



The First Afghan War 1839-42: Invasion, catastrophe and retreat (Campaign)

Richard Macrory

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In 1839, forces of the British East India Company crossed the Indus to invade Afghanistan on the pretext of reinstating a former king, Shah Soojah, to his rightful throne. The reality was that this was another step in Britain's Great Game--Afghanistan would create a buffer to any potential Russian expansion toward India.

This history traces the initial, highly successful campaign as the British easily occupied Kabul and the rebellion that two years later humbled the British army. Forced to negotiate a surrender, the British fled Kabul en masse in the harsh Afghan winter. Decimated by Afghan guerilla attacks and by the extreme cold paired with a lack of food and supplies, just one European--Dr. Brydon--would make it to the safety of Jalalabad five days later. This highly illustrated history then goes on to trace the retribution attack on Kabul the following year, which destroyed the symbolic Mogul Bazaar before troops rapidly withdrew and left Afghanistan in peace for nearly a generation.

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