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J. L. Fitzpatrick

The Persian Policy of  
Sir Edward Gray

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THE PERSIAN POLICY OF SIR EDWARD GREY

1907—1914

BY

JAMES LEVI FITZPATRICK

A. B. Augustana College, 1919

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THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

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IN HISTORY

IN

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY  
SUPERVISION BY James L. Fitzpatrick

ENTITLED The Persian Policy of Sir Edward Grey, 1907-1914

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts

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## Chapter I

### ANGLO-RUSSIAN RIVALRIES IN PERSIA BEFORE 1907

In order properly to understand the policy pursued by Sir Edward Grey with respect to Persia during the decade before the outbreak of the Great European War, it is necessary to review the events of the half century preceding the signing of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. There were many forces and factors at work during this time which had some bearing and influence on the shaping of his policy. Russia and Great Britain were rivals in Persia, both commercially and politically, and the rivalry had become very bitter at the time Sir Edward Grey became foreign minister. The most important of the events, which brought about the strained relations between these two nations in Persian affairs, may be summarized quite briefly.

Since the year 1800, and even before, England, of all the European nations, had a predominating influence in Persia, both commercially and politically. This power had been threatened only once or twice by France; Russian influence was relatively unimportant.<sup>1</sup> Russia, it is true, had been at war with Persia and had taken some of her territory by conquest; the Czar had also added to his territories by repeated conquests in Turkestan. But Russia did not stand very high in the favor of the Persians. Russian influence

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<sup>1</sup>  
Curzon, Persia, II, 588-593.



did not become very powerful until after 1890.

The British, however, had managed to keep the good will of the Persians to a greater or less degree, in spite of the fact that England had opposed Persia in the second Afghan War in 1856-<sup>2</sup>1857, and had carried off the victory. Persia was utterly defeated, but England granted terms in the treaty of peace which seemed quite lenient to the Shah, who had been expecting that an indemnity would be demanded. The result was that Persia again became more kindly disposed toward British interests. During the next thirty years some advance in facilitating commerce and business was made largely thru British help and encouragement. In short there was an awakening on a small scale; one more of the unprogressive countries of the East adopted some of the methods of the progressive West. In 1864, the first telegraph line was constructed for local messages only, and in 1872, when England negotiated a third Telegraphic Convention with Persia,<sup>3</sup> a system of three wires was arranged for, two of them for international messages. The construction of these lines was under the direction of the British Government, which also furnished the material. The British Government had also influenced the Government of the Shah to abolish the slave trade, and English men-of-war had aided in the suppression of this nefarious business in the Persian Gulf; this campaign had been very successful. It

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Sykes, A History of Persia, II, 450-455.

3

British and Foreign State Papers, LV, 26-30; LVIII, 18-19; LXII, 262-266; LXXVIII, 11-12. See also Sykes, op. cit. 473.



was to some extent the result of British pressure that the Karun River was opened, in 1888, for navigation by vessels of all nations as far as Ahwaz.<sup>4</sup> The following year, Baron de Reuter, an English subject, was granted a concession by the Shah for the founding of a bank, which was soon started under the name of Imperial Bank of Persia, and in a few years became a successful and useful institution.

Thus in 1890, the prestige of Great Britain was ascendant. But Russia had become aware of the possibilities of Persia as a commercial field and was now making a systematic attempt to win and encourage Persian trade. It is even said that bounties were given to Russian traders to encourage commerce.<sup>5</sup> Many writers and officials of England also feared that Russia was aiming at the peaceful penetration of Persia, their ultimate aim being to secure a port on the Persian Gulf.<sup>6</sup> Yet in 1890, England still outranked Russia<sup>7</sup> in commerce and influence. In a comparison made by Lord Curzon of Anglo-Persian and Russo-Persia trade for the year 1889, it was shown that the total annual value of Persian trade with India and

<sup>4</sup> British State Papers, LXXIX, 781. Sykes, op. cit., 477. Lord Curzon, op. cit., 333, speaks of French attempts to secure exclusive commercial rights on the Karun River. The concession secured, largely thru British negotiation, opened the river to navigation for ships of all nations.

<sup>5</sup> Whigham, The Persian Problem, 352, 354.

<sup>6</sup> Colquhoun, Russia Against India, 176, 181, 182, 230.

<sup>7</sup> Curzon, op. cit. 579-581. These figures are quoted by Whigham, op. cit., 333-335.



Britain was £3,000,000, of which there were imports into Persia to the value of a little over £2,000,000, and exports to Britain of £1,000,000; the Russian trade amounted to approximately £2,000,000, about £882,000 of which was imports in Persia and about £1,164,000, exports. The value of the Russo-Persian trade was approximately £1,000,000 less than the total Anglo-Persian trade.

The first blow to British prestige came in 1891-1892, when popular feeling in Persia rose to the breaking-point in the matter of the Tobacco Concession. In 1890 a Concession was granted which gave a monopoly of the purchase, sale, and manufacture of all the tobacco in Persia, both for domestic use and exportation, for a period of fifty years, to Major Talbot, who later transferred it to the Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia. The company was to pay the Persian Government £15,000 annually; then, after deducting all expenses and paying a dividend of five per cent. on their capital to the proprietors of the Concession, one-fourth of the remaining profit was to be paid to the Persian Treasury each year. The year 1891 saw the inauguration of the Concession. The majority of the Persians had not understood the nature and scope of this grant, but as soon as they became better informed there was a bitter protest against it thruout the country. The mullahs, or men learned in the law, led the organized protest and asked for the repeal of the monopoly. Russia was opposed to it also, and it seems that Russian officials had some share in influencing and inciting the Persian



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 populace. Thruout the summer and fall of 1891 and January of 1892,  
 the opposition was maintained in Shiraz,<sup>10</sup> Tabriz,<sup>11</sup> Kerbela, and  
 other cities thruout the country; the demonstrations continually  
 became more violent until in January, 1892, a riot occurred in  
 Teheran in which the mob surrounded the Shah's Palace in their  
 demand for the withdrawal of the Concession.<sup>12</sup> The Shah finally  
 yielded and cancelled the Concession with a promise of compensation  
 to the Company. This affair was most unhappy for England; she  
 lost greatly in prestige and the Persians remembered the event for  
 several years.<sup>13</sup>

This hostility toward England was, no doubt, pleasing to  
 the Russians who were ready to take advantage of every opportunity  
 to discredit England. Russia was not content with simply pursuing  
 a passive policy toward that end, but she took the initiative. In

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9  
 On Sept. 16, 1890, Sir H. Drummond Wolff sent a dispatch  
 to the Marquis of Salisbury in which he said the Russian Minister  
 at Teheran had protested against the Concession. British State  
 Papers, LXXXV, 610. In 1891, it was reported that the Russian  
 Minister had informed Russian subjects and protected subjects that  
 they could disregard the Concession. British State Papers, LXXXV,  
 614.

10

British State Papers, LXXXV, 611.

11

Annual Register, 1891, part II, p. 69. Kerbela was out-  
 side of Persia, but it was important because one of the leaders of  
 the Moslem faith resided there.

12

Annual Register, 1892, part II, p. 1. Browne, The Per-  
 sian Revolution of 1905-1909, 31-58. A full account of the whole  
 affair is given by Professor Browne.

13

Ibid., 55, 57.



November of 1901, a commercial treaty was signed between Russia and Persia, which was distinctly advantageous to the former. The ratifications were exchanged in December, 1902, but an attempt was made to keep it a secret a while longer. The treaty was enthusiastically received in Russia, but in England, with surprise and consternation.<sup>14</sup> It provided chiefly for a revision of the tariff. The tariff charges on petroleum and sugar, the two principal imports into Persia from Russia, were reduced,--the former, from 5 per cent. to 1 1/2 per cent., and the latter, from 5 per cent. to 2 1/4 per cent. The duty on tea, one of the chief imports from India, was raised to 100 per cent. This treaty "constituted a notable diplomatic triumph for the northern power."<sup>15</sup>

England was apparently in a difficult position. To make the best of a bad situation the Government negotiated a treaty with Persia, which would recognize the Russian treaty as an accomplished fact and smooth over the affair with the loss of the least amount of prestige. Accordingly, on February 9, 1903, a commercial treaty between Great Britain and Persia was signed, the main provisions of which placed specific duties on various articles of import and export trade instead of the 5 per cent. ad valorem duty of the Treaty of 1857.<sup>16</sup> Reforms were also promised in the customs

14  
Sykes, op. cit., 483-484.

15  
Ibid., 483.

16  
Sessional Papers, 1903 [Cd. 1629] LXXXVII, 193.



administration and the treaty secured the "most-favored-nation treatment" in commercial matters for both nations.<sup>17</sup> In spite of its liberal terms, the treaty was not as favorable as the one Russia had negotiated.

The English also used their good offices in the settlement of the boundary dispute between Persia and Afghanistan in the province of Seistan. A British commission was appointed with Colonel Mac Mahon at its head, and in 1905 after two years of hardship and adventure, the work was completed, the decision being almost entirely in favor of the Persian claim.<sup>18</sup>

Russian commerce had been steadily increasing during these years. This fact was readily shown in the report on British trade in Persia made by H. W. McLean in 1904.<sup>19</sup> According to this report the total Persian trade with Russia was valued at about £3,500,000, of which £1,500,000 consisted of exports from Persia, and £2,000,000 imports into Persia. The value of imports into Persia from the different parts of the British Empire was about equal to the imports from Russia, or £2,000,000 but the exports to Britain were valued at only £500,000. Thus the total value of Russian trade was approximately £3,500,000, while that of England was only £2,500,000. The report went on to state that Russia and Great Britain had a

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Annual Register, 1903, part I, p. 356.

18

Annual Register, 1905, part I, pp. 370-371.

19

Sessional Papers, 1904 [Cd. 2146] XCV, 789. Report on the Condition and Prospects of British Trade in Persia, by H. W. McLean, Special Commissioner Intelligence Committee of the Board of Trade. See p. 3 of the report.



predominating interest in trade with Persia; Russian trade, however, "shows a very marked increase in recent years, whilst British trade shows neither marked increase nor decrease."<sup>20</sup> Russia had made marked improvements in her trading facilities with Persia; the Russian bank, the Banque de Prêts de Perse, which was said to be connected with the Russian State Bank and managed by a Russian Government official,<sup>21</sup> had also been a factor in this increase in commerce. In 1900 and 1901 Russia advanced loans of £2,400,000 and £1,000,000 respectively, for which the customs of the country (exclusive of the Gulf ports) were pledged as security.<sup>22</sup> This, too, strengthened Russian influence.

The British relations with Persia during the few years preceding the signing of the Anglo-Russian Agreement have been criticised and lamented by many writers. One authority says they "constitute a long and not very brilliant chapter in our diplomatic history."<sup>23</sup> Whether the British record in Persia was creditable or not, may be a matter of controversy, but there was a general feeling among English writers and statesmen, and among foreigners

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Sessional Papers, 1904 [Cd. 2146] XCV, 789, p. 3. Whigham, op. cit., 335-340, gives some comparative figures which do not differ greatly from these. They were for the year, March, 1900-March, 1901. These were not official. McLean's figures were gotten from consular reports.

21

Sessional Papers, 1904 [Cd. 2146] XCV, 789, p. 5.

22

Sykes, op. cit., 481-482. Browne, op. cit., 99, 101, 104.

23

David Fraser, Persia and Turkey in Revolt, 281-282.



as well, that Russia was pursuing a policy of aggression, perhaps aiming to secure a port, preferably Bander Abbas, on the Persian Gulf, and continually threatening British power and order in India. "Northern Persia is rapidly becoming Russian, and will at any rate probably act with Russia,"<sup>24</sup> was a typical British view of Russia's policy of commercial expansion. On the Persian Gulf, British power had been supreme, and the idea of her exclusive rights there had become traditional; Englishmen often spoke of a "Monroe Doctrine"<sup>25</sup> in the Middle East, having in mind the policing and control of the Persian Gulf by England. Lord Curzon said: "I should regard the concession of a port upon the Persian Gulf to Russia by any power as a deliberate insult to Great Britain, as a wanton rupture of the status quo, and as an intentional provocation to war; and I should impeach the British minister, who was guilty of acquiescing in such a surrender, as a traitor to his country."<sup>26</sup> This was in 1892, before Russian aggression had become so apparent. An official declaration of Great Britain's intention to maintain her paramount position was made in the House of Lords on May 5, 1903, when in a speech, Lord Lansdowne said: "I say it without hesitation--we should regard the establishment of a naval base, or

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<sup>24</sup> Colquhoun, op. cit., 168.

<sup>25</sup> Lovat Fraser, India Under Curzon and After, 83.

<sup>26</sup> Curzon, op. cit., 465. Quoted by Colquhoun, op. cit., 177; and by Lovat Fraser, op. cit. 85.



of a fortified port, in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it by all the means at our disposal."<sup>27</sup>

There was, no doubt, a Russian menace to British interests in Persia and India, if not in reality, at least in the minds of a great number of Englishmen.<sup>28</sup> How was this menace to be met? England was as strong in Persia commercially as she could expect; no great increase in Anglo-Persian trade was possible. One opinion was, and it had a considerable prevalence, that Persia could not much longer escape foreign control; it was merely a question as to whether the rulers would be many or single. In the meantime, it was necessary to talk about the integrity of Persia, but while doing so England should not be idle. If there was a British sphere of influence it must be developed.<sup>29</sup> A German writer<sup>30</sup> held that alone the British were almost powerless against Russia in Asia and that it would be to England's benefit to form an alliance with the Central Powers. Still others talked of "spheres of influence" and an understanding, or agreement, with Russia for peaceful co-operation

27  
Fraser, op. cit., 83. Parliamentary Debates, Fourth series, CXXI 1348. Lovat

28  
The English were not alone in their suspicion of Russia's motives; Dr. Rouire, La Rivalité Anglo-Russe En Asie, 248, raised the question whether Russia's conduct was not a prelude to annexation or a protectorate. See also Annual Register, 1903, part I, p. 358.

29  
Whigham, op. cit., 391-392.

30  
Popowski, The Rival Powers in Central Asia, 222.  
"Great Britain is both politically and strategically almost powerless against Russia in Asia, and ... Russia times her advance at her own



in Persia. Anglo-Russian rivalries were finally brought to an end in 1907, when the latter course was adopted and the Anglo-Russian Agreement was signed.

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discretion with due regard to the European political situation. With every forward step which Russia makes Great Britain's authority suffers, her position becomes a worse one, and the last hour of her power in India seems no longer to loom in immesurable distance."



## Chapter II

### THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement, which was signed at St. Petersburg on August 31, 1907, was an epoch-making document in many respects. It was generally believed at the time that it had brought an end to the rivalries between England and Russia in Asia, and even more than that, had made the two rivals, friends. It had cemented the Triple Entente; England, France, and Russia now had an understanding which bound them together as firmly as a defensive alliance could. A balance of power had been struck in European affairs.

The advisability, as well as the possibility, of coming to some sort of an understanding with Russia had been the subject of discussion in both official and unofficial circles in England for several years prior to 1907. In the debate on the Agreement in the House of Lords on February 6, 1908, Lord Curzon<sup>1</sup> made the statement that, when he had served Lord Salisbury in the Foreign Office ten years earlier, his chief had drawn up a scheme for adjusting the relations between the two countries thruout Asia on a much wider basis even than the finished Agreement. When the papers regarding affairs in Persia were laid before Parliament in 1908, among them was an extract from a dispatch sent by the Government of India in

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<sup>1</sup>  
Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIII, 1001.



1899 to the India Office. This dispatch,<sup>2</sup> signed by Lord Curzon and five other officials, discussed the demarcation of British and Russian "spheres of influence both political and commercial in Persia," and recommended that "the experiment of an understanding with Russia as to future spheres of interest in that country is worthy of being made, in the interests both of Persia itself, and still more of harmony between the two great Powers, upon whose relations the peace of Asia may be said to depend."<sup>3</sup> At various times<sup>4</sup> the advisability of an understanding was discussed in Parliament and always on these occasions opinion seemed to be favorable toward such a policy.<sup>5</sup> Both Lord Salisbury and Lord Lansdowne during their terms in the Foreign Office had planned, and the latter had worked for, an agreement with Russia in Persian affairs, but these plans and attempts had been fruitless. The consummation of this policy was left for Sir Edward Grey.

Not only did the Government desire a rapprochement with Russia, but Sir Edward seems to have favored it even before he became the head of the Foreign Office. In the debate on Persian affairs in the House of Commons on January 22, 1902, he spoke in favor of England's retaining her influence in southern Persia and not

<sup>2</sup> Sessional Papers, 1908, Persia No. 1 [Cd. 3882]CXXV, 457.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, C 1, 574-628.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Edward Grey, in his speech on February 17, 1908, spoke of Lord Lansdowne's liberal policy. Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIV, 496-497. See Lord Curzon's speech, Ibid., CLXXXIII, 1001; also Lord Lansdowne's speech, Ibid., 1325. Granger, England's World Policy, 130.



yielding an inch, yet he held that there should be unrelaxed efforts to come to an understanding with other Powers and especially with the Russian Government.<sup>6</sup> The policy he then favored was this: "an understanding between the two Governments which would result in a fair and frank interchange of interests in Asia."<sup>7</sup>

Again, in 1903, the question of the Persian understanding was up in the House of Commons. In answer to a question as to whether there had been any communication with Russia with a view of establishing an understanding as to their influence in Persia, Lord Cranborne, the undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, replied that His Majesty's Government desired an amicable understanding between Great Britain and Russia in regard to their respective interests in Persia and that "questions involving those interests have lately been under discussion between the two Governments."<sup>8</sup> He had no papers, however, that could be laid before the House.

Sir Edward Grey became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in December, 1905. Altho a member of the Liberal party he had imperialistic views on foreign affairs. He continued the policy marked out by his predecessors, and especially pushed the negotiations with Russia until at last he was able to arrange a working agreement with the Government of the Czar. The negotiations necessary to arrange the Anglo-Russian Convention covered

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<sup>6</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CI, 608-613.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 609.

<sup>8</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CXIX, 105.



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a period of approximately two years. The opinion had been voiced before that time that Russia would never agree on the Persian question because she would not give up her purpose of securing a port on the Persian Gulf and perhaps of attacking India. But in 1907 Russia was willing to agree. We must bear in mind, however, that Russia had just finished a war with Japan, which had been rather disastrous to the Government of the Czar. The Russian Revolution of 1905 had also helped to break the power of Russia. These events not only weakened Russia at home, but they shattered her pride and weakened her prestige abroad. The time was opportune for England and Russia to settle their disputes in Asia; the opportunity was seized and on August 31, 1907, the Anglo-Russian Agreement was signed at St. Petersburg by M. Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, and Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Ambassador to the Court of the Czar. The greater share of the

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While Lord Lansdowne may have favored an understanding with Russia, the negotiations which had a direct bearing on the Agreement were probably carried on after Sir Edward Grey became Foreign Secretary. For opinions on the length of the negotiations see: Hamilton, Problems of the Middle East, 116, 187; Browne, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909, 175; Contemporary Review, November, 1907, p. 699; Forum, January, 1908, p. 339. A question was asked in the House of Commons about the negotiations in progress on March 29, 1906; Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLIV, 1534.

10

Whigham, op. cit., 390.

11

Rouire, La Rivalité Anglo-Russe En Asie, 260-261. Dr. Rouire speaks of the opportunity for an understanding after the Russo-Japanese War, and describes the development of good feeling between England and Russia during the Algeiras Conference in 1906. See also magazine articles on this point.



credit, or blame, for it, from the English point of view, must be given to the consistent efforts of Sir Edward Grey.

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Not only did the Agreement settle British and Russian affairs in Persia by marking out spheres of influence, but there were also important provisions regarding Afghanistan and Tibet. The section concerning Persia began with the general declaration that the Governments of Great Britain and Russia had mutually agreed "to respect the integrity and independence of Persia," and sincerely desired "the preservation of order thruout that country and its peaceful development, as well as the permanent establishment of equal advantages for the trade and industry of all other nations." 13

Each nation, however, had special interests in certain parts of Persia, so they agreed to certain specific arrangements. In the first place a Russian sphere of influence was marked off in northern Persia, extending no farther than to a line "starting from Kasr-i-Shirin [which is on the Turkish frontier], passing thru Ispahan, Yezd, Kakhk, and ending at a point on the Persian frontier at the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers." In this sphere the British were not to seek concessions of a political or commercial nature, such as concessions for railways,

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The full text of the Agreement is found in: British State Papers, C, 555-560; Sessional Papers, 1908 [Cd. 3750] CXXV, 477; Ibid., 1908 [Cd. 3753] CXXV, 489. Also quoted by Hamilton, op. cit., 189-192, 209-210, 216-217; the section relating to Persia is quoted by Granger, England's World Empire, 130-133.

13

In the Preamble. See Sessional Papers, 1908 [Cd. 3753] CXXXV, 489, p. 9.



banks, telegraphs, roads, transports, insurance, etc., and were not to oppose demands for such concessions made or supported by the Russian Government. This provision made Russian political and commercial rights paramount in the northern section of Persia. In the second place, Russia agreed to recognize the superiority of British claims to similar political and commercial influence in an area in south-eastern Persia extending to a line drawn from the Afghan frontier by way of Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, and ending at Bander Abbas. Article III stated that the strip of territory between the Russian and British zones was to be open for the grant of concessions to the subjects of both contracting parties; the concessions already existing in the Russian and English spheres were to be maintained. In Article IV it was agreed that all the Persian customs with the exception of those of Farsistan and the Persian Gulf were to be used in meeting the existing Persian obligations to Russia; the revenues from Farsistan and the Persian Gulf as well as those of the fisheries on the Persian shore of the Caspian Sea, and the revenues of the posts and telegraphs should be devoted to the service of the British loans arranged previous to the signing of the Agreement. Article V arranged for joint action between the two nations in case Persia failed to pay her obligations; they would determine the measure of control to be used by friendly arrangement and coöperation.

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For the section relating to Persia see: Sessional Papers, 1908 [Cd. 3753] CXXV, 489, pp. 9-11.



In the section of the Agreement relating to Afghanistan, Russia agreed to recognize the political predominance of Great Britain in that country. This was little more than reaffirming the status quo, for Russia had on previous occasions recognized the superiority of British influence there and had repeatedly promised not to meddle in Afghan affairs. In Tibet the two contracting nations agreed to respect its territorial integrity and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration. The suzerainty of China was also recognized. Russia and England also engaged not to seek any commercial concessions or rights in Tibet. While these arrangements concerning Tibet and Afghanistan did not bear directly on Persian affairs, they had an indirect bearing on them and had some influence on the general Asiatic policy.

In the Agreement no mention was made of the Persian Gulf. It was on this point that so much criticism developed in England. As has already been pointed out, the British regarded their rights paramount on the Persian Gulf, and even referred to it as a British lake. Sir Edward Grey, however, did not overlook

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Ibid., pp. 11-12.

16

Chirol, The Middle Eastern Question, 335, 339. On February 17, 1908, Sir Edward Grey said: "These Russian pledges are embodied for the first time in a binding undertaking between the two Governments, and, as Lord Lansdowne pointed out, they are now given in a form more thoro and satisfactory than anything we ever had before," Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIV, 489. See also Ibid., CLXXXVIII, 1328-1329.

17

Sessional Papers, 1908 [Cd. 3753] CXXV, 489, pp. 12-13.



this point entirely, altho no disposal was made in the Agreement. A dispatch sent by the British Foreign Secretary to Sir Arthur Nicolson on August 29, concerning the status of the Persian Gulf was published with the Convention. <sup>18</sup> It stated the British attitude as follows:

"The arrangement respecting Persia is limited to the regions of that country touching the respective frontiers of Great Britain and Russia in Asia, and the Persian Gulf is not part of those regions, and is only partly in Persian territory. It has not therefore been considered appropriate to introduce into the Convention a positive declaration respecting special interests possessed by Great Britain in the Gulf, the result of British action in those waters for more than a hundred years.

"His Majesty's Government have reason to believe that this question will not give rise to difficulties between the two Governments should developments arise which make further discussion affecting British interests in the Gulf necessary. For the Russian Government have in the course of the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of this arrangement explicitly stated that they do not deny the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf--a statement of which His Majesty's Government have formally taken note.

"In order to make it quite clear that the present arrangement is not intended to affect the position in the Gulf, and does not imply any change of policy respecting it on the part of Great Britain, His Majesty's Government think it desirable to draw attention to previous declarations of British policy, and to reaffirm generally previous statements as to British interests in the Persian Gulf and the importance of maintaining them.

"His Majesty's Government will continue to direct all their efforts to the preservation of the status quo in the Gulf and the maintenance of British trade; in doing so, they have no desire to exclude the legitimate trade of any other Power."

From this declaration it would seem that the question of

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Sessional Papers, 1908 [Cd. 3750] CXXV, 477, p. 2;  
British State Papers, CIII, 644-645.



the Persian Gulf had been discussed during the negotiations by the plenipotentiaries, and that Russia had given tacit consent to the supremacy of England there. At any rate, Sir Edward Grey, for his part, stated his attitude in unequivocal terms and stated that the British Government had formally taken note of Russia's acquiescence. Russia could hardly secure greater political influence on the Gulf, and if she should secure control of a port there it would be in violation of the Agreement, since none of the Russian sphere bordered on the Gulf.

The Agreement was favorably received in both countries for it was felt that it had brought the rivalries between Russia and Great Britain in Asia to a close and that in the future there would be no more friction in this part of the world. <sup>19</sup> Not only did the Convention settle affairs between them in Asia, but it was also the final act in the cementing of the Triple Entente. France and Russia had bound themselves together by the formation of the Dual Alliance in 1891; in 1904 France and England laid aside their differences and settled all their conflicts by the signing of an arrangement which later came to be known as the Entente Cordiale. By these two arrangements France had in a measure allied herself with both England and Russia. It was generally thought that England and Russia could not form an alliance because of the great difference in their institutions, the former, the most democratic

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Living Age, November 2, 1907, pp. 315-318; Harper's Weekly, May 3, 1913, p. 10; Contemporary Review, November, 1907, p. 698; Harper's Weekly, October 12, 1907, 1479.



Government of Europe, the latter, among the most autocratic. But difficulty was overcome and Asiatic affairs were used as a means to secure a closer understanding in European affairs; thus France, England and Russia formed an entente which was little less than a formal alliance.

There seems to have been more unanimity among the Russian papers in their approval of the Convention than there was among the English.<sup>20</sup> Some of them frankly admitted that before the Japanese War such a treaty would have been impossible, but with the defeat of the Russian armies on the plains of Manchuria was shattered the hope of the conquest of India. The Russia of 1907 was not the Russia of ten years earlier. Altho she had for some years held out the scare of an attack on India, she seemed at last, after the Japanese War and the Revolution at home, to have yielded to the inevitable. The newspapers viewed the Agreement in a broader light than usual and expressed the opinion that Russia had made a good bargain. The treaty ought to pave the way to abiding friendship between the two countries and, as the Slavo remarked, "secure Russia from any danger she may have feared from the ambition of Germany."<sup>21</sup> While there was not as much unanimity of sentiment among the English papers, the Agreement was usually acceptable. The Manchester Guardian, with no great enthusiasm for it, said:

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Forum, January, 1908, p. 340.

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Quoted in Forum, January, 1908, p. 339. See Browne, op. cit., 172-173.



"The Anglo-Russian Convention seems to us to merit neither strong praise nor strong blame. Things in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet were drifting in certain directions. The convention in each case takes note of the drift, formalizes it, and, as it were, legalizes it. Such agreements are often worth making, but they seldom give sufficient cause for having the bells rung, or for tearing out hair either, and so it is with this one."<sup>22</sup> The London Morning Post seemed to view it in a broader light when it said: "The significance of the Anglo-Russian convention is not to be found by the study of its details. It is a handshaking, not a bargain. It takes things as they are and records them."<sup>23</sup>

While the principle of the Agreement met with quite general satisfaction, there were those who objected to some of the terms. It is interesting to note that thruout all this adverse criticism there was hardly a voice raised to say that Persia had not been consulted, that a free country had been divided into spheres of influence without her knowledge and without having a word to say. That fact was only brought out incidentally.<sup>24</sup> The principal objection was that Russia had gotten more than her share, that Sir Edward Grey had been beaten in the game of diplomacy, that the good will of Russia had been purchased at too great a price, and that there was no definite arrangement concerning the

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Quoted in Forum, January, 1908, p. 340.

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Quoted in Forum, January, 1908, p. 340.

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Blackwood's, January, 1908, p. 153; Nineteenth Century and After, December, 1907, p. 900; Living Age, November 2, 1907, p. 317; Spectator, February 22, 1908, p. 282.



Persian Gulf. Such men as Angus Hamilton,<sup>25</sup> Perceval Landon,<sup>26</sup>  
 a. Vambéry,<sup>27</sup> and many others<sup>28</sup> could see nothing but a loss for  
 England, and much editorial comment held that Sir Edward Grey had  
 lost more by this transaction than he had gained.

England and Russia, however, were not the only interested  
 parties involved. How was the Anglo-Russian Agreement received in  
 Persia? Altho the Convention was signed on August 31, Sir Edward  
 Grey seemingly did not notify Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British  
 Minister at Teheran, until September 7, when he gave instructions  
 for the Minister to inform the Persian Government of the signing of  
 the Agreement and to reassure them that the independence and in-  
 tegrity of Persia was to be respected. He explained that the Con-  
 vention was merely to avoid misunderstandings between the two  
 Governments and that it could "not fail to promote the prosperity,  
 security, and ulterior development of Persia in the most effica-  
 cious manner."<sup>29</sup> Of course these instructions were carried out.  
 But even before this, a communication had been made to the Persian  
 Government by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, whether with the knowledge of  
 of Sir Edward Grey it is difficult to tell. The latter, during the

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25 Fortnightly Review, November, 1907, pp. 734-743.  
 26 Fortnightly Review, November, 1907, pp. 725-733.  
 27 Nineteenth Century and After, December, 1907, pp.895-  
 904.  
 28 Fortnightly Review, November 1, 1911, pp. 973-976. See  
 editorials in current magazines of this time.  
 29 Sessional Papers, Persia No. 1, 1909 [Cd. 4581], CV,  
 489, p. 57, No. 52.



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debates on Persian affairs in 1911, denied having any knowledge of this statement. By September 5, Persian discussion of the terms of the treaty, which were not actually known but were the subject of speculation, had become so violent and hostile, that some explanation or reassurance seemed necessary. For that reason, Sir C. Spring-Rice sent a note to the Persian Government containing the following sweeping statements and promises. <sup>31</sup> "The Agreement, based as it is, on the guarantee of Persia's independence and integrity, can only serve to further and promote Persian interests, for henceforth Persia, aided and assisted by her two powerful neighbors, can employ all her powers in internal reforms.... Not only do they not wish to have at hand any excuse for intervention, but their object in these friendly negotiations was not to allow one another to interfere on the pretext of safeguarding their respective interests." These reassurances were used to quiet public opinion for the time being, and in due time the text of the Agreement was communicated to the Shah's Government. <sup>32</sup> On October 5, it was read in the Assem-

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Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, XXXII, 2599-2600.

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Spectator, October 31, 1908, pp. 668-669. In this letter to the Spectator, Professor Browne quoted only part of the note, which was published in the Habl-ul-Matin of September 14, 1907. He said that he had "independent corroborative evidence as to its purport from sources of unimpeachable authority." The complete document may be found in the Fortnightly Review, October, 1908, pp. 692-694. This note was referred to in the debates in Parliament in 1911; Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, XXXII, 92, 2576, 2578, 2599, 2600. Part of it is also quoted by Granger, op. cit., 134-135. The fact that this note was brought to light simply goes to show that the documents included in the published Sessional Papers are not complete.

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Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, 489, p. 56, No. 50.



bly and in the brief discussion which ensued, it was reported that  
 the tone of most of the speakers was moderate. <sup>33</sup> The Persian  
 Foreign Minister later acknowledged the receipt of the Agreement  
 regarding Persia, which note also was "free from objections." <sup>34</sup>  
 He refused to admit, however, that the provisions of the Treaty were  
 binding on Persia; his note to the British Minister stated that  
 "the above-mentioned Agreement having been concluded between the  
 British and Russian Governments, therefore its provisions will  
 concern the aforementioned Governments who have signed the Agree-  
 ment." He affirmed that Persia as a free and independent state  
 was not subject to any arrangement made by outside Powers. <sup>35</sup>

The newspapers of Persia, such as the Habl-ul-Matin and  
 the Tamaddun, <sup>36</sup> published articles opposed to the Anglo-Russian  
 Convention during the earlier part of September, but soon they  
 turned their attention to more engrossing local affairs which had  
 arisen. A quotation from one of these may well represent the  
 general tenor of Persian feeling: <sup>37</sup>

"In these days it is rumored that the above-mentioned  
 Agreement has emerged from the realms of consideration and discus-  
 sion, and that all its provisions and clauses have been arranged  
 in their final form. All discriminating and well-informed persons  
 suspect that, in view of our negligence and ignorance, the signing  
 of the Agreement will be shortly followed by the end of Persia's

33 Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, 489, p.57, No.52.

34 Ibid., p. 73, No. 62.

35 Ibid., Inclosure in No. 62.

36 Ibid., p. 60, No. 55.

37 Quoted by Browne, op. cit., 179-181.



independence and autonomy. For as soon as the Agreement is signed, the contracting Powers will at once begin to give it practical effect, and to pursue their respective ambitions....

"Now, altho this Agreement ostensibly professes to aim at preserving the independence of Persia, whereby some of our deputies have been deceived and have declared in the Assembly that this Agreement will not hurt Persia, since its primary object is to safeguard her independence, yet such as are versed in the jargon of politics know very well that wherever one of these Powers has acquired influence, it has done so under the guise of just such specious and fair-seeming words. Now if these two Powers really desired the continuance of Persia's sovereignty, then there was no need for such an Agreement. Are the United States of America or Japan likely to come from the Far West or the Far East respectively in order to attack or subjugate Persia, that there should be any need for such an Agreement? It is clear that the danger which threatens Persia is precisely from these two Powers [which are parties to the Agreement], and that, if they had no sinister designs, there would have been no need for any Agreement or Convention."

The Agreement was debated in the House of Lords on February 6, and February 10, 1908, and in the House of Commons on February 17, 1908. In both Houses there was opposition to the Convention, not so much to the spirit of the treaty or the motives that were back of it, but toward the specific provisions that Sir Edward Grey had been able to get. Lord Curzon, who criticised the terms most severely, was not at all reluctant to admit the prime importance of an understanding with Russia. During his speech he declared that for his own part, he regarded "this treaty as the most far-reaching, the most important treaty that has been concluded by the British Government during the past fifty years."

Lord Lamington said: "We have for years past deplored the lack of

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Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIII, 999-1047; 1306-1353; Ibid., CLXXXIV, 461-564.

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Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIII, 1023.



agreement with Russia in regard to Persia,"<sup>40</sup> yet he criticised the Agreement when it finally was concluded. On the floor of the House of Commons, Earl Percy was careful to explain that he welcomed the spirit which had prompted the Agreement and made it clear that the criticisms he voiced did not imply that the leaders of the Opposition would be unwilling loyally to carry out the obligations; he contended, however, that the sacrifices made by England were<sup>41</sup> excessive and that the terms of the Convention were ambiguous.<sup>41</sup> On the whole the criticism was comparatively mild and the Agreement was generally supported.

Sir Edward Grey, in the debate on February 17, defended his policy and replied to the most important of the criticisms voiced against it. The greatest objections were that Russia had received a much larger sphere of influence than England, that in the Russian sphere the majority of the most important cities as Teheran, Tabriz, and Ispahan, were located, the most fertile and productive part of the country was that northern area, and it also contained the greater number of important trade-routes. It was pointed out that the British sphere was smaller; there were only two cities of any importance, Bander Abbas and Kerman,<sup>42</sup> the terminals of the only important trade-route in this sphere; furthermore a great part of this area was desert and unproductive. The

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<sup>40</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIII, 1023.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., CLXXXIV, 460-476.

<sup>42</sup> Statesman's Yearbook, 1916, 1222, 1226.



Opposition contended that Russia had secured a much more desirable territory from a commercial point of view.<sup>43</sup> Another point that created much comment was the absence of any statement in the Agreement concerning the status of the Persian Gulf. They felt that British influence and control was supreme there and wanted that fact recognized by a specific statement in the accord. The note explaining the situation, published simultaneously with the Agreement, was not a sufficient recognition on the part of Russia.

The speech of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was able and comprehensive.<sup>44</sup> He spoke immediately after Earl Percy who had opposed the Agreement. Sir Edward referred to the statement of the Earl that the Treaty was ambiguous; he admitted that it was to a certain extent, but "there is no agreement which cannot be said to be ambiguous.... Any agreement, however clearly expressed, cannot avoid the charge of ambiguity any more than a Bill drawn by the best draftsman presented to this House has ever averted a charge of ambiguity being brought against it by the Opposition."<sup>45</sup> Some critics said it was not comprehensive; in reply the Foreign Minister said that all questions between Russia and Great Britain were not settled by the Convention; such a thing could not have been attempted. If it had there would have been no Agreement at all.<sup>46</sup> The situation had become serious and something had

<sup>43</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CXXXIII, 1009.

<sup>44</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIV, 476-497.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 477.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 478.



to be done; he had adopted the most favorable policy under the circumstances.

Sir Edward Grey also discussed the advantage of the lines drawn in the Agreement over another line that had been suggested before. That former line, which would have run, roughly, thru Khanikin, Kermanshah, Hamadan, Ispahan, Yezd, Kerman to Seistan, would have divided Persia into two parts, the northern one going to Russia as a sphere of influence, and the southern part to England. Many of the objections that were directed at the division, as it had been made, were also applicable to the other plan; Teheran and most of the important commercial centers would still have been in the Russian sphere. This plan, however, had its objections, said Sir Edward Grey; "Russia would have been left within striking distance of Seistan." For that the Government could have been rightly accused of having for commercial prospects sacrificed what ought to have been the main and first point of any Agreement between Great Britain and Russia, namely strategic advantage." It is the strategic position which makes the Agreement desirable and essential; Seistan is the key to the strategic position. Thruout his speech, Sir E. Grey emphasized the strategic advantage of the existing spheres.

He then reviewed the history of the Russian advance in

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Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIV, 480.

48

Ibid., 481.

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Ibid., 481.

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Ibid., 486.



Persia during the preceding twenty years, both in commerce and political influence; he held that England was not supreme, as she had once been, and as Lord Curzon had tried to make them believe. On this point he said:

"When I consider how the position has changed in the last twenty years, and when I am told that by this Agreement we have thrown away great prospects and great commercial advantages, I say you must take into account the situation with which we had to deal and the starting point from which the Agreement had to be made. I cannot believe that anybody who realizes what the situation as regards Persia was when we began to discuss this Agreement can believe that under it we have really sacrificed great commercial prospects which there was any chance of our realizing in future years.... Under this Agreement we have given up nothing that was not gone before"<sup>51</sup>

He defended his stand on the settlement of the question of the Persian Gulf. "As to the Persian Gulf, what we have from the Russian Government is in writing, and it is quoted, the material part of it textually, in the despatch written to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg."<sup>52</sup> While he was hopeful that the Agreement augured well for the future, he was reluctant to say that all danger of interference in Persia was over. "With the internal troubles that exist, and with the troubles on the Turkish frontier, no one can say with certainty what will happen. But the danger of interference by ourselves or Russia is greatly diminished."<sup>53</sup>

51  
Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIV, 487-488.

52  
Ibid., 488.

53  
Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CLXXXIV, 494.



Sir Edward Grey closed his speech by saying that the Agreement had been signed in the spirit of friendship and coöperation, and he hoped and believed that it would be of mutual advantage to both England and Russia. He contended that if the Opposition came into power they would find that the position of the country had been strengthened by the Anglo-Russian Convention. <sup>54</sup>

The foreign comment aroused by the signing of the Anglo-Russian Agreement is both interesting and significant. The attitude in England and Russia has already been pointed out and the Persian hostility has been discussed. But how was it viewed by the rest of the European countries and in the United States?

France openly rejoiced <sup>55</sup> over the Convention, since it practically allied the contracting nations to her; a new feeling in Europe had been created. A. Maurice Low <sup>56</sup> described the French press as being "jubilant" since anything that tended to remove friction between England and Russia "knocks another prop from under Germany and strengthens the English support of France." The Paris Temps explained the situation as follows: "It is of great value to France that her alliance with Russia and her entente with England, which some statesmen have looked upon as incompatible, should

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Ibid., 497. A report of Sir Edward Grey's speech may be found in the Spectator, February 22, 1908, pp. 285-286; also pp. 281-282. This latter editorial stated that Sir Edward's speech "was listened to with marked attention, and made a most favorable impression." The debates on the Agreement are also reported in the Annual Register, 1908, part I, pp. 23-27.

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Independent, October 10, 1907, p. 844.

56

Forum, January, 1908, p. 340.



now have become ratified and confirmed by a direct understanding between London and St. Petersburg. Our moral standing in Europe will henceforth be strengthened." <sup>57</sup> This was the last move in the formation of the Triple Entente, which was pleasing to France.

The understanding was not so desirable to Germany. The consensus of opinion was that it practically closed Persia to German influence. <sup>58</sup> Dr. Paul Rohrbach distrusted England and felt that it was part of a vast British imperial policy, menacing to Germany. <sup>59</sup> He even said that "The published part of the English-Russian pact, which referred to Persia was meant to hide a further agreement directed against Turkey and Germany." <sup>60</sup> <sup>61</sup> Another German felt that by the treaty England had scored a brilliant success. An observer of opinion on foreign affairs held that the German press was compelled grudgingly to admit that England had fortified her position in Europe and had riveted her hold on the Persian Gulf. <sup>62</sup> Count Ernst zu Reventlow believed that the enmity King Edward VII held toward Germany was a reason for this new good feeling toward Russia, and that this feeling of hostility governed the policy of

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Quoted by A. Maurice Low in Forum, January, 1908, p.340.

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Schmitt, England and Germany, 242,298; Independent, October 10, 1907, p. 844.

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Rohrbach, German World Policies, 173,199-200.

60

Ibid., 168.

61

Hans Delbrück, quoted by E. J. Dillon in Contemporary Review, November, 1907, pp. 699-700.

62

A. Maurice Low in Forum, January, 1908, pp.340-341.



the English Government from that time on; France also encouraged the Anglo-Russian rapprochement since it was in the direction of her interests. On March 29, 1909, almost two years after the Agreement was signed, Prince von Bülow before the Reichstag declared that there was no reason for Germany opposing the Anglo-Russian accord, "which respects the independence and integrity of Persia as well as the principle of the open door."<sup>63</sup> If he was sincere in his opinion it was contrary to the general German view. Because of the fact that Edward VII and Sir Edward Grey were considered enemies of Germany by the Germans, and since the formation of the Triple Entente had been brought about by the Agreement, the chances for Anglo-German friendship were somewhat diminished.

The opinion on the Agreement in the United States was not at all critical; no act of international immorality was detected by the press. It was considered quite reasonable, even quite remarkable,<sup>64</sup> and creditable to both parties.

The real effects of this Agreement could not be seen at that time. The attitude of the world seemed to be quite uncritical, at least not openly hostile except in Persia itself. As time went on, however, and the provisions were put into operation complications arose; affairs in Persia became no better,--perhaps even worse,--and opinion in England, in Persia, and in America became

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Quoted by Herbert Adams Gibbons in Independent, March 23, 1911, p. 615.

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Independent, October 3, 1907, pp. 827-828; Ibid., October 10, 1907, p. 844; Outlook, October 5, 1907, p. 234.



more bitter and critical toward Anglo-Russian management in Persia. Much as Sir Edward Grey had defended his work of diplomacy at the time of its negotiation, much as he had praised its virtues, and much as he had denied that England had lost in the transaction, he, too, was forced to change his opinion somewhat. This change of opinion was gradual, but let it suffice at this point to state that in 1912, Sir Edward complained to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Sazonof, that England had not received a large enough sphere of influence in comparison with that of Russia. Thus he was forced to admit that the Agreement, as far as its application to affairs in Asia was concerned, was not as favorable to England as he had been led to believe in 1907.

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No. 335. Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807] LXXXI, p. 173,



### Chapter III

#### THE BRITISH POLICY IN PERSIA, 1907-1910.

The generally favorable attitude toward the Anglo-Russian Agreement which obtained shortly after it had been negotiated by Sir Edward Grey and M. Isvolsky, was not to be wondered at since the future working of the Agreement was as yet only a matter of speculation and its probably satisfactory development, only a matter of academic discussion. How it was really developed and applied in Persia by these two statesmen is a different matter and will be dealt with to some extent in this chapter. At the outset it may be said that the scheme did not work as well as the interested parties had hoped. This phase of the discussion will be limited to the period from the signing of the Agreement until the arrival, in 1911, of W. Morgan Shuster in Persia to take charge of the Persian finance. The conditions which obtained in 1907 changed considerably during this period of little less than four years.

Before going into this discussion of the British Government's policy in Persia during this period, it will make the connections and significance more apparent if a short review of affairs in Persia is first given. Since 1900, and perhaps a few years before, there had been a growing movement opposed to the reactionary Shah and his medieval method of government, and in favor of a fixed code of laws and a representative assembly. The agitation had been started by a few patriotic Persians who either had been educated

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: [Illegible]

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in Europe or had traveled there quite extensively.<sup>1</sup> The movement grew; patriotic and more enlightened leaders were found, until the movement grew serious. In 1905 seven or eight merchants at Teheran were bastinadoed by the Governor;<sup>2</sup> as a protest a large number of the most prominent merchants, many of the mullahs and many of the later popular leaders took bast (sanctuary) at the Royal Mosque and the holy shrine of Shah Abdul-Azim. This "first bast," as it was called was merely a protest against the old order of things. On January 21, 1906, the Shah made vague promises of reform, but nothing was done toward that end. A riot broke out in the capital on June 21, at which time the patriots demanded a code of laws. The mullahs, merchants, and leaders took bast, this time in the gardens of the British and Russian Legations. By August 1, the number of refugees at the British Legation was 13,000.<sup>3</sup> The Shah yielded to the popular demand on August 5, and promised a national assembly, a Court of Justice, and the dismissal of the Grand Vizier. The National Consultative Assembly thus established was opened on

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<sup>1</sup> Browne, op. cit., 29-30. Sykes, op. cit., II, 500-504.

<sup>2</sup> A short account of the Revolution may be found in Sykes, op. cit., 506-511. The most thoro and reliable account is the one by Professor Browne, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909, which has been referred to before. Short accounts may be found in many of the magazine articles on Persian affairs of this time, "Shuster's Own Story" in Hearst's Magazine, April, pp. 2045-2056, reviews it hastily. See also Annual Register for the years 1905-1909.

<sup>3</sup> Browne, op. cit., 119.

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October 7, 1906, by the Shah and a Constitution was drawn up and signed by him on December 30.<sup>4</sup> Under this royal grant, the First Mejlis, or Parliament, sat from October 7, 1906, until June 23, 1908.

At the beginning of 1907, the old Shah, Muzaffer-u-Din, died and was succeeded by Mohammed Ali who was crowned January 19, 1907. Friction between the Shah and the Mejlis soon resulted; Mohammed Ali finally attempted a coup d'etat but failed, and acceded to the demands of the Constitutionalists, or Nationalists, (as the reform party was called) and swore to uphold the Constitution. On February 28, 1908, there was an attempt to assassinate the Shah. Shortly after that he left Teheran under strong protection and established himself at the armed camp, Bagh-i-Shah. Colonel Liahkoff, a Russian in the pay of the Persian Government<sup>5</sup> and supposedly free from Russian influence, in command of a body of Persian Cossacks entered Teheran, proclaimed martial law, ordered the dissolution of Parliament, and became Military Governor. Some of the members of the Assembly would not leave, so the Parliament House was bombarded on June 23, 1908. Fighting followed this act, but the troops of the Shah had the better of it, and gained control of the city.

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A summary of the events of 1906 was furnished the British Government by the British Minister at Teheran, Sir C. Spring-Rice, Sessional Papers, 1909 [4581] CV, 489, pp. 1-6.

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Professor Browne holds that Colonel Liahkoff was in the pay of the Russian Government and presents documents as evidence on this point. See op. cit., 206-232.



In the meantime a lively fight was going on at Tabriz, which after a long and stout resistance finally surrendered to the Nationalists. The rebels then marched on Teheran, gathering strength as they pressed forward. The Shah, on May 5, 1909, proclaimed a general amnesty for those who had been in opposition to him but it came too late and was not accepted. The Nationalists entered Teheran, and on July 16, the Shah, Mohammed Ali, took refuge in the Russian Legation; this was considered equivalent to an abdication. His twelve year old son, Ahmad Mirza, became Shah on July 18, under the regency of Azad-ul-Mulk.<sup>6</sup> New elections were ordered, and on November 15, 1909, the new Parliament began its sessions which continued for more than two years.

During this whole period there was more or less turmoil and unrest; Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British Minister at Teheran, described the state of affairs in Persia at this time as "peaceful anarchy".<sup>7</sup> So the patience of the two signatories to the Agreement had a problem before them that taxed the abilities of their statesmen.

Sir Edward Grey, early in February, 1907, before the Anglo-Russian Convention was signed, had declared himself opposed to intervention by Russia or any other power. In a dispatch to Sir Cecil Spring-Rice he said: "The view held by His Majesty's Government is that any proposals for measures of a military nature

6  
Sessional Papers, 1910 [Cd. 5120] CXII, 527, p. 64,  
 No. 139.

7  
Ibid., 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, 489, p. 39, No. 32.



would be opposed to the principle of non-intervention."<sup>8</sup> He informed Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Minister at St. Petersburg, that he concurred with the Minister at Teheran in deprecating intervention in the internal affairs of Persia. He was quite consistently opposed to intervention thruout this whole period.

M. Isvolsky was not nearly so definite in his attitude on intervention. When Sir Arthur Nicolson interviewed him, the Russian Minister said he was puzzled as to what course should be taken, but at that time (December 11, 1907) he had been advised against a military demonstration.<sup>9</sup> It was explained that Russia was in a more difficult position because of the nearness of her frontier and her important interests in the districts that were then the scene of the greatest revolutionary activities, especially at Tabriz.<sup>10</sup>

During 1907 and 1908, the loan of 1903-1904 made to Persia by Great Britain was the cause of numerous demands on the part of Sir Edward Grey. He protested at first that the interest was long over due, and demanded an immediate payment.<sup>11</sup> If Persia did not comply with this request, the instant payment of the sinking fund would immediately be demanded. Earlier Sir Edward had been willing to suspend the payment of the sinking fund for three

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<sup>8</sup>  
Ibid., p. 8, No. 11.

<sup>9</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, p. 74, No. 66.

<sup>10</sup>  
Ibid., p. 8, No. 10.

<sup>11</sup>  
Ibid., p. 77, No. 77.



years provided Persia did not contract a loan without the option first being given to England or Russia.<sup>12</sup> On February 17, 1908, he informed Mr. Marling, the British Chargé d'affaires at Teheran, that if the payment of the interest was not made by April 4, interest to the sum already due would have to be added.<sup>13</sup> These terms had not been complied with by August 10, so Mr. Marling informed the Persian Government that the above-mentioned terms would have to be applied.<sup>14</sup>

This matter of finance, however, was pushed into the background by exigencies more important. By the beginning of June, 1908, the Nationalist movement had become very serious to the Shah, who at this time was at his armed camp, Bagh-i-Shah. The Russian minister at Teheran, M. de Hartwig, suggested that the two Powers pledge to maintain the ruling Persian dynasty, thinking that such an attitude would have a sobering effect on the agitators at Teheran.<sup>15</sup> Sir Edward Grey would not agree to such a proposal; while he considered it "of the greatest importance that the policy of the two Governments should be in perfect accord", he strongly deprecated any action "which might have the appearance of interfering in the internal affairs of Persia."<sup>16</sup> He wanted the

12 Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd.4581] CV, p. 44, No. 36.

13 Ibid., p. 103, No. 100.

14 Ibid., pp. 172-173, No. 225. Also Inclosure in No.225.

15 Ibid., p. 124, No. 123.

16 Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, p. 125, No. 124.



Persians to have a Government enjoying the full confidence and support of the people, and such a result, he thought, could better be obtained without external influence. Sir Edward did maintain, however, that allowing the Persians to take bast at the British legation was not intervention. It was an old right and custom among the Persians that those whose lives were endangered in a political or similar crisis could take bast, or sanctuary, in some sacred building or at the foreign legations. This method had been used earlier as a protest against the Shah. But on June 23, 1908,<sup>17</sup> a body of Persian Cossacks had entered Teheran and bombarded the Parliament House; fighting had followed and as a result a number of refugees took bast,<sup>18</sup> the number gradually increasing. The English policy was to try to discourage this practice but the British Minister was instructed to refuse to give up the refugees already there.<sup>19</sup> The Shah's officials and methods became more and more obnoxious to the British because a guard was placed around the legation to prevent more refugees from entering and to keep those already there from leaving.<sup>20</sup> This was considered an insult and Sir Edward Grey demanded an apology.<sup>21</sup> In spite of this insult, in a firm note on June 29,<sup>22</sup> he again asserted that he had "no in-

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<sup>17</sup> Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, p. 127, Nos. 132, 133.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 128, No. 136.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 130, Nos. 141, 142.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 130, No. 142; p. 132, No. 148.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 133, No. 153; p. 147, Nos. 185, 188.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 149, No. 193.



terest nor desire to intervene in any way in the internal affairs" of Persia. And again on July 13, he reaffirmed this statement in a note to Mr. Marling<sup>23</sup> explaining that refuge was only granted in the Legation in order to save life, and not to lend assistance to any political enterprise, as the Government of the Shah had accused the British of doing.

In the meantime the situation had been growing worse, especially at Tabriz;<sup>24</sup> the Nationalists had no idea of letting up in their demands. Because of the gravity of the situation all over Persia, Sir Edward Grey, on September 2, recommended that a joint communication by the Russian and British Governments should be made to the Shah.<sup>25</sup> The purpose of this communication should be two-fold: first, it should contain a statement that the two Governments had taken a very serious view of the situation at Tabriz, and that they would hold the Persian Government responsible if any British or Russian subjects were harmed; and secondly, pressure should be put on the Shah to give orders for new elections and to reassemble the Mejlis on November 14. This was done by the British and Russian representatives at Teheran on September 8;<sup>26</sup> the Shah's reply was not very definite or satisfactory on these points.<sup>27</sup>

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Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd.4581] CV, p. 149, No. 193.

24

Ibid., pp. 173-174, No. 226, Monthly Report by the British Legation at Teheran (August 12). Also Nos. 228, 230.

25

Ibid., pp. 177-180, Nos. 229-238.

26

Ibid., p. 185, No. 250.

27

Ibid., pp. 182, Nos. 241-246.



He seemed to resent the interference of the two Governments.

Early in September, 1908, the question of a joint loan to Persia came up. Neither Russia nor Great Britain had made a loan to Persia since the establishment of the Constitution and the meeting of the first Mejlis. An Anglo-Russian advance would have been forthcoming at any time if Persia had desired it, but the Assembly refused to accept a European loan. On this point it asserted its power from the very beginning; the members refused a loan on the ground that the public revenues ought not to be pledged to foreigners.<sup>28</sup> To put the finances of the country on a sound basis they proposed to found and endow a National Bank. As long as the Mejlis remained in session it would not consent to a foreign loan. But after June 23, 1908, when Parliament was dissolved, the Shah had been asking for a loan and at first, both Russia and England seemed ready to advance a sum of £ 400,000.<sup>29</sup> Sir Edward Grey would consent to it on condition that it should not be used for the suppression of the Constitution and that it should be controlled by suitable guarantees.<sup>30</sup> That was on September 5, 1908; but by December 24, he thought it would be advisable to wait until a Constitution had been established before making an advance to

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<sup>28</sup>  
of Events in Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, No. 3, Summary in 1906, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 169-170, No. 219; pp. 175-176, No. 227.

<sup>30</sup>  
Ibid., p. 179, No. 234.



the Shah,<sup>31</sup> for in the meantime the latter had refused to grant an Assembly, which he held was contrary to Islam.<sup>32</sup> Sir Edward maintained that "to give the Shah money in the present circumstances would be worse than futile, and would amount to intervention in Persia's internal affairs."<sup>33</sup>

Until the beginning of 1909, Sir Edward Grey and M. Isvolsky had been in more or less accord regarding affairs in Persia;<sup>34</sup> both apparently were opposed to intervention to secure order as long as the lives of foreigners were not endangered. Professor Browne thought that Russia had refrained somewhat from an aggressive policy because of the restraining influence of Sir Edward Grey, and had not sent troops into Persia, and had especially abandoned the expedition to Tabriz, proposed in October, 1908, because of Sir Edward's warning that it would produce a very bad impression in England. Certain Russian officials who had reactionary sympathies and favored an aggressive forward policy had been recalled apparently to keep the good will of England.<sup>35</sup> The Russian Foreign Minister, however, seemed to be in favor of grant-

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<sup>31</sup>  
Sessional Papers, (Persia No. 2) 1909 [Cd. 4733] CV, 725, p. 15, No. 27.

<sup>32</sup>  
Ibid., (Persia No. 1) 1909 [Cd. 4581] CV, pp. 208-210, Nos. 313-315.

<sup>33</sup>  
 Browne, op. cit., 266-267; Sessional Papers, (Persia No. 2) 1909 [Cd. 4733] CV, p. 22, No. 52; pp. 43-44, No. 70.

<sup>34</sup>  
Ibid., p. 1, No. 1; p. 2, No. 6; p. 5, No. 10; p. 16, No. 29.

<sup>35</sup>  
 Browne, op. cit., 340.



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ing the Shah a loan, and early in 1909, openly favored such an advance; he could not understand why Sir Edward was opposed to granting it.<sup>37</sup> In March, Russia began to move troops to Baku and to the frontier at Julfa to be in readiness to enter Persia if conditions grew much worse, and at the same time fifty Cossacks were dispatched to Resht for the protection of the Russian Consulate.<sup>38</sup> Finally, on April 20, M. Isvolsky decided to send troops to Tabriz and, on April 23, a Russian force was ordered to move.<sup>39</sup> By the end of April, there were Russian troops at Meshed and Tabriz.<sup>40</sup> From that time on until the outbreak of the Great European War, Russian troops were maintained in Persia, and instead of the number being decreased, it was usually increased.

At that time Sir Edward Grey did not object to the sending of Russian soldiers into Persia, but he understood that they were only being sent for the protection of lives and that they would be withdrawn in a short time. In fact he could not object for at almost the same time, the state of "peaceful anarchy" in south Persia had become so menacing that he dispatched a gunboat to Bushire<sup>41</sup> and on April 10, one hundred blue-jackets were landed to

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Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd.4733] CV, pp. 36-41, No. 63.

37

Ibid., p. 54, No. 95, March 23, 1909.

38

Ibid., p. 55, Nos. 97, 98.

39

Ibid., p. 106, Nos. 231, 232.

40

Ibid., p. 114, No. 254; p. 117, Nos. 265, 267.

41

Ibid., p. 67, No. 125, p. 71, No. 145; pp. 74-75,

Nos. 158, 159.



protect foreigners.<sup>42</sup> This detachment, however, was re-embarked  
again on May 20.<sup>43</sup>

Russia finally decided to advance a small loan to Persia  
but Sir Edward Grey refused.<sup>44</sup> The agreement for this loan was  
drawn up in June, 1909, the amount being £ 100,000.<sup>45</sup> In July,  
Russia sent more troops into Persia, this time to Enzeli and Kas-  
vin;<sup>46</sup> the Government of the Czar, however, gave assurances of  
non-intervention which were acceptable to Sir Edward Grey.<sup>47</sup>

The Shah, Mohammed Ali, was soon forced to abdicate; his  
son Ahmad Mirza was appointed Shah on July 18, 1909 with Azad-ul-  
Mulk as Regent. A new electoral law had been proclaimed, and it  
was hoped that order would be restored; elections were held and  
on November 15 the new Mejlis assembled. After the new government  
had come into power, Sir Edward Grey began to ask for the with-  
drawal of Russian troops,<sup>48</sup> whose presence in Persia he considered  
no longer necessary. The number of troops was gradually reduced

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<sup>42</sup> Sessional Papers, 1909 [Cd. 4733] CV, p. 76, No. 164.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 1910 [Cd. 5120] CXII, 527, p. 5, No. 21; p. 26,  
No. 46.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 2, No. 5; p. 3, No. 13.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 49-50, No. 91.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 36, No. 82.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 50-52, No. 92; p. 53, No. 97.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 85, No. 184; p. 137, No. 236.



at Tabriz<sup>49</sup> and Kasvin<sup>50</sup> while those at Ardebil<sup>51</sup> were to be withdrawn.

In December the new government applied to the Russian and British Legations for a loan of £ 500,000, for which they would be unable to give any security. Sir Edward Grey demanded at least a small security on the loan,<sup>52</sup> while the Russian government preferred to advance Persia a large loan rather than the moderate one she asked, so that England and Russia together would be "in a position to insist on the institution of an effective financial control."<sup>53</sup> Finally on February 16, 1910, an Anglo-Russian loan of £ 400,000 was promised on condition that part of it be used to provide an armed force sufficient to protect commercial interests in Persia, that seven French officials be employed in the Ministry of Finance, and that Persia should grant no concessions for the construction of railroads in Persia until the option had been offered to the British or Russian Governments.<sup>54</sup> The Persian Minister of Finance would not even submit these conditions to the Mejlis because he knew they would be rejected. It is apparent from these

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- 49  
242. Sessional Papers, 1910 [Cd. 5120] CXII, p. 139, No.
- 50  
    Ibid., p. 149, No. 260.
- 51  
    Ibid., p. 159, No. 277.
- 52  
No. 2; p. 3, Sessional Papers, 1911 [Cd. 5656] CIII, 503, p. 1,  
    No. 6.
- 53  
    Ibid., p. 10, No. 12.
- 54  
    Ibid., pp. 27, 28, No. 45.



conditions made by Russia and England that they wanted a large measure of control in the internal affairs of Persia as the price of a paltry loan. Later Sir Edward Grey,<sup>55</sup> in view of the need for money in Persia, was willing to make an advance without any conditions except for security and repayment, the money to be expended for the restoration of order. This was to be voluntary on the part of the two European Powers because they felt that Persia would not apply to them, since the Persians were beginning to feel that Russia and England were "scheming to put financial fetters on Persia."<sup>56</sup>

By the middle of the year, 1910, the trade routes in South Persia became so insecure and so harassed by robber bands that Sir Edward Grey suggested that a formal protest be made by the British and Russian Governments to the effect that unless order was restored within a period of three months the British Government would undertake it with a native police force commanded by British officers of the Indian army.<sup>57</sup> Finally, on October 14, 1910, a note<sup>58</sup> was sent to the Persian Government threatening intervention within three months to make the roads safe in Southern Persia unless Persia did it herself. This note brought forth some comment and protest by the outside world. The German papers saw in it a

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Sessional Papers, 1911 [Cd. 5656] CIII, p. 66, No. 131.  
July 22, 1910.

56

Ibid., pp. 66-67, No. 133.

57

Ibid., pp. 77-78, No. 152.

58

Ibid., p. 105, No. 194.



threat at the territorial integrity of Persia; they feared that the shores of the Persian Gulf and the hinterland would fall under the domination of the British. In short the partition of Persia was

<sup>59</sup>feared. In the United States some feeling seems to have been aroused by the conduct of Persian affairs by the Anglo-Russian coöperation. In an editorial entitled "The Squeezing of Persia", the Independent painted a picture of the hopeless condition Persia was in; concerning the German view it says: "Germany, of course, sees in the British note only the consummation of the nefarious bargain between Russia and Great Britain for the partition and <sup>60</sup>annexation of Persia."

While the Persian Government made some efforts to effect plans for establishing order thruout the country, the situation still remained critical. In November, the British officials found <sup>61</sup>it necessary to land troops at the southern ports. However, before the end of the year, conditions improved somewhat: robberies <sup>62</sup>almost entirely ceased and the roads seemed to be more secure. That was the situation in Persia when the members of the Mejlis were clamoring for the appointment of an American financial adviser.

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<sup>59</sup>  
Dillon). Contemporary Review, December, 1910, p. 757, (E. J.

<sup>60</sup>  
Ibid., June 2, 1910, pp. 1160-1161. Independent, November 10, 1910, p. 10 13. See also

<sup>61</sup>  
No. 203. Sessional Papers, 1911 [Cd. 5656] CIII, p. 109,

<sup>62</sup>  
Ibid., p. 119, No. 211.



## Chapter IV

### SIR EDWARD GREY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD W. MORGAN SHUSTER'S ADMINISTRATION IN PERSIA, 1911.

In October, 1910, the Persian Parliament had expressed<sup>1</sup> itself in favor of securing an American as financial adviser. Altho the Cabinet had opposed it at first and had favored the appointment of a Frenchman, they were finally compelled to yield to the request of the Mejlis. After some negotiation between the Persian Legation at Washington and our State Department, W. Morgan Shuster was selected for the position.<sup>2</sup> He had been in the Cuban customs service from 1898 to 1901, had been Insular Collector of Customs at Manila from 1901 to 1906, and after that service until 1909 was a member of the Philippine Commission. His experience in finance had been wide and his training, thoro; above all he was a man of ability and energy. Early in 1911, Mr. Shuster with four assistants sailed for Persia where he arrived on<sup>3</sup> May 12.

The Americans were greeted warmly by the Persians, and Mr. Shuster immediately took up his work. The finances of Persia were in disorder; there were no records of past revenues or ex-

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<sup>1</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1911, Persia No. 1 [Cd. 5656] CIII, p. 94, No. 173.

<sup>2</sup>  
Hearst's Magazine, April, 1912, p. 2047.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., p. 2048.



penditures, no banking system, no check whatever on fraud; the deficit in the treasury was about \$500,000.<sup>4</sup> About three weeks after his arrival, Mr. Shuster presented to the Persian Government the draft of a basic finance law establishing the office of Treasurer-General, and fixing his powers. This law passed the Mejlis on June 13, by an almost unanimous vote.<sup>5</sup> The act gave Mr. Shuster wide powers in the matter of finance.

The new Treasurer-General, however, was destined to find many difficulties ahead of him, in spite of the fact that he had the confidence of the great majority of the Persian people.<sup>6</sup> He had gone to Persia with the idea that Persia was a free and independent nation, as had been recognized by the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and that as an official of the Persian Government he was responsible to Persia alone. He was soon to be disillusioned. In his own story, Mr. Shuster said that from the very time the employment of American officials was suggested, the Russian Government had opposed the plan. After they had failed to influence the Persians and deter them from their purpose, "Russia next approached the American State Department, which at that time was in ignorance of the intentions of the Persian government, and delicately suggested that it would be unwise or unkind to send

4  
World's Work, February, 1912, pp. 379-380; Hearst's Magazine, April, 1912, p. 2051.

5  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 3 [Cd. 6104] CXXII, 61, pp. 74-77, No. 153.

6  
Independent, December 7, 1911, p. 1234; Ibid., p. 1360; Outlook, December 16, 1911, p. 899.



American finance experts to Persia."<sup>7</sup> After the request was made, Russia did not object openly.

It was not long until Mr. Shuster had a dispute with M. Mornard, a Belgian official who had worked up to a responsible position in the Persian customs service. M. Mornard announced that the Belgian employees would not be subject to the American Treasurer-General. By the middle of July, the affair was settled and M. Mornard consented to obey the law.<sup>8</sup> The British Government held aloof from this quarrel. Thus far in Mr. Shuster's administration, there had been no interference or hostility on the part of England. Russia, on the other hand, seems to have opposed him, either openly or secretly,<sup>9</sup> from the very beginning.

At the time the difficulty with M. Mornard was being settled, another question of more importance came up. On July 6, the Mejlis authorized Mr. Shuster to appoint an organizer for a Treasury gendarmerie of 10,000 men; he immediately offered the position to Major Stokes,<sup>10</sup> a British subject and an officer in the Indian army, who had been a military attaché at the British Legation in Persia for several years. Major Stokes knew the country

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Hearst's Magazine, April, 1912, p. 2050.

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Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 3 [Cd. 6104] CXXII, p. 82, No. 159; p. 83, No. 164; p. 93, No. 185.

9

Summaries of attitude of newspapers in Current Literature, January, 1912, pp. 15, 16.

10

Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 3 [Cd. 6104] CXXII, pp. 82-83, No. 161. Annual Register, part I, p. 401.



thoroly and was well acquainted with the language. He was willing to accept the position provided the British Government would allow him to resign his post.

It was on July 7, that Sir George Barclay, the British Minister at Teheran, informed Sir Edward Grey of Mr. Shuster's desire to secure Major Stokes' services. On July 10, Sir Edward instructed Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to ask the views of the Russian Government on the appointment. <sup>11</sup> The reply <sup>12</sup> was that the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs could see no objection to the gendarmerie, but if it were necessary for the organization to be under the command of a single officer, it would be better to select that officer from among the minor Powers; but if the command could be split, he thought that the posts might be filled by a Russian and a British officer respectively. Mr. Shuster, however, insisted that Major Stokes was the best man available for the position, and Sir George Barclay felt sure that a Russian in addition to a British officer, would not be accepted by the Persian Government except under compulsion. <sup>13</sup> Finally, on July 21, Sir Edward Grey sent the following telegram to the Minister at Teheran: <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 3 [Cd. 6104]  
 CXXII, p. 84, No. 167.

<sup>12</sup>  
Ibid., p. 84, No. 168.

<sup>13</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 86-87, No. 178.

<sup>14</sup>  
Ibid., p. 100, No. 208.



"Before Major Stokes accepts command he will have to resign his commission in the Indian army.

"You may tell Treasurer-General this."

From this communication it would seem that at that time Sir Edward had no special objection to the appointment of Major Stokes even if Russia had made a contrary suggestion. But his consent seemed to be given somewhat reluctantly, even at this time. In the debate on Persian affairs on November 27, 1911, he explained that he afterward learned that Major Stokes had strong anti-<sup>15</sup> Russian feelings.

A few days after this note had been sent, the Russian Government began to fear that Major Stokes, in the capacity of commander of the gendarmerie, might have to take part in military operations in Persia, and perhaps against Russia. Sir Edward Grey agreed that it was undesirable for him to engage in military operations.<sup>16</sup> Russia went further than simply to protest; she wanted<sup>17</sup> some appointment to counterbalance that of Major Stokes.

Because of the Russian objection which developed, Sir<sup>18</sup> Edward Grey, on August 1, assumed a different attitude; he not only said that Major Stokes would have to resign his commission, but he complained that the appointment had been made irrespective

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<sup>15</sup>  
Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Commons, XXXII, 154.

<sup>16</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 3 [Cd. 6104] CXXII, p. 108, No. 231.

<sup>17</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 109-110, No. 235.

<sup>18</sup>  
Ibid., p. 119, No. 249.



of the wishes of the British Government, "who would have preferred to have been first consulted in the matter," and pointed out the awkward situation which might result if there were any active military operations. Before long he held that Major Stokes ought not to be employed in Northern Persia, and said Russia had a right to object.<sup>19</sup> On August 18, Sir Edward said he would not accept the resignation.<sup>20</sup> The matter did not come up prominently again until October 9,<sup>21</sup> when the British Foreign Secretary telegraphed that Major Stokes' appointment could not be approved unless the Russian Government was satisfied; finally, on November 16, the resignation was flatly refused.<sup>22</sup> In giving this refusal, Sir Edward Grey finally bowed to the demands of Russia, even after he had said, or at least broadly implied, that this British officer could accept the position if he resigned his commission in the British army.

The next episode which aroused British and Russian displeasure was the appointment of British subjects to Treasury positions at Ispahan, Shiraz, and Tabriz. There was not much objection to the appointment of Mr. Haycock at Ispahan and Mr. Schindler at Shiraz, since the former city was on the border of the Russian sphere and the latter was in the neutral zone.<sup>23</sup> But when Mr.

19  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 3 [Cd. 6105]  
 CXXII, p. 124, No. 254.

20  
Ibid., p. 138, No. 291.

21  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4 [Cd. 61-5]  
 CXXII, p. 7, No. 21.

22  
Ibid., p. 48, No. 118.

23  
Ibid., p. 31, No. 68; p. 33, No. 77.



Lecoffre was appointed at Tabriz, Sir Edward Grey immediately telegraphed that Russia would object, and that such an appointment<sup>24</sup> "would be contrary to the convention of 1907." In a dispatch, dated November 10, he remarked that "it is probable that, if Shuster were to coöperate with the Russian Legation instead of working against it, he would not find it obstructive."<sup>25</sup> Four days later he telegraphed to Mr. O'Beirne,<sup>26</sup> the Chargé d'Affairs at St. Petersburg, suggesting that the Russian Government "formulate their complaints against Shuster and make a formal demand respecting them."

A month before this last suggestion was made by Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Shuster had gotten into trouble with the Russian Consul-General over some property belonging to Shua-es-Sultaneh, a prince of the royal house.<sup>27</sup> The Mejlis had ordered the property seized, and Mr. Shuster sent a small body of gendarmerie to take possession, after he had notified the British and Russian Legations of his intentions. They had made no protest. But after the Treasury force had taken possession, the Russian Consul-General came with

24  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105]  
 CXXII, p. 35, No. 82.

25  
Ibid., p. 40, No. 95.

26  
Ibid., p. 45, No. 109. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Commons, XXXII, 154-155.

27  
 An account of this affair may be found in "Shuster's Own Story", Hearst's Magazine, April, 1912, pp. 2055-2056. Fortnightly Review, March, 1912, pp. 421-422; Annual Register, 1911, part I, p. 401.



some Russian guards and drove out the Persian detachment. The next day, Mr. Shuster sent a larger force of one hundred men under two Americans, who again took possession of the estate. Again the Russian Consul-General appeared on the scene and objected. The reason given for his interference was that the property had been mortgaged to Russian subjects and that it was his duty to protect Russian interests. The Russian Government demanded an apology for this insult, as they considered it, and asked for the withdrawal of the Treasury gendarmerie.<sup>28</sup> The Russian demand does not appear to be well founded; it seems to have been only an excuse for the presentation of demands, the compliance with which would be a humiliation to Persia. In the first place, the seizure of the property by Mr. Shuster's force occurred on October 9 and 10, but the Russian formal protest and demand for an apology was not made until November 2, almost a month later. Further, Sir Edward Grey, in his speech before the House of Commons on November 27, said that as long as England was not interested, he would not enter "into the merits of that dispute."<sup>29</sup> In his dispatch to Mr. O'Beirne on November 14, he said: "Russian complaints against Shuster's action, as reported in your telegram of yesterday, seem to be better founded than dispute about Shua-es-Sultaneh's property, as regards which I am inclined, judging from the version of facts in my possession, to consider that there has been some misunderstanding."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>  
 CXXII, pp. <sup>Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd.6105]</sup>  
 32-33, No. 76.

<sup>29</sup>  
 Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, XXXII, 155.

<sup>30</sup>  
 CXXII, p. 45, <sup>Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd.6105]</sup>  
 No. 109.



Sir Edward considered Mr. Shuster's appointment of Mr. Lecoffre as Treasury agent at Tabriz more objectionable than the seizure of the Prince's property. Sidney Low<sup>31</sup> has said that the story of the Russian Bank's lien on Shua-es-Sultaneh's property was a fiction invented by the Russian Legation or the Russian Consulate-General in Teheran, and the British Foreign Office accepted it. "Prince Shua, before he left the country after his brother's expulsion, executed a will according to the Persian custom, which showed that the Russian Bank had no claim upon his estate." Mr. Low's information may be questioned, but even if it is not reliable, the contrasting attitudes of the British and Russian Governments make the whole affair seem questionable. The fact that Sir Edward Grey did not put much stock in the Russian side of it makes his policy the more open to criticism. The episode was used as one of the reasons for Russia's first ultimatum to Persia.

Russia sent her ultimatum to Persia on November 2, demanding an apology for the seizure of the Persian Prince's property and the alleged insult to the Russian Consul-General; the withdrawal of the Treasury gendarmerie was also asked. The apology must be made by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs in full uniform. The Persian Government would not comply with these demands; on November 10, Russia gave the Persians forty-eight hours to give a satisfactory reply.<sup>32</sup> But no apology was made so Russia, on November 18,

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<sup>31</sup>

Fortnightly Review, March, 1912, p. 422.

<sup>32</sup>

Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII, p. 39, No. 93.



sent troops into Persia. Finally, on November 24, 1911, the Persian Minister apologized, having been pressed to do so by the British Government.<sup>33</sup>

While these events were taking place, Mr. Shuster had further incurred the displeasure of the Russian Government, who were preparing additional demands against Persia. Sir Edward Grey encouraged Russia to demand the dismissal of Mr. Shuster because he had the audacity to defy the pleasure of the two Governments, who considered their rights supreme in Persia, in the appointment of Treasury agents. Mr. Shuster had thus far not heeded the protests raised by the two Powers, especially those of Russia, against the appointment of Mr. Lecoffre at Tabriz. Furthermore, on October 21, Mr. Shuster, in a letter to the London Times had severely criticised Russia, and at the same time had scored England, but not so thoroly as he had Russia.<sup>34</sup> Later this letter had been printed in the Persian language in pamphlet form and scattered broadcast thruout Persia. It was for these two reasons that Russia prepared her new demands.

The Russian Government held Mr. Shuster responsible for the circulation of this pamphlet; they stated that he had caused it to be printed and circulated.<sup>35</sup> Sir Edward Grey took a very similar

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Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII, p. 71, No. 163.

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See London Times, October 21, November 9, 10.

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Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4 [Cd. 6105] CXXII, pp. 74-77, No. 170; p. 71, No. 163; p. 69, No. 159. Hearst's Magazine, May, 1912, pp. 2237, 2238.



view, stating that as an American citizen Mr. Shuster had a right to do it but as an official of Persia he did not. He said: "The situation was an impossible one.... The situation is impossible if you have the official of one Government making public attacks on another Government, especially when it is an essential condition, and must be an essential condition, of Persian independence."<sup>36</sup> It is only fair to state Mr. Shuster's side of the story. He denied having had the pamphlet printed, and said the charge was simply false. "It was well known to be false,--so well known, in fact, that a newspaper in Teheran, the Tamadun, which did print it and circulate it, publicly admitted the fact the minute they heard that I was charged by Russia with having done so."<sup>37</sup> Lord Curzon doubted if the statement published in the London Times was officially issued either by Mr. Shuster or the Persian Government to the press of that country.<sup>38</sup> While it is hardly probable that Mr. Shuster "caused" the pamphlet to be printed and distributed, it seems to have been done with his knowledge.<sup>39</sup>

The second Russian ultimatum was presented to the Persian Government on November 29, 1911. The demands were three:<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>  
Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Commons, CXXII, 156;  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII, p. 80, No. 180.

<sup>37</sup>  
Hearst's Magazine, May, 1912, p. 2238.

<sup>38</sup>  
Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Lords, X, 682-683.

<sup>39</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105]  
CXXII, p. 88, No. 207.

<sup>40</sup>  
Ibid., p. 81, No. 182, Enclosure.



(1) that Mr. Shuster and Mr. Lecoffre should be dismissed; (2) that the Persian Government should in its appointment of foreign advisers consult the British and Russian Legations; and (3) that Persia should pay an indemnity equal to the expenses of the military expedition sent to Persia. Persia was given but forty-eight hours to reply. The Cabinet, which has been accused of being Russophile, favored submission to the Russian terms; but the Mejlis would not agree to terms which they considered disgraceful and humiliating. On December 1, an hour before noon, when the Persian reply was due, a decision had not been reached. A dramatic scene took place when an aged priest arose and said: "It may be the will of Allah that our liberty and our sovereignty shall be taken from us by force, but let us not sign them away with our own hands!"<sup>41</sup> Similar brief speeches were made; the vote was taken and the demands were rejected by a vote that was almost unanimous. There were only six votes in favor of accepting the demands.<sup>42</sup>

This ultimatum was not entirely a Russian demand; the British Government was as much responsible for it as the Government of the Czar. In dispatches thruout November, Sir Edward Grey had said that he would not object to the demand for Mr. Shuster's removal, nor could he see that the demand respecting the employment of foreigners was objectionable. In short, the terms of the Russian ultimatum had been submitted to Sir Edward before it was sent to

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Hearst's Magazine, May, 1912, p. 2239.

42

Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII, pp. 91-93, No. 216.



Persia, and he had made no objection except in two details--he objected to the indemnity because Persia was short of money, and he hoped that Russia would not allow the restoration of the deposed<sup>43</sup> Shah.

In the House of Commons on December 14, Sir Edward Grey discussed these demands and gave his stand with regard to them and the reasons for his attitude. The appointment of British subjects at Ispahan, Shiraz and Tabriz had first aroused him. While the official for Ispahan might meet with no objection from Russia, the situation at Tabriz was different.<sup>44</sup> He explained: "Tabriz is close to the Russian frontier, and as soon as I heard of that, and before the Russian Government had said a word about it, and for all I know before they knew of it, I telegraphed to our Minister at Teheran and pointed out to him that this sort of thing would not do, that it was absolutely contrary to the Anglo-Russian Agreement." The published dispatches seem to bear out this statement. Then on November 6, before hearing from the Russian Government, he telegraphed to Teheran,<sup>45</sup> and informed his Minister there that the appointment of Mr. Lecoffre was objectionable and instructed him to point out to Mr. Shuster the probable consequences of such an act. Mr. Shuster did not take the advice; for that reason, Sir Edward Grey was not opposed to his dismissal from office.

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<sup>43</sup> Nineteenth Century and After, January, 1912, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, XXXII, 2606-2603.

<sup>45</sup> Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII, p. 35, No. 82.



The British Foreign Secretary explained that the second demand, namely, that Persia should appoint no foreign advisers without British and Russian consent, was not an interference with Persia's independence.<sup>46</sup> It would be interfering if Russia demanded Anglo-Russian approval of Persian officials appointed to the Persian Government. He said: "It does not touch the appointment of Persian officials; it does touch, no doubt, the appointment of foreign officials. Persia is weak and disorganized, and the very fact that she requires foreign advisers shows that her independence is not that same independence which can do without leaning on some-<sup>47</sup> one else." On November 24, Sir Edward Grey had notified Sir George Buchanan that the demand was unobjectionable.<sup>48</sup>

The third demand, that Persia pay an indemnity did not meet with Sir Edward's approval, because, he said, "at the present moment Persia cannot pay anything."<sup>49</sup> Again, the payment of an indemnity by Persia at that time would be averse to British trade interests. If Persia paid an indemnity she would be short of money and unable to protect the southern trade routes thru lack of funds. It is apparent that his opposition to this third demand was not actuated by any altruistic motives.

46  
Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Commons, XXXII, 2603-2604.

47  
Ibid., 2603.

48  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd.6105] CXXII, p. 73, No. 168.

49  
Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, XXXII, 2604.



While Sir Edward Grey was willing to see these demands presented to Persia, and allow Russian troops to invade Iran to enforce the demands, he desired an explicit understanding with Russia regarding the future. Therefore, he put his ideas on record in the following six points, which were forwarded to the Russian Government:

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"1. I recognize that the outcome of the present situation must be to secure a Persian Government that will not disregard the special interests of Great Britain and Russia respectively and will conform to the principles of the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

"2. The restoration of the ex-Shah cannot be essential to this object. It will give rise to the apprehension of vindictive measures on his part against those in Persia, who were instrumental in expelling him, and it would not be consistent with our dignity to recognize him now after his recent disregard of warnings given by both Governments not to return. I trust, therefore, the Russian Government will not add to the embarrassment of the situation by allowing his restoration to be the outcome of the present crisis.

"3. It is most important that Mr. Shuster shall be succeeded without delay by some foreign financial adviser who is acceptable to both Great Britain and Russia.

"4. The British and Russian Governments should, when the Russian demands have been conceded, coöperate in facilitating measures such as a loan necessary to prevent chaos and to enable

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Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, XXXII, 2605-2606.  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII, pp.  
 103-105, No. 253.



the Persian Government to restore order.

"5. The exaction of an indemnity by Russia would materially interfere with this object, and I trust the Russian Government will, after the crisis is over, find some way of avoiding this difficulty.

"6. It is understood that military measures and the occupation of Persian territory by Russia now in progress, are provisional and not permanent and will cease when the Russian demands have been complied with, and order in Northern Persia is re-established."

The Russian Government gave him no immediate satisfaction on all six of these points, but the provisions seem to have been followed to some extent. The Persian Government, early in 1912, was forced to recognize the provisions of the Anglo-Russian Agreement.<sup>51</sup> Russia would not agree to oppose the restoration of the ex-Shah,<sup>52</sup> but as he did not come into power again there was no cause for a misunderstanding. Mr. Shuster was successfully expelled and England and Russia agreed upon M. Mornard as financial adviser.<sup>53</sup> Russia still pressed Persia for an indemnity, in spite of Sir Edward Grey's protest, and Persia finally agreed to the Russian terms.<sup>54</sup>

51  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII,  
p. 86, No. 211; p. 90, No. 220; p. 99, No. 243.

52  
Ibid., p. 108, Enclosure 2 in No. 257.

53  
Murray, The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey, 1906-1914, 98.

54  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105]  
CXXII, p. 139, No. 328.



Finally, the Russian troops were never entirely withdrawn from Persia; there were withdrawals from some places, but Russia still had an army occupying a large part of Northern Persia when the Great War broke out. Sir Edward Grey protested against their presence in Persia and pleaded for their withdrawal time and time again, but to no avail. Sir Edward went no further, however, than to protest.

From the time that the Russian demands were rejected by the Mejlis on December 1, 1911, until the beginning of the new year, many changes took place in Persia. The Mejlis still continued to meet. Russian troops penetrated further and further into Persian territory.<sup>55</sup> On December 4, Mr. Shuster tried to remedy matters by revoking the appointments of Messrs. Lecoffre, Haycock and Schindler. Persia attempted to influence Russia to modify the demands,<sup>57</sup> but with no success. On December 18, an attempt was made to get the Mejlis to agree to proposals empowering the Cabinet to settle the dispute with Russia but the Mejlis refused.<sup>58</sup> Three days later, however, the assembly appointed a committee to assist the Cabinet in the settlement and no further reference of the affair was to be made to Parliament. The next day, the Persian Government verbally accepted the Russian demands; the Russian

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Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105]  
 CXXII, p. 94, No. 219; p. 95, No. 222; p. 97, No. 230.

56  
Ibid., p. 95, No. 225.

57  
Ibid., p. 96, No. 229; p. 109, No. 259.

58  
Ibid., p. 133, No. 306.



Minister at Teheran declared that the reply was acceptable to his Government.<sup>59</sup> The same day the Mejlis was dissolved by the Regent.

The Shuster affair called forth considerable comment throughout the world. It is interesting to note the reactions of the different countries. In the Russian papers, Mr. Shuster was referred to as an "American freebooter," and an "insolent American adventurer in a pea-jacket and a paper collar."<sup>60</sup> The Persians seem to have trusted him, and his influence over the Mejlis was remarkable. Americans admired the courage he displayed in opposing Russia's demands. In England, Mr. Shuster had many friends and admirers. Mr. Sidney Low said his "real crime in the eyes of Russia was that he was too energetic in the discharge of his duties, and was getting the Persian finances and administration into order inconveniently fast."<sup>61</sup> After his expulsion from Persia, Mr. Shuster visited England and was warmly received. He made a good impression there; even the London Times had a good word for him.

The policy Sir Edward Grey pursued during the time Mr. Shuster was Treasurer-General in Persia, was severely criticised on all sides. The fact that he supported the Russian ultimatum of November 29, was criticised by many. The following statement from

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Sessional Papers, 1912 -1913, Persia No. 4, [Cd. 6105] CXXII, p. 135, No. 314; p. 136, No. 317; p. 139, No. 329.

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From quotations, one of which is given in Review of Reviews, January, 1912, p. 50, and the other read in debate in the Commons-Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Commons, XXXII, 95.

61

Fortnightly Review, March, 1912, p. 420.



62

the London Economist makes that point: "The discovery that Sir Edward Grey on his own avowal was actually supporting the Russian ultimatum to Persia--in open violation of the Anglo-Russian Agreement as well as the obvious detriment of British and Indian interests--gave an ugly shock to public opinion." Mr. Philip Morrell voiced the same sentiment in an article in the Nineteenth Century and After.<sup>63</sup> The London Nation was hostile and extremely critical toward the Government's policy of 1911.

Many of the speeches made in Parliament on November 27,<sup>64</sup> and December 14, when the Government's foreign policy was discussed, were critical and bitter. The Earl of Ronaldshay said: "When I view the policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to Persia during recent years, I cannot think that its action has been particularly happy."<sup>65</sup> Lord Curzon was opposed to the Government's stand in the Shuster affair,<sup>66</sup> he was afraid the independence of Persia was not being protected, and he said Russia had no just reason for sending the second ultimatum. Mr. Keir Hardie said that England and Russia had agreed to coöperate in maintaining the independence and integrity of Persia, but "from then up till now the chief object of both countries seems to have been to devise ways

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<sup>62</sup>  
Article from the Economist in Living Age, January, 13, 1912, p. 116.

<sup>63</sup>  
Nineteenth Century and After, January, 1912, p. 40.

<sup>64</sup>  
Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Commons, XXXII, 43-165; 2543-2662.

<sup>65</sup>  
Ibid., 113.

<sup>66</sup>  
Ibid., Lords, X, 677-690.



and means as well as excuses for invasions of Persian territory and the destruction of the powers of its rulers." <sup>67</sup> Some speakers criticised the landing and the use of British troops in South Persia during 1910 and 1911.

Those who defended Sir Edward Grey's Persian policy usually viewed it in connection with his foreign policy in general. Then it could be justified. Sir Henry Dalziel said: "He, at all events, has something to lay to his claim, and which I think ought to commend him to his Radical supporters: that during his period of office he has kept us out of war, and, I believe, maintained the dignity and the power of this country." <sup>68</sup> In an editorial, the Outlook <sup>69</sup> pointed out that the British policy was not dictated by antagonism to Mr. Shuster, but rather by a desire to keep the friendship of her ally, Russia, at a time "when the attitude of Germany made England desirous of keeping all her friends in Europe." Sir Edward Grey, himself, admitted that Mr. Shuster was a man of ability and good intentions, but that he lacked tact. Nearly all who criticised the administration of the Treasurer-General praised his honesty, integrity and zeal, but criticised him for the way in which he refused to recognize Anglo-Russian interests in Persia.

Sir Edward Grey's "weak policy" of 1911, in Persia was

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<sup>67</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, XXXII, 132.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>69</sup> Outlook, December 16, 1911, p. 899.



closely connected with his whole foreign policy; it was a part of his entire policy; it was European as well as Asiatic. Mr. Ponsonby made a statement <sup>70</sup> which throws some light on the underlying cause of the English Government's policy during this period. He said: "We find ourselves in Persia submitting tamely to the dictation of the Russian Government. The man in the street sees Russian troops being poured into Persia, and understands that we make no protest. He sees Italy seize Tripoli at forty-eight hour's notice, and we make no protest. He hears of French troops entering Fez, and we make no protest. But immediately a German man-of-war goes to Agadir we are told that we are on the eve of a very great crisis." He explained that the principle at the bottom of all this was the attempt to keep the balance of power.

It was in 1911, that the Agadir incident occurred and in this crisis England supported France against Germany. The dispute lasted from July until November, the time being practically the same as the period of opposition to Mr. Shuster in Persia. Russia had no part in this affair; she did not have to fear Germany as did England and France; her hands were free to exert pressure in Persian affairs.

Furthermore, Russia had become more friendly toward Germany in 1910 and 1911, so it was to England's advantage, as far as the situation in Europe was concerned, to try to keep on good terms with the Czar. If England lost the good will of Russia, the

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latter could easily ally herself with Germany. England feared that very thing might happen, so in the Morocco crisis the British Government had to yield somewhat to Russia in order to keep her from going over to the side of Germany.

The British Government's fear in this instance was well-founded. In November, 1910, Czar Nicholas visited the Kaiser at Potsdam. Here the two monarchs exchanged views on affairs and it was thought that they arranged an agreement. This meeting weakened the Triple Entente, and as a result of it Germany began to threaten the British supremacy on the Persian Gulf. This rapprochement was supplemented by the Agreement relating to Persia signed by Germany and Russia at St. Petersburg, August 19, 1911. In this document, Germany agreed not to seek concessions in the Russian sphere of influence in Persia; on her part, Russia agreed to try to obtain a concession from the Persian Government for the construction of a railroad from Teheran to Khanikin, which was to connect with a branch of the Bagdad Railway. This concession must be obtained by Russia within two years after the Sadijeh-Khanikin branch of the Bagdad Railway was completed. If the Persian concession was not secured in this time, Russia should renounce the right to such a concession and the German Government should have "the right to solicit on its part the concession of said line." There were minor stipulations concerning duties, customs, finance, and other regulations. This Agreement not only brought Russia and Germany more



closely together, but it gave Germany an entering wedge in Persian affairs. No wonder England did not want to provoke Russia in the Morocco crisis in which the British were so openly hostile toward Germany. There was real danger of a combination by Germany and Russia which might be detrimental to Great Britain.

Sir Edward Grey felt the gravity of the situation. On January 20, 1912, in a speech to his constituents, <sup>72</sup> he replied to some of the criticisms of those who wanted intervention in Central Asia and differences with Russia. By such an act, he said, "you are going to incur, not only the very heavy naval expenditure which we have all ready, but a vastly increased military expenditure as well." If England were to have differences with Russia, she would incur the hostility of France; the alliance between France and Russia was too solid not to make both the enemies of Great Britain in case of an Anglo-Russian dispute. Sir Edward believed that such a policy, "if it were carried out, would soon leave us without a friend in Europe." Mr. Shuster ventured the view that England did not have a large enough land force to risk a stand against <sup>73</sup> Russia.

It is true that the Persian policy of the British Government during Mr. Shuster's stay in Persia does not reflect any credit on the British Foreign Secretary; but before condemning his attitude, the Persian crisis must be given its place in the larger

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72

Spectator, January 27, 1912, pp. 141-142.

73

Hearst's Magazine, June, 1912, pp. 2440-2441.



general policy of England during the year, 1911, and considered as a part of this larger policy. From Sir Edward Grey's protest against Russia's demand for an indemnity from Persia, and his repeated requests for the recall of the Russian troops, it is apparent that the situation in Persia was not satisfactory to him and not as he would have it. To retain Russia's good will and keep intact the Triple Entente, it seemed the part of wisdom to bow to Russia and help dictate terms to Persia. It is regrettable, however, that a man like Mr. Shuster, who had accomplished so much in so short a time in reforming Persian finance, should be made to suffer, simply for the convenience of Russia and Great Britain.



## Chapter V

### ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN CONTROL IN PERSIA, 1912-1914.

The first few months of 1912 were taken up for the most part in negotiations between the two Powers and Persia concerning some of the demands included in Sir Edward Grey's six points to Russia.

In the first place, a successor to Mr. Shuster had to be found. The deposed American Treasurer-General left Tengeran on January 11, 1912.<sup>1</sup> A few days earlier, M. Mornard had been appointed acting Treasurer-General, and he was spoken of by M. Sazonof as the logical man to fill the position permanently because of his business experience and his thoro knowledge of Persian affairs.<sup>2</sup> Sir George Barclay had earlier spoken of M. Mornard to Sir Edward Grey in the following fashion:<sup>3</sup> "I have always found him satisfactory, and I think that in view of his long experience of Persia and of the harmonious manner in which he has hitherto worked with the two legations, his appointment would be the most practical in the circumstances." Accordingly, Mr. Mornard was duly appointed to take the post on June 10, 1912, by a decree of the Council of

1 Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 5 [Cd. 6264] CXXII, p. 26, No. 78.

2 Ibid., p. 22, No. 66; p. 25, No. 76.

3 Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 4 [Cd. 6105] p. 101, No. 245 A.



Ministers; his contract was for five years.<sup>4</sup>

The question of a loan to Persia next came up. The two Governments were agreed that Persia needed financial assistance, and the British Government felt that it was needed immediately to restore order. Sir Edward Grey was willing to advance £ 100,000 to start with. On February 12, he instructed the British Minister at Teheran to advance the English share whenever he saw fit.<sup>5</sup> But on February 18, a joint note was sent to the Persian Government by the British and Russian Ministers stating the terms on which the British and Russian banks would advance the money.<sup>6</sup> The most important of these conditions was that the Persian Government "conform their policy henceforth to the principles of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907." The Persians hesitated; they suggested an alternate wording of their agreement to conform to the Convention and after some discussion and negotiation between the three Governments a suitable wording of Persia's submission was arrived at.<sup>7</sup> On March 20, the Persian answer was received at the British Legation, stating Persia's acquiescence quite humbly: "In order to prove their earnest desire to establish on a solid basis of friendship and confidence the relations between Persia, Great Britain,

<sup>4</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807] LXXXI, pp. 80-82, No. 170; p. 85, No. 173.

<sup>5</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 5 [Cd. 6264] CXXII, p. 68, No. 146; p. 72, No. 184; p. 81, No. 196.

<sup>6</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 86-88, No. 211.

<sup>7</sup>  
Ibid., p. 90, No. 220; p. 99, No. 243; p. 109, No. 279; p. 110, No. 282.



and Russia, the Persian Government will take care to conform their policy with the principles of the convention of 1907, and they take note of the assurances contained in the preamble of that convention.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after the Persian Government gave their satisfactory reply to the Anglo-Russian demands, the British share of the advance, £ 100,000, was paid.

During the Persian crisis of 1911, a considerable number of troops had been sent to Persia. In December of 1911, and January of 1912, the Russians had resorted to severe measures in some of the northern cities in Persia, especially Tabriz and Resht.<sup>9</sup> It was alleged that attacks had been made by the Persian populace on the Russian soldiers who were occupying those cities. A number of these Persian citizens were court-martialed and executed.<sup>10</sup> While England made no protest against the actions of the Russian troops, yet as things began to calm down, Sir Edward Grey began to urge the withdrawal of these troops.

The amount of control the British and Russian Governments had during this period over appointments was very great. When a successor to Yeprim Khan, as chief of police in Teheran, was talked of on June 7, 1912, the Regent, Nasr-ul-Mulk, consulted the Minis-

8  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 5 [Cd. 6264]  
CXXII, p. 125, No. 316.

9  
Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 5 [Cd. 6264]  
CXXII, p. 4, No. 15.

10  
Ibid., p. 6, No. 21; p. 8, No. 29; p. 17, No. 50; p. 19, No. 56.



ters at Teheran, Sir Walter Townley and M. Poklewsky, to ascertain the views of the two Governments in the matter since it was desirable that the place should be filled by a foreigner.<sup>11</sup> A Swedish officer was suggested to fill the vacancy. About two months later, Sir Walter Townley criticised the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs for not consulting the two legations before requesting the Swedish Government to furnish police officers,<sup>12</sup> and the same criticism was repeated ten days later when the Persian Government without referring the matter to the British and Russians, approached the Dutch Minister about officers to organize a small Persian<sup>13</sup> army.

On April 20, 1912, in spite of the fact that a loan of £ 200,000 had shortly before been made to Persia by the two Governments, the acting Treasurer-General made a request for a further advance, as the money on hand would be exhausted by the end of the month.<sup>14</sup> Sir Edward Grey favored another advance; the Russian Government at first refused, but later M. Sazonof favored a large loan of £ 6,000,000, but demanded a concession from Persia for the building of a railway from Julfa to Tabriz by Russia as a condition to this loan. As the Persian Government was reluctant to grant such a concession, the negotiations for a joint loan extended until

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<sup>11</sup> Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807], LXXXI, pp. 67-68, No. 148.

<sup>12</sup> Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807] LXXXI, p. 122, No. 250.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 126, No. 265.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25, No. 46.



early in 1913; Sir Edward Grey also asked for a railway concession as one of the terms for the British share, this railroad to be built from Mohammerah to Khoremabad.<sup>15</sup> In the meantime, however, Sir Edward authorized his Minister at Teheran to advance, from time to time, small amounts of from £ 6,000 to £ 10,000 to the Governor-General of Fars to be used for the maintenance of a native Persian gendarmerie for the purpose of keeping the roads and trade-routes safe and open for travel.<sup>16</sup> The Russian concession was finally signed on February 6, 1913,<sup>17</sup> and the Russian Government agreed to an advance of £ 200,000. The British were willing to do the same but Sir Edward Grey was very much surprised and chagrined at the "inequality of the treatment" given the two Powers.<sup>18</sup> He regretted very much that the Mohammerah concession had not been granted, too, "in view of the great forbearance shown by His Majesty's Government to the Persian Government."<sup>19</sup> Later Persia granted the concession.

In spite of Sir Edward Grey's coöperation with Russia in pressing demands on Russia, some of his dispatches show that he still desired to maintain the independence of Persia. In December, 1912, Captain Eckford and a party of British had been attacked by

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<sup>15</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807] LXXXI, p. 118, No. 233; p. 222, No. 433; p. 227, Nos. 450, 453; p. 251, No. 494.

<sup>16</sup>  
Ibid., p. 123, Nos. 252, 253, 254; p. 124, No. 258; p. 146, No. 295; p. 206, No. 398; p. 207, No. 401. Sessional Papers, 1914, [Cd. 7053] CI, 741.

<sup>17</sup>  
Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807] LXXI, p. 300, No. 554; p. 301, No. 557; p. 308, No. 566.

<sup>18</sup>  
Ibid., p. 308, No. 567; p. 309, Nos. 570, 571.

<sup>19</sup>  
Ibid., p. 301, No. 557.



Persian tribesmen and the Captain had been killed. Sir Walter Tounley had recommended that in case the Persian Government was unable to punish the culprits an expedition of British troops should be sent to southern Persia to exact reparation. Sir Edward replied that the plan was open to grave objections. In his reply on January 11, 1913, he said: "I am strongly opposed to such a policy. I do not think there is sufficient ground at present for giving up hope of maintaining the independence of Persia. It would, I think, be more in accordance both with our interests as well as with undertakings which have been given, to direct all our efforts towards establishing a strong Government in Persia, and assisting the gendarmerie to perform its duties in a really efficient manner." <sup>20</sup>

In September, 1912, when Sir Edward Grey and M. Sazonof met at Balmoral Castle, <sup>21</sup> the former pointed out the fact that the Russian sphere of influence was much larger than the British sphere, and complained that the people of England felt that the changes since the Anglo-Russian Convention had been to their disadvantage. He pointed out the predominance of Russian influence in northern Persia, and for that reason England should be sure of the Russian attitude toward the rest of the country. Sir Edward trusted the attitude of M. Poklewsky in Persian affairs. M. Sazonof assured him that whatever Russian Minister was at Teheran, his instructions

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<sup>20</sup>  
 Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807] LXXXI, pp. 236-237,  
 Nos. 471, 472, 473; p. 291, No. 527.

<sup>21</sup>  
 Ibid., p. 173, No. 335.



would always be the same. Altho it was generally expected that the Convention of 1907 would be revised at this meeting, nothing apparently was done about it. In spite of Sir Edward Grey's protest, the Russian and British spheres remained the same.

Sir Edward Grey's attitude in Persian affairs during the years 1912-1914 is nowhere better summed up in his dispatches than in a few sent in November 1912. In a telegraphic dispatch to Sir George Buchanan dated November 20, he said:

"The only justification for the action which we have taken with a view to the appointment of Saad-ed-Dowleh as Prime Minister is the fact that money is absolutely necessary to the Persian Government, and that no other appointment appears to be possible which will enable the two Governments to make an advance to be followed by a larger loan by financiers.

"The concession for the Julfa Railway is, we gather, required by the Russian Government as a condition prior to the grant of any advance. His Majesty's Government expect that the concession for the Mohammerah Railway will at the same time be given to this country.

"If, therefore, these two concessions are granted by Saad, I understand that the Russian and British Governments will either guarantee or themselves make an advance up to £ 1,000,000, subject to proper conditions, for certain specified purposes.

"The two Governments should also, I think, support Saad's views as to the convocation of a Mejlis and the foundation of a Senate [which Sir Walter Townley had said the Persian politicians favored].

"I wish to know whether the above views are fully shared by the Russian Government. If so, we will instruct His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris to join with his Russian colleague in requesting the Regent to appoint Saad-ed-Dowleh Prime Minister."

After receiving evasive replies from the Russian Foreign Minister, Sir Edward began to get out of patience with the Russian



methods. On November 25, he telegraphed the following spirited note  
 to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg:<sup>23</sup>

"I trust that Minister for Foreign Affairs fully realizes that it is impossible for anyone to carry on the Government unless some funds are at once supplied to him for essential purposes of creating a stable administration and for reëstablishing order in the provinces. These are absolutely necessary preliminaries to a larger loan--we could not press for the appointment of any one as Prime Minister unless we could be assure him that the immediate wants of the Treasury would be met, under, of course, proper safeguards, and I much fear that the general chaotic situation in Persia will be aggravated if the present deplorable condition of affairs is allowed to continue. I earnestly trust that the Russian Government will find some means of meeting, in the way his Majesty's Government have proposed, the pressing exigencies of a disquieting situation."

In spite of Sir Edward Grey's favorable attitude toward Persian independence, he had found it necessary thruout 1911, and 1912, to keep British forces in Persia because of the state of anarchy in the south. Order was maintained in the Gulf ports by the presence there of the British East Indian squadron; it had also been necessary to land Indian troops at Lingah to protect the Consulate and British lives and property. Later a force of blue-jackets had to be landed at Bushire to help fight the rebels who were besieging the town. A detachment of the Central India Horse<sup>24</sup> was also stationed at Shiraz. In 1913, the Persian gendarmerie was strengthened and better organized by Swedish officers; so in April, the British Indian troops were withdrawn from Shiraz and

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Sessional Papers, 1913 [Cd. 6807] LXXXI, p. 221, No.430.

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Annual Register, 1913, part I, p. 392. Sessional Papers, 1912-1913, Persia No. 5 [Cd. 6264] CXXII, p. 3, No. 9, p. 7, No. 27.

1870  
The following is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the [Company Name] on the [Date] at [Location].

[Faint, illegible text follows, likely a list of names and titles.]

[Faint, illegible text, possibly a continuation of the list or a separate section of the document.]

[Faint, illegible text, possibly a signature block or a concluding statement.]

25

replaced by a gendarmerie detachment. The gendarmerie force was used in subduing the Boer Ahmadi rebels who were responsible for the murder of Captain Eckford. These troops were used in patrolling the roads and dealing with the robber bands that infested them. The trade-routes were made so much more safe that British trade increased greatly in 1913 and 1914.<sup>26</sup> The successful organization of this native gendarmerie was, to a great extent, due to the efforts of Sir Edward Grey in pushing the Anglo-Russian loan of 1913, and advancing smaller amounts from time to time for the organization of this force.

Thus from 1912 to 1914, Russia and Great Britain exerted a great deal of influence in Persia, and actually controlled affairs to a greater or less degree. This Anglo-Russian control was both political and military. The British policy, however, was much more liberal than the Russian. Sir Edward Grey wished to respect Persian independence, in a limited sense at least, and favored an advance of money at intervals in order to enable Persia to restore order and strengthen her Government. He did not keep British troops in South Persia any longer than was necessary and continually requested Russia to withdraw hers.

By the time the Great European War broke out in 1914, Persia had restored order somewhat under British and Russian influence.<sup>27</sup> But there was still much to be done. There were, how-

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Annual Register, 1913, part I, pp. 390-391.

26

Annual Register, 1914, part I, p. 402.

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For conditions in Persia during this period, see an article by M. Philips Price, "Some Aspects of the Persian Question", in Contemporary Review, April, 1913, pp. 510-518; also an editorial in the Independent, May 11, 1914, p. 243.



ever, no aggressive moves on the part of the two Powers after the events of the Shuster episode and the arrangements immediately following. On July 21, 1914, Ahmad Mirza, having reached his sixteenth year and having become of age according to the Persian law, was crowned and took the oath of fidelity to the Constitution. He was immediately recognized by the British and Russian Governments. Within the next few days, affairs in Europe had come to a crisis; the Great European War claimed the attention of the diplomats, so Persia was left in the background for a time.



## CONCLUSION

Sir Edward Grey's Persian policy has been the object of bitter disapproval at the hands of many critics, as Professor Edward G. Browne, who could see nothing in the Anglo-Russian Agreement but an arbitrary division of Persia by two outside powers who had no right, either moral or political, to make such a partition. To this class of critics the Convention of 1907 was a cheat and a delusion, and the policy pursued by the two Powers after the signing of the Agreement until 1914 was detrimental to the independence and integrity of Persia, which Sir Edward Grey and M. Isvolsky had pledged to respect. Another group stoutly defended the policy of the British Foreign Secretary, and some, as Professor Gilbert Murray, were outspoken in its praise. To judge impartially of the merits and the demerits of Sir Edward's conduct of Persian affairs is rather difficult.

In the first place the Anglo-Russian Agreement fell far short of being the success it was hoped it would be, -at least so far as England was concerned. At the most, it only secured Russia's half-hearted friendship; the good feeling between the two nations was not deep and lasting. The difference in the national outlook of the two countries could not permit that; this difference is shown by Sir Edward Grey's restrained policy in Persia and the aggressive policy of Russia. Sir Edward himself admitted that the Agreement had not been absolutely fair, when he complained that Russia had received a much larger sphere than England; this admission demonstrated that he had overemphasized the strategic value of the pact at the time it was signed. Russia's interpretation of



the Agreement had opened his eyes, we may believe, to the fact that the Government of the Czar was pursuing an aggressive policy with England's approval, or, at least, forbearance.

Sir Edward Grey's approval of the Russian demands in 1911 lost for him most of the good will the Persians still reposed in him as their champion against the power of Russia, and alienated from the group of his admirers a large number of liberal-minded people, not only in England, but in America as well. We must remember, however, that Sir Edward was in a very difficult position in 1911; the Morocco crisis developed at the same time. On account of the agreement between Russia and Germany, the former had to be treated with some deference and tact.

Yet, while coöperating with Russia in the expulsion of Mr. Shuster, Sir Edward had, both before and after that crisis, consistently protested against the large number of Russian troops in Northern Persia. His use of English troops in Persia was liberal when compared with the conduct of the Russian forces. If intervention can in any case be justified, Sir Edward's use of the British troops in South Persia was above reproach, for they were withdrawn as soon as order was restored. The British Secretary's attitude toward the Persian Constitution was liberal; he favored the meetings of the Mejlis. He was always ready to advance a loan to Persia when the need was great; that cannot be said of Russia.

It is hard to believe that Sir Edward Grey aimed to deprive Persia of her independence when he negotiated the Anglo-Russian Agreement; he really meant to respect the integrity and



independence of Persia as the Convention purported to do. But European complications arose, and in his attempt to maintain the balance of power, to keep the Triple Entente intact, and retain the friendship of Russia, Sir Edward had to sacrifice his ideals with regard to Persian affairs. He could not risk a misunderstanding or a war with the Government of the Czar. Sir Edward's Persian policy during 1911 and 1912 was termed a "weak policy" more than once, but viewed in the light of subsequent events it would seem that he made the right decision. The European War proved the value of holding the Triple Entente together. Altho Russia's part in the War was a failure, the hordes that she put in the field engaged large forces of the Central Powers that would otherwise have been thrown against the Allies in the West. Altho there were factors, other than the entente between Great Britain, France and Russia, that would have caused Russia to cast her lot with the Allies, the fact that England and Russia knew how to coöperate cannot be disregarded. Perhaps Russia's friendship was worth the price. Men with high ideals in world affairs have pointed out the international immorality of Sir Edward Grey's Persian policy, but viewed according to the standards of the diplomacy of the period and the bargaining since the Great War, his attitude cannot be severely criticised.



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