



MOHAMMAD-AYYUB KHAN

MOHAMMAD-AYYUB KHAN, born Amir Šēr-‘Ali Khan, a prominent Afghan political figure of the Moḥammadzi clan (1857-1914). He was the third son of the Afghan amir, Šēr-‘Ali Khan (r. 1279-83 /1863-66, 1285-96/1867-79) by a Mohmand wife, Maryam, daughter of Sa‘ādat Khan. Moḥammad-Ayyub had a checkered political career in Afghanistan, most of which was spent in and around Herat. He was governor there in 1289/1872, but because of political problems went into exile in Mašhad. He returned as governor of Herat in 1296/1879 at the accession of his full brother, Moḥammad-Ya‘qub, to the Kabul throne, and remained deeply loyal to him. In the autumn of that year, the British government in India, anxious about the security of its northwestern frontier, occupied the cities of eastern Afghanistan: Qandahār, **Ġazni**, and Kabul. With the virtual collapse of Moḥammad-Ya‘qub’s government at Kabul, Moḥammad-Ayyub became master of western Afghanistan.

In early 1297/1880, Moḥammad-Ayyub left Herat in an attempt to drive the British from Qandahār. At Maywand, on 10 Ša‘bān 1297/27 July 1880 he defeated an Anglo-Indian force under Brigadier-General Burrows. The victory, psychologically important as it was, had little political effect. Moḥammad-Ayyub was unable to take Qandahār and on 26 Ramažān/1 September, after General Frederick Roberts marched from Kabul to the relief of the British force in Qandahār, he was forced to return to Herat.

In the meantime, ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān b. Moḥammad-Afżal had taken the Kabul throne with the blessing of the British. Despite serious political troubles in Herat, Moḥammad-Ayyub prepared to contest ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān’s claim to the



amirate. In Rajab 1298/June 1881, he again marched on Qandahār, now abandoned by the British, and took it from a supporter of ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān. But the latter immediately responded, not only by retaking the city but also by having one of his loyalists, ‘Abd-al-Qoddus, take Herat in Moḥammad-Ayyub’s absence. As a result, Moḥammad-Ayyub was forced once again into exile in Iran. This exile was marked by at least three abortive attempts to return to Herat and by a serious Anglo-Iranian conflict over his presence in Iran. Finally in 1888, Moḥammad-Ayyub was persuaded to move with his handful of supporters to India. While in exile there he was implicated in at least one conspiracy to overthrow ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān.

See also [AFGHANISTAN X](#), esp. pp. 551-53, and [ANGLO-AFGHAN WAR II](#).

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