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AFGHANISTAN.

[May 28.]

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

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No. 1.

Extracts from Report on Events of April 1923 by His Majesty's Minister at Kabul, May 2, 1923.—(Received in Foreign Office, May 28.)

AFGHAN FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Great Britain.

ON the Indo-Afghan border four incidents of outstanding importance occurred during the month under review. These were:—

1. The bombing of the Tazi Khels by British aeroplanes on the 2nd April.

In this connection an official protest was received from the Afghan Government on the 18th April, together with a formal intimation that all official conversations with myself were suspended until satisfaction had been accorded. As has already been reported to His Majesty's Government, this letter was subsequently withdrawn and another substituted, in which a joint enquiry was requested. This enquiry has been granted by His Majesty's Government, and the arrangements necessary for its inception are now under consideration.

2. The murder of Majors Anderson and Orr at Haidari Kandao on the 8th April by two Afghan Sangu Khels.

3. The murder of Mrs. Ellis at Kohat and abduction of Miss Ellis on the 14th April by a small gang of Bosti Khel and Tirah Jowakis.

My own conclusions as to how far it would be just on the facts ascertained, or politic in view of the obvious danger involved both of stiffening the Ameer's resistance to a demand for retribution, and of confirming his estimate of his own ability to influence the frontier tribes, to represent either of these crimes as in any way connected with his recent official activities have already been submitted to His Majesty's Government. In view of certain suggestions which have been made in the North-West Frontier Province Intelligence Bureau Diary, it is important to notice that the alleged violation of Afghan territory was mentioned to me on the 7th April, the day before the Landi Kotal murders were committed (*vide* my telegram No. 104, dated the 8th April, 1923, to the Government of India; copy sent by mail of the 21st April).

Press comments on these outrages have been singularly conflicting and misleading. Apart from the meaningless extracts from articles in the "Times" and "Daily Telegraph" which have been communicated by Reuter's Agency, there appeared in the Indian press an article, dated the 10th April, stating that "no political significance is so far attached to" the Landi Kotal murders. This was followed on the 12th April by a communiqué from the Administration of the North-West Frontier Province to the effect that the same murders were "of great political significance." The "Civil and Military Gazette" of the 26th April contained the surprising statement that the road on which Majors Orr and Anderson were murdered "has up to date been considered perfectly safe," and an Associated Press telegram of the 18th April reported that Miss Ellis had been seen with her captors "near a stream in the Tirah country close to the Afghan border." The reference was presumably to the part of the Mastura River in Sturi Khel country, where it flows within 3 miles of British India. This river nowhere approaches the Afghan border. It is unnecessary to enlarge on the dangerously false impressions likely to be conveyed to the public by such wild statements.

On receiving the report of the Tazi Khel incident, the Afghan Foreign Minister made excuses to avoid granting me his weekly interview, and on the 25th April fell ill. He was attended by the surgeon of this Legation. Accordingly, on the 26th April, I requested a private audience with the Ameer; this was granted at 9 P.M. on the 30th April. I had received on the 28th April explicit instructions from your Lordship as to the line my representations were to follow. A detailed note of the course of the discussion is appended to this despatch. His Majesty's attitude, in my opinion, was, on the whole, satisfactory. I do not, however, attach much weight to his verbal assurances until they are fulfilled. Of his personal desire for the

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