

## V. KASHGHAR AND THE POLITICS OF CENTRAL ASIA, 1868-1878

BY V. G. KIERNAN

CHINESE Tartary or Turkestan, or what has been since 1884 the 'New Province' of Sinkiang, is an irregular thousand-mile long tract in the heart of Asia, shut in on three sides by mountains and on the east by vast deserts.<sup>1</sup> That it should still be in China's possession today, after a century in which so many of her outlying dependencies were shorn away, is one of the facts of modern history that it would have been most rash to predict.

Modern China became a Power of middle as well as further Asia when the Manchu Emperor Ch'ien Lung in 1760 re-established Chinese rule, which had ebbed and flowed there for ages, in eastern Turkestan as far west as Kashghar. He sought prestige in the eyes of his subjects, security for his frontier, and trade advantages; there were numerous minerals to be worked by Chinese enterprise, jade above all.<sup>2</sup> In its prime, Chinese rule was not without favourable features. It built roads and canals, and maintained religious toleration. But before long the Ch'ing dynasty was entering on its decline, hastened by internal discontent and Western pressure, and frontier administration weakened. In the far west, in Kashgharia or 'Little Bokhara', disorders were stirred up from 1820 to 1860 by successive pretenders of the dispossessed Khoja family which had taken refuge in the neighbouring Khanate of Khokand.<sup>3</sup> Farther east in Turkestan, and in the north-western provinces of Kansu and Shensi in China proper, there broke out in 1862 a series of Muslim insurrections. These upheavals acquired the name of Tungan Rebellion, from the Tungan people of the borderlands, many of whom had entered Chinese military service, and were found in garrisons as far off as Kashghar. They gave to the revolt of Islam something of the character of a Mutiny, and as the authority of Peking crumbled it was they who replaced it with a set of petty

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<sup>2</sup> On the importance to China of this mineral wealth see G. Henderson and A. O. Hume, *Lahore to Yarkand* (1873), pp. 94, 103; H. W. Bellew, *Kashmir and Kashghar* (1875), p. 6; S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom* (1883), I, p. 227. China might have advanced still further in Central Asia; in 1762-3 Khokand and Bokhara were seeking Afghan help against a threatened attack. See *Report*, p. 181; ch. III of this is an outline *History of Kashghar* by H. W. Bellew, as are chs. IV and V of Kuropatkin, *op. cit.*; also see *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia*, ed. N. Elias (1898).

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'Great Reforms' would seem to suggest that, at least as regards Russian affairs in the mid-nineteenth century, there is an element of truth in Ranke's dictum about the primacy of foreign over domestic policy. Viewed in terms of Toynbee's analysis of history, Russia's policy after the Crimean War can be described as a characteristic 'response' to the challenge of defeat; her temporary withdrawal from international diplomacy and the return into the arena after the construction of the first strategic railways might be regarded as a classic instance of the process of 'withdrawal and return'.

On a more mundane level, the way in which Russian statesmen faced the unaccustomed problems of defeat reveals in a striking manner two closely related aspects of Russian foreign policy. The first of these is the importance of the tsar. Throughout the negotiations leading to the conclusion of peace, the final decision on major issues rested with Alexander himself. The son of Nicholas in this case, as in others, revealed his stern sense of duty and his willingness to sacrifice personal inclinations to the collective opinion of his more experienced advisers. It seems certain that he would have preferred to follow the example set in 1812; yet he yielded to the advice of Nesselrode and the 'civilians.'

Next to the importance of the tsar, perhaps the most significant feature of Russian diplomacy in 1855 and 1856 is its continuity, in the face of altered circumstances. The aims of Alexander II on the morrow of a great defeat differed little from those of his father at the height of his power; the objectives of the Orthodox and 'national' Gorchakov were almost identical with those of his cosmopolitan and spiritually 'Protestant' predecessor. For the rulers of Russia, the Crimean War was simply a setback, a stimulus to greater exertions; the provisions of the treaty of Paris were a spur to revision and repudiation. Meyendorff had told the Imperial Council that a peace concluded at once need only be a truce; once the treaty was signed, those responsible for Russian policy saw one of their most important tasks in making certain that the 'truce'—reluctantly accepted—would not become a peace.



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principalities under their local chiefs.<sup>4</sup> Internecine strife raged, and prosperity gave place to dried-up canals, deserted fields and ruined settlements.<sup>5</sup>

Enfeebled by the great Taiping Rebellion in the Yangtze valley which ended only in 1860, by the separate 'Panthay' Rebellion of the Muslims of south-west China after 1855, and by the wars of 1857-60 with England and France, Chinese power seemed to have vanished from these marches for ever. The man destined to subdue the warring factions of Chinese Turkestan was the adventurer Mahomed Yakub, 'the greatest man that central Asia has produced for many a generation'.<sup>6</sup> Born about 1820 in Khokand State, in the same region of Andijan or Ferghana that had been the cradle of the first Moghul emperor, he spent his early years in the service of Khudayar Khan, and fought in Khokand's struggles against Russian encroachment. When at the end of 1864 Buzurg Khan, last heir of the old Khoja rulers of Kashghar, set out to claim an inheritance which could now be picked up out of the gutter by any resolute sword, Yakub was the commander of his tiny band of followers. Buzurg was quickly exiled to Tibet by his ambitious officer, who went on from the capture of Kashghar city to that of the other chief towns of this region, Yarkand and Khotan to the south-east, where Tungan bands were in possession. Joined by more and more recruits from the soldiery of his native Khokand, Yakub Beg was able to establish himself as ruler of all the western tip of Chinese Turkestan; soon he began pressing campaigns against the Tungans in the cities at the north-eastern end, beyond the deserts of the interior: Manass, Urumtsi, and Turfan.<sup>7</sup>

He was always a foreigner, relying chiefly on an army made up for the most part of Andijani mercenaries; relying also a good deal on the Andijani merchants who had long flocked into Kashgharia, and trusting to an ostentatiously orthodox display of religion to provide any other cement that his kingdom might need. He was, in any case, strong enough to lift himself for a decade out of the phantom throng of Asian princes, and to be recognizable from as far away as England as the head of a State.

Externally his position was always precarious, for he found himself between the hammer and anvil of two hostile Powers. Until near the end he thought of China as the anvil and Russia as the hammer; and so far as the east was concerned, either he believed that the Chinese would never return to plague him,

<sup>4</sup> The origin of the name *Tungan* or *Dungan* is not clear. It was originally taken to be a tribal name. Another view derived it from a Chinese phrase *tun-jen*, for 'military colonist'. Later it was generally taken to be a Turki word for 'convert', applied in Turkestan to converts to Islam in north-west China; see, for example, M. Hartmann, 'Muhamadanism in China', in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, and 'China', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; cp. Bellew, in *Report*, p. 201, and Kuropatkin, *op. cit.* pp. 113, n. 2, 154-5. I am indebted to Mr Vyvyan of Trinity College, Cambridge, for advice on this and other points.

<sup>5</sup> E. Schuyler, *Turkestan* (1876), II, p. 157.

<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, 17 July 1877, p. 10, col. 3 (an obituary). On Yakub's career see Boulger, *op. cit.* ch. VI covers his earlier years, on which see also *Report*, pp. 97-9, 203 ff., and Kuropatkin, *op. cit.*, ch. VI.

<sup>7</sup> See Boulger, *op. cit.*, ch. VIII, 'Wars with the Tungans'.



or he relied on the gradual reduction of the Tungan cities under his sway to provide him with a barrier. While fighting in the east, he was continually looking back over his shoulders to the west. Kashghar city is not very much farther from Constantinople than from Peking; it is nearly seven hundred miles from Urumtsi, but less than five hundred from Samarkand, and about four hundred from Tashkent, after 1867 the capital of western or Russian Turkestan. Westward from Kashghar the mountain passes were less formidable than on the south; and in the great region beyond them Russian power was advancing with rapid strides. During the years when Yakub was consolidating his position, there was a flare-up of resistance in the States of Khokand, Bokhara and Khiva, all now making their last stand for independence. Tashkent, Khudayar Khan's chief town, fell to the Russians in 1865; Samarkand, holy city of the emirate of Bokhara, in 1868; Khiva finally capitulated in 1873; the town of Khokand was annexed in 1876.<sup>8</sup>

Part of Yakub's policy of Islamic enthusiasm was his pose as champion of his hard-pressed co-religionists; and from Tashkent, one of his officials told an American traveller, he received constant appeals for deliverance from the Russian yoke.<sup>9</sup> It was from the emir of Bokhara, a scoundrel whose spiritual authority was second only to that of the Sultan-Caliph, that he obtained the resounding title of Athalik Ghazi, or 'Guardian of the warriors of Islam'.<sup>10</sup> He took care, all the same, not to *do* anything for his neighbours, whose resistance gave him a valuable breathing-space, while their defeat swelled the number of soldiers who sought employment with him. Having fought against the Russians in the service of Khokand he could make a shrewd estimate of the strength they could bring to bear against him.

A treaty of 1860 with China, nullified by the collapse of her authority in Kashgharia, had authorized the Russians to open three consulates there; and among the arguments in favour of annexing Tashkent that were being considered at St Petersburg in 1862-3 was its convenience for trade with 'the well-populated Chinese towns Yarkand and Kashgar'.<sup>11</sup> Commercial questions were soon causing friction between Yakub Beg and the Russian authorities in Turkestan. In 1868 a Captain Reinthal was sent to Kashghar, and a Mirza Mohamad Shadi from there to Tashkent and next year to St Petersburg. Neither side received the other's mission with much cordiality, and the Russians proceeded to build a fort on the River Naryn, very close to Kashghar city. In 1868 and in 1870 there was reason to think that they were only put off

<sup>8</sup> On the subjugation of the Khanates see H. Spalding, *Khiva and Turkestan* (trans. of a Russian publication, 1874) p. 30 ff.; *Parl[iamentary] Papers*, 1878, LXXX, 'Central Asia, no. 1'; F. H. Skrine and E. D. Ross, *The Heart of Asia, a History of Russian Turkestan* (1899), pp. 247-61.

<sup>9</sup> Schuyler, *op. cit.*, II, p. 255; cp. F. von Hellwald, *Die Russen in Centralasien* (1873), pp. 111, 130.

<sup>10</sup> Properly *Ataliq Ghazi*, the first word—often found in such titles—meaning apparently 'age', hence 'paternity', and so 'tutor' or 'guardian'.

<sup>11</sup> Spalding, *op. cit.* pp. 28-34.



from attacking Yakub Beg by troubles elsewhere in Central Asia.<sup>12</sup> 'You cannot be with Russian officers in Central Asia for half an hour', an English traveller wrote, 'without remarking how they long for a war.'<sup>13</sup> As a kind of preliminary snack, in 1871 Russia assumed control of the Kulja province in the north-west of Chinese Turkestan, along the valley of the Ili River, on the pretext that its disorders were infecting her own adjacent territory.<sup>14</sup> A promise was given that it would be restored to China if ever Chinese power revived in Turkestan. By this alarming stroke Yakub, who would undoubtedly have occupied Kulja himself before long, had been forestalled, and he was now hemmed in by the Russians on a fresh side. Installed in Kulja, moreover, their surveyors were in a position to assess the value of eastern Turkestan as a whole.<sup>15</sup>

On the British side much thought was being given to strategies for halting Russia's march across Asia, with its real or supposed threat to India. There was for long an idea of the native States being left as a neutral zone in middle Asia between the two empires; though according to the Russian thesis the British attack on Persia in 1856 was an infringement of this principle, and justified Russia's advance.<sup>16</sup> The number of free States dwindled. Bokhara drifted into the Russian sphere of influence, Afghanistan was claimed for the British. In Kashgharia, farthest east, the notion of a neutral zone might find its longest lease of life. Any Russian ascendancy there would be dangerous, from the British point of view, as giving Russia access to the routes into India by Gilgit and Leh. Neither of these was a practicable invasion route, but Russian secret agents were nearly as much feared as Russian troops, and 'vigilant observation', one high official in India wrote, must be kept up on Kashghar for fear of sinister influences seeping through it and through the Himalayan States into the Panjab.<sup>17</sup> From the middle of the century, moreover, there was discussion of how trade between India and eastern Turkestan might be developed. In 1862 R. H. Davies, secretary to the government of the Panjab, made a compilation of all the data he could collect on the trade north of the mountains, and argued that Russian competition should not be too hard to overcome.<sup>18</sup> T. D. Forsyth, commissioner at Jullundur, came to the

<sup>12</sup> Boulger, *op. cit.* p. 181; cp. the article 'Eastern Toorkistan' in *Edinburgh Review*, April 1874, p. 308 ff.

<sup>13</sup> F. Burnaby, *A Ride to Khiva* (1877), p. 181.

<sup>14</sup> Lord Augustus Loftus, *Diplomatic Reminiscences*, 2nd series, II (1894), pp. 38 ff., reports an official Russian version.

<sup>15</sup> A. Krausse, *Russia in Central Asia* (1899), p. 178.

<sup>16</sup> *Diplomatic Study of the Crimean War*, official Russian publication (English ed. 1882), I, p. 6. For the view that it was chimerical to expect the survival of small States between the two empires, see D. M. Wallace, *Russia* (5th ed. 1877), II, pp. 440-1.

<sup>17</sup> Sir R. Temple, *India in 1880* (1880), pp. 340-1. On this political danger to India see also Boulger, *England and Russia in Central Asia* (1879), II, and A. R. Colquhoun, *Russia against India* (1900).

<sup>18</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1864, XLII. A Select Committee on the colonization of India had shown some interest a little earlier; *ibid.* 1857-8, VII, part II, pp. 1-10.



same conclusion after visiting both Nizhni Novgorod and its Fair, and Kashmir: 'in all the countries north of India we ought to have absolute command of the market.'<sup>19</sup> Anarchy in eastern Turkestan had encouraged the brigands who infested the hill paths,<sup>20</sup> but it at least removed China's exclusionist control and left a market to be provided, especially with tea, from other sources. With Yakub Beg's restoration of order it seemed reasonable to expect a swelling of the trickle of trade that had always found its way across the mountains, especially by way of the Karakoram Pass, at a height of 18,850 feet, between Yarkand and Leh in Ladakh, the Tibetan-speaking province of eastern Kashmir.

Eastern Turkestan was a region about which both British and Russian geographers still knew extremely little; there were 'heartbreaking discrepancies' among reports on the location of Kashghar city.<sup>21</sup> From 1862 Indian agents were being despatched on reconnoitring missions.<sup>22</sup> In 1865 W. H. Johnson of the Indian Survey received an invitation from an upstart Khan of Khotan, and took the risk of visiting him. He proved to be a stout old gentleman of eighty, who had travelled through India to Mecca and was loud in praise of Britain and abuse of Russia, and very anxious for help from India.<sup>23</sup> An envoy from him reached Calcutta in February 1866, and asked for military equipment and a defensive alliance against Russia and China; Sir John Lawrence, then Viceroy, returned 'a civil but absolute refusal'.<sup>24</sup> Shortly afterwards this Khan was treacherously attacked and killed by Yakub Beg. In 1867, when it was decided that an English officer should be stationed in Ladakh, one of his duties was defined as being to 'pick up and sift all the political information that may come in his way, especially as regards the progress of events in Chinese Toorkistan.'<sup>25</sup> Dr Cayley, who was chosen for the post, reported that Yakub Beg, 'feared and respected for his bravery, justice and liberality', was trying to draw Central Asia together against Russia. Yarkand and Kashmir had some sort of diplomatic intercourse, and a messenger from Yakub Beg

<sup>19</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1868-69, XLVI, 'Eastern Turkestan', pp. 7-9.

<sup>20</sup> E. F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet* (1895), p. 348.

<sup>21</sup> Capt. H. Trotter, 'On the geographical results of the mission to Kashghar... in 1873-4', in *J[ournal of the] R[oyal] G[eographical] S[ociety]*, XLVIII (1878), pp. 225-6. Cp. R. B. Shaw's papers in *Proc[eedings of the] R[oyal] G[eographical] S[ociety]* XVI (1872), pp. 242 ff., 395 ff., and Semenoff's in *Geog[raphical] Journal*, XXXV (1865), pp. 213 ff. Two early accounts of the Yarkand route from native sources are in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, VII (1843), pp. 283-342 (first printed 1825), and XII (1850), pp. 372-85.

<sup>22</sup> See a paper by T. G. Montgomerie, directing the work, in *Geog. Journal*, XXXVI (1866), pp. 157 ff.; cp. H. Yule, Introduction to N. M. Prejevalsky (Przhevalsky), *Mongolia* (English ed. 1876), p. xix. A. Schlagintweit, a German exploring from India, had been killed at Kashghar in 1857.

<sup>23</sup> W. H. Johnson, 'Report on his journey to Ilchi', in *J.R.G.S.* XXXVII (1867), pp. 21 ff.

<sup>24</sup> J. W. S. Wyllie, in *Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1867, pp. 51-2; cp. Sir R. Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India* (1882), p. 340, and *Parl. Papers*, 1868-69, XLVI, 'Eastern Turkestan', pp. 7-9.

<sup>25</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1867-68, L, 'Correspondence... relating to the appointment of a commercial agent in Ladakh...', p. 6.



with presents for the maharajah called on Cayley with an assurance of his master's goodwill.<sup>26</sup> Later news confirmed his belief that the bringing of so much territory under one rule was bound to be good for trade; and it would be useful, he held, to send a representative and 'conclude a friendly alliance'.<sup>27</sup> Forsyth would have liked to go to Khotan himself, and the Panjab government felt that at any rate some trader living in Yarkand might be chosen to represent British interests.<sup>28</sup>

Then in 1868-9 two unofficial explorers, R. B. Shaw and G. W. Hayward, made the journey. Each of them separately reached Yarkand and Kashghar, Shaw being the first Englishman to do so, and each had interviews with the ruler. Yakub Beg, still a rather rough diamond, kept both visitors in close confinement. It was not unnatural for him to feel a certain mistrust of Britain as well as of Russia. His fear of his neighbours varied inversely, however, with the height of the mountains between him and them; and Shaw thought he seemed glad to have an Englishman in Kashghar and to be assured that it would be in order for him to send an envoy to India. At his second audience Shaw noticed that he had been brushing up his information about the outer world, for he now spoke not merely of the Viceroy but of the Queen, who he declared was 'like the sun, which warms everything it shines upon'.<sup>29</sup> On his return Shaw wrote to Forsyth that Yakub kept exemplary order in his dominions, and Hayward also helped to draw attention to Kashghar as a place that 'must eventually play an important part in European politics'.<sup>30</sup> By this time commercial optimism was gaining ground; a 'Yarkund Trading Co.' was formed, and there were rosy dreams about Turkestan as a place with 'a population of scores of millions of people who wanted tea and cottons, and many other stuffs'. The British and Indian governments were more moderate in their expectations; and Sir Thomas Wade, British Minister at Peking, remarked that it was too much to expect any great volume of business over such frozen heights.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile Russian progress had been unexpectedly rapid; and in 1865 when Britain was proposing a general agreement to respect the status quo in

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 18-19 (24 Sept. and 1 Oct. 1867).

<sup>27</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1868-69, XLVI, 'Eastern Turkestan', pp. 15 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 11-12, 9.

<sup>29</sup> R. B. Shaw, *Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand, and Kashghar* (1871), pp. 260 ff., 353 ff. On the career of Shaw, who began as a tea-planter and died in 1878 as Resident at Mandalay, see *D[ictionary of] N[ational] B[iography]*. Hayward's account of his journey is in *J.R.G.S.* XL (1870), pp. 33-166. An Indian agent reached Kashghar at the same time by way of Kabul, and was well received; see account of 'the Mirza's' journey in *Proc.R.G.S.* XV (1871), pp. 198 ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV, 'Central Asia, no. 2' (pp. 16-17; cp. Shaw's account of his journey in *Proc.R.G.S.* XIV (1869-70), pp. 124 ff.); Hayward, *loc. cit.* p. 98.

<sup>31</sup> Bellew, *Kashmir and Kashghar*, p. xiv; *Parl. Papers*, 1868-69, XLVI, 'Eastern Turkestan', p. 57; Wade to Lord Tenterden, Conf., 4 June 1877, F.O. 17 (China) 825, P.R.O. Henderson and Hume, *op. cit.* p. 143, were among those who believed that trade could readily be expanded. For other accounts of the caravan routes see T. Thomson, *Western Himalaya and Tibet* (1852), p. 410, and F. Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories* (1875), pp. 539-44. At Leh in 1945 I met the very friendly Chinese officer, Major S. S. Chiu, in charge of caravans conveying war stores to China.



Central Asia an inquiry was made at St Petersburg about rumours of Russian designs on eastern Turkestan. An assurance was given that such rumours were baseless, and in view of the mountain barriers even ridiculous; and two months later Prince Gorchakov, when asked whether Russia had any consulate or factory there, said 'he believed not', adding that he disapproved of agents being stationed in such remote and barbarous places.<sup>32</sup> Some in Britain disapproved likewise, and strong views were expressed for and against any policy of establishing relations with Yakub Beg. In 1868, for instance, J. S. W. Wyllie, who was inclined to dismiss the idea of trade as a 'brilliant will-o'-the-wisp' argued that in case of war with Russia some action might properly be taken in Turkestan: 'but he who, as matters now stand, prates of English embassies to Yarkund or to Khoten, is simply an enemy to his country'. Yet even this hard-hitting polemist went on to say that all over Central Asia 'a general feeling has arisen, and day by day gains ground, of antagonism to Russia... and of inclination towards England... The time may come when this feeling will be of incalculable value to us.'<sup>33</sup> Needless to say the Russians were equally convinced of the truth of the converse proposition.

Lord Mayo, Viceroy from 1869 to 1872, wished to adopt a friendly, protective attitude towards all the ring of frontier States from Burma to Baluchistan, including Kashghar; and he believed a reasonable understanding with Russia to be possible.<sup>34</sup> In 1869 he allowed Forsyth, who shared these opinions, to go to England and air them; and the Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, arranged for Forsyth to visit St Petersburg and discuss the whole problem of Central Asia.<sup>35</sup> As regards Kashghar Forsyth's suggestion was that both Powers might recognize Yakub Beg formally, and thus help to stabilize his position. The Russians took the virtuous line of recognizing no claims over Kashghar but those of China. 'Russia', Gorchakov remarked to the British ambassador, 'had treaties with China and could not enter into political relations with a successful insurgent against the authority of the Chinese emperor'. Buchanan rejoined that the Indian government was of course aware of China's rights, but that 'finding a new State on their immediate frontier, they could not ignore its existence or deter their subjects from trading with it.' Gorchakov declared that 'the Atilagh Ghazee had nothing to fear from Russia', adding that Britain might assure him of this if she wished.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX, 'Central Asia, no. 1', pp. 170, 171, 176-7.

<sup>33</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, April 1868, pp. 392-6. A parallel problem was offered by the 'Panthays', or Muslim rebels of south-west China, who for some years seemed able to found a regular State, and with whom some contacts were made from India in the late sixties.

<sup>34</sup> W. W. Hunter, *A Life of the Earl of Mayo* (1875), I, ch. v.

<sup>35</sup> *Autobiography [and Reminiscences of Sir Douglas Forsyth]*, ed. Ethel Forsyth (1887), pp. 45-50; A. P. Thornton, 'Afghanistan in Anglo-Russian diplomacy, 1869-73', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, XL, no. 2, pp. 209 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1873, LXXV, 'Central Asia, no. 2', pp. 11-12; cp. pp. 12-14. A long circular sent out by Gorchakov on 5 April 1875 included a summary of the Forsyth talks from his point of view; *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX, 'Central Asia, no. 1', pp. 25 ff.



Mirza Shadi, the Kashgharian who had gone to St Petersburg, was no sooner home again than he was sent off to India by way of Leh. At Lahore he was welcomed and sent on to Calcutta, where on 28 March 1870 he had an audience with the Viceroy and requested that a British officer should be sent back with him.<sup>37</sup> Very recently a Bokharan envoy had come to India to beg, as a last resort, help against Russia. He had been repulsed, but the Indian government had grudges against Bokhara,<sup>38</sup> and Yakub Beg was not yet a beggar. Lord Mayo decided to send Forsyth to Yarkand in search of information about the country, while laying down what some critics thought unnecessarily precise and cautious rules for his guidance. The Viceroy had no faith in what he called 'meddling and interfering by subsidies and emissaries'; and Forsyth was to say no more on politics than Mayo had said to Mirza Shadi—that Yakub would be well advised not to involve himself in any of his neighbours' quarrels.<sup>39</sup> Forsyth set off through Ladakh in the summer of 1870, being joined on the way by Mirza Shadi (part of whose business had been to buy arms), by a relative of Yakub Beg named Sayyid Mohamad Yakub, and by Shaw, who had volunteered his assistance. They reached Yarkand and were hospitably entertained from 28 August to 5 September; but as the Athalik Ghazi was away on campaign at the other end of his country, and showed no signs of making an appearance, Forsyth then insisted on leaving for home, though Yakub's officials made vexatious efforts to detain him.<sup>40</sup>

Among the officials who made themselves unpleasant was Mirza Shadi, who revealed an undiplomatically bad temper when Forsyth refused to stay.<sup>41</sup> Mohamad Yakub was more tactful. As a Sayyid and a Haji he reckoned himself 'a very holy man', as well as an accomplished author;<sup>42</sup> but he was also to become Kashghar's best-known representative. He passed as Yakub Beg's nephew; he was really his half-sister's stepson, and of more aristocratic parentage. Having gone to Constantinople in the service of his native Khokand, he stayed there for four years and won the Sultan's favour; now, in view of the failing fortunes of Khudayar Khan, he had travelled through India to Kashghar to enter the employment of his 'uncle'. His chief task would be to promote good relations with Turkey and Britain. He impressed an Englishman as having acquired 'more enlarged ideas on the civilization of Europe than is possessed by most of his people';<sup>43</sup> and in English society he won 'golden opinions' by his talents and by his 'fine manly figure of an Oriental

<sup>37</sup> Govt. of India to Govt. of Panjab, 6 Jan. 1871: *Parl. Papers*, 1871, LI, 'Yarkand (Forsyth's Mission)', pp. 45-7.

<sup>38</sup> Two Englishmen, Stoddart and Connolly, had been murdered in Bokhara.

<sup>39</sup> W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.* I, pp. 303, 271, 299.

<sup>40</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1871, LI, 'Yarkand (Forsyth's Mission)', pp. 19 ff., and Forsyth, *Autobiography*, p. 88.

<sup>41</sup> *Parl. Papers*, *ibid.* 'Yarkand (Forsyth's Mission)', p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Bellew, *op. cit.* p. 187.



prince'.<sup>44</sup> The Athalik Ghazi's strategy was to balance himself between Britain and Russia, and he found another diplomatic agent whose speciality was to assure the Russians that it was their friendship, not England's, that Kashghar desired. This was Zaman Khan Effendi, an exile from the Caucasus who had been brought up in Russia and spoke fluent Russian, and who also had put in several years at Constantinople.<sup>45</sup> Kashghar's cosmopolitan ruling group could not found a nation, but they could manage foreign affairs better than most Asiatic States.

During 1871 another envoy, Ihrar (or Akhrar) Khan Tora, came to India,<sup>46</sup> and Kashghar's British contacts must have helped to make Russia decide that it was time to stop ignoring her. In 1872 Baron Kaulbars was sent from Tashkent to Kashghar where, not without a good deal of trouble, he arranged the terms of a commercial treaty. Merchants were to be free to come and go on both sides, and their goods were to pay not more than  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  duties.<sup>47</sup> This time the return mission from Kashghar was given a splendid reception at St Petersburg. Early in 1873 Sayyid Yakub Khan was back in India to explore the ground for a similar treaty with Britain. He had an interview in March with the new Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, and expressed a hope that in any forthcoming Anglo-Russian negotiations about Central Asia the opportunity might be taken to reach an agreement about the boundaries of Kashghar. In June the Viceroy suggested to the home government that this idea might be taken up; but the Foreign Office thought the time not opportune for raising the matter at St Petersburg.<sup>48</sup> Khiva was just now finally becoming a Russian vassal;<sup>49</sup> and Russian designs on Khiva had caused a remarkable outburst of excitement in England this year. 'Men talked wisely and learnedly in the clubs of the Amoo Darya, the Sir Darya and the Attrek.'<sup>50</sup>

In the autumn of 1873 Forsyth set off on his second mission through Ladakh to Turkestan, this time at the head of an imposing train of 350 men and 550 baggage animals; he stayed for three months with Yakub Beg at his fortress of Yangi Shahr, the 'New Town' five miles from the old city of Kashghar. On 2 February 1874, Yakub Beg set his seal to the commercial treaty whose draft Forsyth had brought with him. It authorized each party to appoint a representative at the other's capital, and commercial agents elsewhere. India would levy no duties on goods, Kashghar not more than  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ .<sup>51</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Forsyth, Introduction to N. M. Prejevalsky, *From Kulja across the Tian Shan to Lob Nor* (English ed. 1879), p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Kuropatkin, *op. cit.* pp. 10-11.

<sup>46</sup> Shaw says that the Kashgharian envoy in 1871 had several interviews with Mayo at Calcutta and requested a British mission; *Proc.R.G.S.* xvi (1872), p. 407.

<sup>47</sup> Kuropatkin, *op. cit.* pp. 61-2, with text of the treaty.

<sup>48</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX, 'Central Asia, no. 1', pp. 205-6.

<sup>49</sup> For the text of the Russian treaty with Khiva of Aug. 1873, and the British warning to Russia not to advance further, see *Parl. Papers* 1874, LXXVI, 'Russia, no. 2'.

<sup>50</sup> V. Baker, *Clouds in the East* (1876), p. 1; *cp.* G.B. Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (1878), p. 437.

<sup>51</sup> For the treaty see *Parl. Papers* 1874, XLVIII.



Great preparations had been made to welcome this mission; Yakub Beg no doubt had an eye to the impression it would make on his own subjects. His visitors were allowed to go about freely and see things for themselves, and throughout their stay they had the best of relations with their 'good friends the Kashgarians.'<sup>52</sup> Forsyth formed an excellent opinion of the ruler, and one of his party wrote: 'The great mass of the people seemed well to do and happy, and we saw no abject poverty.'<sup>53</sup> In England the embassy aroused much interest. Caravans winding their way across Himalayan passes had a picturesque appeal, and a surprising number of books by these travellers came out.<sup>54</sup> There was even a 'Yarkund Court' to be seen at the Crystal Palace.<sup>55</sup>

Altogether it seemed very likely that the treaty of 1874 would, as its preamble said, 'strengthen the good understanding which now subsists between the high contracting parties.' What had already been done could be viewed as 'riveting England and Kashghar into a closer alliance than any that has as yet subsisted between ourselves and any other Central Asian ruler'.<sup>56</sup> A member of the Forsyth mission could speak of Yakub Beg after his death as 'our recent ally'.<sup>57</sup> 'The treaty is purely commercial', wrote the *Friend of India*, 'but Russia ought to understand that we have the same desire and determination to maintain the *status quo* in Kashgharia as in Afghanistan.'<sup>58</sup> The Indian government could not, on the other hand, wish its new friend to provoke Russia by any rash defiance. In May 1874 Shaw was despatched to Kashghar with the treaty ratification. 'In the event of questions arising between the Ameer and the Russian Government', it was laid down, 'he will, if opportunity arises, impress on the Ameer... the importance of avoiding any step that might unnecessarily prejudice amicable relations with its representative.' Russia was notified of the sense of these instructions.<sup>59</sup>

This would hardly be enough to allay Russian suspicions. In 1875 a fresh mission headed by Reinthal was sent to Yakub Beg's court, and a return visit was paid to St Petersburg; but Yakub Beg showed no desire to have a Russian representative permanently in his capital. Perhaps on this account he allowed Shaw to see that he also would not be welcome to stay for too long; and Shaw, who had been told by Lord Northbrook to use his own discretion, took the hint and withdrew.<sup>60</sup> A resident ambassador from either Russia or Britain was too likely to evolve into a 'Resident'. A particular grievance of which the Russians made a great deal was the alleged supply of arms by India to Kashghar. Rumours in the Indian Press that a large consignment had gone with

<sup>52</sup> *Report*, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup> Henderson and Hume, op. cit. p. 141.

<sup>54</sup> Shaw, Bellew, Henderson, Hume, and T. E. Gordon (*The Roof of the World*, 1876) all accompanied one or other of the Forsyth missions. Half of the annual gold medals of the Royal Geographical Society in these seven or eight years went to explorers of E. Turkestan.

<sup>55</sup> Forsyth, *Autobiography*, p. 77.

<sup>56</sup> Boulger, op. cit. pp. 229-31; cp. pp. 203-4.

<sup>57</sup> Trotter, in *J.R.G.S.* XLVIII (1878), p. 228.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Forsyth, *Autobiography*, p. 206.

<sup>59</sup> *Parl. Papers*. 1878, LXXX, 'Central Asia, no. 1', p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> Obituary of R. B. Shaw by Lord Northbrook, *Proc.R.G.S.* I (n.s.), 1879, p. 524.



Forsyth's second mission were contradicted by London to St Petersburg. Russia was not satisfied, and in March 1875 Count Schuvalov, ambassador in London, raised with the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby, the question of 'the close alliance into which it was said the British government was entering with the Ameer of Kashghar. It was reported that arms had been supplied to him from India in large quantities, military instructors provided, and that the object was to use the Ameer as an ally who might be serviceable in any future quarrel with Russia.' Derby tried to set his mind at rest, but a year later he was still harping on the same string.<sup>61</sup> He also buttonholed Lord Lytton, in February 1876 about to sail for India as Northbrook's successor, to say that General Kaufmann and the Russian government had taken the reports very seriously, though he professed not to believe them himself.<sup>62</sup>

1875 had been a critical year for Yakub Beg, when, as *The Times* remarked a little later, 'it was known that every preparation had been made by the Russians for chastising the insolence, and if necessary annexing the territory, of the emir'.<sup>63</sup> This last title—Amir-ul-Mominin, or Commander of the Faithful—along with that of khan of Kashgharia, had been conferred on Yakub Beg by the Sultan through Sayyid Yakub Khan; they were assumed by him, no doubt with a purpose, while Forsyth was at his capital. He followed this by striking coins and having prayers read in the Sultan's name, thus in traditional style proclaiming the Sultan his overlord.<sup>64</sup> To the Russians it was bound to seem evidence of his 'insane Russophobia';<sup>65</sup> and it did point to the possibility of his being used actively against them in certain circumstances. Turkey, it was true, could extend no protection to Kashghar; but, as the Sultan's feudatory, Yakub might hope to share in the protection that Britain had given and would soon again be giving to Turkey. In Central Asia the Crimean War was not forgotten. At the time of that struggle the Turkish government sought help from the East as well as from the West; it laboured in vain 'to impress on the envoys from Khiva and Bokhara... to return home at once and draw the attention of their respective sovereigns to the excellent opportunities now offering for exerting themselves'.<sup>66</sup> Their neutrality then had failed to save them later, and single-handed resistance had also failed. If Turkey and her friends were again involved in war with Russia they might make a fresh attempt, which would now have a more popular and revolutionary character.

<sup>61</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1878, LXXX, 'Central Asia, no. 1', pp. 14, 15, 17, 24-5, 69.

<sup>62</sup> Lady Betty Balfour, *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876 to 1882* (1899), p. 35. A Russian officer in Turkestan in 1877 made a similar complaint to Burnaby; Burnaby, *op. cit.* p. 143. A correspondence in the Tenterden Papers (F.O. 363/1) shows that both the Commander-in-Chief and the India Office were annoyed with Burnaby himself for helping to arouse Russian suspicions. Cp. B. H. Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans 1870-1880* (1937), p. 56. Indian mercenaries and exiles did serve in Yakub's army (on which see Kuropatkin, *op. cit.* ch. VII); Forsyth heard orders being given in English (*Autobiography*, p. 178).

<sup>63</sup> *The Times*, 17 July 1877.

<sup>64</sup> *Report*, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> G. Merzbacher, *The Central Tian-Shan Mountains (1902-1903)* (1905), p. 162.

<sup>66</sup> A. Vambéry, *History of Bokhara* (1873), p. 400.



So at least it was hoped at Constantinople, where Sayyid Yakub Khan in 1873 found the orthodox party in a fit of Russophobia, delighted at the prospect of an Islamic revival in the east, and ready therefore to be prodigal of titles for the Athalik Ghazi.<sup>67</sup> Britain would have her part to play, and it would be easier for her, Rawlinson thought, to 'instigate a great anti-Russian Mahomedan movement north of the Oxus' than for Russia to stir up Muslim India.<sup>68</sup> If Russia kept quiet Britain would advise Yakub to do the same; if not, Yakub's army and his reputation for piety would both be useful to the common cause. When Burnaby was received by the Khan of Khiva that amiable monarch—as the traveller unexpectedly found him—talked of the sensation that had been caused in Central Asia by the Crimean War, and asked whether England meant to defend the independence of Kashghar.<sup>69</sup>

Between 1875 and 1878 Balkan events were bringing about the situation in which this question could be put to the test. Unfortunately, in a sense (as the test would have been an interesting one), at the last moment history took a different turn. Contrary to all expectation the danger that finally confronted Yakub came not from the west and Russia but from the east and China; and by the time that things came to a head between Britain and Russia in the spring of 1878, the Athalik Ghazi was dead and his kingdom no longer existed.

In forming her connexion with Kashghar, Britain did not think it necessary to take any account of Chinese claims, which were regarded as extinct. By a few commentators this assumption was construed as highly disrespectful to China; the same criticism had been made of Britain's more tentative contacts a little earlier with the Panthay rebels in Yunnan.<sup>70</sup> Sir Thomas Wade, minister at Peking, to whose province it belonged to remind his government of China's rights, was very little consulted in the matter. In 1870 he had some correspondence with Lord Mayo, the Viceroy, and was assured that the first Forsyth mission had no political bearing. He himself believed, and understood the Viceroy to believe, that any connexion formed with Yakub Beg ought to be purely commercial; and he was taken aback later when he suddenly received a copy of the 1874 treaty, which appeared to recognize Kashgharia as a sovereign state.<sup>71</sup>

Yakub Beg's policies were coloured by his chief ambassador's close links with Constantinople, and by the notion that the best road to Britain lay

<sup>67</sup> Sir H. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, (2nd ed. 1875), p. 344. Turkish military instructors, according to the Russians, were reorganizing Yakub's forces (Kuropatkin, *op. cit.* p. 196).

<sup>68</sup> Rawlinson, *op. cit.* p. 312.

<sup>69</sup> Burnaby, *op. cit.* p. 311.

<sup>70</sup> Wells Williams (an American writer), *op. cit.* II, p. 720.

<sup>71</sup> Wade to Forsyth, and Indian Govt. to Wade, enclosed with Wade to Derby, no. 136, 8 July 1876, F.O. 17/825. Cp. Wade to Tenterden, *pte.*, 19 May 1877: 'I was at some pains in 1870 to explain to the Chinese that our relations with Yacoob (then only Beg) were commercial and that all we required was a set of commercial rules for the regulation of trade in and across Kashgaria' (F.O. 363/4). In China mandarins went on being gazetted to the official hierarchy of Turkestan as if the province had never been lost (see article 'Eastern Turkestan' in *Edinburgh Review*, April 1874, pp. 307-8).



through Turkey. Britain's attitude fostered this way of thinking. In retrospect it is clear that she ought in 1874 to have come to some understanding about Yakub's position with China, and that she would have done well to persuade him to exchange his nominal allegiance to Constantinople for a rather more real connexion with Peking. For by the end of the sixties the Chinese government had got over the worst of a series of internal and foreign crises, and it would soon begin looking again in the direction of Turkestan.

Tso Tsung-t'ang, in 1866 appointed governor-general of Shensi and Kansu with the task of finally crushing the Muslim revolt there, was the man who insisted on, and undertook to carry out, the reconquest of Turkestan.<sup>72</sup> He was inflexible, incorruptible and one of the two or three most powerful men in the country. In the course of 1872 his frontier forces were being set in motion; in 1873 they captured the main Kansu city of Suchow, the base for an advance into the far north-west.<sup>73</sup> From there it was nearly six hundred miles farther, in a straight line, to Urumtsi and the eastern fringes of Yakub Beg's dominions. Altogether, by the old winding caravan route from oasis to oasis, it was 3500 miles from Peking to Kashghar.<sup>74</sup> Tso set out late in 1874 on his quixotic expedition, a 'Long March' worthy of comparison with its famous successor of sixty years later. For nearly two years his army practically disappeared from sight. He had to make his detachments sow crops at the oases they passed, to provide food for those coming up behind them. Meanwhile foreigners shrugged their shoulders at his wild scheme of invading a land 'ten leagues beyond man's life'. Przhevalsky, the Russian explorer, was loud in contempt of the opium-fuddled Chinese troops who, he said, having taken Suchow from the equally despicable Tunganis, now had 'a more difficult task before them, in their struggle with Yakub Beg of Kashgar.'<sup>75</sup> Tso's countrymen hardly recalled the existence of his 'Agricultural Army', unless when paying special levies at ferry-crossings towards its support<sup>76</sup>—much like Spaniards in the olden days compelled to buy papal bulls in aid of imaginary crusades.

Sir Thomas Wade was inclined from the outset to throw cold water on China's hopes. He disliked Tso's campaign for the same reason that he disliked Forsyth's treaty: because by disturbing the vague *status quo* in Turkestan it might give an impetus to Russian ambitions. During 1874 he helped to extricate China from a serious complication with the Japanese, who were raising demands on account of some seamen murdered in Formosa, and he did not want to see her jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. He

<sup>72</sup> On Tso Tsung-t'ang (1812-85) see the article by Tu Lien-chê in A. W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (1943).

<sup>73</sup> As late as 1888 a traveller found unrest still smouldering among the Muslims of Kansu (W. W. Rockhill, *Land of the Lamas* (1891), pp. 28, 39).

<sup>74</sup> See description of the route by Col. M. S. Bell, who claimed to be the first European to travel its whole length, in *Proc.R.G.S.* XII (n.s.), 1890.

<sup>75</sup> Prejevalsky, *Mongolia*, II, pp. 130-3.

<sup>76</sup> For an anecdote illustrating this see A. E. Moule, *Half a Century in China* (1911), p. 133.



thought her best course would be to recognize Yakub as an independent ruler, and thus have him as a buffer between herself and Russia; and he expressed this idea to Li Hung-chang, grand secretary and viceroy of the metropolitan province of Chihli, who was Tso Tsung-t'ang's great rival and the leader of the moderate or 'westernizing' school.<sup>77</sup> Li, though he attributed Wade's opinion to Russophobia, passed on the advice to the Tsungli Yamen, or foreign affairs board, and the court, where it only got him into one of his periodical spells of disfavour.<sup>78</sup>

There now took place, far away, an incident that was to have a strong though indirect bearing on the case. In February 1875 an English consular employee, Margary, was murdered on Chinese territory near the Burmese frontier. England, just like Japan a year before, immediately raised sweeping demands for satisfaction. Long and vexatious controversy dragged on through most of 1875-6, and led to extreme tension which only ended when China was forced to accept the Chefoo Convention of September 1876. Tedious recriminations between 'poor tired Sir Thomas' and the 'mendacious and inconclusive Yamen'<sup>79</sup> formed a very unpropitious background for any discussion of Kashghar. England was not in a mood to recognize that she had overlooked Chinese claims there in 1874, nor China to take British advice seriously. In July 1876 Halliday Macartney, the Scotsman who had entered China's service in 1862, was reflecting that England might very awkwardly find herself at war with China and Russia both at once.<sup>80</sup> Hemmed in between those two giants Yakub Beg would not be much of an ally.

At the beginning of this year, 1876, Wade was feeling that his advice to Li Hung-chang had been sound. Tso was rumoured to have been defeated, perhaps killed; the government had no funds to pay and provision his army. Tso had pressed for a loan to be raised from foreign sources, and this was in the end arranged with British financiers; Wade disapproved, partly because he thought the whole campaign futile, partly because of the Margary case.<sup>81</sup> He explained his views in full to Forsyth when the latter was in China early in 1876, in a careful memorandum meant to prime him for an interview with Li Hung-chang. Li should be told that Yakub could not be crushed, and the attempt would only be throwing money away and inviting a 'third party' to intervene. England alone wielded any influence with Yakub, and she would not use it until the Margary case was settled to her satisfaction. Forsyth followed the line marked out for him by Wade, but his discussion with Li

<sup>77</sup> On Li, see Mrs A. Little, *Li Hung-chang and his Life and Times* (1903); J. O. P. Bland *Li Hung-chang* (1917).

<sup>78</sup> Wade to Derby, no. 136, 8 July 1876, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>79</sup> Fraser (chargé d'affaires, Peking) to Tenterden, pte., 22 July 1876, F.O. 363/1.

<sup>80</sup> Boulger, [*The Life of Sir*] *Halliday Macartney* [K.C.M.G.] (1908), p. 257. A writer in England argued that if Russia should wish to quarrel with China over Kashghar, 'we neither can nor need do much to say her nay' (J. A. Partridge, *The Policy of England in Relation to India and the East* (1877), p. 74).

<sup>81</sup> Papers on the question of a loan in F.O. 17/825, 826.



proved fruitless. The grand secretary requested him to advise Yakub to submit to China. Forsyth replied that Yakub was 'a brave, wise ruler, who kept his country in admirable order', and would certainly not surrender. A compromise ought to be agreed on, and there should be a British umpire to see fair play, since otherwise Tso could not be relied on to respect any agreement. Forsyth came away from the talk feeling that the Chinese were in earnest, and that it would be a friendly act to give Yakub a warning.<sup>82</sup>

Within a few months the whole face of things was transformed when Tso's forgotten army abruptly appeared out of the desert and attacked the Tungani cities that Yakub Beg had been bringing under his sway. Urumtsi was stormed and its Tungani garrison put to the sword; in September began the siege of Manass, a more strongly fortified position, which was destined to fall in November. This was a Chinese army such as no one had seen before, reinforced by veterans from the campaigns against the rebels in Yunnan, and made up of men thrown on their own resources and forced to fight for their lives; they were using field glasses and Krupp guns, and manoeuvring as though led by a Moltke.<sup>83</sup> By adopting Western equipment an oriental State in the nineteenth century could strengthen its control over its subjects and dependencies at the same time as it was weakening in face of enemies outside.

News from the front came in slowly to Peking, and was hard to believe at first. In a conversation with Li Hung-chang at Chefu in September Wade reiterated his conviction that a long struggle between Tso and Yakub could end in nothing but a Russian occupation, which would be 'undesirable' even though it might only 'remotely affect' British interests. Li assured him in confidence that he had himself expressed the same view some time since in a memorial to the throne; after the late Emperor T'ung-chih's death in January 1875 the question had been referred by the Empresses Regent to a council, where opinions had been divided. Tso's forward movement this spring had been unauthorized, so far as Li knew (the Chinese government was activated by all sorts of secret and contradictory mechanisms). But Yakub must be made to recognize Chinese suzerainty, at least formally. Li ended by warning Wade that the Tsungli Yamen would mistrust Britain's motives if he pressed any advice on it.<sup>84</sup>

With the Margary case at last out of the way, Sir Thomas was leaving for a holiday in England. Anglo-Chinese relations were improving; and the Tsungli Yamen, a board composed mainly of timid shufflers much in awe of Tso, ventured so far as to send a note to the British legation, and to have a talk with its Chinese secretary Mayers, about the possibility of Tso receiving an envoy from Yakub.<sup>85</sup> A project of British mediation was thus beginning

<sup>82</sup> Forsyth to Wade, 9 April 1876, and other enclosures (as above), with Wade to Derby, no. 136 of 1876.

<sup>83</sup> Boulger, *Yakoub Beg*, pp. 238-40, 275.

<sup>84</sup> Memo. by Wade, 15 Sept. 1876, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>85</sup> Memo. by Mayers, 9 Dec. 1876, F.O. 17/825.



dimly to take shape. There was much that might be said in favour of leaving Yakub on his throne on condition of recognizing the Chinese emperor as his overlord. He would then enjoy a double protection, in being the recognized vassal of the empire whose rights over his territory Russia had never questioned, and in being an autonomous ruler in treaty relations with Britain and Russia. Kashghar's status would resemble that of Korea after 1883, when it was accepted that Korea was at the same time part of China and free to have her own treaties with foreign countries, and on both accounts, as subject to both Chinese and international rights, was removed from the sphere of what anyone could legitimately annex. China seemed, intermittently, not unwilling to accept such a solution. There were three obstacles from her point of view. One was the intractability of Tso Tsung-t'ang. Another, with the Muslim outbreaks in China fresh in memory, was Yakub's militantly Islamic pose, and the fact that he had in a sense thrown down a challenge to China by attacking the Tungan borderlands. Thirdly, Russia could not be expected to hand over the Kulja province to Yakub, and might refuse to restore it to China so long as Yakub survived in Kashghar; while even if she did, China could not easily resume control of Kulja while Yakub's territory hemmed it in.

Among British official observers it was Wade who felt most strongly the advisability of mediation. His ideas were laid before various personages, one of whom, Lord Augustus Loftus, ambassador at St Petersburg, criticized them on the ground that any open effort would be 'discountenanced and thwarted' by Russian agents; he suggested instead a joint Anglo-Russian mediation. This, Wade answered, would merely have the effect of making China suspect that the two Powers intended to share Kashgharia between themselves. He admitted Loftus's objection. But why should not Britain, on her own, make a quiet effort behind the scenes? This war was costing China three millions a year, and Britain had an interest in Chinese solvency. As regards the Russian menace on the frontier, that did undeniably exist—though he was personally 'not at all a wholesale Russophobe'—and China was 'painfully alive' to it; this was clear from memoranda drawn up by a High Committee appointed to study foreign policy during the Japanese crisis, which 'almost all came into our hands'. Tso's army must by now be reduced to a 'terrible condition', a fact doubtless gratifying to Russia, for as Butsov, her minister at Peking, kept saying, she did not wish to see Turkestan reoccupied by the Chinese. In fact, in all Wade's long experience no Russian representative at Peking had ever shown by word or deed anything but dislike of any Chinese emergence from torpor.<sup>86</sup>

Loftus received copies of other papers by Wade, but remained unconvinced; his personal opinion was that mediation would come to little, considering 'the known qualities of the Chinese' (whatever that might mean), and he even

<sup>86</sup> Wade to Derby, 5 Mar. 1877, F.O. 17/825. Loftus (*op. cit.* II, pp. 46 ff.) had never been a believer in the theory of Russian designs against India.



predicted that, in case of a decisive contest between Tso and Yakub, Russia 'would be more favourably disposed to the Chinese than to Kashgar.'<sup>87</sup> For the India Office Lord Salisbury pronounced that the question did not 'directly affect Indian interests'.<sup>88</sup> At the Foreign Office Wade's arguments led to nothing more than a suggestion that since the explorer Ney Elias was being sent from India to Kashgharia to see how the land lay, he might be told to sound Yakub unofficially as to his readiness to accept the good offices of Britain. Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, was a cautious statesman, who was to resign in March 1878 in protest against Disraeli's Eastern policy; and when his senior permanent official, Lord Tenterden, wrote: 'I shd think the less we attempted to interfere in these affairs the better', Derby rejoined: 'I quite agree.'<sup>89</sup>

Early in 1877 Tso was moving southward from Manass across the eastern fringes of the T'ien Shan range towards Turfan, Yakub's chief remaining stronghold in the east; though news of what was happening in the deserts reached the outer world sluggishly. Wade himself, as rumours of Chinese successes thickened, concluded that it would be better to mark time. He learned from Fraser, his chargé d'affaires at Peking, that the Chinese might seek the services of foreign officers if their own efforts against Yakub proved inadequate; these would very likely be Germans, for Von Brandt, German minister at Peking, had always prophesied that China would some day reconquer Turkestan, and he was 'continually pressing the Chinese to buy German arms.'<sup>90</sup> In April the Foreign Office informed the India Office that it was dropping the idea of mediation for the present.<sup>91</sup>

The idea, all the same, quickly revived. One reason for this was the Balkan situation. Things had been worsening steadily for two years, and between England and Russia mutual suspicions of sinister intentions in Central Asia were mounting.<sup>92</sup> Some at least of these were well-founded; for on 24 October 1876, the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, was asked by the British government whether a great blow could be struck at Russia in Central Asia. Lytton replied confidently that it could, with the aid of an appeal to the Muslim population to rise against the tsar, and he set about making preparations. In July 1877—war having broken out between Russia and Turkey in April—this plan, inspired by Disraeli, was revived.<sup>93</sup> By that time a Russian advance towards Merv was again exciting British fears for Afghanistan, and Lytton was fairly

<sup>87</sup> Loftus to Derby, no. 332, 26 June 1877, F.O. 65/967.

<sup>88</sup> India Office to F.O., 23 Feb. 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>89</sup> Memos. by P. Currie, 24 Mar. 1877, and Tenterden, 27 Mar. 1877, with minutes by Derby, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>90</sup> Memo. by Wade, 26 Mar. 1877, and Wade to Tenterden, Conf., 4 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>91</sup> F.O. to India Office, 16 Apr. 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>92</sup> Sumner, *op. cit.* pp. 308-9.

<sup>93</sup> M. Cowling, 'War against Russia. A suppressed episode of 1876-7', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 July 1954.



taking the bit between his teeth. 'For goodness' sake do not get into direct telegraphic corresp<sup>e</sup>. with Lytton', Lord Tenterden wrote to Sir H. Layard at Constantinople. '... There is a most dreadful mess about the Afghan mission. ... Allah only knows what will happen if we have our foreign policy directed from India instead of the more temperate climate of London.'<sup>94</sup>

Another factor fitted neatly into this complicated pattern. In February 1876 the Russians finally occupied Khokand, and in May Kaufmann sent an embassy, led by A. N. Kuropatkin, to tell Yakub Beg that he must accept a certain frontier line between Ferghana and Kashghar and hand over several of his forts. Kuropatkin reached Korla, where Yakub Beg was directing his campaign, on 22 January 1877. Winter hardships were having a serious effect on the amir's army, he found, and altogether this ruler who had been hailed as a new Tamberlane now seemed to him to have feet of clay.<sup>95</sup> He took a high tone, therefore, and Yakub showed himself tractable, sent Zaman Khan to air his anti-British and pro-Russian sentiments, and submitted, though with obvious pangs, to the loss of his frontier forts.<sup>96</sup>

If, therefore, Yakub could be rescued from China, he might well be counted on as a recruit for any grand movement against Russia in Central Asia that Britain might organize. There was some evidence, moreover, that China had not finally made up her mind to go to risky extremes. At Peking when the Grand Council debated Kashghar at the end of April 1877, Prince Kung, president of the Tsungli Yamen and a statesman of great weight, was still in favour of compromise.<sup>97</sup> At Canton the British consul, Sir B. Robertson, had a talk with the governor, who spoke freely of the international situation. Yakub, he thought, would be obliged to take sides with his co-religionists in the Russo-Turkish war, especially after his acceptance of titles from the Sultan; China too was menaced by the grand aggressor Russia, and ought not to be in a hurry to attack Turkey's Kashgharian ally; and besides, China was less interested in the recovery of territory in Turkestan than in the Amur region north of Manchuria, ceded to Russia under duress in 1858 and 1860. This conversation led the Indian government to think that ruling circles in China were disposed to agree to a friendly settlement with Kashghar, and this, it held, would be in accordance with British interests.<sup>98</sup>

Meanwhile the military situation was turning against Yakub more rapidly than anyone outside guessed. He had joined his troops on the eastern front, and was twice beaten near Turfan. In April Przhevalsky, then on a journey of exploration from Kulja to Lob Nor, met him at Korla, south of Turfan; Yakub affected the warmest sentiments towards Russia, but Przhevalsky felt that if he had set out a year earlier, before Yakub was seriously threatened

<sup>94</sup> Tenterden to Layard, pte., 21 June 1877, F.O. 363/2.

<sup>95</sup> Kuropatkin, op. cit. pp. 180-2, 4-5.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. Introduction.

<sup>97</sup> Fraser to Derby, tg. cyph., 1 May 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>98</sup> Foreign Dept., Simla, to India Office, no. 24, Secret, 16 July 1877, and enclosed report from Fraser, F.O. 17/825.



by the Chinese, he would never have been allowed to go on to Lob Nor.<sup>99</sup> Yakub was being driven to look for help wherever he could. He even sent to the Russians at Tashkent to beg for their intervention.<sup>100</sup> This proved futile; his last hope, and a more rational one, was of diplomatic assistance from England. He had sent Sayyid Yakub Khan to London, nominally en route to Constantinople and with no formal powers to treat, but really to see what help could be got.

Luckily for the Kashgharian envoy, who was less at home with Chinese than with Russian or Turkish problems, both Wade and Forsyth were in England, and there was also a Chinese representative with whom things could be discussed. This was Kuo Sung-tao, who had reached London in January 1877 as China's first resident minister abroad.<sup>101</sup> He was a peaceful and amiable man, and in politics a moderate, of the Westernizing school of Li Hung-chang; as such, however, he had already undergone a good deal of obloquy from die-hards at Peking, and he was obliged to tread delicately. He had with him Halliday Macartney, who from now on was to serve China as diplomatic adviser.

'It is possible', Wade wrote from the Athenaeum on 19 May to Lord Tenterden, 'that Kuo, who has a certain amount of self-assertion, may initiate a discussion. In any case it will be desirable to commit the newly arrived Khan as soon as possible to the position of a man seeking our counsel and assistance towards a pacific solution of the misunderstanding between Kashgaria and China.' This letter was shown to the India Office, to which Wade expected Sayyid Yakub Khan to apply.<sup>102</sup> The first contact made by the envoy was with his old friend and well-wisher, Forsyth. On 23 May the two of them, Forsyth acting as Persian interpreter, called on Wade at the Alexandra Hotel, and Yakub Khan begged him to exert his influence to stop a war that must prove ruinous to both parties. He spoke contemptuously of Tso's troops; but Wade was left with the conviction that the Athalik Ghazi would not have sent him to England if the war had not reached a critical stage.<sup>103</sup> A day or two later Wade saw Kuo Sung-tao, who asked whether he had had any talk with the Kashgharian. Kuo seemed to share Wade's belief that it would be to China's interest to settle with Yakub Beg by negotiation, only he insisted that the first step must be taken by the other side; and Wade surmised that he would not mind conferring privately with the Sayyid.<sup>104</sup> Forsyth felt sure that the latter, and probably his uncle also, would go to great lengths to satisfy China; and he thought it would be not unreasonable for Yakub Beg to occupy

<sup>99</sup> *From Kulja across the Tian Shan to Lob Nor*, pp. 127-8, 133.

<sup>100</sup> Boulger, *op. cit.* p. 248.

<sup>101</sup> See article on Kuo by Tu Lien-chê in Hummel, *op. cit.* Boulger (*Halliday Macartney*, p. 282) says that 'During the whole of the summer of 1877 the Chinese envoys were the lions of the season'. He is wrong in supposing (p. 302) that Kuo's activity in London was purely ornamental.

<sup>102</sup> Wade to Tenterden, 19 May 1877, F.O. 363/4.

<sup>103</sup> Wade to Derby, Conf., 24 May 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>104</sup> Wade to Derby, Conf., 26 May 1877, F.O. 17/825.



a position similar to that of the king of Burma as an autonomous ruler under Chinese tutelage.<sup>105</sup> Forsyth had been on a mission to Mandalay since his visits to Turkestan.

Sayyid Yakub Khan now called on Lord Salisbury, and directly requested England's good offices; Salisbury thought the British government ought to explore what could be done.<sup>106</sup> Wade rehearsed his opinions in a long letter to Lord Tenterden at the Foreign Office. He urged two points especially. Tso Tsung-t'ang's expenses were coming chiefly out of the *likin* duties, or tolls on goods in transit inside China, and these fell heavily on British merchandise. Secondly, a compromise now would not mean any permanent sacrifice for China, because Yakub was unlikely to leave a stable dynasty behind him, and his dominions would soon revert to his overlord at Peking.<sup>107</sup> On 12 June Wade formally proposed that the Chinese and Kashgharian envoys should be brought together, each 'educated' beforehand by their British friends, and that if they could reach an agreement Britain should endorse it and recommend it at Peking.<sup>108</sup> The India Office consented, and the Foreign Office authorized Wade to continue.<sup>109</sup>

Wade next had a visit from Kuo, who took care to emphasize that he had no instructions, and no knowledge of what was in his government's mind, and who repeated that the first overtures ought to come from Sayyid Yakub Khan. They should take the form of written proposals, and he outlined what he thought these ought to contain. He seemed willing to accept less than Forsyth believed Yakub Beg would offer; and in spite of his caution he betrayed an eagerness which led Wade to suspect that he had in fact been instructed by the Tsungli Yamen, out of fear of Russia, to seek a settlement.<sup>110</sup> When Forsyth learned of Kuo's proposals he was certain that Yakub Beg would agree to send an envoy to Peking and negotiate on such a basis. Yakub, he pointed out, denied having ever taken up arms against China, unless in self-defence; and as yet there had only been news of fighting between Tso and Yakub's Tungan outposts.<sup>111</sup> The India Office likewise felt that the differences between the two parties were narrow enough to be bridged; it only warned Lord Derby not to give the impression of being willing to guarantee a settlement.<sup>112</sup>

Another would-be mediator put in an appearance: Lord Stanley of Alderley, who had been converted to Mohammedanism during his eastern travels (though he remained 'an ardent supporter of the Church of England, especially in Wales'), and who often dabbled in Indian questions.<sup>113</sup> Kashghar

<sup>105</sup> Forsyth to Wade, Conf., 3 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>106</sup> India Office to F.O., Secret, 8 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>107</sup> Wade to Tenterden, Conf., 4 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>108</sup> Memo. of 12 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>109</sup> India Office to F.O., 14 June 1877, and Derby to Wade, 18 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>110</sup> Wade to Derby, 25 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>111</sup> Forsyth to Wade, 23 June 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>112</sup> India Office to F.O., Conf., 2 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>113</sup> *D.N.B.* (Rev. F. Sanders).



could count on his sympathy; and on the evening of 28 June, when Forsyth was leaving Yakub at his hotel, Lord Stanley turned up and wanted to know why no conference with the Chinese had been arranged, and declared that he meant to bring one about himself. Annoyed to hear next morning of this meddling, and aware that Kuo's desire for a conference had cooled off, Wade gave him a word of warning. Kuo seemed grateful; he was clearly in a highly nervous state.<sup>114</sup>

On 7 July, after ascertaining what terms Sayyid Yakub Khan could offer, the Foreign Office put them in a note to Kuo, saying that it did not want to let slip any chance of helping to restore peace, and that the offer seemed close enough to Kuo's own views for England to feel safe in recommending it.<sup>115</sup> It would give the khan of Kashghar a status similar to that of other borderland rulers to whom the Chinese emperor stood as it were *in loco parentis*. In the original draft of its letter the Foreign Office illustrated the point by comparing the position proposed for Yakub Beg with that enjoyed by the king of Burma; evidently Forsyth had been giving his friend Yakub Khan some sage advice. The India Office insisted on this being omitted.<sup>116</sup> Upper Burma was destined to be annexed within ten years. Wade thought these terms would be acceptable to Kuo, but he knew that the Chinese minister was alarmed by his own boldness, and aggrieved over another issue. 'To console Kuo *ta-jen* yesterday', he reported to Tenterden on the 8th, 'I went to the Chinese Department and asked permission to show him the Despatch which was only waiting for Ld. Derby's signature and I sent Hillier (Wade's Chinese expert) up to Portland Place to read it to him. Hillier found him downcast and sullen.' He was frightened lest the note should make his superiors at Peking think that the idea of mediation had been started by him, and he wanted the reference to his suggestions to Wade cut out. His assistants thought he had been foolish to meddle with Kashghar at all.<sup>117</sup>

Kuo saw Tenterden, and haggled over the wording of the note. 'On reflection', wrote Wade on the 10th to Tenterden, 'I feel sure that his doubts as to the meaning of the passages which he begged you to explain, must be affectation.' Press reports of Chinese victories, or a hint from Peking, had perhaps redoubled his caution. 'Lord Stanley's intervention may also have awakened his suspicions. Hillier tells me that he suspects everyone.'<sup>118</sup> Two notes sent by Kuo to the Foreign Office on 12 July were certainly carping in tone. Yakub Beg, he wrote, was not entitled to full autonomy, and he must at all events surrender the cities guarding China's communications with Turkestan. Further, Kuo asked whether England was prepared to guarantee Yakub's future good conduct.<sup>119</sup> But on 14 July he called on Lord

<sup>114</sup> Wade to Tenterden, 29 June 1877, F.O. 363/4.

<sup>115</sup> Derby to Kuo, 7 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>116</sup> India Office to F.O., Secret and Immediate, 7 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>117</sup> Wade to Tenterden, 8 July 1877, F.O. 363/4.

<sup>118</sup> Wade to Tenterden, 10 July 1877, F.O. 363/4.

<sup>119</sup> Kuo to Derby, 12 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.



ghar's relations with England, and Sayyid Yakub Khan's latest pilgrimage to London cannot have recommended his cause to the Russians. Yakub Beg, a Russian journal wrote, had 'declared himself, at the instance of British diplomacy, a vassal of the Porte', and it would be better for Russia to see Kashghar reconquered by China than free to serve as the catspaw of Turkey and England.<sup>127</sup> Also, Yakub's fall might open an easier way for Russian trade with China.<sup>128</sup> Tso Tsung-t'ang had reached a close understanding with the frontier authorities of Russian Turkestan, and the Tsungli Yamen with the Russian legation, according to what Fraser heard; he surmised that Russia might offer Tso enough help to tempt him into a risky march westward to Kashghar city.<sup>129</sup> And from the Russian point of view the best prospect must naturally be the one that frightened Wade, that of a long, mutually exhausting struggle in Kashgharia which would leave a clear field for Russia as soon as her Balkan difficulties were out of the way. It is worth while to notice that Tso's campaign had been organized partly on the strength of grain bought from Siberia,<sup>130</sup> as well as of money borrowed from Britain; so that all of Kashghar's three neighbours might be said to have co-operated, willingly or unwillingly, to bring about its downfall.

In October a serious Chinese repulse was heard of,<sup>131</sup> and quite possibly if resistance had continued England's mediation would have achieved success. But the defence crumpled rapidly. Forsyth, so much an admirer of Yakub, could only account for the collapse by supposing that he had been murdered. Whatever the truth of this, his death left the country torn by factions and plots, amid which various leaders like the governor of Khotan went over to the Chinese and Beg Kuli Beg, Yakub's heir, murdered his younger brother Haq Kuli Beg, and then in December had to take refuge across the border in Khokand.<sup>132</sup> By this time all the reports were of triumphs won by Tso and his men, 'instruments of celestial vengeance' as the *Peking Gazette* called them.<sup>133</sup> Tso was, it seemed, in a mood even to cross the Russian frontier in pursuit of escaped rebels, counting on the Balkans to keep Russia quiet. This alarmed Fraser, who felt it would be suicidal to give the Russians such a pretext for taking the law into their own hands.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Extract from *Russian World*, with India Office to F.O., 28 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>128</sup> Schuyler, op. cit. II, p. 325; Kurapatkin, op. cit. p. 78.

<sup>129</sup> Fraser, no. 172 as above.

<sup>130</sup> Article *Tso Tsung-t'ang*, see n. 72 above.

<sup>131</sup> Fraser to Derby, 13 Oct. 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>132</sup> Forsyth, introd. to Prejevskiy, op. cit. p. 11; Kurapatkin, op. cit. pp. 250-4. Russian

Press accounts are enclosed with Lotus to Derby, no. 571, 23 Oct. 1877, F.O. 65/969.

Lord Dunmore, *The Pamirs* (1894), I, pp. 317 ff., supports the theory that Yakub was poi-

soned; Sven Hedin, *Through Asia* (1899), p. 862, gives a circumstantial poisoning story;

Kurapatkin (op. cit. pp. 248-9) was told that he had been knocked on the head in a brawl.

<sup>133</sup> H. Cordier, *Relations de la Chine avec les Puissances Occidentales* (1901), II, p. 177; cp.

Fraser to Derby, no. 41 Conf., 7 Mar. 1878, F.O. 17/826, and translation of a Chinese

narrative with Hance, Acting Consul at Tientsin, to Lord Salisbury, Foreign Secretary, no.

19, 27 June 1878, *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Fraser to Salisbury, no. 105 Conf., 22 June 1878, F.O. 17/826.



Tenterden and explained that he had only raised objections in writing in order to cover himself against any outcry that might be raised at home; though he did think that Yakub Beg could be justly accused of having fomented trouble for China in her own north-western provinces.<sup>120</sup> He was assured that the British government in forwarding the proposals to Peking would take care not to attribute the responsibility for them to *him*. It could not, on the other hand, offer any guarantee.<sup>121</sup>

On 16 July there was a meeting between the two envoys under Wade's auspices. Linguistic obstacles, and reticence on both sides, made the interview laborious. Kuo was evidently still oppressed by a sense of the danger of compromising himself.<sup>122</sup> Above all, on this very day a Berlin telegram had belatedly announced the death, seven weeks earlier, of the Athalik Ghazi.<sup>123</sup> On 16 May, in fact, Tso had captured Turfan, and his enemy's death at Korla followed mysteriously on 25 May.<sup>124</sup> His death did not necessarily mean the fall of his throne; he left successors, and an army. Sayyid Yakub Khan put a calm face on things, and declared the situation unaltered.

Early in August the Foreign Office forwarded the peace proposals to Fraser, charge d'affaires at Peking, telling him to support them, but adding: 'You must be careful to avoid pledging this Government to anything beyond friendly advice.'<sup>125</sup> Fraser took up the question with the Tsungli Yamen. Prince Kung took his stand on China's rights of conquest, and said that negotiations could only continue through Tso, to whom the proposals would be sent. Kung's attitude was far from encouraging. He told Fraser, 'in a very significant tone', that he understood England's motives; and the Englishman was left to console himself by hoping that in that case the Chinese might be trusted to see through Russia's motives also. 'Themselves a crafty, ungenerous people', he wrote to London in a style into which irritated diplomats occasionally lapse, 'they have a keen appreciation of interested motives', and 'enough egotism' to pursue their own interests.<sup>126</sup>

Presumably Yakub's death had stiffened the Chinese attitude, and Tso was adamant as ever. Apart from this, the Russian attitude referred to by Fraser was a fresh factor working against any compromise. So far from hindering a Chinese reconquest Russia was, as Lord Augustus Loftus had guessed, showing a disposition to encourage it. With the Turkish army displaying unexpected toughness and the Balkan war threatening to spread, it no doubt seemed undesirable at St Petersburg that an independent khanate should remain to keep alive dreams of freedom at Bokhara or Khiva, or to offer Turkey a prospective ally. This consideration was the more cogent because of Kash-

<sup>120</sup> Memo. by Hillier, 14 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>121</sup> Derby to Kuo, 23 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>122</sup> Wade to Derby, 25 July 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>123</sup> *The Times*, 16 July 1877, p. 5, col. 5.

<sup>124</sup> Derby to Fraser, no. 90, 3 Aug. 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>125</sup> Fraser to Derby, 18. cyph., 27 Sept. 1877, and no. 172, Conf., 24 Sept. 1877, F.O. 17/825.

<sup>126</sup> Boulger, *Yakoub Beg*, pp. 250 ff.

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making war on Afghanistan,<sup>141</sup> and the next Anglo-Russian crisis, that of

1885, was to start from this same point.

When England was making friends with Yakub she was guilty, not for the last time, of underrating the strength of China. She was trying to save the Chinese from themselves, when it was Yakub who was in need of being saved from them. Insignificant as Kashghar might be in itself, it had a unique position in Asia as the junction between the Islamic world and the Far East. An autonomous Kashghar within the Chinese hegemony would have served to link the two old empires at the two ends of Asia, Turkey and China, that Britain wished to bolster against the new empire, Russia. Yakub Beg was gone; but Ney Elias wrote in another part of his report from Turkestan: 'I am more than ever convinced of the value of Kashghar for watching the eastern line of Russian approach and intrigue in the direction of Badakhshan.' It could only be hoped that the Chinese who now ruled in Yakub's place would be equally vigilant against Russian schemes. 'Should the Chinese conquer Kashghar', *The Times* wrote on Yakub's death, making the best of things, 'the event would be welcome to the Anglo-Indians, as they believe that a great and comparatively stable State like China would be a better barrier against the wave of Russian invasion than an isolated Native Government like that of Kashgar.'<sup>142</sup> Certainly Chinese occupation would be better for Britain than any survival after Yakub of a weak Kashghar dissolved into faction, an easy prey for Russia.

A basis was thus provided for an understanding between England and China to replace that between England and Yakub. The Chinese had surprised Ney Elias and his employers very much by inviting him to visit Yarkand immediately after its reoccupation. Their action suggested that they wished to enlist England's friendly interest. Already the question of whether Russia would fulfil her promise to restore the province of Kulja was open, and it was soon to transform the recent amiability between Russia and China into the crisis of 1879-80.<sup>143</sup> Russia was claiming a sum of money in return for her expenses in administering Kulja, in the hope that China would not know where to find ready cash; and early in 1879 the Chinese envoy at Tokyo told his French colleague in confidence that there was a Russian proposal for China to hand over the Kashghar region instead by way of compensation; personally this envoy expected his government to end by agreeing.<sup>144</sup> It may be that Peking really did toy with the idea of letting Russia advance to the frontier of Kashmir and expend her energies in quarrelling with Britain.

A treaty signed at St Petersburg on 24 February 1881 restored to China all but the western tip of the Kulja territory, while Russia's old treaty right to set up consulates in eastern Turkestan was revived and expanded, and Russian

<sup>141</sup> See the Duke of Argyll, *The Eastern Question* (1879), ch. xviii, for a criticism of this Afghan policy.

<sup>142</sup> 18 July 1877, p. 9, cols. 4-5.

<sup>143</sup> Cp. the article 'Kulja' in *Proc. R.G.S.* II (n.s.), 1880, pp. 489 ff.

<sup>144</sup> De Geotroy to Waddington, Foreign Minister, no. 41, 29 Jan. 1879; Japon, Corr. Politique, vol. 27, Archives of the Foreign Ministry, Paris.



China's complete triumph may be supposed to have upset Russian calculations, and St Petersburg reports dwell on the savagery of the Chinese reprisals. Tso's methods with rebels were not indulgent. 'Nothing but devastations meets the eye', he remarked complacently in one of his reports.<sup>135</sup> Even Yakub's tomb outside Kashghar city was broken into and the corpse desecrated.<sup>136</sup> But the conquerors soon turned to reconstruction. Tso advised in a memorial that Kashgharia be at once organized into a regular province, with a subsidy of a million taels a year, in order that it might be developed quickly and made capable of supporting the hungry occupation troops.<sup>137</sup> Ney Elias, lately sent out by the Indian government, described the new régime as less positively brutal than had been made out, but severe and arrogant. 'The highest Mussulman official or mouvi is thought to be far from the equal of the lowest Chinese soldier or Yamen (office) servant; the latter rides down the Mussulman or lashes him with his whip if he finds him in the way in the street. . . . In fact, all the high-handed proceedings charged against the English in India by the writers of the Native Press, prior to the Press Act, are to be seen in Yarkand at the present day.'<sup>138</sup>

Early in March 1878 the Treaty of San Stefano was signed, and from then on, until the Congress of Berlin met in June, Britain and Russia were on the edge of war. Central Asia was one of their prospective battlegrounds. England had in mind an alliance with Persia, and was believed by Russia to be tampering with Bokhara; Russia was believed by England to be tampering with Afghanistan.<sup>139</sup> If it had come to a general trial of strength in this theatre, England as well as Turkey might have felt the loss of Yakub Beg acutely. There was no one left now to lead a *jihad* or serve as a rallying point for the Tsar's enemies. 'No man in Central Asia can wield the sword of Yakob Beg', said an English writer.<sup>140</sup> The Congress of Berlin patched things up so far as the Balkans were concerned, but only to transfer Anglo-Russian rivalry more definitely to the Central Asian arena. Before the end of 1878 England was again

<sup>135</sup> Quoted in Fraser to Salisbury, no. 111, 27 June 1878, F.O. 17/826. Aurel Dummore, op. cit. II, p. 223, describes the tomb as he saw it a few years later. Stein, *Sand-Buried Ruins of Khotan* (1903), pp. 135-7, describes the temple built near it by the Chinese to their victorious general.

<sup>137</sup> Copy with Hance to Tenderden, 27 May 1878, F.O. 17/826; a similar memorial by Tso, 1879, *ibid.* One of Bouliger's objects in writing his *Yakoub Beg* was to exhibit 'the great merits of China as a governing power' (p. viii). F. E. Younghusband considered that the Chinese had set up 'a rule remarkable for its mildness' (*Proc.R.G.S.* x (n.s.), 1888, p. 502; cp. his *The Heart of a Continent* (1904), ch. vi, and pp. 270 ff.). But the old China was running down, in this as in other fields. Cobbold (op. cit. pp. 58, 287) thought her régime here good for agriculture, but otherwise 'nothing else but plain and open robbery'.

<sup>138</sup> Elias's report with Foreign Dept., Simla, to India Office, no. 228, Secret, 6 Nov. 1879, F.O. 17/826. Some Russian Press reports, highly critical of Chinese behaviour and representing the natives as longing for liberation by Russia, are quoted in *Parl. Papers* 1880, LXXVIII, 'Central Asia, no. 1', pp. 14, 42-3. A Russian who explored in 1879-80 from Kulja to Turfan wrote similarly (trans. in *Proc.R.G.S.* III (n.s.), 1881, pp. 340-52).

<sup>139</sup> Sumner, op. cit. pp. 479, 513-14; Malleison, op. cit. p. 450. Lord Lytton broke off negotiations with Afghanistan in March.

<sup>140</sup> P. Andrew, *Our Scientific Frontier* (1880), p. 95.



# NOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

## 1. A BYZANTINE ADMIRER OF 'WESTERN' PROGRESS:

### CARDINAL BESSARION

BY A. G. KELLER

At a time when there is so much discussion of the impact of Western civilization, and in particular of Western technology, on other cultures, it may be of interest to reconsider a letter in which an early 'Eastern' scholar advised his people to learn from the technical achievements of the West, in this case of Italy.

This letter was sent, probably in 1444, by Cardinal Bessarion<sup>1</sup> to Constantine Palaeologos, then despot of the autonomous Byzantine province of Morea. It has been published,<sup>2</sup> but the two works in which it appears are little known and exceedingly hard to obtain in this country.

The Morea was then largely sheltered from Turkish pressure, and a Greek despotate, effectually independent though closely linked dynastically to Constantinople, was rapidly eating away the remains of the Frankish Principality established after the Fourth Crusade. At Mystra (five miles from ancient Sparta) a little court grew up filled with Byzantine scholars and officials struggling to administer the turbulent Morea.<sup>4</sup>

Bessarion, who came originally from Trebizond on the south-eastern shore of the Black Sea, studied in his youth at Mystra as well as at Constantinople. He probably arrived there in 1427<sup>5</sup> at the age of twenty-four—the date of his departure is less certain, but it cannot have preceded 1433. By 1437 he had been back in the capital for some little time. He studied at Mystra chiefly under Gemistos Plethon,<sup>6</sup> a

<sup>1</sup> The fullest and most recent biography of Bessarion is that by Kyros (2 vols. Athens, 1947): there are earlier ones by Vast (*Le Cardinal Bessarion*, Paris, 1878), Mohler (Paderborn, 1923), and Rocholl (Leipzig, 1904).  
<sup>2</sup> The letter was first published by S. P. Lambros in his journal *N[é]os* [*Ελληνισμός*], III (Athens, 1906), p. 15 and again in his collection of documents relating to this period *Ναύα-λόγεια καὶ Πλα[ο]πονησιακά*, IV (Athens, 1930), p. 32. It has been commented on by Lambros (*N.E.* III, p. 46), Zakythinos (*Crise monétaire à Byzance*, Athens, 1948, p. 138), Danielides (*Νεοελληνική κοινωμία καὶ οἰκονομία*, p. 83) and Kyros (*Βησσαρίων ὁ Ἐλληνας*, I, p. 191). But all these writers have been concerned rather with the value of the letter as a plan to reform the Byzantine Peloponnese and as a call to arms to the Greek nation, than with its significance in the general history of Europe.

<sup>3</sup> On Mystra and its despotate, cf. Zakythinos, [*Le*] *Despotat* [*Grec de Morée*] (vol. I, Paris, 1932; vol. II, Athens, 1953); Khazidakis, *Mystras* (Athens, 1948); W. Müller, *Latins in the Levant* (London, 1905).  
<sup>4</sup> For their life, cf. Mazaris *Ἐπιθῆλια ἐν Ἄβου* ('Visit to Hades') in Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca*, III (Paris, 1831), p. 122 and Ziegler, 'Die resitlichen vier unveröffentlichten Briefe Isidors von Kiew', in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XVIII (Rome, 1952), p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> These dates are much disputed—I have followed Kyros, op. cit., I, p. 36, and Vast, but Zakythinos (*Des. Gr.* II, p. 332) following Mohler, p. 45, says that he did not arrive in the Morea until 1431 (but without giving reasons for the later date, whereas Vast and Kyros give reasons for theirs).  
<sup>6</sup> The only biography with full bibliography is that of Marmalakis (Athens, 1939); cf. also B. Knos, 'Plethon et son Souvenir', in *Letres d'Humanité* (Paris, 1950), p. 133.



subjects were to trade duty-free.<sup>145</sup> A Consul-General Petrovsky promptly took up his quarters at Kashghar city, and stayed for many years. Extremely affable to even British travellers, he developed a high-handed attitude towards both the easy-going Chinese and their subjects that made him seem 'the real ruler of Chinese Turkestan.'<sup>146</sup> Meanwhile Britain's interest in Kashgharia ebbed away astonishingly. At first an attempt was made to secure a trading position like Russia's; and the right to keep a consul at Kashghar instead of a mere 'Special Assistant to the Resident in Kashmir for Chinese Affairs',<sup>147</sup> Talks were suspended in 1886—the annexation of Burma seems to have had a bad effect<sup>148</sup>—and in 1895 and 1897 when India wished to revive them Sir C. Macdonald at Peking thought it inadvisable. He believed the Chinese assertion to be true, that they did not dare to give Britain equal rights in eastern Turkestan for fear of angering Russia; and the British government seems to have accepted this position.<sup>149</sup>

But though the decaying régime at Peking was to fritter away the success achieved for it by Tso's army in 1877-78, for a number of years China's reconquest of eastern Turkestan helped to raise her credit in the world, especially with Britain. Kashghar was the farthest of all her remote outposts, nearly twice as far from Peking as Mandalay or Bangkok from Canton, and the one most alien to her in culture. Sir Rutherford Alcock, a former minister to China, told the Geographical Society that he had always thought the Chinese would one day try to fight their way back there, and that their success was 'a remarkable instance of the tenacity and perseverance with which that great people held on to any object that they had once attempted.'<sup>150</sup> A reviewer wrote of the steamroller weight of the Chinese, their inexhaustible manpower, their unshakable purpose—and of what might happen if they should ever embark on a general war of conquest.<sup>151</sup> In 1876 Britain had been ready to fight her fourth war with China; from 1877 until the Sino-Japanese war of 1895 she was inclined to look at China differently, as a country progressing towards modernity, and as a potential ally.

<sup>145</sup> Text of the treaty in *Parl. Papers* 1882, lxxx, 'China, no. 1.' Frontier demarcation was still in progress several years later; see *Proc.R.G.S.* ix (n.s.), 1887, p. 508.

<sup>146</sup> A. von Le Coq, *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan* (trans. A. Barwell, 1928), p. 112 n.; cp. Hartmann, op. cit. p. ii, Cobbold, op. cit. pp. 254, 288, and H. H. P. Deasy, *In Tibet and Chinese Turkestan* (1901), pp. 291 ff., 354.

<sup>147</sup> The post was soon filled by George Macartney, son of Sir Halliday, who still held it (1910-18) when it became a consulate-general.

<sup>148</sup> Sir R. Hart, Inspector-General of Customs, Peking, to Sir J. Pauncefote, Under-Secretary, 28 Mar. 1886, F.O. 17/1062.

<sup>149</sup> Memo. by G. E. P. Hentslet, 19 Sept. 1901, F.O. 17/1583: China Tariff Commission Archives, vol. xi. In these negotiations leading to the Anglo-Chinese treaty of Sept. 1902 it was decided not to introduce any but minor questions affecting Kashgharia (Lord Lansdowne to Sir J. Mackay, Special Commissioner at Shanghai, no. 3, 2 Oct. 1901, *ibid.*). Already in 1889 Bell had found Russian trade much more active than British (*Proc.R.G.S.* 1890, p. 92).

<sup>150</sup> 13 May 1878; *Proc.R.G.S.* xxii, 1877-78, pp. 288-91.

<sup>151</sup> *Economist*, 21 Dec. 1878, p. 1487. Some doubting Thomases remained; Vambery argued in the *Nineteenth Century* (June 1900, pp. 925-6) that Kashghar had been overthrown by internal faction, not by 'the disorderly rabble, called Chinese Army'.