

INVITATION TO TENDER
APPENDIX C

Central Asia, Persia & Afghanistan: from Silk
Road to Soviet Rule
1800-1922



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Figure 1: FO 65/1395, the expansion of the Russian Empire into Central Asia

Page 1: View from the city walls, Khiva, Uzbekistan. Taken by Fulvio Spada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan: from Silk Road to Soviet Rule may become the definitive digital collection of documents covering the period from the decline of the Silk Road in the 18th century to the emergence of Soviet rule in the 20th century. The National Archives holds one of the greatest sets in existence of historical documents on this region. For over a century, from 1800 to the 20th century, the region was the subject of a fierce struggle for supremacy between the British and Russian Empires, the outcome of which continues to shape modern geopolitics. This nineteenth-century 'cold war' was called the Great Game and it offers fascinating insights into the state of the region today. The collection is likely to become an important resource enabling the study and understanding of a region that has long been contested by Great Powers, and is now the focus of a new 21st century 'silk road', driven this time by China.

2. OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

Record Series:	No. of Pieces:	No. of Images:
FO 65: Foreign Office and predecessor: Political and Other Departments: General Correspondence before 1906, Russian Empire, 1781-1905	188	62,660
FO 106: Foreign Office: Political and Other Departments: General Correspondence before 1906, Central Asia, 1899-1905	11 [whole series]	2,530
FO 371: Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966	30	6,242
FO 539: Foreign Office: Confidential Print Central Asia, 1834-1971	118	10,423
TOTAL	347	81,855

N.B. Full piece-level listing in Schedule 2.

3. KEY SUBJECTS AND THEMES

➤ **'The Great Game'**

188 volumes of 'Proceedings in Central Asia' in FO 65 chart Russian expansion into Central Asia and the resulting struggle for influence between Britain and Russia between 1858-1898. Volumes continue from 1899-1905 in FO 106. FO 371 continues the story of Central Asia up to 1922 when the region was incorporated into the USSR. Prior to the 1860s Central Asia consisted of independent khanates which were progressively annexed by Russia in the latter part of the 19th century.

➤ **Diplomacy**

FO 65 and FO 539 contain historically significant correspondence from the East India Company, British Prime Ministers and Viceroy of India. There are letters to and from the Shah of Persia and the Emir of Afghanistan. Crucially, there are items written from the Russian side too, forming a comprehensive picture of events. These include letters from Count Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, and Count Simonich who was Minister of the Tsar at the Court of the Shah. These can be used to map the shifting alliances and politics of the region.

➤ **Warfare & Colonialism**

Key conflicts are documented in the collection. The Anglo-Afghan Wars in 1839-1842 and 1878-1880 were fought to establish Afghanistan as a buffer state to British India, and to shut out Russian influence. War diaries of the Kurram Field Force and despatches from Camp Lahore in FO 65 provide first-hand accounts of the conflict. As a case study of colonialism and the 'informal' British Empire, these are of great significance.

➤ **Russian Empire**

The collection is a valuable resource for any student of Russian history, as FO 65 documents in great detail the expansion of the Russian Empire into Central Asia in the 19th century. FO 371 documents the spread of Bolshevism into Russia's Asian territories post the 1917 Revolution.

➤ **China**

The interplay between the Chinese and Russian Empires becomes more evident in later volumes of FO 65 from the 1890s. Many of these volumes are concerned with tensions between China and Russia in the Pamir Mountains, Chinese Turkestan and alleged Russian influence in Peking.

4. ACADEMIC INTEREST

The content of this collection is relevant to a broad range of university courses and fields of study. These examples show that Tsarist Russia, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Persia form an important part of study at universities in the USA and Europe.

USA	
University of California, Berkeley	➤ 2019 course <i>Historiography of Imperial Russia</i> (major themes: empire, borderlands, nationality, state formation, political dissidence)
University of Chicago	➤ Centre for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies ➤ 2019 graduate course <i>HIST 58602 Colloquium: Iran and Central Asia 2</i>
Columbia University	➤ Harriman Institute for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies ➤ 2018 course <i>Central Asia: Imperial Legacies, New Images</i> ➤ 2019 course <i>Asiatic Russia: Empire, State</i>
Harvard University	➤ Davis Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies ➤ 2018/19 course <i>Central Asia in Global Politics</i>
Princeton University	➤ Field of study: <i>Russia, Eurasia, Eastern Europe</i>
University of Washington	➤ <i>Russia & Central Asia</i> graduate study. The library's Slavic and East European Section acquires books, periodicals, newspapers, microfilms, maps, photographs, video-, DVD and CD recordings, CD-ROMs, and commercial Internet resources to build research collections pertaining to the Russian, East European, and Central Asian area.
UK	
University of Exeter	➤ 2017/18 course <i>From Conquest to Communism: Central Asia under the Russian and Soviet Empires, 1730-1945 (HIH2184A)</i>
University of Oxford	➤ Russian and Eurasian Studies Centre

SOAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SOAS Centre of Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus ➤ 2019/20 <i>MSc Development Studies (Central Asia Pathway)</i>
University of York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2018/19 course <i>Russia under the Tsars 1613-1855</i>
EUROPE	
University of Copenhagen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2017/18 course <i>Central Asia and Afghanistan Studies</i>
Leiden University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2017/18 course <i>History of Central Asia and Afghanistan</i>



Figure 2: INF 14/444, view from the Khyber Pass to the border of Afghanistan

5. SCHEDULE 1: EXAMPLE DOCUMENTS

Note: FO 539 is the Confidential Print for Central Asia and corresponds to the bound volumes in FO 65. The Confidential Print contains transcribed and printed selections from FO 65, but is far from complete and does not include the many maps and ephemera which feature in FO 65. As such, there is an option to digitise FO 539 alongside FO 65 and the remainder of the collection, but it is not obligatory.

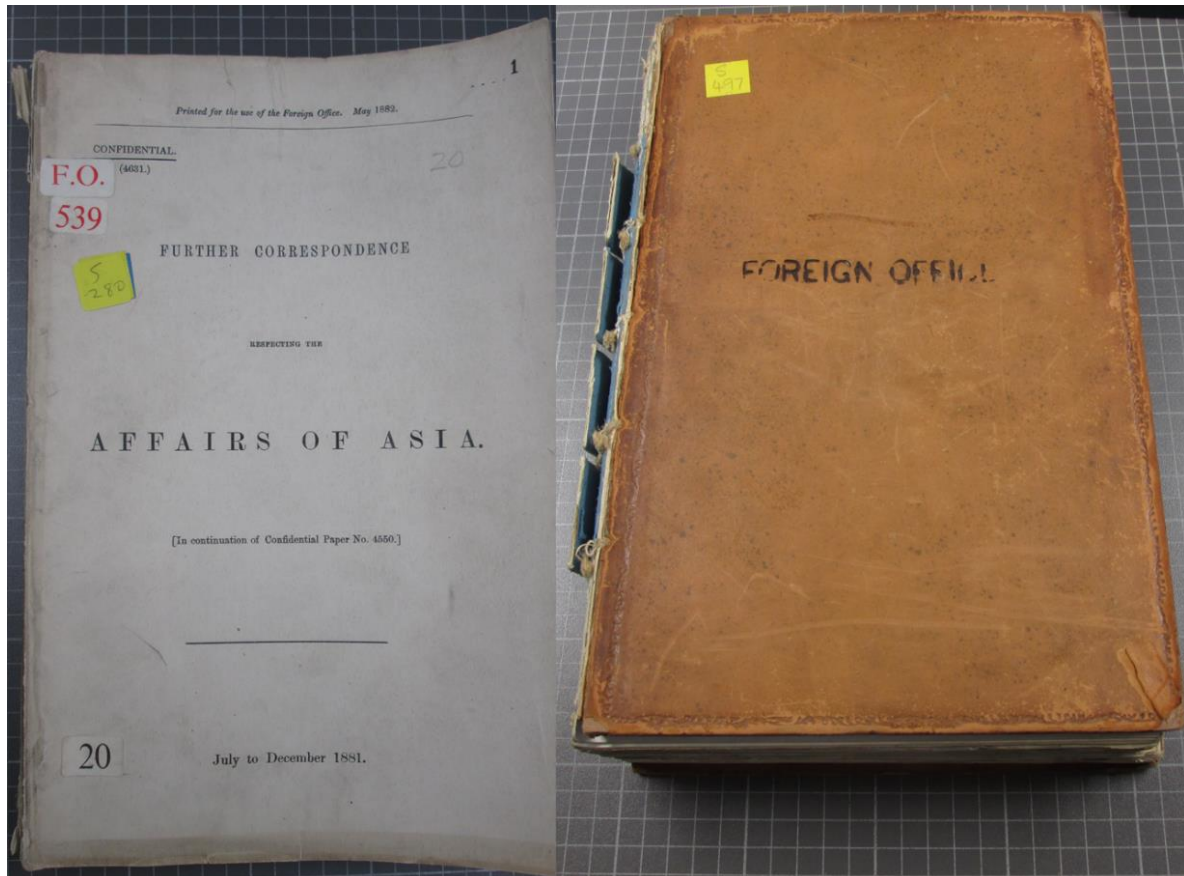


Figure 3: An example of FO 539 (left), and FO 65 (Right)

Peking, 93
March 20th 1894

My Lord.

In its edition of the 31st January
the "Shanghai Mercury" published
the substance of a letter it was
supposed to have received either from
Tientsin or Peking in which, after
stating that the Russian Minister
Count Cassini had received the
First Grade of the First Class of the
Order of the Double Dragon which
is usually only given to sovereigns,
(the

The
Earl of Kimberley, K. G.

Figure 4: FO 65/1485, alleged Russian influence in Peking, 1894

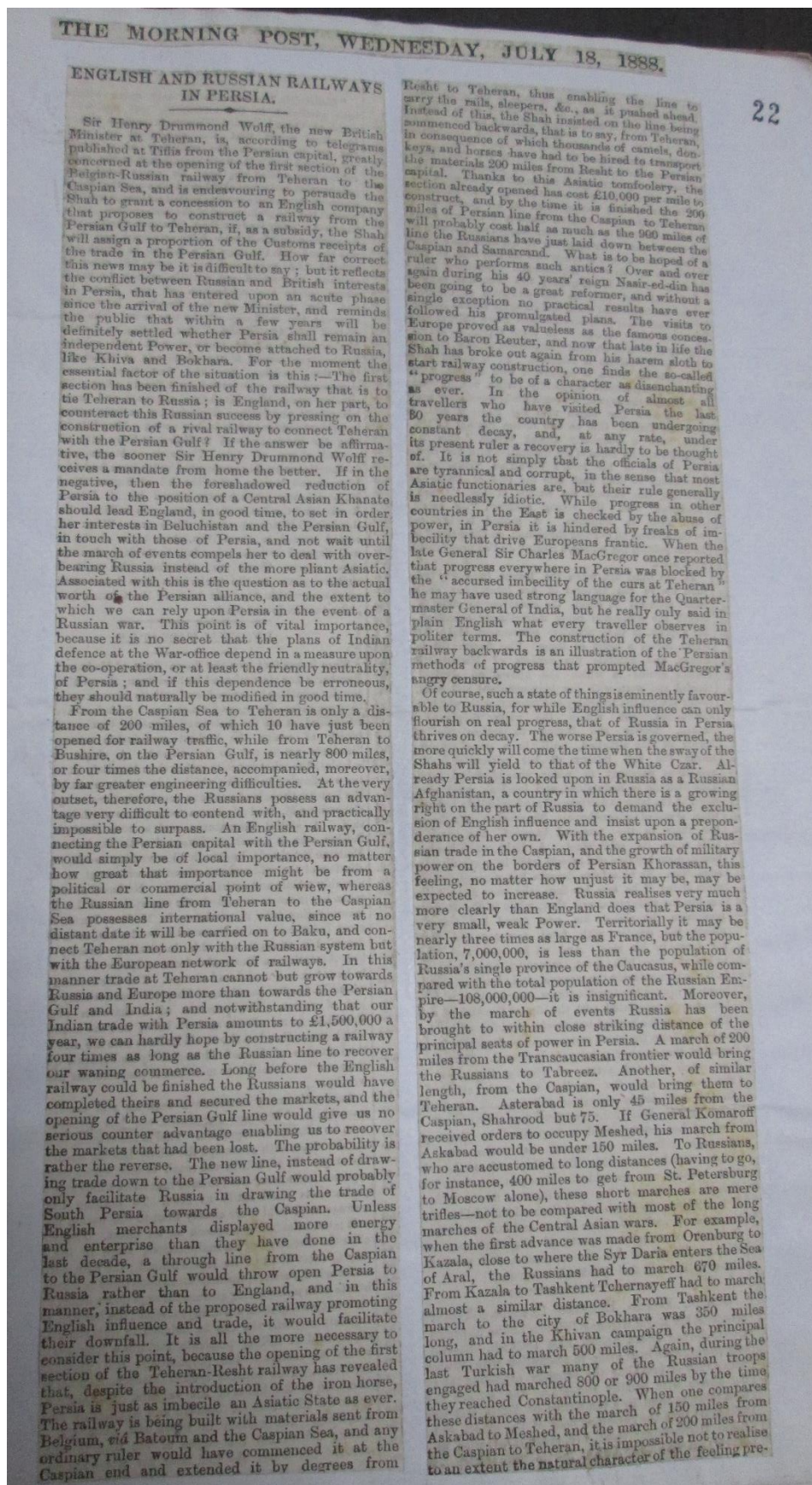


Figure 5: FO 65/1353, English and Russian railways in Persia, 1888

There seems little doubt that the Bolsheviks found that they needed a larger force than they had imagined to suppress Bokhara, and the accounts of wounded soldiers who have been arriving in some numbers in Ashkabad are not nearly so optimistic as those of the Bolshevik agents who were at once despatched to Trans-Caspia by special train to spread the news of the complete overthrow of Bokhara.

On receipt of news of the outbreak of war the Bolshevik commander at Kerki collected his force in the fort. Some thousands of armed Turkomans are reported to have surrounded it at a respectful distance. Although some shots had been fired on both sides, no actual fighting had taken place there up to September 4th. Bolshevik reinforcements were reported to be *en route* from Charjui to Kerki.

An Andijan report states that the situation there at the end of August was by no means favourable to the Bolsheviks. The relations between the Bolsheviks and Sarts were very strained. Frequent cases of arson were reported; firing was always going on in the outskirts of the town, and any Russian soldier who ventured out alone was attacked.

An unconfirmed report states that the Cossacks in the Orenburg district have risen against the Bolsheviks.

(ii) POLITICAL.

After capturing Bokhara, Bolshevik troops looted the town and despatched many prisoners, including *mullas* and officials, to Tashkend.

The Adalat troops at Ashkabad, who number about 2,000, are stated to have refused to fight against Bokhara, and in retaliation the Bolsheviks have deported some of the leaders and disarmed some of the men. Rumours are current to the effect that the Bolsheviks are contemplating breaking up the party, and this, if it is true, is attributed either to its attitude towards the Bokharan campaign, or else to the opposition displayed by its leaders to the Bolshevik scheme of allowing Persians in Turkistan to return to their own country. Up to September 12th some 1,200 had received permission to return.

There is considerable discontent in Trans-Caspia at the recent mobilization orders, and the Bolshevik press-gang method of enforcing them. This discontent is said not to be confined to the Turkomans, but to be felt also by the Russians, who have not yet been called up. As a result the number of refugees to Persia has increased considerably of late. In one case a party of 300 Turkoman families crossed the frontier together. Seventy of Khuddu's followers have also arrived in Persia to avoid being sent to the Bokharan front, while 40 of the Turkish prisoners of war sought to escape, but were mostly recaptured.

(iii) GENERAL.

Recent arrivals in Peshawar state that the present aims of the Turks and Afghans are to use the Bolsheviks in Persia and Mesopotamia but to work for the establishment of Central Asian States. The Turks would control Turkistan including Tashkend and Samarkand, while the Afghans would take over the Pamirs and Ferghana.

The Third International Congress at Baku opened at the end of August. It is reported that the Turkistan delegates expressed dissent from Bolshevik principles. Enver is said to have been sent to Baku to try and stimulate the waning enthusiasm of the Musalmans for anti-entente aggression. It is also stated that Bolsheviks are contemplating replacing Mustapha Kemal by Enver, the former in their opinion being not sufficiently vigorous (*see also "Turkey" and paragraph 1 "Internal".*)

It is reported that the Bulgarians have come to a secret agreement with Mustapha Kemal and have also begun discussions with the Representatives of the Soviet Government. The agreement is said to be directed against the Greeks and General Wrangel.

Reports received from Europe describe the activities of a certain *Baron de Durant* or *Von Durant* who is stated to be living in Switzerland as an un-official attaché to the German Chancellery. This man was notorious during the War as a head organiser of a German propaganda agency, one of his chief duties being the fomenting of revolution. His activities ceased after the armistice but were resumed

Figure 6: FO 371/5382, the advance of Bolshevism in Central Asia in the 1920s

6. SCHEDULE 2: PIECE-LEVEL LISTING

Part 1: Mandatory

The following series comprise the mandatory part of the Invitation to Tender:

Record Series:	Pieces:
FO 65: Foreign Office and predecessor: Political and Other Departments: General Correspondence before 1906, Russian Empire, 1781-1905	867-879; 901-904; 926-930; 956-958; 989-992; 1028-1034; 1060-1071; 1097-1105; 1128-1132; 1150-1153; 1171-1175; 1202-1213; 1235-1252; 1282-1293; 1314-1324; 1347-1356; 1377-1379; 1392-1395; 1412-1417; 1434-1444; 1460-1470; 1484-1488; 1504-1507; 1528-1529; 1547-1549; 1571-1575
FO 106: Foreign Office: Political and Other Departments: General Correspondence before 1906, Central Asia, 1899-1905	1-11 (All)
FO 371: Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966	5381-5383; 6740-6753; 8073-8085

Part 2: Optional

The following series comprise the optional part of the Invitation to Tender:

Record Series:	Pieces:
FO 539: Foreign Office: Confidential Print Central Asia, 1834-1971	1-118

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