

EVOLUTION  
OF  
EASTERN IRANIAN  
BOUNDARIES

**ROLE OF THE KHOZEIMEH AMIRDOM  
OF QAENAT AND SISTAN**

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
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at  
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Standardization of Some Names

Various sources quoted in the text have spelled names of some places and persons related to the eastern Iranian borderlands differently. To avoid conufusion, the following chart is designed in alphetic order to show these variations in comparison to the standard spelling adapted by the author in accordance with the standard persian pronounciation of these names.

Standard Spelling	Some variations of Spelling
Afghanistan	Affghanistan
Amin as-Sultan	Amin es-Sultan
Amir	Mir, Meer, Ameer, Emir, Emeer
Asadollah	Assadullah, Asadullah, Assadollah
Asef ad-Doleh	Asif ul-Dowlah, Ausef ad-Dowleh
Avaz	Awaz, Ahwaz
Baluchistan	Baloochistan, Boluchistan
Band	Bond, Bund, Bandar
Dasht	Dusht
Dizak	Dizuk, Dizzuk
Doroh	Doruh, Duroh
Dust Mohammad	Dost Moh....
Esfandk	Isfanduk, Ispandak, Esfanduk, Ispanduk
Esmail	Ismael, Ismail
Fakhred-Din	Fahrettin
Ferdosi	Firdosi, Firdausi
God-e Zereh	God-i-Zarih, Gud-i-Zirrah, God-i-Zirreh
Guater	Gwuttar, Gwatter
Hesam ad-Doleh	Hisam ud Dowleh, Hisam al-Dowlah, Hissam
Heshmat al-Molk	Hashmat-ul-Mulk, Hishamt ul Mulk
Hezb-e Tudeh	Hizb-i Tudah, Hizb-i-Tudeh
Hirmand	Helmand, Helmund,
Hozdar	Hauzdar
Jahanabad	Jehanabad, Jihanabad
Jalalabad	Jelalabad, Jilalabad
Kabul	Kabol, Cabul
Kalat	Kelat, Khelat, Khalat
Kalateh	Kelata, Kelateh, Kelatah
Kariz	Karez
Khark Island	Kharg, Kharaj

Khoajeh	Khawajah, Khowajeh
Khotbeh	Khootbeh, Khatbah
Kohandel Khan	Kohandil Khan, Kuh indil Khan
Kuhak	Kuhok
Kuh-e Gadayaneh	Kuh-i-Kadanna, Kadaoneh, Kadaona
Kuh-e Khoajeh	Kuh-i-Khojah, Kuh-e Khoja
Makran	Mekran, Mukran
Mashhad	Mehed, Mashed, Meshad
Mehrdeh Khan	Mehrdil Khan
Mirjaveh	Mirjawa, Mirjawah
Mirza	Meerza
Moavez al-Molk	Muaziz ul-Mulk
Mohammad	Mahomad, Mahomed, Muhamad, Mehmet
Moshir ad-Doleh	Mushir ul-Dowleh, Mushir ad-Dowleh
Musa Abad	Musabad, Musaabad
Nader Shah	Nadir Shah
Namakzar	Namaksar
Naserabad	Nasirabad
Neizar	Naizar
No	Nau
Nosratabad	Nasratabad
Parian	Pariun
Pordel Kkan	Pordil Khan, Purdil Khan
Qadim	Kadim
Qaen	Kain, Qain, Kayen
Qaenat	Kainat, Kayanat, Qayinat
Qajar	Kajar
Qaleh	Kala
Qaleh Fath	Kala-i-fath
Qanat	Kanat
Qandehar	Kandahar, Candahar, Qandihar
Qasre-qand	Kasirkand, Kasserkund
Qoran	Koran
Sadiq	Sadik, Saddik
Saduzaei	Sudozye
Safavid	Safaveean
Sanjideh	Sanjitti
Seyyed	Saiyad, Sayud
Sarbaz	Sirbaz, Surdaz
Sardar	Sirdar, Surdar

Sarhang	Surhang
Sarkar	Sirkar, Surkar
Sartip	Surtip
Savar	Sawar
Shir-Ali Khan	Sher Ali Khan
Sistan	Seistan
Shokat al-Molk	Shaukat-ul-Mulk, Shaukat al-Molk
Taher	Tahir
Tappeh	Tappa, Tapp-i
Tehran	Teheran
Torbat-e Heidariyeh	Turbat-i- Heidari
Yamin Nezam	Yamin-e Nezam, Yamin-i-Nizam
Yaqub	Yakub
Yavar	Yawar
Zahedan	Zahidan
Zahir ad-Doleh	Zahir ul-Dowlah, Zuheer-ool-Dwlah
Zurabad	Zarabad, Zorabad

## A B S T R A C T

This thesis is an historiographic examination of the emergence of Eastern Iranian boundaries. It examines the dual impact of Anglo-Russian geopolitics of the nineteenth century, and the nature of centre-periphery relationships within Iran's political system. Iran's political decisions in respect to her eastern flanks appear to have been mostly made in response to the impact of the so-called Great Game of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries played by Britain and Russia in the East. Meanwhile, the political centre in Iran appears to have revelled in the tradition of leaving political events on the geographical peripheries of the country to the provincial political actors without modifying and/or strengthening the ancient structure of centre-periphery relationships. These arguments bring the thesis to its central discussion.

It has continuously been argued that "monopolism" of political power throughout most of the history has meant that the centre was solely responsible for making and implementing all decisions in Iran. This argument neglects the fact that the provincial political units, especially the frontier-keeping states of Iran were more effective in shaping the political geography of Iran's borderlands. This notion constitutes the overall hypothesis of this work which will be partly examined in the general introduction, and in part, in the subsequent chapters.

The schematic model of Jean Gottmann's "Iconography" forms the basis for some theoretical frameworks within which the hypothesis will be examined. In this context, the frontier-keeping state "Amirdom" of Khozeimeh of Eastern Iranian borderlands provides the best example of Iran's traditional political system. The historical background, political structure and regional role of the Khozeimeh Amirdom is first examined, followed by an account of the Amirdom's foreign relations.

A brief introduction to the historical background of the political process which led to the partitioning of Greater Khorasan and separation of Herat is given. The hypothesis here is that these political processes set the stage for the emergence of Eastern Iranian boundaries largely to suit the strategic needs of British India.

The actual delimitation and demarcation of the Khorasan and Baluchistan boundaries is examined. The hypothesis is proposed that the impact of the role of Khozeimeh Amirdom locally influenced the shape of these boundaries in favour of Iran. Evolution of the Sistan boundaries is discussed in which the impelling role of the Khozeimeh Amir of the time became more apparent. The second boundary arbitration of Sistan is reviewed which took place at the time when the role of the frontier-keeping Amirdom of Khozeimeh was largely undermined by the Iranian central authorities. The contrast between the role of the Khozeimeh Amirs in this period and that of the period of first boundary arbitration of Sistan demonstrates that whenever the interests of the central power coincided with those of the frontier-keeping states Iran benefited from it and whenever this coincidence of interests diminished, Iran suffered geographically.

Finally the evolution of Hirmand water disputes between Iran and Afghanistan is examined to show how ineffective was the policy of involvement of central government in border issues when the role of local influence was marginalised. A general conclusion gives a guideline for a fresh approach towards the settlement of the Hirmand water disputes satisfactory to both Iran and Afghanistan.

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Nouri, Mrs. Shokuh Mirzadegi, Mr. Arsalan Nayer-Nouri, Dr. Esmail Nouri-Ala (Payam), Dr. Naser Rahimi, Mr. Kambiz salarian. Dr. G. Sabri-Tabrizi, Mrs. Parvin Sufi-Siyavosh, and Dr. Hassan Yaseri for their assistance or encouragement.

Mr. Shahin Nasiri has kindly seen to the translation into English of the French text of the 1939 Iran-Afghanistan treaty of Hirmand Water Distribution. I owe him many thanks.

Of the institutes, the Document Centre of the Institute of Political and International Studies of Foreign Ministry of Islamic Republic of Iran has been very generous, as a result of the advice of His Excellency Abbas Maleki, Deputy Foreign Minister and Director of IPIS, in sending me copies of a number of disclosed documents relating to Iran-Afghanistan border agreements. I owe them, especially Mr. Maleki, an immense debt of gratitude. My thanks are also due to the controllers of the (British) Public Record Office, India Office Library and Records and the Librarians of the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, British Library, and to the controllers of the Document Centre of the (Iranian) Office of Prime Minister. Ms Norma Edwards has been most patient in organising this work in the form of computer print. A valuable work which deserves my thanks and acknowledgement. My thanks are also due to the controllers of the Computer Help Line of the School of Oriental and African Studies who on many occasions assisted Ms Edwards and myself.

Last, but by no means least, I am most grateful to my wife, Nahid Mojtabeh-Zadeh for her outstanding display of patience and understanding of the unsociable hours I spent working at home, day in and day out for four years. She did all she could do to help and encourage me to undertake and to see through the project. Similarly, I am grateful to my little daughters; Tosca (Nayereh) and Elica (Najmi) who in their small world made sure that I noticed their awareness of the "important work" their father was engaged in.

P R E F A C E

ابر و باد و مه و خورشید و فلک در کارند  
تا توانی بد کف آری و به غفلت نخوری

The cloud, the wind, the moon, the sun and the galaxy  
are at work, for you to make your bread, but not to  
have it in ignorance.

(Sadi: Iranian poet  
born about 1190, died about 1292AD)

In my application for reading towards the Ph.D. degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies, I indicated that I would work on the political geography of the Persian Gulf, the region of my life-time interest. I registered the subject and began organising the research plan in October 1989 when I met Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime<sup>(1)</sup> Alam. He knew of me as a writer, but was unaware of my special field of research interest being political geography. He wanted my advice on a project that he had in mind: writing his memoirs, a productive hobby taken up by most Iranian statesmen of the Pahalavi regime living in exile. As conversation developed, he began making references to his great-grandfather's role in the process of delineation of Sistan boundaries carried out by British officers in the nineteenth century. I, like most other educated Iranians, had heard of the "Khozeimehs", the "Alams", and the "Khozeime Alams", never knowing who was who and what was the connection between these names. I had also known that they were of one family background, with substantial influence in Iran's eastern provinces of Khorasan and Sistan and also in the Iranian Government of the Pahalavi era, without knowing that they themselves had ruled eastern

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(1) Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam spells his surname "Khozeime" without "H" at the end.

parts of Iran somewhat independently for a considerable length of time. I knew that Amir Asadollah Khan Alam was Mohammad Reza Shah's closest confidant of lifetime and his Prime Minister in early 1960s, and finally, the Shah's trusted and powerful Court Minister, 1966-1977, the period in which the second Pahalavi ruled Iran largely through his Court Minister with great determination.<sup>(1)</sup>

I also knew about Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam being a veteran parliamentarian both in the Majlis and the Senate. I even had heard of the term "Amir-e Qaen", but to me, like most other Iranians, it was an abstract term, used in colloquial Persian occasionally as a proverb or a by-word in reference to such expressions as "authority" and "splendour mixed with arrogance."

During the meeting with Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, little did I know that I was talking to the last of the Khozeimeh Amirs whose forefathers were the Amirs of Qaenat and Sistan for centuries. In fact I was talking to a man who had seen the traditional way of his father's rule during the Qajars; a man who at the early age of 23, because of his ancestral influence in the region, was given the sensitive governorship of Sistan and Baluchistan by Reza Shah Pahalavi in the new centralised Iran, during World War II; the last Khozeimeh Amir who, during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, again represented the vast eastern borderlands of Iran in the Senate for 29 years up until the Pahalavi regime was brought down by the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

As conversation with Amir Hussein Khan progressed, he made further references to his family's role in the Eastern Iranian borderlands and this whole conversation opened up, for me, an entirely new horizon for the possibility of a thoroughly new subject for research. What I was confronted with in my mind at the end of the meeting was that, a new

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(1) Alam, Asodollah, "The Shah and I", (The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969 - 1977), introduced and edited by Alinaghi Alikhani, London 1991, the Introduction.

challenge was before me to take on, an original subject for research, a difficult one, yet an opportunity for discovering new territories in which no one else had trodden on before.

Much work has been done on the political geography of the Persian Gulf, I thought, and my contribution to it can wait, but, no one had, thus far, paid any attention to the political geography of the Eastern Iranian borderlands, and I was almost sure that no one had studied the Khozeimeh family and their role in the political geography of these borderlands. This was a challenge well worth taking on, an opportunity not to be missed. Professor Keith McLachlan, designated as supervisor of the work, and himself a highly respected authority on Iranian geography including the Eastern Iranian provinces, welcomed the change of subject of research and the school authorities agreed with the proposed change to the new subject.

The preliminary investigation proved my assumptions to be correct. Published information on the Khozeimeh family was far more scanty than one would normally expect, yet, I had the family sources' vast information available to me. Furthermore, the Foreign Office documents stored in the Public Record Office proved to be invaluable, a whole host of unexplored British diplomatic correspondence, with an amazing concentration on the role of the family in Eastern Iranian borderlands and in the process of delimitation of boundaries between Iran and Afghanistan, and between Iran and Kalat (now Pakistan) was there waiting to be discovered.

In the course of my research works, I discovered that the role of the frontier-keeping "Amirdom"<sup>(1)</sup> of Khozeimeh in the border provinces of Khorasan, Sistan, and Baluchistan, and in the evolution of boundaries separating these provinces from Afghanistan and Pakistan was probably the most

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(1) Because of the exceptional length of the Khozeimeh Amirs' rule of this vast part of eastern borderlands of Iran, stretching from Khorasan to Sistan and Baluchistan, I propose to refer to their rule in that region as the "Khozeimeh Amirdom."

interesting feature of political geography of the region. My second discovery was that this aspect of political geography of Eastern Iran had not been studied before, and that an attempt in that direction would amount to a notable contribution to the knowledge of political geography of the region. I also discovered that the background to, and the evolution of the Eastern Iranian boundary, which happens to be one of the earliest examples of modern boundaries created, had not been seriously studied. References to these aspects of the Eastern Iranian boundaries, both in English and Persian publications would not exceed fifty pages of casual data. The natural conclusion could only be that a serious study of the evolution of these boundaries and the role of the Khozeimeh Amirs in it would be an addition, not only to the knowledge of the political geography of Eastern Iranian borderlands, but also to the knowledge of the politico-historical impact of Anglo-Russian rivalries on the state and boundary of Iran from an "Iranian" point of view. My educational background in Iranian studies (geographical and historical) proved to be an asset in this context, and access to unexplored Iranian documents, few of which that have survived, made it possible for me to see the way the Iranians had approached delimitation of their eastern boundaries.

Apart from the sources pointed out hitherto, I have been fortunate to gain access to the personal knowledge of a number of individuals who were, at some stages, directly or otherwise involved in the process of the evolution of these boundaries.

What can be described as the end result here, is not only a collection of relevant information on the evolution of Eastern Iranian boundaries and/or on the role of the Khozeimeh Amirdom in its process, but also an analysis of the said evolution based on the concepts of state and boundary in political Geography and on the background to the history of state and boundary in Iran. This, I hope, will prove to be an addition to the existing knowledge of political geography

in general, and, on a more personal note, I hope that I have learnt something new of the work of geography (the cloud, the wind, the sun, and the galaxy), and will not have my bread in total ignorance of how this wonderful world of geography works for that bread to be made.

*Pirouz Mojtabah-Zadeh*

*SOAS*

*January 1993*

## G E N E R A L I N T R O D U C T I O N

### "EVOLUTION OF STATE AND BOUNDARY IN IRAN"

Eastern Iranian boundaries are the spatial manifestation of a number of political factors of the nineteenth century. Chief among them were two: first, the role of the frontier-keeping Amirdom of Khozeimeh, an autonomous principality in Qaenat and Sistan which was brought to its end in 1937. Unlike most other frontier-keeping states of Iran, this Amirdom remained solidly loyal to Iran throughout its history and hence played a remarkably effective role in the evolution of the political geography of Eastern Iranian borderlands: the other determining factor was the geographical dimension of Anglo-Russian rivalries in the nineteenth century which generated great pressure on Iran, both from north and east.

*"At the same time that Britain had been extending its position in India, Russia had been expanding its land empire into Central Asia inevitably provoking a clash of interests between the two powers. The result was the Great Game of the nineteenth century, the intrigue and the threats between Russia and Britain in a zone extending from Turkey, through Iran to Afghanistan and the north-west frontier of India. This Victorian cold war, as Edwards (1975) has called it rarely erupted into "hot war", but it was an underlying concern of Britain's global imperial geopolitical code. It was this Great Game that Makinder extended to become the Heartland theory and which the United States finally inherited in the 'real' cold war."*<sup>(1)</sup>

The clash of interests of Britain and Russia in Afghanistan where Iran had substantial interests, especially in the countries of Herat and Qandehar, provoked Iranian reactions, albeit weak and unskilled. Iran was no match for the two giants on her northern and eastern neighbourhood and as a result suffered both politically, by submitting to 'capitulation', and geographically, by loosing territories in the north and east.

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(1) Taylor, Peter J. (1989), "Political Geography", Second ed. London, p. 117.

Considering that the Eastern Iranian boundaries are mainly the outcome of Iranian reaction, whether from Tehran or from Qaenat, to the Anglo-Russian rivalries in the lands between Iran on the one side and India and Central Asia on the other, an analysis of the evolution of these boundaries needs to be supported by a study of the evolution of the state in Iran on the whole and Qaenat and Sistan in particular. Equally important is to define the concepts of frontiers and relationships between central government and peripheral autonomies in Iran.

The emergence, evolution and function of the Khozeimeh Amirdom will be discussed in Chapters II and III and a brief look at the emergence and evolution of state and boundary in Iran constitutes this general introduction.

#### THE ORIGIN OF "STATE" AND "BOUNDARY" IN IRAN

The term "Iran" means "the land of the Aryans". Politically, however, this term refers to the country situated in south-west Asia, that part of the globe generally known as the "Middle East". With a land area of 1,648,195 square kilometres.<sup>(1)</sup> Iran is bounded on the north by the Caspian Sea and the republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkmanistan: on the east by Afghanistan and Pakistan: on the west by Iraq and Turkey: and on the south by the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the north-west corner of the Indian Ocean.

Geographically, the term covers an area much greater than the state of Iran. It includes the entire Iranian Plateau (see chapter I). Culturally, the term includes all people speaking Iranian languages - a subdivision of Indo-European family of languages; people who speak Persian, Kurdish, Luri, Mazandarani, Baluchi.....

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(1) Mahmudi, Gudarzi, Khalilifar, "Joghrifiay-e Iran = Iranian Geography", Tehran 1985, p. 1.

The early Iranians themselves were thought to have been nomadic groups of Indo-European origin, who, moving southward from east and west of the Caspian Sea, gradually overwhelmed and absorbed previous inhabitants and for the most part adopted their sedentary civilisation. It is generally believed that the Persian branch of Iranians took control of Anshan, the location of which is now identified as having been at Tappeh Malyan in the Pars (Persia) province, at the start of the seventh century BC. Eruptions from the north-east were to continue for many centuries by Iranian nomads - Scythians (Sakae) and Hepthalites - down to the middle of the sixth century AD.<sup>(1)</sup> From the sixth century BC, when the Persian Empire emerged, to the seventh century AD when the country was overrun by the Arabs, Iran's role in the making of man's civilisation is largely shrouded in obscurity. Iranian chronicles were largely destroyed by various events, particularly the Arab invasion. Our knowledge of the pre-Islamic history of Iran is almost exclusively drawn from information provided by Hebrew, Greek, Roman and Arab historians.

Although there are mentions of Iran and her role in the old world in the said sources, it is noteworthy that most of these writings speak of Iran as an enemy, not as a friendly nation, or as a third party. As a result, it is not surprising how much our modern world is unaware of the significance of the role Iran played in the old world:

*"Considering the tremendous role which Aryan man has played in world history, how unfamiliar to us (his descendants) are his origins and the lands that were the cradle of our race. Hebrew, Greek, and Roman civilisation is absorbed, more or less by western man with his mother's milk: the vast Iranian panorama in which our ancestors arose and flourished seems as remote to the majority as the moon. For us its early history is restricted to those occasions when it formed part of that of Israel or Greece. Our interest and sympathies are enlisted on behalf of the Jewish exiles, the drama of the Marathon and Thermopylae, the march of the ten thousand, or Alexander's meteoric career: incidental in our minds to these events are*

(1) Murray, John, "Iran Today", Tehran - October 1950, Vol. I, p. 7.

the extent of the realm of Aharuerus (*Esther i. I.*, from India even unto Ethiopia.), the background to the decree of Cyrus, the king of Persia (*Ezrai. I*), the initiative shown by Darius on his accession, or the rise of Zoroastrianism. In part the reason is no doubt that Persia has lacked a chronicle of its own. No Herodotus or Xenophon has arisen (or survived) from amongst the Persians themselves.... Our information, all too scanty as it is, derived from foreigners, from Jews and Greeks, the national enemies of Persia.<sup>(1)</sup> This is a powerful handicap".<sup>(2)</sup>

The Iranians themselves knew, until a century ago, of their ancient past only from the accounts of Arab and Moslem historians and from the epic account of Ferdosi (AD 1020) in his Shahnemeh which was based on a translated version of a lost Khodaynameh of the later part of the Sassanid period (AD 224 - 651).

In their histories the Jews have taken a more favourable view of the Persians, but those writings speak of Persia only when and where Hebrew relations with Iran are concerned. Thus it is limited to the early Achaemenian in general, and Cyrus in particular for his humane treatment of the captive Jews of Babylonia:

"The tolerance and kindness displayed by Cyrus the Great and certain of his successors towards the Jews make it the less surprising that they should have spoken well of the Persians and have remained faithful to them for so long. Cyrus on conquering Babylonia in 539 BC. found the Jews in captivity there.... the Achaemenian king felt a natural sympathy.... no doubt that he was fulfilling the prophecy of Isiah (Chapter xliv)."<sup>(3)</sup>

The author of the above then quotes Isiah as follows:

- (1) Inclusion among ancient Persia's national enemies of the Jews is probably not a correct assumption.
- (2) Iliff, J.H., "Persia and the Ancient World", in A.J. Arberry's "The Legacy of Persia", Oxford 1953, pp. 1 - 39.
- (3) Lockhart, L., "Persia as seen in the West", in A. J. Arberry's the "Legacy of Persia", op. cit., p. 326.

"I am the lord...that saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built: and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid."(1)

The first invasion resulting in a massive destruction and relocation of the Achaemenian chronicles was that of the Macedonians. Alexander, rather than destroying the library at Persepolis, as many historians have suggested, had these chronicles transported to Egypt where he founded the world famous library in the Egyptian city of Alexandria. This library was destroyed at a later date by the Arab invaders of the early Islamic era. The fact that Alexander's invasion of Iran was philosophically motivated, and Iran's advanced civilisation of the Achaemenian era was the main attraction for his invasion is confirmed by many historians and those closely concerned with historical studies. In reply to a letter by this author, Jean Gottmann, a highly respected political geographer of our time whose thesis on "iconography" and "circulation" are widely quoted in the works of political geography, wrote on 17 June 1987:

....Iran must have belonged to the 'Western' part of mankind, and I suspect that this was what Alexander the Great of Macedonia, a pupil of Aristotle, therefore, in the great western philosophical tradition, found in Iran and that attracted him so much that he wanted to establish a harmonious, multi-national cooperation between the Iranians and Greeks within the large empire he was building".(2)

If this was the main purpose of invading Iran, he certainly succeeded in achieving it in part. Translation into Greek of the Achaemenian chronicles at Alexandria and certainly what the Iranians had learnt from the Greeks, have shaped the foundation on which the universal civilisation of modern man has evolved.

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Professor Jean Gottmann authorised this quotation from his said letter, in a separate note dated 19th May 1992.

"The heritage handed down by Iran to the West and still living in its ideological conceptions and cultural institutions is manifold. If its patterns are sometimes difficult to recognise and trace back to their origin, that is due to the fact that this legacy has been received through intermediate cultures and westernised models... the leading elements of what we could call the "vertical organisation" of the state are part of this age-old heritage. They were handed over to the modern world through the late roman imperial structure and its medieval renaissance: through the institutions of chivalry and knighthood that, obscurely transmitted to European society in a Celtic-Germanic garb, were later Christianized.(1)

However, the remaining of the Achaemenian chronicles and all that had been left behind by the Parthians and Sassanids, were completely done away with by the Arab invaders of mid-seventh century AD. The Arabs, as many historians have pointed out, when found themselves faced with a massive collection of books in various libraries in Iran, asked their commander and Caliph, Omar Bin Khattab, for instruction as to what to do with them. Caliph Omar is said to have argued the famous example of fallacy, that; these books cannot be either in favour of the holy Quran or against it; if they are in favour of the Quran, we do not need them because the Quran is available to us and that is enough; and if they are against the teachings of the Quran, their existence is harmful thus, in both cases they must be destroyed.(2)

The destruction of libraries and burning of books in Iran by the Arabs are confirmed by all historians, but such a fallacious argument, if had indeed taken place, cannot be cited as a special Arab enmity against Iran and her people, for, the Arabs, in their invasions of other lands, dealt with people and their cultural heritage in much the same way. Arab strategy at the time was to create an empire within which there would be no room for indigenous non-Arab cultures and languages. In other words, Arab invasions of other lands were culturally motivated with the aim being establishment of

(1) Fillipani-Ronconi, Prof. Pio of Naples University, "The Tradition of Sacred Kingship in Iran", in George Lenczowski's publication on Iran, USA, 1978, pp. 51 - 2.

(2) Filician Chale, "Philosophy of Science", translated into Persian by Yahya Mahdavi, Tehran 1965, p. 157.

a culturally monotonous state under the empire of Caliphateship. An undertaking which could not gain success without endeavouring to do away with the indigenous culture and languages of the subdued nations.

#### EVOLUTION OF STATE AND BOUNDARY IN IRAN

State is the vertical dimension of a legally organised political structure based on common consent in a given human group, the horizontal or spatial dimension of which is territory. In other words, territory is the spatial manifestation of the state, while the latter is the organiser of the former. Politically organised units have, in the past, been translated into a territorial state and later, into a nation state, which is one of the units forming the world political map. The basic elements of a geographical theory of the state, as we are reminded by Peter Taylor,<sup>(1)</sup> were developed in the early 1950s by Gottmann (1951-52), Hartshorne (1950) and Jones (1954).

Gottmann analysed the political partition of the world and concluded that it was based on two main factors - circulation which causes instability and iconography which causes stability.

Moreover, Gottmann has, as yet, provided the most comprehensible account of the concept of territory in relationship with the notion of state. In his "evolution of the concept of territory" while acknowledging that the concept of territory is undergoing a substantial modification in our time, Gottmann argues that:

*"Territory is a political as well as geographical concept because geographical space is both partitioned and organised through political process.."<sup>(2)</sup>*

(1) Taylor, op. cit., 135.

(2) Gottmann, Jean, "Evolution of the Concept of Territory", Social Science Information, Paris 1976, Vol. 14, Nos. 3/4, p.3.

Having said this, he quotes Aristotle's remark in his "physics" that "what is nowhere does not exist", and for that reason he submits that definition of territory offered by him to be accepted. He defined "territory" as:

*"Territory is a portion of geographical space that coincides with the spatial extent of a government's jurisdiction. It is the physical container and support of the body politic organised under a governmental structure. It describes the spatial arena of the political system developed within a national state or part thereof endowed with some authority."*<sup>(1)</sup>

This far more practical definition than others before, leaves little doubt about the inseparability of the concept of state with that of territory. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that while territory is more of a physical nature, state is more of a political one.

The term "state" assumes its meaning similar to the modern concept of state at the time of the Achaemenian empire. No evidence exists suggesting existence of "state" of this description prior to the advent of the Achaemenians. The Achaemenians (BC 559-330) in the beginning created an empire of universal aspiration, extending from India to Egypt (see figure 1). The founder of the dynasty, Cyrus the Great (BC 559-529) used to be the ruler of the vassal kingdom of Persia (southern Iran) in the Median empire (BC 709-559). He and his successors substantially expanded and developed the new empire. They divided their realms into forty satrapies which included lands of Tans-Oxus, Sind, Trans-Caucasus as far as what is now Moldavia, Trans-Jordan and Syria, Macedonia and Cyprus, Egypt and Libya,<sup>(2)</sup> each governed by a vassal king, whereas the King of Kings had his capital in Persia. The King of Kings was not a law giver but the defender of the laws and religions of the empire:

(1) Gottmann, op. cit., p. 1.

(2) Vadiei, Prof. Kazem, (1974) "An Introduction to the Human Geography of Iran", Tehran University Press, N. 1280, pp. 159 - 161 (text in Persian).

"The 'law of Medes and Persians which changeth not' was a *sacral law...which he upheld....Other people of the empire had their laws and customs, which the great king likewise upheld, and their own judges.*"<sup>(1)</sup>

To respect the independent cultural identities of the varying peoples of the empire, the King of Kings did not adhere to any specific religion.<sup>(2)</sup> When conquering new territories the conquered people were allowed to keep their religions, laws and traditions and the great King endeavoured to restore their prosperity. Having conquered Babylonia Cyrus let the Jews in captivity there return to Jerusalem, and while in Babylonia, he issued a proclamation or charter of which the text survives.<sup>(3)</sup> In it, he declared equality and justice for all in the empire and assumed the title of King of Babylonia, Sumer and Akkad, in addition to the titles of King of the Four Quarters<sup>(4)</sup> and King of Anshan. He does not mention a Persian God, but gives thanks to the Babylonian God Marduk. This broad-minded policy won the allegiance of many peoples including the Greek citizens of vassal cities in Ionia.<sup>(5)</sup>

Darius organised twenty provinces (see figure I), each under an autonomous satrap, and fixed their tributes; appointed tribute-collectors and travelling inspectors called 'eyes and ears' of the great king, to watch over the satrap and commanders: introduced currencies of gold darics and silver siglus facilitating trade exchange throughout the empire: built the Royal Road from Susa in Khuzestan to Sardis on the Aegean Sea, with branches to Persepolis and other major centres: ordered for the map of this road and civilised

(1) Templeton, Peter Louis (1979), "The Persian Prince", London, p. 14.

(2) Fillipani-Ronconi, op. cit., p. 51 - 83.

(3) The text is in cuneiform Akkadian inscribed on a clay cylinder now in British Museum, Persian section.

(4) In reference to the grand political divisions of the empire which were organised in four main quarters.

(5) Templeton, op. cit., p. 15.

countries alongside it to be engraved on a plate of bronze<sup>(1)</sup> which must have been the first detailed geographical map in history: established a postal service with relays of men and horses at short intervals: and caused a canal to be dug in Egypt to link the Red Sea to the Nile and, thence to the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>(2)</sup>

A stèle (Hajar ar-Rashid) uncovered at Zaqaziq, near Suez, with the following inscription, is a clear indication of the actuality of the Achaemenians' great interests in commercial use of the sea routes.<sup>(3)</sup>

*"Thus spake King Darius, I am a Persian, and by the help of the Persians, I captured Egypt. I ordered this canal to be dug from the river Nile (Pirava) which floweth in Egypt to the sea which goeth forth from Persia. This canal was dug as I ordered"*<sup>(4)</sup>

These whole undertakings were aimed at promoting prosperity through greater interconnection of various peoples of the empire in a trade link worthy of a commonwealth of autonomous nations.

*"The Persians opened up fresh possibilities of economic development by uniting the whole of Western Asia and Egypt in an enduring empire. Darius the Great (BC 521-485) appreciated the value of linking Persia with India and Egypt by sea as well by land."*<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) A plate of bronze or other metals is called "Jam" in Persian. Similarly a goblet of metal or crystal is jam. On the other hand, Shahnameh of Ferdosi speaks of Legendary Jamshid Shah, founder of Iran, who had a "jam showing the world". From this concept comes the mystical "crystal ball". Yet this author believes Jamshid Shah was none other but Darius the Great who had the Jam showing the map of the civilised world. There are other reasons supporting this notion the discussion on which is beyond the scope of this work.

(2) For more details of these developments under the Achaemenians, see A.J. Arberry's "The Legacy of Persia", Oxford Clarendon Press 1953.

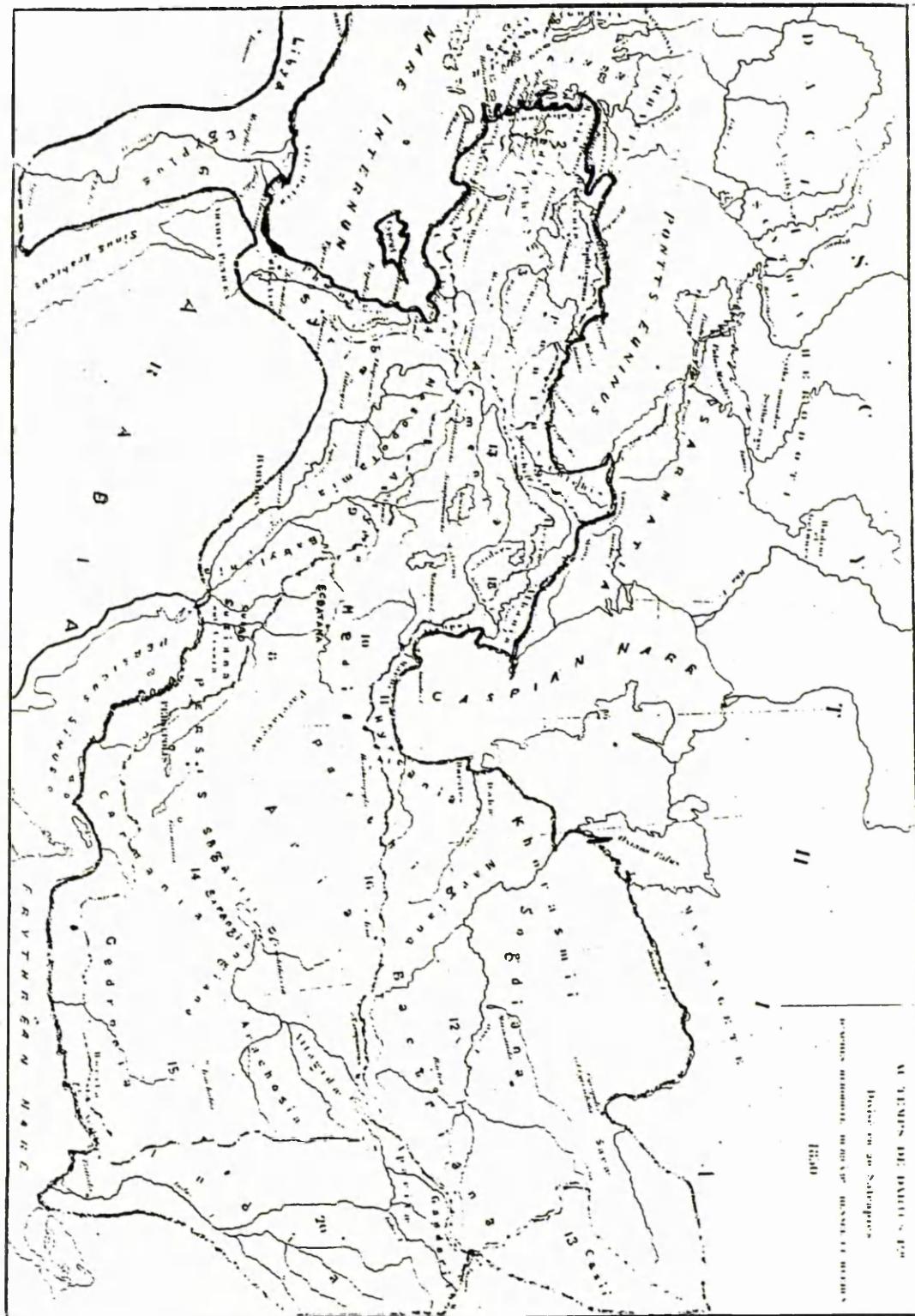
(3) Mojtahehd-Zadeh, Pirouz, "Sheikh-Nashinhay-e Khalij-e Fars = The Sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf", Ataei Press Tehran, 1970, p.31.

(4) Walis, E.A. (1902), "A History of Egypt", London, p. 64.

(5) Major, R.H. (1857), "India in the Fifteenth Century", p. 15.

Figure I

## The Empire of Darius the Great



Source: General Atlas, by El Ducio,  
Hachet Library Publications, Paris 1850

The contribution to man's civilisation made by the Persian rulers of the Achaemenian empire, has been so tremendous that the world continued attributing to the Persians, throughout the ages, the great commonwealth of many nations which was founded by them, and similarly calling the whole countries of Iran as "Persia" until very recently. Frequently it is forgotten that this great empire was handed down by the Achaemenians to many dynasties originating from various corners of the commonwealth, the founder of most of which being a vassal king under the previous dynasty.

When it was the turn of the Sassanids (AD 224-651), the concept of state and the internal political organisation and peripheral frontiers of the empire gained a much clearer form. The Sassanids, not only revived the Achaemenian political organisation of the empire which was divided into forty autonomous countries,<sup>(1)</sup> but they gave a practical meaning to the Achaemenian concept of "four quarters" by dividing the interior of the empire-areas now forming the modern state of Iran—into four "Kusts" or countries, also autonomous but ruled by a noble or prince of the Sassanid dynasty. These were kusts of Khorasan, north, south and west. Arab Geographer-Historian of the fourth century AH, Masudi states:

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"Ardeshir (Artxeres, founder of Sassanid Empire) organised the classes of the people and created seven classes; ministers and then, the priesthood who guarded religious affairs and supreme judges leading

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(1) These were:

1-Medes (Greater and Lesser), 2-Persia (including Kerman), 3-Ilam or Elam (Lur and Khuz), 4-Kadusian (Gilan), 5-Amard and Tapur (Mazandaran), 6-Vahragan (Gorgan), 7-Parth (Northern Khorasan), 8-Harau (Herat), 9-Margu (Marv), 10-Darangiana (Sistan), 11-Harkhavatish (Qandehar), 12-Thetegush (central Afghanistan), 13-Gandar (Eastern Afghanistan), 14-Sind, 15-Bakterea, 16-Karazm (Khiveh), 17-Sogdea (Bokhara and Samarcand), 18-Sak Hurmevarak (Trans-Oxus), 19-Sak Tiger (Trans-Oxus), 20-Matianiens and Saspires (between Mede and Black Sea), 21-Mosches (Georgia), 22-Colches (east of Black Sea), 23-Orartu (Ararat), 24-Tibaran on Thermoden, 25-Armenia, 26-Assyria, 27-Babylonia, 28-Anatolia, 29-Islands of Aegean Sea, 30-Syria, 31-Phenisia, 32-Palestine, 33-Cyprus, 34-Egypt, 35-Libya, 37-Borgia (Ben Ghazi), 38-Thiopia, 39-Trakia (Macedonia and Danube), 40-Kartage (Tunisia)  
(source: Vadiei, op. cit., pp. 159-160-161.)

all priesthood....And appointed four *Espahbads* (Generals); one to Khorasan, the second to the Maghrib (west), the third to the southern provinces, and the fourth to the northern provinces. And these *Espahbads* were administrators of the affairs of their countries, each in charge of politics of one section of the empire, and each was a commander of a quarter, each of these had a *Marzban* (frontier-keeper) who was locum to the *Espahbad*, and the other four classes were people of initiative (knowledge and wisdom) and the affairs of the land and advice on sorting out problems were conducted before them. Then was the class of singers and musicians who organised the industry of music".(1)

Konstantin Inostranster, a Russian Iranologist of our time, gives a slightly different account of the division of the Sassanid Empire. He asserts:

"The post of commander-in-chief (of the armed forces) was abolished at the time of Khosro I, and four commanders were installed instead, each leading a quarter of the military of the Empire. In some instances, a person of close confidence of the king or of the royal family, would be appointed to a position higher than that of a commander."(2)

#### REVIVAL OF STATE IN IRAN

A nationalistically oriented movement emerged in Iran from the early years of Iran's annexation into the Arab Caliphateship (mid-seventh century AD) of Damascus. Aimed at the preservation of Iranian culture and restoration of the country's independent political life, this movement, appeared in every aspect of people's life - from their language to their art, literatures, science and technology, and from their religion to their social viewpoints. It started from the time when Iranians invited Imam Hussain (d 680 AD),

(1) Masudi, Abul-Hassan Ali ebn Hussein, Arab Geographer-Historian of fourth century AH, "Morrajej az-Zahab", Persian translation, Tehran 1977, p. 240.

(2) Inostanstev, Konstantin, "Studies on the Sassandis", translated into Persian by Kazem Kazem-Zadeh, Bongah-e Tarjomeh va Nashr-e Ketab, Tehran 1969, pp. 63-4.

grandson of the prophet of Islam and third Imam of Shah Moslems, to come and proceed with his campaign against the Omayyad Caliphate of Damascus (AD 661-749) in the countries of Iran; from the time when Barmaki Vazirs<sup>(1)</sup> (AD 781-835) organised the Abbasid Caliphate's administration on the Sassanid pattern; from the time when Abu Moslem Khorasani<sup>(2)</sup> headed the military forces of the Omayyad Empire and brought that Empire to its end and later revolted against the Abbasids; from when Taher Zol-Yaminein (ruled AD 821-822) in Khorasan and Maziar (about the same time) in Mazandaran hoisted flags of independence; and from the time when Yaqub Leith Saffarid (AD 867-879) in Sistan defied the rule of the Abbasid Caliph and told the poets of his royal court not to recite poems in a language (Arabic) that he did not understand.<sup>(3)</sup>

Historian Talbot Rice asserts:

"...In the political field the victory was complete: in the cultural it was but short-lived, for the old culture of Persia was not to be destroyed in a day, especially when the Arabs had little of their own to offer in return....Persian art, Persian thought, Persian culture, all survived to flourish anew in the service of Islam, and impelled by a new and powerful driving force, their effect was felt in a widely extended field from the early eighth century onwards....when the caliphate was moved from Damascus to Baghdad with the establishment of the Abbasid Dynasty in 750 that Persian culture ascendancy was established".<sup>(4)</sup>

Against this comment, another historian, R. Levy, believes that the Iranian culture and traditions started to have a large impact on the Arab empire long before the capital was moved from Damascus to Baghdad. He writes:

(1) Ministers or chief administrators.

(2) Abu Moslem's original Persian name was Hormuzan.

(3) Safa, Zabihollah, (1984), "Tarikh-e Adabiyat-e Iran = History of Literatures in Iran", Sixth ed., Tehran, Vol. 1, pp. 165-6.

(4) Rice, Prof. Talbot, "Persia and Byzantium", in A.J. Arberry's "The Legacy of Persia", op. cit., p. 41.

"Within a comparatively few years of the invasion, young men attached to the court of the Omayyad caliph were discarding their homespun in favour of expensive cloths of brocaded silk cut in Persian style, eating Persian culinary delicacies, and displaying manners at tables that were themselves an importation from Persia."(1)

Earlier in the same writings, he points out:

"...the Fakhri, an early - fourteenth century manual of politics and history, relates how the Caliph, Umar, when at his wits end to know how to distribute the spoils of war which were pouring in, sought the advice of a Persian who had once been employed in a government office (of the Sassanids time). His suggestion was that a divan, a register or bureau, should be instituted for controlling income and this became the germ out of which grew the government machine that served the caliphate some hundreds of years."(2)

Omar Bin Khattab, second Caliph of the Rashedin (AD 634-644) who claimed to have learnt justice from Kasra (Khosro) Anushervan of the Sassanids,<sup>(3)</sup> at the time when organising the political and administrative structure of the state of caliphate, provided for a sovereign ruler but retained the principle of electing the caliphs, for the duration of a life-time, exclusively from the Bani-Hashem clan of the Qoreish tribe.

The Caliphate was divided administratively on the basis of Sassanid administrative organisation. This organisation was completed by the Abbasid Caliph, almost in the same detailed form that existed at the time of the Sassanids. The Eastern Iranian borderlands were divided into three provinces of Khorasan, Sistan (Sajistan) and Makran (see figure II).

(1) Levy, R., "Persia and the Arabs", in A.J. Arberry's "The Legacy of Persia, op. cit., p. 74.

(2) Levy, R., op. cit., p. 61.

(3) Maqdasi al-Maruf be-al-Beshari, "Ahsan at-Taqasim fi-Marefat al-Aqalim", Second ed. Liden 1906, p. 8 (Text Arabic).

Apart from the impact of Persian culture and administration system on the expanding Arab Caliphate, the Iranians started a movement from within the empire aimed at restoration of the country's cultural and political independence. This movement took many forms. On the one hand, several armed struggles begun in different parts of the country which resulted in the emergence of a number of vassal states such as: the Tahirids (AD 821-873) in Khorasan; the Samanids (AD 819-1005), descendants of Sassanids from what is now Uzbekistan; the Saffarids (867-1495) in Sistan (see figure III); the Buyeds (932-1055) from southern Caspian littorals; the Seljuqs (1038-1194) from Central Asia; the Ghaznavids (998-1186) from what is now known as Afghanistan...

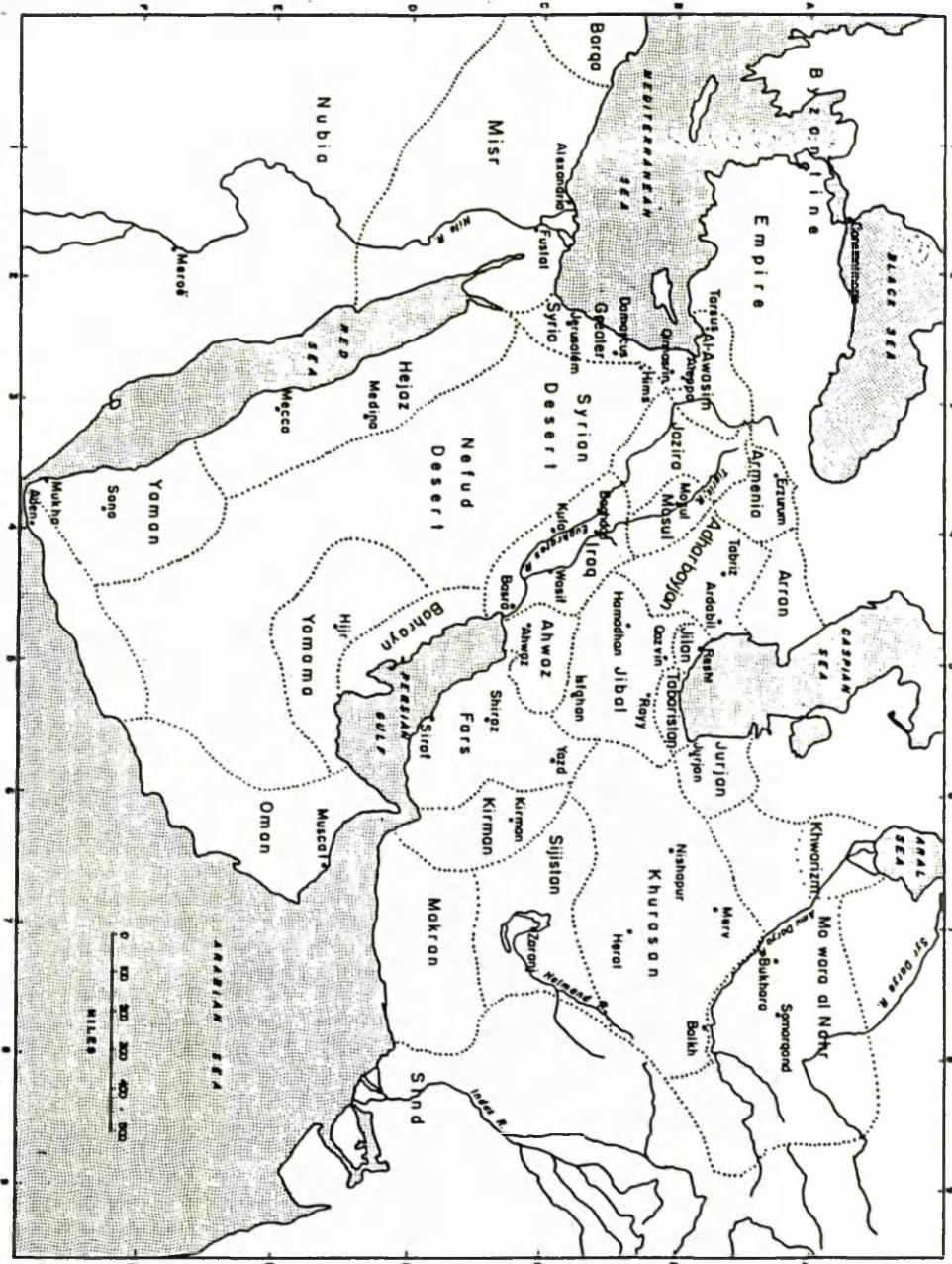
Whereas these are the more well known dynasties who created semi-independent states of varying size in various parts of the Iranian plateau, historians have often overlooked the fact that several branches of the Sassanid dynasty continued ruling some remote or geographically inaccessible parts of Iran, long after the inclusion of Iran in the Arab Caliphate. These were remnants of the frontier-keeping states of the Sassanid Empire which will be discussed later. One such Sassanid family ruled the district of Rostamdar (now Nour and Kojur), situated beyond the high mountains of Elborz in Mazandaran. They were known as the Padusbanan (frontier-keepers) of Rostamdar and their rule lasted for centuries.<sup>(1)</sup> Their kingdom was finally overthrown by Shah Tahmasb Safavid (1524-1576).

Another element of paramount significance in the revival of state in Iran was the growth of Shiism among the masses in the country. As the security organisation created by the Abbasid Caliphate tightened its pressure against Iranians and the general oppression of the population increased, Shiism

(1) Mojtabeh-Zadeh, Pirouz (1973), "Shahrestan-e Nour", section II Historical, Sobh-e Emrouz Publications. This book is a geographical and historical study of the author's native town "Nour", himself being the tenth generation from the last of the Padusbanan of Rostamdar.

Figure II

## Abbasid Caliphate's Provinces

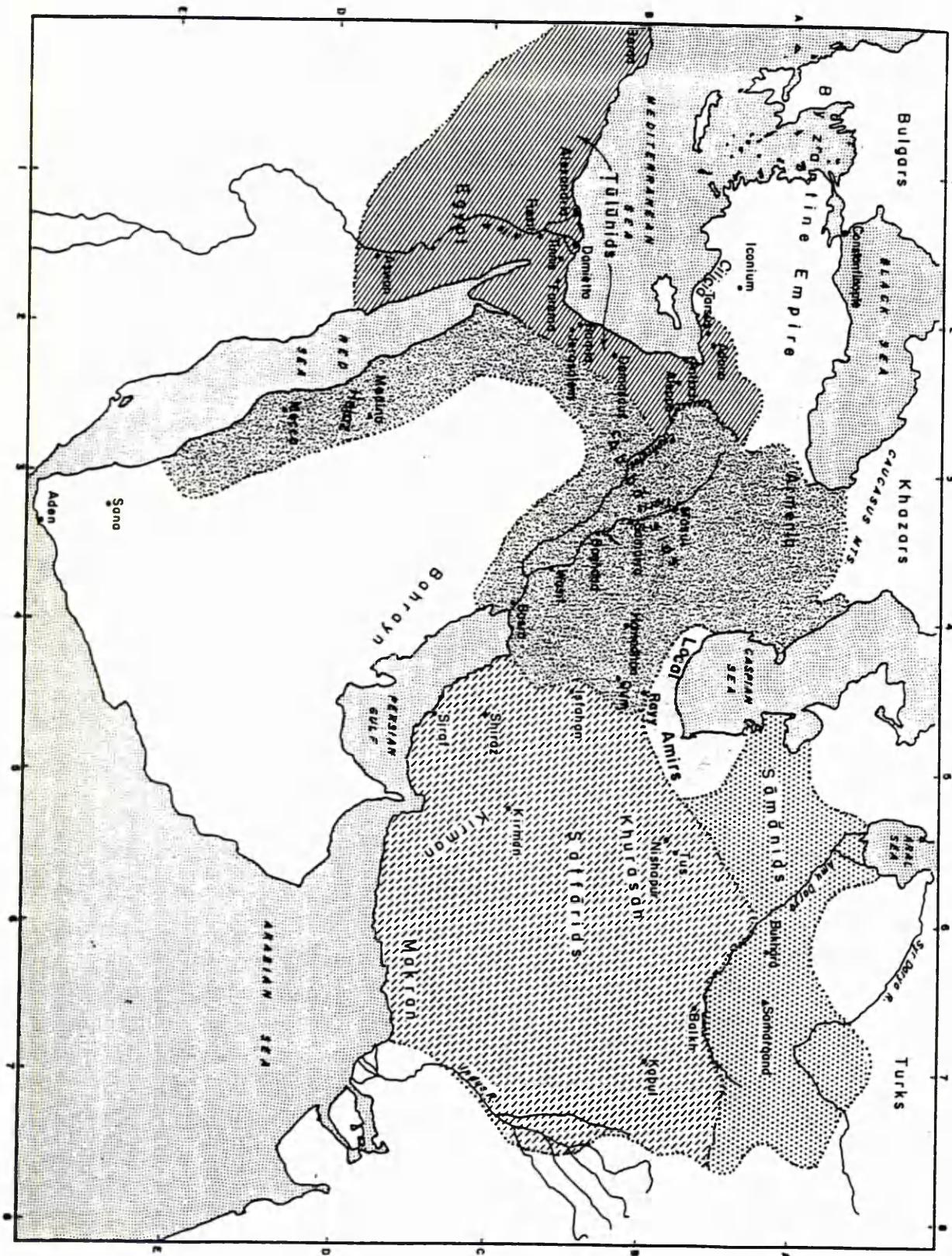


*The Eastern Iranian border provinces of Khorasan,  
Sistan and Makran in the Abbasid Empire's  
administrative divisions*

(Source; Bacharach, Jere L., "A Middle East Studies Handbook", University of Washington Press, Seattle. London. 1984, Chapter VIII, Historical Atlas, p.93)

Figure III

## The Saffarid Kingdom of Sistan



(Source; Bacharach, op. cit., p. 95)

became more popular among the masses of Iran. This growing popularity was the result of a combination of the following basic factors:

- 1 As the ruling groups of the Caliphate were of the main sect of Islam - namely Sunnism - Shiism became popular as the religion of the poor, the oppressed, and the under-privileged groups in Iran, because of its protesting nature. Thus, Shiism became generally known as the religion of the peasants in Iran who were discontented with landlords and governors, the upper class Sunnis protected and privileged by the Baghdad Sunni Caliphate.<sup>(1)</sup>
- 2 The great emphasis, in Shiism, put on the state of the Imams, the grandchildren of the prophet of Islam, who were oppressed by and suffered from the atrocities of the Damascus and Baghdad caliphates, created a natural sympathy among the oppressed masses in Iran who found these Imams as symbols of their own sufferings.
- 3 The hereditary Imamate of Shiism, which was more identical with the Iranian culture and traditions, was particularly appealing to the Iranians.
- 4 The third Imam - Hussein Ibn Ali (680-712) - taking in marriage the Iranian Princess Shahrbanu, daughter of Yazgerd III, the last of the Sassanid dynasty, and the fact that his son (Zein al-Abedin Ali Ibn Hussein) and his sons and grandsons (the subsequent Imams) were regarded as Iranians from their mother's side, had another natural appeal to the Iranians.
- 5 Last but perhaps the most important of all, was that the Iranians, by converting into Shiism, were able to

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(1) Nour-Ala, Esmaeil (1980), "Evolution of Religious Organisation and Legal Theories in Relation to Socio-Economic Conditions of Iran", Ph. D. thesis, University of London, p. 236.

identify themselves as different from the Arabs even by virtue of their religion, while still being Moslems.<sup>(1)</sup>

Therefore, Shiism formed an important part of the cultural movement in Iran for independence and assisted the Iranians in their cause of re-establishing their cultural, political and national identity.<sup>(2)</sup> Centuries later, when the Safavid Empire (1501- 1722) rose in power and came face to face with the expanding Sunni empire of the Ottoman Caliphate in their western flanks, it proclaimed Shiism - hitherto an underground movement - as the official religion of the state, and therefore, masses of Iranians converted into Shiism more rapidly than ever before.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MOVEMENT

A brief look at the map of the world of Islam brings to attention that at the time when the Iranians were struggling for the restoration of their political independence and their independent national identity, other lands conquered by the Arabs, such as Egypt, Syria and the Maghrib, situated on the west and north-west of Arabia proper, and once cradles of their own civilisations, were being drawn deep into the Arabism of the Arab culture, so far as when one now thinks of the Arab world, these names are imprinted in one's mind probably before the names of the real Arab countries. One reason for this could have been the fact that since Islam was a monotheist religion, had strong appeal to the people whose religions of earthly gods were too decadent and too often used by tyrants as their main source of power, to assist them to develop or restore a non-Arabic national identity that would protect them from complete surrender to the Arabs.

(1) It is noteworthy that Shiism discussed here differs in its political function with that of Islamic fundamentalism of our time which is principally based on the philosophy of universality of Islam with little regard for political sectarianism.

(2) On various aspects of political role of Shiism in the restoration of Iranian identity see: Fillipanni-Ronconi, op. cit.; A.J. Arberry op. cit.; Nouri-Ala, op. cit.

Apart from Islam, the Arabs offered little more than nothing to convince the Iranians, whose culture had flourished on the basis of monotheism of Zoroastrianism, to replace their highly developed culture and civilisation and their distinct national identity with those of Arabic. On the other hand, all Islamic countries situated beyond Iran to the east and north-east, while being converted to Islam, were able to maintain their cultural and political independence and their independent identities. This could be interpreted that Iran, by the virtue of her struggles against Arab rule, played the role of a cultural barrier throughout the Islamic era, providing the people of the lands beyond its eastern and north-eastern borders with the possibility of enjoying Islam without being subdued by Arabism. It is worth mentioning that Islam expanded throughout the areas east of Iran, mainly by the Iranians themselves, especially under the rule of the Seljuqids and Ghaznavids who were of Sunni persuasion. Moslems of the lands beyond Iran's eastern flanks are of this sect. It is also noteworthy that the precise location of the line of this cultural barrier can be defined somewhere around the western peripheries of the Iranian plateau, in Mesopotamia which played the same role in the pre-Islamic era between Iran and the Roman Empire.

Here David Mitrany's theory of the "Middle Zone" - defined somewhere in Central Europe, around the Danube - can be applied to the role of this geographical location of Iran in the world of Islam.<sup>(1)</sup> A location which has, throughout

(1) In the introduction to his thesis on the "Evolution of the Middle Zone", David Mitrany says:

"There has always been a curtain somewhere along the line between the Baltic Sea and the Adriatic Sea. Sometimes it has been a curtain of politics or of creeds and ideas. A strange region, with something of political witchery in it, to judge from the many social and political movements which have been checked when they reached it. The Romans tried to get around it from the south, but after much trouble gave up the attempts. The Turks at the height of their power reached the Line, but could not cross it. The fiery stream of Western Protestantism did not get beyond it and the Eastern church remained behind it. Nor in the more recent times of economic development did the industrial revolution pass the Line. Only with the Bolshevik revolution has a policy set in, though not unopposed, which seeks to end that long economic division of the continent into "two Europes...."(a)

(a) Mitrany, David, "Evolution of the Middle Zone, Annals of American Political and Social Science, September 1950.

history prevented total cultural supremacy of other powers over the Iranian plateau.

The Iranians, however, embraced the Shiah sect of Islam which they found more in harmony with their cultural and traditional values, and under its protection, endeavoured to reinstate their cultural and political identity, and their independence from the Caliphate of Baghdad in the beginning, and to prevent domination of the Ottoman Caliphate later on. Hence, Shiism added a new force to the movements of the Iranians, and merged in their national impetus.

Here Jean Gottmann's iconography seems to be most applicable to the process of Iran's re-emergence as a separate political entity with a distinct national identity. In describing his iconography, Gottman says:

*"...to be distinct from its surrounding, a region needs much more than a mountain or a valley, a given language or certain skills: it needs essentially a strong belief based on some religious creed, some social viewpoint, or some pattern of political memories, and often a combination of all three. Thus, regionalism has some iconography as its foundation...the most stubborn facts are those of spirit, not those of physical world...And while history shows how stubborn are the facts of the spirit, geography demonstrates that the main partitions observed in the space accessible to man are not those in the topography or in the vegetation but those that are in the minds of the people".(1)*

During their long lasting struggles against Arab domination , the Iranians were endeavouring to preserve their culture and to restore their cultural and political independence, motivated by a combination of beliefs such as: their social viewpoints strongly directed against Arab domination of their affairs; their Shi'ah creed by which they were acknowledged as Moslems, yet different from the Arabs who were overwhelmingly of the Sunni persuasion of Islam; and their political memories of the pre-Islamic role of their country in advancing man's civilisation.

(1) Gottmann, Jean (1964), "Geography and International Relations", in W.A.D. Jackson's "Political and Geographic Relationships", Princeton Hall INC., Englewood-CLIFFS, N.J.

These notions were the central impetus in the minds of the Iranians which explain the nature of centre-periphery relationships in the recent thirteen centuries of Iranian history, and in fact, a combination of these iconographical factors has been and is Iran's 'reason d'etre' as a political entity and a different nation in the world of Islam and the wider world.

Different dynasties, emerging from different parts of the country, whether tribal or from urban communities, seldom attempted to move the political and administrative centre of the country to the districts of their own origin. Changes of the capital in Iran have always been for geographical, historical, strategic and economic reasons. In other words, the political impetus moved into the centre of Iranian thoughts and beliefs, created some kind of a firm spun which has so far held various ethnicities together as one nation. Whenever a dynasty ran into weakness, laxity and/or corruption and ignored these central impetus, a fresh force emerged from within the ordinary stratas of society and continued. The recorded history of Iran is the best testimonial to this little explored, yet unsophisticated nature of Iran's secret of continuity and change.

From the time when Buyeds and Samanids established their semi-independent states in the Iranian plateau until the emergence of the Safavid Empire, Iran was ruled by many dynasties from within and outside the country, with, at least nominal dependence on the Caliphate of Baghdad. When the Seljuqs of Central Asia ruled Iran, the great Iranian vazir, Khoajeh Nezam al-Molk (d.1092) who served under Sultans Alp-Arsalan and Jalal ad-Din Malek Shah, carried out tax reforms and wrote the most important of the post-Islamic Persian advice books, "the Syasatnameh" or the book of politics. Jalal ad-Din replaced the inaccurate old Arabic calendar in 1079, which the months had become displaced in relation to the seasons, by a new calendar called "Jalali" which was worked out on the basis of the Sassanid calendar "Yazdgerdi". This very accurate calendar was the work of a scientific committee of which the renowned poet/mathematician

Omar Khayam was reputedly a member,<sup>(1)</sup> restored the festival of Norouz to its proper place at the vernal equinox. Persian language had been revived through an extensive cultural movement which reached its peak with the creation of "Shahnameh" by Ferdosi (d 1020). Although Holaku Khan the Mongol, grandson of Ghenghis Kahn, put an end, on the advice of Khoajeh Nasir Tusi, another outstanding Iranian scholar of his time,<sup>(2)</sup> to the Caliphate of Baghdad by executing Caliph al-Mostasam Bellah in 1258, Iran's true and final cultural and political independence had to wait until 1501 when the sixteen year old prodigy Ismail established the Safavid Empire and assumed the title "king of kings" for the first time since Arab invasion of Iran in the mid-seventh century.

Under the Safavids (1501-1722) Iran restored her full cultural identity and true political independence. Shah Ismail came to power at the head of a new Shi'ah movement which began in Ardebil of Azerbaijan and proclaimed twelve Imamate Shi'ah Islam as the official religion of the state. This move disarmed the Ottoman's eastward expansionism which was based on the argument that sons of Ottoman were the caliphs of all Moslems. At the age of thirteen, this philosopher genius headed an army of ten thousand, all men of thought and belief, which impressed the entire east of the Moslem world.<sup>(3)</sup> This army, known as Qezelbash (red-hats) formed the core of the Iranian military forces. The Safavids revived the traditional political union approximately within the frontiers of the pre-Islamic empires. A hundred years later this empire shrank to a smaller size and remained so for the rest of the duration of the Safavid rule. In the second half of the Safavid government, the empire extended from Daghestan, now in southern Russia, to Mesopotamia, and from Kabul to Baghdad (See figure IV). Politically, the

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(1) Templeton, op. cit., p. 23.

(2) Khoajeh Nasir Tusi, a politician and philosopher, tamed the rule of the Mongols in Iran, in his capacity as the Vazir of Holaku Khan the Mongol.

(3) Fillipani-Ronconi, op. cit., p. 76.

Safavids created three kinds of divisions in their territorial state:

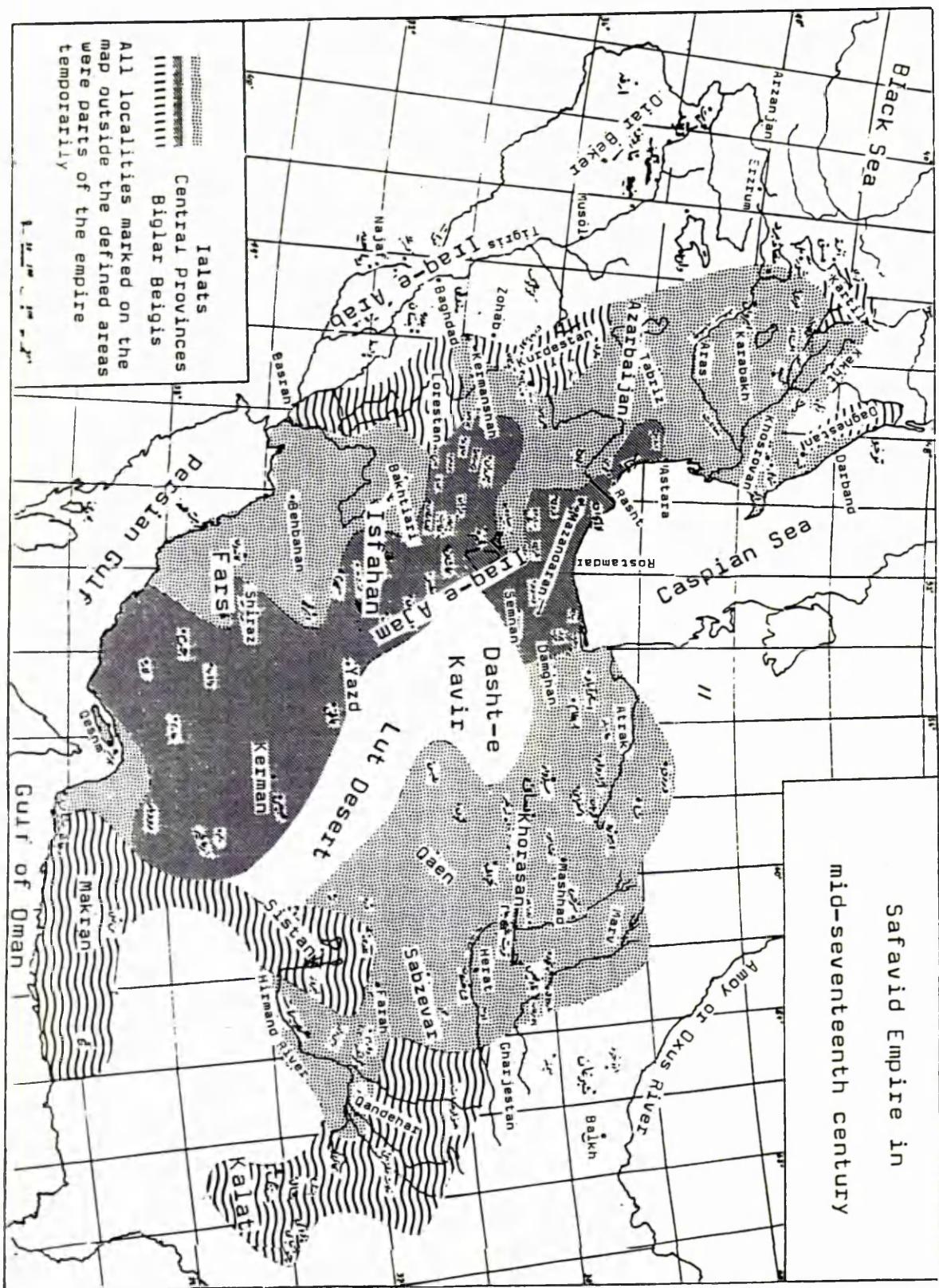
- 1 - The inner provinces which enjoyed no autonomy.
- 2 - The outer governorate generals (Biglar Beigi) which paid tribute and enjoyed a considerable autonomy.
- 3 - The outer states (Ialats) also paid tribute and enjoyed autonomy. The main difference of status of the Biglar Beigi and Ialat was vaguely defined. Generally speaking, Biglar Beigi was a degree lower in status than the Ialat.

Nineteen provinces, Biglar Beigis and Ialats existed at the time of Shah Abbas the Great (1568-1629). These were the following, with the name of their capitals in brackets if different from the name of the state:

- 1 - Shirvan (Shammakhi)
- 2 - Qarabagh = Karabakh (Ganjeh)
- 3 - Chekhur Sad = Armenia (Iravan = now pronounced Yaravan)
- 4 - Azerbaijan (Tabriz)
- 5 - Dyar Beker = Syria-Lebanon (Qaramad)
- 6 - Arzanjan
- 7 - Ali Shokr (Hamadan)
- 8 - The rest of Iraq-e Ajam (Ray)
- 9 - Kermanshah and Kalhor
- 10 - Iraq- e Arab (Baghdad)
- 11 - Fars or Persia (Shiraz)
- 12 - Koh Kiluyeh (Behbahan)
- 13 - Kerman
- 14 - Qandehar
- 15 - Balkh
- 16 - Marv
- 17 - Mashhad
- 18 - Herat
- 19 - Astarabad.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Rohrborn, Klaus-Michael, "Provinzen Und Zentralgewalt Persiens im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert", translated into Persian by Kaykavous Jahandari, Tehran 1978, p.2.

Figure IV

(based on the map appearing in  
Rohrborn's book, Tehran 1978)

Apart from these, Georgia proper, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, Lorestan and Sistan and Qohestan were states of considerable autonomy. The Khozeimeh Amir of Qohestan (Qaenat) at the time of the emergence of Safavid Empire was Amir Sultan who was given the official title of his country and the official position as the Amir by Shah Ismail the founder of the Safavid dynasty.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is noteworthy that those appointed to the governorship of the autonomous states by the imperial court had to have substantial local and/or tribal base, being Khans or Amirs.

Each state had a Safavid prince as "Laleh" or supervisor who, in most cases, never visited the country under his supervision.

Of the administrative divisions, Shiraz and Rasht, both inner provinces, were ruled by vazirs, and the following were Biglar Beigis:

- 1 - Azerbaijan (Tabriz)
- 2 - Armanestan (Armenia)
- 3 - Gorgestan = Georgia (Tiflis = Tblisi)
- 4 - Shirvan - (Shammakhi)
- 5 - Qarabagh (Ganjeh)
- 6 - Astarabad (Gorgan)
- 7 - Mashhad
- 8 - Marv
- 9 - Herat
- 10 - Qandehar
- 11 - Kerman
- 12 - Koh Kiluyeh
- 13 - Qazvin
- 14 - Hamadan.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Tarikh-e Jahan Ara of Ghazi Ahmad Ghaffari Ghazvini, Tehran 1964, p. 278.

(2) Vadiei, Prof. Kazem, "Moghaddameh-i Bar Joghrafiay-e Ensani-e Iran = An Introduction to the Human Geography of Iran, Tehran University Press, No. 1280, 1974, p. 191.

The outer states, however, exercised a considerable degree of independence which in no way contradicted the unity of the empire at the time. When rebellion erupted in Qandehar and southern Afghanistan, for example, Gorgin Khan (George XI) of the Biglar Beigi of Gorjestan (Georgia), an able warrior, was appointed by the king of kings in 1703 to Biglar Beigi of that principality and its dependencies in addition to his own.<sup>(1)</sup>

Following the assassination of Nader Shah Afshar (1736-1747) in June 1747, Iran lost parts of the Safavid states in India and Mesopotamia.

The traditional political and administrative organisation of the Safavid period, vague as it was, remained in force until the late eighteenth century. Relations between the political centre of the country and outer principalities and dependencies were not clearly defined, and this was a powerful handicap. This handicap began to show, especially with the emergence of new European systems of precise legal and political relations between the centre and peripheries within the precisely defined boundaries, one of the earliest examples of which happened to be implemented in the eastern and north-eastern neighbourhood of Iran.

The rise into global prominence of Russian and British powers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Iran's location on the south and west of these two powers respectively (west of the British Indian Empire) left an immense impact on the Iranian political geography. The two wars fought with the Russians which resulted in the conclusion of Golestan and Turkmanchai treaties of 1813 and 1828 respectively, triggered territorial disintegration of Iran. Article seven of Turkmanchai treaty provided for the protection and defence of Prince Abbas Mirza Qajar, Fath-Ali Shah's son's position as the Crown Prince whose position was

(1) Rohrborn, op. cit., p. 136.

threatened in Tehran.<sup>(1)</sup> This article allowed, for the first time, foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Iran and signified Iran's rapid political decline. Statesmen and politicians could no longer survive in their positions without seeking foreign protection. This state of affairs inevitably led to foreign capitulations in Iran, and it was in this situation that territorial disintegration took place rapidly and easily.

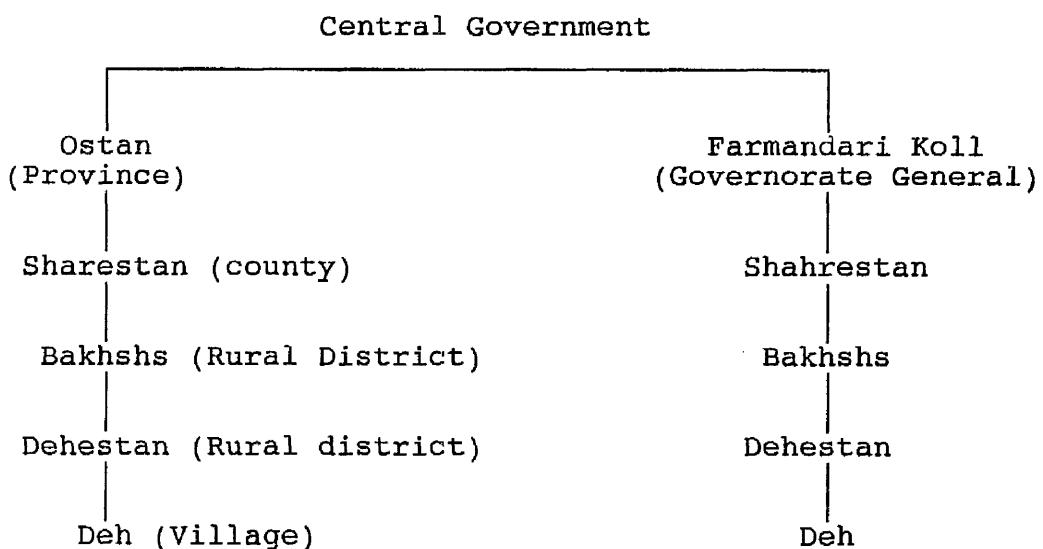
The two treaties of Golestan and Turkmanchai with the Russians resulted in the loss of Iranian dependencies of Trans-Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Aran, later renamed as "the Republic of Azerbaijan). Further treaties with the Russians resulted in the loss of Iranian possessions in Central Asia (Turkmanistan and parts of what are now Uzbekistan and Tajikistan).

The British in India, much apprehensive of Russian designs on India via north-east Iran, decided to assist separation of the dependencies of Herat and Qandehar from Iran and delimitation of modern boundaries with Iran in Khorasan, Sistan and Baluchistan, resulted in the partitioning of all three provinces (chapters IV, V, VI).

Establishment of a powerful central government in Iran and rearrangement of her political and administrative organisation affecting clear and strong relationships between the political centre and the peripheries of the country had to wait until after the fall of the Qajar dynasty in 1926. The new political organisation introduced under Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1937, put an end to autonomy of what was left of principalities and other dependencies, including that of the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Sistan. Iran was politically and administratively divided in 1937 into ten "Ostans" or provinces. Each Ostan was subdivided into a number of "Shahrestans" (equivalent to counties in British and American

(1) Sheikh al-Eslami, Javad (1990), "Afzayesh-e Nofuz-e Syasi-e Russ va Englisi dar Iran = The Increasing Influence of Russia and England in Iran", Part II, Ettelaat Syasi va Eqtesadi monthly, Tehran, June 1990, Vol. 36, p.4.

systems). Each Shahrestan was subdivided into one or more "Bakhshs", each, in turn, subdivided into one or more "Dehestans", and each Dehestan included a number of small towns and villages. A more up-to-date version of the Safavid "Biglar Beigi" has been fashioned in recent decades in the form of "Farmandari Koll" which is a degree lower in status from that of "Ostan", (see the following graph):



The 1937 legislation divided Iran into ten Ostans and fifty Shahrestans,<sup>(1)</sup> which has changed several times ever since. The current political and administrative organisation is as follows: 24 Ostans and Farmandari Koll; 196 Shahrestans and 510 Bakhshs (see figure V).

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(1) Vadiei, op. cit., p. 194

Figure V

## Current Administrative Divisions of Iran

Ostan and Farmandari	No. of Shahrestan	No. of Bakhsh
Tehran	7	24
Markazi (Central)	8	13
Gilan	11	22
Mazandaran	15	36
Azerbaijan (east)	11	34
Azerbaijan (west)	9	19
Bakhtaran	8	17
Khuzestan	13	30
Fars (Persia)	14	37
Kerman	10	23
Khorasan	17	53
Isfahan	15	27
Sistan and Baluchistan	6	23
Kurdistan	6	16
Hamadan	4	12
Chahar Mahal Bakhtiari	4	8
Lorestan	3	16
Ilam (or Elam)	5	12
Koh Kiluyeh and Boir Ahmadi	3	8
Bushehr	7	16
Zanjan	5	14
Yazd	5	12
Semnan	4	10
Hormuzgan	6	18

Source: Markaz-e Amar-e Iran = Iran Statistical Centre,  
 General Census of Mehr 1365 (September - October 1986), Vol.  
 I, p.5.

### BOUNDARIES IN IRAN

Whereas man was preoccupied, in the ancient world, with the idea of establishing the frontiers of his realm, the modern man's main concern regarding the peripheries of his dominion, is to define its "boundary". Boundaries in the modern sense of the word, did not exist until recently. Ancient man considered the end of his conquest as the frontier. Frontier is, therefore, ancient and boundary is new. Endeavouring to distinguish frontiers from boundaries, geographers have used various etymologies:

"Kristof (1959) uses the etymology of each term to derive their essential difference. Frontier comes from the notion of 'in front' as the 'spearhead of the civilisation'. Boundary comes from 'bounds' implying territorial limits.

"Frontier is therefore outward-oriented and boundary inward-oriented. Whereas a boundary is a definite line of separation, a frontier is a zone of contact."(1)

A frontier, therefore, functioned as a zone of contact between two socially and politically united entities on its two extremes and can safely be described as the embodiment of the outer limits of a state's power and influence, and/or it can be described as the embodiment of political push of one power against the other. The Eastern Iranian borderlands of the nineteenth century (Greater Khorasan, Greater Sistan and Greater Baluchistan) in which the two powers of British India and Iran pushed to and fro for little less than a century, is the best example of this description in the more modern world.

Best examples of frontier zones in the ancient world were those between Persian and Roman empires. Instances of frontiers, in the form of a line, are to be found in the ancient world such as the Wall of China, Hadrian's wall in Roman Britain and Sadd-e Secandar wall in north-west Iran. These walls, however, were built as barriers between

(1) Taylor, Peter J. (1989), "Political Geography", Second ed., London, p. 145.

civilisation and barbarians, where contacts between the two became too close. In other words, these walls could be justified as being a small part of a much wider zone of frontiers. Yet, it is noteworthy that Ferdosi (d. 1020 AD), the most famous Iranian epic poet, speaks in his "Shahnameh = Book of Kings" of boundary pillars between Iran and Turan (now Turkmanistan) at the time of Bahram Gur (AD 420-438) the Sassanid king.<sup>(1)</sup>

The concept of frontier, however, differed for different nations. Jean Gottman indicates:

*"To some nations the frontier was a line in space to be secured and maintained; the French concept of 'frontières naturelles' is probably the best illustration of this attitude... To other nations the frontier was a peripheral area that generated social and economic change, shaping a nation and contributing to its political well-being..."<sup>(2)</sup>*

With the emergence of the world-economy in the nineteenth century, which in turn was caused by the development of imperialism of global aspirations of the earlier periods, and with the inherent traits of the new world economic order; new trade and communication systems, the need for defining precise points of contacts between states through their political and commercial agents, and establishing customs houses gave birth to the idea of creating border lines, or "boundaries". The new borderlines were defined first in North America, Australia, South Africa and North-West India between British Indian Empire and Iran, the last of which is the subject of discussion in this work (see chapters IV, V, VI, VII).

Apart from what Ferdosi says of boundary pillars at the time of Bahram Gur, the Sassanids appear to have developed the

(1) Ferdosi (Hakim Abolqassem), "Shahnameh", English translation by Arthur G. Warner and Edward Warner, London 1925, Vo. VIII, pp. 92, 160, 161, 164.

(2) Gottmann, Jean (1976), "Evolution of the Concept of Territory", Social Science Information, Vol. 14, No. 3/4 Paris, p. 34.

concept of frontiers in clear terms. They created two kinds of frontier-keeping states; the internal frontier-keeping states within their four Kusts and the external frontier-keeping states, the most famous of which was the state of Hira in Mesopotamia.

On the north-western corner of the Persian Gulf, where Sassanid and Roman empires' frontiers met, the vassal kingdom of Hira was created on the river Tigris not far from the Sassanid capital Ctisphun, in the seventh century. This frontier-keeping state, paid annually and defended by the Iranians, played the role of a buffer state for Iran defusing pressure from the Romans. In a similar move, the Romans created the vassal kingdom of Ghassan in the region now known as Syria, to play the same role for the Roman Empire. Arab Geographer, Masudi, says of Hira:

*"When Islam came, Khosro Parviz was Shah of Iran who made Ayas Bin Qabsia Taei king of the Arabs of Hira and his kingdom lasted for nine years....Then a number of kings of Hira, both from Arab and Iranian stock, were twenty three who ruled for six hundred and eight years..."*(1)

Of the Ghassan vassal kingdom the same author says:

*"This is how the Ghassanis prevailed over the Arabs of Sham (Damascus) and the Romans gave them the kingship of the Arabs of that area. The first of the Ghassani kings of Sham was Harith Ibn Amr Ibn Amer..."*(2)

This tradition and the tradition of internal frontier-keeping states were maintained by the Abbasid Caliphate. Several of these states were created, the longest surviving of them was the Amirdom of Khozeimeh in Qohestan (Kuh<sup>ē</sup>stan), now known as Qaenat, Tabas and Birjand. This region was part of the

(1) Masudi, op. cit., pp. 464-5.

A kingdom created at the time of the advent of Islam could not have survived for six centuries on the same location where Abbasid Caliphate ruled Moslem world for a similar length of time.

(2) Masudi, op. cit., p. 467.

frontier-keeping state of Sistan in the Sassanid times.<sup>(1)</sup> In fact, this Amirdom was created at the time of Omayyad Caliph Yazid Bin Moaviya (AD 680-683) by an able commander of the Caliphate's military known as Khazem Bin Salmi (see chapter II), and continued functioning until 1937 with an immense impact on the evolution of modern boundaries of Eastern Iranian borderlands (see chapters II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII).

The Safavids also revived the tradition of frontier-keeping states without endeavouring to modernise the idea by creating a clear and up-to-date system which would retain the traditional relationships between the centre of the state and the peripheral autonomies. This shortcoming began to show its impact at the time when the authority of the central government over the peripheries declined under the Qajars towards the mid-nineteenth century. This was the time when Anglo-Russian rivalries intensified in and around Iran. Russian and British strategic interests in Central Asia and west of Indian sub-continent necessitated the creation of buffer zones within clearly delimited boundaries of a modern kind. Delineation of these boundaries began in 1870 when not only was Iran totally unfamiliar with the legal implications and sophistications of delimitation of modern boundaries, but her traditionally ill-defined relations with the dependent principalities and dependencies of the east and north-east together with her general weakness resulted in the loss of territories in Khorasan, Sistan and Baluchistan. Whenever it was claimed that these principalities and dependencies were independent of Iran, Tehran failed legally and physically to prove the opposite. The Eastern Iranian boundaries thus, evolved in the middle of the said provinces, and their evolution is the subject of discussion in this work. Evolution of these boundaries meanwhile, was substantially affected by the role of Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Sistan which also exercised a considerable degree of

(1) Commander of the frontier-keeping state of Sistan at the time of Bahram Gur was Sufrai according to: Pour-Davoud, "Iran Bastan", Tehran University Press, No. 1542, Tehran 1977, p. 10.

influence in Western Baluchistan in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. To examine the role of the Khozeimehs in the emergence and evolution of Eastern Iranian boundaries necessitates a study of the family's origin and its function as a "frontier-keeping" autonomy (chapters II and III). Most of Iran's boundaries with the neighbouring countries are demarcated in full and final settlement. These boundaries and the dates of their settlements are as follows:

1- Northern boundaries (with former Russian Empire):

A-	Republics of Azerbaijan, Nakhjavan and Armenia	1828-1962
B-	Republic of Turkmanistan	1881 & 1893

2 - Western Boundaries with:

A-	Turkey	1639-1914-
		1926-1937
B-	Iraq	1914-1937-
		1975

3 - Eastern Boundaries with:

A-	Afghanistan	1872-1895-
		1905-1935
B-	Pakistan	1870-1896-1905

4 - Southern (maritime) boundaries with:

A-	Saudi Arabia	1968
B-	Qatar	1970
C-	Bahrain	1972
D-	Dubai	1974
E-	Oman	1975

## CHAPTER I

### GEOGRAPHY OF EASTERN IRANIAN BORDERLANDS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MIDDLE SECTION

#### INTRODUCTION = GENERAL GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The country of Iran, within its present boundaries (628,000 sq. miles), occupies most of the Iranian plateau. The country is mainly plateau, except the plains of Khuzestan in the south-west, at the head of the Persian Gulf; the lowlands of

Gilan, Mazandaran and Gorgan, south of the Caspian Sea, and the valleys of Hari Rud and Hirmand River on the Afghan border. This plateau is surrounded by Trans-Caucasus, Caspian Sea, and the western highlands; Lake Aral and the Pamir Plateau to the north; the plains of Punjab and Sind to the east; the Persian Gulf and Oman sea to the south; and Mesopotamia and Asia Minor to the West. Of the geological characteristics of this plateau, W.B. Fisher states:

"The greatly restricted degree of sedimentation during the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Tertiary periods indicates a certain stability of the plateau: and the extent to which it would seem to have transmitted pressure to the Zagros on the south, either from its own movement, or from that of Angaraland, make it appear that central Iran could be regarded as an ancient stable mass comparable, on a smaller scale, with the major continents of Gondwanaland and Angaraland."(1)

The peripheral mountains and sea create an internal plateau which is triangularly shaped and has three main features: the Elborz mountain range to the north and north-east; the Zagros mountain range to the west, south-west and south; and plains and lakes, salt and sand deserts of the interior.

The Elborz mountain system breaks up in the east into subsidiary ranges extending across the Afghan frontier to the

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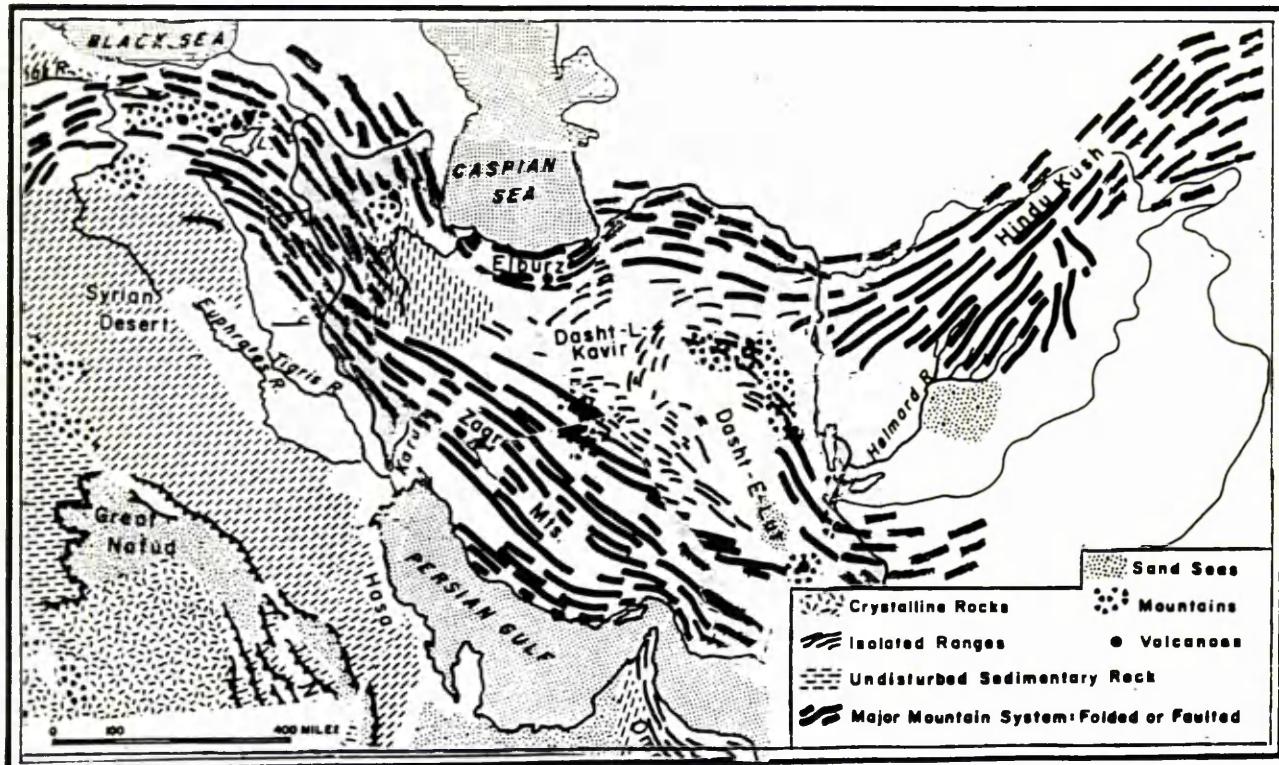
(1) Fisher, W. B. "The Middle East", Part I; Physical Geography, Fifth edition, 1963, p. 21.

Hindu Kosh. The Zagros system, extends from Kurdistan in the northwest as far south as Western Pakistan. Near Bandar Abbas, this mountain range divides into two main branches: one swings southwards and disappears in the Straits of Hormuz and reappears on the other side, in northern Oman, whereas the other branch, of very different structural composition, continues eastwards into Pakistan. The latter branch (Makran Ranges) is barren with one distinguishing feature - the only still active volcano in Iran.

The highlands of Eastern Iran constitute the final segment of the encircling mountains. These are a series of parallel but discontinuous ranges bridging the gap between the Elborz Mountains of Khorasan and Makran Ranges in the south. Ranged along the Irano-Afghanistan frontiers, the Eastern Highlands function as the divide between the interior of the central Iranian plateau on the west and the Afghan countries of Herat, Qandehar and Hirmand basin on the east (see figures I and II).

Figure I

The Central Iranian Plateau



Within this plateau the country is divided into a series of separate basins which may be categorised into two overall groups:

- 1 - The well-watered basins of the north, north-west and south-west which are agriculturally well developed and more heavily populated;
- 2 - The drier basins of the centre, south and east of Iran which are more sparsely populated.

Figure II



A three-dimensional impression  
of Central Iranian Plateau  
(photographed from a three-dimensional  
map of Iran produced by National Iranian Oil Company)

Towards the centre of the latter basins are found playa lakes, most of which remain dry throughout the year. When rain falls, however, such shallow playas may become enlarged up to one mile across<sup>(1)</sup> or more. The remaining lakes, form a waste of crusted salt known as "kavir" as a result of rapid evaporation during the summer months. The Two great deserts (Kavirs) - Dasht-e Lut<sup>(2)</sup> and Dasht-e Kavir (Kavir-e Namak or Salt Desert) - occupy a large part of the central plateau and together, they account for one-half of the desert areas and one sixth of the total land area in Iran<sup>(3)</sup>. These two deserts are of the greatest geographical influence on the Eastern Iranian borderlands.

The Kavir Desert borders Semnan to the north, central areas of Iran to the west, Lut desert to the south and Eastern highlands to the east.

Lut desert is a vast sea of sand dunes, formed under the effect of a southerly wind.

Desert conditions intensify in the summer months, by the drying effect of a northerly wind known as "Bad-e Sad-o Bist Ruzeh" or the wind of one hundred and twenty days. The unfavourable effect of this wind is felt in the Eastern Iranian Borderlands, especially in Sistan.

Rivers in Iran are divided into three categories:

- 1      Border rivers which form parts of the boundaries and flow in or out of the country and they are:
  - A. Rivers flowing into other countries, like the Zab (upper and lower) which flows into Iraq.
  - B. Rivers forming boundaries and flowing eventually into another country or into peripheral seas, like the Karun which empties into the Shatt al-Arab, forming

(1) Cressey, George B., "Crossroads", Chicago - J.B. Lippincott Co., 1990, pp. 526-7.

(2) Dasht in Persian means "open plain" and Lut means "empty".

(3) Iran Almanac (and book of facts), 1987, eighteenth edition, published by the Echo of Iran, p. 21.

thereafter the southern parts of the Iran-Iraq boundary and eventually emptying into the Persian Gulf; Aras to the west and Atrak to the east of the Caspian Sea, forming parts of Iran's boundaries with the republics of Azerbaijan and Turkmanistan respectively, and finding their ways eventually into the Caspian Sea; the Kashaf Rud in Khorasan joining the Hari Rud, forming the northern portions of the Iran-Afghanistan boundaries, and flowing into the deserts of southern Turkmanistan; the Talab River, forming parts of the Iran-Pakistan boundaries, and eventually emptying into the Hamun-e Mashkil in the north-western corner of Pakistan.

- C. Rivers flowing into the country from other countries, and forming parts of the Iranian boundaries, like Hirmand River which flows from Afghanistan and empties into the Hamund-e Hirmand after forming about 50 miles of the Iran-Afghanistan boundaries.
- 2 Rivers rising in Iran and flowing into the peripheral seas. There are a number of permanent and seasonal rivers of this category joining the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, the most important of which is Sefid Rud in Gilan. This river - 765km.<sup>(1)</sup> - is the longest river in Iran, a mountain stream for most of its length, rising in the Zagros and dropping swiftly into the Gilan plain, eventually flowing into the Caspian Sea.
- 3 Inland rivers, rising inside the country and flowing into the lakes and swamps of the interior. The largest and most important of these rivers is the Zayaindeh Rud which rises in the north-west uplands and disappears in the Gavkhuni swamp, after flowing through the highly fertile oasis of Isfahan (see figure III).

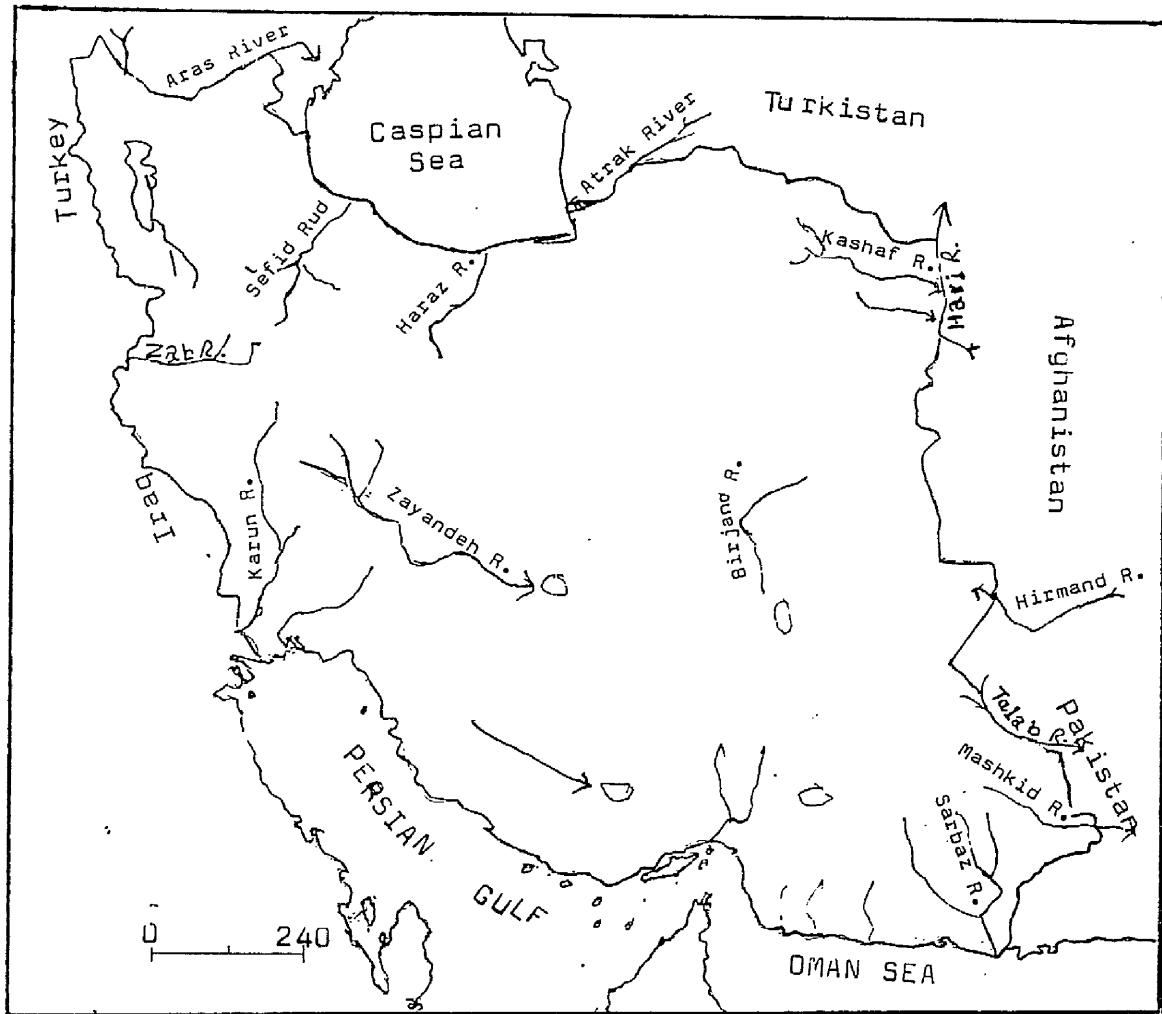
Climatically, Iran is a highly complex country, one of the few in the world in which all kinds of weathers are to be found, while the north and west of the country are covered

(1) Iran Almanac, op. cit., p. 21.

with snow in the winter months, swimming is possible in the south, and while the south, south-east and central areas are burning in the heat of the summer months, the cool weather of higher altitudes of the north and west provides leisurely conditions.

Figure III

The most important Internal and  
Peripheral Rivers of Iran



The situation of Iran between 25 and 40 degrees north latitude, the country's physical structure and her location within the Asiatic landmass, are responsible for the climatic conditions particular to Iran. the climate of Iran is of a

hot and dry character: summers being hot and dry in most areas, except at certain high altitudes and in parts of the Caspian coasts, while the winters are cold and severe with the exception of lower Caspian littoral, the Persian Gulf coasts, and the Khuzestan plain.<sup>(1)</sup>

The high mountainous plateau of northern and western Iran cut off the central plateau from sources of moisture, and, as a result, the interior experiences deep rain shadow conditions. The interior of Iran, moreover, is subject to dry-cold air of the Siberian anti-cyclone, during winter and the dried out hot monsoonal air of north-west Pakistan and Baluchistan, during the summer months.

The hottest part of the country is probably the central and northern areas of the Khuzestan plain in the south-west, where average maximum daily temperature of the four months of summer does not fall below +45 degrees centigrade. The greatest variation in temperature, however, is noticed along the border peripheries of the desert where, within a distance of a few miles, temperature drops of 20 degrees centigrade are recorded because of rapid changes in elevation and where small distances separate frost-free areas from villages with five to six months of freezing.<sup>(2)</sup> The narrow coastal belt of the Caspian Sea is characterised by moderate temperatures, low daily and annual ranges, excessively high in humidity and heavy precipitation. Mid-summer temperatures in the area is around +26 degrees centigrade and mid-winter temperature 7 degrees C. and frost is but short-lived (see figure IV).

The southern coastal plains of Iran, which widen considerably in Khuzestan at the head of the Persian Gulf, are hot with high relative humidity throughout the year. Absolute maximum temperatures in Khuzestan exceed +50 degrees almost every year. Temperature increases in the south-east and rainfall

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(1) Murray, John, (1950), "Iran Today", Vol. I, Tehran, p.26.

(2) Iran Almanac, op. cit., p. 26.

decreases while moisture increases as high as 86%. Winter and early spring is the rainy season of Iran, but the annual rainfall is generally low except along the Caspian Sea.

The amount of rainfall, decreases from north to south and from west to east, whereas temperature increases in a reverse direction. The central areas of deserts which receive the lowest amount of precipitation have a short rainy season, limited to the coldest months of the year. Practically all the winter precipitation in Iran is a result of Mediterranean depressions which govern the weather patterns of the country throughout the winter and spring season (for climatical and temperature variations in Iran, see figures IV and V respectively).

Rainfall in Iran is heaviest at the Caspian Sea littoral and western hills, from 20 to 40 inches, and in the west it averages about 12 inches per annum. It is about 9 inches in Tehran area and diminishes to 4 inches in the Isfahan area of the Central Plateau. Still south and east the rainfall becomes as little as two inches in Sistan.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### EASTERN IRANIAN BORDERLANDS

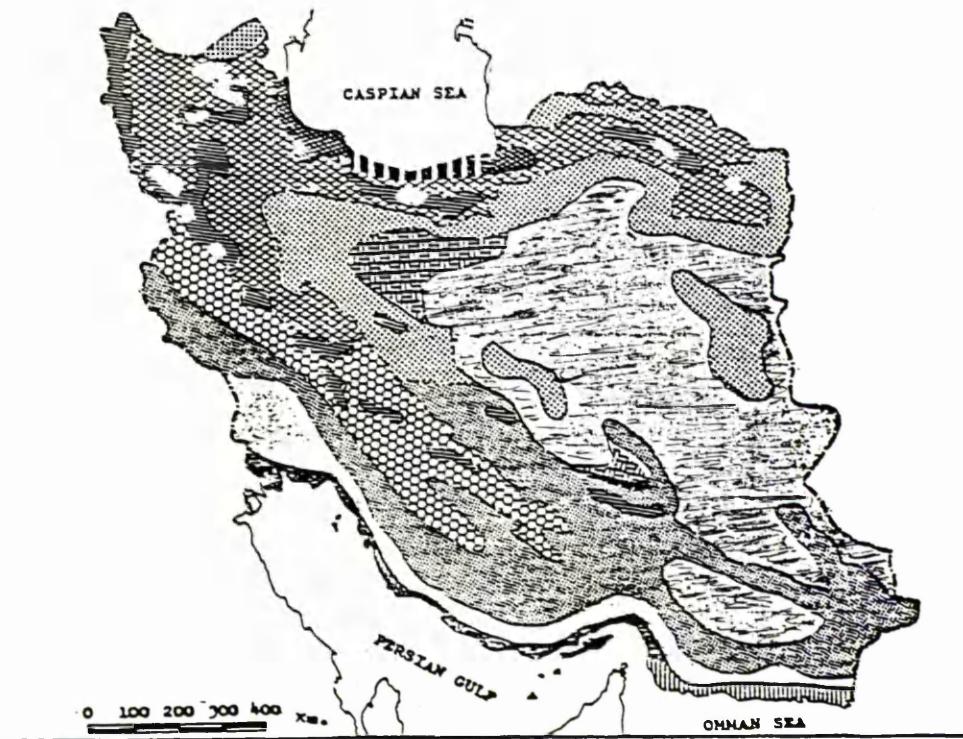
Politically the Eastern Iranian borderlands are divided into two provinces of "Khorasan" and "Sistan and Baluchistan". whereas, geographically three distinct regions form the eastern flanks of Iran; Khorasan to the north, Baluchistan and Makran to the south, and the middle section of Sistan bridging the gap between the former two, with historical links with the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Birjand. These three regions differ from one another, not only in terms of their physical and climatical characteristics, but also in terms of their ethnicity, political history, and socio-economics. There are, at least, six separate drainage basins in the eastern Iranian borderlands which are:

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(1) Murray, op. cit., pp. 26-7.

Figures IV

## Climatic Divisions of Iran



## Climate of Iran

Different types of arid climate: 1,200,00 Sq. km.

(approx)

Moderate climate: 400,000 Sq. km. (approx)

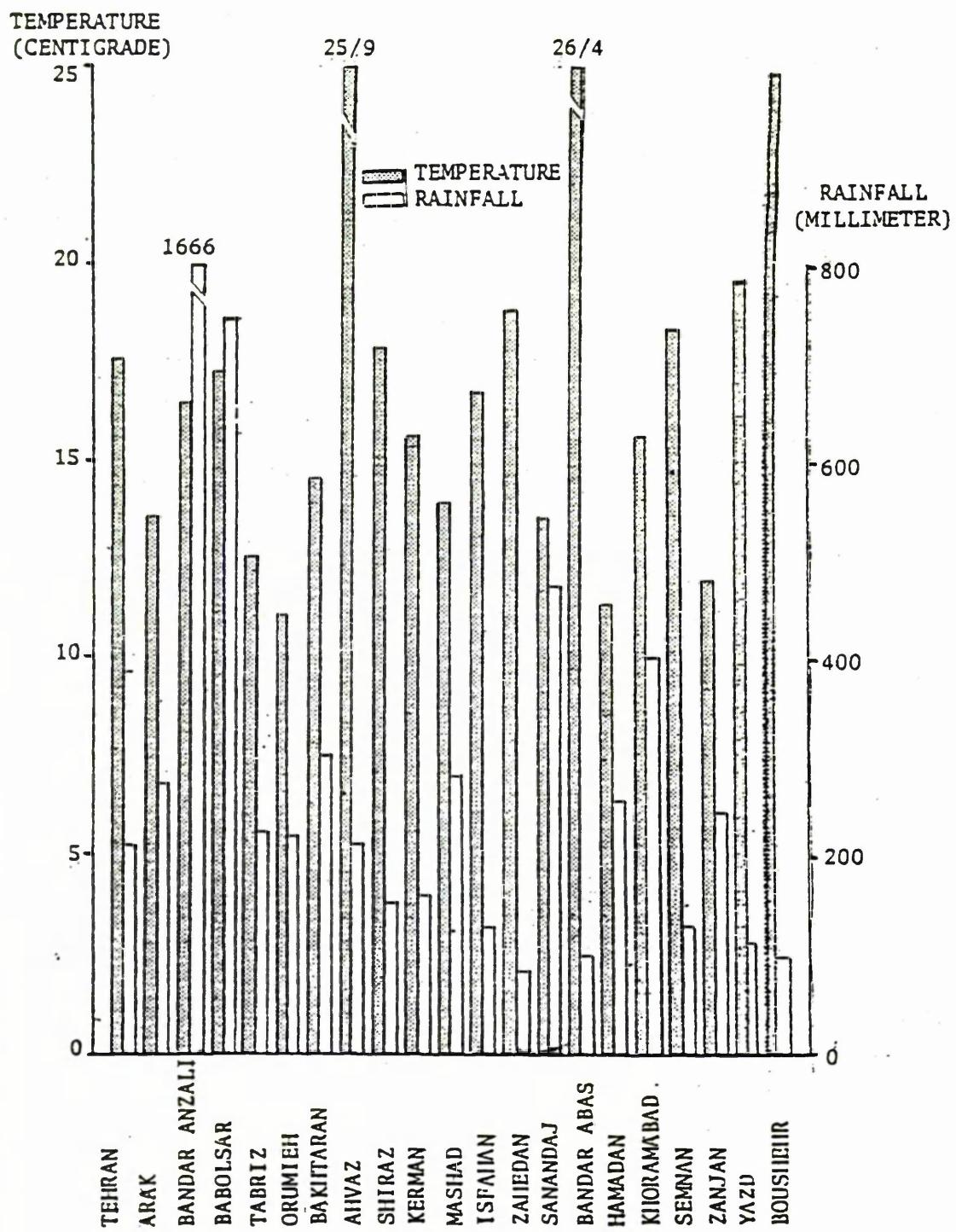
Cold mountainous climate: 40,000 Sq. km. (approx)

- [Hatched square] Extra Cold Mountainous Climate
- [Vertical stripes] Cold Mountainous Climate
- [Cross-hatch] Wet Moderate Caspian Climate
- [Diagonal stripes] Mediterranean Climate with Spring Rainfall
- [Horizontal stripes] Mediterranean Climate
- [Vertical lines] Cold Semi-desert Climate
- [Horizontal lines] Hot Semi-desert Climate
- [Solid black square] Arid Desert Climate
- [Solid black square] Arid Hot Desert Climate
- [Vertical stripes] Coastal Arid and Hot Climate
- [Solid black square] Coastal Arid Climate

(Source: Iran Almanac, op. cit., p. 30)

Figure V

Annual Average Temperature and Rainfall  
for certain Cities of Iran  
1362 (1983-4)



(Source: Iran Almanac, op. cit., p. 29)

- 1 - The drainage system of Northern Khorasan (Kashaf Rud and Jam Rud).
- 2 - The drainage system of Eastern Khorasan (Namakzar).
- 3 - The drainage system of Southern Khorasan (Qaenat and Birjand).
- 4 - The drainage system of Sistan (Hamun-e Hirmand basin).
- 5 - The drainage system of Northern Baluchistan (Hamun-e Mashkil basin).
- 6 - The drainage system of Southern Baluchistan (the Oman Sea basin). (See figure VII).

The three main regions of Eastern Iranian Borderlands will be discussed in the following three parts:

#### PART I = KHORASAN AND THE DISTRICTS OF QAENAT AND BIRJAND

The word "Khorasan" is an ancient Persian term, derived from the term "Khavar" which means "East". The Sassanid Empire of Iran (AD 224 - 651), for instance, had divided their realms into four principal Kusts or countries, of which, the Kust of Khavar was one. Apart from the roots of the word, the term itself is a composition of two components; "Khor" and "Asan". The term "khor" is also an ancient Persian word meaning "sun" and "Asan" is a suffix which means "the place where (something) comes from". The two together, therefore, mean exactly as Rudaki, famous Persian poet of the 10th century said:

خوارسان آن بسود کز وی خور آید

Meaning: Khorasan is the place where the sun comes from. Alternatively, the composition implies that the country of such a name is the ultimate east. There are suggestions in the old records that the original form of this name was "Khorayan"<sup>(1)</sup> which is of the same meaning but more directly expressed.

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(1) Dayerat al-Ma'ref-e Eslami (Islamic Encyclopedia), 1927, Vol. II, p. 966.

Historically, Khorasan included most parts of Afghanistan, Sistan and Trans-Oxania as well as the north-eastern parts of the present country of Iran. In the time of Arab caliphate of the Abbasid, Iran was divided into two distinct political zones, with a middle zone - from Ray (near Tehran) to Bandar Abbas separating the two. This middle zone was generally known as "Eraq-e Ajam" or "the non-Arab Iraq". Areas to the west of this zone was known as "Eraq-e Arab" or the "Arab Iraq", and areas to the east of this zone was generally known as "Khorasan."<sup>(1)</sup> Many of the famous names in Persian literature who were born and bred in Trans-Oxania describe themselves as children of Khorasan. Rudaki of Samargand for example, described himself in the following terms:

شدن زمانه که شعری همه جهان نوشت شدن زمانه که او ناشر خراسان بود

Meaning:

*"The time has gone when all the world wrote his words (poems): the time has gone when he was a poet of Khorasan."*<sup>(2)</sup>

The eastern and north-eastern parts of Khorasan were partitioned in the second half of the nineteenth century, and were included in the countries of Afghanistan and Russia respectively. What is now known as "Khorasan" is the largest province of Iran with a land area of 215,686.5sq.km.,<sup>(3)</sup> and with a population of 5,280,605 which is the largest in Iran outside Tehran.<sup>(4)</sup>

Khorasan is situated between longitude 30 deg.55' and 14 deg.61' east, and latitude 40 deg.30' and 17 deg.38'.<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) Mir Mohammad Sadiq Farhang "Afghanistan Dar Panj Qarn" (Afghanistan in Five Centuries), American Speedy, Virginia, US (1988), p. 12.

(2) Mohammad Sadiq Farhang, op. cit., p. 12.

(3) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran (Statistic Centre of Iran), General Census of Mehr 1365 (Sept. - Oct. 1986), Vol. 1, p. 5..

(4) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, op. cit., p. 29.

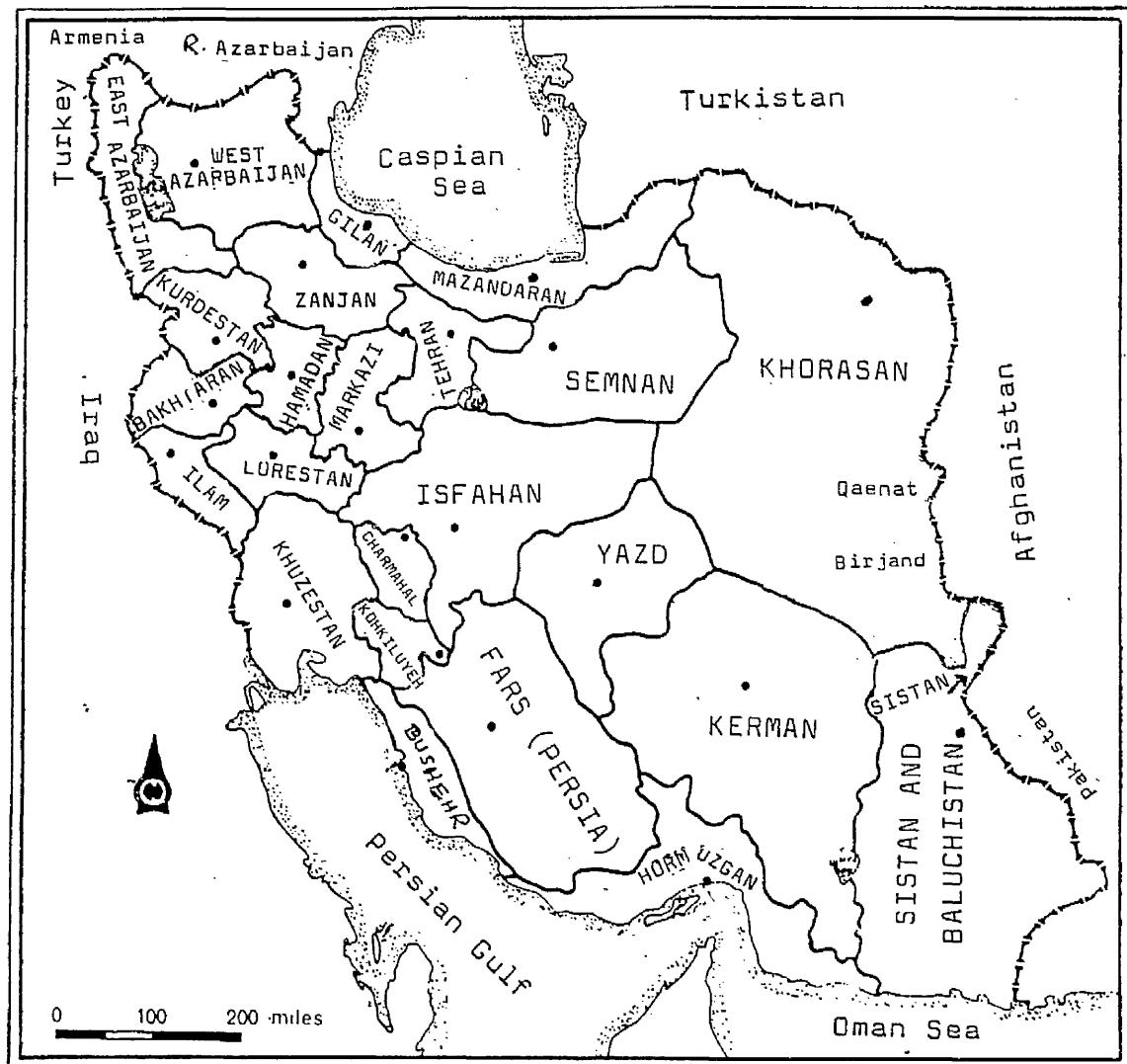
(5) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, op. cit., p. 4.

To the east, Khorasan is bounded by Afghanistan, to the north by Turkmanistan; to the west by the provinces of Semnan, Mazandaran, Isfahan, Yazd and Kerman; and to the south by the provinces of Kerman and Sistan and Baluchistan (see figure VI).

Geographically, Khorasan is a mountainous plateau with an average altitude of 985 meters above sea level. The

Figure VI

Khorasan (Qaen and Birjand, and Sistan and Baluchistan) in the map of administrative divisions of Iran



(Prepared on the basis of a map appearing on Page 16 of Vol.1 of general census of Statistic Centre of Iran (1986)

northern part of Khorasan is characterised by high mountains which are the eastwards extensions of Elborz proper. The highlands of Khorasan constitute the final parts of the encircling mountains. These are a series of parallel but discontinuous ranges bridging the gap between the Elborz mountains on the north and the Makran ranges on the south.

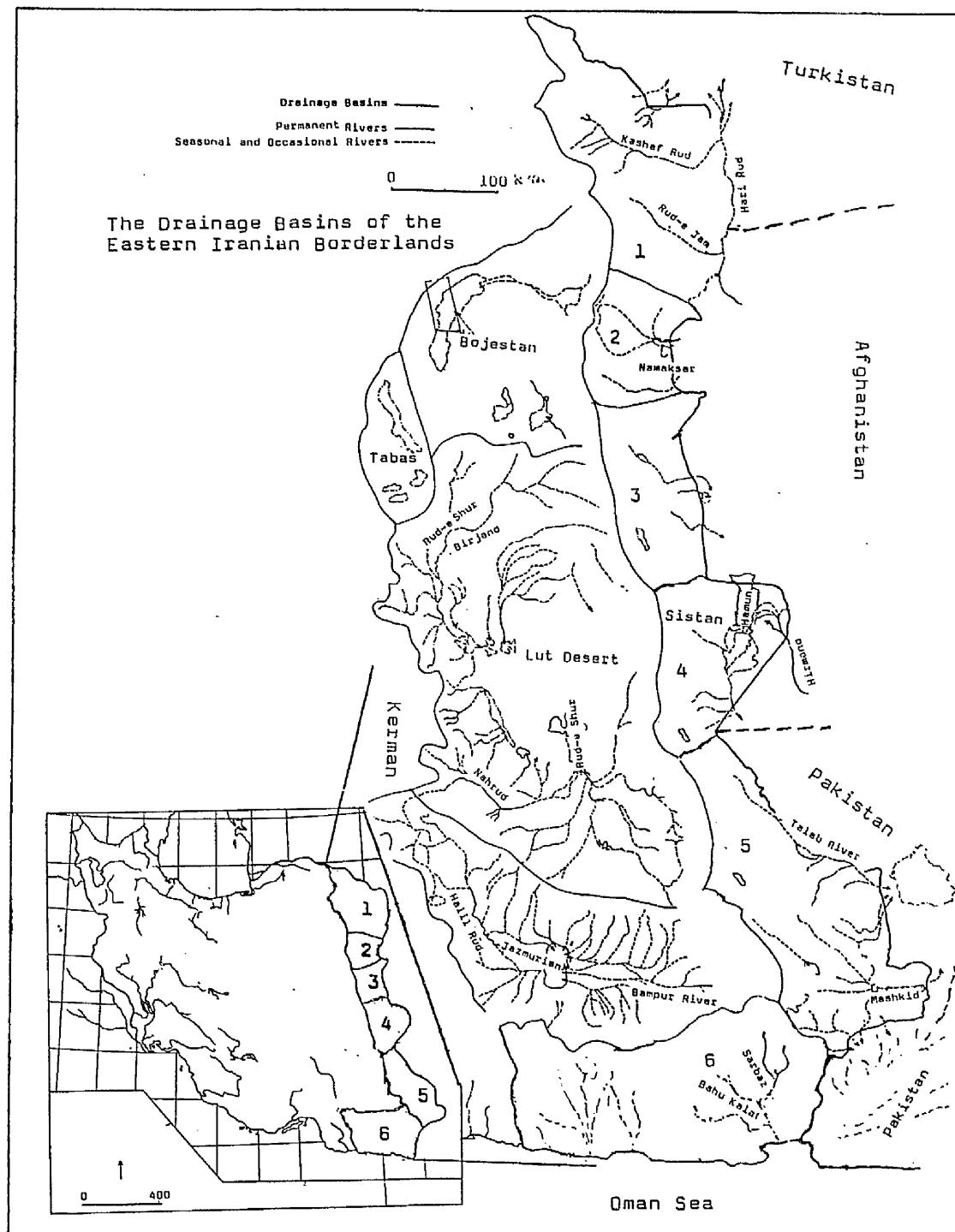
North of Jajarm the crest of the Elborz proper falls to a pass just below 3000 feet above sea level. On the other side of the pass the mountains of northern Khorasan, in a series of parallel ranges, form the borderlands between Iran and Turkmanistan. Rising to 10,323 feet or 3,218 meters above sea level, the basaltic mountain of Hezar-Masjed forms the peak of the Khorasan mountain ranges (see figures I and II).

#### GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM OF EASTERN IRANIAN BORDERLANDS

Apart from the drainage systems listed above, the Eastern Iranian borderlands fall into three distinct geographical regions of Khorasan, Sistan and Baluchistan, albeit Sistan and Baluchistan are incorporated in one province.

These regions and drainage systems will be examined here in order of localities from north to south:

- 1 - Hari Rud Drainage Basin (area 1 of figure VII). This basin is divided into six separate systems which are:
  - A. The northern section of Eastern Iranian borderlands which is a vast drainage basin of which Kashaf Rud is the largest river. Rising in the mountains of north-west of Mashhad, Kashaf Rud flows in an easterly direction, eventually emptying into the border river Hari Rud. This river is joined by a number of seasonal streams along its course and runs dry in the summer months. Jam Rud is the second most important seasonal river in Khorasan which rises in the mountains south of Mashhad and flows in a

**Figure VII****The Drainage Basins of Eastern Iranian Borderlands**

(Developed on the basis of a map appearing in "Joghrafay-e Iran", By Mahmudi and others, Tehran 1985, p.61)

north-west to south-east direction, eventually emptying in the border river, Hari Rud, after passing by the town of Torbat-e Jam.<sup>(1)</sup>

Hari Rud or "Tajan" itself rises from Sefid Kuh and Baba mountains in Afghanistan<sup>(2)</sup> and flows towards Iranian borders after passing through Herat Valley and Ghurian Plain. Near the Iranian border, Hari Rud is no longer a permanent river. It is seasonal and at the confluence of Kal-e Kaleh seasonal stream on the Iranian Border, the river changes its course towards north and forms about 100 kilometres of the Iran-Afghanistan boundaries. After passing through Sarakhs Oasis, Hari Rud flows across Zolfaghar pass where boundaries between Iran, Afghanistan and Turkmanistan meet. From this point the river continues northwards and empties in the Qaraqum sand desert of southern Turkmanistan (see section 1 of Figure VII).

#### B. Hashtadan Plain

To the south of Hari Rud is situated the Hashtadan Plain which is surrounded by Kuh-e Senjidi on the north, Hashtadan hills on the west and inside Iranian territory, Kuh-e Sang-e Dokhtar on the east and inside Afghan territory, Kuh-e Gadayaneh and Kuh-e Yal-e Khar mounds on the south. Waters from the Hashtadan wells and springs are carried northwards into Hari Rud by Kal-e Kaleh which, in turn, forms the Iran-Afghanistan boundary line between Hashtadan and Hari Rud.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Mahmudi and others, "Joghrafiay-e Iran", Published by the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran 1988, p. 62.

(2) Badiei, Rabi, "Joghrafiay-e Mofassal-e Iran", Eqbal Press, Tehran 1983, p. 183.

(3) More details of Hashtadan geography are provided in Chapter V, section on the northern section of Eastern Iranian Boundaries.

### C. Gadayaneh Mounds

Gadayaneh is a hilly district with a number of inter-mingled mounds, 1130 meters above sea level.<sup>(1)</sup> The highest of these mounds is 325 meters above the plain. This district begins from Puzeh-e Gadayaneh to the north which is the first mound and where border pillar no 29 is erected, and continues southwards for four kilometres (2.5 miles) until border pillar no 37, and has a width of about 6.5 kilometres (4 miles). A number of springs and wells are to be found in this district with little water in winter and spring months. These are:<sup>(2)</sup> Tagharak well on the Iranian side of these borderlines' drainage systems, Masjedak well on the Afghan side, Ghashlushi on the Iranian side, Sorkh well on the pass between Gadayaneh, Yal-e Khar and Shantigh with red soils, Rabat-e Turk on the east of Sorkh well.

### D. Musa Abad District

Musa Abad is the name of the district below Hashtadan and Gadayaneh. It is the name of the district as well as the only hamlet and three agricultural fields therein.

The Iran-Afghanistan boundaries at Musa Abad were delimited by the 1935 arbitration in a way that gave the hamlet of Musa Abad to Iran, but its fields and springs were given to Afghanistan.<sup>(3)</sup>

### E. Shantigh and Zanglab

This hilly district is about 15 kilometres (10 miles) long and situated inside Afghan territory, below Musa Abad. This hilly district is very dry with a small

(1) Mokhber, Mohammad Ali, "Marzhay-e Iran", Tehran, 1945, p. 98.

(2) Ibid.

(3) More Geographical details of Musa Abad are provided in Chapter V, section of Altay Arbitration of 1935.

number of wells and springs on its southern slopes which are: the Shantigh spring, Zanglab spring, Bozou (Boz Ab) spring with very little water, Bad well with an adjacent spring.

F. Bakharz Region

Bakharz is a vast region between Torbat-e Jam and Khoaf. Separating this region from Khoaf, the Bakharz range is distinct with its high peaks such as Garmeh and Farzaneh. There are remnants of what once was a forest of mountain woods near Farzaneh, and a number of springs and wells are to be found, especially on the northern slopes of this range. The Chah Qaleh Plain of Bakharz is situated between Kuh-e Sar-Khar of Shantigh range and Gadayaneh mound. An old qanat poorly waters this plain. Apart from Chah Qaleh well, there are a number of other wells and springs in this region, the most important of which are: Kazem spring between Chah Qaleh and Khoshab, the Khoshab wells which water the Khoshabeh plain situated between Garmeh and Shantigh, the Ayyubi springs on the south-west of Khoshabeh, Fazl well and Chah-e Shur well on the north of Namakzar where border pillar no 51 has been erected.<sup>(1)</sup> Apart from these water sources there are a number of seasonal and occasional streams in Bakharz which end up in Hari Rud.

Lieut. Colonel Yate visited Bakharz district at the end of the 19th century and gave the following account of the region:

"Our route now led up the valley in centre of the Bakharz district. We passed through continuous villages and cultivation, and the stream flowing down the valley, with the springs and grassy sward along its banks, gave a look of fertility to the place that one rarely sees in Persia. Bakharz was devastated during the time of the Turkoman raids, and the total revenue in 1894 was said to be only 3400 tumans (f680)

(1) More details in Chapter V, section on Altay Arbitration of 1935.

in cash and 1800 kharwars of grain, but the country seemed capable of great improvement. The population was comprised of Persians known as Bakharzis, with a small proportion of Hazarah, Timuri, and Afghan settlers; and in years of good spring rains a large quantity of unirrigated grain was produced and exported."(1)

2 - Namakzar Basin

Namakzar is a vast plain on the south of Shantigh and Zanglab heights. Most of this district is covered by a salt lake of the same name. Lake Namakzar is a seasonal lake which drains part of the waters of Khoaf, Bakharz, Qaenat and Musa Abad, through a number of "kals", or seasonal and occasional streams.

Coming alive in winter months, these kals are: Kal-e Sargardan which drains Musa Abad's southern waters, Kal-e Gav Khuki, Kal-e Chahar Khal, Kal-e Kordian. There are two larger seasonal steams which run into Namakzar from the Iranian side of the district. These two are: the seasonal stream from Khoaf region and Rud-e Shur from Farrokh district in Qaenat.(2)

Namakzar Lake is very shallow in the summer months, but seasonal streams bring enough waters during winter and spring months to make it a proper lake.

This district has two distinct zones of different characteristics: the north-eastern section which is a proper salt mine where salts are to be found in a depth of 40 centimetres,(3) and the south-western section which is swamp and useless. The former section is situated on the Afghan side of the

(1) Yate, Lieut-Colonel C.E., "Khurasan and Sistan", London 1900, p. 137.

(2) Mokhber, op. cit., p. 99.

(3) Mokhber, op. cit., p. 100.

border, and the latter on the Iranian side. There are a number of wells around Namakzar such as the wells of Siah Kadu, Chalang, Bajgir, Katuri, Fil and Mazar, and the Shekar spring.<sup>(1)</sup> The water of these wells are brackish and useless in the summer months, but drinkable through the rest of the year. The lands around Namakzar are also salty and inundated with some pastoral possibilities used by nomads (see section 2 of figure VII).

The Iran-Afghanistan boundary line turns southward below Musa Abad and runs across Namakzar in a straight line, as far as Kal-e Yarak on the southernmost of this district where border pillar no 54 is erected. Namakzar had, prior to the 1935 arbitration,<sup>(2)</sup> been disputed between Iran and Afghanistan. In a Consular report in 1912, Captain J. Hunter of Sistan Consulate noted:

"Namaksar" - Half Afghan half Persian. Some Gazik people who went to collect salt from the Namaksar last June were made to pay a tax by "Afghans". I am told that the tax is not authorised by Afghan authorities and it must have therefore been black-mail extorted by some of the numerous bad characters who have settled about the disputed area.<sup>(3)</sup>

### 3 - Qaenat and Birjand Basin

Qaenat and Birjand are two separate Shahrestans in the modern political and administrative divisions of Iran. Together they formed one province in older times until 1930, in which, the Khozeimeh dynasty ruled for centuries.

(1) Ibid.

(2) See Chapter V, section on Altay Arbitration of 1935.

(3) Extract from Consular Report, by Captain J.B.D. Hunter of H.M. Majesty's Consulate of Sistan, dated 19th September, FO 248/971, p.19.

Qaenat and Birjand are mostly mountainous regions, hence the name of the district appears in the historical works of geography as "Qohestan" or "Kuhestan" which means "the land of mountains".

As from the eighteenth century this name changed into "Qaenat" which is an Arabic plural for "Qaen". The plural form of this name clearly refers to Qaen and its dependencies, ruled by the Khozeimeh dynasty. This name appears to be most convenient as a term of reference to the region in the geographical and historical discussion of this section.

The mountain ranges of Qaenat form the middle section of the Eastern Iranian highlands, bridging the gap between the easternmost part of Elborz in the north, and the Makran ranges in the south. Ranged along Iran-Afghanistan borders, these mountains function as the divide between the interior plateau region on the one hand, and western Afghanistan on the other (see figures I and II). This mountain range, at the same time, functions as a barrier, protecting Qaenat from the eastward extension of the great central desert (Lut). This mountain range has a generally north-west to south-east direction and includes Kuh-e Kalat, Kuh-e Soleiman, Kuh-e Ahangaran with the highest peak in the region, Kuh-e Shah,<sup>(1)</sup> and Kuh-e Baran. The south-easternmost of this range is Siah Kuh on the borders of Qaenat and Sistan where border pillar no 87 is erected.

Qaenat is a dry country with little precipitation and some ground-water. Summers are hot and dry except at high altitudes. There is no river of a permanent nature in the entire region but the seasonal and occasional streams, carry flood waters of winter and springs months into two basins: one

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(1) Badiei, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 51.

eastwards into Afghanistan like the stream from Sedeheh which runs south-eastwards and runs into Daghgh-e Tondi after passing by Avaz and Gazik, and the stream which begins at Sarbisheh and similarly runs south-eastwards like Rud-e Birjand which rises in the mountains of southern Qaen and northern Birjand and empties into the Lut desert. This stream is the largest in the region and has water most of the year through. Its water is salty and called "Rud-e Shur". There are considerably high level<sub>f</sub>underground waters in Qaenat which are brought to the surface by numerous qanats, wells and springs. It is, therefore, clear that water-holding in Qaenat plays a highly significant role in the agricultural life of the region.

Khozeimeh family's strategic land and water holdings in Qaenat and Tabas, Khoaf and Gonabad formed their power-base in the region for centuries, (see next chapter).



*Rud-e Shur-e Birjand, the only long-term flowing river of Qaenat which carries salt water into the Lut basin. White patches in the photograph are salt deposits of the river.*

On the historical geography of Qohestan "Kuhestan" or Qaenat, Le Strange remarks:

"The province of Kuhistan, like Sijistan, was generally held to be a dependency of Khurasan by the Arab geographers. Kuhistan means 'the Mountain Land' and the province is thus named in accordance with its distinguishing physical features, the hills here being contrasted with the lowlands of Sijistan, lying to the waste of Kuhistan on the Helmund delta. Kuhistan, as Ibn Hawkal remarks has for the most part a cold climate from its elevation, and the date palm only grew at Tabas Gilaki on the edge of the Great Desert. In the 4th century (10th) the nomad inhabitants of the country were Kurds, who possessed great flocks of sheep and camels. Without doubt this province is identical with the 'Tunocain kingdom' of Marco Polo, who took the names of its two chief cities (Tun and Kayin) to be the designation of the whole country. The chief town of Kuhistan was Kayin, which Ibn Hawkal describes as protected by a strong fortress, surrounded by a ditch; and the Governor's house stood here, also the Friday mosque."<sup>(1)</sup>

A map appearing in Le Strange's book demonstrates the political position of this province in the time of the Abbasid Caliphate (see figure VIII). A relatively comprehensive report to the British Embassy in Tehran, in 1912, the British Consulate at Sistan put the population of Qaenat (Shahrestans of Qaen and Birjand together) at 200,000 at the turn of the twentieth century,<sup>(2)</sup> whereas the 1986 census puts the total population of these two Shahrestans at 483,552.<sup>(3)</sup>

Qaenat or the old "Qohestan" was ruled by the Khozeimeh dynasty since the early years of the Abbasid Caliphate until 1937 when the last ruling Amir (Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh) resigned from the official post of governorship as a result of re-organisation of Iran's political and

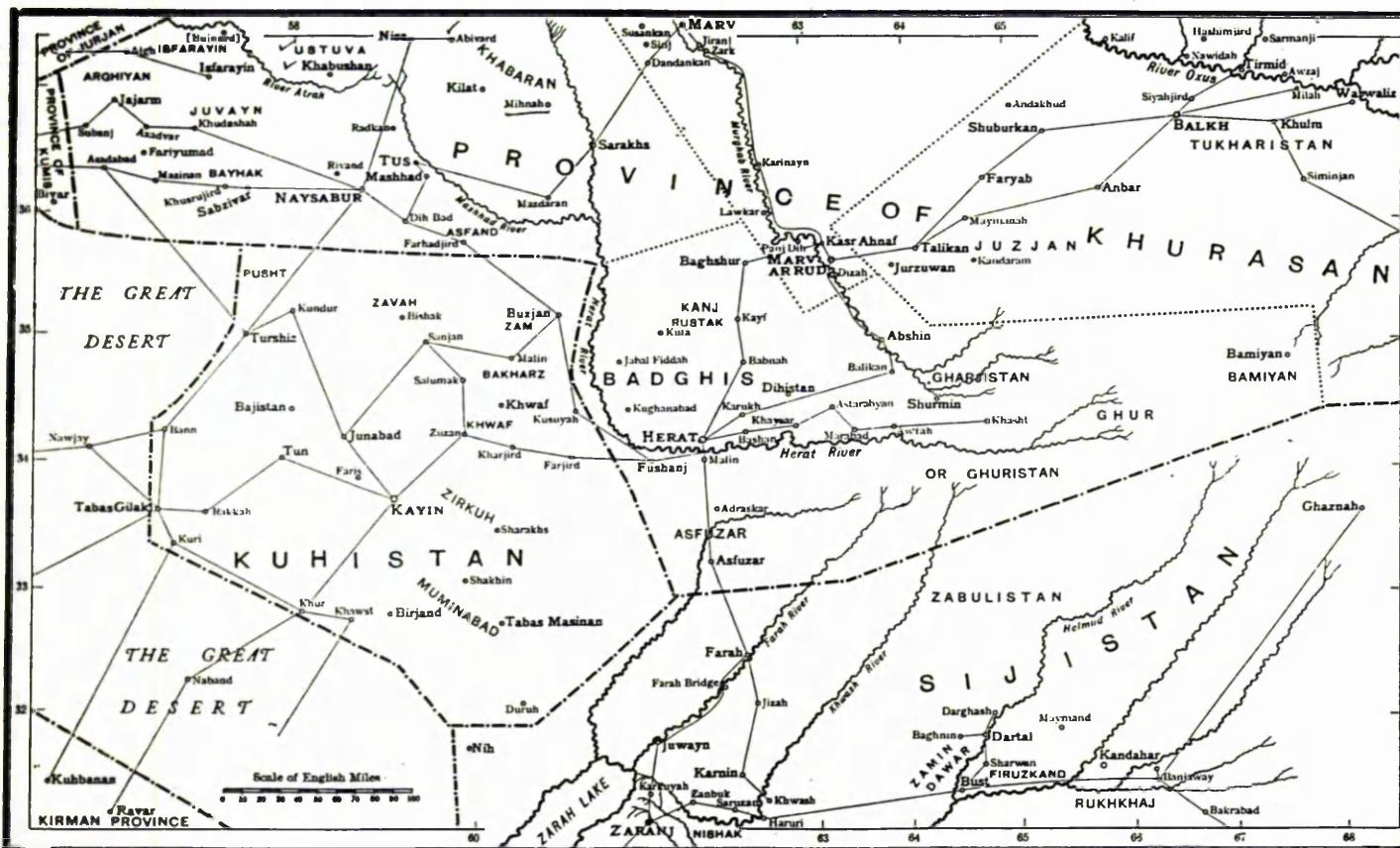
(1) Le Strange, G. "The Lands of Eastern Caliphate", London 1966, Chapter XXV, p. 352.

(2) Consular Report by Captain Hunter, op. cit., p. 3.

(3) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran (Statistic Centre of Iran), Vol. 2-118, p. 3 and Vol. 3-108, p. 3.

administrative divisions (see next chapter). The chief town had for centuries been Qaen, but the capital was moved to Birjand in the early nineteenth century. Politically, however, Qaenat has been divided into two Shahrestans in the latest (1973) major rearrangement of Iran's political and administrative divisions; Shahrestan-e Qaen or "Qaenat", and Shahrestan-e Birjand.

Figure VIII



Province of Kuhistan (Qohestan) in the Abbasid Caliphate  
(Le Strange, "Lands of Eastern Caliphate", Map VIII, P.334)

#### A. - Shahrestan Qaenat

Qaenat is one of Khorasan's seventeen shahrestans. The other sixteen being: Mashhad, Daregaz, Quchan, Shirvan, Bojnord, Esfaraien, Taibat, Sabzevar, Kashmar, Torbat-e Heidarieh, Torbat-e Jam, Gonabad, Nishabur, Ferdos, Tabas and Birjand.

With a land area of 15,050 square kilometres, Qaenat is shaped almost like a rectangle (see figure IX). This shahrestan is bounded by Afghanistan to the east, Birjand to the south, Torbat-e Heidarieh and Gonabad to the north and Ferdos to the west. Shahrestan-e Qaenat is administratively divided into one Bakhsh and eight Dehestans, with the town of Qaen (population 15,955) as its administrative centre. The one Bakhsh of this Shahrestan is Bakhsh-e Markazi, and its dehestans are: Dehestan-e Qaen, Dehestan-e Nimboluk, Dehestan-e Paskuh, Dehestan-e Zohan, Dehestan-e Fandokht, Dehestan-e Gazenak, Dehestan-e Gozokht and Dehestan-e Shahrokht (see figure IX). Each of these dehestans includes a number of "deh's" or villages.

Apart from the town of Qaen, Khezri of Dehestan-e Nimboluk, with a population of 4,026 is the only other urban district of this shahrestan. Shahrestan-e Qaen's total population was recorded by the 1986 general census as being 122,149<sup>(1)</sup> which represented a density of 8.1 per square kilometre. Of this figure, 13,696 were recorded as being foreign immigrants which represented 11 per cent of the total population who are, almost exclusively, Afghan refugees.

Of the eight dehestans of Qaenat, two are strategically situated on the Afghan borders. These are: Dehestan-e Shahrokht and Dehestan-e Gozokht. The border districts of these two dehestans begin from Namakzar on the north and continue as far south as above SunnKhaneh which is known as Tabas Masina of Shahrestan-e Birjand. The most important of these districts is Yazdan.

(1) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, "The Statistic Centre of Iran", General Census of Mehr 1365 (Sept. - Oct. 1986), Vol. 118-3, Shahrestan-e Qaen, pp. 1 and 3.

### The District of Yazdan

The district of Yazdan is situated below Namakzar, and surrounded by Daghh-e<sup>(1)</sup> Kul Berenj with permanent drinkable water, Daghh-e Petergan to the west with some springs around it, dasht-e Na-Omid or "the plain of no hope" which is divided between Iran and Afghanistan with some wells and springs.

Yazdan district consists of three separate localities: the hamlet of Yazdan and its fields with qanats of good water; the fields of Kalateh-Nazar which is situate on the south-west of Yazdan hamlet with wells and springs; Kabudeh hamlet and fields on the south-west of Kalateh-nazar, also with wells and springs.<sup>(2)</sup>

In his consular report of 1912, Captain Hunter of the British Consulate at Sistan said of Yazdan:

"Yazdan was formerly a large and important place and has been described to me as the bandar<sup>(3)</sup> of Kain from the east. It is said that including those of Kabuda and Zainabidin, situated a little distance away, there were in all 72 Karezes.<sup>(4)</sup>

"The present abadi<sup>(5)</sup> of Yazdan was the joint private property of the Hissam-u-Douleh<sup>(6)</sup> and his

(1) Daghh is a local term describing inundated low lands in which flood waters from the surrounding hills gather for a short period annually and remains dry and hard with deep grooves for the rest of the year.

(2) See Chapter V, section on Altay Arbitration of 1935 for more details.

(3) Meaning "port".

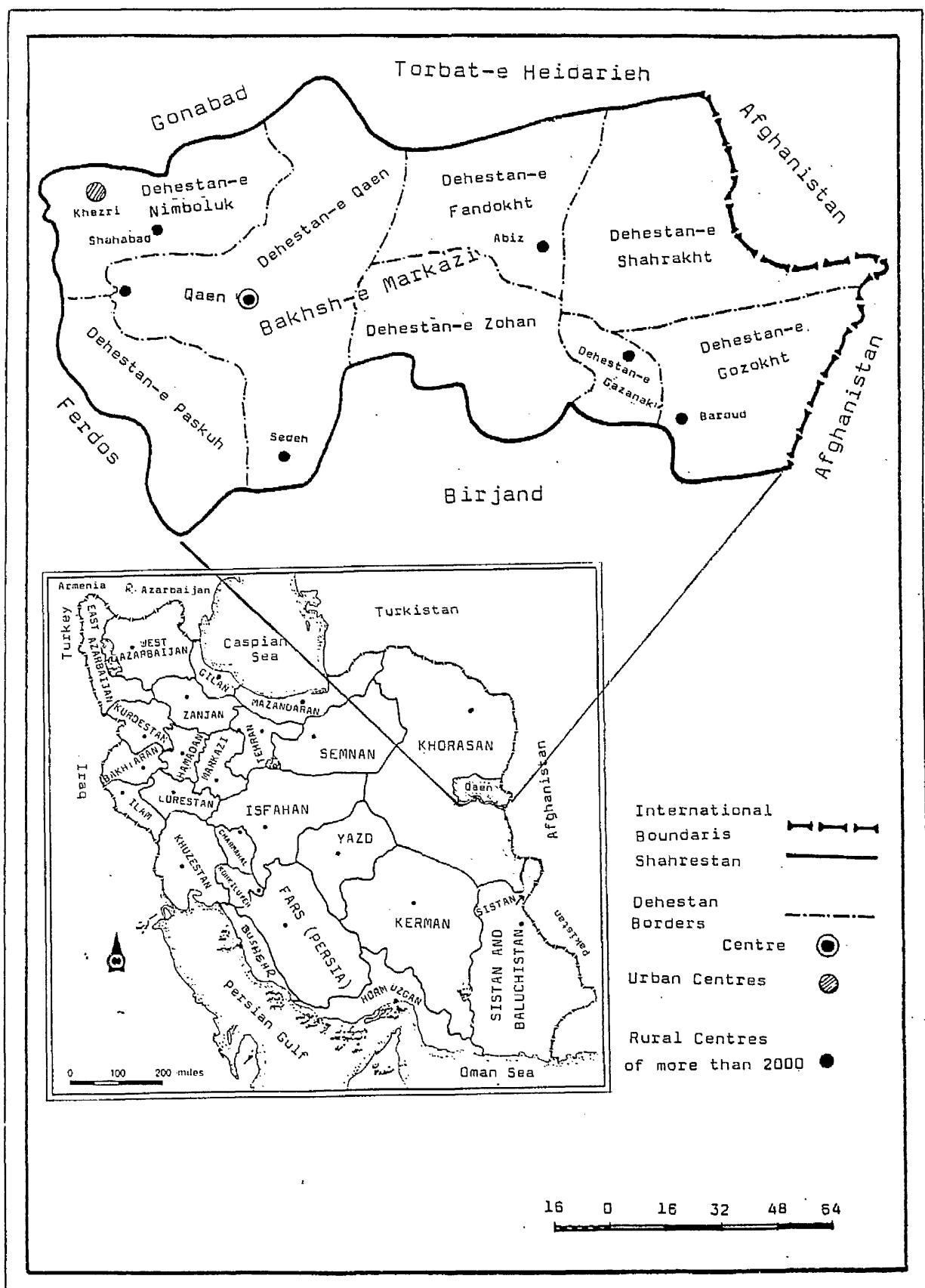
(4) Local name for "Qanat". Kariz is the original Persian term for qanat, still used in Afghanistan and parts of Iran.

(5) Meaning "developed", "cultivated", or "inhabited".

(6) Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh, Hesam ad-Doleh, who was, at the time, Deputy Governor of Sistan. The Khozeimeh family sources told this author that Yazdan belonged to Amir Mohammad Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh, elder brother of Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh, with the exception of western parts including Kabudeh which belonged to the latter.

Figure IX

## Administrative Divisions of Qaenat



Based on the map appearing in; Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, General Census of 1986, Vol.118-3, p. 17

late sister, known as the Nawab. On the latter's death her property was divided.

"There are in Yazdan about 10 families of cultivators, and the produce is about 40 Kharwars (14,500 lbs) of grain.

"I think it is probable that when the Kain frontier comes to be demarcated, the ownership of Yazdan with the adjacent Karezes will be contested.

"My opinion, formed from such documentary and other evidence as I have been able to discover is that Yazdan and its Karezes has always been considered part of Zirkuh Buluk itself being from old times under the Chief of Sunni-Khana or of Kain according to which of the two was predominant for the time being.

"A farman<sup>(1)</sup> of 1124 H (1712), of which mention is made in the note on the history of Zirkuh, show that at this time the revenue of Yazdan was paid to Kain and not to Herat, which was also at that time under the Suffavini Kings."<sup>(2)</sup>

Of Kabudeh, he stated:

"Kabuda is a spring of alkaline water near Yazdan. The land around it is cultivated by Yazdan people for the Hissam-u-Doleh whose private property it is. As regards grazing rights, the Dasht-i-Naomed is open to all, and as stated above, I think that the presence or not of Afghan Maldars<sup>(3)</sup> affords no indication at all as to ownership"<sup>(4)</sup>

In the advent of Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh's demise Kabudeh was inherited by his son Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam who developed new fields and qanats therein and named them after his daughter "Tahereh". The new fields and qanats near Kabudeh are known as "Taherabad".

Yazdan is the easternmost part of the district of Zirkuh of Dehestan-e Shah-rokt. The boundary arbitration of 1935 decided that Yazdan and Kabudeh belonged to Iran, and Kalateh Nazar belonged to Afghanistan.

(1) Means "order" or "decree".

(2) Consular Report by Captain Hunter, op. cit., pp. 23 - 4.

(3) Maldar is a Persian term meaning the one who makes his business by breeding and renting mules, horses, camels, cattle or sheep.

(4) Consular Report by Captain Hunter, op. cit., p. 26.

### B - Saharestan-e Birjand

With a total land area of 70651 square kilometres, Shahrestan-e Birjand is the southernmost Shahrestan of Khorasan with the city of Birjand as its administrative centre.

The city of Birjand with a population of 18,300 in 1986 is one of the most important urban and political centres in the middle section of the Eastern Iranian borderlands. Writing about Birjand at the end of the nineteenth century, Mr Yate's estimated Birjand's population, at the time, at about 25,000:

"Birjand itself was a good sized town, and was said to contain 25,000 people. The town had a flourished look, in so far that all the houses appears to be inhabited, and few ruins were to be seen about, as is generally the case in most Persian towns. There were few gardens around it, owing to the general want of water. The kanat water in the town was brackish and sweet water had to be bought from springs near the chief's village at the foot of the Kuh-i-Bakiran. these hills, which bound the Birjand plain in the south, are said to be twelve farsakhs in length and four in breadth, and to have numbers of small springs in the upland villages, to which many people move up in the summer. This may account for the want of game in them, as both ibex and oorial were said to be scarce."(1)

Another Englishman who lived and worked in Birjand in the early years of the twentieth century as the manager of the British bank "Bank-e Shahi" was Mr Hale who has written of Birjand city:

"I shall never forget my impression as I rode into the Birjand valley next morning and caught sight of a part of the town, looking exactly like another dingy stopping-place on a caravan road. My distaste was heightened by a nearer view of barren hills, below which, on a long hump sticking out of the valley, was dumped a pell-mell heap of little mud and plaster houses with domed roof and mean walls. My feelings were partly relieved when I found a friendly reception and comfortable quarters awaiting me, and my first disappointment gradually gave way to something else."(2)

(1) Yate, Lieut.-Colonel C.E., op. cit., p. 69.

(2) Hale, F. "From Persian Uplands", London (Early 1920s), pp. 18 - 19.

Some seventy years earlier, General Goldsmid, British arbitrator of Sistan boundaries (1872), visited Birjand and noted:

"From Mud a march of twenty-three miles west-north-west brought us into the capital city of Birjand, from which there was a distance of about 400 miles further to Mashhad. The march from Mud to Birjand exhibited quite a change in the scenery. The road ran over a fertile valley some ten to twelve miles broad, bounded on either side by a range of barren hills, and beyond these on the right hand was another valley of which we caught glimpses through openings in the hills, the summits of which were streaked with snow. At every two or three miles we passed abambars or water tanks, some of them dry and ruined, but the generality in good repair, with an excellent supply of fresh and cold water - furnishing another proof of the excellence of the Amir of Kain's rule in his own province: wherever we have been we have noticed that he seems generally popular, and the flourishing condition of the villages bears testimony to the security the inhabitants feel under his government. Our road made a gradual and very slight ascent for the first ten miles and then commenced an equally slight descent. Four miles from Mud is situated the flourishing village of Yek-Darakht (or 'one tree'), and at sixteen miles we passed the large village of Bojd on the right hand, situated at the extremity of the range of hills which divided the valley we were traversing and the plain we had noticed lying beyond. Bojd is a village of considerable size, and is built on the surface of the hills, being surmounted by a ruined fort. It is surrounded by gardens and cultivation. Half a mile further on is the pretty little village of Hajjiabad, standing in a perfect grove of orchards, and also surrounded by cultivation; while five and a-half miles further is Birjand, situated at the end of the valley with surrounding country and scenery much resembling the neighbourhood of the Alburz at Tehran."<sup>(1)</sup>

Shahrestan-e Birjand is bounded by Shahrestan-e Qaenat on the north, Afghanistan on the east, Ferdos and Tabas on the west, Sistan and Baluchistan on the south (see figure X).

The 1986 general census puts the total population of this shahrestan at 361,403 which represents a density of 5.1 per

(1) Goldsmid, General Frederick, "Eastern Persia", London 1976, Vol. I, p. 334.

square kilometre.<sup>(1)</sup> Of this figure, 77,123 were recorded as being foreign immigrants,<sup>(2)</sup> which are almost exclusively Afghan refugees, and make up about 25 percent of total population of this Shahrestan, which is exceptionally high.

Historically, Shahrestan-e Birjand had, until 1937, been the centre or the heartland of the autonomous Amirdom of Khozeimeh with the city of Birjand as its capital since the early eighteenth century.

The history of this district is almost exclusively the history of the Khozeimeh Amirdom which will be discussed extensively in the following two chapters.

Shahrestan-e Birjand is divided into the following four bakhshs:

1. Bakhsh-e Markazi (central) with the city of Birjand as its administrative centre. This bakhsh is divided into three dehestans, each including several dehs or villages. These dehestans are; Dehestan-e Alqur, Dehestan-e Shahabad, Dehestan-e Naharjan.
2. Bakhsh-e Nehbandan with the town of Nehbandan as its centre. This bakhsh is divided into eight dehestans which are; Dehestan-e Chahan, Dehestan-e Shusf, Dehestan-e Arab-Khaneh, Dehestan-e Parak, Dehestan-e Mighan, Dehestan-e Neh, Dehestan-e Basiran, and Dehestan-e Bandan.

Nehbandan has recently been promoted to the status of a Shahrestan, independent of Birjand with Chahan, Shusf, Arab-Khaneh, Parak, Neh, Mighan, Basiran and Bandan as its new bakhshs.

### 3. Bakhsh-e Khusf

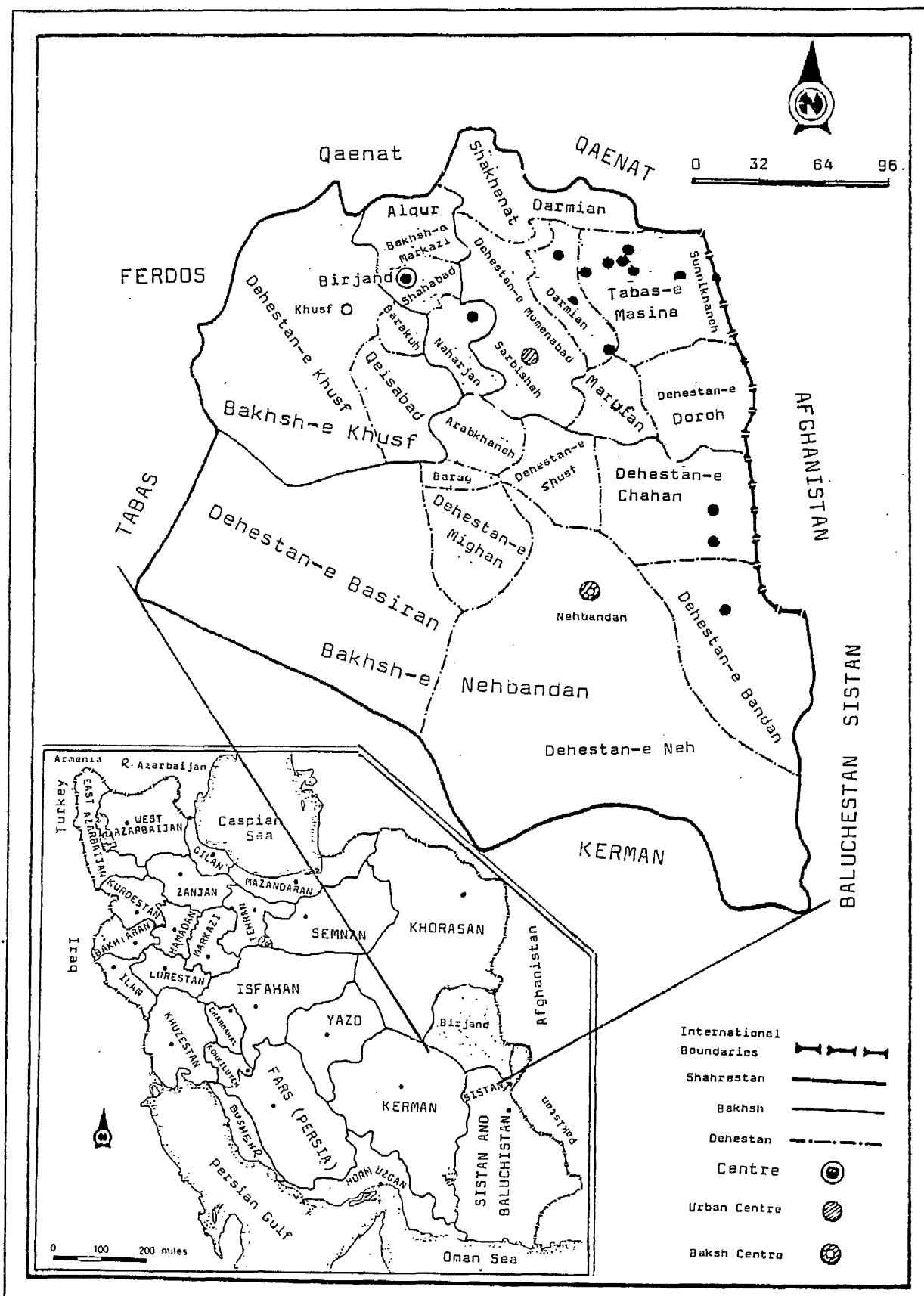
This bakhsh is divided into three dehestans which are; Dehestan-e khusf, Dehestan-e Qeisabad and Dehestan-e Baraku.

(1) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, General Census of 1986, Vol. 108-3, p.1.

(2) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, op. cit., p.3.

Figure X

## Administrative divisions of Birjand



(based on the map appearing in; "Markaz-e Amar-e Iran"  
General Census of 1986, vol. 108-3, p.17)

#### 4. Bakhsh-e Darmian

This bakhsh is divided into six dehestans which are; Dehestan-e Darmian, Dehestan-e Momenabad, Dehestan-e Doroh, Dehestan-e Tabas-e Masina, Dehestan-e Marufan, Dehestan-e Shakhenat.<sup>(1)</sup>

The towns of Nehbandan and Sarbisheh are the only two urban areas of this shahrestan other than the city of Birjand itself.

Of these dehestans, Tabas-e Masina and Doroh are more significant in these studies owing to their location on the borders with Afghanistan. Most of these two districts are in the Iranian side of Dasht-e Na Omid. This plain (Dasht-e Na Omid) is a drainage basin of its own and several seasonal and occasional streams run into it, eventually discharging flood waters into the lower depression of Daghgh-e Tondi where there is a small and dry salt lake on the border (see figure VII).

The two border districts are of the following description:

##### A- Tabas-e Masina or Sunni-Khaneh

This district, as the name suggests, is populated by Sunni Moslems. The existence of this Sunni enclave in the predominantly Shiah region of Birjand and Qaenat has encouraged speculations that the local population had immigrated or moved to this district at the time of the Safavid Empire of 16th to 18th centuries. The speculation is further strengthened by the fact that the family ruling Sunni-Khaneh were Sunnis immigrated from Balkh in the said period. Yet, documents of historical nature examined by this author suggest that Sunnikhaneh had been of the same name long before the advent of the Safavid Empire. Colonel Yate visited Sunni-Khaneh in the late 19th century and described it as follows:

(1) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, op. cit., p. 17.

"Tabas, the headquarters of the Sunnikhana district, was a village containing some 150 houses, and standing out in the open in the centre of the valley, with a row of thirty or forty windmills some little distance off. The water here was derived from Kanats, bringing it in underground channel from the foot of the hills, and the chief of Kain owned most of these Kanats. The arrangement under which the land was cultivated was that he supplied the seed and bullocks and paid the government revenue, and took three-fourths of the produce, leaving one fourth for the cultivators.

"The Tabas fort had been a strong place in its day. The walls and bastions stood high on the top of a lofty rampart, all around which were the remains of a double row of shirazis or loopholed shelter trenches, with a deep ditch in front, the scarp and counterscarp of which were still in good condition. The place was garrisoned by a small detachment of Kain infantry. Gazik, a large village of some 500 or 600 houses, was the northern point of the Sunnikhana district. Beyond that our road led across stony slope immediately under a range of hills, and there is not a sign of life. Hills and plain were equally deserted."(1)

In his Consular Report of early twentieth century, Captain Hunter of the British Consulate at Sistan indicated that Sunni-Khaneh had been mentioned in the works of Arab geographers of 2nd and 3rd centuries of Hijrah (AD 9th and 10th centuries):

"The Arab geographers writing of this period mention Duroh, Tabbas-i-Masinan (Sunni-Khana) and Zirkuh, and it is clear that even at this early date these small districts formed part of the "Kuhistan" and not of Herat or Sabzawar. The existence of the Naomed desert stretching all along the Kain frontier affords an obvious physical reason why this should be so."(2)

Following the assassination of Nader Shah Afshar in 1747, the Khans of Sunni-Khaneh began a life of independence. With the restoration of the power of Khozeimeh Amirdom in Qaenat, at the time of Amir Alam Khan III, Heshmat al-Molk (see chapter II), Sunnikhaneh was reincorporated into the Amirdom of Qaenat.

(1) Yate, Lieut.-Colonel C.E., op cit., pp. 126-7.

(2) Extract of Captain Hunter's Consular Report of 1912, p.2.

In his relatively comprehensive report on the border areas of Eastern Qaenat and Birjand of 1912, Captain Hunter summarised this development in the following manner:

"In 1268 H (1851), Sultan Murad Mirza, Hissam-ul-Sultaneh, despatched a force with guns from Tehran under Sartip Pasha Khan for the final subjection of Sunni-Khana. The strong and picturesque fort at Furk, which had always been the Sunni Khan's strong-hold was taken and Mirza Rafi Khan fled to Herat. Mir Alam Khan was again rewarded for his services. On Pasha Khan's return to Tehran, he left a garrison at Furk. Sunni Khana thus came finally under Persian rule and was incorporated in the Province of Kain. The chief of Sunni Khana, Mohammed Wali Khan (Rafi Khan III), having failed to get help from Herat, went to Tehran and being recommended by Pasha Khan, who was also Sunni, was made Governor of Sunni-Khana under the Amir of Kain with an assignment on its revenues of Tomans 500/-. On his way back from Tehran, he was murdered at Samnan by an emissary of the Kain chief."(1)

#### B- Doroh

Captain Hunter's Consular Report of 1912 speaks of Doroh in the following words:

"The Naib(2) is Khoja Jan Muhammad. He has an assignment on the revenue for the maintenance of 6 sorwars(3) and 4 jambazes.(4)

"The revenue is about tomans 850/- (included from old time and in the Mustansir-ul-Mulk's settlement in the Jama(5) of Sunnikhana).

"The people of Doroh are exempt from the payment of poll tax or sari and are in consequence liable for militia service lashkar kashi.

(1) Extract from Captain Hunter's Consular Report, op. cit., p. 9.

(2) Naib, or correctly "Naieb" means "representative", in this case referring to Deputy Governor, representing the Amir of Qaenat and Sistan in Doroh.

(3) Sowar, or correctly "Savar" means cavalry-man.

(4) Jambaza, or correctly "Jammazeh" means camel cavalry.

(5) Jama, or correctly "Jame" is an Arabic word in reference to the principal mosque of a town.

"There is a Customs house at Duroh subordinate to that at Ahwaz.(1) The present Mirza(2) is Ali Akbar, who was transferred in connection with a case of extortion from Afghanistan (mentioned under the head of Sunnikhana). The authorised route across the frontier is thus described by the Customs Department; - "From Kandahar and Farrah to Birjand by Damdam (Afghan) by Chah-i-Sagak, Chashma-i-Shutaran,(3) Duroh.

The only Karez or cultivated land in this part of the frontier which might conceivably come within the disputed area (though the Afghans have so far made no claim or taken other action with regard to it), is that of Asperan (As-i-Parian).(4) The ruins at this place testify to its having once been a big place, but no one that I have spoken to has been able to afford any clue as to when and why it was abandoned. The reason put forward for the abandonment of other big villages on this strip of frontier is that of Turkoman raids and it is possible that Asperan should be included in the same category".(5)

## PART II = SISTAN DISTRICTS AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Qaenat and Birjand form the upper part of the middle section of the Eastern Iranian borderlands, whereas Sistan forms the lower part. Great variation has existed, since the dawn of history, in naming this province. Zabolestan, Nimrouz, Darangian or Zarang, Sakistan, And Sistan are the more celebrated names that this province has been called throughout history.

Whereas Zabolestan is geographically believed to have been the name of the Upper Sistan in the ancient world, Heredotus and other ancient Greek historians described "Sarangian" or "Darangiana" or "Zarangian" or "Zarang" as being the 14th

(1) This name is "Avaz" which is situated north of Tabas Masina.

(2) Mirza is an old term meaning "Learned" in this context "office clerk".

(3) Correctly "Cheshmeh-e Shotoran" = Shotoran spring.

(4) See chapter V, section on Altay Arbitration of 1935 for more details.

(5) Extract from Captain Hunter's Consular Report, op. cit., p. 14.

Satrapy of Achaemenian Darius the Great, and included the present day province of Sistan. This name survived for a long period of time since the Achaemenids, and was given to its former capital "Zarang" much later, and as "Zireh" is still used in connection with one of its two main lakes. Similarly, Zabolestan reappeared in the first half of the twentieth century in naming the capital city of Sistan as "Zabol".

Nimrouz appears to have been the most ancient name of Sistan, a Persian term, literally meaning "mid-day", a name according to local legends, was given to the province after the prophet Zoroaster established his famous observatory in Sistan where scientific measurements of time and space began on the basis of mid-day zero hour of Sistan (mean) time. The name "Nimrouz" has also reappeared in the early twentieth century and has been given to the eastern half of Sistan by the Afghans.

J.P. Ferrier who had spent many years in Iran and Afghanistan studying places and politics of these countries, suggests that:

"The word *Seistan*, the present name of this province, came originally from the word *Saghis*, the name of a wood much used in Persia for burning at this time".<sup>(1)</sup>

This seems to be an unlikely explanation, for the word "Sistan" in no way shows similarity to the name "Saghez" which Ferrier suggested. A more plausible explanation could be that the name "Sistan" is a shortened version of the name "Sakistan" by which this province was named in ancient times. Sakistan, of which "Sajistan" is an Arabic corruption, virtually means "the land of the Sakaes" an early branch of the Aryan Tribes who settled in this province. Sir Percy Sykes goes even further by suggesting that the word "Saxon" is believed to be another form of "Sakae",<sup>(2)</sup> the western

(1) Ferrier, General Joseph Pierre, "Caravan Journeys and Wandering in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Baloochistan" London 1857, p. 160.

(2) Sykes, Major (later Sir) Percy, "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", London 1902, p. 362.

offshoot of which being Saxons appeared on the European scene almost subsequent to the disappearance of the Sakae in Sistan.

Sistan in the Shahnameh of Ferdosi (AD tenth century) which is believed to have been Shakespeare's source of inspiration, was the country of legendary Rostam the greatest champion of Persian legends, fighting in favour of good against evil, and championing the cause of Iran against her foes.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The province, however, was the 14th Satrapy of the Achaemenian Empire (BC 559-330) and formed a part of the Kust of East under the Sassanid Empire (AD 224 - 651). In the post-Islamic era, Sistan became a major centre of struggles for the revival of Iranianism. Many movements began in Sistan and engulfed the entire countries of Iran. The Saffarids (AD 867 - 910) of Sistan were the first to throw off the yoke of the Abbasid Caliphate (AD 749 - 1242). The subsequent dynasties made a point in including Sistan within their realms.

In the Safavid Empire (AD 1501 - 1722), Sistan was a large "Velayat" or province governed by a "Vali" and included Makran and parts of Baluchistan.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Afghans' political push into Iranian territory in the early nineteenth century coincided with the British Indian Empire's strategic perceptions of nineteenth and early 20th centuries that, in order to prevent a Russian thrust into the western flanks of Indian territories of strategic significance in Sistan and Baluchistan should be given to the buffer states of Afghanistan and Kalat.<sup>(2)</sup> In a letter to the British Government, the Indian Foreign Ministry indicated:

(1) Rohrborn, Klaus-Michael, "Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens im 16 und 17 Jahrhundert", translated into Persian by K. Jahandari, Tehran 1978, pp. 126.

(2) See chapter VI for more details.

"As you are aware, the Government of India attach the highest importance to the assertion of the paramount interest of Great Britain in Seistan and in South-Eastern Persia. They are of opinion that in no circumstances should Seistan be permitted to pass, like the northern provinces of Persia, under the control or even the preponderating influence of Russia, and that British prestige and influence in that quarter should be constantly and actively maintained."<sup>(1)</sup>

Although British support for Afghan claims varied according to circumstances throughout the years, the overall British inclination towards Afghanistan vis-a-vis Iran in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is undeniable. The Afghan encroachments in Sistan motivated Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat to react. He recaptured parts of territories occupied by the Afghans. This victory resulted in political incorporation of Sistan into the Amirdom of Khozeimeh in 1865. As disputes between Iran and Afghanistan in Sistan intensified, British arbitration was sought and General Goldsmid's arbitral commission decided in 1872 that the eastern half of the province should be given to Afghanistan and Hirmand's main channel in the delta region should be recognised as a boundary between the two countries (see Chapter VI for details). Sistan remained as part of the Khozeimeh Amirdom until 1937 when it was included in the eighth Ostan (province) of Kerman and, later was included in the Ostan of Sistan and Baluchistan.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Sistan is almost a flat land, mostly made up of sediments from Hirmand river. The lowest point is Hamun-e Hirmand<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Extract from clause 3 of despatch No. 1291F of H.S. Barnes, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, to H.B. Majesty's Minister at the Court of Persia, dated Simla 29th May 1906. FO 60/730.

(2) Hamun is an ancient Persian word for "lake".

which drains all waters in the region. The surrounding lands have a very gentle, almost negligible slope towards the Hamun depression. To the west of this region, the southward continuation of the Eastern highlands separate Sistan from the Lut desert. The only mountainous part of Sistan is its north-western corner where the Bandan range ends, and its western flanks where Kuh-e Palangan represents the highest peak in the region. Although Sistan lies geographically in the Iranian plateau, most of it falls politically in Afghan territory with a small portion in Pakistan, and only 36,000 sq. km. in Iran; hence Iranian Sistan occupies the west-central part of the most depressed zone of the entire basin.

Of the geological features of Sistan, a relatively detailed survey carried out in the 1950's, remarks:

*"Iranian Sistan has a make-up very similar to that of the other depressions of eastern Iran and of Baluchistan. The mountainous chains which border it are made up of a very varied series of rocks, greatly disturbed tectonically, among which the Cretaceous and Eocene formations predominate, while the depressed zone is filled, for thicknesses not well-defined but certainly of some hundreds of meters, by recent Plio-pleistocene detrital formations."<sup>(1)</sup>*

The same report described soil formation in Sistan as being of three distinguishable series:

*"Three series of detrital formations which fill the depressions can be distinguished; from the bottom to the top, i.e. from the oldest to the most recent, they are the following: Sivalik formations (also called Gobi formations), in great part of the Pliocene age; pebbles and alluvial Pleistocene clays; recent accumulations."<sup>(2)</sup>*

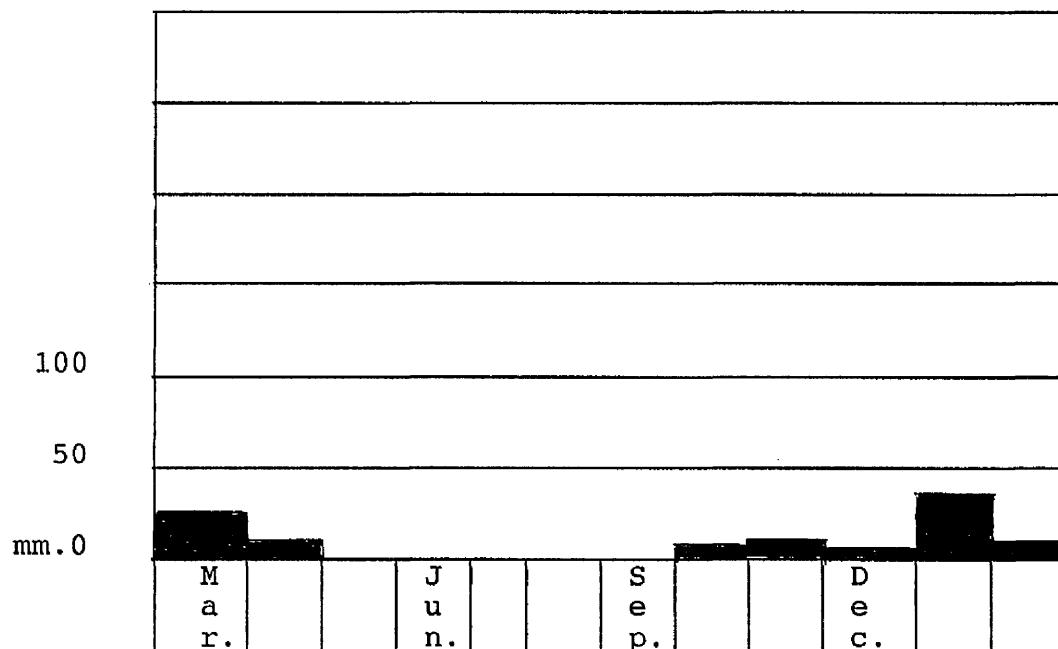
(1) Italconsult, "Socio-Economic Development Plan for the South-Eastern Region", Rome 1959, pp. 45-6.

(2) Ibid, p. 46.

These deposits forming almost the entire area of the Iranian Sistan, create one of the most fertile lands in the country, but its fertility cannot be utilised to its full capacity owing mainly to the shortage of precipitation and water.

Sistan's climate is classified as being of semi-desert kind. Great variations exist in the temperatures of day and night and between summer and winter. Summers continue for 5 to 7 months during which temperature rises to a very high level. The wind from the west brings little cloud and rain to Sistan. The annual precipitation in Sistan is about 2 inches or 40 millimetres.<sup>(1)</sup>

Another high velocity northerly wind blowing from the mountains of Afghanistan in the spring and early summer months with a speed of 70 to 100 miles ph., brings hot and dry air mixed with sand and continues for 110 to 120 days. This wind is locally known as Bad-e Sad-o bist Ruzeh "the wind of 120 days".



Average Annual Precipitation recorded in Sistan<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Murray, op. cit., p. 27.

(2) Mahmudi and others, op. cit., p. 41.

Sir Percy Sykes saw this wind at the turn of the twentieth century as a providence to Sistan because:

*"In fact, were it not for the Bad-i-Sad-u-Bist-Ruz or Wind of 120 days, Sistan could scarcely be inhabited. This providential blast blows across the district from April to July, and although hot and disagreeable, carries away malarial taint. When it dies away, the mass of the inhabitants, who struck me as a sickly race, suffer terribly from fever."*<sup>(1)</sup>

A western geographer who visited the region in the 1930s described this wind as:

*"So dry that it absorbs all moisture from every living organism".*<sup>(2)</sup>

This wind together with high temperature causes intense evaporation of the sheets of water in the region. Notwithstanding shortage of water in Sistan, Lake Hamun and River Hirmand are the main geographical features in the region.

#### A-Lake Hamun

Historically known as "Sea of Zereh" (see Lake Zarah - figure VIII), Lake Hamun, or Hamun-e Hirmand, is the most important lake of the eastern parts of the Iranian plateau due to its extension and perennial character, and above all, to the fact that its waters are fresh. As a major basin, Hirmand collects all waters of a considerably vast area, including about three-quarters of Afghanistan, and flood water from the mountains of its immediate vicinity.

This factor together with the lake's shallowness (apparently not more than 10 meters deep at most), on account, also, of minimum slope of the shore lands and finally, because of the inconstant regimes of the various tributaries, the surface

(1) Sykes, Major Percy, op. cit., p. 393.

(2) Gabriele, Alfons, "The Southern Lut and Iranian Baluchistan", Geographical Journal, XVII, (1938, p. 194).

occupied by the lake varies considerably in the course of the year, as well as from one year to another: "The sheet of water, at the end of the high-water period (May), can reach an area of about 3,200 sq. Km., and the waters mingle with those of the much smaller Hamun-e Puzak, situated in the Afghan territory, into which pours one of the branches of the delta of the Hirmand, the external Parian. Very soon, however, because of the rapid shrinking of the tributaries, the outflow of the Shallaq outlet, and the intense evaporation of the sheet of water, favored by the high temperatures and by the strong arid wind blowing in this period from the North-West (wind of 120 days), the surface area of the lake is reduced to a mere 1,200 sq. Km, thus diminishing by about 2,000 sq. Km., of which 800 sq Km. remain in swampy state, while 1,200 sq Km. become covered by canebrakes and pastures."<sup>(1)</sup>

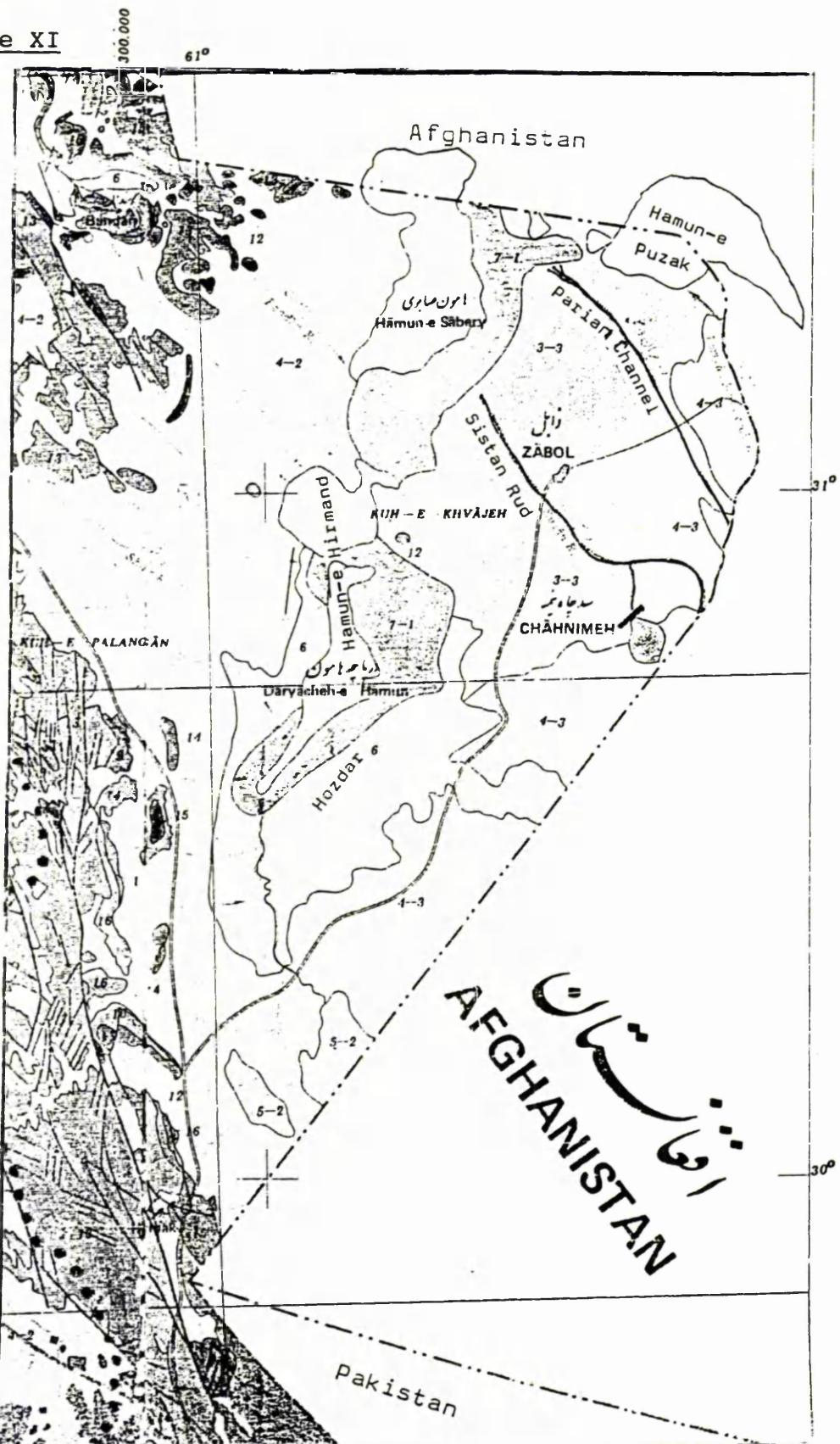
During the low water season the lake is divided into at least four separate sheets of water which are locally known as: Hamun-e Sabery to the north which is the deepest; Hamun-e Puzak to the north-east and inside Afghan territory; Hamun-e Shapour to the south; and a central pool which is considered as the main body of the lake and this is known as Hamun-e Hirmand (see figure XI). British Sistan arbitration Commissioner, General Frederick Goldsmid, who visited Sistan in 1871-2, after three years of drought, described the lake in the following terms:

"Another extraordinary change in Sistan is the drying up of the lake, which can be no longer held to exist. It does not appear difficult to account for the circumstance. For some three years before our arrival the drought had been terrific: the smaller feeders of the lake, the Farah-rud, the Adraskand, the Khash-rud, and their still smaller tributaries, had either not filled at all after the winter season, or in such a very moderate degree that their outflow into the lake was not sufficient to provide for the amount of water lost in the immense annual evaporation; while the Helmand, the principal feeder, instead of as in former years bursting after the winter through its bed, and rushing northward into the lake by its proper bed above Chakhansur, had been completely

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(1) Italconsult, op. cit., p. 48.

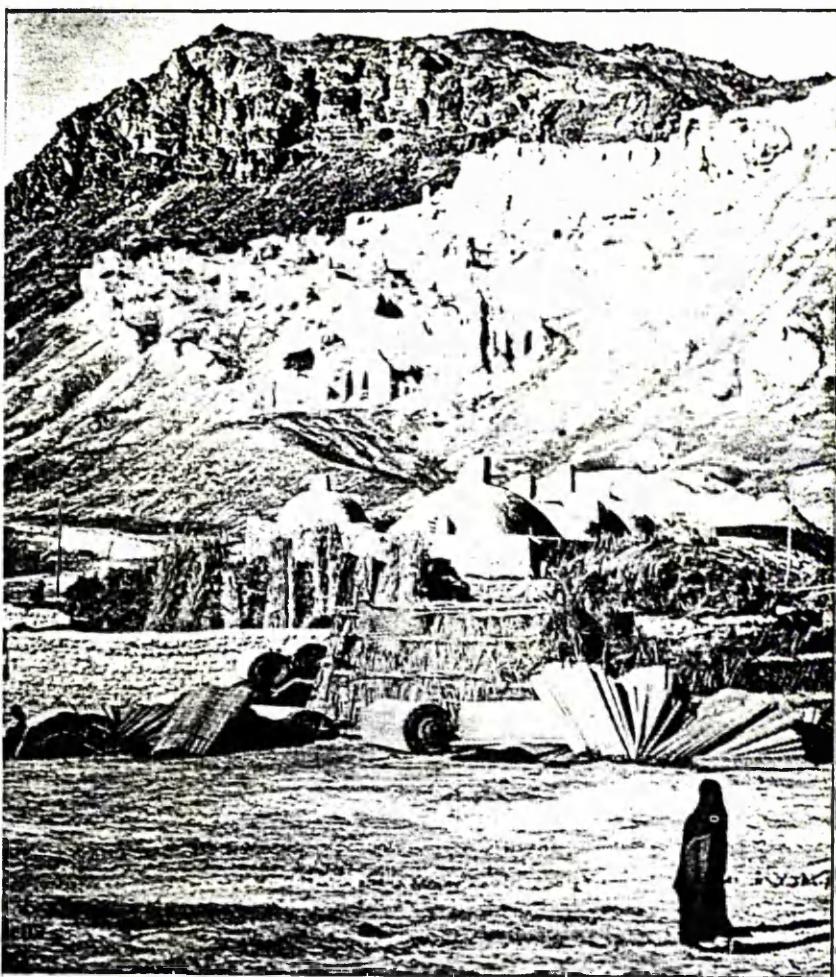
Figure XI



Hydrological Map of Sistan and Hamun  
(Source: Ministry of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran)  
Scale = 1:1000,000

diverted into the great canal by the permanent band constructed by the Amir at Kuhak; and whatever overflow might escape over or through the band would not now probably arrive at the north-eastern bed of the lake, which is to a great extent still covered with detached pools of stagnant water, will, if the present state of affairs continue, become completely dried up and a large area of immensely fertile soil be thus redeemed for cultivation; while the whole conditions of life in the province will undergo a very marked change - though it is difficult to imagine Sistan without its plague of insects and its countless myriad of snakes and water-fowl."<sup>(1)</sup>

The only landmark which stands out in Sistan plain is Kuh-e Khoajeh (stone mountain), a small island rising about one



*Kuh-e Khoajeh  
The eastern face - old ruins at the top  
and present dwellings below.*

(1) Goldsmid, General Sir F., "Eastern Persia", London 1876, pp. 272-3.

hundred meters above the level of the lake. This stoney and conical shaped mound with its flat top, is round and measures 2.5 X 2.0 kilometres. Its origin is said to be of a tabular lava filtration.<sup>(1)</sup> It is situated near the west shore of Hamun-e Shapor, and is separated from the shore by a narrow body of water, which, at flood time, is about 2 kilometres and less than 2 meters deep.<sup>(2)</sup>

Visiting the site at the end of the nineteenth century, Sir Percy Sykes wrote of Kuh-e Khoajeh:

"Kuh-i-Zor, Kuh-i-Rustam or Kuh-i-Khoja, the latter term being almost universal nowadays, is generally more or less of an island, although at the time of the Goldsmid Mission the lake was waterless. On the occasion of our visit, in order to approach it we employed tutin or reed rafts, which resemble bisected cigars, and are very fairly steady. The water being shallow, we had to wade in for some distance, and, upon reaching the raft, we sat upon a roll of felts. The ordinary tutin is some nine feet long and



*Sistani Men sailing Tutin or "Tuten"*

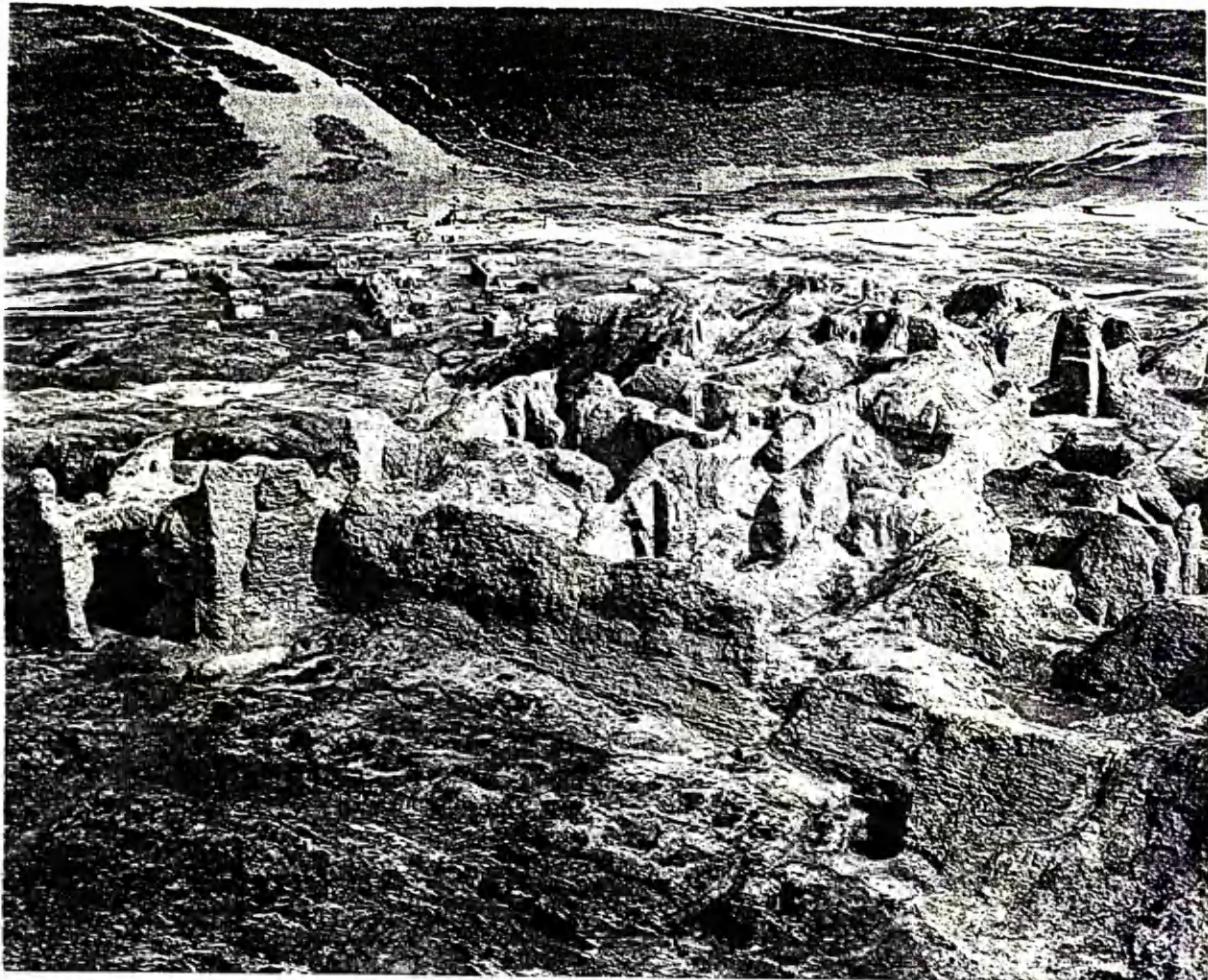
(1) Italconsult, op. cit., p. 49.

(2) Ibid.

two feet six inches wide, and lasts about ninety days after which the reeds rot. We occupied more than an hour in being slowly punted across the open water, which was brackish and perhaps four feet deep, there being very few reeds in this particular section.

"The Kuh-i-Khoja rises 400 feet above the plain and is only accessible on the south and south-east. I may mention that it is apple-shaped, with a diameter of about a mile...."(1)

Kuh-e Khoajeh - an impressive table-hill in Lake Hamun - is the site of an ancient palace and fire temple.



*The ruined palace and fire temple of  
Kuh-e Khoajeh, built in the Partho-Sassanian period*

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(1) Sykes, Sir Percy "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", Chapter XXXIII, p. 377.

Mark Aurel Stain, a Hungarian by birth who became British serving in India, and spent most of his life discovering traces of Alexander the Great, was the first European to discover the ruins of Kuh-e Khoajeh in Sistan. He published the results of his discovery in the Geographical Journal in 1916 and later in his book "Innermost Asia" (Oxford 1928).

The ruins of Kuh-e Khoajeh were visited by the German Orientalist Ernest Herzfeld in the winter of 1924-25. He carried out some excavation works on this site in the spring of 1929. He found buildings of great significance of the site, including a palace and a fire temple of Zoroastrianism, which probably date back to the Parthian and Sassanid periods. Some of the walls of the ruined palace were found lavishly decorated with colorful frescoes and an ornate stucco design.(1)



*One of the Parthian frescoes from the palace at Kuh-e Khoajeh: a man's head in profile.*

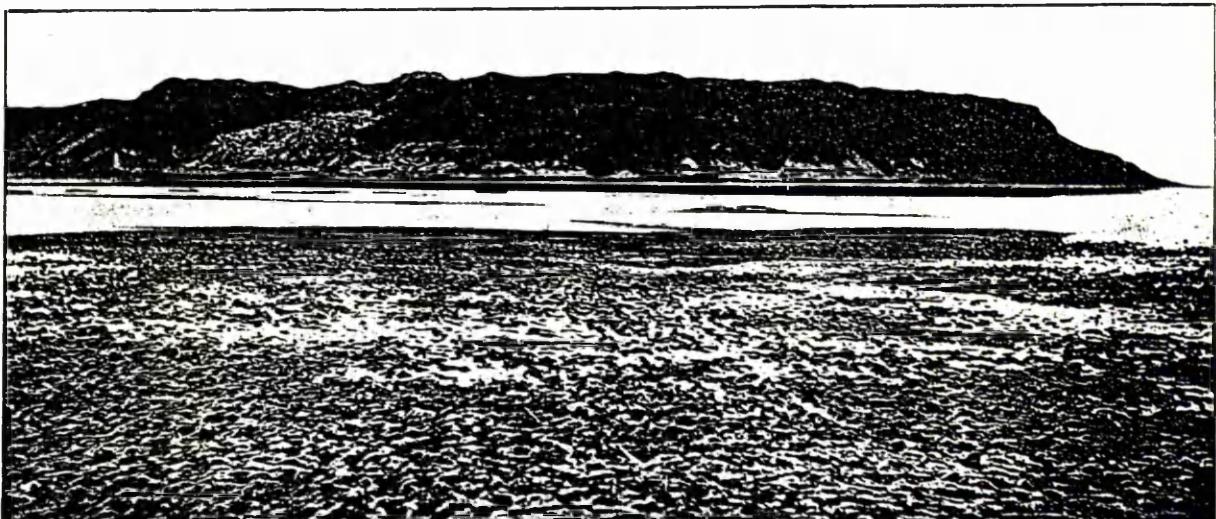
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(1) Hermann Georgina, "The Iranian Revival" of the Making of the Past Series, Oxford 1977, p. 19.

The separate sheets of Hamun water become one at flood times when the level of the lake rises considerably. The surplus water flows out, at the southern end of the lake, through Shila of Shallaq,<sup>(1)</sup> into the depression of God-e Zereh inside Afghan territory.

*"The Shallaq has an ample and well-cut bed in the plain adjacent to the crossing of the Zahedan-Zabol road, and its length of a hundred km. varies with the advance or regression of the waters of the Hamun on its southern shore."*

*"The dip of the Shallaq is proportionally small, inasmuch as the difference in level between the Hamun-e-Hirmand and the Goud-e-Zerre seems to be of no more than 20 m.; furthermore, the bottom of the watercourse is at a somewhat higher level than that of the lake. For these reasons, the flow of the Shallaq river is, in general, abundant only in the period of high waters, while in the remaining period of the year it is so strongly reduced as to disappear, while the water becomes saline after evaporation, which is quite intense, due to the largeness of the riverbed."<sup>(2)</sup>*



*Another view of Kuh-e Khoajeh as appeared  
on page 378 of Sykes' "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia"*

(1) Shila is a strange term in Persian, used locally in reference to the river bed connecting Hamun lake to the God-e Zereh. Some say its original form is Arabic "Masilah" meaning the channel of flood passage.

(2) Italconsult, op. cit., p. 49.

Visiting Hamun Lake towards the end of the nineteenth century, Colonel Yate has given the following geographical descriptions of the lake:

"A glance at the map will show that the Helmund, flowing from south to north along the eastern side of Persian Sistan, empties itself into the Hamuns or lakes on its north. When the snow in the mountains melts and the river is in flood these lakes overflow, and the surplus water flows back again from north to south along the western side of Sistan, eventually emptying itself into the Gaud-i-Zarih, the lake on the south. Just to the south of the two Hamuns is the large tract of country covered with high reeds known as the Naizar. The water in these reeds advances and recedes with the level of the lakes. We for instance had to pass through several miles of dry reeds before we got to the edge of the water on our way out from Nasirabad, and we also got in to Nasirabad from Bandar dryshod, but then 1893 was an exceptionally dry year."(1)

Hamun Lake's role in the life of Sistan is pivotal; it is the principal accumulation of fresh water in the entire Iranian plateau and, with its oscillations, permits the formation of extensive pastures. Its supply of underground waters is the source of life of the province. Its fish resources constitute one of life resources of Sistan population. The Neizar (reed forest) around it not only provides good grazing for the live stock and fine hunting grounds, but also is the source of many kinds of handicrafts for the local population. Colonel Yate's description of duck hunting in the Neizar, at the turn of the century, would probably give a clue as to the importance of Hamun's role in local life since time immemorial. He wrote:

"Next day we were out early, directly after breakfast, and first of all were shown how the Saiyads, as the Shikaris of Sistan are called, netted wild-fowl. In the open pools of water dry reeds are stuck in the mud, in rows at short intervals, and bent down on to the next so as to form long lines along the surface of the water, by which an obstacle is created. The ducks, when swimming, follow along these lines, and are thus diverted over the net. The net is fastened in the centre and at the corners to sticks driven

(1) Yate, op. cit., p. 81.

firmly into the ground. These sticks are then bent down outwards, two on one side and two on the other, under the water, and hitched into nicks in four stakes fixed in the ground opposite to each corner of the net when thus spread out, the sticks thus forming a powerful spring. The Saiyad sits concealed in the neighbouring reeds, and when a flock of ducks swim over the submerged net, he pulls a rope which releases the four sticks. These at once spring upright, thus bringing the two sides of the net together and enclosing the birds between them. The ducks caught are then pinioned in an ingenious manner by crossing their wings at the back of their heads and putting their feet up on their backs and sent to town for sale."<sup>(1)</sup>

Sir Percy Sykes also provides a visitor's view of the lake and life around it. He writes:

"Our first stage was Hamadi, situated close to the lagoon, which I now meant to explore thoroughly. Along its edges dwells a tribe of Saiads or fowlers, who struck me as being perhaps aborigines, both from their appearance and from the account they gave of themselves. Living close to them, but entirely distinct, are the Gaudar or cow-keepers, whose herds of cattle graze in the lagoon, feeding off the young reeds. Sistan is famous for its cows.

"The feather trade is their chief interest, only one or two families are engaging in fishing, but at present the results of their labour are entirely used for stuffing cushions, although, no doubt, in time, the sale of plumes will largely increase their incomes; the total output is 4000 lbs per annum.

"The birds are caught by means of nets held open by stakes, into which they are slowly driven, lanes being cut in the reeds or staked out in the open water as a further assistance. A man lying hidden on his tutin watches until his prey is swimming over his net, when he pulls a string, releases the stakes which form a rude spring, and the hapless fowl is his.

"Early one morning we rode to the Hamun, a dense jungle of reeds, down which runs the narrowest of creeks. Here we stepped on board our tutin and were slowly punted along an open lane about the width of a main road. On each side we heard the calls of countless birds, and many descriptions of hawks hovered above. The first bird shot was a bostani, which is non-migratory. To some extent it resembled the minaul pheasant of Kashmir, with blue plumage and

(1) Yate, op. cit., p. 80.

scarlet beak. Then coots swam across the water-way and a tiny blue bird darted about just like a kingfisher.

"After being punted for three or four miles, we reached the hunting-grounds, which consist of a series of lagoons opening one into the other. Here a few duck were bagged, and we passed a fisherman on his way home with twenty or more freshly caught fish. Some were three or four pounds in weight."<sup>(1)</sup>

Finally, the great mass of Hamun's waters cannot fail to affect strongly the weather of the surrounding region, both in terms of humidity in the air, and moderating action of thermic currents, whereas Hamun's fresh waters, much more limpid than those of the Hirmand River, can supply a drinking water distribution network throughout Sistan, its basin's underground water resources play a highly significant role in the agricultural life of the region and as drinking water supply for its population.

According to the statistics of 1985 from the Iranian Ministry of Energy, the Hamun basin's underground water supplies are 731 million cubic meters<sup>(2)</sup> per annum which constitutes for 1.6 per cent of total distribution in the country. Of this, 268.5 million cubic meters were from 449 deep wells in that year; 349 million cubic meters from 953 qanats; and 71 million cubic meters from 180 springs.<sup>(3)</sup>

#### B- Hirmand River

There are a number of streams emptying into Lake Hamun of which River Hirmand is the only perennial and the most important tributary. Hirmand's delta region is measured as being 150,000 sq. km. The course of this river, upstream of delta, lies entirely in Afghanistan (see figure XII). Rising

(1) Sykes, op. cit., Chapter XXXIII, pp. 386 - 7.

(2) This figure cannot be correct as the itemised figures add up to 1029 million cubic meters.

(3) Statistics from "Atlas-e Abhay-e Iran" (Atlas of Water Resources of Iran), Ministry of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran 1369 (1990), Vol. II, page 158.

in the kuh-e Baba range, north-west of Kabul, Hirmand flows in a north-east to south-west direction, towards Iranian Sistan, after meandering for 1050 km. in Afghanistan.

Throughout its course in Afghan territories, Hirmand receives a number of significant tributaries of which , two are most important; one, the Musa Qaleh which drains together with Hirmand upstream of central Afghanistan, southern slopes of Hindu-kosh and Afghan massif; the other, Arghandab (historically known as Khar-darya)<sup>(1)</sup> which drains southern mountains and plains of Afghanistan. Having received Musa Qaleh, Hirmand is joined by Arghandab near the city of Bist (or Bost) at the edge of mountain zone. Arghandab itself receives a number of tributaries of which Arghasan is the most important (see figure XII).

From Bist, Hirmand crosses the deserts of Rigestan and Dasht-e Marg for about 400 Km., within definite banks with respect to plain, before reaching Chahar Borjak which is the beginning of Greater Sistan; 70 km. upstream of the Iranian border, where there is a measuring station (see figure XII).

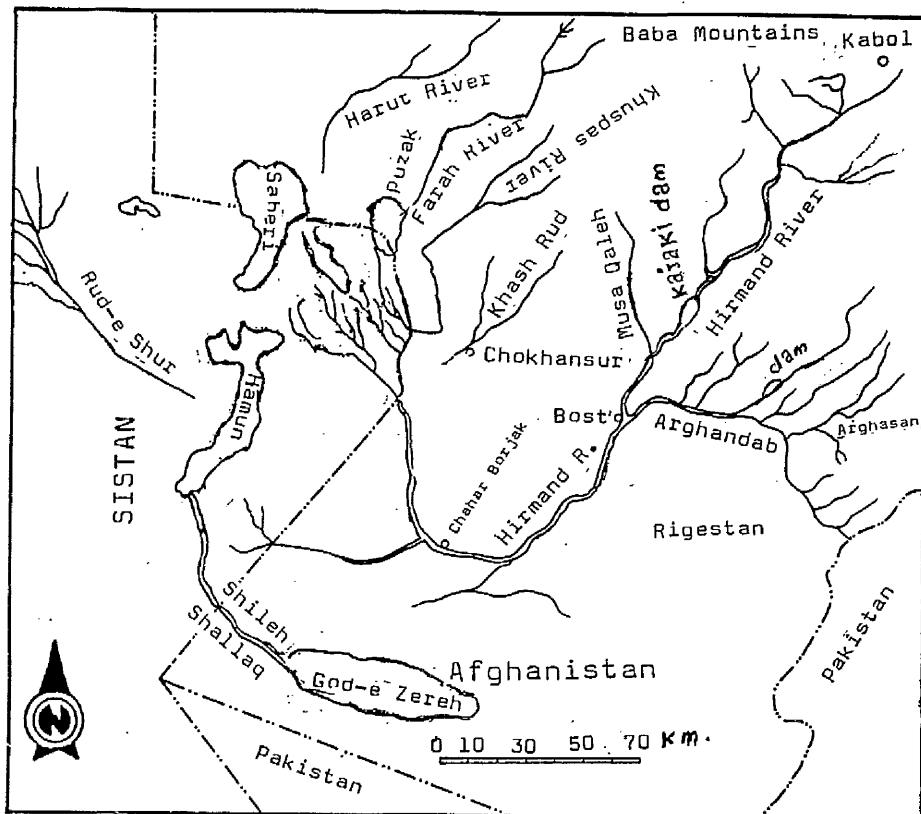
Of particulars of Hirmand river in Afghanistan, Mr Tate of Colonel McMahon's Sistan Arbitration team, remarked at the turn of the twentieth century:

"The average fall of the river-bed is probably not less than thirty-five feet in a mile.... below Girishk the fall in the river-bed diminishes rapidly.

"The valley of the Helmand below Khwaja Ali, where it runs almost due east and west, presents a very peculiar feature. On the north the valley hugs closely the edge of the Dasht-i-Margo, while to the south it is separated from the basin of the Gaud-i Zireh only by a watershed which in places is a mere dividing wall, on which the effect of the wind's action can clearly be traced. Abreast of Rudbar the valley is three hundred feet higher than the Gaud-i-Zireh, and the narrow trough in which the Helmand lies, though all the time descending gradually towards the west, never reaches the level of the Gaud."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Literally meaning "Great River".

(2) Tate, G.P., "The Frontier of Baluchistan = Travel on the borders of Persia and Afghanistan", London 1909, pp. 283 - 241.

Figure XII*Hirmand and its Tributaries in Afghanistan*

Of the waters that Hirmand drains and successfully brings to its delta annually, more than one billion cubic meters are used for agricultural irrigation in the Zabol plain every year. The Afghans have constructed a number of dams of various kinds along the course of Hirmand and Arghandab causing reduction in the annual amount of water reaching Sistan. The utilisation of the accumulated waters, if limited to the middle basin of the Hirmand, would have a strong repercussion on the delta region, where the amounts to be destined for irrigation and those flowing into the lake would diminish. From this, there would be a consequent reduction in the size of the lake, and should the outflow of the waters through Shila-Shallaq to God-e Zereh cease, a progressive increase in the salinity of the waters and in the severity of the climate with disastrous consequences for both Sistan and south-west Afghanistan. (For information on the annual variations in the volume of water reaching delta region and variation of volume from one year to another, see Chapter VIII on Hirmand Water Disputes).

In the delta region which begins at Kuhak, Hirmand divides into two main branches of the Sistan River and Rud-e Parian (Parian-e Moshtarak), each, in turn, subdividing into many branches and canals.

In the following table are given, for the individual hydrological years of the period 1947-1952 from Mehr to Sharivar (about October to September), the amounts of flow into the delta by the main branch of the Hirmand; annual, monthly maximums (mostly Shahrivar) expressed in millions of cubic meters:

"Year	Annual Flow	Monthly Flow	
		max.	min.
1947-48	3,400	956	11
1948-49	3,620	958	15.5
1949-50	4,460	1,063	34.8
1950-51	4,580	1,165	52.7
1951-52	3,990	1,026	46.3

"It should be noted that, in the period of the observations, no year had particularly small flows, such as 1946-47, when the entire annual volume of flow of the Hirmand at Chahar Burjak was less than 2,220 million cu. m. and the minimum monthly flow was less than 1 million cu. m.

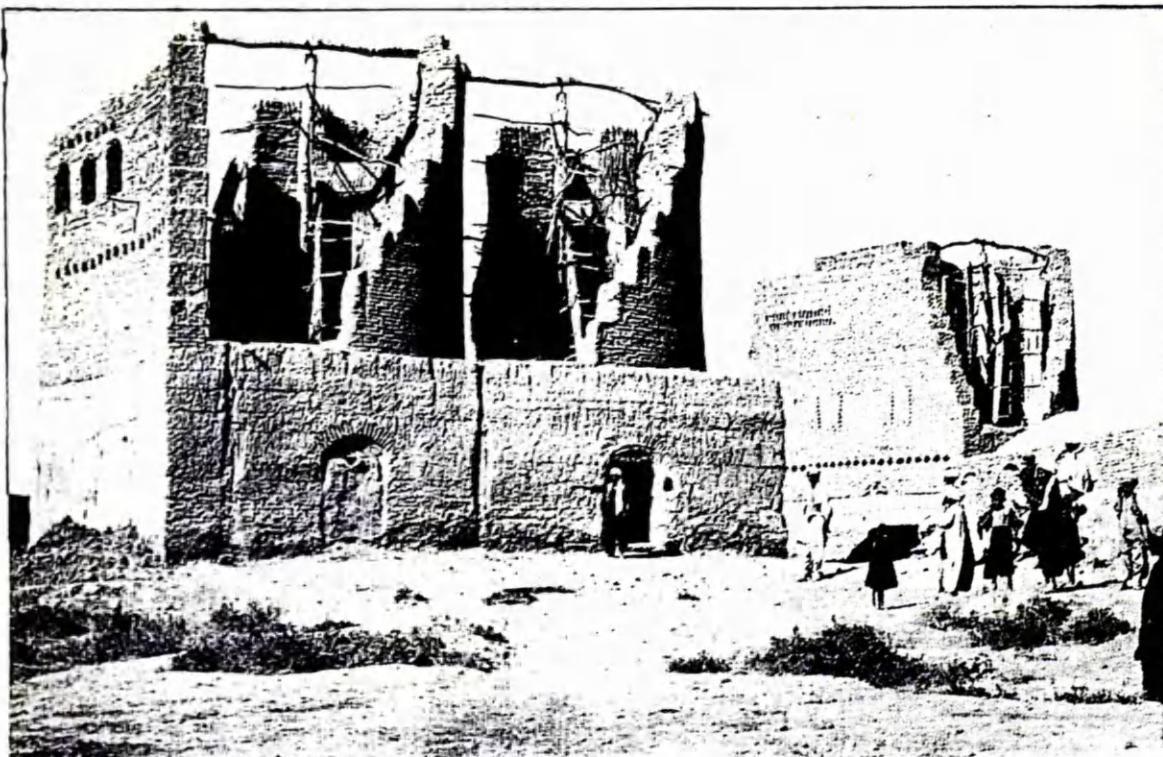
"The variability of the flows of the Sistan proves to be less accentuated than that of the Hirmand, as it receives the greater part of the low flow of the Hirmand, while the high flow discharges principally into the Parian, as results from the following amounts of mean monthly capacity (Iranian Calendar) at Kuhak in the period 1947-52, expressed in % of mean value of the entire period (127 cu. m./sec.)

Month	M	A	A	D	B	E	F	O	K	T	M	C
	12	23	34	50	89	155	262	296	183	61	24	11

"The variability of the annual flow of the Hirmand is also noteworthy; it varies, for example, at Chahar Burjak, from 2.2 to 6.5 thousand million cu. m. in a period of only four years."<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Italconsult, op. cit., p.54.



An Old Windmill in Nehbandan

#### WATER CONSERVATION

Considering Sistan plain's physical characteristics and rapid evaporation together with reduction in the volume of Hirmand water reaching the delta region, implementation of water conservation plans in Sistan will be of great consequence to the province. Several bands (dams made of wood and branches) have existed on Parian, Sistan and the main channel of the Hirmand for centuries. Of these "Band-e Kuhak" at the point where the Sistan River branches out, "Band-e Parian" or "Band-e Jangjah" where Rud-e Parian takes off, and "Band-e Kamal Khan" on the main channel of the Hirmand inside Afghanistan are more famous.

In the years between 1950 and 1954, the fixed cross-channels of Kuhak and Zahak were constructed by the Bongah-e Abyari (Irrigation Foundation) of Iran. Their principal characteristics are:

"Kuhak cross-channel: in reinforced concrete, surmounted by sluice gates, 67 m. long, sustained by the left bank of the river and linked to the right bank with an embankment 95 m. long, with upstream slope faced with reinforced concrete slabs.

"Ten sluice gates, each 5.80 m. long and 4.30 m. high, impound the waters. The sill altitude is 543.20 m. above sea level; the normal high water surface is 3.80 m. above this level, or 547 m. above sea level.

"Downstream from the cross-channel, a stilling basin has been built, 14 m. long and 1 m. deep, with piles to break the rush of the water.

"The diversion works of the Azar canal, to which the function of supplying the Miankangi has been definitely assigned, are placed on the right embankment of the cross-channel, and are composed of three arches, 2.5 m. long, with a sill altitude of 544.40 m., intercepted by sluice gates of 2.50 X 2.80 m.

"The canal, downstream of the diversion works, has its initial section placed in the embankment which, as aforementioned, completes the barrage on the right; after that, it is excavated in the right bank of the Sistan river.

"The capacity diverted in the Azar canal, according to a capacity measurement taken on 19 April 1958, was 12.4 cu. m./sec., with a hydrometric reading in the canal of 2.37 m. and a water level above the cross-channel, at 546.20 m. of altitude, of about 80 cm., i.e. lower than the height of normal high water surface.

"Zahak cross-channel: has been placed in a particularly narrow section of the Sistan river, with a resultant barrier length of 53.40 m. The cross-channel, in reinforced concrete with sill altitude of 538.70 m., was built with eight openings, each one 5.80 m. wide, barred by sluice gates of 5.80 X 3.80 m. The normal high water surface level is 543 m. above sea level.

"The headworks for irrigation are situated a little upstream of the cross-channel; on the right bank, that of the Nahr Shahr, with three arches of 2.50 m., with a sill altitude of 540.40 m., intercepted by sluice gates of 2.50 X 3.10 m.; on the left bank, that of Nahr Taheri, it is composed of a single arch of 2.50 m., with a sill altitude of 540.80 m., intercepted by a sluice gate of 2.50 X 2.60 m.

"Measurement of the capacity in these canals have not been made, but from local information it seems to be around 6 cu. m./sec. for each of them."(1)

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(1) Italconsult, op. cit., pp. 56 - 7.

More recently (1972), an artificial reservoir lake was constructed at the Chah-Nimeh depression to accumulate the waters of spring through which used to run unused into the Hamun; making use of the waters of its artificial lakes in summer and autumn months (see figure XIII). The outstanding particulars of this project can be summed up as follows: "The capacity of the impounding area between elevation 547 and 541 is about  $110 \times 106$  cu. m., with 94 useful volume, net of surface evaporation; this amount of water will enable the natural flow of the Sistan in its four lowest months (generally August-November) to be increased by around 10 cu. m./sec.; the average flow during this period will rise from 30 to 90% (estimated on the basis of the years 1942-43 and 1947-1951 for which flow measurements are available), and the increase of the minimum monthly flow will be more than 100%."<sup>(1)</sup>

This reservoir covers about 4700 hectares with a capacity of 660 m. cu. meters.

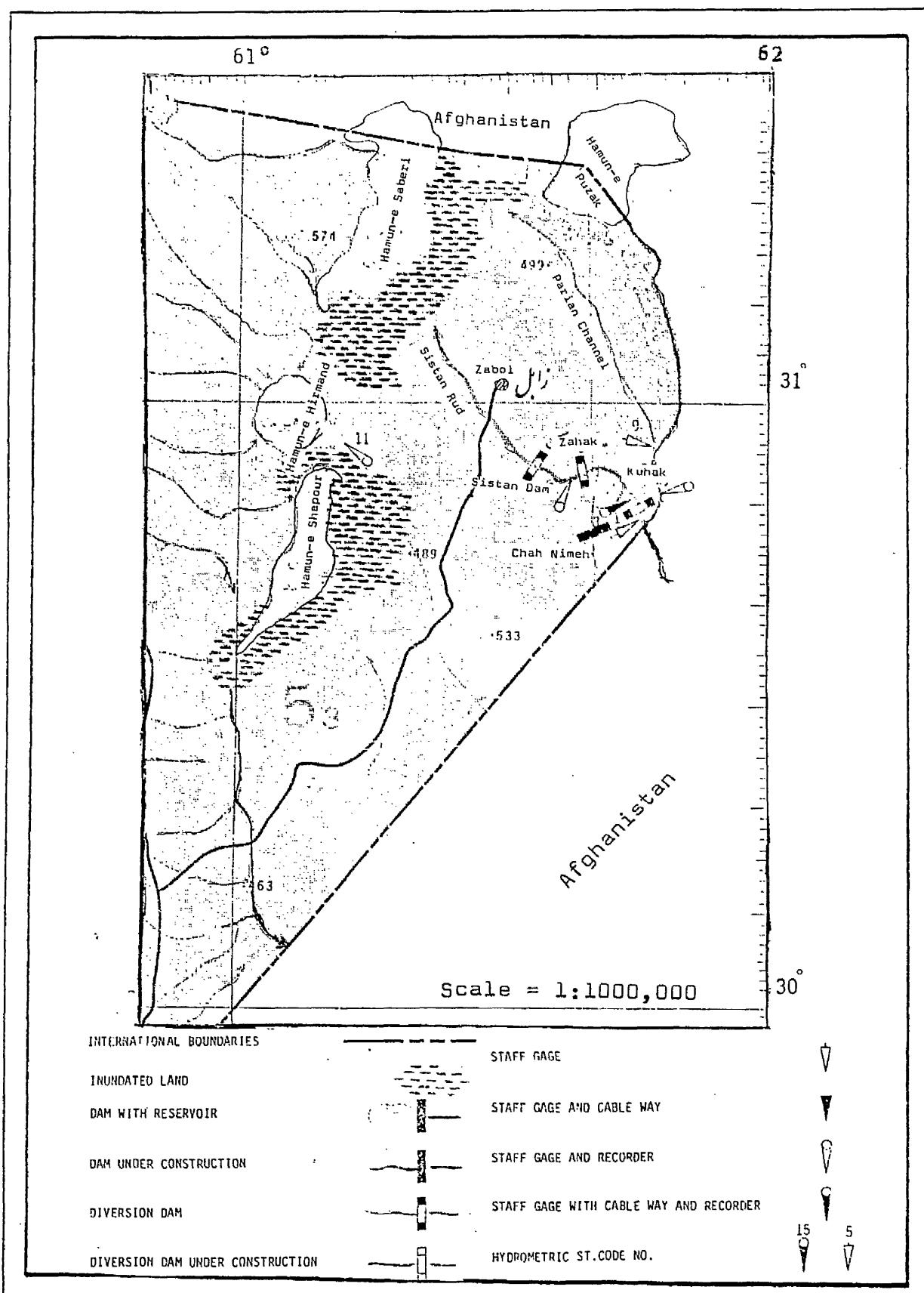
The principal river channels, other than Hirmand, that run into the lake, from east and north and north-eastern sides are, from west to east; Khash, Khuspas, Farah and Harut rivers. All these are of the nature of torrents, rising swiftly and subsiding almost as rapidly. For the greater part of the year they contain no flowing water in their beds for some distance above Lake Hamun.

The Khash river ceases to exist at the Oasis of Khash in Afghanistan. Its channel is fairly well defined down to Chokhansur, and can be traced till it finally loses itself in the north-eastern pocket of the lake Hamun-e Puzak which is situated mainly in Afghan territory. Like Hirmand, the spring is the season of the heavy flooding which finds its way into the lake in a considerable volume, after irrigating Chokhansur district.

(1) *Atlas-e Abhay-e Iran*, op. cit., p. 159.

Figure XIII

## Lakes, Dams and Reservoirs in Sistan



(Based on a map produced by the  
Ministry of Energy of the IRI 1990)

Rud-e Khospas, further north-west of Khash, is of the same character, but before reaching the lake it dwindles to a narrow ditch full of brine and fringed with reeds.

Farah Rud drains the Ghur country and flows southward towards the Hamun after passing through Farah District in Afghanistan. Floods of great violence flow down this river into the lake for a very short period of the year.

Harut river enters Hamun-e Saberi about 20 miles north of the confluence of Farah river. Like the other three, it rarely adds any water to the volume of the lake (see figure XII).

There are a number of insignificant seasonal and occasional streams discharging flood waters into the lake from the hill sites of the west of the Hamun. The most important of these, is Rud-e Bandan which discharges its flood waters into the lake no more than once or twice in five or six years.

Waters from these rivers, especially from the Hirmand, if reached Sistan delta uninterrupted, as Hirmand waters did throughout the history down to the beginning of the twentieth century when the region was known as the "bread basket of Khorasan", Sistan would indeed be no less than the Nile delta in Egypt. Making such comparisons between the two, Sir Percy Sykes writes:

*"I have been much struck by the resemblance that exists between Sistan and Egypt on the one hand and Sarhad and Palestine on the other, Sistan absolutely depends on the Helmand, much as Egypt does on the Nile, both districts being the granaries of the surrounding tribes. Again, in Sarhad, just as in Palestine, drought renders the land uninhabitable, the flocks of sheep and goats dying from want of nourishment, and, during my journey across Sarhad, every enquiry as to absent tribes elicited the invariable reply 'Gone to Sistan.'*

*"In the same way as the patriarch Abraham, and later on Jacob, were forced to seek Egypt, to preserve their families alive, so today the nomads of Sarhad are collected in and around Sistan, although the skeletons that we passed proved that there had been a considerable loss of life on the road. To complete the parallel, just as the traveller to Egypt traversed the Arabian Desert, partly in sight of the Mediterranean Sea, so too the famine-stricken herdsmen painfully urge their worn-out flocks across the desert*



A village dwelling near Lake Hamun,  
made of reeds from the Neizar of Hamun.

*to Sistan and see the great Hamun, and then the glistening Helmands, which, like the Nile, guarantees the wanderer and his flocks from death by hunger." (1)*

This was Sistan until the beginning of the twentieth century when there was no interruption in the flow of the Hirmand waters into the delta region. Construction of dams and canals in Afghanistan has resulted in the decrease in volume of Hirmand water with consequent diminishing waters of the lake and with disastrous results on the irrigation and other economic life of the region (see Chapter VIII for more details on Hirmand water disputes).

#### ECONOMIC UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Water shortage is not the only handicap slowing down economic development of Sistan. Complicated and often uncertain land ownership together with tribal culture create a powerful mixture which hampers economic development of this highly fertile region.

The arable lands of Sistan - 90,000 hectares in total - were declared in 1865 as "Khaleseh" or Government owned. This was a measure of punishment against local Sardars who owned most of the lands in Sistan and who had put Amir Alam Khan III the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan under siege in spite of his efforts in safeguarding Sistan from the Afghan encroachments (see Chapters II and IV for more details). These lands remained Khaleseh and under-developed until 1932 when the Government began leasing them to the local Sardars. This measure did not solve the problem. The Sardars did little to develop agricultural lands while their exploitation of the peasantry and their non-payment of rent levies resulted in successive decisions by the government between 1932 and 1940 in redistributing lands among local Sardars and peasants. This policy though positive, did not settle the question of complicated tribal affiliation and land ownership.

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(1) Sykes, op. cit., pp. 373 - 4.

The arable lands of Sistan are now as follows:

"According to the quotations made by the Khalise, the surfaces are calculated in share, that is in pieces of land of about 3.6 -4 hectares.

"At present the share subject to payment are the following, in the four areas into which the region is divided (the two last ones are now joined together):

Miankangi (North)	8,000
Posht Ab (Centre)	7,000
Shib Ab (South)	8,000
Shariqi Nahruei (South-east)	4,000

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27,000."(1)

#### POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

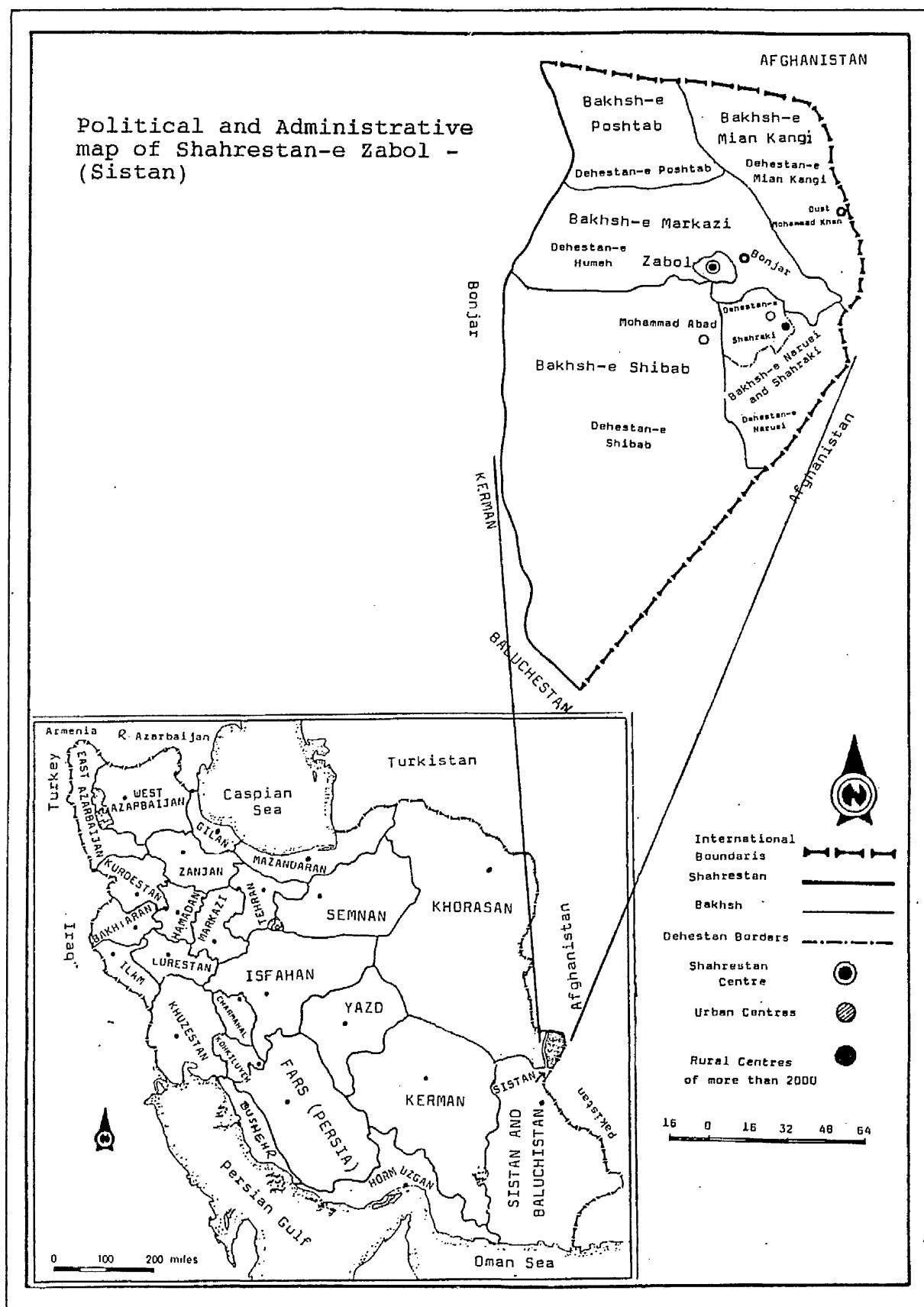
Frequently referred to in the historical documents as the "bread basket of Khorasan", Sistan has, throughout history, always been an important political centre in addition to its significant economic situation. It has always been a highly significant political division of Iran. It was ruled by the Saffarid kings in early Islamic centuries. Then a number of local dynasties ruled Sistan, including the Keyani family, and then ruled by various local Sardars. As from 1856 Sistan was incorporated into the Amirdom of Khozeimeh of Qaenat and remained so until 1937 when it came under the direct rule of the central government of Iran as part of the province of Kerman in the new political and administrative arrangement of the country introduced that year.

Sistan's political importance has diminished in the modern times with its diminishing economic significance as a result of water shortage in the region. In the current political and administrative arrangement of Iran, even the name "Sistan" is replaced by the name of its capital "Zabol" and it constitutes for a shahrestan in the larger province of Baluchistan, whereas the name "Sistan" is added to the name

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(1) Italconsult, op. cit., p. 64.

Figure XIV



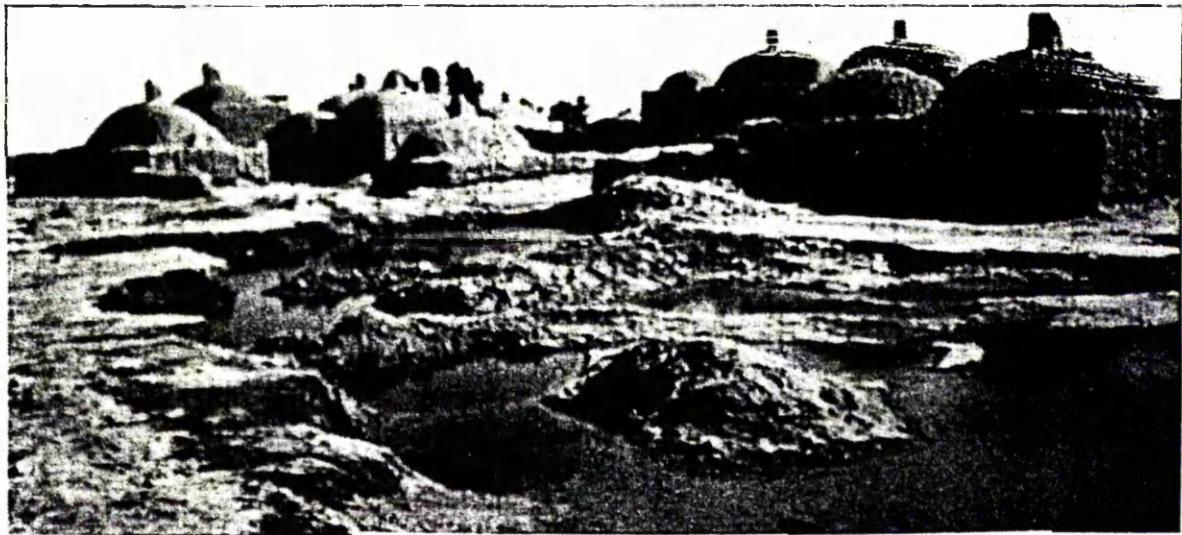
(Based on the map of Sistan appeared in  
 Markaz-e amar-e Iran,  
 General Census of 1986, Vol. 142 - 3, p. 17)

of the province of "Sistan and Baluchistan". The reason must be the presence of a larger Baluch population in Sistan.

Shahrestan-e Zabol (Sistan), with a land area of 8,117 sq. km. is one of six shahrestans of the province of "Sistan and Baluchistan". Internally, this shahrestan is divided into five bakhshs, six dehestans and 847 towns and villages, with the city of Zabol as its centre.

With a population of 274,611 in 1986<sup>(1)</sup> which represented a density of 33.8 per sq. km., this shahrestan is the most populated region in the entire Eastern Iranian borderlands. Of this population, 16,346<sup>(2)</sup> were immigrants which is about seven per cent of the total population, and are almost exclusively Afghan refugees. The majority of Sistan's population belong to various Baluchi tribes, of which, Nahruei, Shahraki, and Keyani (non-Baluch clan) are more well known. Shahrestan-e Zabol is made up of five bakhshs which are:

- 1 - Bakhsh-e Markazi with the city of Zabol as its administrative centre. This bakhsh has only one dehestan which is Dehestan-e Hume, with Bonjar as its centre (see figure XIV).



*Gazmeh - A village in Sistan*

(1) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran (Statistic Centre of Iran), General Census of Mehr 1365 (September - October 1986), Vol. 142 - 3, p. 1.

(2) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, op. cit., p. 3.

- 2 - Bakhsh-e Mian Kangi which also has only one dehestan, with the town of Dust Mohammad Khan as its centre.
- 3 - Bakhsh-e Poshtab (Posht Ab) with one dehestan of the same name.
- 4 - Bakhsh-e Shibab (Shib Ab) with one dehestan of the same name, and with Mohammad Abad as its centre.
- 5 - Bakhsh-e Nahruei and Shahraki with two dehestans:  
 A. Dehestan-e Nahruei on the Afghan border; and  
 B. Dehestan-e Shahraki with Khamak as its centre (see figure XIV).

(1)

The city of Zabol (population 75,105) had, in the past, been called "Nesratabad" or "Nasgrabad" or "Shahr-e Sistan" which was built by Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan, in the late 1860s. Prior to that, the town was known as "Zahedan" or "City of Saggestan" for centuries until it was believed to have been razed to the ground by Amir Teimur Lane in about AD 1383. (2)

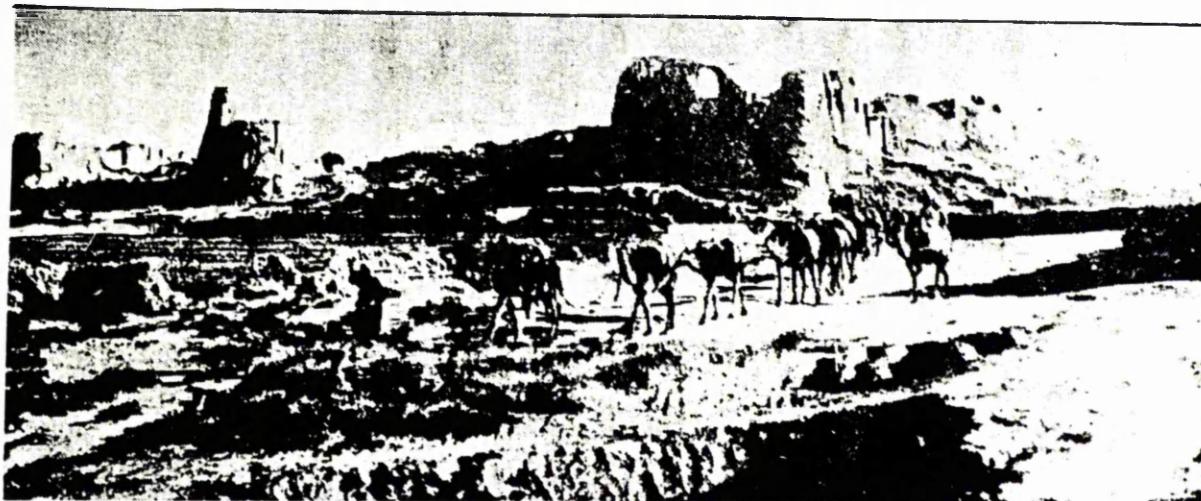
Visiting Nasirabad in 1871, General Goldsmid described the town as:

"The new Fort or Town of Nasirabad, simply called the 'Shahr', or town, by the natives of the province, is built in the shape of a quadrangle, with very strong and high mud walls, having towers at regular intervals along its face, and surrounded on all sides by a deep wet ditch of considerable breadth, between which and the walls a covered way, some twelve feet broad, leads all round the fort. The present fort measures, according to a rough calculation, 400 by 500 yards, and is called by the natives the Shahr-i-Kadim (old city), in contradiction to the Shahr-i-Nau (new city) which is gradually being built contiguous to it, and to mark the limits of which a mud wall has been raised, prolonging the sides of the Shahr-i-Kadim, and with a face to the north. The dimensions of this new fort will be about 1000 yards by 600 yards, and it will enclose an area of nearly half a square mile. Within this space the ancient Sistan village of Husainabad has been enclosed; a fact which has apparently occasioned some confusion in India, for, in a report by Colonel Phayre, the Persians are described as strengthening a fort name Husainabad, on the banks

(1) *Markaz-e Amar-e Iran*, op. cit., p. 3.

(2) *Le Strange*, op. cit., p. 335.

of the Helmand, near Traku, whereas the allusion is evidently to this rising city of Nasirabad. The new town is almost entirely populated by people from Kain and Khurasan, but the village of Husainabad contains original Sistani inhabitants. Twenty thousand people were driven by famine into the province last year, from Persia, and have of course received every possible inducement to settle down, and so propagate Persian influence; and all the necessaries of life are cheap and abundant. The quasi-modern capital, though quite close to the populous and fertile portion of the province, has been built in the middle of a most desolate tract of country."<sup>(1)</sup>



*Ruins of Zahedan near Zabol*

Of the important and populous localities in Sistan, other than Zabol and Dust Mohammad Khan, one is Sekuhéh in the southern section of Sistan. General Goldsmid provides a comprehensive description of this locality in the mid-nineteenth century, when, unlike the present time, Skuheh was an important town in Sistan. He wrote: "The town of Sekuhéh, which derives its name from three clay or mud hills in its midst, is built in an irregular circular form around the base of the two principal hills. The southernmost part of these hills is surmounted by the ark or citadel, an ancient structure known as the citadel of Mir Khúhak Khan (the grandfather of Sardar Ali Khan); which is at present neither armed nor garrisoned, though kept in excellent

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(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., pp. 266 - 7.

repair. Adjoining this and connected with it, is the second hill called the Burj-i-Falaksar, on which stands the present Governor's house; and about 150 yards to the west is the third hill, not so high as the other, two, undefended and with no buildings on it but a mud caravanserai. The two principal hills thus completely command the town lying at their base, and are connected with one another by a covered way. Sekuha is quite independent of an extra-mural water supply, as water is always obtainable by digging a few feet below the surface anywhere inside the walls, which are twenty-five feet high, strongly built of mud and in good repair. The houses are half dome-shaped and half flat-roofed, and we noticed that in almost every courtyard were tethered two or more excellent donkeys. The population, which is somewhat migratory, numbers about 5000 all told, living in 1200 houses.<sup>(1)</sup>

The other important locality is the town and district of Hozdar to the south-east of Lake Hamun. Sir Percy Sykes described this locality at the end of the nineteenth century as follows:

"Hauzdar, as we saw it, is comparatively modern, and consists of an irregular, many-sided wall inside which were hundreds of houses, the largest being two-storied. It was at one time the property of the Rais tribe, but the Sarabandi chief, having gained a footing by marriage, seized the fort and dispossessed its previous owners, most of whom were probably killed."<sup>(2)</sup>

### PART III: BALUCHISTAN - DISTRICT AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

What is now the border province of Sistan and Baluchistan, is a collection of pieces of three ancient provinces of Iran; Sistan to the north, western half of old Baluchistan in the centre, and Makran to the south. Apart from Sistan which

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., pp. 258 - 9.

(2) Sykes, op. cit., p. 373 (footnote).

has previously been discussed, the rest of this border province will be discussed here without any attempt being made in distinguishing between Baluchistan and Makran, as little exists in the way of difference between the two in terms of geographical and population features. With a land area of 181,471 sq. km. which is 11.1% of total land area of Iran, this province is bounded by Pakistan on the east, Sistan and Khorestan on the north, Kerman on the west and the north-west corner of the Indian Ocean (Sea of Oman) on the south.<sup>(1)</sup>

Baluchistan was one of the Satrapies of the Achaemenian Empire and was ruled by local chiefs for centuries as dependencies of Iran until 1870 when the province was divided between Iran and the British Indian Empire. The eastern half of Baluchistan, together with the districts of Sind and Punjab and Pakhtunistan formed the country of Pakistan in 1948.

The mountains of this province form the central link of mountain ranges which start from Zagros and continue into Pakistan. These mountains are joined by another mountain range which cover the border lands of Qaenat and west of Sistan and continue the Khorestan ranges in a southerly direction (see figures I and II).

These mountain ranges are not interconnected in all parts of the province. The internal depressions have created separate ranges in Baluchistan which are:<sup>(2)</sup>

A - Kuh-e Taftan of Khash and Mirjaveh, locally known as the Kuh-e Chehel Tan, with its highest peak 4042 metres above sea level. This volcanic mountain is semi-active which erupts from time to time.

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(1) Iran Almanac, op. cit., p. 20.

(2) Iran Almanac, op. cit., p. 20.

- B - Kuh-e Bazman of the north of Jazmurian depression with its highest peak 3497 metres above sea level. This range separates the Jazmurian depression from the Lut desert with Pirshiran range on its west.
- C - Kuh-e Malek Siah of north of Zahedan with its highest peak 1642 metres above sea level. This mountain is also volcanic but non-active and its highest peak is the point where Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan boundaries meet.
- D - Kuh-e Birg, mostly situated in the Shahrestan-e Saravan.
- E - Kuh-e Bamposht which is situated between Saravan and Chah-Bahar near the sea shore.

Baluchistan has four drainage basins, disregarding Sistan. Of these, two are internal (Jazmurian and Lut); one external (Hamun-e Mashkil); and the fourth being the Oman Sea. Of these four systems, the Hamun-e Mashkil and Oman Sea are of concern in this chapter:

- 1 - Hamun-e Mashkil is a seasonal lake situated within Pakistani territory with its westernmost corner falling inside Iranian territory. There are a number of tributaries to this lake from the Iranian Baluchistan, the most important of which are Mashkil and Tahlab.
- A. Rising in the mountains of eastern parts of Baluchistan, in the vicinity of Esfandak and Kuhak, Mashkil river flows eastwards into Pakistan and after receiving a number of streams from around Panjgur, turns towards north, eventually discharging in the Hamun-e Mashkil. The most important tributary of this river on the Iranian side is Rud-e Nahang.

- B. Tahlab or "Talkhab", locally pronounced as Talab, rises in the mountains of Mirjaveh and Zahedan (Kacheh Kuh) and flows in a south-east direction as far as Hamun-e Mashkil after forming Iran-Pakistan boundary for about one hundred kilometres (see figure VIII).
- 2 - Of the rivers flowing directly into the Oman Sea, on the Iranian side of the border, Rud-e Sarbaz or Bahu Kalat is the most important. Rising in the mountains of Bampur and Iranshahr, this river flows, in a north-west to south-east direction, as far as Sarbaz and Firouzabad. From below this point, it changes its course towards south-west and after passing by Bahu Kalat receives a major tributary from Qasr-e Qand, and once again changes its course into a south-easterly direction and discharges its water in the Govater Bay.
- 3 - Of the Jazmurian tributaries, Rud-e Bampor and Halil Rud are the most important.<sup>(1)</sup>
- 4 - Two systems of Rud-e Shur and Nahrud drain flood waters of north-east of Baluchistan into Lut desert.

The Iranian Government is planning the construction of two dams in Baluchistan on Halil Rud and Rud-e Sarbaz.<sup>(2)</sup>

Akin to its dry surface, Baluchistan's underground water resources are not very impressive. The annual underground water discharge in the province is about 535.4 million cubic metres. The following table provides detailed information of this province's method and volume of underground water discharge per annum.

(1) Mokhber, op. cit., p. 104.

(2) Atlas-e Abhay-e Iran, op. cit., p. 159.

Table of Underground Water Utilised in  
(m. cm.) Baluchistan

Region	Deep Wells	semi-deep Wells	Qanat	Spring	Total Annual Discharge
Zahedan	48	210	56	6	32.5
Gohar Kuh	40	198	107	26	70.6
Ladis	5	10	117	30	58.1
Nosrat Abad	5	20	12	12	2.8
Gorgi Ziarat	2	50	40	1	3.6
Rusak	29	145	31	1	34.7
Kacheh Rud	39	20	22	2	31.4
Hormak	8	4	13	5	4.0
Kurin and Shuru	8	236	24	2	42.0
Khash	107	209	18	49	84.0
Posht Kuh	16	94	21	6	38.7
Abkhoan	12	76	17	1	11.0
Saravan	5	169	34	12	31.0
Sib and Muran	150	189	15	18	56.7
Hasar Rais	5	18	25	2	4.3
Total	479	1630	552	173	505.4 m. cm.

(Source: Bank of Agriculture (of Iran),  
 "Report on Potential and Actual Possibilities of  
 The Province of Sistan and Baluchistan", no date, p. 11)

Excavation of deep and semi-deep wells was promoted in Baluchistan in late 1950s and early 1960s when Ministry of Agriculture actively encouraged them. The consequences proved to be damaging to the underground water resources of

the province. The underground water table dropped and many old qanats ran out of water. Whereas qanats do not harm the underground water table and their function is principally similar to that of the natural spring, water has to be pumped out of the wells artificially and in large volumes which damages the limited underground water table of dry countries like Baluchistan. Interviewed on Sunday 17th May 1992, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, who was once Governor General of Baluchistan and then Deputy Minister of Agriculture, with family ties and interests in Baluchistan, told this author:

*"I was against promotion of deep wells in Baluchistan and argued against it with the Minister Mr Ruhani who did not agree with me and continued promoting it for years. I argued that deep wells will damage the underground water resources in that dry province. It took years before the Minister realised how harmful the experiment was. The Government subsequently banned excavation of more deep wells in Baluchistan."*

Annual precipitation is also low in the province. The recorded average annual precipitation at Zehedan is 120 millimetres which is the highest in the province. Other recorded annual averages are: Chah Bahar 74 mm., Iranshahr 82 mm. Saravan 79 mm.<sup>(1)</sup>

The climate is hot and humid near the sea, whereas heat and humidity decreases in the higher altitude towards north.

Apart from bad climate and water shortage, Baluchistan's great distance from the economic and administrative centres of Iran, together with lack of considerable mineral resources and its complex tribal culture, present considerable handicap for economic development of the province.

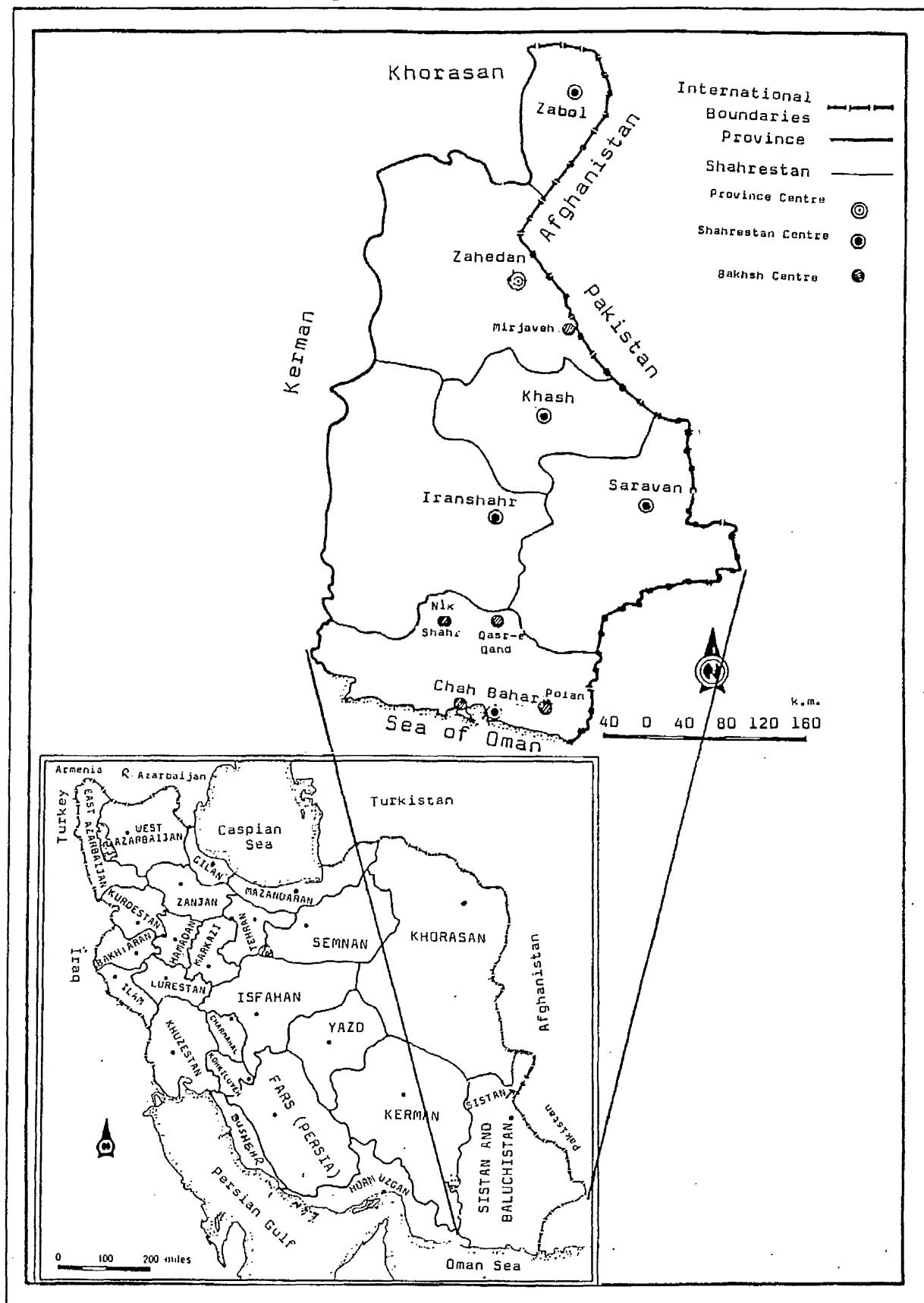
#### POLITICAL DIVISIONS

Politically and administratively, the province of Sistan and Baluchistan is divided into six shahrestans (see figure XV) with the city of Zahedan, formerly known as "Dozdab" as its

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(1) Bank of Agriculture, op. cit., p. 8.

Figure XV  
Political Map of Sistan and Baluchistan



Based on the map appearing in Bank of Agriculture's report on Potential and Actual Possibilities, op. cit., p. 18.

capital. Of the six Shahrestans, Sistan is one, and the other five are:

- 1 - Shahrestan-e Zahedan with a population of 38975 and with three bakhshs. City of Zahedan is the centre, and Mirjaveh is the only urban centre of the Shahrestan, other than Zahedan.
- 2 - Shahrestan-e Khash with 24038.9 population and two bakhshs. The town of Khash is the centre.
- 3 - Shahrestan-e Iranshahr with the town of Iranshahr as its centre and with a population of 55221 and five bakhshs.
- 4 - Shahrestan-e Saravan with the town of Saravan as its centre and with a population of 25464 in four bakhshs.
- 5 - Shahrestan-e Chah Bahar with the Port Chah Bahar as its centre and with a population of 29655 in four bakhshs.<sup>(1)</sup>

There are a number of towns other than Chah Bahar in this Shahrestan. All shahrestans of the province have common borders with Pakistan except Iranshahr. Of the shahrestans of this province, Saravan and Khash are situated on the border areas of Pakistan, whereas of the shahrestan Chah Bahar, only the easternmost parts are facing Pakistani borders. Finally, the eastern regions of Shahrestan-e Zahedan face both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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(1) Markaz-e Amar-e Iran (Statistics Centre of Iran), General Census of Mehr 1369 (September - October 1986), Vol. I, p. 8.

## C H A P T E R    I I

### THE FRONTIER-KEEPING AMIRDOM OF KHOZEIMEH SECTION I - THE KHOZEIMEH AMIRS AND THEIR RULE

#### INTRODUCTION

Before engaging ourselves in the main discussion, it is of some significance to know that the term "AMIR" or "EMIR" is Arabic, literally meaning "commander". However, within its Iranian context, the term constitutes for a position long since disappeared, which was self-made entailing a wide range of political titles such as the leader; the governor; the commander of forces; the ultimate judge in the district; the defender of the territory; the protector of the inhabitants; the ruler of the region. In short, it means "the vassal king" of the classic description. In most cases the Amirs were self-appointed, and created their Amirdom by gradually expanding their areas of influence. The power of such Amirs, inherited by their descendants, was a natural one. It was further strengthened, in some cases, by being officially designated as ruler of their own realm by the King of Kings. Thus, theirs was a two tier power; the natural power and the official title. These descriptions were most applicable to the state of the Khozeimeh Amirdom.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE KHOZEIMEH FAMILY

Almost all recent literatures, both in Persian and English, limited as they are, describe the Khozeimeh family as being of Arab origin. The reason is that the roots of the family are traced to a Khazem (or "Hazem") Bin Khozeimeh, an "Arab" commander of the early Abbasid Caliphs who was dispatched by Caliph Mansour to put down the revolt in Sistan of Ostad of Sis aided by a certain Harish Sistani. Upon his arrival in Qohestan, the district to the north of Sistan, Khazem Bin Khozeimeh succeeded in quelling the revolt. He remained in

that region and founded a dynasty of Amirs who ruled the area for over a thousand years. The family gradually adopted the name "Khozeimeh" and was so known until the time of the Afshar and Qajar dynasties when at least three Amirs of the family, named "Alam" played significant roles in the region. The glory of the roles played by two of those three Amirs led to the adoption of the name "Alam" in the first half of the twentieth century, and the family was subsequently referred to as "Khozeimeh Alam" or simply "Alam". To this date, different branches of the family have adopted the surnames "Khozeime", "Khozeimeh Alam" and, "Alam". Writing on the Arabic background of the family, Sir Percy Sykes goes as far as saying:

"Three days after our arrival we received a call from the Amir of Kain, who is one of the last feudal chieftains in Persia representing the old order. Although they have kept no record, they believe themselves to be of Arab descent, and of the Khuzaiyah or Khuzaimah tribe, which was ruled by Tahir the Ambidexter, a doughty warrior, who set Mamun on the Caliph's seat. Apparently forced to emigrate from Bahrein, they gradually became the ruling family of Kain, the districts of Neh and Bandan first falling under their control, when they marched up from the south."<sup>(1)</sup>

The family itself, however, disputes its Arabic origin. There is little historical evidence decisively supporting either arguments. One of the historical document this author has come across, which supports the argument of the family, is the History of Islam in Iran by Abbas Khalili in Persian. Using numerous documents of early Islamic centuries, Khalili describes Khazem Bin Khozeimeh as a victorious commander of Iranian stock from Marvrud (north-east of the old Khorasan). He asserts: "For the first time, a commander of Khorasani origin, who was living in Iraq, close to the Abbasid Caliphate, changed his views and stripped the Caliph of his title in an announcement and returned to Iran. He was Basam Bin Ebrahim....Abul-Abbas Saffah appointed Khazem Bin Khozeimeh as commander of a

(1) Sykes Major Percy M., "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", London 1902, p. 393.

specially selected force, and he pursued the former as far as the mountains of Iran killing many of his supporters."<sup>(1)</sup> Kahili then explains: "When passing through the village of Bani Hareth who had the honour of being related to the Caliph, Khazem, an arrogant general, expected courtesy from them. As they were from the clan of the Caliph's mother, they did not pay respect to him. To find an excuse for punishment, he asked why had not they arrested and killed such and such outlawed who had passed through their villages. They said; we do not know of such a person. Khazem destroyed their houses, massacred them all, and looted their belongings. Their tribe complained to the Caliph and almost succeeded in convincing the Caliph to kill Khazem. However, commanders of the Khorasan divisions intervened and prevented it. He was, thus, sent to Oman where he successfully regained possession of a number of islands from the Khawarej and that story is outside of this subject. From this calamity the extent of power and pride and daringness of the Khorasanis can be measured. How they used to take revenge of the Arabs and how did they kill them for what kinds of excuses. Even the relatives and associates of the Caliph did not escape their vengeance, and this event is an example of other important events taking place in Khorasan and in central Iran where the Arabs were destroyed group by group."

On Abdoj-Jabar Bin Abdor-Rahman revolt against Caliph Mansour in Khorasan and Khazem's action, Khalili asserts: "As Mansour reviewed the gravity of the situation, he found no alternative but to send his heir Mohammad Mehdi, later a Caliph himself, to Iran to reside there and to maintain security of his surroundings in Khorasan, Deylaman, and Tabarestan. To put down Abdoj-Jabar's revolt, Khazem Bin Khozeimeh, the famous warrior, was assigned and he captured the enemy and sent him to Mansour, sitting back to front on a camel."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Khalili, Abbas, "Iran Va Eslam = Iran and Islam" - Persian text Tehran 1957, Vol. 2 pp. 187 - 8.

(2) Khalili, op. cit., p. 211.

Khazem Bin Khozeimeh, a commander of Abu-Moslem's forces, according to the same document: "It is noteworthy that when Abu-Moslem Khorasani turned against the Caliphate, the commanders and soldiers supporting him, were all of the Iranian stock...."(1)

"Abu-Moslem sent messages to Hasan Bin Qahtabah, commander of the right wing of the army to weaken that flank of the battalion by sending as many men as possible to the left flank, commanded by Khazem Bin Khozeimeh." This tactic had apparently led to the victory of Abu-Moslem over the Caliphate forces. Khazem Bin Khozeimeh fights on the side of the Caliph again;

"Sanbad the Zoroastrian revolted in Khorasan against the Caliph to avenge the murder of Abu-Moslem. He was subsequently defeated. The other notable Iranian known as "Ostad of Sis" revolted against the Caliph...."(2)

"When Ostad of Sis revolted in Khorasan, he successfully captured most of Khorasan, and Mansour saw no alternative but to quell the fire by a fire of the same flame, and to wash the blood of the Khorasanis with the blood of the Khorasanis themselves. He, therefore, dispatched a well equipped army of Iranians commanded by Khazem Bin Khozeimeh Marvrudi, whose name has repeatedly been mentioned here, to fight the Ostad of Sis. At that time Mehdi, the Crown Prince of the Caliph, was living in Iran. Ostad of Sis had captured Khorasan with an army of three hundred thousand people of Herat, Sistan, and Bad-Qeis. A furious war broke out in the vicinity of Marvrud and many of famous commanders of Ostad were killed, including Abul-Najim Sistani and Davud Bin Garaz and Ma'az Bin Salim. Cities were recaptured one after the other. After Sanbad, this event was the biggest war between the Caliph and the Iranian independence seekers."(3)

(1) Khalili, op. cit., p. 190.

(2) Khalili, op. cit., p. 220.

(3) Khalili, op. cit., pp. 220 - 221.

The fact stated in this document that Khazem Ben Khozeimeh was sent to Oman, confirms the statement by Sir Percy Sykes that he was "forced to emigrate from Bahrein". It is noteworthy that the entire southern coasts of the Persian Gulf was generally referred to, by the old Islamic historians and geographers, as "Bahrein" to the west, and as Oman to the east. In other words, it is logical to assume that Khazem Ben Khozeimeh was sent, by the Caliph, to fight the Khavarej forces of the eastern section of that region "Oman". He defeated them and proceeded towards west "Bahrein", from where he was forced to leave. This whole theory corresponds with the historical records "Tarikh-e Tabari" which speaks of Khazem Ben Khozeimeh as a general of the Abol-Abbas Saffah around the year 132-6 AH (749-754 AD), originally from Marvrud of Khorasan, who was sent, by the said Caliph, to fight the Khavarej in Oman.<sup>(1)</sup> Moreover, Tarikh-e Tabari speaks of a Khozeimeh and his son Khazem who had been ruling Khorasan about a century earlier. These historical records mention a Khazem who was the "Vali" or Amir of Khorasan. This Khazem had a son named Abdollah, who succeeded Khazem as the "Vali" or ruler of Khorasan. Abdollah had two sons; Mohammad, who was sent by Abdollah to Herat as Amir of that district; and Khozeimeh, who succeeded Abdollah in Khorasan and Qohestan. These events took place in the years 64 to 66 AH (684 to 686 AD) when Marvan I Ommayyad was on the throne of the Caliphateship.<sup>(2)</sup>

This must be the actual origin of the Khozeimeh dynasty of Qaenat as, Tarikh Tabari asserts:

*"The Omayyad caliph of the time said to Salim Ben Ziad; Oh Abu-Harb, I would like to give you the job of your brothers Abdor-Rahman and Abbad. He then was made the governor of Sistan and Khorasan."<sup>(3)</sup>*

This document, however, mentions that when Salim left for Khorasan, he was accompanied by a number of dignitaries,

(1) Tabari, "Tarikh-e Tabari", translated into Persian by Abol-Qassem Payandeh, vol. XI, Tehran 1974, pp. 4671 to 4672.

(2) See Tarikh-e Tabari, Vol. VIII, pp 3279 to 3284.

(3) Tarikh-e Tabari, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 3087.

This document, however, mentions that when Salim left for Khorasan, he was accompanied by a number of dignitaries, including "Khazem Ben Salmi", possibly his own son. Was he the first Khozeimeh Amir succeeding Salim Ben Ziad and founding the Khozeimeh dynasty of Qohestan? It appears to be the case.

Interviewed by this author, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeimeh Alam dismissed the idea of Arabist origin of the family arguing:

- "1 The Khozeimehs have always been Shi'ah Moslems unlike all Arab Amirs throughout the world of Islam who were of Sunni persuasion.(1)
- "2 The Khozeimeh Amirs have proved themselves, throughout the history to be Iranian patriots with strong attachment to Iranianism which has never had precedence among the Arab Amirs of the Islamic realms.
- "3 There is a small settlement of Arab families near the town of Birjand, the seat of Khozeimeh Amirdom, towards whom the Khozeimeh Amirs have never extended any special favour or support.
- "4 No sign of regionalism of separatist nature is indicated in the history of this family, which again is totally out of character for the Arab Amirs of Iran."

As a life-time reader of Persian Gulf affairs, this author could not help but unintentionally compare, throughout this research work, the Khozeimeh Amirdom with such Emirates as that of Al-Khalifah of Bahrain who descended on that Iranian frontier state and created the separate Emirate of Bahrain, eventually independent of both Iran and Britain.

The Khozeimeh Amirdom was also situated on the remote frontier areas of Iran and, like Bahrain, it also fell on the

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(1) On the Khozeimeh Amirs' devotion shiah Islam, it is noteworthy that all Amirs of the modern generation of this family (from Amir Esmail Khan- 1729 to Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II and his son, Amir Assadollah Alam, have been entombed in their private mausoleum inside the shrine of Imam Reza, the holiest Shiah shrine in Iran.

crossroad of Anglo-Russian and Anglo-Iranian geopolitical rivalries. Not only did the Khozeimehs not pursue a political path that would guarantee them a similar eventuality as it did for the Al-Khalifah at Bahrain, but they displayed maximum loyalty to Iran and its central Government, and actively influenced the boundary delimitation between Iran and Afghanistan, in favour of Iran. Such an attitude would indeed be out of character for an Amirdom of non-Iranian origin.

On the basis of the historical records of the early Islamic centuries this author is of the opinion that the Khozeimeh family was of Iranian origin from the land of Khorasan. The fact that their early ancestors fought in various parts of the Islamic empire for the Caliphate and then returned to Khorasan has led some historians of modern times to assume that they were Arabs. What these historians brushed aside is that the family's ancestors left Khorasan in the first place and that they were originally from Marvrud.

Finally, it must be noted that tracing ones origin to the Arab tribes, if not to the prophet of Islam himself, was a common practice until as late as the turn of the twentieth century, in some parts of Iran and central Asia. However, just what happened to the family, following their settlement in Khorasan, is shrouded in obscurity. There are a number of theories concerning this, the most commonly accepted one is that; with the rise into power of Taher Zolyaminain (Ambidexter) in Khorasan, the Khozeimeh power was wiped out alongside all other regional dynasties, especially if they were of Shi'ah persuasion. Ayati argues in "Baharestan":

*"At the time of Mamun (Abbasid Caliph) the political rivalries made Taher Zolyaminain, himself once a local Amir - subservient to the Arab Amirdoms of the region- to subdue these families, specially if they were of Shi'ah persuasion. Hence, there is no mention of this family in the history of those times."(1)*

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(1) Ayati, Haj Sheikh Mohammad Hussein, "Baharestan", Tehran 1948, p. 109.

The overwhelming weakness of this argument is that, not only is there no historical evidence supporting the idea that Taher had wiped out the Khozeimeh dynasty but also, Ayati introduces no evidence as to who the Khozeimeh Amirs of the time of Taher were. Yet, he assumes that they were of Shi'ah persuasion. In other words, Ayati claims that the Khozeimeh Amirs of that era were Shi'ah Moslems without knowing who they were and what their names would have been. Paradoxically, there are theories suggesting that Taher Zolyaminain himself was a Khozeimeh Amir, and the Amirs of this family, from the 9th century AD onward were his descendants. A well known Iranian scholar, Ali-Asghar Hekmat, asserts:<sup>(1)</sup>

*"....Unwritten traditions trace the origin of this family (Khozeimeh family) to Taher Zolyaminain, the renowned Khorasani general who put Mamun on the seat of Caliphateship<sup>(2)</sup> and thus, secured for himself the Amirdom of Khorasan and Transoxania.*

*"The Shahs of the Taherid dynasty were the first Iranian vassal kings and Amirs who established an independent kingdom (in post-Islamic Iran). Taher's origin is traced by some historians to Bahram Chubineh,<sup>(3)</sup> the famous general of Khosro Parviz the Sassanid Shahanshah."*

This theory is reflected, albeit vaguely, in Sir Percy Sykes' writings, part of which has been quoted earlier in these pages, specifically where he says:<sup>(4)</sup>

*"....they believe themselves to be of Arab origin, and of the Khuzai or Khozaima tribe, which was ruled by Taher the Ambidexter, a doughty warrior who set Mamun on the Caliph's seat."*

(1) Hekmat, Ali-Asghar, "Yek Gentleman-e Taman Ayar", in Mohammad-Ali Monsef's book "Amir Shokat al-Molk Alam, Amir-e Qaen", Tehran 1975, p. 290.

(2) Taher defeated Caliph Amin Abbasid and replaced him by his brother Mamun or-Rashid in 813 AD.

(3) Bahram Chubin, according to Tarikh-e Tabari, was not a General of Khosro Parviz (originally Pirouz). Rather, he was a noble General, rivalling Khosro Parviz, trying to assume the Sassanid throne from the latter. (see Tarikh-e Tabari, Vol. II, pp. 728 to 737).

(4) Sykes, Major Percy, "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", London 1902, p. 399.

This theory, however, does not correspond with what is indicated in the Tarikh-e Tabari. According to these historical records, when Taher Ben Hussein the Zolyaminein was preparing for war with Mohammad Ben Harun in 198 AH (813 AD), he wrote to Khozeimeh Ben Khazem (in Qohestan) that "if he succeeded in this war against Mohammad, and Khozeimeh had no role in the achievement of that victory, he would not hesitate in overthrowing the latter".<sup>(1)</sup> Upon receiving this note of warning, Khozeimeh apparently declared his obedience to Taher. Khozeimeh, however, according to the said document, played a significant role in Taher's campaign against Mohammad Ben Harun and won himself such a reputation that Hussein Khali'e, a famous poet of the time, versified him by saying:

*"Khozeimeh has obliged us all, As the lord has quelled the fire of war through him...."<sup>(2)</sup>*

This evidence leaves no doubt that; the Khozeimehs were Amirs of Qaenat at the time; of Khorasani origin; and Taher was not a member of the family.

#### MODERN BRANCH OF THE FAMILY

When the Safavid fortune overwhelmed the entire Iranian plateau and the largest empire of post-Islamic Iran emerged, the Khozeimeh also seem to have regained their former glory and fortune. Their Amirdom (of Qaenat) was once again recognised as a Velayat (province) in the political organization of Iran of the Safavid period. The Amirs of Khozeimeh, once again started to rule sizeable parts of the empire and were officially recognised as autonomous frontier-keeping Amirs. Apart from all else, the fact that the Safavid Shahs were of Shi'ah persuasion attracted Khozeimeh Amirs' maximum loyalty. They remained loyal to the

(1) Tarikh-e Tabari, op. cit., Vol. XIII, Tehran 1974, p. 5556.

(2) Tarikh-e Tabari, op. cit., pp. 5557-8.

Safavid even after the assassination of Nader Shah Afshar which revived the possibility of restoration of the Safavid dynasty. Nader Shah was the only member of the Afshar dynasty who received loyalty from the Amirs of Khozeimeh. After the fall of the Safavid dynasty, Nader Shah took the province of Qaen and restored it, with the blessings of Shah Tahmasp II Safavid, to Amir Esmail Khan Khozeimeh.<sup>(1)</sup>

He was the son of Amir Ebrahim Khan (1699) son of Amir Mohammad Khan.<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Esmail Khan is regarded as the first Khozeimeh Amir of the present family line, known to the historians of modern times. It is, however, hard to believe that a ruling dynasty, regained their rule, in the same district, after an interruption of about nine centuries. A period between the time of Mamun the Abbasid until the last Shah of the Safavids. This author is of the opinion that there was no interruption in the rule of the dynasty and the reason for the obscurity of the history of the dynasty in the pre-Safavid centuries is that the dynasty in Qaenat (old Qohestan) attracted little attention of the history recorders, mainly owing to two factors:

- 1 With the consolidation of the Abbasid Caliphate in Iran, those provincial chiefs who adhered to the Caliphate did little more than nothing that would attract any attention.
- 2 The entire history of this period is devoted to the successive regional powers revolting against the Caliphate of Baghdad and/or against other outside forces invading Iran and dominating the country in the post-Islamic era, including the Mongolians and Tartaris.

(1) Lovet, Major Beresford, "Journey in Baluchistan", in Major-General Goldsmid's Eastern Persia", Vol. II, London 1876, p. 341, footnote.

(2) Hunter, Captain J.B.D., Her Britannic Majesty's Consulate at Sistan, "Consular Report", dated 19th August 1912, p. 3, FO 248/971 .

The Khozeimeh dynasty, traditionally loyal to the central authorities of the country, naturally had little reason, throughout this period of nine centuries or so, to attract the attention of the historians who were pre-occupied with recording massive upheavals occurring throughout the country in this period of the history of Iran.

Nevertheless, accidentally, in historical records, we sometimes come across the names of some Amirs of Qohestan who must have been members of the same dynasty, as no other dynasty has been recorded to have ruled the district and no change of governorship, from one dynasty to another, has been recorded or suggested to have taken place in this frontier-keeping province, throughout the history since Khazem Ben Salmi and Khozeimeh Ben Khazem arrived in Khorasan. In the historical literatures of the 13th century AD, we come across one of these names, an Amir Naser od-Din, Mohtasham of Qohestan,<sup>(1)</sup> whose name has entered in history solely because Khajeh Nasir od-Din Tusi,<sup>(2)</sup> the renowned Vazir of Mongolian Holaku Khan (mid-13th century) had dedicated to and named after that Amir of Qaenat or Qohestan, his famous book "Akhlaq-e Naseri". Another such name is that of Amir Sultan who had contacted Shah Esmail the founder of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1786) and was given the official title of Amirdom of Qaen by the said Shah:

*"Monday 25, Moharram 921 AH<sup>(3)</sup> the radiance of his (Shah Esmail's) glory arrived in Ujan where he<sup>(4)</sup> went to circumambulate the Safavid shrine.<sup>(5)</sup> Then*

(1) Tabandeh, Haj Sultan-Hussein, "Tarikh Va Joghrafia-e Gonabad", Tehran University Press 1969, p. 12.

(2) It is recorded that Khajeh Nasir od-Din Tusi enticed Holaku Khan to overthrow the Caliphate of Baghdad by suffocating Caliph Al-Mostasam Bellah, while wrapped in a rug, in order to prevent the Caliph's blood being shed on the ground which would otherwise, according to a tradition of the time, destroy the heavens and the earth. This was done in 1258 AD.

(3) March 12, 1515 AD.

(4) Shah Esmail Safavid.

(5) Tomb of Sheikh Safi od-Din.

he returned to mountainous settlements of Sahand. Amir Sultan Saheb of Qaen<sup>(1)</sup> reached the feet of the mighty throne and reported short accounts of the desolate state of Khorasan.

"Also Divan Sultan, arrived from Balkh, and confirmed those accounts. Hence, the kingdom of Khorasan, from the banks of river Amir to Semnan was entrusted to His.... Majesty's nayehs,<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Sultan was given the assignment of Lale (guardianship)<sup>(3)</sup> and the title of "Khan" and was sent back to Khorasan with the Amirdom of Qaen...."<sup>(4)</sup>

This Amir Sultan must have been of the Khozeimeh dynasty. There are at least three reasons supporting the thought. Firstly, he has the title "Amir" which was almost exclusive to this family in that part of the country at that particular time; secondly, he is described as the "Saheb" or owner of Qaen which is a clear reference to the family's long-standing and vast land ownership in the entire region; thirdly he is given the title "Khan" which did not appear after the names of those members of the dynasty mentioned hitherto, and appeared after the names of all Khozeimeh Amirs thereafter.

#### THE AMIRDOM OF KHOZEIMEH IN RECENT CENTURIES

Under the Safavids, Qaen and Sistan were separate Ayalats (provinces). Immediately after Shah Esmail I overwhelmed the forces of Shibak Khan near Marv in 1510 AD, Malek Mahmud Sistani, the local governor of Sistan who was of the Keyani Amirs, arrived in Herat and declared his loyalty and

(1) Saheb, in this instance, means owner or governor.

(2) In the Safavid political organisation of the country "Nayeb" or Nayeb as-Saltaneh was a deputy representing the Shah in various districts, or ruled in different districts on behalf of the Shah.

(3) Laleh was a title for the Statesmen who were sent to various parts as guardians of the minor Nayehs who would normally be selected from among the Safavid princes usually remaining in the capital.

(4) Qazvini, Qazi Ahmad Gaffari, "Tarikh-e Jahan Ara", ed. Mojtaba Minovi, Tehran 1964, p. 278.

obedience to Shah Esmail.<sup>(1)</sup> His dominion included Neh, Qal'eh-gah, Hash, Garmsirat Hirmand, with its capital city of Nimruz.<sup>(2)</sup> Shah Esmail first bestowed the governorship of Sistan on him and sent him back to the province with an army of one thousand Turkamans under the command of a Qezelbash Amir as his assistant.

This Qezelbash Amir is not named in the said document, but he could have been the same Amir Sultan Khan, or another member of the Khozeimeh family. At the time of Shah Tahmasp I (1524 - 76) the governorship of Qaen was with his brother Ebrahim Mirza (1563 - 66), but no name of the Laleh or Guardian, who would have been a local Amir, appears in the history books. The governors of the Ayalats were mainly in charge of the armed forces, paying them from the endowments of the district. Sistan was a separate Ayalat at this period. Sultan Hussein Mirza, a nephew of Shah Tahmasp I<sup>(3)</sup> was appointed as governor of Sistan (1555 to 1558), followed by Badi oz-Zaman Mirza, another nephew of the Shah<sup>(4)</sup> who was a minor and under the guardianship of Emam Qoli Beg Badr Khan, then Mohammad Khan Mossellu Turkaman, and then, Teimur Khan Estajlu.<sup>(5)</sup>

Until 1577-8, Sistan was governed by Qezelbash Amirs. Shah Abbas I (1558-1629) gave Sistan to the governor of Kerman after repossessing Khorasan from the Keyanis. The Sistani chiefs renewed their allegiance to the Shah and have remained so ever since.

Nader Shah Afshar pursued a completely different course of policies in this context. Instead of assigning his close

(1) Rohrborn, Klaus-Michael, "Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens", Persian text, Trans. by Jahandary, Keykavous, Tehran 1978, p. 125.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Rohrborn, op. cit., p. 65.

(4) Ibid.

(5) Rohrborn, op. cit., p. 126.

relatives to the governorship of all provinces and districts, he would capture the districts if needed, and return their governorship to their traditional Amirs or governors in return for their undivided loyalty. This policy seems to have worked to a great extent, especially in the case of Qaen and Sistan districts. One such Amir was Amir Esmail Khan Khozeimeh who was given the governorship of Qaen, Farah, and Koh-Kiluyeh in the Fars province.

It is from this time that the Khozeimeh Amirdom appears once again on the political map of Iran. The Amirdom gradually expanded to include Sistan and parts of northern Baluchistan. During the career of Amir Alam Khan I, the Amirdom reached its peak. It expanded far beyond the traditional limits of Qaenat and Sistan. It included, albeit for a short period, such significant areas and cities as Mashhad and Herat (1748). The Amirdom, at this time, included Mashhad and its dependencies to the north, Herat and its dependencies to the north-east, Farah and its dependencies to the east, Tun and Tabas to the west.

The southern outposts being put in the central areas of Baluchistan, Sistan and Birjand, the traditional heartland of the Amirdom, forming the political centres (see figure IV ). In the wake of Amir Alam Khan's death, the Amirdom shrank in might and size, restricted at most times to Qaenat and Sistan (see figure III ) until early twentieth century when it expanded once again to include Baluchistan. Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk's successful campaign against frequent raids of the surrounding districts by the Baluchi chiefs almost coincided with Dust Mohammad Khans insurgency in Baluchistan, on the one hand, and Reza Khan Mir Panj's rise into power in Tehran as the Minister of war, on the other. Reza Khan (later Reza Shah Pahlavi) who knew of Amir Shokat al-Molk for his role in settling the question of Colonel Mohammad Taghi Khan's uprising in Mashhad (1921) and later acquainted the Amir personally during the latter's visit to Tehran in 1921-2, assigned the Amir to put down Dust Mohammad Khan's insurgency. The following is the text of a telegraph, dated 28 Mizan 1302 (1923 ) from the Joint Command

of the Armed Forces Headquarters to the Commander of the divisions of south and east, ordering reinforcement for Amir Shokat al-Molk's campaign against Dust Mohammad Khan in Baluchistan:<sup>(1)</sup>

*"Commander of the Division of East  
Commander of the Division of South*

*"Whereas, on the decision of His Excellency a company of at least 600 to 700 must be put under the command of Amir Shokat al-Molk in Baluchistan for joint actions there, please arrange for the study of all related matters; time, situation, and routes of the movement of such forces and convey to this office the results on which final decisions have to be made.*

*3252 Offices of the  
Joint Command of the  
Armed Forces."*

In another telegraph to the capital, dated 21 Aqrab 1302 (1923), Amir Shokat al-Molk suggests:<sup>(2)</sup>

*"....the Qaenat and Sistan armed forces should take the responsibility for campaign in half of the Baluchistan district known as Sarhad, and Qal'eh-e Khash."*

These areas of Baluchistan remained under Amir Shokat al-Molk's rule and were for a short period of time the latest addition to the Khozeimeh Amirdom.

#### POWER BASE OF THE AMIRDOM

Khozeimeh Amirdom's power was both of a natural and an official nature. Its natural power was traditionally assumed which lasted for several centuries. They were self-appointed Amirs in the fashion of the Iranian traditions. The legitimacy of this self-appointment is justified by the same

(1) Monsef, Mohammad-Ali, "Amir Shokat al-Molk Alam", Tehran 1975, p. 100.

(2) Ibid.

tradition that has justified legitimacy of the ruling authorities of Iran throughout its history. The tradition which justifies these legitimacies has been studied in the "Introduction" on the "Evolution of the State and Boundaries in Iran". Whenever the vast country of Iran was divided into administrative districts, the natural Amirdom of Khozeimeh remained unscathed. The division of the eastern areas of the country always corresponded with the natural state of the Khozeimeh Amirdom and almost all other Amirdoms for that matter. Hence, the Khozeimeh Amirs always received the official title of "governor" from the central authorities. This title or assignment was the basis for their official power, in effect, reinforcing their natural power. Contrary to what is generally believed, land ownership was not the only or even the main source of this Amirdom's power, though ownership of agricultural lands and water resources strengthened their power base. The main base of the Khozeimeh power in Qaenat, Southern Khorasan, Sistan, and Northern Baluchistan was their historical entitlement of Amirdom recognised by the central power throughout the post-Islamic history of Iran down to the early 20th century. This historical rule together with the strategic situation of the Amirdom and the role of the Amirdom as a frontier-keeping state form the bases for the continued power of the Khozeimeh dynasty: "The case is of general interest for two reasons. The first is that the Amirs of Kain are among the few remaining hereditary governors in Persia, and they are perhaps the only instance of a family, without royal blood and with no tribal chieftainship, retaining through many generations, by wealth and local influence, their administrative powers over a considerable district. The second reason is that Birjand, their present seat of Government, being midway on the route from Russia through Khurasan to India, has in the past frequently been a scene of rivalry and covert contention for influence between the representatives of England and Russia: the town itself was allocated in 1907 by the two powers as being within the British sphere of influence, of which it marked the north eastern limit. This rivalry, though hushed by the greater

business of the war, continues even now on friendly lines as between Khurasan and Seistan, or between Petrograd and Simla.

To keep his position, in the altered state of Persia, the governor of Kain has to maintain his authority and popularity with the people, to act in concert with the views of England and Russia, and to placate the court at Teheran."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Khozeimeh Amirs ruled the largest part of Eastern Iran for several centuries. Their role as the rulers, the leaders, the ultimate district judges, the defenders of the territories, the protectors of the people, the promoters of various regional services deepened the roots of their influence in the societies of their Amirdom. This historical power of the family was much greater than the power they might have assumed through ownership of their agricultural state. An acknowledged authority on Iranian agriculture, Professor K.S. McLachlan asserts:

*"The family influence throughout Khorasan, Sistan, Baluchistan was mainly historically based on qualities of traditional leadership, successful mediation with the central authorities and an ability to dispense patronage in the regional civil service. In southern Khorasan the basis for political influence on the part of the family was strategic land ownership of villages. Thus, the tabas outpost of the family was held through the arm of extended alliance with Birjandi<sup>(2)</sup> family and a small element of landownership. In Gonabad, the family had far more influence over local events than was justified by their land and water holdings, which were almost negligible."<sup>(3)</sup>*

As the family expanded, the landownership and water holdings of the Amirdom broke down through inheritance into smaller units. Yet it made no impact on the power of the Amirdom, led by one, and lately by two independent Amirs. Constitutionalism and introduction of new political divisions in the country made little impact on the power of the

(1) Hale, F., "From Persian Uplands", no date of publication is indicated but it seems to have been published in early 1920s, pp. 100 - 1.

(2) A branch of the Sheibani

(3) McLachlan, K.S., "The Neglected Garden", London 1988, p. 124.

Amirdom. Though Khorasan on the one hand, and Sistan and Baluchistan on the other, were considered in the modern political arrangement as two different provinces, the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat (in Khorasan and Sistan remained unscathed. The rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi into power in 1921 and his accession to the throne of Iran in 1925 brought a sweeping change in the affairs of the state. The Khozeimeh Amir of the time "Amir Shokat al-Molk II", in rivalry with his nephew "Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III", signed a peace treaty with the latter in 1921 and subsequently proceeded to Tehran where he was appointed as a cabinet minister. It was Reza Shah's policy to keep influential figures of different regions away from their traditional dominions.

*"He was in residence now at his kelateh, Akbarieh, after an absence of no less than six years, a painful exile for him and his family. This, he told us, had been spent partly at high posts at the capital or in the western provinces, partly in attendance on Reza Shah, whose policy it was to keep powerful local magnates at a safe distance from their domains - not that the late Shah need have worried about his loyalty."*(1)

Shokat al-Molk's nephew too, resigned in 1937, from the governorship of Qaen, therefore, officially bringing the Amirdom to its end. The Khozeimeh Amirdom thereafter, was but a nominal entity. The land reforms of the 1960s made little difference to the position of the family. Professor McLachlan states:

*"....in the case of Alams the land reform would not deeply hurt them since their lands were fragmented among various branches of the family and their ownership was in a large number of separate villages scattered over a considerable area of south-eastern Iran."*(2)

(1) Skrine, Sir Claremont, "World War in Iran", London 1962, p. 100.

(2) McLachlan, op. cit., p. 124.

### STRATEGIC LOCATION OF THE AMIRDOM

The Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Sistan, geographically situated at the gateway to British India, was of extreme importance to the British whose main preoccupation in the past two centuries was to obstruct the spread of Russian, and briefly, German influence east and south-eastwardly. This geographical situation was, for a considerable length of time, a scene of rivalry and contention for influence between representatives of Britain and Russia, both of whom had opened their respective consulates at Birjand, where they could monitor the events in the Amirdom. Birjand itself was allocated, by the 1907 Anglo-Russian treaty, as being within the British sphere of influence in Iran, of which it marked the north-eastern limit.<sup>(1)</sup> Yet the Russians maintained their consulate there owing to the strategic significance of the Amirdom.

The Russian consulate retained only an escort of a few Cossacks, whereas the British consulate maintained a regular military force in the Amirdom. This force was best described by Mr. Hale who had on April 2, 1917 personally seen it:

"This morning, as I was out walking before breakfast, I passed our football ground, where I saw the consular levy sowars at foot-drill. It was interesting to find that they had not the field to themselves as they usually have, but were sharing it with the local artillery company. It was a curious juxtaposition one side an artillery unit of the Persian army under their own officers, marching and manoeuvring smartly enough: on the other side a troop of Baluchis and Seistanis in the pay of the British government, armed with our service rifles and performing evolutions at the command of an Indian N.C.O. The Persian gunners are much superior in appearance and efficiency to their humble brothers of the regular Persian infantry, being better equipped and better paid than the mere sarbaz. Their commissioned officers, like those of the infantry and the cavalry, are trained in Teheran. The men themselves are a mixed draft from the local population, some of them are petty shopkeepers torn by force from a thriving business. Their term of service is nominally three years.

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(1) Hale, op. cit., p. 101.

"The consular levies are recruited from the tribesmen, stock-raisers, and cultivators of the Seistan and frontier districts. They have not been assigned full uniform as yet, but being well paid and well officered they have already imbibed the company spirit, and have contrived a certain uniformity in their native dress, assisted by the indispensable puttee. Some of them are handsome fellows, soft-featured, dark-hued, curly-haired, supple of limb. They are a promising, workmanlike lot, with a pride of arms and a responsive manner very different from that of the Persian regular. Their scraggy, sinewy little ponies are provided by themselves, and are well broken to work. The force numbers a hundred men, and is principally engaged on patrols and outpost duty towards the Afghan frontier.....

"The Hazara levies in Birjand are only a small guard party. Their headquarters are a few stages to the south at Neh, where a part of the levy force is recruited from yet another tribe the Bahlui. The Bahluis are tent-dwellers of pure Persian descent, breeders of sheep, stout fellows who think nothing of fifty miles for a day's march.

"Apart from these levies we still have about fifty men of an Indian cavalry regiment stationed at Birjand and a stage or two north."(1)

The spreading German influence in Iran on the threshold of both world wars was an addition to the existing rivalries of the European powers in the region. When, in 1915, the British Consul in Esfahan was shot, the British influence there was replaced by that of the German. They began to send their emissaries east and southwards. Mr Hale wrote of this matter:

"They dream of emulating the deeds of Alexander and repeating the history of 327 B.C. by an overland march to India. As this is impracticable for a modern army in modern Persia, they are trying to raise Afghanistan and Persia itself against us. If they can't succeed in embroiling the Persian Government they will create local hostility. Persia is a

(1) Hale, op. cit., pp. 151 - 2 - 3.

suitable country for such a policy, as its means of communication are hopelessly slow, and it is peopled by very diverse races and tribes, many of whom can't be properly controlled from the capital. As the agitators are well provided with money, they have managed to engage a good many mercenaries and to secure desirable adherents. 'Here am I on Tom Tiddler's ground,' says the bold Teuton, 'scattering gold and silver. Gather round, brother Mohammedans, and I will fight your battles for you'. Whatever the results, they have had fair success already, as several hundred emissaries from Germany and Austria have necessitated the sending of some thousands of British and Russian troops to Persia for the protection of our interests, when these troops might have been profitably employed elsewhere."<sup>(1)</sup>

These rivalries in Qaenat, stemming from the Amirdom's strategic sensitivity, caused many problems for the Amirdom. One such problem, resulted in the dismissal of the Amir of Qaenat and his exile to Tehran in early 1916. Iran had declared neutrality in the World War I, but Iranian soil was the arena of great rivalries between the European powers, which eventually led to the division of the country in 1907, into the British and Russian spheres of influence, with the Khozeimeh Amirdom in the zone of the British interest. To keep his position in the confusion of the war years, the Amir (in this instance, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II), had to maintain his authority and popularity with the people; to act in concert with the views of Britain and Russia; to observe neutrality in the eyes of the Germans; and to keep the Imperial Court at Tehran happy. Early in 1916, a group of German emissaries, led by "Nider Myer", crossed the Kavir desert and entered Qaenat district. The British Consul at Birjand, "Major Prideaux", exerted much pressure on the Amir to arrest them and put them in the custody of his consulate. The Amir, fully aware of Iran's declared state of neutrality in the war and strongly loyal to the instructions of neutrality from Tehran, refused the British Consul's

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(1) Hale, F., op. cit., pp. 88 - 9.

request. Neither did he pay any attention to the orders for the arrest of the Germans received from Tehran in the form of a telegraph in Latin, through Indo-European telegraph line which apparently did not convince him of being authentic. Threatened by Major Prideaux with being removed from office and accused of being "Germanophile", the Amir re-stated his position of neutrality in accordance with the war-time policies of his country. The angry Consul complained to his embassy in Tehran, and it was shortly afterwards that Amir Shokat al-Molk was removed from the governorship of Qaenat, summoned to Tehran, and replaced by his nephew, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh, Amir of Sistan.

Amir Shokat al-Molk's exile lasted about two years during which time the British were convinced of his genuine neutrality policies and that, "he supported no one but his own country, Iran".<sup>(1)</sup>

#### THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE ARMED FORCES OF THE AMIRDOM

The power of the Amirdom was executed through an administration system hardly developed from its traditional form. A relatively unsophisticated administration, directly accountable to the Amir himself as the head of the state, and in his absence, to his Nayeb or deputy. The Amir was aided by two administrators; one (Mostofi) in charge of affairs of the state (chief administrator); the other (Pishkar), in charge of the family state and endowments. The family state constituted of considerably large agricultural lands, water-holdings, and a number of buildings and castles etc,. Each property (agricultural land and water source) created by the family, was registered in the traditional Iranian system, as a six "dong" unit, regardless of the actual size or value. Of this six-dong, one dong would be allocated to the

(1) Colonel Prideaux is quoted by Monsef to have recorded this remark: Monsef, Mohammad-Ali, "Amir Shokat al-Molk Alam", Tehran 1975, pp. 49 - 50.

endowments, the revenue from which would finance religious establishments, schools, and other public services. Thus, the endowments alone consisted of sizeable states, administered also by the Mostofi in charge of the family state. The first Mostofi (chief administrator), in charge of the affairs of the Amirdom was assisted by Monshis (secretaries or clerks), whose number varied from time to-time, each of whom were designated to supervise a particular branch of the administration tasks. The district centres were administered by the Nayebs (Nayeb al-Hokumeh) or deputy governors who, in turn, were accountable to the Amir, the nayebs' Mostofis were the administrators of the affairs of their districts, accountable to the nayebs. In charge of the villages were the Kadkhodas (village head-men) who reported to the Nayebs or their Mostofis (see fig.1). In addition to these, a Kargozar (head of diplomacy), assigned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran, was in residence in the Amirdom who supervised the foreign affairs in connection with the Consulates of Britain and Russia in the Amirdom. Similarly, in residence was a Pishkar (representative of the Ministry of Finance) in charge of the revenue of the Amirdom. It is noteworthy that Pishkars used to be assigned to the provinces. But, in this instance, there were two pishkars in the province of Khorasan, one in Mashhad, the centre of Khorasan province, and one in Birjand the seat of the Amirdom. Both these Government officials were paid by the Amirdom and were, in effect, members of the administration of the Amirdom.

Whenever there was an Amir in Sistan, other than the Amir of Qaen in Birjand, a similar administration set up would also be created for Sistan which, ultimately, reported to the administration of the Amirdom at Birjand.

The Khozeimeh Amirdom, though officially part of the province of Khorasan, in practice had nothing to do with Mashhad. It conducted its affairs semi-independently, and reported to Tehran on general principles.

The defence of the realm was, primarily, the responsibility of the Amirdom's own army, commanded by the Amir as its commander-in-chief, and composed of several thousand soldiers divided into three skills; the infantry, the cavalry, and the artillery. Each of these three forces was commanded by a Sartip (Brigadier-General) or a Sarhang (Colonel) who would normally be selected from among the trained officers in Tehran or Mashhad in more modern times, and from among trained members of the family in older days. The forces stationed in Sistan were commanded by a Sartip or Sarhang from the family itself which signified the strategic importance of that province for the Amirdom. Another officer, separately accountable to the Amir, was the inspector general of the armed forces (bazras-e qoshun) who also was a member of the political administration of the Amirdom (see Fig. I ).

The infantry consisted of the Sarbaz or ordinary foot-soldiers, and eilyatis or irregular tribesmen. The sarbaz and artillery men were mostly recruited from among the Azerbaijanis who have always had the reputation of being very loyal and fine warriors. Scores of gunners hailed from Tabriz and held a better position in the army of the Khozeimeh Amirdom, mostly because they were not committed to any regional affiliation in the Amirdom.<sup>(1)</sup> The soldiers were armed with various types of rifles in the post-Nader Shah era; i.e. Werndel<sup>(2)</sup> Jezail,<sup>(3)</sup> and Miskets,<sup>(4)</sup> and artillery men were armed with cannons of various kinds. The cavalry, a mounted force, used both camels and horses, and the entire force of Qaenat Amirdom accounted for one fowj (an old Iranian division) at the time of Qajar kings of Iran. "The divisions of Khorasan are three; (of) Qaen, one

(1) Sykes, Sir Percy, "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", London 1902, p. 375.

(2) Ibid.

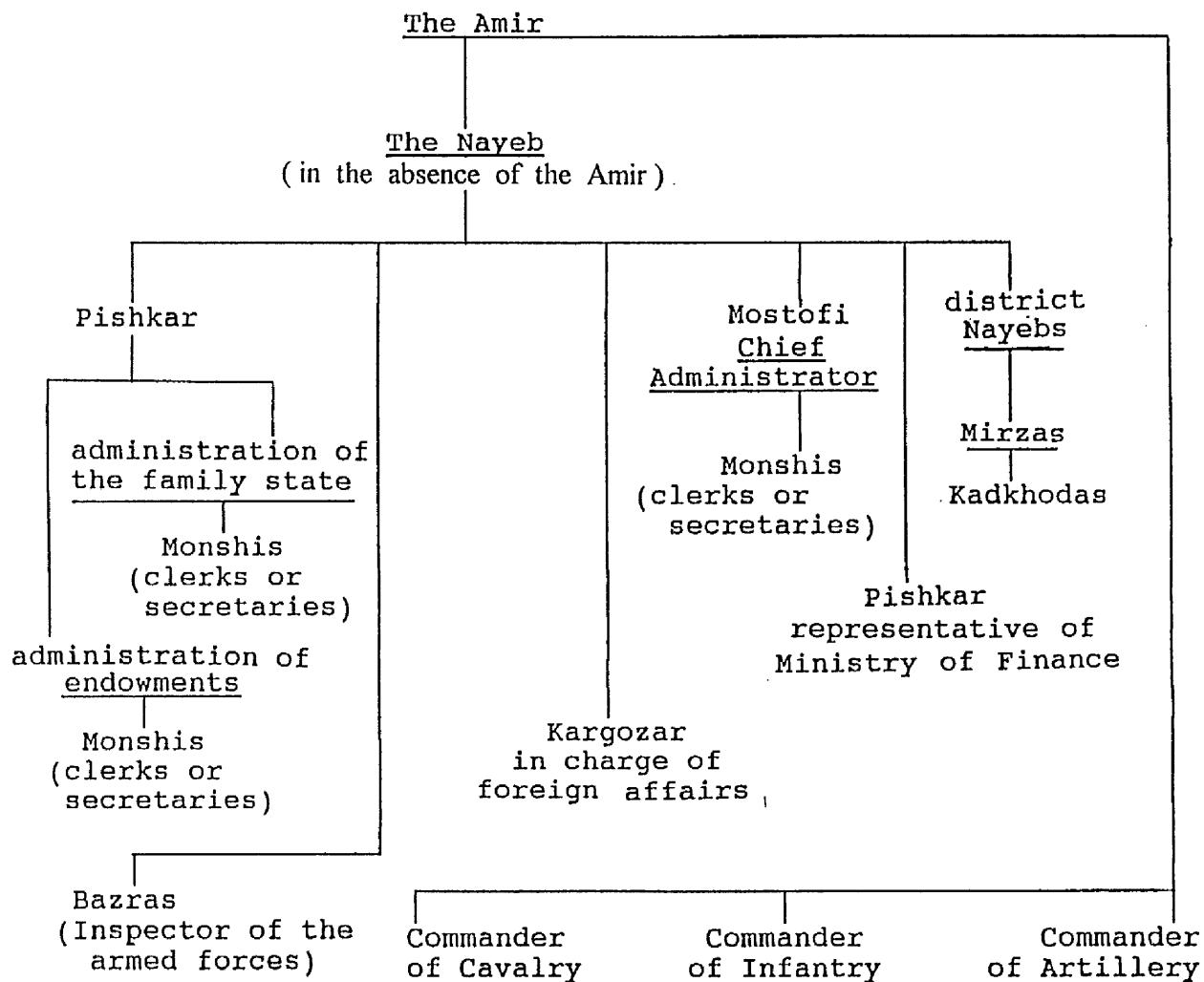
(3) Ibid.

(4) Yate, Lieut. Colonel C.E., "Khorasan and Sistan", London 1900, p. 78.

division, belonging to Heshmat al-Molk (Amir Alam Khan III) Amir of Qaen and Sistan..."<sup>(1)</sup>

Figure I

Political Administration of the Khozeimeh Amirdom  
at the turn of the twentieth century

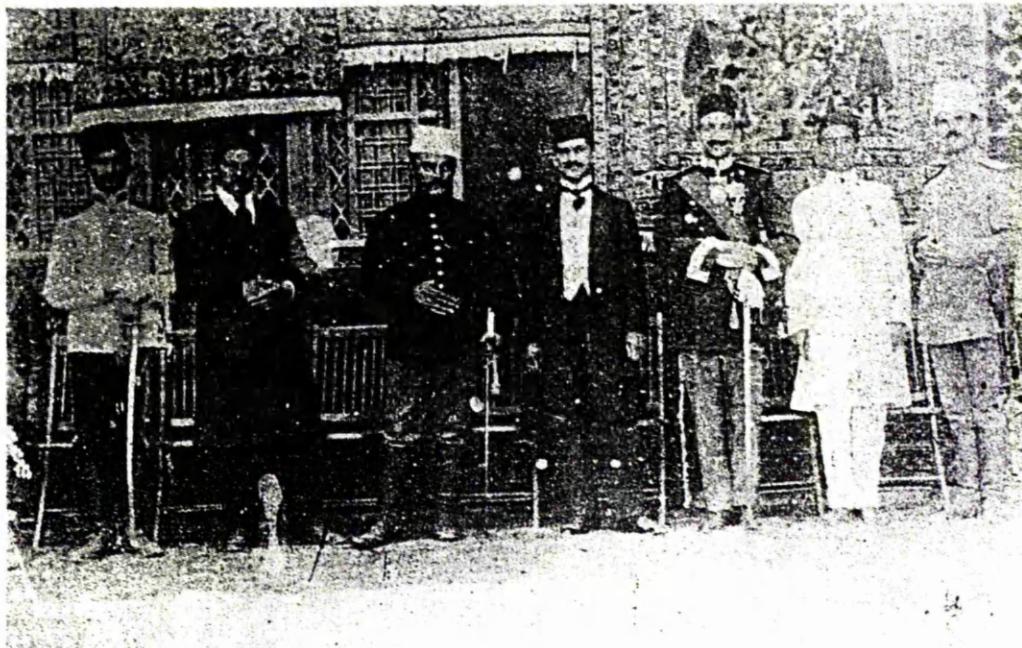


This army fluctuated in size and number according to the fluctuating size of the Amirdom at various periods, and was divided into three to five regiments. Of these regiments, two were garrisoned at Nosratabad since the annexation of

(1) Qaem-Maqami, Sarhang Jahangir, "Yeksad-o Panjeh Sanad-e Tarikh", Tehran 1969, p. 236.

Sistan to the Khozeimeh Amirdom. One of these two regiments was disbanded at home towards the end of the nineteenth century, while "the other supplied the shopkeepers for the capital (of Sistan) in the intervals of their military duties".<sup>(1)</sup> At the time when Amir Alam Khan III was in

*Amir of Qaen and the Staff of the Amirdom*



From right: Colonel Ali-Naghi Vaziri Commander of the Cavalry; E'tesam al-Molk, Kargozar; Amir of Qaen, Amir Shokat al-Molk II; Baqa' ad-Doleh Vakili, Pishkar-e Daraei; Motazedi, Military Investigator; Dr. Mahmud Kasravi, Head of the Clinic; .....

Sistan, he uprooted the Afghan influence and built the town of Nosrat-Abad (later on, named Zabol), 400 cavalry men were with him.<sup>(2)</sup> Quoting Sartip (General) Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh, commander of the Sistan regiment and governor of that province of the Amirdom at the turn of the twentieth century, Colonel Yate indicates:

(1) Sykes, op. cit., p. 375.

(2) Goldsmid, General Frederick, "Eastern Persia", Vol. II, London 1876, p. 268.

"The fort or citadel (of Nosrat-Abad) had been built by his grandfather, the late Amir of Kain, some twenty-five years before, and that the garrison consisted of a regiment of Kain infantry 800 strong and 500 iliyats or irregulars. These iliyats or nomads, he said, all came from Kain. They paid no revenue, but performed service instead, and were sent to serve in Sistan."<sup>(1)</sup>

The sarbazes were paid, towards the end of the 19th century, seven tumans, or about £1.8s in cash, and three Qaeni Kharvars, or about 1095 lbs. of grain, per annum.<sup>(2)</sup> The artillery men were of superior standard, in equipments and efficiency, compared with their counter-parts in the infantry. They were also better paid.<sup>(3)</sup> Their commissioned officers, like those of the infantry and cavalry, were trained in Tehran. Almost all European travellers, who visited Qaen and Sistan at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, spoke of the poor condition and poor organization of the army of the Khozeimeh Amirdom. This was true not only of that army alone, but, of the military forces of the entire country. Yet, this poorly maintained army of Qaen was able to defend the Amirdom, and the eastern frontiers of Iran, for that matter, against numerous raids and encroachments from the east.

#### TAXES, TRADE, REVENUES, AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The Amirdom paid no regular taxes to the central Government until the second half of the nineteenth century. The revenues were spent on maintaining the Amirdom's frontier-keeping forces and other administrators and

(1) Yate, op. cit., p. 77.

(2) Yate, op. cit., p. 78.

(3) Hale, F. "From the Persian Uplands", op. cit., p. 151.

officials in the region. Major Euan Smith, a member of Goldsmid's British arbitration team visiting Sistan and Qaenat in 1872, asserts: "the Amir of Kain pays no fixed revenue to the Shah, but supports the whole expenditure of troops and Government servants located in his province, as well as that incurred in the Government of Sistan: moreover, he transmits from time to time presents or "Ta'arufs" in money and kind, to Tehran."<sup>(1)</sup>

Birjand, the capital city of Qaenat traded mainly with Bandar Abbas, Sabzevar, and Mashhad. Qaenat's exports, towards the end of the nineteenth century, consisted of carpets and Gelims, which mainly found their way to Tehran and Istanbul. About 3800 camel-load of dried fruit, skin, Saffran and opium was mostly sent to Bandar Abbas. 5000 camel loads of wool and other commodities, were sent to Sabzevar and shipped to Armenia via the Caspian Sea.

Other measures of commodities were sent to Mashhad to be traded with the Russians. In return, piece goods such as sugar, tea, spices, iron, indigo, and copper were imported from all directions<sup>(2)</sup> The revenue of Sistan province of the Amirdom was mostly in kind, and was fixed at 24000 kharvars (649 Lbs. to each kharvar) of grain per annum towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>(3)</sup> Of this, 6850 kharvars were paid out locally in allowances to officials and troops, and the balance had to be accounted for by the Amir to the Government at the rate of 7 qarans (later rials). The Government rate of 7 qaran per kharvar of grain was, as always, much below the market value, as for instance in Khorasan, the average value of wheat was 50 qarans a kharvar, while the rate at which the revenue grain was accounted for to the Government was only 25 qarans, "the

(1) Smith, Major Euan, "Perso-Baluch Frontier", in Goldsmid's "Eastern Persia", Vol. II, London 1876, p. 337.

(2) Yate, op. cit., p. 70.

(3) Yate, op. cit., p. 83.

difference", says Yate,<sup>(1)</sup> "being one of the prerequisites of the governor-general (of Mashhad), who made what he could by the sale..."<sup>(2)</sup> In addition, a sum of 2600 tumans was also levied in cash. This amount represented taxes on sheep and cattle at the rate of one qaran per 20 sheep and 2.5 qarans per 100 cows.<sup>(3)</sup> Bullocks were not taxed as they were rarely kept by the villagers.<sup>(4)</sup>

For the entire Amirdom of Khozeimeh, the amount of 32,300 tumans (£6660) was levied in cash from the Amir towards the end of the nineteenth century, by the central Government.<sup>(5)</sup> The Amir himself, and in his absence, the Mostofi (Chief administrator), received in his office the officials who reported to him developments of any kind within the limits of their responsibilities. Other individuals also came to him with their grievance. His office was normally crowded every day, with clerics, merchants, landowners, officials, travellers, leaders of tribes and sometimes, visitors of official business from other districts or from Mashhad or Tehran. Mr. Hale, having observed the administrative and judiciary proceedings of the office of the Amir of his time (Shokat al-Molk II) in November 1913, describes it in the following terms:

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Yate describes the condition of the Sistani cultivators as miserable, explaining; "I do not think I ever saw a more miserable looking lot. There were no landowners in Sistan. All the land and water belonged to the Government (in Tehran), who took a third of the produce. Consequently the revenue fixed at 24000 kharvars would represent an annual out-turn of 72000 kharvars of grain" (p.84). The reason for this miserable condition was that the central Government had, through the authority of governorship of Khorasan, confiscated all lands at Sistan following an uprising of the Sistanis, by both landowners and peasants in late 19th century. Prior to this, the Khozeimeh Amirs better maintained agricultural and economic conditions of the province. With Reza Shah's rise into power, the Government decided to change this whole situation. Lands were redistributed to the cultivators, but water supplies remained a mighty problem which has not as yet been resolved.

(5) Yate, op. cit., p. 70.

"The governor is away just now on business at Teheran. His deputy is a cheery, open-eyed fellow, with a hearty laugh and a good-natured desire to please everybody, to which end he works hard from early morning till night. What does he do? He owns a lot of carpet factories, but besides that he administers a district with several hundred thousand people in it. How does he do it? Well, he goes about seeing people sometimes, but generally he sits in his office at one end of a big garden, and talks to priests and merchants, and landowners and officials, and village headmen and tribal leaders. Some of them have important grievances, others none at all, but they almost all want something from him, and they often get what they want. His office is a general court-house too. The man whose neighbour has damaged his wall or stolen his wife, the traveller who has been robbed or says he has, the late pedestrian arrested for being out in the streets after closing time without the password, the two strangers who have quarrelled, the two friends who have fought, the baker suing for debt, the petty farmer claims water rights, the man who has been called bad names in public, the man who has resisted the 'police,' and the 'policeman' who has overstepped his authority all these come along and swear and forswear and counterswear, each of them with a crowd of witnesses, real or imaginary, and all of them, by their own eloquent showing, harmless, innocent and hapless ones who have been vilely wronged and seek the protection of a benign Government against the most evil of men. Out of contradiction comes truth not always, but surprisingly often. Occasionally a severe beating takes place in the high-walled garden in front of the court-house, and as my own quarters are just on the other side of the wall, I hear the howls of the victim of justice while I am having my poached eggs of a morning. My boy cocks his head to catch the groans, and grins appreciatively. If I ask him what the culprit is being bastinadoed for, he is sure to know all about it. I went on my roof the other day (somewhat shamefacedly) to watch the operation, as I had never seen a beating before. The wretch lay on his back with his feet tied to a cross-pole, and two men were laying

on to his upturned soles in deliberate fashion with stout loose whips. When it was over he was carried to a stable and left there with his swollen feet in the litter. Sometimes jagged branches of pomegranate are used, and blood flows quickly. Even death may result if the flogging is exceptionally severe. Horrible, you say; and what a barbarous country, you think. But is there as much barbarity in that as there was in Europe less than a hundred years ago?

There is a prison in Birjand, but the only occupant at present is a man committed for murder and awaiting sentence. The murder was cold-blooded, and the man has confessed his crime before three priests in turn, but if the son of the victim accepts blood-money he will be let off at that."(1)

With the rise of Reza Shah into power, the autonomous Khozeimeh Amirdom was but a nominal entity. With the introduction of the 1937 administrative divisions of the country, Sistan was incorporated into the province of Sistan and Baluchistan, whereas Qaenat and Birjand were recognised as two separate Shahrestans (administrative districts) of the province of Khorasan. It was in the same year that Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh tendered his resignation from the Governorship of Qaenat and Sistan as will be discussed, and thereupon, put an actual end to the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Eastern Iran.

#### THE KHOZEIMEH AMIRS

##### 1. Amir Esmail Khan

In the absence of any reliable record of the Khozeimeh Amirs of Qaen, in the history, prior to the last Safavid Shah (Tahmasb III), Amir Esmail Khan is, inevitably, considered in this work as the founder of the modern line of the Khozeimeh dynasty.

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(1) Hale, op. cit., pp. 20, 21, 22.

Unlike some members of his family, who are accused of having supported Mahmud and Ashraf Afghan in their raids and occupation of the Iranian cities and the Safavid capital city, Esfahan, Amir Esmail Khan accompanied the Safavid Shah Tahmasp III to Khorasan, where he joined Nader Shah (10 Nov. 1688 - 19 June 1747) in his campaign against Mahmud and Ashraf. While in Khorasan, the Safavid Shah entrusted the official title of governorship of Qaenat, Farah, Tun and Tabas, and Kohkiluyeh on to the Amir.

Amir Esmail Khan's titles were later reaffirmed by Nader Shah (then Nader Qoli) on the eve of preparing for war with the Ottomans (March 21-25, 1731).

Jahangoshi-e Naderi writes on the events of 1144 AH (1731):

"It was during these few days of Noruz..... that the Imperial decree issued for marching toward Iraq..... aia-lat-e Farah and governorship of Qaen were given to Esmail Khan Khozeimeh, and governorship of Asfzar was given to Esmail Sultan son of Bijan Sultan.... each one of them was sent to the district of his responsibility."(1)

The same source, commenting on the events of the year 1145 AH (1732) records:

"At the time when the Iranian forces had the city of Baghdad under their siege, and on the other hand, Nader Shah was moving towards Karkuk and Musol....the news that Mohammad Khan Baluchi had overwhelmed some regions of Fars, was communicated to him. As the task of prolonging the siege did not require a large number of troops, to be kept stationed around Baghdad, he decided to return Esmail Khan to his Amirdom at Qaen by honouring him with the governorship of aialat-e Kohkiluyeh".(2)

Amir Esmail Khan was at the same time, assigned to fight Mohammad Khan Baluchi who had taken some parts of Fars (the

(1) Jahan-Goshai-e Naderi, quoted in Ayati's "Baharestan", op. cit., p. 110.

(2) Jahan-Goshai-e Naderi quoted in Baharestan, op. cit.

districts of Kohkiluyeh). His forces, together with the forces commanded by other Amirs, entered Fars.

"After Baghdad was captured and Nader Shah returned to Iran,.... Tahmasp Qoli Khan from Esfahan and Esmail Khan Vali (governor of kohkiluyeh), from his quarters, moved and joined forces to topple Mohammad Khan (Baluchi). Mohammad Khan moved out of Shiraz to halt their advances..."<sup>(1)</sup>

## 2. Amir Alam Khan I " Vakil ad - Doleh "

Amir Alam Khan, son of Amir Esmail Khan, joined Nader Shah's army still a young man (1736). He, very soon, proved himself worthy of reputation as being brave and a wise warrior. He is so mentioned in the Jahan-Goshi-e Naderi and Mojmal ot-Tavarikh-e Golestaneh historical records of the time. He had fought, at the head of the Khozeimeh army, alongside Nader Shah in many campaigns of the latter in the east and west of Iran. It was because of his braveries that he became one of the few of Nader Shah 's elite officers. Jahan-Goshaie Naderi indicates that when Nader put his military camp at Morad Tappeh near Iravan (Yaravan), to prepare for a battle against the Ottomans in 1151 AH (1738), the Ottomans appeared before him with one hundred thousand mounted cavalries and an infantry of forty thousand strong. Ottoman forces were defeated after a few rounds of battles were fought. Jahan-Goshie Naderi asserts: "after the battle of Sar-Askar (in which the Ottomans were thoroughly defeated), he (Nader Shah) wrote a letter to His Majesty the Ottoman Emperor, sent it to the Ottoman court by Fath-Ali Khan, via Baghdad. Himself returned to Khorasan from Morad-Tappeh, He assigned Mohammad-Ali Khan Qaraqyunlu as the commander-in-chief, aided by Haji Seif ad-Din Bayat with a portion of the victorious army, and Amir Alam Khan, at the head of the Khozeimeh Arabs and Lolaei and Nakhaei forces of altogether twenty thousand of the victorious troops, to hold Iraq. They were assigned to put down any attempt of revolt

(1) Ibid.

there. A few days later, Mohammad-Ali Khan came up with his designs for subordination and dictatorship, the Alvar-e Fili tribe joined up with him, undertaking to support him for one year without payment as from the time when he declares his uprising. A number of other Khans and chiefs had also joined him. Since Mohammad-Ali Khan was not sure of Amir Alam Khan's loyalty to Nader Shah, shared the secret with him in private, hoping that he would also go along with the idea. But, since Amir Alam Khan did not see himself less than Mohammad-Ali Khan in rank or position, refused his proposition. Finally conflicts broke out between the two commanders in the vicinity of Fili. Although Mohammad-Ali Khan's forces were about four thousand strong, Amir Alam Khan fought him in one whole day, from morning to the evening, with two thousand Arabs in his command, defeated him and captured him, and sent him to the supreme leader. Mohammad-Ali Khan was blinded and Emam Qoli Khan Abivardi, his accomplice, was killed. Of the fortunes of Mohammad-Ali Khan, one thousand tumans went to Amir Alam Khan, and the (remaining) five thousand tumans he distributed among his soldiers as reward. Amir Alam Khan was also the recipient of (Nader Shah's) special reward. Amir Alam Khan was one of the nobles of Nader Shah's forces who joined in the competition for the leadership of Iran in the wake of the latter's assassination."<sup>(1)</sup>

Mojmal ot-Tavarikh Golestaneh, another historical record of the time, explains<sup>(2)</sup> that Nader Shah had rendered admirable services to the country of Iran at the beginning of his career. Whatever destruction accrued by the Afghani domination, he had repaired, and whichever of the Iranian territories occupied by the encroaching powers, recaptured, except that towards the end of his rule he changed.

(1) Jahan-Goshaie Naderi, quoted in Baharestan, op. cit.

(2) Mojmal ot-Tavarikh Golestaneh, ed. Malek as-Shoara Bahar, quoted in Ayati's Baharestan, op. cit.

This change of behaviour, clearly resulting from psychological strains, that Nader Shah suffered towards the end of his career, has been extensively discussed in numerous works of historical analysis. Shortly, a series of rapidly spreading insurgencies appear to have shattered his nerves. Almost immediately after accepting the Jafari sect as the official religion of Iran, and thence declaring himself as the Shah of Iran in 1736, the powerful Bakhtiari tribes of southern Iran revolted against him. Their revolt was put down swiftly. When Nader Shah was still fighting his way to India, the Lazkis of Daghestan revolted and killed his brother Ebrahim Khan Zahir ad-Doleh. While still in India, he had to send another army to put down the Lazki uprising. Another incident in India forced him to open his soldiers hands on the people of Delhi. When he was going from Mazandaran to Mashhad in 1741, an attempt on his life took place in the jungles of Mazandaran by unknown elements who had opened gun fire on him. Nader was injured in the arm. Later on, people of Shirvan and Fars and some other parts of the country revolted against him. In 1744 someone claimed in Kerman to be a brother of Shah Sultan Hussein the Safavid. He declared himself as successor to the last Safavid emperor and sought asylum in the Ottoman capital. The Ottomans used the opportunity and declared war on Nader Shah, but were defeated. The clerics who never trusted Nader on the religious matters, and the feudalists whose power he had curtailed, never kept quiet throughout his reign. They spread their influence among Nader Shah's family.

Their close association with Reza Qoli, Nader Shah's first born caused Nader's suspicions of his son's conduct. They succeeded in encouraging Ali-Qoli Khan, Nader's nephew, to revolt against the uncle in Sistan. Nader Shah used force to uproot these issues. His use of force gradually became increasingly cruel. He blinded his own son, Reza Qoli, which he regretted tremendously later. His cruelty increased to an extent that was no longer tolerable. Finally on Jamadi al-Akhar 1161 (19 June 1747), a number of his noble officers conspired, some historical sources say, "at the instigation

of his own nephew, Ali-Qoli Khan"<sup>(1)</sup> killed him in the district of Khabushan at night and threw his head to the soldiers. Great chaos befallen the vast country in the wake of Nader Shah's assassination in 1747. Almost all nobles of his army and a few of his own family entered a cruel race for succession to the throne. The first to claim succession, was Nader Shah's nephew Ali-Qoli Khan who proclaimed himself "Adel Shah" by ascending the Naderi throne. To attract the support of the nobles and commanders, he condemned Nader Shah's "barbarism" and "atrocities" by accepting the responsibility for his assassination.<sup>(2)</sup> Little did he know that the nobles and the commanders of Nader Shah's forces were too loyal to their murdered master to accept his proclamation. He massacred all male members of the royal family, except Shahrokh Mirza, son of Reza Qoli Mirza, and grandson of Nader. He was dethroned by his brother Ebrahim, who was, in turn, killed by his own troops.

At this time, the throne of the kingdom was, once again, open to contest by the eligible leaders. Among those participating in this contest, one was Amir Alam Khan I of the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Sistan. To ensure his success in this great contest, he had to overcome powerful rivals such as Shahrokh Mirza in Mashhad, Ahmad Khan Abdali in eastern Khorasan (Afghanistan), Mohammad Hassan Khan Qajar in Mazandaran, Mir Hassan Khan in Esfanan, Karim Khan Zand in Shiraz, Ali-Qoli Mirza in Sistan, Ebrahim Mirza, Sam Mirza, Mohammad-Ali Khan, and so on. Mohammad-Ali Khan Qaraqayunlu was defeated by Amir Alam Khan, long before Nader Shah's assassination. Ali-Qoli Khan and Ebrahim Mirza finished each other off, as has been discussed. Among Others, Shahrokh Mirza was installed on the throne by commanders of the army, loyal to their assassinated master. He was immediately challenged by an influential cleric, Mirza Seyyed Mohammad, son of Mirza Davood (a superintendent of the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad).

(1) Tarikh-e Jahan-Goshai-e Naderi, Mojmal ot-Tavarikh Golestaneh, Tarikh-e Sultani and so on.

(2) Sing, Ganda "Ahmad Shah Durrani", Bombay 1959, page 82.

Seyyed Mohammad revolted against Nader Shah's grandson with the help of Amir Alam Khan, a Shi'ah Moslem, religiously still loyal to the Safavid Shi'ah dynasty, who saw no room in task of Iranian monarchy for the Afshar "usurpers", except for Nader Shah himself to whom Amir Alam Khan was a loyal general and a trusted noble. Mirza Seyyed Mohammad blinded Shahrokh<sup>(1)</sup> and declared himself "Shah Suleyman the Safavid" by ascending to the throne in Mashhad. Shah Suleyman, a nephew of Shah Sultan Hussein Safavid and his son-in-law, immediately embarked, in association with Amir Alam Khan,<sup>(2)</sup> upon unifying the country by appointing Salim Khan Afshar as commander of Iraq, with Fath-Ali Khan as commander of Azarbajian, and with Mohammad Hassan Khan Qajar as commander of Astar-Abad and Mazandaran.<sup>(3)</sup>

Amir Alam Khan, at the same time, sent his brother Amir Masum Khan with a sizeable army to Herat where they succeeded in capturing the city for a very short time. Other armies were sent to restore security in Qandahar and Kabul.<sup>(4)</sup> These expeditions naturally clashed directly with the interests of Ahmad Khan Abdali, who himself was a powerful contender of the leadership of Iran, and was, at the time, recapturing India and repeating Nader Shah's famous Indian campaign. However, Shah Suleyman was not to reign for a long time. He was soon overpowered by Yusof-Ali Khan Jalayer, Shahrokh Mirza's general. Mojmal ot-Tavarikh Golestaneh has the following accounts for Shah Suleyman's final days;

"The nobles of Khorasan who believed in the family of the Seyyed more than the usurping family of Afshar, and who were all of pure Shi'ah faith, went to the Seyyed and begged him

(1) Tarikh-e Jahan-Goshai-e Naderi; Atashkadeh-e Azar; Mojmal at-Tavarikh-e Golestaneh; Ahmad Shah Durrani; Afghanistan Dar Masir-e Tarikh; etc.

(2) Ayati, op. cit., p. 118.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ayati, op. cit., p. 120.

and chose him as Shah, and named him Shah Suleyman II. They blinded Shahrokh Mirza on the instigation of Amir Alam Khan who, at the time, had the title of "Vakil ad-Doleh". They eventually installed a Government that was aspired by the Qezelbash for so many years. They dispatched an army, commanded by Behbood Khan and Amir Masum Khan, brother of Amir Alam Khan, to Herat and captured the city. Immediately another able army was sent to restore security in Qandahar and Kabul. Even war was declared on Ahmad Khan Durrani. All these activities were taking place owing to the personality, power, wisdom, and political acumen of Amir Alam Khan Khozeimeh Vakil ad-Doleh. It is unfortunate, for the people of Iran, the first day of whose misfortune must be counted from the day when the efforts of Amir Alam Khan were wasted because of the betrayal committed by Yusof-Ali Khan Jalayer, prompted by the women of Shahrokhi harem. Shortly on the day when Amir Mehrab Khan, a close associate of Amir Alam Khan, died and the nobles of the court whose forces usually monitored activities at the (strategic point of) Chahar Bagh of Mashhad, were mourning the former and reciting from the Quran, Yusof-Ali Khan Jalayer entered the Chahar Bagh with a group of armed men, on the order of Habibeh Sultan Begom, the wife of Shahrokh Mirza, captured Shah Suleyman and blinded him and sounded the trumpet in the name of Shahrokh. Amir Alam Khan, who had not even thought of such deeds, was surprised. He attacked the Chahar Bagh, aided by other commanders. Yusof-Ali Khan opened cannon fire on them and killed scores of the Seyyed's supporters. The news of Seyyed's loss of sight disappointed the people. Amir Alam Khan and other nobles went to their own realm of power. Yusof-Ali Khan after restoring the blinded Shah (Shahrokh) on the throne, took by use of trickery, all the money and jewelleries that Shahrokh had, and left Mashhad to the Kalat (Naderi) to live in feasting and drinking. After all these, and the fact that a blind Shah was left in Mashhad on his own, the influence of the Government decreased to its lowest level. On the other hand, Ahmad Khan Abdali arrived in

Khorasan with a large army where Behbood Khan and Amir Masum Khan surrendered themselves to him."<sup>(1)</sup>

The unexpected action of Yusof-Ali Khan, however, angered Amir Alam Khan who decided to take the whole of the country. Ahmad Khan Abdali had returned to Afghanistan and Amir Alam Khan advanced troops to the Kalat-e Naderi, captured Yusof-Ali Khan Jalayer and his brother. He subsequently marched on Mashhad, dethroned Shahrokh for the second time, and declared himself as lord sovereign in 1748.<sup>(2)</sup> Quoting a number of rare historical records of the time, Baharestan, itself a rare book, has the following account of this development:

*"Amir Alam Khan found (the Jalayeri Yusof-Ali's) behaviour most distasteful. He wrecked his vengeance upon Yusof-Ali Khan by marching, with his men, on Kalat where he fought and captured Yusof-Ali Khan and his brother and a number of others. He brought them, as prisoners, to Mashhad and put them to death on the advice of the military chiefs. He then hoisted the flag of independence and gathered around himself large groups of the Khozeimeh, Nakhaei, Lolaei, and other clans of Khorasan. He ordered a few leaders of the Kurdish clans opposing him, to be blinded, and married the sister of Duli Khan Shadlu (a Kurdish chief). Wherever there was a notable chief in Khorasan, accepted the authority of the Amir of "the astronomical troops" willingly or otherwise. Amir Alam Khan killed or injured many of the leading insubordinates and moved troops to capture Nishabur."<sup>(3)</sup>*

Amir Alam Khan seems to have been unfortunate in the sense that his capture of Khorasan and Herat and Baluchistan, brought him in direct confrontation with his more powerful rival, Ahmad Khan Abdali (later Ahmad Shah Durrani).

(1) Mojmal ot-Tavarikh-e Golestaneh, quoted in Ayati's "Baharestan", op. cit.

(2) Coins are reported to have been found in some households of Khorasan and Tehran with Amir Alam Khan's insignia as lord sovereign of Khorasan.

(3) Ayati, "Baharestan", op. cit., p. 121.

From Mashhad, he advanced his forces to open the city of Nishabur, where the Bayat clan refused to accept his sovereignty. Near Nishabur, Amir Alam Khan sent messages to the Bayats inviting them to surrender in peace and to accept his authority. His invitation was turned down. He besieged the city and was about to succeed when the news of Ahmad Khan Abdali's arrival in Jam and Lankar reached him.

Amir Alam Khan left Nishabur to appear before Ahmad Khan. Majmal ot-Tavarikh-e Golestaneh has the following account of this fateful event which had put the final touch on Amir Alam Khan's career: "....(he was trying to capture the city of Nishabur when) the news of the arrival of Ahmad Khan Abdali, with a fateful army, in Jam and Lankar reached this Amir. He had no alternative but to abandon the siege of Nishabur and to prepare for war with Ahmad Khan. He reviewed his troops which included thirty five thousand young men, all armed, each resembling Rostam (son) of Zal. The military secretaries brought the lists of army to the Khan of mighty rank. After reviewing the list, he organised a cavalry force of five thousand to ride in advance of the army and ordered the troops to move to the front on the following day. The Kurdish leaders and other tribal chiefs began dissension and decided to abandon the Amir. At dawn when the splendour of the eastern sun began its manifestation....the Amir, unaware of the fast approaching fate, moved his flag of independence towards Jam and Lankar. He was marching in those directions when the hypocrite generals left him, each taking his own men to his own country. The Amir was left with a few groups, and since he saw his fortune turned and his fate darkened, decided to suspend punishment of the Kurds for the time being. He reached the Tun fortress which was very strong and in his possession. He left the military baggages and his harem there with his brother Amir Masum Khan in charge. Himself went to Duli Khan with the few groups he had and began to mass another army to send to war with Ahmad Khan. The leaders of the Kurds learnt of this matter and sent messages to Duli Khan (a Kurdish chief and the Amir's brother-in-law) advising him that supporting the murderer of our people is against our tribal principles

and honours. If you are concerned with our tribal honours, send the Amir to us without any excuses. Otherwise be prepared for war'. Since Duli Khan had no desire for tribal discords and since he saw supporting the Amir was beyond his capability, he sent him towards Asfzar. The Kurds, informed of this move, mounted their horses immediately. Amir was about to enter the Asfzar fortress when the Kurdish groups reached him, captured him and sent him to Shahrokh bounded up. As Shahrokh found the source of his blindness in his captivity, blinded him and gave him to Jafar Khan the Kurd who was also blinded by the Amir. Jafar Khan took his revenge by having the Amir flogged."<sup>(1)</sup>

Other historical sources, however, record Amir Alam Khan's fate differently. These sources speak of Amir Alam Khan's direct involvement in war with Ahmad Khan Abdali on the arrival of the latter in Jam and Lankar, where the Amir of Qaen fought the Afghan leader forcing him to retreat in the first round of engagement. The author of "Ahmad Shah Durrani", using various sources gives the following accounts of the event:

"Mir Alam Khan was at this time the master of Mashhad, and he was preparing to besiege Nishapur when he heard of the fall of Herat into the hands of Ahmad Shah and of his march against Mashhad. He suspended his activities at Nishapur and hurried down to Mashhad to meet the advancing Afghans. He prepared the fortifications, provisioned the place, and, after having confided the defence to the inhabitants, whom he believed he could trust, he marched out of Mashhad, determined to pounce upon Herat, if possible.

Ahmad Shah detailed an advance army of five thousand selected Afghans under the command of Jahan Khan Popalzei, assisted by Mir Naseer Khan, chief of Kalat, in Baluchistan, to march against Mashhad. On arriving at Turbat-i-Shaikh Jam, Jahan Khan sprang a surprise upon Mir Alam Khan by

(1) Mojmal ot-Tavarikh-e Golestaneh quoted in Ayati's "Baharestan", op. cit., p. 122.

attacking him. Recovering from the first shock, Mir Alam hit back with great intrepidity and pushed back the Durranis. But the position was soon retrieved by a bold attack of Mir Naseer Khan of Kalat, who charged the Persians with his three thousand horse and drove them away. Mir Alam was killed in the battle and his army was cut to pieces."<sup>(1)</sup> Whereas Ferrier asserts that Amir Alam Khan immediately gave up the idea of keeping Mashhad and retired in the direction of Qaenat to his tribe,<sup>(2)</sup> Sir Percy Sykes indicates:

"The province of Khorasan was in a state of anarchy at this period. The various successors of Nadir Shah had been successively killed or blinded. In the latter category was a grandson of Nadir, Shah Rukh Mirza, a boy of fourteen who was at that period merely a puppet in the hands of Mir Alam Khan of Sistan. This chief, who had defeated his rivals, left Meshed with a strong garrison with the intention of surprising Herat. He was, however, himself surprised at Turbat-i-Shaykh-Jam by Timur Mirza, who was marching on Meshed in command of the Afghan advance guard. Mir Alam, recovering from the surprise, fought bravely, but was defeated and his army was cut to pieces by a charge of 3000 Baluch cavalry under Nasir Khan of Kalat. Ahmad Shah then besieged Meshed, without much success, but finally, upon receipt of large sum of money, he replaced Shah Rukh on the throne under his sovereignty."<sup>(3)</sup>

Whichever of these accounts was more precise, the family tradition favours the first account. In a farman (decree)<sup>(4)</sup>, signed by Ahmad Shah Durrani (Abdali) and dated 16 Shavval 1167 (1753), Amir Alam Khan I is compared with Nader Shah Afshar. The Amir is reported in the farman as being under siege in Sabzevar. Amir Alam Khan's death must have, therefore, occurred around that date of 1753. Other sources have recorded his death as in 1749. Amir Alam Khan was, undoubtedly a significantly effective leader of the time and the greatest Amir of the Khozeimeh whose dominion expanded to include a vast country. His Amirdom included Qaenat (the old Qohestan), Sistan, Baluchistan, Khorasan, Herat, and Farah (fig. IV). He put his Amirdom's south-western out posts in Kerman. He had his capital moved

(1) Sing, Ganda, "Ahmad Shah Durrani", Bombay 1959, pp. 57 - 8.

(2) Ferrier, General J.P. "Caravan Journeys and Wandering in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Baloochistan", London 1857, pp. 508 - 9.

(3) Sykes, Sir Percy, "A History of Afghanistan", London 1940, Vol. I, p. 356.

(4) Farman of Ahmad Shah Durrani (Abdali), as appeared in the "farhang-e Iran-Zamin", persian publication, Tehran 1958, pp. 161 - 163.

Figure II

# THE TRADITIONAL HEARTLAND OF THE AMIRDOM

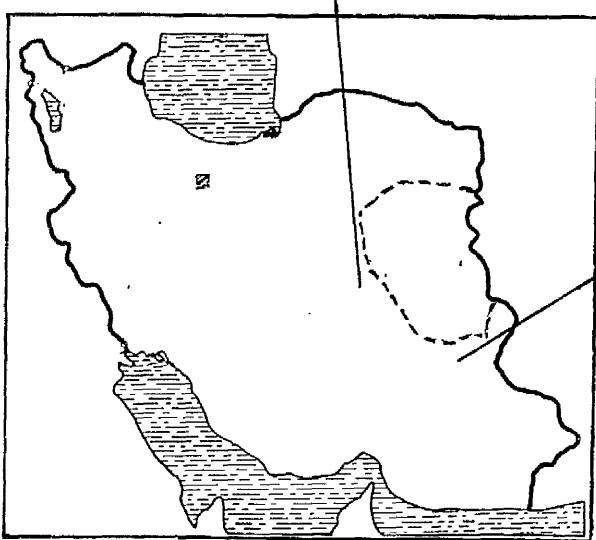
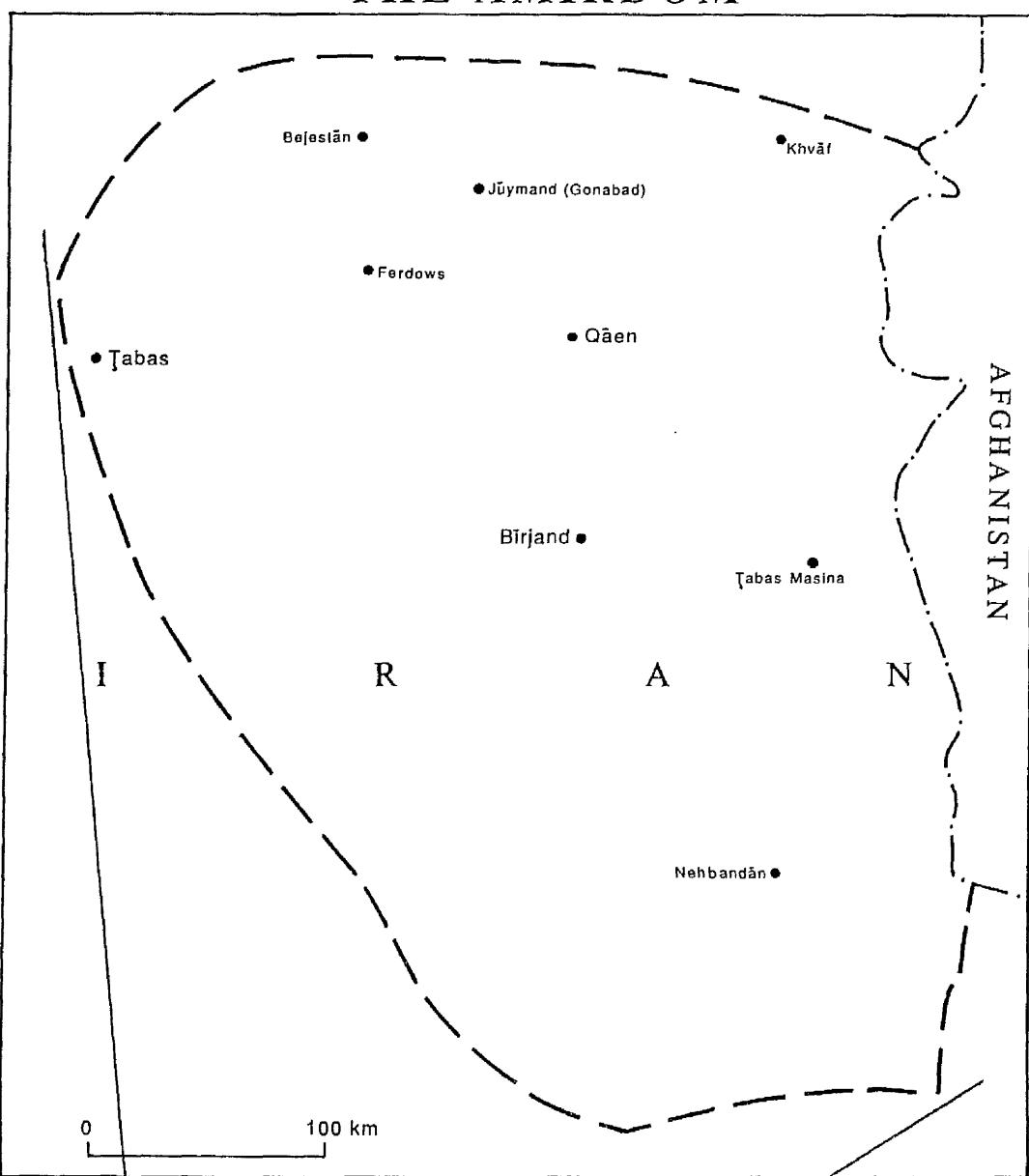
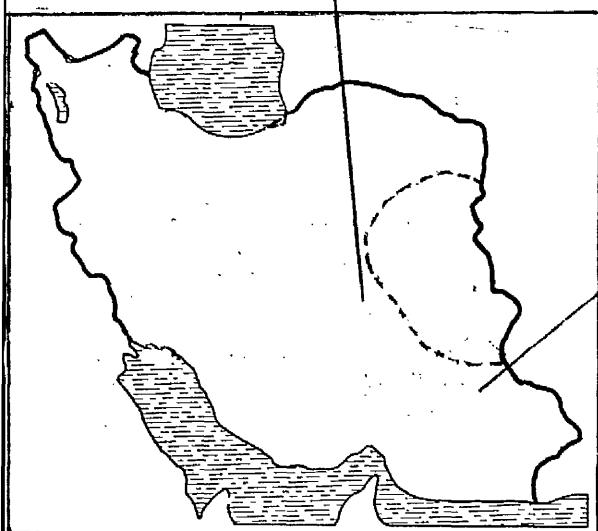
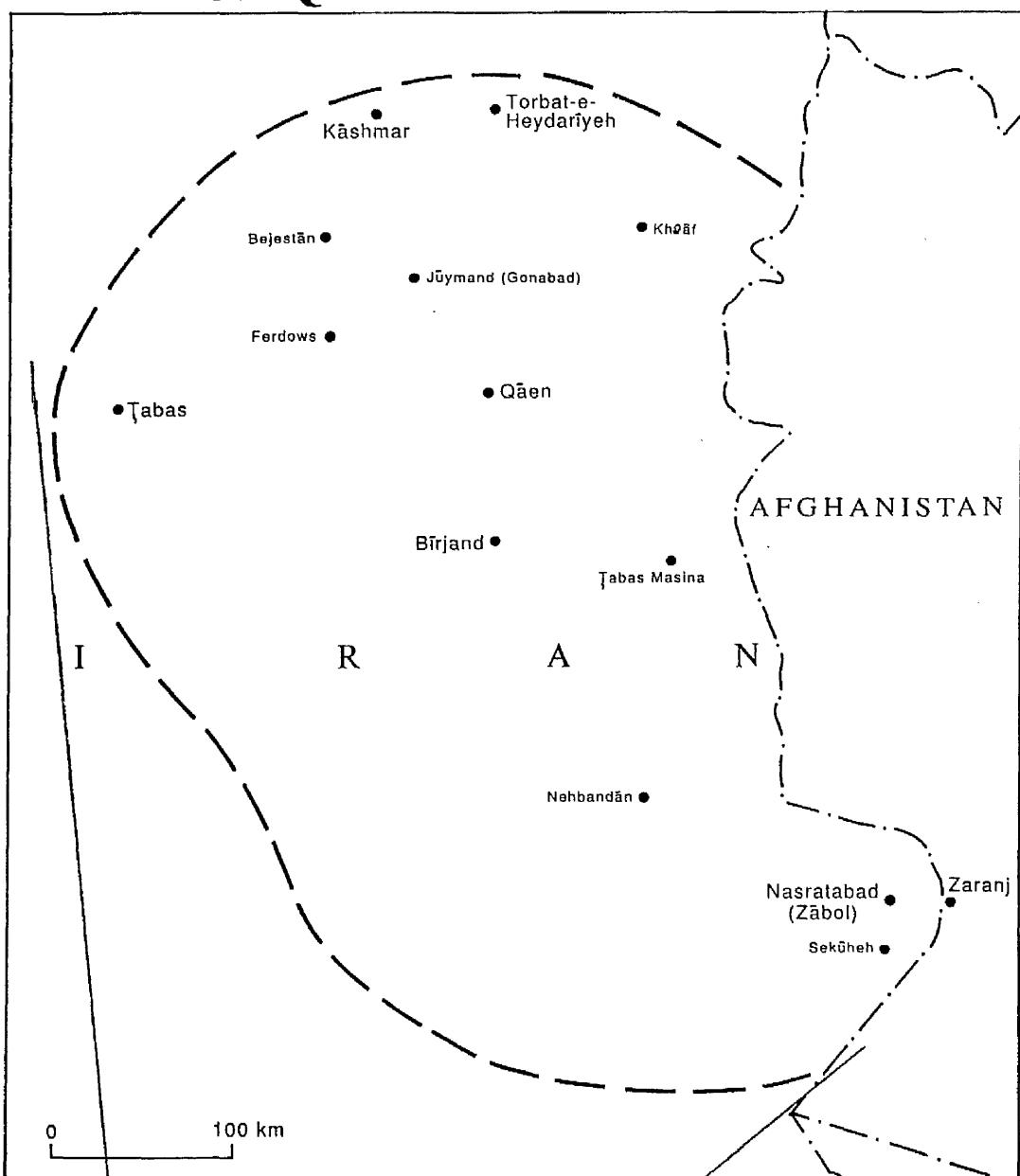


Figure III

# KHOZEIMEH AMIRDOM OF QAENAT AND SISTAN



from Birjand to Mashhad which was the capital of Iran at the time. Had not his fortune clashed with that of Ahmad Khan Abdali so soon, he would, most probably, have influenced Iran's political history for a long period thenceforward, with major impacts on the country's future. From among his rivals Ahmad Khan Abdali founded the kingdom of Afghanistan with himself its first king (Ahmad Shah Durrani); Mohammad Hassan Khan Qajar strengthened his own position in Mazandaran and Astar-Abad (Gorgan). His son, Agha Mohammad Khan, founded the Qajar dynasty in Iran which lasted until 1925; Karim Khan Zand founded the Zand dynasty in Shiraz.

#### Amir Masum Khan

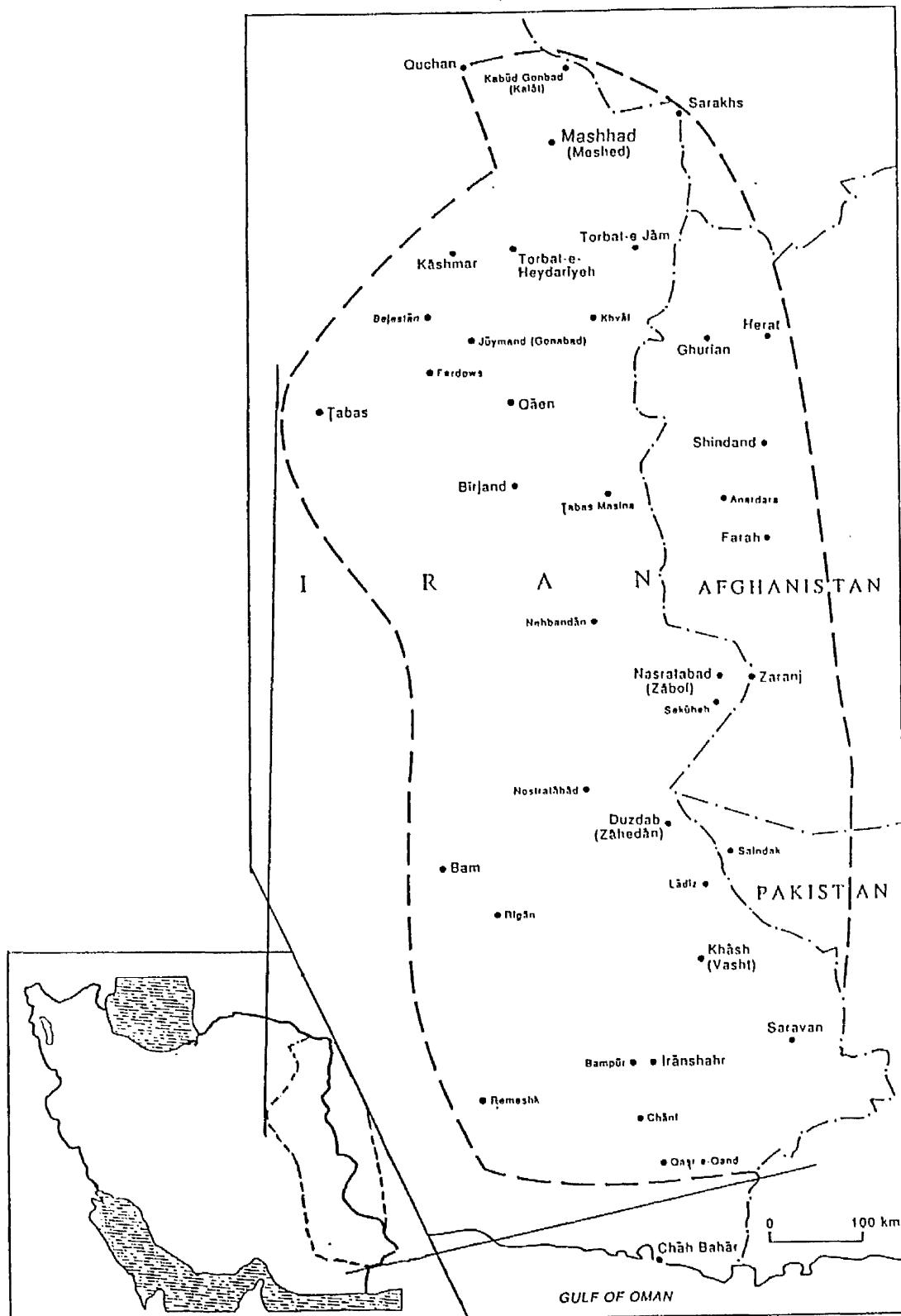
Amir Masum Khan, son of Amir Esmail Khan and brother of Amir Alam Khan, who in spite of never having ruled as a Khozeimeh Amir, played an effective role, under Amir Alam Khan, as commander of the Amirdom's forces. Most of Amir Masum Khan's time was spent with Amir Alam Khan during the latter's contest for the leadership of Iran, acting as his general and commander of the army whom Amir Alam Khan trusted most. When the Abdali Khan finished Amir Alam Khan's career, by bringing the fortress of Tun<sup>(1)</sup> under siege, pressurised Amir Masum Khan to surrender. Unaware of his brother's fate, Amir Masum Khan strengthened his fortifications with the help of the small garrison he had under his command, hoping that his brother would send him reinforcements. The fort could not hold out for a long time, Amir Masum Khan resisted for some time but lost all hope when news of his brother's death reached him. He sued for peace and Ahmad Khan Abdali invited him to his presence, whereupon Amir Masum Khan presented to the Abdali Khan the keys to the fort and surrendered himself.<sup>(2)</sup> He was spared and invited to continue as Amir of Qaen, which he refused. Consequently, Amir Alam Khan's son was nominated for the position.

(1) This name appears in some English history books in the form of "Nun".

(2) Sing, Ganda, op. cit., p. 88.

Figure IV

**KHOZEIMEH AMIRDOM  
AT ITS PEAK  
( 1747 - 1753 )**



Ahmad Khan Abdali, in this respect, followed the example of Nader Shah's policy; i.e. reinstating the defeated leaders, and demanding their maximum loyalty.

Amir Masum Khan, suffering from the grief of his brother's tragedy and the death of a number of his family in that tragedy, was not apparently able to continue in Khorasan. He left Khorasan for Tehran, where he spent the rest of his life. While in Tehran, he endowed a piece of land to the students of the Masumiyyeh School of Theology at Birjand. The deed of this endowment was written in Tehran by the clerics of the capital.<sup>(1)</sup>

### 3- Amir Ali Khan

Amir Ali Khan, son of Amir Alam Khan, restored the Amirdom of Khozeimeh in Qaenat after his father was killed and his uncle, Amir Masum Khan left the district for Tehran. His Amirdom of Qaenat was confirmed by the Khans of the Zand dynasty. According to Sir John Malcolm, Amir Ali Khan was a well known noble of Khorasan at the time. In the event of the contests between the Zand and Qajar dynasties for the monarchy of Iran, Amir Ali Khan fought on the side of Lotf-Ali Khan Zand against Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar.

According to Tarikh-e Giti Gosha,<sup>(2)</sup> when Lotf-Ali Khan was defeated at Kerman in 1208 AH (1793) and was pursued by Agha Mohammad Khan, Amir Ali Khan gave him refuge in Qaen and prepared an army for him made up of Qaeni and Sistani cavalries. Lotf-Ali Khan entered the second round of battles with Agha Mohammad Khan at Kerman with the help of this army. Sir John Malcolm says of Amir Ali Khan:

"The town and district of Kayn, to the south-east of Tubbus, were under an Arabian family of high rank, whose ancestor, Meer Ismael Khan, received a grant of it, to maintain his tribe, from the last Seffavean monarch. This chief served with distinction in the army of Nadir Shah: his grandson now inherited this sterile possession. Numbers of camels are reared in the plains of Kayn, and its mountains are covered with

(1) Ayati, op. cit., p. 122.

(2) Tarikh-e Giti Gosha quoted in Ayati's "Baharestan", op. cit.

sheep; from the wool, carpets of different textures are made, of a quality equal to any produced in Persia. The rulers of this province usually pay their tribute in this manufacture; but the military service of their followers has always been an object more desired, by their paramount lord than the revenue of their lands; for the Arabs of Kayn have long enjoyed the reputation of being the hardiest and bravest infantry of Khorassan. Their present chief Amir Ali Khan had aided Lotf Ali Khan; but the nature and situation of this country left him little to fear from Agha Mahomed, whose wisdom, he knew, would at all times prefer his proffered allegiance, to the hazard."<sup>(1)</sup>

Amir Ali Khan's Amirdom extended from Qaen, the traditional heartland of the Khozeimeh Amirdom, to Sistan.

#### 4- Amir Alam Khan II

Amir Alam Khan II, son of Amir Ali Khan, was named after his grandfather whose memory was to be cherished by the family for over two centuries. He succeeded his father in Qaen, and before that, had joined Lotf-Ali Khan Zand's campaign in Kerman as a commander of the Zand army. His Amirdom coincided with the rule of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar in Iran, who restored the official title of the Amirdom of Qaenat for the Khozeimeh family, in the person of Amir Alam Khan II. In 1213 AH (1798), when Mahmud Mirza Afghan sought refuge in Iran, he was hosted by Amir Alam Khan II in Kashan. Fath-Ali Shah Qajar, thinking of Iran's repossession of Herat, extended Mahmud Mirza Afghan some support and, according to "Baharestan",<sup>(2)</sup> the Qajar Shah ordered Amir Hassan Khan Sheibani, related to the Khozeimeh family and the governor of Tabas at the time, and Amir Alam Khan II to accompany Mahmud Mirza and to support him in Kabul. Amir Alam Khan II was apparently highly respected in Qaenat and the surrounding districts for the peace and tranquillity that he brought back to the region. He had erected buildings and a fine fort in

(1) Malcolm, Sir John G.C.B./K.L.S., "History of Persia, London 1829.

(2) Ayati, "Baharestan", op. cit., p. 123.

Birjand. In 1205 AH (1790) Akhund Molla Abdul-Karim Eshraq, a highly respected cleric of the time and a disciple of Agha Mohammad Bid-Abadi Esfahani, composed some poems in praise of this fortress and its builder. According to these poems, the fortress of Birjand must have been of an excellent design, comparable even to the monuments at Esfahan. The actual Persian words read:

برآرندہ زمین و هفت ایوان  
مقوس ساز چرخ سخت بنیان  
سپهر عدل را مهر درخیان  
خدیو خطه ملک خراسان  
بفرزند فریدون فرعلیم خان  
سربر آرای تخت عدل و احسان  
عمارتیش همه رشک صفاهان  
کز آن پیر خرد گردیده حیران  
صفایش چون صفائی باع رضوان  
خجل از شوکتش درگاه خاقان  
اساس باره اش فولاد بنیان  
بدین سان کرد عقل نکته سنجان  
رسیدی بعد قرنی تا بکیسان  
در غلطانی از طبع چو عمان  
هایون قلعه قصر عیش بنیان

به تاییدات یزدان جهان بخش  
مقرنس بند نه طاق مقوس  
امیر بسی همال دادگستر  
علیخان سکندر فرکه باشد  
خط فرمانروایی را چو بخیزد  
شد او فرمانروای ملک قاین  
بنای قلعه ای بنهاد عالی  
هایون قلعه ای برترز افلاک  
بنایش چون بنای چرخ عالی  
بهرم از رفتحیش بنیاد فرهاد  
برو جش چون بروج چرخ محکم  
قیاس برج وی با برج افلاک  
که گراز کنگره سنجگی فتادی  
بسی تاریخ چون اشراق میجست  
دبیر خامه پا بنهاد و گفتا

5- Amir Asadollah Khan (Hesam ad-Doleh I)

Amir Asadollah Khan, son of Amir Alam Khan II, succeeded his father in Qaen, Tun and Tabas. He was apparently renowned for his bravery, and joined Abbas Mirza Qajar "Nayeb as-Saltaneh" Fath-Ali Shah's crown prince in his campaign of Khorasan in 1247 AH (1831). Abbas Mirza Nayeb as-Saltaneh apparently had high regard for this Amir. When Abdor-Reza Khan Yazdi, governor of Bafgh who had defied Abbas Mirza, escaped from Bafgh and sought refuge in Tabas, Amir Asadollah Khan used his influence with the Nayeb as-Saltaneh and guaranteed the latter's forgiveness for the refugee Khan of Bafgh.<sup>(1)</sup> When in 1249 AH (1833) Abbas Mirza Nayeb as-Saltaneh advanced his troops towards Herat, Amir Asadollah Khan Khozeimeh and Amir Ali-Naghi Khan Arab commanded parts of his military machine. In a report to his father, Fath-Ali Shah Qajar, Abbas Mirza writes:<sup>(2)</sup>

".... having put his reliance on the blessings of the almighty and on the eternal fortune of His Imperial Majesty, this devoted servant left the Naderi fortress to besiege Khabushan. His excellency Sohrab Khan Sartip (Brigadier) was put in charge of the gate of Mashhad with the Shagagi and Maragheh soldiers and with Qaen and Nishabur riflemen, and a group of cavalries with a number of cannons. Himself took position at the gate of Shiran with the rest of the soldiers and cannons. The soldiers of the victorious divisions were made to dig meandering entrenchments and fill in the ditches. Qahraman Mirza, son of this servant of the mighty court of H.I.M. was put in charge of this task on his return from Sabzevar. On the other hand, his excellency Sohrab Khan the engineer and Bruski the engineer designed the entrenchments of the Shaqaqi soldiers to be connected to the ditch (surrounding the city) in three directions. The entrenchments of the Maragheh soldiers under the command of Colonel Hassan Pasha Moghaddam were brought to ten Zar'<sup>(3)</sup> of the gates of Mashhad. The other entrenchments were put in charge of their excellencies Amir Asadollah Khan Khozeimeh Amir of Qaen and Mirza Hussein Khan Darudi chief of Nishabur."

(1) Ayati, op. cit., p. 125.

(2) Qaem-Maqam Farahani, "Monsha-at-e Qaem-Maqam", edit. Qaem-Maqami, Jahangir, Tehran 1337 (1958), p. 163. The letter is dated 18th of Rabi ol-Aval 1248 = 1832.

(3) Zar' was a unit of long measure in Iran, long since replaced by metric system. A zar' was almost as long as a yard (3 ft.).

It was during this movement of the Iranian troops towards Herat that Abbas Mirza Nayeb as-Saltaneh died and his son, Mohammad Mirza, later Mohammad Shah Qajar, returned the expeditory forces to Mashhad. He himself returned to Tehran after leaving most of the responsibilities in the region with Amir Asadollah Khan. In 1253 and 1254 (1837 and 1838) when Mohammad Shah Qajar besieged Herat, Amir Asadollah Khan was present once again, fighting as a commander of the Iranian army. Herat was about to fall when the British intervened and the Iranian troops returned, as will be discussed in chapter IV. Amir Asadollah Khan too returned to his Amirdom of Qaenat, Tun, and Tabas.

In 1269 (1852) when Sardar Ali Khan Sistani refused to accept the authority of the central Government of Naser ad-Din Shah Qajar, Amir Asadollah Khan dispatched his son, Amir Alam Khan (later Amir Alam Khan III, Amir of Qaenat) to join Hassan Khan Jalilvand, sent by Prince Hesam as-Saltaneh, Governor General of Khorasan, to enter Sistan and enforce the rule of the central Government there. They hoisted the national flag of Iran at the entrance of the fort of Sekuheh , took Sardar and put an end to his mutiny.<sup>(1)</sup>

In 1277 (1860) the Turkaman raiders invaded Qaenat, however, Amir Asadollah Khan was able to overpower them and drive them back to Afgani territories. Amir Asadollah Khan was praised by the Shah for this bravery and his son, Alam Khan, was conferred to the honourary rank of Sarhang (Colonel) for his bravery.<sup>(2)</sup>

Amir Asadollah Khan had also participated in the siege and capture of Quchan and its unruly Khan, Reza Qoli. But before all these, he was embarrassed by the revolt of the Sarder in Khorasan which proved to be an arduous experience for himself and for his family. Baharestan, quoting a number of original

(1) Ayati, op. cit., p. 125.

(2) Ibid.

historical manuscripts of the time gives the following account of that event:

"Salar, Mohammad Hassan Khan, son of Allah-Yar Khan Asef ad-Doleh whose father was vali (governor) of Khorasan in 1251 (1835) succeeded him in 1262 (1845) as governor. Shortly, Salar and his brother, chief of Mashhad, opposed the Government and began a rebellion against the central authority. In 1263 (1846) Hamzeh Mirza Heshmat ad-Doleh was assigned to put his rebellion down in Khorasan with a large army. In the first instance, Salar moved to the Dasht-e Akhal, but his brother, Mohammad Khan, was in Mashhad when Heshmat ad-Doleh's army reached the city. He created a total chaos inside Mashhad, in which Mirza Abdollah Khuei, superintendent of the holy shrine, was killed in front of the Goharshad Musqu, by a gun shot. About seven hundred soldiers of the Government forces were also massacred and the rest of them were besieged inside the citadel of the shrine with Heshmat ad-Doleh among them. Meanwhile, Mohammad Shah died in Tehran. When news of the Shah's death reached Mashhad, Heshmat ad-Doleh escaped to Herat with Yar-Mohammad Khan Herati, taking the Government forces with them. Some of the officers and soldiers escaped to Tehran and, thus, Mashhad was left in total domination of Salar. In the wake of Naser ad-Din Shah's ascendancy to the throne, Prince Sultan Morad Mirza Hesam as-Saltaneh was assigned to Khorasan to uproot Salar's mutiny. Moreover, groups of Khorasani nobles joined Hesam as-Saltaneh. In the event of Hesam as-Saltaneh's arrival in the province of Khorasan, Sam Khan Ilkhani Zafaranlu and people of Khorasan abandoned Salar. Local dignitaries were given assurances of the Government's kindness. Hesam ad-Saltaneh besieged the city. The regiment stationed at Khajeh Rabi, began to attack the city from that direction. Famine increased and Salar daringly violated the sanctity of the shrine using the gold and silver of the doors and other parts, making coins in his own name. He arrested a number of the learned men of the city and imprisoned them. This actions worsened the predicament of his own and of the city. The Government forces eventually opened the city. Salar took refuge in the holy shrine in 1266 (1849). Hesam

as-Saltaneh arrived in the holy shrine and released Salar's prisoners. Following this development, Salar and his son, Aslan Khan, and his brother, Mohammad Khan, were captured and put to death for what they did."<sup>(1)</sup>

Baharestan sums up the events of the Salar rebellion in connection with Qaenat and the Khozeimeh Amirdom, in the following words:

"But, as the velayat (province) of Qaen is concerned, following Salar's domination of Khorasan districts, he moved troops towards Qaen. Amir Asadollah Khan embarked upon defending his Amirdom. After a while, as he saw the Qaeni soldiers could no longer resist the Asefi troops, and himself might be punished in the event of defeat for being involved in Hesam ad-Doleh's campaigns against Salar, Amir Asadollah Khan escaped to Herat. His son, Alam Khan, was captured and the family of the Amir was put under the late Akhund Mulla Sar-Chahi, the Friday Imam of Birjand. Alam Khan was imprisoned at Mashhad for a while. He eventually escaped from the prison and joined his father in Herat. They remained there until peace was restored in Mashhad. All these times, Mohammad-Ali Khan Asef ad-Doleh, son of the Salar, retained the governorship of Qaenat. He applied a cruel policy there.

"Of the amazing events of this time, one was that Akhund Mulla Hussein (Sar-Chahi), a learned cleric an eloquent poet, and a sincere friend of Amir Asadollah Khan, continued praising the Amir and damning his foes during his sermons. Asef ordered him to be punished for opposing the Salar regime and inciting disturbances. To punish the cleric, he was ordered to be tied up at the end of the cannon and the gunner was ordered to fire. The gunner tried a few times to fire the gun, but it failed. He lost his temper, hit his hat on the ground, tore his shirt, and said; don't you see that the cannon does not affect the servant of Imam Hussein. He then

(1) Ayati, op cit., pp. 125 - 6 - 7.

shouted; Ya Aba-Abdollah, O' father of Abdollah,<sup>(1)</sup> I adore you, and thus, brought this whole episode to an end. The cleric, rescued from a certain death, composed and recited the following verses:<sup>(2)</sup>

شہی کہ ز آتش دنیا نبودی آزادم      ہم او ز آتش عقبی رسد بفریادم

(the king (Imam Hussein) who has saved me from the fire of this world, will save me from the fire of the next world)."

During their stay in Herat, Amir Asadollah Khan and his son, Alam Khan, apparently purchased many lands there and extended the family's land-holding state as far as Herat itself. Amir Asadollah Khan died in 1845.

#### 6- Amir Alam Khan III (Heshmat al-Molk)

Another highly notable Amir of the Khozeimeh family was Amir Alam Khan III, son of Amir Asadollah Khan, who succeeded his father's Amirdom and expanded its influence. His Amirdom was almost a replica of the Amirdom of Amir Alam Khan I, short of Herat and Mashhad dependencies. He uprooted the minor chiefs ruling in the districts of his family's traditional Amirdom, such as the chiefs of Nakhaei, Khusf, Neh, and Sonni-Khaneh plain. He soon restored the Khozeimeh Amirdom in the entire region of Qaenat and its dependencies.

He received a Farman (royal decree) from Mohammad Shah Qajar, dated Safar of 1264 (1847),<sup>(3)</sup> recognising him officially as the new Amir of Qaenat, stating that he was "recognised as frontier-keeping Amir of Qaenat". Members of the family

(1) Aba-Abdollah "Father of Abdollah" is one of the nicknames of Emam Hussein (p.b.u.h.).

(2) Ayati, op. cit., p. 127.

(3) Ayati, op. cit. pp. 127 - 8.

state that unfortunately this document is displaced and its present whereabouts is not known.

However, Amir Alam Khan III subsequently advanced troops to Sistan (1865), where some Afghan and Baluchi chiefs had defied the rule of the central Government in that province. In the event of fighting, Amir Alam Khan's stronghold of Nosrat-Abad fort, built by himself, was besieged by his adversaries. The siege lasted for about six months during which the Amir's son, Ali-Akbar Khan, failed to send reinforcements. Eventually he succeeded in breaking the siege and defeating the Baluchi forces, with the help of reinforcements sent from Mashhad. Amir Alam Khan's victory in Sistan resulted in the re-annexation of that province to the Khozeimeh Amirdom. Moreover, in a politically motivated move, to seal an alliance with the Baluchi chiefs, he married the daughter of Sardar Ebrahim Khan Baluch,<sup>(1)</sup> married his elder son, Ali-Akbar Khan to the daughter of Sardar Sharif Khan Baluch, and his second son, Mohammad Esmail Khan, to the daughter of Sardar Ahmad Khan Baluch.<sup>(2)</sup> This move, later on at the time of boundary arbitration between Iran and Afghanistan, worked in favour of Iran owing to the Baluchi chiefs who, under the instigation of Amir Alam Khan, testified that their territories belonged to the country of Iran. Amir Alam Khan's victory in Sistan included the fort Nad-e Ali on the eastern side of the Hirmand river, now situated inside Afghanistan territory. A chronicle of the time reported this event as follows:

"Thursday 19th Jamadi al-Aval - at this time another carrier arrived from Mostofi-al-Mamalek delivering reports from Mohammad Esmail Khan Vakil al-Molk, governor of Kerman and Mir Alam Khan, Amir of Qaen and Sistan. The report from Sistan indicated that resultant from the good fortune of the Shahanshah, the fort Nad-e Ali, situated on the other side of river Hirmand, and a strong fort, was captured after four hours of siege and battle, from Ebrahim Khan Baluch (Pordeli).<sup>(3)</sup>

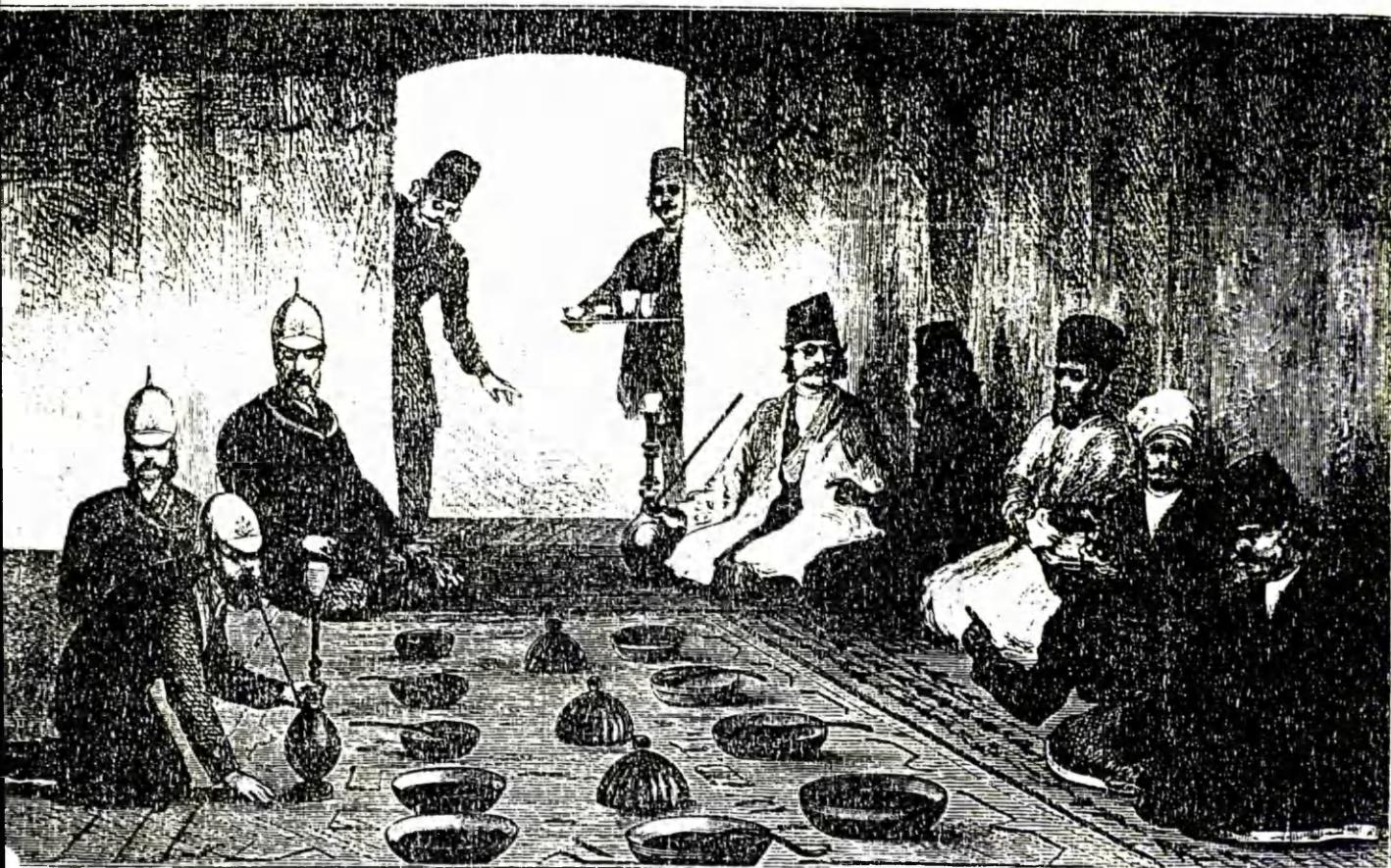
(1) Ayati, op. cit., p. 128.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Hakim al-Molk, Ali-Naghi, "Rouznameh-e Safar-e Khorasan" (1872) Tehran, 1977, p. 476.

The Qajar Shah, much delighted by this news, dispatched, as a token of his appreciation, an ornamented sword to Amir Alam Khan, together with the official title of governorship of Sistan and the titles of "Amir Tuman". General Goldsmid states:

*"...but we hear that a sword of honour is on its way to Sistan as a present to the Amir from the Shah." (1)*



*Major General Goldsmid and his staff of the British frontier arbitration at breakfast with Amir Alam Khan of Qaen and Sistan.*

*(Goldsmid, Major General F., "Eastern Persia"  
London 1876, Vol. II, Frontspiece".*

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(1) Goldsmid, Major General F., "Eastern Persia", London 1876, Vol. II, p. 335.

Amir Alam Khan was subsequently received by Naser ad-Din Shah Qajar in Mashhad where he was given the Shah's personal words of thanks and encouragement. Later on the Amir received a Farman from Naser ad-Din Shah, dated Jamadi al-Avval 1298 (1880) awarding him the title of "Heshmat al-Molk" and the official governorship of Sistan. The actual wording of this Farman describes the Amir as "Heshmat al-Molk, Amir Tuman, and Amir of Qaenat, to whom the governorship of Sistan is entrusted for the maintenance of order in Sistan, because of his worthiness".<sup>(1)</sup>

The Amir is described, in General Goldsmid's book, as a "tall fine-looking man, with a countenance principally noticeable for the immense size of the jaw bones, which project from his face like fins. He wears a thick moustache, is not unlike the Shah, and his expression - though somewhat stern and cruel, with a want of frankness in it - can at times be made very courteous and engaging".<sup>(2)</sup>

Apart from being an able warrior, Amir Alam Khan III was keenly interested in construction and development. He built the fort of Naser-Abad, later named Nosrat-Abad, the actual capital city of Sistan.

"The new fort or town of Nasirabad, simply called shahr', or town, by the natives of the province, is built in the shape of a quadrangle, with very strong and high mud walls, having towers at regular intervals."<sup>(3)</sup>

The existing town of Naser-Abad roughly measured about 400 by 500 yards, and was called Shahre Qadim (old city), while the new fort or town, called Shahre Now (new city) was built to prolong the size of the old town, facing north, with a measurement of about 1000 yards by 600 yards. The new town

(1) This document too has been lost in the wake of the 1979 revolution.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 267.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 266.

was entirely populated by Qaeni settlers, whereas the old town was inhabited by the Sistanis. Nosrat-Abad was renamed "Zabol" at the time of Reza Shah, commemorating an ancient location of Sistan. Irrigation systems were improved under Amir Alam Khan III. New qanats and Ab-Anbars (water reservoirs) were built in every settlements.

"He intended to make it (Sistan) the garden of Persia. Men had been sent for in Tehran to instruct the inhabitants in the cultivation of the potato, orange, date-palm, tobacco, and other plants - as he was of opinion that the soil of Sistan would produce every fruit or vegetable known to man."<sup>(1)</sup>

With these measures of fighting off the separatist elements and building and populating Sistan, Amir Alam Khan III was extremely successful in maintaining his dominion in Sistan, and saving that province from going to the Afghans altogether during the boundary arbitration of 1870s. The British arbitration team of 1872, impressed by his works in this respect, remarked:

"... we learnt how completely successful had been the able measures taken by the Amir of Kain to thoroughly Persianise the whole of the province on the west bank of river (Hirmand); how thoroughly the old Baluch chiefs in the vicinity, with the exception of Chukhansur and Lash Juwain, were inclined to play into his hands, and how contented with the present state of affairs, or at least insouciant of change, were the general inhabitants."<sup>(2)</sup>

The news of development of the town of Nosrat-Abad had somewhat apprehended politicians of the Indian empire:

"....In a report by Colonel Phayre, the Persians are described as strengthening a fort named Husseinabad (the ancient site of Nasratabad) on the banks of the Helmand, near Traku....."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 268.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 271.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 267.

Hussein-Abad, however, was another town, further north, which was also built by Amir Alam Khan III:

*"Husseinabad, which is only of eight years' standing, owes its existence to the energy of Mir Alam Khan of Kain, who built it of neatly-constructed houses, surrounded it with a wall flanked at the corners by four towers, and induced immigrants from Kain and Sar Bisheh to settle in it."*<sup>(1)</sup>

Apart from building and developing, Amir Alam Khan was successful in restoring peace and stability and security in the Amirdom. The British boundary arbitration commission, travelling through the districts of his Amirdom in 1872, remarked:

*"From the peasants who accompanied the camp, we learnt that in olden times this road (from Sistan to Birjand) was most unsafe, but since the advent of the Amir of Kain highway robberies had ceased."*<sup>(2)</sup>

Amir Alam Khan III is specially noted for his appreciation of politics of the time. He had apparently detested the advent of Shir-Ali Khan in Afghanistan and his designs on Sistan. Amir Shir-Ali Khan was in close contact with British India and, among other things, wanting from them guarantees for his younger son as his heir apparent against his older son Yaqub Khan. Amir Alam Khan III made it sure that he befriended and supported the latter against the will of Shir-Ali Khan and the Indian Government.

*"The Amir gave some interesting particulars concerning Sher Ali's son Ya'kub Khan, who had passed through the province the previous year, on his way to Herat. He was guest at Nasirabad for two months, living inside the fort, while his 2000 followers were encamped outside the walls...."*<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 332.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 330.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 269.

The Amir was generally suspicious of the work of the British boundary arbitration mission, and totally convinced that the arbitration was only to legalise cessation of significant parts of Sistan and Baluchistan to Afghanistan:<sup>(1)</sup>

*"... on this occasion (of meeting) he expressed himself very jealous of the proceedings of the Mission, and especially suspicious as to Colonel Pollock's presence with the Afghan Commissioner which he seemed to think intimated a foregone adverse conclusion on the part of the British Government."*<sup>(2)</sup>

The Amir seems to have been so convinced of this matter that he actually ignored documents signed by the Shah agreeing to settlement by the arbitration mission. Complaining about Amir Alam Khan's behaviour, Major General Goldsmid, head of the British arbitration team, remarks: "... on arrival at Nasirabad, the headquarters of Persian Sistan, the opposition was strengthened and, as it were organised by the accession of the Amir of Kain.... the letter of diplomatic agreement acknowledged by the Shah and his Ministers was virtually considered waste paper...."<sup>(3)</sup>

Amir Alam Khan was not alone in suspecting the task of the boundary arbitration. Mirza Masum Khan, the Iranian commissioner, was also highly suspicious of the arbitration's intentions. His unfriendly behaviour towards the arbitration team gradually worsened to the extent that it was no longer tolerable for the British commission. Sir Percy Sykes asserts that Mirza Masum Khan was "anxious to make money".<sup>(4)</sup> Whereas Mirza Masum Khan similarly complains to the Foreign Ministry of Iran, of the behaviour of the arbitration team.<sup>(5)</sup> Iranian observers on the whole, were

(1) Sykes, Sir Percy, op. cit., p. 368.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., pp. 267 -8.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., Vol. I.

(4) Sykes, op. cit.

(5) Mirza Masum Khan's Letter to the Foreign Ministry, Document 93rd. of the "Yeksad Sanad-e Tarikh", ed. Ebrahim Safaei, Tehran 1974.

also suspicious of the work of the British arbitration team.<sup>(1)</sup>

Amir Alam Khan was also noted for his respect for the religion and the traditions. He was in constant contact with the Olama (clerics)<sup>(2)</sup> and upheld religious traditions. General Goldsmid records: "....while we were at Birjand a great distribution of alms took place in the town on account of the close of Muharam, during which time the Amir had at his own expense no less than seventy Tazias, or representations of the death of (Imam) Ali,<sup>(+)</sup> &c., &c., continually exhibited in various parts of the province".<sup>(3)</sup>

Amir Alam Khan's defence of the realm, development of the towns and villages, improvement of economy, maintenance of security, and his respect for the religion made him a very popular Amir commanding the respect and admiration of his people as well as that of the central Government. It is particularly interesting that members of the British team of boundary arbitration, who did not experience a particularly pleasant time in the dominion of Amir Alam Khan III, have said of his popularity with the people of Qaenat and Sistan: "wherever we have been, we have noticed that he seems generally popular, and the flourishing conditions of the villages bears testimony to the security the inhabitants feel under his Government..."<sup>(4)</sup>

Amir Alam Khan III, a devoted Shi'ah, built a number of Tekiyehs (places of mourning martyred Imam Hussein), financially supported by endowments from him. He himself has written some poems in praise of the Imam such as the

(1) See Esmail Raein, "Mirza Malkam Khan", Tehran 1971, section on "Kalat and Kuhak".

(2) Ayati, op. cit., p. 129.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 335.

(4) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 334.

(+) "Imam Hussein" is correct.

following verses in which he invites the Imam to look towards him as a devoted servant.<sup>(1)</sup>

دارد اگر مدعی گواه ندارد  
کیست که گوید حسین سپاه ندارد  
آید و شه هیچ یك زگاه ندارد  
جز سرکوبیت علم بناء ندارد

مثل حسین عاشقی الله ندارد  
کیست که گوید حسین غریب و وحید است  
جن و ملک بهر جانشانی راهش  
سوی علم یك نظر کنای شه خوبان

Returning from a pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza at Mashhad, Amir Alam Khan died in Gonabad in 1891, at the age of 64.



*Amir Alam Khan III, Heshmat al-Molk,  
towards the end of his career.*

#### 7- Amir Ali-Akbar Khan (Hesam ad-Doleh II)

Amir Alam Khan's family consisted of one daughter and four sons, all four of whom ruled after his death, whereas his mother was no less a good governor than the rest of the

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(1) Ayati, op. cit., p. 129.

family. Whenever the Amir was away from Birjand, his mother, not his sons, would rule the Amirdom in his place. General Goldsmid indicates:

*"While the Amir himself is away in Sistan, it is said that his mother rules the province of Kain, and that it was principally to her obstinacy that we owed so much difficulty in obtaining camels."<sup>(1)</sup>*

When Amir Alam Khan died, his elder son, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan was in Sistan where he continued as the Amir of Sistan and Tabas. His younger brother, Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan succeeded the father in Qaenat, and Amir Ali-Akbar Khan never made any overture to his rule at Birjand, albeit he resided in Birjand for most of his life, away from both Sistan and Tabas. Hence, for the first time the Khozeimeh Amirdom was divided into two separate dominions of Qaenat, and Sistan and so it remained until early twentieth century when Amir Ali-Akbar Khan's son, Amir Masum Khan arrived in Birjand and took over the Amirdom of Qaenat from his uncle Amir Shokat al-Molk II, for a brief period of about two years.

Amir Ali-Akbar Khan is variably described as "a brave young man whose decisive action kept the neighbouring Baluchis and Afghans at bay, thus, safeguarding the region for years":<sup>(2)</sup> "A singularly woodheaded youth, wanting manners and conversation, and was entirely in the hands of the Mustofi or manager of affairs, who was remarkably intelligent".<sup>(3)</sup> Interviewed by this author, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, a grandson of Amir Ali-Akbar Khan asserted:

*"Stupid and wooden-headed? I do not know, but he must have been somewhat a simple man putting too much trust in his Mostofi, Mirza Mohammad-Ali. When Amir Alam Khan (III) was under the siege of the Baluchis and Afghans in Sistan, sent for reinforcement from Birjand. Amir Ali-Akbar Khan (his son) wanted to send troops to help him, but under the influence of his*

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 335.

(2) Ayati, op. cit., p. 130.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 335.

Mostofi he decided not to do so. However, reinforcement was sent from Mashhad, and Amir Alam Khan defeated the enemies. On his return from Sistan, he learnt of the reasons of his son's lack of action, and he was furious with the son and more so with his Mostofi. Amir Ali-Akbar Khan found it necessary to leave Qaenat travelling around as a "Darvish" or a man of no earthly desires. Mirza Mohammad Ali, the Mostofi too, escaped to Torbat-e Heydarieh where he lived the rest of his life, and his descendants are now there, known as the Monsef Family."<sup>(1)</sup>

Before Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan died, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan sent his son, later, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III, to Birjand where he was received with kindness by his uncle. This kindly reception marks the good relationships between the two brothers, who are reported in some historical writings, to have been enemies from the beginning. After a while, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan decided to send his son out of Birjand to Tabas, to substitute him and to prevent any clash of interest between him and his brother. The events of Ali-Akbar Khan's effective rule in Sistan, administered by his son, Amir Masum Khan, and his defence of the security of that province against the Baluchi adventures, and also sending the son to Birjand, appear in a poem, made by Mirza Mohammad-Hussein Khajavi, an official of the Amirdom of Sistan and an entourage of the Amir's son in Birjand:<sup>(2)</sup>

فرخنده امیری که بود امن ز قهرش  
مخصوص در این دم که رسیده است ز قاین  
فرزند عزیزش بد و صد عزت و جاه  
کاین یوسف صدیق برون آمدی از چاه  
سرکار چو یعقوب نمای شکر خدا را  
خواهی تو برعیت بده و خواه با کراه  
سرکار بجانس ز تو ساعت بتانم

After the death of Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I, Amir of Qaenat, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan claimed the unity of the family and the Khozeimeh Amirdom. He arrived in Birjand for the fulfilment of this purpose. His arrival in Birjand coincided with Mohammad-Ali Shah Qajar's rule. The Amir

(1) Mohammad-Ali Monsef, author of "Amir Shokat ol-Molk-e Alam" was the grandson of this Mostofi.

(2) Ayati, op. cit., p. 131.

tried to unite the family under his own leadership, but was unable to do so; i.e. he sided with Mohammad-Ali Shah whereas his much younger brother, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan, later, Amir Shokat al-Molk II, sided with the constitutional revolutionaries. The younger brother saw accession to the Amirdom of Qaenat as his own right, mainly owing to the fact that he was like a son to his other brother (the previous Amir of Qaenat) Amir Esmail Khan who had fathered no child and made him his heir. A year later (1909), when Mohammad-Ali Shah was toppled, Ayatollah Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri was executed, and the constitutionalists succeeded in establishing the parliament, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan used his influence with the leaders of the constitutional movements such as Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Tabatabaei and Ayatollah Seyyed Abdollah Behbahani, and regained the Amirdom



*Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, Heshmat al-Molk II  
Amir of Sistan and Tabas*

of Qaenat from his much older brother. Following this development, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan remained in Birjand until he died in January 1915.

8- Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan (Shokat al-Molk I)

Following the death of Amir Alam Khan III in 1891, his elder son, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan, inherited his title "Heshmat al-Molk" and the governorship of Sistan, as has been discussed. A new title "Shokat al-Molk" was created for his second son, Amir Mohammad-Esmail Khan, who inherited the father's title "Amir Tuman" together with the Amirdom of Qaenat. Colonel Yate was of the opinion that:

"The Persian government, by thus splitting the family up, were enabled to reduce its power and also to drop the title of Amir, and the sons are now simply designated the Hukmrans or governors of Kain and Sistan respectively. Once the power of the family has thus been broken, the probability is that the hereditary government in time will go too, and in the end the governors of Kain will come to be ordinary Persian official with no local connection."<sup>(1)</sup>

This assertion, although it was a prophecy of what was to become of the Khozeimeh Amirdom about three decades later, did not apply exactly to the state of affairs at this juncture. That is to say that the splitting up of the Khozeimeh Amirdom in the wake of Amir Alam Khan III's demise, had nothing to do with the policies of the central Government of Iran. Rather, it was the outcome of a dispute between the brothers, as to who was the rightful heir to the Amirdom.<sup>(2)</sup> In the meantime, Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I continued the traditional rule of the Khozeimeh Amirdom in Qaen effectively. Yate asserted towards the end of the 19th century that:

(1) Yate, Lieut. Colonel C.E., "Khorasan and Sistan", London 1900, p. 66.

(2) The dispute between the two brothers was first triggered at the time when their father died in Gonabad in 1891. Amir Esmail Khan arrived in Gonabad and swiftly moved the body to Mashhad without waiting for the older brother, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan, to arrive from Sistan.

"His father was said to have left 60,000 tumans (f12,000) in cash as well as a large amount of jewellery and arms and considerable landed property." (1)

Amir Esmail Khan's dominion of Qaen was still a large country. It extended as far as Neh-Bandan, near Sistan, to the south, and the village of Sar-Chal-e Amiri at the edge of the great desert on the Kerman side, to the south-west. The capital city of Birjand too, was a large town at this time. It had a population of 25,000. (2)



*Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I  
Still a young Amir, at his residence in the village  
of Abedi near Birjand.*

However, in 1903 Amir Esmail Khan, like Amir Ali-Akbar Khan, was summoned to the Imperial Court of the Qajar Shah, presumably for a final settlement of differences between the

(1) Yate, op. cit., p. 67.

(2) Yate, op. cit., p. 69.

two brothers. Amir Esmail Khan declined the summons owing to the fact that he was too ill to travel. Instead, he sent his younger brother, Mohammad Ebrahim Khan to Tehran, where he received the official order of governorship of Qaen upon the receipt of news of Amir Esmail Khan's death in 1904. Visiting Qaenat and meeting both Amir Ali-Akbar Khan and Amir Esmail Khan in 1894, Lieut. Colonel Yate writes:

"Shortly after their arrival I received formal visits from both the Hashmat-ul-Mulk and the Shaukat-ul-Mulk. The former drove over in his carriage from the village of Hajiabad, six miles out, where he lived. He came alone, his eldest son, then some fourteen years of age, being away in Sistan, acting as deputy-governor for his father. The Shaukat-ul-Mulk came accompanied by his younger brother, Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, his cousin, and the Sarhang of artillery. I returned the Shaukat-ul-Mulk's visit at his residence in the village of Abidin, about 1.5 miles out of the town. The chief had here built for himself a reception-room some 25 feet in length, with verandahs on either side and a fortified enclosure at the back of it for his andarun, or family quarters. The village formerly occupied by his father, named Akbarabad, a mile to the east, was left uninhabited."(1)

Interviewed by this author on Sunday 4th April 1993, Amir Parviz Khan Khozeimeh Alam told this author:

"The Kalateh' or village of Abedi was purchased by Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I when his father was still living. He gradually constructed a number of buildings in that Kalateh including:

- 1- The two-storey central building and its garden.
- 2- The building of family quarter.
- 3- The northern building with the description provided by Colonel Yate.
- 4- The Arg' or citadel near family quarter.

"The Kalateh of Akbariyeh' or Akbarabad' was built by Amir Alam Khan III and was named Akbariyeh as a sign of his devotion to the elder son of Imam Hussein (p.b.u.h.) who was martyred in Karbala in the famous battle of Ashura against the forces of the Omayyad Caliph Yazid."

(1) Yate, op. cit., pp. 66 - 7.

Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I, however, remained in Birjand as the Amir of Qaen until he died in 1904. Like his father, Amir Esmail Khan was a religiously conscious Shi'ah, who had built the Shokatiyah Husseiniyah (place of mourning Imam Hussein) of Birjand, which was considered to be a fine building with adequate provisions from the endowments devoted to it by the Amir. This building was later turned into Birjand's famous Shokatiyah school and high-school. He had poetic talent and attended religious ceremonies regularly. One year he failed to do so and went out hunting instead, he was accidentally shot in the arm. He saw the incident as well-deserved divine punishment, and made the following poem while surgery was being carried out on his wounded arm.

تیری که خورد، ایم بود ناز شست ما

از مجلس عزا چو کشیدیم دست ما



*Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I,  
as photographed by Lieut. Colonel Yate in 1894.*

### 9- Amir Heidar-Qoli Khan

Amir Alam Khan's third son was Amir Heidar-Qoli Khan who was given the governorship of the small district of Neh-Bandan by his eldest brother, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan. Neh-Bandan was, at the time, the realm of influence of Amir Esmail Khan's in-laws. He had married the granddaughter of Lotf-Ali Khan, governor of that district. When the British frontier arbitration commission was in the region. Amir Heidar-Qoli Khan was about ten years of age, and was described by the visiting commissioners as:

"At one mile and a-half from the town we were met by an *istikbal* (welcoming party) with two led horses, headed by the youngest son of the Amir, a very little fellow of some eight or nine years old, who had already made a visit to Tehran: he was an exact representation on a small scale of his father the Amir, riding a very large horse that he could barely straddle in a very plucky manner; and whenever he could bring the horse within speaking distance, was most anxious to engage in conversation."(1)

Unfortunately, not much is known of his Amirdom or of himself and his family for that matter.

### 10-Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan (Shokat al-Molk II)

Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan was the youngest of Amir Alam Khan's sons with a considerable age gap between himself and his elder brothers. When his second eldest brother, Amir Esmail Khan was summoned by the Shah to attend the Imperial court or to be replaced, he was sent to Tehran instead of the ailing Amir. He was in Tehran until his brother died. He then obtained the official title of "governorship" of the Amirdom together with the title "Shokat al-Molk", a title with which he was better known throughout his career. Alongside the Amirdom of Qaenat and the title, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan inherited his brother's large fortune and the family disputes between the older brothers and their sons.

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(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 334.

The massive wealth, at the disposal of the young Amir, enabled him to rule with the generosity that he was renowned for. This generosity brought the Amir much fame and respect both in the district and in Tehran. Hence, it is easy to understand why so many poems and other works of literature have been made in praising him. While still a young Amir, Shokat al-Molk II, was described by Mr Hale, Manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia "Bank-e Shahanshahi" at Birjand, who had spent about three years in the region, and published one of the most informative books on this Amir and the Khozeimeh Amirdom, in the following letter:

"BIRJAND, 23rd March 1914.

The Duke, the Amir, the great man, has arrived from the capital, with his men-at-arms and his train of followers. Which is to say that the Governor has returned from Teheran. There was a great stir and clamour at his coming, as you may imagine, for I have told you how popular he is, and you know that a provincial ruler is a powerful man in Persia. The town had a field-day for his entry, and did no work for three days, most of the chief people having ridden out thirty miles to welcome him and escort him in. X. and I sent him letters of salutation with mounted representatives who joined his escort. He must have been very tired, I'm afraid, though very happy, for was he not returning to the home of his fathers and the people his fathers had ruled for generations, and had he not been honoured by the Shah and given an addition to the territories under his administration? So the band played and the horses pranced and his carriage rolled past the town and across the plain to his house a couple of miles away. There he had a great reception, with mullas uttering benedictions and poets reciting odes. On the following afternoon I called on him and drank tea and exchanged polite remarks. He is a tall, lean man of about thirty-three, with fine-cut, mobile, Arab features, a prominent nose, and a sallow complexion. His voice is soft, his speech clear and rapid. His bearing is unaffected, and his manners are full of restrained vivacity and natural courtesy and gentleness. He is evidently a man of keen perceptions, with an active mind and a marked individuality, for which the gods be praised. He was accompanied by three young officials-one of them our stout, ruddy-faced prince of the blood royal, the other two, just arrived with the Amir, being a vigorous and honest-looking officer of cavalry and a revenue collector. The last has an incipient beard, but the others, including the Amir, are clean shaven but for their moustaches, which a Persian never on any account shaves. The revenue collector didn't seem at all pleased at the idea of

living in such a hopeless little hole as Birjand, and he even said as much. The Amir, of course, showed no sign that he didn't like the remark, which somebody else countered by asking the tired one if he had not come here to have an occupation, and to be, in a sense, a guest.

"My visit was returned a few days afterwards, when the Amir told me he was getting his tennis court ready and hoped we would meet there once a week and be good friends." (1)

Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk's dominion has been described somewhat vaguely, by the same author in the following terms:

"In the eastern part of Persia is a province which is called the Qayinat, and the chief town of this province is Birjand. From Birjand if a man journey northwards he will reach the frontier of this province in three or four days, and if he travel towards the rising sun he will come in six days to the country of Afghanistan; likewise if he go by the south road he will arrive in six days within the bounds of Seistan, while if he follow the setting sun he will pass by the edge of the great desert of the south-west - a land which owns but little lordship." (2)

Sistan and Tabas, at this time, were under the rule of Shokat-al Molk's eldest brother, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, who took Qaen as well in 1907, which lasted for only about one year. In 1909, Qaen was returned to Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II. His rule in Qaenat was to be interrupted once again in 1916, at this time his nephew, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III, son of Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, took Qaen from Shokat al-Molk for a period of about two years.

During his relatively long duration of rule, Qaenat benefited from the Amir's patronage of development. Several development programmes were implemented, the most significant of which were:

(1) Hale, F., "From Persian Upland", London, no date of publication is indicated, but it is suggested that the book was published in early 1920s, pp. 45 - 6.

(2) Hale, op. cit., p. 25.

### 1- Drinking water supplies for Birjand

The city of Birjand had been suffering from lack of drinkable water qanats ever since it was founded in the Safavid time. The inhabitants had to use the only source of brackish water that ran through the town. Following World War I, Amir Shokat al-Molk noticed piles of unused pipes, left behind by the British forces in the locality of Sefid-Ab. He purchased the pipes from the British and with an investment of 5000 tumans, he constructed the water-pipe network for the supply of Birjand's drinking water in mid-1910s, when even Tehran was suffering from the lack of such an essential service. With this, project - carried out with active participation of the people of Birjand and the assistance of Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III, the then Amir of Qaenat and Sistan - drinking water was piped to the town from hills of Aliabad six miles away, near Shokat al-Molk's own residence.

### 2- Agricultural development

Shokat al-Molk II, distributed among the peasants of the Amirdom, large numbers of valuable grafts of fruit trees, pistachio trees, and other crops. Not only did he employ from Tehran, agricultural experts, he encouraged young members of his own family to study in this field in Tehran and Europe, bringing back modern methods and techniques in agriculture. One such young member of the family was his own son, Amir Asadollah Khan, who studied at Tehran University's Faculty of agriculture at Karaj. His father had hoped that Amir Asadollah would return to Birjand to help improve agricultural life of the Amirdom. Instead, Amir Asadollah Khan went into politics and spent little time in Qaenat. The other member of the family to be educated in the field of Agriculture, was his nephew's son, Amir Hussein Khan who obtained his degree in agriculture from the British academic establishments.

### 3- Educational developments.

Amir Shokat al-Molk established the first modern school at Birjand in 1908. This school, named Shokatiyeh, was established in the building of the Shokatiyeh Husseiniyeh, built by his elder brother, Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk

I. The building, Shokat al-Molk II found more suitable for educational purposes. This school gradually grew to be expanded to a school and a high school for boys, and a school and high-school for girls, and to a number of schools in Birjand and other towns and villages of the Amirdom.

The students of the Shokatiyah schools not only were given free education, but those of poorer families, received annually two sets of clothing, 84 rials each, and 70 kilos of wheat. Teachers were employed from amongst the better trained individuals, and the curriculum included such subjects as geography, history, Persian, French, and hygiene.

Visited by Mr, Hale, in 1914, the Shokatiyah primary school is described in his book in the following terms:

"BIRJAND, 30th June 1914.

"DEAR M., - We have all been to school, to the Madreseh Shoukatieh (the Shoukat's College), to hear the boys examined on the last day before their summer holidays. You know what the ordinary idea of a school is in the backwaters of Persia - a room where a few urchins have the three R's hammered into them by a fusty old pedagogue full of wise saws and pious cant. The late Amir Shokat al Molk, brother of the present governor of the same title, bequeathed part of his estates for educational purposes, and this trust was applied by his successor in founding and maintaining a school worthy of his name. The result of six years' work is something to be proud of, and the present Shoukat al Molk gets all the credit for it. Why? Because, instead of forgetting his obligations and allowing the bequest to be dissipated as bequests so often are in Persia, he has actually applied the trust for the good of the rising generation.

"Education was in the air in those revolutionary days. Effete old Persia, fired by the examples of Japan and Turkey, was thinking repentantly of her sons, and borrowing, for their guidance, the light of European science. So the old town citadel was put to new uses, and the boys of Birjand were invited to come there and be taught as their fathers never had been. Instructors were brought from Teheran, and pupils of all classes were admitted free. Maps were put on the walls, and the boys learned for the first time that there was a science called geography, and that ancient history was something different from mythology. The little fellows entered a new world of fairy tale, and shocked their fathers and mothers with assertions about the Law of Gravity and how the sun and the moon were made and how ridiculously the earth behaved, all of which made the dear old mullas shake their heads.

The boys of the first year are now young men, and in another year they will complete their studies and go out with an elementary knowledge of such things as hygiene and the French language.

"For the closing day we received and accepted written invitations from the headmaster, and at nine o'clock we went along to the school, shook hands with the teachers, sat down and drank tea. The Governor arrived in his carriage and drank tea likewise, and the boys were marshalled into the big hall, at the end of which they stood facing us till they were ordered to sit. In the front row were children of six or seven, with the big boys of eighteen to twenty-five behind, all with their legs tucked under them and their knees on the carpet, which is a more respectful but less comfortable posture than cross-legged squatting. The boys, even the youngest, were dressed in a variety of frock-coats, long trousers, and the native white slippers, and they all bore the school badge in silver on their black pill-box hats. They numbered about a hundred, and represented all grades of society, the deputy-governor's son rubbing shoulders with the son of his servant or of some small shopkeeper. The boys pay nothing for their education, and some of the poorest of them are even clothed and fed at the school's expense."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Shokatiyeh school for girls was established in 1922. The Amir's daughters, Bibi Fatemeh Khanum and Bibi Zohreh Khanum, were the first to register in a gesture of encouragement for the traditional Birjandi families who were initially reluctant in sending their daughters to the school. After completing their studies the Amir's daughters remained with the school working as teachers and headmistresses. Many of the Birjandi students at the Shokatiyeh school of Mr. Hale's description, have become, men of skills and professions. Many of those completed their studies at Shokatiyeh and went out with "an elementary knowledge of such things as hygiene and French language", continued their education and later served the country in various capacities and professions. The Shokatiyeh students later occupied high posts and positions in Iran. Many of them became doctors, engineers, agriculturalists, historians,

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(1) Hale, op. cit., pp. 51 - 2 - 3.

geographers, professors of various Iranian universities.<sup>(1)</sup>

Eventually in the early 1970s, the Shokatiyeh educational establishments developed to the extent that the Shokatiyeh University was founded by Amir Shokat al-Molk's son, Amir Asadollah Khan Alam. This university, called "University of Shokat al-Molk", has ever since been expanded and it is now known as the "University of Birjand". Financially, this university has been founded on the basis of being supported by large endowments from the family property of "Shokat-Abad Endowments", supervised by a board of governors which included four members who were:

- 1- Amir Asadollah Alam.
- 2- Rudabeh Alam.
- 3- Amir Parviz Khozeimeh Alam.
- 4- Ali-Naghi Assadi.

Amir Asadollah Alam was in charge and superintendent of the Shokat-Abad Endowments and signed an agreement with Professor Mohammad Hassan Ganji on 1st Shahriar 1355 (23 August 1976) whereby the latter was appointed as the Chancellor of the University and in charge of the income from the endowments for the annual budget of the university (see Appendix I).

#### 4- Rehabilitation Services

A building was constructed in the Amir's property near Abbas-Abad Lushi, in which orphans, poor individuals , and famine-stricken families were looked after. These services were expanded by the establishment of the municipality of Birjand.

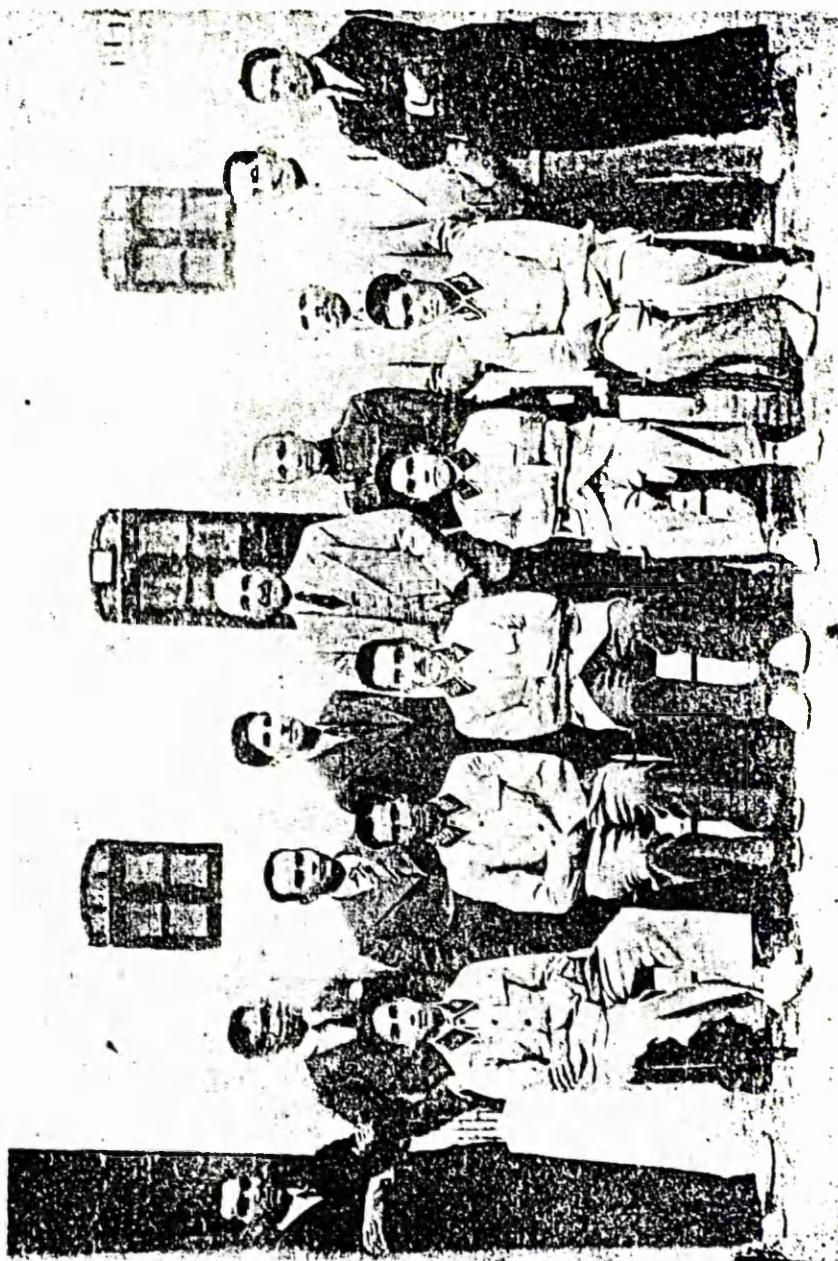
(1) When this author was working towards his first degree at the University of Tehran (late 1960s and early 1970s), he knew, at least, three Birjandi professors, at the Faculty of Literatures and Humanities alone, who had completed the early stages of their education at Shokatiyeh. Of these three, one was Professor Mohammad Hassan Ganji, founder of the Iranian Meteorology organisation, who can, unreservedly, be described as the father of modern geographical studies in Iran, and many of whose students have become geographers of high standard teaching in various Iranian universities and universities around the world. The other two, both vice-deans of the Faculty at the time, were: Dr. Jamal Rezaei, Professor of Persian Literatures; and Dr Esmail Rezvani, Professor of History.

##### 5- Hygiene Services

A clinic was established in Birjand during the early years of Shokat al-Molk's Amirdom. Towards the end of his career, Amir Shokat al-Molk II, began the construction of a hospital at Birjand, which was completed after his demise.



*The First Shokatiyeh School for Boys*



Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk among  
a group of teachers and students of the Shokatiyeh school

6- In 1925, Amir Shokat al-Molk II, invited the Birjandi dignitaries to establish the Red Lion and Sun Society of the Amirdom. The society was established that year in a building donated by the Amir, and actively participated in the hygiene and other services, especially at the time of famine and natural disasters.

Like his forefathers before him, Amir Shokat al-Molk II was a devout shiah Muslim. An Iranian historian says of his devotion to "Ashura" - the most revered shiah Muslim's mourning ceremony- "Amir shokat al-Molk had recognised Ashura that in spite of being so close to the Reza shahi set up, he went to his place of eternal peace with his dignity intact". (1)

#### FRONTIER KEEPING AND NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Almost immediately after inheriting the Amirdom of Qaenat, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II, began the process of modernising the armed forces of the Amirdom. For this purpose he had requested assistance from the central Government to assign trained officers to his forces. Three officers were nominated by the central Government who were appointed to train and to command the armed forces of the Amirdom in the following order: (2)

1- Brigadier Ali-Akbar Khan, in charge of the artillery.

2- Major Ashraf Nezam, in charge of the infantry.

3-Colonel Ali-Naghi Vaziri,<sup>(3)</sup> in charge of the cavalry and Jammazeh.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Mohammad Ebrahim Bastani-Parizi, "Az Sir Ta Piaz", Tehran 1989 P. 553.

(2) Honsef, op. cit., p. 47.

(3) Colonel Vaziri was better renowned as a musician and composer. In fact, he can, unreservedly, be described as the father of the revived Persian Music.

(4) Jammazeh was a company of the Amirdom's cavalry, mounted on camels.

With the aid of his mobilised army, the Amir was able to establish peace and security throughout the Amirdom, badly shattered hitherto by some Baluch and Afghan tribes who regularly carried out raids of "chapo" or looting on Qaenat and Sistan settlements since the death of Amir Alam Khan III. When the army of the Amirdom was being modernised and equipped by the aforesaid officers, the Mohammad Zehi, Esmail Zehi, and Rigi tribes conducted a series of chapo raids on the Sistan and Baluchistan of Iran. Amir Shokat al-Molk massed his troops to uproot their insurgencies. While in Sistan, his forces were reinforced by groups of the Sistani regiment of the Amirdom in addition to the volunteer units from Bahluchi tribes of Qaenat.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Khozeimeh forces descended on the district of Malek-Siah Kuh, junction of the Iran-Pakistan -Afghanistan boundary lines, in November 1914. The Baluchi chiefs had concentrated their forces at Dozdab, later named by Reza Shah's Government as "Zahedan", from where they carried out their raids on Sistan and Qaenat settlements. Hearing of Amir Shokat al-Molk's military expedition, the Baluchi chiefs sued for peaceful settlement. Amir Shokat al-Molk assigned his cousin, Gholam-Hussein Khan Askari, to lead a delegation from the Amirdom<sup>(2)</sup> to conduct negotiations. The Amir's delegation demanded the immediate return of the stolen properties together with promises of a complete halt on the chapo activities on the part of the Baluchis, in return for the Amir's forgiveness.

When the delegation went to Dozdab to hold the third round of negotiations, it found that the Baluchi chiefs had evacuated the area heading towards their respective tribes in what is now known as Pakistan. Some units of the forces of the Amirdom pursued them and were able to defeat them in several

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(1) Monsef, op. cit., p. 48.

(2) Monsef, op. cit., p. 48.

locations, and thus, putting a final end to their raids of  
(1) chapo.

Amir Shokat al-Molk's rule coincided with a series of events in Iran and within the Qaenat and Sistan regions. On the one hand, chaos and upheavals in the country, resultant of the First World War and constitutional revolution in Iran, encouraged some Baluchi tribes of the nearby regions to invade and plunder the towns and villages of the Amirdom. Much of the time and energy were spent in suppressing these plunders. Mr Hale, an eye-witness, states:

*"The Amir has gone south to put the Baluch tribes in order, and he and his army won't be back till the spring. We shall miss them very much this winter."* (2)

On the other hand, rivalries between Shokat al-Molk and his nephew, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh were ignited by the political tensions in the country at large. Hesam ad-Doleh, Amir of Sistan dominion of the family, was a Moghalled (religious follower) of Ayatollah Sadr and a friend of Ayatollah Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri<sup>(3)</sup> who were opposed to the constitutionalism of the sort that was taking shape in the country. Whereas, Amir Shokat al-Molk was a follower of the Fetva (religious decree) of Ayatollah Mulla Mohammad Kazem Haravi Khorasani, and a friend of such constitutionalist leaders as Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Tabatabaei and Ayatollah Seyyed Abdollah Behbahani.<sup>(4)</sup> These differing political affiliations caused chaos in the Amirdom and in the family itself, increasing the existing tensions between the two branches of the family. Using his influence with the anti-constitutionalists in Tehran, Hesam ad-Doleh managed, in February 1916 to take the governorship of Qaen from Shokat

(1) Ibid.

(2) Hale, op. cit., p. 60.

(3) Ayati, op. cit., p. 136.

(4) Ayati, op. cit., p. 136.

al-Molk. Comparing the uncle and nephew with King Charles and Roundhead respectively, Mr. Hale (who was present in Birjand at the time), described on 17th March 1916 the change in the following manner:

"King Charles has lost his head, and the Roundhead sits in his place - by which you are to understand that the Amir Shoukat al-Molk has been dismissed and ordered to Teheran, and that his nephew and rival, the Amir Hisam ud Douleh, is now governor in Birjand. It is a sad business and rather a long story.

"As a matter of fact, the Hisam ud Douleh left Teheran about this time and arrived in Meshed. In February the Shoukat ul-Mulk received a telegram from Teheran instructing him to proceed to Meshed 'to discuss with the governor-general certain matters of revenue' Shortly afterwards he received sanction to go direct to Teheran, and on the 27th of February he left Birjand, accompanied by the majority of his satellites and followers. A few days before his departure a telegram was received by the revenue collector and the agent for foreign affairs from the Hisam ud Douleh, directing them to assume control pending his arrival. These two officials commenced to act without waiting till the Shoukat al Mulk had left the town, and amongst other things a retainer of the dismissed governor was engaged by them. The angry Amir sent for the revenue collector and gave him a severe rating, and the servant in question, who was a son of the former chief of police, was likewise sent for, and was given a sound whipping as a lesson in fealty and good manners. On the day of the Amir's departure the soldiers were drawn up in line at a point of his route just outside the town, and there a crowd assembled. Across the roadway at this point a string was stretched, attached to an upheld pole on either side of the road. In the middle of the string a copy of the Koran was suspended, and the Amir kissed the book as his carriage passed under it, many of his followers doing likewise. About the same time the Hisam ud Douleh left Meshed for Birjand,

and the two Amirs, uncle and nephew, who had not seen each other for some years, passed on the road within a few miles of each other without meeting or exchanging messages. On the 12th of this month the Amir Hisam ud Douleh arrived in Birjand, and was welcomed by a much larger crowd than had witnessed the Shoukat ul Mulk's departure. We called on him the following day, and he made many protestations of friendship, which were repeated when he returned the calls. He spoke to me of what he had heard as to the Shoukat ul Mulk's friendship. They much indication of kindness with the slave had,' I replied.' No doubt your Excellency in the same way will make command.' We smiled gravely, and he remarked that the Shoukat ul Mulk (who is thirty-four and about the same age as himself) was a good lad' - an expression which amused me by its studied detachment.

"Well, King Charles, with his Gallic grace and esprit, his bel air and princely manners, has left us, and here we are exchanging compliments with Cromwell, who is of average height, stout and round-headed, and has weak eyes and a soft voice and manner, and a facile flow of speech. X. has asked for leave, and I am trying to get away too. I haven't much hope though, and neither has X., though he hasn't been home for seventeen years. As for the officers of our Indian troops, they have wanted to leave Persia from the day they arrived. But they like the new governor because he is amiable and talkative.' The other fellow was a bit lordly,' and they didn't altogether trust him. Never quite knew where you were with the Shoukat!' Even they, however, regret King Charles and his tennis and bridge parties, and his 'jolly little dinners.' As for the people of Birjand, their small arms don't count for much when the big guns are booming. We rather expected a hostile demonstration, but no such thing happened. Only the active partisans of the Shoukat al-Molk are apprehensive, and many of their number went away in his train. The soldiers received a donative, and are pleased for the moment. The whole of the ex-governor's staff is now out of office, and the Hisam ud Douleh will have to find a new set of officials for the town and district. This wholesale change of personnel always takes place when a provincial governor is dismissed, and the result is delay and expense

and incompetence and intrigue for some time afterwards - between the new set, who are ignorant of local affairs and routine, and the old set, who are out of employment and feel it their duty and pleasure to be obstructive."<sup>(1)</sup>

This change, however, did not last long. Little more than a year later (February 1917) Amir Shokat al-Molk managed to use his own influence in Tehran, with the constitutionalists and regained the official governorship of Qaenat. Witnessing the second change of Amirs of Qaenat, Hale explains:

"BIRJAND, 20th February 1917.

"DEAR M., - The Amir Hisam ud Douleh has been dismissed from the governorship, and the Amir Shoukat ul Mulk has been reappointed and will be here in a month or so. The people are rather apathetic about it. What they would most like is to see the rivals made friends. They are tired of this ding-dong business with governors and officials, which encourages maladministration and hastens the impoverishment of the country. No one has serious fault to find with either of the two amirs, both of whom are excellent governors when judged by Persian standards, though, if the truth be said, neither of them has shown much public spirit or interest in the progressive development of the district."<sup>(2)</sup>

Another problem of this period was the rebellion in 1921 of Colonel Mohammad-Taghi Khan Pessian in Mashhad against the newly appointed Government of Qavam as-Saltaneh in Tehran.

In a telegraphic message to Amir Shokat al-Molk, Prime Minister Qavam as-Saltaneh asked him to "consider Lieut. Colonel Mohammad-Taghi Khan as an outlaw", to "send troops to stop his agitations", and to "put down his rebellion".

The Amir was wiser than declaring war on the Colonel. Instead, he opened an arduously long negotiation, through telegraphic messages with the Colonel and his supporters. This undertaking was about to result in a satisfactory conclusion and the Colonel set off for Gonabad to meet and

(1) Hale, op. cit., pp. 105 - 6 - 7.

(2) Hale, op. cit., p. 147 - 8.

talk personally with the Amir, but, upon receiving news of mutiny of his troops in Quchan, he went there and was subsequently killed, thus, bringing this whole episode to an end.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is noteworthy that these chaotic situations were coincidental, not only with Iran's post-constitutional revolutionary disorder but also with the World War I political chaos in the Middle East which resulted in the dividing of Iran into two spheres of British and Russian influence, leaving Qaenat and Sistan in the interest zone of the British. Writing on the chaotic post-World War I situation in Iran, Mr Hale indicates:

*"The present state of Persian politics hardly conduces to the fostering of national vitality. The tribal chiefs and political hotheads who butted in to the support of our enemies have mostly dropped out of the losing game, and the British and Russian representatives, threatened, you remember, with a stab in the back at a critical time, have since been in no mood to repeat their handsome proposals for a friendly understanding which would have been creditable to all concerned. While the war continues, the military interests of the Allies are paramount in their thoughts. The native virtues of the Persian placemen who gain their approval are necessarily of less immediate importance than their subservience to our interests, and the under-current of corruption flows on with but little check or restraint."<sup>(2)</sup>*

This condition continued for a short while, until Reza Khan Mir-Panj (later Reza Shah Pahlavi) staged his coup d'etat of 1921, in association with Seyyed Zia ad-Din Tabatabaei. Reza Khan immediately began an ambitious task of creating a centralized Government and a national army, replacing the autonomous regional powers and their armies. As, traditionally, loyal subjects of the central Government of Iran, the two Khozeimeh Amirs realised that massive changes were on the way. They, therefore, signed a treaty of

(1) For details see Bahar, Dr. Mehrdad, "On the Uprising of Khorasan Gendarmerie", Tehran 1990, Section on Documentation.

(2) Hale, op. cit., p. 148.

friendship between themselves dated 20th Jamadi as-Sani 1339 (1921) whereby declaring:

"We the undersigned, call upon the almighty to be our witness and by placing the holy Quran as the arbitrator between us, that from this date onward, not to act in any war against one another; to consider our dignity, credits, and our estates as commonly owned by the two of us; not to allow any internal or external conspiracy to influence us; and abiding by the spirit of this treaty, to be benevolent of the Moslems and to protect our fellow human beings, and to be obedient to our Islamic Government."(1)

The two Amirs remained faithful to the spirit of this treaty as long as they both lived, albeit, they chose slightly different surnames when the newly introduced legislations made it compulsory for all Iranians to drop their Qajari titles and to adopt official surnames. Amir Shokat al-Molk assumed the surname "ALAM", clearly upholding memories of three of his forefathers named "Alam Khan" the last one being his own father, Amir Alam Khan III. Whereas Amir Hussein Khan son of Hesam ad-Doleh assumed the surname "Khozeime<sup>(2)</sup> Alam" more in keeping with the historical name of the family.

Shokat al-Molk's other nephew, Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh and the rest of the family chose their surname to be "Khozeimeh" only.

Following these developments, Amir Shokat al-Molk Alam decided to retire from the governorship of the Amirdom. He, thus, divided the Amirdom between his two nephews; giving the Amirdom of Qaenat to Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III previously Amir of Sistan, and the Amirdom of Sistan to Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh. He himself chose to retire and live the rest of his life in peace, but peace was not to come yet.

(1) Ayati, op. cit., p. 137.

(2) Khozeime, without "H" at the end.

Following Reza Khan's assumption of the monarchy of Iran, Shokat al-Molk was summoned to Tehran and was appointed as Governor General of Fars (province of Persia in Southern Iran). A year later he returned to Tehran and was given the portfolio of Post, Telegraph and Telephone, both positions, apparently, he accepted without enthusiasm, as his passion, then, was to live in peace in his native Birjand. Sir Claremont Skrine writes of the Amir's latest years:

*"He Had aged since we had last seen him on our drive to Europe in 1931, but he was as charming; and hospitable as ever, and it was clear that he intended to help the Allies, and through them his own beloved country, no less effectively in the Second World War than he had done during the latter years of the First. His first action on his return a week before had been to open the granaries throughout his wide domains and thus knock the bottom, if only for a few weeks, out of the local hoarders' market. Only the abdication of his formidable master had made it possible for the Shaukat to return to the home of his ancestors, but Reza Shah Pahlavi had no more loyal subject. In hours of talk with me he let slip not a word of criticism or complaint, although it was clear that he had desired neither the Governorship of Fars nor the portfolio of Posts and Telegraphs nor any of the responsibilities that his Sovereign had thrust upon him. All he had wished was to get back to his beloved Qaenat and administer his ancestral estates in peace, a model to aristocratic landowners throughout the length and breadth of Persia. Alas, it was not to be for long; his heart was worn out by exile and many labours and he died, by no means an old man, two years later."<sup>(1)</sup>*

Almost all those who visited Qaenat, met and talked to Shokat al-Molk II and wrote about him, have described him unanimously as a kind, generous, intelligent, and hospitable gentleman. As for his philosophy of realism, Hale notes:

"On one occasion when we were a party of eight, a new arrival, a young Persian with an earnest mind and a ponderous manner, was edifying us with a discourse on the immorality of war in general, and the necessity for its abolishment

(1) Skrine, Sir Claremont, "World War in Iran", London 1961, pp. 100 - 1.

ethically considered, and the sure prospects of perpetual and world-wide peace that lay at most a matter of centuries ahead. Protests were made, heads were shaken in disagreement, and a mild argument followed. An Englishman evoked natural law and appealed to the past, challenging his protagonist to prophesy against the whole teaching of history and experience. The peace-lover, who had been educated in Europe, persisted in his views and kept the ball rolling till our host was referred to. The Amir smiled. What can I say?' he asked, bending a little forward and fixing his dark eyes on a dish of grapes. It would be a fine thing certainly if war was to cease, but I can't dare to expect it. As So-and-so said just now, when you speak of war you mean blood-spilling on a battlefield, which is only one kind of war. There are innumerable other kinds, of which trade competition is one, and if we consider a state of humanity where all rivalry and jealousy and emulation are done away with, we must imagine a sort of living creature the like of which is not to be seen in the whole world of nature. Natural perfection as we see it in plants and the lower animals is only reached by the exercise of force. Self-expression is a manifestation of force, and is always directed against some form of resistance. Here are eight of us engaged in a discussion, for instance, and as there are two sides to the discussion we have a battle. We may say that any struggle or endeavour, down to the simplest motion, is an attempt to overcome some form of resistance, and is therefore a kind of war, however much it may differ in degree. The principle of pressure, whether it hurts or wounds or slaughters, is the same. So it comes to a question of degree, and how far it is necessary to go in a certain line. Yes? Well, if you clean away all evil and crime from the mind of man you will have no blood-spilling, and the more evil you eliminate, the less blood-spilling you will have, I suppose. Also, the more harmony and co-operation against inorganic force, the less blood-spilling. But can you eliminate evil without eliminating the good also? Are they not relative ideas? You say that the progress of civilisation is improving matters, but if so, then the lesser evil of the future will not be judged less, because it will

contrast with the higher good of the future. So, relatively speaking, evil and crime and vice will always exist. But you say evil can be controlled without bloodshed. I suppose it can, when the good controls it; but until you can eliminate the possibility of private murder by an individual man who is subject to law and restraint, how can you eliminate the possibility of war by one state on another? Let them submit to arbitration? Well, when two individuals disagree, they have an unlimited choice of arbitrators, and also the law and police of their Government, and yet they often come to blows, either from excess of passion or from distrust of law and arbitration.' The Amir paused, and the earnest young man took another mouthful of rice. Our host continued with slackened speech and in a pensive tone. 'In spite of what I have just said, I have always had the idea that the greater and more civilised a race might be, the more peace it would enjoy. But what can we Persians think nowadays? When the mightiest, most wealthy and prosperous and intelligent powers of Europe, to whom we look for the teachings of science and good Government, are engaged in savage warfare on a scale that we can hardly form a conception of? Bah, bah! When we consider that already the casualties in Europe almost equal the whole population of Persia!'...."<sup>(1)</sup>

After signing the peace treaty with his nephew Hesam ad-Doleh, and dividing the Amirdom between him and his brother Samsam ad-Doleh, Shokat al-Molk gave in marriage, his elder daughter "Bibi Fatemeh Khanum" to Hesam ad-Doleh's son, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, and his second daughter "Bibi Zohreh Khanum" to Samsam ad-Doleh's son, Amir Esmail Khan Khozeimeh. Some writers have asserted that by doing so the Amir was trying to put the finishing touches to the unity of the family. If this was the motivation for these marriages, it certainly worked. Interviewed by this author, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam disputed this assertion reiterating that his marriage to Bibi Fatemeh Khanum was not arranged for political reasons. It was the decision of the

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(1) Hale, op. cit., pp. 85 - 6 - 7 - 8.

two of them only. Reconciliation of the two branches of the family, however, came a bit too late as the highly centralized Government of Reza Shah left no room for the survival of the Khozeimeh Amirdom. While in the Government, Shokat al-Molk enjoyed much respect from Reza Shah and other political leaders of the time. He prided himself as an able statesman and a knowledgeable politician. Noting this aspect of the Amir's personality, Alamouti asserts:

*"Shokat al-Molk Alam, Minister of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone in Mansour's cabinet, who had a special affection for Reza Shah and believed in him, and was favoured by the old Shah until his very last days, said; one day I asked the Shah for an audience. It was July 1941. I expressed my apprehension of the propaganda from London and pointed out that although the fate of the war is not known, there would not be any direct benefit or damage to us from the Germans, whereas our northern and southern neighbours can cause some damage to us. Suspecting the Germans (in Iran) is an excuse, perhaps they (the British) are thinking of supplies to the Soviet Union via Iran. Isn't it better to be certain of their aims, specially that the Americans are noticeably leaning towards the allies. The Shah asked; what makes you to think so? Considering the Shah's suspicions that foreign agents (talking to every one) had motivated me to say so, I explained; nothing but my affection and faith in your Majesty and in the survival of these massive development plans which have taken place. After walking up and down for a while, he said; I will think of what you have said. After the events of the 25th of August (1941), one day in the council of ministers, the Shah told me; Mr. Alam, your assessment of the situation was correct, but unfortunately it is too late."(1)*

Of all those who have written about Shokat al-Molk, none has said so much in so little words, as did the British diplomat Sir Claremont Skrine, who dedicated his book "World War in Iran" to the memory of Shokat al-Molk dated winter of 1945:

*"Shaukat-ul-Mulk, head of the seigniorial Alam family of the Qaenat which dates back to the Middle Ages and still owns large estates in the Birjand-Qain district. I wrote about him as follows in a private*

(1) Alamouti Dr Mostafa, "Iran Dar Asr-e Pahlavi", Vol. II "Reza Shah Dar Tabeid", London 1988, pp. 45 - 6.

letter from Birjand in October 1927, the first year we were there. One need not altogether despair about Persia so long as there are one or two men in it like the Shaukat-ul-Mulk, our Acting Governor, whose guests we have just been on a partridge shooting expedition. Until I came here I did not think there existed in all Persia, from what I had heard, a genuinely patriotic, public-spirited and incorruptible Persian landlord of high degree. But the Shaukat is all that, and more. You can get a glimpse of his love of his country, and of the Qaenat in particular, if you get him talking of past times. He is also a specimen of that rara avis, a devout and deeply religious Shi'a gentleman Who is not in the least bigoted. As for his public spirit, he is the one Persian I know of who, being in charge of big religious trust (vaqf) properties, devotes the income from them (along with much of his own) to such objects as education (his school at Birjand contains 300 boys between 6 and 18, and 80 girls), public works (he has installed a piped drinking-water supply for Birjand town from hills 6 miles away), agricultural improvement (he has distributed free to his tenants large numbers of valuable grafts of fruit-trees and of the pistachio nut, at great expense to himself), and so on. He is hospitable in a big way, especially to the poor. With all this, he is full of humour and fun and excellent company, quite free from any kind of swank either about his ancient lineage or about his doings...."(1)

However, Amir Shokat al-Molk II Alam died of heart disease in November 1949 and was buried in Mashhad.

Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II, married four times in the hope of fathering children. His first three successive marriages failed to produce him any children, albeit his second marriage was only a matter of safeguarding the family honour. His second wife was the widow of his elder brother, Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I, who was not able to mother any children for her first husband either. Amir Ebrahim Khan married her only to prevent her marriage to an outsider which would then have been considered harmful to the family honour.(2) An added reason would have been that she was the daughter of Sultan Sardar Ahmad Khan (Shah of

(1) Skrine, op. cit., pp. 100 and 214.

(2) Monsef, op. cit., pp. 56 - 7.



*Amir Shokat al Molk II Alam as Minister of Posts,  
and Telegraph under Reza Shah (1939).*

Herat) and sister of Sardar Agha of Zabol, and her marriage to the outsiders would probably break the alliance between the two families.

Amir Shokat al-Molk's fourth marriage (to the daughter of Amir Parviz Khan, a cousin of the Amir) proved to be fruitful. This marriage resulted in the birth of six children altogether, two of whom died at very young age. The other four were:

- 1- Bibi Fatemeh Khanum, married to Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, son of Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III, and a grand nephew of Shokat al-Molk II.
- 2- Bibi Zohreh Khanum, married to Amir Esmail Khan Khozeimeh , son of Amir Mohammad Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh, and a grand-nephew of Shokat al-Molk II. She died while still a young woman.
- 3- AMIR ASADOLLAH KHAN ALAM. Amir Shokat al-Molk's only surviving son was first educated at Shokatiyeh School of Birjand, then finished the Agricultural College of the University of Tehran. He married Malektaj, younger daughter of Qavam al-Molk, a powerful personality of Shiraz. Amir Asadollah Khan's political career began with an appointment as Governor General of Sistan and Baluchistan whilst still a young man (1945), and in spite of his young age, he was subsequently given several cabinet portfolios including: Agriculture; Roads and Communications; and twice Interior Ministry.

With the so-called electoral reform in the 1950s, Asadollah Alam was instructed by the Shah to form the official opposition party to the Government of Dr. Manuchehr Eqbal and his Melloun party. He formed the Mardom Party.

As trusted confidant of the Shah, he was assigned in the mid-1950s to organise and distribute the "Pahlavi lands". This was the basis on which the well-known

"land reform" in Iran emerged. In 1962 Asadollah Alam was asked by Mohammad Reza Shah to form the cabinet. Alam's Government lasted little less than two years<sup>(1)</sup> only to be replaced by Hassan-Ali Mansour's Government in 1964. Alam was then appointed as the Chancellor of the University at Shiraz, then named "Pahlavi University" under the Shah's personal patronage. The ambition was to expand the university to rival Tehran University. Under the Shah's personal patronage much was done for the University of Shiraz as it is known now.

In 1966 Amir Asadollah Khan Alam was summoned to the capital where he was appointed as the "Minister of the Imperial Court" with such power and influence as exceeding those of the Prime Minister of the country. He held this post until August 1977 when he retired for health reasons. It was in this period that he began to record the daily occurrence in the Imperial Court and his confidential diary of the Imperial Court "The Shah and I" recently published in London is now considered as the most significant document of the history of Mohammad Reza Shah's one man rule' between 1969 and 1978. Amir Asadollah Alam died of cancer in Paris in 1978 and left behind two daughters.

- 4- Amir Shokat al-Molk's last child was also a girl, Belqeis Khanum, married to the powerful family of Farman-Farma. She too, died while still a young woman.

#### 11- Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh

Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh, second son of Amir Ali Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, was given the governorship of Sistan in 1921 by his uncle Amir Shokat al-Molk II, who had decided to divide the Khozeimeh Amirdom between his two nephews. Sistan, though a separate Amirdom of the Khozeimeh

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(1) From 19 July 1962 to 7 March 1964.

family's traditional realms since the death in 1891 of Amir Alam Khan III, was more of an autonomous province of the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Sistan. Before Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan, Sistan was autonomously governed by his younger brother, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III, who had inherited it from his father, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan. In 1921, Shokat al-Molk simply replaced Amir Masum Khan in Sistan by Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan, giving the former, an experienced and more able Amir, the governorship of Qaenat, the traditional heartland of the Amirdom. This exchange of seats of Amirdom made no impact on the considerable estates of the two Amirs in each other's new dominions.

Amir of Sistan, Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh had a relatively peaceful duration of governorship, spending most of his time and fortune on developing the economic and social life of Sistan. He had a keen interest in the industrial



*Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk, II  
flanked by his two nephews:  
Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh (right)  
Governor of Qaenat and  
Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh (left)  
Governor of Sistan (1921).*

aspects of development, using his own family fortune for the construction of modern small-size industrial units. By selling most of his lands and other properties in Birjand, he was able to venture on such projects as an electric power station for the province; a flour-mill at Zabol; an ice-making factory; a cinema, and a number of other projects.

The machineries, for these plants, were purchased either in India or from Europe, all transported to the Iranian border of Sistan and Baluchistan by railways, and from there, by buffalos to Zabol and other parts of the province.

Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh died in 1942, leaving behind six sons and two daughters:

- 1- Mohammad Amir Khan
- 2- Amir Ali Khan, who married his cousin, daughter of Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh and sister of Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam.
- 3- Amir Esmail Khan, who married his father's cousin, daughter of Amir Shokat al-Molk II, Bibi Zohreh who died still a young woman. He served as governor (a Government post, not the traditional Amirdom) of Birjand and Zabol successively and died in 1988.
- 4- Ali-Akbar Khan.
- 5- Hussein Khan.
- 6- Taghi Khan.
- 7- Marziyeh Khanum
- 8- Qodsiyeh Khanum.

#### 12- Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III

Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III, Heshmat al-Molk III, began to experience the task of Amirdom while still very young. When Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, (Heshmat al-Molk II) was ruling Sistan, he stayed for most of the time in his residence at Birjand and sent his third son, Amir Masum Khan to Sistan as deputy governor (Nayeb al-Hokumeh). His family connection with Sistan's influential Nahruie tribe, under the chieftainship of Sardar Said Khan, (see Appendix III) Amir Masum Khan's maternal uncle, made it easy

for him to establish himself as an effective de facto ruler. While still a young Amir, he was met, at Sistan, by the well-known British diplomat-historian, Sir Percy Sykes, who writes of this Amir in the following terms:

*"we were met by Mir Masum Khan, the Governor, a boy of nineteen, whom, however, I took to be at least twenty-five, partly because he wore blue spectacles."*

*"We returned the Governor's call the day after our arrival, and, upon entering the village, turned sharp to the right and passed a rusty cannon, with its rammer stuck in its mouth, and about six gunners drawn up behind it. We thence rode through a second gateway, finally alighting at a low door and skirting a pool of water where two swans were swimming about, we entered a mean room in which Mir Masum Khan received us. He is the son of the Heshmat-ul Mulk, himself the eldest son of the late Amir, and had been Governor of Sistan for the last six years, under the guidance of a vizier.*

*"He was rather sallow and unwholesome-looking, and, as may be supposed, was ignorant and somewhat conceited, having been a Governor surrounded by menials all his life. However, we got on well enough, especially as I had no cases to settle with him, in which event I think that there would have been difficulties, as his mother, the daughter of Sardar Sherif Khan, must have been taken into account."<sup>(1)</sup>*

When reading this passage, one must remember that Amir Masum Khan was then a very young man and Sir Percy Sykes, on the whole, disliked the Iranians.

Another European visitor who met Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh in the same period, was Lieutenant Colonel Yate, who has provided a very useful manuscript of his journey in Sistan. He writes:

*"At the head of the party was the young chief Sartip Mir Masum Khan, and with him were Sirdars Sa'id Khan, Khan Jan Khan, and Purdil Khan, and they all escorted us into camp, and then came in and sat down with us to tea. Our camp was pitched near the garden, or rather enclosure, called the Chahar Bagh, a little distance from the town, and as we rode in, our numerous escort*

(1) Sykes, Sir Percy, op. cit., pp. 374 and 376.

galloped around, firing off their guns in every direction.

"Sirdar Sa'id Khan, the maternal uncle of the young chief, was the son of the late Sirdar Sharif Khan, Nahruei, who held a prominent position in Sistan politics at the time of the Goldsmid Boundary Settlement in 1872. He subsequently submitted to the Afghans, and died at Kabul about 1889. The Hashmat-ul-Mulk had married his daughter, and she was the mother of Mir Masum Khan. Sharif Khan's two sons were both summoned to Kabul by the Amir after their father's death, and were sent off by him to Turkistan, but they escaped on the road. Sa'id Khan made his way to Peshawar, and thence to Sistan via Quetta. The other brother, Muhammad Ali Khan, came down the Helmand to Sistan, and since then had lived mostly with the Baluchis in Sarhad.

"Sirdar Ibrahim Khan of Chakansur, also a well-known man in former days, the father of Sirdar Khan Jan Khan, had died in Sistan just two months before my arrival, after having lived in huts as a wanderer in the jungle for many years, and, like him, all the other old Sirdars of Sistan were dead and gone, and there was no one left with any power or following.

"Later on the young chief came to pay me his formal visit, accompanied by the Peshkar, and I duly returned it. We rode along outside the walls to the gateway of the fort, and then through it to the ark or citadel in which he lived. The Sartip met us at the door, and took us into his reception room - a cold place for winter, as I remember I was seated on a raised dais at the end just under the badgir or windshaft, which, though excellent in summer, was a trifle too draughty for the cold weather then prevailing. Almost all the better-class houses in Persia have these windshafts to catch the air in hot weather. The Sartip told us that the fort or citadel had been built by his grandfather, the late Amir of Kain, some twenty-five years before, and that the garrison consisted of a regiment of Kain infantry 800 strong, and 500 iliyats or irregulars. These iliyats or nomads, he said, all came from Kain. They paid no revenue, but performed service instead, and were sent to serve in Sistan. Both these and the sarbazes or soldiers were all quartered in the fort or Naasirabad, as it is called."<sup>(1)</sup>

The son of Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, grandson of Amir Alam Khan III and Sardar Sharif Khan Nahruei, and nephew

(1) Yate, Lieut. Colonel C.E., "Khorasan and Sistan", London 1900, pp. 76 - 7.

of Amir Shokat al-Molk II and Sardar Said Khan Nahruei was a somewhat arrogant young Amir who, as Sykes asserted "made himself disliked by the leading men of the province".<sup>(1)</sup> Repeated complaints against his conducts in Sistan, to his father, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan resulted in the latter's decision, of sending his eldest son, Amir Mohammad-Hussein Khan, by an inferior wife<sup>(2)</sup> to replace his half brother. Amir Mohammad-Hussein Khan's party arrived in Sistan in 1898. Amir Masum Khan declined to hand over the fort of Nosrat-pleading illness as an excuse. Being supported by his uncle and the Sistan regiment, he dragged on. Sykes' account of this event is as follows:

"Upon being repeatedly petitioned, the Hishmat-ul-Mulk decided to send his eldest son by an inferior wife to replace his half-brother, putting him in charge of Abdul Wahab Beg, brother of Mohamed Reza Khan's mother.

"The new Governor and party reached Sistan early in January 1898, and asked to have the fort handed over to them Mir Masum Khan, however, had no intention of throwing up the sponge, and pleaded illness as an excuse for delay. Thus matters dragged on for about three months, there being two Governors in Sistan Mir Masum, however, had the advantage of possession, and the regiment was also on his side. To end the complication, Abdul Wahab collected his party with a view to rushing the fort, but after a conflict he was deserted, and had to surrender at discretion. Meanwhile, a strong desire for his death had grown up, and the pretext was soon forthcoming, as he had been implicated in the assassination of a certain Dervish Khan, who was murdered on his return from Meshad, a short distance from Tabas, and whose family lived in Sistan and was clamouring for vengeance. Abdul Wahab Beg, however, swore to be a supporter of Mir Masum - the half-brother apparently counted for nothing - and it was arranged that he was to proceed to Meshad, in order to try

(1) Sykes, op. cit., p. 376.

(2) Ibid.

and win over the Governor-General to his new views. In spite of this, as his fidelity was doubtful, it was finally decided to kill him, and one day, in broad daylight, he was shot with a revolver. He rushed off from the fort, pursued by his assassin to the Deputy-Governor's house, and, upon his promising to die speedily, no more shots were fired, but he was carefully watched to see that he did not break his word! The murderer then rode quietly off towards Birjand to be rewarded by the Amir of Kain - at least so it was stated - and every one considered that the atmosphere had been cleared!

"The Hishmat-ul-Mulk, upon receiving information of what had happened, was furious, not only on account of the murder, but also at his orders being, slighted, and instructed Purdil Khan, the one-armed Sarbandi chief, to drive out the Nahrueis and to use force should Mir Masum decline to leave Sistan<sup>(1)</sup> A sharp skirmish or two ensued, just about the date of my arrival, and the Nahrueis finally crossed into Afghan territory, to await further developments, while Mir Masum tried to avoid leaving Sistan.

"I may here perhaps anticipate events so far as to say that he finally did quit Sistan and visited his father at Tun, who merely said to him, Masum, by killing Abdul Wahab you have knocked my staff from my hand"<sup>(2)</sup>

An additional force that aided Amir Masum Khan's dismissal from the Amirdom of Sistan was the British policies in the region:

*"Hisam ud Douleh, became a Russian protege, and looked mainly to Russia for diplomatic support. The Hisam ud Douleh was, moreover, in disfavour with the British, having been dismissed from Seistan, partly their instance, on a charge of tacit encouragement to the Baluch tribes who raided southern Kain four years ago.*

*"Matters stood like that in 1914, when the rival interests of Britain and Russia were suddenly united*

(1) The order was that he might resist so far as to kill one man but that if he went further, he was to be killed himself.

(2) op. cit., pp. 376 - 7.

*for the war, much to the annoyance of those Persians who had enjoyed knocking their heads together."(1)*

Following these events, Amir Masum Khan stayed away from Sistan for a while, but returned there as the governor (Amir of Sistan) in the wake of the death of his father, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk II, Hesam ad-Doleh II in 1914. With this inheritance, Amir Masum Khan inherited his father's title "Hesam ad-Doleh". By this time, a much more experienced Amir Hesam ad-Doleh III began to contest the Amirdom of Qaenat, the traditional heartland of the family Amirdom, and thus, entering rivalries with his young (paternal) uncle Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II.

When Amir Alam Khan III died, the Khozeimeh Amirdom was divided into two governorships of Sistan under the rule of his eldest son, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan, and of Qaenat under the rule of his second son, Amir Esmail Khan. This unpremeditated arrangement was mainly because Amir Ali-Akbar Khan had been governor of Sistan when their father died in 1891. When Amir Alam Khan III died in Gonabad in that year, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan was in Sistan as Deputy Governor and it took him quite a long time to arrive in Gonabad. His younger brother, Amir Esmail Khan, was in Birjand and arrived in Gonabad much sooner than the elder brother. Amir Esmail Khan immediately arranged for his father's corpse to be taken to Mashhad where it was buried, without Amir Ali-Akbar Khan being given the chance of reaching Gonabad and fulfilling his traditional duties as the eldest son. This incident became the bone of disputes between the two brothers and continued after them by Amir Ebrahim Khan, the youngest brother, and heir to Amir Esmail Khan's estate and Amirdom on the one hand, and Amir Masum Khan, the third son of and heir to Amir Ali-Akbar Khan's Amirdom on the other. The father and son, although continued governing Sistan, never gave up claims to their "rightful" inheritance of the Amirdom of Qaenat. Amir Masum Khan, still bitter about the "unjust" arrangement of

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(1) Hale, op. cit., pp. 102 - 3.

the inheritance of the Amirdom between his uncles and his father, decided to restore the Amirdom of Qaenat to its rightful heirs, namely his father and himself. He thus, began to use his influence in Tehran, with the court of the Qajar Shah. Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk's sympathy with the Constitutionalists on the one hand, and his reluctance to do what the British wanted him to do regarding German travellers in Qaenat which made the British to use influence in Tehran against him, on the other, resulted in Shokat al-Molk being unseated in 1915 and replaced by Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III. While in Birjand, Hesam ad-Doleh applied a much more strict administration, unlike his predecessor, living in the town itself.

*"The Hisam ud Douleh, unlike his predecessors, lives in town. His residence is built on the usual lines of house construction here, consisting of a square brick-paved compound with rooms on every side and a small shallow tank in the middle. On one side is a paved verandah, behind which is what is intended for the main reception room."*(<sup>1</sup>)

Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh's rule in Qaen lasted little more than one year, from late 1915 until February 1917. During this term of office, Hesam ad-Doleh experienced much difficulties in running the affairs of the Amirdom mainly owing to the uncooperative behaviour of the administration of the Amirdom which favoured the dismissed Amir and therefore, shunned proper service for a smooth business of governorship. This state of affairs deprived Amir Hesam ad-Doleh, a well organised and rather strict ruler, the opportunity of putting his finer qualities on display. Nonetheless, he managed to serve the Amirdom as best as it was possible for him, in a period as short as it was. Perhaps, his endeavours in developing the qanats and irrigation systems of Qaenat was his best service to the Amirdom at this period.

Amir Hesam ad-Doleh was replaced in February 1917, by his uncle and predecessor, Amir Shokat al-Molk, and his Amirdom, once again, was restricted to the province of Sistan. This

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(1) Hale, op. cit., p. 115.

state of affairs continued until 1921 when Amir Shokat al-Molk decided to abdicate from the Amirdom in favour of his nephews Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh and Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh. Amir Hesam ad-Doleh was given the Amirdom of Qaenat, whereas the latter was given the governorship of Sistan. During his second term of Amirdom of Qaenat, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh had more opportunity to serve the Amirdom. His uncle, Amir Shokat al-Molk, though retired from the task of ruling the Amirdom, took an active role in developing the Amirdom in cooperation with Amir Hesam ad-Doleh. The results are the Shokatiyah schools and high schools; the Birjand clinic; the Birjand drinking water-pipe network and so on. Amir Hesam ad-Doleh, known as a strict ruler, possessed finer qualities which were not universally acknowledged mainly owing to the fact that he was upstaged, throughout most of his career, by his uncle and rival Amir Shokat al-Molk. Of those who praised Hesam ad-Doleh, one was Haj Sheikh Mohammad-Hassan Ayati, author of "Baharestan", according to whom, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh was a "personality worthy of reverence".<sup>(1)</sup> He asserted:

*"While being Amir, he (Hesam ad-Doleh) would scrutinise the activities of his agents so closely that they were not able to extort even one qaran from the people. His deputy governors (nayehs) too knew of this and would employ maximum caution. Consequently, the people lived in the Amirdom free of all misconducts on the part of the officials."*<sup>(2)</sup>

Ayati goes on reciting a lengthy poem that he had composed in praising Amir Hesam ad-Doleh.<sup>(3)</sup>

Finally in 1937 Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh, tired of rivalries and disappointed by the results of a life-time of struggles and aware of the new political orders in the country, tendered his resignation from the Amirdom of Qaenat, by writing officially to the Prime Minister of Iran, who in accepting his resignation wrote back stating:

(1) Ayati, op. cit., p. 138.

(2) Ayati, op. cit., p. 139.

(3) Ayati, op. cit., pp. 140 - 141.

"Ref. 3374

Date 30.4.1937

Mr. Masum Khozeimeh,  
 I am in receipt of your letter of 26 April 1937. I have been saddened by the news of your eye-ache and indigestion problem that you have recently been inflicted by and consequently requested retirement from the service. It is necessary to point out that your services in the regions of Sistan and Qaenat have always been highly appreciated by the leadership (the Shah) of the country who considers you one of the most sincere servants of the state, and herewith conveys his gratitude. The Ministry of Interior has been instructed to arrange for your pension and you will be duly informed of the results.

Mahmud Jam Prime Minister."(1)

Amir Hesam ad-Doleh's resignation from the governorship and Amirdom of Qaenat put a final end to the Khozeimeh rule in that region and thus, putting an end to one of the last autonomous frontier-keeping states in Iran.

While Amir of Qaenat, Amir Hesam ad-Doleh maintained his state in Sistan until 1934 when the Government in Tehran decided, on the instruction of Reza Shah, to distribute the lands of Sistan amongst the peasants in attempt to improve the miserable conditions of the population of that province. Mr. Mohammad Naragi, an official of the Ministry of Treasury arrived in Sistan for the purpose and found that Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh had, in anticipation, written to the Government offering his entire estate of eleven villages to be distributed among the peasants.

After resigning from the Amirdom, Hesam ad-Doleh III spent a few years in seclusion at Birjand, then decided to travel abroad. He spent the rest of his life mostly in Beirut and in European countries until he died in 1951.

From his two marriages, Hesam ad-Doleh had five children:

- 1- Amir Aqdas Khanum.
- 2- Heshmat Khanum.
- 3- Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam.
- 4- Talat Khanum.
- 5- Amir Alam Khan.

Amir Hesam ad-Doleh's elder son, AMIR HUSSAIN KHAN KHOZEIME ALAM, continued the traditional leadership of the family in the region albeit unofficially. His career, in this respect, began with his appointment in the 1940s, by the Government of Reza Shah, as the Governor General of Sistan and Baluchistan, in which capacity he served for five years.



*Governor-General of Sistan an Baluchistan,  
Amir Husseini Khan Khozeime Alam*

Though he was quite young for such an appointment at the time, two major factors made him the most suitable candidate for the job in the circumstances:

1- The province of Baluchistan and Sistan was still neighbouring British India, and no one else in that part of the country had his family's record of traditional loyalty to the central Government of Iran, on the one hand, and his family's influence among the people of the region, on the other. These qualities, almost an inborn trait of the career of the latter Khozeimehs, made Amir Husseini Khan Khozeime, the unique choice for the appointment.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Amir Husseini Khan's family influence in Sistan stemmed from his father and his grandfather's Amirdom of Sistan, and in Baluchistan it stemmed from his maternal uncle and grandfather's chieftain of the Baluchi tribes of that province.

Quoted by Dr. Mostafa Alamouti, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime indicated:

"I remember, when I was a young man, just returned to Iran after completing my studies in England, the Ministry of Interior employed me for a salary of 400 tumans per month, which was a considerable amount those days. It was learnt that General Rafat, commander of Baluchistan division told Reza Shah that governors such as Brigadier Tajbakhsh and Colonel Mokri were not suitable for Baluchistan. A well informed and educated person is needed for the province as Governor General. Reza Shah asked Ali-Asghar Hekmat, Minister of Interior, for a list of suitable names. He presented the Shah a list containing names of a number of people. Since Reza Shah was a shrewd man, turned those names down and said; go and bring me names of young educated men. When he did so, Reza Shah singled out Amir Hussein Khan's name and said this young man is suitable. He is educated with good knowledge of the province, and enjoys family influence there. He then sent me to Baluchistan as Governor General. Many works were done. When the incident of Shahriyar 1320 (September 1941) occurred<sup>(1)</sup>, I used my good offices with the English and secured food and other goods for Baluchistan. But at the time of election, I noticed that the English were interfering. I stood before them and said; we have friendly relations with your country, therefore we will accept your negative notes on the individuals, but will not accept your interference in the election. They accepted it and Farrokh won the election in Zabol."<sup>(2)</sup>

On the subject of securing cooperations from the British for the supplies of food and other goods for Baluchistan during the occupation of Iran by the allies in September 1941, which made famine an imminent eventuality, Sir Claremont Skrine, the British Consul General says:<sup>(3)</sup>

"The following morning I paid my respects to the Governor. We greeted each other warmly; he was the son of an old friend of mine from Sistan Consulate days and I remembered him as a young graduate of an English agricultural college His English was better

(1) Iran was occupied by the Soviet and British forces in September 1941 which brought chaos and famine to the country.

(2) Alamouti, Mostafa, "Iran-e Asr-e Pahlavi, Vol. III, London 1989, pp. 396 - 7.

(3) Skrine, Sir Claremont, op. cit., p. 95.

than my rusty Persian, and we soon got down to business in the former language over our tea glasses. I said I had heard he had been to Zabol with the local representative of the Ministry of Food and Economics to get wheat. Had he had any luck?

"Very little," he said. "The Government ambars (warehouses) there are nearly empty. There's a good deal of grain hidden away in the villages, but even if the Maliya (Finance Ministry) people could get hold of it they couldn't bring it here because the road is cut by floods from the Helmand, as you know it usually is at this time of year. I managed to bring three truckloads back with me by a circuitous route, but most of it will have to be allotted to the troops. We don't want to have a mutiny."

"I did some quick thinking before I spoke again. At that early stage I knew little of the grain-collection and bread-rationing system evolved under the late Shah - I was to learn something of its ramifications later at Meshed but I knew that, whatever it was, it encouraged hoarding; and the black market at the expense of the rations sold at the bread-shops to the impoverished bulk of the population. I strongly suspected that this was what was happening at Zahedan and Zabol. If I could bring, an appreciable amount of food-grain from Nok Kundi quickly, with promise of more to come, it might knock the bottom out of the local black market, at any rate for the time being.

"The Indians are clamouring for their bread-rations," I said. "A big deputation of them came to me this morning. Obviously you can't allot them wheat you haven't got. If I can get an export permit from India for a consignment of wheat or flour, will you arrange with the revenue Superintendent to buy it from the Nok Kundi merchants and use it for rationing the Indians?"

"The Governor hesitated. "I'll see what I can do," He said. "Anyway you can go ahead. I'll see that the grain is allowed in."

On the question of preventing the British from interference in the election, Alamouti remarks:<sup>(1)</sup>

"Farrokh says in his book of memories: when I was nominated as a candidate for the Majlis from Zabol (capital city of Sistan) and arrived there, some one with the name of Shimi<sup>(2)</sup> had also nominated

(1) Alamouti, op. cit., pp. 395 - 6.

(2) This candidate was allegedly supported by the British Consul General in the region.

himself. Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, then 24 years of age, stood firmly before the English Consul and said that they had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Iran, and if they continued doing so, he would take the matter up to the higher authorities. This action resulted in the English Consul to refrain from interfering in the election".

2- Amir Hussein Khan, though a young man, was highly educated with qualifications in agriculture from the Royal Agricultural College of the United Kingdom. A point that would not be missed by Reza Shah whose drive for reforms in Iran needed young and educated energies. While in Baluchistan, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime told this author, that he prepared a five-year development plan for the province, financed by the central Government. The first payment was made, the plan was put in implementation, but it was soon brought to a halt by the events of the World War II and the occupation of Iran by the British and Soviet forces.

In the post-war era, after serving as deputy Minister of Agriculture for some years, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam chose to serve the people of Qaenat and Sistan in the capacity of representing them in the Iranian parliament, first as a Majlis deputy for several durations, and then as Senator for Khorasan and later for Baluchistan and the adjacent districts, appointed by the Shah.<sup>(1)</sup> In the last monarchic parliament, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime served as an elected senator from that province. Alamouti describes this changed status in Amir Hussein Khan's parliamentary career in the following words:

*"In the general elections of the period of the Rastakhiz (party) (1975)<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Hussein Khan*

(1) The constitution of the Pahlavi regime, allowed sixty members for the upper house, thirty from the capital and thirty from the provinces. Of each category fifteen were elected by the people, and the other fifteen appointed by the Sovereign as his constitutional right.

(2) The parliamentary period 1975-79, in which the Rastakhiz Party, initiated by the Shah, as the party of Iran's new single-party system, is generally referred to as the Rastakhizi period.

*Khozeime Alam was named as a candidate for election to the Senate, from Kerman, Baluchistan, and the Persian Gulf coasts and ports, after serving for some durations as an appointed Senator. Some assumed that he had lost the favour (of the Shah). When the matter was brought up with His Majesty, he replied that according to the studies carried out, he enjoys an outstandingly popular position in the region and will be able to pull massive votes. Hence, it has been said that it would be better for him to be nominated for election'. Incidentally this was proved to be the case, and in spite of strong rivals being nominated as well<sup>(1)</sup>, he won the election with considerable majority. His vacant seat amongst the appointed Senators, was given to someone else."<sup>(2)</sup>*

Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam is married to Bibi Fatemeh Khanum, daughter of Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II, with four children:

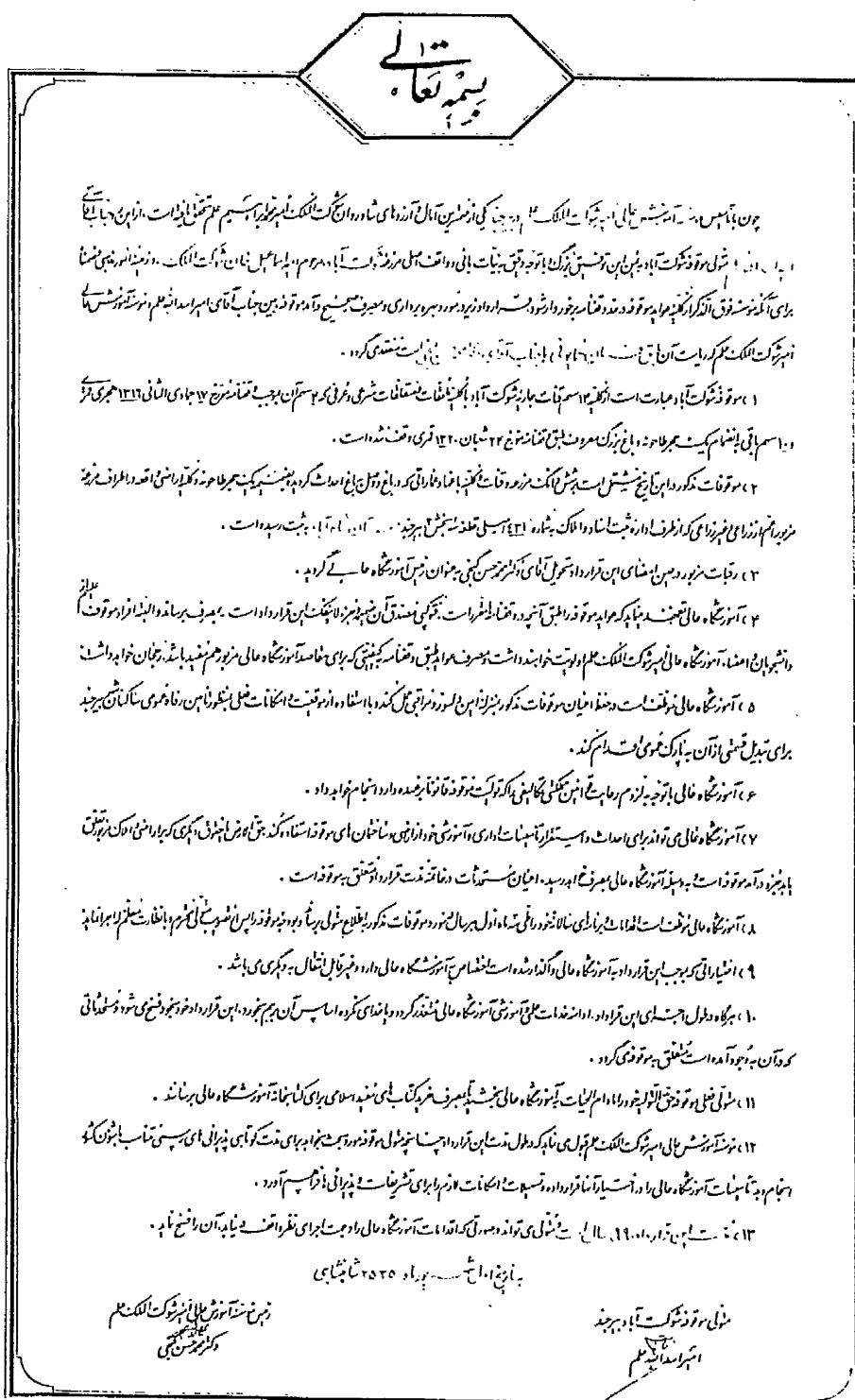
- 1- Tahereh Khanum, married to Peter Temple-Moris.
- 2- Amir Parviz Khan, married to Naz Diba,
- 3- Dariush Khan, married to Nilufar Diba.
- 4- Ziba Khanum, married to Keyvan Khosravani.

(1) During the Rastakhiz period, three candidates were introduced by the party for each constituency, from among whom the electors had the choice of electing one.

(2) Alamouti, op. cit., p. 395.

## Appendix I

Original text of agreement between  
Amir Asadollah Alam and Professor Mohammad Hassan Ganji  
regarding the University at Birjand.



Appendix II

Construction Works of the Khozeimeh Amirs,  
Still to be seen in Qaenat and Birjand and in Sistan.

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1. Amir Alam Khan I and his brother Amir Masum Khan.
  - A- The fort of Birjand.
  - B- The religious school "Musumiyyeh" of Birjand endowed to Mashhad endowments.
2. Amir Ali Khan.
  - A- Fortification of Khoond-e Mud with;
  - B- qanat of mud; and
  - C- start of the Omar-shah dam for the supply of drinking water for the city of Birjand and supply of agricultural water.
3. Amir Alam Khan II
  - A- Completion of Omar-Shah dam.
  - B- The Arg-e Bozorg "Great Arch or Citadel" of Birjand. This building is locally known as "Arg-e Khesht-e Kham".
  - C- Water tanks of south of Fort of Birjand.
4. Amir Asadollah Khan "Hesam ad-Doleh I".
  - A- The Arg-e Kuchak "Small Citadel", locally known as the "Arg-e Khesht-e Pokhteh".
  - B- The Bagh-e Amir gardens and buildings in Tabas.
  - C- Arg-e Kalateh-e Khan some 6 k.m. south of Birjand.
  - D- Qanat of Amirabad "Kalateh Khan"
  - E- Supply of drinking water to Amirabad "Kalateh Khan"
5. Amir Alam Khan III "Heshmat al-Molk I, Amir Tuman".
  - A- Construction of Nasratabad, now Zabol, the capital city of Sistan.
  - B- Construction of Fort Husseinabad in Sistan, later developed into a town.
  - C- Construction of Band-e Dareh "Dareh Dam" for supply of drinking water to Akbariyeh, Rahimabad (Kalateh Abedi), Bidokht and for irrigation.
  - D- Construction of Akbariyeh buildings and gardens.
  - E- Construction of qanat Bid-e Meshk south of Kuh-e Baqeran.
  - F- Construction of qanat Bidokht also south of Kuh-e Baqeran.
  - G- Construction of qanat Give also south of Kuh-e Baqeran.
  - H- Construction of Husseiniyyeh and Religious School in Sistan.

6. Amir Ali-Akbar Khan "Heshmat al-Molk II and Hesam ad-Doleh II"  
 A- Qanat of Avaz of Tabas-e Masina (Sunnikhaneh).  
 B- Qanat of Shamsabad of Tabas-e Masina.  
 C- Qanat of Ahangaran of Zirkuh.  
 D- Qanat of Mohammadabad of Zirkuh.  
 E- Expansion of Kalateh Akbariyeh.
7. Amir Mohammad Esmaile Khan Shokat al-Molk I.  
 A- Qanat and buildings of Shokatabad (east of Birjand).  
 B- Buildings of Rahimabad (Kalateh Abedi), including the citadel; Family quarters; the northern buildings of the Kalateh.  
 C- The Shokatiyeh School at Birjand.
8. Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II (Alam)  
 A- Qanat of Losoeiyeh of east of Birjand.  
 B- Drinking water pipeline network for Birjand to which local people contributed financially. This water was piped from Aliabad, some 9 k.m. outside Birjand.  
 C- Alam Hospital of Birjand. This project was completed by Amir Asadollah Khan Alam in the event of his father's demise.  
 D- Shokatiyeh School and High-School. The project continued by his son, Amir Asadollah Khan Alam and developed in the establishment of the University of Shokat al-Molk Alam in Birjand, now known as the University of Birjand.  
 E- Birjand School and High-School for girls.  
 F- Completion of the buildings of Shokatiyeh and Akbariyeh Kalatehs.  
 G- Constructions for the mineral waters (Ab-e Torsh) of Goje Morgh.  
 H- Road Construction from this mineral water sites to Birjand.
9. Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh.  
 A- Power plants for Zabol, and Birjand.  
 B- Ice making factory of Zabol  
 C- Flour mill of Zabol  
 D- Cinemas for Birjand and Zabol.  
 E- Revitalisation of qanats at Zirkuh, Yazdan and Farzaneh.
10. Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk III, Hesam ad-Doleh III.  
 A- Qanat, buildings and gardens of Masumiye of West of Birjand.  
 B- Buildings of Shamsabad and Avaz of Tabas Masina (Sunnikhaneh).  
 C- The Chaharbagh of Zabol.  
 D- Masumabad Qanat of Zirkuh.  
 E- Kabudeh Qanat of Zirkuh.  
 F- Falaki Qanat of Zirkuh.  
 G- Amirabad qanat and gardens of Zirkuh (south of Masumabad to the north).

11. Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam.
  - A- Khozeimeh-Alam Hospital and Maternity Hospitals of Birjand.
  - B- Khadijeh Alam Orphanage of Birjand, originally donated by Bibi Khadijeh Alam.
  - C- Khozeimeh Alam High-School for boys at Birjand.

**Genealogical Tree of  
early generations of the Khozeimeh family**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Khazem ben Salmi**

Contemporary of Ommayyad Caliph Marvan 1  
arrived in Khorasan in 680 AD

as Governor

Abdollah ben Khazem

Marvtudi

**Mohmmad**

sent to Herat as Governor in 686 AD

**Khozeimeh**

made Governor of Khorasan in 686 AD

**Khazem ben Khozeimeh**

General of Abbasid Caliph Mansur sent to the Persian Gulf from  
where he returned to Khorasan as Governor in 749 AD

**Khozeimeh ben Khazem**

Amir of Qohestan who assisted Taher Zol Yaminein in 813 AD

Not Known

**Amir Naser ad-Din**

Mohtasham of Qohestan, contemporary of Holaku Khan  
Moghol (1250s), Philosopher khoajeh Nasir Tusi wrote his  
famous book (Akhlaq-e Naseri) in the name of this Amir

**Amir Mansur**

Mohtasham of Qohestan,  
the Nakhaei family branched out of the dynasty after this Amir

Not Known

**Amir Sultan Khan,**

Contemporary of Shah Esmail Safavid (1510s)

Not Known

**Amir Mohammad Khan**

Amir Ebrahim Khan (1699)

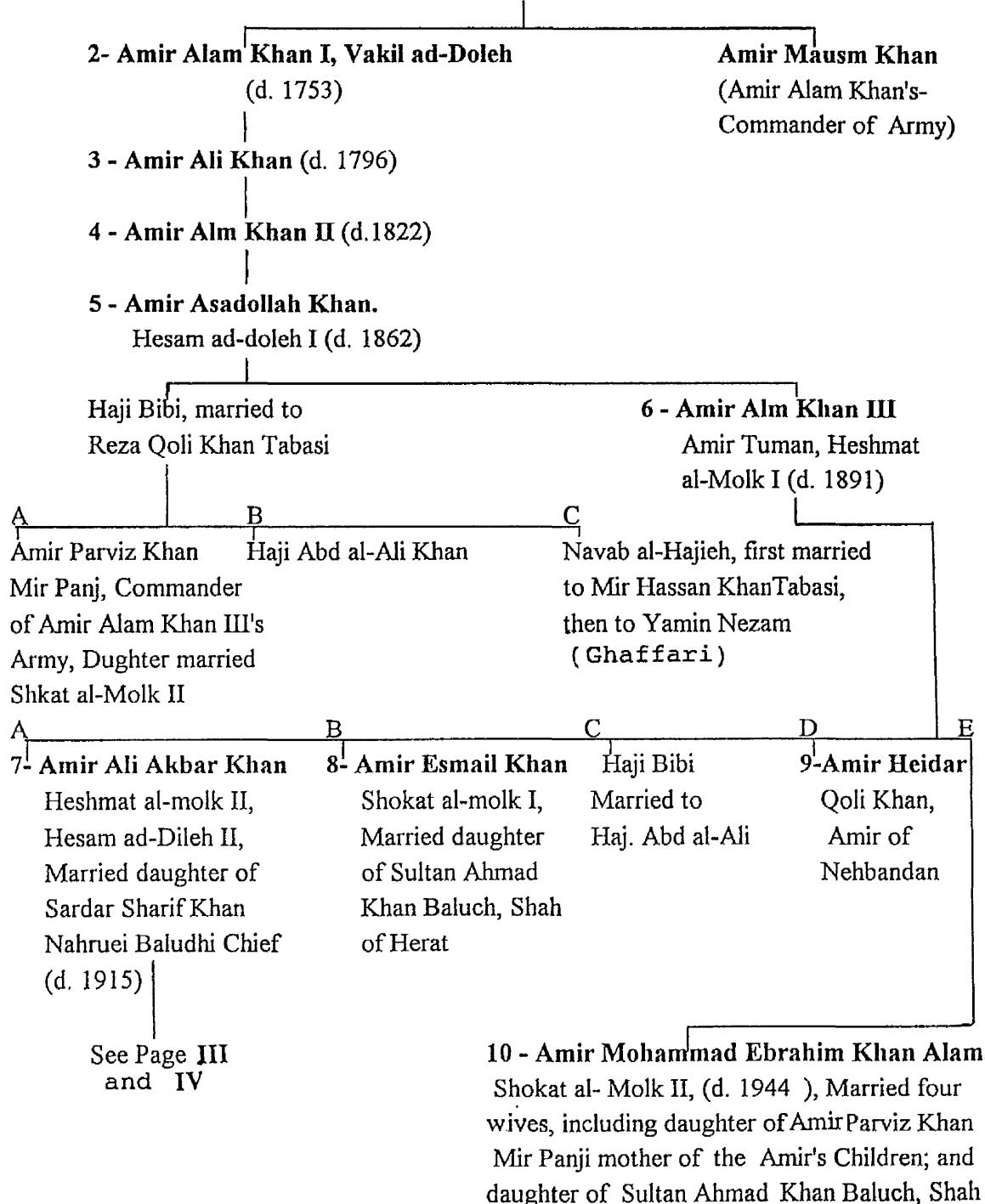
Amir Esamîl Khan (1724)

regarded as the founder of the modern generation of Khozeimehs

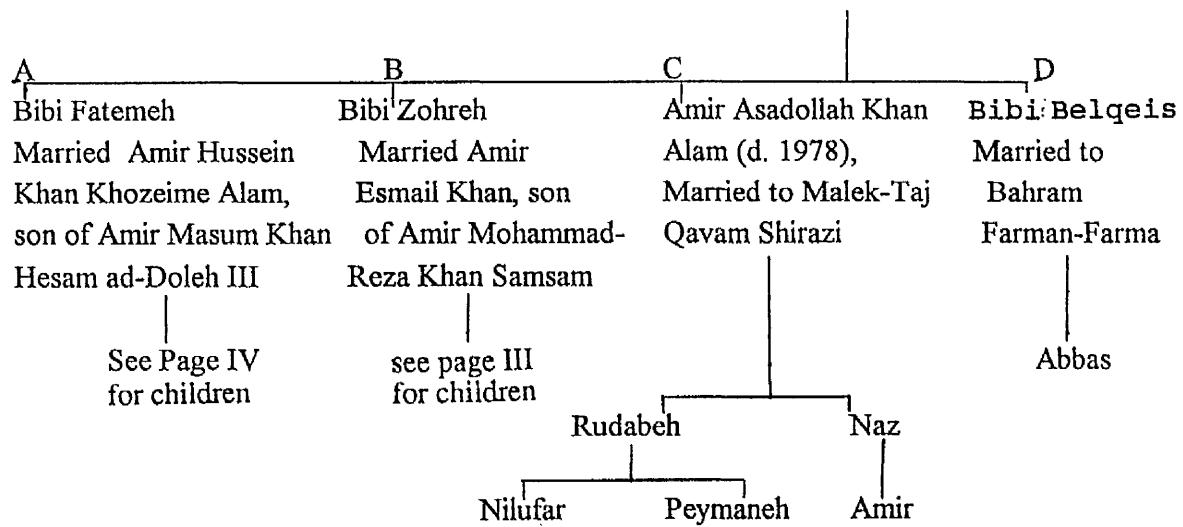
**KHOZEIMEH FAMILY TREE**  
**Modern Line of Khozeimeh**

Page II

**1- Amir Esmail Khan Khozeimeh,  
(A About 1731 AD )**

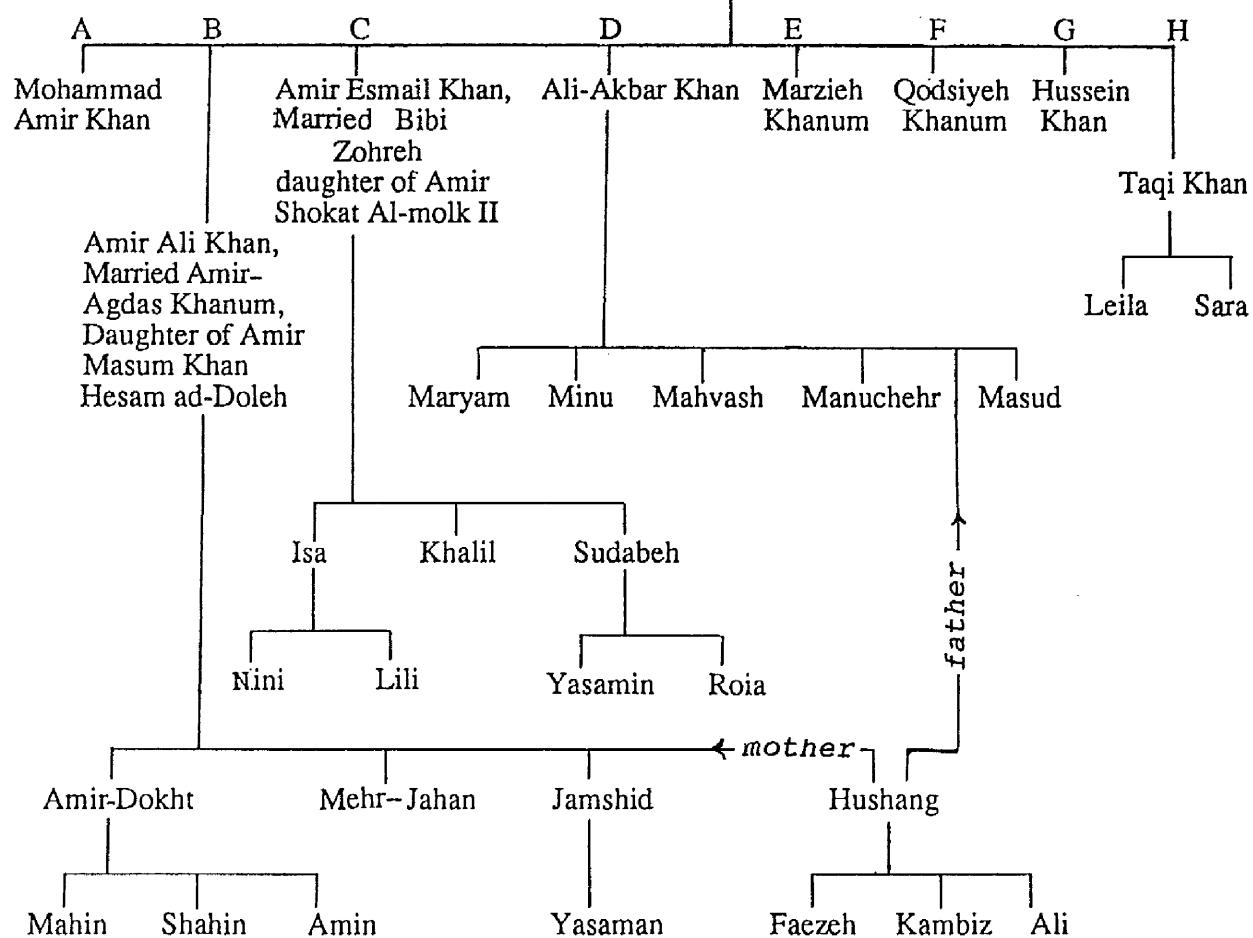
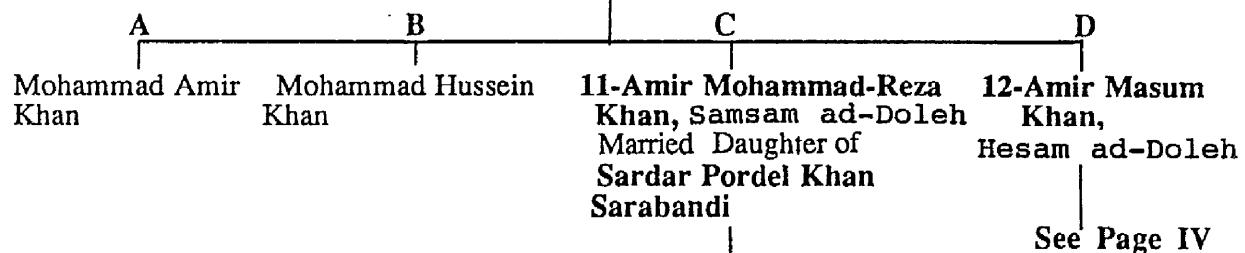


of Herat, who had previously been wife of his older brother Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I



## Khozeimeh Family Tree

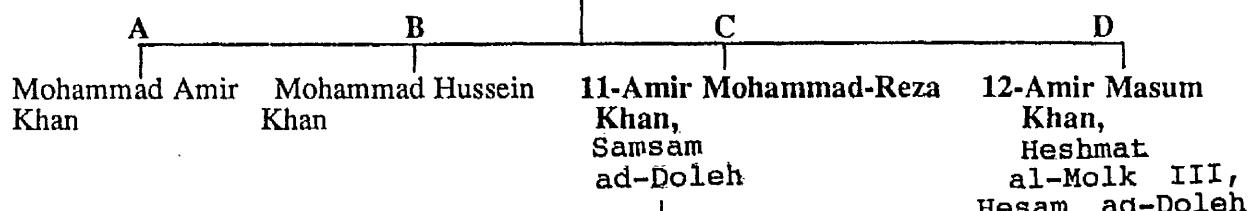
7- Amir Ali-Akbar Khan,  
Heshmat al-molk II,  
Hesam ad-Doleh II,  
(d. 1915)



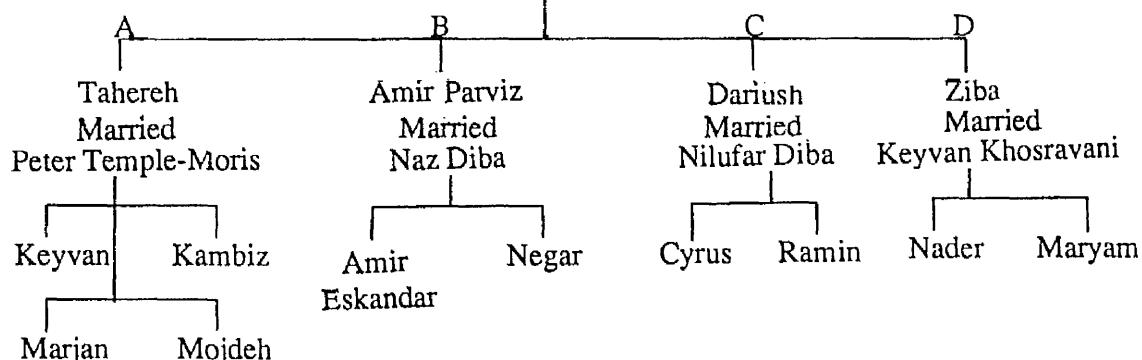
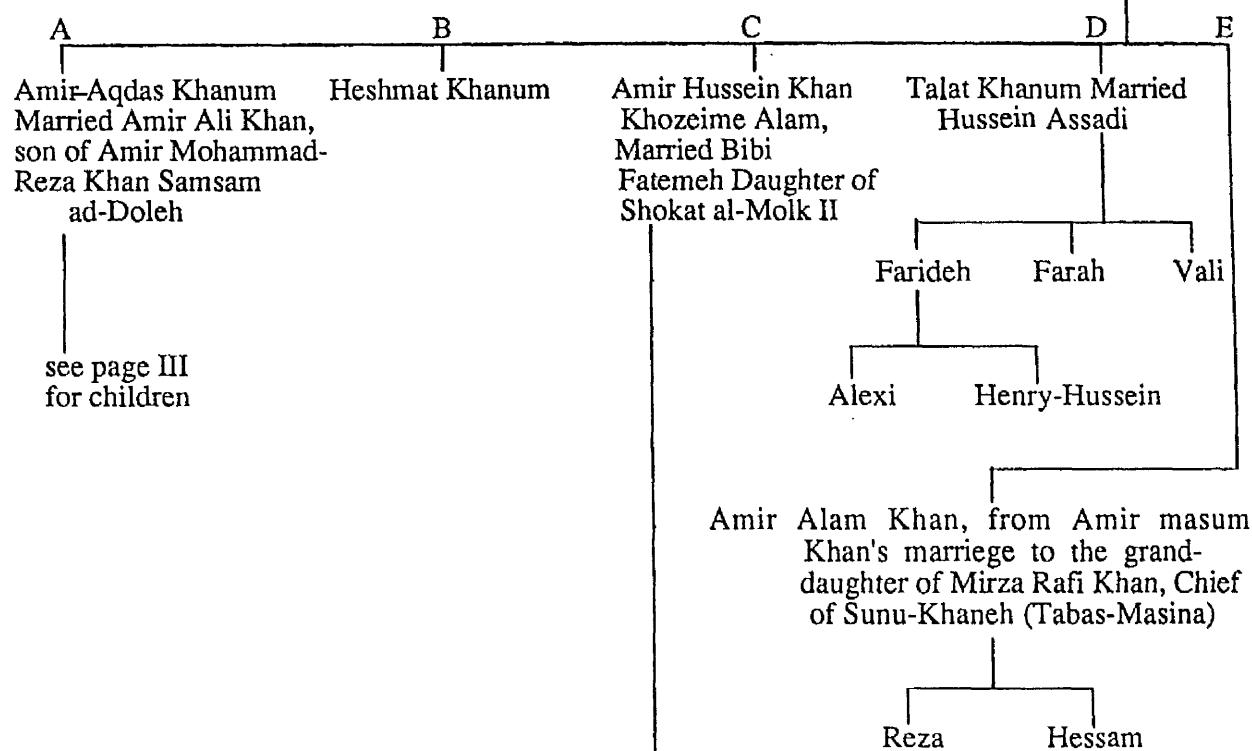
## Khozeimeh Family Tree

Page IV

7- Amir Ali-Akbar Khan,  
Heshmat al-molk II,  
Hesam ad-Doleh II,



See Page III



Appendix IV

A Brief Historical Account of the Chieftainship of Nahruei  
 Baluch Sardars in Sistan Related to the Khozeimeh Amirs of  
 Qaenat and Sistan

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- 1- Sardar Alam Khan was the first Nahruei Tribe's sardar in Sistan. He was the first cousin of Shah Mehrab Khan of Bampur. He settled in Sistan under the auspices of Malek Bahram Keyani, on the borders of God-e Zereh, south of Sistan proper, where he built the famous Borj-e Alam Khan. Sardar Alam Khan had four sons, the eldest of whom was;
- 2- Sardar Dust Mohammad Khan, a powerful Baluch chief in Sistan:

*"Leech writing probably in about 1838-9, mentions that he married the sister of Riza Khan, and gave his own sister to Ali Khan Baluch, adding he is under Kamran."* (1)

Sardar Dust Mohammad Khan died in 1857 and is buried close to Qaleh-e Nao which is also known as Qaleh-e Dust Mohammad Khan near Borj-e Alam Khan, the seat of Nahruei Chieftainship.

- 3- Sardar Dust Mohammad Khan was succeeded by his eldest son, Sardar Darvish Khan who passed over, in the succession to his father's chiefdom, in favour of his uncle, Sardar Sharif Khan, the second son of Sardar Alam Khan.
- 4- Sardar Sharif Khan Nahruei, became the principal Baluchi chief of Sistan in the 1870s. His devotion to Iranian interests during the Sistan Boundary Arbitration of General Goldsmid (1872) became a determining factor in consolidating Amir Alam Khan Khozeimeh's position in Sistan, consequently securing Sistan proper in Iranian possession. Writing on this subject, General Sir Frederick Goldsmid asserts:

*"Sharif Khan. The principal Baluch Chief in Sistan, whose devotion to Persian interests, whether assumed or real, has no doubt greatly tended to consolidate the power of the Amir of Kain."* (2)

(1) Goldsmid, General Sir Frederick, "Eastern Persia", published in London 1876, Vol. I, p. 425.

(2) Ibid.

To create an alliance in Sistan, Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan married his eldest son, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Khozeimeh (Heshmat al-Molk II) to the daughter of Sardar Sharif Khan. This alliance of the two influential families undoubtedly consolidated the interests of Iran in Sistan.

Following Iran's rejection of Goldsmid's Sistan boundary arbitration award of 1872, a coalition of Baluchi chiefs of Sistan who were enticed by Sardar Ebrahim Khan Sanjarani of Chukhansur to rise against Iranian Governor of the province, forced Amir Alam Khan III to take refuge, on 21st December 1872, in his newly built Fort Naseriyeh at Nasir Abad. Sardar Sharif Khan Nahruei joined the coalition simply because every other Baluchi chiefs had done so, albeit he was related to Amir Alam Khan by marriage. This event has been misinterpreted by some British historians as proof of Sardar Sharif Khan's submission to the Afghans<sup>(1)</sup> Sardar Sharif Khan died in 1889 and his two sons, Sardar Saeid Khan and Sardar Mohammad Ali Khan were invited by Amir Shir Ali Khan of Afghanistan who, instead of greeting them as his guests, send them into exile in Turkistan. The two brothers escaped on the road to Turkistan. Sardar Saeid Khan made his way to Pishavar, and thence to Sistan via Quatta. The other brother came down the Hirmand River to Sistan, and since then had lived mostly with the Baluchis in Sarhad.<sup>(2)</sup>

While Sardar Sharif Khan was in charge of the Nahruei Chieftainship in most parts of Sistan, his two younger brothers, Shir-Del Khan and Azim Khan were in charge of parts of Nahruei possessions in Sistan; Shir-Del Khan was in charge of Kimak and Borje Alam Khan with acknowledged local influence and undivided loyalty to Iran's sovereignty in Sistan.<sup>(3)</sup> His son, Heidar Ali Khan was educated in Tehran and succeeded him in Borj-e Alam Khan; Azim Khan, the youngest brother of Sardar Sharif Khan, was in control of Deh-e Sharif Khan, also with local influence and loyalty to the Iranian sovereignty in Sistan.

- 5- Sardar Saeid Khan, eldest son of Sardar Sharif Khan who returned to Sistan after being exiled unlawfully to Turkistan by the Afghans, used his tribal influence in favour of Iran's interests in Sistan. His nephew, Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh was Deputy Governor of Sistan at the time, whose family connection with the influential

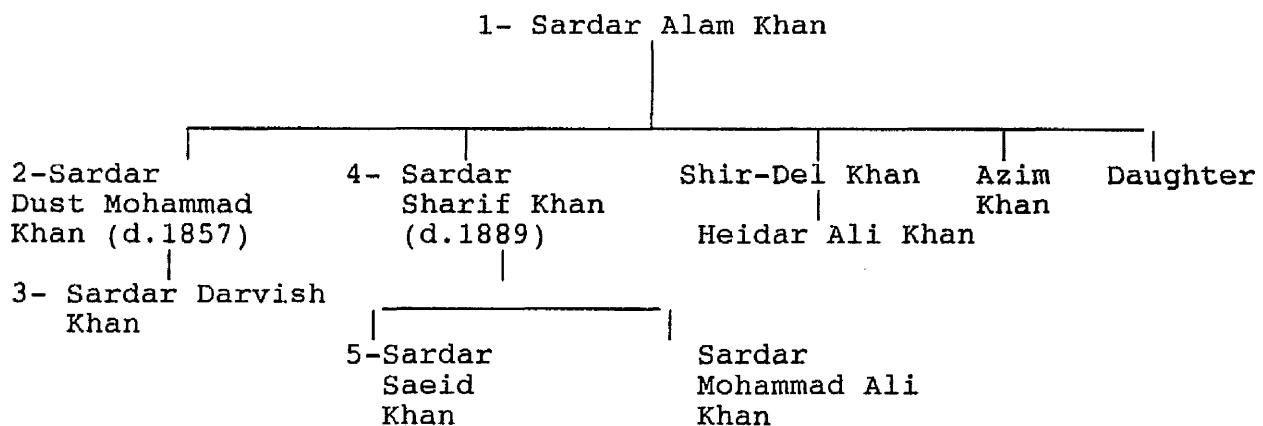
(1) See for example: Yate, Lieut. Colonel C.E. "Khorasan and Sistan", London 1900, pp. 76-7.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit.

Nahruei Tribe under Sardar Saeid Khan, Amir Masum Khan's maternal uncle, made it easy for the young Amir to establish himself as an effective de facto ruler in Sistan, albeit the two fell out later.

Nahruei Sardars of Sistan



## CHAPTER III

### THE KHOZEIMEH AMIRDOM SECTION II: FOREIGN RELATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

A significant aspect of the role of Khozeimeh Amirdom in Qaenat and Sistan was its foreign relations. The latter Amirs of this Amirdom are still remembered in Iran for their relations with foreign powers. These relations had evolved from the Amirdom's basic function of defending Iran's eastern frontiers against foreign interference. A role which it played with a noticeable degree of independence. Officially the Amirdom was bound by the fundamental regulations of the State in Iran to confine its foreign relations within the official channels of the Central Government, namely the Foreign Ministry. This Ministry used to assign its representatives in the provincial centres where a foreign government maintained a consulate. This representation constituted the diplomatic post of KARGOZARI, and the KARGOZAR was the government's diplomatic representative in charge of provincial foreign affairs.

The Kargozari of Sistan and Qaenat was established simultaneously with the establishment in Sistan of the first foreign consulate, namely the British Consulate, in 1900.

In practice, however, the Amirdom's foreign relations, like most other aspects of the affairs of the Amirdom, bypassed the official channel of Kargozari and gradually developed into a somewhat semi-independent foreign relations on its own rights. This development was more in evidence at the time of Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk II, Amir of Sistan (1891 - 1914) and Amir Mohammad-Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I, Amir of Qaenat (1891 - 1904) and their successors. The fact that these two Amirs' terms of office coincided with the duration of capitulation in Iran, worked as a major encouraging factor for the foreign consulates to motivate direct and a somewhat

semi-independent foreign relations in the Amirdom. The foreign policies of the Amirdom, mostly reflecting on the strategic significance of the Eastern Iranian borderlands and on the challenges mounted against the position of the Amirs, both from within and outside the family, were shaped by the following factors:

- 1 - General political situation of Iran both in terms of varying attitude of the Central Government towards the Amirdom, and its fluctuating foreign affairs, which created confusion in the Amirdom and encouraged political initiatives of its own.
- 2 - Political threats posed against the Amirdom and/or individual Amirs which necessitated foreign alliance whenever supports and protection from the Central Government were felt to be ineffective.
- 3 - Internal rifts and rivalries which in the greatest part of the latter decades of the Amirdom's life increased to a dangerous level, not only threatened the position of the individual Amirs, but also put the existence of the Amirdom in jeopardy.
- 4 - The strategic location of the Amirdom which was highly considered by the British and the Afghans, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. This was the period in which Iran and Britain were engaged in an intensive process of pushing their frontiers towards each other in a vast area stretching from the Gulf of Gwader northward to the Russian frontiers, a long and gradual process which gave birth to the present boundaries between Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Khozeimeh Amirdom was situated in the middle section of this stretch of land and this situation increased the strategic significance of the Amirdom in the eyes of the British and Russians.

- 5 - The fact that almost the whole of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century was the period of capitulations in Iran makes it easier to understand why foreign consulates had increased their involvement in local affairs of the Amirdom and, by doing so, encouraged the Khozeimeh Amirs to develop their somewhat semi-independent foreign relations.
- 6 - The geographical situation of the Amirdom and its considerable distance from the political centre of Iran on the one hand, and the difficult geography of Central and Eastern Iran on the other, added to the problems of speedy communication with the Central Government. This factor necessitated adoption of instant initiatives which could not materialise but on the basis of some degree of independence in the Amirdom's foreign relations.
- 7 - Since the Amirdom was a frontier-keeping state of Iran, it had to perform its duty in protecting the frontier areas by implementing policies and initiating strategies it deemed fit. This was in keeping with the tradition of frontier-keeping states of Iran and the nature of the duty involved a certain degree of independence in foreign relations.
- 8 - Last but by no means least was the factor of political rivalries between the British and the Russians in the region which created a situation the Khozeimeh Amirs were able to exploit to their own benefit. In short, the two foreign powers (Britain and Russia) on the one hand, and the Khozeimeh Amirs on the other, have been led into a situation where each side endeavoured to use the power and influence of the other to their own advantage.

### RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

The Khozeimeh Amirdom's foreign relations were limited to contacts with the British and the Afghans who were the immediate neighbours of the Amirdom, and with the Russians who were in the region as a result of their rivalries with the British.

### RELATIONS WITH THE AFGHANS

Khozeimeh Amirdom's relationships with the Afghan Amirdoms of the late 18th century and with Afghanistan of late 19th century onward, were very limited. These relationships began with direct clashes between Amir Alam Khan I and Ahmad Khan Abdali (Durrani) founder of the kingdom of Afghanistan, in the wake of Nader Shah's assassination of 19th June 1747, which resulted in the defeat of the Khozeimeh Amirdom after Amir Alam Khan I was betrayed and murdered in 1749.<sup>(1)</sup>

H.W. Bellew who visited the Amirdom in the winter of 1871 asserts:

*"Mir Ali, transferred his headquarters to Birjand. He was succeeded in the rule by his son Mir Alam, and he by his son Mir Asadullah, both of whom were subjects of the Durrani kings."<sup>(2)</sup>*

Although no evidence has been introduced to prove these Amirs' adherence to the Durrani Khan, no evidence exists also to the contrary. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to accept that in the wake of Amir Alam Khan's defeat and murder, his son and successor, Amir Ali Khan accepted the authority of the Durrani king in return for retaining the Amirdom of his

(1) For details of this event, see previous chapter, section on Amir Alam Khan I.

(2) Bellew, H.W., "From the Indus to the Tigris", reprint 1977, Karachi, p. 305.

dynasty in Qaenat and Sistan. This, if happened, did not last long as Bellew himself points out:

"On the break-up of this dynasty, Mir Asadullah became independent to all intent."(1)

Bellew claims a second period in which Amir Asadollah Khan became a subordinate of the Afghan Khans. He states that in the advent of the Governor General of Khorasan, Asef ad-Doleh's attack on Qaenat in 1835 "Mir Asadullah, retired to Sistan, and, as an Afghan subject dependent on Herat, sought the aid of its ruler."(2)

Once again no independent evidence exists to substantiate this theory. Furthermore, there was not such a country in existence as Afghanistan at the time of which Amir Asadollah Khan could have been a subject and provincial governor. As for Herat, it is noteworthy that both Kameran Mirza and Yar Mohammad Khan, Governors at the time, were loyal to the Iranian Government, and Amir Asadollah Khan's plea for assistance from them would hardly make him an Afghan subject. Bellew goes further by indicating that Amir Asadollah Khan sought assistance from Yar Mohammad Khan of Herat a year or two later. As it will be examined in the following chapter, Yar Mohammad Khan, as ruler of Herat, was staunchly loyal to Iran and it was because of injustice to his son and successor in Herat that Iran attacked and captured the town in 1856. Again, Amir Asadollah Khan's request for assistance, if at all, from an Iranian-appointed governor of Herat would not make him an Afghan subject. Not only is there no mention of these events in the numerous documents of history examined by this author, many documents give evidence to the effect that the Amirs of Qaenat and Sistan participated in Iran's military operations in Herat of 1836 and 1856, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

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(1) Bellew, op. cit., p. 306.

(2) Ibid.

Amir Asadollah Khan's son and successor, Amir Alam Khan III, however, revived his great grandfather's (Amir Alam Khan I) powerful rule in Qaenat. He successfully re-established the Khozeimeh rule in Sistan. As examined in the previous chapter, at the time of disputes between Iran and the Afghan chiefs on the question of sovereignty over the eastern section of Sistan, Amir Alam Khan III established his authority on the areas east of the Hirmand delta, by capturing Nad Ali. His dominion was extended to include the eastern sections of Sistan after the Iranian Government received the famous reply to its enquiry with the British, despatched by the British Foreign Secretary Lord Russell.

This development intensified border disputes between Iran and Afghanistan. Both parties called upon the British to arbitrate in Sistan. The Sistan arbitration (1871 - 1872), led by General Frederick Goldsmid completed its work after experiencing a great deal of difficulties created by Amir Alam Khan III, the powerful Amir of Khozeimeh who saw in the arbitration work a foreign intrusion in favour of the Afghan leader, Shir Ali Khan. Amir Alam Khan detested the latter, whose "encroachments" in Sistan encouraged the Khozeimeh Amir to extend his support for the Afghan Chief's rebellious son Yaqub Khan. Amir Alam Khan harboured and entertained Yaqub Khan and his troops for some months, offering his Amirdom's support for his much hoped "triumphant" return to Kabul. This collaboration failed to achieve its objective, as Shir Ali Khan entered in a pact with the British whereby the nomination of his younger son as the heir to his throne was guaranteed by the British.

The delineation of boundaries in Sistan, by the Goldsmid arbitration, however, put an end to the direct relations, limited as they were, between the Khozeimeh Amirdom and the Afghan chiefs, while it marked the beginning of a new and direct political relations between the Amirdom and the British and the Russians who announced their political presence in Sistan and Qaenat as soon as the British opened their consulate there.

### RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH AND THE RUSSIANS

British interests in the strategic significance of Sistan and Qaenat were the natural consequence of the establishment of their authorities in the eastern half of Baluchistan and consolidation of their influence in Afghanistan.

Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Sistan was the immediate Iranian territory neighbouring British Baluchistan and the principalities of Afghanistan. British Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department informing the British Minister at Tehran of this interest states:

"....The Government of India attach the highest importance to the assertion of the paramount interest of Great Britain in Sistan and in South Eastern Persia. They are of opinion that in no circumstances should Sistan be permitted to pass, like the northern provinces of Persia, under the control or even the preponderating influence of Russia, and that British prestige and influence in that quarter should be constantly and actively maintained. Though the commercial advantages of the overland trade with India have not been overlooked and are of much importance both to India and Persia, you will readily understand that the objects of the Government of India in opening the route to Quetta and pushing the trade have been mainly political. It has been their desire not only to create and increase the trade, but by means of the trade to establish beyond a doubt the superior interest of England in those parts of Persia which border on Baluchistan..."(1)

The Khozeimeh Amirdom, on the other hand, was at the same time, suffering from a growing internal dispute which emerged in the wake of Amir Alam Khan's death in 1891.(2) His elder son, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk II, who was serving as Deputy Governor in Sistan, was denied the leadership of the Amirdom by his younger brother, Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I, who succeeded Amir Alam Khan in

(1) From H.S. Barnes, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, to his Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Persia, Tehran, No. 1291 F., Dated Simla, 29th May 1901, FO 60/636.

(2) See previous chapter.

Birjand. This dispute grew deeper as time went by and expanded to engage much of the time and energies of the two Amirs and their successors. The two parties in this family dispute employed every means at their disposal in securing the single leadership of the Amirdom, each for himself.

The establishment of the British consulate in Sistan in 1900, which was immediately followed by the opening of a Russian consulate there, gave Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk the opportunity of using the influence of the British in Tehran in safeguarding his position in Sistan and in endeavouring to obtain leadership of the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat as well. The employment of this strategy coincided with the British policies of securing influence in Sistan and the grounds were, thus, prepared for mutual exploitation between the two. Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk's friendly attitude towards the British and the encouragement and support that he intended to the British Consul's efforts in advertising commercial advantages of the new commercial road between Sistan and Qaenat, created a situation in which he felt his position to be threatened. He, therefore, feared the hostility of the Russian Consul.<sup>(1)</sup> His fears were not totally unfounded. Within a few days he was ordered to Tehran. Though this order was the outcome of the Russian activities in Tehran, the British saw it as "another form of squeeze" and "a small pecuniary help of ten thousand tumans would relieve pressure".<sup>(2)</sup> This development coincided with the appointment of Yamin Nezam as the Iranian commissioner in the McMahon's Sistan arbitration. Yamin Nezam, related to the Amir by marriage, had for some time served in Sistan as commander of the border guards. His new appointment strengthened his position in Sistan and his display of friendship with the Russian Consul added to the political rivalries between the British and the Russians in the district. The British suspected Yamin Nezam of being in

(1) From Barnes to the British Envoy in Tehran, op. cit.

(2) From Major G. Chenevix Trench, Consul General - Meshed, to Foreign Secretary Simla, 31st May 1901, FO 60/636.

the pay of the Russian Consul,<sup>(1)</sup> who himself was suspected by the British of using local Mollas for spreading rumours among the poor people of Sistan that the British were the cause of their misfortune. The British Consul General in Mashhad, therefore, asked the British Minister in Tehran to use his influence with the Atabk' Azam (Prime Minister) and to remove Yamin Nezam from his appointment as the Iranian Commissioner in the Sistan boundary arbitration and to appoint Amir Heshmat al-Molk in his place.<sup>(2)</sup> This tactic did not however succeed. Yamin Nezam (Abd al-Hamid Khan Ghaffari) was also suspected of conspiring with the Russian Consul for the removal of the Amir of Sistan from his post of governorship.

*"The Amir inveighed very bitterly against the Russian Consul and the Yamin-i Nizam, who, he said, were both working for his removal and the destruction of British influence in Sistan. He welcomed the arrival of the Arbitration Commission, and assured me that everything would be done to give Colonel McMahon and his officers the respect that was due to them."<sup>(3)</sup>*

Yamin Nezam's intrigues in Tehran, for the removal of Amir Heshmat al-Molk drew the Amir closer to the British. Yamin Nezam's intrigues included securing a document for Sardar Said Khan Nahruie, a Sistani Sardar who arrived there on 10th April that year. The document demanded Amir Heshmat al-Molk to give the Sardar, his own brother-in-law, the following villages: Qaleh Nao, Khoajeh Ahmad, Sharif Khan, Deh Isa Khan, and Sekouheh.<sup>(4)</sup> Yamin Nezam sought an interview with the Amir on this subject but the Amir refused to meet him and the Sardar, and the problem was averted for the time being. Amir Heshmat al-Molk asked the British to help

(1) From H.B.M.'s Acting Consul General in Meshed - to H.B.M.'s Minister, Tehran, Telegram No. 22, dated 17th February 1903, FO 248/789.

(2) Ibid.

(3) From Diary No. 5 of H.B.M.'s Consul, Sistan and Kain, for Period 1st to 15th March 1903, FO 248/789.

(4) Sistan Diary, dated 16th April 1903, by R.A.E. Benn, British Consul in Sistan, FO 248/789.

removing Sardar Said Khan from the frontier,<sup>(1)</sup> in return for removing obstacles he put in the way of trade with India. He, in the meantime, complained to Tehran of the arrangement which was favourably replied to by placing the disposal of the Sardar entirely in the hands of the Amir.<sup>(2)</sup>

Meanwhile, rivalries between Amir Heshmat al-Molk and his younger brother Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk, Amir of Qaenat, took a new turn for the worse. The Shokat al-Molk sent a letter of complaint to the Shah (Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar) in which he accused Amir Heshmat al-Molk of wanting to give Sistan to the British:

*"I swear by the salt of the asylum of the universe that if the whole of Sistan was offered to me, I should not accept it and have resolved never to place my foot out of the soil of Qaen which is my ancestral inheritance, but my patriotism and love of the Imperial Government can never accept that Sistan, which is the "sangar" (rampart) of Persia against the Uzbaks, the Afghans, and the Turkamans, should fall with such ease into the hands of the English.... but my brother Heshmat al-Molk, I do not know with what thoughts and opinion, has been taken in by the English and it is now two years since he entered into a compact with them, so much so that he has strayed from the road of justice and virtue. He wants to give Sistan to the English without trouble or steps, fighting or dispute of any kind..."*<sup>(3)</sup>

A further threat to his position in Sistan came from the new Governor General of Khorasan, Rokn ad-Doleh, who hinted that payment was necessary if the Amir wished to retain the Sistan governorship. Amir Heshmat al-Molk had already remitted 50,000 qarans to the new Governor General whose father was also Governor General at one time, and was not favourably inclined towards Amir Heshmat al-Molk.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Ibid.

(2) Sistan Diary No. 10, of Major Benn, H.B.M.'s Consul in Sistan and Kain, dated 16th to 31st March 1903, FO 248/789.

(3) Translation of report sent by Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I to his agent in Tehran, to be presented to the Shah, dated 17.04.1903.

(4) Sistan Diary No. 10, dated 16 - 31, May 1903, FO 248/789.

Facing all these threats to his position in Sistan, the Amir threw in his lot with the British, the only source of reliable support for his survival. This was a mere regional repeat of the political situation that existed in the capital of Iran of the Qajar period. A situation in which bribery and dictatorship left no one throughout the country with the sense of security for his position, dignity, and his life. Even the Qajar princes found themselves compelled to seek friendship and protection of a foreign power.

The British, therefore took up the case of defending Amir Heshmat al-Molk's position in Sistan, albeit they found relations with the Amir of Sistan "have had but a negative value" for them.<sup>(1)</sup>

In a confidential report to the Secretary to the Government of India, the British Consul for Sistan and Qaen describes the political circumstances in which the British had to take up the case of Amir Heshmat al-Molk's position in Sistan, a summary of which is as follows:

"I have the honour of inviting the attention of the Government of India to the probability of the dismissal of the hereditary Governor of Sistan, the Amir Heshmat-ul-Mulk. This probability has been increased by certain recent incidents; and it is plain that no time should be lost in either preparing for, or attempting to avert, such an event.... The Government of India already know from many sources that the Yamin-i-Nizam, warden of the Sistan border and Persian Boundary Commissioner, has been intriguing for some time, with Russian help, to oust and supplant the Amir Heshmat-ul-Mulk. The latter has managed, by a constant supply of presents to Meshed, to keep in power. But with the new Governor of Meshed, a notorious Russophile and personally hostile to the Amir's family, this will be increasingly difficult. And two facts which have come to my notice during the last few days, coupled with the obvious wish of the

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(1) Notes by Major R.A.E. Benn, Consul for Sistan, dated 31st May 1903, FO 248/789.

Russians to effect a speedy counter-stroke to the British Arbitration Commission, seem to show that a deal set has now been made against Heshmat-ul-Mulk in Tehran, and that his fall may take place at any moment, the first fact is that Mons. Naus,<sup>(1)</sup> in his letter of the 3rd May 1903, to His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran, written to explain the difficulty about supplies for the British Boundary Commission, remarked that the order prohibiting export of cereals was directed only against the Amir of Sistan, who had been smuggling corn across the frontier. The second fact is that Mons. D'Hoedt, inspector of Customs here, told me three days ago that he had heard from the new Persian Director of Telegraph for Seistan that, as the Amir Heshmat-ul-Mulk is in very bad odour with the Central Government, he (the Director) expects to make a large amount of money out of him by threatening to send unfavourable reports to the Shah.... It is also possible that if there is any truth in the hitherto unverified story of there being large consignment of arms in the Russian caravans which has arrived here, it is the intention of the Russian Consul to arm Saiyid Khan, Nahruie, and other enemies of the Amir against him and thus encourage disturbances which would result in his dismissal. The early dismissal of the Heshmat-ul-Mulk having been thus shown to be probable, it remains to be considered whether it is to the interest of the British Government to avert it. In this connection the following points seem to call for examination.

- 1) Would a change of Governors damage our interests?
- 2) Is the Amir worth supporting?
- 3) If the answer to the above question is in the affirmative, to what extent must support of the Amir be pushed, and how definite must it be to secure British interest?<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Mons. Naus was a Belgic national at the service of the Iranian Government, in charge of organising the country's Custom Services.

(2) From H. Dobbs Esq., H.B.M.'s Consul for Seistan to the Secretary to the Government of India in the F.D., No. 278, dated 18th June 1903, FO 248/789.

He then provides the Government of India with his own opinion which was adopted. His advise was:

"There can, I think, be no doubt that a change of Governors in Seistan would gravely damage our interests. Not only has Heshmat-ul-Mulk shown himself constantly friendly towards the British, whenever he has not been hampered and threatened by a Kargozar or a Yamin, but it is the common talk of the Province that, if he falls, his fall will be due to the Russians, and will be directed against the British. Russian and British power in Seistan will thus be brought to a public test, in which British power will be worsted: and it will be recognised that the British cannot help their friends or hurt their foes. It is, moreover, impossible to insist too strongly on the fact that, in the case of the Heshmat-ul Molk, his fall will make much more noise than that of the Governor of any ordinary province or tribe, who expects to be changed every Nauroz. The Amir being a hereditary Governor, his dismissal will be a flagrant violation of tradition: and the idea formed by the people of the country of the Russian power, which is able to bring about such a violation of tradition, proportionately exaggerated, the Russians will then be able to prosecute without hindrance their plan of building up material interests in Seistan; while British material interests will encounter endless petty opposition and will eventually decay. And, finally, when the time comes for the question of the possession of the strategically important oasis of Seistan to be decided, the British Government will have no material interest in it to show as a justification for energetic action..... the question whether the Amir Heshmat-ul-Molk is worth supporting, must, I think, be answered in the affirmative. It has to be remembered, in the first place, that as I have already written, he is a hereditary Governor, and that his retention in his place is in accordance with tradition. His hold over the country through strong chiefs like Sardar Purdil Khan, who are attached to his cause, is exceptionally firm. Finally, his eldest son, Mir Masum Khan,<sup>(1)</sup> who will in the

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(1) Amir Masum Khan was Amir Heshmat al-Molk's third son. His eldest son was Amir Mohammad Hussein Khan.

ordinary course succeed him, appears now to be an especially nice youth, who since his journey to Calcutta, has been thoroughly friendly to the British, and who is disposed to be far more energetic than was at one time thought possible. It is clear, therefore, that the support of the Heshmat-ul-Mulk offers more certain advantages than does the support of the ordinary fleeting officials of Persia, who has no regular pied a' terre, and whose useful adhesion can at best be only for a few years.

"Regarding the extent to which the support of the Amir should be pushed, I venture to think that a definite statement should be made to the Government of the Shah that the British Government insists on the maintenance of the status quo in Seistan, and will not tolerate the dismissal of the Amir, inasmuch as the status quo would thereby be altered prejudicial to British interests...."<sup>(1)</sup>

An incident that occurred in July 1903, further strengthened Amir Heshmat al-Molk's case with the British. Briefly, an agitation took place on the unfixed rate of that year's abundant harvest. The agitation was apparently instigated by the local agents of the Russian Consul who "made people anxious about the price of grain by spreading reports of huge purchases for the British, and then put the blame upon the Boundary Commission".<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Heshmat al-Molk brought the agitation under control with the assistance of the Kargozar, by publicly flogging the ring leaders. "Being unable to save the agitators from punishment, as he had promised, Mr. Miller (Russian Consul) undertook to get the Amir Heshmat-ul-Mulk dismissed for his action in protecting British property and interest".<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) From Mr. Dobbs, to the Government of India, dated Nasratabad, 18th June 1903, FO 248/790.

(2) H. Dobbs, H.B.M.'s Consul for Seistan, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the F.O., No. c.4, dated Camp Bunjar, Seistan, 7th July 1903, confidential, FO 248/790.

(3) Ibid.

To the British, the Russian Consul's undertaking to dismiss the Khozeimeh Amir created a serious challenge to defend their political influence and credibility in the region. The British found that "if the Amir Heshmat-ul-Mulk is kept in office, in spite of Russian efforts for his dismissal, the effect of the recent agitation will be excellent. For it will be proved that we can help our friends and hurt our foes. It will also have been proved that we are absolutely disinterested, since, when the British Consulate and shops were in immediate danger of attack, we trusted for protection to Persian troops, and did not call in the Boundary Commission escort, which was a short way off".<sup>(1)</sup> Continuing with his comment on the situation, in his report of the incident, the British Consul asserts: "If the Amir is now not supported, after I have taken upon myself the responsibility of assuring him that the British Government will not permit his dismissal solely on account of his punishment of offenders against its subjects, British prestige in Seistan will sink to a lower point than it has ever yet reached."<sup>(2)</sup>

The British Consul, therefore, successfully attracted the attention of the Indian Government to the vulnerable position of Amir Heshmat al-Molk which was tied up, from the British point of view, to the prestige of that power vis-a-vis the Russians in Sistan. The British Foreign Office and the Indian Government took on board the Amir's case to prevent "British prestige" from sinking "to a lower point than it had ever yet reached". In a telegram on July 9, 1903, India Office informed the Foreign Office:

"....with reference to the further telegram from the Viceroy of the 8th July, of which a copy was sent to the Foreign Office to-day, that Lord George Hamilton trusts that Lord Lansdowne will instruct Sir A. Hardinge, in accordance with Lord Curzon's recommendations, to support with all means at his disposal the Heshmat-ul-Mulk and kargozar, in order to prevent developments of situation which might become

(1) From H. Dobbs, to the Government of India, Camp Bunjar, 7th July 1903, FO 248/790.

(2) Ibid.

really serious. Lord Lansdowne's attention will doubtless be directed to the concluding passage in Lord Curzon's telegram, in which he suggests that the Russian Ambassador should be informed of Mr. Miller's consistently unfriendly conduct, which renders difficult the maintenance of friendly relations in Seistan."(1)

Having interviewed the Foreign Minister, Moshier ad-Doleh, in Tehran, on this subject, the British Minister to the Court of Qajar Shah, concluded that:

"....As your Lordship is aware the Mushir ed-Dowleh is strongly Russophile & is suspected of being actively paid by the Russian Government. I think it is not impossible that his Excellency has been intriguing on his own account, & at the instigation of the Russian Minister to have the Amir removed from Seistan, & it may be that the Shah has never taken any decision in regard to the matter."(2)

While actively trying to prevent Amir Heshmat al-Molk's dismissal from the Amirdom of Sistan, the British were risking his reputation as an independent Iranian Amir of Sistan, and they were aware of it. In a letter from Bahrain, addressed to Moshir ad-Doleh the Iranian Prime Minister, Mr. A. H. Hardinge British political representative in the Persian Gulf, explains:

"....We have no particular reason to regard the Heshmat-ul-Mulk as a specially able administrator or as one specially desirous of promoting friendly relations between Persia and Great Britain. On the contrary we have, as Your Excellency is aware, had frequent occasions to complain to Tehran of his conduct. But although he has not been specially friendly, he has generally abstained from conduct strongly or markedly unfriendly to our representative and to the good relations I have mentioned and has on that account incurred the resentment of those who view those good relations with dislike and distrust.... If we had any evil designs in Sistan we could wish for nothing better than the dismissal of the

(1) From India Office, to Foreign Office, No. 2., July 9th, 1903, FO 248/790.

(2) India Office to Foreign Office, No. 2, July 9, 1903, FO 248/790.

Heshmat-ul-Mulk under the circumstances I have described, for it would give us an excuse for much greater interference than we have ever attempted before in the affairs of the province."<sup>(1)</sup>

Following the activities in Tehran by both Amir Heshmat al-Molk's supporters and enemies, the new Prime Minister Ain ad-Doleh summoned the Amir, on March 7th 1904, to Tehran. After some efforts to avoid going to Tehran, the Amir visited the capital where he experienced circumstances more friendly than he had feared.<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Heshmat al-Molk's younger brother and his rival, Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I, Amir of Qaenat, was also summoned to Tehran at the same time. He had reportedly sent a douceur of 5000 tumans to Tehran.<sup>(3)</sup> In the meantime the Khozeimeh Amirdoms of Sistan and Qaenat were, at this time, in a worse situation than ever before. In Birjand (Capital city of Qaenat) a representative of the Central Government known as Moavez al-Molk from Torbat-e Heidariyeh, was intriguing to assume the governorship of Qaenat. At one point, it was rumoured that he had succeeded in replacing Amir Shokat al-Molk I.<sup>(4)</sup> Meanwhile, still in Tehran, Amir Heshmat al-Molk was rumoured to have been offered the governorship of Qaenat in addition to that of Sistan.<sup>(5)</sup> The uncertainty of Amir Shokat al-Molk's position in Qaenat apparently continued for some months. The British Consul's diary of Sistan and Qaen (no. 43, 1st to 7th December 1904) reads:

(1) From A.H. Hardinge to H.E. The Mushir ed-Dowleh, dated Bahrain November 26th 1903, FO 248/803.

(2) From British Legation at Tehran (Gholhak) to the Marquess of Lansdowne, No. 128, July 18th 1904, FO 248/810.

(3) No. 1 Diary of the Turbat-i-Haidari (British) Consulate for the period 5th to 18th November 1904, Par. 6, FO 248/810.

(4) Ibid., Part 1.

(5) From British Legation at Tehran, to the Marquess of Lansdowne, No. 128, July 18th 1904, FO 248/810.

"....The Kargozar informed me that the Shaukat ul-Mulk had been deprived of all powers and that the Muaziz ul-Mulk was now acting as the Governor of Kain. The Kargozar seemed to think that it was practically certain the Hashmat-ul-Mulk would eventually get the Governorship of Kain as well as of Sistan."

The uncertainty of Shokat al-Molk's position in Birjand had become so serious that he decided "at one time to pay the Muaziz al-Mulk tumans 3,500 if the latter would depart from Birjand".<sup>(1)</sup> He later changed his mind as he thought that Moavez al-Molk was about to leave soon. As the dispute over the position of the Khozeimeh Amirs of Sistan and Qaenat continued, the British began to review their attitude towards the matter. They saw their other interests in the district of greater importance than trying to keep the Khozeimeh Amir in office for the mere consideration of prestige vis-a-vis the Russians:

"....I find that opinion has recently been expressed by His Majesty's Charge d' affairs at Tehran, and by Colonel McMahon, that the Hashmat is not a worthy object of solicitude, and it is probable that we should not have committed ourselves to his support, had it not been for the attitude taken up towards him by the Russians in connection with the 1903 disturbances."<sup>(2)</sup>

Thus, the British authorities found it more productive to their interests if they traded their support for the Khozeimeh Amir, for other considerations. The Viceroy of India wrote on this matter that:

"....It has occurred to me that it might not be impossible to make an arrangement with the Persian Government about Seistan affairs generally, which would be a gain rather than a loss to us, and which might be accepted by the Persian Government. Our objection to the removal of the Hashmat might be withdrawn, provided:-

(1) Diary No. 46 of Sistan and Qaen (British) Consul, for the period 22nd to 31st December 1904, FO 248/822.

(2) From Viceroy of India to the Foreign Office and Legation at Tehran, 3rd January 1905, FO 248/833.

1)- That suitable provision is made for him in some other province;

2)- That the Persian Government give a promise in writing, that Yamin will be recalled from Seistan when our mission is withdrawn;

3)- That a strong Governor, to be approved by us, shall be appointed to Seistan and retained in his appointment."(1)

This change of policy on the part of the British, came at the same time that it became apparent that Amir Heshmat al-Molk's return to Sistan, as the Governor, was open to serious doubt. By mid-March 1905 it was apparent that both Khozeimeh Amirs of Sistan and Qaenat had lost their hereditary Amirdom to Moazez al-Molk, an outsider. In a report from Birjand, dated 11th March 1905, the British Consul registers in the Consulate's diary that: "...The Muaziz ul-Mulk received a copy of the telegram from the Sadr Azam<sup>(2)</sup> to the Asef-ul-Dowleh<sup>(3)</sup> to the effect that, on account of his good services, H.M. the Shah was pleased to confer upon him the Governorship of Khorasan<sup>(4)</sup> and Seistan for the current year."

Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I died in March that year, but his younger brother, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II managed, in Tehran, to secure the governorship of Qaenat for himself for a revenue payment of tumans 80,000 annually, instead of the previous rate of 33,000 tumans per annum. Regarding Amir Heshmat al-Molk's position in Sistan, the British were still busy negotiating with the Iranian Government on a deal that would involve Amir Heshmat al-Molk's appointment to the governorship of Sistan in return for the British neglect of the Mirjaveh

(1) Ibid.

(2) Prime Minister.

(3) Governor General of Province of Khorasan.

(4) Very Likely a spelling mistake. It should read "Kain" for "Qaen", as this name was spelled "Kain" by the British at the time.

delimitation in Baluchistan where the Iranians had many grievances.<sup>(1)</sup> Amir Heshmat al-Molk II retired from active governorship, leaving his son Amir Masum Khan in charge of the affairs of governorship of Sistan, conferring on him his own title "Heshmat al-Molk", himself settling on his second title "Hesam ad-Doleh". The young Amir began changing side from the British to the Russians. While stranded in Tehran, he secured from the Russian bank, a loan of £2000, which was the equivalent of tumans 12000 and for which, he was originally in negotiations with the British Minister.<sup>(2)</sup> The British Minister at Tehran, however, managed to secure for Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk III the governorship of Tabas, whereas the young Amir had cultivated friendship with the Russians. This whole affair proves that the Khozeimeh Amirs were, in the words of the British Minister at Tehran, using their foreign relations to their own ends. He stated: "... the fact of course is that all the Persian chiefs and dignitaries are guided in their relations with the rival foreign consulates solely by the considerations of their own personal interests for the moment, and that their friendship cannot be relied upon as a permanent factor by either power..."<sup>(3)</sup>

The British changed their attitude towards Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk so much that by April 1905, they considered his return to Sistan as incompatible with their interests:

"...Sir A. Hardinge telegraphed that the Heshmat-ul-Mulk had been offered the Governorship of Seistan and that he was trying to get Kain as well, with every prospect of success. I am afraid the return of the Heshmat-al-Mulk under present circumstances to these parts is not calculated to advance British interests."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) From H.B.M.'s Minister at Tehran, to the Foreign Office, No. 33, Tehran, March 22nd 1905, FO 248/837.

(2) Seistan Diary, March 29, 1905, FO 248/848.

(3) From H.B.M.'s Legation, to Foreign Office, No. 62, Confidential, Tehran, March 22nd, 1905, FO 248/838.

(4) Sistan Diary of H.B.M.'s Consul, dated 20th April 1905, FO 248/838.

Furthermore, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk II was accused of having instigated the poisoning of Sardar Said Khan Nahruie, an enemy of the Amir and his brother-in-law, who died on 27th April 1905.<sup>(1)</sup> The Amir was, at this time, still trying to secure governorship of Qaen by heavy bribery which was the order of the day. He did not succeed and his young uncle, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan's payment of bribes had, apparently, superseded those of his.<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk's heavy bribing in Tehran put him in great financial difficulties. He approached the British bank in Mashhad for a loan of tumans 50,000.<sup>(3)</sup> This development marked a new phase in the history of the Amirdom's foreign ties. A new phase in which the two Khozeimeh Amirs changed sides in their relations with the foreign powers. Amir Shokat al-Molk II gradually favoured good relations with the British, while Amir Heshmat al-Molk III slowly moved towards the Russians. Relations between the two Khozeimeh Amirs, in the meantime, further deteriorated as a result of the following developments:

- 1- Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II inherited his older brother's state and title in Qaenat, with which went the old rivalry and conflict with his oldest brother Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk II now inherited by Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk III.
- 2- Amir Heshmat al-Molk II's efforts in Tehran to obtain for himself the governorship of Qaenat in the wake of the death of Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I, was frustrated by the young Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II's success in securing the Amirdom of Qaenat for himself.
- 3- Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk's will gave Shokat al-Molk II two thirds of the land property and all of

(1) Sistan Diary of H.B.M.'s Consul, dated 18th May 1905, FO 248/847.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Confidential Diary of H.B.M.'s Consul in Seistan, dated 4th July 1905.

the rest of his wealth. Amir Heshmat al-Molk contested the will with the support of the Mojtahehd (Jurisprudent) of Tehran.<sup>(1)</sup>

This whole affair made the two brothers, one very old and one very young, prepare for a long lasting open conflict. The young Amir, Shokat al-Molk II, of Qaenat being inexperienced and frail, was even too frightened to establish open relations with the foreign power which he had to rely upon for support. When diplomatic representatives of British India went to see him in a courtesy call at his country residence, the Kalateh Akbariyeh in 1907, the young Amir received them "with great ceremony and was outwardly cordial enough", but British Consul for Sistan and Qaen was not sure "whether at heart" he was equally so. The Consul remarks: "He is so ridiculously afraid lest he should be thought to be at all intimate with us (he was afraid for instance, from all I hear, of others coming to see me, that I cannot help thinking that he has been got at by the Russians, either in Tehran or in Meshed and that he has now some kind of understanding with them, and is therefore extremely afraid of offending them".<sup>(2)</sup>

Moreover, Amir Heshmat al-Molk II remained in Tehran, still trying to obtain the governorship of Qaenat, and thus, uniting the Khozeimeh Amirdom of Sistan and Qaenat. By early April 1907, he succeeded in his efforts and attained this goal. British Consul for Sistan recorded:

*"... Captain Watson telegraphs today that he hears the Heshmat-al-Molk has bought the Governorship of Kainat for tumans 100,000 and that he has been financed by the Russians. Sartip Mir Masum Khan's<sup>(3)</sup> immediate departure for Birjand gives colour to the story, which*

(1) Ibid.

(2) Confidential Diary, No. 25 of Captain A.D. Macpherson, H.B.M.'s Consul for Seistan and Kain, for the period 13th to 17th July 1907, FO 248/910.

(3) Amir Heshmat al-Molk III.

*in one form or another has been current for some time past..."(1)*

This success was short lived and Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk was reappointed to the Governorship of Qaenat within a few days.<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk III, who had gone to Birjand to assume his role as deputy governor, representing his father Amir Hesam ad-Doleh II, was escorted out of Birjand by the Telegraph Sartip, an influential government official. This development worsened the situation between the two parties. Amir Masum Khan left Birjand but remained in Qaenat, at or near Birjand, in clear defiance of the orders of the Central Government. Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk's supporters in Birjand and Qaen were reported to have carried on an agitation in his favour, circulating reports of ill-treatment of his supporters by Amir Shokat al-Molk.<sup>(3)</sup> The conflict soon escalated and penetrated the Tehran newspapers. The Habl al-Matin carried an attack on Amir Shokat al-Molk in February 1908. The British Consul for Sistan and Qaen supposed, at the time, that the attack was engineered by one of the supporters of Amir Heshmat al-Molk.<sup>(4)</sup> Whether Amir Heshmat al-Molk's supporters were behind this media campaign or not, it was the first of a long campaign waged and continued for varying reasons, aimed at damaging Amir Shokat al-Molk's reputation.

While still in Tehran and barred from returning to Sistan, Amir Hesam ad-Doleh continued with his efforts for the removal of Amir Shokat al-Molk from the governorship of Qaenat.

(1) Confidential Diary of Seistan and Kain, dated 4th April 1907, FO 248/909.

(2) Summary of events in Sistan and Kainat for the week ending 4th May 1907, by H.B.M Consul for Sistan and Kain, FO 248/909.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Confidential Diary No. 8, of Major B.L. Kennion, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Kain for the week ending 22nd February 1908, FO 248/941.

Meanwhile, Sartip Mohammad-Reza Khan, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh's elder son, who was in Sistan, acting as Deputy Governor since his brother Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk III left for Birjand in April 1907, decided to resign from deputy governorship as he could not alone carry on the heavy duties.<sup>(1)</sup> The end result of his decision was that he was officially appointed, on May 13th 1908, as Deputy Governor of Sistan.<sup>(2)</sup>

Amir Shokat al-Molk II had by then solidified his friendship with the British who were the main power preventing his removal from the Qaenat Governorship. The British Consul for Sistan remarks:

"...There is no question of his very great and undisguised friendliness to the British Government. This is doubtless in great measure inspired by gratitude, as he is aware that he has been befriended by H.M's Legation more than once when his position was in jeopardy."<sup>(3)</sup>

This period of family disputes between the two Khozeimeh Amirs of Sistan and Qaenat was coincidental with the heightening tensions in Tehran between the Qajar Shah Mohammad-Ali and the Constitutionalists. The British in Tehran had sided with the Constitutionalists, whereas the Russians supported the anti-constitutional movements of the Shah. The heated constitutional debate in Tehran was reflected in the provincial centres. The state of affairs in the Khozeimeh Amirdom became a miniaturised version of what was going on in Tehran. Amir Shokat al-Molk II joined the constitutionalists, whereas Amir Heshmat al-Molk III joined supporters of the Shah. The British and Russian consuls acted the same way as their respective legations did in

(1) Sistan Confidential Diary for the week ending 9th May 1908, FO 248/941.

(2) Supplement to Sistan Confidential Diary for the week ending 16th May 1908, FO 248/941.

(3) Confidential Diary No. 24, of R.L. Kennion, H.B.M.'s Consul, for the week ending 6th June 1908, FO 248/941.

Tehran. This realignment was in keeping with the two Khozeimeh Amirs' relations with their respective foreign power.

In June 1908, the Qajar Shah gained the upper hand in Tehran and overthrew the Majlis (parliament). This turn of event in Tehran was bound to work against Amir Shokat al-Molk. British Consul for Sistan and Qaen reported:

*"I called on the Shokat-al-Molk. He was a good deal perturbed at the turn things had taken in Tehran. His school has been closed for the past few days, the school masters being keen sympathisers with the Majlis and business generally is in a state of suspense....there was some excitement at Birjand when the news of the Shah's coup arrived. The artillery men made some threats of attacking the school-masters and other sympathisers with the Majlis, but the Shokat on hearing of it, sent for the Yawar (colonel) and threatened him. He also took the precaution of picketing the streets....the Shokat received a telegram from the Shah ordering him to imprison or execute disaffected persons."<sup>(1)</sup>*

In Tehran, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II offered the Shah a bribe of tumans 30,000 for the Governorship of Qaenat, but Amir Shokat al-Molk was made to understand that he could retain it for 25 to 30 thousand tumans.<sup>(2)</sup> The latter refused to pay the bribe and he was dismissed from his Governorship. The British intervened immediately and saved his position. The British Consul for Sistan and Qaen reports in his confidential diary No. 32, for the week ending 1st August 1908:

*"The Shokat sent the Mustofi to thank Mr. Howson for the intervention of H.M's Legation on his behalf."*

Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk was in fact advised by the British Consul not to pay the Shah the bribe that was

(1) Confidential Diary No. 27, of Major Kennion, for the week ending 27th June 1908, FO 248/941.

(2) Confidential Diary No. 29, for the week ending 11th July 1908, FO 248/941.

required of him. Amir Hesam ad-Doleh II continued with his bid for the Governorship of Qaenat in Tehran. Amir Shokat al-Molk was advised by his agent in Tehran to extend a bribe of tens of thousands of tumans to the Shah and to the War and Interior Ministers to maintain his position. He refused to do so, and the clergies of Birjand prepared a petition asking that Amir Shokat al-Molk should be retained.<sup>(1)</sup> A similar petition was also sent to the Shah by the people of Birjand.<sup>(2)</sup> Meanwhile, Amir Shokat al-Molk telegraphed his agent to present to the Shah that since his father's death, he had paid, in addition to revenue, over tumans 200,000 all of which had been borrowed from Russian and British banks, and had served the country faithfully and had preserved peace while "the people under him were contented and happy, and foreign representatives were also pleased with him. He was surprised at being threatened with the loss of his Governorship unless he paid a large sum, because Amir Heshmat al-Molk offered a large sum as bribe". He then continued asking "if this was to be the reward of loyal service?"<sup>(3)</sup>

As the situation worsened, the British decided to seize the opportunity and strengthen Amir Shokat al-Molk's friendship. The British Consul for Sistan and Qaenat asserts:

"... as matters now stand, if the Shokat is left to fight his own battle alone, it is likely that he will succeed in retaining the Governorship for the present, by practically ruining himself by bribery. In this case he will have little to thank us for, and it would not be surprising, if, when he saw that he had everything to fear from the Shah (with whom in the popular estimation the Russians are identified) and nothing to hope from us, his feelings underwent a change. In any case there would be no certainty that after he had been squeezed dry, he would not be thrown over in favour of the first applicant with money. It is thus very important that we should not only assist

(1) Confidential Diary No. 34, of Major Kennion, dated 15th August 1908, FO 248/941.

(2) Confidential Diary No. 35 of H.B.M.'s Consul, dated 22nd August 1908, FO 248/941.

(3) Confidential Diary No. 34, op. cit.

*the Shokat to retain the Governorship, but enable him to do so as cheaply as possible..."(1)*

By early September that year (1908) news of Amir Hesam ad-Doleh's success in Tehran of being given the Governorship of Qaenat for a bribe of 59,000 tumans, which was loaned from the Russian bank,<sup>(2)</sup> reached Birjand. This amazingly high level of bribery, reflecting the depth and the extent of corruption of Qajar rule in Iran, was verified by several different sources at the time. The British Legation even managed to obtain the details of this bribery. According to the Confidential Diary of British Consul for Sistan and Qaenat, Amir Hesam ad-Doleh had paid tumans 18,000 in cash, the remainder being guaranteed by the Russian bank. The money given and guaranteed was distributed in the following order:

- 1- The Shah, 35,000
- 2- The Minister of Interior, 10,000
- 3- Amir Bahador (War Minister), 5,000
- 4- The smaller people, 9,000 altogether<sup>(3)</sup>

The rate of bribery had, by then, increased substantially. A major factor for this unbelievable rate of bribes must have been the fact that the Royal Court and other officials realised that the British and the Russians were competing seriously over the issue of Governorship of Sistan and Qaenat, each determined to secure the position for its respective friend by sacrificing huge sums. Amir Shokat al-Molk was advised by his own men to bid for a higher amount to retain the Governorship. The British realised that if this was done the blackmailing would go on indefinitely.

(1) Confidential Diary No. 36, of Major Kennion, dated 29th August 1908, FO 248/941.

(2) Confidential Diary No. 37, of Major Kennion, dated 5th September 1908, FO 248/941.

(3) Confidential Diary No. 38, of Major Kennion, dated 12th September 1908, FO 248/941.

Amir Shokat al-Molk did not bid and received, on 21 September that year, a telegram from Prime Minister Moshir ad-Doleh, informing him that he was dismissed from his hereditary position. Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk was made Deputy Governor of Sistan and Qaenat, on behalf of his father, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II.<sup>(1)</sup> The father, at this time, was officially given the title "Hesam ad-Doleh" and his old title "Heshmat al-Molk" was officially given to his son Amir Masum Khan.

It is noteworthy that the Russian Consul received the news of Amir Heshmat al-Molk's appointment, three days before Amir Shokat al-Molk received his marching orders.<sup>(2)</sup> Amir Shokat al-Molk offered, at that late stage, a bribe of tumans 30,000 to reverse the orders, but he could not raise the money. He asked the authorities in Tehran for the appointment of an official to adjudicate between him and his brother Amir Hesam ad-Doleh in the matter of the family estate.<sup>(3)</sup> Meanwhile, the French Government sent him a glittering ornament with a document which was an order of the third class of the "Dragon d' Annam", through the Foreign Ministry. The order was sent, apparently in appreciation of Shokat al-Molk having once entertained a French official, probably an indication of a French interest in opening a representation in the region through the friendship and favour of the Amir. He received the order just after being dismissed from the Governorship of Qaenat.

The British Consul in Sistan and Qaenat, having advised Amir Shokat al-Molk not to pay heavy bribes to the Shah and his ministers to retain his Governorship with the assurances that the British Legation in Tehran would not let him to be dismissed, felt that the British would lose prestige with

(1) Confidential Diary No. 40, of Major Kennion, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Kain, for the week ending 26th September 1908, FO 248/941.

(2) Confidential Diary No. 40, Major Kennion, dated 26th September 1908, FO 248/941.

(3) Ibid.

Amir Shokat al-Molk and the population if the Amir's position was not restored. He, therefore, argued, in a long report to the Legation in Tehran, that it was in the interest of the British if Governorship was returned to Amir Shokat al-Molk.<sup>(1)</sup> The deposed Amir, in the meantime, informed the British vice-consul in Birjand that he was prepared to make terms with Amirs Hesam ad-Doleh and Heshmat al-Molk, on the condition that they accepted the late Amir Shokat al-Molk's will as a valid instrument, and that if Amir Hesam ad-Doleh insisted on a division of the property without reference to the will, he would agree provided that his original portion, inherited from his father and squandered by the late Shokat al-Molk I, during the present Shokat al-Molk's minority remained intact.<sup>(2)</sup> An agreement was concluded on that basis on 24th December 1908. Amir Shokat al-Molk's fortune was to change soon, as Mohammad-Ali Shah was toppled by the constitutionalists on 5th July 1909. The confidential diary of Sistan for the week ending 4th September 1909, reports the following, under entry for 1st September:

"Mr. Howson wires he has received information that the Shokat ol-Molk has been appointed Governor of Kain but that the news has not been made public yet. The Shokat, after taking over charge, has been instructed to recover from the Hissam<sup>(3)</sup> all the revenue collected by him and to send him and his son, the Heshmat-al-Molk, to Sistan."<sup>(4)</sup>

Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk, deposed as Deputy Governor of Qaenat, refused to leave the district and by mid-September, his reluctance in leaving Qaenat was about to end in a clash between his men and those of his uncle, Amir

(1) Major Kennion's Defence No. 39, Confidential, Sistan 13th November 1908, FO 248/941.

(2) In the event of the death of Amir Alam Khan III, Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II was a minor, and was brought up by his elder brother, Amir Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk I.

(3) "Hesam od-Doleh" the new title of Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat ol-Molk.

(4) Supplement to the Confidential Diary of Sistan, No. 34, of H.B.M.'s Consul for the week ending 4th September 1909, FO 248/971.

Shokat al-Molk. "This affair has come to a head during the week. The Heshmat had contrived to delay his departure from Birjand by a number of pretexts and excuses, and aided at one time by the Russian Consul and latterly by a medical certificate from the Russian doctor, affairs were getting distinctly strained towards the end and local feeling was running very high. One or two assaults were made by the Heshmat's followers on persons of the opposite party and it looked as if business was bound to end in a free fight. Fortunately, however, Baron Cherkasoff has latterly been acting in concert with Mr. Howson and the two between them have succeeded in impressing upon the Heshmat the error and folly of his ways, and he has now, though with the greatest reluctance, consented to depart on the 6th December. The Shokat al-Molk's position throughout has been a rather difficult one as he naturally hesitates to use force with a man who is his relative and who only recently was Deputy Governor of the province. But during this last week he has written officially to the Russian Consul and to Mr. Howson to notify them that he soon will be compelled to take definite action himself. Such a course would undoubtedly have meant bloodshed and it is fortunate that the necessity has been averted...."<sup>(1)</sup>

This turn of event, at the same time, was a victory for the British in their rivalries with the Russians in Sistan and Qaenat. The deposed Amir regretted his friendship with the Russians as is indicated by the British Consul for Sistan and Qaen:

"...the Deputy Governor says the Hesam ad-Doleh has written to the Mostofi that he was deceived by the Russians, that they are pressing him for money now, at this critical moment, and that he is very sorry now that he gave up the friendship of the British for that of the Russians."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Confidential Diary of Major W.F. O'Connor, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Qaenat, for the week ending 11th September 1909, FO 248/ 971.

(2) Supplement to Sistan Confidential Diary No. 40, for the week ending 16th October 1909, FO 248/971.

Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk defied all orders, and remained in Qaenat for a long period of time. A series of raids against towns and villages of Qaenat by the Baluchi tribes took place in the meantime. These raids were blamed on Amir Heshmat al-Molk by the British, on the basis that certain Baluchi Sardars were his maternal relatives. The new British Consul for Sistan and Qaenat asserts in the confidential diary No. 46:

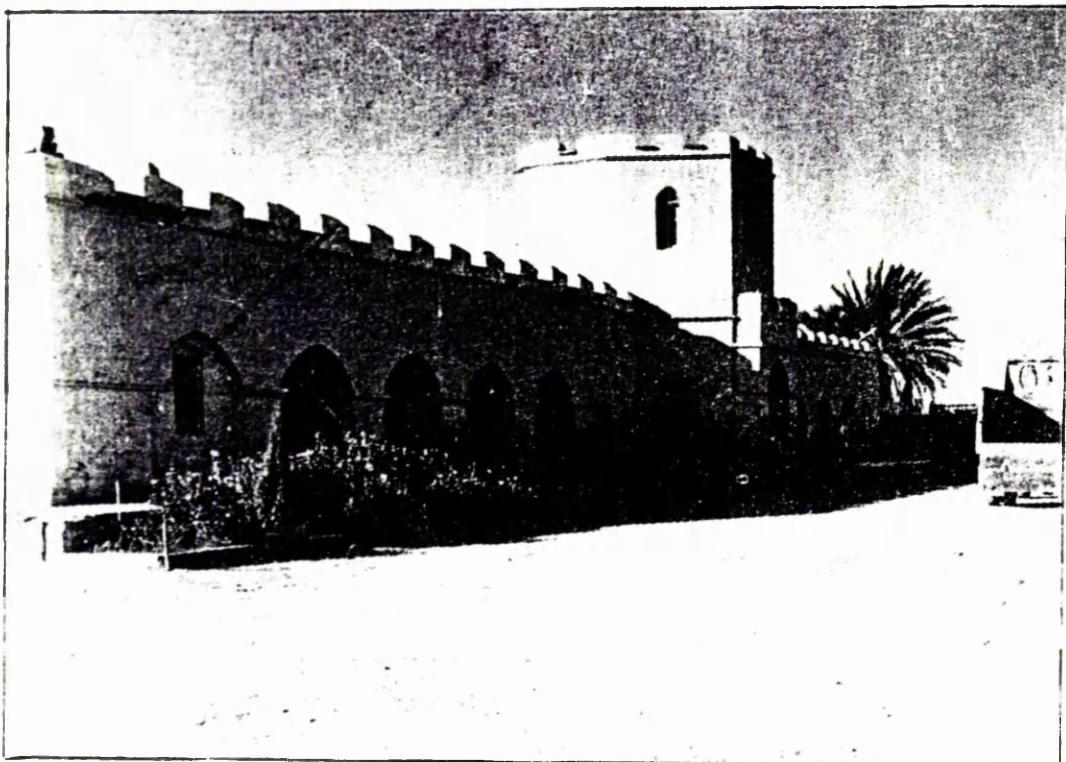
"....Hashmat ul-Molk, Deputy Governor of Sistan, could, I think, be a strong man but is indolently inclined. He is a Baluch from his mother's side and therefore has many characteristics of that race. Since my arrival in Seistan, I have found him very friendly to meet and I am more than inclined to think that he wishes to make advances with the Baluch tribes in the neighbourhood. His ambition to become Governor of the Kainat makes him, I am afraid, use this influence against the Shaukat ul-Molk..."(1)

Interviewed by this author, on Wednesday November 14th 1990, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeimeh Alam, son of Amir Masum Khan, then, Heshmat al-Molk III (later, Hesam ad-Doleh III), dismissed the accusation stating:

"The Baluchis were, at the time, using the opportunity of general state of confusion befallen on the province as a result of constant change of administration. The Baluchis had always had their own interests in Sistan and Qaen. Some of them could have been angered over the dismissal from the Governorship of Qaenat of my father who was a close relative of their chief and they saw Governorship of both Sistan and Qaenat as his rightful entitlement. Baluchi raids were not, however, the only raids on Qaenat at the time. There were raids by the Afghani tribes on the province, because of the same state of confusion in the region."

Amir Hussein Khan Khozeimeh Alam's statement can be verified by the fact that there are reports, in the British Consuls' diaries of Afghan raids on Qaenat in the same period when Baluchi raids were taking place. Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk's statement to the British and Russian Consuls, at

(1) Sistan Confidential Diary No. 46 of Major F. McConaghey, 26th November 1910, FO 248/1002.



*Former British Consulate at Sistan*

the time, that "he had received instruction from Tehran to proceed against the (Baluchi) robbers and to recover the stolen property" and adding that "it was practically impossible to corner these nomads in their own hills",<sup>(1)</sup> does not seem to have convinced the British and the Russians. The Russians, wishing to bridge the gap between themselves and Amir Shokat al-Molk, found this situation a good opportunity for trying to win over his friendship and co-operation. The Russian Consul in Sistan, Baron Tchorkassov, wrote a letter to Amir Shokat al-Molk II, on 12 March 1911, stating:

*"I beg to remind your excellency of the extent and heartiness of my friendship towards you. I have for a long time awaited a fit opportunity to prove it. Now, the lawless doings of Heshmat ul-Mulk, his secret instigation and other actions causing mischief and damage to your province passed all bounds and I and the British Consul cannot restrain ourselves and are prepared to assist you in any way possible..."*<sup>(2)</sup>

This whole affair drove Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk II further away from the British and the Russians. Not only did his relations with the foreign powers never recover adequately, but he gradually developed an anti-foreign policy. The British also never trusted him again and showed their distrust to his son, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, as the latter remembers. The British, in the meantime, endeavoured in Tehran to obtain Amir Heshmat al-Molk's dismissal from the Governorship of Sistan:

*"H.B.M.'s Minister has telegraphed to inform me that the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs has promised to arrange the recall of Heshmat ul-Mulk as soon as possible. This is good news..."*<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Sistan Confidential Diary No. 9, of Major W.F. O'Connor, H.B.M.'s consul for Sistan and Kain, for the week ending 4th March 1911, p.3, FO 248/1034

(2) Translation of a Letter from Baron Tchorkassov to H.E. Shaukat-ul-Mulk.... dated 12th March 1911, Sistan Diary for week ending 18th March 1911, FO 248/1034.

(3) Confidential Diary No. 13, of Major O'Connor, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Kain, for the week ending 1st April 1911, FO 248/1034.

The British, by then, were thoroughly disappointed with Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk, while not thoroughly happy with Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk either, describing the former as "ignorant" and the latter as "a weak man". The confidential diary of the British Consulate in Sistan asserts:

*"The Shokat-ul-Mulk. An amiable but very weak man. Whilst the social relations between him and the Consulate are excellent, I find that in any official matters he is a broken reed - easily swayed by bad counsels...the Heshmat-ul-Mulk. Nephew of the Shokat-ul-Mulk. A very ignorant, bigoted, self-conceited man. Whilst far more capable than the Shokat-ul-Mulk, he is a far greater blackguard and stops at nothing which he thinks may further his own interests. At one time a protege of the Russians he is now, I believe, thoroughly anti-foreign..."(1)*

The continued dispute between the two Khozeimeh Amirs together with general confusion, resulting from the repeated raids on Qaenat by the Baluchi and Afghani tribes, created an atmosphere of uncertainty in the district. The Government in Tehran assigned a Haji Nasir as-Saltaneh as "Sarhad-Dar" or frontier-keeper, as an authority, temporarily representing Central Government in that frontier district to restore order. After a year of efforts, he failed to bring about peace in the Khozeimeh Amirdom. Consequently, he recommended the dismissal of the hereditary Governors of both Sistan and Qaenat,<sup>(2)</sup> to be replaced by a fresh man from elsewhere to be in charge of both provinces. He, in the meantime, put a number of other people in charge of the revenue, the army, and the justice affairs, as Government officials. These measures made Amir Shokat al-Molk telegraph Tehran resigning from the Governorship.<sup>(3)</sup> His resignation was not accepted. Both the British and the Russians representations in Tehran supported his views. Meanwhile, Amir Shokat

(1) Confidential Diary, No. 18, of Major O'Connor, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Qaenat, for the week ending May 3rd, 1911, p. 2, FO 248/1034.

(2) Confidential Diary of Major O'Connor, No. 13, week ending 30th March 1912, FO 248/1056.

(3) Sistan Diary No. 28, of Captain Hunter, week ending 13th July 1912, FO 248/1056.

al-Molk reconciled with his nephew, Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk, on the occasion of the latter's marriage when the former gave him an expensive present and entertained him lavishly for his wedding.<sup>(1)</sup> This time Amir Masum Khan married the daughter of Mirza Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Rafiei, son of Mirza Rafi Khan, the Khan of Sunni-Khaneh, who was mother to Amir Alam Khan Khozeimeh, Amir Masum Khan's younger son. A year later, in August 1913, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, his son, Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk, and Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Mulk received telegrams from the Ministry of Interior and from the President of the Majlis, insisting on their attendance in Tehran. Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam al-Molk was too old to travel, but the other two obeyed the instruction only after receiving assurances from the British and Russian Consuls that their absence from the Amirdom would not work against their positions. Major Prideaux of the British Consulate of Sistan indicates:

*"It is now practically settled that Shokat ol-Mulk will start on the 8th September and Heshmat-ul-Mulk a day or two later. The former refused to travel with the latter, telling me that he was afraid of being murdered...Shokat ol-Mulk has received from me a letter of assurance that he will not be detained in Tehran more than a month against his will, and that he will not be forced personally into a court of law by either Treasurer-General or Yamin-i-Nizam, a relation by marriage, who claim properties in Birjand from him.<sup>(2)</sup> "Heshmat-ul-Mulk has informed Shokat that he is going under a guarantee from the Russian Consul who assures him that directly he leaves Kainat his person and property will be safe we hardly believe that Heshmat will go to Tehran, but he tells me that he is taking proofs with him that will confound some of my friends. I believe he means to institute that my predecessors in the consulate and the political agent, Chagai, are the real instigators of the Baluch raids. Baron Tchorkassov and Heshmat-ul-Mulk have dined with each other eight times during Ramadan. It will be interesting to see the results of their collaboration."<sup>(3)</sup>*

(1) Confidential Diary of Captain J.B.D. Hunter, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Qaenat, No. 37, for the week ending 14th September 1912, p.2, FO 248/1056.

(2) For the text of the document, see Appendix I.

(3) Confidential Consular Diary of Major F.B. Prideaux, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Qaen, No. 36, for the week ending 30 August 1913, FO 248/1071.

However, the British Consulate issued a warning to the three Amirs that if they disobeyed the orders from Tehran, "worse things would befall the family".<sup>(1)</sup> This warning made Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk claim that the summon was related to some kind of British intrigue in Tehran. He wrote to the British Consul enquiring:

*"Seeing that the authorities have ordered me to present myself at Tehran and I do not know at all the cause and reason of my having been summoned, I request firstly that you very kindly will write me what you know regarding this. Secondly, Please say if after my arrival at Tehran I shall receive assistance and help in my affairs from the British Legation and yourself. Thirdly, please write whether you yourself, during the period of your stay in this province have ever observed (God forbid), disrespect and anything but devotion and sincerity from me to yourself, or anything peculiar or contrary to the usages required for the maintenance of proper friendly relations."<sup>(2)</sup>*

The British Consul, replying to this letter, stated:

*"....You have undoubtedly been summoned to Tehran at the instance of the British Legation to answer for the losses which have occurred to British subjects at the hands of Baluch, Afghan and Sistan robbers during your incumbency of the Government of Sistan as the Deputy Governor of your father His Excellency..... the extent of our claims is about tumans 26,500, and in addition as a sign of the displeasure of His Britannic Majesty's Government at your neglect and disregard for British interests, the Persian Government have been requested to prohibit you from returning to the vicinity of Qaen and Sistan for some time to come... I feel sure that you will be acting wisely by going to Tehran and your compliance with the orders of your Government will certainly be a source of pleasure both to the Cabinet and to His Britannic Majesty's Minister."<sup>(3)</sup>*

(1) Confidential Diary of Major Prideaux, No. 31, for the week ending 2nd August 1913, FO 248/1071.

(2) From Amir Masum Khan to Major Prideaux, dated Sistan 7th September 1913, FO 248/1071. For the text of the original letter, see Appendix II.

(3) From Major Prideaux to Amir Masum Khan, dated Sistan 9th September 1913, FO 248/1071. For the text of the original letter, see Appendix III.

Meanwhile, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Hesam ad-Doleh II, Heshmat al-Molk II, died at 6 p.m., on 22nd of January 1915.<sup>(1)</sup> His elder son, Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh, was still Deputy Governor of Sistan, whereas his fourth son, Amir Masum Khan Heshmat al-Molk III, kept away from Sistan and Qaenat, but inherited the father's title "Hesam ad-Doleh". At the same time, a concerted smear campaign against Amir Shokat al-Molk, then Amir of Qaenat and Sistan, began in Tehran. The first of a series of newspaper articles accusing him of all manner of swindles appeared in January 1915.<sup>(2)</sup> These accusations soon continued to take a political shape and the Amir was soon to be accused of being an Anglophile and working for the interests of the British.

Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh still stranded in Tehran, wrote to Amir Shokat al-Molk on 6th January 1915, asking him to intervene with the British to allow him to return home:

".....if you liked, you could at once express your real wish in two words to them and the affair would be settled and finished. The thing which keeps me convinced in this opinion is that I have had many verbal conversations with the Minister and Mr. Churchill and it has always happened that all their remarks have ended with recommendations for the success of your Governorship and they have never laid any stress on the claims of their subjects..."<sup>(3)</sup>

Meanwhile, interviewed by this author, on June 26th 1991, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam said the following as being the reasons for his father being kept in Tehran for six months:

"In Tehran, my father went to see Ein ad Doleh (the Prime Minister). When he wanted to leave the building the officer on the post prevented his exit. He was kept in the Golestan Palace for six months. The

(1) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 4, for the week ending 23rd January 1915, FO 248/1116.

(2) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 4, for the week ending 23rd January 1915, FO 248/1116.

(3) Confidential Sistan Diary of Major Prideaux, No. 4, 23rd January 1915, FO 248/1116.

reason for this detention was said to have been his opposition to the English. After six months, Ein ad-Doleh arranged reconciliation between him and British diplomats, and he, therefore, was able to return. The reason for his opposition to the English was that he (Hesam ad-Doleh III) protested against hoisting the Union Jack on the grounds of their consulate instead of hoisting it above the building, and the English, for their part, accused him of inciting and supporting Baluchi raids on Qaenat."

While in Tehran, Amir Hesam ad-Doleh employed all his energy and influence, not only to return to his inherited seat of Governorship of Sistan, but also to secure for himself the Governorship of Qaenat. As Amir Shokat al-Molk felt the danger of Amir Hesam ad-Doleh's presence in Tehran was becoming more harmful than his presence in the Amirdom, asked the British to make it possible for him to return to Birjand.<sup>(1)</sup> Meanwhile, reports began to emerge that Amir Hesam ad-Doleh was being considered for the Governorship of Tabas:

"I have heard from His Majesty's Consul-General, Meshed, that this young man is likely to get the Governorship of Tabas. Our Governor, Shaukat al-Molk, tells me that he will be pleased if the report is true, as his nephew will get occupation, and he is capable of doing more mischief whether he stays in Tehran or returns to Birjand as a private individual."<sup>(2)</sup>

A new development began to take shape in the meantime, which disturbed Amir Shokat al-Molk's so-called special relations with the British. A group of Germans entered the Khozeimeh Amirdom, seemingly enroute to Afghanistan. The British Consulate was determined to detain them for interrogation to find out the exact purpose of their mission. Amir Shokat al-Molk refused to cooperate with the British in that enterprise, arguing that his country was neutral in the

(1) From Amir Hesam ad-Doleh to Amir Shokat al-Molk, Tehran 6th January 1915, FO 248/1116.

(2) Telegraph from Major Prideaux, H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Qaenat, to British Legation at Tehran, No. 24, dated 24th January 1915, FO 248/1116.



*Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh  
Hesam ad-Doleh III  
Amir of Qaenat  
seated*

on-going world war. Reporting the matter to his Government, British Consul at Sistan indicated:

"...I shall try to intercept them with the assistance of Afghan camel-men whom I can arm, if they hurry through this province. The Governor is really afraid of acting in an un-neutral manner, and is awaiting instructions for which he has telegraphed, from Tehran.(1)

"....on the 25th July the long expected telegram for the Governor from the Minister of the Interior arrived. It was to the effect that he was to preserve strict neutrality!

...on the 27th I made a final appeal to the Governor to take strong action against the Germans and he said he would certainly decide on his course of action after one more reference to Tehran.

"....At 1 a. m. on the 30th July I was woken up by the Deputy Governor, who informed me that His Excellency had at last been ordered by the Foreign Minister to arrest the Germans and disarm their SAWARS.(2) At the same time His Excellency had heard that a force of cossacks was within 16 miles of Kain and would doubtless have attacked the Germans before a force from Birjand could appear on the scene.

"...I thought the Birjand force should await further news, and be employed in arresting the Germans if they should vacate Kain and make for Birjand or the frontier before the Russians arrived. On the 31st July we heard that the Russians had reached Kain at 3 a.m. They exchanged some shots with the Germans over the gardens, And one Cossack was wounded. At six a.m. the Germans disappeared! it is rumoured that they flew off in a balloon but it is not known how the Bakhtyaris went!"(3)

Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh III was, at this time, given the Governorship of the frontier state of Tabas and his elder half-brother who was serving as deputy Governor of Sistan received a telegram from the central Government ordering him to "supply 50 infantry men and 20 camel Sawars for service at Gonabad, under his brother. The men were to be paid from

(1) Confidential Diary of Sistan and Kain Consulate, No. 27 for the week ending 3rd July 1915, FO 248/1116.

(2) Cavalry-men.

(3) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 31 for week ending 31st July 1915, FO 248/1116.

Sistan revenue".<sup>(1)</sup> By September 11th 1915, Amir Hesam ad-Doleh's Governorship was not confirmed as a bribe of 3000 tumans was demanded of him. He asked his uncle Amir Shokat al-Molk to lend him the money.<sup>(2)</sup> The appointment of this Amir was eventually finalised for the districts of Khoaf and Gonabad in early November that year.<sup>(3)</sup> Amir Shokat al-Molk, still at odds with the British and Russians on the question of neutrality between them and the German emissaries in the district, began his efforts to patch up the differences: "On the 11th December 1915 Shokat-al-Molk called upon Mr New<sup>(4)</sup> and showed him a telegram from Farman Farma which, apparently and according to his statement had been received the previous day, and announcing that friendly relations had been established with the British and Russian governments and instructing the Governor to help the British.<sup>(5)</sup>

Amir Shokat al-Molk decided to ignore the telegraph arguing that he could not trust its authenticity as it was received through the Indo-European telegraph line. He, thus, decided to uphold the policy of neutrality that his country had adopted in the World War I. The British had by then changed heart once again, and decided to remove Amir Shokat al-Molk from the Governorship, replacing him with Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh. The British Consul-General at Meshed telegraphed the British Legation at Tehran stating:

*"I have the worst opinion of Shaukat's loyalty. His sympathies may be anti-Russian rather than anti-British, but I believe that he has helped and is willing to help Germans against both of us.*

(1) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 36, for the week ending 4th September 1915, FO 248/1116.

(2) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 37, for the week ending 11th September 1915, FO 248/1116.

(3) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 45, for the week ending 6th November 1915, FO 248/1116.

(4) British Vice-Consul at Birjand.

(5) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 50 for the week ending 11th December 1915, for the text of this telegram, see Appendix IV.

"I do not think an outsider could be placed in Sistan, Kain, or in either owing to tribal feeling. Shaukat's influence in Sistan is I believe small and dislikes it, so that if it is intended to punish him it might be well to send him there. Hisam's influence however extends to Sistan as well as to Kainat and whatever his character may be he will probably assist us at the present time in return for appointment and with example of Shaukat's downfall before him. Without knowing anything of proposal he has intimated he is prepared to help us, signed Haig."(1)

This was done and Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh was appointed as Governor of Sistan and Qaenat which was the fulfilment of his lifetime ambition, whereas Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk was exiled from Birjand to Tehran. In February 1916, while out of the Amirdom, he was rumoured to be contemplating joining the Ottomans, but it was proved to be wrong. With his dismissal, however, Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan, resigned from Deputy Governorship of Sistan. His brother, Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh accepted his resignation and tried to replace him by an outsider. Reporting these rumours, British Consul for Sistan states:

"It is rumoured here that Hisam-ud-Doleh contemplates sending Sartip Zabiullah Khan, the worthless but comparatively harmless, local Cavalry Commander, back to Sistan as Deputy Governor. I have already informed His Majesty's Minister that I would like to have Rukn-ul-Wizarah, the outgoing Kargozar, confirmed in this appointment of which he has been holding charge since last February."(2)

Meanwhile, the British found the exiled Amir Shokat al-Molk's presence in Tehran unsatisfactory. The British Consul at Sistan recommended the Amir to be expelled from Tehran, because: "It seems desirable that Shaukat-ul-Mulk should be expelled from Tehran as quickly as possible, if we are not to

(1) Telegram from H.B.M.'s Consul-General, Mashhad, to H.B.M.'s Legation, Tehran, No. 1, dated Mashhad 3rd January 1916, FO 248/1151.

(2) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 28, for the week ending 8th July 1916, FO 248/1151.

lose Hisam ud-Duleh's confidence in our ability and inclination to retain him in office".<sup>(1)</sup>

On the other hand, the press campaign against Amir Shokat al-Molk, trying to deform his character, began once again in Tehran at the same time. Mirza Ahmad Khan Naraghi, who used to be Governor of the Shokatiyah School (the school established by Amir Shokat al-Molk in Birjand on his own expenses) and later dismissed for his unsuitable conducts, waged this campaign against the exiled Amir in his newspaper "Shahab-e Saqeb" accusing him of being an Anglophile. He was arrested in April 1916 by the Russians at Kashan and the British claimed that the arrest took place at their instigation.<sup>(2)</sup> Still in exile, a son was born to the Amir's wife on 22nd April 1916, who subsequently died. Another development was the death of Molla Mohammad Mehdi, chief Mojtahehd of Sistan who was involved in local politics on the side of Amir Shokat al-Molk when relations between the latter and the British were good:

"Mullah Muhammad Mehdi died on the 30th January 1916. Of late years he has been on quite friendly terms with the Consulate. He secretly held a considerable number of shares in the Imperial Bank of Persia. His estate is believed to be worth 100,000 tumans."<sup>(3)</sup>

In August 1916 Rokn ad-Doleh received a telegram from Tehran, appointing him as Deputy Governor of Sistan the way the British Consul at Sistan had asked the British Legation at Tehran to support his appointment to the post.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Confidential Sistan Diary No. 18, for the week ending 18th April 1916, FO 248/1151.

(2) Mashhad Confidential Diary, April 1916, p. 2. FO 248/1151.

(3) Mashhad Confidential Diary, April 1916, FO 248/1151.

(4) Confidential Consulate Diary of Mashhad, April 1916, FO 248/1151.

Amir Shokat al-Molk's movements in exile were monitored by the British who gradually concluded that he was a Germanophile. His nephew and rival, Amir Hesam ad-Doleh did his best to deepen the British distrust of the exiled Amir: "Hisam ud-Dauleh has heard from his Tehran Agent that Shaukat ul-Mulk had recently accompanied Mr. Churchill to Lar for a few days. On his return, when he learnt that the Turkish force was between Hamadan & Kazerin, he was so glad that he almost proceeded to join it. This last item of news seems significant when compared with the Meshed Diary information of September 2nd..."<sup>(1)</sup>

Amir Shokat al-Molk however, returned to his Amirdom after about two years in exile. The British, by then, realised that he was neither Germanophile nor Anglophile All that concerned him was preservation of his country's declared policy of neutrality in the war. The British, thus, decided to make good with him by presenting the Amir with a Humobile:

*"With reference to your telegram No. 509-S., dated 3rd May 1920, I have the honour to inform you that the Humobile car was duly presented to His Excellency Shaukat-ul-Mulk in Birjand. His Excellency desires me to convey to the Government of India his gratitude for this gift..."*<sup>(2)</sup>

Amir Shokat al-Molk continued his Governorship of Qaenat and Sistan until 1935. On September 24, 1935, he resigned from the Governorship, dividing it into two separate Governorships of Qaenat and Sistan, between his two nephews. Amir Masum Khan Hesam ad-Doleh, his old rival, was given the Governorship of Qaenat, and Amir Mohammad-Reza Khan Samsam ad-Doleh, who had served as Deputy Governor of Sistan for many years, was given the Governorship of Sistan.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Confidential Diary of Sistan Consulate No. 39, week ending 16th September 16, FO 248/1151.

(2) From H.B.M.'s Consul for Sistan and Kain, T.V. Brenan, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, dated Simla 24th July 1920, FO 248/1314.

(3) Meshed Political Diary of British Consulate-General, 24 September 1935, FO 371/19421.

Amir Shokat al-Molk died in December 1944, at the time when Soviet Union's "forward policy" was taking shape in Iran. Soon after the Amir's death, the Tudeh (Communist) Party opened its branch in Birjand and began a retaliatory stance against his family accusing Amir Shokat al-Molk as an Anglophile. This was to serve two purposes; one was retaliation against the late Amir's non-conciliatory policy of the previous decades towards Russia, and later Soviet, designs in East Iran; two, the Amir and his family were wealthy landlords, representing the bourgeois of the district on the one hand, and respect for him and his family on the other, would prevent spread of pro-Soviet party's influence in the district. Hence, the allegation against Amir Shokat al-Molk, of being Anglophile, initiated earlier by other adversaries of the family, was propagated more forcefully and extensively in Iran. Paragraphs 137 and 138 of British Consul's diary of 18th July 1945 notes:

"137. The Hizb-i-Tudeh came officially to birth on the 21st June when the local leader, Amiri informed the Governor (1) in writing of the formation of a Birjand branch of the party. Next day Amiri had a long private interview with the Governor, a mild inexperienced young man put in by the late Shaukat to obey orders. At this meeting Amiri is believed to have hinted at "strong measures" if the Governor put any obstacles in the way of the Hizb. On the 12th July, the Tudeh committee invited all the officials, notables, and general public to a tea party to celebrate the birth of Imam Hussain (this was a move to conciliate the religious elements). None of the higher officials or representatives of the Alam and Khozeimeh families (to which Shaukat belonged) attended, but over 500 other Birjandis did and the function seems to have been a success.

"138. H.B.M.'s Consul-General's impression after a week in Birjand is that the Shaukat's sudden death could not have been worse timed. It came just when the new Soviet "forward policy" was taking shape all over Persia as a result of the oil concessions crisis. The Shokat's son and heir, Amir Asadollah Alam, is a fine character and a worthy successor to his father in whose place in the Qainat he undoubtedly intends to fill to the best of his ability. But the funeral obsequies and the necessity for him to secure his position with the Shah and cabinet at Tehran kept

(1) Now an administrative appointee, not related to the traditional Amirdom.

him away from the province during five of the eight months following his father's death and he has only just (July 9th) returned permanently to Birjand with his wife and infant daughter. Meanwhile the disaffected elements and would be quislings have made hay while the sun shone, assisted by the blunderings of the well-meaning but weak little Governor. Hitherto at Birjand itself, 31 of local Tudeh members and 16 sympathisers who may or may not be members have been identified.... As may be expected from the above analysis, the party is one of discontented bourgeois, not proletarians. The unifying motive is jealousy of the Alam and Khozeima families and of the rich and successful Agha Sipahri, hereditary Mirakhor or Master of the Horse to the Shaukat whose business affairs he used to manage. The Hizb-i Tudeh has declared war on the Alam family and Sipahri by publishing violent articles against them in the Tudeh press of Tehran and Meshed and attacking them publicly from the platform at Birjand itself. It remains to be seen whether, in the absence of Red Army Tommy - Gunners, the movement will make further progress now that Asadollah Alam is back in the home of his father."(1)

### CONCLUSION

The Khozeimeh Amirdom's foreign relations were, in reality, limited to the 19th and early 20th centuries. These relations were largely restricted to those with the two rival foreign powers of the time, the British and the Russians, later the Soviets. Internally, conflicts between the Khozeimeh Amirs on the one hand, and Anglo-Russian rivalries in eastern parts of Iran, on the other, were the main determining factors, shaping these relations. The Anglo-Soviet rivalries in Eastern Iran entered a new phase in the 1930s and 1940s. The Soviet Consulate at Zabul was closed in 1930 by the order of Reza Shah whose officials argued that there was no reason for a Soviet Consulate in Sistan as no Soviet nationals resided in that district. A consulate agent was however kept in the region (in Zahedan) by the Soviets. In August 1946 Sardar Mohammad-Reza Khan Pordeli, Shah-Qoli Khan, and Agha Ebrahim Sharifi organised a petition, asking for the Soviet Consulate

(1) Secret and Confidential Meshed Diary No. 9, of British Consulate-General, dated 18th July 1945, FO 371/45475.

to be reopened in Sistan, and took it to Tehran, but the demand was turned down.<sup>(1)</sup> A year earlier, the Tudeh (Communist) Party, directly supported by the Soviets, opened its branch in Birjand (June 1946) and very soon took over the task of rivalries with the British. The following report by the British Consul at Zahedan is probably the best example of Tudeh Party branch's new role in Qaenat and Sistan districts:

*"On evening of August 5th party to Governor and notables was given in British Consulate. Local Tudeh received instructions from Tehran to give opposition entertainment at same time but was poorly attended."*<sup>(2)</sup>

The Soviets, at this time, were still firmly established in northern Iranian provinces, including Khorasan. Late in June 1945, the Soviet Consul-General at Mashhad made a tour of Qaenat, Sistan and Zahedan. The British Consul-General's confidential diary No. 9, reporting on the Soviet Consul - General's tour, states:

*"H.B.M.'s Consul - General who happened to arrive at Birjand the day after his Soviet colleague passed through, learned from the Governor that M. Abramov had displayed great interest (i) in the condition of the labourers in the carpet factories (ii) in the personalities of sitting Deputy, Munsif, and rival candidates for the next elections and (iii) in the numbers and leaders of the newly formed local branch of the Hizb-i-Tudeh."*<sup>(3)</sup>

This massive upsurge of Soviet interest and activities in Eastern Iran was a local manifestation of Soviet Union's new "forward policy" taking shape all over Iran as a result of the oil concession crisis of 1945. A concession for oil exploration in Northern Iran promised to the Soviets, by Prime Minister Qavam as-Saltaneh in return for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Azarbaijan. The withdrawal of Soviet

(1) Savingram from H.B.M.'s Consul-Zahedan to H.M.'s Consul-General Meshed, No. 295, dated 22nd August 1946, FO 371/52707.

(2) Savingram No. 281, from H.B.M.'s Consul-Zahedan to H.M. Consul-General, Meshed, 18th August 1946, FO 371/52756.

(3) Political Diary No. 9, of British Consul-General, secret and confidential, Meshed, 18th July 1945, FO 371/45475.

forces was completed, but oil concession was not ratified by the Iranian Majlis. The Soviet-backed Tudeh party's branch at Birjand entered the local politics vigorously from the beginning, strongly opposing the British and the Khozeimeh family, supporting all those opposed to them, landlords and peasants alike. Thus, the old Anglo-Russian rivalries in Eastern Iran took a new turn, this time the Tudeh party acting on behalf of Soviet Union and the Khozeimeh family and its influence in the district, the main target. This turn of events gradually changed the political atmosphere, shaping the old rivalries into new domestic politics of the district which was a local model of what was happening in Iran as a whole. At the same time, local disenchantments and dissatisfactions translated themselves into the membership of or sympathy for Tudeh party. Hence, many of nobilities of the old order, including the Qajar princes who were deprived of their power and privileges by Reza Shah were to be found amongst the early Tudehs.

In Sistan also, it was no surprise that Tudeh sympathies came from the normally unlikely candidates, from the Government officials, from landlords and local headmen, and from merchants and clerics. A telegram from the British Consul at Zahedan to the British Consulate-General at Mashhad contains the names of a number of Sistani local dignitaries as sympathisers of the Soviet-backed Tudeh party's Birjand branch. The document indicates:

"Governor has also recommended the removal of the following, known for their Tudeh sympathies:

Officials:

- 1) Jalaludin Firoz, Rais-i-Adlieh
- 2) Agha Faizhid, Registration officer
- 3) Dr. Kalhudi, Medical officer
- 4) Agha Ashari, Director, posts and telegraphs
- 5) Sargourd Safapour, Frontier officer
- 6) Agha Malik Kiyani, Public Prosecutor

Non-Officials:

- 1) Shah Quli Khan,
- 2) Mohammad Reza Khan Pordeli (once exiled from Sistan by late Shah),
- 3) Agha Sharifi,
- 4) Agha Mirza Abbas Qaimi"<sup>(1)</sup>

Of the above named, two are of greater interest here, as they played a leading role in political activities, generally directed against the influence of the Khozeimeh family in Qaenat and Sistan. They are Sardar Mohammad-Reza Khan Pordeli, a leading landlord of Sistan, and Agha Sharifi, an active cleric of Sistan. Sardar Mohammad-Reza Khan Pordeli, once described in the Confidential Diary of the British Consulate-General at Mashhad, as "one of the disgruntled Sardars and landowners of Sistan whom Konopatkin<sup>(2)</sup> has taken under his wing"<sup>(3)</sup> was exiled from Sistan in the time of Reza Shah Pahlavi, for having taken a large number of camels and other live stocks in a raid on Afghanistan territories. He was exiled as a result of a strong protest from the Afghan Government which, if not responded to favourably would harm relations between the two countries at the time of negotiations for boundary settlement of 1935 which secured half of the Hirmand waters for the Iranian Sistan.

In 1945, when Reza Shah's strong rule in Iran had been succeeded by the weak Governments of his son, and while the Soviets still maintained their power and influence in Khorasan, Sardar Mohammad Reza Khan Pordeli's men carried another raid on Afghanistan and took 900 camels. The Afghan

(1) Savingram, secret, from H.M. Consul-Zahedan, to H.M. Consul-General, Meshed, No. 281, dated 8th August 1946, FO 371/52707.

(2) Soviet Consular Agent at Sistan.

(3) Secret Diary of British Consulate-General, No. 37-1/1, Meshed, dated 15th May 1945, FO 371/52707.

Government complained to the Iranian Government. No action was taken against him, because of the political atmosphere in the country. Any action against this Sardar would only cause agitations on the grounds that Soviet and Tudeh supporters were being victimised. This was at least the reason for the lack of action against him, provided by British Consul:

*".... unfortunately through lack of initiative of the Firmandar<sup>(1)</sup> no action was taken. If action were taken now there would be howls from certain quarters that he was being victimised because he was friendly to the Russians."<sup>(2)</sup>*

Agha Ebrahim Sharifi was a cleric of Sistan whose interest in politics was, apparently, a late development. A memorandum from the British vice-Consul at Zahedan describes him as: "...has interested himself in politics only very recently, although it has been known for some time that the Russian Consular Agent has been making approaches to him through Shah Quli Khan. Since the selfish aims which induced Agha Sharifi to take this step have by no means been achieved yet, a few details may be of interest. He is the son of Agha Mod, Ali Shariati, who, like his brother Sheikh Haji Reza, was a firm friend of this Consulate in the days before Reza Shah Pahlavi. In 1943 Ibrahim Sharifi proceeded on pilgrimage to Kerbala, and on return, immediately started to intrigue with a view to capturing the position of leading Mujtahid in Zabul from Agha Sadar. The latter's position is very strong because, apart from being a sayyed, he is himself a big landlord, and accordingly has the support of the late Shaukat-ul-Mulk's family and of the Sardars on both counts. In 1944 Ibrahim Sharifi launched a public subscription for opening a religious school, to which K.S. Bashirullah contributed Ts. 10,000/. Insufficient money was collected and the project was scaled down to the construction of an

(1) Governor.

(2) Secret and Confidential Diary No. 37-1/1, of British Consulate-General, dated Meshed, 15th May 1946, p. 4, FO 371/52707.

Hussainia."<sup>(1)</sup> The report goes on indicating that Agha Sadar the Mojtabah started construction of a larger Hosseiniyeh to which Amir Shokat al-Molk's son, Amir Asadollah Khan Alam, contributed noticeably. This move was interpreted as support of the Khozeimeh (Alam) family for Agha Sadar and it is not improbable that it added to the failure of Agha Sharifi's religious competition against Agha Sadar and induced him to embark on his adventure in politics on the opposition to the Khozeimeh family. The election campaign of 1946 resulted in disagreements between those supporting the family and the official candidate, and those supported by the Soviet Consulate Agent and Tudeh party. The election campaign turned ugly as several Government officials were killed in a riot instigated by Sardar Mohammad-Reza Khan and Agha Sharifi who was the unofficial candidate. Interviewed by this author on Wednesday 2nd January 1991, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam stated:

*"Agha Ebrahim Sharifi signed on the back of the holy Quran for me, at the time, in promise that he had no role in instigating the riot."*

This incident was the manifestation of the kind of political atmosphere created in Qaenat and Sistan by the long-standing rivalries between the British and the Soviet Consulates, often involving local affairs. Memories of this political atmosphere still lingers on in the region and there are still those who remember the days that the pro-Soviet feelings were translated into anti-Khozeimeh family activities or vice versa, with the mysterious "Dast-e Englis" or the English hand always colouring the background of all stories.

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(1) Confidential Memorandum No. 19-S/9(c). From H.M.'s Vice-Consul, Zahul/Zahedan; to H.M.'s Consul, Zahedan, dated 25th February 1946, FO 371/52756.



*Amir Mohammad-Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk  
flanked by the British (left) and Russian (right)  
diplomatic missions at Birjand in early 20th Century,  
before the advent of the Pahlavi regime.*

Appendix I

Text of a letter from Major Prideaux of H.B.M. Consulate of  
Sistan to Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh, dated 9/10/1913, FO  
248/1071.

## HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S CONSULATE



SEISTAN AND KAIN.

فونسلاری دولت خیمه انگلیس  
مقیم سیستان و قاینات  
تاریخ ۷ شهربانوی اسلام

سالها

معفو  
امام

حمد لله رب العالمين

فلاست شرح شرف دارم رسیده را به شرف حمل معاشر مورخه شهربانوی اسلام را امضا کرده  
خواهی در حضور محترم و احترم احتمال را بله از این امر نموده ام که در زمانه و خواسته فرمائید  
در عمارت سینه کوه فتحی اسپرسی در کارخانه باجایی همراهی و مساعدت و پاکیزه تیر خوبی مروال

و فرماید آنکه در مراده خوب با خواسته از خوبی عزازم کنی تأمین چرخ و پیش عده خطا نموده است  
در حوالب بکار برده از همان حرف را که شفاه باجایی مذکوره نموده است که از این دلایل بدلید

حمد لله رب العالمین که فتحی اسپرسی احترم فرموده شده دند و خواهی زیارت خود را برداشته باز است

ساقیز بیوچ و افغان و سیانی در هر حکومت سیاست خواهی داشت از طرف هر رئیس کو ارجمند

خوبی جلدی باید از این خوبی را امیر سام الدود نمایی کنم و بوده ام بر این ایام که فتحی اسپرسی وارد

آمده است جو یعنی همینه آنرا از دعا و برآورده و بسیب مبلغ سهیت و شش زیاره بالصدوریان میباشد و

نمایی از این دلیل این را ممکن کرد اعلیحضرت اقدام برداشته برخلاف خود الدوده و سعادت از پایان

عفلت و بی اعتمانی داشتند که فتحی اسپرسی نموده اند و زده است عصی ایران خواهش نموده

Free Copy  
عوْدَةٌ مُّهَاجِرَةٌ

Imperial attaché

$$6 - 2 = 4$$

## Appendix II

The original text of a telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II, instructing the latter to assist the British by arresting German emissaries travelling through his Amirdom to Afghanistan, dated 25th July 1915, FO 248/1116.



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بِتَارِيخ

داست و زراء

ورهہ تملک رانی

• 5

اطبع میزلم سنت خانه ای ام بیکر  
لطفاً نهادن راهنمای فراز بکسر دنده فردا  
فراز و کارهای خود را در میان طرف دست را باز نهادن  
فردا و کارهای خود را در میان طرف دست را باز نهادن  
مجید اطاعه همچنان که در آن راهنمای فراز بکسر دنده فردا  
انظر از راهنمای فراز بکسر دنده فردا

1973

## C H A P T E R   I V

### THE PARTITIONING OF KHORASAN A STUDY OF BACKGROUND TO THE EMERGENCE OF EASTERN IRANIAN BOUNDARIES

#### INTRODUCTION

Since this thesis is aimed at a study of the evolution of Eastern Iranian boundaries with special reference to the boundaries of Sistan, and since the partitioning of Sistan in 1872 was justified on the merits of political developments of the post-Nader Shah period in Khorasan, no positive assessment of the evolution of these boundaries can escape an adequate study of the said developments. In other words, the partitioning of Sistan was, in reality, but an aftermath of the partitioning of Khorasan in the preceding two decades or so: a better understanding of the circumstances leading to the partitioning of Khorasan is closely examined.

It seems only appropriate to open this section with a quotation from Lord George N. Curzon whose works on Iran and Afghanistan are regarded as of the most authoritative. He asserts:

"Persia cannot forget that what is now Western Afghanistan has through the greater part of history been Eastern Khorasan, that Herat has been habitually ruled by persian sovereigns, viceroys governors, or vassals, that it is inhabited by people of Persian rather than Afghan traditions and sympathies, and that it is severed by no physical or ethnographical barrier from Meshed...."(1)

The Afghan historians have in the past century or so, endeavoured to present a different picture of this situation. A historical picture in which Iran and Afghanistan emerge as two different political entities, busy colonising each other since the dawn of man's history.(2)

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(1) Curzon, George N. (1892), "Persia and the Persian Question", Vol. II, p.586.

(2) See for example; Ghobar, Mir G. Mohammad (1965), "Afghanistan Dar Masir-e Tarikh", published in Kabul.

Yet, the fact that remains is that Iran's Eastern flanks have, for the best part of the past 25 centuries, included some central and most western parts of the modern countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As from the second half of the 18th century, when British Indian power began to consolidate its influence in the largest parts of south and central Asia, other European powers, mainly France and Russia, extended the sphere of their geopolitical aspirations eastward and continued their rivalries with the British all over Asia. Iranian power was, at this period in time, on the decline following the assassination of Nader Shah Afshar in June 1747, and the chaos that it caused. The power and influence of British India was, by contrast, on the rise. To counter the influence of the rival powers, British India began to create a buffer zone between itself, Iran and Russia, the former suspected, throughout the Qajar period (1779 - 1924) of being influenced by the French and Russians. Hence, the Eastern Iranian frontiers became the subject of a series of changes and modifications, shifting from the Easternmost part of Khorasan, Sistan and Baluchistan to the central parts of these three extensive provinces and resulting in the creation of Afghanistan and the British Baluchistan (Kalat, later Pakistan). The study of these changes and modifications constitutes the discussion in this chapter.

#### THE PARTITIONING OF KHORASAN AND CREATION OF AFGHANISTAN

Having almost completed his long and arduous campaign of unifying Iran, Nader Shah Afshar was assassinated in the middle of the night on June 19th 1747, after a brief struggle with his assassins. The next morning the whole camp was in chaos, most leaders took their contingents and headed towards their own districts. The Afghan and Uzbak contingents held together, under the command of Nour Mohammad, seconded by Ahmad Khan Abdali. Both these two men, loyal to the memory of their late sovereign, took up arms and prevented the pillage of the royal tents. This act of loyalty would not,

in any way, suggest that the Afghans were, by then, considering themselves as being people of a different country.

In a decree issued on 16 Shavval 1167 (1753) Ahmad Shah does not even mention the name "afghanistan". Instead, he speaks of hope that he would "God willing ... bring under dontrol the whole of Iran ...". (1).

Having found themselves outnumbered by the rest of the Naderi forces, however, the Afghan commanders led their troops in their fateful march towards the east. On their arrival in Qandehar, the leaders of the Afghan tribes decided to go their own way by choosing their own king and creating their own kingdom. They selected Ahmad Khan Abdali of the Durrani tribe for the post, giving him the title "Shah" of Afghanistan.(2) Thus, the kingdom of Afghanistan was born under the rule of its first Shah, Ahmad Abdali "Durrani".(3)

(1) Ahmad Shah Durrani's Farman (decree) of 16 Shavval 1167 (1753), as appeared in "Farhang-e Iran-Zamin", persian publication, Tehran 1958, pp. 161 163.

(2) G.P. Tate, an authority on Afghanistan history describes this development in the following terms:

"Sabir Shah who had followed Ahmad to the camp, rejoined him on the way eastwards. This person was one of those wandering and semi-insane fakirs (very common even in the present day), whose incoherent utterances, and irresponsible actions are regarded still with awe by superstitious persons, as inspired by the Almighty.

"Nur Muhammad was an eccentric and irritable person who owed his promotion to Nadir Shah, but he was unpopular with the Abdalis whom he commanded. As long as they were on the march the authority of their commander was regarded, but when Kandahar was reached in safety, Nur Muhammad was set on one side.

"The Leaders of the tribes, such as Haji Jamal Khan, the Barakzai, Muhabat Khan Popalzai, Musa Dungi the famous Ishakzai chief, Nur Mohammad, Alizai, Nasr-Ullah Khan, the Nurzai Sardar and others, met in solemn conclave at the Shrine of Surkh Sher Baba. They were quite unanimous that it was very expedient that they should have a king to manage their affairs, for the times were troublous and there were persons on all sides asserting their claims to independence. The question to be decided was who should be king. Not one of these powerful chiefs would acknowledge the superiority of the claims or his peers. Ahmad Khan by virtue of his rank and family was present at the debates, and Sabir Shah's calling also made him welcome. He cut short the discussion by producing a tiny sheaf of wheat, and placing it in Ahmad Khan's turban, declared that no one in that assembly was so fit for the kingship as Ahmad Khan, the flower of the Duranis. The words and act of the eccentric fakir were regarded by all as a happy solution of the difficulty. Probably, also, they were regarded as a manifestation of the Divine will revealed through the holy man to the assembled chiefs. The scene was the shrine of a well known saint, who might be regarded therefore as being interested in the debate." Tate, G.P., op. cit. above, pp.68 - 9.

(3) The first revolt of the Abdalis of Afghanistan against the Iranian Governorship of their district took place at the time of Shah Abbas the Great (Safavid) in late 17th century. The Government at Isfahan commissioned Gorgin Khan, Vali of Gorgestan (Georgia) as Governor of Qandehar (1692) who brought the unrest under control by expelling the Abdali Leaders.

The name "Afghanistan" was, according to some historians, invented in the 16th century by the Moghul Empire of India, as a convenient term referring to the districts and dependencies of Kabul. The term had existed in the older chronicles, first used in the Ghaznavid writings of the 13th century, when the term was applied to the mountain and cultivable tracts which were the Afridis and Vaziris. Sir Percy Sykes asserts that General Houtrum Schindler believed that the Afghans were termed "Aghvans" in the Safavid times.<sup>(1)</sup>

The country which emerged in mid-18th century was largely the home of three distinct races:-

- (i) The Hazaras located mostly to the west of the road from Qandehar to Kabul, who are mostly of Mongolian origin.
- (ii) Tajiks, who include most of the settled population. They are agriculturalists with Persian as their native language. They are the descendants of the ancient race, who had migrated from Central Asia to Iran. Tate describes them as: one people and in all probability they represent the original Iranian or Aryan race, among whom Zoroaster published his doctrine; among whom the Greek colonists of Alexander settled....<sup>(2)</sup>
- (iii) The Afghans who are nomadic by origin, and consider themselves as warriors. They are said to be Pathans, the name of the people mentioned by writers of antiquity. Afghan is applied to the tribes collectively, and also to the pastoral nomads among them.

(1) Sykes, Sir Percy (1902), "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", footnote to page 364.

(2) Tate, G.P., MRAS, FRGS, "The Kingdom of Afghanistan", Delhi, reprinted 1973, P. 4

The history of Afghanistan is practically the story of two great confederacies led by the Durranis and Ghelzais, both of which have ruled the territories of Afghanistan from time to time.

#### THE PARTITIONING OF KHORASAN

Greater Khorasan had, until the assassination of Nader Shah in 1747, been united. It included the cities and districts of Mashhad, Nishabur, Herat, Quchan, Bokhara, Samarquand, Marv, Farah, Qandehar, Qohestan which was later renamed as Qaenat.

Of Nader Shah's successors, nobles and generals, Ahmad Khan Abdali and Amir Alam Khan Khozeimeh were concerned that Khorasan's unity should remain intact in the wake of their sovereign's assassination, each one of them for a different reason. Ahmad Khan Abdali, (by then "Ahmad Shah Durrani"), the first ruler of the new kingdom of Afghanistan, wanted the entire Khorasan to be affiliated to his new kingdom, probably to be extended later to include the rest of Iran, thus, reviving Nader Shah's empire. Whereas Amir Alam Khan Khozeimeh wanted to maintain the entire Khorasan as a part of Iran, preferably under his own rule.

It was for the attainment of this goal that Amir Alam Khan attacked Mashhad soon after Nader Shah's assassination and subdued Shahrokh Mirza, Nader Shah's grandson, who was installed on the Naderi throne by some of the generals. The Amir despatched, hurriedly, a troop to Herat, where his brother, Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh succeeded in capturing the city and its dependencies, albeit this victory was very short lived.<sup>(1)</sup> This event led to Amir Khan and Bohlul Khan, Shahrokh Mirza's men in Herat, writing to Ahmad Shah at Qandehar, informing him of the state of confusion in Herat. This news was received by Ahmad Shah with delight. He marched his troops of twenty thousand men on Herat in the

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(1) See Chapter II for details.

spring of 1749, where he met Herati citizens' resistance. The city was finally opened and he marched on Mashhad where he restored Shahrokh Mirza on the throne, who, in turn, acknowledged the Afghan suzerainty.<sup>(1)</sup> By so doing, Shahrokh Mirza lost the legitimacy inherent in the tradition of the Iranian monarchy. In the eyes of the contestants for the leadership of Iran (i.e. Amir Alam Khan Khozeimeh, Mohammad Hassan Khan Qajar and Karim Khan Zand) Shahrokh was no longer fit to rule as he had acknowledged suzerainty of a foreign sovereign. As a result, Shahrokh himself paved the way for his adversaries, Khozeimeh Amir and Qajar Khan, to do away with his rule in Khorasan.

Following these developments, Ahmad Shah Durrani captured considerable parts of what is now the Iranian half of Khorasan. Amir Alam Khan marched on Mashhad in 1748, dethroned Shahrokh Mirza for the second time, captured territories to the north and east of Mashhad as far as Quchan, and marched on Nishabur. His capture of Nishabur was yet to be completed when news of Ahmad Shah's forces' arrival in Mashhad reached him. He had prepared to meet Ahmad Shah's challenge and defeated some of the advance parties of the Afghan troops, when the Khorasani Kurdish contingency of his forces deserted him and by so doing, instigated a mass desertion. Amir Alam Khan was left alone and was subsequently killed.<sup>(2)</sup>

Ahmad Shah's expedition in Khorasan was not to last long. events in the east, especially in relation to India, drew his attention away from Khorsan. The blind Shahrokh Mirza, reinstated by Ahmad Shah, was left in charge of the province where his rule continued for approximately half a century. Meanwhile, Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar had taken over from his father, Mohammad Hassan Khan, the task of contesting for the

(1) Sykes, Sir Percy M. (1915), "History of Persia", Vol. II, pp. 370 - 71 - 72.

(2) For more details on these events and relevant historical sources, see Chapter II.

leadership of Iran. He arrived in Khorasan in 1795 and overthrew Shahrokh Mirza, thus, putting a final end to the weak and corrupt rule of the grandson of Nader Shah, who had in 1748 accepted the suzerainty of the Afghan ruler. The rest of Iran was, at this period in time, ruled by Karim Khan Zand (1747 - 1799) except the northern parts of the country which were under the control of the Qajar family. Shahrokh Mirza still possessed many of the priceless jewels that Nader Shah had brought from India. Some of his collection, including the renowned Kuh-e Nour diamond had been taken from him by Ahmad Shah Durrani, and the rest, including the Darya-ye Nour diamond, were seized by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar who considered them as the property of the Iranian crown, and have remained so to this date.<sup>(1)</sup>

Agha Mohammad Khan had turned to Khorasan after achieving paramountcy over the rest of Iran by defeating the heroic Lotf Ali Khan Zand and after subduing the rebels in Gorjestan (Georgia).

Ahmad Shah Durrani died in 1773 and with his death was gone Shahrokh Mirza's adherence to the Durrani suzerainty. On his arrival in Khorasan, Agha Mohammad Khan was greeted by the local chiefs and vassal rulers, including Amir Ali Khan Khozeimeh of Qaenat who submitted to the Qajar Shah. Nader Mirza, son of Shahrokh Mirza sent his brothers to Herat and he himself followed them shortly, leaving his old blind and feeble father behind to make his own submission to the founder of the Qajar dynasty in Iran. Having completed the task of returning Khorasan to Iranian sovereignty, Agha Mohammad Khan returned to Tehran<sup>(2)</sup> taking with him Shahrokh Mirza Afshar who died on the way in 1796.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) The Famous piece of diamond, Kuhe Nour, eventually found its way to Great Britain and is now part of the British Crown Jewels.

(2) Tehran was, at this time, chosen by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar to be the new capital of Iran.

(3) Watson, Robert Grant (1866), "History of Persia, p. 96.

In his book "The Kingdom of Afghanistan", G.P. Tate claims that at the time of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, which coincided with the demise of Ahmad Shah Durrani's kingdom all over Afghanistan, his former realm divided into three principalities (Kabul, Herat and Qandehar), Iran recognised the state of Afghanistan. The reason given in support of this claim is Agha Mohammad Khan's decision in sending, in 1796, Hassan Khan Qaraguzlu to the court of Shah Zaman, the ruler of Kabul. To substantiate this theory, Tate provides a caption from Tarikh-e Sultani, a Persian chronicle of historical events of the early Qajar period. This historical document is quoted by Tate as stating:

*"He was accorded a gracious reception, and a money present, robes and a charger were bestowed on him; and permission was given him to return to Meshed. Kado Khan Barakzai accompanied the Persian Ambassador as the Afghan Envoy, to the court of the Kajar Prince."<sup>(1)</sup>*

Though the true nature of the dependencies of Kabul, Herat and Qandehar to Iran had always been a matter of great ambiguity, sending emissaries back and forth between the central Government of Iran and the rulers of these principalities had never amounted to the recognition of their independence. Whereas sending emissaries back and forth between Iran and Kabul, Herat, Qandehar and other Central Asian dependencies of Iran had been an ongoing practice since the time of the Safavid Shahs, It is not clear as to how Tate found this particular emissary being an Ambassador conveying Iran's recognition of the State of Afghanistan. Moreover, while the kingdom created by Ahmad Shah Durrani was divided into three principalities in the wake of his death, and thus, the state of Afghanistan had all but disappeared, Iran could not recognise "the state of Afghanistan" by sending an emissary to the principality of Kabul. Furthermore, Iran's so-called recognition of Kabul as the "State of Afghanistan"

(1) Tate, G.P., op. cit., p.6.

without the Afghan principalities of Herat and Qandehar being part of it sounds more like wishful thinking on the part of Tate than a logical action on the part of Iran or any other country.

In Khorasan, however, Nader Mirza, son of Shahrokh Mirza and great grandson of Nader Shah Afshar, hearing of Agha Mohammad Khan's assassination in July 1797, left Kabul, and having put together some troops, returned to Mashhad and took possession of the city and declared himself as the rightful heir to the Naderi throne. In Tehran, Fath-Ali Shah Qajar had succeeded his uncle Agha Mohammad Khan on 28th July 1797. He warned Nader Mirza of the consequence of his actions which was heeded by the latter. Some Afghan historians view Nader Mirza's claim in Mashhad as being the rightful heir to the throne of Nader Shah of Iran as yet another manifestation of Afghanistan's resumption of sovereignty over Khorasan.<sup>(1)</sup> These writers do not, of course, see it as their responsibility to specify as to how the rebellion in Khorasan of the great grandson of the Iranian sovereign Nader Ashar claiming to be the rightful heir to the Naderi throne, would constitute the resumption of Afghanistan's sovereignty over the Iranian province of Khorasan.

Fath-Ali Shah, however, marched on Mashhad and recovered all towns and cities of the province. Nader Mirza was seized by the inhabitants of Mashhad after he had desecrated the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza and had slain with his own hand an ayatollah. He was subsequently put to death.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) See for example, Ghobar, op. cit.

(2) Afshar Yazdi, Dr. Mahmud (1980) "Afghan Nameh", Vol. II p. 26. This author indicates that when Fath-Ali Shah finished off Nader Mirza's rebellion by putting him to death, exclaimed that a parallel vengeance had taken place. What he meant was that his great grandfather was killed by Nader Mirza's great grandfather, Nader Shah Afshar, and now, Nader Shah's great grandson is killed by Fath-Ali Shah, the great grandson of Fath-Ali Khan.

### THE BRITISH INTEREST - A NEW DIMENSION

A new dimension was added to this general state of affairs in the region where there was the westwardly expanding political and strategic interests of the British Indian Empire.

As from the early 19th century, Britain began to view the principalities of Afghanistan and to some extent, Iran, as vulnerable gateways through which attacks could take place by either France or Russia or possibly the two of them together with Iran, against its possessions in India. Both France and Russia had realised that although it was difficult, if not impossible to challenge British supremacy at sea, it would be easily possible by land through Afghanistan. An additional source of anxiety for the British, was the active efforts of French diplomacy in Iran<sup>(1)</sup> as well as all over Asia. A French mission, led by Monsieur Olivier arrived in Tehran in 1795 seeking friendship and alliance. The British found the activities of Napoleon's representatives in the east, especially in Iran, for the purpose of contracting alliances, hostile to its position in India. At the same time, Shah-Zaman ruler of Kabul, was posing serious threats to the stability of India and the position of the British India Company.<sup>(2)</sup>

This whole situation provoked British reaction which manifested itself in two different ways:

(1) Iranian Foreign Ministry Collection of Documents = Ahdnameh-haye Tarikhi hereafter referred to as the "Green Book", Tehran 1971, p. 91.

(2) Tate, G.P., op. cit., p. 105. He describes this situation as follows:

"An invasion of Hindustan (the country to the south of the Sutlej) would have thrown the whole country into a condition of anarchy. The Muhammadans looked to the Durani king as their deliverer and hoped for the restoration of the House of Timur through Afghan intervention in the affairs of Hindustan. The partisans of Shah Zaman had set on foot intrigues in many parts of India. The Rohillas took up arms. Every follower of Islam anxiously looked for the coming of the champion of Islam. Dissensions among the Mahrattas had drawn their forces to the south; and they were dismayed at the prospect and looked for help to the British. The attitude of the Sadozai king had compelled the authorities in Calcutta to assemble an army at Anupshahr; and to raise new regiments and the 4th Bengal Light Cavalry; and the 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th regiments of Bengal Infantry had been raised in 1796."

1. To counter the weight of the French in Iran by endeavouring to seal treaties of friendship and alliance with the Iranians.
2. To expand their influence throughout the countries of Afghanistan and to bring all three Afghan principalities under an effective political control.

In the first instance, Mirza Mehdi-Ali Khan, an officer of the East India Company at Bushehr, was sent to Tehran in 1799 to prepare the ground for the launch of British diplomacy in Iran. The following year, Captain John Malcolm, envoy of the viceroy of India arrived in Tehran. He gave Fath-Ali Shah two diamonds each worth fifty thousand rupees, and succeeded in signing two treaties with Haji Ebrahim Khan, Fath-Ali Shah's Prime Minister in January 1801; one on trade and the other political. The political treaty was signed in five articles which, not only ended the activities of the French in Iran, but guaranteed an Iranian invasion of Afghanistan if the Afghans threatened India.<sup>(1)</sup> This treaty realised the ostensible object of Malcolm's mission which was to instigate Fath-Ali Shah to move an army upon Herat so as to divert Shah-Zaman from his threatened invasion of India. The Iranian move, which was motivated by the domestic situations in Herat and by the question of its loyalty to Iran, had already been made before John Malcolm appeared in Tehran.<sup>(2)</sup>

When Fath-Ali Shah sought British assistance in 1804 in the war with the Russians, the British declined, arguing that the war had been started by Prince Abbas Mirza, the Crown Prince of Iran. Fath-Ali Shah wrote to Napoleon asking him to renew the old friendship. Napoleon's personal secretary, Monsieur Joubert was sent to Tehran in 1805 where he prepared a new treaty which was signed at Finken Stain in the Spring of

(1) Political Treaty with England, Green Book, op. cit., p. 91

(2) Bilgrami, Asghar H. (1972) "Afghanistan and British India", New Delhi, p. 19.

1807<sup>(1)</sup> by Mirza Mohammad Khan Qazvini on the part of Iran and Bernard Maret on behalf of France.

This treaty provided for general Gardan, Napoleon's adjudant to arrive in Tehran as French Ambassador, with a group of officers and engineers who started their task of training and equipping Iranian troops. General Gardan was also assigned to conclude a defence treaty with the Iranian Government. However, as Napoleon disregarded the question of the war between Iran and the Russians in his meeting of Tilsit with the Tzar of Russia in 1808, when the two European powers agreed on cooperation against Britain,<sup>(2)</sup> Fath-Ali Shah lost hope with the French.

The Russo-French agreement of Tilsit, on the other hand, raised anxieties in London and Bombay of a new and more powerful threat to the British India possessions. These anxieties led the British Indian authorities to attempt once again to secure the friendship of Iran and preclude her from joining the dangerous combination of the two European powers in the wake of peace between Iran and Russia. Sir Harford Jones was sent to Tehran in 1809 for the purpose. Later that year, he signed a provisional treaty with the court of the Qajar Shah, according to which the Franco-Iranian treaty of Finken Stain was declared null and void. A loan of 200,000 tumans was extended to the Iranian Government by the British Government of India which also undertook to prepare and train Iranian troops for the defence of the Iranian realms.<sup>(3)</sup> The British Government ratified this treaty in 1810 and assigned Sir Gore Ouseley as London's Ambassador to Tehran who prepared a new treaty to be signed between London and Tehran. Meanwhile, the British India Government, anxious of the situation arising from the possibility of a combined Franco-Russian threat to India, and probably uncertain that

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(1) The Green Book, (Iranian Foreign Ministry Document Collection) p. 70).

(2) The Green Book, op. cit., p. 71.

(3) The Green Book, op. cit., p. 73.

the direct diplomacy of London in Tehran would pay enough attention to this situation, sent Sir John Malcolm back to Tehran to secure Iran's cooperation in that regard. Fath-Ali Shah refused to see him. His rivalries with Sir Gore Ouseley resulted in his return from Iran in the Summer of 1810.<sup>(1)</sup>

Sir Gore Ouseley signed the 1812 treaty of friendship with Iran and mediated between Tehran and Moscow which resulted in the conclusion of the treaty of Golestan in 1813, whereby Iran lost many of her north-western provinces to Russia.<sup>(2)</sup>

The British connection with Iran, however, had an objective of providing additional security to India against a French threat and from a renewed threat from the Russians via Iran.

The second British reaction to this situation concerned her relations with Afghanistan. The principality of Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan had gone through a long period of chaos and disintegration in the wake of Shah-Zaman's deposition in 1803. Two years earlier, Shah-Mahmud, brother of Shah-Zaman revolted against the latter in 1801 when Zaman was still threatening India. Mahmud declared himself as King. The city of Herat and its dependencies were, at this time, tributaries of Iran. The per annum taxes paid to the treasury of Tehran was one million rupees and fifty thousand ass-load (Kharvar) of grain.<sup>(3)</sup>

When Agha Mohammad Khan, founder of the Qajar dynasty marched troops to Khorasan to put an end to Shahrokh Mirza's obedience to Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Governor of Herat declared his allegiance to Agha Mohammad Khan and the Government of Iran. He made the official speech at the

(1) The Green Book, op. cit., pp. 73 - 4.

(2) The Green Book, op. cit., p. 73.

(3) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 395.

public prayer (Khotbeh) in the name of the Shah of Iran and reinstated the payment of annual taxes to the treasury at Tehran.<sup>(1)</sup>

Shah-Mahmud, meanwhile, succeeded in dethroning his brother, Shah-Zaman in 1803 after the countenance offered to him by the Shah of Iran (Fath-Ali Shah). Mahmud appointed Prince Firouz ad-Din as Governor of Herat, who in turn, appointed Shah-Mahmud's son, Prince Kameran, as Governor of Farah, a dependency of Herat. Shah-Mahmud was dethroned in 1804, by Shah-Shoja, and escaped to Iran a year later.<sup>(2)</sup> At the same time, Firouz ad-Din, sent troops to capture Ghurian in accordance with a pre-arrangement with the Iranian Deputy Governor of the district who surrendered the town in the event. This move was not only viewed in Tehran as a violation of Iran's sovereignty in the Eastern provinces but also signified Firouz ad-Din's rebellion against Iran's sovereignty of Herat. Iranian troops defeated Firouz ad-Din's forces in Ghurian and Mohammad Vali Khan, the Governor General of Khorasan, marched on Herat to punish Firouz ad-Din for his breach of faith and to collect the tribute which had been in arrears for two years. The city of Herat was invested in 1810. Firouz ad-Din apologised for his conducts and sent his son Malek Hussein Mirza to stay in Iran (Tehran or Mashhad) as a guarantee of his good faith in the future. He also sent to the treasury at Tehran the tributes in arrears with the promise of discharging the taxes punctually in future. Six years later, he revolted against Herat's dependency on Iran (1816) and invaded the district of Ghurian. This time Prince Hassan-Ali Mirza Shoja as-Saltaneh, the new Governor General of Khorasan recovered Herat and not only did he collect from Firouz ad-Din the tributes in arrears, but an extra fifty thousand tumans as punishment. He was obliged to guarantee punctual payments of the annual tribute, to read the Khotbeh in the name of

(1) Mahmud, Mahmud, "Tarikh-e Ravabet-e Siasi-e Iran-o Englis Dar Qarn-e Nuzdahom", Vol. II, Tehran 1950, p. 870.

(2) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 395.

Fath-Ali Shah, and to make the coinage in the name of the Iranian sovereign.<sup>(1)</sup>

In Kabul, unlike his brother Shah-Mahmud who was faithful to Iran, and whom he had dethroned in 1804, Shah-Shoja was wholly reliant on the British from whom he received many valuable gifts. The British envoy, Mount Stewart Elphinston, had signed a treaty with him on June 17, 1809 whereby Shah-Shoja undertook on behalf of all Afghans, to prevent any attack on India from the north-west of that country.<sup>(2)</sup> This agreement did not survive for long, as Shah-Shoja was dethroned in the same year. Shah-Mahmud's struggles against Shah-Shoja brought much chaos to the countries of Afghanistan. Shah-Mahmud eventually succeeded in settling in Herat with his son Prince Kameran with the consent of Tehran. Chaos in Kabul and Qandehar deepened as Shah-Shoja was recalled in 1817 by Sardar Mohammad Azim Khan to become "Shah of Afghanistan" in the principality of Qandehar. Other Sardars, namely Yar Mohammad Khan and Dust Mohammad Khan called Ayub Saduzai as "Shah of Afghanistan" in Kabul. This chaotic state of affairs worsened as Sardar Mohammad Azim Khan fought Shah-Shoja, the so-called monarch he himself selected for Afghanistan. Shah-Shoja was defeated and forced out of Qandehar. Dust Mohammad Khan and his brothers divided the principalities of Kabul and Qandehar amongst themselves. Dust Mohammad became the ruler of Kabul and his brother, Kohandel Khan became the ruler of Qandehar.<sup>(3)</sup>

In Herat, Shah-Mahmud and his son Prince Kameran, the last of the Abdalis, fell out and fought a number of times against one another (1820 - 1821) until the people of Herat mediated between them and arranged for Mahmud to remain King, and Kameran as his Prime Minister in charge of affairs.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Mokhber, Mohandes Mohammad-Ali (1945), "Marzhaye Iran", Tehran, p. 24.

(2) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 396.

(3) Ghobar, op. cit., pp. 397 - 8.

(4) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 403.

Firouz ad-Din had already escaped to Mashhad when Shah-Mahmud arrived in Herat in 1818. He had taken refuge with the Governor General of Khorasan.

British direct diplomacy in Afghanistan, by this time, succeeded in establishing a considerable degree of influence, especially in the principality of Kabul.

In Iran, a series of events further provoked the geopolitical apprehension of the British concerning the situation in Central Asia. Iran fought another war with Russia which resulted in the conclusion of the disastrous treaty of Turkmanchai in 1828 with the mediation of Sir John MacDonald Kinner, British envoy in Tehran.<sup>(1)</sup> The treaty of Turkmanchai, signed on February 21, 1828, granted the Russians the right of capitulation, excluding Russian subjects from prosecution under the Iranian laws.<sup>(2)</sup> Although the British and other foreign subjects were later on granted the same right, the sudden expansion of Russian influence in Iran after the Turkmanchai gave rise to the British anxieties of a Russian threat via Iran to their possessions in India, bringing the strategic importance of Herat to their attention more than ever before. The following are examples of the views expressed confidentially to the British Government by British diplomats in Iran:

*"The key of all Afghanistan towards the north is Herat; and although I can have no right to press my personal opinions upon your lordship after having already stated them, and although I must necessarily*

(1) Under article 3 of Golestan Treaty of 1813, Iran lost to Russia the cities and dependencies of Karabakh (Gharabagh), Ganjeh, Shakki, Shirvan, Qobbeh, Darband, Baku, Daghestan, Gorjestan (Georgia), Shureh-Gel, Achugbash, Kurieh, Mankerbel etc. - Article 3, Treaty of Golestan, The Green Book, op. cit., p. 128.

Under article 3 of the treaty of Turkmanchai of 1828, Iran lost to Russia the principalities of Armenia and Nakhjavan - Article 3, Treaty of Turkmanchai, The Green Book, op. cit., p. 131.

(2) Capitulation continued in Iran until it was abolished by Reza Shah in 1929.

be ignorant of the many important considerations not immediately connected with this question which must influence the policy of her Majesty's Government, still I cannot refrain from saying a few words more regarding the importance of preserving the independence of Herat.

"I have already informed your lordship publicly, that the country between the frontiers of Persia and India is far more productive than I had imagined it to be; and I can assure your lordship that there is no impediment, either from the physical features of the country or from the deficiency of supplies, to the march of a large army from the frontiers of Georgia to Kandahar, or, as I believe, to the Indus.

"There is therefore, my lord, no security for India in the nature of the country through which an army would have to pass to invade it from this side.

"On the contrary, the whole line is peculiarly favourable for such an enterprise; and I am the more anxious to state this opinion clearly, because it is at variance with my previous belief, and with statements which I may have previously hazarded, relying on more imperfect information."<sup>(1)</sup>

The anxiety over a Russian design on Herat and eventually, India, was further stimulated by the arrival in Herat of Count Simonich, the Russian envoy at Tehran, with the Iranians in 1838: "It is currently reported and believed here, though I cannot say on what grounds, that there is a secret arrangement between Persia and Russia to exchange Herat for some of the districts beyond the Arras which formerly belonged to Persia. This report was first mentioned to me at Teheran in March last; but I then paid no attention to it, because I could not see how Russia was to get at Herat, and I still am inclined to regard it as probably unfounded, though Count Simonich certainly threatened Mahammed Ameen, a servant of Yar Mahammed Khan (who was sent with a message from his master to the Persian camp) that if Herat did not surrender to the Shah, he would march a Russian army against it."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Extracts of a letter from Sir John McNeill to Viscount Palmerston, dated Mashhad, June 25, 1938, Blue Book, pp. 131 - 2 FO 539/1 - 10 (Microfilm), pp. 131 - 3.

(2) Ibid.

In a letter to Sir John McNeil, British Minister Plenipotentiary at Tehran, Secretary to the Government of India states:

"The political interests of Great Britain and of British India are even more concerned that their commercial interests in the exemption of the countries between India and Persia from foreign aggression from the westward. There is too much reason to apprehend that Persia, under its present sovereign, has evinced an unprecedented degree of subserviency to Russian counsels.... The pertinacity with which Persian Government has persisted in this design.....(1) is of itself a sufficient ground for apprehending the existence of some ulterior and unfriendly design towards our interests."(2)

The theory of a Russian threat to the British possessions in India via Iran and Afghanistan had become so realistic in the eyes of the British that fortification of the countries of Afghanistan against this threat, not only becomes the cornerstone of the foreign policy concerns of British India in Asia, but it became a kind of universal obsession amongst British politicians, diplomats and military officers alike. Captain Hunt, for example, writing on the "Persian Campaign" in which he himself fought, argues: "the Kingdom of Afghanistan, as most of our readers know, has long formed the great bulwark of British India upon the Asiatic side. It was the high road to conquest in India for many ages, until the English and other nations approached the coveted possession from the sea. The chief passes of this barrier land admit of easy access from the Persian dominions, and Russia is fully aware that while this state is preserved in its integrity it must prove an obstacle to the accomplishment of her designs against India. Hence her efforts have been to produce complications in that quarter, and these have frequently been crowned with success."(3)

(1) Referring to the siege of Herat by the Iranian forces in 1837.

(2) Extracts of a letter from Mr Macnoughten to Mr McNeill, dated Fort William, November 21, 1838, "Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Persia and Afghanistan" section B, p. 2, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

(3) Hunt, Captain G.H. (1858), "The Persian Campaign", Outram & Havelock's London, pp. 84 - 5.

This apprehension of Iranian and Russian designs on the countries of Afghanistan and India was further aggravated by an approach made by Iran, to Sardar Kohundil Khan of Qandehar, who had renewed his predecessors' loyalty to the Iranian Government. A treaty was signed in 1838 between Mohammad Shah Qajar of Iran and Sardar Kohundil Khan of Qandehar whereby, the ruler of Qandehar engaged his principality to renew its historical dependency to Iran in return for Iranian protection.<sup>(1)</sup> The Shah also, according to article 1 of the treaty was to bestow the principality of Herat onto the rulers of Qandehar "as a reward for their faithful services performed to him since his accession to the throne of Persia".<sup>(2)</sup> This treaty was apparently signed by Count Simonich, the Russian Minister plenipotentiary at Tehran as the guarantor on his own behalf<sup>(+)</sup> as representative of the Government of Russia. Nevertheless, the British found this whole affair as yet more proof of a Perso-Russian design on the countries of Afghanistan and on India. This suspicion provoked great alarm among the British as Sir John McNeil described in a despatch dated August 1st 1838:

"....if the treaty has really been guaranteed by Russia, and not by Count Simonich, personally, Russia becomes by it indisputable mistress of the destinies, political and commercial, of all Central Asia; for Great Britain, having been forced back to the Indus, Khiva and Bakhara must submit if they are attacked; while Persia and Afghanistan will already be entirely at her disposal."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) See Appendix I for text.

(2) The only copy of this treaty this author has come across was cited in General Ferrier's book. The treaty has no date and shows the signature of Major H.C. Rawlinson as the translator of the document. Ferrier, General J.P., "Caravan Journeys and Wandering in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkmanistan, Baloochistan", London 1857, pp. 508 - 9.

(3) From Mr. McNeill to Viscount Palmerston, dated Camp near Tehran, August 1, 1838, No. 39, Vol. 10 part 1, section A, p. 1, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

(+) See text, Appendix I.

The British, observing these developments in the countries of Afghanistan with dismay as they could no longer rely upon the ability of the Afghan chiefs to play the role of a barrier, separating India from the potential threat of the west and north-west, decided to apply the policy of direct intervention in Afghanistan in order to prevent the danger of a Russo-Iranian threat there.

Meanwhile, Prince Kameran, Tehran's appointed Governor of Herat, styled himself in 1829 as "Shah" of that principality<sup>(1)</sup> and began a series of raids and incursions against Iranian territories, especially in Sistan. These acts of rebellion angered the Central Government in Tehran, which was already agitated by the rebellion and lawlessness taking place in Marv, Khiveh and Bokhara, the countries of Turkmans and Uzbeks who "had then continued depredations in Astarabad and the neighbouring districts".<sup>(2)</sup>

The Iranian Government prepared two expeditions in 1836; one against Herat and the other against Marv, Khiveh and Bokhara, which was to proceed to the north-east after Herat was subdued. The expedition against Herat began its march in 1837. Prince Kameran, seeing no hope of assistance from any quarter, turned to Sir John McNeil, British Minister at Tehran, for help. McNeil protested against the action of the Iranian Government knowing full well that Tehran's action against the rebellion of one of its own appointed Governors of the dependent principalities was provoked by the Governor himself. In a despatch, dated Tehran, February 24, 1837, Sir John McNeil says:

*"Putting aside the claims of Persia to the sovereignty of Herat, founded on ancient rights and on the professions of allegiance to the Crown of Persia which have been made at various times by Prince Kamran; and regarding the question as one between two independent Sovereigns, I am inclined to believe that the Government of Herat, will be found to have been the aggressor.*

(1) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 404.

(2) Hunt, op. cit., p. 92.

"On the death of Abbas Meerza, when the present Shah returned from his unsuccessful expedition against Herat, negotiations were entered into, which terminated in the conclusion of an agreement for the cessation of hostilities between the parties and the demarcation of a line of boundary. From that time up to the present moment, Persia has committed no act of hostility against the Affghans, but on the death of the late Shah, concluding no doubt that Persia would be thrown into great confusion, the Government of Herat made predatory incursions into the Persian territories, in concert with the Turcomans and Hazarehs and captured the subjects of Persia, for the purpose of selling them as slaves. This system of warfare has from that time been carried on without intermission by the Affghans of Herat, and Persia has not retaliated these acts of aggression by any hostile measure, unless the public annunciation of its intention to attack Herat should be regarded as such.

"Under these circumstances, there cannot, I think, be a doubt that the Shah is fully justified in making war on Prince Kamran: and though the capture of Herat by Persia would certainly be an evil of great magnitude, we could not wonder if the Shah were to disregard our remonstrances, and to assert his right to make war on an enemy who has given him the greatest provocation, and whom he may regard himself as bound in duty to his subjects to punish, or even to put down. I therefore doubt whether the measures proposed by the Government of India would have the desired effect."<sup>(1)</sup>

Whilst the Iranian expedition against Herat was in progress, a Herati envoy, Fateh-Mohammad Khan arrived in Tehran on the intervention of Prince Asef ad-Doleh, commander of Iran's expeditionary force and Governor General of Khorasan. The Iranian Government demanded that Herat should submit and send a personality of some significance to remain in Tehran assuring guarantee of their submission. In reply, Yar-Mohammad Khan, Vazir (administrator) of Herat, wrote to the Iranian Government submitting to the demands for submission and sending an agent to stay in Tehran as guarantee of their submission. Yar-Mohammad Khan's proposals were as follows:

(1) Extracts from Mr. McNeill's despatch to Viscount Palmerston, dated Tehran, Feb. 24, 1837, No. 13, p. 3, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

1st Point. - There is to be a cessation of war and of marauding; the capture and sale of prisoners are to be utterly abolished.

2nd Point. - Should the King of Kings intend to undertake a military expedition against Toorkistan, and should he require troops from Shah Kamran, the latter is to supply troops to the extent of his ability, and they shall accompany the Governor of Khorassan on any expedition against Toorkistan. Should troops be required on the frontiers of Azerbijan, Shah Kamran shall furnish them in such number as may at the time be practicable, and shall not withhold them.

3rd Point. - A sum of money in the shape of tribute shall be paid annually, at the festival of Noorooz, to the Persian Government.

4th Point. - Merchants from every quarter who shall arrive in the territories of Herat and its dependencies, are to receive full protection, and suffer no injury in person or property.

5th Point. - One person, who shall be a descendant of Shah Kamran, and some other persons who shall be relations of Vizier Yar Mahomed Khan, and of Sheer Mahomed Khan, shall reside for two years at Meshed as hostages. When the period of two years has elapsed, if the Ministers of Herat shall have performed the foregoing engagements, and shall have committed no infraction, the above hostages shall be despatched to Herat, and shall not be detained more than two years. Should any infraction of the above engagements have been committed, the hostages are to be retained until the time of their fulfilment.

6th Point. - A Vakeel or Agent from Shah Kamran shall always reside at the Court of the King of Kings.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Extracts from enclosure 1 in No. 3 of despatch by Mr McNeill to the British Government, dated Camp Tehran, July 1837, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

In return for the renewal of Herat's submission to the central Government of Iran, Yar-Mohammad Khan proposed the following engagements from the Government in Tehran:

"1st Point. - The King of Kings of Persia shall consider Shah Kamran as his brother, and treat him with regard.

"2nd Point. - The Ministers of the King of Kings of Persia shall not interfere in any manner whatever in the succession of the posterity of Shah Kamran. Whichever of the Descendants of Shah Kamran shall succeed him in his Government and titles, and shall fulfil the engagements that have been here contracted; it is stipulated on the part of the King of Kings of Persia that these engagements shall continue in full force, and shall no undergo any alteration.

"3rd Point. - Troops are not to be sent into the territories in the possession of Shah Kamran; war and marauding are to cease; and the capture and sale of prisoners are to be entirely abolished. The Government of the King of Kings of Persia is not to interfere in any manner whatever in the internal affairs of the territories in the possession of Shah Kamran: and to enable the Government of Herat to fulfil its engagements, the internal management of these territories is to be entirely under the control of the Government of Herat.

"4th Point. - The English Government shall be mediators between the Persian and Herat Governments; and if there should be any infraction of these engagements by either party, it shall employ every exertion to obtain their fulfilment."(1)

Notwithstanding the fact that Yar-Mohammad Khan's despatch to Tehran indicated clearly Herat's agreement to the revival of its dependency and loyalty to the Central Government of Iran by accepting to pay its annual taxes to Tehran and to send a number of high placed individuals to stay in Mashhad as guarantee for Herat's adherence to the terms of its submission to the dependency, its terms and conditions did not satisfy the Iranian Government, especially in that it fell short of other customary undertakings for submission such as coining the money in the name of the Iranian monarch and having the prayer (khotbeh) made in the name of the Shah of Shahs of all Iran. Thus, Prime Minister Haji Mirza Aghasi

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(1) Ibid.

wrote in reply to the Heratis, the terms and conditions that were, from his point of view, appropriate for submission. The first two points of his memorandum, dated 14th of Rabee al-Aval 1253 (July 1837) reads:

"THE first point is that war, marauding, and the capture of prisoners shall cease. - As all these things are opposed to obedience, it is evident that they will, as a matter of course cease, when Prince Kamran acknowledges subjection to Persia. He who is obedient must be obedient under every circumstance.

"Second Point. - As Herat with its dependencies is one of the provinces of Persia, whenever the exigencies of the State require troops to be despatched in any direction, Herat, like the other provinces of the kingdom, must furnish troops and provision.

"Throughout the propositions of Futteh Mahomed Khan, the designation applied to Prince Kamran, is Kamran Shah. This is precisely the point which is the cause of the movement of troops, that these pretensions may be destroyed. Two kings cannot dwell in one kingdom. The title of Feridoon Meerza, the Governor General of Fars, which is ten times as large as Herat, is Ameerzadeh, son of a prince (not prince.) This phrase conveys the impression of disobedience and refractoriness, and the remedy is to cease to employ such expressions."(1)

(For complete text, see Appendix II)

Although Prince Kameran Mirza was referred to in Yar-Mohammad Khan's letter as "Shah Kameran" and true that in his reply to Herat's propositions, Haji Mirza Aghasi demands the title "Shah" to be abandoned by Prince Kameran, the fact is that use of such titles by a vassal king in the traditional Iranian political organisation did not contradict the dependency of that vassal kingdom to Iran. In a letter addressed to Mohammad Shah Qajar in March 1840 by "Shah-Kameran", for instance, he declares himself to be the "faithful servant of the Shahanshah (King of Kings)".(2)

(1) Extracts from the translation of a memorandum by Haji Mirza Aghasi in reply to Yar Mohammad Khan's proposals, enclosure 3 in No. 3 of Mr. McNeill's despatch to Viscount Palmerston, dated July 1837, pp. 11 - 12, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

(2) Ferrier, General Joseph Pierre, "Caravan Journeys and Wandering in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Baloochistan", London 1857, p. 160.

While this debate was going on between Tehran and Herat, however, the expedition against Herat was in progress and Herat was put under siege by the forces despatched by Tehran. Seeing no hope of assistance from any quarter, Prince Kameran Mirza pleaded with Mr. John (later Sir John) McNeil - British Minister at Tehran since 1836 - for help. Mr McNeil protested against Mohammad Shah Qajar's military undertaking against the rebels in a dependent principality of Iran, in spite of his own expressed view that the Central Government of Iran had every right to do so in response to Kameran Mirza's behaviour. He left Tehran in the Spring of 1838, suspending Anglo-Iranian relations in protest because he believed that Iran's possession of Herat was an evil against the interests of the British.<sup>(1)</sup>

In a despatch to Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister in London, McNeil strongly advised the British Government to intervene in this affair in support of rebellious Kameran Mirza, arguing:

*"Captain Vicovich continues to remain at Cabul, and I learn from Captain Burnes's communications that the success of his negotiations there will in a great measure depend on the failure of the Shah's enterprise against Herat. At Kandahar our position is even more precarious; and I have the honour to enclose a translation of a draft of a treaty between the Shah and the Chief of Kandahar, which it is proposed to conclude by the mediation and under the guarantee of Russia, and which has for its object to unite Herat and Kandahar under a chief, who shall be nominally subject to Persia, but actually under the protection of Russia. I am unable to inform your Lordship what progress has been made towards the conclusion of this treaty, or what view the Shah may have taken of the position, in respect to these countries, in which, by this arrangement, he would be placed; but the treaty is said to have been signed by Kohundil Khan, and I am not without any serious apprehensions that, even before the fall of Herat, Kohundil Khan may be induced to co-operate with the Shah; while, in the event of Herat's being reduced, I cannot doubt that the Chief of Kandahar will consider it to be for his advantage to connect himself with Persia and Russia rather than with England.*

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(1) Majmeh-e Ahdnameh-haye Tarikh, the Green Book, op. cit., p. 74.

"I therefore continue to be of opinion that the fall of Herat would destroy our position in Afghanistan, and place all, or nearly all, that country under the influence or authority of Russia and Persia.

"I need not repeat to your Lordship my opinion as to the effect which such a state of things would necessarily have on the internal tranquility and security of British India; and I cannot conceive that any treaty can bind as to permit the prosecution of schemes which threaten the stability of the British empire in the East."<sup>(1)</sup>

In an earlier despatch, Mr. McNeil argued:

"The pretensions of Persia to the sovereignty of Afghanistan appeared to me to be such, as we were neither called upon by a sense of justice, nor permitted by a due regard to our own security, to sanction or allow. I thought I could show from our Treaty with Persia, that the Afghans were looked upon by the Persian Government itself, at the time when that Treaty was signed, as an independent nation; while the fact of our having concluded a Treaty of defensive alliance with their Sovereign, in 1809, precluded the possibility, so long as they preserved their actual independence, of our being called upon to acknowledge them to be subjects of Persia."<sup>(2)</sup>

Thus convinced that Iran's undertaking against rebellious Kameran Mirza at Herat would seriously jeopardise vital British interests, Lord Palmerston and the Governor General of India, Lord Auckland,<sup>(3)</sup> informed the British public that it was imperative to defend Herat against Iran.

Meanwhile, a young English officer, named Eldred Pottinger, who had lived among the Heratis for sometime, supposedly on his own initiative, as a Moslem darvish, was encouraging the Heratis against Iran.

(1) Extract of letter from Mr. McNeill to Viscount Palmerston Dated Camp before Herat, April 11th, 1838, p. 85 FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

(2) Extracts of letter from Mr. McNeill to Lord Palmerston, dated Camp near Tehran, June 30, 1837, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

(3) Lord Auckland had replaced Lord William Bentinch in March 1837 as Governor General of India.

The siege of Herat began on November 23, 1837 and lasted for several months.<sup>(1)</sup> Most of the Afghan dignitaries were in favour of Iran's action in Herat: Dust Mohammad Khan, Amir of Kabul had practically encouraged Mohammad Shah to invest Herat. Omar Khan son of Kohandel Khan, Amir of Qandehar, joined the Iranians in their military action against Herat. Shams ad-Din Khan, an associate of Prince Kameran saw to the food requirements of the Iranians. Even Jalal ad-Din, son of Prince Kameran fought on the side of the Iranians.<sup>(2)</sup>

The British observers of the time, viewed the historical dependency of the Afghan chiefs on the Iranian Government in different lights, interpreting it variably to suit various arguments. Captain Hunt, for instance, blames these chiefs' dependency on Iran, on the inadequacy of British policies:

"The total neglect with which the British Government had hitherto treated these Afghan chiefs, - had led them to regard England with feelings of jealousy rather than of attachment; and had induced them to seek, in alliances with Persia and Russia, protection against the dangers with which they believed themselves to be threatened from the East. The chief of Cabul sent accredited agents almost simultaneously to the courts of Tehran and St. Petersburg, soliciting from both assistance against the Seiks. The chiefs of Candahar also sent agents into Persia; but as the greatest danger which they apprehended was from the power of Kamran, prince of Herat, their chief object was to concert with Persia a combined attack for the destruction of that power."<sup>(3)</sup>

This argument fundamentally contradicts the fact that the Afghan chiefs had traditionally been dependants of the Iranian Government, a historical fact attested by masses of documents, including a letter sent to Mohammad Shah Qajar, at the time of Captain Hunt, by Dust Mohammad Khan Chief or Amir of Kabul, in reply to a letter from the former assuring him of the kindness of the Iranian Government. In his letter, Dust Mohammad Khan asserted:

(1) The length of the siege has been reported variably by various historians, ranging between 3 to 10 months.

(2) Ghobar, op. cit., pp. 404 - 5.

(3) Hunt, Capt. G.H., op cit., p. 138.

"....., in the past years and in the olden times, the chiefs of this dynasty considered their country and Governments dependants of the mighty Government late Shahanshah (King of Kings), and from their heart, not in the form of lip service, joined that Government of universal proportions...."(1)

As dependants of Iran, these chiefs would naturally align themselves with Tehran in the situation of uncertainties, unless planned for cession which was the case with Prince Kameran Mirza of Herat at the time.

With the direct and indirect assistance provided by the British, Herat however, withstood the siege for several months. The British Government of India despatched from Bombay a naval task force which attacked Iran's southern provinces on the Persian Gulf. Sir John McNeil sent in July 1838 written message to Mohammad Shah informing him of the British action in the Persian Gulf and warned him of the consequences of his Government's undertaking against Herat. Apart from all else, McNeil argued in this message that the Iranian enterprise in Herat was being "totally incompatible with the spirit and intention of the alliance which (had) been established between Great Britain and Persia".<sup>(2)</sup> McNeil's reference in this regard is not clear as to which treaty or engagement would support his claim. There was no instance in any of the treaties signed prior to these events between Great Britain and Iran that would support Mr McNeil's aforementioned argument. Articles 2 and 3 of the political treaty of January 1801, speaks of the Iranian Government discouraging the Afghan King (Shah Shoja) from his possible designs against India, while article 4 speaks of British military support for the Iranian Government in the event of

(1) Extracts of letter from Dust Mohammad Khan to Mohammad Shah, FO 248/162, 170969. This letter has no date, but it is a reply to Mohammad Shah's letter dated Rabi al-Avval 1270 (1854).

(2) Extracts of written message delivered by Lieut. Colonel Stoddart to the Shah, enclosure 1 in No. 32, July 1838, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

an attack against Iran by the Afghan King<sup>(1)</sup> which was the case with Prince Kameran, regarded by the British persistently as an Afghan King, in his attack on the Iranian territories as was mentioned in Mr. McNeil's despatch of February 24th, 1837<sup>(2)</sup> quoted earlier.

Moreover, article IX of the Anglo-Iranian treaty of November 25, 1814, in fact prevents the British from interfering in any incident between Iran and the Afghans unless asked to do so. This article reads:

*"If war should be declared between the Afghans and Persians, the English Government shall not interfere with either party, unless their mediation to effect a peace shall be solicited by both parties."*<sup>(3)</sup>

The forces despatched from Bombay, under the command of Colonel Shariff,<sup>(4)</sup> landed on Iran's island of Kharg in the Persian Gulf. This measure proved to be effective as the Shah's Government appeared to be aware of the greater importance of the Iranian possessions in the Persian Gulf compared with the dependencies in Afghanistan. The British had already begun spreading their influence around the Persian Gulf. A series of treaties had been signed, as from 1820, with the chiefs of the tribes of the lower Gulf, the traditional Iranian sphere of influence.<sup>(5)</sup> The position in the Persian Gulf was viewed in Tehran as more vulnerable than that in the Eastern borderlands, thus, the Iranian Government decided to abandon its undertaking in Herat by

(1) Political treaty with England, Green Book, op. cit., p. 91

(2) Ibid

(3) Extracts of the Persian text of the treaty as appears in the Green Book, op. cit., pp. 91 - 126. This treaty was signed by Henry Allis, British Minister at Tehran. John McNeill was, at the time, secretary to the British Legation and replaced Allis as Minister in 1836.

(4) See; Mojtahehd-Zadeh, Pirouz (1970) "Emirates of the Persian Gulf", Tehran, Ataei Press, text in Persian.

(5) Ibid.

complying with the terms of McNeil's message. In a letter to the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, McNeil informed him:

"All my arrangements had been made for marching to-day towards the Turkish frontier, when yesterday afternoon a messenger arrived from Colonel Stoddart with letters informing me that the Shah had given a favorable answer to the message of which that Officer was the bearer. His Majesty had given a verbal promise to comply with the demands of the British Government, and a letter from Meerza Ali, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, of which I have the honour to inclose a translation, conveys to me, on the part of His Majesty, an unconditional written promise to the same effect.

"I learn from Teheran, that an intimation of these His Majesty's intentions has been made to the official authorities there, and His Excellency the Ameer Nizam (Mirza Taghi Khan Amir Kabir, then known as 'Amir Nezam') called upon me this morning to inform me, that he had been specially instructed by the Shah to induce me to suspend the prosecution of my journey and not to leave the Persian territory."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Iranian Government, thus decided to lift the siege and to withdraw its forces from Herat without punishing its rebellious ruler. The Iranians subsequently made some considerable concessions in order to satisfy the British. These concessions included relinquishing Iran's rights to the district of Ghurian, south of Herat and north of Sistan. Article 2 of Haji Mirza Aghasi's letter to Viscount Palmerston states:

"On the 5th of this month of Rajab (15th of September), orders have been issued to His Excellency the Ausef od-Dowleh, Governor of Khorasan, that he shall give up Ghurian, and deliver it to the Afghans after the arrival of the English Ambassador, who is to come here."<sup>(2)</sup>

Enclosure number 2 of this despatch was the English text of a decree from Mohammad Shah to the Governor General of Khorasan, dated 15th September 1839, ordering him:

(1) From McNeill to Viscount Palmerston, No. 49, dated Sept. 11, 1838, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

(2) Extracts of the Letter of 15th September 1839, from Haji Mirza Aghasi to Viscount Palmerston, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

"AS the English Government has requested the Persian Government that we should give up the Fort of Ghorian, in consideration of the friendship between the two exalted States, the wish of that Government has been honoured by our acceptance; and your Excellency, our honoured Uncle, is therefore ordered, in compliance with the wishes of the English Government, to give up that Fort and deliver it to the Affghans, after the arrival at our sublime court of the English Ambassador.

"Our honoured Uncle will therefore comply with these commands, stable as fate.

"This command is imperative."(1)

#### DIRECT DIPLOMACY IN AFGHANISTAN

The whole episode of the siege of Herat, however, increased the urgency for the British to expand their influence in the countries of Afghanistan. Still wary of the possibility of some Russian designs on the countries of Afghanistan, Lord Auckland, Governor General of India, sent a mission, for the expansion of commerce, to Afghanistan. This mission contacted the Amir of Kabul. When the mission reached Peshawar, a letter from W.H. MacNaughton, Secretary to the Indian Government, to the mission, turned it into a purely political mission.(2)

Dust Mohammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, received the mission with the kind of enthusiasm which did not last long. His brothers, the rulers of Qandehar, had already aligned themselves with the Iranians and their treaty with Iran greatly troubled the British, especially that article 2 of the treaty put the Sardars of Qandehar in possession of Herat. This article reads:

"We, (the Shah), have given the territory of Kandahar, and the territory of Herat with their dependencies to the Sirdars, with the exception of Shekiwan, and the territory beyond it, (towards Persia), and so long as they shall not have committed any act of opposition (or hostility), these

(1) Enclosure 2 of the above document.

(2) From Macnoughten to Burnes, dated 11 September 1837, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

territories shall be in their possession, and in that of their heirs; and if they should commit any act of opposition (or hostility), the circumstances shall first be communicated to the Sirdars, when if they rectify the error (or make reparation) it is well; but if they do not, then they shall be dealt with in whatever manner the haughty Government (of Persia) shall consider expedient."<sup>(1)</sup>

This undertaking on the part of the Iranian Government to the Sardars of Qandehar remained as a source of discomfort to the British who considered that "no state of affairs in Central Asia more favourable to the interest of British India, than the (then) division of power among the several rulers of Afghanistan".<sup>(2)</sup> Moreover, the British resolved to bring the entire countries of Afghanistan under their influence. They reached understanding with Shah Shoja (al-Molk) Abdali and the Governor of Sekuhéh, both of whom facilitated the British invasion of Afghanistan in 1839 with a force of 45,000 strong,<sup>(3)</sup> and established their influence as far north as the southern slopes of Hindukush. In the western parts of the countries of Afghanistan, Vazir Yar-Mohammad Khan, by then the Governor of Herat, soon forced Lieutenant Pottinger out of Herat and made overtures to the Iranian Government in March 1839 and to the chiefs of Qandehar, to cooperate with him against Shah-Shoja and his British supporters.

The rapid progress of the British forces in the countries of Afghanistan and the inactivity of the Iranians, however, prevented realisation of Yar-Mohammad Khan's dream of cooperation against them. "Qandehar was occupied shortly and Yar Mohammad Khan was among the first to congratulate Shah Shoja on the occasion".<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Extracts of the English translation of the treaty, enclosure 1 of McNeill's despatch No. 39 of August 1838 to Viscount Palmerston FO 539/1 - 10.

(2) Extracts of a letter from Mr. Macnoughten to Captain Burnes, dated November 1837, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

(3) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 446.

(4) Ferrier, op. cit., p. 526.

The British finally concluded a series of treaties with the chiefs of Qandehar and Herat in 1839, thus recognising these Iranian dependencies as independent principalities.<sup>(1)</sup>

DIRECT RIVALRIES BETWEEN IRAN AND  
BRITAIN IN THE EASTERN TERRITORIES

The British military expedition in Afghanistan and the treaties that they signed with the principalities of Herat and Qandehar, near the border areas of Iran, which placed British India as the guarantor of independence of these principalities, brought Iran and Britain face to face in those areas. It was as from the beginning of the 1840's that the two powers began to push the frontiers between them back and forth, a political process which eventually resulted in the formation of the Iran-Afghanistan boundaries.

Early in January 1840 the British Government demanded restoration of Ghurian to Herat. In reply, the Iranian Prime Minister informed Lieutenant Colonel J. Sheil, British Charge d'Affairs at Erzeum that Prince Kameran, former sovereign of Herat, so recognised by British India, had declared himself to be the faithful servant of the Shahanshah, that, "he merely tolerated the presence of the English envoy for expediency, although he was by no means niggardly in the expenditure of money, jewels, &c and that his (Prince Kameran's) hopes were in the asylum of Islam".<sup>(2)</sup> Upon receiving the news of this letter and overtures made to Iran by Vazir Yar-Mohammad Khan the new ruler of Herat, the British began to strengthen their position in Herat and other principalities close to the Iranian frontiers. Within a short period of time between 1839 and 1840, the British reoccupied Kalat, negotiated and brought under their control the principality of Khiveh, while Dust Mohammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, had also surrendered his principality to the British

(1) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 448.

(2) Ferrier, op. cit., Appendix F, p. 528.

without any resistance.<sup>(1)</sup> Accompanied by 150 members of his family and relations and servants, Dust Mohammad Khan went to live in India.

On their way back from Afghanistan, the British Indian forces annexed the district of Sind and Punjab. This new territorial addition brought the British Indians on the borders of Iran:

"The battle of Miani<sup>(2)</sup> (1843) and Guzerat<sup>(3)</sup> (1848) were significant political events, for the conquest of Sind and the annexation of the Punjab carried our whole frontier beyond the Indus, or to a line reaching from Peshawar on the north to Karachi on the south. Afghanistan and Baluchistan, thus became contiguous state to British India; and this contiguity of territorial possession could not fail to provoke, at least in some material respects, identity of interest....."<sup>(4)</sup>

The British Government sent Sir John McNeil back to Iran in 1841 to restore political relations with the Court of Qajar. The countries of Afghanistan were in turmoil and the British had strengthened their positions in the strategic points near the Iranian frontiers, including Girishk and Hirmand districts: During the British occupation of Afghanistan, the maintenance of Girishk was always considered an important object, as it not only defended the high road, and offered security to travellers, but presented a good military point against Herat. When the Afghan troubles broke out in November, 1841, the Governor of Herat being at that time unfriendly to the British, it was of particular importance to the British to maintain Girishk, and with this view Major Rawlinson, then political agent at Kandahar, was anxious not

(1) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 448.

(2) Mianeh.

(3) Gujerat.

(4) Goldsmid, Sir F. (1876), "Eastern Persia", Vol. 1, pp. IX - X introduction.

only to retain on the Helmund the regiment to whose care the fortress was entrusted, but to strengthen the position with reinforcements from the Kandahar garrison.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### A SUMMARY OF EVENTS LEADING TO IRAN'S OCCUPATION OF HERAT

In Herat, Yar-Mohammad Khan revolted against Prince Kameran in 1839 and took his place as the ruler of the principality. He informed Tehran of his loyalty and thereupon ventured on capturing Ghurian (1840) and forced Meimaneh and Hazareh to become tributaries of Herat. It was in 1841 when Yar-Mohammad Khan expelled Major Todd from Herat, and began a life of independence with loyalty to Tehran.

In 1847 when Hassan Khan Salar and Jafar Khan revolted in Mashhad and Sarakhs against Hamzeh Mirza Asef ad-Doleh, Young Naser ad-Din Shah's uncle and Governor General of Khorasan, the latter asked for Yar-Mohammad Khan's assistance. He despatched troops to Mashhad where the Heratis succeeded in freeing Hamzeh Mirza and took him to Herat. The Governor General remained in Herat for about three months, during which time, Prince Morad Mirza, another uncle of Naser ad-Din Shah, put down the revolt. Yar-Mohammad Khan was rewarded by Naser ad-Din Shah for his services by investing upon him the title "Zahir ad-Doleh" literally meaning "supporter of the Government". This title came to Yar-Mohammad Khan in the form of a farman accompanied with four cannons as a present from the Shah.<sup>(2)</sup> Having received the Shah's farman, Yar-Mohammad Khan officially restored Herat's traditional position as a principality dependent of Iran. A document prepared by the Iranian officials for circulation in Europe reads:

"Yar-Mohammad Khan, of Herat, came against the Salar.... and aided the Persians, performing every service to the Persian Government in the siege of Meshed. He provided horsemen, collected stores and did everything in his power without hesitation. His

(1) Ferrier, op. cit., p. 311, footnote.

(2) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 409.

presents and letters to the Shah constantly reached Tehran; and, in return, farmans and dresses of honour were sent to him from the Shah, the same as to former Governors of Herat. He coined the money in Herat in the name of the Shah of Persia, and he considered Herat as a portion of the Persian dominions."(1)

In 1850, the Sardars of Qandehar, allies of Iran according to the treaty of 1273 (1856) signed between them and the Government of Naser ad-Din Shah,(2) revolted against Yar-Mohammad Khan. Sardar Shir-Ali Khan, son of Mehr-Del Khan, advanced as far as Lash which was then a dependency of Herat. Mohammad-Sadeq Khan, son of Kohandel Khan, occupied Chokhansur, and later entered Girishk. Yar-Mohammad Khan's forces pushed Shir-Ali Khan out of Lash, and defeated Ahmad Khan Eshaqzaei, another Sardar of the district. He invited the defeated Sardars to unite with him, but before making any progress in this venture, he died (1850). Yar-Mohammad Khan's son, Saeed-Mohammad Khan, Governor of Lash and Jowain, succeeded him, and immediately declared loyalty to the Central Government of Iran by writing to the Shah. Having been named Governor of Herat in the place of his father by the Shah, and having received his dress of honour, he continued to serve like his father, and never made the slightest objection to send offerings to the Shah, to cause the "Khotbeh" (prayer) to be made in the Shah's name, or to do all that was necessary as a Governor and loyal servant. His brother, Mahomed Sadeq Khan, was sent by him to Tehran to attend upon and serve the Shah.(3)

(1) Extracts of clause 9 of the translation of paper drawn by the Iranian Ministers for publication in Europe, doc. 2, enclosure 1 of Mr. Murray's despatch to Earl of Clarendon, dated Tabrees, January 22, 1856, p. 3, British Documents of Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, part 1, from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War, section B, the Near and Middle East, 1856 - 1914, edited by David Gillard, Vol. 10, Persia, 1856 - 1885, University Publications of America 1984, hereafter referred to as the "F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, 1856 - 1885". The actual Foreign office reference numbers for these documents at P.R.O. are from: FO 60/207 to FO 60/227.

(2) For text see: the Green Book, op. cit., pp. 180 - 1.

(3) F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, op. cit.

Shortly after this development, Mohammad Sadiq Khan, son of Sardar Kohandel Khan of Qandehar entered Herat to take Saeed-Mohammad Khan's place, on the pretension that the people of Herat wanted him to do so. Saeed-Mohammad Khan asked for help from Tehran. Iranian troops, commanded by Abbas-Qoli Khan, entered Herat and occupied the citadel of the city in April 1852, leaving some of the Iranian troops at Ghurian, later reinforced by Sam Khan Ilkhani of Daregaz. Sam Khan was recalled in January 1853, but Abbas-Qoli Khan remained in Herat as Vizir to Saeed-Mohammad Khan. The Qandehar Sardars had also left Herat, on the understanding that they were allies of Iran and had no business in Herat whilst the Iranian forces were there and continued their protection of the principality.

Apprehensive of the deepening dependence of Herat and the Qandeharies on Iran, the British Minister at Tehran, Colonel Sheil did all he could to mobilise his Government to put an end to this process. In a letter to the Sadr Azam (Prime Minister) Mirza Agha Khan Nouri<sup>(1)</sup> of Iran, Sheil warned him of the consequences of Iran's interference" in Herat. An Iranian document states:

*"..... every day he had some occupation and worked for the Persian Ministers. Finding that his object could not be attained by these means, he wrote something plausible to his Government, and the British Ministers suspended all intercourse with Shfee Khan, the Persian Charge d'Affairs in London, and distinctly informed that functionary that until the Persian Ministers settled the affair of Herat with Colonel Sheil, relations would not be resumed with him."<sup>(2)</sup>*

An agreement, concluded on January 25, 1853, restricted both Governments of Iran and Britain from interfering in the affairs of Herat. Nevertheless, it somewhat clearly

(1) Mirza Agha Khan Etemad ad-Doleh Sadr Azam Nauri was Prime Minister from 1851 to 1857.

(2) Extracts of clause 10, doc. 2, enclosure 1, F.O., Book of Documents on Persia, January 22, 1856.

recognised the dependency of Herat on Iran. Paragraph 2 of the section on the engagements of the Iranian Government reads:

"The Persian Government also engages to abstain from all interference whatsoever in the internal affairs of Herat, likewise in (regard to) occupation or taking possession or assuming the sovereignty or Government, except that the same amount of interference which took place between the two in the time of the late, Zuheer-ood-Dowlah, Yar Mohammed Khan, is to exist as formerly...."(1)

The British Government, in return, undertook:

"If any foreign power, such as the Afghans, or others, should wish to interfere, and take possession of Herat territory, or its dependencies, and the Persian Ministers should request the British Ministers to prevent them by friendly means, and by advice from doing so, they will not object to do so...."(2)

Meanwhile, Saeed-Mohammad Khan, Governor of Herat, was overthrown in 1855 by his deputy, Nayeb Isa Khan, who claimed to have represented the will of the people of Herat for Saeed-Mohammad Khan's removal from the office. The latter was, by then, tainted with insanity.

Nayeb Isa Khan sent for Prince Yusof Abdali, grandson of Prince Firouz ad-Din in Mashhad, to come and claim the seat of authority in Herat. He entered the city on 15th September 1855 as the new ruler. Saeed-Mohammad Khan, the rightful ruler of Herat was subsequently murdered and Haji Kheirollah, the only Sardar who dared to defend Saeed-Mohammad Khan, was mortally wounded.

The Nayeb and the Prince extracted some of the wealth of Yar-Mohammad Khan and his son from the Alakaozais.<sup>(3)</sup> All

(1) Extracts of Anglo-Iranian agreement of 1853, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, op. cit., doc. 210, enclosure in doc 209, pp. 161 - 2.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Tate, op. cit., p. 158.

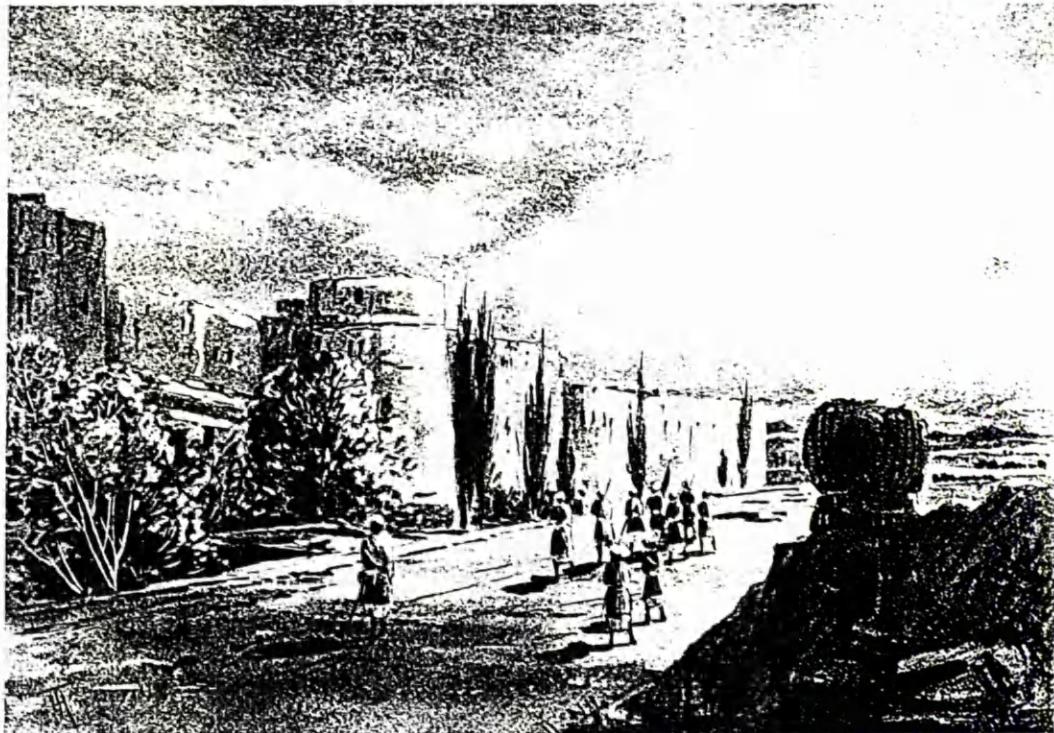
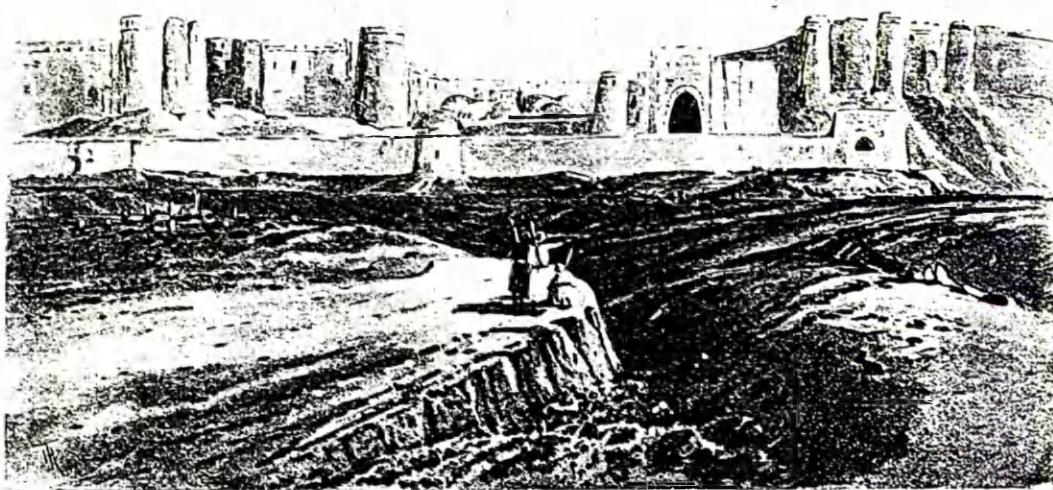
these events took place under the watchful eyes of the Iranians who were neither consulted in advance of these doings nor were extended a message of loyalty by the new rulers, a right for Iran which had been recognised by the British in the 1853 agreement (see previous page).

Herat's seat of authority was usurped by the Nayeb and the Prince who had also murdered the overthrown ruler and confiscated the private properties of the murdered ruler's family. This lawlessness, together with the general chaos that they brought to the principality, forced the Shah's Prime Minister, Sadr Azam Nouri, to amass troops under the command of his uncle Hessam ad-Doleh Morad Mirza, Governor General of Khorasan.

#### THE CAPTURE OF HERAT

The Iranian troops' mission was to reduce Herat and avenge the murder of Saeed-Mohammad Khan, and to bring back order to the principality. Nayeb Isa sought assistance from Amir Dust Mohammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, who had, with the help of the British, made a come-back on the scene of Afghan politics. The Amir of Kabul shunned any assistance and, like his Qandehari brothers, cousins and nephews, refused to meddle with Iran's "internal affairs". The Nayeb was, thus, left with no alternative but to send Prince Yusof to Prince Morad Mirza as a guarantee of loyalty, promising to make up for his conduct. The Prince was taken to Tehran where he was tried and executed for having murdered Saeed-Mohammad Khan. The siege of the city of Herat which began in April 1856, nonetheless, continued. The British Ministers at Tehran, Ch. A. Murray, had departed from Tehran on December 5th 1855, as a result of misunderstandings with the Iranian officials. Mirza Shafi,<sup>(1)</sup> Iran's Charge d'Affairs in London was informed that relations between the two Governments were

(1) A great grandfather of this author.



Two views of the walls around the city of Herat in the late nineteenth century, as appeared in "the Indian Borderland 1880-1990" by Colonel Sir T Hungerford Haldich, London 1901, pp. 140-1

suspended.<sup>(1)</sup> The Iranian forces, however, succeeded in capturing Herat on 25th of Safar 1273 AH (1856). An Iranian poet<sup>(2)</sup> marked this date in the following words:

*"As seventy three was added to a thousand and two, it marked the date of the capturing of Herat."*

At this time, Amir Dust Mohammad Khan of Kabul had expanded his dominions almost all over Afghanistan. He had taken possession of Qandehar from his nephews in August 1855,<sup>(3)</sup> and Herat was the only district (of the present country of Afghanistan) which was left outside his newly expanded kingdom. As the Iranian forces entered Herat, the Khans and tribal chiefs of the entire region went to Prince Morad Mirza Hessam as-Saltaneh declaring their allegiance to the Government of Iran. These whole events apparently disturbed Dust Mohammad Khan who was endeavouring to revive Ahmad Shah Durrani's dominion as the country of Afghanistan. The developments in Herat came as a blow to his designs and drew him ever closer to the British who were also perturbed by these events.

In connection with these events, the Foreign Office's confidential documents contain messages to the British from a certain "Essan Khan" asking them to intervene in Herat. This name does not appear in the local documents and is unfamiliar in local custom. The only likelihood that this author can see is that the messages came from Nayeb Isa Khan and that the officers of the British Indian diplomatic services had misinterpreted the name. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that Nayeb Isa Khan's name also does not appear in the said documents. Nayeb Isa Khan, according to these documents, sent a petition to Mr Murray pledging himself, the principality and the people of Herat to the

(1) The Green Book, op. cit., p. 75.

(2) Mirza Shafa.

(3) Tate. op. cit., p. 158.

British, asking them to take over his principality. In a letter sent to the Earl of Clarendon, through Mr. Murray, he asserts:

".... I swear by God, who has no equal, and by all the inspired writings of the prophets (on whom be peace) which have been handed down to us, especially by Koran and Mohammad, I swear that the entire control of the city, the country, servants, and subjects, with all authority that is exercised, shall be with the Government (of Britain): and this your slave, now ruler of Herat, does hereby accept and adopt of his own free will and pleasure, the service of the state, which he will perform in all sincerity, truthfulness, and devotion, and he will delegate to the Government everything he now possesses, land, countries, servants and subjects, with full authority over them, and God willing, he will never act contrary thereto. The proof of this compact and agreement is, that whatever gentleman comes on the part of the state, he shall at once be installed and have at his disposal the country and people...."(1)

Nayeb Isa Khan's double dealing must have become clear to the Iranians and thus he was assassinated on his way back from the Iranian camp outside the city of Herat. The Iranians appointed Soltan Ahmad Khan, son of Mohammad Azim Khan, who had turned against Dust Mohammad Khan of Kabul, his own father-in-law, as the new Governor of Herat. He immediately assumed the title "Shah of Herat as was customary of Herat leadership at the time. He made coinage and Khotbeh in the name of Naser ad-Din Shah Qajar "Shahanshah" of Iran.(2)

The Iranians, on the other hand, suspected that Dust Mohammad Khan must have taken Qandehar with the help of the British and at their instigation, and that he intended to take Herat as well.(3) In their correspondence with the Iranians and

(1) Extracts of statements made by Essan Khan's messengers to the British authorities, dated August 12, 1856, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, doc. 155, enclosure in doc. 154, pp. 126 - 7.

(2) Extracts of paper drawn by Persian Ministers, F.O. Book of Documents, op. cit., p. 3.

(3) Ibid.

the intermediaries, the British Indians denied having anything to do either with Dust Mohammad Khan's annexation of Qandehar, or with his designs on Herat. Nevertheless, the remaining documents of correspondence between the British diplomats and military officers and the British Government personnel suggest otherwise. In a despatch to London, Sir Justin Sheil expresses delight that Dust Mohammad Khan had occupied Qandehar. He asserts:

*"The proposition of the Persian Government to evacuate or retire from Herat on condition that Dust Mahomed should restore Candahar to Kohandil Khan's family, and engage to abstain from aggression on Herat, seems to me wholly inadmissible. For what it amounts to but that on committing a deliberate breach of faith, instead of punishment, Persia receives a reward for her perfidy. Candehar has escaped from the control of Persia, and should be preserved from again falling under it."*<sup>(1)</sup>

Furthermore, when Mohammad Sadiq Khan, son of Dust Mohammad Khan took Farah, a dependency of Herat,<sup>(2)</sup> not only did the British not protest against the move but were thinking of paving the way for the success of Dust Mohammad Khan's designs on Herat. In a despatch to the Chief Commissioner for Punjab, Lieutenant Colonel Edwards pointed out:

*"I asked if it were possible for Essan Khan to come to any understanding with the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan. They (the Afghan envoys) said 'yes' if any English officer came between and settled the terms.... If the British Government ordered Essan Khan to hold Herat under the Ameer of Cabul, paying yearly tribute of camels and horses as an acknowledgement of dependency."*<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Extracts of Sir Justin Sheil's despatch to M. Hamond, dated Dec. 18, 1856, doc. 209, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, op. cit., p. 160.

(2) From Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, dated Jan. 18, 1857, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, op. cit., doc 234, p. 181.

(3) Clause 14 of despatch of Lieu. - Colonel Edwards to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner for the Punjab, dated Huzara, September 18, 1856, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, doc. 189, p. 147.

All these, not only contradicted the obligations suggested in the Iranian Government's contracted engagement, relative to Herat in January 1853, whereby the British Government accepted to "prevent, by friendly means, foreign powers, such as the Afghans, or others" from "interfere, and take possession of the Herat territory, or its dependencies"<sup>(1)</sup> but also were contradictory to the terms of clause 3 of the same document of the testimonies of envoys of Essan Khan (Isa Khan) which declared "Persia, Khiva, Bokhara, and Afghanistan" as enemies of Herat.<sup>(2)</sup>

The British Government, however, declared war on Iran on November 1st, 1856<sup>(3)</sup> over the question of Herat. British forces, commanded by General Sir James Outram, occupied a number of Iranian ports and islands in the Persian Gulf and informed the Iranians of their conditions for peace. The British conditions contained mainly withdrawal, on the part of Iran, not only of all military forces from Herat and dependencies, but also of all claims to Herat and what was then termed as the countries of Afghanistan. The Russians, suspected of mobilising to support Iran, were pacified:

*"We learn with satisfaction that our principal conditions are considered reasonable by the Russian Government. You will inform them that we think it better to settle the whole at once, as subsequent negotiations might lead to fresh disagreement.*

*We cannot stop the expedition, which by this time must have occupied points in the Persian territory; but as we have no wish to press too severely on Persia, its operations shall not be extended while there is any hope of our conditions being accepted."<sup>(4)</sup>*

(1) Extracts of Engagement Contracted by the Persian Government, relative to Herat, dated January 25, 1853, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, doc. 210, p. 162.

(2) See: Essan Khan's message to the British authorities, dated 12th of August 1856, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia, doc. 155, enclosure in doc. 154, pp. 126 - 7.

(3) Tate, op. cit., p. 212.

(4) Extracts of Letter from the Earl of Clarendon to Lord Wodehouse, dated F.O. December 25, 1856, doc. 217, F.O. Book of Documents on Persia p.165.

Meanwhile, the British began openly disregarding Iran's historical interest in Herat by claiming that the action in Herat was a display of an intention of threat against Qandehar and other areas occupied by Amir Dust Mohammad Khan of Kabul. Not only did the British not raise objections, as was promised in the last paragraph of the 1853 engagements of the Iranian Government that the British also accepted, to Dust Mohammad Khan's occupation of Qandehar and Farah, but they signed an agreement with him on 6th January 1857, whereby they allied themselves with him and undertook to pay him monthly as long as the latter kept the Iranians busy in war:

*"Whereas the Shah of Persia contrary to his engagement with the British Government, has taken possession of Herat, and has manifested an intention to interfere in the present possession of Ameer Dost Mohammad Khan, and there is now war between the British and Persian Governments, therefore the Honourable East India Company, to aid Ameer Dost Mohammad Khan to defend and maintain his present possessions in Balkh, Cabool and Candahar against Persia, hereby agrees out of friendship to give the said Ameer one lakh of Company's Rupees monthly during the war with Persia,...."<sup>(1)</sup>*

Amir Dust Mohammad Khan signed this agreement with the British, against Iran, in direct contravention of the fact attested by himself in a letter to the Shah of Iran<sup>(2)</sup> that not only Herat and Qandehar, but also his own principality of Kabul had been dependencies of Iran<sup>(3)</sup>.

British forces, however, occupied the Iranian island of Khark in the Persian Gulf on December 4th, 1856; British Indian troops disembarked at Bandar Abbas on December 9th; the Iranians were dislodged from Bushehr on January 27th, 1857; General Sir James Outram landed at Bandar Abbas,

(1) Tate, op. cit., p. 212.

(2) The original Persian text of this letter and a number of relevant letters do not have any detectable dates. The enclosure to the despatch to James Murrat by Secretary to the Gov. of India, dated Feb. 25, 1856, FO 248/16.

(3) Ibid.

and on February 8, 1857 Iranian forces were defeated at Borazjan on March 26; and Khorramshahr (then Mohammareh) was occupied by the British forces.<sup>(1)</sup> This military expedition, once again, made the Iranian Government give up Herat, as Tehran seems to have been aware of the supreme importance of Iran's position in the Persian Gulf, compared with the possession on the border areas of Afghanistan. At the same time, London "looked on the Indian Government's expedition of the entire Iranian coasts and islands of the Persian Gulf with discomfort".<sup>(2)</sup> The British, therefore, were said to have made overtures to Napoleon III of France who had also been approached by the Iranians. As a result of mediation by the French Government, a treaty of 15 articles was signed in Paris on March 4, 1857. The Iranians, submitted to the conditions laid down by the British, and Farrokh Khan Amin al-Molk, the Iranian Ambassador extraordinary to Paris, signed with R.H. Henry Richard Charles Baron Cowley, British Ambassador extraordinary to Paris. Article 5 of this agreement dealt with the withdrawal of the Iranian forces from Herat and the adjacent districts<sup>(3)</sup> - (for the full text of the treaty, see Appendix III). Article 6 of the treaty compels Iran to relinquish all her rights and claims in connection with Herat and the "countries of Afghanistan". Furthermore, the Iranian Government undertook other concessions, including the recognition of Herat's independence and never to attack or interfere with the independence of the state of Herat and other principalities of Afghanistan. This treaty was ratified at Baghdad on May 2, 1857.

As the Eastern Iranian frontiers shifted, therefore, to the territories to the west of Herat, Ghurian and Farah, and as boundary delimitation was next on the agenda of British

(1) Tate, op. cit., p. 212.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Treaty of Peace between her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the Shah of Persia, F.O. 60/403, No. xc/69020, p.2, see Appendix III.



*Iranian diplomatic mission to the  
peace conference with Britain - Paris - March 1857*

Ambassador Extraordinary Farrokh Khan Amin al-Molk seated. Third from right standing is Mirza Malkam Khan Nezam ad-Doleh who, as acting Foreign Minister in 1873, signed General Goldsmid's Sistan Boundary Arbitration awards.

(Photograph as appeared in Rahavard quarterly  
Persian Publication,  
No.23, Summer of 1990 Los Angeles, US, p.340)



*Illustrated London News, 14 February 1857*

(Queen Victoria found Farrokh Khan  
"a fine looking man")

A Persian miniature of Farrokh Khan Amin al-Molk (later Amin ad-Doleh) as appeared in *Illustrated London News*, 14 February 1857, and reappeared in Denis Wright's "The Persians Among the British."

With the Permission of Sir Denis Wright

Indian political designs concerning these areas, article 6 of the 1857 peace treaty of Paris provided for the British to be party to such boundary arrangements between Iran and Afghanistan. The third paragraph of article 6 of this treaty made it clear that:

*"In case of differences arising between the Government of Persia and the countries of Herat and Afghanistan, the Persian Government engages to refer them for adjustment to the friendly offices of the British Government and not to take up arms unless those friendly offices fail of effect."*<sup>(1)</sup>

Despite these developments, Sardar Sultan Ahmad Shah, King of Herat, appointed by Iranian central authorities in 1856,<sup>(2)</sup> not only continued in this capacity until 1863, but remained loyal to Iran in spite of the terms of the first paragraph of article 6 of the 1857 peace treaty which engaged Iran not to:

*"....demand from the Chiefs of Herat, or of the countries of Afghanistan, any marks of obedience, such as the coinage or 'Khootbeh', or tribute."*<sup>(3)</sup>

There is no evidence suggesting that Iran asked Herat to remain loyal to the Central Government at Tehran or to pay annual tribute. Sardar Sultan Ahmad Shah of Herat himself continued his own and his principality's loyalty to Iran even after the signing of the 1857 peace treaty of Paris between the British and the Iranians which effectively declared Herat a principality independent of both Iran and Afghanistan. This was not what Amir Dust Mohammad Khan of Kabul desired. Having established himself firmly in Qandehar and having seized Herat's dependency of Farah, Dust Mohammad Khan ordered Sardar Mohammad Sharif, his Governor of Farah, to march his troops northwards. Herat's dependencies of Ghurian and Sagher were seized in 1860. Sardar Sultan Ahmad Shah, for his part, moved troops southward and recaptured Farah

(1) Extracts of third paragraph of article 6 of 1856 treaty of Paris, *Ibid.*

(2) See previous pages.

(3) First paragraph of the 1857 peace treaty, see appendix IV for text.

itself in 1861. This measure provided Dust Mohammad Khan with the necessary pretext for action against Herat. On 28th June 1862, intelligence received in Tehran that Amir Dust Mohammad Khan had reached Qandehar, with the aim of marching on Herat. The Iranian Government informed the British Ambassador, in accordance with the last paragraph of article 6 of the 1857 peace treaty that Sardar Amin Khan and Sardar Sharif Khan had invested Farah on behalf of Dust Mohammad Khan, and asked for British<sup>(1)</sup> intervention. The British remained inactive on the subject. Farah fell on 8th July that year, and Dust Mohammad Khan marched on Herat. He captured Sabzevar (now of Afghanistan) on 22nd July.<sup>(2)</sup> Herat was put under siege immediately, which continued for several months.<sup>(3)</sup> During the siege of the city of Herat, Sultan Ahmad Shah's wife, Amir Dust Mohammad Khan's daughter, died (January 1863). Shortly after her death, Sultan Ahmad Shah himself passed away (April 1863). The defence of the city was continued by Sultan Ahmad Shah's son, Sardar Shahnavaaz Khan, a grandson of Dust Mohammad Khan. The grandson's resistance against the grandfather's tightening siege of the city proved ineffective, and Dust Mohammad Khan entered Herat shortly afterwards.

The Iranian Government's appeal to the British Government was to assist Sardar Shahnavaaz Khan by lifting the siege of Herat. Mr Eastwick was assigned by the British Legation of Tehran, to see to the matter. He was made Her Majesty's

(1) Engagements of British Government under article 6 of of 1857 treaty: FO 60/403, pp. 8 - 9.

"The British Government, on their part, engage at all times to exert their influence with the State of Afghanistan to prevent any cause of umbrage being given by them, or by any of them, to the Persian Government; and the British Government, when appealed to by the Persian Government, in the event of difficulties arising, will use their best endeavours to compose such differences in a manner just and honourable to Persia."

(2) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 587.

(3) G.P. Tate asserts that the City of Herat was invested by Amir Dust Mohammad Khan on 27th of July 1862 which cannot be correct as Dust Mohammad Khan died in June 1863 only a week after capturing Herat.

Charge d'Affairs at Herat, but was directed to return to Tehran empty handed. Dust Mohammad Khan thus invested Herat and fulfilled his dream of creating the kingdom of Afghanistan within the territories now known as the country of Afghanistan. His joy was but short-lived, and he died on the 19th June 1863,<sup>(1)</sup> only a week or two after capturing Herat.

### CONCLUSION

The political and military paralysis of the Iranian Government, resulting from the terms of the 1857 peace treaty of Paris, allowed finalisation of the partitioning of Khorasan, and paved the way for the creation of the Kingdom of Afghanistan. Ahmad Shah Durrani<sup>(2)</sup> had in the second half of the eighteenth century created the kingdom of Afghanistan, but it collapsed shortly after his death in 1772, for it did not have the necessary geographical, historical and cultural substances which could keep Herat and Qandehar in a lasting union with Kabul and other areas of diversified spatial structures of human societies. Herat, for instance was more a Khorasani environment than anything else, and as Lord Curzon asserted, it was a geographical, historical and cultural extension of Mashhad rather than being Afghan. Dust Mohammad Khan succeeded in the second half of the nineteenth century in recreating the Kingdom of Afghanistan with the direct assistance of the British Indians when it was necessary, such as in the case of capturing Qandehar, and with British India's inactivity when it mattered, such as in the case of the annexation of Herat. This whole process was entirely in contradiction with the aforementioned British claims that Iran had territorial designs against the countries of Afghanistan and that Dust Mohammad Khan did not have any designs on Qandehar and

(1) Ghobar, op. cit., p. 589.

(2) Ahmad Shah Durrani, born 1722, died 1772.

Herat. The country of Afghanistan was thus created to suit the strategic desires of India in relations with Iran and Russia. The clamour intensifying in the British empire in the 1830's, 1840's and 1850's of a possible joint Russo-Iranian design or Russian design against India through Iran has never been substantiated properly, except for the enthusiastic geopolitical and strategic assumption of Sir John McNeil and Sir Justin Sheil. The following indications prove this view:

1. There is not any evidence in the existing documents both in English and Persian, remotely suggesting that there was an understanding between Iran and Russia concerning India or the Iranians wanting to transform the traditional semi-independent principalities of Herat and Qandehar into annexed territories of Iran.
2. Iran had suffered two major humiliations at the hands of the Russians by the signing of the treaties of Golestan (1813) and Turkmanchai (1828) and the power and influence of the House of Qajar was in sharp decline. In a state as feeble as Iran was under the Qajars, especially after 1828, it would be more like a miracle for Iran to have had any designs against any neighbouring territory, let alone threatening the possessions of a great power in India.
3. Although the British had quite correctly assumed that a "weak" Iran would make it possible for the Russians to gain prominent influence in that country which could be used in threatening India, it should be noted that considering her deep distrust of both major powers (Britain and Russia), especially after the treaty of Turkmanchai 1828, it would be highly unlikely that Iran would join Russia in a far-reaching strategic plan against British India.

Contrary to these realities, Sir John McNeil's strategic assessments of Herat and the so-called countries of

Afghanistan were adopted by the British. Yet, there are indications that London remained somewhat uneasy on the question of denying Iran completely of her rights in Herat:

*"Persian claims to Herat were of long standing. It had been the capital of Eastern Khorasan and geographically was not separated by any natural barrier from Mashhad."*(1)

This is an echo of the statement made earlier by Lord Curzon on the fact that Herat had been a historical part of Iran's Eastern Khorasan.(2) Yet convinced of the vitality of Sir John McNeil's strategic assessments, Lord Curzon, like most other officers and diplomats serving in India, was critical of the London Government's repeated proposal of returning Herat to Iran:

*"Lord Beconsfield after the war of 1878 committed the inexplicable error of proposing once again to hand over Herat....'Key of India' to Persia to the tender mercies of the Czar."*(3)

The British in the meantime, began consolidating their position in Kalat of Baluchistan, another historical dependency of Iran, where the two sides disputed almost every village, every hamlet and every piece of land in a vast stretch of territory. This development, together with the expansionist drives of Dust Mohammad Khan's successor, Shir Ali Khan (a British protected individual) in Sistan and areas to the west of Ghurian and Farah, narrowed down the corridor of land in which political push by the two powers (Iran and British India) against one another took place, to a stretch beginning from Quetta Bay to the south, to Central Khorasan to the north, and set the grounds for the emergence of the Eastern Iranian boundaries.

(1) Persian Frontiers, Section on boundaries with Afghanistan, RRX/7/i, FO 371/40219, p. 2.

(2) See introduction and relevant reference.

(3) Curzon, George N, op. cit., p. 586.

Appendix ICopy of the Draft of a Treaty sealed by Kohundil Khan<sup>(+)</sup>

Proposed terms of a Treaty between His Majesty Mohammed Shah and Kohundil Khan, Sirdar of Kandahar, under the sealed guarantee of the Russian Ambassador at Tehran.

\*\*\*\*\*

I, as Minister Plenipotentiary of the Russian Government at the Court of Persia, guarantee the fulfilment of the following conditions of treaty between His Majesty Mohammed Shah and the Sirdar of Kandahar:-

1st. The Principality of Herat is to be bestowed by the Shah on the rulers of Kandahar, as a reward for their faithful services performed to him since his accession to the throne of Persia.

2nd. The territories and tribes at present subject to the Sirdars of Kandahar to be preserved to them free of violence, injury or confiscation.

3rd. The Persian Government in no way to amalgamate with their own subjects any of the Afghan tribes, great or small, or to employ them upon service unconnected with their own affairs; and all business relative to the Afghan states to be submitted by the Persian Government to the rulers of Kandahar.

4th. The Prince Kameran and his Minister Yar Mohammad Khan to be excluded from all participation in the councils of Persia.

5th. Should any hostile movement be made against Kandahar by Shooja-ool-Molk, the English, or the Ameer of Cabul, aid to be afforded by the Shah to the Sirdars.

6th. In the event of the sons or brothers of Kohundil Khan coming with an auxiliary force to the royal camp, no violence or injury to be in any way offered to the persons or property of them or their followers, and none of them to be detained as hostages, with the exception of a single son of Kohundil Khan's, who will always remain in the service of the Shah.

7th. A contingent of twelve thousand horse and twelve guns to be supplied by the Kandaharees to garrison Herat, receiving pay and rations from them, and to assist the Shah on occasion of service.

8th. On the arrival of treaty duly ratified at Kandahar, Mahommad Omar Khan to be immediately dispatched to the royal presence.

(+) This is the only copy of the treaty that this author cited in General Ferrier's Book "Caravan Journeys and Wandering in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkmanistan, Baloochistan", London 1857, pp. 508 - 9.

9th. After the presentation of this Prince, the necessary money for the outfit of the horse and artillery to be made over by the Persian Government to the Sirdars of Kandahar; Sirdar Mehrdil Khan to be then sent with a thousand horse to the royal camp. This Prince being presented, and mutual confidence being established between the Shah and the Sirdars, no other demand to be made upon the Kandaharees by the Persian Government than that of military service. Should Mohammed Shah fail to fulfil any of these several conditions, or depart in any way from the stipulations, I as Minister Plenipotentiary of the Russian Government, becoming myself responsible, will oblige him, in whatever way may be necessary, to act fully up to the terms and conditions of the treaty. This Memorandum is framed as draft of the proposed terms of treaty.

*True Translation*

(Signed) H.C. RAWLINSON, Major.

Appendix II

Text of the Memorandum of Haji Mirza Aghasi, in reply to Yar-Mohammad Khan's proposals, sent to the British Prime Minister<sup>(+)</sup>

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"The first point is that war, marauding and the capture of prisoners shall cease. - As all these things are opposed to obedience, it is evident that they will, as a matter of course cease, when Prince Kameran acknowledges subjection to Persia. He who is obedient must be obedient under every circumstance.

Second point - As Herat with its dependencies is one of the provinces of Persia, whenever the exigencies of the state require troops to be despatched in any direction, Herat, like other provinces of the kingdom must furnish troops and provisions.

Throughout the propositions of Futtah Mahomed Khan, the designation applied to Prince Kameran is Kameran Shah. This is precisely the point which is the cause of the movement of troops, that these pretensions may be destroyed. Two kings cannot dwell in one kingdom. The title of Feridoon Meerza, the Governor General of Fars, which is ten times as large as Herat, is Ameerzadeh, son of a prince, (not prince). This phrase conveys the impression of disobedience and refractoriness, and the remedy is to cease to employ such expressions.

In regard to the first proposition of the engagements by Persia, that the King of Kings of Iran shall treat Prince Kameran as his brother. - The treatment of the King, the Asylum of the Faith, to Feridoon Mirza, (the King of Persia's brother) is that of master to his servant. Let Prince Kameran be like Feridoon Meerza,, for higher expectations would be presumptuous. It might indeed be proposed that he should be treated with more favour than His Majesty's brother; but no one can aspire to be regarded as brother to the King of Kings; for all are devoted servants of the Great King.

Third Point. - That tribute shall be paid annually at the Noorooz. He who is obedient must of course pay tribute and taxes; He must read the Khootbeh (prayers which imply royalty), and strike the coin in the name of the king, the Asylum of the Faith (King of Persia); and he must, at all times, and on all occasions, acknowledge his obedience and subjection; and he must avoid the inconsistency of

(+) Enclosure 3 in No. 3 of Mr McNeill's despatch to Viscount Palmerston, dated July 1837, pp.  
11 - 12, FO 539/1 - 10 (microfilm).

endeavouring to form a Treaty as if Persia and Herat were two separate kingdoms.

Fourth Point. - The protection of merchants - This clause resembles the preceding, for the greater question includes minor points. - The line of conduct for a person under subjection is this: he must protect the Ryots and merchants of the country entrusted to his charge; and if any property is destroyed, he must make good the loss; all persons who travel in this country must enjoy perfect security in the same manner as existed in the time of the Seffavean kings, (may God have mercy on them), nor must there be any occasion for their feeling alarm or taking precautions for their safety.

Fifth Point. - Regarding hostages; hostages selected from the principle persons of Herat and its dependencies, must come and reside at Meshed, and when perfect confidence has been acquired of the submission and subjection of Herat, they will of course obtain leave to depart (nay, Herat itself may become a place for securing other hostages); but two persons or five persons as hostages will not be sufficient.

Persian Government will not interfere in the affairs of Herat, and any deviation from this course will be contrary to royal justice; but if otherwise, beyond a doubt changes and alterations will be introduced, and the severest punishments will be inflicted on the people of that country.

In regard to the third proposition; why should military expeditions be undertaken against a country which has acknowledged its subjection? Troops are sent against the rebellious and refractory - not the submissive and obedient. Who would seek to inflict evil on his own dominions?

In regard to the fourth proposition, - the British Government, from the friendship subsisting between both states, is always listened to, whenever it gives counsel to Persia and its provinces. After the acknowledgement of subjection by the people of Herat, and the performance of service, then whatever the British Government recommends, shall be without doubt assented to.

The language which Futteh Mahomad Khan held to Your Excellency, varied exceedingly from the letters which Yar Mahomad Khan (Vizier of Herat) addressed to the Ausef-ud-Dowleh, and which your excellency has perused and taken a copy of; the propositions have no connection with that document; therefore no confidence is to be placed in the declarations of Futteh Mahomad Khan; and if any discussion were to take place, no reliance could be held in his assertions.

Undoubtedly Your Excellency has heard the complaints against the Affghans which have been forwarded to this Court. Recently, too, the nobles and priesthood of Khorassan, for instance such persons as this Meerza Eskeree, the chief priest, and Haji Meerza Moosa Khan, and foreigners and natives, have made representations on this subject. I have sent these representations to Your Excellency; and, after perusal, I beg you to give me your opinion on the answer that ought to be written, and on the course that it is incumbent on His Majesty to adopt under such circumstances.

In truth it would be contrary to manliness to suffer such proceedings with patience. I need give no further trouble.

14th of Rebee-oll-eevel, 1253  
Translated by  
(signed) J SHEIL,

Appendix III

Treaty of Peace between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the Shah of Persia.(1)(+)

\*\*\*\*\*

Signed, in the English and Persian Languages, at  
Paris, March 4, 1857

[Ratifications exchanged at Baghdad, May 2, 1857]

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE ALMIGHTY, THE ALL-MERCIFUL.

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty, whose Standard is the Sun, the Sacred, the August, the Great Monarch, the absolute King of Kings of all states of Persia, being both equally and sincerely animate by a desire to put a stop to the evils of war which is contrary to their friendly wishes and dispositions, and to re-establish on a solid basis the relations of amity which had so long existed between the two exalted states, by means of a peace calculated for their mutual advantage and benefit, have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries, for carrying into effect this desired object, the following, that is to say:

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Right Honourable Henry Richard Charles, Baron Cowley, a Peer of the United Kingdom, a Member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to his Majesty the Emperor of the French, &c.,&c.,&c.;

And His Majesty the Shah of Persia, His Excellency the Abode of Greatness, the Favourite of the King, Ferokh Khan, Amen Olmolk, the Great Ambassador of the Mighty State of Persia, the Possessor of the Royal Portrait, and of the Blue Cordon, the Bearer of the Diamond studded Girdle, &c.,&c.,&c.;

Who, having exhibited and exchanged full powers, and found them to be in due form, have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles:-

(1) Afghanistan is spelled in the text of this document as "Affghanistan".

(+) F.O. 60/403, pp. 8 - 9.

## ARTICLE I.

From the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present Treaty, there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom and Ireland, on the one part, and His Majesty the Shah of Persia, on the other, as likewise between their respective successors, dominions, and subjects.

## ARTICLE II.

Peace being happily concluded between Their said Majesties, it is hereby agreed that the forces of Her Majesty the Queen shall evacuate the Persian territory, subject to conditions and stipulations hereafter specified.

## ARTICLE III.

The High Contracting Parties stipulate that all prisoners taken during the war by either belligerent shall be immediately liberated.

## ARTICLE IV.

His Majesty the Shah of Persia engages, immediately on the exchange of the ratifications of the Treaty, to publish a full and complete amnesty, absolving all Persian subjects who may have in any way compromised by their intercourse with the British forces during the war, from any responsibility for their conduct in that respect, so that no persons, of whatever degree, shall be exposed to vexation, persecution, or punishment, on that account.

## ARTICLE V.

His Majesty the Shah of Persia engages further to take immediate measures for withdrawing from the territory and city of Herat, and from every other part of Afghanistan, the Persian troops and authorities now stationed therein: such withdrawal to be effected within three months from the date of exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty.

## ARTICLE VI.

His Majesty the Shah of Persia agrees to relinquish all claims to sovereignty over the territory and city of Herat and the countries of Afghanistan, and never to demand from the Chiefs of Herat, or of the countries of Afghanistan, any marks of obedience, such as the coinage, or "khotbeh" or tribute.

His Majesty further engages to abstain hereafter from all interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan. His Majesty promises to recognize the independence of Herat, and of the whole of Afghanistan, and never to attempt to interfere with the independence of those States.

In case of differences arising between the Government of Persia and the countries of Herat and Affghanistan, the Persian Government engages to refer them for adjustment to the friendly offices of the British Government, and not to take up arms unless these friendly offices fail of effect.

The British Government, on their part, engage at all times to exert their influence with the States of Affghanistan, to prevent the cause of umbrage being given by them, or by any of them, to the Persian Government; and the British Government, when appealed to by the Persian Government, in the event of difficulties arising, will use their best endeavours to compose such differences in a manner just and honourable to Persia.

#### ARTICLE VII.

In case of any violation of the Persian frontier by any of the States referred to above, the Persian Government shall have the right, if due satisfaction is not given, to undertake military operations for the repression and punishment of the aggressors; but it is distinctly understood and agreed to, that any military force of the Shah which may cross the frontier for the aforementioned purpose, shall retire within its own territory as soon as its object is accomplished, and that the exercise of the above-mentioned right is not to be made a pretext for the permanent occupation by Persia, or for the annexation to the Persian dominions, of any town or portion of the said States.

#### ARTICLE VIII.

The Persian Government engages to set at liberty without ransom, immediately after the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, all prisoners taken during the operations of the Persian troops in Affghanistan, and all Affghans who may be detained either as hostages or as captives on political grounds in any part of the Persian dominions shall, in like manner, be set free; provided that the Affghans on their part are set at liberty, without ransom, the Persian prisoners and captives who are in the power of the Affghans.

commissioners on the part of the two Contracting Powers shall;, if necessary, be named to carry out the provisions of this Article.

#### ARTICLE IX.

The High Contracting Parties engage that, in the establishment and recognition of Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls, and consular Agents, each shall be placed in the dominions of the other on the footing of the most favoured nation and that the treatment of their respective subjects and their trade, shall also, in every respect, be placed on the footing of the treatment of the subjects and commerce of the most favoured nation.

## ARTICLE X.

Immediately after the ratifications of this Treaty have been exchanged, the British Mission shall return to Tehran, where the Persian Government agrees to receive it with the apologies and ceremonies specified in the separate Note signed this day by the Plenipotentiaries of the High Contracting Parties.

## ARTICLE XI.

The Persian Government engages, within three months after the return of the British Mission to Tehran, to appoint a Commissioner, who, in conjunction with a Commissioner to be appointed by the British Government, shall examine into and decide upon the pecuniary claims of all British subjects upon the Government of Persia, and shall pay such of these claims as may be pronounced just, either in one sum or by instalments, within a period not exceeding one year from the date of the award of the Commissioners. And the same Commissioners shall examine into and decide upon the claims on the Persian Government of all Persian subjects, or the subjects of other Powers, who, up to the period of the departure of the British Mission from Tehran, were under British protection, which they have not since renounced.

## ARTICLE XII.

Saving the provision in the later part preceding Article, the British Government will renounce the right of protecting hereafter any Persian subject not actually in the employment of the British mission, or of British Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls, or Consular Agents, provided that no such right is accorded to, or exercised by, any other foreign powers; but in this, as in all other respects, the British Government requires, and the Persian Government engages, that the same privileges and immunities shall in Persia be conferred upon, and shall be enjoyed by, the British Government, its servants and its subjects, and that the same respect and consideration shall be shown for them, and shall be enjoyed by them, as are conferred upon and enjoyed by, and shown to, the most favoured foreign Government, its servants and subjects.

## ARTICLE XIII.

The High Contracting Parties hereby renew the Agreement entered into by them in the month of August 1851 (Shawal 1267), for the suppression of the slave trade in the Persian Gulf, and engage further that the said agreement shall continue in force after the date at which it expires, that is, after the month of August 1862, for the further space of ten years, and for so long afterwards as neither of the High Contracting Parties shall, by a formal declaration, annul it; such declaration not to take effect until one year after it is made.

## ARTICLE XIV.

Immediately on the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, the British troops will desist from all further acts of hostility against Persia; and the British Government engages, further, that as soon as the stipulations in regard to the evacuation, by Persian troops, of Herat and the Affghan territories, as well as in regard to the reception of the British Mission at Tehran, shall have been carried into full effect, the British troops shall, without delay, be withdrawn from all ports, places, and islands belonging to Persia; but the British Government engages that, during this interval nothing shall be designedly done by the Commander of the British troops to weaken the allegiance of the Persian subjects towards the Shah, which allegiance it is, on the contrary, their earnest desire to confirm; and, further, the British Government engages that, as far as possible, the subjects of Persia will be secured against inconvenience from the presence of the British troops, and that all supplies which may be required for the use of these troops, which the Persian Government engages to direct its authorities to assist them in procuring, shall be paid for, at the fair market-price, by the British Commissariat, immediately on delivery.

## ARTICLE XV.

The present treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications exchange at Baghdad in the space of three months, or sooner if possible.

In witness whereof the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the same, and have affixed thereto the seal of their arms.

Done at Paris, in quadruplicate, this fourth day of the month of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty seven.

(Signed) COWLEY  
FEROKH (in Persian).

## C H A P T E R      V

### EMERGENCE OF EASTERN IRANIAN BOUNDARIES = KHORASAN AND BALUCHISTAN

#### INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the previous chapter, Herat's occupation in 1863, by Dust Mohammad Khan, finalised the partitioning of Khorasan. The Afghan encroachment into Iranian territories did not, however, stop at that. These encroachments continued in various forms of direct military operations and tribal raids. Amir Dust Mohammad Khan was succeeded in 1863 by his son Amir Shir-Ali Khan who almost immediately after acceding to power, resumed expansionist activities in the territories well beyond the western districts of Herat and Qandehar, particularly in the Sistan district.

Meanwhile, the British forces, returning from their Afghan expedition, captured Sind and Punjab in two battles: Mianeh in 1843 and Gujerat in 1848. The annexation of these two countries pushed British India's frontiers westwards to a line reaching from Pishavar, on the north, and Karachi, on the south. Baluchistan thus became contiguous to British India and the Indian frontiers were put on the doorstep of Iran. By the late 1860s, the British Indians began to implement a project of telegraph lines between India and Great Britain which was scheduled to pass through southern Baluchistan (Makran) and the Persian Gulf.

These two developments necessitated the establishment of clearly defined boundaries of a European nature between Iran and Afghanistan; in the Khorasan and Sistan regions and between Iran and British India in the Baluchistan region. Of these three sections (Khorasan, Sistan and Baluchistan) the Sistan boundaries' delimitation (the middle section) consumed the longest time with the most arduous of efforts. As they

involved the complicated issue of Hirmand river, the study of their emergence and evolution deserves more elaboration in separate chapters which comprises the core chapters of this thesis (see next three chapters). The Khorasan and Baluchistan boundaries (northern and southern sections) form the longest stretch of the frontiers of Eastern Iran, and a summary study of their emergence and evolution will undoubtedly assist in a better appreciation of the emergence and evolution of the middle section of the boundaries of Eastern Iran. This chapter, therefore, falls into two sections; the first section examining the evolution of the northern section; and the second, studying the southern section of the Eastern Iranian boundaries.

#### SECTION I: KHORASAN BOUNDARIES

Following Herat's secession in 1857 and its occupation in 1863 by Amir Dust Mohammad Khan of Afghanistan which finalised the partitioning of Khorasan, the frontier between what was left of Khorasan and the kingdom of Afghanistan was put to the west of Herat, Ghurian and Farah. This frontier is 337 miles in length, in addition to the length of Hari-rud which forms the northern most part of the border line between Iran and Afghanistan. These boundaries are situated between 35° and 37' and 31° and 50' latitude,<sup>(1)</sup> running through rivers, mountains and deserts in an almost north-south direction.

Although Herat was captured by Dust Mohammad Khan of Kabul, founder of the Barakzai dynasty of the newly formed kingdom of Afghanistan, the frontiers between the province of Khorasan of Iran and the Afghan province of Herat remained undefined. Consequently, disputes and affrays between the two countries continued to intensify to the extent that

(1) Mokhber, Mohammad-Ali (1945), "Marzhay-e Iran", p. 27.

defining a clear boundary line in the central sections of old Khorasan became a necessity.

Not only did Dust Mohammad Khan's successor, Shir Ali Khan, do nothing to put an end to Iran's suspicions of his dynasty's expansionist designs against Iranian territories, but also indulged in military operations in the vicinity of Sistan, giving rise to Iran's anxieties of his intentions. The Iranian Government informed the British Minister at Tehran in December 1878, that the Amir of Afghanistan had assembled 20 regiments of foot and horsemen with 50 guns at Herat with the intention of attacking Sistan.<sup>(1)</sup> Having informed the British of this, the Iranian Government enquired if their intervention, under clause 6 of the 1857 treaty of Paris could be counted on. While referring the Iranian Government's enquiry to the British Government in London, the Governor General of India claimed that Calcutta was not aware of any ill intentions against Iranian territories on the part of the Afghan Amir.<sup>(2)</sup> Notwithstanding British Indian officials' apparent lack of interest in Iran's grievances of the conduct of the Afghan Amir, political disputes, as well as local raids, and counter raids intensified in the border areas of Hashtadan and Qaenat. The disputes and affrays in the said border areas became so serious that they necessitated arbitration and boundary delimitation.

#### HASHTADAN ARBITRATION AND MACLEAN'S LINE

The district of the Hashtadan Plain forms the eastern and greater portion of a tract, the north-western portion of which forms part of the Iranian district of Bakharz. Karat,

(1) Extracts of telegraph to the British Government from Governor General of India, dated January 24, 1878, FO60/417.

(2) Extracts of telegraph to the British Government from Governor General of India, dated January 24, 1878, FO60/417.

Farzaneh, Raona and Garna were, at the time of arbitration of the 1880s, included in the sub-division known as "Payin Velayat" or lower Bakharz.<sup>(1)</sup> The Hashtadan Valley, according to General MacLean's memorandum of July 1891,<sup>(2)</sup> was bounded on the north by the Sanideh Hills which the Afghans call Kuh-e Darband; on the south by the Kuh-e Gedayaneh; on the east by the Sang-e Dokhtar and Yal-e Khar ranges, and on the west by the watershed between Hashtadan qanats and the streams flowing into Iranian territory.

The valley is about 24 miles in length, and its greatest breadth from the Dahaneh-e Shurab to the crest of the Kuh-e Gedayaneh, is about 16 miles. The valley consists of three distinct regions:<sup>(3)</sup>

1. The Shurab basin, around the head of which lie the traces of former habitation and cultivation.
2. A belt of level steppes which surrounds the Shurab basin on three sides, and has no visible signs of surface drainage.
3. An outer slope at the foot of the hills and drainage of which is, for the most part, lost in the steppe, and does not appear to reach the Shurab except that from the Sanjideh and perhaps some from the Sang-e Dokhtar during heavy rain.

The Shurab has six principal tributaries which unite before leaving the valley by the Dahaneh-e Shurab. Thence it takes the name of Qaleh Kala which to the point of junction with Hari-rud near Tuman Agha, forms what was then the acknowledged boundary between Iran and Afghanistan. There

(1) Part 1 of General MacLean's memorandum of 14th December 1889, FO60/538., p. 10 of 279.

(2) Memorandum of General MacLean, dated Mashed 6th July 1891, pp. 310 - 405, FO60/538 .

(3) Ibid.

are ruins of several villages in Hashtadan Plain, which had been deserted for generations. There were also the remains of 39 qanats, at the time of arbitration, in the valley, all of which were out of repair and dry. The number of Hashtadan's qanats in the olden times are said to have been eighty (Hashtad) and this is where the name "Hashtadan" comes from. The Governor General of Khorasan undertook in April 1885 to clear out and repair some of these qanats. The work was interrupted by the Afghans who destroyed the plants and tools of the Iranian labourers.<sup>(1)</sup> This incident brought the two Governments in direct dispute. Both Iran and Afghanistan approached the Government of British India requesting their intervention.

#### THE MACLEAN ARBITRATION OF HASHTADAN PLAIN

The Government of British India decided in 1886 to depute Brigadier General C.S. MacLean, British Consul General at Mashhad, to arbitrate between Iran and Afghanistan in the disputed Hashtadan Plain. The investigation work was delayed for various reasons. By late April 1888 General MacLean began his works in Hashtadan. Iran was represented in the arbitration commission by Mirza Moheb-Ali Khan Nezam al-Molk, the Kargozar<sup>(2)</sup> of Khorasan, and accompanied by engineers; his son Mirza Jahangir Khan, and General Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan as professional advisor.<sup>(3)</sup> Afghanistan was represented by General Qotb ad-Din accompanied by a number of lawyers and tribal chiefs from Herat, one of whom was Mirza Mohammad Omar who was sent specially by the Amir of Afghanistan to keep a check on the Afghan Commissioner.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) The Persian written claims, enclosed in MacLean's memorandum of 14th December 1889, FO 60/538, p.11 of 280.

(2) "Kargozar" was, in Qajar administration, the representative of Foreign Ministry in the provincial centres where there was a foreign consulate.

(3) Mokhber, op. cit., p.29.

(4) From Brigadier General MacLean to Secretary to the Government of India Foreign Department, dated Camp Hashtadan 29th April 1888, FO 60/538, p.120

Before leaving for Hashtadan, General MacLean asked both Iranian and Afghan representatives to submit to him their written claims. In their initial claims, the Afghans wished to restrict the investigation to lands of Kolukh, Pardeh and Hashtadan.<sup>(1)</sup> But as the arbitration commission met on 30th of April 1888, and the Iranian representative claimed the whole of Hashtadan valley and lands up to Sang-e Dokhtar, the Afghan representative changed his mind instantly and claimed Farzaneh, Garmab and places situated well within Iran's undisputed territories.<sup>(2)</sup> Apart from these kinds of conducts, the greatest handicap for the investigation to come to a fair and just conclusion was that Hashtadan was virtually uninhabited at the time of arbitration. The testimonies of the population of a district disputed between two or more states, are the best indication in determining the fact.

The population of Hashtadan had left the plain probably more than a century before the arbitration investigation began. In the first memorandum on Hashtadan, General MacLean remarks:

*I have heard from both Persians and Afghans a story which I think accounts for the sudden disappearance of the Hashtadan people, better than any other theory hitherto suggested. I first heard it at Karat and afterwards at Farzana, and from several respectable Afghans. About one hundred years ago or more, an epidemic throat disease swept over eastern Khorasan, and part of Herat, and carried off the greater portion of the population. It was particularly severe in Hashtadan, Darband, and Kafir Kala, which were abandoned by the inhabitants, en masse, and of the survivors many never returned."*<sup>(3)</sup>

In the absence of local testimonial, the arbitrator had to consider, for the most part, on determining the history of the former population's allegiance to either Governments of

(1) From the Viceroy and Governor General of India to the Amir of Afghanistan, dated Simla 7th September 1888, FO 60/538.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Extract of General MacLean's Memorandum of 14th December 1889, op. cit., p. 11 of 280 FO 60/538.

Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>(1)</sup> The arbitration also had to rely on the evidence provided by the two sides. Both the Iranian and Afghan representatives supplied General MacLean with their written claims, accompanied by eleven and ten documents of proof respectively. In his memorandum of 14th December 1889, General MacLean provides a list of the summary of the eleven documents supplied by the Iranian representative, at the end of each section of which, he registered his own evaluation of the documents, rejecting almost all of them. When it came to the ten documents supplied by the Afghan side, he enclosed all of them in their original form without registering an opinion of his own on the validity of the said documents.<sup>(2)</sup>

As time went by and both representatives of Iran and Afghanistan were not forthcoming in a compromise for the settlement of the dispute, the Viceroy of India wrote to the Amir of Afghanistan, asking him to advise his representative to give up unjustifiable claims on places within Iranian possession:

*"I rely upon General MacLean having accurately defined the doubtful territory, and it seems to me necessary if the dispute is to be settled that both sides should agree to his definition. I therefore ask Your Highness to accept these limits, and to instruct your officials to withdraw their claim to Farazna, Garmab, and other places outside them. I am communicating with Her Majesty's Minister at Teheran and asking him to obtain the consent of the Persian Government also. I would only add that Your Highness may be sure that your interests will be fully considered by General MacLean, and I have no doubt that, provided the enquiry is confined within the boundaries described, he will soon be in a position to submit his award for my orders, in accordance with the terms agreed to by Your Highness and the Persian Government."<sup>(3)</sup>*

As for the Iranians, General MacLean found an opportunity to meet Naser ad-Din Shah (1848 - 1896) in the United Kingdom

(1) Ibid, pp. 10 - 12 of 279 - 295.

(2) Ibid, pp. 279 - 295.

(3) Extract of letter from H.E. the Viceroy and Governor General of India to H.H. Amir of Afghanistan, dated Simla 7th September 1888, F060/538, p.123.

during the latter's visit of July 1889. It was in this meeting that General MacLean must have concluded that the Court of Qajar was very ignorant of the question in dispute and its importance for Iran. The Shah decided, at the conclusion of this meeting, that "the Afghans were nothing", but he would give them the whole of Hashtadan plain with all its qanats, other water resources, agricultural lands and whatever of the population therein, only because of "the feelings of friendship (he) entertained towards the English Government".<sup>(1)</sup>

As a result of this incomprehensible generosity, the whole of Hashtadan was given to the Afghans save for the barren Hashtadan Hill. Furthermore, in order to keep his own nation oblivious of his generosity, the Qajar Shah requested that the new maps should have the word "Hashtadan" marked on the Iranian side of the border line:

*"Hashtadan. Shah accepts General MacLean's proposal provided the Hashtadan Hill under two acres is included in Persian territory, and the word 'Hashtadan' is marked on the Persian side of the map. This General MacLean thinks may be accepted. Shah says that there is no further neutral territory, and that he hopes no further question of frontier may arise.*

*"I think that General MacLean deserves very great credit for the care and ability with which he has conducted this business."<sup>(2)</sup>*

This development, however, enabled MacLean to delimit 103 miles of Khorasan boundaries between Iran and Afghanistan. He surveyed and delineated the boundaries from Hashtadan Plain, some 60 miles to the west of the city of Herat, to Zolfaghar Pass where the Iran-Afghanistan and Russian frontiers met. General MacLean's line consists of 39 turning points which leaves the entire plain on the Afghan side, with

(1) For the full text of General MacLean's notes on his interview with the Shah (Naser ad-Din Shah) of Iran, see Appendix I.

(2) Telegram dated the 7th December 1889, from Sir H. Drummond Wolff, H.B. Majesty's Minister at Tehran to Viceroy, Calcutta, FO 60/538, p. 275.

the Hashtadan Hill on the Iranian side (see MacLean's map of Hashtadan boundary, figure I).

General MacLean's description of the boundary line on the map is briefly as follows:

"The line commences at the northern point of the Kuh-i-Kadanna, passes round the heads of the southern group of Kanats, so as to include these in Afghan territory, and up to the head of the short Kanat immediately north of the Hashtadan mound. It then passes round the Hashtadan mound, leaving the mound on the Persian side of the line. Thence across to the foot of the Hills, and thence due north to the crest of the Sanjitti range. The line then follows the crest of the range eastward to the crest of the Hills on the northern side of the Dahna-i-Shorab, and thence in a straight line to a point on the left bank of the Kali-i-Kala 300 yards below the place where the old canal takes off towards Kafir Kala. The line then follows the Kali-i-Kala up to the Hari-rud."(1)

The proposed settlement of the Hashtadan boundary dispute was reported to the Iranian and Afghan Governments through the Viceroyalty of India in 1890. In his letter of 29th September 1890 to the Amir of Afghanistan, the Viceroy of India presses him for his announcement of the acceptance of the proposed settlement. The letter states: "Your Excellency also, who has given directions and instructions to Colonel MacLean on this subject, no doubt will be pleased to send (necessary) instructions to the said officer. The Governor of Herat will be in communication and correspondence with the said officer, in this matter, to the end of the time of the completion of this work."(2)

General MacLean was immediately assigned to carry out the demarcation work of the Hashtadan boundary. He concluded this task by July 1891 and submitted a copy of the synopsis together with its map of the line (see figure II) to the British Indian Government. The Viceroyalty submitted a copy

(1) Extract of Memorandum of 6th July 1891, FO Press - No. 575 - 29 - 3 - 90 - 44, FO 60/538, p. 2 of 310.

(2) Extract of letter from H.H. the Amir of Afghanistan to H.E. the Viceroy, dated 18th October 1890, FO 60/538 . p. 3 of 343.

Figure I

## Illustration of Hashtadan Boundary by General MacLean Arbitration<sup>(+)</sup>

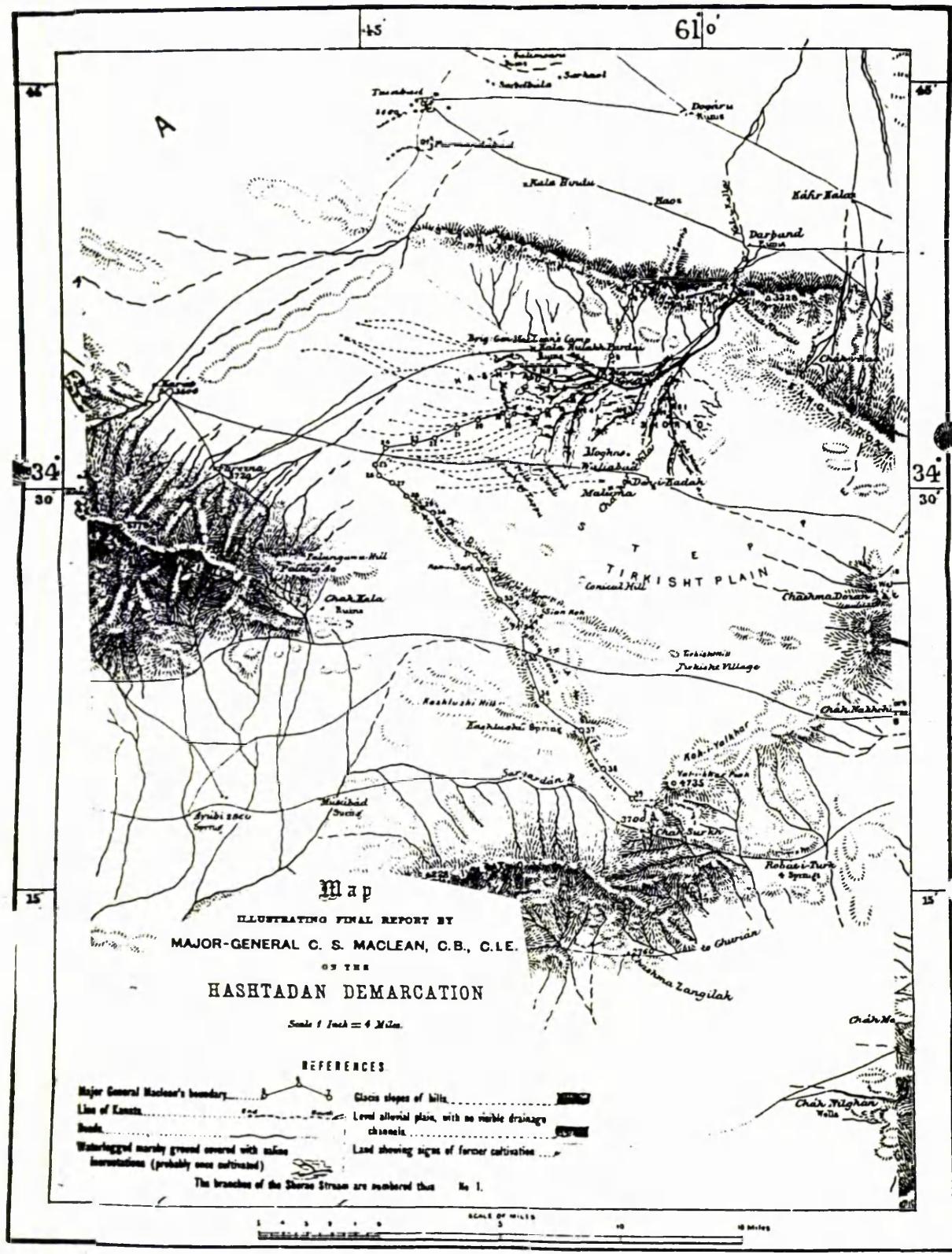
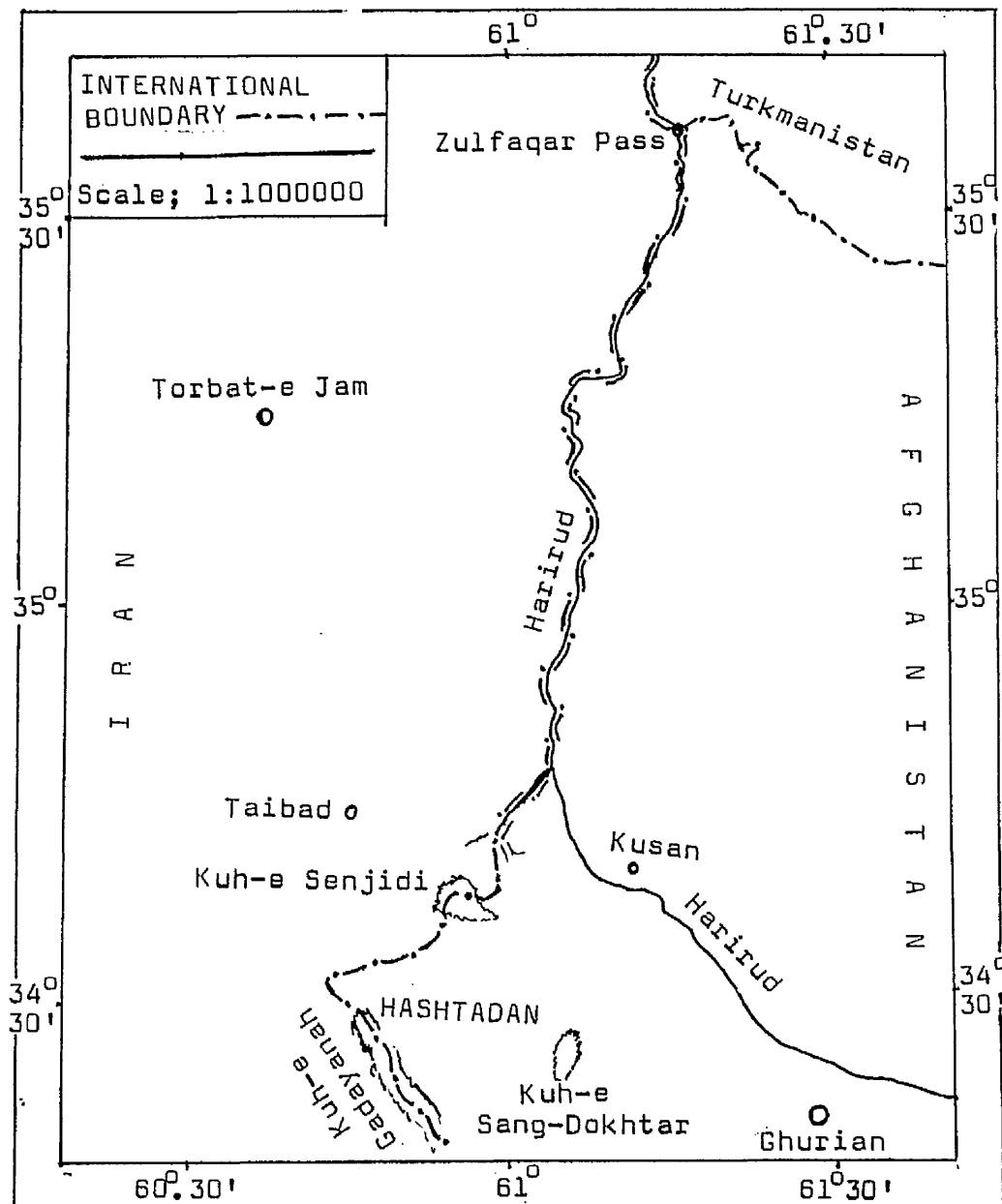


Figure II

The Hashtadan and Hirirud Boundaries of Northern Khorasan  
According to General MacLean's arbitration of 1891.



of MacLean's report to the Amir of Afghanistan who also accepted it with much delight. In a letter to the Viceroy of India, the Amir of Afghanistan asserted:

*"The friendly endeavours of the High officials of the illustrious (British) Government in gaining this object and bringing it to a conclusion, have given me a great deal of pleasure. But my desire, in accordance with the wishes of all the people of Afghanistan, is that a writing, under the signature and seal of His Majesty the Shah of Persia, may be obtained about the settlement of this dispute and the demarcation of the limits, and the (fixing of the) line of partition and distribution, which have been accomplished between the Governments of Persia and Afghanistan, with the testimony and attestation of the high officials of the illustrious British Government, so that it may remain as a document with the Afghan Government, and that a writing, under my signature and seal, may be prepared and written, so that it may remain, as a document and 'Sanad' with the Persian Government. Then at no time will quarrel and disputation arise between the servants of these two Governments, about the lands which have been demarcated; and the people of Afghanistan will acquire a strong confidence by becoming aware that the friend of the Afghan Government, viz, the illustrious British Government, has, in demarcating the limits between our territory and that of Persia, displayed in a kind and friendly manner the excellence of his good intentions; and that by the acquisition of the writings of the Governments of Persia and Afghanistan, and by their existence in the hands of both sides, there will never arise any cause for any quarrel and strife.*

*"Further, may the days of (Your Excellency's) honour and glory continue permanent!"<sup>(1)</sup>*

International reflections on Naser ad-Din Shah's incomprehensible generosity in giving the Hashtadan Plain to the Afghans, out of his "friendly feelings" towards the British Government were no less than a disgrace to the Iranian leadership. The Russians, for instance, claimed now that the Iranian territories are, in effect, up for the loot, Hashtadan should be given to them. In a message to Amin as-Sultan, the Iranian Prime Minister, the Russian Charge d'Affairs stated that in view of the circumstances Hashtadan was virtually given to the British. The French similarly demanded that the Iranian island of Khark be given to them:

(1) Ibid.

"Russian Charge d'Affairs sent violent message to Amin-es-Sultan, complaining that the Island of Kharaj in Persian Gulf had been ceded to England, and that Persian territory at Hashtadan had been surrendered to Afghanistan, but virtually to us.

"His excellency replied that first charge was entirely unfounded, and made out that General MacLean's decision in fact gave Persia some Afghan possessions. Russian Charge d'Affairs now declares himself satisfied at arrangement.

"French Charge d'Affairs informs me that if the island had been surrendered to England, he should have been obliged to protest, as he declares it really belongs to France, having been ceded in 1835."(1)

What has happened in Hashtadan was indeed no less than openly ceding Iranian territories to Afghanistan. Not only were the Russians and the French aware of this, but in his own memorandum of 14th December 1889, General MacLean states openly that:

"It will be noticed that the Afghans bring forward no proof of their having actually occupied Hashtadan either before or after Ahmed Shah's time. The leaves of the Herat revenue record they allude to have no date, and, therefore, even if genuine, give no indication of the period during which Kulukh Pardai paid revenue to Herat."(2)

(For the boundary line, see figure II)

#### QAENAT BOUNDARY ARBITRATION AND ALTAY'S LINE

General MacLean's arbitration of 103 miles of Khorasan boundaries left the remaining 234 miles of Iran-Afghanistan boundaries of the Khorasan district of Qaenat undefined.

The areas of the undefined frontiers with Afghanistan began from the hamlet of Musa Abad, south-east of MacLean's pillar

(1) From Sir H. Drummond Wolff, H.B. Majesty's Minister at Tehran, to the Viceroy Calcutta, dated 9th December 1889, FO 60/538 ; p. 1 of 275.

(2) Extract of Memorandum dated 14th December 1889, FO 60/538 , p. 14 of 281.

No. 39, running through the salt lake (Namakzar), to east of Qaenat, ending in the start of McMahon's line of 1905 at Kuh-e Malek Siah which is the beginning of the Sistan boundary. A number of areas in this stretch of frontier were in dispute between Iran and Afghanistan. Moreover, the long lasting raids on Iranian settlements by Afghan elements increased noticeably. The Afghan tribes had for centuries raided Iranian towns and villages. Writing in 1857, General Ferrier asserts: "It is only five or six years since Kerim-dad Khan (Chief of Hazarah Tribes) followed the noble profession of pillage: he plundered caravans, and extended his forays to the south of Persia in the district of Ghain, where he sacked the villages and carried off the people to sell them to the Uzbeks. His depredations were so frequent, and gave rise to so many complaints, that Assef Doulet sent to Yar Mohammad Khan and informed him that, as he seemed unable to keep his own vassal in order, he should chastise himself as the head of an army."<sup>(1)</sup>

Reports and confidential diaries of British Consulates at Mashhad, Birjand and Sistan contains a large number of instances where Afghan raids on the towns and villages of Khorasan, Qaenat and Sistan which increased in their frequency as from the beginning of the twentieth century. To illustrate this problem, some instances of these incidents follow:

November 1913

"(a) A resident of Nozad, a village about 50 miles east of Birjand, has come into Vice-Consulate Dispensary, suffering from a bullet wound and a sword cut. His story is that he was attacked by two Afghans who entered his house at night, asking for hospitality, and then attempted to kidnap his wife....

"(b) Nine Afghans attacked a small village near Bamrud, and carried off eleven camels."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Ferrier, General J.P., op. cit., pp. 191 - 2.

(2) Confidential Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consulate for Sistan and Kain, No. 48 for the week ending 29.11.1913, FO 248/10761 .

September 1915

"A caravan of 50 camels was recently taking grain from Sistan to Duroh. There were 9 Durohis in charge with 6 Baluch camelmen. 20 Afghan horsemen suddenly appeared from across the border near Isparan, while some of Durohis were lagging behind, and drove off the whole caravan. It is said that the Afghans were regular soldiers."(1)

December 1915

- 1—"Fourteen donkeys of Awaz have been carried into Afghanistan by three robbers. They were carrying wood for the Customs Director."(2)
- 2—"A party of Afghans have carried off 50 camels and two flocks of goats and sheep from Gulwarda, 16 miles east of Awaz."(3)

July 1920

"Afghan raids - Trade caravan of twenty-five donkeys with all loads raided and carried off evening 15th July at Mian Bazar between Hurmuk and Duzdab. Local levies are in pursuit."(4)

November 1929

"Afghan raids into the Qaenat have been numerous and the inhabitants are considerably perturbed, and are demanding arms for their defence."(5)

March 1930

"A caravan of thirty camels was attacked near Sufaidabad about March 10. The raiders appear to have fled to Afghanistan."(6)

(1) Confidential Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consulate for Sistan and Kain, No. 36 for the week ending 4th September 1915, FO 248/1116 .

(2) Confidential Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consulate for Sistan and Kain, No. 47 for the week ending 4th December 1915, FO 248/1116 .

(3) Confidential Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consulate for Sistan and Kain, No. 50 for the week ending 11th December 1915, FO 248/1116 .

(4) Telegrams from Captain T.V. Brenan, H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan and Kain to the Government of India, dated 17th July 1920, FO 371/4926 , p. 171.

(5) Sistan and Kain Diary for October - November 1929, FO 371/14526, p. 3 of 208. 3 of 208.

(6) Confidential Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consulate General at Mashed, for March 1930, FO 371/19421 , p. 2 of 155.

September 1935

"According to reports received in Meshed, bands of 15 to 20 raiders are continually crossing the Afghan frontier near Karizand raiding Iranian villages, the strength of the Road Guards post at Kariz has accordingly been increased by 30 men."(1)

The list can go on to include a great number of similar instances of Afghan elements' raids into Iran. These cross border raids came to a head in late 1934 when Afghan tribesmen who had previously entered Iran and decided to return to Afghanistan causing considerable damage to lives and properties in the border area of Zurabad on the instigation of local Afghan officials. Reuter reporting from Tehran described the incident as follows:

"Teheran 16th December, 1934

A party of Afghans consisting of prominent persons and military officers entered Persian territory via Zorabad, plundered 25 villages, murdered 3 road guards and took away 2,000 Persians as prisoners with a large quantity of arms. The loss following on this incident is estimated at £50,000 sterling. Because of this incident the Persian press is bitterly attacking the Afghan Government."(2)

This report, though proved to be exaggerated in the case of 2000 people being taken prisoner and was thought to have been the number of tribesmen crossing the border, caused an uproar in Iran. Iranian authorities formally protested to the Afghan Government who, in return, invited Iranian representatives to jointly inspect the site of the incident<sup>(3)</sup> in order to prove that no incident of the kind reported had happened. The press in Afghanistan, in the meantime, denied the whole thing and the Afghan Ambassador to

(1) Political Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consulate General at Mashed for September 1935, FO 371/19421, p. 4 of 193. of 193.

(2) Enclosure No. 1, to Kabul despatch No. 147, dated the 27th December 1934, FO 371/19408, p. 192.

(3) Enclosure No. 2 to Kabul despatch No. 149, dated the 27th December 1934, FO 371/19408, p. 195.

Tehran carried a campaign of smear among foreign diplomatic representatives in a communique in Tehran against the Iranians as a nation.<sup>(1)</sup> The joint commission eventually concluded that the Zurabad incident took place without the knowledge of the Afghan Government, but had been provoked by Afghan Tribal leaders and a number of other Afghan subjects. The Afghan Government subsequently undertook to punish the offenders and to compensate for the losses occurred and to return the stolen goods.<sup>(2)</sup> Notwithstanding the terms of this joint communique which implies that neither the Afghan Government nor any Afghan Government official had been directly or indirectly involved in this incident, British observers in the region were aware that: "For a long time it has been the policy of the Naib Salar of Herat to locate the toughest elements in the province on the frontier, these consist of well-armed tribes of nomads who with their flocks and camels are not confined to any one area and at the same time are in a position to raid with impunity in any direction having no immovable property which can be threatened."<sup>(3)</sup>

Apart from cross-border incidents of the above nature, the Afghans began a series of claims against the Iranian territorial possessions as from 1931, and began interfering with the border arrangements. In a telegram to the Indian Government, for instance, the British Consul General at Mashhad indicates:

"....a boundary pillar on Bakharz frontier, recently removed by Afghans, has been replaced by Persian troops. Both sides have increased the frontier posts and relations are strained."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) British Legation, Tehran despatch No. 114, dated 9th March 1935, FO 371/19408, p. 248.

(2) See text of agreement between the two officials of the two sides, dated 24th January 1935, enclosure to Kabul despatch No. 35, dated the 20th March 1935, FO 371/19408, pp. 1 & 2 of 255.

(3) Clause 2 of Confidential report of H.B. Majesty's Consul General at Mashed, dated 9th December 1934, FO 371/19408, p. 222.

(4) Telegram from Government of India to the Secretary of State, dated Simla 19th July 1932, FO 371/16279.

In addition to these activities, the Afghan authorities claimed the village of Musa Abad, south-west of pillar 39 of General MacLean's line, arguing that Musa Abad had been given to the Afghans by MacLean boundary award of 1891. In 1903 a party of Afghan soldiers visited Musa Abad,<sup>(1)</sup> in direct contravention of MacLean's award which invited both Iran and Afghanistan to observe a status quo in the tracts to the south of pillar 39 of Hashtadan boundary, and in violation of the fact that Musa Abad was the property of Mohammad Sadiq, an Iranian subject and Deputy Governor of the Iranian district of Bakharz.

A report prepared for the Government of British India in April 1904 by Captain C.B. Winter, H.B. Majesty's Consul at Torbat-e Heidariyeh, identifies instances of Afghan encroachments at Musa Abad. This report asserts:

"On the 28th instant, I started from Khushkabad and rode first to Ayubi. At Ayubi there is a small tower and spring, which is about two miles from Khushkabad. I then rode towards Musabād, and was told by my guide that, as the post there was in the hands of the Afghans, it would be necessary to proceed cautiously. When I came in sight of the post, I sent my guide and clerk on ahead, and remained on a hill to watch their movements through my glasses. I instructed them to ride slowly towards the post and have a good look round, and to ask any Pathans they met if there would be any objection to my riding round the post. I could myself see the post quite easily, but to avoid any possibility of complications, I did not approach any closer. There is a large encampment close to the post. My clerk and guide were received politely, and welcomed and given a liquid which was called tea. It appears that about 9 years ago, Muhammad Saddik, the Deputy Governor of Bakharz, built a small fort at Musabād, in order to establish his claim to the land and make use of the existing 'Karez' or 'Kanat'. About a year later, and when the crops were being reaped, some Afghans came and turned the Persians out of the fort. From that time the Afghans have been in possession. In the old fort, now not used, there are 30 houses, 14 of these are in ruins, the remainder

(1) From British Legation at Kabul to Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, No. 348 (E), dated 23rd September 1932, FO 371/16279.

being used for godowns for bhoosa, &c. About 7 months ago, the Afghans erected a post there, consisting of a tower, two godowns and stables surrounded by a wall; the post measures about 50' by 18'. The post is in charge of one Alam Khan, Babakzai; he and about 25 families live in small temporary huts about 200 yards to the north-east of the post. No land is being cultivated, as there is not sufficient water. Men are, however, now engaged in enlarging the Kanat, and the Afghans state that they intend to cultivate the land. As the account obtained from the Afghans, agrees with the account obtained from Persian sources, it may be taken as correct....

"Ayubi and Khushkabad are in the hands of the Persians, and Musabad in the possession of the Afghans."(1)

Forwarding this report to the Government of India, the British Consul General in Khorasan concluded:

"I have no recent papers of this case here subsequent to General MacLean's final report, dated 6th July 1891, on the Hashtadan demarcation. The file was sent to Captain Winter, and has not yet been received back. But from the position of boundary pillar No. 39 of General MacLean's settlement, and from paragraph 12 of his report, Musabad would certainly appear to belong to Persia."(2)

Notwithstanding these facts, the Afghans continued interfering with the affairs of this Iranian territory. The Iranian Kargozar of Torbat Heydoriyeh reported to Tehran in 1904 for instance that "an Afghan official has visited Khushabeh from Ghorian, and has told the people that Khushabeh belonged to the Afghans: also that an Afghan

(1) Extract of Captain Winter's report on Afghan encroachments at Musa-Abad, enclosed in Colonel Minchin's confidential despatch No. 20, to Secretary to the Government of India, dated Meshed 21st May 1904 FO 60/711, pp. 1 - 2.

(2) Clause 4 of Colonel Minchin's Confidential despatch to the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, No. 20, dated Meshed 21st May 1904, FO 60/711, p. 1.

official from Ghurian visits Musabad, Khushabeh and Kuh-e-Sang-e-Dokhtar twice a week; and if he sees Persian flocks grazing there, prevents them from grazing.<sup>(1)</sup>

In his despatch of 8th September 1904 to the British Government, the British Minister at Tehran reporting on his meeting with Moshir ad-Doleh, the Iranian Prime Minister, indicated:

*"I at the same time informed His Highness (Grand Vizier) of the representations which the Government of India had made at Kabul respecting the encroachments at Musabad which the Persian Government has of late been again making complaints. The Mushir-ed-Dowleh states that the Afghans have encroached not merely at Musabad, but at a place in its vicinity named "Ayubi" respecting which I have so far no information."<sup>(2)</sup>*

The Afghan Government asked the British at Kabul in September 1932, "whether the Government of India could give the Afghan Government any information and documentary evidence"<sup>(3)</sup> proving that Musa Abad was given to Afghanistan by MacLean's Hashtadan awards.

The two sides (Iran and Afghanistan) had by this time started negotiations on these boundaries and related issues, and the Afghan Government had asked once again if the British Government could supply them with documentary evidence supporting their claims, whilst they had in their possession copies of General MacLean's award in which the demarcated boundaries are described as starting from the northern point of the Koh-i Kadana (Kuh-e Gedaianeh), passes round the heads of the southern group of kanats...<sup>(4)</sup> This description of

(1) Enclosure in despatch No. 168 of British Legation at Tehran to the Foreign Office, dated 8th September 1904, FO 60/711, p. 22.

(2) From A.H. Hardinge of British Legation at Tehran to the Marquis of Lansdowne, No. 168, dated 8th September 1904, FO 60/711, pp. 22 - 3.

(3) From British Legation at Kabul to Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, No. 348 (E), dated 23rd September 1932, FO 371/16279.

(4) See Memorandum of 6th July 1891 of General MacLean, No. 575 - 29 - 3 - 90 - 44, FO 60/538, p. 2 of 310.

the southern end of MacLean's Line, clearly leaves out Musa Abad to the south-west of Kuh-e Gedayaneh and pillar 39 which is the last pillar of MacLean's Line, south of Hashtadan Plain. Furthermore, the Afghan Government put the above request to the Government of British India knowing that they had in 1897 asked the Viceroyalty of India the same question, even trying to accuse the British and Iranian Governments of having, one way or another, considered Musa Abad as an Afghan possession. The Amir of Afghanistan had asked at that time:

"Again Musabad is not a disputed tract. It is manifestly a tract, within the limits of the God-granted kingdom, so much so that, in the boundary settlement of the outskirts of Hashtadan, this valley has been included in the jurisdiction of Afghanistan, and the boundary line and the marks of the (boundary) pillars are visible there. For many years past a border guard of this Government has been located at that place and been keeping a watch there. In the map acknowledged by the Russian Government, which is now lying before me, this place has been shown as a part of Afghanistan, and the Persian Government too has never considered and do not consider it to be a disputed tract between the two Governments."<sup>(1)</sup>

To this, the Viceroy of India replied:

"I am not aware to what map Your Highness refers as 'the map acknowledged by the Russian Government'. The boundary settlement mentioned by Your Highness is no doubt that undertaken by General MacLean, the final settlement of which was communicated to Your Highness in Lord Lansdowne's letter of December 17th, 1891. General MacLean's labours, however, were confined within certain specified limits, i.e. on the north, the Sanjiti range; on the east, the Sang-i-Dukhtar and the Kuh-i-Yalkhar; on the south, the Kadaoneh range; and on the west, a line running from the Kuh-i-Kadaoneh close to and round the heads of the Kanats which irrigate, the lands of Hashtadan, Kulukh and Pardeh to the Sanjiti range. But, as I am informed, the Persian Government, equally with Your Highness, maintain their claim to the Musabad lands, though, since the conclusion of the Hashtadan demarcation, they have not actively pushed their

(1) Extract of letter from H.E. Viceroy and Governor General of India to H.H. The Amir of Afghanistan quoting passages of a letter from the latter, dated Simla July 1897, FO 371/19408, pp. 230 - 1.

claim, and have in this acted in conformity with an arrangement made at the time with General MacLean that they would preserve the status quo in the disputed tract. I trust that your officers will abstain from taking any steps which might lead the Persians to press their claims and perhaps disturb the peace of the frontier which has happily remained for so long unbroken."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Afghan Government's question of September 1932, had a similar reply from the British Indian authorities. This time the Government of India refers to another similar question put to the British by the Afghans in 1903. On that occasion, Lord Curzon had made it clear to the Afghans that Musa Abad did not belong to them.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Afghans nevertheless continued claiming not only Musa Abad, but also the district of Yazdan, further south of Musa Abad, the Namakzar (Salt Lake) and Chekab, all in Iranian possession.

#### THE ALTAY ARBITRATION

As the dispute intensified, both Governments agreed on the 8th of March 1934, under article 10 of the Iran-Afghanistan treaty of 1921, to go to arbitration. This time the Turks were asked to arbitrate. The Turkish Government agreed in March 1934 and General Fakhred-Din Altay was assigned to lead the arbitral team. It was arranged for the two sides to the dispute to submit their written claims to the arbitration commission through the Turkish Government before October that year. The commission was given an audience by Reza Shah Pahlavi at Amol of Mazandaran in October 1934 and then visited the area in dispute for a preliminary survey and

(1) Ibid.

(2) From Metcalfe of the Indian Government to H. Majesty's Envoy and Minister at the Court of Afghanistan, No. D. 4777-F/32, dated New Delhi the 21st November 1932, F0371/16279, pp. 377 - 8.

proceeded from there to Kabul on the 12 of November 1934. The commission returned to the frontier, for further investigations on 22nd November that year.<sup>(1)</sup>

Among General Altay's arbitration team was one Colonel Zia Bey whom, the British diplomats at Kabul recognised as having been an old friend of senior Afghan officers:

"Colonel Zia Bey, who was in Kabul a dozen years ago as a member of Jemal Pash'a Military Mission and trained the locally famous formation known as the 'Qita Namuna', was described to me as the chief of Fahrettin Pash's staff. He was enthusiastically welcomed as an old friend by the more senior of the Afghan Military Officers, with whom he was frequently in close conversation."<sup>(2)</sup>

The Iranians, in the meantime, began a noticeable military movement in the eastern areas of the country despatching troops to the frontier in the neighbourhood of Torbat-e Jam and Khaf.<sup>(3)</sup> These movements of troops were not directly attributed to the border dispute considerations, but presented clear indications of Iran's determination that unlike the past experiences, this time the matter of boundary disputes would be treated seriously:

"A European here - who is by no means a fool - attended the Firdausi Celebrations at Meshed where, he tells me, he came into touch with several young Persian military officers. He gained the impression that they were very proud of their army, confident of its efficiency, and anxious to test this in practice. One of them said to him 'we have finished with all nonsense on the Afghan frontier and can give them two kicks for each kick they give us'.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Afghanistan Annual Confidential Report for the year 1934, No. 1358/-1358/97, Kabul February 22 1935, FO 371/19423 , p. 41.

(2) Clause 4 of Despatch from His Majesty's Minister, Kabul, to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London No. 141, dated the 13th (received 18th) December 1934, ) FO 371/19408 , p. 173.

(3) Confidential report of British Consulate General, dated Mashed, 9th December 1934, FO 371/19408 , pp. 222 - 3 - 4.

(4) From R.R. Maconachie, British Legation at Kabul to V.A.L. Mallet, British Legation at Tehran, dated 11th December 1934, FO 371/19408 , pp. 182 - 3.

The Iranian Government, however, appointed Mehdi Farrokh (Motasam as-Saltaneh) as the Iranian Commissioner aided by a group of twenty experts<sup>(1)</sup> and the Afghan Government assigned the Governor of Herat, Abd ar-Rahim Khan Nayeb Salar to lead the Afghan delegation to the border arbitration commission.

The arbitration commission spent three weeks at Mashhad and returned to Ghurian on the 29th December 1934 for further local investigations, only to meet again with the representatives of Iran and Afghanistan on 18th of January 1935 for the final study and exchange of documents related to the two sides' claims. From Ghurian, the arbitration commission proceeded to inspect the frontier from the Afghan side, because it was impossible to do so (for reasons not stated) from the Iranian side. This arrangement was hailed with delight by the Afghan delegation.

The commission inspected the disputed boundary as far south as Siah Kuh and on January 17th returned to Herat. The Iranian delegation who had not been with the commission during these proceedings also arrived in Herat on the same day. The next day General Altay addressed both delegations at a joint sitting and some brief deliberations followed.<sup>(2)</sup> The Turkish Commissioner left for his country. Disturbances occurred a few days later around the Salt Lake (Namakzar) area. The Iranians began to compile documentary evidence supporting their claim:

*"It is learnt at Birjand that the local Governor received instructions to produce documents which would be of use to prove that the Salat Desert pastures, an area claimed both by the Persians and the Afghans, have long been held by the Persian nomadic tribes of the frontier. The Governor at Birjand summoned the headmen of the tribe and it is alleged to have required them to fabricate ante dated documents to show that they had inherited the lands and had been in the habit of buying*

(1) Mokhber, op. cit., p. 32.

(2) From British Legation Kabul to British Legation Tehran, dated 11th December 1934, FO 371/19408 - , pp. 182 - 3.

and selling the same among themselves for years past."(1)

The renewed conflict and protestations by both sides caused delay in the announcement of final awards. A British diplomat in Turkey reported to his Government:

"Nuri Pasha tells me that Turkish Mission under General Fahrettin which was sent to compose Persian-Afghan frontier dispute has been unable to find any solution acceptable to both parties and finds it quite impossible to make sense of their respective arguments.

"He had been told that in these circumstances Turkish Government have decided to withdraw their mission unless Persian and Afghan Governments both express simultaneous acceptance in advance and abide by an award which Turkish mission would make without further discussion."(2)

These assurances were given to the Turkish Government by both sides and the Turkish Government finally delivered on the 15th May 1935 to the Iranian and Afghan Ambassadors at Ankara the arbitral awards prepared by General Altay<sup>(3)</sup> which was written in Turkish. The bill prepared on the basis of this award, was passed by the Iranian Majlis on the 6th of October 1935<sup>(4)</sup> and a joint Iranian-Afghan Commission of demarcation was formed immediately to erect the necessary boundary posts.

(1) Clause 2 of H.B. Majesty's Consulate General of Khorasan and Sistan Confidential Diary for January 1935, FO 371/19421 , p. 3 of 142.

(2) Mr. Morgan's despatch No. 457, dated Angora, 1st January 1935, FO 371/19408 , p. 179.

(3) From British Embassy at Ankara to the Foreign Office, dated Angora May 22, 1935, FO 371/19408 , p. 261.

(4) British Legation at Tehran, Despatch No. 447, dated Tehran 18th of October 1935, FO 371/19408 , p. 271.

### THE OUTSTANDING POINTS OF ALTAY'S AWARD

#### 1-Musa Abad

Musa Abad, at the time of arbitration, was a hamlet of three mud houses and a spring of fresh water. The Afghan guards had occupied the largest of the three houses, and the other two were occupied by another Afghan. The water consumed at Musa Abad was from a qanat which brought the water from the spring situated more than a kilometre to the north of the hamlet.<sup>(1)</sup> There were also other springs to the south-east of the hamlet, near the winter headquarters of some nomadic Afghan tribes. The qanat had been reconstructed by Amir Mohammad Reza Khan Khozeimeh who was, at the time, Amir of Sistan on behalf of the Khozeimeh family<sup>(2)</sup> and he was the owner of the qanat and the irrigated lands at Musa Abad. Though the hamlet of Musa Abad itself was under the occupation of the Afghan subjects, Iran did not recognise this occupation and had repeatedly protested against it. The Afghans produced documents in rejection of the Iranian claims. The Altay award asserts that these documents were from the British in which the British Government had repeatedly emphasised that a status quo should be maintained at Musa Abad. These documents showed that no right to ownership of the hamlet and its water was given to the Afghans by any one. The award asserted specifically that the water which keeps the district alive and irrigates the land in the vicinity undoubtedly belongs to Iran.

"Therefore, and according to these reasons, I have decided to divide the Musa Abad district into two sections: giving Iran the lands situated therein and two of the mud-houses, and giving the winter quarter of the tribes on the opposite side and the springs to the Afghans."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) This author has come across the Persian version of General Altay's arbitration award in Mohammad Ali Mokhber's "Marzhay-e Iran", published in Tehran 1945, pp. 31 - 52.

(2) Altay's award, op. cit., p. 41.

(3) Altay's Arbitration Award, Mokhber, op. cit., pp. 41 - 2

Thus, regardless of the fact that Musa Abad was the personal property of an Iranian subject and that it is situated tens of miles to the west of the MacLean's border mark 39, General Altay began his line by sharply turning to the west so that he could give half of Musa Abad district to the Afghans - (see section 1 of figure III).

#### 2-The Namakzar (Salt Lake)

From Musa Abad to the north of Namakzar, General Altay put border marks (numbers 40 to 51). From this point the boundary line follows the Rud-e Sargardan riverbed for about 10 kilometres until it reaches the point where the new channel of the river branches out from the old channel. Border mark 52 was put there. From this point the border line follows the old channel of Rud-e Sargardan for about 10 kilometres (north-west to south-west), leaving the Afghan Siah Kadu to Afghanistan, and the Iranian Siah Kadu to Iran. This line continues to the northern coasts of the Salt Lake where border mark 53 is put.<sup>(1)</sup>

General Altay continued his line southwardly dividing the Salt Lake into two, giving the eastern half to Afghanistan and the western half to Iran - (see section 2 of figure III) - solely on the basis of a document provided by the Iranians expressing their consent to the use of the salt of the lake by the Afghans.

#### 3-Yazdan

Yazdan, at the time of arbitration, was a small village of a few inhabitants with an agricultural field, a Gendarmerie and a Custom Office, all belonging to Iran.<sup>(2)</sup> The village and its lands were owned by Amir Mohammad Reza Khan Khozeimeh and Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam. Twelve kilometres to the south of Yazdan is situated the small village of Kabudeh. This village was also inhabited by a few families with agricultural land, all of which also belonged to Iran. The

(1) Altay's Arbitration Award, Mokhber, op. cit., p. 43.

(2) Altay's Arbitration Award, Mokhber, op. cit., p. 44.

village of Kabudeh, its lands and qanats were owned by Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam who had reconstructed an old qanat for the village. He had also constructed a qanat at a nearby cultivable land and named it "Taher Abad" after his daughter Tahereh.<sup>(1)</sup>

Between Yazdan and Kabudeh was situated the Nazar Khan field which belonged to an Afghan subject and there were places around Nazar Khan which were used by some Afghans during the winter months.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Afghans claimed all these places arguing that the Iranians had occupied them during the chaos that had existed in Afghanistan in the preceding years. The Iranians produced documents proving that these districts belonged to Iran in olden times. The arbitration rejected all documented claims, recognised the existing possessions and the fact that neither had the Iranians produced any document proving their protests against the Afghan occupation of Nazar Khan, nor had the Afghans been able to produce any document proving that they had protested Iran's occupation of Yazdan and Kabudeh.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus, the arbitrator decided to give Iran the villages of Yazdan and Kabudeh, and to give Afghanistan the Nzar Khan field, situated between the former two - (see section 3 in figure III).

#### 4-Chekab

The border line, from Kabudeh follows as far as Kuh-e Rigu where border mark No. 72 was placed. Thence the line turns and follows a gentle north-west south-easterly direction as far as Kuh-e Kharmageh where border mark 80 was placed. General Altay named this mountain after himself and refers to it, in his award, as Kuh-e Altay.<sup>(4)</sup> To the south of this

(1) Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam interviewed by the author in London, January 5th 1992.

(2) Altay Arbitration Award, Mokhber, op. cit., p. 44.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Altay Arbitration Award, Mokhber, op. cit., p. 48.

point General Altay did not take into consideration the ownership of the hamlet of Chekab which was the property of Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk Khozeimeh (later Mr. Alam), Amir of Qaenat. He refers to this place and his decision regarding this place as follows:

"Notwithstanding that a humble cottage and some fields were (watered) by the Asperan spring which are said to belong to an Iranian, they were given to Afghanistan. The said Iranian could not be found and, on the other hand, this was not a sufficient reason to change the geographical direction of the frontier line. Moreover, further investigation proved that they belonged to an Afghan. Here, there is a peak upon which border mark 83 is placed...."(1)

Writing on the status of Asperan in 1912, Captain Hunter of the British Consulate at Sistan indicates:

"Some 8 or 10 years ago Ali and his father Mahomed, Afghan refugees, (and reputed robbers), cultivated a little land from the Asperan water in company with a man of Duroh named Akbar (a Mulla Ali). The latter sold his share of the Karez to Kat Khuda Hamaza and Ali Morad (Tuni) of Seistan, for Karans 400/- some 7 years ago. The latter worked the Karez for some months with Ali and then having a dispute with him abandoned it. In 1908, Said Khan (Mamasseni), employed by the Seistani Consulate as Levy Jamadar, petitioned the Shaukat-ul-Mulk for the grant to him of the Asperan Karez. As Ali was paying no revenue, the Governor agreed to the grant on the condition of Said Khan maintaining there a post of Baluch to guard the frontier. Asperan, it should be noted, is situated on the direct route from Seistan to Kain that passes through a corner of Jowain to the north of the Hamun-i-Sabari and robberies were frequent.

"When this grant was made, objection was raised by the Salaris of Neh, the old ruling family of this bluk, on the ground that they held documents (Mahr-namas) proving them to be the owners of Asperan as well as of Surtigh, Khoja do Chahi and other Karezes in the Duroh-Lahnu district. Their claim as regards Asperan seems to have been accepted, as they executed a deed making over their rights to the Shaukat-ul-Mulk as Pish kash.(2) (There were other points regarding

(1) Ibid.

(2) Present.

the Neh revenue at the same time.) The man Ali, who had been evicted, was given in exchange another property in the Duroh district called Mahi Rud and he executed a formal agreement accepting the exchange. Katkhuda Hamza and Ali Morad do not seem to have put in a claim. Khoja Jan Muhammad of Duroh raised an objection to Asperan being given to Said Khan, as he claimed Asperan as his private property."<sup>(1)</sup>

It is noteworthy that all the places named in this quotation were acknowledged as Iranian territories at the time, belonging to Amir Shokat al-Molk II.

Altay even does not name the place in his award. The place was in fact a hamlet with few inhabitants and a number of agricultural lands named Chekab. Interviewed by this author on 5th January 1992, Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam stated:

"Chekab was owned by my father's uncle and my father-in-law Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk, then Amir of Qaenat and Sistan. Though his ownership of the hamlet and its fields and springs were established, the arbitrator decided to give them to Afghanistan solely on the basis of the testimony given by Amir Shokat al-Molk's Mobasher (local representative) who was an Afghan and hoped to own them if given to Afghanistan. But Amir Shokat al-Molk continued ownership of Chekab for a few years."

(See section 4 in figure III)

Monsef is the only source which deals with this subject in more details. In his book he asserts:

"Amir Shokat al-Molk's continued enforcement of ownership of Chekab, eventually led to a protest from the Afghan Government.... (Reza Shah) summoned the Amir and after a lengthy discussion, ordered him.... to give up Chekab if the Afghans purchased his interests."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Extract from the Consular Report by Captain Hunter of her Britannic Majesty's Sistan Consulate, dated 19th August 1912, FO 248/921 , p. 15.

(2) Monsef, Mohammad Ali (1972), "Amir Shokat al-Molk" Tehran, pp. 193 - 4.

From Asperan the border line continues in a north to south direction as far as Siah Kuh which is the beginning of the McMahon line of the Sistan boundary. The border mark No. 87 which is the final border mark of Altay's line, is placed at the highest peak of this mountain.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### SOME GENERAL COMMENTS ON ALTAY'S AWARD

The British diplomats in Kabul, acknowledge that the Afghans concluded, at the time that Altay's award favoured Iran:

"The impression left on a reader of the award who had not visited the area is that when, as in the case of the village of Musabad, the arbiter had to make a difficult decision he was inclined to favour Iran. This appears certainly to have been the impression in Kabul where the award was coldly received. It was, however, recognised that there were no grounds for challenging a decision which had been very carefully worked out and which settled finally the demarcation of a frontier line through a country too barren to be worth quarrelling about."<sup>(2)</sup>

This is undoubtedly an over statement. The fact that Altay, like his predecessors, allocated a number of Iranian possessions to the Afghans, was later acknowledged privately even by the Afghans themselves as shall be discussed.

The Iranian possessions given to Afghanistan by Altay's award are:

1. Musa Abad district - Though he himself confessed Iran's ownership of the lands and Iran's possession of the district, Altay divided the district between Iran and Afghanistan, regardless of the fact that this district was situated behind the final point of MacLean's line, well within Iran.

(1) Altay Arbitration Award, Mokhber, op. cit., p. 49.

(2) Afghanistan Confidential Annual Report 1935, from Lieutenant Colonel Fraser-Tyler to Mr Eden, No. 31, dated Kabul March 7 1936, FO 371/19423 , p. 48.

2. Namakzar - Though he himself confesses to Iran's ownership and actual possession of this district, and in spite of the fact that he had denied in an interview in January 1935 that the Afghans had any right to it - (see appendix II) - General Altay divided the district into two halves on the basis of a document produced by the Iranians whereby the Afghans were allowed, out of humanitarian concerns, to use the salt of the lake. If the Afghans truly needed to have access to this salt lake in addition to another salt lake that exists within their territories to the south of Herat, the arbitration officer should put the border line on the eastern margins of the lake; on the slopes of Kuh-e Shantigh and Zanglab, not the Rud-e Sargardan riverbeds which, necessitate the partitioning of the Iranian possessions at the Namakzar, an undertaking exactly to the expectations of the Afghans. This is to say that the arbitrator ignored Iran's rights and possessions and her claims in these tracts and based his award of Namakzar solely on what was desired and claimed by the Afghans. An enclosure in the despatch of the British Consul for Sistan and Qaen of December 1904 states:

"(a) Persian claim. The frontier line runs post No. 39 along the crest of the Simtik mountain to a point south of Musabad, the source of a stream now dry, and down this stream to the northern shore of the Namaksar Lake, dividing the lake by an imaginary line to the opposite bank.

"(b) Afghan claim. The frontier runs from pillar No. 39 along the northern bank of the Sargardan River to Musabad, and thence down the same stream to the Lake Namaksar. The Kashif-ul -Mulk adds that both Afghans and Persians collect salt from the Namaksar Lake on their respective sides."(1)

3. The Iranian delegation had proved to the arbitration commission that the larger parts of the Namakzar were swamps and useless.(2) Nevertheless, the arbitrator

(1) Extract of an enclosure in the despatch from H. Dobbs to the Government of India, dated 2nd December 1904, FO 60/711, p. 2.

(2) Mokhber, op. cit., p. 50. Mokhber was the engineer officer of the Iranian delegation in the arbitration commission.

gave Afghanistan half of the Namakzar which happened to be the better half and as a result, most of what was given to Iran in the Namakzar was the useless swamp.

4. "Though Iran's possession of Yazdan and Kabudeh and her ownership of the districts of Yazdah and Kabudeh were established, the arbitrator, in order to give the Nazar Khan field to Afghanistan, designed the border line in a way which put Yazdan in an entanglement, rendering the whole district useless both militarily and in terms of agricultural activities.
5. "Although Iran's possession of Chekab and her ownership of the village and the district were established, the arbitrator gave it to Afghanistan solely because he wanted his border line to maintain its straight north-southerly direction and because the arbitrator "could not find the Iranian owner of the district" and accepted the testimony of the Mobasher (an Afghan) without even mentioning Amir Shokat al-Molk's Mobasher the man was.

There are a number of theories as to the reason for Altay's awards so obviously favouring Afghanistan. One such theory is that he inspected the frontier areas only from the Afghan side without the presence of the Iranian delegation which proved to be instrumental in his appreciation of the Afghan arguments and claims better than those of the Iranians. Another theory is that General Altay's assistant's (Colonel Zia Bay) close friendship and constant contacts with the Afghan military officers led the arbitration to favour Afghanistan.

In a letter dated 20th November 1989, Abdol-Hussein Meftah, a veteran Iranian diplomat, who has since passed away, explained a different theory to this author which is quite popular amongst the older generation of Iranian diplomats:

" Mr Mojtaheh-Zadeh, once in Ankara, I met Feiz Mohammed Khan, Afghan Ambassador, who was Afghanistan's foreign minister at the time of Altay arbitration of 1935. He told me privately :

*"Mr Meftah, I know that the arbitration was received in Iran with a stern face (Reza Shah and Forooghi were both very angry), but whose fault was it? It was the fault of the Iranian Government for sending a mentally unbalanced person as head of the commission."*

These words shocked me, and I kept staring at him in surprise. He continued:

*"Mr Meftah, don't be surprised; I will just tell you a little about his behaviour and leave it to your judgement. This man used to get up at each meeting, and while keeping his hands behind his back and walking up and down like a teacher in a classroom, spell out French words and expressions, suffering from a superiority complex, in such a manner that both of us, General Altay and I, were totally nervous. When you send such an impolite and unbalanced person to such an important job, what do you expect?"*

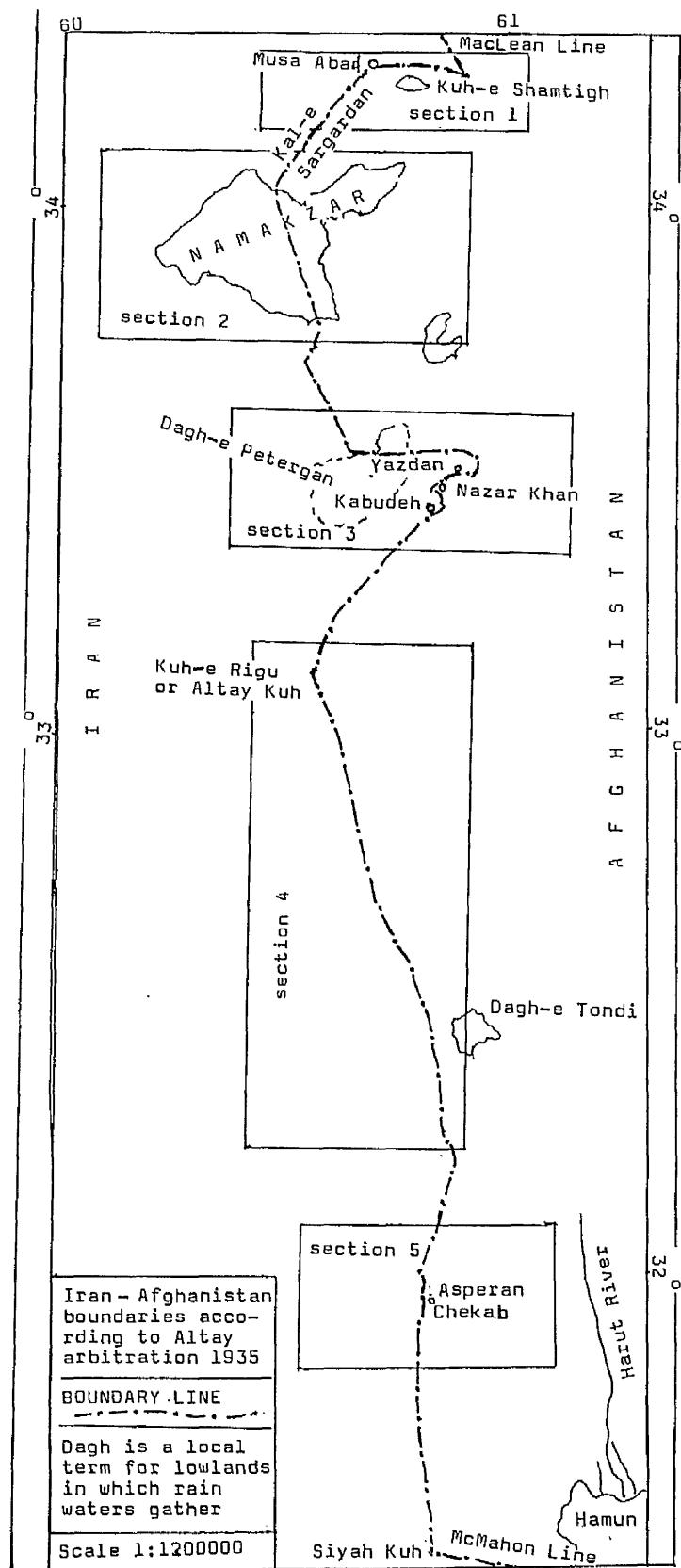
This theory is quite popular amongst the older generation of Iranian diplomats, but others who served in the Iranian Government and are more familiar with the overall view of Iran's relations with Afghanistan dismiss this theory. Dr. Ali-Naghi Alikhani, a former Minister of the Iranian Government told this author on March 18th, 1991:

*"Though there is no doubt about Farrokh's irrational behaviour, it is not easy to believe that a boundary arbitrator would base his decision of creating permanent frontiers between two or more countries on such petty considerations as disliking the behaviour of a colleague. If Altay's arbitration favoured Afghanistan, the reason must be sought elsewhere."*

Mr. Meftah's letter, nevertheless, indicates that top Afghan officials admitted privately that Altay's arbitration award favoured Afghanistan at the expense of loss of territories to Iran.

Figure III

## Altay Line



However, the joint Iranian-Afghan Demarcation Commission was set up immediately after the official announcement of Altay's awards in May 1935. This Commission completed the demarcation works along the whole of the 234 miles of the Altay line by early 1936.

Finally, it is worth observing that the boundary demarcation, though reducing cross-border raids on the Iranian villages, did not put an end to the problem. The following reports are two examples of the continued problem.

1. "I have received report that on 20th November at mile 48 on the road North of ZAHIDAN two lorries carrying tea to ZABUL were attacked by 8 armed Ismailzai Afghans from ZIRREH who killed a Persian Captain, wounded two other passengers and drove one of the lorries to the Afghan frontier where they removed 25 cases of tea. They were taking off tyres also when a pursuit party from HORMUK came up and they escaped across the border.

"Presume you heard of this serious raid. Please telegraph news of any further raids on the road immediately to the Vice-Consul at BIRJAND AND myself and send by bag details of post-inspections and any action taken by you since 1st July in pursuance of instructions received last February, vide my demi-official Q.8 dated 8th April to CAROE copy of which I gave you on 16th April."(1)

2. "On May 1st British military engineers truck coming from Kerman was fired on ten miles from Zahidan. Persian officer and his wife both passengers were wounded, the truck got through to Zahidan.

"On May 2nd large party of armed Baluch from Afghanistan, who had lifted 150 camels south of Birjand were intercepted by gendarmerie and armed locals at Baluchab 14 miles north of [5 groups undec.]. Three raiders were killed, two wounded, one armed local killed, all camels recovered, rest of the gang escaped during the night."(2)

(1) Telegram from British Consul General to the Government of India, dated Meshed 5.12.1942, No. 279, FO 248/1413 .

(2) Telegram from British Consul General to Foreign Office, dated Meshed 5th May 1944, FO 371/40184 .

SECTION II: THE PARTITIONING OF BALUCHISTAN AND  
FRONTIERS WITH BRITISH INDIA

INTRODUCTION

The Safavid Empire of Iran (1501 - 1731) succeeded in reviving the traditional political union of Iran approximately within the frontiers of the pre-Islamic empires. Baluchistan district - from river Hirmand to the coasts of the Indian Ocean, and from Indus to Kerman - was under Iranian sovereignty throughout the Safavid era. The rise to power of Nader Shah Afshar in the 1730's put an end to about ten years of confusion that had occurred resulting from the Afghan rebellion of 1722 and guaranteed Baluchistan's return to Iranian sovereignty after a brief period of turmoil. When in 1730 (1143 H.) Nader Shah (then Nader Qoli), engaged in subduing a revolt in Herat at the outset of his career, sent Mohammad Momen Beik Marvi to Abdullah Khan, leader of Brahui Baluch and Governor of Baluchistan, for assistance. Abdullah Khan was preparing for this task when war broke out between him and the Governor of Sind, during which he was killed. His sons, Amir Mohabat and Amir Iltiaz (Emtiaz), wrote to Nader informing him of the incident. Nader Shah bestowed the Governorship of Baluchistan upon Amir Mohabat, the elder son of Abdullah Khan (1736).

Having completed his Indian expedition, Nader Shah ordered the south-western sections of the province of Sind to be included in the Governorate of Baluchistan.<sup>(1)</sup>

During the period when Iran was leaderless following Nader Shah's assassination in 1747, Nassir Khan, the youngest son of Abdullah Khan, who had served Nader Shah in his Indian expedition, seized power in Kalat, and accepted the suzerainty of Amir Alam Khan I, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat

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(1) Mokhber, op. cit., p. 53.

and Sistan who had expanded his dominion to include Baluchistan in the wake of Nader Shah's assassination.<sup>(1)</sup> Immediately after the murder of Amir Alam Khan which took place shortly afterwards, Nassir Khan aligned himself with Ahmad Shah Durrani who had founded the first kingdom of Afghanistan. On the death of Ahmad Shah in 1772, Nassir Khan claimed independence and began expanding his own dominion within Iran:

"The army of Kelat marched through Mekran as far as Kusserkund and Dizzuk. The latter provinces were not permanently retained, and eventually were re-occupied by Persia. Punjgur and Kolwah were attached to the Upper Provinces, and Mekran began to assume the political aspect it exhibits at the present time."<sup>(2)</sup>

Iran was, at this time, in a state of confusion, suffering from armed conflicts between the houses of Qajar led by Agha Mohammad Khan, founder of the dynasty, and Zand led by Lotf-Ali Khan who had succeeded Karim Khan Zand.

Nassir Khan died in 1795 and on his death, the Gitchkis took advantage of the confusion at Kalat to shake off the Kalat yoke. They were reduced again in 1831 by Mehrab Khan.<sup>(3)</sup>

By the turn of the nineteenth century the Qajars had established themselves firmly in control of Iran. Claims of sovereignty to the whole of Baluchistan was revived by Mohammad Shah Qajar (1834 - 47), and Bampur was taken from

(1) See Chapter II The Khozeimeh Amirs.

(2) Extracts of a document on the history of Baluchistan which exists in the Public Record Office, FO 60/385 , p. 61 of 60.

(3) Same document, op. cit., p. 62.

the rebellious chiefs in 1834.<sup>(1)</sup> The newly appointed Governor of Kerman, Ibrahim Khan, subsequently recovered Geh, Qasreqand, Dizzak, Bahu and Sarbaz.<sup>(2)</sup> Esfandak and Chabar (Chahbahar) were recovered in 1872. Chahbahar had hitherto been held by the Arabs of Muscat for a brief period of time, administering the port and its surrounding district on behalf of the Iranian Government.<sup>(3)</sup> The Qajars, nevertheless, failed not only in recovering all of the lost possessions of Iran in Baluchistan, but also in defining a clear framework within which relationships with the autonomous chiefs of the peripheral districts of the country would be governed. They also failed in defining any comprehensible frontier limits around the country.

*"In accordance with the customary policy, neither Persian Officers nor Persian troops were placed in charge of these districts. So long as their own Chiefs satisfied the demands of Persia, they were left unmolested. The districts of Geh, Kusserkund and Bahodustyari are under the charge of a Gitchki Chief, named Mir Abdullah, who is Naib on the part of Persia, and acts under the orders of Ibrahim Khan, the Persian Governor of Bampur, who, in his turn, is subordinate to the Wukil-ul-Mulk of Kerman. Subordinate to Mir Abdullah are the Judgal Chiefs of Bahodustyari, Mahomed Ali and Din Mahomed. The remaining Persian Districts are also governed by Beluch Chiefs, who render account of the revenue to Ibrahim Khan."<sup>(4)</sup>*

(1) (2) The dates given here are disputable:

"It is well worthy of remark that Mr Badger, speaking of Mir Abdullah of Geh, mentions that he "became tributary to Persia about 12 years ago (1849), and still professes (1861) to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Shah." This assertion, not given as mere hearsay but the result of careful inquiry, agrees well with that of.....

"Nao Mull, who makes the capture of Bampur by the Persians to have been in about 1845, and the subsequent invasion of Geh and Kussurkund some few years later, or in about 1849"

(Letter of the Acting Secretary to Government, Bombay, No. 9 of 3rd June 1861, FO60/385, p. 25 of 42).

(3) Reverand, G.P. Badger to the Government of Bombay, No. 10, dated June 5th, 1861, FO60/385 .

(4) Extract of a document on the history of Baluchistan, op. cit., p. 62 FO 60/385 .

Thus, at the time of boundary delimitation in the district of Baluchistan (1870), it had become clear that the eastern half of Makran and Baluchistan had fallen to the share of the autonomy of Kalat which had accepted British protection and suzerainty, and the western half had returned to Iran.

British influence in Baluchistan and Sistan began as from the turn of the nineteenth century. Realising the importance of Bulan Pass to the security of India, the British during their expedition to Afghanistan, sent troops to Kalat to punish Mehrab Khan who had caused them much trouble. Kalat was reduced and the Khan killed during the war. Two years later, the Baluchis revolted against the British and fought against them, which resulted in their submission to the rule of Nassir Khan II.<sup>(1)</sup>

Having annexed Sind in 1843 and Panjab (Punjab) in 1848, British influence in Baluchistan expanded. In 1854 they signed an agreement with Nassir Khan whereby the British undertook to pay him annually in return for his acceptance of becoming a British protectorate.<sup>(2)</sup> Nassir Khan II died in 1857 and was succeeded by his brother, Mir Khodadad who adhered to the said agreement with the British in return for the annual payment to be doubled. These events resulted in bringing Iran and Britain face to face in Baluchistan and caused friction between the two powers. Expressions of the desire by the British to extend their telegraph line westward from Gwader to the Straits of Hormuz at Jask deepened these frictions and necessitated a well defined boundary between the two powers. Coinciding with these developments was friction between Iran and the newly revived state of Afghanistan over the province of Sistan. Amir Shir Ali Khan of Afghanistan had asked the British to intervene on behalf

(1) Mokhber, op. cit., p. 54.

(2) Ibid.

of his Government,<sup>(1)</sup> offering arbitration between the two countries which was accepted.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### THE GOLDSMID LINE OF IRANO-KALAT BOUNDARIES

In 1870, it was agreed to settle the disputed frontiers of Iran and Afghanistan through British arbitration, but the Afghans informed the British that the arbitration should be postponed for a year or so owing to the internal problems of that country.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Iranian Government appointed Mirza Masum Ansari, an intelligent and alert officer of the Foreign Ministry, as the Iranian Commissioner, to cooperate with General Frederick Goldsmid, head of the British telegraph wire construction in southern Baluchistan, who was assigned by the Government of British India to lead the arbitration team to Sistan and Baluchistan.<sup>(4)</sup> His assignment was the result of persistence on the part of the British Indian Government that the Amir of Afghanistan "will naturally expect that arbitrator of Sistan boundary be appointed by Indian Government".<sup>(5)</sup>

The fact that the Amir of Afghanistan had, in 1870, requested British intervention in his border dispute with Iran, was no

(1) From Colonel F.R. Pollock to the Secretary to the Indian Government, dated Peshawar 17th June 1870, FO 60/386 , p. 206.

(2) See next chapter. Also, see letter from Secretary to the Government of India to Secretary to the Government of Punjab, dated Simla 8th Sep. 1870, No. 1613, FO 60/386 , p. 382.

(3) From H.H. Amir of Afghanistan to the Governor General of India, dated 8th October 1870, FO 60/386, , p. 462.

(4) Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy of India, dated 19th May 1870, FO 60/386, p. 249, section 182.

(5) Extract of telegram from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, dated 14th May 1870, No. 784p, FO 60/386, p. 249, section 182.

more than an opportunity for the British of India to define a border line in Baluchistan which was long desired:

*"The India Office (5th May 1869) sent to Foreign Office, for opinion, copy of Indian letter No. 85, dated 16th March, containing the suggestion that Persia should be urged to agree to negotiations for satisfactory adjustment of its eastern frontier."*(1)

And:

*"They showed that Colonel Goldsmid had, in 1864, made just such a preliminary enquiry as was recommended by Mr. Alison."*(2)

However, as delimitation of Irano-Afghanistan boundaries in Sistan was delayed, Colonel Goldsmid was instructed to proceed with the delimitation of Baluchistan boundaries. Goldsmid, by this time, promoted to the rank of Major General, proposed in a letter to the Governor of Bombay, dated 28th November 1870,(3) to proceed from Bampur to the most north-easterly point practicable on the Baluchistan frontier, proceeding thence southward to the sea.(4) This proposal was agreed to by the Government of India who had actually undertook to advise Goldsmid as to where precisely the Baluchistan boundary should be defined. In his letter to General Goldsmid, secretary to the Government of India, the Foreign Office advised him:

*"3. You will observe that the Secretary of State has approved the suggestion that the boundary described in your memorandum of 28th April 1869 should form the basis of your operations, with such deviation as your personal inspection may show to be desirable. Presuming that you will strike the boundary somewhere in the neighbourhood of Jalk, the line proposed, if*

(1) FO60/387, p. 14 of 60.

(2) Extract of brief history of Baluchistan dispute, for the year 1869, FO 60/387, p. 15 of 61.

(3) Confidential letter from C.U. Aitchison, Secretary to the Government of India, to Major General Goldsmid, dated Fort William 24th January 1871, No. 169P, FO 60/387, p. 158.

(4) Ibid.

eventually adopted, will reach the sea immediately to the west of the Drabol Hill in the centre of the Gwetter Bay, and will leave on the west Jalk, Dizzuk, Sirbaz, Peshin, and Baho; and on the east Kohuk, Punjgoor, Kej, Toomp, Nussirabad, and Mund. The main object to be attained is the definition of the western boundary of Khelat and its dependencies of Kej, &c., beyond which it is not supposed that the Persians have valid claims. A very liberal view may therefore be taken of Persian claims to the west of that line; but deviations to the eastward should not be agreed to unless they rest on substantial grounds, such as Treaty, possession, the wishes of the local Chiefs, or obvious advantage.

"4 From Jalk northward the boundary shown in your memorandum is an imaginary line drawn across the desert to Seistan. In respect to any such line as you may suggest to your fellow-Commissioners, great caution will be requisite. The point where the prolongation of the boundary joins the cultivated lands on the left bank of the Helmund will naturally be the point from which the Seistan boundary will start. On this subject I enclose, for your information, copy of a despatch, No. 41, dated 7th July 1879, addressed by the Government of India to the Secretary of State. If the dotted line shown on your map as the suggested boundary be prolonged, it will strike the Helmund somewhere in the neighbourhood of Buggutser, or, at any rate, much further up the river than the highest point to which the Persian Government have any pretensions. Very great caution, therefore, must be exercised, and if any desert line be suggested at all, it should be such that the Seistan boundary may form the natural continuation of it. The most desirable course would be to leave the desert line undetermined till its other terminus on the Seistan side can be definitely settled. It can really be of little importance what course the line takes between the termini; and probably the straight line will meet the wishes of all parties. On this point His Excellency in Council will be glad if you will submit your views in a Special Report."<sup>(1)</sup>

The unfavourable desires of the Indian Government towards Iran's rights of sovereignty in the Iranian section of Baluchistan was further demonstrated in clause 8 of the same letter:

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(1) Clauses 3 and 4 of Aitchison's Letter to Goldsmid, dated Fort William 24th January 1871, FO 60/387, p. 158.

"8. His Excellency in Council does not think it desirable that the question of the Persian claims to Charbar and Gwadur should be taken up. It would be impossible, indeed, for such a question to be settled by a Commission on which the Muscat Government is not represented. In the unlikely event, therefore, of Persia pressing the consideration of her claims to these two sea-ports, or Khelat claiming Gwadur, you will content yourself with recording fully the grounds on which the claims rest, and will inform the Commissioners that no opinion can be given on the subject except after communication with the Government of Muscat."(1)

With regard to the position of Chahbahar and Gwater, the Indian Government, knowing that these places were held by the Muscatis on a lease agreement with Iran which in no way contradicted Iran's sovereignty,(2) doubted Iran's rights of sovereignty over them.

The first dispute between the two commissioners, however, occurred before the actual commencement of the surveying of the frontiers. The initial dispute was on the introduction of Faquir Mohammad Khan, a well known British protege, as Commissioner representing the Khan of Kalat. The Iranian Commissioner argued that the boundary commission was there only to survey and draw up a map of the frontier areas for the diplomats of Iran and Britain to negotiate in Tehran for settlement, not to carry out boundary adjudication that would necessitate participation of a Kalati representative. This argument was based on the text of the letter in which the Iranian Foreign Minister informed the British of Iran's agreement to their proposal on boundary delimitation. He states:

"The said Commissioners will be at liberty to proceed from thence (Seistan) and draw up a map of Persia's possessions in Beloochistan and those of the Khan and Khelat with their boundaries, and bring the same with themselves to Teheran. That question will be then justly decided with the knowledge of the

(1) Ibid.

(2) Reverand Badger to the Government of Bombay, No. 10, dated June 5th 1861, FO 60/385.

*British Government, but it is hereby agreed upon that the boundaries in Seistan are to be looked to first and before those of Beloochistan."(1)*

The problem was solved as a result of the British Government's use of influence in Tehran which secured an order from the Iranian Foreign Minister to Mirza Masum Khan instructing him to "accept Kalat commissioner if all right."<sup>(2)</sup>

Before settlement of this problem was finalised, another problem of a much greater magnitude threatened the mission. This time, the Iranian Government brought to the attention of the British Minister at Tehran on the 5th of March that according to reports which had been received from the Iranian Commissioner, General Goldsmid had undertaken a series of proceedings which were damaging to the rights of Iran in the disputed areas and were provocative:

*"The Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the 5th instant, communicated to me a message from the king respecting the alleged proceedings of General Goldsmid, our Commissioner for inquiring into the matter of the Perso-Khelat frontier. The King, he said complained of General Goldsmid's proceedings as one-sided, and calculated to create disorder within the Persian frontier possessions. According to the reports received from the Persian Commissioner, General Goldsmid had openly declared places avowedly Persian to belong to Khelat, and had unsettled men's minds by enquiring about the right of Persia to other places already in her possession, and indisputably belonging to her. Another subject of complaint was that of the tumultuous demonstrations on the part of the Khelat authorities, and the expedition of troops with drums, trumpets, &c., from Gwadur into the Kedj territory at the instigation of the British authorities. His Majesty, the Minister observed, was so offended at these proceedings, that he would*

(1) Extract of translation of memorandum from Mirza Saeed Khan, Iran's Foreign Minister, dated Tehran 24th July 1870, FO 60/386, p. 431.

(2) Telegram from the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Iranian Commissioner, repeated in Mr. Alison's telegram to Goldsmid, dated Tehran the 2nd of March 1871, FO 60/390, p. 4.

consider himself justified in recalling his Commissioner. His sole object with regard to the disputed Perso-Khelat frontier was that the Commissioners should conduct an inquiry into the matter in an orderly and a quiet way, draw up a map of that frontier line, and bring it to Teheran, where the subject would be settled between the Persian and British Governments."(1)

In his despatch No. 67 to the Secretary of State for India, dated 18th March 1871, General Goldsmid accused Mirza Masum Khan of similar undertakings and suggested: "The whole action of the Persian Commissioner leads me to the thankless conclusion that an enquiry such as contemplated by Her Majesty's Government cannot now be carried out on the Perso-Baluch Frontier unless under diplomatic influence at Tehran."(2)

(For more details on the grievances of the two Commissioners see Appendix III)

These differences between the Iranian Commissioner, Mirza Masum Khan, supported by Ibrahim Khan, Governor of Bampur, and British Commissioner, General Goldsmid, supported by the Khan of Kalat, stemmed principally from Mirza Masum Khan's distrust of the British Commissioner's true intentions. In a despatch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mirza Masum Khan indicated: "..... Since all intentions of the said officer (Goldsmid) can be seen in his notes (to me), I will stop at sending the collection of (notes) questions and answers between myself and the English Officer and will dare adding... that this Officer has no other intention but supporting and strengthening the Khan of Kalat and obtaining documentary evidence to prove that Kaj, Tump, and.... belong

(1) Extract of letter from C. Alison, H.B. Majesty's Minister at Tehran to Right Hon'ble the Earl Granville, dated Tehran 9th March 1871, No. 22, FO 60/390, p. 57.

(2) Extract of clause 12 of despatch No. 67, from Major General Goldsmid to His Grace the Duke of Argyll, dated Camp Gwadur 18th March 1871, FO 60/388, p. 5.



*Mirza Saeed Khan, Naser ad-Din Shah's Minister  
of Foreign Affairs at the time of  
Goldsmid's Baluchistan Boundary Delimitation*

to the (Said) Khan. He is very annoyed with this humble servant (of yours) because of lack of cooperation in furthering the intentions of the said Officer on my part."<sup>(1)</sup>

As the differences intensified between the two commissioners, both Governments of Britain and Iran advised their respective Commissioners to cooperate with each other. The British Minister at Tehran telegraphed General Goldsmid advising him:

"PERSIAN Government has sent in a series of complaints about your alleged unfair proceedings towards Persia; of the warlike demonstrations made on part of Khelat, &c. His Majesty wishes the enquiry to be orderly and quietly conducted, and that you and colleague should prepare a map for subsequent settlement of frontier question here. I have telegraphed Home that an open statement of opinion, if adverse to Persian pretensions, might have an unfavourable effect on pending inquiry about Seistan. Details by messengers."<sup>(2)</sup>

The Iranian Foreign Minister similarly telegraphed Mirza Masum Khan stating:

"Your telegram received. Your co-operation with British Commissioner approved. Act according to your instructions. It is moreover by Royal orders notified to you that in inspecting places attached to frontier line, in making necessary enquiries, and in collecting information you are to co-operate with General Goldsmid without taking steps for deciding the question of the boundary. You will each prepare your own maps, and you will each bring your maps with the notes you have made to Teheran, so that the question may be decided by the Persian and English Governments. Accept Khelat Commissioner if all right; if not suitable, do not take armed force with you. Inform me of details of both cases."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) From Mirza Masum Khan to Mirza Saeed Khan, dated 29 Safar 1288 19th May 1871, document 93 of the "Yeksad Sanad-e Tarikh", by Ebrahim Safaii, Tehran, March 1974.

(2) From Mr Alison to General Goldsmid, dated Tehran 8th March 1871, FO 60/1390, p. 3 of 58.

(3) From Foreign Minister to Mirza Masum Khan as contained in Mr Alison's telegram to Goldsmid, dated 3rd March 1871, FO 60/388, pp. 11 - 12.

The two Commissioners continued with the task of surveying the frontier areas without tensions between them subsiding.

Cooperation between the two Commissioners were, however, limited to the exchange of some notes. General Goldsmid assigned Captain Lovett the Engineer of his commission to survey and draw up the map of the border areas. Writing to the Iranian Commissioner on 7th February 1871, General Goldsmid informed the former that Captain Lovett had prepared a map of the frontier areas which did not include Kuhak and Esfandak districts in the Iranian side of the border - (see Lovett's map, figure IV). Writing to Mirza Masum Khan, Goldsmid asserted:

*".... as the claim made by Persia to Kuhak and Isfunder have not been accepted by the other side and as they have several witnesses on their side ready, I think it advisable that this matter should be at once enquired into...."(1)*

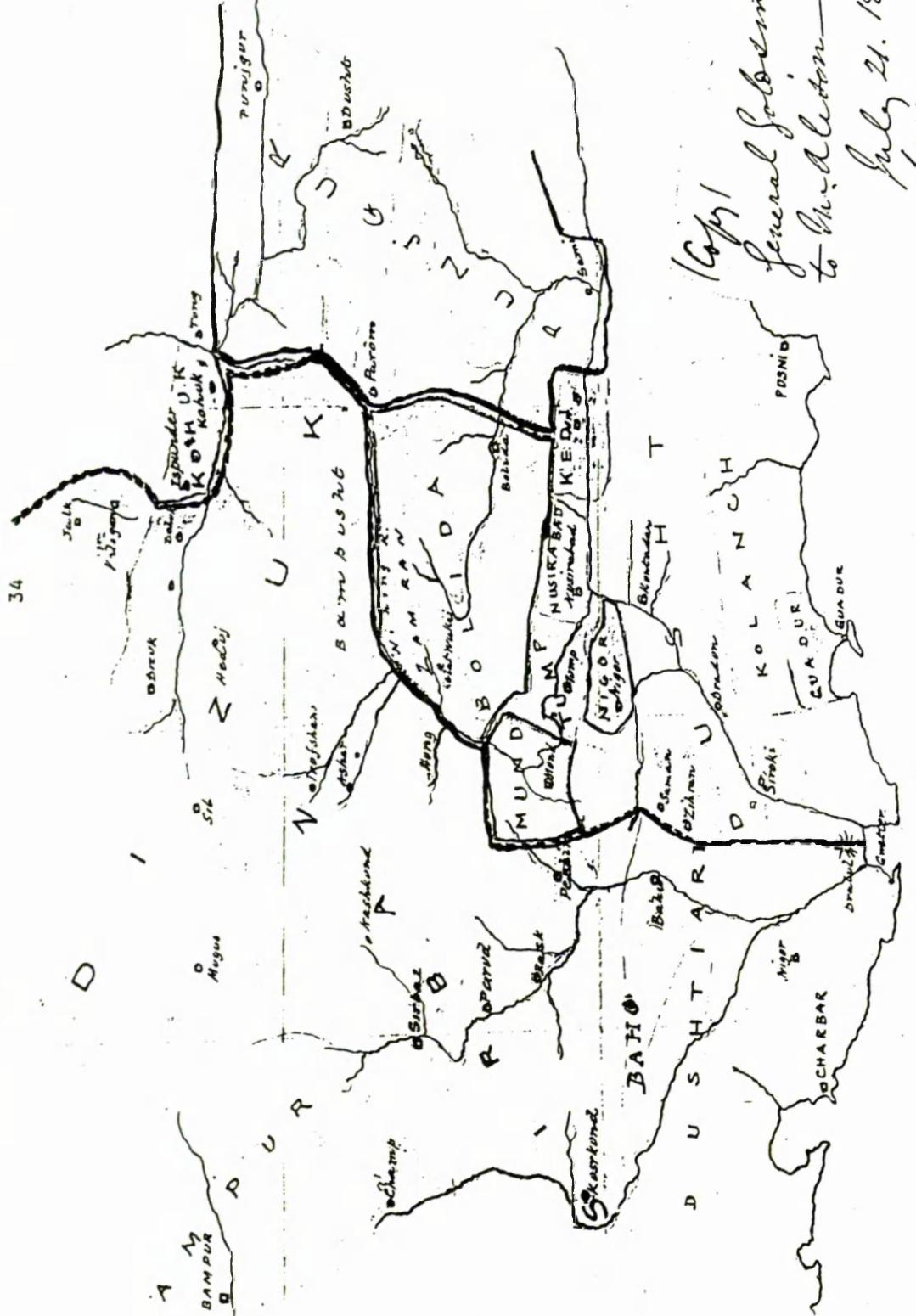
The Iranian Commissioner protested against the suggestion. In his reply, Mirza Masum Khan asserted that:

*"Captain Lovett brought over a sheet of paper to my tent, enquired about several places from the Surteep Ibrahim Khan, and made notes on the same paper. He asked - 'have these places paid revenue to Persia or not?' Ibrahim Khan answered - 'Yes!' and the collectors and officers of those places are now present with me. Captain Lovett asked concerning Kedj and Punjgoor. Ibrahim Khan said - 'For three or four years the inhabitants of those places have failed in paying the revenue, and I have always wished to go and punish them and take the revenue, but the Persian Government, I know not for what reason, has not allowed me.' And with regard to what you have written about Kohuk and Isfunder, that the other side say that those placed do not belong to Persia, and that they have several witnesses to prove their right of possession, and that you think this should be immediately enquired into, and therefore wish that I should come over to your tent, and that this should be settled with the Khelat Commissioner. First, Kohuk and Isfunder are dependencies of Dizzuk, and have no*

(1) From General Goldsmid to Mirza Masum Khan Ansari, dated Bampoor 7th February 1871, FO 60/388, p. 23.

ROUGH SKETCH SHewing THE SUPPOSED REVENUE DISTRICTS ADJACENT

# To PERSON-BELUCH FRONTIER



Map showing Irano-Kalat frontiers, accompanying General Goldsmid's report to Mr Alison, dated Golhak July 21, 1871, FO 60/389, p. 36.

connection (or nothing to do) with the enquiry you are appointed for; secondly, the Khelat Commissioners have been specially appointed to discuss the question of the frontier of Kedj and its dependencies. What right have they to make a claim on Dizzuk and its dependencies that they should waste your time and delay us in these useless matters?"(1)

Having disputed Goldsmid's method of determining sovereignty of Iran and Kalat in the disputed areas, Mirza Masum Khan kept aloof. General Goldsmid nevertheless, continued with his work without Mirza Masum Khan's cooperation. He completed his task and telegraphed the British Minister at Tehran on April 19th, suggesting that his map and his findings be put forward for discussion in Tehran.(2) This happened exactly as was suggested by General Goldsmid, and the Iranian Government accepted on 23rd August that boundary awards should be conducted on the basis of Goldsmid's one-sided findings and his map, in spite of writing to the British Minister at Tehran a week earlier expressing regrets for the way General Goldsmid had conducted the survey of the border areas. The Iranian Foreign Minister writing to the British Minister at Tehran on that occasion, indicated:

"The copy of the correspondence between His Excellency General Goldsmid and Mirza Maasum Khan, Commissioners of the British and Persian Governments, which was forwarded in a memorandum from the Mission, has been read by this Department and submitted to His Majesty the Shah.

"From that correspondence, that which strikes the mind most as being strange, and which has caused regret to His Majesty, is the fact that the British Commissioner (while) at Bumpur, and before proceeding with the Persian Commissioner, conformably to the arrangement made between this Department and Her Britannic Majesty's Legation, to Gwadur and Kedj, and (before) they collected information and drew a correct map, repeatedly in his letters regarded the port of Gwadur as belonging to the Arabs, and Kedj to the Khan

(1) From Mirza Masum Khan to General Goldsmid, dated Bampoor 8th February 1871, FO 60/388, p. 23.

(2) From General Goldsmid to Mr. Alison, dated 17th April 1871, FO 60/390 -

of Khelat, and he made the Persian Commissioner's going to those Districts dependent upon the possibility of his doing so and upon permission being obtained from the agent of the Khan of Khelat."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Iranian Government not only accepted Goldsmid's map as the basis for discussion, but actually limited the discussion to one meeting between the Iranian Foreign Minister and the British Minister at Tehran accompanied by General Goldsmid, and without the participation of Mirza Masum Khan, who had reportedly fallen ill.<sup>(2)</sup>

The boundary line suggested by Goldsmid, and referred to the Shah for his opinion, was partly modified by the Shah who included in the Iranian side of the border line: Kuhak in the north, and lands comprising within Nahang and Dasht rivers - from Mond to the sea, abandoning Gwadur Bay and Kaj.<sup>(3)</sup> Finding the Iranians quite serious on the question of Kuhak, General Goldsmid advised the Indian Government that Kuhak should be given to Iran. He asserted:

*"We might, perhaps, settle question by giving Kohuk to Persia on grounds of doubtful possession and non-payment of revenue, maintaining rest of line as indicated on Lovett's map. In such case might engineer officer be detailed to meet Harrison and Chief from both sides to mark off boundary in minute detail? Full proposal by post."<sup>(4)</sup>*

This advice was not taken on board and the British Minister at Tehran officially informed the Iranian Foreign Minister in a memorandum on 1st of September 1871 of the boundaries

(1) Extract of Memorandum from Mirza Saeed Khan to C. Alison, H.B. Majesty's Minister at Tehran, dated 17th August 1871, FO 60/391, p. 33.

(2) From Alison, Tehran, to Viceroy, Simla, dated 18th July 1871, FO 60/390, p. 101.

(3) From Goldsmid to Foreign Secretary, Simla dated Tehran 14th August 1871, FO 60/390 .

(4) Ibid.

delineated in Baluchistan, from Guater as far north as Jalq, in accordance with Goldsmid's map and his findings. The memorandum outlined:

"The undersigned, Her Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Persia, acting on the part of his Government, has the honor to submit, for the approval of His Majesty the Shah, a map in which the boundary line between the territories possessed in Beloochistan by Persia, and the territories forming the exclusive property of the independent State of Khelat, is delineated.

"This line may be thus described: Commencing from the northernmost point, or that which is furthest from the sea, the territory of Khelat is bounded to the west by the large Persian District of Dizzuk, which is composed of many Dehs or minor Districts, those on the frontier being Jalk and Kallegan. Below these two last-named is the small District of Kohuk, which, together with Punjgur, comprising Parum and other dependencies, is on the Khelat side of the frontier, while on the Persian side is Bampusht.

"Below Punjgur, the frontier, possessions of Khelat to the sea are Boleida, including Zamiran and other dependencies, Mund and Dusht. Within the Persian line of frontier are the villages or tracts belonging to Sirbaz and Bahu Dustyari. The boundary of Dusht is marked by a long line drawn through the Drabol hill situated between the Rivers Bahu and Dusht, to the sea in the Bay of Gwuttur.

"To summarise: Punjgur and Parum and other dependencies with Kohuk; Boleida, including Zamiran and other dependencies; Mund, including Tump, Nasserabad, Kedj, and all Districts, dehs and dependencies to the eastward; Dusht with its dependencies as far as the sea: these names exhibit the line of actual possession of Khelat, that is to say, all tracts to the east of the frontier of actual Persian possession, which frontier comprises Dizzuk and Bampusht, Sirbaz and Peshin, Bahu and Dustyari."<sup>(1)</sup>

Replying to this memorandum, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs stated his Government's official line in the manner that expressed their acceptance of the delimitation without satisfaction. This letter asserted:

(1) Extract of Memorandum from C. Alison to the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated Gulhak the 1st September 1871, FO 60/391, pp. 1 - 2 of 37.

"In obedience to His Majesty's orders I beg, in reply, most respectfully to state that the Persian Government, notwithstanding the clear right which it considered itself to have over Beloochistan, simply out of regard for the wishes of Her Britannic Majesty's Government that this question should be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the definition of a boundary line, has hereby accepted Your Excellency's letter and the map."(1)

Notwithstanding the official acceptance of Goldsmid's Line in Baluchistan, the Iranian authorities informed the British Minister at Tehran unofficially that Kuhak and parts of Mashkil Valley should go to Iran. These demands soon proved that a final agreement of these boundaries was impossible and the question of Kuhak and Mashkil Valley remained, only to be settled later.

Immediately after the delineation tasks were completed and Goldsmid departed from Iran, Ibrahim Khan, Governor of Bampur, captured Kuhak and other parts of the Mashkil Valley.

General Goldsmid's Line was, however, inspected in 1875 for the purpose of demarcation, by Colonel St. John and Mirza Ali Ashraf Khan.(2)

#### THE HOLDICH LINE OF IRANO-KHARAN BOUNDARY

Whilst the limits of Iranian possessions in Baluchistan were defined by Goldsmid's Line of 1871, drawn from the coast of Gwater Bay northwards as far as Jalq, Kuhak and Esfandak remained out in the cold. The Iranian Government, though accepting in principle the Goldsmid Line, did not agree with his decision on the northern sections of the line. The final

(1) From Mirza Saeed Khan, Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Mr Alison, dated 14th September 1871, FO 60/391, p. 2 of 37.

(2) From Mr. Durand to British Government, dated Gulhek (near Tehran) July 12, 1895, FO 60/627, p. 4.

agreement, therefore, left Kuhak, Esfandak and Mashkil Valley with a long stretch of frontier to the River Hirmand, including in all 300 miles of frontier, undefined and mostly unmapped. These points of undefined frontiers are determined by the following passages in General Goldsmid's award of Sistan and Makran boundaries:

*"Sistan. - 'The main bed of the Helmand therefore below Kohuk should be the eastern boundary of Persian Sistan, and the line of frontier from Kohak to the hills south of the Sistan desert should be so drawn as to include within the Afghan limits all cultivation on the banks of the river from the Band upwards. The Malik Siah Koh, on the chain of hills separating the Sistan from the Karman desert, appears a fitting point.'*

*"Makran. - 'Commencing from the northernmost point or that which is furthest from the sea, the territory of Kalat is bounded to the west by the large Persian district of Dizzuk, which is composed of many dehs, or minor districts, those on the frontier being Jalk and Kalagan. Below these two last named is the small district of Kohuk, which, together with Panjgur, comprising Parum and other dependencies, is on the Kalat side of the frontier, while on the Persian side is Bampusht.' "(1)*

The decision to leave areas to the north of Jalq undefined by Goldsmid's Makran Commission was due to the fact that Azad Khan, chief of Kharan, considered himself and his dominion to be independent of that of the Khan of Kalat. The following is an authoritative statement on this point:

*"As regards Punjgur, and indeed all his lands except Kharan, Azad Khan has, I am to remark, always been considered a feudatory of that State (i.e., Kalat); but as regards Kharan, the Government has left his allegiance to Kalat or Kabul an open question."(2)*

(1) Boundary between Persia and North-west Baluchistan, Confidential Foreign Office Document, dated 19th September 1893, FO 60/627, p. 1.

(2) Extract from Letter from Foreign Secretary to General Goldsmid, dated 26th May 1871, enclosure 12 to Government of India Secret letter No. 61 dated 26th September 1871, quoted in Boundary between Persia, op. cit., dated 19th September 1893, FO 60/627.

In 1884, however, Azad Khan, under Sir Robert Sandeman's auspices, obtained a reconciliation with the Khan of Kalat, as one of his Sardars. Previous to this, he had written to the Amir of Afghanistan to ask if there was any objection in Kabul to his submitting to the British Government. Seeing his own power and the survival of a united Afghanistan largely dependent on the geostrategic considerations of the British Government in Central Asia and South-West Asia, the Amir of Afghanistan gave his consent<sup>(1)</sup> to Kharan's submission to Kalat and the British Indian Government which was, by this time, in direct control of the whole of eastern Baluchistan including Kalat. The Iranians, at this time, reasserted their control of Kuhak which motivated the British authorities to seek delimitation of boundaries in these frontier areas to contain Iran's encroachments into Kharan. There were a number of other reasons for the British to enforce boundary lines in the tracts to the north of Jalq and Mashkil river as outlined by Captain Macdonald in a memorandum on this subject:

*"(i) It will put a stop to intrigue between Persia and Kharan for the possession of Mashkel, and prevent Persian aggression not only in Mashkel but at Kohuk.  
(ii) It will enable us to settle definitely the relations between the Reki chief of Mashkel and Sir Naoroz Khan, and thus enable us to interpose a trustworthy barrier between Kharan and Persia. (iii) It will reassure the people and the rulers of Mekran, and convince them that we have not lost interest in them, and that we do not intend to let them be absorbed by Persia or Kharan. (iv) It will indirectly tend to check the growth of the Naushirwani power. (v) It will serve as a countermove to Russia, and will show the people (and this is of the very greatest importance) that we have not abandoned the field to Russia, and do not fear her."<sup>(2)</sup>*

It is noteworthy that Captain Macdonald's reference under clause (v) is to the newly established Russian Consulate at

(1) Boundary between Persian and North-west Baluchistan, a Foreign Office document, dated 19th September 1893, FO 60/627, p. 4.

(2) Memorandum of Captain F.W.P. Macdonald of Indian Staff, dated London 15th August 1893, FO 60/627, p. 17.

Qaen where the British had previously established one of their own.

However, on the subject of Kuhak not being an Iranian possession, Mr. Durand, the British Minister at Tehran, put the following argument to the British authorities:

"....the district has never been acknowledged to Persian territory as Your Highness has been led to believe.

"To recapitulate.

"1) There have been disputes between the frontier authorities of Persia and India about the Mashkil or Mashkhok district.

"2) In November last H.M. the Shah agreed to send a Persian official to enquire into the matter in conjunction with a British officer.

"3) The Persian official did not go, and the British officer had to go by himself.

"4) When I asked the Persian Government to restrain its frontier authorities from aggression on the disputed tract pending the joining enquiry to which it had agreed, the Persian Government refused to do so.

"5) It based its refusal, a refusal of a most peremptory nature, upon the assertion that the disputed district had been distinctly acknowledged in maps drawn up after demarcation to belong to Persia.

"6) That assertion proves to be incorrect."(1)

Mr Durand's last remark that the assertion of the claim by the Iranian Government that Kuhak was included in Iranian territory on the map drawn up after demarcation work being incorrect does not correspond adequately with the fact that indeed Kuhak, Esffandak and areas to the west of the river Mashkil were included in the Iranian side of the boundary - (see the demarcation map of 1875, figure V).

(1) Extract of letter from H.M. Durand to the British Indian Government, dated Gulhekk July 12, 1895, FO 60/627, p. 5.

By December 1895, however, the two powers decided to demarcate tracts between Jalg and Sistan territory. An agreement was signed in Tehran between the Prime Minister of Iran and the British Legation at Tehran allowing the demarcation of these boundaries to proceed.<sup>(1)</sup> The British had by this time resolved that more than twenty years of Iranian possession of Kuhak and Esfandak was too long a period of time to be easily ignored.<sup>(2)</sup>

The actual delimitation of these boundaries was agreed by the two parties in Tehran on the basis of Colonel T.H. Holdich's final report on the proceedings of the Irano-Baluchistan Frontier Delimitation Commission, the details of which appears in their agreement in Tehran 27th December 1895 allowing their representatives to carry out demarcation of the boundary - (see text of this agreement in Appendix IV).

Colonel Holdich and his Iranian counterpart completed the task of demarcation by late March and signed on the 24th March 1896 an agreement on the completion of demarcation which was submitted to their respective Governments in early April 1896, finalising the boundary settlement of northern Baluchistan.<sup>(3)</sup> This boundary recognised Kuhak, Esfandak and areas to the west of Mashkil river as Iranian possessions. The demarcation report which was submitted by Holdich to his Government described the boundary as:

*"Commencing from the Mashkel river it is defined by the bed of that river from pillar 1 to pillar 2. Pillar 1 is placed on a conspicuous hill on the left or north bank of the river, about a mile and a half below the junction of the Gazbastan stream with the Mashkel, and almost immediately south of Kohak Fort.*

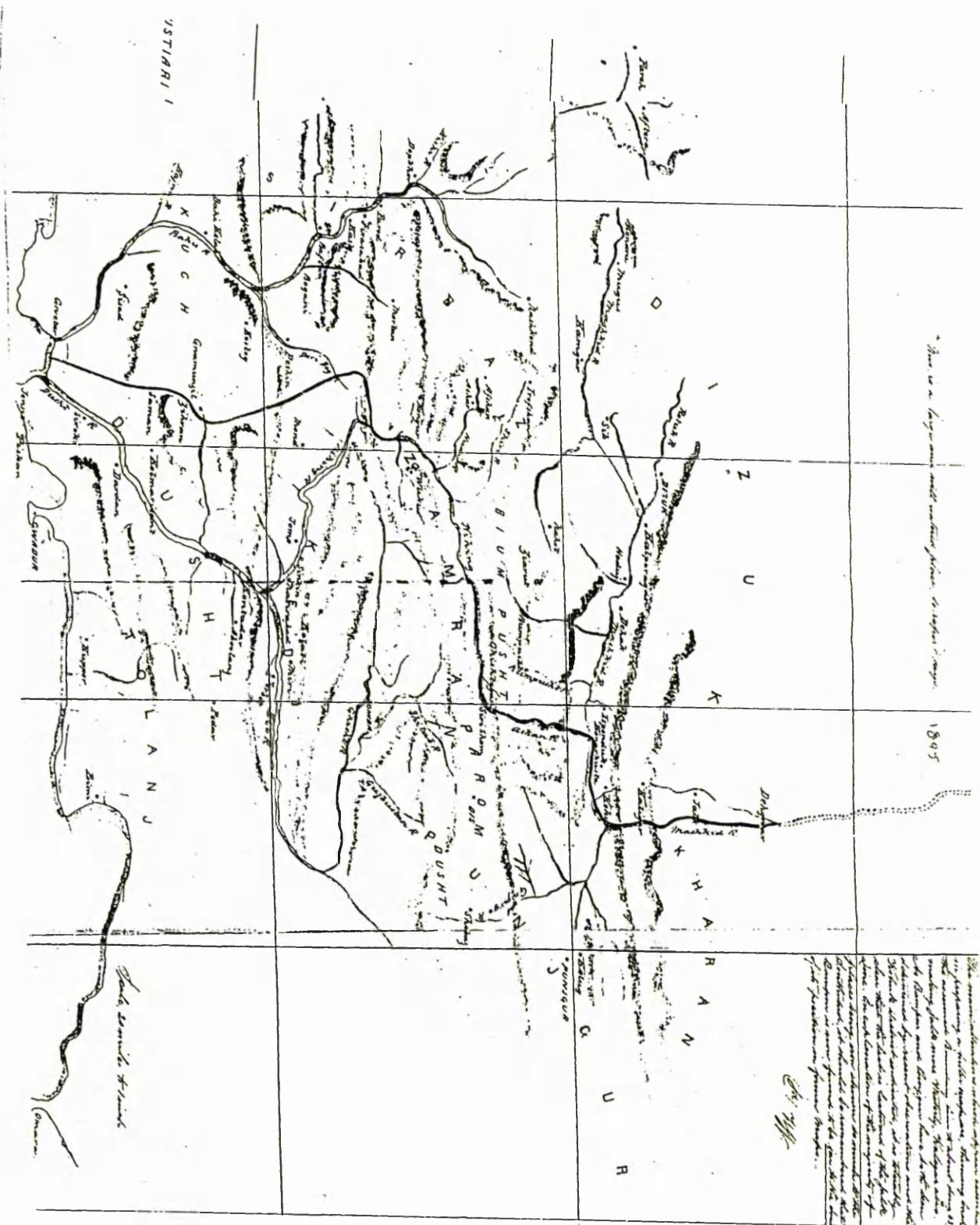
(1) See the text of agreement, dated Tehran December 27, 1895, FO 60/627 - 169881 in 3 pages.

(2) From the Viceroy to Her Majesty's Government, dated 16th December 1895, FO 60/627 -

(3) From Colonel T.H. Holdich, H.B. Majesty's Commissioner for the delimitation of Perso-Baluch Frontier, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated Camp Panjgur the 5th April 1896, No. 34, FO 60/627 -

Figure v

Colonel Holdich's map of delimitation of  
Northern Baluchistan Boundaries, FO 60/388, p. 253



"Pillar 2 is built on a well marked hill on the right or south bank of the Mashkel river about 6 miles above the junction of the Mashked and the Rakshan rivers. From pillar 2 the boundary runs in a north-westerly direction to a conspicuous peak on the subsidiary range which runs from the Tank-i-Grawag to the Siahān. The peak is marked by pillar 3. From pillar 3 it follows the watershed of this subsidiary range to its junction with that of the Siahān Koh and thence it is defined westward by the main watershed of the Siahān range to a point about 4 miles east of the pass called Bonsar or Sharindor, on the main road connecting Isfandak with Jalk. At this point, which is marked by pillar 4, a subsidiary watershed or spur runs northward, along which the boundary extends, leaving all drainage into the cultivated tracts of Kalagan on the Persian side. The boundary is here marked by a conspicuous peak, distinguished by a natural bluff resembling a tower on its summit. From this peak 5, it is carried to pillar 6, which is placed on the main road leading a little south of east from the village of Kaladen towards the Mashkel river. Pillar 6 is 4 miles from the village of Kaladen. From pillar 6 the boundary runs direct to pillar 7 on the main road connecting Jalk with Ladgasht and Mashkel at 12 miles from Zarāt-i-Pir-Omar at Jalk.

"From pillar 7 the boundary is carried in a northerly direction by a straight line to pillar 8.

"Pillar 8 is placed on the road connecting the date groves of Ladgasht with those of Muksokhta or Muksotag, and it is erected at a distance of 3 miles from the southern edge of the Muksotag grove, so as to divide the southern group of date groves, including Ladgasht and Kalag, from the northern group, which includes Muksotag, Gorani and others.

"Ladgasht, with its date groves, becomes the property of Kalat, and Gorani with its date groves, has been allotted to Persia, on the understanding that the frontier governors of the Persian Government in future becomes responsible for the conduct of the Damani cultivators of these groves.

"From pillar 8 of the boundary runs 14 miles nearly north to pillar 9 at the south-eastern edge of the Kindi date grove, and thence in the same direction for 3½ miles to the north-eastern edge of the same grove of Kindi, where pillar 10 is erected.

"From pillar 10 the boundary runs 11 miles a little south of west, so as to clear the northern edge of the Kindi date grove, to pillar 11.

FIGURE VI

Baluchistan Boundaries, Goldsmid's Delimitation of 1871.  
 Italconsult, Local Chart, scale 1:1,000,000, published by  
 USAF Aeronautical, Jan. 1958.

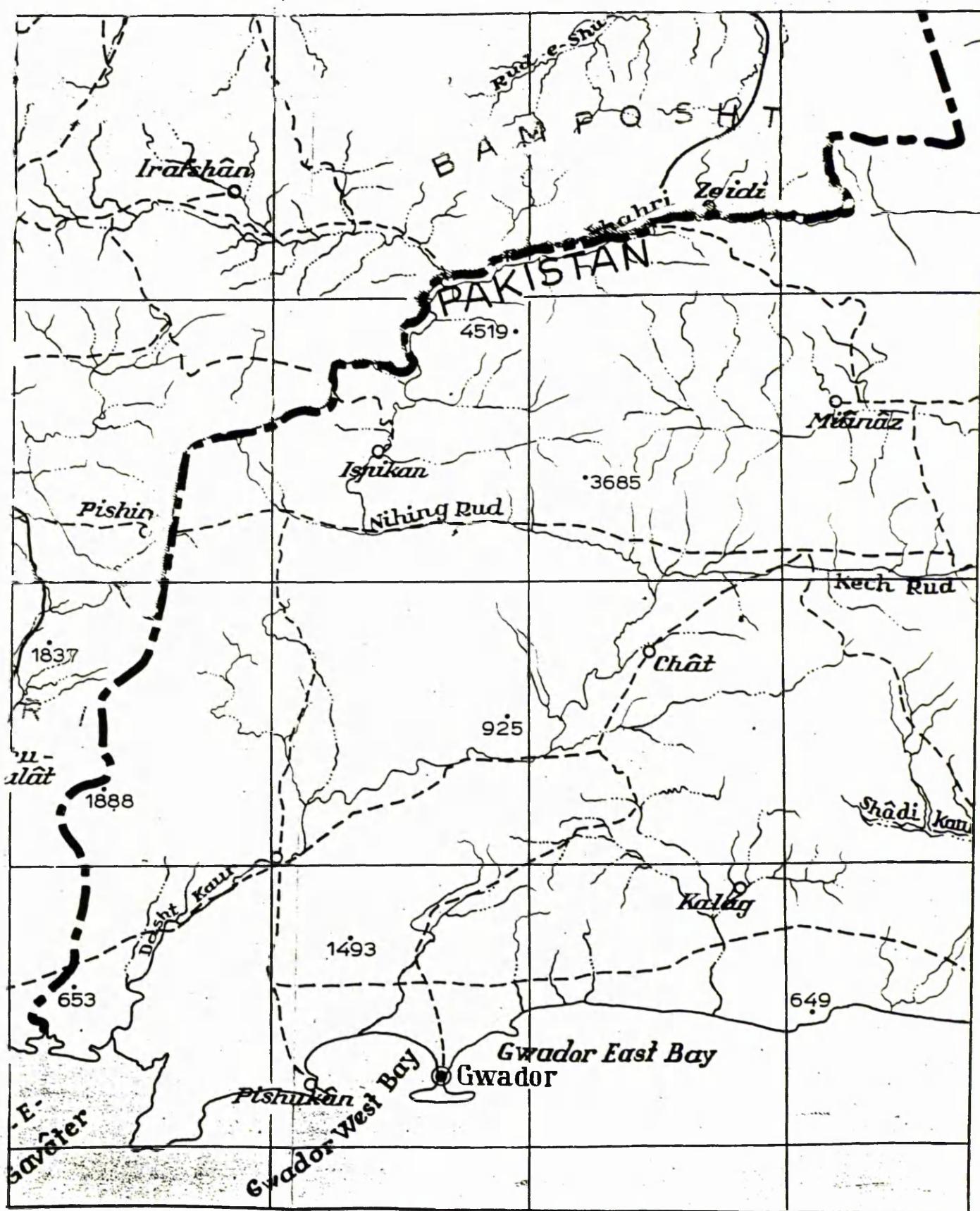
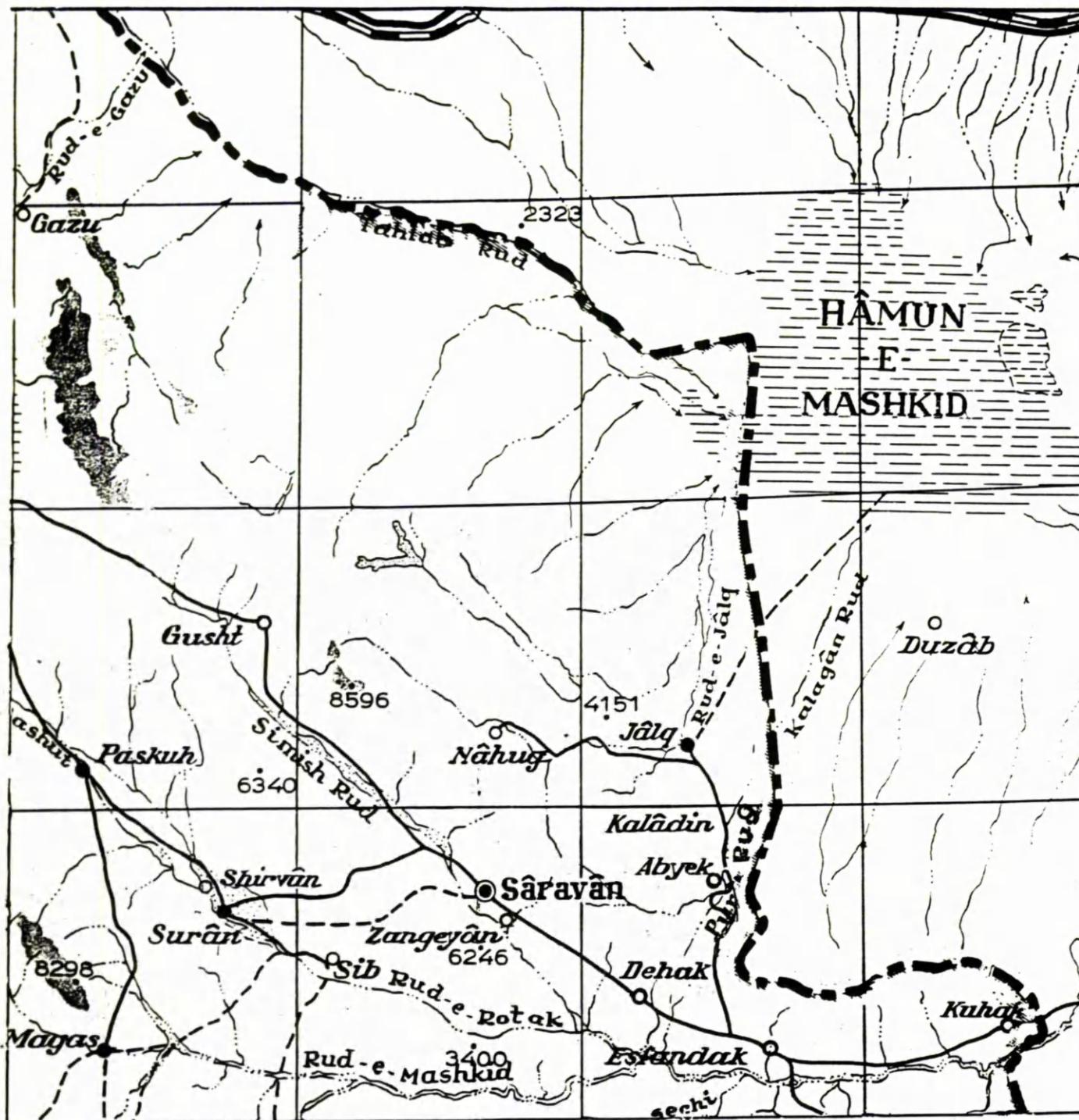


FIGURE VII

Baluchistan Boundaries, Holdich Delimitation of 1896,  
 Italconsult, Local Chart, scale 1:1,000,000, published by  
 USAF Aeronautical, January 1958.



"Pillar 11 is on the edge of the right bank of the Talab watercourses, and about 1 mile east of the northern end of the Gorani date groves.

"From pillar 11 northwards the Talab river becomes the boundary to its junction with the Mirjawa river. From the point of junction it is carried by a straight line to the nearest point on the watershed of the Mirjawa range, which limits the drainage into the Mirjawa river on the north.

"Thence it follows the main watershed northward to the highest point of the Kacha Koh.

"From the highest point of the Kacha Koh the line is carried straight to the highest point of the Malik Siah Koh."(1)

The boundary settlement though it recognised such places as Kuhak, Kenarbaste, Esfandak and areas to the west of Mashkil river, long in actual possession of Iran as Iranian properties, deprived Iran of most of the Mashkil district and most importantly, the Mirjaveh town and district and its strategic points. The British authorities were aware of Iran's losses in this settlement as Durand stated in his letter of January 20th 1896 to the Marquis of Salisbury:

"I now enclose a copy of the convention with attached memorandum and map. Your Lordship will see that the convention secures for Kelat considerably better terms than the Government of India was willing to accept. I thought it desirable to keep something in hand for future exchange or concession. Our Commissioners will now be in a good position for they can make considerable concessions to Persia if they should wish to do so, while still reserving to Kelat all that the Government of India thinks necessary. At present however the Persian Government is quite satisfied with its bargain, though this involves the abandonment of the whole or almost the whole of the Mashkel district, to which I referred in my despatch No. 60 of the 7th of July 1895."(2)

(1) Colonel Holdich's report to the Government of India on demarcation of Iran's boundaries in the north of Baluchistan, dated 5th April 1896, FO 60/627, pp. 1 - 2.

(2) From Durand to Marquis of Salisbury, dated Tehran January 20th, 1896, No. 5, FO 60/627 -

Finally, it is noteworthy that in 1900 the interests of the Khan of Kalat in the Nushki district were bought by Government of India<sup>(1)</sup> in spite of Kalat itself being a British protectorate.

#### THE 1905 SETTLEMENT

When settling the boundary to the north of Jalq, Colonel Holdich based his information on a map which the British claimed to have proved, by subsequent investigations, to be wrong. When the British authorities realised this, they discovered if they were to demarcate the boundaries on the basis of his map, the result would very likely bring their Padaha post well within Iranian territory. The British authorities, therefore, assigned Captain Webb Ware to survey the areas concerned and prepare a report on the actuality of the boundary line. This he did in 1902 and the map he prepared put Mirjaveh in British Indian territory - (see figure VIII). This action agitated the Iranians and friction occurred between the two powers. In a lengthy memorandum in November 1904, Colonel McMahon, British Arbitration Commissioner for Sistan boundary, proposed a new line to be imposed upon the Iranians which he alluded to as "the red line" as opposed to that of Holdich's "blue line". In his memorandum, Colonel McMahon proposed:

"To continue the boundary line along the watershed of all the hills north of Kacha Koh, draining eastwards into British territory, would necessitate a line from peak 7033 (near Bagaiwad pass) stretching far westwards to the crest of the Buzaf, Lakshak and Wawaila Ranges. This would bring the Persian routes from Seistan to Bampur, Ladis and Jalk, via Duzdab, within our territory and would naturally be strongly objected to by the Persians."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Sykes, Major Percy, (1902), "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", London 1902, p. 358.

(2) Clause 14 of McMahon's memorandum, No 2540, dated Camp Kohak the 5th November 1904, FO 60/712, p. 3.

McMahon's proposed red line was rejected by the British Government on the advice of the British Minister at Tehran who believed that they could not ever induce the Iranian Government to accept it.<sup>(1)</sup> He suggested that:

"My idea would be to suggest to them that, if they behaved well as regards Seistan affairs, i.e., settled the case of the Hashmat-ul-Mulk and grain export questions to our satisfaction, we should be prepared, as the Shah found in the presence of the Mission a source of anxiety, to withdraw it without exposing them and us to trouble and expense of a Mirjawa delimitation by it. We would leave them Mirjawa itself, keeping Padaha ourselves, and treating the intervening stream as the boundary, and erecting a boundary pillar between Robat and Koh-i-Malik Siah to mark the boundary on the road. We should, however, ask for a definite agreement that we should be permitted to obtain supplies from Mirjawa and Duzdab."<sup>(2)</sup>

The case of Heshmat al-Molk, referred to in this document, was that Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Khozeimeh Heshmat al-Molk, Amir of Sistan, allegedly supported by the Russians, had enforced an order prohibiting exports of supplies to the British Indian frontiers. In a despatch to the Indian Government in February 1902, the British Vice-Consul for Sistan and Qaen reported:

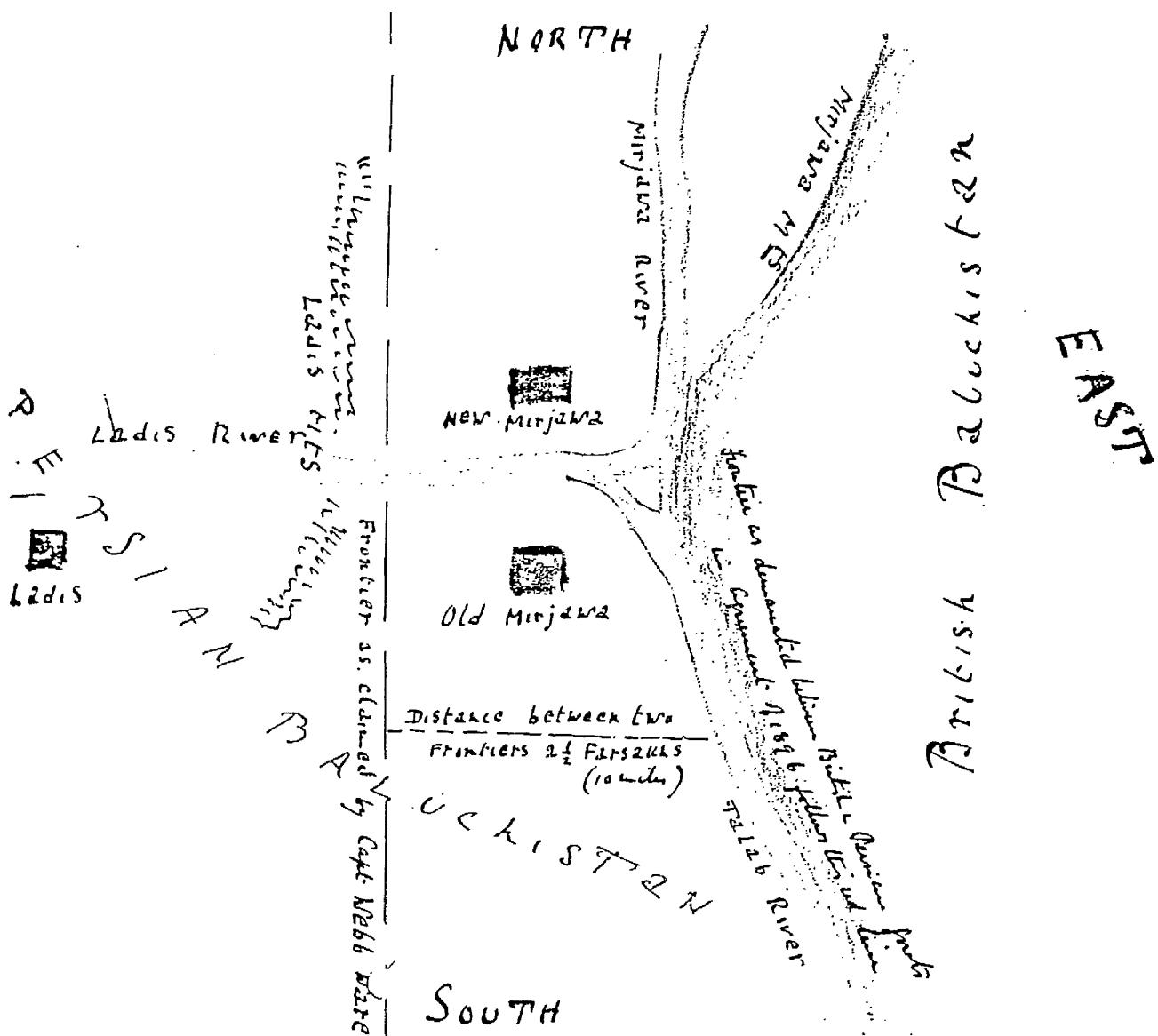
"Before leaving Seistan Mons. Molitor visited the Amir Hashmat-ul-Mulk and reminded him of the order prohibiting the export of supplies to our frontier. A few days later I visited the Amir, who told me that Mr. Miller had also been to visit him to impress on him the existence of this order and to warn him that it was his duty to punish Katkhaudas of villages who disobeyed it. The Amir added that Mr. Miller had also remarked, 'If you cannot look after your frontier yourself, you know that some one else will have to do it for you.' The Amir regarded this an indication of Mr Miller's future designs with regard to our border. On the subject of supplies the Amir said that an order prohibiting their export did exist; but that an

(1) From Sir A. Hardinge, H.B. Majesty's Minister at Tehran to Foreign Secretary, telegram No. 5, dated 9th January 1905, FO 60/712.

(2) Ibid.

Figure VIII

Captain Webb Ware's proposed line of 1902,  
giving Mirjaveh, old and new, to Britain. FO 60/712.



exception had always been made in the case of our thanas on the trade route, as the provisions were required not for purposes of trade but as a means of sustenance for the garrison. After his visit to the Amir Mr. Miller summoned the Quarantine Doctor and instigated him to seize the opportunity of visiting our frontier, remarking that I could not move from here to interfere with him. The Quarantine Doctor actually left Seistan in the direction of our frontier, but returned after he had got as far as Lutuk."(1)

A year later Amir Heshmat al-Molk's position as Governor of Sistan was threatened, not only by his younger brother, Amir Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II Khozeimeh, Amir of Qaenat who had lost all powers, but also by Moavez al-Molk who was then acting as the Governor of Qaenat. Amir Heshmat al-Molk, therefore, decided in the face of these threats to his position, to throw in his lot with the British<sup>(2)</sup> and thus protected British lives and property in a disturbance which took place in Sistan against the British in July 1903. This undertaking resulted in the Russian Consul for Sistan undertaking "to get the Amir Hashmat-ul-Mulk dismissed for his action in protecting British property and interest."<sup>(3)</sup> The British, finding the dismissal of the Amir a grave injury to their prestige vis-a-vis the Russians in Eastern Iran,<sup>(4)</sup> instructed their Minister at Tehran, Sir A. Hardinge, to conclude with the Iranian Government an agreement of status quo in the frontier to the north of Holdich line's pillar No.11, in return for Amir Heshmat al-Molk remaining in his position as Governor of Sistan. The

(1) Clause 4 of despatch No. 331, from Major R.A.E. Benn, H.B. Majesty's Vice-Consul for Sistan and Kain, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated Sistan 23rd February 1902, FO 60/712, p. 2.

(2) Notes by Major Benn, dated 21st May 1903.

(3) H. Dobbs, Consul for Sistan, to the Indian Government, 7th July 1903.

(4) Ibid.

agreement, signed on the 13th of March 1905<sup>(1)</sup> though securing the post at Kila Sefid for the British, left Holdich's blue line delimited on the Talab water course which left both Old and New Mirjaveh to Iran - (for the text of the agreement see Appendix V). The Governments of Britain and Iran agreed to the survey and delimitation of the section of the boundary from the neighbourhood of Mirjaveh to Kuh-e Malek Siah. This undertaking produced no other results but mapping the frontiers.<sup>(2)</sup> In 1938-9, similar agreements were reached between the two Governments which proved fruitless also.

In 1948, British Baluchistan lost its identity with Great Britain and was brought under the jurisdiction of the newly created state of Pakistan.

On August 13th 1950 the Daily Ettelaat of Tehran reported that the Governments of Iran and Pakistan had agreed to demarcate the Mirjaveh-Malek Siah Kuh boundary.<sup>(3)</sup> The British Government supplied the Government of Pakistan with all documents relevant to this portion of the Irano-Pakistan boundary.<sup>(4)</sup> In spite of the fact that Pakistan continued negotiations with Iran on demarcation of these areas of the two countries' frontiers, parts of their common borders still remain to be demarcated in full and final settlement.

(1) From Mr. Cook to the Foreign Office, 1st Sept. 1950, FO 371/82332A, No. 4170/1, p. 2.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Extract of "Ittelaat" of 13th August, 1950, FO 371/82332A.

(4) From L. Barnett of Foreign Office to C.E. Diggines of Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 11th August 1950, FO 371/82332A (EP1081/3).

CONCLUSION

The southern (Baluchistan) section of the eastern Iranian boundaries was one of the early examples of modern European concept of boundary which happened to be administered in the orient. Not only did the British have a clear idea of the legal and geographical implications of implementation of these modern concepts, but they evidently had a well thought out agenda regarding Baluchistan territories and boundaries and effectively decided in advance where the boundary line should be placed. In fact, General Sir Frederick Goldsmid's mission of 1870-71 was not to "arbitrate" border differences in Baluchistan, but to implement the detailed plan of border limits of Baluchistan as was outlined to him in January 1871 by the Government of India (see text of the relevant communication). By contrast, the Iranians, like all other peoples of the orient, were totally ignorant of the modern European concepts of boundary and their legal and geographical implications. Furthermore, it proved in practice that translation of the ancient oriental tradition of sovereignty and suzerainty over dependent principalities and dependencies into modern European legal forms was impossible. The result was whenever the British argued for total separation from Iran of these dependencies and dependent principalities, the Iranians failed to prove it otherwise.

Above all these was the irresponsible manner in which the Court of Qajar, particularly the person of Naser ad-Din Shah Qajar, approached methods of territorial divisions and boundary settlements. Not only did Naser ad-Din Shah present the district of Hashtadan to the Afghans out of his "feelings of friendship towards the British Government", but his Government did not feel responsible enough to follow the terms of their own agreement of 1870 with the British on the methods and terms of reference of boundary settlement. The complaints and notifications of Mirza Masum Khan, their own representative commissioner, fell on deaf ears, and instead

of "surveying border areas" together with the Iranian Commissioner and preparing maps of the area "to be discussed in Tehran" between competent authorities of the two sides for a just and proper settlement, General Goldsmid delineated the boundary line in accordance with the instruction he had received from India and without the participation of the Iranian Commissioner in the process of that task.

Not only did the Government of Naser ad-Din not object to these irregularities; not only did they not consult their own Commissioner; and not only did they accept Goldsmid's one-sided so-called "arbitral opinion", but they also limited their "discussions" on the results of the survey of border areas, to one meeting between the Foreign Minister of Iran and the British Minister at Tehran, accompanied by General Goldsmid. His maps and suggestions were accepted immediately and without objection. Only when the results were referred to Naser ad-Din Shah for final ratification, did the Shah ask for the Kuhak district to be included in Iranian territory.

The final result of all these and the subsequent Baluchistan arbitrations was so one-sided and the British gained for the Khans of Kharan so much of undisputed Iranian territories that they decided they had enough additional territories in their hands "for future exchange and concessions" to trade off with the Iranians for other concessions (see letter of 20th January 1896 exchanged between British authorities). This trade off deal in fact took place at least on one occasion in 1905 whereby the Mirjaveh district was returned to Iran in return for a concession from the Iranian Government by securing the position of Amir Heshmat al-Molk Ali-Akbar Khan Khozeimeh, Amir of Sistan.

This whole practice of boundary delimitation was no more than a game of political geography played by the European rulers and in the British court. It was the first example of boundary settlement in eastern Iranian borderlands only to be followed by a series of other boundary settlements in

Baluchistan, Sistan and Khorasan, more or less in the same fashion. In other words, Goldsmid's boundary settlement of southern Baluchistan left a precedence which became an example for the settlement of other boundaries on the eastern flanks of Iran.

Appendix I

Notes of Brigadier-General MacLean's interview with the  
Shah at Brighton. (+)

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The first remark the Shah made to me on the evening of my arrival at Brighton was "Have you brought the map of Hashtadan?" I replied, "Yes."

On Sunday afternoon (28th July) the Shah sent for me.

On being shown into the room His Majesty caused all other persons to go out, and carefully examined the map. He said that he desired me to speak to him, not as the Shah, but as if he were an ordinary individual. He asked me to mark distinctly in red the direction of the line of frontier, as suggested by the proposals for a compromise. This I did. He then asked me to point out the provinces of Herat, Khaf, Bakharz, and Jam. When this was done, he suddenly asked me to whom Hashtadun belonged. I replied that this was the very point under dispute. He then pressed me to give him my own opinion on the subject, which he said he would keep quite secret. I said that as far as I could judge Persia had lost Hashtadun when Ahmad Shah conquered Eastern Khorassan and there is nothing to show that she has since regained it.

On the other hand, although the Afghans do not appear to have occupied the valley for about 50 or 60 years, they have always opposed its attempted occupation by Persia. I pointed out that for at least a generation it had been a rendezvous of Turkoman raiders, which His Majesty admitted.

He then asked on what principle the basis for a compromise rested. I replied that it rested on a division of the old water canals (kanats), of which the northern and southern (sic ? central) groups would fall to Persia, the southern to Afghanistan. The Persians would then be able, if so inclined, to apply their share of the water, after cleaning out the kanats, to the irrigation of the old cultivated lands falling to them, while the Afghans would have water for the irrigation of the Kafir Kala and Darband lands, below the Darband defile.

The professed wishes of both parties would then be met.

His Majesty examined the line marking the heads of the kanats, and putting his finger on Kafir Kala and Darband asked to whom they belonged. I replied, "To Afghanistan." His Majesty seemed quite pleased to see that the actual piece of land where the Persians commenced digging would, by the compromise, fall to Persia.

He then asked where the boundary in that quarter was, and I pointed out the Kali Kala, which in answer to further inquiries, I said joined the Heri-Rud near Toman Agha.

He then asked to whom the country south of the Hashtadun valley belonged, pointing to the direction of Khurhaba. I

replied that my orders were to confine my inquiries to Hashtadun, but that I knew that the Afghans claimed a share of the Nimak Sar salt lake, from which both Persians and Afghans draw supplies of salt.

His Majesty then called for a German map of Persia and Afghanistan, on rather a small scale, and seemed surprised at the comparatively small space occupied by Hashtadun.

He then said that the map I had did not show the relative position of Hashtadun with regard to the neighbouring Afghan and Persian districts with sufficient clearness, and that I must provide myself with another map which I should show him at Tehran, ten days after his return there. He said that I must not go to Mashad before coming to Tehran.

He would, he said, like to consult the Nazim-ul-Mulk (the Persian Agent who met me at Hashtadun) before coming to any decision; after that he would do what was right. He said that he looked upon the Afghans as nothing, and were it not for the feelings of friendship he entertained towards the English Government, he would give them nothing. However, he desired to please the English Government in the matter.

Prince Malcom Khan was present during the greater part of the interview and was desired by the Shah to go at once to Sir H.D. Wolff to communicate the decision he had arrived at

[signed] C.S. MacLean, Brigadier-General.

St. Andrews,  
1st August 1889.

Appendix II

Report from British Legation at Tehran to the  
British Foreign Office,  
dated Tehran January 10th 1935  
(FO 371/1940), pp. 208 - 209

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the vernacular press has published an account of an interview given by General Fahrettin Pasha, head of the Turkish Mission of Arbitration in the Perso-Afghan frontier dispute, to the Meshed paper "Bahar"

2. General Fahrettin Pasha stated that the Mission had visited and studied the frontier along a length of three hundred kilometres where delimitation had not yet been carried out, and had determined "convincing limits" which would be officially notified to the two parties in the near future.

3. The General added that, in determining the frontier line, three points had been taken into consideration.

- (1) The need of both parties to have access to the Salt Lake;
- (2) The need of Afghan tribes to make use in the winter of wells situated on the frontier; and
- (3) The necessity of securing Persian villages and agricultural districts against encroachments by such Afghan tribes, when they were forced to descend from the mountains in search of water.

While the Afghans had no right to the Salt Lake, they enjoyed access to it by virtue of an established local custom, which the Mission had decided not to disturb in view of the real need of the tribes.

4. The General denied that there had been serious conflict over the Musabad area (please see my telegram No. 180). This area, he said, was not capable of being cultivated but it was of importance in that on its Northern edge, it contained a source of fresh water, used for drinking purposes, while on the Southern edge there was a salty spring which was used by the Afghans for watering their cattle.

5. The General concluded by denying that there would be any modification of the delimitation carried out by General MacLean, since this would be a breach of the Perso-Afghan Agreement of March 7th last.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India (No. 2) and to His Majesty's Minister at Kabul (No. 5 M).

I have the honour to be with the highest respect,

Appendix III

No. 1 - Complaints made by General Goldsmid of  
Mirza Masum Khan's conduct. (+)

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No. 61, dated Camp Gwadur, 10th March 1871.  
From - MAJOR GENERAL F.J. GOLDSMID, on Special Mission.  
To - CHARLES ALISON, Esq., C.B., Her Majesty's Minister,  
Teheran.

LATE last night your Excellency's cipher telegram reached me. Its purport calls for a brief statement on my part, though such statement be little more than recapitulation.

1. I had supposed the Commission to which I had been appointed one to determine a boundary between Persian Beloochistan and Khelat, and had purposed proceeding with the other Commissioners engaged from the extreme north of the existing frontier to the sea, taking claims and verifying status as we went along. The Persian Commissioner, on opening discussion at Bampooor, would have nothing to say to such enquiry, but urged enquiry into Persian claim upon Kedj-Mekran only. I endeavoured to meet his view so far as to adjourn our meeting to the Kedj-Mekran Frontier at Peshin. This would not, however, suit him when the time for moving approached. He withdrew his consent to attend the Peshin Conference, either because he could not attend with an armed force, or because he objected to admit an existing frontier as a basis of procedure. Had I considered myself merely commissioned to work out a practical result, I should, under the circumstances, have proceeded to Jalk and the upper frontier as originally intended. But as joint Commissioner I had no course open but to seek a convenient station for reporting proceedings and awaiting the instructions which Mirza Maasum Khan had sought from his own Government; accordingly, I removed to Gwadur, the Persian Commissioner remaining, at least for the moment, at Bampooor. In this case I think it will be allowed that I have myself cause for complaint.

2. The Khelat Commissioners came to Bampooor to meet the Persian and British Commissioner. Their followers, though numerous, presented no unusual number, and were quiet and orderly. The presence of the British Political Agent in their camp was a guarantee for good behaviour. Yet the Persian Commissioner, who had expressed his opinion in writing that the arrival of the Khelat deputation need not interfere with the even course of our proceedings, made their presence and the presence of the British Agent in their camp

the ground of complaint. So strong, indeed, were the expressions of feelings on this head, that I felt it a duty, much to my inconvenience and I fear to the delay of the boundary work, to remove the ostensible cause of annoyance. Here also the right of complaint rests, I am of opinion, with myself.

3. The Persian Commissioner at one of our latest interviews assured me spontaneously and with seeming earnestness that he had no complaint whatever to make against myself or any member of my staff, and that, though he might search for cause of complaint in such respect, he could find none. Now in the face of these assurances, he appears to have furnished material for a series of complaints against me on the part of the Persian Government, often as he has said that his spoken words were to count for nothing, I could scarcely believe that he would carry out this remarkable principle so keenly, as he must have done in the present instance.

I have a word to add in conclusion. Though not aware of the nature of the complaints noted in the telegrams under acknowledgement, nor of the necessity of vindicating my character of such a charge as "unfairness," I cannot tax my conscience with any deviation from a strictly impartial course throughout the present enquiry, and I am convinced that a correct apprehension of the state of the case is only wanting to save your Excellency much further trouble and reference.

No.2 - Complaints made by Mirza Masum Khan of  
 General Goldsmid's conduct, as reiterated  
 in the Memorandum of the  
 Iranian Foreign Minister<sup>(+)</sup>

*Translation of a memorandum received from the Minister  
 for Foreign Affairs, - dated the 8th March 1871*

NEWS received from Beloochistan and Kerman.

From Ispahan the British Commissioner, by telegraph and by Captain Lovett, of the Engineers, sent instructions to the British officers, who were at Gwadur and Khelat, that, on the approach of the two Commissioners, they should proceed with guns and troops to Kedj and Mekran, and give out that the Persian Government have sent a Commissioner in order to make over to the Khan of Khelat their territory in Beloochistan.

When the Commissioners left Kerman, the others having collected about 300 soldiers and horsemen from Kedj and Mekran came towards Kasr-i-kend, Pesheen, and Serbaz, places which specially belong to, and are in possession of, Persia. It is evident to what degree such injurious proceedings on their part, in countries possessed by Persia, must affect the minds of the lower classes of (our) subjects, and how incompatible they are with the present state of good order.

On the day of the Commissioner's arrival at Bampur, Faquier Mahomed Khan, Commissioner of the Khan of Khelat, with other agents of his, together with Mr. Harrison, Political Agent of the British Government, escorted by 300 soldiers and horsemen, arrived at Bampur. Now, this style of proceeding is contrary to the instructions of the Commissions and to the maintenance of the frontiers possessed by Persia. The British Commissioner proposed to the Persian one to proceed towards Pesheen in Mekran, and there to hold a conference and discuss with the Khelat Commissioners the arguments bearing upon Persia's territorial rights in that question, though not the slightest doubt existed as to Kedj and Mekran being in the possession of, and specially belonging to, Persia. If the object of the conference is to establish Persia's ownership of Mekran, that point is already clearly shown, for, in order to establish a person's proprietorship no proof could be better than that of possession, and everybody knows that Pesheen, and equally so the whole of Mekran and Kedj, are territories in the possession of Persia. In every part of Mekran there are deputies and agents appointed by the Governmens of Kerman and Beloochistan.

A communication on the part of the British Commissioner was made to the Persian, that Kedj is in the possession of the Khan of Khelat, and that he has a garrison there. The fact is, that Sirdar Faquir Mahomed Khan and Mollah Ata Mahomed, agents of the Khan of Khelat, have brought 400 or 500 troops and two guns into the Kedj territory, which clearly belongs to Persia; such communications prove, therefore, that the aforesaid (British) Commissioner is protecting and upholding the Khan of Khelat, which is altogether inconsistent with the British Government's principle of arbitration.

He, Moreover, told the Persian Commission that, if he would not discuss with the Khan of Khelat at Pesheen in his presence, he would telegraph to His Excellency the (British) Minister. How could I enter into a discussion respecting a district which clearly belongs to Persia? What sort of a proposal is this that he makes to the Persian Commissioner? The Commissioners ought, in pursuance of the arrangement made by the Foreign Office and the Mission, to define upon a map the frontiers which lie between the Beloochistan territory held by Persia and that in the possession of Khelat, and to take that map to Teheran, so that the matter may be settled with the knowledge of the Foreign Office and the Mission. The Persian Commissioner has all along fully co-operated with the British Commissioner.

The British Commissioner says that General Ibrahim Khan should not accompany (the Commissioner). The Khelat agents came to Bampur with horsemen and soldiers and four or five Generals. The Persian Commissioner is unable to dispense with Ibrahim Khan, who is acquainted with the country, and proceed with his own inexperienced attendants to the end of Kedj to inspect and define the frontiers. both Ibrahim Khan and the Governor of Kerman have shown the greatest kindness and respect towards the British Commissioner. Under these circumstances, the said Commissioner's present attitude can only show a wish to protect the Khan of Khelat.

The British Government, merely out of friendship and a spirit of justice, have sent a Special Commissioner to arbitrate. But they could never have wished that he should collect around him all the British Agents from Bushire, Gwadur, and Khelat; that he should invite to so distant a place as Bampur is, from Kedj and Mekram, the Chiefs (Khans) of Khelat; that he should, by presents and spending money, render Persian subjects desirous of submitting themselves to the Khan of Khelat, and that they should enter Persian territory with such a party.

The British Commissioner has telegraphed to his Excellency the (British) Minister the Persian Commissioner's refusal to consent to the conference. The British Commissioner's object in wishing to convene the conference being to investigate the positions of Koohek and Spendar, and other places, and those villages being dependent on Dizzek,

and forming a portion of Persia, such a conference was not necessary.

The British Commissioner takes no steps as regards the drawing up of a map and the inspection of the proper places. He says that an English engineer officer has already completed the map of Kedj and Mekran, and that he should go with a Persian engineer to make a map from Jaluk and Dizzek to the sea shore. Now the Commissioners ought to inspect all these places and draw maps thereof. So every proposal made than an engineer officer should be sent together with a Persian engineer to draw maps of Mekran, Kedj, and other places, the British Commissioner replies that he cannot ask that a Persian surveyor should enter the Khelat territory, but he promises that the English surveyor will bring to me the maps of any country that may be required.

In an inspection by the Commissioners and the drawing up of maps were not necessary, why should the Persian Government have considered it proper to depute a Commissioner and a Surveyor? How is it that he (the British Commissioner) should have invited the Khelat Agents with such a party to come to Persian territory which is not meant for inspection, and that the Persian Commissioner and Surveyor should not proceed to places which clearly belong to Persia or even to the Khan of Khelat.

Translated by \_\_\_\_\_

W J DICKSON

Appendix IV

Agreement between Iran and Britain on Demarcation of the Northern Section of Iran's Boundaries in Baluchistan. (+)

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Memorandum attached to the map supplied to the Commissioners for the demarcation of the Perso-Kelat frontier from the neighbourhood of Kohuk to Koh Malik Siah.

The point from which the boundary line will start is a point on the Mashkil river about a mile and a quarter north of the junction of the Mashkil with the small stream which takes its rise in the Segarkand hill.

Thence the line will be continued along the Mashkil river northwards to a point about six miles short, that is to the west, or south west, of the junction of the Bakhshan and Mashkil rivers.

From thence it will run approximately west along the southern slopes of the Sianeh Koh till it joins Sir F. Goldsmid's line of demarcation, giving Kohuk, Konarbasta and Ispandak to Persia.

بران دلهز

تَسْ أَنْ خَطْرِ صَدْرِ طَرْفِ شَلْ رَيْتْ بَزْ

كَوْهْ نُورْ دَارْ رَوْهْ رَكْرَبْ رَبْ

سَرْ زَرْ كَرْ كَنْ لَرْ سَيْ كَوْهْ خَطْرِ صَدْرِ طَرْفِ

دَرْ فَرْ قَشْتْ لَهْ بَهْ كَشْيَهْ خَاهْ

بَسْرَسْتْ شَرْقْ دَلَاتْ خَغْرِ كَلَيْهْ دَهْ

كَوْهْ دَادْ كَسَنْ بَهْتْ بَرْانْ خَاهْ

أَرْبَلْ خَطْرِ صَدْرِ كَوْهْ كَلَكْ كَشْيَهْ خَاهْ

بَصْرَكَتْ تَهْنَهْ دَهْ زَجْهَهْ دَلَاسْ كَشْ

بَهْنَهْ سَبْتْ شَرْقْ كَلَنْدَرْ

زَرْ قَرْ دَارْ كَمْ بَهْرِ كَشْيَهْ خَاهْ

كَوْهْ خَرْ دَرْ شَلْ حَلْ عَسْرَهْ دَهْ دَلَرْ

كَاهْ شَرْهَهْ قَرْ دَهْ دَارْ شَهْ دَرْانْ قَطْهَهْ خَاهْ

بَهْرِ كَلَكْ كَشْيَهْ دَهْنَهْ كَهْزَبْ كَلَنْ كَهْ

رَبْتْ زَرْهَهْ كَوْهْ كَلَكْ كَشْيَهْ خَرْهَهْ دَهْ لَهْ

بَهْنَهْ قَرْزَيْهْ بَرْانْ بَهْ

إِنْ جَهْتْ بَهْنَهْ صَدَرْ كَمْ دَهْ كَلَطْ بَهْ

بَهْنَهْ كَعْصَمْ كَوْهْ كَاهْ دَهْنَهْ هَرْهَهْ

The line will then run northwards to the west of the prominent hill overhanging the Bonsar pass.

After passing through the Sianeh Koh, the line will be drawn in the direction indicated on the sketch map, that is, to the East of the minor districts of Kallegan and Jalk, which, with all the villages belonging to them, will be left to Persia.

From Jalk the line will be drawn to Koh Malik Siah, leaving on the East certain groups of date groves, among which are Ladgasht and Kalag.

Such information as is available tends to show that the country North of Jalk is mainly desert. The commissioners will effect a settlement on this section on the basis that Persia should receive approximately as much territory as will be left to the west of a line drawn straight from Jalk to Koh Malik Siah.

(Sd.) December 27 1895

Sadr I Azam.

H.M. Durand.

وَدَرْ فَرْ دَارْ سَهْ بَهْتْ بَزْ

وَهَرْهَهْ لَهْ ۱۳۱۳ اَخْرِ دَهْ دَهْ

بَصْرَهْ دَرْهَهْ كَهْرِبَرْهَهْ كَهْ

Appendix V

Anglo-Iranian agreement on Mirjaveh district of  
Northern Baluchistan. (+)

وارد این میں دو تین علیحدت شاهنشاہ ایران و علیحدت گورنمنٹ

\*\*\*\*\*  
AGREEMENT

بین حکوم وارلند و حاکم لندن اور اسکرچر ہسپر اور اسکرچر جامی دیں پر طرف ایران و پاکستان  
بین ایران و پاکستان کے مابین معمولی تعاون واقعہ درستہ ایران و پاکستان  
جس بیان بصریشہر الدوام و وزیر امور خارجہ علیحدت پادشاہ ایران  
Between the Governments of H.M. the King of Great Britain Dominions beyond the seas, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India; and H.M. the Shahinshah of Persia for the settlement of certain outstanding questions on the frontier of Persia and India.

جنگلی آب بصریشہر الدوام و وزیر خارجہ علیحدت پادشاہ ایران  
پادشاہ لندن نعمت خداوند ایران دارای نشان حمام از درجه خوبی  
اجازہ حکیم تبعین خود کر اردو زیر راسته تو نظر  
H.E. the Mushir ad Dowleh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of H.M. the Shah of Persia and Sir A. Hardinge K.C.S. H.B.M. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Tehran, duly authorised thereto by their respective Governments have concluded the following agreement.

## فصل اول

ادعا کے درستہ ۱۹۰۲ در قصیہ اول وہی ملک ایران دریوں کا  
دریکشیت آب از طرف ہر تھنیں بیان مرحلت شرائی  
I. H.B.M. Government withdraw the claim to the ownership of Mirjawar put forward on its behalf in the year 1902 when a Persian Custom House was first established at that place. The Persian Government on its side undertakes to permit the British outpost at Padaha to procure using buckets or waterskins

این ادعیہ را رک نیما بر جلت ایران راز از ظرف تعمید بود که  
که قراول نامه لفظی سر در پادھ آب لازم خود را رزچا چھایا آب  
که قراول نامه لفظی سر در پادھ آب لازم خود را رزچا چھایا آب

for the purpose) the supply of water which may be necessary for it from the wells or tank situated at or near Mirjawar.

که قراول نامه لفظی سر در پادھ آب لازم خود را رزچا چھایا آب

### فصل دویم

دوستین عیشیں رضیت فاطم قبول نہیں کیا کے مدد و راکہ

یک کسیوں مخصوص دریاب رصد خود را نہیں کے بوجب اکھی

و نمیزج ۱۳۰۷ھ طب بیب پیر الدین بخوب سردار را مردینگ

دولت بخوبی خوکھیف و خوبی خلیف لبڑی شیر اور بوجب اکھی

۵ صفر ۱۳۰۷ھ طب بیب زریں قبول کرد اور رک نہیں دین خود

خواہ بکھر جب قرار دلو ۱۸۹۶ ۱۳۱۳ھ انعام افتخار و درستہ از اس بہ ادعیہ خواہ

### فصل سوم

نظریہ دلار و دلار و سردار ایران چانہ خواہ دلو کنیت قاء

سرخوار لاوس و خزانہ تاریخ از فقصہ خود را رزی علیہ

قراول نامہ لفظی کے درآں حوالہ در فکل ہند واقع از وقہ نہیں

2. The two Governments agree by common consent to abandon the further examination by a special commission of their frontier line in this region which was proposed on behalf of H.R.H. Government in Sir A Hardinge's note to the Mushir od Dowleh dated 6 April, 1902 and accepted by H.E. in his note to Sir A. Hardinge of May 14, 1902. This frontier shall be definitely settled in accordance with the agreement of 1896 and no further claim shall be made in respect of it.

3. With a view to the increase of friendly relations the Persian Government will permit the inhabitants of the frontier villages of Mirjawar, Ladis and Duzdab to sell supplies, should they be willing to do so, (the annual amount of seven hundred Tabriz Kharwars of grain) to the neighbouring British outposts of the Indian side of the frontier, and will also allow the unrestricted export of fifteen hundred Tabriz Kharwars of grain and fifty Tabriz Kharwars of ghee annually from Siestan for the use of the British frontier station of Rabat Killah and other stations along the Nushki route. All the

exports of grain and ghee will be liable to the payment of the customs duty levied on those of the most favoured nation. It is understood that this provision applies to nominal years and that the British Government will not demand the specified export of grain from one of the localities mentioned when such locality can be clearly shown to be suffering from actual famine owing to destruction of its crops by locusts, blight, or other exceptional visitation.

Done at Tehran on the 13th day of  
May in the year 1905

Seal (Sd.) Arthur Hardinge

که در فوق ذکر شده در خواست نخواهند کرد و تغیر در وقتیکه بطور وضوح

که دادخواه و بولطم فہم زمزہ لزیخ نہ کن سارے رفاقت فوق ایسا عالم

طهران ۱۳۴۳ ششم ماه رسماً دلاور شدند از احتمال دست

140

## ماه می کشنہ پکزار و خصہ و نج سمجھی

مشیر المردوم در در امور خارجه

Signature of the  
Master of Ball

## C H A P T E R      V I

### EVOLUTION OF SISTAN BOUNDARY - PART I THE GOLDSMID ARBITRATION

#### INTRODUCTION - A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The province now known as Sistan had throughout the history been named variably: Sakestan, Nimrouz, Zabolestan, Zarang, etc., and it formed the 14th Satrapy of the Achaemenian Empire (559 - 330 BC), and formed part of the Kust of East under the Sassanid Empire (AD 224-651). In the post-Islamic era, Sistan became a major centre of struggle for the revival of Iranianism (see introductory chapter on the Evolution of State and Boundary in Iran). Many movements began from Sistan and engulfed the entire Iranian Plateau. The Saffarids of Sistan were the first dynasty to throw off the yoke of Abbasid Caliphate. The subsequent dynasties have always made a point of including Khorasan and Sistan within the countries of Iran. Throughout the Safavid Empire (1501 - 1730) Sistan formed the Eastern province of Iran and Nader Shah Afshar (1730 - 1747) included Sistan in his Empire almost at the outset of his career after a negligible period of approximately eight years after the Afghan uprising.

Following Afshar Shah's assassination in 1747, Iran fell into chaos and Ahmad Khan Durrani (Abdali), who founded the Saduzaei Kingdom of Afghanistan, used the opportunity of Iran being leaderless and occupied the greater part of this province after defeating Amir Alam Khan I, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat who had in 1747 included the whole of Sistan, Khorasan and Baluchistan in his dominion (see chapter II on Khozeimeh Amirs). From the year 1749, eastern parts of Sistan remained under the occupation of Ahmad Shah of Afghanistan until his death in 1772, a mere 23 years in all.

The Kingdom of Saduzaei in Afghanistan, created by the force of arm, fell into chaos in the wake of Ahmad Shah's death while chaos in Iran was still prevailing as a result of the

continued armed struggle of Agha-Mohammad Khan Qajar against Lotf-Ali Khan Zand and a number of other rebellious chiefs around the country who began a life of independence as there was no apparent leader in Iran to whom the customary proceedings of allegiance could be practised. Sistan was ruled, in this period, by the Baluchi chiefs and by Bahram Khan of the Keyani family, descendants of the legendary ancient Iranian dynasty of Keyanian. They accepted in a chaotic manner, the nominal suzerainty of Ahmad Shah Durrani's successor, Teimur, who used force against them. There was no one in Iran to protect them.

It was under Fath-Ali Shah, nephew and successor of Agha-Mohammad Khan Qajar, that the whole of Sistan, Baluchistan and Khorasan was recovered between 1810 and 1840. Since then, Iranian Governments never allowed an interval to elapse without reasserting Iran's sovereignty over Sistan. By the time of the Anglo-Iranian war which was concluded by the treaty of Paris, March 1857, both Herat and Qandehar laid claims on sections of Sistan. Sardar Ali Khan Sarandi of Sekuheh, the hereditary chief of Sistan, who had in 1853 officially declared allegiance to Iran,<sup>(1)</sup> felt threatened by the claims from Herat and Qandehar and personally went to Tehran where he was officially appointed the Governor of the province and married a cousin of Naser ad-Din Shah. This move, once again, stimulated the well known British Indian Officers' strategic apprehension that Iran or the feeble Government of Qajar would, in conjunction with Russia, pose a threat to the security of a powerful British Indian Empire if Sistan was to remain as a province of Iran. Colonel Taylor, British Commissioner in Herat, claimed in a letter to Lord Canning: "Should Persia be permitted to continue the exercise of her influence in Sistan, she may have it in her power to propagate falsehood to the prejudice of India and, being so near the frontier of the latter, they could be freely circulated. On the other hand, if Sistan were the instrument of a friendly power, she

(1) "Persian Frontiers", a Document prepared for the British Indian Government, No. RRX/7/i, FO 371/40219, p. 10.

might when occasion required, be made to inflict very serious injury to the commerce of Persia by disturbing her south-eastern frontier and plundering all her caravans."<sup>(1)</sup>

It was rumoured at the time that Ali Khan Sarbandi was to return to Sistan with two regiments of regular infantry and a few field guns, together with able men from Sistan.

Before even the Afghan chiefs heard of this rumour, the British Minister at Tehran, James Murrey, addressed the Iranian Prime Minister on the 5th of May 1858, saying that he hoped the rumour of that intention was incorrect "as the occupation of Sistan", he added, "which is part of Afghanistan, by Persian troops would be a direct violation of the treaty of Paris".<sup>(2)</sup> The Iranian Prime Minister replied on the 13th May 1858:

"The Persian ministers have always considered, and do now consider, that Seistan, *ab antiqua*, has formed an integral part of the Persian territory, and it is at the present time in the possession of the Persian Government, on whose part it is therefore not necessary that troops or soldiers should be sent, or a new occupation of the place effected."<sup>(3)</sup>

This statement naturally did not satisfy British authorities of India who wished to strengthen the western flanks of their buffer state of Afghanistan: and James Murrey replied to the Iranian Prime Minister on the 15th of May 1858 by writing a letter to him which began with the following claims on behalf of the Afghan chiefs:

(1) From Colonel Taylor to Lord Conning, dated 2nd February 1858, repeated in H.L.Wynne's account of History of Sistan and Lash-Jowain, FO 60/ 386, p. 18.

(2) H.L. Wynne's Account of the History of Sistan and Lash-Jowain, op. cit., p. 20.

(3) H. Leopold Wynne's account of the History of Sistan and Lash-Jowain, prepared for the British Indian Government, dated July 6, 1870, FO 60/386, p. 20.

"The British Government cannot admit the correctness of this view, which is indeed contradicted, not only by the political history of Seistan, but also by its geographical position, which is represented in every existing map, possessing any claim to authority, as forming part of Afghanistan." (1)

James Murrey's letter was concluded by the following threat on behalf of the British Government:

"....it is my duty to inform your Highness that, if the Persian Government were to send troops into Seistan, a Province which is much nearer to Candahar, the centre of Afghanistan, and to the British Frontier, than Herat itself, Her Majesty's Government would consider such a step as being a direct violation of the treaty of Paris." (2)

Sardar Ali Khan, however, returned to Sistan with an escort of 300 cavalry men and two field guns, and was murdered in October 1858 by his own nephew, Taj Mohammad Khan, an ex-chief in the province of Sistan. Taj Mohammad Khan, too, declared his allegiance to the Government of Iran after a while, and declared himself as being an Iranian subject.(3) Before Taj Mohammad Khan's declaration of allegiance to Iran, the Iranian Government decided to send military forces to Sistan to punish those involved in the murder of Sardar Ali Khan. In a letter of reply to a letter from Mr Doria, the new British Minister at Tehran, who asked what was the purpose of the Iranian Government in wanting to send troops to Sistan, the Iranian Sadr-e Azam (Prime Minister) stated that the Shah intended to issue orders to the Governors of Qaen and Kerman to hold in readiness a number of troops to march on Sistan for the punishment of Taj Mohammad Khan and all concerned in the assassination of Sardar Ali Khan, in the event of the people of Sistan

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., p.21

(3) "Persian Frontiers", op. cit., p. 10.

refusing to deliver over to the Persian Government the perpetrator of the murder.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Sadr-e Azam was once again reminded that the British Government considered Sistan as belonging to Afghanistan, a country which was not in existence at the time. In spite of British India's insistence that Sistan was a part of Afghanistan, Taj Mohammad Khan declared his own and his governorate of Sistan's allegiance to Iran. In a letter to the Indian Government, Mr Doria, British Minister at Tehran wrote on 30th March 1859:

"two persons were introduced by the deputy master of ceremonies bearing a tray, upon which were some gold coins. A long letter was then read aloud, pretended to have been written by the ruler of Seistan, making protestations of fidelity and obedience as subjects to the king. The coins on the tray were Shahee Ashrefees struck in His Majesty's name in Seistan."<sup>(2)</sup>

Having been convinced of the Iranian Government's determination with regard to the prosecution of their ancient rights to the sovereignty of Sistan, the British Indians found it wise to acknowledge these rights. In his brief "history of Sistan and Lash-Jowain", prepared for the British Foreign Office in 1870, H L Wynne Asserts:

"When\* the papers were communicated to the India Office, Mr Eastwick# drew up a precis showing that Persia was not so undoubtedly in the wrong, as had been hitherto held, in the assertion of her claim on Seistan.

"Lord Stanley endorsed his memorandum with the following remarks:-

"The general conclusions from the facts noted on the preceding memorandum appear to be that Seistan has been for ages, and from a period even antecedent to the dawn of history down to the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, an integral portion of the Persian Empire.

(1) "History of Sistan and Lash-Jowain", op. cit., p. 22.

(2) "History of Sistan and Lash Jowain", op cit., p. 23

"It further appears that Seistan can be in no sense included in Afghanistan, being inhabited by different people, who are, for the most part, Sheahs like the Persians, and not Sunnis like the Afghans, who speak a different language from the Afghans, and who have never yielded more than a nominal obedience to the Afghan rulers, except to Ahmed Shah, and that only for a period so short as would not invalidate the claim of sovereignty on the part of Persia, - a claim based on the two titles recognised by international law, viz., first occupancy and uninterrupted possession."<sup>(1)</sup>

\* Mr Thomson's account in Mr Alison's letter to Government of India, 27th December 1867.

# See Mr Eastwick to Mr Alison, 18th December 1862.

#### EVENTS LEADING TO THE PARTITIONING OF SISTAN AND BOUNDARY ARBITRATION

Dust Mohammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, marched in July 1861 a sizeable army on the semi-independent principality of Quandehar, which was traditionally but vaguely a dependency of Iran save for the duration of Afghanistan's consolidated monarchy of Ahmad Shah (1749-1772). This development disturbed the Iranians who were convinced that Dust Mohammad Khan's plan was to take Farah, Herat and eventually Sistan. Farah was also captured shortly after. In a letter to the Government of Great Britain, the British Minister at Tehran wrote that the Court of Qajar was disturbed by news that Mohammad Sharif Khan, son of Dust Mohammad and Governor of Farah, was, under the pretext of punishing certain Baluchis who had plundered Qandehari territory, contemplating an attack on Sistan and that the British Government cannot, in justice, expect Iran to submit quietly to the invasion of Sistan.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Ibid, p.22

(2) From Mr. Alison, Her Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran to Lord Clarendon, dated May 20th 1861, repeated in Wynne's report on Sistan, FO 60/ 386, p. 25 of 227.

British Government must have been aware of Dust Mohammad Khan and his son's plan for Sistan. Kabul Diary of the British Legation, of 28th April 1861, indicates that Sharif Khan was contemplating this step. A servant of Taj Mohammad Khan of Sistan brought the news to Mashhad, and said that Sharif Khan had first of all taken Rudbar which belonged to the Baluch, and had then advanced on Jahan Abad, in Sistan, capturing it also. The Governor General of Khorasan wrote to the Governors of Sistan telling them to be firm in maintaining their position until news came from Tehran.<sup>(1)</sup>

Having the experience of Herat in the back of their minds,

Iranian authorities appeared to have resolved to go about solving the problem of Sistan in accordance with treaties and documents exchanged between Iran and Britain and in accordance with the terms of the Peace Treaty of 1857, in order to avoid any situation that could lead to the British declaring war on Iran in support of the Afghans, as happened in the case of Herat.

Notwithstanding repeated appeals by the Iranian authorities, including the Shah himself, to the British to use their influence with Dust Mohammad Khan and his lot, in accordance with article 6 of Paris treaty of 1857, and prevent them from invading Iranian territories, the British preferred to remain inactive in the dispute.

The last paragraph of article 6 of Paris treaty of peace of 1857 that the Iranians were referring to in their plea to the British asserts:

*"The British Government, on their part, engage at all times to exert their influence with the States of Afghanistan, to prevent any cause of umbrage being given by them, or by any of them, to the Persian Government, when appealed to by the Persian Government, in the event of difficulties arising, will*

(1) Confidential Diary of Kabul, repeated in the "History of Sistan and Lash Jowein", dated 28th April 1861, FO60/386, p. 25 of 227.

*use their best endeavours to compose such differences  
in a manner just and honourable to Persia."(1)*

Meanwhile, Dust Mohammad Khan captured Farah as well as Qandehar and put Herat under siege in July 1862. With the capture of Qandehar and Farah, Dust Mohammad Khan effectively captured important places in Sistan, such as Chokhansur, Qaleh Fath and Qaleh Nad-e Ali, which had in the previous times been taken by the autonomous principality of Qandehar whose rulers, Kohandel Khan and his sons had declared their dependency on Iran.<sup>(2)</sup> As Dust Mohammad Khan's son captured Jahan Abad in the Hirmand Delta, the province of Sistan became partitioned in effect. The British Government, however, after some enquiries made by way of correspondence with Dust Mohammad Khan, concluded that the Barakzaei Amir of Kabul had no intention of crossing to the Iranian frontier and to carry his war into the Iranian dominion.<sup>(3)</sup> This statement of view was made at the time when Dust Mohammad Khan's son had occupied Jahan Abad an undisputed Iranian town in Sistan. To justify this conclusion, the British Indians decided to change their stance by denying once again that Sistan belonged to Iran. This changed attitude would make it possible for the British not to consider Dust Mohammad Khan's encroachment in Sistan as "crossing Iranian frontiers and taking his war into Iran".<sup>(4)</sup> The new British policy was spelled out to the Iranian envoy to the Ottoman court by the British Foreign Secretary Lord John Russell:

*"With the above despatch was sent a copy of Lord Russell's despatch to Mr Alison, dated 25th September 1862, giving an account of His Lordship's interview*

(1) Extract of article 6 of treaty of peace between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the Shah of Persia, Paris, March 4, 1857, FO 60/403, pp. 8 - 9.

(2) See chapter IV on the Partitioning of Khorasan and the Question of Herat.

(3) From India to the Foreign Office, dated 11th August 1862, repeated in the History of Sistan and Lash Jowain, op. cit., pp. 36 - 7.

(4) From India Office to the Foreign Office., op. cit., p. 37.

with the Persian envoy to the Porte. The envoy contended that, under the treaty of 1857, Great Britain was bound to remove all causes of outrage and dispute between Persia and Afghanistan. No, said Lord Russell, not to remove them, but to endeavour to compose such differences, and Mr Alison had already been requested to use his good offices for this purpose.

The envoy then said that -

"if we did not choose to interdict to Dost Mahommed Khan the siege of Herat, the Persian Government hoped we would allow them to use their own forces to prevent the capture of Herat.

"Lord Russell replied, it would not be just to say the ruler of Herat may attack Dost Mahommed as much as he pleases, but Dost Mahommed shall not be at liberty to attack Herat in his turn. If Dost Mahommed should get possession of Herat and assume an attitude threatening to Persia, then certainly Persia, subject to the provisions of the treaty, might take up arms to defend herself against aggression on the part of Dost Mahommed." (1)

By July 1863, less than a month after Dust Mohammad Khan's death, his son and successor, Shir Ali Khan, despatched his younger brother, Mohammad Amin Khan, at the head of an Afghan force against Sistan. The Iranian Foreign Minister for 27 years, Mirza Saeed Khan,<sup>(2)</sup> met Mr Thomson, Her Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran, and informed him that: the expedition had been ordered by Dost Mahommed Khan, but that it had been subsequently relinquished in consequence of that Chief's death. Mirza Saeed Khan added, that the Afghans were certain, sooner or later, to renew this project and to attempt the occupation of Sistan; but that the Iranian Government considered that country to belong to the Iranian dominions, of which it formed an integral part, and that they would not hesitate for a moment, should Afghan troops enter Sistan, but would at once despatch a force to resist any such

(1) H.L. Wynne, History of Sistan and Lash-Jowain, op. cit., pp. 37 - 8.

(2) Mirza Saeed Khan's granddaughter, Mrs. Saeed-Ansari (Fotuhi-Mozafarian) informed this author in February 1992 that her grandfather's duration of Ministry of Foreign Affairs lasted for 27 years.

aggressive movement. In answer to my remark that the sovereignty of Iran over Sistan had never been recognised by the British Government, Mirza Saeed Khan stated that this was because there being no mention of Sistan in the treaty with England. Iran would not forego her claims in the matter, but would maintain her right to that province even should hostilities with the Afghans ensue.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Iranian Government subsequently pleaded with the British Government that: since the occupation of Chokhansur, Qaleh Fath, Nad-e Ali and Jahan Abad had practically partitioned Sistan and as there was no reason to believe that the Afghans' push into Sistan would not go further, if the British did not act to stop them, should, at least, acknowledge Iran's rights of self-defence in accordance with the provisions of article 7 of the Anglo-Iranian treaty of 1857.

Article 7 of Paris treaty of 1857 which the Iranians were referring to in their plea with the British Government asserted:

*"In case of any violation of the Persian frontier by any of the states referred to above (Kabul, Herat and Qandehar) the Persian Government shall have the right, if due satisfaction is not given, to undertake military operation for the repression and punishment of the aggressors; but it is distinctly understood and agreed to, that any military force of the Shah which may cross the frontier for the above mentioned purpose, shall retire within its own territory as soon as its object is accomplished, and that the exercise of the above mentioned right is not to be made a pretext for the permanent occupation by Persia, or for the annexation to the Persian dominions of any town or portion of the said states."<sup>(2)</sup>*

(1) From Mr Thomson to the Government of India, dated 8th July 1863, repeated in Wynne's History of Sistan, op. cit., p. 33 of 231.

(2) Article 7 of the Treaty of Peace between Iran and Britain (1857), op. cit., pp. 8 - 9. For the full text of this treaty see Appendix III of chapter IV on the partitioning of Khorasan.

The above provisions of the said treaty made it absolutely clear that Iran had the right of self-defence in the face of Afghan aggression in Sistan and was determined to repel the aggression, and that the military operation of the Iranian authorities in these areas of Sistan occupied by the Afghans would not amount to crossing any frontier into any other country's territory in pursuit of the aggressors in order to inflict punishment on them and then withdraw from that country's territory. Iran's frequent representations to the British Government eventually resulted in the British Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell, writing on the 5th of November 1863 the important despatch giving Iran permission to assert her rights in Sistan by force of arms. Lord Russell's despatch to the Iranian Foreign Minister stated:

*"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter on the 20th ultimo, in which you call the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the apprehended invasion of the territory of Seistan by the Afghans, and requesting that an assurance might be given to you that Her Majesty's Government would not permit any such invasion of Persian territory.*

*"I have the honour to acquaint your excellency, in reply, that Her Majesty's Government, being informed that the title to the territory of Seistan is disputed between Persia and Afghanistan, must decline to interfere in the matter, and must leave it to both parties to make good their possession by force of arms."<sup>(1)</sup>*

Though this despatch was in keeping with article 7 th of 1857 Anglo-Iranian treaty of peace, the Iranians did not take it as a reason for immediate action. The Iranian Foreign Minister in fact informed Mr Eastwick of the British Legation at Tehran that "the Iranian Government had decided upon sending Mohammad Kord-Bacheh to Sistan, where he had formally been employed, but that the Iranian troops would not enter that province unless an aggressive movement were directed

(1) Despatch from Lord Russell to Mirza Saeed Khan, dated London 5th of November 1863, repeated in Wynne's History of Sistan, op. cit., p. 39.

against it by the Afghans".<sup>(1)</sup> This aggressive movement materialised in October 1865, but in a different form. Ahmad Khan, Governor of Lash-Jowein of Sistan, who had been for years a self-declared subject of Iran and in receipt of salary from the Government of Iran, was persuaded by the Amir of Afghanistan, Shir Ali Khan, to join him. Ahmad Khan married the daughter of Shir Ali and arranged submission to him not only of himself but also of the dominion under his governorship. Similar intrigue resulted in Ibrahim Khan, another chief of Sistan acting similarly and to taking his quarter of Sistan over to Shir Ali Khan.<sup>(2)</sup>

The loss of a vast portion of Sistan in this manner forced the Iranian Government to resort to military operations in order to enforce the above-named chiefs' dismissal to recover the territories transferred by them to the Afghans. This military operation, the Iranians argued, was in accordance with article 7 of the Anglo-Iranian peace treaty of 1857 and was permitted by the British Government in the form of the British Foreign Secretary's despatch of 5th November 1863 to the Iranian Foreign Minister. Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat, was empowered by the Iranian authorities to advance on Sistan at the head of a cavalry and infantry regiment with two guns, where he was joined by four more regiments and four guns from Sistan.<sup>(3)</sup> Amir Alam Khan was put in charge of all forces in Sistan in June 1866 and was given the governorship of Sistan in addition to his own hereditary governorship of Qaenat. Amir Alam Khan's first task was to deal with Ahmad Khan the Governor of Lash-Jowein, who had sold himself out and the dominion entrusted on him to the Amir of Afghanistan. Ahmad Khan and others of lesser note were arrested and deported to

(1) Extract of letter from Mr. Eastwick to the Indian Government, dated Tehran 28th January 1864, repeated in Wynne's History of Sistan, op. cit., p. 41.

(2) From Mashhad Agent to the British Legation at Tehran, dated 28th of October 1865, repeated in Wynne's History of Sistan, op. cit., p. 43.

(3) From Mr. Alison to Lord Clarendon, dated 10th January 1866, repeated in Wynne's History of Sistan, op. cit., p. 43.

Tehran<sup>(1)</sup> where he remained for some years before his return to Sistan. Amir Alam Khan had also attacked Ibrahim Khan, another chief of Sistan who had also sold out to the Afghans. The Amir of Qaenat and Sistan recovered Jahan Abad, Jalal Abad and Fort Nad-e Ali:

*"The news from Seistan was that the Ameer of Kain had attacked Ibrahim Khan,*

*"who had been forced to evacuate the forts which he had on the left bank of the Helmund River, and had retired with his people to the right bank. The Persians had likewise crossed the Helmund, and had captured the fort of Nad Ali, and they now intended to attack Sheikhnassoor and other strongholds in Ibrahim Khan's possession."<sup>(2)</sup>*

Ibrahim Khan appealed to the Afghan authorities for assistance, but his application was turned down. Amir Alam Khan put some of his men in charge of Fort Nad-e Ali and returned to his headquarter at Nasrat Abad (now Zabol) on the western side of the Hirmand River. He received from Nasr ad-Din Shah the titles "Heshmat al-Molk" and "Amir Tuman" which signified the Shah's pleasure with his success in repelling the aggression against Sistan.

Frustrated by the Afghan Chief's lack of enthusiasm to defend him, Ibrahim Khan turned to the British for assistance. Colonel Phayre, Political Superintendent of Upper Sind, reported on the 14th January 1869 to the Government of India a strange assessment of the situation in Sistan, aimed at provoking the old strategic sensitivities of British Indian Officers:

*"in a strategical sense, and with reference to the well known ambition of Persia towards Afghanistan, her occupation of Hosseinabad is a flank movement of incalculable importance.*

(1) From Sir H. Green to the Government of India, dated 13th November 1867 repeated in Wynne's History of Sistan, op. cit., p. 46.

(2) Clause 117 of H.L. Wynne's History of Sistan and Lash-Jowain, prepared for the Government of India, dated July 6, 1870, FO 60.386, p. 46.

"By it she completely turns Herat, Furrah, and Lash-Jowain, neutralizes them, in short, without endangering her rear communications.

"Politically speaking, she lays the axe at the root of Afghan neutrality and independence, because in Seistan she holds a more dominating position than her possession of Herat and Furrah would have afforded her.

"The occupation of Kheirabad, about 40 or 50 miles higher up the Helmund, during the present year, will greatly consolidate these well-laid and ably-executed plans; and there can be no doubt that such will take place, unless some powerful preventive be immediately interposed."(1)

#### GOLDSMID'S ARBITRATION OF THE SISTAN BOUNDARY

The Amir of Afghanistan, Shir Ali Khan, formally asked the British in 1870 to intervene, on behalf of his Government, in Sistan.<sup>(2)</sup> The Government of British India contacted the Iranian Government, offering arbitration between the two countries in accordance with article 6 of the Paris treaty of 1857.<sup>(3)</sup> The Iranian Government's agreement to the proposal of the British Indian Government was set in the form of the following conditions:

"The Persian Government agrees that a Commissioner should come to Teheran on part of the British Government and proceed from there (to Seistan) in company of a Persian Commissioner. They are to inspect Persia's possessions in Seistan at the present day, and to bring a map of the same conjointly to Teheran, which, after having been laid before the Shah, will be communicated to the British Government. The British Government will then in friendship, and according to the first basis entered upon between this department

(1) Political Proceedings for March 1869, No. 196, repeated in Wynne's History of Sistan, op. cit., p. 49.

(2) From Colonel F.R. Pollock to the Secretary to the Indian Government, dated Peshawar 17th June 1870, FO 60/386, p. 206.

(3) From Secretary to the Government of India to Secretary to the Government of Punjab, dated Simla 8th September 1870, No. 1613, FO 60/386, p. 382.

and the British Legation, in conformity with Earl Russell's letter and the memorandums sent to the Legation, amongst which is the one dated the 19th April, define the boundaries of the possessions of Persia in Seistan, and also of that portion which the Persian Government had not yet endeavoured to obtain possession of according to its natural sense of justice; so that, through the good offices of England, peace and tranquility may be preserved in future in our frontier and that of other parties."<sup>(1)</sup>

These conditions were received and acknowledged by the British Indian authorities.<sup>(2)</sup> The arbitration Commission, led by Major General (later Sir) Frederick Goldsmid, was formed 9th August 1870 on the instruction of the British principal Secretary of State for India.<sup>(3)</sup> Goldsmid was joined by Mirza Masum Khan Ansari as the Iranian Commissioner, and Seyed Nour-Mohammad-Shah Khan Foshenji as the Afghan Commissioner.

The Amir of Afghanistan subsequently requested a delay of approximately one year for the boundary arbitration work to start in Sistan owing to the disturbances occurring in his dominion. The arbitration Commission, as stated in the previous chapter, proceeded with the delimitation of the Baluchistan boundary between Iran and Britain in the Makran and Kalat districts. This task was completed in September 1871, and General Goldsmid was re-assigned in May 1871, before finalising his Baluchistan delimitation of boundary assignment, to lead the Sistan boundary arbitration commission.<sup>(4)</sup> From the Iranian side, Mirza Masum Khan Ansari was also re-assigned as the Iranian Commissioner.

(1) Extract of Mirza Saeed Khan's Memorandum of 24th July 1870, enclosure in Mr Alison's despatch to the Earl of Granville, No. 38, dated 25th July 1870, FO 60/386, p. 431

(2) Telegram No. 1963p. from the Viceroy to Alison, dated Simla the 16th September 1871, FO 60/390, p. 188, enclosure No. 24.

(3) Goldsmid, F.J. "Eastern Persia", Vol. I, London 1876, p. xiv.

(4) From Indian Government to Goldsmid dated 16th May 1871 No. 905P, FO 60/388, p. 2.

Mirza Masum Khan and General Goldsmid were re-appointed to this task in spite of great difficulties in their relationship, developed during the Baluchistan boundary delimitation which prevented co-operation between them.

Before any problem occurred between the two commissioners in their new assignment, a difficulty emerged resulting from the advance of an Afghan force towards Iranian territory in Sistan. The British Minister at Tehran, being informed of the matter, wrote to the Viceroy of India asking him to induce the Afghan ruler to abstain from hostilities.<sup>(1)</sup> To this, the Viceroy replied:

"Your telegram of 12th. We have already advised Ameer to abstain from hostilities. He has expressed intention only to defend his frontier, and has invited British arbitration. Only obstacle to solving question peacefully is disinclination shown by Persia to accept our arbitration on basis which Home Government have already approved. If Shah agree to proposals made, we will communicate with Ameer at once."<sup>(2)</sup>

The reason for the Iranian Government's reluctance was that the British had proposed a few conditions in order to increase General Goldsmid's authority in deciding where to go in Sistan, what to do, whom to see, and when to return. These conditions were eventually accepted by the Shah in October 1871 and the British Minister at Tehran communicated the acceptance of the arbitration by the Iranians and their proposals to the Government of India:

"Recommandee - After a lengthened discussion the King has accepted our arbitration in the following terms: When the British, Persian, and Afghan Commissioners are all assembled together in Seistan, the Persian and the Afghan Commissioners respectively will state and substantiate their claims. If local enquiry be necessary, the Commissioners will proceed to any point for that purpose, and make a map of any districts without let or hindrance. When the British

(1) Telegram from Mr. Alison to the Viceroy of India, dated 12th October 1871, FO 60/390, enclosure No. 30.

(2) From the Viceroy to Mr Alison, dated Simla the 15th October 1871, No. 2217P, enclosure 31, FO 60/390, p. 6.

Commissioner considers that there is nothing further to be done on the spot, the Commissioners will then return to Teheran, where the question will be fully discussed with a view to its settlement, and the British Commissioner will also state his arbitral opinion."(1)

By the acceptance of these conditions on the part of Iran and British India, General Goldsmid's delegation became an Arbitral Commission with full legal status.

The British Indian authorities, meanwhile, pacified the Amir of Afghanistan in his military threat against Sistan and assigned Colonel F R Pollock to supervise the Afghan Commissioner during the arbitration proceedings. This appointment was questioned by the Iranians as will be discussed.

Before setting out for Sistan, General Goldsmid was furnished by masses of literatures on relevant correspondence and on the historical accounts of Sistan disputes, including the hitherto quoted "History of Sistan and Lash Jowain" prepared for the British Indian Government in 75 pages on July 6, 1870, by Mr H.L. Wynne, the Under Secretary to the Government of India. All this literature bluntly favoured Afghanistan's claims on Sistan. The above-mentioned document, for instance, began with a quotation from Mr Watson's Memorandum of the boundaries of Iran, to Mr Alison, dated 15th December 1864. The extract reads:

"In the time of the Sefaveean Kings, the Province of Seistan, as well as the whole of Afghanistan, formed part of the Persian dominions. But Seistan was added to the new kingdom of Afghanistan in the year 1749 by Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Sudozye dynasty, and therefore it can no more be argued that the Province forms an integral portion of Persia than that the whole of Afghanistan forms an integral portion of Persia.

(1) From Mr. Alison to the Viceroy of India, dated Tehran 23rd October 1871, FO 60/390, enclosure 35, p.7.

"Sixty years is the period laid down as that after which any dormant claim for territory may not be legally revived; and therefore, even supposing that the Shahs of the Kajar dynasty had the right to claim all the possessions of the Sefaveens, they have at this date, according to the above-mentioned principle, forfeited that right in the case of Seistan."<sup>(1)</sup>

Similar one sided accounts of the history of Sistan continues throughout the 75 pages of this document. Of the kind of diplomatic correspondence supplied to General Goldsmid, the following text is sufficient enough an example of the literature that helped the British arbitrator to make up his mind even before entering Sistan:

"In a strategic point of view the advance of Persia along the fertile valley of the Helmund, is a far more formidable menace to Afghanistan than her advance upon Herat, which the British Government has spent so much blood and money to counteract, and which was finally checked by the Treaty of Paris of March 1857. If hostilities between Persia and Afghanistan were to be permitted, while we do not overlook the serious danger that would arise to Afghanistan from the machinations of disaffected subjects and refugees who would make common cause with Persia, we are fully persuaded that the Ameer would strain every nerve to recover all that he has lost in Seistan, and might probably succeed in driving the Persians from the Province. He is fully alive to the danger which threatens him from the position which Persia occupies on the Helmund. From the Cabul Diary for the 18th to 21st March 1870, your Grace will observe that the Ameer remarked to our Agent, "troops from Seistan, via Helmund, can come to Candahar without any hill or other impediments. This fact is well ascertainable by the British authorities if they refer to (Afghanistan) maps."

"While we admit that the dispute between Persia and Afghanistan must be settled according to the rights and reasonable expectations of both parties, we are strongly of opinion that when facts in support of right are at all doubtful, the policy which we have for so many years pursued of securing the independence of Afghanistan and the Provinces dependent on it against the encroachments of Persia, should be allowed full

(1) Extract of section one of "History of Sistan and Lash-Jowain", by H.L. Wynne, dated July 6. 1870, FO 60/386, p. 3 of 214.

weight in the consideration of the case. Whatever may be the result of arbitration in respect to the portion of Seistan which Persia has recently occupied, we think it would be most undesirable that Persia should be allowed to cross the Helmund at any point, and we consider it absolutely essential to the security of Afghanistan that, from the points where the river turns into the territories now in the possession of Afghanistan, the Ameer's possession of both banks of the river should be maintained. Further than this, so far as consistent with the facts that may be elicited by the enquiries of the Commissioner, we would desire to re-assert and maintain our former policy regarding that part of Seistan up to the Helmund on which Persia has within the last few years encroached. This policy was clearly enunciated in Lord Malmesbury's despatch to Colonel Sheil, dated October 27th, 1852, when he announced the distinct determination of Her Majesty's Government not to allow "any systematic attempt on the part of Persia to effect a change in the state of possession in the countries lying between the Persian frontier and the British territories in India." It was repeated after the war of 1856, when Lord Cowley, then engaged in negotiating the treaty of peace, told the Persian plenipotentiary that Her Majesty's Government were "determined that Persia should not disturb the existing state of the tribes on the eastern frontier." These declarations were clearly intended to bar the encroachments of Persia, not only on territory then undoubtedly belonging to the Afghans, but also on all territories and tribes to the eastward not at the time under Persian dominion, including Seistan, part of which is now in the Persian occupation, and the whole of which is claimed as an integral part of the Persian Province of Khorassan."<sup>(1)</sup>

Goldsmid's approach to Iran's rights to the sovereignty of Sistan, based on information of this kind became suspected by Mirza Masum Khan the Iranian Commissioner who had from the outset of the proceedings of Baluchistan boundary delimitation questioned Goldsmid's true intentions. A fierce correspondence started between the two commissioners as soon

(1) Clauses 3 and 5 of despatch from Mr Mayo and others of the Government of India Foreign Department to the Duke of Argyll, dated Simla the 7th July 1870, No. 41 of 1870, FO 60/386, pp. 1 - 2 of 211.

as the arbitration proceeding began in Sistan. The Iranian Commissioner, for instance, wrote to the British Commissioner on 9th February 1872:

"AFTER becoming acquainted with the contents of your letter of 28th Zulkhadeh, I have found it necessary to inform you without delay that, with regard to the passage in the agreement of the 7th Shaban, which sets forth that "if it is necessary to inspect any locality, the Commissioners should visit any place they may deem expedient, and prepare maps of any district without let or hindrance," its meaning is, not that present Persian possessions in Seistan should (unnecessarily and in a spirit contrary to the tenor of Lord John Russell's despatch) be again submitted to enquiry, but that the meaning and wish of the Persian Foreign Office and the British Legation was and is, that if the Commissioners during their stay at any one place should wish for information concerning any other place in Seistan that is not completely in Persian possession, and upon which the Afghan Commissioner may make a claim, and that such information is impossible to be obtained at the place at which the Commissioners are then staying, then they should go to any such place as may be necessary, and prepare the necessary maps without let or hindrance."(1)

To this, General Goldsmid replied:

"I HAVE read your letter of 28th Zulkhadeh. I regret that I cannot change the opinion which I have communicated to you in my official letters and also by word of mouth during our march hither. With regard to other matters, I must wait until the meeting of the Commissioners. In my opinion it is not proper to raise difficulties before mention is made of their existence."(2)

Not satisfied with this reply, Mirza Masum Khan asked General Goldsmid of the nature of Colonel Pollock's role in the arbitration commission: "I requested you would inform me in what capacity and with what intention Colonel Pollock was accompanying the Afghan Commissioner? You replied that I had

(1) From the Persian Commissioner, Nasirabad, 9th February = 28th Zulkhadeh, enclosure No. 22 FO 60/392 , pp. 26 - 7.

(2) From General Goldsmid, Nasirabad, 9th February = 28 Zulkhadeh, enclosure No. 22, FO 60/392 , pp. 26-7

been long informed by you of Colonel Pollock's coming. As I wished to know what his actual employment is, I have again to request that you will be kind enough to inform me in what capacity and with what object Colonel Pollock accompanies the Afghan Commissioner?"<sup>(1)</sup>

General Goldsmid's reply to this question was that: "The above mentioned gentleman will on arrival give me such assistance in the work of the mission as I may require from him."<sup>(2)</sup>

General Goldsmid's description of the role of Colonel Pollock in the proceedings of the Sistan Boundary Arbitration is imperceptible, especially when implying that Colonel Pollock's mission was to aid him, whereas he was assigned to supervise the Afghan Commissioner. This was clearly defined in the Indian Government's despatch No. 1614 to the Government of Punjab to which Colonel Pollock was attached which clearly asserts:

"Colonel Pollock should carefully advise the Afghan Commissioner as to his proceedings, and, without assuming a position of partiality, should see generally that the views of the Kabul Government, whom the Commissioner represents, are fully and fairly explained."<sup>(3)</sup>

Furthermore, the Viceroy of India himself had described Colonel Pollock's mission slightly differently. In a letter to the Amir of Afghanistan, he stated:

"Your Highness's Commissioner will be accompanied by a delegate on my part, and I have selected Colonel Pollock, C.S.I., for this purpose.

(1) From the Persian Commissioner, Nasirabad, 9th February = 28th Zulkhadeh, enclosure 23, FO 60/392, p. 27.

(2) From General Goldsmid, Nasirabad, 10th February = 29th Zulkhadeh, enclosure 25, FO 60/392, p. 27 of 73.

(3) Extract of clause 5 of despatch No. 1614 of Aitchison to the Secretary to the Indian Government of Punjab, dated Simla, 8. 9 1870. FO 60/392, p. 383.

I am desirous that my delegate on his way to Seistan should have an opportunity of a conference with Your Highness and communicate personally with you on various matters connected with the welfare of Afghanistan."(1)

Colonel Pollock's duty had also been described in the Indian Government's Foreign Department despatch of 8th September 1870 as being 'to acquaint Afghan Commissioner with the opinions and feelings of the court of Cabul; and to explain to him the views and policy of the Government of India on the Seistan question.'(2)

Colonel Pollock, accompanied by the Afghan Commissioner and a large escort, arrived in Sistan in early March 1872. The Iranian Commissioner protested against the presence of such a large number of local chiefs from Afghanistan being in the company of Colonel Pollock and the Afghan Commissioner on the Iranian soil. In a letter to Goldsmid, Mirza Masum Khan stated: "in your letter of the 27th Zulkhadeh you have written that I should have certainly gained correct information as to the people accompanying General Pollock and the Afghan Commissioner during the time that these latter were encamped at Nasirabad, and that Sardar Ahmad Khan was the only one worthy of consideration. I have thought it necessary to ask you the reason of the presence of Sardar Ahmad Khan and Mardan Khan, and Dust Mohammad Khan and others, with such a following; and why they accompanied the Afghan Commissioner into Iranian territory, give me, please, speedy information on this matter."(3)

(1) Extract of letter from His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council to His Highness the Ameer of Cabul, dated Simla the 31st of October 1871, enclosure No. 46, FO 60/390, p. 193.

(2) Quoted in Mirza Masum Khan's letter to General Goldsmid, dated 9th March 1872, No. 84 of correspondence related to Sistan Mission, FO 60/392, p. 81.

(3) Extract of Mirza Masum Khan's letter in C.U. Aitchison, Secretary to the Indian Government to the Secretary of the Government of Punjab, dated Simla 8th September 1870, No. 1614, FO 60/386, p. 383.

Most of these individuals and the armed men were, as a result of this protest, returned to Afghanistan and though Colonel Pollock was received by Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan, with due honour and respect, the Amir refused to receive the Afghan Commissioner. In a letter to General Goldsmid, Mirza Masum Khan spelled out the decision of the Amir of Qaenat and Sistan in this regard, stating:

*"YOUR Special Assistant, Major Smith, sent me a message by your Mir Akhor Ghuffir Beg to the effect that General Pollock would come to-morrow to Nasirabad and call on me and the Hashmut-ul-Mulk, on the understanding that the Ameer and I were to return his visit at Bunjar. The Ameer does not agree to this, but has requested me to say to you that if the Afghan Commissioner has any claims to make he should either come to Nasirabad and state them verbally, or that he should write them at Bunjar, and that the continued presence of so large a number of Afghans in the territory possessed by Persia is contrary to the agreement between the two Governments, and foreign to the duty and authority of the Ameer."<sup>(1)</sup>*

A further complication occurred regarding General Goldsmid's team's flying of the British flag in front of their tents which gave rise to unpleasant rumours among local people and much headache for the Amir of Qaenat and Sistan. After a long argument the Iranian Commissioner found a solution in a letter of explanation from General Goldsmid to the Amir who could use it in explaining the position to his subjects. This letter was sent and the Amir replied:

*"AFTER I received your letter I assembled Haji Mushtihid<sup>(2)</sup> and the other Moollahs<sup>(3)</sup> and Syuds,<sup>(4)</sup> and had much conversation with them concerning your flying a flag in front of your tent,*

(1) From Mirza Masum Khan to General Goldsmid, dated 8th March 1872 = 2nd Zulhajeh, No. 83, FO 60/392, p. 43.

(2) Mojtahehd = Jurisprudent.

(3) Mulla = Cleric.

(4) Sayyed = descendants of the Prophet of Islam.

and with the greatest trouble made them understand that the flag was merely a sign of your mission."(1)

The arbitration commission decided to visit not only the frontier areas but many places within Iran's undisputed possessions. This decision caused more friction between General Goldsmid and Mirza Masum Khan who protested against Goldsmid's examination of areas in Iranian possession. Mirza Masum Khan thus suspended his own mission in Sistan and returned to Tehran in the vain hope that the Iranian authorities would act on his protestation of General Goldsmid's proceedings in Sistan.

The arbitration commission visited the Hirmand delta and many places in and around the province and interviewed many people arriving at the conclusion that the arbitration must take into consideration both the ancient and recent rights of the two sides, based on examining the actual possessions and documentary evidence produced by the two Governments.

The Afghan Commissioner handed over to General Goldsmid a lengthy written statement of documentary evidence. No such written statement was provided from the Iranian side, because the Iranian Commissioner had departed from Sistan.

Other determining factors taken into consideration were testimonials of the local chiefs and khans as to whom their loyalty would go to as their sovereign Government.

In order to determine the ancient rights of sovereignty over Sistan, the arbitrator concluded that Sistan was:

"... a province on the Eastern Frontier of Persia, which had become comprehended in Afghanistan on its first conversion into a consolidated monarchy by Ahmad Shah Durani, but which, by a common process of intrigue and encroachment, had lapsed almost imperceptibly to her stronger neighbour on the west.... Persia, on

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(1) From Amir Khan Heshmat al-Molk to General Goldsmid, dated 6th March 1872, attached to enclosure No. 27 of correspondence of Sistan Mission, FO 60/392, p.80.

*the other hand, laid claim to Sistan by virtue of a more ancient sovereignty than that of Ahmad Shah: and justified recent conquest and annexation, within its limits, as the mere assertion of dormant rights."*(1)

If the interests of British India favouring Afghanistan's claims were not known it would be incomprehensible as to how the arbitrator could ignore more than twelve centuries of Iran's sovereignty of Sistan before it was conquered and annexed by Ahmad Shah Durrani, and how could he justify this short-lived annexation by Ahmad Shah - from 1749 to 1772 - as culminating any right of sovereignty to Sistan for Afghanistan.

Ahmad Shah Durrani, as has hitherto been explained occupied Sistan as well as Herat, Qandehar and Baluchistan when Iran was leaderless in the wake of Nader Shah's assassination in 1747. Moreover, the arbitrator ignored the fact that both Herat and Qandehar revived their traditional dependency on Iran as autonomous principalities shortly after Ahmad Shah's death (see chapter IV on the partitioning of Khorasan and the question of Herat), and the chiefs of Sistan and Baluchistan declared their allegiance to Iran at the same time. None of these developments, which revived Iran's traditional relations with the autonomous chiefs of Herat and Qandehar and revived Iran's historical sovereignty in Sistan and Baluchistan, could be considered as "intrigue and encroachment" on the part of Iran. Strangely enough, when defining the boundaries in Baluchistan a year earlier, General Goldsmid did not consider Afghanistan's rights in Baluchistan, in spite of the fact that Baluchistan had also been conquered and annexed by Ahmad Shah Durrani in the wake of Nader Shah's assassination. When considering these historical facts, Amir Alam Khan Khozeimeh's undertaking in Sistan and the recovery of lands transferred into the Afghanistan dominion by Ahmad Khan and Ibrahim Khan, the two

(1) Goldsmid, General Sir Frederick, "Eastern Persia", London 1876, p. xiii.

local chiefs who were intrigued by Amir Shir Ali Khan of Afghanistan to join him, could hardly be described as "intrigue and encroachment" on the part of Iran. Ahmad Khan and Ibrahim Khan who had been subjects of the Iranian Government, suddenly decided to become subjects of the Amir of Afghanistan. What was wrong was to take with them vast areas of the Iranian province of Sistan to be included in Afghanistan dominion. Amir Alam Khan entered Sistan, punished the two rebel chiefs and recovered Iran's lost territories in Sistan. This whole process was in keeping with article 7 of the Anglo-Iranian peace treaty of Paris (1857) and was permitted by the British Government in the form of Lord Russell's (the British Foreign Secretary) despatch in this context. This process, therefore, could hardly be described as "intrigue", "encroachment", "conquest" and "annexation" of another country's possessions.

The arbitrator, nevertheless, decided to examine the historical rights of the two countries in Sistan on the background of events in the period of one hundred years preceding the date of arbitration which conveniently included the closing years of Ahmad Shah Durrani's career. The one hundred years that the arbitrator chose to be the history of Sistan's affiliation to either Iran or Afghanistan conveniently excluded two thousand years of sovereign rights to Sistan and thus weighing heavily in favour of Afghanistan. To fill the gap between Ahmad Shah's death (1772) and Dust Mohammad Khan's conquest and annexation of Herat and Qandehar (1861 and 1863), the arbitrator decided to consider these two principalities as being part of Afghanistan, a country which did not exist in that interim period of 91 years (between 1772 and 1863), ignoring the fact that both principalities had officially renewed their traditional dependency on Iran: their rulers governing the principalities on behalf of the Government of Iran: making coinage in the name of the Shah of Iran: reading khotbeh in the name of the Shah of Iran: paying annual tax to the Government of Iran: and whenever payment of annual taxes were withheld they were punished by being fined or being replaced (see chapter IV on the partitioning of Khorasan).

It is thus inconceivable how Sistan's dependence on either Herat or Qandehar in that interim period could culminate in "historical rights of sovereignty" for Afghanistan. The arbitrator, nevertheless concluded that:

*"Sistan was certainly part of Afghanistan when Afghanistan was a consolidated kingdom. It was afterwards dependent on Herat or Kandehar, according to circumstance, or it may be independent of either if occasion offered."*(1)

By so asserting, the arbitrator was, in effect, claiming that it did not matter if, after the rule of Ahmad Shah Durrani, his consolidated monarchy disappeared and Herat and Qandehar resumed their traditional role as autonomous principalities of Iran, and Sistan chiefs became, for most of the period in question, subjects of the Iranian Government. He also assumed that if the Sistan chiefs adhered, from time to time, to the principalities of Herat and Qandehar dependent on Iran, would not culminate as a "right of sovereignty" for Iran but for Afghanistan, and that recovery of Sistan territories taken into Afghan dominion did not amount to anything because no fair fighting was involved:

*"The manner in which Sistan was occupied by Persian troops corresponds with an appeal to arms such as contemplated by Lord Russell's letter quoted - there was no fair fighting at all. Nor can it be admitted that allegiance was obtained by the single means of military movements or open procedure of any kind".*(2)

By so asserting, the arbitrator dismissed the recovery, through military means, of territories taken into the Afghan dominion by Ahmad Khan and Ibrahim Khan as constituting any right of Iran, arguing that it was done at a time when Afghanistan was leaderless. Here the arbitrator ignored the fact that Amir Shir Ali Khan was the leader of Afghanistan, though temporarily lost Kabul to his rebellious son, but was

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., Appendix A, p. 403.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., pp. 411 - 12.

in so firm a position in Qandehar that he successfully intrigued with Ahmad Khan and Ibrahim Khan, chiefs of Sistan, to join him, an act which precipitated Iran's military operation in Sistan. Furthermore, the arbitrator considered Ahmad Shah Durrani's occupation of Sistan, Herat and Qandehar (1749) as culminating in sovereign rights for Afghanistan; an occupation at a time when Iran was in chaos and was leaderless as a result of Nader Shah's assassination and after Amir Alum Khan I Khozeimeh, leader of Eastern Iran, was also murdered by the Kurdish element of his own forces (1749); an occupation of Iranian territories which met no resistance from the Iranians. Eventually, the arbitrator ruled out Iran's historical rights altogether:

"I have given it as my opinion that the Persian claim to Sistan on the score of ancient right is not such as to warrant revival after the lapse of a hundred years..."<sup>(1)</sup>

He even rejected testimonies of allegiance to Iran by the local chiefs:

"I cannot say that the acts of Ali Khan and Taj Muhammad, Sarbandis, have satisfied me that their allegiance to Persia was the general desire of the inhabitants."<sup>(2)</sup>

This statement clearly contradicts his earlier assertion of "how contented with the present state of affairs, or at least insouciant of change, were the general inhabitants".<sup>(3)</sup> He went as far as rejecting the actual possessions:

"The garrison in Kaleh-i-Futh, I regret to consider as brought there in contravention of the terms of the arbitration; therefore the fact of its existence can have no value, nor can its discussion be appropriate in the present paper."<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 407.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 407.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 271.

(4) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 409.

Chukhansur, taken into the Afghan dominion by Ibrahim Khan who was punished by Amir Alam Khan III, was also considered as not being in Iranian possession. By contrast, he considered Ibrahim Khan's illegal act as sufficient enough reason to give Chokhansur to Afghanistan:

*"Chakhansur is not in Persian possession, but held by Ibrahim Khan on the Afghan side."*<sup>(1)</sup>

He dismissed the recovery of the occupied territories of Sistan being in keeping with British Foreign Secretary's aforementioned letter allowing Iran to make good its possession in Sistan by force of arm:

*"I do not think that the English ministerial letter quoted alters the position in this respect."*<sup>(2)</sup>

When it came to the (Iranian) territories to the west of Hirmand's main branch in the delta region which have been in Iran's uninterrupted possession, the arbitrator declared Iran's sovereign rights but still with some reservation:

*"Sistan Proper is now, under certain reservations, to be hereafter noted, in possession of Persia, whose Governor is Mir Alam Khan of Kain."*<sup>(3)</sup>

Iran's rights of sovereignty to the territories to the east of the main branch of Hirmand river was dismissed and similarly thrown away were such factors as peoples' language and religion (similar to those of the people of the rest of Iran), the actual possession backed by local testimonies which, in the words of General Goldsmid himself, were from the "general inhabitants" who were "contented with the present state of affairs, or at least insouciant of change."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 409.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 409.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 48.

(4) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 271

Suspicions existed at the time that General Goldsmid wanted to give the whole of Sistan to Afghanistan, but the power and influence of Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan, and his determination in keeping Sistan within Iran seems to have convinced Goldsmid that depriving Iran of the whole of Sistan would not be advisable. Reporting to the Government of India, Goldsmid asserted:

"Ameer of Kain has great power. Persian Commissioner plays his game and talks of Lord Russell's despatch, arguing that no present possession is to be discussed. Writes politely, but acts mischievously and in hostile spirit. Meanwhile much information obstructed and survey far advanced. I hurry completion to be prepared for contingencies."(1)

Based on this information, the Government of India decided that Sistan should be partitioned. In a letter to Pollock (promoted to the rank of General) adviser to the Afghan Commissioner, the Indian Government asked:

"Government gathers from papers received that the position is this - Persia holds chief parts of Sistan so firmly that arbitral opinion must be in favour of Persia, but that a boundary on Helmund from Ameer of Kain's bund(2) upwards, might be secured and also a line of river onwards to lake. Can you confirm this as being the position? If so, would such boundary, though not giving all that is desired, satisfy sufficiently Afghan interests?...and would Ameer of Afghanistan probably convinced that it is the best obtainable..."(3)

The arbitrator thus decided to carve up the province into two sections: referring to them as "Sistan proper" and "outer Sistan". He gave Afghanistan the larger part and gave Iran the smaller part, defining the main channel of Hirmand River on the easternmost part of the delta as the boundary between

(1) Telegram from General Goldsmid through Henjam to Foreign Secretary, Calcutta, dated 12th April 1872, FO 60/392.

(2) Referring to Band Sistan dam.

(3) Telegram from the Foreign Secretary of Indian Government to General Pollock, dated 27th April 1872, No. 1042p, FO 60/392.

the two (see figure 1). This decision allocated much of Iran's actual possession such as Nad-e Ali, Qaleh Fath and much of the territories occupied by the Afghans in the preceding years, to the Afghan claimants. This approach to the boundary arbitration in Sistan was in complete contradiction to the circumstances described by himself as leading him to believe that documents produced in support of Afghan claims and testimonies given in support of Afghan claims did not convince him of any sovereign rights for Afghanistan in Sistan:

"Whatever force such documents may have, they can only apply to particular short-lived conditions and circumstances; and I do not consider they can affect the validity of Afghan sovereignty over the province in respect of the period under review. The allegiance of Sistan was of a feudal nature which could not be transferred to suit the personal convenience of a temporary ruler!"<sup>(1)</sup>

In trying to divide Sistan politically, the arbitrator found it somewhat necessary to introduce a geographical meaning to his decision. He, therefore, argued:

"It is not easy to define what, in the present day, is meant by the term '*Sistan*'. The expression is very vague, for ancient limits have long since become obsolete, and modern signification practically comprehends the Peninsula of the Helmand and Hamun only.

"I see no better way to illustrate the case than by supposing two territories, - one compact and concentrated, which I will call '*Sistan Proper*'; the other, detached and irregular, which may be designated '*Outer Sistan*'.

"The first is bounded, on the north and west, by the Hamun, which divides it from the Lash Juwain and Neh Bandan districts, respectively; on the south generally by the Hamun, but immediately by the Dasht-i-Sangbar and barren tracts south of Sekuha and Burj-i-Alam Khan; and on the east by the main branch of the Helmand below the band at the mouth of the great canal.

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 405.

"The second is composed of the country on the right bank of the Helmand, and extends to a distance of about 120 English miles in length, or from the vicinity of the Charboli and Khuspas River north, to Rudbar south. Its breadth is variable, but trifling compared to the length, the actual boundaries being assumed as the limit of river cultivation on the east. To this may be added the Sistan Desert, comprising Zirah and the "Shilah."<sup>(1)</sup>

(For the text of the General Summary of Goldsmid's arbitration opinion see Appendix I).

Commenting on General Goldsmid's arbitration awards of Sistan, Sir Percy Sykes believes that the arbitrator tried to work out an absolute justice that is to give little importance to historical evidence and to put more emphasis on the actual possessions. He asserts: "The arbitrator had to decide, not so much as to claims - both the Afghans and Persians having laid the district under tribute at various periods - but as to the actual status quo."<sup>(2)</sup>

Yet, when considering the actual status quo, the arbitrator decided to ignore a number of actual possessions of Iran. Amir Alam Khan III Khozeimeh's actual possessions at Nad Ali and Qaleh Fath and their dependencies on the left bank of Hirmand River, for instance, were ignored. Similarly a number of actual possession of the Sanjarani and Nahruei Baluchi tribes of Iran on the left banks of Hirmand were ignored:

"As regards 'Outer Sistan', the professed allegiance of Kamal<sup>(3)</sup> and Imam Khan<sup>(4)</sup> the Baluch chiefs, residing on the banks of the Helmand, does not to my mind constitute a case of absolute possession similar to that of 'Sistan Proper'; nor do I find that

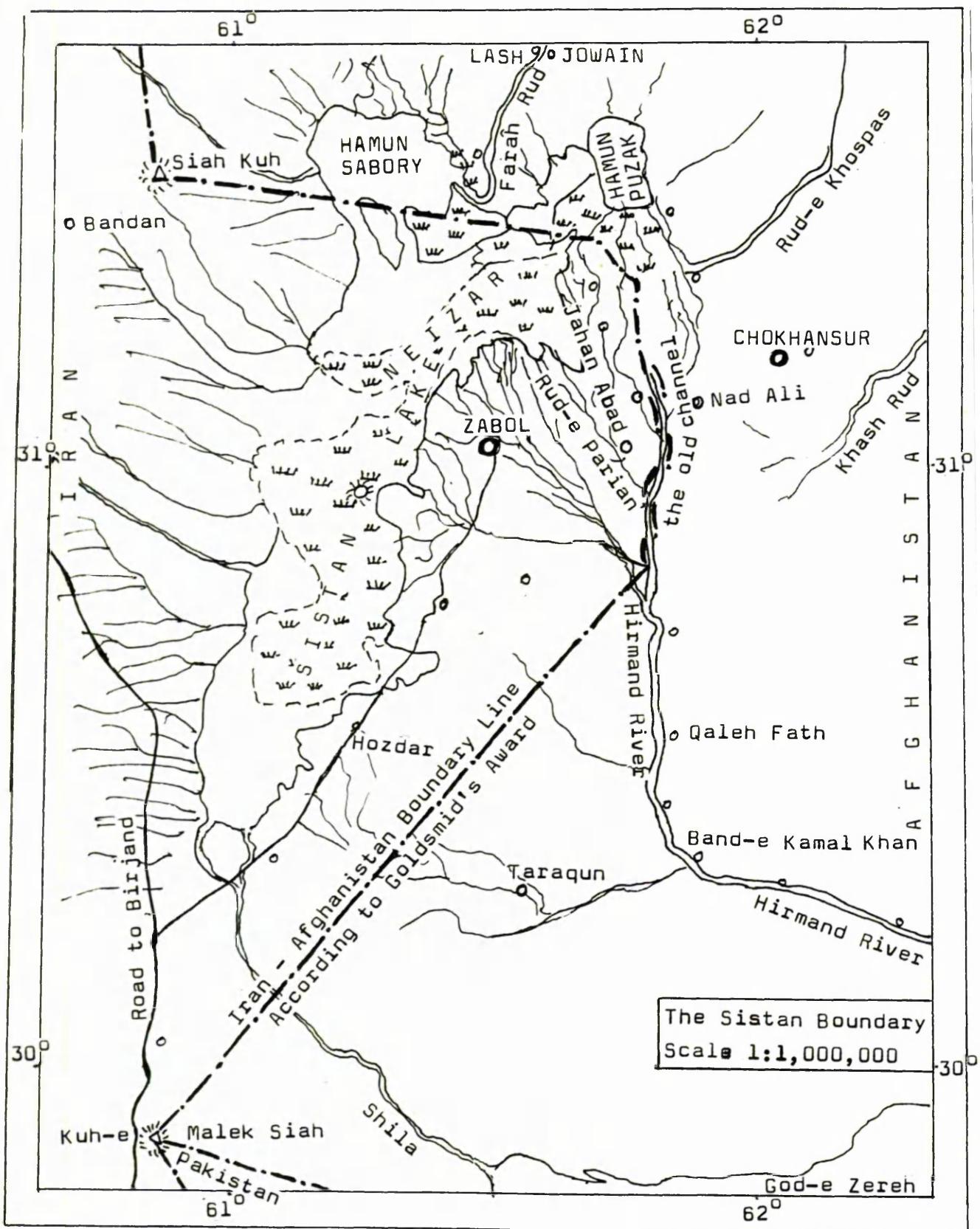
(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 407-8.

(2) Sykes, Sir Percy, op. cit., 368.

(3) Sanjarani.

(4) Nahruei.

**FIGURE 1**  
Sistan Boundary According to General Goldsmid



any arguments bearing upon these particular lands have been used by the Persian Government, except that my own request for the recovery of a stolen horse, made on the right bank of the Helmand to a Persian Yawar, (1) is cited in favour of Persia's claim."(2)

Major-General Goldsmid's arbitration award not only failed to satisfy the local chiefs whose lands were given to a Government that they were not subject to, but proved to be unpopular with the local inhabitants as well as the injustice that the Iranian Government considered to have done to its rights in the province. Aware of the unpopularity of this award, the arbitrator asserted:

"Briefly, being unable to justify the recent action of Persia in Sistan on the score of ancient right to that province, I am bound to state my opinion that as regards her possession of 'Sistan Proper,' the fact is established; although the action of the authorities before described has unquestionably caused me to entertain misgivings on the attitude or sentiments of the population in certain instances."(3)

General Goldsmid did not elaborate in his description of various aspects of his award that by putting the boundary on the main branch of the River Hirmand in the delta region (see figure 1), he put 'Sistan Proper' at the mercy of the Afghans who could easily deprive the "more fertile half of Sistan" of its badly needed water from that river, as it proved to be the case in subsequent years.

One individual most unhappy, at the time, with the arbitral proceeding, was Mirza Musam Khan Ansari, the Iranian Commissioner, who had evidently endeavoured to prevent the partitioning of Sistan by creating as much inconvenience for the arbitration proceedings as possible. In his book on "Eastern Persia" Major General Sir Frederick Goldsmid

(1) Major (Military rank).

(2) Goldsmid, Sir Frederick, op. cit., p. 409

(3) Goldsmid, Sir Frederick., op. cit., p. 409.

complains extensively of Mirza Masum Khan's behaviour towards the British arbitration commission. Sir Percy Sykes goes further by accusing the Iranian Commissioner of being: "only anxious to make money, he saw that by fostering this mistaken idea he could advance his private interests".<sup>(1)</sup>

It is noteworthy that not only was Mirza Masum Khan not accused of such intentions in any other documents that this author has examined, but there are indications that the Arbitration Commission attempted to buy Amir Alam Khan III Heshmat al-Molk's consent by offers of bribes. In a letter to his agent in Tehran to be forwarded to the Shah, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Heshmat al-Molk II Khozeimeh, the eldest son of Amir Alam Khan and his successor as the Amir of Sistan, asserted:

*"In the time of my late father, people came from the side of England to Sistan, and thought of raising their flag. They offered money to my father, the late Amir, but he in view of his loyalty never accepted. The late Shah consequently gave my late father much consideration in that connection. The English complained bitterly of my late father to the Central Government, but it was of no use."* <sup>(2)</sup>

Similarly, Amir Mohammad Esmail Khan Shokat al-Molk, the second son of Amir Alam Khan III and his successor as the Amir of Qaenat, wrote to the Shah through his own agent in Tehran:

*"All the inhabitants of Khorasan and Persia are witness to this fact that my late father the Amir during his life refused 100,000 tumana and as far as was possible did not allow the English to set foot in Sistan...."* <sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Sykes, op. cit., p. 368

(2) From Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Khozeimeh to his agent in Tehran, dated 26th Zihajeh (26th March 1903), enclosed in despatch No. 56, from A. Hardinge to the Marquis of Lansdowne, dated 30th April 1903, FO 60/711.

(3) From Amir Esmail Khan Khozeimeh to his agent, dated 18th Moharram 1321 (17th April 1903), enclosed in despatch No. 56 above op. cit.

Sir Percy Sykes did not stop at accusing Mirza Masum Khan of trying to make money by confronting the arbitrator in his proceedings, but accused Amir Alam Khan III of "ignorance" and "jealousy" because of the lack of cooperation that was expected of him. General Goldsmid wrote of the view of Amir Alam Khan regarding the arbitration proceedings:

"...specially suspicious as to Colonel Pollock's presence with the Afghan Commission, which he seemed to think intimated a foregone adverse conclusion on the part of the British Government".<sup>(1)</sup>

Sir Percy Sykes concluded differently that:

"The position was one of difficulty, owing to the hostility of the local authorities, which was mainly the result of ignorance... The Amir of Kain, however, imagined that the British Commissioner was trying to seize as much territory as possible for his Government - Afghanistan being always regarded by Persians as a province of the Indian Empire."<sup>(2)</sup>

It could hardly be because of ignorance that the Amir of Qaenat and Sistan endeavoured to prevent as effectively as possible the eastern half of his dominion of Sistan being given to the Afghans. Not only did his efforts fail to prevent eastern Sistan from being given to Afghanistan, but many of his personal lands and villages on the left bank of River Hirmand were also given to the Afghans. The eastern half of Amir Alam Khan's dominion of Sistan was given to the Afghans in spite of the fact that the arbitrator himself confirmed that the possessors of that half of the province were partly Iranian, partly Afghan: "Outer Sistan, on the other hand, irrespective of the Desert, Shilah and uninhabited tracts, is in possession of Baluch chiefs who profess to acknowledge Persian sovereignty, or disclaim allegiance to any sovereign power but Afghanistan."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 267 - 8.

(2) Sykes, op. cit., p. 368.

(3) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 408

General Goldsmid's own account of the role of Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan is much more realistic than that of Sir Percy Sykes. The following are two examples of his observation of the role of this Amir in relation to the arbitration proceedings:

(1) "this march up the Helmand could not fail to be productive of much valuable information. By it we learnt how completely successful had been the able measures taken by the Amir of Kain to thoroughly Persianise the whole of the province on the west bank of the river; how thoroughly the old Baluch chiefs in the vicinity, with the exception of Chakhansur and Lash Juwain, were inclined to play into his hands, and how contented with the present state of affairs, or at least insouciant of change, were the general inhabitants."(1)

And:

(2) "We arrived at the rendezvous before the Amir, who came attended by a large mounted retinue, and with the sons of two Baluch chiefs, holding forts on the Helmand (which we afterwards visited), who had acknowledged allegiance to Persia, and who were this day evidently paraded with the purpose of declaring their love for Persian rule before the British arbitrator."(2)

General Goldsmid's arbitral award of 19th August 1872 was, however, submitted to the two Governments of Iran and Afghanistan. This award delimited the Sistan boundary in the following manner:

1. From Siah Kuh, near Bandan, which is the beginning of the Qaenat district a line to be drawn to the southern limit of the Neizar towards Lash-Jowein. Thence the line continues to a point named Shahi which is the end of Hirmand's main water-bed.
  
2. From Shahi, the boundary takes a more north-west to south-east direction to Korki.

(1) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 271.

(2) Goldsmid, op. cit., p. 268 - 9.

3. From Korki the boundary follows Hirmand River's main channel upstream as far as Kuhak.
4. From Kuhak the boundary takes a north-east to south-west direction in a straight line across desert as far as Kuh-e Malek Siah, the highest peak of which is the beginning of Baluchistan and the dividing point of Iran-(Pakistan)-Afghanistan boundaries. (see Appendix I).

The map prepared by the engineers of the arbitration commission showed considerable inaccuracy in tracing the boundary line, especially in areas north-east of Mian Kangi and south-east of Lash-Jowain. This inaccurate map caused much dispute later and was used by the Afghans to justify their encroachments in the Iranian side of the river.

General Goldsmid entered Tehran on the 4th June 1872. The Iranian Commissioner, Mirza Masum Khan had, for reasons unknown, once again disappeared from the scene after leaving Sistan in protest against General Goldsmid's arbitral proceedings. He was replaced in Tehran by Mirza Malkam Khan Nazem ad-Doleh as Iranian Commissioner.<sup>(1)</sup>

General Goldsmid, Mirza Malkam Khan and the Afghan Commissioner met twice in Tehran discussing the terms of the award.<sup>(2)</sup> The Afghans as well as the Iranians raised a number of objections to the specifics of the award. The most significant objection raised by the Iranians concerned water use of the two sides of the frontier river. In clauses 1, 2 and 4 of his arbitral award, General Goldsmid had laid down, as regards the Hirmand water rights, that:

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(1) "She (Persia) should not possess land on the right of the Helmand... the main bed of the Helmand, therefore, below Kohak should be the eastern boundary of Persian Sistan.

(1) The Notebook of Sistan Boundary Delimitation (*Ketabcheh-e Tahdid-e Sistan*), repeated in "Farhang-e Iran-Zamin", Tehran 1990, Vol. 28, p. 298

(2) The Notebook of Sistan Boundary Delimitation, op. cit., 301 - 315.

(2) "and the line of frontier from Kohak to the hills, south of the Sistan desert, should be so drawn as to include within the Afghan limits all cultivation on both banks of the river from the band upwards.....

(4) "It is, moreover, to be well understood that no works are to be carried out on either side calculated to interfere with the requisite supply of water for irrigation on both banks of Helmand."(1)

In their appeal against this award, the Iranian Government contended, *inter alia*, that the Sistan of Iran could not live without control of the Hirmand up to Rudbar. This was a statement of fact which has been attested to by the passage of 120 years.

The tripartite meeting of the commissioners in Tehran was mostly dominated by questions and answers centred around the Iranian Commissioner's reassertion of Iran's claim to the whole of Sistan.

As the parties concerned could not agree, the arbitration opinion was referred to Lord Granville, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, for final adjudication. The Foreign Secretary over-ruled all objections raised by Iran and Afghanistan and confirmed General Goldsmid's arbitration opinion in its entirety on 7th March 1873, which was communicated to both Governments of Iran and Afghanistan who subsequently ratified it.

The Afghans naturally did not raise any objection to Goldsmid's water award, but asked the British Government for their interpretation of clause 4 of the above award.

*"The Government of India, in referring this question to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (despatch No. 74, dated 15th September*

(1) Extract of Goldsmid's Sistan boundary award regarding Hirmand River repeated in Colonel McMahon's Hirmand Water Award, from Colonel McMahon to Secretary to the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, No. 2407, dated Camp Kohuk, 25th September 1904, FO 60/727,  
P. 2.

1873), after pointing out that the Amir desired to construct new, and repair old, canals, leading from Helmand, in order to strengthen his frontier and establish an Afghan colony at Tarakun, wrote; 'In our opinion the clause referred to in the award cannot be understood as applying either to existing canals or to such old and disused canals as the Afghan Government may wish to put in proper repair: nor would it interfere with the excavation of new canals, provided the requisite supply of water for irrigation on the Persian side is not diminished. If Her Majesty's Government concur in this way, we would suggest that an explanation may be given which we can communicate to the Amir."<sup>(1)</sup>

This suggestion was concurred with by the British Foreign Secretary in its entirety and the question of the "requisite supply of water for irrigation on the Persian side" being a matter of interpretation, allowed the Afghans to minimise supply of water to the province of Sistan, turning it into a parched land in a matter of less than half a century.

Having permitted the Afghans to repair the old canals and construct new ones, the Foreign Secretary made his decision permanent:

"Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs accepted the above interpretation and the Amir was duly informed. The above ruling should, therefore, be considered as an integral portion of the Goldsmid award."<sup>(2)</sup>

The way this award was compiled, and the manner in which it was accepted by the Iranian Government, was in complete contradiction of the condition laid down by the same Government when agreeing to the arbitration of Sistan boundary. The conditions laid down by the Iranian Government for accepting arbitration were:

(1) Ibid.

(2) From McMahon to Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, 25th September 1904, op. cit., p. 2.

"The Persian Government agrees that a commissioner should come to Tehran.... they are to inspect.... and define the boundaries of the possessions of Persia in Sistan, and also of that portion which the Persian Government had not yet endeavoured to obtain possession of according to its natural sense of justice."(1)

In later correspondence to the British Minister at Tehran, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs repeated:

"The Persian Government consents, and is also highly pleased, that the British and Persian Commissioners are to proceed to Seistan and inspect the present possession of the Persian Government, to draw up a map of the same, to define the same, and to ascertain what portion of Seistan has not yet come into Persia's possession, and to state the same to the British and Persian Governments."(2)

Not only did General Goldsmid's award not ascertain the portion of Sistan which had not yet "come into Iran's possession"; not only did his award not give many of Iran's actual possessions on the east of Hirmand delta to her, but also, the award made Iran to abdicate all rights of control over Hirmand's water distribution which proved in the later decades to be detrimental to Sistan and its inhabitants.

#### GOLDSMID'S AWARD, THE AFTERMATH

General Goldsmid's arbitration award and delimitation of boundary in Sistan did not bring peace to the province. Rather, it opened up fresh causes for friction and dispute. The most noticeable complication that occurred immediately in the wake of ratification of Goldsmid's award was resultant in the way the Afghans interpreted various aspects of the

(1) Extract of Mirza Saeed Khan's Memorandum of 24th July 1870, enclosure in Mr Alison's despatch to the Earl of Granville, No. 38, dated 25th July 1870, FO 60/386, p. 431.

(2) Extract of Mirza Saeed Khan's Memorandum to Mr Alison, dated Tehran 4th August 1870, FO 60/386, p. 433.

award. On the northern section of Sistan, for instance, the Afghans seized a number of Iranian villages on the pretext that the terms laid in the award would have meant so. The Iranians complained to the Government of Great Britain. Her Majesty's Secretary for India enquired from the Indian authorities if it was possible to undo the occupation. The Foreign Department of the Indian Government replied that Afghanistan authorities' interpretation of the award must be supported, because "the Iranian Commissioner had not been present at the time when Goldsmid was surveying those areas" and because "Amir of Afghanistan would not be pleased if his interpretation was over-ruled":

*"We telegraphed on the 20th instant, in reply to Your Lordship's despatch, Secret, No.18, dated 17th July, that we deprecate any modification whatsoever of the Seistan award finally accepted both by Persia and Afghanistan, as being likely to bring about very serious complications; and that having in view the correspondence relative to the acceptance of the award by the Ameer of Cabul we could not make to His Highness any proposal for modification.*

2. "General Goldsmid's arbitral award expressly declares that "north of Seistan the southern limit of the Naizar should be the frontier towards Lash-Jowain." The language of the award and the map which was attached to it leave no doubt as to the exclusion of the Naizar from the portion of Seistan awarded to Persia. If thereby any Persian villages have suffered loss, it is owing entirely to the proceedings of the Persian Commissioner who left Seistan before the investigation was completed.

3. "We are of opinion that if the award be reopened in the interest of Persia, we shall be placed in a very false position towards the Ameer of Afghanistan, who accepted the decision with great reluctance, and is not likely to agree to any further concession to Persia however apparently insignificant." (1)

Prior to this aggression, Amir Alam Khan III, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan, was forced to take refuge, on 21st December 1872, in his newly built fort of Nasriyeh (or Nasir

(1) From B.H. Ellis and others of the Foreign Department of the Indian Government to the Marquis of Salisbury, Secretary for India, No. 56, dated Fort Williams 25th August 1874, FO 60/394, p. 209.

Abad). The coalition that forced him to retreat to his fortification was led by Ibrahim Khan Sanjarani of Chokhansur, who had previously joined the Amir of Afghanistan, taking with him territories belonging to Iran and under Iranian possession, and eight or nine of his villages on the western side of Hirmand's main branch remained in Iranian possession according to Goldsmid's award.<sup>(1)</sup> Other Baluchi chiefs in that coalition included, Ahmad Khan of Lash-Jowein, who had also aligned himself with the Afghans;<sup>(2)</sup> Kamal Khan of Bandan; Imam Khan of Rudbar. Malek Abbas Khan Keyani, another significant chief in Sistan, sent one of his sons to the Amir and the other to the rebels. Sharif Khan Nahruei also joined the coalition simply because every other Baluchi chief did, albeit he was related to Amir Alam Khan by marriage. The rebel chiefs furnished 500 men:

"On the 1st Mohurrum (about 10th February) a force was sent to Seistan with Abbas Khan Sartip, Herati, Ataoolla Tymore, and Baba Khan, Hazara, consisting of the Regiments of Turshiz and Damghan with two guns, 600 horse Tymori and Hazara, and 100 Shamkhalcis (mounted matchlock-men). By the end of Mohurrum the Governor was reduced to the last extremity, having been driven out of Huseinabad into the "ark" or citadel of Nasriya, leaving a gun in the hands of the insurgents. Forty or 50 men had been killed during the siege or blockade, and provisions had come to an end."<sup>(3)</sup>

The Amir's position was critical, even his son, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan who was put in charge of the governorship of Qaenat in the absence of his father, refused to send a relief force to his rescue for reasons explained in chapter II on the "Khozeimeh Amirdom of Qaenat and Sistan - section on Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Khozeimeh". The news of the despatch of relief forces from Mashhad softened the chiefs and as the

(1) From Captain the Hon'ble G.C. Napier, on Special duty in Persia, to C.U. Aitchison, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, No. 18, dated Tehran 1st March 1875, FO 60/394 , p. 1 of 220.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Extract of Captain Napier's report to the Government of India, No. 18, dated Tehran 1st March 1875, FO 60/394 , p. 2 of 220.

relief forces appeared near Sistan, the insurgents began to disperse. The action of the said chiefs who collectively owned considerable measures of agricultural lands and Neizar in Sistan, angered Naser ad-Din Shah Qajar to the extent that he ordered for all their lands in Sistan to be transferred into Khaleseh (public lands, owned by the crown) and to be leased back to whoever wanted to cultivate them.<sup>(1)</sup> These lands were re-distributed among the peasants at the time of Reza Shah Pahlavi in the 1930's.

Amir Alam Khan III was replaced in April 1872 by Samsam al-Molk (an outsider) as Governor of Sistan. This man was recalled in the winter of 1873-74 and was replaced by another outsider, Mohammad Jahan Khan, who did not last long in Sistan either and was recalled in December 1874 to be replaced by Amir Alam Khan III, this time for life.

During the rule of Samsam al-Molk, the Iranian Government appointed Haji Shah-Mohammad Khan to demarcate the Sistan boundary in conjunction with Afghan representatives who had also arrived at the frontier. These men were dismissed after a while by the Governor who argued that "the administrative and revenue arrangements for the partitioning of lands and demarcation were not completed".<sup>(2)</sup>

The Afghans efforts, in diverting water from Hirmand before reaching Sistan Proper, was so effectively felt in the three years after General Goldsmid's arbitration award that Captain Napier's report on the "(present) situation in Sistan in relation to late arbitration" could not overlook it. This report indicates:

"The swampy malarious basin, it is argued, has come to be the seat of the densest population since the destruction of the old cities and of the canals, by which the fine lands to the south of the basin and on the right bank were rendered unculturable.

(1) Mojtahed-Zadeh, Pirouz, "Bar Sistan va Hirmand Cheh Gozashteh Ast", Rahavard Quarterly No. 25, Vol. 1, Spring 1991, Los Angeles, p. 270.

(2) Captain Napier's report, op. cit., p. 3.

"This, I was informed, would, undoubtedly, be the result of an energetic resort to works of irrigation on the Afghan side, even if the whole country were under one rule; when, therefore, the Persians are aware that their people are in the main disaffected, as events continue to prove, they have good reason to fear a ruinous desertion of their lands.

"It is probable that some stipulation was made regarding a division of the water of the Helmund by the "arbitrator," but if so, it is never alluded to by the Persians. They perhaps feel, as they well may, the futility of any such conditions under circumstances precluding the possibility of a speedy settlement of disputes. The party naturally the stronger and with the strongest hold on the country, having entire command of the source of water supply, and it being practically impossible to refer a dispute for settlement to any third party, the weaker party has good reasons to fear that its interests will suffer. After discussing this question, and looking at it as far as possible from all points, the conclusion arrived at is that the Persians have certainly much reason to fear loss of population and consequently of revenue, but that whether they have any reason to complain is doubtful."<sup>(1)</sup>

Finally, reflecting on the public disappointment of the Iranians with the arbitration award of General Goldsmid regarding the Sistan boundary, Captain Napier states in his report:

*"Persian Opinions.*

"The Persians, and especially those who have local knowledge, appear to regard the arbitration as a device to rob them of the lands they have acquired and have an ancestral claim to, by taking advantage of the weakness and ignorance of the Shah and his Ministers, and this is in the interest not of the Afghans but of the Government that promoted the arbitration. Believing this, and seeing also more plainly the losses that may ultimately be suffered by the more complete occupation of the lands on the Afghan side of the Helmund, they are furnished with a motive for disregarding the award and delaying as long as possible to give effect to it, and are stimulated thereto by a hope that some change of fortune may in the meantime occur to improve their position. Every

(1) Captain Napier's report, op. cit., p. 5 of 222.

year that they can delay a settlement of the country and the occupation of the Afghan land is a direct gain, and also leaves room for changes that must be favorable. For, in the opinion of those Persians with whom I have conversed on the subject, their position in the country is so bad that if the arbitration award be strictly adhered to, their share of it will not be worth holding, and that matters being thus at the worst any change that time may produce must be to their advantage. Such opinions fully explain why the people are left in the dark regarding the boundary, and are led to believe that the matter is still unsettled, and that there is room for further changes.

*"Opinions of Seistan*

"The view taken by the Seistanis is very much the Persian view. They show that they believe, though they may not say so in so many words, that the arrangement was forced on the Persians by us for our own benefit, and that in awarding so much of the country to the Afghans we were simply gaining our own ends. They talk of the Afghan side of the boundary almost invariably as "mal i Inglis" (English possession) and of the people as "raiyat i Inglis."<sup>(1)</sup>

**SISTAN BOUNDARY DISPUTE RENEWED**

The most important friction between Iran and Afghanistan in Sistan occurred in 1896 when the main branch of Hirmand River changed its course in the delta region, from its most eastward old channel to Rud-e Parian, a more westerly branch (see figure 1). Though almost all recorded evidence speak of this change of course occurring in the said year, it appears that this change took place gradually, starting from 1893. Reporting this development to the British authorities of India in 1900, the British Consul for Sistan states:

"My visit along this eastern border was to see for myself the actual course of the Helmand river to the Naizar, as I had heard that, owing to the river having changed its course about seven years ago, there

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(1) Captain Napier's report, op. cit., p. 7.

existed some ambiguity about the clear definition of the border as laid down by Goldsmid."<sup>(1)</sup>

The border line ambiguity referred to in this report concerns claims made by the Afghans that since the river had changed its course, Goldsmid's arbitration award was rendered null and void, and their boundary followed the river in its new channel, consequently the Mian Kangi<sup>(2)</sup> district was no longer Iran's but belonged to them. British Consul at Sistan wrote in 1900 that: "the Afghans maintain that the old bed has become obliterated, and that, with its obliteration, the Goldsmid award becomes null and void. They claim the new bed runs along the rud-i-Pariun as far as the new Naizar. The Persians assert that the old bed can still be traced, and that, whatever geographical changes may have taken place in the locality, the Goldsmid award must still hold good."<sup>(3)</sup>

The Afghan Claim to Mian Kangi would benefit them tremendously as the district is a highly fertile land. This claim was in clear contradiction of Goldsmid's boundary delimitation award. His arbitral opinion of 19th August 1872, concerning the eastern boarders of Sistan asserts:

*"The main bed of the Helmand, therefore, below Kohak should be the eastern boundary of Persian Sistan."*

(see Appendix 1)

The Afghan claim could warrant some validity if the arbitration opinion spoke of the "main branch" or "main course" of the river being the boundary. The water changed its course but the actual river bed which was defined to be

(1) Confidential Diary of Major G. Chenevix-Trench, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul for Sistan, No. 6, Period 14th to 25th May 1900, FO/60 463, P. 140.

(2) Kang is an ancient Persian word for "island".

(3) Extract of clause 3 of despatch No. 172 from Major Benn, H.B., Majesty's Vice-Consul for Sistan to Lieutenant J.F. White, Consul General for Khorasan, dated 14th July 1902, FO 60/463, p. 209.

the boundary, could not have moved from where it was. As the changed course of the river rendered lands to the east of the new channel (Rud-e Parian) dry, the Iranians began constructing canals from Parian to the lands deprived of water in Mian Kangi. Writing on this undertaking, the British Consul for Sistan noted:

"Here I was much struck by the extraordinary quantity of grain being at the time reaped and the general richness of the soil. I found that the Persians were busy in making new canals from the right bank of the Parian or present bed of the Helmand, to water the lands which were now dry, and which were formerly watered from the left bank of the Helmand.

The Nahr-i-Surhang and Sartip were two large canals in progress, the Nahr-i-Surhang extending right up to Takht-i-Shah, the least rightful property of the Persians."(1)

Threats of an Afghan aggression west of the old bed of River Hirmand, for the occupation of Mian Kangi, was imminent. Amir Alam Khan III, the able and powerful Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan had died and was succeeded in 1891 by his elder son, Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Khozeimeh, as Governor of Sistan who had inherited his father's title "Heshmat al-Molk" as well as the governorship of Sistan. Amir Heshmat al-Molk II, unlike his father, was not a strong leader and this in itself was an invitation for Afghan aggression in Sistan.

Aware of this situation, and concerned about the situation in Afghanistan in the wake of Amir Shir Ali Khan's death in 1901, the Governor General of Khorasan decided to strengthen Iran's frontier with Afghanistan in Sistan. Information received by the British Consul of Sistan confirmed that a force of 4,000 infantry with some guns was being despatched to Sistan from Tehran because it was necessary, owing to the death of the Amir of Kabul, to have an adequate force under a strong man along the Sistan-Afghan boarder. The officer in charge of the force was said to be the Entekhab-al-Molk.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Extract of Confidential Diary of Major G. Henevix-Trench, op. cit., p. 3 of 141.

(2) Diary No. 25 of Major R.A.E. Benn, Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul for Sistan and Kain, for period 1st to 15th December 1901, FO 60/463, pp. 1 - 2 of 7.

The long awaited Afghan aggression in Mian Kangi district took place in 1902. The local Governor of Chokhansur (Afghanistan), Faqir-Mohammad Akhund-Zadeh, informed the British Vice-Consul for Sistan on the 7th of December 1901 that during his previous visit to Herat, he was told that it had been decided to redemarcate the Sistan boundary, and that the Afghan Commissioner was on his way to Sistan to be joined by the Iranian Commissioner.<sup>(1)</sup>

As it turned out, there had been no arrangement of the kind that was claimed by the said Akhund-Zadeh to have taken place with the Iranians. Less than six months later he sent a request to the Deputy Governor of Sistan, Amir Mohammad Reza Khan (eldest son of Amir Heshmat al-Molk II) to be allowed to visit Nosrat Abad (now Zabol) capital of Iranian Sistan, for the purposes of discussing boundary delimitation and that he would bring three regiments with him as escort.<sup>(2)</sup> This, the Deputy Governor of Sistan refused, and Yamin Nezam who had been appointed by Tehran as the Frontier-Keeper of Sistan, despatched parts of his troops to the Sistan frontier with Afghanistan, where they were joined by the local cavalry sent by the Deputy Governor.<sup>(3)</sup> This was done in anticipation of the suspected aggression against Sistan by the Afghans which was sensed by the Iranians to be imminent in the wake of Akhund-Zadeh's above-mentioned message to the Deputy Governor of Sistan. Faqir-Mohammad Akhund-Zadeh crossed the frontier with all his troops on 29th June 1902, pitching his camp close to Deh-e Dust Mohammad on the Iranian Territory and began a campaign of harassment on the inhabitants. He prevented Government officials from performing their administrative work on behalf of the Iranian Government, and destroyed Iran's Band-e Sistan dam which had

(1) Diary No. 25 of Major Benn, 1st to 15th December 1901, op. cit., p. 2.

(2) Confidential Diary No. 6 of Major R.A.E. Benn, Her Britannic Majesty's Vice Consul for Sistan, for Period 16th to 30th June 1902, FO 60/463, P. 1 of 205.

(3) Ibid.

existed long before the Goldsmid arbitration and was recognised by the arbitral opinion as being an Iranian possession. Previous to this, however, the Afghans had made two attempts to provoke the Iranian authorities to take action.

During the first week in April it was reported that the Akhund-Zadeh had arrested, near Jallalabad in Iranian territory, an Iranian subject who was collecting grazing-tax. This report seems to have been exaggerated, and it would appear that the Akhundzada - claiming the new Hirmand bed as his boundary - merely protested against the Iranians collecting taxes at Jallalabad.

On 15th April, at a time when there was a great scarcity of water in the Hirmund, reports reached the British Consul that the Afghans had partially destroyed the Sistan Band at Kuhak, so as to allow of a good flow of water reaching a point lower down stream, called Chah Gol, where they had made a dam to conduct the water into Afghan territory. This dam had the effect of temporarily cutting off the Mian Kangi district from water, or at any rate of seriously reducing its supply.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Afghans began constructing two dams" one in a place south of Malek and the other down stream near Deh-e Dust Mohammad, thus diverting the whole of the Hirmand water to the Afghan side and thereby ruining Iranian villages,<sup>(2)</sup> while the Iranian officials: the Deputy Governor, the Yamin-e Nezam and the Kargozar retired in indecision and while the British officials began referring to Mian Kangi as the "disputed frontier district", the Russian Consul for Sistan became agitated by the situation and began displaying objections to the Afghan aggression and Iranian local officials'

(1) Confidential Diary of Sistan, No. 172, for 14th July 1902, FO 60/463, p. 2.

(2) From His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India to His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan, dated Simla 31st July 1902, FO 60/659.

inactivity. The confidential dairy of the British Consul for Sistan, dated 14th of July 1902 states:

*"During M. Molitor's absence on the frontier, the Russian Consul had written letters to the Deputy Governor and the Yamin-i-Nizam. He asked the former for an official explanation of his action in allowing an armed force belonging to a foreign power to enter Seistan.*

*The Deputy Governor (as he subsequently complained to me) was much annoyed at this "piece of interference", and in a short but polite reply told the Russian Consul that the matter only concerned the Persian Government. The above was afterwards corroborated by M. Miller's Mirza who told my Head Clerk."(2)*

(For more details on Anglo-Russian rivalries in Sistan and Qaenat, see chapter on Khozeimeh Amirdom's Foreign Relations).

The two local authorities of Iran and Afghanistan (Yamin-e Nezam and Akhund-Zadeh) eventually agreed to meet and discuss the differences. This meeting took place on 10th July 1902 and was decided, according to the confidential diary of the British Consul for Sistan:

- "(1) That as the maps in possession of the Persian and Afghan representatives do not appear to agree, and that as no definite decision regarding the boundary can, therefore, be arrived at for the present, the matter should be referred for orders to Tehran and Kabul, respectively.*
- "(2) That pending the receipt of orders from their Governments, both parties should retire from the frontier.*

*"The Akhundzada, though he dismissed his troops, was at first inclined to remain at Deh Dost Muhammad with a small escort, there to await his orders. He is now said to have retired to his own residence at Kila-i-Kang, and the Yamin-i-Nizam and Sardar Purdil Khan have now returned with all their troops to Seistan."(2)*

(1) Extract of Clause 12 of Confidential Diary of Sistan, No. 172, for 14th July 1902, FO 60/463, p.3 of 210.

(2) Ibid, p. 5 of 211.

Thus, the problem was settled temporarily on the 1st of August 1902. The British Charge d'Affairs at Tehran informed the Foreign Office that the Iranians had complained to him of the occupation of Iranian territory in Sistan by Akhund-Zadeh, and requested them to prevent further encroachments pending a settlement of the boundary line.<sup>(1)</sup>

Reports to the Indian Government by the Vice-Consul for Sistan seems to have moved the Government of India to formulate a policy that would make the Iranians refrain from military action against the aggressors and to refer the dispute to the British Indian authorities for settlement. This was mainly owing to the facts stated in the following document:

"*MY Secret telegram of 17th July.*

Benn telegraphed on 7th July that Molitor<sup>(2)</sup> is said to have demanded reinforcements urgently, and that Birjand Governor is sending troops. In later telegram, dated 9th, Benn reports that Molitor, who returned on 6th informed him that he acts[ed] as Customs officer only, that his meeting Miller<sup>(3)</sup> at Governor's house was accidental, and that hostile influences, meaning Miller's were at work to complicate situation and provoke disturbance. Deputy-Governor, who had received another letter from Miller, complained of latter's interference to Benn, who has information that Miller is in communication both with Afghan Governor and Yamini Nizam, and is inciting both. Benn is in communication Afghan, has induced Seistan Governor to issue orders to avoid conflict, and has reminded latter of provisions of Article VI of Treaty of 1857. I think that Persian Government should also be reminded of their obligation under this Article to refer dispute to British Government, and, if you agree, I will address Ameer in similar sense; meanwhile, I again urge strong protest against Russian Consul's intrigue [?] in a matter which solely concerns Persian, Afghan and British Governments."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) From Her Britannic Majesty's Charge de Affairs to Foreign Secretary Simla, No. 25, dated 1st August 1902, FO 60/463 .

(2) Molitor was an Iranian Customs Officer from the Belgic team led by Monsur Nouz.

(3) Miller was the Russian Consul for Sistan.

(4) Telegram from the Government of India to Lord George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, dated July 21, 1902, FO 60/463 , p.118.

The Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, in the meantime, complained to the Russian Government of the interference by the Russian Consul for Sistan in the Sistan frontier dispute. The Russians replied that they could not be indifferent in such matters. The Russian Ambassador informed the British: "that the Russian Government had learned that an Afghan Chief (the Akhund-Zadeh) had collected a considerable body of troops and was threatening the Persian frontier in the neighbourhood of Nasratabad. The Russian Government could not regard the prospect of such an incursion with indifference, and that they hoped that the British Government would do their best to prevent a breach of the peace."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Iranian Foreign Ministry informed the British Legation at Tehran on 29th July 1902 that Akhund-Zadeh had resumed encroaching on Iranian territory by taking possession of several other villages and hamlets on Iranian soil.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Viceroy of India, at length, wrote to the new Amir of Afghanistan, Amir Habibollah Khan, (who had been invested with a Knighthood and the title of "Sir" by the British Government) reminding him that a settlement of the frontier dispute with Iran was not the responsibility of his Government's provincial representatives, but those of the British Government of India. The Viceroy pointed out:

*"I am not prepared at this moment, and on the information in my possession, to advise Your Highness precisely how the frontier line should be drawn: this is a question which can only be decided after very careful enquiry on the spot. I would remind Your Highness, however, that by the arrangement with your late father, the control of the foreign relations of Afghanistan rests with the British Government, and I would accordingly propose that, as in 1872, a British officer should be appointed as arbitrator to settle the dispute. I regard this measure as imperative in the interests of peace and, on hearing that Your*

(1) Extract of letter from the Marquis of Lansdowne to Sir C. Scott, No. 208, dated Foreign Office, July 27, 1902, FO 60/463, P. 84.

(2) From Moshir ad-Doleh, Iranian Foreign Minister, to Mr. des Graz of British Legation at Tehran, dated July 29, 1902, FO 60/659.

*Highness approves of this suggestion, I will take steps to secure the consent of the Persian Government, and will arrange for the deputation of a competent officer in the early autumn."(1)*

The Iranian authorities complained again on August 2, 1902, to the British Minister at Tehran that the Afghans had made fresh encroachments in Sistan and established customs and posts and built houses and dwellings on Iranian soil.<sup>(2)</sup> A further complaint from the Iranian Foreign Minister, made on August 14, 1902, confirmed that the Akhund-Zadeh had returned after the negotiations with Yamin-e Nezam, but on returning from the Iranian territories, the Afghans stopped up all mouths of the water courses and runlets, diverted the water of the Hirmand, destroyed the dam by which water came to Sistan, and went off.<sup>(3)</sup> The substance of this complaint was subsequently confirmed to the British Minister at Tehran who wrote to the British Foreign Secretary on August 15, 1902 that: "it was true that he had heard that the Afghans had according to his information withdrawn but not before having achieved the object they had in view by destroying dams in Iranian Territory and thus depriving part of Iranian Seistan of water. These fresh acts of aggression had been reported to him on dates which he made out to be somewhat more recent than July 14 and he was receiving constant complaints and appeals for redress from the inhabitants of those villages which had been entirely deprived of their water supply by the Afghans' action in breaking down the dams and diverting the stream to their own territory."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Extract of letter from H.E. the Viceroy of India to H.H. Amir Sir Habibollah Khan of Afghanistan, dated Simla 31st of July 1902, FO 60/659.

(2) From Moshir ad-Doleh to Mr. des Graz, August 2, 1902, FO60/659.

(3) From Moshir ad-Doleh to Mr. des Graz, August 14, 1902, FO60/659.

(4) Extract of letter from H.B. Majesty's Minister at Tehran to the Marques of Lansdowne, No. 117, dated August 15, 1902, FO 60/569, p.2.

But what the Iranian Foreign Minister did not know was that the damage inflicted by the Afghans to the people and lands of Sistan was far greater than it was first thought. Replying to a despatch by the British Foreign Secretary in assessing the damages, the British Legation at Tehran informed him:

*"Benn reports, in urgent communication received by post to-day, copy of which has been telegraphed to Government of India, that Persian sowars who were sent by Seistan authorities to report on condition of Helmand have brought back story that Afghans have constructed Bunds at ten or twelve different places in Afghan territory, which divert water to irrigate lands hitherto uncultivated, and that Akhandzadeh has opened deep channel just above Seistan Bund, thus drawing off what little water that remains. There is water famine in Seistan caused in part by prolonged drought of Bund."* (1)

Mr Benn, Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul for Sistan, subsequently informed the Foreign Secretary of the Indian Government of a different story, that shortage of water in Sistan was because of Hirmand being "particularly dry" that year. (2) Finally, the Government of India proposed, in a letter to the British Foreign Secretary, in late September 1902, that Colonel McMahon should be appointed as the new arbitrator for Sistan's "disputed" frontiers, that he should start in November, accompanied not only by experts in matters of boundary delimitation, but also by "two companies of infantry and a troop of cavalry". (3)

Replying to the Viceroy of India's letter, the Amir of Afghanistan, firstly denied the whole incident and then claimed that the dispute was local and insignificant. He claimed that what was interfered with was recognised by

(1) From des Graz to the Marques of Lansdowne, No. 52, 28th August 1902, FO 60/569 .

(2) From Major Benn to Foreign Secretary India, 1st Sep. 1902, FO 60/659 .

(3) From Government of India to Lord Hamilton No. 1 dated Sept. 30, 1902 of Persia and Arabia  
Confidential FO 60/659

General Goldsmid's arbitral map which, according to him, was a curved line from Kuh-e Siah to the end of the Irano-Afghanistan frontier, clearly implying that the boundary was from the beginning on the new channel. Having said all this, he finally stated:

"As to what Your Excellency writes stating that the Persian Government has represented to His Majesty the King of England's Government that, besides occupying land, which was until recently indisputably Persian, my subjects have destroyed the Persian dam of Band-i-Seistan near Kuhak, - my dear friend, as clearly the complaints of the Persian Government are against the officials of Chakhansur, who are subjects of the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, and are friends and not subjects of the Government of His Majesty the King of England, I have written a reply above to the effect that the Hakim of Chakhansur does not interfere with the land which is on the other side, to the west of the boundary line, as marked in the map of General Goldsmid, although owing to the flood and change of course of the stream, it may have come to be placed on this side of the Helmand and close to the western side of the boundary line."(1)

The British Vice-Consul for Sistan, in the meantime, once again corrected his report on the extent of damages caused in Sistan by the Afghans. In his despatch of October 15, 1902, Major Benn informed the Indian Government:

"My report No. 298, dated 30th September, shows clearly how the Shahgul bund and channel are able successfully to prevent any of the Helmand water from reaching the Miankangi district. I have also pointed out that in normal years the Helmand water easily passes the Shahgul bund and fills the Pariun river bed, which is the main channel of supply for the Miankangi district. At the present moment, although Nasratabad and its adjacent villages, as also the villages along the Rud-i-Seistan, are supplied with water, the Miankangi district is absolutely without any, owing to the existence of the Shahgul bund and channel. It is stated here that what the Afghans are striving for is to destroy the Seistan bund at Kohak and to construct a more permanent dam at Shahgul. By this means they hope that the Helmund water would

(1) Extract of letter from H.H. Amir Sir Habibollah Khan to H.E. the Viceroy of India, No. 12 dated 15 October 1902, FO 60/659, P. 75.

again be permanently diverted into its old bed. The only argument the Afghans use in defence of their present action is that, with the shifting of the Helmand into its new bed, the Miankangi district has become their property, and they, therefore, deny the Persians' right to cultivate it. These arguments they are able to support by a show of force, which is certainly superior in quality to anything the Seistanis can at present produce."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Government of India, apparently loosing patience with the Afghan Amir's evident lack of concern about the situation in Sistan, wrote on October 21, 1902, to the British Government stating that Akhund-Zadeh had flatly refused to allow water to pass through the Shahgol dam - the Afghans built on the Hirmand, diverting all its water to Afghan territory - to Mian Kangi and the Iranians threatened reprisals. The Iranian Government had stated that they felt the situation to be critical and likely to result in the advancement of Iranian troops and that the letter promised by the Amir of Afghanistan had not been received. They, therefore, asked the Foreign Office to address strong remonstrance to the Amir.<sup>(2)</sup>

A new turn, for the worst, was the undertaking by the Afghans to construct a large canal from the Hirmand River at Kushk, before the start of Sistan - Afghan boundary, diverting the whole of the river into Afghan territory before reaching the Iranian boarder. Major Benn, British Vice Consul for Sistan, indicated in his confidential diary of 31st October 1902:

"The Afghans, it is said, cherish the hope that their large canal from Kushk above the Seistan Bund through Khaogah to Jaroki will divert the course of the Helmund and deprive Seistan of its water supply. But from information now received from a secret agent sent to inspect the canal a somewhat different aspect has been thrown on the case. It would appear that only half the work is now completed and that 20 to 30

(1) Clause 3 of despatch from Major Benn to the Secretary to the Indian Government, No. 339, dated 15 Oct. 1902, FO 60/659 .

(2) From the Government of India to Lord G. Hamilton, No. 1, dated 21st October 1902, FO 60/659 .

days will be required to finish it. Also that owing to disputes existing between the Akhundzada of Chikansur and the Governor of Kilai Fath there is a probability of the canal not being finished at all."<sup>(1)</sup>

This undertaking was also in contradiction with the terms of Goldsmid's arbitral opinion which makes it clear that "no works are to be carried on either side calculated to interfere with the requisite supply of water for irrigation on both banks of the Helmand" (see Appendix I).

Major Benn visited the site of this canal and prepared a sketch which is reproduced here (see figure II). He also reported on October 29, 1902 that the Yamin-e Nezam told him that the Iranians would not take Akhund-Zadeh's grand canal too seriously, and that it was more of a psychological warfare against the Sistanis.<sup>(2)</sup>

Faquir-Mohammad Akhund-Zadeh continued harassment of Sistan even when the British Arbitration Commission, led by Major McMahon, was preparing to move to Sistan. He threatened to destroy what remained of the Sistan dam and persistently claimed Mian Kangi to be his possession. As a result, the Viceroy of India wrote to the Amir of Afghanistan on November 24, 1902 explaining in full detail the situation, his claims and Goldsmid's award, remarking:

*"It is not the case therefore, as stated by Your Highness, that by Colonel Goldsmid's decision the whole of the river below the Kohak bund and the Kohak bund were left to Afghanistan or that Your Highness' subjects are at liberty to do what they please with the water below Kohak. Further, it is clear from the award of Colonel Goldsmid and from correspondence that passed between Atta Muhammad Khan, Khakwani, British Agent at Kabul, under instructions*

(1) Extract of Confidential Diary No. 14 of Major Benn, British Vice-Consul for Sistan, 16th to 31st October 1902, FO 60/463, p. 2.

(2) From Major Benn to the Government of India, No. 366, dated 29th October 1902, FO 60/659.

from the British Government, and Saiyid Nur Muhammad Shah, the Sadr Azam, in February 1874, in consequence of enquiries made by the latter as to the meaning of this portion of the award, that the Persians have the same right to make channels on their side of the river below Kohak as the Afghans have to make them on theirs, and that channels should not be constructed by either party which will interfere with the water in the old ones. These then are the facts. Your Highness and your officials are apparently under a misapprehension as to the true position of the boundary fixed by Colonel Goldsmid."<sup>(1)</sup>

Interestingly enough, as the arbitration commission was about to leave for Sistan, both Iran and Afghanistan expressed unwillingness for the matter to be referred to British arbitration, both claiming that with the rise in Hirmand water the dispute would settle itself.

When the British Minister at Tehran applied pressure on the Iranian Prime Minister for the reasons of Iranian reluctance regarding British arbitration of the Sistan dispute, the Prime Minister, according to the British Minister at Tehran, replied that it was because the Russians had suggested to the Shah that their representative should also be involved in the arbitration and as the Shah responded favourably to this demand it would be difficult to go ahead with the proposed arbitration without them being involved.<sup>(2)</sup>

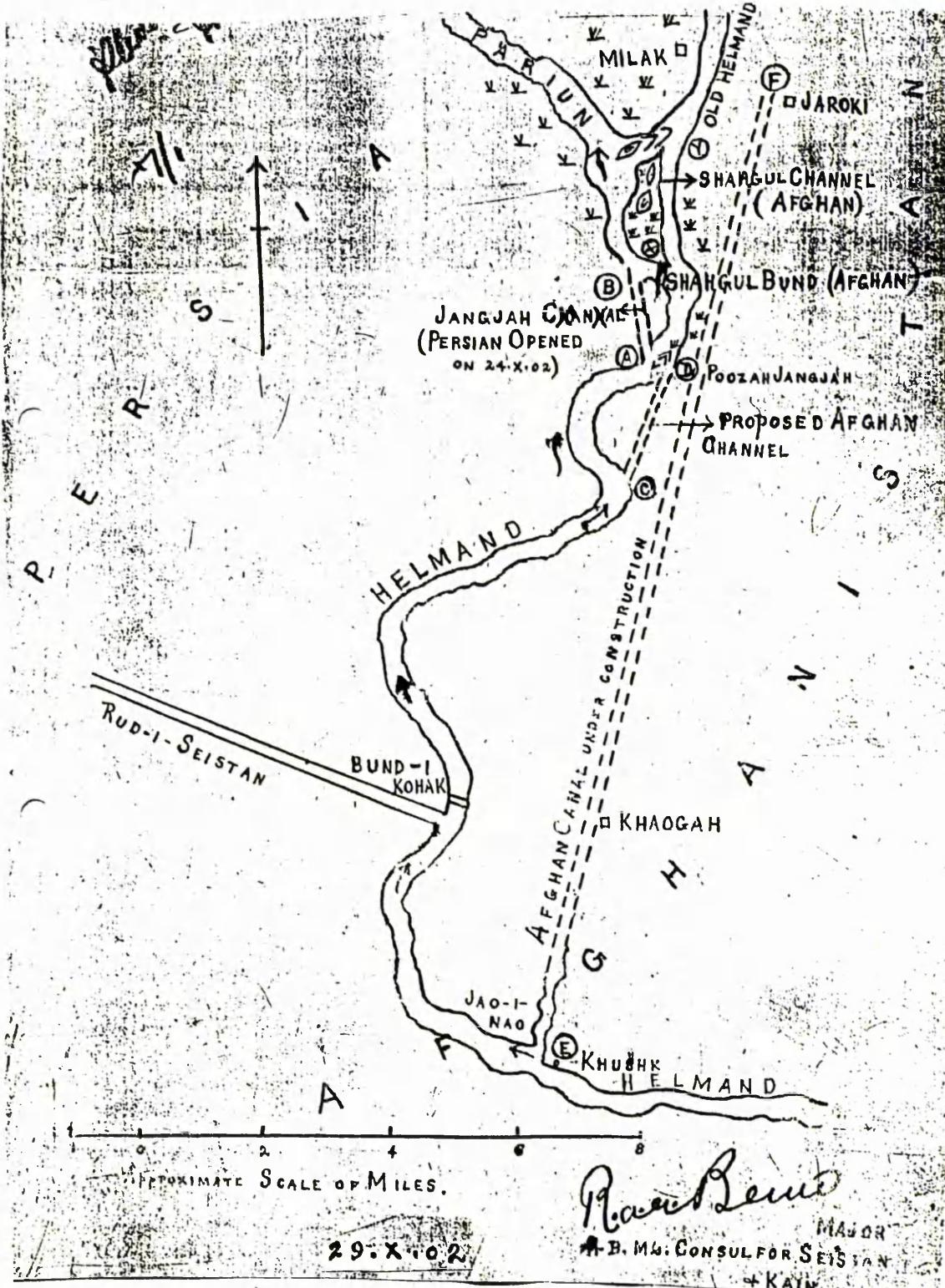
Even if this was the case, it would not explain the reluctance displayed by the Afghans to British arbitration. It appears, however, that the actual reason for both parties' reluctance to accept the proposed British arbitration was because of their dissatisfaction of General Goldsmid's arbitration award of 1872.

(1) From H.E. the Viceroy and Governor General of India to H.H. Amir Sir Habibollah Khan G.C.M.G. of Afghanistan, No. 51. p.o., dated Viceroy's Camp the 24th November 1902, FO 60/659, p. 100.

(2) From Hardinge of British Legation at Tehran to the Marques of Lansdowne Confidential No. 180, dated Tehran December 29, 1902, FO 60/659.

FIGURE II

Sketch of Afghan Grand Canal, Prepared by Major Benn  
 (Enclosure in Mr Benn's despatch No. 366,  
 dated Sistan 29th October 1902, to the Government of India  
 FO 60/659 )



The new arbitration of Sistan, however, went ahead in 1903 and concluded its task in 1904, and final arbitral awards were made in 1905 (See next chapter).

APPENDIX I

General Summary and Arbitral Opinion; dated Tehran,  
 the 19th August 1872. (+)

## Preamble

The Arbitral opinion which I am required to deliver has been formed after perusal of the several histories of Sistan of more general note; after examination of much oral and written evidence; and after a stay of forty-one days within the localities under dispute. Naturally the more immediate argument with which I have to deal is contained in the statement authoritatively given in by the Persian Government (through the Foreign Office, or Mirza Melkam Khan), and Afghan Commissioners. These have been carefully considered together with the documentary evidence with which they are supported.

I now proceed to summarise my views on the whole Sistan question and to carry out the instructions with which I have been honoured.

## Summary

- I Sistan was undoubtedly in ancient times part of Persia, and it appears to have been so especially under the Safavian Kings: but under Ahmad Shah it formed part of the Durani Empire. Further it had not been recovered to Persia until at a very recent date; and that only partially, and under circumstances the nature of which materially affect the present enquiry.
- II Ancient associations, together with the religion, language, and perhaps habits of the people of Sistan Proper, render the annexation of the tract to Persia by no means a strange or unnatural measure. But Persia has not valid claim to possess it on abstract right, whether the country be taken from Afghanistan, or whether it be simply deprived of independence. The period referred to for former connection is too remote. A century of disconnection cannot fail to be a bar to validity.
- III The possession of the Afghans for the second half-century may have been more nominal than real, and more spasmodic than sustained. It may have been asserted by raids and invasions, or mere temporary tenure: but it has nevertheless a certain number of facts in support; and these are most material in an enquiry of this nature. General principles and theories are always important, but they cannot produce facts:

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(+) Goldsmid, Major-General Sir Frederick, "Eastern Persia" Vol. I, London 1876, pp. 410 - 411 -  
 412 - 413 = 414.

whereas facts have a more practical tendency - for they support and establish general principles and theories. Neither ancient associations nor national sympathy are strong enough to nullify the force of circumstances, and circumstances show that Persia has exercised no interference in the internal administration of Sistan from the days of Nadir Shah until a very recent date.

- IV Geographically, Sistan is clearly part of Afghanistan, and the intrusion of Kain into the province is prejudicial to the delineation of a good natural frontier.

It has been commonly considered part of Herat and Lash Juwain; though its dependence on the Helmand for irrigation may cause it to be included by some in the general valley of that river. The Neh Bandan Hills manifestly separate Sistan from Persia. I cannot but believe such would have been found to be the status had an illustrative map accompanied the sixth article of the Paris treaty.

- V But while, in my opinion, Afghanistan has the advantage in claims on the score of an intermediate tenure, superseding that of Nadir Shah or the Safavian Kings, it cannot be denied that from year to year she has been relaxing her hold over Sistan; and this has been evinced in a marked manner since the death of the Wazir Yar Muhammad. It would be absurd to contend that the second half-century of Afghan connection with the province has been a period of continuous possession. That Sistan has now fallen into the hands of independence and the personal action of its ruler. It was for a time at least out of the hands of Afghanistan. I do not admit that the manner in which Sistan was occupied by Persian troops corresponds with an appeal to arms such as contemplated by Lord Russell's letter quoted - There was no fair fighting at all. Nor can it be admitted that allegiance was obtained by the single means of military movements or open procedure of any kind. On the other hand, I cannot see that the Afghans took any measures to counteract the proceedings of Persia when treating with Ali Khan, Taj Muhammad, or other Sistan chiefs.

- VI As the Sistan of the present day is not the separate principality of the past, and it is essential to a due appreciation of claims, that the parts in possession of either side should be intelligibly defined, I revert to a territorial division which has appeared to me convenient and approximate. By this arrangement the rich tract of country, which, the Hamun on three of its sides and the Helmand on the fourth, cause to resemble an island, is designated 'Sistan Proper,' whereas the district of Chakhansur and lands of the Helmand above the Bank, and Sistan desert, are known as 'Outer Sistan.'

The first may be considered in absolute possession of Persia and has a comparatively large and mixed population.

The second is either without population or inhabited chiefly by Baluchis some of whom acknowledge Persian, Some Afghan sovereignty. The professions of Kamal Khan and Imam Khan do not to my mind prove a possession to Persia, similar to that of Sistan Proper. Chakhansur on the right bank of the Helmand is under the Afghans. But the fort of Nad Ali on the same bank has been lately taken by the Persians.

- VII I have to consider ancient right and present possession, and report briefly my opinion on both these head: 1st. That Sistan was incorporated in the Persia of ancient days: but the Afghanistan of Ahmad Shah, which also comprised Sistan, had not then come into existence; and it is impossible to set aside the fact that this kingdom did exist, any more than that Ahmad Shah was an independent monarch. 2nd. That the possession of Sistan obtained in recent days by Persia cannot affect the question of right as regards Afghanistan. If admitted at all under the circumstances, it can only be so subject to certain restrictions, and with reference to the particular people brought under control.

#### Arbitral Opinion

Weighing therefore the merits of the case on either side as gather from evidence of many kinds, and with especial regard to the great advantages of a clearly defined frontier, I submit an opinion that the tract which I have called 'Sistan Proper' should be hereafter included by a special boundary line within the limits of Persia, to be restored to independence under Persian protection, or governed by duly appointed governors. This opinion is accompanied by an expression of sincere and earnest hope that the Persian rule will prove beneficial to a people whose nominal state has been from time immemorable one of terror, suspense, and suffering.

But I am thoroughly convinced that, by all rules of justice and equity, if Persia be allowed to hold possession of a country which has fallen to her control under such circumstances as these detailed, her possession should be circumscribed to the limits of her actual possession in Sistan Proper, as far as consistent with geographical and political requirements. She should not possess land on the right bank of the Helmand.

If in a question of ancient right and present possession, a military occupation of six or seven years and the previously action of a local chief be suffered to outweigh rights and associations extending more or less over a whole country, and Arbitration award the most coveted, populous, and richer part of the Sistan province, it is manifestly fair that some compensating benefit should accrue to the losing side.

It appears therefore beyond doubt indispensable that Nad Ali should be evacuated by Persian garrisons, and both banks of the Helmand above the Kohak Band be given up to Afghanistan. And this arrangement becomes doubly just and proper when the character of the inhabitants along the banks of the river is compared with that of the Sistanis of Sekuha, Deshtak, and Sistan Proper.

The main bed of the Helmand therefore below Kohak should be the eastern boundary of Persian Sistan, and the line of frontier from Kohak to the hills south of the Sistan desert should be so drawn as to include within the Afghan limits all cultivation on the banks of the river from the Bank upwards.

The Malik Siah Koh on the chain of hills separating the Sistan from the Karman desert, appears a fitting point.

North of Sistan the southern limit of the Naizar should be the frontier towards Lash Juwain. Persia should not cross the Hamun in that direction. A line drawn from the Naizar to the "Kuh Siah" (black hill) near Bandan, would clearly define her possessions.

It is moreover to be well understood that no works are to be carried out on either side calculated to interfere with the requisite supply of water for irrigation on the banks of the Helmand.

F J GOLDSMID, Major-General,  
On Special Mission

## CHAPTER VII

### EVOLUTION OF SISTAN BOUNDARY = PART II: McMAHON'S BOUNDARY ARBITRATION OF SISTAN (1903-1905)

#### INTRODUCTION

Following General Goldsmid's Sistan boundary arbitration of 1872, further disputes occurred between Iran and Afghanistan on the Sistan section of their mutual boundaries. Recurrence of disputes between the two countries was caused by changes of course of the River Hirmand in the Sistan delta region which began by an unusually large flood in 1884 and was completed by another unusually large flood in 1896. While both Iran and Afghanistan were unhappy about Goldsmid's arbitral award of their mutual boundary of 1872, the new alteration in the course of the river came as an addition to the old disputes.

In 1896 the Hirmand burst into a new main channel which was subsequently named Rud-e Parian. The Afghans claimed that the boundary should also follow the changed main course of the river, thus leaving the district of Mian Kangi to the Afghan side of the frontier. The Iranians rejected this claim and maintained that the boundary should remain along the old branch of the river "Nad Ali channel" where it was defined by General Goldsmid, and that the change of the course of the river should not be considered as cause for changing the boundary. The Afghans occupied lands to the east of the new channel of Parian and to the west of the old channel of Nad Ali which are known as Mian Kangi (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the Afghans constructed new dams and canals, diverting much of the water from the Hirmand to their territories.

The Iranians complained to the British Minister at Tehran in July 1902 against Afghan encroachments in Sistan and requested the British Government's intervention to prevent further Afghan encroachments in the Iranian territories.<sup>(1)</sup> The Indian Government undertook to remind the Iranians not to resort to force in the disputed frontier and proposed to remind the Iranians "of their obligation under this Article<sup>(2)</sup> to refer the dispute to the British Government".<sup>(3)</sup>

The Viceroy of India wrote to the Amir of Afghanistan asking him also to refer the dispute to the British Government for arbitration.<sup>(4)</sup> In another letter in September 1902 to the British Foreign Secretary, the Government of India proposed that Major Henry McMahon should be appointed as the arbitrator of the disputed Sistan frontiers,<sup>(5)</sup> but both Iran and Afghanistan expressed to the British their unwillingness to refer the frontier dispute to the arbitration of British officers which was ignored and McMahon's arbitration went ahead.

#### THE RUSSIAN DIMENSION

The Iranians intimated to the British Minister at Tehran that the attitude of Russia was the real reason for Iran's desire

(1) From H.B. Majesty's Charge d'Affairs at Tehran to Foreign Secretary of India, No. 25, dated 1st August 1902, FO 60/463 -

(2) Article VI of 1857 Anglo-Iranian Peace Treaty of Paris.

(3) Telegram from Government of India to Lord George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, dated July 21, 1902, FO 60/463, p.118.

(4) From His Excellency the Viceroy of India to His Highness Amir Sir Habibollah Khan of Afghanistan, dated Simla 31st July 1902, FO 60/659 -

(5) From Government of India to Lord G. Hamilton, No. 1, dated September 30, 1902, of Persia and Arabia Confidential, FO 60/659 .

to back out of arbitration. Writing to the Marquess of Lansdowne, Her Majesty's Foreign Secretary, the British Minister at Tehran informed him that he had been told by the Iranian Prime Minister that the Russian Minister had asked the Shah to allow a Russian Delegate to accompany the Iranian Commissioner and the Shah had not objected to the proposal. This the British could not accept<sup>(1)</sup> and the British Minister at Tehran told the Iranian Prime Minister what to say to the Russians:

"I said that his course was easy. Persian Government could at most only promise Russia to ask us if we objected to her, and if we did, as I felt certain would be the case, inform her of my reply and of Persia's treaty obligations"<sup>(2)</sup>.

The idea of Russian involvement in Sistan arbitration was opposed to by the British, who went as far as threatening the Iranians with Afghans interference with the water supply in Sistan if the Iranians did not submit to McMahon's arbitration without their commissioner being accompanied by a Russian representative. In a letter to the Government of India, the British Secretary of State for India indicated:

"We do not think that in any form Russian intervention can be allowed, and we are of opinion that, if in spite of remonstrance addressed by us to the Shah, the Persian Commissioner is accompanied by a Russian delegate, McMahon should decline to exercise his arbitral functions, and should follow Hardinge's suggestion, that he should remain on the Afghan side of the frontier and advise the Afghans.

By adopting this course he will be able to supply all information that is necessary, and the failure of the Persian Government to respect its treaty obligations will be responsible for any inconvenience that may result to Persian cultivators from the Afghans interfering with the water supply."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) From Lord G. Hamilton to Government of India communicated by India Office, dated December 31, 1902, FO 60/711 .

(2) Extract of Telegram No. 83, from Sir A. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne, dated Tehran December 29, 1902, FO 60/711 -

(3) Extract from despatch from Secretary of State (for India) to Viceroy, dated 31st December 1902, FO 60/711 .

This development was just another manifestation of fierce Anglo-Russian rivalries in Iran, substantially increased by the turn of the twentieth century. The Russians viewed Sistan as the real key to India and, thus, attached greater strategic importance to the position of Sistan vis-a-vis India. Their Consul for Sistan Mr Miller, became accordingly highly active in the region. An article appearing in the Russian paper, 'Novoe Vremya' on January 2nd, 1903, described the Russian view in clear terms:

*"Seistan, by its geographical position and intrinsic nature, deserves, rather than Herat, the name of the "key to India". Seistan, that flank position on the road to India which it is impossible to turn. Were it in our hands the advance to India would be made far easier. In English hands, all our operations are rendered considerably more difficult. Lord Curzon has a keen appreciation of the extreme importance of Seistan, and he is therefore striving to place it as quickly as possible under British influence. The railway from Quetta to Nushki...i.e.. towards Seistan, is already under construction. But the Indian Viceroy is not satisfied with this somewhat slow progress towards the object in view. He wishes to accelerate matters.*

*"What would Lord Curzon say if we despatched a mission, with a becoming escort, to Candahar? We have as much right to be disquieted by disputes between the Afghans and neighbouring tribes on the East of Afghanistan, as the English have by such disputes on the West of that country."(1)*

The author of this article felt so badly about British arbitration in Sistan without Russia being involved that he proposed active undertakings to remedy the situation. The article states:

*"What role will Major McMahon's mission play in Seistan? That of the representative of Afghan interests, or of a Court of arbitration? In any case we cannot sit as indifferent spectators of such a mission in Seistan. If the English are protecting*

(1) Extract of the translation of an article appeared in the Russian paper "Novoe Vremya", dated January 2nd 1903, enclosure of despatch No. 3 of British Embassy at St. Petersburg to the Marquess of Lansdowne, same date, FO 60/711, p. 4.

Afghan interests, we must protect those of Persia. If the English desire to pose as mediators we ask, who requested their mediation? The disinterestedness of England in all affairs that concern her interests is sufficiently well-known. They will so delimitate the Perso-Afghan possessions, in dividing the waters of the Helmund between the disputants, that in the end the whole of the southern course of the river will be in their own hands.

"It may be objected that we have a Consul in Seistan and a very active one, to protect our interests. To this we can only answer that the English also have a Consul in Seistan and that if they despatch for the 'peaceful' settlement of a misunderstanding a force of three squad companies of troops, it is evident that a Consul cannot be equal to such a situation. In the East it is impossible to keep up prestige with notes and memoranda and the other weapons of diplomatic chanceries, their force must be opposed to force, and not in the abstract but in grim reality."(1)

The Russian Minister at Tehran, in the meantime, informed the Iranian Prime Minister on 2nd January 1903 that the Russian delegate should be involved in the arbitration and Russia should be party to any settlement in Sistan.(2) The Prime Minister complained, in a conversation with the British representative, that "no political step could be taken by him without exposing himself to suspicious inquiries and interference on the part of either Russia or England, and that these two great powers, instead of discussing their rivalries together, always made Persia the victim of their mutual jealousies".(3)

The size and strength of the armed escort accompanying Major McMahon was also a major cause of friction. The Kargozar of Sistan had informed the Iranian Government that, on the

(1) Extract of translation of article, op. cit., pp. 3 - 4.

(2) Confidential despatch of Sir Arthur H. Hardinge, British Minister at Tehran, to the Marquess of Lansdowne, No. 5, section 9, Persia and Arabia, dated January 26, 1903, FO 60/711 .

(3) Ibid., p. 1.

authority of the Indian press, Major McMahon was bringing with him to the frontier of Sistan an armed force of 800 men and artillery. The Iranian Foreign Minister wrote to the British Minister at Tehran in December 1902 protesting that McMahon's mission did not necessitate the presence of so large an armed body or of guns.<sup>(1)</sup> To this letter, the British Minister replied that: "Major McMahon's escort consists of a single company of foot soldier and a troop of Sowars, which, as he has to move through a wild part of Afghanistan, can scarcely be deemed an excessive guard for the protection of an important diplomatic Mission. It is scarcely conceivable that the presence of a small escort of about 150 men on their borders, such as has frequently been sent on previous occasions for the personal security and dignity of British Missions, can cause disquiet to the Persian authorities in Seistan; but should this really be the case, it can, I have little doubt, be arranged that a portion of the escort should remain in Afghan or British territory, or, if it has at any point to cross the Persian frontier either to camp or obtain supplies, that it should not penetrate more than a very short distance into Persian territory."<sup>(2)</sup>

This explanation seems to have convinced the Iranian Foreign Minister, but he, in reply to the British Minister at Tehran, reasserted Iran's desire for the abandonment of the proposed arbitration:

"Your Excellency in your note considers the rise of the water as temporary, and you think the removal of the differences depends on the appointment of the Commissioners. From what has been seen, there is not every year a rise and fall in the water, and it seldom occurs like last year. In view of this fact, the Persian Government does not consider the meeting of the Commissioners necessary, and I have no doubt that your Excellency will communicate the views of the

(1) From Moshir ad-Doleh to Sir A. Hardinge, dated 27th December 1902, repeated in Sir A. Hardinge's letter to Moshir ad-Doleh, dated 6th January 1903, inclosure 1, in No. 1, FO 60/711, p. 2.

(2) Extract of letter from Hardinge to Moshir ad-Doleh, dated January 6th, 1903, inclosure 1, in No. 1, FO 60/711, p. 2.

Persian authorities to your Government, in order that the departure of the Commissioners may be stopped for the present.

In spite of this, should the appointment of the Commissioners be insisted upon, it would be better that a Russian official should also attend the meeting which is to be held for the inquiry into the matter."(1)

This note clearly came as a disappointment to the British who were adamant on going ahead with the boundary arbitration in Sistan and to keeping the Russians out of it altogether. In his letter of 7th January 1903 to the Iranian Foreign Minister, the British Minister at Tehran informed the Iranians once again that the arbitration had to go ahead because his Government preferred to adhere to the procedure prescribed by the treaty of 1857 rather than trust to chance that the rise of the river might prevent, once and for all, a recurrence of the difficulties.<sup>(2)</sup> He further notified the Iranian Government that the British Government would not accede to the proposal of Russia being represented in the boundary arbitration.<sup>(3)</sup>

The British Government went a stage further by instructing Major McMahon to proceed with arbitration work whether the Iranians agree or disagree. In a despatch to the Viceroy of India, the British Foreign Office asserted:

"We are not prepared to abandon idea of arbitration or to cancel arrangements for McMahon's visit. He should proceed to frontier as originally intended and if he finds that owing to attitude of Persians he cannot obtain the information necessary for forming opinion as arbitrator he should report state of affairs with expression of his views for consideration of H.M. Govt. He should be careful not to recognise any right of intervention on the part of

(1) Extract of letter from Moshir ad-Doleh to Hardinge, dated 6th January 1903, inclosure 2 in No. 1, FO 60/711, pp. 2 - 3.

(2) From Sir A Hardinge to Mushir-ed-Doleh, dated January 7th 1903, inclosure 3 in No. 1, FO 60/711, p. 3.

(3) Ibid.

*the Russians in case their Consul or anyone else assuming to represent their interests should be in the neighbourhood."(1)*

The Russian Ambassador to London in the meantime, held a lengthy discussion with the British Foreign Office authorities during which he acknowledged Russian satisfaction with the assurance given by the British authorities with regard to the strength of Colonel McMahon's escort. The Russian Ambassador further declared that there was a considerable Afghan force concentrated near the Iranian frontier and that the Russian Government would not agree to any change in the boundary line laid down by British arbitration in 1872:

*[His] "Excellency told me that he had been instructed to say that the Russian Government 'ne Saurait se preter a une modification de la ligne de frontiere combinee avec l'Angleterre en 1872.'*

*"I gathered from his answer to a question which I put to him, that the line to which he referred was that laid down by General Goldsmid about the time referred to.*

*"I told his Excellency that we too had heard of the alleged Afghan concentration, and that the Government of India had taken steps to discourage it. I could not, however, see that the matter in any way concerned Russia."(2)*

The Russians had apparently argued that the matter concerned Russia because they had agreements with the British on the maintenance of Iran's integrity and independence and that it was maintenance of Iran's integrity that concerned Russia in this matter. To this argument the Foreign Office authorities replied in a note stating:

*"I cannot find in our archives any documents which can be regarded as giving the Russian Government*

(1) Extract from Telegram from Foreign Office to Viceroy of India, dated 13th January 1903, FO 60/711 .

(2) Extract of despatch from Foreign Office to India Office, repeated to British Minister at Tehran, dated February 21, 1903, No. 39, FO 60/711 .

a right of intervention in the matter of the arbitration now proceeding in Seistan as to the claims of the Persians and Afghans to the use of the waters of the River Helmund.

"The British and Russian Governments have, it is true, on more than one occasion agreed to respect the integrity of Persia, and there is a despatch from Lord Granville to Lord Augustus Loftus of the 10th July, 1873, in which he records a conversation with Count Brunow upon this point.

"It can, however, scarcely be contended that an arbitration for the purpose of settling a local dispute as to water rights can be regarded as affecting the general principle of the integrity of Persia, or that such assurances as those given by Lord Granville in any way derogate from the right of this country to act as Arbitrator in accordance with the Treaty of 1857." (1)

The explanations and assurance given to the Russians by the British authorities in London and by the Iranians at Tehran appear to have convinced the Russians to let the arbitration go ahead. The Iranian Prime Minister informed the British Minister at Tehran in February 1903 that the Russians had abandoned the idea of Russian participation in the arbitration proceedings and decided to send an officer of their own, to watch proceedings independently. (2)

#### THE ARBITRATION PROCEEDINGS

These developments coincided with heavy rainfall in Sistan and the rise of the Hirmand water which, increased tensions between the Iranians and Afghans. The confidential diary of the British Consul for Sistan for the period 1st to 15th December 1902 states that: "heavy rain fell here during the 2nd and 3rd December. The present temporary quarters of the Consulate, which we are still occupying, suffered

(1) Ibid.

(2) From Sir. A. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne, dated Tehran February 9, 1903, No. 9, FO 60/711 -

considerably and two rooms were rendered uninhabitable. In the city many of the domed roofs fell in and three Seistanis were killed.

"The Helmund has risen considerably. The Karguzar informed me that half the Seistan Bund at Kohak had been carried away, and that the Afghan Bund at Shahgul, which has been one of the main causes of the recent water difficulty, has also been demolished. A bund, constructed by the Seistanis just above the Poozah Jang Jah channel, the existence of which had not been reported to me, was also carried away.

"The Mian Kangi district now has an ample supply of water and the villagers are reported to be busily engaged in cultivation.

"From Deh Dost Muhammad a report has reached me that the Kat Khuda of that place, having made use of a water channel which takes off from the west bank of the (old) Helmund to irrigate his district, the Akhundzada blocked up the mouth of the Channel, which, however, was opened again by the Kat Khuda. With the exception of this incident the status quo with respect to the Seistan water question has not been disturbed.

"It is, however, reported from a reliable source that the Akhundzada has completed the long canal he was engaged in digging from Kushk above the Seistan Bund to Jaroki. Three hundred and fifty labourers are said to have been discharged from work on the 4th December."<sup>(1)</sup>

McMahon's arbitration commissione was well established in Sistan by June 1903. He was assigned, in the meantime, to extend a telegraph line from India to Sistan and thence to

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(1) Clauses 3 and 4 of Confidential Diary No. 18 of H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan and Kain, for period 1st to 15th December 1902, repeated in FO 60/ 711, p. 127.

Mashhad. The Russians decided to station their own military signallers at principal points of the telegraph line between Sistan and Mashhad. This decision made Colonel McMahon postpone work on extending the line.<sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile the collision between the Iranians and Afghans which, according to Colonel McMahon's despatch of 16th June 1903, needed his immediate attention, was described by him as not important in itself but could lead to serious results.<sup>(2)</sup>

The friction was in fact the continuation of disputes between the two sides of the previous five years or so. The Afghans dug a canal in 1902 carrying off all the water of the Sikh-Sar channel of Hirmand River (Northern continuation of Nad Ali or old main bed of the river) to cultivate the lands between Deh-e Yar Mohammad and Deh-e Hassan Kharut (see figure I). The Iranian Commissioner, Abdul-Hamid Khan Ghaffari Yamin-e Nezam, contended that the dry channel of Sikh-Sar northwards into the Neizar, marks the main bed of the Hirmand laid down as the boundary between Iran and Afghanistan by Sir Frederick Goldsmid.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Afghan Commissioner, Musa Khan (later replaced by Faqir Mohammad Akhund-Zadeh) contended that the old main bed of the river followed the dry channel then known as the Shela-e Shamshiri, and that therefore all land to the east of that is Afghan territory.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Telegram No. 1892F, from His Excellency the Viceroy to H. Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated Simla 3rd July 1903, enclosure No. 44, FO 60/725, p. 20.

(2) From Colonel A. H. McMahon to Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. 45, dated Camp Kohak the 16th June 1903, FO 60/725, p. 20.

(3) From Colonel A. H. McMahon to Secretary to the Government of India in Foreign Department, No. 824, dated Camp Kohak 16th June 1903, enclosure No. 45, FO 60/725, p. 21.

(4) Ibid.

McMahon asserts in his report of 16th June 1903 that: "undoubtedly the main bed of the Helmand in past time did run in the Shela-i-Shamshiri channel."<sup>(1)</sup> Having said this, he immediately asserts: "there is reason to believe that at the time of Sir Fred Goldsmid's award the main bed followed the Sikhsar channel. Deh Dost Muhammad and other important villages in the tract between the Shela-i-Shamshiri and Sikhsar channels are all of recent date within the last 25 years or so, and are all Persian. The Afghan villages on the east of the Sikhsar are also, with the exception of Kila-i-Kang, of recent date. Among the local people, Persian and Afghan alike, the Sikhsar appears to have long been recognised as the boundary line."<sup>(2)</sup>

Colonel McMahon's survey of the lands in dispute made it clear to him that if Goldsmid's line was indeed in the Sikh-Sar channel, the Afghans were in occupation of Iranian cultivable lands between Deh-e Yar Mohammad and the Neizar, and if Goldsmid's line continued northwards to follow the edge of the Neizar, the Iranians were in occupation of Afghan lands in the Neizar beyond its edge. Faced with this situation McMahon concluded:

"To follow strictly the Goldsmid line would necessitate making the Afghans surrender the lands of Deh Hassan Kharot and Ali Jangi, and the Persians the lands in the Naizar and at Tappa-i-Kaniz. This would cause ill-feeling on both sides and would cause no advantage to the Afghans, because the Persian lands can be easily irrigated from the west, while the Afghans have no means of irrigating them.

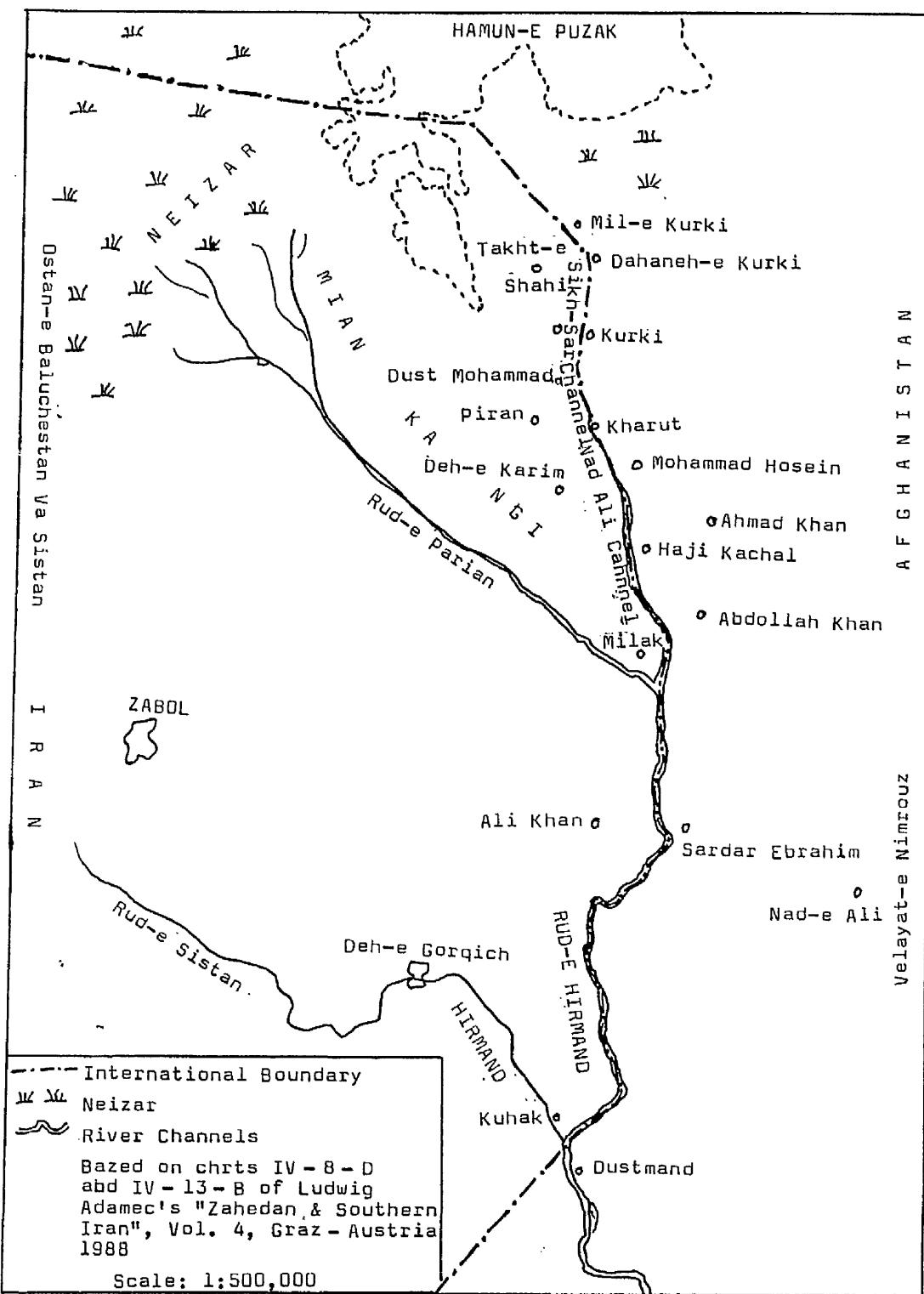
It appears reasonable to treat the two sets of encroachments as a set-off against each other, and draw a line dividing lands at present actually occupied by both sides. It will be seen that the intermediate order I have issued lays down such a line."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

Figure I  
Hirmand River - Old and New Channels and Mian Kangi



To define such a line, McMahon found it admissible to search for neighbouring permanent landmarks instead of demarcating in a low level tract liable to inundation. He, therefore, concluded that the boundary line should follow a line of prominent mounds "tappehs" in a series of straight lines from Tappeh-e Talaei to the most western of the mounds of Tappeh-e Shahrak to the Tappeh-e Kurki and then to the point Salgumi just north of Tappeh-e Shahi (see figure I). The land around all these tappehs is sour salt soil of no value.<sup>(1)</sup>

The above line considered by McMahon differed from that of Goldsmid's in areas between Deh-e Yar Mohammad and Takht-e Shahi to the disadvantage of Iran. He justified this difference in the following manner:

*"It will thus be seen that the line I propose to fix in my award between Deh Yar Muhammad and Takht-i-Shah differs but only slightly from the line defined by Sir Fred. Goldsmid, or, to speak more correctly, the line which careful survey of the country shows to be a fair and impartial interpretation of Sir Fred. Goldsmid's definition of the boundary. Also that the difference as regards area is more to Persian than Afghan advantage.*

*"In this small section only, i.e., from Deh Yar Muhammad to Takht-i-Shah, a distance of some 13 miles, does the line I propose to define in my award differ from the line defined by Sir Fred. Goldsmid. It will be a line regarding which future doubts cannot well arise, and is one which should be acceptable to both sides. As regards the people living in its neighbourhood on both sides, it involves no change of existing conditions, and will cause no ill-feeling or unpleasantries."<sup>(2)</sup>*

Having declared that his proposed line would be more to the advantage of Iran than Afghanistan, McMahon accused Yamin-e Nezam, the Iranian Commissioner, of being responsible for the anxieties of the Shah and the Iranian Government because of reporting to Tehran the incorrect assumption of sinister intentions on McMahon's part. To the Iranians McMahon

(1) Clauses 9 and 10 of McMahon's despatch dated 16th June 1903, op. cit., pp. 21 - 2.

(2) Clauses 12 and 13 of McMahon's despatch of 16th June 1903, op. cit., p. 22.

described his findings and invited evidence to the other effect if any:

"I have, therefore, clearly stated above existing facts, and have described the line which I mean to lay down in my arbitral award, unless I obtain hereafter fresh evidence on doubtful points which would necessitate reconsideration of such line. I do not foresee at this advanced stage of enquiry much likelihood of that. It might be well, therefore, if any outcry be made at Tehran against this order, to put the matter clearly as above stated to the Persian Government and dispel not only present baseless anxiety on their part, but obtain acceptance of the line therein defined and thereby remove what would otherwise prove a ground for subsequent appeal against my award and consequent delay in the demarcation of the line."(1)

As regards the Afghan attitude on this point, Colonel McMahon believed that protest would be made from Kabul against inclusion of Takht-e Shahi in Iranian territory. However, he thought that it would not be a strenuous protest because of Takht-e Shahi being an Iranian possession for a long period of time.(2)

Meanwhile, conflict broke out between the Sistani Iranians and Afghan subjects in the Neizar which resulted in three Afghans being wounded and an Afghan horse being killed. The boundary arbitrator, being informed by the Afghans of the incident, wrote to the Iranian Commissioner proposing a line temporarily separating the antagonists:

"I therefore issued the following order, i.e., that, until further orders or until final settlement of arbitration work, Persian subjects should not be allowed to interfere with water or land on the east side of the following line, i.e., the line followed by the water channel recently constructed by Afghans from a point between Deh Yar Muhammad and Deh Shah Gul to where that channel joins the Shela-i-Shamshiri near to and leaving Deh Hassan Kharot on the east. Thence it

(1) Extract from clause 15 of McMahon's despatch of 16th June 1903, op. cit., p. 22.

(2) Extract of clause 15 of McMahon's despatch of 16th June 1903, op. cit., p. 22.

runs in a straight line, dividing the hamlets off Deh Ali Mardan on the west from Deh Ali Jangi on the east to Tappa-i-Tilai. Similarly, no Afghan subjects are to interfere with land or water on the west of that line.

"The line is the line separating the lands under actual occupation of Persian and Afghan subjects, respectively, at the time of my inspection of the country.(1)

This proposal was received in Sistan with much suspicion which were apparently stirred up by Mr Miller, the Russian Consul for Sistan. In his confidential diary, the British Consul for Sistan remarks: "with reference to paragraph 6 of my diary No. 11, I received from Colonel McMahon a summary order regarding the land in dispute between the Afghans and Seistanis, which he asked me to communicate to the Amir Hashmat-ul-Mulk. The latter received the order very suspiciously, and informed me that Mr Miller had told him that His Excellency the Viceroy had bargained with the Amir of Afghanistan that the British were to receive all land south of the Helmand from Afghanistan, and to give in exchange to Afghanistan a large slice of Seistan land. I disabused his mind of this notion by all the arguments at my command, but I fear that he does not yet quite believe in our good faith. Another matter which makes the Hashmat-ul-Mulk suspicious of the English is that the Mustaufi of Meshed informed him that they were backing up his enemy, Syed Khan, Nahrui."(2) & (3)

The British at the same time were harbouring the idea of a passport system in the Irano-Afghan borders of Sistan. The British Consul for Sistan visited border areas and concluded

(1) Extract from letter from Colonel McMahon to Yamin-e Nezam, dated Camp Kohak 14th June 1903, FO 60/725, pp. 23 - 4.

(2) Sardar Saeed Khan Nahruei was Amir Heshmat al-Mulk's brother-in-law (see Appendix IV of chapter II on the Khozeimeh Amirs).

(3) Clause 2 of Diary No. 12 of Mr. H. Dobbs, H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan and Kain, for the period 16th June to 9th July 1903, FO 60/726, p. 4.

that the Iranian and Afghan villagers were so inextricably mingled and had such close daily relations with one another, that the introduction of a passport system would produce great hardship and discontent even if worked with consideration.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Sistanis, meanwhile, gathered in large number at the Band-e Sistan to restore it after being damaged by flooding in the spring of 1903. In his diary of 24th August 1903, Colonel McMahon remarks: "There seems to be a difference of opinion on the subject between the Governor and the Persian Commissioners. The latter do not want the bund made while the Mission is here, as they say I may form inconvenient conclusions from the amount of water the bund sends down the Rod-i-Seistan. The Governor says, very wisely, that he and his people are not going to lose a season's water for anything the Mamurs may think."<sup>(2)</sup>

The Iranians, after some deliberation, accepted Colonel McMahon's proposed line of boundary at the northern continuation of Sikh-Sar channel, which was a modification of Goldsmid's line. Yamin Nezam, the Iranian Commissioner, who had been implicitly described by Colonel McMahon as being under the instruction of the Russian Consul,<sup>(3)</sup> showed McMahon confidential telegrams of the Iranian Foreign Minister's report on the acceptance of the proposed line. The telegram indicated:

"Your reports and map have been received, and submitted to proper quarter. The Foreign Office Council consider exchange of that land with land shown in the map not advantageous to Persian Government; and a clear promise should be obtained from Afghans that they will never damage present Kuhak Bund, and will not give trouble. They should also undertake not to

(1) Confidential Diary No. 14 of Mr. H. Dobbs, His Britannic Majesty's Consul for Seistan and Kain for period ending the 31st August 1903, FO 60/ 725, Clause 2.

(2) Extract from the Diary of Colonel A.H. McMahon for period ending the 24th August 1903, FO 60/725, p. 14.

(3) Ibid.

erect any bund above Kuhak, or below Rudbar, lest water, which irrigates local land, and has been given up, should be cut off and leave this land waste. Please see carefully and report whether the land which will be given up in exchange for land taken by us will not harm Persian Government. The Council say that the land the Afghans wish to take is fertile, and that the other land is waste. Please ascertain these points carefully, and report quickly. Ends.(1)

Yamin Nezam assured McMahon that his letter strongly advocated McMahon's line, and attributes present indecision to Russian interference. He telegraphed the same day stating that he had received his telegram and will carry out Tehran's instructions. That he had made careful enquiries again, and could say that proposed exchange will be advantageous to Iranian Government. It is necessary that the boundary should be settled first and demarcated; also the lesser question could then be taken up. He then suggested that Foreign Minister had an interview with British Minister, with a view to discussing the matter.

Yamin Nezam's recommendation to the Iranian Government that "proposed exchange will be advantageous to the Persian Government" is in clear contradiction of Colonel McMahon's description of the lands to be exchanged. In his report of his proposed boundary line of 16th June 1903, McMahon described the lands occupied by Afghans, and proposed they be exchanged as being: "small tract of poor worthless land"(2) and described the lands occupied by the Iranians and proposed to be exchanged as being: "patches of poor cultivation in the Neizar".(3) Even British officials sensed that Yamin Nezam was suspected by the Iranian Government officials of being bribed to support the proposed settlement. In his

(1) Extract from Colonel McMahon's telegram No. 422 to Sir Arthur Hardinge, dated Seistan 12th September 1903, enclosure 21, FO 60/725, pp. 14 - 15.

(2) Clause 8 of despatch No. 824, from McMahon to the Indian Government, dated Camp Kohak 16th June 1903, enclosure No. 45 of FO 60/725, p. 21.

(3) Ibid.

despatch of 24th October 1903 to the Foreign Office, the British Minister at Tehran states that: "the attitude of the Persian Government on this question is very foolish, and can only be explained by the supposition that their inveterate suspiciousness of our intentions in Seistan has led them to conjecture that Col. McMahon's proposal conceals some trap and that the Yamin's support of it is due to his having been bribed or talked over."<sup>(1)</sup>

A mischievous accountant at the Imperial (British) bank branch in Sistan gave out information in March 1904 that Yamin Nezam had deposited 10,000 qarans with that bank which he had received from the boundary arbitration. The British Consul for Sistan recorded this incident in his diary of 16th to 21st March 1904 as follows:

"19th March. - Mr Emmerson has been obliged to suspend Ismail Khan, the Accountant of the Imperial Bank. It appears that the Yamin-i-Nizam recently deposited some 10,000 krans with the bank, and the Accountant for motives of his own has been giving out, at any rate the Yamin-i-Nizam stated that the information was now public property, not only that the Yamin-i-Nizam had put this amount into the bank, but that the same was the consideration he had received from the British Commissioner for 'services rendered' in connection with the recent boundary award!

The Yamin is furious, as the story has reached the ears of the Karguzar who, he thinks, is sure to make capital out of it against him."<sup>(2)</sup>

A further proof of falsehood of Yamin Nezam's recommendation to the Government of Iran that exchange of villages in question was in favour of Iran, came later in a letter to the Amir of Afghanistan by the Viceroy of India who pointed out: "from the Band-e Kohak to the Naizar the

(1) Extract from despatch of Sir A. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne, dated Tehran 24th October 1903, FO 60/725, p. 2.

(2) Extract from Confidential Diary No. 7 of Captain A.D. MacPherson H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan and Kain, for the period 16th to 21st March 1904, FO 60/726, p. 1.

frontier follows practically the old bed of the Hirmand or Siksar, but runs a little to the west of this in one place to include villages now in Afghan possession. These substantial advantages to the interests of Your Highness are qualified only by a slight concession which Col. McMahon has felt called upon to make in the direction of Takht i Siah to the Iranians."<sup>(1)</sup>

The acceptance by the Iranian Government of this exchange and proposed line was confirmed by the British Minister at Tehran in a letter to the Foreign Office, dated 24th October 1903 in which the British Government was informed that the Iranian Government had made this acceptance conditional upon an engagement on the part of the Afghans not to construct any dam upon the upper Hirmand from Band-e Sistan to Rudbar.<sup>(2)</sup> In his telegram of 12th September to Sir A. Hardinge, Colonel McMahon had rejected outright doing anything about preventing the Afghans from constructing bands on the Hirmand above Band-e Sistan, arguing that the question raised about Afghan bands above Sistan lies outside his arbitration tribunal's jurisdiction, and he had strictly avoided any reference whatever to it in discussions with the Iranians.<sup>(3)</sup>

Hardinge did indeed succeed in preventing the Iranian Government from continuing these conditions. In a meeting with Moshir ad-Doleh, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Hardinge was informed that following an interview that Moshir ad-Doleh had with the Shah, the Iranian Government had withdrawn this condition and only asked that the Afghans should undertake

(1) Extract from letter from His Excellency the Viceroy of India to His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan, No. 8, dated 22nd November 1903, FO 60/ 711, pp. 2 - 3.

(2) From A.H. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne, dated Tehran 24th October 1903, FO 60/725.

(3) From Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne, dated Tehran 24th Oct. 1903, FO 60/725.

not to destroy the existing Band-e Sistan without previous agreement with Iran.<sup>(1)</sup>

To secure the Afghans' agreement to his proposed line, Colonel McMahon decided to tell them bluntly but indirectly how wrong they were in relying confidently on Goldsmid's vague definition of the boundary line. In a despatch to Hardinge which was referred to the Foreign Office, McMahon noted:

"I sent Khan Bahadur Mir Shams Shah this morning to pay a casual visit to the Akhundzada and to take the opportunity, if the Akhundzada alluded, as I felt sure he would, to boundary matters, to speak somewhat gloomily on the subject. I directed him especially to find out, if possible, the purport of whatever correspondence had passed between the Amir and the Akhundzada on this subject. He had a very important and useful interview over five hours with the Akhundzada and Musa Khan. They, of course, turned the conversation at the start off to boundary work, and the whole question was thoroughly threshed out once more. All the old Afghan arguments were paraded and my own answers to them repeated. The Akhundzada seemed to have thoroughly understood the ambiguity of Sir Fred. Goldsmid's definition of the boundary line between Bund-i-Kohak and Koh-i-Malik Siah, and how unfavourably to Afghanistan that definition can be read. A purpose of this, the Akhundzada admitted, what I have long suspected, that the Afghans possess no copy of the Goldsmid award."<sup>(2)</sup>

This tactic apparently secured the Afghan Government's acceptance of his proposed line. The Iranian Government's unconditional acceptance of the particulars of McMahon's boundary line was telegrammed to him by the British Charge d'Affairs at Tehran on 1st November 1903. The Shah had, on 8th October, asked the British through his Foreign Minister that he would like McMahon, after the delimited line was agreed upon with Yamin-e Nezam north of Hirmand, to mark out

(1) Telegram No. 422 from Colonel McMahon to Sir A. Hardinge, dated 12th September 1903, enclosure 21, FO 60/725, p. 15.

(2) From Hardinge to Marquess of Lansdowne, dated Tehran 24th October 1903, FO 60/725 -

the Irano-Afghanistan frontier between Hirmand and Kuh-e Malek Siah so that doors should be closed to a recurrence of the controversies.<sup>(1)</sup>

Colonel McMahon concluded his boundary arbitration award and communicated it to the Afghan Commissioner on the 7th November 1903 and to the Iranian Commissioner on the 17th November that year.<sup>(2)</sup> McMahon's boundary award states:

*"Arbitral award given by  
COLONEL A.H.McMahon, C.S.I., C.I.E.,  
British Commissioner,  
Seistan Arbitration Commissioner.*

*"The boundary line in Seistan between Afghanistan on the east and Persia on the west should run as follows, i.e., from the Malik Siah Koh in a straight line to the Bund-i-Kohak and thence along the bed of the Helmand river to the junction of its two branches, the Rod-i-Parium and Nad Ali channel. From here it should follow the bed of the Nad Ali channel into the Sikhsar and along the bed of the Sikhsar to the point near Deh Yar Muhammad where the Sikhsar has been diverted towards the west in the water channel shown in the map which joins the Shela-i-Shamshiri near to Deh Hassan Kharat. The boundary line should follow the left bank of this water channel to the Shela-i-Shamshiri leaving Deh Hassan Kharot on the east. It should then run in a straight line separating the hamlets of Deh Ali Mardan on the west from Deh Ali Jangi on the east of Tappa-i-Tilai; thence in a straight line to the most western of the mounds of Tappa-i-Shaharak; thence in a straight line to the most western mound of Tappa-i-Kurki; thence in a straight line to Salgumi and thence in a straight line to Siah Koh, Bandan."<sup>(3)</sup>*

In separate letters to the Iranian and Afghan Commissioners, McMahon gives more details of various aspects of his boundary award (see appendix I for McMahon's detailed letter to the Afghan Commissioner).

(1) Telegram from A. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne, No. 129, dated Tehran 8th October 1903, FO 60/711 -

(2) From McMahon to Secretary to the Indian Government in the Foreign Department, No. 1258, dated Camp Kohak, the 14th November 1903, enclosure 66 of FO 60/725, p.41.

(3) McMahon's Boundary Award, FO 60/725, p. 43.

In spite of being deprived of much of their possessions in the areas to the north of Sikh-Sar channel and in the Neizar, the Iranian Government accepted McMahon's boundary award, but the Afghans complained and argued against it for nearly a year. The Amir of Afghanistan declared his acceptance of the award and stated his agreement to demarcation of this boundary in October 1904.

Meanwhile, the Afghan Commissioner (Faqir Mohammad Akhund-Zadeh) became agitated by the state of affairs as the Iranians continued cultivating lands to the east of the arbitral boundary in their possession hitherto and the Afghans could not do much about it because their Government had not accepted the award. The following remarks in Colonel McMahon's diary of January 1904 give clear indication of this situation:

"19th January, Camp Gul Shah. - Fearful howls from the Akhundzada, who sallied forth to-day to inspect the land near Ganguzar. He saw two Persian ploughs working, and returned in high dudgeon. I expressed regret that he had not continued his researches further west, for, if he had, he would have found the boundary line clearly defined by an avenue through the jungle. Any ploughing and sowing done by Persians east of that line, would, I said, be Afghan gain.

I made the Yamin-i-Nizam send for the village headmen responsible for this continued flagrant encroachment, and he promised to keep them in custody. Instead of doing this, however, he let them go, and they went to the Akhundzada to try and make terms with him. The lands in question can be irrigated from the Persian side, but not from the Afghan side, and what will happen after final demarcation of the boundary line will be that those who have now cultivated those lands will merely step over the border and become Afghan subjects.

The sooner the Amir accepts the award, and demarcation is completed, the better, for both the Persian and Afghan Commissioners are working themselves into a nervous and depressed state of mind. The Akhundzada fears he will share the fate of my last Afghan colleague, Sardar Muhammad Umar Khan, while the Yamin says everybody is accusing him of taking bribes from me for selling Persian territory.

23rd January, Camp Gul Shah. - The Akhundzada has seemed very restless and nervous the last few days, and I am firmly convinced he has received unsatisfactory news from Kabul. I sent Khan Bahadur Mir Shams Shah to see him to-day. He denies the receipt of any letter from Amir, and, to-day, is in better spirits, owing to a dream which Mulla Samand, an aged Pir of his, who is now in the Afghan camp, has just had. He dreamt that a letter from the Amir of a favourable nature is on the road and will reach us in a few days. The Akhundzada places implicit confidence in this. In the course of conversation, the Akhundzada referred to the bad influence exercised over the Amir by his brother, Nasrulla Khan. He does much to counteract the Amir's natural leaning towards clemency and generosity, and opposes reform and progress."(1)

The Iranian Commissioner, Yamin-e Nezam wrote to Colonel McMahon on 2nd June 1904 reporting that the Afghans were showing signs of resisting, by force, the taking of revenue by the Iranians from the lands near the villages of Ali Jangi which had been cultivated by them to the east of the arbitral boundary line. The Iranian Commissioner contended that, until the Amir of Afghanistan agreed to the boundary line, and the protocols were signed, the line could not be considered to effect ownership of disputed lands hitherto in Iranian possession.(2) To this, McMahon replied on 4th June 1904 that: the Amir of Afghanistan had recently agreed to his boundary line; but had raised questions, regarding demarcation, which were still under discussion. In any case, he added that he pointed out that his line was now a definite settlement of the boundary, and must be adhered to. The Persians, he added, could no more object to Afghans taking revenue from lands on their side of it, than Afghans could to the Persians doing the same with regard to Takht-i-Shah, Tappa-i-Kaniz, or other lands hitherto disputed."(3)

(1) Extracts from Colonel McMahon's Diary of 23rd January 1904, FO 60/726, p. 55.

(2) From Yamin-e Nezam to Colonel McMahon as appeared in McMahon's Diary of 8th June 1904, dated 2nd June 1904, FO 60/727.

(3) Extract from McMahon's Diary of 8th June 1904, op. cit.,

In spite of the above claim, there is no trace of any document suggesting the acceptance of McMahon's arbitral boundary line by the Amir of Afghanistan before 15th October 1904. He was, most certainly, referring to a letter from the Amir of Afghanistan to the Afghan Commissioner in February 1904 instructing the latter to investigate certain aspects of the situation in the frontier areas. In a telegram to the Government of India regarding this letter, McMahon stated:

"Afghan Commissioner has received letter from Amir, which he has communicated to me in strict confidence. Amir makes various enquiries regarding substance of my award, chiefly as to previous owner of certain villages and tracts along border. Letter does not indicate disapprobation of the award, but corroborates Afghan Commissioner's forecast that Amir would find pretext to delay acceptance for a becoming period. Very satisfactory feature of Amir's letter is that references in it to Afghan Commissioner's previous letters showed latter expressed thorough approval of my award. Afghan Commissioner has replied to Amir's questions, and the answer thereto are all corroborative of favourable nature of my award."(1)

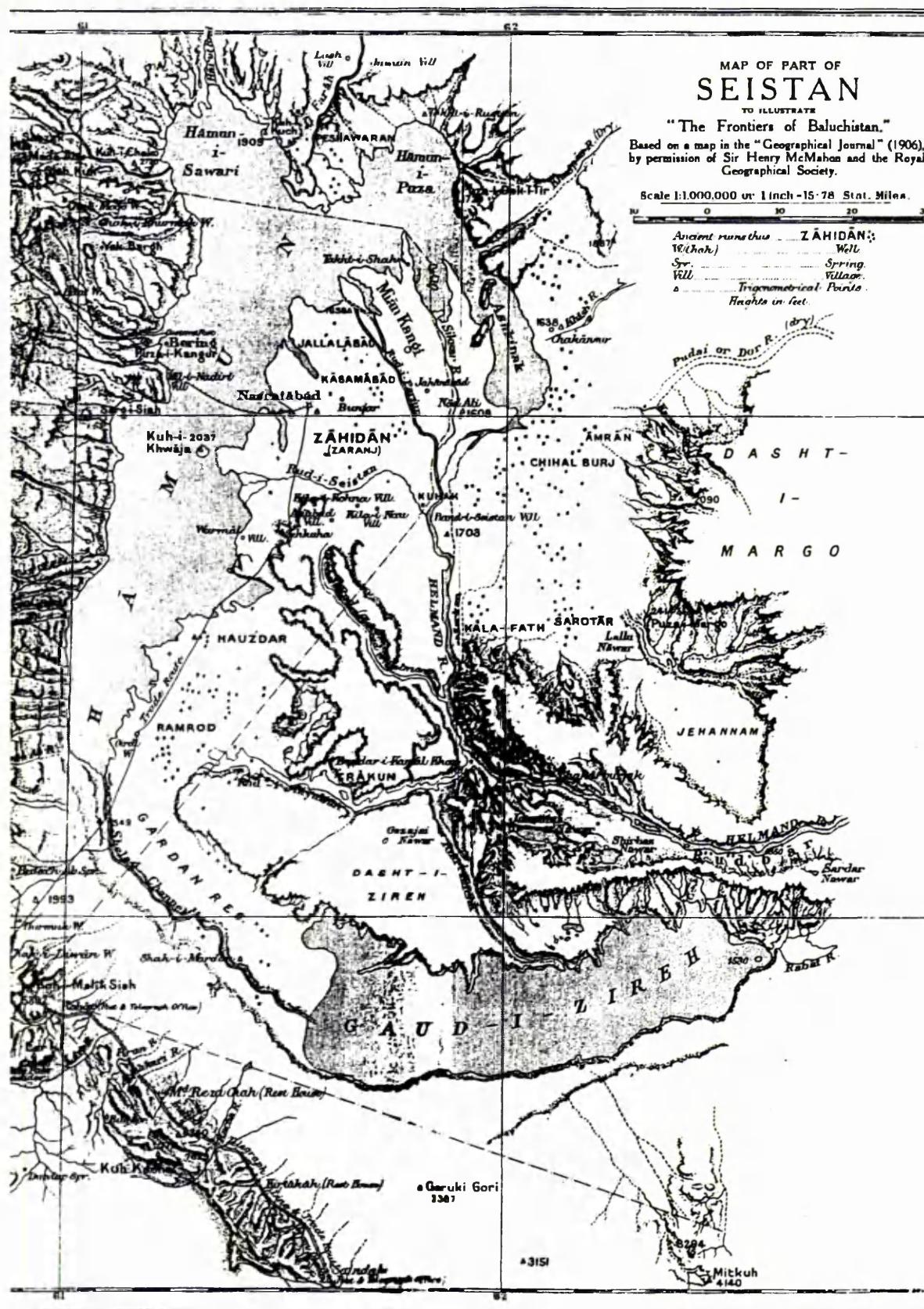
As a result of this treatment of the Iranian farmers' cultivation in the lands to the east of McMahon's proposed line which were still in their possession, the Iranians lost a whole year's revenue from those cultivations.

As the Afghans' doubts about the situation in the areas to the north of Sikh-Sar boundary continued, Colonel McMahon sent two extracts of his draft final report on the Sistan boundary to the Government of India so that they could use them in meeting the objections of the Afghans. These two extracts clearly demonstrated the rights of the Iranians in the Neizar and lands exchanged between the two sides (see Appendix IV for text).

Meanwhile, the Amir of Afghanistan wrote to his representative in the arbitration commission on 15th October 1904 giving his consent to the arbitral award and the

(1) Telegram No. 549 from Colonel McMahon to the Foreign Secretary Calcutta, dated the 13th of February 1904, FO 60/726, p. 55.

FIGURE II



This is the only map of Sistan Boundary attributed to McMahon which this author has come across, FO 60/725.

commencement of demarcation of McMahon's line. The Amir stated:

"Whereas you were deputed on my behalf as representatives for the determination of the separation of the boundaries of Afghanistan in the Naizars of Seistans and my revered friend Colonel McMahon was deputed on behalf of the allied Government (British) to settle the aforesaid affair, the written award of the latter has now reached me through His Excellency the Viceroy of India. As far as possible, I did my best in correspondence with him to maintain my rights. As I am now convinced that the Government of India have, as far as possible, done justice to Afghanistan, and consider that the settlement which they have made is in the interests of my State, therefore I know this also that in no way have they neglected, nor will they neglect, my interests. Without doubt, in determining the frontier, and in the settlement of the aforesaid tract, they will bear our welfare in sight.

"Therefore, in accordance with the written award of the aforesaid Colonel, the details of which were copied on a separate paper and sent to you, you are informed that you are to take action in pillar building, so that the work may be finished during this season." (1)

Colonel McMahon proceeded with boundary demarcation immediately after confirmation of the Afghans' acceptance of his line was received. He informed the Indian Government on 18th November 1904 that demarcation of the straight line of boundary from Kuh-e Malek "Siah to Kuhak was completed by that date<sup>(2)</sup> (see figure II).

Colonel McMahon's boundary award was accompanied by a water award which was issued on 25th September 1904.<sup>(3)</sup> In his water award Colonel McMahon determined that Iran and

(1) Extract from the translation of H.H. the Afghan Amir's Farman of 5th Shaban 1322 (15th October 1904) to Faqir Mohammad Akhund-Zadeh, enclosure No. 19 of FO 60/728, p. 30.

(2) Telegram No. 838 of McMahon to Foreign Secretary of the Indian Government, dated 18th November 1904, enclosure No. 14 of FO 60/728, p. 27.

(3) From Col. McMahon to the Government of India, No. 2407, dated the 25th September 1904, FO 60/727, pp. 1 to 20.

Afghanistan should receive from Hirmand, below Band-e Kamal Khan, half the water each<sup>(1)</sup> regardless of the requisite consumptions of the two sides which have been naturally developed throughout the ages and regardless of the fact that Iranian Sistan was repeatedly acknowledged as being highly fertile and in need of more water compared with the Afghan side of Sistan which was acknowledged by General Goldsmid to be generally barren. Moreover, McMahon changed this decision later in his final award by giving one third of Hirmand water to Iran and two thirds of it, from below Band-e Kama Khan, to Afghanistan. (For details of McMahon's Sistan Water Award, see next chapter).

Colonel McMahon, however, completed his demarcation of the Sistan boundary in February 1905<sup>(2)</sup> and communicated to the Government of India on 21st February 1905, his report on the final settlement and demarcation of the boundary between Iran and Afghanistan in Sistan.

Clauses 1 to 19 of his report consists of the historical background of the dispute and Goldsmid's arbitration. Clauses 20 to 43 deal with the way he determined the Sistan boundary (see Appendix II). Furthermore, McMahon had on 1st February 1905 communicated to the Iranian and Afghan Commissioners his report on the demarcation of this boundary (see Appendix III).

McMahon's water award came as a great disappointment to the Iranian Government (see next chapter), while his boundary award dismayed the Sistanis. In a letter, to the editor of "Trans-Caspian Review" of Russia appearing on 19th March 1905, an unnamed Sistani remarked:

(1) From Colonel McMahon to the Government of India No. 2407 dated 25th September 1904, FO 60/727, pp. 1 to 20.

(2) From McMahon to the Government of India, dated 21st February 1905, FO 60/728.

"We beg to request you to have the following particulars printed in your esteemed journal, so that all the lovers of their native country may know that we have complained, and do complain, about the question of the Sistan boundary delimitation, by which a large and valuable portion of the sacred Persian territory has been added to Afghan territory. But it is a matter of great regret that the high officials of the Government do not listen to our representations and complaints.

"Now, it is three years since that this English Arbitration Mission have come to Sistan, where they have pitched their camp on the banks of the Helmand in Persian territory. When they arrived, they said that they would finish their work of arbitration, and that, please God, they would depart in two or three months. But now three years have passed, and yet they say the same, i.e., that they would depart in two or three months. At present they have replaced their tents by building regular houses and apartments. God knows when they will go!

"The thing to be wondered at is that this Mission was appointed to arbitrate about the waters of the Helmand. Gradually they began to say that the limits should be duly recognised and fixed. And before the poor people were aware of the matter, the British Mission suddenly fixed a boundary between Sistan and Afghanistan, and built up high and round pillars on the line, in such a way that cattle-owners, flock-owners and cultivators saw that all their pastures and 'Naizars', which specially belonged to the cattle-owners of Sistan, and cultivated and other lands, were all transferred to Afghanistan. The wonder is that the high officials of the Persian Government had appointed a Commissioner for the frontier to look after it. But when this delimitation was effected, where was he, why did he not prevent them, or at least report actual facts and all the particulars to the high officials of the Government?

"The Mission, from the beginning, up to the present, have been saying that no new changes would be made, but that the boundary line laid down about 32 years ago by General Goldsmid, between Persia and Afghanistan, would be renewed, as in most places it had become obliterated and was not clear.

"[Then the correspondent gives some particulars of the boundary laid down by General Goldsmid, and states that some of the lands, which by that

*delimitation belonged to Sistan, have now by this fresh boundary line passed to Afghanistan.]"(1)*

The author of this letter continued by accusing the British of planning to take Sistan for themselves. An accusation much in the same fashion advocated by the Russians at the outset of McMahon's Sistan mission.

These suspicions were encouraged by such extremist recommendations as that of Major Percy Sykes, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul for Kerman, which asserted:

*"As regards the Province of Kain, such is, I understand, not the case, but yet, my Lord, I am convinced that its possession by Russia would constitute a permanent menace to the Indian Empire.*

*The buffer State of Afghanistan is apparently doomed to succumb, and as our minimum share of it would include the watershed of the Helmand, I would submit that we must not leave the flank of Western Afghanistan unprotected."(2)*

Nearly a century had gone by proving the accusation that Russia intended to take possession of Qaenat to be unfounded but McMahon's water award was a devastating blow to the inhabitants of Sistan as remarked in the Confidential Diary of February 1948 of His Britannic Majesty's Consul General from Mashhad:

*"When at Zabul at the beginning of January H.M. Consul General saw the desperate condition of that one-time "granary" of East Persia, due to the failure (or stopping) of the flow of water from the Helmand River in Afghanistan, with the resultant drying up of the usually 40 x 20 miles wide "overflow" the Hamun Lake. Some water was actually flowing in a few of the canals as it had been arranged that water would be*

(1) Extract of translation of a letter from Sistan as appeared in the "Trans-Caspian Review", dated the 12th Moharram 1323 H. (19th March 1905), enclosure No. 14 of FO 60/728, p. 7.

(2) Extract from Major Percy Molesworth Sykes's (later Sir Percy Sykes) despatch to the Marquess of Salisbury, dated Kerman June 29, 1900, No. 4, FO 60/621.

released for 5 weeks, and had been available in Zabul town for 3 weeks for the first time for months of drought."(1)

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(1) Clause 6 of Political Diary No. 1 of His Britannic Majesty's Consul General for Mashhad, dated the 4th of February 1948, FO 371/68724, p. 2.

Appendix I

Letter from Colonel McMahon, British Commissioner for Sistan Boundary Arbitration Commission to Faqir Mohammad Akhund-Zadeh, Afghan Commissioner<sup>(+)</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

After Compliments. - We have discussed the question of the boundary between Afghanistan and Persia in Seistan for many months, and the time has now come when I am able to give my arbitral award on this question.

In April last, I verbally explained to you the boundary line which I said represented a fair and impartial interpretation of the award given by General Sir Fred. Goldsmid. I would have given my award then, but further survey work appeared necessary and, moreover, the Persian Commissioner at that time declined even to discuss boundary questions. They claimed that the words in Sir Fred. Goldsmid's award, i.e., "the line of frontier from Kohak to the hill south of the Seistan desert should be so drawn as to include within the Afghan limits all cultivation on both banks of the river from the bund upwards" mean that only the few cultivated portions of land on the bank of the Helmand remain in Afghanistan and that all the rest of the country, including Tarakun, is Persian territory. They maintained that this had been already settled, and no boundary question was, therefore, now in dispute.

I refused to admit this argument, and the matter has now, as you will see below, been at last settled.

Before stating my award, it is advisable to refer to certain matters which explain my award. You were yourself with Sir Fred. Goldsmid's Mission and know the difficulties under which he examined and surveyed the country. Major, now General, Beresford Lovett has himself told me that he was not able to go over the country properly, and that his maps was, therefore, a very rough map of which the accuracy could not be depended on. As regards Sikhsar and the Maizar, he says he did not get nearer to that portion of the country than Khakansur. You can realise from this how impossible it was for him to make a correct map. Sir Fred. Goldsmid, moreover, in his award, takes care to say that this map is only :illustrative of the country awarded:. I have found from our present surveys how very inaccurate that award map is. I have followed in my award as much as possible the line shown

(+) From McMahon to Akhund-Zadeh, No. 2 - A.P., dated 7th November 1903, FO 60/725,  
41 - 2 - 3.

pp.

on that map; but in portions where the maps has been wrong, I have had to be guided by Sir Fred. Goldsmid's written definition of the boundary line.

Another fact to remember is that Sir Fred. Goldsmid did not arrive at any conclusion about the boundary till after he had left Seistan. He delivered his award in Teheran several months after he left Seistan. The line which he awarded was never clearly explained on the round to either the Afghan or Persian officials and people of Seistan,. They only received a vague idea of the line from their Governments, and the people actually living near the line were, therefore, obliged to come to some common understanding between themselves as to what they thought the right line was. For many years it has been fairly well understood among the people along both sides of the line that the boundary ran along the Mad Ali channel of the Helmand, thence along the continuation of that channel, i.e., the Sikhsar, as far as that stream-bed could be traced through the Naizar into the Hamun. Cultivation has gradually been extended and villages have gradually been made by both countries nearer and nearer to this line until they reached this line. At the present moment the bed of the Sikhsar represents the boundary between land occupied by Afghan subjects on the one side and Persian subjects on the other, throughout its course, except at two places, i.e., near Deh Yar Muhammad where you have recently made a canal from the Sikhsar and irrigated a tract of land on the west of the Sikhsar, which is coloured red on the map and near Ganguzar where the Persians have sown crops to which you have objected on the east of the Sikhsar. These lands are coloured green on the map.

You have strongly maintained your right to cultivate land on the west of the Sikhsar on the ground that the real main bed of the Helmand in past times ran in what is now called the Shela-i-Shamshirir. Undoubtedly the main bed of the Helmand did in past times follow the course of the Shela-i-Shamshiri, but this, in my opinion, was before the time of Sir Fred. Goldsmid's Mission. At the time of his award the main bed of the Helmand followed the Sikhsar channel.

I come now to Sir Fred. Goldsmid's award. The portions relating to the boundary line are as follows: "Persia should not possess land on the right of the Helmand. The main bed of the Helmand, therefore, below Kohak, should be the eastern boundary of Persian Seistan, and the line of frontier from Kohak to the hills south of the Seistan desert should be so drawn as to include within the Afghan limits all cultivation on both banks of the river from the bund upwards. The Malik Siah Koh, on the chain of hills separating the Seistan from the Kerman desert, appears a fitting point. North of Seistan, the southern limit of the Naizar, should be the frontier towards Lash Juwain. Persia should not cross the Ilamun in that direction. A line drawn from the Naizar to the Koh Siah Illill near Bandau would clearly define her possession".

Interpreting this award with the aid of Sir Fred. Goldsmid's map and, in places where I have found that map inaccurate, adapting that award to agree with a correct map of the country, I lay down the award of which a copy is attached to this letter.

I send you a map in two parts to illustrate this award. This map is on a scale of 4 miles = 1 inch. When the boundary line has been demarcated with boundary pillars, I will give you a more complete map showing the position of each pillar. You will see that this boundary line leaves to Afghanistan the lands cultivated by the new water channel near Deh Yar Muhammad, and it leaves to Persia the lands occupied and cultivated for many years past by Persian subjects at Takht-i-Shah and Tappa-i-Kaniz.

I feel regret at not being able to concede to the many and urgent demands you and also Musa Khan have made for the inclusion within the Afghan line of Takhi-i-Shah. Not only does the definition of the line awarded by Sir Fred. Goldsmid prevent my doing this, but I feel sure that to forcibly take away from Persia lands which that country has so long occupied and cultivated would undo much of the good which will result from a definite settlement of the Seistan boundary. It is, moreover, to be remembered that Persia can easily irrigate that tract and the Tappa-i-Kaniz land by canals from the Rod-i-Pariun, whereas it is impossible to irrigate them by canals from the Afghan side. Sir Fred. Goldsmid's definition of the line is very clear. The southern limit of the Naizar shall be the boundary. Takht-i-Shah is a small miserable tract of poor land and, willing as I would be to include it in Afghan territory to meet your many requests if it were in my power to do so, I fail to see how the possession of it would be of any value or use to Afghanistan. As an Arbitrator, I am obliged to act impartially towards both countries concerned, and it has been my object to try and arrive at a boundary line fair to both and one which would not lead to ill-feeling between the people living on either side of it. I feel confident you will yourself admit that the line I have now awarded is a fair and impartial settlement of all present boundary disputes. I have every hope that this award will meet with the approval of His Highness the Amir, when he is informed of it.

It now remains to properly demarcate this line with boundary pillars so as to avoid all disputes in future. I trust that no delay will occur in starting that work.

Appendix II

Colonel Henry McMahon's report to the Government of India on the final settlement of boundaries between Iran and Afghanistan in Sistan.<sup>(+)</sup>

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Clauses 1 to 19 of this report concern the history of the disputes, and the following clauses deal with McMahon's arbitration proceedings and decisions;

20. On the arrival of this Arbitration Mission in Seistan in february 1903, further attempts were made to stultify its action and defeat its purposes. The Persian Commissioners\* were informed by their Government that our arbitration applied only to water questions. Their instructions were thus worded:- "Keep this point in view that the boundaries of Seistan and Baluchistan have been already entirely delimited. Now in Seistan this Mission is for the removal of differences# in respect to Helmund water \*\*\*\* and nothing else." (Vide enclosure to my letter No. 503 of 25th February 1903m to the Government of India.)

21. Although the Persian Commissioner were not then authorized to discuss boundary questions, I insisted upon obtaining their views on the subject. I even made them accompany me along the disputed boundary from Deh Dost Muhammad to Takht-i-Shah in March 1903, but they declined to accompany me round the northern portion to Siah Koh, when I went there in May of that year.

22. The boundaries claimed by the Persian and Afghans respectively were as follows. Briefly stated, the Persians contended that Sir Frederick Goldsmid's award map was no authority, and they even denied ever having seen a copy thereof. They claimed that the boundary as defined in his award ran as follows:- From the Koh-i-Malik Siah it ran, not in a straight line to Band-i-Kuhak, but in such a manner as to include in Persian territory the Tarakun tract and all the country on the west of the Helmund, 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 Helmund and the Nad Ali Sikhsar channel, and thence northwards through the old Maizar to the northern edge of the Hamun, and thence in a straight line to Siah Koh.

(1) From Colonel A.H. McMahon C.S.I., C.I.E., British Commissioner, Sistan Arbitration Commission, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, enclosure 17 of FO 60/728, pp. 1 to 13 (21st February 1905).

23. The Afghan claims are defined in detail in His Highness the Amir's letter of October 15th and December 9th, 1902, to the government of India. They represent merely an attempt to verbally define the line shown on Goldsmid's award map, which is taken as the sole authority on the subject regardless of any written award. As a matter of fact I have ascertained that the Afghan Government does not possess any copy of Sir Frederick Goldsmid's award, as all papers connected with the Goldsmid Mission appear to have got lost in the chaos which ensued on the death of Amir Sher Ali.

Briefly stated, the Amir claimed a line from Koh-i-Malik Siah to Band-i-Kuhak including Ramrud in Afghan territory. (The Afghan Commissioner\* claimed possession also of Hauzdar and Kuntdar.) From Band-i-Kuhak their line followed the Helmund and Nad Ali channel to a point about one and a half miles from Nad Ali near Burj-i-As and Deh Ido. It was contended that this is the point at which, on Sir Frederick Goldsmid's map, the boundary line leaves the river and that therefore the Afghan boundary should run from here in a straight line to Siah Koh.

24. So much for the rival claim. It will be seen that the Persians based theirs on their own interpretation of the Goldsmid award and professed ignorance of his map, while the Afghans had never seen the award and insisted on a strict adherence to the map.

25. The first thing to be done by this Mission was to make an accurate survey of the country. Even the latest Government of India maps were found to be very inaccurate, a fact which is easily explained when one realises the very serious difficulties which the country offers to accurate survey work owing to its dead flatness and general absence of prominent points, together with, in some places, dense tamarisk jungle, wide stretches of water and high reeds, and in others vast expanses of waterless desert. It was only with great effort and after a considerable time with our large staff of able surveyors that these difficulties were overcome and accurate maps on scales of 4 miles and 1 mile = 1 inch were prepared. It was hardly surprising, therefore, to find that the country as shown by our maps differed largely from that shown in earlier maps prepared under less favourable circumstances, and especially from that shown in the Goldsmid map. It is a matter of much greater surprise that the map made under such unfavourable circumstances by Major Beresford Lovett in 1872 is so approximately accurate as it is.

26. The next step after completing a new survey of the country was to determine with its aid the course of the boundary line as defined in the Goldsmid award. Having established the fact that the Helmund at the time of that award ran along the present Nad Ali and Sikhsar Channels, the boundary presented little difficulty up to the point where it is said by Sir F. Goldsmid to enter the Maizar.

Local evidence and the unerring proofs afforded by surveys and levels established the fact that, at the time of the Goldsmid Mission, the point where the Helmund entered the Naizar is at the edge of the tract of mainland just north of Deh Ali Jangi and Ganguzar. The limits of the old Naizar can be still distinguished by the dry stumps of reed roots and the absence of old# tamarisk jungle which covers the mainland. From just west of this point the mainland jutted out northwards into the Naizar in a long narrow spit on which the Deh Buzi and Takht-i-Shah villages are now situated, and which terminates at a point known as Shalghami. The Afghan Commissioner has himself admitted that this spit was dry mainland and not Naizar at the time of the Goldsmid Mission. Applying Sir F Goldsmid's definition to the actual conditions of the country, the boundary line of his award ran along the eastern edge of this spit to Shalghami, thus leaving Takht-i-Shah in Persia.

27. From this point onwards the definition becomes very difficult of application. As shown by their own accounts of their journey to Lash Juwain, the Naizar even at the time of the Goldsmid Mission stretched practically across the whole of that portion of the Hamun tract between Seistan and the mainland of Lash Juwain. There was a larger of Hamun to the north-east than now exists since the Helmund has turned westwards, but then, as now, the Naizar stretched in places from the southern to the northern shore and only in years of high flood is there any wide stretch of open water to which the name of Hamun as distinct# from Naizar can be applied between the Hamun-i-Puza and the Hamun-i-Sabari; the Hamun area shown in our recent survey map is the area covered by water in years of high flood. Even at the time of the Goldsmid Mission it would have been impossible to lay down a boundary line from any point on the north bank of the Seistan mainland to Siah Koh in strict accordance with Sir F. Goldsmid's definition. The principle underlying his definition is that the boundary line should not enter the mainland north of the Hamun, which belongs to the Lash Juwain district of Afghanistan.

A straight line from Shalghami to the nar-i-Ahu peak fulfils this conditions.

28. The next difficulty was to determine the identity of the Siah Koh (Black hill) near Bandan referred to in the Goldsmid award. It was not visited by that Mission and the name was taken from people at a distance who probably knew as little of the names of the distant hills as their present successors. It is obvious, however, that a group of conspicuous black hills which stand out prominently near Bandan as seen from Seistan and Lah Juwain was the Siah Koh meant by Sir F. Goldsmid. The position in his map ascribed to this group confirms this.

None of these mountains, however, are locally known as Siah Koh. The three mountains composing the above group are

called Nar Ahu, Mada Ahu, and Sabzak, respectively, of which Nar Ahu is the most southern and Sabzak the most northern of the group.

That this group was understood by the Persians to be the Siah Koh of the Goldsmid award is proved by an old Persian map which is in my possession. On it is a note by Mir Alam Khan, the then Governor of Seistan, to the effect that "Siah Koh is also called Nar Abhi Mada Ahu".

It only remained to decide which of the three peaks best fulfils the Goldsmid definition. To Nar Ahu only of the three can a straight line be drawn from Shalghami without cutting the mainland north of the Hamun. Nar Ahu must, therefore, be taken to be the Siah Koh.

29. Having thus applied the boundary line defined by Sir F. Goldsmid to the existing country, it was necessary to next ascertain the conditions of actual present occupation and possession by Persia and Afghanistan of the country adjoining that line, and consider whether any modification of that line was necessary to suit present conditions.

It has already been explained in paragraphs 14 and 15 above how, in the absence of detailed information of the Goldsmid award, the people of Persian and Afghan Seistan had arrived at a mutual understanding regarding the boundary. The line recognized by them only differed from the actual line defined in the Goldsmid award from the point where the old Helmund entered the Naizar northwards. It thence ran along the old dry bed of the Sikhsar through the Naizar northwards and thence westwards north of the Shalghami to Mesh Kushi. From there nobody apparently has ever bothered their heads about boundaries. The line was vaguely understood to run in a straight line to Tappa-i-Kharan, and then westwards. How or where it ran from Tappa-i-Kharan no one has ever seemed to know or care. This is hardly surprising when one considers that the tract in question is nothing but Maizar, saline flats, marsh or Hamun until the barren waterless slopes of the mountains are reached. The desolate, waterless, saline flats studded with old ruins, which form the southern portion of the Lash Juwain district, moreover, offer no attraction to the people of that district, and they have always remained supremely indifferent about their southern boundary.

30. Both sides seem to have respected their mutually recognized boundary until the last few years, when the encroachments described in paragraph 17 above were made.

The Goldsmid line described in paragraphs 26, 27 and 28 above represents the boundary of actual present occupation except in the following cases:-

- (1) A small tract included by the Afghan canal west of the Sikhsar between Deh Gul Shah and Deh Hassan Kharot.

- (2) A small tract of Persian cultivation east of the Sikhsar at Ganguzar. In the winter of 1903-1904 the Persians further encroached in this direction by occupying the lands of Deh Ali Jangi.
- (3) The Persian cultivation and village at Tappa-i-Kaniz. This, it should be noted, is on the Persian side of the mutually recognized boundary, although east of the Goldsmid line as defined in paragraph 26 above.

Further north and west the vague ideas held of the boundary line by the Persian Seistanis and the apathy of the Lash Juwain people have resulted in the Persian Cattle owners grazing their herds and residing for portions of the year without let or hindrance as far north as the Farrah Rud, while Persian tax collectors have often collected grazing tax and taken fees from kafilas without objections being made as far north inside the Lash Juwain mainland as Peshawaran and Salian.

31. With the above information at my disposal it only remained to adapt the line of the Goldsmid award to present conditions. I considered that it was of primary importance for many reasons to reduce to a minimum any disturbance of existing conditions of occupation and possession. The circumstances of the case did not seem to call for changes, and I considered that arbitrary changes, however pleasing they might appear at first sight to one or other side, would in reality do more harm than good and the ill-feeling stirred up thereby would in the end injure both sides.

The explanations given by Sir F. Goldsmid of the principles underlying his award, as stated in paragraph 12 above, gave me, I considered, all the necessary authority for making the slight modifications required in his line which, at the same time, keeping my award within the terms of his award as required by the conditions imposed upon me by the Persian Government.

From the Koh-i-Malik Siah to the Band-i-Kuhak the only satisfactory solution of the boundary question equally fair to both sides was a straight line between these points. A tract of deserted country has formed the boundary up to now; but it is no longer safe to rely upon a boundary so indefinitely defined. I therefore decided to award a straight line.

From Kuhak to the mouth of the Afghan canal near Deh Gul Shah the line runs along the Helmund River and Nad Ali and Sikhsar channels. From that point I decided to award to Afghanistan the lands between their new canal and the old "Sim" as far as Deh Hassan Kharot, as a fair set off to the Persian encroachment at Tappa-i-Kaniz. The Persian encroachments at Ganguzar and Deh Ali Jangi could not be supported on any grounds, so I decided to restore those lands to Afghanistan.

I would have liked, with the above exception, to retain as the boundary of the old bed of the Sikhsar northwards which had for so long been recognized as such, but this is now only a small dry ditch about 2 feet wide and a few inches deep, in places no larger than a shallow furrow. It is very difficult to distinguish its course, and a careless ploughman might any day obliterate it for ever. To demarcate its course meant building pillars for a long distance through marsh lands subject to heavy inundation. It therefore decided to take advantage of a line of prominent and conveniently situated Tapps or mounds called Tappa-i-Tilai, Tappa-i-Shahraki, and Tappa-i-Kurki and run the boundary by straight lines at long them to Shalghami. This line very closely follows the course of the old "Sim."

From Shalghami to Siah Koh I saw no reason to depart from a straight line for the boundary, and for reasons stated in paragraph 28, the Nar Ahu was fixed upon as the Siah Koh.

32. It will be noticed that this line fails to include, in Afghanistan, Takht-i-Shah which the Persian Government in 1873 and 1974 understood to be outside the Persian boundary. I have explained in paragraph 26 how the Persian Government were mistaken in this idea. This place lies on the Persian side of the line as defined by Sir F. Goldsmid. My reason for now referring to this spot again in some detail is because regarding no place along the whole Seistan boundary has so much misunderstanding and discussion risen. This is the more extraordinary, as it is about the most miserable spot in Seistan. It consists of a few patches of poor culturable land in the midst of sand hills fringed on either side by a dismal waste of marsh and salt flats. Importance has been attached to this place by the Afghans owing to its having been specifically alluded to in correspondence between the other Governments concerned in the Seistan Settlement. The Afghan Commissioner made strenuous efforts to obtain its inclusion in Afghan territory, as he feared the Amir's wrath if he failed to do so. It was easy to see that he did not himself believe that the Afghans had any real right to it.

To include it in Afghan territory, even if this could have been done in accordance with the Goldsmid award, would have brought about a most undesirable state of affairs. It has always been in Persian possession, it is within a short distance of several Persian villages and is irrigable from Persian canal, whereas it is cut off for the greater portion of the year from the Afghan mainland by marsh and water. Whilst this Mission were camped there, the Afghan Commissioner could only reach us by travelling several miles through Persian territory. The nearest inhabited spot of Afghan territory was some 14 miles distant, and he urged me to leave the place as it gave him so much trouble to keep in touch with me while there! It cannot be irrigated from any Afghan canal system, and would, therefore, be useless to the Afghans. It would form an isolated island, so to speak, of Afghan territory thrust into inconvenience, trouble, and

irritation to the Persians. To prove the trouble it would cause, I need only quote the Afghan Commissioner's reply to my query as to what use Afghanistan would make of this worthless spot if they got it "Oh," said he "we would put an Afghan post there and at Tappa-i-Kaniz just to annoy the Persians." Further comment appears unnecessary.

33. Enough has been said above to fully explain the line I determined to award and the reasons which influenced me in so doing. My decision was arrived at by May 1903 and under ordinary circumstances I would have delivered forthwith an arbitral award accordingly, but the circumstances of the case were very far from ordinary, and I considered it wiser for the following reasons to defer the delivery of my award and take action on other and somewhat unusual lines.

The Persian Government still contended that no boundary questions were in dispute and that the scope of my arbitration extended only to the settlement of the Seistan water questions. To such lengths did they go in this direction that they actually demanded from me, through the British Legation in Teheran, an explanation as to why I visited the Siah Koh! It would appear that the reason of this unreasonable attitude was that the Russians had frightened them into believing that our arbitration would result in a large portion of Persian Seistan being given to the Afghans. Until the Persians consented to recognize the very obvious fact that boundary questions were in dispute, it seems premature to fire off a boundary award, and, moreover, I was obliged to look beyond my arbitral award and keep in view the fact that the boundary line itself had subsequently to be demarcated on the ground. This would not be possible until the award was accepted and approved of by both the countries concerned.

34. No further progress was made until June 14th, 1903, when a very opportune fracas occurred between Afghans and Persians over the disputed lands on the frontier near Deh Ali Jungi in which some Afghans were wounded. This gave me the desired opportunity of advancing matters an important step forward and I issued an arbitrary order in the form of an intermediate award laying down the boundary line ascribed in paragraph 31 above from Deh Gul Shah to Tappa-i-Tilai and called upon both Commissioners to prevent their people transgressing that line.

As this collision and my action thereon would necessarily prevent the Persian Government contending any longer that there were no boundary disputes, I thought the time had now arrived to communicate full particulars\* of the whole boundary question to the British Minister at Teheran and to define, for the information of the Persian Government, the line which I said I proposed, except under certain stated contingencies, to lay down in my arbitral award.

35. It may be asked why I did not deliver the whole of my award at this stage. To do so I considered would be playing into Russian hands as they would make the Persian Government believe they had been hardly dealt with in my award, no matter what its terms really were. An appeal to His Majesty's Foreign Secretary of state would doubtless have followed and that opened out a vista of interminable discussion and delays, and the ultimate confirmation of my award with the rejection of the Persian appeal would be represented to Persia as a fitting termination to our arbitrary and high-handed proceedings. The Russians had very favourable ground to work on. They have long ago got the Persians to believe that the Goldsmid award was an act of most cruel injustice to Persia, who had every right to the whole area of classic Seistan even as far up as Rudbar. So much national sentiment attaches to both the legendary and historical past of Seistan that the Persians always find it hard to view Seistan with undistorted perspective and have long nursed imaginary grievances regarding the Goldsmid settlement.

It seemed wiser, therefore, to try and work matters, if possible, so that the Persian Government should be reduced to accept my award before it was actually delivered. I could not alter it after formally delivering it, whereas the peculiar circumstances of the case enabled me, while laying all possible stress on the points where my proposed interpretation of the Goldsmid award could be shown to be favourable to Persia, to also hint very plainly that any reconsideration of the question on wider lines, and in the light of past injudicious admissions and statements of the Persian Government, would result in an interpretation much less favourable to Persia, if she did not accept the settlement now proposed.

A lengthy correspondence ensued and the Persian Government, while no longer able to deny that boundary disputes were in question, endeavoured to question the justice of my line and to insist on various conditions relating to the Seistan water question being included in my boundary award, and coupled with boundary questions. To describe the new positions taken up and abandoned by the Persian Government at this period is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that nothing seems to have been left undone by Persia's disinterested Russian advisers to complicate simple questions.

36. During this stage I received some valuable assistance from one of the Persian Commissioners, the Yamin-i-Nizam. I had delayed communicating to him the details of my proposed award until they were just about to reach Teheran. This gave him no time to forward any objections to Teheran in consultation with the Russian Consul in Seistan, with whom he had hitherto been working conjointly, and to confess, at this late stage, his ignorance of my opinions and intentions would have exposed him to a rebuke from his Government. He was,

moreover, agreeably surprised to find that my proposed award was much more favourable to Persia than anything I had yet given him cause to hope for. He, therefore, took the only wise course open to him and strongly recommended by telegram and letters the acceptance of my proposals. Under instructions from his Government, he continually kept pressing upon me the consideration of various water questions designed to complicate the boundary settlement.

37. I steadily declined to discuss any water questions until the boundary question was settled, and in doing so I was obliged to repeat more and more plainly the warning conveyed in my previous communication, until on the 24th October 1903, I informed the Yamin-i-Nizam, for the information of his Government, that matters had then reached a stage when nothing remained for me, but to consider the whole boundary question on wider lines and award a boundary in strict accordance with the letter of the Goldsmid definition, irrespective of all existing conditions of possession or occupation. On the 1st November the Persian Government agreed to accept my line unconditionally.\* This satisfactory result having at last been achieved and the hands of the Persian Government being thus completely tied in the matter of any appeal, I proceeded to formally deliver my award. It was delivered to the Afghan Commissioner on the 8th November and to the Persian Commission on the 11th November 1903. The text of the award as delivered was communicated to the Government of India and Teheran in my letter No. 1259 of 14th November 1903.

It is necessary to note here that, although the terms of my proposed award had long ago been communicated to the Persians, the Afghans had until now remained in ignorance of them. This was necessary as long as there was any chance of my being obliged to modify my award in consequence of the contingencies referred to above. I had, moreover, steadily endeavoured to minimise any expectations on the part of the Afghans of a line unduly favourable to themselves, and any misgiving which they protracted period of our discussion with the Persian Government had instilled into their minds were allowed to remain there.

The result was as intended and hoped for, i.e., that when the time came to enlighten them they were very agreeably surprised at the line propounded in my award. The Afghan Commissioner in forwarding it to His Highness the Amir wrote in very favourable terms of it and strongly recommended its acceptance.

38. He expressed to me his confidence that the Amir would accept it, but said it was not improbably that some delay might occur in this as the Persians had created so much delay in the matter that the Afghan Government might think it unbecoming to their dignity to show undue alacrity in expressing their final approval of the boundary settlement.

This supposition proved correct. No reply was received from the Amir until early in April 1904 when he informed the Government of India that he accepted my award. He stated, however, that demarcation was undesirable. His letter (no. 52 of 10th March 1904), to which I invited reference, expresses approval of the boundary settlement and argues that an award on my part more favourable to Afghanistan would have played into the Russian hands. It affords interesting corroboration of the views expressed in paragraph 35 above. This connection in the Amir's mind of Russia with the Seistan question, coupled with the annoyance he was then experiencing at their hands, in the matter of the demarcated Russo-Afghan frontier, led him, as stated in his letter, to desire that the Seistan line should not be demarcated.

39. Further representations to Kabul by the government of India resulted at last in a letter (No. 57 of 12th August 1904) from His Highness the Amir agreeing to demarcation. This did not reach me until 5th September when I informed the Afghan Commissioner the Afghan Commissioner of the Amir's consent. No authority, however, had reached him from Kabul and he was naturally afraid to take action without it. I explained that doubtless the Amir considered his communication to the Government of India sufficient and I had no option but to act upon it as sufficient authority for demarcation. In deference to the Afghan Commissioner's anxiety I decided to limit our work at first to the demarcation of the straight line from Koh-i-Malik Siah to Kuhak, and work commenced on the 23rd September.

The line from Koh-i-Malik Siah to the Band-i-Seistan, running as it does through absolutely waterless desert from some ninety miles, presented great difficult. All water, both for men and animals and building, had to be brought from a distance varying from ten to twenty-five miles, and some four hundred camels were continuously employed on this work. The heat, wind, dust, haze and mirage interfered greatly with the work of alignment and the straight line from Koh-i-Malik Siah to Kuhak was not finished until November 18th, 1904. The building parties, who worked for over one and a half months in the waterless desert, suffered considerable hardships.

In the meantime the Afghan Commissioner received, on 30th October, the requisite authority from His Highness the Amir to assist in demarcation.\* This letter was the first intimation the Afghan Commissioner had yet received of the Amir's acceptance of my award. There was a complete absence of any note of disapproval of the boundary settlement in this letter and it cause the Afghan Commissioner the liveliest satisfaction.

The details of the demarcation of the boundary line are very fully related elsewhere. It is sufficient to say here that a low Hamun enabled me to demarcate with boundary pillars most of the usually inundated portion of the line

between Shalghami and the Siah Koh. The last 25 miles from the western shore of the Hamun to Siah Koh ran through another stretch of absolutely waterless country.

The whole line was successfully demarcated up to the Siah Koh by the 29th December 1904. Masonry pillars carefully built, many of them of great size and height, have been built along the line. Every care has been taken to mark clearly with pillars all portions of the line where future doubt might arise and to demarcate the whole line in a manner that is best waited for durability and permanence.

The arduous duty of building the pillars, a task which involved careful and extensive arrangements and considerable hardship, was entrusted to Mr. T. R. J. Ward and the thorough manner in which the work has been carried out is deserving of the highest praise.

It is not to be expected that the plaster covering of these pillars will long resist the destructive effects of the alternating heat and frost of Seistan, but the loss of the outer skin will have no effect on the durability of the pillars themselves. I would suggest, however, that His Majesty's Consul in Seistan should be instructed to have all the pillars visited each year and arrange for the annual repair and whitewashing of them all.

40. The preparation and completion of boundary maps and statements and other final documents relating to the boundary line occupied the whole of January 1905. Further delay in their delivery arose through the unavoidable who in consequence of important work connected with his district was unable to rejoin my camp. On the 20th February# 1905 the following documents were delivered to both the Persian and Afghan Commissioners:-

- (1) A covering letter, dated 1st February 1905, addressed by me to both Commissioners enumerating the documents therewith handed over to them for delivery to their respective Governments.
- (2) A statement written in Persian on parchment, defining in all necessary detail the course of the boundary line as demarcated and the manner of its demarcation. This document may be considered as my final arbitral award on the Seistan boundary question.
- (3) A map of the whole Seistan boundary, in two sheets drawn on tracing cloth, on a scale of one inch = four miles.
- (4) A map of that portion of the boundary from the point of separation of the Rud-i-Paroun and Nad Ali branches of the Helmund to Tappa-i-Tilai, in one sheet drawn on tracing cloth, on the scale of one inch = one mile.
- (5) A detailed list of boundary pillars prepared on ferrotype showing the position and nature of each

pillar. This list is written in Persian and comprises three large sheets of cloth-mounted ferrotype paper.

41. The following documents are herewith forwarded to the Government of India:-

- (A) A roll containing an exact facsimile in every respect (including material and method of production) of each of the five documents above, as given to the Persian and Afghan Commissioners, together with the receipts, in original, signed by the Persian and Afghan Commissioners for the documents delivered to them. All documents in this roll are marked A in red ink.
- (B) A roll containing exact copies of the above five documents, in ferrotype, together with an exact English rendering of No. (5) on cloth-mounted ferrotype paper, in three sheets.
- (C) An English translation of the covering letter to the Persian and Afghan Commissioners, i.e., No. (1) above.
- (D) A list of pillars and detailed particular of each in English, typewritten. [N.B.- This list and the particulars noted therein includes some details which are not shown in the list of pillars, (5) above, given to the Persian and Afghan Commissioners and which will facilitate the identification of any pillar regarding which any dispute may hereafter arise.-A.H.M.]
- (F) Plans and drawings of all the boundary pillars in original.

42. This report has, I fear, attained somewhat large proportions, but this has been unavoidable in the case of a question which, possession certain intricacies of its own, has by reason of unnecessary complications of an unusual nature taken two years of tedious labout to unravel and settle.

It is gratifying in bringing this review of its history and settlement to a close to be able to record the opinions entertained of its settlement by the countries concerned. In the settlement of all boundary questions, more especially where they relate to a country to which sentimental as well as material importance attaches, there is always a grave risk of the discussion re-opening the old sentimental grievances of either side, and of awakening the slumbering ill-feelings of the past, and of the eventual settlement leaving both sides discontented and with ruffled feelings that take some time to calm down. In the present case I am glade to be able to report that no such result have accrued. Both sides, as represented by those most intimately concerned, i.e., the officials and the people of the country itself, appear\* genuinely satisfied and pleased with their boundary as now settled and demarcated. It is a boundary line to which, with slight exceptions, they have already been long accustomed.

The very slight modification which the previous Seistan boundary has required and the satisfaction with which the present settlement has been locally accepted furnish solid evidence of success of Sir Frederick Goldsmid's award on which it is based.

43. A copy of this report is being forwarded direct to His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Teheran and to His Britannic Majesty's Consul for Seistan and Kain, together with the following documents, viz., (B), (C), (D), and (E), as described in paragraph 41 above.

A copy of this report with documents (B), (C), and (D) are also being sent direct to Mr. Dane, O.S.I., Kabul Mission, for information.

Appendix III

Colonel Henry McMahon's statements on  
Sistan Boundary demarcation. (+)

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Final Arbitral Statement on the Seistan Boundary by COLONEL A.H. McMAHON, C.S.I., C.I.E., British Commissioner, Seistan Arbitration Commission, dated 1st February 1905.

1. The boundary line between Persia dn Afghanistan in Seistan was defined in my arbitral award of November 1903 as follows:-

"The boundary line in Seistan between Afghanistan on the east and Persia on the west should run as follows, i.e., from the Malik Siah Koh in a straight line to the Band-i-Kuhak and thence along the bed of the Helmund river to the point of separation\* of its two branches, the Rud-i-Parian and Nad Ali channel. From there it should follow the bed of the Mad Ali channel into the Sikhsar and along the bed of Sikhsar to a point near Deh Yar Muhammad where the Sikhsar has been diverted towards the west in the water channel shown on the map which joins the Shela-i-Shamshiri near to Deh Hassan to the Shela-i-Shamshiri leaving Deh Hassan Kharot on the east it should then run in a straight line separating the hamlets of Deh Ali Mardan on the west from Deh Ali Jangi on the east to Tappa-i-Tilai; thence in a straight line to the most western of the mounds of Tappa-i-Shaharaki; thence in a straight line to the most western mound of Tappa-i-Kurki; thence in a straight line to Shalghami; and thence in a straight line to Siah Koh, Bandan."

2. The above award having been accepted by both Governments, I have now demarcated the boundary line by boundary pillars in strict accordance with that award. The following remarks will clearly explain the boundary line and the manner in which that line has been demarcated by pillars.

3. The starting point of the boundary line is marked by a boundary pillar on the summit of Malik Siah Koh which was constructed by the Afghan-Baluchistan Boundary Commissioner in 1896, and is known as Boundary Pillar No. 186 of that Commission.

4. The latitude and longitude of this and all other Seistan boundary pillars, the position of each with regard to

(+) From Colonel A.H. McMahon C.S.I., C.I.E. British Commissioner, Sistan Arbitration Commission, to the Persian and Afghan Commissioners, dated the 1st February 1905, FO 60/728 , pp. 14 to 24.

prominent places visible from them, and all necessary particulars of their size and construction are fully stated in the list of boundary pillars attached to this statement.

The position of each boundary pillar is also clearly shown in the two maps attached to this.

5. From the top of Malik Siah Koh to the Band-i-Kuhak (also called Band-i-Seistan) the straight line of boundary has been marked by 51 pillars. As these are all in exactly one straight line a further description of each is unnecessary; and it suffices to say that No. 12 is on the sought bank of the Shela, No. 36 on the north bank of the Sana rud, and No. 51 on the left bank of the Helmund river where the Rud-i-Seistan leaves that river at the Band-i-Kuhak. Between pillars Nos. 8 and 9 and between Nos. 12 and 13 are 3 and 8 miles respectively of heavy sand through which it was not possible to demarcate the line with pillars.

Besides these 51 pillars there are 16 smaller marks also exactly on the straight line. The positions and particulars of these are stated in the attached list of pillars. They bear the following numbers in that list:- 13!, 14A, 15A, 16A, 17A, 18A, 18B, 18C, 21A, 23A, 23B, 25A, 25B, 26A, 32A, 43A, but in order to prevent confusion with boundary pillars they have been shown in the map attached to this only as small black dots without numbers.

6. From the Band-i-Kuhak demarcation with pillars was unnecessary along the course of the Helmund river as far as the point of separation of the Rud-i-Pariun and Nad Ali branches of that river. To mark this point pillar No. 52 has been built at a distance of 94 feet from the left, i.e., Persian, bank of the Nad Ali channel, and pillar No. 53, has been built at a distance of 65 feet from the right or Afghan bank of the same channel. The boundary line thence follows the Nad Ali channel. The old ruin of Burj-i-As marks the right bank of that channel near Nad Ali, and pillar No. 54 marks the right bank at the point where the Shela-i-Charakh leave that channel. From Pillar No. 54 the Nad Ali channel is known as the Sikhsar. Pillar No. 55 marks the left bank of the Sikhsar at the point where the Deh Dost Muhammad canal takes off from it, while pillar No. 56 also marks the left bank at the point where the Sikhsar again turns northwards. Pillar No. 57 has been built on a prominent mound called Tappa-i-Sikhsar.

Further north, pillar No. 58 which has been built at a distance of 109 feet from the right bank, and pillar No. 59, which is situated 20 feet from the left bank of the Sikhsar stream, mark the point where the boundary line leaves the Sikhsar as defined in my award. Pillar No. 58 is built alongside the site of Deh Yar Muhammad. That village mentioned in my award has lately been deserted and no longer exists.

7. Further demarcation of the course of the Helmund river and the Nad Ali and the Sikhsar streams is at present impossible owing to the nature of the banks, which are liable to be inundated. Moreover further demarcation appears unnecessary at the present time as the course of the water in those streams clearly marks the boundary. Hereafter should any of those streams dry up by reason of a change in the course of the Helmund, and cease to be water channels, their course can easily be ascertained and demarcated, if necessary, with the aid of the pillars and places above described.

8. From Pillar No. 59 the course of the boundary line is demarcated by pillars Nos. 60 and 61 built on the left bank of the water channel which joins the Shela-i-Shamshiri near Deh Hassan Karot. Pillar No. 62 has been built to mark this point on the south bank of the Shela-i-Shamshiri close to Deh Hassan Kharot. From here the straight line to Tappa-i-Tilai has been marked by pillars Nos. 63, 64 and 65, the last named being built on the top of Tappa-i-Tilai. It is necessary to note here that the villages of Deh Ali Mardan and Deh Ali Jangi mentioned in my award as being on either side of this line have been deserted since my award was delivered and neither of them now exist.

9. To illustrate the boundary line from the point of separation of the Rud-i-Parun and Nad Ali channels to Tappa-i-Tilai in greater detail than is possible in a map of 4 miles to 1 inch, a map of 1 mile to 1 inch of that portion of the boundary line is attached to this statement.

10. Pillar No. 66 has been built on the top of the most western of the Sharaki Tapps and the straight line onwards to Tappa-i-Kurki is marked by pillars Nos. 67 and 68, the latter being situated on the top of the most western of the Kurki Tappas. On the straight line between pillar No. 68 and Shalghami, which is marked by pillar No. 70, pillar No. 69 has been built. The land on which pillars Nos. 67 and 69 have been built is generally under water, but as it happened to be dry at the time of demarcation massive masonry pillars have been built at those points which it is hoped will last a long time.

11. From pillar No. 70 at Shalghami, the straight line of boundary to Siah Koh has been marked by 19 pillars, Nos. 71 to 90. Of these pillars some are built in Naizar lands subject to inundation, and every care has been taken to build them strong and massive enough to last a long time. The line from pillar No. 70 to pillar No. 76 passes 600 feet south of the most southern edge of a prominent Tappa called Tappa-i-Kharan, 3,223 feet south of the centre of top of southern face of Tappa-i-Shaghalaq, and 1,485 feet south of the highest point of Tappa-i-Musjidak. Between pillars Nos. 76 and 77 the line crosses the open water of the Hamun and demarcation was impossible. Pillar No. 77 is on the west shore of the Hamun, and the line thence ascends the barren

and waterless glaciers and slopes of the Siah Koh. Pillar No. 90 is on the summit of Siah Koh, which is also known locally as the Nar-i-Ahu.

12. Two maps accompany this statement. One, in two sheets is on a scale of 1 inch = 4 miles and illustrates the whole boundary from Malik Siah Koh to Siah Koh. The other is a scale of 1 inch = 1 miles, and illustrates the boundary between the point of separation of the Rud-i-Pariun and Mad Ali channels of the Helmund and Tappa-i-Tilai only.

It should be noticed that the number of names of villages has been restricted as much as possible in these maps. This is due to the fact that most of the villages in Seistan frequently change not only their names but also their position. Endeavour has been made to show only such villages as are likely to be permanent.

These maps should be considered as superseding those issued with my award of November 1903.

13. Attached to this statement is a list, already referred to, of all the boundary pillars, giving all necessary particulars of their position, size constructions, etc.

14. All measurements such as inches, feet, yards and miles in this statement and the accompanying list of boundary pillars, are English inches, feet, yards and miles.

A.A. McMAHON, Colonel,  
British Commissioner, Seistan Arbitration Commission.

Appendix IV

Extract from the draft of the final report of Colonel McMahon on the settlement of the Sistan Boundary, FO 60/727, pp. 1 - 2.

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"First, the fact is, in my opinion, conclusively proved, not only from local evidence, but from the unerring proof afforded by levels and surveys, that, at the time of Sir Fred. Goldsmid's Mission, the point where the old Helmand channel entered the Naizar was at the north edge of the tract of mainland now called Deh Ali Jangi and Ganguzar. From here westwards, the mainland jutted out northwards into the Naizar in a long narrow spit, on which the Deh Buzi and Takht-i-Shah villages are now situated, and which terminated at a point which is now known as Shalgumi. The Afghan Commissioner has himself admitted to me, although such evidence is hardly required to prove the fact, that this long spit was dry mainland, and not Naizar, at the time of the Goldsmid Mission. The strict interpretation of Goldsmid's definition obviously brings his boundary line along the edge of this spit of mainland to Shalgumi, whence his straight line takes off to Siah Koh.

"The Persians have, for some years, cultivated a small reclaimed area of old Naizar round Tappa-i-Kaniz, where a small Persian village long existed. This cultivation, strictly speaking, is an encroachment on the Naizar as existing in 1872. This tract is irrigated by extension of the canal which goes from the Rod-i-Parun to Takht-i-Shah, and I should mention here that there is no possibility of irrigating it from any other source.

"West of this spit of mainland, there is little needing remark. To the western edge of the Hamun-i-Saburi the country is Naizar, marsh, and Hamun, either entirely or only partially flooded, according to the annual volume of the Helmand.

"To those who have followed the above statements of the history of the boundary question and of existing conditions, it will not, I think, be a difficult matter to form a definite opinion as to a boundary line which would not only be in accordance with Sir Fred. Goldsmid's definition as interpreted with the aid of accurate local survey, but cause the minimum of disturbance in the existing conditions of present occupation and possession.

"I will briefly describe the line which, in my opinion, fulfilled these conditions, and which I have accordingly laid down in my award.

"From Kohak the boundary runs as before, and follows the hitherto recognised line of Nad Ali and Sikh Sar channels to Deh Gul Shah. From here, I have taken the Afghan encroachment, west of the old Sim, as a set off to the Persian encroachment in the Naizar, at Tappa-i-Kaniz. Sir Fred. Goldsmid's interpretation of his own award, vide paragraph above, applies effectively to the case of Tappa-i-Kaniz. The line, as now awarded, is marked, therefore, by the Afghan canal to Deh Hassan Kharot, and thence a straight line to Tappa-i-Talai, and thence in straight lines though Tappas-i-Sharak and Kurki to Shalgumi.

"The Persian encroachment, in the face of Afghan protest, at Ganguzar, cannot be supported on any grounds, and possession has been given to the Afghans.

"These prominent Tappas have been chosen to mark the boundary line, as they are the only conspicuous marks in this flat waste. The ground between each is a salt marshy land generally under water. It will be noticed that the line as demarcated follows as closely as possible the old main channel of the Helmand, which was for so long mutually recognised as the boundary. It is not possible to trust to the faintly marked line of depression which has hitherto marked this. A ploughshare might any day obliterate forever.

"From Shalgumi, the line runs straight to Siah Koh.

"About no place along the whole of the Seistan Boundary has more misunderstanding and discussion arisen than about Takht-i-Shah. This is the more extraordinary as it is the most miserable spot in Seistan. It consists of a few patches of poor culturable land of bad salt soil, in the midst of sandhills fringed on either side with a dismal waste of marsh and salt lands. It is possible that at the time when the Persian Government, in 1873-74, thinking erroneously that it was included in Afghanistan, made such efforts to obtain possession of it, the Naizar in the neighbourhood was of large extent, and, as such, afforded better grazing for herds than other places. Whatever may have been the case, then, it offers no advantages now. With the shrinkage of the Naizar, the grazing in that neighbourhood has diminished, and now-a-days both Afghans and Persians have ample and luxuriant Naizar grazing grounds elsewhere.

"Importance has been attached to this place by the Afghans, because it has been specifically named in the correspondence between the other Governments

concerned. The Afghan Commissioner made strenuous efforts to get possession of this tract, as he feared the Amir's wrath if he failed to do so. It was easy to see that he did not, himself, believe that the Afghans had any real right to it.

"To include it in Afghan territory, would have brought about a most undesirable state of affairs. It is cut off, for the greater portion of the year, from the Afghan mainland, by marsh and water. When this Mission was camped there, the Afghan Commissioner could only reach me by passing through several miles of Persian territory. The nearest inhabited spot in Afghan territory was about 14 miles distant, and the Afghan Commissioner urged me to leave that locality, as it gave him so much trouble to keep in touch with me. It cannot be irrigated except from the Persian canal system, and would, therefore, be useless to the Afghans. It would form an isolated island, so to speak, of Afghan territory thrust into Persian Seistan, and, as such, would not fail to become a source of inconvenience, irritation, and trouble to the Persians. To explain what needless trouble it might cause, I must note the Afghan Commissioner's reply to my question as to the use Afghanistan would make of this worthless place if they got it. "Oh", said he, "we would put an Afghan post there, and at Tappa-i-Kaniz, just to annoy the Persians"! Further comments appears unnecessary.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Note Marginally referred to above.-

Regarding his line from the Helmand northwards, Sir Fred. Goldsmid wrote in Minute to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (pages 80-81 of Plowden's Precis of 1879) as follows:-

"it would certainly not be contrary to the spirit of arbitration to allow Persia the benefit of any reeds or cultivation within the Naizar which fairly belong to the places assigned to her as such, as Jalalabad, Jehanabad, &c., provided they do not equally belong to places north of the Naizar

"The cultivation at Tappa-i-Kaniz at the present date comes within this category.

A. H. McMAHON"(1)

## C H A P T E R   V I I I

### EASTERN IRANIAN BOUNDARIES = EVOLUTION OF SISTAN BOUNDARY

#### SECTION III: HIRMAND WATER DISPUTES (1872 - 1939)

##### Geographical Backgrounds

Rising in the Baba mountain to the north-west of Kabul, Hirmand river flows through Afghanistan for most of its course, but before emptying into the Lake Hamun, it forms the boundary between Iran and Afghanistan for about 40 to 50 miles.<sup>(1)</sup>

The name of the river is an ancient Persian adjective: a combination of the word "Hir" meaning "water" in pre-Islamic Persian, and the common suffix "mand" which implies abounding in". The combination thus means "the river of abundant water". Similar descriptive adjectives exist in modern Persian such as "honarmand" which is a combination of the word "Honar" meaning "art" and the suffix "mand", describing a person of abundant artistic talents.<sup>(2)</sup> The name "Hirmand" appears in this form in all Persian and Arabic works of geography and history of the post Islamic era. Referring to the city of Bost in Afghanistan: Maqdasi<sup>(3)</sup> states that the city and its fortress, surrounded by great suburbs, stood one league above the junction of the river Khardaruy<sup>(4)</sup> (modern Argandab) with the Hirmand.<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) Wilber, Donald N., editor, "Afghanistan", Human Relations Area File, 1956, p. 24.

(2) Mojtahehd-Zadeh, Pirouz "Bar Sistan Va Hirmand Che Gozashteh Ast", Rahavard Persian Quarterly, No. 25, Los Angeles, Winter, 1990 - 91, pp. 262 - 271.

(3) Maqdasi is an Arab Geographer of fourth century of Hijra.

(4) Correctly "Khardarya".

(5) Le Strange, G. "The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate", London 1966, p. 345.

It is for unknown reasons, however, that the British travellers and recorders of the nineteenth century adopted the term " Helmand" or "Helmund", a corruption of this name, used locally in south-west Afghanistan.

Flowing for about 650 miles in a north-east to south-westerly direction, Hirmand enters the Iranian border area at Kuhak (see figures I and III). Its drainage system includes most of the central and southern half of Afghanistan. The course of the river, upstream of the delta, is made up of two parts with quite distinct characteristics: one, mountain; the other, plain. The mountain basin occupies a great part of the southern slope of the Afghan massif and feeds a great number of tributaries, which flow together in two principal streams: the Hirmand main branch which is also known as Zamin Davar; and the Arghandab branch which, in turn, unite near Qal'eh-e Bost, at the edge of the mountain zones. Describing Hirmand, Tate states: "of these, the Helmand is the first in rank draining an area of about 100,000 square miles, and with a discharge in the summer (taken in Sistan) of 70,000 cubic feet per second in ordinary years. This river ranks the twelfth in the list of rivers of Asia, having regard to area drained by it and its tributaries, and eleventh with reference to the population it supports."<sup>(1)</sup>

Hirmand carries a great deal more water in its upper sections and its width at Zamin Davar is about 900 metres in the Spring and Summer, and about 300 metres in the Winter months.<sup>(2)</sup> Its width in Sistan is much less than it is in Zamin Davar. Hirmand's width reduces at Milak where Rud-e Parian takes off to 200 metres with a depth of two to three metres.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Tate, G.P., "Travel on the Borders of Persia and Afghanistan", London 1909, part III, p. 120. Mr Tate was a member of Colonel Sir Henry McMahon's Sistan Arbitration Commission team.

(2) Mokhber, Mohammad Ali, "Marzhay-e Iran", Tehran 1945, p. 101.

(3) Ibid.

From Qal'eh-Bost which is Arghandab's confluence with Hirmand, the river crosses the deserts of Rigestan<sup>(1)</sup> and Dasht-e Marg<sup>(2)</sup> for about 250 miles within definite banks with respect to the plain. Before reaching the delta region of Sistan, Hirmand changes its direction northwards at Band-e Kamal Khan, and in Sistan it subdivides into numerous branches which flow into the Hamun-e Hirmand and Hamun-e Puzak.

Data available from Colonel McMahon's Arbitration Commission's measurements of Hirmand water at the turn of the twentieth century<sup>(3)</sup>, at the bifurcation, indicate annual flows (from October to September of three years - 1902 - 1905) respectively of 7.7, 5.4 and 3.6 thousand million cubic metres: minimum monthly flows of 40 - 50 million cubic metres: and maximum of about 2000 million cubic metres.<sup>(4)</sup> Against these figures, data from observations made at Chahar Borjak measuring station - situated in the plain section about 45 miles upstream of the delta - in the period between October 1946 and September 1950, gathered by Hirmand Delta Mission shows that: the flows were 2.2, 4.5, 6.6 and 6.5 thousand million cubic metres, respectively, with minimum monthly flows in the months of September and October (exclusive of September 1947, exceptionally low) of  $30 \times 10$  cubic metres (equal to a capacity of about 11 - 12 cubic metres per second) and maximum of 1.8 -  $2.6 \times 10$  cubic metres in the months of April and May (700 - 1000 cubic metres per second).<sup>(5)</sup>

The above two sets of data show clearly a drop in the average amount of water flowing in Hirmand downstream in the first

(1) Meaning the Land of pebbles.

(2) Meaning the plain of death.

(3) Period from October 1902 to September 1905.

(4) As quoted in Italconsult's "Socio-Economic Development plan for the South-Eastern Region", Preliminary Report to Plan Organisation of Iran, Rome, November 1959, p. 52.

(5) Ibid.

half of the twentieth century during which the Afghans constructed a number of dams and canals on the Hirmand.

The Afghans signed, in 1945 a series of agreements with American firms for the construction of dams and canals on the river Hirmand. The most important of the dams built by the American construction were Abgardan (diversion) Boghra dam at Girishk together with Boghra canal of seventy kilometres, with a capacity of 2800 cubic feet per second, and the Kajaki reservoir dam with a capacity of 1.5 million cubic feet, and the Juy-e Now canal which was constructed near the Iranian borders<sup>(1)</sup> (see figure III). Arghandab dam constructed on the Arghandab branch of the Hirmand is another important dam built at this period. Kajaki is situated on the Hirmand main branch above Arghandab's confluence. Recording data concerning this dam, Italconsult report of November 1959 indicates:

*"Two important barriers have been built on the two above-mentioned principal streams: one, on the Hirmand at Kajakai, consisting of an earth rock dam with a volume of  $3.3 \times 10$  cu. m., 98 m. high, 550 m. long, with dam lake of  $3.5 \times 10$  cu. m.; the other on the Argand Ab, near Qandahar, consisting of an earth dam with a volume of  $3.6 \times 10$  cu. m., 48 m. high, 530 m. long, with a dam lake of  $480 \times 10$  cu. m. The two reservoirs enable a total of 380,000 ha. to be irrigated. These dams are capable of making considerable variations in the water supply of the two streams, artificially determining the high or low level of the river, the former extremely dangerous, given the heavy overall flow from the dams (equal to 4,000 cu. m./sec.)"<sup>(2)</sup>*

The utilisation of the accumulated waters, if limited to the middle basin of the Hirmand, would have a strong repercussion on the delta zone, where the amounts to be destined for irrigation and, in any case, those flowing into

(1) Mojtahehd-Zadeh, Pirouz, "The Eastern Iranian Boundaries", paper presented to the seminar on the Iranian Boundaries at the Geopolitics and International Boundaries Research Centre, SOAS, December 9, 1991.

(2) Italconsult Report, op. cit., p. 51.

the Hamun-e Hirmand, would diminish. From this, there would be a consequent reduction in the size of the lake, itself a major source of irrigation in Sistan, and should the outflow of the waters through Shileh Shallaq - a natural canal flowing Hamun's surplus waters into God-e Zereh (see figure II of previous chapter) - cease, a progressive increase in the salinity of the waters. Hence, in preparing a plan for the economic rehabilitation of Sistan, it is essential to know thoroughly the Afghan irrigation projects, how the reservoirs will be utilised, and how it is intended to safeguard the interests of the current uses downstream. The course of the Hirmand in the delta region begins at Kuhak where the river - the direction of which is from south to north - subdivides into two main branches; the Sistan river which takes off at Kuhak in a south-east to north-westerly direction, and Hirmand channel which continues northwards as far as Milak, where Rud-e Parian takes off most of the waters. This branch, from Kuhak to Milak, is now generally known as "Common Parian" or "Parian-e Moshtarak". The rest of the waters continue in a northwards direction, generally known as Nad-e Ali Channel, the old bed of the river. Its continuation towards the Neizar is known as Sikh-Sar Channel which is no longer identifiable on the ground. Each of these branches subdivides into a number of branches and canals in the delta region, potentially enabling Hirmand waters to reach all population centres and cultivable lands in Sistan (see figures I and III).

Rud-e Sistan constitutes the most important branch of the delta region of Hirmand, in as much as it crosses and irrigates the most fertile and populous zone of Sistan, both the Shibab and Poshtab, and further through the Azar Canal, conveys the greater part of the irrigated waters to the third zone of Sistan, the Mian Kangi.

The other branch of Hirmand, called the Common Parian (Parian-e Moshtarak) - as it forms the boundary between Iran and Afghanistan - is subdivided in its turn into various branches, of which the most important are the inner Parian

(Dakheli), the Milak and the Shah Nahr-Holmir, all situated in Iranian territory. The inner Parian or Rud-e Parian subdivides, in turn, into numerous branches, among which are the Shir Del, the Maleki and the Niatak. The first two carry water to the Mian Kangi region, the third to the northern Poshtab and to the Mian Kangi<sup>(1)</sup> (see figure I). A background study of the changes of course of Hirmand in the delta region made by M. P. Tandy, British Vice-Consul for Sistan in 1940, accompanied by a sketch he drew himself, provides useful information on the formation of the existing main branches and related deltas. He indicates that it took some 60 years to silt up the Cilling delta of Rud-e Sistan which he refers to as "Nurab", and some 40 years to silt up the Alamdar<sup>(2)</sup> delta on the Afghan side of the boundary line (see figure II). He continues:

"In the past the river has usually given previous indication of the coming change by floods along the new bed which scour it out. In the next year of high flood the new bed is then deep enough to take the main discharge. Last year's flood of the Nurab appears to have been of this nature, and I have for some weeks suspected that a change in the course of the Helmand was threatened. I was, however, waiting until it was possible to visit Band-i-Seistan before submitting a report; this the flood of the 3rd February anticipated.

"I have inspected the Nurab at several points along its course up to KalaiKuhna and I have also seen the previous main channel of the Helmand (Rud-i-Pariun) at Malaki. Of the two the "Nurab" was wider and deeper and, if anything, faster. There are, however, two other channels running north. I forded the western most one and found it only some 3 foot deep and sluggish, while the other, (the Siksar on the Afghan boundary) was said to be even smaller. I am therefore of the opinion that the discharge of the Burab a month ago was about equal to that of the old bed of the Helmand. This is merely an amateur opinion and not founded on any measurements or calculations whatsoever.

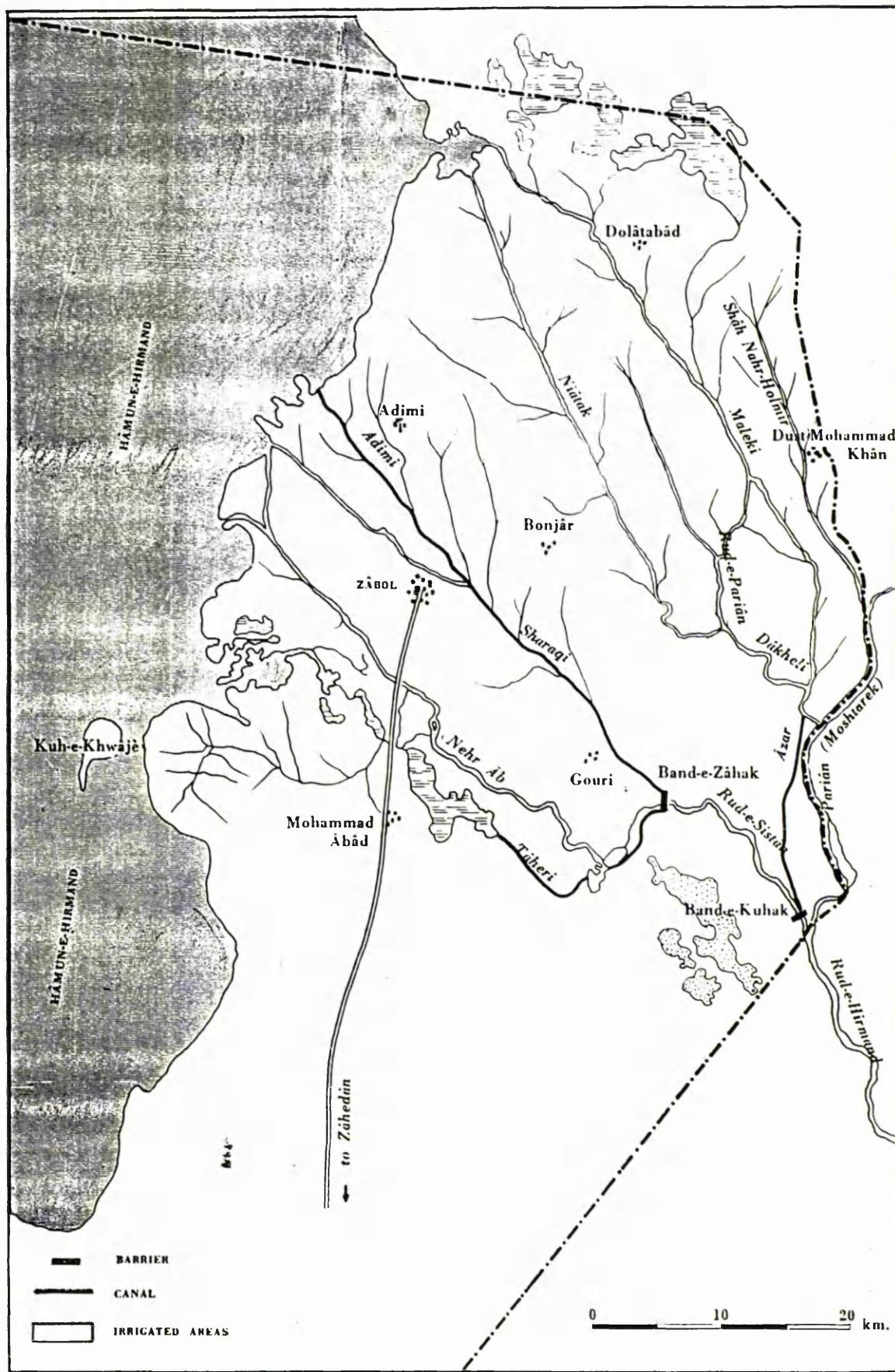
"In previous years there has been at Kohak (the point of divergence of the Nurab from the Helmand) a dam to turn the water from the Helmand into the Nurab for irrigation. This used to be built in August of tamarisk fascines, and the spring flood used to carry

(1) For more detail see Italconsult's report on Sistan (1959).

(2) Tandy spelled this name as "Ilamdar".

**Figure I**

Hirmand's subdivisions in Sistan as appeared in  
Italconsult's report of 1959



it away. Without it the Nurab would have carried no water, at least during the winter. Last autumn this bend (or at any rate the Irani half of it) was not built. The heavy winter discharge of the Nurab has therefore found its own way into that river un-assisted by any dam.

"A fact which points to the change of bed being at present far from complete is that during the floods of 3rd February the Rud-i-Pariun also flooded very severely; but this does not prove that no change in the river bed is in progress. In the past such changes have taken several years, during which the old bed may carry water. I think I am right in saying, however, that it is unusual for a river to divide into two branches and for both of them to carry an equal amount of water for any length of time. That being so I consider that the "Nurab" is in process of becoming the 'Helmand'.

"The obvious result of this will be considerable suffering to the population of Seistan both from inundations and from the drying up of the present delta. In addition when the change is complete Zabul will probably become uninhabitable in its present site. Finally canals taking off into Afghanistan from the eastern bank of the Helmand and the Siksar channel are likely to run dry. This will upset Sir Henry McMahon's division of the Helmand waters between Afghanistan and Iran, and the parties may have difficulty in reaching a settlement by negotiation. I have not yet had time to study this last aspect of the matter."(1)

Another useful study of the irrigation water distribution in the delta regions of Hirmand, through man-made canals, was carried out in 1909 by another British Vice-Consul for Sistan which is supported by a sketch map of these canals. This report is reproduced in Appendix I.

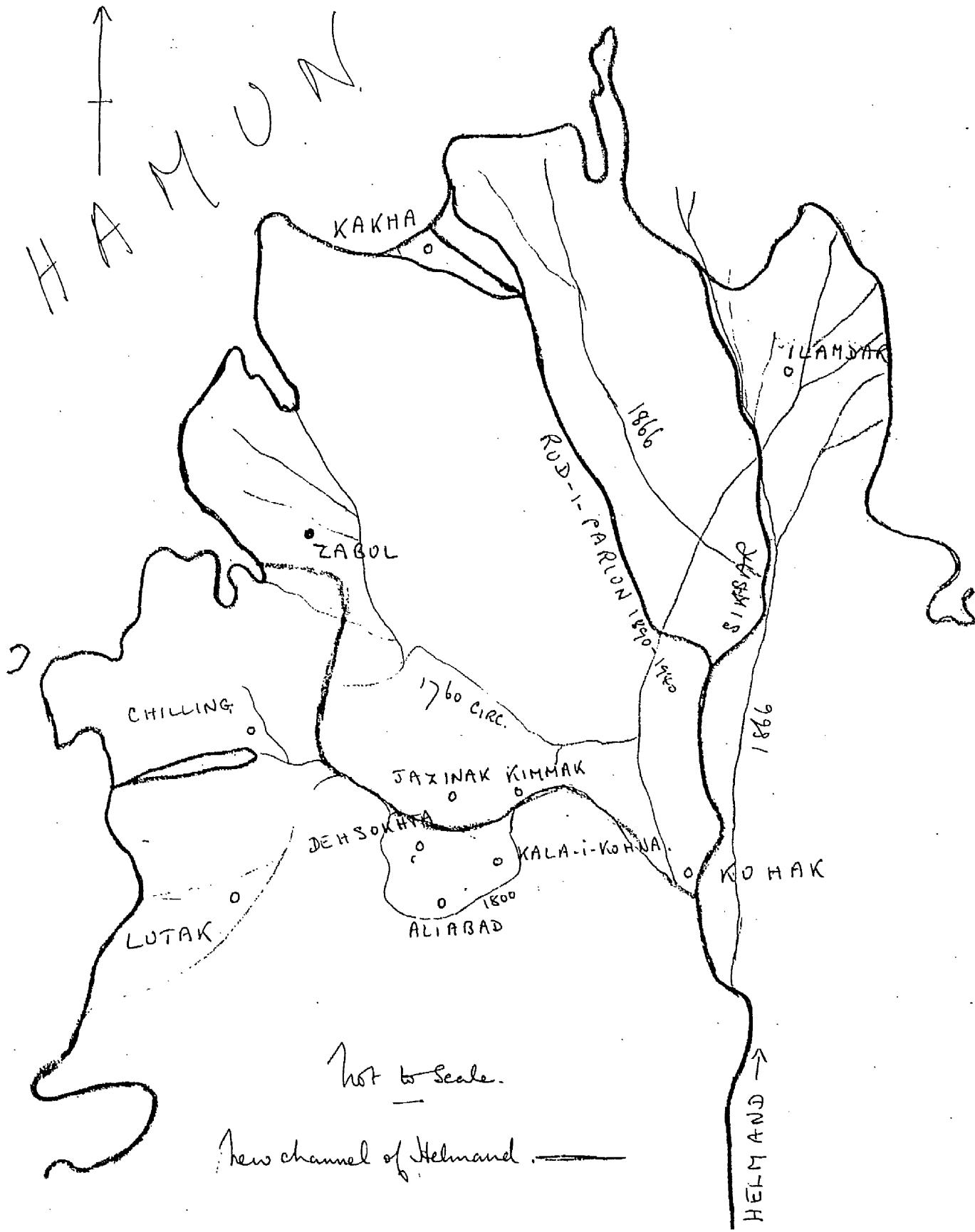
An important feature of Hirmand's behaviour is the great variations which exist in the level of its water throughout the year. The autumn and winter months are the months of low levels whereas the spring and summer months are the months of high levels of water.

(1) Paragraphs 2 to 7 of M.P. Tandy's "Note on the Helmand in Sistan", enclosed in Indian Government's Foreign Secretary's letter No. 48, dated 11th March 1940, FO 371/29582.

Figure II

M.P. Tandy's sketch of Hirmand delta channels  
FO 371/29582 , p.258

Oscillations of Helmand 1760 - 1940



The data available permit determination of the type of snow-water and hydrological regime of the Hirmand, as results from the following table from Italconsult's report of 1959 which gives the amount of the mean monthly capacity at Chahar Borjak in the period 1946 - 1950, expressed in percentage of the mean value of capacity for the entire period (157 cu. m./sec.):<sup>(1)</sup>

Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
11	16	21	27	76	211

Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.
390	296	99	29	14	10

The flows are concentrated in the period of snow melting. More specifically 75% in the months from March to May, and about 90% in the months from February to June.

Greater variation still exists in the volume of water flowing downstream into Lake Hamun in different years. Little is known of the cycle of years of drought and high flood, thus Hirmand remains as one of the most unpredictable rivers of the world.

The highest water mark left by the flood which can be traced around Lake Hamun is five feet above the level in 1903, the year of McMahon's study of Sistan frontiers. When the lake established this record the discharge of the Hirmand must have been not less than 200,000 cubic feet a second.<sup>(2)</sup>

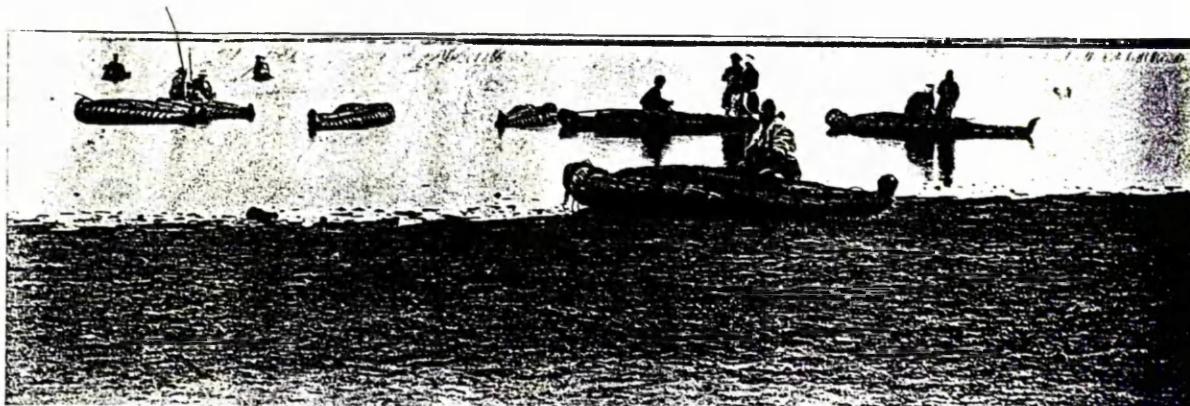
In all probability the year which saw such an expansion of the lake area was 1885. This flood prepared the ground for the change of Hirmand's course in the delta region from the old channel to Rud-e Parian which was completed by another high flood in 1895/6.

(1) Italconsult report, op. cit., p.52.

(2) Tate, op. cit., p. 245.

"Nothing is known of any other 'year of Noah' till after a very long interval of time, even then the date cannot be fixed more exactly than between 1692 and 1722 A.D. Rather more than a hundred years later we find Captain Edward Conolly recording that in 1883 a tremendous flood came down the Helmand and formed a new channel for the river in the delta. The year 1866 was another year of high water and this was followed by the last great flood of 1885."<sup>(1)</sup>

The latest reported flood of major consequence took place in April 1991 after many years of low water and droughts, which caused extensive damage in Sistan. This flood was the outcome of a combination of high levels of snow melting and lack of control in Afghanistan, both political and technical, owing to the prevailing political situation in that country.



REED BOATS ON THE HELMAND LAGOON

(This picture appeared in Major Percy Sykes' book  
"Ten Thousand Miles in Persia", London 1902, p.375)

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(1) Tate, op. cit., p. 246.

### EVOLUTION OF HIRMAND WATER DISPUTES

The question of allocation and method of utilisation of Hirmand water in the delta region has always been the most important aspect of border disputes between Iran and Afghanistan in Sistan. Although the actual location of the boundary has long been accepted by both states, disputes concerning allocation and other reparian rights has not as yet been resolved. This is in spite of several attempts in the past 120 years to settle these disputes. The original problem was that the Amir of Afghanistan considered the Hirmand as an internal river of that country, reserving for Afghanistan the right to utilise its water in whatever way she wished. McMahon's Memorandum of 25 September 1904 asserts that: "the Afghan Government do not admit that there is any water question in dispute, as their geographical position makes them sole owners of the whole Helmand above the Band-i-Seistan."<sup>(1)</sup>

By harbouring such considerations, the Afghan Amir, not only ignored the rights of the people of downstream Hirmand whose life depended so heavily on the water supplies from that river, but also ignored international trends towards recognising status of rivers passing through more than one country as "international rivers". This trend began with the Vienna agreement between the states of Prussian and Saxony of 1815 on navigation rights on the river Elbe,<sup>(2)</sup> and evolved through a number of treaties and agreements concluded between two or more reparian nations,<sup>(3)</sup> embodying, by late nineteenth century, the internationally accepted description of international rivers which can be summarised as follows:

(1) Paragraph 3 of clause 69 of McMahon's Memorandum of 25th September 1904 on Sistan Water Question, FO 60/727, P. 11.

(2) Bogg, Whittermore, "International Boundaries, a Study of Boundary Function and Problems", New York, Columbia University Press, 1940, p. 117.

(3) See above, and/also: Oppenheim, L.F.L., "International Law & Treaties", ed. Lauterpacht, H., 8th Edition, New York, Longman, 1955.

- (a) crossing the territories of two or more countries,
  - (b) dividing two or more countries' territories,
  - (c) being of economic consequence to two or more nations.
- (1)

River Hirmand, "crossing Afghan territory into Iranian Sistan; separating Afghanistan from Iran in Sistan; and being of vital economic consequence to both Iran and Afghanistan", is undoubtedly an international river to the downstream sections of which neither Iran nor Afghanistan can claim exclusive rights. In fact the arbitral award of 1905 and subsequent agreements recognise the status of the international river for Hirmand downstream, effectively from Band-e Kamal Khan in South-west Afghanistan.

#### GOLDSMID'S HIRMAND WATER AWARD

General Sir Frederick Goldsmid was assigned in 1871/2 by the British Government of India to arbitrate in boundary disputes between Iran and Afghanistan in Sistan. When in 1872 his arbitration commission began its investigation in Sistan, the Hirmand river had only one major offshoot, i.e., Rud-e Sistan. This river took off from the Hirmand at the Band-e Kuhak which is the beginning of Iran-Afghanistan boundary, situated at its present site, and thence followed the same course westwards as it does at present.

The main branch of Hirmand in Sistan, from the Band-e Kuhak northwards, followed its present course to near Shahgol where Rud-e Parian took off in the late nineteenth century, at least twenty years after Goldsmid's arbitration. From Shahgol, the course of Nad-e Ali and Sikh-Sar to Neizar and Hamun were followed. In his arbitral award, General Sir Frederick Goldsmid laid down as regards the Hirmand water rights that:

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(1) See above and other material on international rivers.

- "(1) She (Persia) should not possess land on the right of the Helmand. \* \* \* The main bed of the Helmand, therefore, below Kohak should be the eastern boundary of Persian Seistan,
- "(2) and the line of frontier from Kohak to the hills, south of the Seistan desert, should be so drawn as to include within the Afghan limits all cultivation on both banks of the river from the band upwards. \* \* \*
- "(3) It is, moreover, to be well understood that no works are to be carried out on either side calculated to interfere with the requisite supply of water for irrigation on both banks of the Helmand."(1)

Considering that the above was the closest Goldsmid came to dealing with water division rights between the two countries, it is reasonable to state that he made no water award in his arbitration opinion and the above vague terms made little impact on the region. Nonetheless, the Afghans appear not to be aware of even these vague terms for years thereafter. This is clearly stated in a letter to the Amir of Afghanistan from the Viceroy of India in 1902. In this letter the Viceroy points out: "that the whole of the water of Helmand which passed the Kohak bund, was, at the end of September, when water was urgently required for the Rabi sowings, being diverted into the old channel of the Helmand by an Afghan Bund at Shahgul and a channel dug by the Afghans just above this bund, and that the whole of lower Persian Seistan was thereby left without water. The local Persian authorities had remonstrated with the Afghan officials who refused to allow any water to go down to Persian Seistan. Since then it appears that the Persians have been engaged in constructing another channel above the Afghan channel in order to counteract it, and that the Afghans have now begun a third channel above the Persians. Seven hundred men are working on

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(1) Memorandum on the Sistan Water Question from Colonel H. McMahon to the Indian Government, No. 2407, dated Camp Kuhak, the 25th of September 1904, FO 60/727, p. 2.

the Persian channel; and the position is one that may at any moment produce a conflict."<sup>(1)</sup>

Water disputes soon erupted and the Iranian Government complained in October 1883 in a letter to the British Minister at Tehran that the Afghans had diverted the Hirmand into their territory by constructing the Band-e Shamshiri. The matter was dropped as neither the Iranians nor the British officials seem to have been able to define the position of this band (dam). Yet, about twenty years later, McMahon's arbitration team was able to find this band which, by then, was useless as Hirmand's main branch had changed its course above that point in 1896. McMahon's Memorandum of September 1904 states: "from careful local enquiries, we have ascertained that the Band-i Shamshiri referred to was constructed across the then mouth of the Shela-i Shamshiri, which then took off from the main river at a point between Deh Taus and the present village of Deh Lalla. It was constructed to prevent the Shamshiri drawing off too large a volume of the river, and to thus feed the Sikhsar and other Afghan channels. It was first constructed about 1883, and was maintained until 1895. The changes in the river caused by the flood of 1896 rendered it no longer necessary."<sup>(2)</sup>

An unusually high flood in 1885 turned the main course of the Hirmand from Sikh-Sar to Shileh Lakshakh. This branch was still the main course by 1894 when Colonel Yate visited the site in the spring of that year, but the Shileh-e Jahanabad which, when he crossed, halfway between Milak and Deh-e Sayyed, was little smaller than the Lakshakh.<sup>(3)</sup> Another major flood in 1896, however, changed the course of the

(1) Extract from letter from H.E. The Viceroy and Governor-General of India to H.H. Amir Sir Habibollah Khan of Afghanistan, No. 51, p.o., dated 24th November 1902, FO 60/659, p. 99.

(2) Extract from McMahon's Memorandum on Sistan Water Question, op. cit., p. 3.

(3) Yate, Lieut. Colonel C.E., "Khurasan and Sistan", London 1900, pp. 102 to 105.

river completely into Rud-e Parian, the northern parts of which were the channels of water to Lakshakh and Shileh-e Jahanabad. This major change in the course of the river, brought the question of the Sistan boundary to the forefront of the frontier disputes between the two countries (see previous chapter).

COLONEL HENRY McMAHON'S SISTAN ARBITRATION AND  
WATER AWARD

By the turn of the twentieth century the Afghans opened up an old canal from the Hirmand, at a point about five miles above the Band-e Sistan, to feed the important Jaraki canal which was then known as Nahr-e Sultani. The Iranians, in retaliation, dug a new canal called the Nobar-e Puzeh "Jangjah", to outflank the Shahgol Band and turn the river into Rud-e Parian (see figure III). The Afghans, in retaliation, threatened to band the river above this canal. The dispute, therefore, intensified and British intervention was sought, but an unusually early winter flood in 1902 settled water differences naturally but temporarily. Both Iran and Afghanistan withdrew their request for British intervention and expressed disinterest in the British offer of boundary and water arbitration (see previous chapter). The arbitration works of Colonel McMahon, nevertheless, went ahead and by June 1903, a survey of the water and land in Sistan began. The measurements made by McMahon's mission of the volume of the Hirmand during 1903 and 1904 produced the following results:

*"The following statement of the ten day averages of the Hirmand volume, in a normal year, will show how this figure is arrived at:-*

Period	Average of daily discharges at Band-e Kamal Khan.
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September 21st to 30th .. .. ..	2,162 cusecs.
October 1st to 10th .. .. ..	2,360 "
" 11th to 20th .. .. ..	2,502 "
" 21st to 31st .. .. ..	2,442 "

<i>November 1st to 10th</i>	..	..	..	2,612	"
" 11th to 20th	..	..	..	2,966	"
" 21st to 30th	..	..	..	3,481	"
<i>December 1st to 10th</i>	..	..	..	3,161	"
" 11th to 20th	..	..	..	3,062	"
" 21st to 31st	..	..	..	3,252	"
<i>January 1st to 10th</i>	..	..	..	3,450	"
" 11th to 20th	..	..	..	4,420	"
" 21st to 31st	..	..	..	4,280	"
<i>February 1st to 10th</i>	..	..	..	5,110	"
" 11th to 20th	..	..	..	5,525	"
" 21st to 28th	..	..	..	5,800	"
<i>March 1st to 10th</i>	..	..	..	6,750	"
" 11th to 20th	..	..	..	*12,100	"
<i>Total:</i>				75,435	"
<hr/>					
<i>Average</i>				4,191	or roughly 4,200."

During the above period, the average volume taken off by the Afghan canals between Band-e Kamal Khan and Kuhak, including the Nahr-e-Sultani, is about 294 cusecs, as follows:-

<i>By the Mirabad** canal</i>	..	..	27	cusecs.
" " Dak-e-dila "	..	..	36	"
" " Qaleh-e-Fath "	..	..	44	"
" " Deh Dust Mohammad Canal			27	"
" " Mirak canal	..	..	27	"
" " Khwabgah canal	..	..	27	"
" " Sultani	..	..	106	"
<i>Total:</i>				294
<hr/>				

The water which passes down the river below Band-e Kamal Khan at this season is thus appropriated:-

\* This sudden rise may cause comment in a statement of normal volumes, but it must be remembered that a heavy rise always takes place from, or about, the middle of March.

\*\* These canals though shown in this list, actually take off above Band-e-Kamal Khan at Qaleh-e-Mir, but the lands they irrigate are below Band-e-Kamal Khan."(1)

(1) Paragraphs 48, 49 and 50 of McMahon's Memorandum on the Sistan Water Question of 25th September 1904, op. cit., p. 7.

## (1) To the Afghans

By canals above Band-e-Sistan	7/100 ths
as above	
" " on the Nad Ali channel	7/100 ths

Total: 14/100 ths  
=====

## (2) To the Iranians

By the Rud-e-Sistan	48/100 ths
" canals from the Rud-e-Parian	8/100 ths
" " " Nad Ali channel	7/100 ths

Total: 63/100 ths  
=====

(3) Flows through the Rud-e-Parian 23/100 ths  
into Hamun

Having arrived at these figures, McMahon stated that: from Band-e Kamal Khan downwards to the Band-e Sistan, the Afghans take off only  $\frac{7}{100}$ th of the whole river above the Band-e-Sistan, and an equal amount below it, whereas the Persians at, or below, the Band-e Sistan take off  $\frac{63}{100}$ th of the whole volume of the Hirmand which passes Band-e Kamal Khan; and that the Persians are only able to utilise  $\frac{8}{100}$ th of the water which goes down the Parian, the remainder flowing on into the Hamun.

As regards the Hirmand from Band-e Kamal Khan upwards to Rudbar, McMahon found that there are the following Afghan canals (not included in the above calculations) whose volumes, during the spring crop season, are recorded below:-

Rudbar Canal .. .. .. .. ..	25 cusecs.
Chahar Burjak canal .. .. ..	30 "
Band-e-Kamal Khan, old canal ..	16 "
Band-e-Kamal Khan, new canal ..	12 "

Total: 83  
=====

"The Rudbar canal actually takes off at Pulalak; the Chahar Burjak canal at Puza Mashi; and the two Band-e-Kamal Khan canals opposite Chahar Burjak. It is important to note that the Chahar Burjak and the Band-e-Kamal Khan old canals are both capable of very large future extension, which would irrigate lands below Qaleh-e-Fath and in Tarakun, respectively. The Afghans are not likely to be able, by themselves, to effect anything like the full amount of possible extension; but, even with their present methods, they could draw off a very appreciable portion of the volume of the Hirmand at the time of low river, thereby largely affecting the volume available below Band-e-Kamal Khan.

"If we consider the whole amount of water taken by Persians and Afghans respectively, in the spring crop season, from Rudbar downwards, we find that the volume of the Hirmand (calculated at the head of the Rudbar canal at Pulalak) is appropriated as follows:-

By Afghans .. ..	$\frac{16}{100}$ ths
" Persians.. ..	$\frac{62}{100}$ ths
" Flows unused into the Hamun	$\frac{22}{100}$ ths "(1)

Asserting that "although the Persians use this large proportion of the volume of the Hirmand, it must not be supposed for a moment that they really require so much water for their cultivation. A large portion is wasted owing to their careless system of irrigation",<sup>(2)</sup> McMahon ignored the fact that the cultivable lands in Iranian Sistan were a great deal more than those of the Afghan side. He, thus, gave no consideration for the future needs of water in Sistan. McMahon also ignored the fact that waters finding their way to the Lake Hamun were not wasted because Hamun itself was an important source of irrigation and a major

(1) Paragraph 51 of McMahon's Memorandum on the Sistan Water Question, op. cit., p. 8.

(2) Extract from paragraph 52 of McMahon's Memorandum on the Sistan Water Question, op. cit., p. 8.

source of other economic interests in Sistan, and its surplus waters flow into God-e Zereh which is inside Afghan borders. Taking into account deserts and sandhills on the Afghan side of Sistan McMahon asserted that Afghanistan's cultivable lands in Sistan exceed those of Iran's in the proportion of 4 to 3. He illustrated that:

<i>"In Afghan Seistan -</i>	
Tarakun tract ..	2,697 square miles
Elsewhere ..	1,510 " "
<hr/>	
Total:	4,207 " "
<hr/>	
<i>In Persian Seistan -</i>	
Hauzdar tract ..	.. 1,139 " "
Elsewhere ..	.. 1,728 " "
<hr/>	
Total:	7,073 " "
<hr/> <sup>(1)</sup>	

Having recorded the above figures, McMahon himself found them unrealistic and claimed that cultivable lands in Sistan are proportionally equal between Iran and Afghanistan; "when the proportionately larger area of uncommandable dasht and sandhills in Afghan territory is taken into consideration, we find that the total culturable areas in Afghan and Persian Seistan may be treated as approximately equal."<sup>(2)</sup>

It was on the basis of this kind of consideration of proportionality of cultivable lands that McMahon first resolved to divide Hirmand water equally between Iran and Afghanistan in spite of remarking that the Iranian lands, at least in the case of the Hozdar region of Sistan were superior lands richly cultivated in the past,<sup>(3)</sup> which would naturally require more water. Nonetheless, McMahon decided that:

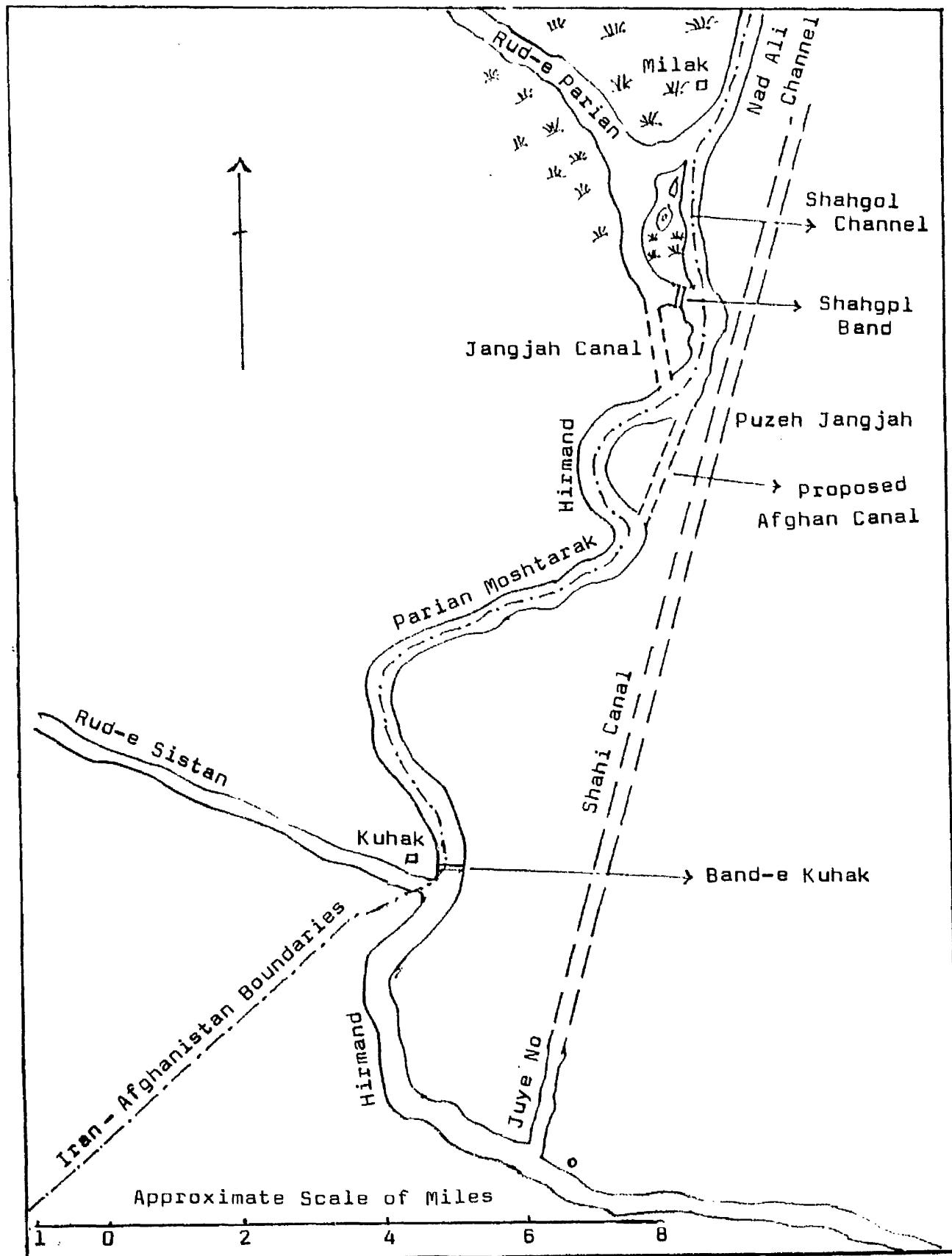
(1) Extract from paragraph 61 of McMahon's Memorandum of September 1904, on Sistan Water Question, op. cit., p. 9.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

Figure III

Major Bands and Channels of the Hirmand in Sistan  
 (Based on Major Benn's Sketch of the Hirmand at Delta Region)



"....the following rough division of water would very fairly meet all possible future requirements:-

*1/3rd of the Helmand to Afghan territory on the right bank below Bandar-i-Kamal Khan.*

*1/3rd " " Persian " " left " "*  
*Band-i-Seistan.*

*1/3rd " " the Tarakun and Hauzdar tracts in the proportion of half to each.*

*This arrangement would thus give one half of the whole Helmand to Persia and the other half to Afghanistan."(1)*

This decision would undoubtedly restrict Iran's rights to the water of the Hirmand as McMahon himself recognised it. Describing the situation in his memorandum on water question, McMahon states: "even an Afghan, however, must acknowledge, when it is brought home to him, as it should be, that any settlement which restricts Persian right to water to certain limits is in the present case a distinct gain to Afghanistan who has hitherto taken off only 16/100ths of the whole river from Rudbar downwards, while the Persians have taken 62/100ths. Any deferred settlement of the question might have to recognise the Persian right to what custom may have entitled them to, and not, as in the present case, to their requisite supply of water only."<sup>(2)</sup>

When it came to the actual water award, McMahon further restricted Iran's rights to Hirmand water. He prepared the draft of his water award in four different forms (draft A, B, C and D) of which the Viceroy of India agreed to draft B, the only version with the most devastating prospect for Iran.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Extract from McMahon's Memorandum on Sistan Water Question, op. cit., p. 14.

(2) Paragraph 82 of McMahon's Memorandum on Water Question, op. cit.

(3) Telegram No. 4883 from H.E. the Viceroy, Calcutta, to H. Majesty's Secretary of State for India, London, dated the 29th December 1904, FO 60/ 728, p. 34.

Clauses 2 and 3 of the "award" of draft B of McMahon's Water Award, favoured by the Viceroy of India, defined Iran's need of Hirmand water in Sistan as being one-third of the whole volume of Hirmand water and thus allocated to Iran only one-third of the water which was in effect to restrict Iran's share of the water from 62 percent of the river's volume to 33 percent. This incomprehensible water allocation to Iranian Sistan, which is admittedly the more fertile part of the province and naturally in need of more than half of the Hirmand water, was in clear contradiction of Goldsmid's award, in spite of McMahon's repeated statement of undertaking that his arbitration would not exceed the framework of that of Goldsmid's. The Afghans do not seem to have made any protest against McMahon's water award. Yet, they seem to have protested against clause 3 of draft A of his water award which was included under clause 6 of draft B. This clause gave both Iran and Afghanistan the right to reconstruct their bands at Kuhak and Shahgol respectively. To this protest. McMahon replied: Amir (of Afghanistan) would be wise to accept paragraph 3 of my draft award A, as Afghans some day may badly want to take advantage of it.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Viceroy of India, having agreed to draft B of McMahon's Sistan Water Award, desired some modifications of a trivial nature in the contents and composition of the sentences. These modifications were outlined to be: "I agree to draft B, with the modifications now proposed, subject only to the substitution of 'shall' for 'should' in both places in clause 5 of award."<sup>(2)</sup>

These modifications were implemented (see Appendix II), and McMahon's water award was delivered to the Iranian and Afghan

(1) Extract of telegram No. 836 from Colonel McMahon to the Indian Government's Foreign Secretary, dated 15th November 1904, FO 60/728, p. 27.

(2) From H.E. the Viceroy, Calcutta, to H. Majesty's Secretary of State for India, telegram No. 4883, dated 29th December 1904, FO 60/728 - P. 34.

commissioners on 10th April 1905.<sup>(1)</sup> This water award was immediately protested to by the Iranians. In his telegram of 12th April 1905 to the Foreign Secretary of the Indian Government, Colonel McMahon gave a summary of his interview with the Iranian Commissioner, stating:

*"Persian Commission, at long interview yesterday, expounded following opinions regarding my water award.*

*"(1) Preliminary remarks, paragraph 7. He felt sure Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' ruling had not been communicated to Persian Government. I expressed ignorance, but said I knew that it had been communicated to Afghanistan by the Government of India.*

*"(2) Paragraph 9(c), and clauses 2 and 3 of award. Why was Persia given only one-third of the river, and Afghanistan two-thirds? On what figures is this calculation based, and why is water not divided in accordance with respective areas of land on both sides? I said that obligation to allow of one-third of water at the point river reached Kohak did not leave two-thirds of river to Afghanistan; that this arrangement gave Persia assurance of continuance of requisite supply; that the share of water given to Persia is sufficient to irrigate much more than present Persian cultivation, and even as much as half of the entire irrigable area of Persian Seistan commanded from and below Kohak annually; that area of culturable land in Afghan Seistan is somewhat in excess of corresponding area in Persian Seistan.*

*"(3) Clause 5. He thought that, as carrying out of my award required presence of an expert, Persian Government would raise no objection.*

*"(4) Clause 6. He expressed thorough approval, but asked why I had not laid down that the bund below Kohak should be built jointly by both sides. I said I had carefully avoided all details which, though practicable now, might hereafter prove inconvenient to either side.*

*"(5) Clause 7. He said this will give offence to Persian Government, and is opposed to spirit of Article 6 of Treaty of Paris. Why had I not imposed similar restriction on alienation of Afghan Seistan? I said that any idea of restricting Persia was far from my intention, and that further reflection would show this clause to be in the true interests of*

(1) From H.E. the Viceroy to H. Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated 18th April 1905,  
FO 60/728, p. 5.

Persia. It was necessary for me to emphasise the fact that my arbitration was solely between Persia and Afghanistan, and my award, therefore, would not necessarily hereafter apply to any one else. That the geographical position of Afghanistan gave her superior rights in water, which made a similar restriction in her case uncalled for.

"(6) Persia contended Persian right to water for irrigation of Ramrud tract, and said that Persia could arrange with Afghanistan for canal through Afghan territory for that purpose. Why had I ignored this right? I explained I was as he knew, restricted by the terms of the Goldsmid award, and was, therefore, unable to consider the question of Persian right to conduct water through Afghan territory.

"Interview was very friendly, and I was agreeably surprised at the few objections raised against my award, and at the manner in which these were propounded. I am confident, however, that, although Persian Government may accept the one-third allotment of water for land commandable at and below Kohak, they will strongly raise point 6 above, and will doubtless talk much about point 5."(1)

The Afghans, in contrast, were pleased with McMahon's water award. In another telegram to the Indian Government, McMahon gave a summary of his interview with the Afghan Commissioner, stating:

"Afghan Commissioner, at interview yesterday, expressed following opinions on the water award:-

"(1) Preliminary remarks, paragraph 9(c). He asked why division of water was calculated at a place within Afghan territory. I explained impossibility of giving Persia what she has just right to demand, i.e., assurance of continuance of requisite supply of water, without calculating her share at the actual point where water is capable of division and diversion; that that point is at present near Bandar-i-Kamal Khan, but if new canals are constructed above that place to water land below that place, then the point of division will move higher up the river accordingly. I showed how this applies to clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, of award, and how Afghanistan must always arrange to

(1) Extract of telegram No. 947 from Colonel McMahon to Foreign Secretary of India, dated 12th April 1905, enclosure No. 6, FO 60/728, p.3.

let sufficient water pass the point of division to enable at least one whole third of river reaching and being available for Persian use at Kohak. He said he understood this; and, as far as he was personally concerned, admitted justice of this contention.

"(2) Clause 5. He expressed approval of this.

"(3) Clause 6. While admitting in confidence that both portions of this clause were necessary, he was obliged to protest against first portion on the ground of the Amir's orders conveyed in latter's letter of 15th October 1904 (vide No. 19 of Seistan Series, part V). I said I would make a note of it, but felt confident that Amir would himself at once recognise advisability and necessity of this clause.

"(4) Clause 7. He express complete approval.

"(5) Clause 8. He admitted danger of river taking new course at Bandar-i-Kamal Khan or near Kila-i-Fath, and recognised absolute necessity for greatest care in enlargement of old or opening of new canals. I was glad to find he thoroughly recognised danger involved if Afghanistan tried new irrigation experiments at first named place, and, in fact, he admitted that, though works required for diverting water there could easily be constructed by Afghanistan, yet the danger involved thereby is beyond their power to cope with.

"(6) He asked whether Persia was entitled to more than the one-third now allotted to her for future irrigation of Ramrud tract. I replied that my arbitration had been restricted by the terms of Goldsmid's award, which nowhere provided for right of one party to cut along canals through territory of the other party; that my award (vide clause 2) provided requisite supply of water for irrigation of Persian Seistan commandable from and below Kohak only; that I presumed if irrigation of Ramrud tract by Persia hereafter became practicable, supply of water for it would then, and then only, form question for settlement.

"The Afghan Commissioner's reception of whole award was most favourable, and he admitted that his protests 1 and 3 above were pro forma. He begged that the Government of India, in communicating award to Amir, would, in order to protect him, lay stress on necessity for those two clauses."(1)

(1) Extract of telegram No. 949 from Colonel McMahon to Foreign Secretary of India, dated the 13th April 1905, enclosure No. 7, FO 60/728, p.4.

The Iranian Commissioner had put two other questions of less significance to Colonel McMahon. The British Commissioner replying to these questions expressed his surprise both by the small number of objections raised by Yamin-e Nezam and with the friendly and agreeable manner in which they were propounded.<sup>(1)</sup>



*Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh  
Deputy-Governor of Sistan at the time  
of McMahon's Water Award,  
seated and flanked by  
his cousin*

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(1) Persian Commissioner's views, from Col. McMahon to the Government of India, No. 3004, dated 15th April 1905, No. 16 of FO 60/728, p. 15.

The Kargozar of Sistan and Deputy-Governor, Amir Masum Khan Khozeimeh despatched telegrams to Tehran accusing Yamin-e Nezam of being in collusion with the British Commissioner.<sup>(1)</sup> However, it seems that the authorities in Tehran had similarly received Colonel McMahon's water award without much objections at the time.

Writing to the Marquess of Lansdowne in May 1905, the British Minister at Tehran stated:

"The full text of the award, with the Yemin's observations on it, has now reached the Persian Government and the Mushir-ed-Dowleh has informed me that it has been submitted to the Shah. I asked him if he did not think it very just and satisfactory to Persia, and it appeared to me, from the rather guarded terms in which he expressed himself, that the only point which had so far occasioned any heart-searching to the Persian Government was the clause about the Persians being entitled to only a third of the water, as to which he said he would talk with me again after receiving the Shah's commands. In the meantime His Majesty's departure for Europe has for the time stopped further discussion of the subject.

"The Heshmet-ul-Mulk, in the course of a recent visit which he paid me, referred to the Seistan water question. He knew nothing, of course, about the award, but he said that what the Persians feared was the construction by the Afghans of a canal from a point near Bander-i-Kamal Khan through the now desert Tarakun tract. It is probable that the omission of any reference to this contingency in the award, especially when its terms were known to the Russians, may give rise to some criticism here. On the whole, however, the decision seems so far to have been received at Tehran less unfavourably than the Yemin-i-Nizam had told Colonel McMahon to expect."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Diary No. 1 of Captain A.D. MacPherson, H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan and Kain, for the period 1st to 7th January 1905, FO 248/847.

(2) Extract of despatch No. 103 from Sir A. Hardinge, British Minister at Tehran, to the Marquess of Lansdowne, dated Tehran May 15th 1905 FO 60/728, Persia Confidential (June 5) Section 5.

THE AFTERMATH OF MCMAHON'S WATER AWARD

As the summer months of 1905 drew closer, and Hirmand water began to become scarce in Sistan, the Iranians opened two new canals from the main stream of Hirmand (Parian-e Moshtarak) nearly opposite of Nad-e Ali where both sides were deprived, by McMahon's water award, of cutting off from the river. Since his water award had not been acceded to by the two sides, McMahon could not do much to reverse this development. Assistant to the British Consul for Sistan remarks in his despatch of 12th July 1905:

"About the 27th June, Persians opened two canals from the main stream of the Helmand nearly opposite Nad Ali. Owing to the failure of our newswriter, this was not reported till 1st July. Afghans crossed frontier and closed canals on the first. Failing to obtain trustworthy information, I sent Muhammad Ashraff to make enquiries. He reported on the 6th that the Yamin had had interview with Afghan officials who have permitted him to keep one canal open for ten days from 2nd, but that both Brigadier Ghulam Ahmed, Acting Governor, Chokhansur, and Ayub Khan, Governor of Kila Fath, were ignorant of the terms of McMahon's award, copies of which had been taken to Kabul by the Akhundzada. Meanwhile, I had heard that the Yamin was boasting of having worsted the Afghans and declared that he would keep canals open as long as necessary. I inspected canals on the 7th; the one now running irrigates 14 pagaos and probably detrimentally affects Afghan irrigation. The opening is new, but it eventually joins old canal mouth which has become silted up. Ayub Khan had returned to Kila Fath, but the Brigadier received me most cordially on the eighth. He informed me that he had permitted one of the canals to remain open for ten days, as he had been appealed to as a fellow Mussulman, but that, on the expiration of that period, he would, if necessary, use force to close it. He is of a mild disposition and would prefer pacific measures, but the agitation of the Akhundzada's faction, which is behaving hostilely to him, may compel him to make a show of force in

order to escape hostile reports to Kabul. As award not yet accepted by the Amir, I considered it inadvisable to show him the text, but advised him that, as matter was still sub judice, he should not violate frontier again. I am also sending warnings to Akhundzada's faction that any provocative action on their part will only injure their chief. On the 9th, I had interview with Yamin who was elated at his success, and boasted if Afghans cross frontier again he would close 30 canals on the Afghan side that have been dug since Goldsmid's award. He said that he had told Afghans he would pardon them this time, but would insist on punishment if the offence were repeated. He denied agreement as to ten days, and maintained that he had right to dig these canals, as they irrigate land unirrigated by old canal, and Afghans had also dug canals since Goldsmid's Award, which was not yet superseded by McMahon's Award. He declared intention of keeping new canals open as long as necessary. I warned him of serious consequences that might ensue from the violation of conditions clearly laid down in both Awards."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Afghans did not uphold the agreement with Yamin-e Nezam. Brigadier Gholam Ahmed, named above, received a strongly worded letter from the Governor of Herat and as a consequence, opened two new canals in retaliation: Neshan-e Divan and Nad-e Ali.<sup>(2)</sup> Furthermore, the Afghans crossed the frontier and closed the two canals constructed by the Iranians.<sup>(3)</sup> The local dispute was about to turn so ugly that British Consulate officials at Sistan intervened and prevented an almost certain clash between the parties.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Extract of telegram No. 98c from Lieut. T.H. Keyes to Captain A.D. MacPherson, H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan and Kain, dated 10th July 1905, FO 60/729, p. 10.

(2) Telegram No. 112c from Lieut. Keyes to Captain MacPherson, dated 29th July 1905, FO 60/729, p. 13.

(3) Report from Lieut. T.H. Keyes to Captain A.D. MacPherson, H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan, No. 105c, dated 21st July 1905, FO 60/729, pp. 13 to 16.

(4) Ibid.

The Sistanis once again wrote a letter to the editor of "Trans-Caspian Review" Russian newspaper spelling out the grievances of the ordinary people of Sistan on the effect of McMahon's boundary and water awards. The letter stated:

*"Translation of a letter in the Persian supplement of the 'Zakaspiski Obozrenie', dated the 1st May 1905.*

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(To the Editor of the newspaper 'Mawaray-e Bahr-i-Khizar')

"I have read your paper No. 15 of the 12th Mohurram. This that you had given publication to a detailed account penned by us poor people of the literal facts and a full statement regarding the ceding of a large area of the lands of Holy Persia, which, by the arbitration and award of the British Commission, in presence of the Persian Commissioner, was given to Afghanistan. On reading this we were exceedingly thankful to you.

"God be praised, we are not ashamed before our consciences, for we have beaten and are beating the drum of these facts to different tunes and to the sound of despair in every direction from which we might expect hope, in order to see what may be wrought by the courage of the men of our day. By the will of God the real opinion of this stricken people has reached the ears of the authorities of the Government, and they will have consideration for the boundaries of an excellent nation and the rights of a powerful Government may God strengthen their pillars and impart vigour to their helpers which is the first important care and duty binding on a Muhammadan people; and they will bring all the lands which have slipped out of our hands back to Persia as before or according to the words which are in common use to-day (*What business is it of mine? What business is it of yours? Mahshallah! Inshallah!*) they will be satisfied and will leave things as they are.

"In short, I state here, for the information of your readers, the conclusions from the previous communication: this that after the English had excited the Afghans saying that now the Russian Empire is engaged something may be gained, and it would be advisable for them to pick a quarrel with the Persian Government, and at that time they will settle all necessary things. The result was the coming of a British Commission to Persia and the appointment of an officer of the Persian Government from Tehran as Sarhaddar and Persian Commissioner.

"These officers, i.e., the British Commissioner and the Persian Commissioner, obviously had no thorough knowledge of the lands of Seistan, and the surroundings.

"It is indeed worthy of attention that from the very beginning of the arbitration up to the present none of the officers asked any questions at all of a single one of the grey-beards, katkhudas, or revenue officers of Seistan as to which side such or such land has belonged during the past thirty years, and to whom has the revenue been paid. That which was done by the British Commissioner should not have been done without obtaining information, but information was obtained from the Afghans as to which tracts could by any under-hand means be taken from Persia in this arbitration, and what was the profit from each tract.

"The lands belonging to Persia which have been given to the Afghans are stated here one after the other for the information of our readers the land from which revenues have been recovered by revenue officers from 30 years ago to the present time, to all of which they have a separate claim.

"On the northern boundary of Seistan -

"Three-fourths of the hills known as Nar Ahu and Madah Ahu, which are called Siah Koh, although the Siah Koh cited by Goldsmid lies now at a distance of two farsakhs or more to the north-east of Nar-Ahu.

"Koh-i-Tabarkan,                   Koh-i-Zarkan,                   Koh-i-Sabzak,  
 Chah-i-Reg,                       Chah-i-Hejna,                   Chah-i-Rustam,  
 Shaud-i-Shirin,                   Shorah                       Gaz,                   Dasht-i-Gauri,  
 Dasht-i-Chah-i-Shor,            Kalak,                       Koh-i-Darazu,           Nal-i-Ab,  
 Koh-i-Chakab,                   Ajkimak,                   Naizar Masjadak,           Dahan-i-Nahaq,  
 Chashma-i-Kah,                   Shugalak,                   Kulha-i-Khan,           Tapa-i-Kharan,  
 Naizar Maesh Kushi,             Machatak,                   Naizar Gaz Kushtar,  
 Paiju,                           Tapa-i-Arawana,           Shalgami,                   Reg-i-Saruni,           and  
 Laf-i-Takht-i-Shah.

"Of the division known as Mian Kangi, the cultivated lands that have been given away, together with the produce of their people, are:-

"From Deh Muhammad Khan 8 pagaos [pagao is a plot of land producing six (?) kharwars, Tabrizij]; inhabited but uncultivated land 13 pagaos; deserted land 40 pagaos.

"From Band-i-Kohak to Malik Siah Koh, one-third of the lands of Mashi, all the lands of Tarakhun, and one-fifth of the lands of Kundar and Hauzdar. This tract from Band-i-Kohak to Malik Siah Koh has an area of about a hundred square farsakhs.

"The area of the first-mentioned tracts has been left for calculation. We hope that the authorities of the Government will give minute consideration and complete attention to this important place Seistan, which is called the 'Gate of Tehran' by the Seistanis and will

not let this large area go, nor will consent to the obvious loss to the Government and the homeless state of its poverty-stricken subjects will be forced to emigrate.

"As for the Naizar, which used to be a place for the flock-owners of Seistan, the better part of their share has fallen to Afghanistan. The flock-owners used to live in the northern and western parts of it during the winter and when water was scarce, while in the spring when water is ample they used to move gradually towards the north and east.

"Now the tracts where, during the time of abundance of water, the flock-owners used to live have gone altogether, and the poor peasants are in a state of destitution owing to their grazing grounds having become Afghan territory, and from this that the land that once formed part of Persia has now gone."(1)

Colonel McMahon concluded his mission by the 1st of July 1905, on which date he sent his final report to the Government of India and received from the Government of India a congratulatory letter dated 15th July 1905<sup>(2)</sup> whereas Sistan's people continued voicing their disappointment with the outcome of his arbitration. Another letter from Sistan appeared in the influential Persian Habl al-Matin in late July 1905, which pointed out aspects of the awards most injurious to the Iranian Sistan.<sup>(3)</sup> Similarly, the Russian Legation at Tehran sent a report to the Iranian Crown Prince highlighting points most damaging to Iran's interests in Sistan.<sup>(4)</sup> The Russian Legation wrote another note to the Iranian Crown Prince claiming that the Iranian Commissioner, Yamin-e Nezam had sacrificed Iran's interest to Colonel

(1) Extract of translation of a letter from Sistan appearing in the Persian supplement of the "Zakasfiski Obozrenie", dated 1st May 1905, FO 60/ 729, pp. 11 - 12.

(2) From the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department to Colonel A.H. McMahon, No. 2575F, dated Simla the 15th of July 1905, FO 60/729 .

(3) Letter from Sistan appearing in Habl al-Matin of 24th July 1905, enclosure No. 20 of FO 60/729 , p. 17 of 298.

(4) Copy of a report sent by the Russian Legation at Tehran to H.I.H. the Vali-ahd, dated July 20th 1905, FO 60/729 , p. 48.

McMahon, and demanded his dismissal.<sup>(1)</sup> The Crown Prince Mohammad Ali Mirza (Mohammad Ali Shah as from 1907) apparently agreed to send a commission to Sistan to enquire into the truth of the charges of corruption against Yamin-e Nezam.<sup>(2)</sup>

In a letter addressed to the Viceroy of India in September 1905, the Amir of Afghanistan gave his Government's general consent to McMahon's water award.<sup>(3)</sup> The Iranians, to the contrary, were very disturbed by the terms of the award. Ehtesham al-Vozara, a competent engineer, was sent in early September of that year to Sistan to enquire into complaints made by inhabitants of the province against McMahon's water and frontier awards.<sup>(4)</sup> By this time, it became clear to the British diplomatic mission in Tehran that the Iranian Government had decided to reject Colonel McMahon's water award, and to lodge a formal appeal against it with the British Government.<sup>(5)</sup> The people of Iran also became very agitated by the results of McMahon's arbitration. Letters of protests from Sistan and Tehran began to appear in various newspapers within and outside Iran. The Times of London featured a long report on McMahon's arbitration proceeding with the following statements as its introduction:

*"PERSIA, RUSSIA, AND GREAT BRITAIN.  
(From A Correspondent.)  
St. Petersburg, Sept. 23.*

*"Telegrams dated from Teheran are almost daily published here by the St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency and transmitted to the English and foreign Press containing false or exaggerated statements calculated to promote ill-feeling towards England.*

- (1) Despatch from British Legation at Tehran to the Marquess of Lansdowne No. 182. Secret, dated August 21, 1905, FO 60/ 729, p. 43.
- (2) Telegram No. 147, from Sir Arthur Hardinge, British Minister at Tehran, to Foreign Secretary of the Indian Government, dated 22nd August 1905, FO 60/729, P. 26 of 218.
- (3) From H.H. the Amir of Afghanistan to H.E. the Viceroy of India, No. 73, dated 17th September 1905, FO 60/729, p. 34 of 225.
- (4) Telegram from E. Grant-Duff His Britannic Majesty's Charge d'Affairs at Tehran to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs London, No. 162, dated 14th September 1905, FO 60/729, No. 33 of p. 225.
- (5) Letter from British Minister at Tehran to the Moshir ad-Doleh, the Iranian Foreign Minister, dated Meshed 9th September 1905, FO 60/729, p. 206.

"Thus, among other things, it is claimed that the Seistan Boundary Commission despoiled Persia for the benefit of Afghanistan; that many important concessions have been obtained by England from the new Prime Minister and long accounts are given of the British Minister's journeys in north-eastern Persia as if they concealed some political designs. Each and all of these statements are grossly exaggerated. The British Boundary Commission did apportion a slice of what was formerly considered Persian territory to Afghanistan; but it awarded to Persia a still larger section of what was formerly Afghan soil. There is some dissatisfaction in Teheran regarding the share awarded to Persia of the water of the Helmund."<sup>(1)</sup>

The report went on, claiming that:

"Then followed the question of the distribution of the Helmund water, which did not depend upon demarcation, but on existing rights and practice. This was decided last May, and has, it is understood, now been accepted by both the Amir and the Shah".<sup>(2)</sup>

Not only was the Times of London wrong in stating that the water award had been decided on existing rights and practices, and not only was it wrong in stating that the award had been decided in May (1905), but this author has not come across any evidence, among Persian and English documents suggesting Iran's acceptance of McMahon's water award. The people of Sistan, however, were reported to have demolished and burnt the Lakshakh band of the Afghans on the 29th of October 1905.<sup>(3)</sup> The Iranian Commissioner, Yamin-e Nazam, began on his own behalf communicating with the Afghans for a more satisfactory arrangement, while the Government of Iran seems to have requested a fresh arbitration.<sup>(4)</sup> Public anger in Sistan led to wide spread reactions. The local officials of Sistan attacked and burnt down the Sistan

(1) The Times, Friday September 29, 1905, FO 60/729, p. 20.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Confidential Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan, dated the 15th November 1905, FO 248/847, p. 6 of 315.

(4) From Hardinge to the Foreign Office, dated Brighton, November 21st 1905, FO 60/729, p. 268.

Arbitration Commission's building at Kuhak.<sup>(1)</sup> Other people of Sistan widened the canals and strengthened the bands on Hirmand, taking more water from the river. The Viceroy of India reported the complaints of the Afghans of these undertakings by the Iranian subjects stating:

"P. Seistan. Please refer to my telegram of the 27th ultimo, regarding Water Award. A telegram, dated the 30th November, has now been received from His Majesty's Consul to the effect that Afghans are complaining that more water is being taken by the Persians than they have ever taken before. Macpherson states that Afghan complaint is fully justified, as the Persians are receiving 1,400 cubic feet per second, while the Afghans are only getting 100, and no water was passing down the Sikhsar channel. Two dams were recently constructed by Afghans, one across Helmund at Shahgul, and the other at the mouth of Lakshak canal; effect of latter was to reduce by about one half the Lakshak supply. Gangs of Persians were collecting in anticipation of orders for removal of dam being issued by Yamin. Macpherson fears that there will be serious trouble unless the Persians allow a larger amount of water to flow down the Helmund at Bund-i-Kohak; he is, however, trying to arrange to induce the Afghan Governor to settle matter amicably, should dispute arise."<sup>(2)</sup>

#### DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS: AMIR SHOKAT AL-MOLK'S MISSION

Disputes between the Iranians and Afghans on the distribution of the Hirmand water in Sistan continued for years. Not only was not McMahon's decision on Hirmand water distribution observed by local population but his recommendation of appointment of a permanent British water engineer for the supervision of water distribution was not followed by any one.

In his confidential diary of December 1929, the British Consul for Sistan indicates that: "there had been one or two minor affrays between Afghans and Persians in the Mian Kangi

(1) From India Office to Foreign Office, dated 23rd November 1905, FO 60/729 , p. 280.

(2) From the Viceroy of India, dated 8th December 1905 FO 60/729 , p. 341.

district of Sistan as a result of disputes in connection with the distribution of the Hirmand water. A few casualties on both sides resulted."<sup>(1)</sup>

By this time, Reza Shah Pahlavi had established a strong central authority in Iran backed by a modern central military force. As his power consolidated in Iran and his Government's influence began to expand among neighbouring countries, he began fresh attempts to settle the Sistan water dispute through direct negotiations with the Afghans. The first attempt to enter negotiations with the Afghans took place in 1930. The two governments, according to Mohammad Ali Monsef's book on Shokat al-Molk, had agreed to send their missions to Sistan where negotiations could be conducted on the site of the disputed frontiers. Iran's mission was led by Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan who had by then assumed the surname "Alam". His appointment was obviously prompted by his vast knowledge of the problem and his deep interest in the matter. Other members of the Iranian delegation included Colonel Mokri representing the army, Badi az-Zaman Khan Mesbah and Esmail Shirazi representing the Ministry of Finance, Rafi al-Molk Rasteh representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mohammad Ali Monsef was secretary to the mission. The Afghan mission was led by Abd al-Ahad Khan speaker of Afghan Majlis, Mohammad Anvar Khan, Governor of Chokhansur, Gholam Yahya Khan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Motasam Khan and Mohammad Esmail Khan.<sup>(2)</sup> The two delegations met at Deh-e Mohammad in Sistan and continued their discussions for two months: "when the Afghan mission referred to the arbitrations of Goldsmid and McMahon, the Amir said: we are not prepared to base our talks on foreign arbitrations which had never been officially endorsed. Moreover, those arbitrations were not for settlement of

(1) Paragraph 97 of Confidential Diary of H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan for 15 Nov. to 31 Dec. 1929, FO 371/14526, p. 3 of 211.

(2) Monsef, Mohammad Ali, "Amir Shokat al-Molk Alam", Tehran 1975, pp. 184 - 189.

differences, but to create cause for disputes between the two brothers in religion. Thus, it is not to the interest of either side to negotiate on those arbitrations."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Amir, therefore, succeeded in opening up fresh possibilities in the Iran-Afghanistan negotiations on Hirmand water distribution by casting out Goldsmid and McMahon water awards. Direct negotiations thus began on a new footing which was to rule out previous arrangements and to start afresh. It was to negotiate everything in accordance with accepted international and true local needs. The Shokat al-Molk, therefore, demanded that the Hirmand water should be divided between Iran and Afghanistan on equal bases, each side receiving half of the water flowing from Band-e Kamal Khan downstream. The Afghans, at length, agreed to the division of water in two equal volumes from Nahr-e Shahi which is situated below the Kamal Khan band. This offer was not acceptable to the Amir as there was not much water left in the river below Band-e Shahi to be divided by the two sides and the Amir was clearly hoping for more water for Sistan.<sup>(2)</sup> The Amir, in reply, made the following statement:

*"I have explicitly stated that I cannot accept any other arrangement (other than dividing the whole water from Kamal Khan band into two equal halves). If you wish, I will inform my government of your suggestion, and if my government accepted it, I personally will refrain from adhering to it and will resign from this mission, because your suggestion is injurious to the Government (of Iran) and to the people of Sistan.... I do not want to be cursed and blamed like Yamin-e Nezam's mission has been. Whenever I myself see the (border) pillars, I curse them, because unlike internationally accepted method of putting boundary line in the middle of the rivers or on top of mountains, here natural boundary has been disregarded."<sup>(3)</sup>*

(1) Monsef, op. cit., p. 187, quoting notes of the first round of talks.

(2) Monsef, op. cit., p. 188.

(3) Monsef quoting notes of the third round of talks, op. cit., p. 188.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Amir Shokat al-Molk's abortive attempt for settlement of disputes was followed by an upsurge of conflicts. The Foreign and Diplomatic Department of the Indian Government reported in November 1931 to the Foreign Office in London, outlining an eruption of fresh disputes between Iranian and Afghan subjects on Hirmand water utilisation. The report indicated that: "Afghans have been clearing bed of the old Shahi canal above Sistan band, which if used would deprive Sistan of water.... Local Sardar and followers, roughly 1,000 men, have proceeded to the frontier to negotiate. It is believed that they have instructions to fight if it is necessary...."<sup>(1)</sup>

The British Consul telegraphed shortly afterwards that: "Tribal levies returning. Matter is being taken up by respective Governments."<sup>(2)</sup>

The British, meanwhile, assigned a delegate led by Brigadier C.H. Haswell to carry out preliminary studies of the Hirmand water and possibilities of constructing bridges and dams on the river inside Afghan territory. The timing and purpose of this assignment were so controversial with regard to the existing sensitivities that the delegate was ordered to observe strict confidentiality of their mission. The British Minister at Kabul writing to the Indian Government stated:

"My memorandum no. 622. Telegraphic orders stated to have issued December 8th to Afghan Visa Officer Quetta to Grant Haswell's party visas. Prime Minister now prefers that they should stay at consulate Kandahar and is anxious that no mention of visit should be made in press. All telegraphic correspondence on subject should please not be in clear. Consul informed. Visit by party to Helmand not desired."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Telegram No. 2799S. from Government of India to the Foreign Office London, dated 17th November 1931, FO 371/15550, p.8.

(2) Telegram XX No. 84, from British Consul at Zabol to British Minister at Tehran, dated 1st December 1931, FO 371/15550, p. 10.

(3) Telegram No. 812 from H.B. Majesty's Minister at Kabul, to Foreign Department, New Delhi, dated 10th December 1931, FO 371/16275, . . . p. 29.

Receiving this telegram, the Indian Government issued instructions to the authorities of British Baluchistan stating:

- "Kabul telegram of 10th December no. 812
2. Please instruct Haswell accordingly. He should be particularly warned not to attempt visit to Helmand and to warn all members of his party to avoid doing anything which might give publicity to their movements or arouse Afghan suspicion.
  3. Presume you can arrange to keep local correspondent from mentioning this affair!"(1)

This mission, however, went ahead in maximum secrecy albeit its task did not include any interference with the volume of Hirmand water flowing into Sistan. In a report to the British Minister at Kabul, Brigadier Haswell stated that they were asked to investigate the following:-

- (1) Subsoil water flow on the area between Kandahar and the hills to the North.
- (2) Sites and designs for bridges on the Argandab river on the Herat Road and Hazarastan Road.
- (3) Site and design for a bridge over the Argastan river near Takhter Hul.
- (4) Repairs necessary to improve the road to Chaman for the benefit of the Fruit Trade Lorries.(2)

The Afghans began, as from 1920, to get the Americans to Kabul.(3) The Daily Telegraph of London reported in January 1935 that the Americans had decided to send a Minister to Afghanistan.(4) While surprised by this

(1) Telegram No. 3118-S, from Foreign Department, New Delhi, to Baluchistan, Quetta, dated 12th December 1931, FO 371/16275, p. 30.

(2) Extract of detailed report from Brigadier Haswell to British Minister at Kabul, dated Quetta, January 5th 1932, FO 371/16275, p. 32.

(3) Minute paper of British Foreign Office, No. P.Z.325/35, FO 371/19421, pp. 1 and 2 of 104.

(4) Daily Telegraph, Cutting date 16th January 1935, FO 371/19421, p. 106.

decision, the British concluded that the decision was connected to oil explorations in Afghanistan.<sup>(1)</sup>

American interests in Afghanistan proved, in due course, not to be connected with oil exploration in that country. American interest in Afghanistan was proved to have been motivated by geostrategic considerations of wanting to return Afghanistan to the Western sphere of influence. This interest manifested itself in economic cooperations, including the construction of dams and canals on the river Hirmand.

#### THE 1939 HIRMAND WATER AGREEMENT

After her third war with the British, Afghanistan considered closer ties with her historical neighbour Iran.<sup>(2)</sup>

In 1920 the Government of Afghanistan sent Sardar Abd al-Aziz Khan as its representative to Iran. He succeeded in signing an agreement of friendship with Iran in June 29th, 1921.<sup>(3)</sup> Diplomatic relations were established between the two Governments that year, and another agreement of friendship was signed on 31st October 1927, article six of which provided for the direct diplomatic settlement of disputes between the two countries in accordance with the terms laid down in the attached protocol. This protocol stated:

"Taking into consideration Article six of treaty of friendship between the governments of Iran and Afghanistan, the two contracting parties have agreed to the method of appealing for arbitration that, in the event of differences occurring between the two contracting parties, if settlement was not achieved through political means, each side will select an important personality of their country with full

(1) Minute paper of British Foreign Office, op. cit., p. 2.

(2) Ghobar, Mir Mohammad, "Afghanistan Dar Masir-e Tarikh", Kabul 1987, pp. 787-8.

(3) Ibid.

authority, and if agreement was not achieved by them, they will jointly select an important personality from a third country and the opinion of the third party arbitrator will be final and binding. Dated sixth of Azar of 1306 (31 October 1927)."<sup>(1)</sup>

It was on the strength of this protocol that Turkish General Fakhr ad-Din Altay was selected to arbitrate between the two countries in 1935 on the disputed districts of Musa-Abad and Yazdan (see chapter V on the boundaries of Khorasan and Baluchistan).

With the strengthening military positions in Baluchistan and Sistan in the mid-1930's the attention of the Iranian Government, once again, was drawn to Sistan and the question of the Hirmand water. An incident occurred in Sistan between the subjects of Iran and Afghanistan in 1938.<sup>(2)</sup> This incident brought the urgency of a settlement to the Hirmand water disputes to the forefront of Reza Shah's Government's foreign policy priorities. Mohammad Nader Shah's friendly attitude towards Iran at this time made it possible for an amicable settlement to the disputes. The protocol attached to the treaty of friendship of 1927 also prepared the grounds for negotiations between the two countries. Mr. Baqer Kazemi Iran's Ambassador to Afghanistan, was instructed to enter negotiations with the Government of Afghanistan. Negotiations between Kazemi and the Afghan Foreign Minister, Mr. Ali Mohammad Khan, resulted in the conclusion of a new treaty between the two countries which was signed on 26th January 1939.

Article 1 of this treaty recognised that "the Governments of Iran and Afghanistan agree to divide in equal shares all waters of the Hirmand river which flows to Band-e Kamal Khan (30 miles inside Afghan territory) between Iran and Afghanistan"; and

(1) Translated by the author from original Persian text of the protocol sent to the author by Document Centre of the Institute of Political and International Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on 17.05.1369 (8th August 1990).

(2) See Ghobar, op. cit., for details.

Article II of this treaty provided that "in order not to use more water than what is taken now between Deh-e Chahar Borjak and Band-e Kamal khan, the Government of Afghanistan engages not to construct any other stream in the said distance and even not to repair any of the existing ones"<sup>(1)</sup> - (See Appendix III for full Persian text and English translation of this treaty).

An important obstacle in the way of reaching this agreement was the deep rooted mistrust between the two people of each other's intentions. To remove this obstacle, the two signatories to this agreement issued a joint communique on the same day stating:

"Considering friendly relations and brotherhood that fortunately exist between the Imperial Government of Iran and the Royal Government of Afghanistan, at this time that the treaty of dividing Hirmand water is being signed by the competent representatives of the two sides, in order not to leave any cause for anxiety and suspicion between the inhabitants of Sistan and Chokhansur and between their respective governorates, and in order to enable the inhabitants of the two sides to trust each other's mutual friendship and cooperation, the following communique is signed and attached to the treaty of Hirmand water division of today's date: First; the Imperial Government of Iran announces that its sole consideration regarding this treaty is cultivation and irrigation of Sistan so that the cultivators would not be in much difficulty in this respect, and that it has no intention in obtaining instrument and excuse for interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs, but desires the everlasting progress and prosperity of Afghanistan.

"Secondly; the Royal Government of Afghanistan announces that it has no intention whatsoever, in administering pressure for preventing water to reach Sistan, and to this end, will not permit undertaking which will result in reduction in the Iranian share of water at Band-e Kamal Khan (engagement stated in the

(1) Articles I and II of the treaty of Hirmand Division, signed between the Imperial Government of Iran and the Royal Government of Afghanistan, on sixth of Bahman of 1317 (26th January 1939), Text in Persian, from the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, sent to this author by the Document Centre of the Institute of Political and International Studies, on 8th August 1990, Ref. 94.

*Article I of the treaty) which would damage cultivation and irrigation in Sistan."(1)*

(for original text see Appendix IV)

This agreement, though a significant improvement on McMahon's water award, from the Iranian point of view, also failed to put an end to Hirmand water disputes between Iran and Afghanistan, mainly because Reza Shah was deposed and exiled by British and Soviet forces who occupied Iran in 1941. The feebled Governments which replaced Reza Shah's authority in Iran were too weak to engage in settlement of disputes in their foreign policy.

Commenting on the impact of the 1939 treaty, a French translation of which was forwarded to the British Foreign Office by the British Legation at Tehran,<sup>(2)</sup> a Foreign Office official made the following notes:

*"I seem to remember, while I was in Tehran (1931 - 1934), that the question arose in some form or another of a new division of the water being necessary. No Award can last forever in this case, because the Helmand keeps changing its course.*

*In the present case, the Band-i-Kamal Khan lies about 30 miles inside Afghan territory, and I presume that the Deh Doust Mohammad which is mentioned is the one shown on the large-scale maps (India and adjacent countries 1/1,000,000 No.30) as about 20 miles north of the Band-i-Sistan, i.e. the point where the Helmand reaches the Perso-Afghan frontier. The Band-i-Sistan (or Band-i-Kuhak) has hitherto, I believe, been the principal irrigation barrage for Sistan."<sup>(3)</sup>*

(1) Translation (by the author) of the Communiqué of 26th January 1939, signed by Baqer Kazemi and Ali Mohammad Khan, Original Persian text sent to this author by the Document Centre of Institute of Political and International Studies of IRI, dated 8th August 1990, Ref. 94.

(2) From British Legation at Tehran to Viscount Halifax London, dated 13th April 1939, FO 371/23264 r p.184.

(3) Comments from an unnamed official of Foreign Office on the French text of Hirmand Water Division Treaty of 1939 between Iran and Afghanistan, dated 2nd May 1939, FO 371/23264 .

Notwithstanding the fact that the 1939 Hirmand Water Division Treaty was much in line with the accepted international standards concerning international rivers, it has failed in effect not because of geographical reasons but because of political sensitivities. The Hirmand has not changed its course in the delta region since 1939, but the prevailing atmosphere of distrust and lack of goodwill has prevented genuine efforts for solving the disputes.

AN ACCOUNT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HIRMAND  
WATER DISPUTES SINCE THE 1939 AGREEMENT

The 1939 Hirmand water agreement between Iran and Afghanistan was not enforced because the Afghans declined to ratify it, arguing that the Iranian Government should undertake, in a separate official communique ratified by the Iranian Majlis, to make no objection to Afghanistan's complete freedom of interference in the Hirmand water above Band-e Kamal Khan.<sup>(1)</sup> An additional argument for disregarding the agreement was that its attached communique was not ratified by the Iranian Majlis. The agreement was not, therefore, officially exchanged between the two Governments and eight years of negotiations did not succeed in revitalising the agreement.

Reza Shah Pahlavi was deposed and sent into exile in 1941 as a result of an Anglo-Soviet effort. His power and influence in Iran was replaced by a succession of weak Governments who lacked the ability and initiative of bringing about a solution to the worsening situation regarding Sistan's water problem. The Afghans, on the other hand, concluded a series of agreements with the Americans, in 1945 whereby the Americans were granted concessions to build dams and canals

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(1) Afghanistan's proposals as attached to the letter of 11.10.1319 (1st February 1941) from Deputy Foreign Minister to the Prime Minister, Iranian Documents of the Office of Prime Minister, Series No. 102010.

on various locations alongside Hirmand and its tributaries within Afghanistan with harmful consequences for Sistan. The Political Diary of the British Consul General of Mashhad records a long spell of drought in Sistan in the summer of 1947. It remarks: "from Zabol a report has been received that no water from the Helmand has reached the town for a month and that outlying villages have been without it for some three months. The drought-stricken population will not believe that failure of last winter's snow is the reason and have expressed their intention of crossing into Afghanistan and forcibly releasing the water on which they depend and which they are convinced the Afghans are illegally stealing or diverting by their new American engineered irrigation schemes in the neighbourhood of Girishk."<sup>(1)</sup>

Flow of Hirmand water into Sistan, in the meantime had diminished, in some instances completely stopped. A report from Zabol in the summer of 1947 to the Iranian Government indicated that Hirmand water had completely dried up in that year:

*"1- Following my previous reports, the number of the people taking part in the sitting strike increased today, and all of them cry about the lack of water and constantly ask me for an answer to their telegrams of complaints sent to His Excellency the Prime Minister and some of the Ministries and to the media and communication centres. I, therefore, beg to draw your attention to this matter...."*<sup>(2)</sup>

Within eight years, between 1949 and 1957, the Abgardan Boghra dam was constructed at Girishk, the Boghra Canal was built in 70 kilometres with a capacity of 2800 cubic feet per second, the Kajaki reservoir dam was constructed with a capacity of 1.5 million cubic feet, the Arghandab dam was constructed on the Arghandab branch of the river Hirmand.

(1) Extract from Secret Political Diary of British Consulate General Meshed, No. 8 of 1947, dated 5th August 1947, FO 371/62024 .

(2) Extract of telegram from Afshar Naderi in Sistan to the Iranian Government, dated 07.06.1326 (29th August 1947), Iranian Documents of the Office of Prime Minister series No. 102010.

Also the Hoghian Kamaraq, Akhtechi, Gohargan, Juy-e No, Archi Sarvi and a number of other canals were constructed with disastrous consequences for Sistan.<sup>(1)</sup>

In a report to his Government, the Iranian Ambassador to Kabul described his own personal assessment of the inspection of the Boghra canal in the following words:

*"Following the telegraph No. 244, I returned to Kabul last night and accompanied by Mohandes Tashakori, inspected the Boghra canal from Kereshk (Girishk) which is its beginning, to Nad-e Ali in 65 kilometres. This canal is completed and now in use. The depth of water all along this canal is two and a half metres; the water flowing in the canal at present is one thousand cubic feet, or in other word, 300 cubic metres per second. The water of Hirmand at this time of the year which is at its most, is between 15 to 20 thousand square feet. The breadth of the canal is 30 metres at the upstream, and reduces to a minimum of 12 metres at the downstream...."<sup>(2)</sup>*

Another local official in Zabol reporting to Amir Asadollah Alam, Governor General of the province of Sistan and Baluchistan, in 1945 states:

*"According to information received from inside Afghanistan a canal known as Boghra Canal has been constructed near Ghandahar in 1314 - 1315 (1935 - 1936) towards Hirmand river (towards Zabol). Our investigations indicate that during the past 8 to 9 years this canal was constructed in 18 kilometres with a breadth of 35 metres and with a depth of 5 metres.*

*"The number of people working on it until now, except for the three months of the winters, have been 6 to 7 thousand, but this year the number of the workers has increased, and it is estimated to be completed within*

(1) Mojtahehd-Zadeh, Pirouz, "The Eastern Iranian Boundaries", paper presented to the Seminar on the Iranian Boundaries, at the Geopolitic and International Boundaries Research Centre, SOAS, University of London, on December 9th 1991. Information contained in this section were compiled from various Afghan sources.

(2) Extract of telegram No. 252 from the Iranian Ambassador to Kabul to his Government, no visible date, Iranian Documents, op. cit.

*the next five years with disastrous consequences for Sistan...."(1)*

Construction of Kajaki reservoir and the Boghra diversion dam in 1947 - '49 caused great uproar in Iran, especially amongst local people and dignitaries of Sistan and Baluchistan.

Interviewed by this author on Wednesday 10th April 1992, Amir Husseini Khan Khozeime Alam stated:

"Construction of Boghra dam in Afghanistan caused much anxieties among local people in Sistan and increased fear of complete halt in the flow of Hirmand water into the delta region. Floods of letters and telegrams from Sistan and Baluchistan did little to move the Iranian Government to act in that regard. My cousin and brother-in-law Amir Asadollah Khan Alam whose concern and enthusiasm regarding affairs of Sistan and Qaenat cannot be doubted, was Governor-General of Baluchistan and Sistan at the time. He instructed units of the Air Force at Zahedan (Baluchistan and Sistan) to carry out surveillance flights over the site of the dam studying possibilities of destroying the dam by aerial bombardments. Young Amir Asadollah Khan was about to act on his own initiative that Mohammad Reza Shah advised him to control his temper and allow for peaceful means to settle the problem. He followed young Shah's advice but the promised settlement never materialised."

Other sources attribute this impetuous act to General Razmara, the powerful Prime Minister at the time, but it does not seem logical that a mature politician as prudent as Razmara would follow his impulse in this manner, whereas Amir Asadollah Khan Alam was at the time a young man enthusiastically inclined regarding local affairs.

As Afghanistan continuously failed to reply to Iran's suggestions for the settlement of the problem, the Iranian Government, instructed their permanent representative at the United Nations in 1947 to refer the case to the UN Security

(1) Extract of telegram of 05.03.1324 (26 May 1945) from Hussein Sarani to Amir Asadollah Alam, Iranian Documents of the Office of Prime Minister, series No. 102010.

Council. Before Iranian representation was made to the Council, the Americans intervened and their Ambassador to Tehran, George Allen, was instructed to persuade the Iranians to continue negotiations with the Afghans in Washington. The Government of Iran agreed to this course of endeavour and all parties (Iran, Afghanistan and the United States) decided to allow an impartial commission to study the amount of Hirmand water, the size of the cultivable lands on both sides of the border river and the water needs of each side, before serious negotiations took place. As a result of this decision, a commission was formed of three international water experts from three impartial countries. The three were:

- 1- Mr. F.F. Dominguez, a water expert and university professor from Chile;
- 2- Mr. Robert L. Lowry, a water expert from the United States; and
- 3- Mr. Christopher E. Webb, a water expert from Canada.<sup>(1)</sup>

Having completed their investigation in Afghanistan, the commission continued investigation of the relevant water and agricultural situations in the Sistan of Iran in 1948. Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, Iran's Deputy Minister of Agriculture at the time, who was in charge of hosting and guiding the commission inside Iranian territories, told this author on Wednesday 10th April 1991 that the commission inspected relevant districts on either side of the river and recommended that Iranian Sistan should receive, at least, 22 cubic metres per second of the Hirmand water.

Although this amount per second of Hirmand water was, in practice, less than the amount determined by Colonel McMahon in 1905 of the Hirmand water for Sistan,<sup>(2)</sup> the Afghans declined to accept it. The Government of Iran eventually succeeded in obtaining Afghanistan's consent to a new round

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(1) Iranian Documents of the Office of Prime Minister, series No. 102010.

(2) Iranian Documents of the Office of Prime Minister, series No. 102010.

of negotiations on the question of Sistan water on the basis of recommendations of the impartial commission.

The two Governments decided on conducting their own negotiations in Washington. The Iranian delegation was led by Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam and included Mr. Qodratollah Tashakori and Mr. Soleiman-pour who were water engineers, Mr Abd al-Ahad Dara, Mr. Mohammad Sarvari and Dr. Mohammad Hassan Ganji<sup>(1)</sup> a highly respected Iranian geographer who was also secretary to the mission.

In Washington, the delegation was joined by Dr. Ali Amini, Iranian Ambassador to the United States, as the chief negotiator.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Afghan delegation was led by Mr. Ludin , that country's Ambassador to the United States and included Abd al-Majid Khan Zabuli, Dr. Tabibi and Mr Reza who was a water engineer.

In a summary of the confidential notes of the mission, sent to this author, Professor Mohammad Hassan Ganji indicates that: "the first official session began in the afternoon of 9th April 1959. Heads of the two delegations exchanged their written statements which contained the main points of their claims.... The two sides exchanged their notes of response to the claims of the opposite side on the 11th April.... thence meetings took place twice a week in the embassies of the two countries alternately. As discussions proceeded the Afghans continued reiterating their one-sided answers to the questions put to them. This practice prevented progress of negotiations.... The Afghans remained intransigent throughout emphasising that Iran's rights of Hirmand water were limited to the minimum 22 cubic metres per second quota as defined by the impartial commission. In reply, Iranian water engineers demanded 52 cubic metres per second which was needed for

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(1) Later Professor of Geography at the University of Tehran, now retired (Professor Emeritus).

(2) Later Prime Minister.

agricultural irrigation in Sistan.... As negotiations continued to no avail, Dr. Ali Amini stated in a meeting of the latter days that he had solved the problem of oil in Iran and was then ready to accept on his own responsibility an offer from the Afghans of 30 cubic metres or even 26 cubic metres per second instead of the 52 cubic metres quota needed. But the Afghans stated that they had no authority to anything more than the 22 cubic meter per second quota...."(1)

These negotiations came to an abrupt end as the Afghan delegation wanted to return to Kabul. Professor Ganji indicates that:

"On 5th June 1956 Dr. Amini informed Iranian delegation that the Afghan representative had informed him that the talks should be brought to an end within one week, allowing him to see to his other duties. The Iranian delegation, as a consequence summarised its view in a note which was handed to the Afghan delegation. This note was as follows:

- (1) Iran has, in accordance with historical tradition, the rights of using Hirmand water and will continue preserving these rights.
- (2) The Washington negotiations will not be considered as terminated, but the two sides agree to:
  - (a) Afghanistan will continue allowing supply of water needed for the existing agricultural lands of Sistan (149,000 acres) for 5 years, and Iran will, in the meantime, undertake to improve irrigation networks to eradicate wastage.
  - (b) Afghanistan undertakes to supply water for the future agricultural needs of Sistan.
  - (c) The two sides will form joint commissions for further studies of the problem and compiling relevant documents.
  - (d) After the 5 year period is terminated, the present commission will resume its sessions or a new commission will take over."(2)

(1) A summary of the notes of negotiation of Iranian delegation in Washington with the Afghan delegation on Hirmand water division, prepared and sent to this author by Professor Mohammad Hassan Ganji, dated 9th March 1991, translated into English by Pirouz Mojtabeh-Zadeh.

(2) Ibid.

On 19th and 20th of March 1959 direct negotiations were resumed between an Iranian delegation at Kabul and the Afghan Prime Minister Sardar Davood Khan. The Iranians put forward a series of proposals to the Afghans during these negotiations, none of which was accepted. The Governments of Iran and Afghanistan eventually signed in Kabul, on March 13, 1973, a new agreement with two protocols regarding the water division of the Hirmand river. Unfortunately the text and related information were not disclosed at the time and the agreement did not enter into effect because of the Afghan Coup d'etat of that year which prevented ratification of the agreement by the Afghan parliament. The Iranians also disowned the agreement unofficially, firstly, because of widespread protest against it within the country and; secondly because of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 which resulted in the cancellation of many agreements with other countries signed by the previous regime. Mr Foroughi, Iran's Ambassador to Afghanistan (late 1960's and early 1970's)<sup>(1)</sup> who was involved in the preparation of grounds for this agreement, prepared for the use in this work, a report on the basis of his personal notes, of the proceedings leading to the signing of the 1973 agreement. The following is a summary of his report: "late in Shahrivar (mid-September) of 1345 (1966), six months after arriving in Kabul I informed Iranian Foreign Ministry in a report the following:

- 1- One of the principal reasons of differences among the countries of Asia and Africa is the legacy of the colonial policies of European countries of the 19th century.... I include the Hirmand dispute in this category....
- 2- I discussed General Goldsmid's arbitration and his invention of outer Sistan and Sistan proper, and introduced it as the principal bone of dispute concerning Hirmand.
- 3- Then I discussed (with the Afghans) the mission of Sir Henry McMahon.

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(1) Mr Mahmud Foroughi was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister in 1978. He took residence in the United States in the wake of the 1979 revolution and died there in January 1992.

- 4- Then I considered the Commission of Hirmand Delta (the Impartial Commission) of 1950. According to a table (produced by this Commission) Iran's average annual share of Hirmand water was determined as being 22 cubic meter per second. It is noteworthy that the Iranian Government did not agree with the outcome of these two missions (McMahon and the impartial commission).
- 5- His Majesty the Shah of Afghanistan for the reasons of courtesy to His Majesty Mohammad Reza Shah added another four cubic metres per second to the figure (recommended by the impartial commission of 1950) bringing up the total to 26 cubic metres per second, but the division of water was to be based on the formula of the same table.
- 6- Another 2 cubic metres per second was possible to be added to this in that year (1966), bringing the total to 28 cubic metres per second.
- 7- All damages caused to Iran in the past years were the results of ignorance of the (Iranian) authorities of the time, I hope with no ill intentions.
- 8- A careful study of Sistan's military and economic importance of today is needed. If the situation remains as it is now, what will happen? How could the water be stored and how could Iran's share be increased? What policies could the Iranian Government adopt regarding rivers flowing from Iran into other countries?
- 9- With development plans progressing in Chokhansur of Afghanistan, how much the Hirmand water will be affected?
- 10- Having completed these studies, we have to proceed with solutions (to the problems). Should we accept the 28 cubic metres quota and then increase our share of the water by implementing joint projects for storing Hirmand waters, or should we do nothing at present and proceed with international arbitration, bearing in mind that whenever we did, we sustained losses. Or should we follow imaginations of those who still hold out that the entire Sistan (divided between Iran and Afghanistan) and the countries of Herat, Samarqand, Bokhara, Caucaus and... are parts of Iran?

- 11- Time is passing to the disadvantage of Iran. Political situation in Afghanistan is uncertain and centre of decision making becomes more problematic every day.
- 12- If settlement of the differences is aimed at, it should be noted that an agreement is not the end of the problem but it will be the beginning of extensive activities.
- 13- I suggest that a qualified commission be appointed to see to these matters."

Negotiations with the Prime Minister of Afghanistan in the month of Aban (October-November) of that year resulted in his agreement to the proposed investment on joint projects to be implemented in the Afghan territory. High officials of Iran instructed Mr. Foroughi in the following month to proceed with the aim of settling the differences on the basis of acceptance by Iran of the 28 cubic metres quota with joint projects and investments for increasing Iran's share of the water in mind. Afghanistan, in the meantime, was going through a domestic political change. As freedom expanded in the country, achievement of unanimity of views on the question of Hirmand water disputes with Iran became more difficult. Apparently there were groups of people in Iran who were, as Mr. Foroughi puts it, "influenced by their fanaticism, and advocated hostility to any settlement with Afghanistan, propagating that any such settlement would add up to nothing less than treason". He writes:

*"The question which was initially technical, became political and legal. Regrettably informations in Iran on the Hirmand issue were little more than none. I wonder how many people had seen that river, Sistan and Chokhansur.... However, talking to His Majesty the King and the Prime Minister of Afghanistan after a while, I was told that considering prevailing (political) situation, acceptance of 26 cubic metres quota was difficult let alone accepting 28 cubic metres per second. But, since we have already accepted the principle of 26 cubic metres per second, we will agree to it in any circumstance. We also promise, with our honour, that we will agree to the joint projects after settlement of the differences, because it is to the benefit of Afghanistan as well."*

As each month passed by it became clear that time was against Iran and the Afghan authorities began to lose their power and

influence in that country. In his notes, Mr. Forughi points out:

"Late Hoveida, the then Prime Minister (of Iran) arrived in Kabul on the 6th of Aban (28th of October) of 1347 (1968) for a state visit. Negotiations on Hirmand issue were high on the agenda. The night before his return to Iran, the Afghan Government cabinet assembled in the Chehel-Sotun Palace (Late Hoveida's residence) and we Iranians assembled in another room. Talks continued for some hours past midnight. There were much comings and goings between the two rooms, but no agreement was achieved and the Prime Minister returned to Iran with his entourage the following day (9th Aban) (31st October)."

The year 1971 was the year of great drought in the Hirmand delta region. People in Iran and Afghanistan sustained great loss and large groups of Afghans immigrated and settled in Kerman, Baluchistan, Khorasan and Gorgan regions of Iran. The Afghan Government endeavoured at the outset of the drought not to ask for foreign help but to no avail. They sought assistance and the Red Lion and Sun Society of Iran did all it could. After six years of remaining in Afghanistan, Mr. Forughi requested termination of his mission to that country. The application was approved and he returned to Tehran on the 18th November 1971. After all those negotiations and comings and goings between Tehran and Kabul, the Hirmand dispute remained unsettled. Mr Forughi was sent back to Kabul by order of the Shah less than a year later. He indicates in his confidential notes:

"I was sent to Kabul at the head of a delegation for a temporary mission in Shahrivar of 1351 (August-September 1972). I resumed negotiations there. The basis of negotiations was the same quota of 26 cubic metres per second. But according to a table prepared by the Ministry of Water and Power of Iran, additional quota of water would be purchased annually in a separate agreement to be signed with the Afghans.

"Agreements between the United States and Canada, between the United States and Mexico and agreements between some states of the United States on the rivers flowing from one country to another and the ways of purchasing water were studied.... The final draft on

the measurements of the water was prepared. I have already explained the rest of the matter to you.<sup>(1)</sup>

"In the final letter I wrote to the Foreign Ministry on the 29th Shahrivar 1351 (20th September 1972) pointing out that I had stated in the final meeting in Kabul that by reaching agreement and when documents went through legal process the activities and cooperation between the two countries will just start. Then I noted that if we were to sign this agreement on the belief that the differences are finally settled, we are better not to do so. But if the aim is to settle the differences on the basis of this agreement so that we could begin all efforts and cooperation between the two countries, the sooner we sign the agreement the better. It is obvious that the preparation of future projects will rest with the honourable Government, but as a reminder I would add that such cooperations must include a wide range of projects: from joint projects for reservation of water and regularisation of distribution system, to economic and cultural cooperations, each to be prosecuted diligently and with patience, stamina and goodwill."

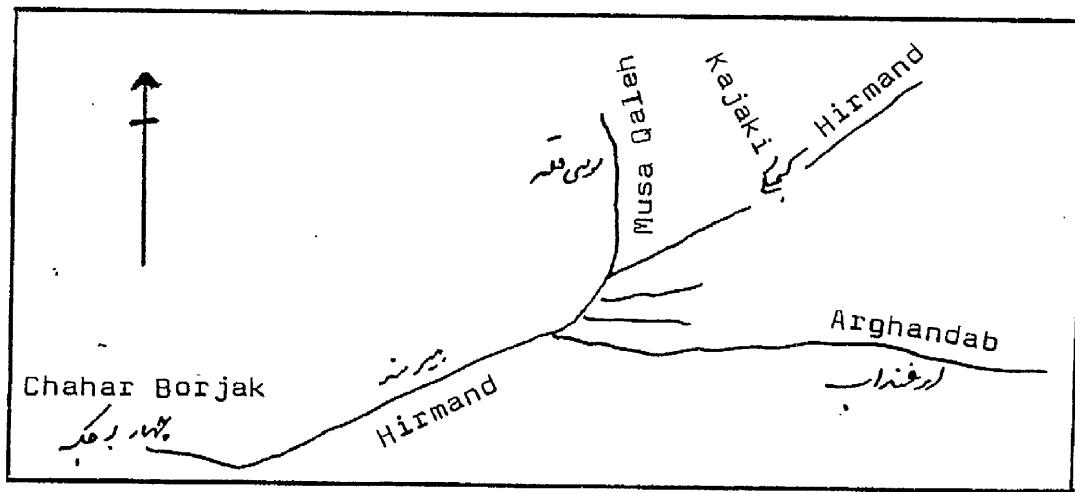
Here Mahmud Foroughi expresses regret for not being in possession of the final draft of the agreement to send to this author. Before coming to the final draft, representatives of the two countries prepared and modified eleven drafts during their six years of negotiations. On the joint projects and investments, he points out that the experts of the two countries had concluded:

"....that the Musa Qal'eh branch of Hirmand was the most suitable site for the construction of the intended dam. In an amateurish sketch that I have attached, the approximate positions of the rivers joining Hirmand are shown and I hope it will be of some use in your research project."<sup>(2)</sup>

In an earlier correspondence, Mr. Foroughi wrote to this author:

(1) Here Mr. Foroughi refers to the contents of an earlier letter to this author which will be quoted in subsequence to this text.

(2) Report in 7 pages in Persian, sent to this author by Late Mahmud Foroughi, prepared on the basis of his personal notes, dated 7th of Shahrivar 1369 (29th August 1990).



Rough sketch of Hirmand and its tributaries, prepared by Mr. Mahmud Forughi in aiding his report on Hirmand negotiations of late 1960's and early 1970 sent to this author on 29th August 1990. Names in English added by the author.

"After a few months His Majesty instructed me to go back to Kabul accompanied by a delegation to resume efforts aimed at settlement of Hirmand problem. Negotiations were resumed there and eventually we agreed that after signing the new agreement it should be first ratified by the Afghan Parliament and signed by the King, then the treaty of purchasing water should be signed and the whole package to be presented to the Iranian Houses of Majlis and Senate for ratification, to be signed finally by the Shah.

"The remaining task still to be sorted out was the method of measuring Hirmand water. Since this was a technical matter and I was not qualified to make any decision on the subject, I returned to Tehran and reported the development (to the Shah). A few days later Mr. Amir Abbas Hoveida, the then Prime Minister informed me that Mr. (Safi) Asfia, Deputy Prime Minister was to go to Kabul accompanied by a delegation. I apologised for not being able to do so, but promised to furnish Mr. Asfia with every detail of the previous proceedings. I did so, but learnt later that treaties were signed and ratified by the Iranian Parliament with no news of water purchasing agreements." (1)

The treaty of 1973 was not ratified in Afghanistan because of the coup d'etat which occurred in that country three months after signing the treaty.

When it was put before the Parliament in Iran in 1973 for ratification, much opposition to it was voiced both within the Parliament and outside it. A vociferous opponent of this treaty was Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam, then a member of the Senate, who told this author in an interview on Wednesday 10th April 1991:

"My opposition was motivated by two aspects of the treaty: firstly, the treaty on the whole denied Iran of her ancient rights to half of the Hirmand water reaching Iranian borders, and: secondly, it recognised all dams, bands and canals that the Afghans had constructed above and below Band-e Kamal Khan contrary to the terms of 1939 treaty and contrary to the previous arbitral opinions concerning the same."

(1) Extract from a letter from Mr Mahmud Foroughi to this author, dated 10th Khordad 1369 (31st May 1990).

A few years later the Iranian monarchy was overthrown by the Islamic revolution of February 1979. A few months later, Afghanistan was occupied by the forces of the Soviet Union and civil war continued until April 1992 when the Soviet installed regime of Dr. Najibollah was toppled by the Afghan Mojahedin forces. The new "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" has not, as yet, consolidated its position in that country and there is no prospect, at present, of an early resumption of dialogue between Iran and Afghanistan on the Hirmand water disputes.

Appendix I

Report by British Vice-Consul (1909) on canals  
 in Hirmand delat.<sup>(+)</sup>

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Sir, I have the honour to submit for your information the following notes made by me recently, while on tour in the Mian Kangi district, on the Afghan and Persian canals and - water-channels between the "Band-i-Shah Gul" and Deh Dost Mohammed (vide Colonel McMahon's map - scale 1" to 1 mile illustrating his boundary award)

AFGHAN

2. On crossing the "Band-i-Shah Gul" (the old "Band-i-Pariun no longer exists) I noticed that the water did not appear to be flowing freely down the head of the Ju-i-Afghan. This has been considerably blocked by sand which is blown off the Reg-i-Pariun by the prevailing north wind. On proceeding about half a mile further down the Ju I found that a fresh cut had been made from the Helmund which meets the old Ju at a point about half way between the take out from the Helmund and its point of junction with the Nad-i-Ali channel. A good volume of water appeared to be flowing down this cut and I was informed that it had been made in 1908 by the Afghans and Persians together and without friction.

SHAM-U-DINSWATER CHANNEL

3. From this point I retraced my steps and crossed the Reg-i-Pariun to boundary pillar No. 53. A dry water channel (vide sketch map attached) was found to run from the head of the Ju-i Afghan parallel to the right bank of the Helmund to a point in the Reg-i-Pariun where it turned off to the N.E. in the direction of Milak. This water channel showed no signs of having held water and is now out of repair. On making enquiries I was informed that it had been constructed in 1907 by Sham-u-Din Khan, nephew of Khan Jehan Khan, with a view to irrigating the country round Milak (which has suffered from lack of water since the change in the course of the Helmund). The Afghans, however, very naturally refused to allow the water to be taken from this point fearing that a large proportion of the water of the

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(+) From H.B. Majesty's Vice-Consul, Sistan and Kain, to Major R.L. Kennion I.A., His Britannic Majesty's Consul for Sistan and Kain, dated Seistan; the 30: January 1909, FO 248/971.

Ju-i-Afghan, already scarcely sufficient for its purpose, would be diverted from the Nad-i-Ali channel. The actual objection they raised was to the effect that the new water channel traversed their territory and could not therefore be made without their permission. This is certainly correct but in any case it appeared to me improbable that the channel would have worked satisfactorily since the sand which has already partially blocked the Ju-i-Afghan would have had an even worse effect here.

As far as I could ascertain Shams-u-Din Khan did not attempt to despite the right of the Afghans to refuse water for this channel and it therefore remained unused.

4. No water now flows down the old bed of the Helmund between boundary pillars nos. 53 and 52. The bed is therefore dry up to the point where it is met by the Ju-i-Afghan.

#### WATER CHANNELS

##### TAKEN FROM THE NAD I-ALI

5. From this point I followed the Nad-i-Ali channel and the Sikhsar to Deh Dos Mahomed. On the left bank I noticed that two water channels, in close proximity to one another feed Milak (in place of one shown on map). One of these was recently made owing to the unsatisfactory flow of water down the old channel and I was informed that they reunite lower down. Neither appear to take off any very considerable volume of water.

About half a mile below Milak a water channel, with a good flow of water, has been recently made by Shams-u-Din Khan. This, I was informed, unites with the canal somewhat lower down (marked Jehanabad water channel No. 2 on the sketch map) and it is to one of these canals that Shams-u-Din referred to when speaking to H.B.M's Consul at their exchange of visits last month. He then stated that disputes had arisen regarding one of these (almost certainly No. 1 which was the last to be dry) and that the Afghans had closed it. At the time of my visit water was flowing freely down the channel and I could see no signs of its having been recently closed.

On the right bank I noticed that one of the Afghan water channels leading in the direction of Nad-i-Ali was closed but this may be temporary. None of these appeared to carry off much water

LAKSHAK  
AND DEH DOST  
MAHOMMAD CANAL

6. On proceeding some two miles further down the left bank through dense tamarisk undergrowth, I found that the Lakshak and Deh Dost Mahomed the spot known as "Janjal" (vide marginal note Sheet No.2 (b) map of Persian Seistan showing irrigation canals). These two canals take out together. The draw is very considerable and the canal itself very much larger and deeper than any other above it.

AFGHAN  
CUT

7. A few hundred yards further down and at the point where the Nad-i-Ali channel bends to the N. (vide sketch), I found that a new cut had been made by the Afghans which is connected apparently with the Shela-i-Charkh and which, at the time of my visit, carried off all the remaining water of the Nad-i-Ali channel. From this point and onwards as far as boundary pillar 56 I found no water in either the Nad-i-Ali or Sikhsar channels except for a short distance where the united waters of the Lakshak and Deh Dos Mahomed canals rejoin the old bed before separating at a point known as "Janjal" (vide sketch).

From boundary pillar 56 and down to the head of the Rud-i-Gashta I found water was flowing in the Sikhsar channel: this was brought in from the Afghan side (right bank) a few hundred yards to the north of boundary pillar No. 56 but from such enquiries as I had any opportunity of making, it was recognised that the water belonged to the Afghans. The water followed the old Sikhsar channel to the spot where the Rud-i-Gashta takes out from it and thence onwards it was, at the time of my visit, dry. Opposite Deh Rasul Khan a cut had been made and was actually being repaired and cleaned by a man from Bahlol on the Afghan side when I passed by. This cut passes through a corner of Persian territory and rejoins the Sikhsar about half a mile further down.

I spoke to some cultivators from the Afghan side who met me here: they told me that the water was carried through the cut and on by the old Sikhsar channel to irrigate the country round Bahlol. At the time of my visit, the channel of the Sikhsar showed evident signs of having held water recently.

**JEHANABAD  
CANALS**

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8. On my return from Deh Dost Mahommed I visited Jehanabad and Khadung. A few days later I also visited Gazbar.

I found that Jehanabad and the country surrounding it obtained water not only from the Lakhsak and the two Jahanabad canals but also from an old canal recently cleaned out and repaired which takes off some three miles below the "Band-i-Shah Gul."

**TENDENCY OF  
WATER TO TURN  
TOWARDS KHADUNG**

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9. A greater proportion of the water of the Pariun than in previous years appears to be flowing via Khadung and Gazbar (in this connection see covering letter to Water Award from the British Commissioner to the Afghan Commissioner dated 16.04.06) and whereas last year the country round Sheikh Wasi was inundated before that round Gazbar, this year the reverse is the case.

10. To sum up:-

The Nad-i-Ali channel has been strengthened by a new cut taking out above the "Band-i-Shah Gul, dug by Afghans and Persians without friction.

(ii) Water channels are taken out on both sides of the Nad-i-Ali channel down to the point marked A on the sketch. At this point the Lakhsak and Deh Dost Mahommed canals take out together and thence onwards no water is taken by the Seistanis.

(iii) At B is the new Afghan cut and from such information as I could gather it was understood that under present conditions the residue of the water which did not pass down the Lakhsak canal belonged to the Afghans whether conducted by the Sikhdar channel or not.

The Nad-i-Ali and Bahlol districts appear to depend entirely on this canal and it seems very probable that any disputes which may arise under the present state of affairs will hinge on points marked A and B on the sketch. Both of the canals had a strong flow of water at the time of my visit but I am inclined to think the Lakhsak has the advantage of being higher up the Nad-i-Ali channel, and should the Persians increase the number of their water channels, which are already in excess of those dug by the

Afghans, above the Laksak, it is possible that, in a low year, sufficient water will not pass for the new Afghan cut.

(iv) The water of the Pariun below the "Band-i-Shah Gul" appears to show an even stronger tendency than formerly to turn to the west by Khadung.

(v) I heard of no disputes of any importance between Afghans and Persians. Undoubtedly the Nad-i-Ali channel is much silted up but the fact that a settlement such as that indicated at A and B has been arrived at between the parties tends to show that no serious friction exists at present.

Appendix IIMcMahon's Water Award: Final Draft<sup>(+)</sup>

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Colonel McMahon's draft Award "B", as revised with reference to the telegram from His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated the 19th December 1904 and the telegram to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated the 29th December 1904.

## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

1. General Sir Frederick Goldsmid, as Arbitrator between Persia and Afghanistan, was called upon to settle the question of rights to land and water of Persia and Afghanistan in Seistan. He delivered an arbitral award on both points in 1872, which was confirmed by His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and accepted by the Persian and Afghan Governments in 1873.

2. At the time of the above award, the Helmand River had one main distributary channel in Seistan, i.e., the Rud-i-Seistan, at the mouth of which, in order to divert sufficient water into this rud, was a tamarisk band known as the Band-i-Kohak or the Band-i-Seistan. The Helmand River from thence, onwards flowed in one channel past Nad Ali, and along what is now known as the Sikhsar, into the Naizand and Hamun. In 1896, a large flood caused the river to burst out for itself a new main channel, which left the old one near Shahgul, and is now known as the Rud-i-Pariun.

3. Various disputes regarding water between Persian and Afghan Seistan, which were caused by changes in the course of canals and in the course of the main river, have arisen since 1872. My enquiries show that these have, until recently, always been mutually and amicably settled by the responsible officials concerned on both sides, i.e., the Governors of Seistan and Chakansur. These officials, who thoroughly understood each other's water requirements, have always shown great tact and skill in settling water disputes to the mutual satisfaction of both countries.

4. Unfortunately of recent years, whatever may have been the cause, and whether this was due to the change in the course of the main stream, or to more strained relations, the

amicable settlement of water difficulties has been found to be no longer possible. A series of small, and in themselves unimportant, water questions arose between 1900 and 1902, which, by reason of estranged relations caused misunderstanding and increased ill feeling, until matters were brought to a crisis by further disputes arising from abnormal deficiency of water in the Helmand in 1902. This led to the present reference to the arbitration of the British Government.

5. The condition under which the present arbitration has been agreed to by the Governments of Persia and Afghanistan, is that the award should be in accordance with the terms of Sir Frederick Goldsmid's award.

6. In framing my award I am, therefore, restricted by the above condition.

7. Sir Frederick Goldsmid's award on the water question was as follows:-

"It is to be clearly understood that no works are to be carried out on either side calculated to interfere with the requisite supply of irrigation on both banks of the Helmand". Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as the final confirming authority of that award, after consulting General Goldsmid, further laid down in 1873 that the above clause should not be understood to apply either to existing canals or to old or disused canals that it may be desired to put in proper repair, nor would it interfere with the excavation of new canals, provided that the requisite supply on both banks is not diminished.

8. The above award is so definite that it is unnecessary to make any attempt to define it further, except on one particular point. This award provides that Persia has a right to a requisite supply of water for irrigation. In order to prevent future misunderstanding, it only remains to define what amount of water fairly represents a requisite supply for Persian requirements.

9. From the careful and exhaustive measurements, observations, and enquiries made by this Mission in Seistan, the following facts have been clearly established:-

(a) Seistan suffers more from excess than deficiency of water. Far more loss is caused by damage done to land and crops, year after year, by floods, than is caused by want of water for irrigation.

(b) In only very few exceptional abnormal years of low river has any question of sufficiency of water arisen in Seistan, and then Afghan Seistan has suffered equally with Persian Seistan. Moreover, questions as to the sufficiency of water only prove serious when the spring crop cultivation is concerned when the river is at its lowest, i.e., between the autumn and spring equinoxes, yet it has been ascertained

that only in 3 out of the past 35 years has there been any serious deficiency of water in Seistan during that season. It is necessary, therefore, first to consider water requirements during the season of spring crops. Any settlement based on the requirements of that season will meet the case of the remainder of the year also.

(c) After carefully calculating the normal volume of the Helmund River during the period between the autumn equinox and the spring equinox, it has been clearly ascertained that one-third of the water which now reaches Seistan at Bandar-i-Kamal Khan would amply suffice for the proper irrigation of all existing cultivation in Persian Seistan, and also allow of a large future extension of that cultivation. This would also leave a requisite supply for all Afghan requirements.

10. I therefore give the following award:-

Award.

1. No irrigation works are to be carried out on either side calculated to interfere with the requisite supply of water for irrigation on both banks of the river, but both sides have the right, within their own territories, to maintain existing canals, to open out old or disused canals, and to make new canals from the Helmand River, provided that the supply of water requisite for irrigation on both sides is not diminished.

2. The amount of water requisite for irrigation of Persian lands irrigable from and below the Band-i-Kohak is one-third of the whole volume of the Helmand River which enters Seistan.

3. Persia is, therefore, entitled to one-third of the whole Helmand River calculated at the point where water is first taken off from it to irrigate lands on either bank situated at or below Bandar-i-Kamal Khan.

4. Any irrigation works constructed by Afghanistan to divert water into Seistan lands, as above defined, must allow of at least one-third of the volume of the whole river being available for Persian use at Band-i-Kohak.

5. To enable both sides to satisfy themselves that this award is being complied with, and at the same time to avoid the necessity of fresh references to (the) Government of India and (the) expense of special Missions, a British officer of Irrigation experience shall be permanently attached to (the) consulate at Seistan. He will be empowered to give an opinion, when required by either party, on any case of doubt or dispute over water questions that may arise. He will, when necessary, take steps to bring the real facts of any case to the notice of the Government concerned. He will be able also to call the attention of either party to any important indications of threatening danger to their

water-supply arising from natural causes of their own irrigation works. To enable this officer properly to fulfil the functions of this office, free access shall be given to him by either side, to the Helmand River and its branches and the heads of the canals leading therefrom.

6. The maintenance of the Band-i-Kohak is of great importance to the welfare of Persian Seistan. It is possible that the deepening of the river bed at and below the site of the present band may necessitate moving the band a short distance further up the river. Afghanistan should allow Persia to move this band, if necessary, and grant Persia the right to excavate the short canal required from such new band through Afghan territory to the Rud-i-Seistan. Similarly, should it become necessary for Afghanistan to move the present Shahgul band across the Rud-i-Parun somewhat lower down that stream, Persia should (as has been done before) allow Afghanistan right of way for a canal through Persian territory from that band to the Nad Ali channel.

7. It will be noted that the rights to the Helmand water, which her geographical position naturally gives to Afghanistan as owner of the upper Helmand, have been restricted to the extent stated above in favour of Persia in accordance with Sir Frederick Goldsmid's award. It follows, therefore, that Persia has no right to alienate to any other Power the water rights thus acquired without the consent of Afghanistan.

8. I cannot close this award without a word of warning to both countries concerned. The past history of the Helmand River in Seistan shows that it has always been subject to sudden and important changes in its course which have, from time to time, diverted the whole river into a new channel, and rendered useless all the then existing canal systems. Such changes are liable to occur in the future, and great care should, therefore, be exercised in the opening out of new canals, or the enlargement of old canals leading from the Helmand. Unless this is done with proper precaution, it may cause the river to divert itself entirely at such points, and cause great loss to both countries. This danger applies equally to Afghanistan and Persia.

Treaty of Hirmand Water Distribution, original text of which signed between Iran and Afghanistan on 26th January 1939. Sent to this author by Document Centre of Institute of Political and International Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on 8th August 1990, Ref. 94

**قرارداد تقسیم آب هیرمند بین دولت شاهنشاهی ایران و دولت پادشاهی افغانستان**



چون دولت شاهنشاهی ایران و دولت پادشاهی افغانستان هردو با سویاً میل بودند که راجع به تقسیم آب هیرمند بین دولت قرارداد نداشته‌اند و برای انجام این قصوٰ قرارداد مخصوصی منعقد و امضان نمایند لکن نخانند کان مختار خود را بشرح ذیل انتخاب نمودند :

از طرف دولت شاهنشاهی ایران

جناب آقای باقر کاظمی سفیرکاری دولت پادشاهی کابل .

از طرف دولت پادشاهی افغانستان

عالیحضر جلال‌الهاب علی محمدخان وزیر امور خارجه دولت پادشاهی

و نماینده کان مزبور پس از تبادل انتیار نامه‌ای خود که واجد شرائط صحت و اعتبار بودند در مواد ذیل موافقت نمودند :

ماده اول - دولتین ایران و افغانستان موافقت نمایند که هر ساله هر مقدار آب رو دخانه هیرمند که به بند کمال خان میرسد بین ایران و افغانستان از بند کمال خان بعد بالمناصفة تقسیم شود .

ماده دوم - برای آنکه از دو چهار برجک ای بند کمال خان زاند بر مقدار آب یک فعلاً برده بیش و سو و سصرف نگردد و دولت افغانستان تعهد نمایند که در فاصله

مزبور علاوه بر انصار یکه جاری بوده و بسته هر دیگری احداث و حتی تغییر ننماید .

ماده سوم - مأمورین و میراباتی مجاز طرفین تقاضا به سال دفصل پاییز مقدار آبی را که در بند کمال خان میرسد تعیین نمایند و از بند کمال خان تا سپتامبر

مقدار آب یکه هر کیم از طرفین بوسیله اهالی منشعبه از هیرمند میرند معلوم نمایند و در هم طرفین محاسبه میدانند یکیکه این و هم مساوی باشد .

صورت تقسیمات و اسامی اهوار و مقادیر آب هر کیم از اهالی طرفین را پس از تشخیص یکیکه یکرا ببلغ خواهند نمود و اگر بعد ازین تغییری در صورت تهای مزبوره لازم شود که بخواهند در یکجا اضافه و دعوی عرض جای دیگر کرند یکیکه اطلاع خواهند داد .

ماده چهارم - دست کا بهاداد و اوت لازمه برای تعیین مقدار آب رو دخانه اهوار طرفین را مأمورین فنی ایران و افغانستان بین یکج و دیگر دولتین بالمناصفة

تئیز کرده در خلهاي مناسب را زندگان خان به بعد نصوب نموده و در صورت از زوم بيراي رودخانه را زندگان خان را ساخته هستيم  
منها يند

ماوه هفتم، - برای اينکه تقسيم تئليز آسپ رو دخانه هيرمند زندگان خان بوجه عادلانه كه متنظمو راين قرارداد است صورت گيرد ماورين فني طرفين  
در خطا طيکه مناسب بدانند در خاکنای خود مقسمهاي ائم خواهند ساخته هستند همچو ساختن اين مقسمها را طرفين تهاهين بعد از حصول آن  
نظر گير گير در طرح آن به مناسب مقدار آسيکه ميرمند عهد دار خواهند بود.

ماوه هشتم، - تاساختن سد و بند نای ائم نبند هاي گزى تبرار سابق ساخته خواهند شد و اگر طرفين را بسيز نبند هاي خوب گزفروت داشته  
باشند بسا در پييمت بيكيد گير خواهند داد.

ماوه هشتم، - چون دخنه هيرمند گه متنظمه از زود دخانه هيرمند زندگان خان شعيب شده و بجاگ طرفين جاري بيشو دخاکي ميانشده برای اينکه  
زياده و نقصانی در خصمه هر گيشه از طرفين پيرانشود و لوسپين متوجه شودند كه از تاریخ امضای ائم قرارداد انتبهي تاچهار سال هر دو  
آن دخنه را با اجر و آنگه گير گاه سخراج خود به ترتیب صحیح بسازند.

ماوه هشتم، - دولتین متوجه شوند كه سچوکونه اقدامات و عملیات زندگان خان تا بهده دوست محظیان و سخن سرکه تقسیم آخرين است خواهند كرد  
كه بحسب اتفاقان یا گاهش ميزان هر گيشه از طرفين بشود.

ماوه هشتم، - دولتین ایران و افغانستان تفاهم اموافقت ميانند كه ماورين فني ميرابهاي ائم امور اجرای عملیات مندرجه در تقلید او هستند  
و همچو عاليه جاسته امور سبتن و ساختن پاک كردن تقطیم بند ها و اهباپين بند كه ائم امور اجرای عملیات مندرجه در تقلید او هستند  
در خاک طرف مقابل هجاشتمه شد باشد بدون اسلحه متيوانند با هجا زنجاک بيكيد گير بروند.

تبصره، - مصالح و ادوات و اشياء يكه ماورين و عللها برای انجام وظائف مندرجه در راین قرارداد لازم دارند یا برای رفع حوالج زندگی  
خود در موقع خروج از سرحد هر راه خود ميرمند از حقوق گرگي معاف خواهند بود.

ماوه هشتم، - در صورت گه رودخانه هيرمند بالاي زندگان خان به بستر جديدي تتعلق شود مدول ماوه اول دليل گير كه بمنزه زندگان خان در علاوه چنان سور  
فعلي باشد با موافقت دولتین اجرای تعيين مقسم خواهند شد چنانچه پاين را زندگان خان به بستر جديدي تتعلق يا بستر فعلی طوري عميق شود كه برای  
اراضي سیستان آئمباری ممکن شود دولتین به اتفاق ميگذرد اينصوت برای استفاده اراضي سیستان از هر چهار يكه در ماوه اول

معین شده است بر ضایت طرفین تحت شرائط جداگانه قرارداد شد.



ماده پنجم: هرگونه اختلافی در اجرای مقررات این قرارداد خ ده که میر بهما و متصدیان امر از علت آن عاجز و یا از سود و انتیارات آنها غایج باشد  
بهرجیست حاکم و نماینده سیستان از طرف دولت ایران و حاکم و رئیس مالیه چنان سورا نظرف دولت افغانستان یا نماینده کان آنها  
تصفیه خواهد شد و لیکن این بحث با تفاوت اتفاق نمایند قاطع خواهد بود چنانچه موضوع مختلف فیه بین طریق تاد و ما و از تاریخ بروز اختلاف  
حل نگردید مگر زیرا طرفین با سرع اوقات بطور قطع حل و تسویه خواهد گردید.

ماده ششم: طرفین متعاهدین تعهد نمایند که هر کجا اتباع کی از آنها طریقه استفاده از آب رو و غذاء هم زندگانی که درین قرارداد  
مندرج است بهم نزند یا از مقررات آن تخلف نمایند و از خاک خود اقدامات لازمه را برای رفع آن عمل آورده مقصرين انجامات  
قانوني برسانند.

ماده هفتم: طرفین متعاهدین در طرف دو ماه از روز امضای اینقرارداد ترتیب استزاده از آب هم زندگانی کان و سهم خود را در خاک خود  
باطلان نمایند سرحدی و امامی و ساکنین اطراف رو و غذاء خواهند رسانید.

ماده هشتم: هر گیز از طرفین متعاهدین برچهزو و ترس از امضای این قرارداد ناموری برای مراجعت و نظرت در اجرای مواد این قرارداد  
تعیین و کتابه بطرف مقابل معرفی خواهند نمود.

ماده نهم: این قرارداد در طرف سه ماه از تاریخ امضای آن تصدیق مقامات مربوطه دولتین خواهد رسید و سخن تصدیق شده در کابینه  
خواهد شد.

ماده شانزدهم: اینقرارداد پس از مصادله اسناد صد شده معتبر و مجری است.

اینقرارداد در نسخه زبان فارسی تحریر شد و هر دو نسخه آن معتبر است. نظر بر این فوچ نماینده کان فنی طرفین اینقرارداد را امضاده و هر خود ممکن نمودند.  
کابل تاریخ ششم بهمن ۱۳۷۴

وزیر امور خارجه دولت پادشاهی افغانستان

سفیر کبیر دولت شاهنشاهی ایران

علی محمد

ملحق

TRANSLATION

Treaty on the division of Hirmand Water between the Imperial Government of Iran and the Royal Government of Afghanistan<sup>(+)</sup>

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Whereas the Imperial Government of Iran and the Royal Government of Afghanistan were equally interested in the conclusion of a just treaty concerning division of the Hirmand water between the two countries, and in signing a special treaty for this purpose, they have selected their competent representatives of the following description:

On behalf of the Imperial Government of Iran  
His Excellency Bager Kazemi, the Ambassador.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Afghanistan  
His Excellency Ali Mohammad Khan Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Royal Government,

And the Said representatives, after exchanging letters of credential which established their respective competence, agreed on the following articles:

Article I - The Governments of Iran and Afghanistan agree to divide in equal shares all waters of Hirmand river which flow to the Band-e Kamal Khan between Iran and Afghanistan.

Article II - In order not to use more water than what is taken now between Deh-e Chahar Borjak and Band-e Kamal Khan, the Government of Afghanistan engages not to construct any other stream in the said distance and even not to repair the existing ones.

Article III - Officials and water distributers of the two sides will jointly measure the volume of water reaching Band-e Kamal Khan in the autumn of every year. They will also measure the volume of water taken by the two sides through canals branching out from the Hirmand between Band-e Kamal Khan and Sikh-Sar, adding them to the table of each side's share in a way that (in the end) they will amount to equal shares. Tables of shares, names of streams and volume of waters flowing through the streams of each side will be communicated to the other side after being determined. They will also communicate to each other whatever change is

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(+) Translated into English by Pirouz Mojtabeh-Zadeh, 27th March 1992.

needed to be made in the said tables that is requiring to decrease amount in one part and increase same amount in another.

- Article IV - Tools and instruments needed for the measurement of the water of the rivers and streams of the two sides will be purchased by the technical employees of Iran and Afghanistan to be paid for by the two governments in equal shares. These tools and instruments will be installed in appropriate sites below Band-e Kamal Khan, and if needed, they will regulate the river course from Band-e Kuhak to Sikh-Sar.
- Article V - In order to allow just division and regulation of the waters of Hirmand river to take effect as is aimed by this treaty, technical employees of the two sides will construct permanent watersheds (water divider) in places they deem fit on their respective sides, and the expense of each construction will be met by the two contracting sides after agreeing on the project and in proportion of the volume of water being used by each from it.
- Article VI - Until permanent dams and bands are constructed, bands made of Gaz wood (Tamarisk) will continue to be built in traditional manner and if the two parties needed gaz wood from each other for this purpose, will pay each other accordingly.
- Article VII - Whereas the mouth of the streams taking off directly from the Hirmand river after Band-e Kamal Khan and flowing in the lands of the two countries, is of earth, and in order to prevent decrease and increase in the shares of each of the two sides, the two governments undertake gradually but correctly to construct the said parts with brick and chalk within four years from the date of signing this treaty on their own expense.
- Article VIII - The two contracting Governments engage not to take any step or act in any way, between Band-e Kamal Khan and Deh-e Dust Mohammad Khan and Sikh-Sar which is the last dividing point, that would diminish or cause decrease in the share of the other party from the water.
- Article IX - The Governments of Iran and Afghanistan mutually agree to allow technical employees and water distributers assigned to implement above measures and also other employees assigned to construct, regulate and clear the bands and streams between Band-e Kuhak and Sikh-Sar which necessitate entering the territory of the other side, to travel unarmed and with permission to each others territory.

- Note: - Instruments, tools and other objects that the said employees and officials may need for implementation of the above measures or for living after crossing the borders will be exempted from custom duties.
- Article X - In the event of Hirmand river changing its course above Band-e Kamal Khan into a new channel, the terms of Article I will apply to another spot, which will take the place of Bande Kamal Khan within the limits of Chokhansur, with the agreement of the two governments. If the river was to change its course below Band-e Kamal Khan into a new channel or if the existing channel deepened to the extent that irrigation of Sistan lands became impossible, the two governments agree to consider a separate arrangement to the satisfaction of both sides, allowing for the same amount of water determined in Article I to be used for irrigation of lands in Sistan.
- Article XI - Any differences occurring in the application of these regulations the solution of which is beyond the ability and/or competence of the water distributors and other officials named above, will be referred to the Governor and Director of Finance of Sistan on behalf of the Iranian Government and the Governor and Director of Finance of Chokhansur on behalf of the Afghanistan Government or their representatives to be solved and the judgement arrived at unanimously by this group will be decisive. If the cause of differences was not so settled, it will be referred to the political centres of the two countries, within two months from the date of its occurrence, to be solved speedily and decisively.
- Article XII - The two contracting parties undertake, whenever subjects of one of them disturbed the method of utilisation of water below Band-e Kamal Khan as defined in this treaty or violated regulations laid down here, to take immediate action on their own soil to make good the damage and to bring the guilty individuals to legal prosecution.
- Article XIII - Within two months from the date of signing the treaty, the two contracting parties will inform border officials and inhabitants of the vicinity of the river in their own territories of the terms of arrangements for the utilisations of Hirmand water and their shares from Band-e Kamal Khan.
- Article XIV - Each one of the two contracting parties will appoint an official for the purposes of reference and observation of implementation of this treaty soon after signing this treaty and will introduce him to the other party in writing.

Article XV - This treaty will be ratified by the competent authorities of the two governments within three months of the date of being signed and the ratified instrument will be exchanged in Kabul.

Article XVI - This treaty will come into force after the exchange of the instruments of ratification.

This treaty is written in two copies in Persian and both copies will be valid. In witness whereof the competent representatives of the two sides have signed and sealed this treaty. Dated Kabul the sixth of Bahman (Dalv) of 1317 (26th of January 1939). Signed the Ambassador of the Imperial Government of Iran, Baqer Kazemi. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Afghanistan, Ali Mohammad.

Appendix IV

Original Persian text of joint communique signed and sealed on 26th of January 1939 by Baqer Kazemi, Ambassador of the Imperial Government of Iran in Kabul, and Ali Mohammad Khan Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Afghanistan.



نظر بر وابط صیمانه دولتی و برادری که خوشنخانه بین دولت شاهنشاهی ایران و دولت پادشاهی افغانستان موجود میباشد در نیوکریک قرارداد راجع تقسیم آب های مند با مضای نمایندگان مختلف طرفین میرسد برای اینکه سیچنوع نگرانی و سوژنی بین ساکنین سیستان و چنان سور و بالتفعیل بین حکومتهاي دو طرف باقی نماند و ساکنین طرفین مزتباونش باهایت یکریگي و اعتماد متعاقب بودستي و بهکاري همديگر اطیبان نمایند اعلام میباشد مشرک ذیل را امضاده تقریداً تقسیم آب های مند مورخه امروز نمایند :

اولاً - دولت شاهنشاهی ایران اعلام میدارد که یکان منظور آن از این قرارداد وزراعت آیاری سیستان است که زایین اینجنبه در مصیقه و زحمت نباشند و بیچق تصویب در بدست آوردن و سیل و هباه برای مداخله در داخله افغانستان ندارد و پیوسته ترقی تعالی افغانستان را آرزومند است .

ثانیاً - دولت پادشاهی افغانستان اعلام میدارد که بیچق به قصودی و تضییق و فشار و نزدیک آب های سیستان ندارد و لین منظور اقداماتی را که موجب نکث آب های ایران در بندگان افغان (قرار یکه در ماده اول قرارداد توضیح یافته) و این راه ضرر مالک بزراععت آیاری سیستان شود اجازه نخواهد داد .

کابل تاریخ ششم بهمن ۱۳۱۷

وزیر امور خارجه دولت پادشاهی افغانستان

محمد

سفیر کبیر دولت شاهنشاهی ایران

علی

## G E N E R A L C O N C L U S I O N

Colonel Sir T. Hangerford Holdich, a prominent administrator of the British Indian Government at the end of the nineteenth century and Lord George Curzon of Kedleston,<sup>(1)</sup> Viceroy of India at the time, were in favour of the so-called "natural boundaries". This is not to be confused with the French concept of "frontieres naturelles" which considers frontier as being a line in space to be secured and maintained.<sup>(2)</sup>

Both Curzon and Holdich made an immense impact on the formation of the Eastern Iranian boundaries. Holdich actually delimited, in 1895, the northern section of the British-Iranian boundaries of Baluchistan. Writing in 1916 on his delimitation of the said boundaries, Holdich stated that no more perfect boundary could be devised than that of the mountains and rivers combined.<sup>(3)</sup>

Curzon and Holdich's views of "natural boundaries" were subsequently discredited for having disregarded the human dimension of boundary organisation as they did in the case of Khorasan, Sistan and Baluchistan where indigenous populations were divided between neighbouring countries.

Representing the eastward limits of jurisdiction of the state of Iran, the Eastern Iranian boundaries are the spatial manifestation of political push against one another, in the nineteenth century, of Iran and British India.

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(1) See Holdich, Colonel T. Hangerford, "Political Frontiers and Boundary-Making", Macmillan, London 1916, and Curzon, of Kedleston, Lord George, "Frontiers", "The Romanes Lecture, University of Oxford 1907", Oxford University Press 1908.

(2) See Gottmann, Jean, "Evolution of the Concept of Territory", Social Science Information, Paris 1975, Vol. 14, Nos. 3/4.

(3) Holdich, Colonel T. Hangerford, "Political Frontiers and Boundary Making", London 1916.

Commenting on the southern section of these boundaries, from a British Indian point of view, Colonel Holdich, describes this "push" from the Iranian side, in the following words:

"....the Persians practically settled the question of Kohuk by military occupation, and they had gone on pushing their claims and their raids further and further east until a definite limit to their aggressions became a political necessity."(1)

The Eastern Iranian boundaries, meanwhile, indirectly represented geographical frontiers of political rivalries between Britain and Russia in the nineteenth century, the latter perceived by the former at the time as being in alliance with Iran against her interests in India. However unrealistic this perception may appear now, it was most serious at the time and British India had every reason to have anxieties over the strategic sensitivities of the position of Iran and her dependencies of Afghanistan between the two super powers of the time. The laxity and lack of political initiative which were the mark of the Qajar regime in Iran, and their frequently signed but meaningless treaties with France and Russia (Britain's main rivals in global imperialism) did little to lessen the anxieties of British India. This whole situation could not lead to any other result but territorial contentions in the Eastern Iranian borderlands where British India desperately sought to create a zone of safety (a buffer zone) between herself and Russia. This development led to what was known then as the "Great Game" of geopolitics between Britain and Russia, to which Iran (Persia) was also a party as far as delimitation of her eastern frontiers was concerned. Iran was suspected by the British of collusion with Russia against British possessions in India and against British India's peripheral strategic sensitivities. These suspicions, though based on logical assumptions, did not have actual foundations. Time itself has proved that Iran was too weak and her leaders too ignorant of geopolitical games of the time to involve herself in acts of conspiracy with one neighbouring giant against the

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(1) Holdich, Colonel Sir T. Hangerford, "The Indian Borderlands 1880 - 1900", London 1901, p. 317.

other. Nonetheless, her weakness was indeed a matter of concern to the British. When it came to territorial disputes and boundary delimitation, these handicaps of Iran demonstrated themselves in an unmistakable manner. The Eastern Iranian boundaries were, as a consequence, designed to suit India's strategic needs and nothing else. Holdich asserts:

"A consulate had been formed at Kirman (the most important town in eastern Persia south of Mashad) and the establishment of this political link between Tehran and India had been attended with the happiest results. It is to the political influence thus acquired, as well as to the possession of sound geographical knowledge, that the rapid success of the efforts of Government to settle once for all the vexations of border disputes with Persia must be ascribed."(1)

Compared with the general weakness of the central Government in Iran, and the weak ties between it and the dependencies far and wide, the frontier-keeping states of the peripheries of Iran proper, played a major role, not only in safeguarding the frontiers but also in the actual survival of the country as a whole. In fact, it was their power and their influence that has brought Iran safely out of many periods of political chaos and disarray throughout her history.

Fully equipped with the philosophy and tradition of Iranian Political leadership, examined in the general introduction to this work on "the evolution of state and boundaries in Iran", the homogenous regions and amirdoms in Iran constantly strengthened their positions, awaiting to take over the leadership of the country whenever weakness and decay in the political centre triggered the process of disintegration of the central power and dispersion of peripheral dependencies.

This was the case of Nader Shah's accession, and when he was assassinated in June 1747, with the consequent chaos in the country, many leaders of regions and amirdoms, who had been loyal to him, opted for leadership of Iran, one of whom was Amir Alam Khan I, the Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat who almost

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(1) Holdich, op. cit., p. 317.

succeeded in establishing the Khozeimeh dynasty of Iranian leadership. He was murdered in 1749 before fulfilling this ambition, whereas his rivals divided Nader Shah's realm into two countries: Ahmad Khan Abdali (Dorrani) created Afghanistan and Mohammad Hassan Khan and his son Agha Mohammad Khan established the Qajar dynasty in the rest of Iran, which was replaced, at the depth of its decadence in 1924, by the Pahlavis who, in turn, were replaced by the Islamic Republic in 1979. This politically upward movement of Iran's peripheral political units has had two prominent features; firstly it encouraged rivalries among them which eventually shaped most of the internal political structure of the country. This internal political structure and administrative divisions - as can be seen even at the present time - are less geographically oriented than they are regionally and ethnically inclined, in some cases still representing the domains of the old socio-political regions, i.e., vassal kingdoms and amirdoms: the second feature was the relative absence of regionalism of a separatist nature among the peripheral autonomies of the frontier-keeping states of Iran proper. In most cases they adhered loyally to the force that had succeeded in taking over the leadership of the country. The Amirdom of the Khozeimeh, particularly examined in this work, was probably the best example in this regard. Writing on the uprising of Khorasan Gendarmerie in 1921, led by Colonel Mohammad Taghi Pessian, and the efforts of Amir Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Shokat al-Molk II, the then Khozeimeh Amir of Qaenat and Sistan in mediating between the Government and the Colonel, an author who seems to be familiar with the role of the Khozeimehs in southern Khorasan, describes Shokat al-Molk's loyalty to the Central Government of Iran in the following words:

"Obeying the orders of the centre meant to him as guarantee of continuation of the simple living standards of the people and of the survival of his own rule. Whether Qajar was in power in the centre or Pahlavi, made no difference to him. He was loyal to the centre."(1)

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(1) Bahar, Dr. Mehrdad, "Dar Bareh-e Qeyam-e Jandarmeri-e Khorasan = On the Uprising of Khorasan Gendarmerie", Tehran 1990, p. 21 introduction.

In a telegram to Colonel Pessian, Amir Shokat al-Molk himself states:

*"....What can I do? I consider myself as the obedient servant of the Government, and therefore, cannot disobey the orders of the Government...."(1)*

The one and only reason that has guaranteed survival of the Khozeimeh Amirdom throughout the ages and kept it in favour with various dynasties coming and going in Iran was this undivided loyalty to the Central Government of Iran, regardless of the origin of the dynasty in power in the centre. In other words, it made no difference to their loyalty to the centre-whether the centre was in the hands of the Abbasid Arabs or the Mongolian Holaku Khan: the Safavid Seyyeds or the Afshar Sunnis: the Qajari Turkmans or Mazandarani Pahlavis - they were loyal to the centre.

The frontier-keeping states and amirdoms of Iran, however, played an undisputedly significant role in safeguarding Iran's unity and integrity and in determining the present shape of the international boundaries of the country. The significance of their role is particularly more noticeable in the Eastern Iranian frontiers.

In the Eastern Iranian borderlands, many such amirdoms and families can be singled out. Historically, the more notable families of Taherids of Khorasan and Saffarids of Sistan waged many wars on the non-Iranian forces in the west, particularly against the Caliphate of Baghdad, not only to secure their own region's freedom, but also for the independence of Iran as a whole, preferably under their own rule.

In more recent centuries, such families as the Keyanis, Khozeimehs, Hazaras, Barakzais, Abdalis, Kalalis, Teymuris, Surbandis, Shahrakis, Nahrueis, Sheibanis, Sanjaranis and so on, have each played a role of some significance in shaping the history and the boundaries of Eastern Iran. Among these

(1) Bahar, op. cit., p. 65, telegram from Birjand to Mashhad, dated 9 Sonboleh 1300 (31st August 1921).

families, none has influenced political geography of the Eastern Iranian borderlands as significantly as did the Khozeimehs. Their Amirdom, probably the best example of the frontier-keeping states in post-Islamic Iran, has been involved in regional and tribal rivalries with those of the surrounding areas for at least three centuries, beginning from the time of the later Safavid Shahs until early twentieth century. Their territorial and political rivalries with the tribes and Amirs of Western Afghanistan, in particular, have been a dominant factor in determining the present boundaries between Iran and Afghanistan in the Qaenat and Sistan regions.

At least in three sections of the Eastern Iranian boundaries, the impact of the role of Khozeimeh Amirs directly influenced boundary delimitation in favour of Iran:

1. - In Sistan, the role that was cast by Amir Alam Khan III Heshmat Al-Molk, made the British arbitrator take his power and influence in that region into account. The arbitrator wrote to his Government, advising them of the "great power of the Ameer of Kain" and his refusal of "discussing present possessions".<sup>(1)</sup> Based on this information, the Government of British India informed the British officer accompanying the Afghan Commissioner that "Persia holds chief part of Sistan so firmly that arbitral opinion must be in favour of Persia...."<sup>(2)</sup> The arbitration commission, as a result of Amir Alam Khan's display of power and influence resolved that Sistan should be partitioned and divided between Iran and Afghanistan, instead of being handed over to the Afghans in its entirety.

The boundary in this section was drawn in a delta shape to include the western half of Sistan in Iranian territory.

(1) From General Goldsmid to Foreign Secretary Calcutta, dated 12th April 1872, FO 60/392 .

(2) From Foreign Secretary Calcutta to General Pollock, dated 27th April 1872, No. 1042P, FO 60/392 .

- 2 - The Baluchistan boundary arbitration of 1895 included the district of Mirjaveh (an obvious Iranian possession) in the Kalat territory. The decision was protested to by the Iranians, but to no avail. The Anglo-Russian rivalries in Sistan, on the other hand, intensified to a degree that the British felt their prestige in the region would be "gravely injured"<sup>(1)</sup> if the Russians succeeded in securing Amir Ali Akbar Khan Khozeimeh's dismissal from the governorship of Sistan. The Russians were conspiring with the Government in Tehran to dismiss the Amir for having protected British lives and property in a disturbance which was initiated by Russian agents against the British diplomatic mission in Sistan in July 1903. The British found it necessary to compromise this situation with the Iranians in return for boundary adjustments in Baluchistan. They agreed in March 1905 to recognise Mirjaveh district, connecting the northern section of Baluchistan boundaries to the southern sections of Sistan boundaries in a stretch of 300 miles, as an Iranian possession in return for "concessions in Sistan", namely, retaining Amir Ali-Akbar Khan Khozeimeh in power as the hereditary Governor of the province.
- 3 - When the southern section of the Khorasan boundaries with Afghanistan was being determined by the Turkish arbitration in 1935, the land and water holdings of Amir Masum Khan Hesam Ad-Doleh and his son Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam and his brother Amir Mohammad Reza Khan Khozeimeh in Yazdan district were too strongly in evidence to be disregarded by the arbitrator. The boundary line in Yazdan vicinity was, consequently, drawn in a delta shape to include that district within Iranian territories.

Apart from these, the Khozeimeh family's deep concern of the developments in the borderlands of Qaenat and Sistan,

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(1) From H. Dobbs, H.B. Majesty's Consul for Sistan to the Indian Government, dated 7th July 1903.

stemming from their immediate political and economic interests in those borderlands, together with their knowledge of the region and its borders, were considered as an asset by the central Governments of Iran who assigned, on many occasions, members of the family to negotiate with the Afghans for border settlement. Amir Shokat al-Molk's mission of 1930 and Amir Hussein Khan Khozeime Alam's mission of 1956 in Washington were of more noticeable missions of this kind, whereas when Mohammad Reza Shah decided in 1969 to have direct dialogue with the leaders of Afghanistan, he deputed his powerful Court Minister, Amir Assadollah Alam to carry out, on his behalf, confidential negotiations with the king and Prime Minister of Afghanistan.<sup>(1)</sup>

These instances of Khozeimeh Amirs' power and influence directly affecting the evolution of the Eastern Iranian boundaries, in addition to the wider impact of their role in shaping the political geography of Eastern Iranian borderlands, are manifestations of the impact of the peripheral autonomies on the safeguarding of the territorial integrity of Iran. The concerns of the Khozeimeh family with farming and irrigation gave them the local knowledge and economic incentive to fight for a maximalist portion of both territory and above all water supply in the south east region. Insofar as these local family interests coincided closely with national policies, Iran benefited from the activities of its regional elite. When local advice, inter alia from the Khozeimehs, was ignored by the Iranian central authorities, national interests were also badly served as is illustrated by the continuing border problems faced in Sistan Basin and adjacent territories. Whereas these peripheral autonomies performed successfully their role of defending the country's territorial integrity within their immediate jurisdictions, the weakness of the Central Government of Iran resulted in a reverse consequence.

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(1) Alam, Asadollah "The Shah and I", Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969 - 1977, ed. Alinaghi Alikhani, London I.B. Tauris 1991, Diary of Sunday 16th March 1969, p. 41.

The arbitration awards of the Sistan boundaries of 1872 and 1905, and the Khorasan boundaries of 1891 and 1935 and the delimitation agreements of Baluchistan boundaries of 1871 and 1896, have resulted in the loss of much of the territories traditionally belonging to Iran, in some cases in actual Iranian possession for a considerable length of time. This was due to two factors: first, the strategic considerations of the British Indian Government which were wholly based on the want of pushing their own frontiers with Iran in Baluchistan and those of their protectorate of Afghanistan in Khorasan and Sistan as far west as it was possible. This strategy was mainly motivated by a strong conviction that the Russians had firm plans to threaten India via Iran and that the Iranians, having occupied India in the times of Nader Shah (1732 - 1747), would always remain a source of threat to the security of India or her weakness would encourage the Russians to use her territory as the road to India: second, and more importantly, it was because of the weakness, incompetence, ignorance and lack of responsibility which were the trademark of the Qajar rule in Iran, particularly that of Naser ad-Din Shah.

The decline of Iran's power began with the treaties of Golestan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828) which resulted in the secession of a number of Iran's northern provinces to the Russians as well as in the expansion of foreign influence in the country and among the ruling class. This political decline together with the ignorance and incompetence of the administrations and the irresponsible manner in which the Shah and his ministers conducted the affairs of the state resulted in the loss of territories all around Iran.

Naser ad-Din Shah himself, for instance, presented the Hashtadan Plain to the Afghans out of his "feelings of friendship towards the British Government", an unbelievable act of ignorance, stemming from lack of responsibility that gave the Russians and the French the impression that Iranian territories were up for grabs. Iran lost territories to the British protectorate of Kalat in much the same way. The

Shah's Government made their acceptance of the boundary delimitation proposal of the British Indian authorities in 1870 conditional on the commissioners of the two sides only surveying and drawing up their maps of the frontier areas, but the actual delimitation would take place through negotiations in Tehran. In practice, they did not even care to see their own commissioner's map and not only had they not asked the opinion of their commissioner, but also limited their so-called negotiations to one meeting between their Foreign Minister and the British Minister at Tehran during which the British commissioner's boundary proposals and map were accepted as the final settlement of Baluchistan frontiers, save for the Shah's own demand for Kuhak to be given to Iran. Having, thus recognised Khan of Kalat's status as a protectorate of British India and having abandoned Iran's historical rights in Kalat and East Makran, the Iranian Foreign Minister demanded in 1876 that as Kalat's status was changing (an internal affair of British India), the abandoned Iranian rights to that "province" should be revived. These meaningless demands were withdrawn as soon as a strong reply was given by the British Government:

*"At Lord Salisbury's suggestion, the Persian Government was given to understand that the policy of Her Majesty's Government in regard to Kalat was not liable to be affected by the assertion of any reversionary or contingent claims of Persia to the territories now ruled by the Khan. It was held that the Shah's formal acceptance of Mr Alison's letter of 1st September 1871, submitting General Goldsmid's boundary decision, was a final abandonment of Persian claims, of whatever value these might be, based on the short-lived and long-dead empire of Nadir Shah."*(1)

Not only did this strongly worded response silence the Iranian Foreign Ministry, but also took away from them the natural courage of trying to put the history of the argument right: that Nader Shah's "short-lived empire" was not the beginning and end of Iran in South-West Asia; that it was just another revival of Iran; that it was only the revival of the Safavid Empire within its borders of nearly three

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(1) Extract of Confidential Memorandum of Boundary between Persia and North-west Baluchistan, dated 19th September 1893, p. 8, FO 60/627 .

centuries, after a short ten year period of confusion caused by the Afghan rebels in Iran.

The extent of ignorance of the Iranian authorities in matters of such magnitude as maintaining the country's territorial integrity did not escape the attention of rival powers. The British Minister at Tehran for instance, reported to his Government:

"At the outset of this negotiation the Persian Government advanced some very extravagant claims; but happily the Persian Foreign Office is exceedingly ignorant both of the course of former correspondence and of the situation on the frontier. Its claims were consequently based on assertion which were not difficult to disprove."(1)

Now that all this is history and Iran is contented within its present boundaries, if the Iranians were to look back and seek reasons for the loss of valuable territories to the neighbouring countries, they should not look further than the incompetence and ignorance of those who ruled their country at the time of boundary delimitation.

A strong factor that can affect Eastern Iranian boundaries in the future, is the fact that these boundaries, in many cases, partition districts of the same characteristics with people of the same ethnicities. This situation is more pronounced in Sistan where Hirmand waters are vital to the existence of the population on both sides. Hence, and since these boundaries are not firmly established in many parts, they could constitute a continued source of friction between Iran and her two eastern neighbours. In fact, Hirmand water disputes have never ceased keeping Iran and Afghanistan apart.

Disputes over the use of water from Hirmand river continued between the Iranians and the Afghans as from 1929, mainly because the latter had been trying to draw more water from the river than the two-thirds which was awarded to them by the McMahon arbitration of 1903.

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(1) Clause 3 of letter from Durand, H.B. Majesty's Minister at Tehran to the Marquis of Salisbury, No. 5, dated Tehran January 20th 1896, FO 60/627 .

It was reported in 1931 that the Afghans began clearing the bed of the old Shahi canal, above Band Sistan, which, if used, would deprive Sistan of water.<sup>(1)</sup> The dispute continued until 1935, when the Altay arbitration work was completed and pressure exerted by the Government of Reza Shah resulted in the signing of a new treaty whereby, the boundary line was put in the middle of the river and the water divided equally between the two countries.<sup>(2)</sup> Article I of the treaty reads:

*"The two powers will divide the water of the Hirmand, throughout the year, in equal portions, from the Band Kamal Khan."<sup>(3)</sup>*

This agreement, though a significant improvement, from the Iranian point of view, failed to put an end to the border disputes. The Afghans, with the help of the Americans, constructed a number of dams and canals, diverting more than half of the water of the Hirmand before reaching Iranian borders, and thus, depriving a highly fertile and populous region of its badly needed water.

The dispute continued in the Hirmand delta, and even the Sadabad pact<sup>(4)</sup> of 1937 - giving implicit recognition to the existing boundary arrangements in the region - did not put an end to the differences. The Afghans' continued diversion of water from the Hirmand before it reaches the Band Kamal Khan, further aggravates Sistan's deprivation of the Hirmand river and is leading to a large scale geographical disaster.

Sistan, frequently referred to in the historical documents, as the "bread basket" of Khorasan, owed much of its economic life to the free flow of Hirmand waters and Lake Hamun. This

(1) Deciphered telegram from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, dated 16th November 1931, FO 371/15550.

(2) From British Legation, Tehran, to Foreign Office, dated 14th November 1935, No. 6213, FO 371/19408.

(3) Translation from the French text as appeared in the Journal de Tehran, FO 371/23264. The original text of the treaty as exists in the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is in Persian language but without reference number.

(4) Both Iran and Afghanistan, together with Turkey and Iraq were signatory to this treaty.

highly fertile province is now gradually turning into a parched land.

Lake Hamun, described by G.P. Tate at the turn of the twentieth century as being something like 150,000 square miles,<sup>(1)</sup> has gradually diminished and with it is going almost the whole of the Neizar and its related economic life with disastrous environmental consequences for both Sistan of Iran and Nimrouz of Afghanistan. Hamun, the only fresh water lake in Asia, not only is the main source of irrigation in Sistan, other than Hirmand, but also provides many water-associated economic activities such as fishing, hunting in the Neizar, ferrying goods and passengers across the lake, has a pivotal role in the living of the Sistan population. With the diminished body of the lake and the Neizar, all these economic activities are diminishing, while the damage to the agricultural life of the province have forced many of the local population to migrate from Sistan.

In her long efforts to settle this problem, Iran rarely faced Afghanistan herself. Iran had to deal with the British in Afghanistan in the beginning, whose role was, to some extent, replaced by that of the Americans who constructed many dams and diversion canals on the Hirmand during the first half of the twentieth century. As from the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, Afghanistan gradually went under the influence of the Soviet Union until it was occupied by the Soviets in 1980. Two gaps appeared between the durations of foreign domination in Afghanistan:

- 1 - The first gap appeared in the 1920's and 1930's, between the end of British domination and the beginning of American influence. This duration of lack of foreign domination in Afghanistan coincided with the growing power and influence of Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi whose Government succeeded in concluding the 1938 agreement with Afghanistan,

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(1) Tate, G.P., "The Frontier of Baloochistan = Travel on the Borders of Persia and Afghanistan", London 1909, p. 237.

whereby Hirmand waters were divided equally between the two countries from below Band-e Kamal Khan.

2 - The second gap appeared in the 1960's and early 1970's when Afghanistan was relatively free from political domination of foreign powers. Although Soviet influence was on the increase in this period, Soviet agents were not, as yet, in control of Afghan foreign relations. This period coincided with Iran's growing power and influence in the region. Yet, Iran's approach to her border problems with Afghanistan appears strangely weak and almost incomprehensible. Notwithstanding the fact that by the conclusion of the 1939 treaty with Afghanistan, half of Hirmand's waters, from Band-e Kamal Khan downwards, belonged to Iran, Tehran's representatives argued for 52 cubic metres per second of Hirmand's water in the 1959 Washington negotiations. Later on Iran dropped her demands from this figure and Prime Minister Hoveida accompanied by his Minister of Plan and Budget, Safi Asfia, signed, in 1973, a new agreement with the Afghan Government whereby Iran was given 22 c.m. per second (1) of Hirmand water as her share, with an additional 4 c.m. per second as purchase.

This abortive agreement, could seriously jeopardise Sistan's life if ratified and implemented. In search for justifiable reasons for the manner in which Iran's border interests were handled by the Government of the time, this author interviewed Dr Ali Naghi Alikhani, a prominent member of Iran's Government in the 1960's and early 1970's, on Saturday 4th April 1992. Dr Alikhani gave the following assertion on the general policies of Iran towards Afghanistan:

"In view of the fact that Soviet influence was on the increase in Afghanistan, the Iranian Government began to be increasingly agitated by the prospect of Soviet domination of that country which could bring that power as close to the Strait of Hormuz, frequently referred to by the Shah as the 'jugular vein of Iran and the West', as 300 miles. To avoid such

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(1) Fakhari, Gholam-reza, "Ekhtelaf-e Dolat-e Iran va Afghanistan dar Morede Rud-e Hirmand" = Dispute between Iran and Afghanistan in the issue of Hirmand River, Tehran 1993, p.74.

eventualities, Tehran committed herself to a policy of encouraging Afghanistan to move away from the Soviet influence and to join the Western camp under the Iranian influence. Hence, not only did Iran give Afghanistan financial and economic assistance and granted her such concessions as road links to the Persian Gulf through Iranian territories, but also moderated her demands in border disputes with that country...."

This view is supported by a number of assertions by Amir Assadollah Alam, the Court Minister of Mohammad Reza Shah, in his confidential diary. These assertions are as follows:

Sunday, 16th July 1969:

"HIM is particularly concerned by the situation in Afghanistan and thinks that before long there may be a leftist coup, mounted under the cover of religion, as in the Sudan. The Afghans regularly send their students and even their servicemen to study in Russia. They have also allowed in the Chinese to oversee major development programmes. The Afghan regime, if not the country, becomes shakier day by day. All of which is of tremendous significance from our point of view...."(1)

Thursday, 5th February 1970:

"We ought to extend (to Afghanistan) transit facilities and make various other concessions, including an offer of favourable terms for the sale of oil.... if only to reduce their dependence on China and the Soviets...."(2)

This assertion is in keeping with Iran's regional role in the 1970's and if accepted as the main reason behind moderating her rights in the border river to the level of 1973 abortive agreement, Tehran must have hoped to replace that agreement with a more realistic one at a future date.

(1) Alam, Asadollah, "The Shah and I" Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969 - 1977, ed. by Alinaghi Alikhani, London I.B. Tauris 1991, p. 79.

(2) Alam, op. cit., p. 128.

Whatever the reason for Iran's shortcomings in Hirmand water disputes, the consequences for Sistan has been and will continue to be disastrous unless the issue is treated amicably and justly by both parties with the following recommendations to be considered as prerequisites for such a settlement:

- 1 Complete depolitisation of the Hirmand issue both in Afghanistan and in Sistan. Hirmand has never been a national issue in Iran since McMahon's water and boundary awards of 1905.
- 2 Both nations of Iran and Afghanistan to become fully and consciously aware of the fact that Hirmand river, below the confluence of Arghandab, particularly below Band-e Kamal Khan, is not the exclusive right of either one of them, and that each of Sistan and Nimrouz provinces of Iran and Afghanistan respectively has its rights to the river in accordance with its geographical situation and its water needs.
- 3 Carrying out thorough surveys of agricultural lands and irrigation possibilities in Sistan and Nimrouz provinces and determining the scale of the annual water needs of each.
- 4 Distributing the Hirmand waters to Sistan and Nimrouz provinces in accordance with the determined annual water needs of each.
- 5 Undertaking joint ventures for investment on construction of regulatory and reservoir dams in suitable places below the confluence of Arghandab.
- 6 Embankment and regulation of the course of branches and channels on both sides to prevent wastage.

- 7 Embankment of Lake Hamun and rehabilitation of the Shila Shallaq.
- 8 Establishing at Kuhak on the Parian-e Moshtarak a permanent dam with sluice gates to regulate subdivisions of waters between Iran and Afghanistan in that section.
- 9 Implementation of a rational canalisation to ensure an equitable distribution of the irriguous waters, eliminating wastage and unlawful uses of the waters.
- 10 Construction of reservoir dams wherever possible to conserve flood waters in the two provinces of Sistan and Nimrouz, which will be of noticeable consequence to the irrigation needs of the region.

The Iran-Afghanistan disputes on the Hirmand water rights, however, have played a major role in the two countries' relationships, preventing cooperation between the two, and will continue to do so unless these disputes are settled justly. Considering the positive impacts of the changed global geopolitical structure in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, and with the changed political structure in both Iran and Afghanistan, any hopes of a just settlement of this issue is not too unrealistic.

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