

Practices of Diplomacy under the Mughals C.1526-1707

Fouzia Farooq Ahmed

Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

This article postulates that the Mughal emperors established viable diplomatic relations not only with neighboring regions but also with many European powers. These relations were multi-faceted and ranged from military and economic to cultural and familial. The rubric of Mughal diplomacy largely rested on realism. This paper argues that diplomacy helped emperor Humayun to reclaim his power in India, and it was one of the prime reasons for the decline of Mughal rule and the ultimate downfall of the empire.

Keywords: Mughals, Mughal diplomacy, Mughal culture, Mughal economy, Mughal Warfare

The conquest of the sub-continent by the Chaghtai Turks commonly known as the Mughals and the establishment of an extensively centralized and prosperous empire that endured varying fortunes for nearly three hundred years is an episode of great significance in the history of the sub-continent. The Mughal Empire at the time of its climax extended from Kabul to Assam and from Kashmir to the tip of the peninsula in South Asia. Thus "it was the largest single state ever known in India from the dawn of history to the rise of British power" (Sarkar, 1981, p. 24). For the first time in the history Sub-continent under the Mughals established systematic trends of foreign relations with outer world and the country dealt with foreign forces as a unified entity.

The Mughals dealt with three types of external powers i.e. the gun powder empires (McNeill, 1993, p. 103), the European naval powers and the petty states within the subcontinent: the territorial status of which kept on fluctuating under different Mughal emperors. In Asia, the Mughals had to deal with a: Safavid Persia (1501-1736) b: Central Asian States, and the Ottomans (1299–1922): who were essentially Muslim empires (Dale, 2009, p. 10). These empires are also known as gunpowder empires for their use of gunpowder in the warfare (Douglas, 2011, p. 3-4). The ties with the gunpowder empires were by no means religious. These relationships were based upon strategic and political pragmatism. The relationships with the neighboring petty states were solely for the purposes of defense and expansionism. The policies such as Deccan policy and the Frontier policy were the tools of dealing with these matters. Thirdly, Mughals faced the maritime European powers and their trading companies that accessed the Mughal court and systematically projected their influence to the sub-continent. The Mughal connections with all these powers helped Mughals transform their agrarian economy into mercantile economy. Successful diplomacy between Persians and Humayun helped the latter reclaim the Delhi throne. Failure of peace diplomacy under Shah Jahan and Aurengzeb Alamgir resulted in unnecessary warfare that hollowed the Mughal economy and resulted in the downfall of the Mughal Empire.

The Mughal and the Safavids

The rise of the Safavids in Persia and the Mughals in India was almost synchronous (Dadvar, 2000, p. 368). Persia remained the pivot of the Mughal foreign policy from the reign of Babur till the diplomatic debacle at the times of Muhammad Shah Rangeela (1719 -1748) that became the short term cause of the attack of Nadir Shah in 1738-39. Persia was the strongest potential rival empire of the Mughal subcontinent: from the times of Akbar till the advent of the British in India.

The Mughals and Safavid relations encompassed the fields of politics, diplomacy, culture, art, literature, trade, commerce and religion. There was an overt distrust and friction amongst the neighbors about Qandahar. Furthermore, the attitude of the Mughal emperors towards the Shia Sultanates of Deccan was unacceptable to Persia.

Despite of these conflicts over the state interests, the Mughals and the Safavids had matrimonial alliances and personal friendships between the royal families and higher court nobilities of the both sides. There was also a constant inflow of Persian émigrés who secured higher ranks in Mughal bureaucracy. Seventy percent of the nobility of Akbar was plainly composed of Tauranians (Central Asians) and Persians from Herat and Baghdad (Dadvar, 2000, 368). Nonetheless, so dominant was the Parisian culture in the Mughal court that Tauranian and Indian cultures seem to be eclipsed by it (Walia, 1982, p. 126). Keeping aside power game in Qandahar and Deccan. There were four major dimensions in the Mughal-Safavid relationships.

1. The Military relationships
2. The Ambassadorial relationships
3. The Persian émigrés and the Mughal court
4. The Trade and cultural relationships

The Military Relationships

The military relationships between the two empires were concurrently congenial and adversarial. In the reign of the earlier Mughal emperors the relationship was that of military assistance. At the end of Jahangir's reign assistance was replaced by overt hostility. Babur's help by Ismail Safavid proved to be of great moral to Babur in Central Asia against his archrival the Uzbek chief Shaibani Khan (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 97). Later Shah Tahmasp helped Humayun twice to reclaim his empire: First in 1544. to recover Qandahar and later in 1546 (Dadvar, 2000, pp. 34-5) at the battle field Badakhshan. The Persian royal ambassador Walad Beg Taklu fought besides Humayun's army. Persian combat troops of Shah Tahmasp displayed great valour in this battle, (Dadvar, 2000, p. 36). In 1577, the Ottomans attacked Persia in the west and the Uzbek-Persian frontier was also at war. Sultan Muhammad Khudabanda at this time dispatched Sultan Quli Chandan Oghli to India and requested Akbar's aid. Akbar at this time intended to send his assist in curbing the disorder (Dadvar, 2000, p. 36). He had a plan to come personally to Khorasan in order to fight the Turks (Dadvar, 2000, pp. 37). The Uzbek offer for an anti-Persian alliance was tactfully declined by Akbar in 1577 (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 98). In 1622 prince Khurram (later Emperor Shah Jahan) blatantly requested Shah Abbas for help against his father emperor Jahangir. This request however was diplomatically ignored by the Shah (Dadvar, 2000, p. 45).

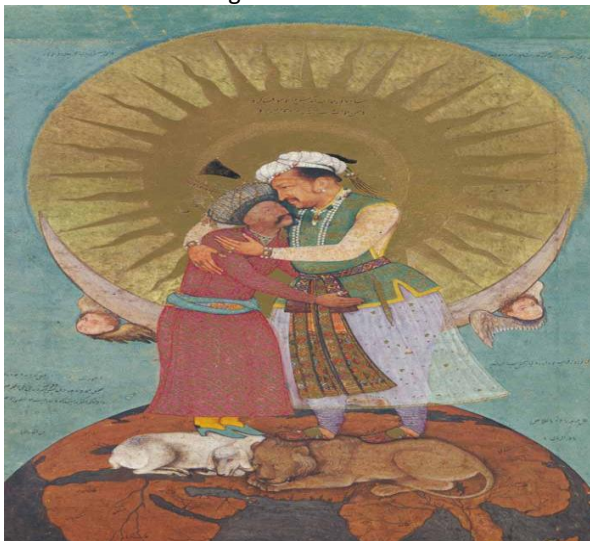
After Akbar, the military relations gradually transformed into open hostility mainly on the territorial claim of Qandahar region. Immediately after Humayun's death the Persian occupied Qandahar which was retrieved due to volunteer surrender by Muzzafar Hussain Mirza the Persian

governor of Qandahar in Akbar's reign (Qureshi, 1992, p. 69). Qandahar was recaptured at Jahangir's time which resulted in a violent action by Jahangir in 1607 (Walia, 1982, p. 1267). Later Shah Jahan's three sieges of Qandahar where a better show by Persians that drained off the blood of the Mughal treasury.

Ambassadorial Relationships

The pattern of relations is almost one sided during 1556-1666. Seven Indian embassies went to Persia and twenty-three Persian envoys came to India (Dadvar, 2000, p. 57). Despite of occasional distorted relations the flow of embassies was hardly disturbed. Nevertheless, the loss of Qandahar and the failure of the Mughals to recover it during the reign of Shah Jahan embittered the Mughal-Persian relations. Another factor, which acted as an irritant, was the Safavid support to Deccan Muslim states and assistance to the defiant princes. Consequently, Persian embassy at Alamgir's court could not succeed in restoring the old cordiality (Qureshi, 1992, p. 111).

These embassies were lavish and served multipurpose i.e. they were sent to normalize the relationships between the two countries. In 1562, Sayyed Beg Safavid's embassy to Akbar (Dadvar, 2000, p. 37) and Hussain Beg's embassy to Jahangir were meant to clarify Shah's move towards Qandahar (Dadvar, 2000, p. 39). The Persians also sent embassies to demand Qandahr. In 1559, (Dadvar, 2000, p. 39) Shah Abbas demanded for Qandahar via diplomatic means, later the embassy of Zenial Beg in 1622 (Dadvar, 2000, p. 39) also demanded Qandahar from Jahangir refusal of which resulted in open hostility from the Persians. The embassies where also sent to ascertain the impression of the subjected court and its politics and also to divulge the image of their own countries: Khan-e-Alam's embassy in 1618 (Dadvar, 2000, p. 43) was an important landmark in the history of the Mughal diplomacy. Never before or afterwards, a more splendidly equipped mission was sent anywhere by the Mughals nor did the Safavids ever receive such a lavish ambassadorial mission (Jahangir, 1869, p. 121). Shah Abbas impressed by Khan-e-Alam's talents and manners gave him the title of Jaan-e-Alam (Shah, 1976, p. 728). The profound justification behind this embassy was to impress the Persians by pomp and show. Later in 1622, Shah Abbas I wrote a letter to Khan-e-Aalam requesting him to clarify Shah's position to Jahangir over the conquest of Qandahar (Islam, 1976, .84). Thus Shah used his personal contacts to mitigate the strains in the inter-states relationships.



This painting of Jahangir and Shah Abbas Safavid best explains Mughal world view during Jahangir's time. Safavid Shah Abbas is shown as standing on a sheep while Jahangir is standing on a lion. The sheep represent the Safavid emblem and the lion represents the Mughal emblem. Both emperors are standing on an atlas of the known world. The atlas is in line with the 17th century knowledge of geography which explains how conscious Mughals were about the world around them. Jahangir is shown as taller and has the upper hand. The halo and sun are marks of royalty guarded by angels that are a Portuguese influence on the Mughal painting.

The Persian Émigrés

Akbar's policy of extensive recruitment of the foreigner émigrés in his nobility reinforced the diplomatic links between the two empires. There was continuous flow of Persian administrators, scholars, poets, artists and craftsmen in the Mughal sub-continent. These émigrés not only strengthened the Mughal bureaucracy but also penetrated in every sphere of life.

These Persian émigrés requested Persian Shah for the recommendations to the Mughal emperor for their placement and promotions in the Mughal court (Dadvar, 2000, p. 36). In 1564, a Persian noble Sultan Mahmud of Bakhar requested Shah Tahmasp to recommend Akbar for grant him the designation of Khan-e-Khanan. The emperor contentedly approved Shah's recommendation. Sultan Mahmud was given the title of Eitbar Khan (Dadvar, 2000, p. 36). One, Salamullah Arab requested Shah Abbas I for promotion. Jahangir immediately elevated his mansab and jagir (Jahangir, 1869, p. 117). These incidents occurred at the times when the Mughal and Persian relations were highly strained due to Qandahar. Thus the strained inter-states relationships hardly influenced personal amity on royal level.

The Trade and Cultural Relations

The trade relations between the royal courts can be traced during the end of Akbar's reign when prince Saleem (later emperor Jahangir) some years before his accession to the throne as Jahangir sent a trade mission under his trade agent Khwaja Burj Ali Nakh Chilsani: *Zubdat ul Tujjar* (Dadvar, 2000, p. 38). Shah Abbas intervened and supplied his requirements from the royal stores. Shah wrote a letter to prince Saleem complaining why the prince had entrusted his needs to the traders while he could have written to him directly (Dadvar, 2000, p. 40). Shah Jahan had active trade relations with Persian court as well. The Persian Shahs also requested the Mughal emperors for the hunting birds of subcontinent (Dadvar, 2000, p. 40). Apart from the ventures of the royal trade agents some private traders also received royal patronage. For instance, one, Haji Rafiq was conferred with the title of Malik-ul Tujjar (chief trader). These traders also carried letters between Shah Abbas I and Jahangir and later Shah Jahan (Jahangir, 1869, p. 121).

The Mughals and Turan-the Central Asian States

Central Asia or Turan was important in the Mughal foreign policy since Mughals themselves belonged to Central Asia. The Mughal foreign policy towards Central Asia was essentially based on two themes.

1. Expansionist Imperialism
2. Balance Of Power

Expansionist Imperialism

The Mughal contact with Turan the Central Asian states was not very frequent until the middle of Akbar's reign when the boundaries of the empires collided by Abdullah Khan Uzbek's conquest of Balakh and Badakhshan and conquest of Kabul by Azar (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 98). The

Mughal policy of expansionism was primarily the policy of expansionism across Transoxiana. So keen was the Mughal desire that Babar went to the length of his sacrificing his religious conscience (Babur, 1934, p. 81) and siding with Persian against the Central Asian rulers (Mitchell, 2001, p. 2). Humayun attempted to regain Central Asian lands during the times of his father but later could not, as he had other misfortunes to reckon on with. Akbar was prevented by the great power of the last Shaybanid Khan of Bukhara Abdullah Khan Uzbek (1583 - 1598).

The first diplomatic contact between Mughals and Tauranians was reported in 1572 when Abdullah Khan sent an embassy to Akbar. According to Abul Fazal this embassy was aimed to "gain the Mughal support against the domestic warfare and for greater security and success, (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 98) " To make his embassy notable lavish gifts presented to Munim Khan and Mirza Khoka. (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 98) Akbar however, severed the diplomatic relations on the reception of second embassy since he had intentions to conquer instable Tauran (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 98). The growing strength of Abdullah Khan kept Akbar from doing so (Dadvar, 2000, p. 38). Jahangir was too lax to leave the charm of Kashmir and Lahore for a hazardous march through the passes of Hindu-Kush. Shah Jahan, despite of the advice to the contrary by such able ministers as Sa'd Allah Khan and Ali Mardan. Attempted to subdue Central Asia Indian troops. Nonetheless, he only succeeded in justifying the name of those mountain ranges by sacrificing thousands of Rajputs (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 97). Aurangzeb profited by his experiences as the commander in chief of his father's forces had neither part nor lot in Central Asia and had like British Indian government not a central Asiatic but an Indian policy (Walia, 1982, p. 127).

Balance of Power

The policy of balance of power towards Central Asian states was twofold. Firstly, balance of power amongst the Central Asiatic states thus containing them within the borders of Central Asia. Secondly, the balance of power between the northern and the north western frontiers: in order to avoid the maneuverings in the Mughal frontiers by the Uzbeks and the Persians. In 1577. Mirza Suleiman the ruler of Badakhshan sought asylum in Akbar's court as a result of a powerful intrigue by his grandson Mirza Shah Rukh (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 99). Great respect was shown to him due to his association with Babur and Humayun (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 100) Nevertheless. Akbar was too astute to support a potential loser. He received envoys from Mirza Shah Rukh's mother who offered her daughter to Akbar thus a matrimonial alliance was formed between Akbar and the house of Badakhshan (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 100).

The Mughals also attempted to create balance of power between Central Asia and Persia to check the aggressive expansionist designs of Abdullah Khan Uzbek of Tauran. The offer by Abdullah Khan for an alliance against Persia was rejected not because Akbar had sympathy towards the Persians but a strong Persia was necessary to keep check over growing Uzbek threat (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 99). Due to constant Persian defeats on the western front by the Ottomans Akbar signed a treaty with Abdullah Khan Uzbek to conquer the road to the holy places, Iraq and Persia (Dadvar, 2000, p. 100). This treaty survived various phases of inimicality and distrust as Akbar and Abdullah Khan both feared each other's powers (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 101-104). Akbar after the death of Munim Khan and Abdullah Khan abandoned this treaty. (Afzal and Majeed, 1997, p. 107) No diplomatic treaty was ever signed after this occurrence. In Shah Jahan's era, the civil war broke in Central Asian states that gave the emperor a chance to march into Badakhshan. Despite of short-term victories. This venture caused great diplomatic and material loss in which resulted in destroying, the web of administration made by Akbar in Afghanistan (Qureshi, 1992, p. 91).

The Mughals and the Ottoman Empire

There were no territorial boundaries in common between the Mughals and the Ottomans. As a consequence, there were no direct means of conflict or cooperation between the Mughals and the Ottomans, the relationship between the Mughals and the Ottomans were primarily on three grounds;

1. The Ambassadorial Relationships
2. The Pilgrimage to Hejaz
3. The Trade Relationships

The Ambassadorial Relationships

The history of Mughals and Ottomans dates back to 1517 when Babur then a fugitive prince in Afghanistan and Central Asia refused to accept Sultan Salim (1512-1520) as a caliph. Later in 1519 Babur became an ally of Sultan Salim who provided the earlier not only cannons and matchlock muskets but also siege engineers like Mustafa Rumi and Ali Quli Khan. Babur's efficient use of canons and matchlock muskets in the field made him triumphed in the first battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodhi's (1526) (Watts 2011, p. 707.).

Suleiman the magnificent (1520-66) sent several naval expeditions to Gujarat to check the growing power of the Portuguese in the Arabian Sea and on the western cost of Subcontinent. The leader of last of these expeditions Sidi Ali Reis, after having been defeated by Portuguese and forced to abandon his fleet found his way to the court of Humayun and was hospitably received in 1556 (Qureshi, 1992, p. 15). One Ottoman naval officer Sayyed Ali Katibi, who having been shipwrecked in India went to Constantinople via overland. Akbar used the accidental presence of Sayyed Ali at Delhi to develop diplomatic ties between Ottomans and Mughals. The emperor hoped that reciprocity from the Ottoman Sultan and hoped for long term cordiality (Rasheed, 1962, p. 68). This however was an isolated event as no embassies were exchanged by any of the sides thereafter. There was an exchange of royal letters (maktubat). This exchange of letters was through naval officers and traders. The letters that were exchanged were mere courtesy exchanges between the two Muslim rulers. There is no evidence of any request being made for any military, economic assistance or political alliances. There is no revealing account of any social, political and economic relations between both the countries. The letters seem too casual and too mutually complimentary to give an insight into the real intentions of the writers of these letters. Nevertheless, several regular embassies were exchanged during the reign of Shah Jahan. There was exchange of discourteous letters as well (Rasheed, 1962, p. 75). Yet the exchange of embassies seems least affected by it (Rasheed, 1962, p. 76). After the demise of Shah Jahan the ambassadorial relationship between the Ottomans and the Mughal became infrequent. As both the empires encountered similar internal threats resulting from intransigence of the conquered regional powers that neither conciliated nor assimilated and also from the ever increasing pressure of the western imperialism. Nevertheless, no military alliance were formed because of conflict of interest and the distance separating the two empires. Cultural and commercial contacts established during Shah Jahan's era continued as Alamgir's era as well (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 99).

There was surreptitious mistrust between the two powers against each other. An attempt by Abdullah Khan Uzbek for a triple alliance against Persia with the Ottomans was indistinctly adjourned by Akbar. On the other hand, Akbar articulated his intention of expelling the Portuguese from India as well as he wished to free Holy Places from the Ottomans in one of his letter (maktub) to the Uzbek Chiefs (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 99). Consequently, there was an explicit distrust shown

by the initial diplomatic gestures of the Ottoman rulers. This distrust became more visible when the Ottoman spies stationed in India reported in 1588 to the Ottoman Sultan that Akbar had secretly formed an alliance with Portuguese against Ottoman and was expected to attack the ports of Yemen that were under the sway of the Ottomans (Rasheed, 1962, p. 72).

The Pilgrimage to Hejaz

A constant stream of Indian pilgrims went to the Hejaz. Rich and costly royal donations were sent to holy places. Prince Dara Shikoh sent presents for the tomb of Imam Abu Hanifa and Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani. (Sarkar, 1986, p. 317) Later Alamgir had his personal appointed for Hejjaz who carried donations and presents to the holy places (Qureshi, 1992, p. 96). Alamgir was seen with high regard by the Ottomans due to his religious tendencies. (Rasheed, 1962, p. 78) In short the Mughal diplomacy was essentially boundary based and since there were no common boundaries between the two empires the relationship between the Mughals and the Ottomans remained very formal, commercial and inconsequential.

The Deccan Policy of the Mughals

The Mughals never recognized Deccan governors as independent rulers and in state papers and official chronicles: they are described as Adil Khans. Qutab-ul- Mulks and Nizam-ul-Mulks respectively (Dadvar, 2000, p. 45). Like their predecessors the Delhi Sultans, the Mughals followed an active Deccan policy. This policy was the outcome of both the domestic and trans-regional politics.

Firstly, Deccan was an area where Mughals and Persians interests collided, the Adil Shahs of Bijapur and the Qutab-ul Mulks of Golkanda were Shia before the advent of the Mughals in India. Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar adopted Shiaism in 1537-8 (Naqvi, 1994, p. 63). Consequently the Safavids were in close relationship with the governors of Golkanda, Bijapur and Ahmadnagar (Dadvar, 2000, p. 46). The Mughals regarded with displeasure any ties between Deccan kingdoms and the Safavids. They strongly objected to the inclusion of the name of ruling Safavid in khutba of Golkanda, a practice which the Qutab Shahs had adopted soon after the rise of Shah Ismail in Persia (Rasheed, 1962, p. 72). The policy of the Persians was to engage the Mughals on both northern and southern fronts and make them economically and militarily weak. Shah Abbas Safavid (1588-1629) successfully engaged Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan in Deccan affairs, thus subjection of the south was important for the Mughals.

Secondly, the Deccan kingdoms were the targets of Mughals ambitions from the days of Akbar. Akbar's Deccan policy was actuated purely by imperialistic motives. Akbar realized the danger from the European powers from the sea; that were exploiting the economic resources of his empire and meddling in Indian political affairs and could impair his growing empire. So, "he wanted to drive away the Portuguese who were rising into political power of the sea (Awan, 1994, p. 475). The Portuguese hatred of the Muslims proved to be a hurdle in the way to pilgrimage to Makah, Deccan states had good relations with the Portuguese which gave Akbar a justification to march into Deccan. The successors of Akbar, nevertheless, did not take this reason very seriously.

Thirdly, the Mughal expansionist tendencies were also the underlying factor for the Mughal Deccan policy. Deccan had also been an asylum for the anti-Mughal elements thus it was important to take action against the Deccan states. Deccan states were fighting amongst themselves; an instable periphery was unaffordable for the Mughal administrative authorities at the center. Moreover, the large army of the Mughals was also a reason for the Mughal hostile designs in Deccan as it was important to keep the large army occupied to avoid its indulgence in anti-state activities.

The peace and stability and flourishing economy in north also gave the Mughals time to venture in Deccan (Khan, 1971, p. 7).

Through mainly preoccupied the affairs of northern India. Neither Babur nor Humayun was oblivious of the Deccan. They were in correspondence with Burhan Nizam Shah of Ahmenagar. Humayun occupied Gujarat, though only for a short period of time was interested in Khandesh as well (Islam, 1976, p. 110). Akbar gave a new vigor to the Mughal policy of expansionism; after consolidation of his rule in the north, Qureshi, (1992, p. 96) he sent four emissaries to Khandesh, Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda but only Khandesh accepted suzerainty of the emperor. Thus war was to be the arbiter where diplomacy failed (Awan, 1994, p. 475). The second diplomatic development was made with Chand Bibi in 1594 as a result of which Mughals accepted Bhadur as the sultan of Ahmednagar who in return was to accept the suzerainty of Akbar (Qureshi, 1992, p. 71). Although Akbar was unable to annex the entire south but he paved the way to complete the conquest of remaining part of India for his successors. (Sharma, 1988, p. 1-12). Jahangir's policy was not as aggressive as that of Akbar. The submission gained by him with the help of Shah Jahan depended more on treaties that were signed without war (Islam, 1976, p. 110), hence negotiations played an important role in Jahangir's foreign policy in Deccan. Eventually no territorial expansion took place in that era. At Shah Jahan's accession to the throne the Deccan policy of the Mughals passed into a new phase. He followed a vigorous expansionist policy (Qureshi, 1992, p. 571-518). He signed treaties with Golconda and Bijapur but the pattern was that of tributary states which were not become the part of the empire. Aurangzeb had a religious motive behind his Deccan policy. He followed expansionism blindly without realizing how difficult it would be to manage such a vast empire. He spent last twenty five years of the reign in south as a consequence: this endless war exhausted Mughal treasury (Bhatti, 1997, p. 708). In short , Deccan policy of the Mughals was that of expansionism. Despite of the occasional short term successes the Deccan policy of the Mughals was one of those failures that prove to be one of the major reason in the eventual downfall of the Mughals.

The Mughals and Qandahar: The North Western Frontier Policy

Qandahar was located the northern periphery or the Mughal Empire. It occupied prime significance in the Mughal foreign policy. The Mughal relationship with Persia and the Central Asian states were largely determined on the Qandahar factor: attainment of which was zero sum game for all the three powers. Qandahar was principally, a part of Persian frontier, however the Mughal foreign policy towards Qandahar was simply that of expansionism which was to be acquired through war. The significance of which for the Mughal Empire was mainly because of geo- strategic and revenue factors.

1. Qandahar was the key to the overall defense of northern India. Since its proximity to Lahore and the indo- Gangetic plain made it an ideal launching point for invasions. Akbar and previous Indo-Islamic rulers had made the defense and maintenance of the fort a priority issue (Khan, 1976, p. 45).
2. Qandahar is located between the Arghandad and Shurab rivers and represents a component in the Kabul-Qandahar-Herat triangle was one of the principle entrepôts of Central Asia. Textiles. Spices, slaves, gold and silver were transported by the Indian merchants via Qandahar to Persia: likewise, the Persian and the Armenian traders used the city as a conduit to the subcontinent for their commodities of silk, porcelain, wine, and the European-manufactured goods (Mitchell, 2001, p. 16). Nearly 14000 caravans passed through Qandahar. In short, this region had the potential to add handsomely in the Mughal trade revenue (Qureshi, 1992, p. 89).

3. The fertile hinterland, the plentiful supply of the water and the mass agricultural produce in Qandahar were enough to cover the revenue deficit of the entire region of Afghanistan. The roots of Mughal-Persian tussle over Qandahar can be traced from the times of Humayun. While coming back to India from Persia, after capturing Bust. Humayun marched to Qandahar. Nevertheless, Humayun's seizure of Qandahar from the Persians did not interrupt his friendly and cordial relations with Shah Tahmasp (Dadvar, 2000, p. 35). In the years 1556, Akbar ascended the Mughal throne and Shah Tahmasp captured Qandahar thus deteriorated the Mughal and Persian relations for sometimes (Dadvar, 2000, p. 36). In 1595 the Persian governor of Qandahar from the fear of the Uzbeks offered to hand over the province to Akbar. Shah Beg was deputed to take over charge and Qandahar was peacefully united to the Mughal Empire (Qureshi, 1992, p. 69). Later there were repeated ambassadorial demands from the Persians to hand over the province of Qandahar but they were discreetly ignored by Akbar. The first direct confrontation between the Mughals and Persians came with an attempt by the Persians to occupy Qandahar was at the death of Akbar. The revolt of Mughal prince Khusrau gave Shah Abbas I. an opportunity of instigating the chiefs of Khorasan and to attack Qandahar, but Shah Beg Khan, the Indian governor of the fortress put up a stout defense. Early in 1607. Jahangir sent reinforcement under Mirza Ghazi Tarkan (Dadvar, 2000, p. 39). The Persians, struck with terror raised the siege and retreated to Khorasan. Foiled in this business Shah Abbas disclaimed knowledge of the invasion, rebuked the Khorasani nobles and apologized to Jahangir. He wrote to explain that the restless border tribes had committed the mischief of their accord and that he had punished them for their foolish audacity (Dadvar, 2000, p. 40). This diplomatic act was followed by exchange of embassies from both sides. Later. Jahangir was requested by Shah Abbas I for the return of Qandahar but Persian request was rejected. In any event, the opinion that finally prevailed was that the surrender of Qandahar would be regarded as a sign of weakness, this impression is confirmed by the Persian sources as well, for they say that a group of mischief-mongers at Jahangir's court prevented the settlement of the issue in accordance with the Shah's desire. In the year 1622. Shah Abbas conquered Qandahar (Qureshi, 1992, p. 79). Attempts to form an alliance with the Uzbeks and his plan: expedition under prince Shah Jahan for the recovery of Qandahar ended in naught (Dadvar, 2000, p. 33). After the loss Of Qandahar, Jahangir had resentment against an old friend who had not only deprived him from a rich province, but had instigated against him the rulers of the Deccan States and possibly Shah Jahan. He wanted to recover Qandahar at cost (Walia, 1982, p. 129). The main purpose of Yadgar Beg's mission in 1610 (Dadvar, 2000, p. 39) was ascertain Delhi's attitude towards Qandahar but a month before he reached India. Qandahar fell into the hands of the Indian army which was later lost in no time. In 1649, 1652 and 1653 Shah Jahan sent three unsuccessful expeditions to Qandahar but it was lost without a hope of recovery and it set the degeneration in the Mughal Army. Loss of Qandahar deteriorated the Mughal and Persian relationship. The race for Qandahar was basically between the Mughals and Persia. However the relationship between Persia, Central Asia and the Ottomans determined issue of possession Of Qandahar. The Qandahar tussle between Mughals and Persians faded at the times of Aurangzeb Alamgir, when the ultimate decline of the all four empires took place.

The Mughals and Maritime Powers

In 1498 Vasco da Gama circumnavigated Africa and thus ushered in a new era of European participation in the Indian Ocean. Till the early seventeenth century the Mughal India had begun to emerge as a central hub in the developing economics of proto-capitalistic powers like England and

Holland as well (Mitchell, 2001, p. 20). The foreign trade developed in the sub-continent because Mughal empire in 1600 had 22% of world GDP (Madison, 2004, 256). This won Mughal empire the prime economic status in the Eurasian commercial theater (Mitchell, 2001, p. 21). There were several reasons for the development of foreign trade in the sub-continent.

Firstly, the laissez faire policies of the Mughal government in respect of trade created enlarged opportunities for conducting trade and for operating at inland marts in India (Moosvi, 1999, p. 267). Secondly, the Mughal Empire was land based -classic tributary empire that had no match with the gunpowder naval powers. The Portuguese cartaze system and later the other European joint stock business organization alternated trade dynamics in the Indian oceans. thus. they built a mercantile naval empire in Indian oceans (Mitchell, 2001, p. 21). Mughals had no adequate to counter them. The Portuguese arrived in the subcontinent three decades before the Mughals. They made their colonies in south. The Danish, the Dutch, the Spanish, the Germans, the Armenians, the British and the French followed them. The colonies of these western powers were mainly in south and Bengal (Sen, 1971, p. 5). The Mughal relationship with these maritime powers was relatively one sided and was based on trade. The Mughals viewed oceanic trade with contempt: as numerous elite aphorisms make this point. Merchants who trade by sea are like "silly worms clinging to logs." Moreover, "wars by sea are merchants affairs and of no concern to the prestige of the kings" (Pearson, 2000, p. 413). There is very little that Mughal chronicles mention about the foreign powers. The standard chronicles by Abdul Qadir Badauni and Abul Fazal mention only the first Jesuit mission-ignoring the next two. While Jahangir's Memoirs ignore the Europeans totally, even the mission by Sir Thomas Roe which from English side was of such great significance. It seems as if Mughals were centre of attention for the Europeans including the Portuguese the reverse was hardly the case (Pearson, 2000, p. 408).

Lesser European trading powers had relations with the local Mughals authorities: as the Danes were given a parwana of trade in 1698 by the subadar prince Aim-ud-Din (Ray, 1998, p. 291) and in Armenian chronicles the references of conflict between a Mughal official Ghiyas-ud-din and one Minas an Armenian trader. This matter was settled by Muhammad Amin Khan, a higher Mughal official (Moosvi, 1999, p. 272).

The stronger European powers like Portuguese, French and British sent their emissaries to the Mughal court and were able to win the privileges of trade. The first emissary by the foreign power was by the Portuguese in the court of Akbar. These three missions in royal court in 1594 allowed for the Portuguese to establish limited diplomatic contact with the Mughal Emperor which in turn resulted in certain trade concessions being allotted to Estado da India (Mitchell, 2001, p. 8). Thomas Roe's embassy though failed to procure a bilateral trading agreement. Succeeded in soliciting a farman for trading capitals in Ahmadabad, Burhanpur and other Mughal trading enter ports. These powers did have jealousies amongst themselves and they attempted to outdo each other in Mughal court. The arrival of Roe's embassy depleted with presents for Jahangir, played a part for the weakening of the Portuguese influence in the Mughal court (Mitchell, 2001, p. 25).

Akbar realized the Portuguese threat to his naval borders. At first he attempted to win an alliance with the Portuguese by appeasing them through permitting them to build a church in Lahore despite of the mass resentment in 1595. The Portuguese earned Akbar's wrath when they refused to provide him with guns and ammunitions for his Deccan campaigns (Qureshi, 1992, p. 72-3).

With the advent of the Portuguese started an era of large scale piracy in Arabian sea by Europeans who held up the pilgrim traffic. Captured and looted vessels along the coastal areas and levied taxes on the local merchants. The owner of the ships and some port towns. The weakness of the Mughal naval power and the cupidity of the port officers made effective reprisal against pirates impossible (Qureshi, 1992, p. 116).

According to Khawafi Khan "the total revenue of Bombay, which was chiefly derived from beetle-nut and coca-nuts. Does not reach two or three lacs of rupees. The profit of the commerce of these misbalances according to the reports does not exceed twenty lacs of rupees. The balance of money acquired for the maintenance of the English settlement is obtained by plundering the ships voyaging to the house of God of which they take one or two every year" (Qureshi, 1992, p. 116).

These maritime powers were constantly threatening the Mughal writ of the state. After various unsuccessful attempts the English, the Dutch and the French were compelled in 1698 to give an undertaking that they would be responsible for suppression of piracy and would pay for all losses suffered on the sea (Qureshi, 1992, p. 115-6). This undertaking proved to be a failure and Mughals authorities in 1703 acted against the Dutch and English for capturing Mughal ships and imprisoning hajj pilgrims. In 1706, however an imperial order to lift the restrictions was issued (Moosvi, 1999, p. 273). The maritime powers strengthened their rule in the subcontinent and the Mughals viewed these developments with sheer helplessness. No successful strategy was devised to deal with the Europeans: there was merely one sided flow of embassies supported by irresistible temptations of peshkash in return of the trade privileges by the foreign powers. The growing hostilities by foreign powers on eastern and southern sea shores and the challenges to the Mughal writ of the state by these powers on land recurred fights between the Mughals and naval powers, which proved to be "a fight between an elephant and the whale. The one helpless against the other..." (Qureshi, 1992, p. 117).

To conclude with; the foundations of the foreign policy of the Mughals rested upon its expansionist designs. This expansionism can be observed in Mughal actions in Central Asia. Qandahar and the Deccan. The Mughals foreign relations were essentially boundary based: the relation between Persia and subcontinent remained disconnected during the initial 13 years of Humayun's reign because independent Kabul ruled by Mirza Kamran (Dadvar, 2000, p. 34) existed between Persia and the subcontinent. Moreover, the first contact between the Tauranis and Mughals occurred only when Abdullah Khan Uzbek captured Badakhshan and Balkh (Afzal & Majeed, 1997, p. 98). This phenomenon explains the fact why Mughals did not have active diplomatic contacts with the Ottomans.

Persia remains axle in Mughal foreign relations, as the strength of Safavid Persia counterbalanced the Mughal Imperialism in the region. The influence of Persian nobility in the Mughal court also contributed to add the significance of Persia in the Mughal foreign policy.

The Mughal foreign policy was shaped by short-term state objectives and the personal inclinations of the emperors. The foreign policy of the Mughals under Babur and Humayun was Persian- Central Asian policy. The administrative sagacity of Akbar was reflected in the robust edifice of foreign policy: the successful containment of the Central Asian state by maintaining balance of power and peaceful accession of Qandahar from the Persians were his distinctive diplomatic achievements. Jahangir's laxity was reflected in his diplomatic treaties with the Deccan states.

Aggressiveness of Shah Jahan, can be observed in his Central Asian and Qandahar policies and Aurangzeb's religious inclinations are revealed in his Deccan policy and the policy of draftiness

towards Persia. The Mughals could not counter the maritime powers with an effective foreign policy because the Mughals were far too archaic to counter advanced European trade tactics, gunpowder and naval technologies. Moreover, the Mughal Empire which was already of the size of Western Europe was too large to handle for a single centralized government at the center. The local coastal authorities were unable to counter the foreign naval challenges. Thus leaving the grounds open for the Europeans to flourish. The Mughal foreign policy as a result, was a mixture of successes and failures, that adequately fulfilled the immediate objectives of the defense and expansion of the Mughal Empire against Persia and Central Asia but failed to tackle with the long term question of survival inflicted upon them by the maritime powers.

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