

**INDIAN FRONTIER
POLICY: AN
HISTORICAL SKETCH**

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Indian Frontier Policy: An Historical Sketch by Sir John Adye

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SIR JOHN ADYE

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P R E F A C E

THE subject of our policy on the North-West frontier of India is one of great importance, as affecting the general welfare of our Eastern Empire, and is specially interesting at the present time, when military operations on a considerable scale are being conducted against a combination of the independent tribes along the frontier.

It must be understood that the present condition of affairs is no mere sudden outbreak on the part of our turbulent neighbours. Its causes lie far deeper, and are the consequences of events in bygone years.

In the following pages I have attempted to give a short historical summary of its varying phases, in the hope that I may thus assist the public in some degree to understand its general bearings, and to form a correct opinion of the policy which should be pursued in the future.

JOHN ADYE,

General.

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21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

EVENTS PRIOR TO, AND INCLUDING, FIRST AFGHAN WAR OF 1839-41

	PAGE
Proposed Invasion of India by Napoleon I.—Mission of Burnes to Cabul—Its Failure—Hostility of Russia and Persia—First Afghan War, 1839-41—Its Vicissitudes and Collapse . . .	1

CHAPTER II

EVENTS PRIOR, AND LEADING UP, TO SECOND AFGHAN WAR

Conquest of Khiva, Bokhara, and Kokand by Russia—British Con- quest of Scinde and the Punjab—Our Policy with the Frontier Tribes—Treaty of 1857 with Dost Mahomed—Shero Ali succeeds as Ameer, 1868—War of 1873—Abdul Rahman becomes Ameer —Withdrawal of British Army from Afghanistan, 1861 . . .	17
---	----

CHAPTER III

FRONTIER POLICY SINCE SECOND AFGHAN WAR, INCLUDING EXPEDITION TO CHITRAL

Further Advance of Russia—Merv Occupied—Sir West Ridgeway's Frontier Commission of 1885—The Durrand Agreement with Abdul Rahman—The Chitral Expedition of 1895—Its Results —Sudden Outbreak of Frontier Tribes, 1897 . . .	43
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MAP	<i>To face p.</i> 1
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CHAPTER I

EVENTS PRIOR TO, AND INCLUDING, FIRST AFGHAN WAR OF 1839-41

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IN considering the important and somewhat intricate subject of policy on the North-Western frontier of our Indian Empire it will be desirable, in the first place, to give a concise history of the events which have guided our action, and which for many years past have exercised a predominating influence in that part of our Eastern dominion.

Speaking generally, it may, I think, be said that the main features of our policy on the North-Western frontier have been determined by the gradual advance of Russia southwards, and partly also by the turbulent character of the people of Afghanistan, and of the independent tribes who inhabit the great

region of mountains which lie between Russia and ourselves.

These two circumstances—the first having been the most powerful—have led us into great wars and frontier expeditions, which as a rule have been costly, and in some cases unjust, and their consequences have not tended to strengthen our position either on the frontier or in India itself.

It will be well therefore to give an outline of the Russian conquests in Central Asia to the north of Afghanistan, and also of our dealings with the rulers of Cabul in bygone years, and we shall then be better able to judge of our present position, and to determine the principles which should guide our North-Western frontier policy.

One of the first threats of invasion of India early in the century was planned at Tilsit, and is thus described by Kaye :¹ ' Whilst the followers of Alexander and Napoleon were abandoning themselves to convivial pleasures, those monarchs were spending quiet evenings together discussing their future plans, and projecting joint schemes of conquest. It was then that they meditated the invasion of Hindostan by a confederate army uniting on the plains of Persia ; and no secret was made of the intention of the two great European potentates to commence in the following spring a hostile demonstration—Contre les possessions de la compagnie des Indes.'

¹ *History of the War in Afghanistan.*