

CENTRAL ASIA

**Political Ascendancy
and Diplomatic Pulls
(An Imperial Era)**

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FORWARD

Hutten-beck, In "Great Game in the pamirs" refers to the concept of natural boundaries and asserts that stability in the region is not possible if the great powers do not establish their boundaries, and any weak area or a state between the powers will be a source of trouble and instability.

The expansionist policy of the colonial powers in Asia resulted in the establishment of Great India Colony by the British Imperialism and the control of Central Asian Khanates by the Zarists, the small, principality of Moscovy expanded in to Colossal powers in the North, with an eye on warm seas. The expansion towards the south, obviously was a great concern for the British Imperialistic authorities in India. Therefore in order to safeguard the colonial interests the British has a vigilant eye on the Northern Frontiers of India. Missions after mission were deputed, some openly and some very secretly to analyse the developments in the region. The motivating factor was their colonial interest. The British imperialism was under dures, especially after the rise of Napoleon in France. However the two colonial giants, had third foe also, the Chinese factor.

The western powers were intrigued by the Chinese treatment of foreigners; though they were fascinated also, and had found the imperial Chinese treatment of foreigners bizarre. The structure of Chinese diplomacy was partly a defense mechanism; which worked well during the heydays of colonial imperialistic designs in Asia. Western European powers expanded considerably and systematic efforts were made to make in roads into the Chinese markets, and the Chinese did not oblige them. The ever growing appetite of the colonialists who were eager to push their "Way in the china", but the Chin'g rulers made every effort to deny them any foot hold. British advances towards North and China fought for her control over Xinjiang province.

Western Europe was fastly growing. Its economy was set to control the markets, and the merchants were in full control of South and South East Asian sea routes. On the other hand, Russia still had the Tartar

hangover, and was expecting any turning point, if stringent measures were not adopted for reformation within and territorial expansion in the south and south east. As already referred to, China watched every movement of the British missions in Xinjiang with suspicion, and as such were vigilant to counter any moves, which could weaken the position of China in Central Asia in general and Xinjiang in particular. The political missions with the cloak of merchants, were frustrated and even some of them were killed in a cold blood. With this background Triangular contest in the area continued over a period of more than a century until the energy of colonial powers was exhausted in the cobwebs of II World War.

Since Afghanistan happened to be a corridor to central Asia, as such constant efforts were made by the British to have control over Afghanistan by hook or by crook. But here too their nefarious designs were frustrated by the Ameers of Afghanistan. It was practically impossible to set foot on the slippery boulders of the Afghan territory. Having realized the ground reality, the British ultimately were satisfied with the confederation status of Afghanistan with a status of buffer state between the two powers.

With this intriguing background, historical legacy and diplomatic maneuvering of the colonial imperialistic designs the author has tried to analyse the game which was played on the roof of the world. The present attempt is in many ways an improvement on the existing reading material on the region. While unfolding many a wrinkled pages of the sources, the author has tried to draw the attention of the central Asian watchers towards the fact that central Asia is not a mere geographical impression or sandy soil but a live organism which can turn the tied of history any time.

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During Nineteenth Century, the Central Asian Region was subjected to imperialistic intervention and suppression by two ever-expanding powers of Europe i.e., Russia and Britain. The extensive expansion was carried out with all their added responsibilities and Administrative skill. The British, after subjugating the Sikh empire in India and the Russians after defeating the Khanates of Central Asia, reached the borders of Iran, Afghanistan and Xinjiang (a newly carved-out state on Chinese soil by the Amir who come from the main lands of Central Asia).

The strategic environment at times presented a unique image of fear, mistrust and threat perceptions. British owing to its global power consciousness attempted hard to maintain its predominant position after out-manoeuving the Russians and the Chinese. The Russians attempted to frustrate the British bids in connivance with China. The Chinese meanwhile attempted to forestall both owing to its past and bitter experiences with the European powers. The remaining states of Central Asia i.e., Iran, Afghanistan and Xinjiang desperately tried to play one power against the other, with a view of maintain their sovereign position. The unique strategic compulsions presented a phenomena of crises like situations and their management. The book contains the records of threat perception and the interesting models of Foreign policy operations of three powers of Britain, Russia and China alongwith Foreign policy objectives of Iran, Afghanistan and Xinjiang.

AFTAB AHMAD KHAN (born in Srinagar) took his Ph.D. in Political Science from Centre of Central Asian Studies (CCAS), University of Kashmir. Presently He is Sr. Lecturer at Amar Singh College, Srinagar and teaching at Under-Graduate level for eight years. He is also member of various academic associations. Besides this book he has also authored a book entitled "*Central Asia : Imperialistic Motivations And Sinkiang*" 1998.

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