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Sanders, George

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**Diplomacy and the Anglo-Russian
Convention of 1907**

George Sanders

On the thirty-first of August, 1907, Russia and Great Britain signed an agreement in St. Petersburg which established a formal understanding between the two countries regarding the potentially explosive region of Central Asia. The agreement, known as the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, secured a temporary status quo between the two imperialist giants in the highly coveted regions of Tibet, Persia, and Afghanistan. For much of the nineteenth century Russia and Great Britain vied for positions of influence in this "buffer zone" separating their empires. Mutual distrust encouraged their imperial rivalry, and more than once the tense climate threatened to explode into war. Russia's interest in the region was motivated in part by a process of expansion not unlike the American movement west. Just as American policy once tested the Mexican will to resist "manifest destiny," carrying with it the desire to secure natural frontiers, Russia pressed southward in search of what it considered to be God-given boundaries. Great Britain coveted the territory as protection against hostile Russian action toward India and as a source of trade. The convention curtailed the rivalry and led to the formation of the Triple Entente of Russia, Great Britain, and France.

Historians have traditionally associated the convention with the rise of European alliances that played an important role in the coming of the First World War. An unfortunate result of this interpretation has been to view the convention as a natural consequence of international events. This perspective argues that Russia, weakened by the debacle of the Russo-Japanese War and internal revolution, was naturally conciliatory toward an agreement with Great Britain. Britain wished to counterbalance the strength of the Triple Alliance and therefore was willing to enter into negotiations with

George Sanders received his B.A. and M.A. in History from the University of Arizona, where he is currently working on his Ph.D. in European History.

Russia.¹ In spite of these motives for entente, successful negotiations depended upon the determined efforts of British and Russian diplomats. Contrary to the smooth negotiations implied by the traditional interpretation, an examination of British and Russian documents related to the convention reveals the tenuous nature of the settlement between the two nations. Only through the perseverance of British ambassador Arthur Nicolson and Russian minister of foreign affairs Alexander P. Izvolskii, were Russia and Britain able to conclude the convention.

Preliminary discussions suggested that both sides desired an agreement. King Edward of England met with Izvolskii, then the Russian ambassador to Copenhagen in April 1904, and, as a result of their discussion, Russia and England agreed to arrange for more substantial talks on Anglo-Russian relations in Central Asia. The burden of negotiations during Russia's war with Japan, a critical period, fell to Charles Hardinge, the British ambassador to St. Petersburg. Hardinge maintained cordial relations between the two nations despite Russia's displeasure over the 1902 British alliance with Japan. Later, he was appointed permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, a position he used to promote a favorable attitude toward rapprochement with Russia.²

Russia quickly seized the opportunity of Hardinge's appointment to reopen negotiations with Great Britain. In London, the Russian ambassador, Count Benkendorf, approached the Foreign Office regarding the status of Anglo-Russian relations. Benkendorf favored an agreement with Britain. He met with Sir Edward Grey, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, in order to gauge the British attitudes toward Russia. Carefully feeling his way, the Russian ambassador suggested that England had shown a tendency to cooperate with Russia and that Russia had viewed this with much satisfaction. Although Benkendorf was unwilling to discuss the issue of Central Asia, he regarded the matter as one for further consideration.

Secretary of State Grey conveyed the essence of his conversation with Benkendorf in a dispatch to Cecil Spring-Rice, the chargé d'affaires of the British embassy in St. Petersburg. Grey gathered that Benkendorf's complimentary remarks signaled Russia's desire for an entente with Britain similar to Great Britain's tie with France. Grey also alluded to Russia's recent disaster in the Russo-Japanese War, and indicated that it now might be easier for Great Britain to cooperate with Russia than it had been a few years earlier. Grey's remarks implied that the Foreign Office felt itself in a superior negotiating position and therefore could obtain an agreement favoring Great Britain.³

In the spring of 1906, Izvolskii became Russian minister of foreign affairs. Just as Hardinge's appointment to the position of permanent under-secretary greatly improved the climate for discussion, Izvolskii's new role as Russian foreign minister created a favorable condition for negotiations. Izvolskii revealed in his memoirs that he had visited Benkendorf in London prior to the opening of discussions with Grey, at which time both had agreed to pursue a rapprochement with Britain.⁴

Although the diplomatic corps of both nations were ready to do business in the spring of 1906, it took fifteen

months to reach an accord. Nicolson and Izvol'skii had to overcome traditional hostilities between factions in England and Russia. Ambassador Nicolson entered St. Petersburg in late spring with the intention of continuing the discussions begun by Benkendorf. To this end Grey gave his wholehearted support. If the British were to avoid the "old, bad rut" which had often pushed them to the verge of war with Russia, Grey believed a definite agreement would be necessary.⁵ Both Grey and Nicolson felt, however, that a general statement of alliance would be difficult to obtain given what they perceived were traditional antagonisms between Englishmen and Russians. Nicolson wrote that he thought the British should restrict the discussions to "a matter-of-fact treatment of the respective British and Russian interests in certain specific regions."⁶ By rejecting the idea of a general agreement and by assuming the responsibility of negotiating on specific topics to which only small concessions could be offered, the British created a very delicate diplomatic situation for themselves. The burden of this situation fell on Nicolson.

As Nicolson familiarized himself with the requirements of office in St. Petersburg in late May, rumors of an Anglo-Russian entente appeared in the Russian press. Almost immediately the German ambassador queried Izvol'skii on these reports. Fearing diplomatic isolation between France and Russia, the Germans were apprehensive about negotiations between London and St. Petersburg. Izvol'skii was anxious not to alarm the Germans and replied to the ambassador that no formal arrangements had taken place. The British and Russians had only engaged in discussions on the maintenance of the status quo in Central Asia. The German ambassador declared that the German government would remain happy as long as no damage was done to German interests. Izvol'skii replied that any action affecting Germany's railway interests would be discussed beforehand with the German government. In London Grey told Benkendorf that nothing was further from Great Britain's desire than to use friendship with Russia as a lever to create difficulties with Germany.⁷

In addition to a temporary lack of German opposition, Nicolson found a favorable change in the traditionally hostile Russian press. This new source of Russian support did not go unnoticed by the British Foreign Office. In notations from the minutes of a Foreign Office docket, Hardinge suggested that the friendly tendency in the Russian press should be "carefully nursed until it bears fruit." Nicolson also benefited initially from the positive attitude taken by Parliament. Responding to early reports in the English press that an agreement between Britain and Russia was imminent, Grey stated in Parliament that although no such agreement existed, cooperation between Russia and England had strengthened friendly relations. Parliament responded with cheers.⁸

With conditions clearly in favor of fruitful negotiations, Nicolson paid his first visit to Izvol'skii. On May 29, 1906 he informed Izvol'skii that he was instructed to exchange views on several important matters but made no mention of an entente, although Nicolson thoroughly understood the implications of an exchange of views. He reassured Izvol'skii that Great Britain did not seek to injure any third power (Germany) in the course of discussions. That night Nicolson entered his impressions of the situation in his diary. He felt his overtures were received in good faith, but was wary of the minister's preoccupation with Germany.⁹

Nicolson's initial audience with the Tsar was also encouraging. Nicholas held a favorable opinion toward the prospect of an agreement with Great Britain. He was equally pleased to see public opinion in Britain well disposed toward an understanding with Russia. According to Nicolson, the Tsar's desire that the forthcoming negotiations should lead to an agreement would "doubtless exercise a useful influence over the attitude of the Minister for Foreign Affairs."¹⁰ Nicolson did not foresee at this time that militaristic and nationalistic pressures within Russia would force the Tsar to equivocate in support of an agreement, and that it was to be Izvolskii who would seek most actively an agreement with Britain. Nicolson's inability to fully understand Izvolskii's position resulted both from Izvolskii's unwillingness to reveal his hand and, as Nicolson believed, from Izvolskii's fear of a negative German reaction to Anglo-Russian talks.¹¹ Nicolson blamed the German influence in St. Petersburg for Izvolskii's lack of candor and even expressed the opinion that given the right circumstances Russia and Germany would form an intimate alliance.¹²

Izvolskii had to contend with the sympathy shown to Germany by the Tsarina and several high officials at court. This sympathy confirmed Nicolson's opinion that Germany weighed heavily on Izvolskii's mind. Thus, Nicolson wrote to Grey that it was still too early to determine in which camp Izvolskii stood. Given the enthusiasm for an agreement Izvolskii had displayed in his earlier conversations with Edward and then Nicholas, however, Nicolson's fears appear exaggerated.¹³ Although Izvolskii certainly kept the German influence in mind, he still desired rapprochement.

The summer of 1906 almost saw the unraveling of the negotiations, as discussions ran afoul of Russian domestic concerns. By the end of July, the Russian government's preoccupation with the Duma and agrarian reform had moved the Russians away from the negotiating table. The British held grave doubts about the stability of the Russian government. The Foreign Office questioned the practicality of continuing discussions with Russia, and on July 29, Grey and Hardinge asked Nicolson to suspend negotiations. Nicolson did not wish to forsake two months of discussion and suggested that talks continue on the assumption that Great Britain was dealing with a stable government.¹⁴ He believed the British had nothing to lose by continuing the negotiations, but would risk losing all influence in Russia if they ended the discussions for fear of a Russian government collapse. The Foreign Office cautiously accepted Nicolson's argument and averted a breakdown in negotiations. In addition to reservations within the Foreign Office, the English press began a barrage of attacks against Russian autocracy. Many Russian writers returned to the topic they knew best, Anglophobia. Tension mounted between negotiators and their governments as the press of both nations waged a war of words. Russian Prime Minister Stolypin announced that he regretted the English press's hostility toward the Russian government.¹⁵

Negotiations were somewhat improved by ambassador to Constantinople I. A. Zinoviev's letter to St. Petersburg which argued for the desirability of an agreement. Zinoviev wanted England's consent to revise the London Conference of 1871 in order to allow Russian warships to pass through the Straits of Constantinople. Consequently, he was sympathetic to the idea of reaching a settlement. He wrote to St. Petersburg

reviewing the origins and the course of negotiations and emphasizing the good intentions of both Russia and England in attempting to address the misunderstandings between the two countries. Zinoviev's letter was secret, and it is unclear how influential its contents were in St. Petersburg. Since Russia eventually solicited an English response to the Straits question, Zinoviev's letter probably had struck a responsive chord with some of the policy makers in St. Petersburg. Zinoviev's positive approach to Anglo-Russian relations and his attitude on the Straits question pleased Izvolskii. Zinoviev's letter served the same cause as Nicolson's persuasive dispatch to the Foreign Office, and the negotiations continued.¹⁶

In the fall of 1906, members of Parliament and representatives from municipal and educational organizations planned to send a deputation with a memorial to the recently dissolved first Duma expressing good will and support for the Duma's efforts.¹⁷ The Russian government understandably viewed this action as interference in Russian internal affairs. Izvolskii conveyed the Russian objections to Nicolson, expressing his fear that the Constitutional Democrats would incorrectly perceive the memorial as the opinion of the British government. Izvolskii did not expect the British government to stop the delegation, but he did ask for an official disclaimer. He warned of the opposition growing in Russia against the memorial and cited articles in the *Novoe Vremya* and *Kolokol* which called it a national insult.¹⁸ Fortunately, the deputation was cancelled and the memorial was handed privately to the former president of the Duma.¹⁹ Although Foreign Office pressure may have influenced the delegation's decision, Foreign Office dockets recorded no evidence of such pressure. Notations on one internal Foreign Office docket suggest that Grey had no information explaining why the delegation was forced to abandon its plans.²⁰ The ultimate effect of the entire episode was to distract the British and Russian negotiators and thereby directly prolong the discussions.

Negotiations slowed to a trickle in the winter as Izvolskii concentrated on Russo-Japanese relations in the Far East. Nicolson wrote that Izvolskii continued to keep himself well informed of the climate in Berlin and consequently acted with extreme caution in his negotiations with England and Japan. The British Foreign Office offered a stimulant to the discussions by suggesting that Russia submit a proposal on the Straits question. The move delighted Izvolskii, but the Russians eventually recognized the British offer as nothing more than a "carrot on a stick" tactic, and negotiations once again bogged down.²¹ The major stumbling block at this juncture was the indecisiveness of the Russian government in constructing a coherent policy for Central Asia. Izvolskii pressed the Russian government to formulate a policy which would serve as the basis for his talks with Nicolson. Russia's top officials met to discuss the Russian position regarding Persia on February 1, 1907. In addition to Izvolskii and Benkendorf, the minister of finance, minister of trade and industry, and the commander of the general staff attended the meeting. Without question Izvolskii was the dominant figure during the conference. The group agreed that it was unrealistic to think that all of Persia should fall under Russian control. Izvolskii was in favor of establishing spheres of influence as the most suitable means for reducing conflict with England in the region. In order to mollify the

general staff's concern for Russia's strategic interests, Izvolskii accepted the recommendation of the general staff to take its suggested maximum boundaries as the basis for discussion with England.²²

The British were pleased with Russia's stand on Persia. As Grey stated in his memoirs, Russia's southward momentum had increased British apprehensions in the region.²³ With Russia's acceptance of the principle of spheres of influence, the British desire to see Persia form a buffer state between the two countries was realized. Not surprisingly, however, difficulties arose over the issue of Russia's strategic interests. In a dispatch to Grey, Nicolson presented the Russian position on Seistan province.²⁴ The abandonment of Seistan to England would alter the strategic status quo in the region, and the proximity of Seistan to the Indian frontier deeply concerned the Foreign Office. The English proved intransigent, and only under pressure from Izvolskii did the Russians agree to British control of Seistan. On April 2, discussions on Persia ended, and the results were later incorporated into the convention. Izvolskii had gained his first victory against his opponents in the Russian government.

The question of Afghanistan presented a more serious challenge to the negotiations than Persia. While Britain clearly wanted to secure recognition that Afghanistan was outside Russia's sphere of influence, Russian officials argued about their goals in Afghanistan.²⁵ Izvolskii presided over a special meeting on April 14, hoping to gain the same support he eventually received on the Persian issue. Izvolskii set the tenor of the meeting by referring to the Afghan question as the most serious problem of all. Again he stressed the importance of establishing good relations with England, calling an Anglo-Russian agreement a new and powerful guarantee for peace. He asked the members of the meeting to aid all effort toward the successful conclusion of discussions and to avoid pressing the English for concessions or territorial advantages. Believing that Izvolskii asked for too great a sacrifice from Russia, significant opposition arose against him. The pro-German group argued that Russia would lose both territory and the friendship of Germany. The war clique viewed an Anglo-Russian agreement as an obstacle to the continuation of Russian expansion in Central Asia. Izvolskii was unsuccessful at this meeting in convincing the opposition that an agreement with England was in Russia's best interest.²⁶

The difficulty Izvolskii experienced in gaining consent from the military and pro-German cliques for a conciliatory approach to Afghanistan hindered his talks with Nicolson. The British Foreign Office questioned what it viewed as an unreasonable delay in receiving an expression of Russian policy in Afghanistan. Izvolskii apologized to Nicolson for the delay, explaining quite honestly that to ensure an agreement, he would need to obtain the full concurrence of the other Russian departments besides his own ministry of foreign affairs. Grey wrote to Nicolson questioning Russia's good faith. But Nicolson assured Grey that the Russians were sincere in their negotiations, that they would abide by the agreements reached thus far, and that the discussions should continue.²⁷ The Foreign Office, fully confident of Nicolson's opinion, waited for a response from the Russians. Just one week after Nicolson's assurance to Grey, the Russians

presented Nicolson with a draft agreement on Afghanistan.²⁸ The essence of the draft called for the Russian recognition of Afghanistan as outside the Russian sphere of influence, but stipulated that Russian trade and customs regulations be of equal authority as Britain's trade and customs regulations with Afghanistan. Furthermore, Britain would agree neither to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan nor to annex or occupy any portion of Afghan territory.²⁹ In short, the Russians wanted to establish Afghanistan as a buffer state with neither side exercising special privileges: The British received the draft well. In the minutes of a Foreign Office docket dated May 21, Hardinge wrote, "On the whole M. Iswolsky's [sic] draft Convention is much more favourable than we had any reason to anticipate and there should be no difficulty in getting it into proper shape." In this case proper shape meant ensuring England's special position in Afghanistan and rejecting the Russian proposal of a buffer state, which implied equal status for both Russia and Britain. The Foreign Office counter-draft removed the term "buffer state," changed "Britain would not annex" to "Britain expresses no desire to annex" Afghan territory, and supported the policy of "open door" for British and Russian trade.³⁰ By spring, Russia and Britain had taken positive and concrete steps toward reaching agreement over Afghanistan.

Nicolson still encountered substantial difficulty gaining Russian acceptance of the British draft. In a conversation with Izvolskii, the Russian complained to Nicolson of the unfair clause concerning annexation. Izvolskii pointed out that for Russia it was unconditional, but for Britain it depended on the observance of a 1905 treaty signed with the Amir. Russia was not pleased that frontier arrangements had to be agreeable to the Amir who could nullify any measures beneficial to Russia. The British Foreign Office refused to redraw the counter-draft. Grey wrote to Nicolson that Britain would stand firm on the annexation principle for fear that Russia would use the agreement as a pretext for intervention. A few days later Izvolskii expressed the concern that England might annex all of Afghanistan. Clearly, both Russia and Great Britain were becoming increasingly suspicious of each other's intentions.³¹

Nicolson long suspected that Izvolskii experienced tremendous pressure from the Russian general staff. Izvolskii himself had admitted to Nicolson that his continued support of a pro-British line faced strong internal opposition.³² On August 11, the Russian government held another conference which once again reflected the dissension among top Russian officials. Izvolskii urged the members of the Council of Ministers to concentrate on the broad issue of establishing good relations with England rather than on quarreling over points which were relatively unimportant. But his arguments met with the same objections encountered in the previous meetings. The next day the Tsar and Russian general staff went on maneuvers, leaving Izvolskii without a great deal of support in his negotiations with Nicolson. Nicolson presented Izvolskii with a memorandum from the British Foreign Office concerning changes made in the Russian draft which Izvolskii was unable to forward to the Tsar.³³

This untimely delay further aggravated the already tense climate, and Nicolson did not learn of the Tsar's acceptance of the text until August 25. The council remained opposed to the article on commerce, however, because it did

not guarantee equality of customs duties. The majority of members also objected to Izvolskii's suppression of the clause in which Great Britain was to agree not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan nor annex Afghan territory.³⁴ Without question the Russian government was divided over the prospect of an agreement with the British and reluctant to concede terms to them. Only Izvolskii, Stolypin, and a member of the council unnamed in Russian documents supported the text. Izvolskii considered the council's rejection a personal attack on himself and threatened to resign if the Tsar accepted the council's decision. In London, Grey expressed his frustration at the events in Russia and the slow course of discussions. Saying that bigger issues than even those in the agreement were at stake, he reiterated the importance of an understanding with Russia in Central Asia as the first step in making possible friendly relations with her elsewhere.³⁵

A major breakthrough in negotiations occurred on August 28 when Izvolskii, at the request of the minister of commerce, asked the British Foreign Office to write a note clarifying the British position on trade in Afghanistan. Grey replied that the British position was already perfectly clear, but included a note which specified duties within the framework of "equality of treatment" in trade relations with Afghanistan. Izvolskii appeased the minister of commerce and apparently convinced the rest of the council that Britain would not change its position on the issue of annexation. Russia's best interests, he asserted, would be served by signing the treaty. On August 31, Nicolson and Izvolskii signed the convention in St. Petersburg.³⁶

The final text of the agreement concerning Afghanistan reflected the arduous negotiations between Russia and Britain. Article I reaffirmed the principle of a buffer state, as Great Britain promised not to alter the political status quo in Afghanistan. The British would exercise their influence in Afghanistan only in a very pacific sense. They would not take, nor encourage Afghanistan to take, any measures threatening to Russia. The Russians declared that they recognized Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence and that they would not send agents into Afghanistan. Article II affirmed Britain's intention not to annex nor occupy Afghan territory as stipulated in the 1905 treaty with the Amir. Article III allowed Russian and Afghan authorities to establish relations on their frontiers for the settlement of nonpolitical questions. Article IV established the principle of equality of commercial opportunity in Afghanistan. Article V made the agreement contingent upon the consent of the Amir.³⁷

Most historians view the agreement as a success for British diplomacy. The terms accepted were for the most part those formulated by the Foreign Office. Most noticeable was England's right, under Article II, to annex or occupy Afghan territory if the Treaty of 1905 were violated. Russia, on the other hand, was prohibited by Article I from any form of occupation or annexation of Afghan territory. While the general tenor of the agreement suggested a buffer state, England received through the agreement a more favorable position.

This analysis overlooks the success of Izvolskii's foreign policy. The Russian foreign minister overcame considerable opposition among the general staff, the council of ministers, the Tsar, and the press to realize his goal of an

agreement with Britain. He achieved an understanding with Britain without considerable sacrifice to Russia. Were it not for Izvolskii, the expansionist and pro-German factions in the Russian government would have made an agreement impossible. Like Izvolskii, Nicolson overcame significant opposition. He successfully fought the British press and skepticism in the Foreign Office. A more accurate description of the agreement would characterize it as a success for the diplomats in both countries.

Despite the successes of the foreign offices, those who had attacked the concept of an agreement while it was being negotiated continued to criticize it after its successful conclusion. The Russian press disparaged Izvolskii's concessions and Lord Curzon, an influential opponent of the agreement, called it a surrender of one hundred years of British diplomacy. Yet, at least in Nicolson's case, praise came from the King of England. In a private letter to Hardinge, Edward wrote:

I was delighted to get Grey's and Nicolson's cypher telegrams last night telling me that the 'Anglo-Russian Convention' had been signed at St. Petersburg. It must be a great relief to your and Grey's minds and Nicolson deserves the *greatest* praise for having carried out these most difficult negotiations with such skill and perseverance.³⁸

The difficulties and delays which characterized the negotiations between England and Russia suggest that the foundations for an Anglo-Russian rapprochement were infirm. The British Foreign Office believed that a lasting commitment from Russia would have to be nurtured carefully. Nicolson worried that any serious check to the new relationship might destroy it in its infancy. His fears began to materialize as Russia grew increasingly dissatisfied with the arrangements. On the eve of Russia's revolution the convention was revised considerably through secret wartime treaties. The bond that kept the two countries together was a mutual distrust of Germany's boisterous militarism. A less demanding and more conciliatory Germany could have achieved what the Triple Alliance attempted to achieve during World War I, the destruction of the Triple Entente. Were Britain and Russia not drawn together by a fear of hostile German actions, their agreement over Central Asia probably would have floundered in the face of serious differences, and the later transformation of the Anglo-Russian Convention into the stronger Triple Entente would have been unlikely.

NOTES

1. The standard account of the convention is Rogers Platt Churchill's *The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1939). Churchill minimized the significance of the problems confronting the British and Russians, writing that the "elusiveness" of the convention finally yielded to the realities of international relations (p. 168). Similar discussions of the convention pervade general diplomatic histories and anthologies of sources and documents. Rene Albrecht-Carrie's *A Diplomatic History of Europe Since the Congress of Vienna* (New York: Harper, 1958), pp. 255-259, merely suggests that the balance of power in Europe created conditions favorable to rapprochement between Britain and Russia. W. Henry Cooke and Edith P. Stickney comment in *Readings in European International Relations (Since 1879)* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 178, that the convention was "an obvious complement to the Anglo-French Entente of 1904." They just mentioned political differences which "hampered" the conclusion of the agreement. The omission of more detailed accounts indicates that historians have not viewed the negotiating

process as critical to the success of the convention.

2. Harold Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart.: First Lord Carnock, A Study in Old Diplomacy* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1930), p. 206.

3. Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Russia: Correspondence* (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1977), F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 9505, vol. 124, p. 111, hereafter cited as F.O.; Charles Louis Seeger, ed., *The Memoirs of Alexander Iswolsky: Formerly Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to France* (Academic International Press, 1974), p. 89; F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 9505, vol. 124, pp. 111-113. In the course of subsequent negotiations many Russians complained that Britain was attempting to extract excessive concessions from Russia in Central Asia while Russia's strength and prestige in that region remained limited. In view of Grey's remarks to Spring-Rice the Russian complaint seems justified. British intransigence during the course of later discussions also lent validity to the Russian objections.

4. Seeger, *The Memoirs of Alexander Iswolsky*, p. 89.

5. Edward Grey, *Twenty Five Years: 1892-1916* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), p. 147.

6. Nicolson, *A Study in Old Diplomacy*, p. 207.

7. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 17967, vol. 125, p. 9.

8. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 18149, vol. 125, pp. 44, 47; F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 18350, vol. 125, p. 56.

9. Nicolson, *A Study in Old Diplomacy*, 215.

10. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 19857, vol. 125, p. 36.

11. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 20588, vol. 125, p. 63.

12. Nicolson, *A Study in Old Diplomacy*, pp. 208-209.

13. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 21431, vol. 126, p. 7.

14. Nicolson, *A Study in Old Diplomacy*, pp. 223-224.

15. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 27544, vol. 127, p. 6.

16. "K istorii anglo-russkogo soglasheniia 1907 g.," *Krasnyi arkhiv* 70. (1935):3-5; 5-18. Reprint. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1966.

17. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 31043, vol. 128, p. 96.

18. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 34614, vol. 128, p. 173; F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 34618, vol. 128, p. 175.

19. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 34486, vol. 128, p. 140.

20. F.O. 371, 1906, doc. 36079, vol. 128, p. 197.

21. Nicolson, *A Study in Old Diplomacy*, p. 243.

22. *Krasnyi arkhiv*, pp. 19-25.

23. Grey, *Twenty Five Years*, p. 148.

24. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 6336, vol. 320, p. 78.

25. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 6967, vol. 320, p. 91.

26. *Krasnyi arkhiv*, pp. 25-32. The only new member of note was General A. P. Protopopov, a member of the Council of Defense. Benken-dorf was in London and his place was taken by the counsellor of the London embassy, S. A. Poklevskii-Kodell.

27. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 15482, vol. 320, p. 136.

28. See appendix.

29. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 15973, vol. 320, p. 146.

30. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 16393, vol. 320, pp. 191, 195.

31. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 22423, vol. 320, p. 340.

32. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 23258, vol. 320, p. 356; F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 24209, vol. 320, p. 369.

33. *Krasnyi arkhiv*, pp. 32-39; F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 27117, vol. 320, p. 412.

34. Nicolson, *A Study in Old Diplomacy*, p. 254.

35. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 28370, vol. 320, p. 482.

36. F.O. 371, 1907, doc. 28865, vol. 320, p. 501.

37. See appendix.

38. Charles Hardinge, *Old Diplomacy: The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penhurst* (London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1947), p. 146.

APPENDIX

These documents are reprinted with the original grammar and punctuation.

I. Russian Draft Convention on Afghanistan (May 15, 1907), as written by Arthur Nicolson to Edward Grey:

Article I states that Afghanistan shall form a buffer State.
Art. II. Russian Government recognize Afghanistan as outside sphere of Russian influence, and engage that all their political

relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through intermediary of His Majesty's Government.

Art. III. Great Britain engages not to annex or occupy any portion of Afghanistan or its dependencies, or interfere in internal affairs of country. British Government will only exercise their influence in Afghanistan in a pacific sense, and will not themselves take, or encourage Afghanistan to take, any measures which may be considered as threatening Russian frontier.

Art. IV. Russia engages not to send any agents into Afghanistan. If in the future the development of commerce clearly shows utility of commercial agents the two Governments will exchange views on the subject.

Art. V. The Russian and Afghan authorities specially designated for the purpose may establish direct relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character.

Art. VI. Russian Government declare that they do not at present apply, and engage not to do so in the future, any special measures in favour of Russian commerce with Afghanistan other than those which may be adopted in regard to Russian trade in general with all countries.

Art. VII. Russian trade, traders, and subjects shall be placed on same footing in Afghanistan as British of British-Indian trade, traders, and subjects, and will profit by the same facilities which the latter enjoy at present, or may hereafter acquire.

It is understood that a uniform customs . . . shall be established along whole of Afghanistan.

II. British Counterdraft on Afghanistan (May 29, 1907), as sent to Arthur Nicolson from Edward Grey:

The High Contracting Parties, in order to assure the perfect security of their respective frontiers in Central Asia, and to maintain there a solid and lasting peace, have agreed as follows:--

Article I. The Russian Government recognize Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence, and engage that all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government.

Article II. The British Government having recorded in the Treaty signed at Kabul on the 21st March, 1905, that they recognize the sovereignty of the Ameer, and that they have no desire to interfere in the internal government of his territories, Great Britain engages not to annex any portion of Afghanistan or to interfere in the internal administration of the country, provided that the Ameer fulfils the engagements already contracted towards His Majesty's Government under the above-mentioned Treaty. Great Britain further undertakes to exercise her influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense towards Russia, and will not herself take in Afghanistan, or encourage Afghanistan to take, any measures which may be considered as threatening the Russian frontier. On the other hand, the Russian Government undertake not to annex any part of Afghanistan, nor to take any measures either involving interference with the internal government of the territories of the Ameer, or such as may be considered as threatening the Afghan frontier and calculated to provoke retaliatory measures. It is understood that the British and Russian Governments maintain the right to carry out such railway projects as may seem desirable to them within their own frontiers.

Article III. Russia engages not to send any Agents into Afghanistan. If in the future the development of commerce clearly shows the utility of Commercial Agents, the two Governments will agree as to what measures should be taken in this sense.

Article IV. The Russian and Afghan authorities specially designated for the purpose may, with the consent of the Ameer, which His Majesty's Government will endeavor to obtain, establish direct relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character.

Article V. The Governments of Great Britain and Russia affirm their adherence to the principles of the "open door" and of equality of commercial opportunity, and, with a view to the same facilities being accorded to Russian trade and traders in Afghanistan as British and British Indian traders now, or may in the future, enjoy in the territory of the Ameer, His Majesty's Government will undertake to exercise their influences to secure the reciprocal observance of these principles in Afghanistan.

III. Final Convention on Afghanistan (August 31, 1907), as signed by Nicolson and Izvolskii:

The High Contracting Parties, in order to ensure perfect security on their perspective frontiers in Central Asia and to maintain in these regions a solid and lasting peace, have concluded the following Convention:--

Article I. His Britannic Majesty's Government declare that they have no intention of changing the political status of Afghanistan.

His Britannic Majesty's Government further engage to exercise their influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense, and they will not themselves take, nor encourage Afghanistan to take, any measures threatening Russia.

The Russian Government, on their part, declare that they recognize Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence and they engage that all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Britannic Majesty's Government; they further engage not to send any Agents into Afghanistan.

Article II. The Government of His Britannic Majesty having declared in the Treaty signed at Kabul on the 21st March, 1905, that they recognize the Agreement and the engagements concluded with the late Ameer Abdur Rahman, and that they have no intention of interfering in the internal government of Afghan territory, Great Britain engages neither to annex nor to occupy in contravention of that Treaty any portion of Afghanistan or to interfere in the internal administration of the country, provided that the Ameer fulfils the engagements already contracted by him towards His Britannic Majesty's Government under the above-mentioned Treaty.

Article III. The Russian and Afghan authorities, specially designated for the purpose on the frontier or in the frontier provinces, may establish direct relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character.

Article IV. His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Russian Government affirm their adherence to the principle of equality of commercial opportunity in Afghanistan, and they agree that any facilities which may have been, or shall be hereafter obtained for British and British-Indian trade and traders, shall be equally enjoyed by Russian trade and traders. Should the progress of trade establish the necessity for Commercial Agents, the two Governments will agree as to what measures shall be taken, due regards, of course, being had to the Ameer's sovereign rights.

Article V. The present Arrangements will only come into force when His Britannic Majesty's Government shall have notified to the Russian Government the consent of the Ameer to the terms stipulated above.