maymana, since the latter was also on bad terms with the amir; however this request was futile.¹⁶ At the same time, the *wali* engaged in correspondence with Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, and then announced that the sardar was coming to Maymana.¹⁷

The wali's exaction of money from his subjects for the fortification of his defenses caused unrest.¹⁸ About three hundred families from Khairabad emigrated to Andkhoy¹⁹ and the Turkmen cultivators of Qal'a-e-Wali, a dependency of Maymana near Murghab, informed the government's official in Herat that they were ready to submit.²⁰ The wali had become so unpopular that it was generally believed that if the amir encouraged the inhabitants of Maymana they would abandon him.²¹

The early pacification of Maymana was not a compelling necessity for the amir. He only instructed Mir Hussayn Khan, the former wali of Maymana, to replace the incumbent wali, but he failed to do so.²² Meanwhile, the amir instructed Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan, the governor of Turkestan, in Mazar, to keep the wali under

¹² Shahzadah of Khoqand to Commissioner of Peshawar, PD, 23 Sept. 84, PSLI, 42, 123.

¹³ HD, 12 Apr. 84, PSLI, 40, 1315.

¹⁴ Col. Waterfield, 22 Apr. 82, PSLI, 32, 525.

¹⁵ HD, 14 Sept. 82, PSLI, 34, 385.

¹⁶ HD, 12 Dec. 82, PSLI, 35, 386.

¹⁷ HD, 6 May 82, PSLI, 32, 867.

¹⁸ HD, 25 Jan. 83, PSLI, 35, 832.

¹⁹ HD, 6 June 83, PSLI, 37, 299.

²⁰ HD, 21 June 83, PSLI, 37, 1066.

²¹ Kand D., 3 Oct. 93, PSLI, 38, 413.

²² BACA, 100.

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The Panja stream remained the boundary between the Russian-controlled Bukhara and Afghanistan⁵⁸ even though it "... is almost unknown as a boundary, and is as artificial as a wire fence or a degree of latitude."⁵⁹

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⁵⁶ Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier*, 252.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PACIFICATION OF THE HAZARAS

In 1891, the semi-independent Hazaras of the central highland, the Hazarajat, agreed to the stationing of government officials in their territory. Shortly afterward, government officials and troops were stationed in parts of it, but they oppressed the local population so much that they rose in rebellion that lasted for three years (1891-93). Since the Hazara elders had supported the British in the Second Anglo-Afghan war, and since, as Shi'i Muslims, they had been on bad terms with their Sunni neighbors, they were vulnerable, despite their highland terrain. This enabled the amir to dispatch a large number of troops and militias against them. Ultimately, the Hazaras were overcome; some Durranyas and Ghilzays were settled in parts of their land, while their pastures were given to nomads.

The Hazaras live in most parts of the central highland, called the Hazarajat,¹ and at times also Hazaristan,² or Barbaristan.³ It has little arable land, six-month long winters and vast pastures. The Hazarajat was divided into 15 regions or districts (*olgas* or *nawas*),⁴ each of which was ruled by one family, notably the Beg family of Dai Zangi (also called the *toll sardar*, which owned the whole of Dai Zangi) and the Ibrahim Beg family of Dai Kundi.⁵ The Hazara ruling elders, or *mir*s were so powerful that they ruled their respective communities as they pleased, without recourse to councils. They even sold the children of the Hazara commoners into slavery. Hazara women performed domestic chores and bore children as if they existed only to

¹ Smaller groups of Hazaras settled in the provinces of Herat, Turkestan and Badakhshan would not be discussed as they were already under government control.

² GAK (1895), 272.

³ Riyazi, M. Y. *Ẓia al-Mu'arafa* (*The Light of Knowledge*), Mashhad, 1907, 44.

⁴ These *olcas* [olus?] were Dai Zangi, Dai Kundi, Behsud, Dai Mirdad, Saypaw, Gizao, Ajaristan and Malistan, Chora and Baburi, Dai Folad, Uruzgan, Zawli and Bobash, Dai Chopan, Tirin and Dehrawud, Jaghuri, and Shaykh Ali.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PACIFICATION OF THE HAZARAS

In 1891, the semi-independent Hazaras of the central highland, the Hazarajat, agreed to the stationing of government officials in their territory. Shortly afterward, government officials and troops were stationed in parts of it, but they oppressed the local population so much that they rose in rebellion that lasted for three years (1891-93). Since the Hazara elders had supported the British in the Second Anglo-Afghan war, and since, as Shi'i Muslims, they had been on bad terms with their Sunni neighbors, they were vulnerable, despite their highland terrain. This enabled the amir to dispatch a large number of troops and militias against them. Ultimately, the Hazaras were overcome; some Durranyas and Ghilzays were settled in parts of their land, while their pastures were given to nomads.

The Hazaras live in most parts of the central highland, called the Hazarajat,¹ and at times also Hazaristan,² or Barbaristan.³ It has little arable land, six-month long winters and vast pastures. The Hazarajat was divided into 15 regions or districts (*olgas* or *nawas*),⁴ each of which was ruled by one family, notably the Beg family of Dai Zangi (also called the *toll sardar*, which owned the whole of Dai Zangi) and the Ibrahim Beg family of Dai Kundi.⁵ The Hazara ruling elders, or *mir*s were so powerful that they ruled their respective communities as they pleased, without recourse to councils. They even sold the children of the Hazara commoners into slavery. Hazara women performed domestic chores and bore children as if they existed only to

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What the Hazara shared with their neighbors was Islam, although even with regard to this they were distinct from them. As previously noted, most Hazaras were Shi'as, and only some were Sunnis, whereas their neighbors were all Sunnis. Consequently, the Hazaras were "...oppressed by all their neighboring nations, whom they served as hewers of wood and drawers of water."²⁵ The oppression began with the decline of the Mongol power, a situation that enabled their neighbors to expel them from their pasture encampments and besiege them in their present highland, just as they had besieged the Kafirs in Kafiristan. Their neighbors even viewed them as 'infidels' (*kafirs*) and thereby justified their sale,²⁶ although the sale of Muslims was forbidden in Islam.

Down to the reign of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, the Uzbeks and Turkmens enslaved and sold the Hazaras in Turkestan as well as Central Asia. Although the Hazaras of Dai Kundi and Dai Zangi and the Shaykh 'Ali Hazaras, sent slaves as tributes to Mir Murad 'Ali, ruler of Qunduz, when they were subject to his rule²⁷ the Uzbeks and Turkmens still sent raiding parties into the Hazarajat until they were checked by the government during the reign of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, and by the development of local fortifications in northern Hazarajat.²⁸ Of the Char Aimaq who were "at hereditary enmity with the Hazaras"²⁹ the Firozkohis enslaved them, and sold them in Bukhara.³⁰ The Jamshedis enslaved the Hazaras even though on a smaller scale up to the last year of the nineteenth century, after which time they were unable to do so because of the pressure applied by the government. The Russian authorities also checked the sale of the Hazaras in Panjdeh.

²⁴ Burnes, *Cabool*, 231.

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²⁸ Canfield, R., *Faction and Conversion in a Plural Society, Religious Alignments in the Hindu Kush*, Ann Arbor, 1973, 93.

²⁹ Harlan, J., *Central Asia, Personal Narrative of General Josiah Harlan, 1823-1841*, edited by Ross, F. E., London, 1939, 152.

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Another serious offense committed by the Hazara was their sacking of Ghazni at the instigation of the British officials during the Second Anglo-Afghan war, when the Sunni inhabitants were fighting the British army in Kabul.³⁶ In particular, the Hazaras of Jaghuri and of other areas cooperated with General Donald Stewart against the Ghilzays when he was on his way from Kandahar to Kabul in April 1880. At Ahmad Khel, south of Ghazni, over fourteen thousand Ghilzays and others attacked and nearly routed the British army of over four thousand men, but at the end of the conflict they lost over one thousand men to the superior weapons and the good discipline of the British.³⁷ After the Ghilzays had fled, the Hazaras looted their houses and insulted their women.

The Historical Background

In the early sixteenth century, when he ruled Kabul, Mohammad Zahir al-Din Babur did not invade the Hazarajat even though he passed Bamiyan in the late fifteenth century. Thereafter, Bamiyan, though not considered a part of the Hazarajat,³⁸ but an important center linking the Oxus River, the Indus River and the Hazarajat, remained more or less open to expeditions, which were undertaken by his successors, notably Emperor Shah Jahan (1628-1658). While the Emperor Shah Jahan's attempts at invading the Hazarajat did not succeed,³⁹ the Safavi emperor, Shah 'Abbas I (1587-1629) influenced the Hazaras by appointing an elder over them.⁴⁰ It was probably during this period that the Shi'i faith of Islam began to replace the shamanism of the Hazaras, although exactly who persuaded the Hazaras to accept the new faith, and also when they

³⁶ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 403.

³⁷ At Ahmed Khel, on April 19, 1880, the Ghilzays were comprised of 1,000 horse and 13,000 foot soldiers against a division of the British troops numbering 3,000 rifles, 350 lances, 700 sabers, and 22 guns. Trousdale in MacGregor, *War in Afghanistan*, 178n. The Ghilzays had no guns and were also poorly armed. See also Robson, B. *The Road to Kabul, The Second Afghan War*, Arms and Armour Press, London, New York, 1986, 194, 195.

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The Submission of the Hazaras

In 1890; the amir appointed Sardar 'Abd al-Quddus Khan, the governor of Shiberghan, as governor of Bamiyan with the authority to pacify the still-independent Hazaras in the Hazarajat proper. Meanwhile, the amir invited the *mirs* of 45 clans (*tawa'if*) of Uruzgan, Ajaristan, Malistan, Dahla, Zawli, Dai Chopan, and other areas to submit to the government.⁴⁶ In the proclamations (*firman*s) which he sent them the amir did not offer them terms for submission. He only asked them to submit, because he believed that their further insistence on rebellion, in view of the closeness of the Christian powers, would be injurious to Afghanistan.⁴⁷ However, the Hazaras claimed that they were invited to submit on terms that included autonomy, and exemption from paying taxes for several years to come.⁴⁸ Whatever the truth may have been, the Hazaras agreed to submit. In the spring of 1891, Sardar 'Abd al-Quddus Khan, accompanied by an army and tribal levies of ten thousand men, including the Hazaras of Dai Zangi, Dai Kundi and Behsud entered the independent Hazarajat. Sardar Mohammad 'Azim Khan Hazara and Mir Mohammad Ilkhan had led the Hazara levies, and the entry of the army was smooth except for sporadic light resistance.

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opposed, but as the troops became oppressive, the Hazara commoners stood fast behind their *mirs* and *sayyeds*.

In the official chronicle, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, there is no mention of whether the Hazaras were made to pay taxes, but other sources indicate that they undertook to pay one *rupee* per family annually.⁵⁸ The Hazaras were also hard pressed for supplies.⁵⁹ After having killed a few soldiers, the Palo subsection of the powerful Sultan Mohammad clan of the Uruzgan Hazaras, under the leadership of Mir Hussayn Beg, rebelled. Soon, other Hazaras joined them, killing and expelling the rest of the army scattered throughout the Hazarajat. Further, they declared a war and a jihad against the kingdom of Afghanistan. Sardar 'Abd al-Quddus Khan, who had been stationed with his army of four thousand soldiers in Gizao fled to Qalat in the Ghilzay country.⁶⁰ The Hazaras may have killed the rest, numbering, about six thousand soldiers and others.

The Mobilization of Public Opinion

The Hazara rebellion crystallized animosity between the Sunni and Shi'i population still further, and religious leaders on both sides incited their co-religionists. The 'ulema gave the amir the legal ruling (*fatwa*) to the effect that the Hazaras were "infidel", rebel, and deserving of death.⁶¹ They preached this theme in their sermons and incited the soldiers, whom they accompanied to the battlefields. At this time, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman called himself the "amir of Islam."⁶² He tried to turn the war into a sectarian war by stating that the Hazaras were "infidels" and that the army and tribal levy were free to act as they pleased with regard to them and their property after they conquered their land.⁶³

The Hazara land was promised only to the Durranays and the Ghilzays.⁶⁴ The amir also declared that his object in conquering

⁵⁸ Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 249. KD, 22 Dec. 91, PSLI, 65, 103.

⁵⁹ MM, Dec. 91, PSLI, 65, 103.

⁶⁰ Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 250. Mir Hussayn Beg, 11 Apr. 94, PSLI, 74, 548. Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 761.

⁶¹ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 891. KD, 22-24 June 92, PSLI, 1511. Riyazi, *'Ayn al-Waqayi'*, 253.

⁶² Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 543.

⁶³ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman's Firman, Kand D, 28 May 92, PSLI, 66, 1259.

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Uruzgan was to secure "an impregnable natural position" for the Durranays as the infidels on both sides now exposed them to attacks.⁶⁵

Despite all of this, hostility to the Hazaras was not universal. About twenty seven thousand "Afghans" (of unknown tribal identity) living side by side with the Hazaras were reported to have joined them against the amir. This population had been refractory for some time.⁶⁶ Near Kabul, the inhabitants of Kohistan encouraged the rebel leaders in their stand against the amir.⁶⁷ The *mir* of Maymana, who had revolted at the time, promised his support to the Hazaras.⁶⁸ For their part the Hazaras also declared a religious war,⁶⁹ and elected Timus Shah, a descendant of Imam Musa Raza, as their ruler (*khalifa*).⁷⁰

In her, *A Tale of the Hazara War*, Lady Hamilton who lived in Kabul at the time notes that the Hazaras detested "the unholy alliance" that existed between the amir and the English. She quotes the Hazaras as having declared that "We will fight for one true God, and his true prophet, and for 'Ali against these Kafirs and the allies of Kafirs."⁷¹ This statement is true in the sense that the Hazaras cloaked the war in religion, but untrue with regard to the point that they wanted to fight the British also.

On the contrary, in view of their cooperation with the British during their invasion of Afghanistan, the Hazaras expected that they would help them against the amir,⁷² and so they asked them, although in vain, to assist them in their present struggle in return for their cooperation in future "in every way."⁷³ Both sides resorted to religion for the justification of their bellicose stand. The amir and the 'ulema on one side, and the *mirs*, and the *mujtahids* (Shi'i 'ulema) on the other, for reasons best known to them, invoked the names of God, the Prophet, 'Ali and Islam in inciting the Sunni and Shi'i

⁶⁵ MM, July 92, PSLI, 67, 275.

⁶⁶ KD, 21-24 May 92, PSLI, 66, 1103.

⁶⁷ Riyazi, *Ayn al-Waqay'*, 251.

⁶⁸ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 821.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 781.

⁷⁰ KD, 10 May 92, PSLI, 66, 606.

⁷¹ Hamilton, L., *A Vizier's Daughter, a Tale of the Hazara War*, London, 1900, 31. Based on the experience of the author with the Hazara prisoners in Kabul, this is a historical novel. The author, who was sympathetic toward the prisoners, has dramatized her account and so has made it unreliable as a source.

⁷² Brown, Major J., to secretary to Government of India, 11 Apr. 91, PSLI, 74, 547.

⁷³ MM, Sept 92, PSLI, 68,

Uruzgan was to secure "an impregnable natural position" for the Durranays as the infidels on both sides now exposed them to attacks.⁶⁵

Despite all of this, hostility to the Hazaras was not universal. About twenty seven thousand "Afghans" (of unknown tribal identity) living side by side with the Hazaras were reported to have joined them against the amir. This population had been refractory for some time.⁶⁶ Near Kabul, the inhabitants of Kohistan encouraged the rebel leaders in their stand against the amir.⁶⁷ The *mir* of Maymana, who had revolted at the time, promised his support to the Hazaras.⁶⁸ For their part the Hazaras also declared a religious war,⁶⁹ and elected Timus Shah, a descendant of Imam Musa Raza, as their ruler (*khalifa*).⁷⁰

In her, *A Tale of the Hazara War*, Lady Hamilton who lived in Kabul at the time notes that the Hazaras detested "the unholy alliance" that existed between the amir and the English. She quotes the Hazaras as having declared that "We will fight for one true God, and his true prophet, and for 'Ali against these Kafirs and the allies of Kafirs."⁷¹ This statement is true in the sense that the Hazaras cloaked the war in religion, but untrue with regard to the point that they wanted to fight the British also.

On the contrary, in view of their cooperation with the British during their invasion of Afghanistan, the Hazaras expected that they would help them against the amir,⁷² and so they asked them, although in vain, to assist them in their present struggle in return for their cooperation in future "in every way."⁷³ Both sides resorted to religion for the justification of their bellicose stand. The amir and the 'ulema on one side, and the *mirs*, and the *mujtahids* (Shi'i 'ulema) on the other, for reasons best known to them, invoked the names of God, the Prophet, 'Ali and Islam in inciting the Sunni and Shi'i

⁶⁵ MM, July 92, PSLI, 67, 275.

⁶⁶ KD, 21-24 May 92, PSLI, 66, 1103.

⁶⁷ Riyazi, *Ayn al-Waqay'*, 251.

⁶⁸ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 821.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 781.

⁷⁰ KD, 10 May 92, PSLI, 66, 606.

⁷¹ Hamilton, L., *A Vizier's Daughter, a Tale of the Hazara War*, London, 1900, 31. Based on the experience of the author with the Hazara prisoners in Kabul, this is a historical novel. The author, who was sympathetic toward the prisoners, has dramatized her account and so has made it unreliable as a source.

⁷² Brown, Major J., to secretary to Government of India, 11 Apr. 91, PSLI, 74, 547.

⁷³ MM, Sept 92, PSLI, 68, . . .

'Azim Khan, elder of the Se-pai Dai Kundi, who was until then the amir's head servant.

The amir poured about one hundred thousand troops and tribal levies into the Hazarajat from all sides.⁸⁰ He had never previously been able to employ so many soldiers and militias against an enemy. The army was led by Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Orakzay, Sardar 'Abd al-Quddus, General Sher Ahmad and others. Many battles preceded the decisive ones that were fought in Daya, Folang, and Uruzgan. In Uruzgan the battle continued for five days,⁸¹ and fifty skirmishes took place before it was reoccupied.⁸² In the winter, the troops evacuated the Hazarajat just short of Uruzgan. During the next spring, the Hazaras of the northern Hazarajat were the first to rise. However, after their initial successes in April 1893, they were defeated by the tribal levies, and the army led by Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Orakzay and General Amir Mohammad. It appears that General Amir Mohammad won the last decisive battle on the bank of the Helmand River between Dai Kundi and Dai Zangi. The Hazaras were finally crushed in September 1893.⁸³

The Hazara Settlement

After the defeat of the Hazaras, the amir tried to break their power. As an ethnic group of the Shi'i sect occupying the central highland, the Hazaras were a significant force, and the amir regarded them as a source of potential danger to the country.⁸⁴ He considered their *mirs* and religious elders in particular to be the enemies of both the Hazara commoners and the Afghans. These "enemies" he ordered to be separated from the rest of the Hazaras and settled elsewhere,⁸⁵ and commissioned Na'ib Padshah Gul to round up the elders and send them on to Kabul. However, since the government officials

⁸⁰ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to Durrany of Kandahar, Kand D, 2 July 92, PSLI, 66, 1721. According to Riyazi, (*Ayn al-Waqay'*, 258) the number of regular troops was 20,000, of tribal levies 60,000; and of guns 40. His figures of 10,000 for the Hazara fighting men are incredibly low.

⁸¹ Mir Hussayn Beg, 11 Apr. 94, PSLI, 74, 548.

⁸² Amir 'Abd al-Rahman in darbar, KD, 21-23 Sept. 92, PSLI, 68, 105.

⁸³ MM, Sept. 93, PSLI, 72, 257. Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 898.

⁸⁴ Sultan Mahomed, *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, 1, 276.

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The government converted the pastures of the Hazarajat into state property and then sold them to the nomads (*kuchays*) who had helped it to transport supplies during the war.¹⁰³ Until then the nomads had been unable to graze their cattle beyond Behsud, Nahur, and the Saydasta of the Jaghuri area;¹⁰⁴ with the blessing of government officials, they forced their way onto the pastures of Dai Zangi, Dai Kundi, Malistan, and other interior localities.¹⁰⁵ The lands of those who had fallen in the war and had left no inheritors were confiscated, as were the lands of the *mirs* of Dai Zangi and Dai Kundi. Since in the past, these *mirs* had taken over lands from the Hazara commoners, the latter now claimed their lands. The amir ruled that such lands were to be handed over to their original owners, and the *mirs* were to be left only with those lands, which they themselves cultivated.¹⁰⁶

The Qizilbashs, who were followers of the same Shi'i faith as the Hazaras, sympathized with them, incited them by saying that "... the British were going to bring an end to the Emirate, and that now was the time to assert Hazara independence against the Amir's fledgling government."¹⁰⁷ The government then accused the Qizilbashs

⁹⁸ Of the 20,000 families of Behsud only 6,400 families in total and only 60 families of the Sultan Mohammad clan survived the war. Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 854, 1031.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 989.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 855, 914.

¹⁰¹ MM, Nov. 94, PSLI, 80, 21. Kand D., 6 Jan. 94, PSLI, 69, 627.

¹⁰² KD, 2 June 95, PSLI, 80, 21. Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 829, 855.

¹⁰³ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 986.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 714, 715.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1100.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1011.

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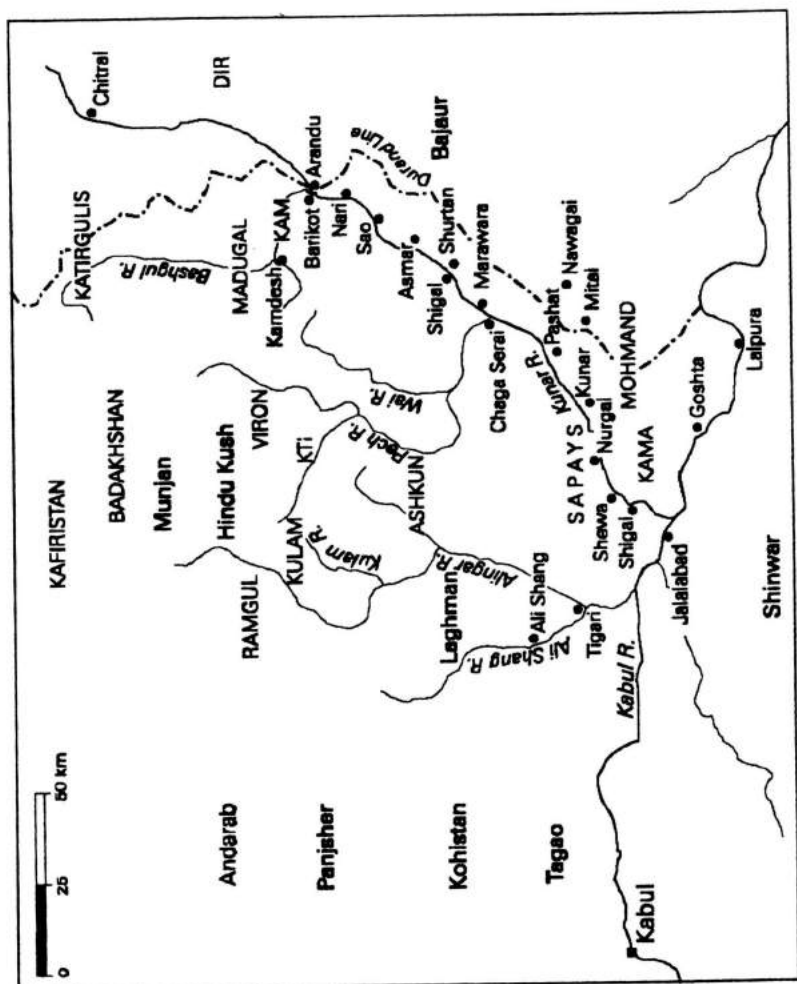
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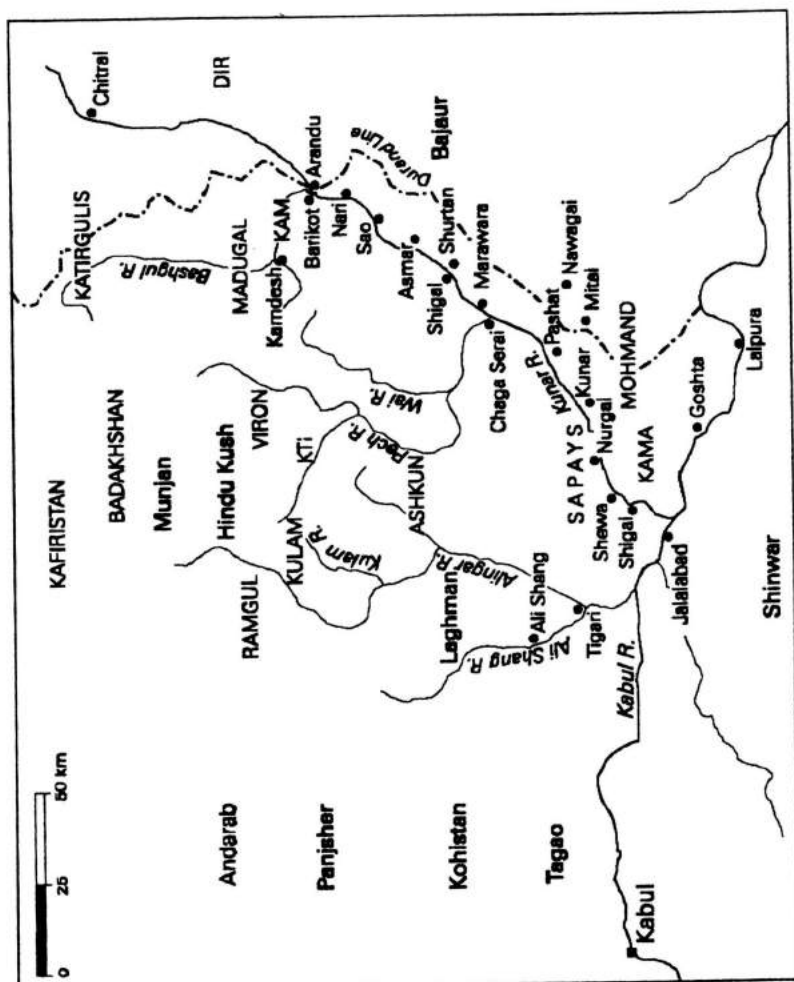
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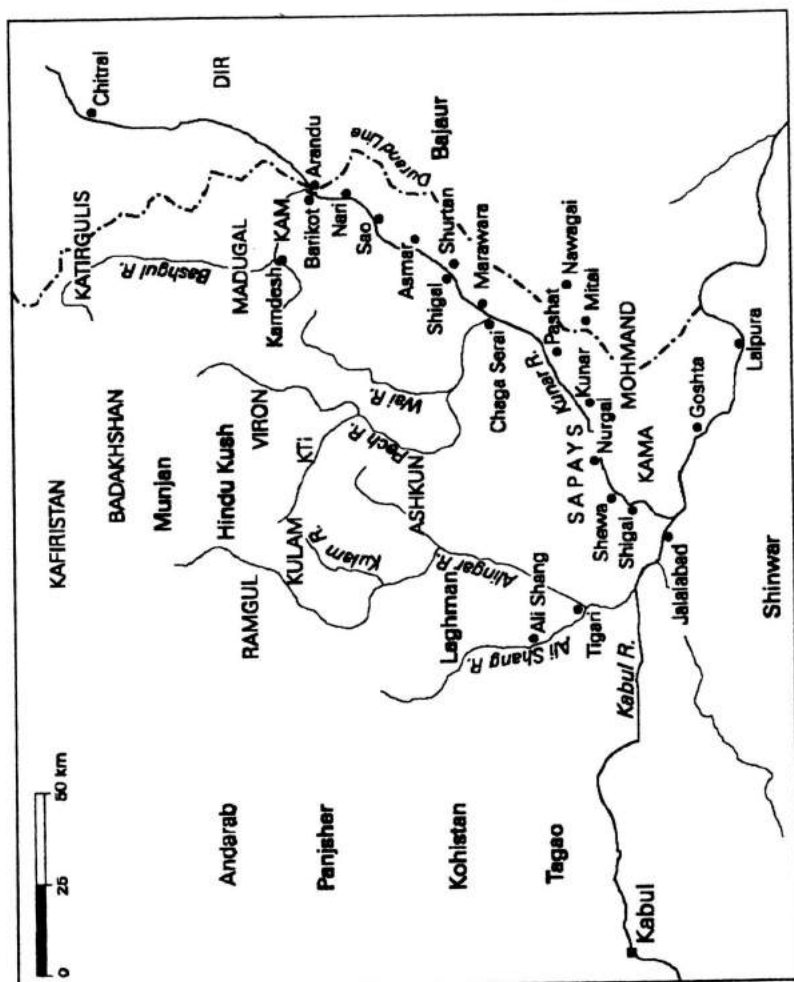
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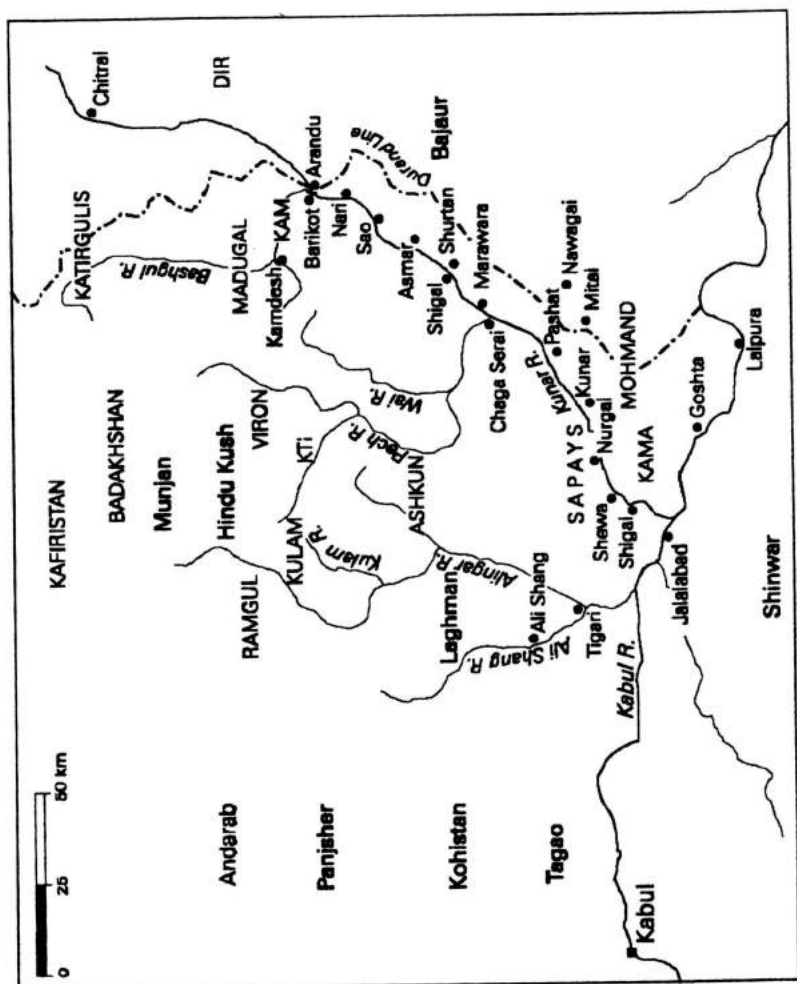
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but actually by a small group of greybeards, who at ordinary times rule in a more or less absolute way."¹¹ At any rate, Robertson focuses only on the common council (*urey*) which he calls "parliament" and which he attended. He states:

A Kafir parliament is a strange sight. . . . A dozen men, perhaps, try to speak at once; each has his own little group of listeners, whose attention . . . he seeks to recall by loud ejaculations of 'ai ai' or by little pokes in the ribs with his walking club. If some very exciting topic is being discussed, perhaps all are talkers and none are listeners; but, as a rule, when one of the tribal orators begins to speak, he gets the attention of the greater part of the assembly.¹²

Since the illiterate Kafirs could not record their decisions they often did not stick to them. Robertson notes:

. . . the discussion [decision] arrived at on one day is quite likely to be rescinded on the next, and reverted to on the third. But such occurrences are exceptional and only happen when people are laboring under strong excitement on some subject.

Further, Robertson states that "Generally the Jast, or its inner council, manage every thing." He then refers to the political order of the Kafirs as "oligarchy, or, in some tribes, an autocracy."¹³ While it is true that the Kafir political order was an oligarchy, it is also true to say that it was not an autocracy, since membership in the council was only for one year, and the position of Jast as head of the clan was not hereditary. More importantly, in the absence of landed aristocracy as well as a cash economy to enable some one to retain militias even the powerful Jast were unable to rule autocratically, and had to rely on the good will of the tribesmen in conducting public affairs. Robertson even speaks of ". . . a public opinion which avenges any outrage on itself by promptly burning down the culprit's house and destroying his property." In his view public opinion is "a power not to be disregarded."¹⁴

Also, by the time a tribesman attained the status of Jast he had become financially worse off. This may explain why no one has evidently attempted to set up a monarchy. The reason for this is simple; the process of choosing the Jast was elaborate and very expensive.

¹¹ Robertson, 234.

¹² Robertson, 435.

¹³ Robertson, 434, 435.

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neither land nor cattle, maintaining themselves by laboring mainly as shepherds. The slaves (*borjan*) were divided into the Bari and the Showala, and were either artisans or domestics. They were the property of families whose heads enjoyed wide power. The slaves were originally prisoners of war, whom the Kafirs had acquired in conflicts with their neighbors in past centuries.¹⁹ The position of the artisan slaves was much better because they owned property and the community needed their services as carpenters, tanners, weavers, goldsmiths, ironsmiths and the like. Slaves of both types were forbidden to visit shrines, and domestic slaves were even banned from going beyond certain limits in the house. Like the *shudras* or *dasas* of ancient India slaves were considered unclean. Of all the Kafir tribes the Kam and the Calsha had the highest number of slaves, and they were sold and bought in the town of Kamdesh.²⁰

The Kafirs had some other customs as well that distinguished them markedly from their neighbors. Their women, being unveiled and therefore able to move freely, tilled the land. However, since Kafiristan was a mountainous country it had narrow valleys and only limited stretches of cultivable land. Tauza claims that women tilled the land so that men have ample time to defend the country against the ever-present danger to which they were exposed from their Muslim neighbors.²¹ Consequently, it was not uncommon for Kafir women to engage in sexual affairs both out of wedlock and extra-maritally. If discovered, the women were not severely punished and any resulting problems were settled by a council of elders, who ordered the male 'seducer' to give a few goats to the wronged husbands. Young unmarried women were especially indulgent, and their fathers accepted and raised their out of the wedlock children without grudges. It is even said that the Siyah-posh Kafirs were inclined to "... resign their wives to those who reside under their roofs" out of hospitality to their guests.²²

The Kafirs were polygamous to the extent that some of them married more than four wives. It was even considered a reproach to have only one wife—a sign of poverty and insignificance.²³ However,

¹⁹ Ghobar, *The Geographical History of Afghanistan*, 140. Tauza, 178.

²⁰ Tauza, 177-181.

²¹ Tauza, 185.

²² Masson, Charles, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, and the Panjab*, First published in 1842. Reprint by Oxford University Press, 1874, 1, 227.

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their Muslim neighbors, who buried their dead, the Kafirs neither buried nor burned their dead, and placed the body of the dead in a box that was put on the summit of a nearby hill, a custom similar to that which prevailed in the Avestan period. Since the Kafirs were illiterate they had no written records of their own. Also, because of their small-scale contact with the outside world they were not exposed to change, and held steadfast to their cultural values. Consequently, for centuries their society had been essentially retentive. The biggest change in their long history that affected them as well as their society in a fundamental way came with their conversion to Islam in 1896. On the eve of their conversion the author Robertson characterized the Kafirs in the following manner. "Their present ideas and all the associations of their history and their religion are simply assassinations and blackmailing; yet they are not savages. Some of them have the head of philosophers and statesmen. Their features are Aryan, and their mental capabilities are considerable. Their love of decoration, their carving, their architecture, all point to a time when they were higher in the human scale than they are at present."³¹

The Kafirs had a hostile as well as symbiotic relationship with their Muslim neighbors. Although they suffered from disunity they would unite whenever the latter would threaten them, but would not conduct a combined operation, preferring instead to retaliate in small parties. On the other hand, the Muslims would raid their territory to exact tribute, grab their land and capture their women, or to take revenge for their relatives whom the Kafirs had killed. The Muslim and Kafir communities in return would reward their respective successful raiders with the title of *ghazi* (Muslim fighter against non-Muslims) for the Muslims, and of *shoramauch* for the Kafirs.

Nevertheless, the Kafirs and their neighbors maintained a symbiotic relationship through trade in local commodities. Muslim peddlers carried on such trade in times of peace, even in the interior of Kafirstan. The Kafirs also maintained relationships with the Muslims individually as well as collectively. They had 'brothers' among some frontier Muslims, and both sides extended hospitality to each other when called upon. It was this symbiotic relationship and the introduction of currency that contributed to the spread of

³¹ Robertson, 165.

Islam in the fringes of Kafiristan. Here, particularly in Bashgul, lived a large number of converts to Islam, known as *shaykhs* or *neenchas*. Although they had converted, their kinsmen accepted them without prejudice, because their blood ties were much stronger than religious ones. Thus, on the eve of the invasion, Islam had made considerable inroads among the Kafirs, who were said to number about 52,500 people in 1891.³²

The Historical Background of the Kafirs

As previously noted, the Kafirs were an indigenous people. According to Ghobar they were the descendents of the people of Bakhtar who left their land (Bakhtar or Bactria) after the overthrow of the Greco-Bactrian rule by the people of Takhar. They settled in regions south of the Hindu-kush, which they called Biloristan after their former land Bakhtar. In their new habitat, where they partly mixed with the indigenous people, but largely kept to themselves, they maintained their former predominantly Zoroastrian ways of life,³³ as previously described.

In the Islamic period, when Islam was being introduced in what is now eastern Afghanistan, the Kafirs were pressured to accept Islam, and those who refused proceeded further up the highland, from Laghman, Konarr, Bajaur and other valleys. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna may have been the first Muslim ruler to have pressured them to embrace Islam, in the beginning of the eleventh century. Although he invaded India seventeen times, he did not conquer the highland of the Kafirs. The example he set was followed by Timur Lane (1335-1405) and by the Muslim princes of Turkestan, in the fifteenth century.³⁴ In the early part of the sixteenth century, Mohammad Zahir al-Din Babur (1483-1530), the founder of the Mughal dynasty of India, had a small encounter with the Kafirs in the Konarr valley. During the reigns of his successors, notably Jalal al-Din Akbar (1556-1605) and Jahangir (1605-1627), the Kafirs of

³² GAK, 250.

³³ Ghobar, *The Geographical History of Afghanistan*, 135-139.

³⁴ McNair, W. W., *Exploration in Eastern Afghanistan, Kafiristan*, 1883, 38, PSLI, 44, 1208. Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys*, 1, 198-201.

Tagao, Nijrao, Pech, Konarr and Laghman were converted to Islam.³⁵ In the first half of the eighteenth century, Nadir Shah Afshar (d. 1747) left the Kafirs unmolested, as did the Sadozay rulers afterwards. However, later in 1874, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan tried to conquer Kafiristan, although the details of his attempt are unknown.

Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan did not take a military expedition against them until 1895, since he was not ready to confront them. Nor did the Kafirs present a problem. After Russia occupied Panjdeh in 1885, the amir feared that the Russians viewed the Kafirs as "... their auxiliary force."³⁶ A year later he also feared that "... the British Government intended to annex Kafiristan."³⁷ This was after the British Government requested him that he permit a British party under Colonel Lockhart to enter Kafiristan for collecting geological data.³⁸ The amir turned down the request, but was still unable to bring the Kafirs within the orbit of Kabul, due to more pressing problems elsewhere. Instead, he lent his blessing to the jihad movement that Mulla Khalil Mohmand and others were waging against the Kafirs at the same time that he also adopted a paternal attitude toward those deputations of Kafir elders who were turning to him in Kabul, for protection. Pressured by overzealous Muslims on the fringes of their land, groups of Kafir elders frequently visited the amir and received good treatment, as well as presents of robes and cash.

'Omara Khan and the Kafirs

In the late 1880s 'Omara Khan (Umra Khan), the famous khan of Jandol, revived the centuries-old custom of jihad against the Kafirs. In 1891, he occupied the Kafir village of Nasrat on the left bank of the Konarr River even though his local rivals and the *mehtar* (ruler) of Chitral had made a coalition against him, which prevented him from undertaking a large-scale invasion. However, his second attempt

³⁵ Rahim, M., *Sifat Nama-e-Darwesh Mohammad Khan Ghazi (Persian) (in Praise of Darwesh Mohammad Khan Khan Ghazi)*, 1288 H.Q., Islamabad, Laghman, Introduction and Annotation by Scarcia, G., Rome, 1965, 74.

³⁶ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to Afzal, KD, 17, Mar. 85, PSII, 44, 740.

³⁷ MM, Apr. 86, PSII, 63, 496.

³⁸ Durand to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, 22 Jan. 86, PSII, 47, 1027.

at invading the Kafir's territory, after he had defeated his rivals, was anticipated by the Kafirs,³⁹ and they invaded his territory instead. They did so with the encouragement they received from Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Khan Charkhay, who had arrived at the time at Asmar with a large number of troops. Further, as a result of the Durand Agreement of 1893, when Kafiristan was officially recognized by India as a part of Afghanistan, the sipah salar warned 'Omara Khan to leave the Kafirs alone.⁴⁰ However, 'Omara Khan was still undeterred, stating that in Kafiristan his claim was "superior"⁴¹ to that of the amir's and of the Mehtar of Chitral. He gave up his planned invasion only after the Government of India prevented him from carrying it out.⁴²

The Mehtar of Chitral and the Kafirs

Previously Kafiristan, Chitral and Gilgit formed one land,⁴³ and the Mehtar of Chitral, entitled Shah Kator,⁴⁴ was viewed as the suzerain of the Kafirs, for which they paid him tribute.⁴⁵ Although, during the period under discussion, the *mehtar* was unable to administer their affairs, the Kafirs, especially those of the nearby Bashgul valley, still sought his protection when pressured by other Muslims. After they found out that he could no longer protect them from the threats of 'Omara Khan, they turned to the amir for protection.⁴⁶ When the Government of India, the suzerain of the *mehtar*, accepted the amir's claim that the whole of Kafiristan was a part of Afghanistan⁴⁷ the centuries-old relationship between the former and Chitral came to an end.

³⁹ PD, 23 Nov. 92, PSLI, 68, 703.

⁴⁰ PD, 8 Jan. 94, PSLI, 7, 208.

⁴¹ 'Omara Khan to Mehtar, PD, 8 Jan. 94, PSLI, 73, 208.

⁴² Secretary to government of India to 'Omara Khan, 30 Mar. 94 (1), 9 May, PSLI, 74, 711.

⁴³ Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh*, 671.

⁴⁴ Elliot, "Hindu Kings of Kabul", GAK, Appendix B., cxxdv.

⁴⁵ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 1129.

⁴⁶ Kaim elders to Ghulam Haydar Khan, PD, 8 Jan. 94, PSLI, 74, 128.

⁴⁷ Elgin to Hamilton, 22 Apr. 96, F.L. No. 77 (1896), PSLI, 85, 20.

The Negotiations

The concentration of troops at Asmar, as described in Chapter Four, alarmed the Kafirs. The amir instructed the *sipah salar* to allay their fear by negotiating with them. However, the purpose was not a settlement through negotiation, but to dissuade the Kafirs from fleeing to Chitral, as, reportedly, they would do, if military expeditions were taken against them before the winter set in. The *sipah salar* was most suited for conducting the negotiation. As a Yusufzay Pashtun, well versed in the art of negotiations and settlements and enjoying wide authority as the amir's viceroy in the eastern province, the *sipah salar* also preferred negotiation to the employment of force. Since one political center did not exist among the Kafirs, he began negotiating with the tribes separately. Extensive negotiations were held with the Kam Kafirs of the Bashgul valley bordering Chitral. However, these were no more than a delaying tactic.

The *sipah salar* and his troops moved to Barikot (Birkot), closer to the Kam Kafirs of the Bashgul valley, and proposed that they accept Islam and the amir's rule.⁴⁸ While, they were willing to submit to the amir, they were unwilling to accept Islam. They were also unwilling to accept the construction of a road through their valley to Badakhshan, which the *sipah salar* had planned to build. Subsequently, they agreed to the construction of the road, provided they were left free to practice their religion. The *sipah salar* went along with their request, but when work was begun on the road, the Kafirs changed their minds, proposing instead to accept Islam, not the road. For the *sipah salar*, the construction of the road and their submission were of greater urgency than the Kafirs' immediate conversion, because without the road the invasion would be difficult.

For precisely the same reason, ultimately the Kafirs of the whole valley made it clear that they wanted to become *zimmis* (non-Muslim subjects), but would accept neither Islam nor the road.⁴⁹ Evidently, the Kafirs, who had lived in freedom since their arrival in their territory, resented losing their freedom, and so wanted to retain it by becoming *zimmis*. The *sipah salar* gave way, knowing that if he refused to accept their proposal they would resist and then escape to Chitral.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 1124, 1125, 1129, 1130.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Sayyed Shah of Daryu of Luthkoh to British agent, Gilgit Diary, 2 Nov. 95, F.L., No. 4493 (1896), PSLI, 83.

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The *sipah salar* overran the Bashgul valley and returned to Asmar in early January 1886, after having left a garrison there; resistance was light and a number of Kafirs fled to Chitral.⁵² Next, along with troops from Munjan, he pacified the long valley of Pech and all of its side vales. The Ramgul and Kulum Kafirs, who lived in the interior of Kafiristan and stood fast by their religion, proved difficult to overcome. This finally occurred in the winter of 1896, after both sides incurred heavy casualties. With the fall of Kulum the conquest was complete.

The Settlement and Conversion

Following the invasion the conversion to Islam of the Kafirs began. Armed Sunni mullas of the Hanafi system of laws guarded by armed *khassadars* (militia) were commissioned to convert the Kafirs. Further, mosques were built in all of the villages and hamlets, where the Kafirs were taught in the fundamentals of Islam. Many wooden effigies and statuettes depicting Kafir deities, and presumably also their ancestors, were collected and sent on to Jalalabad and Kabul, where they disappeared. Thus, the Kafir art which was the work of client artisans, and exemplified the religious beliefs of the Kafirs vanished. Except for a few ugly incidents here and there the mass conversion went on smoothly, and the Kafirs gradually became staunch Muslims. This was particularly true of young Kafirs, although the elderly felt sorrow over the loss of their traditional religion.

By the amir's order, no one was to pillage Kafir property or to enslave a Kafir. The Kafir slaves were declared to be free as the amir had already abolished slavery in Afghanistan. If anyone did so, he was to pay a fine of seven thousand rupees—an exorbitant sum. *Qazis* and *hakims* (subgovernors) were appointed to manage the land

ing the fact that the amir's betrothal of the Kafir slave-girls was in line with the custom that allowed dowry and bride-price.

Additionally, according to Dr. Jones (p. 3) following the British invasion of Afghanistan Amir Sher 'Ali Khan accompanied the Russian mission to Russia where "Sher 'Ali was something of an embarrassment and he was advised to return." The plain fact is that Russia's governor-general von Kaufmann did not allow the amir to enter even Central Asia, and that this refusal became partly responsible for the estrangement in Russo-Afghan relations until 1917 when the Bolsheviks came to power.

⁵² CD, 29 Dec 96, F.L., No. 78-F., (1896), PSLI, 90.

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Internal and External Significance

The conquest produced strong repercussions in Afghanistan, as well as in India, Great Britain, and Russia. While in Afghanistan the people lauded the amir, in the other three countries, the press and some Christian societies expressed concern and sought to bring pressure upon their respective governments to prevent the amir from annexing Kafiristan, and failing that to save the Kafirs from what was referred to as "extermination." However, the protestations failed to arouse their governments to action.

In an age of European domination, devout Christians found it hard to tolerate the conquest of the 'Land of the Infidel' by a Muslim ruler, and consequently, they demanded counteraction from their own governments. The intellectual ground for this had already been laid by Christian missionaries in India to the effect that because the Kafirs of Kafiristan "... are almost without a religion ... such people are open to receive the Gospel."⁵⁷ This view had originated with a Jesuit priest, Benedict Goes. Upon hearing that the Siyah-posh Kafirs were not Muslims, and that they drank wine, he had "inferred that they were Christians." Goes had made this assertion in 1603, when crossing the Hindu Kush by the Parwan Pass to Andarab.⁵⁸

Until George Robertson traveled into Kafiristan in 1890-1891 no European had penetrated it, and Robertson had found no evidence to suggest that the Kafirs were Christians or were even their sympathizers. Nevertheless, after the conquest, some Christian societies in Britain raised their voices against it, charging that it was intended to result in the "enslavement" and "extermination" of the Kafirs. Sympathizing with the Kafirs on the basis that they had always "relied on British protection", and that they were "the brethren of the Europeans", these societies asked the British Government to rescue them from "the present danger."⁵⁹ Others viewed the conquest as an "irredeemable loss to our [British] prestige",⁶⁰ predicting that "England in India will be the first to suffer by it."⁶¹

⁵⁷ Downes, E., *Kafiristan*, London, 1873, 15.

⁵⁸ Masson, *Narrative of Journeys*, 1, 205.

⁵⁹ Aborigines Protection Society to Secretary of state for India, 22 Jan. 96, 5. The Anti-Slavery Society in London also made similar assertions and requests. For details see, Memoranda-Parliamentary Questions, Chitral, Afghanistan, etc., 1896.

⁶⁰ A Missionary, "The Amir's Pacan, the Mittai Valley and the Kafirs", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 2, 1896, 186.

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had not expressed a desire to become Christians, and the claim in certain missionary circles that during the previous forty years they had invited them several times "to bring Christianity into their secluded homes"⁷⁰ was simply untrue. Contrary to this assertion, in 1886 the Kafirs themselves had blocked the entry into Kafiristan of a British mission led by Colonel Lockhart. The stated purpose of the mission was to examine the passes of the Hindu Kush for "a scientific" survey, but it was, in fact, political. From George Robertson's travel accounts of Kafiristan it is clear that the Kafirs had no love for their so-called European 'Kafir brethren.' They even suspected Robertson of being a spy and his journey, in his own words, "... a mere preliminary to an attempt to annex their country."⁷¹ In the second place, in comparison to his rebellious subjects, the amir treated the Kafirs mildly. He realized that since they were fewer in number they could never become a threat. It was because of all these considerations that the British Government thought it inadvisable even to address the amir on the subject, although certain members of the House of Commons (where the subject was discussed) asked it to do so.⁷² In a similar fashion, the official *Turkestan Gazette*, wrote, "We, Russians can only, against our wish, remain deeply sad spectators of the tragedy enacted in Kafiristan which is one of the darkest blots on European domination in Asia."⁷³

From all this one good result emerged for the Kafir refugees when the British Government of India declared that they would be given asylum with small grants of land in Chitral.⁷⁴ The Kafir refugees were then settled in the upper Bumber-et and Gobar. They were also allowed to retain their beliefs. They gradually became Muslims, who are now known as *Bashgulay shaykhs*.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Leitner, W., "Kafiristan and the Khalifa Question", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 1896, 1, 288.

⁷¹ Robertson to Cunningham, 14 Jan. 90, PSLI, 59, 1006.

⁷² Memoranda-Parliamentary Questions, 1896, 6.

⁷³ Quoted in *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 1896, 1, 294.

⁷⁴ Memoranda-Parliamentary Questions, 1896, 4.

⁷⁵ Shah, Wazir A., "Invasions Preceding the Conquest of Nuristan," in *Cultures of the Hindu Kush*, ed. by Jettmar, K., Wiesbaden, 1974, 25.

CHAPTER TEN

RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE DURAND AGREEMENT

Great Britain was the first European country with which Afghanistan came into contact, but relations between them were often hostile. Britain twice invaded Afghanistan, first in 1838 and then in 1878, but failed to make it a colony. However, it did succeed in controlling Afghanistan's external relations after the second invasion, and it also helped define and delimit the country's international boundaries. Thus, Anglo-Afghan relations are the most important aspect of Afghanistan's external relations during the period under consideration.

Before 1880

The first official contact between Afghanistan and Britain was made in 1809, when a British mission led by Mountstuart Elphinstone, an envoy of the East India Company, concluded a treaty with the Afghan ruler, Shah Shuja' Sadozay, in Peshawar, his winter seat. By the terms of the treaty concluded on June 17, 1809, the Afghans agreed to prevent the French from entering Afghanistan as the Sindians and the Persians had agreed to prevent them from entering their countries. Both parties to the treaty agreed to refrain from meddling in the internal affairs of each other's country.¹

The treaty had been prompted by the fear of a joint Franco-Persian invasion of India through Afghanistan. In it the Afghan king agreed that he would "prevent their passage, and, . . . not permit them to cross into British India."² However, the fear proved unreal, and Shah Shuja' was soon overthrown. Consequently, the treaty lost its purpose, even though it had declared friendship between the two states "to continue for ever", and Anglo-Afghan relations remained in limbo for the next twenty years. However, the treaty caused the

¹ Norris, J. A., *The First Afghan War, 1839-1842*, Cambridge, 1967, 14.

² Kaye, J. W., *History of the Afghan War*, London, 1851, 1, 150.

production of a permanent value. Elphinstone, who was more of a scholar than a civil servant, managed to collect wide range information on Afghanistan on the basis of which he, in cooperation with his colleagues, composed the most comprehensive book which has ever been written in any language on the state and society of the Durrani Empire entitled, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*.

In the 1830s, Russo-phobia struck British India once again. By then, as a result of the treaty of 1828 of Torkmanchai, Russian influence had replaced British influence at the court of Tehran, in Persia. Afghanistan had been fragmented into the principalities of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and Peshawar. This led the British government to conclude that the pro-Russian king of Persia, Fath 'Ali Shah, intended to dominate Kandahar and Herat, and influence Afghanistan.³ Britain considered such an eventuality detrimental to her interests in India, and to forestall the perceived danger, it charged Governor-general Lord Auckland to counteract the progress of Russian influence in Afghanistan. For this purpose Lord Auckland sent a mission under Alexander Burnes to the court of Kabul, but it failed in its purpose.

Although by then "Russia declared to abstain from entering into any political relationships with Afghan chiefs and not to take part in their civil wars or in their family feuds"⁴ Lord Auckland still decided to intervene. Apparently, Auckland saw it necessary to forestall a perceived Russian intervention in Afghanistan in order to make way for the actual British military intervention there. In preparation for this intervention, he along with Rangit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Panjab and the former Afghan king, Shah Shuja', then a fugitive in India, concluded a treaty.⁵ For its purpose it had the placing on the throne of Kabul a ruler who would be subject to the British. The tool of its accomplishment became Shah Shuja'—a rejected claimant to the throne who soon became unpopular with the Afghans during his brief period of British-dominated reign.⁶

Britain failed in its purpose by losing more than 16,500 soldiers and Indian servants in its war with Afghanistan, and Dost Mohammad

³ Habberton, W., *Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, 1833-1907*, Illinois Studies in Social Sciences, Vol., XXI, 1933, 10.

⁴ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 4.

⁵ Habberton, *Anglo-Russian Relations*, 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

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with the aid of both arms and money"¹¹ he "... declared his friendship with the British Government."¹²

To a certain extent, the British compensated the Afghans for the loss of Peshawar by granting weapons and money to help recover Herat, which Persia had invaded in 1856 as it had unsuccessfully invaded it several times before. This was to be Persia's last invasion of Herat. At the same time, Calcutta and Kabul were to exchange diplomatic representatives, known as wakil, although the former refrained from concluding "a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance" with Afghans.¹³ On the whole, the treaties improved relations between the two countries so long as the amir was alive.

From the death of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, in 1863, and the accession of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan the British policy toward Afghanistan falls into three phases: the so-called "neutrality", from 1864 to 1868; reconciliation without commitment, from 1868 to 1876; and active intervention, once again, afterward.

Amir Sher 'Ali Khan expected Britain to follow the same policy toward him that it had followed toward his father. However, during the Afghan civil war, Britain followed a policy of partiality in the name of neutrality in the hope that his rival, pro-British brother, Sardar Mohammad A'zam Khan, would establish "... a strong government in Afghanistan friendly to the British power."¹⁴ Nevertheless, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan still preferred British friendship to that of Russia's, as he was concerned about the integrity of his kingdom, and its independence from the feared Russian encroachment. He

¹¹ Ibid., 256.

¹² Ibid., 269. Amir Dost Mohammad Khan's reluctance to restore Peshawar in 1857 was crucial as in 1848 when the Sikhs rose up against the British and "... in their extremity appealed to Amir Dost Mohammad Khan to help them in return for the cession of Peshawar." (Hamid-ud Din, "Dost Mohammad and the Second Sikh War", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 11, pt. 1v, Oct. 1954, 280). But Amir Dost Mohammad Khan helped the Sikhs only with a token force under his son Sardar Mohammad Akram Khan, even though he regarded Peshawar as "the burial place of my forefathers, and my hereditary country." (Ibid., 281) He did so probably because he stuck to the promise that he had given after he had concluded the treaty of 1857 with the British government in Peshawar. He had promised that "I have now made an alliance with the British government, and come what may I will keep it till death." (Fraser-Tyler, W. K., *Afghanistan, A Study in Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, 125.

¹³ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 7.

¹⁴ MacGregor, C. M., *Central Asia, Pt. 11, A Contribution towards the Better Knowledge of the Topography, Ethnology, Resources and History of Afghanistan*, Calcutta, 1871, 102.

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To a certain extent, the British compensated the Afghans for the loss of Peshawar by granting weapons and money to help recover Herat, which Persia had invaded in 1856 as it had unsuccessfully invaded it several times before. This was to be Persia's last invasion of Herat. At the same time, Calcutta and Kabul were to exchange diplomatic representatives, known as wakil, although the former refrained from concluding "a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance" with Afghans.¹³ On the whole, the treaties improved relations between the two countries so long as the amir was alive.

From the death of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, in 1863, and the accession of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan the British policy toward Afghanistan falls into three phases: the so-called "neutrality", from 1864 to 1868; reconciliation without commitment, from 1868 to 1876; and active intervention, once again, afterward.

Amir Sher 'Ali Khan expected Britain to follow the same policy toward him that it had followed toward his father. However, during the Afghan civil war, Britain followed a policy of partiality in the name of neutrality in the hope that his rival, pro-British brother, Sardar Mohammad A'zam Khan, would establish "... a strong government in Afghanistan friendly to the British power."¹⁴ Nevertheless, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan still preferred British friendship to that of Russia's, as he was concerned about the integrity of his kingdom, and its independence from the feared Russian encroachment. He

¹¹ Ibid., 256.

¹² Ibid., 269. Amir Dost Mohammad Khan's reluctance to restore Peshawar in 1857 was crucial as in 1848 when the Sikhs rose up against the British and "... in their extremity appealed to Amir Dost Mohammad Khan to help them in return for the cession of Peshawar." (Hamid-ud Din, "Dost Mohammad and the Second Sikh War", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 11, pt. 1v, Oct. 1954, 280). But Amir Dost Mohammad Khan helped the Sikhs only with a token force under his son Sardar Mohammad Akram Khan, even though he regarded Peshawar as "the burial place of my forefathers, and my hereditary country." (Ibid., 281) He did so probably because he stuck to the promise that he had given after he had concluded the treaty of 1857 with the British government in Peshawar. He had promised that "I have now made an alliance with the British government, and come what may I will keep it till death." (Fraser-Tyler, W. K., *Afghanistan, A Study in Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, 125.

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Concluding that "Salisbury was bent on war"²³ the viceroy left India in April 1876. However, the first step for the Second Anglo-Afghan war had been taken in the same year after the British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (later Earl Beaconsfield) adopted a new policy, known as the "Forward Policy", which meant intervention and occupation. It consisted of securing by Britain key frontier points close to Afghanistan, and turning Afghanistan into a protectorate state.

The implementation of the Forward Policy began after Lord Edward Robert L. B. Lytton replaced Lord Northbrook as viceroy and governor-general in the spring of 1876. Lytton "arrived in India armed with an entirely fresh set of instructions to guide the government of India's attitude to the Central Asian problem." In particular "... [h]e came to India with specific instructions to deal with Afghanistan in accordance with the aims of the Forward Policy."²⁴ He not only had the full support of Salisbury; Beaconsfield too assured him that "[m]y confidence in you is complete."

With regard to the administration of the North-west Frontier, Salisbury even told him that "whatever you decide on, I shall uphold."²⁵ This point will be explained soon. Lytton was willing to conclude a defensive and offensive alliance with Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, and also to recognize his heir apparent. In return, he demanded that the amir forgo the external independence of his country, and accept the stationing of British officers along its frontiers. For obvious reasons, the amir did not accept the proposal.²⁶ The Peshawar conference that was held in March 1877 between Lytton and the amir's representatives on the subject failed. A mission from the Ottoman Sultan to the amir in September 1877, which attempted

²² Ibid., 146.

²³ Ibid., 147.

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In line with the treaty, a British embassy, headed by Cavagnari was quartered inside the Bala Hissar near the amir's palace, on July 24, 1879. "Part Italian, part French, part Irish and all British" Cavagnari had actually dictated the treaty to the amir in Gandumak. In Kabul, Cavagnari behaved as if he had been appointed ruler of Afghanistan. He was mistaken. On September 3, 1879, the people and the army of Kabul massacred all the inmates of the embassy which consisted of Cavagnari, W. Jenkyns, A. H. Kelly, W. R. P. Hamilton, and seventy five members of the cavalry and infantry.³² Soon afterward, in response to the massacre, the British invaded Afghanistan once again. During this second phase of the war, Lytton embarked on a policy with the purpose of dismembering Afghanistan in accord with the requirements of the Forward Policy. Ultimately, this policy, as described in Chapter Two, also failed and Afghanistan emerged reunited under the leadership of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan.

The Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan

During the Zimma meeting (July 31–August 1, 1880) Sir Lepel Griffin, the British Political Officer at Kabul, secretly handed over the following letter to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan:

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council has learnt with pleasure that your Highness has proceeded toward Cabul, in accordance with the invitation of the British Government. Therefore in consideration of the friendly sentiments by which your Highness is animated, and of the advantage to be derived by the Sirdars and

³¹ Ibid., 49. That Cavagnari viewed the Gandumak treaty with contempt is clear from the note of Frederic Villiers, the Graphic's special artist, who was present on the occasion: "Cavagnari was kneeling on the floor when I entered, melting the wax [to seal the treaty] by the aid of a candle. On the tent-stool by his side were the pens with which the treaty had just been signed. 'Ah,' said I, 'these pens, so unimportant but yesterday, are now wonderfully historic.' 'Do you think so?' he replied with just a faint touch of the brogue in his voice, for he was a son of the Emerald Isle, 'then take the things, and put them into your museum.'" Trousdale, Introduction, in *War in Afghanistan*, 50.

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In July 1883, the viceroy, Lord Ripon, fixed the amir an annual grant of 1,200,000 rupees, stating that

The internal disorders of Afghanistan were so largely due to our invasion of that country that we felt it to be our duty to aid him [the amir] in the establishment of a regular government.⁴⁴

The British government of India also granted weapons to Kabul in critical times. By the "establishment of a regular government" Ripon meant the organization of a strong army, because the internal resources of Afghanistan for that purpose were insufficient. The grant indicated the significance which the British attached to Afghanistan. However, it was bound to injure the amir's public image, as it made him look like a British vassal. As a countermeasure, the amir announced that

... this grant of theirs is not a favor or an obligation, but the security and safety of India is in view. The English do not give a single cowry to any without motive. In the second place, I am the shield of their country, and on account of me, they are secure from the Russian attack. If my government remains stable, I go on in this way, taking rifles and money from the English; and having made my foundation firm, I shall be able to fight the Russians and the English.⁴⁵

In his private *darbars* [courts] the amir used to say that the grants he received were a poll tax (*jazya*).⁴⁶ The statement was not entirely rhetoric. Although the amir could not fight the British or the Russians, he did not allow them to influence him in running the country. This was clear, among other things, from his negative responses to the British requests. But in this he went so far as to block the introduction of modern technology by rejecting the proposal of the viceroy that the British be allowed to construct a telegraph line connecting Kabul with Peshawar⁴⁷ or a railway line linking Kandahar with Herat.⁴⁸ He even discontinued the work of a British specialist in a copper mine in a location near Kabul. He did all of this to deprive the British of a chance to meddle in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. This meant that the amir preferred isolationism and medieval autocracy to renewal and modernization.

⁴⁴ Ripon to secretary of state for India, 13 July 83, PSLI, 37, 121.

⁴⁵ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman in *darbar*, KD, 5 Apr. 87, PSLI, 50, 268.

⁴⁶ KD, 214-16 Feb. 94, PSLI, 73, 1029.

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... ready with my army and my people to render any service, which may be required of me or of the Afghan nation. As the British Government have declared that it will assist me in repelling any foreign enemy, so it is right and proper that Afghanistan should unite in the firmest manner and stand side by side with the British Government.⁵⁵

To reciprocate the British commitment to Afghanistan, the amir added "... should disturbances arise in your empire of India ... the people of Afghanistan can ... give you friendly help by protecting the frontiers of India."⁵⁶ However, this honeymoon period did not last long.

In the late 1880s, certain events stained Anglo-Afghan relations. The Government of India did not invite Kabul to participate in the Anglo-Russian Boundary Commission which was set up to delimit Afghanistan's north-western boundary, even though the issue was bound to affect the country's integrity. This angered the amir, and in retaliation he did not allow the British commission to travel to the areas through Afghanistan. The commission, under Colonel Ridgeway, then had to travel through a barren and inhospitable route along the Persian-Afghan border, mainly in Seistan. For this and his diatribes the viceroy accused the amir of using "unfriendly language and unfriendly acts."⁵⁷

Later, in 1889, the amir resented what he considered interference in his administration by the viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, who had sent a letter asserting that his punishment of the people of Turkestan, following the suppression of the revolt of Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan, was "abhorrent to civilization."⁵⁸ As the viceroy, Lord Elgin, later stated the amir had resented Lansdowne's interference in his internal affairs very much, and he had never forgiven him for sending him that letter. Consequently, this personal resentment had affected political relations disadvantageously.⁵⁹ The amir also resented the presence of Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, with over eight hundred of his followers in India, believing that that through him the Government of India intended to pressure him.⁶⁰ However, what actually restrained Anglo-Afghan relations was the British "Forward

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Mohammad Nabi, *Sawal wa Jawab*, 11.

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The amir's failure to establish relations with the British government was followed by his efforts to make Afghanistan independent by other means. To dishonor his pledge with the British, who had helped him to the throne and had afterward strengthened him with money and weapons, was out of the question. This was particularly so, when the viceroy, Lord Dufferin, had assured him that the British government wanted

... to maintain a powerful, independent and united Afghanistan under a ruler capable of enforcing peace and order within his own territories, of conciliating the good-will and confidence of his people, and of showing a formidable front to an invading foe.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, mutual trust was often lacking, and the type of relationship that developed between the amir and the British government was only the result of mutual necessity.

The amir fully realized that the British could make trouble for him, and even unseat him, as they had unseated Amir Sher 'Ali Khan and Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan.⁷¹ Even without undertaking military action, themselves, the British could do so through the former Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, and hundreds of other Mohammadzay sardars and Ghilzay elders most of whom lived on British pensions in India and had followers in Afghanistan. Additionally, just around the corner was the standing menace of a Russian invasion. All of these points restrained the amir from forcing any issue at any time with the British government, and they even prompted him to cooperate. As the viceroy, Lord Curzon, noted on the broader issues of foreign relations the amir always acted within the framework of the British imperial policy.

Nevertheless, toward the end of his reign, when he had consolidated his position, the amir acted as an independent ruler. For the sake of appeasing the Afghans⁷² and "[f]irmly impressed with belief in the divine right of Kings and with determination to make Afghanistan a powerful and independent State unhampered by interference

⁶⁹ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 149.

⁷⁰ Marquis of Dufferin to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, 20 July 87, PSLI, 50, 1420.

⁷¹ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to Col. Afzal, KD, 20 Jan. 82, PSLI, 23, 720.

⁷² Curzon, *Tale of Travels*, London, 1923, 54.

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The amir's failure to establish relations with the British government was followed by his efforts to make Afghanistan independent by other means. To dishonor his pledge with the British, who had helped him to the throne and had afterward strengthened him with money and weapons, was out of the question. This was particularly so, when the viceroy, Lord Dufferin, had assured him that the British government wanted

... to maintain a powerful, independent and united Afghanistan under a ruler capable of enforcing peace and order within his own territories, of conciliating the good-will and confidence of his people, and of showing a formidable front to an invading foe.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, mutual trust was often lacking, and the type of relationship that developed between the amir and the British government was only the result of mutual necessity.

The amir fully realized that the British could make trouble for him, and even unseat him, as they had unseated Amir Sher 'Ali Khan and Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan.⁷¹ Even without undertaking military action, themselves, the British could do so through the former Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, Sardar Mohammad Ayyub Khan, and hundreds of other Mohammadzay sardars and Ghilzay elders most of whom lived on British pensions in India and had followers in Afghanistan. Additionally, just around the corner was the standing menace of a Russian invasion. All of these points restrained the amir from forcing any issue at any time with the British government, and they even prompted him to cooperate. As the viceroy, Lord Curzon, noted on the broader issues of foreign relations the amir always acted within the framework of the British imperial policy.

Nevertheless, toward the end of his reign, when he had consolidated his position, the amir acted as an independent ruler. For the sake of appeasing the Afghans⁷² and "[f]irmly impressed with belief in the divine right of Kings and with determination to make Afghanistan a powerful and independent State unhampered by interference

⁶⁹ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 149.

⁷⁰ Marquis of Dufferin to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, 20 July 87, PSLI, 50, 1420.

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The viceroy, Lord Elgin, also stated that the Durand Line made the amir accept only the status quo. In his own words,

The Durand Agreement was an agreement to define the respective spheres of influence of the British government and of the amir. Its object was to preserve and to obtain the amir's acceptance of the status quo.¹¹⁵

The author, Louis Dupree, has grasped the essence of the agreement in stating that the object of the Durand Line was "... the extension of the British authority and not of the Indian frontier." Further, he states "The Line was not described as the boundary of India, but as the eastern and southern frontier of the amir's domains, and the limits of the respective spheres of the two governments."¹¹⁶

By the word "interference" the amir as well as his successors meant armed interference, and they did not consider influencing the tribes¹¹⁷ to be a breach of the contract.¹¹⁸ That was why they continually influenced the tribesmen through many and varied non-military means in spite of the agreement. Further, like his predecessors, Amir Abd al-Rahman also looked on the tribesmen as the people of Afghanistan, and the Indus as the natural and demographic boundary of the country.¹¹⁹ As described in Chapter Four, the people of the region were overwhelmingly Pashtuns, and Afghanistan itself had originated from this region.

By the amir's compelled adherence to the status quo, the Durand Line checked the extension of his actual control over his own kinsmen, depriving him "... of his natural sovereignty over the kindred Pathans of Bajaur and Swat."¹²⁰ Hastily drawn on the map with a lack of local knowledge, the Line was "... not based on any natural,

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¹¹⁴ Durand quoted by Leitner, G. W., "The Amir, the Frontier Tribes and the Sultan", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Series 3, 1897, 4, 237.

¹¹⁵ Elgin to Hamilton, 22 Apr 96, F.L., No. 77, (1896), PSLL, 85.

¹¹⁶ Dupree, L., *Afghanistan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980, 767.

¹¹⁷ Rastogi, *Indo-Afghan Relations*, 180.

¹¹⁸ Harris, *British Policy*, 263.

¹¹⁹ Mahomed, *The Life of Abdur Rahman*, 2, 158, 159.

¹²⁰ Leitner, "Kafiristan and the Khalifa Question", *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 1896, 1, 285.

beyond the borderland already affected, but he held to his engagements with a high sense of honor and remained faithful to the pledges given to the British Raj."¹³³

The amir believed that he had saved Afghanistan, and his dynasty from imminent danger, but actually consented to the fragmentation of the country in the long run, and had alienated such a great portion of the population, including those who had taken a leading part in founding the country in the eighteenth century and who had defended it against external aggressors ever since. Consequently, it was natural for them to complain as they actually did when the British overran their country. They complained that the amir did not care, because, as they put it, he had sold them "... to the British Government for money." As an excuse in a carefully written proclamation that was intended for the British, the amir declared that "... as you did not consult me when you raised this revolt, you are not justified in throwing blame on me." After reviewing Amir Sher 'Ali Khan's policy toward the British, which ultimately led to the downfall of his dynasty, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan continued, "Don't be led to think that, like Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, I am such a fool as to annoy and offend others for your sake." However, he was careful not to alienate them forever, stating, "If you now choose to leave yourselves at my disposal and authority I shall try, please God, to settle your affairs with the British government satisfactorily."¹³⁴

The uprising, the military operations and the consequent expenditures made the British also cautious not to antagonize further either the tribesmen or the amir. A senior British official made the following recommendation:

[I]nstruct our officials on the frontier not to push forward, and not to give the amir any cause for suspicion. I would wait until the amir dies before making any further endeavor to bring the tribes under our control. I believe we lose nothing by the delay.¹³⁵

¹³³ Quoted in Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 162.

¹³⁴ For details see, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, *Izah al-Bayan fee Nasihat al-Afghan* [A Word of Explanation for the Benefit of Afghans], (Dari), 13 Aug 97, Sir R., Udny to secretary to government of Panjab, 24 Sept. 97, PSLI, 96, No. 1043, No. 376.

¹³⁵ Gulzad, *The Afghan State*, 236.

In conclusion, to obviate an assumed threat to their Indian empire the British deprived Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan and his successors from their right to govern their kinsmen in the hope that they themselves could do so to ensure the requirements of the Forward Policy. However, with the demarcation of the Durand Line they set in motion a movement that ultimately led to the division of Afghanistan and the bifurcation of the Pashtuns who had been the backbone of the country, founding and safeguarding it. This provoked the tribes to the extent that because of it they (the British) failed in their efforts to ensure the requirement of the Forward policy, despite their ingenuity in colonial affairs, their skill in dealing with overseas nations, and their military prowess as a superpower of the time.

Although the British still persisted in the implementation of the Forward Policy, the people of the region persisted in their efforts to retain their independence. To keep these ever-defiant people compliant, the British frequently undertook military expeditions against them, especially after the amir died, in 1901. In response, the local people continually resisted, and even carried on raids on India itself. For instance, from 1920 to 1938—that is, in the course of 18 years—they carried on eighteen such raids from the Tribal Areas.¹³⁶

An incidental corollary of these military expeditions and raids, as well as that of the Anglo-Afghan wars, was the strengthening of religious and xenophobic feelings of the people and the incremental increase in the influence of religious personalities. The raids were called *ghazas* in emulation of the raids carried on in Arabia at time of the Prophet Muhammad.¹³⁷ Individual tribesmen likewise distinguished themselves in showing their opposition to the Durand Line sometimes with such daring enterprises that they soon turned into legends. A conspicuous example of such a legend is the story of 'Ajab Khan Afriday, who abducted Miss Elis, a British woman, from her family, which was securely quartered in Peshawar, and treated her as an honorable guest, even providing her with European food that he stealthily procured from Peshawar. The story of these people's struggle is an odyssey of a fight for independence. All of this activity kept alive anti-British feeling and a state of permanent anarchy

¹³⁶ Akbar, "Pakhtun Tribes in the Great Game", 195.

¹³⁷ Mohmand, Siyal, *de Mohmando Ghazaganay*, (Pashto), [The Raids of the Mohmands], University Book Agency, Peshawar, 1354/1975.

pregnant with local and international tensions, not only during a time when the British ruled India until 1947, and also to the present day. This colonial legacy is still a source of local and international conflict, and will probably remain so until it is settled to the satisfaction of all those affected by it.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF PANJDEH

Relations with Russia

The first official contact between Russia and Afghanistan was made in 1837, when the government of Russia sent Captain Paul Vitkevich to Kabul to obtain its support for Persia's design on Herat. Since the province of Herat was a part of Afghanistan, but then besieged by Persia, it was impossible for Vitkevich to succeed in his mission. What he actually did in Kabul is unknown, but whatever overtures he might have made to Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, were rejected.¹ Ironically, the Vitkevich's mission along with Persia's siege of Herat provided an alibi for the British Government of India to invade Afghanistan, in 1838. The British Government feared that since after the conclusion of the Tukomanchay treaty in 1828, Persia had been under the influence of Russia, its occupation of Herat might endanger its Indian colony.

Earlier in the century, especially in the 1830s, some British and Indian Muslim travelers, among them Eldred Pottinger, Alexander Burnes, James Abbott, John Wood, Percival Lord, 'Izzat Allah and Mehdi 'Ali Khan, had established that the routes through which Russia could reach India led through Afghanistan.² Thereafter, Herat was looked upon as the key or the gate to India. At that time, the Indian official circles believed that "[o]f all the external influences beyond Indian frontiers, the Russian advance in Central Asia threatening British supremacy in Afghanistan constituted the greatest danger."³ The "danger" also had something to do with the nature of

¹ Yapp, M. E., *Strategies of British India. Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980, 234, 235. I am grateful to Professor Yapp, my former supervisor at the University of London for giving me a copy of this excellent book. Waller, J. H., *Beyond the Khyber Pass, The Road to British Disaster in the First Afghan War*, University of Austin Press, 1993, 97.

² Gulzad, *The Afghan State*, 115.

³ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, xl.

the Russian empire that was compact, centralized, expanding and run autocratically by unpredictable masters. Also, as Plehve, Russia's minister of the interior stated at the time, "Russia has been made by bayonets not diplomacy." Actually, as B. H. Sumner states, "... the root of the trouble lay in St. Petersburg itself where the different ministries were usually at loggerheads with one another, as well as often divided within themselves."⁴ The British Empire, in comparison, was diffused, open, and ruled democratically. Since it had already reached its broadest limits its masters concerned themselves mainly with safeguarding it. However, after the Vitkevich's mission Russia, did not pose a danger for Afghanistan for a quarter of a century.

After its defeat in the Crimean war (1854-56) and the perceived failure of its policies in Europe, Russia embarked on expansion southward in the vast region of Central Asia. Early in the century, it had already subdued the Kazakh steppes and established a strong military fort in Orenburg from which it dispatched troops in every direction. In 1864, Russia extended its authority to the borders of the organized khanates, or states, of Khoqand, Bukhara and Khiva (Khwarazm or Khorezm). In the following year (1865), it occupied Tashkand; in 1867, it created the new province of Russian Turkestan and compelled Muzafar al-Din, the amir of Bukhara, to sign a treaty in which he placed his state under Russia's protection; and in 1868, Russia annexed Samarqand.⁵ Russia then became, for the first time, co-terminous with Afghanistan and the Russian-dominated Central Asia a rival to the British-dominated South Asia.

Russia's advances sharpened the so-called 'Great Game.' Played by different actors in various forms to the present day, the phrase was first coined in the 1840s by a British traveler, Captain Arthur Conolly, and immortalized years later by the British poet, Rudyard Kipling, in his novel, *Kim*. The 'Great Game' referred to the rivalry that existed between Russia and Britain over the domination of Central Asia. The chessboard on which it was played was, however, much wider in extent and "... stretched from the snow-capped Caucasus in the west, across the great deserts and mountain ranges

⁴ Sumner, B. H., *Tsardom and Imperialism in the Far East and Middle East, 1880-1914*, Archon Books, 1986, 6, 14.

⁵ Singhal, India and Afghanistan, 9. Audrey, C. Sh., *Long Years of Exile, Central Asian Refugees in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, University Press of America, Lanham, New York, 1994, 17.

of Central Asia, to Chinese Turkestan and Tibet in the east." According to Peter Hopkirk, "The ultimate prize, or so it was feared in London and Calcutta, and fervently hoped by ambitious Russians serving in Asia, was British India."⁶

The 'Great Game' escalated after Russia made Khiva a protectorate in 1873 and occupied Khoqand three years later, in 1876. This state, which included the fertile Ferghana valley, was subsequently abolished by Russia. The 'Great Game' became likewise a challenge to the rulers of Afghanistan with regard to how to safeguard their country at a time when the viceroys and military generals of the expanding Asian empires of Russia and Britain were trying to occupy new territories. All of this was in an age when no international community existed to curb the expansionist drive of the colonial powers.

As noted in Chapter Ten, Russia regarded Afghanistan as a country beyond its sphere of influence as the result of an understanding that had been reached between it and Britain, in 1873. Nevertheless, in 1878, Russia's governor-general at Tashkand, General Constantine P. von Kauffmann, forced a mission under General Stolietoff on Amir Sher 'Ali Khan in Kabul. Stolietoff is said to have concluded a defensive and offensive treaty with the amir.⁷ Two Afghan senior officials, Mohammad Nabi and Mohammad Hassan Khan, later told General Roberts in Kabul, after he had occupied it that a "treaty" had been concluded. However, from the correspondence exchanged between the amir and Kauffmann the author D. P. Singhal has concluded that "... there was no 'treaty' at all." He has based his conclusion on the amir's letters, in which he had asked for military assistance from Russia without invoking the treaty. He had only requested of Mohammad Hassan Khan, who was then in Tashkand, that Russia not "... withhold the aid of troops at this time of need and in accordance with the requirements of the friendship between the two Governments, and not to defer the aid till some other time, but to send to Afghan Turkestan the 32,000 troops of Tashkand which General Stolietoff told in your presence were ready and would be dispatched whenever I required them."⁸

⁶ Hopkirk, P. *The Great Game, The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*, Kandersha International, New York, London, 1992, 2.

⁷ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 34.

⁸ Singhal, D. P., "Russian Correspondence with Kabul, 1870-1879", *The Journal of Indian History*, April 1963, No. 121, vol. XLI, Part 1, 122, 125.

It was the presence in Kabul of the Stolietoff mission that Britain made an excuse for its second invasion of Afghanistan, in 1878. It should be noted that its first invasion of Afghanistan forty years earlier had also been prompted, in part, by the presence in Kabul of a Russian mission, as noted in Chapter Two. While on his way to Afghan Turkestan, the amir, in a letter, addressed to Kauffmann expressed his desire to proceed to the Russian capital to "... have a congress held there to inquire into and settle my cause with the English after asking them what right they had to advance on Afghanistan." Kauffmann hastened to advise the amir "... not to leave your kingdom", adding that the "Emperor has caused the British Government to agree to the continuance of Afghan independence, and that the "British Government have promised this." However, subsequently he wrote that the Czar had directed him to ask the amir to come to Tashkand. With regard to the military aid requested by the amir, he had earlier replied that "... it is impossible to assist you now. I hope you will be fortunate. It all depends on the decree of God."⁹ Ill, betrayed, and helpless, the amir died in Mazar on February 21, 1879. Singhal writes,

Thus ended the life of a prince who refused to surrender an iota of dignity before the threat of war and betrayal of friendship alike, to accept diminution of his authority as a prelude to certain foreign domination, as had happened to many Indian and Asian princes.¹⁰

When the British invaded Afghanistan, Russia ignored the treaty if it had been concluded. Russia not only did not provide arms and assistance to the amir, as it had agreed to if Afghanistan was attacked; Kauffmann even refused permission to the amir to cross the border, in January 1879.¹¹

When Amir Sher 'Ali Khan had died and his son and successor, Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, had been deported to India, and the roads south of the Hindu Kush had been occupied by the British, Russian officials in Tashkand seemed to have devised a plan with regard to northern Afghanistan. This was during the period when Russia had embarked on expansion in the Turkmen country north-west of Afghanistan, to be described shortly. Although the lack of

⁹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰ Ibid., 127.

¹¹ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 40.

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"... a certain blunt autocratic naivete"⁵² applies to all of the Czars in various degrees. As a colonial power, Russia, like Britain, had deliberately set out on the road to grab land. In this situation its high priests, like Gortchakov, formulated views that justified not only the occupation of land, but also the slaughter of indigenous people, the plundering of their collective wealth, and the resulting disruption of their social order.

Afghanistan's claim to the region inhabited by the Turkmen was historical as well as demographic. The Turkmen were linked to Afghanistan through Herat. Ghobar, maintains that Merv was a province of Afghanistan for centuries.⁵³ According to Qazi Sa'd al-Din, the governor of Herat, formerly the elders of Merv and of Sarakhs accompanied Afghan rulers as their vassals, and, because they were subject to Herat, the elders of Akhal and the Tekke Turkmen were with Amir Sher 'Ali Khan in Kabul.⁵⁴ The Sarik Turkmen of Panjdeh were still more closely linked to Herat. Formerly, the Jamshedis, who were subject to Herat, inhabited Panjdeh, but were driven out of it by the Arsari Turkmen who, nevertheless, agreed to pay tribute to them. The Arsari Turkmen were, in turn, expelled by the Sarik Turkmen in about the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ The new settlers also agreed to pay tribute to the Jamshedi tribe, which had always been subject to Herat.⁵⁶ In addition to the fact that the northern frontier of Panjdeh beyond Sari Yazi was the natural and traditional frontier of Herat,⁵⁷ and that Merv itself was a dependency of Herat, by the time the Russians approached Panjdeh, the Afghans had established their rule there.⁵⁸ All of this demonstrates that Panjdeh was ethnically, geographically as well as historically a part of Herat, and through it a part of Afghanistan.

This explains why Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, who knew the area well, favored a forward policy there.⁵⁹ As a Muslim ruler, he enjoyed the support of the Muslim rulers of Central Asia and northern

⁵² Sumner, *Tsardom and Imperialism*, 6.

⁵³ Ghobar, *Afghanistan Dar Masir-e-Tarikh*, 674.

⁵⁴ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 47.

⁵⁵ Yate, *North Afghanistan*, 186.

⁵⁶ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 499.

⁵⁷ Yate, *North Afghanistan*, 178.

⁵⁸ Peter Lumsden, Chief member of the British delegation to the Joint Afghan Boundary Commission quoted in Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 117.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

Muslim India, in particular the tribal area (later officially called the North-West Frontier of India) and, after the fall of Panjdeh, these elders asked him to declare a jihad against Russia.⁶⁰ A number of elders from Central Asia had either taken asylum with the amir, or engaged in correspondence with him.⁶¹ Others, from Central Asia, had promised him that they would rise against Russia from within, when he rose against it from without.⁶² Consequently, because of these assurances the amir believed that in the event of war with Russia the Turkmen would rise en masse against it.⁶³ As late as 1889, he even cherished the idea of raising a rebellion against Russia and becoming a second Timur Lane.⁶⁴

In spite of all this, when the Russian forces arrived near Panjdeh, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan instructed his army under the command of General Ghous al-Din Khan to desist from opposing them when they chose to attack it, and to retreat to Bala Murghab.⁶⁵ He did so for the following reasons. First, he had been discouraged in his forward policy in the area by the British. In 1881, they had advised him not to accept the allegiance⁶⁶ of the Tekke Turkmen of Merv, offered by their ruler, Makhdum Quli Khan.⁶⁷ Perhaps for the same reason, the amir had earlier turned down the offer of submission by the khan of khwarazm.⁶⁸ Second, the British government had ignored the amir's warnings for the delimitation of the undefined boundaries of Afghanistan with Russia,⁶⁹ in spite of his repeated complaints to the effect that the British had abandoned their responsibilities with regard to Afghanistan, and about impending advances by Russia.⁷⁰ At first, neither Britain nor India took the amir's warnings seriously. The viceroy, Lord Ripon, only reminded him that Afghan boundaries with Russia were so fixed in 1873, and that it would be unwise to reopen the question.⁷¹

⁶⁰ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 474.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 546.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 483.

⁶³ Mohammad Nabi, *Sawal wa Jawab-e-Dawlati*, 7.

⁶⁴ Griechbach, C. L., to Ellias, N., 5 Mar 89 (Mazar), For Dept., Secret-F., Pros., May 1889, Nos. 216-225, NAI.

⁶⁵ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 455.

⁶⁶ Ripon to Hartington, 22 May 81, PSLI, 28, 887.

⁶⁷ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 388.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 383.

⁶⁹ The Amir's Visit to India, 1885. PSLI, 44, Encl., No. 3, 2.

⁷⁰ Amir 'Abd al-Rahman in darbar, PD, 9 Dec. 82, PSLI, 35, 5.

⁷¹ Singhal, *India and Afghanistan*, 107.

Muslim India, in particular the tribal area (later officially called the North-West Frontier of India) and, after the fall of Panjdeh, these elders asked him to declare a jihad against Russia.⁶⁰ A number of elders from Central Asia had either taken asylum with the amir, or engaged in correspondence with him.⁶¹ Others, from Central Asia, had promised him that they would rise against Russia from within, when he rose against it from without.⁶² Consequently, because of these assurances the amir believed that in the event of war with Russia the Turkmen would rise en masse against it.⁶³ As late as 1889, he even cherished the idea of raising a rebellion against Russia and becoming a second Timur Lane.⁶⁴

In spite of all this, when the Russian forces arrived near Panjdeh, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan instructed his army under the command of General Ghous al-Din Khan to desist from opposing them when they chose to attack it, and to retreat to Bala Murghab.⁶⁵ He did so for the following reasons. First, he had been discouraged in his forward policy in the area by the British. In 1881, they had advised him not to accept the allegiance⁶⁶ of the Tekke Turkmen of Merv, offered by their ruler, Makhdum Quli Khan.⁶⁷ Perhaps for the same reason, the amir had earlier turned down the offer of submission by the khan of khwarazm.⁶⁸ Second, the British government had ignored the amir's warnings for the delimitation of the undefined boundaries of Afghanistan with Russia,⁶⁹ in spite of his repeated complaints to the effect that the British had abandoned their responsibilities with regard to Afghanistan, and about impending advances by Russia.⁷⁰ At first, neither Britain nor India took the amir's warnings seriously. The viceroy, Lord Ripon, only reminded him that Afghan boundaries with Russia were so fixed in 1873, and that it would be unwise to reopen the question.⁷¹

⁶⁰ Fayz Mohammad, *Siraj al-Tawarikh*, 474.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 546.

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On March 30, 1885 Panjdeh fell to the Russians. The Afghan troops opposed them, even though they were overwhelmed by them, and even though they had been handicapped by the amir's instruction not to fight.⁸³ At the time Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan was on a state visit to India. When informed of the fall he advised his host "not to distress yourself (*gham ma khurid*)."⁸⁴ Not only did he not make any attempt to invoke the British commitment to Afghanistan which had been subjected to "unprovoked aggression", but he also

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Relations with the Ottoman Turkey

Afghanistan and the Ottoman Turkey had no commercial or other ties between them. However, as Sunni Muslim states separated by Shi'i Persia, they were traditionally on friendly terms with each other. Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan had great respect toward the person of the Caliph Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid, and regarded him as the protector of the Muslims, calling on every Muslim to be loyal to him.¹⁸ The amir's respect for the caliph sultan, as the guardian of Mecca and Medina and the spiritual head of the Muslim world was, of course, religiously significant, but more importantly, his autocracy and the police state he had created appealed to him. Additionally, it was prestigious for Afghan rulers to be on good terms with the Ottoman sultans.

The amir tried to respect and even imitate the caliph sultan. In *The Booklet on Islamic Affairs* (*Risala-e-Islamiya*), he declared that since the caliph of Islam had decreed that his subjects should pay ten per cent of their annual income over and beyond their usual tax, his subjects should also do the same.¹⁹ Hence the exaltation of the sultan and of his innovation whether real or imaginary. In a firman, the amir called on his subjects, to "[b]e at least as zealous in this cause as the subjects of the sultan of Turkey . . . who have offered their lives for the sultan."²⁰ Further, in his treatises on jihad the amir expressed that he had been inspired by the example of the sultan, because, apart from the fact that they were both Muslims, both the Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan were threatened by the same power—Russia. Like the Ottoman sultans, the amir was likewise on good terms with the British government and, conversely, on bad

¹⁸ Kabul Series, Pt., 111, 141, Nos. 233–234, Encl. No. 22, Ikdam Turkish Paper, 9 Oct 1901.

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The amir tried to respect and even imitate the caliph sultan. In *The Booklet on Islamic Affairs* (*Risala-e-Islamiya*), he declared that since the caliph of Islam had decreed that his subjects should pay ten per cent of their annual income over and beyond their usual tax, his subjects should also do the same.¹⁹ Hence the exaltation of the sultan and of his innovation whether real or imaginary. In a firman, the amir called on his subjects, to "[b]e at least as zealous in this cause as the subjects of the sultan of Turkey . . . who have offered their lives for the sultan."²⁰ Further, in his treatises on jihad the amir expressed that he had been inspired by the example of the sultan, because, apart from the fact that they were both Muslims, both the Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan were threatened by the same power—Russia. Like the Ottoman sultans, the amir was likewise on good terms with the British government and, conversely, on bad

¹⁸ Kabul Series, Pt., 111, 141, Nos. 233–234, Encl. No. 22, Ikdam Turkish Paper, 9 Oct 1901.

¹⁹ For details see, *Sarrishla-e-Islamiyya-e-Rum* (*The Islamic Management of Turkey*), Kabul, 1311/1894.

²⁰ PD, 9 Dec. 95, PSLI, 83, No. 23.

At the same time, to appease the Persian public, the amir sent a decorated Quran as a gift to be placed in the shrine of Musa Imam Raza in Mashhad. Ultimately, the viceroy dropped the subject altogether.

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place and has reduced the citizens to a state of poverty bordering on despair.²

Still, by the standard of the region and the time this combination of political centralization and individual liberty was an accomplishment, and that time was needed for the country to become a modern nation-state. However, in 1878 the British invasion destroyed the whole arrangement. Thereafter, disturbances bordering on anarchy shook the society, until Amir 'Abd al-Rahman stabilized it by instituting such a rigid system of administration which the people of Afghanistan had never experienced.

During the British occupation, Afghanistan did not have a legitimate government; in fact, it did not even have a functional government, except in the city of Kabul and its immediate environs. The reigning ruler, Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, had died and the British had deported his son and successor, Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan, to India. In this situation, the Sunni Muslims of the greater Kabul region, known in the British official reports sometimes as the Ghazni Party and at other times as the National Party, strove for a ruler of their own to lead them in their struggle against the 'infidel' invaders. This was what time-honored tradition and Islam demanded, but since there were several claimants to the throne they failed in their purpose.

The British occupiers likewise failed in their efforts to elevate a Mohammadzay sardar of their choice to the throne; it was out of the question for them to rule the country directly. They failed because the National Party upheld the cause of the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali Khan. For the same reasons, a few middle-of-the-road Mohammadzay sardars also failed in their efforts to attract a substantial following, while the non-Mohammadzay elders who had distinguished themselves in the campaigns against the British invaders could not aspire to the throne for the simple reason that they were not Mohammadzays. Only the house of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan was viewed as the ruling dynasty.

The failure of the British officials dealing with Afghanistan to set up a functional government was due to the opposition of its people. Prompted by their loyalty to their country, their religion and their own Muslim rulers, they opposed the British and their various schemes.

² Bellew, H. W., *From the Indus to the Tigris*, London, 1874, 148.

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Afghanistan was invaded, conquered, occupied and dismembered; her peoples suffered mass arrests, collective fines and mass executions; yet she successfully survived all these ordeals and acquired a political personality.⁶

It was because of this "political personality" that Lytton was forced to change his view. It was also the reason that he had previously failed to rule over Afghanistan first through Amir Mohammad Ya'qub Khan and afterward directly, even when the country was to have been divided among Russia and Persia and British India.

After the uprising and the almost continuous unsettled situation, Lytton decided to evacuate Afghanistan, even if a new ruler had not been found for it. This was because the resistance was appreciated even by the people of Great Britain, who replaced the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, which had devised the 'Forward Policy' by the liberal government of William Gladstone in the general election that was held later, in April 1880. The Afghan war had become an issue in the election, and Gladstone won in part because he had promised an "honorable withdrawal" from Afghanistan. Until the evacuation, set for October 1880, the search for a native ruler for what Lytton and his lieutenants called "Northern Afghanistan", an entity from which the provinces of Kandahar and Herat were to be excluded, continued.

This was during the period when Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman Khan had arrived in Badakhshan from Samarqand, where he had lived in exile for eleven years. Lytton, who had declared war on Afghanistan, apparently in an effort to forestall the danger to India posed by Russia, had become so desperate that he tried to negotiate terms with a claimant to the throne who was a known Russian pensioner. He did so because, like him, 'Abd al-Rahman Khan was also opposed to the rule of any member of the family of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan.

Lytton found it necessary to search for an able dynastic rival because the National Party had already rejected the pro-British candidates to the throne. It accepted the sardar mainly in order to get rid of the 'infidel' invaders. Although, it had preferred the house of Amir Sher 'Ali Khan, its opposition to the 'infidel' invaders was stronger. Further, the war had dragged on for too long and the people of Afghanistan as well as Britain desired for someone to bring

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Whatever their real aim, the British twice invaded Afghanistan, apparently in an effort to forestall a Russian danger to India. Toward that end, in 1878, Lytton devised a strategy to secure a line of defense along the passes of the Hindu Kush range. This made it necessary for British India to occupy Afghanistan up to or beyond the Hindu Kush—a scheme that, whether by chance or design, coincided with the western limit of the Mughal Empire at its zenith. But the Sunni inhabitants of Afghanistan foiled the scheme, as their fathers had foiled a similar British scheme some forty years earlier. The policies that the British Government of India adopted toward Afghanistan following each war were different. After the first war, it pursued the policy of 'containment', known as 'masterly inactivity', the essence of which was non-interference in the affairs of the land beyond the Indus, that is, Afghanistan. This policy which had a strong proponent in the person of John Lawrence, the governor-general of India, was successful because no major clashes occurred during the period in which the policy was in place.

After the Second Anglo-Afghan War, two concepts crystallized in British official circles, regarding Afghanistan, though both had been conceived of much earlier: the concepts of the 'buffer zone', and the 'scientific frontier.' These concepts, which were interrelated, appeared to be a product of Russo-phobia, and were applied for the ultimate purpose of making India secure from the threat of a Russian invasion. Whether the danger was real is uncertain, but the fear of it was, and it permeated official circles in India whenever the Conservative Party was in power in Britain. This fear affected Afghanistan, internally as well as externally. To make India secure, the British government attempted to make Afghanistan secure from Russian influence; at the same time it sought an additional alternative. The former made it necessary for the British government to arrange a buffer zone, and the latter to occupy strategic points in Afghanistan's eastern hinterland.

The idea of creating a buffer zone between the empires of Russia and Britain in Central Asia was an old one, which had arisen following the British withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1841. Three years later, in 1844, Britain and Russia had arrived at an understanding concerning what was known as the 'Asiatic Question.' They agreed that "... the Khanates of Central Asia should be left by Russia to form a neutral zone between the two empires, so as to preserve them

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Henry Rawlinson, the "high priest of the forward school"¹¹ had expressed this phobia when he stated that

India is a conquered country, where a certain amount of discontent must be ever smoldering which would be fanned into a chronic conflagration by the contiguity of a rival European power.¹²

However, the demarcation of the Durand Line proved disastrous. Shortly after its introduction, in 1897, it led to the greatest uprising against the British west of the Indus, forcing them to employ more troops than they had in their two wars in Afghanistan. Subsequently, it also resulted in numerous clashes between the British forces and the ever-defiant peasants of the frontier regions, until Britain left India in 1947. The problems emanating from the so-called 'scientific Frontier', as well as the Anglo-Afghan wars, have left a legacy of anti-British feelings that is still alive to the present day.

The demarcation of the Durand Line made it imperative for the British to try to make Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan neutral as far as the frontier tribes were concerned. In this regard the British followed a carrot-and-stick policy to compel the amir to keep out of the affairs of the tribes, at the same time that it increased the amount

¹¹ Duff, *The Afghan Policy of the Beaconsfield Administration*, 33.

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decade of the amir's reign, when almost all groups of the *ra'iyats* rebelled.

The amir managed to suppress the more than forty rebellions that occurred, and he also employed other tactics as a matter of policy. For example, he would send tribal levies (*eljaris*) to oppose a rebellious tribe, from among its neighbors. This was, of course, standard practice, but the amir also would instruct his officials to create dissension between tribes to weaken them in relation to the government—a tactic that none of his predecessors had adopted. Consequently, this divide-and-rule policy deepened old animosities that existed between tribes, and created new ones among the *ra'iyats*, a practice that weakened national solidarity. The amir also inculcated a fear of the infidels among the *ra'iyats*, and set the jihad movement, or a kind of ideological war, in motion.

Scores of other new measures were also adopted to keep the *ra'iyats* calm. For example, the amir placed restrictions on the movement of the *ra'iyats*, sometimes even from one village to another. Additionally, efforts were even made to keep the rebellions secret, and anyone who talked about them as well as politics was punished. Once a man's lips were sewed closed because he had talked about politics. The subjects of peace, war and politics even though they affected the lives of people in a fundamental way, were considered to be the concern only of the amir and of those who were directly involved in them.

The suppression of the rebellions took a tremendous toll on the population. The number of casualties from the uprisings and the number of those who were killed by the police will never be known; the amir quotes a figure of over 100,000. In a population of approximately six million, even this number, if true, is proportionately very high, and many times higher than the combined number of Afghans and the British killed in the two Anglo-Afghan wars. In addition, those persons who were in a position to oppose the government were either killed or expelled, or they went into exile for safety.

Consequently, the country was purged of known elders to such an extent that it was said that if the British invaded Afghanistan again, they would encounter no resistance. This was evident from the reactions to the amir's rule by the general public who, on many occasions, especially after prayers in mosques, wished the amir bad luck. They even prayed for the return of the British to deliver them

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The amir managed to suppress the more than forty rebellions that occurred, and he also employed other tactics as a matter of policy. For example, he would send tribal levies (*eljaris*) to oppose a rebellious tribe, from among its neighbors. This was, of course, standard practice, but the amir also would instruct his officials to create dissension between tribes to weaken them in relation to the government—a tactic that none of his predecessors had adopted. Consequently, this divide-and-rule policy deepened old animosities that existed between tribes, and created new ones among the *ra'iyats*, a practice that weakened national solidarity. The amir also inculcated a fear of the infidels among the *ra'iyats*, and set the jihad movement, or a kind of ideological war, in motion.

Scores of other new measures were also adopted to keep the *ra'iyats* calm. For example, the amir placed restrictions on the movement of the *ra'iyats*, sometimes even from one village to another. Additionally, efforts were even made to keep the rebellions secret, and anyone who talked about them as well as politics was punished. Once a man's lips were sewed closed because he had talked about politics. The subjects of peace, war and politics even though they affected the lives of people in a fundamental way, were considered to be the concern only of the amir and of those who were directly involved in them.

The suppression of the rebellions took a tremendous toll on the population. The number of casualties from the uprisings and the number of those who were killed by the police will never be known; the amir quotes a figure of over 100,000. In a population of approximately six million, even this number, if true, is proportionately very high, and many times higher than the combined number of Afghans and the British killed in the two Anglo-Afghan wars. In addition, those persons who were in a position to oppose the government were either killed or expelled, or they went into exile for safety.

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Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies the towns of Kandahar and Jalalabad with all the territory now in possession of the British armies, excepting the districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi. His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies agrees on his part that the districts of Kurram and Pishin and Sibi, according to the limits defined in the schedule annexed, shall remain under the protection and administrative control of the British Government: that is to say, the aforesaid districts shall be treated as assigned districts, and shall not be considered as permanently severed from the limits of the Afghan kingdom. The revenue of these districts, after deducting the charges of civil administration, shall be paid to His Highness the Amir. The British Government will retain in its own hands the control of the Khyber and Michni Passes, which lie between the Peshawar and Jalalabad districts and of all relations with the independent tribes of the territory directly connected with these passes.

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

26 May 1879 – 4 Jamade-Ussani 1296

D. The Durand Agreement or the Kabul Convention of 1893

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

1. The eastern and southern frontier of His Highness's domains, from Wakhan to the Persian border, shall follow the line shown on the map attached to this agreement.

2. The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of Afghanistan,

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future as far as possible all causes of doubt and misunderstanding between the two Governments.

7. Being fully satisfied of His Highness's goodwill to the British Government, and wishing to see Afghanistan strong, the Government of India will raise no objection to the purchase and import by His Highness of munitions of war, and they will themselves grant him some help in this respect. Further, in order to mark their sense of the friendly spirit in which His Highness the Amir has entered into these negotiations, the government of India undertake to increase by the sum of six lakhs of rupees a year the subsidy of twelve lakhs now granted to His Highness.

Kabul, November 12, 1893

E. The Covenants of Unanimity, 1896

Following is an English translation only of the covenant, which the Mohammadzay sardars gave to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan after Kafistan was conquered in 1896. All other groups of the people throughout Afghanistan followed their example—the Hindus, artisans, businessmen, nomads, soldiers, and civil and military officials. Some of these covenants were identical with the one that the Mohammadzay sardars gave. Others were slightly different, but all were signed by the mullas, tribal elders, countersigned and officially sealed by the muftis and qazis. All stated that the covenants were issued with the "free" consent of the people. On 26 Asad 1275 H.Sh. (7 Rabi' al-Awwal 1314 H.Q., 17 August, 1896) a grand total of 194 covenants were presented to the amir, who named that day Jashn-e-Mutafiqiya (The Festival of Unanimity). In the covenants the people undertook in strong words to confer the title of Zia al-Millat-e-wa al-Din (The Light of the Nation and Religion) on the amir. They also pledged themselves to defend the boundaries of Afghanistan, now fixed for the first time. They likewise undertook to obey and observe the religious and secular arrangements that the amir had made, to remain faithful to him and his descendants, and to accept the hasht nafari (one out of eight) system of conscription.

The Covenant

"The purpose of this covenant is this. Since the Almighty God, out of extreme graciousness, has chosen a leader of the religion and the state of Afghanistan from among the Mohammadzay tribe, and made us and the other tribes of Afghanistan subjects of this august existence, and since by following is meant obedience, and obedience makes incumbent upon the followers to follow the sovereign, and since we, the above-mentioned tribe, because of close relationship, are the first in obedience and following, so obedience in the sense of following became our right. The other tribes of Afghanistan should follow our lead."

"Therefore, we state that, since the title of imam is obligatory on behalf of the Almighty God and, since our King who, out of religiosity expelled from the country the tribes opposing the religion, has certainly and evidently not failed to fulfil the five religiously and worldly commandments, their safeguarding became our right."

"And again, since he has improved the disorganized state of the land, its consolidation has become obligatory on us."

"Again, since he defined the boundaries with our close neighbors and with those far away, their safeguarding became our duty."

"Again, since he reconstructed the fallen and ruined mosques and pulpits, and fulfilled religious commandments by appointing the president, the muhtasibs and prayer leaders, their preservation became our duty."

"Again, since he manifested honesty in state affairs we are duty bound not to commit treachery to its integrity. Now that our sovereign has fully fulfilled his responsibility, it is incumbent upon us followers to act accordingly so that it should not happen that while our imam has fully fulfilled his duties, we stand shameful when we present ourselves before the real King, in accordance with the real promise of the day, when all the people go forward with their imam as has been mentioned in the Quran."

"Therefore we, the Mohammadzay tribe who, in line with the general principle, considered ourselves the number one followers, observed and understood and held God as guarantor and His Prophet, (may peace be upon him), as witness, swore on the Quran, which has been sent by God, not to give away his acquired land to anyone so long as we have the power and the strength."

"Secondly, not to disrupt the arrangements he has made."

"Thirdly, to safeguard the boundaries, which are the frontline so long as we have the soul and life in our body."

"Fourthly, not to dispute the right of the religion and to strengthen our religious arrangements of God and the Prophet."

"Fifthly, to recognize his sons as the inheritors to his crown and kingdom, not to deviate from his will, to keep on obeying whether he is alive or dead, be on guards to dangers all the time, not to be ignorant of our responsibilities to our selves, to our religion and honor and of the other Muslims, and it is for his sons, neither for us nor for our descendants to choose the inheritors, so that we may have acted in accord with the heavenly dispensation and are not shamed in this world and the next."

"And also whoever puts forward claims for amirate, during the lifetime or after the death of our king, is either the untrue son of his father, or is not from our religion, or has intended a new destruction. And also since we would like to see his name remembered forever in Islam we add the title of Zia al-Millat wa al-Din after his blessed name. 1313."

Signed and sealed by the descendants of the Amir-e-Kabir,

Sardar Amir Mohammad Khan and Wazir Fatih Khan

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Unpublished Documents

Unpublished records of the government of Afghanistan

Files relating to the reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. Afghan Archival Records have not yet been made public, but I was given access to them. What I actually found was so little, whereas the records pertaining his reign were very much.

Unpublished records of the British government of India

- a) In London in India Office Library and Records now in the British Library. Political and secret letters and enclosures received from India from volume 25 to 141 covering the period from 1878 to 1902.
- b) In New Delhi in the National Archives of India. Foreign and Political Department.

The above two entries are the most comprehensive archival sources there are in any language on nineteenth century Afghanistan.

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