

do so by threats of Afghan intrigue in Bokhara, where the death of Enver Pasha had destroyed all hopes of a successful rebellion. But if one of the competitors for Afghan friendship was irresponsive, the other might be induced to make a bid, not from gratitude—the efficacy of which as a factor in diplomacy is discounted by the Afghans—but from fear. In order, however, that the bid should be satisfactorily high, the value of Afghan friendship must be proved by a taste of Afghan hostility.

4. I anticipate that the present Anglo-Afghan Treaty will be denounced by the Afghan Government at the earliest possible date, and that in negotiating a new treaty their main demand will be for financial assistance to be given in some form considered compatible with their "independence." In return they may be expected to offer the bait of Afghan neutrality, or even co-operation, in the pacification of the frontier tribes.

5. The occasion of the Ameer's visit to Jalalabad seemed eminently suitable for carrying out the preliminary stages of such a programme. He was there brought naturally into contact with the tribesmen of the Eastern Province; the appeal of the Mahsuds who fled to him with tales of British atrocities could not in his own interests prudently be disregarded, and afforded an opportunity of charging His Majesty's Government with a breach of the treaty; at the least, some gesture might be made to obliterate from the tribesmen's memory his betrayal of their interests in concluding the present treaty with Great Britain.

Deeper, however, than the promptings of political opportunism lay the conviction that the consolidation of British influence in "independent territory" would mean the permanent loss to Afghanistan in future of her only real leverage in diplomatic dealings with His Majesty's Government. The latter appeared to be taking advantage of the correctness of the Afghan attitude to effect such a consolidation, which, if it might be impossible eventually to resist, it was obviously to the Afghan interest to delay until after the expiry of the present treaty.

6. The new sphere for intrigue thus opened to Sardar Nadir Khan appealed to him not only as a politician, but also as a soldier. He has expressed to me, quite probably sincerely, his disgust at the unwarlike character of the tribes of Northern Afghanistan, and it seems likely that the large reductions now being made in the regular Afghan army reflect his conviction that the only fighting material of any value in this country is to be found in the tribal irregulars from the eastern frontier, who will be regarded in future as the first line troops of Afghanistan. More than one of these influences can be traced in the conversations which Sardar Nadir Khan has had with me and members of my staff, as reported in my despatches No. 6, dated the 10th February, 1923, and No. 9, dated the 3rd April, 1923. To these considerations should be added the personal interest which the Afghan Commander-in-chief takes in the tribes which assisted him so successfully in the late Afghan war.

7. Allowance must also be made for a natural desire on the part of the Afghan Government to test the efficacy of an old weapon by the effect on His Majesty's Government of its reappearance. Any signs of perturbation on the part of the latter would show that it has lost none of its virtue; while the feel of it in his hand tickles the Ameer's vanity and ministers to his pretensions as the rightful sovereign of "Afghanistan irredenta." Although the Ameer's present attitude is hailed with delight by the Russian and Turkish Ministers, I consider it most unlikely that either of them are primarily responsible for it.

If the only result of these tactics were to increase the Ameer's sense of his own power and importance, they might, in my opinion, be ignored with advantage by His Majesty's Government. However, at the present juncture in Waziristan, where the influence of Afghan intrigue may undo the work of months and postpone indefinitely a settlement with the Mahsuds, it seems to me essential that the Ameer should be made to realise that active interference on his part in the affairs of the tribes on the British side of the Durand line cannot be tolerated by His Majesty's Government.

8. On receipt of the Viceroy's telegram dated the 21st March, 1923, I accordingly addressed the Afghan Foreign Minister in letter No. 54, dated the 24th March, 1923, a translation of which I have the honour to append as an enclosure to this despatch. In this letter, while careful to avoid committing His Majesty's Government to any definite line of action, I purposely used the same Persian terms as are employed in the official text of the Anglo-Afghan Treaty (article 6 and letter No. 1), without expressly quoting it, so that the way might be prepared for a refusal, if this were considered desirable, by His Majesty's Government to allow the import by British ports by the Afghan Government of the arms mentioned in your Lordship's despatch