It was during the early nineteenth century that the Russians advanced towards Central Asia and the British extended their control towards the north and northwestern parts of India. This forward movement from two opposite directions led to the convergence of imperialist interests of two rival powers in Afghanistan and Central Asia. At this juncture, Russian boundary in Asia ran from the mouth of the Ural river up to Orenburg and thence to Omsk and Semiplatinsk, while British India was bounded by the river Sutlej. Consequently a zone, some 1400 miles wide, intervened between British possessions in India and Russian territory of Central Asia.

British policy was as much influenced by the Russian expansion in Central Asia, as was the Russian reaction to British occupation of Afghanistan during the period 1839-42, and intrigues of the British agents in Khiva and Bokhara. Russia first focused its serious attention towards Khiva in 1839-40 AD, mainly because the Uzbek Khan of Khiva

1. Moscow Gazette, 21 February 1869, c.f. A.H. Bilgrami. n.2. chapter 1, p. 130
encouraged the plundering of caravans for slave cattle and other loot, and because a number of Russians were held as prisoners in Khiva and were ill treated. The British occupation of Kabul also provided an excuse to the Russian frontier officials to initiate forward policy in Asia. In 1839, Perovoski led an unsuccessful expedition to Khiva, and he was forced to return to Orenburg in 1840. However, this event did alarm Major Todd, the British representative at Herat. Under his instructions, Captain James Abbot, who was later followed by Captain Richmond Shakespeare, reached Khiva and explained to the Uzbek Khan the grave implications of flouting Russia. They advised the Khan "to release all Russian slaves, and personally conducted them, numbering four hundred men, women and children to Orenburg".  

While Russia was contemplating the despatch of a second expedition against Khiva, the Khan of Khiva tendered his submission and in 1842 signed a treaty abolishing slave dealing in Khiva, promising to abstain from further raiding.

Whereas, the British envoy in Afghanistan were relieved at Perovsky's failure in Khiva, the Russians witnessed the British disaster in Afghanistan and subsequent withdrawal. In the meanwhile Russia continued its

task of subduing the Central Asian tribes. However, it was their defeat in the Crimean War (1853-57), which convinced the Russians of their inability to challenge the British in Europe. Now the Russians decided in order to effectively counteract the Britain in Central Asia, which was considered to be their sensitive and weaker point on land. The Russian General Skobeloff's policy is summed up in the following words:

"The more powerful Russia becomes in Central Asia, the weaker England becomes in India, and consequently more amenable in Europe."

The Russians occupied Khokand in 1864 followed by the strategic fortress of Chimkent in September 1864 thereby bringing them up to the Tien Shan mountains of Western China. Tashkent was annexed next to the Russian empire, and the Russian Governorate General was established in 1867 with Tashkent as its headquarters. In 1868 Bokhara was defeated and Samarkand, an important trading centre in Central Asia, was annexed. The Amir of Bokhara was compelled to be subservient to Russia. With the appointment of General Kauffman, as the Governor General of Turkistan, concerted initiatives were taken to extend and consolidate Russian
presence in Central Asia. As when the Russian Foreign
Minister Gorchakov issued his famous Memorandum, circulating
it to all foreign representatives he spelt out clearly the
aims and objectives of Russian expansion in Central Asia.

The memorandum said that Russia had no intention of
interfering in the interests of the British empire or even
Afghanistan. He wrote:

This consideration marks the geographical
precision, the limits where interests and reason
command us to stop, that is, before the limits of
Afghanistan". 4

In the mean time, in England two schools of thought
came up with conflicting views concerning the exact limit of
the British frontier. John Lawrence, who represented one of
the schools, advocated closed border policy". He advised that
Indus should be fixed as the British frontier, which was
supported by Sir James Outram. However, Lord Canning opposed
this policy saying that a river could not form a good line of
defence. Lawrence wanted to turn Afghanistan into a buffer
state, in order to meet the perceived Russian threat on the
northwest frontier in case of its attack on India. But as
per Russian press reports, Russia had no intention. Moscow
Gazette described it as a "complete absurdity". 5


5. Foreign S.H. February, 1869. 23-25, 1869. c.f. Bilgrami
p. 135.
The Central Asian question was a bugbear to the British government. The continuing Russian expansion towards Central Asia posed a threat to the northern territory of Afghanistan also, as Amir Sher Ali tried to obtain an assurance from the British Indian government for the preservation of its security. But the Russian Foreign Minister assured that Afghanistan would not be touched. British Indian government consoled the Amir Sher Ali that there was no ground for his apprehension as England and Russia were good friends. But it was at this time that Russia had launched its campaign against Khiva and occupied it. This event influenced the Amir of Afghanistan to rely more on Russian power than on British assurances, thereby causing friction in Anglo-Afghan relations.

BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

The British in India adopted Lawrence's policy of non-interference and did not take any active interest in the long internecine struggle between Sher Ali and his brothers for Afghan throne. Lawrence's policy of non-interference in Afghanistan was followed until the close of his Viceroyalty in 1869. When Sher Ali, reestablished his interrupted reign in Afghanistan in 1869, he had to face with three main
problems. Firstly, he was in need of money and ammunition to keep the country in control. Secondly Persia had annexed certain Afghan territories of Siestan near the river Helmand during the Afghan civil war, which the Afghans were eager to take back; and lastly, the Russians appeared in Central Asia near the northern borders of Afghanistan posing a new threat. The British policy was to provide security to India against the supposed Russian threat through northern Afghanistan or via Persia.6

In the first half of 19th century, British forward moves against Afghan rulers were mainly determined by a spasm of Russophobia. The first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42) was also prompted by fears that a Russian supported Persia was preparing to annex Herat - as a springboard against the British Indian empire. Whereas the Russians had occupied most part of Central Asia and British had consolidated their control over India, Afghanistan continued to remain a buffer between the two rival empires.

The British policy towards the north-west India and Afghanistan was dictated by considerations "to keep the British lion and the Russian bear apart".7 To


achieve this objective, two diverse policies were followed by Britain at different points of time. The proponents of the forwarad policy argued that the British should advance their territorial limits to meet the Russian threat directly and away from the plains of Indus Valley. The other view, which was in favour of status quo, recommended easily defenesable British Indian boundaries and was in favour of a buffer Zone between the two empires. Since the 1830s, British policy vacillated between the two extremes and came to an end by neither incorporating the Afghan territory into the British India nor retreating to the Indus river, thereby leaving Afghanistan to itself. However, through intermittent military incursions, as well as diplomatic and economic pressures, the British succeeded in controlling Afghanistan's foreign relations and keeping it within their sphere of influence.

When the turn of Lord Lawrence as Governor General of India was expiring and Lord Mayo was to take over, the former communicated his views on Afghan policy to the Secretary of State in a letter dated January 4, 1869. Later his views formed the basis of the British policy pursued by Lord
Lawrence advised his government to start a direct dialogue with the Russian government in order to reach a clear understanding with regard to Central Asia, so that the Russian government could be plainly told not to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan or in those of any State lying contiguous to the Indian frontiers. He was in favour of the de facto ruler of Kabul may be given such assistance as might be necessary to help him establish his hegemony over his warring and anarchic enemies and also to give him moral support against external threat, without making any formal offensive or defensive alliance. Lastly, Lawrence opined that Amir Sher Ali Khan should be invited for a meeting with the Governor General in person, for an exchange of views on matters of mutual interests.

At the same time Lawrence strongly advocated the policy of non-interference. He was of the opinion that "the British should try to impress upon Sher Ali Khan to create a pro-British climate of opinion among his people that could completely erase from their minds the memories of the first Afghan war, as well as, to dispel the idea, generated during the Afghan civil War, that the British might again try to move into Afghanistan". Amir Sher Ali did not apprehend any trouble from the British, he was fearful of the over the

8. Lawrence Papers, Lawrance to Sir Bartle Frere, 28 June 1856.
rapid expansion of Russia in Central Asia particularly on the northern boundary of Afghanistan. Lawrence's policy was accepted by the British government and followed by his successor Lord Mayo. Pursuing this policy, Mayo sought to check increasing Russian influence in Central Asia by pushing commerce further northwards. Sher Ali too, accepted Mayo's invitation and expressed his gratitude for the British help in consolidating his rule. "the British Sher Ali wanted to subsidise him to maintain the integrity of his kingdom and also to contract an alliance between the two states which could afford him stability at home and security from foreign aggressions". 10 Before Mayo and Sher Ali met at Ambala in March 1869 the former thought of assisting the latter in the formation of a strong and permanent government in return for a large additional facilities to the British trade". 11 Unlike Lawrence, however, Mayo hoped that between the Russian and British territories, there could be a "double layer of influenced but independent states' which could act as a cushion to lessen mutual discomfort of direct contact between the two empires". 12

10. Ibid., p. L42.
11. Mayo Papers, Mayo to Argyle, 2 March, 1869.
12. G.J. Elder, British India's Northern Frontier, 1865-95, p. 38.
Mayo included in his plan possibly, "all the frontier states not only on the northwest but also Nepal and Burma on the north-east". Mayo was in favour of maintaining relationship of intimate friendship, by supporting their power, instead of following the policy of annexation, thus "creating in these states outworks of the British empire in India".

At Ambala meeting, Lord Mayo showed utmost goodwill amity, and moral support of the British government for the Amir Sher Ali but politely declined to enter into any definite treaty relations or to offer any promise of regular, permanent subsidy. However, he provided the Amir with some help in money and arms and promised aid and support in case of internal or external emergency. Lord Northbrook agreed with Lord Mayo for extending assistance in terms of money and arms being given to the Amir. But as regards Russia, he wanted that country to be told "in the plainest possibly language "what our relations with Afghanistan were and how difficult, it would be for them 'to avoid war if the Russians came into immediate contact with Afghanistan".

16. Salisbury papers, Northbrook to Salisbury, 30, April, 1874.
The outcome of the Ambala meeting was that Amir Sher Ali did not get what he wanted, even his desire for his son Abdullah Jan being nominated his successor was not entertained. He returned Afghanistan disappointed but not dissatisfied or disillusioned. Since he was very much scared of the Russian moves, he decided in his own interest to work in harmony and friendship with the British. The British on its part understood that the relations established with Afghans would prove to be helpful in future. However, continuing Russian advance in Central Asia a strong lobby in England which came to be known termed as "India-in-danger lobby".

When Russian expansion was taking place in Central Asia especially her move northwards, the relation of the British Indian policy towards Central Asia including Afghanistan took a definite change from that of commercial character to political one. So, the question of defence of India became a matter of great concern among the British who felt that the Russian advance and her forward designs should be checked immediately. The question was raised whether the existing frontier should be extended further to a convenient position.

from where the Russian advance could be watched and effectively checked or the status quo should be maintained.

By the late 1860s Afghanistan was subdued by British Indian government. She was no more a sovereign state but a dependency of the British government. The treaty of Gandamak which was signed between Afghan Amir Yakub Khan and the British conceded to the British, control over foreign policy of Afghanistan. The Afghan ruler promised not to have any foreign relations except with Britain. In return, the British government guaranteed to defend the boundaries of Afghanistan against foreign aggression.

ANGLO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS ON NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF AFGHANISTAN

The year 1869 witnessed the beginning of a series of negotiations between London and St. Petersburg regarding Afghanistan's northern frontiers. Lord Clarendon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Gladstone cabinet, while discussing the Central Asian question with Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador, suggested for the "recognition of some territory as neutral between the possessions of England and Russia which should be the limit of those
possessions and be scrupulously respected by both powers".\textsuperscript{18} The Russian Ambassador assured that his government would treat Afghanistan as entirely beyond the sphere of Russian influence. Though St. Petersburgh responded positively to the British proposal of an intermediate zone between the two empires, it also suggested for the inclusion of Afghanistan in it in order to prevent her from being annexed by Britain.\textsuperscript{19} Gorchakov the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, confirmed it in his communique dated March 7, 1869, to the British government. "Afghanistan is entirely outside the sphere of Russian influence. She has no intention whatever of intervening in any way so as to damage the independence of that state. If London, as we hope holds the same view as ourselves, the wish expressed by Lord Clarendon will be realized, our dominion in Asia will be separated by independent zone".\textsuperscript{20}

However, the British policy makers wanted Russia's freedom of action in Afghanistan to be limited. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon in his reply to the Russian Foreign Minister, Gorchakov in March 1869, said, "Afghanistan could not serve as a neutral zone since her

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Clarendon to Bachanan, 27 March, 1869 (Bilgrami, p. 150).
\item \textsuperscript{19} Devendra Kaushik, Central Asian in Modern Times, (Moscow, 1970).
\item \textsuperscript{20} Central Asian Review, No. 2, 1959, p. 209.
\end{itemize}
frontiers were not sufficiently defined, and this might lead to dissension in the future." The British government presented its own proposal to the Russian government suggesting the creation of a neutral zone out of the independent Khanates of Southern Turkistan, besides proposing the Oxus as the ideal line which would divide the possessions of two empires. Gorchakov, the Russian Foreign Minister raised objection to the proposal on the ground that since a portion of the territory south of the Oxus was claimed by the ruler of Bokhara, its inclusion in the British sphere, as part of Afghanistan would hamper negotiations and lead to the dispute between the two empires. He proposed that Afghanistan be regarded as a "neutral zone" between domains of Tsarist Russia in Central Asia and British India.21 Lord Mayo strongly objected to the suggestions of making Afghanistan as a neutral territory because he thought, it would be inimical to the defence of India. In his opinion the security of India was dependent on a strong, united and friendly Afghanistan, and not on Russia having equal status with Britain at the court of Kabul.22 So the British Indian government opposed

22. Mayo to Clarendon, 3 June, 1869, c.f. in A.H. Bilgrami, p. 150.
any definite treaty arrangement with St. Petersburgh for creating Afghanistan or any other frontier State as a neutral zone.

During their discussions, Clarendon told Gorchakov about the inability of his government to accept Afghanistan as a neutral zone. He explained that it was so because of uncertain frontiers and the inclination of Amir Sher Ali to bring under his own subjection the different Khanates, which had formerly belonged to Afghanistan and which were considered by Russia to be independent.23 Agreing with Clarendon Gorchakov wanted Amir Sher Ali to refrain from any activity against Bokhara. On his part Gorchakov agreed to use his govt's influence to restrain the Amir of Bokhara from transgressing the Afghan territory.24 Finally, the Clarendon-Gorchakov negotiations concluded on the points that neither the British would help Amir Sher Ali against the interests of Russia, nor Russian expansion in Central Asia would be directed against the British.

Russia now started thinking on two main points, i.e. the idea of neutral zone and defining the exact limits of

23. Bilgrami, n. 2, Ch.I, p. 150-151.,

frontiers of Afghanistan. Streanaukoff, Incharge of the Asia Division in Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed creation of the neutral zone which included such areas as Balkh, Kunduz and Badakhshan. But once he realised that these territories had already been incorporated in the dominions of Sher Ali khan, he dropped the idea and once again treated the entire Afghanistan under the possessions of Sher Ali as the neutral zone. But the British rejected the idea as they wanted Afghanistan to be considered by St. Petersburgh as exclusively within their own sphere of influence. As regards the creation of the neutral zone, it proposed an area to be located beyond the northern borders of Afghanistan, somewhere on the upper reaches of the Oxus. In these circumstances, "the negotiations which began with the aim of creating a 'buffer state' ended up with the discussions focussing on the spheres of influence."²⁵

In 1869 when Russia recognised Afghanistan as lying beyond her sphere of influence, the question of defining the northern boundary of Afghanistan came up for discussion. In his despatch of May 20, 1870, Lord Mayo indicated "these limits as being those territories which acknowledged the sovereignty of Dost Mohammad Khan and were at that time within the dimensions of Sher Ali."²⁶ Now both Russia and

²⁶. Ibid.

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Great Britain began ascertaining the northern boundary of Afghanistan. The Indian government proposed the course of the Oxus river from the district of Balkh on the west to the extreme east of Badakhshan as the northern boundary of Afghanistan. The British considered "the north-western boundary of Sher Ali's dominions which ran in a south-westernly direction from a point on the Oxus between the Khojah Saleh and Kerki, including the provinces of Balkh, Maimena with its dependencies lying between the valleys of Murghab and Hari Rud. That means, the northern boundary was "considered to be the Oxus from the same point between Kerki and Khojah saleh eastward to Punja river valley and Wakhan, and thereafter the stream which passed Wakhan upto the point where the range of the Hindu Kush meets the southern angle of the Pamirs."\textsuperscript{27}

Although Streamoukoff accepted the boundaries indicated in the Viceroy's despatch, he doubted "if the boundary line should commence on the Oxus, as Kojah Saleh was represented on the Russian maps as being the western limits of Afghan Turkistan on the Oxus"\textsuperscript{28} request to send a copy of the despatch to Russian cabinet so that it could further be forwarded to General Kaufmann, the Governor-General of

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Mayo to Argyil, 20 May, 1870 (Bilgrami, p. 153).
Turkistan for a complete report on the question of Amir's possessions.

Sir Andrew Buchanan, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg wrote of Earl of Granville, who had succeeded Lord Clarendon as the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, of the transmission of Indian dispatch related to the boundaries of the territories of Amir of Kabul to General Kauffman for his observations.²⁹

The British expected to receive from Russia the subsequent report of General Kauffman on the countries south of the Oxus.³⁰ It was hoped that impartial inquiries instituted by General Kauffmann would enable the two governments to come to a prompt and definitive decision on the vexed question.³¹

Earl of Granville informed Lord Loftus that the British government considered "the right of the Amir of Kabul (Sher Ali) to the possession of the territories up to the Oxus as far down as Khoja Saleh as fully established."³²

³⁰. Correspondence with Russian respecting Central Asia Foreign Office, 17th October, 1872, Earl; Granville to Lord A Lofters., p. 1.
³¹. Ibid., p. 1.
³². Ibid.
When St. Petersburgh replying on this issue, concerned, the British tried to pursue for the same. On June 21, 1871, Earl of Granville instructed Buchanan to "obtain, if possible, General Kauffmann's opinion relating to the matters referred to him." Russia promised to forward Kaufmann's report early.

Towards the end of 1871, Buchanan once again put the Afghan frontier question before Gortchakov, who responded by saying that "the territory in the actual possession of Sher Ali (the Amir) at that point of time should be considered the limits of Afghanistan (and) beyond such limits the Amir should be dissuaded by the British from attempting to exercise any influence or interference, while the Russian govt. assumed a parallel responsibility of restraining the Amir of Bokhara." However, the Russian government continued to avoid defining the Afghan frontier as the British wanted. Kauffman too did not send the long awaited report. In the meanwhile the British Ambassador informed the Russian government about the territories and boundaries which were considered by the British government to belonging to the Amir of Kabul.

33. Ibid.
34. Granville to Buchanan, 21st June, 1871.
36. Ibid.
1. Badakhshan, with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikal (Wood lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha river with the Oxus (or Panja), forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire extent.

2. Afghan Turkistan, comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of the Oxus from the junction of Kokcha river to the post of Khoja Saleh, inclusive, on the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. Nothing to be claimed by the Afghan Ameer on the left bank of the Oxus below Khojah Saleh.

3. The internal districts of Aksha, Siripool, Maimena, Shibberjan, and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to dependent tribes of Turcomans.

4. The western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorasan is well known and need not here be defined.

Gortchakov, while writing to Count Brunnow, in his letter dated December 7, 1872 informed that he had received a copy of Granville's despatch of October 17, 1872.
concerning the "affairs of Central Asia."\textsuperscript{37} Gortchakov recapitulated the different phases of the Anglo-Russian negotiations and their desire to secure peace and consolidate the friendly relations and understanding between the two governments.\textsuperscript{38} He pointed out that they had agreed to have a certain "intermediary" zone of Afghanistan between their respective boundaries.\textsuperscript{39}

Gortchakov not only expressed Russian government's reservation in regard to Badakshan and Wakhan, but also raised the already shelved question of neutral zone/buffer state and referred to it as 'Intermediate Zone', suggesting that Afghanistan seemed well fitted to supply what was needed.\textsuperscript{40}

The British Foreign Secretary, Granville in his letter dated 24th January 1873 to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, cautioned the Russian government that "if Amir's sovereignty over Badakhan was not recognised, there was more likelihood of disturbance of peace in Central Asia, as the Amir might be tempted to assert his claim by arms".\textsuperscript{41} The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid. Prince Gorchakev to Count Brunnow, St. Petersburg, December 7, 1872.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Lord Granville to Lord Aloffns, Foreign Office, January 24, 1873.
\end{itemize}
British Indian government was eager to have the northern frontiers of Afghanistan recognised. Granvile's declaration and subsequent correspondence between London and St. Petersburg led to the Agreement of 1873, which is known as the Clarendon-Gortchakov agreement. However, the agreement was concluded without any reference to the Amir of Afghanistan. According to the agreement two things were settled down: Firstly, the northern frontiers of Afghanistan were accepted but were not delimited on the spot; secondly, Russia gave a positive commitment that Afghanistan lay wholly outside the sphere of her influence. 42 However, direct correspondence between London and St. Petersburg, continued as the British government was keen to get the Afghan boundaries properly delimited not only in the north, but also in the west with Persia as well as with India in the east and the south-east respectively.

The year 1874 witnessed a shift in the British policy towards Afghanistan. It was more so due to the fall of Khiva at the hands of Russians and their penetration into the steppes occupied by the Tekke Turkoman tribes. The Russian expansion in Central Asia also coincided with simultaneous

extension of Trans-Caspian railway. Moreover the agreement of 1873 failed to the frontiers of Turkomans with either Bokhara and Afghanistan.

On their part the British occupied Quetta in 1878. Further, despatch of Russian mission of Stolietov to Kabul and Sher Ali's refusal to entertain a similar British mission of Chamberlain, made the British position in Afghanistan tenuous. 43

All these factors provided Lord lytton, a cause for the second Anglo-Afghan war, (1878-80). As a result, Russia was able to manoeuvre. The British in such a way, that "they were in advantageous position not only in Central Asia but also in Europe." The Anglo-Afghan treaty Gandamak which was signed on 26th May 1879, placed the foreign policy of Afghanistan into the hands of British government. In return they promised to protect Afghanistan against foreign aggression. During the next seven to eight years, Russians continued to advance from the Caspian in the direction of Merv. The Amir became more apprehensive of the Russian designs, moves and wanted that the British government to settle the northern frontier of Afghanistan with Russia. For

43. Gopal Kirshnan, p. 80.
this purpose, in July 1882 Amir Abdur Rahman expressed a desire to visit India and confer with the British authorities personally in order to settle completely the question of Afghanistan."

At the same time, Afghanistan's internal political and economic conditions were not favourable to the Amir. Also, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan had lost faith in Russia's peaceful assurances, because there were reports of movements in the trans-Caspian districts up to Oxus. Abdur Rahman Khan was alarmed by Russia's approach towards his north-west frontier and he frequently stated the need to strengthen it. In October 1882, The Amir wrote to Lord Ripon, the Viceroy of India urging him to settle the Afghan frontiers with Russia as otherwise it would be "difficult to act and strengthen the frontiers." Lord Ripon in his reply 1883 assured him that he should have no cause of uneasiness. Ripon believed that Russia's sphere of influence, if not her actual possession, would soon be co-


46. Ram Sagar Rastogi, "Indo-Afghan Relations 1880 - 1900 (Lucknow 1965) p.40.

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terminous with the northern boundary of Afghanistan which could not be prevented but "could be utilised to Britain's advantage." 47 He was of the view that in return for recognition of authority up to that point "a treaty might be secured binding Russia not to interfere in Afghan affairs and clearly demarcating the northern boundary of Persia."48 At the same time Ripon tried to inspire the confidence of Amir who asked for making arrangements for the defence of the frontier, or to pay his troops at Herat.

This resulted in the renewal of the 1880 agreement in 1883, which maintained the basic features, viz, (a) British would not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan; (b) the British were to assume a definite liability to help the Amir in the event of impromptu aggression on his country; and (c) the foreign policy of Afghanistan was to be under British guidance. Abdur Rahman was also satisfied by the annual grant of twelve lakhs rupees for the payment of his troops and defence of his frontiers.

Meanwhile, the Russians moved further and occupied Merv, and pushed into the valley of Murghab. The British official Stephen suggested that "pressure be brought on the Amir to obtain effective control over the upper Murghs districts and the territory lying between that river and the

47. Ibid.
48. Memorandum of Viceroy of India to Secretary of State for India, Hartington, 2nd Sept and 3rd November, 1881.
Hari Rnd, that Herat be put in a state of defence and be held by two or three regiments subsidized by the Indian government." At that time, Abdur Rahman Khan was on a visit to India. At Rawalpindi Darbar, he gave his consent and approval to Lord Dufferin's proposal to delimit the frontier between Oxus and Hari Rud. Lord Dufferin informed Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State in Gladstone Ministry, that the Amir had agreed to give the British government "a perfectly free hand in delimiting the frontier."  

The Secretary of State for India desired Lord Dufferin to take immediate steps for the fortification, garrisoning and provisioning of Herat, as the "Russian cloud continued to hover over North-West." In England the Royal family too was concerned about the Russian danger, and Queen Victoria informed Lord Dufferin of the general impression in England and Europe that "the war seemed so imminent."  

49. F.D. Progs. March 1884 See E. No. 51. Report by Mr. Stephen respecting Russian negotiations with Mew and Measures to prevent the extension of Russian activity to Afghan territory, 11th May 1883, p. 12, 13.  
52. Queen to Dufferi, 28th May 1885, Dufferin Papers (Microfilm) Reel - 16 cited in Mahavir P Srivastava.
The British mission at Tehran, informed Granville, that "the Russians would shortly establish themselves in close vicinity to Sarakhs on the very frontier of Afghanistan." Interestingly, the Amir had no clear idea as to what extent his territories reached. So, he requested the Viceroy of India to send him a copy of the document and a map showing the boundaries between Afghanistan, Russia and Persia. The Viceroy replied that, "the boundaries of Afghanistan had already been settled by the British and the Russian governments, adding that the whole boundary had never been laid down accurately in any map. Hence all the maps were imperfect, and the country had not been examined at all on the spot." The Viceroy suggested that a frontier line should be precisely defined and laid down within which the Afghans should be free to manage their own affairs without interference from any foreign power.

Amir Abdur Rahman Khan now produced his own maps showing territories like Shignan and Roshan as his own which were earlier considered by the British as outside Afghan territory. D.P. Singhal writes that "Ripon had only one

54. Ram Sagar Rastogi - p. 41.
56. Ram Sagar Rastogi, p. 42.
answer to all these problems, a treaty with Russia, giving her authority over Merv and taking from her an assurance not to meddle with Afghan politics." 57 But the British government was indifferent to the Afghan problem because Russia had, time and again assured the British government that Merv laid beyond the "Russian sphere of influence." 58 The occupation of Merv by Russia, however, compelled both British as well as the Afghans to review their policy towards the promise given by Russia in regard to the territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

The matter was discussed in the British cabinet and afterwards Lord Granville sent a note to Russian government about the British reaction to the Russian expansion towards Afghanistan since 1873. The note asked the Russian government "to state in unambiguous terms their further designs, schemes and proposals, if any towards the Afghan frontier and Afghanistan proper itself." 59 The Russian Ambassador sent a reply to Lord Granville stating that "the Russian government had accepted the submission of the Turkomans of Merv as an act of local administration brought about by the force of circumstances without any political premeditation on the part of Russia." 60

57. Ibid.
60. Ram Sagar Rastogi, p. 43.
Although Russia accepted the British proposal on the need for delimitation through the joint commission in principle, it raised objections to the inclusion of an Afghan Commissioner and the suggested meeting place of the Commission at Sarakhs. Russia was of the opinion that "before sending the Commissioners to the place of their activities, the two governments should exchange on the general basis of the future delimitation, so as to prevent as far as possible the differences of opinion and misunderstandings, which might arise between the Commissioners and delay the progress of their labour." In fact Russia was in favour of planning to adopting an ethnic basis for the delimitation rather than a geographical one, as it better suited the Russian interests. Soon after the conquest of Tekke Turkomans the Russians had reasons to contend that "the tranquility of the Turkoman country was impossible unless all the Turkomans were brought under their control." It was considered that if the Sarakhs population remained independent in the east or under Afghan rule, the nomadic habits of Turkomans would cause

61. Giers to thorton, 3 May and 18th June 1884.
63. Mahavir P. Srivastava, p. 16.
complications between Russia and Afghanistan. But the British rejected the Russian stand as "it could involve the alienation of the Sarakhs or of territories claimed by the Amir of Afghanistan."

Persia too was alarmed at the Russian occupation of old Sarakh. The Russian Minister at Tehran informed the Persian government that his government could not recognise the claim of Persia to any territory on the right bank of the river." 64 The Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs reasserted Persia's claim to the entire district on the basis that before the new fort was built, only one Sarakhs, the district on the right bank of the river, was known; that it was recognised by all as Persian territory, and Persia's claim to that district had never till then brought to question, even by Turkomans.

The British India government in favour of investigating the matter try a Boundary commission. It was also thought that the retention of old Sarakhs district by Persia would interrupt direct failed to make a stand for the retention of Sarakhs in Persian hands, as G.P. Tripathi rightly observes, "Had Sarakhs remained in Persian hands it would have acted as a buffer between the Rusians and Afghans on the Hari Rud." 65

64. F. Deptt. Progs. Secret E. July 1884, Nos. 186-219, No. 207.
In May 1884 both the British and Russian sides agreed to appoint a joint commission with a view to secure a permanent agreement on the question of northern boundary of Afghanistan. The British government appointed Major General Sir Peter Lumsden as their Commissioner, while the Russian government named General Zelenoi. St. Petersburg stressed that the two sides should agree, upon "a zone within which a boundary should be laid down in general terms and beyond which the Commission should not be allowed to extend their exploration." However, the British government agreed to a zone to be determined first. On 22 July 1884, the Government of India informed General Amir Ahmad Khan, the Amir's agent in India regarding the appointment of General Lumsden as British Commissioner. The British Commissioner had to meet the Russian counterpart on or about 15 October 1884 at a point where they were supposed to receive the party from India who knew well the affairs of Afghanistan.

The Russian commissioner Zelenoi failed to reach the spot in time, and the Russians explained it due to his illness. As the winter was approaching the work of the Commission had to be postponed to the following

66. F. Deptt. Progs. December 1881, Secret F. Cons. 146-
From Granville to Thorton, Foreign Official, 12 Nov.
1884, p. 9 (cited in Mahavir P. Srivastava, p. 17)
spring. 67 In the meantime, Russian troops established themselves at a post-known as Pul-i-Khatoan and occupied Zulfikar pass. On the other hand, the Afghans after crossing the controversial Kushk river. 68 Both sides were thus poised for an imminent clash. General Kamanov, the Russian Governor of Akhal Oasis, marched ahead with a strong Russian force and camped at Kizel Tape. A clash occurred between the two sides on March 30, 1885. The Russians defeated the Afghan force and drove it out of Panjadeh which was now occupied by Russia.

Panjdeh incident underlined the importance of early delimitation of the northern limits of Afghanistan. Lumsden, the British Commissioner felt that if the Commission was asked to demarcate the disputed frontier on the spot, its position would be most humiliating in the eyes of the Afghans, Saraks and Uzbeks. Therefore, on April 27, 1885, he proposed to Granville that "the definite limits of Afghanistan should be fixed in London on the basis of the reports and surveys which had (already) been prepared." 69

68. Ibid., p. 205
69. Ram Sagar Rastogi, p. 91.
The British government realised the importance of Lumsden's views and accepted his proposal. At St. Petersburgh, the Russian government having achieved their object of acquiring Panjdeh, appointed Colonel Khulberg as their new Commissioner for further delimitation of the Russo-Afghan boundary. On the British side, the Secretary of State for India recalled Lumsden and Col. Stewart to London and appointed Col. Ridgeway as the new boundary Commissioner. The reconstituted commission started its work from Zulfigar pass on Hari Rud river at the end of the year 1885 and continued till the Summer of 1886, when the group reached Khoja Saleh on Amu Darija (Oxus). Despite their disagreement on the exact location of the frontier, both the British and Russian governments were keen to define the frontier as it actually existed, and both were equally desirous of giving to each country what at the moment actually belonged to it. This was the general leading principle of the understanding of 1872, as well as of the protocol of 10th September 1885. The only point which caused some debate and delay was the difficulty of ascertaining what actually belonged to each country.

Lord Salisbury wanted to settle the boundary dispute as early as possible, so he sent Colonel Ridgeway to St. Petersburg to resume the discussions with his Russian counterpart. Ridgeway suggested that the Afghan colonies at Kara-Tape and Chahil Dukhtarans should not be removed from their possession and Russia agreed to this proposal. It also led to the settlement of the frontier on the Murghab. Now, the two powers had made up their mind to resolve the issue, the Russians agreed to allow the Afghans for retaining the revarain pasturage of Kham-i-ab. In return, the British agreed to allow the Russians to possess Imam Nazar. Regarding Afghan interests, Colonel Ridgeway sent a report to Salisbury saying: "The Amir has not lost a penny of revenue, a single subject, or an acre of land which was occupied or cultivated by any Afghan subject." After resolving the differences, the final protocols embodying an agreement was signed on 22nd July 1887 by Colonel Ridgeway and Zinoviev at St. Petersburg. On the advice of Lord Salisbury, a clause providing for the demarcation of the frontier by a joint commission, in conformity with the signed maps, was also inserted into the agreement with the consent of Zinoviev.

73. Mahavir P. Srivastava.
In this way, the north-west frontier of Afghanistan was finally established after a long period of negotiations between Great Britain and Russia. The actual work of delimitation on the spot in terms of technical execution took almost four years. All the three contending parties—Afghanistan, Russia and Britain were satisfied with the arrangement. Whereas the 1885 Protocol, recognised the Russian extended frontier up to the northern frontiers of Afghanistan, Amir Abdul Rahman was satisfied at the formal and definite drawing of his northern borders from Hari Rud to Khoja Saleh. Similarly, the British found the Russians with a formal agreement whereby former frontier limits were clearly defined. Thus the thorny border questions, which rocked Anglo-Russian relations over Afghanistan, were finally settled. However, the Pamirs area which remained undefined this time, became the issue of subsequent negotiations, which is dealt with in the next chapter.