

The Anglo-Russian Rivalry, Russia's Annexation of Merv and the Consequences of the Annexation on Turkmens

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Abstract: The annexation of Merv into Russia in 1884 was one of the most important stages in Russian expansionist policies and in the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Turkistan. It brought all the Turkmens—today living in Turkmenistan—under the Russian rule.

The British who thought that the Russians had secret plans and goals towards India became extremely alarmed in every Russian move in Central Asia. Because of their fears of Russian expansion, the British sent agents to the region, adopted an adversarial diplomatic stance vis-a-vis Russians and, from time to time, invaded Afghanistan and Iran during the nineteenth century. The Anglo-Russian rivalry that has been called as “the Great Game” reached a stage of open conflict during Russian annexation of Merv.

The Turkmens who had suffered under the militaristic and corrupt Russian rule did not immediately change their traditional life style. However, their cities and fertile lands began to be occupied by Russian and other immigrants. When the British and the Russians agreed to draw a border between Turkistan and Afghanistan, some Turkmens were left under Afghan and Iranian domination.

Key words: The Turkmen, the Russians, the British, Turkmenistan, Merv, Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, the Turks and the Anglo-Russian Rivalry

Few Remarks about Russia's Invasions in Central Asia: Russian expansion into Central Asia had a long history starting in the late sixteenth century when a Cossack leader named Irmak (Yermak) Timosevitch in the service of the Stragonov family crossed the Urals and attacked the Khanate of Siberia (“An Indian Officer” 1894: 10-11)¹ and ending in the early twentieth century when the Russo-British Convention was signed in 1907, which recognized all Turkish Central Asia as the Russian protectorate (Rurthart 1986: 10).² In the first half of the eighteenth century the Russians subdued Kazakh Hordes as a result of both Russia's erstwhile eastern expansion and help the Kazakhs sought from the Russians because of the

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danger posed by the Khalmuks. Russia's control over large Kazakh Steppes, however, had taken quite a time. Although she succeeded in incorporating all of Kazakh Steppes towards the mid eighteenth century, Russia's expansion into the Turkish lands stretching from the northern Black Sea in the west to the Chinese border in the east had limits until the mid nineteenth century. There were free Turkish khanates and Turkmen lands in the nineteenth century before Russia intensified her invasions in the 1860's. A line starting from the northern Caspian Sea passing through the steppes and reaching to the Chinese border in the east was the border between the independent Turkish Khanates of Central Asia and the Tsarist Russia ("The Russians in Central Asia" July-October 1865: 530).³

However, beginning in the mid nineteenth century, especially in the 1860's, Russian gradual expansion gained a sudden momentum. In this sudden increase in Russian invasions in Turkistan, Russia's defeat at the Crimean War (1853-1856), which temporarily blocked her free action in the Near East forcing her to seek new places to satisfy her militaristic and imperialistic appetite elsewhere, American Civil War (1861-1866), which increased cotton prices in Europe forcing the European states to find this valuable commodity in other places, to Russia the place was Central Asia, and the British increased interests in Central Asian markets, which frightened some Russians who thought that the British were going to permanently settle in these places, played important roles. At this time, the Russians intensified their efforts to invade last remaining free Turkish lands, namely the khanates of Khiva, Khokand and Bukhara, and free lands of the Turkmens, Turkmenia, stretching from the Caspian Sea to Afghanistan and from Persia to Khiva, in Central Asia. All these last remaining free Turkish lands were either annexed into Russia or subdued to the Russian authority by wars fought between modern Russian armies on one side and poorly equipped Turkistan armies on the other, lasting roughly from 1857 to 1884.

One of the last large areas annexed by the Russians was Merv which had been known since the ancient times as "the queen of the world," a major center in the great oases of Central Asia and on the Great Silk Road. It was located on the Murghab River and had been a major agricultural center which had been irrigated by canals built to carry water from the Murghab River (Yakubovskiy 1997: 774). Some Iranian and Arab historians believed that the city of Merv was founded by the Turks in ancient times (Togan 1946: 26). At the time of Russian invasions, Merv which was a small town located in the great Merv oasis which was around 2,500 square kilometer (Yakubovskiy 1997: 776) was a part of Turkmenia and was mostly populated by the Turkmens, namely Teke, Sari, Salor, Ersari, Ata, Mahtim and Yamud

(Marvin 1883: 196).⁴ The Teke Turkmens whose number was estimated to around 250,000 (Vambery 1885: 42; Hopkirk 1992: 402) was the largest group who had perfect warrior qualities in Turkistan (Togan 1947: 75).

Anglo-Russian Rivalry Regarding Merv: During Russian expansion in Central Asia, Every Russian forward move created new fears in the British circles both in British India and in England. These fears originated from the British concerns for the safety of India and were not at all groundless since the Russians were always closing the distances towards the British imperialist possessions in the east.

The Russian threat to India seemed real enough at the time, whatever historians may say with hindsight today....For four centuries the Russian Empire had been steadily expanding at the rate of some 55 square miles a day, or around 20.000 square miles a year. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, more than 2,000 miles separated the British and Russian Empires in Asia. By the end of it this had shrunk to a few hundreds and in parts of the Pamir region to less than twenty. No wonder many feared that the Cossacks would only rein in their horses when India too was theirs (Hopkirk 1992: 5).

After annexing strategically and economically important parts and subduing the rest of the khanates of Khokand and Bukhara into vassalage level by 1868 and establishing a governor-generalship, Turkistan in 1867, in there, as Tashkent was its capitol (Hayit, 1987: 213),⁵ the Russians were always making new steps to invade more lands in Turkistan. The British always knew that Russia was getting ready to make new advances after each gain they made in the region, which greatly alarmed them. Yet, both the disaster tasted at the First Afghan War (1839-1842) and death of two agent-officers in Bukhara in 1842 forced the British to act more cautiously in the Central Asian politics. Ardent supporters of forward policies in the region in the 1830's were left their ground to the "masterly inactivists" who searched a definite border between the Russian and the British imperialist possessions and were not enthusiastic about lands located beyond the Amu Daria River in Central Asia in the late stages of the "great game".

When Russia's military campaign against the Khanate of Khiva was pending in 1872, the British were alarmed that their richest possession, India, was under a Russian threat from the north. They feared that the closer the Russians get to India, the more dangerous things were bound to happen in the region. Since they were not able, and even were not willing to interfere in the affairs that taken place in Turkistan, they desired to guaranty the security of India by putting a marked line with Russia in Central Asia. They

preferred to keep Afghanistan, which was holding some of the most important passes, such as Khayber and Bolan, as well as strategic centers, including Herat, Balkh, Kabul and Gazne, under their sphere of influence at all time (*The Times* of London, 23 January 1853).⁶

In order to reach an agreement with the Russians over Afghanistan, the British held meetings with the Russians, sent messages and messengers to Russia, as well as received Russian messages and envoys. In 1869, Douglas Forsyth, who had been an explorer in Kashgaria, went to Russia to deliver a note penciled in by the Viceroy of India, Lord Mayo. In the note, the viceroy assured the Russians that the British had no interest beyond the Afghan borders and would not threaten Russia as long as she stayed out of Afghanistan (Lieven, vol. 1 (1883): 293-294). Later, Lord Augustus Loftus, British ambassador in Petersburg, delivered another note to Prince Gorchakov warning him not to violate Afghan borders. The note also contained a rough draft of these borders (*The Times*, 27 December 1872, 13 February 1873). The borders that the Russian and the British foreign ministers proposed during a meeting held between Lord Clarendon and Prince Gorchakov in 1869 were bound to be northern boundary of Afghanistan. The only problem was where the actual boundary line on the ground was passing!

The British, whose Turkistan Policy all throughout the nineteenth century was designed to bar Russia from gaining an open door to the warm waters and to eliminate any possibility of Russia's real threat to India, followed wide and strong plans. They developed and executed many joint-plans with the native states, namely the Ottoman Empire, Iran and Afghanistan, located on the way of Russia's southward advances. The British undertook a successful policy of maintaining their interests in the Ottoman Empire up until 1878. They succeeded in averting Russia's continuous attempts to reach to the Mediterranean. For this, they even fought on the Ottoman side against Russia in the Crimean War in the 1850's.

While helping the Ottomans to set obstacles before the Russians in the Near East, the British also fought a fierce diplomatic and political war in Central Asia to keep Russia out of the Gulf of Persia and the Indian Peninsula. For them, Iran and Afghanistan were key places for the security of India. In order to stop Russia from reaching India, the British played a fierce diplomatic, political and military role that came to be called the "great game" which was first coined by Captain Arthur Conolly who was executed in Bukhara in 1842, and was immortalized by Kipling's novel, *Kim*. (Hopkirk 1992: 1).

In the Great Game, Russia's military campaign against Khiva was an important step. Russia's advance in Khiva in 1873 created considerable fear

and anxiety among the British. However, Russia's subjugation of Khiva was accepted by the British when Russia limited her territorial annexation with the northeastern part of Khiva. After the subjugation of Khiva, the British focused more on the methods of keeping Iran and Afghanistan under their control and free from Russia's intrigues.

The British determination to keep Russia out of Afghanistan somehow helped the Russians to develop proper policies to incorporate all of Central Asia populated by the Turkish communities. The Russians were sure that they would expand their lands up to the Afghan borders, as the British made clear that they were unwilling to get involved in events that would take place in the lands lying beyond the northern boundaries of Afghanistan. It was now just a matter of time for the Russians to annex or subdue lands that stretched up to Afghanistan, as well as the Iranian borders, in the 1870s. The subjugation of Khiva, annexation of Turkmenia and "peaceful" incorporation of Merv by the Russians all took place whenever the time was suited to the Russian expansionist policies. Nevertheless, Merv as in the hands of Russia, Great Britain began to feel more vulnerable to a possible Russian attack against India because at the early years of the nineteenth century, the British agent-specialists of the region, such as Captain John Macdonald Kinneir who was one of the British trainers of the Persian soldiers in 1812, clearly stressed that if Russia subdued the warlike tribes of Central Asia, she would overcome a great obstacle before attempting to invade India (Hopkirk 1992: 71-74).

Despite a general consensus that existed in the minds of both imperialist states, Russia's big gains in Central Asia always alarmed the British. In British India, they feared of a native uprising against their rule, as the natives were showing signs of favoring Russia over Britain after every Russian gain in Central Asia. It created a fierce Anglo-Russian rivalry that lasted well into early 1900. The basic characteristic of the rivalry was that while the Russians were expanding their lands and coming closer to India, the British were trying to keep Russia away from India. In this respect, the British found Afghanistan as a crucial place that had to be on their full control and that had to be under their sphere of influence at all times. Because of such conviction, the British spent all their diplomatic skill to persuade the Russians not to violate Afghan borders which had never been a clear border on the ground. For this, whenever they were threatened by a fresh Russian forward move, they intensified diplomatic, political and military pressure over the Russians to reach an agreement that might be beneficial to the both sides. One of such agreements was concluded in the eve of Russia's Khivan expedition in 1873 (Yetişgin 2000: 125-126).⁷

A Russian envoy, Count P. Andreyevich Schouvalov, was sent to London to discuss the matter that had been talked upon by both the Russian and the British politicians. He was received by Lord Granville, British Foreign Secretary. After much discussion, both sides had reached to an understanding that marked the first solid step to draw lines between the spheres of influence of both countries. The basic aspect of the understanding was that while the British would not interfere with Central Asian affairs taking place in the north of Amu Daria (the Oxus River), the Russians would not violate the Afghan borders which roughly followed the banks of the river Oxus at this time (*The Times*, 25 January, 13 February 1873). Although, the 1873 treaty regarding Central Asia between the British and the Russians had established a temporary relief for the British, the Amir of Afghanistan continued to worry about Russia's possible move into Merv. According to his view, the Turkmens of Merv would cross the border and come into Afghanistan if the Russians attacked their country. This would cause the Afghans to fight against the Russians (Leiven 1883, vol. 2: 66).

The British who assured Shere Ali that his territory was safe from any trouble brought the fears of the Amir to the attention of the Russian authorities. Upon this, Prince Gorchakov assured the British that they had no intention of sending troops against the Turkmens. Gorchakov wrote, "Afghanistan, I have told Lord A. Loftus that we had no intention of undertaking an expedition against the Turkomans; it depended entirely on them to live on good terms with us, and even to derive profit from our proximity and from the outlets which we are endeavouring to make for peaceful commerce; but if these turbulent tribes were to take to attacking or plundering us, we should be compelled to punish them." Later, the British authorities clearly indicated that they value Merv, and if the Russians were to make any move against that place, they would have to act swiftly to go further north to protect India (Leiven 1883, vol. 2: 67).

Despite the Schouvalov mission to London and the agreement reached during this mission in 1873, the British never stopped worrying over Russian intrigues which never knew any rest in Central Asia. After subjugation of Khiva in 1873, Russia annexed Khokand in 1876 and sent strong military units into Turkmenia. When the British government inquired what the real aims of the Russians in Turkmenia towards Merv, the Russian authorities reiterated their pledges that they did not have any desire to march on Merv, and they assured that they were still respecting the treaty they had signed in 1873 (Leiven 1883, vol. 2: 70).

During this time, Russia engaged a new war in the Near East against the Ottomans. While they were fighting in the Ottoman front, both in the

Caucasus and in the Balkans, they also gave serious considerations for sending another army through the Transcaspia to Herat to take this city, which would create an advantageous position against the British, who would enter the war on the Ottoman side in the Near East. Though they could not attempt to take Herat, the Russians sent a well-equipped military force numbered around 14.000 prepared by the Turkistan Governor General, General Kaufman, to be stationed near Balkh. This Russian force remained there until the Berlin Treaty of 1878 was signed (Bayur 1987: 443).

Meanwhile, the British were having some reasonable doubts about the relations between the Russians and the Amir of Afghanistan, Shere Ali. Starting in 1876, the British India tried to reach an agreement with Shere Ali to strengthen her position in Afghanistan. They offered money, men and military supports to the Amir in return for him to stay in peace with his neighbors, not to enter diplomatic relations with other states without the British knowledge in advance, to allow the British army officers to watch northern borders and to help them draw these borders, to permit British merchants to trade freely in Afghanistan, to help the British who wanted to travel within the country, to consent the British to establish a telegraph line in the country, and to approve a British ambassador to come into Kabul. Shere Ali rejected all British offers. In order to help the British to reach an agreement with the Amir, the Ottomans sent an envoy to Kabul (B.O.A. 1992: 145). Behind the Ottoman decision to send an envoy headed by Ahmet Hamdi Efendi to Afghanistan was the requests made by either Austen Henry Layard, the British Ambassador in Istanbul, or Benjamin Disraeli, the prime minister of Great Britain. Despite a chilly welcome showed by the Amir, the Ottoman envoy asked Shere Ali to improve his relations with the British and help the Ottomans in their fight against the Russians. This attempt did not help the British to improve her relation with the Amir (Wasti 1994: 957-960). Shere Ali not only rejected these offers, but also allowed a Russian embassy led by General Stolietov to visit Kabul in 1878. The goal of the Russian envoy was to establish an alliance with the Amir against the British. In a possible war between the British and the Russians in the Near East, the Russians aimed to use this alliance to threaten the British in India. Yet, before the Stolietov mission to Kabul was reached, the treaty of Berlin was signed, which ended any possibility of war between Great Britain and Russia (Bayur 1987: 434-445).

Because of his stubborn resistance for allowing a British envoy led by Sir Neville Chamberlaine to come to Kabul and trust on the Russians for a possible war with the British, Shere Ali had to suffer second British invasion of Afghanistan in 1879. After loosing war, Shere Ali escaped to Belh where

he died in 1879. In his place, his son Yakub Khan was chosen as the new Afghan Amir "Afghanistan" 1879: 599-603). Between Yakup Khan and the British, Gandamak Treaty was signed. According to this treaty, the British were to control the foreign relations of Afghanistan, to protect her against the foreign attacks, to control Khayber and Michin passes. Furthermore, some military and civil servants of Great Britain were to handle things in Afghan cities and the Amir was to receive 600.000 ruble (around 60.000 British gold) every year (Bayur 1987: 446-447). With this treaty, the British gained not only a protectorate over Afghanistan but also undergone under new responsibilities for the Afghans in a possible conflict with Russia in the region.

The Russians who had fears that the British were after establishing their rule over not only Afghanistan but also other Central Asian states to curb Russian interests in the region supported more active and forward policies. One of such Russian was Terentiev whose book entitled as *Russia and England in the Struggle for the Markets of Central Asia* claimed that the British were after monopolizing Central Asian bazaars and political life. He also claimed that the British were secretly arming the Turkmens to resist the Russians. In order to end British intrigues, according to Terentiev, Russia had to follow a forward policy with the ultimate goal of reaching India and ending the British rule there with the help of the natives who would readily join with the Russian "liberating army" (Hopkirk 1992: 363-364).

Annexation of Merv into Russia: The British knew that the Russians were after annexing whole of the Turkmen lands stretching from the Caspian Sea to Afghanistan as soon as they got accustomed to what they earned from the Khivan expedition. In order to monitor Russian activities and receive more information about Turkmenia, especially about Merv, British agents were on active duty in Persia and Afghanistan. One of such agents was Captain George Napier who surveyed the north eastern borders of Persia, collecting as much information about the Turkmens as possible. Another British was Colonel Charles MacGregor. MacGregor went to Herat to gather information relating to Merv. Although he was invited by the Turkmens to come into Merv, because the Mervians were afraid of being attacked by the Russian forces and thus they were trying to receive helps from the British, MacGregor turned down their invitation and did not go to Merv lest he would exceeded his power (Hopkirk 1992: 366-367).

Russia's plan to march its Caucasus army through the Turkmen lands to capture Herat and to create pressure over the British India was carried out by a military campaign in 1879. Despite Russian assurances that the campaign was aimed to subdue "indomitable" Turkmens, it was designed to

go further than Turkmenia. Its first goal was to subdue the Teke Turkmens lining in the Akhal oasis. If the Russians had captured the Akhal country, they would have gone further south to invade Merv and even Herat. The fate of the campaign, however, was a disaster for the Russians. The Russians lost hundreds of men and great prestige by the failure of this campaign (Marvin 1880: 266-279). They had to prepare another military force to attack against the Turkmens, which took place in 1881.

In 1881, the Russians sent a well-chosen and perfectly equipped army across the Caspian Sea into the Turkmen lands. This time, knowing what went wrong in 1879 campaign, the Russian military force led by General Skobelev, one of the most able and notorious commanders in the Russian army of the time, successfully crossed the desert and attacked the Turkmens. After fierce battles at Geok Tepe, the Russians defeated the Turkmens. This was a brutal and quite bloody battle in which more than half of the population of the Akhal Turkmens, including women, children and elderly, whose number have been estimated to around 25,000, were massacred by the Russians. With the order of General Skobelev, the Russians destroyed the walls of Geok Tepe fortress and plowed it. After annexing the Akhal Oasis, the Russians reached to Ashkabad in March and took the city which became the center for the Russian newly captured lands in Turkmenia (Hayit 1975: 111-112; Marvin 1984: 99; Vambéry 1885: 30; Yetişgin 2004: 223-240). Further action was arrested by the Russians because the British strongly protested their move, and the Russian expeditionary force got shortages to march for the further south (Saray 1999: 354).

After subjugation of the Turkmens and annexation of the Akhal Oasis and Ashkabad, all of the northern part of Turkmenia, Russia came closer to Merv which was the next place to invade. Merv was an ancient city and a mouthwatering place for the Russians. Merv's strategic situation, historic importance, commercial value, central position in Central Asia and arable lands had attracted the Russians. The Mervians were growing many agricultural goods, including rice, silk, melons, peaches, apricots, wheat and cotton. The Russians were especially interested in cotton that was being produced in quantity of some 54.000 pounds annually in Merv (Marvin 1883: 200). It was located on a strategic ground which was controlling important caravan roads. In Merv commercial goods were produced to be sold in Herat and other cities (Hopkirk 1992: 42, 219).

As the Russian move in 1881 brought her closer to Afghanistan and India, the British hoped to find an understanding with the Russians to guaranty safety of her possession in India. One way to strengthen British line of defense for India would be the incorporation of Merv within the British

sphere of influence in Central Asia. For this, the time was mature because the Mervians who knew that they were going to be put under the Russian bondage, had sent at least forty well-known envoys to Kandahar to seek the British help. They were even ready to accept a British suzerainty. In their preferences, both the British promises to protect them and the Russian wicked massacres at Geok Tepe played some great roles ("The Merv Oasis" 1883: 215). Furthermore, many British wrote on the subject to find out what was wrong and what would be done to keep the British possessions secure and their credit in the eyes of the natives high in the East. For example, Sir Baker suggested that Britain had to improve her defense of India and to prepare herself for a possible confrontation with the natives who would be encouraged by the Russians to rise against their masters. He also stated that the "native press (at all times disloyal) not only exposes but exaggerates our failures, and the advance of Russia towards Afghanistan rule. The opinion is general among all classes that England is unable to resist Russia wherever Russia may determine to commence her long-meditated invasion" (Baker 1888: 216).

The general notion in India, especially among the natives, during Russian move into Merv was that the Russians were more powerful than the British and that the Afghans were developing more pro-Russian policies due to the Russian supremacy in the Central Asian affairs. They also believed that the Russians had greatly reduced the distances to India.

It is the fashion for English people to ridicule the approaching danger. This happy indifference is the best incentive to the persistent advance of Russia. Twelve or fourteen years ago the chief organs of the press of Great Britain deprecated the suspicion of Russian duplicity. We were told to believe in the sagacity of our own statesmen, and to place implicit faith in the assurances of Russia. Khiva was to remain untouched and Merv was a question in the distance, so remote that it could not be approached within the wildest limits of probability... Russia has now completed her railway from the Caspian to Merv (Baker 1888: 216).

Despite alarming tones of many voices among the British, the prevailing notion in the British government was in favor of seeking political solution rather material involvement in the event, which had been laid down by the Duke of Argyll's word "mervousness" seven years earlier (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 February 1884).

Although the British feared and protested after every move the Russians made, the British had not shown any effort to commit themselves in providing real help to the Turks of Turkistan. As in the case of Merv,

although the Mervians had not only sought the British help but also unilaterally declared themselves as the British subjects, the British authorities in Tehran refused to give any sort of aid to them (Saray 1999: 354). Despite repeated appeals made by the Turkmens to the British government for erection of a British protection over Merv, the British government did not respond affirmatively (Saray 1989: 218-220).⁸ Nevertheless, the Mervians who had had a great relief when the Russian armies stopped at Ashkabad in 1881 after the bloody massacres at Geok Tepe and who had chosen Makhtum Kulu Khan as their leader had increased hopes for the British help when Edmund O'Donovan came to Merv. Although the British had not sent O'Donovan as their agent and although O'Donovan himself told to the Turkmens that he had no official title, the desperate Turkmens held him in Merv in the hope of receiving the British help. However, according to Edmund O'Donovan, a British journalist who had lived among the Turkmens through 1879 and 1882 claimed that the British had given some sorts of promises to the Mervians to protect them against possible Russian attacks ("The Merv Oasis," 215). Togan believed that the British helped the Mervians at least in the form of financial aid (Togan 1947: 236).

The Russians wanted to march on Merv and finish the job at once after the fall of Geok Tepe in 1881. However, General Skobelev suggested to the government that it would be wiser to apply diplomacy rather than war for the annexation of Merv (Hayit 1975: 113). Upon Skobelev's suggestion, the Russians waited to see effects of their bloody massacres inflicted on the Akhal Teke Turkmens among the whole Turkmens and desired to capture rest of Turkmenia without losing new men and more materials. They also wanted to wait for a while to reduce tension arisen in Europe, especially in England, against their ruthless behavior presented during the Skobelev's campaign against the Akhal Teke Turkmens in Geok Tepe (Yetişgin 2004: 229-239). Massacres of the Turkmens, regardless of women, elderly and children, created an abhorrent feeling in Europe towards the Russians. The fall of Geok Tepe and defeat of the Turkmens also revived fears of the British who thought that the Russians would march on Merv and Herat, which would create a dangerous situation for the security of India. The British authorities asked the Russians about their exact plan regarding Merv. They protested the Russians and demanded them to keep their words that had been given by the Russian authorities about Merv (Leiven 1883, vol. 2: 72-74). Thus, the Russians wanted to avert a strong and hostile British reaction that would entail a rapid British invasion of Herat and even Merv. In order to appease the British, Russian authorities, including the tsar himself, promised again that they were not going further and were not interested in attacking Merv.

Despite assurances, as the Russians had given many times in the nineteenth century, the Russians seriously contemplated capturing Merv. They hoped to gain those lands without shedding more blood! This was not at all true when the history of the Russian bloody expansions in Central Asia was concerned. Moreover, another cause for the arrest of the march, according to General Skobelev, was a lack of provision for soldiers who were tired after long march and fierce fights. Skobelev claimed that Russia at that time did not seriously contemplate the invasion of Merv. The immediate plan for the Russians was to destroy Geok Tepe, which was achieved. Along with Geok Tepe, Russia had some 60.000 of the finest Turkmen cavalry to be used in her future plan against the British in India (Marvin 1984: 98; Handsard's Parliamentary Debates 1881: 230-231). The massacre and destruction of the Akhal Teke Turkmens at Geok Tepe furthered Russia's plans to subjugate all the Turkmens living in Merv and elsewhere.

In order to incorporate Merv into Russia, the Russians sought some ways to avoid receiving a strong British reaction in case of annexation. They produced new excuses, such as news that two Russians had been killed by the Mervians and some British agents were active in Merv to unite them against the Russians (Leiven 1883, vol. 2: 74). With their pretexts, the Russians were not only trying to pave the way for the future annexation of Merv, but also creating some excuses to break their early pledges given to the British. It was also a right time for the Russians to break their pledges given to the British and make new moves in Turkistan because the British concentrated at the *Mehdi* uprising in Sudan (Saray 2003: 72). In reality, the Russian policies pursued in Central Asia had always been based on creating a more profitable and sustainable frontier. For this, in order to feed their army and receive more profits, they needed to add rich oasis of Merv. Prince Gorchakov had once said, "It was essential that the line of our advanced forts ... should be situated in a country fertile enough, not only to insure their supplies, but also to facilitate the regular colonization, which alone can prepare a future of stability and prosperity for the 'occupied country, by gaining over the neighbouring populations to civilized life" (Leiven 1883, vol. 1: 288).

The Mervians who had sought helps from the Persians, the British and the Ottomans did not receive any favorable answer. Since the British were interested in only Afghanistan, and since Persia and the Ottoman Empire were too weak to help the Mervians, the Russians were waiting a right moment to move into Merv. The Persians who had previously accepted some pledges made by the Mervians to join into Persia (Leiven 1883, vol. 1: 305)⁹ were afraid of the Russians who openly declared that it was

unacceptable for them to see the Persians claiming any right over Merv (Leiven 1883, vol. 2: 75).

The Mervians knew that they were alone in case of a war with the Russians, which would be new massacres for them at the hands of the Russians. Their only option at the time seemed to bow before the Russian advance. Since the massacre at Geok Tepe, a "State of helplessness and confusion has reigned in and around Merv...It is in this state of anxiety that Russia has ultimately succeeded in turning the tide of Turcoman sympathies in her favour, and by creating a party which, evidently tired of the useless wavering, and fully convinced of the hopelessness of any Persian or English assistance, has found out that it would be much more advisable to throw itself into the arms of the lion than to be forcibly devoured" (Vambery 1884).

In order to annex Merv without going to war, the Russians sent military forces under the command of Colonel Muratov who took a central place, Karre Bent, in November 1883. Some Russian officers were sent under disguise as Russian merchants to learn the true feelings of the Mervians towards the Russians, as well as to collect information about defense lines and the military power of Merv in December 1883. The Russian officers headed by Captain Alikhanov (Maksud Ali Han Avar), an aristocratic Avar Turk in origin, went to Merv to observe the political situation and the prospect for "peaceful" surrender. After a long trip, and meeting with local dignitaries, these Russians learned the feelings of the locals and reported to St. Petersburg. They sensed that the Mervians were going to accept Russian authority without any resistance (Hayit 1975: 113-114; Vambery 1885: 48; Saray 1989: 223).

Meanwhile, the military commander of the Russian forces in the Transcasian region, General Alexander V. Komarov, invited a group of dignitaries from Merv to attend the coronation of the Emperor Alexander III in Moscow in May 1883. These Mervians carefully chosen by the Russians to see Russia's power and capabilities witnessed how advanced and powerful the Russians were, and, after they returned to their lands, they told their stories, which greatly helped to influence people to accept a Russian protectorate (Tcharykow 1931: 161). As a result of Ali Han's propagandas and reports of the Mervians who visited St. Petersburg during the tsar's coronation the dignitaries of Merv began to seriously consider about what their future would be. Many important dignitaries and leaders of the Turkmens, including Tikma Serdar, Makdum Kuli Khan, Gulcernal Hatun, gradually offered their allegiances to the Russians (Togan 1947: 236; Saray 2003: 63). Gulcernal Hatun, who was the widow of Nur Verdi Han, and

who was one of the respected persons among the Merv leaders, accepted the idea of going under the Russian rule (Gömeç 2002: 207). The Mervians held many meetings in order to find a solution to their future. One meeting held on 1 January 1884, which was attended by 300 Merv dignitaries. In the meeting, the Mervians decided to send an envoy to Ashkabad to negotiate with the Russians. On 31 January 1884, an agreement between the Russians and the Mervians was reached in Ashkabad. According to the agreement, the leaders of the Turkmen tribes were going to keep their partial freedom and a Russian officer was going to handle affairs in Merv (Hayit 1975: 114). The rights given to the Turkmen and mentioned in the agreement was later denied by the Russians (Hayit 1995: 114). As soon as the Mervians accepted Russian offers, a Russian army led by General Komarov marched on Merv to take the place. Some Mervians tried to stop the Russian march but they were failed. In this stage, Gulcemal Hatun played an essential role in convincing the Mervians to allow the Russians to come and take Merv. Because of her role in inducing the Mervians to accept Russian authority over Merv, Gulcemal Hatun was later visited by Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff and given her an expensive dress which was said to be marked with needlework and sent by the Empress of Russia as a gift (Vambéry 1885: 50; *The Times*, 13 June 1884; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 June 1884).

On the first day of February, General Komarov, the Governor of Transcaspian region, telegraphed St. Petersburg,

I have the pleasure of most humbly informing your Imperial Majesty that to-day in Ashkabad the Khans of four tribes of Merv Turcomans and 24 chosen delegates, one for every 2,000 *kibitkas* of tents, accepted unconditional allegiance to your Majesty; confirming the same by solemn oath for themselves and the whole people of Merv. According to the khans and delegates, the Turcomans of Merv come to this decision from the conviction that they cannot govern themselves, and that only the strong government of your Majesty can introduce and secure order and prosperity among them. –Lieutenant-General Komaroff (*The Times* 16 February 1884).

Punch, a British humorous newspaper of the time, mocked the adjective “peaceful” before the annexation because of the Russian precise pre-designs and efforts to incorporate Merv (*Punch*, 8 March 1884).

Prior to the Russian annexation of Merv, the Mervians had been rejected by the British, treated as worst enemies by the Persians, and never felt comfortable with the Afghans. Isolated and surrounded by not a single friendly power, they had given serious thoughts to the acceptance of a Russian protectorate. In any event, Merv, the last free lands populated by the

Turkmen in Turkistan, was annexed by the Russians in January 1884 (Kurat 1970: 514). Upon annexation of Merv by the Russians, the Shah of Persia telegraphed the tsar of Russia to congratulate him, which created a hateful feeling in the Islamic societies against the Shah (B.O.A. 1992: 165).

In a lengthy article, Vambéry mocked the idea that the Turkmen had willingly accepted the Russian authority. He had seen them, and their love for freedom. He wrote, "Strange indeed! The most unruly adventurers of the Central Asian Steppes, who boasted twenty years ago before the writer of these lines that royalty is not according to their taste, and that with them everybody is a king...well these adventurers ... have now suddenly become anxious to get a chief—may, an Emperor; and, to our great amazement, they show willingness to be governed, taxed, and led on the path of modern civilization by the mighty tutor on the Neva." According to Vambéry, Russian "commercial and scientific travelers, civil engineers, and military adventurers have incessantly plied between Ashkabad and the Tejend...The horrible onslaught and heavy losses sustained by their Akhal brethren struck them with terror, and, considering the absolute want of any sense of common interest, we can easily explain the state of helplessness and confusion which has reigned in and around Merv since 1880" (*The Times*, 16, 23 February 1884). Thus, "it would be much more advisable to throw itself into the arms of the lion than to be forcibly devoured," (*Punch*, 8 March 1884).

In the annexation of Merv, Russia's clever policies paid off for what they had desired. They carefully planned the timing of the incorporation of Merv. First, the British government was headed by a pro-Russian, Lord Gladstone, who had always criticized forward approaches to the Russian moves in Central Asia. Second, as the British were preoccupied with the Egyptian problem, more precisely Sudanese uprising that was led by a person who called himself the *Mehdi* claimed to lead the Muslims to recover from the foreign pressures, the Russians easily felt that it was a good time to go further in Central Asia to annex one of the most strategic places, Merv (*The Times*, 16 February 1884).

Though, General Komarov stressed the "unconditional allegiance" of the Turkmen, the reality was that these people knew they could not win even if they resisted to the Russians as far as their last man. They could not stand before the enormous power of Russia that inflicted the worst massacre against the Akhal Teke Turkmen a few years earlier. As *The Daily Telegraph* put,

Beaten and massacred at Goek Tepe, isolated alike on the side of Khiva and Persia, having no friends and no allies, they were obliged

to submit, give way either before Russian diplomacy or, Russian force. No one, we suppose, will have the hardihood to doubt that, had the Mervians not come in, they would have escaped the penalties of an expedition, and have incurred, perhaps, the sanguinary punishment inflicted on the Yomuts after the capture of Khiva. We may say, therefore, that the acquisition of Merv is the direct and inevitable consequence of Skobelev's victory and bloody reprisals (*The Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1884).

Despite a general acceptance to the Russian move into Merv, some Mervians did not want to give up all hopes of having a free life unrestrained by the foreign domination. When General Komarov marched into Merv to establish Russian authority, one of the leaders of the Mervians, Kadjar Khan, and his helper, Siah Push, black-robed-one, an Afghan preacher who was hailed as *mehdi*, gathered military power to stop the Russians. However, despite preaching of some religious men against the Russians' annexation of Merv, and Kadjar Khan's attempt to stop the Russians, the majority of the Turkmens, including Gulcemal Hatun, seem to have been in favor of surrendering their country. After a brief fight between Kadjar Khan's forces and Komarov's forces, Kadjar Khan who used to be one of the high ruling personalities of Merv before he was replaced by E. O'Donovan, a British journalist ("The Merv Oasis", 224), could not stop the Russians who simply marched on Merv and added it into the Russian Empire (Hayit 1995: 114).

Even if the Mervians succeeded in stopping Komarov's forces, they knew that the Russians had plenty of forces to send against them. They told Tcharykow, one of the first Russian diplomatic agent at Merv, that they "were not afraid of you (the first Russian force to enter Merv), but of your tail" (Tcharykow 1931: 169; *The Times*, 12 May 1884). As the Russian semi-official *Journal de Saint Petersburg* had stated, "Russia can easily bring the strength of her 70 millions to bear upon her few Mussulman subjects" whose number was estimated to be around 400,000 (*The Times*, 26 July 1875; Tcharykow 1931: 169). It was not Komarov's small detachment, but the whole Russian power backed by the Russians' determination to enlarge their lands that succeeded in annexing Merv. It was an inevitable destiny for the Turkmens to accept the Russians, since the British denied any support to them. If the British had extended their political and military help to the Turkmens, they had a very good chance of establishing their influence over Merv because the Turkmens were "dissatisfied with Persian rule, dismayed at the possibility of annexation by Russia, and desirous of passing under an English protectorate" (Marvin 1886: 92).

Although it was claimed to be a peaceful annexation to Russia, the native people of the region always hated the idea of being ruled by the “infidel” Russians. “The notion of a Mussulman province asking to be governed by the Giaours is too ridiculous to be entertained,” said Captain Maslov who was present in both General Grodekov’s ride into Herat and General Skobelev’s Akhal Teke expedition (Marvin 1883: 153). Yet, the circumstances they were in forced the Turkmens to accept Russian rule because there was almost no Turkish land left outside the Russian domination in Central Asia. Almost all Turkish lands had already become part of Russia after long and bloody invasions. Joining with this new empire was, in a sense, meeting with their countrymen. In addition, the Russians made it clear prior to the acceptance of allegiance that the Mervians were going to be a ‘respected’ member of a big empire, and keep their way of life. This mild and somewhat friendly offer was an important element in inducing them to accept Russian rule. Furthermore, the Russians offered them protection, “welfare, order, security” (Vambéry, *The Times* 23 February 1884), and the right to use the resources of the Russian Empire.

Having played the most important role in inducing the Mervlis to accept the Russian rule Ali Han was awarded by the Russians with medals. His rank was raised to the rank of a colonel and was appointed as the governor of Merv.

Immediate Effects of Merv’s Annexation by the Russians: The Russians who cleverly annexed Merv gained a large and great country without losing any man and material. As soon as they annexed Merv, the Russians started diluting their promises indicated in the agreement. They began to rule the place as they wished, attempting to populate Merv with immigrants, as they had been doing in other parts of annexed lands in Turkistan (Togan 1947: 84-85). Five years after the annexation, the Russians living in Merv were around 2,000 souls. Along with the Russians, Poles, Persians, Armenians and others began to populate Merv (Curzon 1889: 111-114).¹⁰ Indeed, one of the strange results of Russian invasions in Turkmenia was. Demographic change in the region. While cities and towns were mostly populated by the foreign traders, merchants and craftsmen, the Turkmens continued to practice their traditional life as villagers, townspeople, nomads and semi-nomads. However, in many places, especially on the fountainheads and upper parts of rivers and creeks, new villages were constructed by the new comers. These foreign elements started to control rare water resources, which quite badly affected the traditional life of the Turkmens who came to feel extreme hatred towards the new comers (Togan 1947: 290).

After the annexation of Merv, the Turkmens continued to live in their *kibitkas* (tents) while the new comers began to build towns and cities for themselves, which suited to the tsarist Russia's policies that had been applied in Turkistan. According to the tsarist policies, the Russians did not really want to settle the nomads on the land and encourage them to change their traditional life styles. Instead, the Russians pushed the nomads out of wet and arable lands and forced them to live in deserts. They expected the natives to die out in the arid lands, while they were encouraging and helping the immigrants to settle on arable lands and construct big towns and cities (Togan 1947: 299-300). According to Dobson, who visited to Merv in 1889 and had a chance to lunch with the governor, Ali Han, and local dignitaries, namely Yusuf Khan, Maili Khan, Sari Khan and Murat Khan, "Russian Merv is now composed of eighteen streets, 414 houses, 619 shops, stalls, and caravanserais: four so-called hotels, which would be better designated as lodging-houses of the very commonest kind; thirteen bakeries, and thirty four eating houses and tea shops" (Dobson 1890: 293).

Merv's incorporation into Russia ended the Russians' fears of the Turkmens who had been known by them as "unruly and lawless" people. Now, the Turkmens were under their rule and would be used as a powerful force in the Russian Army against the British India. In a couple of years from the subjugation of the whole of Turkmenia, hundreds of the Turkmens began to serve in the tsarist army. The Russians believed that, if they needed, 8,000 Turkmen would be enlisted in the Russian army. Some believed that with the fighting abilities of the Turkmen warriors, the Russians would march in India to fight against the British (Curzon 1889: 129). The British believed that the Merv oasis would provide provisions to more than one hundred thousand Russian soldiers, would add to the Russian army "one hundred thousand of the best irregular cavalry in the world," would close the distance to Herat to "one week's march," would complete the invasions of Central Asia, would bring danger closer to India, would give a great political prestige to Russia (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 February 1884). It was not going to take long to confront the Cossacks on the banks of Indus. In a lengthy memorandum, the British government criticized and condemned repeated pledges given by the tsar and other Russian high officials about their forward move in Central Asia. Even though they had promised not to march on Merv, they easily took it without caring what they had told to the British. However, in case of Merv, the Russians claimed that the Turkmens had willingly offered their allegiance to Russia.

Meanwhile, the British who were feverishly discussing Russia's annexation of Merv in their journals, meetings and books came to appreciate a Russian

danger gradually growing to menace the British interests in Afghanistan, Persia and India (*The Daily Telegraph*, 16, 18 February 1884; 8 March 1884). Many British, especially the hawks, or the forward policy supporters, believed that the Russians were in a position to threaten Afghanistan and India, the government, however, headed by Gladstone did not show any sign of remorse toward the Russian annexation of Merv. When the Prime Minister Gladstone was asked about Merv, he simply told that the tsar had accepted Merv as a new Russian territory (*The Times*, 21 February 1884). Despite Gladstone's personal pro-Russian stance, the British government protested the Russians. In the end, as Sir Charles Dilke said, "Our position is clear. North of the Oxus (Amu Daria), outside the boundaries of Afghanistan, Russia has a free hand. She will advance or retreat, establish garrisons or agents or Residents, annex or protect, or do whatever she pleases and whenever she pleases, according to the dictates of her own interests and the interests of her Asiatic subjects," (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 March 1884) the British did not put any solid action on the ground against the Russians.

In order to ease British reaction, the Russians offered a plan which involved a task on the ground to draw a solid border between Afghanistan and Russia's possession in Turkistan. After much talking and correspondences, both sides agreed to establish a Joint Afghan Boundary Commission in October 1884. The Boundary Commission headed by General Zelenoy on the Russian group and by Sir Peter Lumsden on the British side was to meet at Sarakh. After delays and troubles in Pendjeh, the commission finally succeeded in drawing a border between Russia and Afghanistan up to the Pamir region in 1887 (Yate 1886: 1-2; Saray 2003: 126).

Merv's annexation almost completed Russia's design to include all the Turkish people of Turkistan under the tsarist rule. Except some Turkmens and other Turkish people who were left under Afghan and Iranian rules and the khanates of Khiva and Bukhara, both of which had accepted Russian suzerainty, as well as the Eastern Turkistan that ruled by the Chinese, all of the Turks living from the Caucasus to China and the Turkish lands stretching from the Caspian to China became parts of the Russian Empire. Furthermore, Although Merv had long been considered by the Persians as theirs, and the Persians had tried to incorporate Merv into Persia ever since the death of Nadir Shah in 1746 (Saray 1999: 271, 335), it became a Russian town, which ended Persia's longtime claims. Indeed, the Persians whose power could not protect their own borders had nothing to do against the Russians' annexation of Merv. Without any immediate supporty neighbors to the Turks of Central Asia and mingling of foreign powers with

the Turkistan affairs, the Russians began to feel more secure in their newly reached borders. In short, with the incorporation of Merv, Russia gained a geographic harmony in the region, which greatly helped them to construct a railway starting from the eastern shores of the Caspian. The Russian railway that began to be built in 1880 reached to Merv in 1885 and to Semerkand in 1888.

Having been known with its glorious past and called as the “queen of the world” Merv lost its romance under the Russian occupation. It turned to be a Russian frontier garrison town where “Cheap Russian goods” were sold and “a Russian club where a dance was held once a week was erected” (Hopkirk 1992: 442). When Curzon visited Merv in 1889, he witnessed how far the Turkmens had been forced to accept Russian authority. He reasoned from his observation that the Russian invasions in the region were complete because many Turkmens were wearing Russian uniforms and serving in the Russian army (Hopkirk 1992: 442).

Since it had been attracting the Russians to grow cotton that the developing Russian textile industry badly needed the Merv oasis began to be irrigated by the Russians as much land as possible. Russia’s cotton policies radically changed the land-use in Turkistan. The Russians generally forced the locals to grow cotton and other sorts of plants that mostly served to their needs. Because of the Russian agricultural policies, a kind of “cotton bondage” was erected in the native lands and the natives were increasingly tied to the Russian economy (Togan 1947: 280). Furthermore, one of the Russian policies in annexed lands in Central Asia was to distribute rich lands among the Russians and other new comers who were to settle on these arable lands (Saray 1999: 356). As soon as they annexed Merv, the Russians started to build new dams and water canals to carry water from the Amu Daria River (Yarmolinsky 1967: 34). Today, the Karakum canal which is the longest irrigation canal in the world with its 1,100 kilometer length carries almost 15 percent of the water of the Amu Daria River into the Merv oasis (<http://www.asie-centrale.com/turkmenistan/karakoum.htm>).

The wealth of Merv added new riches to the already great richness of the tsar. With an imperial decree, a large tract of lands on the right bank of the Murghab River, which “consisted of 103,908 *desyatin* soil,”¹¹ became the personal property of the tsar (Hayit 1975: 115). Besides this, all the Russian officers who served in Merv had lovely houses with “flourishing gardens” (Dobson 1890: 173). Furthermore, along with large number of animals, including 700.000 sheep, 44.000 cattle, 20.500 horses, and large quantities of cereals, including 29.700.000 pounds of wheat, the Russians added 4.000 Turkmen carpets priced as 32.000 pounds annually. Besides large quantities

of source materials originated from Merv, the Russians had chances to sell their goods that amounted to 719.765 roubles every year in the shops of Merv, which “are all tenanted by Armenians, Greeks, Georgians and Jews” (Curzon 1889: 114-116; Dobson 1890: 173).

With the loss of Merv and with the erection of the Russian authority in there, the Turkmen tribes who had been wandering in large areas, including the Afghan Turkmenistan and Khorasan, lost their freedom of moving between long distances. Once quite a freedom-loving people, the Turkmen, lost their freedom to live as they wished. They began to obey a corrupt, militaristic Russian rule and pay heavy taxes to the Russian treasury (Togan 1947: 208, 262). Furthermore, they gradually lost their fertile and irrigated lands to the new comers, which forced them to recede into deserts and wildernesses. In addition, the Turkmen who had a type of unity in Turkistan were forcefully separated from each others. After the British and the Russians drew a border for Afghanistan and Turkmenistan in 1887, some Turkmen tribes were left in Afghanistan and Iran. This division among the Turkmen had many negative effects, including continuing pressures from different foreign dominations, lack of unity for developing a common culture, and division of traditional Turkmen territories.

Notes

1. “An Indian Officer,” *Russia's March Towards India*, London: Sampson Low, 1894, p. 10-11. According to the author, “İrmak, with his motley army, crossed the Ural Mountains in 1579, traversed the vest untrodden forests of Tobol, defeated Kuchum in a series of battles in 1581, captured his capital, Sibir, and made the Khan's cousin, Mahmet Kul, a prisoner. Many of the neighbouring chiefs submitted, and the Russians then sailed down the River İrtiş,...”
2. According to 1907 Russo-British convention, Russia was to respect British protectorate over Afghanistan in return respect for her possessions in Central Asia. Plus, Iran was divided into three parts leaving the southern part under the British and the northern part under the Russian control and recognizing the middle part as neutral.
3. The Orenburg Siberian line commenced from Guriev on the mouth of the Yayik (Ural) River, followed up the left bank of the river to Orenburg and Orsk, and then crossed by the head streams of the Tobol River to Troitska. From there it followed through Petro-pavlovsk on the Ishim and Omsk on the İrtiş, and reached to Semipolatsinsk and Bakharatminsk on the Chinese border.
4. According to Marvin, the Turkmen of Merv had claimed that they had 100,000 *kibitkas* (tents). However, the Russian sources claimed that the Turkmen had around 46,000 *kibitkas*, of which the largest group was the Teke Turkmen who were made up of 36,000 *kibitkas*.

5. A committee headed by Russian War Ministry Milyutin decided to establish The Governor-Generalship of Turkistan in 1867 within the ministry of the war. The center of the Governor-Generalship was Tashkent. It established on lands annexed from the Turkish Khanates of Turkistan. It also handled affairs between Russia and the vassal khanates of Bukhara, Khokand and Khiva.
6. *The Times of London*, 23 January 1854. As the Times stressed, in the mid-nineteenth century, the British believed that there were there ways to reach India from the North. The first way was passing through Farsistan, Kerman, Beloochees and going along the Persian gulf to Cabul. This road was taken by Alexander the Great thousands of years ago. The second road was following the valley of Oxus through the khanate of Chunday, and crossing the Hindoo Koosh mountains to Cabul. And, the third road was leading from Tehran to Heart to Candahar and through Ghaznee to Cabul. All these roads had harsh climatic and geographical features.
7. In their 1873 settlement with the British, the Russians openly and repeatedly assured the British that they were not after annexation of the khan's lands. Yet as the victory was gained, the Russians did not want to leave the khanate intact. They made some arrangements, including the ceding of territories located on the right bank of the Amu Daria River to Bukhara as a payment to the amir's help to the Russian expeditionary forces. Part of these territories was annexed in order to construct forts and to erect military posts to control the khanate in the future. Along with this territorial arrangement, the Russians ordered the khan to pay a 2,000,000 ruble indemnity. In a country where the income of the government was not more than 400,000 rubles, the obligation of paying 2,000,000 rubles as indemnity in a span of seven years was a harsh treatment of the vanquished. Later, 800,000 of this amount was decided to be paid by the Yomud Turkmens.
8. According to Saray, E. O'Donovan was a correspondent of the *Daily News* of London. He was sent to make observations on the ground about the true nature of the Russian movements in Turkistan to inform the public in England.
9. Lieven, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, vol. 1, p. 305. According to a treaty signed between the Merv Turkmens and the Persians,
 - " 1. The Merv Turkomans declare their allegiance to Persia.
 - " 2. They engage that raids by them on this country shall entirely cease,
 - " 3. That the Persian flag is to be hoisted at Merv,
 - " 4. That a Persian Agent shall reside at Merv on the part of the ' Shah.
 - " 5. That 100 hostages (men of position from the four divisions of the tribes) shall reside at Meshed, but without their families.
 - " 6. That a body of 1,000 horsemen shall be sent to Meshed (about 250 from each division of the tribe) to be employed in the service of the Persian Government. These horsemen are to provide their own horses and arms, and to be under the command of their own Chiefs, but they are to be paid by the Persian Government, and they may be employed in any part of Persia where their services are required.

" The Persian Government state their readiness to agree to the following points:

 - " 1. They recognize the Merv Turkomans as Persian subjects, and promise them protection and favourable treatment.

- " 2. They agree to defray the expenses of the hostages sent to Meshed, which may be estimated at about 6,000 tomans a-year.
- " 3. They undertake to pay the horsemen furnished by the Turkomans for service in Persia at the same rate as that allowed by the Government to the Khorassan irregular horse, which will amount to over 30,000 tomans annually.
- " 4. They grant permission for 1,000 families of Merv the Turkomans to occupy Old Serekliş, and the lands adjacent on the Tejjen."
10. According to Curzon, the population of Merv in 1889 consisted of 60,000 Sarik and Salor Turkmens, 100,000 Teke Turkmens, 3,500 Persians and Tatars, 3,500 Armenians, 2,000 Russains and Poles, 1,000 Khivans and Bokhariots, 300 Jews and others, such as Caucasians, Greeks, Germans, Hungarians, Afghans and Kirghiz.
11. One *desyatin* equals to 2.7 acres. $103908 \times 2.7 = 280.551$ acres.

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İngiliz-Rus Rekabeti, Rusya'nın Merv'i İlhâkı ve Bu İlhâkın Türkmenler Üzerindeki Etkileri

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Özet: Rusların Türkistan'daki yayılmacılık siyasetlerinin son örneklerinden birisini oluşturan Merv'in işgali, on dokuzuncu asır boyunca devam eden İngiliz-Rus rekabetinin önemli bir halkasını oluşturduğu gibi, Türkmenlerin yaşadığı toprakların büyük kısmının da Rus hakimiyetine girmesini sağlamıştır.

Rusların, Hindistan üzerinde gizli emelleri ve planları olduğuna inanan İngilizler, onların Orta Asya'da Hindistan'a doğru işgal ettikleri her toprak parçasında büyük kaygılar duymuşlardır. Bu kaygılarından dolayı bölgeye ajanlar göndermişler, Ruslarla çetin bir diplomasi trafiği kurmuşlar ve zaman zaman da Afganistan ve İran'da işgallerde bulunmuşlardır. "Büyük Oyun" olarak isimlendirilen İngiliz-Rus rekabeti, Merv'in 1884'te Ruslar tarafından işgali sırasında ateşli bir seyir izlemiştir.

Rus hakimiyeti altında askerî ve bozuk bir düzenin baskısına maruz kalan Türkmenlerin geleneksel yaşam tarzlarında hemen değişiklik olmamış, ancak şehirleri ve zengin toprakları yeni gelen Rus ve yabancı göçmenler tarafından ele geçirilmiştir. Ruslar ile İngilizler arasındaki sınır belirleme siyaseti nedeniyle bir kısım Türkmenler Afganistan ve İran idaresi altında kalmışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkmenler, Ruslar, İngilizler, Merv, Türkmenistan, Türkistan, Orta Asya, Afganistan, İran, Türkler, İngiliz-Rus Rekabeti

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Англо-Русское Соперничество, Захват Мерва и Влияние Этого Захвата на Туркменский Народ

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Резюме: Захват Мерва, который явился одним из последних примеров захватнической политики России в Туркестане, являясь важным звеном англо-русского соперничества, продолжавшегося на протяжении всего 19го века, обеспечил вхождение большей части туркменских земель под Русское господство.

Анличане, уверенные в том, что у русских есть тайные замыслы и планы насчет Индии, испытывали большую тревогу с захватом каждого клочка земли на территории Центральной Азии, прилегающих к Индии. По этой причине они направили в регион агентов, развили сложную дипломатию и иногда совершали военные походы на территорию Афганистана и Ирана. Это англо-русское соперничество именнованное "Большой Игрой" проявилось очень ярко во время захвата г. Мерва. В период Русского господства традиционная жизнь туркмен, находившихся под военным и гнилым режимом, не претерпела кардинальных изменений, однако города и богатые земли перешли в руки русских и других чужестранцев. Из-за определения границ между анличанами и русскими, часть туркмен осталась под управлением Афганистана и Ирана.

Ключевые Слова: Туркмены, Русские, Англичане, Мерв, Туркестан, Центральная Азия, Афганистан, Иран, Турки, Англо-Русское Соперничество

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