CHAPTER III

ACCESSION OF AMIR AMANULLAH AND THE THIRD
AFGHAN WAR

On the conclusion of the First World War, the Afghans expected recognition of Afghan's independence as a reward from the British for their neutrality in the war. Even during the war, Sardar Abdul Qadus Khan, Prime Minister of Afghanistan, told the British Agent at Kabul that he would not be permitted to leave the country unless the "hopes and aspirations in connection with the sincere services rendered by the Afghan Government in keeping its neutrality during the war ... are not satisfactorily re-adjusted between both Governments". ¹ Obviously, his aim was Afghanistan's independence. In December 1918, the Amir and his Council expressed their wish to participate in the Peace Conference after the conclusion of the war. On 2 February 1919, the Amir wrote to the Viceroy demanding Afghanistan's representation at the Peace Conference. ² He added:

I have considered it necessary and incumbent upon me to write to Your Excellency to say that if the exalted Government of England can

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obtain from all the attendants and members of the said Conference a written agreement recognizing the absolute liberty, freedom of action and perpetual independence of the Sublime Government of Afghanistan free from future interference, damage or loss, and hand it over to me, well and good, otherwise it will be unavoidable for the representatives of the Sublime Government of Afghanistan to attend the said Conference, to put forward and argue all their established rights of liberty, complete freedom of action and settled independence and to obtain, God willing, a written agreement according to their own desire under the signature of the peace makers there. 3

The Viceroy was prepared to offer some concessions to the Amir, Denys Bray, Deputy Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, remarked on the Amir's demands:

Our control of Afghanistan's foreign relations has been so long a fundamental principle of our Afghan policy that it requires an effort of mind to conceive of our willingly consenting to any diminution of it. Possibly it may prove essential that it should continue to dominate our policy. But the present is so different from the past, and the future seems likely to be so much more different still, that the time has come for us to scrutinize our traditional policy anew. 4

Bray suggested that Afghanistan should be free and on friendly terms with Britain. He suggested that the subsidy should continue even after Afghanistan's independence. 5

3 Amir to Viceroy, 2 February 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, NAI.

4 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Pro. 706, NAI.

5 Adamec, n. 1, p. 106.
The Home Government did not agree with this proposal. Opinion in London was against any move which might open the door to foreign intrigues in Afghanistan, a country from which it had always been British policy rigidly to exclude all foreign influences. Circumstances might conceivably arise, it was feared, in which Britain may have no alternative but to intervene in Afghanistan in order to preserve the peace of its Indian border. An Afghan delegation to the peace conference would have complicated matters for Britain in managing her Indian Empire. The Secretary of State, therefore, advised the Viceroy to explain to the Amir that only the belligerents could participate in the peace conference. He also could not accept the right of Afghanistan to conduct her own foreign relations.

Amir Habibullah's failure to secure a suitable reward for his services to the British made him further unpopular with his people. The war party in Afghanistan wanted the Amir to declare jihad against the British. There were domestic source of opposition as well. Amir Habibullah's domestic policy was opposed by the young Afghans even before the First World War. They wanted a constitutional government in Afghanistan and pressed for the establishment of a constitutional assembly, founded on a national rather than a tribal basis and circulated a petition addressed to the

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Amir to this effect. Ideas in favour of a parliamentary government in Afghanistan were current among a number of the younger Sirdars. In 1918 an anonymous letter was signed by the Amir's sons and others including Nasrullah Khan demanding the introduction of parliamentary system of government in Afghanistan. The Amir had no intention of making any concessions to such demands which would have curtailed his own absolute authority. Therefore, he suppressed the constitutional movement and arrested its leaders. Ruthless suppression did not solve the Amir's problem. The opposition groups tried to penetrate into the royal palace.

The Amir one morning discovered a paper under his pillow addressed to him from the "President of Society and Progress in Afghanistan", the purport of which was as follows:

Your Majesty, please take warning that we are watching your actions. We find that you are squandering in luxury public money which ought to be spent on the improvement of the country. You are neglecting affairs of the State and you seize and kill all well wishers of the country who show any signs of striving to establish democratic institutions. Remember that we are

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7 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 32 NAI.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
a large party, the members of which can get at you anywhere in your Court, in your Camp, in your palace and even inside your haram. We can kill you at any time that we choose to do so, but we do not intend to do you any harm at present provided you desist from your mal-practices, mend your ways and honestly discharge your obligations. 10

The discovery of the letter caused much anxiety to the Amir. On this pretext he flogged some of his personal attendants whom he suspected. 11

The above-mentioned events and the Amir's friendship with the British made him unpopular and led to desertions by his courtiers and finally to his assassination. On 19 February 1919, when he was camping in Laghman Valley, he was killed at midnight by an unknown person. The Amir's camp was heavily guarded with a special patrol from inside and outside. No one seemed to have gone out from the camp or had come out of it. It is generally believed that the execution was arranged and carried out by the Amir's own courtiers and security officers. The Security In-Charge of the Amir's camp was Ahmad Shah Khan, a member of Mussahibbin Khas family. 12

At the time of Amir Habibullah's death, his brother Nasrullah Khan was in Jalalabad and most of the leading

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 89, NAI.
mullas of Eastern Afghanistan were with him. When Habibullah's body was brought to Jalalabad these mullahs accounced that being a martyr (shaheed) he must, according to Islamic custom, be buried at once in the clothes he was wearing and elaborate ceremonies were not required. They also declared that in the case of a martyred king his body could not be committed to the ground by any hand but that of his elected successor. This was apparently part of the plot to put Nasrullah Khan on the throne as quickly as possible to forestall opposition.  

The first man who declared his loyalty to Nasrullah Khan was Sardar Ali Ahmad Jan, a nephew of the Ulyat Hazrat. Nasrullah Khan after his accession to the throne raised the pay of the army from Rs. 8 to Rs. 11 per mensem. He sent firmans to all provincial governors and to Kabul and Peshawar demanding declarations of loyalty. Amanullah Khan, who was the third son of Amir Habibullah and Governor of Kabul, on hearing the news of his father's death, seized the treasury and arsenal and denounced his uncle Nasrullah Khan as a traitor to Islam and the murderer of the Amir.  

When Nasrullah Khan first heard of Amanullah Khan's revolt, he sent several people to reconcile him by

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13 Stewart, n. 6, p. 31.

14 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 89, NAI.
various promises. Amanullah Khan sent messages to Jalalabad telling all the Sirdars there that he would not hesitate in executing their families in Kabul if they did not punish the murderers of the late Amir. He also appealed to the troops in Jalabad to support his just cause and promised to increase their pay. 15

Nasrullah Khan had promised Prince Inayatullah Khan, the elder son of the Amir, that he would declare him as the heir apparent and that after his own death the succession should come back to Inayatullah Khan and his sons. He also made a similar offer to Amanullah Khan who turned it down as he was in a strong position in Kabul. He and his mother's family were in power in the capital and had the control over the treasury and arsenal. He also had the army on his side. The mullahs and the frontier tribes, however, preferred Nasrullah Khan as Amir. 16

Nasrullah Khan had been declared King of Afghanistan on 20 February. On the same day he wrote to the Viceroy narrating the story of Amir Habibullah's death. He justified his appointment as King of Afghanistan and stated:

15 Ibid.

They all (Government Officials, Malik, ...) came to my presence where upon the Mu'in Saltana of the Sublime God-granted Government of Afghanistan, his other brothers, members of the royal family, Kazia, Sayeds, Ulemas, Officers, Soldiers, Khawanin, noteables and representative of the civil population, came forward and said "according to the teachings of the Sacred law of Islam based on the Koran and traditions of Prophet, on whom be blessings of God, it is necessary for the maintenance of the honour of the faith to appoint a new Amir before the remains of the deceased Amir can be interred. Therefore, we unanimously accept you, of our own free will and pleasure as our Amir look upon you as our sympathetic King and we offer our allegiance to you". 17

On 24 February 1919, the Viceroy informed the Secretary of State of the Amir's death and Nasrullah Khan's accession. The Viceroy directed closing of all public offices in India and flags were flown at half mast on 23 February. 18

The British Agent at Kabul, who was in Jalalabad, wrote to Nasrullah Khan on hearing the news of the Amir's death. The letter was delivered to the new Amir who sent an immediate reply. It bore Amir Nasrullah's signature and narrated the story of the death of the late Amir. The Secretary to the Amir (Ishak Aqasi Mulki) wrote a separate letter to the British Agent and invited him to attend a public

17 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 18, NAI.

18 Ibid.
mourning durbar. The British Agent attended it. Nasrullah Khan's name was proclaimed from the pulpit in the Friday prayers. In all mosques of Jalalabad Nasrullah Khan was proclaimed as the Amir of Afghanistan.

In a mourning durbar held on 21 February, Nasrullah Khan entered with Inayatullah Khan beside him in the same role which Nasrullah Khan used to play to Amir Habibullah. Then Inayatullah Khan broke the silence with a pledge of allegiance to Nasrullah Khan: "I will serve you loyally and obediently, Sir, as I served the late Amir, my father". 19

Nasrullah Khan's address on the occasion was full of quotations from the Quran. Then notables in groups of about a hundred, were presented to Nasrullah Khan; they offered their personal allegiance and signed a document that Nasrullah Khan read in a loud voice, stating that the people and princes were in entire agreement as to electing him as their new Amir of Afghanistan and bound themselves permanently to be submissive to him and loyal to his person and throne. All who were present signed the document. 20

The durbar continued on 22 and 23 February. The object of the durbar was the receipt of condolences for the deceased and congratulations for the new Amir, Nasrullah Khan.

19 Stewart, n. 6, p. 33.
20 Ibid.
On 24 February, a public durbar was held and there was a parade on the golf-course. The parade was witnessed by all the nobles and by the Amir who was accompanied on horseback by Padshah Sahib of Islampur. The Amir addressed the Army. He was assured of the Army's submission. An artillery salute was also fired. In the same durbar, the Amir increased the pay of the soldiers. Later on when he returned to the durbar hall, the ceremony of "dastar bandi" "putting turban on the Amir's head) was performed by a few priests, including Naqib Sahib, Padshah Sahib of Islampur, and the son of Hazrat of Chahar Bagh. Prayers were offered and mutual assurances of reciprocal goodwill and good-wishes were exchanged between the Amir and the audience. After this the Amir announced the remission of the arrears of Government dues of all kind outstanding for the past ten years of his father's reign and seven years of his brother's reign, which announcement was received with acclamations from the subjects and officials present. The Amir appointed Inayatullah Khan as his Naib-ul-Saltanat (Deputy) and made over to him his sword, etc.21

The British authorities in India were under the impression that Nasrullah Khan may not manage to get the throne of Kabul. When he did manage to do so, there was reluctance to recognize him as Amir. The Viceroy suggested

21 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 113, NAI.
to the Secretary of State a draft reply to Nasrullah Khan's letter of 20 February 1919. It stated that the British Government and the Government of Afghanistan were united by common sorrow on the Amir's death who was a friend of the British Government. The Viceroy continued:

It gives me pleasure to learn that your Majesty had been unanimously acknowledged by the members of the Royal Family and by the religious, civil and military representatives as their Amir, and has peacefully succeeded to the throne of Afghanistan. I thank Your Majesty for your friendly consideration in hastening, even amid the universal grief, to set my mind at rest. Your Majesty has expressed the hope that the friendship and friendly intercourse between the Government of Afghanistan and the Government of Great Britain will be daily strengthened and increased by your efforts and mine. The friendship between the two governments is based on the treaties and engagements concluded with the British Government by the late Zia-ul-Millat Wad-din and confirmed by the late Siraj-ul-Millat Wad-din. 22

On 1 March 1919, the Secretary of State advised the Viceroy that the recognition of the new Amir would be premature. He added that British India's policy had been to recognize as Amir only a person who had succeeded in consolidating his position in the country. He advised the Viceroy to amend his proposed letter to Nasrullah Khan as

22 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 26, NAI.
follows:

....As soon as action of the princes and notables at Jalalabad is confirmed by Princes, etc. and representatives of the Afghan people as a whole, and when with their consent you have assumed reigns of Government at Kabul, I shall have great pleasure in asking His Majesty's Government to accord you the same recognition as that accorded to your lamented brother. 23

The Viceroy was further advised not to address Nasrullah Khan as Amir or Your Majesty. But events were progressing faster than letters could be composed and written. Before the Secretary of State's letter reached the Viceroy there were dramatic developments in Afghanistan.

Amanullah Khan, the third son of the Amir, was acting as the Governor of Kabul - a key position of the State. On the eve of his father's death, Sardar Hayatullah Khan, the second son of Amir Habibullah, was on his way to take charge of the Kabul Governorship from Amanullah Khan, but his motorcar "broke down" on the way. In the meanwhile the news of the Amir's death reached Kabul. Amanullah Khan immediately called a giant military parade in the capital. He narrated the sad news of his father's murder to his troopers: He criticized his uncle who had proclaimed himself as King. Was it right? he asked, notably when the heir to the throne, his own brother, still lived, and had

23 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 57, NAI.
desire to rule. He unsheathed his sword and pronounced that not till the murderer of his father was brought to book would he sheath it. The soldiers replied, "Our beloved prince now you are our king".24

The Governorship of Kabul was an asset to Amanullah Khan in his struggle for the throne.25 He had good relations with lower and upper strata of society. While Nasrullah Khan, a devout Muslim, represented the religious and conservative elements in the country, Amanullah Khan, young, ambitious and popular, represented nationalism and progress.26

On 26 February the Ulya Hazrat left for Kabul in order to negotiate between her son, Amanullah Khan, and the new Amir. On her arrival at Kabul she decided to support Amanullah Khan. The messages from Kabul encouraged the forces at Jalalabad and they surrounded the Ark (royal palace) at midnight of the 25-26 and refused to listen to anybody until they had secured the written resignation of Nasrullah Khan and his confession that he was unable to arrest the murderers of the late Amir. After this the soldiers went to the houses of the Musahibbin Khas and


arrested them one by one in a brutal manner. Padshah Sahib of Islampur asked Nasrullah Khan not to abdicate, as his abdication would cause moral disgrace to his own priestly prestige. He promised Nasrullah Khan a force of 50,000 to support his cause. About 300 of his armed disciples were brought to Jalalabad but Nasrullah Khan knew that his position was weak and decided not to provoke a civil war.  

On 28 February 1919, Amanullah Khan stood in the Court of Idgah Mosque in Kabul. Besides him stood the most highly respected mullah in Afghanistan, Shah Agha known as Hazrat of Shoor Bazar. He proclaimed Amanullah Khan as King of Afghanistan and put the customary silken turban on his head. This ceremony strengthened Amanullah Khan's position. He had the support of intellectuals as well as of the clergy.

The very first act of Amanullah Khan upon ascending the throne was to issue a royal proclamation to this people in which he narrated the story of the death of his father and the allegiance of the army and others accepting him as the Amir of Afghanistan. He further declared that Afghanistan was internally and externally free and asked the people to

27 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 113, NAI.
support him in his efforts to punish those responsible for his father's assassination. 28

On 27 February 1919, Inayatullah Khan and Hayatullah Khan, the Amir's elder brothers wrote from Jalalabad to Amir Amanullah:

... the tumult and events that have happened during this week in our family and among the military at Jalalabad have been observed. If the fire of this dissension becomes ablaze it will lead to great ruination and subversion of a civilized community and the destruction of the Royal Family. Therefore since the royal robes have proved suitable to your august body our beloved brother, who was destined for imamiat and amarat (religious leadership and rulership), it is fitting that he should receive the congratulations of his brothers. Accordingly, we convey our congratulations and trust that we shall enjoy mutual confidence. 29

Similarly, Sardar Nasrullah Khan wrote to Amir Amanullah and accepted his Amirship. He added:

Later on I received your communication from which it appeared that the people of the capital of Kabul had sworn allegiance to you and that you had accepted the Amirship of the Government of Afghanistan. Therefore since I had no desire to become Amir and had agreed to take up that heavy load upon my shoulders only for the sake of looking after

28 For detail, see full text of the proclamation, Appendix IX.

29 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 121, NAI.
you and in consideration of the protection of the faith and nation of Afghanistan and I had not the remotest idea of displeasing you, and since I look upon you, as I always did, as my dear and beloved son and consider your Amirship, Government and power as my own, I of my own free will and accord abdicate my Amirship and pray that God Almighty may make your imammat and amarat (religious leadership and rulership) lucky, auspicious, lasting and enduring. 30

The military officers in Jalalabad who got the news of Amir Amanullah's declaration at Kabul and the increase of pay of rupees five, accepted Amir Amanullah as their King. 31

On 15 March 1919, the Afghan Postmaster at Peshawar received three firman from Amir Amanullah for communication to all Afghan officials in India. The first firman contained the new appointments made by the Amir and asked the agent to contact him through Mahmud Tarzi who had been appointed foreign minister. The second firman enclosed copies of the deeds of allegiance submitted to him by the military officers, Nasrullah Khan, Inayatullah Khan and Hayatullah Khan from Jalalabad through Ghulam Mohammad Khan, Panchayat Bashi. 32

30 Ibid.
31 Thomas, n. 25, p. 165.
32 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, File. 124, NAI.
The third firman enumerated to the qualities of the late Amir, as a king and as a Muslim, the progress made by Afghanistan under his rule, and then referred to his assassination at the hands of traitors. The firman went on to say:

When I was a Sardar I used to be appointed Governor of Kabul by my father during his absence. I discharged my duties honestly and painstakingly and treated the public, civil and military officers, very kindly attending to their comfort. Now that I have been elected Amir of Afghanistan, I trust that the people and authorities will co-operate and serve their religion, king and country and pray for the stability of the Kingdom. 33

Nasrullah Khan, during his brief spell as Amir, had increased the pay of soldiers at the rate of five Kabuli rupees per sepoy and officer; but the increase sanctioned by Amir Amanullah was at the rate of eight Kabuli rupees on his own behalf and three Kabuli rupees on behalf of his mother. She announced this amount when she returned to Kabul from Jalalabad. The consolidated monthly pay of the soldier was thus twenty three Kabuli rupees. Thus was considered a handsome salary. In addition to this, the soldiers in Kabul and Jalalabad were given rupees two Kabuli each as an entertainment allowance; the object of this was to keep the armed forces upon whom depended the

33 Ibid.
succession to the throne of Kabul in good humour. On 27 March 1919, nine lakh rupees were taken to Jalalabad for the pay of Kabul forces in Jalalbad. It was said that forty rupees were paid to each soldier which was an excessive amount. The above measures involved considerable expenditure and it was resolved to effect retrenchments in the local administrative machinery generally and to expel all foreigners, who were a great burden on the exchequer. The latter measure served the two-fold purpose of lightening the finances and of relieving the country from the foreign element which were, according to some reports, responsible for indirect activities which led to the death of Amir Habibullah Khan.34

On 13 April 1919, the Amir held a durbar in which he announced the results of the investigation of the assassination of Amir Habibullah. He then delivered a short speech in which he declared:

I had two objects occupying my mind badly since the death of my father and now I am glad to say that I have successfully achieved both of them by the grace of God and through the sincere help and loyalty of my brothers the civil and military rank and file. One of my objects was to revenge my father's murder, for which purpose I had worn Khaki (Gray dress) all the time and drawn my sword, which I now victoriously sheath in triumph. And the second is that I have declared myself and my country entirely free, autonomous and independent both

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34 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 132, NAI.
internally and externally. My country will hereafter be an independent state as other states and powers of the world are. No foreign power will be allowed to have a hair's breadth of right to interfere internally or externally with the affairs of Afghanistan, and if any ever does, I am ready and prepared to cut its throat with this sword. 35

At the end of his speech he asked Hafiz Saifullah, the British agent at Kabul: "O Safir, have you understood what I have said"? The agent replied "Yes".36

On 3 March 1919, Amir Amanullah wrote a friendly letter to the Viceroy, informing him about the assassination of his father and his accession to the throne. He also declared that he considered Afghanistan as a completely independent country.37 The Amir's letter remained unacknowledged for about six weeks because of difference within the Indian Government about a suitable reply. One view was that as the letter was in a friendly tone, a suitable reply in the same friendly manner might be sent. Others maintained that as the Amir had deliberately adopted the phraseology of an independent monarch, the letter should

35 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 154, NAI.

36 Ibid.

37 Amir to Viceroy, 3 March 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, 1-66, October 1919, NAI.
be read as an expression of his desire to get rid of British influence in his country. The Viceroy, in his reply dated 15 April 1919, conveyed his deepest regrets on the untimely death of Amir Habibullah who was a close friend of the British Government. He thanked Amir Amanullah for his letter, and assured him that British India was ready to conclude a commercial treaty with Afghanistan. But the Viceroy ignored the Amir's remarks regarding the independence of Afghanistan.38

While the British could decide to ignore Afghanistan's desire for complete independence, Amir Amanullah explored other avenues to achieve his objective. On 7 April 1919, he wrote a letter to Lenin. The Amir stated that he had seized the occasion of his ascending the throne of Afghanistan to announce to the Russian leader his strong adherence to the principle of equality of all men and peaceful union of all people. Afghanistan had till then stood apart from all other nations, but as the standard of Bolshevism had been raised by Russia, he hastened to declare that she had earned the gratitude of the whole world. The Amir hoped that Lenin would not refuse to accept his friendly greetings. He signed himself "your friend Amanullah".39 Mohammad Tarzi in his letter to the Soviet Foreign Minister hoped that permanent friendly

38 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, June 1919, 1-158, Pro. 142, NAI.
39 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200, B, Pro. 48, NAI.
relation would be established between Soviet Russia and Afghanistan. Lenin replied on 27 May 1919, congratulating the Amir and the Afghan people for their heroic defence of their liberty and accepting the proposal to establish diplomatic relations. Lenin declared: "By the establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between the two great peoples, a way will be opened for them to render mutual assistance against any attempt on the part of the foreign vultures to deprive them of their liberty".

Meanwhile, political developments in India were moving towards a crisis. The Montague-Chelmsford reforms failed to satisfy Indian aspirations for genuine self-government. The people of India embarked upon a new phase in their struggle for their independence.

In 1917 the Government of India appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Justice Rowlatt to investigate the revolutionary crimes in India and to suggest measures for their eradication. After reviewing the political situation, the Rowlatt Commission recommended a series of changes in the law of the country. The proposed changes authorised the Government of India with special powers to deal with acts of political violence. On the basis of the recommendations, the Government of India drafted two


bill which were presented to the Imperial Legislative Council on 18 January 1919. The first of these bills sought to amend the Indian Penal Code in a manner which would empower the Government of India to check activities prejudicial to the security of the State. The second bill was designed to invest the Government of India with the authority to short-circuit the process of law in dealing with revolutionary activities.42

The proposed changes were challenged in the legislative assembly, but this had no effect on the Government. On 24 February 1919 Gandhiji and his followers signed a pledge, stating that they would not accept the Bills. He also despatched a telegram to Lord Chelmsford, informing him of his decision to launch a satyagraha. Two days later, on 26 February, Gandhiji addressed an open letter to the people of India, in which he urged them to join the satyagraha launched against the Rowlatt Act. He set up an organisation in Bombay, called Satyagraha Sabha in order to lead the protest against the Government.43

Amritsar had been the centre of Congress organization in the Punjab since 1917. A hartal was decided on 30 March 1919 in many towns. All the shops were closed in Amritsar and a meeting was held in Jallianwala Bagh. It was

43 Ibid., p. 23.
attended by about 5,000 people. Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew presided. A resolution was passed calling for the repeal of the Rowlatt Acts.44 Gandhi was not allowed to visit Amritsar. Dr. Kitchlew and other leaders were ordered to leave the city by 10 April. The news spread all over the city. Shops were closed down. Banks, post offices and railway yards were set on fire.45

By 11 April about 1000 British soldiers arrived in the town. General Dyer was deputed to handle the situation. He issued a proclamation that processions and gatherings would not be allowed. In the afternoon of 13 April, a meeting was attended by 25,000 natives, at Jalianwala Bagh. General Dyer on receiving the information, went to the place and without any warning, he ordered the soldiers to fire on the mob. The firing continued for ten minutes.46 In the Jallianwala Bagh massacre at least 1,500 people including children and old men were killed.47

46 Draper, n. 44, p. 91.
Late in April, the Amir called a special durbar. The durbar was attended by the nobility of Afghanistan. While addressing the gathering he read letters from India which described with great emotion the British atrocities at Amritsar and the massacre of the Jallianwala Bagh. While reading the letters he wept bitterly and declared: "What tyranny has been practiced on our brothers in India; not only this, but Baghdad and holy places have been seized by tyranny. I ask you if you are prepared for holy war. If so, gird up your lions. The time has come." The audience wanted jehad. The Amir declared that he would not collect revenue that year. He asked the people to collect grains for jehad; rich men should buy rifles and ammunition from the arsenal. Poor men could get them on security.

Roos-Keppel, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, wrote to Maffey, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India: "The effect of the Rowlatt Bill agitation has been extraordinary, and I am receiving petitions to the Viceroy from every tribe, every community in the district, the biggest men have signed these, even including the ones who are most on our side. Many of my most reliable and oldest Indian friends tell that the men of the Indian Army are also very

48 Stewart, n. 6, p. 44.
49 Ibid.
bitter against the Bill".  

Amir Amanullah, in his firman of 27 April 1919, informed all sections of the people of Eastern Afghanistan that India was in a state of revolution. He asked them to serve their religion and kingdom. General Saleh Mohammad Khan was sent to the tribal area to deal with the situation.  

Ikbal Ali Shah, the author of the Tragedy of Amanullah, states:

I have debated this question with important persons as the late Mr Edwin Montagu (the then Secretary of State for India) and Sir Hamilton Grant (the then Foreign Secretary at Simla), and both were equally regretful of the incalculable harm which the attitude of not replying to Amanullah's perfectly friendly letter did to the future of the country.  

The Hindu Gazette of 8 June 1919 was of the view that the Amir had come under the influence of the German, Austrian and Turkish spies who visited Afghanistan during the World War. The paper also asserted that Amir Amanullah was intriguing with the Bolsheviks against the British.  

The Chief Commissioner of the North West Frontier Province on 1 May 1919 reported to the Foreign Secretary that the Amir of Afghanistan was uneasy about his own position as he

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50 Roos-Keppel to Maffey, 8 May 1919, Montague Papers, Roll No. 1932, NAI.

51 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-422, Pro. 91, NAI.


feared a reaction in favour of Inayatullah Khan or Nasrullah Khan. In Afghanistan belief was growing that the murder of Amir Habibullah was arranged by the Ulya Hazrat with the connivance of Amanullah Khan and Abdul Kuddus Khan and that Nasrullah Khan was an innocent scapegoat. Crimes in Afghanistan were increasing and districts were getting out of hand and the Amir was merely taking precautions by sending round the Commander-in-Chief whom he could not trust.54

The ideal of independence, always a war-cry in Afghanistan, became a popular passion. Democratic impulses manifested themselves throughout the country, and the days of autocracy were numbered.55

Amir Amanullah’s policy towards the British Government was mainly influenced by the views of Sardar Abdul Quddus Khan, Sardar Mahmud Tarzi, and Sardar Abdul Aziz Khan. They were newly-appointed Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and War Minister respectively. It could be clearly understood from Sardar Khushdil Khan’s anxiety, who was governor of Kandahar. He thought that on his pro-British policy he would be dismissed by Amir Amanullah.56

On 29 April 1919, Foreign Minister Mahmud Tarzi, instructed the Afghan Envoy at Simla to obtain Biat namas

54 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 22, NAI.

55 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, Frontier B, October 1919, 15-138, Pro. 138, NAI.

56 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 22, NAI.
(deeds of allegiance) in the name of Amir Amanullah from Hindus and Muslims. Tarzi wrote that Maulavi Obeidullah was with armies in the Eastern direction and Haji Abdur Razaq was on the frontier among the Mohmands. The envoy was asked to get into communication with them. It was an opportune moment to incite the people against British imperialism and newspapers were to be used for this purpose.57

The Afghan Envoy, Abdur Rahman, and the Afghan Post-master in Peshawar, Ghulam Haider, reported to the Amir that India was on the verge of revolution and that it required only the spark of an Afghan invasion to overthrow British rule in India. In another letter to the Amir, Ghulam Haider wrote that on getting the tip that the Post Office was to be searched, he ordered armed resistance, as all his papers were against the British Government. He assured the Amir that if necessary he would start a holy war against the British in Peshawar city. He had many interviews with Sipah Salar Saleh Mohammad Khan.59 He claimed that about eight thousand men were already with him; an additional two thousand men from the surrounding villages would soon join him. The Sikhs had assured the Muslims of their cooperation. He added that both Muslims and Hindus

57 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 44, NAI.

58 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 227, NAI.

59 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 4, NAI.
would be much displeased if the Amir did not launch an invasion.

Soon after the news of the first fight at Landi Kotal was received, Ghulam Haider sent out large mobs to do as much damage as possible. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, put a card on round the city on 8 May 1919. There were at about ten thousand persons, most of them Afghan as well as some Peshawaris, who were ready to start trouble against the British. In fact, the whole city had become hostile to the British and that hostility was spreading rapidly all over the district of Peshawar and other parts of the country. 61

Ghulam Haider's plan was to attack military installations secretly with the help of the tribemen, and Afghans were to join in this attack. While the regular troops of the British were away at Dakka, an attack could be launched at their base which would effectively cut off their sources of supply. Peshawar was as good as lost with the death of several hundred British men and women. 62

On the evening of 5 May 1919, a rumour spread in Peshawar city that the arrest of Ghulam Haider and search of his house were imminent. He collected about 2,000 Afghans and issued them arms. The Chief Commissioner considered the

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60 (i) Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-235, Pro. 42, NAI.

(ii) Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 227, NAI.

61 Chelmsford to Montague, 8 May 1919, Montague Papers, Roll No. 1932, NAI.

62 James Spain, Amanullah Ex-King of Afghanistan (London, 1939), p. 56-58
possibility of arresting the postmaster, but thought that it was not feasible. Ghulam Haider had left the post office and was living in a house far from the main streets. Any attempt to arrest him would have led to heavy street fighting. There were about 10,000 Afghans in Peshawar City. The Chief Commissioner thought that the use of artillery was not possible. He asked for more troops to surround the city.\(^{63}\)

The Indian Revolutionary Committee at Peshawar City had arranged to collect 7,000 persons, Afghan subjects and trans-border inhabitants. They were supposed to burn the cantonments and civil lines, damage the railway and destroy the mobilization stores.\(^{64}\)

The troops surrounded the city. At 2.00 p.m. on 8 May 1919, the people of Peshawar City were taken by surprise. The Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar issued a letter to the Afghan Post-Master to surrender himself to the Government along with his five servants. Ghulam Haider and twenty-two other anti-British men were imprisoned.\(^{65}\) Though most of the agitators went underground, many were arrested. Ghulam Haider along with other eight Afghans and fourteen

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63 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 41, NAI.

64 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 29, NAI.

65 Ibid.
Indian "agitators" were arrested. Martial law was clamped on the city the same day.

The Government of India was very much concerned about the response of the Peshawar City to Ghulam Haider's call for jihad. The Viceroy feared that Northern India would be effected by this propaganda. Leaflets distributed in India by the Afghan Envoy, intercepted by the Central Intelligence Department, reinforced these anxieties. The first leaflet was in Persian and addressed to the people and army, Sayeds, mashaikhs (mystics); ulamas (religious scholar), khawanins (nobles) and leading men of Kandahar. This leaflet, bearing the seal of Amir Amanullah, referred to the storm of unrest and revolution in India. Indians were groaning under British tyranny and the British were interfering with their religious practices. They had been deprived of freedom of speech; three men could not assemble


67 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, t-235, Pro. 76, NAI.

68 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, t-200 B, Pro. 20, NAI.
and Muslims and Hindus were not allowed to go to their mosques and temples. The second proclamation was of the same nature but was in Pashtu language. 69

When Ghulam Heider was interrogated about the leaflets and other inflammatory materials published in Siraj-ul-Akhbar, he answered that as the British Government had not issued prohibitory orders, it was received in his post office and distributed. He added that a part of this material came to India through the tribal belt of the Mohmands and the Masuds. Regarding the crowds which collected at his house, he said that they had come uninvited to warn him that the Government of India wanted to imprison him and collect his arms. He said that the Peshawaris and other frontier tribes went to him in batches and they were dismissed instantly. 70 The demonstration organised by the Union Committee on the Rowlatt Bill was liberally supplied money by Ghulam Haider. 71 Approximately one lakh of rupees were recovered from his house.

The Chief Commissioner in his telegraphic communication to the Government of India suggested that Ghulam Haider should be court-martialled and shot. He thought that

69 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 37, NAI.

70 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 57, NAI.

71 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 117, NAI.
this punishment would have a most salutary effect.72

Amir Amanullah, in his firman to the tribes, pointed out the injustices perpetrated by the British on the Indian people: "No one, Hindu or Mohammadan, will have any right of ownership to his land and property nor will any one have power to speak freely; three men cannot stand in one place, nor can they go to a mosque; nor can Hindus go to their temples. If they go there or collect, they will, without any investigation and at the word of the Criminal Investigation Department, receive punishment.73 He added that according to international law, he was not supposed to interfere in the internal affairs of the British Government, but disturbances in India had adverse effects on Afghanistan. He, therefore, exhorted his subjects to remain united.74

On 3 May 1919, Zar Shah's Lashkar killed five collies who were on water work near Bagh Village. The British authorities at Peshawar got in touch with Zar Shah, who said that the Sipah Salar (Commander-in-Chief in the Afghan army) had sent him to commence hostilities. He had also showed a lithographed copy of a firman bearing Amir Amanullah's seal.

72 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 138, NAI.
73 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 5, NAI.
74 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier Branch, October 1919, 1-66, Pro. 8, NAI.
The firman appeared to be genuine. It began by referring to the unrest in India. It repeated the usual criticism of the Rowlatt Bill and exhorted the Afghans to follow the procession of the new Commander-in-Chief, Saleh Mohammad Khan, by whom Amir's orders and intentions would be fully explained. The firman wound up with an exhortation to all to win favour of God and obey the will of the prophet, which was a clear incitement to jihad although the word was not used. It was said that two hundred and forty-five firmans were sent to Peshawar. Inflammatory letters were also sent to the tribes to instigate them against the British Indian Government.75

On 4th May 1919, a party of 100 Afghan regulars, 200 Khasadars and some Shinwari tribesmen occupied Bagh and Kafir Kot and cut off one of the water-supplies of the British frontier force at Laud Kotal.76 The Government of India, on hearing of the trouble in the Khyber area, summoned Sardar Abdur Rahman, the Afghan Envoy in India, and sternly asked the Amir to observe the norms of friendly relations. He was told that if the Amir had heard any rumours regarding disturbances in India those were not based on facts.77 The Envoy informed the Amir that the British were collecting

75 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 4, NAI.

76 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 161, NAI.

77 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 45, NAI.
their troops.\textsuperscript{78}

On 4 May 1919, the Viceroy's letter was communicated to the Political Agent at Khyber to be delivered immediately to the Afghan Government. The Viceroy indicated that Zar Shah Shinwari who had attacked Landi Khana had a \textit{firman} with the Amir's seal in which the tribes were instigated to revolt against the British Government. Zar Shah should be arrested and the tribes should be told that the \textit{firman} was a forgery.\textsuperscript{79} The Amir was also told that the Punjab was rapidly returning to normal conditions.\textsuperscript{80}

The Amir's reply was couched in stray language.

It stated:

\begin{quote}
I regret your request of Zar Shah's arrest at such a time ... when all the Hindus and Muslims are united against tyrannical laws which the Government of India have promulgated and the Hindus and Musalmans of Afghanistan, especially the frontier people, have shown unity of heart with them.
\end{quote}

He denied that the letter which was distributed by Zar Shah was signed by him; it could have been printed by Zar Shah himself. He objected to the long delay of Abdur Rahman's appointment as an Afghan envoy.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{79} Viceroy to Amir, 4 May 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

\textsuperscript{80} Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 9, NAI.

\textsuperscript{81} Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 203, NAI.
Reflecting upon the deterioration of Anglo-Afghan relations Montague wrote in a private letter to the Viceroy that the area of unrest was becoming more confined. He was worried that the war would be prolonged and might affect Indian Muslims. He added: "I can only hope that we may be able to bring our military operations to a successful end at an early date. I wonder what Amanullah thinks of the desperate game to which he is setting his hand."82

The Viceroy, through a proclamation dated 10 May 1919, informed his subjects that Amir Amanullah had attacked India. This attack was attributed to internal pressures on the Amir as well as to German intrigues.83 Afghanistan and British India were thus engaged in a military conflict. Events had moved at a fast pace. The upheaval of the revolutionary ferment in the Islamic world, the Bolshevik revolution, and the nationalist upsurge in India had all been contributory factors to this conflict. The Amir thought the time had come for his country to force British authorities in India to acknowledge his country's independence.

As we move on to the cause of the third Anglo-Afghan war, it will be useful to have a look at the distribution

82 Montague to Chelmsford, 14 May 1919, Montagu Papers, Roll No. 1930, NAI.

83 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 103, NAI.
of British military power in India. In 1919, military forces in India were organised into two armies, the Northern and the Southern. Certain divisions were directly under army headquarters. The composition of these armies was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Army</th>
<th>Southern Army</th>
<th>Under Army Headquarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Cavalry Brigade (Risal Pur)</td>
<td>5th Division</td>
<td>12th Mounted (Baleli near Quetta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Cavalry Brigade (Meerut)</td>
<td>9th Division (Secunderabad)</td>
<td>4th Division (Quetta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Cavalry Brigade (H.Q. and regiment Peshawar)</td>
<td>Independent Brigades (Karachi)</td>
<td>8th Division (Lucknow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 regiment (Mardan) (Rawalpindi)</td>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>Burma Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Division (Peshawar)</td>
<td>Divisional Area Poona</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Division (Rawalpindi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Division (Lahore)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Brigades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunnu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derajat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divisional area Meerut. 84</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Field Army for service on the North-West Frontier of India consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 16th and 4th Divisions, with the 1st, 4th and 10th Cavalry Brigades and the 12th Mounted Brigade.

A Division of the Field Army consisted of three infantry Brigades. One squadron of Indian cavalry, one field artillery brigade (two 18 pr. batteries and 4.5 ins. howitzer battery), one mountain artillery brigade (two batteries of 2.75 ins. guns), two companies of machine guns (16 guns each), two companies of Sappers and miners of machine guns (16 guns each), two companies of sappers and miners, one pioneer battalion, one divisional signal company, a divisional ammunition column and the usual ancillary units.

The 1st and 4th Cavalry brigades were composed of one horse artillery battery, one British and two Indian cavalry regiments, one squadron of machine guns (12 guns), one field troops sappers and miners, one signal troops and an ammunition column. The 10th Cavalry Brigade and the 12th Mounted Brigade were similarly constituted except that they had no horse artillery battery and three Indian cavalry regiments, but no British cavalry. The 12th Mounted Brigade was composed of newly raised Indian units mounted on under-sized country-bred horses.85

85 Ibid.
In addition to the Field Army, certain units were placed for the defence of the North-West Frontier and for the maintenance of law and order. These were the Kohat, Bannu and Derajat Independent Brigades. These three independent Brigades were composed of all arms, and had sufficient transport. Each consisted of one regiment of Indian cavalry, one battery of mountain artillery, and one armoured car battery.86

The operations were directed by the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Charles Munro,97 from Army Headquarters at Simla. The North-West Frontier Force was commanded by General Sir Arthur Barret. The Baluchistan Force was commanded by Lieutenant General R. Wapshare.88

The outbreak of hostilities with Afghanistan, after the conclusion of the First World War, put the Government of India in a very difficult position. Military preparations on the frontier were still governed by the War Committee in London, through the Secretary of State. The Field Army consisting of four divisions, three frontier brigades and four cavalry brigades were depleted due to shortage of personnel who had not returned from overseas, and there was

86 Ibid., p. 17.

87 General Sir C.C. Monro served as Commander-in-Chief in India, and Extraordinary member of Council from 1 October 1916 to 20 November 1920.

88 Military Report on Afghanistan (Simla, 1940), L/Mil/17/14/6, p. 82, IOLR.
considerable deficiency in medical and engineering personnel. Stocks of electrical and railway plant and other stores were reduced to the lowest ebb. Many men, including number of skilled artisans and mechanics, had already been demobilised. 89

Serious internal disturbances had broken out in the Punjab one month before the outbreak of the Afghan war. 90 And this had necessitated the diversion of a number of units from their peace stations, the detention of others awaiting demobilisation or embarkation for the United Kingdom, and the recall from leave of numbers of Indian troops who had returned from the World War. 91

The supply and transport services, owing to constant calls from overseas, had been reduced enormously and the resources in animal transport had been exploited to the utmost. The supply of mules had been completely exhausted and recourse had to be made to ponies. The heavy demands for operations in Persia had seriously crippled the supply of camels. The mechanical transport available was only sufficient for convoy on the Khyber line. The British ranks of the heavy mechanical transport companies were considerably under

89 Military Report, n. 88, p. 81.
91 Military Report, n. 88, p. 81.
strength and the proper complement of drivers could not be provided for the vehicles available.\(^{92}\) Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities a hot wave increased the temperature by seven degrees in the North-West Frontier Province, and the outbreak of cholera, which was raging in the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, further increased British difficulties.\(^{93}\)

When the war with Afghanistan broke out, all units, both of the Field Army and the Internal Security Force, were short of their authorized strength. Demobilization of British personnel had begun before the Afghan war started and a large number of men had left for their homes without being replaced. Besides this, many soldiers were absent from their peace stations; many of them had left for hill stations for the summer.\(^{94}\)

In addition to these disadvantages, both British and Indian units were short of senior officers. But this gap was filled up by those officers who were detained in India on their way to England. These officers and men were utilized to meet the crisis.\(^{95}\)

British forces in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan were organized as follows:

\(^{92}\) Ibid.
\(^{93}\) Ibid.
\(^{94}\) Ibid.
\(^{95}\) Ibid., p. 19.
North-West Frontier Force
1. First Cavalry Brigade
2. 10th Cavalry Brigade
3. 1st Division
4. 2nd Division
5. Peshawar Area troops
6. Malakand Garrisons
7. Chitral Garrison
8. L of C troops Northern
9. Kohat Force
10 Waziristan Force

Baluchistan Force
1. 12th Mounted Brigade
2. 4th Division
3. Zhob and Quetta Area Troops
4. Meshed Force
5. East Persian L of C Troops

Central Reserve Force
1. 4th Cavalry Brigade
2. 16th Division
3. 46th Mobile Brigade
4. 47th Mobile Brigade
5. Ist "Special Brigade"

96 Military Report, n. 88, pp. 88-93.
The total British forces for the Third Afghan war consisted of 450,000 men and 80,000 animals.

Having described the distribution of British forces in India, let us turn our attention to Afghanistan. It should be borne in mind that the real military strength of Afghanistan depended on the armed population rather than on the regular forces. The greatest number of the tribesmen ever to have come together was in December 1879, when as many as 60,000 men assembled for the siege of Sherpur. The force which Amir Habibullah collected to suppress a rising in Khost in 1912 was composed of about 4,000 regulars and 18,000 tribesmen.\footnote{The Third Afghan War, n. 84, p. 22.} The difficulties of supply restricted the numbers which could be assembled and kept in the field.\footnote{Abdul Ali Arghandawi, "Economic Conditions of Afghanistan, in the First Half of the 19th Century" (M.Phil Dissertation, AMU, Centre of Advance Study, Department of History, Aligarh, 1976), p. 120.}

The Afghan army comprised 78 battalions of infantry, 21 regiments of cavalry, 280 breach-loading guns and an equal number of 33 loaders. The effectives totalled about 38,000 rifles, 8,000 sabres and 4,000 artillerymen. The country was divided into ten military districts, all of which, except Kabul, were in contact with one portion or another of the Afghan frontier. In Eastern Afghanistan, the districts which bordered on India were Jalalabad, Khost,
Ghazni, Makur and Kandahar. These places in normal times had 35 battalions of infantry, 5 regiments of cavalry and 107 guns. The garrison in the Kabul district consisted of 17 battalions of infantry, 3 pioneer battalions, 7½ regiments of cavalry and 108 guns. In the remaining districts on the Russian and the Persian borders were 23 battalions of infantry, 8½ regiments of cavalry and 65 guns.\(^99\)

The only arsenal in the country was at Kabul, where guns, rifles ammunition and shells were manufactured. Smokeless powder was manufactured in small quantities. Transport facilities were available in the country. Camels and horses could be found in abundance. In 1912, 8,000 camels were collected in fourteen days for operations against the Khost rebels. To facilitate the movement of troops, there were state grainaries in the fortified posts on the highways.\(^100\)

Upto the 12th July 1919, the Afghan forces were distributed as follows:

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\(^99\) The Third Afghan War, n. 84, p. 23.

\(^100\) Ibid., p. 24.
### Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Infantry</th>
<th>Cavalry</th>
<th>Guns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asma district</td>
<td>6 Batteries</td>
<td>½ Regiment</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalalabad and Laghman</td>
<td>6 &quot;</td>
<td>12 &quot; Regiments</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadamak Area</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
<td>1 Regiment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peiwar Karlachi Area</td>
<td>6 &quot;</td>
<td>½ &quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matun and Southern Khost</td>
<td>6 &quot;</td>
<td>13 &quot;</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgun</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
<td>½ &quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wana</td>
<td>Small Detachment</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashid Kila</td>
<td>4 Batteries</td>
<td>1 Regiment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar Area</td>
<td>10 &quot;</td>
<td>2½ &quot; Regiments</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seistan Border</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>10 &quot;</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some 15,000 tribesmen were reported to be with the forces at Rashied Kila and opposite Chaman.

Total: 53 Battalions; 11 Regiments: 173 Guns. 101

By the evening of 6 May 1919, the Afghan forces near Bagh had increased to three battalions of infantry and two guns. A body of about 350 infantry and two guns had also moved from Dakka and occupied Tor Sappar and Landi Kotal. The Afghan forces at Tor Sappar and Spinasuka, reinforced by bodies of tribesmen, had advanced and seized

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101 Political and Secret Memoranda, L/P&S/18, A. 183, IOLR.
Ashkhel ridge. This place was one mile to the north of Landi Kotal. The Afghans could now easily attack the Khyber Fort and Peshawar Valley.

The British First Infantry Brigade, after arriving at Landi Kotal, took the Ash Khel ridge from the Afghans and established a strong piquet line. It was garrisoned by the Sikhs and Gurkha rifles. On 8 May 1919, the Gurkha Rifles reached Landi Kotal. 102

The British forces under General Crocker decided to attack Bagh. They thought that any delay in the occupation of Bagh would encourage the tribes to revolt against the British in tribal territory. The British forces, supported by aeroplanes drove out the Afghans from Bagh. 103

By 8 May 1919, the first Infantry Brigade, with one Battalion of the Second Infantry Brigade and 14 Field and Mountain guns under the command of Brigadier-General S.D. Crocker, were concentrated at Landi Kotal, while other troops of the First Division were moving up the Khyber in support, and troops of the Second Division were continuously arriving in the Peshawar area. On the morning of 9 May, General Crocker, reinforced by another battalion of the Second Infantry Brigade, attacked the Afghans and secured the Tangi spring. He encountered stubborn resistance and owing to the difficult mountainous country his force was insufficient

102 The Third Afghan War, n. 84, p. 27.

to drive the Afghan from their positions covering the Bagh spring. On the following day, the remainder of the Second Infantry Brigade, together with a mountain battery and a machine gun company, arrived at Landi Kotal and Major-General C.A. Fowler, commanding the First Division, assumed command. 104

On 11 May the British attacked the Afghans holding the Khargali heights, which dominated the Bagh springs. Infantry, guns, machine guns and aeroplanes working in close co-operation defeated the Afghans, who resisted stubbornly. The British aeroplanes also bombarded Dakka, where Afghan transport were collected. According to British sources, in the Bagh fighting the British casualties were 10 dead and 35 wounded. The Afghans left 66 dead on the battlefield and 400 to 500 were killed and wounded. On 12 May the Afghans still occupied, Spina Suka and hills near Tor Sappar. But on the following day they could not resist British bombardment and eventually evacuated their positions. On 13 May a cavalry force, consisting of the 1st Cavalry Brigade under the command of Brigadier-General O.M. Baldwin, advanced through the Khyber from Jamrud and occupied Dakka. 105 On 14 May the British Infantry forces built defences round the Camp and made a landing ground for the aeroplanes. Subsequently, they were reinforced by 2 battalions and the 1st Infantry

104 Military Report, n. 88, p. 84.

105 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 70, NAI.
Brigade. On 14 May Brigadier-General Crocker took over command of the force at Dakka. Meanwhile preparations were made for further advance on Jalalabad. 106

In the British bombardment of Dakka and its military camp there were many casualties, including horses and camels. Sepah Salar Saleh Mohammad Khan was also wounded on his left foot. He was rushed to Jalalabad for treatment and Brigadier Mohammad Umar Khan took over from him. Salah Mohammad Khan sent two regiments to Dakka under the command of General Abdur Rahim. 107

The British forces further advanced and captured the Khurd Khyber pass with little opposition, and advanced on Girdi village. The villagers resisted and opened fire on the British and they were compelled to retreat. The British forces used machine guns and captured the village. On the first day of the British campaign in Girdi, the British lost ten officers and soldiers and eighty were wounded; fifty-eight animals were killed and thirty wounded.

On the second day the Afghans took their position on Somerset hills. The Afghans had 3,000 fighting men and seven guns. Afghan casualties in this area were 200 killed and 400 wounded, while the British casualties were 22 killed and 157 wounded. 108

106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
108 The Third Afghan War, n. 84, p. 43.
The Afridee under the leadership of Yar Mohammad Khan Afridi blocked the road in Khyber near Ali Masjid. The British employed regular troops instead of the Khyber rifles to protect the road between Jamrud and Landi Kotal. The British were afraid that the Afridees in the Khyber rifles would betray them. The Afridees were told that those who wished to take their discharge were free to do so. About 100 men, amongst whom was a large number of Indian officers and non-Commissioned officers, elected to remain in the service, but the rest availed themselves of the offer and left for their homes the same evening. The Khyber Rifles thus ceased to exist. 109

The British aeroplanes bombed Jalalabad town. In one day one ton and eight hundred K.G. weight explosive material was dropped on Jalalabad. Large portions of the military quarters of the town were burnt out. In the panic which ensued in the town, the neighbouring tribesmen looted large quantities of arms, ammunition and treasure.

On 24 May Kabul was bombed. During the bombardment the Amir's palace and Amir Abdur Rahman's tomb were bombed. There is little doubt that this raid was an important factor in forcing the Afghan Government to sue for peace.

Hafiz Saifullah Khan, the British envoy in Kabul who was on his way to India, was held up in Jalalabad due to heavy bombardment. He wrote to the officer commanding Dakka

109 Ibid., p. 46.
that he was staying at the *ark* of Jalalabad and noticed bombardment made on the *ark* and the city. A few bombs were exploded in front of his room and he had a narrow escape. 110 He asked the Commanding Officer to take urgent steps to submit his letter to the Foreign Secretary and assured that the Afghan Government was ready to come to an understanding. The Afghan Envoy in India, Sardar Abdur Rahman, was also with him and both were making efforts to resolve the crisis. 111

In a debate in the House of Commons on 4 June 1919 Lieutenant Commander Kenworthy said that British aeroplanes operated at night and bombarded Jalalabad and other towns of Afghanistan and killed women and children. The Secretary of State, however, asserted that the planes did not operate at night and that he had ascertained from the Viceroy that all possible care was taken to confine operations to troops and military objectives. 112

On 18 May Nadir Khan, the Sipah Salar, reached Almarai. He was accompanied by a cavalry regiment, three regiments of infantry and guns estimated at sixteen of which one was heavy and was transported by six elephants. His transport was about one hundred and twenty camels. Shah


111 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 20, NAI.

Walli Khan, along with 6,000 troops, reached Urgun on the same day. 113

The news of Nadir Khan's offensive had already reached and caused much alarm at the North West Frontier Force Headquarters at Peshawar. Plans for an advance from Dakka on Jalalabad were at once postponed. It was obvious that the situation at Thal would have to be cleared up at once, or tribes who had been quiescent, such as the Orakzais and Zaimukhts, would rise and join the Afghans. 114

Nadir Khan held a jirgah (tribal gathering, a traditional practice followed in times of national emergency) in Jalalabad. It was decided to fight against the British and this decision was conveyed to the trans-border tribes. 115 Nadir Khan assigned Afghan fighting forces on the Southern front as follows:

1. Khost, a central position, lying opposite Thal, where the British had concentrated their forces.
2. Jaji, facing Toogai and Kuram.
3. Urgoon, overlooking Waziristan and the British military establishment in that area.

As Khost was the central place, Nadir Khan decided to supervise the whole front from there. The forces at

113 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 9, NAI.
114 Holesworth, n. 103, p. 117.
Urgun and Jaji regions were commanded by Nadir Khan's brothers, Shah Mahmood Khan and Shah Wali Khan.¹¹⁶

On 14 May Shah Wali and Shah Mahmud Khan started for their respective posts. Shah Wali Khan in his Memoirs writes that after two days' journey full of difficulties, he reached Urgun. He adds: "I was pleased to learn that these tribes, who had already promised their whole-hearted help to the Sipah Salar (Nadir Khan), were now coming in large numbers from all sides to our help, fully equipped with their own weapons and carrying their foodstuffs."¹¹⁷

Shah Wali Khan along with his Afghan forces attacked Wana. It fell after heavy fighting. Six British military officers were killed in the fighting. Trans-border Pathans showed bravery and fought against the British. About 200 militia men and an Indian doctor deserted the British and joined Afghan forces.

The British, seeing the surging waves of nationalism on all sides, decided to fall back as soon as possible to avoid capitulation. They vacated the military posts of Watakhel, Ishpana and Khyber, set fire to buildings, military installations and ammunition dumps. After a forced march lasting for several hours, they took refuge in Miran Shah's Fort. The Commander of the front after knowing the victory of Wana sector sent Shah Daula Khan as the administrator

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 11.
¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 18.
of the conquered region. These places remained under Afghan administration for about six months. 118

The fall of Wana encouraged the tribes. The British concentrated their forces at Thal and guarded the place with heavy guns and modern weapons. On 26 May 1919, the Afghan assault was delivered with full force. General Nadir Khan took charge of the whole army. The Afghan forces after crossing the border were met with heavy gun fire and bombardment. 119 But they could not be stopped and the post of Speenwam was taken after heavy fighting. The British left behind large quantities of arms and ammunition. On 27 May 1919, Thal was captured and the British forces were defeated. 120

On the Kurram sector Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan, after inflicting some crushing blows on the enemy, had achieved outstanding victories. He opened communication with Thal. 121

Sardar Abdul Qadus Khan was deputed to the Kandahar front, with 200 guns and eight regiments. On receiving this information the Viceroy recalled the British representative in Kandahar. On 18 May he arrived at Quetta. 122

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118 Ibid., p. 22.
119 Ibid., p. 23.
121 Shah Wali, n. 115, p. 25.
122 Political and Secret Memoranda, L/P&S/18, A 183, IOLR.
He ordered all those who were anti-British to be removed from Chaman. 123

In the Waza Khwa region on the Kandahar front, orders were received by the governor that one male member from each family had to join the army; in case of refusal to join the army force could be used. Fifteen Kabuli rupees would be given to a footman and thirty to a mounted man. 124 The Government would issue arms and ammunition to those who had none. 125

The Afghan forces at Kandahar consisted of about five regiments, of whom two were artillery. In the fort of Spin Boldak near New Chaman there were 300 Afghan soldiers. The British had fourteen regiments along with aeroplanes and guns.

On 27 May 1919 the British forces surrounded Boldak Fort in Kandahar. The fort contained a garrison of one Afghan regular regiment. On refusal by the Afghan soldiers to surrender themselves, the British opened fire and planes dropped shells over the fort. Almost all the Afghans who

123 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 7, NAI.
124 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 221, NAI.
125 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 223, NAI.
were in the fort were killed. 126 This was the strongest fort in Afghanistan. 127

Four hundred horsemen of the English forces who were in New Chaman on the Kandahar front deserted and joined the Afghans. About 12,000 persons under the guidance of the mullahs attacked the English and carried the guns of the soldiers. 128

On 31 May, reinforcements reached from Kabul to Kandahar. On 1 June large Afghan forces gathered at Daberai, 20 miles north-west of New Chaman. On 2 June, Abdul Qadus Khan, commanding the Kandahar front, reached Melkarez, 32 miles north-west of New Chaman, with reinforcements. Afghan forces under his command consisted of one cavalry regiment, five infantry battalions, ten guns and some 9,000 tribesmen. On 3 June, British officers received armistice terms and

126 Mr Redigul, an old Afghan inhabitant of Spinboldak, told me that there was a small water pool in the courtyard of Boldak Fort. The British planes dropped bombs in the water reservoir in order to stop water supply to Afghan soldiers. And old lady, whose two sons were among the soldiers, supplied drinking water for the soldiers. When she brought the second Zai (goat skin used as water container) her one son had been killed. She did not stop supplying water until her second son and she herself got injured and died. Mr Redigul also said that a farmer who was cutting wheat saw the British army passing, left his work and stabbed a British soldier with his sickle; while attacking another British soldier he was shot dead.

127 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, I-200 B, Pro. 114, NAI.

128 Aman-i-Afgan (Kabul), 2 July 1919.
stopped offensive action.\textsuperscript{129}

On 12 June the water channel which supplied water to Spin Boldak was cut by the Afghans. The British sent a cavalry to reconnoiter but were fired on by the tribesmen.\textsuperscript{130} During July, Afghan forces in the Murgha Chaman area facing New Chaman were further reinforced and the Afghan strength rose to four cavalry regiments, ten infantry battalions, thirty-eight guns, and 6,000 tribesmen.

On 20 July it was decided by the British to attack Afghan forces at Murgha Chaman. British forces reached Bogra spring on 22 July, but the attack was cancelled by the British owing to the news of the arrival of Afghan peace delegates at Dakka.\textsuperscript{131}

Discussing future course of action, the Viceroy wrote in a private letter to the Secretary of State that there were two alternatives; first, to drive a railway into Afghanistan and dominate the whole country; secondly, to assure the Afghans that Britain had no territorial designs on their territory and wished a prosperous and friendly Afghanistan as a neighbour. The Secretary of State rejected the first alternative on the basis of past British experience in Afghanistan and also on account of its costliness. He was

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{129} Molesworth, n. 103, p. 152.
\item\textsuperscript{130} Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 76, NAI.
\item\textsuperscript{131} Molesworth, n. 103, p. 152.
\end{enumerate}
inclined towards the second alternative. In his telegram of 17 May 1919, he warned the Viceroy of the serious consequence of a forward policy. The occupation of Jalalabad and subsequently of Kabul may allay tribal unrest for a short time, but this course would result in a prolonged contest with Afghanistan.

The Secretary of State in his telegraphic communication to the Viceroy explained the considerations which made him reluctant to sanction any further involvement in the affairs of Afghanistan. His words reveal the impact of the upheaval in the Arab world on British policy towards Afghanistan. He could not lightly sanction any more which would amount to -

an offensive on our part that would be tantamount to a formal declaration of war, from which withdrawal would not be feasible and which would commit your Government and His Majesty's Government to an adventure, the magnitude and consequences of which could not be foreseen. Nor can we overlook the effect of the Afghan War, undertaken in such circumstances and threatening the existence of one of the few surviving independent Muhammadan states, on Muslim feeling throughout the East, already resentful and suspicious of British designs and likely to become further embittered when the terms of settlement with Turkey are known.

132 Chelmsford to Montagu, 21 May 1919, Montagu Papers, Roll No. 1932, NAI.

133 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 15, NAI.

134 Ibid.
The Viceroy in reply of the Secretary of State's letter made an elaborate plea for a forward policy. He maintained that the defensive policy of British India would encourage the tribes on both sides of the border to indulge in anti-British activities. An advance on Jalalabad would impress the tribes that the British Government was strong; it would also have a good effect on Indian Muslims. Once British forces were at Jalalabad, they would be in a position to intercept supplies of arms and ammunition from Afghanistan to the frontier tribes. Such an advance would be a threat to Kabul, and Amanullah Khan would have to concentrate his forces for its defence, thus relieving the British frontier of the menacing presence of large Afghan forces. Withdrawal to Landi Kotal, the Viceroy feared, would be interpreted as inability to advance, and conflagration would be certain throughout the frontier.

He further pleaded for the occupation of Jalalabad on the basis of its supposed favourable repercussions on developments inside Afghanistan. He summed up in these words:

It is perhaps not too much to expect that the discontent with Amanullah's regime in which present trouble has its own origin will revive and gather strength with demonstration of Amanullah's failure. In Afghanistan there is

135 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 20, NAI.

136 Ibid.
no room for failures. And when Amanullah's failure is made manifest by our occupation of Jalalabad, there is a good chance that Afghans will repudiate him to leave way open for a new Amir with whom we shall have no difficulty in treating. 137

The Secretary of State however, remained unconvinced by the Viceroy's arguments. The British could not afford to capture and keep Jalalabad. He added:

I am confident that you will not have forgotten lessons of history, that we have not so much to fear from the Afghan regular army as from the irregular tribesmen and their constant attacks on our isolated camps and lines of communication. To hold the line and to protect your convoys between Jalalabad and Peshawar you will no doubt have provided troops in sufficient quantity and good quality. 138

He was afraid of prolonged hostilities with Afghanistan and their impact on the tribes as well as on the rest of India. He communicated his unhappiness with the state of affairs in the following words: "How unfortunate this Afghan business is, and who knows how long it may take us to settle our accounts? While we are fighting on the Frontier province and the Punjab to quiet down, and when part of India remains in an abnormal condition, it is bound to influence the rest of the country". 139

137 Ibid.

138 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 4-200 B, Pro. 66, NAI.

139 Montague to Chelmsford, 20 May 1919, Montague Papers, Roll No. 1930, NAI.
While the Secretary of State was having serious misgivings about hostilities in Afghanistan, Amir Amanullah in his letter of 10 May to the Viceroy wrote that he was willing to conclude a treaty of friendship with India. He asked the Viceroy to abolish the tyrannical laws like the Rowlatt Act and to recognise the absolute independence, equal rights and freedom in all respects of the Government of Afghanistan. He complained that the Viceroy did not reply to his letter within a reasonable time, and did not accept the appointment of the new Afghan Agent. The Amir was suspicious of this lapse on the part of the Viceroy which showed that he was reluctant to recognize the new Amir. 140

The Afghan war Minister and Commander of the Eastern front in his letter of 18 May 1919 to the Political Agent of the Khyber Agency stated that the British officers had commenced an unlawful war against Afghanistan, bombed civilians and killed children. On instructions from the Amir, he had suspended hostilities and hoped that the British would stop fighting. 141

Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan, Chief Afghan delegate, Sardar Habibullah Khan and Colonel Ahmad Ali Khan, members of the delegation were sent by Amir Amanullah to the British camp to negotiate peace terms. The British sent all of them

140 Adamec, n. 1, p. 114.

141 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 55, NAI.
to Peshawar so that they should be overawed by British military preparations. Abdur Rahman Khan was permitted to go to Afghanistan to communicate British peace terms. Two Afghan delegates were kept in Peshawar for the safe arrival of the British Agent at Kabul. They produced a firman dated 20 May as follows:

To Habibullah Khan, Superintendent of Post Offices, and Colonel Ahmad Ali Khan. I have been informed by Abdur Rahman Khan, late Afghan Envoy with the Government of India, that the Foreign Secretary discussed with him before his departure the question of the cessation of war and the opening of the door of peace. I therefore depute and authorise you to go to the field of battle and proceed to the British camp and discuss the terms of peace. If you find the ground favourable for peace inform me. In any case it is necessary, and I authorise you to take these steps. Amir Amanullah.

Why the two delegates delayed the production of the firman until the departure of the Chief delegate. The reason was obviously they thought that they would be detained for a long period and in showing this firman their visit to the British military camp would be justified. This firman was actually meant for their own guidance.

The Government of India advised the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier province not to stop the war till

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142 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 29, NAI.

143 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 8, NAI.
the Amir had ordered his soldiers to their peace stations. A signed copy of such orders was required to make it certain that the Amir was committed to peace. Meanwhile, British forces were to continue their advance. 144

On 27 May 1919, the Amir ordered all the commanders to stop fighting. This order was followed by the cessation of hostilities by the British. Abdul Aziz Khan, the late Afghan Envoy, was informed by the British Government to communicate the British decision to the Afghan Government. 145

Amir Amanullah, in his letter of 28 May to the Viceroy, ascribed strained relations "resulting in the outbreak of war to certain unpleasant events which arose from certain misunderstanding". He explained that the disturbances and disorders in northern India, and more especially the unruly demonstrations in Peshawar, had reached such a pitch that he was compelled to despatch troops to protect his frontiers. The Commandant of the Eastern Army, considering certain areas as part of Afghan territory according to maps and plans in his possession, proceeded to conduct some digging as a precautionary measure, whereupon British troops violated Afghan territory and the Amir was then obliged to declare war. 146

Thus, according to the Amir, the war was accidental and

144 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 27, NAI.
145 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200B, Pro. 101, NAI.
146 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 28, NAI.
undesirable. He had, therefore, put off the publication of a proclamation of Holy War by the Islamic Shaikhs of Afghanistan and had referred the matter to the National Council which decided that the Envoy should be sent to India to offer explanations and to stop the fighting. He further emphasized that he did not want that the century-old friendship between Afghanistan and Britain should be broken and bloodshed should lead to perpetual enmity. He was in favour of a peace treaty which would be for the good of both countries. 147 Attached to this communication was a certified copy of his order to the Commander of the Afghan Eastern Army. He asked the Commander that he should suspend hostilities until the door of discussion and communication was opened and defensive measures should be taken till further orders. He was asked to be cautious and to keep in view offensive preparations. 148 The Viceroy while replying the Amir's letter of 23 May maintained that Afghanistan was responsible for the war. He insisted that Afghan forces should withdraw to a distance of 20 miles from the frontier and that the Amir should write to the tribes that he asked for cessation of hostilities. 149

Amir Amanullah, in his proclamation addressed to the Afghan armed forces asked for cessation of hostilities.

147 Ibid.
148 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 23.
149 Chelmsford to Amir Amanullah, 3 June 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, 1-66, NAI.
An armistice had been declared which would pave the way for peaceful settlement between the two governments. He had appointed Ali Ahmad, Home Minister, as leader of the Afghan Peace Delegation. He added: "If we obtain an honourable peace, which means all respect and honour for our nation, well and good, but if we are unable to achieve our aim and object by peace we shall firmly carry on the fighting and the Holy War until death." He asked the armed forces to remain ready till the result of the Peace Conference was known. 150

On 25 July 1919, the Amir held a durbar. He blamed General Saleh Muhammad Khan, Sardar Abdul Rahman Khan, and Mirza Chulam Haider, for misleading and deceiving him. He did not want enmity between the two governments. Addressing the Mullahs present, he pointed out that according to the Quran peace was much better than war. 151 He affirmed that he would abide by the terms laid down in the compact and treaty between his father's and grandfather's Governments and the British Government. 152

The Amir summoned a meeting of the nobles and religious leaders and informed them that he had made repeated overtures for peace, but the British refused to negotiate. If

150 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, September 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 41, NAI.
151 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1919, 18-191, Pro. 114, NAI.
152 Ibid.
the people of Afghanistan considered him responsible for war and for the ruin of their country he would willingly abdicate. Bringing his infant son to the durbar he swore on the child's head as to the truth of his statements. This is the most solemn oath an Afghan can take. The assembled nobles and religious leaders declared that they were satisfied that the war had been forced on Afghanistan by the British. They assured him that the Afghans would fight in the holy war to the last man. The religious leaders wrote a fatwa of jehad which was copied and distributed among the tribes. 153

The Amir, in his letter of 14 June 1919 to the Viceroy, pointed out that the British had made certain impossible demands, such as the removal of the Afghan troops to a distance of twenty miles from the British troops and the freedom to fly British aircraft over Afghan territory. The latter was an extraordinary demand by any standards. He further added that as the military and civil forces of Afghanistan were identical, it was not possible to ask the villagers to leave their villages. 154

The Viceroy, in his telegraphic letter of 21 June 1919, reiterated his demand for the withdrawal of regular Afghan troops from the frontier to a distance of twenty miles from the nearest British force. He was very much concerned

153 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 159, NAI.

154 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-422, Pro. 305, NAI.
about Afghan regular and irregular forces near New Chaman and asked the Amir to remove them immediately. Afghan soldiers should also be withdrawn from British territory in the Peiwar Kotal area. He added that so long as a single Afghan regular soldier remained on the British side of the frontier no peace negotiations were possible, and there could be no alternative but a resumption of hostilities. 155

Amir Amanullah, in his letter of 2 July 1919, said that the re-establishment of peace was the object of both the governments. He had asked his officers in Chaman and Peiwar areas to withdraw their forces for a few miles. The British should withdraw their forces from New Chaman to Chaman and from Dakka to Landi Kotal. The Amir objected to the flying of aeroplanes over the Afghan territory. He refused to hand over those people who had fled to Afghanistan as it was against international law. 156

A large number of Pathan soldiers in the British army had crossed over to the Afghan side. Due to an alarming increase of desertions in the Khyber Rifles, Roos Keppel directed the Commandant to concentrate men at Landi Kotal and Jamrud and to ask them individually whether they wished to receive discharge or to remain loyal to the British. Six

155 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-422, Pro. 305, NAI.

156 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-422, Pro. 386, NAI.
hundred out of seven hundred soldiers at Landi Kotal elected discharge and at Jamrud the result was similar. 157

The disbandment of the Khyber Rifles adversely affected the Afridi tribes. The leaders of the Afridis were bribed by the British to remain quiet, but the young men of the tribes were secretly asked by their elders to work against the British. 158

Roos-Keppel wrote to the secretary to the Foreign Department that the Khyber Rifles had behaved very badly. The men at Landi Kotal commanded by British officers fought well, but the officers were so occupied with the campaign that they neglected the outposts. Soldiers from these outposts sent messages to Peshawar that the British were being defeated by the Afghans on all fronts and would shortly overwhelm Landi Kotal. These messages had a great impact and the Khyber rifles at Landi Kotal shot their officers and went over to the Afghan side. 159 A majority of the Ghilzais and the Achekzais of Gulistan opposed the British and crossed into Afghanistan. 160 The tribes living in the Thal area complained to Nadir Khan that they were being harassed by the British. The Chiefs of

157 Political and Secret Memoranda, L/P&S/18, fl 183, IOLR.

158 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1919, 1-235, Pro. 220, NAI.

159 Chelmsford to Montague, 21 May 1919, Montague Papers, Roll No. 1932, NAI.

160 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 8, NAI.
Masuds and Wazirs told him that they had ceased hostilities in accordance with his orders. Nadir Khan warned the British that if they continued to oppress the tribes, it would not be possible to conclude a peace treaty. 161

Had the war been prolonged the British would have faced many difficulties. The Government of India was worried about the internal situation in India and appealed to the people to support the Government against the Afghans. Maffey, Secretary to the Foreign Department, on 7 May wrote to Gandhiji:

The Afghan news will surprise you. Excited by grossly exaggerated stories of disorders in India, the hot-headed, inexperienced Amanullah has decided that the Afghan sword shall shine in India. It is a new complication. Militarily it is not a serious proposition for us and we are doing best to act with all restraint towards this young man in his mid-summer madness. 162

Gandhiji assured the Government of India that he would try to preserve peace in the country. But he in turn demanded: "The support I need is a satisfactory declaration on the Muhammadan question and withdrawal of Rowlatt legislation." 163 Another facet of Gandhi's approach is revealed in his remark that if the Afghans attacked India he would welcome them. 164

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161 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1919, 13-191, Pro. 111, NAI.
163 Ibid., p. 303.
164 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-222, Pro. 78, NAI.
The Agha Khan called upon the Muslims of India to help the British against the Afghans. He was sure that the British who overthrew German militarism could defeat the Afghans. He advised all his followers to remain, like him, staunchly loyal subjects of His Majesty the King Emperor. 165 The Secretary of State asked the Viceroy to distribute the Agha Khan's message among the frontier people.

Many rulers of the Princely States in India criticised the Amir of Afghanistan for declaring war and tried to improve their standing with their British masters. They assured the government of their readiness to help. The Begum of Bhopal contributed Rs. 25,000 and the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior Rs. 15,00,000 to be utilized by the government for the Afghan war. 166

The chief of Warahi in his letter to J.W.B. Merewether, Political Agent of Palanpur wrote:

I have learnt with great regret that British Government's old ally the Amir of Afghanistan on the termination of world wide war of right against might has turned into an enemy without any cause or provocation. His action in taking arms against the mighty government of Britain is most foolish and there is no doubt that it will be condemned by the Almighty and he shall deeply repent for the same. 167

He further wrote that the resources of his state were limited; but to prove his loyalty and devotion to the British he

165 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 72, NAI.

166 Military Department, Part B, September 1920, 274-278, Pro. 277.

167 Muridkanji to Political Agent, Palanpur, August 1919, Military Department, Part B, November 1919, 91-92, NAI.
contributed Rs. 100 to the government for being utilized towards the relief of wounded soldiers in the Afghan war. 168

Newspaper's coverage of the Anglo-Afghan war reflected various facets of the political scene in British India. The Aman-i-Afghan in its second issue published an article under the title of "What is the condition of the British?" It referred to the unrest in India, especially in the Punjab. The people had destroyed telegraph and railway stations and the British officers had removed their women from Lahore. Muslim soldiers were disarmed for lack of trust in them. Some of the Gurkha troops fought against the British and refused to surrender their arms. The paper also published reports that the British had committed many atrocities in Egypt. 169 Maulavi Abdul Bari declared a jihad against the British. Haji Abdul Razik, Commander of Army of Yaghistan, asked the Indians to fight the British. He asked the people to take up the arms and to start a campaign for national freedom. He appealed to the Indian soldiers not to stand against the Afghan army which consisted of thirty lakhs armed men. 170

168 Ibid.

169 Aman-i-Afghan (Kabul), 15 May 1919.

170 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1919, 18-191, Pro. 112, NAI.
The *Siyasat* of 22 June 1919, on the other hand, criticized Maulana Mohammad Ali who had said that no true Muslim could use his arms against the Amir of Afghanistan. It asserted that during the first two Afghan wars the Indian Muslims had remained steadfast in their loyalty to the British Government. They rendered as much help to the Government in conquering Afghanistan as was rendered by any other community. It added that the Muslims were ready to die for the British. 171

The *Jat Gazette* of 14 May 1919, published an appeal from the honourable Lal Chand of Rohtak. He advised the Indians to be loyal to the Government. He requested those who had taken military training during the First World War to join the army. They would be paid a bonus of Rs.25 in addition to their pay. The paper said that Amanullah Khan would soon be prisoner in Ludhiana like other Kings of Afghanistan. The paper suggested that the British should bring another man on the throne of Afghanistan and construct a railway line between Baluchistan and Herat. 172 The *Paisa Akhbar* of 30 May 1919 said that the Afghans had misunderstood the incidents which occurred in the Punjab and other parts of India. 173 The *Akhbar-i-Am* of the 24 May 1919, defended the

171 *Siyasat* (Lahore), 22 June 1919, Punjab Press Abstracts, vol. XXXII, p. 131, NML.
172 The *Jat Gazette* (Rohtak), 14 May 1919, Punjab Press Abstracts, vol. XXVII, p. 181, NML.
173 The *Paisa Akhbar* (Lahore), 14 May 1919, Punjab Press Abstracts, vol. XXXII, p. 188, NML.
allotment in the Budget of an extraordinarily large sum of money for the army. It remarked that the Amir's condition was like that of an ant which developed feathers when the hour of its death came closer. 174

The Hindu Gazette asked all the Hindus to help the Government in its campaigns against the Afghans. It observed that the Hindus had not forgotten the treatment which was accorded to them by the Afghans, Tartars and Durranis. It added: "At one time Hindu men and women were sold in the streets of Ghazni for two rupees a piece. The Kabul Hindus are not allowed to blow the conch in their temples." It concluded that the British emperor was the only protector of the Hindus. 175


175 The Hindu Gazette (Lahore), 8 June 1919, Punjab Press Abstracts, vol. XXXII, p. 199, NML.