

A THESIS

entitled

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY IN AFGHANISTAN

UNDER AMIR 'ABD AL-RAHMAN, 1880 -- 1896

presented by

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## Abstract

The subject of this thesis is the establishment and consolidation of the power of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman in Afghanistan between 1880 and 1896.

'Abd al-Rahman reappeared in Afghanistan from exile in Russian Turkistan at a critical time when the British were considering how to establish a government satisfactory to their interest, in Kabul. 'Abd al-Rahman showed skill in obtaining both the support of anti-British groups (who were committed to the former ruling family) and the British themselves. At first, he obtained only the reduced state of Kabul, the British being determined to retain control of the province of Kandahar. Later, following the defeat of their army in Kandahar, the British reversed their former policy and evacuated Kandahar which passed to 'Abd al-Rahman. Subsequently, 'Abd al-Rahman succeeded in expelling Mohammad Ayub (a brother of the former Amir) from Herat and thus establishing his rule over the whole of Afghanistan, (chapters 2 and 3).

'Abd al-Rahman then extended and consolidated his rule over the provinces at the expense of the authority of the tribal elders and dynastic governors. This led to conflict between him and the elders, who aroused the tribes against him. The several disturbances which ensued are described. They were all ultimately suppressed (chapters 4, 5 and 6). Further, the Amir brought under control the territories of the Hazarajat and Kafiristan (chapters 7 and 8). At the same time, the Government of India contained the extension

of the Amir's authority into the territories beyond the frontiers which the Government of India was largely instrumental in establishing for Afghanistan during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. M. E. Yapp for his advice and suggestions during the writing of this thesis.

## Abbreviations

(Published and unpublished documents)

- BCA - Biographical Accounts of Chiefs, Sardars and others of Afghanistan, Calcutta, 1888.
- CD - Chitral Agency Diary
- FTNK - Frontiers and Overseas Expeditions, Tribes North of the Kabul River, Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1907.
- GAB - Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part 1, Badakhshan, 1914.
- GAH - Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part 3, Herat, 1910.
- GAK - Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part 4, Kabul, 1910.
- GAKand. - Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part 5, Kandahar, 1908.
- GAT - Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part 2, Afghan Turkistan, 1912.
- GD - Gilgit Agency Diary
- GNWFP - Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, North-West Frontier Province, Calcutta, 1908.
- HD - Herat Diary
- IGA - Imperial Gazetteer of India, Afghanistan and Nepal, Calcutta, 1908.
- Kand. D. - Kandahar Diary
- KD - Kabul Agency Diary
- MRA - Military Report on Afghanistan, Calcutta, 1906.
- PD - Peshawar Agency Diary
- PNEA - Papers relating to Afghanistan, Narrative of Events in Afghanistan, 1878-80, 1880.
- PSLI - Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures Received from India.

## A note on transliteration

Because of typing difficulties, and considering the fact that this was a thesis in history and not in language, I abandoned my original system of transliteration which employed a different form for each letter. In the system now used **ع** has been recorded by the sign of ('). The transliteration of Persian and Pashto words follow conventional system but letters peculiar to Pashto are transliterated as follows:-

د	-	d
چ	-	ch
ن	-	n
ش	-	sh
ر	-	r

Pashto names in the singular have been spelt as they are pronounced in Pashto but anglicised in the plural. Thus we have Afriday, Ghilzay and Safay, not Afridi, Ghilzai and Safi, as they are generally written. Persian, Pashto and 'Arabic words have normally been underlined, but such words as amir, khan, sardar and mulla have been considered to be anglicised as they are regarded as such in the Oxford English Dictionary.



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction 1863-1880

Afghanistan (the land of the Afghans), before 1880, was known to outsiders as Afghanistan but its own inhabitants distinguished it by two appellations - Khurasan (Zabulistan) and Kabul (Kabulistan), the former including the territories to the north-west of the massive range of the Hindu Kush up to Persia, and the latter including the territories to the south of the Hindu Kush up to the Indus river.<sup>1</sup> Its boundaries were not defined. They were demographic rather than territorial. Hence their fluctuations in accordance with the extent of the power of the rulers of the central government in Kabul over the outlying districts. In 1871, the outlying districts in the south and east (nominally subject to the central government) were the Chitral, the land of the Yusufzays, of the Afridays, of the Waziris, and of the Kakars. Baluchistan bordered it in the extreme south. To the west, it was bounded by Persia. The territory of Sistan was included in Afghanistan, but this claim was disputed by Persia. To the north-west, Afghanistan was bounded by the Turcoman country. The Oxus (from the Haji Salih to the Pamirs) formed its northern boundary with Bokhara.<sup>2</sup> The country was divided into the provinces of Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad and Balkh (Afghan-Turkistan).

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1 Bellew, H. W., quoted by MacGregor, C. M., Central Asia, pt 2. A contribution towards the better knowledge of the topography, ethnology, resources and history of Afghanistan. Calcutta, 1871, 7. According to MacGregor, the Afghans called their country Wilayat. Ibid. Since wilayat means a province, the wilayat of MacGregor is probably the wilayat of Kabul.

2 MacGregor, 5.

This extensive area was inhabited by various ethnic groups whose total number was estimated to lie between four and a half and six millions.<sup>3</sup> The Pashtuns (also called the Afghans), comprising the tribes of Durranis, Ghilzays, Yusufzays, Khugianays, Kakars, Shinwarays, Mohmands, Waziris, Mangals, Orakzays and others, were equal in number to the rest of the population who were the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Qizilbashes, Char Aimaq, Kafirs and others. The inhabitants were divided among themselves linguistically and ethnically. The Pashtuns spoke the Pashto language, while the rest, except for the Uzbeks who spoke the Turki language and the Kafirs, who spoke different languages, spoke Persian. The common bond among the majority of the population was the religion of Islam but this was weakened by the existence of the two sects of Sunnism and Shi'ism. Kafirs, Hindus, Jews and Sikhs were the non-Muslim minorities.

A small portion of the population lived in towns, among them about 140,700 in Kabul (1876), 31,000 in Kandahar (1880), 17,000 in Herat (1885) and 3,000 families in Mazar (1906). The urban population was heavily dependent for its provisions on the neighbouring countryside, whereas the rural population was self-sufficient. Military control of the towns did not necessarily imply control over the country. The Pashtuns, as the ruling nation, considered

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3 IGIA (1908), 23 - 4,500,000  
 MacGregor (1871), 32 - 4,901,000  
 MRA (1906), 111 - 6,100,000  
 Amir 'Abd al-Rahman's firman,  
 Mar 1883, PSLI, 35, 930 - 13,000,000  
 The last figures are no doubt too high.

the profession of artisan degrading.<sup>4</sup> But like the Tajiks they were also engaged in trade. The artisans who were engaged in various professions<sup>5</sup> were mainly the Kabulis and Tajiks.

Village life was very common as all the tribes in general and the Tajiks and the Kafirs in particular lived in the villages. Of all the tribes, the Tajiks alone were non-tribal agriculturists. Some parts of other tribes in general, and the Char Aimaq in particular, were pastoral and nomadic, moving in the short distances between their summer and winter quarters. The Ghilzay tribe, as a whole, was in a transitory state from pastoral to agricultural life.<sup>6</sup> Its migratory sections (the Powindas) made regular movements from the central highlands of Afghanistan in the summer to India in the winter. Before 1880, there was no legal restriction on the movements of people, but such movements among the settled population were infrequent. The roads were not usually wide enough for wheeled traffic and bridges over rivers did not exist, although there were ferries on some rivers.<sup>7</sup> Regionalism and tribal feelings were, therefore, very strong. Trade routes, however, were many and Kabul, the capital city, was connected by them, not only with the provincial towns, but also with neighbouring countries, through the cities of Quetta, Peshawar, Meshed, Merv, Tashkand, and Bokhara. Mainly for security

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4 Elphinstone, M., An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependencies in Tartary, Persia, and India, London, 1842, 1, 332.

5 According to Elphinstone, the number of different kinds of artisans and tradesmen in Kabul reached 32 in the early part of the nineteenth century, 1, 336.

6 GAK, 140.

7 MacGregor, 57.

reasons, commercial goods were carried on camels and ponies in large caravans.

Being mountainous, Afghanistan has a very varied climate and abounds in products of both the temperate and tropical zones. In the late nineteenth century, about one-fifth of the arable land was under cultivation. It was tilled with primitive implements. Except in the more elevated areas, there were two harvests each year. The main products were wheat, barley, rice, corn, millet, cotton, and many kinds of vegetables and fruits. On the whole, ownership of the land was more equally divided in Afghanistan than in most countries.<sup>8</sup> A large number of small landowners, assisted by hired labourers, cultivated their own fields, although crop-sharing tenancies were also very common. This fairly even distribution of land may account, in part, for the sense of equality which existed among the population of Afghanistan. It has been said frequently that individual liberty existed nowhere in the East so extensively as it did in Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup>

Afghanistan before 1880 was nominally a monarchy. In reality, it was a military and aristocratic republic, the ruler of which was established for life. Its sovereign, who was absolute under the Shari'at, could introduce changes in the system of administration as he saw necessary. Also he had the power to dispose of the property and

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8 MacGregor, 34.

9 Ibid, 59.

lives of his subjects,<sup>10</sup> though even the poorest of his subjects was able to take his complaints to him in person. In theory, the principle of succession was hereditary, but in practice the legitimate heir was obliged to submit the question of succession to an election and the chances of war.<sup>11</sup> Thus the death of a ruler was always followed by civil wars.

The main support for, and the opposition to, the rulers came from the sardars<sup>12</sup> who were mainly the commanders of the subdivisions of tribes and often chosen from among the tribal elders, mainly the Durranis. The sardars were under the nominal control of the rulers in Kabul who paid them the taxes of the region over which they held command in return for their military service in time of war.<sup>13</sup> Each of these sardars ruled his region after his own fashion. Therefore the political stability of the country depended mainly on good relations between these sardars and the rulers. Religious groups, among them the mullas, were the next restraining influence over the absolute power of the rulers. Because of their religious knowledge and the fact that they acted like local magistrates<sup>14</sup> and lived closely with the people, the mullas had enormous influence with them. The rulers were careful not to antagonise the mullas. They paid them

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10 Ibid, 57.

11 MacGregor, 58.

12 Literally, a leader, but actually a military title given by kings to tribal elders.

13 MacGregor, 60.

14 For detail see Risalah-i-mu 'l'za, written on the instructions of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, Kabul, 1311 A.H.

regular allowances (wazifas) and used their influence in stirring popular opposition against foreign invaders.

As a political entity, Afghanistan began to emerge when the empires of the Safavids in the west and of the Moghuls in the east declined rapidly. From the sixteenth century to the eighteenth, the eastern provinces of Afghanistan formed a part of the one and the western provinces a part of the other, while the northern provinces were mainly under Bokhara. Although the eastern Pashtuns were the first to rise under their poet leader Khushhal Khattak (1613-1689), it was the Pashtuns of Kandahar under Mir Wais (d. 1715) who succeeded in overthrowing Safavid rule in the early part of the eighteenth century.

It was at the beginning of the second part of the eighteenth century that Afghanistan became fully independent under Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747-1773). Ahmad Shah founded an empire which, towards the east and south, stretched as far as Delhi, Little Tibet, and the Arabian Sea. The river Oxus formed the northern boundary of his empire, while Persian Khurasan to the west became a tributary state. The empire was too vast to survive and began to disintegrate when his numerous grandsons quarrelled over the throne in the early years of the nineteenth century. In the later stage of their struggle, the few surviving grandsons of Ahmad Shah were overthrown by the elders of the Barakzay branch of the Durrani tribe. The Barakzays had fought among themselves, but by 1839, one of them, Dost Mohammad, was able to bring a considerable part of Afghanistan (Kabul, Ghazni, Jalalabad) under his rule and to declare

himself Amir. His progress was interrupted when the British, in conjunction with Shah Shuja' al-Mulk (a former Sadozay king), and Ranjit Singh (the Sikh ruler of the Panjab), overran Afghanistan in that year. This invasion proved a failure and during the second, long reign of Amir Dost Mohammad (1843-1863) the whole of Afghanistan (Turkistan, Badakhshan, Kabul, Jalalabad and Herat) came under his control.

The absence of a working principle of succession and the practice of polygamy among the rulers had always been one of the root causes of civil wars in Afghanistan. In this context, the civil war which followed the death of Amir Dost Mohammad in 1863 is hardly surprising. The Amir had left over 20 sons and grandsons of importance by his five principal wives. They were governors and sub-governors when he died. Although one of his sons, Sher 'Ali (b. 1823) by his favourite Barakzay wife, had been declared his successor, his amirate was challenged.

The civil war, one of the bloodiest in Afghan history, lasted for four years (1864-1868). The principal opponents of Sher 'Ali were his elder half-brothers Mohammad Afzal (b. 1811) and Mohammad A'zam (b. 1818); they challenged him for the amirate. Sher 'Ali's full-brothers, Mohammad Amin (b. 1829) and Mohammad Sharif (b. 1830) opposed the extension of his authority over the provinces which they considered to be their "possession". Others revolted because of the Amir's attempts to deprive them of their revenue - free lands and private armies. From May 1866 to October 1868, Mohammad Afzal and Mohammad A'zam ruled



in Kabul as Amirs successively, and Sher 'Ali was expelled to Herat. But finally Sher 'Ali triumphed over all. Sher 'Ali's opponents either died or fled the country. Of the surviving contenders 'Abd al-Rahman (pronounced 'Abdur Rahman) (b. 1844), the only son of Mohammad Afzal, distinguished himself during the civil war by defeating Amir Sher 'Ali in May 1866, January 1867, and September 1867. After the triumph of Sher 'Ali, 'Abd al-Rahman fled to Samarqand in 1869, where he resided on a Russian pension for 11 years. Mohammad Ya'qub (c. 1849), Sher 'Ali's son, also distinguished himself in the civil war by regaining Kandahar in 1868.

During his second reign (1868-1879), Amir Sher 'Ali injected significant stability into the war-torn country and introduced some reforms. His reforms were mainly the result of the civil war. In a way, the war had been a war between the centre and the provinces for domination. The problems which Amir Sher 'Ali and his rival brother, Mohammad A'zam (while Amir), faced were almost identical, when they tried to extend the authority of the central government over the provinces. This attempt was opposed by all the Barakzay sardars. With the triumph of Sher 'Ali representing the centre, the power of the sardars was greatly reduced when the Amir created a standing army of about 80,000<sup>15</sup> in which all irregulars (including the

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15 Rishtia, S. Q., Afghanistan during the Nineteenth Century, (Afghanistan dar garn-i-nuzdahum), Kabul, 1336 (A.H.) Second edition, 1880. According to H. C. Rawlinson, Amir Sher 'Ali had a regular army of 68 regiments of infantry, 16 cavalry, and 300 guns. "The Situation in Afghanistan" The Nineteenth Century, 1880, 199.

private army of the sardars) were converted into regulars and paid in cash instead of by orders on villages.<sup>16</sup> But the basic structure of tribal aristocracy remained the same until it was altered drastically some years later by 'Abd al-Rahman. Another notable result of the civil war was the pre-eminence of the Ghilzays during the second reign of Sher 'Ali. He recruited his army mainly from among the Ghilzays. With the Ghilzays in the army, the Pashto language also came into prominence, as the manual of instruction for the army was prepared in that language.<sup>17</sup> The Amir's newly created, but short-lived, Consultative Council (1874) was also dominated by Ghilzay elders, among them 'Ismat Allah, Arsala Khan and Mustaufi Habib Allah Wardak, who were to play a prominent part in the coming struggle against the British invasion of Afghanistan. It is significant to note that no Barakzay of importance was made a member of the Council.

In order to tackle the difficult question of finance, the Amir decided to collect the land revenue wholly in cash, not half in cash and half in kind as was hitherto the practice.<sup>18</sup> Among the achievements of the second reign of the Amir, a mention should also be made of the construction of a new city to the north-west of Kabul, the establishment of a periodical, Shams al-Nahar, and the complete pacification of the northern provinces (Kataghan, Badakhshan, Turkistan and Maimana) by his Viceroy Na'ib Mir 'Alam Khan.

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16 Sykes, Sir P., A History of Afghanistan, London, 1940, 2, 78.

17 Ibid, 79.

18 Sykes, 2, 78.

If Amir Dost Mohammad was the "founder of Afghanistan", Sher 'Ali was its "reformer".<sup>19</sup>

In the knotty question of the succession, Sher 'Ali acted unwisely. He failed to understand that it was mainly the personal ability of a prince, his popularity with the army and the Barakzay aristocracy, rather than his nomination by his sovereign father, which makes him obeyed. In 1874, the official nomination of his minor son, 'Abd Allah Jan (b. 1862) as his successor made his two ambitious elder sons, Sardar Mohammad Ya'qub and Sardar Mohammad Ayub, rebel against him. Ya'qub was imprisoned and Ayub fled to Persia. Since the most capable Barakzay sardars had either been killed in the civil war or driven into exile, the removal of his two sons created a situation in which the position of the Barakzays, as a ruling dynasty, could be in danger. The timely return of 'Abd al-Rahman after the death of Sher 'Ali and the subsequent deportation to India of Ya'qub and others firmly re-established the Barakzay rule. Further, the nomination also strained Amir Sher 'Ali's relations with the Government of India, because of his insistence on the recognition of his nominated successor by the reluctant British.

During the second reign of Sher 'Ali, there was much diplomatic activity. Since it is not our purpose to deal with it in detail, only an outline of the main events which

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19 Rishtia, 188.

led to the British intervention in Afghanistan in 1878 will be given here. British involvement in Afghanistan unleashed forces which reshaped the course of its history.

The period of civil war in Afghanistan corresponded with the rapid military advance of Russia in central Asia. By 1868, after having annexed Tashkand and Samarqand, Russia established her suzerainty over Bokhara and through her became co-terminus with Afghanistan. Because of his alarm over the Russian advance, the Amir wished to draw closer to Britain. Britain gave an implied warning to Russia that she would not remain indifferent if the independence of Afghanistan was endangered. The result was lengthy negotiations between Russia and Britain over the northern frontiers of Afghanistan from 1869 to 1873. Russia assured Britain that Afghanistan was beyond the sphere of her political action.<sup>20</sup>

In the late seventies, however, the conflicting attitudes of Russia and Britain towards the Ottoman empire changed their attitude towards each other in central Asia drastically. As a result, a policy emerged in India which aimed at pushing forward the frontiers of India and securing advanced strategic positions along her north-western borders and active interference in Afghanistan.

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20 Singhal, D. P., Afghanistan and India, 1876-1907, Australia, 1963, 11.

From the accession of Sher 'Ali, his relations with India fall into three periods. From 1864 to 1868, India pursued a policy of so-called "neutrality" towards Afghanistan; from 1868 to 1876 a policy of reconciliation without commitment; and from 1876 to 1878 a policy of intervention.

After his accession, Amir Sher 'Ali hoped that the Government of India would follow the same friendly relations with him as it had with his father. But the Government of India maintained a facade of "neutrality" during the civil war in the hope that his rival brother A'zam would establish "...a strong government in Afghanistan friendly to the British power."<sup>21</sup> Apprehensive of Russia's advances, the Amir still wished to draw closer to Britain. However, his relations with Britain did not improve fundamentally, as is evidenced from the conferences of Ambala in India in 1869 and Simla in 1873. The Government of India did not share the Amir's alarm of Russia<sup>22</sup> and was not willing to recognise 'Abd al-Lah Jan as his successor,<sup>23</sup> although she offered him arms and assurances of non-interference in Afghan affairs.

Such was the atmosphere when, early in 1876, Lord Lytton was chosen as Governor-General and Viceroy in India, partly with a view to securing the confidence of the Amir.<sup>24</sup> Instead, Lytton brought war on Afghanistan. Instructed by

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21 MacGregor, 105.

22 Singhal, 11.

23 Rishtia, 185.

24 Singhal, 15.

London, Lytton was willing to accept the Amir's demands, including a more decided recognition of his nominated successor than had so far been given, and the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance with the Amir.<sup>25</sup> But as these concessions were contingent on the Amir's acceptance of British officers about his frontiers, and refusal of all communication with Russia and other foreign powers,<sup>26</sup> they were not acceptable to the Amir.

It is not surprising that the Peshawar conference between the Viceroy and the representatives of the Amir in March 1877 failed. A mission from the Ottoman Sultan to the Amir with a view to estranging him from Russia also failed. Lytton suspected that the Amir was under Russian influence. The Amir's view of the Russians was that they were devils and concerned only with their own interest.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, they did not seem to have the intention of advancing on his kingdom. Not only were they courteous to the Amir, they also treated him as their equal.<sup>28</sup>

Such was the atmosphere when General Kaufmann, Russia's Governor-General in Turkistan, despatched a mission under General Stolietoff on his own initiative to Kabul in June 1878. Versions vary as to Russia's proposed treaty with the Amir. As mentioned in the Parliamentary Papers, the proposed treaty was in many ways similar to that of Britain. The fundamental difference was the placing of

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25 Ibid, 18.

26 Ibid.

27 Singhal, 28.

28 Singhal, 29.

no restriction on the Amir's relations with other powers.<sup>29</sup> The whole scheme was a manoeuvre to involve Britain in Afghanistan and thereby force them to withdraw the Indian troops they had sent to Malta in support of the Ottomans with whom the Russians were then at war.<sup>30</sup> Thus when the treaty of Berlin was signed between the Great Powers in July 1878, the Russian mission at Kabul was instructed to leave Kabul (August 1878).

The Kaufmann scheme was successful. It gave Lytton the required pretext to carry the Cabinet in London with him on his rash actions towards Afghanistan. After he failed to force his mission on the Amir in September 1878, war was declared on Afghanistan on November 21, 1878.

By the end of January 1879, the greater part of southern Afghanistan had passed into British hands. This advance had been facilitated by the non-opposition by the Afghan army as the Amir, against the wishes of his officials, had prevented it from fighting.<sup>31</sup> The Amir left Kabul for Turkistan, hoping to seek aid from Russia, but he died at Mazar on 21 February, 1879.

Before his flight, Sher 'Ali had released his imprisoned son, Ya'qub, and appointed him governor of Kabul; (the heir-apparent had recently died). After the death of his father, Ya'qub declared himself Amir and opened communication with the Government of India. He was less inclined than

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29 Ibid, 34.

30 Ibid, 33.

31 Rishtia, 240.

his father to resist the invading army and antagonise Britain. He had rivals in the persons of his half-brother, Mohammad Ibrahim, and the full-sister of the late heir-apparent, who had been unsuccessfully encouraged by Afghan Government officials at Mazar to raise their claims.<sup>32</sup>

At Kabul, his uncle, Sardar Wali Mohammad (b. 1830) was already known to be the choice of Lytton if Ya'qub proved unfriendly to the British.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, his long imprisonment (1874-1878) had dispirited him considerably. Thus, despite the opposition of his councils to a treaty with Britain,<sup>34</sup> Amir Mohammad Ya'qub went to Gandamak (about 29 miles to the south-west of Jalalabad) after he had received a favourable response to his earlier communication from the Government of India.

On 26 May 1879, Ya'qub signed a treaty - the most humiliating ever signed by an Afghan ruler - with L. Favagnari, Envoy of the Government of India. Britain obtained a position in Afghanistan which she never had before or afterwards. Ya'qub accepted all the demands which Lytton had made on his father, and others in addition. The most important among them were the control of the Amir's foreign affairs, the stationing of British agents in Afghanistan in return for British support against foreign aggression, a small subsidy and a deceptive promise of non-interference in Afghan home affairs.

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32 Rishtia, 242.

33 Singhal, 43.

34 Ibid, 44.



The treaty made the Amir, in fact, a British feudatory. Singhal maintains that the aim of the treaty was "...to reduce Afghan territory into small principalities."<sup>35</sup> But according to the treaty, Afghanistan was not to be divided. Lytton hoped to rule over Afghanistan through Ya'qub whose power, he hoped, "...would gradually be transferred to the British envoy....."<sup>36</sup> In such an event, Afghanistan was likely to be absorbed eventually into the British empire, as Baluchistan was absorbed by a similar treaty in 1876, and Chitral sixteen years later, in 1895.

Cavagnari became the first British Envoy and, along with three British officials and 75 Indian infantry and cavalrymen, took up residence in the Bala Hisar (citadel) in Kabul on 29 July 1879. Soon the Envoy openly attempted to assume power by fixing or holding back payments and subsidy to the Afghan army and elders.<sup>37</sup> This interference led to the massacre of all but one of the party by an army contingent from Herat, backed by the inhabitants of Kabul on 3 September 1879. The incident was not instigated by the Amir, but he failed to protect the life of the Envoy and others as was required of him by the treaty of Gandamak. The massacre showed how right the late Amir was in opposing British agents in his dominion.

Shortly after the massacre, Afghanistan was again invaded. The cities of Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad

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35 Singhal, 46.

36 Ibid, 49.

37 Rishtia, 246.

(up to Gandamak) were occupied, through Kurram, Quetta and Khyber respectively. General F. Roberts led the forces in Kabul, General D. Stewart in Kandahar, and General Gough and others in Jalalabad.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted mainly to Kabul, referring to other provinces only when it is necessary. An attempt will be made first to describe events inside the province and then describe the new policy the Government of India adopted towards Kabul.

Being the capital, Kabul was the most important of all the provinces. It was like a kingdom in itself, diversified in area and population. Broadly, the province of Kabul was bounded on the north by the Hindu Kush, on the west by the Hazara country, on the south by Baluchistan and Kandahar, and on the east by the Indus. The most numerous group among the inhabitants of the province were the Ghilzays, who occupied mainly the central and southern areas. Tajiks were settled mainly in the north; the Hazaras in the north-west; and Safays, Kafirs, Mohmands, Shinwarays, Khugianays, Khostwals, and others in the east. Dehgans, 'Arabs, and Hindus (as shopkeepers in the towns) were also to be found. As has been mentioned already, the inhabitants of the outlying districts in the east such as the Chitralis, Yusufzays, Waziris, and the Kakars were under the nominal control of Kabul.

The city of Kabul was also diversified in population. Of its 140,700 inhabitants (in 1876), 103,050 were detribalised Kabulis, 12,000 Tajiks, 9,000 Pashtuns

(Durranis, Ghilzays and Safays), 4,000 Hindus, 3,000 Kashmiris, 3,000 Parachas and 100 Armenians.<sup>38</sup> Amidst the Sunni inhabitants, the 6,500 Shi'ite Qizilbashs had always played a significant role out of all proportion to their number. Being hostile to the Sunnis, they had assisted the British in both Anglo-Afghan wars.

The Amir was uncertain about himself when Kabul was invaded. He feared the opposition of his people,<sup>39</sup> presumably for his inaction against the "infidel" invaders. Having failed to save the lives of the British, he also feared his imprisonment by Roberts. He preferred submission to resistance, and offered his resignation to Roberts. Until a decision on his resignation was made, Ya'qub was kept under surveillance in the British camp.

Roberts imprisoned all senior Afghan officials, including the Mustaufi Habib Allah Wardak, the Wazir Yahya Khan and Zakaria Khan, presumably for their inaction during the massacre. Only Daud Shah, the Commander-in-Chief, was not molested, because of his unsuccessful attempts to save the lives of the British. Roberts set up a military government led by Major T. Hills. The immediate measures Robert took were brutal. Assisted by the Qizilbashs,<sup>40</sup> each of whom was awarded 50 rupees,<sup>41</sup>

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38 GAK, 230. Based on the census taken under the general supervision of Qazi 'Abd al-Qadir during the reign of Amir Sher 'Ali. Parachas are people of obscure origin.

39 Rishtia, 250.

40 Hensman, W., The Afghan War 1879-80, London, 1881, 88.

41 Rishtia, 251. Rishtia mentions them not by their name but as "traitors".

Roberts rounded up suspected insurgents and hanged [89] of them.<sup>42</sup> After having demolished the historic Bala Hisar (the seat of the Afghan kings),<sup>43</sup> where the massacre had taken place, he moved the British army to a newly made cantonment in Sherpur, which extended for about two miles under the southern and western slopes of the Bimaru hills.<sup>44</sup>

On 28 October 1879, Ya'qub was informed that his resignation had been accepted, after the Government of India was assured by its officials in Afghanistan that this would not have an adverse effect on the Afghans. In early December, Ya'qub was deported to India, followed a week later by all his principal officials, except the Mustaufi who was set free in the hope that use could be made of his administrative ability in the management of the country. The severe punishment, the deportation and the tight grip over the city led Roberts to think that the British were on their way towards reducing the country, but he was mistaken. December saw a rising more formidable than the one which had happened almost forty years before. But unlike the previous one, this rising did not bring immediate success. However, it marked the intensification of popular resistance which continued until the British army left the country in late 1880.

After many engagements around the city, a combination

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42 Rishtia, 251.

43 Ibid, 250.

44 PNEA, 100.

of 40,000 to 60,000 of the Ghilzays, Tajiks, Safays, Waziris, Zadrans and others (except the Qizilbashes and Hazaras) occupied the city and besieged the British army in the Sherpur cantonment in the middle of December 1879. But they failed to force the army into submission. Rishtia maintains that the British officers bribed two relatively unknown leaders - Zar Pacha Khan and Mohammad Shah Surkhabi<sup>45</sup> - whose treacherous retreat at a critical moment led to the general retreat. It seems more likely, however, that the Afghans failed to destroy the wired and fortified cantonments with their primitive weapons (the guns of the Amir's army had been seized by the British) and were themselves forced to retreat because of the cold, shortage of provisions, the lack of an efficient leader, and the counter-shelling of the besieged army.

The insurgents or "...the bulk of Afghan people",<sup>46</sup> known to us first as the Ghazni Party and later as the National Party, chose Ghazni as their temporary centre. They were led by sardars, tribal elders, and mullas. Few of them played any significant part and none of them was a dominant leader. The lack of a real leader was, in fact, the basic weakness of the movement.

Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam Akhundzadah was the most influential of all the leaders of the National Party. His parentage is not known, but he was identified with the Andar section of the Ghilzay tribe. His original

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45 Rishtia, 253.

46 PNEA, 103.

name was Din Mohammad. The name Mushk-i-'Alam ("the perfume of the universe") was given to him by a celebrated religious teacher, Mulla 'Abd al-Hakim, on account of the versatility of his religious knowledge. Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam had enormous influence with the mullas and people of Ghazni, Kabul, Laghman and the Mohmand in particular, and with all the Muslims throughout the country in general, on account of his religious knowledge, the establishment of madrasas and also for the fact that he was a wealthy man, receiving allowances from the Amirs in Kabul, presents from his followers, and owning large tracts of revenue-free lands.<sup>47</sup> But he was too old (b. 1790) to be able to lead the struggle personally. He was, in fact, the moving, spiritual leader in the struggle and had preached jehad ever since Ya'qub was kept under surveillance. He was honest and straightforward but lacked political insight. Mohammad Jan Wardak was one of the most energetic leaders of the National Party. His ancestors were elders of the Wardak tribe and he himself was a wealthy man and a general in the army of the ex-Amir. He was most influential with the dispersed army, among whom there was a substantial number of Wardaks. He led the attack on the British residency,<sup>48</sup> after which he was known as Ghazi. He also distinguished himself in the subsequent rising and was mainly responsible for the siege of the British army. Although a good soldier, he was temperamental and lacked the stature of a political leader. 'Ismat Allah Jabar Khel Ghilzay (b. 1830), who was influential with the Ghilzay

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47 BCA, 143.

48 F. Roberts to ..... India, 18 Feb 1880, PSLI, 28, 147.

tribe, in particular, and with the Mohmands, Shinwarays, Khugianays in general, was another leader.<sup>49</sup> His popularity was more on account of his parentage than of his personal ability. He was a member of the late Amir's Consultative Council and had served as Minister of the Interior under Sher 'Ali.<sup>50</sup> Sardar Mohammad Hasan, grandson of Amir Dost Mohammad (not to be confused with the pro-British Sardar Mohammad Hasan, son of Amir Dost Mohammad) proved to be the staunchest and most persistent supporter of Ya'qub. But he was more of a government official (he was the governor of Jalalabad when Afghanistan was invaded for the second time) than a popular leader. Of the other Barakzay sardars a mention should also be made of Sardar 'Abd Allah Khan, son of Sikander Khan, Sardar Mohammad Tahir Khan, son of Mohammad Sharif Khan and Sardar Mohammad 'Alam Khan (cousin of the late Amir). The last two sardars were amenable to compromise with the British and their pro-British attitude weakened the leadership of the Party considerably. Mir Bacha of Kohistan (a district to the north of Kabul) was a leader of the Tajiks. Being a persistent opponent of the British, he was one of the four whom Roberts had exempted from the amnesty.

The aim of the National Party was the restoration to power of the deported Amir and the observance of the "old engagements"<sup>51</sup> - a probable reference to the two

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49 BCA, 48.

50 Rishtia, 200.

51 Letters from elders of Afghanistan to Roberts (one dated 25 Dec 1879), PNEA, 103.

treaties of 1855 and 1857 concluded between Amir Dost Mohammad and the Government of India in which the latter, among other things, had undertaken not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan while the Amir had committed himself to be the friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies of the British.

Following the September massacre, Lytton resolved to divide the kingdom of Afghanistan. He had given up the idea of controlling Afghanistan through a puppet Amir. On 11 December 1879, the Home Government had agreed with him, stressing the point that military supremacy should take precedence over political arrangements. It was left to Lytton as to how he should carry out his scheme of disintegration.

Lytton's view was that Kandahar and Kabul should form two separate political entities. Herat was to be offered to Persia, on certain conditions. No decision had been reached as yet on the provinces between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus but Lytton was "...philosophical about the eventual loss of Badakhshan and Wakhan to Russia."<sup>52</sup> At the same time, he was not averse to their inclusion in the province of Kabul if its future Amir was able to hold them. The assigned frontier districts of Pishin, Kurram and Sibi and the passes of Khyber and Michni, secured by the treaty of Gandamak, were to be permanently annexed to

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52 Alder, G. J., British India's Northern Frontier 1865-95, London, 1963, 172.



India. The new rulers would be assisted militarily and financially and would be in subordinate alliances with Britain. Every attempt for a united Afghanistan, even by a friendly ruler, would be opposed. The scheme, if successful, was in fact an attempt to divide Afghanistan between Russia, Persia and British India, with the latter in a position to control eventually all territories up to the Hindu Kush.

The December rising had made an early settlement for Kabul necessary. But before a permanent settlement could be agreed on, a temporary administration was set up there on 15 January, 1880. Sardar Wali Mohammad Khan (half-brother of the late Amir) who, along with his sons and a few other insignificant sardars, had been protected by the British army during the rising, for their co-operation with the British, was appointed as Wali (governor) of Kabul. Mustaufi Habib Allah Wardak was to assist him in revenue affairs. The Wali was at no time able to exercise power outside the city. In the city, too, his power had to be maintained by the British military force. Roberts, however, was over-optimistic, believing that with the help of these Barakzay sardars and Qizilbashs "...it should be possible in time to bring over and attach to our interest a considerable part of the population."<sup>53</sup>

As to the permanent settlement for Kabul, the

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53 PNEA, 103.

situation did not seem promising either. The policy of disintegration, and the finding of a qualified ruler with the full backing of the people, did not seem to be feasible. The Afghans may not have had a special liking for Ya'qub when he was their Amir, but his deportation made him a martyr in their eyes, as was evidenced from the December rising. But Lytton was irrevocably averse to his restoration.

In the beginning, the attitude of the Government of India towards Ya'qub was favourable. The Indian Government annoyed the late Amir over Ya'qub's imprisonment in 1874. Lytton was so pleased with him that just before the massacre he noted that Ya'qub was "...behaving angelically."<sup>54</sup> Soon after the massacre, he changed his view. Was this because Ya'qub had a hand in the rising? The official judgement of the Government of India was that "...the massacre was not instigated by the Amir",<sup>55</sup> but the Amir and his immediate advisers were accused of being at least "culpably indifferent to the fate of the Envoy and his companions....."<sup>56</sup>

Lytton resolved to dethrone Ya'qub and in this he succeeded and carried the Council with him with but two dissensions. He was so much opposed to Ya'qub that he was willing to resign rather than see him restored. The Home

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54 Singhal, 49.

55 Ibid, 55.

56 Ibid, 56.

Government also agreed with him that Ya'qub should not be restored.<sup>57</sup>

The fact was that the policy of disintegration and the re-establishment of Ya'qub, in Lytton's words, "...a prince born to the hereditary sovereignty of the whole Afghan kingdom"<sup>58</sup> were incompatible. About Musa Jan (b. 1866 ?), son of Ya'qub, Lytton also held a similar view, arguing that he "...might be less willing than others who have no hereditary claims to sovereignty, to acquiesce in the new order of affairs in Afghanistan."<sup>59</sup> Obviously only puppet rulers with no hereditary claims could fit in in this "new order". Such a ruler was easily found for Kandahar. For Kabul, it proved so difficult that eventually Lytton invited a person with hereditary claims to sovereignty.

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57 PNEA, 146.

58 Ghose, D. P., England and Afghanistan, Calcutta, 1960, 97.

59 PNEA, 143.

## Chapter 2

## The Accession of 'Abd al-Rahman

At a time when Lytton was desperately looking for a friendly ruler for Kabul, Sardar 'Abd al-Rahman appeared in Badakhshan. Lytton correctly looked on him to be the only Barakzay sardar who could exclude the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali, to whom Lytton was obstinately opposed. In spite of the popular demand for the restoration to power of the ex-Amir, Lytton agreed to the amirate of 'Abd al-Rahman, and risked his possible ties with Russia. But 'Abd al-Rahman aspired to the whole of Afghanistan and proved a tough negotiator who exasperated British officials. He was nearly to raise the country against the British, whose declared policy now was to leave Afghanistan. But the cool statesmanship of Ripon (successor to Lytton) and the military movements in south-west Afghanistan of Sardar Ayub - the rival to 'Abd al-Rahman - induced the latter to accept the reduced State of Kabul, on British terms.

'Abd al-Rahman had spent most of his life in exile, mainly in Samarqand. After the death of Amir Sher 'Ali he was removed to Tashkand, apparently at the suggestion of Sardar Sher 'Ali, the Wali of Kandahar, who then led a mission of the late Amir to General von Kaufmann. 'Abd al-Rahman's repeated requests to enter Afghanistan during the reign of the late Amir were refused because of his relationship with Russia.

The deportation to India of the ex-Amir, Ya'qub, in December 1879, provided 'Abd al-Rahman with his

opportunity. Now even he was urged to go to Afghanistan by the Russian authorities in Tashkand.

When 'Abd al-Rahman left for Afghanistan is not certain. But it is known that he left Tashkand with about 100 horsemen, travelling through Khojand, Shahr-i-Sabz (near Samarqand) and Hissar. Before crossing the Oxus opposite Rustaq (a district in the north-east of Badakhshan), 'Abd al-Rahman sent off a letter to Shahzadah Mohammad Hasan, then the ruler of Badakhshan.

Geographically, Badakhshan proper lies between the province of Kataghan in the south, the Oxus in the north-east, Turkistan in the west and Wa-khan in the east. In 1914, its population of Tajiks, Mongols and Hazaras was estimated to be 120,000<sup>1</sup> with the Tajiks as the largest group. Among the Tajik population only those who lived in the most inaccessible highlands were Shi'as.<sup>2</sup>

In the confusion and anarchy that followed the death of Amir Sher 'Ali, Badakhshan became the centre of an intense struggle, first between the Afghans and the local inhabitants (Badakhshanis), and later between the members of the former ruling family of Badakhshan who, before the death of the late Amir, were either in prison or in exile.<sup>3</sup> This former ruling family had been on bad terms with the late Amir, because its leader, Mir Jahandar Shah was 'Abd al-Rahman's father-in-law. After the death of Sher 'Ali, the Afghan forces and governor, Sayyed

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1 GAB, vii.

2 GAB, 10.

3 PNEA, 112

Mohammad 'Alam, were forced to retreat to Kunduz by the local insurgents, who were led by Prince 'Abd al-Fayaz, and Mir Baba Khan (a nephew of Mir Jahandar Shah, who had been imprisoned in Mazar). Mir Baba was declared as "Amir al-Umara". He appointed his associates as district rulers.<sup>4</sup> Mir Baba was in power for about a year when he was ousted by Shahzadah Mohammad Hasan (son of Mir Shah, brother of Mir Jahandar Shah) and Mohammad 'Umar (son of Yusuf 'Ali, cousin of Jahandar Shah). They had been either in exile in Ferghana<sup>5</sup> or with 'Abd al-Rahman in Samarqand.<sup>6</sup> Mohammad 'Umar rebelled against the Shahzadah and the latter had to expel him beyond the Oxus with the assistance of his former rival, Mir Baba, who was then appointed as the ruler of Rustaq.<sup>7</sup> The coalition between the Mir and the Shahzada was dictated by expediency. In fact, they were rivals.

It was at this juncture that a letter from 'Abd al-Rahman reached the Shahzadah, asking his assistance with money and supplies, but assuring him that he was intending to go to Kabul.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the Shahzadah opposed his entry. In excuse, he wrote to 'Abd al-Rahman that "The envoy of the British Government [Mohammad Ashur Shignani, Agent of the British Resident at Gilgit, who had recently been with the Shahzadah] is with me. I have created alliance with that Government and I can

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4 Bek, Mirza Fazil, Mirza Sang Mohammad, Tarikh-i-Badakhshan (Persian text), 1325 A.H. (1907), photostated Leningrad, 1959, 197.

5 Bek, Mirza Fazil, 198.

6 Young, (Secretary, the Punjab Government), to A. Lyall, (Secretary to Government of India), 30 Mar 1880, PSLI, 25, 921.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

not give you any assistance for fighting that Government."<sup>9</sup> Being related to the Shahzadah, 'Abd al-Rahman had hoped for assistance from him. Now, 'Abd al-Rahman had to force his way in, but his own account of crossing the Oxus in early February<sup>10</sup> is, no doubt, an exaggeration when he says that the army of the enemy, numbering 12,000, facing him dispersed<sup>11</sup> without any reason. Both Ashur Shighnani and Mirza Fazil Bek are unanimous in saying that Mir Baba and Mohammad 'Umar brought 'Abd al Rahman to Rustaq.<sup>12</sup>

From Rustaq, 'Abd al-Rahman succeeded in ousting the Shahzadah with the assistance of Mir Baba to whom 'Abd al-Rahman had promised the governorship of Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan. Accompanied by a number of mirs (elders) including Ashur Shighnani, the Shahzadah escaped to Yassin and ultimately to Gilgit where he died shortly afterward.

At Faizabad, after having thwarted a plot by Mir Baba, 'Abd al-Rahman feared a coalition of the Mir and Mohammad 'Umar. He then set out for Kataghan (Kunduz), inhabited almost entirely by about 120,000 Uzbeks of the Kataghan tribe.<sup>13</sup>

Ever since 1865, Kataghan had been ruled by Sultan Murad, son of Mir Ataliq. Sultan Murad was a powerful

9 Ibid, 922.

10 KD, ... PSLI, 25, 9.

11 Mahomed, S., 1, 171.

12 Young to Lyall, 30 Mar 1880, PSLI, 25, 922.

13 GAB, 62.

ruler, but a great opportunist who, during the civil war in the sixties, chose, with remarkable success, whoever was winning. Twice he had sided with 'Abd al-Rahman, but did not hesitate to desert him when he saw that he was losing in 1869. Thereafter, Sultan Murad had held Kataghan as a fief from the Amir, and expelled for him Mir Jahandar Shah from Badakhshan.<sup>14</sup> During the British occupation of Afghanistan, Sultan Murad held friendly correspondence with Roberts in Kabul, and the British Resident at Gilgit<sup>15</sup>, and defied General Ghulam Haydar Wardak, who held Turkistan for the deposed Amir.<sup>16</sup> But a force sent against him from Turkistan forced him to leave Kataghan. He was on his way to Badakhshan when he met 'Abd al-Rahman at Kala-i-Afghan (a small village in the extreme south of Badakhshan). Although Sultan Murad had earlier refused passage for 'Abd al-Rahman through his territory on the pretext that this would "...offend the English,"<sup>17</sup> 'Abd al-Rahman not only pardoned him, he even promised him Kataghan when he came to power. Together they arrived at Talukan (a town about 21 miles to the east of Khanabad), some time before 21 March 1880. It was here that the victorious army of Mazar in Kataghan (5 battalions, 1,200 cavalry, 5 batteries)<sup>18</sup> also joined 'Abd al-Rahman.

The acceptance of him by the army as a leader was

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14 BCA, 200.

15 Sultan Murad to Scully, British Resident (Gilgit), 21 Jan 1880, PSLI, 25, 925.

16 See p.181.

17 Mahomed, S., 1, 175.

18 Mahomed, S., 1, 183.



a turning point for 'Abd al-Rahman. From a mere Barakzay Sardar, with a small number of followers, among predominantly non-Pashtun inhabitants, 'Abd al-Rahman now became the acknowledged leader of a regular army. His prestige and power increased further when news reached him that the whole army of Turkistan had already joined Sardar Mohammad Ishaq, who supported his cause.<sup>19</sup> All the provinces of northern Afghanistan except the district of Maimana came under his rule. Now 'Abd al-Rahman was in a position to enforce his authority. In a public darbar he ordered that "All the rulers of this country must bring money according to their position,..."<sup>20</sup>. The unreliable Mir Baba was imprisoned, ostensibly for his failure to release "6000" Afghan women<sup>21</sup>, but in reality for his earlier plot against 'Abd al-Rahman which had been instigated by General Ghulam Haydar Wardak. On 24 March 1880 'Abd al-Rahman set out for Kunduz (a large town about 13 miles to the north of Khanabad).

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In Kabul, armed opposition to the British lasted longer than had been originally anticipated. London was getting restless at the prolonged occupation and was not ready to sanction it further.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, Roberts' executions of the insurgents in Kabul had

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19 Vide p182.

20 Mahomed, S.,1,188.

21 Ibid, 189.

22 Singhal, D.P.,59.

aroused public fury even in England. Two consequences were finally to emerge. First, Lytton decided that all military forces were to be removed from Northern Afghanistan by the following autumn (October) and before that the country was to be pacified. Vast military operations ("the Spring Operations") were therefore sanctioned in accordance with which General Stewart was ordered to pacify the country between Kabul and Kandahar, and General Roberts was ordered to move with his forces to Kohistan and Bamian. Second, implementing the "new order" required vast diplomatic skill which Roberts evidently lacked. Lytton therefore deputed Lepel Henry Griffin,<sup>23</sup> to undertake all the administrative and diplomatic affairs, under the general supervision of General Stewart, who would replace Roberts as the British Supreme Commander in Northern Afghanistan. Griffin reached Kabul on 19 March with instructions from Lytton on a wide range of subjects, among them:-

- ' 1st. Non-restoration of the ex-Amir. '
- ' 2nd. Permanent severance of western [Kandahar] from north-west Afghanistan. '

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23 (1838-1908). Joined ICS 1860. Appointed assistant Commissioner in Panjab. His appointment at Kabul had been preceded by a number of civil posts. On his appointment to Kabul, Lytton said of him, "I have come to the conclusion that there is only one man [Griffin] in India who is in all respects completely qualified.....to do for the Government of India what I want done as quickly as possible...[in Afghanistan]". After the termination of his job in Kabul, Griffin was appointed Agent to the Governor-General in Central India, a post he held until he retired in 1889.

'3rd. Neither annexation nor permanent occupation of the latter.'

'4th. Willingness to recognise any ruler (except Ya'qub) whom the Afghan themselves will empower to arrange with us on their behalf for the restoration of their country and its evacuation by our troops.'<sup>24</sup>

Two points of the above need comment. Lytton was not only opposed to the restoration of Ya'qub, he was also unwilling to accept either Musa Jan or Sardar Ayub as Amir. With the policy of disintegration three terms were widely used by the British officials. The term Western Afghanistan was applied to the province of Herat which was to have been offered to Persia. Since this scheme ultimately fell through, the question of fixing its boundaries did not arise. Southern Afghanistan was applied to the province of Kandahar. Since Lytton considered the Hindu Kush to be the natural boundary of India he wished to push the northern boundary of Kandahar up to the Hindu Kush along the Helmand<sup>25</sup> river, in order to obtain a commanding position over Herat - "the gate to India". For this reason the severance of Kandahar from the rest of the country was declared to be "irrevocable" and efforts were made to win over the Hazaras of the southern Hindu Kush. Northern Afghanistan was used to designate the provinces of Kabul, Ghazni and Jalalabad. The provinces lying between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus

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24. Balfour, B., Lord Lytton's Indian Administration: 1876 - 1880, London 1899, 408.

25. PNEA, 95.

(Kataghan, Badakhshan, Mazar and Maimana) were, generally, called Afghan Turkistan.<sup>26</sup>

Griffin's main task was to search for a ruler for Kabul, acceptable to "the Afghan themselves" and to Lytton. The difficulty of his task could be appreciated when we bear in mind that the wishes of Lytton and the great majority of the Afghans were irreconcilable. On the whole, Griffin did well but at certain stages his judgement nearly failed him.

Within a few days of his arrival at Kabul, Griffin explained the main features of British policy towards Afghanistan to Sardar Wali Mohammad and Sardar Mohammad Hashim, an influential cousin of the ex-Amir. This stirred the various factions in Kabul and the National Party in the country into activity.

In Kabul, the strongest party was probably that of Sardar Mohammad Hashim, son of the late Mohammad Sharif (d. 1883 at Baghdad), full-brother of Amir Sher 'Ali. He was the richest of all the Barakzay sardars, enjoying the additional prestige of being the son-in-law of Amir Sher Ali's favourite wife - an able and energetic lady. As a person, Hashim was gentle and polite but lacked determination, and preferred diplomacy to militancy. After the deportation of Ya'qub he hoped to become Amir<sup>27</sup>, and believed that he would if he

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26 Vide p.180.

27 BCA, 92.

succeeded in building a bridge between the National Party and the British. However, the National Party never trusted him, and the British officers withdrew their original support when they started negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman. Only then did Hashim show opposition to British policy. He had the whole-hearted support of Sardar 'Abd Allah Jan, one of the most capable Barakzay sardars, and the half-hearted support of the Mustaufi Habib Allah. The Wali also aspired to the amirate, although it was generally known that he would not survive for a day without the backing of the British army.

In the Jalalabad area two powerful elders, Mohammad Akbar Khan Mohmand of Lalpura,<sup>28</sup> and Sayyed Mahmud, Badshah of Kunar,<sup>29</sup> supported British policy in the face of a jihad led by Mulla Khalil, the Faqir of Mian 'Isa, Sadiq Khan and others. Griffin spoke of Akbar Khan and the Badshah as well as "the various other chiefs of lesser or greater importance, who form the English party."<sup>30</sup> The identity of the "other chiefs" is not known. Griffin might have been referring to the elders of the Qizilbashs, Rajab 'Ali Hazara, an influential elder of the Hazaras of the southern Hindu Kush, and to others, mainly contractors who had benefitted from the British occupation. In Griffin's words, they "...would rejoice if Afghanistan were for ever annexed to the British dominions."<sup>31</sup>

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28 See p. 4.

29 See p. 111.

30 KD, 1 Apr 1880, PSLI, 25, 227.

31 Ibid.

But the most influential voice in the choice of the Amir was that of the National Party. It was pro-Ya'qub, pro-Musa and pro-Ayub, although it is not known whether there was much communication between the Party and Ayub, who held Herat. The National Party would not accept any compromise on the integrity of Afghanistan. Although it was hostile to British policy in Afghanistan, the Party preferred British friendship to that of Russia.

Before the arrival of Griffin in Kabul, Roberts had made contact with the elders of the National Party, probably in response to letters sent by the elders of the Party to him. On 10 February 1880, Roberts had deputed Badshah Khan, an elder of the Ahmedzay Ghilzay from the district of Logar, and others to inform Mohammad Jan Wardak that the British had no interest in Afghanistan, except to protect it against the intrigues of Russia and that there was no need for any fighting.<sup>32</sup> But Mohammad Jan did not trust Roberts' words and imprisoned the messenger. In mid-February, Roberts sent the Mustaufi to the elders of the National Party at Ghazni in the hope that he would be able to impress upon the elders the necessity of naming someone to rule Kabul.<sup>33</sup> The proposal fell short of what the elders of the National Party had earlier demanded, but the mission of the Mustaufi had some success. The elders of the National Party showed their willingness to come to a settlement with the British. They sent back the Mustaufi, with a number of rather insignificant men who arrived at Kabul on 11 April 1880.

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32 Roberts to Mohammad Jan, ... PSLI, 25, 25.

33 PNEA, 178.

In a letter of 9 April, 202 elders of the party proposed that:-

"1 - Our king and ruler should be released and restored to his former power; and we, the tribesmen, guarantee that.....he will maintain a lasting and sincere friendship towards the British Government...."

"2 - The British Agent, whoever he may be, should be of Mohammaden religion, while all British troops should be withdrawn from our country."

"3 - The kingdom of Afghanistan should be restored in its entirety..... In this way, it will be able to cope with its foreign [apparently Russian] enemies."<sup>34</sup>

On 13 April 1880, Griffin rejected these proposals in a public darbar. Instead he told the emissaries of the National Party that Afghanistan would be divided up and Ya'qub never allowed to reign again.<sup>35</sup>

Once again an opportunity for coming to an understanding with the National Party was missed. The proposals could have become a basis for a settlement, but Lytton's obstinate refusal to contemplate the restoration of Ya'qub was a stumbling block. Followers of the National Party resisted the advance of General Stewart who had left Kandahar on 1 April for Kabul. Two bloody engagements were fought between the forces of the National Party and those of the General - one in Mushaki (about 23 miles to the south of Ghazni), the other in Char Assia (near Kabul). With the ultimate victory of the

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34 Afghan elders to Griffin, undated, PSLI, 25, 509.

35 KD, ... PSLI, 25, 325.

British forces, two Barakzay leaders of the National Party lent their support to the British, naively hoping this would help towards the restoration of Ya'qub. On 24 April, when Ghazni fell to General Stewart, Sardar Mohammad 'Alam accepted the temporary governorship of that city.

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During this period, 'Abd al-Rahman tried to consolidate his position in Turkistan and extend his influence in the country, especially in the province of Kabul. In Kabul, the main centre of his attention was Kohistan, where he had many followers. In his letters to the elders and his relations, 'Abd al-Rahman, with remarkable skill, appealed to the hopes of the militant anti-British Afghans as well as to the British. Basically, his letters were not anti-British, but they were equally not meant to disregard the anti-British feelings in the country. In fact 'Abd al-Rahman kept in with both sides, the one expecting a peaceful settlement and the other leadership against the British.

'Abd al-Rahman called on the Kohistanis to be ready to fight for their faith and country and announced that he was moving on Kabul. He advised Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam and others to await his arrival and to attack the line of communications rather than Sherpur<sup>36</sup>, the headquarters of the British forces at Kabul. To his relations in Kabul, where his letters were most likely to be intercepted,

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36 Griffin to Foreign (T),..... PSLI, 25, 696.



'Abd al-Rahman wrote that "...affairs in Afghanistan had fallen into confusion owing to bad management and breaking faith with Powerful State...."<sup>37</sup> or "I hope when I have talked the matter over with the English Government, they will.....be pleased to withdraw..."<sup>38</sup>

Among the people, the immediate response was one of expectation and excitement. They looked on 'Abd al-Rahman as the long-awaited leader. The Charikaris expressed their willingness to join 'Abd al-Rahman.<sup>39</sup> Mir Bacha started arming soldiers for him and Ghulam Haydar Charkhi, a leader of the National Party, joined him in Kataghan. Only General Mohammad Jan Wardak came out against him, warning the British officials that "...Abdur Rahman and the sons of Azim [Mohammad Ishaq and his brothers] are sent by Russia."<sup>40</sup>

The Kabul sardars were disturbed. Mohammad Hashim entered into closer communication with the Mustaufi, and with the liberal use of his money tried to win over the National Party.

Griffin was alarmed. Since Kabul is, strategically, at the mercy of Kohistan, Griffin believed that a general rising of the Kohistanis would prove formidable. He wrote, "The principal danger to be feared is that.....

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37 Griffin to Foreign (T) ... PSLI, 25, 696.

38 'Abd al-Rahman to Sardar Fakir Mohammad, 23 Mar 1880, PSLI, 25, 253.

39 Lytton to Cranbrook (T), 9 Apr 1880, PSLI, 25, 99.

40 Mohammad Jan Wardak to Nawab Ghulam Husayn (Assistant to Political Officer) ... PSLI, 25, 705.

the Sardar may prefer to trust a general rising, unite his forces with those of the Ghazni party, who might be induced to join him, and endeavour to become Amir of Afghanistan without the assistance of the English whom he knows to be anxious to leave the country."<sup>41</sup> The picture looked still gloomier to Griffin when an erroneous report reached him that 'Abd al-Rahman had made an alliance with Ayub. As will be discussed later, Griffin's alarm was premature.

Long before 'Abd al-Rahman had stirred up the people, Lytton had thought of him as Amir for Kabul, mainly because both were opposed to the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali. With the offer of Kabul to the hitherto fugitive 'Abd al-Rahman, Lytton hoped he would make 'Abd al-Rahman so grateful that he would easily accept his "new order". It did not prove difficult for Lytton to obtain approval of his choice from London, with the one qualification that 'Abd al-Rahman was "...acceptable to the country, and he would be contented with northern Afghanistan."<sup>42</sup> However, before that Cranbrook asked Lytton, "But where is he, and how do you propose to know his wishes?"<sup>43</sup> Lytton had already instructed his officials in Afghanistan to find out the whereabouts and wishes of the Sardar.

While the Sardar was in exile, his mother lived in

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41 Griffin to Stewart, 8 Apr 1880, FSLI, 25, 247.

42 PNEA, 151.

43 Ibid.

Kandahar and his sister in Kabul. They were contacted by the British officials, probably in early February. In a letter to 'Abd al-Rahman, his sister wrote "Twice the English had asked me about you. They enquired whether you were disposed to be friendly with them."<sup>44</sup> Sayyed Ghous al-Din, a nazir of the family of 'Abd al-Rahman, had a similar letter. "The English are exceedingly anxious for your friendship. They constantly ask me about you."<sup>45</sup> On March 3, 1880, 'Abd al-Rahman's mother, who was interested in public affairs, was able to inform General Stewart in Kandahar that 'Abd al-Rahman had rejected Ayub's invitation for a joint march on Kabul because "... he had no intention of acting against the English..."<sup>46</sup> Lytton considered these letters very important and wrote to Griffin about them, before the latter had set out for Kabul, that they may have "... the most important practical bearing on the early solution of the very difficult problem you are about to deal with in North Afghanistan."<sup>47</sup>

Because an agent of the British Resident at Gilgit was with Shahzadah Mohammad Hasan, Lytton must have known that 'Abd al-Rahman had entered Badakhshan in early February, yet he still seemed to avoid contact with him. When the encouraging letter of 'Abd al-Rahman's mother was followed by the establishment of 'Abd al-Rahman's

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44 'Abd al-Rahman's sister to 'Abd al-Rahman, undated, PSLI, 25, 220.

45 Ghous al-Din to 'Abd al-Rahman, undated, PSLI, 25, 220.

46 'Abd al-Rahman's mother to Stewart, PSLI, 25, 34.

47 Balfour, B, 421.

authority in Kataghan, three messengers, from Kandahar, Peshawar and Kabul, were sent to him. Only the one from Kabul, Mohammad Sarwar Ghilzay, a confidential servant of 'Abd al-Rahman's family, succeeded in his mission.

The negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman have been covered in works by D. K. Ghose and D. P. Singhal, and by the latter in full detail, but they have dealt mainly with the diplomatic aspects. However, the attitude of 'Abd al-Rahman in these negotiations is fully comprehensible only when the attitudes of the various political factions within the country are given equal weight. After a long residence abroad, 'Abd al-Rahman found himself in a situation in which he had to deal with the British within the narrow framework of the "new order", and at the same time try to win over to his side the most influential elders in Kabul who were basically committed to the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali and without whose support it was difficult to establish himself. The following pages give a balanced, but a short, account of both aspects - internal as well as diplomatic.

On 2 April, Mohammad Sarwar set out for Kataghan. Griffin's written message to 'Abd al-Rahman was very general, inviting him to make any representations that he might wish to the British Government about his purpose in entering Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, Griffin's verbal message was more precise. Sarwar was directed to tell

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48 Griffin to 'Abd al-Rahman, PSLI, 25, 225.

'Abd al-Rahman that the English would like to establish an Amir who would be friendly with them and that they were determined to leave the country and that they had no hostile feelings towards him because of his long residence within the Russian Empire, and that the British Government was able to help him more than could Russia.<sup>49</sup>

On 10 April 1880, Sarwar reached Kunduz where 'Abd al-Rahman had taken up residence. 'Abd al-Rahman did not believe in open diplomacy, but in Kataghan he was not strong enough to do otherwise. To deal with the British while ignoring the army and elders would cause his "ruin".<sup>50</sup> He therefore received Sarwar, in an open darbar attended by about "7,000", Uzbeks and Afghans. His written answer which he composed in their presence and which was approved by them was general, but his verbal message, like that of Griffin to him, was the more important, although that too was given in the presence of his council. The most essential points of his verbal message were that he would like to know the nature of the British friendship, would like to discuss the problem of negotiation in person in Charikar, that Afghanistan under him would be friendly to both Russia and Britain, and that the country, like Persia, would enjoy immunity from foreign interference. About his relationship with Russia, Griffin was to be told that "I have entered into no secret or written engagement with the Russians. I am bound to them.....simply by feelings of gratitude. I have eaten their salt and for 12 years

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49 Singhal, 64.

50 Mahomed, S, 1, 191.

was dependent on their hospitality."<sup>51</sup>

Between Sarwar's return to Kabul on 21 April 1880 and the despatch of a second mission by Griffin to 'Abd al-Rahman on May 3, much had happened in Kabul and England which was to have significant bearing on the affairs of Afghanistan. The Spring Operation had come to an end and General Stewart had arrived in Kabul. Although it was the harvesting season and Ghazni was no longer the headquarters of the National Party, gatherings were being held in the Ghilzay country, and the opposition was still unabated. In Kohistan, the pendulum of popular enthusiasm continued to swing towards 'Abd al-Rahman, and the disbanded soldiers of the ex-Amir were joining him in large numbers. In England, as a result of the general election, the Liberals under W. E. Gladstone formed a new government on 28 April. The Marquis of Hartington was the new Secretary of State for India and the Marquis of Ripon the new Viceroy, but until his arrival in India (8 June 1880) Lytton continued in office. The new administration was against an active policy in Afghanistan and had pledged itself to the recall of British troops from Afghanistan "decently and "honourably". Although this change gave a new urgency to the early settlement of the Afghan problem, its importance should not be over-estimated.

Before trying to examine how 'Abd al-Rahman's letter

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51 'Abd al-Rahman to M. Sarwar, PSLI, 25, 603.

was interpreted in Calcutta, it is necessary to examine, as far as we can in the absence of Russian sources, why Russia permitted 'Abd al-Rahman to enter Afghanistan, and what was 'Abd al-Rahman's own purpose in doing so.

It is clear from Sultan Mahomed's The Life of Abdur Rahman that during his residence in Tashkand and Samarqand (1869 - 1880) 'Abd al-Rahman was treated well and received moderate pension. Although he did not mix with the Russians, he occasionally met Kaufmann.<sup>52</sup> But he was refused permission, despite his repeated requests, to enter Afghanistan during the reign of Sher 'Ali and of Ya'qub. Only when Ya'qub was deported to India was 'Abd al-Rahman allowed and even urged to enter Afghanistan. "You surely will be able," says the Secretary of Kaufmann to 'Abd al-Rahman, "to drive out General Ghulam Haider and establish yourself in Turkistan..... The English have removed Yakub Khan to Hindustan; the opportunity is favourable. If you wish to go you are at liberty to do so."<sup>53</sup> Some three days later, 'Abd al-Rahman was emphatically urged. "...Why do you not go? If you fail it does not matter much, you can return to us and your present allowances..."<sup>54</sup>

During this time Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad and the main lines of communication had fallen to the British forces and it appeared as if the British meant to annex

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52 BCA, 20.

53 'Abd al-Rahman to Sarwar, PSLI, 25, 603.

54 Ibid.

Afghanistan south of the Hindu Kush, as indeed was Lytton's original idea. In such an event, a Barakzay sardar such as 'Abd al-Rahman, who had spent many years in Russian Turkistan would not be allowed in Kabul. Because the Sardar was encouraged to oust Ghulam Haydar Wardak, it suggests the view that it was more than likely that the Russians had a long term design on Afghanistan north of the Hindu Kush, a view that is borne out by their southward advance in the mid-eighties. A small Afghan state to the north of the Hindu Kush under 'Abd al-Rahman would be dependent on Russia eventually, especially in the face of a hostile British Empire. Hence the lack of any written agreement with 'Abd al-Rahman and the small amount of assistance given him in arms and money<sup>55</sup> to establish himself in Turkistan. But was 'Abd al-Rahman to be content with only Turkistan?

Because of the lack of evidence, we are not sure with what purpose 'Abd al-Rahman left Tashkand for Afghanistan. But once he entered Afghanistan, all the evidence suggests that he was aiming for Kabul. In his letter to Shahzadah Hasan, 'Abd al-Rahman spoke of "...proceeding to Kabul..."<sup>56</sup> Mirza Fazil Bek held the same view.<sup>57</sup> To Sultan Murad of Kataghan 'Abd al-Rahman wrote that he had come "...to release.....Afghanistan from the hands of the English..."<sup>58</sup> It may be argued that these were just ploys, aimed at

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55 Griffin to Stewart,.....PSLI, 25, 1253.

56 'Abd al-Rahman to the Shahzadah,.....PSLI, 25, 921.

57 Fazil Bek, 211.

58 Mahomed, S, 1, 176.



creating a favourable atmosphere for his entry and eventual establishment in their lands. But there are other considerations which support the opposite view, with even greater force. Letters from his relations, indicating that the British were disposed to be friendly towards him, reached him when he was in Badakhshan. In the light of these letters, his rapid advance to Kunduz, in order to make an early contact with the British officials, may be understood. He was fully aware of the strength in Afghanistan and equally he was disillusioned with the Russians, of whom he said, "I know what the Russians did to my grandfather, the late Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, and to the late Amir Sher 'Ali. They will do the same to me."<sup>59</sup> Also, he may have guessed that he had a good chance of becoming the ruler of Afghanistan if he responded favourably to the British. This may explain why in his first message to Griffin 'Abd al-Rahman said that he had entered Afghanistan in order "...to help my nation..."<sup>60</sup> Therefore it is tentatively suggested that Russia's design on northern Afghanistan was not altogether shared by 'Abd al-Rahman, and that the latter wished to become the ruler of the whole of Afghanistan.

'Abd al-Rahman's message was received at a time (21 April) when Lytton was satisfied with his Afghan policy. He thought the massacre had been revenged by the capture of Kabul, the severance of Kandahar, and the

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59 Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to Mohammad Afzal (British Agent Kabul) 29 June 1883, PSLI, 35, 720.

60 Mahomed, S, 1, 192.

seizure of the frontier districts. By October, the army was to withdraw whether Kabul had found a ruler or not. This may explain why the points which 'Abd al-Rahman had raised were not fully answered and the throne of Kabul was offered to him. What Lytton had to say about them to Cranbrook was vaguely conveyed to 'Abd al-Rahman through the next messengers. About 'Abd al-Rahman's reference to Russia as a co-guarantor of a neutral Afghanistan, Lytton, as might be expected, was completely opposed. He said: "...he ['Abd al-Rahman] must put out of his head .....the Anglo Russian protection..."<sup>61</sup> over Afghanistan. Although 'Abd al-Rahman was considered to be under Russian influence, and his message dictated by Russian "advisers", in Lytton's view this did not make him ineligible for the throne of Kabul - a strange attitude, because it was precisely the fear of Russian influence over Amir Sher 'Ali which was the main cause of the Anglo-Afghan war. But Lytton was against 'Abd al-Rahman's territorial concept of "Afghanistan". To Lytton, the separation of Kandahar was irrevocable. "...he ['Abd al-Rahman] must put out of his head the acquisition of Kandahar which we would never restore..."<sup>62</sup> Under such conditions, the transfer of Kabul to 'Abd al-Rahman was to be unconditional and with a reasonable amount of assistance.<sup>63</sup>

On 3 May 1880, Griffin sent a mission, led by Sardar Mohammad Afzal Wazirzadah, to 'Abd al-Rahman. Sardar

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61 Balfour, 415.

62 Lytton to Cranbrook, ... PSLI, 25, 438.

63 Lyall to Griffin, ... PSLI, 25, 745.

Mohammad Ibrahim and Sardar Sher Mohammad Barakzay were its other members. In choosing Mohammad Afzal and Mohammad Ibrahim, Griffin made his first mistake, because they were Amir Sher 'Ali's brother-in-law and son respectively, and reported unfavourably on 'Abd al-Rahman. Afzal was a son of Nizam al-Dowla Sadozay who had resided on a British pension in India. Mohammad Afzal had distinguished himself in the British service and was now an Assistant Political Officer in Kabul. He had relations in the Kohistan and had some influence with them. Mohammad Ibrahim was the eldest surviving but incompetent son of the late Amir. Also, because of his service to the British, Ibrahim had no influence with the Afghans and was himself under the influence of his uncle, the Wali of Kabul, who was opposed to 'Abd al-Rahman. The third member of the mission was an unimportant sardar, but a well-wisher of 'Abd al-Rahman.

The conditions of the "unconditional" offer were so severe that even Griffin was pessimistic about its successful outcome. He believed that neither 'Abd al-Rahman nor Ayub would accept the throne of Kabul if both Kandahar and Herat, the two provinces most closely associated with the historical glories of their line, were taken from them.<sup>64</sup> He therefore searched for some concessions to be made. Since the scheme of offering Herat to Persia had fallen through, Griffin and Stewart both favoured the inclusion of Herat in the dominion of

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64 Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1256.

the ruler of Kabul, to which the Government of India agreed, but with the reservation that 'Abd al-Rahman must take possession of it himself.<sup>65</sup> As an alternative to agreement with 'Abd al-Rahman, Griffin proposed that "In the event of failure, Abdur Rahman be set aside and a new Amir proclaimed."<sup>66</sup> But if no capable Amir was found, in that case the great Afghan tribes would be told that "...each tribe should manage its internal affairs in the same manner as the independent tribes of the north-west frontiers, Afridis, Waziris, Usufzais, and others have been wont to do."<sup>67</sup> Strangely, Griffin proposed to reduce the already reduced state of Kabul, and protect the elders of Lalpura and Kunar to whom they had given guarantees.<sup>68</sup> But none of these proposals was acceptable to the Government of India, because they might involve India, which she did not want, in the struggles among equally matched factions, perpetuate anarchy, and divide the country still further without a government.<sup>69</sup>

On 15 May the mission arrived at Khanabad (the centre of Kataghan, about 237 miles to the north of Kabul) where 'Abd al-Rahman had taken up residence. In Khanabad 'Abd al-Rahman had with him almost all the influential elders of Kohistan. He was confident of their loyalty but he had not yet won over the Ghilzay elders, though he

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65 Lyall to Griffin, 27 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1075.

66 Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1256.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid, 1258.

69 Lyall to Griffin, 20 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1263.

was in constant communication with them. Before accepting the throne, he preferred to consult the Ghilzay elders. He said: "...I will first summon the chiefs of Logar, the Ghilzays, and Wardaks, and will bring them to consent to my rule, like the Kohistanis."<sup>70</sup> He feared that his association with the British without consulting the Ghilzays would make him like the puppet rulers of Kabul and Kandahar. Although Mohammad Afzal went beyond his instructions and offered 'Abd al-Rahman the amirate and a treaty with India, 'Abd al-Rahman was still unwilling to accept them. He said, "Singly, I can neither be friend nor foe of anyone; my special desire therefore is to accept no position and make no treaty without the approval and consent of the chiefs of my nation."<sup>71</sup> At the same time, 'Abd al-Rahman was very careful not to lose the opportunity. He therefore adopted delaying tactics and in a public darbar asked the mission the following questions:-

"When the British Government tells me that what are to be the boundaries of Afghanistan; will Kandahar, as of old, be left in my kingdom or not? Will a European Envoy and a Government (British) remain within the borders of Afghanistan, after friendship is made between us two or not? What enemy of the British Government shall I be expected to repel and what manner of assistance will the Government wish me to give? And what

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70 Afzal and others to Griffin, 18 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1272.

71 Ibid, 1271.

benefits will the Government undertake to confer on me and on my countrymen?"<sup>72</sup>

On 16 May, 'Abd al-Rahman sent his formal reply through two members of the mission, who arrived at Kabul on June 2. 'Abd al-Rahman kept Mohammad Afzal at Khanabad; he concluded that "The Sardar desires friendship of the British Government, but is suspicious. Russia is assisting him with money and arms. Believes he is very popular with the nation."<sup>73</sup>

Meanwhile, 'Abd al-Rahman increased his communication with the elders of the country and addressed almost all groups, including the Qizilbashs, the Hazaras, and even some of the staunchest supporters of the ex-Amir, like Mohammad Jan and others. It is significant to note that of the 97 letters sent through one Nazir Mohammad Qasim, there was only one letter to a Kandahari.<sup>74</sup> As usual, the tones of his letters varied, but he spoke less of a jihad. He advised the Kohistanis not to make disturbance but to be ready.<sup>75</sup> To the more militant faction of the National Party, represented by the elders of the Maidan and Mohammad Jan Wardak, 'Abd al-Rahman wrote that "...there should be no passive laxity on your part in collecting your levies, who should remain fully equipped and armed, but passive and stationary until the result [of the negotiations] is known, of which I shall acquaint you."<sup>76</sup> Reportedly, 'Abd al-Rahman went so far as to

72 Ibid. 1272.

73 Ibid.

74 'Abd al-Rahman to elders, PSLI, 25, 1296.

75 'Abd al-Rahman to Khwaja Sultan (Kohistan), 19 May 1880, KD, 25, 1088.

76 'Abd al-Rahman to elders in Maidan Jamad-i-us-Sani, 1297, PSLI, 25, 1305.

seek the advice of some influential elders of the eastern Ghilzays whether he should go to Kabul or not.<sup>77</sup>

Despite the moderate tone of these letters, popular militancy was increasing. Earlier, Mir Ghulam Haydar, a spokesman for the Kohistan elders and son-in-law of the late Mohammad A'zam, had urged Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam, Mohammad Jan and the elders of the southern Ghilzays and of Logar that should the British not accept 'Abd al-Rahman "...it was incumbent upon all Afghans to rise and make a final effort to expel the English."<sup>78</sup> The spring season was on its way out and most people had gathered their crops. Also the appearance of the Safays of Tagao at Kohistan gave a new dimension to the anti-British struggle. Griffin took all this seriously. He said, "Should the cry [of jihad] be raised.....it would spread like wild-fire."<sup>79</sup> But he thought it might not prove difficult to expel 'Abd al-Rahman by the expenditure of 3 or 4 lakhs of rupees in paying up the Turkistan troops and raising the Uzbek population against him.<sup>80</sup>

In Kabul, when the opening of negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman was known, changes took place in the political factions. The Wali abandoned hope of the throne. Similarly, Mohammad Hashim also saw his chance lost. He asked permission to go to Farah, ostensibly to

77 'Abd al-Rahman to Ghilzay elders (eastern), KD, 19 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1087.

78 Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1252.

79 Ibid, 1254.

80 Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1256.

his own estate but in reality to join Sardar Ayub. Sardar Mohammad 'Alam and Sardar Mohammad Tahir tried to impress upon Griffin that "...Yakub was the only man who could really pacify the country."<sup>81</sup> But the man who really tried to thwart the negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman was Mustaufi Habib Allah Wardak. He had much influence with the Logaris and Wardaks and was a personal friend of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam and Mohammad Jan and was respected throughout the country. In many ways the Mustaufi was the most able and powerful man in the country, with the intelligence to devise schemes and the patience and powers of organisation successfully to carry them out.<sup>82</sup>

The accession of 'Abd al-Rahman meant ruin to the Mustaufi. Besides being a senior official of the late Amir Sher 'Ali, the Mustaufi had made 'Abd al-Rahman his enemy. Twice the Mustaufi had written to General Ghulam Haydar Wardak to dispose of any member of the family of 'Abd al-Rahman who might cross into Turkistan.<sup>83</sup> After the escape of the General, his secretary went over to 'Abd al-Rahman, so presumably the Mustaufi's actions were known to 'Abd al-Rahman. The Mustaufi then increased his secret activities against the negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman. In Kabul he tried to combine all the sardars of the Sher 'Ali faction against 'Abd al-Rahman.<sup>84</sup> In Turkistan he endeavoured to raise the country against

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81 Sardar Mohammad 'Alam to Griffin, 12 May 1880, 25, 1203.

82 Griffin to Stewart, 21 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1066.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.



'Abd Al-Rahman and to incite such disaffection in his army as to prevent his visiting Kabul.<sup>85</sup> But on 20 May the Mustaufi was deported to India. Griffin wrote, "The removal of the Mustaufi appears sufficient for the break up of the formidable combination formed against the Government."<sup>86</sup>

On 21 May 1880, before 'Abd al-Rahman's answer was received in Kabul, Lord Hartington, the new Secretary of State for India, had announced his views on Afghan policy. He argued against the military occupation of the whole country. Prompt evacuation and the re-establishment of a "...settled government"<sup>87</sup> were considered to be the best alternatives. 'Abd al-Rahman might be established in Kabul "...with as little direct assistance from Her Majesty's agent or troops as possible, and to give him to understand that he must rely on his own sources."<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, he might not be embarrassed with the presence of British officers. Her Majesty's Government was content with only a Native envoy who would supply the Indian Government with all necessary information.<sup>89</sup>

On 2 June 1880, 'Abd al-Rahman's reply was received in Kabul. His delaying tactics exasperated Griffin, who swung rapidly from one view to another. At first, sharing the view of Mohammad Afzal and Mohammad Ibrahim that 'Abd

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85 Griffin to Stewart for India, 21 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1066

86 Ibid, 1069.

87 Prasad, B. The Foundations of India's Foreign Policy 1860 - 1882, 1, 223.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

al-Rahman's letter was simply a device "...to gain time for Russian advice..."<sup>90</sup>, Griffin concluded that 'Abd al-Rahman was a "Russian nominee".<sup>91</sup> Then Griffin changed his view that his hesitation to come to Kabul "...might be dictated by other motives [the weakness of his position in the city] than by love of Russia."<sup>92</sup> With all his astuteness, Griffin failed to realise that 'Abd al-Rahman was trying to win over the elders of the National Party and avoid too close association with the "infidels".

To add to the complications, over 200 letters from 'Abd al-Rahman to the people of every group had created tremendous popular excitement. 'Abd al-Rahman's new tactic was to pose before the staunchest supporters of the ex-Amir simply as his follower, determined either to bring about<sup>93</sup> the restoration of Ya'qub or the appointment of his son. Now even the followers of the ex-Amir believed that at last they had found a leader who was capable of forcing the British out and bringing the jehad to a successful conclusion. Mohammad Jan Wardak with levies from the various sections of Ghilzays and Wardaks was heading towards Ghazni, with a plan to advance on Kabul, while the Kohistanis were preparing themselves for a similar move.<sup>94</sup> Believing that this agitation was primarily due to the letters of 'Abd al-Rahman<sup>95</sup> Griffin and Stewart

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90 Griffin to India (T), 3 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1077.

91 Ibid.

92 Griffin to Stewart for India, 5 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1288.

93 Griffin to Stewart for India, 9 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1303.

94 Griffin to Stewart for India, 11 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1146.

95 Griffin to Stewart for India, 11 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1146.

proposed that "...negotiations with him should be broken off"<sup>96</sup> and Ya'qub restored. In case Ya'qub did not accept Afghanistan without Kandahar and the frontier districts, Griffin proposed the appointment of Sardar Ayub<sup>97</sup> although he was not certain about his acceptance only of Kabul. But the new Viceroy was not prepared to break off with 'Abd al-Rahman, because in his view "...the grounds upon which it is proposed at once to break off correspondence with 'Abd al-Rahman are as yet inadequate."<sup>98</sup>

On 14 June 1880, Griffin, instructed by the Government of India on 12 June, sent 'Abd al-Rahman the British terms in full detail. 'Abd al-Rahman was to be told that since the British Government admitted no right of interference in Afghanistan and since Russia and Persia were pledged to abstain from all political influence in Afghan affairs, it is plain that the Kabul ruler could have no diplomatic relations with any foreign power except Britain. And if such power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the Kabul ruler, Britain would be prepared to aid him and if necessary to repel the aggressor, provided that he would follow our advice in his external relations. With regard to territorial limits, the whole province of Kandahar had been placed under a separate ruler, except Pishin and Sibi retained in British hands.

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96 Ibid.

97 Ibid, 1147.

98 Ripon to Hartington, 15 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1136.

Therefore the British Government could enter into no negotiations with the Sardar on these points or in respect of arrangements with regard to the north-west frontier made with the ex-Amir. With these reservations, the British Government were willing that the Sardar should establish over Afghanistan generally, including Herat, as complete and extensive authority as had hitherto been exercised by his predecessors. The British Government would not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan nor would they demand acceptance of an English resident anywhere in the country, though for the conduct of ordinary friendly intercourse it may be convenient to station, by agreement, a Mohammadan British Agent at Kabul.<sup>99</sup>

It should be recalled here that Persia was bound by the treaty of Paris of 1857 not to interfere with Herat, but Russia was not bound by such an undertaking. In 1873 and 1875 a kind of understanding had been reached between Russia and Britain over Afghanistan whereby Russia admitted Afghanistan to be beyond her sphere of influence, while Britain agreed not to violate the independence of Afghanistan. But with the treaty of Gandamak, and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan by Britain, the Russian official view, as expressed in the "Journal de St. Petersburg" and the "Agene Russe" on 28th and 29th August 1879 was that the treaty had made that understanding null and void.<sup>100</sup>

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99 Lyall to Griffin, 12 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1147.  
100 PNEA, 128.

On 20 June 1880, 'Abd al-Rahman received Griffin's message in Khanabad. On instructions from Calcutta, Griffin had set a four-day time limit for 'Abd al-Rahman within which he was required to reply. This time, 'Abd al-Rahman accepted the terms in principle, but he interpreted them as if Kandahar and the assigned districts were included in the offer, saying "Regarding the boundaries of Afghanistan which were settled by Treaty with my..... grandfather Amir Dost Mohammad, these you granted me."<sup>101</sup> He accepted all other points of the offer too, but interpreted them differently, slightly to his advantage. It is significant to note that 'Abd al-Rahman expressed his willingness to set off shortly for Parwan (north of Kabul) and soon sent off his message, on 22 June, by express horsemen, who reached Kabul on 26 June. Further, 'Abd al-Rahman wrote to Griffin about Ayub: "If he should be hostile to me.....then I will inform you and take such actions as we.....may deem to be right and proper." Accompanying the letter of 'Abd al-Rahman was Mohammad Afzal's message in cipher: "Abdur Rahman to appearance is a friend of the English; at heart their enemy and contemplates mischief."<sup>102</sup>

When the first treaty (1855) was signed between Amir Dost Mohammad and the British, Kandahar was not in the Amir's dominions, but it was at the second treaty (1857). The vague reference of 'Abd al-Rahman to "Treaty"

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101 'Abd al-Rahman to Griffin, 13 Rajab 1297 (22 June 1880), PSLI, pt 2, 26, 1297.

102 Afzal to Griffin, ... PSLI, 25, 1411.

could be applied to either. Thus he left his claim open on Kandahar.<sup>103</sup> In announcing his acceptance of the terms to the elders, 'Abd al-Rahman went a step further by saying as if the British had promised him that "The very same boundaries shall be given to you, as existed in the time of your grandfather."<sup>104</sup>

Usually, after each message which he sent to Griffin, 'Abd al-Rahman progressively increased the number of his letters to the elders. After the acceptance of the terms, his circulars were increased still further. His new letter to Griffin and his circulars to the elders alarmed Griffin. Their immediate result was that Mohammad Hashim and Sardar 'Abd Allah joined the Ghilzays, and the latter were greatly excited.<sup>105</sup> Griffin's fears were further increased by wrongly believing that Ayub was "...no doubt in concert with Abdur Rahman."<sup>106</sup> Believing that the Afghans had been "...enriched by the war" and that they were today "...more formidable for offence and defence than ever"<sup>107</sup> and that they had looked upon 'Abd al-Rahman as a Barakzay sardar, able "...to unite all parties in driving the infidels out of the country,"<sup>108</sup> Griffin and Stewart reaffirmed their early conviction that "...the people are preparing for a general rise..."<sup>109</sup> They again urged that the negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman be broken

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103 Ripon to Hartington, 6 July 1880, PSLI, pt 2, 26, 10.

104 'Abd al-Rahman to elders, KD, 22 June 1880, PSLI, pt 2, 26, 24.

105 Griffin to India, 27 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1414.

106 Ibid.

107 Griffin to India, 5 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1286.

108 Griffin to India, 19 June 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 24

109 Griffin to India, 9 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1305.

off, and that either the ex-Amir or his son or Ayub be brought to power, but they preferred the ex-Amir on the grounds that he would easily expel 'Abd al-Rahman from Afghanistan.<sup>110</sup>

But Ripon, despite the unsatisfactory reply of 'Abd al-Rahman, did not share Griffin's alarm, saying that "...in the present complicated state of political affairs and parties in Afghanistan, an understanding with the Sardar ['Abd al-Rahman] still offers the most desirable solution."<sup>111</sup> The Government of India instructed Griffin to request 'Abd al-Rahman to start at once for Kabul, accepting the separation of Kandahar from Afghanistan.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, Stewart was authorised to break off with 'Abd al-Rahman if he delayed his reply, and to ask the representatives of the late Amir Sher 'Ali's family to organise a government.<sup>113</sup>

Accordingly, Griffin addressed a letter to 'Abd al-Rahman on 2 July 1880. 'Abd al-Rahman had already left Khanabad on a slow march,<sup>114</sup> and received the letter in Minjan after he had travelled a long way from Ak Chasma.<sup>115</sup> On 6 July, 'Abd al-Rahman sent his reply in the affirmative by express horsemen who had already been stationed along the road to Kabul. 'Abd al-Rahman indicated to Griffin

110 Ibid. 27 June 1880, PSLI, 25, 1414.

111 Ripon to Hartington, 6 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 11.

112 Foreign (Simla) to Stewart (T), 29 June 1880, 26, pt 2, 25.

113 Ripon to Hartington, 6 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 11.

114 Ghose, 118.

115 Ghose, 118.

that he wanted "...to consult the people of Afghanistan,"<sup>116</sup> in Kohistan, where he arrived on 14 July and encamped at Tutundara (a valley about four miles to the north of Charikar). Griffin and Stewart did not insist on 'Abd al-Rahman's arrival at Kabul, not because "...there was no sign of growing hostility against the British Government"<sup>117</sup> as Ghose believed but, on the contrary, in the face of growing hostility they did not think it advisable to embarrass 'Abd al-Rahman, for whom they were now trying to win over the Afghan elders.

'Abd al-Rahman's correspondence with leaders of the National Party, his arrival at Kohistan, and the repeated announcements of Griffin that the British were leaving Afghanistan, brought about new alignments. At first the National Party split, then its most influential leaders declared their support for 'Abd al-Rahman. Finally, after the withdrawal of the British troops, the National Party ceased functioning.

Elected as their leader by some Ghilzay and Wardak elders at Gardez (the main town of Zurmut), Sardar Hashim drew closer to that wing of the National Party which was bitterly opposed to the British. Sardar Mohammad Hasan and Faiz Mohammad Ghilzay, son of the late Mohammad Shah Khan (who, together with the late Wazir Akbar Khan had forced the British withdrawal about forty years ago),

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116 'Abd al-Rahman to Griffin, 6 July 1880; Negotiations with Abdur Rahman 1880, A.37.

117 Ghose, 119.



were among his new supporters.<sup>118</sup> Sardar Hashim, for the first time, leaned towards an active anti-British role, but it was too late. The gathering at Maidan, with about 10,000 Ghilzays and Wardaks, scattered in the villages, was the biggest at the moment. Its spokesmen were Mohammad Afzal Wardak (brother of Mohammad Jan Wardak), and Ismat Allah Ghilzay, who were against any compromise with the British.<sup>119</sup> However, a dramatic development cooled down the anti-British excitement. The man responsible for this was none other than Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam.

For an early settlement, Griffin thought it advisable to get in touch with Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam. In mid-June, he wrote to him that "The Government does not wish to take the country, and is with a single mind endeavouring to find some Chief who shall be both wise to rule and strong to protect his subjects. If quiet be maintained, then a happy settlement will be speedily made."<sup>120</sup> In his first letter to Griffin, the Mulla stressed two points; the Amirate for Musa Jan, and a cease-fire between the ghazis and the British troops, which were engaged against each other in the Maidan and Charikar areas. The Mulla wrote "If your object be the peace and friendship of Afghanistan, then you should restrain your troops..."<sup>121</sup>

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118 KD, 12 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 455.

119 KD, 6 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 454.

120 Griffin to Mushk-i-'Alam, KD, 6 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 454.

121 Mushk-i-'Alam to Griffin, KD, 24 June 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 100.

Griffin must have given him such an assurance, because the Mulla, who had recently been elected as "Imam al-Mujahidun-a-wa Al-Muslimun [sic]"<sup>122</sup> (leader of the holy warriors and Muslims) vigorously restrained the ghazis in Maidan,<sup>123</sup> and worked for a "...reconciliation between Islam and the English."<sup>124</sup> The Mulla's next achievement was his persuasion of 'Ismat Allah, Mulla 'Abd al-Ghafur and some others to accept any one, be it Ya'qub, 'Abd al-Rahman or Ayub, whom the British chose as Amir.<sup>125</sup> On July 20, Griffin wrote to them that 'Abd al-Rahman was the choice. Faithful to his promise, the Mulla now even persuaded Mohammad Jan Wardak and swore with him on the Quran to uphold 'Abd al-Rahman.<sup>126</sup> Although the amirate of 'Abd al-Rahman was "...most distasteful"<sup>127</sup> to them, they accepted him, as Griffin had anticipated "...for a temporary purpose, such as the expulsion of the English from their country"<sup>128</sup> mainly because Ya'qub was not restored, Musa Jan not accepted and Ayub failed to join them. Otherwise their opposition to the British was so strong that they threatened 'Abd al-Rahman, even when he became Amir, that they would desert him if he persisted in paying a courtesy call on the British camp in Charikar.<sup>129</sup>

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122 KD, 19 June 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 19.

123 KD, 11 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 420.

124 KD, 6 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 454.

125 Mushk-i-'Alam and others to Griffin, KD, 19 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 4, .....

126 KD, 26 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 493.

127 KD, 7 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 215.

128 KD, 7 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 246.

129 Griffin to Stewart, 4 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 5, 865.

Now, Charikar had become the biggest centre where the Ghilzays, Kohistanis, Tagovis were congregating daily. Griffin already had sent there an unofficial deputation led by the Khan-i-Mulla Khan (chief judge) of Kabul. 'Abd al-Rahman writes that "On 20th July all the chiefs and heads of the Afghan tribes.....proclaimed me as their King and Amir at Charikar and wrote my name in the Khutba as their ruler."<sup>130</sup> Two days later, Griffin, instructed by the Government of India, also held a darbar in Kabul where Amir 'Abd al-Rahman was "...formally acknowledged and recognised by the British Government as Amir of Kabul."<sup>131</sup> None of the anti-British Barakzay sardars of the National Party, including Mohammad Hashim as well as Faiz Mohammad Ghilzay, attended the ceremony either in Charikar or in Kabul. They set out for Kandahar, after they had been disappointed to hear from Mushk-i-'Alam at Maidan that he had accepted 'Abd al Rahman and did not wish to encourage dissension.<sup>132</sup>

Shortly after assuming the **a**mirate, 'Abd al-Rahman moved to Ak Serai (south of Charikar) with more than 20,000 followers, and the influential elders of the Tajiks, Ghilzays and Safays, including elders like Ismat Allah Khan, Mazullah Khan of Hisarak, Bahram Khan of Iaghman, and Badshah Khan of Logar. Mohammad Jan Wardak and Mushk-i-'Alam were absent. News reached Kabul and India that Sardar Mohammad Ayub had gained a decisive victory

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130 Mahomed, S. 1, 195.

131 Griffin to Stewart, 23 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 403.

132 Griffin to Stewart, 26 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 493.

over a British force at Maiwand along the Helmand river in Kandahar on 27 July. One of its immediate effects was that it brought the British and Amir 'Abd al-Rahman still closer. A common enemy was seriously threatening the position of both at Kabul and Kandahar, and if he were not quickly defeated the recent arrangements might collapse and the whole country rise. Compelled by the news of the defeat,<sup>133</sup> Griffin arranged, with all possible speed, to meet the Amir at Zimma (about 15 miles to the north of Kabul) - the place he had already suggested - for a settlement. On 31 July and 1 August they had two meetings which lasted well over six hours.

Regarding the territorial question, the Amir told Griffin that he had no desire either for Kandahar or Herat.<sup>134</sup> Neither did he raise any demand on the frontier districts. Instead, he concentrated on asking for arms, money and a formal treaty, in order to establish himself as quickly as possible in anticipation of Ayub's possible advance on Kabul. But the Amir failed to obtain all that he had asked for. Only some light guns (the heavy guns of the late Amir had already been removed to India), 10 lakhs of rupees (in addition to 9½ lakhs of rupees left in the treasury of Ya'qub), and a formal letter of statement, in conformity with the detailed letter sent to him to Khanabad, defining his relationship with the British, were given or promised to him. In trying to win the friendship of Britain, the Amir went so far as to contradict his earlier statement

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133 Griffin to Stewart, 4 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 5, 864.

134 Ibid, 869.

by telling Griffin that in Russian Turkistan he had been kept "...more as a prisoner than as a free agent."<sup>135</sup> Perhaps his greatest service to the British was his persuasion of the Ghilzay elders (by no means a small task) to consent to the passage of a British force through Ghazni to Kandahar,<sup>136</sup> ostensibly to leave Afghanistan but in reality for the defeat of Ayub in Kandahar, against whom the British found it difficult to send troops from Quetta. Griffin promised the Amir the immediate retreat of all British forces from Kabul, and this began on 10th August. Thus the Anglo-Afghan conflict in the Kabul area, which had lasted for about two years, came to an end.

The accession of 'Abd al-Rahman was the result of a complicated process involving a number of conflicting factors. The factors which favoured his accession were firstly the almost general opposition to the British occupation, secondly the choice by Lytton of 'Abd al-Rahman, and finally the flexible attitude of 'Abd al-Rahman himself.

Except for short intervals, the general opposition to the British occupation of Kabul was continual. Only the cities of Kabul, Jalalabad and later Ghazni were in the British hands. All efforts, including the spring operation, to subdue the country as a whole had failed. The bulk of the population such as the Ghilzays, Wardaks, Tajiks and the Pashtuns of the outlying districts opposed the British, while only a few groups such as the Qizilbash

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135 Griffin to Stewart, 4 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 5, 875.

136 Ibid, 872.

and the Jaghuri Hazaras and a number of chiefs such as a few Barakzay sardars, the Badshah of Kunar, and Akbar Khan of Lalpura, supported the British. Kindled by religious feelings, the popular anti-British movements were basically against an alien infidel rule, and for the preservation of independence. But contrary to the notion that circumstances create leaders, this prolonged resistance had failed to produce one until the appearance of 'Abd al-Rahman.

The choice by Lytton of 'Abd al-Rahman was another significant contributing factor to 'Abd al-Rahman's successor. This choice was based on the belief that 'Abd al-Rahman was the only alternative to the ex-Amir. Although Lytton's policy concerning Afghanistan had been mainly abandoned by the new Liberal Administration in England, yet the negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman were continued by Ripon, despite the suggestions by Griffin and Stewart that they should be stopped. This was due to the statesmanship of Ripon. Later, Griffin's efforts in winning the support of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam and others for 'Abd al-Rahman proved a significant factor in 'Abd al-Rahman's ultimate success.

Despite all this, 'Abd al-Rahman might have failed had he persisted in his original claim. In mid-June his flexibility became apparent, as he no longer insisted on the Afghanistan ruled by his grandfather, but expressed his willingness to accept the throne of the reduced and dependent state of Kabul. This change of attitude can be explained when the movements of his cousin, Sardar Ayub, in south-west Afghanistan are considered.

For the obvious reasons that Ayub was a son of the late Amir and popular with the National Party as well as the Barakzays of Kandahar while 'Abd al-Rahman was not, 'Abd al-Rahman would not form an anti-British alliance with him. On 9 June 1880, about three weeks before 'Abd al-Rahman set out for Kabul, Ayub had left Herat to march on Kandahar. This must have been known by 'Abd al-Rahman and he must have feared the almost certain alliance of the Barakzays and Ghilzays under Ayub, should he come to Kandahar. In such an event 'Abd al-Rahman, knowing that the British were determined to leave Afghanistan, must have feared that Ayub might come to terms with the British before he did. In this context, his acceptance of the British terms is not surprising.

Again, 'Abd al-Rahman might have failed even in obtaining the throne of Kabul if Ayub had advanced on Kandahar a few weeks earlier than he did. To gain the throne of Kabul the support of the Ghilzays was essential. They were the supporters of Ya'qub and Ayub, but their opposition to the British was stronger than their loyalty to them. Hence, in the absence of Ayub, they reluctantly accepted 'Abd al-Rahman as Amir at the last moment.

As a Barakzay sardar, 'Abd al-Rahman stood almost alone. The late Amir had liquidated the Barakzay sardars who had supported the family of 'Abd al-Rahman during the civil war. The remainder of the Barakzay sardars at Kabul were either pro-Ya'qub, pro-British, or had ambition for themselves. As a keen realist, 'Abd al-Rahman therefore bypassed them and appealed directly to the

popular feelings. It is a great tribute to his diplomacy that 'Abd al-Rahman succeeded in gaining the support of those opposed to the British, along with those who, like Ghilzays and Wardaks, were committed to the family of the late Amir, while at the same time successfully trying to come to terms with the British. But by doing so, he cannot escape the criticism that his acceptance of Kabul meant the division of Afghanistan which had been united under Amir Dost Mohammad and which 'Abd al-Rahman had originally claimed.



## Chapter 3

## The Reunification of Afghanistan, 1880-84

In accordance with the British scheme of disintegration, the province of Kandahar was placed under a nominally independent ruler, while Herat was offered to Persia on certain conditions favourable to British India. Ultimately, however, these arrangements failed and Afghanistan emerged as a reunified kingdom under Amir 'Abd al-Rahman. The object of this chapter is to analyse firstly these arrangements and the reaction against them and secondly the subsequent struggle between the two rival cousins, 'Abd al-Rahman and Mohammad Ayub, for the control of Afghanistan.

Broadly speaking, the province of Kandahar was bounded on the north by the Taimini country which was subject to Herat and by the Hazarajat and Muqur districts which were subject to the province of Kabul; on the south by Baluchistan and on the west by Farah. Its inhabitants were predominantly Durrani (formerly called Abdalis) whose number in the nineteenth century had been estimated between 500,000 and 1,200,000. Although with the transfer of the capital to Kabul in the latter part of the eighteenth century Kandahar had lost its original significance, it was still associated with the ruling dynasty and the Durrani were still a privileged tribe. The other inhabitants of Kandahar were the Ghilzays in the east, the Hazaras in the north, the Brahuis and Baluchis in the south-west, with smaller communities of Qizilbash (Parsiwans) and

Hindus in the city.<sup>1</sup>

Lytton considered Kandahar to be of immense importance both strategically and commercially. Its control, whether direct or indirect, was therefore considered to be essential. 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 [Kandahar] and the means of forestalling Russian influence at Herat, we cannot lose sight of the fact that this route has been at all times one of the main tracks of Central Asian traffics."<sup>2</sup> To maintain an effective hold over the province, the construction of a railway line to the city was started, which was scheduled to be completed at the end of 1880.<sup>3</sup>

For maintaining the "undisputed command" over Kandahar, indirect rule backed by military force was attempted. Sardar Sher 'Ali, a son of Mehrdil Khan and a cousin of the late Amir Sher 'Ali was made ruler. Sardar Sher 'Ali was already the governor of Kandahar when it was occupied by British troops after the disturbance of September 1879. He was closely related to the mother of the late heir-apparent, 'Abd Allah Jan, and was not on intimate terms

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1 GA Kand, i-iv, 118-159. IGA, 72. Elphinstone, 2, 84-136. Yapp, M.E., Disturbances in Western Afghanistan, 1839-40, BSOAS, xxvi, pt 2, 1963, 288. Tully, E., Topographic and Sanitary Report on Kandahar City, 1 June 1881, PSLI, 29, 1102.

2 Lytton to Cranbrook, 20 Nov 1879, PNEA, 110.

3 Ibid.

with Ya'qub Khan.<sup>4</sup> To obtain Kandahar, Sardar Sher 'Ali threw in his lot with the British and so fitted well into the scheme of disintegration. Lytton wrote that British officials at Kandahar "...are of the opinion that Sher 'Ali Khan is well able to hold his own and entirely subject to our control."<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Sher 'Ali's provisional acceptance of Kandahar in November 1879 was followed by his official recognition in May 1880 as the Wali (governor) of Kandahar.

Apparently the Durrani of Kandahar, unlike the inhabitants of Kabul, did not prove turbulent. Perhaps, owing to the nature of the flat, open country and the lack of a leader, they were unable to oppose the British forces. However, sporadic activities and surprise attacks, even by small boys, were widely reported. But the December rising against the British at Kabul encouraged the ghazis in Kandahar and alarmed the Wali. To keep the Wali in Kandahar, General Stewart considered it necessary to give him some definite assurances. On 12 March 1880, the Government of India decided that the province of Kandahar would be placed under the hereditary rule of Sardar Sher 'Ali as Wali. He would enjoy complete internal independence but his foreign relations would be controlled by a political representative. On 11 May 1880, Kandahar was publicly bestowed on the Wali. The Viceroy's letter, which was addressed to him as "The Wali of Kandahar and its dependencies, partly ran "...I have great pleasure in

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4 BCA, 188.

5 Balfour, B., 382.

announcing to you that Her Majesty the Queen-Empress has been pleased to recognise Your Highness an independent ruler of the Province of Kandahar..."<sup>6</sup> The Wali was given the right to have the Khutba read and coin issued in his name. He was also given weapons and a subsidy which subsequently enabled him to raise 3,000 infantry and about 1,500 horsemen. The Wali requested the Viceroy to allow a British force to remain in Kandahar.<sup>7</sup>

After his official recognition the real troubles of the Wali began. It was generally understood that he was a British puppet. This brought him into direct conflict with the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali. Even with the acceptance of the provisional governorship of Kandahar, Ayub had warned the Wali, by pointing out that "...if Yakub has abdicated, I, the next heir to him, have not done so."<sup>8</sup> After the official recognition of the Wali, Ayub denounced him as a "Kafir".<sup>9</sup> In Kandahar, the mullas also declared him to be a "Kafir" and expressed their willingness to join Ayub against the Wali.<sup>10</sup> The Wali's own brother, Sardar Mohammad Husayn, and his family advised him to oppose the British.<sup>11</sup> But the Wali remained loyal to the British. Only among the Barakzays, the Wali had a few supporters. They were Sardar Gul Mohammad (half-brother of the Wali) who held Girishk (a district on the right bank of the Helmand river),

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6 PNEA, 109.

7 St. John to Lyall, 20 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1153.

8 Ayub to Wali Sher 'Ali, 11 Dec 1879, PNEA, 109.

9 Ibid, 110.

10 Kand.D, 1-8 June 1880, PSLI, pt 2, 26, 41.

11 Stewart to Lyall, 12 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1025.

and Mir Afzal, a son of Pirdil Khan (brother of Amir Dost Mohammad) who was the governor of the province of Farah. Although Mir Afzal was anti-British, at home he supported the Wali against Ayub because, being the father of the late Amir's favourite wife, Mir Afzal was opposed to Ayub. But he was too old to be active and soon retired to Meshed. In Kandahar, Sartip Nur Mohammad, a Mohammadzay sardar, was the only influential supporter of the Wali. But his hostility to the British was so strong that he left the Wali in a critical moment for Ayub.

The task before the Wali was to establish and consolidate his power, but this he found difficult, if not impossible. On the day of his investiture, the land-owners of the Arghandab valley and Zamindawer (a district on the right bank of the Helmand) defied his authority by refusing to pay revenue. So did the landowners of more remote districts. Only those Ghilzays in the immediate neighbourhood of Qalat paid their revenue. His own Durrani elders boycotted him, and he was left without adequate advisers. The whole arrangement for Kandahar seemed to have collapsed but the British officials were convinced that eventually the Wali would be able to establish his authority. From Kabul, General Stewart wrote "His [the Wali's] need was, and still is, the want of trustworthy advisers and subordinates, and his principal difficulty in which he is held, and must be held for some time, on account of his fidelity to us."<sup>12</sup>

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12 Stewart to Lyall, 12 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1025.

Early in June there were strong rumours of an advance by Ayub on Kandahar. The Wali had to move up to Girishk to fortify his frontiers and to stir up opposition to Ayub, in Farah and Taimani (a district of Herat to the north-west of Zamindawer). But the Wali "...made it clear that without the support of the British he will be unable to move beyond Girishk."<sup>13</sup> Late in June, when Ayub's advance had been established beyond doubt, a British force of 2,400 under General Burrows was despatched to the Halmand. But with the arrival of the British force the Wali lost the support of Sartip Nur Mohammad who, after inciting the troops to rise against the Wali, joined Ayub.<sup>14</sup>

The province of Herat comprised an area of about 6,000 square miles, bordering Persia on the west, the Turcoman country on the north, Siestan on the south, and the Hari Rud on the east, was inhabited by a mixed population of over half a million, with the Pashtuns (Sadozays and Ghilzays) in a minority.<sup>15</sup>

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Herat had been in dispute between Persia and Afghanistan, but since 1863 it had formed part of the latter. Early in 1879, following his accession to power in Kabul, Ya'qub invited his younger brother Ayub to assume the administration of Herat. Until then Ayub had lived in

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13 St. John to Lyall, 21 June 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 209.

14 St. John to Lyall, 12 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 216.

15 GAH, i-v, 93-110. Hamilton, A., Afghanistan, 1906, London, 147-177.

Meshed, fearing that, like Ya'qub, he would be imprisoned by his father, Sher 'Ali, if he returned to Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> At Herat he had no money, the troops were unpaid, and he had to spend a year's revenue in advance in order to raise 2,000 horsemen. Because of discord between his Kabuli and Herati troops, his immediate intended advance on Kandahar had to be postponed.<sup>17</sup> He then concentrated on building up his army until his position improved at the beginning of 1880.

Meanwhile Britain started negotiations with Persia over Herat, in complete disregard of Ayub. The view in London was that, unlike Kandahar, Herat should not be ruled by an Afghan ruler who might easily be influenced by Russia. Persia was, therefore, to be allowed to take possession of Herat provided she accepted indirect British control.<sup>18</sup> The British ambassador at Tehran, Ronald Thomson, was instructed to sound out the Shah of Persia as to his willingness to accept Herat.

But the question of Herat was not so easily disposed of, owing to its strategic location and also to the fact that it was beyond the physical control of Britain. Russia took a keen interest in it. Believing that the new proposed arrangement would give Britain a predominant influence in central Asia, some Russian newspapers

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16 BCA, 52.

17 PNEA, 111.

18 For details see PNEA, 120-121.

Novoye Vremia (20 January 1880), Golos and the Journal de St. Petersburg - suggested the invasion of Persia itself - an obvious warning to the Shah against his acceptance of Herat.<sup>19</sup> Russia proposed Russo-British joint supervision of Herat and gave an implied warning against any arrangements made in a spirit of hostility to Russia.<sup>20</sup> Earlier, in November 1879, Lord Salisbury, Foreign Secretary, had declined the promise of material support to Persia which had been requested by Malcom Khan, Persia's Minister in London, in the event of a Russian attack on Persia. On the other hand, members of the Indian Council were unanimous in objecting to the surrender of Herat to Persia arguing, each on different grounds, that the proposed arrangement would legalise and thereby increase Russia's influence in Herat - a threat, from their point of view, to India.<sup>21</sup> Consequently the negotiations with Persia fell into abeyance. About this time the Government of India had decided to offer Kabul to 'Abd al-Rahman and withdraw its forces from northern Afghanistan. Failing with Persia, the Home Government agreed to offer Herat to 'Abd al-Rahman, but at the Zimma meeting 'Abd al-Rahman showed unwilling to accept it because of its control by Ayub.

Considering himself to be the heir to Ya'qub, Ayub aimed at rule over Afghanistan. Early in January 1880

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19 Ibid, 127.

20 Ibid.

21 For details see Notes by Members of the Political Committee on the Herat Question, A.35, IOL, 1880.



he was able to reconcile the two parties of his army. His Kabuli troops were said to be composed of men from the north-eastern tribes, a loose term and it is difficult to identify them precisely. At any rate, they were anxious to return to their homes. So were his advisers who were connected with Kandahar. Consequently, pressure for an advance on Kandahar was great,<sup>22</sup> especially when the unpopularity of the Wali had become known.

Although Ayub had declared that his purpose was "...to commence a religious war and drive the infidels out of the country"<sup>23</sup> it seems doubtful, as will be discussed later, whether he really intended to oust the British by force of arms. But he must have sent many letters and emissaries to this effect so that St. John,<sup>24</sup> the Political Officer at Kandahar, had come to the conclusion that "...for many months Ayub Khan and his partisans have used every effort to inflame the religious and patriotic feelings of the chiefs and people against us and our protégé, Sher Ali Khan."<sup>25</sup> Already apprehensive on account of having been denounced as a kafir, the Wali was also "...fearful of Ghaza and Jihad against him."<sup>26</sup>

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22 Ripon to Hartington, 17 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 4, 718.

23 Ayub to Yarú Khan, elder of Khakrez, Kand. D, 1-28 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 6, 1618.

24 St. John (1837-1891). Educated Marwish Grammar School and Addis Combe. Entered ICS 1859. Held posts in Baluchistán and Persia (Meshed); Chief Political Officer in Kandahar 1878-1881. Later Governor General's Agent in Baluchistan. Before arriving at Kandahar he knew a good deal about south-west Afghanistan, and his diaries are therefore very informative.

25 Kand. D, 17 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 495.

26 St. John to Lyall, 31 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1373.

Elders of the most influential families of Kandahar were either with Ayub or were in communication with him. They included the descendants of the 'Dil' brothers (Kohandil, Mihrdil and Purdil, who were half-brothers of the late Amir Dost Mohammad and had ruled Kandahar independently during most of the first half of the nineteenth century), except Mir Afzal who had retired to Meshed, but his son 'Abd al-Wahab was an active supporter of Ayub in Herat. The Shahghasi family, possessing a large estate in Tirin (a district about 80 miles to the north of Kandahar), was next in importance to the 'Dil' family. The Shahghasi family, whose members were mainly government senior officials, was named after Shahghasi Sherdil Loynab. His son, Loynab Khushdil was Ayub's Commander-in-Chief. Abu Bakr, the most powerful of the Alizai Durranis of Zamindawer, who had opposed the British and the Wali, was also with Ayub.<sup>27</sup> To the elders and officers of the Kabul province, Ayub was reported to have sent about 1,200 letters,<sup>28</sup> but it is not known who these elders and officers were. It may be assumed that the latter were the officers of his father's scattered army, while among the former were elders of the Ghilzays. Ayub had Ghilzay officers in his army, among them Hafiz Allah Gadakhel Ghilzay, Naib Salar (Deputy Commander-in-Chief) and Sardar Sher 'Ali Tarakay. Nevertheless, despite the attachment of the Ghilzays and Wardaks to the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali, Ayub's relationship with them remains obscure.

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27 St. John to Lyall, 3 Nov 1880, PSLI, 27, 553.

28 Kandahar to Simla (T), 28 June 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 53.

Before his advance on Kandahar, Ayub seems to have gained the support of the important tribes of Herat. His relationship with them would be discussed later, but for the moment it is sufficient to record that he left the city in charge of Sardar 'Abd al-Wahab, assisted by a General and elders of the important tribes,<sup>29</sup> except Anbia Khan Taimini. Ayub was invested with the title of Amir. He also had money coined in his name.<sup>30</sup> Having despatched two groups of troops separately in advance, Ayub set out for Kandahar on 9 June 1880.

From Herat to the Maiwand, Ayub received free supplies from the villagers. In Farah he was joined by "...Ghazis and tribesman...from all sides."<sup>31</sup> With his approach near Girishk, the Wali's troops (except 500 horsemen), under Sardaru Khan and Zaman Khan, deserted him, taking a few guns with them which were later recovered.<sup>32</sup>

From Girishk, Ayub created a diversion. Instead of following the main route he moved upwards along the Helmand towards Zamindawer. Apparently either he hoped to be joined by many Zamindaweris (which they did in large numbers) or intended to avoid confrontation with the British forces, or, by bypassing them, he wished to cut the British forces into two parts. Evidence suggests that he hoped to avoid a confrontation, and reach a settlement

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29 Kand D, 1-28 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 6, 1612.

30 St. John to Lyall, 2 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 2, 54.

31 M. Akbar (a Secretary of Ayub) to St. John, Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 595.

32 St. John to Lyall, 17 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 495.

with the British. But St. John, who was with the British forces, made the war of Maiwand inevitable.

At the suggestion of St. John, General Burrows withdrew his forces and the remainder of the Wali's to Kishk-i-Nakhud (about 30 miles from Girishk).<sup>33</sup> The plan was that in the Kishk-i-Nakhud area the Ayub would be met in a plain, chosen by the British army,<sup>34</sup> where, in view of past experience, Ayub's forces would be routed. Later, when the result had proved quite otherwise, Ripon also supported the plan, arguing that if Ayub had been left unchecked he, in accordance with his original plan, would have advanced on to Qalat and Ghazni in which case "...the effect upon our military reputation, and upon the political situation generally in Afghanistan, would have been exceedingly damaging."<sup>35</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Ayub had such a plan. On the contrary, Ayub later stated that he did not want a collision, and St. John believed this statement to be true.<sup>36</sup>

In July the main body of Ayub's troops reached the Helmand (about 12 miles above Girishk), followed by Ayub himself, who crossed the Helmand at Haiderabad on 22 July. Having heard that Ayub's advance force had occupied Maiwand (a village then in the possession of the Wali in the centre of the Maiwand valley about 3 miles from

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33 Ripon to Hartington, 3 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 485.

34 St. John to Lyall, 17 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 495.

35 Ripon to Hartington, 17 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 4, 719.

36 St. John to Lyall, 1 Nov 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 1972.

Kishk-i-Nakhud), General Burrows arrived there on July 27. Ayub's forces were surprised. Details of the battle which took place in the vicinity of Maiwand village do not concern us. Suffice it to say that General Burrows' forces were totally defeated.<sup>37</sup> According to St. John, Afghan losses (killed or wounded) were about 1,350 regulars, 800 ghazis and the English killed were about 1,100. Ayub's army was 4,555 infantry, about 3,200 cavalry and 4,000 ghazis, with 30 guns of various sizes, while that of Burrows' was 2,800 regulars with 2,000 followers.<sup>38</sup>

After the defeat, the remainder of the British forces (3,400) in the city of Kandahar shut itself up in the citadel, having expelled the Pashtun inhabitants (18,000) from the city, leaving the merchants and the bulk of the Parsiwans. General Primrose assumed supreme political and military authority. The Wali, who had taken refuge with the British, was disarmed, and any outsider approaching the walls was shot at. Thus the besieged army was cut off from the outside world. St. John complained "I found it necessary to point out to General Primrose that the indiscriminate firing on [any] human being that [sic] appears within shot of the walls is fatal to the acquisition of intelligence or letters from the outside."<sup>39</sup>

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37 St. John to Lyall (through a messenger to Quetta)  
29 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 304.

38 St. John to Lyall, 21 Sept 1880, PSLI, 27, 1051, 1055.

39 Kand. D, 21 July-1 Sept 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 7, 1916.

On August 6, Ayub arrived at Kokaran (6 miles from the city) having been joined on the way by ghazis to the number of between 20,000 (St. John) and 30,000 (Ak-bar).<sup>40</sup> But contrary to general expectation, and much to the annoyance of his officers,<sup>41</sup> Ayub opened negotiations with the besieged army, after an unsuccessful sortie by the besieged army in which 213 British soldiers were killed and wounded.<sup>42</sup>

On 16 August, Bibi Hawa, an elderly widow of Sardar Rahimdil Khan, known as the Walidah (the mother) opened negotiations with St. John and Ayub. Ya'qub 'Ali Khafi, who was with Ayub, maintains that the leader of the British army, presumably Primrose, obtained 40 days grace from Ayub, through the Walidah, who had adopted the British leader as her son.<sup>43</sup> At any rate, a number of letters were exchanged. Ayub's letters are revealing. On 20 August he wrote to the Walidah "...from the beginning we had no intention of fighting with the British Government, but [had] only wishes of friendship and peace."<sup>44</sup> And to St. John, "My open object is this, that the kindness which was extended by the British Government to the late Amir should be granted to me."<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile, the general rising had spread, with remarkable speed, as far as Qalat in Baluchistan. Consequently

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- 40 Akbar to St. John, Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 595.  
 41 Khafi, Y.A., The Recent Kings of Afghanistan, (Persian), Kabul, 1336, A.H., 2, 192.  
 42 Macmunn, General Sir G., Afghanistan, London, 1929, 202.  
 43 Khafi, 2, 192.  
 44 Kand. D., 29 July-1 Sept 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 7, 1923.  
 45 Kand. D., 29 July-1 Sept 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 7, 1924.

the despatch of a relief force from Quetta had become very difficult, if not impossible. Fearing attack on Baluchistan, Robert Sandeman (b. 1835), British Agent there, suggested the despatch of a force from Kabul, no doubt partly to create a diversion from the side of Kandahar. He reported "Situation very serious."<sup>46</sup>

In Kabul, although as a result of the agreement with the Amir, anti-British activities had stopped, the Maiwand spark could easily upset the arrangement there. The Ghilzay elders were still not attached to the new Amir. Their acceptance of him was only a means of removing the British. The triumphant appearance of Ayub in their country was sufficient for them to rise and rally round him. A day after Maiwand, Griffin wired Lyall, "The Kandahar news entirely alters (?) [sic] the position here; and, unless Ayub can be beaten decisively and quickly, may cause all arrangements to collapse. Amir will not be able to stand against Ayub, victorious. Many of his adherents will abandon him and his troops here and in Turkistan may mutiny. If he [Ayub] marches to Ghazni, the country will join him."<sup>47</sup>

The result of Sandeman's and Griffin's suggestions was a prompt and successful settlement with the Amir in Zimma. Realising that the British were driving away the

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46 Agent, Governor-General (Quetta) to Foreign, Simla, (T) 2 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 4, 630.

47 Griffin to Lyall (T) 28 July 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 3, 479.

main danger to himself, the Amir became "most friendly"<sup>48</sup> with the British. At the request of Griffin, the Amir obtained the consent of the Ghilzay elders to the passage of British troops through their land. It was a remarkable achievement, because the Ghilzay elders must have known that the so-called withdrawal of the troops via Kandahar was meant to be for the defeat of Ayub. With all probability the Amir obtained their consent, with the promise of high positions, as he subsequently conferred the title of Khan-i-'Ulum (the chief of learnings) upon Mulla 'Abd al-Karim, son of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam, and let Ismat Allah act for Amir 'Abd al-Rahman as a kind of Prime Minister for a brief period. The only condition made by the Ghilzay elders was that the troops should avoid unnecessary halts. They agreed to provide provisions and facilities.<sup>49</sup> Hence the easy and quick march of a select force of 10,000 under Roberts to Kandahar (10 - 30 August).

It was with the news of the arrival of this force at Qalat that the British in Kandahar dropped their interest in reaching agreement with Ayub.<sup>50</sup> On 30 August, Roberts arrived at Kandahar, and the next day he defeated Ayub in the village of Mazra (in Arghandab) where he had taken up his residence. Ayub lost all his guns and left for Herat where he arrived on 22 September, leaving Sardar Mohammad Hashim in charge of Farah.

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48 Ibid.

49 Amir to Griffin, supple. Griffin to Stewart, 4 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 5, 872.

50 Primrose to Ayub, 23 Aug 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 7, 1924.



However, the victory of Ayub at Maiwand was the death blow to the projected "independence" of Kandahar. Lyall concluded that "...the Durranis of Kandahar are now much opposed to the occupation [of Kandahar], either directly through Sher Ali or any other nominee, or directly through our officers."<sup>51</sup> The Wali refused to take charge of the province again.<sup>52</sup> He asked the Viceroy for permission to settle with his family in Karachi.<sup>53</sup> This was granted, and he left Afghanistan forever in December 1880.

In September, the question of Kandahar was discussed in the Council of the Governor-General. All members, except E. Baring (later Lord Cromer and General Councillor in Egypt), were against the abandonment of Kandahar. To some members Kandahar was necessary to India, for commercial and strategic reasons, and to others for political and moral reasons. Robert Sandeman proposed its take-over by the Amir 'Abd al-Rahman on condition that he expelled Ayub from Herat and established his authority in Kabul. But owing to the illness of the Viceroy a decision on Kandahar was deferred. Meanwhile, in October, Lyall was sent to Kandahar on a fact finding mission.<sup>54</sup>

The main argument for the retention of Kandahar was its strategic value to the defence of India, especially now that a Russian army under General Skobelev was

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51 Lyall on Kandahar, Nov 1880, PSLI, 27, 547.

52 Memorandum of R. Sandeman, 31 Oct 1880, PSLI, 27, 541.

53 Wali Sher 'Ali to Ripon, 30 Oct 1880, PSLI, 27, 133.

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

operating in the Turcoman country, near 'Ishqabad, along the eastern border of Persia. General Haines, the Commander-in-Chief of India, believed that Merv, Herat, and finally India were the ultimate objective of Russia's military operations there. To Haines, Kandahar was the point on the line from which alone a serious attack on India could be delivered by Russia. But to Ripon the retention of Pishin and Sibi (the frontier districts of Kandahar, bordering on Baluchistan) were sufficient to ensure the requirements of the defence of India. The Liberal Government went even further. They reiterated the opinion that the true defence of India lay only in the good government of India. But Ripon stood firm against the abandonment of the frontier districts, which were first temporarily retained and then annexed to India. On 20 January 1881, despite the opposition of the Council, it was decided to leave Kandahar and hand it over to the Amir of Kabul.

The next problem of the Government of India in connection with Kandahar was to persuade the Amir to occupy it. Because Ayub was "...the most popular candidate for rule in southern Afghanistan"<sup>55</sup> the Amir feared its immediate occupation by him following the British withdrawal.<sup>56</sup> Apart from that, the Amir had made himself unpopular in Kabul by treating harshly the late Amir's senior officials.<sup>57</sup> But the principal reason for

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55 Lyall on Kandahar, Nov 1880, PSLI, 27, 547.

56 Mahomed, S., 1, 208.

57 PD, 26 Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 842.

his unpopularity was his alleged friendship with the British.<sup>58</sup> Consequently most of the Khans were reported to be in correspondence with Ayub.<sup>59</sup> The Amir made concessions to the Ghilzays and Kohistanis by upholding the grants which the Kohistan elders had enjoyed under Amir Dost Mohammad<sup>60</sup> and exempting the Ghilzays from paying poll-tax.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, a "popular rising"<sup>62</sup> and "...danger for Kabul"<sup>63</sup> during any possible absence of the Amir were generally feared. It was against this background that the Amir was reluctant to occupy Kandahar immediately, saying that "...I do not know why and wherefore the representatives of the sublime Government are so hasty and are going to abandon Kandahar so soon."<sup>64</sup> However, believing that "...the kingdom of Kabul without Kandahar was like.....a fort without any gate,"<sup>65</sup> the Amir agreed to occupy Kandahar about 15 April, without fixing a definite date. Although the position of the Amir was far from being satisfactory, yet he exaggerated his fears to obtain additional assistance from the Government of India.

Anxious to withdraw its troops from Kandahar before the summer heat, the Government of India responded favourably to the Amir. Unlike the policy of "masterly inactivity"

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58 PD, 28 Mar 1881, PSLI, 28, 238.

59 Ibid.

60 PD, 30 Mar 1881, PSLI, 28, 241.

61 St. John to Lyall, 20 Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 991.

62 St. John to Lyall, 22 Mar 1881, PSLI, 28, 226.

63 Mahomed, S., 1, 203.

64 Amir to W.G. Waterfield, Commissioner of Peshawar, 6 Mar 1881, PSLI, 27, 1657.

65 Mahomed, S., 1, 208.

and "active interference", the policy then was to strengthen Afghanistan under the Amir with money and arms without committing Britain to take sides in the imminent civil war. By 20 April, the Government of India had given to, or promised, the Amir an additional amount of 20 lakhs of rupees (including 5 lakhs of the treasury of Kandahar), with rifles, artillery and a further temporary allowance of 50,000 rupees a month. But the Viceroy deferred the personal interview which had already been requested by the Amir, arguing that such a meeting "...would be universally construed as a public manifestation of our resolution to adopt his cause and interest."<sup>66</sup>

Before occupying Kandahar, the Amir took over Qalat, which had been agreed upon at the Zimma meeting to be part of Kabul, though at no time, except during the brief period when Dost Mohammad was the Wali of Kabul only, had it been part of Kabul. On 16 April, the Amir's officials, accompanied by an army of 4,000 and 8 guns, also took over the administration of Kandahar, and the British withdrew from Afghanistan altogether. The Amir appointed his cousin, Sardar Mohammad Hashim (b. 1863), son of A'zam Khan, as governor. He was assisted by a committee of three, composed of Sardar Shams al-Din Khan, Qazi S'ad al-Din, and General Ghulam Haydar Charkhi. Since the governor was young and inexperienced, civil power was actually exercised by Shams al-Din, and military by Ghulam Haydar.

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66 Ripon to Hartington, 19 Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 365.

In an effort to win over the people, the governor repeated the Amir's earlier declaration that fresh taxes, such as the sarmarda (a poll-tax on non-Durrani males), imposed by the late Amir Sher 'Ali would be remitted.<sup>67</sup> But the promise of special treatment to those who had helped the British did not help the cause of the Amir. During the British occupation these were mainly the Parsiwans who, working as tax collectors, spies and junior clerks, had made themselves "...particularly obnoxious to the Afghans."<sup>68</sup>

After his retreat from Kandahar, Ayub had some serious problems to face at Herat. However, in his reports, St. John had slightly exaggerated their seriousness, forgetting the fact that Ayub was now joined by persons such as Sardar Mohammad Hashim, Sardar Mohammad Hasan, Sardar 'Abd Allah and others, with whose help he was able to suppress opposition easily. The Taimini tribe (in the south-east of Herat), one of the most numerous of the Char Aimaq (the four tribes), was rebellious.<sup>69</sup> Since May 1880, Sardar Anbia Khan, Chief of Taimini, had refused payment of taxes to Ayub, and during the latter's absence had held correspondence with the ex-Wali and St. John in Kandahar. Anbia Khan, who received allowances from St. John, had declared that his tribe was loyal to the British.<sup>70</sup> Ayub's own father-in-law, Khan Agha, chief of the Jamshidis (a small tribe of

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67 St. John to Lyall, 12 Apr 1881, PSLI, 28, 293.

68 St. John to Lyall, 15 Apr 1881, PSLI, 28, 707.

69 St. John to Lyall, 28 Nov 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 1979.

70 Sardar Anbia to St. John, Kand.D., 28 Mar 1881, PSLI, 28, 767.

the Char Aimaq, occupying the district of Kushk in the north of Herat), not only joined the opposition, he also put forward Mohammad Haydar Alkozay, the eldest surviving son of the late Wazir Yar Mohammad Khan of Herat as a candidate for the governorship of Herat.<sup>71</sup> He asked St. John that the Wali's son and General Faiz Khan be permitted to join him in Taiwara (the capital of the Taimani country),<sup>72</sup> but as the Government of India did not wish to be involved in the affairs of Herat, the Khan was discouraged.<sup>73</sup>

Before these tribes could plan any joint action, Ayub crushed them easily. Khan Agha was put to death and Sardar Anbia Khan managed to escape to the hills. Although Kushk and Taiwara were henceforth governed for Ayub by Sardar Mohammad Hasan Khan and 'Abd al-Wahab Khan respectively, the Jamshidis and Taimanis, and later the Firzokohis (another of the Char Aimaq tribes, occupying Murghab, north of Herat), proved dangerous when Ayub again advanced on Kandahar. Through a respectable Sayyed, Sardar Anbia Khan, chiefs of the Firozkohis, and the Qipchaq tribe of Herat offered their allegiance to the Amir.<sup>74</sup> The Sunni Hazaras of Kala-i-Nao (a district in the north-east of Herat) remained loyal to Ayub.

Among the Pashtuns of Herat, the Alkozays and Ishakzays - two clans of the Durranis - had also been

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71 St. John to Lyall, 8 Dec 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 2173.

72 St. John to Lyall, 28 Nov 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 1979.

73 Lyall to St. John, 3 Dec 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 1980.

74 PD, 21 June 1881, PSLI, 29, 233.

opposed to Ayub. Having enjoyed power in former years, through their elder the late Wazir Yar Mohammad (d. 1863), the Alkozays had never hesitated to reassert their independence when Barakzay rule was shaken in Herat. Recently when Ayub was in Kandahar the two clans made a combined but unsuccessful attack on the city under Faiz Allah Ishaqzay, the leader of the Herat troops, and Behbud Khan, a grandson of Yar Mohammad Khan.<sup>75</sup> But in early 1881, Ayub succeeded in overcoming their opposition and put to death the son and grandsons of Yar Mohammad Khan.<sup>76</sup> This further alienated the Durranis of Herat from him. With the Parsiwan inhabitants of the city of Herat, who formed a larger proportion of the city, Ayub's relations were strained for the simple reason that they were turned out of their homes to make room for Ayub's Kandahari soldiers.<sup>77</sup>

Since Ayub had now been joined by capable Barakzay sardars, he suppressed the opposition easily and concentrated on building up his army. Soldiers of the old Kandahari regiments were continually arriving from Kandahar. By 19 July he was said to have built up an army of 4,400, with about 19 guns.<sup>78</sup> His gun foundry and arms factory began to work, but he was short of funds and was dependent on trade dues. He taxed the people very severely and was still short of money to pay his troops. Soon he became

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75 St. John to Lyall, 8 Dec 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 2173.

76 St. John to Lyall, 2 Mar 1881, PSLI, 27, 1661.

77 St. John to Lyall, 8 Dec 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 2173.

78 St. John (Quetta) to Lyall, 19 July 1881, PSLI, 29, 508.

short of war materials (fire-arms, iron and percussion caps) too. Under pressure from Ronald Thomson, British Minister at Tehran, the Shah prohibited the export of war material to Ayub from Meshed.<sup>80</sup> Still the army remained loyal to Ayub.

After his retreat from Kandahar, Ayub seems to have abandoned his original claim for the whole of Afghanistan. With Herat already in his possession, he now tried to obtain Kandahar from the British by diplomacy.

As early as November 1880, Ayub asked Nawab Hasan 'Ali, Political Adviser to St. John, to use his good offices so that Kandahar might be given to him.<sup>81</sup> In all probability he received a discouraging reply. Still, on the advice of councillors, especially of Sardar Mohammad Hashim, Ayub sent to St. John a mission composed of Hazrat-i-'Umar Jan Sahibzadah and Sardar 'Abd allah Khan. Through them Ayub expressed his deep regret over the murder of L. Maclain, an English prisoner of war, who had fired the shots which began the battle of Maiwand. Although Ayub considered himself to be the rightful heir to the sovereignty of Afghanistan, he placed his affairs in the hands of the British Government, looking upon himself as its friend.<sup>82</sup> But on 21 March 1881 his envoys were told that Kandahar had already been assigned to

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80 St. John to Lyall, 15-21 Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 1039.

81 Ayub to Hasan 'Ali, 24 Nov 1880, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 1981.

82 'Abd Allah to St. John, 1 Mar 1881, PSLI, 27, 1661.



'Abd al-Rahman.<sup>83</sup> The envoys failed in their open mission, but their very presence as Ayub's representatives stirred up popular anti-British feelings.

At Kandahar, when it was publicly known that the British were leaving the city, the Kandaharis increased their activities on behalf of Ayub. They were reported to be buying and repairing arms and thinking of nothing but Ayub,<sup>84</sup> and were confident of his ultimate victory over the Amir.

Girishk had been strongly garrisoned by the Amir's forces with about 6,000 (regulars and irregulars) with 18 guns,<sup>85</sup> composed predominantly of Ghilzays, Kabulis and Durranis under Naib Salar Ghulam Haydar Charkhi. In mid-July 1881, the Amir's forces defeated the first advanced force of Ayub under Sardar Mohammad Hasan at Miskarez (near Girishk). But at a subsequent engagement at Karez-i-'Ata (near Girishk) on 20 July, Ayub's forces, comparatively smaller in number (just over 5,000 regular and irregular) defeated the Amir's forces.<sup>86</sup> Accounts of this engagement vary, but the defeat proved decisive. According to the Amir's officials the defeat was caused by the action of part of the Amir's own army, known as the Qalati (presumably the Ghilzays), who, at a critical moment, commenced a general onslaught on the Kabulis.<sup>87</sup>

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83 St. John to Lyall, 21 Mar 1881, PSLI, 27, 1667.

84 Ripon to Hartington, 21 May 1881, PSLI, 28, 911.

85 St. John to Foreign (T) 25 July 1881, based on statement of Sardar Shams al-Din, PSLI, 29, 481.

86 St. John to Foreign (T), 4 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 621.

87 General Ghulam Haydar Charkhi to Amir, AB, Kabul Correspondent, 6 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 773.

The Amir's Governor and Ghulam Haydar Charkhi, now Sipah Salar (Commander-in-Chief), finding the city of Kandahar closed, retreated to Qalat where they joined the army already sent there from Kabul. Towards the end of July, Kandahar fell peacefully to Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan, who was followed by Ayub, accompanied by his senior officials, including Sardar Mohammad Hasan, Mohammad Husayn Qizilbash Sipah Salar, Hafiz Allah Ghilzay Na'b Salar and Sartip Nur Mohammad.

As always, at Kandahar too Ayub was short of money. Although Muslim and Hindu merchants contributed voluntarily to his treasury,<sup>88</sup> this contribution was hardly sufficient for his immediate needs and he attempted to raise a loan on the security of the customs.<sup>89</sup>

Ayub's biggest problem was what to do next. Should he make an advance on Kabul, where the Amir's position was reported to be "extremely critical"<sup>90</sup> or should he fortify his position in Kandahar and meet the Amir there? What would be the attitude of the Government of India, whose forces at Quetta were so close to Kandahar? In the end Ayub remained at Kandahar and, by doing so, missed his opportunity.

Firstly, Ayub was apprehensive of the British, mainly because his early attempts to come to terms with them had

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88 St. John to Lyall, 11 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 788.

89 St. John to Lyall, 20 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 781.

90 AB, Kabul Correspondent, 4 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 771.

failed and, after his occupation of Kandahar, they had strengthened their frontier districts with considerable forces. Ayub feared that in the event of his march on Kabul, British forces would occupy Kandahar, cutting him off from his base. Hoping for a change of heart by the British, Ayub opened communication with St. John, who had succeeded Sandeman, informing him of his victory, expressing his desire for friendship with the British, and stating that he intended to march on Kabul.<sup>91</sup> St. John's original draft, expressing the British attitude of no interference in Kandahar affairs, was changed to one of having received "no instructions"<sup>92</sup> - a vague and ominous reply.

Secondly, there were some indications that the Durrani were not enthusiastic about marching on Kabul. Ayub's initial efforts to raise a large number of regular troops from among them did not meet with the expected success. Thirdly, the timely arrival of the Amir's forces at Qalat, and their junction with the remainder of the defeated forces under Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Charkhi also deterred Ayub from marching on Kabul.

Circumstances had placed Ayub in a position which required greater enterprise from him than he could possibly offer. Had he been a forceful personality, he would have pushed a large body of his Durrani on to

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91 Ayub to St. John, 7 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 721.

92 St. John to Ayub, 10 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 721.

Kabul, and in alliance with the Ghilzays, who were reported to be "...particularly dangerous"<sup>93</sup> to the Amir and on Ayub's side, he would have turned the discontented people of Kabul against the Amir.

In sharp contrast to Ayub the Amir, after the fall of Kandahar, acted swiftly and with determination. Within a week he announced his intended march on Kandahar. After consulting the most important elders of the Kohistan and of the Ghilzays, he set out for Kandahar on 11 August, accompanied by Ismat Allah Ghilzay, Niaz Mohammad Khan, Bahram Khan and others.<sup>94</sup>

Before his departure the Amir entrusted the administration of Kabul to a committee of four, led by his eldest son Sardar Habib Allah Khan (b. 1872). Actual power, however, was exercised by Parwana Khan, a member of the committee, and the most reliable servant of the Amir. Parwana Khan was a Kafir slave of the Amir, presumably from Badakhshan, who had been in exile with the Amir in Samarqand. Soon after 'Abd al-Rahman became Amir, he appointed Parwana Khan as Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and Kotwal of Kabul, a post equivalent to that of Minister of the Interior.<sup>95</sup>

The Amir's departure was by no means smooth. He imprisoned all those suspected of intriguing with Ayub,

93 BCA, 17.

94 AB with Amir from the Zarni Camp (between Ghazni and Maidan), 16 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 1013.

95 Mahomed, S., 1, 216.

including Mohammad Jan Wardak, his elder brother, Mulla 'Abd al-Ghafur, Sardar Nek Mohammad (a son of the late Amir Dost Mohammad), and others. Sayyed Ahmad, the eldest son of Sayyed Mahmud, the ruler of Kunar, deserted the Amir. So did Sultan 'Ali and Safdar 'Ali (sons of Sardar Sher 'Ali, chief of the Jaghuri Hazaras who had been a close friend of the late Amir). But their intended purpose of making disturbances against the Amir did not seem to have been successful.

With the liberal use of the large funds at his disposal the Amir, while on his march, bought the allegiance of most of the Ghilzays. In about 100 letters to their elders between Kabul and Qalat, the Amir promised them that after restoring peace and order "...the prosperity and welfare of the nation.....will be the primary object of his rule."<sup>96</sup> The Amir undertook to feed the entire camp, elders with their followers, and animals.<sup>97</sup> Seeing that the Amir had opened "a free restaurant" Ghilzay volunteers joined him at every stage in large numbers.<sup>98</sup> Supplies, furnished by the people, were allowed for by the remission of revenue. Further, the Amir presented elders and mullas with money and chapans (loose coats). This innovation won over to him the undecided and hesitant Ghilzays including some of the Tarakays who had recently turned away the Amir's sub-governor from their country and who were in correspondence with Ayub.

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96 AB (Puli-i-Maidan), 15 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 965.

97 Ibid.

98 AB (Zarni Camp), 16 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 1013.

Both the Amir and Ayub obtained fetwas (religious endorsements) from mullas and thereby justified bloodshed between Sunni Muslims. In Maidan, the Amir obtained expressions of allegiance from about 400 mullas as well as their fetwas to the effect that Ayub was a "rebel". In Kandahar the mullas denounced the Amir as a "kafir" and called upon Muslims "...to fight against the nominee and coadjutor of the infidels..."<sup>99</sup> While styling himself "Ghazi" and the Amir a "Farangi" (the Persian form of the word Frank but with the meaning of infidel), Ayub called on the people to join him in a jihad.<sup>100</sup> The Kandaharis also styled themselves "religious warriors!"<sup>101</sup> On the whole, Ayub had the better of these exchanges. Because the Amir had come to terms with the British he was associated with the "infidels", and as far as religious opinions went, the Amir was in a very unfavourable position. Only by the liberal use of money was the Amir able to denounce Ayub as a rebel whereas the Amir was easily denounced as a kafir.

But Ayub was no match for 'Abd al-Rahman in diplomacy. In Kandahar Ayub entertained the naive idea of compromising with the Amir. 'Abd al-Rahman was an unscrupulous opportunist who was determined to exclude the family of Sher 'Ali from reigning over any part of Afghanistan. When the Amir arrived at Kandahar, Ayub sent him a peace mission composed of sayyeds and mullas, led by Sardar Mohay al-Din, the only surviving son of Sardar Kohandil.

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99 Amir to Ripon, 22 Shawal 1298, A.H., PSLI, 33, 86.  
 100 AB, 4 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 771.  
 101 Amir to Ripon, 26 Sept 1881, PSLI, 33, 88.

Ayub also sent, subsequently, a proposal for peace in a sealed Quran by the hands of Sardar Shams al-Din (an official of the Amir who had been imprisoned by Ayub in Kandahar). Ayub's proposal was reported to be as follows:-

"We were both exiles, but now God has given us Afghanistan between us. I am small [younger], and you are great [elder]. Nevertheless, do you so act that we may become one and join against the Farangis. If you will not, then let me alone. What I propose is this: do you go to Turkistan, which was your father's share. Let the son of Azim Khan take Kuram. Let Kabul go to Yakub; Kandahar to the sons of Amin Khan; Girishk to Hashim; Herat to me. I will fight the infidel; and if you will be my friend, will obtain the release of Yakub. If not, I will ruin myself. Should you not agree to this, I will not on that account attack you; but if you come on, that is your own affair."<sup>102</sup>

Although the Amir detained the mission for some time, he was not willing to listen to a proposal which would give him only Turkistan and commit himself to an undertaking which would mean the release of the ex-Amir. A final show-down between the two cousins was then unavoidable.

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102 St. John to Foreign (Simla) (T), 5 Sept 1881, PSLI, 29, 977.

The coming conflict has been depicted by St. John, whose reports are our main source, as a war between the two "hereditary foes"<sup>103</sup> - the Ghilzays and Durrani whose "ancestral animosity" he thought to have been "...by far the strongest political passion in Southern Afghanistan".<sup>104</sup> Thus he had concluded that the Durrani flocked to Ayub - "...the representative of Durrani against Ghilzai" - to defend "...their city against the Ghilzai invader."<sup>105</sup>

No doubt the Durrani rushed to defend their country against invasion, but the conflict was not intra-tribal. It was a conflict which was shaped mainly by factors such as religion, fear of foreign domination, and the acquisition of material reward. In the first place, the loyalty of both Ghilzays and Durrani was evenly divided. On the eve of the engagement, the Tarakay Ghilzays, who supported Ayub, rebelled against the Amir and closed the road behind him.<sup>106</sup> The Hotakay Ghilzays were almost equally divided. The Qalati regiment which went over to the advanced force of Ayub in Girishk was, in all probability, composed of the Ghilzays. No doubt the larger number of the Ghilzays was with the Amir, but he bought their service with money and a promise of plunder. There is no evidence to suggest that the Ghilzays offered their service because they had a feud with the Durrani. The same may be said, though on a smaller scale, of the

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103 St. John to Lyall, 22 Sept 1881, PSLI, 30, 117.

104 Ibid,

105 Ibid, 1, 118.

106 St. John to Lyall, 22 Sept 1881, PSLI, 29, 1063a.



Barakzays of south-east of the city of Kandahar who joined the Amir.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, there were about 2,000 Kandahari (i.e. presumably including Durranis) horsemen in the army of the Amir. The main feature of this struggle was the popular, but mistaken, conviction among the Durranis that the Amir was "a creature of the British" and Ayub "a champion of Islam." Hence, the presence of a large number of mullas and talibs (students of Islamic studies) on the side of Ayub. Besides, the struggle showed a general opposition by the Kandaharis against the idea of being ruled by another puppet ruler as, in their opinion, the Amir was.

On 20th September, after the Amir had entrenched his forces in camp at Karez-i-Neko (about 6 miles to the south-west of the city), Ayub withdrew his main body of forces from the city to Chil Zina (a pass to the west of the city). The exact number of troops on both sides is not known. The number of regulars and irregulars together on the side of the Amir was reported to be about 14,000, while on the side of Ayub about 17,000.<sup>108</sup> The Amir had 18 guns and Ayub 14. On 22 September, the Amir's infantry advanced and the battle started. In the beginning Ayub's troops were successful. But a dramatic development in the midst of the fighting turned the scale entirely against Ayub, when his own Kabuli and Herati regiments from the rear fired on his Kandahari regiments in the

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107 St. John to Lyall, 16 Sept 1881, PSLI, 29, 1062a.

108 M. Hashim (Native Agent) to St. John, 26 Sept 1881, PSLI, 30, 8. According to S. Mahomed (1,212), the Amir's troops (regular and irregular) were about 22,000, and Ayub's 20,000.

front and the irregulars on the flanks. Ayub's Kandahari regiments and irregulars who fought bravely had no alternative but to retreat and disperse.<sup>109</sup> Ayub again fled to Herat. The victorious army plundered the city and many houses of the Hindu and Muslim merchants for 24 hours.

Shortly the city of Herat also fell to the forces which the Amir had already sent there. Ayub had entrusted Herat to Musa Jan, leaving Loynab Khushdil with a small force in the city and Sardar 'Abd al-Wahab at Tiwarah. But against a concerted assault of some 20,000 Taimanis, Firozkohis, and the Hazaras of Dehzangi [?], led by Sardar 'Abd al-Qudus (the Amir's sub-governor at Tashqurghan in Turkistan), and Sardar Anbia Khan Taimani,<sup>110</sup> Herat succumbed easily on October 2, 1881. While on his way to Herat, Ayub learnt of its fall. The hero of Maiwand, whose name has remained to this day a symbol of national pride and honour, fled to Meshed, to spend the life of an exile, first in Persia till 1888, then in India (Lahore) until 1924.

The victory of the Amir was a great relief to the Government of India. After having obtained the approval of the Home Government, Ripon now addressed 'Abd al-Rahman as "The Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies."<sup>111</sup>

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109 St. John to Lyall, 30 Sept 1881, based on account of an eyewitness, PSLI, 30, 111.

110 Sardar 'Abd al-Qudus (Ghore) to Amir, AB, Kabul Correspondent, 16 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 1013.

111 Singhal, 91.

The reunification was finally completed when Maimana, ruled more or less independently by Mir Delawar since 1879, was subdued in 1884. Until then the Amir had left the Mir largely unmolested, mainly because the Amir was busy in subduing other tribes, and Maimana did not present a problem to him. But in early 1884, when the Russians approached the north-western border of Afghanistan, Maimana was pacified.

The reunification of Afghanistan was mainly a result of the massacre in 1879 and the subsequent prolonged resistance to the British occupation of Kabul. In 1880, the Liberal Government reversed the policy of the previous Conservative Government and decided to withdraw all British troops from Afghanistan, except from Kandahar. But after the defeat of their troops in Maiwand, the British Government, on the initiative of Ripon, also decided to withdraw from Kandahar, except from the frontier districts. With the withdrawal of the British troops, the biggest single danger to a unified Afghanistan came from Ayub (the favourite of the majority of the people), when he challenged the Amir. His challenge was not only a threat to 'Abd al-Rahman, but also to the Government of India which now pursued a policy of bringing about a strong and unified Afghanistan under Amir 'Abd al-Rahman. Hence her liberal assistance in money and arms which helped 'Abd al-Rahman to expel Ayub easily. Finally, with the incorporation of Maimana in 1884, the reunification of Afghanistan within the frontiers which, on the whole, remain to the present day, was completed.

## Chapter 4

## The Pacification of Eastern Afghanistan

A considerable problem was presented to 'Abd al-Rahman by the results of the British occupation of Eastern Afghanistan - the easterly extension of the province of Kabul. During their occupation of Jalalabad, the British came to understandings with the Shinwaray tribe, the Khan of Lalpura and the Badshah of Kunar. The first two continued to administer the road leading to the Khyber as before while the latter tried to prevent the emergence of a popular jehad against the British. In return they were paid a subsidy and allowed to enjoy a large degree of autonomy. After the British withdrawal, these concessions clashed with the measures the Amir took to consolidate his authority there. The result was disturbances which lasted until the early nineties. But the Amir's efforts to regain territories further east failed.

Lalpura

The only Khan who retained his nominal position during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman was Mohammad Akbar Khan Mohmand, the Khan of Lalpura, the main seat of the Upper Mohmand, on the left bank of the Kabul river near Jalalabad. The territory of the Upper Mohmand is situated between the Uthman Khel in the east, the Kunar valley in the west, Bajaur in the north and the plain of the Kabul river in the south. Upper Mohmand was inhabited by the Mohmand tribe. In its plain there were a number of small communities of Arabs, Dehgans, Tajiks, Sayyeds, Piranchas,

Hindkis, and Lodijs [Lodins?]. In 1906, the Mohmands may have numbered 55,000.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1879, the deportation to India of the ex-Amir was followed by a general rising in Kabul as well as in the Mohmand country, where the rising was led by Mulla Khalil Mohmand (a religious leader of the Mohmand), and others. Sadiq Khan, the then Khan of Lalpura, who was related to the ex-Amir, joined the rising with about 5,400 Mohmands near Dakka (a village on the road to Kabul, about 12 miles from Landai Kotal).<sup>2</sup> But soon a split in the leadership occurred, when Akbar Khan, half-brother of Sadiq Khan, accepted the khanate of Lalpura from the British "...on condition of his loyalty and good services to the British Government."<sup>3</sup> Akbar Khan also received small loans. In return, he supplied the British forces with provisions and opposed the jehad movement,<sup>4</sup> so keeping the intractable Mohmands in as good order as could be expected.

Griffin described the guarantee of the khanate to Akbar Khan as "absolute" and urged that it "must be maintained."<sup>6</sup> Further, Griffin informed 'Abd al-Rahman that Lalpura was under "...the protection of the British Government."<sup>7</sup> This was a clear breach of the agreement

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1 Elphinstone, M., 2, 40. Jenkyns, W., Report on the Jalalabad District, Chiefly in Regard to Revenue, 1879, Calcutta, pp4,xii-xv, Government of India. FTNK, 419.

2 FTNK, 459

3 B,C,A, 12 January 1880, 31.

4 Ibid.

5 Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1257.

6 Ibid.

7 Griffin to Amir, 22 Aug 1880, PSLI, 33, 512.

reached between him and the Amir, apart from the fact that from the days of Ahmad Shah the Mohmands were subject to the Kabul rulers.<sup>8</sup> In regard to the eastern province, Griffin was an expansionist who, in May 1880 while the negotiations with 'Abd al-Rahman were in progress, had unsuccessfully urged the necessity of retaining Jalalabad as far as Gandamak.<sup>9</sup> That the British Government did not pursue the claim suggests that it was largely Griffin's personal contribution..

As the Khan of Mohmands, Akbar Khan held an important position. By tradition, the Khan of Lalpura was a guardian of the Khyber, in which the authority of the Mohmands was so great that it was said that a single Mohmand will pass a whole caravan.<sup>10</sup> Akbar Khan collected road tolls at Dakka from merchants and travellers, and levied dues on the rafts on the Kabul river. His annual income which he collected with his own men was about one lakh of rupees.<sup>11</sup> Because of the special position of Akbar Khan, and the fact that the only alternative to him was Sadiq Khan, who was related to the ex-Amir, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman did not take drastic measures against him. Besides, the Amir feared a coalition of Akbar Khan and the Badshah of Kunar. Instead the Amir gradually stripped Akbar Khan of power and made him a kind of government official. Finally he kept him in Kabul.

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8 FTNK, 419.

9 Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1245.

10 Elphinstone, 2, 41.

11 PD, 10 May 1882, PSLI, 32, 962.

Shortly after the British withdrawal, the Amir summoned Akbar Khan to Kabul and confirmed him as Khan, but imposed certain conditions on him. In 1882 the Amir further reduced his power by appropriating half the tolls of Lalpura,<sup>12</sup> and garrisoning Dakka with a force of his own, which took over the management of the road.<sup>13</sup>

Akbar Khan acquiesced. In the first place, his request "...for the intervention of the British Government"<sup>14</sup> met with the reply that he should comply with "...the orders received from...the Amir."<sup>15</sup> In the second place, among the elders of his own tribe he was, by tradition, only primus inter pares and he had formidable rivals in the persons of his elder brother and cousins.

Aware of his position, Akbar Khan at no time dared to oppose the Amir who, in 1883, took over the collection of the Lalpura tolls from the Khan and leased them out. But the proceeds were equally shared between Akbar Khan and the Amir.<sup>16</sup> Next, on the grounds that the Khan was exercising oppression and tyranny over the people,<sup>17</sup> the Amir confiscated the whole of the Lalpura tolls,<sup>18</sup> and made him an allowance of only a thousand rupees cash a month.<sup>19</sup>

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12 PD, 4 July 1882, PSLI, 33, 234.

13 PD, 18 Sept 1882, PSLI, 34, 9.

14 BCA, 32.

15 Ibid.

16 KD, 27 Mar 1883, PSLI, 36, 262.

17 KD, 31 July 1883, PSLI, 37, 927.

18 Akbar Khan to the Commissioner of Peshawar, 30 Nov 1883, PSLI, 38, 999.

19 PD, 31 May 1883, PSLI, 44, 860.

Meanwhile the Khan rendered valuable services to the Amir's army under Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Charkhi in suppressing the Shinwarays in the late eighties for which, in 1890, the Amir granted a rent-free village to the Khan and an allowance to his son in Kabul.<sup>20</sup> But in early 1893 the Amir confiscated all his rent-free villages and gave him a fixed cash allowance,<sup>21</sup> owing to his failure to crush Umra Khan of Jandol against whom the Khan had taken the field in support of Safdar Khan, the Khan of Nawagai,<sup>22</sup> who was an ally of the Amir. In late 1893 Akbar Khan was told that his power would be limited to Lalpura alone.<sup>23</sup> In 1894, certain allowances hitherto paid to the Mohmands through the Khan were dispersed through a certain Lalunai, an agent of the Sipah Salar. Soon, Lalunai became more powerful than the Khan who was detained first at Asmar by the Sipah Salar<sup>24</sup> and in the following year in Kabul.

### Kunar

The district of Kunar, bounded on the east by the Mohmand range, north-west by the Kashmund range, west by the district of Laghman and south by Jalalabad, was inhabited predominantly by the Safays with small communities of Shinwarays, Mamunds, Kafirs, Durrans and Tajiks.<sup>25</sup>

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20 PD, 6 Dec 1890, PSLI, 61, 953.

21 PD, 10 Jan 1893, PSLI, 69, 583.

22 FTNK, 470.

23 KD, 9-12 Dec 1893, PSLI, 73, 118.

24 FTNK, 470.

25 GAK, 317. Udny, R., to Chief Secretary to Government of Panjab, 12 Aug 1892, PSLI, 67, 1077.



For centuries Kunar had been ruled by a sayyed family whose ancestors were believed to have been the descendants of Mohammad through his daughter, Fatima. This accounts for the title of Badshah (probably a corruption of Padishah) and Sayyed used by the rulers of Kunar. According to tradition, the ancestors of Sayyed Mahmud, the then Badshah of Kunar, had migrated through Termiz (on the right bank of the Oxus) from 'Arabia. Kunar had been granted as revenue - free by the Māghul emperor Humayun (1526-1530, 1555-1556) to an ancestor of Sayyed Mahmud whose descendants gradually became secular rulers, taking revenue at the rate of one-third of the produce.<sup>26</sup>

From the time of Humayun up to the reign of Shah Shuja' al-Mulk Sadozay (1803), the sayyeds of Kunar held undisturbed possession of Kunar,<sup>27</sup> but under the Barakzays there began a series of attempts to bring the area under control.<sup>28</sup> Family dissension among the sayyeds of Kunar helped Amir Dost Mohammad to annex a portion of Kunar and make Sayyed Baha al-Din, the then Badshah, his tributary vassal.<sup>29</sup> During the British occupation of Afghanistan, Baha al-Din maintained relations with the British and accepted the rule of Shah Shuja'.<sup>30</sup> After the British withdrawal, Amir Dost Mohammad annexed Kunar

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26 Statement of Sayyed Mahmud, 1892, PSLI, 67, 1078.

27 MacGregor, GAK, 321.

28 Yapp, M.E., Disturbances in Eastern Afghanistan, 1839-42, BSCAS, xxv, pt 3, 1962, 504.

29 Sayyed Mahmud, 1078.

30 Yapp, M.E., 50.

entirely to his kingdom, but later divided it between Sayyed Baha al-Din and one of his brothers, Sayyed Hashim, while annexing a large portion of it to his kingdom. Amir Sher 'Ali, in both his reigns, kept the arrangement, while Amir Mohammad Afzal removed Sayyed Baha al-Din from Kunar and had him arrested in Kabul.<sup>31</sup>

During the second British occupation of Afghanistan, Sayyed Mahmud, who had succeeded his father Sayyed Baha al-Din, probably in 1868, took possession of the whole of Kunar. Believing that, by assisting the British, he would be able to regain and retain the whole of Kunar "...independent of any ruler in Kabul and only subordinate to the British,"<sup>32</sup> Sayyed Mahmud tried to prevent resistance to the British and established friendly relations with them. In return the British Government guaranteed his "hereditary possessions"<sup>33</sup> and promised him assistance and protection.

When Griffin was on his way to Kabul, Sayyed Mahmud met him in Jalalabad. Besides renewing his loyalty to the British, Sayyed Mahmud advised Griffin on the country as a whole, suggesting to him that Afghanistan should be divided up into minor principalities, independent of each other, but subordinate to the British. Further, he advised him that "...no final settlement should be made

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31 Sayyed Mahmud, 1078.

32 Griffin to Roberts, 29 Mar 1880, PSLI, 33, 546.

33 Major-General Bright (Commanding officer, Khyber Field Force), to Sayyed Mahmud, 21 Dec 1879, PSLI, 33, 542.

until Muhammad Jan Khan and his adherents had been thoroughly defeated and broken, and the power of the British Government fully vindicated."<sup>34</sup> Griffin was so impressed by him that he gave him another guarantee, to the effect that "...he might rest assured Government would fulfil literally and fully all promises made to him, and would take care, happen what might, he would not suffer for having placed himself upon the side of the British."<sup>35</sup> Griffin granted him a cash allowance of twenty thousand rupees and two pieces of mountain artillery.<sup>36</sup>

Griffin strongly recommended Sayyed Mahmud to the Amir saying that "...the British Government would hear with special pleasure that Your Highness had maintained him in the enjoyment of his present possessions of Kunar-i-Kuhna [the old Kunar] and Pishat [the principal town of Kunar], and the country east of the river and that he had been granted the privilege of holding Shewa Shiggi [a collection of villages about eight miles from Jalalabad] in farm."<sup>37</sup> But for reasons which will be discussed later, the Amir took measures which compelled Sayyed Mahmud to take refuge in India.

In late 1880, the Amir confirmed Sayyed Mahmud's personal possessions [lands] on both sides of the Kunar

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34 Sayyed Mahmud to Griffin, 12 Mar 1880, PSLI, 33, 547.

35 Griffin to Roberts, 29 Mar 1880, PSLI, 33, 548.

36 Sayyed Mahmud, 1079.

37 Griffin to Amir, 17 Aug 1880, PSLI, 33, 511.

river but made them subject to revenue. The Amir farmed out the right to collect taxes only in the districts of Kashkot (Behsud) and Pashat to the Sayyed. But no sooner had the Badshah arrived at Kunar from his recent visit to the Amir than the Governor of Jalalabad, on instructions from the Amir, despatched khassadars to collect the revenue from Kashkot and Pashat.<sup>38</sup> Sayyed Mahmud acquiesced, but the landowners refused to pay the revenue. In the following year Sayyed Mahmud's position became worse when his son, Sayyed Ahmad, deserted the Amir while he was on his march to Kandahar. The Amir determined to ruin his father, Sayyed Mahmud.<sup>39</sup>

Aware of the Amir's attitude toward him, Sayyed Mahmud refused to obey a new summons to Kabul in 1882. Meanwhile, on instructions from the Amir, the Governor of Jalalabad claimed arrears of 370,000 rupees from Sayyed Mahmud for the revenue of the previous years.<sup>40</sup> According to the estimate of Sayyed Mahmud, the annual revenue of Kunar with the districts which he had ruled since 1878 was about 240,000 rupees,<sup>41</sup> but he was willing to pay only 60,000 rupees as nazrana (gift).<sup>42</sup>

In declining the summons Sayyed Mahmud must have had other considerations in mind too. His father had been a supporter of Amir Sher 'Ali against the father of 'Abd

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38 BCA, 126.

39 Amir to Ghilzay elders, A.B. from Zarni, 16 Aug 1881, PSLI, 29, 1014.

40 PD, 11 June 1882, PSLI, 32, 1269.

41 Sayyed Mahmud, 1080.

42 PD, 11 June 1882, PSLI, 32, 1269.

al-Rahman during the civil war. But in the eyes of the Amir "...the sole difficulty"<sup>43</sup> was the fact that Sayyed Mahmud himself was "...a strong partisan of Sher 'Ali Khan",<sup>44</sup> to whose family he was related by marriage. The Amir had either imprisoned or executed a number of influential supporters of Amir Sher 'Ali. Sayyed Mahmud was therefore reluctant to wait on the Amir without some guarantee by the Government of India.

Several letters were exchanged over Sayyed Mahmud. In one of them the Government of India wrote to the Amir that the Viceroy "...is assured that the feelings of justice for which Your Highness is so distinguished will make you hesitate before you think of visiting upon Syud [Sic] Ahmad [Mahmud] the sins of his son."<sup>45</sup> In reply the Amir wrote, "If he [Sayyed Mahmud] comes with the real purity of heart to pay his respects 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..."<sup>46</sup> None of the letters helped Sayyed Mahmud. Griffin even held the view that they "annoyed" the Amir."<sup>47</sup> Griffin's conclusion might be true, but in view of his general attitude towards influential elders throughout the country, it was unlikely the Amir would have left Sayyed Mahmud in his position in any case.

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43 Amir to W.G.Waterfield (Commissioner of Peshawar), 18 Apr 1885, PSLI, 49, 235.

44 PD, 18 Apr 1885, PSLI, 44, 235.

45 Lyall to Amir, 12 Jan 1882, PSLI, 33, 514.

46 Amir to Lyall, 1 Feb 1882, PSLI, 33, 514.

47 Griffin to Government of India, 4 Mar 1882, PSLI, 33, 514.

For the Government of India there were the questions of the explicit guarantees which had been given to the Badshah, and their effects on the neighbouring independent tribes if the guarantees were not upheld. Rawlinson feared that if the Government "...abandon the Badshah....we shall incur incredible disgrace along the frontier and must be prepared for further aggressions on the part of the Cabul [Government] against Swat, Bajor and Dir and ultimately against Chitral."<sup>48</sup> Hartington also held a similar view,<sup>49</sup> although he had been of the principal advocates of withdrawal from Afghanistan. Furthermore, Kunar was considered to be strategically important. It was on a passable route to Badakhshan and ultimately to central Asia. Also, from Kunar, there was an easy access to Kafiristan, Chitral, Jalalabad and, more important, to the tribes along the north-western border of India.

But Ripon was not willing to go further than recommending Sayyed Mahmud. As had been pointed out elsewhere, the policy of the Government of India was to work towards a strong Afghanistan under the Amir, free in the internal affairs of his kingdom. Ripon argued that because of their geographical locations "...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."<sup>50</sup>

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48 Memorandum by Sir H. Rawlinson, 16 Sept 1882, PSLI, 33, 525.

49 Hartington to Ripon, (T), 11 Sept 1882, PSLI, 33, 519.

50 Ripon to Hartington, 23 Oct 1882, PSLI, 34, 221.

There seemed to be only two courses left for the Government of India, either to abandon the Badshah or to fulfil the guarantee by force. It chose to abandon the Badshah. In excuse, Ripon wrote, "...the Badshah of Kunar has persistently neglected to follow our advice [to wait on the Amir] ..... We have reason to doubt whether, in his relations with the present Amir, he has not played a double game."<sup>51</sup>

For the Amir, Kunar was not simply a matter of personal hostility towards the Badshah. He was prepared to keep the Badshah at Kabul with a good allowance.<sup>52</sup> The real problem was the Amir's determination to prove that he was not a puppet ruler. Also, for the same strategic reasons, his direct control over Kunar was essential for the extension of his authority into the territories further east. Because of this he even threatened to relinquish the amirate and to retire either to Herat or to Turkistan in face of the threatening attitude taken by Lepel Griffin, once his admirer, now his critic. Ripon had commissioned Griffin (Agent to the Governor General in the Central Province) to see if he could influence the Amir through the Amir's Agent at Calcutta to whom Griffin had said, in an interview at Calcutta, that "The British authorities are thinking of arranging the Amir's affairs."<sup>53</sup>

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51 Ibid.

52 Amir to Colonel Afzal (British Agent at Kabul), 6 Apr 1883, PSLI, 36, 383.

53 Griffin to General Amir Ahmed (Amir's Agent at Calcutta), 28 Oct 1882, PSLI, 34, 740.

Relying on the British guarantees, Sayyed Mahmud was still hopeful for the exercise of yet stronger influence. To Griffin he wrote, "My visit to Kabul would be deferred until I get an assurance from the British Government. Up to date, as far as lay in my power, I had served the Government, and incurred a bad name among my clansmen. This service was not rendered with the object that it should bear good fruit in the next world."<sup>54</sup>

For some time past the Amir had been threatening Sayyed Mahmud. In his last warning, the Amir gave him twenty days to wait on him, failing which he was told that he would be driven away from his kingdom.<sup>55</sup> In Kunar itself opposition to Sayyed Mahmud had grown stronger, in all probability with the encouragement of Mulla Khalil. In an undated letter to the Amir, some people of Kunar had already complained of Sayyed Mahmud's alleged atrocities and the mullas of Bajaur, Asmar and Shiggal [?] had declared him as a "kafir" for his having prevented the ghazis from fighting the British.<sup>56</sup> In November 1882, the Sipah Salar drove Sayyed Mahmud away from Kunar. Abandoned by the British and opposed by his own people, Sayyed Mahmud offered but a feeble resistance and fled to Mittai (a village on the frontier of the Mohmand country ) where he remained until 1886, hoping to return if some misfortune happened to the Amir. Finally he went to Hasan Abdal (India), receiving a subsidy of 2,000 rupees a month

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54 Sayyed Mahmud to Griffin, 25 Feb 1882, PSLI, 33, 514.

55 Amir to Sayyed Mahmud, 15 Apr 1882, PSLI, 33, 516.

56 Elders and mullas to Amir, undated, PSLI, 33, 575.



from the British Government. Only after the Amir's death was the Badshah allowed to return in 1905, but without being restored to power.<sup>57</sup>

### The Shinwarays

Except for Kot, the Shinwaray tribe occupy all the valleys and a number of passes of the Safed Koh (Spin Ghar). Their country, the Shinwar, is encircled by the Khugianay tribe in the west, the Afriday and Mohmand tribes in the south and east, and the Kabul river in the north. The tribe is divided into four main divisions of the Sangu Khel (Sun Khel), Ali Sher Khel (with a portion of it in Loargai cis-Khyber), the Sipai and the Mandozay (Mandezay). With them live a people in subordinate position (hamsayas), called Mulagoris. Of all the tribes, the Shinwarays, despite their small number of 70,000 (in 1906), refused to accept the authority of the Amir for the longest period. They were not pacified until 1892.<sup>58</sup>

The Shinwarays not only received different kinds of allowances such as malikana (for each head-man of the village) and tankwah-i-wilayati (for the whole tribe) amounting to 30,000 rupees a year,<sup>60</sup> but they were also exempt from paying revenue.<sup>61</sup> Only the Mandozay section, who were less turbulent than the other sections, paid

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57 GAK, 321.

58 Elphinstone, M., 1, 42. Jenkyns, W., ii. MRA, 100. GAK, 485-500

59 Jenkyns, W., 15.

60 Amir in darbar, (Mazar), 5 Nov 1889, PPSLI, 58, 849.

61 Jenkyns, W., 12.

revenue but, like others, they also received allowances. The Shinwarays also received allowances for keeping the road open.<sup>62</sup> Allowances were also paid to the various religious groups among the Shinwarays such as the 'Ulema, Sayyeds, Sahibzadas, Khojazadas and Faqirs.'<sup>63</sup>

As guardians of the Khyber, the Shinwarays also located watchmen on certain portions of the Kabul road leading to Peshawar, and levied tolls. This was their right by tradition to which the British Government agreed when they were in control of the land between Dakka and Landai Khana (in the Khyber) in the war of 1879-1880. In return the Shinwarays, as before, took the responsibility of keeping the road open and safe.<sup>64</sup> The denial by the Amir of the road tolls to the Shinwarays became the signal for a long conflict, which in the course of time was intensified by other factors.

In 1882 the Amir garrisoned Dakka with a force and took over the management of the road from the Shinwarays as well as the Mohmands.<sup>65</sup> In an attempt to restore their traditional rights, all sections of the Shinwarays sent two large jirgas to the Amir. But the Amir, in contradiction of tribal custom, imprisoned and executed members of the second jirga in Kabul. About this time, Sardar Mohammad Hasan and Mir Bacha of Kohistan were inciting the Shinwarays in the Shinwar against the Amir. The first step was taken

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62 Elphinstone, M., 1, 43.

63 Jenkyns, W., 14.

64 GAK, 495.

65 PD, 18 Sept 1882, PSLI, 34, 9.

by the Sangu Khel, who raided the Amir's territory. By early 1883 they were attacking caravans on the Kabul road, which became completely unsafe.<sup>66</sup>

On 2 February 1883 the Amir arrived at Jalalabad. He unsuccessfully attempted to keep some influential Shinwarays as hostages near Jalalabad. It was about this time that the Amir introduced the se-kot (three portions) system in accordance with which one third of their land produce was demanded from the Shinwarays as well as other people of the eastern province as revenue.<sup>67</sup>

After their refusal to pay the revenue, the Shinwarays were routed by the Amir's army under General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay in an engagement at the village of Sarak in April 1883. Impressed by his victory, the Amir determined on either bringing the Shinwarays under complete control or expelling them from their homes.<sup>68</sup> By his order, the heads of about 140 Shinwarays, who had fallen in the battle, were piled in the vicinity of Jalalabad, and a large number of Shinwarays were imprisoned, some in the Siakh Chah (black well) in Kabul. Mass imprisonment was also an innovation to the Shinwarays, as the Jalalabad district had no prison.<sup>69</sup> The Amir also promised to give the land of the Shinwarays to the Khugianays.<sup>70</sup> The brutal measures of the Amir only

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66 GAK, 496.

67 Ibid, 495.

68 M. Afzal, (British Agent with Amir in Jalalabad), 1 May 1883, PSLI, 36, 741.

69 Jenkyns, A., 17.

70 M. Afzal (Jalalabad), 27 Feb 1883, PSLI, 35, 935.

hardened the attitudes of the Shinwarays, especially when, after the death of many of their elders in the battle, the leadership among them passed on to the more radical younger leaders.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, many jirgas went to and fro. For keeping the western part of the Khyber pass open, the Shinwarays insisted on their traditional allowances. Although the Amir reduced the revenue demand from one-third to one-tenth, in return he insisted on their being disarmed and hostages taken from them.<sup>72</sup> The net result was a failure.

The failure of the negotiations was followed by many encounters at Sarak, the Nargas Pass, the Bandar Pass, the Nazian Pass in which about 1,000 Shinwarays were killed and as many forts destroyed. The Shinwarays fled to the upper hills, while their houses were burnt down and their crops destroyed.<sup>73</sup> Besides, the Amir stopped the allowances to their mullas,<sup>74</sup> for failing to dissuade the Shinwarays from fighting. Although the Amir declared an amnesty and promised the release of the prisoners of war on the good conduct of the Shinwarays,<sup>75</sup> they declared that they had lost confidence in him.<sup>76</sup> They demanded, in addition, the permanent annulment of the revenue demand which the Amir, of course, was not willing to accept.

71 GAK, 488.

72 PD, 1 June 1883, PSLI, 36, 1549.

73 M. Afzal (Jalalabad), 3 June 1883, PSLI, 36, 1336.

74 M. Afzal (Jalalabad), 10 Apr 1883, PSLI, 36, 587.

75 M. Afzal (Jalalabad), 26 June 1883, PSLI, 37, 160.

76 Mir Kazim (Amir's messenger to Shinwarays) to Amir, 3 July 1883, PSLI, 37, 26.

The Amir left Jalalabad for Kabul without having reached any settlement with the Shinwarays. After his departure, the Shinwarays, especially the Sangu Khel, the most determined and numerous of all sections, made regular raids on the neighbouring lands. Indeed, robbery was the only occupation left by which the Shinwarays could support themselves. As, much later, they themselves put it, "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."<sup>77</sup>

Meanwhile the Sipah Salar took over the expedition against the Shinwarays, and acted as a viceroy of the Amir in the eastern province. He sent Mulla Najm al-Din, the most influential religious leader in eastern Afghanistan, to the Shinwarays, to advise them to expel Sardar Nur Mohammad Khan, son of Sardar Wali Mohammad, former Wali of Kabul, and Sadu, the famous Garu Khel Ghilzay robber who, for some time, had been with the Shinwarays and were inciting them against the Amir. But it was to no avail. A similar attempt had already failed when 80 released Shinwaray prisoners failed to induce their fellow tribesmen, despite their promise to do so, to submit to the Amir and pay the revenue.<sup>78</sup> However, by now a split had occurred among the Shinwarays, some willing to submit, others opposed to the Amir's rule.<sup>79</sup> In the absence of evidence, it is difficult to know who they were, but it may be

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77 Shinwaray elders to Ghulam Haydar Orakzay, 11 May 1885, PSLI, 44, 1079.

78 MM, Aug 1886, PSLI, 48, 55.

79 MM, Sept 1886, PSLI, 48, 511.

assumed that the Mandozays and the Sipai, who occupied the territory west of Shinwar, were for, and the Ali Sher Khel and the Sangu Khel were against conciliation. By their proximity to the Khyber, the Sangu Khel were affected materially more than others by the loss of tolls. This may account for their most stubborn attitude throughout the struggle.

In the meantime, the Shinwar had become a centre for a number of rebel leaders. Sadu and Sardar Nur Mohammad, who had earlier joined the Waziris against the Amir, returned to Shinwar. So did Maghul Khan, the former Khan of Goshta, who had already joined Sayyed Mahmud, the Badshah of Kunar, against the Amir. Soon, Mulla Najm al-Din also returned, this time in opposition to the Amir. The Mulla had recently escaped assassination by the Amir in Kabul, where the Mulla had advised the Amir to relax his demands upon the population.<sup>80</sup> In Shinwar, the Mulla denounced the Amir as an "infidel"<sup>81</sup> for his tyranny, while the Shinwarays declared Najm al-Din their Badshah,<sup>82</sup> but subsequent events showed that the Mulla took no part in activities against the Amir.

Because of the seriousness of the situation in Shinwar, the Amir did not recall his troops from there in the height of the Ghilzay rising in 1887. But operations against them were slowed down. This may account for the

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80 Colonel 'Ata Allah (British Agent at Kabul), 19 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1669.

81 PD, 29 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1877.

82 PD, 13 Aug 1887, PSLI, 50, 1887.

frequent kidnappings of the Amir's soldiers, and nightly attacks by the Shinwarays upon soldiers who had been garrisoned in Deh Bala in the heart of the Shinwar,<sup>83</sup> so much so that the soldiers became sick and feeble.<sup>84</sup> But the Shinwarays were not strong enough to force the army out of their country.

On 6 January 1888, the Amir returned to Jalalabad, with the object of bringing about the submission of the Shinwarays and conquering Dir, Swat and Bajaur. The Amir tried to employ such means as presenting each Shinwaray elder with a thousand rupees<sup>85</sup> and warning them of the danger from the infidels who, according to the Amir, menaced their country from two sides. In particular, he warned them of the insult to their women in the event of the invasion of their country by the infidels, and asked the Shinwarays to be prepared for jehad. Once again many jirgas were held. For the first time, the Sangu Khel made their submission, by agreeing to pay 'Ushr (tithes), and retaining a Qazi (judge) of the Amir in their land.<sup>86</sup> Also, they asked Sardar Nur Mohammad to leave their country.<sup>87</sup> About 700 elders entered into an agreement for payment of revenue, graduating according to the quality of their land.<sup>88</sup> At the same time the Amir gave tagavi (money advanced for the improvement of agriculture) to the Khugianays of the Gandamak area who had been

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83 Sipah Salar to Amir, 10 June 1887, PSLI, 50, 1189.

84 Sipah Salar to Amir, 8 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1449.

85 Colonel 'Ata Allah (Jalalabad), 30 Dec 1887, PSLI, 52, 569.

86 PD, 22 Feb 1888, PSLI, 52, 753.

87 MM, Feb 1888, PSLI, 52, 768.

88 Colonel 'Ata Allah, 7 Feb 1888, PSLI, 52, 1073.

settled in Deh Bala.<sup>89</sup>

After their return home, the elders held jirgas, but failed to induce their clansmen to accept the agreement they had made with the Amir. Together they sent the following message to the Amir; "We are ready to submit to Your Highness's authority.....but two things prevent us from carrying these our 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 Mohmands and Khugianis have fled on account of oppression. How then can we be consoled and assured that we will be treated well?"<sup>90</sup> Besides their loss of confidence, in the Amir, for his tyrannical rule, the fact was that the Shinwarays and their land were too poor to pay the revenue. Nevertheless their former tribal unity was now broken. Even the Sangu Khel split into two parties.<sup>91</sup> Those who lived in the lower parts of the valleys, north of the Nazian glen (the main land of the Sangu Khel) accepted the terms, while those in the upper parts still asserted their independence.<sup>92</sup> But despite this split, the rebellious Shinwarays inflicted a loss of about 400 (killed and wounded) on the Amir's army in two engagements in July.<sup>93</sup> Moreover the Shinwarays killed nearly all of the

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89 Colonel 'Ata Allah, 24 Feb 1888, PSLI, 53, 342.

90 Shinwaray elders to Amir, 16 Mar 1888, PSLI, 53, 511.

91 PD, 31 May 1888, PSLI, 54,

92 PD, 10 July 1888, PSLI, 54, 425.

93 MM, July 1888, PSLI, 54, 753.



one hundred members of a jirga, which the Sipah Salar had sent to them for their peaceful submission. This was no doubt in revenge for the treatment of their own jirga which the Amir had seized in 1883, and the recent misconduct of the soldiers towards their women.<sup>94</sup>

The Amir's conciliatory attitude towards the Shinwarays over the past two years and their successes were probably due to the risings of the Ghilzays, and of Sardar Mohammad Ishaq in Turkistan. With the collapse of both risings, the attitude towards the Shinwarays hardened and large scale operations against them were undertaken, especially when other efforts failed.

In February 1889, the Sangu Khel were routed,<sup>95</sup> with the help of about 3,000 tribal levies from Ningrahar,<sup>96</sup> and about 2,000 from Tagao (a valley to the west of Laghman), the latter under Mohammad Shah Khan Safay.<sup>97</sup> In this major battle, even the Shinwarays of Deh Bala and some Afridays also took part. The Nazian valley was occupied and many Shinwarays taken prisoner. The Sipah Salar revenged himself upon the Shinwarays by imprisoning their jirga, but the Sangu Khel still did not submit and fled further into the hills, from where they made unsuccessful raids.

The Sipah Salar established military posts in all

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94 Colonel 'Ata Allah, 7 Aug 1888, PSLI, 54, 925.

95 MM, Mar 1889, PSLI, 56, 1072.

96 PD, 28 Nov 1888, PSLI, 55, 1243.

97 PD, 22 Dec 1888, PSLI, 55, 1368.

the villages along the foot of the hills, In one of the posts, opposite the Nazian pass, the Sangu Khel of the lower valleys were employed.<sup>98</sup> It was apparent that the power of the Sangu Khel was now broken, and their tribal unity ended.

Recognising the hopelessness of their position, all the Shinwarays, except a few sections of the Sangu Khel, made their submission. A tax of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  rupees per jarib of land was levied and their land measured.<sup>99</sup> In 1890, the last of the Sangu Khel also made a truce, agreeing not to injure the Amir's subjects and giving two of their elders as hostages.<sup>100</sup> But the truce was soon nullified when the Sangu Khel failed to restore the cattle they had plundered from a village.<sup>101</sup>

In retaliation, the Amir imposed economic blockade on the Sangu Khel, so preventing their export of timber. Further, the Amir threatened them with the occupation of their upland valleys.<sup>102</sup> Still the Sangu Khel refused to submit and went still further into the hills in the face of the repeated attacks by the Sipah Salar.<sup>103</sup> In 1892, however, the tribe as a whole settled down,<sup>104</sup> in all probability on the Amir's terms.

98 PD, 3 May 1889, PSLI, 57, 383.

99 Colonel 'Ata Allah (in Mazar with Amir), 5 Nov 1889, PSLI, 58, 849.

100 PD, 11 July 1890, PSLI, 60, 952.

101 PD, 19 July 1890, PSLI, 60, 992.

102 Amir to Shinwaray elders through Malik Zaman Afridi, 5 Nov 1890, PSLI, 61, 843.

103 MM, Mar 1891, PSLI, 62, 938.

104 GAK, 500.

The extension of the central authority is exemplified in the struggle with the nominally subject Shinwarays. The taking over of the Peshawar road by the Amir started a struggle which intensified with the introduction of se-kot and the seizure of the jirga elders. It was to take ten years before the Shinwarays finally accepted the Amir's authority. After their pacification, the Amir attempted to regain territories further east. However, the Government of India had fixed the eastern limits for Afghanistan and the Amir found his progress checked. If the Amir had advanced into the unsubdued eastern territories, postponing his confrontation with the Shinwarays whose territory was not in dispute with India, he might have been successful. Thus it could be argued that this victory of the Amir over the Shinwarays was achieved at too great a price.

#### The Safays of Kunar

After the pacification of the Shinwarays, the entire body of troops were moved to Kunar, with the apparent object of regaining territories further east. But before that Kunar had to be pacified. In the early eighties, such an attempt had been postponed, because the troops were moved to Shinwar. As had already been mentioned, Kunar up to Chagaserai (three villages on the right and left banks of the Kunar river, 57 miles from Jalalabad) was occupied predominantly by the Safays, a Pashtun tribe scattered over the narrow and difficult valleys (Pech, Badel, Dewagal, Chowkai, Challus and Ghaziabad) on the right bank of the Kunar river.

In late 1888, the Safays of Kunar rose. Their rising was connected with the construction of a road in the valley of Chowkai.<sup>105</sup> Whereas agents of Mulla Khalil urged the Safays to submit to the Amir, as the rightful Muslim ruler, those of Mulla Najm al-Din incited them to rise against the "infidel" Amir,<sup>106</sup> as, in their opinion, 'Abd al-Rahman was. However, early next year a settlement was reached whereby the Safays agreed to pay the revenue in kind. The construction of the road was abandoned and Chowkai evacuated.<sup>107</sup>

A year later the Safays, encouraged by Umra Khan of Jandol, and the Shinwarays of Shigal (villages along the Kunar river about 11 miles from Chagaserai) again took up arms. But because they were assisted by about 2,000 Kafirs, the Safays lost the support of all Muslims<sup>108</sup> and they again submitted. They accepted the se-kot system of the payment of revenue, but the administration of their country was retained by their elders.<sup>109</sup> However, the Safays of Badel and Dewagal (who were reported still to be pagan) soon broke the agreement and they were not pacified until 1896.<sup>110</sup>

#### Asmar

Asmar was a small independent Khanate (about 8 miles

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105 MM, Aug 1889, PSLI, 58, 75.

106 PD, 24 Aug 1889, PSLI, 58, 90.

107 PD, 15 Jan 1890, PSLI, 59, 153.

108 PD, 8 Mar 1892, PSLI, 65, 951.

109 PD, 22 Mar 1892, PSLI, 66, 88.

110 PD, No. 6, 20 Mar 1896, F.L.O. No. 881 - F(1896), PSLI, 85.

from Shigal on the left bank of the Kunar river), occupied predominantly by Tarkalanays, with a small community of Kafirs in the highlands. The Khan of Asmar enforced his authority with a body-guard of about 200 men (Tayar Khor) and realised revenue on the basis of se-kot. He also imposed duties on exports and imports, and exacted escort duties (badraga) from travellers.

In 1890 the Khan of Asmar, Tahmasp Khan, was murdered by a Kafir slave, whereupon Umra Khan of Jandol and Safdar Khan of Nawagai tried to gain possession of the khanate. Finally in 1891, Umra Khan succeeded in establishing his nominee, Ghulam Khan (half-brother of the late Khan of Asmar) to the khanate.<sup>111</sup>

During the struggle over Asmar, the Sipah Salar was engaged with the Safays. Shortly after the settlement with the Safays, the Sipah Salar occupied Shigal, without being opposed. On 18 March<sup>112</sup> he sent tribal levies to Asmar, who occupied it without opposition. Umra Khan's nominee fled to Chitral, taking with him his niece, a minor, who had been betrothed to Sardar Habib Allah, the eldest son of the Amir.<sup>113</sup> Soon the Sipah Salar moved to Asmar with his troops.

The occupation of Asmar was an important step in the

111 GAK, 24.

112 Sultan Mahomed gives the date of the occupation of Asmar to be December 1891, 2, 159.

113 MM, Mar 1892, PSLI, 66, 161.

extension of the authority of the Amir, either by diplomatic or military means, over the territories of Dir, Swat and Bajaur. Although the Amir claimed Asmar to be a part of Kunar,<sup>114</sup> it was, in fact, geographically and tribally much nearer to Bajaur.<sup>115</sup> From Asmar, roads led into Bajaur, Dir and the Salarzay country and Asmar was on the frontier between the districts of Kunar and Chitral. The greater part of the inhabitants of Asmar, the Tarkalanays, lived in Bajaur and they were kin to the Yusufzays who occupied Dir and Swat up to the Indus river.<sup>116</sup> As far as the eastern territories were concerned, Asmar held a key position in Kunar, whose importance has already been discussed. To the Amir, Asmar was strategically as important as Herat, Blakh or Kandahar.<sup>117</sup>

With the concentration of a large force at Asmar (at one time, in addition to his regular troops, the Sipah Salar was reported to have about 24,000 tribal levies)<sup>118</sup> and with the existing feuds among the khans of Bajaur, the impression grew stronger among the local inhabitants that the Bajauris would accept the Amir's rule.<sup>119</sup> It would, therefore, be useful to look briefly into the affairs of territories beyond Asmar.

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114 PD, 23 Nov 1891, PSLI, 64, 1452.

115 Khan of Asmar, MM, Sept 1889, PSLI, 58, 376a.

116 For Yusufzays see Bellew, H.W., The Races of Afghanistan, Calcutta, 1880, 67-76; Davies, C.C., The Problem of the North-West Frontier, 1890-1908, Cambridge, 1932, 60.

117 Mahomed, S., 2, 500.

118 PD, 9 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 528.

119 PD, 23 Feb 1892, PSLI, 65, 722.

### Bajaur, Dir and Swat

From Chitral down to the Khyber or further east of the Kunar river, lay the quasi-independent principalities of Dir, Swat, Bajaur, Uthman Khel, Mohmand and Afriday. We are concerned here with the first three principalities, each of which was ruled by a khan who collected revenue on the basis of 'Ushr (one-tenth) and maintained a few troops of his own. But the authority of the khans was limited by tribal jirgas, on whom they depended for inter-tribal and external wars. Of all the khans, Umra Khan, the Khan of Jandol (situated in Bajaur, but an hereditary part of the Dir state)<sup>120</sup> was the most powerful.

Allying himself first with Mian Gul, son of the famous Akhund of Swat, by 1882 Umra Khan had occupied half of Dir, then in the possession of Mohammad Sharif Khan. But in 1883 the position of Umra Khan became difficult. Mulla Makrani, who was said to have been sent by Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to the Uthman Khel, organised a combination of Dir, Nawagai (the main seat of Bajaur), Swat, Uthman Khel and others against Umra Khan. But these allies were defeated, quarrelled one with another, and dispersed. By 1890, the Mulla having fled the country, Umra Khan was the master of the whole of the Dir territory. Mohammad Sharif Khan, the former Khan of Dir, fled to Swat.<sup>121</sup> By the middle of 1891, Nawagai and Swat were also under the threat

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120 Caroe, O., The Pathans, 550B.C.-A.D.1957, London, (Papermac), 1965, 384.

121 GNWFP, 129.

of Umra Khan.<sup>122</sup> Because Umra Khan had already brought under control the Shamozy section of the Uthman Khel (a tribe inhabiting the country between the borders of Nawagai and Jandol), his threat to Nawagai was much more serious.

The rapid extension of Umra Khan's authority turned many khans against him. Safdar Khan, the Khan of Nawagai, entered into an agreement with Mohammad Sharif Khan who, after having visited the Amir in Jalalabad, took refuge in Nawagai.<sup>123</sup> While Mian Gul of Swat incited the Swatis against Umra Khan<sup>124</sup> the Mohmand of Mittai supported the rivals of Umra Khan.<sup>125</sup> Maghul Khan, the former Khan of Goshta, and the Mihter of Chitral, were the supporters of Umra Khan.<sup>126</sup> But since the former was himself an exile and the latter the traditional suzerain of the Kafirs (who were also threatened by Umra Khan) their support was ineffective and doubtful. The support of Najm al-Din for Umra Khan was moral in the sense that the Mulla stigmatised the Amir (the main rival of Umra Khan) as a "kafir".<sup>127</sup> At best, the Mulla could be considered a counterpoise to Mulla Khalil who supported the Amir.

For some time past the Amir had been fomenting troubles for Umra Khan. In the early nineties, he redoubled his activities against him by increasing the allowance of

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122 MM, Apr 1891, PSLI, 63, 120.

123 MM, May 1891, PSLI, 63, 497.

124 PD, 21 July 1891, PSLI, 63, 1086.

125 PD, 13 June 1891, PSLI, 63, 624.

126 PD, 9 Nov 1891, PSLI, 64, 1175.

127 PD, 23 Sept 1891, PSLI, 64, 229.



Safdar Khan to one lakh of rupees a year and promising him tribal levies and, if necessary, regular troops.<sup>128</sup> He had already commissioned mullas, among them the noted Mulla Khalil, who invited the Mohmands to jehad against Umra Khan for his alleged rebellion against the ruler of Islam.<sup>129</sup> In 1892, after the concentration of troops and tribal levies at Asmar, the balance of power was completely upset, and the defeat, whether by diplomacy or war, of Umra Khan, and with it the extension of the Amir's authority in Bajaur, seemed more than probable. But at this juncture, the Government of India warned both Umra Khan and the Sipah Salar of their advance against each other. The Sipah Salar was told that his advance into Bajaur would be "...regarded as an act of hostility to the Government of India."<sup>130</sup> The Amir postponed further operations in that direction, although he maintained his claim to Bajaur as a part of Afghanistan until the Durand Agreement of 1893. But ultimately he was obliged to abandon his ambitions in Bajaur in the face of the determined opposition of the Government of India.

### Kurram

Kurram, situated between Spin Ghar in the north and Waziristan and Kohat in the south and south-east, is inhabited by a Shi'ite Pashtun tribe of Turi. With the exception of some Shi'ite Bangash in the east, the Turis of Kurram are surrounded on all sides by the Sunni Pashtuns,

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128 PD, 8 Aug 1891, PSLI, 63, 1183.

129 PD, 8 Sept 1891, PSLI, 64, 84.

130 PD, 28 June 1892, PSLI, 67, 308.

and this fact has bedevilled their relations with them.

In 1880, while negotiating with 'Abd al-Rahman, the Government of India told him that the frontier districts, including Kurram, which had been secured under the treaty of Gandamak, would not be restored to him. Kurram remained under nominal British occupation.

From late 1891 onwards, Kurram became a hotbed of conflict. Expeditions against the Turis were led by neighbouring tribal elders, mullas and adventurers. Finally, one of these adventurers, Sarwar Khan of Chinarak nicknamed as Chikkai, who had already given much trouble to the British at Kohat, took possession of the Lower Kurram and the Turis agreed to pay him revenue.<sup>131</sup> Chikkai allowed the Waziris and others to occupy and cultivate the Turi villages and land on payment of one-tenth on the produce.<sup>132</sup> Having given up the hope of recovering the Lower Kurram,<sup>133</sup> the Turis finally made a truce with Chikkai, according to which they agreed to the retention of the Lower Kurram by Chikkai while he undertook to refrain from further advances in future.<sup>134</sup>

The invasion of Kurram took place after Chikkai and his 150 armed men returned from Kabul, where he had been received "with unusual honour" by the Amir.<sup>135</sup> The

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131 KD, 4-8 Dec 1891, PSLI, 69, 1706.

132 KD, 23-25 Mar 1892, PSLI, 66, 71.

133 MM, June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1323.

134 MM, May 1892, PSLI, 66, 884.

135 MM, Oct 1891, PSLI, 66, 1334.

Governor of the Panjab was of the opinion that Chikkai's actions were "...directly encouraged by the Amir himself."<sup>136</sup> The Amir wished to make the Turis his subjects, but at the same time he was careful not to displease the British Government. He therefore incited Sunni mullas against them<sup>137</sup> without supporting the mullas with his own troops. The Amir's view was that the Turis "...have thrown off the yoke [Sic] of Islam and become friends of outsiders whom they helped enter Afghanistan..."<sup>138</sup>

But the Government of India, after some correspondence with the Amir, decided to expel Chikkai and others. The Amir gave his consent, and in early October 1892 British troops entered Kurram and brought about a settlement there.<sup>139</sup>

### The Afridays

The Afridays are included among the Khyberis, and together with the Orakzays they occupy the country immediately to the south-east of Spin Ghar. After the second Anglo-Afghan war an agreement was reached between the Government of India and the Afridays by which, in return for allowances and a guarantee of non-interference in their domestic affairs, they allowed the Khyber pass to remain open.<sup>140</sup>

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136 MM, Dec 1891, PSLI, 65, 107.

137 Derajat Confidential Diary, 15 Dec 1891, PSLI, 65, 513.

138 Amir to Sipah Salar, PD, 8 Jan 1892, PSLI, 65, 175.

139 Harris, L., British Policy on the North-West Frontier of India, 1889-1901 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis at the University of London, 1960), 88.

140 Ibid, 33.

The Amir's attitude towards the Afridays was similar to that which he had adopted towards the Turis. He encouraged the Afridays to look towards Kabul, mainly through the mullas without supporting them with troops. Jirga after jirga from Tirah proceeded to Kabul, one of which consisted of 144 and another of 250 tribal elders and mullas. To the usual offer of allegiance by the elders and mullas, the Amir kept replying that "...the Afridis must be unanimous in accepting his rule before he could address the Government as such."<sup>141</sup> In 1892, it was reported that all the Afridays had offered their allegiance to the Amir and informed the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar of their decision.<sup>142</sup> But no report of this was recorded by the Deputy Commissioner. It seems likely that the Amir did not take the matter up with the Government of India. The Amir's officials had already occupied Wana, a Waziri district, where they were trying to win over the rest of the Waziris.

The Amir's overall advance into the territories further east can be understood when the connection of the eastern Pashtuns (Pathans) or "Berdoorraunes"<sup>143</sup> (the Upper Durranis), a name given to them by Ahmad Shah, with Afghanistan, as a whole, is taken into account.

In the eighteenth century, Afghanistan began to emerge as a political entity through the efforts of the

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141 MM, Dec 1891, PSLI, 65, 108.

142 KD, 2-5 July 1892, PSLI, 66, 1729.

143 Elphinstone, M., 2, 2.

Pashtuns who lived almost exclusively in the south and eastern parts of Afghanistan including the areas occupied by the eastern Pashtuns. Previous rulers, like 'Abd al-Rahman, considered the eastern Pashtuns to belong to Afghanistan. Amir 'Abd al-Rahman spoke of them as people "...of my nationality and my religion"<sup>144</sup> and called their land Yaghistan (the land of rebels), thus implying their rebellion against him. Through his paternal grandmother and mother, the Amir was related to the eastern Pashtuns.

However, the weak point of all rulers in the past was that none of them had direct control over the eastern Pashtuns, but this was also the case with almost all the outlying districts. Moreover, with regard to some districts in eastern Afghanistan, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman was in a less advantageous position than his predecessors had been. In 1880, the British Government told him that the frontier districts mentioned in the treaty of Gandamak would never be returned to him. At that time, the Amir neither accepted nor rejected this position. Presumably he wished to leave room for manoeuvre in the future depending on circumstances. As is clear from the preceding pages, the Amir certainly wished to extend his authority over the eastern Pashtuns. But until the early nineties, military means were not contemplated. Instead, the Amir concentrated on the peaceful penetration of the tribes by giving large

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144 Mahomed, S., 2, 158, 159.

allowances to their elders. Nowhere so much as in these areas did the Amir employ so many mullas as his emissaries. His pamphlets on the jehad were also addressed mainly to the people of the eastern province. His progress was slow and costly, but it was steady. Had the Government of India not checked his advances, the Amir might have extended his authority over a larger number of the eastern Pashtuns.

### The Kabul Convention of 1893

The Amir's advances to the east coincided with what was called the "Forward Policy of the Nineties" or the "Scientific Frontier", which received its greatest impetus from the Marquis of Lansdowne, who was the Viceroy of India from 1888 to 1894. The aim of this new policy was the speedy occupation of the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line in the event of Russia's advance towards India, or in the case of domestic troubles in Afghanistan following the Amir's death. The idea of a "Scientific Frontier" had been suggested first after the Second Anglo-Afghan War and by 1888 it had been accepted by the military authorities in England and India.<sup>145</sup>

The problems of the new policy were, among others, to acquire control over the main passes leading to the "Scientific Frontier" and to devise means of political control over the tribes in whose territories these passes lay. It necessitated the fixing of a boundary with Afghanistan. The Amir must be made to give up his claims

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145 Harris, 2, 46.

146 Ibid, 41.

over these tribes. The fixing of the boundary was considered so essential that it was decided that "...the Government of India will pursue the course they have marked out"<sup>147</sup> whether the Amir co-operated or not. Arrangements for the eventual occupation of the Kabul-Kandahar Line were made. These included the completion of the Khojak tunnel, the extension of the railhead up to New Chaman, the storing of sufficient supplies to carry the line to Kandahar, the opening of the Gomal Pass and of the Zhob Valley, the building of roads and posts on the Samana Range, and finally the survey of the Kabul River Valley, with a view to the construction of a railway to Jalalabad.<sup>148</sup>

For some time past, the Amir was disturbed over the activities of the Government of India along the frontier with Afghanistan, especially with the construction of the Khojak tunnel and the reception given to Sardar Mohammad Ayub in Lahore, where he arrived with his numerous followers. While the Amir kept the spirit of jehad alive, he unsuccessfully tried to enter into direct contact with London. Numerous letters were exchanged between the Viceroy and the Amir for the settlement of the problems connected with the new policy, but they too failed. The Government of India brought pressure on the Amir by detaining his purchased war supplies, which were urgently needed by the Amir for the prosecution of his war with the Hazaras in Afghanistan. In early 1893, the Amir had a most severe

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147 Harris, 49.

148 Ibid, 106.

attack of gout which left him unable to move his legs and hands for a long time.<sup>149</sup>

At this juncture, Russia urged Britain to fulfil the "agreement" of 1873. In that year, an understanding rather than an agreement had been reached between Britain and Russia that the Oxus was to be the boundary between Afghanistan and Bokhara. The Viceroy, hoping for a settlement with Russia, urged the Amir to receive a British officer who would explain to him the claims of the Russians and ascertain his views on them. The Amir welcomed the proposal and requested that a high official be sent to him so that other matters might also be discussed.<sup>150</sup>

The outcome was the arrival in Kabul on 2 October 1893 of a British mission, led by Sir Mortimer Durand (Foreign Secretary to the Government of India).

On 12 November 1893 two agreements - one about territories north and south of the Oxus, and the other about those to the south and east of Afghanistan - were signed between the Amir and Durand. Parts of the second agreement, known as the Kabul Convention or the Durand Agreement, read that "The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line [the line indicated on the map attached to the agreement marking the territories from Wakhan in the east to the Persian border in the south] on the side of

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149 MM, Feb 1893, PSLI, 69, 1177.

150 Singhal, 144.



Afghanistan..." while the Amir on his part agreed that "...he will at no time exercise interference in Swat, Bajaur or Chitral including the Arnawai or Bashgal valley." The Amir relinquished his claims on Wana, Chageh, and accepted the British activities at Chaman, in return for Asmar, Birmal (in the Waziri country) and six lakhs of rupees per annum in addition to his subsidy.

By pledging India to an undertaking of "no interference" in the territories beyond the line in Afghanistan, the Government of India was not strictly honest, as that pledge was contrary to the very nature of the "Scientific Frontier". Besides the pressure which was brought upon him, the Amir was misled by, or misunderstood, the map (which is missing) attached to the agreement. Because of this "...he did not really understand all the implications of the line drawn on the map before him" and "...refused to agree to some of the details shown on the map..."<sup>151</sup> Thus, contrary to expectation, the practical demarcation of this line took a long time and the result was that the Mohmand country was left undemarcated. Three years later, when the Amir insisted that the Bashgal valley was on his side of the map and not in the British sphere of influence (as had been indicated on the map), Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, gave way and admitted that it "...was an unfortunate error."<sup>152</sup>

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151 Rostogi, R.S., Indo-Afghan Relations 1800-1900, Lucknow, 1965, p.180.

152 Elgin to Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, 22 Apr 1896, F.L. No. 77 (1896), PSLI, 85.

In accordance with the English text, the Amir had undertaken not "to exercise interference" in the territories within the British sphere of influence. This is not the renunciation of the Amir's claim, as stated by Durand,<sup>153</sup> and Sultan Mahomed.<sup>154</sup> To the Amir, and indeed to all rulers of Afghanistan, interference meant armed interference and they did not consider themselves debarred from influencing the tribes<sup>155</sup> without regarding this act as a breach of contract.<sup>156</sup> In the words of Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, "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."<sup>157</sup>

By fixing the respective spheres of influence, the Durand Line checked the extension of the Amir's control over the tribal areas but it took no account of ethnic considerations. It left tribes (Tarkalanays, Mohmands and Waziris) who had the strongest ties of unity among themselves and with other Pashtuns on both sides of the line.

Even the "Status Quo" was not observed, for it was Lord Elgin's policy to extend control<sup>158</sup> over the tribal area which had come within the sphere of influence of the Government of India. By 1896 a number of measures had been taken, among them the exploration of the Gomal and Tochi passes, the establishment of the right of use of

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153 Durand to A. Cunningham, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, 3 Dec 1893, PSLI, 73, 14.

154 2, 161.

155 Rastogi, 180.

156 Harris, 263.

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

158 Davies, C.C., 89.

the Dir-Chitral road and the extension of control over Kurram.<sup>159</sup> Also, by 1896, demarcation of the Line itself had been completed except in the Khyber area<sup>160</sup> and in the Mohmand country. But these measures were opposed by the great tribal Uprising which started in June 1897 under the leadership of Mulla Najm al-Din, the Mulla of Mankai, and the Palam Mulla. By late August the Uprising was joined by all the tribes except the Turis of Kurram. More than 70,000 troops were employed,<sup>161</sup> before the Uprising was suppressed.

How far did the Amir support the Uprising? The main charge brought against him was that he failed to prevent his regular soldiers and subjects from joining the insurgents.<sup>162</sup> As far as movement of the tribes on both sides of the Line was concerned, the demarcation had not made any difference. The leaders of the Uprising had followers on both sides. The expectation of support among the insurgent tribesmen not only from their fellow tribesmen on the Afghan side but also from the Amir himself was "universal."<sup>163</sup> Thus, tribal support from the Afghan side was not only likely but inevitable. But whether the Amir had supported the Uprising with soldiers in civilian clothes is doubtful. He may have stirred the tribes for action, but the largest single contributory factor in the Uprising was the Durand Line, the demarcation of which must have suggested visibly and

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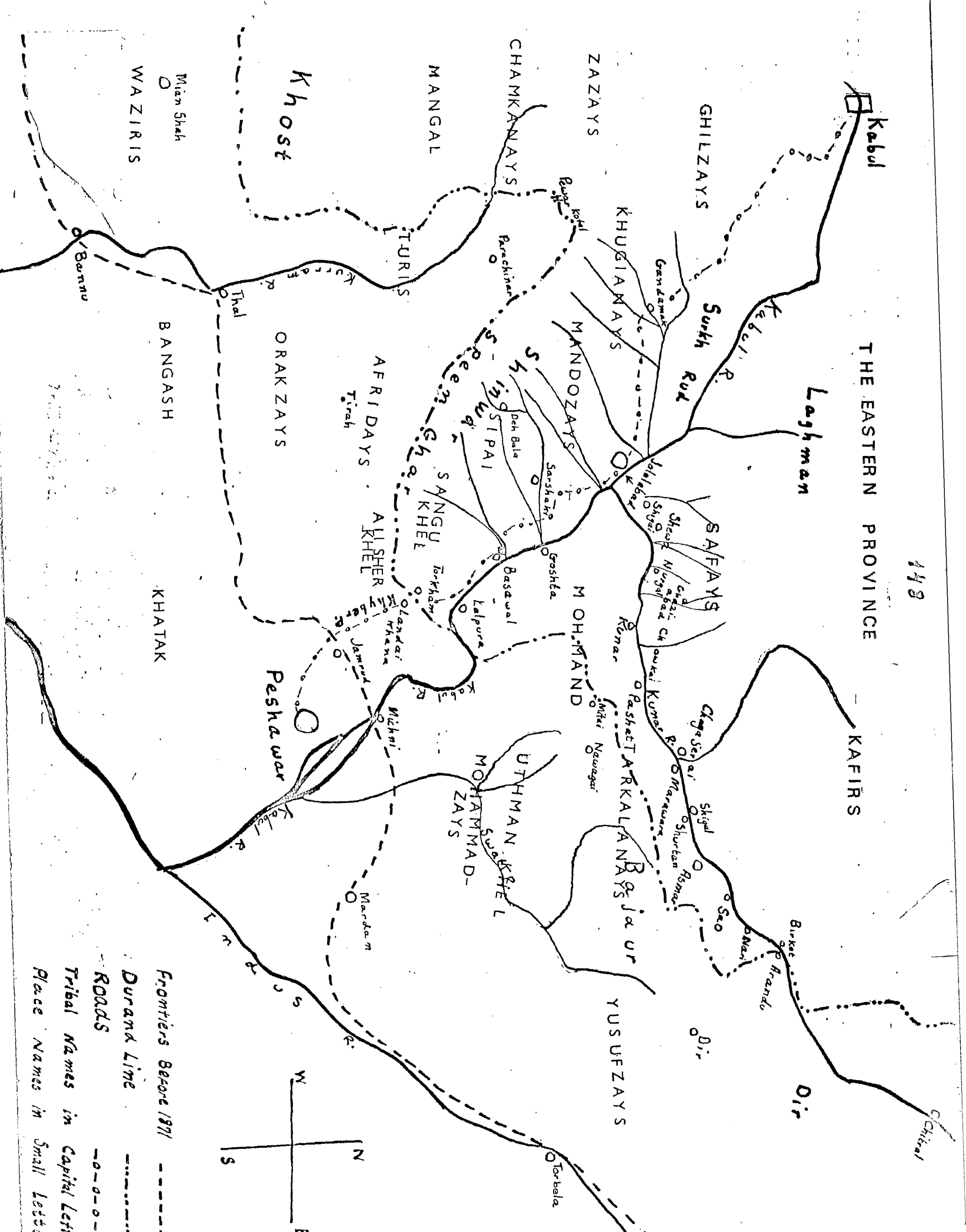
159 Harris, 271.  
 160 Davies, 162.  
 161 Harris, 276.  
 162 Davies, 164.  
 163 Ibid.

forcefully to the tribes that they were no longer inhabitants of completely independent territory but were brought within the circumference of British influence and control.<sup>164</sup>

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164 Harris, 278.

THE EASTERN PROVINCE



## Chapter 5

## The Great Ghilzay Rising and its Suppression

Soon after the defeat of Ayub in 1881, the Amir's relations with the Ghilzays became strained. The Amir imprisoned and executed some Ghilzay elders, and tried to impose a wide range of taxes on the tribe. This led first to the opposition of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam and later to a general rising of the Ghilzays in late 1886. Because of the general discontent in the country, the Amir failed to obtain the support of other tribes, except the Durrani, against the Ghilzays. Nevertheless, by 1888 the Amir was able to suppress the rising with his army. Through their support of the Amir, the Durrani became a privileged tribe.

After the Durrani, the Ghilzays were the most important Pashtun tribe, occupying an area of approximately 39,000 square miles, extending roughly from Jalalabad in the east to Qalat in the south-west, and including the adjoining slopes and spurs of Spin Ghar, Sulaiman Koh and Gul Koh (west of Qalat). Some Ghilzays lived in Farah, Herat and Kohdaman as well. But the area, which was most densely populated by the Ghilzays, was between Kabul and Qalat, including Ghazni and Muqur. Although Barakzays, Tajiks, Qizilbashs, Hazaras and some Hindus also lived within this area, the Ghilzays exerted a predominant influence, except in the city of Kabul. Jaghuri and Jaghatu Hazaras in the west, and the Pashtun tribes of Waziris, Mangals and Kakars in the east were their immediate neighbours. In this chapter we are concerned mainly with the Ghilzays of this area who were, for administrative purposes,

unevenly divided between the provinces of Kabul and Kandahar. The nomadic Ghilzays (Powindas) and the eastern Ghilzays (between Kabul and Jalalabad) will be referred to only in so far as they influenced events which led to the rising among southern Ghilzays.

The Ghilzay tribe is divided, traditionally, into the main divisions of Burhan (Bular) and Turan (Tular), but this seems to have lost its original significance. Smaller subdivisions include the Sulaiman Khel, Hotakays, Tokhays, Andars, Nasirs, Tarakays and Kharotays. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, they were estimated to be about a million in number. They were engaged in both settled agriculture and pastoral activities. Their nomadic sections (Powindas) who consisted mainly of the Nasirs, Sulaiman Khel and Kharotays made regular movements from the central highlands of Afghanistan in the summer to India in the winter. They were also engaged in trade, and sent their goods as far as Calcutta, Khurasan and Bokhara.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1881, Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam, accompanied by about 300 mullas and elders, unsuccessfully asked the Amir in Ghazni to release Mohammad Jan Wardak. The Amir had imprisoned Mohammad Jan Wardak in the previous July, following the allegation that he had plotted to assassinate

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1 Elphinstone, 2, 137-180, Bellew, H.M., The Races of Afghanistan, 97-108. GAK, 133-149. GAKand., 88-91. MRA, 99-100.

Estimated number of Powindas (1878-79) - 57,000 (GAK, 432).  
 " " " " (1906) - 300,000 (MRA, 100).

him.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Mohammad Jan had done so, but much to suggest that the Amir was distrustful of him. Because of his campaigns against the British, Mohammad Jan had attracted substantial popular support. Also, the Wardak tribe, as a whole, was associated with the late Amir Sher 'Ali and Mohammad Jan was a staunch supporter of his family. In collaboration with other leaders of the National Party, Mohammad Jan had tried to effect the release of the ex-Amir Ya'qub. This may have been the reason why the Amir did not fulfil his earlier promise to Mohammad Jan of appointing him as Supreme Commander of the army. Instead he gave him an allowance of a thousand rupees a month.<sup>3</sup> Feeling cheated, Mohammad Jan showed signs of independence of the Amir. The intercession of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam did not help Mohammad Jan. By the Amir's order, Mohammad Jan and others, including Mulla 'Abd al-Ghafur Akhundzadah (a relative of the Mulla) were murdered on Kotal-i-Abdu in Balkh.<sup>4</sup> Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam was still further alienated from the Amir when he did not try, as the Mulla requested, to effect the release of Mustaufi Habib Allah Wardak and General Daud Shah, who had been deported earlier to India.<sup>5</sup>

In January 1882, 'Ismat Allah Ghilzay was imprisoned by the Amir, ostensibly on the grounds of his alleged

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2 A.B., Kabul Correspondent, 7 Dec 1881, PSLI, 31, 305.

3 PD, 26 Dec 1881, PSLI, 26, pt 8, 2208.

4 PD, 1 Jan 1882, PSLI, 31, 217.

5 A.B., Kabul Correspondent, 7 Dec 1881, PSLI, 31, 308.



correspondence with Ayub. In all probability, the Amir's motives were the same as those which applied to Mohammad Jan Wardak. An important exception, however, was the fact that, being Jabar Khel (a subsection of the Sulaiman Khel), 'Ismat Allah had a strong following among the eastern Ghilzays. During the brief honeymoon between the Amir and the Ghilzays, the Amir made 'Ismat Allah Prime Minister, but feared his influence. For this reason, the Amir rejected the idea of deporting him to India, lest the British use 'Ismat Allah against him.<sup>6</sup> In October 1882, he was secretly hanged and his body given to his relatives.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from his ghazas against the British in collaboration with Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam, 'Ismat Allah had been a devoted follower of the Mulla who asked, again unsuccessfully, for his release.<sup>8</sup> The Mulla then raised the standard of rebellion and joined the Sulaiman Khel in Zurmut and Katawaz (two districts to the south of the Sulaiman mountain).<sup>9</sup>

The Sulaiman Khel (the most numerous section of the Ghilzays) occupy a large area, stretching from Pishin and Qalat-t-Ghilzay as far as Jalalabad, including the district of Logar, to the south of the city of Kabul. In

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6 Amir to Mir Mohammad Husayn, an ex-Mustaufi, A.B., Kabul Correspondent, 9 Feb 1882, PSLI, 31, 739.

7 KD, 6 Oct 1882, PSLI, 34, 333.

8 Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam to Amir, KD, 16 Jan 1882, PSLI, 31, 721.

9 Colonel Afzal, British Agent with the Amir in Mama Khel (Jalalabad), 17 Aug 1883, PSLI, 37, 1001.

the early nineteenth century, they were said to have numbered about 35,000 families.<sup>10</sup> Hitherto, the central government in Kabul had very little influence over the Sulaiman Khel of the remote areas, including those of Katawaz who levied tolls on travellers along the Gomal river.<sup>11</sup>

Having roused the Sulaiman Khel, Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam joined Sardar Nur Mohammad and the famous adventurer, Sa'd ud-Din, nicknamed Sadu in the Mangal country (situated between Ghazni and Upper Kurram). The Mangals (inhabitants of the Mangal country) were in open rebellion and the Mulla incited them still further and informed Sardar Ayub in Persia.<sup>12</sup> The Amir tried to reconcile the Mulla, calling him his kind friend and religious leader,<sup>13</sup> but the Mulla did not trust him, replying that by similar treachery the Amir had killed many people.<sup>14</sup> In September 1885, the Mulla was reported to be inciting people between Ghazni and Kabul, but a year later he died at the age of 96.

After his accession, the relations of the Amir with the Tarakays, who occupied the Muqur area from Chisham-i-Panjak in the south to Jamrud in the north, also became strained. In the last quarter of the last century, the Tarakays were reported to be 25,000 families<sup>15</sup> with about 50,000 fighting men.<sup>16</sup> They were mainly pastoral. The

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10 Elphinstone, M., 2, 149.

11 GAK, 279.

12 KD, 4 Jan 1884, PSLI, 39, 525.

13 KD, 21 Sept 1883, PSLI, 38, 153.

14 KD, 21 Dec 1883, PSLI, 39, 338.

15 GAKand., 91.

16 B,C,A, 187.

Tarakays levied tolls on the caravans on the Kabul-Kandahar road.

Alone among the Ghilzays, the Tarakays had openly supported Ayub against the Amir. Several attempts of the Amir, including the remission of the poll-tax,<sup>17</sup> failed to bring the Tarakays, who had declared Sardar Sher 'Ali Tarakay as their Badshah,<sup>18</sup> under control. However, in mid-1882 their rising was reported to have been suppressed, and they were called upon to pay the revenue of the previous two years.<sup>19</sup> During this brief period, the Hazaras of Jaghuri and some other Ghilzays supported the Tarakays against the Amir.

In early 1882, all the elders of the Andars, who occupied mainly the rich district of Shilgar (south of Ghazni), and some adjoining territories, were also imprisoned,<sup>20</sup> for their refusal of payment of revenue for the previous two years, and for their opposition to the stationing of the Amir's troops in Muqur. In the early nineteenth century the Andars were reckoned to be about 12,000 families.

The Hotakays and Tokhays occupied the area from Pulisang (about 8 miles to the south of Qalat) to Chasma-i-Panj in the north, including Qalat, the Tarnak valley, Gul Koh and Surkh Koh. In the west they were neighbours

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17 Kand. D., 25 Feb 1881, PSLI, 27, 1464.

18 Kand. D., 16 Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 1040.

19 Kand. D., 23 Apr 1882, PSLI, 32, 986.

20 Kand. D., 1 Feb 1882, PSLI, 31, 997.

to the Durranis of Arghandab and in the east to the Kakars of Zhob. In 1880, the Hotakays were reckoned to be about 12,000 families and the Tokhays 20,000.<sup>21</sup> The Hotakays were the Khan Khel or Badshah Khel (ruling section) of the Ghilzays and in the early eighteenth century, many of the kings had been Hotakays while the Tokhays had produced many wazirs and high officials.<sup>22</sup> Because of their special position, the Hotakays were not only exempted from paying taxes, their elders also received an annual allowance of about 40,000 rupees from the government.<sup>23</sup>

In 1883, the Amir imprisoned Mir Afzal, son of Mir 'Alam Khan, a powerful khan of the Hotakays, on charges that during the reign of the late Amir Sher 'Ali he aspired to the sovereignty of Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup> In all probability the charges against Mir Afzal were untrue, for he was a supporter of the family of the late Amir. Ya'qub had appointed him Khan of the Hotakays and he had joined Ayub in Kandahar in 1880. However, during the British occupation of Afghanistan, Mir Afzal had been neutral, mainly because the British at Kandahar had used his feeble, but popular, uncle Sadu Khan Hotakay, as a counterpoise to him.<sup>25</sup> Afzal's support of the family of Sher 'Ali may have been the real reason for his imprisonment.

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21 GAK, 135.

22 Elphinstone, M., 2, 147.

23 GAKand., 89.

24 Colonel Afzal, with Amir in Mama Khel (Jalalabad), 13 July 1883, PSLI, 37, 543.

25 Kand. D., 11 Jan 1881, PSLI, 27, 577.

The Amir's relations with the eastern Ghilzays were also strained. Because of the introduction of se-kot and the demand of the Amir for revenue for previous years, the eastern Ghilzays were disturbed, insubordinate and a number of their sporadic revolts were suppressed by force and their elders eliminated. In late 1883, Mazullah Khan Jabar Khel of Hisarak was expelled to Meshed. In 1885, Khan Mohammed Khan was thrown into prison and a year later his brother, Niaz Mohammed Khan, who had been appointed as Khan of the eastern Ghilzays, fled to Peshawar. Thus by 1886, the Amir had disposed of all the influential elders of the eastern Ghilzays.

Also, by 1886 mutual distrust between the Amir and the southern Ghilzays began to increase. But their disturbances, being generally in the form of isolated revolts, were easily put down by the khassadars. General Ghulam Haydar Tokhay, who had been in exile with the Amir and was his trusted adherent, was also suspected by the Amir of being concerned with the intrigues of the Ghilzays. Although he was the Amir's General in the army of Kandahar, he fled to Sibi.

Following the imprisonment of the Ghilzay elders and the suppression of their sporadic revolts, the Amir imposed a wide range of taxes over them. Although these taxes followed a pattern which was becoming general throughout Afghanistan, they were new and a heavy burden on the Ghilzays. In 1885, zakat had been demanded by which one out of every forty (chehel-wa-yak) cattle was to be given to the government every year. House tax (khanawari) to which even mullas and sayyeds were subject had also been

imposed. A birth tax of 4 rupees on the birth of every male child and 2 rupees on each female child was also demanded.<sup>26</sup> Marriage taxes entailed payment of 10 rupees on the marriage of a virgin and 5 rupees on a widow.<sup>27</sup> A succession tax of chehel-wa-yak which an inheritor must pay to the Government was also imposed.<sup>28</sup>

To the Ghilzays these taxes were all new and differed sharply from the old quota system. Previously each section of the Ghilzays paid their fixed quotas to the Government through their Khan. Their quotas, comprising mainly cattle, were of poor quality, but credited by the Government at a high price. The Khan usually took half of what he received and gave the rest with an apology to the king. Sometimes the kings allowed the Khan to take certain additional shares also.<sup>29</sup>

Again, the Amir had introduced drastic changes in the payment of revenue from the land. In the early years of the nineteenth century, the kings had derived but a moderate revenue from the Ghilzays, part of which went to the Khan of the Ghilzays and part to the Durrani Sardar who commanded their contingents of troops.<sup>30</sup> But the Amir introduced se-kot on land irrigated by streams (nahri), one-fifth on land irrigated by springs (chishmai), and

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26 KD, 13 Jan 1886, PSLI, 46, 193.

27 PD, 7 Jan 1886, PSLI, .....

28 Kand. D., 13 Mar 1886, PSLI, 46, 1533.

29 GAK, 141.

30 Elphinstone, 2, 157.

one-tenth on land irrigated by subterranean canals (karezi).<sup>31</sup>

Further, the Amir discontinued the allowances of the deceased Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam and his son and successor, Mulla 'Abd al-Karim (b. 1835), and assessed a revenue of about 15,000 rupees on the previously rent-free lands of the Mulla which had been partly purchased by him and partly granted to him by followers in Shilgar, Charkh, Logar, Ghazni and other places. The Amir had also demanded three years revenue from the Tokhays, Hotakays, Tarakays, Andars, Sulaiman Khel, and the Kharotays.<sup>32</sup>

Mulla 'Abd al-Karim, the second son of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam by his Andar wife, was on reasonably good terms with the Amir until the expulsion of Sardar Ayub in 1881. The Amir had conferred on the Mulla the honorary title of Khan-i-'Uloom (the prince of learnings) while the Mulla had accompanied General Roberts (on the Amir's instructions), and the Amir in their marches against Ayub. Mulla 'Abd al-Karim assisted his father against the Amir. After the death of his father, Mulla 'Abd al-Karim was looked upon as his successor.

The new assessment proved a crucial point in the relations of the Ghilzays with the Amir. All the discontented Ghilzay elders, among them Mir Afzal Hotakay (presumably released from prison) went to the Mulla to his residence in Shilgar and there they planned the rising.

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31 Amir to Colonel Afzal, 9 Aug 1887, PSLI, 51, 310.

32 Qazi 'Abd al-Qadir to Peshawar Commissioner, 7 Dec 1886, PSLI, 49, 111.

The first major event which led to the rising occurred in the Muqur area in October 1886, and involved a newly recruited regiment of Durranis from Kandahar, which was on its way to Kabul. About 4,200 Andars and Sulaiman Khel sent a message to the Durranis, saying that they had no quarrel with them whatever, but demanding from them the Amir's property. Seeing that they were outnumbered, the Durranis complied, handing over 140 camels, 80 tents and 30,000 Kandahari rupees. The Durranis were not molested and were left at liberty to go wherever they liked.<sup>33</sup> The Ghilzays then marched on Ghazni.

At Kabul the Amir acted swiftly. He despatched an army of five regiments of cavalry and infantry with 12 guns under General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the Amir expelled to India a number of Barakzay sardars, including his uncles, lest "...the people of Kabul should rise and set up one of these Sardars as their ruler."<sup>35</sup> The Amir also mounted guns in strategic places in the city.<sup>36</sup> Further, he took strict measures and forbade people to talk about the rising.<sup>37</sup>

With the approach of General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay near Ghazni, the Ghilzays sent him a message, similar to

33 MM, Nov 1886, PSLI, 49, 75.

34 In Sultan Mahomed's biography of the Amir (1,254), General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay has been confused with General Ghulam Haydar Tokhay, who had already left the country.

35 Amir in darbar, PD, 13 Nov 1886, PSLI, 48, 1261.

36 Ibid.

37 PD, 7 Dec 1886, PSLI, 49, 111.



that which they had sent to the Durranis, asking him to refrain from shedding blood among Muslims.<sup>38</sup> But the General rejected their request on the grounds that "...they had rebelled against the Badshah [King]." <sup>39</sup> Accounts of the battle at Talkhakzar [Talkha Guzar?] near Ghazni on 28th October are conflicting, but the net result was a complete defeat of the Ghilzays, either through treachery or sheer force. Twelve leading insurgents, including Mulla 'Abd al-Karim, fled to the country of the Kakars and the heads of about 2,000 fallen Ghilzays were sent to Kabul where a kala minar (tower of skulls) was to be made of them as a "warning"<sup>40</sup> to other people.

Following his round of victories, the Amir took severe measures against the Ghilzays. These measures, which were intended to suppress the Ghilzays, incited them still further and led to a rising which became the greatest of all the tribal risings against the authority of the Amir. But before describing the major rising, and the campaigns which ensued, it will be convenient to consider, briefly, the diplomatic and other negotiations which took place before the Ghilzays were finally crushed in the autumn of 1887.

The rising appeared to be suppressed but, in fact, it was the advent of the cold winter which made it die down. The Amir was as impressed by the victory as he had

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38 MM, Nov 1886, PSLI, 49, 76.

39 Ibid.

40 Amir to Colonel 'Ata Allah, British Agent, KD, 2 Nov 1886, PSLI, 48, 117.

been by a similar victory over the Shinwarays in 1883. He instructed the army to disarm the Hotakays and Tarakays.

The task of disarming the Hotakays, who had been on the point of rebelling when the rising suddenly collapsed, was entrusted to Sikandar Khan Orakzay, Commander of the Kandahar Khassadars and father of General Ghulam Haydar. Each Hotakay family was ordered to surrender a sword, a gun [musket?] and five rupees.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the Orakzay General moved with his army to the Andar country. Each Andar family was ordered to surrender a shield, a knife, a musket<sup>42</sup> and a horse, besides the payment of enhanced revenue for seven years. Stores of grain were taken away from them and soldiers were quartered in each house, where they and their horses were to be fed by the householders. Besides, many Andars were employed as labourers without pay.<sup>43</sup> They were "...greatly oppressed and their women insulted."<sup>44</sup> Because of this, over 700 families of Tokhays, Andars and Tarakays left their lands. Some went to the country of the Kakars,<sup>45</sup> others to the Mangal territory.<sup>46</sup>

During the cessation of hostilities, both the Amir and the insurgent leaders tried to draw in other tribes and groups in support of their respective causes. On the whole, the Ghilzays were more successful than the Amir.

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41 Kand. D, 22 Feb 1887, PSLI, 49, 625.

42 KD, 18 Feb 1887, PSLI, 49, 736.

43 KD, 4 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1124.

44 KD, ..... PSLI, 49, 1137.

45 PD, 12 Feb 1887, PSLI, 49, 575.

46 PD, 12 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 797.

These activities will be dealt with in the following pages.

The Amir turned to his own tribe, the Durranis, and tried to exploit the old animosity between them and the Ghilzays, just as he had done six years ago in his confrontation with Ayub. The Amir warned the Barakzay sardars that "They [Mulla Karim and others] now aspire to the sovereignty of the country and to your position."<sup>47</sup> Hitherto, the Durranis, who had supported Ayub, were on bad terms with the Amir. He refused them government jobs; the Durranis believed that his rule would collapse. The Ghilzay rising changed this. The Amir let the Barakzays enjoy, as before, their land free of revenue, whereas just before the rising he had pressed them for revenue.<sup>48</sup> The Barakzays of Kandahar willingly accepted employment with the government and enlistment in the army.<sup>49</sup> The Amir instructed the Durrani regiment that they might keep the plunder for themselves.<sup>50</sup> The Qizilbash community of Kabul was also instructed to wean the Hazaras from the Ghilzays. Meanwhile, the Amir reminded a deputation of Hazaras elders "...of the cruelties exercised over them... by the Ghilzais during the late Anglo-Afghan war."<sup>51</sup>

At the same time the Amir made a direct approach to the rebel leaders. In a sealed Quran, he agreed to take

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47 KD, 29 Oct 1886, PSLI, 48, 1173.

48 Kand. D, 18 Jan 1887, PSLI, 48, 487.

49 KD, 25 Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 557.

50 PD, 8 Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 283.

51 PD, 8 Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 283.

revenue from them at the rate paid during the reign of Amir Dost Mohammad, if they desisted from rebellion.<sup>52</sup> He also impressed upon them that, with the two infidel powers to the north and the south, their internal disruption could be the downfall of Islam.<sup>53</sup> But to no avail. While rejecting his proposal, the insurgent leaders identified the Amir with the Russians and considered themselves to be "...the sincerest friends of the English."<sup>54</sup>

The rising was an indication of the unpopularity of the Amir with his subjects. Sensing this, he did not venture, as was usual on such occasions, to collect tribal levies, after the implied refusal of the Kohistanis (the Amir's closest allies).<sup>55</sup>

The Amir's efforts to obtain a fetwa for his campaigns against the Ghilzays were not a success either. Religious groups in Afghanistan were known as the mullas, sahibzadas, khojazadas and fagirs. They received nearly half the revenue of the country from the State<sup>56</sup> and one-tenth of the land produce directly from the landowners, as charity.<sup>57</sup> Among them the mullas were most influential with the people who looked upon them as their leaders.

Ever since his accession, the Amir had been on bad

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52 PD, 8 Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 283.

53 Amir to Ghilzay elders, KD, 25 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1141.

54 Ghilzay elders to Amir, KD, Ibid.

55 KD, 5 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 269.

56 Mahomed, S., 1, 252.

57 PD, 10 Nov 1884, PSLI, 42, 856.

terms with all religious groups and in particular with the mullas. The mullas considered the Amir to be an associate of the infidels, and therefore condemned him as an "infidel" at the time of his confrontation with Ayub. The execution of two of their members by the Amir after his victory in Kandahar further alienated the mullas. The Amir accused the mullas of being "...false leaders of religion."<sup>58</sup> In order to weaken their power and reduce State expenses, he introduced reforms among the religious groups. Payment of allowance to the mullas was made subject to their passing a test in religious knowledge.<sup>59</sup> Stipendiary sayyeds and sahibzadas had to prove their descent before they were paid their allowances.<sup>60</sup>

Because of a major role of the mullas in the Ghilzay rising, the Amir resolved to weaken the power of the mullas still further. The Ghilzays were noted for having many mullas<sup>61</sup> who, besides their religious functions, also acted like local magistrates.<sup>62</sup> The Amir resolved to compel these mullas to repay the allowances they had received during the past seven years,<sup>63</sup> but whether he succeeded in doing so is not certain. However, he was successful in considerably reducing the number of religious

59 Amir's firman, Col. Afzal (Jalalabad), 4 May 1883, PSLI, 36, 904.

60 Kand. D, 23 Aug 1886, PSLI, 48, 561.

61 According to the Amir, the Andars alone had 2,500 mullas during the time of Amir Dost Mohammad. KD, 29 Oct 1886, PSLI, 48, 1173.

62 Elphinstone, E., 2, 154.

63 KD, 29 Oct 1886, PSLI, 48, 1173.

groups in Kandahar.<sup>64</sup> But his reforms had an immediate setback when the Ghilzays rose again and the Amir felt that he needed the assistance of the mullas in denouncing the Ghilzays as rebels. Many mullas were summoned at Kabul and a great debate began. A section of them, represented by Mulla Sa'd of Laghman alias as Khosa, issued a fetwa that it was lawful to wage war against the Ghilzays because of their rebellion against the king of Islam.<sup>65</sup> The great majority, however, did not support this view and told the Amir that he was only justified in fighting those who were most dangerous to Islam,<sup>66</sup> a reference which could hardly be applied to the Ghilzays who were led by a distinguished mulla.

During the rising the Amir, again unsuccessfully, tried to bring about a peaceful settlement. A deputation of elders from Kabul and Qarabagh undertook to settle the dispute, but was not heard of again. Another deputation of about 60 mullas also failed. The exact terms of the Amir were not known, but in reply Mulla 'Abd al-Karim agreed to suspend hostilities provided the Amir released all Ghilzay prisoners and desisted from further oppression.<sup>67</sup> Since the Amir had executed over 50 prisoners<sup>68</sup> and had hanged about 12 mullas of the Tarakays and Andars<sup>69</sup> the fulfilment of the terms was impossible. The fact was that

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64 Kand. D, 11 Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 631.

65 KD, 16 Aug 1887, PSLI, 51, 257.

66 PD, 7 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 244.

67 PD, 24 Aug 1887, PSLI, 51, 242.

68 KD, 28 June 1887, PSLI, 50, 1281.

69 MM, Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 221.

the rebel leaders had lost confidence in the Amir. Although the Amir relaxed his rigid rule,<sup>70</sup> his oppressive measures which had been a main cause of the rising were by now too well known for the rebel leaders to take much notice of this sudden change of heart.

Mulla Karim induced the mullas to denounce the Amir as a "kafir", so that his campaigns against him would be justified on religious grounds. About 500 mullas issued a fetwa to that effect.<sup>71</sup> It is not known on what precise grounds they based their fetwa. It seems likely that, besides his harsh treatment of the mullas, the Amir's general cruelty and oppression may have provided adequate argument. The Amir had executed many of those who had campaigned against the British and who were ghazis in the eyes of the public. He had even executed such persons as Sahibzadah Mohammad 'Umar Jan of Herat, who was not against the Amir but had religious influence in south-west Afghanistan. The fetwa of Mulla 'Abd al-Karim was that the Amir was "...an infidel, the extirpator of Islam, worshipper of himself, and the friend of an alien Government."<sup>72</sup>

An important leader of the rising was Mulla 'Abd al-Karim who, in one report, declared himself to be a "King"<sup>73</sup> while in another a Khalifa.<sup>74</sup> He was also reported to have read the khutba<sup>75</sup> and issued coins in

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70 PD, 14 Sept 1887, PSLI, 51, 545.

71 PD, 8 Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 283.

72 PD, 29 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1320.

73 PD, 29 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1320.

74 PD, 7 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 243.

75 Amir in darbar, KD, 29 Oct 1886, PSLI, 48, 1173.

his own name.<sup>76</sup> It is possible that the title "King" has either been mistranslated, or the Mulla later abandoned it for Khalifa. He justified his claim by stating that "...if 12,000 Musulmans should offer their allegiance to any Musulman, the latter, according to Mahomedan religion, can declare himself a King."<sup>77</sup>

There is considerable confusion over the division of authority between Mulla Karim and Mohammad Shah Hotakay, another important leader of the rising. The latter had been elected by about 30,000 Ghilzays of all sections as their leader with the title of Amir.<sup>78</sup> As Mohammad Shah was son of Mir Afzal (a remote descendant of Mir Wais Hotakay) and belonged to the ruling section of the Ghilzays, it may be that the tribe hoped, by declaring him as Amir, to bring greater unity among themselves. Mulla Karim seemed to have had temporal as well as religious power, while Mohammad Shah was the military leader of the campaign.<sup>79</sup> However, they did not seem confident of establishing themselves as successful rivals to the Amir. This may be considered a weak point in the rising. Like Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam before them, they also invited Ayub<sup>80</sup> presumably to lead the rising.

Among the different sections of the Ghilzays, who were at feud with each other, Mulla Karim brought about

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76 PD, 20 May 1887, PSLI, 50, 725.  
 77 PD, 29 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1320.  
 78 BAC, 178.  
 79 BAC, 6.  
 80 PD, 8 Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 283.



general agreement. He bridged the differences between the pastoral Nasirs (one of the wealthiest of the Powindas who grazed their herds in the area around the lake of Ab-i-Istadah) with the semi-pastoral Sulaiman Khel,<sup>81</sup> and the pastoral Kharotays and the Lohanays. But the reconciliations came too late to be of practical help against the Amir.

Among the non-Ghilzays who supported the rising were the Kakars, Waziris, Mangals and Hazaras. From the accession of the Amir, his relations with the Jaghuri Hazaras were strained.<sup>82</sup> The whole tribe became rebellious when a hakim of the Amir had been killed over a woman by the Hazaras. However, as advised by Mulla Yusuf, the Khan of the Qizilbashes,<sup>83</sup> the Hazaras kept aloof in the last days of the rising. Still, their land remained a centre of refuge for the Ghilzay women. The Kakars of Zhob (in the British territory) supported the Ghilzays in action as well as giving them shelter. So did the Waziris of Waziristan.<sup>84</sup> Nearer Kabul, some Kohistanis and Wardak elders (unidentified) participated in the assemblies of the insurgents,<sup>85</sup> while the bulk of the Kohistanis stipulated remission of revenue in return for the despatch of their levies<sup>86</sup> - a pretext equivalent to refusal. Still nearer, the inhabitants of Ghazni and Qarabagh, presumably Tajiks and Hazaras whose country was occupied by the Amir's army, refused to fight against Muslims

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81 MM, June 1887, PSLI, 50, 1238.

82 See p. 208.

83 PD, 29 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1324.

84 KD, 26 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 519.

85 KD, 5 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 268.

86 Ibid.

(Ghilzays).<sup>87</sup> But Mulla Najm al-Din's support turned out to be moral rather than practical. Although he agreed to raise the standard of jehad against the Amir, as requested by Mulla Karim,<sup>88</sup> Najm al-Din took no active steps.

In his dealings with the common people, Mulla Karim behaved with honesty. He took nothing by force and even paid compensation to a few merchants whose caravans had been plundered by the insurgents. As a result, he was steadily supported with provisions and even the Amir's soldiers were deserting to him, at one time at the rate of ten a day.<sup>89</sup>

The insurgent leaders were also active in the field of diplomacy by trying to create an atmosphere of good-will between themselves and the British Government. They, including a few Hazara elders, wrote to the Queen, "If ever at any time you proposed to improve and cherish the distressed people of Afghanistan, pray do not throw away this opportunity but come to our aid."<sup>90</sup> This vague approach had been interpreted, in some publications of the Government of India, as though the Ghilzay elders wished to place their country under the British.<sup>91</sup> It is more probable that the insurgent elders simply hoped that the British Government would not side with the Amir and that they might be able to flee to the adjoining British territories in the event of their failure.

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87 General Ghulam Haydar Orakzay to Amir, KD, 13 May 1887, PSLI, 50, 630.

88 PD, 7 Dec 1886, PSLI, 49, 113.

89 KD, 22 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1673.

90 MM, Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 221.

91 MRA, 100. GAK, 149.

The Government of India did not answer the letter, but it did take the issue up with the Amir. The Amir had earlier intensified a jehad movement, by warning his subjects that threats to their country and religion was imminent, from the infidels. In one of his recent publications, the Targhib al-Jehad (The Encouragement of Jihad), he had given out that it was the intention of the infidels to occupy their country a third time - an obvious reference to the British who had invaded Afghanistan twice in the past. The Viceroy pointed out to the Amir by stating that "...in this you are merely endeavouring to divert to your neighbours the animosity which has apparently come to exist amongst a portion of your subjects [Ghilzays] towards your own person."<sup>92</sup> But to avoid complications, the Viceroy assured him that the object of the policy of the British Government was "...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."<sup>93</sup> Dufferin implied that the formation of such a "formidable front" in Afghanistan against "an invading foe" - a phrase which presumably referred to Russia - was difficult to envisage when the power of the Ghilzays, the bravest of the Pashtuns, was broken up into insignificance. Subsequently the Viceroy again addressed the Amir directly on the subject of the Ghilzays, advising

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92 Marquis of Dufferin to Amir, 20 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1420.

93 Ibid.

him "to come to some amicable understanding with the insurgent Ghilzais".<sup>94</sup> At the same time, he offered the Amir arms and ammunition worth twenty lakhs of rupees as a gift. Nevertheless, the Amir suspected the British of helping the Ghilzays. In his private darbar he was reported to have remarked, "The English should not think that they would reign over Afghanistan. They should be grateful and thankful to me that I sent them back safe from this country."<sup>95</sup> Only when the rising had almost been suppressed, did the Amir assure the Viceroy that his treatment towards the Ghilzays in the future would be more lenient.<sup>96</sup>

In peace-time, the Ghilzay elders (khan, malik, mushr), unlike the Durrani elders, were not all-powerful.<sup>97</sup> They exercised only limited authority over the nearest sections of their tribe. The Ghilzay tribe, as a whole, was broken up into small independent groups. But in a state of emergency such as a war, this was altered. Among the Sulaiman Khel, chelwashtees (fighting forces?), commanded by an able person who was given wide power and the title of Mir, were organised.<sup>98</sup> During the campaign, each clan of the Ghilzays elected leaders, presumably in the above manner. We read that even a certain Mohammad Akram Hazara also led the Andars in the campaign.<sup>99</sup>

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94 Marquis of Dufferin to Amir, 15 Sept 1887, PSLI, 51, 347.

95 KD, 5 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 269.

96 Amir to Marquis of Dufferin, 4 Oct 1887, PSLI, 51, 769.

97 Elphinstone, 2, 151.

98 Ibid, 2, 154.

99 KD, 26 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1705.

The engagements between the Amir's army and the insurgents were too many to describe. Only a description of the major ones, with decisive effects, will be attempted here. In the spring, the insurrection was resumed. The total number of the insurgents was reported to have risen from 20,000 in March<sup>100</sup> to about 100,000 in April.<sup>101</sup> Qalat fell to them. Mulla Karim and other leaders who had arrived from Kakaristan surprised and killed from ten to twenty of the Amir's troops every night.<sup>102</sup> Ghulam Haydar Orakzay was ordered to advance on Qalat from Muqur, but he was unable to do so.<sup>103</sup> Finding his direct advance checked, the General retreated and joined the shaken force under his father on the border of the Maruf district (about 90 miles to the east of Kandahar in the Hotakay country). There, his father had already opened a front. But since he was old and feeble and the khassadars under him were untrustworthy, his activities were rather a mixture of treachery, conciliation and indecisive engagements. He had already been defeated by the Hotakays under Mohammad Shah who had taken position at Ataghar, an inaccessible location surrounded on all sides by hills.<sup>104</sup>

The morale of the combined forces of the Amir improved with the arrival of a Durrani levy and the despatch of abundant provisions from Kandahar. At Ataghar, these combined forces inflicted the first major defeat

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100 MM, Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1281.

101 PD, 7 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 243.

102 KD, 5 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 268.

103 Ghulam Haydar Orakzay to Amir, KD, 15 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 281.

104 BCA, 178.

on the Hotakays who subsequently made their submission.<sup>105</sup> The Orakzay General then made a northward march towards Nawa in the Tarakay country where the Governor of Ghazni had already arrived with reinforcements. Towards the middle of June, the General was reported to have routed the Tarakays at Qala-i-Katal in the direction of Ab-i-Istadah (about 65 miles south-east of Ghazni). This was the second major defeat of the Ghilzays whose loss in dead was reported to be over 1,000. Almost the same number were taken prisoner. Not long after, the insurgents were again routed.<sup>106</sup> Although these rapid major defeats broke the main power of the Ghilzays, they still maintained their resistance. Outside the Ghilzay area in Khost (a district to the north of Waziristan), the Amir's troops led by the Governor of Khost were defeated by Sardar Nur Mohammad Khan who was joined by the Waziris.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, a large combination of Kakars, reported to be about 30,000,<sup>108</sup> and Waziris inflicted a defeat on the Amir's troops,<sup>109</sup> but the location of the engagement is not known.

In Herat in early June, the Andar regiment rebelled and fled to the Ghilzay country to assist their tribe. In early July they arrived there and together with other Ghilzays defeated the Amir's army and recovered Nawa.<sup>110</sup> But at this time about 20,000 troops from certain provinces arrived at Kabul. This concentration had "...a powerful

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105 KD, 20 May 1887, PSLI, 50, 879.

106 MM, June 1887, PSLI, 50, 1239.

107 MM, May 1887, PSLI, 50, 698.

108 KD, 26 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 519.

109 KD, 19 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 283.

110 KD, 5 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1442.

effect on the Ghilzays".<sup>111</sup> Besides, the Amir spread false rumours that the British Government, in accordance with her treaty with Afghanistan, had concentrated a large force along the frontiers to assist him, when asked, in suppressing the internal enemies of Afghanistan.<sup>112</sup> It was a clever move and though, because of the Amir's oppression, the people were opposed to him, they did not rise, believing that the British Government would uphold his cause with the force of arms.<sup>113</sup> Thus the rising did not spread throughout the country.

In Nawa, all the major clans of the Ghilzays gathered,<sup>114</sup> their total number being reported under Mulla Karim as 70,000 in July,<sup>115</sup> and 200,000 in September.<sup>116</sup> It is difficult to envisage how such a large number could assemble in such a short time in the face of the Amir's troops, especially when further reinforcement had reached the General. Further, the assemblage of so large a number would have made major confrontation inevitable. But after July no major confrontation had been reported, only small skirmishes.<sup>117</sup> Although a few insignificant gatherings of the Tarakays and Andars were to take place during the next two years, from September 1887, the rising began to fade out. Winter was setting in and conditions became too severe for the homeless and destitute Ghilzays to offer any effective resistance.

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- 111 MM, June 1887, PSLI, 50, 1239.  
 112 Kand. D., 19 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1680.  
 113 PD, 19 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 656.  
 114 Kand. D., 26 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1705.  
 115 PD, 29 July 1887, PSLI, 50, 1876.  
 116 PD, 14 Sept 1887, PSLI, 51, 545.  
 117 Mahomed, S., 1, 258.

In September, Sardar Ayub made an abortive attempt to reach the Ghilzay country. In response to the invitation from the Ghilzays, he managed to reach the Persian/Afghan frontier secretly, but at the Afghan frontier post of Ghorian the Sardar and his eighteen followers were driven back.<sup>118</sup> No rising took place in his favour in Herat, but his reappearance was to bring harsh repercussions on the Durranis. In Kabul and Kandahar, a number of influential Durrani elders were executed. Some were deported to India.<sup>119</sup> However, after the disappearance of Ayub, the Amir's relations with the Durranis returned to a new improved footing.

For a peaceful return of the Ghilzays to their homes, the Amir offered to take no further actions against them. He even promised to rebuild their demolished forts. He released some Ghilzay prisoners and gave them small allowances, but the insurgents preferred exile to submission.<sup>120</sup> The Amir then issued a proclamation, pardoning all except Mulla Karim, Mohammad Shah Hotakay, and Sher Jan Tarakay,<sup>121</sup> who fled to Kakaristan. The total loss of life on the Ghilzay side was reported to be about 24,000,<sup>122</sup> while that on the Amir's side had not been reported.

The Ghilzays gradually returned to their homes, but they were systematically impoverished, especially the

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118 BCA, 55.

119 MM, Nov 1887, PSLI, 51, 1332.

120 PD, 6 Oct 1887, PSLI, 51, 803.

121 MM, Dec 1887, PSLI, 52, 62.

122 KD, 18 Nov 1887, PSLI, 51, 1339.



Hotakays. Economically weakened, they were now politically weakened so that they could not rise again. What the Amir once had said about the Andars, he now applied to the whole tribe, "...when they have no money left with them, [they] will not again raise disturbances."<sup>123</sup>

All the taxes and revenues were reimposed.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, the Tokhays were ordered to pay 80,000 rupees, the arrears of revenue since the British occupation of Afghanistan. Although there is no report available of a similar demand on other sections, it may have been the case with them. The Hotakays were debarred from entering Government service.<sup>125</sup> The Ghilzays as a whole were reported disarmed,<sup>126</sup> but it is not known how this was carried out. Allowances to the Tarakay and Andar mullas were also discontinued.<sup>127</sup> Since the mullas were closely associated with the rising, the allowances of all Ghilzay mullas may have been discontinued.

In 1880, during the Zimma meeting, the Amir had felt uneasy about the influence the Ghilzay elders had acquired under the late Amir Sher 'Ali, and during their campaign against the British. But because of Ayub, and his support by the Durranis, the Amir had drawn closer to the Ghilzays at that time and expelled Ayub, mainly with their support. After the expulsion of Ayub, the Amir had made extensive efforts to widen his authority over the Ghilzays, by taking

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123 Amir to Naib Kotwal of Kabul, KD, 7 Dec 1886, PSLI, 49, 149.

124 KD, 2 Feb 1888, PSLI, 53, 355.

125 Colonel 'Ata Allah (with Amir in Mazar), 12 Feb 1889, PSLI, 56, 789.

126 PD, 24 Dec 1887, PSLI, 52, 113.

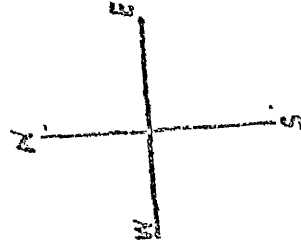
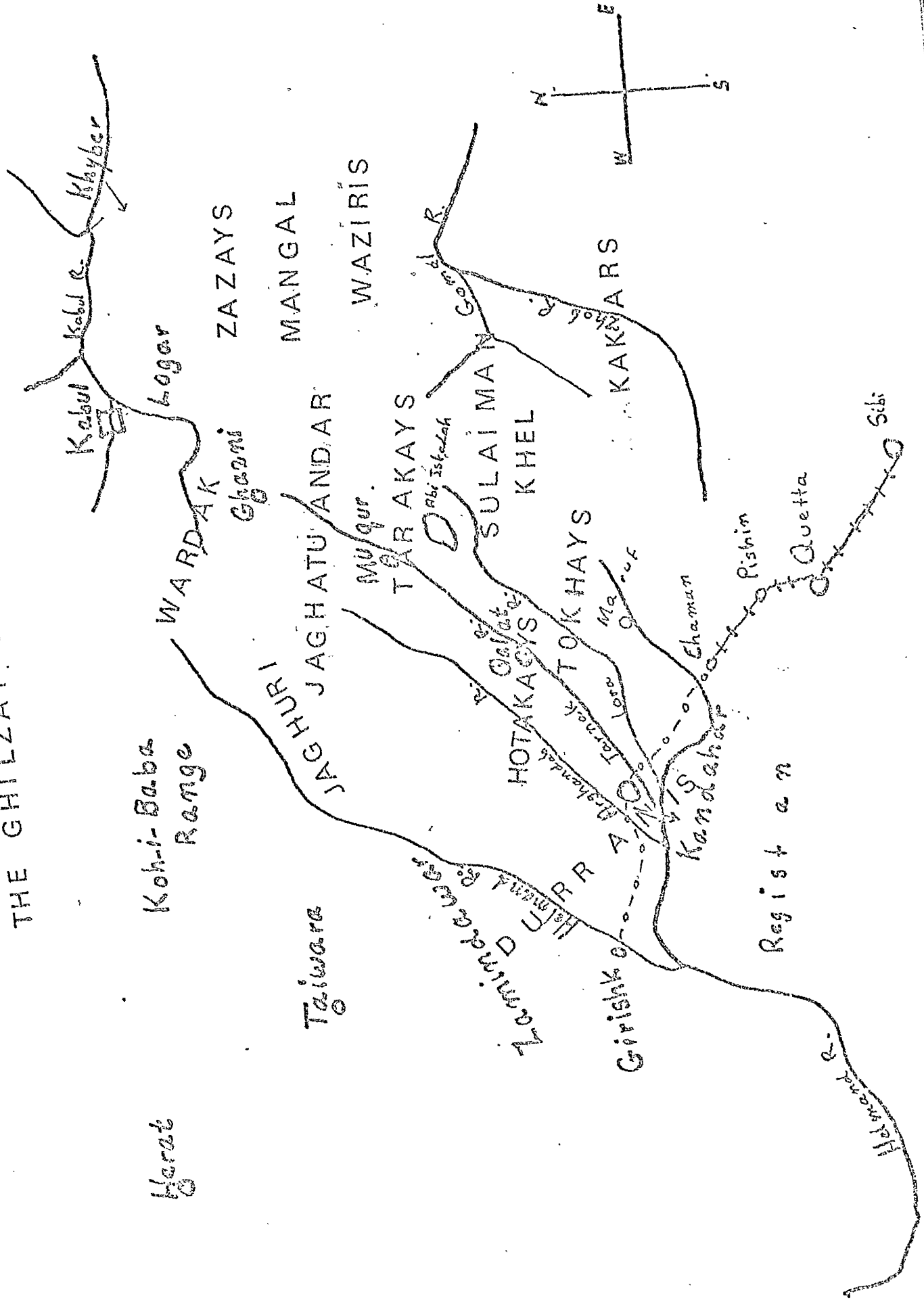
over the management of the Kabul-Kandahar road, demanding arrears of revenue, stationing troops in their country, and eliminating their influential elders. The sporadic disturbances of the main sections of the Ghilzays were easily put down but the activities of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam, once the Amir's supporter and now his opponent, stirred the Ghilzays to a great extent. The imposition of enhanced revenue and taxes over the Ghilzays and on the rent-free lands of Mulla Mushk-i-'Alam, and the discontinuance of the allowances of the Ghilzay mullas, proved a turning point in the relations of the Amir with the Ghilzays.

Thus the Ghilzay war was essentially a war of the landowners who were resisting the new, heavy taxation demanded by the Amir in an effort to break their power. Popular sympathy was against the tyrannical and oppressive rule of the Amir as was evidenced by his failure to send tribal levies (except Durranis) and to obtain a fetwa from the mullas against the Ghilzays, but the tribe, having little money and poor arms, had little chance of success.

Usually after each disturbance among the non-Pashtuns, the Amir relied more and more on the Pashtun elements. But subsequent to the Ghilzay rising, he drew closer to the Durranis and among them to his own Mohammadzays (a section of the Barakzays). By granting annual allowances to every member (female and male) of it, and looking upon it as "sharik-i-dowlat" (partner of the State), the Amir

raised the Mohammadzay section to a privileged position among the tribes of Afghanistan. The position of the Qizilbashs was also temporarily improved.

# THE GHILZAY LAND



## Chapter 6

## Struggle with Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan

The extension of the power of Kabul over the province of Turkistan marks an important extension of the power of 'Abd al-Rahman. In the early part of 1880, at the same time that 'Abd al-Rahman had established himself in Badakhshan, his cousin Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan took control of Turkistan, of which province he remained governor after 'Abd al-Rahman became Amir. Mohammad Ishaq's desire for local autonomy in Turkistan under the loose suzerainty of Kabul clashed with 'Abd al-Rahman's aim to create a strong central power. Mohammad Ishaq ruled Turkistan in virtual independence until in 1888 he revolted, was defeated, and fled to Bokhara. 'Abd al-Rahman then introduced far reaching administrative changes in Turkistan, aimed at confirming the power of the central government there.

The boundaries of Turkistan were uncertain. Their limits depended on the power of local rulers. Writing in 1869, J. T. Wheeler included all the territories between the Oxus and the Hindu Kush and the Pamir steppe and Herat, in Turkistan. It seems that this definition was of more geographical than administrative significance, and far too wide to be ruled by one governor. Under Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan, Turkistan, with its capital at Mazar, comprised only the plains south of the Oxus, between Andkhui and Badakhshan. In 1884 it was inhabited by a predominantly sedentary population of about 87,000 families, made up of Uzbeks (30,000), Arabs (16,000), Hazaras (11,000), Turcomans (8,000), Tajiks (10,000),

Pashtuns (3,000), Qipchaqs, Firozkohis, Sayyeds, Qizilbashes, and others.<sup>1</sup>

Following the death of Amir Sher 'Ali in 1879, his son and successor, Mohammad Ya'qub, appointed General Ghulam Haydar Wardak as Governor of Turkistan. The General held that province during the British occupation of Afghanistan. He favoured the Pashtun elements of the Afghan army which, as a whole, was opposed by the Uzbek and Turcoman tribes. This was the situation when 'Abd al-Rahman, before starting for Badakhshan in late 1879, sent Sardar Mohammad Sarwar Khan, Sardar Mohammad Ishaq, and Sardar 'Abd al-Qudus Khan to Turkistan. The first two, who were sons of the late Amir Mohammad A'zam, were full cousins of 'Abd al-Rahman, and the third was a son of Sardar Sultan Mohammad. Having crossed the Oxus at Kerki, they arrived at the ruined city of Balkh (about 14 miles to the west of Mazar). They immediately suffered a setback. In the face of troops sent against them by the General, they retreated to Shiberghan (about 82 miles to the west of Mazar), where Mohammad Sarwar, failing to win over its Governor, was arrested and sent to Mazar. At Mazar, he was beheaded by the order of the General.

The execution of Sarwar caused unrest in the army in Mazar. The garrison at Takhta Pul (a town close to Mazar)

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1 Wheeler, J.T., Memorandum on Afghan-Turkistan, Calcutta, 1869, 1, Hamilton, A., Afghanistan, London, 1906, 242-268, Ridgeway, Sir W., Report on Survey Operations in Western and North-Western Afghanistan in 1884, 1885, 1886, Calcutta, 1887, 32. GAT, i-xii.

mutinied and its example was followed by the troops in Mazar itself. At Mazar, the position of the General was further weakened by the despatch of some troops under his nephew against Sultan Murad, the most powerful Uzbek Mir of Kunduz, who, ever since the British occupation of Afghanistan, had successfully defied the General's authority. Though the General's nephew gained complete victory over the Mir in Kunduz, his own expedition against the mutinous troops at Takhta Pul failed. The army turned against him, and he hurriedly fell back on Mazar from where he escaped to Bokhara.<sup>2</sup> Ishaq, who had previously escaped towards the Oxus,<sup>3</sup> reappeared. The warm reception accorded to his herald, Qudus, at the town of Aqcha (about 56 miles to the north-west of Mazar), encouraged Ishaq to appear in person in the city, where he too was warmly welcomed. Next, the two sardars moved to Shiberghan where the elders of both districts declared Ishaq to be their governor. They were also well received in Mazar. Thus the whole of Turkistan, except the district of Sari Pul, whose ruler was later overcome, fell peacefully into the hands of Ishaq.

Sardar Ishaq Khan (b. 1851) was a son of the late Amir A'zam by an Armenian wife. Nothing is known of his youth. In 1869, he commanded 'Abd al-Rahman's forces in

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- 2 In Bokhara, the General entered the service of the Badshah (incorrectly called Amir) of Bokhara. GAT, i. The General organised a military force of 16,000. He died in 1894 in a quarrel with a Russian officer over an ill-treated woman who had taken refuge with the General.
- 3 According to 'Abd al-Rahman, Ishaq, after the arrest of his brother, went to Maimana. Mahomed, S., 1, 177.

Turkistan and later accompanied 'Abd al-Rahman to Samarqand. By 1873, he had made several abortive attempts to enter Badakhshan and Turkistan, after which he had to content himself with the life of an exile on a small Russian pension.<sup>4</sup> In Samarqand, Ishaq seems to have been influenced by the mystic Naqshbandiyya order of Islam which was to play a significant part in his career in Turkistan.

Little has been recorded of Ishaq's activities in Turkistan in the 1880s, except that, much to the annoyance of merchants, he raised some loans for 'Abd al-Rahman, and he appointed district rulers, among them Qudus in Tashqurghan (about 30 miles to the east of Mazar).

As early as February 1881, Ishaq asked the Amir to recognise him as "...the exclusive owner of Turkistan" - a request which strained his relations with the Amir. The Amir, however, avoided a clash by promising him that he would do so, "When all our home and personal anxieties and troubles [Ayub who held Herat] have been removed."<sup>5</sup>

In late 1881, when Herat fell to Qudus Khan, Ishaq sent his younger brother, Sardar Mohsin Khan, with some troops there, instructing Qudus to hand over Herat to him, but the latter referred the matter to the Amir. Sardar Ishaq then demanded Kandahar for his other younger brother, Sardar Mohammad Aziz Khan, and further wrote to the Amir in Kandahar, "The acquisition of Turkistan cost my

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4 BCA, 106.

5 BCA, 107.



brother, Mohammad Sarwar, his life. You must not think of Herat or Turkistan. I acknowledge your supremacy, so do not follow the example of Amir Sher Ali... It is right that you should grant Kandahar to Sardar Mohammad Aziz Khan [the Amir's brother-in-law], and seating yourself on the throne of Kabul, [and] look upon us as your dependents."<sup>6</sup>

The Amir showed his political judgement by recalling his own nominee, Sardar Yusuf Khan (the youngest son of the late Amir Dost Mohammad), who was on his way to Herat, and confirming Qudus as the Governor of Herat, thus winning him to his side. Further, the Amir tried to weaken Ishaq's position by persuading his brothers to join him in Kabul where, in appearances, he accorded them unusual consideration but, in fact, kept them as hostages. To Ishaq the Amir wrote conciliatory letters which had some effect. Still, Ishaq insisted on keeping the revenue of Turkistan, and even demanded that of Herat<sup>7</sup> over which he had no control. The Amir agreed not only to Ishaq's keeping the revenue of Turkistan, but he even sent him money from Kabul, and gave him wide powers. Thus Ishaq had de facto independence in Turkistan. In return, Ishaq acknowledged the Amir's suzerainty by reading the Khutba in his name.<sup>8</sup> Like other governors, Ishaq too periodically sent valuable presents, especially horses, to the Amir.

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6 AB, Kabul Correspondent, 7 Dec 1881, PSLI, 31, 306.

7 BCA, 108.

8 Khafi, 2, 160.

No major change in relations between Kabul and Turkistan was reported before 1884, although the Sardar once asked the Amir to grant him Turkistan in perpetuity.<sup>9</sup> Otherwise, Ishaq remained loyal to the Amir and would do "nothing without the Amir's knowledge,"<sup>10</sup> presumably in matters relating to Turkistan. But after the pacification of Maimana, relations became strained between the Amir and Ishaq. Because he had led the expedition against the rebel Mir of Maimana, and because Maimana, in the past, had often been a part of Turkistan, Ishaq hoped that the Amir would place Maimana under him. But the Amir appointed Mir Mohammad Husayn, a former Wali of Maimana, as Governor, independent of Ishaq.<sup>11</sup>

After his disappointment over Maimana, Ishaq made strenuous efforts to consolidate his position. Reports are unanimous concerning the popularity of Ishaq with the people of Turkistan. His administration was mild in contrast to the brutal methods of the Amir elsewhere. Usually, Ishaq did not interfere in legal cases and allowed them to be dealt with in accordance with the shari'at.<sup>12</sup> There is no report available on land revenue, but the poll-tax on non-Muslims and transit duties were light.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Ishaq was of an extremely pious disposition. Adhering to the "Naqshbandiyya" order of Islam, he devoted much time to prayer. This piety drew him still closer to

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9 PD, 17 Oct 1883, PSLI, 38, 402.

10 The tutor of Ishaq's son to a certain person, Rasul Khan, HD, 16 Dec 1883, PSLI, 39, 1039.

11 HD, 5 July 1884, PSLI, 41, 49.

12 Khafi, 2, 161.

13 PD, 19 Dec 1884, PSLI, 43, 72.

the Uzbeks, who observed Islam in its "utmost detail,"<sup>14</sup> and the Turcomans in particular, among whom the Naqshbandiyva order was widespread.<sup>15</sup> This also may account for the fact that Ishaq ordered his people to call him not a sardar but a Faqir (mendicant), or a Mulla.<sup>16</sup> Ishaq was also popular with his army, which he paid regularly.<sup>17</sup> Turkistan being a frontier province, the Amir not only had allowed Ishaq to raise a large army,<sup>18</sup> which was composed of Kabulis, Uzbeks, Turcomans and Ghilzays, but also sent him money from Kabul to meet the expenditure.<sup>19</sup> Thus the necessity of exacting money from the people for the maintenance of a large army in a comparatively small province did not arise. Also, because of Ishaq's mild rule, there was a great influx of people into Turkistan, especially of Uzbeks from Bokhara,<sup>20</sup> and of the inhabitants of Khanabad, who escaped the oppressive rule of Sardar 'Abd Allah Tokhay. Indeed, Turkistan, especially the cities of Mazar and Tashqurghan, had prospered under Ishaq.<sup>21</sup> Ishaq was the first Afghan ruler who treated the Turkistanis well and they, in turn, felt loyalty to him.

While maintaining a conciliatory appearance, the Amir still strove to remove Ishaq from Turkistan. He tried, on several occasions, to persuade Ishaq to come to Kabul. Each time Ishaq failed to obey the summons. The fact was

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14 Elphinstone, 2, 188.  
 15 Mahomed, S., 1, 265.  
 16 PD, 7 Jan 1886, PSLI, 46, 461.  
 17 Khafi, 2, 160.  
 18 For number see p. 194.  
 19 BCA, 106.  
 20 BCA, 112.  
 21 BCA, 112.

that the Amir's attitude towards his governors had still further estranged Ishaq from him. The Amir's policy towards his governors was to dismiss them in disgrace before they became wealthy and influential. Governors of influential families, including the Barakzay sardars, were especially subject to this policy. The best examples were the cases of 'Abd al-Qudus and 'Abd al-Rasul, who had been removed from Herat and Kandahar respectively, and imprisoned. High posts, including provincial governorates, were being given to non-Barakzay sardars, especially to the head servants of the Amir's court and households, whereas the Barakzays, or those who were still in Afghanistan, were detained in Kabul. Ishaq was the only Barakzay sardar with ambition and a claim to the throne who was still a governor of a province. Under such circumstances, it was most unlikely that he would visit the Amir in Kabul. Hence Ishaq's excuses. In late 1884, he pleaded ill-health.<sup>22</sup> In 1885, he said his absence from the province would lead to disruption, and he unsuccessfully asked the Amir to send him his brothers, before he could visit Kabul.<sup>23</sup>

Next, the Amir sent to Turkistan his mother-in-law, who was a daughter of the late Amir Dost Mohammad, and who enjoyed the confidence of both Ishaq and himself, to try to effect a reconciliation,<sup>24</sup> but her mission was a failure, and relations between the two cousins deteriorated

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22 MM, Nov 1884, PSLI, 42, 825.

23 MM, Dec 1885, PSLI, 46, 221.

24 PD, 12 May 1886, PSLI, 47, 205.

further. In 1887, Ishaq, perhaps for the first time, refused an order of the Amir to confiscate certain waqf (religious endowments) property in Mazar.<sup>25</sup> The refusal appeared serious in view of the Ghilzay rising.

The repeated refusal of Ishaq to obey the summons alarmed the Amir. Because he was subject to serious attacks of gout,<sup>26</sup> the Amir feared that in the event of his collapse, Ishaq would imprison his two sons and secure the amirate for himself.<sup>27</sup> He determined therefore to remove this possible danger. But because of the Ghilzay and Shinwaray risings, the Amir was not prepared for a military expedition against him. Instead he summoned all high military and civil officers of Turkistan to Kabul, ostensibly to reward some and dismiss others, but in reality to weaken the position of Ishaq. When the Amir's firman was made public, the Turkistanis appealed to Ishaq, who delayed the order. The Amir's subsequent summons of Ishaq's son, Sardar Mohammad Isma'il, was also declined.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, rumours were rife in Turkistan that the Amir was dead. In order to ascertain the true state of affairs, Ishaq wrote to the Amir that his absence from public view might lead to a rising, and that he should appear at the darbar in four days.<sup>29</sup>

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25 MM, Jan 1887, PSLI, 49, 373.

26 Surgeon C.W. Owen, Member of the Afghan Boundary Commission who visited the Amir in Kabul, 12 Oct 1886, PSLI, 49, 51.

27 MM, based on statement by a female servant of the Amir, July 1886, PSLI, 47, 1128.

28 Khafi, 2, 167.

29 KD, 29 Apr 1887, PSLI, 50, 524.

It is not certain why Ishaq failed to take advantage of the Ghilzay rising when the Amir's position was critical. The Ghilzays, too, do not seem to have approached Ishaq, despite the fact that he was on good terms with them and was related to them by marriage. In fact, Ishaq supplied the Amir with troops for use against the Ghilzays, and the advice that he should adopt a lenient policy, advice which was bitterly resented by the Amir.<sup>30</sup> But Ishaq, much to the annoyance of the Amir, freed all the Ghilzay prisoners,<sup>31</sup> whom the Amir had sent to Turkistan. Ishaq also fixed allowances for them.<sup>32</sup> Because free movement between Turkistan and Kabul was strictly prohibited, and only those who were given passports (rahdari) could travel, it seems likely that Ishaq failed to realise the full extent of the Ghilzay rising.

When the Ghilzay rising was over, the Amir stiffened his attitude towards Ishaq. At first he imprisoned a number of Ishaq's officials, who had been sent to Kabul in compliance with a previous order of the Amir.<sup>33</sup> Next, the Amir summoned Ishaq himself. Various reasons have been given for this new summons. Khafi maintains that the Amir wished to consult Ishaq on Turkistan affairs in view of the proximity of the province to its powerful,

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30 KD, 23 Aug 1887, PSLI, 51, 385.

31 By 1886 the Amir had sent to Turkistan for settlement about 10,000 "Afghan" families (BCA, 113) among whom the Ghilzays were the highest in number.

32 KD, 23 Aug 1887, PSLI, 51, 385.

33 KD, 20 Dec 1887, PSLI, 52, 382.

hostile neighbour, Russia.<sup>34</sup> But according to the Amir, the summons was for the purpose of consulting Ishaq on the impending arrival of a British mission to Kabul,<sup>35</sup> while according to the Commissioner of Peshawar, the Amir wished to appoint Ishaq Governor of Kabul.<sup>36</sup> Whatever the real reason, it was feared in Turkistan that if Ishaq went to Kabul he would never return.<sup>37</sup> Ishaq, therefore, summoned his senior officers and officials for consultation.

The consultations were held in Shadian, the summer seat of Ishaq near Mazar. According to Khafi, the view was common among the elders and ordinary men in Turkistan that the Amir was determined to destroy the province and impoverish its inhabitants. They therefore unanimously offered their service to Ishaq to fight the Amir. In Shadian, they took an oath on the Quran, pledging themselves to occupy the whole of Afghanistan for Ishaq. During the next two weeks, military officers extracted an oath of loyalty from the soldiers, and the elders from the ordinary people. Only one officer delayed signing the Quran and was instantly killed.<sup>38</sup> Afterwards, Ishaq moved to Mazar, where he was declared Amir in the public mosque on Friday, 10 August, 1888. Ishaq's seal was inscribed "Amir Mohammad Ishaq, son of the late Amir Mohammad Azim Khan",<sup>39</sup> indicating that his claim was

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34 Khafi, 2, 168.

35 Amir to British Agent (Mazar), 6 Feb 1890, PSLI, 59, 686.

36 PD, 17 Dec 1887, PSLI, 52, 101.

37 Khafi, 2, 168.

38 Khafi, 2, 168-170.

39 HD, 6 Oct 1888, PSLI, 55, 718.

based on his being a son of A'zam. The Amir's version of the inscription is "La illah [sic] [illallah] [,] Amir Mahomed Ishak Khan." (There is no God but God, Amir Mohammad Ishaq Khan.)<sup>40</sup> But this is in complete contrast to the religious character of Ishaq. All the elders, however, were not unanimous in declaring Ishaq as Amir in Mazar. Some suggested that this should be deferred to a later date and done in Kabul.<sup>41</sup> According to Khafi, who was a witness to the event, this did not suggest any opposition but was a matter of policy.

Khafi does not say why Ishaq assumed the amirate while the Amir was alive. Although, according to the Amir, Ishaq believed that the Amir was dead,<sup>42</sup> this is made uncertain by the silence of Khafi, and the declarations of Ishaq against the Amir. Khafi only mentions that Ishaq made it known publicly that the people of Kabul had asked him to come and occupy the capital of the kingdom.<sup>43</sup> In his written proclamations, Ishaq declared a jehad against the Amir, declaring himself the avenger of the oppressed people,<sup>44</sup> although for tactical reasons he also circulated rumours of the death of the Amir which gained a considerable degree of credence.<sup>45</sup>

Ishaq sent agents throughout the country, inciting

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40 Mahomed, S., 1, 267.

41 Khafi, 2, 171.

42 Mahomed, S., 1, 267.

43 Khafi, 2, 171.

44 MM, Aug 1888, PSLI, 55, 134.

45 MM, Sept 1888, PSLI, 55, 599.



the people against the Amir.<sup>46</sup> He also sent proclamations to the refugees at Peshawar, and to Sardar Mohammad Ayub in Lahore, and also to the Afridays of the Khyber, and the people of Kunar, whose Safay inhabitants were still holding out against the Amir.<sup>47</sup> Similar invitations were also extended to the Ghilzays, Hazaras, Bajauris<sup>48</sup> and to Sardar Nur Mohammad Khan, who was in the Shinwar. But because of the restrictions imposed by the Government of India, no refugee was able to take part in a move against the Amir. Indeed, Sardar Ayub handed over the proclamation to the Government of India.

Shortly after declaring himself Amir, Ishaq set out for Kabul, but when he reached Gomar (a stage from Mazar), affairs in Maimana turned against him. Although Mir Husayn was the Wali of Maimana, actual power was exercised by the Amir's military officer, who commanded troops in the city.<sup>49</sup> Mir Husayn was at Mazar, presumably summoned by Ishaq, when the latter declared himself Amir. The Wali was imprisoned, probably for his refusal to accept Ishaq as Amir, whereas General Sharbat Khan, Commander of the Maimana troops, declared for Ishaq. But the troops, and the sons of the Wali, remained loyal to the Amir. They seized the General and sent him to Herat where he was killed.<sup>50</sup> Soon, General Rustam Khan arrived with reinforcements from Herat and took over the administration

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46 KD, 21 Aug 1888, PSLI, 54, 969.

47 MM, Aug 1888, PSLI, 55, 134.

48 MM, Sept 1888, PSLI, 55, 599.

49 GAT, pt 2, 221.

50 Khafi, 2, 172.

of Maimana. The example of Maimana was soon followed by the elders of Andkhui, and Dowlat Abad, who reiterated their allegiance to the Amir.<sup>51</sup> Thus the north-west flank of Ishaq's position became insecure, and his attempts to bring Maimana under control failed. Nevertheless, Ishaq continued on his march, leaving his son and heir-apparent, Sardar Isma'il, in charge of Turkistan, to look after Maimana and to cope with the possible danger from the Hazarajat and Herat.<sup>52</sup> After passing Tashqurghan, Ishaq was joined on the bank of the Kunduz river by the Amir's army quartered at Khanabad, and subsequently the whole of Badakhshan fell to him. The Amir's officials and soldiery swore the oath of loyalty to him. Only a limited number, who refused to do so, were imprisoned and killed. The ground for this easy victory had been prepared by his emissaries, and facilitated by the absence of Sardar 'Abd Allah Tokhay, the Governor of Badakhshan, who was on his way to Kabul.

The combined forces then moved on to Khanabad, where towards the end of August, Ishaq was joined by Sultan Murad, the opportunist Mir of Kunduz who, in the past, had never hesitated to join a strong contender to the throne, and subsequently to desert him. In Khanabad, Ishaq's march was delayed, because of the slow movement of the army in Shighnan (a district in the far east of Badakhshan) whose commander, Saidal Khan, was at first

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51 MM, Aug 1888, PSLI, 55, 133.

52 Khafi, 2, 173.

hesitant to join Ishaq. For three weeks Ishaq remained in Khanabad, during which time the news of his march spread and the Amir's reply was allowed to develop.<sup>53</sup>

The revolt of Ishaq presented the Amir with problems similar to those caused by Sardar Ayub in 1881. Both Sardars claimed the throne, though the claim of Ishaq had been of lesser weight. But under Ishaq, a large army (the total number of the Turkistan and Badakhshan troops was 18,700 with 86 guns,<sup>54</sup> minus the number of troops and guns in Maimana, Andkhui and Dowlatyar) advanced on Kabul at a time when the Amir was so ill that "...he could not walk for more than.....two or three steps."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, because of the prevailing discontent in the country, the general feeling was in favour of Ishaq.<sup>56</sup> But the Amir acted swiftly.

In Kabul, the Amir imprisoned the three brothers of Ishaq, and 360 relatives of men in the service of Ishaq in Turkistan. He directed his efforts to mobilise religious and public opinion against Ishaq. The mullas and elders of Kabul and Jalalabad gave him a fetwa to the effect that Ishaq was a rebel.<sup>57</sup> The Amir then called on all the tribes to act against Ishaq.<sup>58</sup> Further, he gave out that Ishaq's rebellion was due to Russia,<sup>59</sup> and thus

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53 Khafi, 2, 173-176.

54 Military Resources of Afghanistan, Nov 1886, No. 78, 1.

55 KD, 21 Aug 1888, PSLI, 54, 969.

56 KD, 21 Aug 1888, PSLI, 54, 969.

57 PD, 9 Sept 1893, PSLI, 72, 64.

58 Amir's proclamation, KD, 28 Aug 1888, PSLI, 55, 21.

59 Amir's proclamation, KD, 28 Aug 1888, PSLI, 24.

he called the suppression of the insurrection "a religious war."<sup>60</sup> It is worth noting that the Amir obtained a fetwa easily from the mullas against Ishaq, whereas he failed to do so against the Ghilzays. By implicating Russia in the revolt, the Amir apparently hoped to obtain assistance from the British Government, and to turn the tribes against Ishaq. In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that Ishaq was supported by Russia. In the past there had been occasional vague and general reports of Russian association with Ishaq. In 1883 it was reported that "...the Russians place great confidence in him."<sup>61</sup> In 1884, that Ishaq was "...in correspondence with the Russians,"<sup>62</sup> and in 1888 that the Russians visited Ishaq more frequently than before.<sup>63</sup> That the Amir in his proclamations spoke of Ishaq as "the bastard Armenian servant of Russia", and that Ishaq accused the Amir of being "a British protégé"<sup>64</sup> was, in fact, no more than propaganda directed at inciting tribes against each other.

Militarily, the Amir also acted very swiftly. He despatched a strong force to Turkistan under Ghulam Haydar Orakzay, who had been promoted to the rank of Naib Salar (Deputy Commander-in-Chief) after his victory over the Ghilzays. Another force under Brigadier Sayyed Shah Khan, and a third under Sardar 'Abd Allah Tokhay, were also sent. After having combined in Saighan (a district of

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60 KD, 4 Sept 1888, PSLI, 55, 190.

61 PD, 1 July 1883, PSLI, 37, 312.

62 KD, 12 Feb 1884, PSLI, 39, 1018.

63 MM, Mar 1888, PSLI, 53, 286.

64 MM, Sept 1888, PSLI, 55, 600.

Turkistan to the north of Bamian), the first two forces arrived on 4 September before Kahmard (near Saighan), which was held by an advance force of about 700 Khasadars under General Najm al-Din Ghilzay, father-in-law of Ishaq. From the pass of Dandanshikan, the artillery of the combined forces rapidly destroyed the so-called "iron fort" of Shash Burja, where the Khasadars of Ishaq were, capturing General Najm al-Din and the rest.<sup>65</sup> From there, the Naib Salar advanced on the town of Haibak (about 246 miles from Kabul), where he was well received by the elders. On 23 September, he was joined by the troops under Sardar 'Abd Allah Tokhay. The combined forces, comprising 13 regiments of infantry, 4 regiments of cavalry, 26 guns with some irregulars marched onwards, reaching the valley of Ghaznigak (three miles south of Tashqurghan) on 25 September. In this valley, advanced units of the army of Ishaq were already in position. Ishaq himself, with the main body of his troops, was falling back on Tashqurghan. He had been abandoned already by the Mir of Kunduz who had crossed the Oxus to safety.

The decisive battle took place at Ghaznigak on 27 September. The exact number of Ishaq's troops under Naib Salar Mohammad Husayn in Ghaznigak is difficult to ascertain, but the Amir's army was larger than that of Ishaq. On the eve of the confrontation, Ishaq received

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65 Khafi, 2, 176-177.

66 Amir to British Agent, Mazar, 5 July 1889  
PSLI, 55, 1068.

a sealed Quran from a section of the Amir's army (ششش  
 پلتن و توپخانه و دو رساله با سوار و لایش), promising desertion during the battle. Accordingly, Ishaq, who had taken position on a hill distant from the battlefield, issued orders to his army not to fire first. That part of the Amir's army which was led by 'Abd Allah Tokhay opened fire. This part was totally defeated, some submitting while others, including 'Abd Allah Tokhay, fled towards Herat, the Hazarajat, and Kabul.<sup>67</sup> According to the Amir, eight regiments of infantry surrendered while the cavalry fled.<sup>68</sup> While Ishaq's army was plundering 'Abd Allah Tokhay's baggage, Naib Salar Orakzay made a surprise attack and defeated Ishaq's troops with complete success. But what finally completely sealed the fate of the battle in favour of the Amir's army was the sudden and unexpected flight of Ishaq, who was misinformed about the success of the major portion of his army under Naib Salar Husayn Khan. Ishaq's flight disheartened the rest of his army, which followed him. After having taken their families, Ishaq and the remainder of his troops crossed the Oxus at Patakasar, from where they finally reached Sherabad in Bokhara. Ishaq took up residence at Samarqand once again.<sup>69</sup>

Several factors contributed to the unexpected defeat of Ishaq. Communication was non-existent between him, about one farsakh from the battlefield, and his commanding

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67 Khafi, 2, 178-186, MM, Oct 1888, PSLI, 55, 927.

68 Amir to British Agent, Mazar, 5 July 1889, PSLI, 57, 1068.

69 Khafi, 2, 178-186.

officer, Naib Salar Husayn Khan, and the latter failed to send him the news of his victory over 'Abd Allah Tokhay. The two portions of Ishaq's army were also unaware of each other's position, probably because of the thick dust produced by the battle. Like Ishaq, his advisers were also cowardly and incompetent. From the beginning of hostilities, they worked on his fears and encouraged him to retreat. Ishaq was not a soldier and lost his judgement at the critical moment. When his own messengers incorrectly informed him that his officers had been killed, Ishaq instantly took flight, without verifying the report. His flight was further hastened by fear of attack on his rear from the Maimana side, though the Maimana army was also reported to be on the brink of submission to him. Otherwise his army fought bravely, and had he shown courage it is possible that all of the Amir's army would have submitted to him.

The early collapse of the revolt checked the disturbances which otherwise might have become widespread. Disturbances were raised in the neighbourhood of Ghazni, and the inhabitants of Muqur and Ghazni were reported to be ready for Ishaq, if he had gained any success. The Kabul-Kandahar and Kabul-Peshawar roads were infested with robbers. The difficulty of the Amir's position could be realised from the fact that, after receiving the news of the defeat of a portion of his troops, the Amir instructed the British Agent at Kabul to declare, in a military darbar (which did not take place) that, should the Amir wish it, the British Government was

ready to send troops to Kabul, in seven days.<sup>70</sup> The escape of Ishaq was fortunate for the Amir. Since the expulsion of Ayub in 1881, no other important member of the ruling Barakzay family had been left in the country who might one day have become his rival. But the affairs of Turkistan had to be set on a new footing. The Amir left for Turkistan on 25 October, leaving his elder son Habib Allah in charge of Kabul.

Apparently two considerations induced the Amir to go to Turkistan, where he remained until July 1890. First, Ishaq with, according to Khafi, 8,377 followers, including women and children,<sup>71</sup> across the Oxus might be a source of constant danger, especially since the Amir believed Russia had backed Ishaq. This necessitated the fortification of the frontiers along the Oxus. Second, the control of the chaos following the revolt could not be handled by a person other than the Amir himself, as this involved problems such as the punishment of the disloyal Turkistanis, the resettlement of the depopulated areas, and breaking the administration of Turkistan into smaller units.

On his way to Turkistan, the Amir's first target became the Sheikh Ali Hazaras, who inhabited both sides of the south-western end of the Hindu Kush, and who had supported Ishaq, under their leaders Mir Ja'far and

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70 KD, 2 Oct 1888, PSLI, 55, 689.

71 Khafi, 2, 185.



Dilawar. The Amir ordered them to submit their arms,<sup>72</sup> a large number of cattle, and pay 50,000 rupees in fines.<sup>73</sup> But when they failed to do so, they were ordered to be removed en masse from their country and dispersed throughout Afghanistan.<sup>74</sup> Subsequent reports confirmed that many of them were removed to Qalat, Herat, and Bala Murghab in the province of Herat. Only those who had been detained in Kabul were later permitted to return to their homes.

In Turkistan, the Amir tried to tackle the other problems simultaneously. The fortification of the frontiers along the Oxus occupied his principal attention. But, finding his initial proposed arrangement of building about 40 forts along the border with Russia financially difficult and politically inadvisable, the Amir decided instead, at the suggestion of his geologist, Captain Griesbach, to choose two sites - one in the neighbourhood of Bala Murghah (Herat), the other at Dawlat Abad (Turkistan), for the construction of two fortified camps.<sup>75</sup> But ultimately the fort of Dehdadi (near Mazar), commanding the valley along which runs the main road from the Russian territory to Mazar and was one of the strongest in the country, seems to have taken their place.<sup>76</sup> As a supplement to this, the Amir decided to remove disloyal tribes from Turkistan and settle the frontier districts with non-Uzbeks,

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72 British Agent, with Amir in Barfak in Doab, 20 Nov 1888, PSLI, 55, 1229.

73 British Agent, Mazar, 24 Sept 1889, PSLI, 58, 538.

74 British Agent, Mazar, 3 Feb 1890, PSLI, 59, 840.

75 MM, Mar 1889, PSLI, 56, 1071.

76 Mahomed, S., 1, 271.

especially with Pashtuns. He removed many Uzbeks from Maimana,<sup>77</sup> and settled many families from the Safays of Tagao, the Shinwarays, the Mohmands, Nurzays, and Hazaras in Khamiab (on the left bank of the Oxus, to the north-west of Mazar), and Bala Murghab.<sup>78</sup>

In connection with punishing those who were implicated in the revolt, the Amir's wrath fell especially on the notables. After obtaining letters addressed to Ishaq by Turkistanis, and four copies of the Quran in which people had signed their allegiance, the Amir singled out elders and officers for the hardest punishment the Turkistanis had ever experienced. But people with no influence were pardoned.<sup>79</sup> The remainder of the troops of Ishaq, numbering over 6,000, were disbanded.<sup>80</sup> The

Kabuli officials of Ishaq were called upon to refund the pay they had received for the past seven years.<sup>81</sup> By late 1890, about 1,000 people had been executed,<sup>82</sup> and 5,400 arrested. These actions of the Amir prompted a letter from the Viceroy Lansdowne in which he reminded the Amir that such treatment was "abhorrent to civilisation".<sup>83</sup> But the Amir considered this reminder to be interference in his internal affairs, and in turn reminded the Viceroy that "Neither do the English like rebellions"<sup>84</sup> - a reference to the brutal suppression of the Indian rising

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77 MM, July 1894, PSLI, 75, 991.

78 HD, 7 Jan 1892, PSLI, 65, 651.

79 British Agent, 4 Jan 1889, PSLI, 56, 288.

80 PD, 6 Sept 1890, PSLI, 61, 231.

81 KD, 24 Sept 1890, PSLI, 61, 511.

82 Amir in darbar, PD, 6 Sept 1890, 61, 231.

83 Lansdowne to Amir, 27 Feb 1889, PSLI, 56, 721.

84 Fletcher, A., Afghanistan, Highway of Conquest, New York, 1965, 147.

in 1857.

Confiscation of property and realisation of revenue were the measures which might have compensated for part of the losses the Amir had suffered. But while fines and confiscation of property were imposed upon those who were in any way associated with the revolt, excessive revenues were collected from all those who were liable for the payment of ordinary taxes. All hitherto rent-free lands, including charitable lands, were made subject to the revenue payments.<sup>85</sup> Large balances of revenues were demanded from almost all districts of Turkistan and Badakhshan, except Maimana.<sup>86</sup> Since the revolt had originated in Turkistan, its landowners were further ordered to pay a year's revenue in advance.<sup>87</sup>

Even before his arrival in Turkistan, the Amir had determined to divide the province into smaller districts "...so that no one may aspire to the Amirship in future."<sup>88</sup> Appointment of governors with wide power over the provinces of Turkistan and Badakhshan was therefore avoided, and the various districts of the latter were entrusted to the "...faithful servants and slaves"<sup>89</sup> of the Amir.

The revolt of Sardar Ishaq was a combination of two tendencies, dynastic and social. Ishaq's original idea

85 MM, June 1889, PSLI, 57, 852.

86 MM, June 1889, PSLI, 57, 852.

87 British Agent, Mazar, 9 Aug 1889, PSLI, 57, 1435.

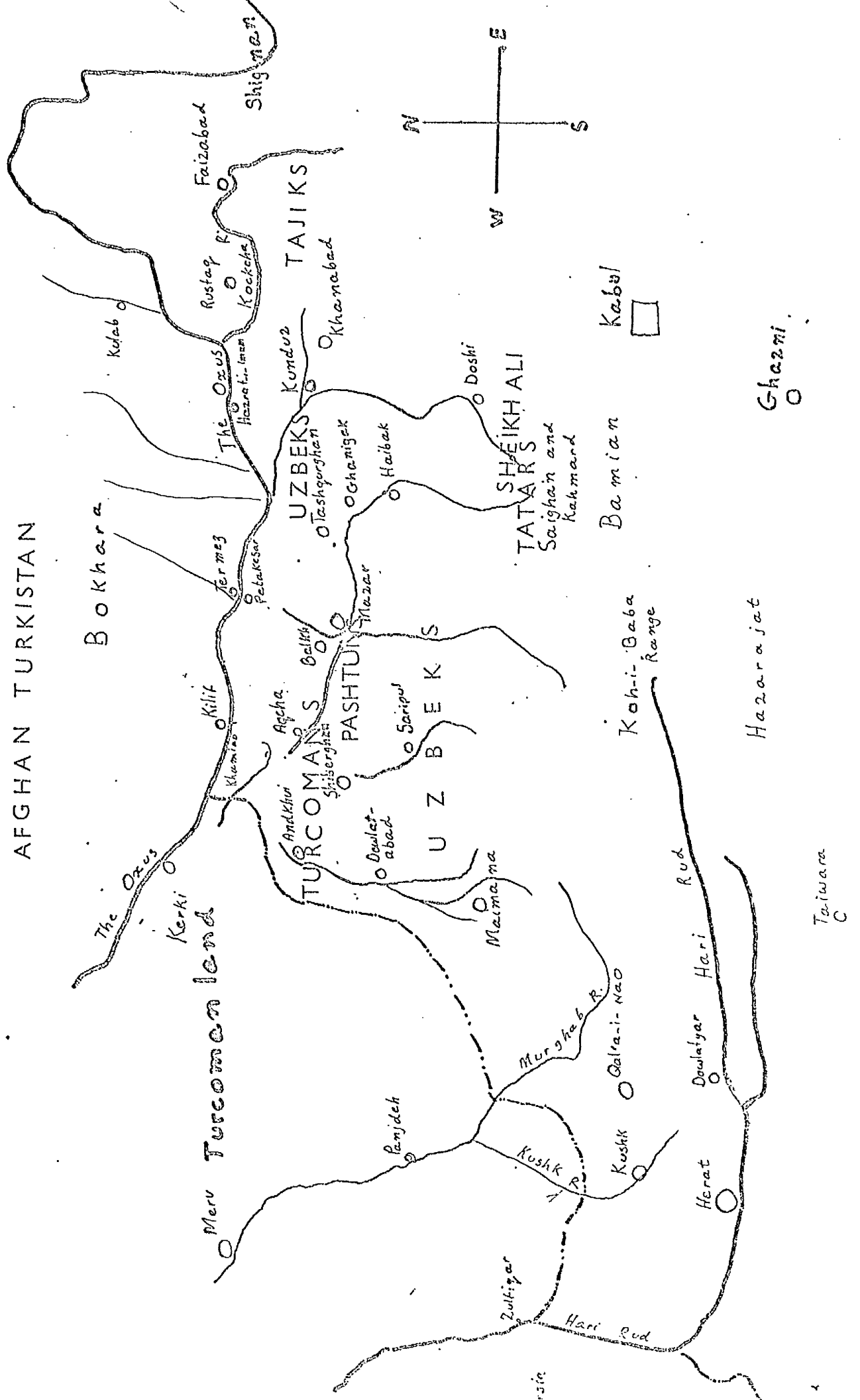
88 Amir to Captain Griesbach, British Agent with Amir in Dehara-i-Bed, 6 Nov 1888, PSLI, 55, 1129.

89 Amir's proclamation, Izah al-Bayan, PD, 2 Sept 1889, PSLI, 58, 390.

that he and his brothers would rule Turkistan (including Badakhshan), Herat and Kandahar in a loose confederation, under the hegemony of the Amir in Kabul clashed with the Amir's desire to rule the country autocratically. By 1884, when he was completely disappointed in his early hopes, Ishaq made strenuous efforts to get closer to the people, and to rule by consent rather than by force. The Amir's harsh and oppressive rule elsewhere also contributed heavily to the success of Ishaq in attaching the Turkistanis to himself. By the time the Amir finally decided to remove him from Turkistan, Ishaq was so popular with the Turkistanis that they volunteered to fight for him against the Amir. The oppressive rule of the Amir also brought Ishaq wider support, as was evidenced by the easy acceptance of his claim to the amirate by the army and people of Badakhshan, Kataghan, as well as by a portion of the Amir's army. Had Ishaq held out longer, he might have been supported by tribes throughout the country. But as Ishaq was a religious romantic and not a general, he lost his opportunity in the battle. His sudden flight left the Turkistanis and Badakhshanis at the mercy of the Amir, who reduced their power and influence, not only by systematic impoverishment but also by encouraging people from other areas to settle in Turkistan, Kataghan and Badakhshan. This forceful immigration remained a policy of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman and his successors, and has continued to the present day.

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# AFGHAN TURKISTAN



## Chapter 7

## The Pacification of the Hazaras

Of all the tribal opposition to the Amir's efforts to extend the authority of the central government, the opposition of the Hazaras was among the greatest. Having enjoyed a semi-independent status in the past, the Hazaras resisted the control the Amir was attempting to impose on them. Their opposition finally culminated in a full-scale war which lasted intermittently for three years, from 1891 to 1893. The position of the Hazaras was inherently a weak one. They were Shi'ite Muslims, and on bad terms with their Sunni neighbours. They had also made themselves unpopular, by assisting the British in the past. This enabled the Amir to rally popular support against them. Ultimately the Hazaras were overcome and subdued. They were also greatly impoverished, and Sunni tribes settled on some of their lands.

The Hazaras occupy mainly the central highlands of Afghanistan (westward from Kabul, Ghazni, Qalat, to the neighbourhood of Herat and Turkistan). This area contains high mountains and inaccessible valleys, with long severe winters. In this area there were also Tajiks and the so-called Sayyeds, as well as the Hazaras. In Bamian, the number of Tajiks and Sayyeds was particularly high. Outside this area, there are Hazaras in the districts of Badghis in the province of Herat, and of Doshi, Ghor, Khinjan and Andarab in the province of Badakhshan. As these Hazaras had been under the control of the Government

for many years, they will not be considered here.<sup>1</sup>

Like the Pashtuns, the Hazaras also had tribal organisation and were divided, according to Mohammad Husayn Jaghatu Hazara, into the Hazaras of Pas-i-Koh, the Behsud, Balkhabi, Deh Kondi, Jaghatu, Sheikh Ali, Jaghori, Deh Mardad, Mohammad Khwaja, Chardasta, and Deh Zangi Giro. In 1886, the Hazaras (probably also including the non-Hazara inhabitants of Hazarajat), were reported to number about 120,000 families.<sup>2</sup>

In the early nineteenth century each tribe had its own elder with the title of Sultan, who had absolute control over his own tribesmen. But the tribes had vendettas among themselves, and at no time had any solid or useful confederacy.<sup>3</sup> The Hazaras were generally sedentary, but as their land was poor and the winters very cold, a considerable number of them migrated in the winter to the cities of Kabul, Kandahar, Ghazni, Lahore and Quetta, where they earned their living in menial jobs. The bulk of the Hazaras adhered to the Shi'ite sect of Islam, with the great majority being "twelvers" but some being "seveners" - the latter locally known as the "Agha Khani" - the followers of the Agha Khan of Bombay. Only the Hazaras of Herat and those "towards the north and west of the country"<sup>4</sup> were of the Sunni sect.

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- 1 Bellew, H.W., The Races of Afghanistan, 113-117, Elphinstone, 2, 208-212, Schurmann, H.F., The Mongols of Afghanistan, Leiden, 1962, 96-99, 110-158. Wilber, D., Afghanistan, 45-47, GAK, 37-171, GAB, 109-112. GAT, 96-99, 269-273. GAH, 140-159. Mahomed, S., 1, 276-284.
  - 2 Report by Subadar Mohammad Husayn, son of Rajat 'Ali (elder of Jaghatu Hazara), member of the Afghan Boundary Commission, Subadar in 2nd Sikh Regiment, 1886, PSLI, 49, 415.
  - 3 Elphinstone, M., 2, 211.
  - 4 Bellew, Races of Afghanistan, 115.

The Hazaras were comparatively recent settlers, but at what period they settled in the Hazarajat is not certain. The Hazaras seem to have no traditions about their settlement. In the late nineteenth century, they did not even seem to have a common appellation. They were known to each other by the name of the tribes to which they belonged. The word Hazara, meaning "thousand" in Persian, was given to them by their neighbours. There is a generally held view that the Hazaras are the descendants of the ten military colonies of a thousand each planted by Ghengiz Khan (1206 - 1227),<sup>5</sup> although when Ghengiz Khan returned to Mongolia after his invasion of the region he left no troops behind him. According to Wilber, the Hazaras are the descendants of the army of Chaghatai (1227 - 1241), a son of Ghengiz Khan, and were sent on expeditions to India during the last part of the thirteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Schurmann maintains that the Hazaras are a mixed population formed by a fusion of an aboriginal Iranian mountain people with invaders of Mongol affinities.<sup>7</sup> Be it as it may, the Hazaras are the third largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, with distinct Mongol features and Persian culture, as is evidenced by their Shi'ite faith and Persian language.

The Amir's attitude in the eighties was not the same towards all the Hazaras. Neither did the Hazaras adopt

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5 Bellow, 114.

6 Wilber, 46.

7 Schurmann, 111.



one policy towards the Amir. The Hazaras of Jaghori (5,400 families in 1886) and Jaghatu (8,470 families), occupying an area to the north-west of Muqur, opposed the Amir when he marched against Ayub in 1881, because they were associated with the family of the late Amir Sher 'Ali. Their opposition, however, proved ineffective, and the Amir was able to kill two elders of the Jaghori who were the sons of Sardar Sher 'Ali Hazara. In 1884, the Amir was able to appoint a hakim over them, thus exacting revenue in cash and kind.<sup>8</sup> But on the eve of the Ghilzay rising, the Hazaras rose, killing their hakim. Their rising was caused ostensibly by a demand by the hakim for a daughter of a Hazara elder. But in fact, the Hazaras were disturbed over the killing of the elders and the imposition of heavy revenue.

After the apparent failure of a conciliatory mission to the Jaghori Hazaras,<sup>9</sup> the Amir addressed them again to the effect that "I am your friend. Follow the right road, for the English, who are not my friends, are coming against me."<sup>10</sup> Apparently, the Amir wished to dissuade the Jaghori Hazaras from supporting the Ghilzays, because there was no question of any British advance on Afghanistan. In fact, such a reference to the British worked against the Amir. The Jaghori Hazaras were on good terms with the British, for whose support during the second Anglo-Afghan war,<sup>11</sup> their elders<sup>12</sup> had been rewarded with

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8 Mohammad Husayn, 1886, PSLI, 49, 415.

9 KD, 5 Nov 1886, PSLI, 48, 1177.

10 KD, 18 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1137.

11 Griffin to Stewart, 8 May 1880, PSLI, 25, 1258.

12 Mohammad Husayn, 1886, PSLI, 49, 415.

70,000 rupees<sup>13</sup> and gold medals by the British. This explains why the Jaghori Hazaras replied to the Amir that they were willing to join the British if and when they came and that they would never submit to him because he was an infidel and ruining the Muslims.<sup>14</sup>

Twice the Amir sent other Hazara tribal levies against them, but the Jaghoris repulsed them.<sup>15</sup> In the summer of 1888, the revolt of the Jaghoris seemed to have spread far beyond their confines among other Hazaras. But as the rising was not general, it did not constitute a threat to the Amir. When a danger to the Amir's authority loomed on the horizon of Turkistan, the Jaghoris were left in their rebellious state.

The only Hazaras who were reduced in the eighties were the Sheikh Ali Hazaras, who numbered about 3,090 families in 1886 and occupied the area to the north-west of Bamian in the province of Turkistan. Although they had first been pacified during the reign of Amir Sher 'Ali, after his death they had renewed their old practice of plundering caravans on the Kabul-Turkistan road which ran through their country. But during the first years of 'Abd al-Rahman's reign, three successive expeditions were sent against them in 1881,<sup>16</sup> in 1882<sup>17</sup> and in 1883.<sup>18</sup>

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13 KD, 28 Dec 1886, PSLI, 49, 271.

14 KD, 18 Mar 1887, PSLI, 49, 1137.

15 PD, 14 Sept 1887, PSLI, 51, 544.

16 PD, 4 Mar 1881, PSLI, 27, 1615.

17 AB, Kabul Correspondent, 26 Jan 1882, PSLI, 31, 729.

18 British Agent with Amir in Jalalabad, 8 May 1883, PSLI, 37, 52.

A yet more drastic step against them was taken in 1890, when they were removed en masse from their land following their support of Ishaq in 1888.<sup>19</sup>

With other Hazara tribes, the Amir's policy of peaceful penetration was successful. This penetration was accomplished by methods such as the granting of allowances and the posts of hakim to some leading Hazaras of Behsud and Deh Zangi. By 1886 all Hazara tribes paid land revenue and taxes on cattle, and even marriage fees. But the revenue was not levied in a uniform manner. The revenue was paid in cash as well as in kind, and the latter included ghee, animal skins, sack, rope and barak (woollen material). Whereas some tribes such as the Behsud (13,020 families), Deh Mardad (4,370 families), and Sheikh Ali paid  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{10}$  of the produce of their lands, other tribes such as the Mohammad Khwaja (3,330 families), Balkhabi (10,400 families), Deh Zangi and Deh Kondi (11,010 families) paid a fixed amount either on the land or per family. But the rate of revenue on all tribes was increased in various degrees during this period of the Amir's reign. The only exception was the Hazaras of Pas-i-Koh (beyond the mountain), who mainly occupied Uruzgan (a region to the north-west of Qalat). They were the largest of the tribes (44,000 families), and so far had successfully defied all attempts to obtain their submission.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See p. 199.

<sup>20</sup> Mohammad Husayn, 1886, PSLI, 49, 415.

In 1890 the removal of the Sheikh Ali Hazaras was followed by the appointment of Sardar 'Abd al-Qudus, who had been under surveillance in Kabul since 1882 - as Governor of Bamian. As the Sardar had been given wide powers and a large body of troops, it indicated the Amir's determination to bring the whole of the Hazaras under effective control. But at first, peaceful methods were employed. A deputation of about 40 elders was sent to the Hazaras, presumably to the Hazaras of Uruzgan, to persuade them to submit to the authority of the Amir.<sup>21</sup> The Hazaras were at first not convinced,<sup>22</sup> but later, when the Amir sent his personal attendant (peshkhidmat), Sardar Mohammad 'Azim Khan (an influential elder of the Deh Kondi Hazaras), and offered them terms in return for their submission, the Uruzgan Hazaras accepted the terms. According to the Hazaras, they were to accept the Amir's authority but to keep their internal autonomy, and pay no revenue for several years to come.<sup>23</sup> Subsequent events seem to show that the Hazaras agreed to accept a governor of the Amir. In the spring of 1891, 'Abd al-Qudus, accompanied by a force of 10,000 men made, according to the Amir, an opposed but, according to the Hazaras, unopposed, entry. Soon, on instructions from the Amir, the army began to disarm the Hazaras and to collect revenue from them. The Palo Hazaras, a subsection of the Sultan Mohammad clan of Uruzgan, rose, killing some soldiers

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21 British Agent with Amir in Mazar, 18 July 1890, PSLI, 60, 1237.

22 PD, 28 Dec 1890, PSLI, 62, 373.

23 Statement by Mir Mohammad Husayn Beg. Elder of the Sultan Mohammad clan in Uruzgan, led the Sultan Mohammad Hazaras in war against Amir's forces. 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 547.

and capturing some military supplies. Soon the whole of the powerful Sultan Mohammad clan (12,000 families) rose under Mir Husayn Beg and defeated the Amir's troops, who took refuge in the fortresses.<sup>24</sup> A detachment of about 4,000 men of the troops had previously proceeded to Gizao (to the north of Uruzgan) under Qudus, and this naturally made the victory of the Hazaras a little easier.

The disaster was a complete surprise to the Amir. Obviously the first step to be taken was to relieve the besieged troops. A reinforcement, according to Mir Husayn Beg of about "10,000" men under one Faiz Mohammad, was despatched, but this force too, after some engagements, was compelled to take refuge with the already besieged army. The combined forces were besieged for a month, after which they surrendered unconditionally. The Hazaras took possession of the forts, massacring a great number of troops, and hunting the rest who fled to Tirin (a district to the south of Uruzgan).<sup>25</sup> Other reports, however, speak of the total annihilation of the troops stationed at Uruzgan.<sup>26</sup> By now the rising had become general and joined by all the tribes, including the Deh Kondi, Deh Zangi, Daya, Folad, Behsud, Jaghori and Gizao.<sup>27</sup>

The rising made a large scale expedition against the

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24 Mir Husayn Beg, 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 548.

25 Mir Husayn Beg, 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 548.

26 KD, 21-24 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 1104.

27 Mir Husayn Beg, 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 548.

Hazaras necessary. The total number given of tribal levies of from 30,000 to 40,000,<sup>28</sup> and of tribal levies and regulars of about 100,000,<sup>29</sup> may be debatable, but it was certainly true that the Amir introduced men into the Hazarajat on a scale he had never been able to do before. With the exception of the Andars and Tarakays who were, at one stage, reported to have rebelled, tribal levies from all sides were despatched. Even some sections of the Hazara tribes such as the Deh Kondi, Behsud and Jaghori, who had not yet risen, supplied the Amir with about 2,000 levies. But these Hazaras were obviously not trusted. They were made to fight in front of the troops; half of them were slain and the other half deserted.<sup>30</sup>

Two factors made the despatch of this large force possible. Because the Hazaras were Shi'ite Muslims and therefore in perpetual enmity with their Sunni neighbours, the Amir obtained a fetwa from the mullas easily. For the first time, the Khan-i-Mulla of Kabul, in consultation with other mullas, declared a religious war against the Hazaras. The issue of such a fetwa had been facilitated by the seizure of a book from some Hazaras in which the first three Caliphs of Islam had allegedly been abused by the Hazaras.<sup>31</sup> In 600 proclamations which the Amir distributed throughout the country, the Hazaras and all the Shi'as were declared to be "kafirs".<sup>32</sup> The task of

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28 Mahomed, S., 1, 283.

29 Amir to Durrani of Kandahar, 2 July 1892, PSLI, 66, 1721.

30 KD, 21-24 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 1104.

31 KD, 21-24 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 1102.

32 KD, 22-24 June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1511.

inciting the Sunnis was entrusted to the Sunni mullas who, in their religious preachings, spared no efforts in condemning the Hazaras to death. In the past, the Hazaras and their neighbours used to carry off girls and cattle from each other.<sup>33</sup> The Amir now officially declared that "...after Urzagan [Sic] is captured, all Hazaras are to be put to the sword, their wives, children and property being distributed as booty among the Afghans."<sup>34</sup> The result was that tribal elders volunteered their service against the Hazaras. Only the tribal levy of the eastern province could not be sent, because their service was needed at Asmar under Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Charkhi.

For the effective use of tribal levies, efforts were concentrated on their organisation and discipline. The levies of the Kabul province were led by their maliks (as leaders of ten men), pinjabashis (leaders of 50), sinjbashi [sadhashis?] (leaders of 100), hazarbashis (leaders of 1,000). These leaders were to operate under the general leadership of the military commanders or governors of the same province. The maliks were asked to provide their men with some ammunition, supplies and donkeys for transport for which the Amir would pay.<sup>35</sup> This may have been a model for the organisation of the levies of all the provinces, but information about them is not available. To keep up the spirit of war, stipendiary

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33 Lady Hamilton, A Vizier's Daughter, A Tale of the Hazara War, London, 1900, 23-

34 Amir's firman, Kand. D., 28 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 1259.

35 KD, 2-5 June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1731.

mullas were ordered to accompany the tribal levies, and preach ghaza to them.<sup>36</sup> Any member of the tribal levies who wished to desert was threatened with the confiscation of his house.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, soldiers and officers who were accused of being disloyal were brutally punished. A number of such officers died after being mutilated, and their bodies were burnt in the Hindu Suzan<sup>38</sup> - a place in Kabul where the Hindus burn the bodies of their dead in accordance with their custom.

But the despatch of so large a force, and the consequent dislocation of the economy, had their effects upon the people, as a result of which the initial enthusiasm for war evaporated, especially when the Hazaras put up tremendous resistance. In Kandahar, the price of grain rose quickly, because of the large quantity of grain being sent to the Hazarajat. Free purchase of grain was forbidden there. Grain was rationed, and its sale made subject to obtaining a permit (parwana) from the authorities.<sup>39</sup> In Kabul, public disorder was feared. Rich people hid their money and valuables.<sup>40</sup> In Turkistan popular distress caused by the war was further aggravated by the outbreak of cholera in epidemic form.<sup>41</sup> But the Amir did not relax his rule, and to pay for the whole expensive operation he tried to obtain money "...from any source and by any means."<sup>42</sup>

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36 KD, 23-26 July, 1892, PSLI, 67, 316.  
 37 KD, 23-26 July 1892, PSLI, 67, 316.  
 38 KD, 4-7 ..... 1892, PSLI, 66, 1291.  
 39 MM, Oct 1892, PSLI, 68, 476.  
 40 KD, 6-9 Aug 1892, 67, 461.  
 41 MM, Aug 1892, 67, 698.  
 42 KD, 19-21 Oct 1892, PSLI, 68, 455.



Nevertheless, there was no fear of a major rising against the Amir.<sup>43</sup> The temptation of booty was so great that even the refractory Andars and Tarakays joined the march. Indeed, the Ghilzays were reported to show more zeal than the Durranis in fighting the Hazaras.<sup>44</sup>

Fighting in the Hazarajat confronted the Amir with many problems of which the main one was the despatch of supplies. In general, the Amir was not short of supplies and ammunition. The problem, however, was their safe despatch to the forces in the field. Often, provisions and ammunition with transport animals (camels, donkeys and ponies) were plundered by the Hazaras.<sup>45</sup> As a result, towards the end of the summer supplies became so scarce in the camp of Qudus that his soldiers were compelled to live on parched wheat.<sup>46</sup> Another difficulty was the outbreak of cholera among the troops at the time of their march in May,<sup>47</sup> and its persistence till September. In some camps, this demoralised the troops, as a result of which a combined attack had to be deferred to a later date.<sup>48</sup>

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- 43 Three isolated disturbances which were the outcome of oppressive rule took place, however, during the Hazara rising. In early 1892, the Sunni Hazaras of Herat revolted. Russian intrigue may have played a part in this rising, (MM, May 1892, PSLI, 66, 877). The Maimana tribal levies attacked the Amir's garrison at Maimana, (MM, July 1892, PSLI, 67, 275). Also the Firozkohis of the Herat Province made disturbances. But all these disturbances were suppressed easily.
- 44 Note by Major J. Brown (Governor-General's Agent, Baluchistan), Kand. D., 18 June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1517.
- 45 KD, 8-10 June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1296.
- 46 Sardar Qudus to Divan Sadnan (Sarishta Dar of Kandahar), Kand. D., 13 Aug 1892, PSLI, 67, 765.
- 47 KD, 21-24 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 1106.
- 48 MM, Sept 1892, PSLI, 68,

Unquestionably, the Amir's army had superior arms to the knives, daggers, flint-lock guns, muskets and about 300 rifles of the Hazaras, but at that time the Government of India imposed an embargo on the supply of arms to the Amir. Apparently the Government of India did not mean to assist the Hazaras against the Amir, but the embargo actually proved advantageous to the Hazaras. The Amir was told that "...until the correspondence now proceeding between him and the Government of India regarding....the frontier [i.e. the Durand Frontier] has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, neither the Hotchkiss guns nor any munition of war [which the Amir had purchased in England] can be allowed to pass the frontier."<sup>49</sup> Workshops in Kabul which the Amir had set up for the manufacture of munitions in 1887 were therefore ordered to work for twenty-four hours a day.<sup>50</sup> In 1891, these workshops produced, among other things, 10 breech-loading rifles and one artillery gun a day.<sup>51</sup>

Between the annihilation of the combined forces in the early spring of 1892 and August, the rising had become general. With the exception of those Hazaras who lived close to Qalat and on the fringes of the Hazarajat, all other Hazaras had joined the rising by August. Hazara labourers who used to work in the main cities, including those who worked in India, returned to Uruzgan. The last

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49 MM, Aug 1892, PSLI, 67, 700.

50 MM, Aug 1892, PSLI, 67, 689.

51 PD, 8 Oct 1891, PSLI, 64, 756.

main tribes to join the rising were the Behsud and Deh Zangi. Because of the assistance the Deh Zangi Hazaras had earlier given to Qudus in fighting the Uruzgan Hazaras, their elders Mir Ibrahim Beg, Na'im Beg, Mir Mohammad Husayn Beg and Ghulam Shah Beg were given valuable presents in Paghman by the Amir, and sent back to the Hazarajat to influence the Hazaras to refrain from fighting.<sup>52</sup> But in the Hazarajat, they were compelled to join the rising.<sup>53</sup> Never in the past had the Hazaras been so united among themselves as they now were against the Amir. In an assembly where the Hazaras were reported to have arrived like "swarms of bees", Timus Shah, a sayyed descendant of Imam Musa Raza, was elected as their Khalifa for the purpose of religious war against the Amir.<sup>54</sup> But those who led the Hazaras in the fighting were Sardar Mohammad 'Azim Khan Hazara and a chief known as Qazi 'Askar. In the overdramatised version of the Hazara war written by Lady Hamilton, the Hazaras detested the "unholy alliance"<sup>55</sup> between the Amir and the British. The Hazaras declared "We will fight for one true God, and his prophet, and for Ali against these Kafirs and allies of Kafirs".<sup>56</sup> There is ample evidence to prove that the Hazaras were not against the British, but it was certainly true that they gave their struggle a religious cloak.

While fighting was going on, peace appeals were

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52 KD, 16-19 July 1892, PSLI, 67, 192.  
 53 KD, 30 July-2 Aug 1892, PSLI, 67, 417.  
 54 KD, 10 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 606.  
 55 Lady Hamilton, 31.  
 56 Lady Hamilton, 31.

occasionally made but, except for a short interval, they came to nothing. When the Hazaras rejected an earlier appeal made by the Amir for their submission in return for good treatment and pardon, the Amir became very conciliatory. He addressed them as his children and said that he did not want bloodshed between Muslims. Alternatively the Amir proposed a 50-day truce to which the Hazaras agreed.<sup>57</sup> Whether the truce was observed for the whole period is doubtful, but even a short truce may have helped the tribal levies and the Hazaras in cutting their harvests. When the Hazaras had the upper hand, they did not listen to any proposals which Sardar 'Abd Allah, governor of Kandahar, made to them.<sup>58</sup> The peace overtures were, in fact, merely a device for gaining time. The Amir never offered them a serious bargain. It is not surprising that when the Uruzgan Hazaras, justifying their rising in self-defence, asked for the Amir's "justice and magnanimity," the Amir demanded that the Hazaras should either kill the ring-leaders or expel them from their land before he could extend them pardon.<sup>59</sup> Of course such a proposal could not be acceptable to the Hazaras. They were only willing to accept such terms which would involve the withdrawal of the troops from their land,<sup>60</sup> but this was not acceptable to the Amir,<sup>61</sup> who determined to subdue the Hazaras. Meanwhile, the simple-minded Hazaras, in view of their co-operation with the British in the past,

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57 KD, 8-10 June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1296.

58 Kand. D., 16 July 1892, PSLI, 67, 323.

59 Herat Governor in Durbar, HD, 6 Aug 1892, PSLI, 67, 528.

60 MM, Sept 1892, PSLI, 68,

61 PD, 10 Oct 1892, PSLI, 68, 348.

were led "to believe that we [the British] would help them....."<sup>62</sup> in their struggle with the Amir. They therefore asked for "...the help of the British Government to prevent the Hazara tribe from being crushed" and in return offered their co-operation with the British "in every way."<sup>63</sup> But their request was left unanswered.

Perhaps the most difficult problem of the Hazara war is to describe military operations. An entirely accurate version of them seems impossible to give. The difficulty arises from the lack of knowledge of the Hazarajat and of the Hazaras at the time of the operations and of the control over the movements of newswriters. The information collected by the British News Agents in Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and by the Commissioner of Peshawar is therefore confused and contradictory. The clearest account seems to be that of Mir Husayn Beg, the elder of the Sultan Mohammad tribe of Uruzgan. Mir Husayn Beg led his tribe throughout the war against the Amir's troops until he was treacherously captured by Sardar 'Abd Allah Khan, but escaped to India in disguise. As is understandable, he speaks mainly of the gallantry, successes of the Hazaras and the defeats and losses they inflicted on the Amir's troops.

The plan of advance on the Hazarajat was made by the Amir himself. In accordance with this plan, the

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62 Major J. Brown to Secretary to Government of India, 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 547.

63 MM, Sept 1892, PSLI, 68,

Hazarajat was attacked from the sides of Turkistan, Kabul, Ghazni, Herat and Kandahar. On the approach of these forces at Daya, and Folad under Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Orakzay, Sardar Qudus, Colonel Ferhad Khan, and 'Ata Mohammad Khan, the Hazaras of Folad, Daya, Deh Zangi, Deh Kondi, Jaghori, Kaimsan, and others, except those of the Uruzgan, surrendered. About 9,000 of the Uruzgan Hazaras marched to Daya to meet the forces there. While they were engaged in battle at Daya, a detachment of the Amir's cavalry was despatched to Folad. This detachment cut off all communications between the fighting Hazaras and the Hazaras in Uruzgan. The fighting Hazaras then moved on to Folad where, in the severest battle that followed, the casualties on the side of the Amir's army was reported to be about 2,000. No figure on the Hazara side was reported, although Mir Husayn Beg admits that the Hazaras were so pressed that they had no alternative but to retreat to Uruzgan.

In Uruzgan, the Hazaras then moved their families to remote areas. The battle with the Amir's forces continued for five days.<sup>64</sup> Mir Husayn Beg does not mention the outcome of these battles, but reports from other sources which might refer to these battles speak of the great losses of the Hazaras. In the words of the Amir "...51 skirmishes took place before the country [Uruzgan?] was retaken."<sup>65</sup> According to the Amir, the

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64 Mir Husayn Beg, 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 548.

65 Amir in darbar, KD, 21-23 Sept 1892, PSLI, 68, 105.

Hazaras, after suffering considerable losses, were eventually reduced by force.<sup>66</sup> Mir Husayn Beg maintains that the final victory was gained by treachery. The fact was that the Hazaras were outnumbered by the troops and the tribal levies and they suffered a series of setbacks from about July onwards as was evidenced by the large number of their prisoners continually being sent on to Kabul. Seeing that their position was desperate, the Hazaras accepted the offer of peace although, in fact, it was military power which forced them to do so. But with the approach of the winter, further military operations were suspended. Since there were no adequate quarters in the Hazarajat, most of the troops and tribal levies were withdrawn by November. Only General Sher Mohammad Khan, with a portion of the troops, remained in Uruzgan.

The apparently quiet winter was followed by a stormy spring, when some, if not all, the Hazaras resumed fighting. This time the Hazaras of the Koh-i-Baba area, where no garrison had been left, rose first. Although the Amir minimised the seriousness of this rising, yet it was quite clear that the Hazarajat was difficult to pacify unless its leading men were crushed and a large force permanently stationed there. Since the disturbed area this time was in the northern Hazarajat, the Amir ordered the speedy despatch of regular troops and tribal

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66 Mir Husayn Beg, 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 548.

levies from Kabul, Tagao, Logar, Maimana, Herat and Turkistan. As before, the Turkistan forces were led by Sipah Salar Orakzay, but the Kabul forces were led by General Amir Mohammad Khan of Tagao. Soon, the initial success of the Hazaras in Deh Zangi in April was followed by a series of defeats in the Yakawlang to the west of Bamian by the Sipah Salar and in the Deh Zangi by General Amir Mohammad Khan. Perhaps the last decisive battle was won by the General over the Hazara forces led by Ghulam Husayn, son of Mir Mohammad Amin of the Behsud, on the bank of the Helmand river between Deh Zangi and Behsud, where the Hazaras were routed leaving about 250 dead behind. Although towards the end of June 1893 the General claimed that all the Hazaras had submitted,<sup>67</sup> the Hazaras were still far from being crushed. However, because of their weakness, the Hazaras were unable to offer battles in the open. Instead they resorted to guerrilla tactics and surprise attacks at night until they were finally subdued in September 1893.<sup>68</sup>

Military conquest was followed by the usual practice of demolishing fortresses and removing arms.<sup>69</sup> For administrative purposes, the Amir had already appointed hakims in the various districts of the Hazarajat in 1891.<sup>70</sup>

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67 General Amir Mohammad to Amir, KD, 28-30 June 1893, PSLI, 70, 1811.

68 MM, Sept 1893, PSLI, 72, 257.

69 Reportedly 13,000 horses, 16,000 rifles [flint-locks?] (KD, 16-19 Sept 1893, PSLI, 72, 374), 25,000 rifles [flint-locks or muskets] (Sardar Qudus to British Agent, KD, 4-7 Mar 1893, PSLI, 69, 1443) were brought to Kabul.

70 KD, 12-14 Oct 1892, PSLI, 68, 417.



After the pacification of the Hazaras, he appointed Qazis and muftis as well.<sup>71</sup> For the maintenance of law and order, nine Hazara elders led by Sulaiman, son of Dost Mohammad, entered into an "agreement" with the Amir, undertaking to hand over wicked Hazaras to the hakims as well as arms and weapons which may be found in the possession of the Hazaras.<sup>72</sup> Whether increased revenue was assessed is doubtful. The earlier assessment was in line with the assessment in the rest of the country. But Uruzgan had been almost desolated and its colonisation by Pashtuns was stressed. The Amir asked the Durrani and Ahmadzay Ghilzays to send 12,000<sup>73</sup> and 4,000 families<sup>74</sup> respectively to Uruzgan for permanent settlement there. Later, the Hazaras of Malistan, Deh Zangi, Ajristan and Uruzgan left their homes en masse to emigrate to Meshed and Quetta because of their extreme poverty. The Amir then announced that anyone wishing to settle in their places would be welcomed by being exempted from revenue for the first year, and allowed to pay at a lower rate in the future.<sup>75</sup>

The prisoners of war on both sides were treated brutally. The treatment of the Hazara prisoners is recorded in detail. The total number of these prisoners who arrived at Kabul between July 1892 and June 1894 and recorded by the British Agent was 8,755. Judging from

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71 KD, 3-5 Jan 1894, PSLI, 73, 341.

72 KD, 3 July 1895, PSLI, 81, No. 25 (5).

73 MM, Nov 1892, PSLI, 68, 828.

74 Kand. D., 6 Jan 1893, PSLI, 69, 627.

75 KD, 2 June 1895, PSLI, 80, No. 21.

the subsequent reports in Kabul, the actual number may have been higher. The Amir chose 50 beautiful girls and women to work in his household as suratis (concubines). He also selected young sons of the mirs of the Hazaras and made them his ghulam bachas (page boys). Sardar Qudus was reported to have married 21 wives, presumably concubines, from the Hazaras.<sup>76</sup> The rest of the Amir's high officials chose Hazaras from among the prisoners, to serve them or to offer to friends as presents.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, all leaders of the tribal levies had their share of the Hazara prisoners. In Kandahar, the Amir's soldiers seized all those Hazaras who had submitted, claiming that they were their booty.<sup>78</sup> Other prisoners were sold by auction. The price fixed for a young man or woman was 100 rupees, and for a person of 12 years of age, 50 rupees, and for one under 12 years of age 30 rupees.<sup>79</sup> The auctions continued till June 1894, but at a reduced price because the Hazara slaves were so plentiful that there were no buyers to be found for them.<sup>80</sup>

Mirs and elderly Hazaras were killed in many ways. Between November 1893 and February 1894, over 150 prisoners were either made targets and shot dead by soldiers, or blown from guns. Others were blinded and afterwards put to death. Some were hanged and others died in the jails.<sup>81</sup>

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76 KD, 11 Apr 1893, PSLI, 70, 341.

77 Lady Hamilton, 239.

78 Kand. D., 6 Jan 1893, PSLI, 69, 627.

79 KD, 13-15 July 1892, PSLI, 67, 187.

80 Lady Hamilton, 236.

81 Bi-MM, Nov-Dec 1893, PSLI, 73, 161.

Still, in the middle of 1894, there were about 5,000 left in jails. Because they were fed by the Government, the prisoners were a financial burden. The Amir, therefore, instructed the Kabul Kotwal to "Take out of the jail 15 men every night, putting halters on their necks in the same manner as one would treat dogs, and put them to death so that we may get rid of them. Sell their wives and children in the bazaar by public auction."<sup>82</sup> Apparently there were still many left and it was reported that in April 1895 over 1,000 of them were released and others were to be released later.<sup>83</sup>

The Amir's reason for subjugating the Uruzgan Hazaras and others was their refusal to accept his sovereignty,<sup>84</sup> In particular, they persisted in robbing caravans, passing through or near their territory. They also constituted a potential source of disloyalty to the state, because of their readiness to join foreigners against "Afghanistan".<sup>85</sup> They were therefore considered to be a standing menace to the internal security and existence of Afghanistan. In the Amir's view with "...the extension of the British and Russian territory on either side of Afghanistan,"<sup>86</sup> the pacification of the Hazaras was a necessity at that time. That because of the feud with the Sunnis, the Hazaras were a factor in disturbing the internal peace was no

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82 Amir to Mohammad Husayn (Kabul Kotwal), KD, 6-8 June 1894, PSLI, 75, 132.

83 KD, 23 Apr 1895, PSLI, 79, No. 15.

84 Mahomed, S., 1, 279.

85 Mahomed, S., 1, 276.

86 Amir's firman, Kand. D., 10 Aug 1891, PSLI, 63, 1294.

doubt true, but as the Hazarajat was surrounded on all sides by the Amir's territory, it was impossible for any foreign power to annex it without invading Afghanistan. The Amir spread this view of the Hazarajat being a danger to Afghanistan to justify his own invasion of it. The participants were prompted by the promised loot of the Hazaras, their property and their land. The Hazara war had all the elements of a foreign war. It was for these reasons that for the first time all the Sunni population rallied to the Amir. It increased his power and prestige, and infused a sense of unity among his subjects.

All Hazaras, except the Hazaras in Uruzgan, had accepted the Amir's rule, yet the rising happened. There were, in fact, three risings, or three stages of a major rising, each caused by apparently different factors. It would be proper to look for these causes separately. Throughout the eighties, incidents among the Hazaras were isolated in nature. Disturbances among the Sheikh Ali and the Jaghoris were caused by entirely different factors. Among the rest of the Hazaras except the Uruzgan Hazaras, the Amir's attempts at peaceful penetration were successful. He even made use of elders of Behsud and Deh Zangi tribes in winning over the other tribes. They paid his revenue and taxes. What, however, is not known is the method of tax collection, whether it was direct through government tax collectors, or indirect, as before, through Hazara elders. Departure from the conventional method of tax collection was likely to cause disturbances, especially among the Deh Zangi Hazaras whose mirs (elders of clans) alone owned the arable land. But there is no report of

any disturbance among them in the eighties. Even the Hazaras in Uruzgan surrendered on terms.

It was after the peaceful invasion of Uruzgan that the rising became general and spread with remarkable speed throughout the whole of the Hazarajat in the summer of 1892. According to the Amir, it was the mujtahids of the Hazaras who were at the bottom of the rising. They gave out that the Amir intended to interfere with their Shi'ite faith by having sent Sunni Qazis to the Hazarajat, who preached Islam and administered justice according to the Sunni Mohammadan law.<sup>87</sup> The Amir officially rejected the view that the rising was caused by the misconduct of his soldiers, but in a private darbar he admitted it to be so.<sup>88</sup> The Amir's view is further weakened by the apparent fact that, before 1892, he had not appointed Qazis in Uruzgan. In all probability, the Amir spread this view to mobilise religious opinion against the Hazaras.

The rising, in fact, was caused by the attempt by the soldiery to disarm the Hazaras, collect revenue, and take their women. In the long winter of Uruzgan, the troops had no separate quarters for themselves. Of the 10,000 troops, some made 11 Qal'as (fortified villages) for themselves alone<sup>89</sup> and turned away the inhabitants,

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87 Amir to British Agent, KD, 29 June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1676.

88 Amir to military officers in a private darbar, KD, 8-10 June 1892, PSLI, 66, 1296.

89 Mir Husayn Beg, 11 Apr 1894, PSLI, 74, 547.

while others scattered in different Qal'as and lived with the Hazaras. Some soldiers married Hazara women, while others raped women and girls whom they found attractive.<sup>90</sup>

When told that the Hazaras rose because Sherin Jan, a daughter of a Mir, was forcibly sent for by an officer,<sup>91</sup> the Amir cited the Persian saying, "In sherini aez talkhi bud!" - "This bitterness [rising] was because of the sweetness", referring to Sherin which means "sweet".<sup>92</sup>

Beside insulting their women, the soldiery pressed the Hazaras hard for supplies. What the Hazaras resented most was the survey of their lands for assessment of revenue, and the attempts to disarm them. These measures were in violation of the agreement concluded with the Hazaras. In 1893, an additional factor was the fetwa of the mujtahids of Meshed who declared "...a religious war against Afghan Sunnis to be lawful and worthy of the martyr's reward."<sup>93</sup>

The persecution of the Shi'ite population of Afghanistan which started with the rising and accelerated with the fetwa of the Meshed mujtahids, had far-reaching consequences. Its echoes reached Persia, England and India, and caused a futile correspondence on the subject.

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90 Two Hazaras to British Agent, KD, 21-24 May 1892, PSLI, 66, 1103.

91 Brigadier 'Abd al-Subhan to Amir, KD, 28-30 Sept 1892, PSLI, 68, 200.

92 Lady Hamilton's book is a dramatisation of the story of this girl, but she gives her name as Gul Begum, whom she makes a daughter of Ghulam Husayn, Chief Adviser or "Vizier" to a Mir, presumably of Uruzgan. Sherin Jan was a daughter of this Mir, but according to Brigadier 'Abd al-Subhan, her father was either Qazi Mir 'Askar or Mohammed Azim, the two leading figures of the rising.

93 MM, Apr 1893, PSLI, 70, 395.

Among the Shi'ite population of Afghanistan there were some 50,000 Turcomans and Persians.<sup>94</sup> They were collectively known as the Qizilbashes and consisted of Juanshirs, Kurds, Rikas, Afshar, Bakhtiaris, Shah Sewans, Talishes, Bayats, and others. The Qizilbashes lived in the cities of Kabul (also in its suburbs), Kandahar, Herat and Mazar. In the city of Kabul, the Qizilbashes were the most powerful and influential body in the early part of the nineteenth century. They occupied one half of the city and the fortified quarter of Chandawal was exclusively theirs. They were encouraged initially to live in Afghanistan by Nadir Shah Afshar, and were actually settled there by Ahmad Shah under whom and his successors they formed the principal portion of the Ghulam Khanas (the household troops).<sup>95</sup> They also had influence with the Barakzay rulers, because they held mainly clerical posts with the Government. But with 'Abd al-Rahman they lost favour, firstly because of their support of the British in the Anglo-Afghan wars, and secondly for their support of the late Amir Sher 'Ali.

Because of a common faith, language and feud with the Sunnis, the Qizilbashes were closely connected with the Hazaras. They were both in contact with the Shi'ite population of Persia, especially with those in Meshed

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94 IGA, 25. Other estimates of numbers of Qizilbashes are: 100,000 (MRA, 111), 150,000 (MacGregor, 32). Both estimates seem very high for the Qizilbashes.

95 Masson, C., Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, and the Panjab, 1826-1838, Vol. 2, London 1842, 297.

where they used to, and still, undertake pilgrimages to the shrine of Imam Musa Raza.

Although there is no evidence to suggest that the Qizilbashs had supported the Hazaras in their rising, the Amir implicated them with it. He called them "enemies to the Afghan state"<sup>96</sup> and spared no effort in inciting the anti-Shi'ite feelings among the Sunnis. In addition to the confiscation of property and the imprisonment of some leading Qizilbashs, the Amir persecuted them religiously. The Qizilbashs of Kandahar<sup>97</sup> and Herat<sup>98</sup> were ordered to embrace Sunnism. Reports are unanimous that this order was vigorously enforced. In Kabul, after compelling the Qizilbashs to wear only red turbans, the Amir also forced them to agree that they would no longer practise the Shi'ite faith, but only the Sunna.<sup>99</sup> Consequently the Shi'ite population of Persia was greatly excited.

Towards the end of April 1893, the mujtahids of Meshed, led by Sheikh Mohammad Taqi, declared war against the Sunnis of Afghanistan. The fetwa was finally issued when the Shah of Persia had twice failed to stop the persecutions. In late 1892, the Shah had sent an urgent remonstrance to London in regard to the persecution of the Shi'as in Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup> Instructed by London, the Viceroy wrote

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96 Amir in darbar, KD, 5-8 Mar 1892, PSLI, 65, 1150.  
 97 Kand. D., 13 Jan 1893, PSLI, 69, 628.  
 98 HD, 15 Sept 1892, PSLI, 68, 194.  
 99 KD, 24 Oct 1896, PSLI, F.L. No. 3167-F (1896), 89.  
 100 Viceroy to Amir, 19 Oct 1892, PSLI, 68, 335.



to the Amir that "It would be a great advantage if Your Highness were to authorise me to contradict these reports."<sup>101</sup> But the Amir adopted an uncompromising attitude, arguing that "I gave instructions for the punishment of my rebellious Shiah [Sic] subjects, who are ryots [Sic] of Afghanistan and sentenced them to death, imprisonment, and banishment according to their respective deserts."<sup>102</sup> Further he wrote that "...should it be known that the Shah of Persia and his Mullas entertain a thought of interfering with the subjects of Afghanistan, the Sunnis of Afghanistan will.....render a good account of the matter without aid from the Sunnis of Turkey."<sup>103</sup> The Viceroy then dropped the subject altogether. From the displacement of the Hazaras and the persecution of the Qizilbashs, it is clear that, like Nadir Shah in Persia, the Amir also wished to make his Muslim subjects adhere only to the Sunni faith of Islam, and thus bring religious unity among them.

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101 Ibid.

102 Amir to Viceroy, 27 Oct 1892, PSLI, 68, 1053.

103 Amir to Viceroy, 27 Oct 1892, PSLI, 68, 1053.

THE HAZARAJAT  
Turkistan  
SHEIKH ALI

Koh-i-Baba  
Range

Saighan

Kabul

DEH ZANGI

Unai Katal

YAKAWLANG

Barnian

BESUD

Taiwara  
GIZAO  
DEH KONDI

MOHAMMADO  
KHWAJA  
Chazmi

URUZGAN

JAGHURI  
JAGHATU  
Mugur

Tirin

DEH CHOPAN

Zamin-dawar

Dahle

Helmand R.

Galst

Girishk

Kan-dahar

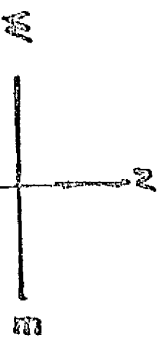
Farah Rud

Naraz

Hari Rud

Dowlayer

Helmand R.



## Chapter 8

## The Conquest of Kafiristan

Kafiristan, a region in the north-east of Afghanistan, had remained independent for centuries. Its inhabitants, the Kafirs, had repulsed attempts by many rulers who tried to subdue them. In the eighties, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, on several occasions, decided to pacify them but, because of various risings elsewhere, this project was postponed. Indeed, he pursued a policy of conciliating the Kafirs with impressive presents. The Kafirs, themselves hard pressed by their zealous Muslim neighbours, looked to the Amir for protection. This facilitated the Kafir conversion to Islam. But in the mid-nineties, when Russia occupied the Pamir and British India brought Chitral under control (two regions close to Kafiristan), the Amir considered a rapid military conquest of Kafiristan a necessity. In the spring of 1896, this was accomplished. Many roads were built. The Kafirs were converted to Islam. Many were removed to other provinces.

Kafiristan, a hilly region of about 5,000 square miles, consists of an irregular series of deep, narrow and tortuous valleys. It is bounded by the Hindu Kush in the north; Chitral in the east; the Kunar valley in the south; and the valleys of Panjsher, Nijrao and Tagao in the west. Despite the high altitude and the rugged nature of the land, communication with the whole of the region is possible through the valleys of Alishang, Alingar, Pech, Bashgul and Minjan which lead to the interior of Kafiristan. But during the winter, Kafiristan is practically converted into a number of isolated

communities with no means of inter-communication.<sup>1</sup>

In 1891 the Kafirs, who dwelt in two- or three-storeyed wooden houses in large villages, may have numbered 52,500.<sup>2</sup> The Kafirs had no common name for themselves. For one thing, except for religion they had no common bonds. The commonest name, Kafir (infidel), given to them by their Muslim neighbours, is too general to be of academic use. Chroniclers, Muslims and non-Muslims, have classified them by their dress rather than ethnic identity. Hence their division into two main groups of Sia Posh (black-robed) and Safed Posh (white-robed). But in view of linguistic and customary differences inside each group, this differentiation is misleading. The Kafirs, according to Robertson,<sup>3</sup> were divided into tribal communities and each community into three distinct groups.

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- 1 McNair, *Exploration in Eastern Afghanistan, Kafiristan*, 1883, 36-46, PSLI, 44, 1208. Bellew, H.W., *An Inquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan*, London, 1891, 143-148. Robertson, G.S., *Kafiristan and its People*, London, 1895, - , *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush*, London, 1896. Wilber, D.N., *Afghanistan*. GAK, 237-259.
- 2 Robertson, GAK, pt 4, 250. Other estimates:-  
 Amir's Agent sent to Kafiristan, PD, 9 Nov 1891, PSLI, 64, 1171 - 44,000  
 McNair, 39 (1883) - 35,000  
 GAK, pt 4, 250 (1910) - 60,000
- 3 Robertson, Sir George Scott (1852-1916). Anglo-Indian Administrator. Educated Westminster Hospital Medical School. Entered Indian Medical Service 1878. Served with Kabul field force at Kabul 1879-80. Surgeon at Gilgit Agency 1889. Travelled over a year in Kafiristan 1890-91. British Agent at Gilgit 1893. Besieged at Chitral with a force, 1895. / British Agent, Chitral, 1895-99 ? / Retired and returned to England 1899. Liberal M.P. 1906. He was the first European to visit parts of Kafiristan (Bashgal valley, upper parts of the Pesh valley up to Minjan). Though he could not speak any of the Kafir languages, his writings are the major source of information on Kafiristan, on the eve of its conquest.

Tribal Kafirs were the Katirs, Muman, Kam, Presun, Wai, and Ashkun.<sup>4</sup> The Katirs with its subdivisions of Rangul, Kulam, Kti and Katirgulis were larger than all other tribes put together. The Katirs, Muman and Kam (all of the Siah Posh group) spoke one language, Kati, with local variations, while others spoke Waiguli, Presun and Ashkun.<sup>5</sup> The latter languages, spoken by the Safed Posh Kafirs, were mutually unintelligible. But all languages belonged to the Dardic group of the Indo-European family.<sup>6</sup>

Other groups consisted of the slaves and poor freemen. The poor freemen were a small number of detribalised Kafirs, who owned no land or cattle, and maintained themselves by being hired, mainly as shepherds. Slaves, who were the property of individuals not of the community, were either artisans or domestics. Among the slaves the position of the domestic slaves was better. But all slaves were liable to be bought and sold. On the other hand, members of the artisan slaves were allowed to be elected as members of the magistracy of the community because of their intimate knowledge of their own group. The artisan slaves could also own property. The three groups, in fact, corresponded to three classes which formed each community.<sup>7</sup>

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4 Every tribe had three or four names. I have used the names current among the Kafirs themselves, giving other names only in brackets.

5 Wilber, 51.

6 Grierson, Sir G.A., The Linguistic Survey of India and the Census of 1911, Calcutta, 1919, 68.

7 Robertson mentions another group of Kafirs as a separate "class", The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 85. There is no reason why these Kafirs should not be included among the tribal Kafirs.

Since only tribal Kafirs owned land and cattle (the two main sources of livelihood) and were in the great majority, they were dominant, economically and politically. Among them it was the wealthy heads of clans (those with numerous relatives) who were the political representatives of each community. The tribal Kafirs were the main moulders of their history. But on the eve of its conquest, Kafir society was on the verge of disintegration, and some of the conflicting tendencies within the society were perhaps more conspicuous than at any time before.

To begin with, the tribes had feuds among themselves. Even the subdivisions of the Kafirs were at war with each other. In the absence of a common arbitrating authority, some of these wars had continued for generations. As land was scarce and production insufficient, cattle robbery was common. This was the commonest cause of the intra-tribal wars. The bitterness of the intra-tribal wars can be illustrated by the fact that a tribe was always ready to ask the help of Muslims against an enemy Kafir tribe, a factor which helped the penetration of Islam, and of the authority of the Amir in Kafiristan.

Although religion<sup>8</sup> was the only common bond among the Kafirs, it was on religious grounds that Kafir society was disintegrating. The Kafir religion had two main characteristics. First, Kafir gods and goddesses, which were numerous, were believed to protect the Kafirs, their

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8 For religion of the Kafirs, see The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 376.

villages, crops and cattle from the enemies. Secondly, worship required sacrifices of cows and goats to gods on frequent occasions. To remain a Kafir was indeed costly. Among the Kafirs of the Bashgul valley, older Kafirs were devout but the younger generation was sceptical.<sup>9</sup> Conversion to Islam among them was therefore frequent. If a son believed that his father had treated him unjustly, he would turn Muslim for some time.<sup>10</sup> Inside the Bashgul valley, all the inhabitants of two hamlets of Agatsi and Agarun had turned Muslim.<sup>11</sup> Similarly among the Wai (occupying a side valley to the left of the long valley of Pech with a population of 5,500), conversion was general and bloodless.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the greatest number of the new converts to Islam were in the "numerous villages"<sup>13</sup> of Kafirs on the fringes of Kafiristan. These converts, locally known as the "sheikhs" were the main source of contact with neighbouring Muslims. But the Presun who, with a population of 5,000, occupied the upper part of the Pech valley in the interior of Kafiristan, were loyal to their faith. The Katirs of Ramgul and Kulam, with a population of 18,000 and 3,000 respectively, may also have been religious, as they showed considerable opposition to their conversion in 1896. The Kulam lived in the interior and the Ramgul in the west of Kafiristan. On the whole, a considerable degree of religious tolerance was observed among the Kafirs, as was evidenced from their maintaining kinship relationships

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9 Ibid, 379.

10 Kafiristan and its People, 26.

11 Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 72.

12 Ibid, 73.

13 Ibid, 73.

with the new converts. The Kafir antagonism with Muslims was "...one of race, not of religion".<sup>14</sup>

The main channel of contact with Muslims was trade, carried by pedlars in time of peace. The Kafirs carried the greater part of their external trade through the Muslim villages on the frontiers, especially in Kunar and Minjan.<sup>15</sup> They also traded with Chitralis. Muslims from Peshawar and Badakhshan entered Kafiristan. The Minjanis travelled into all districts of Kafiristan except Kamdesh.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the people of Kunar took their goods to the neighbouring Kafirs.<sup>17</sup> Although the Amir had prohibited the slave trade in Kafir girls, it still continued<sup>18</sup> even after their pacification in 1896.<sup>19</sup> The Kafirs exchanged their ghee, hides, goats, wool, sheep, honey and walnuts for woollen robes, cotton cloth, salt, iron, gunpowder and match-locks.

The Kafirs maintained relationships with the Muslims on two levels, individual and tribal. In the Kunar district, every Kafir had a "brother" who protected him from other Kafirs. In return, the Kafir supplied his "brother" with food and lodging whenever called upon.<sup>20</sup> Many families of Bashgul Kafirs had Muslim blood relations

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- 14 Holdich, Colonel Sir T.H., The Indian Borderland 1880-1900, London, 1901, 276. Holdich was chief surveyor attached to the Mohmand Boundary Commission.
- 15 Kafiristan and its People, 53.
- 16 GAK, pt 4, 257.
- 17 Kafiristan and its People, 54.
- 18 KD, 8 Jan 1890, PSLI, 59, 165.
- 19 GAK, pt 4, 257.
- 20 Kafiristan and its People, 9.



in the Luthko valley, or Chitral or Kunar.<sup>21</sup> But this is not to suggest that Kafir-Muslim relationships were basically friendly. In fact, they were composed of antagonism and war. The Kafirs were "...incessantly robbing, blackmailing or murdering on the frontier unless completely overawed by the power of some particular chief.." <sup>22</sup> In raiding Muslim territories, they had some particular object of plunder in mind.<sup>23</sup> Their feud with Muslims was fully sanctioned by their religion, as it was interpreted by their high priest (Utah) who often led these expeditions in person. It is interesting to note that, among their numerous gods, the god of war (Gish) was second only to the god of creation (Imra), and that, upon returning from a successful raid, a Kafir was given the welcome of a hero. The Muslims, too, made similar raids upon the Kafirs. The ambition to become a ghazi and exact tribute actuated many Muslim chiefs who raided Kafiristan.<sup>24</sup> War with the Kafirs was profitable because victories brought Kafir girls to be sold as slaves.<sup>25</sup> Also, many of their attacks on Kafiristan were in revenge for murdered relations and plundered caravans.<sup>26</sup> The acquisition of land, especially grazing land, was also a strong stimulant.

Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (998-1030) may have been the first Muslim ruler to attack the Kafirs who are "...a

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21 Ibid, 13.

22 The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 566.

23 Kafiristan and its People, 62.

24 The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 566.

25 KD, 8 Jan 1890, PSLI, 59, 165.

26 The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 566.

remnant of the original population of their area"<sup>27</sup> and who refused "...to embrace Islam"<sup>28</sup> in the early part of the eleventh century. Mahmud's example was followed by Timur (1370-1405)<sup>29</sup> and by Muslim princes of Turkistan, among them of Bokhara in the fifteenth century.<sup>30</sup> In the early part of the sixteenth century, Babur had a small encounter with the Kafirs in the Kunar valley. During the Māghul period in India, noted expeditions against the Kāfirs were carried out in the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) when the Kafirs of Tagao, Nijrao and Laghman were forcibly converted to Islam.<sup>31</sup> The Kafirs of the Pech, Kunar and Laghman [?] were converted during the reign of the Emperor Jihangir (1605-1627).<sup>32</sup> No mention is made of similar attempts when the Maghul empire was in decline. Likewise there is no mention of any attempts by Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah or Timur Shah during whose reigns Kafiristan remained independent, like an island in one corner of their empire. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Kafiristan seems to have been away from attention at all. However, in 1874 attempts for its conquest had been made by Amir Sher 'Ali,<sup>33</sup> but no details of them are available.

The Kafirs did not present a serious problem to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman in the eighties. Neither was the Amir

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27 Wilber, 50.

28 Kafiristan and its People, 2.

29 McNair, 38.

30 GAK, 245.

31 Rahim, M., Sifat Nama-i-Dervesh Mohammad Khan Ghazi, 1288 A.H., Islamabad, (Laghman), introduction and annotation by Scarcia G., Rome, 1965, 74.

32 GAK, 246.

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

prepared to conquer Kafiristan, as he was preoccupied with other tribes. However, minor expeditions in western and south-eastern Kafiristan were occasionally made against the Kafirs by tribal levies and troops. It would be convenient to trace the events on the two fronts separately.

The Russian occupation of Panjdeh in 1884 made the situation of Kafiristan serious, perhaps for the first time, in the eyes of the Amir, as he thought the Russians looked upon the Kafirs as "...their auxiliary force"<sup>34</sup> in the event of their occupying Afghanistan. Since the Amir's troops had been removed from the Kunar to the Shinwar, military operations against the Kafirs of south-east Kafiristan could not be undertaken. The Amir lent his official blessing to the jehad movement of Mulla Khalil, and the Khan of Asmar who, ever since the British withdrawal from Afghanistan, had led a jehad against the Kafirs. In 1886 the Mulla was able to occupy three villages of Kambir [Gambir?], Kattar and Dayuz belonging to the Katir who occupied a valley probably to the east of Asmar. Shinwarays and Salarzays were settled in the conquered villages.<sup>35</sup> The pressure on the Kafirs increased when the Amir feared that "...the British Government intend to annex Kafiristan."<sup>36</sup> This followed an unsuccessful request by the Government of India to permit a party led by Colonel W. Lockhart to enter

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34 Amir to Col. Afzal, KD, 17 Mar 1885, PSLI, 44, 740.

35 PD, 23 July 1886, PSLI, 47, 1191.

36 MM, Apr 1886, PSLI, 47, 77.

Kafiristan via Badakhshan to make themselves "...acquainted with the nature of the ground [of Kafiristan]." <sup>37</sup> The year before, an attempt by the Colonel to enter Kafiristan without the knowledge of the Amir had been thwarted by the Katirs of the Bashgul valley. But because of the subsequent risings of the Ghilzays, of Mohammad Ishaq, and of the Hazaras, the Amir was unable to pacify the Kafirs until the early nineties. However, from 1886 onwards, with the additional increased activity of Mulla Khalil, the Amir tried to influence the Kafirs by impressive presents. This aspect will be discussed later.

By 1890, the movement of Mulla Khalil had become fairly widespread. He had about 400 other mullas in his camp. Mulla Najm al-Din also sent him his followers. Tribal levies of about 1,500 Salarzays, Mohmands and the Shinwarays of Shigal might have joined together also, as the area of their operations was the same as those which were under attack by Mulla Khalil, <sup>38</sup> but it is not certain whether the operations were led by him. What is certain is that the Kafirs, probably the Kafirs to the east of Asmar, were frightened of this new danger. They appealed to the Amir for protection and "submitted" to his authority. The tribes were dispersed, <sup>39</sup> and a fine of 2,000 rupees was imposed on them for their attacks "...on the subjects of the Amir." <sup>40</sup> After 1892, Mulla Khalil, on instructions

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37 M. Durand to Amir, 22 June 1886, PSLI, 47, 1027.

38 MM, May 1891, PSLI, 63, 496.

39 Ibid.

40 PD, 13 June 1891, PSLI, 63, 625.

from the Amir, disengaged himself from activities against the Kafirs and tried to incite the Salarzays and Mohmands against Umra Khan of Jandol.

In south-east Kafiristan, another source threatening the Kafirs was Umra Khan of Jandol, who revived the centuries old practice of jehad against the Kam in the late eighties. The Kam Kafirs occupied the lower part of the Bashgul valley close to Dir and Bajaur. Umra Khan intended to subdue the Kafirs and exact revenue from them, but he failed to impress them by peaceful overtures.<sup>41</sup> When Umra Khan contemplated sending a large tribal combination against the Kam,<sup>42</sup> the latter and Aman al-Mulk, the Mehtar of Chitral, entered into an agreement with the rival faction of Umra Khan led by Mohammad Sharif Khan, of Dir, and Shah Baba, the noted religious leader of Dir. The Kam undertook to refrain from murdering travellers.<sup>43</sup> The large-scale invasion of Kam by Umra Khan does not seem to have taken place, but in 1891 he succeeded in occupying Narsat (Nari), a village of Kam on the left bank of the Kunar river.

After Umra Khan had expelled Mohammad Sharif Khan from Dir, and weakened the position of Safdar Khan considerably, he again invited the tribes to attack the Kam, but their action was anticipated by the Kafirs.<sup>44</sup> The Kam had never before invaded the territory of Umra

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41 PD, 27 June 1889, PSLI, 57, 966.

42 PD, 10 Sept 1889, PSLI, 58, 250.

43 Ibid.

44 PD, 23 Nov 1892, PSLI, 68, 703.

Khan. Now they did so, because the balance of power had changed considerably. After the pacification of the Shinwarays in 1892, the Amir's troops were removed from the Shinwar, first to Chaga Serai, and then to Asmar, from where the Sipah Salar incited the Kam to invade the territory of Umra Khan.<sup>45</sup> In the early part of 1894, when, as a result of the Durand Agreement, Kafiristan was, by implication, recognised by the Government of India as a part of Afghanistan, the Sipah Salar warned Umra Khan to leave the Kafirs alone.<sup>46</sup> But, believing that in Kafiristan his claim was "superior"<sup>47</sup> to that of the Amir and the Mehtar of Chetral, Umra Khan was still preparing a grand invasion of Kafiristan. He only gave up his planned invasion when the Government of India prevented him from carrying it out.<sup>48</sup>

Their loss of confidence in the Mehtar also caused the Kam to lean towards the Amir. Traditionally not only the Kam but all the inhabitants of the Bashgul valley looked on the Mehtar as their suzerain. They offered him presents on various occasions, but these presents were not a fixed revenue. The Mehtar was not in a position to administer the affairs of the Kafirs, though he usually allied himself with the Kam in their feud with other Kafirs.<sup>49</sup> But in 1890, relations between the Mehtar and

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45 PD, 24 July 1893, PSLI, 71,

46 PD, 8 Jan 1894, PSLI, 73, 208.

47 Umra Khan to Mehtar, PD, 8 Jan 1894, PSLI, 73, 208.

48 Secretary to Government of India to Umra Khan, 30 Mar 1894, PD, 9 May 1894, PSLI, 74, 711.

49 Kafiristan and its People, 6.

the Kam became strained when the former, against the wishes of the latter, persisted in settling Gujars (flock-raising nomads who were originally from Dir, Swat and Hazara Kohistan),<sup>50</sup> in the village of Narsat.<sup>51</sup> It is clear from Robertson's travels among the Kam that the Mehtar's suzerainty was nominal. Further, with the occupation of Narsat by the Khan of Jandol, and the wide-spread fear of his invasion of the Kam, the Kafirs' confidence in the Mehtar was completely shaken. They therefore asked the Sipah Salar to protect them from Umra Khan, otherwise, they argued, all the Kafirs [Kam?] would submit to the Khan.<sup>52</sup> The acceptance of this request still drew the Kafirs away from the Mehtar.

Ever since 1886, when the Amir feared Kafiristan to be under threat from the Government of India, he adopted a more markedly conciliatory attitude towards the Kafirs. The new attitude probably was the result of his inability to launch military expeditions against the Kafirs. But peaceful infiltration in Kafiristan was systematically followed. From 1889 to 1895, large deputations of Kafir elders paid visits to the Amir in Kabul and the Sipah Salar in Jalalabad and Asmar. Large presents (cash, clothes) were given to the Kafirs. Usually the Kafir elders would promise the Amir that, upon their return, they would persuade their tribes to submit. Some even

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50 Israr al-Din, A Social Geography of Chitral State, Thesis for M.A., London University, 1965, 98.

51 Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 298.

52 Kam elders to Sipah Salar, PD, 8 Jan 1894, PSLI, 74, 1282.

outrightly would accept Islam, in which case the ritual of conversion would have been performed in the presence of the Amir. Sometimes neither promise nor conversion would come, but the effects of their honourable reception and presents, especially cash, which had a wide appeal to the Kafirs, were undeniable.

During the corresponding period, the Amir's attitude towards the western Kafirs was rather militant. In 1886, the Khan of Tagao was reported to be operating against the Kafirs from the Panjsher side with about 10,000 tribal levies.<sup>53</sup> As a result, two years later, elders of the Siah Posh, presumably the Ramgul in the neighbourhood of the Upper Panjsher, submitted to the Amir but agreed to pay only jizya.<sup>54</sup> In 1891, two forces of the Amir, one under General Katal Khan from the Andarab side,<sup>55</sup> the other under Sayyed Shah Khan from the Panjsher side,<sup>56</sup> advanced on the Kafirs. The latter succeeded in bringing the submission of a portion of the Kafirs. But the proposal for the peaceful submission of all Kafirs failed. In reply, the Kafir elders said that their people were unwilling to submit, and if pressed would go further up into the mountains.<sup>57</sup> It is not known whether any further measures were taken against them. Presumably the Hazara war gave them a respite. But these Kafirs were sufficiently

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53 KD, 20 July 1886, PSLI, 47, 1002.

54 MM, June 1888, PSLI, 54, 54.

55 PD, 23 May 1891, PSLI, 63, 507.

56 PD, 13 June 1891, PSLI, 63, 625.

57 Kafir elders to Commanding Officer, Parian valley (Panjsher), KD, 4 Feb 1891, PSLI, 62, 710.



overawed, as was evidenced from the regular despatch of their elders to the Amir in Kabul. Occasional references have also been made to operations against the Kafirs from the Badakhshan and Minjan sides, but no details are available.

At Asmar, the Sipah Salar was occupied mainly with the affairs of Bajaur and beyond. There was no question of the invasion of Kafiristan when he moved to Asmar from the Shinwar, although he was active in Kafir affairs on the diplomatic front.

From 1893 to 1895, the Bashgul valley was the subject of a diplomatic wrangle between the Government of India and Afghanistan. Umra Khan also claimed it, but in the end the Amir had his way. Bashgul was inhabited by about 20,000 Kafirs of the three main divisions of the Sia Posh, the upper part by the Katirgulis (Kamtoz, Lutdeh), the middle part by the Muman (Madugal), the lower by the Kam (Kamoz, Kamdesh).<sup>58</sup> Until 1895 India, being separated from the Kafirs by a broad belt of semi-independent Pashtun tribes, was unable to communicate with the Kafirs directly, except through the Mehtar. Although the Mehtar's suzerainty over the Bashgulis was nominal, the Bashgul valley was included in the Kabul Convention (by Durand), as being in the sphere of influence of the Government of India. The Amir agreed, because he mistook the Arnawai (or Bashgul) of the Kabul Convention for a stream of the

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58 GAK, 65.

same name which joined the river at the village of Arnawai from the east instead of the west.<sup>59</sup> But two years later, during the delimitation of the frontiers, he "...threatened to break off negotiations"<sup>60</sup> unless he had "...the whole of Kafiristan to its last house."<sup>61</sup> Aware of the error in the map, the Government of India gave way.<sup>62</sup>

During all these years, the Kafirs were so impressed by their mild treatment by the Amir that in 1895 the Sipah Salar was able to report to the Amir that the Kafirs, presumably the Kam, were willing to embrace Islam,<sup>63</sup> but they begged that troops might not be sent to their country. Accordingly the Sipah Salar, with a small force, moved to Kamdesh (a town of about 600 houses and the headquarters of the Kam), where he was welcomed.<sup>64</sup> Expression of submission did not mean that the Kam became Muslims and subjects of the Amir overnight. They were, in fact, divided, with the town inhabitants for submission and the rest against it. Besides, no further progress was made, as the Sipah Salar returned to Asmar from where he was instructed to try to win over the Mohmands, whose country had been left undemarcated.

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59 Holdich, 266.

60 Lee Warner, W., Kafiristan, 1896, 7.

61 Ibid.

62 Elgin to Hamilton, 22 Apr 1896, F.L. No. 77, (96), PSLI 85. Alder, G., holds that this concession was intended to involve the Afghans with Umra Khan, (290).

63 Kafir elders to Amir through Sipah Salar, PD, No. 12, (12), 24 June 1895, PSLI, 80.

64 PD, No. 14, 25 July 1895, PSLI, 81.

Meanwhile the Amir at Kabul offered terms to a deputation of the Kam for the submission of, presumably, all Kafirs. The deputation was told that if the terms were not accepted Kafiristan would be invaded.<sup>65</sup> No details of the terms are available, but it could be assumed that the Kafirs were asked to accept the Amir's rule and allow the introduction of mullas for the preaching of Islam in their country. These were, in fact, the terms which the Sipah Salar was demanding from the Kam.<sup>66</sup> Other Kafirs were observing these developments with keen interest. It would be useful to look to these negotiations in some detail.

The Kam, who held their assemblies (jirgas) in Kamdesh, were divided among themselves. Muslim Kam (sheikhs) had sided with the Sipah Salar. The first reaction of the Kam was to accept the Amir's rule, but not Islam. They proposed they should be treated like non-Muslim subjects, paying jizya, with no troops stationed in their country.<sup>67</sup> The Sipah Salar, however, insisted on their conversion also<sup>68</sup> and captured some of their villages between Nari (or Narsat) and the Kamdesh district, where he stationed some troops. He refused their request for the withdrawal of the troops in return for the payment of revenue only.<sup>69</sup> He then moved his forces to Sao (about 6 miles below Nari),

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65 Amir to Sipah Salar, KD, No. 30, 7 Aug 1895, PSLI, 81.

66 PD, No. 16, 20 Aug 1895, PSLI, 81.

67 Jalalabadi, Mirza Sher Ahmad, On the Conquest of Kafiristan (Persian ballad), Lahore, 1313, A.H., 4.

68 PD, No. 16, 20 Aug 1895, PSLI, 81.

69 PD, No. 17, 6 Sept 1895, PSLI, 82.

and through Sheikh headmen of Nari he again tried to persuade the Kam to accept the terms,<sup>70</sup> but without success. The Sipah Salar again refused their request.<sup>71</sup> But by this time, the resistance of the Kam was almost broken. Only a small portion of them was against submission.<sup>72</sup> Shortly after, they all surrendered and allowed mullas to preach Islam among them. They agreed to pay revenue and jizya. The Amir, however, refused to accept their tribute, saying he wanted Kafiristan, not money.<sup>73</sup>

Meanwhile, the Sipah Salar had moved with all his forces (five regiments) and tribal levies closer to Kamdesh, to Birkot (a village on the right bank of the Kunar river) which he made his permanent headquarters. Birkot, in fact, replaced Asmar and developed into a big local market. The Sipah Salar persuaded the Kam elders to sell their goods there, and guaranteed their safety. He issued strict orders to the soldiers, who were living in tents and newly built huts, not to fire on the Kafirs even if they fired on them.<sup>74</sup> But the peaceful conversion and complete submission of the Kafirs was insisted upon. Presents, often cash, were liberally given to Kafir elders. In Kamdesh, this led to quarrels between common men and elders.<sup>75</sup> However, the efforts of the Sipah Salar did not make immediate headway. The Kafirs suspected his

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70 Gilgit Diary, 24 Aug 1895, PSLI, 82.

71 GD, 31 Aug 1895, PSLI, 82.

72 GD, 4 Oct 1895, PSLI, 82.

73 GD, 12 Oct 1895, PSLI, 83.

74 Sayyed Amir Shah, headman of Arandu to British Agent, GD, 14 Oct 1895, F.L. No. 4350 (1895), PSLI, 83.

75 A Sheikh to British Agent, GD, 16 Nov 1895, PSLI, 83.

motives, because of the construction of a road through Bashgul to Badakhshan, and his insistence on a jirga of about 80 Kam elders to wait upon the Amir in Kabul. Their fear, of course, increased with the concentration of a large force so close to Kamdesh.

The Kam, therefore, told the Sipah Salar that, although they agreed to become subjects of the Amir, they were opposed to the occupation of their country by troops, and the construction of the road through their valley.<sup>76</sup> They warned the Sipah Salar that, if pressed, they would go farther up into the hills and then to Chitral, after having burnt their houses and crops, as they had done twelve times previously. The Sipah Salar dissuaded them from their proposed action by telling them that they would be refused asylum in Chitral, as the British Government was the friend of the Amir. However, the resultant stalemate made him much more cautious than before in dealing with the Kafirs of the Bashgul valley. But the Sipah Salar's approach to the Bashgulis, presumably Muman, for submission was not successful at all.<sup>77</sup> The Katirgulis of the Bashgul valley whose land was close to Badakhshan were approached by the Amir's General at Faizabad,<sup>78</sup> but they refused submission,<sup>79</sup> although they sent him a deputation with a slave-girl as a present.

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76 Kam elders to Sipah Salar, GD, 16 Nov 1895, PSLI, 83.

77 GD, 17 Aug 1895, PSLI, 82.

78 GD, 12 Oct 1895, C. F. Minchin (Assistant British Agent, Chitral) to Secretary to Government of India, No. 478, 16 Oct 1896, PSLI, 83.

79 Gomura, Katirguli elder to British Agent, GD, 28 Oct 1895, PSLI, 83.

Threatened by the General, they asked the Mehtar for help but they were disappointed. The Government of India had advised the Mehtar "...to observe strict neutrality as between Kafirs and Afghans."<sup>80</sup> He was advised not even to give refuge to the Kafirs in Chitral. The Katirgulis then told the British Agent that "...their country belonged to Chitral and Gilgit and for that reason they asked for help against the Afghans."<sup>81</sup> But the Agent told them that it was not so.<sup>82</sup> Only then the Katirgulis submitted to the Amir's rule when they were assured that "...after their conversion they would not be made prisoners."<sup>83</sup>

The Presun (Virun, Parun) Kafirs who were remarkably peaceful had, in 1894, made their submission to the Amir through his General at Faizabad.<sup>84</sup> Proposal also had been made to the Kafirs of north and west Kafiristan, presumably Ramgul and Kulam, for their submission. The Kafirs close to Andarab, Panjsher and Nijrao accepted the Amir's suzerainty,<sup>85</sup> but the Kafirs of the remoter areas were not willing to do so.<sup>86</sup> The Wai, among whom Islam had penetrated deeply, and who had always asked the help of Muslims in their feuds with other Kafirs, had renewed their loyalty to the Amir in 1894, and since then they had kept aloof from the other Kafirs altogether.<sup>87</sup> There

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80 MM, Oct 1895, (5), PSLI, 83.

81 GD, 14 Oct 1895, F.L. No. 4350(1896), PSLI, 83.

82 Ibid.

83 A Sheikh to British Agent, GD, 16 Nov 1895, PSLI, 83.

84 GD, 16 Nov 1895, PSLI, 83.

85 KD, No. 35, 11 Sept 1895, PSLI, 82.

86 Ibid.

87 GD, 16 Nov 1895, PSLI, 83.

is no report available as to whether the Ashkun and Kti had been approached for their submission.

This diplomacy mixed with intimidation was successful in so far as it led to the extension of the Amir's rule over the Kafirs. But, despite the headway of Islam among some Kafirs, they did not become Muslims. On the other hand they did not show opposition to the preaching of Islam, as was evidenced by their acceptance of mullas. The evidence suggests, however, that these efforts were only a prelude to the physical invasion of Kafiristan in the coming winter.

Preparations for military operations against Kafiristan were under way since autumn. Asmar in the south and Minjan in the north had been chosen as two big military camps. Although tribal levies from Laghman had engaged the Kafirs of Shagiri, Pandu and Katihi clans in inconclusive encounters above Najil, in the Alishang valley,<sup>88</sup> the initial all-out invasion of Kafiristan was deferred to winter, apparently at the suggestion of a Kafir slave-boy of the Amir.<sup>89</sup> The idea was that, because in the winter the Kafirs come down to the lower parts of the valleys, their pacification would be comparatively easy and quick. Hence an all-out invasion of Kafiristan for the "...absolute submission and conversion to Islam"<sup>90</sup>

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88 PD, 20 Aug 1895, PSLI, 81.

89 KD, No. 41, 23 Oct 1895, PSLI, 83. According to Jalalabadi, this postponement had been initially proposed by the Sipah Salar, 5.

90 Sayyed Shah Daryu of Lutkoh to British Agent, GD, 2 Nov 1895, F.L. No. 4493(1895), PSLI, 83.

of the Kafirs in the winter from four sides, from the Panjsher by General 'Ata Khan, from Laghman by the son of Sardar Hasan Khan, from Birkot by the Sipah Salar, and from Badakhshan by General Sayyed Khan.<sup>91</sup> In the operations, tribal levies preceded the troops. Operations in the Bashgul valley would be discussed first, to be followed by those in the Pech, and then in the west of Kafiristan.

Rapid success attended the progress of the Sipah Salar. He occupied the country between the Kamdesh and Birkot quickly. Only in Muman was opposition offered, as a result of which about 200 tribal levies and 180 Kafirs were reported lost.<sup>92</sup> The regulars did not take part in the fighting, but a large number of Kafirs still burnt their houses and fled to the foot of Katirgul,<sup>93</sup> and then to Chitral. On 25 December 1895, news reached Kabul that "Kafiristan" had been conquered.<sup>94</sup> But this "Kafiristan" was, in fact, the Bashgul valley which had

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91 PD, No. 23, 9 Dec 1895, F.L. No. 4601, PSLI, 83. According to Sultan Mahomed, the commanding officers were: Captain Mohammad 'Ali from the Panjsher side, and General Katal from the Badakhshan side, 290. Fletcher's account that Kafiristan was attacked in the "winter of 1896" and that the Amir's troops were also concentrated at "Chitral" is incorrect, 148.

92 Chitral Diary, 7 Dec 1895, F.L. No. 4602 (1896), PSLI, 83.

93 Reports from Peshawar Diary indicate that the Sipah Salar made an unopposed entry in Bashgul, PD, No. 24, 20 Dec 1895, PSLI, 84. Since a large number of the Kafirs fled to Chitral, this does not seem to be likely.

94 Sipah Salar to Amir, KD, 28 Dec 1895, PSLI, 84.



been overrun quickly and from which the troops returned to Birkot in early January, after having left small garrisons in Katirgul, Muman and Kam.<sup>95</sup>

The Pech valley, known by several names (Kama, Presun, Pech and Tsarogul) in different localities, stretching from Chaga Serai to Minjan, was one of the longest valleys in Kafiristan. Together with its tributary valleys, Pech was inhabited by Presun, Wai, Ashkun and Kti. Only the Kti, occupying a side valley to the right of the Pech valley, were a subdivision of Katirs and therefore a part of the Siah Posh. The others were separate tribes, but collectively known as the Safed Posh. In February 1896, the Sipah Salar with a force moved from Asmar. He had instructed the elders of Katirgul, from whom he had married a wife, to advance on the Presun and Wai.<sup>96</sup> But before such an advance was made, a deputation of about 60 Wai elders met him in Chaga Serai and offered to submit without fighting.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, the Presun offered their submission without opposition;<sup>98</sup> but the submission of neither of them was acceptable to the Sipah Salar, who demanded that the Presun should accept mullas, send their elders to the Amir, and surrender their arms. These may have also been the terms offered to the Wai. After the expiry of a 15-day grace, during which the terms were not accepted, the Kafirs were attacked from Minjan and Chaga Serai. Their lands

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95 CD, 11 Jan 1896, F.L. No. 230(1896), PSLI, 84.

96 CD, 22 Feb 1896, F.L. No. 737-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

97 CD, 29 Feb 1896, F.L. No. 740-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

98 PD, No. 6, 20 Mar 1896, F.L. No. 881-F(1896), PSLI, 85.

were occupied, 110 of their elders sent as hostages to Kabul, and the two forces of the Amir joined at Presun.<sup>99</sup> Soon the Sipah Salar left for Asmar, after having disarmed "...all the Kafirs in the Pech valley."<sup>100</sup> There is no report available of the Kti and Ashkun, but it seems likely that they were also subdued.

Ramgul and Kulam proved the most difficult of all the Kafirs to be overcome. The advance on them was made by tribal levies and regulars (number not known) from the south from Laghman, from the north-west from Khanabad, Ghorband, Panjsher and Andarab.<sup>101</sup> A large number of tribal levies and troops perished in avalanches, but shortly the 15 forts of the Ramgul were taken and their inhabitants fled to Kulam.<sup>102</sup> Details of the operations against them which continued until the next winter are not known, but their magnitude can be assessed from the number of their prisoners - 11,000 from the Laghman side and 6,000 from the Panjsher side<sup>103</sup> (the former figure may also include prisoners from the upper parts of the Alishang valley) - sent to Kabul. The valley of Ramgul became almost empty of its inhabitants (only 100 married Ramgulis were allowed to return from Jalalabad, and the remainder fled to the surrounding lands). The valley of Kulam fell only in the winter of 1896 after heavy fighting with considerable losses on both sides.<sup>104</sup>

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99 CD, 21 Mar 1896, F.L. No. 942-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.  
 100 CD, 4 Apr 1896, F.L. No. 1012-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.  
 101 PD, No. 2, 23 Jan 1896, PSLI, 84.  
 102 CD, 22 Feb 1896, F.L. No. 737 (1896), PSLI, 84.  
 103 KD, 24 Jan 1896, F.L. No. 395)F.(1896), PSLI, 84.  
 104 CD, 29 Dec 1896, F.L. No. 78-F.(1897), PSLI, 90.

With the fall of Kulam, the conquest of Kafiristan was complete. It was near the large village of Patchah in the Ramgul valley that an inscription on an enormous rock known as the Sang-i-Naveshta,<sup>105</sup> dating back presumably to the period of Timur, was found. An officer of the Amir inscribed the following on the rock:-

"In the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Ghazi, in 1896, the whole of Kafiristan, including Kullam, was conquered by him....."<sup>106</sup>

The conquest of Kafiristan presented the Amir with many problems. First, he had to establish an administration. But the enforcement of Islamic law on the Kafirs made this task difficult. We see then that mass conversion was closely linked with the administration in which the mullas played a complex role in a still basically Kafir society. In the first place, many Kafirs were converted to Islam immediately after the conquest of their lands. Mosques were built. But, by the Amir's order, no Kafir was to be converted forcibly.<sup>107</sup> The Kam, Muman and Katirgulis may have been the first to accept Islam. By June 1896, there were already mullas of Kafir origin among them. They were "...sufficiently versed in Islam" and undertook "...to instruct Islam to their fellow tribesmen,"<sup>108</sup> in place of Afghan mullas. Conversion among the Bashgulis was so successful that a number of Kafirs in Chitral, presumably

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105 Newby, E., A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush, London, 1968, Penguin, 226.

106 Mahomed, S., 1, 292.

107 PD, No.11, 9 Jan 1896, F.L. No. 1637-F.(1896), PSLI, 87.

108 CD, 9 June 1896, F.L. No. 1720-F.(1896), PSLI, 87.

some of those who had fled there, voluntarily accepted Islam. Despite a revolt in the Bashgul valley in 1897, Islam remained popular, especially among the younger Kafirs. Because of this widespread acceptance of Islam, the Amir renamed the Bashgul valley "Nuristan"<sup>109</sup> - the land of light (of Islam) - a name which appears to have displaced the unmelodious Arabic term "Nur al-Islam" (the light of Islam) which was given to Kafiristan by the Amir's son and successor<sup>110</sup> in 1906.

Similarly, the Wai and Presun also accepted Islam,<sup>111</sup> although they were reported to dislike praying five times a day.<sup>112</sup> But among the Ramgul, who had nearly all been taken to Kabul, conversion was not so easy. The elder Kafirs still worshipped their idols. The Amir threatened them with death if they failed to become Muslims. But the young among them had become sincere Muslims.<sup>113</sup> During this mass conversion, the non-Muslim Safays, presumably of Badil, Dewagul and Pech, and the non-Muslim Shinwarays of Shigal,<sup>114</sup> were also converted to Islam.

The task of preaching Islam was entrusted to Sunni mullas, armed with rifles, swords and escorted by some ten to twenty khassadars. Each village had one or two mullas. By October 1896, Katirgulis, for instance, had

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109 GAK, 67.

110 Ibid, 259. Nuristan denotes the territory. It is incorrect to speak of its inhabitants (Nuristanis) as "Nuri tribes" or "Nuris" (Wilber, 50; Fletcher, 19), because the latter terms suggest an ethnic significance.

111 CD, 28 Apr 1896, F.L. No. 1220-F.(1896), PSLI, 86.

112 CD, 16 Mar 1897, Foreign Secretary Letter No. 4M (1897), PSLI, 91.

113 KD, 20 June 1896, F.L. No. 1879-F.(1896), PSLI, 87.

114 Amir's firman to Safays, Shinwarays of Shizal, etc., PD, No.16, 15 Aug 1896, F.L.No.2544-F(1896), PSLI, 88.

13 mosques and 28 mullas<sup>115</sup> while the Kam (by August) had 112 mullas, with Mulla Satar of Turkistan as chief of all mullas in Kafiristan.<sup>116</sup> The mullas, who drew twenty rupees a month as salary, instructed the Kafirs in the basic tenets of Islam. They were also in charge of village schools where young boys received instruction in religious knowledge, and performed duties similar to those of lumberdars (theregistered representative of a coparcenary community, who is responsible for Government revenue)<sup>117</sup> in India.<sup>118</sup>

On the whole the Kafirs, especially those who submitted without fighting, were treated leniently. The Sipah Salar proclaimed a general pardon for all the Bashgulis.<sup>119</sup> But five out of fifteen Kafirs [Ramgul?] who tried to burn themselves in Laghman, because they were opposed to conversion, were publicly executed in Kabul.<sup>120</sup> The initial lenient attitude of the Amir occasionally gave way to brutality when instances of opposition to conversion were observed.

Neither were the Kafir prisoners of war enslaved. Their sale and enslavement was strictly prohibited. The Amir warned his subjects that offenders would be fined 7,000 rupees each.<sup>121</sup> Though Muslims, the Hazara prisoners

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115 CD, 27 Oct 1896, F.L. No. 3128-F.(1896), PSLI, 89.  
 116 PD, No. 16, 15 Aug 1896, F.L. No. 2544-F.(1896), PSLI, 88.  
 117 Yule, Col.H., and Burnel, A.C., Hobson-Jobson (A glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases), London, 1903, 524.

118 GAK, 423.

119 Viceroy Elgin to G. Hamilton, 22 Apr 1896, F.L. No.77(1896), PSLI, 85.

120 KD, 10 Oct 1896, F.L. No. 3077-F.(1896), PSLI, 89.

121 PD, 7 Apr 1896, F.L. No. 1011-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

of war were made subject to sale and enslavement, but the Kafir prisoners were not. The Hazaras rebelled and fought, while war was brought upon the Kafirs and the majority of them submitted without fighting. The proximity of Kafiristan to Chitral may also have had a bearing upon the lenient attitude of the Amir towards the Kafirs. Sheikhs were rewarded and made Khans for their service,<sup>122</sup> which was, in fact, contrary to their traditional neutral attitude in a war between Muslims and their own kinsmen.

In contrast with his policy towards other rebellious groups, the Amir's treatment of the Kafirs was almost paternal. He made particular efforts to educate them in Islamic and Afghan ways, although this was paid for largely from loot from Kafiristan. Over 300 sons of Kam and Katir elders were sent to Kabul for education, while 22 other boys under 10 were chosen to become the Amir's page-boys, and 20 girls under 12 to serve in the harem. Absorbtion, however, proved difficult. Cannibalism was observed among some Kafirs who had been settled in Paghman.<sup>123</sup>

The pattern of assessment on the produce was not uniform. Favouritism was shown to the Kam, among whom there were many sheikhs and who were the first to accept Islam. A light assessment of chehel-wa-yak on their cattle and tithe on their land produce was introduced.<sup>124</sup>

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122 PD, No. 4, 27 Feb 1896, F.L. No. 695-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

123 KD, 20 June 1896, F.L. No. 1879-F.(1896), PSLI, 87.

124 PD, No. 11, 9 June 1896, F.L. No. 1637-F.(1896), PSLI, 89.

The Katirgulis were required to pay a reduced amount of 2,000 rupees a year.<sup>125</sup> But the Wai were heavily taxed. They were to give eight out of every 40 of their cattle, in addition to eight rupees per man [family?]. Also they were required to supply a large quantity of ghee and wheat each month, without payment, to the troops stationed in their land.<sup>126</sup> This assessment is so high that it would seem unlikely that the Wai (who were favourably disposed to the Muslims) could have paid it indefinitely. There is no report available about the assessment on the other Kafir tribes.

Apart from the increasing role of the mullas, the pattern of administration in Kafiristan was the same as in the rest of Afghanistan. The Siah Posh, in general, were reported to have accepted qazis and hakims<sup>127</sup> which meant the extension and enforcement of the Islamic laws in their land. As the assessment on the Kafirs was light, and the Kafirs remained acquiescent (except the Wai, among whom discontent was general because of the high rate of taxation), the administration was projected towards introducing Islam on a mass scale. A pattern was established whereby a mulla introduced Islam, and acted as the Kafir representative; a qazi decided Kafir legal disputes in accordance with the Shari'a and a hakim and khassadars, backed by a distant army, enforced their decisions. It is not clear what happened to the "elective magistracy" and its chief (Ur Jast), who were formerly

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125 CD, 27 Oct 1896, F.L. No. 3128-F.(1896), PSLI, 89.

126 CD, 24 Nov 1896, F.L. No. 3323-F.(1896), PSLI, 89.

127 PD, No.6, 20 Mar 1896, F.L. No. 881-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

responsible for the internal affairs of a tribe.<sup>128</sup> It seems probable that, in the face of the new pattern of administration, the "elective magistracy" dwindled into insignificance while an acquiescent "Jast" (tribal elder) continued to function. The Utah and other priests, of course, were replaced by mullas.

The reported number of Kafirs (men, women and children) who were sent to Kabul was well over 25,000. They were treated not like prisoners of war, as they were fully maintained by the Government, and were not kept in jails. They were distributed among other districts in order to learn about "...Islam and the manners of the people among whom they live."<sup>129</sup> Hence their distribution in various provinces; Laghman (3,000), the neighbourhood of Kabul (4,000), Turkistan (some), Kohistan (5,000), and Paghman (1,700). They were given land for cultivation. How many of them remained in these places is difficult to ascertain, as they were later permitted to return home when they obtained the confidence of the Amir<sup>130</sup> which was dependent on their acceptance of Islam. It appears that eventually all of them returned either to Kafiristan or Paghman. This is partially corroborated by a reference in The Life of Abdur Rahman that those Kafirs who had fought bravely<sup>131</sup> had been removed to Paghman. About 10,000 Kafirs were ordered to be enlisted in the army,

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128 Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, 435.

129 Amir's firman, PD, 7 Apr 1896, F.L. No. 1011-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

130 Ibid.

131 Mahomed, S., 1, 291.



and their regiments known as "jadid al-Islam"<sup>132</sup> - from which the word jadidi (the new) has been derived and used even to the present day.

Of the 1,100 Bashgulis who had fled to Chitral, there was a substantial number from Kamdesh. Upon their return from Chitral, from where [except a small number] they were all turned away,<sup>133</sup> they had nowhere to go and nothing to eat,<sup>134</sup> because, before their flight, they had destroyed their crops and burnt their houses. The Sipah Salar sent them to Narsat and other districts. This led to a scarcity of grazing land for the Gujars, some of whom now lived in Narsat. Whereupon the Sipah Salar settled them in Kamdesh.<sup>135</sup> Eventually the Kam were allowed to return to Kamdesh,<sup>136</sup> but whether the Gujars had been turned away from there is not clear. Similarly 1,000 nomadic families from the Safays of Tagao, 1,000 from Laghman, 1,000 from Panjsher were ordered to be settled in Kafiristan (where is not known), where each family was to reclaim land without paying revenue on it for one year.<sup>137</sup> Kafiristan was also populated by retired soldiers,<sup>138</sup> besides becoming a "Siberia" for those, including Barakzays, who fell under the Amir's suspicion.

Much importance was attached to the construction of

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132 MM, [1895?], No. 30 (G), PSLI, 84.

133 CD, 14 Dec 1895, PSLI, 84.

134 CD, 11 Jan 1896, F.L. No. 230-F.(1896), PSLI, 84.

135 CD, 11 Jan 1896, F.L. No. 230-F.(1896), PSLI, 84.

136 MM, Apr 1896, PSLI, 86.

137 PD, No. 4, 27 Feb 1896, F.L. No. 695-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

138 Mahomed, S., 1, 291.

roads in Kafiristan. Before the conquest, all routes leading to Kafiristan were extremely narrow.<sup>139</sup> The construction of roads went side by side with the conquest. Three main roads were built, connecting Badakhshan with the Kunar and Laghman valleys through Kafiristan, (Chaga Serai to Minjan, Asmar to Badakhshan, and Laghman to Minjan). Although the best among them (Chaga Serai to Minjan) was like "a sort of track",<sup>140</sup> they were usable for loaded ponies, horses and mules. A sum of 20,00,000 rupees was sanctioned for their construction, public serais and hamlets along them. Hindus were encouraged to open shops along the first two.<sup>141</sup> For their use by merchants, efforts were made to popularise them. Hitherto, merchants of Badakhshan sent their goods through Chitral, avoiding Kafiristan altogether. There was a good demand in the markets of eastern Afghanistan for the goods of Badakhshan such as ghee, wheat, zera, salt, namad and gold dust (washed since 1888). The Amir declared exemption from tolls for three years for merchants who would use the Asmar-Badakhshan road.<sup>142</sup> In the early part of 1897, when the Asmar to Badakhshan road was open to traffic, merchants used it. It would then appear that the sole purpose of the Amir in the construction of the roads was the encouragement of trade, but it was not so.

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139 McNair, 38.

140 Lorimer, J. G., Afghan Troops and the Roads in Ningrahar and Kafiristan, 7 Aug 1899 (4), Letters Received from India (1899), 865, Political and Secret Department.

141 PD, No. 21, 9 Nov 1896, F.L. No. 3169-F.(1896), PSLI, 89.

142 CD, 3 Nov 1896, F.L. No. 3170-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

The construction of roads was linked mainly with the developments in the Pamirs and Chitral. In 1895, Russia and India came closer than ever before to each other, with the former in the Pamirs and the latter in Chitral. The same was also true of India and Afghanistan. In 1895, as far as Britain and Russia were concerned, a measure of stability both north and south of the Hindu Kush was achieved.<sup>143</sup> But the position of Afghanistan as the Amir saw it was precarious. North of the Hindu Kush, Russia had threatened the north-east of Afghanistan, (the threat was subsequently averted by the fixing of Afghan boundaries with the Russian dominated Bokhara). South of the Hindu Kush, the Government of India established a firm hold on Chitral, by sending forces there from Gilgit and Peshawar. Chitral was subsequently annexed to India. Thus, apart from neutralising the Amir's disguised attempts on Chitral, the opening of the new Peshawar-Dir-Chitral road, hitherto unpenetrated by the British, dominated the semi-independent states of Swat, Dir and Bajaur.

The Amir was alarmed. He distrusted the advance of Russia in the Pamir and of Britain in Chitral. In his public proclamations he warned his people repeatedly that "All Christians cast eyes upon my country from all sides" and that "Russians and English.....are both enemies of my country",<sup>144</sup> and that "The time is not very far off that

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143 Alder, G., 298.

144 Amir's firman to people of Kunar, Asmar, etc., PD, No. 18, 29 Sept 1895, PSLI, 82.

this country of us Afghans will be divided by the Russians and English among themselves....."<sup>145</sup> It may be argued that the demarcation of all the frontiers of Afghanistan with Russia and to a large extent with India might have removed his apprehension, but the Amir trusted neither of them. He believed that "...everything changes so very suddenly."<sup>146</sup> The hasty conquest of Kafiristan and the construction of the roads were, therefore, mainly for reasons of security and strategy. The conquest was considered necessary in 1895 because, situated as it was, Kafiristan was "a danger to Afghanistan."<sup>147</sup> Roads were rapidly opened in the hope that the Russians might use them when they chose to invade India,<sup>148</sup> thus avoiding the central parts of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Amir increased the number of his army first by introducing the selective system of char nafari (one out of four) in the eastern province,<sup>149</sup> and subsequently by hasht nafari (one out of eight).<sup>150</sup> The latter remained the basis of conscription until very recently.

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145 Amir's firman to the people of Ningrahar and Laghman, Kabul, etc., PD, No. 23, 9 Dec 1895, PSLI, 83. There is an exaggerated, and misleading, stress on the Amir's apprehension of Russia's threat to Kafiristan in The Life of Abdur Rahman (288-289), and no mention of his apprehension of Britain. For a general comment on the book see p. 269.

146 Ibid.

147 Amir quoted by S. Pyne (Amir's engineer) to a Reuter's Agent, 20 Jan 1896, 66-F, PSLI, 84.

148 PD, No.1, 8 Jan 1896, F.L. No. 159-F.(1896), PSLI, 84.

149 PD, No.23, 9 Dec 1895, F.L. No. 4601-F.(1895), PSLI, 83.

150 MM, Sept 1896, F.L. No. 175-F.(1896), PSLI, 88.

The external threat was not the only reason for the conquest of Kafiristan. The extension of laws among the Kafirs,<sup>151</sup> the opening of the trade routes in Kafiristan,<sup>152</sup> the enlistment of warlike Kafirs in the army,<sup>153</sup> and an end to the centuries old feud between the Kafirs and Muslims (which had encouraged slavery), were also strong reasons for its conquest. The Amir also wished to make the Kafirs, who had no previous loyalty, attached to his dynasty - a policy which has been consistently pursued by his successors even to the present day.

In contrast to operations against other rebellious tribes and the Amir's rivals, the operations against the Kafirs were on a much smaller scale. Their military significance lay only in the difficult terrain of Kafiristan which had helped the Kafirs to repulse attempts made against them by famous emperors and kings in the past. But now, because of the internal and external pressures (the last accentuated by the superiority of weapons) Kafir society was disintegrating in any case. It just needed a push. Nevertheless, the Amir put himself above the famous Muslim conquerors by telling his troops that the conquest of Kafiristan had been reserved for Amir 'Abd al-Rahman to be performed through you - an act which, said the Amir, no Indian or Afghan king, even Amir Timur, had achieved.<sup>154</sup> In fact, the conquest of

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151 Amir to Viceroy, 16 Jamadi al-Sani 1313 A.H. (4 Dec 1895), enclo. No. 3, PSLI, 84.

152 Amir quoted by Pyne, 20 Jan 1896, No. 66F, PSLI, 84.

153 PD, No. 1, 8 Jan 1896, F.L. No. 159-F.(1896), PSLI, 84.

154 KD, 22 Feb 1896, F.L. No. 693-F.(1896), PSLI, 85.

Kafiristan was significant for religious reasons and the Amir made political capital out of it. He tried to use these events as a means of increasing his prestige and acquiring loyalty for his dynasty.

At the suggestion of many Barakzay and Mohammadzay sardars,<sup>155</sup> the Amir accepted the title of Zia al-milat-i-wa al-Din (light of the nation and religion).<sup>156</sup> But in a gathering of about 40,000 people in the newly-built public mosque of 'Idgah in Kabul, where representatives of each tribe pledged themselves to remain loyal to the Amir and his dynasty, a long title of Zia al-milat-i-wa al-Din, Amir-i-ibn Amir, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Ghazi (light of the nation and religion, Amir the son of the Amir, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Ghazi) appeared on the gold and silver coins.<sup>157</sup> Meetings of loyalty were also held in the provinces and August 17, 1896 (7 Rabi' al-Awal 1314 A.H. lunar) was declared jashn-i-mutafiqya, (the festival of unanimity) and a public holiday.<sup>158</sup> With the conquest of Kafiristan, the whole of Afghanistan lay under the Amir's control.

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155 KD, 6 June 1896, F.L. No. 1721-F.(1896), PSLI, 87.

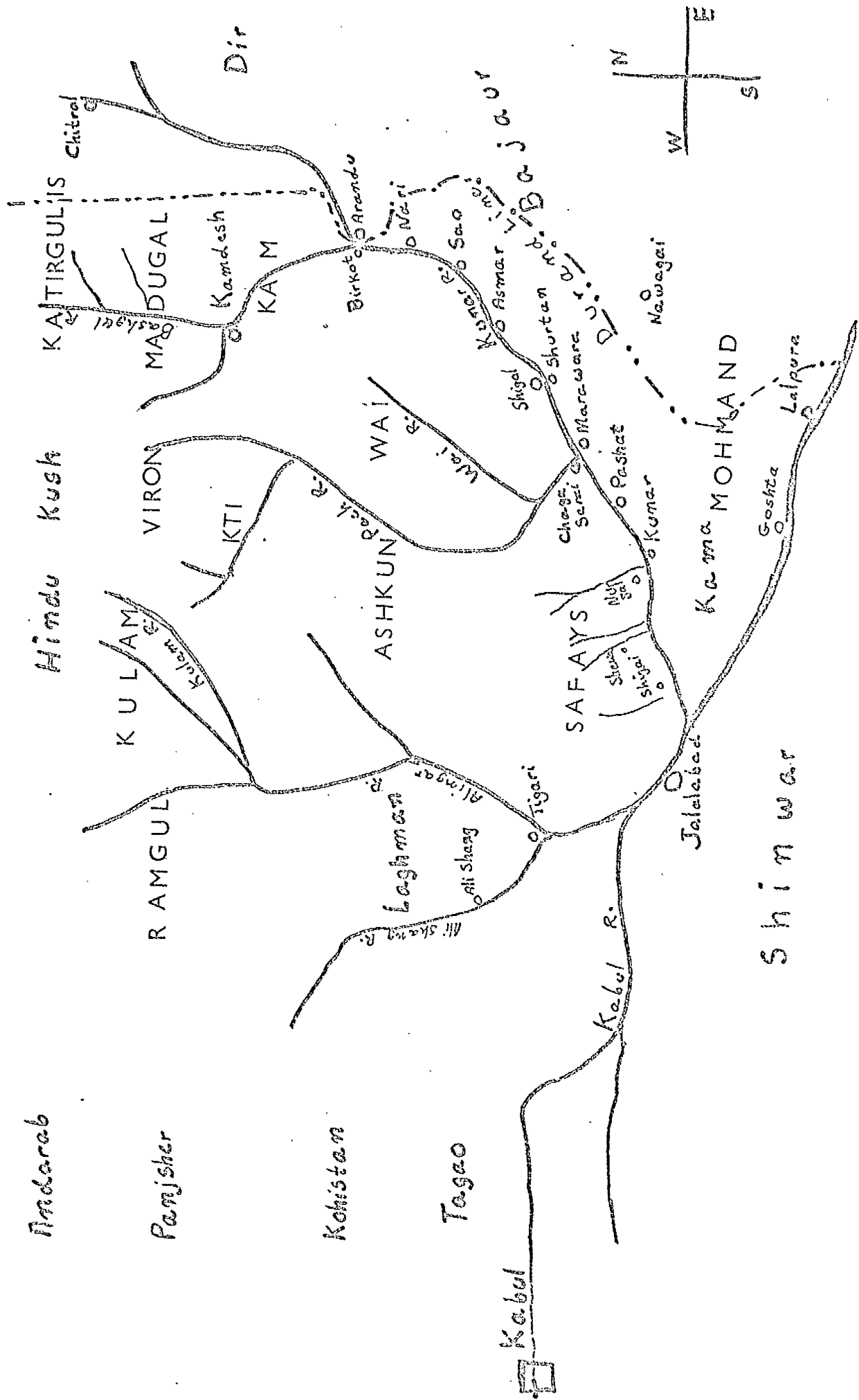
156 MM, June 1896, F.L. No. 131-F.(1896), PSLI, 87.

157 PD, No. 6, 6 July 1896, F.L. No. 1934-F.(1896), PSLI, 87.

158 MM, Sept 1896, F.L. No. 175-F.(1896), PSLI, 88.

KAFIRISTAN.

Minjan Badakhshan



Madarab

Panjsher

Kohistan

Tagao

Kabul

Kabul R.

Jalelebad

Kamah MOHMAND

Shimwar

Hindu Kush

KULAM

VIRON

MADUGAL

KTI

ASHKUN

WAI

KATIRGULIS

KAMDESH

Dir



### Conclusion and Consideration of the Sources

The present thesis is based mainly on the Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures Received from India in the Commonwealth Relations Office Records. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, these records contain weekly official diaries, reports of British missions to Afghanistan and official correspondence exchanged between the Amir and the high officials of the Government of India. As such, these records are the most comprehensive and important source both for diplomatic relations and for internal developments during the critical, formative period of modern Afghan history with which this thesis is concerned. As internal developments are the main theme of this thesis, we are concerned here with the diaries rather than with the official correspondence. However, use has also been made of those parts of the official correspondence which throw light on internal developments.

Three groups of official diarists have recorded events in Afghanistan from 1880 to 1896. They were British officials, Indian Muslims and local agents.

The diaries of the British officials in Afghanistan cover only the period of occupation during the second Anglo-Afghan war. Brief though it was, the period was of great importance. The occupation gave rise, on the one hand, to popular anti-British activities while, on the other, it brought into the open the basic conflicts which existed between local factions. St. John and Lepel Griffin have left us, on the whole, a very informative



record not only of political affairs but also of social and economic changes. In certain cases their view of events was not borne out by subsequent developments. St. John's view of Ayub after Maimand is a clear case in point. So is Griffin's view about 'Abd al-Rahman's position after the latter had adopted delaying tactics in the negotiations. But on the whole it is fair to say that they were intelligent and, in recording events, they were cautious to avoid fraud and rumours. They were themselves influenced by only the minimum degree of prejudice. This, however, cannot be said of General Frederick Roberts whose grasp of events was poor. He overestimated the strength of some minor groups who assisted the British, and showed bias against those who fought him. A distinctive feature of this period is the interception of a large number of private letters which were exchanged between elders of various factions. The original letters were often sent on to their destinations, but from the style and contents of the translations which are preserved, the letters seem to be genuine.

Outside Afghanistan, the Peshawar diary, compiled by various deputy commissioners, is another important source which covers the whole period of this work. Its information comes mainly from merchants, Afghan refugees, and spies, who were occasionally sent to eastern Afghanistan to collect information. Its reports on eastern Afghanistan are fairly reliable but those on the rest of the country are mixed with exaggerations and rumours. But the Chitral and Gilgit diaries, which were compiled

mainly by Sir George Robertson, and which form the main source for the chapter on Kafiristan, are very reliable. Robertson had an intimate knowledge of Kafiristan and Kafir elders, many of whom were Robertson's acquaintances, went freely to Chitral and Gilgit, where they volunteered information. Consequently a substantial degree of accuracy can be claimed for the chapter on Kafiristan. The two accounts of the conquest of Kafiristan - one by Sher Ahmad Jalalabadi and the other by the Chitral diary - which tally very closely one to another, support this view. But with the diaries of the Muslim agents inside Afghanistan, the story is strikingly different.

To begin with, the Agents<sup>1</sup> had a very unpleasant life in Kabul. They were lodged in squalid surroundings, and were looked down upon by all Afghans with "undisguised contempt",<sup>2</sup> not only because they were British Agents but

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- 1 Qazi 'Abd al-Qadir, 1880-82.  
 Colonel Mohammad Afzal Sadozay, 1882-85.  
 Colonel 'Ata Allah (Rajput), 1885-91.  
 Afzal Khan Gandapuri, 1891-94.  
 (A Khan of Derajat and a Lawyer  
 British Agent with Amir Sher 'Ali, Assistant, Kabul  
 Kotwal 1879-80.)  
 Resaladar Mohammad Akram Khan, 1894-95.  
 Maulawi 'Abd al-Ghafur of Luknow, 1896 - ...  
 Kabul Agency had a hospital attached to it. It also  
 had about 20 men listed as "retinue". In the absence  
 of the Agent, Kabul Diary was compiled by a secretary.
- 2 Durand to Cunningham, 3 Dec 1893, PSLI, 73, 16.

also because they were Indian natives. In 1893, M. Durand threatened to boycott a grand festivity prepared in his honour, because the British Agent was not allowed to occupy a respectable seat. Not only was the British Agency under constant surveillance, but the movements of the Agents were also restricted. Some of them were not even allowed to ride on the public roads. For fear of the Amir, not only did the local inhabitants cease to keep open contact with the Agency but Peshawar merchants, who were subjects of the Government of India also ceased to meet any member of the Agency. The Agents were treated like "prisoners". But they had free and undisturbed access to the Amir's darbar, where the Amir treated them courteously. The Amir claimed that the British had made friends with him, not with the people of Afghanistan, and that it was neither proper nor necessary for the Agents to mix with the Afghans. In fact, of course, the Amir's opposition to contacts between the Agents and the Afghan population was political. He had treated very harshly all those sections of the population who had in any way helped the British during the occupation. He had also expelled many Barakzay sardars to India. The contacts of the Agents with such people and their relations was likely, the Amir thought, to foment trouble and endanger relations with the Government of India. Hence the restrictions not only on the movements of the Agents but also on the movements of foreigners and natives.

Two results were to follow from the Amir's treatment of the Agents. First, the Kabul Diary became mainly a record of darbar proceedings, as the Agents understood

them. But the darbar was the centre from where the Amir, as an absolute head of the State, exercised his overall power. Also, in the darbar the Agents had a good chance of obtaining information from high officials and courtiers, among whom a few Agents had relations. The Agents also had regular reporters who collected information from the city and the country where they were occasionally sent. But, as they were under surveillance, they were handicapped in their work. Many of their local contacts lost their lives. Secondly, the reports of four out of the six Agents in Kabul between 1880 and 1896 were, in varying degrees, biased. Although they had been instructed to confine their reports to facts and figures only (they were asked to send their own impressions separately), the Agents concentrated on the dark side of events. Of Colonel Ata Allah who, of all the Agents, served for the longest period, it was said that he always took "...the gloomiest views of the Amir's position and character".<sup>3</sup>

But the reports of Qazi 'Abd al-Qadir and Maulawi 'Abd al-Ghafur were better balanced and more impartial. Qazi 'Abd al-Qadir who acted as a secret news-writer and wrote under the name of AB, Kabul Correspondent, belonged to a respectable family of Peshawar. He was an adviser to Amir Sher 'Ali in Kabul during the seventies.<sup>4</sup> During this period and especially on account of his supervising the taking of a general census,<sup>5</sup> in 1876, the Qazi acquired a

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3 MM, Aug 1888, PSLI, 55, 135.

4 BCA, 5.

5 GAKand., 74.

thorough knowledge of Afghanistan. In spite of his service with Amir Sher 'Ali, the Qazi succeeded in entering the service of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman for two years. While back at Peshawar, the Qazi was often consulted by the Deputy Commissioner on the Afghan affairs. Subsequently he worked again for Amir 'Abd al-Rahman as his news-writer in Peshawar. But because he was known to be the most anti-British of all Sher 'Ali's advisers,<sup>6</sup> the Government of India always suspected him. Ripon even spoke of him as "an acknowledged scoundrel".<sup>7</sup> The fact was that ever since 1864, when the Qazi, while a nai'b tahsildar (a junior revenue officer) in Peshawar, had been imprisoned for his alleged corruptions,<sup>8</sup> relations between him and the Government of India remained strained. In spite of this, the Government of India asked for his service in Kabul, because it was thought inadvisable to send an Agent openly so soon after the evacuation and because the Government of India was concerned to know about the activities of Russian agents in Afghanistan and their treatment by the Amir. But the Qazi was the most intelligent of all the Muslim news-writers. His reports on Afghan affairs are the most meaningful. As he wished to remain in the service of the Amir who paid him well, the Qazi was cautious to avoid misrepresentation. Maulawi 'Abd al-Ghafur's reports were impartial but they were very short and usually did not contain much significant information.

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6 BCA, 4.

7 Singhal, 69.

8 BCA, 4.

Mir Mohammad Hashim, Mirza Mohammad Taqi, Mirza Ya'qub 'Ali and Sayyed Delawar Shah who were stationed at Kandahar and Herat formed another group of news-writers.<sup>9</sup> For the obvious reason that 'Abd al-Rahman was the first ruler to break the power of the Qizilbashes, these news-writers, who, with one exception, were all Qizilbashes, reported unfavourably of the Amir and of the feelings of his subjects towards him. Sandeman's view of Mir Hashim that he did not report "truly"<sup>10</sup> of what happened in Kandahar applies, in varying degree, to the others also. But they were all treated with contempt and scorn. Not only were they restricted in their movements, but difficulties were created even for their obtaining the necessities of life. For fear of the Amir's spies and for their service to the British, they were boycotted even by their own relations. However, the Amir's officials, from whom they obtained information in the darbars, did not treat them so badly, mainly because the Amir had obliged them to report

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9 A - 'Ali, Mirza Ya'qub  
Herat, 1886-92.

B - Hashim, Mirza Mohammad, a resident of Kabul.  
1879-80, a member of Intelligence Department, Kabul.  
1881-92, Kandahar.

C - Shah, Sayyed Delawar 'Ali,  
1895 - ..., News-writer, Kandahar.

D - Taqi, Mirza Mohammad, resident of Kandahar.  
1879, Member of Political Commission enquiring into  
the causes of the massacre.  
1880-81, news-writer for Ayub, Herat,  
1881-..., Secretary to the British, Kandahar,  
1882-92, news-writer, Herat,  
1892-95, news-writer, Kandahar.

10 Sandeman, R. G., Foreign Secretary (India), 19 May 1885,  
PSLI, 44, 893.

to him on his own officials. Despite the restrictions placed on them, their diaries are especially valuable for their recording the firmans of the Amir in parts and the system of taxation in detail.

But these prejudiced and subjective reports still contain much valuable information. It is possible to check them against one another as each contains records of the same events. Also, the Amir's own firmans and the pamphlets which reflect his system of administration help us to look into events from his point of view. Perhaps one day, if the reports of the Amir's own spies are made available, it will be possible to make a far more complete and accurate reconstruction of the history of Afghanistan than is possible at the moment. But even now it is quite possible to construct a coherent picture of the period under discussion by a thorough comparison of the multitude of different reports. Still, one difficulty cannot be avoided. This difficulty, which is probably characteristic of this work, is the absence of documents dealing with high level policy. Here 'Abd al-Rahman, both as a person and a ruler, comes into the picture. He had an "unlimited flow of language"<sup>11</sup> and tended to give different impressions of himself on different occasions. Although he used to consult his advisers at times, he did not make public his own views on major issues although they alone were decisive. One result of this method of ruling is that we are now obliged to construct generalisations and logical patterns

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11 Durand to Cunningham, 3 Dec 1893, PSLI, 73, 15.

of the events exclusively from the implementation of the policies rather than from the enunciation of the policies themselves. How far I have been able to succeed in this is for the reader to make his own judgement. Here, I would like to make one point clear about the method which I have followed in composing this thesis. Because no other work on the subject of this thesis exists, I have tried first to reconstruct the past by establishing the facts, and then to draw conclusions by analysing them.

Of the printed works about the period under discussion, The Life of Abdur Rahman by Sultan Mahomed is by far the best. But it is not an autobiography in its entirety, as has generally been assumed, as only the first eleven chapters (covering the present thesis) have been written by 'Abd al-Rahman. Sultan Mahomed, who was originally a native of the Panjab, claims in one place that he wrote the rest as dictated by the Amir.<sup>12</sup> In another place, he speaks of translating the book from Persian into English.<sup>13</sup> But it is doubtful whether the Amir personally dictated the rest of the book to him as he claims. In 1895, Dr. Gray, the Amir's former physician, sent 'Abd al-Rahman his book My Residence at the Court of the Amir - a collection of personal impressions of rather insignificant matters. The Amir became displeased with the book but it gave him the idea of writing a book himself. This was the time when Sultan Mahomed, the Amir's former mir munshi (general secretary) was without a job, mainly because he

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12 1, viii.

13 1, ix.



was under suspicion for being in correspondence with some Britons in India. In January 1896, the Amir commissioned him to compile a book on his life and made available to him all the necessary documents. But Sultan Mahomed was instructed to show the manuscript to the Amir only through Sardar Habib Allah and Sardar Mohammad Yusuf, the Amir's son and uncle respectively. How the work proceeded from this time onwards is not known to me, as I have not been able to go through the records up to the death of the Amir in 1901. One thing is certain however; the second part of the book, especially that which deals with the foreign policy, is not genuine. I have been at pains for some time how to reconcile the Amir's conflicting views as expressed in his firmans with his alleged Autobiography, until I discovered that "...all the latter part [ of the Autobiography ] is made up in England."<sup>14</sup> However, providing the reader guards against the several factual mistakes, the latter part in so far as it deals with internal, as opposed to international, affairs, can be regarded as generally reliable.

The second most valuable book in English on Afghanistan under 'Abd al-Rahman is probably Frank Martin's Under the Absolute Amir. Frank Martin was the younger brother of Sir A. Martin, through whom the Amir employed English specialists for his workshops and bought war materials from England. Frank Martin came to Kabul in 1895.

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14 Lord Kitchener to Curzon, 20 Apr 1903, Mss Eur., F.111, Curzon Collection, Vol. 207, Letter No.117, 109. I am indebted to Miss Lal Baha - SCAS - for this reference.

Subsequently he succeeded Salter Pyne as the Amir's chief engineer. Martin spoke Persian well and Pashto poorly. The Amir treated him well and received him frequently in the darbar. The main merit of his book is that it contains a good description of the institutions, especially of the darbar, rather than concentrating on the author's personal impressions.

Except for certain aspects of diplomatic relations, this thesis is based on materials previously unused, and deals with topics which have not been dealt with before. An exception is Sultan Mahomed's book, but this book gives only an outline of some major events from the Amir's point of view. As such, it is hoped that this thesis will be a contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 1 shows how, as a result of the the second Anglo-Afghan war, the political atmosphere finally became suitable for 'Abd al-Rahman to appear as a candidate for the throne of Afghanistan. Chapter 2 covers both diplomatic and internal developments, as a result of which 'Abd al-Rahman was accepted as the Amir of Kabul. This is perhaps the most important chapter of all, in which anti-British popular resistance, the activities of various political factions and the position of 'Abd al-Rahman in relation to all, including the British, has been dealt with at some length. Chapter 3 analyses the causes of the confrontation between 'Abd al-Rahman and Ayub. It is in this confrontation that the Durrani and Ghilzays play an important role. With the outcome favourable to the Amir, the Durrani became estranged from him. Also, the reunification

of Afghanistan was, to a large extent, assured.

While the first two chapters describe the establishment of his rule by the Amir, the rest are accounts of his efforts mainly for the extension and consolidation of his rule. Chapter 4 is a clear illustration of the latter, which covers the Amir's attempts in eastern Afghanistan until 1897. The consolidation of the central power is best illustrated in the struggle with the Shinwarays. It shows, in part, how and at what price, the previously only nominally subject Shinwarays were, for the first time, brought under the firm control of Kabul. It also analyses how the Amir's advances further east were finally checked and a large section of the Pashtuns was, by treaty, separated from Kabul.

Chapter 5 describes how the Ghilzays finally reacted to the oppressive rule of the Amir. It shows the full significance of a major tribal rising and its wider implications for the Amir's future dealings with the tribes. In Chapter 6, the Amir's apparently surprising confrontation with Ishaq is fully discussed. It shows how, by defeating Ishaq, who was supported by a regular army and the Turkistanis, a major threat to a probable civil war was averted surprisingly quickly. Chapters 7 and 8 show how, for the first time, the semi-independent and independent territories of the Hazarajat and Kafiristan were incorporated into Afghanistan.

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For comments on these documents and evaluation of the sources of information, see Conclusion.

Documents, etc. - PublishedSee abbreviations

(Political and Secret Department Library, India Office Library)

- |      |                    |   |
|------|--------------------|---|
| A    | E. Neel            | Correspondence relating to<br>Afghanistan, 2 vols., 1878 - 1881.  |
|      | A.W. Moore         | Afghan Memoranda, 2 vols.   |
|      | O.T. Burne         | Afghanistan - various Memoranda.<br>Memorandum Afghanistan.<br>Memorandum - Afghanistan Frontier<br>Demarcation, Hari Rud to Oxus,<br>pts. i - v.<br>Memorandum - Indo-Afghan<br>Demarcation.<br>Agreement with Amir, Parliamentary<br>Questions, Chitral, Kafiristan, etc. |
| B. 6 | H. Le Poer<br>Wyne | Narrative of recent events in<br>Afghanistan from the recovery of<br>Kandahar to the conclusion of the<br>rebellion of Yacoob Khan,<br>(1868 - 1871).   |
| B. 9 |                    | Summary of events in Afghanistan<br>from Dost Mohammad's death to the<br>battle of Sheikhabad, 1863 - 1871.<br>With precis by Mr. Wyllie.   |
| B.10 | 1869 J. Wheeler    | Memorandum on Afghan Affairs from<br>1700.  |
| B.11 |                    | Recent events in Afghanistan,<br>1866 - 1868.<br>Continuation of Mr. Wyllie's precis.   |
| B.13 | T.C. Plowden       | Precis of correspondence showing<br>the policy and relations of the<br>British Government towards<br>Afghanistan, 1872 - 1879.  |

- |        |      |               |  |
|--------|------|---------------|--|
| B.43   | 1880 | E.G. Hastings | Genealogical tree of the Peshawari sardars of the Barakzai family.     |
| B.44   | 1880 | E.G. Hastings | Genealogical table showing the Kabuli and Herati sardars and others.   |
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| B.46   | 1880 | E.G. Hastings | Genealogical tree of the reigning branch of the Barakzai family.       |
| B.47   | 1888 |               | Biographical Accounts of Chiefs, Sardars and Others of Afghanistan.    |
| B.104  | 1893 | A.H. Mason    | Report on the Mahsud Waziri tribe with map.                            |
| B.107A |      |               | Treaties with Afghanistan (Amir Dost Mohammad Khan).                   |
| B.182  | 1910 |               | A dictionary of the Pathan tribes on the north-west frontier of India. |
| B.220  | 1914 |               | Who's Who in Afghanistan.  |
| B.192  | 1919 |               | Routes south of the Kabul river.                                       |

(Political and Secret Department Memoranda)

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|------|------|--------------------------------|---|
| A. 5 | 1869 | T. Wheeler                     | Afghan Turkistan                        |
| A.21 | 1878 | A.W. Moore                     | Afghanistan: historical sketch.         |
| A.28 | 1879 | Report of the Court of Enquiry | Attack on the British Embassy at Kabul. |
| A.30 | 1879 | H. Grey                        | Affairs of Afghanistan                  |

- |      |      |                                    |   |
|------|------|------------------------------------|---|
| A.31 | 1879 | R.H.P. Bennick                     | Afghanistan: Selection of an Amir.                                  |
| A.32 | 1880 | Sir O.T. Burne                     | Recognition of Sardar Sher Ali as an independent ruler of Kandahar. |
| A.33 | 1880 | Members of the Political Committee | Affairs in northern Afghanistan.                                    |
| A.34 | 1880 | Lord Lytton                        | Political situation in northern Afghanistan.                        |
| A.35 | 1880 | Members of the Political Committee | Notes on the "Herat Question".                                      |
| A.36 | 1880 | Sir W. Merwether                   | Position of affairs in Afghanistan.                                 |
| A.37 | 1880 | Sir O.T. Burne                     | Negotiations with Abdur Rahman.                                     |
| A.38 | 1880 | Sir O.T. Burne                     | Russian correspondence found at Kabul.                              |
| A.39 | 1880 | Sir H. Norman                      | Note on the retention of Kandahar.                                  |
| A.40 | 1880 | Sir H. Rawlinson                   | Note on the retention of Kandahar.                                  |
| A.41 | 1880 | Lord Napier of Magdala             | Note on the retention of Kandahar.                                  |
| A.42 | 1880 | Sir O.T. Burne                     | Kabul family roll.  |
| A.43 | 1881 | A.W. Moore                         | Narrative of events in Afghanistan, August 1878 to December 1880.   |
| A.44 | 1881 | H.W. Wylie                         | Pishin  |
| A.46 | 1882 | H. Waterfield                      | Relations of the Amir of Afghanistan with the Badshah of Kunar.     |

- A.47 1882 A.W. Moore Relations of the Amir of Afghanistan with the Badshah of Kunar and the Khan of Lalpura.
- A.48 1882 G. Napier Undefined frontiers between Persia, Afghanistan and Russia.
- A.49 1883 Departmental Note Afghanistan: disposition of the Amir's troops.
- A.50 1884 Sir O.T. Burne Policy towards Afghanistan in consequence of Russia's actions with regard to the Merv Turcomans.
- A.51 1884 Sir H. Rawlinson Shighnan and Roshan
- A.52 1884 A.W. Moore } Correspondence relative to the  
1886 E. Neel } boundary of Afghanistan; Questions of Shighnan. 2 pts.
- A.53 1886 A.W. Moore } Correspondence in regard to the  
Sir O.T. Burne } demarcation of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan from the Hari Rud to the Oxus. 2 pts.
- A.54 Correspondence of the Amir of Afghanistan (Abdur Rahman) with the Viceroy of India and others. 2 pts.
- A.68 1885 North-west boundary of Afghanistan between the Hari Rud and the Oxus Rivers.
- A.69 1885 Central Asia and Afghanistan: Chronological table of events from 1855.
- A.70 1886 Strength of Afghan troops in Turkistan and Badakhshan.



A.71	1886	Sir R. Sandeman	Future policy in Afghanistan.
A.75	1886	Sir R. Sandeman	Boundary of the Quetta District.
A.76	1887	T.H. Holdich	Geographical results of the Afghan Boundary Commission.
A.77	1887	T.H. Holdich	Report on survey operations in western and north-western Afghanistan.
A.78	1887	Departmental Note	Military resources of the Amir of Afghanistan.
A.78	1888	Departmental Note	Indian Frontier policy.
A.81	1891	Sir C. Bayley	Afghanistan: question of succession.
A.84	1892	W.N.S.	Extent and objects of the proposed delimitation in the Pamir region.
A.85	1892	Sir A.C. Lyall	The responsibilities of Her Majesty's Government for Afghan foreign relations.
A.86	1892	Sir S.C. Bayley	Delimitation in the Upper Oxus territories.
A.91	1892	Sir S.C. Bayley	Afghanistan: agreement with Russia of 1872-3, Upper Oxus question.
A.94	1895	F.E. Young- husband	Notes on Chitral with reference to the murder of Nizam ul-Mulk and Umra Khan's invasion.
A.107	1895		Visit of Shahzadah Nasrullah Khan of Afghanistan to England.
A.108	1896	Sir W. Lee Warner	Kafiristan

A.109	1896	Sir W. Lee- Warner	Memorandum on British relations with Afghanistan.
A.110			The Afghan succession and Russia's advance.
A.111	1896	A.C. Lyall	Policy in regard to Afghanistan.
A.112	1896	Sir W. Lee- Warner	The Afghan succession.
A.114		Sir O.T. Burne	Afghanistan: Amir Sher Ali and negotiations with Abdur Rahman (MS. copy).
A.116	1887	Resolution of the Political Committee	Afghanistan: disordered conditions, Russian aggression.
A.117	1886	F. Roberts	The defence of north-west frontier of India.
A.118	1885	E. Barington	Negotiations with the Russian Government for the demarcation of the boundary of Afghanistan since the annexation of Merv.
A.120	1880	E. Baring	The retention of Kandahar and Pishin.
A.123	1889	Sir R. Sandeman	Present position on the north- western frontier.
A.125			The Afghan question.
A.128	1887	A.J.	Afghanistan: Russia's advance.
A.129	1897	Sir A. Lyall	North-west frontier affairs.
A.130		Sir W. Lee- Warner	North-west frontier affairs.
A.133	1884	R. Michell	Russian advance in central Asia.

A.137	1898	Sir W. Lee- Warner and Lord Curzon	Question of the Afghan succession.
A.140		Sir D. Fitz Patrick	Our relations with the tribes on north-west frontier.
A.142	1889	A.H.M.	Distribution of Afghan troops.
A.143	1889	Sir A.C. Lyall	Minutes of correspondence with the Amir of Afghanistan.
A.144	1899	J.G. Lorimer	Strength of the Afghan troops.
A.147	1900		Russian assurances in regard to Afghanistan, 1869 - 1885.
A.155	1901		Collection of agreements and treaties with Afghanistan.
A.157	1902	R. Ritchie	Afghanistan, the engagements with the late Amir.

Parliamentary papers

Year	Vol.	Command No.	Title
1879	LVI	2190	Correspondence respecting the relations between the British Government and Afghanistan since the accession of the Ameer Shere Ali Khan.
		2191	Further papers relating to the affairs of Afghanistan.
		2250	Further papers relating to the affairs of Afghanistan.
		2401	Further correspondence.
		2402	Further correspondence.

Year	Vol.	Command No.	Title
1880	L111	2457	Correspondence relating to the affairs of Afghanistan.
		2690	Papers relating to the advance of Ayooob Khan and Kandahar.
		2736	Further papers.
1881	LXX	2776	Further correspondence relating to the affairs of Afghanistan, including the recognition of Sirdar Abdul Rahman Khan as Amir of Kabul.
		2811	Papers relating to the occupation of Kandahar.
		2852	Further papers relating to the occupation of Kandahar.
		2865	Further correspondence relating to the affairs of Afghanistan, including the transfer of the Administration of Kandahar to Amir Abdul Rahman Khan.
1896	LX	8042	Agreement signed by Mr. R. Udny and Sipah Salar Ghulam Haidar Khan, Joint Commissioners for laying down the Afghan boundary from the Hindu Kush range to Nawa Kotal, confirmed 19th December 1895.
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