Published: December 15, 2003
Last Updated: June 7, 2013

HERAT VI. THE HERAT QUESTION

HERAT

vi. THE HERAT QUESTION

From the middle of the 18th century, following Nāder Shah's assassination in 1747, Herat became the focus of a century-long power struggle and regional rivalry that came to an end only with Persia renouncing its sovereignty over the city in 1857. Early Qajar shahs were committed to the preservation of Herat as an inseparable part of "The Guarded Domains of Iran" (*mamālek-e maḥrusa-ye Irān*), treating it mostly as a frontier vassalage that had to be protected, if necessary, by military means. Memories of the city as the capital of the late Timurid empire and the second capital of the Safavids, known by the epithet dār-al-Salṭana, were fresh in the minds of the Qajar rulers, whose grand strategy was to reconstitute the Safavid empire. Moreover, at the turn of the 19th century, Herat was a city of major strategic importance, with fertile hinterlands, an abundant water-supply, and secure defenses. Herat's population, estimated at about 100,000, consisted mostly of Persian-speakers from various Afghan ethnic groups, including Hazāras and Pashtuns, as well as Hindus and a sizable Jewish minority. The city's vast bazaars and its manufacturing base served as the chief emporium of trade between India, Kashmir, Kabul, Kandahar, Bukhara, Marv, Khorasan, Yazd, and Kermān (Fraser, appendix, pp. 30-33).

The weakening of Safavid control of the periphery of the empire had provided an opportunity for the restive Abdāli Afghan confederacy in the vicinity of Herat to take control of the city, and the region as a whole, as early as 1717. Tahmāsp-qoli Khan, later Nāder Shah, who recaptured Herat in 1728, preferred to reinstate the Abdāli chief Allāh-Yār Khan as governor of the city. Three years later, Nāder returned to quash a local Abdāli resistance, and recaptured Herat for the second time on his way to Isfahan. In 1738, taking advantage of the Abdālis' old rivalry with the Ḡilzi (q.v.) Pashtuns, Nāder included them among his troops in his march on Kandahar, where he destroyed the old city and put an end to Ḡilzi domination (Marvi, I, pp. 93-102, 168-98; II, pp. 484-91).

Upon the disintegration of the Afsharid empire at the end of the 18th century (see AFSHARIDS), Herat, to be followed soon after by the rest of Khorasan, fell under Aḥmad Khan of the Sadōzi clan. An Abdāli tribal chief in Nāder Shah's army, he soon expanded his empire from Kashmir and Jammu to Herat and Mašhad. Aḥmad Shah Dorrāni, as he came to be known, treated Šāh-roḵ Mirzā, the blind descendant of Nāder Shah who ruled over the remnants of Afsharid Khorasan, as his subordinate. Dor-rāni control of Herat at this juncture, fragile though it was, served as the historical grounds for the later inclusion of the city in the newly constituted country of Afghanistan. Later, to preserve Herat, Qajar shahs continuously had to play off the feuding Sadōzi claimants against each other as well as against chiefs of other Pashtun tribal clans (Eʿteżād-al-Salṭana, pp. 34-45).

Āqā Moḥammad Shah's campaigns in central and western Iran during this period left no time for the recapture of Khorasan beyond taking control of Mašhad in 1795. Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah's (q.v.; 1797-1834) consolidation in Khorasan, and his subduing of Kurdish and Qarāʾi khans (see KARĀʾI), renewed Qajar interest in Herat and in the neighboring Guriān and Farāh frontier provinces as areas of key importance for maintaining the security of Khorasan. The ambition of the Qajars clashed with the claims of Zamān Shah Sadōzi, the amir of Kabul and grandson of Aḥmad Shah, who contemplated seizing control of the whole of Khorasan. To ward off this threat, Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah welcomed an anti-Afghan alliance proposed by Lord Wellesley, the governor general of India, who in 1800 dispatched Captain John Malcolm on his first mission to Iran. In 1216/1801, the shah, who had harbored Maḥmud Mirzā and Fēruz-al-Din Mirzā, the rebellious brothers of Zamān Shah, provided money and troops for Maḥmud to march on Kabul. Zamān Shah was deposed and blinded by

Maḥmud, who declared himself the new amir under Qajar suzerainty, with a kingdom stretching from Kabul to Herat and Peshawar. Relieved of the Afghan threat in the northwest, the East India Company condoned nominal Persian sovereignty over western Afghanistan (Kelly, pp.68-74; Ḵāvari, I, pp. 73-75, 95, 117-19, 134-39, 172-73).

Despite much internecine conflict within the feuding Dorrāni house, Qajar Iran maintained its fragile control over Herat. When in 1807 Maḥmud's brother, Fēruz-al-Din, the governor of Herat, rebelled against the Qajars in collaboration with Ṣufi Eslām, a messianic claimant from Bukhara, a Qajar army headed by Moḥammad Khan Davallu crushed the movement, killed Ṣufi Eslām, and marched on Herat. Once more the Qajars subdued Fēruz-al-Din and restored Persian domination. In 1814, sensing Iran's evident weakness after defeat in the first round of Russo-Persian wars, Fēruz-al-Din Mirzā again entered Herat, only to be confronted there by his own nephew, Kāmrān Mirzā Sadōzi, the governor of Kandahar. Facing defeat, the vulnerable Fēruz-al-Din took refuge with the Qajar chief, Esmāʿil Khan Dāmḡāni; he deterred Kāmrān Mirzā from approaching and reinstated Fēruz-al-Din as a subordinate, in exchange for a payment of 50,000 *tomān*s to cover the cost of the campaign in addition to an annual tribute to Tehran. Fēruz-al-Din issued coins in the name Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah and acknowledged him in the Friday sermon (*ḵoṭba*). Only a year later, however, a general insurrection in Khorasan that led to the removal of Moḥammad-Wali Mirzā, the prince-governor of the province, prompted Fēruz-al-Din to evade his commitment. The new Persian governor of Khorasan, Ḥasan-ʿAli Mirzā Šajāʿ-al-Salṭana, another senior son of Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah, once again marched on Herat and forced Fēruz-al-Din to pay the monetary tribute that was due and to restate his loyalty to the shah (Ḵāvari, I, pp. 265-68, 328-29, 392-93, 344-49).

A greater threat emerged, however, from a coalition headed by the influential Pashtun chief, Fatḥ Khan Bār-akzi of Kandahar, who served as a nominal minister of Maḥmud Shah, the amir of Kabul. In a broad anti-Qajar coalition, Fatḥ Khan allied himself with Moḥammad Khan, the chief of the powerful Qarāʾi tribe of Torbat Ḥaydariya, as well as with the governor (*wali*)of Ḵiva and the amir of Bukhara. The alliance marked the first serious Bārakzi attempt to dominate Herat. Šajāʿ-al-Salṭana once again rushed to Herat and, in collaboration with a local Dāmḡāni chief, in 1817 soundly defeated the Afghan-Uzbek forces at the battle of Kāfer-Qalʿa. Some 12,000 Afghan troops were captured, and Maḥmud was forced to acknowledge Persia's sovereignty over

Herat. Fatḥ Khan was blinded at Tehran's request, but his numerous brothers did not stop rebelling against Maḥmud and Persia's overlordship (Watson, pp. 178-81; Ḵāvari, I, pp. 478-85; Donboli, pp. 326-32). In the period between 1818 and 1826, Dōst-Moḥammad Khan (q.v.), the most daring of Fatḥ Khan's brothers, in collaboration with the others, tried to impose a Bārakzi hegemony over all Afghan principalities. As a result the Sadōzi princes, Maḥmud and his son Kāmrān, took refuge in Herat, where they embarked on a turbulent quest for autonomy between Kabul and Tehran. In 1825 the Qajar Šajāʿ-al-Salṭana once again returned to Herat, this time to reinstate Kāmrān as Persia's protégé. His more independent-minded father was again forced out of the city (Eʿteżād-al-Salṭana, pp. 62-85. Ḵāvari, I, pp. 513-18, 528-29, Fayż-Moḥammad, I, pp. 88-108).

Less than a decade later Persia's control of Herat was seriously jeopardized because of endemic anti-Persian unrest in the city and also Britain's growing involvement in Afghanistan. Despite earlier support for Qajar control of Herat (see GREAT BRITAIN iii.), the East India Company began to favor Herat's autonomy as a buffer against Perso-Russian agitation in northwestern India (Ingram, pp. 46-82). In the aftermath of Persia's 1827 defeat in the second round of wars with Russia, the whole of Khorasan plunged into a phase of tribal insurrection. Fearing the immanent loss of the province to Afghans, Turkmans, and Kurds, in 1830 the shah summoned ʿAbbās Mirzā from Azarbaijan and gave him the task of pacifying Khorasan, a move that was bound to arouse British suspicion. In the view of most British observers, the Turkmanchay treaty of 1828, which guaranteed the crown prince's succession, had turned ʿAbbās Mirzā into a virtual captive of Russian favor if not an agent implementing their wishes. Moreover, defeat had weakened ʿAbbās's position in relation to his competing brothers, especially Ḥasan-ʿAli Mirzā Šajāʿ-al-Salṭana, who had defied Tehran, after he had been denied the viceroyship of Azarbaijan in place of ʿAbbās. Campaigning in Khorasan would have allowed ʿAbbās to restore his military credibility and prove the worth of the New Army of Azarbaijan.

By 1833, after sweeping campaigns against the local chiefs of Khorasan and the Turkman chiefs of the Saraḵs frontier, ʿAbbās Mirzā was ready to move on Herat, in part to underscore his military prowess but also to carry out Russian strategic wishes in the east, as directed through diplomatic channels in the Tehran court. The Russians, who had just embarked on an expansionist policy against the khanates of Turkistan, regarded Iran's possession of Herat as a

challenge to the British ambitions in Afghanistan, and even as a potential threat to British India. From the Russian perspective, ʿAbbās's preoccupation in the east had the additional benefit of distracting him from contemplating any restoration of the lost Caucasian provinces (Ḵāvari, II, pp. 836-40; Fraser, appendix, pp. 33-39).

ʿAbbās Mirzā's Herat campaign was marred from the start by this Anglo-Russian clash of interests, which formed the first major episode of colonial power rivalry in Qajar history and the prelude to what came to be known as the Great Game (Ingram, pp. 249-55). From the start, Russia pressured the reluctant ʿAbbās Mirzā, whose judgement was impaired because of a grave illness, to take Herat. This forced Kāmrān Mirzā, the governor of Herat, who earlier had declared himself a tributary of the Persian state, to switch sides and ally himself with the British, whose agents persuaded the adventurous prince to resist a Qajar military occupation. He even contemplated the capture of some Persian territory in Sistān. A third camp in Herat, led by the cunning Yār-Moḥammad Khan, the vizier of Herat, advocated instead a temporary reconciliation with Persia. In the face of Kāmrān's intransigence, two of ʿAbbās Mirzā's senior sons, Moḥammad Mirzā and Ḵosrow Mirzā, accompanied by the crown prince's capable minister, Mirzā Abu'l-Qāsem Qāʾem-maqām Farahāni, were instructed to lay siege to the seemingly penetrable Herat. However, news of ʿAbbās's death in Mašhad in November 1833 compelled Moḥammad Mirzā to lift the siege and return to the capital, where he was installed as the new crown prince. The relieved Kāmrān Mirzā agreed only to pay an annual tribute to Tehran (Hedāyat, X, pp. 30-31, 56-61).

Soon after his accession in 1834, Moḥammad Shah focused his attention again on Herat. He viewed military victory over Herat necessary not only for the consolidation of his throne, but also to please the Russian representative at his court, the energetic Comte Simonitch. Moreover, Moḥammad Shah could not afford to overlook the Afghan and Turkman ravaging sorties in the east, backed by Kāmrān Mirzā and Yār-Moḥammad Khan. Paying little heed to the advice of the British envoy in Tehran, in July 1837 the shah ordered troop assembly, and in September he marched towards Herat at the head of sizeable regular and tribal forces. Dr. John McNeill, who had earlier dissuaded ʿAbbās Mirzā from capturing Herat, this time warned Moḥammad Shah of British retaliation, even though he could offer for his threat little sound legal grounds: in the event of a war between Iran and the Afghans, Article 9 of the 1814 Anglo-Persian treaty denied the British government the right "to interfere with

either party unless their mediation to effect a peace shall be solicited by both parties" (Hurewitz, II, p. 201). Yet the Russophobes in the British establishment, headed by Lord Palmerston, viewed with alarm the growing Russian influence in Tehran. In their eyes, Persian control of Herat was a sure license for Russians to foment tribal anti-British agitation in Afghanistan. The East India Company's efforts to counter this perceived threat to India had proven ineffective, for it had failed to persuade the Bārakzi amir of Kabul to back Kāmrān Mirzā against Persian presence in Herat. Dōst-Moḥammad and his brother, Kohandel Khan, the governor of Kandahar, were sufficiently impressed by Russian might to offer their allegiance to her apparent ally, the shah of Persia. Yet their promised support never materialized, either in the course of the Qajar campaign or afterwards (Rawlinson, pp. 28-33; Kelly, pp. 286-87; Etteḥādiya, pp. 55-78).

Yār-Moḥammad Khan, on the other hand, switched sides to the British camp, and his Sunni tribal forces prepared for the defense of Herat. As a result, the Persian army remained stranded before Herat's gates for nearly ten months; the Qajar artillery proved ineffective, and the Persian siege strategy failed to penetrate the fortifications of Herat. Ḥāji Mirzā Āqāsi (q.v.) had allowed a level of humanitarian relief to go through and declared some city gates safe for civilian traffic. In April 1838, McNeill, who had arrived at the Qajar camp with threats of British military retaliation, put pressure on the shah to accept his mediation. However, the shah was left unimpressed by the unfavorable terms that were offered by the British envoy. Another British ultimatum issued in May was followed by McNeill's angry departure from the camp in June. He protested the detention of the British legations' courier outside Herat and the alleged opening of sensitive diplomatic dispatches. On such frivolous pretexts, on 7 June 1838 he declared a break in diplomatic relations with Persia. Ten days later the British Indian fleet that had been dispatched months earlier from Bombay occupied the Persian Gulf of Ḵārk and threatened the port of Bušehr. The small force of 500 Indian Sepoys faced virtually no resistance. Anxious to bring the campaign to an end, on 23 June, the shah ordered a new offensive but failed to break through Herat's defenses despite high Persian casualties. The enhanced fortifications under the supervision of a British officer, Major Eldred Pottinger, had made Herat's city walls even more difficult to penetrate. Finally in August 1838 troop exhaustion and the high cost of the war forced the shah to accept McNeill's earlier offer and thus return to the capital in September 1838 empty-handed. The public announcement issued by the government spoke of the shah's frustration.

Moreover, as a direct result of the Qajar campaign, Herat and its environs sustained enormous agricultural, commercial, and material damage (Kelly, pp. 290-301, 306-20; Etteḥādiya, pp. 79-116). The whole affair signified a clear British strategic victory over Russian advances in Central Asia.

McNeill, who after the break in relations headed towards Tabriz, on the way dispatched a letter to the celebrated senior jurist (*mojtahed*)of Isfahan, Sayyed Moḥammad-Bāqer Šafti, criticizing the Persian government for bringing about the break in relations and urging that "leader of the community," as he referred to Šafti, to stay clear of the conflict between the two governments. This was a veiled warning to him not to declare jihad against Britain at the behest of the shah and his premier. The mojtahed's rejoinder, which reached McNeill in September 1838, was conciliatory and showed his awareness of the futility of declaring jihad as had been done in the 1826 war against Russia. Yet he refuted McNeill's charges and defended the shah's campaign on the grounds that it was aimed to pacify the eastern frontiers against Turkman and Afghan raids and stop the abduction and enslavement of the Shiʿite inhabitants of Khorasan. Šafti further stated in no unambiguous terms that, regardless of differences with the government, he recognized the shah's authority and did not consider foreign affairs within his own judicial sphere (Amanat, 1990, pp. 11-41).

The failure of the Herat campaign and its aftermath discredited Moḥammad Shah and further exposed the Persian state to internal strife and diplomatic abuse. It emboldened Yār-Moḥammad in his anti-Qajar stance, contributed to Khorasan's insecurity, demonstrated Persia's vulnerability to a naval threat in the Persian Gulf, and encouraged deeper British involvement in Afghanistan from 1839 onwards. In February 1842, the East India Company dispatched expeditionary forces to depose and exile the now pro-Russian Dōst-Moḥammad in Kabul, and to secure in his place on the throne of Afghanistan the British puppet, Shah Šajāʿ Sadōzi. The British however, were soon obliged to withdraw from Kabul in the face of a popular uprising; and the retreating forces, numbering some 3000 troops, were massacred in Jalā-lābād by the Afghans under Akbar Khan, Dōst-Mo-ḥammad's son (see ANGLO AFGHAN WARS i.). Dōst-Moḥammad was subsequently restored to power, and soon afterwards he began to consolidate his base. Facing a new threat from Kabul and a change in the political climate, especially after the British setback, Yār-Moḥammad now tilted back towards Iran and sought the shah's help against Dōst-Moḥammad in as early as 1839. Viewing Kāmrān Mirzā as a nuisance,

three years later he murdered the Sadōzi prince and declared himself the governor of Herat. The prevailing of a new Sunni emir over Herat, who effectively put an end to Sadōzi rule, further complicated Iran's policy toward Herat and added to its concern for the maltreatment of the Shiʾi population.

To restore relations with Britain and request withdrawal from Ḵārk, in early 1839 the shah dispatched Ḥosayn Khan Ājudān-bāši to Europe. After much delay and humiliating treatment, he negotiated a settlement according to which the Persian government was obliged not only to apologize for charges already made by McNeill, but to punish its own officers and officials for their actions. Under pressure Iran signed, in October 1841, a long-resisted commercial treaty that was meant to match Russian commercial privileges as stipulated in the Turk-manchay supplementary treaty. The increasing hardship suffered by the Shiʿites of Herat at the hands of the Sunni tribesmen, a major motivation for the Herat campaign, forced many of them to take refuge in the towns and cities of Khorasan. Despite these setbacks, the Persian government still refused to renounce its sovereignty over Herat.

With the accession of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah in 1848 and the premiership of Amir Kabir (q.v.), Iran saw a new chance to reassert itself in Herat. Britain's temporary hands-off policy persuaded the khans in Herat to adopt a friendly attitude towards Tehran and, in effect, to serve as a mini-buffer between Iran, India, and Kabul. During the Sālār revolt (1847-51), when Turkman and Kurdish tribes in northern Khorasan rose against the Qajar state, Yār-Moḥammad even offered logistic and intelligence support to the Persian troops, for which he received from Tehran the title of Ẓahir-al-Dawla (the supporter of the state). After his death, his son, Sayd Moḥammad Khan, also recognized Persian suzerainty and adopted a pro-Shiʿite stance in exchange for Tehran's backing against Kohandel Khan, the amir of Kandahar, who in early 1851, in league with his brother Dōst-Moḥammad Khan, marched on Herat. He claimed he was appointed by Moḥammad Shah as the legitimate ruler of Herat. The Persian expeditionary force of one thousand strong that was dispatched to Herat after the fall of Amir Kabir by the new prime minister, Mirzā Āqā Khan Nuri, entered the citadel of Herat in late 1851 and disbanded the pro-Bārakzay forces there under Kohandel Khan and Dōst-Moḥammad Khan (Ādamiyat, pp. 605-44).

The Qajar success in Herat through backing Sayd Moḥammad Khan enraged Colonel Justin Sheil, the British minister plenipotentiary in Tehran, who demanded an immediate Persian withdrawal. His initiative opened a new

chapter in the Anglo-Persian scramble over Herat that eventually led to the 1856 confrontation. Once in office, Nuri, who had come to power with the blessing of the British, was obliged to adjust his orientation and shift to a more independent course of policy so as to accommodate the young Nāṣer-al-Din Shah's aspirations for Persian sovereignty in Herat. The British anxiety was intensified by the possibility of a Russian consular presence in the city, should Iran be allowed to obtain a permanent foothold there. Like McNeill, Sheil believed the northwest Indian frontier would be exposed to Russian intrigue. His argument gained backing in the Foreign Office and the Indian Government, especially on the eve of the Crimean war, once the period of relative calm in Anglo-Russian relations came to a close (Sheil, pp. 301-6, 370-75).

Under intense British pressure, the Persian expeditionary force withdrew from Herat in January 1852, but only after Kohandel's forces had retreated from the vicinity of the city. Despite the Persian withdrawal, Nuri resisted Sheil's wishes to declare Herat outside of Persia's sphere of control; but, after long and acrimonious negotiations, in January 1853 he was compelled to give a unilateral undertaking to the British government. The Sheil-Nuri agreement obliged Iran "not to send troops on any account to the territory of Herat, excepting when troops from without attack the place." It also demanded that, immediately on the retreat of the foreign troops, Persian forces must "return to the Persian soil without delay." Iran was to "abstain from all interference whatsoever in the internal affairs of Herat" except for whatever influence it already exerted on Yār-Moḥammad Khan. Iran was also required to relinquish "all claim or pretension of coinage of money and to the 'Khootbeh' (*ḵoṭba*) or to any other mark whatever of subjection or of allegiance on the part of the people of Herat to Persia." The only consolation was that these engagements were valid so long as there was "no interference whatsoever" by the British Government "on the internal affairs of Herat and its dependencies" (Hurewitz, I, pp. 305-6; Amanat, 1997, pp. 225-32).

The ensuing turmoil in Herat caused further deterioration in Anglo-Persian relations and exposed the fragil-ity of the recent agreement. Upon learning of the Sheil-Nuri undertaking, Sayd-Moḥammad Khan lost no time in switching to the British side, while the Persian government, in response, sided with another pretender to the government of Herat, Moḥammad-Yusof Mirzā, a nephew of the slain Kāmrān Mirzā of the Sadōzi house. In September 1855, Moḥammad-Yusof removed Sayd-Moḥammad from power and subsequently

murdered him. This happened just after the death of Kohandel Khan in Kandahar, which persuaded his brother Dōst-Moḥammad, the amir of Kabul since 1842, to take Kandahar in February 1856. Already in March 1855, Dōst-Moḥammad had concluded a decisive treaty with the East India Company that recognized him as the amir of the whole of Afghanistan. The Treaty of Peshawar (18 March 1855) was designed in part to impede Persian designs on Herat (Hurewitz, I, p. 310). Dōst-Moḥammad, who despite his earlier anti-British history now enjoyed full British backing, declared his intention to march on Herat. His pretext was to avenge the murder of Sayd-Moḥammad, his son-in-law. In fear Moḥammad-Yusof, who was uncertain of Persian support, switched sides to join the British after the people of Herat had almost managed to remove him from power and to force the Persian regiment that had come to his support out of the citadel. In desperation, the governor of Persian Khorasan, Solṭān-Morād Mirzā Ḥosām-al-Salṭana, an uncle of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, helped to stage a bloodless coup in Herat that brought to power yet another contender, ʿIsā Khan, an influential chief with equally questionable loyalties. Yet the Persian government was backing a wrong contender. Handing Mo-ḥammad-Yusof to Morād Mirzā, ʿIsā Khan lost no time in pleading for support from Dōst-Moḥammad and the British government against Persia's impending threat (Rawlinson, pp. 80-87; Amanat, 1997, pp. 277–82).

International developments in the mid-19th century contributed to the gravity of the situation in Herat. Most significantly, the British preoccupation with the Crimean War and its setbacks in late 1854 and early 1855 gave a false impression to Nāṣer-al-Din Shah that, if he could secure the backing of the new tsar of Russia, Alexander II, he would then be able to capture Herat and put an end to half a century of domestic feuding and colonial scrambles. Russia's gains in Kars in December 1855 confirmed this impression. After a series of acrimonious exchanges with the British Legation, in November 1855, diplomatic relations between the two countries finally ruptured. This came after a vehement quarrel with the British minister plenipotentiary Charles Murray over his alleged affair with a certain Parvin Ḵānom, a sister-in-law of the shah. Nāṣer-al-Din Shah used this occasion to embark on a swift mobilization of his forces to march on Herat with Morād Mirzā at the head. The shah's motives were partly military glory, but more than anything he feared the rise of a united Afghanistan under the aegis of the British as a threat to Persia's eastern frontiers. The Treaty of Peshawar had recognized Dōst-Moḥammad's control over Kabul and "of those countries of Afghanistan now in his possession," and required of the amir "to be the friend of his friend

and enemy of the enemies of the Honorable East India Company," the latter being a clear reference to Iran (Hurewitz, I, p. 310; Amanat, 1997, pp. 265-77).

From the Persian perspective, a divided Afghanistan with Herat under Persia's direct or indirect control would strengthen her hand in the face of increasing British strategic and diplomatic presence. Adopting a two-track policy of military campaigns and diplomatic negotiations, the shah and his premier hoped to arrive at a fair settlement with Britain. In late 1855, they dispatched to Europe Farroḵ Khan Amin-al-Molk Ḡaffāri (later Amin-al-Dawla), a gifted statesman and diplomat, to negotiate with the British ambassadors in Istanbul and in Paris on Persia's conditions for ending the Herat campaign. He was also instructed to solicit the mediation of France and seek a loan and military support from the United States. This was at a time when a 15,000-strong Persian force was stranded before the formidable walls of Herat. After nearly nine months, the technical assistance of M. Buhler, a French army engineer in the service of the Persian government, who dug a series of subterranean tunnels under the city walls, eventually brought the famine-stricken Herat to its knees. In October 1856, the Persian forces finally captured the city. In the epinicium (*fatḥ-nāma*) issued by Morād Mirzā, he boasted about securing the city; he also minted coins in the name of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah and instructed the adoption of the Shiʿite call to prayer (*aḏān*) and the acknowledgment of the shah's authority by the symbolic mention of his name in the Friday sermon (Kelly, pp. 452-99; Amanat, 1997, p. 80).

The Persian victory was short-lived and turned out to be the final Qajar attempt to retrieve Herat. As expected, the breakdown in negotiations at Istanbul was followed by a second British declaration of war and the landing, in December 1856, of a substantial force of British and Indian troops at Bušehr. Soon the British forces moved northwards through the province of Fārs, and in February 1857 they exacted a heavy blow on the Persian regular army in the battle of Ḵušāb. Facing an empty war-chest and the threat of political ruin, the terrified Nāṣer-al-Din Shah and his bewildered premier instructed Farroḵ Khan in Paris to accept the harsh British conditions for a ceasefire and the eventual restoration of diplomatic relations. On 4 March 1857, the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris ended hostilities between the two countries. Two days after the draft of the treaty reached Tehran, however, in late March 1857, British naval forces arrived at the Persian port of Mohammara and, in early April, began bombarding the city of Ahvāz. Apart from serving as a punitive action, the attack did not accomplish any strategic

objectives.

The Treaty of Paris put a definite end to any Persian claims of sovereignty in Afghanistan. While Article 5 engaged “His Majesty the Shah of Persia” to withdraw from Herat within three months, Article 6 demanded that he “relinquish all claims to sovereignty over the territory and the city of Herat or the countries of Afghanistan, and never to demand from the Chiefs of Herat, or of the countries of Afghanistan, any mark of obedience, such as coinage or ‘Khootbeh’ or tribute.” His Majesty further promised “to abstain hereafter from all interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan” and to “recognize the independence of Herat and the whole of Afghanistan, and never to attempt to interfere with the independence of that state.” In case of differences between Herat and Iran, the same article stipulated, “the Persian Government engages to refer them for adjustment to the friendly offices of the British Government, and not take up arms unless those friendly offices fail to effect.” The British government promised in exchange to exert influence to resolve problems between Afghanistan and Iran. The only right that Article Seven reserved for the Persian government in case of any violation of its frontier, was that, if the due satisfaction was not given, they could “undertake military operations for the repression and punishment of the aggressors” without the Persian forces being able to stay longer than necessary or to occupy Herat (Hurewitz, I, p. 342; Ette-ḥādiya, pp. 119-97; Amanat, 1997, pp. 292-308).

After more than half a century of Persian involvement, Qajar ambitions to retain Herat as a frontier vassalage were brought to an end as a result primarily of British strategic interests in Afghanistan—an early consequence of the Great Game. The Treaty of Paris ended three and a half centuries of almost unbroken, though often turbulent, inclusion of Herat in the Persian domain. Under the Bārakzi dynasty and with British blessing, Herat was incorporated into Afghanistan as a relatively stable province, although it remained culturally distinct from the rest of the new country. The loss of Herat also initiated a gradual demarcation of Persia’s eastern frontiers, a process that continued up to the end of the 19th century. Defeat in the war convinced Nāṣer-al-Din Shah and the Qajar state never to engage militarily against Persia’s imperial neighbors. In the longer historical span, the humiliation of losing Herat invoked in Persian memory, especially during the Pahlavi era, the image of Qajar infirmity and ineptitude, and a painful national loss second only to that of the Caucasian provinces three decades

earlier.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fereydun Ādamiyat, *Amir Kabir wa Iran*, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1969.

Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1997.

Idem, " 'Pišvā-ye ommat' wawazir-e moḵtār-e 'bi-tadlis-e' Engelis," *Irān-šenāsi* 2, 1990, pp. 11-41.

George Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 vols., London, 1892.

Idem, *Russia in Central Asia*, London, 1899.

ʿAbd-al-Razzāq Donboli, *Maʾāṯer-e solṭāniya*, Tabriz, 1241/1825.

ʿAli-qoli Mirzā Eʿteżād-al-Salṭana, *Tāriḵ-e waqāyeʿ wa sawāneḥ-e Afḡānestān*, ed. Mir Hāšem Moḥaddeṯ, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1997.

Fayż-Moḥammad Kāteb, *Serāj al-tawāriḵ*, 3 vols. in 2, Kabul, 1331-33/1913-15.

J. P. Ferrier, *Caravan Journey and Wandering in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Beloochestan*, London, 1857, pp. 144-200.

James B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan in the year 1821 and 1822*, 2nd ed., Delhi, 1984.

Reżā-qoli Khan Hedāyat, *Rawżat al-ṣafā-ye nāṣeri*, Tehran, 1960, IX and X.

G. H. Hunt, *Outram and Havelock's Campaign, 1857*, London, 1858.

C. J. Hurewitz, *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record*, 2 vols., New Haven, 1975.

Edward Ingram, *The Beginning of the Great Game in Asia, 1828-1834*, Oxford, 1979.

Fażl-Allāh Širāzi Ḵāvari, *Tāriḵ-e Ḏu'l-Qarnayn*, 2 vols., ed. Nāṣer Afsārfar, Tehran, 2001, I, pp. 172-73.

John William Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan,* 2 vols., London, 1851.

J. B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795-1880*, Oxford, 1968.

Moḥammad-Kāẓem Marwi, *ʿĀlam-ārā-ye nāderi*, ed.

Moḥammad-Amin Riāhi, 3 vols., 3rd ed., Tehran, 1995, I, pp. 93-102, 168-98; II, pp. 484-91.

Laurence Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, London, 1938, chap. 5. George Pottinger, *The Afghan Connection*, Edinburgh, 1983.

Henry Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, London, 1875.

Mary Sheil, *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*, London, 1856.

Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan,* 2 vols., London, 1940.

Pio-Carlo Terenzio, *La Rivalite Anglo-Russe en Perse et en Afghanistan*, Paris, 1947.

Robert Grant Watson, *A History of Persia*, London, 1866.

(Abbas Amanat)