

The Dark Defile: Britains Catastrophic Invasion Of Afghanistan, 1838-1842 - Diana Preston

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The consequences of crossing the Indus once to settle a government in Afghanistan will be a perennial march into that country.--The Duke of Wellington, 1838 There is nothing more to be dreaded or guarded against in our endeavor to re-establish the Afghan monarchy than the overweening confidence with which Europeans are too often accustomed to regard the excellence of their own institutions and the anxiety that they display to introduce them in new and untried soils.--Claude Wade, January 1839. Convinced in 1839 that Britain's invaluable empire in India was threatened by Russia, Persia, and Afghan tribes, the British government ordered its Army of the Indus into Afghanistan to oust from power the independent-minded king Dost Mohammed and install in Kabul the unpopular puppet ruler Shah Shuja. Expecting a quick campaign, the British found themselves trapped by unforeseen circumstances; eventually the tribes united and the seemingly omnipotent army was slaughtered in 1842 as it desperately retreated through the mountain passes from Kabul to Jalalabad. Only one man survived. Diana Preston vividly recounts the drama of this First Afghan War, the opening salvo in the strategic rivalry between Britain and Russia for supremacy in Central Asia. As insightful about geography as she is about political and military miscalculation, Preston draws on rarely documented letters and diaries to bring alive long lost characters--Lord Auckland, the weak British Governor-General in India; his impetuous aide William McNaghten; the prescient adventurer-envoy Alexander Burnes, whose sage advice was steadfastly ignored. A model of compelling narrative history, The First Afghan War is a cautionary tale that resonates loudly today. Author: Preston, Diana Publisher: Walker Books Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: The Dark Defile: Britains Catastrophic Invasion of Afghanistan, 1838-1842 Pages: 00352 (Encrypted EPUB) On Sale: 2012-02-21 SKU-13/ISBN: 9780802779823 Category: History : General

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