

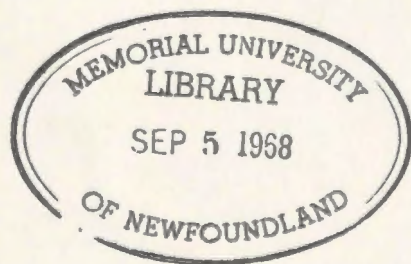
THE PROBLEM OF THE
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER
OF INDIA: 1800-1880

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THE PROBLEM OF THE
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER
OF INDIA; 1800-1880

A THESIS
BY
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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

1968

THIS THESIS HAS BEEN APPROVED BY:

INTERNAL EXAMINER

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

ABSTRACT

Early in the nineteenth century British India was compelled to give attention to her North-West Frontier. Fear of invasion, prompted first by Napoleon, forced the British to search for a defensible frontier in advance of the existing position.

At first the defensive policy was to establish the neighbouring states, particularly Persia and Afghanistan, as buffers. But by the late 1830's, Russian intrigue in these countries convinced the British that actual control of Afghanistan was vital to Indian security. Thus the First Afghan War ensued.

Following the war, Sind and the Punjab were annexed as partial realization of the desire for a defensible frontier, bringing the British into contact with the mountains of the North-West and the mountain tribes. The reaction to the war, combined with the administrative problems of the new provinces, caused some, particularly John Lawrence, to regard the Indus as the best defensible frontier. Others saw a better defensive line at the foot of the mountains, or beyond, on the

Kabul-Kandahar line, with Herat as an advance post.

With the advance to the mountains, the Pathan and Baluch tribesmen came into the context of Imperial policy, since they had to be pacified to ensure unobstructed British access to the mountain passes. Even if British defense were to rest on the Indus, the tribes had to be brought to friendly terms, in the hope that they would not join an invader.

With the consolidation of the new provinces, and renewed Russian activity in Central Asia after 1860, the tendency was once again to seek security for India by an advance into Afghanistan. Thus the policy of the 1870's was similar to that of the 1830's; the Second Afghan War was the result of the search for a defensible frontier, as the first had been.

Thus the theme of the thesis is the search for a defensible frontier for India, 1800-1880.

PREFACE

In pursuing a study of the North-West Frontier of India, one is very soon impressed with the vast body of literature which has been written and accumulated on the subject. A second impression occurs that there is an ever-present, but not always apparent, theme running through it--that the British were constantly aware of the necessity of finding a frontier that could easily be defended in case of invasion.

It has been my attempt to develop this theme of the search for a defensible frontier. Having but limited access to primary source material and original documents, my effort has been almost totally restricted to an analysis of secondary sources. Some were works of contemporary to the period under examination, others having been written with the advantage of a century of retrospect.

This particular theme, of a search for a defensible frontier, has been developed by historians like A. J. Norris and D. P. Singhal, but their works cover only a relatively short time span. No one has attempted to cover the period from the first awareness of the frontier problem up to the second attempt, eighty years later, to establish the frontier on the Afghan Plateau. Therefore, I have attempted,

as far as my resources and ability would permit, to develop this theme covering this particular period.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Dr. Leslie Harris, certainly for his assistance and constructive criticism in the preparation of this thesis, but more particularly for his having introduced me to this most intriguing facet of Indian history.

Thanks certainly has to be expressed to the staff of Memorial University Library for their constant assistance and service. I appreciate now that librarians are more than mere custodians of the printed word.

A very special debt of gratitude has to be expressed to Miss Sheila MacLeod, who so cheerfully and so capably transformed a mass of handwritten material into the finished product.

To my wife, I express my awareness of and appreciation for, her understanding and patience. There was always encouragement; if scholarship is lacking, I have only myself to blame.

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Chapter I

EMERGENCE OF A FRONTIER PROBLEM

1800-1840

British India's contact with the tribes of the North-West Frontier and her relations with Afghanistan throughout the nineteenth century were the product of two separate forces at work, one serving to emphasize the other. It is highly probable that normal British expansion, even without the Russian threat, eventually would have brought British India into contact with Afghanistan. Napoleon first, Russia later, brought a sense of urgency to the situation and accelerated the process of expansion and involvement.

British expansion was motivated by several influences, including, imperialistic acquisitiveness, the urge to dominate, the repercussions of strife in Europe, the greed of great trading companies hungry for dividends, and the policies of ambitious men scarcely restrained by authority whose control was rendered nugatory by distance.¹

There were other influences, perhaps more vital, often involving the "white man's burden." In 1688 the President and Council of Surat stated the cause of British obligation to the

1. Fraser-Tytler, W. K., Afghanistan, London, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 75.

people of the sub-continent when they declared,

There are many eminent persons that have declared themselves very desirous to live among us with their families might they be secure.¹

Thus, while people found security within the English fold, the English found themselves with an obligation forced upon them which is not normally a characteristic of a trading company, that is, the obligation to protect the native peoples that came within the British territories. Unintentionally, customers became subjects.

However the most vital influence in British expansion was the necessity of procuring a defensible border. One method was to expand spheres of influence into protectorates and surround acquisitions with a belt of native states. Thus,

The Rajput states and Oude were maintained as a buffer, Sind and Punjab warded off contact with Baluchistan and Afghanistan while the Sutlej states warded off contact with the Punjab.²

Lord Wellesley's annexations were inspired by a desire to find a defensible border, as P. E. Roberts claims when he remarks that,

Wellesley . . . turned his attention to his northern frontier. He held that the buffer state of Oudh formed but a weak defence of the north-western boundary of Bengal.³

1. Foster, English Factories in India 1668-69, as quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 75.

2. Curzon, G. N., Frontiers, Romanes Lecture, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1907, p. 79.

3. Roberts, P. E., History of British India, London, Oxford University Press, 1952, p. 248.

Moreover, as the Mogul Empire declined with the eighteenth century, historical experience warned of the possibility of a fresh wave of conquerors emerging from the vast area west of the Hindu Kush. Indeed, two such waves were forthcoming, the first under Nadir Shah in 1749 and the second under Ahmad Shah in 1761,

Meanwhile, the English, the only stable political and military power in India, found expansion to the north and west actually forced upon them; a phenomenon which Sir Henry Rawlinson, for example, saw as "another illustration of the old doctrine that, when civilization and barbarism came in contact, the latter must inevitably give way."¹

The British, in India, followed this common pattern. In 1798 the Bengal Presidency had been expanded westward to include Benares and Allahabad. By 1805 further territorial acquisitions had advanced their north-western territories almost to the River Sutlej, touching the territories of the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs. During Lord Minto's Governor Generalship (1807-1813) Ranjit Singh agreed to abstain from all interference in the affairs of the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs who had placed themselves under British protection.² Thus,

1. Rawlinson, H. C., Memorandum on Central Asia, printed in Philips, C. H., Select Documents on the History of India and Pakistan, Vol.IV, London, Oxford University Press, 1962. p. 442.

2. Davies, C. C., An Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula, London, Oxford University Press, 1958, maps 26, 28, p. 56, 58.

As they [the British] moved they reached out beyond their boundaries, seeking to safeguard the territories they had conquered by probing into the secrets and the policies of those which lay ahead.¹

The opening years of the nineteenth century found the British frontier advanced to the River Sutlej with the farthest outpost at Ludhiana. The normal pressure for advance and the desire for a defensible frontier had reached a logical stopping point, a river frontier with a strong friendly chieftain on the other side.

But though there were forces which constantly compelled the British forward there were also forces in the opposite direction. For the mountains of the North-West were reached contrary to the wishes of the Directors of the East India Company. The Governors-General, under whose direction the frontiers advanced, were pledged to non-annexation and non-intervention. While Pitts' India Act of 1784 had stated that "schemes of conquest were repugnant to the wish, honour and policy of the nation" this declaration was followed by Wellesley's and Dalhousie's annexations. In spite of the pledge of non-annexation they apparently were aware that

Any great power that fails adequately to protect its frontier ceases to be great; any empire that neglects this important duty of self preservation is eventually overthrown.²

1. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 77.

2. Davies, C. C., The Problem of the North West Frontier, London, Oxford University Press, 1932, p. 2.

But it is true that

at this time and for long afterwards the British had no conception of the strategic problems which were immediately confronting them in their advance to the north-west and the strategic connections of Afghanistan with the security of India had not yet crossed the horizon of their consciousness.¹

When, eventually, they were drawn into the orbit of Central Asian affairs the precipitating agent was another European power, It was Napoleon who first brought the North-West into practical Anglo-Indian politics; "such men as he have a dangerous gift of shattering complacency, as often by the mere fantasy and audacity of their ambitions as by any sense in them."²

Before Napoleon's advent on the Asian scene the Valley of the Indus held little attraction for the East India Company. But the growing power of France in Europe and the daring of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt kindled speculation as to the possibility of a French invasion of India. French intrigues in Persia likewise stimulated British sensitivity in regard to the sub-continent, for

Some French agents under the feigned character of botanists had visited Teheran before Bonaparte invaded Egypt, and wished Aga Mohamed Khan, the then ruler of Persia, to seize Bussorah and Bagdad.

1. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 79.

2. Morison, J. L., "From Alexander Burnes to Frederick Roberts," Raleigh Lecture, printed in Proceedings of British Academy, Vol. 22, 1936, p. 178.

They also endeavoured to stimulate the Shah to assist Tippoo Sultan against the British.¹

Since Napoleon had made no secret of his ambitions to lead an army across Asia Minor to India, the authorities in England and India became convinced of the imminence of the French menace and directed all their diplomatic, commercial, and military efforts in the countries to the west and north-west of India towards the repulse of these anticipated threats. Even

Napoleon's repulse outside Acre, the destruction of his fleet by Nelson and the obvious logistical impracticability of marching a significant force through the arid and hostile lands of south west Asia did not diminish the determination of the Company's officers to shore up their military and diplomatic defences in India.²

Involvement in the Indus Valley and the closing of Sind was of prime importance to any defensive strategy, for Sind might well play an important role in the calculations of several potential aggressors. For not only were the French feared but also a threatened combination of the Marathas, with Tipu Sultan of Mysore, the Amirs of Sind, and possibly the French. Furthermore, Zamin Shah, the Amir of Afghanistan, was thought to be contemplating an invasion of India through Sind, perhaps also with French assistance.

1. Kaye, J. W., History of the War in Afghanistan, London, R. Bentley, 1857, Vol. 1, p. 44.

2. Huttenback, R. A., British Relations With Sind, Berkley, University of California Press, 1962, p. 1.

Consequently, as early as 1794 Jonathan Duncan, the Governor of Bombay, sent a merchant to the court of Mir Fatehali Khan to try to set the stage for the reopening of amicable relations between Sind and British India. The agent succeeded in his attempt and the establishment of a factory was proposed, "not so much with a view to commercial as to political advantages."¹

In March 1800, Nathan Crow was sent to be the company's agent in Sind. In a report he listed six advantages inherent in any British establishment in Sind: it would divert and worry Zamin Shah and make him more tractable; it would ensure help if an attack on Afghanistan became necessary; it would provide a base for the formentation of revolution against Kabul if this were considered necessary or desirable; it would preclude the entry of the French, Afghans or Marathas into Sind; it would provide an excellent base from which to spy on Afghanistan.²

Actually none of these advantages came to be realized, for the Sindians forced the factory to be closed and Crow to leave.

Meanwhile,

with the inception of the Consulate and the renewal of the campaign against Austria, Napoleon became so preoccupied with affairs in Europe that even

1. Huttenback, R. A., "The French Threat to India and British Relations with Sind," English Historical Review, Vol. 76, 1961, p. 591.

2. I. O. R. Home and Miscellaneous, V 333, Crow to Duncan, May 1880, quoted in Huttenback, "The French Threat to India," op. cit., p. 592.

alarmist British statesmen were soon convinced that the French threat to India had at least temporarily waned, thus the affairs of Sind became unimportant to the British interest.¹

The response to the French threat had not been confined to activities in Sind. In fact, Wellesley approached Persia for assistance in guarding the north-western approaches to India. He instructed Medhi Ali Khan, a naturalized Persian, who was acting as the resident of the Company at Bushire

to take measures for inducing the Court of Persia to keep Zamin Shah in perpetual check (so as to preclude him from returning to India) but without any decided act of hostility.²

Thus in 1801 a treaty was signed with Fath Ali Shah of Persia whereby Afghans and French were to be prevented from attacking India. As for the Afghans, the Shah undertook "to lay waste and desolate the Afghan dominions and to employ every exertion to ruin and humble the above mentioned nation,"³ while the British Government agreed to furnish the Persian army with warlike stores.

Lord Minto went to India in 1807 believing in the policy of non-intervention,⁴ but was able to check, only temporarily, the forward policy inaugurated by Wellesley. For, though

1. Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, op. cit., p. 4.

2. Sykes, P. A., History of Afghanistan, London, McMillan and Company, 1940, V of 1, p. 378.

3. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 76.

4. Roberts, op. cit., p. 266.

the Peace of Amiens had, for a short time, contracted the danger of a French invasion, its disintegration reawakened British apprehensions as to possible French aspirations both toward India and the lands to the west of the Hindu Kush. As the prospect of the French arousing anti-British feelings in the North-West was re-awakened, Minto became disposed to the policy of establishing outposts to detect possible French manoeuvres. He wrote:

I do not allude at present to any expedition of any actual invasion of the British territories in India by a French army; but many considerations denote conclusively the extension of the enemies views to this country.¹

The signing of the Treaty of Tilsit is generally regarded as being an important event in the history of frontier diplomacy. Indeed, J. L. Morison suggests that "we may take the history of our frontier to begin after 1807."²

Certainly the complications created by the signing of the treaty were typical of phenomena that would re-occur during the nineteenth century; for as C. C. Davies remarked retrospectively in 1932,

to a large extent our Afghan policy has been regulated by the pressure of the political barometer in Europe, for friction between England and Russia in Europe have nearly always been followed by complications in Central Asia.³

1. Elliot, Gilbert, Life and Letters of Gilbert Elliot, quoted in Huttenback, "The French Threat to India", op. cit., p. 593.

2. Morison, op. cit.

3. Davies, C. C., The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit., p. 154.

However, the effect of the Treaty of Tilsit has been somewhat overestimated, and in its Indian frame of reference can only be viewed in relationship with another treaty made two months earlier between France and Persia which was allowed to lapse after the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit. The implications of Tilsit were not immediately felt in Persia; but the Treaty of Finkenstein, which provided for a Franco Persian alliance, activated a British response which is sometimes associated with Tilsit.

While the actual signing of the Treaty of Finkenstein took place only two months before the signing of Tilsit the chain of events which led to its signing began at least two years previously, for "in 1805 the Shah addressed a letter to Napoleon seeking the aid of the great western conqueror to stem the tide of Russian encroachment."¹

While the first French agent appeared in Persia in 1805 the entente began to take shape in 1806, as

Monsieur Joubert was received with marked attention and respect . . . the king was prepared to listen to any proposal, so that his new allies undertook to co-operate against his Russian enemies. He would join in an invasion of Hindostan, or in concert with the French, amputate any given limb from the body of the Turkish empire.²

1. Kaye, op. cit., p. 44.

2. Ibid, p. 49.

In 1807 the Finkenstein treaty was signed, the Shah agreed, "if the French have any intention of invading Khorasan the king will appoint an army to go down by the road of Kabul and Kandahar."¹ Thus the treaty clearly proved his readiness on paper to invade India.

Since Persia had entered an alliance with France to get assistance against Russian aggression, it was the English policy to approach Persia with the same enticement, therefore:

The court of St. James had proposed to assist Persia by mediating with St. Petersburg, and Mr. Hartford Jones was deputed to Teheran to negotiate with the ministers of the Shah. It was originally intended that he should proceed to Persia, taking the Russian capital in his route; but the pacification of Tilsit caused a departure from this design, and Sir Hartford Jones sailed for Bombay with the mission on board one of His Majesty's ships.²

Hence the Jones mission, and likewise the Malcolm mission, must have been planned before Tilsit, and thus were a response to Finkenstein.

Whereas the Malcolm mission failed because the impact of Tilsit and its meaning for Persia were not yet felt in Teheran and the Persians still had faith in the Franco Persian alliance, the Jones mission was successful because it coincided with the Persian realization of her position.

Malcolm left his successor to reap the harvest of altered circumstances for when Jones arrived in Teheran

1. Sykes, op. cit., p. 379.

2. Kaye, op. cit., p. 55.

the 'chapter of accidents' had worked mightily in his favour. The reign of Gallic influence was at an end. Our enemies had overreached themselves, and been caught in their own toils. Before Napoleon and the Tsar had thrown themselves into each others arms at Tilsit, it had been the policy of the French to persuade the Persian court that the aggressive designs of Russia could be successfully counteracted only by a power at enmity with that state; and now he and the emperor were 'invariablement unit pour la paix comme pour la guerre.'¹

Furthermore, the Persians felt that their interests had been sacrificed at Tilsit because one of the enticements of Finkenstein had been the return of Georgia to Persia with Russian benevolence. But after Tilsit "Fath Ali was naturally deeply chagrined by the Convention since it contained no reference to the return to Persia of Georgia."²

Furthermore, the Seton and Smith missions to Sind were also in response to the Treaty of Finkenstein for the Gardanne mission to Teheran in 1807 had also been intriguing with the Amirs of Sind. Before the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit, native intelligence reported that envoys from Sind had arrived in Persia and rumours reported imminence of a French foothold in Sind.³

Minto's reaction was to open relations immediately with Sind and have an agent appointed to

determine the extent of the Franco Sind influence and counteract it. Also he should attempt to

1. Ibid, p. 62.

2. Sykes, op. cit., p. 379.

3. Huttenback, "The French Threat to India," op. cit., p. 594.

determine the extent of the Franco Persian influence in the countries north of Sind and should do his utmost to re-establish British influence in the Sind court, the agent should also investigate the feasibility of an army's marching from India to Persia.¹

To re-establish relations Captain David Seton was sent to Sind as an envoy. Seton proposed a treaty, favourable to Sind, but in keeping with his mission to re-establish relations with Sind, and to undermine Persian and French influence at all costs. However, this treaty was abrogated by Minto and a second treaty was proposed by Nicholas Hankey Smith which was accepted. (August, 1809) Ultimately this treaty was accepted for the same reason as the Jones treaty with Persia, because of the changed circumstances following Tilsit.

While Morison points out that the Tilsit plan aroused the Government in British India, it was actually French rather than Russian aggression which was the bogey originally. This view is supported by C. C. Davies who points out that it was not the Treaty of Tilsit but French intrigues in Persia and the success of General Gardannes mission to Teheran in 1807 that alarmed Lord Minto. However, the success of Minto's counterstroke, Malcolm's mission to the court of the Shah and that of Elphinstone to the camp of Shah Shuja at Peshawar was made easier of attainment because Napoleon had sacrificed Persian interests at Tilsit.

1. Minto in Council to Duncan, March 14, 1808, as quoted in Huttenback, "The French Threat to India," op. cit., p. 595.

Paradoxically, therefore,

the alliance between the two great continental powers which seemed to threaten the destruction of the British Empire in the East, was a source of security to the latter.¹

Precisely which treaty, Tilsit or Finkenstein waked the British response is not really terribly important. But what is significant is that the response to a potential threat against Indian security was an attempt to establish buffers along all exposed frontiers, thus Elphinstone to Afghanistan, Metcalfe to Ranjit Singh at Lahore, and Seton and Smith to Sind. Kaye presents the case clearly when he wrote,

It now became our policy whilst endeavouring to re-establish our influence in Persia to prepare ourselves for its hostility, and to employ Afghanistan and Sindh as barriers against encroachments from the west; and at the same time to increase our security by enlisting against the French and Persian confederacy the friendly offices of the Sikhs.²

It would appear that the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit compounded already existing fears and raised the spectre of a combined Franco Russian move on India through Persia. The combined impact of the two treaties is given by Huttenback as the reason for the home authorities becoming thoroughly alarmed and ordering the Governor General to take measures to prevent a hostile army from crossing the Indus and to cultivate

1. Kaye, op. cit., p. 53.

2. Ibid, p. 53.

to the utmost of your powers the favourable opinion and co-operation not only of all states and countries to the eastward of the Indus but also of the Afghan government and even of the Tartar tribes to the eastward of the Caspian.¹

However, Napoleon soon became involved in dynastic intrigues and unable to free himself from the "Sepoy General" in the Iberian Peninsula; thus he posed no further threat to India. The Secret Committee considered this situation a reason, of the most forcible nature for proceeding without unnecessary delay to reduce our military expenses within the narrowest bounds that may be consistent with the publick interests and security.²

When the repercussions of Finkenstein and Tilsit had ended, the French threat vanished and the British focused their attention on Russia which had come to be the major threat to India, rather than France or Persia. Actually, Russian aspirations towards India had existed long before Tilsit and Napoleon.

Popular belief held that Russia's intentions towards India went as far back as the days of Peter the Great and that the plan for Russian encroachment towards India was set forth in his will. But it is generally accepted that this will of Peter the Great was fabricated. As Eugene Schuyler explains,

The forgery of the will of Peter the Great was due to the desire of Napoleon to frighten

1. I. O. R. Boards Secret Drafts, March 2, 1808, as quoted in Huttenback, The French Threat to India, op. cit., p. 594.

2. I. O. R. Boards Secret Drafts, June 29, 1810, ibid, p. 599.

Europe, and thus to give him excuses and pretexts for entering upon his Moscow campaign . . . there are strong reasons for believing that the only will left by Peter the Great, that naming his wife as his successor, was forged by Catherine and Menshikof immediately after his death.¹

This same argument is raised by Laurence Lockhart, who also claims that the will is fictitious and that no mention of it was made prior to 1812 and that it was "mere a pamphlet to justify the invasion of Russia by Napoleon."²

By 1860 the authenticity of the will was doubted by historians and in 1877

Tsar Alexander II, when assuring the German ambassador, Prince Hohenlohe Schillingfurst, that Russia had no designs on India or Constantinople, denied the existence of the will.³

Nevertheless, whether authentic or not, to a limited extent it accurately reflects the political aims of Peter the Great, for Peter was anxious to establish an overland route to India. For,

It was Medvedyev's mission to Bokhara and Balkh in 1644 that first gave the rulers of Russia the idea of opening up a trade route to India through Central Asia.⁴

1. Schuyler, E., Turkistan, New York, Scribner, 1885, Vol. II, p. 258.

2. Lockhart, Laurence, "The Political Testament of Peter the Great," Slavonic Review, Vol. 19, 1936, p. 437.

3. Ibid, p. 439.

4. Ibid, p. 440.

Furthermore,

There is little doubt that rumours of the great wealth of the country south of the Central Asian wastes had reached him [Peter] and provoked his curiosity, and he dispatched a secret envoy, one Simon Malinki, to explore the region which was at that time being contested by England and France. Malinki started from St. Petersburg in 1694 but he never reached his goal . . . Defeated in his first attempt, Peter strove by other means to gain information respecting India . . . and on learning that in order to reach the coveted land it would be necessary first of all to traverse Turkestan and subdue its turbulent people, he gave orders for the ill-fated expedition of Prince Bekovitch, whose assumed victory over the Khivans was to open up the way towards the Hindu Kush.¹

Also Peter is quoted as having said,

Bukhara is the commercial centre of these parts . . . from Astrabad to Balkh and Badakshan is only twelve days journey and on that road to India no one can interfere with us.²

In reviewing the history of Russian invasion proposals towards India, Lord Curzon states that an advance toward India via Orenburg, Bokhara and Kabul was planned as early as 1791 by M. de St. Gemi and considered by Empress Catherine.³

The second expedition was to be a joint venture designed by Emperor Paul and Napoleon (then First Consul). The plan called for a French army of 35,000 to march down the Danube

1. Krausse, Alexis, Russia in Asia, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1899, p. 149.

2. Solovyev, Istoria Rossii, Vol. XVIII, p. 48, as quoted in Lockhart, op. cit., p. 440.

3. Curzon, G. N., Russia in Central Asia and The Anglo Russian Question, London, Longmans, Green, 1889, p. 167.

to the Black Sea to be shipped thence to Taganragan on the Sea of Azov where it would then join a Russian force of greater strength upon the Volga. They would then be conveyed by river to Astrakhan and by sea to Astrabad, then an over-land march through Persia to Herat, Farrah and Kandahar, Apparently the spirit of liberation appealed to Paul, for he wrote,

The sufferings under which the population of India groans have inspired France and Russia with the liveliest interest, and the two governments have resolved to unite their forces in order to liberate India from the tyrannical and barbarous yoke of the English.¹

Apparently Napoleon was not quite as "inspired with the liveliest interest" as Paul, for

The Emperor Paul from his hatred of the English and his sympathy with Napoleon did indeed propose an expedition to India, but his plan was so wild that even Napoleon laughed at it.²

At any rate, after Napoleon was forced from this plan Paul proposed to undertake it alone. In order not to make the conquest too much of a burden upon the Government,³ he intended to effect it by means of the Don Cossacks. Addressing the Ataman of the Don Cossacks, General Orleff, who was to mobilize at Orenburg, he wrote:

I am preparing to be beforehand with the English, who intend attacking me by land and sea.

-
1. Ibid,
 2. Schuyler, op. cit., p. 258.
 3. Ibid, p. 265.

I propose to attack them in their most vulnerable part, where they least expect it. It is three months march from Orenburg to Hindostan; to you and your army I confide this expedititon; assemble your men and begin your march to the River Indus and the English settlements in India. The troops there are light troops like yours; you will have over them the advantage of your artillery. Prepare everything for this campaign; send your scouts to prepare the roads. The enterprize will cover you with immortal glory, will secure you my good will, will load you with riches, giving an opening to our commerce, and strike the enemy a mortal blow. India, to which I send you, is governed by a supreme head called the Great Mogul, and a number of small sovereigns. The English possess commercial establishments there, which they have acquired by means of money, or conquered by force of arms; my object is to ruin these establishments, and to put the oppressed sovereigns in the same state of dependence on Russia as they are at present in towards England. Be sure to remember that you are only at war with the English, and the friend of all who do not give them help. On your march, assure all men with the friendship of Russia. The expedition is urgent; the earlier the better.¹

The diary of Ataman Denisov, one of Orleff's officers describes the route of the army and its recall. He wrote:

The army reached a monastery of the Roskolniki on the Irguza River. The monastery lay in an area between Russian claims and the authority of the Central Asian Sultans; but it was on the road to Khiva and Bokhara. It was at the monastery that word reached the troops of Paul's murder and their recall.²

1. Krausse, op. cit., p. 150.

2. Cherbotarev, A. P., "Zapiski Donskago Ataman Denisova," Russkaid Starina, Vol. 20, 1875, as quoted in Shneidman, J. Lee, "The Proposed Invasion of India by Russia and France in 1801," Journal of Indian History, Vol. 48, 1957, p. 167-175.

Then, seven years later came the plan of Tilsit. At Tilsit Napoleon suggested joint operations with Russia against "les possessions de la Campagne des Indies," the French proposing to pass through Constantinople, Asia Minor and Persia. In a letter to Alexander I of February 2, 1808, he suggested that a force of 50,000 Russian, French, and perhaps a few Austrians might bring England to her knees before India was actually reached.¹

Thus it was that Russian designs on India had a long background. But after the downfall of Napoleon these threats seemed to be much more of a reality and consequently influenced the whole nature of British relations to the West of the Indus. For, as a later historian said:

If Napoleon and the Czars of Russia had not entertained ideas of an invasion of India; if they had not intrigued to our detriment both in Persia and Afghanistan, if the Black Eagle had never winged its flight across the Caucasus in all probability our relations with Central Asian states would have been purely commercial in character.²

But British India had started on a policy of treaty making and diplomacy which was to plunge her into Central Asian politics and repeatedly raise the question of where her western frontier should lie, Political considerations in the Middle

1. Herold, J. C., The Age of Napoleon, New York, American Heritage Publishing Co., 1963, p. 154.

2. Davies, C. C., The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit., p. 154.

East and England's position in India gave an unfortunate direction to the new policy provoked by Napoleon, for the north-west limit of British possessions lay far within the natural Indian frontier. Four independent regions, Punjab, Sind, Afghanistan and Persia had come to be regarded as likely spheres for hostile influence.

Elphinstone questioned the wisdom of an advance to Kabul because it would mean waiving "the advantage of the strong frontier to the westward, presented by the deserts, the rivers of the Panjab and the Indus."¹

While Elphinstone questioned the wisdom of an advance, Charles Metcalfe, whose treaty with Ranjit Singh, "the master of the true frontier," was the most lasting of the anti-Napoleonic treaties and stabilized British Sikh relations till the death of Ranjit Singh, questioned the presence of a threat. Metcalfe, "who loathed the twists and turns by which his superiors were trying to guard against external dangers"² thought Russian aggression an idle fear, and advised,

I would say that it is best to do nothing, until time shall show us what we ought to do, because there is nothing that we can do in our present blind state that would be of any certain benefit on the approach of that event.³

1. Forrest, G. W., Official Writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone, London, 1884, p. 27.

2. Morison, op. cit., p. 183.

3. Quoted in ibid, p. 183.

In 1833 he prophesied that the extension of political relations beyond the Indus would lead to "embarrassments and wars, expensive and unprofitable at the least, without any equivalent benefit, if not ruinous and destructive."¹

While Shah Shuja had concluded a treaty with Elphinstone, he lost his throne a few weeks later and

for the next twenty years the unhappy condition into which the Durrani Empire had fallen rendered the Afghans powerless for good or evil in the affairs of Central Asia.²

The early years of the nineteenth century witnessed a power vacuum in Afghanistan and a chaotic Oxus Valley. For the Afghans and the Uzbeks lacked both leadership and the spirit of conquest. Thus neither of them posed any threat to India, but neither did they represent any defense against a possible Russian threat. Thus the vital bastions of India's north-western defences, Kandahar, Herat, and the Hindu Kush were practically unguarded.

Now that Russia had become the chief bugbear, Persia became the region threatened. This was another aspect of the British problem, for Britain could see beyond a weak Afghanistan increasing Russian influence in Persia.

The Russian menace might have been still far off, but it was developing. It came, at first, not from the north, but

1. Quoted in ibid, p. 183.

2. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 79.

from the Caucasus. The Persians had turned first to France, but after Tilsit they had turned to Britain. In 1814 an Anglo-Persian treaty was signed, pledging Britain to assist the Persians if they were attacked by any European power. By this time the Russians had made their first move. In 1813 they had defeated the Persians and by the Treaty of Gulistan Russia was established in Georgia and the Caucasus. Russian influence in Persia, more than Russian conquests, created a perennial Persian question for England and gave Afghanistan a new importance for Calcutta and London and introduced a new and highly speculative diplomatic game which took all west Central Asia for its playing field.

For Russia and Persia had been at war again in 1828, the Treaty of Turkmanchia consolidated Russian possessions south of the Caucasus and set the pattern for the future, since

The moral ascendancy achieved by these victories increased Russian influence at Teheran, while at the same time it caused the Persians to seek by conquest in the east compensation for their losses in the west.¹

This could only mean the focus of attention falling on Herat, and if Herat were to fall there was only a weak Afghanistan to stop a Persian or Russo-Persian advance towards India.

But the British response was one of grave error. For, while British domination at no point impinged on the real

1. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 81.

North-West Frontier, in Morison's judgment,

in place of concrete policies soldiers and politicians indulged in irresponsible and speculative adventures with governments and in countries of which they had no accurate understanding . . . on the far side of the Sikh kingdom any forward position could only be maintained by efforts and an expense beyond the resources of the Indian government.¹

Even though Sind and the dominions of Ranjit Singh were between her and the frontier hills and passes, England saw a Russian menace on the horizon and recognized that "Afghanistan was the Achilles Heel of India, the glaxis of the fortress of Hindustan."²

But the "Great Game" had begun, this grandiose epoch in frontier policy culminated in the fruitless victory and final tragedy of the First Afghan War.

Two questions concerning this formative phase of policy are: the actual motives of Russia in considering an invasion of India, and, the actual possibility of such an invasion taking place.

Concerning the first question, while earlier writers tended to envisage Russia actually indulging in invasion and conquest, contemporary writers tend to see the Russian policy as using their position in Central Asia as a means of putting

1. Morison, op. cit., p. 181.

2. Davies, C. C., The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit., p. 153.

political pressure upon the Government in London. For example:

In the last century Russian soldiers no doubt dreamed of an attack upon the British Empire in India. Empires always have their theorists of expansion. No doubt, too, Russian statesmen encouraged the more outspoken of their "forward school" to rattle their sabres at the doors of the European enemy, as a means of putting political pressure upon the Government in London. But it is doubtful whether the rulers of Russia seriously considered an invasion of India, whatever the activities of its wild men in Central Asia.¹

Likewise, "The statesman does not discourage the dreams of his soldiers, but he need not believe in them."²

But this interpretation does not alter the fact that in the early nineteenth century Russia was currently believed to be planning an attack on British India,* and as Ward later explained

The charge was officially repudiated by the Russian Government. But the conduct of Russian agents in Central Asia was not in accordance with the declarations made at Petrograd. As a result 'Russo-phobia' became a leading element in British public opinion. Experts in the Far Eastern problem raised the cry of 'India in danger.'³

Whichever of the two was the actual Russian motive, it would not alter the fact of the British response or significantly change the reality that either way, India was in danger.

1. Edwardes, M., Asia in the European Age, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1962, p. 177.

2. Thompson, E. J., Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, London, MacMillan, 1935, p. 126.

*See p. 17-20.

3. Ward, A. W., Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Cambridge, University Press, 1922, Vol. II, p. 197.

Concerning the second question as to the actual possibility of invasion, those who tend to dilute the possibility, point to the fact of distance, like

The proximity to our Indian possessions can be gauged by the distance between Orenburg, the most advanced Russian base, and the nearest English post at Ludhiana, over two thousand miles.¹

This argument has two weaknesses, for, in the first place, distance does not necessarily mean defence. If this were the case would Britain have been safer if she were to retreat to the East and thereby increase the distance? Actually, it was only by decreasing the distance and advancing to a more defensible frontier that India could find security. There was certainly excuse for the alarm felt in Britain about Russian machinations since she had not reached that barrier of mountains.

In the second place, the proximity of Russia did not necessarily have to be measured from Orenburg; the alarmists of the time would be more inclined to measure the distance from Herat, as did Schuyler towards the end of the century.

The only danger to India lies through Persia. Experience has proved that all invasions of India have come through Afghanistan, and Afghanistan can only be approached by Russia through Persia.²

1. Edwardes, op. cit., p. 61.

2. Schuyler, op. cit., p. 265.

For the Russian problem was essentially a double edged one; even in the time of Peter the Great the advance of Russia was a double pronged advance. For the Russian line of advance followed two courses, via Central Asia or via Persia, both ultimately meeting at Afghanistan. Thus there were two routes for invasion, if Afghanistan were the gateway to India, two different paths led to the gate.

First, the direct route ran southward from the Russian headquarters at Orenburg on the upper waters of the Ural River. On the map it was easy to trace a passage between the Caspian and Aral seas to the valley of the Oxus, occupied by the Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara. Of these, Bokhara was coterminous with Afghanistan.

In reality this route, a wilderness of sand deserts and rocky plateaux, was then impracticable for the ordered march of an army. Nevertheless, the government of India was in constant fear of a Russian advance from this direction, and it carefully watched the attitude of the Khanates on the Oxus.¹

The second, the indirect route, which Russia could follow was by way of Persia. Here Russia had the advantage which resulted in a long course of successful aggression which gave her the predominance in Persian counsels. The strategic advantage which this gave Russia was that,

The Russian Territories that are contiguous with Persia on the north are continuous either with

1. Ward, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 201.

those of Asiatic Russia or with those of European Russia . . . the forces of Great Britain, if required for purposes either of menace or attack, would require to be conveyed by sea and would be separated by a great distance from their base . . . whereas the Russian land approaches upon the north are in her own exclusive possession, the maritime access of Great Britain on the south is equally open to any other power possessing a naval marine.¹

By inciting Persia to push eastwards into Afghanistan, Russia was, at the same time, extending her grasp over a vantage ground from which to make an attack on British India.

Consequently,

If Herat fell to the Persian army it would become the seat of a Russian consul, and a centre of Russian influence. Herat was at that time of unquestionable value. Standing in a fertile oasis, rich in the materials for military supply, it was the starting point of routes to Kabul on the one hand and to Kandahar on the other, from both of which there run natural lines of invasion into India.²

Thus, Britain had to take whatever steps necessary to insure that Herat, or all of Afghanistan, did not fall into Russian hands.

1. The Government of India to the Secretary of State on the Relations of Britain With Persia, 21 September, 1899, as quoted in Philips, Select Documents, p. 471.

2. Ward, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 204.

Chapter II
THE FIRST FORWARD POLICY
AND
THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR

Sir George Eden, Lord Auckland, is generally charged with having brought about the first involvement of British India in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and thereby focusing British attention on the region of the Hindu Kush. The events which precipitated the first forward policy and thus the first disastrous Afghan War are considered to be the result of Auckland's policy. However, the general pattern of events which caused Auckland to decide on those measures which resulted in the war, had been determined long before Auckland's arrival in India.

Any appraisal or analysis of the first forward policy demands a consideration of events and persons, appearing at first sight to be isolated and unrelated, but actually fusing together to form an interrelated pattern which culminated in the First Afghan War. Thus one's focus of attention must include at one time all the personalities and the forces at work on the whole Central Asian stage. The frame of reference must include Persia and Russian intrigues in Persia, as well as

Herat and Kandahar and Russian designs on Herat. Furthermore, we must consider whether these designs were regarded as ends in themselves or as means to other ends. Shifting one's attention eastward the frame of reference must also include the Punjab and Sind and then focus on Afghanistan, lying between British India and Persia. In the same manner the personalities on this very broad stage have to be appraised. While the Amirs of Persia play a supporting role in this drama, the leading figures are Dost Mohammed, Ranjit Singh, Shah Shuja and even Lord Bentinck, Auckland's predecessor. Certainly Lord Auckland is the central figure but particular attention must be paid to those near him and thus in a position to influence his decisions--Macnaughten, Colvin, Burnes, and particularly Claude Wade. All these forces and personalities influenced the decisions ultimately made by Lord Auckland, and which resulted in the first forward policy.

The logical starting point for an analysis of the causes of the First Afghan War is Persia. British influence in Persia had been allowed to decline after the Napoleonic Wars, while Russian influence increased.¹ The first quarter of the nineteenth century saw Russian conquest of northern Persian territory and the establishment of Russian influence at the

1. Greaves, R. L., Persia and the Defence of India, London, Athlone Press, 1959, p. 23.

court of Tehran. Russo-Persian relations, after a quarter century of Russian aggression and encroachment, became almost friendly, since

The Shah realized he could not fight his northern neighbour with any chance of success, Russia henceforth was able to dominate Persia by intrigue rather than costly occupation, and the country became in every sense a satellite, a front for Russian sorties against the growing power of the British in India.¹

Most likely the growth of this Russian influence could have been prevented earlier by the British had they fulfilled the terms of the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1814, but Britain's unwillingness to help Persia in her wars with Russia led to the decline of British influence and prestige. As Sir Mortimer Durand said, "The Shah found England no longer under alarm for her eastern empire, but a cold ally."²

Lord William Bentinck noted the possible serious consequences for India of this growing Russian influence at Teheran. Bentinck was quite aware of the possibilities, if not the likelihood, of a Russian threat, not from the north but from Persia, and consequently he realized the strategic significance of Herat, a fact which was not appreciated by Lord Auckland. Bentinck noted in a minute:

Persia in its distracted state since the death of the late king is unequal to any great effort,

1. Edwardes, M., Asia in the European Age, op. cit., p. 187

2. Durand, Sir H. M., The First Afghan War and its Causes, London, Longmans Green, 1879, p. 12.

unassisted by Russia, but the co-operation of twenty thousand Russians from the Arrus would speedily terminate the civil war, and the advance of the combined force would give them in the first campaign possession of Herat, the key to Kabul.

It is in the interest of Russia to extend and strengthen the Persian Empire, which occupies a central position between the double lines of operation of the autocrat to the eastward and to the westward, and as Persia can never be a rival of Russia the augmentation of their strength can only increase the offensive.¹

In the 1830's the Persians began paying attention to their eastern borders and particularly to Herat. The motivation of this Persian expansion is explained in slightly different ways. Fraser-Tytler suggests that it was a response to the Russian gains and a consequence of Persian humiliation, thus

the moral ascendancy achieved by these victories increased Russian influence at Tehran while at the same time it caused the Persians to seek by conquest in the east compensation for their losses in the west.²

From this it would appear that Persia desired Herat and would have done so even without Russian suggestion; but on the other hand Edwardes sees Persian activity as the result of Russian instigation and insistence. As he puts it,

1. Boulger, D. C., Lord Bentinck, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, p. 181.

2. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 81.

"Russia's next move was to jerk her puppet into an attack on Herat, ostensibly to rescue the city from Afghan rule,"¹

Whichever the case it appears that the Persians had justification for their designs on Herat, a fact admitted by Mr. Ellis, the British envoy to the Shah of Persia, who

wrote to his government that the Shah had fair claim to the sovereignty of Afghanistan as far as Ghuznee, and that Kamran's conduct in occupying part of the Persian province of Seistan had given the Shah a full justification for commencing hostilities against Herat.²

In the early 1830's Herat, the significance of which was now becoming apparent to the Russians and the British, was occupied by Shah Kamran, son of Mohammed Shah, who had ousted his brother Shah Shuja from the throne of Kabul, for a while occupying it himself before being ousted to retire to the principality of Herat.

As early as 1832 Prince Abbas Mirza of Persia had proposed a march to take Herat, a proposal disapproved of, at that time, by his father, Fateh Ali Shah. However, in 1833 he did send an army towards Herat under the command of his son, Mohammed Mirza. This first expedition was unsuccessful; in fact, it never reached its destination since the death of Abbas Mirza necessitated its recall. However, its leader,

1. Edwardes, op. cit., p. 187.

2. Forbes, A., The Afghan Wars, New York, Scribners Sons, 1892, p. 2.

Mohammed Mirza, was subsequently nominated by his grandfather Fateh Ali Shah, as heir in succession to his father, Abbas Mirza.

In 1834 Mohammed Mirza ascended the throne of Persia as Mohammed Shah and again considered an expedition on Herat. Although he had become Shah partly through the support of the British his aggressive designs towards Herat were cause for concern and contrary to British hopes, which might be summarized as follows:

The British Government has never encouraged Persia to engage in hostilities with any foreign states or to seek foreign conquests, but to seek friendly relations with her neighbours . . . The British Government had sought in their intercourse with Persia the tranquility and the strength of that kingdom and they desired its independence and its integrity; but while Great Britain wished to give security to Persia against foreign enemies, and believed that, by pursuing a course calculated to lead to that result she was also giving security to her own empire in India, she has at all times endeavoured to prevent Persia from converting the elements of strength which England supplied her for purposes of defence into means of aggression against any other country.¹

The elevation of Mohammed Mirza to the position of Shah caused the British to dispatch an embassy to Persia, headed by Henry Ellis, to preserve any remains of British influence over the Shah; but

When the Right Honourable Henry Ellis arrived in Persia in 1835 as an embassy of condolence and

1. "Foreign Office Correspondence Relating to Persia and Afghanistan," Quarterly Review, No. 84, 1839, p. 148-149, (henceforth cited as F. O.)

and congratulations to the young Shah he speedily found that Russian influence was dominant at court and that the impression of the power of Russia as compared with that of England was always to the disadvantage of the latter,¹

This mission of "condolence and congratulation" was instructed by Lord Palmerston "especially to warn the Persian government against allowing themselves to be pushed on to make war against the Afghans."²

But by this time the Shah had apparently determined to make another attempt to subdue Herat, a determination encouraged by the Russian minister who proposed to accompany the mission, while Ellis vainly protested to the Shah and pointed out to the Persian Government the risk it would incur of antagonizing the British Government by prosecuting any schemes of conquest in Afghanistan,³

Ellis' first dispatch to Palmerston confirmed the Shah's intention. He wrote,

It is unsatisfactory to know that the Shah has very extended schemes of conquest in the direction of Afghanistan, and, in common with all his subjects, conceives that the right of sovereignty over Herat and Kandahar is as complete now as in the reign of the Safavi dynasty.⁴

1. F. O., p. 150.

2. Palmerston to Ellis, July 25, 1835, quoted in Fraser-Tytler. op. cit., p. 83.

3. F. O., p. 150.

4. Ellis to Palmerston, November 13, 1835, quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 83.

Ellis' reports to Palmerston during the early months of 1836 are most significant, for it is in these letters that the strongest concern over Afghanistan is expressed and the fear that Persia cannot be considered a bastion of Indian defence against Russian encroachment. Thus the Herat situation, as assessed by Ellis, was significant in determining the nature of Lord Auckland's future policy for the defence of India.

On January 15, 1836, Ellis wrote to Palmerston:

I feel quite assured that the British Government cannot permit the extension of the Persian monarchy in the direction of Afghanistan, with a due regard to the tranquility of India; that extension will, at once, bring Russian influence to the very threshold of our empire; and as Persia will not, or does not, place herself in a position of close alliance with Great Britain our policy must be to consider her no longer as an outwork for the defence of India, but as the first parallel from whence the attack may be commenced or threatened.¹

A month later Ellis again wrote to Palmerston suggesting that Herat alone was not the object of Persian schemes but only a preliminary to much broader plans. He wrote,

I am convinced that every effort will be made by the Shah to obtain possession of Herat, and to extend his dominions in the direction of Afghanistan, and that, for this purpose, no opportunity will be lost for forming connexions with the chief of Cabool and his brothers . . . for I can conceive no event more likely to unsettle the public mind in the north western provinces, and to disturb the general tranquility of our eastern empire.²

1. Ellis to Palmerston, January 15, 1836, F.O., p. 151.

2. Ellis to Palmerston, February 25, 1836, F.O., p. 151.

In July of 1836 Ellis informed Palmerston that in fact the Shah had been making efforts towards that end, that is, of attempting to make agreements with the Afghans and that an envoy from Kandahar had arrived in Tehran to negotiate a treaty with the Shah, with the result that

The Kandahars expatriated on the readiness of all Afghanistan, with the exception of Herat, to come under feudal submission to the Shah, who might, like Nadir Shah, push his conquests to Delhi.¹

The Russian participation in this scheme was reported by Ellis as follows:

His majesty has been encouraged, and I have been recently informed, has been promised positive assistance in this design by the Russians, who well know that the conquest of Herat and Kandahar by the Persians is in fact an advantage for them towards India.²

In the summer of 1836 Ellis was replaced by Dr. McNeill whose instructions from Palmerston indicated that the British Government had not as yet become convinced that their influence in Persia had been completely eclipsed by that of the Russians. McNeill's instructions

specially directed him to prevent Russia from establishing anything in the nature of a protectorate over Persia and also to thwart the ambitious schemes

1. Ellis to Palmerston, July, 1836, F. O., p. 151.

2. Ibid.

which the Persian Government, at Russia's instigation, was hoping to carry out in Afghanistan.¹

Doctor McNeill later helped to convince doubters about the plans of Russia by the publication of his book, Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East. In it he elaborated on Russian expansion and the importance of preserving Persia's independence and cultivating the friendship of the Central Asian States. He justified British interference in the affairs of other countries on the grounds that,

The right of interference in the affairs of independent states is founded on this single principle, that as self preservation is the first duty, so it supercedes all other obligations. The just application of the principle requires that danger should be shown, not to the minor interests merely, but to the vital interests of the state which appeals to it.²

Up to this point Lord Auckland was unaware of the Ellis-Palmerston correspondence and practically unaware of the whole Persian situation. Although Auckland had been appointed in 1835 he did not arrive in Calcutta until March 2, 1836, having been en route since October 3, 1835.

The situation at the time of his appointment was apparently one of tranquility with no indication of immediate

1. Ward, op. cit., Vol II, p. 200.

2. McNeill, John, Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East, London, 1836, as quoted in Norris, J.A. The First Afghan War, Cambridge, University Press, 1967, p. 84.

problems on the frontier, But unfortunately for him the political climate was to undergo a radical change for the worse, As Lord Curzon later said:

A man who is both weak and diffident may emerge without discredit from normal situations. But in times of stress, where ordinary rules and ordinary men are equally misplaced, these qualities become the parents of inevitable disaster.¹

In fact, shortly after Auckland's assumption of office there were signs that the period of tranquility was coming to an end, In the early fall of 1836, as matters turned out, the Shah of Persia marched on Herat. The expedition had to be recalled because of an outbreak of cholera, notwithstanding the Russian envoys complaints to the Shah about the postponements and his encouragement of a winter campaign.²

The British ambassador at St. Petersburg, Lord Durham, protested to the Russian foreign minister, Count Nesselrode, and was assured that the Russian official in Persia was acting contrary to his instructions. At the same time, on the Afghan scene, an active exchange was being carried on between the chiefs of Kabul and Kandahar, and the Shah, in which the Russian minister played an important part, to encourage them to concert with Persia in a combined attack for the destruction

1. Curzon, G. R., British Government in India, London, Cassell and Co., 1925, Vol. II, p. 198.

2. Colonel Stoddart to McNeill, September, 1836, F.O., p. 152.

of Kabul.¹ Fearing that the Sodowzais might one day be restored, the chiefs of Kabul and Kandahar

exerted all their influence in favour of the connexion with Persia . . . they advocated the advantages of an alliance with Russia also--for they were told by the agents of both these governments that Persia and Russia were one.²

Indeed the developing situation on the North-West was fraught with many dangers for the Afghans were concerned with the situation to the east as well as to the west since, as the Quarterly Review explained the situation:

The increasing power of the Sikhs, the success which had hitherto attended their able and warlike sovereign, Ranjeet Singh, in all his contests with the Afghans, and especially the establishment of his authority over Peshawar, and some other places on the western bank of the Indus, which were inhabited by Mohammedan population, had excited at once the fears and the religious enthusiasm of the chiefs of Cabool and Kandahar. At the same time the connexion which was supposed to exist between the English and the excited sovereigns of Affghanistan, who had found an assylum in the British territories--the opinion which prevailed, that the government had favoured the unsuccessful attempt which Shah Shoojah had made on a former occasion to recover his kingdom--the intimate relations of friendship which were known to have subsisted for many years between the British Government in India and the court of Lahore and--more than all the total neglect with which the British

1. F. O., p. 155.

2. F. O., p. 156.

Government had hitherto treated these Afghan chiefs-- had led them to regard England with feelings of jealousy rather than of attachment; and had induced them to seek, in alliance with Persia and Russia, protection against the dangers with which they believed themselves to be threatened from the east.

The chief of Cabool sent accredited agents almost simultaneously to the courts of Tehran and St. Petersburg soliciting from both assistance against the Sikhs.¹

During the spring of 1837 the Shah began reassembling his army for a renewed march on Herat while at the same time sending envoys to Kabul and Kandahar "charged with presents and communications" and rejecting the efforts made by McNeill to negotiate between Kamran and himself. On July 23 the Shah had his army ready and began his march towards Herat.

On October 14 Colonel Stoddart, who accompanied the Shah, wrote to McNeill:

Captain Vicovich of the Russian service, an aide-de-campe of the general at Orenberg arrived here [Nishapur] from Tehran and Resht on the 10th instant. He is gone on a mission to Kabul. Horsemen have been given to pass him to Toorbut, thence a change to Khain, then again to Lash, from thence to Kandahar.²

With reference to this communication, McNeill further informed Palmerston that,

Vicovich had everywhere announced that he was sent to intimate the arrival at Asterabad of a large Russian force, destined to co-operate with the Shah's army against Herat.³

1. F. O., p. 154.

2. Stoddart to McNeill, October 14, 1837, F.O., p. 160.

3. McNeill to Palmerston, October, 1839, F.O., p. 160.

Although the large Russian force did not materialize, the Persian army was officered and led by Russians, if the Shah's attempt on Herat proved successful, then Russia would at once become pre-eminent in Afghanistan. The submission of Kabul and Kandahar would follow as a matter of course, and the Indian frontier would be open to the machinations of the Tsar's advisers.¹

At this time Auckland thought it necessary to take some positive action. He therefore decided to enter into negotiations with Dost Mohammed. For this purpose Alexander Burnes was sent to Kabul.

In 1836 Auckland had already exchanged communications with Dost Mohammed who had sent a letter to the new Governor General congratulating him on his safe arrival. Significantly, the letter included a request for advice on how to get Peshawar back from the Sikhs. To this the Governor General replied that although he hoped shortly to send a commercial mission to Kabul, it was not the practice of the British Government to take sides in disputes between independent states.²

Auckland's reply is dually significant. It enabled Auckland to describe Burnes' mission as the promised commercial mission and it clearly informed Dost Mohammed of the degree of help he could expect from Auckland against the Sikhs. In this sense it may be said to have encouraged Dost Mohammed

1. Krausse, op. cit., p. 113.

2. Dunbar, J., Golden Interlude, London, J. Murray, 1955, p. 41.

to turn towards the Shah and the Russian envoys who might be more sympathetic to his aspirations.

That Burnes' mission was intended as far more than a commercial mission is clear from the instructions issued by the Secret Committee of the East India Company on June 25, 1837, which required Auckland to

Judge what steps it may be proper and desirable to take to watch more closely than has hitherto been attempted, the progress of events in Afghanistan and to counteract the progress of Russian influence in a quarter which from its proximity to our Indian possessions, could not fail, if it were once established, to act injuriously on the system of our alliances, and possibly to interfere with the tranquility of our territory.¹

The instructions, demonstrating that Lord Auckland's policy was part of the general Whig plan for the containment of Russian expansion in Asia continued:

The mode of dealing with this very important question, whether by dispatching a confidential agent to Dost Mohammed of Kabul merely to watch the progress of events, or to enter into relations with this chief, either of a political or merely in the first instance of a commercial character, we confide to your discretion, as well as the adoption of any other measures that may appear to be desirable in order to counteract Russian influence in that quarter, should you be satisfied from the information received from your own agent on the frontier, or hereafter from Mr. McNeill, that the time has arrived at which it would be right for you to interfere decidedly in the affairs of Afghanistan.²

1. Edwardes, op. cit., p. 61.

2. Ibid, p. 61.

Thus the Burnes' mission was converted into one of a political nature and thus began Auckland's fatal involvement in Afghan politics. Not the least of his problems was the dilemma which he was unable to resolve--that of having to decide between Dost Mohammed and Ranjit Singh as an ally. For he realized that in the situation as it was developing, he would not be able to maintain friendship with both. But, "Auckland felt bound by twenty-eight years of alliance and by cool considerations of British self interest in India to choose the Sikhs,"¹

Moreover, it was necessary for Auckland to take precautions not to offend Ranjit Singh since he had been persuaded by Auckland not to interfere in Sind.

Although Burnes was convinced that Auckland should support Dost Mohammed, it is evident that Auckland was already inclined to favour the friendship of Ranjit Singh, for instructions to Burnes September 13, 1837, state:

It must be nearly needless to say that you are in a position in which you should regulate your conduct marking the firm maintenance of our old alliance and friendship with Ranjit Singh as the avowed first principle of our duty and policy and bringing Dost Mohammed to his senses and to a just measure of his most hazardous position.²

If Burnes personally favoured Dost Mohammed, his early correspondence could only serve to convince Auckland that his

1. Norris, op. cit., p.134.

2. John Colvin to Alexander Burnes, September 13, 1837, quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 93.

"first principle" was the correct one and actually to increase whatever suspicions he might already have had concerning Dost Mohammed. For, on 15 November 1837, Burnes wrote to the Secretary of the Indian Government sending a copy of a letter from the Russian envoy, Simonich, to Dost Mohammed, as well as one from Hajii Ibrihim, Dost Mohammed's agent at Tehran, which stated:

The Shah directed me to inform you that he will shortly send an elchee who, after meeting you, will proceed to Ranjit Singh to explain to him, on the part of the Shah, that if he (Ranjit Singh) will not restore all the Afghan countries to you, the Ameer, he must be prepared to receive the Persian army. When the Shah takes Herat he has promised to send you money and any troops you want.

The Russian ambassador who is always with the Shah has sent you a letter which I enclose. The substance of his verbal message to you is, that if the Shah does everything you want, so much the better, and if not, the Russian Government will furnish you, (the Ameer) with everything wanted.

The object of the Russian elchee, by his message, is to have a road to the English (India) and for this they are very anxious.¹

The correspondence from Kabul during the last months of 1837 indicated the presence of Russian and Persian intrigues at Kabul and at Kandahar. Vicovitch appeared in Kandahar with letters from the Russian minister in Persia, from Count Nesselrode and from the Emperor himself. On December 22, 1837,

1. Burnes to Secretary of Indian Government, 15th November 1837, Inclosure #2, Hajee Ibrahim to Dost Mohammed, F. O., p. 164.

Burnes reported that Vocovitch was in Kabul and enclosed letters of Simonich to Dost Mohammed commenting:

M. Vicovitch informed Dost Mohammed Khan that the Russian government had desired him to state his sincere sympathy with the difficulties under which he laboured and that it would afford him great pleasure to assist him in repelling the attacks of Runjeet Singh on his dominions; that it was ready to furnish him with a sum of money for the purpose, and to continue the sum annually.¹

Certainly these reports were a matter for concern in India. Burnes' instructions were to bring Dost Mohammed to a speedy decision; either to dismiss the Russian agent or else to lay himself open to a charge of breach of faith with the British.²

But to persuade Dost Mohammed to eliminate a potential alliance with the Persians or Russians, Auckland would have had to offer the one thing he was not able, or not prepared, to offer--the restoration of Peshawar to Afghanistan. Indeed, Lord Auckland's biographer declares: He [Dost Mohammed] would do whatever the British Government desired, if the latter would but help him in the matter of Peshawar."³ There could be no question of an alliance with Dost Mohammed against the Sikhs. All he could hope for was British

1. Burnes to Auckland, December 23, 1837, F.O., p. 168.

2. Secretary of Government of India to Burnes, January 20, 1838, F.O., p. 170.

3. Trotter, L., Lord Auckland, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1893, p. 44.

influence upon Ranjit Singh to save him from further attacks, provided that he first ceased cultivating Persian or Russian alliances.¹

On April 26, 1838, Captain Burnes left Kabul and reported to the Governor General in Simla that the Amir was deep in conclave with the Russian agent. At the same time McNeill reported to Palmerston that Herat was being beseiged, therefore on May 21, 1838, Palmerston wrote to McNeill that:

You are instructed to proceed at once to the Shah and to declare to him explicitly that the British Government cannot view with indifference his project of conquering Afghanistan, that the British Government must look upon this enterprise as undertaken in a spirit of hostility towards British India, and as being wholly incompatible with the spirit and intention of the alliance which has been established between Persia and Great Britain . . . Great Britain must take such steps as she may think best calculated to provide for the security of the possessions of the British crown.²

Thereby McNeill, on June 25, 1838, announced the unsuccessful termination of his negotiations at Herat.

Thus by the summer of 1838 McNeill and Burnes had both failed in their efforts; McNeill to prevent a situation from developing which would endanger the safety of India, Burnes to provide a defence through alliance should the need arise. Thus there appeared to be the immediate possibility of Persian and Russian domination to the banks of the Indus.

1. Norris, op. cit., p. 122.

2. Palmerston to McNeill, May 21, 1838, F. O., p. 177.

The failure of McNeill to stop the Shah at Herat was virtually a foregone conclusion since Russian influence had overshadowed British influence at the court of Tehran for a decade before the ambitious designs of Mohammed Shah threatened the stability of Central Asia. However Burnes had failed to establish a second line of defence through Dost Mohammed, although he remained convinced that this was the policy Auckland should have followed. For Burnes saw in Dost Mohammed "the one strong ruler in a blatant land," in whose defence he wrote:

But it remains to be considered why we cannot act with Dost Mohammed. He is a man of undoubted ability and has at heart high opinions of the British nation; and if half you must do for others were done for him, and offers made which he could see conducted to his interests, he would abandon Russia and Persia tomorrow. It may be said that the opportunity has been given to him, but I would rather discuss this in person with you for I think there is much to be said for him. Government have admitted that at best he had but a choice of difficulties and it should not be forgotten that we promised nothing, and Persia and Russia held out a great deal.¹

The Burnes' mission failed basically because Auckland refused to depart from his "first principle" of keeping good relations with Ranjit Singh. In this determination the options open to him presented very little choice, namely,

He could allow events to go on, and, if Herat fell, risk a potential enemy reaching the very borders of India. Or he could assist Dost Mohammed, should

1. Burnes to McNaughten, June 2, 1838, as quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 99.

Afghanistan stand in danger of being overrun--and risk the Dost turning against the Sikhs, England's allies. Or he could follow McNaughten's plan of reinstating Shah Shuja, with the aid of Ranjit Singh . . . The first course pointed to danger for India, the second for danger to an ally.¹

It appears that Auckland was never in strong support of a mission to Kabul or of becoming involved in Afghan politics. The idea of a commercial agency at Kabul was not popular with men of Indian experience. Sir George Tucker, Chairman at India House, had condemned it, Sir Charles Metcalfe objected to Burnes' schemes and Sir Charles Grant, President of the Board of Control, was of the same opinion, but, "in a weak moment Lord Auckland yielded to outside pressure."²

Auckland had reason to be suspicious of Dost Mohammed as Burnes' correspondence had indicated, on the other hand he knew that Dost Mohammed had just cause to be resentful against the British,

Undoubtedly Auckland was strongly influenced by the Bentinck policy of maintaining close alliance with Ranjit Singh as a "first principle." In Bentinck's minute on defence there was evidence also for believing that the strength of Dost Mohammed might have been overestimated, for he claimed:

The present state of Afghanistan presents no cause of alarm to India. The success that attended the wretched army that Shah Shuja had under his

1. Dunbar, J. op. cit., p. 144.

2. Kaye, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 360.

feeble guidance offers the best proof of the weakness of the Afghan powers.¹

Further evidence of the strength of Dost Mohammed was available by observing the success of his 1834 expedition to recapture Peshawar, and his humiliating repulse in the Khyber.

There is no doubt that Auckland in his final decision was influenced to a great degree by the men on the scene,

having no settled policy of his own, and being by this time, far removed from his council, Lord Auckland fell under the influence of his two secretaries, William McNaughten and John Colvin . . . both alike bitten by the present Russo-Phobia.²

Another man who greatly influenced decisions was Captain Claude Wade the Governor General's Agent for the Sutlej Frontier, stationed at Ludhiana. The Burnes' correspondence from Kabul passed through the hands of Wade before reaching McNaughten, and reached the Governor General with Wade's comments as well.³ Wade was an ardent supporter of Shah Shuja and did his best to negate any influence which Burnes' correspondence would have on Auckland. Furthermore, Wade wrote to McNaughten on January 1, 1838, favouring support of Shah Shuja rather than Dost Mohammed:

I submit my opinions with every deference in the wisdom of his lordships decision; but it occurs

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1. Boulger, Lord Bentinck, op. cit., p. 173.
 2. Trotter, Lord Auckland, op. cit., p. 46.
 3. Norris, op. cit., p. 119 and 139.

to me that less violence would be done to the prejudices of the people, and to the safety and well being of our relations with other powers, by facilitating the restoration of Shah Shooja than by forcing the Affghans to submit to the sovereignty of the Ameer.¹

Thus Auckland, influenced by Wade and McNaughten, supported Shah Shuja in an effort to replace Dost Mohammed on the throne of Afghanistan, despite the fact that one year earlier,

[In] April 1837 he [Auckland] had no design of obstructing the existing situation in Afghanistan, proved by his written statement of that date, 'the British Government had resolved decidedly to discourage the prosecution by the ex-King, Shah Soojahool, Moolk, so long as he may remain under our protection, of further schemes of hostility against the chiefs now in power in Cabul and Candahar.'²

But with the changed situation, by mid-1838 it was felt necessary to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan; and it was obvious that the British could not do so advantageously without the support of Ranjit Singh. The geographical position of the Punjab determined this, as well as any purely military considerations. Since Ranjit Singh had already concluded a treaty with Shah Shuja with the object of replacing him on the throne of Kabul, there was for Auckland no other course but to become a party to that agreement.

Even up to this point, it appears that Auckland did not fully intend to involve the British army in a war with Afghanistan. Rather, he hoped that Shah Shuja would recover his

1. Wade to McNaughten, January 1, 1838, quoted in Norris, op. cit., p. 140.

2. Forbes, op. cit., p. 10.

throne aided by British officers and funds, and with the co-operation of Ranjit Singh. It was only at the insistence of Mcnaughten, Burnes, and Sir Henry Fane, (the Commander in Chief) that a British army became involved.¹

Durand acknowledges that the policy was not of Auckland's making but inspired by those around him, particularly Wade, who "had thus the satisfaction of seeing his schemes in favour of Shah Shuja in the end completely triumphant."²

The final Triparite Treaty was negotiated and concluded on June 26, 1838, using as a basis the same treaty concluded about five years previously between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, which ironically had been repudiated by Bentinck.

Not until December 10, 1838, was the force assembled to leave for Kabul with the intention of establishing the defensive line of India on the Kabul Kandahar line. The first forward policy had been set in motion and defended by a Whig Government and a forward policy school who claimed:

We hold it to be incontrovertible that the military defence of India must be undertaken in advance of its own frontier . . . when once an enemy should have got possession of Afghanistan we must be content to defend the line of the Indus and to abide the consequences in the interior of India of the presence of an enemy.

1. Durand, op. cit., p. 68.

2. Ibid, p. 64.

No large army can march to India by any other line than the great road through Afghanistan and it must pass in the vicinity of Kandahar. This is the shortest line on which India can be defended. Are we to leave it undefended? The most defensible country on the whole road from the Russian frontier to the Indus is Afghanistan. Are we to allow it to be occupied by the very power which threatens to attack us in India? The best undisciplined soldiers in Asia are the Afghans. Are we to place them at the disposal of Russia . . . ?¹

The opponents of the new forward school had little influence. Elphinstone, Bentinck, Wellesley--all condemned it, while

The Duke of Wellington with prophetic sagacity, pronounced that the consequence of once crossing the Indus to settle a government in Afghanistan would be a perennial march into that country.²

1. F. O., p. 184.

2. Forbes, op. cit., p. 13.

Chapter III

THE ANNEXATION OF SIND

Immediately upon the conclusion of the war in Afghanistan, the province of Sind was annexed by the British. British interference in Sind was a direct consequence of the decision to interfere in Afghanistan, for the one necessitated the other. Interference in the internal administration of an independent state does not necessarily lead to annexation, but in this case there were compounding circumstances. British failure in the Afghan War necessitated a change in policy and a revision of the structure of the defence of India. Failure in one area of operation demanded success in the other.

The conquest and annexation of Sind was a complicated historical process which repeated historical analysis has not made any less complex. Confusion still exists mainly because historians have been overly concerned with what happened in Sind rather than with the question of why things happened. The events, the "what," have been carefully documented and researched; indeed, a day-to-day, hour-by-hour description of events is available. All the action has been thoroughly described--but less attention has been paid to the motivation.

The geographical nature and position of Sind first determined its importance in the history of India long before the British became involved, but it became a factor in British considerations because of two particular geographical facts. Firstly, because of its position east of the mountains, it was a logical stopping point for British growth and therefore figured prominently in any considerations of the "natural" defensible borders of India. But secondly, Sind was vital because of the Indus, and the Indus had to be considered not only because of its role as a "natural" defensible barrier to invasion; but more particularly because of its influence on potential commerce and communication. Possibly, had there never been a Russian threat or a war in Afghanistan, the British might still have annexed Sind to control the Indus, and thereby control trade into the upper northwest and beyond.

On the other hand control of Sind and the Indus implied control of the Bolan Pass, which was seldom considered in commercial terms. Peculiarly, possession of Sind was vital even if Indian defences were based on either the theory of the forward school or on the Indus school. If the forward school held sway, then Sind was necessary because it gave access to the Bolan and the Kabul-Kandahar line. But if defence were to be based on the Indus theory, Sind was still important because the Indus ran through Sind and any invading force entering India through the Bolan could be met in Sind.

But before considering the British in Sind, brief mention must be made of Sind before the British, particularly its role

in the history of invasions of India. Sind, like the North-Western passes was also a gateway to India. It is situated astride some of the major approaches to India and has been a much frequented invasion route. For

it was insulated by its mountains and deserts and its climate but it had known invasions and historically had been more of a passageway than a block to invaders. In the third millennium B. C. the Harappa civilization had been over-run. Alexander the Great passed through Sind as well as the Moslems in the eighth century. In 1026 Mahmud of Ghazi took Sind. In the sixteenth century the Baluchis moved into Sind from the hills west of the Indus, these were later conquered by the Nadir Shah.¹

Thus Sind, like the upper North-West had to be considered in the content of the defence of India. As such Sind was an object of British concern during the Napoleonic threat; but the decline of this threat reduced its apparent importance.

Nevertheless, it was never completely forgotten, for in Cutch, British and Sindian ambitions clashed. Treaties in 1816 and 1819 had made Cutch practically a British dependency which "laid the foundations of a forward policy along the Indus."²

The treaties consequently set the British against raiding tribes from the domains of the Amirs of Hyderabad. In fact,

1. Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, op, cit., p. viii.

2. Norris, op, cit. p. 17.

Mountstuart Elphinstone, then Governor of Bombay, threatened to wage war on Sind because of these raids. However, Governor General Lord Moira, condemned the proposal because it would be contrary to the policy of non-annexation.

"War with Sind [he declared] would involve us in disputes, jealousies, enmities, intrigues, negotiations, wars and incalculable embarrassments in the countries beyond the Indus."¹

It is noteworthy that in this situation, like countless others, the man closest to the scene and best informed on a local level encouraged aggression while the more remote responsibility, with possibly a greater sense of perspective, was reluctant to become involved in hostilities.

Lord Moira felt that the British should consolidate power within their present sphere, although he was prepared to admit that the future might force expansion in self-defence. Thus war was avoided and a treaty was signed on November 9, 1820, providing for eternal friendship and the exchange of vakils. Roberts claims that this treaty was a restatement of the 1809 treaty to exclude the "tribe of the French." However, the motive was probably not so much to exclude foreign political intrigue as to exclude foreign mercenaries such as had been employed by Ranjit Singh. Thus the hopes were not merely to insure Sindian friendship but to guarantee Sindian weakness in the future.

1. Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 16.

After the signing of this treaty hostilities in Cutch disappeared, although the British were to refer to them on several occasions during negotiations with the Amirs of Sind.

In the late 1820's Sind again came into British consideration; but the principal motivation seems to have been commercial rather than political, although annexation was predicted. In 1827 Dr. James Burnes, brother to the famous Alexander, wrote A Narrative of a Visit to the Court of the Ameers of Sindh in which he accepted the fact that annexation might be forthcoming and assessed the potentialities of the Indus and Sind.

He wrote:

. . . it is scarcely possible to conceive a more easy, or as far as the people are generally concerned, a more willing conquest, were our victorious arms turned in that direction . . . Were such an event to happen, as happen in all probability it will, from causes as uncontrollable as those which have led to the already mighty extension of our Empire, there is no district which would better repay the fostering care of a mild and enlightened management than Sindh . . . Then the River Indus might once more become the channel of communications and wealth, between the interior of Asia and the Peninsula of India, and the Sind herself . . . would rise renewed to claim a due importance in the scale of nations, and to profit by her benefits which nature has bestowed on her . . . A single glance at the Indus will show the easy passage to the very heart of their [the Amirs] dominions, which the river offers to a maritime power.¹

1. Burnes, Dr. James, Narrative of a Visit to the Court of the Ameers of Sindh, Government of Bombay, 1829, as quoted in Norris, op. cit., p. 44.

Obviously, Ellenborough, at this time President of the Board of Control, was impressed with the illusion of British trade on the Indus, for he wrote:

No British flag has ever floated upon the waters of this river, Please God it shall, and in triumph, to the source of all its tributary streams.¹

Although the degree to which the navigation of the Indus was practical and possible was a debatable point, at least some were optimistic. For instance, Lieutenant Postans wrote,

There can be no doubt that time is alone required to gain practical experience, and ultimately the attainment of all our objects in this great river.²

It would appear that even before the Herat problem that Ellenborough did envisage a British controlled North-West including Sind and the whole of the Punjab. The annexation of Sind some fifteen years later was a partial realization of this vision. Furthermore, even at this early date Ellenborough held certain ideas that became the cornerstone of his policy when he eventually became Governor General. In the first place he was intrigued with the possibility of British possession of the Indus system as we have just seen.

Furthermore, he was aware of and concerned with a Russian threat. Although one of his biographers, A. H. Imlah, suggests that

1. Lord Ellenborough, A Political Diary, quoted in Imlah, A. H., Lord Ellenborough, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1939, p. 38.

2. Postans, T., Personal Observations on Sindh, London, Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, 1843, p. 42.

"Ellenborough did not fear Russia in the exaggerated manner of many of his contemporaries,"¹ Huttenback tells us that not only did Ellenborough admit to fearing the Russians he was also of the opinion that the proper place to face them was not in Afghanistan but on the Indus. For Ellenborough wrote "The directors are much afraid of the Russians, so am I . . . I feel confident we shall have to fight the Russians on the Indus."²

Thus it was with more than commercial thoughts that Alexander Burnes was sent in 1830 to survey the Indus under the guise of delivering a present of English horses to Ranjit Singh from William IV. He was able to proceed on this mission because Sir Henry Pottinger, then Resident in Cutch, threatened the Amirs that if they hindered Burnes the question of the raids into Cutch from Sind would be re-opened.

Following the completion of the mission Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General wrote:

The result of Burnes mission has satisfied me that the importance of the River Indus in a political point of view not less than as a route of commerce has not been overrated.³

1. Imlah, op. cit., p. 85.

2. Lord Ellenborough, A Political Diary, quoted in Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 18.

3. Bengal Government to Clare (Governor of Bombay), October 22, 1831, quoted in Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 22.

Therefore Burnes' mission was followed up in 1832, by a mission to the courts of Upper and Lower Sind under Pottinger. This time the lever used against the Amirs was the threat of Ranjit Singh on their northern border. Treaties were ultimately signed on April 4, 1832, with the Amirs of Khairpur and on April 20 with the Amirs of Hyderabad. These were purely commercial treaties however, since the terms gave the British no political advantage. Although the British were restricted, at least the door to the Sind was open to them for "the treaty threw open the Indus and their [Amirs] country to the merchants of Hindustan."¹ The passage of military stores was banned and no armed vessels were to enter the river; nor were English merchants allowed to settle in the country. Preceding these articles was one which bound the two contracting powers never to look with the eyes of covetousness on each other's possessions.²

Initial trade efforts proved to be discouraging and soon the British demanded changes in the toll structure governing river navigation and the establishment of a British residency in Sind, ostensibly for commercial purposes. Nur Mahomed, obviously suspicious of British intentions, refused. In

1. Lambrick, H. T., Sir Charles Napier and Sind, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952, p. 13.

2. Khera, P. N., British Policy Towards Sind, Dehli, Ranjit, 1963, appendixes VI and VII, pp. 117, 118

response to this situation Pottinger wrote, in language rather strong for motives that were purely commercial, "We must change our requests to demands and support these demands by increasing our force in Kutch and blocading the ports of Sindh till everything we wish is fully acceded to."¹

Bentinck expressed a similar sentiment when he informed the Secret Committee that "We should be compelled to adopt measures of coercion as might be necessary to insure their compliance."²

It is significant that about this time Shah Shuja, with Bentinck's blessing, was making his bid to recover the throne of Afghanistan. Certainly a British resident in Sindh would not impede this venture. However this ambition was not realized for a treaty was signed in 1834 to readjust and reconsider the question of tolls, still no resident was permitted.

In the 1830's Ranjit Singh gave the British further reason for concern over Sindh. Despite the fact that a close alliance with Ranjit Singh was a cornerstone of British India's defence policy, his power had to be carefully controlled for his part in the alliance was maintained out of respect for British strength. A Sikh kingdom too powerful might be a potentially dangerous friend. An independent Sindh, with its independence

1. Pottinger to McNaughten, August 10, 1834, quoted in Huttenback, British Relations With Sindh, p. 28.

2. Bentinck to Secret Committee, March 5, 1835, quoted in Ibid, p. 28.

guaranteed and its policy controlled by a British Resident would be an effective buffer in the North-West against Sikh expansion as well as against threats from other directions.

In 1831 Ranjit Singh had proposed to Bentinck the partition of Sind between himself and the Company, a proposition which Bentinck refused.¹ Consequently in 1835 Sikh armies moved against the Mazaris, an Upper Sindian tribe, and demanded from the Amirs tribute formerly paid to Kabul.

This situation at first caused the British deep concern, but it was one which they quickly turned to their own advantage for they were able at the same stroke to contain Ranjit Singh and obtain a foothold in Sind. Conveniently for the British, the Amirs asked for British aid in this situation. The British were eager to offer their assistance, but on these terms:

if the Sind emirs wish [sic] to be protected from the Sikhs they must draw closer to the British . . . The price of permanent protection against the Sikhs, without an alliance, was the acceptance of a British garrison in Sind, and not only in Sind but in the capital itself; the price of protection in this crisis only, without future commitment, was the acceptance of a British resident.²

Furthermore, Pottinger was empowered to receive overtures from the Amirs for complete dependence of Sind on the British. Throughout these and subsequent negotiations the British preferred to deal with the Amirs of Sind independently of each

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 325.

2. Norris, op. cit., p. 94.

other, rather than collectively, applying the principle of divide and rule. Any effort on the part of the Sikhs to control Sind would upset the balance of power and thereby destroy the buffer system on which the defence of India rested.

Ellenborough stated on March 7, 1835,:

It is our political interest that the Indus and its tributary streams should not belong to one state. The division of power on the Indus between the Scindians, the Affghans, and the Sikhs is probably the arrangement most calculated to secure us against hostile use of that river . . .¹

If this division of power could not be guaranteed without actual British control over Sind then a policy of annexation would naturally follow.

At one point in this incident between Ranjit Singh and the Amirs, the British were concerned that the participants might come to an understanding by themselves without British auspices. Macnaughten thereupon wrote to Pottinger stating that the Amirs be informed that whatever benefits came of the negotiations, the Amirs could only thank British influence; and if they ignored a British alliance, then Britain would refrain on any future occasion to secure their independence.

Fortunately for the British, negotiations between the Amirs and Ranjit Singh collapsed and the British pressed again for a residency. On April 23, 1838, the Amirs finally agreed

1. Secret Committee to Governor General, March 7, 1835, as quoted in Norris, op. cit., p. 71.

to a treaty allowing a British resident at Hyderabad, but no British army in Sind. Also the British agreed to adjust the differences between the Amirs and Ranjit Singh.¹

After the signing of this treaty, events in Afghanistan forced the British to consider Sind of prime military and political significance; and any commercial considerations faded further into the background. The signing of the Tripartite Treaty and the decision to send a British force into Afghanistan was the first major turning point in the significance of Sind. For now the most important determinant of policy was the fear of a Russian invasion through the North-West.

In the summer of 1837 when it became apparent that the Afghans were contemplating an alliance with Persia to achieve their aims against the Sikhs, it was suggested that, if negotiations⁷ with Dost Mohammed were unsuccessful, the British would work with the Sikhs and Sindians against the Afghans. When the Tripartite Treaty was signed the right of transit through Sind was necessary to approach the Bolan Pass.

Now Auckland "clearly needed a pretext for exacting a new treaty from the Amirs,"² and was compelled to make new arrangements with Sind, and "he chose to see an opportunity

1. Khera, op. cit., Appendix VII, p. 118.

2. Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 46.

to secure the protectorate he had wanted in 1836."¹ Thus Sind took on a new importance and British policy took on a new character.

In August, 1838, Auckland was given his pretext for Pottinger wrote to Macnaughten that the Amirs of Sind were negotiating with Persia.² Auckland therefore demanded cessation of Sindian intrigue with Persia; British control of Sind's foreign relations; a tribute of 3 1/2 lakhs of rupees towards the cost of a permanent British military force in Sind; and co-operation in the movement of troops and supplies.

Auckland further instructed Pottinger:

At the same time it would be uncandid to conceal from their Highnesses that his Lordship expects from them, as sincere friends and near neighbours, some ostensible display in their present exigency, of their attachments to British interests and some concession on their part to the responsible wishes of the British Government.³

The tone of British policy towards Sind at this point almost indicates that the annexation of Sind was the accepted policy and the primary reason for the Afghan War. After Auckland was informed of the Amirs exchanging notes with

1. Imlah, op. cit., p. 125.

2. Pottinger to Governor General, August 13, 1838, Correspondence Relative to Sinde, 1838-1843; Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, 1843, No. 10, p. 10. (Henceforth cited as Cd.)

3. Macnaughten to Resident in Sind, July 26, 1838, Cd., No. 8, p. 6.

Persia, he stated: "This justifies any course which we may think it expedient to adopt towards them."¹

Also, on July 26, 1838, Macnaughten wrote to the Resident in Sind:

If the amirs have entered into any negotiations with the Shah of Persia it would be considered as hostile to British interests. If they have the resident is authorized to bring a force from Bombay.²

In reply the Resident informed the Governor General that when he knew that the Amirs were considering treating with the Shah he would tell them distinctly "that the day they connect themselves with any other power will be the last of their independent authority."³

Shortly after the Amirs were warned "that if a gun, or even a matchlock, were fired, they should lose their country."⁴

The demands now being made were in open violation of the 1832 treaty, but, in Roberts' judgment:

The Indian Government appears to have held that they could legally amend a treaty by the

1. Governor General to Resident in Sind, September 6, 1838, Cd., p. 15.

2. Macnaughten to Resident in Sind, July 26, 1838, Cd., No. 8, p. 6.

3. Resident in Sind to the Secretary with the Governor General, August 13, 1838, Cd., No. 10, p. 10.

4. Resident in Sind to the Secretary with the Governor General, February 13, 1839, Cd. No. 151, p. 149.

formal announcement to the weaker party that they intended to violate one of its provisions, therefore the Amirs were informed that while the present exigency exists the article of the treaty prohibiting the use of the Indus for conveyance of military stores must necessarily be suspended.¹

Initially the Amirs refused the passage of Shah Shuja through Sind. Therefore Auckland wrote:

The treachery of the Ameers is fully established by a variety of concurrent circumstances, of their having written a slavish areeza to the Shah of Persia . . . by the treatment openly shown to a self-styled Persian Prince at Hyderabad and their insulting letter to Shah Shoojahool Moolk coupled with the distinct announcement regarding opposition to the Shah.²

At first the Amirs prepared to resist the British by gathering tribesmen together, but the sight of British troops from Bombay and Bengal³ convinced the Amirs to give in. In the meantime the British had taken Karachi when Admiral Frederick Maitland "mistook" a salute for an attack and captured the town.

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 326.

2. Auckland to Pottinger, December 31, 1838, as quoted in Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 47. Note: "slavish areeza" referred to is, Nur Mohammed Khan to Shah of Persia, found in Cd., No. 11, p. 12.

3. Troops requested by Pottinger to prevent resistance to Shah Shuja, Pottinger to Governor General, August 25, 1838, Cd., No. 12, p. 12.

In March of 1839 a treaty was accepted which gave the British everything they demanded except outright possession of Sind. For all practical purposes it was annexation. Soon after a similar treaty was signed with Mir Rustam of Khairpur giving a second British residency.¹

On March 13, 1839, Auckland wrote to the Secret Committee explaining the new status of Sind, the treaties having placed it formally under British protection. There was no indication that the occupation was temporary. In fact Auckland stated in 1840 that the home government was in agreement with him regarding the new status as permanent,² notwithstanding the Secret Committee criticizing Auckland for having "extended the limits of the Indian Empire."³ Thus the Secret Committee recognized these 1839 treaties as annexation in practice if not in fact.

Towards the end of Auckland's administration the Resident at Hyderabad urged the policy which Ellenborough later carried out:

if we are ever again obliged to exert our strength in Scinde it must be carried to subjugating the country.⁴

1. Khera, op. cit., Appendixes XI, XII, p. 124, 125.

2. Dodwell, H. H., (Ed.), Cambridge History of India, Cambridge, University Press, 1937, Vol. V, p. 531.

3. Secret Committee to Lord Auckland, July 8, 1839, quoted in Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 57.

4. The Resident in Sind to the Secretary with the Governor General, February 13, 1839, Cd., No. 151, p. 149.

Although Auckland feared outright seizure, he did occupy Karachi, Sukkur, Tatta and Rohri. This was the situation which he left to his successor.

During the war Sind was the base of operations, both during the initial invasion and the "reconquest." Events along the Sind frontier emphasized the need to command the passes and control the hill tribes if the defensive line of India were to be pushed beyond the mountains.

Roberts tells us that the Amirs faithfully kept their agreements and "the fearful disasters that fell upon our army did not tempt them to any acts of hostilities."¹ This needs investigation. It is true that in Lower Sind, where James Outram replaced Pottinger as Resident in 1840, relations were satisfactory. Lambrick feels that this was because of the influence of Outram who kept the Hyderabad chiefs passive when British prestige was badly shaken by disasters in Baluchistan. But in Upper Sind the Amirs did not keep their agreements quite so faithfully.

The hill tribes of Baluchistan made it difficult to ship supplies, by harassing the convoys on the way to the Bolan.

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 327.

particularly troublesome were the Dombiki and Jakhrani tribes of the Kachhi Plain who likewise attacked the convoys. These tribesmen took shelter in the hills occupied by the Bugti and Marri tribes. A Major Billamore was sent with a small force to punish them and established a garrison in the Marri country, only to be beseiged and annihilated by the Marris. A relief force was repulsed at the Naffusk Pass.

Also, above the Bolan Pass the Kakkar tribe attacked Quetta and the Brahuis of Kelat rose against a pretender installed by the British. Kelat was lost and insurrection spread to the Kachhi Plain.¹ Although the situation was restored temporarily at the end of the year the uprisings were omens for the future.

Postans in Observations of Sind considers this uprising in Kelat as a decisive turning point in Sind-British relations because it focused attention on the tribal problem of Baluchistan.²

Furthermore Outram had reason to question the faithfulness of the Amirs; and he wrote reports about intrigues and treachery on the part of the Amirs,³ which must have been influential to the policy making of the new Governor General.

1. Lambrick, op. cit., p. 45.

2. Postans, op. cit., p. 319.

3. Political Agent in Sind to Governor General, May 31, 1842, Cd. No. 338, p. 320.

The actual annexation of Sind is generally credited to Lord Ellenborough and the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to his policy. However, he accomplished only in name what his predecessor had accomplished in fact, for Lord Auckland's treaties with Sind and the show of British force in achieving these treaties reduced Sind to a tributary of British India. Ellenborough merely made the annexation complete and legal.

Two important factors must be considered concerning Ellenborough's policy; first the situation in Afghanistan on his arrival and therefore the urgency to act quickly, and secondly the personality of Sir Charles Napier, his agent in Sind, who was ideally suited to a situation which necessitated speedy action. His facility to act with speed was not impeded by the weight of his knowledge and understanding of things Indian.

Ellenborough arrived in India in the dark days following the destruction of the British army at Kabul. It was his first consideration to turn the tide of disaster and restore the morale and prestige of the British army. This factor of morale and prestige cannot be overestimated in British affairs in India; and as such was a salient feature of Ellenborough's policy, both towards Afghanistan and Sind.

Ellenborough never wavered from his earlier feelings that the British should not be involved in Afghanistan and

that the defence of India should rest upon the Indus. The disasters in Afghanistan only strengthened this conviction and made annexation of Sind attractive, particularly since it already had been practically achieved.

While Palmerston, Hobhouse, and Auckland felt they must checkmate the Russians in Afghanistan rather than await them on the Sutlej and Indus, Ellenborough felt this would imperil, rather than improve, British security in India¹ and was "content with the limits nature appears to have assigned to its Empire."²

Here we see the continuing argument, whether India's defensible frontier should be on the River Indus or the Afghan Plateau. Ellenborough's policy was to withdraw permanently from Afghanistan. Recent events had only confirmed his belief that a policy of intervention was wrong.

It would be erroneous to suppose [he declared] that a forward position in Upper Afghanistan would have the effect of controlling the people of the trans-Indus states.³

But first, before withdrawal, it was important for British prestige to convert the disaster at Kabul into a merely temporary setback. To facilitate this, Ellenborough

1. Imlah, op. cit., p. 85.

2. Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 68.

3. Lord Ellenborough to Sir Jasper Nicolls (Commander in Chief), March, 1842, quoted in Imlah, op. cit., p. 92.

gave General Nott the option of returning from Kandahar via Kabul and Ghazni joining General Pollock at Kabul and continuing the withdrawal via Jellalabad and Peshawar. However this action necessitated certain considerations for Sind since it meant that the least fit of General Nott's army would withdraw through Sind. It was probable that their apparent weakened condition would have confirmed in the minds of the Amirs of Sind the impression of British weakness which in turn might inspire them to hostilities with the British. As Postans explained in a memorandum May 5, 1842:

The progress of our measures in re-establishing our supremacy in Afghanistan has been narrowly watched by our enemies in Sinde and Beloochistan; and there can be no doubt from general report and distinct evidence, that a very general revolt against our influence and authority would have resulted from any serious reverse or disaster above the passes.¹

The retreat is a significant event in the affairs of Sind since it coincided with the arrival of Sir Charles Napier in Sind. Huttenback claims that Napier's arrival was coincident with British victory in Afghanistan and was thus as unnecessary as annexation. But, actually, the Amirs were not convinced of British victory. In any case, "victory" for Ellenborough necessitated a change in policy which meant that Sind was to be one of the fruits of victory since it would

1. Postans, Memorandum, May 5, 1842, Cd., Inc. 4 in No. 338, p. 322.

restore British prestige and give the British a defensible frontier on the Indus.

Thus in August of 1842 Napier was given full command in Sind with Outram to assist him. There is no evidence that he was sent to speed up annexation. Rather, as a military man he would supervise transit of troops returning from Kandahar. The presence of a British force would prevent any hostile acts which were a possibility since certain Afghan chiefs had written to the Amirs of Upper Sind "reminding [them] that they were the tributaries of the Afghan Government and that now was the time to act."¹

Much of the controversy concerning Napier and Sind centers about the fact that Napier was eventually given "carte blanche," and the political agencies closed. Ellenborough most likely proceeded on this course to prevent in Sind what had happened in Afghanistan and on this issue he was acting on the advice of the Duke of Wellington, whose influence on the whole North-West question is not to be underestimated.

To ensure that measures in Afghanistan should be guided by military rather than political considerations Ellenborough issued an order subordinating all the political agents in Afghanistan to the military command. He was aware that the reverses in Kabul had been greatly aggravated, if not caused,

1. Minute by Sir George Arthur (Governor of Bombay), September 2, 1842, Cd., No. 362, p. 352.

by the supremacy of political counsels there. Wellington, and Wellesley too, had cautioned him to avoid this "first fatal error, the employment of Civil Clerks on High Military Commands."¹

Furthermore, to place matters in a military rather than a political context Ellenborough was undoubtedly influenced by a letter from Wellesley, dated July 4, 1842:

If the British power of active military movement should decline, war of the most terrific nature accompanied by confusion and anarchy must insue. The peace of India is maintained by the military strength of the British power.²

Certainly Ellenborough could only decide to take firm measures in Sind. Furthermore, at a time when it was vitally important to maintain British prestige it was therefore vital that reverses in Afghanistan should not be followed by similar disgrace in Sind. For, again, Wellington had warned Ellenborough

that grave consequences among the Muslim population in India and throughout Asia might be expected to follow the reverses at the hands of the Muhammadans of Afghanistan.³

Would firm control of Sind control the Muslim population of India as he had hoped the incident of the Somnah Gates would ensure the loyalty of the Hindu population of India?

1. Wellington to Ellenborough, March 30, 1842, quoted in Imlah, op. cit., p. 95.

2. Wellesley to Ellenborough, July 4, 1842, quoted in Ibid, p. 95.

3. Wellington to Ellenborough, March 30, 1842, quoted in Ibid, p. 95.

Furthermore, the eventual "victory" in Afghanistan did not lessen the importance of Sind but greatly increased it. For, as Ellenborough stated in a proclamation in the year 1842, Sind must have been of prime importance for future policy.

The rivers of the Punjab and the Indus and the mountain passes and the barbarous tribes of Afghanistan will be placed between the British army and an enemy approaching from the West, if indeed such an enemy there can be, and no longer between the army and its supplies.

The enormous expenditure required for the support of a large force, in a false military position, at a distance from its own frontier and resources, will no longer arrest every measure for the improvement of the country and of the people.

The combined army of England and India, superior in equipment, in discipline, in valour, and in the officers by whom it is commanded, by any force which can be opposed to it in Asia, will stand in unassailable strength upon its own soil, and forever, under the blessing of providence preserve the glorious empire it has won in security and honour . . . 1

Thus "back to the Indus" was the policy and this necessitated the control of Sind, if indeed, policy depended on the rivers of the Punjab and the Indus. Sind was at that time a stronger position than the Punjab for Ranjit Singh had died, and problems from this quarter would only be a matter of time. Whereas only a few years previous policy had hinged on Punjab as the warden of Indian defence, now it was becoming apparent that Sind would be the base from which to control the affairs of Punjab.

1. Proclamation by Lord Ellenborough, October 1, 1842, quoted in Imlah, op. cit., p. 108-109.

Therefore, in the spring of 1842 it was apparent to Ellenborough that new arrangements had to be made with the Amirs of Sind, to facilitate the "means of rendering our power on the Indus invulnerable."¹ Thus existing treaties had to be modified. Justification was found in the incident of the Amirs' intrigues against the British. Although Roberts claims that the evidence against the Amirs was unsatisfactory and that British policy in regards to Sind could not be justified on moral grounds,² expediency demanded that a case for annexation be found or manufactured.³

Thus, on October 25, 1842, Napier submitted to Ellenborough evidence reviewing breaches of faith on the part of the Amirs.⁴ Perhaps the most serious was one from Mir Rustam to Lahore urging alliance against the British.⁵

On another occasion Mir Rustam had addressed his chiefs:

See the English have been turned out of Afghanistan and have eaten dirt, have been killed so far on their return to India. Their

1. Agent in Sind to Governor General, May 8, 1842, Cd., No. 331, p. 316.

2. Roberts, op. cit., p. 329.

3. Innes, A. D., A Short History of the British in India, London, Methuen and Co., 1902, p. 137.

4. Sir Charles Napier to Governor General, October 25, 1842, Cd., No. 379, p. 362.

5. Mir Rustam to Sher Sing, Cd., Inc. No. 5 in No. 379, p. 370.

force is large, and if they will but leave Sind I will meet all their demands for money. If on the contrary they do not leave Sukur and Sind we must fight them.¹

It is obvious that the Amirs would be reluctant to accept the presence of British troops maintained by their tribute money; and equally obvious that definite possession of Sind, as Wellington believed, would give greater military security.

Thereupon Napier announced to the Amirs that the charges made against them had been substantiated and that he was authorized to revise the treaty of 1839, Under the proposed new treaties the British were to have outright possession of Karachi, Tatta, Sukkur, Rohri, and Bukkur; vital areas in both a commercial and military sense.²

This cession of territory would be made in place of the three lakh tribute formerly collected to maintain the British force in Sind. Also the Amirs were to provide fuel for British steamers navigating the Indus; and thirdly, the Amirs were to cease to exercise the privilege of coining money. Significantly,

This last provision was looked upon as a complete surrender of their national rights and it is probable enough that from this time onward they only prolonged negotiations with a view to taking up arms at a favourable time.³

1. Napier to Ellenborough, November 30, 1842, intelligence enclosure from Major Clibborn, Cd., No. 425, p. 463.

2. Secretary to Governor General to Political Agent in Sind, May 22, 1842, Cd., No. 334, p. 318.

3. Roberts, op. cit., p. 328.

Before the Amirs accepted the treaty, Napier confiscated the territory in question; and acted as if Sind had passed under his jurisdiction, feeling that Britain should, or would, eventually annex Sind.

I conceive [he stated] that such a state of political relations could not last and the more powerful government would, at no very distant period, swallow up the weaker. If this reasoning be correct would it not be better to come to the results at once?¹

The Amirs were hesitant about accepting the new treaties and appeared to be making preparations for war. Matters were further complicated by Napier's interference in the question of the hereditary leadership of Upper Sind. Napier transferred the leadership from Mir Rustam, who had been accused of intriguing against the British, to Ali Murad, who would probably not ally with Lower Sind against the British. In this incident, was Napier acting on the divide and rule principle or deliberately provoking the Amirs into a war by interfering in their traditional affairs? The outcome of this incident was Napier's attack on the fortress of Iman Garh, although the Amirs had made no hostile moves towards the British; and the process of annexation had commenced.

Napier justified the annexation on the imperialistic philosophy that it was Britain's mission to bring the blessings

1. Observations by Sir Charles Napier on the occupation of Sind, October 17, 1842, quoted in Huttenback, British Relations With Sind, p. 76.

of civilization to backward people, even if they had to be "thrashed" into seeing the blessings, for he stated:

Barbaric chiefs must be bullied or they think you are afraid; they do not understand benevolence or magnanimity . . . I do not want to draw trigger against the Amirs . . . but if we show a wish to avoid doing so they will be at us and must be thrashed into sense.¹

The actual process of annexation followed from the razing of Iman Garh to the victory at Miani a few months later, and the eventual expulsion of the Amirs. However, these events do not concern us here, only the reason why.

In a geographic sense Sind was vital to the British whether the defense of India rested on the Indus or on a line beyond the mountains. This factor Auckland realized and thus he was interested in Sind even before the decision to push into Afghanistan. But the defeats at Kabul determined that the defensive policy would be "back to the Indus" and Sind had to be annexed as a cornerstone of this policy.

The annexation was a logical outcome of the expense and agony of conducting a war beyond the mountains. However, the war experience also illustrated that the tribes of Sind and Baluchistan in the strategic area of the passes leading into Sind would have to be considered in a policy of defence based on the Indus and Sind.

1. Quoted in Napier, Sir W., The Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles James Napier, as quoted in Lambrick, op. cit., p. 68.

Chapter IV

THE BRITISH CONQUEST OF THE PUNJAB

All causes that were not the cause of Rome were destined to be lost. The central power, once dominant, could only grow and all the outside forces could only shatter themselves against Rome as enemies or augment the strength of Rome as vassals.¹

These few words accurately describe the relationship of the Punjab and British India during the period from 1809 and the signing of the Treaty of Amritsar up to the eventual annexation of the Punjab by British India in 1849.

The annexation of the Punjab was a consequence of British expansion up to the Sutlej and a natural sequel to the First Afghan War and the annexation of Sind. This is not to say that the annexation was part of a master plan prepared by the British Government in India long before the actual event. However, it was realized by many, even as early as Lord Bentinck's time, that conflict with the Sikhs would eventually take place.

Bentinck himself was aware that British Sikh friendship depended upon the relationship with Ranjit Singh and that after his death relations with the Punjab would take a different direction.

1. Sinha, N. K., Ranjit Singh, Calcutta, A. Muckherjee, 1960, p. 192.

It is true that Ranjit Singh was the "sheet anchor of British policy"¹ and it is one of the exceptions of British rule in India that this cornerstone of policy lasted as long as it did. However it is important to realize that the years of alliance with Ranjit Singh were not years of perfect harmony and ideal foreign relations. Throughout the period in fact, there were definitely currents of conflict and cross purposes which became apparent only after the death of Ranjit Singh. The years of Ranjit Singh's domination were not only a temporary postponement of eventual war but a prelude to it. For in fact, the conflict which emerged during these years provides a partial explanation for the British conquest of the Sikh realms. Moreover, the course of events of these years gave the Sikhs justification for believing that the British would ultimately covet their kingdom.

The illusion of British Sikh friendship during these years 1809-1839 has been too often oversimplified, for the motivation behind their relationship was in fact, fear. For, "his [Ranjit Singh's] policy towards the English was inspired by dread of their power and not the result of genuine trust or goodwill."²

1. Sykes, op. cit.

2. Chopra, G. L., The Panjab as a Sovereign State, Hoshiarpur, Vedic Research Institute, 1960, p. 48.

The British, for their part, fearing Russian designs on India, felt it to be desirable to give the world an impression that there was complete unanimity between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar.¹

The Treaty of Amritsar, generally thought of as marking the beginning of British-Sikh friendship, actually pointed towards eventual conflict, for it restricted the Sikh commonwealth and confined Ranjit Singh's activities to the west side of the Sutlej. This act frustrated Sikh nationalism² and

The English alliance begun by depriving Ranjit Singh of one of the most cherished objects of his life, the idea of being the sole ruler of all the Sikhs.³

Thus from the Sikh point of view the eventual British-Sikh Wars were a clash between Sikh nationalism and British imperialism.

Certainly Ranjit Singh was a valuable ally to the British, for his strength in the Punjab was a buffer against any invasion of India from the West. Ranjit Singh had been the first Indian in a thousand years to stem the tides of invasion from across the North West Frontier, persuading Sikhs and Muslims to become instruments of an expansionist policy which eventually

1. Sinha, op. cit., p. 81.

2. Singh, Khushwant, Ranjit Singh, Maharaja of the Punjab, London, Allen and Unwin, 1962, p. 8.

3. Sinha, op. cit., p. 71.

brought Kashmiris and Pathans under his subjugation. Significantly, "he [Ranjit Singh] had secured possession of the most important posts beyond the Indus."¹

By 1823 the entire Valley of Peshawar was at the mercy of the Sikhs. Although there was no regular occupation, an army was occasionally sent to collect tribute. Actual annexation took place in 1834, while in 1835 and 1836 Hari Singh had built a fortress on the site of Bala Hissar and occupied the fort of Jamrud at the mouth of the Khyber. This corner of his empire was obviously singularly important to the British in India.

However, vital as was the friendship of Ranjit Singh, the relationship between the two powers produced serious tensions. The fact of the British imposing limits on Punjab expansion, the conflict of interests in Sind, and the British decision to intervene in Afghanistan all combined to drive a wedge in the entente and arouse Sikh antagonism towards the British.

Although the Afghan War and British activity in Sind are closely related, it was first of all British interference in Sind which caused the first strain on the relationship.² Sind was vitally important to Ranjit Singh since it could open

1. Chopra, op. cit., p. 22.

2. Sethi, R. R., The Mighty and Shrewd Maharaja, Delhi, S. Chand, 1960, p. 124.

communication with other countries free from British control. Furthermore, Sind was a natural extension of the Punjab for they both constituted a geographical entity separated from other parts by rivers, mountains, sea and desert.

Ranjit Singh urged his right of free action in Sind and attempted to maintain a claim on Shikarpur, the gateway to Khorasan, vitally important to Indus trade and that of Central Asia. Furthermore, through Shikarpur lay a route to Afghanistan and Baluchistan.¹

Open conflict was avoided in this first crisis basically because of the already mentioned factor of fear.

Had he [Ranjit Singh] felt strong enough he might have attempted to check by force of arms what he considered to be the unjustifiable interference of the English in his designs against Sindh.²

Furthermore, the fact that the British established themselves in Sind before Ranjit Singh could establish a definite relationship with the Amirs of Sind gave the British the advantage for: "Sind would have been invaded [by Ranjit Singh] had not Pottingers negotiation for their protection deterred Ranjit Singh."³

By 1836 Lord Auckland had become deeply concerned about the conduct of Ranjit Singh and looked upon the British Sikh

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1. Sinha, op. cit., p. 8.
 2. Chopra, op. cit., p. 48.
 3. Sinha, op. cit., p. 122.

alliance not without apprehension. His correspondence with Metcalfe and Hobhouse indicates this and mentions that the conduct of Ranjit Singh seemed to be becoming less friendly towards the English.¹

If the first "crisis" or straining of the relationship was caused by a conflict of interest over Sind, the second came about through the Tripartite Treaty and the First Afghan War, as Edwardes claims when he declares that "The illusions of Lord Auckland and the fear of Russia had drawn blood and sown the seeds of the Sikh wars."²

Although the signing of the Tripartite Treaty is generally accepted as the high water mark of the British Sikh entente, it actually came at a low point in Ranjit Singh's disposition towards the British. Less than a year previously to the signing of the treaty, Wade, the Political Agent in Ludhiana, referred to the change in the tone and temper of the Lahore ruler, pointing out that his sense of deference to the British Government which had been the chief source of mutual confidence and harmony was gone.³ Indeed,

in the last three years of his reign he showed a marked disposition towards pursuing an

1. Chopra, op. cit., p. 49.

2. Edwardes, M., The Necessary Hell, London, Cassell, 1958, p. 83.

3. Sinha, op. cit., p. 89.

independent line of action, irrespective of English interests and good-will,¹

supported in this attitude by his minister Raja Dihan Singh.²

Why then did Ranjit Singh sign the treaty? The secretary to the Governor General believed that he did so because he feared British might, and he maintained that:

the dread in which he stands of our power may be accepted as a sure pledge that he will never suffer himself to oppose the views and wishes of the government so long as we admit him to a participation of them as a friend.³

But it is more likely that Ranjit Singh became a partner to the treaty simply because he had nothing to lose, as long as his own participation was limited. If the British were to achieve a victory in Afghanistan he at least was a partner in the victory and if the British were defeated he would be free of the restrictions of the alliance. Thus, "perhaps he cheered his vexed spirit with the hope that the English would yet be baffled."⁴

Even before the signing of the treaty there were some who were convinced that the British would eventually have to become involved in the Punjab, perhaps to the extent of outright

1. Chopra, op. cit., p. 49.

2. Ibid, p. 49.

3. Secretary to Governor General of India, as quoted in Sinha, op. cit., p. 82.

4. Cunningham, J. D., A History of the Sikhs, Delhi, S. Chand, 1955, p. 22.

annexation. In 1837, while Auckland was on his tour of the Upper Provinces, he and his commander-in-chief discussed the best way of conquering the Punjab.¹ Although these discussions were dismissed as being purely academic, it would seem that they were academic only in the sense that no definite time was affixed to the execution of the exercise. Lord Auckland's nephew and military secretary scarcely concealed his enthusiasm for the reality of such speculation in his journal. In May, 1838, he wrote:

One course to pursue on Ranjit Singh's death would be the instant occupation of the Punjab by an overwhelming force and the establishment of our North-West frontier on the Indus.²

His enthusiasm, plus his inexperience, perhaps influenced his powers of observation, for his appraisal of Ranjit Singh's army contrasts sharply with most opinions, almost as if he felt it had been overestimated.³ However, his observations were made on the parade square and not on the battlefield.

During the period of the war with the Afghans, relations between the Sikhs and the British were further strained, for

From the moment when British forces began to use the Panjab as an avenue of approach to Khaiber

1. Thompson, E., The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe, London, Faber and Faber, 1937, p. 326.

2. Journal of William Osbourne, as quoted in Sinha, op. cit., p. 88.

3. Edwardes, The Necessary Hell, op. cit., p. 104.

Pass and Kabul there were increasing difficulties with the government and people of that country.¹

Logically British reverses at Kabul only tended to temper sikh suspicions with contempt.²

In 1839 Ranjit Singh died, and the British had to reconsider the role of the Punjab as a buffer state contributing to the defence of India. Apparently the Sikhs feared British movements even at the hour of his death, for we are told that:

On the night of his death precautions were taken against civil disturbances and incursions from abroad, ammunition was distributed and boats were kept on the western side of the Sutlej.³

Ranjit Singh's death ended the thirty year stalemate with the British, which I have attempted to point out was marked by undercurrents of tension which would have to break out into conflict now that there was a power vacuum in the Punjab and a gap in India's defensive arrangements. War was bound to come, that it had not may be explained by a motive more noable than simple fear:

Perhaps with the solicitude inherent in all builders he [Ranjit Singh] feared to expose the kingdom he had created to the risks of war and chose instead the policy of yielding.⁴

1. Imlah, op. cit., p. 158.

2. Ibid, p. 159.

3. Singh, Ranjit Singh, op. cit., p. 22.

4. Sinha, op. cit., p. 91.

The new situation in the Punjab, plus the reverses in Kabul, caused the British immediate concern. Briefly the situation was described thusly,

The regiments were mutinous and almost out of control and the whole area in chaos. The English had been massacred at Kabul, General Sale was incarcerated in Jelalabad; in January a Sepoy battalion mutinied at Peshawar. Everything was ripe for a serious affair.¹

It was this apprehension of "a serious affair" that led the British to withdraw from Afghanistan. It was the situation in the Punjab as well as the reverses in Afghanistan that caused Lord Ellenborough to speedily terminate the war with whatever facade of honour that could be mustered in a short time.

As well as terminating the war, Ellenborough laid the foundations for the future policy towards the Punjab. It was Ellenborough who crystallized earlier speculation about the Punjab and the academic discussions about its conquest into a reality. Two principles governed the foreign policy during the years 1842-1849, the first to secure the strategical extension of the North-West Frontier and the second, a principle of moderation on the part of the home authorities but a moderation which did not lead them to cancel any advances made.²

1. Edwardes, The Necessary Hell, op. cit., p. 85.

2. Ward, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 210.

To the authorities in India the first principle took precedent over the second.

Ellenborough was a Russophobe and viewed the Punjab as a part of the natural and logical defences of British India. While we are told by Hardinge, writing in 1891, that "the Government of India was determined to respect the treaty of 1809 and to avoid all interference with the dissensions of the Durbar,"¹ a later historian sees the situation more clearly.

the English, who had anticipated the chaos that would follow the death of Ranjit Singh began to move troops up to the frontier and to meddle in the internal affairs of the Durbar.²

Obviously plans were conditioned by affairs in Afghanistan for

as the Durbar's authority weakened, the British began to mature their plans of moving in. Their involvement in Afghanistan precluded for some time direct intervention in the Punjab. But as soon as affairs in Afghanistan were settled they resumed their expansionist policy.³

To careful observers it appeared probable that the Punjab, far from remaining the sure and steady friend of the Government of India, "was likely at no distant date to rush into war against it."⁴ For the Sikhs were taking precautionary measures

1. Hardinge, C. S., Viscount Hardinge, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1891, p. 72.

2. Singh, Khushwant, A History of the Sikhs, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1963, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 1.

3. Ibid, Vol. II, p. 7.

4. Ward, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 210.

to prevent the British from taking advantage of their weakness and also to remove the limitations which the British had placed on their expansion, a fact which in itself antagonized the British and helped convince them of Sikh hostility. The Sikhs began to extend their frontier towards Tibet

by striking out North and Eastward the Punjab could establish a common frontier with Nepal and guard itself against the possibility of British encirclement. When the Dogras had penetrated Tibet the British demanded that the Durbar give up its new conquests.¹

Ellenborough was not inclined to rush immediately into the Punjab for he instructed Richmond, his envoy and agent, to adhere to the policy of friendship towards the Punjab. However, this advice was not meant to be the basis of permanent relations, since

he [Ellenborough] considered that the presence of the Sikhs as a strong and friendly nation between the Indus and the Sutlej was most beneficial, however, defensive measures must not be neglected and information that would be of use in war must be collected.²

Ellenborough's annexation of Sind in 1843 undoubtedly caused the Sikhs to be concerned that the same future was in store for them. Nevertheless, Ellenborough's action in Sind and Gawalior did close up one of the weak points on the

1. Sinha, History of the Sikhs, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 24.

2. Broadfoot, W., Career of Major George Broadfoot, London, John Murray, 1888, p. 225.

North West Frontier and put the British in a stronger position not only in regard to Central Asia but in regard to Punjab, since

Sind carried the British border to the mountains while Gawalior secured the rear and the communications of the British army in case of a war with the Sikhs.¹

Ellenborough had feared that affairs in Gawalior might be an incentive for the Sikhs to attack for he wrote late in 1843:

It would have been unpardonable were we not to take every possible precaution against such an event; and no precaution appears to be more necessary, than that of rendering our rear, and our communications, secure by the establishment of friendly government at Gawalior.²

Having secured Sind and Gawalior, obviously Ellenborough was in a much stronger position to consider his policy towards the Punjab in the light of his personal ambition. It appears that anarchy in the Punjab was entirely to his liking and would provide the justification for his extreme forward policy. In April, 1844, he wrote admitting his secret desires to his brother-in-law, Hardinge:

You see what has happened at Lahore. There can be no doubt that out of the state of things in the Panjab will arise an invasion of our protected territory. All things tend to it.

I had rather any necessity for our moving should be put off for a year and a half from this time. If it could be, I should have an army with which I could march to the Dardanelles. In four months I shall have 275,000 men in arms.

1. Ward, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 212.

2. Quoted in Imlah, op. cit., p. 158.

I think I could cross the Sutlej with rather more than 33,000 infantry, 7,000 cavalry, and in all 162 guns. But as I have told Sir George Arthur I want 40,000 men, and one, and that one a General. The last I have not got.

Does not this excite your ambition? It would be an operation of two years, which would require the most dextrous political management as well as military, but which well managed should give us the Panjab, Cashmere, and Peshawar, that is, everything within the mountains; and it should be terminated, in order to secure the whole, by the assumption of the Imperial title by the Queen . . .

I think you will at once see that, supposing this operation of two years is successfully completed, we have under our foot, whenever the state of Europe will permit us to take it, that country which has ever been the ultimate object of my desires, but of which I hardly dare to whisper the name--Egypt.¹

About the same time Ellenborough was in correspondence with Peel, attempting to convince him of the desirability of occupying the Punjab as it was part of the natural boundary of the British Empire in India. Furthermore, additional justification for such action was found in the possibility of the Punjab situation influencing the Sepoys to rebellion. Ellenborough expressed these ideas in a letter to Peel, dated July 22, 1844:

The Panjab is within India, and everything within the summits of the mountains which form the north and west boundary of the Valley of the Indus must be on terms of real friendship with us, or dependent upon us, or occupied by us. We cannot

1. Ellenborough to Hardinge, April, 1844, as quoted in Parker, C. S., Sir Robert Peel, London, J. Murray, 1891, Vol. III, p. 29.

admit an open or concealed enemy within our camp. Beyond these limits we cannot advance without weakening ourselves, even if we hold all the country in our rear. The monstrous error of Lord Auckland was that of advancing beyond these limits without having secured all within them.

I have said, and I repeat it, that I should prefer the Panjab as it was under the friendly government of Ranjit Singh to having it in our own hands. But we cannot tolerate in the Panjab a state hostilely disposed; still less can we endure there the pernicious example of a mutinous army extorting higher pay and donations from the nominal head of the government by threats of violence. Such an example is more dangerous to us than the presence of a powerful enemy upon our frontier; for we depend altogether upon the fidelity and obedience of the native army, which such an example long continued would shake and ultimately perhaps subvert.¹

Actually this particular letter was received by Peel after Ellenborough's recall. But during the short administration of Lord Ellenborough, the likelihood of British occupation of the Punjab passed from the realm of speculation to near inevitability.

In 1844 Hardinge succeeded Ellenborough as Governor General. He saw eighteen months of peaceful rule till December, 1845, when the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej. Ellenborough had foreseen a Sikh war and the Directors had finally recognized this fact, and appointed Hardinge because of his reputation in the Peninsular Wars, giving him the same commission of Captain General and Commander-in-Chief that had been given to Wellesley in 1800, enabling him to command personally troops

1. Ellenborough to Peel, July 22, 1844, as quoted in Parker, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 258.

in India.¹

The crossing of the Sutlej by the Sikhs was the signal for war. But what inspired the Sikhs to cross? Prior to the crossing, the British had been waiting and watching the anarchy in the Punjab, possibly waiting for someone of the calibre of Ranjit Singh to emerge; but more likely waiting to prove that there was not going to be another Ranjit Singh.

Apparently the British were only waiting for an opportunity to annex for when the Lahore Durbar asked for a British force at Lahore, which might have established tranquility, the British declined.²

Furthermore, Khushwant Singh charges that the British not only watched the anarchy in the Panjab but also contributed to it, citing as evidence their supporting Sher Singh then only standing by and watching his assassination by Ajit Singh Sandhawalia when Sher Singh proved to be incapable.³

Commenting on these incidents the British Friend of India wrote

we have no proof that Company instigated all the King-killing which have been perpetuated in Punjab . . . we must say we smell a rat.⁴

1. Curzon, British Government in India, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 201.

2. Hardinge, op. cit., p. 73.

3. Singh, A History of the Sikhs, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 17.

4. Friend of India, December, 1843, as quoted in Chhabra, G. S., The Advanced History of the Panjab, Ludhiana, Parkash Brothers, 1962, p. 230.

After this assassination Dulip Singh became Maharaja, with Hiri Singh as his minister, who directed the animosity of the army towards the British, since,

he foresaw that the time must come when he could no longer raise money to satisfy the rapacity of the army and believed that his chance of safety then was to incite the soldiers against the British.¹

The British further provoked the Sikhs by their decision concerning the treasure of Raja Suchet Singh and their rejection of the Durbar's request for the restoration of the village of Moran and free passage to their possessions across the Sutlej.

In december of 1844 Hira Singh was murdered in another wave of violence in the Punjab. Khushwant Singh claims that at this point Hardinge became thoroughly convinced that the Sikhs were incapable of maintaining a stable government and began to deliberately weaken the Sikhs by strengthening the Dogras in the hills and fortifying the frontier with a view to annexing the Punjab at an appropriate time wanting only a justifiable reason.²

All the while the Khalsa army was becoming more hostile to the Durbar and the British—a Khalsa army too strong,

1. Broadfoot, op. cit., p. 220.

2. Singh, A History of the Sikhs, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 32.

with too little to do, looking for plunder and war. A situation

encouraged by British ineptitude in the Afghan War. No money in the treasury, no pay for the army, while across the Sutlej town after town lay waiting to be sacked.¹

On December 3, 1845, the British severed diplomatic relations with the Durbar; and the next day the Rani ordered the army to march to the Sutlej. On December 13 the crossing was made. Although we are told that "the movement was not contested since at that time and place we were to some extent unprepared,"² actually Hardinge had made elaborate preparations and increased the military strength on the Sutlej frontier.³

If the Sikhs were guilty of unprovoked aggression, then the British were fighting a defensive war; but if the Sikhs had been provoked and crossed the Sutlej in an act of self defence, then the war was a calculated move on the part of the British to justify some type of control over the Punjab. Viewing British relations with the Punjab since the beginning of the century and the search for a defensible frontier, this writer is convinced that the British desired the Punjab, and to that end welcomed and encouraged the First Sikh War.

1. Cork, B. J., Rider on a Grey Horse, London, Cassell and Co., 1958, p. 19.

2. Roberts, op. cit., p. 334.

3. Hardinge, op. cit., p. 77-78.

Definitely there was a conspiracy between the British and the Sikh Council of State. Since a victory for the Khalsa army over the British would make the army stronger still, there was therefore need of a compromise. Thus there was an agreement between Lal Singh, Tej Singh, and the British that no further attempts would be made to hold back the Sikh forces; however every effort would be made to insure that the Khalsa would lose battles. Thus in due course when the British gained a final victory, her servants could look forward with confidence to appropriate rewards.¹

Hardinge's major concern over the Sikh's crossing the Sutlej was to wonder "will the people of England consider this as an actual invasion of our frontier and a justification of war?"²

At the end of the fifty-four day war, in February of 1846, Hardinge was forced to act on the wishes of the Home Government, which objected to the extension of British territory. After a decade of costly conflict involving wars in Afghanistan, Sind and Punjab, and the annexation of Sind and Gawalior, the British public would not tolerate another annexation. However, Hardinge himself was completely convinced that annexation

1. Cork, op. cit., p. 19.

2. Lord Hardinge's remark to Robert Cust, December 18, 1845, referred to in Singh, A History of the Sikhs, Vol. II, p. 46.

was justified. At the war's end, in Roberts' estimation

. . . the Sikhs by their absolutely unprovoked violation of British territory could have looked for little else than the complete loss of their independence.¹

Hardinge stopped short of annexation, not only because of the wishes of the home authorities, but because at that time he was not strong enough to occupy the Punjab, for Singh claims:

Hardinge had already made up his mind about the future of the Sikh kingdom. He knew that there were still too many Khalsa soldiers scattered about in the country to permit annexation, so he contented himself with terms which would facilitate a take-over at a more appropriate time.²

Under the terms of the Treaty of Lahore, Lahore was to be occupied by British troops for one year, which could facilitate a takeover at a more appropriate time. The British contingent at Lahore was in fact the thin edge of the wedge of annexation. While Charles Napier agreed that annexation at that time was impossible,³ Hardinge did admit that

the presence of British troops at Lahore would greatly facilitate the annexation of the whole province whenever such an extremity might become necessary.⁴

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 338.

2. Singh, A History of the Sikhs, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 35.

3. Hardinge, op. cit., p. 121.

4. Quoted in Ibid, p. 133.

Hardinge's settlement with the Punjab was calculated to weaken the Punjab as a potential enemy but preserve it, temporarily, as a buffer against attacks from the west.

Precisely,

he [Hardinge] still keeps between British India and the mountain hordes of Central Asia, a power strong enough to restrain the latter should they aim at permanent conquests in the plain, yet has so far weakened it by the severance of the new principality [Kashmir] assigned to Gulab Singh, that we trust all risk of a rupture with us, for many a day to come at least, is averted.¹

The Treaty of Lahore established Henry Lawrence as Resident at Lahore and Lal Singh, as a reward for his part during the war, was appointed first minister. Peter Lumsden predicted:

Lal Singh's life is not worth two hours purchase after the withdrawal from Lahore which we are bound to do in October. Should this withdrawal take place the unfortunate Punjab will have once more to witness those fearful scenes of murder and confusion for which the Sikh Court has of late been so remarkable and we shall assuredly have to return and annex the country . . . I am quite convinced that before six months we shall either have a permanent resident at Lahore or the whole country under our rule.²

However, the treaty with Lahore was praised by Peel for its "dignified forbearance and moderation." But within a matter of weeks this dignified moderation became a much

1. "Dispatches of Viscount Hardinge," Quarterly Review, No. 78, 1846, p. 215.

2. Lumsden, P. S. and Elsmie, G. R., Lumsden of the Guides, London, John Murray, 1899, p. 23.

firmer line and Hardinge came much closer to actual annexation, when, in October 1846, there was an insurrection in Kashmir when Shaikh Iman-ud-din refused to carry out the transfer of Kashmir to Ghulab Singh. Thus, "without an hour's hesitation the Governor-General declared that the treaty must be enforced by British troops."¹

It is significant that this insurrection was acted upon "without an hour's hesitation" while the insurrection at Multan only a few months later did not receive attention for over six months. One can only assume that it was convenient to let the Multan revolt erupt into something bigger.

The Kashmir issue was significant in that it justified, in Hardinge's view, a crucial revision of the Treaty of Lahore. Hardinge wrote to the Secret Committee:

. . . the course which may be open to the British Government to take . . . would be to carry on the government at Lahore in the name of the Maharaja during his minority, a period of about eight years, placing a British minister at the head of the government.²

Thus in a matter of a few months British influence over the Punjab had been expanded from an occupation of one year to a virtual control for a period of eight years. The new treaty provided for a Regency Council, presided over by Henry Lawrence and also that a British garrison would remain in Lahore till the Maharaja came of age.

1. Hardinge, op. cit., p. 147.

2. Ibid, p. 149.

It was considered necessary that this new arrangement be honoured not only by the consent but by the invitation of the ghost Durbar, for Hardinge wrote on December 10, 1846, a week before the signing of the new treaty, "it is important that the proposal should originate with them."¹

This was to be Hardinge's last act in the conquest of the Punjab for the actual takeover was to be effected by Lord Dalhousie. But before he left there were indications of friction with the Sikhs for on April 29, 1847, Henry Lawrence reported:

Sikh character may dictate the attempt to escape from under foreign yoke . . . a British army cannot garrison Lahore, and the fiat of a British functionary cannot supercede that of the Durbar throughout the land, without our presence being considered a burden and a yoke.²

In January, 1844, Hardinge was relieved by Dalhousie and before the year was over the Punjab was to become a British province and the frontier pushed to the mountains of the North West.

There is one slight misconception concerning the strength of the Indian army at Hardinge's retirement. Roberts states that the Indian army was vastly reduced after the First Sikh

1. Hardinge to Currie, December 10, 1846, quoted in Singh, A History of the Sikhs, Vol. II, p. 160.

2. Lee-Warner, Sir William, The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie, London, Macmillan and company, 1904, Vol. II, p. 149.

War, reduced, in fact, by about 50,000. While this is true, it is important to remember that it concerns the total picture of the army in India; the situation on the North West area was considerably different. In fact the garrison on the North West Frontier had been doubled. On the Sutlej there were 50,000 men with 60 guns; at Ferozpur, 10,000 men, and at Lahore, 9,000 men. When the insurrection subsequently broke out at Multan Lord Gough had an ample force for the operations which followed.¹

Within a few months of Dalhousie's arrival, the situation which was to decide the future of the Punjab broke out at Multan.

Dalhousie's action concerning this outbreak provoked controversy; but it appears that his actions were calculated to use this outbreak to justify annexation, for the unrest gave Dalhousie the opportunity to reorientate British thinking towards the Durbar.

The trouble at Multan apparently started because the Governor, Mulraj, was dissatisfied with his share of the revenue and threatened to resign. Thereupon Lahore appointed Sadar Khan Singh Man to succeed him, with Vans Agnew and Lieutenant Anderson as Political Agents. Upon their arrival

1. Hardinge, op. cit., p. 169.

the British officers were assaulted, but their last dispatches exonerated Mulraj. Vans Agnew wrote: "I don't think Mulraj had anything to do with it. I was riding with him when we were attacked"¹; similarly Herbert Edwardes wrote to the Lahore Resident, "I think Mulraj has been involved in rebellion against his will."² In any case, the next day after the assault Anderson and Vans Agnew were murdered by a mob at Multan.

Henry Lawrence, who opposed annexation, was of the opinion that the outbreak at Multan should be put down immediately; and wrote to Dalhousie telling him what he would have done in such a case.³ Likewise John Lawrence was of the same opinion:

if we do nothing [he declared] the whole of the disbanded soldiery of the Manji will flock down and make common cause with the mutineers.⁴

Junior officers, whose enthusiasm exceeded their sense of political scheming, cried for immediate action. For example, Peter Lumsden wrote:

The example of one successful attempt is likely to lead to a dozen others, and unsettled mens minds, making them doubt the power of our government, which should always be felt to be irresistible, as well as available at all seasons of the year,

1. Quoted in Edwardes, H., A Year on the Punjab Frontier, London, R. Bentley, 1851, Vol. II, p. 68.

2. Ibid, Vol. II, p. 100.

3. Henry Lawrence to Lord Dalhousie, October, 1848, quoted in Edwardes, The Necessary Hell, p. 110.

4. John Lawrence to H. M. Elliot, quoted in Ibid, p. 111.

should people once take it into their heads that we cannot act in the hot weather, we shall soon have lots of summer campaigns. Had Lawrence been at our head we should have been in Multan at this time.¹

However, this delay, for which Dalhousie was being criticized, was exactly what he wanted for according to S. S. Thorburn, "the Government of India had decided to let the Punjab abscess come to a head, and when ripe, to lance it freely."²

As early as the 4th of May the Governor General had been informed of the insurrection, but he and the Commander-in-Chief hesitated, giving as a reason that action was impossible in the hot season, but, "they were conscious of the fact that they might have to be prepared for any outbreak and the defection of allies."³

Only Herbert Edwardes took immediate action and attacked Mulraj at Multan, fearing that Mulraj would summon the hill tribes to an insurrection around Dera Shazi Khan. Edwardes is a rather pathetic figure in his effort to save the Empire, for he was unaware of his superior's policy, since

the policy of deliberate inactivity did not percolate down to the junior officers among whom the most enterprising was Lt. Edwardes.⁴

1. Lumsden and Elsmie, op. cit., p. 51.

2. Thorburn, S. S., The Panjab in Peace and War, Edinburgh, William Blackwood and Sons, 1904, p. 101.

3. Lee-Warner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 156.

4. Singh, A History of the Sikhs, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 72.

While Edwardes started the siege of Multan, the revolt was spreading. The Maharani was corresponding with Mulraj and was attempting to stir up mutiny, for

regiments had been approached and agreed to a general uprising that was to mark the end of British rule in the Panjab. Moreover a date for the uprising had been fixed.¹

While Lord Gough and Dalhousie hesitated, Currie, the Resident at Lahore, decided to act on his own and sent General Whish towards Multan to assist Edwardes in the siege.

On September 4, Whish issued a proclamation for the surrender of Multan, and while plans were being made for a siege, Sher Singh and 7,000 men went over to Mulraj.²

At the same time the Sikh leaders entered into an alliance with Dost Mohammed "buying his aid with the surrender of Peshawar."³

Dalhousie had hesitated, waiting for the situation to become such that British public opinion and the Company directors would support his actions. For Hobhouse had written to Dalhousie saying that the action of Mulraj had not produced a sensation in England.⁴ Apparently jingoism was at

1. Cork, op. cit., p. 42.

2. Lee-Warner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 169.

3. Roberts, op. cit., p. 342.

4. Lee-Warner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 170.

a low ebb in England and the murder of two British officers did not justify another war.

However, the defection of Sher Singh was significant; for, "the event was the turning point in the rebellion,"¹ and indicated to Dalhousie that the time had come to justify preparations for large scale war.

Events were now moving rapidly; the Rani had sent emissaries to Kabul, Kandahar, Kashmir, Jammu and Rajputana while Dost Mohammed moved his troops to Jalalabad. About the same time that Sher Singh went over to Mulraj, Sher Singh's brother, Chattar Singh in Hazara, came out in defiance of John Nicholson, "while from village to village throughout the Panjab went the call to the Khalsa."²

The uprising was now a national one which was exactly what Dalhousie wanted, for he stated on September 18, 1848:

The insurrection in Hazara has made great head . . . I should wish nothing better . . . I can see no escape from the necessity of annexing this infernal country . . . I have drawn the sword and this time thrown away the scabbard.³

Hardinge expressed his support by saying

The energy and turbulent spirit of the Sikhs are stated by one section of politicians

1. Ibid, p. 172.

2. Cork, op. cit., p. 46.

3. Baird, J. G. A., Private Letters of the Marquis of Dalhousie, Edinburgh and London, W. Blackwood, 1911, p. 33.

here as ground for not annexing. In my judgment this is the argument which would dispose me, if I were on the spot, to annex,¹

The sword was drawn, the scabbard thrown away, and on February 22, 1849, the last battle for the advanced frontier was fought at Gugrat. Then a month later, March 29, 1849, annexation of the Punjab was declared.

The struggle which had begun almost half a century before was now completed, "a momentous step which finally carried the frontiers of British India to their natural limits, the base of the mountains of Afghanistan."² The outside force now augmented the strength of Rome as vassals.

1. Hunter, W. W., The Marquis of Dalhousie, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1890, p. 83.

2. Roberts, op. cit., p. 344.

Chapter V

TWO FRONTIER SYSTEMS

After the annexation of Sind in 1843 and of the Punjab in 1849, the British administrators turned their attention to the problems of the defence of the North West Frontier. The real history of the frontier begins after the annexations, for "British India had for the first time touched its natural limits . . . the true policy for the frontier dates from this point,"¹ and the frontier itself becomes the centre of attraction.

Since the frontier problem was always a juxtaposition of local and imperial concerns the first problem to be solved was that of fixing and defining the frontier, then administering it. In the two recently acquired territories two distinct schools of thought evolved concerning frontier administration; the Sind System and the Punjab System. Each had its distinctive characteristics, each created frontier heroes and each system had its champions, but both were primarily concerned with finding the best defensible line for the protection of India. This chapter will be concerned with a description

1. Morison, op. cit., p. 184.

of the nature and mechanics of each system, their objectives, and an assessment of the degree to which each realized these objectives.

The differences in the two systems may be generally accounted for by natural as well as human factors. The systems were determined in part by the size and nature of the respective terrains, in part by the temperament of the tribes that had to be administered, and the temperament of the administrator.

The territory of Sind was much smaller than that of the Punjab, exposing a much shorter frontier and a much easier one to traverse. Specifically:

At the point where the Panjab meets Sind the Western mountain barrier recedes from the Indus Valley, curving round to enclose the Kelat province of Kachhi, a plain some six thousand square miles in extent, and separated from Upper Sind by a desert twenty or thirty miles across. The southern edge of this desert was generally recognized as the boundard between the territories of Kelat to the north and the Mirs of Hyderabad to the south. Sind in fact extended as far as the waters of the Indus would reach in their annual innundation.¹

Sind was only important because the easiest passes through the mountain barrier were approached across Sind,²

1. Lambrick, H. T., John Jacob of Jacobabad, London, Cassell, 1960, p. 33.

2. Muir, R., The Making of British India, Manchester, University Press, 1923, p. 307.

therefore practically all of the activity of the Sind System was concerned with this Upper Sind province of Kachhi, which controlled the access routes to the principal pass, the Bolan. Kachhi is described thusly:

The physical aspects of this flat country is tame and depressing even now . . . Kachhi still remains, and may always remain, much as it was in 1839, a burnt up dusty plain of reddish brown earth, diversified by sandhills and low scrub jungle here and there, and intersected by the beds of occasional torrents from the hills that hem it in on three sides. The fertility of the soil is discounted by want of water, the crops depending on precarious rainfall,¹

North of Kachhi lay the mountains and the vital approaches to India: Quetta, the Bolan, and Kandahar. To the south it was insulated by a desert, pictured as:

Kachhi was little better than a desert. Yet it was favoured land compared with Sind. No more forbidding region exists than those two thousand square miles of emptiness; a dead brown level of indurated soil not only devoid of animal life or vegetation in any form, but unrelieved by the slightest irregularity in the ground. Here, as nowhere else but on a calm sea, the curvature of the earth is plain to the eye; here the travellers tales are everyday realities--the dust storm which turns day into fearful night; the mirage in which a few bones assume the semblance of a walled city, and salt crystals a blue lake, the simoon beneath whose poisonous blast the springs of life are dried up and man or horse fall back and shrivelled in their tracks. From March to October the whole tract--Kachhi, the desert, and Upper Sind swelters under heat indescribable; the unrelenting sun has drained the country of colour, half tones only

1. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, op. cit., p. 35.

remain, the dull grey green of the tamarisk, the grey brown of the inhospitable hills and the dun of the parched earth,¹

Along the southern fringe of this desert lay the "Sind Frontier," but the wardens of this march would always look beyond the desert, beyond the mountains, to Kandahar, and the Afghan Plateau for the real defensible line of India.

The Sind frontier and the Punjab frontier had one factor in common, neither had been successfully administered by their previous masters. Before the British neither the Talpur Amirs in Sind nor Ranjit Singh in the Punjab had had any degree of success in controlling their frontiers. The Talpurs had only hired Baluchis of one tribe to guard their borders against Baluchis of another. The Talpur Amirs had adopted another policy towards the tribes which was likewise practiced on the Punjab frontier. Blackmail, or subsidies paid to the tribes, was practiced and in some cases found to be less expensive than military pressure.

This feature of frontier administration, though adopted by the British somewhat reluctantly, was practiced on both frontiers. However, this particular policy of playing tribe off against tribe was more a feature of the Napier administration before the appearance of John Jacob, and thus before the actual formulation of the Sind "System."

1. Ibid, p. 36.

Although the Sind System, per se, did not properly evolve until the mid-1840's, after annexation, this particular frontier was an area of concern for the British as early as 1838 when, during the First Afghan War the Bolan route was the avenue of conquest. Conflict with the tribes of this area was an important secondary feature of the conduct of the war itself. The interrelationship of frontier policy and imperial policy made itself apparent first of all on the Upper Sind frontier where valuable experience was painfully learned which determined later policy.

As we have seen, British convoys through the Bolan had been attacked by the tribes with an alarming degree of success. As Lambrick explains:

. . . it seemed incredible that bands so few in number could be so ubiquitous and come such distances over the pathless desert. The Dombki and Jakhrani raiders were tribes of horsemen who thought nothing of covering sixty miles without a halt, to arrive at daybreak at the rendezvous . . . their retreat, through the intense heat of the day, soon distanced all pursuit . . . the Baluch is indeed well fitted by constitution and physique to perform such feats of endurance. No race in the world can endure without water for such long hours under a burning sun.¹

To the north-east and east of the desert lay the lands of the Marris, centered about Kahan, and the Bugtis of Dera.

1. Ibid, p. 35.

Here was a mountain mass which formed a bastion to the Bolan route. Here

the characteristics of India's great western Barrier are found in all their firmness, sharp foothills rising from a wilderness of drift sand; long stony plateaux intersected by water courses full of boulders and shingle; ranges thrusting up almost perpendicularly and deeply cleft by avulsion, or the passage of torrents; naked saddle-backs scored by innumerable ravines.¹

Here the Marris and Bugtis, nominally vassals of the Khan of Kalat, enjoyed a stormy independence and with the reputation of being invincible on their own ground, threatened the approaches to the Bolan. Consequently to control the Marris and Bugtis, Major Billamore led the first hill campaign on the Sind frontier. This 1839 campaign was John Jacob's first. In it he made his reputation as a swordsman, he learned of handling cavalry and the problems of transport and an insight into the qualities of the Baluch tribesman, their methods of warfare and the workings of their minds.

In October of 1841 a cornerstone of British frontier policy in Sind was allied with the signing of a treaty between the British Government and the Khan of Kelat. In this particular treaty the Khan acknowledged Shah Shuja and agreed to be guided by British advice and conceded the British the right to station troops in his territory. In return Kachhi

1. Ibid, p. 40.

was returned to him but the valley of Quetta remained in British possession. Although this particular treaty was short lived, it would be revived, for the Sind System was based in part on an alliance with the Khan of Kelat. This particular characteristic of alliance with a power beyond the border was a feature of the Sind System not shared by the Punjab System.

At about the same time Jacob was promoted to the command of the Sind Irregualr Horse and significantly one of his first duties was to survey the "high road" from Shikarpur to Dadar, the line to the Bolan.

After the British reverses at Kabul, affairs on the Upper Sind frontier became more critical. Thus the Sind Irregular Horse was to guard the frontier from Sibi to Shikarpur, a distance of approximately 120 miles, with 475 officers and men plus auxiliaries of Jakhrani and Dombki. This characteristic of employing tribal horsemen became a permanent feature of the Jacob system. To keep open the high road, Headquarters was established at Chattar, but Jacob acknowledged Outram's foresight, that a defeat in Afghanistan would mean falling back from the forward position at Quetta back to the desert.

If we have to evacuate Afghanistan [Outram predicted] I think it very probable the desert will be our boundary hereafter and Khangar [later Jacobabad] our frontier post.¹

1. Outram to Jacob, February 4, 1842, quoted in Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, p. 59.

Following the Afghan War came the annexation of Sind. One argument against annexation was that a large number of troops would have to be exposed to guard the new frontier since there had been renewed plundering by the Dombki and Jakhrani. With the conquest the policing of the border beyond Shikarpur became the permanent responsibility of the British. However, as Lambrick says,

Sir Charles Napier did not yet understand the character of the independent tribes of Kachhi. He seems to have assumed that his own prestige as conqueror of Sind was in itself almost enough to overawe the border robbers.¹

With renewed raiding Napier's policy was to turn tribe against tribe. Jacob described this type of policy as

the most pernicious policy that could be adopted for securing the frontier; the practice of private warfare and the perpetuation of blood feuds were the main causes of its chronic disorder.²

Napier also initiated the policy of transferring inhabitants from one area to another, but this only exposed the frontier to further raiding. Part of the problem causing the unrest on the frontier at this time was the personality of Napier and the fact that each frontier post had to be in correspondence with Karachi. Individual officers were allowed little initiative, thus,

This crushing of the initiative of officers in command of isolated detachments in the face of

1. Ibid, p. 109.

2. Ibid, p. 111.

a cunning and vigilant enemy could have only one result.¹

In December of 1846 the Bugtis made the biggest raid into Sind ever known. Over 1,500 Bugtis raided Sind and took 10,000 cattle. They raided well within British posts, going within fifteen miles of Shikarpur. British troops were ineffective, particularly the strong post at Shahpur.²

Thus the Napier policy had had little success. He had built forts and posted detachments on the frontier but they were not effective. There was only one option left to Napier:

. . . one body of troops, one man under his command, on whom he could depend not only to retrieve the disaster, but to solve the whole frontier problem for him. On December 20, 1846, Jacob and the First Regiment of the Sind Irregular Horse left Hyderabad.³

This was a turning point in the history of the Sind frontier, for

until the arrival of Major John Jacob and the Scinde Irregular Horse in January 1847 no efficient protection had been afforded to British subjects along this exposed frontier.⁴

In the period January to October 1847 Jacob established himself on the Upper Sind frontier and revolutionized

1. Ibid, p. 126.

2. Lambrick, Sir Charles Napier and Sind, op. cit., p. 304.

3. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, op. cit., p. 127.

4. Davies, The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit., p. 20.

Napier's system and established relative peace and a working system of frontier administration. Upon his arrival he established his headquarters at the then desolate post of Khangarh.

Immediately he began to convince the authorities to increase his personal authority. Colonel Forbes at Shikarpur placed all outposts under his command, giving him authority to destroy any marauders but not to enter the territories of the Khan of Kelat.¹

In his defensive arrangement he established five outposts: Rojhan, Khangarh, Mubarakpur, Mirpur, and Shahpur; moving the commanders outpost from Shikarpur to Khangarh. In the area to the westward of Rojhan the Camel Corps in Larkhana was responsible. Also a strong British force was established at Kashmor. Jacob was in direct command of the first five named posts and later moved the Mubarakpur outpost to Gorhi Del Murad, retaining Baluch horsemen to watch the watering places between Murad and the hills. Jacob now established what was really the heart of his system, a system of patrols from all outposts, night and day along the frontier into Burdeka and up to the skirts of the hills.

¹, Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, op. cit., p. 134.

Although it was described as an energetic system of close border counter raiding¹ Jacob's policy was not based entirely on force. Rather he hoped to raise the moral and material status of the tribes by providing useful channels for their energies, for example the policy of enlisting some tribesmen.

Part of the reason for Jacob's success was the fact that he was allowed so much personal responsibility. However, when Napier was replaced by Pringle there was a danger of his power being reduced, with political authority being placed in the hands of the collector at Shikarpur. On this Jacob wrote to his immediate superior in the fall of 1847:

Were I to wait for instructions from the collector at Shikarpur the whole country might be plundered before anything could be done to prevent it . . . I must have political and descretionary authority or I am powerless.²

Actually Jacob's powers were increased rather than decreased for the Governor in Council wrote:

[it is] most desirable the Major Jacob should be entirely trusted with the protection of the frontier, and that our relations with the plundering tribes should be confided to his superintendence. [I am] therefore pleased to appoint him Political Superintendent as well as Commandant of the Scinde Frontier.³

1. Caroe, O., The Pathans, New York, St. Martins Press, 1958, p. 330.

2. Quoted in Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, p. 148.

3. Quoted in Ibid, p. 149.

During this question of authority Jacob elaborated on his tribal philosophy, and its result. He wrote:

They [the tribesmen] have taken to cultivating their fields . . . with as good a will as if they had been agriculturists all their lives. How has this been done? By my having made the business of a lootoo disreputable and unlucky as well as dangerous.¹

Jacob was given both his regiments on the frontier and held the entire line of outposts with full magisterial and political authority, and the right to make all arrangements with Kelat and Khairpur. On the British side of the border the carrying of arms without permit was prohibited and a persistent steady quiet stream of patrols broke down the habits of private warfare.

By 1848 the frontier line of Upper Sind was established and defended. New posts were established at Tangwana, Kandhkot and Bandani in Burdeka. The frontier was now about 120 miles long and employed Khosa, Jakhrani, Dombki, and Chandia tribesmen as guides. The outposts absorbed about 360 men (3 per mile), plus guides, plus 1,000 men at headquarters at Jacobabad (formerly Khangarh). Posts were approximately fifteen miles apart.

In spite of minor incidents during the Second Sikh War, Jacob was able to report by the end of 1850,

1. Quoted in Ibid, p. 151.

the adventurous kind of life which the guarding of this frontier implied some years ago has now settled down into a regular routine, and the country is profoundly quiet along the whole border.¹

In 1850 Dalhousie had written to Jacob asking for a report on his system. In reply Jacob considered the salient features as being: the change from a defensive to an offensive policy; the disarming of the country; the treatment of British subjects and foreigners as equally guilty when detected in marauding; and the regular system of patrolling. Perpetual vigilance was a vital element, for

my Beloochee Scouts give timely information of everyting stirring . . . every strange footstep on the border is certain to be speedily reported to one or other of the posts and to be immediately followed.²

Later Jacob denounced the Punjab System on the grounds that it was a strictly defensive method; the troops were protected by fortifications; the people were encouraged to bear arms; attacks in retaliation on hill men were welcomed; and the exertion of moral influence on the tribes had not been considered.³

Although much of the success of the Sind System is explained by the relatively short distance which had to be

1. Jacob to his brother (in England) Circa, December, 1850, quoted in Ibid, p. 164.

2. Jacob to Dalhousie, August, 1850, quoted in Ibid, p. 165.

3. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, p. 170.

patrolled and the nature of the terrain which was ideally suited to the type of patrolling instigated by Jacob, perhaps more of the answer is found in the personality of Jacob and the makeup of the Sind Irregular Horse. The force was well officered, well armed, and well equipped with a high degree of mobility and excellent arrangements for transport.

Apart from transforming the land by irrigation and canal systems and transforming the people by encouraging pacific occupations, Jacob never lost sight of the Imperial consideration in the context of local affairs. Nor did he visualize the defence of India depending upon the Sind frontier, rather he planned and built with the purpose of advancing the defensive line beyond the Sind frontier to the Afghan Plateau.

Roads were built ostensibly to promote commerce, but moreso to facilitate rapid movement of troops and military stores. By 1852, 330 miles of road work had been completed with 159 bridges. Roads "forty-five feet wide, with trenches at the side, and running straight from village to village"¹ were perhaps more than adequate for trade in a land where commerce was minimal and wheeled transport practically unknown, but ideal for military movements along

1. Ibid, p. 244.

the Indus and up the avenues to the mountain passes.

Likewise a project for bridging the Indus between Sukkur and Rohri would facilitate the movement of troops from anywhere along the length of the Indus road up to Jacobabad and Sibi and Quetta,¹

Furthermore, when the Sind Railway Company was promoted in 1855 and encouraged by Sir Bartle Frere with the idea to connect Karachi with the Indus, the question of alignment was opened by Jacob who proposed that the alignment should be decided with an eye to the "trade route" through the Bolan.² Most of Jacob's schemes to improve the condition of the country likewise facilitated the rapid transit of troops to the Afghan Plateau. Likewise Frere urged railway building, for while the army could be reduced by one third, increased mobility would make a smaller force as effective as the larger one had been.³ After the Mutiny particularly, the necessity of railroads was realized and the High Command decided to build some main lines which would make transport of troops and material easy.⁴

1. Ibid, p. 297.

2. Ibid, p. 297.

3. Gopal, S., British Policy in India, Cambridge, University Press, 1965, p. 53.

4. Panikkar, K. M., Relations of Indian States With the Government of India, London, Martin Hopkinson, 1927, p. 79.

Actually Jacob was anticipating Lord Curzon's advice to Sir Donald Stewart years later.

I want [Curzon stated] to have all our troops ready when we call upon them for the big things instead of being wasted on the small things. Easy lines of advance, troops ready to march without delay, and light railways to hurry on their transport from the base . . . these seem to be the principles at which we should aim.¹

The Sind System, unlike the Punjab System, was dependent on maintaining a relationship with a power beyond its frontier. This relationship, combined with a system of patrolling was designed to keep the frontier quiet and enable a British advance up to a more defensible line beyond the Bolan.

Thus, in 1854 a new treaty was concluded with the Khan of Kelat arranging for a subsidy of Rs. 50,000 annually to the Khan for which he would undertake to oppose the enemies of the British and act in subordinate co-operation with it. Most significantly the British authorities were to be at liberty to station troops anywhere in the state that they thought fit. This arrangement coincided nicely with Jacob's transportation arrangements. Furthermore, the Khan bound himself and his successors to prevent plundering in or near British territory and to protect the passage of merchants between that territory and

1. Edwardes, M, High Noon of Empire, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965, p. 65.

Afghanistan,¹ Thus the British had a route guaranteed to the Afghan Plateau and could move freely through the passes.

That the Sind frontier was never meant to be a defensive line but merely a means to ensuring an advance to the ideal defensive line of India was admitted by Jacob during the Persian War of 1856. When Canning asked Jacob's opinion on defensive and offensive matters, Jacob proposed a defensive stance not on the Sind frontier but at Quetta. He advised the establishment of a large cantonment there with the reserves of Baluchistan available and amongst friendly people. The road to the Bolan could be improved and linked with the Sind frontier with a railroad eventually, from Dadar to the Indus. A good force at Quetta, guaranteed by the treaty, with good communications, guaranteed by the patrols and transport system would, in Jacob's words, "give us complete command of Afghanistan, without at the same time our giving offence to anyone around us."²

Thus the Sind System was not merely a local scheme for dealing with local problems but part of the whole scheme of Imperial consideration and falls into place with the search for a defensible frontier. The Sind System guaranteed the feasibility of an advance to Quetta and a defensive line on

1. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, op. cit., p. 260.

2. Jacob to Canning, June 30, 1852, quoted in Ibid, p. 304.

the Afghan Plateau and thus anticipated the "scientific frontier" some twenty-five years before the second "forward policy."

Thus in the local context as well as the Imperial context the Sind System has to be considered as being vastly more successful than the Punjab System.

Turning our attention now to the Punjab frontier, we see first of all that the Sind frontier was only a miniature world in comparison to the world of the Punjab frontier. The Punjab frontier was much longer and presented far more difficulty in the nature of the topography.

The specific limits of the Punjab frontier were:

. . . from the top of the Khagan Glen (a dependency of Hazara) near Chilas on the north-west corner of Kashmir, then passes round the north-west boundary of Hazara to Torbela; crossing the Indus it winds round the north and north-western boundary of the Peshawar valley to the Khaibar Pass. From there it skirts the Afridi hills, and follows the north-west boundary of the Kohat district along the Miranzai Valley to Thal. Turning to the east it encloses the Waziri hills and then runs almost due south at the base of the Suleiman Range to a point near Kasmor on the Indus, on the borders of Sind.¹

This in effect was the old Sikh boundary described by Pal as:

1. Paget, W. H., and Mason, A. H., A Record of the Expeditions Against the North West Frontier Tribes, London, Whiting and Co., 1884, p. 3.

starting from a barrier of snowy peaks from 15,000 to 20,000 feet high in Kashmir, the British frontier line ran south west to the Indus, followed the river round the Bonair hills, bent westward to circuit the Peshawar plain, made a loop to avoid the Kohat Pass, and then ran in a generally southern direction at the foot of the higher ranges to near Mithankot where the frontier of the Panjab ended.¹

In the Punjab there appeared to be two possible choices for the frontier line, either the Indus or the frontier running along the foot of the hills. Initially Lawrence preferred the former. He wrote on October 21, 1858:

From Kalabagh northwards the frontier line should be the river Indus instead of the base of the hill ranges and we should cede Peshawar and Kohat districts to the Afghan government . . . the river itself is a might barrier, being broad, deep, and rapid. The line of the river is far shorter than the present frontier line and therefore defensible at a far less cost in every respect. In the rear of the line there are several salubrious places eminently fitted for the location of European troops. On the present frontier many fortified places are necessary. Although the points at which an invader could emerge from the passes are known, yet we must hold in strength not only these points but the whole line, owing to the character of the hill tribes.²

Although Lawrence is generally pictured as having absolute faith in the Indus line he did concede that advance could be made from it, obviously towards the mountain passes.

1. Pal, D., The Administration of Sir John Lawrence in India, Simla, Minerva Book Shop, 1952, p. 174.

2. Punjab Government to Government of India, October 21, 1858, as quoted in Ibid, p. 179.

He wrote continuing the October 21 letter:

In the event of invasion we need not confine ourselves to the defence of the Indus line, offensive measures might be combined with defensive at the discretion of the General of the Day.¹

However, the policy of the Indus frontier was rejected because military authorities felt that a river is generally not a good line of defence since it can easily be forced.² Eventually Lawrence became convinced that the old Sikh administrative line had certain advantages; nevertheless, he was opposed to any forward move beyond the trans-Indus hills. The foot of the hills offered a well defined line, but once the hills were entered it would be difficult to know where to stop. The plains could be easily overrun and held and might respond to improved administration; but the mountain tracts of the North-West were difficult to traverse and subdue, and even if subdued, administration would be difficult.

However, there was one decided disadvantage to the foothill line as a strategical line. The value of a barrier such as a mountain range depends upon commanding both sides of the points of passage, and the power to operate on either side of the obstacle. Otherwise the mountain barrier acts as an obstruction, masking and protecting an enemy operating on the far side.

1. Ibid, p. 175.

2. Curzon, Frontiers, op. cit.

However, the British took over the frontier districts from the Sikhs and accepted an ill-defined administrative boundary. The Sikh frontier administration had been of the loosest type with little influence in the trans-Indus tracts. What little authority they did have was confined to the plains, and even here their authority had only been obeyed in the immediate vicinity of their forts. Thus, "on the Panjab frontier the British succeeded to a heritage of anarchy."¹

In general the British policy adopted in the frontier region of the Punjab was not unlike that of Ranjit Singh, which was described as

a 'tip and run' policy, i.e., when any particular tribe became too aggressive, committing too many raids, a military column went into the country, inflicted whatever damage it could and came out again. The mountaineers were kept down by a movable column constantly in the field.²

Furthermore, the centres of British defence likewise followed the pattern established by Ranjit Singh, and

the most important part of his plan of defence was connected with the acquisition of Tank, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan. Dera Ismail Khan established a connection along the banks of the Indus with Peshawar.³

1. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 450.

2. Sinha, Ranjit Singh, op. cit., p. 109.

3. Ibid, p. 111.

In addition he held Bannu, Kohat and Peshawar. His frontier policy, limited in success, depended on a chain of frontier forts:¹ Nara, Darum, Maru, Satana, Machin, Sikham, Kairbad, Jahangira, Shabkadur, Attoack, Manshera, Nawasahr, and Haripur.²

Limited as Ranjit's influence was, perhaps he did grasp the realities of the frontier situation. In terms of comparison with Sind, perhaps it was not reasonable to expect the same results. For under the Ranjit Singh regime

the authority of the Lahore, government was always admitted and often asserted, but subject to that admission the people were left to wrangle among themselves and to settle their own disputes with sword and dagger . . . tribal authority was relied on to keep society together and prevent anarchy.³

Likewise, Lawrence's objectives in this area were limited, as compared to Sind. It was, as Morison explains

useless to suppose that unbroken peace could be maintained, success meant lowering the average of tribal raids and wars and limiting their scope by resolute and immediate action.⁴

Henry Lawrence expressed this limited scope of aspirations:

It is not to be expected that such a frontier can

1. Chhabra, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 70.

2. Ibid, p. 70.

3. Sinha, Ranjit Singh, op. cit., p. 114.

4. Morison, J. L., Lawrence of Lucknow, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1934, p. 188.

ever be what is called quiet, but it is quite in our power to prevent it becoming dangerous.¹

At any rate, the Punjab frontier was arranged for administrative purposes in roughly the same manner as that adopted by the Sikhs. There were six districts: Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan, each of which had a longer border to defend than the whole of the Sind frontier. Hazara and Kohat were hilly and mountainous while the other four were almost level plains broken by deep ravines and torrent beds.²

Most of the credit for organizing the military defence of the frontier goes to Sir Henry Lawrence.³ He created the Punjab Irregular Force, which was aided by the Guides. This force was entrusted with the defence of the frontier except for Peshawar. The Punjab Irregular Force was under a Brigadier General who was subject to the control of the Civil Government of the Punjab while the Peshawar division was under the Commander in Chief of the Army of India. This system of mixed command was criticized by the Commander in Chief, but the idea was defended by the Punjab authorities since it allowed action without delay, which was exactly the situation enjoyed by Jacob in Sind.

1. Henry Lawrence to Lord Stanley, March 31, 1853, quoted in Morison, "From Burnes to Roberts," p. 186.

2. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 4.

3. Pal, op. cit., p. 175.

The Punjab Irregular Force and, more particularly the Guides, were patterned after the Sind Irregular Horse. During the First Afghan War, Henry Lawrence had seen the difficulties the army encountered in the mountains and passes amongst the hill tribes, hence, "he resolved that there should be men accustomed to every region and familiar with every dialect."¹

There was a common element in the Sind and Punjab Systems that was at the same time a source of strength and a vital weakness; namely, the part played by the strength of the character of the individual. Personalities were more effective than systems. In the Sind there was a Jacob; in the Punjab there was Lawrence as well as Edwardes, Nicholson, Harry Lumsden, Hodson, Lake, James Abbott and George Lawrence. As Morison describes this characteristic

Civilized machinery simply did not function in the hills, and the one obvious instrument of government was the individual master, whose courage, truth, fair play, and mixture of humorousness and humanity could convince the hillmen that he must be obeyed.²

The Lawrence system of tribal control depended upon sending a specially selected officer with a force of irregulars, giving him the largest possible measure of

1. Lumsden and Elsmie, op. cit., p. 64.

2. Morison, Lawrence of Lucknow, op. cit., p. 188.

individual initiative. The measure was effective, although sometimes enthusiasm overestimated the effectiveness, as in Edwardes pacification of Bannu when he wrote:

In a word, the Valley of Bannu, which had defied the Sikh arms for four and twenty years, had in three months been peacefully annexed to the Punjab and two independent Afghan races, the Waziris and the Bannuchis, been subjugated without a shot being fired.¹

To protect the frontier, a chain of forts was erected along the borders roughly corresponding with those of Ranjit Singh. Parallel to the border a military road was constructed, However, communications along the frontier, unlike Sind, were "very defective,"² because of the nature of the country. Actually there was a double line of communications, a road in the interior of the districts connecting the principal towns and another close to the border connecting the military outposts.³

Three means of coercion were used against the tribes: fines, blockades and expeditions. The cases in which a blockade could be successfully employed were extremely limited since the blockading power must command the approaches and the arteries of trade and supplies, and also have the co-operation of the surrounding tribes.⁴

1. Edwardes, H., A Year on the Punjab Frontier, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 352.

2. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 4.

3. Ibid, p. 4.

4. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 452.

While punitive expeditions were condemned as a system of "semi-barbarous reprisals,"¹ they were considered a last resort.

Actually the basis of the Punjab policy was one of forbearance since the tribesmen were allowed to trade within the British borders even though British officials were prevented from entering tribal territory. Furthermore, the policy adopted was an attempt firstly at conciliation "to show the tribesmen how they would benefit by becoming friendly neighbours."² The steps taken towards conciliation show that force obviously was a last resort, for instance, the capitation tax of Sikh days and frontier duties were abolished; complete freedom of trade was allowed; steps were taken to protect and increase Powindah trade; fairs were held; roads were constructed from passes to bazaars; free medical treatment was provided; tribal maliks and jirgas were encouraged to enter British territory for settlement of disputes; attempts were made to colonize waste lands with families from across the border; and the ranks of the army and police were open to tribesmen.³

1. Ibid, p. 452.

2. Ibid, p. 451.

3. Davies, The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit., p. 25.

Thus the policy was one of conciliation backed by force, but the ultimate sanction was force.

Unlike Jacob, Lawrence attempted to refrain from interference with the tribes and to retain a laissez faire relationship, probably because he did not share Jacob's policy of the need to keep the routes to the passes under control to establish a line of defence. For instance, when the District Commissioners requested to be relieved of some executive details of their position, Lawrence replied, on May 11, 1864,

. . . it is well known that political officers with no legitimate duties of administration often unduly interfere in the concerns of the chiefs to whom they are accredited and thus raise up feelings of ill will and animosity towards the British government . . . while he should be very accessible to their representations, he cannot do better than to leave their affairs alone and employ himself on his own civil duties.¹

Even if desired, force could not be completely avoided.

For instance, in 1849, George Lawrence reported that

as no troops of ours had been sent beyond the cantonment of Peshawar, an impression had got abroad among the ignorant hill tribes throughout the frontier that we had either no force, or were afraid to approach their fastness.²

1. Minute by John Lawrence, May 11, 1864, quoted in Pal, op. cit., p. 183.

2. George Lawrence to Government of Punjab, October, 1849, as quoted in Lumsden and Elsmie, op. cit., p. 78.

When used in the proper proportions with forbearance, expeditions were not without success in commanding the respect of the hill tribes, as an 1864 report states:

The military success [Lawrence wrote] which, in varying degrees, has always attended expeditions, and the demonstration that their roughest hills can be penetrated by our troops, have done much to subjugate the minds and compel the respect of the hill populations, and so reconcile them to peaceful pursuits.¹

Essentially the purpose of expeditions and the essence of the system was summarized in this way by Henry Lawrence, "now they hate us but do not fear us. I should try to reverse the case--to conciliate them when quiet, and hit them hard when troublesome."²

In considering the two frontier systems, we must consider the length of the respective borders, the nature of the topography of each, the personalities of the frontier administrators and their views as to where to establish the defensible borders of India.

Another consideration, perhaps the most vital, previously untouched in this chapter, is the nature of the tribes with which both systems had to deal, their numbers and peculiar characteristics.

1. Quoted in Ibid, p. 82.

2. Henry Lawrence to Lord Stanley, March 31, 1853, as quoted in Edwardes, H. B., Life of Sir Henry Lawrence, London, Smith Elder & Co., p. 501.

In terms of actual numbers alone the tribes along the Punjab frontier presented a much greater problem. There were approximately thirty-four major tribes with a total fighting force nearing 225,000 men.¹ While the exact number of Baluch tribesmen is more difficult to ascertain, it would appear that only about 10 per cent of this figure might be realistic.

But apart from mere figures, it was far more difficult to deal with the Punjab tribes because of the nature of their tribal organization. Jacob found it convenient and relatively easy to deal with the Baluch tribes through their chiefs since, traditionally,

a Baluch [Lambrick claims] can generally be controlled if a personal ascendancy is gained over his chief, who exercises patriarchal authority,²

but this approach was not possible on the Punjab frontier since their tribal organization was quite different. In the Punjab System:

the tribes had no recognized chiefs and thus it was not possible to influence them through their chiefs. Their national organization was popular rather than aristocratic. Each tribe was divided and subdivided into numerous clans, each independent of the other and yielding but small obedience

1. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 4.

(Lumsden and Elsmie, op. cit., claim that Sir Henry Daley, in 1884, estimated the actual fighting strength, that is, what they could put on the field at one time, as being nearer 100,000.)

2. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, op. cit., p. 34.

to its own petty headman, constantly indulging in internecine war; hating each other with the hatred begotten of generations of blood feuds; with interests ever in collision, and only uniting under the most exceptional circumstances against a common enemy. Control exercised over such tribes though their chiefs did not exist.¹

While there were some who felt that the Pathans and Punjab tribesmen were no more formidable than the Baluchis, for example, Sir Bartle Frere and Sir George Clerk, the Governor of Bombay, who urged the application of Jacob's principles to the Punjab line,² others felt that there was a considerable difference in the individual qualities of the two groups of tribes. For example, "one attacks his enemy from the front the other from behind; the one is bound by his promises, the other by his interests."³

The Baluch, according to Paget and Mason, is less turbulent, less treacherous, less bloodthirsty and less fanatical than the Pathan. He is

frank and open in his manner, and without severity, fairly truthful, faithful to his word, and looking upon courage as the highest virtue . . . a pleasant man to have dealings with.⁴

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1. Pal, op. cit., p. 184.
 2. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, op. cit., p. 389.
 3. Paget and Mason, op. cit., pp. 7-13.
 4. Ibid, p. 7.

On the other hand, again according to Paget and Mason, the Pathan

is bloodthirsty, cruel and vindictive in the highest degree; he does not know what truth or faith is, and though he is not without courage he would scorn to face an enemy whom he could stab from behind . . . For centuries he has been subject to no man, he leads a wild, free, active life in the rugged fastness of his mountains.¹

Naturally Sind administrators tended to show the tribesmen of their frontier as the most savage on the face of the earth while Punjab people make similar claims about their wards. But perhaps we can agree with Mr. Temple, the secretary of the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, who wrote in a report on the relations of the British Government with the frontier tribes (1855) that "the Baluchis are still of a far milder and more amiable disposition."²

In considering the approach of the two different systems to the problems of these tribes, it has been claimed that the Sind System was primarily a military system while the Punjab was not. For example, C. C. Davies states that, "it [the Sind System] can be roughly described as an uncompromising repression of outrages by a strong military force,"³ while T. H. Thornton claims,

1. Ibid, p. 6.

2. Ibid, p. 6.

3. Davies, The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit., p. 20.

for the preservation of peace upon the border the Sind authorities depended more upon military measures of protection and repression than upon conciliatory treatment of the tribes.¹

In the Punjab it was clear from the first that it would be impossible to organize the defence of the frontier on a purely military basis, accordingly, from the very first the system of border defence maintained by the Punjab Government was partly military, partly political, and partly conciliatory.²

However, the contrast is not quite that clearly defined. It is true that the Punjab System of administration had clear cut divisions of military and political authority. Military control was exercised by officers of the Punjab Frontier Force while the political administrative business was managed by the Deputy Commissioners of the frontier districts. In Sind, because of the relatively miniature extent of the frontier and the forceful personality of Jacob, he and his successors united in their own hands all military and political authority on and beyond the frontier with administrative responsibility for the Upper Sind Frontier District.³

1. Thornton, T. H., Colonel Sir Robert Sandeman, London, J. Murray, 1895, p. 31.

2. Ibid, p. 71.

3. Martineau, J., The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere, London, J. Murray, 1895, Vol. 1, p. 165.

But, because a system has united and combined functions does not justify its being called a purely military system.

Furthermore, calling the Sind System one of uncompromising militarism is not completely accurate. That charge is more properly applied to the Sind frontier during the First Afghan War and immediately after annexation before the evolution of the Jacob system. In fact, as early as 1854 Jacob wrote:

I shall have considered our proceedings a failure, had it been necessary to continue to use violent measures. Having, by the use of force, made ourselves feared and respected, we were able to apply better means, and to appeal to higher motives than fear. This I had in view from the very first.¹

Furthermore, Captain Green, one of Jacob's successors, inherited his views of moral force to transform the lives of the tribesmen. For instance,

nothing tames them so much [he wrote] as regular pay and food; once having touched this they seldom return to their old habits, and their families and relations partaking, to a certain degree, of the little luxuries which ready money enables them to procure, urge them to remain peaceable members of society.²

Lawrence rejected adaptation of the Sind methods basically because the nature of the Punjab frontier was not conducive

1. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad, op. cit., p. 410.

2. Henry Green to Government of India, August 16, 1866, quoted in Pal, op. cit., p. 187.

to the idea of patrols unprotected by fortifications. Actually it is now generally concluded that the methods of the Sind System were not applicable to the Punjab frontier.

Thus two distinct systems had grown up, each appropriate for the area in which it was to serve. The two were vastly different in their methods of approach, the size of the frontier they served, the nature of the terrain and the character of the tribes they had to administer. The success and the results of each is difficult to assess since the two differed, not only in their approach but in their philosophy and in the objectives to be achieved. Within their own frames of reference each was successful; while one created a peaceful oasis the other had to be content with a situation that was considered successful when the number of expeditions necessary in one year was less than in the preceding year.

Viewed in an Imperial context there was a significant difference. In Sind the frontier line was not considered the best defensible line but only served to hold the approaches to the Afghan Plateau while in the Punjab, Lawrence felt that the defensible frontier of India lay behind the administrative line, certainly not beyond it.

Chapter VI

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE JOHN LAWRENCE PERIOD

The foreign policy of Sir John Lawrence was conditioned by his earlier experiences as Governor of the Punjab, the lesson of the First Afghan War and the experience of the Indian Mutiny. Thus many of the characteristics of his policy as Viceroy were evident before he assumed that office.

Certainly the First Afghan War had infected the Afghans with suspicion and dislike of the English, and quite naturally during the 1850's Canning and Lawrence disliked and avoided the idea of a closer connection with Afghanistan and discussed the advisability of a withdrawal to the Indus.

During the early 1850's foreign policy was a matter of secondary concern. The new annexations and the resulting problems of administration occupied the total concentration of Jacob in Sind and of Edwardes and Lawrence in the Punjab, "and for a while these men had little time for thoughts on external policy."¹

In a sense the problem of Central Asia was somewhat simplified after the First Afghan War since the annexation

1. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 122.

of Sind and of the Punjab had placed the Government of India in direct contact with the region concerned.

Furthermore, from 1840 until the outbreak of the Crimean War, the Russian threat did not seem to be a matter of vital concern. In 1839 their efforts with respect to Herat had failed and a later expedition against Khiva from Orenburg had also failed. Russian energy was temporarily absorbed in changing their base of operations from Orenburg to the Sea of Aral.

As far as Afghanistan was concerned, the ten years after the restoration of Dost Mohammed saw British relations with that country undefined but sullen. In 1848 Dost Mohammed had joined the Sikhs in the Battle of Gujrat and since then relations had consisted of "sullen quiescence on either side, without offence but without goodwill or intercourse."

The impetus for a change in this situation came again from Persian activity. In 1852 the Persians had taken Kandahar; and although it was relinquished under British pressure it was again attacked in 1854. Herbert Edwardes wanted to take advantage of this situation to renew a friendship with Dost Mohammed. Edwardes believed that British interests could best be served by an Afghan alliance and persuaded Dalhousie of the merits of this idea, over Lawrence's opposition.¹

1. Fletcher, Arnold, Afghanistan, Highway of Conquest, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1966, p. 122.

While Edwardes was concerned with Persian activities, Dalhousie was perhaps moved by Russia and the situation in Crimea. Dalhousie saw no immediate threat to India from Russian movements but insisted that the British

should leave nothing undone which would tend to make Afghanistan an effectual barrier against Russian aggression, or which would encourage and induce the Afghan tribes to make common cause with us against an enemy whose success would be fatal to the common interests of both Afghan and British power.¹

With the appearance of external danger, Dalhousie turned to the old policy of providing for the security of India by establishing Afghanistan as a potential buffer by reassuming friendly relations with that country. In 1855, because of the Persian threat and as a result of peace feelers thrown out by Edwardes, Dost Mohammed changed his position in regard to the English. The Amir was

disposed to forget the past, if Britain would do the same, and to ally himself with them as a counter to Russian pressure and Persian assertions of paramountcy.²

While Lawrence was described as being only "lukewarm"³ to the proposals, the negotiations were left to Edwardes. In March of 1855 the Amir's son, Ghulam Haider, came to Peshawar and signed a treaty of three clauses which re-opened

1. Lord Dalhousie, Minute of March 14, 1854; quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 122.

2. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 123.

3. Ibid, p. 123.

diplomatic relations; gave assurances that the British had no aggressive intentions; and pledged the Amir to be "friend of the friends and enemy of the enemies of the East India Company."¹ Actually, this treaty did little more than re-open diplomatic relations.

Although Lawrence had been hesitant about entering into this arrangement, events over the next year were to draw him even closer, although still reluctantly, towards a deeper involvement with Afghanistan. For in 1856 Herat again came into the picture, when in October the Persians seized the city. Britain treated the seizure as a casus belli and declared war on Persia. Within three months the Persians agreed to withdraw from Herat and to never again attempt to interfere with its independence or with that of Afghanistan.²

Meanwhile to ensure Dost Mohammed's co-operation in the British-Persian War, he had been invited to Peshawar and a supplement to the previous treaty had been signed. This agreement provided that the Amir would get a lakh of rupees a month during the war, would maintain troops to defend his possessions, and would permit British agents to administer

1. Aitchison, C. U., A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, Calcutta, Government of India Publication Branch, 1929-33, Vol XI, p. 340.

2. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 47, p. 42.

the subsidy. Following the signing, Dost Mohammed visited Peshawar early in 1857 and the 1855 treaty was ratified "with a British promise to aid the Amir if he were attacked by a foreign enemy."¹

However, Lawrence was hesitant and reluctant about the situation. In the first place he had wanted to see Herat remain independent of Afghanistan for he apparently saw more danger from Afghanistan than from Persia or Russia, for he admitted, "it [Herat] was not to belong to the Barakzyes for we had injured Dost Mohammed too much to make us wish unnecessarily to increase his power."²

Furthermore, Lawrence was opposed to a meeting with Dost Mohammed after the treaty of 1855 since it would only create a deeper involvement.

It appears to me [he wrote] we shall get nothing out of the Ameer, except by paying through the nose for it; and this being the case I would not bring on an interview . . . the best chance for getting on well with the Afghans was to have as few points of contact as possible.³

When Herat was taken by the Persians, Edwardes restated the old policy of establishing the Indian defences on a line beyond the mountains. He wrote a memorandum imploring

1. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 123.

2. Smith, R. B., Life of Lord Lawrence, London, Smith Elder and Co., 1883, Vol. 1, p. 501

3. Ibid, p. 513.

Lawrence to dispatch troops to Kabul and Kandahar. In Lawrence's reply he clearly stated the case for a line of defence on the Indian side of the mountains. He wrote:

I consider that the battle for India is to be fought on this side of the Suleiman Range, and not on that . . . If we carry on war in Afghanistan we shall ruin our finances, and in the event of a reverse, the very Afghans will sell us to our enemies. They will make friends of them at our expense. On the other hand, should a Russo Persian army press on and meet us at the mouth of the Bolan or Khyber and experience a reverse, then the Afghans, who have united with them, will play the same game against them.¹

In a letter to Canning he further elaborated on this policy and the motivation for it. As to the end of his career, financial considerations entered into every thought. His ideas for improvements of a non-military nature were uppermost, even before the Mutiny. He wrote:

. . . the conclusion which has been invariably forced on my judgment is, that it would be a fatal error for us to interfere actively in Central Asia.

I admit that the interests of the Afghans are, at present identical with ours, but it does not follow that such will always be the case. If we prove successful in the contest, no doubt the Afghans will remain faithful. But in the event of a reverse, it might prove their true game to take the other side.

I am equally averse to the measures of dispatching an irregular force to garrison Candahar. If the Ameer cannot fight his own battles on his own ground, it seems vain for us to attempt to do so.

1. Ibid, p. 514.

If we send a force to Candahar, it will eventually necessitate the re-occupation of the country. Afghanistan will then become the battlefield for India, and the cost of maintaining our position will render India bankrupt.

Whereas, on the other hand, if we leave Afghanistan alone, and concentrate our means on this side of the Suleiman Range, we should meet an invader, worn by toil and travail, with a weak artillery and distant from his resources, as he debauched from the passes. Under such circumstances defeat should be certain and defeat would be annihilation.

The money we should expend in beseiging Herat and in fighting in Afghanistan would double our European force in India, finish our most important railroads, and cover the Punjab river with steamers.¹

In this pre Mutiny, pre Viceroyalty period, his primary consideration was no doubt with the Punjab and the administrative problems of the frontier. Practically a decade had passed since the annexation of the Punjab and the qualified success of pacifying the frontier had to influence his outlook on foreign affairs.

Furthermore [he goes on] an expedition into Afghanistan would mean taking men from the Punjab which would leave the frontier in a dangerous position. The mountain tribes have never yet been thoroughly punished, let alone subdued; and the force which Colonel Edwardes indicates as available to take their place can ill be spared . . . I do not forget that I have informed Your Lordship that I could spare 2,000 of the Punjab force for service in Persia. But this was with much difficulty; and if nearly double that number be

1. Ibid, p. 517.

withdrawn, we must permanently confine ourselves to a defensive system on the frontier. And such a system has proved radically weak and ineffective.¹

If Lawrence was suspicious and hesitant about involvement in Afghanistan he was not alone in his thinking, certainly others of influence shared his views. In 1854 Sir James Outram spoke clearly against any advance. "England should establish her power on the Indus,"² he declared; and in a Minute dated February 6, 1857, Lord Canning stated with the same conviction that, "a wise foresight had fixed our boundaries at the foothills of the trans-Indus valley."³

The agreement of 1857 inspired Canning to record this Minute setting forth his views on Afghan policy, which were that in no circumstances should Britain interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan; and moreover that Herat should be absorbed by Afghanistan.⁴

In a letter to Captain Lumsden shortly after the Minute of February 6 Canning revealed the extent to which Lawrence had influenced his policy:

You cannot [he wrote] impress too strongly upon every man you meet that the British

1. Lawrence to Canning, quoted in Ibid, p. 517.

2. Minute by James Outram, 1854, quoted in Ghose, D. K., England and Afghanistan, Calcutta, The World Press Private Ltd., 1960, p. 3.

3. Canning's Minute of February 6, 1857, quoted in Ibid, p. 4.

4. Canning's Minute of February 6, 1857, quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 126.

Government does not desire to send into Afghanistan a single man, armed or unarmed, except with the full consent of the Afghans themselves . . . Endeavour to convince them of the truth, that what we most desire is that they would govern themselves and defend themselves after their own fashion without any thought from us, and that in return for contributing to their defence we ask for nothing but confidence in ourselves and their resistance to the common enemy.¹

Undoubtedly Lawrence's (and Canning's) hesitation during this period was conditioned by the memory of the First Afghan War. Lawrence, it was said, "could not overcome the memory of a bone strewn Khurd Kabul,"² and was definitely suspicious of Dost Mohammed and the Afghans. After his meeting with Dost Mohammed he stated that he was not particularly impressed with the Amir. Specifically, on January 30, 1857, he said:

As regards the Ameer, it is very difficult to devine what are his real views and feelings. I confess that I felt no confidence in anything which he said.³

Ironically, however, it was precisely this agreement with the Dost which saved the British from an Afghan invasion during the troubled days during the Mutiny; and furthermore, determined Lawrence's future policy towards Afghanistan. As his biographer says:

1. Canning to Lumsden, circa February, 1857, quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 126.

2. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 126.

3. Quoted in Smith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 523.

The interview between John Lawrence and Dost Mohammed at Peshawar helped so much to determine the attitude of the Afghans towards the British throughout the Mutiny and the attitude of John Lawrence to Afghanistan throughout the whole of his subsequent career.¹

It was fortunate for British India that Lawrence's suspicions of Dost Mohammed were not verified, for the possibility of an Afghan invasion during the Mutiny was not remote. MacMunn, for example, maintains that,

During the Indian Mutiny many Afghans favoured an invasion of India . . . the Dost nearly gave way . . . it was his son, Azim Khan, who reminded him of his relationship with Sir John Lawrence and his goodwill to the British.²

While it is true that Azim Khan restrained the Dost from attacking India it was not simply out of "good will" but fear of British retaliation if the Afghans assisted the Sepoys.

As a good Mussulman [Azim warned his father] you may properly wage war against the infidel Feringhi; but before committing yourself to so hazardous an enterprise, count well your chances of success. We have had the English here before, when the Punjab lay wide between us, but now they stand at our very door; if you bring them here again, they will stay here.³

1. Ibid, p. 449.

2. MacMunn, Sir G. F., Afghanistan From Darius to Amanullah, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1929, p. 162.

3. Wheeler, Stephen, The Ameer Abdur Rahman, London, Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1895, p. 30.

Certainly the atmosphere in 1857 was "delicate," the Afghans were "anxious for support but ready to shy off at any suggestion of interference in their internal affairs."¹ At the same time the Crimean War had influenced Russian activity and caused speculation concerning a move towards India, at least on the part of some Russian frontier generals. In 1856, for example, General Khruleff stated that:

It would be easy for us to march 30,000 men to Kandahar and by inciting Afghan hostilities against the English to break down the power of the latter.²

This was precisely the type of activity which Lawrence felt would be best met by a policy of non-interference in Afghanistan, and a defensive line on the Indus.

Although Russian activity was not really apparent during the fifties, the undercurrents were present, which became more obvious in the late sixties and seventies. As Rawlinson assessed the situation:

During the Crimean War Russia realized her false position in regard to England. If she were to develop into a leading power it was necessary to redress this inequality, thus she must find a weak point in the British armour. Hence create a great Oriental satrapy which would envelop the north west frontier of India and from which an

1. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 124.

2. Vambéry, Arminius, "Will Russia Conquer India," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 17, 1885, p. 30.

occasion might arise, pressure could be exerted on, or if necessary, armed demonstrations might issue, which would neutralize British opposition in Europe.¹

By 1853 the Russians controlled the Syri Darya for almost three hundred miles from its mouth, and had expanded into the Ili valley. Consequently, in the fifties the two opposing points of view concerning defensive policy began to emerge although they did not take distinct lines until a decade later.

Lawrence believed in falling back to the Indus River as a boundary. Indeed, during the Mutiny Lawrence advocated the restoration of the trans-Indus territories to the Afghans. He would have evacuated Peshawar and held the left bank of the Indus. It was Edwardes who regarded Peshawar as "the anchor of the Punjab" and influenced Canning to negate Lawrence's proposal by his telegram, "Hold on to Peshawar to the last."

However, Lawrence still had faith in the Indus line. To him it had certain advantages: it would remove troops from positions deteriorous to their health; it would conciliate the Afghans and thereby strengthen relations; and it would not diminish strength of defensive positions since the area could easily be reoccupied.²

1. Rawlinson, Sir Henry, "The Russian Advance in Central Asia," *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 17., 1885, p. 558.

2. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 130.

Although some, like Outram, felt that nature had rendered the Indus frontier so exceptionally strong as to merit the epithet "impregnable," it is now generally agreed that a river, any river, is not a good line of defense. In the case of the Indus it was constantly shifting its course rendering permanent defences impossible. Also the Indus valley was unhealthy for European soldiers, and undoubtedly an Indus defense would have had a disastrous moral effect on all of India.¹

However, opposing views to the Lawrence scheme were being expressed, As early as 1854 Jacob was advocating pushing through the Bolan Pass to Quetta to protect the left flank of the defensive line. In 1855 he expressed doubts of the existing policy.

It seems to me [he declared] that if arrangements for the permanent defense of our north west frontier be not speedily applied and manfully carried out they will have caused the loss of our Indian Empire within the next generation of men.²

In 1856 Jacob urged Canning to garrison Quetta. To him the British frontier system was that of an army without outposts, while Quetta could threaten the flank of an invading army advancing upon the Khyber. This proposal was

1. Davies, C. C., The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit. chapter 1.

2. Green, Henry, "The Great Wall of India," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 17, 1885, p. 906.

rejected by Canning (influenced by Lawrence) on the grounds that Quetta was too isolated and surrounded by tribes which might prove to be unfriendly.

Thus we see that by the end of the Mutiny the lines had been drawn which would only be more clearly traced during the sixties and seventies. Lawrence, long before becoming Viceroy, had adopted attitudes and the nucleus of a policy while the opposing school had begun to take shape and to gather the support which would eventually overpower the Lawrence mystique.

While Fletcher claims that,

the years passed and British control over India was strengthened, new policies began to contend with Lawrence in the minds of the British leaders,¹

actually there was no new policy developing at all. Rather the old policy that had existed since the beginning of the century, to seek a defensible frontier for India in advance of the mountains, in abeyance under Lawrence, was reiterated more strongly than ever before.

After the treaty of 1857 with Dost Mohammed, events were relatively calm until the mid sixties when Afghanistan again became prominent in Indian affairs. Now three factors, seemingly unrelated, began to play on each other

1. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 126.

to create a renewed interest in Afghan relations and defensive plans. These were: the death of Dost Mohammed, the appointment of John Lawrence as Viceroy of India, and a renewed vigorous activity on the part of Russia in Central Asia.

In January of 1864, John Lawrence returned to India as Viceroy to conduct Indian affairs for the next five years. He brought with him an atmosphere of near infallibility. As Dodwell writes,

Upon the generation that had witnessed the Indian Mutiny Lawrence's vigor of character and singleness of purpose produced a remarkable effect. His opinions were accepted as oracles, and men forgot or ignored the fallibility of his judgment.¹

The India to which he returned was politically calm but troubled by natural calamities of famine and cyclone damage.² Finances were in an unfavourable condition, and the situation was aggravated by a commercial crisis caused by the American Civil War. This consequent necessity to cut expenses had a strong influence on Lawrence's foreign policy, which is sometimes underestimated by his biographers.

The India of 1864 was considerably different from that of 1856;

the Mutiny had shaken the attitudes of both

1. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 406.

2. Aitchison, C. U., Sir John Lawrence, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, p. 125.

British and Indians into new molds . . . the Indian army was radically altered, the position of the princes was stabilized and the states were to act as bulwarks of traditional strength.¹

A different India demanded a different approach for the India that John Lawrence returned to was no longer the almost free and easy administration of traders and men of action. The sword was giving way to the pen, the dynamic to the ordered, the adventurous to the caution of the bureaucrat.²

India was, and had to be, his primary concern; foreign affairs had to take a secondary position to internal administration. Initially

his policy was of peaceful progress at home . . . he conceived that his duty in India was to centralize and unify. He saw the Afghan problem as a will-o'-the-wisp, leading to dangerous swamps.³

However, it had been frontier affairs that determined his appointment, for the Punjab frontier was in a troubled condition, and frontier wars were the exceptions to the generally calm political scene. In the early 1860's the Mahsuds were raiding across the border in the area around Tank. Temporary peace was achieved by a force under Brigadier General N. B. Chamberlain. Again in 1863 Chamberlain led another expedition against the "Hindustani Fanatics" at Malka on the slopes of the Mahaban Range. By the time

1. Edwardes, M., The Necessary Hell, London, Cassell, 1958, p. 188.

2. Ibid, p. 189.

3. Ibid, p. 190.

Lawrence had arrived in India the fourth expedition against the Mohmands had been carried out. The Mohmands had the Khyber area at their mercy and raided the plains around Peshawar, plundering caravans.¹

As far as the management of the frontier tribes was concerned, there was a difference of opinion between Lawrence and Sir Bartle Frere. Frere wanted to extend his influence among the tribes on the frontier while Lawrence was for confining his attention to the plains. To both, the tribal problem could not be separated from the Afghan problem, and the Afghan problem could not be separated from the Russian problem.

Frere's advice was actually a restatement of the forward policy of the late 1830's, to push forward to the Afghan Plateau. This policy, as expressed in the mid-sixties,

[to] make your influence paramount at Quetta, at Khelat, at Kandahar, and at Kabul, in order that you may checkmate Russia there and may thereby and thereafter secure the² peace, and prosperity, and contentment of India,

was premature, for Lawrence's attitude was the opposite. His policy was to:

Make India as it is in your power to do, peaceful, prosperous, and contented first.

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1. Paget and Mason, op. cit., Chapters V-VIII.
 2. Quoted in Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 436.

Assure the neighbouring tribes that you do not covet their territory and will not meddle with their independence, and then, when Russia comes, if ever she does come, with hostile intention, they will be to you as a wall of adamant against her, and you will be able to enter their territories, not as their enemies but as their allies and friends.¹

While this tribal policy was partly conditioned by the ever pressing economic factor, Lawrence justified his stand on a stubborn attachment for the Indus line and a concern for the internal condition of India.

To take [he wrote] any of those steps advocated by the Sind school . . . would draw us away from our natural frontier of an almost impassable river and then of mountain wall piled behind mountain wall . . . would be guarding against a future and contingent danger by neglecting those which lie beneath our feet; would concentrate the attention of Indian and English statesmen on matters over which they can exercise little appreciable influence; would employ an Indian army on a service which they hate; would throw away crores of rupees on barren mountain ridges and ever vanishing frontier lines.²

But tribal policy was an integral part of foreign policy, and certainly the most serious question in foreign policy during Lawrence's term as Viceroy was Afghanistan. But Lawrence's policy towards Afghanistan has been described as the belated result of the old dogma of non intervention which in India had produced little but undesired and unexpected war.³

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1. Quoted in Ibid, Vol. II, p. 436.
 2. Quoted in Ibid, Vol. II, p. 437.
 3. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 407.

In practice it meant "friendship towards the actual rulers combined with rigid abstention from interference in domestic feuds."¹

The most serious Afghan problem during the Lawrence administration was that concerning the succession. For Dost Mohammed, having recaptured Herat and reduced most of the provinces of Afghanistan to his control, had died a few months before the arrival of Lawrence in India, and at a time when the British were in the throes of the Ambela uprising of 1863.

The struggle for the succession to the Afghan throne was marked by treachery, intrigue, and bloodshed, characteristic of the Afghans throughout their history. Five principal characters took part: Sher Ali, the Dost's third son; Afzal, Governor of Turkestan; his half brother, Azim, Governor of Kuram; Amin, the Governor of Kandahar; and Abdur Rahman, the son of Afzal. Dost Mohammed's designated heir, and the one recognized by Lord Canning, was Sher Ali.

Sher Ali, reportedly pleased with the appointment of Lawrence, sent an envoy to him in March of 1864 asking for the renewal of the treaty made with his father; recognition of his son, Mohammed Ali as heir; and a gift of 600 muskets.

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 407.

Lawrence granted the first two requests but refused the gift of arms.¹

When Afzal and Azim asserted their independence from Sher Ali, the signal was given for the beginning of the war of succession. Throughout that confused period two factors are clear: Lawrence's policy of recognizing the de facto ruler and his desire to avoid becoming involved in the situation.

In 1866 when Azim and Abdur Rahman took Kabul, the British Government still recognized Sher Ali. Lawrence explained to the Cabinet,

We should not be hasty in giving up the Amir's cause as lost. We should await the development of events and for the present continue to recognize Sher Ali as the Amir of Afghanistan. If the Amir fails in his attempt to recover Kabul, and Sadar Muhammad Azim Khan establish his power and make overtures to the British Government, the latter can then be recognized as the ruler of such parts of the country as he may possess. It should be our policy to show clearly that we will not interfere in the struggle; that we will not aid either party; that we will leave the Afghans to settle their own quarrels; and that we are willing to be on terms of amity and goodwill with the nation and with their rulers de facto.²

Obviously Lawrence was trying to avoid the repetition of the situation that produced the First Afghan War.

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1. Aitchison, Sir John Lawrence, op. cit., p. 177.
 2. Quoted in Wheeler, op. cit., p. 38.

When Sher Ali failed in an attempt to recover Kabul, he continued to hold Herat and Kandahar while Afzal Khan was proclaimed Amir. Afzal wrote to Lawrence requesting recognition and friendship but Lawrence's reply, rather than addressing him as Amir, simply addressed as "Wali of Kabul." Afzal was told:

My friend, the relations of this government are with the actual rulers of Afghanistan. If Your Highness is able to consolidate Your Highness' power in Kabul, and is sincerely desirous of being a friend and ally of the British Government, I shall be ready to accept Your Highness as such. But I cannot break the existing engagement with Amir Sher Ali Khan and I must continue to treat him as the ruler of that portion of Afghanistan over which he retains control. Sincerity and fair dealing induce me to write this, plainly and openly to Your Highness.¹

Thus far Lawrence adhered to his pre-Mutiny policy of non-intervention in Afghanistan and maintenance of the treaty of 1855 with Dost Mohammed.

On January 17, 1867, Sher Ali made another attempt to recover Kabul. Defeated, he had to fall back on Kandahar only to find it closed to him, thereupon he returned to Herat.

When Afzal announced his victory to Lawrence he was addressed this time as "ruler of Kabul and Kandahar." Obviously, Lawrence was determined to recognize only the de facto situation. He would wait to see who would emerge as Amir of all Afghanistan, but he would not contribute to that event.

1. John Lawrence to Afzal Khan, July 11, 1866, quoted in Wheeler, op. cit., p. 39.

Critics of Lawrence's policy of having relations with only the de facto ruler claim that such action was a direct encouragement to successful rebellion, a premium on anarchy, and furthermore, played into the hands of Russia. However, rebellion and anarchy were characteristic of the Afghan succession. British interference would only have established an artificial ruler who might need permanent British support.

Whether or not the Lawrence policy played into the hands of Russia, the rejected claimants did attempt to make arrangements with the Russians, forcing Lawrence to consider Central Asia in his policy. For after Lawrence wrote to Afzal Khan recognizing him as ruler of Kabul and Kandahar only, Afzal still tried to get British aid by using the Russian threat as a lever. He wrote to Lawrence's secretary, dwelling on the victorious advance of the Russians and expressing fear for Afghanistan as a consequence. But he was told that "the most friendly relations exist between the British and the Russian governments and that there was no reason to fear Russia."

This message Afzal Khan sent to Bokhara, adding that the English did not care if the Russians took Bokhara and that they should therefore make peace with the Russians. Thus Afzal attempted, despite British warnings, to use the Bokhara situation to solicit Russian aid for himself and

1. John Lawrence to Afzal Khan, quoted in Wyllie, J. W. S., "Masterly Inactivity," Fortnightly Review, December, 1867.

Azim. General Romanovski, the Russian Governor at Tashkent, who had been sent a copy of Lawrence's letter, was told that both Afzal and Azim were disgusted with the British Government; and they therefore looked upon the Russians as their real friends to whom they hoped to send ambassadors.¹

Undoubtedly, the activity of Afzal Khan, together with the encroachment of Russia, led the Amir of Bokhara to solicit Lawrence's aid for his own cause and reopen relations between Bokhara and India.* But Lawrence wrote to the Amir asserting the same principles of non-involvement as he had in the case of Afghanistan.²

No doubt Lawrence's refusal to aid the Amir facilitated Russian ambitions in Central Asia, but considering the situation in Afghanistan, no other course of action was open to Lawrence, who still slung to the hope that Sher Ali would emerge successfully from the war of succession. J. W. S. Wyllie informs us that:

Sir John Lawrence has taken no less pains to let it be known throughout the length and breadth of Afghanistan that England does not

1. Wyllie, J. W. S., "Masterly Inactivity," Fortnightly Review, December, 1869.

* During the First Afghan War two British officers, Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, were sent to Bokhara to bar Russian progress by organizing a Tartar confederacy under Amir Nassur of Bokhara. They were both murdered, thus relations with Bokhara ended.

2. Wyllie, "Masterly Inactivity," op. cit.

depart lightly from her engagements, and that no pretender can hope for any countenance from her, so long as the prince whom she has once recognized as sovereign retains any material hold upon the country.¹

Azim Khan, as well as Afzal Khan, attempted to win British support; but he was given the same treatment by Lawrence as Afzal had received. Thereupon Azim too attempted to gain support through the suggestion of Russian compliance.

The rumour of Russian influence [Wyllie reports] in the Cabul Durbar spread through Meshed to Tehran, and the tale, as told in Persia, was that Abdool Rehman had obtained through the mediation of Bokhara recognition from the Russian Government as Ameer of Afghanistan, on the condition of vassalage to the Emperor Alexander.²

The year 1867 marks the last phase of the war of succession and a shift in the policy of Lawrence. Towards the end of 1867 the plight of Sher Ali was worse than it had ever been. His appeals for help from the British were refused. He then sought assistance from Persia and Russia. He had facilities for communicating with the Russians across the Oxus from his position in Balkh.³ Also he sent his son Yakub Khan to Persia offering Herat as a fief to the Persian crown. The Shah of Persia refused assistance since he was bound by treaty with the British not to

1. Wyllie, J. W. S. "The Foreign Policy of Sir John Lawrence," Edinburgh Review, Vol. CXXV, January, 1867, p. 26.

2. Ibid, p. 32.

3. Wyllie, "Masterly Inactivity", op. cit.

interfere in Afghanistan.¹

There is an interesting difference of interpretation of Lawrence's reaction to Sher Ali's negotiations with Persia and Russia. One historian, at least, claims that this action caused a change in Lawrence's policy and forced him to recognize and give assistance to Sher Ali. The argument is stated as follows:

For some time opposition to this hands off policy had been growing in India and London, and it won the day when Sher Ali approached the Russian military government in Turkestan. Once convinced of his error, Lawrence acted swiftly; he sent a message to Sher Ali recognizing him as Amir and forwarded a gift of 20,000 rupees and 3,000 muskets. This effectively ended the civil war, with Sher Ali firmly on the throne.²

Others claim that Lawrence told Sher Ali that if he sought assistance from Persia and Russia, British India would assist the party in power at Kabul with a subsidy and arms to resist Sher Ali.³

The significant point is not which candidate Lawrence would support, but that he would now support someone in Kabul. Whether Sher Ali or not, is not really important as far as strategy is concerned. What is important is that Lawrence, for the first time, looked beyond the mountains for the source of Indian security.

1. Ibid

2. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 125.

3. Aitchison, Sir John Lawrence, op. cit., p. 183.

In fact the war of succession was brought to an end, not by Lawrence's intervention, but by the change in fortunes of Sher Ali aided by an act of nature, an historical accident, the natural death of Afzal Khan in October of 1867. Temporarily, Azim ascended the throne and was recognized by the British.

Sher Ali, no doubt encouraged because Azim's rule was as detested by the people as had his brother's, regained strength in Herat and once again moved on Kandahar. He defeated the Kabul army and recovered the capital. Now Sher Ali was the undisputed ruler over all Afghanistan and had regained all his father's possessions.

Sher Ali was congratulated by Lawrence, who now found it possible to strengthen the Amir in an attempt to secure his goodwill, and to establish him as a friendly buffer between India and Russia.

Lawrence admitted his change in policy and his concern over Russia's advance when he wrote to the home authorities in 1869:

I think it should be carefully explained to him [Sher Ali] that we are interested in the security of his dominions from foreign invasion, and that, provided he remains strictly faithful to his engagements, we are prepared to support his independence; but that the manner of doing so must rest with ourselves . . . while strictly refusing to enter into¹ anything like an offensive and defensive alliance.

1. Quoted in Ibid, p. 187.

In pursuance of this policy, Lawrence, who had been given authority to "act on your own judgment in assisting Amir Sher Ali," gave the Amir £ 60,000 and 3,500¹ muskets and proposed a meeting between himself and the Afghan ruler.

Despite the fact that Lawrence's policy had its strong supporters, including the five Secretaries of State under whom he had served² there were those who severely criticized it.

Dodwell, in the Cambridge History of India, for instance, criticized it because it alienated Abdur Rahman and drove him to "shelter with the Russians since he had never seen the benefit of English friendship."³ But this seems a rather pointless criticism, since at the time Abdur Rahman was not yet twenty-five years old and not a major figure on the Afghan stage. Indeed, if the Lawrence policy had not been reversed, he might never have become prominent.

A second criticism is that Lawrence's non-intervention, and non-support of a particular candidate during the wars of succession, had in fact made rebellion popular. But when the competition for the throne began, Sher Ali was the recognized Amir, and to interfere with material help and to maintain a ruler not acknowledged by his people would have been a dangerous policy forbidden by the provisions

1. Wheeler, op. cit., p. 48.

2. Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 583.

3. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 407.

of existing treaties. Moreover, one should not forget the dictum that in Afghanistan "the rightful sovereign is he who can take the crown and wear it."¹

Lord Dalhousie had admitted the validity of this Afghan national custom when, by treaty, he recognized Dost Mohammed as founder of a new dynasty in supercession of the House of Sadowzai. If Dalhousie's act was justifiable so too must have been Lawrence's policy. And if we accept this argument we must also accept that the course followed did not contribute to the situation in Afghanistan and did no injustice to Sher Ali.

A third criticism is that Lawrence's policy was on the basis that it was basically a "do nothing policy," more inactive than masterly. But his biographer maintains that the term Masterly Inactivity

does not bring out that knowledge and that watchfulness which were of its very essence . . . a policy of self reliance, of waiting and of watching, that he might be able to strike the harder and in the right direction, if the time for aggressive action should ever come.²

Probably the most serious charge against the Lawrence stance was that it ignored the danger from Russia and in fact played into her hands. As the Cambridge History of India puts it

Russia was pursuing this policy [of expansion] while Lawrence was being 'masterly inactive' . . . he [Lawrence] seems wholly to have ignored the point that unless England could entrench herself

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1. Wyllie, "Masterly Inactivity," op. cit.
 2. Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 571.

so strongly in Central Asia as to convince Russia of the futility of movements in that direction an agreement in Europe could only be reached by subordinating English to Russian interests on the continent.¹

However, it is noteworthy that Russian generals did not pursue a policy of meeting British plots in Afghanistan by plots of their own; Afzal and Azim both had been refused Russian aid. Perhaps it is possible that Russia kept out of Afghanistan simply because the English also did; or more likely the Russians abstained from interference for the same reasons as did the English.

Lawrence was not unaware of Russian expansion; he simply did not see it as something to be counteracted by an advance into Central Asia. As he said, "The Anglo-Indian mind forgets that we are lords paramount of India only, not all of Asia."²

In a minute dated October 3, 1867, Lawrence, opposing a British advance, argued that the further Russia penetrated into Central Asia, the longer her supply line would become, while the length of the British supply line would remain the same.³

1. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 408.

2. Wyllie, "Masterly Inactivity," op. cit.

3. Kazemzadeh, Firuz, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968, p. 13.

Furthermore, Lawrence urged the Home Government to come to some definite agreement with Russia as to a line of demarcation between their respective spheres of influence. If that could be accomplished, then there would be little to fear from Russian expansion.¹ Actually Britain had little right to object to Russian expansion, rather, he felt, that Britain should welcome the civilizing influence of Russia on Central Asia. As he said on October 3, 1867:

I am not myself at all certain that Russia might not prove a safer ally, a better neighbour, than the Mahomedan races of Central Asia and Kabul. She would introduce civilization, and she would abate the fanaticism and ferocity of Mahomedanism, which² still exercises so powerful an influence in India.

Lawrence did not want to get deeply involved in Afghanistan or in Central Asia simply because India, at that time, lacked the resources to carry out such a responsibility, thus as G. S. Alder comments, "India should incur no responsibility where her arm could not reach."³

But to interfere in Afghanistan, in order to check Russia, she would have had to dominate Afghanistan up to the point of effectively taking responsibility for her foreign affairs. As Alder has explained the situation:

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 409.

2. Minute of John Lawrence, October 3, 1867, quoted in Kazemzadeh, op. cit., p. 13.

3. Alder, G. J., British India's Northern Frontier, London, Longmans Green and Company, 1963, p. 32.

The moment one great nation says to another, 'I will not permit you to interfere with this small state on my border,' it becomes responsible to the other nation for restraining the smaller state from injuring its neighbour, and may justly be called upon to exercise that restraint or to allow the other nation to redress its own wrongs.¹

As far as Russia was concerned, Lawrence felt that she could be considered a "better neighbour" only up to a certain point and therefore should be told,

that it cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, or in those of any state which lies contiguous to our frontier . . . If this failed, we might give that power to understand that an advance towards India, beyond a certain point, would entail on her, war, in all parts of the world, with England.²

But war with Russia was unlikely to Lawrence. His main hopes were in reaching an agreement with the Russian Government on Central Asia and the line of demarcation between their spheres of influence. In a letter of September, 1867,

Some understanding [he wrote] should be come to with the Czar's government so that up to a certain point the relations of the British and Russian governments should be openly acknowledged, and admitted as bringing them into necessary contact and treaty with the tribes and nations on the several sides of such a line. If an understanding, or even an engagement, of this nature were come to, the Government of India on the one hand could look on without anxiety or apprehension at the proceedings of Russia on her southern frontier and welcome the civilizing effect of her border government on

1. Ibid, p. 180.

2. Memo of John Lawrence, November 25, 1868, quoted in Ibid, p. 165.

the wild tribes of the steppes and on the bigoted and exclusive governments of Bokhara and Khakand; while Russia, on the other hand, assured of our loyal feeling in this matter, would have no jealousy in respect of our alliance with the Afghan and neighbouring tribes.¹

In the event of a Russian invasion of India, Lawrence did have a policy, summed up in a covering despatch from the foreign office. It reveals that Lawrence's mentality was conditioned by a mutiny complex, probably the strongest impression in his mind. More likely than an actual frontal invasion, Lawrence felt that Russian activity would manifest itself by generating internal disharmony in India. Thus there was a social and moral element in any scheme of Indian defence. The British dominion was that of a foreign people, few in number, and with a European army so limited that the concentration and utilization of it on an advanced frontier necessarily weakened British strength in the sub-continent that was still recovering from the Mutiny.

Therefore, his policy of defence was summarized when he said in a dispatch of January 4, 1869:

Should a foreign power, such as Russia, ever seriously think of invading India, from without or what is more probable, of stirring up the elements of disaffection or anarchy within it, our true policy, our strongest security, would then, we conceive, be found to lie in previous abstinence from

1. Aitchison, Sir John Lawrence, op. cit., p. 184.

entanglements at either Kabul, Kandahar, or any similar outpost; in full reliance on a compact highly equipped and disciplined army, stationed within our own territories or on our own border; in the contentment if not in the attachment of the masses; in the sense of security of title and possession with which our whole policy is gradually imbuing the minds of the principal chiefs and the native aristocracy; in the construction of material works within British India which enhance the comfort of the people, while they add to our political and military strength; in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources; in quiet preparation for all contingencies which no Indian statesman should disregard; and in a trust in the rectitude and honesty of our intentions, coupled with the avoidance of all sources of complaint which either invite foreign aggression or stir up restless spirits to domestic revolt.¹

Unquestionably the strongest factor in Lawrence's attitude was his memory of 1857. As Edwardes points out:

Superficially, it might seem that such a policy had been based upon ordinary common sense and memory of 1838, or perhaps even upon moral grounds, but this was in fact not the case. Lawrence never forgot the lesson of the Mutiny: that the British government in India was maintained by a combination of power and consent, and that a wave of popular feeling and hatred, properly led and supported from outside could drive the British into the sea. The aim of Lawrence, an aim to which all Imperial policy must be subordinate was simply to prevent the possibility of another and perhaps successful, mutiny.²

It appears then that many factors conditioned Lawrence's opinions and helped develop his policies along what he saw

1. Dispatch from Foreign Department, Government of India, January 4, 1869, quoted in Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 586.

2. Edwardes, The Necessary Hell, op. cit., p. 197.

as the only logical lines. The memory of the cause and the disastrous results of the First Afghan War; the memory of the Mutiny; the reality of the post Mutiny period; the reality of the North West frontier situation and the reality of the Indian finances--these were the factors. In this context, the Lawrence policy was appropriate and logical. But these factors could change and thus leave the Masterly Inactivity policy inadequate and outdated.

Thus one is forced to accept the verdict that:

It was a magnificent policy so long as the Amir remained friendly and undisturbed by Russian propinquity, and it could with little difficulty be changed into a more positive policy if the Amir asked for closer relations. But it took an iron nerve and much confidence to remain untroubled in India, not knowing when the Russians might move or what devils cauldron might be brewing behind the mountains of the Hindu Kush. The issues of the policy of Masterly Inactivity were too difficult and too delicate, there were so many factors which might destroy their equilibrium, and there was no means of restoring the balance once this was upset.¹

Certainly one of the things that could destroy the equilibrium was Russian expansion and the Russians were moving in the 1860's. This brought the end to Masterly Inactivity. As MacMunn says,

The Policy was wise enough and might have held for all time had it not been for the steady absorption of the Central Asian Khanates by Russia.²

1. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 134.

2. MacMunn, op. cit., p. 166.

This development brought new forces into play in India, strengthened the existing opposition to the Lawrence policy, and brought about a restatement of the old forward policy which substituted action for inaction.

Chapter VII

FROM LAWRENCE TO LYTTON

The ten years after Lawrence left the Indian scene was a period of transition, not only in the Indian domestic situation but also in Indian foreign policy. While the Viceroys Mayo and Northbrook attempted to work within the framework of the Lawrence policy, at least in principle, there were forces at work to create a change in British attitudes towards Afghanistan and Central Asia which determined a modification of the Lawrence policy, if not an outright change of approach.

There was, during the seventies, an ever-growing opposition to the Lawrence policy which became more and more influential in shaping official policy. The motivation of the opposition was the changing political climate beyond the Indian frontiers and the growing momentum of the Russian absorption of Central Asia which brought her closer and closer towards Afghanistan.

Since Indian policy was formed against this background of Russian expansion, it is desirable to examine this phenomenon briefly.

Russian activity in Central Asia, which at least one author compares to the American westward movement,¹ began to manifest itself in the late 1850's in the form of reconnaissance and intelligence. For example:

In 1858 a mission of enquiry, accompanied by a large body of topographers was dispatched under Ignatief, to collect information about military conditions, roads, and means of transport.²

During the 1860's Russian activity seemed to reach its peak and was therefore the more disturbing to the British; for as Thornton says,

The strides made by the Russians into Central Asia between 1864-1869 were greater than any they took thereafter in that area,³

one reason for this activity being the increased demand for Bokhara cotton, due to the American Civil War.⁴

Recovering from the Crimean War, Russia set herself to strengthening her position in Central Asia.⁵ Two means were employed: firstly by closing the open frontier between her

1. Riasanovskyny, N. V., A History of Russia, New York, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 432.

2. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 407.

3. Thornton, A. P., "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy, 1869-1873," Cambridge Historical Journal, Vol. XI, 1954, p. 204.

4. Thornton, A. P., "The Re-opening of the Central Asian Question 1864-1869," History, Vol. 41, 1956, p. 128.

5. Allworth, Edward, Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule, New York, Columbia University Press, 1967, p. 131.

advanced positions at Perovsk on the Orenberg Line and Vernoe on the line of Siberia, and secondly by increased activity on the Caspian Sea, resulting in the occupation of Krasnovodsk and the advance along the Atrek.¹ By 1864 she had begun to move westward from Vernoe and eastward from Perovsk; Auliata was taken by the force moving from Vernoe and the city of Turkestan taken by the Perovsk force, while Chamkand in the centre completed the line. This movement brought Russia face to face with the Uzbek Khanates of Khokand, Khiva and Bokhara;

their absorption was obviously a mere matter of time but the movement only became marked towards the end of Lawrence's period of office.²

Russia had also advanced to the Jaxartes by the occupation of Tashkent and Chinaz in 1865. Early in 1865 General Cherniaev had emphasized that it was impossible for Russia to maintain her position in Central Asia if Tashkent were not occupied.³ Thus the fate of Kokand, Khiva and Bokhara appeared sealed. As Wyllie observed,

All three retain an independent existence only so long as Russia pleases, two hundred

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1. Aitchison, Sir John Lawrence, op. cit., p. 184.
 2. Roberts, op. cit., p. 409.
 3. Allworth, op. cit., p. 132.

navigable miles of the Oxus are all that separate Khiva from the Russian flotilla on the Aral Sea; and Kokand . . . it is not a hundred miles from the large Russian garrison at Tashkent.¹

This prediction proved accurate enough, for in 1866, Khokand, Oratippa, and Jizak were annexed, coming under Czarist control and adding 4,200 square miles south of the Jaxartes to the Russian possessions. Bokhara fell next by the occupation of Samarkand and Katikurgan. By 1867 Bokhara had been reduced, and the province of Russian Turkestan set up, under the Governorship of General Kaufmann, "a fervent expansionist."²

Thus by the late 1860's only Khiva remained separate from Russian domination; but it was felt that Khiva, like Tashkent a few years earlier, would give a sense of solidarity to the Central Asian conquest.³

Just as there were different opinions on how best to deal with the Russian expansion, there were likewise different motives ascribed to the actual cause of the expansion, and different opinions as to whether it constituted a threat to British India.

1. Wyllie, "Foreign Policy of Sir John Lawrence," op. cit., p. 36.

2. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 127.

3. Allworth, op. cit., p. 143.

Prince Gorchakov, the Russian Chancellor, directed Russian representatives abroad to explain Russian expansion through the same theory that the British had used. Gorchakov in his dispatch wrote:

The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilized states which are brought into contact with half savage, nomad populations, possessing no fixed social organization.

In such cases it always happens that the more civilized state is forced, in the interests of the security of its frontier and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whom their turbulent and unsettled character make most undesirable neighbours.

First there are raids and acts of pillage to put down. To put a stop to them, the tribes on the frontier have to be reduced to a state of more or less perfect submission.¹

However, some felt that the drive into Central Asia was motivated by purely political considerations. For example,

Russian activity in the Central Asian khanates after 1858 was produced more by political motives than by the supposed necessity of imposing order on barbarous neighbours.²

Furthermore, it was felt that the "political motives" were directed towards Europe rather than Asia:

. . . neither strategy, nor lust of conquest, nor military glory, nor any one of the thousand and

1. Kazemzadeh, op. cit., p. 8.

2. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 407.

one motives which in matters of peace and war ordinarily actuate nations, was the governing principle in directing the Russian advance into Central Asia. That principle was, I believe, an intense desire to reach the threshold of India, not for the purpose of direct or immediate attack, but with a view to political pressure on Great Britain.¹

This principle was verified in 1858 by Ignat'ev, the Russian military attache in London, when he wrote:

In the case of a conflict with England, it is only in Asia that we shall be able to struggle with her in any chances for success and to weaken her.²

Nevertheless, to some observers, expansion appeared as a positive good impeded by British policy in Europe. MacMunn, for example, says

Russian absorption was in its way all to the good of mankind and civilization . . . Had it not been for our policy of maintaining Turkey in Europe and in Asia, and therefore getting at loggerheads with Russia, we might have had a settlement which would have relieved us of much of our anxieties.³

Others saw it as a definite plan to invade India.

General Cherniaev, the conqueror of Tashkent, who, according to Wyllie, desired no further annexations, wrote:

The mysterious veil which has hitherto covered the conquest of India, a conquest looked upon until now as fabulous, is beginning to lift itself before my eyes.⁴

1. Rawlinson, "The Russian Advance in Central Asia," op. cit., p. 560.

2. Allworth, op. cit., p. 150.

3. MacMunn, op. cit., p. 166.

4. Vambery, Arminius, "Will Russia Conquer India," op. cit., p. 25.

Arminius Vambery claims that it was only after the capture of Tashkent that the Russians looked towards India; this was the great turning point; or as Vambery says, "It may be therefore asserted that it was then only that the Indian light began to burst upon the eyes of Russia."¹

And we must not forget that Russian frontier generals, even more than their British counterparts, often determined frontier policy. On one occasion, Lord Clarendon, the Secretary of State for foreign affairs, observed that Russian armies were

impelled forward either by direct orders from St. Petersburg, or by ambitions of generals in disregard of the pacific intentions of the Emperor,²

while Gorchakov agreed that the military "had all exceeded their instructions in the hope of gaining distinction."³

Following this line of thought one writer claims that even the occupation of Tashkent was "unknown to St. Petersburg and without authorization;" furthermore,

in all these cases of Russian annexation, the British were inclined to see Russian deceit and calculated design, where in fact there was simply lack of control from St. Petersburg.⁴

1. Ibid, p. 26.

2. Kazemzadeh, op. cit., p. 15.

3. Ibid, p. 15.

4. Lederer, Ivo J. (ed.), Russian Foreign Policy, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962, pp. 247-248.

This period of intense Russian activity coincided with Lawrence's policy of non-intervention and non-involvement in trans-frontier affairs and with the war of succession in Afghanistan. About the time that Samarkand fell, Lawrence had to reconsider his position and pressed for some arrangement with Russia.

Thus Lawrence made two proposals, to assist the established government at Kabul and to conduct friendly negotiations with Russia. Out of these proposals grew the subsequent British policy: firstly, the grant of assistance to Sher Ali when he had recovered Kabul; secondly, the meeting with Sher Ali at Ambala in March, 1869; thirdly, the proposal of a neutral zone between the Russian and British spheres of influence in Central Asia; fourthly, the negotiations with Russia for the delimitation of the northern and western frontiers of Afghanistan; and fifthly, the measures taken for the consolidation of the Afghan Government down to the time of Lord Lytton.¹

At almost the same time that the Russian influence was extended to the River Oxus, John Lawrence was replaced by Lord Mayo (January, 1869). There is a considerable difference of opinion as to whether this marked a departure

1. Aitchison, Sir John Lawrence, op. cit., p. 186.

from the Lawrence policy of Masterly Inactivity or whether Mayo continued that policy, only to change it later under other pressures. The differences center about what was the highlight of Mayo's administration: his meeting with Sher Ali at Ambala.

Mayo's biographer contends that there was no change in policy at Ambala, but also admits that Lawrence had himself previously changed his policy. He writes:

It has been represented that Lord Mayo, by the Ambala Durbar in, March 1869, reversed his predecessor's policy towards Afghanistan. Now the truth is, in the first place, that the policy was not reversed, and, in the second place, that any changes which took place in it were marked out by Lord Mayo's predecessor himself.¹

However, Lawrence's biographer claims that Mayo supported an unchanged Lawrence policy. He writes that:

The pledges of friendly feeling and of non-interference given by John Lawrence to Dost Mohammed in 1855 and 1856 at Jamrud, and afterwards to Sher Ali in 1869, had been endorsed by Lord Mayo at Umballa, and had been renewed, with still more explicit assurances by Lord Northbrook at Simla.²

Whether a change in policy or a "legitimate development," Lawrence was apparently satisfied that his disciples were continuing his work. As Bosworth Smith reports:

1. Hunter, W. W., Life of the Earl of Mayo, London, Smith Elder & Co., 1875, Vol. I, p. 256.

2. Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 622.

Lawrence had the infinite satisfaction of feeling that . . . Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook were strenuously endeavouring to carry out the policy which he had constantly advised towards Afghanistan, towards Central Asia and towards Russia.¹

While Hunter portrays the Ambala meeting as a great success, not everyone agreed. There were those who not only regarded the meeting as a change in policy, but also questioned its effectiveness. Fletcher, for example, says that, "the talks there were unproductive; the British were in the final throes of masterly inactivity."²

Before the meeting with Sher Ali, Mayo himself expressed the hope that he would not have to depart from the Lawrence policy; but at the same time he realized that he would have to be careful not to alienate Sher Ali. Hunter quotes him as saying:

I think any treaty or promise of permanent subsidy most unadvisable. At the same time we must not shut ourselves out altogether from assisting Sher Ali if we find it advantageous so to do.³

Actually the meeting with Sher Ali had been arranged before Lawrence's departure from India. Sher Ali had wanted closer relations with the Indian Government and had asked for a definite treaty, a fixed subsidy, and assistance in

1. Ibid, p. 622.

2. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 127.

3. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 257.

arms and men. He actually wanted a commitment on the part of the British to support his throne and his dynasty. Furthermore, he wanted recognition of Abdulla Jan rather than Yakub Khan as heir.

While we may agree that the meeting itself was "no breach in continuity in policy,"¹ the demands of Sher Ali "went far beyond anything Mayo was prepared to concede,"² since they would have linked up British power and prestige in India with the fortunes of Afghanistan, which was far from being a stable dynasty. Thus Sher Ali had to be refused, yet his friendship had to be maintained.

Thus Sher Ali was not given a treaty of alliance but a letter of friendship and support, plus a gift of two batteries of artillery and 10,000 stands of arms. While he was given nothing that he asked for, yet "Mayo sent the Amir away satisfied and deeply impressed with being on good terms with the British power."³

Sher Ali expressed his satisfaction with the meeting and his impression of British power, in a letter to Mayo (April 3, 1869):

If [he declared] it please God, as long as I am alive, or as long as my government exists,

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1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 412.
 2. Ibid, p. 413.
 3. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 257.

the foundations of friendship and goodwill between this and the powerful British Government will not be weakened.¹

Despite this declaration, and however charmed Sher Ali might have been by Mayo it must be that having got so little of what he had asked for he left Ambala slightly disappointed.² Bosworth Smith recognizes this when he writes,

If Sher Ali was still dissatisfied it was because he had asked for pledges which would certainly have drawn us into the vortex of the internal politics of Afghanistan.³

For his part Mayo was delighted with his achievements and expressed the belief that a new day had begun in Indo Afghan relations. He wrote:

The Afghans were once our friends . . . I believe they may be so again, if we adhere strictly to what has been commenced here; and the day may not be far distant when we may find the advantage of possessing on our frontier an almost impenetrable country manned by some of the best hill troops in the world.⁴

Accordingly, Mayo expressed his satisfaction to Lawrence, revealing that he had not departed from the Lawrence policy, but suggesting that Lawrence had, during his last few months as Viceroy, taken a different position to the held previously.

1. Sher Ali to Lord Mayo, April 3, 1869, quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 132.

2. Thornton, A. P., "British Policy in Persia 1858-1890," English Historical Review, Vol. 69, 1954, p. 569.

3. Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 622.

4. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I., p. 216.

But I adhered [Mayo wrote] rigidly to the line laid down--i.e., no treaty or engagements which may, hereafter, embarrass us . . . I believe that when you sent Sher Ali the money and arms last December you laid the foundation of a policy which will be of the greatest use to us hereafter. I wish to continue it.¹

One positive aspect of the Ambala meeting was the fact that a personal contact, "so vital in dealing with an Afghan,"² had been established between Amir and Viceroy which Lawrence had never established.

Some historians regard the Ambala meeting as that turning point in British policy which marked the beginning of the transition from "Masterly Inactivity" to a new line resulting eventually in Lytton's forward policy. According to this school, the meeting with Sher Ali was held to convince him that a change was taking place. As the Cambridge History of India puts it,

Endeavours had been made to remove the unfavourable impressions produced upon Sher Ali by Lawrence's policy which even before Lawrence's retirement from the Governor Generalship in 1869 was already recognized by its author as inadequate.³

This view is supported by Thornton who points out that, before Lawrence left India he laid aside his policy of inactivity since he held out his hand both to greet and support Sher Ali.⁴

1. Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 625.

2. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 132.

3. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 409.

4. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 207.

In any case, if we continue to follow Thornton, the meeting, seen in this context, was something less than a diplomatic triumph. For he contends that

Sher Ali came looking for a fixed treaty but got a handout and assurance that the 'Government of India would endeavour from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the Government of Your Highness' . . . Mayo intended this as an evasion; Sher Ali as a pledge.¹

It is significant that J. W. S. Wyllie, whom we already know as a strong supporter of the Lawrence policy, interprets the Ambala Durbar not only as a sensational break with the policy of the past, but also as one of those significant turning points which affected all of Central Asia and started a new policy of "Mischievous Activity." As he puts it,

the same English who lately had not an obolus of alms for his [Sher Ali's] distribution are now eagerly courting the honour of his exalted friendship.²

Since Lawrence was at the end of his term, he was prepared to concede to his successor "a certain dalliance with milder forms of popular infatuation." He had concluded that his policy was doomed to some modification, but felt that he had it in his power to trace what the modification would be.

1. Ibid, p. 208.

2. Wyllie, J. W. S., "Mischievous Activity," Fortnightly Review, March, 1870.

Thus, to confine what he regarded as impeding mischief within manageable bounds he proposed that money should be granted to Sher Ali.

While the general attitude of historians is that Mayo gave very little at Ambala, Wyllie charges that he gave too much and that the Durbar appeared to Sher Ali as a British apology for past policy.

Mayo [Wyllie charges] erred on the side of excessive complaisance to his Afghan quest . . . instead of being decently grateful for benefits to which he [Sher Ali] had, by desert, no claim whatever, he grumbled aloud that our bounty had been long in coming and that he had been all but ruined by the delay.¹

Furthermore, Wyllie contends that Sher Ali demanded and Mayo agreed, that Persia should be called to account for encroachments in Seistan. Actually, as we shall see, a new arrangement in regards to Seistan was a vital part of the new policy and very much in the interest of British India.

To Wyllie the Durbar had far reaching consequences. For Mayo had committed the Indian Government to the support of Sher Ali and thus to a deeper involvement in Afghan politics. The alternative would be to repudiate an alliance and thereby lose face.

1. Ibid.

In India, Wyllie reported, the Durbar was interpreted as a slap in the face to Russia; the "Grand Game" was revived in the Indian newspapers which predicted that soon there would be British agents in Afghanistan and British officers training the Amir's army.

In Persia likewise the Durbar had repercussions. The result was equally mischievous for the Shah was suspicious of a British-Afghan alliance. Alarmed over Seistan, he called upon the British cabinet for an explanation and had to be assured by British diplomats that the Afghan policy was not hostile to Persia.

More important, the Durbar was reported by Wyllie to give offence to St. Petersburg. More likely it was convenient for Russia to pretend that offence had been given in order to justify her own Central Asian policy. However, the Russian press denounced the event as "the first stone of the wall which the Anglo Indian Government was hastening to build across the road of the Russians in Central Asia."¹

The Moscow Gazette observed that if England had chosen to intrigue in Afghanistan the same game was open to Russia in Bokhara, and Turkestan would be a formidable base of operations against the Indian Empire. Furthermore, the

1. Ibid.

Russian publication, The Golos, reported:

The commercial war already being waged between England and Russia on the northern frontier of Afghanistan is not at all unlikely to give way some day to a combat with more sanguinary weapons than weights and measures. In this case, the rifles presented to the Amir by the Earl of Mayo would stand him in good stead, though, for the matter of that, the Amir, after taking pounds sterling, is quite as likely as not to try roubles for a change.¹

Thus, in Wyllie's interpretation, the Durbar had profound repercussions and were bound to influence Anglo Russian diplomacy. Generally, according to Wyllie, the results of the Durbar were to leave

Russia irritated into the very course of aggression we wanted to prevent; Persia sullenly augmenting her encroachments towards Seistan and Mekran; India startled from her task of self-improvement by expectation of a 'Great Game' being opened to decide her destiny; and British influence in Afghanistan staked on the fate of an ungrateful and half-crazy individual.²

If Mayo had inherited Lawrence's foreign problems, he likewise inherited Lawrence's problem of an unsettled frontier; but was not completely inclined to accept it as Lawrence had left it. In fact, he was critical of the tactics employed on the frontier. Thus he proposed,

to substitute as far as possible, for surprise, aggression, and reprisal, a policy of vigilant,

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

constant, and never ceasing defence of those parts of our frontier which are by their position liable to be attacked by foreign tribes.¹

However, this was part of a new foreign policy and a realization of possible invasion, particularly if the border area betrayed signs of British weakness.

Every shot [he continued] fired in anger within the limits of our Indian Empire reverberates throughout Asia; gives to nations who are no friends to Christian or European rule the notion that amongst our own subjects that there are still men in arms against us; and corroborates the assertion that the people within our frontier are not yet wholly subjected to our sway and that British power is still disputed in Hindustan.²

Actually, Mayo took two approaches to foreign affairs, through negotiations at St. Petersburg and by consolidating relations with the frontier states. As far as Afghanistan was concerned, relations could best be consolidated by observing the principles that had guided Lawrence: first, that there would be no European officers placed as residents in Afghan cities; second, that there would be no offensive and defensive treaty; third, no British soldier would be sent across the frontier to coerce the Amir's subjects.³

But in consolidating relations with the frontier states, Persia presented a problem. The Persian boundary was not

1. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 236.

2. Ibid, p. 237.

3. Aitchison, Sir John Lawrence, op. cit., p. 191.

settled and Mayo feared that the Persian frontier might advance to be coterminous with India, with Persia absorbing the territory between Sind and the Mekran.

In 1870 he wrote:

Persia by her policy of aggression in the Gulf, on Mekran coast, Beluch frontier and Seistan has got into what is rapidly proving for herself a dangerous line.¹

The Seistan basin, on the Persian Afghan border, was of real importance to the British since it commanded the valley of the Helmand and with it a route to India. Colonel Holdich writes:

It is, after all, the highways of Herat and Seistan that form the only avenues for military approach to the Indian frontier that are not barred by difficulties of Nature's own providing, or commanded from the sea.²

Lord Curzon's evaluation of Seistan, although expressed near the end of the century was no less true for the 1870's. He wrote:

Seistan is, by virtue of its position and its features, an object of much interest both to Russia and Great Britain. Situated at the point of junction of the frontiers of Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan, its future affects the destinies of all three countries. Lying, as it does, almost

1. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 288.

2. Holdich, T. H., The Gates of India, London, Mac Millan and Co., 1910, p. 525.

midway between Meshed and the Persian Gulf, no advances can be made from Khorasan to the sea except through Seistan. Its position upon the exposed flank of Afghanistan would render its occupation of great value to any power contemplating a move against that country, or an advance upon Kandahar. Nor will it be denied that the Kandahar-Herat line could not be held with safety by India, nor the valley of the Helmand defended, were a hostile power in possession of Seistan.¹

Likewise, Valentine Chirol claimed:

Seistan alone, amidst the wilderness of Eastern Persia, would afford her [Russia] in virtue of its natural resources and geographic position a tempting field for economic and political expansion, as well as an admirable strategic base for future military operation.²

Thus it was very much to British India's advantage to improve relations with Persia as well as with Afghanistan. Therefore, at the Shah's request,³ Mayo agreed to the arbitration of the Persian-Kalat boundary, and in 1872 the Seistan boundary was demarcated.

As far as Persia and Afghanistan were concerned, the situation was reminiscent of the early part of the century when the British were hastening to cement relations with neighbouring states to serve as buffers for the outer limits of Indian defence. That situation too was a prelude to intervention and eventually, war.

1. Quoted in Greaves, op. cit., p. 18.

2. Chirol, Valentine, The Middle Eastern Question, London, John Murray, 1903, p. 288.

3. Greaves, op. cit., p. 18.

For Hunter says of Mayo's policy

By these varied means and by firmly establishing our internal influence in Afghanistan and Kalat he had surrounded the whole western and north-western frontier of India with friendly and well defined states.¹

As far as Russia was concerned, Mayo's attitude shows a departure from the Lawrence policy, conditioned with a note of caution.

I hope [he declared] that sensible men will not continue to advocate the extreme line of inaction, or the worse alternative of meddling and interfering by subsidies and emissaries . . . the Central Asian question is only a bugbear if prudence be observed.²

His policy of "habitual watchfulness and friendly intercourse"³ he felt was best facilitated by negotiation at St. Petersburg, consequently in November of 1869 Sir Douglas Forsyth was sent to St. Petersburg. On this line, Mayo's ideas of foreign policy were similar to those of Lawrence, who had suggested as early as 1867 that it might be expedient to come to some understanding with Russia.

Since the Cabinet in London was reluctant to take any but diplomatic steps against Russian expansion,⁴ negotiations between the British Foreign Secretary and Prince Gorchakov

1. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 295.

2. Quoted in Ibid, p. 258.

3. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo-Russian Diplomacy," p. 209.

4. Kazemzadeh, op. cit., p. 14.

began. Clarendon proposed that the two governments might agree to establish a neutral zone in Central Asia. On March 27, 1868, Brunnow, the Russian ambassador, transmitted to Clarendon a letter from Gorchakov giving assurance in regard to the neutrality of Afghanistan.¹ But the India Officer could not accept the idea of Afghanistan as a neutral zone since the frontiers of Afghanistan were too ill defined. But

the core of the objection lay in the plain fact that they could not afford to allow to Sher Ali the privileges of a neutral . . . the Amir at Kabul should certainly be independent--but he must also live in friendly relations with the Government of India.²

Rather, the India Office proposed the line of the Upper Oxus as a boundary which neither power should permit its forces to cross; but there was little chance of Russia accepting this since Khiva was south of the Oxus.

Thornton states that Clarendon and Gortchakov treated the matter as an exercise in diplomacy rather than an investigation into the possibilities of practical action.³ Kazemzadeh supports this view. He claims that:

The Clarendon-Gorchakov pourparlers neither did nor could lead to an understanding.

1. Ibid, p. 14.

2. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 212.

3. Ibid, p. 212.

St. Petersburg was aware of the indecision in London. If anything, Britain's conciliatory attitude and the acceptance of Gorchakov's version of the causes of Russian conquests in Central Asia encouraged further moves southward and eastward. Negotiations, exchanges of notes, reminders concerning old pledges, and expressions of dissatisfaction on the part of the British had not the slightest effect upon Russian planning and execution of conquests. Now that Tashkent and Khojent had been annexed, it was Khiva's turn to fall before the armies of the Aq-Khan (the White Tsar).¹

Actually Sir Charles Wood, then Secretary of State for India had advised that England should not put her signature to any convention or agreement which might tie her hands in the future in circumstances which could not then be foreseen. Consequently a dispatch proposing that both England and Russia limit their expansion had been so emended by the India Officer that it was rendered meaningless.²

In November of 1869 the Russians had established a base at Krasnovodsk on the southern Caspian and opened a caravan road to a point on the Oxus, a movement which was interpreted by Wyllie in 1870 as a prelude to a campaign against Khiva.³

1. Kazemzadeh, op. cit., p. 15.

2. Thornton, A. P., "The Re Opening of the Central Asian Question, 1864-69," op. cit., p. 133.

3. Wyllie, "Mischievous Activity," op. cit.

Because of border interference on the part of the Khivans, Kaufmann reported to St. Petersburg the necessity of military action and received permission to undertake it.¹ However, Augustus Loftus, the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, deduced that the Imperial Government did not wish to annex Khiva but preferred to make a client of the Khan, since, "Russia's financial position was not such as could allow her to continue a career of military adventure in Central Asia."²

Thus Britain pressed again to settle the Afghan border. Britain would hold Sher Ali to these boundaries and "all causes of uneasiness and jealousy between England and Russia in regard to their respective policies in Asia could be removed."³

On January 24, 1873, Granville wrote to Gorchakov concerning Sher Ali's rights on the northern Afghan frontier which were conceded.

The understanding was arrived at that the northern boundaries of Afghanistan should include all territories then in possession of the Amir up to the Oxus but the Amir was not to cross the river or interfere in Bukhara . . . the British Government would see that the Amir adhered to this and Russia would not encroach southwards.⁴

1. Pierce, R. A., Russian Central Asia, Berkley, University of California Press, 1960, p. 29.

2. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 215.

3. Ibid, p. 216.

4. Hunter, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 274.

Thus Granville managed to end the diplomatic game suggested by Lawrence and Mayo, but the idea of a neutral zone was abandoned. However, the agreement of 1873 has been interpreted as a diplomatic victory for Russia, since

by the 1873 agreement Russia gained her point. Her policy was now to advance up to the effective borders of Afghanistan. All that was really obtained was an admission that Russia regarded Afghanistan as beyond her sphere of interest.¹

Opponents of the Lawrence school were not impressed by the diplomatic notes; they felt that the Russian drive into Central Asia towards British India was unlikely to be brought to a halt by a line of frontier which neither Englishmen nor Russians had ever seen. The same outlook was expressed by General Cherniaev:

As long as England and Russia [he wrote] mean well towards each other their respective interests in Central Asia will not require the protection of a written agreement, which, on the other hand, is of such a character that Russia will easily find a number of pretexts for breaking it when necessary.²

Through this agreement and Russian statements regarding Khiva, Britain felt that Russia had pledged herself not to occupy and hold Khiva. Then in August of 1873 Khiva fell to the Russians; the "English press expressed great agitation,

1. Dodwell, op. cit., p. 409.

2. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 217.

declaring that this new Russian conquest was a threat to Afghan independence."¹ In January of 1873, Granville had been assured that orders had been issued against the occupation of Khiva,² yet within a year it had become a Russian province. Shortly after the occupation of Khiva, Lord Lawrence, in a minute on the Central Asian question, admitted that Russia's approach to India was "fraught with future trouble and danger."³

The fall of Khiva to the Russians was the single most dramatic incident in Anglo-Russo-Afghan relations. Russia, in pursuit of her "manifest destiny,"⁴ was drawn into this area by the same geographic magnetism that had compelled both British and Russian annexations. Geographically the Upper Oxus and all the northern slope of the Iran and Afghan plateaux belong to the Ural Caspian region, and

As soon as the Russian Empire had stepped into the delta of the Amu the conquest of the whole basin became a sad necessity. The march on Khiva already implied the occupation of Merv; and as soon as a footing was taken on the eastern

1. Allworth, op. cit., p. 147.

2. Edwardes, Asia in the European Age, op. cit., p. 182.

3. Quoted in Greaves, op. cit., p. 25.

4. Thornton, A. P., "The Re Opening of the Central Asian Question, 1864-69," op. cit., p. 133.

coast of the Caspian, the conquest of Geok-Tepe of Merv, and Penj-deh were unavoidable. The advance no longer depended on the will of the rulers, therefore, it became one of those natural ¹ phenomena which must be fulfilled sooner or later.

The design on Khiva was well under way when British and Russian diplomats were attempting to come to terms over Central Asia. For, during the same period as the negotiations were taking place, 1870-73, the St. Petersburg Geographical Society was besieged with schemes of exploration of the Amu Basin:

The Government [Kropotkin claims] took advantage of this scientific glow for planning its advance into the Turcoman Steppes . . . thousands of roubles were immediately voted by all possible ministries for pushing forward the learned pioneers into the Trans Caspian. This willingness to support scientific exploration precisely in that direction, was obviously the result of a scheme long ago elaborated at the Foreign Office for opening a new route towards the Indian frontier. Far from checking the advance the government favoured it by all means.²

The possession of the Khiva opened new avenues to the Russian frontier generals whose ambitions were boundless. General Skobelev predicted:

It will be in the end our duty to organize masses of Asiatic cavalry, and to hurl them into India under the banners of blood and pillage, as

1. Kropotkin, "The Coming War," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 17, 1885, p. 746.

2. Ibid, p. 747.

a vanguard, as it were, thus reviving the times of a Tamerlane.¹

And towards this end Kropotkin declared that, "The advance in the Trans Caspian region had been really made with a determined aim--the seizure of Herat."² And from Herat, according to Skobelev, the road might well lead to Constantinople.³

The importance of Khiva to Russia was not to be underestimated, for with Khiva in their hands the Russians could establish themselves on the Lower Oxus. The problem of supplying Tashkent and Turkestan from Orenburg was now solved.⁴ The Oxus was a navigable river, new communications would connect it with Tashkent and Samarkand on one side and on the southern side with the Caspian Sea either through Merv or Khiva. Now the Persian flank, the whole frontier of Khorassan lay exposed.⁵ The Russian incursion into Khiva had made Herat the key not only to western Afghanistan--Kabul--India--but also Kandahar and the Persian Gulf.

The fall of Khiva had thus changed the true centre of gravity in Central Asian affairs so far as

1. Vambery, "Will Russia Conquer India," op. cit., p. 40.

2. Kropotkin, op. cit., p. 747.

3. Vambery, "Will Russia Conquer India," op. cit., p. 41.

4. Thornton, A. P., "British Policy in Persia, 1858-1890," op. cit., p. 561.

5. Greaves, op. cit., p. 27.

British India was concerned, from the mountains¹ of Afghanistan to the Persian and Turkoman plain.

This new state of affairs was to influence British Afghan relations, for Sher Ali became alarmed at the nearness of Russia and demanded a clear and definite statement of policy from the Viceroy. However, in 1872 Lord Mayo had been assassinated and the personal link that had been forged at Ambala was now broken.

Sher Ali, with only Merv and the Oxus between him and the Russians, turned to the British. Since there was no British agent in Kabul, the Amir's agent went to Simla and asked for a definite statement of British policy in the event of Russian aggression.

The envoy asked that a written assurance might be given to him to the effect that if Russia, or any state of Turkestan or elsewhere under Russian influence should commit an aggression on the Amir's territories, or should otherwise annoy the Amir, the British government would consider such aggressor an enemy, and that they could promise to afford to the Amir promptly such assistance in money and arms as might be required until the danger should be past or invasion repelled. Also, that if the Amir should be unable to cope single-handed with the invader, that the British Government should promptly dispatch a force to his assistance, by whatever route the Amir might require the same.²

The Amir was looking for the British to act on that pledge that he felt had been given at Ambala. But instead of getting

1. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 203.

2. Dolwell, op. cit., p. 410.

action he got a further evasion. He was merely told that:

The Russians had agreed to respect the northern boundaries of Afghanistan which followed the course of the Oxus from its source in the Pamirs to a point named Dhivaja Salar, thence South West to the Persian border so as to include within Afghanistan's limits Balkh, Andkhui, Maimana and Herat and that the Russian Government had agreed that the territories of the Amir contained by this boundary were completely outside the sphere within which they might be called on to exercise influence.¹

With the approach of the Russians, Sher Ali, by 1873, realized that he had to accept closer and likely more subordinate relations with either the British or the Russians. The appearance of his envoy at Simla showed that he gave the first preference to the British connection. The envoy stated his Amir's position to Northbrook, (July 12, 1873):

The rapid advances made by the Russians in Central Asia had aroused the gravest apprehensions in the minds of the people of Afghanistan. Whatever specific assurances the Russians may give, and however often these may be repeated, the people of Afghanistan can place no confidence in them, and will never rest satisfied unless they are assured of the aid of the British Government.²

However, in the 1870's, the Viceroy was unfortunately not allowed the freedom of action which earlier Governors General had exercised. There was a difference of opinion as to the sincerity of Sher Ali and the Russian threat

1. Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 135.

2. Singhal, D. P., India and Afghanistan, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1963, p. 11.

between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India.

Lord Northbrook, who had replaced Lord Mayo, was apparently more concerned with the trans-border situation than had been his predecessor. As far as Persia was concerned, he advised stronger relations in the form of a military attache to the Legation at Teheran.¹ And as far as Afghanistan was concerned he would apparently have given the Amir more encouragement, for he wanted to inform him that:

if he unreservedly accepts our advice in all external relations, we will help him with money, arms and troops if necessary to expel unprovoked invasion.²

But the Secretary of State, apparently still under the Lawrence policy of non-intervention, rejected this proposal and the envoy was told by Northbrook: "The question is of such importance that the discussion of it should be postponed to a more suitable opportunity."³

Thus the Amir was told by his envoy that the mission had failed. To this disappointment was added the dissatisfaction of the British award in the Seistan dispute⁴ and the British position on the matter of his successor.

1. Greaves, op. cit., p. 28.

2. Quoted in Fraser-Tytler, op. cit., p. 135.

3. Quoted in Ibid, p. 135.

4. Thornton, A. P., "British Policy in Persia 1858-1890," op. cit., p. 566.

This Simla meeting was obviously a turning point in British-Afghan relations, and marked a change in the attitude of Sher Ali. As Roberts puts it:

It is a matter of regret that at this opportunity a more binding agreement was not entered upon with Sher Ali. In 1869 it was not feasible since Sher Ali was new on the throne, but by 1873 he had proved his ability.¹

Before the Simla meeting the regard Sher Ali had for the British was expressed by Bosworth Smith in these words:

Sher Ali had governed Afghanistan well; had regarded Lawrence with reverence; Mayo with passionate affection; Northbrook without any feelings of hostility.²

But after Simla he was disillusioned with the British and embittered. As Thornton says:

It was clear to him that the British Government would never stir to maintain the power of the Amir of Kabul for love of him, but perhaps it might be induced to do so for fear he found another, and firmer, friend to take his part.³

Thus it is suggested that Sher Ali turned to the Russians simply to pressure the English into giving more satisfaction than expressed at Simla. On the other hand it is suggested that Sher Ali had no other hope but to turn to Russia after

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 425.

2. Smith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 580.

3. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 207.

being rejected by the English. Fletcher, for example, quotes him as saying,

The English look to nothing but their own interests and bide their time. I will not waste precious time in entertaining false hopes from the English and will enter into friendships with other governments.¹

Lord Napier of Magdala was one who considered that the English had taken the wrong turn at Simla and had treated Sher Ali badly.

First [he declares] we stood aloof in his struggles for life and Empire . . . Then, when Sher Ali had subdued his enemies, he came forward to meet us with an alliance, but we were willing only to form an imperfect alliance. He was willing to trust us provided that we would trust him, but we felt that we could not bind ourselves to unreserved support of a power whose ideas of right and wrong were so different from ours.²

Thus by 1874 relations with Afghanistan were already strained when a new government under Disraeli took office in London, and

The new cabinet, as energetic in foreign affairs as its predecessor had been lethargic, contained many members who had long chafed at the policy of Masterly Inactivity.³

With the possible estrangement of Sher Ali, and the increased activity of Russia, and a realization of the

1. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 127.

2. Singhal, op. cit., p. 12.

3. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 128.

inadequacy of the policy of non-intervention, which Lawrence himself had several times been on the verge of admitting, there was to be a revival of the forward policy of the pre-First Afghan War period. Once again the defenders of British India were to seek security beyond the mountain barrier.

Thus the new Secretary of State, Lord Salisbury, instructed Northbrook to get the assent of the Amir to station British officers at Herat and other Afghan locations. The Viceroy protested, resigned, and early in 1876 was replaced by Lord Lytton. On the eve of his departure Northbrook warned:

To force Sher Ali to receive an agent against his will was likely to subject us to the risk of another unnecessary and costly war in Afghanistan before many years are over.¹

1. Roberts, op. cit., p. 428.

Chapter VIII

LORD LYTTON AND THE FORWARD POLICY

Lord Lytton's administration was characterized by the Second Afghan War and the high tide of the Forward Policy. However, even during the Lawrence administration and the policy of non-intervention, there were undercurrents of the forces which expressed themselves dramatically in the late 1870's. Suggestions for a more forward policy were put forth even before the Mutiny. With each fresh wave of Russian activity in Central Asia, there was a reaction on the English side to press forward to meet this Russian advance rather than wait for it on the Indus.

Before the Mutiny, as we have seen, John Jacob saw that the frontier presented a problem in scientific strategy and that Baluchistan was of the greatest strategical importance. At that time, 1856, Persia had taken possession of Herat and Jacob advised the occupation of Quetta for the better protection of the frontier, since he felt it necessary to occupy advance posts. He based his argument on the premise that there were two possible routes of invasion, the Khyber and the Bolan. Unfortunately the British posts, Peshawar and

Jacobabad, were on the British side of the passes. Thus, in an act of self-preservation, the British should advance from Jacobabad. The procedure he outlined was to first take advantage of the article in the treaty with the Khan of Khelat which permitted British troops in his territory, and with those troops to occupy Quetta. Quetta should then be connected to Sind by a continuation of the Sind Railway and a road through the Bolan Pass. The next step would be to take a body of Baluch irregulars and establish them at Quetta. Once established in Baluchistan, the British could subdue the Afghans and pave the way for the peaceful occupation of Herat. With a garrison at Quetta and twenty thousand men at Herat, they could block the Bolan and outflank an army proceeding to the Khyber.¹

If he beheld Herat converted to an English fortress and garrisoned by British and native troops to secure the North West Frontier, basically security rested on the occupation of Quetta, since,

From Quetta we could operate on the flank and rear of any army attempting to proceed towards the Khyber Pass; so that, with a British force at Quetta, the other road would be shut to an invader, inasmuch as we could reach Herat itself before an invading army could even arrive at Kabul.²

1. Wyllie, J. W. S., "Foreign Policy of John Lawrence," op. cit.

2. Pelly, L., Views and Opinions of Gen. John Jacob, London, 1858, p. 379.

This scheme not only would protect India from invasion but would have other advantages, since Britain would be in possession of a position

which would preclude all possibility of successful invasion, which would give us by moral influence a full control over Afghanistan; establish the most friendly relations with us throughout the country; and ere long bring down a full stream of valuable commerce from all Central Asia to the sea.¹

Jacob, to no avail, tried to defend his scheme on the grounds that such a move was not really contrary to existing policy, inasmuch as

You wish the red line of England on the map to advance no further. But to enable this red line to retain its present position . . . it is absolutely necessary to occupy posts in advance of it.²

However, Canning, influenced by Henry Durand, did not accept Jacob's proposals.

The inclination towards a forward policy was assisted during the Mutiny by Edwardes when he refused to abandon Peshawar, although Lawrence was inclined to give it to the Amir of Afghanistan. Edwardes was acutally contradicting the Indus policy when he replied to Lawrence:

. . . it would be a fatal policy to abandon it, and retire beyond the Indus. It is the anchor of the Panjab, and if you take it up, the whole ship will drift to sea.³

1. Hanna, Colonel H. B., The Second Afghan War, Archibald Constable & Co., London, 1899, Vol. I, p. 101.

2. Quoted in Pelly, op. cit., p. 397.

3. Edwardes to John Lawrence, June 11, 1857, quoted in Morison, "From Burnes to Roberts," p. 188.

Furthermore, he was anticipating a new approach in tribal policy which indeed was interwoven with the later forward policy. His idea was that, according to Morison,

Frontier policy must henceforth deal with the whole border fringe itself, its population, its geography and the strategy imposed by that geography . . . frontier statesmanship must first stabilize the actual border strip, but not stopping there, it must exert the full force of its influence among the hills.¹

In 1865 the Jacob scheme was revived by Sir Henry Green, Jacob's successor, and endorsed by Sir Bartle Frere. Green's proposal was not as radical as Jacob's however, as it

Did not advise a sudden and immediate advance to Quetta but merely the adoption of measures in Baluchistan and the Bolan which would lead the British thither.²

This proposal was likewise rejected, this time by Lawrence, supported by Durand and the Commander in Chief, Sir William Mansfield. It was rejected because of the expense that would be involved and the fear that it might alarm both the Afghans and the Persians. Furthermore, the British could always occupy Quetta if a real danger were present, but according to Mansfield the occupation would need nine thousand men while there were then only two thousand defending the Sind frontier. Also additional cost would be involved by

1. Morison, "From Burnes to Roberts," p. 188.

2. Hanna, op. cit., p. 103.

the building of a fort at Quetta. All this would be unnecessary since the best defence of the Bolan would be its eastern end.¹

Like Mansfield, Durand was committed to a line of defence on the Indus,

It will be all that political and military considerations demand, if our lines of river and rail communications on the Indus frontier are rendered as perfect as it is easily in our power to make them . . . If our position on the Indus frontier be one of unmistakable strength, it will long paralyze aggressive presumption.²

Actually, Green did not anticipate fighting the invader beyond the existing British line but merely to effect a delaying action. He felt

it was absolutely necessary that a position should be occupied in advance of our existing line of frontier, not so much with a view of attempting to stop the actual Russian advance, which would require a much greater effort, but with a view of being prepared to meet her with advantage on our side under any circumstances that might occur at some future time.³

Shortly after Green's proposal for a forward tendency, another appeared issued by Lieutenant Colonel Peter Lumsden. He too would defend India by pushing forward into Afghanistan.

1. Wyllie, op. cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Green, Henry, "The Great Wall of India," op. cit., p. 906.

Although he agreed that the Bolan was the only route by which a Russian army was likely to enter India, he condemned the idea of halting the enemy at Herat. Rather, he advised taking possession of the valleys of Kuram and Khost. With the control of the Peiwar and Shutargardan Passes, the British could then master Kabul.¹

Russian activity in Central Asia continued to evoke proposals for counteracting it, and with the fall of Samarkand in May of 1868 the strongest proposal to date followed as a consequence. May 28, 1868, Rawlinson's minute was issued and "enunciated the forward policy in a more complete form."²

Actually Rawlinson's thesis was first enunciated in general terms in 1865 in the Quarterly Review³ when he expressed doubts of dealing with Russia through diplomatic channels. He claimed there was no hope of making, nor any use in trying to make, any engagement with Russia concerning Central Asia on a basis of uti possidetis. England should retain her freedom of action, she might someday not find it expedient to remain within the boundaries of British India, therefore England

1. Hanna, op. cit., p. 105.

2. Ghose, D. K., England and Afghanistan, Calcutta, S. Bhattacharji, 1960, p. 10.

3. Thornton, A. P., "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 205.

must watch her every move and seek to forestall any upsetting consequences since diplomatic interchange had only a limited use. If Russia continued to press on to the Oxus, the British should secure a strong flanking position by the occupation of Kandahar and even Herat. What the British needed, Rawlinson advised, was "a series of first class fortresses in advance of our present territorial border and on the most accessible line of attack."¹

Furthermore, he accused the non-intervention policy of not fulfilling its obligations to the Empire. He asked,

Are we justified in allowing Russia to work her way on to Kabul unopposed and there to establish herself as a friendly power, prepared to protect the Afghans against the English?²

In his 1868 Minute, he advocated the occupation of Quetta and the building of a strong fortress* at a point which would cover the frontier and would delay an enemy sufficiently to enable the massing of full forces in the rear, as Lumsden had recommended.

In reference to Afghanistan, Rawlinson asserted Auckland's old doctrine of "establishing a strong and friendly power on our north west frontier," not so much out of fear of a Russian

1. Rawlinson's Minute of May 28, 1868, quoted in Ibid, p. 203-206.

2. Ibid.

* Hanna claims that in this suggestion Rawlinson differed from Jacob and Green, since neither had recommended fortifications at Quetta, but desired a strong mobile native force. Hanna, op. cit., p. 112.

invasion of India as to forestall her influence at Kabul. Furthermore, he urged that the subsidy formerly paid to Dost Mohammed be restored to Sher Ali "to establish a quasi protectorate over that country"¹ and he furthermore suggested a British mission at Kabul.

Rawlinson's proposals appear to differ significantly from Green's and Lumsden's in that his appear to be an aggressive imperialistic motive for a foreign policy, whereas Green and Lumsden were speaking in terms of a forward policy in a sense of defensive measures. If this be the case, then Rawlinson's philosophy inspired Lytton more than the actual mechanics of his project.

However, like the previous proposals for a change in policy, Rawlinson's scheme failed to move the entrenched policy of non-intervention beyond the existing frontier. Lawrence said of it:

A careful perusal of the Memorandum forwarded to us, and a further discussion of the subject in all its bearings, has not led us to recommend any substantial alteration in the course of policy to be adopted on the frontier, or beyond it.²

But it became another factor in a mounting pressure that would eventually be recognized and become the basis of the forward policy of the 1870's.

1. Ghose, op. cit., p. 10.

2. The Government of India to the Secretary of State, January 4, 1869; printed in Philips, Select Documents, op. cit., p. 444.

The final plea for a change in policy, and the one which coincided with the change in government in England and the consequent appointment of Lord Lytton as Viceroy, was proclaimed by Sir Bartle Frere in 1874. Like the previous proposals, Frere's was inspired by Russian advances in Central Asia, In the spring of 1873 Khiva had fallen to the Russians and on June 12, 1874, Frere elucidated his fears and the proposals to allay these fears. He suggested that the Russian influence in the court of Kabul, which could stir up elements of the Indian population, could be counteracted by following three proposals: firstly, an advanced post at Quetta should be established as a strong military post, with or without the Amir's consent, to watch southern Afghanistan and act on the flank of any force threatening India from the Khyber; secondly, English agents should be established at Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat; thirdly, the Amir of Afghanistan must be persuaded to consult the British Government in all matters of foreign policy.¹

Nevertheless, Frere did not advise an attempt to secure subjugation of Afghanistan nor even its military occupation, nor would he advise interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan since he would not advise attempting to enforce

1. Ghose, op. cit., p. 12.

union of all Afghan states under a single ruler, although he would not oppose it if a ruler be capable.¹

In many aspects, Frere's letter influenced Lytton's approach, at least "the forward policy acquired at length a definite shape."² This letter was forwarded to the Viceroy in India, but the rejection of the proposals were this time ineffective for Northbrook's resignation was in the same mail as his letter condemning what was, by this time, the framewrok of a new foreign policy. As his last official act Northbrook had written:

It is in the highest degree improbable that the Amir will yield a hearty consent to the location of British officers in Afghanistan which the mission is intended to accomplish; and to place our officers on the Amirs frontier without his hearty consent would, in our opinion, be a most impolitic and dangerous movement.³

To bring this momentum for a more forward policy to its logical conclusion, Lord Lytton appeared as Viceroy in 1876, charged with instructions to break away from the old policy of Masterly Inactivity. Not only was there already existing this theoretical tradition for a forward policy, but, more significantly, there was a growing realization that frontier policy, tribal policy, and Imperial policy

1. Ibid, p. 12.

2. Ibid, p. 12.

3. Hanna, op. cit., p. 71.

were not separate problems but indeed had become aspects of the same problem. This meant taking a new look at India's defensible frontiers. In this new light the old frontier ideas were no longer adequate. For instance, Lord Napier of Magdala, who

approved of a haphazard frontier at the base of the hills so long as our only enemies were the border tribes, has entirely changed his view since Russia mingled in the fray, and the prospect has thus arisen that we may be called upon to meet an Afghan army led by Russian officers. Napier now says, 'A mountain chain that can be pierced in many places is no security if you hide behind it.'¹

In the same manner, the methods of dealing with the frontier tribes had also begun to go through a change, inspired by the forward policy ideals and the limited success of the Lawrence system of non-intervention. Originally the government had tried pacific measures leaving the management of tribal affairs to local governments. The system introduced was the "close border" system, but the method of frontier defence through punitive expeditions and go-betweens proved to be less than effective. Between 1849 and 1877 thirty punitive expeditions were called against the border tribes.²

Thus a change in tribal policy was required, since "this unsatisfactory state of affairs on the frontier made it necessary that some intimate relations should be established with the tribes."³ Hence the Sandeman system was created,

1. Rawlinson, H. C., "The Afghan Crisis," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 4, 1878, p. 987.

2. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 16.

3. Ghose, op. cit., p. 16.

based simply on friendly interference backed by force, ever ready and ever present. Furthermore, it was based on the principle that the only way to deal with the tribesmen was "to turn the wild tribesmen from enemies into friends."¹

It seemed to Sandeman that the English could not expect a quiet border as long as there was no settled authority on the other side. However, the Sandeman system was created originally only with a view to provincial thinking, outside of the broader context of Imperial thinking, and was initiated as early as 1867. In that year the Marris and Bugtis were raiding into Dera Ghazi Khan, and a number of prisoners were taken. Later the prisoners were returned and Sandeman took into employment a number of tribal horsemen, partly as messengers and partly as patrols to keep open the main caravan routes from tribal strongholds into the settled districts. This was the beginning of the system of tribal employment.² In 1871 a conference was held between the Sind and Punjab authorities in which Sandeman's system of employing tribal horsemen and keeping in touch with the friendly tribes was approved.³

Basically the Sandeman system worked in this manner:

1. Roberts, F. S., Forty-One Years in India, Richard Bentley and Son, London, 1897, Vol. II, p. 100.

2. Woodruff, P., The Men Who Ruled India, London, Jonathan Cope, 1954, p. 144.

3. Roberts, Forty-One Years in India, op. cit., p. 144.

Tribal employment was the cornerstone; the more amenable elements of the tribe must be encouraged and strengthened. This could best be done by letting the tribal leaders present men for service in the tribal levies, thus providing an alternative to loot as a source of cash, while at the same time a force was available when the leader needed help. Tribal levies could be genuinely useful and should be used constantly.¹

But although Sandeman's views in the beginning were merely local and provincial,² his policy as it developed in Baluchistan fused with Lytton's imperial views to create a single wide-engulfing idea.

Actually Baluchistan had been in a disturbed state during Northbrook's administration, and the Indian Government had been obliged to intervene in order to open the Bolan route. Sandeman had been able to bring about a reconciliation between the Khan of Kelat and his subject. However, when Sandeman withdrew, fighting broke out again. Actually the occasion was advantageous to the occupation of Quetta, but the Northbrook Government forbade such a scheme taking place.³ However, Northbrook's resignation was effective at precisely the time that Sandeman had to return to Baluchistan for a second time, and Lord Lytton took advantage of the opportunity, for withdrawal did not enter into Lord Lytton's views, on the contrary, his mind was set upon increasing

1. Ibid, p. 145.

2. Balfour, Lady Elizabeth, Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, New York, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899, p. 97-98.

3. Hanna, op cit., p. 114.

the strength of the British force in Baluchistan, and so localizing it that it should not only exercise a commanding influence in that state, but also menace Afghanistan.¹

Recognizing the Imperial implications of Sandeman's mission, Lytton wrote to Sandeman (March 23, 1877):

If it be conducive to British interests, as we have no doubt it is, to influence the tribes and the peoples who live beyond our border, we must be in contact with them.²

Thus, "Masterly Inactivity had gone down before the new policy of conciliatory intervention."³

Lytton sent his secretary, Colonel G. P. Colley, to accompany Sandeman to the Khan of Kelat, provided with a treaty which would effect the permanent occupation of the prince's territory and instructed to occupy Quetta. Colley later wrote about this step in the forward policy, claiming that it brought together Imperial and Frontier policy. He wrote,

We believed that an opportunity had presented itself of substituting a friendly, peaceful, and prosperous rule for the utter anarchy and devastation that had prevailed in Baluchistan for nearly twenty years, and at the same time of securing a position of enormous value strategically for the defence of our southern border. Militarily speaking Quetta covers five hundred miles of our trans-Indus frontier from the sea to Dera Ghazi Khan.⁴

1. Ibid, p. 115.

2. Woodruff, op. cit., p. 146.

3. Ibid, p. 146.

4. Bruce, R. I., The Forward Policy and Its Results, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1900, p. 232.

This significant step, the move into Baluchistan and the occupation of Quetta, marking the definite end of the Lawrence policy which had prevailed for almost twenty years, was explained by Lord Lytton in a dispatch to the India Officer dated March 23, 1877. Significantly he enunciated the motives for a forward policy, as well as bringing together Imperial policy and Frontier policy. The dispatch read:

Whilst, therefore, we were fully alive to the difficulties and responsibilities of the permanent intervention advocated by Maj. Sandeman, we could not disguise from ourselves the greater difficulties and responsibilities of renouncing the position in which the success of his mediation had conspicuously placed us. Moreover, we were also of opinion that the highest and most personal interests of this Empire (interests no longer local but Imperial) rendered it necessary to place our relations with Khelat on a much firmer more durable, and more intimate footing than before. Whatever may have been, the personal disinclination of this Government in times past to exercise active interference in Khanates beyond our border, it must now be acknowledged that, having regard to possible contingencies in Central Asia to the profound and increasing interest with which they are already anticipated and discussed by the most war-like population within as well as without our frontier, and to the evidence that has reached us of foreign intrigue in Khelat itself (intrigue at present innocuous, but sure to become active in proportion to the anarchy or weakness of that State and its alienation from British influence), we can no longer avoid the conclusion that the relation between the British Government and this neighbouring Khanate must henceforth be regulated with a view to more important objects than the temporary prevention of plunder on the British border. But, indeed, the experience of late years is no less conclusive that even the permanent protection of British trade and property equally demands a more energetic and consistent

exercise of that authority which we are now invited by its ruler, its chiefs, and its people, to exercise in Kelat . . .¹

In a letter to the Queen, Lytton explained the importance of Kelat

. . . To begin with Kelat [he wrote] through the territories of this state Your Majesty's Indian Empire is most open to attack, either from the Russian army of the Caspian, or from Afghanistan, if the Amir of Kabul were to enter into any alliance hostile to us.²

Thus the death knell of the Lawrence policy was sounded and provincial affairs were clearly seen in the context of Imperial concerns.

The occupation of Quetta, "the bastion of the frontier,"³ was referred to as "one of the decisive moments in frontier history."⁴ It occupied a position of natural strength and was of vital strategical importance, either for a flanking movement against an enemy advancing via Kabul, or as a jump off point to take Kandahar or move against Herat. As A. J. Toynbee explains, Quetta was the meeting point of four roads: north west to Kandahar; south east through the Bolan to Sukkur; "the great east road" to the Indus; southwest to Meshed.⁵

1. Lawrence to India Office, March 23, 1837, quoted in Thornton, T. H., Sir Robert Sandeman, p. 85.

2. Quoted in Balfour, op. cit., p. 100.

3. Davies, The Problem of the North West Frontier, op. cit.

4. Morison, "From Alexander Burnes to Frederick Roberts," op. cit., p. 194.

5. Toynbee, A. J., Between Oxus and Jumna, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 166-170.

Almost immediately after its occupation orders were issued for connecting Jacobabad with Quetta by a telegraph line through the Bolan.¹ The next move was the building of the railway to Quetta, which was almost finished before the outbreak of the Second Afghan War.² Actually Quetta was occupied even before the signing of a treaty with the Khan of Kelat.³

The project was formalized by a treaty signed at Jacobabad by Lytton and the Khan of Kelat. The first three articles renewed and reaffirmed the treaty of 1854 whereby the Khan agreed to oppose the enemies of the British Government, to act in subordinate co-operation with it and to abstain from entering, without its permission, into any negotiations with any other state. By the fourth and fifth articles the political agency was permanently established at the court of the Khan, and the British Government was constituted the final referee in case of dispute between the Khan and his Sirdars. This is the key part of the whole treaty since it terminated the old system of non-intervention and placed the supreme control of affairs in Baluchistan in the hands of the British Government.⁴

1. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 94.

2. Martineau, op. cit., p. 158.

3. Thornton, "Afghanistan in Anglo Russian Diplomacy," op. cit., p. 89.

4. Ibid, p. 93.

Article six arranged for the location of British troops in Baluchistan and the subsequent articles provided for the construction of railways and telegraphs in Khelat territory, and an increase in the subsidy granted to the Khan from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 100,000 per annum.¹

The forward move into Baluchistan was only the beginning of frontier activity. For Lytton, like Jacob saw the necessity of "treating all frontier questions as parts of a whole question."² As the Jacob plan saw fulfillment by Lytton, so did Peter Lumsden's scheme of an occupation of the valleys of Kuram and Khost. Lumsden, now Adjutant General, supported by Frederick Roberts, was able to impress Lytton with his scheme of dominating Kabul from the summit of the Shutargardan, and to prepare for its realization

Lytton had the road between Rawal Pindi--the largest cantonment in Upper India--and Kohat--an important frontier station commanding two roads into the Duram Valley--repaired; the approaches to the Indus at Kushalgarh put into order, and a bridge of boats substituted for the ferry at that place; whilst to Thal, a village separated from Afghan territory by the Kuram River, he sent Gavagnari and other officers, with orders to select the site for a military camp and to obtain all possible information as to the country lying beyond that stream. He further established a bullock and mailcart service between Rawal Pindi and Kohat, and opened an alternative route suitable for the passage of guns, between the latter place and Altock on the Indus, via the

1. Ibid, p. 93.

2. Balfour, op. cit., p. 97.

Nilabgashah and Quarra jungles; he dispatched a commissariat officer to form a large depot at Kohat, and gave orders to collect at Rawal Pindi immense quantities of ammunition and ordnance stores, also a large number of transport animals; and finally, he directed the Commander in Chief to hold in readiness to move to Kohat, or its neighbourhood, three batteries of artillery--two of which were to be equipped with mountain guns--two companies of sappers and miners, a regiment of British and two of Native cavalry, and two regiments of British and four of native infantry.¹

By advocating the occupation of the Kuram Valley, Lytton facilitated the advance of Roberts during the Second Afghan War and provided,

a military post in the valley, commanding the districts of Dawer, Khost and Furlul, important in preserving order and tranquility through the central mountain region of Afghanistan.²

Along with the southern and central sectors of the frontier, Lytton also considered the northern frontier, pushing forward to command the passes and the zones that would be logical bases to spearhead a movement into Afghanistan. Thus Chitral attracted his attention and,

determined to impress Sher Ali with the salutary truth that the British arm was long enough to reach him on his north east as well as his southwest frontier, he supplied the Maharaja of Kashmir with arms of precision and encouraged him to push forward with troops into the passes leading to Chitral.³

1. Hanna, op. cit., p. 118-119.

2. Rawlinson, H. C., "The Situation in Afghanistan," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 7, 1880, p. 215.

3. Hanna, op. cit., p. 119.

The Mehtar of Chitral was now caught between two forces, since he was threatened with absorption by the Afghans, and in consequence in 1876 placed himself under the suzerainty of the Maharaja of Kashmir, with the approval of the British Government.¹

In a manner similar to that which had been adopted in Baluchistan,

Lytton arranged a treaty between the Mehtar of Chitral and the Maharaja of Kashmir, whereby the former acknowledged the suzerainty of the latter in return for a cash subsidy, while the British as their part of the bargain were permitted to establish a political agency in Gilgit.²

This gesture positioned the British for either a defensive or an offensive move in relation to both Afghanistan and Central Asia for

the deep narrow valleys of this zone gave access to several difficult passes over the mountain barrier into Central Asia, and, at their southern ends led to passable routes to the Vale of Peshawar and the Kabul Valley.³

Thus Lytton initiated a forward tendency along the whole of India's North Western Frontier, from Chitral to the sea. However, this was only one aspect of his general policy; the other, the more complicated and more controversial, was in

1. Barton, Sir William, India's North West Frontier, London, John Murray, 1939, p. 57.

2. Harris, Leslie, "Chitral and the Forward Policy," Unpublished paper.

3. Younghusband, F. E., Report on the Passes of the Hindu Kush, as quoted in Harris, op. cit.

his relationship with Afghanistan and Sher Ali, which led ultimately to the Second Afghan War.

When Lytton arrived in India in 1876, he was charged with instructions to initiate a new basis of relations with Afghanistan and its Amir,¹ hopefully to improve relations with that country, taking into account Sher Ali's loss of confidence in the sincerity of the British Government, since

the Government of India has apparently failed to find, for the increased security of its own frontier,² pacific pledges in the friendship of the Amir.

Specifically he was directed to dispatch a mission to Kabul to require the Amir to accept a permanent British resident and free access to the frontier positions.³ However, he was also sanctioned to take a firm stand with the Amir, for he was to be informed that, according to Salisbury's advice,

if the language and demeanour of the Amir be such as to promise no satisfactory results of the negotiations thus opened, His Highness should be distinctly reminded that he is isolating himself, at his own peril, from the friendship and protection it is in his own interest to seek and deserve. If negotiations resulted in the irretrievable alienation of Sher Ali's confidence in the sincerity and power of the Indian government no time must be lost in re-considering from a new point of view, the policy to be pursued in reference to Afghanistan.⁴

1. Secretary of State to the Government of India, February 28, 1876; printed in Philips, Select Documents, op. cit., p. 446.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Salisbury to Lytton, quoted in Hanna, op. cit., p. 79.

It appears that Lytton was prepared for such a contingency, perhaps even looked forward to it, since,

even before the Viceroy designate had left the shores of England he had independently come to the conclusion that Russia's advance in Central Asia necessitated an active interference in the affairs of Afghanistan, and that if the Amir should refuse to come under the influence of the Indian government, it should cast about for some alternative arrangement in that country.¹

For the possibility of England's having to take action in Central Asia was considered by the new Conservative Government in view of the Eastern Question and the fact that Russia might be moved to make an attempt on Constantinople. On July 22, 1877, Disraeli reported to the queen,

It is Lord Beaconsfield's present opinion that in such a case Russia must be attacked from Asia, that the troops should be sent to the Persian Gulf and the Empress of India should order her armies to clear Central Asia from Muscovites and drive them into the Caspian; he went on to say, we have a good instrument for this purpose in Lord Lytton, and indeed he was placed there [in India] with that view.²

Considering the situation in regard to Russia, not only in Central Asia but also in Eastern Europe, it became obvious to the British Government that Afghanistan must be maintained, first of all as a buffer state between the north western frontier of British India and the Russian advances from Central Asia,³ but secondly arrangements must needs be made

1. Ghose, op. cit., p. 25.

2. Disraeli to Queen Victoria, July 22, 1877, as printed in Monypenny, W., and Buckle, G. E., Life of Disraeli, (Six Vols.), London, John Murray, 1920, Vol. VI, p. 155.

3. Forbes, op. cit., p. 161.

to guarantee the passage of British troops through a friendly Afghanistan towards Central Asia in case of a conflict in that area. To prepare for this,

Lord Lytton's Afghan policy . . . was to obtain co-operation from the Amir as would enable a British Indian army to be fed as it marched through Afghanistan into Russian Central Asia in the event of war in Europe, making the disintegration of the Russian empire an object of British policy.¹

Although the object for which Lytton had been sent to India to effect might have meant the virtual subordination of Afghanistan to India,² any contemplation of serious action in Central Asia demanded the co-operation of the Amir. But the need to be prepared for a general Anglo-Russian war and fears for India's internal security compelled Lytton to avoid action that might involve him in war with the Afghans,³ at least for the present.

However, preparations for action in Central Asia did not prompt the Amir's co-operation, in fact it further alienated him for

the massing on the Afghan frontier in November and December of 1876 of the spearhead of the Central Asian expedition almost certainly convinced the Amir that action was intended against him.⁴

1. Cowling, Maurice, "Lytton, the Cabinet and the Russians," English Historical Review, Vol. 76, 1961, p. 61.

2. Hanna, op. cit., p. 96.

3. Cowling, op. cit., p. 61.

4. Cowling, op. cit., p. 61.

In compliance with his original instructions to establish permanent British agents at Kabul, a step which was prerequisite to any Central Asian policy, Lytton attempted to open negotiations with Sher Ali. Sher Ali refused to receive a temporary mission, giving as his reasons: that he was quite satisfied with the existing friendly relations, and furthermore could not guarantee the safety of the British envoy and his people, and also if he admitted a British mission he would have no excuse for refusing a Russian one.¹ Looking back thirty years, his fears for a British mission were well founded and probably genuine, for, as Singhal explains,

the Amir personally had no objections to stationing a European agent at Kabul, but he was genuinely afraid of the Afghan people, who were vehemently opposed to such an arrangement.²

When Sher Ali refused to receive a temporary mission, but suggested sending his own envoy, he was cautioned that

if he persisted in his refusal the Viceroy would have to regard Afghanistan as a state which had voluntarily isolated itself from the alliance and support of the British Government.³

Therefore a preliminary conference was held between the Amirs envoy, Atta Muhammed Khan, and Lytton's representative, Sir Lewis Pelly, at Simla in October of 1876. However, during

1. Forbes, op. cit., p. 163.

2. Singhal, op. cit., p. 23.

3. Forbes, op. cit., p. 164.

the discussions the Viceroy's tone was one of threat and intimidation, for the Amir's envoy was instructed by Lytton

the moment we have cause to doubt his [Sher Ali's] sincerity, or question the practical benefit of his alliance, our interest will all be the other way, and may greatly augment the dangers with which he is already threatened, both at home and abroad.¹

On the other hand, a contemporary writer put all the hostility on the side of the Afghans, in an attempt to justify subsequent events. Rawlinson reported,

the envoy's veering throughout was so unconciliatory, not to say, imperious, as to give rise to the suspicion that he must have come to Simla predisposed to quarrel--a suspicion that was strengthened by the subsequent course of events, for each succeeding act of the Amir, after the envoys returned to Kabul, was unfriendly and in some cases directly hostile.²

Furthermore,

on the return of the messengers from Simla he [Sher Ali] resolved to throw in his lot with Russia, and accordingly formed an alliance with that government, which continued uninterrupted till the final catastrophe in 1878.³

Nevertheless, Atta Mohammed Khan left Simla instructed to persuade the Amir to accept British officers in Afghanistan and to inform him that, according to Lytton's instructions

non acceptance would leave the Viceroy free to adopt his own course in his rearrangements of frontier relations, without regard to Afghan interests.⁴

1. Lytton to Atta Mohammed Khan, quoted in Ghose, op. cit., p. 31.

2. Rawlinson, "The Afghan Crisis," op. cit., p. 994.

3. Rawlinson, "The Situation in Afghanistan," op. cit., p. 198.

4. Lytton to Atta Mohammed Khan, paraphrased by Ghose, op. cit., p. 32.

Thus the Simla conference held out little promise of improved relations, and shortly after Sher Ali's reasons for hostility to the British Government were further intensified by the action of the British Government in concluding the treaty of alliance with the Khan of Kelat (who had originally been a tributary of the Duranni Empire), and the occupation of Quetta.¹ The action had its effect on British-Afghan relations as Bruce reported,

relations between the British Government and the Amir of Kabul became strained, and he and his agents commenced intriguing with the Khan, and rousing up discontent among the Kakar and other Pathan tribes living in the neighbourhood of Quetta, inciting them to commit offences against government.²

Nonetheless, Sher Ali agreed to a second conference and sent Nur Mohammed Shah and Mir Akhar Ahmed Khan to Peshawar, but the Peshawar conference was as unproductive as the Simla one had been, since the Viceroy virtually demanded the surrender of the independence of Afghanistan. As Rawlinson reports it,

Sir Lewis Pelly would have signed an offensive and defensive treaty with Sher Ali, and would further have pledged the British Government to recognize and support the succession as determined by the Amir, if His Highness would only have placed

1. Barton, op. cit.

2. Bruce, op. cit., p. 71.

his foreign relations in our hands, and have permitted British officers to reside, for the mere purpose of observation, not at Kabul, but at Herat¹ and on the frontiers exposed to Russian aggression.

Not only did these demands appear to the Amir to be extravagant but he was further disturbed by Lytton's frontier activity, not only at Quetta, which indicated an intention to advance on Kandahar, but also in the region north of the Kabul River, and further by the advance of the Kashmir forces towards Chitral to gain possession of the eastern passes of the Hindu Kush: the Ishkaman, the Darkut and the Biroghil.²

From the activities of both parties, it appears that positive results of a conference were not really anticipated, for on Lytton's side, Reverend T. P. Hughes reported to Sir Bartle Frere,

I must however acknowledge that Lord Lytton's attempt to carry out your and Sir Henry Rawlinson's programme was not such as to command success. Although his Lordship has denied it, there is not the slightest doubt that at the very time Sir Lewis Pelly's mission was at Peshawar there were small warlike preparations at Rawal Pindie and Kohat which were calculated to excite the suspicions of Sher Ali Khan.³

But at the same time

intelligence reached India from Kabul during the Peshawar Conference that the Amir was making every effort to increase his military force; that he was massing troops at various points of his British

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1. Rawlinson, "The Afghan Crisis," op. cit., p. 977.
 2. Ibid, p. 977-979.
 3. Martineau, op. cit., p. 156.

frontier; that he was publically exhorting all his subjects and neighbours to make immediate preparations for a religious war, apparently directed against the English, whom he denounced as the traditional enemies of Islam, that on behalf of this religious war he was urgently soliciting the authoritative support of the Akhoond of Swat and the armed co-operation of the chiefs of Dir, Bajour and the neighbouring Khanates; that he was, by means of bribes, promises, and menaces, endeavouring to bring under personal allegiance to himself; these chiefs and territories, whose independence we had recognized, and with whom in many cases we had contracted engagements; that he was tampering with the tribes immediately on the frontier and inciting them to acts of hostility against us, and that for the prosecution of these objects he was in correspondence with Mahomedan border chiefs openly subsidized by the British Government.¹

Consequently Lytton took advantage of the death of the Afghan Envoy, Nur Mohammed Shah, (March 26, 1877) to close the conference

although he was aware that a fresh Envoy was already on the way to Peshawar with the authority to accept eventually all the conditions of the British Government.²

Why then did Lytton end the conference? Either, as Rawlinson charges,

the Peshawar conference, and the various negotiations which preceded it, were mere shams, encouraged by Sher Ali for no other purpose than that of gaining time, while he matured arrangements with his Russian allies,³

or else Lytton was looking for a convenient excuse to depart on a new policy since recent events had necessitated a change

1. Rawlinson, op. cit., p. 979.

2. Ghose, op. cit., p. 34.

3. Rawlinson, "The Situation in Afghanistan," op. cit. p. 198.

in policy. Probably Lytton had come to the conclusion that "the alienation of the Amir had gone beyond redemption" and that he was not going to play the role of a subordinate prince eager to respond to the dictates of the British Government. Again, Lytton may also have become convinced that Sher Ali had grown susceptible to Russian influence and therefore concluded that "the idea of a strong and neutral state in Afghanistan was illusory, and that country . . . must lean either to Russia or England."¹ In fact Lytton had said

But one lesson he [Sher Ali] will have to learn; and that is, that if he does not promptly prove himself our loyal friend, I shall be obliged to regard him as our enemy, and treat him accordingly. A tool in the hands of Russia I will never allow him to become. Such a tool it² would be my duty to break before it could be used.

Indeed Lytton had become disturbed about the correspondence between Sher Ali and Kaufmann and reported to Salisbury that the messages from Sher Ali to Kaufmann were more frequent than had been believed, claiming that, "during the past year they have become incessant."³ Lytton in fact shared with the British Government the knowledge that Kaufmann had been given broad powers by St. Petersburg "to wage war on the Central

1. Ghose, op. cit., p. 35.

2. Lord Lytton to C. Gridlestone, August 27, 1876; printed in Philips, Select Documents, op. cit., p. 449.

3. Lytton to Salisbury, quoted in Singhal, D. P., "Russian Correspondence with Kabul," Journal of Indian History, April, 1963, p. 115.

Asiatic states at his discretion," and also, "to conduct negotiations and conclude agreements with their rulers."¹

In addition, at the approximate time of the conference, the Russian general Lamakin had led an invasion against the Turkoman tribes of Kizal Arvat, which was obviously a preliminary move in the conquest of Merv, which could conceivably involve the occupation of Herat and the extension of Russian influence in Afghanistan. Such a move, to the forward school, could only be counteracted by a commanding British influence at Herat.

Within the context of this situation, Lytton proclaimed his Central Asian policy and a changed approach to Afghanistan. He reported to Salisbury,

the Hindu Kush is the natural rampart of India; and in order to utilize it properly, we ought to hold Cabul, Ghuznu, and Jellalabad, as our principal bastion, with Quetta as a curtain, and advanced posts at Kandahar, Herat and Balkh;

as for Afghanistan, he emphasized that,

since the establishment of British influence at Herat was no longer possible in alliance with the Amir, some measure wholly independent of the co-operation, and wholly regardless of the resistance of Sher Ali Khan ought to be taken, failing which Afghanistan would be lost to India . . . A time might come when it would be absolutely necessary to disintegrate the Afghan kingdom, and establish a separate Khanate in Western Afghanistan with predominant British influence at Herat.²

1. Pierce, R. A., Russian Central Asia, University of California Press, 1960, p. 49.

2. Lytton to Salisbury, July, 1877, as quoted in Ghose, op. cit., p. 37.

Therefore, the idea of maintaining Afghanistan as a buffer had definitely been abandoned in the scheme of the defense of the British Empire in India because of the unwillingness of Sher Ali to admit a British mission in Kabul, an unwillingness that was generated by Lytton's forward policy along the frontier from Baluchistan to Chitral.

Lytton's dissatisfaction with the Amir was merely a part of his general dissatisfaction with the Indian border, which was to him arbitrary and an accident of past events. As he described it, "our mountain frontier is simply a fortress with no glacis--in other words, a military mousetrap."¹ He felt that "line by chance" should "be replaced by line by choice."² Lytton was forced to concede that

it would best consort with the interests of India to have a strong, friendly and independent power in the Afghan mountains . . . but this happy vision, however, of a cheap security desirable as it has always seemed, has never approached realization.³

About the same time as his letter to Salisbury, Lytton became aware of the possibility of a Russian mission to Kabul. In January of 1877 General Skobelev had written of a project for the successful invasion of India combined with a mission to Sher Ali to win over the Afghans. Skobelev predicted that

1. Balfour, op. cit., p. 185.

2. Singhal, England and Afghanistan, op. cit., p. 32.

3. Rawlinson, "The Afghan Crisis," op. cit., p. 197.

if we were successful we should entirely demolish the British Empire in India; and the effect of this in England cannot be calculated beforehand. Competent English authorities admit that an overthrow of the frontiers of India might even produce a social revolution in England . . . the downfall of the British supremacy in India would be the beginning of the downfall of England.¹

In July of 1878 a Russian mission actually arrived in Kabut, prompted by the situation in Europe and the passage of a British fleet in the Dardanelles,² and the movement of 5,000 native soldiers from Bombay to Malta.³ The purpose of the mission was interpreted by Rawlinson as follows:

It was called into existence by the supposed imminency of war with England--and that it actually accompanied a military force as far as the extreme point of Russian territory, there cannot be any reasonable doubt that its true purpose was to confirm Sher Ali's hostility to England and to provoke us to enter an armed conflict with the Afghans, the benevolent aim of Russia being to lead us on to exhaust our strength in what she hoped would be an endless and profitless struggle at Kabul, while at the same time our attention would be diverted from those regions of European Turkey where Russian interests were more immediately concerned.⁴

Ironically, although this mission was dispatched because of the tenseness of the situation in Europe, that tension had been eased before it arrived in Kabul by the Congress of Berlin and the treaty proceeding from it. It was precisely

1. Edwards. H. S., Russian Projects Against India, London, Remington & Co., 1885, p. 278.

2. Hanna, op. cit., p. 188.

3. Roberts, F. S., op. cit., p. 109.

4. Rawlinson, "The Afghan Crisis," op. cit., p. 983.

this proclamation of peace, rather than the situation of war, which eventually gave Lytton the opportunity to act.

Lytton, acting on, according to Singhal,

masses of reports collected in India through agents, travellers, captives, exiles, spies, officers on duty, merchants, adventurers, etc., in which fact and fancy often get intermingled, provided an amorphous pool of information from which anyone could pick up the bits to suit his purpose,¹

concluded that the occasion had arrived for some new and radical assertion in Kabul by the British Government and thereupon wrote to Lord Cranbrook, who had replaced Salisbury as Secretary of State for India, elaborating on his Central Asian policy and the frontier situation, as well as claiming that the situation was ideal for action in Afghanistan.

The Russian mission to Kabul was the major turning point in Lytton's policy towards Afghanistan, for

this move aroused a great storm and finally gave the opportunity to Lytton to declare war against Afghanistan. Although the Russian dispute in England had been settled in June, the Second Afghan War could not be stopped, as both Kaufmann and Lytton were now acting on their own and in defiance, certainly Lytton, of their superior authority.²

(Actually it was because the dispute in Europe had been settled that Lytton could afford to act.)

1. Singhal, "Russian Correspondence With Kabul," op. cit., p. 94.

2. Ibid, p. 118.

In his letter to Cranbrook (August 3, 1878), Lytton claimed that since Britain and Russia would be coterminous eventually, it should be decided beforehand where such contact would allow the least inconvenience and injury. The lines of contact, he recommended, should be a strong military line, but in regard to the existing frontier,

the Punjab frontier [Lytton claimed] was a hopelessly bad frontier since it left in the hands of Russia all the outer debouches of the passes leading into India. The great natural boundary of India to the north west was the watershed formed by the range of the Hindu Kush and its spurs; and that range, with such outposts as may be necessary to secure the passes, ought to be our ultimate boundary;

furthermore,

Between the Asiatic Empires of Britain and Russia, Herat was the really crucial point, and though military considerations proponderated in favour of taking up a line vertical resistance nearer India, all political considerations were strongly against the abandonment of Herat to any other power, Persia or Russia.¹

In this vision of an Indian border on the Hindu Kush, Lytton was actually pointing to what Panikkar claims is the natural geographical frontier of India. "The Hindu Kush is the outer area for the defence of the Indian sub-continent."²

To achieve this objective Lytton proposed three alternative schemes: firstly, to secure by fear or hope such an

1. Lytton to Cranbrook, August 3, 1878, quoted in Ghose, op. cit., p. 38-39.

2. Panikkar, K. M., Geographic Factors in Indian History, Bharatīva Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1959, p. 101.

alliance with Sher Ali as would effectively and permanently exclude Russian influence from Afghanistan; secondly, failing this, (which had in fact already failed), to withdraw, promptly and publicly, all countenance from him, to break up the Afghan kingdom, and to put in the place of Sher Ali a sovereign more amenable to British interests; and thirdly, to conquer and hold so much of Afghan territory as would be absolutely requisite for the permanent maintenance of the north west frontier.¹

In the same Minute he reviewed the frontier situation, probably more to convince Cranbrook of the necessity to intervene in Afghanistan than to merely report. The total frontier situation was described thusly:

To the left our flank rests on the Persian Gulf and is covered by the sandy deserts of Western Baluchistan. Our occupation of Quetta fulfils all the requisites of a strong military position on that side. In fact, I look upon our frontier from Mooltan to the sea, as now so well guarded by our position at Quetta, that it leaves almost nothing to be desired; to the extreme right the Empire is well protected by the Himalayan Ranges and the deserts of Tibet, in this direction our ultimate boundary should be the great mountain range, or watershed, dividing the waters of the Indus from those which run northwards.²

But as to the centre sector of this line, Lytton advocated the continuation of the Hindu Kush and its spurs to Herat, as our main line, with outposts at Balkh, Maimena, and Herat, and the Oxus as our visible boundary . . . I feel no doubt whatever, that, at some time or other, and in some form or other, we

1. Lytton to Cranbrook, August 3, 1878, quoted in Ghose, op. cit., p. 39-40.

2. Ibid, p. 41.

shall eventually be obliged to absorb the whole of the mountain country between Herat and Kabul.¹

Since peace had been concluded in Europe, the most favourable time had come for bringing pressure to bear upon the Amir, success being guaranteed by

the fact that from our commanding position in Quetta, we could now at any moment lay our hands swiftly upon Candahar, where our superior weapons and organization would sweep away, like flies, the badly armed, badly drilled, and badly disciplined troops he could oppose to us.²

Thus Lytton was pleading to be allowed to intervene in Afghanistan and war was therefore virtually certain. The Chamberlain mission merely proved the necessity and provided the justification, for it was bound to fail.³ The ultimatum to Sher Ali to apologize for the insult to the British mission merely provided a casus belli to justify to the British parliament and the British public an act which the Cabinet had already accepted.⁴

1. Ibid, p. 41.

2. Ibid, p. 42.

3. Forbes, op. cit., p. 167.

4. Cowling, op. cit., p. 78.

EPILOGUE

When, on November 21, 1878, British troops entered Afghanistan, the wheel had turned full circle since 1838. The "forward policy" was at its flood, and, as in 1838, a British army was going to remove the Amir of Afghanistan and fabricate a state which would be more amenable to British proposals, and thereby part of the fabric of the defence of India.

The British quest for a defensible frontier in India had begun at the turn of the century with the fear that Napoleon might march to Britain's Imperial prize. The activity which Napoleon activated on the part of the British to shore up their defensive position was indeed one of his more enduring feats. From that time on the British in India looked towards the mountains of the North West, and often beyond, for the proper position to meet an invader. Neighbouring states were annexed, or bound by treaties, in order to make political frontiers correspond with natural geographic frontiers. The tendency was always to push forward, though opinions differed as to how far forward it might be necessary to push in order to reach the best military frontier: to

the River Indus? to the foot of the mountains on the Indian side? to the crest of the range? to the foot of the mountains on the Afghan side? or to some intermediate point?

With the coming of Lord Auckland the decision was taken to hold the Afghan Plateau as a line of defense. Only temporarily, after the First Afghan War, did the forward tendency subside. Then, for almost a decade, influential voices, like, Ellenborough, Outram, and Lawrence, were heard claiming the Indus as the defensible boundary, while at the same time, others, like Jacob, Edwardes, and Frere, pressed for one or other of the alternatives.

Following the withdrawal from Afghanistan, Sind and the Punjab were annexed, for these territorial acquisitions were necessary even if the frontier were to be the Indus; these annexations were expressions of the forward policy and part of the framework of the British defensive policy. For a few years, under Lawrence, the forward school lost its momentum, but it never completely lost its support. Even the Lawrence policy, under close examination, began to take on aspects of a forward tendency, particularly towards the end of his administration.

Russian activity in Central Asia after the middle of the century was not a new phenomenon, but only an intensification

of the same forces that had stirred the British at the beginning of the century, after the Napoleonic threat had vanished. Again, similar stimuli provoked similar responses, and the forward policy regained its momentum. And once again the British sought the security of India by advancing through the passes toward the Afghan Plateau. Thus, throughout the century the pattern was the same, only the degree of intensity of the forward momentum changed.

With the forward policy of Lord Lytton was born the phrase, "scientific frontier." It gave form and substance to, and thereby crystallized the varied, and sometimes ethereal, forward tendencies expressed throughout the century. The term "scientific frontier" was to dominate British India's relations with Afghanistan for the next thirty years. as the term "India in danger" had dominated British activity for the preceding seventy.

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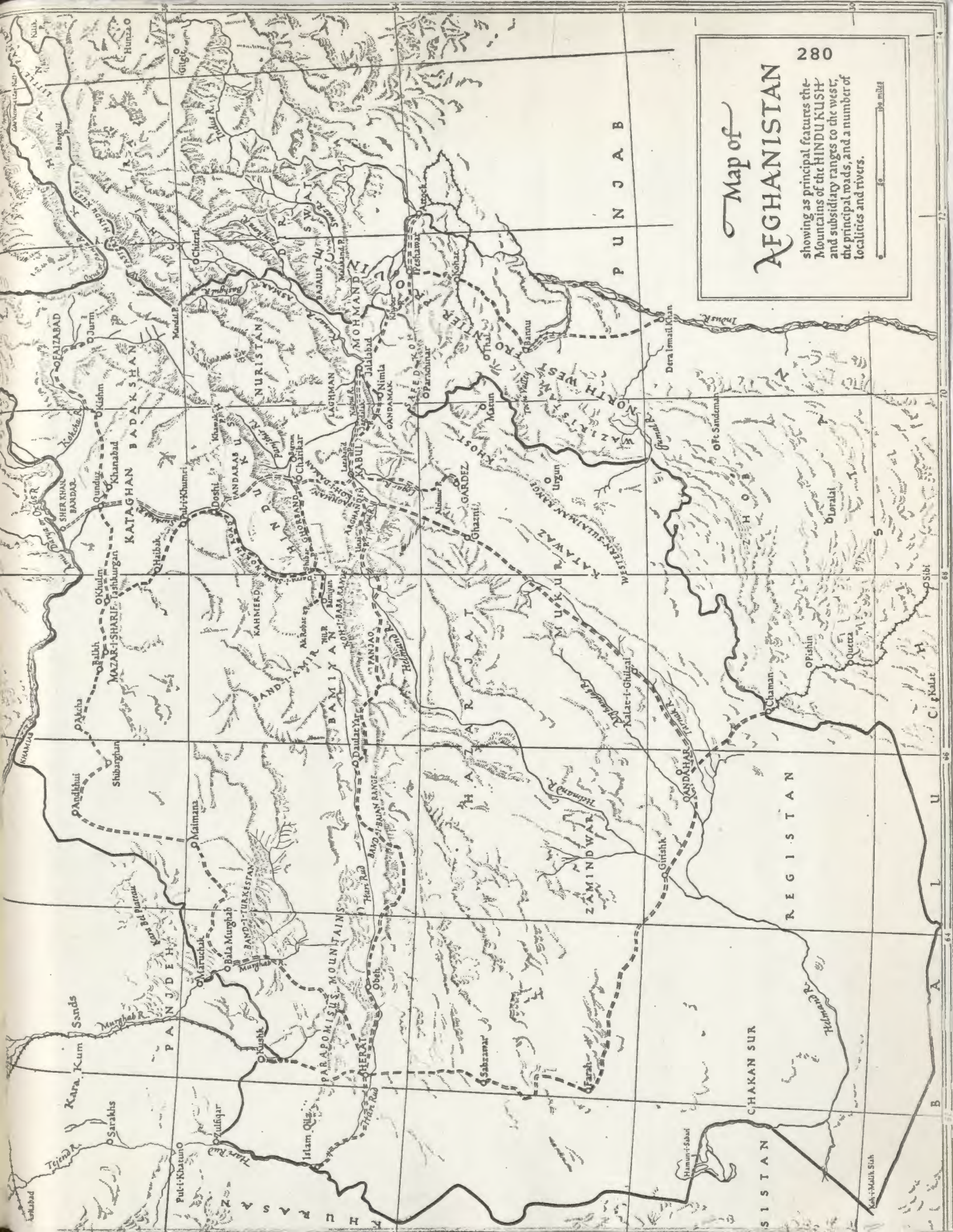
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Map of AFGHANISTAN

showing as principal features the
Mountains of the HINDU KUSH
and subsidiary ranges to the west,
the principal roads, and a number of
localities and rivers.

0 6 12 Miles



PUNJAB

REGISTAN

CHAKAN SUR

SINDH

KARAKUM SANDS

PANJDEH

THURASAKA

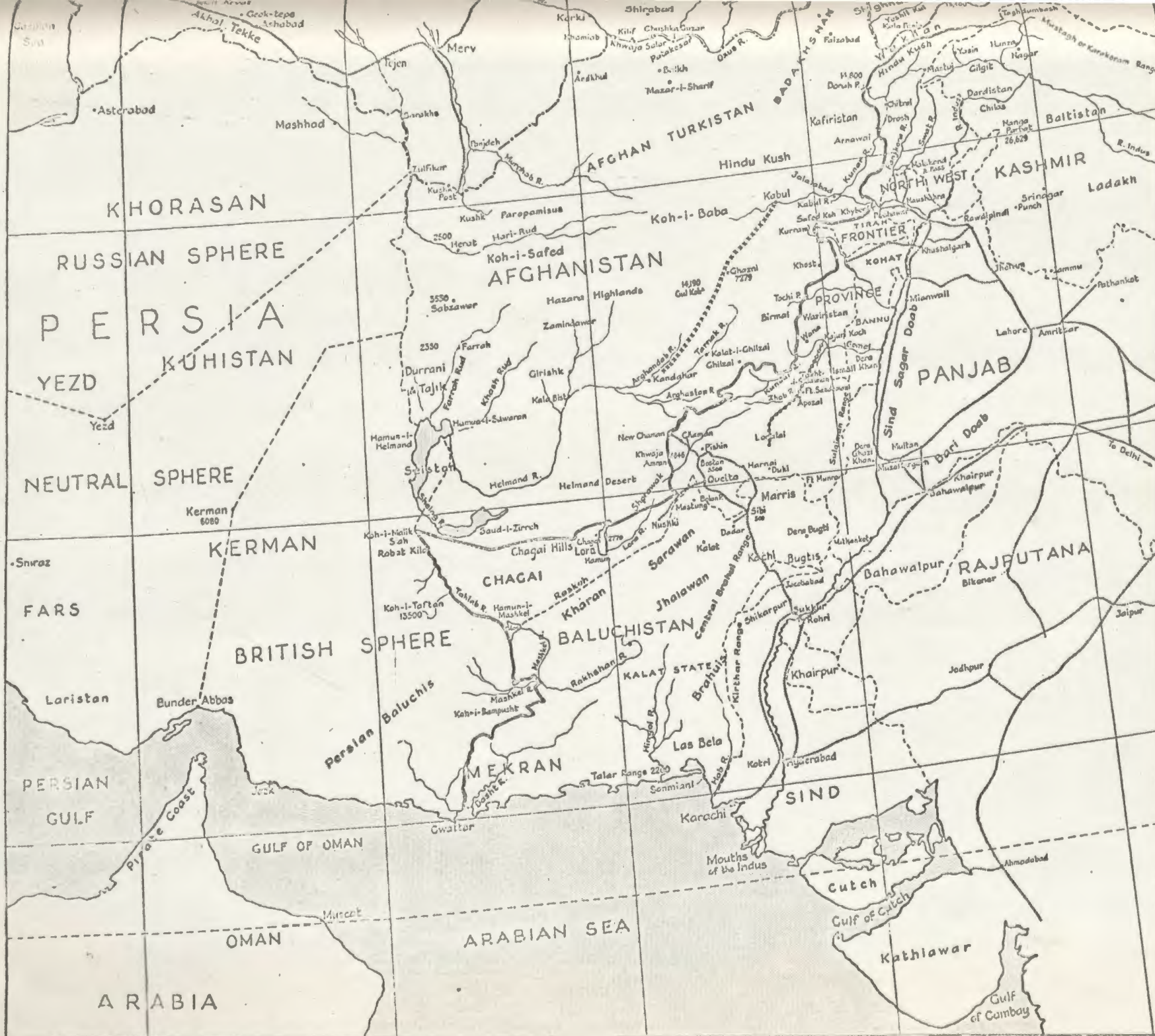
HERAT

KANDAHAR

KABUL

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HERAT



Scale of Miles 0 50 100 150 200 250 300

The North-West Frontier of India 1890-1908.

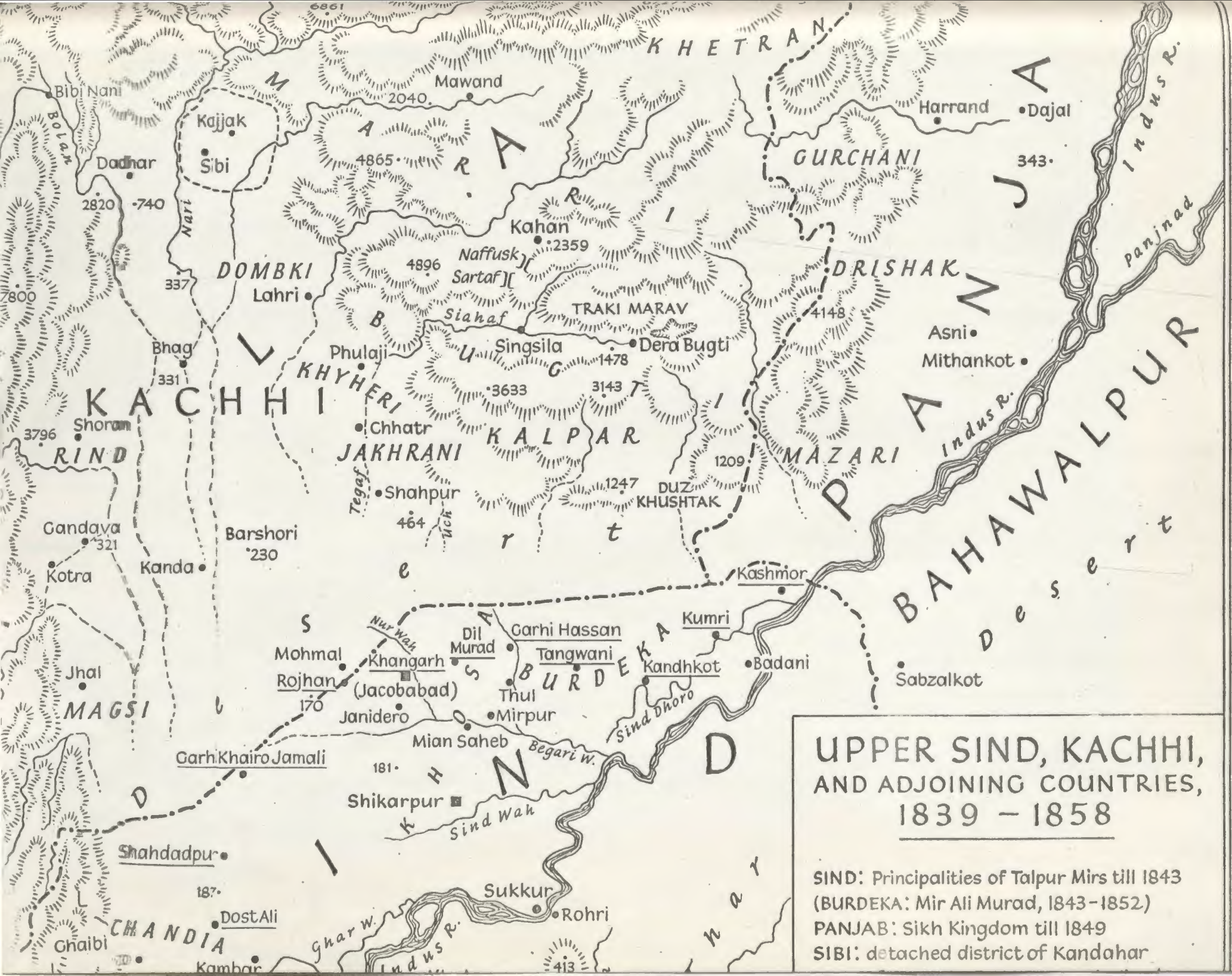
C.C. Davies.



SIND
and the
NORTH-WESTERN
APPROACHES TO INDIA

1956

35°
30°
30°
25°
282
25°





MAP 1. THE RUSSIAN CONQUESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA.



2. Successive Russian advances in Central Asia, and railways completed to 1890.

(a, above). General outline.

(b, opposite). Detail of central area.
below.



