

# PAX PAMIR

A game by Cole Wehrle and Phil Eklund  
Design Based on Phil Eklund's *Pax Porfiriana*  
Living Rules Version 1.2 (5/1/2016)

**Note: All differences between the living rules and the published rules are indicated in red text.**

*With the fall of Napoleon, the British East India Company plied its trade unchecked, from the Cape of Good Hope to the markets of Canton. India stood at the center of a sprawling imperial network, and the currents of empire ran through its ports, tying the Far East with European markets and awarding the British virtual control of the vast wealth of the subcontinent. However, the "crown jewel" of the empire was far from secure.*

*Across the forests of Siberia and the steppes of Asia, the Russian Empire advanced at a rate exceeding even the pace of America's western pioneers. This expansionism by the world's largest nation loomed over British holdings in India, casting a longer shadow each year. In central Asia, surveyors, adventurers, industrialists and government agents crossed paths, all seeking to manipulate the byzantine political landscape of the region. There, in the shadow of the Pamir Mountains, the stage was set for a contest that would define the lines of imperialism in the 19th century to the present day.*

## A. SUMMARY & GENERAL RULES

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### A1. Objective.

(A1.1) In Pax Pamir, two to five players assume the role of Afghan tribal leaders navigating the winds of colonial power at the start of "The Great Game." A generation ago, realizing these ambitions might have been a simpler matter for the players. However, by the early nineteenth century, the great empires of the age had begun to disrupt the previous political order. Players will always be aligned with one of three Empires in the game (British, Russian, or Afghan), but these Loyalties may shift. The game ends when one of these Empires achieves Supremacy in the region. If this happens, the player with the most Influence in that Empire wins.

### A2. Flow of Play.

(A2.1) Each turn you take at least two actions. Most of these concern the management of your personal Tableau, composed of the cards that have been played in front of

you. As an action, cards are purchased from the Market and then, as an additional action, are played to your Tableau.

(A2.2) Playing a card has two chief consequences.

(A2.2.1) It allows you to place Units. There are four kinds of Units: Tribes, Spies, Roads, and Armies, each associated with one of the four Modes of power (political, intelligence, economic, or military). Every played card will place Units matching that card's Mode on the board or Tableau. Units are used to calculate whether or not an Empire can achieve Supremacy and have numerous other roles.

(A2.2.2) It expands your Tableau. This enables Special Actions allowing you to destroy Units, disrupt Tableaus, and consolidate wealth.

### A3. General Rules.

(A3.1) Tie-breaker. Ties are always broken in favor of the player with more military stars on his Tableau. If there is a further tie, the tie is broken in favor of the player with more rupees. If there is a further tie, neither player is superior.

(A3.2) Terms. Capitalized terms (e.g., Loyalty Prize) are defined in the glossary.

(A3.3) **Deal-Making. Players may not freely exchange cards or rupees. However, players are free to make any deal during the game. Deals are non-binding.**

## B. COMPONENTS

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### B1. Game Contents.

- 120 cards. Ninety-three cards represent places and personalities which inhabited central Asia c. 1823 – 1845.<sup>1</sup> The remainder have general game functions, such as marking the current Regime or identifying player Loyalty.
- 50 Cubes. Ten cubes in five player colors (white, black, orange, yellow, purple). A cube represents a Tribe (political unit) if on a Location card or a Spy (intelligence unit) if on a Tableau card.
- 30 Cylinders. Ten cylinders in three Empire colors (blue, green, red). A cylinder represents

an Army (military unit) if on a Location card or a Road (economic unit) if on a Connection between two Locations.

- 45 Discs. Thirty-five white discs, worth 1 rupee each, and 10 red, worth 5 rupees each.

## B2. Card Anatomy.

(B2.1) Pax Pamir includes 93 cards used to build the draw deck.

## B3. Player Cards.<sup>2</sup>

(B3.1) There are five player cards. Player cards are not part of a player's Tableau.

## B4. Regime Cards.

(B4.1) There are four Regime cards, each denoting a different Mode used in determining Supremacy. Regimes also enable additional actions and other special effects. Only one Regime is in play at a time.

## B5. Loyalty Cards.<sup>3</sup>

(B5.1) There are five Loyalty cards, each with two orientations. Your choice of orientation determines your starting Loyalty.

## B6. Topples.

(B6.1) There are four Topples, which are mixed into the draw deck during setup and may trigger the game end.

## B7. Favor Cards.

(B7.1) The three favor cards mark the player with the most Influence in each of the three Empires. Players should immediately take the corresponding favor card when they have the most influence in that Empire. **No influence is required in an empire to receive the empire's favor card. If no players have influence in an empire, refer to A3 to determine who receives the empire's favor card.** Favor cards confer special bonuses to that player.

- **British. IMPERIAL INVESTMENT** - Gain one rupee after a card with the Leveraged Impact Icon is discarded or taken back into a player's hand via Purge or Honeymoon.
- **Russian. EUROPEAN ARMS** - You may discard one rupee to boost the rank of your

attack by one once per Campaign Action. Rank 3 cards may not be boosted.

- **SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE** - Only pay a single rupee to rightmost card in either Market row to move armies without roads during a Campaign Action.

## C. SETUP

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### C1. Map Formation.<sup>4</sup>

(C1.1) Each of the six map cards depicts one of the six map Locations: Transcaspian, Persia, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, and Punjab. Arrange these to form a six-card map as shown. Leave a small amount of space between each card.

*Optional Mapboard.* A "Pax P mapboard" is available for purchase from [www.sierra-madre-games.eu](http://www.sierra-madre-games.eu). This optional accessory has a map and card layout for Pax Pamir on one side, and for Pax Porfiriana on the other. This replaces the 6 map cards.

### C2. Players.

(C2.1) Each player receives a player card at random.

(C2.2) Player Tableaus. Place your player card in front of you. Cards in your personal Tableau will be played in a single row above your player card.

(C2.3) Cubes. Each player receives the ten cubes of his color and places them near his player card.

### C3. Draw Deck & Market.

(C3.1) Take 40 random draw deck cards, plus another 8 random cards for each player in the game. Shuffle and divide into six approximately equal stacks. Take the four Topples cards and shuffle one into four of the stacks. Without further shuffling, stack the four decks containing the Topples cards – this forms the bottom of the draw deck. Finally, place the two stacks without Topples cards on top of the draw deck.

(C3.2) Market. Deal 12 cards from the Draw deck to form two rows of six face-up cards.

#### C4. Regime.

(C4.1) Place the starting Regime card (“Political Fragmentation”) near the map.

#### C5. Starting Capital.<sup>5</sup>

(C5.1) Each player receives 4 rupees (white discs).

#### C6. Starting Loyalty.

(C6.1) Shuffle the five Loyalty cards and deal one to each player. Each player now secretly chooses one of his card’s two possible starting Loyalties by rotating the card to the desired orientation. All orientations are then revealed simultaneously. Players adjust their seating according to the seating order number in the corner of their Loyalty card. The player with the lowest number is the start player and play will continue clockwise to the player with the next higher number. Place Loyalty cards behind your player cards so that the colored band indicating Loyalty is clearly visible.

(C6.2) If an Empire has only one loyal player, that player should take the corresponding favor card (B7).

*The game is now ready to play.*

## D. SEQUENCE OF PLAY

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### D1. Your Turn.

(D1.1) On your turn, perform the following in any order:

- Up to two actions—Standard and/or Special (E).
- A number of additional actions, limited to those of the current Regime card (E).

### D2. Cleanup (F).

(D2.1) Perform Market Cleanup and then continue play clockwise with the next player

## E. ACTIONS

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### E1. General.

(E1.1) On your turn you **must** perform at least two actions (Standard or Special)

(E1.2) You must be able to pay all associated costs in order to take an action.

(E1.3) Special Actions are enabled by your Tableau cards. Each Special Action is associated with one of the four Regimes. Though it can be used during any Regime, if a Special Action is performed during its associated Regime, it will not count against your two actions.

(E1.4) Each card can only be used for one action per turn.

*Example: The regime is Political Fragmentation. This regime allows you to use the Tax action with each Tableau card with the tax action without having any of those actions count against your two actions per turn. However, if one of those cards had previously used another action, such as the Campaign action, you could not tax with the card this turn since the card itself has already been used for an action.*

### E2. Discard (Standard Action).

(E2.1) You may discard one card from your Hand. If you use both of your Standard Actions to discard two cards from your Hand, take one rupee from any player or market card.

### E3. Purchase (Standard Action).

(E3.1) Purchase a card from the Market **or another player’s hand** and add it to your Hand.

(E3.2) Hand Size. Your Hand Size is limited to one card PLUS the sum of the Ranks on all the Intelligence cards on your Tableau. You may not purchase a card if you do not have room in your Hand.

(E3.3) Cost. The cost of a card depends on its current column in the Market. The leftmost column is free, the next column costs one rupee, then two, etc. Pay this cost by placing one rupee on each card in the same row to the left of the card you are purchasing. **If purchasing a card from another player, the seller determines the card’s cost. The price is then paid directly to the seller.**

(E3.4) If you place a rupee on a market card for any reason, you may not purchase that card this turn.

(E3.5) You get any rupees that were on the card you purchased.

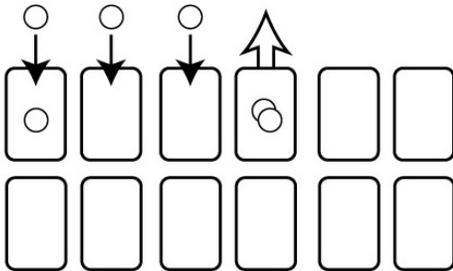
(E3.6) Topples (H) are triggered the moment they are bought from the market. **As Topples never enter your**

hand you do not need to have room in your hand in order to purchase them.

(E3.7) If the current Regime is a Military Struggle, market purchase costs are doubled. Place two of your rupees on each market card instead of one.

(E3.8) If you are ever required to place a rupee on a vacant market spot, pay the card in this spot in the other market row. **Note: in some rare instances both market slots in that column may be vacant. In this case, place the rupee(s) on the next highest market card in that row. (This situation would only occur if you purchase two market cards in the same row and then take a special action with a cost.)**

*Example: You purchase the fourth card from the left in the Market by spending three rupees. Though there are two rupees on this card, you cannot use those rupees towards the card's purchase. Place the first rupee on the far left card, the second rupee on the next card to the right, and the last rupee on the next card to the right. You now take the fourth card into your Hand and take any rupees on that card.*



**E4. Play (Standard Action).**

(E4.1) Play any card in your Hand to your Tableau and then place Units on the map or Tableau.

(E4.2) Tableau Size. Your Tableau Size is limited to three cards PLUS the sum of the Ranks on all the political cards on your Tableau. You may temporarily go over this limit, but must discard back down to this limit during cleanup (F2).

(E4.3) Cost To Play. You must pay one rupee for each Tribe in the Location matching the card to the Tribe's owner (you do not need to pay yourself). However, this cost may be negotiated with the owners of the Tribes (G1).

(E4.4) Placement. You must play a card to either the left or right side of your Tableau.

(E4.5) Patriots. If you play a Patriot card, your Loyalty will change to match the played card. If you take on a new Loyalty, you must discard any conflicting Loyalty Prizes/Starting Loyalty tucked partially behind your player card, **remove any gifts**, and discard any Patriots on your Tableau, returning Spies on them to their owners unused cube pool.

(E4.6) Impact icons such as Regime Change, Leveraged, Informants, and Garrison take effect when a card is played. Each is described in detail in the glossary.

(E4.7) Place Units.<sup>6</sup> After playing the card, place cubes or cylinders depending upon the Mode of the card played. If you cannot place the required cubes or cylinders, **you must take the needed Units from anywhere in play (Location, Tableau Card, or Connection).**

(E4.7.1) MILITARY. Take a number of Empire cylinders equal to the played card's Rank. These cylinders must match your Loyalty. Place these Armies on the Location card matching the played card's Location.

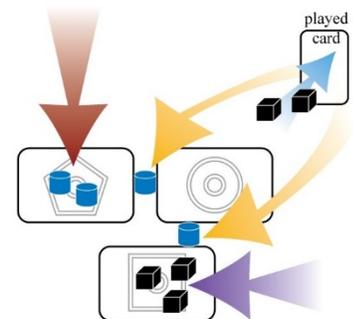
*Ex. Rank 2 in Kabul*

(E4.7.2) INTELLIGENCE. Take a number of personal cubes equal to the played card's Rank, and place these Spies on the center of the played card.

(E4.7.3) ECONOMIC. Take a number of cylinders equal to the played card's Rank. These cylinders must match your Loyalty. You may place these Roads on any Connection adjacent to the Location card matching the played card's Location. You may place multiple Roads on the same Connection. *Ex. Rank 2 in Punjab*

(E4.7.4) POLITICAL.

Take a number of personal cubes equal to the played card's Rank, and place these Tribes on the Location card matching the played card's Location. *Ex. Rank 3 in Kandahar*



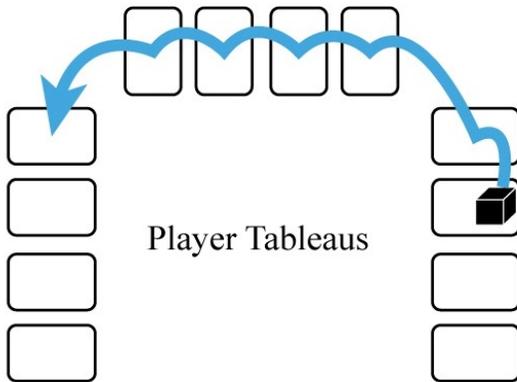
**E5. Travel (Intelligence Special Action).**

(E5.1) Use this action to move your Spies. These cubes move along cards in the players' Tableaus, as if they formed a single continuous track around the area of play.

(E5.2) You may make a number of moves equal to the Rank of the card using the Travel action. Each Rank allows a Spy to move one card in either direction. These moves may be allocated anyway you see fit.

(E5.3) If a Spy finishes its movement on a card with one or two colored bands that is NOT on your Tableau, **you may** place it either on the Patriot band at the top of the card or the Loyalty Prize band at the bottom. The color of the band chosen indicates which Empire you are Spying for and so gain Influence in. Since this represents a clandestine agent, you may have Influence in Empires which you are not loyal to. Spies never impact Loyalty.

(E5.4) Up to one Spy from each player may be colocated on a band. In this way, multiple players can gain influence from the same card.



*Example: You have three cards of Rank 2 with the travel icon in your Tableau, and the Regime is Intelligence War. Each card using the Travel action will allow you to move two Spies one card. For instance, you could use all three (Rank 2) Travel actions to move a single Spy six cards in either direction.*

**E6. Counter-Espionage (Intelligence Special Action).**

(E6.1) Use this action to remove Spies belonging to other players on **any** card where you have at least one Spy.

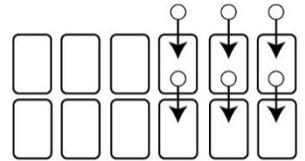
(E6.2) The maximum number of enemy Spies removed is equal to the Rank of the card using the counter-espionage action.

(E6.3) Spies removed are returned to their owner's pool of unused cubes.

**E7. Bribe (Intelligence Special Action).<sup>7</sup>**

(E7.1) Use this action to steal one card where you have a Spy.

(E7.2) Cost. Pay two rupees for each Rank of the target card. The cost should be paid to the rightmost Market cards (across both rows) with a max of one rupee per card.



(E7.3) Take the card and place it on your personal Tableau. Any Spies remain on the card. If you have a Spy on the Prize or Patriot band, the Spy moves to the card's center.

(E7.4) If you bribe a Patriot, the Patriot **will** enact a Loyalty Change if you are currently of a different Loyalty.

(E7.5) Coup. If you bribe the highest ranked Political Card in an opponent's Tableau, all of his Tribes in that Location convert to your color.

**E8. Assassinate (Intelligence Special Action).<sup>8</sup>**

(E8.1) Use this action to discard one card where you have a Spy.

(E8.2) Cost. Pay one rupee to each of the two rightmost cards in the market. You must also remove one of your Spies on the targeted card.

(E8.3) **After the assassinated card is discarded,** you may accept it as a Loyalty Prize.

(E8.4) Any Spies on the card are returned to their owner's pool of unused cubes.

(E8.5) Strawman. You may target a card on your Tableau.

### E9. Commerce (Economic Special Action).

(E9.1) Using this action, take an amount of rupees equal to the acting card's Rank from any Market Cards.

### E10. Gifts (Economic Special Action).

(E10.1) Using this action, you may purchase a single Gift cube which will count as one Influence in the Empire matching your current loyalty.

(E10.2) Cost. Each Gift has a cost (2, 4, 6) as marked. The cost should be paid to the rightmost Market cards (across both rows) with a max of one rupee per card.

(E10.3) Place a personal cube on the Gift matching the cost paid. Only one cube per Gift is allowed.

(E10.4) **Rupee Transfer.** Instead of Purchasing a Gift, players may use this action to give another player a number of rupees up to the Gifting card's rank.

### E11. Tax (Political Special Action).

(E11.1) Use this action to take rupees up to the acting card's Rank.

(E11.2) Restrictions. There are two restrictions on the Tax action. First, cards may only use the Tax action in their location. Second, a player may only Tax in a location if he has at least one tribe and more units (tribes + loyal armies) than any other player in that location. Ties should be broken following the tie-breaker (A3).

(E11.3) Procedure. Take rupees equal to the rank of the acting card. Rupees may be taken from any player whose tableau contains a card of the same location as the taxing card or any market card of that location. *Ex. Taxing with a rank 3 Herat card, the Ruler of Herat takes two rupees from a player whose tableau contains Bandits (an intelligence card in Herat) and another rupee from a Market Card located in Herat.*

(E11.4) Tax Shelter. The total number of Economic stars on your Tableau indicates the amount of rupees you can shelter from the Tax Action. Only rupees you hold in excess of your Tax Shelter are vulnerable to the tax action.

### E12. Campaign (Military Special Action).

(E12.1) Use this action to move Armies and eliminate other Units. You may take this action without attacking. Each campaign action follows this sequence:

(E12.1.1) Pick one Location with Armies of the Empire to which you are Loyal. **Some or all of these Armies comprise your battle group.**

(E12.1.2) If you wish, you may move the battle group to any single adjacent region if the Empire has at least one Road on the Connection. **Any armies which share your Loyalty in this new location may be added to the battle group.**

(E12.1.3) **Attack.** If you wish, choose one defending Empire in the Location **with your battle group.** You may only attack Roads or Armies of that Empire or Tribes Loyal to that Empire. You may not attack units Loyal to your Empire.

(E12.1.4) **Casualties.** An attack eliminates a number of cubes or cylinders up to the Rank of the card used for the campaign action. Defending Armies must be eliminated before Tribes and Roads.

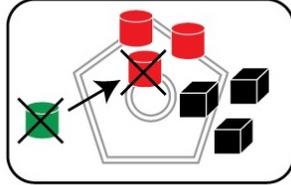
(E12.1.5) Attacker Losses. For each enemy Army eliminated, eliminate one friendly in **your battle group.** If you cannot take the loss, you may not eliminate the enemy Army. If there are no further Armies **in your battle group,** you can no longer eliminate any enemy Unit.

(E12.2) Intel. If you have a consenting Spy on a card that matches the Location, you may ignore the requirement to destroy Armies first in that location.

(E12.3) Overthrow. If you eliminate a player's last Tribe in a location that player must discard a political card from his Tableau of the matching location, if able. Any Spies on the card are returned to their owner's pool of unused cubes.

(E12.4) Baggage Train. **If your Empire has no road on the connection you wish to travel,** you may pay one rupee to each of the two rightmost cards in the market to move your Armies as if there was a Road.

*Example: Tom uses a Rank three military card to trigger an attack in Kabul. He is loyal to the Afghan Empire and there is a single Afghan Army in Kabul. His attacks are directed at the British, which have two Armies in Kabul and three Tribes loyal to the British. He must first eliminate the British Armies. He eliminates the first Army and must then eliminate the Afghan Army as well. He must now stop his action because British Armies remain and there are no further Afghan Armies in the Location. If he had Intel, he could have ignored the requirement to attack the British Armies in the Location first and attacked the Tribes instead, eliminating all three tribes with his rank three Campaign action.*



## F. CLEANUP

### F1. Automatic Discard.

(F1.1) A Patriot or Topple card in either of the two leftmost cards in the Market (occupying the “0 cost” position) will be automatically discarded without effect. Any rupees on a card discarded in this way should be moved to the next card in the row. If the final Topple is discarded, the game is over (H5).

### F2. Discard Down to Tableau Size.

(F2.1) If you have more cards than your Tableau Size, discard Tableau cards till you are within your limit. All Spies on discarded cards are returned to their owner’s pool of unused cubes.

*Example: During the round, Jim’s rank three political card was Assassinated. Jim’s max Tableau Size has now been lowered by three. During the Cleanup phase on Jim’s turn, he will need to discard any cards on his Tableau in excess of his Tableau size.*

### F3. Refresh Market.

(F3.1) Move all cards in the Market to their leftmost position in their market row and draw new cards to return the market to its normal size.

## G. NEGOTIATIONS

### G1. Deals.

(G1.1) As per A3, players are welcome to make any deal. However, any agreed upon deal should be considered non-binding. Furthermore, though the free transfer of resources is prohibited, cards can still be purchased from other players using the Purchase action and rupees can be given to other players using the Gift action.

*Example 1: Leveraging Political Power. You have six tribes in Kabul, enough to make Play costs prohibitive. You declare to the other players that you will only charge three rupees if they play cards in Kabul and you promise not to tax them so long as they take no aggressive action against you.*

*Example 2: Puppet Kings. You have positioned spies on a player’s highest rank political card. You demand that he allow you to play cards freely (that is, not paying his tribes) and that you not tax him or you will assassinate his card.*

*Example 3: Gun for Hire. You have secured a military monopoly, but find yourself cash poor. You tell other players that they can purchase your services. You agree to help a fellow player for four rupees. He gives you the rupees on his turn using the Gifts special action and then, on your turn, you take your army into the Punjab and unseat a rival.*

## H. THE TOPPLE

### H1. Game End.

(H1.1) When a Topple is purchased from the Market the game ends if:

- An Empire gains Supremacy (H2).
- If the final Topple of the game is unsuccessful or is automatically discarded from the Market (H5).

### H2. Supremacy.

(H2.1) An Empire achieves Supremacy if it has both more cubes/cylinders of the current Regime’s Mode than all other Empires combined AND at least 1 cube/cylinder of each Mode. Player cubes (Spies and Tribes) count towards the Empire to which they are loyal. This

includes Spies which may be providing Influence in a different empire.

### H3. Influence & Victory.

(H3.1) If an Empire achieves Supremacy, the player with the most Influence in that Empire wins the game. For ties, see A3. To calculate your Influence in the Empire, add up:

(H3.2) If you are Loyal to that Empire

- Your Loyalty card, Prizes, and Gifts
- The number of Patriots in your Tableau.
- Each of your spies on a colored band of that empire's color. Reminder: In practice Spies on your personal tableau will never provide influence.

(H3.3) If you are NOT Loyal to that Empire

- Each of your spies on a colored band of that empire's color. Reminder: In practice Spies on your personal tableau will never provide influence.

*Note: It is possible that a player can win the game and not be Loyal to the Supreme Empire. Moreover, influence in the Supreme Empire may not be required to win if no players have any influence in that empire. In this case, use the tiebreaker (A3) to determine the winner. If the tie cannot be broken, no player wins.*

### H4. Failed Topple.

(H4.1) An unsuccessful Topple results in a purge, unless it is the final Topple.

(H4.2) Remove all but one cube and cylinder of each color from every map Location and Connection. Afghan Empire Cylinders are not removed.

(H4.3) Starting with the player to the left of the one who triggered the topple (and proceeding clockwise), players must cull their Tableau. A player may only have one card of each Mode. Cards in excess of this limit are taken into a player's hand (which may exceed hand size). Leveraged Cards taken back into player's hands must be paid for as if they were discarded. Spies on cards taken into a player's hand are returned to their

owner's pool of unused cubes. Players may then freely discard any cards in their hand.

(H4.4) Reminder: Hand Size is ONLY used to determine whether or not a card can be taken from the Market during the purchase action(E3).

### H5. Failed Final Topple.

(H5.1) If the final Topple fails, follow the tie procedure to determine the winner (A3).

*Successful Topple Example:*

*The Regime is a Military Struggle and the Topple is purchased from the market. The Afghan Empire has two Armies, the Russian Empire has one Army, and the British Empire has four Armies. Assuming the British also have at least one Road, one Tribe, and one Spy, the Topple is a success because the British have more Armies than the other two Empires combined. The game is now over. To determine the winning player, everyone counts up their influence in the British Empire. Jim has four influence (he is loyal to Britain (+1), has two Patriots on his Tableau (+2) and has one Spy on a British Patriot band in Mark's Tableau). Dave has three influence (he has two Spies on each of Jim's two Patriot bands (+2) and one on Mark's (+1)). Mark has only two influence (he is loyal to Britain (+1) and has one Patriot on his Tableau (+1)). Jim wins the game. Note, that if Dave had more influence than Jim, he could have won the game, even if he was never directly loyal to the British during play.*

## I. OPTIONAL RULES

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### I1. Nation Building.<sup>10</sup>

(I1.1) This variant alters the game's victory condition. Empires now must consolidate control over a generation. This variant is recommended for two-player and three-player games and for players who want more teamwork and an experience that places less pressure on individual Topples. Games played with this variant may be a little longer as they will usually reach the fourth Topple.

(I1.2) Remove the three Favor Cards from the game. They will not be used when playing with Nation Building.

(I1.3) End-of-game and Victory. The game will end either after the resolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> Topple OR if an Empire is able to achieve Supremacy twice consecutively. At this point the player with the most Victory points wins. If there is a tie, consult the tie-breaker (A3).

(I1.4) Gaining Victory Points. If a Topple is successful, players gain one victory point per influence point in the Empire that gained supremacy. If the Empire that gained supremacy has only one Loyal player that player gains a bonus of two additional Victory points. Victory points should be tracked on paper or with some other token.

(I1.5) Honeymoon. Successful Topples cause a brief period of peace and prosperity which partially resets the game. During the first three Topples, when an Empire achieves Supremacy the first time, remove all units except gifts from play. Then, starting with the player to the left of the one who triggered the Topple (and proceeding clockwise), players must cull their ENTIRE Tableau. Culled cards should be added to a player's hand. Leveraged Cards taken back into player's hands must be paid for as if they were discarded. Spies on culled cards are returned to their owner's pool of unused cubes. Players may then freely discard any cards in their hand.

*Reminder: Hand Size is ONLY used to determine whether or not a card can be taken from the Market during the purchase action(E3).*

## I2. Badal Tokens.<sup>11</sup>

(I2.1) The ten red discs are now Badal ("Revenge") tokens.

(I2.2) Acquiring. Whenever a player's personal cubes or Tableau cards are eliminated by another player, the victim can take a Badal token. You may only take a single Badal token per opponent turn, even if multiple actions harmed you. If there are no more Badal tokens in the bank, the victim may take a Badal token from any player.

(I2.3) Spending. Badal tokens can be spent to intensify the effectiveness of special actions. For every token spent, the Special Action is executed as if the card using the action were of a single Rank higher (max 3).

## J. KHYBER KNIVES (EXPANSION)

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### J1. Introduction to the Expansion

(J1.1) This expansion dramatically expands the game-to-game deck variance in Pax Pamir by adding 54 new game cards. These cards introduce unique powers and events. This expansion is not designed to be modular, though the Wazir Cards can be used by themselves.

#### (J1.2) Components

- 6 Wazir Cards.
- 20 Headline Cards.
- 27 Capability Cards.
- 7 New Game Cards (2M, 2I, 3P)
- 8 Empire Cylinders (2 Green, 2 Blue and 4 Red).

### J2. Setup

(J2.1) Mix in the expansion cards with the 93 cards from the base game.

(J2.2) Create a game deck following the rules outlined in Pax Pamir, but use **50** cards plus 8 per player.

(J2.3) Form Empire Force Pools. The Afghans begin with a force pool of 6. The Russians have 8. The British have 10. Place the remaining cylinders in the box. They are not initially available to be placed until they enter the game through Headline cards.

(J2.4) Use the Nation Building Rules (I1).

### J3. Wazir Cards

(J3.1) There are six Wazir cards, each corresponding to one of the game's six locations. These cards should be given to the player who is currently the Ruler of a particular location. Like Favor cards, these cards will transfer immediately.

(J3.2) Qualifying for Ruler. In order to become a Ruler of a location, a player needs to have at least one tribe and more units (tribes + loyal armies) than any other player in that location. Ties should be broken following the tie-breaker (A3)

(J3.3) Benefits of Wazir Cards. Each Wazir Card provides access to two special actions. In order to use either of the special actions, the Wazir Card will have to be hosted by

any card on the Ruler's tableau that has not yet used a special action. Special actions on the Wazir Card will take the rank of the hosting card. Using a special action on a Wazir Card will disqualify the host card from taking any additional special actions that turn. During Cleanup, all Wazir Cards should be uncoupled from their hosts.

#### **J4. Consolidate (Political Action).**

(J4.1) The Consolidate Action allows a player to place Units in the Location associated with a Wazir. Roads may be placed on any adjacent connections. Spies may be placed on any card on any player's tableau that matches the location of the Wazir enabling the action. Any combination of different units may be purchased so long as the total does not exceed the hosting cards rank.

(J4.2) Cost. Pay two rupees per unit. The cost should be paid to the rightmost Market cards (across both rows) with one rupee being placed on each card.

#### **J5. The Regime Change Action (Political Action).**

(J5.1) This action allows a player to change the game's current Regime to the one indicated on the icon.

(J5.2) Cost. Pay six rupees to the rightmost Market cards (across both rows) with one rupee being placed on each card.

#### **J6. Headline Cards**

(J6.1) Headlines cards never enter player hands. Instead, they are resolved immediately when purchased from the market. During Cleanup, any Headline in the leftmost column of the market will be automatically played.

(J6.2) The purchasing player may opt to sabotage the headline. This discards the Headline without effect.

(J6.3) Rounding. Some Headline cards will ask players to pay a particular cost. This cost will usually be followed by either a (-) or (+) which indicates whether the amount should be rounded down or up respectively.

#### **J7. Capability Cards**

(J7.1) Unlike regular game cards, Capability cards have no rank and no location. They never enter player hands or tableaux. Instead, when a Capability card is purchased

from the market, it is immediately played either to Augment an existing Tableau card or as a Capability.

(J7.2) AUGMENT. Capability cards may be played to augment the rank of an existing tableau card.

(J7.2.1) Tuck the Capability card partially behind a card on your tableau so that the white star is showing. Each Capability card played in this way increases the rank of the host card by one. *Note: Increasing rank in this way allows a player to activate Capability Cards, expand their hand size, improve the efficacy of their special actions etc.*

(J7.2.2) Tableau cards may host multiple Capability cards played in this way but cannot increase their rank beyond three. After playing a Capability card in this way, the active player should place a single unit of the host card's Mode following the procedure outlined in E4: Place Units.

(J7.2.3) If a tableau card ever leaves your tableau (Purge, Honeymoon, Bribe, Assassinate, Cleanup, etc) all Capability cards played to Augment that card are discarded.

(J7.3) CAPABILITY. Capabilities provide players with new special powers if activated.

(J7.3.1) Play the Capability card sideways, on a row below a player's tableau. Sideways Capability cards are considered inactive and have no effect on play. As soon as the conditions of activation are met, players may activate the Capability card. Once a Capability card is activated, it cannot be deactivated unless the card says otherwise. During a Purge or Honeymoon, all inactive Capability cards owned by players are discarded.

(J7.3.2) Conditions for activation. The conditions for activation always refer to the player who owns the Capability card. Most capability cards require a player to have a certain number of stars of a particular color on their tableau. Other conditions include owing cards from a variety of locations, changing loyalty, etc.

**(J7.3.3) Types of Capability Cards.**

- Persistent. These cards have powers which provide persistent bonuses.
- Action. These cards provide new Standard Actions that their owners can take. *Note: A player may take any Standard Action twice in a single turn, including those gained via an activated Capability Card.*
- Interrupt. These cards allow players to interrupt the usual flow of the game in special circumstances. Note: some Interrupt Capabilities allow players to cancel the actions of others. An action so interrupted is effectively used up and the triggering card cannot be used again that turn.
- Topple. These cards provide some benefit during the resolution of Topples (though they may impact the general game as well).

## GLOSSARY

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**ADJACENT**—This is indicated by the route lines on the Location cards.

**ARMY**—A cylinder on a Location in one of the three imperial colors, representing a military unit.

**CONNECTIONS**—Connections are the spaces on the route lines between two Locations. Cylinders representing Roads are placed here, which facilitate the movement of Armies.

**CONSENT**—You have Consent if the owner of cubes agrees to let you “use” the cube in order to enable certain actions. During the campaign action, a consenting Spy enables attacks in a particular location.

**CUBE & CYLINDER MANAGEMENT**—Each player has 10 wooden cubes, and each Empire has 10 wooden cylinders, which are hard limits. Collectively these are called Units. If you need to place a Unit but none remain, you may remove the necessary Units from any position.

**EMPIRE**—Players, Cylinders and Patriots are always associated with one of the three Empires: British (red), Russian (blue), or Afghan (green).

**FAVOR CARDS**—The three Favor Cards correspond to the player with the most influence in that Empire. If there is a tie, use the standard Tie Breaker. If there is any change in player standing, the appropriate Favor Card should be immediately passed to the new leader in influence. The holder of the Favor Card does not need to be Loyal to that empire. Each favor card provides a special bonus described in B7.

**GARRISON IMPACT**—When played, place a cylinder of the Empire you are Loyal to on the map, at the played card’s Location.

**GIFTS**—Your player card has three Gifts, which are spots priced at 2, 4, and 6. You may place a personal cube on one of these Gifts by performing the gifts action (E10). Only one cube can be on each Gift. Each cube placed on a Gift counts as a single Influence in your current Empire. If you make a Loyalty Change, return all Gift cubes to your supply.

**HAND**—When you purchase a card from the Market, place it in your Hand. You cannot purchase a card from the Market if it would violate your Hand Size.

**HAND SIZE**—Your Hand Size is limited to ONE CARD PLUS THE SUM OF THE RANKS ON ALL OF YOUR INTELLIGENCE CARDS ON YOUR Tableau. Your Hand Size determines if you can use the Purchase action (E3) to take a card from the market or obtain a card in a negotiation (G1). You may violate Hand Size if you take cards into your Hand via a failed topple (H4) or if your Hand Size limit changes due to the loss of an intelligence card on your Tableau.

**IMPACT**—The following card icons indicate Impacts: Garrison, Informants, Leveraged, and Regime Change Arrows. Impacts only occur when a card is first played (except Leveraged which also has an effect when the card is discarded).

**INFLUENCE**—If an Empire achieves Supremacy, the player with the most Influence in that Empire will win the game. Influence has four sources: Loyalty cards/prizes tucked partially behind your player card (including your starting Loyalty Card), Patriots on personal Tableaus, Spies on the colored bands that mark Patriots and Loyalty Prizes, and Gift cubes.

**INFORMANTS IMPACT**—When played, place a single Spy cube on the card.

**LEVERAGED IMPACT (Play)**—When Leveraged cards are played (E2), the game’s money supply increases. The player takes rupees equal to the card’s Rank from the box.

**LEVERAGED IMPACT (Discard)**—When a Leveraged card is discarded **from a player tableau** (e.g. by assassination, purge, etc) **or returned to a player’s hand** (e.g. **Purge, Honeymoon**), the card’s owner discards a number of rupees equal to the card’s Rank to the box. For every rupee that he cannot pay, he must discard a personal cube or Tableau card. **NOTE:** When a Leveraged card is discarded from a player Tableau, the player with the British Favor gains one rupee.

**LOCATION**—There are six Location cards in Pax Pamir: Transcaspian, Persia, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, and Punjab. Cylinders on these cards are military Armies, and cubes on these cards are political legitimacy (Tribes).

**LOYALTY**—You will always have Loyalty to exactly one of the three Empires, as indicated by cards with a colored band in your Tableau or tucked behind your player card (i.e. your starting Loyalty card, Patriots, Prizes). Your Loyalty determines which cylinders you are able to place and manipulate. Loyalty is used in determining Supremacy and victory. In the rare instance that you have lost your Loyalty card, Patriots, and Loyalty Prizes, you will default to a Loyalty in the Afghan Empire.

**LOYALTY CHANGE**—You can change Loyalties by playing Patriots on your private Tableau or by taking Loyalty Prizes. If so, you must discard all Tableau cards of conflicting Loyalties and remove any cubes on Gifts.

**LOYALTY PRIZE**—If you eliminate a card by assassination that lists “Loyalty Prize” along its lower edge, you can take it as a Loyalty Prize. Place it partially behind your player card so that the Loyalty Prize band is visible. A Loyalty Prize placed in this way counts as an Influence in the indicated Empire. Taking a Loyalty Prize may enact a Loyalty Change if the Loyalty Prize does not match the player’s current Loyalty.

**MARKET**—The 12-card Market is composed of two rows of 6 face-up cards. Obtain these cards by the purchase/play action.

**MODE**—Each Tableau and Regime Card belongs to one of four Modes: dark red cards are Military (M), light blue cards are Intelligence (I), purple cards are Political (P), and gold cards are Economic (E). Each of the Regimes enables additional actions of the matching Mode. Each cylinder is Military Mode if on a Location on the map, or Economic Mode if on a Connection. Each cube is Political Mode if on the map, or Intelligence Mode if in a Tableau.

**PATRIOT**—These cards represent individuals of strong principles. Each has a colored band across the top that is either green (Afghan Empire), red (Britain) or blue (Russia). If you make a Loyalty Change, all Patriots in your Tableau of another Loyalty are discarded.

**PLAYER CARD**—Each player gets one player card. Player cards are not part of a player’s Tableau.

**RANK**—Each card has a Rank of between one to three stars. This indicates how many cubes/cylinders the card will play on the map, and the effectiveness of its actions. Rank is also used to determine your maximum Hand Size (blue stars), Tableau Size (purple stars), and Tax Shelter (yellow stars).

**REGIMES**—There are four Regime cards, which signify different political climates felt broadly across the region. Only one Regime is in play at any time.

- **Military Struggle**—This represents a Russo-British hot war. Costs to purchase cards are doubled (E3). The campaign action does not count against your turn’s two actions.
- **Intelligence War**—This represents a Russo-British cold war. The Regime Mode is Intelligence. The assassination, travel, counter-espionage, and bribe Special Actions do not count against your turn’s two actions.
- **Political Fragmentation**—This represents global disinterest in the region allowing warlords to consolidate power. The Regime Mode is political. The tax action does not count against your turn’s two actions.

- **Economic Boom**—This represents a period of political stability, public/private investment, and growth. The Regime Mode is Economic. The commerce and gift actions does not count against your turn’s two actions.

**REGIME CHANGE ARROW**—Whenever a card with this icon is played, the game’s current Regime changes to match the color of the arrow.

**ROAD**—A cylinder on a Connection space in one of the three imperial colors, representing Roads and other economic infrastructures aiding commerce.

**RUPEE**—Rupees are represented by white discs (1 rupee each) or red discs (5 rupees each). Rupees will circulate between players during the game. Rupees are added to or subtracted from the game through the play or discard of Leveraged cards, or with bonuses gained through Imperial Investment (British favor card). The rupees provided in the game are not a hard limit. Use spare tokens if required.

**SPECIAL ACTIONS**—Most cards offer Special Actions which are shown as a row of icons across the middle of the card. Each card in your Tableau can only be used for one action per turn (E1). Special Actions described in section E.

**SPY**—A cube on a Tableau card in one of the five player colors, representing an intelligence unit.

**SUPREMACY**—To have a successful Topple, an Empire must achieve Supremacy, by having both more cubes/cylinders in the current Regime’s Mode than all other players and Empires combined, and by having at least one Army and one Road, and having at least one Spy and Tribe belonging to any Loyal player.

**STANDARD ACTION**—Unlike a Special Action, you do not need a Tableau Card to perform a Standard Action. The discard action (E2), the purchase action (E3) and the play action (E4) are Standard Actions.

**TABLEAU**—This is a row of face-up cards under your control.

**TABLEAU SIZE**—Your maximum Tableau size is **THREE PLUS THE SUM OF THE RANKS ON ALL OF YOUR POLITICAL CARDS ON YOUR Tableau.**

During the cleanup phase, if your Tableau has expanded beyond this threshold, you must discard cards until your Tableau is within this limit.

**TAX SHELTER**—Tax Shelters allow players to protect their rupees from the tax action (E8). The total number of economic stars on your Tableau indicate the amount of rupees you can shelter from the tax action. Any rupees you hold in excess of your Tax Shelter are vulnerable to the tax action. A convenient way to show sheltered rupees is to place the sheltered ones directly on top of the economic cards in your Tableau, up to one coin per yellow star.

**TOPPLE**—One of four cards that triggers a Supremacy check if purchased.

**TRIBE**—A cube on a Location in one of the five player colors, represent a political unit such as a warlord or a tribal council.

**UNIT**—A wooden cube or cylinder.

## L. Historical Notes (Cole Wehrle).

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### L1. Endnotes.

<sup>1</sup> Pax Pamir draws its images from primarily mid-19th century publications. The cover image is from a political cartoon drawn by Sir John Tenniel for Punch Magazine, 1878. I have made particular use of James Rattray’s *Afghaunistan* (1842), James Atikson’s *Sketches in Afghaunistan* (1842, see back of box), and August Wahlen’s *Moeurs, Usages, et Costumes de tous les Peuples de Monde, d’apres des Documents Authentiques et les Voyages les plus Recents* (1843-44). When possible, historically accurate images have been used. However, because some of the game’s named characters are obscure, some liberties have been taken. Those cards with approximate illustrations of named characters are listed here by ID number: 2, 9, 45, 47, 49, 51, 55, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Players represent political factions. The images on the player cards are taken from James Rattray’s *Afghaunistan* (1842). These anonymous figures represent the powerful, non-public actors within factions, often forgotten to history. One of five images is of a woman from Rattray’s illustration “Kandahar, Lady of Rank.” In his note on the illustration, Rattray writes “Many of these Afghan ladies have rendered their names

celebrated in history by their conjugal attachment and devotion to the cause they supported.” He also writes of Shujah’s favourite wife, Wafadar Begum, who rescued him from imprisonment by the Sikh ruler Ranjeet Singh and of the brave widow of Akram Khan, who was a powerful chief of Zamindawar to the south of Kandahar. When Khan was executed, his widow threw off her burkha and led her tribe to battle. Though the vast majority of women in Afghanistan had few rights in the early 19th century, I feel that it is important to note that women of rank did have a role in political affairs, even if they were seldom seen.

<sup>3</sup> Loyalty cards represent diplomatic networking which occurs outside of the scope of the game (1810s and early 20s).

<sup>4</sup> Pax Pamir’s six Location cards cover an area about three times larger than the area covered in Pax Porfiriana. This area includes four distinct political topos: Persian court intrigue, the warlords and minor khanates of the Transcaspian Oblast, the dynastic dueling between the Durrani and the Barakzai in Afghanistan (Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat), and the struggles of the fledgling Sikh Empire in the Punjab. In general, Russia’s positions are strongest in Persia and in the Transcaspian while the British are mostly based in the Punjab. Pax Pamir uses an amalgam of naming systems and combines both modern and period usage in a way that I hope is both evocative and easy to grasp. The cities take their spellings from modern English usage (Kabul vs Cabool) while the areas around modern-day nations (Turkmenistan, Iran, Pakistan/northwest India) take their archaic regional names (the Transcaspian Oblast, Persia, and the Punjab). In all cases, the name of each location covers a very broad and loose area. For instance, for game purposes Kabul extends far north into Badakhshan and its mineral riches. The reason for this is two-fold. First, the game could only have so many Locations and still be playable, and, second, the cities service as political, communications, and economic nodes. Kabul would have been Badakhshan’s regional trade hub, even if the mines were quite distant from its market streets.

<sup>5</sup> A player’s pile of rupees should be understood to include both a small physical bank as well as a broad

network of IOUs, blackmail, democratic and/or religious legitimacy, as well as other forms of political capital.

<sup>6</sup> The placing of Units on the map represents the aligning of extant assets in the current political struggle. In this sense, unlike enterprises in Pax Porfiriana, players do not “build” anything. Many of the economic cards in this game represent trade routes, patrols, and markets which have existed for a thousand years. By placing Roads on the map in their empire’s color, the player is simply signifying that a particular patrol has chosen a side in the current conflict. It’s worth noting that while Spies and Tribes will “follow” a player if they change Loyalty, Armies and Roads do not. The reason is one of scale, supply, and control. The alignment of Armies and Roads represents their enmeshment with forces outside of a player’s direct control. Though they may have delivered the army to the empire, the empire is now the one footing the bill.

<sup>7</sup> The Bribe action is a targeted attempt to win over certain key figures currently working with your opponents. A coup represents a succession dispute. In buffer regions between superpowers, it is common for them to support rival contenders for the throne to gain influence in the new regime.

<sup>8</sup> Cards on a player Tableaus represent ministers and administrative assets. For this reason, although an assassination may kill off a key person, it will not directly remove the broader resources that the minister helped coordinate.

<sup>9</sup> Association with an empire is often a liability. The ability to tax players loyal to an empire reflects efforts of tribes to consolidate control and political legitimacy. It should surprise no one that some of these situations will be baldly hypocritical. For instance, in the example one player Loyal to Russia can Tax another player, also Loyal to Russia.

<sup>10</sup> Despite a disastrous initial march, the British expedition into Afghanistan did succeed in Toppling Dost Mohammad’s fledgling kingdom. However, Afghanistan proved a hard place to rule and it was not long before Auckland and the East India Company realized how many resources it would take to consolidate power and bring stability to the country.

<sup>11</sup> The traditional Pashtun ethical code makes special provision for the concept of “Nyaw aw Badal” (justice and revenge). This provision was often carried out in ways that would be illogical in a contemporary political and economic framework. The idea was particularly effective when appealing to the more traditional rural Tribes. This optional rule attempts to capture that dimension of political life and the cycles of violence that the idea engendered.

### **L3. Bibliographic Essay (Cole Wehrle).**

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This game draws on the work of many scholars in several disciplines. In the following section, I would like to offer a brief selection of those books, both for those with a passing interest in the game and its subject as well as those looking to engage more deeply with the game’s concepts.

Most general histories of the early phases of the Great Game tend to lionize Britain and Russian agents. This is an understandable impulse. The region did attract brilliant and creative thinkers, but we should not overemphasize their influence and should be careful with texts which place them on pillars. A fine example is Eldred Pottinger who is made out to be the “Hero of Herat” by a Victorian novel of that name. In point of fact, the siege of Herat was likely not turned by a single inventive Westerner, and Afghan histories rarely take note of Pottinger’s involvement. The legacy of that Victorian legend has endured and lingers even in otherwise excellent books such as Peter Hopkirk’s *The Great Game* (1992). Hopkirk offers many compelling portraits of some of the conflict’s most interesting characters. However, more recent treatments of the period, such as William Dalrymple’s *Return of a King* (2012), provide a much richer analysis. Dalrymple also has a particular talent for capturing the contradictions of British policy in the period. For those looking for a more academic and rigorous treatment of that subject, the work of M. E. Yapp will be useful. His book *Strategies of British India, Britain, Iran and Afghanistan* (1980), remains the seminal text on the subject. Yapp bores deeply into the bureaucratic underbelly of Britain’s diplomatic apparatus and helps one understand the concerns (both in London and in India) about the question of India’s northwestern frontier and Britain’s ability to interface with its politics.

In terms of understanding those politics, Christine Noelle’s *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan* (1997) is a remarkable text which I have drawn on heavily in capturing the landscape of power and privilege in Afghanistan. Noelle’s book explains the successful rule of Dost Muhammad as the management of an amalgam of power centers. Noelle’s work also considers the economic state of nineteenth century Afghanistan and pays particular attention to the role of customs and bribes, and the relationship between economic forces and political power. Much of this dimension of Noelle’s research is reflected in the game’s semi-closed cash system which seeks to capture the ebb and flow of political will and capability among the players.

The game’s emphasis on intelligence resources comes largely from C.A. Bayly’s *magisterial Empire and Information* (2000). Bayly argues that a large portion of the British success in India was tied to its ability to control information and participate in an economy of intelligence with the other centers of political power. Accordingly, intelligence is a critical element in the game, enabling greater strategic flexibility (hand size), operational power (the disruption of Tableaus, Intel), as well as Influence.

When I first set out to design this game I started with the victory condition and, indeed, it has not changed in over two years of development. The general theories of empire and Supremacy come from Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper’s *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (2011). Burbank and Cooper suggest that empire is not hegemonic in practice, and that an effective imperial operation requires a robust infrastructure that is sensitive to traditional centers of power. For this reason, regardless of Regime, Empires need at least some presence in the four modes of power.

### **L4. Empire and Supremacy (Phil Eklund).**

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The best source for this theme is Thomas Sowell’s *Conquests and Cultures*. This regards “political capital” as an euphemism for “bullets”. If you want to be left alone, or if you want to share power, you give rupees to whomever has the most bullets in the area. Which has little to do with the economy, which is a function of the

productive infrastructure, transactional freedoms, and worker skills of the region. The last is what Sowell calls “human capital”, and in Afghanistan there was essentially only human capital and bullets.

## **L5. A Defense of British Colonialism (Phil Eklund).**

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Although much maligned, British Colonialism had significant advantages for its colonies, as evidenced by how well some of them turned out. The USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore are among the most civilized and best places to live today. Why?

**The British Legal Tradition.** The British de facto separation of powers, first between lords and king and then between king and parliament, yielded a unique framework of law that facilitated economic transactions. A vast improvement over tribal justice, where all three branches of government were embodied in one warlord.

**Pax Britannia.** British rule was more stable than the weak, corrupt, and capricious regimes they replaced. Both India and Afghanistan had suffered from centuries of battles between petty warlords. But in India, British rule brought a century of peace, marred only by the localized 1857 Indian Mutiny. Upon Indian independence in 1947, the end of Pax Britannica immediately sparked the Tamil separatist movement, as well as an endless series of Indo-Pakistani wars and conflicts. Since both countries now have the bomb, the next war could be nuclear, with dire consequences for the world.

**Slavery.** Britain was the first to enforce abolishment of the international slave trade in 1807, and slavery itself in 1833, ending centuries of this entrenched institution in her colonies (see cards 51, 53, 64, 67). This is perhaps the most momentous political accomplishment in history.

**Globalization.** The mass-produced goods of the British Industrial Revolution raised the quality of life of their customers in the colonies. Because native Handicrafts often could not compete with factory-made goods, artisans moved to the thriving export trade, which enjoyed low British duties.

Which of these advantages did Afghanistan enjoy? None, because it was a buffer zone, not a colony. A buffer zone is a rugged piece of territory between superpowers, such as (in Europe) Andorra, Switzerland, Karaman, and Finland. Both superpowers gain a mutual stabilizing advantage in maintaining a buffer zone with a bit of independence and neutrality.

Afghanistan’s legacy as a plaything of superpowers has left it as one of the world’s worst places to live. Female literacy is just 17%. Ranked 174 out of 176 on the corruption index. Ongoing civil wars since the Soviets pulled out in 1978. These Soviet-US hot wars of the Cold War Era were accompanied by just as much destruction for little gain as in the “Great Game” period.

Neighboring India has fared better as a British colony, but here too policy failures have left their mark in what will be soon the world’s most populous nation. Nearly a quarter of the population lives in poverty (about \$1.25 a day). Other policies such as the General Service Enlistment Act increased domestic unrest and contributed to the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the eventual nationalization of the East India Company. Furthermore, the continuance of the medieval Jajmani system and a reliance on cash crops left India vulnerable to famine cycles such as the big one in 1876. Still, British rule did shield India from many major confrontations and helped modernize the Indian economy. Decolonization, while providing greater autonomy, has also set the stage for today’s deadly nuclear confrontation with Pakistan.