CHAPTER IV

THE RAWALPINDI PEACE CONFERENCE

Anglo-Afghan relations were conducted on the basis of mutual mistrust. The Afghans believed that the British were expansionists whose plan was to occupy Afghanistan. The British could not trust the Afghans who continuously instigated the tribes and attacked British territory. These suspicions were, to some extent, based on mutual ignorance of each other. The Amir never allowed his envoy in India to mix freely with British officials to know about their feelings and intentions. His reports were based on information provided by spies, whose main object was to please him. The British Agent at Kabul remained practically a prisoner, and what little information he got was bazar gossip.¹

During the critical days of the war, in spite of the enormous strain put upon them, Anglo-Afghan relations remained reasonably friendly and the British were thereby saved from an appalling additional embarrassment; but this was because of Amir Habibullah. Hamilton Grant, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, wrote: "But this was entirely due to the personality and wisdom of the late Amir Habibullah, and to the

¹ Foreign Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Notes, p. 28, NAI.
manner in which the situation was handled. I need not now recall how near we were to a complete breakdown, or what deplorable results would have occurred had Amir Habibullah been murdered at an earlier date".  

The Treaties between Britain and Afghanistan were based on Griffin's letter to Amir Abdur Rahman Khan which was accepted by Amir Habibullah in the Dane Agreement of 1905. Griffin wrote:

"...if any foreign power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression, on the dominions of Your Highness in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you to such extent and in such manner as might appear to the British Government necessary in repelling it, provided that your Highness followed unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations."  

The British, on their part, did not keep their promise, even in the face of a real threat from Russia at the time of the Panjdeh incident in 1885. As regards the Amir's foreign relations, he sought British advice wherever it suited him. In the case of the reception of the German Mission to Kabul, this provision was completely ignored. The British could not

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2 Grant's Note, 20 June 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.
4 Panjdeh was a fertile plain in North Western Afghanistan. It was ceded to Czarist Russia in 1884 during the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman.
do anything to enforce the treaty and the Afghans never stopped intriguing with the tribes.  

The Viceroy, in his letter of 3 June 1919 to the Amir, expressed his desire for cessation of hostilities. He pointed out that the Amir had misunderstood the political situation in India and was responsible for the war. The Viceroy referred to Zarshah, a Chinwari chief, who had on Amir's firman (decree) occupied Bagh and Kaffir Kot. The Viceroy proposed the following terms for an armistice:

1. All Afghan troops should be withdrawn from the frontier. No Afghan troops were to be located within twenty miles of the nearest British force.

2. British troops should remain in Afghan territory wherever they were and with freedom to continue such military preparations and precautions as might be necessary. The troops would not take offensive action.

3. British aircraft would not bomb Afghan localities or forces so long as the armistice was observed. They had the freedom of movement in the air to reconnoitre and observe the positions of Afghan forces in order to ensure against any concentration of Afghan forces or tribesmen. The Amir was asked to guarantee that his people would not fire on British aircraft and to ensure the safety of any British airman who might be forced to

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5 *The Englishman* (Allahabad), 15 November 1919.

6 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 189, NAI.
land in tribal territory.

(4) The Amir should send messages to the tribes, on both sides of the Durand Line, stating that he had asked the Government of India for a cessation of hostilities. He was asked to warn the tribes that if any military action on their part would be at their own risk and they would not be granted asylum in Afghanistan.7

The Viceroy, in his telegraphic letter of 5 June to the Secretary of State, stated that he had appointed Foreign Secretary Grant as British Representative and Maffey as his Political Adviser. He wanted the same powers to Grant as were given in 1913 to McMahon for the Tibet negotiations.8

Amir Amanullah, in his letter of 11 June 1919, objected to the armistice terms. He particularly pointed out his difficulties in carrying out the withdrawal of Afghan forces twenty miles from the border. He argued that every single Afghan was a soldier and many had homes near the border; he, therefore, could not ask them to leave their homes. He also expressed his inability to stop his subjects from shooting at the British soldiers.9

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7 Viceroy to Amir Amanullah, 3 June 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, NAI.

8 (i) Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Pro. 200, NAI.
    (ii) See Foreign Office letter 1325 - 13, dated 13 August 1913, Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, NAI.

9 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 44, NAI.
The Viceroy in his letter of 21 June 1919 warned the Amir:

All I demanded was that your regular troops be removed from frontier to a distance of 20 miles from nearest British force. I understand you have given practical effect to this provision except in vicinity of New Chaman where I must ask you to do so at once. Further, I am informed there are still some Afghan troops on our side of frontier notably in vicinity of Faizabad Kotal. These must be immediately withdrawn. So long as a single Afghan regular soldier remains on our side, peace negotiations are out of the question and there can be no alternative but a resumption of hostilities.

The Viceroy wanted the Amir to issue orders to the tribes that they should not gather near British military forces. He maintained that it was necessary to reconnoitre in order to secure his troops against such hostile gatherings of the tribesmen. The Amir was requested to issue strict orders to his subjects against attacking the British aeroplanes. The Viceroy finally made it plain to the Amir that the British Government would not allow any further modifications of the armistice terms.

The Amir's letter of 11 June 1919 was studiously courteous. He made no attempts to defend his actions during

10 (i) Viceroy to Secretary of State, 22 June 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

(ii) The Times of India (Bombay), 23 June 1919, NAI.

11 The Times, 23 June 1919.

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

13 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 22 June 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.
the crisis leading to the war. In response to the Viceroy's warning, he enumerated his assets: (a) Afghan passion for independence; (b) Afghanistan's power of resistance in spite of lack of organisation which he frankly admitted, (c) his authority to issue an appeal for *jehad*, and (d) the newly awakened world public opinion against oppression and domination.

He maintained that he had already issued orders to his general to stop all hostilities, and thus had brought about a *de facto* ceasefire. He finally appealed to the Viceroy: "Your Excellency will see signal proof of my good intentions in my acceptance of your terms of armistice in a reasonable manner. If Your Excellency will overlook past and carefully consider, you will see a bright future for both parties in the hope of friendly relations between the two governments". 14

The Viceroy ordered the cessation of hostilities. He informed the Secretary of State that the Amir's contention was correct that he had in large measure carried out the spirit of armistice terms as he had secured a cessation of hostilities since the end of May and had openly given orders to this end. 15 He added:

> We are confident that Amir now realises our strength and will be grateful to us for forgiveness and saving his face before his

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14 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 16 June 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

15 Ibid.
people and that consequently his delegates who appear to have been chosen for their friendly connection with India will be instructed to negotiate in spirit of trust and friendliness. 16

The collapse in Waziristan and Zhob, with its inevitable reaction on the administered districts, demanded instant attention. Internal situation in India was also critical. The disturbances of April had been suppressed, but with the abrogation of martial law in the Punjab on June 11, and the consequent relaxation of press censorship, the tide of agitation rose quickly. The Khilafat movement was at the same time gaining intensity. As Rushbrook Williams put it: "During the whole of the summer of 1919 a marked feature of the political life of India was the vehemence and universality of the press attacks, which were launched against the administration". 17

British authorities in India were anxious to conclude a peace treaty with Afghanistan. There were strategic, political, and economic compulsions influencing British policy. The economic situation had also affected British policy towards Afghanistan and peace treaty. The failure of the 1913

16 Ibid.
monsoon had caused widespread distress. This was intensified by the influenza epidemic, which raged through the country in the autumn of that year, causing a mortality of six millions and seriously affecting the efficiency of the agricultural population. By July 1919, the prices of foodgrains had reached an unprecedented level. General war weariness was prevalent, and above all the Government of India were convinced that there was nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by prolongation of war with Afghanistan.  

Apart from the reasons mentioned above, the Viceroy's suggestion was based on a realistic appraisal of the situation, i.e. prolongation of war would not be acceptable to the world. In view of Britain's delicate position in West Asia since the end of the First World War, it was extremely necessary to abstain from any action which may cause embarrassment to Britain in the Muslim world. Thus imperial considerations required cessation of hostilities in Afghanistan. Moreover, prolongation of war would have necessitated construction of a railway through Khyber. This would have almost certainly increased the hostility of the Afridees and other tribes against the British. Although the British had superiority in weapons and manpower, they could not fight the Afghans for a long time. The Afghans would have resorted, it was feared, to guerrilla warfare and


19 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Pro. 735, NAI.
the geographical situation would have been in their favour.

Grant recommended a lenient policy towards Afghanistan. He argued that the Muslim world was suspicious of Britain's designs in the Islamic world. A non-aggressive attitude towards Afghanistan would demonstrate that Britain had no intentions to crush Islam. There were serious misgivings regarding British policy in West Asia and the Anglo-Afghan war had further alienated Muslim public opinion. Moreover, the Bolshevik Revolution had transferred the scene in Central Asia. According to Grant, Bolshevism was much more dangerous than Tsarist Russia:

Bolshevism appears to us a danger scarcely less formidable than the aggressive foreign policy of the late Russian empire. But it is different in that it will not, we believe, take the form of military invasion, but adopt the more insidious and subtle tactics of peaceful penetration, coupled perhaps with military support and elaborate propaganda and intrigue, directed particularly against Great Britain. 21

Military occupation of Afghanistan, it was feared, would be a costly venture and would have a weakening effect on Britain's position in Asia. Grant concluded: "The only alternative appears to be to secure the genuine friendship and trust of Afghanistan and to persuade the Amir and his

20 "Munasibat-i-Afghanistan Wa Ittihad Shoaraw" (Kabul, 1971), p. 4.

advisers of the sincerity and harmlessness of our intentions and the great danger to himself and his kingdom of the inroad of Bolshevism". 22

Regarding annexing Afghanistan's territory with British India, Grant commented:

There is nothing in regard to which nations in general, and Afghanistan in particular, are more sensitive than territorial possession. History teems with examples of wars bred by (irredentanta); and I believe in the present instance, if we insist on territorial surrender by the Afghan Government, we shall be laying up a store of trouble for ourselves in the future which will necessitate extended military operations and military garrisons on a prohibitive scale. 23

Grant suggested the following proposals for establishing Anglo-Afghan relations on a sound footing:

(1) Acceptance of the frontier agreed upon by past Amirs, subject to rectification of undemarcated portions.

(2) Improvement of the position of the British Agent in Kabul and other British representatives in various parts of the country and acceptance of their free movement and free intercourse with Afghan officials.

(3) A corresponding improvement in the powers and positions of the Afghan Envoy with the Government of India.

22 Grant to Roos-Keppell, 20 June 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, NAI.

23 Grant's Note, 20 June 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.
(4) Control over the Amir's import of arms through India.
(5) Some understanding regarding the Amir's foreign relations to accept Britain's advice in important issues.
(6) Isolation of Afghanistan as a buffer against Bolshevism.
(7) Expulsion of Indian Revolutionaries, like Barakatullah and Mahendra Pratap, from Afghanistan.
(8) Dismissal and expulsion of Bolshevik mission and agents from Afghanistan.
(9) Abolition of the Afghan post office at Peshawar.
(10) An understanding regarding interference with the tribes.
(11) Keeping peace on the common border between British India and Afghanistan.
(12) A reduced subsidy in consideration of the Amir's acceptance generally of the Durand line and of the maintenance of generally friendly relations. ²⁴

Grant suggested two agreements, a formal treaty and an exchange of notes. The formal treaty should contain:
(1) a clause re-establishing friendship.
(2) a clause accepting the frontier as laid down in former treaties and engaging to accept rectification of the undemarcated portions.

²⁴ Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Notes, p. 30, NAI.
(3) an arms clause.

(4) a subsidy clause.

An exchange of notes should cover the remaining points.

Lieutenant-General Kirkpatrick, Chief of the General Staff, suggested three important rectifications of British India's frontier with Afghanistan. He suggested: "In the Khyber region our line should be advanced so as to afford room for concentration, maintenance and deployment on the Western side of the Khyber Hills of sufficient forces to operate promptly and decisively by land or air against Afghan forces in the plains of Ningarhar and Jalalabad." The actual area which was proposed to be occupied was about forty miles by twenty. It comprised a tract of country running from the Sufed Koh northwards into the Mohmand country, taking in Basawal and Dakka. Khost and a large strip of country running from the north of Chaman down to and including the cultivated valleys of Jat Poti and Shorawak were to be annexed.

For annexing the vicinity of Dakka and especially the portion of it north of the Kabul river, it was required to keep considerable garrisons in this area for its control. Such control was entirely distasteful to the Shinwaris. The

25 General Kirkpatrick, Chief of the General Staff, Notes, 11 June 1919, L/F&S/10/809, IOLR.

26 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Notes, p. 31, NAI.
Afridis and Mohamands would have certainly opposed British infiltration into their country. A railway was required for movement of troops in that area. Such a railway would have been resented by the Afridis. The Afghan tribes would have continually harassed British troops and civilian staff.27

About Lieutenant-General Kirkpatrick's proposal regarding the annexation of Khost, Grant commented:

We should occupy it on the general lines of our administration on the Khurram Valley and that such occupation would not be unpopular. I can only point out that the conditions in Khost, which is occupied by some of the most truculent Sunni tribes on the Northwest Frontier, are entirely different from those in the Kurram Valley - a Shia enclave ever fighting for its existence against surrounding Sunni enemies. We tried for a short time in the second Afghan War to administer Khost through an Indian Moslem official, Shahzada Sultan Jan, but the experiment was not successful. 28

Grant asserted that the occupation and administration of Khost was not possible.

With regard to the proposal for the rectification of the frontier on the Baluchistan border, Grant wrote:

I can only say that it would add a thousand-fold to the rancour that still lingers from our original annexation of Chaman. Nor with all differences can I see that recent events have demonstrated any serious weakness on this side. We have without difficulty not only kept the enemy at a distance from New

27 Grant's Note, 20 June 1919, p. 4, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

28 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Notes, p. 32, NAI.
Chaman, but have actually advanced and captured the formidable fort of Spin Boldak, and we are, I understand in a position to move on Kandahar at any moment. 29

As regards occupation of the cultivated valleys of Jat Poti and Shorawak, Grant was of the opinion that the Afghans would resent it.

Grant only suggested a small rectification of the frontier in the vicinity of Landi Kotal. He added: "If more is essential, I would propose that it should take the form of an exchange, and that we should offer finally to abandon our claim to the Bohai Dag in the Mohamand country in exchange for territory elsewhere".30

The Government of India was anxious for a peace treaty with Afghanistan. It was not possible for them to offer the Amir British friendship as an immediate sequel to his unprovoked aggression on British India. The first requisite was peace, if not at any price, at least without haggling over details. The conclusion of peace could not be allowed to await the outcome of protracted negotiations, which would be necessary for the arrangement of relations with the Amir on a permanent basis.31

The October Revolution of 1917 had replaced the danger of Russian aggression by peaceful penetration of the

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, 15-138, Pro. 92, NAI.
Bolshevik ideology which was a real threat to British position in Asia. This new danger necessitated maintenance of friendly relations with Afghanistan. Territorial annexation could provoke the Afghans. Grant suggested that the issue should be settled in two phases, a peace treaty to be followed by a treaty of friendship. This suggestion was approved by the Government of India.

The Viceroy was anxious to have an early peace with Afghanistan. He presented his draft treaty to the Secretary of State on 29 June 1919. He held that any delay in the conclusion of a peace treaty with Afghanistan would further complicate matters for Britain. Establishment of friendly relations was the only way for the exclusion of Bolshevik and other anti-British influences. The draft contained the following terms:

(1) Because of Afghan aggression, the importation of arms through India would be prohibited;
(2) No subsidies would be granted, and the arrears would be forfeited;
(3) If the Amir were contrite, after six months, new negotiations might establish friendly relations.

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32 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Notes, p. 18, NAI.
33 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Notes, p. 13, NAI.
(4) Until that stage was reached, British troops would remain in Afghan territory in the Khyber area. British troops from other positions would be withdrawn. 34

The Viceroy was prepared to receive another Afghan Mission after six months for signing a treaty of friendship. During this probationary period, the Amir had to prove his desire for friendship. In order to obtain a treaty of friendship from Britain, the Amir must show his goodwill by:

(1) dismissing all hostile foreigners from Afghanistan;
(2) having foreign relations with no country other than Britain;
(3) expelling Obeidullah and other Indian Revolutionaries;
(4) co-operating in keeping the borders safe from outlaws;
(5) improving the position of the British agent and other British representative. The position of the Afghan envoy would be correspondingly upgraded. 35

Amir Amanullah in his letter of 2 July 1919 to the Viceroy stated that the re-establishment of peace was the object of both parties and that it was necessary that attention should be devoted to the removal of misunderstandings and the

34 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Pro. 729, NAI.

35 (i) Ibid.

(ii) Viceroy to Secretary of State, 4 July 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, NAI.
establishment of new friendship. Regarding peace terms, Amir suggested that regular troops should be removed to their previous stations. He had already issued orders for the withdrawal of Afghan troops. It was absolutely necessary that British forces should be withdrawn from New Chaman to Chaman and from Dakka to Landi Kotal. He objected to the overflying of British aeroplanes and refused to allow the return of tribesmen to British India; this, he maintained, was against International Law. 36

There was much disagreement among the Amir's advisers regarding peace terms as well as regarding the composition of the delegation to be sent to India. Mahmud Tarzi and the extremist party were pressing the Amir to make excessive demands but the moderates pointed out that such demands were bound to be rejected and a fruitless mission to India would be detrimental to Afghan interests. The majority of Afghans were in favour of peace on any reasonable terms but, according to British sources, extremists and foreigners in Afghanistan were trying to force the Amir into further hostilities. 37

The Government of India wanted to terminate hostilities with Afghanistan in two phases: first peace and then a treaty of friendship. It was felt that immediate peace should

36 Frontier and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-422, Pro. 386, NAI.
37 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 July 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.
be secured without protected negotiations. It was hoped that
force of circumstances, commercial, geographical and political,
and the closure of the passes to the Afghan nomads and traders
would eventually force the Amir to seek friendly relations with
Britain. The Viceroy pointed out that the draft treaty was not
merely penal in character but held a definite offer of
friendship on old lines.38

The Secretary of State expressed approval of the
suggested probationary period, but objected at first to two
stage negotiations. The initial treaty, while claiming to be
a treaty of peace, was in reality a treaty of penalties alone.
It offered no definite inducement to sign and imposed no
definite obligations on the Amir. After the probationary
period, it was feared, there would be fruitless discussions and
arguments as to whether the Amir had fulfilled the conditions
for renewed friendship.39

The Secretary of State held that the real terms of
peace were contained in the Viceroy's six points. He, therefore,
prefersed to incorporate those points in the peace treaty.
During the probationary period, the Amir would neither get
subsidy nor the right to import arms through India. Under
such conditions, in case the terms were not complied with,

38 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 10 July 1919, L/P&S/10/
808, IOLR.

39 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier,
October 1920, 705-806, Pro. 735, NAI.
there was no need for a second meeting; the only points to be decided would be whether to grant subsidy, and if so, what amount, or whether to cancel the treaty altogether. All previous treaties with Afghanistan had lapsed and it was desirable to include in the new treaty the entire framework of future relations between the two countries. The Secretary of State, therefore, suggested the following Articles:

I. "Amir will hold no political relations with any foreign power except the British Government. He will follow unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to his relations with all foreign powers.

II. If any foreign power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of Amir, the British Government will be prepared to support Amir against such aggression to such extent as may appear to them necessary and in such manner as they may deem advisable.

III. The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond their frontier on the side of Afghanistan, and Amir will at no time exercise interference in the territories beyond this line on the side of India. The tribes on the Afghanistan side of the frontier shall not receive allowance from the British Government, and the tribes on the Indian side

40 Secretary of State to Viceroy, 7 July 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.
of the frontier shall not receive allowance from the Afghan authorities.

IV The frontier from the Nawa Peak to Sasobi shall follow the line shown in the map attached to this treaty, and shall be demarcated by a British Commission and Amir shall accept such demarcation.

V Amir shall co-operate with the British Government for the maintenance of peace and order upon their common frontier and for the removal of outlaws and notorious raiders, and shall instruct his offices accordingly. 41

The Secretary of State agreed that it was objectionable to the Afghans to allow their land to be annexed but felt it desirable to draw a line so as to include a railhead at Kam Dakka or Loi Dakka if the Shilman or Kabul River Railway was ever constructed. He advised the Viceroy not to mention the railway in negotiations with Afghanistan. 42

The crux of the problem was Article 1 dealing with control over Afghanistan's foreign relations. One year before the Third Afghan War there had been a profound change in political outlook in West Asia including Afghanistan. The Arab awakening, the new emphasis on self-determination contained in President Wilson's pronouncements, Bolshevik propaganda, and the new phase in the national liberation

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
movement in India -- these momentous events had their impact on the Anglo-Afghan relations. This was evidenced in Amanullah's first utterance as Amir in which he emphasized the sovereign independence of Afghanistan and complete freedom to conduct its external relations. The Viceroy in his telegram of 10 July 1919 to the Secretary of State remarked:

If we press the matter we shall be met either with a flat refusal or with counter demand which we cannot brush aside, and if in the end we manage by threats of renewal of hostilities to force on Amir inclusion of your Article I in a treaty we should find that the provision would be broken as it has been in part by his predecessors. For instance, Amir could not in the face of his people refuse correspondence with Turkey or even the admission of a Turkish mission. Thus Article urged would remain a dead letter and we should be faced with necessity of winking at its breach or sending a force to Kabul to enforce compliance. 43

The Viceroy was of the opinion that the Secretary of State's Article II harked back to a time when Afghanistan was seriously afraid of Tsarist Russian invasion. Amir Amanullah had nothing to fear from Bolshevik Russia and he, therefore, would not have considered the British offer of assistance in case of Soviet aggression as a good bargain for British control of his foreign relations. 44 The Viceroy did not agree with the Secretary of State's suggestions regarding the incorporation of Dakka and Kam Dakka in British Indian territory. He further added that the Amir would not be allowed to import unlimited arms through

43 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 10 July 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

44 Ibid.
India; only restricted quantity of arms should be allowed to be imported.\textsuperscript{45} The Secretary of State finally, in his letter of 16 July 1919 with great reluctance agreed with Viceroy's plan. He warned the Viceroy to be cautious in case the negotiation proceeded in a different direction. The Secretary of State said that the British were prepared to resume hostilities in case the Amir refused preliminary treaty.\textsuperscript{46}

During the long correspondence between the Amir and the Viceroy the tribal situation deteriorated. The Afghan Government did not give any reply to the Viceroy's armistice terms. The Government of India thought that the Amir did not want real peace, and its object in asking for an armistice was only to gain time for a resumption of hostilities. The Government of India decided that if Afghan delegates did not arrive by 22 July 1919, British troops would start an offensive attack on all fronts.\textsuperscript{47} There was, in fact, no resumption of hostilities as the British received a letter dated 18 July from the Amir informing the despatch of an Afghan delegation, under Sardar Ali Ahmad Khan, expected to reach Rawalpindi on 25 July.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} Secretary of State to Viceroy, 16 October 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

\textsuperscript{47} (i) General Staff, India, Military Report, Afghanistan, Part-I History (Simla, 1941), p. 98.

\textsuperscript{48} General Staff, India, Military Report, Afghanistan, Part-I History (Simla, 1941), p. 98.
The two most surprising features of the Rawalpindi peace negotiations were, first, the number and personnel of the Afghan peace delegation; and, secondly, the fact that the delegation was given plenary powers. Under the old regime an Amir used to send one or two of his own near relations to represent him. But the Afghan Mission at Rawalpindi consisted of a strange medley representing widely different elements. For instance, Sardar Ali Ahmad, who led the delegation, represented the grandee official class of the new school and General Muhammad Yunus Khan the grandee official class of the old school. Colonel Chulam Muhammad was an old soldier who had fought against the British in the second Afghan War. He had never been to India and had never seen even Jalalabad in his own country. Sardar Abdur Rahman and Colonel Abdul Aziz, who had been Afghan officials previously posted in India, were acquainted with India. A remarkable feature of the delegation was the appointment of Narinjan Das and Dr Abdul Ghani, as members of the Afghan delegation. In the selection of these delegates, an endeavour had been made to appeal to public opinion in India. The majority of those selected had been intimately connected with India. Dr Abdul Ghani was an Indian Muslim, while the appointment of Narinjan Das was intended to enlist the sympathy and support of the Hindu community in India. Throughout the negotiations it was seen that the Afghan delegates had been briefed to encourage and promote close ties with the Hindus and Muslims of India.
Sardar Ali Ahmad attempts to elicit Muslim sympathy in the mosque at Rawalpindi were doubtless in pursuance of the same policy. Apart from this, the selection of the Afghan delegation was evidence of the newly awakened democratic spirit. A still more striking evidence was the bestowal on them of plenary powers. This amazing departure from the old autocratic system was an indication of the Amir's desire to work in future on constitutional lines.

The first meeting between the Afghan and British delegations was held on 26 July. Sardar Ali Ahmad, the Chief Afghan delegate, used the occasion to present the Afghan version of events leading to the war. He maintained that the repressive Rowlatt Act in India was responsible for the Anglo-Afghan war. This reference was designed to invoke the sympathy of the Indian people for Afghanistan. The Sardar mentioned other causes of the war which, he insisted, were provoked by the British. The delay of about forty-four days by the Viceroy in replying to the Amir's letter written immediately after his accession to the throne, and British rejection of the Afghan request to send a delegation to the Paris Peace Conference were additional causes of the war.

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

50 Ibid.

51 The British delegation for the Rawalpindi Conference consisted of Sir Hamilton Grant as chief delegate, J.L. Maffey, Political Adviser, Brigadier-General F.J. Moberly, Military Adviser, Sir Gurbaksh Singh Bedi, and Sir Sham.: Shah members and Nawab Maula Baksh interpreter.
He added that Afghanistan's friendship was more important for the British than the friendship of Britain was for the Afghans. Playing upon British anxieties regarding Bolshevik propaganda, he said that Afghanistan could save India from Bolshevik infiltration. Grant challenged the statement that Afghanistan's friendship was more important for the British. He pointed out the importance of British friendship but declaring that Afghanistan's foreign trade depended on the goodwill of the British Government in India. Sardar Ali Ahmad countered Grant's argument in a subtle manner. He said:

The Bolsheviks say to Afghanistan: If you remain friendly to us, we will give you rifles and cartridges, be friends with us. We shall never allow Bolshevik influences to enter Afghanistan. If you close the door of our trade, we will increase our trade with the Bolsheviks. If you fight with us we can fight with you and can get help from Bolsheviks and fight against you. But if you are our friend, we can prevent them by force. Now it is for you to decide whether you will make us friends or drive us to the Bolsheviks.

During the second session of the conference held on 29 July 1919, Sardar Ali Ahmad said:

Afghanistan is like an iron barrier between the British Government and her enemies. The British Government in virtue of this co-operation had been able to rule India without trouble or inconvenience and has had nothing to fear from its Asiatic enemy. Unless the Afghans were completely destroyed nothing could interfere with the tranquil administration of the British Government in India.

52 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, 15-138, Pro. 52, NAI.
Pointing out the benefits of Afghan friendship, he observed that the British Government, through its actions, had not shown very great friendly disposition towards Afghanistan. The British refusal to allow the tribes to be brought under Afghan control was objectionable to the Afghan people. 53

The Sardar referred to the war in Tripoli and the Balkans, British hostilities with the Turkish Government, the undue hardships inflicted on the Muslims of India, and the attack on the sacred places of Islam, such as Baghdad, Kerbela, and Jerusalem. These events had made a deep impression on the Afghans and they were suspicious of British intentions. 54

Referring to the events leading to the war, the Sardar mentioned the nationalist movement in India. British repression in India had aggravated the situation on the frontiers. There were reports of serious disturbances on the Peshawar frontier. These reports excited the minds of the people of Afghanistan, who had temporarily been kept quiet by the late Amir. Afraid of repercussions on the Afghan frontier, the Afghan Government had posted troops on the frontier as a precautionary measure. These moves, in turn aroused British suspicions. This misunderstanding on both

53 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, 15-138, Pro. 53, NAI.
54 Ibid.
sides led to war.  

Contrary to the British view that the first overtures for peace were made by Afghanistan, the Sardar said that it was Bray, the Foreign Secretary, who expressed his desire for peace through the Afghan Envoy, Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan, to Amir Amanullah. He added: "In spite of what had happened, the Amir maintained his friendly attitude and agreed to the proposal. His unparalleled wisdom temporarily checked the universal excitement among the Afghan tribes, and he communicated to the British Government his orders for an armistice."  

Sardar Ali Ahmad maintained that the frontier tribes were Afghanistan's own people who spoke the same language and belonged to one nation. The allegiance of the frontier tribes was the main cause of anxiety between the two governments, but he expressed the hope that this problem could be solved in a friendly manner, thereby promoting peace and friendship.  

Hamilton Grant, in his reply, observed that Afghanistan had enjoyed complete independence. The Amir of Afghanistan was completely free in his internal affairs and equally free in external relations, but he had wisely chosen to employ the British Government as the agency for the discharge of his foreign relations. He pointed out that one important

55 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, 15-138, Pro. 52, NAI.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
article of the previous treaty with Afghanistan was that the Amir should seek the advice of the British Government in his foreign relations and should conduct them through British agencies. The British Government on their part gave the Amir an assurance of military support against unprovoked aggression by any other power on Afghan territory. This arrangement, he said, was very useful for Afghanistan. Carried away by his own argument, Grant put India and Afghanistan on an equal footing and asserted that Britain, with her diplomatic experience, was in a better position to safeguard the common interests of Afghanistan and India than it could be the case if Afghanistan was left to manage its foreign relations by itself. Regarding the problems of the frontier tribes, Grant observed that all great powers had such problems on their frontiers. Afghanistan and Britain could certainly maintain order in the frontier region if they maintained friendly relations.\footnote{58 Ibid.}

Grant explained the terms of the proposed treaty at the third meeting held on 31 July. The treaty, particularly Article 4, kept the door open for renewal of friendship and for readmission of Afghanistan to such benefits as may subsequently appear suitable in the light of her conduct during the next six months. Grant attached importance to the provision that Britain should be Afghanistan's adviser and
agent in the conduct of her foreign relations. He stated that the Government of India regarded the presence of various Indian 'seditionists' in Afghanistan -- Raja Mahendra Pratap, Maulavi Obeidullah and Barakatullah -- as an unfriendly act. Their expulsion from Afghan territory, Grant said, would be treated as a sign of the desire of the Afghan Government for friendly relations with the British Government in India.59

Referring to the frontier tribes, Grant stated that the British Government considered the action of the Afghan Government in this regard as the main test of friendship. There should be no attempt to incite the tribes against British authority; no allowance should be granted them by the Afghan government; notorious characters should be removed from the frontier and there should be peace on the common border. Regarding the boundary between the two countries, the treaty merely asked the Afghans to accept the Durand boundary line between India and Afghanistan with a little readjustment in the Khyber region.60 The Afghan Government was also requested to release the British Agent at Kabul. A Persian translation of the proposed treaty was then read out and a copy was handed over to the Afghan delegate. Sardar Ali

59 Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, 15-138, Pro. 74, NAI.

60 Ibid.
Ahmad was then asked whether he had full powers to accept or reject the treaty.\textsuperscript{61}

It was now the turn of Sardar Ali Ahmad to respond to Grant's speech. He regretted that the discussion of one day at the conference were not consistent with the discussions of the next day. He went on: "We were one hundred miles distant from peace. The first day's meeting brought us twenty miles nearer. The second day's meeting brought us eighty miles nearer. The expressions of today have driven us two hundred miles back. Afghanistan has made itself independent and it does not matter whether the British Government recognises that independence or not."\textsuperscript{62} This was in response to the threat made by Grant that if Afghanistan did not accept the terms being offered by him, Britain would resume hostilities against Afghanistan. It seemed that the British authorities considered Afghanistan to be at par with native states like Gwalior, and other states in India. But, reminded the Sardar, Afghanistan was an independent country and was ready to sacrifice everything for her independence. She would do so in case of any power which threatened her independence, be it Russia, Britain, Germany or even Turkey. As for the frontier tribes, he sarcastically referred to the expenditure of men and money

\textsuperscript{61} Proceedings of the Third Meeting, Rawalpindi Peace Conference, 31 July 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Frontier B, October 1919, 15-138, NAI.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
incurred by the British Government. If they handed over half the amount of money spent on maintaining control over the tribes to the Government of Afghanistan, there would be no trouble on the British border. But if the tribes remained as they then were, they would commit raids on British territory; and the British Government would think that they had been incited by the Afghans. The Afghan Government would know nothing of the matter, but British displeasure would spoil Anglo-Afghan relations.

These moves and counter-moves in the Conference were made in the context of the broad framework of negotiations. The British tried to make an assessment of the instructions given to Afghan delegation before it had left Kabul. So far as could be gathered, the Afghan delegates were instructed to conclude a treaty of peace provided that this involved neither territorial surrender nor the continued control of the foreign relations of Afghanistan by the British Government. These two points were an absolute *sine qua non*. The delegates were, however, also ordered to make a strong bid for:

1. The arrears of the subsidy including a crore of rupees promised to the late Amir.
2. New subsidy;
3. The surrender of large tribal areas, including Waziristan, to Afghanistan.

63 Ibid.
(4) An amnesty for such tribes as had revolted against British Indian Government.

(5) A recognition of the Amir as "His Majesty" by the British Government.

As soon as the British realized that this was the Afghan brief, they decided to present the draft of the proposed peace treaty in the form of an ultimatum. The Viceroy thought that it was no longer possible to secure control over Afghanistan's foreign relations through treaty provisions; circumstances demanded a more subtle manner of doing it. 64

Presented with the Peace Treaty as an ultimatum, the Afghans were put in a very awkward position as regards their own demands. They were not in a position to reply with an ultimatum embodying their desiderata and they could only put them forward incidently; and when they did so, these demands were categorically rejected and the Afghan delegation could not do anything about them.

In presenting the draft peace treaty as an ultimatum, the British made it clear to the Afghans that they were not allowed to refer any point in it for reconsideration to the Afghan Government. This approach was adopted on the assumption that if allowed to do so, the Afghans would have insisted upon referring every point in the treaty for

64 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Pro. 798, NAI.
reconsideration. In this manner, the British authorities forced acceptance of those terms without further delay. 65

The Afghan delegates, faced with the British ultimatum, were ready to sign the treaty in case they could obtain the unfettered right of Afghanistan to conduct her own foreign relations. The Afghan delegates were sore at not being offered a treaty of friendship. They were also unhappy about the terms of the proposed treaty of peace. The British delegates took the line that freedom in foreign relations was not a matter which could properly be included in a peace treaty. The Afghans frankly stated that they could not return to Kabul empty-handed on this crucial issue. 66

Grant realized that without an assurance on freedom to conduct their foreign relations, the Afghan would have no option except a complete breakdown of negotiations. He, therefore, suggested to the Viceroy that a document containing an assurance regarding freedom to manage foreign relations should be given with the peace treaty. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State agreed with the suggestion. A treaty of peace was finally signed on 8 August 67 and a separate letter was given to the Afghan delegates accepting Afghanistan's freedom in its foreign relations. The letter runs as follows:

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65 Ibid.

66 Grant to Denys Bray, 8 August 1919, Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-805, NAI.

67 See Appendix X.
You asked for some further assurance that the Peace Treaty which the British Government now offers, contains nothing that interferes with the complete liberty of Afghanistan either in internal or external matter.

My friend if you will read the Treaty carefully, you will see that there is no such interference with the liberty of Afghanistan. You have told me that the Afghan Government are unwilling to renew the arrangements whereby the late Amir agreed to follow unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to the external relations. I have not, therefore, pressed this matter and no mention of it is made in the Treaty. Therefore, he said treaty and this letter leave Afghanistan officially free and independent in its internal and external affairs. Moreover, this war has cancelled all previous treaties.

The Rawalpindi Peace Treaty contained the establishment of peace, prohibition of war material through India, confiscation of the late Amir’s arrears of the subsidy and discontinuation of further subsidy, resumption of discussions leading to friendship treaty after a probationary period of six months, and the demarcation of the Indo-Afghan boundary in the Khyber region.

The position on the North-West Frontier province after the termination of hostilities remained tense. The Waziris and Masuds frequently raided the administered area from Peshawar to Dera Ismail Khan. In November 1919 a settlement was made with the Afridis which included a fine of 50,000 rupees and the return of the Government arms and property. The Afridis, however, could not be reconciled and

68 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, October 1920, 705-806, Pro. 788, NAI.
continued their raids. 69

For the first time since the Durand Mission (1893) to Kabul, the Amir issued an open proclamation addressed to the frontier tribes. The proclamation began with a salutation to Sayeds, Ulemas, Sheikhs, Nawabs, Khans, Maliks (village headman) and the brave tribes of the frontier. It stated that in order to safeguard the honour and freedom of Afghans in Afghanistan and in the border region, the Amir had informed them of his intentions to make war, and the tribes gave proof of their willingness to fight against the British by responding to his call. It went on: "As there is now an armistice and Ali Ahmad Khan has been sent to India for settlement, tribes should suspend fighting for the present. 70 If peace with all respect and honour for Afghanistan was obtained well and good; if not the Amir would carry on a holy war until his death. He asked the tribes: "You the noble tribes and the mighty Afghans should also stand firmly united and courageous for the achievement of the end." 71 He added that he would not transact any state affairs without their knowledge, advice and consent.

The tribes were agitated regarding the turn of events. About 500 Afridis, who had deserted the British army, went to Jalalabad to interview General Ghulam Nabi.


70 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 27 July 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

71 Ibid.
They said that they had sacrificed themselves for the sake of the Amir and asked what the latter would do for them. General Ghulam Nabi replied that whatever individual services they might have performed, the Afridi tribe had betrayed the Amir by not raising the banner of revolt when called upon to do so and had also looted Jalalabad. 72

On 27 June, a large number of Shinwaris, Khugianis, Mangals, Mohammands, and Afridis collected near Khamti Kahani at the invitation of Afghan officials. The estimated total was about 13,000. Leaders were collected and addressed by Sardar Ali Ahmad. He assured the tribesmen that hostilities would recommence in three or four days after the Id festival, and would continue without intermission until the British had accepted the Amir's terms. A peace delegation would go to Rawalpindi as arranged but this would be merely to gain time as there was no hope of peace without victory, and the Amir had no intention of making peace unless all his demands were accepted. The Amir wished to complete his preparations which were proceeding very satisfactorily. 73 The Afridis present pointed out that it was unlikely that their tribe would rise unless the Amir came and conducted the war in person; they had frequently been encouraged to join the Afghans in the past and had invariably been deserted by the Afghans and suffered heavily

72 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 19 June 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.

73 Viceroy to Secretary of State, 1 July 1919, L/P&S/10/808, IOLR.
at the hands of the British. The Afghan officials assured them that the Amir would not agree to any peace terms which did not include complete amnesty for all frontier tribes who had joined him, and that he would in future consider all their territory as part of Afghanistan.

Press reaction to the Treaty of Rawalpindi was critical. The Treaty seemed an inadequate conclusion to the Third Afghan War. It was condemned and denounced by certain Anglo-Indian papers. The *Times of India* wrote: "At the time of the negotiations which closed last year's war the representatives of the Government of India evidenced a policy of which the less said the better. It was attacked in Parliament; and generally regarded by British public opinion as having involved a loss of practice." 74 The *Statesman* followed the *Times of India*:

The whole episode is in keeping with the policy of evasion which too often marks the action of the present Government of India. The Afghan unquestionably won the peace. The Afghans are still recalcitrant, are still sheltering Hindu revolutionaries, are still hand-in-glove with Bolsheviks, and are still stirring up strife on our borders. All the debating subtleties of Lord Curzon cannot cancel the plain conclusion that the Government of India muddled the campaign and muddled the peace. The control of Afghan foreign relations should never have been surrendered on false ideas of outcome of conflict. 75

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74 *The Times of India* (Bombay), 7 April 1920.
75 *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 18 November 1919.
Certain newspapers supported the Government of India for concluding a peace treaty with Afghanistan. The Pioneer observed that controlling Afghanistan's foreign relations would have definitely led to a war between Afghanistan and British India. It observed: "Simla may not always be particularly wise, but in this case unquestionably it adopted the wisest course". The Tribune of 18 October wrote:

In spite of fulmination of the London Times, every right-thinking man will agree with the Government of India that the decision to leave the Afghan control of their own external relations was a measure of wise statesmanship. Control of its external relations is a necessary element in the sovereign independence of a state, and any interference with it would be galling to a proud sensitive people. Of course, it remains to be seen what use the Afghan will make of the Government of India's action in this matter, but if they will not use it properly, the fault will be theirs, not the Government of India's.

The Englishman of 15 November 1919 observed: "The Afghans were always independent, as the control hitherto exercised over their foreign policy was quite nominal. We were unable to prevent the late Ameer from entertaining Turks and a German mission during the war. Sir Hamilton Grant's treaty saves India much money and worry...."

The Government of India expressed satisfaction with the results of the conference, and were generous in praise of

76 The Pioneer (Allahabad), 10 November 1919.
77 The Tribune (Lahore), 18 October 1919.
78 The Englishman, 15 November 1919.
their delegates. The Viceroy in his telegram of 9 September 1919 to the Secretary of State for India stated: "We regard result of peace negotiations as highly satisfactory. With a few modifications, none of which is essential, Afghan delegates have accepted our draft treaty in full. We are indebted for our success to the admirable patience, tact, and skill with which Grant, ably assisted by his associates notably Maffey, etc." 79

The Secretary of State was considerably more reserved and made trenchant comments on the procedure which had been adopted. In his private letter of 11 September 1919 to the Viceroy he wrote: "

The more news comes through about the peace with Afghanistan the more I am sorry to say I dislike it. I do not wish to be harsh in my judgement of Grant. Of course when a man goes to negotiate a treaty he is terribly tempted to come back with one. But looking back don't you think he had to give a tremendous lot away. I am horrified to find that even the Afghan Post-Master was likely to be perpetuated, and I tell you that public feeling is very very strong on the subject, both in the Cabinet and outside. 80

In his telegram of 13 September 1919 to the Viceroy, he observed:

While sharing your appreciation of tact and skill which British delegates displayed, and while hoping sincerely that your diplomacy may be crowned with expected success, I regard

79 Machonachie, n. 18, p. 27.
80 Montagu to Chelmsford, 11 September 1919, Montagu Papers, Roll No. 1830, NAI.
modifications introduced in Treaty at the last moment as important. When I accepted your plea, which I did with some misgiving, your telegram of 10 July had led me to believe that your draft was in the nature of an ultimatum, to be accepted or refused as it stood. 81

Sir Charles Carmichael Munro, Commander-in-Chief in India, in his letter of 14 August 1919, congratulated Grant for his successful peace treaty with the Afghans. 82 General Barrow also shared Munro's views regarding the success of Grant. He thought that the terms of the Rawalpindi Treaty was favourable for the British. 83

The Treaty, for completely different reasons, did not get a friendly reception in Afghanistan. Its terms were considered detrimental to Afghan interests. According to the people of Afghanistan, the British had been defeated in their military confrontation; yet they had dictated peace terms at the Conference. Moreover, Afghanistan was not allowed to import arms and ammunition through India. It was believed that Sardar Ali Ahmad had deviated from the instructions given to him before his departure to India. The King and his Council of Ministers had given him guidelines which specifically

81 Machonachie, n. 18, p. 27.
82 Munro to Grant, 14 August 1919, No. 22, MSS, Eur., D. 660, Grant's Papers, IOLR.
83 Barrow to Grant, 11 September 1919, No. 23, MSS, Eur., D. 660, Grant's Papers, IOLR.
prohibited him from making any territorial concessions. He should have consulted other members of the delegation and should have referred important matters to Kabul for final decision. He was consequently in disgrace. He was thrown into prison and was released after two years. 84