Chapter III

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In the form of colonial legacy the emergent states of Asia and Africa have territorial complex situation where artificially contrived borderlines were subject to criticism and reappraisal. Within each state, there were multitude of ethnic and linguistic groups, some of them were separated from each other by international boundaries. In some of the states, there was no greater unity among the component groups than that deriving from the common experience of European rule.

In the contemporary political set up, there is no room for optimism and complacency. Nation(s) which had assumed that, in view of the arbitrariness of the boundaries, the preservation of the frontiers would arouse no patriotism, have been proved wrong. In many Asia states, e.g., Afghanistan, there was an uneasy stirring of irridentist claims kept alive by groups whose traditional frontiers have been apparently outraged by the international boundaries. It can, then, be argued, that boundary disputes, as in Europe, are "...to arise in many instances because too much history is remembered by both the parties concerned". ¹

It is extremely dangerous to declare glibly that the international boundaries imposed were little adopted to

indigenous historical antecedents. They need a objective consider-ation in preference to vague and over-simplified generalizations about the boundaries. Primarily, when analyzing the discrepancies between the international boundaries and traditional frontiers, the character of the local frontier should be clear vis-a-vis the international boundaries. Further, the ethnic groups affected by the imposed boundaries were not living in a political vacuum. Between the traditional tribal communities in Asia, lines separating them was often demarcated according to the tribal codes. The frontier between them was vaguely defined as to their extent. When one considers the migratory tendencies among the Powindahs and other similar groups in Afghanistan, the idea of any type of frontier between them and their neighbours seems inconceivable.

Administrative organizations and centralized authority pattern are important while analyzing the tribal communities of Asia. There is no doubt that politically centralized communities were recognized by the European powers in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, it also implied that the existence of such a state structure did not necessarily suggest ethnic, cultural or linguistic homogeneity. On the corollary, it can be attributed that, the absence of political focus rules out close affinities in respect of culture, religion and language. For example, the Durrani and Ghilzai tribal

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2: See Chapter II.
Confederations included many other tribal groups within their boundaries. In addition, the various tribes in the northwest evolved no visible comprehensive political organization and central administration. They possessed a common history and culture while each maintained a sense of exclusiveness.

War of conquest was important. The result of successful war brought more areas of the neighbouring country under it. The complexities of Asian traditional frontiers and human pattern have been signified in order to underline the argument that each boundary zone has to be scrutinized separately so as to assess the discrepancies between the indigenous frontiers and the international boundaries.

Even when one finds that international boundaries divide and separate their similar groups, one should analyze the ethno-political conditions prevailing in the boundary zone immediately antecedent to the drawing of the international boundaries. It also requires a close scrutiny of diplomatic negotiations out of which the boundaries have emerged. This is to ascertain with a view that to what extent to which the peculiarities of local political conditions influenced the decision of the boundary negotiations.

3 The consistence in holding the territories could well have laid base to better and perhaps more legal claims to the boundary. The failure of Afghan rulers to do so (see Chapter II) ultimately led to conflict between two emergent nations, viz., Afghanistan and Pakistan. This, however, did not legitimize the Afghan claim. See also J.R.V. Prescott, The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries (London, 1968), pp. 110-12.
Afghanistan as a modern politico-territorial unit, emerged in stages and so did its international boundaries. The political upheavals and wars which chequered the history of the indigenous empires of Afghanistan undoubtedly left their impress upon the frontier state. It was bound to be difficult during the nineteenth century to demarcate a precise political boundary. In areas where there were segmented societies, the extreme intermingling as in N.W.F.P. and other areas, created intractable problems in the matter of demarcation.

To insist upon the fact that the peculiarities of local political conditions played a part not usually acknowledged in the evolution of Afghanistan's international boundaries, is not to ignore the indisputable fact that the colonial questions were not completely isolated from exigencies of European diplomacy.

European powers were responsible for relegating the role of native states in the Asian affairs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Asian states, however, owing to their strategic and geographical location, retained their importance. It was due to the territorial rivalry that the extent of traditional empires were restricted while the colonial powers expanded beyond their limits. At such a stage, the rival powers clashed and the intermittent territory became at once a zone of contention and of conflicting interests. Afghanistan was such a zone where the territorial
interests of Britain and Russia clashed. Recognizing the importance of the location of Afghanistan, British were determined to make it a (semi-) independent buffer state. In all probability, the absence of which could have encouraged Russia to expand far beyond the Oxus, while the British fortified themselves along the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line.

The genesis of the rivalry began with the Franco-Russian design on the Indian subcontinent. However, the withdrawal of French interests in Persia in 1807, eliminated the possible threat of invasion. Yet, this did not prevent Russia to expand in the Central Asia. The steady encroachment by Russia on the Persian Central Asian possession and the failure of British assistance to the latter, compelled Britain to consider and depend upon Afghanistan for security. In the meanwhile, unstable political conditions in Afghanistan enabled Kabul, Herat and Kandahar to emerge independent of each other. Kabul and Kandahar were vying with each other for Persian support against Herat (see Chapter II) while Russia was gradually expanding in the Central Asia.

This became the basis of British India's Afghan policy.

4 C.C. Davis, Frontiers: A Study in Imperial Policy, p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 153. It can also be argued that while Britain was expanding in Central Asia, they were not in favour of any partners or rivals in their design of exploiting the commerce of Central Asia.

This resulted in three wars and finally culminated in the emergence of Afghanistan as an independent state in 1919. This was achieved only after the international boundaries of Afghanistan were defined and the Russian threat had faded away.

The political and commercial interests dominated the territorial expansion of Great Britain and Russia in Central Asia. The struggle between the two powers for supremacy was inherent in the logic of events as was the British fears over Russian advances. Therefore, in order to check wherever they could, the British created "...an imaginary line stretching from Constantinople through Persia to Central Asia and China". At the same time, the Russian attempt to establish a natural frontier was met "...at every point along the southern and eastern borders...(by)...British power. Time and again Russian advances called for British fears and hostility, while British measures in turn aroused the Russians".

As both the European powers were interested in the commercial exploitation of the conquered territories, it can be argued that the role played by existing traditional trade routes between the various Khanates was important. For example, the trade route to the Central Asia led from Kandahar, Kabul and Peshawar to India. The returning caravans carried

7 A. Lobonov-Rostovsky, Russia and Asia (New York, 1951), p. 113.
the products not only to these Khanates but also to Khokand and Bokhara. With the same logic, it was obvious that Russian apprehension was implicit in the fact that "...British, following up their potential advantage, caused Russian influence in the Middle East to collapse". On the contrary, the Russian territorial expansion along with the extension of the trans-Caspian railway countered this, and resulted in the isolation of the British commercial interests in Central Asia.

Under such circumstances, Afghanistan (though undefined, see Chapter II) became the focal point of power rivalry. Aware of the growing Russian influence, Britain once again re-defined Afghanistan as a frontier of India. Their active participation in the frontier politics was evident only after the culmination of the Second Anglo-Sikh war in 1847; their northwestern boundary being superimposed upon the Sikh boundary with Afghanistan (see Chapter II).

Yet, analyzing the territorial advances made by these

9 Alexander Burns, Cabool: A Personal Narrative of a Journey and Residence in that City in the Years, 1836, 1837 and 1838 (London, 1840), p. 58.


11 By the Treaty of Teheran, Russia was not only able to compel the Persians to confirm their territorial expansion in the Persian Central Asia but also brought them under their commercial orbit; their by bringing a stiff opposition to the British commerce in the region.
two powers, a striking similarity in their approach was more or less evident. This suggested that it was both political as well as geographical. The Russian expansion in Central Asia upto Tashkent answered exactly with the British expansion upto Lahore. The frontier military outposts of Russia at Samarkand and beyond the Syr-Darya was corresponding to Peshawar in trans-Indus region. The independent state of Bokhara on the one side, and Kabul on the other were about equi-distant from the advanced military outposts. While considering these factors, it is evident that the region beyond Bokhara were either dependent or under its tutelage. Hissar, Kulab and Darwaz; whereas in the corresponding plane, Kabul held sway over Balkh, Kunduz and Badakhshan (including Wakhan).

As noted earlier (see Chapter II), river Oxus formed the boundary between the two. This suggests that because of relative political calm, Bokhara was able to administer far-off areas which Russia later claimed to be the part of Bokhara in the boundary dispute; but in Afghanistan, the unstable political conditions did not allow such healthy situation to persist. Perhaps, it was the tenacity of the negotiators which was largely responsible, latter, to bring an amicable solution to the boundary dispute favourable to Afghanistan. This aspect of the boundary was ignored by Russia in the boundary demarcation.

However, given a definite check in Europe, Russia
rapidly expanded in Central Asia. By 1865, Tashkent was occupied and the trans-Caspian railway was extended to Samarkand in 1867; so much so that the pivot of Russian advance shifted from Orenburg to Tashkent, as it became the capital of the province of Russian Turkestan created in 1867. By this position, Russia was not only able to exert a dominant influence on Afghanistan but also to dominate the course of events to arouse equal if not more British apprehension.

However, with the Russian annexation of Turkestan, the pivot area of Russian Central Asia shifted from Tashkent to Askabad. This shift of administrative and military capital was geographically significant for "The cradle of policy, the starting point of action... (was Tashkent).... It was from Tashkent that... (Russia expanded) ...via Samarkand to Jam, on the Bokharan frontier, in order to menace, and, if necessary, to invade Afghanistan...." On the other hand, Askabad with its forward military outposts at Geok Tepe, Sarakhs, Merv and Penjdeh provided more easy access to Russian penetration of Herat.

It became imperative for Britain to take effective measures to check the rapid Russian advance, the views expressed by Lumsden and Lawrence's rejection of forward policy coincided with the British failure of proposing a delimitation

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of spheres of influence in Central Asia between the two in 1864. However, due to rapid Russian expansion, Britain was conscious of the necessity of asking for such delimitation of spheres in 1869. The same year, the negotiations had started with the proposal to create buffer states but it did not go further than the recognition of the spheres of influence.

In the process, both Russia and Britain were bent upon creating a buffer zone(s) between them. Bokhara dependent upon Russia served as effective barrier; on the same lines as Afghanistan served as an effective neutral zone for the British. Yet, this arrangement came into controversy when Bokhara for all practical purposes became a tributary to Russia, for only Afghanistan remained the neutral zone between the two.

The concept of neutral zone was dropped. Instead, there was emphasis upon the Afghanistan's uncertain frontiers and the possibilities of Amir Sher Ali to bring under his control the Khanates, which formerly belonged to Afghanistan. This was accepted by Russia only to the extent that Amir Sher Ali refrained from any activity against Bokhara. This was based upon the fact that the true northern frontier of Afghanistan was marked by the river Oxus from Balkh to Badakhshan which had acknowledged Amir Dost Mohammad Khan's sovereignty.

However, Russia claimed that Khiva remained outside the Afghan influence. The nature of this stand arose from the

British proposal of Upper Oxus which was south of Bokhara as the boundary between the two. Limiting this expansion, they argued that "this would leave a large tract of country apparently desert, and marked on the map as belonging to Khan of Khiva, between Afghanistan and the territory already acquired by Russia, and if agreed to, remove all fears of dis-sensions". They refused to recognize the validity of Amir Sher Ali's claim, while they stressed on Bokharan territories south of the Oxus. Yet, "Bokhara had no territories south of Oxus save Kerki and Charjui farther west and that under Dost Mohammad, Afghanistan possessed the whole tract of the country up to the Oxus. Not only did Sher Ali have a right to inherit all of that territory, but now has effective control of it".

Following Lawrence's policy, Mayo was quite clear about his objective on the Afghan question: These were, "The creation of a strong and independent government in Afghanistan, complete abstinence from direct interference in the internal affairs of that country, the development and protection of trade with Central Asia...." The frontier policy of Mayo did not include

British advance up to Quetta but emphasized upon the extension of British commerce northwards to counter Russian advances.

Forsyth mission to St. Petersburg in 1869, was successful in eliciting assurances from Russia regarding their non-interference in Afghanistan and requested the Government of India to define the Afghan frontiers. Meanwhile, the divergence of views between the Home and Indian Governments on Russia and Afghanistan began to widen rapidly. In 1871, Britain had proposed that:

1. Badakhshan with the dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikol (Wood's Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha river with the Oxus (Panjah), forming the northern boundary of the province through its extent;

2. Afghan Turkestan, comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of Oxus, from the junction of the Kokcha river to the post of Khoja Saleh, inclusive of the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. No claims on the left bank of the Oxus, below Khoja Saleh.

It was agreed that "...neutral zone was to include such tracts as Balkh, Kunduz and Badakhshan; but since then these provinces have become for period more or less incorporated with Afghanistan, all the provinces, then, in the possession of Amir Sher Ali.... Beyond this limit that of the region controlled by the Amir-Russia would not interfere nor seek to exercise any influence". Quoted from Habberton, n. 14, p. 26.

Gopal, n. 16, p. 71; see also Davis, n. 4, p. 168.
3. The internal districts of Akcha, Seripol, Maimana, Shibberghan and Andkhoi, the latter being the extreme Afghan frontier territory in the northwest, the desert beyond belonging to the independent tribes of Turkomans.

4. Western Afghanistan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorassan is well-known.

This proposal was based on the assumption that Sher Ali had fully re-established his right of possession of territories upto the Oxus as far down as Khojah Saleh. This Afghan possession was also admitted by Bokhara; all other evidence pointed towards the actual possession of these territories by Sher Ali.

However, prior to 1871, Turkoman country formed an intermediary zone between Afghanistan and Bokhara. The boundary of Turkoman country was clearly marked by the river Oxus. The Russian occupation of Khiva in 1873, distorted this position in relation to Afghanistan's northwestern boundary. They contested Amir Sher Ali's claim on Akcha, Seripol, Maimana, Shibberghan and Andkhoi. But they agreed for a intermediary zone till the delimitation of the Afghan northern frontiers was finalised in St. Petersburg.

The very basis of this concept of intermediary zone was undermined by Russian doubts on Sher Ali's claim. They


20 See Habberton, n. 14, p. 29.
insisted that: (a) territory under Sher Ali's actual control be, for a time being, considered as Afghanistan's northern limit; (b) Sher Ali should not exercise political control beyond it; and (c) Britain should prevent aggression by Sher Ali against Bokhara vice-versa. Yet, the extent of the frontier remained debatable. It was Russia's contention that Amir Dost Mohammad had left much confusion regarding the actual territorial extent of Afghanistan; and that it could not be the basis for the boundary delimitation.

The acceptance of river Oxus as the boundary between the two added more to the complication of determining the political affiliations of various Khanates, particularly in the northeastern part of the Russo-Afghan frontier. For example, it was argued that Sher Ali's claim to Shignan was debatable because, as "...more than half of the population of Shignan which was claimed by the Amir, as from ancient times dependency and a feudatory of Badakhshan, dwelt beyond the river...Oxus". In addition, commenting upon the boundary agreement, Lord Salisbury stated that it was merely, "...drawing lines upon the maps where no human foot has ever trod... giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other... only hindered by small impediment that we never know exactly where those mountains and rivers and lakes were".

21 Tate, n. 19, p. 83.
22 Ibid.
As noted earlier, the inherent weakness of the agreement was that it was entirely based on information collected by Russia. The boundary claims, thereby, became politically oriented and maps were doubtful to provide correct geographical appraisals. This was evident from the Home Government suggestion that in the northeast, the boundary was to follow the line of the main stream from Sarikul Lake (Wood's Lake) on the Pamir to the Kerkis ferry. If this was recognized, it was evident that Afghanistan will lose Kolab and other territories across the river. Instead another stream (Ab-i-Panja) was taken up, as the dividing line, as it passed through Wakhan to a point where the ranges of Hindukush meet the southern angle of Pamir steppe. Later it was redefined to include Badakhshan and its dependent district of Wakhan from Sarikul in the east to the junction of Kokcha with the Oxus in the west. The line of Ab-i-Panja formed the boundary.

Under such situations the control of both the banks becomes a strategic necessity. With the same logic, in Upper Oxus region, one cannot overlook the topography, especially where the valleys are separated from one another by impassable passes, where river gaps form the main artery of communications. Their function becomes arbitrary and artificial.

Furthermore, the political control of the Amir, was weak. The explorations carried out to define the sphere of influence between the Russia and Great Britain could not identify the river dividing Afghanistan and Bokhara. It can be
said that the boundary had separated the ethnological distributions and the traditional territorial limits. Similarly, as the districts of Ishkashim, Gharan, Shignan and Roshan were bisected by the Panja river, it would be difficult to separate some as to belong to one and others to another.

The ambiguous stand taken by Russia indicated the lack of reliable information about the area under question. Though much of the data was collected through Russian advance, it can be positively argued that "...in the first place, all the data we have to rely on respecting those regions are very vague and uncertain. The little native testimony, that there is, is unworthy of credence. The maps are problematic and often contradictory".

In the same manner, data limited the Afghan frontier in the northeast; which, accordingly, was to start from the confluence of Kokcha river with the Oxus to Khoja Saleh on the Oxus in the west. However, with Russia's acceptance of British stand on the northwest and northeastern frontiers of Afghanistan, the boundary negotiation (started in 1869 in St. Petersburg) was finally settled in 1873. By this agreement (between Granville and Gortchaveoff in 1873), two features were singularly apparent. They were: (1) the Afghanistan's frontier with Russia was delimited; thereby checking the rapid Russian advance in Central Asia, and (2) that Afghanistan

remained under British sphere of influence. But, the treaty was almost invalidated without much delay by the annexation of Khiva by Russia.

In the meanwhile, Amir Sher Ali consolidated his power and authority firmly over Afghanistan. His spontaneous preference to Great Britain and his grasp of Afghanistan's indispensable position vis-a-vis Anglo-Russian relations were important features. However, in 1874, the change in the Home Government led to a major shift in the British policy towards Afghanistan.

This fear was further augmented with the fall of Khiva, when Russia commenced its gradual penetration into the steppes occupied by the Tekke Turkoman tribes. This nervousness became apparent with the arrival of Lord Lytton to India. This expansion in the Central Asian desert conceded with simultaneous extension of trans-Caspian railway. This gave, for the first time, direct communication with St. Petersburg. In the process, this acquisition enabled Russia to pressurize Turkomans from Khira and Bokhara as well as from the Caspian and Afghanistan.

There was a similarity of events in the Afghan north-west frontier. The 1873 agreement failed to perceive the

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25 See Gopal, n. 16, pp. 73-77.
26 See Prasad, n. 12, pp. 113-14.
frontiers of Turkomans with either Bokhara or Afghanistan. It was arbitrary. Commencing from Khoja Saleh on the Oxus to Sarakhs on the outer point of Persian frontier district of Meshad, but "...lack of geographical information about the region rendered the treaty...nebulous and uncertain. It was acknowledged...that...to be a line connecting Khoja Saleh with Persian frontier at Sarrahs". Khoja Saleh was mentioned as a post on the Oxus. Though Sarrahs was able to be identified, the mention of Khoja Saleh was available only from the records of Alexander Burns.

Meanwhile, in 1876, the British decided to occupy Quetta. Occupation of Quetta, was first proposed by Sir John Jacob in 1856 and later by Sir Henry Green in 1866. Strategically, Quetta "...occupies a position of extraordinary natural strength and of commanding strategical importance in the centre of the highland part of Baluchistan. Protected by on the southwest by the lofty Chehiltan range, on the northeast by the Zarghun plateau, it dominated all the southern approaches to the Indus valley".

In 1878, with the occupation of Quetta, British position

29 Davis, n. 4, p. 10.
became less dependent upon Afghanistan. Sher Ali's animosity and the territory he coveted was British. In view of this, British proposed to establish forward outpost in the Kurram Valley. The pro-Turkish policy of Britain resulted in the Russian mission of Stolietoff to Kabul and Sher Ali's refusal to entertain Chamberlain mission to Kabul.

Hence, these combined to provide Lord Lytton, with his casus belli for the Second Afghan war, 1878-80. Thus, 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 beginning stages of the Second Afghan war resulted in the replacement of Amir Sher Ali by Yakub Khan as the Amir of Afghanistan and as per the treaty of Gandamak (26 May 1879), the British would guide foreign matters and in return they would protect him against any aggression. In addition, the districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi (these districts are in the neighbourhood of Bolan Pass) were brought under protection and administrative control. They also retained the control of the Khybar and Mishmi passes and of all relations with the independent tribes in the near vicinity. The British troops were withdrawn, except those stationed at Kandahar. But by

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30 Gopal, n. 16, p. 83.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., pp. 88-89.
September 1879, the British Resident and the small escorts were murdered in Kabul. Britain once more penetrated Afghanistan and occupied Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line. In the meanwhile Amir Yakub Khan abdicated.

Lytton's proposal of annexation of Kabul, Kandahar and other neighbouring areas was not accepted. Instead, it was preferred that Herat should be transferred to Persia while Kandahar was to be retained by a loyal ally. The Hindukush once again figured as the northwestern frontier. The question of scientific frontier was taken up and was based on the steady Russian expansion in Central Asia. It was decided that the politically united Afghanistan can serve as a 'Buffer' between the two. The withdrawal of British forces and the emergence of Abdur Rahman as the Amir had significant impact in the finalization of the extent of Afghanistan's international frontiers.

Amir Abdur Rahman, at first, was given to understand that the whole of Afghanistan except Kandahar was to form a part of his dominion. British gave no assurances about Herat, which they thought will be absorbed by Persia along with Seistan. Later on, in 1881, Kandahar was transferred to the

33 Davis, n. 4, p. 17; see also George Dobson, Russia's Railway Advances in Central Asia: Notes on a Journey from St. Peters burg to Samarkand (London, 1895), p. 47.

Amir. During the same period, the Government of India decided to relinquish the Afridies of the Khybar pass and the Turis of Kurram valley. Pishin and Sibi were retained for the extension of railway through the Khojak tunnel to New Chaman to Kandahar. In spite of repeated assurances not to advance in the direction of Merv and Herat, Russia broke its promise by annexing the Turkoman country of Merv. This expansion can be debated as to be coterminous with British advance to the frontiers of Afghanistan as to be similar—compelled by political and commercial interests. In 1881, the Russo-Persian treaty, delimited the frontier at Fort Baba Dormuz. Though the agreement included in the demarcation of the boundary, the significant feature was the absence of a line towards Merv and Herat. The British apprehension against the Russian advance was further increased by the introduction of new maps indicating the boundaries of Merv, southwards up to the Hari Rud and meeting the river near Herat.

The British reluctance to assure Afghanistan indicated their failure to formulate an effective and definite Central Asian policy; for between the Russian outposts and Afghanistan, there was only an undefined frontier. The negotiation between Russia and England was not for a treaty but setting up a joint boundary commission. Britain was content to check the Russian

35 Prasad, n. 19, p. 226.
advance in the direction of Herat; in the event of failure to defend Herat, they could easily defend the mountain passes or fall back on river Indus.

In late 1884, however, Russia started annexing Sarrakhs, while Afghanistan consolidated itself at Panjdeh. British apprehension arose from the Russian occupation of Merv, as they considered Merv as the key to Herat, as Herat was for Kandahar, and finally Kandahar through the Bolan pass was key to India.

On the other hand, it was argued that it was the advanced line of frontier outposts at Sarrakhs, and Pul-i-Khatun (later Panjdeh) which were important for future Russian territorial expansion towards Herat, instead of Merv. (This was based on the location of Merv at the junction of trade routes.)

With these inherent advantages, Russia proposed the need of the definition of the zones to be surveyed by the boundary commission. While accepting the proposal, Britain contented that Russia should withdraw from Pul-i-Khatun and Panjdeh and on the same basis Afghanistan was asked to withdraw from Sari.

37 Ibid., pp. 185-6.
38 See Curzon, n. 10, p. 120.
39 Ibid., p. 120.
40 Curzon, n. 10, p. 118.
Yaza. The entire contention rested on the fact that earlier, Russia had accepted the neutrality of Panjdeh and that they should evacuate them to their former advanced outposts of Aimakjar and Hazrat Imam down the Murghab and half way down to Merv. Rejecting the proposal, Russia demanded the Afghan withdrawal from Panjdeh, as both Pul-i-Khatun and Panjdeh remained outside the Afghan influence. This clearly indicated that they would rather prefer an ethnic basis for delimitation rather than geographic. Again it was debatable that even if there were geographical obstacles, Russia would not have hesitated to advance for political obstacles could be easily circumvented. This suggested that Russia would be content with cogency than the absence of tranquility in the Turkoman country under their control. This was reflected in their attitude about the Sarikhs who owed only nominal allegiance to the Afghans. It should be noted, however, that Sarikhs were nomadic group and due to the economic necessity, they could have settled peacefully under the Russian rule. In view of the essential differences (the line of dispute between the Hari Rud and Murghab), both Russia and Afghanistan began stretching their line of advance as much north as it was south in the debated area.


42 Ghosh, n. 36, pp. 185-6.
With this impasse the strategic situation changed. Russia was able to reach 170 miles nearer to Herat (with the possession of Pul-i-Khatun, 40 miles further south of Merv) and the British were able to reach only up to Quetta, a distance of 500 miles from Herat. Both the Home and Indian Governments were convinced that Russian stand was a prelude to further expansion towards Afghanistan. The relation between the colonial powers worsened. Before the British could assume a defensive posture, Russia evicted the Afghans and annexed Panjdeh. At the same time, in order to forestall any further Russian reaction, Britain restrained Afghans from reinforcing their position in Shignan and Roshan; they suggested that the northern limit of Afghanistan in this sector being located at Panja and Northern Panja.

Besides, it was also suggested to the Amir that he had no definite frontier in the direction of Merv and Sarrakhs. They added that the frontier between the Hari Rud and Khoja Salih on the Oxus should be determined and carefully laid down. The Afghan withdrawal from the trans-Oxus was followed by their occupation of territories east of the Hari Rud. It was strategically important for the road leading from Sarrakhs.

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44 Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec. E, March 1884, Nos. 145-197, No. 195-
to Herat through Badghis was essential for Herat. In the process, it was decided to demarcate in consent with Russia, the entire northern border of Afghanistan from the Hari Rud to the borders of Kashgar.

Russia proposed the demarcation of the northwestern boundary from Khoja Saleh to Tejend. Meanwhile, Persia protested against the Russian occupation of old Sarrakhs, but it did not bring any desired result whatsoever. Russia contented that Persia had no territories on the right bank of Hari Rud and that the entire district belonged to the Merv Turkomans (whose permission to settle was refused by Persia).

With the appointment of Sir Peter Lumsden to represent the joint boundary commission, British insisted that the boundary dispute between the Hari Rud and the Murghab should be settled at the beginning. This dispute arose from the Russian occupation of Merv and also due to proposal that the boundaries of Merv touched the two rivers. Delaying the work of the joint boundary commission, Russia counter-proposed the need for definite principles for delineating the boundary and argued whether it will be ethnographical, topographical or geographical or all the three. It was finally decided to start the

45 Ibid.
boundary demarcation from the Hari Rud north westwards to the Oxus. Implying the necessity of principles on which boundary delimitation was to be followed, the British considered that "...Afghan territory to extend to a point on the Hari Rud in the neighbourhood of Sarrakhs...(but they withheld any definite understanding before the joint commission had investigated it)...." They added that the primary duty of the commission was to identify and determine the true frontiers of Afghanistan and in the process the commission should be guided in defining the Amir's authority by his relations with the tribes. Such a step, the suggested, was necessary to avoid future boundary dispute between the two.

The disputed Panjdeh area was 100 miles due south of Merv at confluence of the Murghab and Khushk river. As this line of Russian advance easily commanded the high way to Herat and India, the annexation of Pul-i-Khatun and Zulfikar pass posed a serious threat to the security of British India. At the same time, the Amir agreed to accept any border that did not come further south than the Zulfikar and which left Gulhar and Maruchak within the Afghan border. Later during the boundary settlement, Zulfikar was exchanged by giving up Panjdeh to Russia. Even before the final decision was taken about Panjdeh, Lumsden stated that the surrender of Panjdeh and the abandonment of the forward posts of Ak-Tepe would be taken as

48 Ibid., No. 460.
giving up the key to Herat to Russia. Lumsden was recalled and was succeeded by Sir West Ridgeway as the British representative in the joint boundary commission.

The completion of the process of the northwestern boundary of Afghanistan brought definite territorial advantage to the Amir in the form of an agreement from the Hari Rud to the Oxus river.

Of the problem which beset the Anglo-Russian boundary commission, was the definition and the exactness of the geographical location of places mentioned in the 1873 treaty. The inaccurate and hypothetical maps had contributed significantly to the loose nature of the definitions. Taking advantages of this, Russia had continued the policy of expansion in Kara Kum desert and had often attempted to control strategic and geographically important areas along the periphery.

The use of treaties and maps for interpretation of the indigenous frontiers proved extremely difficult; as was in the case of determining the location of the 'post' of Khoja Saleh on the Oxus river or determining the extent of water and pasture rights of the Sarikhs and the Turkmans between the Kushk and the Murghab rivers. The boundary negotiators accepted the view that the tribal limits were of fluctuating nature and were far too uncertain to be accepted for the purpose of delimitation. Though local representatives were able to substantiate the information about the area under dispute, it has been

49 Quoted in Tripathi, n. 43, p. 42.
found that the Russian claims were based on more sound basis. This was largely due to the fact that the data was collected by people who were directly or indirectly connected with the boundary negotiations. The ethnographical and geographical details supported their claims. However, in turn it added more to the confusion of the boundary dispute. Yet, the vagueness of the tribal territorial limits as well as the loose nature of the Afghan political control of these areas, ultimately a definite agreement as to the extent of territorial limits was sought.

Beginning the process of delimitation from the Hari Rud to the Oxus, the boundary was settled from Zulfi kar on the Hari Rud to the Kushk river and thence to the Murghab. This section of the boundary followed fairly prominent features which could not be easily mistaken. But the intermediate tract between the Murghab and the Oxus, area dominated by the 'Chol hills' crossing the main channels of drainage from the Kara Bel plateau to the Chaharshamba valley and striking again the wide expanse of desert between the foot of the 'Chol' and the Oxus riverain. The delimitation on such a tract would not only have involved time, labour and money, but would have been difficult for the inhabitants to recognize the boundary.

But this does mean to suggest that there was a want of a definition for such disputes were easily settled by

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comparatively small party of surveyors without resorting to any major political confrontation.

The dispute over the Zulfikar pass was both geographical and strategical. For "...it is simply a gorge or break in the line of cliffs that surround the valley of Hari Rud on the east and almost all the way up to Pul-i-Khatun to Kara Elias, some forty miles upward. Zulfikar pass is the only possible communication route between the valley of the Hari Rud and the country above it". The geographical advantage of the pass was strategic as it gave an easy access to the valleys of Hari Rud and Khushk rivers.

As the delimitation advanced, towards the valley of Shorab and Islam, Russia claimed that the boundary was to cross the valley and running along the crest of hillocks bordering the southern bank instead of following the natural line along the bed of the stream. Such a claim was meant to deprive Afghanistan of the perinnial source of water, in a region which had very few sources of water. This was settled and enabled 52 Afghanistan to extend from Kara Tepe to Kara Tepe Khurd.

Till the Khushk river the boundary strictly adhered to treaty. The ambiguous terms and definition became a source of continuous irritant but ultimately provided a vast geographical

51 Yates, n. 41, p. 75.
52 Ibid., p. 104.
information about the area. In the meantime, Russia was able to evict the Afghans from Panjdeh. This complicated the boundary delimitation. Lumsden was recalled to help the negotiation in England while Sir West Ridgeway was appointed to continue the work of delimitation. By June 1886, the Afghan northwestern boundary from Zulfikar on the Hari Rud to Dukchi, a group of wells north of Andhkoi and 40 miles of the Oxus was delimited.

Throughout the length of the boundary, there were claims and counter-claims most of which were based on the rights enjoyed by the tribes on water and pastures. This was unfortunate for the joint boundary commission, as it was unable to decide the exact location of the boundary in the vicinity of the river. According to the 1873 agreement, Khoja Saleh was the frontier; but no such place along the frontier could be found. This led to the dissolution of the commission at Khamiab (which had settled the boundary up to Dukchi).

The significant aspect of the northwest boundary springs up from the established limits of pasture of Turkomans. The Turkomans of Panjdeh and Merv have recognized limits of their pasture, which was west of Kara Kum desert. The limits of


54 C.U. Aitchinson, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries
pasture for the Turkomans living on the banks of Oxus, was on the east. Between these two lay a barren country. Thereby, it compelled Russia to seek a viable a frontier which in essence (according to them) was a compromise between the political and geographical boundaries. The evidence collected by the boundary commission indicated that the Uzbegs of Maimanah have wells and pastures in south of the desert. The Russian claim to this region though in the form of protecting the interests of the Turkomans, in no way justified the geographical continuity of the Maimanah claims.

Russian claims on territory have been more on the line of actual area covered by the Turkomans. The Turkoman tribe had their areas widely scattered and led to an ambiguity in claims.

With the boundary delimitation, the unsettled part of the frontier was favourably concluded. Afghanistan restored to the Sarikh Turkomans most of the land of which they had been deprived of between the Khushk and the Murghab rivers.

55 The difference between the two lay essentially in the definition and the characteristics of the latter. The former depending upon the political situation, changes and is arbitrarily defined by negotiating powers, whereas the latter is distinct and is quite permanent. The structural boundary is that distinct feature which at its point indicates a culmination of a natural feature and the beginning of another, for example, the culmination of the Kara Kum desert in the mountains of the northern Afghanistan, is a distinct feature, where both the desert and the mountain show a distinct structural change.
In turn, Russia had withdrawn all her claims to districts in possession of Afghanistan on the Oxus as well as to wells and pastures necessary for the prosperity of the Uzbegs of Afghan Turkestan.

Latter, in 1888, Yates and Peacocke, completed the demarcation of the revised portion of the frontier between Khushk and the Murghab and between the Dükchi and the Oxus. The final protocol was signed at St. Petersburg in 1887.

Thus, the advantage gained the settlement of the northwestern frontier essentially lay in the fact that there was a definite frontier from the Hari Rud to the Oxus river. The earlier conditions against the reopening of the canals below Chihil Dukhtar remained in force, but the Afghan immigrants at Karatapa were allowed the exclusive use of the Maghor river. Further by restoring rights to the Sarikhs, the district of Khamiab was retained by Afghanistan. Thus the British succeeded in making Russia to accept a boundary, whose transgression in the future would have been a open violation of the convention of July 1887.

With the culmination of the Second Afghan war, Britain were committed to the Lytton's policy of containing Russia which had threatened to overflow the Himalaya. With a firm grip on the Afghan affairs, Lytton suggested the occupation

56 Aitchinson, n. 54, p. 217.
57 Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec. F, August 1887, Nos. 33-46, No. 44.
Yasin, as it would cover the Iskoman and Baroghil passes (as they controlled the road from Wakhan into the Indian plains via Chitral, Chilas and Tarbela, and from Chitral on to Peshawar). British Himalayan policy was based on the friendly relations with the tribal chiefs who controlled strategic zones between the British frontier and whose passes provided easy access to the Indian plains. However, this enabled Lytton in 1879 to formulate the basis of Britain's Northern Frontier of India. "The natural boundary of India is formed by the convergence of the great mountain ranges of the Himalayas and of the Hindukush which here extend northwards upto their junction.... Within the angle thus formed lie the territories of Chitral, Darel, Yasin, Hunza and other petty dependencies.... And the only pass through these ranges from the Pamir are...in the hands of semi-independent chiefs... (and if we)...consolidate our influence over this country... we shall have laid down a natural line of frontier which is distinct, intelligible and likely to be respected.

Meanwhile, the increasing Russian activities in the Pamirs became a source of concern to the British. Though, they

59 Ibid., p. 85.
60 Ibid., pp. 85-88.
lacked adequate geographical information regarding the Sino-Afghan boundary, they encouraged the Chinese claim up to the Russo-Afghan boundary (as laid down in the 1873 agreement), in order to wade off the encroachment of any third party in the region. Furthermore, the growing Russian commercial interest in Chinese Turkestan increased British apprehension as to the Russian design in the region. The resultant Young-husband mission to Kashgar through the Pamir region, brought significant geographical details which enabled the British to assess the situation as it had existed in the Pamirs.

However, Russia was determined to assert its claim on the Pamirs and also on areas which were regarded as the Afghan territory. It was also felt that the Amir of Afghanistan should not persist in excluding the British in the region, for it would clearly result the Russian absorption of territories right up to the Indian border. The British apprehension of Russia gaining a foothold in the southern slope of the Hindu-kush increased. In 1891, Russia claimed the whole of Roshan and Shignan and suggested that the northern boundary of Afghanistan ran straight from Lake Victoria to the junction of Kokcha with the Oxus; thereby increasing their claim to Badakhshan north of Faizabad. Contesting the claim, British asserted that according to 1873 agreement, it was accepted that

61 Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec. F, September 1891, Nos. 72-126, No. 85.
both Badakhshan and Wakhan belonged to Afghanistan. It was argued that the Russian claim was based on the fact that the region of Pamirs was a tributary to Khokand and as the latter formed a part of Russia, the former became a part of Russia.

At about the same time, China consolidated its western and southern frontier in Turkestan. Encouraged by Younghus-band's mission to Kashgar (which undoubtedly formed the basis of major British frontier decisions) China gradually expanded in the Pamirs. Thus the settlement of the boundary called for British, Russian, Chinese and Afghan co-operation in the Pamirs. This led to mutual suspicion regarding other's territorial advances. The situation in the Pamirs became complicated when Sino-Afghan dispute at Somatash surfaced.

The British considered that the 1873 agreement would be of no help in defining the boundary east of the Wood's Lake; as there was no effective Afghan or Chinese occupation. They also feared Russian occupation of Hunza and Yasin passes. They argued that delimitation would be possible only after Russia accepted a line restricting their advance eastward and keeping northward of Pamirs leaving Roshan and Shignan or the latter to the Afghans.

Yet, the nebulous state of the frontiers and lack of adequate geographical knowledge, the Afghans lost Alichur Pamirs to Russia in 1893. The Amir's demand resulted in an assurance of early demarcation of the boundary. In the process, the Amir was restrained from vacating eastern portion of Wakhan.
However, the growing Russian activity in the Pamirs compelled the Amir to negotiate with the British. The British interest in the tribal areas south of the Hindukush was strategic. Although they allowed the Chinese to advance into the Pamirs, they distinctly identified the Karakoram ranges as the natural boundary between Hunza and the Chinese territory of Sinkiang. For, to the north of Hunza, it stretched towards the junction of the Muztagh and the Hindukush was divided only by a narrow wedge of Afghan territory separating from Russian Pamirs. Its importance and retention was obvious.

Russia wanted to enclose Oxus watershed and to be in contact with the range forming the water partings from the river Indus. But British proposed that Afghan territory should be extended to one hundred twenty-eight kilometres to meet Nezatash in Chinese Turkestan as the natural limit of Afghanistan in the northeast.

At this stage, Amir Abdur Rahman withdrew his occupation from north to Murghab and eastwards of the upper water of the river Murghab and confined himself to 73°E longitude. The significance of this is evident from the fact that "while retaining territory on the wrong side of the Oxus in the north, he had renounced parts of Wakhan to which he was entitled by the 1873 line, and by so doing had laid bare the Dora Group of passes into Chitral west of Baroghil, which so far the Russians had been unable to approach".

In 1893, Russia began to insist upon 1873 agreement. Russia demanded the abandonment of trans-Oxus Roshan and Shignan by Afghanistan. They suggested that if this was done by Afghanistan, Bokhara would give up all Darwaz south of the river. They changed their frontier from the original Lake Victoria feeder of the Oxus to the line of the Wakhan Su to the south of it. The British insisted upon the control of the longitudinal valleys of the north but not south of the mountains.

Meanwhile, negotiations continued at St. Petersburg on the subject of Pamirs. The British contention, based on the 1873 agreement was that the land between the Oxus river was a matter which would be determined by discussion. They also called for a division of so-called no-man's land between Bokhara and the Oxus. Importance for the settlement of the boundary, east of Wood's Lake was also stressed. British position was clear from the fact that the Amir should vacate Roshan and Shignan as Russia accepted to give up Darwaz and that the no-man's land between Wakhan and Chinese frontier was to be included in Afghanistan.

The deadlock which arose in the demarcation of the northeastern boundary of Afghanistan, can be described as "...that part of the undefined Russo-Afghan frontier...is bordered by the disputed main stream or streams of the upper Oxus, and contested Khanates of Shignan and Wakhan, etc. The misunderstanding arose through the utter ignorance of the
country upon which the first Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873, 63
as to this region of the frontier, was based.

The whole question of Afghanistan's northeastern fron-
tier began to focus around the question of the exchange of
trans-Oxus Roshan and Shignan for cis-Oxus Darwaz. Despite
all misunderstandings the 1873 line traversed through the
Kokcha Junction along the Oxus to Lake Victoria, which was
confirmed in 1895 and continued eastwards across the Pamirs
to the Chinese frontier which was taken as the boundary bet-
ween Afghanistan and Russia in the Pamirs.

This led to the Durand mission to Kabul, which apart
from securing Amir's approval, also negotiated Indo-Afghan
boundary. After eliciting necessary assurances from the Bri-
tish, the Amir gave up all the districts held by him to the
north of the upper Oxus, on condition that he received
in turn all districts not now held by him to the south of this
part of the river. Ultimately, in 1895, the Anglo-Russian
agreement on the Pamir was concluded. The agreement, arrang-
ing for delimitation clearly recognized that the situation
existing in the Chinese frontier was to be assessed and
concerned itself with the Taghdumbash Pamirs. Accordingly
the Russo-Afghan frontier was demarcated as far as the
Poraloschverkorski, a point on the Taghdumbash, where it was
accepted to have reached the Muztagh range at Sarikol which

63 Dobson, n. 33, pp. 44-45.
was taken up as actual Chinese frontier. The settlement laid down that the spheres of influence of Great Britain and Russia to the east of Lake Victoria should follow the crest of the mountain-ranges running somewhat to the south of the latitude of the lake as far as the Bendersky and Ortabel passes. From there the line should run along the same range where it remained to the south of the latitude of the said lake and on reaching that latitude it should descend a spur of the range towards Kizil Robat on the Aksu river, if that locality was found not to be north of the latitude of the Lake Victoria, and thenceforth it should be prolonged in an easterly direction so as to meet the Chinese frontier. If it should be found that Kinzil Robat was situated to the north of the latitude of the Lake Victoria, the line of demarcation should be drawn to the nearest convenient point on the Aksu river south of that latitude and from thence prolonged as aforesaid.

The river Oxus, which for nearly 960 kms., acts as a boundary between Afghanistan and Russia, was essentially an 'anthropogeographic boundary'. Its main drawback lay essentially in this and instead of assimilating the politico-ethnic features of the region, it had provided a sharp political contrast between them and had divided the existing ethnic distribution. 'Turkoman's inhabit the river Oxus region. They

are found on both the banks of the river. Their division by the boundary has rendered the same tribal group to owe allegiance to two entirely different administrative and political set up. As a consequence any disturbance had a direct bearing on both the sides of the boundaries. It was evident in late 1880s, when Amir Abdur Rahman Khan of Afghanistan led a military expedition in the northern province. This resulted in the forced migration of many Turkomans to the other side of the Oxus. This aggravated the relation between Russia and Afghanistan. Again in 1921, many of the Turkoman group escaped to Afghanistan after crossing the Oxus to escape the Soviets. This resulted in the propaganda war against the Afghans by Soviet Russia. Thus such boundaries are clear indicators of potential friction and dispute and as far as Afghanistan was concerned, it was chief grievance against the boundary makers of the nineteenth century. This is again implicit in the 1921 treaty of Russo-Afghan friendship. According to the text related to boundary, it was agreed that Khira and Bokhara's independence was recognized. Further, it was offered that the plebiscite will be held in Panjdeh to know whether they should belong to Russia or Afghanistan, and as such none were held to apply the treaty realistically.

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The western boundary of Afghanistan with Persia (Iran) was comparatively stable. It had involved minimum of friction.
The primary cause of the boundary dispute between Afghanistan and Persia, lay essentially in the complex nature of the history of the region with a desert environment. The dispute was upon the important cities which formed part of the strategic communication route connecting Central Asia and Asia Minor with the Indian subcontinent.

Afghan boundary with Persia is nearly 1120 km. It starts from the trijunction point of Zulfikar pass (where Persia, Russia and Afghanistan converge) extends up to the northern parts of the Seistan basin. From Seisten, it turns southeastwards and east to Koh-i-Malik-Siah, where Persia, Afghanistan and Pakistan converge to form a trijunction point.

The Hari Rud forms the boundary line between Persia and Afghanistan. It demarcates the boundary from Zulfikar pass to a point where the Hari Rud turns and follows a longitudinal trend to Zulfikar. Below this point and up to the northern end of Seistan basin, is the Hashtadan Plain. Maclean arbitration award of 1881 had not only considered the geographical features of the area but also delineated the boundary. The boundary between the Hashtadan Plain and the Seistan basin was settled in 1935 when General Fakhur-ud-Din Ahmed, a Turkish officer, was appointed to arbitrate the dispute. The award defined the boundary from Siah-Koh in the vicinity of Bandan to a point in Hashtadan plain, where General Maclean's award ended.

The Afghan rule in Seistan was only nominal. Persia
took advantage of the unstable political conditions in Afghanistan and Seistan to extend its influence. In 1866, they occupied a part of it. The resultant boundary dispute was referred to the British for arbitration. In 1872, Sir Frederic Goldsmid was appointed as the Chief arbitrator. Goldsmid's mission was hampered by Persian Commissioner and the Governor of Seistan. Commission's movement and their effort to collect information was subjected to all kinds of difficulties. With whatever enquiries and surveys possible under such circumstances, the boundary award was delivered. Dividing Seistan into (1) Seistan proper and, (2) Outer Seistan, the Goldsmid's award laid down the boundary on Paper as to extend from "...the Band-i-Seistan northwards to the Naizar or reed-beds on the Hamun Shore, the main bed of the Helmand was defined to be the boundary".

However, due to heavy floods in 1896, river Helmand changed its course from Nad Ali, and northwards in straight line to westwards along the new channal Rud-i-Parian. The old channal diminished to a stream and after feeding the irrigation canals, reached Sikh Sar Channa! with very little water. As a result the area of the Hamun decreased and the Naizar dried up. This changed course led to renewed dispute, as the doubts whether new or old channal was the boundary. It was

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66 Ibid.
further complicated by the distribution of the water of the Helmand river, as both countries depended on it for cultivation, extended all over Mian Kangi and Takht-i-Shah. The British Government again acted as arbitrating authority and appointed Sir H. McMahan as the Chief arbitrator.

The Sikhsar beyond Deh Gul was still considered as the international boundary. It was believed that if the outside influences had not penetrated, the boundary could have been resolved peacefully. Instead, the boundary and water dispute assumed serious proportions in Perso-Afghan relations. The series of boundary dispute began with the extension of Takht-i-Shah canals by Persia in 1901. Though extension in itself cannot be considered as a source of dispute, it was extension of cultivation near Ganguzar on the east of Sim that was considered as a violation of the boundary. Meanwhile, the Afghans closed small Sikhsar canal and diverted it to West of Sim.

The attempt to resolve the dispute by the commissioners of the country ended in a failure.

Persian claim was based on Goldsmid's award which ran as follows: "from the Koh-i-Malik Siah it ran, not in a straight line to Band-i-Kuhak,...as to include in Persian territory the Tarakun tract and all the country on the west of the Helmand leaving only the small narrow fringe of present Afghan cultivation on the left bank of that river in Afghan territory. From Kuhak it followed the Helmand and the Nad-Ali and Sikhsar channel, and thence northwards through the old
Naizar to the northern edge of the Hamun, and thence in a straight line to Siahjoh. On the contrary, the Afghanistan claimed a line from Koh-i-Malik Siah to Band-i-Kuhak including Ram Rud. From Kuhak along the Helmand and Nad Ali to Burj-i-As and Deh Ido. It was contented that according to award, the boundary leaves the river and hence the Afghanistan should extend upto Siahkoh.

Interestingly enough while Persia insisted upon the interpretation of the award (showing ignorance to the map) and Afghanistan insisted upon the map (showing ignorance of the award). To resolve the outstanding differences, McMahan insisted upon the complete survey and to determine the course of Goldsmid's award. The earlier award remained the basis of his award with modifications.

Delivering the award on 11 November 1903, McMahan stated that the boundary was in a straight line from Koh-i-Malik Siah to Band-i-Kuhak. From the latter to the mouth of the Afghan canal near Deh Gul, the line ran along the river and Nad Ali and Sikhsar channels. From here, the decision regarding lands between the new canal and Old Sim as far as Deh Hassan Kharot went to the Afghanistan as a compromise to the extension of Persia at Tappa-i-Kaniz. Ganguzar and Deh Ali Jangi was restored to Afghanistan. Taking the prominent mounds of Tappa-Talai, Tappa-i-Shah Raki and Tappa-i-Kurki, McMahan decided

the boundary to extend in a straight line to Shalghami. From here to Siahkoh the boundary ran in a straight line with Nar Ahu taken as Siahkoh.

Persia and Afghanistan ratified the McMahan's award in 1903 and 1904 respectively. By the end of 1904, the process of demarcation was completed.

Regarding the allocation of water resources of the Helmand river, it was decided that no irrigation work were to be carried out which will interfere with the frequent supply of water. New canals can be opened provided they did not diminish the supply of water by both sides. The irrigation facilities for Persia below Kohak was one-third of the volume of Helmand river after it had entered Seistan, which comprised all lands on either side of Helmand from Bandar-i-Kamal Khan downwards. Similar proportion of water was allocated to Afghanistan. As the maintenance of Band-i-Kohak was important for Persia so was downward movement of Shahgul Band across Rud-Parian to Afghanistan.

Later on, however, the two countries negotiated a convention providing that the water of the Helmand river from Kamal Khan dam will be divided equally between them. A joint commission was appointed to determine the quantity of water available in the autumn of each year.

68 Boggs, n. 1, p. 146.
The controversy between the forward and non-intervention schools of Imperial expansion figured prominently in the frontier question. The policy of non-annexation and non-intervention floundered as gradual Russian territorial aggrandizement in Central Asia began to threaten the British interest. As noted earlier, it was only after the Second Afghan war, that impressed the need for establishing a scientific frontier along Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis. The growing controversy for the adoption of a particular school of thought, further widened the gulf between the Amir, Abdur Rahman and the Indian Government. The question of tribal policy as well as the true frontiers of India in the northwest became the debatable issues. In this discussion, the scientific front- tier, the Durand line and the river Indus became the focal point. Finally, the development of better communication facilities and acquisition of strategical position along the frontier was agreed upon as the possible alternative which not only justified the strategical interests but also was financially more advantageous.

At the same time, there was a move to pressurize the Amir to limit his claims and forestall any move which he may

69 Davis, n. 4, p. 2.
70 Ibid., p. 18.
71 Ibid., pp. 4-17.
take to avoid to reach any definite understanding with them regarding the boundary. Thus keeping in view the defence of India, the British had created the triple frontier. They were: (1) the northern boundary of Afghanistan; (2) the Durand Line and (3) the administrative boundary (Indus river was also considered). Between (2) and (3) was the tribal belt, latter the hot-bed of Afghan resentment against the British. But this frontier of tribal belt between Afghanistan and British India "... is not sound from geographical point of view... it is not a frontier defined by watershed or big rivers. The only natural frontier to the westwards is the waterless desert of eastern Baluchistan and the highest ridges of some of the western Himalaya in the far north. From ethnic point of view frontier politics are a jumble of interests".  

"The Durand line...was not conterminous with the administrative frontier". The Durand Agreement had clearly indicated that the tribal area between the Durand line and the British administrative frontier was to be under the British influence.

But evidently what the Duran line had overlooked was that "for the settlement of new frontier lines, the problems

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72 E. Howard, "India's Defence as an Imperial Problem", *Journal of Central Asian Society* (London), vol. 13, pt. 2, 1926, p. 112. [Henceforth referred to as *JRCAS*]

are different and call for a complex solution, considering frontiers not only as an accomplished fact but also the frontier in the process of making and the ease with which it can be surveyed and marked out upon the ground becomes an important fact.\(^{74}\)

The British concept of the Durand line was strategically oriented. To the east of the line was the administrative boundary corresponding to it on the Afghan side was the Russo-Afghan boundary. This alignment of boundaries perhaps could not be considered in isolation, for southward deflection of Russo-Afghan boundary, for example, would produce serious consequences. The British thought as to the desirability of a northern or westwards deflection of the Durand line.

But the Durand line clearly indicated that the history of the region has been an important factor in determining its course. This historical factor has "sometimes even superseded physiographic factor...which...always interacting with all other factors, those working for persistence as well as those working for change". For example, the Kunar has long remained strategically important as a gateway from the conquest of the plains of Indus. It connected Badakhshan and the Oxus.


\(^{76}\) In between the highlands of Afghanistan and the Indus plains was the country inhabited by the tribes who were subjugated by the invading armies.
in the northern frontiers of Afghanistan with the Indus. Thus its importance was well recognized by the British and in their attempt to decide upon the most appropriate alignment for their border, experimented with numerous possibilities. Hence "the Durand line is very much a compromising solution based upon British strategic and administrative experience and not upon treaties and customs".

The local tribal policy became a cause for friction between the Amir and the Indian Government. The acquisition of the Gomal pass along with routes through Zhob to Pishin became coterminous with British strategic requirements to extend the frontier. The contiguous frontier with Afghanistan, it was argued, would enable the British to control, if necessary, the events in Afghanistan. This move was to secure the Dera Ismail Khan frontier. In addition, Waziristan and Tochi pass was brought within the British influence; thereby enabling them to check the Russian advance from Western Afghanistan or Afghan Turkestan.

At the same time, the Amir was informed of the British intention of pacifying and including those tribes who remained under British influence. They stated that the development of

77 Alastair Lamb, n. 74, p. 248.

78 This was intimated to the Amir in 1890 and was explained that the lawlessness of the tribes in the area was a source of danger to the Indian Government. Gomal routes owed its importance largely to its location between Quetta and Punjab; from Zhob and Bori valley to Dera Ismail Khan. See also Davis, n. , pp. 32-36.
transport network along the Gomal will be commercially advantageous to Afghanistan (as it was strategic to them). In spite of such assurance as not to encroach upon those tribes that belonged to Afghanistan, the Amir reacted to every British advance toward the frontier, particularly in Waziristan and places such as Gulkach between it and the Gomal river.

The Indian Government was determined to settle the Indo-Afghan frontier. In the process of settlement, the Amir was allowed to retain Wana and other places. This was done, with a view that it will give adequate opportunity to the Amir to represent his claims on this side of the frontier. Reluctance of the Amir to meet Lord Roberts, finally led to the suspension of boundary talks.

In the meanwhile, Amir disputed the British claim to the Gomal and the Kakar country. He argued that area north of Gomal is within his territorial limits. In addition, he enquired whether the Indian Government considered the entire country north of Gomal upto Ghazni and Mukin as lying within the Kakar country. However, Indian Government regarded the land inhabited by the Waziris as important. For, "It commanded the Gomal pass, the Mahsud country, and the different routes leading into Afghanistan, and therefore the Amir was keen to keep that place under his control, while the British were

79 Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec. F, August 1892, Nos. 65-149, No. 135.
anxious to deprive him of that position of vantage”.

The relation between the two further worsened over Bajaur. Pursuing a frontier policy advantageous to them vis-a-vis Russia, Britain considered the importance of consolidating their authority over the independent tribes.

The independent tribes occupying the eastern fringe of Afghanistan became the target of the Afghans. "The natural outlet for the superabundant energy of the Afghan army is on the frontiers of Afghanistan". The independent tribes had never been subdued. These tribes comprise of Kafirs, Mohmands, Bajouris, Swatis, Afridis and Waziris; excepting the Kafirs, all approached the Amir of Afghanistan for arbitration in their disputes. This direct influence of the Amir of Afghanistan on the independent tribes strained the relations of Afghanistan with the British. It was stated that by the treaty of Gandamak, Indian Government retained the control of Khyber and Michni passes, which lay between Peshawar and Jalalabad districts, as also of all relations with the independent tribes of the territory directly connected with those passes. In fact, they claimed jurisdiction over the tribes who were connected with the passes. The need for such a boundary was not only to define the boundary between the British India and Afghanistan but also to establish a second line of defence

80 Tripathi, n. 43; p. 68.
81 Holdich, n. 27, p. 226.
against a possible Russian threat. So much so, the British began to extend their administration to the tribal areas which were immediate to their administrative boundary. The extension of railway communication to New Chaman across the Khojak Hills in the southeastern frontiers of Afghanistan was considered as a British attempt to extend their frontier arbitrarily.

Regarding the Amir's claim to Bajaur and other areas (Amir had steadily endeavoured to extend his influence over these districts), Britain held the view that Bajaur, Swat and Chitral were not a part of Afghanistan. This, they argued, was firmly stated to Dosh Mohammad in 1861 and again to Sher Ali in 1877. However, annexation of Kunar and latter occupation of Asmer (Amir considered it as a part of Kunar forming the frontier of Afghanistan in the direction of Chitral) was motivated to threaten Chitra, Swat and Bajaur. However, Amir was persistent by stating that "...Asmer was the limit and "bundar" of the Kunar territory, and inevitably it should be in his possession". The British interest in retaining Chitral were to gain effective control over the passes. The dispute concerning the Kurram valley was investigated by a joint commission in 1888.

83 Tripathi, n. 43, pp. 70-71.
84 Ibid., p. 71.
Besides, there was centered around Chageh, a point thirty miles on the Baluchistan side of the Lut (south of Helmand and forming a natural boundary between northwestern Baluchistan and Amir's dominion). Though it was considered as a part of the State of Kharan, Amir occupied it in 1886, as he believed that it was located within his frontiers.

The Amir's procrastination for delimitation finally compelled the British to bring the frontier tribes under their influences as well, to extend the railway beyond New Chaman for strategic reasons. Interestingly enough, as there was no definite boundary between the two in the neighbourhood, the Amir had asserted that fort of Chaman was the boundary between Kandahar and Pishin districts.

Apart from settling the Pamir boundary, Durand mission also negotiated the settlement of the eastern and southern frontier. With specific objectives, Durand was authorized to make certain concessions to the Amir regarding the boundary dispute: about the intention of Indian Government to extend the railway through the Khojak mountains to New Chaman as well as the necessity (importance) to maintain direct relation with the frontier tribes. The Amir agreed to the definition of the sphere of influence between the Government of India and Afghanistan and gave up the suzerainty over the independent frontier tribes. As a compromise, Durand accepted Amir's

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85 Foreign Dept., Progs., Sec. F, August 1892, Nos. 573-7, No. 575.

authority in Asmer, Kunar valley and Birmal tract. Amir agreed not to interfere with the Bajauris, Afridi, Waziris, Kakars and other frontier tribes and also renounced his claim on New Chaman and Chageh. The agreement between Durand and the Amir was finally concluded and signed on 12 November 1893. It was also agreed that the process of demarcation should be taken up with delay. Thus, on the face of growing Russian threat, Britain was able to successfully manoeuvre the complete delimitation and demarcation of international frontiers of Afghanistan. The Pamir agreement of 1895 and the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907, finally eliminated the Russian threat. Afghanistan became the 'buffer' between the two colonial powers in Central Asia.

The settlement of the southern and eastern frontiers of Afghanistan theoretically defined the limits of the Afghan suzerainty even though the disputes arising from the boundary settlement (both major and minor disputes) were left unaltered till the British were in power in the Indian subcontinent. But "the process of boundary making gave to the ruling Afghan dynasty during the nineteenth century control over territory and population which in other circumstances might never have acquired". 87

The Durand line became the source of conflict. The inclusion of the hill tribes to the British side of the boundary,

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brought greater resentment of the Afghans against the British. The Amir expressed this in no ambiguous terms in his letter to Lord Landsdowne when he stated "if you should cut them of my dominion they will never be of any use to you (the British) nor to me.... As long as your government is strong and at peace you will be able to keep them quiet by a strong hand, but if at any time a foreign country appears on the borders of India, these frontier tribes will be your worst enemies".

The Durand line delimited the 1,920 km. boundary between Afghanistan and British India. The Afghan claim of suzerainty over parts of Baluchistan were based on historical factors but poorly supported by independent characteristics of the tribes of Baluchistan. The Afghan tribes had complete occupation of Baluchistan several times in the course of the history. Their occupation was often interrupted by conquering


The Afghan resentment of the Durand line largely rested on the fact that their country, whose territory shrank due to colonial expansion of the nineteenth century, did not benefit by the Durand line. They claimed that:

1. Durand line was signed under duress and imposed by a military force on Afghanistan; and

2. The question of Pakhtun territory always remained under dispute.
tribes which selected this particular area as a line of advancement for their ultimate invasion of the Indian subcontinent. They revolted, when the Afghan rule was weak and ineffective. The Afghans, basing their claim on their sporadic rule over Baluchistan, could not affect a probable adjustment to the boundary because of the Baluchi tribes, who had always expressed their independence.

But the Afghan boundary with British India indicated clearly the British attempt to control the strategic places. For example, Wana, a desolate plain, in the south of Gomal river at the southwestern corner of Waziristan in Baluchistan. "It is conveniently placed for dominating the Sulaiman Khel and other strongholds of the Ghilzai tribes, and it absolutely commands the great high road for trade between Ghazni and India". Thus the retention of the strategically important places by the British along the frontier had been Afghanistan the primary concern (for it gave easy access to Afghanistan) and the cause of the boundary disputes. Yet "the difficulty in demarcation of the Durand line between the British Indian Empire and Afghanistan arose from the various interpretations of the ambiguous terms in the proviso that the boundary should be drawn along the foot of hills". The demarcation of the

89 Prescott, n. 3, pp. 110-12.
90 Holdich, n. 27, p. 234.
boundary did not anticipate partitioning of the area which was geographically homogeneous in nature.

The error committed by the British in the early part of the negotiations seemed to have persisted in their relation with Afghanistan. The error was that during the negotiations no survey officer was permitted to accompany, for "no one was better aware than the Amir, that the road from Peshawar to Kabul had been thoroughly surveyed and indeed far beyond it".  

The work of demarcation of the Indo-Afghan border as defined by the Durand agreement was done in sections and was carried out by joint commission between 1894 and 1896. By 1895, the frontier between Nawa Kotal on the periphery "...of Mohamand country and the Bashgal valley on the borders of Kaferstan was demarcated and an agreement concluded...between Mr Udny and Ghulam Haider Khan". Similarly, the boundary agreement was concluded upto the Kurram valley in 1894. The only portion of the frontier left undemarcated was in near the Mohmand country and the Khyber pass. This was finally demarcated in 1919. The Afghanistan-Waziristan boundary from Daomandi to Larem was earlier demarcated by British officers. Afghanistan's international frontier was finally completed with the demarcation of the boundary from Daomandi to the Persian border.

92 Holdich, n. 27, p. 228.
93 Davis, n. 4, p. 162; see also C.U. Aitchinson, n. 54.
The boundary problems which resulted as a consequence of colonial expansion figured prominently in the Indo-Afghan relations. It clearly indicates that the boundaries were not antecedent and therefore, the absence of geographical, historical and topographical factors are not surprising. With this impræsenseness, the boundary commission were faced with problems of establishing a boundary where the local tribes custom had their own specific pattern of settling the disputes by taking an oath. This had led to an establishment of a permanent commission for adjudication of problems where the decisions were made strictly according to the tribal code by the chief-tains. Besides, there were disputes as to the exactness of definition of the point or posts (which prominently the foot of hills in Afghanistan-Baluchistan boundary as to the location of the trijunctional point of Koh-i-Malik Siah. Instead of a mountain, a shrine Ziarat-i-Malik Siah Koh in a higher elevation was finally selected as a point).

The evolution and the development of the Afghan state have direct bearing upon its boundaries. The boundaries have indicated lack of conformity to the external morphology. This

94 Boggs, n. 1, p. 14; see also the Quotation Concerning Afghanistan-Baluchistan Boundary, p. 145.
96 Ibid., p. 61; see also Quotations, pp. 101 and 159.
is so because a politically organized region had a definite size and shape; and Afghanistan throughout its history, has had a varied territorial limits. It was this factor that had given way to difficulties in assessing the exact limits of territory. Further, the internal political structure of Afghanistan was sharply divided. It is due to the fact that Kabul, Kandahar and Herat have competed against each other for importance for each had been playing significant role in the history of modern Afghanistan. Each of the mentioned cities have had developed lateral communication line connecting itself with other parts. As a consequence, when the boundaries were defined in the later part of the nineteenth century, they virtually clashed with the traditional boundaries of these regions. As the boundaries were enforced by circumstances upon the Afghans, they were unable to maintain political balance between themselves. This was also reflected in the acute regional imbalances which had influenced the political viability of the state. As a consequence, the latent boundary disputes began to dominate its foreign relations.

Afghanistan clearly indicated the presence of politically organized ethnic groups - both sedentary and nomadic - each living in relative geographic isolation from others. The collective efforts of each of the ethnic groups was rewarded by the establishment of individual independent political unit, till such time when the Pushtuns were ultimately successful in imposing their hegemony over the frontier politics. The
resultant 'mono-ethnic state' tended the structural lines of
the polity and the state to coincide; thereby making it diffi-
cult to distinguish and separate the two.

This phenomenon, valid for the state as such, was seem-
ingly easy and coterminous with the existing spatial ethnic
pattern. It was intruded by extraneous ethnic concept which
threatened to bring an opposition to the unity of the 'Afghan
Nations'. It has not only reflected the interests of the
imperial powers in locating the present Afghan international
boundaries but also the basis on which Afghan irredentism can
be explained. The heterogeneous composition of the state ref-
lected the territorial objection of the Afghan state to the
imperial/colonial adjustments of the international boundaries
which were zones separating the two colonial powers from each
other.

The boundary definition was a source of constant re-
minder (to the Afghan state) of the territorial loss. For,
from their point of view, the heterogeneous composition of the
Afghan state confirmed the mores and precedents of the 'Afghan
Nation' established by Ahmad Shah. It is evident that for
each of the constituent units of the Afghan state, i.e., the
tribes, there would be no distinction between the varied claims;
but for their singular existence which, with time could be more
associated with Afghanistan than with any other state that
borders it.

Irrespective of the attributes imprinted upon the
inhabitants of the state, the boundary demarcation by the external powers resulted in different types of non-identity that confronted the exact territorial limits of the ethnic groups in the frontier region. Suffice it to say, that the contact maintained across the political frontiers and the contiguity of ethnic groups make up to produce a high degree of awareness of ethnic homogeneity and heterogeneity with ensuing tensions and claims. Paradoxically, therefore, the non-congruence between the state and ethnic structure of Afghanistan, is illustrated clearly by the failure to assimilate the contiguous ethnic groups within the framework of Afghan political state. The results of this kind are partially exposed by the Afghanistan-Pakistan dispute over Pushtunistan.

Yet it is clear that the use of the "natural barrier theory" in the boundary making, has been largely to protect the colonial interests of imperial powers involved. The selection of boundary location and the imprecise and inaccurate geographical information has been played to keep up the options of imperial powers to acquire more territories, if the need and circumstances arise (more so in the Russo-Afghan border). Further, the location of the boundary, as per this theory of natural barrier, has been largely responsible in depriving Afghanistan of its frontier regions. The pressures exerted by the expanding imperial powers plus the unstable political

conditions in Afghanistan have been largely responsible for the application of this theory. The role of such boundaries were to keep the imperial powers far from direct contact and confrontation.

Again we find that the forces which had tended to weaken the frontier areas have not only enabled the frontier regions to break away from the core but also enabled the competition of the process of boundary delimitation of Afghanistan in the east as well as in the south and west. The boundary definition, thus forced Afghanistan into a part of the core area of the Afghan empire and retained in the process only those parts which were under immediate influence of Herat, Kabul and Kandahar. The great power politics had rendered Afghanistan a buffer and the future hanging in balance with disputes inherent in the nature of the boundaries.

In general, the process to develop and determine the fixed boundaries of Afghanistan was made over the ruins of the Afghan empire. Further it was a situation which was never called for, for the administrative unit was already established and which had become a new state. The characteristics of the boundaries, loosely defined the functional qualifications of the 'Buffer State'; it had created geographical problems, whose latent effects became very clear.

The solution for the boundary disputes of Afghanistan is difficult to formulate. It is primarily due to the lasting impression left by the boundary on the border landscape. It
had served as a basis for the economic and cultural development of the border regions of Afghanistan and the more developed regions within the state had assumed a greater importance.

This has led to an inference that the Afghans have passively recognized the extent of their territorial jurisdiction, and whatever disputes they have, arise from the technicality of the region involved. It can perhaps be said that, the recent development in the international relations, makes it difficult to alter or redraw the international boundaries, with the exception of minor boundary adjustments. Afghanistan then was left with the only alternative of accommodating and to try for mutual understanding in the area under dispute.

With the economic dimension to the boundary dispute, the relative position of Afghanistan became doubtful. The economic and social development in the northwest frontier province, has enabled the settlement of people from other regions of Pakistan and has adversely affected the position of Afghanistan. It has also affected the economic development of the eastern provinces of Afghanistan. These provinces began to assume the position of a buffer. The economic problems created by such situation compelled the state to concentrate their efforts for development in other areas. This coupled with the geographical environment accentuated the already perilous spatial economic and political imbalances. Afghanistan thus trapped has no alternative except to reconcile. The boundary dispute of the tribal area will perhaps remain in
paper, rather than be solved amicably. The definition of the international boundaries of Afghanistan, then, has given the Afghans, the territorial concept of a state and power to function, politically. It has also enabled to formulate national policy to safeguard the existing territorial jurisdiction.

It is evident that the post-analysis of the boundaries of Afghanistan are full of improbabilities of any direct solution without affecting the structure and morphology of the existing boundaries. The boundary disputes were inherent in the boundary making techniques of the nineteenth century, and whose solution lies not in achieving the territorial possession of the disputed region, but to succeed in getting the best required results of good relations. For all its disputes, Afghanistan today can gain recognition only politically rather than any solution by decisive means. Its impotency to act against her neighbours is characterized by its economic development and the growing complexity of laws governing the relations amongst the states.

Thus it is evident that the axis regions have exercised a decisive influence in shaping the territorial contents of Afghanistan. Due to their relative position, the axis regions had, time and time again, asserted either Central Asian and Persian or the Indian domination of the frontier region. Moreover, with the peripheral location of the nuclear regions and unfavourable geographical environment, the geopolitical factors had fragmented the axis regions in such a way that the dominant
part had always been outside the Afghan political and military control.

The function of the Afghan core area (the core area is limited in the north by the Hindukush, in the west by the Kabul-Chazni-Kandahar line, in the east by the Indus river and, by Baluchistan in the south) (see Map No. 3B) was overshadowed by geographical and historical environment of the frontier. Though the core area was responsible for spreading the idea of the Afghan homeland, it failed to become an effective functioning unit - a focal or the nerve centre of the Afghan state. It was a region which indicated the supremacy of the disruptive forces and was divided in its loyalties, so that when the international boundaries were defined, the core area was "...neither sufficient nor essential to the evolution of the...  
[Afghan]...nation or state". Although the concept of Afghanistan had an historical precedent, the core area was never considered in the boundary definition of Afghanistan.

This suggests that the frontier was constantly under pressure. Its function was dominated by the degree of political, military and economic pressures exerted by the then colonial powers in this region and this resulted in lack of unity and thwarted and delayed the emergence of a definite state-idea among its inhabitants. The geographical environment

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coupled with the influence of the historical processes upon the inhabitants, had ultimately resulted in the dominance of Central Asian influence on the frontier, the perpetuation of the inter and intra-tribal conflicts and its consequences, the evolution of the boundaries and the resultant loss of traditional territories, the territorial disputes, and the land-locked location with its political and economic consequences. The influence of these factors persists even today.