CHAPTER X

India And Her Neighbours

UNDER British rule, India developed relations with its neighbours on a new basis. This was the result of two factors. The development of modern means of communication and the political and administrative consolidation of the country impelled the Government of India to reach out to the natural, geographical frontiers of India. This was essential both for. defence and for internal cohesion. Inevitably this tended to lead to some border clashes. Unfortunately, sometimes the Government of India went beyond the natural and traditional frontiers. The other new factor was the alien character of the Government of India. The foreign policy of a free country is basically different from the foreign policy of a country ruled by a foreign power. 'In the former case it is based on the needs and interests of the people of the country; in the latter, it serves primarily the interests of the ruling country. In India's case, the foreign policy that the Government of India followed was dictated by the British Government in London. The British Government had two major aims in Asia and Africa: protection of its invaluable Indian Empire and the expansion of British commerce and other economic interests in Africa and Asia. Both these aims led to British expansion and territorial conquests outside India's natural frontiers. Moreover, these aims brought the British Government into conflict with other imperialist nations of Europe who also wanted extension of their territorial possessions and commerce in Afro-Asian lands.

In fact, the years between 1870 and 1914 witnessed an intense struggle between the European powers for colonies and markets in Africa and Asia. The developed capitalist countries of Europe and North America h»d a surplus of manufactured goods to sell and surplus capital to invest. They also needed agricultural and mineral raw materials to feed their industries. This led to intense commercial rivalry among European states. The governments of Europe were willing to promote their commercial interests even by the use of force against their rivals as well as against the country to be commercially penetrated. Moreover, political control of economically backward countries enabled an imperialist country to have secure markets for its goods and capital as well as souices of raw materials and to keep out its rival. Thus the different imperialist countries struggled to extend their control over different aieas oT ihc world. During this period, the continent of Africa was divided up among the European

powers. Russia expanded both in Central Asia and East Asia. Germany, Britain and Russia competed for control over the decaying Ottoman Empice in Turkey, West Asia, and Iran. Franoe occupied Indo-China in the 1880's, and both Britain and France competed for control over Thailand and North Burma. Hawaii and Philippines were conquered by the United States of America in 1898, and Korea by Japan in 1905. From 1895 an intense competition for control over different parts of the Chinese Empire broke out among the powers. Britain, having secured the linn's share in the colonial division of the world, faced rivals on all sides. For example, at different periods, British aims and ambitions came into conflict with the aims and ambitions of France, Russia, and Germany.

The desire to defend their Indian Empire, to promote British economic interests, and to keep the other European powers at arm's length from India often led the British Indian Government to commit aggression on India's neighbours. In other words, during the period of British domination India's relations with its neighbours were ultimately determined by the needs of British imperialism.

But, while Indian foreign policy served British imperialism, the cost of]ts implementation was borne by India. In pursuance -of British interests, India had to wage many wars againct its neighbours; the Indian soldiers had to shed their blood and the Indian taxpayers had to meet the heavy cost. Moreover, the Indian army was often used in Africa and Asia to fight Britain's battles. Consequently, military expenditure absorbed a large part of India's governmental expenditure. For example, more than half of India's revenues—nearly 52 per cent to be exact—was spent on the army in 1904.

War with Nepal, 1814

The British desire to extend their Indian Empire to its natural geographical frontier brought them into conflict, first of all, with the northern Kingdom of Nepal. The Nepal valley had been conquered in 1768 by the Gurkhas, a Western Himalayan tribe. They had gradually built up a powerful army and extended their sway from Bhutan in the East to the river Sutlej in the Wfest. From the Nepal Tarai they now began to push southward. In the meanwhile, the British conqiired Gorakhpur in 1801. This brought the two expanding powers face to face across an ill-defined border.

In October 1814 a border clash between the border police of the two countries led to open war. The British officials had expected an easy walk-over especially as their army attacked all along the 600 mile frontier. But the Gurkhas defended themselves with vigour and bravery. The British armies were defeated again and again. Charles Metcalfe, *a* senior British-Indian official, wrote at the time:

> **Wc have met with an enemy who shows decidedly greater bravery and greater steadiness than our troops possess; and it is impossible to say what may be the end of such a reverse of the order of things. In some Instances our troops, European and Native, have been repulsed by inferior numbers with sticks and stones. In others our troops have been charged by the enemy sword in hand,**
> **and driven for miles like a flock of sheep_____ In short, I, who have always thought our power in India precarious, cannot help thinking that our downfall has already commenced.**

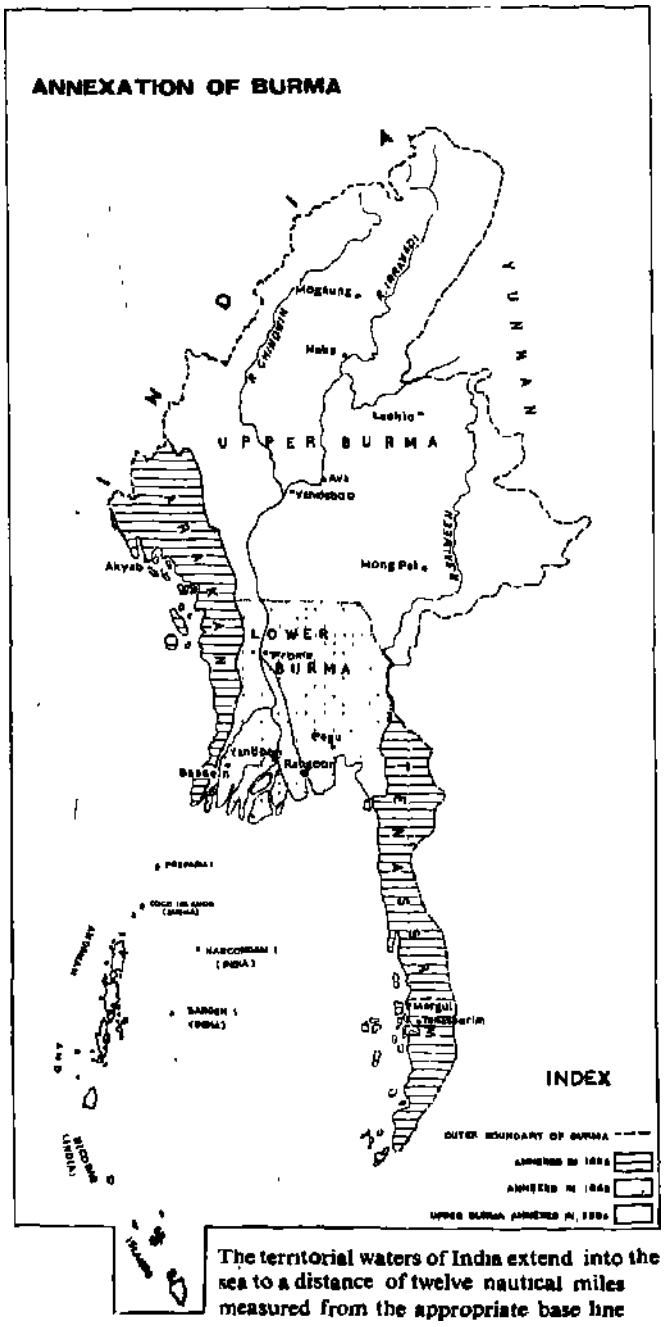
Out power rested solely on our military superiority. With respect to one enemy, that Is gone.

In the long run, however, the Gurkhas could not survive. The British were far superior in men, money, and materials. In April 1815 they occupied Kumaon, and on 15th May they forced the brilliant Gurkha Commander Amar Singh Thapa to surrender. The Government of Nepal was now compelled to sue for peace But the negotiations for peace soon broke down. The Government of Nepal would not accept the British demand for the stationing of a Resident at Khatmandu, Nepal's capital. It realised fully well that to accept a subsidiary alliance with the British amounted to signing away Nepal's independence. Fighting was resumed early in 1816. The British forces won important victories and reached within 50 miles of Khatmandu. In‘ the end, the Nepal Government had to make peace on British terms. It accepted a British Resident. It ceded the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon and abandoned claims to the Tafai areas. It also withdrew from Sikkim The agreement held many advantages for the British. Their Indian Empire now reached Ihe Himalayas. They gained greater facilities for trade with Central Asia. They also obtained sites for important hill-stations such as Simla, Mussoorie, and Nainilal. Moreover the Gurkhas gave added strength to the British-Indian army by joining it in large numbers.

The relations of the British with Nepal were quite friendly thereafter. Both parties to the War of 1814 had learnt to respect each other’s fighting capacity and preferred to live at peace with each other.

Conquest of Banna

Through three successive wars the independent kingdom of Burma was conquered by the British during the 19th century. The conflict between Burma and British India was initiated by border clashes. It was fanned by expansionist urges. The British merchants cast covetous glances on the forest resources of Burma and were keen to promote export of their manufactures among its people. The British authorities also wanted to



check ihe spread of French commercial and political influence in Burma and the

rest of South-East Asia.

The First Burmese War, 1824-26: Burma and British India developed a common frontier at the close of the 18th century when both were expanding powers. After centuries of internal strife, Burma was united by King Alaungpaya between 1752-60. His successor, Bodawpaya, ruling from Ava on the river Irrawaddi repeatedly invaded Siam, repelled many Chinese invasions, and conquered the border states of Arakan (1785) and Manipur (1813) bringing Burma's border up to that of British India. Continuing his westward expansion, he threatened Assam and the Brahmaputra Valley. Finally, in 1822, the Burmese conquered Assam. The Burmese occupation of Arakan and Assam led to continuous friction along the ill-defined border between Bengal and Burma.

One of the sources of (his friction was provided by the Arakanese fugitives who had sought shelter in the Chittagong district. From here, they organised regular raids into Burmese-held Arakan. When defeated they would escape into British territory. The Burmese Government pressed ihe British authorities to take action against the insurgents and to hand them over to the Burmese authorities. Moreover, the Burmese forces, chasing the insurgents, would often cross into Indian territory. Clashes on the Chittagong-Ar&kan frontier came to a head over the possession of Shahpuri island in 1823 which was first occupied by the Burmese and then by the British. The Burmese proposal for neutralisation of the island was rejected by the British and tension between the two began to mount,

Burmese occupation of Manipur and Assam provided another source of conflict between the two. It was looked upon by the British authorities as a serious threat to their position in India. To counter this threat they established British influence over the strategic border states of Cachar and Jaintia. The Burmese were angered by this action and marched their troops into Cachar. A clash between Burmese and British troops ensued, the Burmese being compelled to withdraw into Manipur.

The British Indian authorities now seized this opportunity to declare war on Burma. For several decades they had been trying to persuade the Government of Burma to sign a commercial treaty with them and to exclude French traders from Burma. Nor were they happy to have a strong neighbour who constantly bragged of his strength. They believed that Burmese power should be broken as soon as possible, especially as they felt that British power was at the time far superior to that of the Burmese. The Burmese, on their part, did nothing to avoid war. The Burmese rulers had been long isolated from tbe world and did not correctly assess the strength of the enemy. They were also led to believe that an Anglo-Burmese war would lead many of the Indian powers to rebel.

The war was officially declared on 24 February 1824. After an initial set-back, the British forces drove the Burmese out of Assam, Cachar, Manipur and Arakan. The British expeditionary forces by sea occupied Rangoon in May 1824 and reached within 45 miles of the capital at Ava. The famous Burmese General Maha Bandula was killed in April 1825. But Burmese resistance was tough and

determined. Especially effective was guerrilla warfare in the jungles. The rainy climate and virulent diseases added to the cruelty of the war. Fever and dysentry killed more people than the war. In Rangoon 3,160 died in hospitals and 166 on the battlefield. In all the British lost 15,000 soldiers out of the 40,000 they had landed in Burma. Moreover, the war was proving financially extremely costly. Thus the British, who were winning the war, as well as the Burmese, who were losing it, were glad to make peace which came in February 1826 with the Treaty of Yandabo.

The Government of Burma agreed; (I) to pay one crore rupees as war compensation; (2) t<> cede its coastal provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim; (3) to abandon all claims to Assam, Cachar, and Jaintia; (4) to recognise Manipur as an independent state; (5) to negotiate a commercial treaty with Britain; (6) and to accept a British Resident at Ava while posting a Burmese envoy at Calcutta. By this treaty the British deprived Burma of most of its coastline, and acquired a firm base in Burma for future expansion.

The Second Burmese War, 1852: If the First Burmese War was in part the result of border clashes, the Second Burmese War which broke out in 1852 was almost wholly the result of British commercial greed. British timber firms had begun to take interest in the timber resources of Upper Burma. Moreover, the large population of Burma appeared to the British to be a vast market for the sale of British cotton goods and other manufactures. The British, already in occupation of Burma's two coastal provinces, now wanted to establish commercial relations with the rest of the country, but, the Burmese Government would not permit further foreign commercial penetration. British merchants now began to complain of "lack of facilities for trade" and of "oppressive treatment" by the Burmese authorities at Rangoon. The fact of the matter was that British imperialism was at its zenith and the British believed themselves to'be a superior people. British merchants had begun to believe that they had a divine right to force their trade upon others. At this time the aggressive Lord Dalhousie became the Governor-General of India. He was determined to heighten British imperial prestige and to push British interests in Burma. "The Government of India", he wrote in a minute, "could never, consistently with its own safety, permit itself to stand for a single day in m attitude of inferiority towards a native power, and least of all towards the Court of Ava." As an excuse for armed intervention in Burma, Dalhousie took up the frivolous and petty complaint of two British sea-captains that the Governor of Rangoon had extorted nearly 1,000 rupees from them. In November 1851 he sent an envoy, accompanied by several ships of war, to Rangoon to demand compensation for the two British merchants. The British envoy, Commodore Lambert, behaved in an aggressive and unwarranted manner. On reaching Rangoon he demanded the removal of the Governor of Rangoon before he would agree to negotiate. The Court at Ava was frightened by the show of British strength and agreed to recall the Governor of Rangoon and to investigate British complaints. But the haughty British envoy was determined to provoke a conflict. He started a blockade of Rangoon and attacked and destroyed

over 150 small ships in tKe port. The Burmese Government agreed to accept a British Resident at Rangoon and to pay the full compensi tion demanded by the British. The Government of India now turned on the screw and pushed up their demands to an exorbitant level. Titey demanded the recall of the new Governor of Rangoon and also a full apology for alleged insults to their envoy,' Such demands could hardly be accepted by an independent government. Obviously, the British desired to strengthen their hold over Burma by peace or by war before their trade competitors, the French or the Americans, could establish themselves there.

A full British expedition was despatched to Burma in April 1852. This time the war was much shorter than in 1825-26 and the British victory was more decisive. Rangoon was immediately captured and then other important towns—Bassein, Pegu, Prome fell to the British. Burma was at this time undergoing a struggle for‘power. The Burmese King, Mindon, who had deposed his half-brother, King Pagan Min, in a struggle for >jower in February 1853, was hardly in a position to fight the British; at the same time he could not openly agree to surrender Burmese territory. Consequently, there were no official negotiations for peace and the war ended without a treaty. The British annexed Pegu, the only remaining coastal province of Burma. There was, however, a great deal of popular guerrilla resistance for three years before Lower Burma was brought under effective control. The British now controlled the whole of Burma’s coastline and its entire sea-trade.

The brunt of lighting the war was borne by Indian soldiers and its expense was wholly met from Indian revenues.

The Third Burmese War, 1885; Relations between Burma and Britain remained peaceful for several years after the annexation of Pegu. The British, of course, continued their efforts to open up Upper Burma. In particular, the British merchants and industrialists were attracted by the possibility of trade with China through Burma. There was vigorous

agitation in Britain and Rangoon for opening the land route to Western China. Finally, Burma was persuaded in 1862 to sign a commercial treaty by which British merchants were permitted to settle in any part of Burma and to take their vessels up the Irrawaddy river to China. But this did not satisfy the British merchants, for the Burmese king retained the traditional royal monopoly of trade in many articles such as cotton, wheat, and ivory. These merchants were impatient of restrictions on their trade and profits and began to press for stronger action against the Burmese Government. Many of them even demanded British conquest of Upper Burma. The king was finally persuaded to abolish, all monopolies in February 1882.

There are many other political and economic questions over which the Burmese king and the British Government clashed. The British Government humiliated the king in 1871 by annoucing that relations with him would be conducted through the Viceroy of India as if he were merely a ruler of one of

the Indian states. Another source of friction was the attempt by the king to develop friendly relations with other European powers In 1873 a Burmese mission visited France and tried to negotiate a commercial treaty which would also enable Burma to import modern arms, but later under British pressure the French Government refused to ratify the treaty.

King Mindon died in 1878 and was succeeded by King Thibaw. The British gave shelter to rival princes and openly interfered in Burma's internal affairs under the garb of preventing the alleged cruelties of King Thibaw. The British thus claimed that they had the right to protect the citizens of Upper Burma from tbeir own king.

What really annoyed the British was Thibaw's desire to pursue his father's policy of developing commercial and political relations with France. In 1885 he signed a purely commercial treaty with France providing for trade. The British were intensely jealous of the growing French influence in Burma. The British merchants feared tbat the rich Burmese market would be captured by their French and American rivals. The British officials felt that an alliance with France might enable the king of Upper Burma to escape British tutelage or might even lead to the j founding oi a French dominion in Burma and so endanger the safety of their Indian Empire. Moreover, the French had already emerged as a major rival of Britain jn South-East Asia. In 1883, they had seized Annam (Central Vietnam), thus laying the foundation of their colony of Iado- China. They were pushjng actively towards North Vietnam, which they conquered between 1885 and 1889, and in the west towards Thailand and Burma.

The chambers of commerce in Britain and the British merchants in Rangoon now pressed the wilting British Government for the immediate annexation of Upper Burma. Only a pretext for war was needed. Tim was provided by the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation. <i British concern which held a* lease of the teak forests in Burma. The Burmese Government accused Ihe Company of extracting more than double the quantity of teak contracted for by bribing local officials, and demanded compensation The British Government, which had already prepared a military plan for the invasion of Upper Burma, decided to seize this opportunity and put forward many claims on the Burmese Government, including the demand that the foreign relations of Burma must be placed under the control of the Viceroy of India. The Burmese Government could not have accepted such demands without losing its independence. Its rejeclion was followed by a British invasion on 13 November 1885. This was a clear case of aggression, Burma as an independent country had every right to put trade restrictions on foreigners. This was being done daily in Europe. Similarly, it had every right to establish friendly relations with France and lo import arms from anywhere.

The Burmese Government was unable to put up effective resistance to the British forces. The King was incompetent, unpopular, and unprepared for war

The country was divided by court intrigues. A condition of near civil war prevailed. King Thibaw surrendered on 28 November 1885 and his dominions were annexed to the Indian Empire suon after.

The ease with which Burma had been conquered proved to be deceptive. The patriotic soldiers and officers of the army refused to surrender and vanished into the thick jungles. From there they carried on widespread guerrilla warfare. The people of Lower Burma also rose up in rebellion. The British had to employ a 40,000 strong army for nearly five years to suppress the popular revolt. The expenses of the war as well as of the campaign of suppression were once again thrown on the Indian exchequer. ' After ihe First World War, a vigorous modern nationalist movement arose in Burma. A wide campaign of boycotting British goods and administration was organised and the demand for Home Rule was put forward. The Burmese nationalists soon joined hands with the Indian National Congress. In 1935 the British separated Burma from India in the hope of weakening the Burmese struggle for freedom. The Burmese nationalists opposed this step. The Burmese nationalist movement reached new heights under the leadership of U Aung San during the Second World War. And, finally, Burma won its independence on 4 January 1948.

Relations with Afghanistan

The British Indian Government fought two wars with Afghanistan before its relations with the Government of Afghanistan were stabilized. During the 19th century the problem of Indo-Afghan relations got inextri

cably mixed up with the Anglo-Russian rivalry. Just as Britain was an expanding imperial power in West, South, and East Asia, Russia was an expanding power in Central Asia and desired to extend its territorial control in West and East Asia. Consequently, the two imperialisms openly clashed all over Asia. In fact, in 1855, Dritain in alliance with France and Turkey, fought a war with Russia, known as the Crimean War. **In** particular, the British feared for the security of their dominion in India. Throughout the 19th century, the British rulers of India feared that Russia would launch an attack on India through Afghanistan and the North Western frontier of India. They therefore wanted to keep Russia at a safe distance From (he Indian frontier. Anglo-Russian rivalry over Central Asian trade was another factor in the situation. If Russia succeeded in colonising the whole of Central Asia, the British chances of participating in Central Asian commerce in the future would disappear.

Afghanistan was placed in a crucial position geographically from the British point of view. It could serve as an advanced post outside India's frontiers for checking Russia's potential military threat as well as for promoting British commercial interests in Central Asia. If nothing else it could become a convenient buffer between the two hostile powers.

The British policy towards Afghanistan entered an active phase in 1835 when the Whigs came to power in Britain and Lord Palmerston became the Foreign Secretary. Dost Muhammed was the ruler of Afghanistan at this time. Afghan politics had been unsettled since the early yean of the 19th century. Dost Muhammed had brought about partial stability but was constantly threatened by internal and external enemies. In the North he faced internal revolts and the potential Russian danger; in the South one of his brothers challenged his power at Kandahar; in the East Maharaja Ranjit Singh had occupied Peshawar and beyond him lay the English; in the West lay enemies at Herat and the Persian threat. He was therefore in dire need of powerful friends. And since he had a high regard for English strength, he desired some sort of an alliance with the Government of India.

The Russians tried to win him over but he refused to comply. While discouraging the Russian envoy he adopted a friendly attitude towards the British envoy, Captain Bums. But he failed to get adequate terms from the British who would not offer anything more than verbal sympathy. The British wanted to weaken and end Russian influence' in Afghanistan but they did not want a strong Afghanistan. They wanted to keep her a weak and divided country which they could easily control. As the Government of India wrote to Burns:

> **A consolidated and powerful Muhammedan State on our frontier might be anything rather than safe and useful to us, and the exirting division[1] of strength[1] (i.e. between Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat) seemt far preferable.**

This was so because the British aim was not merely to guard India against Russia but also to penetrate Afghanistan and Central Asia. Lord Auckland, the Indian Governor-General, offered Dost Muhammed an alliance based on the subsidiary system. Dost Muhammed, on the other hand, wanted genuine

sympathy and support of the English. He wanted to be an ally of the British Indian Government on the basis of complele equality and not as one of its puppets or subsidiary 'allies'. Having tried his best to acquire British friendship and failed, he reluctantly turned towards Russia.

The First Afghan War: Auckland now decided to replace Dost Muhammed with a 'friendly' i.e. subordinate, ruler. His gaze fell on Shah Shuja, who Jiad been deposed from the Afghan throne in 1809 and who had been living since then at Ludhiana as a British pensioner. Finally, the Indian Government, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and Shah Shuja signed a treaty at Lahore on 26 June 1838 by which the first two promised to help Shah Shuja capture power in Afghanistan and, in return, Shah Shuja promised not to enter into negotiations with any foreign state without the consent of the British and the Punjab Govern' menls. Thus without any reason or excuse the British Government decided to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and to commit aggression on this small neighbour.

The three allies launched an attack on Afghanistan in February 1839. But Ranjit Singh cleverly hung back and never went beyond Peshawar, The British forces had not only to take the lead but to do all the fighting. Not that there was much fighting at this stage. Most of the Afghan tribes had already been won over with bribes. Kabul fell to the English on 7 August 1839, and Shah Shuja was immediately placed on the throne.

But Shah Shuja was detested and despised by (he people of Afghanistan, especially as he had come back with the help of foreign bayonets. The British historian William Kaye has pointed out that Shah Shuja's entry into Kabul "was more like a funeral procession than the entry of a king into the capital of his restored dominions.'' Moreover the people resented British interference in their administration. Gradually, (he patriotic, freedom-loving Afghans began to rise up in anger and Dost Muhammed and his supporters began to harass the British army of occupation. Dost Muhammed Was captured in November 1840 and sent to India as a prisoner, But popular anger went on increasing and more and more Afghan tribes rose in revolt. Then suddenly, on 2 November 1841, an uprising bVoke out at Kabul and the sturdy Afghans fell upon the British forces.

On 11 December 1841, the British were compelled to sign a treaty with the Afghan chiefs by which they agreed to evacuate Afghanistan, and to restore Dost Muhammed. But the story did not end there. As the
British forces withdrew they were attacked ail along the way. Out of
16,0 men only one reached the frontier alive, while a few others survived *as* prisoners. Thus the entire Afghan adventure ended in total failure, It had proved to be one of the greatest disasters suffered by the British arms in India.

The British Indian Government now organised a new expedition. Kabul was reoccupied on 16 September 1842. But it had learnt its lesson well. Having avenged its recent defeat and humiliation, it arrived at a settlement with Dost Muhammed by which the British evacuated Kabul and recognised him as the independent ruler of Afghanistan.

Historians have with remarkable unanimity condemned the First Afghan War as imperialistic, immoral, and unwise and politically disastrous. It cost India over one and a half crores of rupees and its army nearly 20,000 men. Moreover, Afghanistan had become suspicious of, and even hostile to, the Indian Government. Many years were to pass before Afghanistan's suspicions were lulled to some extent.

Policy of Non-Interference. A new period of Anglo-Afghan friendship was inaugurated in 1855 with the signing of a treaty of friendship between Dost Muhammed and the Government of India. The two governments promised to maintain friendly and peaceful relations, to respect each other's territories, and to abstain from interfering in each other's internal affairs. Dost Muhammed also agreed that he would be "the friend of the friends of the East India Company and the enemy of its enemies." He remained loyal to this treaty during the Revolt of 1857 and refused to give help to the rebels.

After 1864 this policy of non-interference was vigorously pursued by Lord Lawrence and his two successors. As Russia again turned its attention to Central Asia after its defeat in the Crimean War, the British followed the policy of strengthening Afghanistan as a powerful buffer. They gave the Amir of Kabul aid and assistance to help him discipline his rivals internally and maintain his independence from foreign enemies. Thus, by a policy of non-interference and occassional help, the Amir was prevented from aligning himself with Russia.

The Second Afghan War: The policy of non-interference did not, however, last very long. From 1870 onwards there was a resurgence of imperialism all over the world. The Anglo-Russian rivalry was also intensified. The British Government was again keen on the commercial and financial penetration of Central Asia. Anglo-Russian ambitions clashed even more openly in the Balkans and West Asia.

The British statesmen once again thought of bringing Afghanistan under direct political control so that it could serve as a base for British expansion in Central Asia. Moreover, British officials and public opinion were again haunted by the hysterical fear of a Russian invasion of India, the 'brightest jewel[1] in the British Empire. And so the Indian Government was directed by London to make Afghanistan a subsidiary state whose foreign and defence policies would be definitely under British control.

Sher Ali, the Afghan ruler or Amir, was fully conscious of the Russian danger to his independence and he was, therefore, quite willing to cooperate with the British in eliminating any threat from the North. Ho offered the Government oflndia a defensive and offensive alliance against Russia and asked It for promise of extensive military aid in case of need against internal or foreign enemies. The Indian Government refused to enter into any such reciprocal and unconditional commitment. It demanded instead the unilateral right to keep a British mission at Kabul and to exercise control over Afghanistan's foreign relations. When Sher Ali refused to comply, he was declared to be anti-British and pro- Russian in his

sympathies. Lord Lytton, who had come to India as Governor-General in 1876, openly declared: "A tool in the hands of Russia, I will never allow him to become. Such a tool it would be my duty to break before it could be used." Following in Auckland's footsteps, Lytton proposed to effect "the gradual disintegration and weakening of the Afghan power."

To force British terms on the Amir a new attack on Afghanistan was launched in 1878. Peace came in May 1879 when Sher Ali's son, Yakub Khan, signed the Treaty of Gandamak by which the British secured all they had desired. They secured certain border districts, the right to keep a Resident at Kabul, and control over Afghanistan's foreign policy.

But the British success was short lived. The national pride of the Afghans had been hurt and once again they rose to defend their independence. On 3 September 1879 the British Resident, Major Cavagnari, and his military escort were attacked and killed by rebellious Afghan troops. Afghanistan was again invaded and occupied. But the Afghans had made their point. A change of government took place in Britain in 18B0 and Lytton Was replaced by a new Viceroy, Lord Ripon. Ripon rapidly reversed Lytton's aggressive policy and went back to tjie policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of a strong and friendly Afghanistan. He recognized Abdur Rahman, a grandson of Dost Muhammed, as the new ruler of Afghanistan. The demand for the maintenance of a British Resident in Afghanistan was withdrawn. In return Abdur Rahman agreed not to maintain political relations with any power except the British. The Government of India also agiced to pay the Amir an annual subsidy and to come to his aid in case of foreign aggression. Thu* fhe Amir <et Afghanistan lost control -of his foreign policy and,

ihait ejdejrt, became -a <d^penden (ruler. At ahe same time, he retained iccuwplete aoritrbl jwer iris country's internal affairs,

The Third Anglo-Afghan War: The First World War and the Russian Revolution of 1917 created a new sitnation in Anglo-Afghan relations, The war gave rise to strong anti-British Feeling in Muslim countries, and the Russian Revolution inspired new anti-imperialist sentiments in Afghanistan as, in fact, all over the world. The disappearance of Imperial Russia, moreover, removed the perpetual fear of aggression from the northern neighbour which had compelled successive Afghan rulers to look to the British for support. The Afghans now demanded full independence from British control. Habibuliah, who had succeeded Abdur Rahman in 1901 as Amir, was assassinated on 20 February 1919 and his son Amamillah, the new Amir, declared open war on British Tndm. Peace came in 1921 when by a treaty Afghanistan recovered its independence in foreigft affairs.

Relations with Tibet Tibet lies to the north of India where the Himalayan peaks separate it from India It was ruled by a Buddhist religious aristocracy (the lamas) who had ieduced the local population to serfdom and even slavery The chief political authority was exercised by the Dalai Lama, who claimed to be the

living incarnation of the power of the Buddha. The Imns wanted to isolate Tibet from the rest of the world; however, since the beginning of the 17th century, Tibet had recognised the nominal suzerainty of the Chinese Empire. The Chinese Government also discouraged contacts with India (hough a limited trade and same pilgrim tiaffic between India and Tibet existeo.

The Chinese Empire under the Manchu monarchy entered a period of decline during the 19th century. Gradually, Britain, Francc, Russia, Germany, Japan, and the United States of America penetrated China commercially and politically and established indirect political control over the Manchus. The Chinese people also created a powerful anli- Manchu and anti-imperialist nationalist movement at (he end of the 19th century and the Manchus were overthrown in 1911. But the nationalists led by Dr. Sun Yat Sen failed to consolidate their power and China was torn by civil war during the next few years. The result was that, weak at home, China, since (he middle of the 19th century, was in no position to assert even nominal control over Tibet. The Tibetan authorities slill acknowledged in theory Chinese overlordship so that other foreign powers would not feel tempted to penetrate Tibet. But Tibel was not aljle to maintain its complete isolation for long.

Both Britain and Russia were keen to promote relations with Tibet. The British policy towards Tibet was governed by both economic and political considerations. Economically, the British wanted to develop Tndo-Tibetan trade and to exploit its rich mineral resources. Politically, they wanted to safeguard the northern frontier of India. It seems that the British therefore desired to exercise some sort of political control over Tibet. But up to the end of the 19th century the Tibetan authorities blocked all British efforts to penetrate it. At this tins'; Russian ambitions also turned towards Tibet. Russian influence in Tibet was on the increase; this the British Government would not tolerate. The very notion that the territory adjacent to India's northern border could fall under Russian influence was abhorrent to it. The Government of India, under Lend Curzon, a vigorous empire builder, decid^I to take immediate action to counter Russian moves and to bring Tibet under its system of protected border states. According to some historians, the Russian danger was not real and was merely used as an excuse by Curzon to intervene in Tibet.

In March 1904, Curzon despatched a military expedition to Lhasa, the Capital of Tibet, under Francis Younghusbdnd. The virtually unarmed Tibetans, who lacked modern weapons, fought back bravely but without success. In one action at Guru alone 700 of them were slaughtered. Tn August 1904, the expedition reached Lhasa without coming across any Russians on the way. A treaty was signed after protonged negotiations. Tibet was to pay Rs. 25 lakhs as indemnity; the Chumbi valley was to be occupied by the British for three years; and a British trade mission was to be stationed at Gyantse. The British agreed not to interfere in Tibet's internal affairs. On their part, the Tibetans agreed not to admit the representatives of any foreign power into Tibet. The British achieved very little

by the Tibetan expedition. It secured Russia's withdrawal from Tibet, but at the cost of confirming Chinese suzerainty. World events soon compelled Britain and Russia to come together against their common enemy—Germany. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 brought about this shift. One of the clauses of this Convention laid down that neither country would seek territorial concessions in Tibet or even send diplomatic representatives to Lhasa. The two countries agreed not to negotiate with Tibet directly tout to do so only through China. Britain and Russia reaffirmed China's suzerainty to avoid conflict over Tibet and in the hope that the decaying Manchu Empire .would not be able to enforce this suzerainty. But they failed to foresee the day when a strong and independent, government would emerge in China.

Relations frith Sikkim

The state of Sikkim lies'to the north of tfengal, adjacent to Nepal and at the border between Ti^ef and India. In 1835 the Raja of Sikkim ceded to the British territory around Darjeeling' in return for an afinual money grant. Friendly relations between the two were disturbed in 1849 when a minor quarrel led Dalhousie to send troops into Sikkim when* ruler was in the end forced to cede nearly 1700 square miles of his territory to British India.

Another clash occurred in 1860 when the British were engaged by the iroops of the Diwan of Sikkim. By the peace treaty signed in 1861, Sikkim was reduced to the status of a virtual protectorate. The Raja of Sikkim expelled the Diwan and his relations from Sikkim, agreed to pay a fine of Rs. 7,000 as well as full compensation for British losses in the war, opened his country fully to British trade, and agreed to limit the tiansit duty on goods exchanged between India and Tibet via Sikkim.

In 1886 fresh trouble arose when the Tibetans tried to bring Sikkim under their control with the complicity of its rulers who were pro-Tibet. But the Government of India would not let this happen. It looked upon Sikkim as an essential buffer for the security of India's northern frontier, particularly of Darjeeling and its tea-gardens, It therefore carricd out military operations agajnst the Tibetans in Sikkim during 1888. Final settlement came in 1890 with the signing of an Anglo-Chinese agreement. The treaty rccognised that Sikkim was a British protectorate over whose internal administration and foreign relations the Government of India had the right to exorcise exclusive control.

Relations with Bhutan

Bhutan is a large hilly country to (he East or Sikkim and at India's northern border. Warren Hastings established friendly relations with the ruler of Bhutan after 1774 when Bhutan permitted Bengal to trade with Tibet through its territory. Relations between the Government of India and Bhutan became unsatisfactory after 1815. The British now began to cast greedy eyes upon the narrow strip of territory of about 1,000 square miles at the base of Bhutan hills containing a number of *duars* or passes. This area would give India a well-

defined and defendable border and useful, tea-lands to the British planters. Ashley Eden, who went to Bhutan in 1863 as British envoy, described the advantages of occupying'the *duars* as follows:

> **The Province Is one of the finest In India and under our Government would In a few years become one of the wealthiest. It ia the only place I hive icen in India in which the theory of European settlement could, in my opinion, lake a really practical fonm.**

In 1841, Lord Auckland annexed the Assam *duars.* The relations between India isad Bhutan .were further ;strained by the intermittent raids **made by die Bhutiyas** on the **Bengal** side **of** the border. This state of ji[fairs lasted for nearly **half a century. In** ihe end, in 1863, a brief war broke out between the two. The fighting was utterly one-sided and was settled by a treaty signed in November 1865. Bhutan ceded all the Bengal and AsSam *duars* in return for an annual payment of Rs. 50,000. The Government of India was to control Bhutan's defence and foreign relations, though it promised not to interfere in Bhutan's internal affairs.

E X E R C I S E S

1. Bring out some of the basic factors which governed relations of the Government of India with India's neighbours in the I9th century.
2. What were the objectives underlying British policy towards Burma in the 19th century 7 How were these objectives realised ?
3. Examine critically British Indian policy towards Afghanistan during the 19th century. Why did it fail repeatedly 7
4. Write short notes on:

   (a) Anglo-Russian rivalry in Tibet, (b) Younghusband expedition, (c) Indian relations with Sikkim in the 19th century, (d) Indo-Bhutan Settlement of 1865, (e) War with Nepal, 1814.