CHAPTER 1

AFGHANISTAN AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The outbreak of the First World War brought Afghanistan on the stage of international politics. The strategic interests of Britain, Tsarist Russia, Imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire converged on the region surrounding Afghanistan. The impact of the war on the domestic politics of Afghanistan triggered a series of events which culminated in the Third Anglo-Afghan War.

Even before the outbreak of the First World War, political awakening had been growing in Afghanistan. The establishment of Habibia College educated a number of young Afghans who actively participated in their country’s politics. Political consciousness was further awakened by the Siraj-ul-Akhbar, the only newspaper in the country, which was started in 1911.

There were mainly three political groups in the country. The first group consisted of the Amir’s family members and his courtiers. The second was a National Secret Party with its centre in the Habibia College, and the third group consisted of individual citizens.¹ Sardar Mahmud

Tarzi, 2 Chief Editor of Siraj-ul-Akhbar and a champion of Afghan nationalism and modernization, was a supporter of the Ottoman Turks and opposed British policy in Asia, particularly in Afghanistan. He enjoyed the support of the political groups which were outside the Amir's court. Prince Amanullah, the third son of Amir Habibullah, was also his follower. Sardar Nasrullah Khan, the Amir's young brother, opposed the British and was a champion of the Pan-Islamic movement. All these groups headed by Mahmud Tarzi and patronized by Nasrullah Khan worked as Afghan nationalists. The majority of the nationalists wanted Afghanistan to join the war against Britain, and were, therefore, known as the 'War Party'.

The Afghan nationalists were particularly influenced by world events. The defeat of Russia in 1905 by Japan and the success of an Asian country had a great psychological effects on the Afghan nationalists. 3 The nationalists hoped that good relations would be established between Afghanistan and Japan. Maulvi Barakatulla, an Indian revolutionary, who was in Japan, wrote to Siraj-ul-Akhbar that the establishment of an Islamic propaganda centre was essential in Japan. He

2 Sardar Mahmud Tarzi (1866-1935) was the son of Sardar Ghulam Mohammad Tarzi and belonged to the Mohammadzai clan. Tarzi and his father were exiled by Amir Abdur Rahman to the Ottoman Empire and lived there for about twenty years. He settled in Damascus and often visited Constantinople, where he came into contact with European culture and institutions. It was at Constantinople that he was influenced by the Ottoman nationalist movement and the Pan-Islamic views of Sayed Jamal-ud-din Afghani.

argued that the conversion of Japan to Islam would be a great help to the Islamic world. Addressing the Afghan Cadets, Inayatullah Khan, the eldest son of Amir Habibullah, also praised the Japanese Army in its war against Russia. He pointed out that the Japanese were always patriotic and disciplined soldiers and condemned the Russians who were always drunk. The Russian revolution of 1905 had a great impact on countries with contiguous borders with Russia. China, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey felt its impact. As Lenin put it:

Geographically, economically and historically, Russia belongs not only to Europe, but also to Asia. That is why the Russian revolution succeeded not only in finally awakening Europe's biggest and most backward country and in creating a revolutionary people led by a revolutionary proletariat. It achieved more than that. The Russian revolution engendered a movement throughout the whole of Asia.

The constitutional movement of 1906 in Iran and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 regarding Afghanistan, Iran and Tibet had their impact on the Afghan Nationalists. The Convention was a great shock to the Afghan Nationalists as the Amir had not even been consulted by the two Imperial Powers. Both the Amir and the Nationalists feared that the freedom of their country was in danger.

The defeat of the Ottomans in 1911 by Italy and by the Balkan states in 1912, supported by Europeans, had

4 Siraj-ul-Akhbar (Kabul), 21 May 1913.
6 Siraj-ul-Akhbar, 1 March 1912.
strengthened the Pan-Islamic movement in Afghanistan. The British Ambassador in Kabul officially declared his government's neutrality in the Balkan War and the Amir was briefed about the course of the war. But Mahmud Tarzi did not accept British neutrality as genuine.7

It was under such circumstances that the Viceroy informed the Amir about outbreak of the First World War on 8 August 1914:

I desire to inform your Majesty that a state of war exists in Europe. Austro-Hungary has declared war on Serbia, and Germany has begun hostilities with France and Russia. As a result, war has also broken out between Germany and Great Britain, whose interests are virtually connected with those of France. Under the terms of our letter to the late Amir dated 18 July 1880, which was reaffirmed by your Majesty in the Dane Treaty of 1905, you agreed to follow unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations. In accordance with this agreement, I now advise your Majesty to remain neutral for the present and to maintain the absolute neutrality of Afghanistan, to take special precautions to preserve order on both your frontiers. 8

The Amir called a meeting of his nobles and tribal chiefs to announce his neutrality. At a durbar, held on 3 October, he reaffirmed his neutrality and contradicted the rumour that he was hostile to the Russians.9

With the participation of Turkey in the War, the Amir's position became very difficult. On the one hand, Turkey was a

7 Ibid., 27 May 1914.
9 Sykes, n. 3, p. 246.
Muslim country and had a large number of supporters in Afghanistan consisting of the leading intellectuals and powerful religious leaders. On the other hand, Britain was a powerful friendly state to whom the Amir had promised his neutrality in the war. He confided to the British Agent in an interview: "The intervention of Turkey in the war has caused my position to become indescribable; I am between the devil and the deep sea, with a friend on the one hand and a brother in faith, weak and in the need of help, on the other hand, asking me for help against the first friend."

On 5 November 1914, the Viceroy informed the Amir that war had been declared between Britain and Turkey. He sent translation of a statement which had been issued in India. The Viceroy further emphasized that it was in no sense a religious war. Turkey, under the direct influence of German intrigue, had been persuaded to range herself, in the European struggle, on the side of Germany and Austro-Hungary. In order to prove their true sympathy with the Muslim world, His Majesty's Government had issued a Proclamation to the effect that the holy places of Arabia, including the holy shrines of Mesopotamia and the port of Jeddah, would be immune from attack by the British forces and that Russia and France had given

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10 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier Confidential A., April 1916, 1-340, Notes, p. 49. National Archives of India (hereinafter referred to as NAI).

11 Kabul Diary, 31 May 1916, L/P&S/10/202, India Office Library and Records (London), (hereinafter referred to as IOLR).

12 Hardinge to Amir Habibullah, 5 November 1914, L/P&S/10/459, IOLR.
similar assurances. He added that the ruling Muslim chiefs of India were using their influence to the utmost to prevent any misunderstanding on the part of the Muslim community in India. The Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Tonk and others had exhorted Muslim to remain loyal to the British. According to the Viceroy, Arab chiefs too supported Britain.13 The Afghans were not sure whether or not the sacred places of the Muslims would be safe from the Allied attack. They still remembered the bombardment of Imam Ali Raza's shrine at Meshed by the Russians.14

The Amir received a letter from the Sultan of Turkey inviting him to join the war. He was particularly asked to instigate the frontier tribes. The Amir replied that there was no ground to attack India and that it was not a religious war. In another letter from the Sultan, the Amir was urged on the score of the universal brotherhood of the Muslims to terminate his political relations with the British Government by withdrawing his envoy from India and sending back the British Agent at Kabul. If he did not accept this, he had to state that he was not prepared to sympathise with the cause of the Muslims. On the receipt of this letter, the Amir called a private council15 and the matter was discussed. It was decided that no decisive

13 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier Confidential, April 1916, 1-340, Notes, p. 49, NAI.


15 The private council consisted of the following members: Mohammad Asif, Mohammad Yusuf, both Mughalotten-i-Khas, Nasrullah, Inayatullah, Nadir Khan, Mahmud Tarzi and not more than half a dozen high ranking officials.
answer, affirmative or negative, would be given before the next spring. This was on the basis of a general impression that the war would be over by that time. The Amir particularly was playing a waiting game. 16

The Amir assured the Viceroy on 23 March 1915 thus:

I will so long as the sublime God-granted Government of Afghanistan remains in security and peace, hereafter continue to abide the same way as I have hitherto been abidding by my friendly treaty and engagements with the illustrious British Government, and will not, please God as far as lies in my power, give preference to the false ideas of ignorant and short-sighted persons, over the interests of and welfare of the affairs of my state. 17

The Amir, in response to the Turkish demand for joining the war, convened a meeting of the advisory council (majlis-i-ashura). The council decided on Afghan neutrality, and a firman was issued to Asim Bey, Governor of Herat and Padshah Sahib of Islampur as follows:

...the Government of Afghanistan have no reason to undertake any responsibility in connection with the intended Turkish military movements in or around Afghanistan, in way of assistance either in men or materials. Afghanistan is quite well aware of what will cause it profit or cause it loss, and knows better than anybody else the Islamic ordinance which direct what course to adopt to suit the requirements of the present crisis all over the world and has no need to follow the advice offered by outsiders. 18

16 Kabul Diary, 24 December 1914, L/P&S/10/202, IOLR.
17 Sykes, n. 3, p. 246.
18 Kabul Diary, 31 March 1915, L/P&S/10/202, IOLR.
The Naib-ul-Hakuma of Herat was asked to maintain a close watch on the border and not to allow foreigners to enter Afghanistan. The Padshah Sahib of Islampur was asked to advise his followers to wait till the standing harvest was over. He should convince his followers not to wage Holy War against the British. 19

The Sultan of Turkey, in a letter, taunted the Amir that it was British subsidy which prevented him from embarking on a war against British India. The Amir replied that the war waged by Turkey against the British was in no way a religious war and that it was an armed conflict in which Germany, a non-Muslim country, had hired the services of Turkey. 20

The Muslim world had unanimously accepted the Sultan of Turkey as the Caliph of all Muslims and regarded *jihad* (holy war) as obligatory on each and every Muslim. For this reason, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge was very cautious about action against the Ottoman Empire. Cooper Busch writes:

Lack of forces, however, was not the sole reason for Hardinge's caution. Until the last minute, he continued to urge privately to Lord Crew, Secretary of State for India, that until war actually broke out, for the sake of Indian Muslim opinion, Britain must not appear the aggressor. I cannot help thinking that Winston Churchill is at the bottom of this proposal in his anxiety for the safety of the oil wells at Abadan.... 21

19 Ibid.

20 Kabul Diary, 15 May 1915, L/P&S/10/202, IOLR.

Public opinion in Afghanistan was in favour of the Ottomans, and the Amir was under pressure to participate in a *jehad* against the British. A section of the courtiers, especially Mahmud Tarzi and Nasrullah Khan, strongly supported the Ottomans and wanted the Amir to join the war. The Amir, however, managed to maintain his country's neutrality.

On the occasion of the Afghan National Day on 4 July 1915, the Afghan Qazi-ul-Quzat (Chief Judge) told the British Agent that the war was purely religious, and that it was obligatory for every Muslim to join it. He said neutrality had no meaning and he would have long ago announced and proclaimed *jehad*, had the Amir not declared neutrality. The Qazi-ul-Quzat was a respected dignitary, but the Amir looked upon him as an old-fashioned mullah.  

Sirdar Abdul Qadus Khan, who was chief minister, informed the Amir that insofar as military was ready for *jehad*, the Amir was infuriated and wrote a letter in his own hand stating that the Sirdar should place at least a third of his personal property at the Amir's disposal to enable him to do what was necessary; but if fanatical love for *jehad* existed in any one's mind, he was at liberty to do so on his own personal responsibility.  

The whole country was against the British and favoured Turkey. Government officials were influenced by Mahmud Tarzi's

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22 *Kabul Diary*, 7 July 1915, L/P&S/10/202, IOLR.

23 Ibid., 8 August 1915.
and other nationalists' views through Siraj-ul-Akhbar. There was a story circulated by the pro-Turkish groups that the Turkish Mission (details of this mission are given later in this chapter) on behalf of the Sultan of Turkey had submitted to the Amir a sword and a chadar (a piece of cloth). While the sword obviously represented commitment to jehand, the chadar was meant to cover the Amir's face for the shame of being a coward.\(^{24}\)

In the consequence of the worry and annoyance caused to the Amir by the pro-Turkish party, which had been agitated by reports of Turkish reverses, he provided an outlet. He entrusted to them a new scheme of preparation for war, viz., the organization of a war fund, consisting of contributions in kind and cash from the people of Afghanistan. This project was enthusiastically accepted by all and met with a generous response. Mir Sahib Jan Padshah of Islampur, a religious leader of the North-West Frontier, offered horses collected by him from his disciples for the use of Afghan cavalry, and four wagons full of Tirah-made ammunition. Camels, sheep, horses and cash had been pouring in from all parts of the country.\(^{25}\)

In September 1915, the King-Emperor wrote an autographed letter to the Amir. He expressed his gratitude at the scrupulous and honourable manner in which the Amir had maintained the attitude of strict neutrality as guaranteed by

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 30 November 1915.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 8 May 1916.
him at the beginning of the war. He praised this attitude "not only because it is in accordance with your Majesty's engagements to me but also because by it you are serving the best interests of Afghanistan and of the Islamic religion. I am confident that your Majesty will continue to persevere until victory crowns the arms of the Allies". The Emperor's letter was received by the Amir's Officer at Landi Khan where the guard of honour, furnished by the Khyber rifles, consisted of a British Officer, two companies of infantry and a hundred mounted infantry. After the exchange of courtesies, the ceremony of handing over the King-Emperor's letter took place. There was a letter from the Viceroy as well in which he informed the Amir that his subsidy had been increased by Rs.2,000,000.

On 11 December 1915, the British Agent at Kabul, Hafiz Saifullah Khan had an interview with the Amir which lasted for about an hour. The Amir referred to the above-mentioned letters. He had replied to the Viceroy but the subject of the increment of two lakhs of rupees in the Amir's annual subsidy still remained unreplied and was under his consideration. He considered this amount very low compared to his services. The Amir said:

This very sum, which has been granted as compensation for my friendly services and sincere dealings is so trifling as I spend every month on the pay of the Europeans serving my government.

26 King George to Amir Habibullah, 24 September 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-95, NAI.

27 Sykes, n. 3, p. 247.
You, as a representative between both the governments, are required by your position and call of duty to judge all what happens here, not from what is current as rumours of the Bazar gossips, but from what actually occurs as an event resulting from my deeds or utterances. As a Muslim and Afghan no one can better know than you the gravity of the situation caused by the existing war since a year or two, and the strenous efforts on my part to discourage the agitating frontier minds... 28

The Amir asked the British representative to convey his assurance to the British Government that he was a true friend of the British and would keep neutrality to the last so long as the internal interests of Afghanistan were not exposed to danger. 29

Amir Habibullah, in his letter of 16 January 1916 to the Viceroy, referred to the proposed increase in the subsidy. He stated that he had explained the proposal to the high public functionaries of Afghanistan who considered two lakhs of rupees a very small compensation for the neutrality of Afghanistan. They thought it was an insult to the honour of Afghanistan, and made the following representation to the Amir:

We did not expect that the illustrious British Government, who is and has for long years past been the friend of our Government, in return for the neutrality of Afghanistan, which, if

28 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-288, Notes, pp. 79-81, NAI.

29 Ibid.
not maintained, will result in injuries that are well known to the illustrious British Government, has given only two lakhs of rupees to our Government as compensation for that neutrality which has such great advantages to our friend the British Government in this world-wide war and in maintaining which our Government has rendered every assistance as an insult to the honour of Afghanistan.... 30

On 16 January 1916, the Amir wrote a letter to the King-Emperor reiterating his country’s neutrality so long as it was not injurious to Afghanistan. His dissatisfaction with the increase in the subsidy was also communicated in this letter. 31

The Turco-German Mission

The object of the Central Powers in the Middle East was to foment trouble for Britain in order to prevent the flow of manpower to the war theatre in Europe. 32 They wanted Persia, Afghanistan and the Pathan tribes to join the war against the British. 33 For this purpose Germany and Turkey organised a joint mission to be sent to Persia and Afghanistan to persuade them to declare jihad against the British.

30 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, June 1916, 1-212, Pro. 132, NAI.

31 Ibid., pro. 133, NAI.

32 During the war, the Government of India recruited on a voluntary basis over 800,000 combatants and more than 400,000 non-combatants, a grand total of about 1.3 million men. Prior to the war, the normal recruitment of combatants for the Indian Army was about 45,000 men a year. For details see, India in the Year, 1917-1918 (Calcutta, 1919), pp. 1-18.

33 Sykes, n. 14, p. 448.
The originator of the Turco-German Mission to Afghanistan was the Turkish War Minister Enwar Pasha. He wanted the proclamation of jehad at Constantinople and at other Muslim centres. A mission consisting of Germans and Turks preaching the jehad was to cross from Persia to Afghanistan, furnished with credentials from the Caliph. The Amir would be promised money and arms from Germany and Turkey to enable him to invade India. 34

Enwar Pasha had requested Germany to send a Mission to Afghanistan even before Turkey's participation in the war. After the Turkish entry into the war, he received a message from the Amir asking whether he should attack Russia or Britain. He thought that the Amir was really interested in Islamic solidarity and was eager to start hostilities against the Britain. 35 But the Amir in fact had no such intentions and simply wanted to keep happy the leading Islamic country and satisfy his own people who were pro-Turkish and anti-British.

The project of sending a mission to Afghanistan was accepted by the German authorities and suitable persons were collected from various places. In September 1914, the first contingent of twenty-three Germans set out for Constantinople under the leadership of Wilhelm Wassmuss who was acquainted with the Middle East. The German mission under Wassmuss

34 Sykes, n. 3, p. 252.

achieved signal success in liquidating centres of British influence in southern Persia. Grahame, the British Consul in Isfahan, where a German, Zugmeyer, was operating, was wounded. The British Vice-Consul at Shiraz, Nawab Ghulam Ali Khan was murdered. Finally, British diplomatic representative and bank officials were forced to leave the main cities of Southern Persia. The Germans were mainly supported by tribes who were incited by Seiler, Zugmeyer and Wassmuss, who assured them that Germany and Turkey would soon defeat the British and the Russians. By the autumn of 1915 the British were practically driven out of their sphere of influence in Persia with the exception of the south-west, where the oil company continued its operations under the protection of the army, based in Basrah. But the north, due to the presence of Russian troops, remained under the control of the Allies.36

Niedermayer soon followed with another group of Germans. In mid-January 1915, the expedition was thoroughly reorganised; new members were added and those who were unqualified were dropped. Neidermayer had by that time worked himself into a leading position. The German groups was to be integrated into a Turkish force under the command of Colonel Rauf Bey, a hero of the Turco-Italian War; but German preparations had gathered a momentum which no longer permitted the Germans to be integrated into a Turkish-led project. Germany paid the cost of the expedition, and both Wassmuss and Neidermayer felt

that they should not become the "tools of Turkish policy". They wanted to take orders only from the German Foreign Office and the German General Staff.\textsuperscript{37}

These developments, as well as personality clashes between the Germans and the Turks, resulted in much friction and mutual suspicion. The German initiatives calling Muslims for \textit{jihad} against the British were disliked by the Turks. Captain F. Klein, a former military attache at the German legation in Teheran, had gone to Karbala and obtained \textit{fatwas} from the Shaykh Ali-Al-Iraqayn and the Great \textit{mujtahids} favouring a holy war against the Allies. Rauf Bey blamed German indiscretion for publicising the existence and purpose of the expedition and, in view of the changed character of the mission, he became reluctant to continue the project. The Turks were afraid that in case of victory, Germany would treat Turkey as a conquered country. The Germans aimed at the invasion of India by winning over Persia and Afghanistan to their side, whereas the Turks tried to combine \textit{jihad} with Pan-Turanian propaganda in order to bring the Central Asian Turks under the banner of the Sultan of Turkey.\textsuperscript{38}

The British Consul in Seistan, in his telegram of 25 July 1915, informed the Government of India about a German party consisting of four Germans and forty Persian \textit{sowars}

\textsuperscript{37} Adamec, n. 35, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{38} Sykes, n. 3, p. 254.
with machine guns which reached Kainat. They were received by the Deputy Governor and stayed with him as his guests. This party and other parties which were active in Southern Persia (Bir Jand and Seistan) wanted to establish an influential group, pending the outbreak of hostilities with Persia. The Consul sought advice from the Government of India as to what action should be taken against them.39

The Government of India, in view of the arrival of a considerable German party at Kainat and at Bir Jand and of their cordial reception by local Persian authorities, agreed that it was useless for the Consul to attempt an attack on them with the combined escorts of Russian and British consuls. The local forces which had been raised could not arrive in time and would apparently be inadequate for the purpose of successful attack. It appeared improbable that payment of money could secure any form of successful tribal attack on the parties. It would have been useless to engineer the assassination merely of a few members of these German parties, as this would certainly lead to complications and possibly to an attack on the consulates, which, without machine guns, they could not defend. The Government of India advised the Consul to distribute money freely in obtaining as much information as possible in regard to the intended movements and plans of these German parties.40 The Secretary to the Government of India in

39 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, January 1916, 1-202, Pro. 171, NAI.

40 Ibid., p. 52, NAI.
the Foreign and Political Department advised the British
Consul-General in Meshed that German parties should be
prevented from entering into Afghanistan. He was instructed to
assist and encourage the Persian authorities in concerting
measures for dealing with the Germans; but he was told not
to recruit any forces and to avoid direct conflict between
the German parties and its escort. 41

On 6 July 1915 the Viceroy wrote to the Amir infor-
mimg him about a number of German agents in Persia who were
trying to enter Afghanistan. It was reported that while the
members of parties were scattered over Persia, all were
proceeding from different directions towards Bir Jand. He
further mentioned that it was contrary to the law of neutrality
to allow armed parties to move about in a neutral country. The
Amir was assured that steps were taken to move the Persian
Government to deal with these parties. It was suggested that
the Afghan Government should arrest, disarm and intern the
Germans, pending the conclusion of the war, in case they had
entered Afghanistan. 42 In a subsequent letter the Viceroy
furnished more detailed information about the German parties.
He reported that six parties were active in various parts of
Persia. The total number of these parties was 243 of which
29 were Germans, 16 Austrians, 26 Indians, 146 Persians, and

41 Ibid., Pro. 66, NAI.
42 Ibid., Pro. 60, NAI.
26 'Indian Fanatics' and 'Caucasions'. Most of them were armed with rifles, and also carried six machine guns.

The different groups under German leaders moving towards Afghanistan were described in the following manner:

1. Pugin and some Germans or Austrians

2. Zugmeyer
   Greisinger
   1 Bengali
   30 Persians Sowars

3. Wagner
   Pasdew
   8 Austrians
   32 Persian Sowars: Possibly 70 to 80
   12 Camels: Possibly 100
   4 Machine guns
   12 loads of arms and ammunitions
   16 Mules

4. (a) Neidermeyer
   3 Germans
   5 Austrians
   4 Gendarmes
   17 Persian Sowars
   12 Servants
   12 Camels
   32 Mules

43 Ibid., Pro. 171, NAI.
(b) Hentig

Bechor

6 Germans or Austrians
10 Fanatics
3 Camels with rifles
4 Camels with machine guns
5 Camels with ammunition

5.

4 Germans
3 Indians or Afghans
A few Sowars: Possibly 22 Afridis
17 loads of ammunition

6. (a)

1 Austrian Officer
2 Austrian Soldiers
4 Persian Sowars
6 Fanatics
20 Mules

(b)

8 Germans or Austrians
10 Caucasions
3 Persian Sowars
22 Mules

Total:

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243 with 6 machine guns

44 Ibid., Notes, p. 63, NAI.
The Viceroy referred to the rumours spread in Afghanistan and in the North-West Frontier about a Turco-German army which was on the march towards India via Afghanistan. If it indeed was true that such rumours were prevalent in Afghanistan, the Viceroy suggested that the Amir officially contradict such rumours so that the more ignorant and credulous of the Amir's subjects might not be misled, more so since there were no Turkish or German troops in Persia.

The Viceroy congratulated the Amir for maintaining Afghanistan's neutrality in the war. He indicated that this neutrality was for the best interests of the Amir's own country. The Allies numbering 314 millions (excluding India and Japan), with far superior economic resources and the command of the sea, could not fail eventually to crush powers with less than a third of their population and an infinitely inferior economic condition, a ruined trade and complete exclusion from the seas, however great the initial advantage they might have in military equipment and organization owing to their long and secret preparations for this war.45

The Amir in his personal letter addressed to the Viceroy, assured the Government of India of Afghanistan's neutrality and added that it had never been the practice of the Afghan Government to permit armed parties of foreigners to roam about in the country. If any party had entered Afghanistan, it would be disarmed and interned until the

45 Ibid.
conclusion of hostilities; orders to this end been issued to the Governor of Herat.\textsuperscript{46}

On 23 August 1915, the Foreign Secretary informed the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province that a German party of about 70 persons had entered Afghanistan at Chah-i-Reg. Similarly, on 25 August 1915, Lord Hardinge furnished details to the Amir regarding this German party. He further submitted a detailed report of the British Consul at Siestan that this party was constituted as follows:

(a) Six Germans, including three named Fisher, Litton, and Frederich.

(b) Two self-styled Indian Princes whose identity is unknown but who were obviously imposters.

(c) Two or three Turks; one said to be named Pasha Nasib, and another Kazim Beg.

(d) A Mullah, suspected to be a notorious fire-brand, named Mohammad Barkatullah, who was formerly employed in Japan, where his revolutionary views brought him into disgrace.

(e) A so-called Kabulli artillery officer, named Mir Mast; believed to be Mir Mast Afridi, a Jamadar belonging to an Indian regiment who, in the face of the enemy, deserted his post of duty in France in the most cowardly fashion.

\textsuperscript{46} Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, February 1916, 1-327, Pro. 67, NAI.
(f) A Persian, named Asghar Yadesh, formerly Chief of Police at Tun.

(g) Sixty Arab Soldiers from Baghdad.

(h) Fifty mules laden with tents and water-skins. 47

The Amir in his reply assured Lord Hardinge that the Afghan Government would keep its neutrality. About the German party which entered Afghanistan at Chah-i-Reg, he advised the Governor of Herat to send the party to Kabul. 48

Captain Oskar Niedermayer, the leader of the German Mission to the Amir, experienced considerable trouble with the Turkish authorities at Baghdad, who wished to utilise the services of the Mission against the British in Iraq. They even tried to prevent it from penetrating into Persia. In spite of these difficulties, Niedermayer crossed the Persian border early in 1915, where he was warmly welcomed. His party, along with the Turkish under Kazim Beg, had travelled via Southern Persia and on approaching the Afghan frontier had segregated into three sections with a view to avoid the British and Russian troops that were patrolling the southern and northern sections of the Perso-Afghan boundary respectively. 49

The German Mission reached Herat on 22 August 1915 and was accommodated in Bagh-i-Shah. Members of the Mission represented that they had defeated a party of Russian Cossacks by whom they

47 Ibid., Pro. 129, NAI.
48 Ibid.
49 Sykes, n. 3, p. 255.
had been attacked, that the Governor of Siestan treated them very well, and that they had destroyed both the British and Russian consulates, first hauling down their flags. On Friday, 27 August, a few members of the mission attended the prayers and the Turkish Agent asked for permission to recite khutba. But they were told that the khutba could be read only by a khatib appointed by the Amir. The British Agent at Herat who was a Muslim had already told the khatib about the above-mentioned request of the Turks.50

The Germans did not pretend to be Muslims, but it was understood that they would accept Islam after bringing the war to a successful conclusion. They said that they were preaching jehad, by the orders of the Sultan of Turkey, the Shah of Persia and the Ulema of the Sunnis and the Shias. They were saluted as they rode to the Bagh-i-Shah and were accompanied by a large escort. Some mullahs encouraged the people to kiss their hands. Some of the Sepoys asserted that they would forswear their allegiance to the Amir unless he listened to the Caliph's envoys, but these were Kabulis and Kandaharis. The Governor of Herat treated them well and allowed them to walk around the city.51

On 28 August 1915, the German Mission was received by the Governor in a durbar. The Germans exhibited a large map and pointed out the positions of Constantinople, Mecca

50 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.
51 Meshed Diary, 11 September 1915; and Ibid.
and Medina and also exhibited the proclamation of *jehad* issued by the Sultan and Sunni and Shiah mullahs. They said that Germany was prepared to supply Afghanistan with new guns, good rifles, troops and officers for the Afghan army, and to engage that the terms of peace with Great Britain and Russia should include the cession to Afghanistan of India as far as Bombay, and Turkistan as far as Samarkand, so that Afghanistan should become a great power in the east.\(^{52}\)

After a short stay in Herat, the Governor informed the members of the Mission that they should be ready to start for Kabul. The Governor granted rupees 10,000 for their expenditure en route to Kabul.\(^{53}\) Meanwhile, an official communication from the Governor of Herat to the Amir reported that there were a thousand Turks near the Herat frontier who were engaged in procuring provisions and transport to enable them to move forward to an unknown objective as soon as they received their orders for which they were waiting.\(^{54}\) The Governor had already sent a squadron of *sowars* to strengthen the frontier posts and to prevent any other party from entering Afghanistan. The commander of the troops had summoned to Herat the officer responsible for allowing the German party to slip through.\(^{55}\)

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\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Kabul Diary, 30 September 1915; Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1–195, NAI.

\(^{55}\) Meshed Diary, 4 September 1915; Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1–195, NAI.
The German Mission started from Herat on 7 September 1915 and reached Kabul on 28 September 1915. Mohammad Akbar Khan, ex-Governor of Khost, had been sent from Kabul to receive the German Mission half way from Herat, with a good number of attendants. Members of the Mission were housed in Baber's Garden under strict custody with double Afghani guards who were directed to disallow anybody to go near them. A special watch had also been ordered so that the Amir's brothers or any other member of the royal family may not get any chance to approach the Mission.

The British Agent at Kabul in his communication to the Government of India feared that the Mission might drag the Afghans into the war. The Amir convened the shura (Privy Council) in regard to the German Mission. The members of the Council made the following two suggestions: First, under the pretext of jehad having been proclaimed by the Sultan of Turkey, which rendered it obligatory on Muslims to respond to the call, the neutrality of Afghanistan should be annulled and war declared; the second suggestion, which was made by Nasrullah Khan and his partners, was to the effect that a secret agreement should be made with the Turks, conditional on their

56 Sykes, n. 3, p. 256.

57 Hafiz Saifullah, British Agent at Kabul, to J.L. Muffey, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, 29 September 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.

58 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-288, Notes, p. 5, NAI.
supplying a sufficiency of munitions, but that active participation in *jehad* should be deferred till a suitable opportunity offered itself. It was proposed that in order not to arouse the suspicious of the British Government, a public durbar should be held at which, in the presence of the British Agent, the demands of representatives of the Mission should be rejected and the representatives driven out of the durbar in disgrace. The Amir made no comment on either suggestion.\(^59\)

Till 16 October 1915, the Amir did not see members of the Mission. He who was in Paghman, a hilly station near Kabul. On his return from Paghman he went to the Istalif district and did not return to Kabul.\(^60\) Various rumours were current on the border about the arrival of the German, Persian, and Turkish emissaries in Kabul. There was great excitement in Khost about the reports of the Amir's intention to declare *jehad*. Systematic propaganda was being conducted from Kabul to rouse anti-British feelings and even Khost officials were doing their utmost to fan the flames by calling on the faithful to declare a holy war for Islam. Posters were pasted upon the gates in public places in Kabul, Urgun, and the Khost cantonments. The *kazid* had read out to the Khost maliks at Matun a *firman* announcing the arrival of a German aeroplane at Kabul and warned his subjects to prepare for war, and he averred that

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\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) *North-West Frontier Diary*, 16 October 1915; *Foreign and Political Department, Secret War*, May 1916, 1-288, NAI.
he had received official orders from Kabul to collect rations and arrange accommodation for Afghan troops, who would be required to engage in war with another sovereign power within that year.61 There were also rumours that Enwar Pasha with an army of twenty lakhs had crossed the Turkistan border and arrived at Maimana and that the governor of Khost had been directed by Nasrullah Khan to provide logistic support for this army in Kohistan and Koh Daman.

Nasrullah Khan and Inayatullah Khan were pleased at the arrival of the Germans and were showing them all honour; but the Amir was coy and it was generally believed in Kabul that he intended to temporise and deceive the Germans. Nasrullah Khan, whose attitude was hostile towards the British, openly stated that he had sent ammunition to Mir Sahib Jan Padshah and other mullahs of the Mohmand country. He also urged the Wazirees and Masuds to start hostilities on the Derajat border and he promised to give them a large supply of catridges.62 The Amir was asked by Nasrullah Khan and Inayatullah Khan to start a *jihad* but he replied that he was not strong enough to fight the British.63 Nasrullah Khan, however, persuaded the Amir to impose old *hasht nafar*,

61 *North-West Frontier Diary*, 23 October 1916, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-288, NAI.

62 Ibid.

63 Roos-Keppel to Grant, 13 October 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.
law which had not been enforced for quite some time. The hasht nafari required at least one male member, above twenty-two years of age, among eight male members of a family, to serve in the armed forces. 64

The German Mission reported to their government that the Afghan Regular Army consisted of 80,000 strong men; 42,000 of them were mobilized and 16,000 had modern rifles. The Army was capable of being expanded on money and arms being furnished, to 500,000 men. Wireless stations were also required. A large number of guns, rifles, munitions, and not less than a million pounds, and aeroplanes were required. They were sure that on the appearance of 10,000 men, either German or Turkish, on Afghan soil, war might begin even without the Amir's large demands being fulfilled. 65 Afghanistan had enough money and grain and could wage war against Britain. By the end of 1915 there were six hundred million rupees (£ 40,000,000) available. There were one million maunds (Indian) of wheat and barely available in the granaries of Afghanistan. Thirty thousands horses and thirteen thousand camels were ready for military service. 66

Nasrullah Khan sent letters to the Padshah Sahib of Islampur, the Babra mullah and Chaknavar mullah, Malik Mohammad

64 Roos-Keppel to Grant, 2 October 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.
65 Political and Secret Department, Memorandum, A.176, L/P&S/19, IOLR.
66 Kabul Diary, 29 January 1916, L/P&S/10/202, IOLR.
Amin Khan of Bajaur, and Malik Mahasal Khan Kodalkhel, containing intimation of the arrival in Kabul of 200 Germans, Austrians, and Turks and exhorting the tribesmen to purchase arms and ammunition and to be prepared to rise when called upon to do so. 67 He sent the mullahs to stir up trouble amongst the various tribes of the Swat and Mohmand region. 68

It was reported to the Government of India that the Amir had not held any public interview with the German emissaries in Kabul; he was said to have interviewed them twice by night and in secret and had told them that his receipt of a subsidy from the British Government made it impossible for him to break faith and that he consequently could not accede to their requests for passage of troops through his country. 69

On 24 October 1915, the German Mission paid a visit to the Amir at Paghnam. Five members of the Mission were received by the Amir at a Secret Council consisting of Nasrullah Khan, Inayatullah Khan, two privy councillors, the Ishak Akas Hazuri and the Ishak Akas Mulki, the Commander-in-Chief, Mohammad Nadir Khan and Mir Ahmad Shah Khan. The members of the Mission presented to the Amir four sealed letters on golden trays from the Persian, Turkish, German, and Austrian Governments

67 North-West Frontier Diary, 23 October 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-285, NAI.

68 Roos-Keppel to Grant, 2 October 1915. Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-185, NAI.

69 North-West Frontier Diary, 30 October 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-285, NAI.
respectively. Raja Mahendra Pratap, an Indian revolutionary, was a member of the Mission. The Amir, in reply, told them to wait till he saw them again when he would answer them after consulting the nation. The members of the Mission were satisfied with this meeting. They gave various promises to the Amir and assured him that within a month of his joining their cause, unlimited supplies of war material and of fighting men would be at his disposal from Berlin. A prominent part was played in these efforts by Maulavi Barakatullah, who had been a news-writer of the late Amir of Afghanistan. He attempted to convince the Amir that the German side would ultimately be successful in the conflict.

The mission delivered another letter to the Amir from Enver Pasha, signed by 160 Turkish high military officers and containing the following main points:

(a) A lawful declaration of *jihad* had been regularly proclaimed by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan of Turkey, the Khalifat-ul-Muslimin, which was incumbent on every Muslim all over the world to obey and was being obeyed by the people of Persia and the tribes of North-Western India. From Afghanistan, a comparatively more devout and better organised Muslim Kingdom, better hopes of help were entertained. Would these hopes be fulfilled?

70 Kabul Diary, 8 November 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-238, NAI.

71 Ibid.
(b) It was proposed to march Turkish forces through Afghanistan towards India. Would this be allowed?

(c) Political relations of Afghanistan with the British Government should be terminated and the British Agency dismissed, regardless of the pecuniary help Afghanistan received from the British Government. Cessation of such help would be made good by God's help if Muslim armies were victorious.

(d) It was requested that the priests and influential mullahs in Afghanistan who were inclined to go to ghaza (holy war) should not be prevented and might be given permission to do what they considered right in the way of performing their religious duties by joining the racial and religious cause of Jehad.

The letter was discussed in the majlis-i-ahura (Advisory Council) by Naqrullah Khan, Inayatullah Khan, Mohammad Yusuf Khan, Mohammad Asif Khan, the Musahibin, Mir Ahmad Shah Khan (the Mulki General) and Mohammad Nadir Khan (the Commander-in-Chief). The Amir's reply despatched on 15 September, to the Turkish officers, stated:

(a) Afghanistan was true to the religion of Islam and to the Muslims and was carefully studying the signs of the times and the events of the war. The time was not ripe to discontinue the neutral attitude hitherto adopted.

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72 Kabul Diary, 30 September 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.
(b) The march of the Turkish army to India via Seistan and Baluchistan or by any route outside the limits of Afghanistan would not be hindered in any way, but no help could be given in the way of provisions.

(c) It did not seem desirable at that time to take the initiative in breaking off political relations with the British Government or dismissing their Agent, and it would be wiser to wait till the British Agent was recalled by the British Government themselves, should they be hard-pressed by the circumstances of the war.

(d) The priests and mullahs were already at liberty to do what they liked in the matter of participating in a war against any enemy beyond the limits of Afghanistan; they were neither restricted from doing, nor instigated to perform, any acts of hostility.73

In an interview with Nasrullah Khan, the German Mission asked for the Amir's assistance for a war of conquest as far as Attock; it was pointed out that if these conquests were made without Afghanistan's assistance the Afghans could not later expect a share in the conquered territory.74

By the end of 1915 the German Mission had been received by the Amir twice or even thrice. The negotiations and

73 Ibid.
74 North-West Frontier Diary, 9 October 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.
deliberations between the Amir and the members of the German Mission in the month of November were to the following effect:

The Amir of Afghanistan declared:

(a) Though the subjects of Afghanistan are devout Muslims, good fighters and staunch patriots, they do not possess the means and materials of warfare to the extent of the civilized nations of the world;

(b) They are always prepared to come forward promptly at the calls of *ghaza* and *jihad* but for want of economic and military means and provisions, they are unable to continue for any length of time in a state of war;

(c) Though the organized army of Afghanistan is very small in number, yet, such is their devotion to their faith and their love for their independence and their country, that the whole population of the country would rise at once if occasion arose.

(d) Though the country as a whole is deficient in industrial skill and knowledge and hence lacking in wealth, yet it is neither burdened with a national debt nor dependent on any foreign nation. 75

The members of the German Mission replied as follows:

(a) The non-existence of arms factories in Herat and in the chief towns of Afghanistan, with the exception of Kabul, was a matter of real regret and demanded the primary attention of the Government, because the element most needed in modern warfare is weapons of the latest types and not men alone.

75 Ibid.
(b) In the event of Afghanistan coming to an understanding of friendly political relations with their co-religionists, the Turks, Afghanistan would be rendered through the latter, every assistance in war methods, and materials would be secured from Austria and Germany, the foremost countries in Europe in this respect. Turkey, Austria and Germany were entirely prepared to render all manner of help of this nature to Afghanistan.

(c) These countries were also ready to render pecuniary assistance, if needed, up to twelve lakhs of sovereigns annually to enable the Amir's Government to repay the subsidy hitherto received from the British Government, should such repayment be demanded, and to give military assistance to Afghanistan against its enemies, regardless of the cost in men and material.

The Mission was not sent in order to secure the co-operation of Afghanistan owing to the war having placed the relations concerned in straitened circumstances. It was sent because of the genuine desire of the Muslim world to avoid the fratricide which the great war was expected to cause between the Turks and the Muslims of Asiatic countries in the event of the war spreading to Central Asia and India. With the noble idea of fore-warning the Asiatic Muslims this Mission had taken the trouble to travel such a distance and endure a journey attended with so many risks and difficulties. It was now the Amir's turn to consider matters and decide as he
thought fit.\textsuperscript{76}

Three additional persons joined the German Group. This group visited the Amir and asked the reason for the imprisonment of their friends. The Amir replied that they had not been imprisoned and that the guards placed over them was for their own protection. They then asked the Amir for a straight answer as to whether he would or would not give a passage for troops and asked to allow them to go in case he was not prepared to accept their request.\textsuperscript{77} The Amir prevaricated.

The Amir summoned two councils with regard to the proposals of the foreigners. One was the General Assembly which consisted of the chiefs of the tribes and headmen of the villages. The second was a private council. The latter was ordered to prepare a report for the Amir's guidance.\textsuperscript{78} It presented a seventeen page report which was kept secret. However, it was rumoured that the Report of the Private Council had recommended that the Amir should await the result of the Turkish in Egypt which was supposed to be decided in winter of 1916.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77} Kabul Diary, 8 January 1916, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, June 1916, 1-212, NAI.

\textsuperscript{78} Abstracts of recent information about Kabul, Harding Papers, vol. 91, no. 24, Cambridge University Library.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
Amir Habibullah, in his letter of 6 May 1916, congratulated Lord Chelmsford on his appointment to the office of Governor-General of India. He stated that his subjects were anxious about the prolonged world war. They were particularly annoyed with the statement made by the Nation, an English newspaper published from London. The Nation had commented that:

During the last few days a most important newspaper of London has discussed at length the terms of the peace which will be concluded in the future. With regard to Afghanistan, the editor of the said newspaper says that since Russia and England are now friends, it will become necessary that Afghanistan should be divided between them, because a buffer state is not now required between two (friendly) powers. 80

The Amir protested that at a time when the German and Turkish agents were trying to incite the Afghans against Russia and Britain, such a statement would contribute to anti-British feelings in his country and nothing worse could be imagined.

On the basis of the above-mentioned statements, the Amir wrote that representative of various tribes represented to him and had suggested that a representative of Afghanistan should take part in the peace conference along with representatives of other powers. Such participation would remove the suspicions created by the British press. 81

80 Amir to Viceroy, 6 May 1916, L/P&S/10/460, IOLR.
81 Ibid.
The Viceroy, in his reply to the Amir's letter of 6 May 1916, promised financial assistance. Regarding the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, he was assured that the agreement was not injurious to the interest of Afghanistan. Its aim was to safeguard the existing status of the country and to prevent the possibility of future misunderstanding between Afghanistan, Great Britain and Russia. The Viceroy explained that the press was not reflective of the views of the British Government. He referred to Siraj-ul-Akhbar's treacherous view about Great Britain which never represented the Amir's views. It was stated that steps were being taken to control the press in Britain and in India. The Viceroy wrote that he was advised by his government that only belligerents could participate in the peace conference at the end of the war. The Amir was assured that no proposal affecting Afghanistan's interest would be entertained without his knowledge and prior consultation. In this connection, Great Britain had consulted the Russian Government which accepted this assurance.

The men on the frontier, both inside and outside Afghanistan's boundary, blamed the Amir for not declaring a holy war against the British. He was called a kafir (unbeliever).

82 Viceroy to the Amir, 7 May 1916, L/P&S/10/460 IOLR.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
by some people. 85 A number of military officers sent a deputation to inform the Sipahsalar (Commander-in-Chief) that the troops were bent on jehad and that if the Amir would not lead them, they would find somebody who would show his readiness for war. 86

Nasrullah Khan on one occasion left a meeting of the shura (Advisory Council) in great anger, uttering, the sentence: "injustice is the cause of ruin to the world, just as the autumn breeze works havoc in a smiling garden". He recommended the discontinuance of the neutrality of Afghanistan. 87 The members of the German Mission with the help of Nasrullah Khan could manage to go freely around the city and even visited the countryside. The British Agent at Kabul reported to his Government that members of the Mission were sent to Jalalabad and Dakka to inspect the military defences and to suggest improvements according to the techniques of modern warfare. He further added that a few members had been deputed to visit Mohmands, Afridis and Wazirs in order to foment disturbances and unrest on the Indian frontier. 88 Nasrullah Khan and Inayatullah Khan openly

85 Roos-Keppel to Grant, 2 October 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.

86 British Agent at Kabul to the Government of India, 22 December 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-288, NAI.

87 Kabul Diary, 15 December 1915, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-288, NAI.

88 North-West Frontier Diary, 8 January 1916, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, June 1916, 1-212, NAI.
said that whereas the Amir was bound by treaties and promises to the British, they were not and would join the *jihad* in the spring of 1916. 89

Maulavi Barkatullah, along with the Afridi members of the Turkish Mission, went to the frontier regions on the suggestion of Nasrullah Khan and there they rekindled the fire of agitation. 90 The War Party in Afghanistan addressed a forged letter from the Amir to the *mullahs* and tribal chiefs of the North-West Frontier. The letter encouraged the tribes to fight against the British authority in India and said:

... we are much pleased with you and you should prepare yourselves for holy war which will if God pleases, take place in summer next. You should completely prepare yourselves. We will supply you with rifles, as many as you require. You should make each and every man firm to take up this enterprise and fortify each and every place. This is not fictitious. We have been informed of the occasion. On arrival of the German ships in your country you will be put in trouble. 91

The letter was intercepted by the British authorities and regarded as a forged letter prepared by Nasrullah Khan. The impression of the Amir's seal was very weak and could not be read easily.

89 Ibid.

90 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, June 1916, 1-212, Notes, p. 60, NAI.

91 *North West Frontier Diary*, Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, June 1916, 1-212, NAI.
Since the outbreak of the War, the Amir was being embarrassed by the Afghan nationalists, members of the German Mission and the tribes on his eastern frontier. In view of his difficult position, on 24 January 1916, he finally signed a treaty with the German Mission. The treaty had ten articles and began with the declaration of friendship between Germany and Afghanistan: Germany and the Central Powers were to recognise the independence of Afghanistan, while the latter agreed to "perfect" her military resources and administration. Afghanistan was to establish political relations with the "peoples" of Persia, India, and Russian Turkistan. Germany would supply, with no obligations to Afghanistan, 100,000 modern rifles, 300 guns, and other war material and 10 million sterling. Germany was required to open the way through Persia so that she could help Afghanistan effectively. Diplomatic relations were to be established, Henting being recognised as the German representative in Afghanistan. An Afghan official was to be sent to Persia to negotiate there with representatives of the Central Powers. Next followed clauses describing in detail various questions of consular relations and the establishment of an Embassy in Kabul. The members of the German Mission who signed the treaty had no credentials to do so; a copy of the treaty was therefore sent to Berlin for approval through Haji Hasan. The messenger was,

92 British Military Attache at Petrograd to Foreign Office, London, 31 October 1916, L/P&S/10/460, IOLR.
93 For full text of the Treaty, see Appendix VI.
however, arrested on his way to Germany and the message never reached Berlin. 94

The treaty contained interesting provisions, and for various reasons could not be enforced. Articles 1 and 2 referred to the independence of Afghanistan. Article 3 pertained to the reorganization of the Amir's army and his relations with Persia, Russia's Central Asia and India. Though this article was designed to bluff the Germans, in reality it was nothing more than a continuance of his daily relations with Persians, Indians and natives of Russian Turkestan who visited his country. As regards Article 4, he could hardly be expected to decline a generous gift of munitions and money offered by German gratis and unconditionally, or her equally unconditional offer to place technical experts at his absolute disposal thus saving him the necessity of engaging more Englishmen and Americans at high salaries. Apropos Article 5, the Amir's categorical declaration that the one and only object of all these measures was to increase Afghanistan's resources was in itself a proof that he intended to give nothing in return for whatever was offered to him. The provisions of Article 6 were a mere window-dressing, being expressly conditional on his entering into the war, which he had not the slightest intention of doing. "As regards Article 7, he had no option but to

recognise Hentig; all he himself agreed to was to send a secret agent not to the Persian Government but to the Persian capital. This agent, however, would never declare himself to be an Afghan Minister, for the simple reason that the Amir would take care that "the time" should never come; and as for sending a plenipotentiary to the peace conference, he had since told the British that his people wished him to do so. As regards Article 8, the reference to the opening of Embassies was mere bluff, as Russia and England between them would ensure that no foreign commissaries arrived, if indeed any power would wish to send one on such humiliating conditions. The provision about a commercial treaty contained in Article 9 was not meant seriously, for he had every intention of making his own conditions so preposterously stiff as to turn this article into a waste paper. As regards Article 10, that treaty would never be ratified at all because he would take care that the Afghan emissary was not forthcoming in Persia to receive Germany's reply. 95 Further, the Amir had not followed his usual style of signature. The British could afford not to object to the Amir's treaty with the Germans because he had signed Siraj-ul-Millat-i-Waddin whereas all documents of grave importance were signed by him as "Amir Habibullah". 96

95 Foreign Department, Government of India to Political Department, India Office, 11 January 1918, A-176, L/FAS/18, IOIR.

96 Ibid.
The treaty was signed by Amir Habibullah and by Captains Neidermeyer and Hentig on 24 January 1916. It was supplemented with a note signed by Neidermeyer and Hentig as follows: "The Afghan Government desires the friendship of the German Government and to conclude a treaty in accordance with this draft. I send this copy of the Afghan treaty to the German Government. Now that I have seen Afghanistan, I recommend one to the German Government, and I hope that she will accept this Friendship Treaty." According to Hentig, these remarks were added at the request of the Amir and Nasrullah Khan.

In receiving the Turco-German Mission, the Amir undoubtedly committed a technical breach of his engagements with the British. He committed a much more definite breach when he entered into a draft engagement with the Turco-German Mission. He was in a tight corner. He was faced first, with a rabid party among his own councillors; secondly, with a general wave of pro-Turk fanaticism throughout his country; and thirdly, with the possibility of British defeat in the war. He was thus forced to adopt a devious course. In any case, he was pro-British and followed a Machiavellian policy. An official communication from India stated that the Amir's devious course should not alter our estimate of Amir's policy or intentions or our own policy towards him. But it is clear that we must be more on our guard than ever, realising that the arrival of even a small

97 Ibid.
98 Extracts from Seiler's Diary, 23 May 1916, A-176, L/P&S/18, IOLR.
Turco-German force on the northern frontier of Afghanistan might produce a situation which the Amir, with all his craft and with all his good will towards us, would no longer be able to control. 99

The German Mission in Kabul, disappointed at the Amir's refusal to help them against the British, informed the German Minister at Tehran that the Amir was not ready to enter the war. They suggested that they should stage a coup d'etat and replace the Amir so that they could fulfil their aims. 100

The letter was intercepted by the British and was sent to the Amir in order to strain his relations with the Germans. 101

The Amir was now ready to be decisive. All German members of the German Mission were dismissed by him in the presence of Nasrullah Khan and Inayatullah Khan. They left Kabul on 22 May 1916. 102 The German party, after leaving Kabul, divided into two groups; one group went to Kandahar and the other to Miemana in Northern Afghanistan. 103

Pasch an who was also with the Mission did not go to Kabul and remained at Herat. He went back to Isphahan to deliver a letter to Seiler. For about two months he was in Isphahan and came back to Herat. He was arrested on his

99 Foreign Department, Government of India to the Secretary, Political Department, India Office, 11 January 1913, A. 176, L/P&S/18, IOLR.

100 British Minister at Teheran to Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, 27 March 1916, L/P&S/10/460, IOLR.

101 Viceroy to Amir, 23 February 1916, L/P&S/10/460, IOLR.

102 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, July 1917, 147-536, Pro. 530, NAI.

103 Ibid.
way to Isphahan and confessed:

Now all officers wish to leave Kabul as one day the Amir says he is for us and the next day against us. Twice before this Niedermeyer had made up his mind to leave, but each time the Amir detained him by giving positive assurances.... Before my departure from Herat I received a letter from Niedermeyer saying there was no hope and that we must all leave. 104

On 2 December 1916, the British representative, Hafiz Saifullah Khan had an interview with Amir Habibullah. The Amir stated that his neutrality was based on two considerations: first, it was beneficial to his country and, secondly, it was an expression of his faith in the friendship of Great Britain. He disliked European politics. He insisted that his policies were based on true Islam, differing absolutely from those of the British which were based on temporal reasons (Akl-i-maash). 105 He continued:

"...my friendship with you is an abiding one so long as there is no menace on your part to my friendly feelings or to my country, which has been none, up till now, I openly admit. I am never willing to part with an inch of my country or to meet a single hint meaning a moral disgrace to my independence if attempted by you or anybody else, which is none, to the present moment, I assure you — simply I argue. 106"  

Emphasizing the concrete results flowing from his neutrality in the war, the Amir maintained that it was he who had "caused India to be swept away of its armies to be able to

104 Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, July 1917, 147-556, Pro. 99, NAI.

105 Hafiz Saifullah Khan to Denys Bray, 2 December 1916, Chelmsford Papers, MSS, Eur., E 264, 55 (C), IOLR.

106 Ibid.
fight in France; in Europe and in Egypt. It was because of the trust reposed in him by the Government of India that there was "such total army-sweeping and hence I deserve thanks from His Excellency the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford." 107

Amir Habibullah was of the opinion that the defence of Afghanistan and India was dependent on two things, viz., the strength of Afghanistan, and the conciliation of the people of India. The strength of Afghanistan lay in the people of Afghanistan themselves, but what they needed was money and a sufficient number of arms. He assured the Viceroy that if at that critical and perilous moment four hundred thousand magazine rifles and four hundred large and small guns with their ammunition and four crores (forty million) of Indian rupees were given free to Afghanistan, a foreign enemy would in no circumstances pass through Afghanistan towards India. 108

The situation in the North-West Frontier was explosive after the outbreak of the First World War. The tribes were naturally excited by the Turkish decision to join the war against Britain, and they were also incited by the mullahs and the war party in Afghanistan. The reverses suffered by the British in Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the early stages of the War and the despatch of Indian army overseas to Europe, further increased tension on the frontier. The Mahsud and

107 Ibid.
108 Amir Habibullah to Chelmsford, 9 June 1918, Chelmsford Papers, MSS, Eur. E. 264, 55 (d), IOLR.
other tribes began to raid on a large scale British posts in the tribal territory. 109

In the meantime, the Ottoman Sultan in a letter to the Padshah Sahib of Islampur encouraged him to attack Peshawar. He was asked to instigate the tribes against the British. The letter stated that the Hindus and Muslims of India were in a state of ferment and prepared to rise in revolt; it especially mentioned the usefulness of the Bengalis as they were advanced in making bombs. The letter contained a promise that Bombay would be attacked in the month of May 1915. The Padshah Sahib was offered all the war material he needed for this purpose. 110

In the Court of Amir Habibullah, a strong war party which opposed him for his pro-British policy, strongly supported the tribes in their anti-British agitation. The leader of the war party, Nasrullah Khan, was popular among the tribes and was trying to instigate them. In October 1915, it was openly said that Nasrullah had sent mullahs to the tribal areas to stir up trouble amongst the tribes. The Haji Sahib of Turangzai, who was popular in the Mohmand country, was deputed by Nasrullah Khan to instigate the tribes against the British. 111

In January 1916, a letter signed by Nasrullah Khan and the mullahs, Maliks and people of the tribal territory was


110 *Kabul Diary*, 19 February 1915, L/P&S/10/202, IOLR.

111 Roos-Keppel to Hardinge, 2 October 1915, *Foreign and Political Department, Secret War*, March 1916, 1-195, NAI.
widely circulated among the Afridees of Tirah and other tribes, who were asked to prepare for a holy war against the British.\footnote{112} On the departure of the German Mission from Kabul, the Turkish members of the mission, at the instance of the Afghan officials, left for the North-West Frontier and intensified their anti-British propaganda in the tribal territory. Khairi Effendi, a Turkish national who had been appointed instructor in the military college in Kabul, took eighteen rifles, seven horses and a sum of 32,000 Indian rupees from the foreign office of Afghanistan, under a \textit{firman} signed by Sardar Nasrullah Khan, and left for the tribal territory.\footnote{113}

The anti-British activities in Afghanistan and in the tribal territory were conducted with the consent of the Amir. He, however, played a double role. When the British protested against the visits of members of the Turkish mission to the tribal territory, the Amir ordered that Khairi Effendi and others be brought to Kabul and on their arrival they were jailed. He informed the British agent at Kabul that the Turks were imprisoned. Khairi Effendi is reported to have expressed himself as follows:

\begin{quote}
Look here brother. It was suggested by responsible Afghan officials that I should go to Tirah and incite the Afridees for \textit{ghaza} (holy war) against India in aid of Turkey, and now I am put in prison for going there. These Afghan devils are very treacherous and hypocritical; they are
\end{quote}

\footnote{112} Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, June 1916, 1-212, Pro. 64, NAI.

\footnote{113} Kabul Diary, 22 April 1918, L/P&S/10/203, IOLR.
never faithful to any one, either to their alleged brothers in faith, the Turks, or to their benevolent friends, the British. They are merely time-servers and look only to their own interests. 114

With the support of the Padshah Sahib of Islampur, military training was given to the Afridees at Tirah and a big bungalow had been constructed to accommodate the Turks. Seven regiments of the Afridees had been raised and rendered fit to take the field. The Wazirees promised 90,000 persons ready for mobilization to be placed at the disposal of Afghanistan, and the Afridees promised 10,000 armed men. 115

The Turks widely propagated against the British and preached *jihad* in the tribal territory. They were invited by Mir Mast Afridi, who was a deserter from the British army. They summoned a *jirga* (meeting) and spoke in Persian before a large group of Afridees and asked them to be united and be ready to answer to a call for *jihad*. They announced themselves as Turkish plenipotentiaries deputed to extend Turkish suzerainty and protection to the frontier tribes if the latter were willing to accept it. The Afridees pleaded their poverty and inability to render much assistance to the cause of Islam without arms and ammunition and without money to support them. They said that they were entirely dependent on the British for subsistence. The Turks wanted to drag the Pathans into the

114 *Kabul Diary*, September 1917, L/P&S/10/203, IOLR.
115 Ibid., 31 August 1916.
war and promised all help which in fact, they were not in a position to offer.\footnote{116}{Ibid., 30 November 1915.}

The Amir sharply reacted to British protests regarding the activities of the Turks in the North-West Frontier though he took strong measures to counteract anti-British propaganda. He observed that even a powerful nation like the British could not put a stop to the hostile activities of the Indian revolutionaries in America and Japan. He added that he had successfully discouraged the tribes from wanton attacks on British territory, because such attacks were not only fruitless but reduced the military strength of Afghanistan.\footnote{117}{Hafiz Suifullah Khan to Denys Bray, 2 December 1916, L/P&S/10/460, IOLR.}

The British agent at Kabul, in his assessment of the Amir, stated that Amir Habibullah had played a remarkable role in dispelling the rumours connected with a possible rising against British India on the frontier. Had the Amir given any encouragement, the excitement on the frontier would, under the circumstances of the war in Europe, have been far greater than was actually the case. He had arrested 40 persons of the Safees tribe who were planning to join the ghaza on the frontier.\footnote{118}{Kabul Diary, 16 November 1914, L/P&S/10/203, IOLR.} Roos-Keppel, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province was also convinced that the Amir was trying to preserve peace on the frontier. He reported to the Viceroy that Amir Habibullah had ordered the
Governor of Jalalabad to punish all those who were creating trouble on the frontier and to send troops to those villages whose residents were participating in *jehad*. The abstention of Mulla Sahib Jan Padshah and Babra Mullah from the frontier fighting was due to the Amir's advice. 119

As things turned out, the Amir could not control the tribes; they continued to harass the British Indian authorities. Roos-Keppel in a private letter to the Viceroy complained regarding the Afghan attacks:

> The position is a curious one as we are practically at war with an Afghan province, the war being so one-sided that the enemy can prepare a stroke at leisure, safe from our observation and can strike when and where he likes in great force, and while we are bound to a very strict defensive and are debarred even from the tactical offensive, to our very great disadvantage. 120

In the southern province of Afghanistan, officials were advised by Nasrullah Khan to instigate and help the Afghan tribes against the British. The Governor of Khost district issued 15,000 rounds of cartridges to the Afghan tribes on the occasion of their raid on Miram Shah in the British territory. The Afghan party consisted of 15,000 persons and captured eighty-six sepoys and three officers from the British troops. 121

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121 Kabul Diary, 22 April 1915, L/P&S/10/202, IOLR.
Denys Bray of the Political Department reported to the Viceroy about the frontier fighting between the tribes and advised him not to write to the Amir about tribal fighting as the Amir was not in a position to prevent it. 122

The fortnightly Siraj-ul-Akhbar played an important role in the First World War. The paper became the spokesman of the Afghan nationalism and soon it became a forum for the expression of Pan-Islamic views which tended to influence Afghan foreign policy according to the principles of Islamic solidarity. 123 May Schinasi writes: "As an Islamic journal, Siraj-ul-Akhbar was closely interested in Muslims all over the world, and it was the axis for the entire Muslim world, namely the Ottoman Empire, seat of the Caliphate, that received the most sustained attention." 124 All the news concerning the politics of Afghanistan was approved by Nasrullah Khan before publication.

Siraj-ul-Akhbar was received fortnightly in the Amir's Post Office at Peshawar and thence distributed to the subscribers to newspaper offices, and to the Amir's employees in India. The approximate number of copies received in India

122 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, February 1918, 20-70, Pro. 44, NAI.


varied from one hundred to one hundred and twenty copies. Its various issues contained articles critical of British oppression in India as well as of British imperial politics in Asia.

The Viceroy wrote to the Amir on 14 December 1914, complaining about the anti-British tirades of Siraj-ul-Akbar. He told the Amir that the paper created a false impression in the minds of its leaders as to the progress of the World War and the British motives. The paper depicted the Central Powers as victorious and the Allies as fighting a losing and anti-Islamic war. It also warned the Muslims of the world including Indian Muslims that an allied victory would make haj (pilgrimage to Mecca) impossible. The Viceroy requested the Amir to suppress the paper; if he could not, the British Indian Government would impose a ban on it. The Viceroy further added that the British would provide information about the war along with the maps of the world war theatres if the Amir so desired.

In another letter dated 20 May 1915 the Viceroy thanked the Amir for his efforts to check the anti-British propaganda of Siraj-ul-Akbar. The paper, however, still continued to publish anti-British material. The Viceroy

125 Home Political Department, Secret, no. 21, July 1916, Notes, p. 2, NAI.

126 (i) Siraj-ul-Akbar, 22 October 1914.

(ii) Home Political Department, Secret, No. 21, July 1916, Notes, p. 1, NAI.

127 Home Political Department, Secret, No. 21, July 1916, Notes, p. 23, NAI.
forwarded Maulvi Saleh Mohammad's Pashto poem which was published in the issue of 16 April 1915. The writer referred to the World War's upheaval in various countries of the world. Germany was the country chosen by God; Russia and England were her victims. The poet remarked that Mussalmans, especially the Afghans, were delighted with the course of events. He asked his readers to be thankful for the course of events which made the infidels quarrel themselves and to pray that all of them may be ruined. In conclusion the writer prayed to God to protect Mussalmans under the shadow of Amir Habibullah Khan. 128

The Amir assured the Viceroy on 2 June 1915 that he had secured written assurances from the Editor of the Siraj-ul-Akhbar that he would not in future publish anti-British and inflammatory articles. 129

Hafiz Saifullah, British agent in Kabul, reported to the Government of India on 19 January that the January issue of the Siraj-ul-Akhbar was late that month. He stated that it was burned and destroyed on instructions from the Amir, due to its very inflammatory and insulting remarks against the Allies in general and against the British Government in particular. The Amir called for an explanation from the Editor.

128 (i) Siraj-ul-Akhbar, 16 April 1915.

(ii) Home Political Department, Secret, July 1916, No. 21, notes, p. 6, NAI.

129 Home Political Department, Secret, July 1916, No. 21, Notes, p. 39, NAI.
The Editor submitted that when the objectionable material was published he was sick. His assistant was fined two thousand Afghans. The Amir ordered that the proofs of the paper should be shown to Nasrullah Khan before final publication.\textsuperscript{130}

British authorities in India continued to worry about the inflammatory material published in the paper and quoted by many Indian newspapers. On 19 April 1916, the Home Department wrote to the Governments of Bengal, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa and the North-West Frontier Province directing them to instruct local newspapers to discontinue quoting the Siraj-ul-Akhbar. One month later on 23 May 1916, the Home Department asked the Governments of Baluchistan, the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province to prevent its circulation and intercept it.\textsuperscript{131}

By the middle of 1916, a new policy was adopted by the Government of India: the paper was intercepted through covert means. No overt action was to be taken and the Amir was not to be informed regarding the measures taken by the British authorities unless he himself raised the issue. It was also decided that if the Afghan officials raised the issue a non-committal reply should be given.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{130} Home Political Department, Secret, July 1916, No. 21, Notes, p. 23, NAI.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p. 28.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 25.
The Siraj-ul-Akhbar continued its anti-British propaganda. Mahmud Tarzi, its editor, was threatened by Amir Habibullah. The Amir wrote to him: "Mahmud Tarzi, son of Ghulam Mohammad Tarzi, editor of the newspaper, be it known to you that in future you should write such unreliable things against the British, who are the friends of our Government. If you write again (in this manner), you will be turned out of the country without any consideration being shown to you". The Amir stopped a considerable portion of Tarzi's salary as a punishment for his anti-British propaganda.

133 Kabul Diary, 7 November 1917, L/P&S/10/203, IOLR.
134 Ibid., 22 April 1918.