

The Durand Line: History and Implications of British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan

Honors Research Thesis

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by

Anne Marie Payne

The Ohio State University

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Project Advisor: Dr. Scott Levi, Department of History

“Generations yet unborn will benefit by the ‘Durand Line’ that [Sir Mortimer Durand] negotiated with grim Amir Abdur Rahman Khan... Durand stands out in his generation as the great Boundary-maker and as a consequence as the great Peace-maker.” –Sir Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand*

“How can a small Power like Afghanistan, which is like a goat between these lions, or a grain of wheat between two strong millstones of the grinding mill, stand in the midway of the stones without being ground to dust?” –Abdur Rahman Khan, 1900

“I have been struck with the magnitude of your resources, your ships, your arsenals, but what I cannot understand is why the rulers of so vast and flourishing an empire should have gone across the Indus to deprive me of my poor and barren country.” –Dost Muhammad, cited in *Afghanistan*

Between Afghanistan and Pakistan lies an invisible line, 1,600 miles in length, that is intended to determine the borders of each country. Though it is largely commonly accepted and appears, with mild variations, on nearly all modern-day maps of the world, local Pashtun tribes disregard it entirely, passing freely between Afghanistan and Pakistan; their history is fraught with nothing but contempt for this line. Indeed, though its existence directly interferes with the Pashtun way of life, any tribal input on the matter was deemed irrelevant. That hotly-contested boundary, referred to as the Durand Line, was concocted by emissaries of the British Raj during the final decade of the nineteenth century in an attempt to establish a buffer state and prevent open conflict between two of the pre-eminent imperial powers of the age. This power struggle, known as the Great Game, was defined by the British sense of debilitating national insecurity surrounding the expanding Russian Empire combined with a desire to increase their territorial possessions. Not only was this line a power play and greedy ruse on behalf of the Raj, but its careless demarcation has led to over one hundred years of strife and has fostered countless conflicts in the region, which has become a haven for the Taliban, rife with anti-Western sentiment. Sadly, however, the line is a mere continuation of the list of British abuses of power in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is an ethnically complex region, with some fifty-five ethnic groups represented.¹ The largest of these groups are the aforementioned Pashtuns (or 'Pathans', in India and Pakistan), likely of similar heritage as modern Iranians, who constituted anywhere from two-fifths to an entire half of the Afghan population. Their existence is somewhat mysterious, though many suggest that they are the same 'Pactyans' to whom Herodotus refers in *The Histories*.² The

¹ Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2008, p. 16.

² Herodotus, *The Histories*. London: Penguin Group, 1954, Book VII.

Pashtun tribes did not see themselves necessarily as subject to the many whims of the Amir; rather they existed in a partially self-governing society, dependent upon their own code of *Pashtunwali*. The imposition of British customs upon this tribal society placed them uncomfortably at the cultural cross-section of an Afghan society to which they were not ready to conform, and British customs which were restrictive, and completely alien in many regards.

This thesis will provide a cursory background to these events, analyzing the key proceedings of the Great Game that led to tensions between Britain and Russia regarding Afghanistan and the limited role the Pashtun tribes were permitted to play in the shaping of their future nation. It will pay particular attention to the manipulation of the Afghan people on behalf of the British Raj in order to enjoy a position of greater security in India, the jewel of its empire. As signing the Durand Agreement meant an unconditional surrender to the demands of the British in Afghanistan, an examination of both the motivations of the Afghan leader Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, who ruled from 1880 to 1901, in placing his signature upon it, as well as an analysis of the residual effects felt by the Afghan people, throughout the late nineteenth century to present, is crucial. Finally, it will consider the proposed solutions to this long-standing conflict.

Section I: The Early Period

Rising tensions as the stakes mount in the Great Game

In order to understand the formation of the Durand Line, one must look first to the legacy of domineering British involvement in Afghanistan, and then to the tribal nature of the Afghan population. Even prior to British involvement in the region, however, Afghanistan's history was marked by a tumultuous nature; the territory that eventually became the modern state was shaped

through a turbulent process, which eventually placed the borders in the locations in their currently acknowledged locations. Throughout history, the land had passed from the hands of one dynasty to another, then eventually down into the rule of various warring tribes, until leaders emerged who were capable of sufficiently managing the interests of the tribes, yet still able to proceed with the modernization of the Afghan state. Amir Dost Muhammad Khan began this process in the 1830s, and his son, Sher Ali, continued with it following Dost Muhammad's death. Despite their best attempts, the territory fell into a period of turmoil defined by constant skirmishes with British forces and internal chaos, and the shaping of modern-day Afghanistan did not continue until Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, the Iron Amir, assumed control of Afghan leadership.

The British began a legacy of underhanded policies in Afghan territory under the watchful eye of George Eden, First Earl of Auckland and Governor-General of British India. Though British interest in Afghan territory originated as early as 1809, no direct conflict arose between the two until the First Anglo-Afghan War. This affair is referred to in various disparaging contexts; from its common nickname as 'Auckland's Folly', to "part of Britain's ongoing attempts to dismember Afghanistan by various means."³ While the previous attitude toward Afghanistan had been largely passive, Auckland received instructions in June 1836 from London, directing him "to watch more closely than [had] hitherto been attempted the progress of events in Afghanistan, and to counteract the progress of Russian influence."⁴ That missive continues to encourage him to use any means necessary to quell the Russian advance, when, after nearly three decades of relatively peaceful coexistence, British policy toward Afghanistan shifted

³ Christine Noelle. *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863)*. Padstow, Cornwall: Curzon Press, 1997, p. 40.

⁴ Secret Committee to Auckland, cited in Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics*, New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2002, p. 52.

toward one of preparation for active intervention. Here, however, is where the narrative fails to converge with the behavior of Auckland. His continued insistence that the sworn practice of the British government was to avoid “interfering with the affairs of other independent states” directly conflicted with the monetary and military support he continued to lend the Sikhs in Northern India, in order to move directly against Afghanistan.⁵

This marks the first clear instance of British leaders in India directly undermining the authority of Afghan leaders, though this practice would become quite commonplace in the years to come. What Auckland employed in practice expanded far beyond the intent of the British government. Instead of attempting to keep the Russians out of the area, Auckland became obsessed with gaining the territory and repurposing it as a buffer state for the British Empire. In order to do this, Auckland set about subtly undercutting the influence of the current Amir, Dost Muhammad, with the intention of replacing him with the British puppet, Shah Shuja. Shuja had previously proven useful to the British in promoting their economic interests in the territory, and would no doubt prove an easier ally for Auckland than the strong-willed Dost Muhammad while rejecting the economic interests of Tsarist Russia, serving the British twofold.

Auckland proved here that he was eager to go a step further in his deception, by issuing the Simla Manifesto in October 1838. This document cast Dost Muhammad as an unpopular and ill-suited ruler, and instead sang the praises of Shah Shuja as a ruler whose popularity “had been proved... throughout Afghanistan by the strong and unanimous testimony of the best authorities.”⁶ Both of these statements are egregious, self-serving untruths, as the historical record demonstrates that Dost Muhammad served Afghanistan as a visionary ruler, whereas Shah

⁵ Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 40 (1839). India Papers 5, cited in Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, p. 53.

⁶ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, p. 61.

Shuja was nearly universally considered to be inept and unconcerned with how he could best serve his people. The fabrications of the Simla Manifesto did not end with falsehoods regarding leaders, as the statement concludes with the sentiment that the removal of Dost Muhammad and with the “independence and integrity of Afghanistan established, the British army will be withdrawn.”⁷

Auckland’s attitude toward Afghanistan proved to be so apprehensive that around this time, he developed a sentiment of mistrust toward his own allies in Northern India, Ranjit Singh and the Sikhs. Though he clearly felt comfortable manipulating them into marching on Dost Muhammad, Auckland regarded Singh, nicknamed the “Lion of the Punjab”, as highly mistrustful and was careful to undermine his position. If the Sikhs were able to seize Afghanistan, this would constitute a crisis and would prove a serious detriment to British control of Northern India. In reaffirming British interests in Afghanistan, Auckland wrote, he would be shoring up a buffer state and a “lasting barrier to all encroachments from the Westward, and to establish a basis for the extension and maintenance of British influence throughout Central Asia.”⁸

As he fostered this greedy desire, concerns surrounding Russia rose sharply. The Russians’ slow expansion southward led them to Khiva, for as the British feared Russian designs on their territory, the Russians also harbored concern that the British would attempt to monopolize commercial interests in central Asia. Strict orders from London decreed that relations between the two powers were to remain friendly, but a pervasive atmosphere of unease prevailed. Around this time, Sir John McNeill, British Minister to Persia, expressed concern that

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

an alliance between Persians and Afghans would encourage the two to march upon India and retake the land they had worked so diligently to “civilize.”

The mounting tension between Britain and Russia, combined with the escalation of hostilities with Dost Muhammad, eventually culminated in the First Anglo-Afghan War.

Auckland’s demands that Dost Muhammad deny Persia and Russia contact with Afghanistan and return vast tracts of Pashtun-inhabited land to the Empire remained constant. This second tenet, much-overlooked, is the first documented instance of British designs on this border territory. Despite the fact that they were thoroughly routed and humiliated in their first legitimate clash with Afghanistan, the British would eventually acquire the territory they desired for their own in 1893, upon the signing of the Durand Agreement.

Auckland’s legacy as Governor-General would be forever tarnished due to his mismanagement of Afghanistan, but his heavy-handed dealings as a representative of the Empire lived on far beyond the termination of his tenure in India. Auckland planted the seed that would germinate into the ideas held by Durand and his compatriots. The Russians were to be kept out of Afghanistan at all costs, by decree or by sheer brute force.

Martin Ewans makes a notable distinction in his book, *Afghanistan*: the solid defeat of the British at the hands of their “uncivilized” Afghan neighbors marks the initiation of a spirit of endemic hatred between Briton and Afghan. Despite many varied accounts of Afghans from early nineteenth century British travelers as respectful, friendly, and tolerant, following their stunning defeat in the First Anglo-Afghan War, the attitude shifted toward seeing the Afghans as marred with “a reputation for barbarity, treachery, and fanaticism.”⁹ The British suffered both the

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

economic consequences of defeat and the humiliation of losing the “respect” of their Indian subjects, and it became apparent that they would not soon forget the injustice that they felt they had undergone at the hands of the Afghans. It seems reasonable to suggest that a desire for retribution was a persistent motivating factor for the British in their future dealings with their neighbors.

They would soon get that retribution, and more, in the Second Anglo-Afghan War, from 1878 to 1880. Following the prior conflict, Afghanistan descended into a period of political turmoil, leaving it susceptible to future attacks on behalf of the British. Suspicion of the Russians only weakened in the days following the First Anglo-Afghan War, and Prime Minister Gladstone’s replacement, Benjamin Disraeli, favored a hawkish policy involving an incursion into Central Asia from the direction of India. Lord Lytton’s appointment as viceroy, however, seemed the seminal event in the initiation of the second in this series of protracted conflicts between Afghanistan and England. Lytton, known for his arrogance and intolerance, demanded that Sher Ali, Dost Muhammad’s successor, receive an emissary in Kabul to counter the Russian representative he previously entertained. Sher Ali rejected this proposal, giving rise to the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

Although the First Anglo-Afghan War certainly established a precedent regarding relations between Afghanistan and the Raj during the nineteenth century, it is likely that the Second Anglo-Afghan War was the event that broke the will of Afghans and allowed for events surrounding the demarcation of the Durand Line to occur. His own letters indicate that Sher Ali developed the inherent fear that “if Englishmen, or other Europeans, once set foot in the country,

it [would] sooner or later pass out of their hands.”¹⁰ This was certainly not an unfounded fear, as even a cursory examination of British documents regarding Afghanistan make it clearly evident that its existence was a continued nuisance, either in hindrance to the furthering of their own rapidly expanding empire, or as a jewel of temptation to the worrisome Russians, who were certainly a far greater threat than their ‘savage’ Afghan neighbors.

Instead, Lytton and Lord Roberts imposed a reign of terror upon any who dared oppose their occupation of Afghanistan. As the weak, divided state was further ravaged by baseless hangings and random bouts of savage cruelty, Lytton relished the opportunity to usher in such vindictive hostility. In a letter addressed to Roberts, Lytton waxes poetic: “Every Afghan brought to death I shall regard as one scoundrel less in a nest of scoundrelism... It is our present task to shed such a glare upon the last bloodstained page of Indian annals as shall sear the sinister date of it deep into the shamed memory of a smitten and subjugated people.”¹¹ In 1879, the Amir forcibly signed the Treaty of Gandamak, referred to as the “condemned treaty”, effectively ceding any foreign relations to the British.¹² Afghanistan was humiliated, and with control of its foreign affairs handed over to the British government, the once-proud nation was reduced to protectorate status in the eyes of the Crown.

An analysis of this turn of events is convoluted: as a British protectorate, the sensible course of affairs for the British government would be to involve itself with the matter of concocting the boundary lines of Afghanistan. However, one must consider to what extent this situation allowed for the bloated, self-serving Raj to both promote and protect its own interests.

¹⁰ Oriental and India Office Collections, cited in Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, p. 84.

¹¹ British Library, Lytton Pps. 518, cited in Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, pp. 89-90.

¹² Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 425.

The protection component of this theory, in particular, provides interesting insight as to British motivations for drawing boundaries as they did.

Opinions differ regarding the threat Russia posed to India during the Great Game, but many of Britain's policy decisions made during the period were motivated by fear of the steady Russian advance southward. From concern rising as early as the latter half of the eighteenth century, to Auckland's early instructions in 1836, all the way to the signing of the Durand Agreement in 1893 in order to prevent direct contact between the two empires, trepidation of the threat posed by the Russians is pervasive in nearly every move made by the Raj.¹³ According to historian J.R. Seeley's *The Expansion of England*, common sentiment noted that "any stirrings in... Afghanistan, we are obligated to watch with vigilance. The reason is that we have possession of India, and a leading interest in the affairs of all those countries which lie upon the route to India. This and only this involves us in that permanent rivalry with Russia, which is for England of the nineteenth century what the competition with France for the New World was to her in the eighteenth century."¹⁴

Arguably, the culmination of tensions came in 1865, as the Russians annexed Tashkent and founded Russian Turkestan, their colonial venture in Central Asia. They next moved southward to defeat Bukhara. Two years later, they set out to take Samarqand, putting them in position to seriously challenge the British position in India if they felt the desire to do so. Diplomatic representatives working on behalf of the two powers finally agreed in 1872 that Afghanistan would be repurposed as a buffer state. This conclusion appears to have been quite favorable for the British; in 1800 "the frontier bases of the two empires were 2,000 miles apart;

¹³ D.S. Richards, *The Savage Frontier: A History of the Anglo-Afghan Wars*. London: Macmillan, 1990, p. 4.

¹⁴ J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883, p. XIX.

by 1876, that distance had been halved, and by century's end the gap between the Tsar's domain and British India was only a few hundred miles – indeed as little as twenty miles separated outposts in the lofty Pamirs.”¹⁵

That narrow distance is expressed in the Russian annexation of Merv in 1884, referred to in one of the worst historical puns of all time as a bout of ‘mervousness.’¹⁶ Upon the Russian occupation of the Panjdeh oasis in 1885, directly north of Herat, the Afghans literally found the Russians upon their doorstep. Though many contend that hostilities between England and Russia reached their apex in 1866, the letters of C. E. Yate, a member of the Baloch-Afghan Boundary Commission, refer to summer 1885 as “a time when the question of peace or war between England and Russia lay in the balance.”¹⁷

Whatever conclusion one comes to regarding the continued escalation of aggressions between the Russian and British Empires during the Great Game, it must be fundamentally understood that these attitudes drove British policy regarding Afghanistan. Largely, the British found themselves manipulating their neighbor in order to secure a dominant position against their rival. Though they excelled in controlling those in positions of power, it appears that the British vastly, and repeatedly, underestimated the resistance they would receive from the Pashtun tribes of Afghanistan, particularly those occupying the border areas between India and Afghanistan.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. XIX.

¹⁶ Jennifer Siegel, *Endgame: Britain, Russia, and the Final Struggle for Central Asia*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2002, p. 7.

¹⁷ Major C.E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan; or, Letters From the Afghan Boundary Commission*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1888, p. 1.

On the North-West frontier, a vast population of Pashtun tribesmen lay in wait as these events transpired. Under the agreement that was to come, they would no longer be governed under their former system of *Pashtunwali*, but instead would be required to submit to British colonial rule in India. *Pashtunwali* itself is a nuanced and complicated form of tribal governance that the British were never fully capable of comprehending. In this case, their policy failures were due to their inability to understand the tribal mentality. This is indicated in their varying negative attitudes, describing tribesmen as varying from an entertaining curiosity, to simply uncongenial, uncouth savages, as did C.E. Yate of the Baloch-Afghan Boundary Commission. This proves to be a terrible shortcoming, as the Pashtun are notably referred to as the “largest tribal society on earth.”¹⁸ Indeed, it would appear that the vast majority of nineteenth century British sources describing Pashtun are simply subject to a tendency “to shift along with changes of imperial strategy”¹⁹, varying from either “noble savages” to “bloodthirsty, treacherous, and greedy bandits.”²⁰

In any case, three of the most notable tenets of *Pashtunwali* are honor, hospitality, and revenge. These would be tested time and again by continual interference in the lands inhabited by the Pashtuns, and sadly equally as frustrating whether perpetrated by the British or by Afghanistan’s own Amir, Abdur Rahman Khan. Abdur Rahman’s appointment came amidst a push by Disraeli to withdraw from Afghanistan, with “little hope of leaving behind a coherent state.”²¹ Though doubt that Abdur Rahman was the proper candidate for the position was fairly prevalent, he shored up his position by obtaining the support of the border Pashtun tribes. This marked the beginning of a somewhat anemic relationship between the Afghan government and

¹⁸ Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan*, p. 135.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

²¹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, p. 94.

the very people over whom it was intended to preside. The Afghan leader naturally derived his right to rule through the *jirga*, a necessary tribal consensus. Abdur Rahman immediately alienated the tribes with his insistence that he was not, in fact, supported by the decision of the *jirga*, but a divine entitlement to the throne. This claim became exceedingly important after Abdur Rahman placed his signature on the Durand Agreement, but immediately served to establish an antagonistic nature toward the Pashtun.

T.L. Pennell succinctly sums up commonly held sentiment toward the frontier Pashtun and their “dualistic” honor code with a translation of one of their proverbs:

“Tender-handed grasp a nettle,
It will sting you for your pains;
Grasp it like a man of mettle,
Soft as silk it then remains.”²²

Thus with a cursory understanding of the uncomfortable situation of the Pashtun, both politically and geographically, one may examine the Durand Agreement itself and fully comprehend its implications.

Section II: Issues Surrounding Demarcation

Faced with the Pashtun “ethos of independence”, growing concern regarding tribal revolts in Waziristan, and the Panjdeh incident between the Russians and the Afghans, common sentiment in India held that some form of boundary line would need to be drawn in order to prevent both tribal unrest from spilling over into India and to keep the Russians out. Thus, commissions were formed in order to oversee this process. The first of these, the 1885 Afghan

²² T.L. Pennell, *Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier: A Record of Sixteen Years' Close Intercourse with the Natives of the Indian Marches*. London: Seeley & Co. Ltd., 1909, p. 19.

Boundary Commission, led by A.C. Yate, was sent to demarcate the area between the Hari Rud and the Amu Darya. This served the purpose of keeping the Russians out of Afghanistan, however, the most pressing concern arose as Russian surveyors were rumored to have ventured into the Pamirs, in direct violation of several warnings the British issued regarding their designs on Afghanistan. There can be no doubt that “these ‘surveyors’ were unquestionably interested in claiming the area for the tsar”, as a small skirmish arose upon their encounter with a pair of British officers.²³ At this juncture, it can be ascertained that had the British not been so stalwart with their refusals of the Russians, the possibility that Afghanistan could have instead been absorbed into the Russian Empire was certainly not without weight.²⁴ Essentially, this conflict of Anglo-Russian relations lies ultimately at the center of the Great Game; the British feared Russian advance southward, while the Russians coveted choice land in Central Asia.

To combat this, various commissions were sent out between 1885 and 1896, in order to prescribe Afghanistan’s borders. As aforementioned, the earlier commissions frequently dealt with the northern and western region, such as the mountains to the north of Herat. Though these boundaries are not the ones in contention today, there is much to be learned from examining the writings of the men working on the commissions; consider, for example, the letters of C.E. Yate from the 1885 Afghan Boundary Commission. A sense of satisfaction is evidence as Yate and company enjoy themselves in the mountains near Herat, while their Russian counterparts are plagued, “suffering in the heat of the desert and decimated by sickness [while] we have been reveling in a climate where the thermometer rarely exceeded 75 degrees... with hardly a man sick in hospital.”²⁵ Nonetheless, Yate’s letters seem to indicate a very suspicious climate, as he

²³ Jennifer Siegel, *Endgame*, p. 7.

²⁴ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, p. 106.

²⁵ C.E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan*, pp. 21-22.

frequently comments on the latest rumors passed to him regarding the movements of the Cossacks. Certainly, however, Yate paints a colorful picture of Afghans themselves: “the Kabulis swagger about armed to the teeth, with knives half as long as themselves and weapons of every sort and shape.”²⁶

As Abdur Rahman Khan watched the British claim territory west of the Khyber Pass for their own, he suggested that a conference be held in order to establish more firmly which territory belonged to the Raj and which was to be the possession of Afghanistan. Accounts disagree here, but it would appear that Abdur Rahman was not acting on behalf of the border tribes, as he was known to hold quite conflicted feelings for the peoples of Waziristan, over which he was entirely incapable of holding control. Rather, he meant to keep his own possessions in check.

To this end, Sir Mortimer Durand, a Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, was appointed to negotiate a frontier agreement with the Amir. He arrived in Kabul in winter of 1893, appointing three commissions in order to fully demarcate the frontier area in question: the Baluch-Afghan Commission, the Asmar Commission, and the Waziristan Commission. These groups were tasked with settling the final points of his eponymous agreement, a rousing success in all British accounts. His work with the Durand Line is continually referred to as “the greatest of all his services in India”, after which he “left India with the highest of reputations.”²⁷

Conversely, Afghan sentiment regarding the agreement was grim fury; Abdur Rahman Khan’s people never entirely forgave him for signing away vital Afghan land, to which they felt entitled.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁷ R.C.T. "The Right Hon. Sir Mortimer Durand, A Biography by Sir Percy Sykes." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. 2. (1927): 343-346.

No two accounts seem to agree on the events leading up to the signing of the Durand Agreement, particularly regarding the crucial question of why Abdur Rahman knowingly signed his own land away. Durand's biographer, Sir Percy Sykes, casts the two signatories as invariably hard-headed men, who curiously fostered some semblance of mutual respect. The relationship between these two larger-than-life characters sheds some light upon the circumstances under which the two came to an agreement.

Durand himself took an interest in demarcating a boundary between the two areas in January 1884, as he expressed in his journal. In particular, he was concerned with the favorable position Russia enjoyed, "with nothing to overcome but geographical difficulties - a big nation absorbing a number of small weak tribes... We, on the other hand, are a small body of foreigners holding two hundred and fifty millions of Asiatics in leash... our [position is] *prima facie* at least, a weak and artificial one."²⁸ He was insistent on coming to an understanding point-blank, however, as Durand's journals show some extent of tenderness toward the Afghans, or least of all a desire to handle matters in the most candid manner possible. With regard to Russia, Durand recommended that the Raj "precisely [define] the limits of Afghanistan... and [recognize] the extension of Russian influence up to those limits."²⁹

Durand's stance on Abdur Rahman Khan, however, was initially not as comfortable as it eventually became. He saw the Amir as "a troublesome and unsatisfactory ally... thoroughly detested throughout the country. His cruelties are horrible... especially as he shows the utmost jealousy of ourselves... I should not be sorry to see him driven out of the country."³⁰ Despite

²⁸ Sir Mortimer Durand, as cited in Sir Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand*. London: Cassell and Company, LTD, 1926, p. 149.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

this, the two convened in 1893 to draw up an agreement that acceptably accommodated the needs of both Afghans and Britons alike. This document, signed November 12, 1893, is known as the Durand Agreement and is one of the single greatest sources of contention regarding the behavior of the British Empire in this region.

The first proviso of the agreement is immediately problematic, as the line itself is “not based on any natural, topographical, ethnographical, or political principle of delimitation”, but rather is simply a hastily scribbled mark that pays virtually no attention to the ways in which it would affect the inhabitants of the region.³¹ This line is decreed as law – despite the fact that it designates large sections of what will eventually be known as Balochistan, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), and seven sections of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas as the possession of the British Empire. These seven “semi-autonomous agencies” (Bajaur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, Orakzai, South Waziristan, and North Waziristan) have a long history of occupation of tribes at least nominally under Afghan rule. According to A.S. Ghaus, the agreement essentially makes “demands, according to which territories and people who since time immemorial had been considered part of the Afghan homeland and nation were arbitrarily included in British India.”³² Thus this meant placing restrictions quite abruptly on tribes who had passed fluidly from one encampment to another, to establish that one of these sites was in fact in another country presented a serious problem. Additionally, it was commonly held that the tribesmen were hardly willing to subject themselves to the relatively passive rule of the Amir; to conceive of these tribes as having become overnight the subjects of Queen Victoria, Empress of India, is absurd.

³¹ M.H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2006, pp. 186-187.

³² Abdul Samad Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan: An Insider's Account*, Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1988, p. 15.

Despite the storied history of such tribes, Durand scoffed. Their resistance simply indicated “they realized that it meant interference with their predatory habits and feared that it would ultimately end in annexation.”³³ He reassured the Amir that their resistance was due to their rage at being subjugated and required to pay taxes, glossing over the lack of regard they received in demarcation itself. In practice, however, this caused an even larger problem: this agreement established a set of territories within the Northwest Frontier Province that, despite being overseen by British sovereignty, existed outside the colonial administration of the Raj.

Specifically, debate arose between the two regarding who would receive which strategically important territories. The most important geographical feature of the Durand Line was that it allowed for the Wakhan corridor, the Afghan border with China, to exist. The Wakhan Corridor, virtually indefensible and only ten miles wide at its narrowest, was conceived in order to prevent direct contact at any point between territory belonging to the Russians and that of the British. The Amir was largely indifferent to receiving this territory, and in practice felt that extending his governance to such a remote spit of land would be difficult, though Durand remained resolute on the matter. Abdur Rahman, despite an impassioned plea for Waziristan, lost the territory he so desperately sought.

Once the two agreed upon territories, as noted on the map attached to the agreement, Durand asserted the second caveat. Under this tenet, the Government of India abandoned designs on Afghanistan altogether with a strict non-interference clause imposed for both parties. This was perhaps an optimistic sentiment, as the British quickly violated this in the earliest years of the twentieth century. The contentious point of the agreement, however, came in the form of

³³ Sir Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand: A Biography*, London: Cassell and Company, 1929, p. 214.

rupees. Her Highness Queen Victoria, Empress of India, assures the Amir of her goodwill, and expressed sentiment in favor of the cultivation of Afghanistan as a strong, independent nation. In so doing, the British “will raise no objection to the purchase and import by His Highness of munitions of war, and... will themselves grant him some help in this respect.”³⁴ Some help in this respect in fact referred to the addition of six lakhs of rupees (equivalent to 600,000 rupees) per year to the Amir’s bloated salary, essentially no better than bribery.

Though the two appear to have sustained a certain amount of trust, Durand nonetheless left their meeting with some reservations. He later wrote in his journal that he could not help “a sort of feeling of pity for the Amir – standing there fighting his game out against Russia and England – absolutely alone. Of course it is largely his own fault that he is alone, but there is something rather touching about it.”³⁵ Abdur Rahman Khan, however, appears to be far more direct about his feelings, expressing to Durand that:

“I would fight you if you drove me to it. I am not a coward, and I would fight, though I know what the result would be... I would not give up my independence without a fight for my honour. But remember what I say. Unless you drive me into enmity, I am your friend for my life. And why? The Russians want to attack India. You do not want to attack Russian Turkistan. Therefore the Russians want to come through my country and you do not. People say I would join with them to attack you. If I did and they won, would they leave my country? Never. I should be their slave and I *hate* them. You would know what it is to hate, if you had been an exile among them – humiliated every day.”³⁶

³⁴ The Durand Agreement, Kabul Convention of 1893, Cited in M. Hasan Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History*, pp. 236-237.

³⁵ Sir Mortimer Durand, cited in Sir Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand*, p. 214.

³⁶ Abdur Rahman Khan, cited in Sir Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand*, pp. 216-217.

In fact, Abdur Rahman Khan is truly the figure at the crux of the whole Durand Line conundrum. One could easily have accused him of playing both sides of the conflict; as a guest of the Russians for twelve years in his earlier years, he must have felt some form of obligation to maintain relations with them, though certainly not at the expense of the British, who were occupying his country. This proved to be a difficult struggle, as the British were highly xenophobic and actively resisted any Russian contact with Afghanistan. To this end, the British were able to obtain the advantage; Abdur Rahman lacked the financial support he needed, and their regular gifts of arms and money were very well-received. This monetary support most certainly represented one of his key motivations to sign the Durand Agreement.

Many accounts exist detailing his tenure as supreme ruler of Afghanistan. Some say he was nearly universally hated, some suggest that he was a strong ruler and a reformer who was able to play the hard line against the world's two largest imperial powers. All agree, however, in calling him the Iron Amir, an extremely hard-headed man who was highly insistent in his policies. There can be no denying that he alienated many of his people with unpopular measures. As aforementioned, his belief in his divine right to rule undermined the authority of the *jirga*. He struggled continually to unite Afghanistan under a common banner, as the Pashtun were highly resistant to rule by a figurehead as far away as Kabul. During his tenure, over forty revolts were conducted by various border tribes. He relocated many Hazara from their homeland, creating a legacy of racism which persists even today in Afghanistan.

The Pashtun tribes quickly realized that the Amir was an inept ruler, and having already rejected British rule, they found themselves in a unique position with virtually no interference from outside authority. This makes them a truly fascinating case study; Afghanistan's rich tribal history gives rise to a degree of tribal pride, to the extent that it supersedes any nationalistic

tendencies of the tribes. W.K. Fraser-Tytler speaks of Pashtun loyalty in his history of Afghanistan, referring to “recurring instances of the tendency of Afghan rulers to look on the [Pashtun] nation as one, whole and indivisible, owing, if not temporal, at any rate spiritual allegiance to its God-granted ruler in Kabul.”³⁷ No doubt Abdur Rahman Khan was fascinated with this idea, and in fact passed off his frequent interferences in the region as an attempt to implement this concept.

He spent a great deal of time and resources, including those that the British provided, in an attempt to bring down the feudal tribal system, despite his failure to unify Afghanistan and establish his own political authority over most of the territory. British officials in Calcutta became concerned that he was incapable of keeping the tribes in check, despite his constant incursions in the border territories. Their misgivings led them to the implementation of a forward policy, encouraging the use of force against many of the more uncooperative border tribes. Such force fomented a strong sense of Anglophobia and hostility amongst the tribes, who saw this interference as a violation of their culture and of *Pashtunwali*.

For all his ability to anger the tribes, Abdur Rahman did not fail to antagonize the religious elite either. He referred to the mullahs as “ignorant priests whose teachings were entirely contrary to the principles and teachings of [Muhammad].”³⁸ He repossessed the *waqfs*, or religious endowments regarding the appropriation of land for charitable endeavors, and repurposed them as mere government functions and imposed examinations in order to test the religious credentials of individuals.

³⁷ W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 307.

³⁸ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, p. 101.

The Amir was also highly suspicious of technological advances; in particular, the prospect of the construction of a British railway line “pointing unmistakably toward Kandahar” in the game of their ever-expanding “scientific frontier” distressed him.³⁹ This forward progress on behalf of the British constituted yet another aspect of their concern toward the Russians; in the event of an invasion, in order to shore up defenses quickly in such distant cities as Kabul, Ghazni, or Kandahar, they set about “devising... a means of political control over the tribes in whose territories [strategic] passes lay.”⁴⁰ Abdur Rahman refers to British railway construction as “pushing like a knife into my vitals.”⁴¹

As to the circumstances under which Abdur Rahman Khan signed the Durand Agreement, a great deal of disparity exists. Some assert that he signed only “under duress”, others conclude that the British bribe of the aforementioned six lakhs of rupees to his stipend proved to be the deciding factor, but still another controversial group contests both of these opinions.⁴² According to this third school, the Amir could not have possibly understood the full implications of his actions, and to agree to sign away access to strategically beneficial coastal lands, as well as what had historically been the homeland of his people, seems ludicrous. Whatever the actual case may be, several viable options must be considered.

The British were clever and studied in their dealings with the Iron Amir. Despite their presence in his country as occupiers, they made sure his demands for monetary support were met. Certainly, the added lakhs of rupees did not hurt in bolstering the Amir’s support for the agreement. According to this theory, convincing the Amir was no easy task. He was originally

³⁹ M. Hasan Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan*, p. 83.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴¹ *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*. II. Edited by Sultan Mahomed Khan. London: John Murray, 1900, p. 159.

⁴² A.S. Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan*, p. 15.

presented with an inaccurate map of the arrangement that he would not sign. Later, he again refused to sign the Persian text of the agreement, despite Durand's signature on the document.⁴³

From this, one has to wonder if the signature on the Durand Agreement is, in fact, Abdur Rahman Khan's. As the Amir would not sign the Persian copy of the agreement, and as he could not read English, it would seem rather unlikely that he would choose to sign the English copy instead. M. Hasan Kakar makes this argument in *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*, contending that as the Amir's distress over losing a number of major territories was so great, it is evident that he could in no uncertain terms be responsible for the statement "I renounce my claims..." as it appears in the agreement. In all cases, this perspective seems rather implausible, particularly in the fact that the story is not corroborated by Durand's journals. Conveniently for the British, however, all attempts to unearth official Afghan records regarding the agreement have been futile. Though a pamphlet was released at the time which detailed all arrangements the two men decided upon, it too has been lost.⁴⁴

As problematic as the conception of the Durand Line itself was, the physical act of demarcating the line proved to be every bit as difficult. The Baloch-Afghan commission, the first to set out, finally returned without having completed their full objective following what A.H. McMahon describes as, "15 months of considerable hardship, much hard work, and many delays."⁴⁵ Completion took over four years, and even by 1897, partial segments had still not been

⁴³ M.H. Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History*, p. 182.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴⁵ A.H. McMahon, *Letters on the Baluch-Afghan Boundary Commission 1896*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1909, p. 1.

drawn. The eastern frontier is “unutterably rugged” in sections and plagued by constant bouts of weather so bad as to make the area impassable.⁴⁶

Despite this, all three commissions were relatively prolific in producing accounts in journals and letters regarding their experiences on the frontier. Most of these cast the Pashtun tribesmen as entertaining and even fascinating at times, yet give little regard to their needs and desires. The Baloch-Afghan Commission’s special correspondent details a group of “simple savages” who are enthralled by the arrival of a modern doctor in their camp, “When the people found he was a hakim, they crowded round his horse and insisted one and all on having their pulses felt! It soon appeared that they regarded him rather in the light of a ‘try-your-strength’ machine, and they refused to budge until their strength had been registered. When he gravely pronounced them in turn either *takra* or *kahzor* they yelled with delight, congratulating the man in the first case and jeering at him in the second.”⁴⁷ Though the accounts do not detail a single case in which the commission comes upon a hostile tribe, it is nonetheless apparent that they regard the Pashtun as almost child-like. Despite the British attitude that they were doing Afghanistan a great service, they were undeniably incapable of understanding the natives, and thus could not know what was to be the best course of action for the betterment of the country. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the Commissions’ words cannot be taken at face value, though they provide a charmingly idealistic vision of the “quaintness” of border-area tribes. Despite this, the Raj spared neither opportunity nor occasion to praise these brave men:

“For the Indian Empire this successful Mission constituted the most important achievement of external policy during the nineteenth century. Not only did it stop the

⁴⁶ Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan*, p. 163.

⁴⁷ A.H. McMahon, *Letters on the Baluch-Afghan Boundary Commission*, p. 24.

further advance of Russia towards India, but it removed a constant source of misunderstanding and irritation with that Power.”⁴⁸

Section Three: Implications and Responses

When considering the legacy of the Durand Line, one must consider the purpose for which it was actually intended. Was it meant to serve as a definitive international boundary for the ages, or was it simply a frontier agreed upon for the sake of temporarily easing tensions? In the Amir’s autobiography, he alludes to the fact that he never “considered any Pashtun areas as permanently ceded to the British.”⁴⁹ The Afghan position is, and has always been, that this agreement “never constituted a formal border, but rather an agreed-upon frontier... the formal boundary to this frontier has yet to be set.”⁵⁰ Not once through the years has an Afghan administration been willing to make the concession that the Durand Line constituted an acceptable agreement on behalf of both parties.

Even the British, it would seem, were hesitant to see the line as a long-term international boundary. This was simply considered an agreement to “define the respective spheres of influence of the British Government and the Amir... simply delineating zones of influence and responsibility.”⁵¹ This ambiguity proved to be damning upon the Partition of India in 1947, as Pakistan was fully prepared to accept the Durand Line as definitive law.

⁴⁸ Sir Percy Sykes, *The Right Honourable Sir Mortimer Durand*, p. 223.

⁴⁹ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p. 425.

⁵⁰ Thomas Barfield, *The Durand Line: History, Consequences, and Future: Report of a Conference*. Istanbul, Turkey: The American Institute of Afghanistan Studies & The Hollings Center for International Dialogue, 2007, p. 4.

⁵¹ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p. 427.

The effects of the line were felt almost immediately. Though it was intended to be a quick fix for discord in the tribal areas, unrest was immediately amplified. Tribes who rebuffed the rule of the Amir were certainly not fit to be governed by British India, who failed even more spectacularly than the Amir in gaining control of the area. Under *Pashtunwali*, *badal* (revenge) attacks flourished as resentment mounted.⁵² Only two decades later did Abdur Rahman Khan's successor, Amanullah, force the British into making their first concession on the matter of the tribal areas, convincing them to attach a letter to the Treaty of 1921. This letter was the first admission that Afghanistan did, in fact, have an 'interest' in the frontier tribes currently under the rule of British India.⁵³ The British had their revenge on Amanullah, however. In 1929, his regime collapsed under tribal insurrections most likely fomented by British trepidations over his virulent reforms.⁵⁴

The Partition of India into two separate states, India and Pakistan, in 1947, brought the inconsistencies of the Durand Agreement to the forefront, and foreshadowed the chaos to come. Discussion of the partition resurrected Afghan concerns surrounding the line; Pashtuns should not be required to choose between being Indian or Pakistani, but ought to be allowed to have the option of forming their own Pashtun state. This unrest was quickly trampled by Sir Olaf Caroe, Governor of the Northwest Frontier Province, and hostilities intensified. Afghanistan summarily held a *loya jirga* in July 1949 to revoke all treaties with the British, the most significant of these being the Durand Agreement. This was, they explained, due to the fact that "when the British left South Asia [they] were not transferable to the new state of Pakistan."⁵⁵ This contributed to the

⁵² Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005, p. 189.

⁵³ W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan*, p. 307.

⁵⁴ Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*, p. 39.

⁵⁵ Thomas Barfield, *The Durand Line*, p. 2.

initiation of mutual resentment between Afghanistan and Pakistan, “[exacerbating] Pakistan’s acute sense of insecurity at birth.”⁵⁶

Pakistan’s entire existence has been defined through the fear of its statehood disintegrating. Since its inception, it has been plagued by constant, bloody revolts, and such traumatic events as the gruesome civil war of 1971 in which Bangladesh seceded. Afghanistan, by contrast, is a “strong nation but a weak state, while Pakistan is a strong state with no strong sense of nationhood.”⁵⁷ This tension is only made stronger through Pakistan’s insistence that the Durand Line does in fact constitute their international boundary with Afghanistan, whereas since Pakistan’s inception, over sixty years of successive Afghan governments have rejected the agreement staunchly.

Thus, the two countries proceeded forward with sense of resentment from the start. Pakistan, much like the British before them, prolonged the British policy regarding the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Though they are described as Pakistani, the tribes operate autonomously, with no intervention from Pakistani law. This policy has fostered a culture of lawlessness in the region, as the tribes have descended into a vague semblance of self-governance. As it would be virtually impossible to police, the passage from one side of the line to the other is not restricted in any context whatsoever. Thus the corridor became a major route for smuggling and illegal activities, in light of the lenient border regulations by which it is monitored.

During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the line provided an unguarded border for sympathizers and freedom fighters eager to assist the Afghans in their *jihad* to move freely

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5..

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

across.⁵⁸ Indeed, Zia ul-Haq, the military ruler in Pakistan at the time of the invasion, encouraged Afghanistan's *jihad* by funding *medrassas* and providing weapons to the resistance. In so doing, he created a radical, militaristic sect on the border region.⁵⁹

In this climate, FATA was repurposed as “both a haven for Al Qaeda leaders and a base for Afghan Taliban to conduct cross-border attacks on the Government of Afghanistan and the international forces assisting it.”⁶⁰ This further serves to agitate antipathy between the two states, as neither is willing to accept responsibility for this border force.

By deterring Pashtun tribal pride, and conversely supporting Islamist militias such as the Taliban, Pakistan's government stands to protect their own interests. Since Afghans have been calling for the independence of a Pashtun state since the Partition, if Pashtun nationalism grows, the Pashtun stand a decent chance at gaining their own state. This would mean the loss of open territory for Pakistan, as well as the potential surrender of significant cities such as Peshawar. Such a move would deliver a devastating political blow to an already-volatile climate in the region. Thus, funding the Taliban presents itself as a relatively attractive defensive strategy for the Pakistani government. Currently, much dispute surrounds Pakistan's support of the Taliban; in October 2007, the International Crisis Group reported that “the Taliban and its Pakistani allies are undermining the state-building effort in Afghanistan.”⁶¹ Despite this, the regime of Pervez Musharraf, then-Pakistani president, repeatedly denied these allegations.⁶²

⁵⁸ Victoria Schofield, *Afghan Frontier: Feuding and Fighting and Central Asia*, New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2003, p. 322.

⁵⁹ Jayshree Bajoria, “The Troubled Afghan-Pakistani Border”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 26, 2011

⁶⁰ Thomas Barfield, *The Durand Line*, p. 1.

⁶¹ Jayshree Bajoria, “The Trouble Afghan-Pakistani Border”

⁶² *Ibid.*

In the days following the September 11th attacks, under significant international pressure, Pakistan declared itself an ally of the United States in its War on Terror. However, doing so created a somewhat ironic and uncomfortable situation in which Pakistan aided a search-and-destroy mission against the very organization it originally backed. Consequences of international ultimatums on Pakistan are deep in their complexity; reports exist of Pakistani soldiers openly surrendering to Islamic militants, showing a pervasive indifference in the Pakistani military and impeding international efforts in-country to no end. In addition to this, the Pakistani government has great economic incentive for the situation to remain in its current, ambiguous state. Pakistan directly benefits from the high volume of illegal trade into Afghanistan, in arms as well as controlled substances.

In this environment, the situation continues to fester, as “Afghanistan blames Pakistan for fueling the insurgency in Afghanistan in order to destabilize the government of Hamid Karzai and install a more compliant government in Kabul.”⁶³ At the same time, however, in its currently crippled state, Afghanistan is economically dependent on Pakistan to fully function. After Pakistan gained independence in 1947, Afghanistan was the only country to vote against their membership in the United Nations.⁶⁴

The outlook on reforming the mistakes perpetrated in the Durand Agreement may be rather grim, as the most viable solutions simply address the issues and not the root of the problem. In order to come to a feasible solution, it must be clearly defined and agreed upon whether the Durand Line represents an international boundary, or simply a frontier. Both

⁶³ Frederic Grare, “Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations in the Post-9/11 Era”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, February 26, 2011, p. 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

countries must agree upon a cessation of hostilities, and steps were taken in 2007 in the form of a ‘peace *jirga*’ between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

To this end, the American Institute of Afghanistan Studies and the Hollings Center held a conference devoted solely to analysis of the Durand Line. The major result of this conference was a five-step framework in order to move toward a peaceable solution to the debate. The first tenet of this involves the acknowledgement on behalf of Afghans that, however suspect the conditions under which it was established, this line has in fact served as an international boundary for longer than a century. It also considers the transfer of territory, acknowledging that it would most likely be quite a small portion nonetheless.

The document continues on to discuss the importance of maintaining a soft border, allowing for tribesmen to pass freely through the fluid border as they currently do. In order for this to be practicable, however, it would be necessary for both governments to gain greater control over their respective sides of the border. In addition, international parties must assist in implementing confidence-building measures, such as trade and security, in order to strengthen the border. The conference points out the need for the involvement of the United States, or another major third-party arbiter, in order to “take the initiative in bringing the parties together and provide the political incentives needed to help maintain progress once they have started the process.”⁶⁵ The final conclusion of the council indicates that in addition to the above measures, a substantial aid package may be necessary in order to encourage both parties to come to a positive finality.

⁶⁵ Thomas Barfield, *The Durand Line*, p. 14.

However optimistic such discussions may appear, it must be accepted that this conflict's long, protracted history will not be easily overcome. In any case, unabashed European greed caused an elongated feud, with implications far beyond the imaginations of those who hastily drew a line on a map in 1893. Particularly in light of such high-profile events as the assassination of Osama bin Laden, international gaze has been fixed squarely upon the debacle instigated by the Durand Line. It is clear that the opportunistic British officials were merely serving their own ends with these unscrupulous policies, though the resounding effects are felt over a century later. In any case, the fault here can be clearly traced back to this lack of regard, though it was a convoluted set of circumstances that allowed for such a reprehensible decision to be made. The conflict remains a storied one and as of yet fails to yield a compromise that would satisfy both parties. Afghanistan's rich tribal history confirms that they will not abandon pursuits to regain lost territory.

Durand Line Agreement
(November 12, 1893)

Agreement between Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, G. C. S. I., and Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, K. C. I. E., C. S. I.

Whereas certain questions have arisen regarding the frontier of Afghanistan on the side of India, and whereas both His Highness the Amir and the Government of India are desirous of settling these questions by friendly understanding, and of fixing the limit of their respective spheres of influence, so that for the future there may be no difference of opinion on the subject between the allied Governments, it is hereby agreed as follows:

1. The eastern and southern frontier of his Highness's dominions, from Wakhan to the Persian border, shall follow the line shown in the map attached to this agreement.
2. The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of Afghanistan, and His Highness the Amir will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of India.
3. The British Government thus agrees to His Highness the Amir retaining Asmar and the valley above it, as far as Chanak. His Highness agrees, on the other hand, that he will at no time exercise interference in Swat, Bajaur, or Chitral, including the Arnawai or Bashgal valley. The British Government also agrees to leave to His Highness the Birmal tract as shown in the detailed map already given to his Highness, who relinquishes his claim to the rest of the Waziri country and Dawar. His Highness also relinquishes his claim to Chageh.
4. The frontier line will hereafter be laid down in detail and demarcated, wherever this may be practicable and desirable, by joint British and Afghan commissioners, whose object will be to arrive by mutual understanding at a boundary which shall adhere with the greatest possible exactness to the line shown in the map attached to this agreement, having due regard to the existing local rights of villages adjoining the frontier.
5. With reference to the question of Chaman, the Amir withdraws his objection to the new British cantonment and concedes to the British Government the rights purchased by him in the Sirkai Tilerai water. At this part of the frontier the line will be drawn as follows:

From the crest of the Khwaja Amran range near the Psha Kotal, which remains in British territory, the line will run in such a direction as to leave Murgha Chaman and the Sharobo spring to Afghanistan, and to pass half-way between the New Chaman Fort and the Afghan outpost known locally as Lashkar Dand. The line will then pass half-way between the railway station and the hill known as the Mian Baldak, and, turning southwards, will rejoin the Khwaja Amran range, leaving the Gwasha Post in British territory, and the road to Shorawak to the west and south of Gwasha in Afghanistan. The British Government will not exercise any interference within half a mile of the road.

6. The above articles of' agreement are regarded by the Government of India and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan as a full and satisfactory settlement of all the principal differences of opinion which have arisen between them in regard to the frontier; and both the Government of India and His Highness the Amir undertake that any differences of detail, such as those which will have to be considered hereafter by the officers appointed to demarcate the boundary line, shall be settled in a friendly spirit, so as to remove for the future as far as possible all causes of doubt and misunderstanding between the two Governments.
7. Being fully satisfied of His Highness's goodwill to the British Government, and wishing to see Afghanistan independent and strong, the Government of India will raise no objection to the purchase and import by His Highness of munitions of war, and they will themselves grant him some help in this respect. Further, in order to mark their sense of the friendly spirit in which His Highness the Amir has entered into these negotiations, the Government of India undertake to increase by the sum of six lakhs of rupees a year the subsidy of twelve lakhs now granted to His Highness.

H. M. Durand,
Amir Abdur Rahman Khan.

Kabul, November 12, 1893.

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