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PhD thesis

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The Role of Pressure Groups
in the Formulation of British Central Asian Policy,
1856-1881.

A thesis submitted by John Lowe Duthie
for the degree of Doctor Of Philosophy
in the University of Glasgow.

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Summary.

In examining Britain's relations with the territories beyond her Indian North-West frontier at a time of rapid Russian advances in Central Asia, this study focuses on the pre-emptive strategy known as the "Forward Policy": a crucial aspect of that 19TH, century Anglo-Russian cold war called "The Great Game".

Investigating its origins and development through the careers of its foremost advocates, it appears that the so-called "Forward Policy" was no unitary monolith. It is divisible, in fact, into two major strategies: the idea of a 200 mile British territorial advance to Quetta beyond the Bolan Pass, and a belief in closer diplomatic relations with Persia and Afghanistan as a safeguard over Herat and a political defence outwork for India. Following the initial failure of its originator, General John Jacob, in 1856, the project for a British cantonment at Quetta, consistently rejected by successive governments, was kept alive through its persistent advocacy by the "Bombay School": that body of Jacob's disciples among whom the best known by the 1860's was Sir H.B.E. Frere, Governor of Bombay. Apart from the Quetta scheme, Frere also favoured closer Anglo-Afghan relations; and repeatedly offered advice on this score to his superiors. The other branch of the "Forward Policy" was principally represented by the views of Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson. Drawing his political sustenance from the events, ideas and personalities surrounding the First Afghan War, Rawlinson remained an outspoken, and occasionally intemperate, advocate of a firmer British commitment or intervention in Afghanistan and Persia at a time when such an objective was generally discredited. During the 1860's he used any convenient public platform to voice his concern about recurrent Russian advances in Central Asia, and to advocate more active counter-measures. Little success attended his efforts, though

his warnings were less alarmist and his opinions never so extreme as his opponents pretended.

Coming together in the India Office in the late-60's - as councillors in that singular institution the Council of India - Sir Bartle and Sir Henry became steady members of the office's Political Committee. Here they advantageously enjoyed ready access to the latest secret information, and close contact with the top-ranking statesmen responsible for policy-making. Along with Sir John Kaye and Sir Robert Montgomery, they formed an active cabal within the Political and Secret Department of the India Office. The continually up-dated knowledge available to these men, and the informal manner in which Kaye ran his department, enabled the cabal to produce a number of unsolicited notes and memoranda; in attempts to influence the policy options chosen by their superiors. Throughout Gladstone's First Ministry, the cabal repeatedly, and twice almost successfully, pressed its ideas about the optimum British relationship with Persia, Afghanistan and Kalat on the Duke of Argyll or the Earls of Mayo and Northbrook.

After their fruitless endeavours under the Liberals, the cabal's members began to drift apart: they had always been united as much by a common, Laurentian opposition as by wholehearted sympathy with each other's notions. Despite their increasing disunity, however, individual members were highly successful in convincing both the 3RD. Marquis of Salisbury and Lord Lytton of the feasibility of their separate notions. Both these statesmen, it is contended, owed a considerable intellectual debt to Frere and/or Rawlinson. Salisbury's particular idea - termed by him "pacific invasion" - of how Britain could best and easiest dominate Afghanistan is shown to have been a thriving offshoot of suggestions first made to him by Frere. Even if it was denied the opportunity to bear fruit, Frere's

and Salisbury's stratagem provided that barely-articulated, initial assumption which underlay the British quest of the late 1870's for the location of English agents within the Amirate of Kabul. Though ultimately responsible for realising the long-standing Quetta project, Lytton did wilfully diverge from Salisbury's Afghan policy. He was far readier to use coercion, and also preferred Rawlinson's suggestion that the Amirate be partitioned; with its western section brought under British control - direct or indirect. Drawing attention to Lytton's inclination to war from mid-77 onwards, and defining his war aims more precisely than previously, the thesis seeks to show that the Second Afghan War was a forcible attempt by the Viceroy to implement policies borrowed from Rawlinson. Sir Henry's public defence of Lytton's policies throughout the war is described subsequently, together with the mounting attack by Liberal spokesmen and hostile fellow councillors on Frere and Rawlinson. Their advocacy of the general aims pursued before and during the war had been too long and too clear for opponents to dismiss the similarity as mere coincidence. Denounced by those critics of Beaconsfieldism who therefore suspected them of back-stairs involvement in the stratagems leading to the Second Afghan War, when a Liberal government was returned in 1880, Rawlinson and Frere were finally discredited as mentors on North-West frontier policy.

Ostensibly, this thesis is aimed at highlighting the role played in policy-making by members of that political and social stratum identifiable as a "service gentry". Yet, apart from showing that Sir Bartle and Sir Henry helped formulate the stratagems by which - and objectives towards which - policy was conducted, the study is far wider in scope than the title suggests. In fact, it becomes a peg on which to hang a succession of hats: a deliberate attempt to elaborate established historiographical concepts, employ little-used analytical tools, and to test

various received notions of those motives underlying the activities of mid-Victorian imperialists. The many extant notes and memos in the files of the Political and Secret Department have been used to re-examine the concept of informal empire, test its applicability to the nature of Anglo-Afghan relations, and re-define it by specific reference to its ideological rather than economic content. The study also sets out to show that a proto-racialist sense of personal and cultural superiority was an important dynamic for imperial aggrandisement - "indirect empire" not direct - rather than a Kipling-Henty postscript to imperialising. With the conviction that strong links exist between the statesman's individual character and his political behaviour, theories of personality borrowed from reductionist and existentialist psychology have been applied to Lytton; providing a more exact analysis of his personality, its relationship with his political conduct, and his susceptibility to the influence of certain political associates. The term "Russophobia", much used contemporaneously as a cant term of abuse, was examined; and its place in the historian's vocabulary of political characterisation questioned. Finally, by assessing Frere's, Rawlinson's, Salisbury's and Lytton's individual views of India's political and economic value, this study insists that the ideological conviction instilled by a sense of serving that abstract Moloch, the modern state, as much as the interests of a depressed metropolitan economy, underlay their singular concern to defend the sub-continental empire against possible Russian harassment.

(VII)

List of abbreviations.

B.L.	British Library.
B.L.P.E.S.	British Library of Political and Economic Sciences.
C.C.L.	Christ Church College Library, Oxford.
F.O.	Foreign Office.
G.I.	Government of India.
H.R.O.	Hertfordshire Record Office.
I.O.	India Office.
I.O.L.&R.	India Office Library and Records.
P.R.G.S.	Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society.
R.A.S.	Royal Asiatic Society.
R.G.S.	Royal Geographical Society.
R.G.S./H.C.R.	Royal Geographical Society/Rawlinson Papers.
S.O.A.S.	School of Oriental and African Studies.
S.S.I.	Secretary of State for India.

"HISTORY does NOTHING, it 'possesses NO immense wealth', it 'wages NO battles'. It is MAN, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; 'history' is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve ITS OWN aims; history is NOTHING BUT the activity of man pursuing his aims".

Karl Marx, "The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism",

Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Collected Works: Vol. 4: Marx and Engels 1844-45 (London, 1975), p.93.

"Physics is not events but observations. Relativity is the understanding of the world not as events but as relations".

Jacob Bronowski, The Ascent of Man (London, 1973), p.254.

"Of the many advocates of the anti-Russian policy, Sir Henry Rawlinson in his articles and Sir Bartle Frere by memoranda which recently saw the light of day in a mysterious manner for the first time, are the most distinguished. In fact the rest, however distinguished, may be classed as followers of Jacob or Rawlinson".

Sir Henry Norman, "The Scientific Frontier", Fortnightly Review, Vol.25 N.S. (1879), p.2.

Chapter 1. Introduction: The Running Web.

"The period allowed in the Viceroy's ultimatum expired yesterday. No reply has been received from the Ameer and all the columns have been ordered to cross the frontier today.

All telegrams detailing movements or disposition of the troops have been stopped by the military authorities".¹

With this laconic announcement under the quarter-inch heading "The Afghan War" - so different from the baseless forecasting and banner headlines which greet contemporary declarations of war - "The Times" of 22 November 1878 carried the news of yet another scene in a sequence of British efforts to neutralise the vulnerability of India's North-West frontier. In a changeless setting of Turkestan deserts and Hindustan plains, against the backcloth of Afghanistan and Baluchistan's mountain ranges and passes, like a continuously running web the drama based on India's susceptibility to landward threat from the north-west has been played out interminably. Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Timurlane, Babur, Nadir Shah, Napoleon, terrorist generals: the transience of the dramatic personae, impatiently crossing the stage or threatening vaguely from the wings, has provided the only novelty. In the 19TH. century act variously entitled "The Great Game", "The Victorian Cold War" or "The Central Asian Question", Britain and Russia were the protagonists who surveyed each other from opposite sides of the Hindu Kush; each trying to anticipate the other's intentions while using the intervening territory to satisfy its ambitions, ease its anxieties and maximise its strategic advantage. Accepting that a question may be defined by reference to the problem set as well as the answers given, the Central Asian Question may be described as: Britain's

1. "The Times", 22 November 1878, p.3, col. 1.

varied and intermittent responses to the problem created by Russia's occupation of vast tracts of Central Asia, making eminently feasible her invasion of British India. But such a definition would be completely erroneous. The Central Asian Question cannot be interpreted concisely or precisely, either by reference to British actions, to Russia's real or imagined intentions, to the geographical area known as Central Asia, or solely in relation to India.

Even contemporaries realised that a precise geographical delimitation of Central Asia was of little value as a definitional aid.² To denote it as the region east of the Caspian Sea and west of Chinese territory is to adopt the 19TH. century corruption of forgetting that Eastern or Chinese Turkestan was a part of Central Asia proper. To equate Central Asia with Russian Turkestan is to ignore the fact that the Russian gubernia was not created until 1867 and that the Turkmen lands beyond it were also an integral part of Central Asia. The volume indexes of the India Office's records implicitly define it as that area of Russian military activity beyond the northern boundaries of Persia and Afghanistan. But if the British meant by Central Asia those lands to the east of the Caspian, west of Chinese Turkestan and beyond Persia and Afghanistan, confusingly they also embraced within the Central Asian Question the matter of British and Russian relations with those polities and with Baluchistan as well. In lectures, the daily and periodical press, and even at the highest level of political discussion, Central Asia was no more delimited by the terms of the Central Asian Question than the latter was defined by reference to Central Asia proper.

Impossible to define in geographical terms, the Central Asian

2. See F.J. Goldsmid, Central Asia and its Question: A Paper Read in the Speech-Room of Harrow School, on 18 March 1873 (London, 1873), pp.4-5.

Question is also chameleon-like in its shifting, multi-coloured, political content: encompassing as it did Britain's position as an Asian, a European and a world power. By the 1820's tsarist Russia had replaced Napoleonic France as the greatest potential threat to British India. As she renewed her pressure on the Ottoman Empire and extended her influence at the Shah's court in Teheran, individual British soldiers and diplomats sketched out the practicability of Russia's invading India, and highlighted Herat as the key to its defence.³ The Amirate of Kabul, the Uzbek Khanates of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand, such Turkmen oases as Merv (Merv)⁴: to credulously impressed British statesmen a preponderant influence in at least some of these territories seemed an essential condition not only of India's security but also of Britain's international political status. Russia, on the other hand, by ensuring these polities' affiliation and hence threatening Britain's sub-continental empire, might hope to restrict British diplomatic manoeuvring over control of the Dardanelles. Yet even though events in Europe and Asia were interdependent, and more than India's security was at stake, the Central Asian Question was not simply a part of the general Eastern Question.⁵ It was, rather, a segment of a far broader "Russian Question", in which the tsarist empire, like an inverted crescent stretching from the Black Sea to the Tien Shan Mountains, gradually moved southwards

3. See Sir George de Lacy Evans, On the Designs of Russia (London, 1828); *ibid*, On the practicability of an invasion of British India; and on the commercial and financial prospects and resources of the Empire (London, 1828); J. McNeill, "Invasion of India", Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 22 (1827), pp.267-80.
4. Since there is no standard orthography for Indian and Central Asian place names, I have used the spelling and pronunciation given in The Times Atlas of the World: Comprehensive Edition (London, 1972). Thus Merv, for example, is given in the Russianised form "Mary".
5. One authority says its more violent manifestations, "the Afghan wars were essentially a part of the general Eastern Question". P. Spear (ed.), The Oxford History of India, third ed. (Oxford, 1956), p.601.

towards the bare nerve ends of British diplomacy: Constantinople and India. Whether deliberate or involuntary, opportune expedient or persistent pursuit of long-cherished aims, Russia's encroachment, no matter how distant in the earlier part of the century, seemed to endanger Britain's power in Europe and in Asia. During the later 19TH. century the revolution in steam transportation and telegraphic communication had shrunk the world, while the Suez Canal had become the vital umbilical cord between Britain and her Far Eastern empire. By the 1870's, then, the "Russian Question" - together with its important Central Asian sub-section - was not confined to problems of the English empire's⁶ security in India or the flexibility of Britain's European diplomacy, but implied a contest for pre-eminence between two global powers.

In the 1850's Russia's bridgehead in Central Asia was bounded by her two defence lines: the Syr Darya line extending from the mouth of the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) to Fort Perovski (formerly Ak-Masdjid now Kyzyl-Orda), and the New Siberian line stretching from the Irtysh river down to Fort Vernyi (Alma Ata) just across the River Ili. The six hundred mile gap between the two lines was closed with the capture of the Kokand town of Chimkent in 1864: an incident which heralded the switch from defensive to offensive operations. The events leading up

6. Equating "England" with "Britain", most contemporaries referred to "England's interests," her "mission," her "empire," etc. They ignored the fact that "the British empire was conquered by the Irish and administered by the Scots for the benefit of the English". The Scots who did so were either "lads o'pairts" drawn abroad by Scotland's poverty and lack of opportunity or anglicised aristocrats who sought their identity south of the border and their blood sports north of it. Any English reader feeling slighted by a seemingly semantic quibble is referred to A.J.P. Taylor, English History 1914-45 (Harmondsworth, 1970), p.21, footnote. I have used the terms "English Empire" and "British Empire" interchangeably in deference to contemporary usage, but hope my criticism will be taken as part of a concern for precision rather than the product of that gleefully vindictive culturocentrism which plagues both Scots and Sassenachs.

to the gap's closure were a paradigm of that sympathetic and antipathetic interaction of military and diplomatic parties, of local and metropolitan impulses, which underlay much of Russia's subsequent expansion at the expense of the Uzbek Khanates. Chirchik's capture followed the wayward initiative of the local general, Chernyshev, was carried out against Foreign Minister Gorchakov's opposition to territorial annexation, and had been forcefully advocated by the War Minister, Milyutin.⁷ For the next twenty years outside observers were to be repeatedly and distrustfully puzzled by the gulf between Foreign Ministry announcements that a reluctant St. Petersburg government was being impelled forward unwillingly, and Russia's systematic conquest of the Khanates and the Turkmen lands beyond. In fact the Foreign Ministry seems to have been more or less excluded from any say in the Tsar's relations with Central Asian potentates, and the military lobby, headed by Milyutin and dependent on the local advice of his protégé Von Kaufman,⁸ maintained an untroubled paramountcy in dictating the terms of Russian expansion.⁹ Called in only to cover up central government responsibility for potentially embarrassing, specific events, an ill-informed Foreign Ministry may have exaggerated the extent of local initiative in such episodes as the 1873 Khivan expedition. Yet with their monopoly of parochial information, their hard lobbying, and tendency to make more moves than the one authorised, local military commanders did exercise a considerable freedom of manoeuvre - if not initiative - which cannot

7. See S. Becker, Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865-1924 (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 16-17.
8. General Von Kaufman was the first governor-general of the new Turkestan gubernia, from its inception in 1867 until 1881. For an assessment of his administrative achievements see D. Mackenzie, "Kaufman of Turkestan: An Assessment of his Administration 1867-1881", Slavonic Review, XXVI (1967), pp. 265-85.
9. See P. Morris, "The Russians in Central Asia, 1870-1885", Slavonic and East European Review, LIII (1975), pp. 521-38.

be arbitrarily periodised.¹⁰

Peering into a dim mist of the motives and responsibilities behind various Russian military campaigns, British politicians were granted only fleeting, contradictory sightings of vague landmarks by which to guide their own responses. Their sole source of official "leaks", the Russian Foreign Ministry, was itself ill-informed. The indeterminate incidence and importance of local initiatives tended to heighten the element of unpredictability. If modern scholars, denied access to Soviet archives, still disagree about local and metropolitan responsibilities for expansion, how much more indiscernible must Russian motives and intentions have seemed to British contemporaries? Moreover, whatever the peculiarly Central Asian reasons for Russia's advance, in the wider sphere of global politics her government was clearly divided into political opportunists and conciliators. The 1864 Gorchakov circular,¹¹ denying any intention of absorbing the sedentary agricultural and commercial populations of the khanates, had been immediately preceded in 1863 by Milyutin's justification for the occupation of Kokand: "In case of a European war we ought particularly to value the occupation of that region, which would bring us to the northern borders of India and

10. In his PH.D. thesis Morris tends to periodise the element of local initiative by pointing out that it was significant in the 1860's under Chernyaev and Romanovski, less prevalent under Von Kaufman, and again more important during Skobelev's term in Central Asia. Even if this were true, 19TH. century British politicians would have been unable to detect it, lacking as they did the historian's advantages of hindsight and access to at least some private Russian material. Then again, Morris's conclusions about the incidence of local initiatives must be treated as provisional. Denied access to Soviet archives, his source material consists primarily of contemporary Russian journals. Against his conclusion that local commanders in the early 70's were firmly under the central government's control, there is some evidence that Von Kaufman attempted to mount a full-scale Khivan expedition in 1871, without St. Petersburg's approval. For that evidence see chapter 4, p.10 and footnote 92. For Morris's conclusions see L.P. Morris, Anglo-Russian Relations in Central Asia 1873-1887, Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in London University, 1969, p.432.

11. For the relevant extracts from the Gorchakov circular see F. Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914: A Study in Imperialism (London, 1968), pp. 8-9.

facilitate our access to that country. By ruling in Kokand we can constantly threaten England's East-Indian possessions. This is especially important since only in that quarter can we be dangerous to this enemy of ours".¹² But the British Foreign and India Offices were unaware of the military lobby's machinations until the mid-70's, and Milyutin's outspoken opportunism was only voiced privately. From the British view-point, then, the indecipherable complexity of local and metropolitan motives and intentions underlieing the Russian advance created a general atmosphere of uncertainty and unpredictability. An atmosphere in which her statesmen and imperial administrators blindly tried to separate the real from the unreal or at least to keep one guess ahead.

With this cloud of indeterminacy in mind, it becomes apparent that any attempt to understand the Central Asian Question of the 1860's and 70's by reference to British actions and Russian intentions also leads to difficulties. Since the only truly adequate scientific theory is that which accounts for its own origins, any valid historical explanation of the Central Asian Question in the period 1856-81 must take account of the fact that it was in a continuous process of contemporary definition. Neither in terms of the problem set nor the solution(s) provided was it objective to the probing consciousness of the mid-century statesmen who were still engaged in defining it. Nor was a universally acceptable definition in process of emerging. For contemporaries disagreed over the nature or very existence of a Russian threat to India and, as a direct consequence, differed radically in their view of the most suitable British response. This divergence of opinion was a direct result of the two traumas in 19TH. century Anglo-Indian experience: the tragic events and subsequent retreat from

12. Milyutin to Gorchekov, 7 July 1863. Quoted Becker, Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia, p. 17.

Afghanistan in 1841-2, and the '57 Rebellion in India.¹³

During the 40's and early 50's, with Britain salving the wounds of the First Afghan War and Russia moving cautiously after the disaster of Perovski's 1839 Khivan expedition, the Central Asian Question had lain dormant; but not closed and certainly not solved. By 1850 India's North-West frontier had been stabilised: in Sind in 1843 and in the Punjab in 1849. Though estimates of the frontier's length vary,¹⁴ one knowledgeable contemporary put it at 960 miles: from Attock, 25 miles east of Peshawar, to the Arabian Sea, 30 miles west of Karachi. With the exception of the frontier's upper 120 miles the British held a narrow strip of territory bounded by the Suleiman Mountains, Parri hills and Hale range before them and the river Indus at their backs. Cautioned by the experiences of the First Afghan War, Britain had severed all contact with the contiguous polities of Kalat and Afghanistan, and allowed Russian influence to predominate in Persia. The war's high cost in money, human life and national humiliation had created a lasting reluctance to venture beyond the Khyber and Bolan Passes again. But the consecutive incidence of the Crimean War and the '57 Rebellion brought the recrudescence of the Central Asian Question in the form of a debate.

13. In 1861, while Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, Colonel H.M. Durand wrote: "I can keep down and on principle overrule the boiling wrath which eats so deep into ones(sic) heart in 1857; but I no more get rid of it than I can of ... the rage with which I learnt of our military disasters in 1841. Time seems to go on deepening such feelings ... The brain cannot forget; and the heart neither..." Quoted H.M. Durand, Life of Major-General Sir Henry Marion Durand (2 Vols., London, 1883), Vol.1, p.291. For the history of the First Afghan War see J.A. Norris, The First Afghan War 1838-42 (Cambridge, 1967).
14. Compare the different estimates of 960, 800 and 1,428 miles given by Waddington, Adye and Ghose. See Inverarity to Clerk, Karachi, 16 July 1860. Enclosure 3, Secret 46, 26 November 1860, Secret Dept., Bombay to S.S.I. L/P&S/5/505, pp. 455-8; J.R.A. Adye, "Central Asia: A Military Sketch", Macmillan's Magazine, XXVII (1872-3), pp.429-30; D.K. Ghose, England and Afghanistan: A Phase in their Relations (Calcutta, 1960), Appendix A, p.213.

Though certain that invasion was out of the question Governor-General Dalhousie was compelled by the Crimean War to extend British diplomacy beyond the North-West frontier once again and to conclude simple, tentative treaties with the Khan of Kalat and the Amir of Kabul.¹⁵ Having inherited from the first war an ingrained fear that Afghan affairs, turbulently unpredictable, might prove an inhalant vortex, the British negotiators to the Amir felt that the lengthy, year-long negotiations confirmed their distrust of the Afghans. The Punjab envoys Sir John Lawrence and Herbert Edwardes remained convinced that the existing Indus frontier must be the limit of British diplomatic and military activity. Reckoning Russian invasion an impossibility, they believed that all contact with contiguous territories should be minimised since close relations were valueless and potentially dangerous. Having defined the problem as one of impracticable invasion, they were to see the most suitable defensive solution as "masterly inactivity": strengthening and standing aloofly behind the 1849 frontier line. In diametrical opposition to those favouring "masterly inactivity" were the adherents of the "forward" school of thought, which had twin roots. The first derived from the ideas which Colonel John Jacob had formulated in the aftermath of the Crimean War and as an alternative to the Persian expedition of 1856. The second drew sustenance from the long-established view of Herat as the key to India. As a permanent safeguard of India's North-West frontier, Jacob advocated the military occupation of Quetta, above the Bolan Pass and beyond the Hala and Suleiman mountain ranges. Involving an extensive territorial advance, the security of the Bolan guaranteed the protection of the Lower Indus. Though Jacob died in 1858, such was his personal magnetism

15. See G.J. Alder, "India and the Crimean War", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 2(1972-73), pp. 15-37.

that the converts to his scheme, most notably Sir Bartle Frere, kept it alive in upper government circles into the 1860's. The "forward" school's other root, whose principal proponent from the 60's onwards was Sir Henry Rawlinson, involved a more active, a "forward", diplomatic commitment to Afghanistan and Persia. With financial and military support these policies could be drawn closer to Britain and provide loyal, dependent allies immune to Russian infiltration.

If one branch of the "forward" school of thought had been a post-script to the Crimean War and the other the principal presumption to the First Afghan War, with both originating in the fear of Russian invasion, the school's subsequent sustenance was drawn from the '57 Rebellion. After 1857 British authority in India was seen to rest not on trust and amicably accepted mutual advantage, but on the naked, punitive sword and the maintenance of an unchallengeable British prestige which demanded the eclipse of all external rivalry. In the 60's and 70's, therefore, the advocates of "forward" military and diplomatic strategies were not only providing a solution to India's defence problems, they were also redefining the whole Central Asian Question. The problem was no longer one of the likelihood or feasibility of a Russian invasion, but of Russia's destabilising British rule through the opportunities afforded by her nearness to India's borders. By mounting hostile military demonstrations along Afghanistan's northern and western frontiers, by impelling an Asiatic horde through the Khyber and Bolan Passes, or by sending agents provocateurs into India, Russia could tie down valuable British troops in Asia. The Russians need not test the practicability of an invasion which they had probably never even contemplated in the first place.¹⁶ Basing their own inactive response

16. See W.B. Walsh, "The Imperial Russian General Staff and India: A Footnote to Diplomatic History", Russian Review, 16 (1957), pp.53-8; A. Lobanov Rostovsky, "The Shadow of India in Russian History", History, 14 (1929-30), pp.217-28; ibid, "Russian Imperialism in Asia, its origins, evolution and character", Slavonic and East European Review, 8(1929-30), pp.28-47.

to Russia's Central Asian advances of the 60's and 70's on the impossibility of a successful invasion, subscribers to "masterly inactivity" could dismiss their "forward" opponents' views as "alarmist" or "Russophobia". But in doing so they missed the point by failing to realise that the "forward" school was redefining the whole problem as much by reference to Innenpolitik as Aussenpolitik. From the "forward" school's viewpoint, and given their definition of the problem, there still seemed some need for pre-emptive measures.

Ideas, in this case military and diplomatic defence strategies, are not objective entities, extrinsic to and activating humans. They are conceived, articulated and communicated by and between people; a fact implicitly acknowledged by the contemporary critic who singled out Frere and Rawlinson as the most distinguished advocates of an anti-Russian policy in the 60's and 70's.¹⁷ The analytical mapping out of ideas can only be accomplished within the grid of men's activities. Accordingly, in being directed to studying the origins, development and coalescence of the twin branches of the "forward" school, as well as conjecturing the eventual wider influence of its proponents' thoughts, this work concentrates on two political figures: Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere and Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson. Political behaviour - intentional, purposive and projective like all human activity - is a string-driven composite of the reasonable and the irrational; concerned as much with possibilities as with actualities. With this in mind, Frere and Rawlinson's ideas and political activities must not be dismissed out of hand as the objectification of alarmist phobias. And to endlessly repeat Salisbury's pungent, though unoriginal¹⁸ strictures about the abuse of small-scale maps is to miss the point, since their

17. See the third of the introductory quotes at the beginning of the thesis: that by Sir H.W. Norman.

18. In May 1865, Sir Roderick Murchison, President of the Royal Geographical Society, remarked that those of his fellow-countrymen who were anxious about Russian designs on India only looked "at maps of Asia on the scale of perhaps 100 miles to an inch". Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, IX (1864-5), p.239.

anxieties were not about invasion. Only by reserving judgement and taking their ideas at face value can the logical or baseless pre-suppositions on which their arguments rested be understood, and the rational and irrational elements in their thinking assessed proportionately. For, if they did not create the British anxiety, they certainly augmented it, even as they formulated policy for easing it. Moreover, occasional glimpses of the "forward" school's thinking may have strengthened St. Petersburg and Tashkent's awareness of British sensitivity about India's security, and confirmed the military lobby in its existing aim of using Russia's Central Asian knight against Britain's European queen. Advocating offensive action as a defensive measure, supporting war for the sake of peace, helping confirm the existence of the very eventuality they aimed to nullify: Frere and Rawlinson's thought has about it the aura of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The two men had become inextricable gear-wheels in an endless conundrum, the infinitesimal discussion of which is as frustrating as trying to imagine the digestive convolutions of the worm Ouroboros progressively swallowing its own tail.

Initially the thesis concentrates on the political background of those two men who carried into the 1860's a well-articulated set of singular responses to the Russian presence in Central Asia. In particular, two previously unused collections of Rawlinson's private papers provide a valuable insight into the origins of his ideas in the 30's and 40's. Along with a study of the Quetta scheme's originator, John Jacob, Frere's discipleship of that remarkable polymath is fully documented, as he supports the Quetta project or brings it up for re-examination even after Jacob's death. But the gist of the hypothesis is traced from the late 60's when, as members of the Political Committee of the Council of India, united in the India Office together with their ideas,

Frere and Rawlinson came into an especially favourable position as propagandists. As the volume of 19TH. century government business expanded geometrically, statesmen became increasingly dependent on the summaries, memoranda and oral advice of subordinates. Auspiciously, the Secretary of State for India was being subjected to just such magnified pressure of work in the 1870's. In these circumstances, advisors may become the political generals who devise and advertise strategies, and top-rank statesmen the captains responsible for implementing tactically those strategies they have chosen.

In the India Office Records, where "they keep every scrap of paper",¹⁹ Rawlinson and Frere's persistent production of memos and notes - spontaneous and solicited, formal and informal - is well documented; along with evidence of their initiatives' transmission to the Foreign Office and Government of India. Scrutiny of the Foreign Office's records shows that their propaganda also claimed some of its officials' attention. But discussion between the "forward" and "masterly inactivity" schools about the exact nature and most suitable solution to the Central Asian Question also took place in the arena of public debate. The periodical press contains numerous disputatious articles, of which Rawlinson in his role of publicist contributed a fair number in addition to his magnum opus "England and Russia in the East". As President of the Royal Geographical Society he also exploited the platform afforded by geography's great contemporary popularity to deal with the Central Asian Question repeatedly and contentiously. Benefitting from the institutional informality of the India Office and the Council's propensity to form coteries, Sir Bartle and Sir Henry also gathered several knowledgeable, well-placed converts around them to create a

19. This was said to me, somewhat contemptuously I suspect, by one of the keepers at the Public Records Office in the summer of 1975.

very active cabal within the Political and Secret Department. During Gladstone's First Ministry, under the Duke of Argyll's regime at the India Office, this cabal twice came close to success on matters of Angle-Afghan policy. As their private papers reveal, in office neither Argyll nor Northbrook, the Viceroy, were as complacent of the Russian advances as they later pretended in opposition. But by 1874, with its executive lynchpin, Sir John Kaye, in retirement, and the dependability of the Amir of Kabul in dispute among its members, the short-lived cabal began to break up. Even as it did so, Frere and Rawlinson, separately and at different times, caught the ear of Lords Salisbury and Lytton.

Salisbury's decision of January 1875 to seek the appointment of British agents to Afghanistan, and Lytton's persistent attempts, from mid-77 onwards, to establish a British-controlled khanate in western Afghanistan owed a great deal to Frere and Rawlinson respectively. This conclusion is certainly suggested by a particularly close examination of Sir John Kaye's confidential letter book and the private papers of Salisbury, Lytton, Sir Lewis Pelly²⁰ and, most improbably, Florence Nightingale. The manner and context in which Sir Bartle and Sir Henry eventually won the Secretary of State and prospective Viceroy's support for their pre-emptive strategies is strongly reminiscent of the innermost workings of the White House, as revealed in the Pentagon Papers. The study adequately demonstrates how important political decisions were made by prominent statesmen on the basis of dubious premises which they either shared with their advisors or never examined critically.²¹ This is especially true of the proto-racist

20. Prevented by circumstances from fulfilling his appointed role of diplomatic envoy to Kalat and Kabul in 1876, Pelly acted as Lytton's representative at the Peshawar Conference. The small collection of his private papers most notably contains several highly confidential and particularly illuminating letters from G.T. Burne, the Viceroy's private secretary.

21. See B. Brodie, War and Politics (London, 1973), p.279.

assumptions which upheld Frere's faith in Afghan malleability under British tutelage. Yet even as their objectives were realised, Rawlinson and Frere's close association with the ideas which eventually led to the Second Afghan War embroiled them in the mounting Liberal attack on Beaconsfieldism. From the zenith of fulfillment they were plunged to the nadir of public censure and given the political cold shoulder by a Liberal Government anxious to reverse its Conservative predecessor's expansionist adventures.

It is all too easy to be taken up with the ceremonial minutiae of the giving and partaking of the bread and wine rather than with the symbolic meaning and wider significance of the supper. With this in mind, the central hypothesis, that the "forward" school's members had a previously unacknowledged impact on government thinking, becomes merely a peg on which to hang a hat: a means of examining a far wider range of historical problems. Escalating from alliance, to insidious and manipulative penetration, to covert and finally overt coercion, Frere and Rawlinson's views on the nature of Anglo-Afghan relations suggest that these relations from 1874 onwards have been studied erroneously, as if they were some aspect of diplomacy between two European states.²² Instead, Anglo-Afghan relations in the middle and late 70's should be treated as an episode in the extension of British imperial influence. Adopting this approach, it becomes apparent that historiographical concepts such as "informal empire", principally employed in studying imperialism in Latin America and Africa,²³ equally apply to the Indian North-West frontier. Furthermore, by a process of scholarly

22. See B. Prasad, The Foundations of India's Foreign Policy (2 Vols., Calcutta, 1955), Vol. 1; D.K. Ghose, England and Afghanistan; S.P. Singhal, India and Afghanistan 1876-1907: A Study in Diplomatic Relations (Queensland, 1963). The latter title is very suggestive of this diplomatic approach.

23. Africanists, whose favourite hobby-horse is that imperial policy was not made solely in the Chanceries of Europe, will find much to disagree with in my Eurocentric view of imperialism on the North-West frontier. I offer no apology since, so long as there are discoveries to be made by a particular scrutiny of metropolitan impulses, that is sufficient justification in itself.

symbiosis, the wealth of relevant data preserved in official documents and private papers lodged in the India Office Records makes possible a precise, ideological definition of the term: less anachronistic than existing, economic descriptions. A second investigation, arising from the lengthy frankness with which Frere sometimes expressed himself, tries to assess how far racialism may have been an integral part of indirect empire's expansion, rather than a Kipling-Henty postscript to territorial aggrandisement. A critical examination will also be made of the value of the term "Russophobia" in historical analysis. Finally, by inquiring into Frere and Rawlinson's personal estimations of India's value, the relative importance of strategic and economic considerations in the eyes of the second-grade "official mind of imperialism" will be assessed. Strategy is a prescription, prior to antagonistic contact, of those major dispositions of forces that will determine where, when, and to whose advantage contact takes place. It is inevitably prescribed in defence of vital interests, however fallibly and subjectively these may be defined.²⁴ Since Sir Bartle and Sir Henry were especially keen to defend India, their estimate of its place in British world interests may be illuminating.

Apart from the passage of time and natural forces, change is chiefly induced by human agency. But in its account of change, when not too taken up with the dynamics of abstract forces, historical analysis is over-impressed with the view of people as autonomous individuals rather than as persons sharing and exchanging experiences and deriving, elaborating or constructing ideas from each other's communicable knowledge. History is not the sum total of innumerable biographies but an infinite progression of inter-personal relationships. Returning to the White House analogy, from his experience as a

24. See Brodie, War and Politics, pp. 341-74 & 433-96.

presidential advisor the historian Arthur Schlesinger has noted how difficult it is, even at first hand, to trace influences, assign roles or motives, and allocate responsibilities for the elaboration of policy.²⁵

It is by investigating the nature of inter-personal relationships, no matter how fleeting, that these gaps can be filled in. The student of ideas, in this case defence strategies, should examine not only their intrinsic qualities and temporal appropriateness but also the principal medium through which they are apt to be transmitted. To list the incidence of contact between individuals is to detail the possibility or circumstance of inter-personal relationships. The existence and language of such relationships lies in those personal and ideological affinities which in turn create fruitful possibilities for propagating and further developing ideas. The radical initiatives which Salisbury and Lytton adopted in trans-frontier policy can be accounted for not only by force of political circumstance but also by the personal and ideological factors which enabled Frere and Rawlinson to exert a fundamental influence on them. If the "historian's interpretation of the past evolves with the progressive emergence of new goals"²⁶ then the clarification of inter-personal relationships should attract his closer attention.

More generally, the underlieing theme of this study is the extensive ramification of a whole complex web of relationships: that between the adult statesman's actions and his youthful experiences; that between initial, unproven assumptions and general policies; that between the vital interests conceived and the pre-emptive strategies adopted; that between proto-racialist ideology and the socio-economic environment which bounds it; that between the realisation of individual ambition and the idea of service to some abstract entity such as the state; that

25. Ibid, p.279.

26. E.H. Carr, What is History? (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp. 123-4.

between the irrational and the reasonable in individual thought. It is the meandering inter-warp and weave of these many objective and subjective relationships which provides history with its rich, textural diversity while simultaneously denying it the comfort of ascertainable logic and mathematical certainty. The very structure of this work, which begins and ends with newspaper reports of events only two and a half years apart but traverses a period of fifty years in seeking to explain them, is testimony to the pervasiveness of the "relationships" theme. That necessary periodisation which gives the past its comprehensibility often denies its complexity. If the question "Who Made the Second Afghan War?"²⁷ can still be conclusively answered "Lytton", liability for the "forward" policies which led to it rests with Frere, Salisbury and Rawlinson as much as the Viceroy.

27. See I. Klein, "Who Made the Second Afghan War?", Journal of Asian History, 8 (1974), pp. 97-121.

Chapter 2. John Jacob and the "Bombay School": The Warp.

Fiction's impoverishment when faced with the excesses of fact is well illustrated by the one-dimensionality, in comparison with their real-life predecessors, of such heroes as Tyrone Power of adventures set on British India's North-West frontier. The 20TH. century's girl-winning, Afghan-trouncing Hollywood imitations are mere celluloid shadows of the real personalities on that frontier in the mid-19TH. century. One such personality was Colonel John Jacob: soldier, administrator, civil engineer, amateur philosopher, economic theorist, army reformer - a vigorous, heroic polymath.¹ In the 1850's the province of Sind in the extreme north-west of British India was a vast barren territory larger than England and Wales; traversed but as yet unfertilised by the Indus and with a sparse population of six million. Between 1848-58, as Political Superintendent of the Upper Sind Frontier responsible for the security of that 200 mile section of the north-west border, not only had Jacob pacified this turbulent area but he had also transformed it agriculturally and commercially by giving practical application to his theories of political economy. Semi-nomadic peoples who practised or suffered from a constant round of depredation had been encouraged or coerced into the role of sedentary agriculturists and, from a previously barren desert, irrigation had helped produce a surplus sufficient to feed all the troops of Jacob's Sind Irregular Horse. The greatest symbol of Jacob's personal triumph was his construction of Jacobabad: by 1858 a town of six thousand inhabitants where, in 1847, there had been only the ruined fort of

1. The two biographies of Jacob are: H.T. Lambrick, John Jacob of Jacobabad (London, 1960) and A.I. Shand, General John Jacob: Commandant of the Sind Irregular Horse and Founder of Jacobabad (London, 1908). Jacob's subordinate and disciple, Lewis Pelly, collected and edited a great number of Jacob's writings on a variety of subjects. See Lewis Pelly (ed.), The Views and Opinions of General John Jacob (Bombay, 1858).

Khungur with a few dozen denizens.

A bad stutter, of which he was acutely conscious, and perhaps the homosexuality at which his modern biographer hints, had led to a self-imposed seclusion in Upper Sind from which Jacob was reluctant to stir, either on leave or to take command of the cavalry in the 1856-57 Persian War. Yet his isolated subjection to the heat and the dust storms of the Sind desert did not preclude a self-assured propagandising on such matters of sub-continental importance as army reform, rifling improvements and the security of British rule in India. Such excursions in print and script were carried out under the impetus of a considerable autodidactic intellect and a deeply felt commitment to fulfilling the duties of "a morally superior race" in governing supposedly less well attributed "Asiatics" with "truth and honesty", thereby enjoying the right to rule.² Provokingly aware of his own exceptional talent he had a magnified estimation of his own worth; and the intolerant, querulous tone he adopted in the acrimonious disputes he became involved in detracted from the appeal of his ideas to his superiors in the British administration. Upper Sind being the channel through which passed intelligence from Kandahar, Herat, the Turkmen country and sometimes Khiva, nearest of the Uzbek khanates,³ Jacob not only attended to his civil and military duties as Political Superintendent but also gave thought to the general problem of India's relations with her neighbours to the north-west and her security against attack from that quarter.

In April 1856, while occupying the post of Acting Commissioner in Sind in the absence of his superior, Bartle Frere, Jacob had received a communication from Muhammad Yusef, ruler of the then independent territory of Herat. The message gave India its first news that a

2. See Pelly, The Views and Opinions, pp.3-4.

3. See, for example, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors, 27 May 1856. L/P&S/5/353, pp.157-60. Also other relevant letters and enclosures in L/P&S/5/353, -54 & -55 generally.

Persian army was only a few miles from that city and announced that its ruler had hoisted the British flag over Herat's citadel. Throughout the 1850's the British and Indian governments had been attempting to reconcile the established policy of maintaining an independent Herat with the emergent one, also dictated by India's defence needs, of seeking a strong, united and friendly Afghanistan, strengthened against Persia by the inclusion of Herat.⁴ Against the backcloth of this dilemma, British relations with Persia, already strained by her representative's precipitate exit from Teheran in late 1855, were further aggravated by news of armed Persian encroachments on Herat in what seemed an attempt to destroy its independence. The powerless Muhammed Yusuf had tried to obtain active British support against Persia and to this end despatched to India the messenger who had made contact with Jacob. In such a delicate, fluid situation, even though Jacob thought his reply non-committal, the new Governor-General Lord Canning considered that the very fact of an answer compromised future British action and therefore severely reprimanded Jacob.⁵ For Canning had just then received instructions from London directing him to see that Herat remained independent and, in the event of a Persian attack, to take such measures as would ensure its independence "as an important element in the defence of British India".⁶ Tempering his reproof with an appeal to Jacob's vanity and experience, at the request of Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, Canning agreed to take Jacob more into the central government's confidence and asked him to write unofficially on any matters of importance which might present themselves.

Lacking any directive from home on what action to take in the event of a Persian seizure of Herat and in doubt as to the efficacy of an operation confined to the Persian Gulf, Canning sought to explore the

4. See G.J. Alder, "The Key to India? : Britain and the Herat Problem 1830-1863 - Part 1", Middle Eastern Studies, 10 (1974), pp.196-200.

5. Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 12 May 1856. Can/56, Letter 1.

6. Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 11 June 1856, f.3r. Can/56, Letter 2.

most advantageous means of attacking the Persian hinterland.⁷ Intrigued by Jacob's assertions that Persia was assailable in quarters other than the Gulf,⁸ Canning, though privately doubting if "the Cock of a small Dunghill takes in a large view" and repelled by his "tone... of overweening conceit", asked Jacob to elaborate on this point.⁹ Flattered by the studied cultivation of his self-esteem, Jacob apologised and gave his opinion that a full-scale invasion of Persia via Shiraz, Kermanshah and Esfahan was redundant; though he did roughly outline a plan for threatening the interior from the British occupied seaports of Bandar Abbas and Bander E Bushehr until the Shah relinquished Herat. He was "convinced that all this will not be requisite to ensure the complete submission of Persia and to place our Indian frontier generally in the most secure state for the future...; for it appears to me that we could command success by another more easy and more certain mode of proceeding. I would establish a large cantonment permanently at Quetta just above the Balaun Pass".¹⁰ This was an altogether novel addition to the spectrum of means and suggestions by which Britain might best secure India's defence against hostilities from the north-west.

Traversing the Hala Mountains - which divide Beluchistan from Sind - at their northern extreme, the Bolan Pass commences at the town of Dadhar at a height of 742FT. above sea level and elevates in a north-westerly direction by a succession of narrow valleys and gorges to its crest 5,800FT. above sea level. Hence, only a few miles distant, lies

7. See Canning to Vernon Smith, Calcutta, 17 May 1856. Can/32, Letter 15 a.
8. Jacob to Canning, Karachi, 26 May 1856. Can/29. Letter 1.
9. Canning to Elphinstone, Calcutta, 12 June 1856, f.1. Can/47, Letter 6. See also Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 11 June 1856, ff.8, 9 & 10. Can/56, Letter 2.
10. Jacob to Canning, Karachi, 30 June 1856, ff.2v & 3r. Can/29, Letter 2.

the town of Quetta or Shawl. With its mud walls and round towers enclosing an area measuring $\frac{1}{2}$ ($\frac{1}{3}$) of a mile with 2,000 inhabitants, it is situated in a well watered, heavily cultivated valley 12 miles long by 6 wide. Absolutely flat and shelterless this glen is commanded by artillery from the 100FT. mound of the Miri, or fortified palace, within the town.¹¹ The last town on the road from Upper Sind to Kandahar - the main route from India to Central Asia - the suzerainty of Quetta was still disputed between the Amir of Kabul and the Khan of Kalat, Jacob was convinced it lay in the territory of the Khan: allied to Britain by treaty in 1854. Arguing in favour of his scheme in late June 1856, Jacob anticipated the favourable reception of such a British cantonment in Baluchistan and pointed to the ease with which communications by road supplemented ultimately by rail could be effected between Quetta and the British frontier 150-200 miles distant. Nor could government parsimony be offended, for the cantonment would be manned by troops drawn from the redundant Sind and Punjab garrisons and the cost of its upkeep offset by the stimulus it would provide to trade between India and its northern neighbours. Jacob clearly meant the scheme not as a temporary expedient to meet the immediate circumstance of a possible war with Persia, but as a permanent measure with sweeping ramifications: "The more I have thought over this proceeding of establishing ourselves at Quetta the more clearly it appears to me that the measure would result in remedying all the ill effects to be apprehended from Persian or any other foreign influence at Herat and in

11. For descriptions of the Bolan Pass see: C.N. Markham, "The Mountain Passes of the Afghan Frontier of British India", Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 1 N.S.(1879), pp.38 et seq.; and Colley to Lytton, Jacobabad, 28 October 1876. Quoted Sir W. Butler, The Life of Sir George Pomeroy-Colley (London, 1899), p.167.

securing us from them in the future."¹²

Newly appointed and lacking earlier Indian experience, Canning needed time to consult more knowledgeable Anglo-Indian administrators on the feasibility of Jacob's scheme.¹³ Yet Canning was already assailed by the Indian government's reluctance, born of an unforgettably disastrous Afghan war, to send troops beyond the mountain barriers surrounding India. Rumours of Persian activity at Jalq - on Kalat's western frontier and 350-400 miles south of Herat - provided only dubious evidence of a "grand invasion design", but Canning was adamant that until an expedition to the Persian Gulf "has been tried and found insufficient I shall be unwilling to send a single man across our land frontier. I do not say that circumstances might not arise to force us to do so - such as the presence of the Persians at Kalat - but this I have not begun to contemplate".¹⁴ Cautiously seeking expert advice on every effective move possible in the event of a war to secure Herat's independence, but without referring to his Quetta proposals, Canning had sought Jacob's views on the advantages and practical difficulties of subsidising the Afghans with arms and money against Persia.¹⁵

To this proposal, Jacob reiterated his scheme as the definitive arrangement, "proper to secure our North-West frontier of India permanently in such a manner as to obviate the necessity of any alarm, unusual stir, or hasty operations of any kind, in consequence of movements of enemies of possible enemies from without."¹⁶ He made it plain that it was meant to "preclude the possibility of invasion" since "the road through the Balaun is even at present generally good and sufficiently easy for an army to proceed by it with all its artillery, stores,

12. Jacob to Canning, Karachi, 30 June 1856, f.6. Can/29, Letter 2.

13. See Canning to Elphinstone, Calcutta, 27 July 1856, f.2v. Can/47, Letter 10.

14. Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 26 July 1856. Can/56, Letter 4.

15. Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 13 July 1856, ff.3v & 4r. Can/56, Letter 3.

16. See Jacob to Canning, Karachi, 28 July 1856, ff.1r, 7v & 2r. Can/29, Letter 3.

etc. etc."¹⁶ Correctly surmising that Canning was already inclining towards donations to the Afghans, he skilfully blended his recommendations with moralistic judgements on Afghan untrustworthiness and the likelihood that they would turn the arms and money against the British unless closely supervised from the proximity of Quetta. "When we were fairly established at Quetta we might, I think, then subsidise the Afghans... with great advantage, but until we were so established such a measure would it seems to me be unwise. The Afghans would not be true to us if we really required their services and might probably turn against us the very means with which we had supplied them. Such a proceeding would only be characteristic of the people."¹⁷ With his deep distrust of the Afghans, Jacob seems to have envisaged his Quetta scheme as the best means of securing a position beyond the frontier while simultaneously remaining independent of them. Its insinuation with Canning's ideas on Afghan subsidies was a mere expedient to add to its acceptability; though Jacob did envisage a date when honesty of purpose, emanating from the actual presence of "the English mind" and a sufficiency of British force on the spot, would create such an identity of interest and mutual confidence as would range the Afghans firmly on the British side against any invader of India.

As to the forces needed to ensure success, a number of indigenous irregulars would be employed to secure communications between Quetta and Upper Sind and, as important, to ensure close, amicable relations with the Kalat populace. The nucleus of the Quetta force, however, would be provided by the two regiments of the Sind Irregular Horse, moved up from Sind with two regiments of infantry and two of horse artillery and organised as a light Irregular Field Force. Once adequate quarters had been built and supplies arranged, a division of regular troops would also be stationed at Quetta; the precise number at all

17. Ibid, p.3.

times being regulated by the state of affairs to the north-west. It is difficult to determine what method of warfare Jacob envisaged using as a deterrent to an invader, largely because of his reticence on this point and the equal division of the regular and irregular forces between cavalry, infantry and heavy and light artillery.¹⁸ In Upper Sind he had established a "fluid frontier" along which no defensive works were permitted and numerous daily patrols, freely exposed and covering great areas of territory, were constantly on the offensive. Acting on the principle that forewarned is forearmed, these patrols were augmented by excellent intelligence gathering facilities so that the enemy could be checked far in advance of one's own unwallled settlements.¹⁹ The Quetta scheme, then, can be envisaged as a logical extension of the ideas Jacob employed on the Upper Sind frontier, though the dictates of operating far in advance of that border prevented absolute mobility and necessitated a large armed supply base. As its market attracted merchants from Afghanistan and Central Asia, Quetta would become a fruitful source of intelligence, and its mobile cavalry arm, in the event of a Russian or Persian invasion attempt, could harry the enemy's columns guerilla-style in true T.E. Lawrence fashion. Furthermore, the salient which it presented as a heavily armed fort would threaten the flank of any Khyber-bound enemy and simultaneously deny them access to the Bolan Pass.

Jacob kept his immediate superior, Elphinstone, informed of his proposals by sending him copies of his correspondence with Canning.²⁰ But Bombay's Governor staunchly favoured an advance into Persia's interior from the Gulf as the best means of humbling the Shah's government and ensuring a withdrawal from Herat.²¹ Foreseeing initially that

18. See "Memorandum of proposed arrangements in case of a British Force being stationed at Quetta above the Bolan Pass", accompanying Jacob to Canning, 28 July 1856. See 16 above.

19. See Pelly, The Views and Opinions, pp. 349-50, 357-61 & 367.

20. See Jacob to Elphinstone, Karachi, 2 July, 30 July & 20 August 1856. MSS.EUR.F.87/68/5.

21. See Elphinstone to Vernon Smith, Bombay, 29 July 1856. MSS.EUR.F. 87/88/8/3.

"the Minister who would propose the occupation of a single post on the other side of the passes must be a bold man",²² he also came to regard Jacob's project as counterproductive. Leaving no scope for humbling the Persians it would merely convince them that they had frightened the Indian government, while it would also revive rather than extinguish Afghan distrust of the British and might even encourage Russia to make a corresponding move in the direction of Khiva.²³ By mid-August, Elphinstone, cautioned that London wanted his preparations for a littoral invasion of Persia completed by the end of September, was hurriedly but expertly organising an expedition for despatch to the Persian Gulf. Such unnecessary haste - London was eventually to delay permission for its despatch - left him little time for deliberate consideration of the Quetta scheme.²⁴ Even so, he did give it guarded, though not uncritical support in a letter to Canning where he conceded that Quetta might be a useful *tête de point* for augmenting British influence and security in the area, provided it did not prove additionally expensive. But he envisaged it as "merely a temporary measure, a part of our demonstration against Persia".²⁵

In the meantime Canning still reserved judgement on Jacob's idea, having apparently dismissed the likelihood of a full-scale Persian invasion of India and in any case preferring to deal with their incursions in Western Baluchistan by subsidising the Khan of Kalat's troops.²⁶

22. Elphinstone to Jacob, Bombay, 15 July 1856, f.3r. MSS.EUR.F.75/ Brown envelope marked "Elphinstone to Jacob", Letter 1.
23. See Elphinstone to Vernon Smith, Bombay, 29 July 1856. MSS.EUR.F. 87/88/8/3; Elphinstone to Jacob, Bombay, 16 August 1856. MSS.EUR.F. 75/Brown envelope marked "Elphinstone to Jacob", Letter 2.
24. Note in this context the rather garbled, abruptly terminated letter, Elphinstone to Jacob, 16 August 1856. See 23, above.
25. Elphinstone to Canning, Bombay, 24 August 1856, f.2v. Can/15, Letter 21.
26. See Canning to Vernon Smith, Calcutta, 8 August 1856. Can/32, Letter 28; Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 26 July 1856. Can/56, Letter 4.

But the rumoured Persian presence at Jalq had the opposite effect on Jacob, only serving to convince him that it was "evidently not merely Persia with whom we have to deal but Persia guided, moved and aided by Russia; and from the circumstances the proceedings near our frontier now appear to be of much more serious nature than any mere Persian occupation or threatening of Herat which have been so often made or attempted in the past twenty years. Wherefore our demonstration by sea, if no simultaneous proceedings be undertaken by land on our North-west frontier will it seems to me have no effect but to make Russia push Persia all the more vigorously in this direction while we are still unprepared".²⁷

By late August, however, Canning had decided to supplement the proposed Persian expedition, and optimally defend the north-western frontier, with financial and material aid to the rulers of Kalat and Afghanistan. As a permanent measure he considered Jacob's Quetta plan "preposterous". "Annexation without its accompanying advantages, and more likely to become a source of weakness rather than strength": it called for the financially onerous isolation of a large force at some distance from the British border, with insecure rearward communications "and it would infallibly provoke suspicion in Afghanistan".²⁸ Determined to have the Dost as an ally, he had taken the initiative in doubling the number of muskets to be despatched to Afghanistan and undertaken the immediate payment of five lacs of rupees to the Amir of Kabul "to enable his army to aid us in relieving Herat from the attack of Persia".²⁹ No provocation of Afghan jealousy could be permitted as long as there was some chance of their fighting Britain's battle as well

27. Jacob to Canning, Karachi, 11 August 1856, ff.2v & 3r. Can/29, Letter 4.

28. Canning to Elphinstone, Calcutta, 31 August 1856. Can/47, Letter 13.

29. Minute by the Rt. Hon. Governor-General, p.302, Enclosure 17, Despatch 33, 21 August 1856. L/P&S/5/228, pp.295-304.

as their own, aided by British money and arms. All the old suspicions would be rekindled if the British appeared in force in their neighbourhood yet stood aloof from joining them.³⁰ This was probably the immediate, primary consideration leading to his rejection of Jacob's design.

Such short-term considerations aside, during his first year as Governor-General, Canning was cautious and timid about taking final decisions. Keeping all options open like any man unsure of his ground, he had not dismissed outright the possibility of a temporary armed demonstration beyond the frontier to Quetta. Perhaps enlarged into a British march across Afghanistan to Herat, this option seems to have been suggested to him by Jacob's original idea. Far from Jacob's design, this contrivance he eventually dismissed; being largely influenced in his ultimate opposition to any physical venture beyond the red line by the results of a chance meeting and short correspondence with Colonel H.M. Durand, formerly Private Secretary to Lord Ellenborough. The leading figure in a famous incident during the First Afghan War, in which the gates of Ghazni were blown open, Durand dissuasively argued against both a permanent cantonment and an armed demonstration to Quetta or beyond. The latter operation certainly seems to have been discussed,³¹ and eventually dismissed in early 1857,³² by the Governor-General and his Council. With his first-hand knowledge of the Afghans, Durand presented the likely Afghan reaction to any British advance as one of uniform hostility and claimed much of the credit for the contemplated operation's

30. See Canning to Elphinstone, Calcutta, 19 September 1856. Can/47, Letter 17.

31. See H.M. Durand, The Life of Major-General Sir Henry Marion Durand, p.194, footnote.

32. See Governor-General in Council to Secret Committee, Court of Directors, (Secret), Foreign Dept., Fort William, 21 February 1857. L/P&S/5/62, pp.295-6. Also the minutes which accompanied it, by Canning, Low, Grant and Peacock, as contained in the bound volume, *Afghanistan: Memoranda: O.T. Burne*. This is as yet uncatalogued in the I.O.L. & R. See also Canning to Elphinstone, Calcutta, 18 January 1857. Can/47, Letter 25.

eventual demise along with Jacob's original Quetta proposals.³³ Canning elaborated on the reasons for his rejection of the permanent cantonment scheme in his eventual reply to the Acting Commissioner in Sind, emphasising the practical difficulties involved. The dangerous isolation of a 5,000 man force holding Quetta "without obtaining any hold over the country lying between it and our frontier"³⁴ was remarked on. Such an anomaly, he feared, would lead inexorably to the extension of the British frontier up to Quetta itself. For, lengthy military occupation carried with it civil government: "and Civil Government is Sovereignty."³⁵ From a logistics figure of one fighting man to five inhabitants, he deterringly calculated that "5,000 men with their followers at Quetta must either bring starvation upon their hosts and put in jeopardy our amicable relations with them; or they must depend upon supplies drawn from a very wide area of country which is but little productive; - therefore the supplies must be precarious, or they must look to the Commissariat in India, 200 miles behind them".³⁶ Though quite practicable, considerations of cost ruled out the latter possibility and logistic calculations, consequently, "would be a fatal objection to a permanent occupation".³⁷

In a last throw of the dice Jacob, who astutely realised that an old Afghan hand was advising the Governor-General, assured Canning that good, well-secured communications would prevent any isolation of the

33. See Durand, "Note on Projected Occupation of Quetta", 5 February 1867. L/P&S/5/530, pp.121-4. Also, Private Secretary to Canning, (n.d., but seemingly late September, early October 1856). Can/114, Letter 223. Also H.M. Durand, The Life of, pp.180-94. The actual correspondence between Durand and Canning is unavailable, since 46 bundles of "in" letters are missing from the Canning Papers. The Registers for this part of Canning's correspondence have several indexed references to letters by Durand on the subject of Quetta. See Can/112&113.

34. Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 18 October 1856, f.1v. Can/56, Letter 5.

35. Ibid, f.3r.

36. Ibid, f.5.

37. Ibid, f.6r.

garrison, while the Bugtis', Jekranis' and Kalmure' rejection of their old plundering habits made the Northern Sind, Cutch and Bolan districts quiet and peaceful. Ready local compliance in the order established by the Kalat government, as well as the influence already exerted by the Political Superintendent on the Sind frontier, precluded any need for the extension of British territory. As to the problem of supplying food, Jacob confidently intended repeating at Quetta his performance on the Sind frontier. He confidently expected the sheep, wheat and cattle of the Mastung, Pishin and Shawl valleys and the bounteous Cutch district to flow naturally into the British camp, round which would grow a large commercial town "which would, as in the instance of Jacobabad, suffice for the wants of an army".³⁸ Countering Canning's objections on the grounds of exciting Afghan suspicions, Jacob idealistically reaffirmed the purgative powers of honesty, fairness and justice. With these peculiarly English qualities exerted from Quetta on the Afghans, "their old mistrust must certainly ere long disappear".³⁹ More to the point, these were petty considerations, for the whole future of Britain's empire in India was at stake: "To enable this red line to retain its present position, to prevent its being driven back and erased from the map, it is, it appears to me, absolutely necessary to occupy posts in advance of it.A severe struggle within our own established and long settled boundary with a powerful invader, might shake our power in India to its very foundations, which might not be in the least disturbed even by many battles fought beyond our frontier, and which would be completely reserved by the arrangements which I have indicated".⁴⁰ Clearly, pre-emption was the crux of his project and it was invasion against which it was directed.

38. Jacob to Canning, Shahpur(?), 1 November 1856, f.10(1). Can/29, Letter 5.

39. Ibid, f.13r.

40. Ibid, ff. 10v & 11.

In Bombay, Elphinstone thought that Jacob had successfully met the Governor-General's objections on the score of distance, isolation and supply. But on the real drawbacks - the revival of latent Afghan hostility and a corresponding advance by Russia - he thought Jacob too sanguine in anticipating the former's speedy disappearance; while, though the Russians would creep forward opportunistically in any case, "we should endeavour to do nothing to hasten their advance".⁴¹ From Calcutta, Canning's next communication with Jacob, in early 1857, merely confirmed his appointment to join the army in Persia with one regiment of the Sind Irregular Horse.⁴² The shutters had been quietly drawn on the Quetta project.

The entire issue had been raised and settled in India without reference to the Court of Directors in London but at least one vain, unofficial attempt was made to bring it to their attention. Frere, house-hunting in London, maintained regular contact with his locum throughout his leave. Influenced by an almost adulatory regard for Jacob⁴³ he assured him that: "Your Bolan and Quetta plan is admirable and whatever happens elsewhere that will I hope be carried out".⁴⁴ Deploring what he saw as a mixture of careless confidence and ignorance among those in Britain responsible for governing India, he had sent all Jacob's letters on Central Asia to Sir George Clerk, then Permanent Under-Secretary to the India Board, in the hope that they might "reach quarters where they will do essential good".⁴⁵ There is no evidence that Clerk ever succeeded in raising the matter officially.⁴⁶ In a

41. Elphinstone to Jacob, Bombay, 12 November 1856, f.2v. MSS.EUR.F.75/Brown envelope marked "Elphinstone to Jacob", Letter 6.

42. Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 4 January 1857. Can/56, Letter 7.

43. See Frere to Jacob, London, 26 July 1856. MSS.EUR.F.75/Brown envelope marked "Frere to Jacob". These letters are arranged in no particular order. Also A.I. Shand, General John Jacob, p.308.

44. Frere to Jacob, London, 24 August 1856. MSS.EUR.F.75/Brown envelope marked "Frere to Jacob".

45. Frere to Jacob, Wimbledon, Surrey, 25 November 1856, f. 2r. MSS.EUR.F.75/Brown envelope marked "Frere to Jacob".

46. See L/P&S/3/50.

curious postscript to Jacob's propaganda, Canning received by mail from England an anonymous pamphlet entitled "Our North-Western Frontier".⁴⁷ The work of Jacob's subordinate and close associate, Lieutenant Lewis Pelly,⁴⁸ this nineteen page feuilleton amalgamated extracts from Jacob's most important letters to Canning in 1856. The arguments in favour of the Quetta scheme and the outline of the nature of the Russian threat were given more elaborately than in those letters, and the style was Jacob's throughout. It seems justifiable, then, to suppose that Pelly wrote the pamphlet not only with Jacob's knowledge but also with his active collusion. Canning suspected that he had Jacob to thank for its delivery⁴⁹ but Jacob denied all concern with it and affirmed that he bore no responsibility for its composition or its publication.⁵⁰ In 1857, however, he did have his relevant letters printed and circulated privately in the form of a pamphlet entitled "Letters on the Persian War and on the Frontier Arrangements of our Indian Empire". Jacob and his accumulating disciples were barely resigned to the defeat of his propaganda and the demise of their pet project.

* * *

Twice in as many years the proposal for establishing a British cantonment at Quetta was made. On the second occasion its revival was initiated by H.B.E. Frere, Commissioner in Sind,⁵¹ in the course of a report on Kalat and amidst his and Jacob's fears that British forces on the North-West frontier were dangerously depleted through being diverted

47. Anon., Our North-West Frontier (John Chapman, Strand, London, 1856).

48. Pelly had been an assistant in the Revenue and General Dept. in Karachi while Jacob was Acting Commissioner in Sind, and Aide-de-Camp and Political Secretary to Jacob in Persia. He was editor of The Views and Opinions, on the title page of which he acknowledged authorship of the pamphlet.

49. See Canning to Jacob, Calcutta, 4 January 1857. Can/56, Letter 7.

50. See Jacob to Canning, Karachi, 20 January 1857. Can/29, Letter 8.

51. Henry Bartle Edward Frere, 1815-84. First entering the East India Company's service in 1834, he was Private Secretary to the Governor of Bombay, 1842-5, and subsequently Resident, 1847-9, and Commissioner, 1849-50, at Sattara. He was Commissioner in Sind from 1850 until 1859.

in some strength to help suppress the popular rebellion of 1857-1858.⁵² The death of Britain's ally the old Khan of Kalat Nusseer Khan in June 1857, followed by that of his pro-British minister, left considerable power in the hands of his eighteen year old successor, Khodaded Khan. Primus inter pares as head of a state customarily constituted as a confederation of sirdars, Khodaded Khan, aided and advised by his unpopular Hindu Vizier Gungerum, wilfully usurped his authority by assigning increased powers to himself and refusing to confer with his most prominent sirdars. By late 1857 acrimonious agitation between Khan and sirdars had become the norm in Kalat, and both Frere and Jacob, writing in January 1858, were convinced that open rebellion and civil war in Baluchistan had been only narrowly averted. They felt this had been largely due to the presence in Kalat of Lt. Macaulay of the Sind Horse, and their own success, during conversations with him between 1 and 11 January, in persuading the new Khan to replace the unpopular Gungerum and agree to hold closer consultations with his sirdars.⁵³ But Frere realised that the settlement was a pretty tenuous one and that, given the strained relations still existing between the wayward, inexperienced Khan and his disaffected sirdars, open and violent rebellion in Kalat was still a distinct possibility.

Frere's unease was heightened by his sharing Jacob's belief that the daily-expected death of Dost Mahomed, possibly complicated by "intrigue from without", would have an inflammatory effect on all those countries immediately to the north-west of India and that a general conflagration might soon engulf Afghanistan as well as Baluchistan.⁵⁴ Persia,

52. See Frere to Elphinstone, Bombay, 14 January 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373.

53. See Jacob to Viscount Melville, Jacobabad, 7 January 1858. B.L.ADD. MSS.41,567N, ff.191-4; Frere to Elphinstone, Bombay, 14 January 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373.

54. Jacob to Frere, 4 February 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373. Jacob also feared a spring invasion of Kalat through the Bolan by a combined force of Persians and Afghans. See Jacob to Frere, 23 January 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373.

her infiltration of Makran and Western Baluchistan having gained her Azad Khan Sirdar of Kheran as a lackey, could hope, if he succeeded a speedily deposed Khodadad Khan, to assume the position of supreme power in Kalat. Thence, on the Dost's death and the division of his territories, the Shah might hope to recover his old influence at Kandahar.⁵⁵ In his lengthy despatch to Elphinstone of 19 February 1858, on the state of affairs in Kalat, Frere pressed for the establishment of a Frontier Field Force of irregulars. Able to move out at a few hours notice, such a force would be eminently useful in quelling such local and proximate disturbances as those in Kalat; which Frere and Jacob were both agreed in seeing as part of a concerted effort by the sirdars to replace Khodadad Khan by Azad Khan, the Persian nominee. But the Frontier Field Force was seen by Frere as playing only a local role and as bringing only "a measure of comparative security"; for he was also aware of the wider implications of a collapse of the Khan's authority and his replacement by either a Persian candidate or an Afghan sirdar. As he saw it, this involved a threat to the lower part of the North-West frontier: "The ruler of Khelat commands one of the two main roads between India and Western and Central Asia. In a strategical point of view his position is of great importance to every state between the Indus and the Euphrates and Caspian".⁵⁶ Frere, alarmed, saw a revolt as a stone thrown into a pool: causing a rippling accumulation of dangers the likelihood of which could not be ignored.

Impressed by the old Khan's sense of insecurity regarding the future intentions of Persia and Afghanistan towards Baluchistan, Frere

55. See Frere to Elphinstone, Camp Kundian, 19 February 1858. Enclosure 21, Despatch 42, 9 April 1858, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors. L/P&S/5/528 (Mutinies Series). A copy is also contained in MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 5. There is an occasional absence of pagination in some of the L/P&S/5 series.

56. Ibid, f.17.

also seems to have drunk some of the heady wine of credulous and uncritical suspicion of Persian, and ultimately Russian, activities along the frontier. This fermentation intoxicated the officers in Upper Sind in 1857 and the first half of 1858 and led them to detect a Persian or Russian puppeteer manipulating any unrest among the indigenous peoples bordering British India.⁵⁷ Into the vacuum created by a lack of concrete evidence were drawn supposition and conjecture based on bazaar gossip and rumour. Both were notoriously inaccurate, but Frere's fears were strongly felt nonetheless.⁵⁸ Even had such distant subversive involvement in the Kalat disturbances existed, in seeing that unrest as the first stage in a Persian attempt to attack India along the Makran coast through Kharan Frere was clearly unable to differentiate between the intention and the deed. Jacob and Merewether of the Sind Horse had covered this difficult terrain during the recent Anglo-Persian war and had already assured him that a Persian attack from that quarter was impossible.

Seeing the causes and repercussions of the Kalat disturbances in these broad terms, Frere pressed for the occupation of Quetta "as an important outpost where in case of need, a strong force could be assembled commanding the access to the Bolann (sic), effectively securing the key to our whole frontier south of Guguze(?) and enabling us to flank and check any force which threatens the northern part of the Punjab by the route of the Khyber".⁵⁹ No delay could be countenanced since Azad Khan, if he succeeded to the Khanate of Kalat, would effectively deny both the Bolan Pass and Quetta to the British. False

57. Jacob to Viscount Melville, Jacobabad, 7 January 1858, f.191v. B.L.ADD.MSS.41,567N; also Jacob to Frere, Jacobabad, 21 February 1858, S.O.A.S., MS. 138373; Green to Jacob, Kalat, 20 May 1858. H/552/25, pp.475-82; and Jacob to Frere, Bidhuna, 24 May 1858. Enclosure 5, Despatch 79, 19 June 1858, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors, L/P&S/5/496.

58. Frere to Elphinstone, Camp Kundian, 19 February 1858, ff.19-20. See also 55 above.

59. Ibid, f.26.

claiming that he was a recent and "an unwilling convert" to the Quetta stratagem, Frere, whose apprehensions were clearly directed towards Persian or Afghan hostility to British India, not to a Russian invasion, asserted that the problem of supply could be solved at no great expense. He also shared Jacob's view of Quetta's occupation as an essential pre-emptive move rather than an alternative to be exercised whenever impending danger might appear to render it necessary; as its critics would have it. Secretive and unscrupulous, such neighbours as Persia and Afghanistan, he advised, would give no warning of their intentions; thereby causing the British continuous apprehension and denying them the calm and secure reassurance which only the tenancy of Quetta guaranteed.

From Bombay, Elphinstone twice wrote to Vernon Smith, President of the Board of Control, drawing his attention to Frere's revival of Jacob's plan. Certain that the first priority in holding India was the reconstruction of the native army in the aftermath of the rebellion, Elphinstone remained unconvinced by Frere's new arguments in Quetta's favour, or rejoinders to former objections. He doubted if either the Board of Control or the Governor-General of India would accede to Frere's proposal.⁶⁰ Before the Governor of Bombay in Council could reply officially to Frere's report on Kalat, his government received several letters from the Commissioner in Sind reporting Jacob's news, derived from Major Henry Green Political Agent to the Khan, of a new crisis in Kalat, where the succession of Azad Khan seemed imminent.⁶¹ Though the crisis was soon resolved by Green's persuading Khodadad Khan to rid himself finally of the unpopular Hindu Vizier, it is clear that Frere and Jacob, who both stridently sought the return of the First Regiment Sind

60. See Elphinstone to Vernon Smith, Bombay, 9418 March 1858. MSS.EUR.F. 87/88/9/4.

61. See Jacob to Frere, Jacobabad, 21 February 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373; also Frere to Elphinstone, Camp Dowlutpoor, 24 February 1858. Enclosure 22, Despatch 42, 9 April 1858, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors. L/P&S/5/528 (Mutinies Series).

Irregular Horse and the setting up of a Frontier Force, saw it as a close call. At a time when the flames of rebellion in Central India had not yet been properly quenched, great danger to the security of the British frontier had been only narrowly averted. And in their opinion that was in disproportionate part due to the presence and rare personal characteristics of one man - Major Henry Green.⁶²

Badly shaken and sometimes apocalyptic in their forebodings, Frere, Jacob and Green all believed the endemic unrest in Kalat was the work of external agencies and were all equally united in the belief that Quetta's occupation was an inalienable element in the defence of the North-West frontier.⁶³ It was at all times necessary to have the "eyes and ears to learn what goes on above the passes",⁶⁴ and a base at Quetta would be an admirable means of "seeing that no enemy approach India, or if there is, being able to give timely warning of its approach".⁶⁵ They seem to have feared not only invasion but also the unsettlement first of the frontier and then of the still unstable interior of India by a process of conspiratorial infiltration beginning in the contiguous countries to the north-west. Elphinstone was urged that unless he advanced "to shut the door and secure the key (of the Bolan Pass and Quetta) you would not be secure with even a strong brigade in

62. See Jacob to Frere, Jacobabad, 27 February 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373. Frere to Elphinstone, Camp Hale, 5 March 1858. Enclosure 15, Despatch 42, 9 April 1858, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors. L/P&S/5/528 (Mutinies Series). For Frere and Jacob's extravagant praise of Green see Frere to Jacob, Hyderabad, 12 March 1858 and Jacob to Frere, Jacobabad, 18 March 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373.

63. See Jacob to Frere, Jacobabad, 2 & 20 March 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373. Frere to Elphinstone, Hyderabad District, 25 March 1858. MSS.EUR.F.87/6C/8/3.

64. Frere to Elphinstone, Hyderabad District, 30 March 1858, f.1v. MSS. EUR.F.87/6C/8/3.

65. Green to Jacob, 5 March 1858, f.1r. S.O.A.S., MS. 138373.

Upper Sind".⁶⁶

Frere was aware that Elphinstone, even though assailed by such a unified body of opinion from Sind, inclined to think British hands were too full at that moment to allow for Quetta's occupation.⁶⁷ And when it came, the Bombay government's response was in fact firmly negative.⁶⁸ Though not indifferent to events outwith India's frontiers, and clearly dissatisfied with the Kalat government's instability, the Governor of Bombay in Council felt that the proposal had even less chance of acceptance in 1858 than it had in 1856; given the altered circumstances created since then by Persia's enforced withdrawal from Herat, the popular rebellion in India and the absence of a trustworthy Indian army. They did not share Frere's equanimity on the problems of British involvement beyond the limits of empire and disagreed as to the "absolute necessity" of Quetta's occupation, since only one danger from the North-west really justified the measure and that was the threat of a Russian invasion. A force stationed far in advance of British territory would be costly to support, useless in maintaining internal security in Sind, and likely to arouse Afghan distrust. In any attempt to prevent Kalat's usurption by a Persian dependent or its conquest by the Afghans, Quetta's occupation would be a superfluous indulgence: "The Governor in Council is of the opinion that without taking up a position in advance of our present one, the best plan will be to persevere in the course already so auspiciously commenced, by supporting and adding to the influence of

66. Frere to Elphinstone, Hyderabad District, 25 March 1858, F.S. MSS. EUR.F.87/6C/8/3.

67. Frere to Jacob, Hyderabad District, 27 March 1858. S.O.A.S., MS. 136373.

68. See Anderson to Frere, Bombay, 7 April 1858, Enclosure 23, Despatch 42, 9 April 1858, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors. Received in London, 4 May 1858. L/P&S/5/528 (Mutinies Series).

the Khan by supplies of money and arms and the assistance of European officers".⁶⁹

Egged on by Jacob, who impatiently advocated a "firm, sound, bold policy"⁷⁰ so as to re-establish British prestige and prevent the bordering countries joining the first power to propose an invasion of India, in May Frere again pressed the advantages of a forward adjustment of the frontier. An unshaken belief in its necessity prevented his realising that he was, for the moment, pursuing a lost cause. Though he did assure Elphinstone that, whatever his personal opinions, he would obediently adhere to the government's final decision.⁷¹ In reiterating his arguments more explicitly, Frere made it plain that, for the moment at least, the invasion of India he feared was not one by Russia but by "those semi-barbarian hordes which intervene between the Russian and English Frontier". In any such enterprise the Shah would be a Russian dupe seeking compensation in India for the loss of northern sections of his country to Russia; while Russian involvement would be unofficial and confined to the independent actions of over-patriotic Russian officers.⁷²

Frere's recapitulation is also instructive in that he clearly associated the fear of invasion with the deep sense of insecurity which the British had felt in India since the popular rebellion. Easy acceptance of British sovereignty could no longer be taken for granted; and the assumption that their Indian subjects could be impelled by the activities of some external power to rise in opposition to British rule

69. Ibid, paragraph 12.

70. Jacob to Frere, Jacobabad, 25 April 1858, f.10v. Enclosure 7, Despatch 53, 8 May 1858, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors. L/P&S/5/496.

71. Frere to Elphinstone, Karachi, 21 May 1858. Enclosure 3, Despatch 79, 19 June 1858, Secret Dept., Bombay to Secret Committee, Court of Directors. L/P&S/5/496.

72. Ibid, paragraphs 15, 18 & 20.

again provided the rationale for repeated assertions, then and in the 1860's and 1870's, that frontier security must be absolute. With a dependable Indian army and calm in the British occupied provinces of India, Frere reckoned the British could have foregone, with equanimity, any move beyond the Bolan Pass. But "our internal weakness affords the strongest argument for adopting a course which shall enable us most easily to prevent having external aggression added to our domestic difficulties".⁷³

Though Elphinstone had written unofficially to both Vernon Smith and Lord Ellenborough - his successor as President of the Board of Control - on Frere's advocacy of Jacob's Quetta scheme, he had not done so encouragingly.⁷⁴ The Board of Control expressed their entire concurrence in the views which had led the Governor of Bombay in Council to reject Frere's proposal, and much later the Governor-General in India also endorsed the Bombay government's opinion.⁷⁵ The first instance of Frere's official commitment to the Quetta scheme ended at this juncture, with the Commissioner in Sind still the project's most prominent adherent within the Indian administration. The arrow first released by Jacob was deflected, having failed once again to reach its target.

The unrest endemic in Beluchistan in 1857-1858 had led Frere to press for a pre-emptive occupation of Quetta as a means of defusing any danger arising from a conflagration beyond the North-West frontier. But

73. Ibid, paragraph 10. Frere's underlying concern with the consequences of the rebellion and the nature of British rule in the future are also apparent in paragraphs 33 & 35.

74. See Elphinstone to Ellenborough, Bombay, 12 April 1858. MSS.EUR.F. 87/88/9/4; see also 60 above.

75. See Board of Directors to Governor of Bombay in Council, London, 11 May 1858. L/P&S/5/582, pp.187-8; also Foreign Dept., Government of India to Government of Bombay, Fort William, 14 March 1859. Enclosure 5, Despatch 46, Secret Dept., Bombay to S.S.I., 11 April 1859. L/P&S/5/501.

on this occasion the "turbulent frontier"⁷⁶ did not lead to an extension of British territory. In their continued determination to minimise British activity beyond India's borders, Frere's superiors' response was to endorse those proposals which had immediate relevance to the Kelat crisis while rejecting outright any strategic readjustment of the frontier in advance of the Trans-Indus region. Towards the end of 1858, Jacob, Frere and Green - conveniently labelled the "Bombay School" in the 1860's - had retreated from the original vision of the Quetta strategy as a pre-emptive one and had concluded that "the advance to Quetta could now only be effected in the case of actual hostilities with Persia and Afghanistan and that our safest and indeed only course now is to make ourselves as strong as possible in the valley of the Indus so as to have the means of advancing whenever any real necessity arises".⁷⁷ Despite this alteration in the timing of its implementation, and the death of its progenitor in Early December 1858, two crises in two years in territories proximate to the North-West frontier had ineradicably established Jacob's project for a British cantonment at Quetta as one of the recurrently proposed strategic solutions to the perennial problem of securing British rule in India against the animosities of its neighbours and rivals to the north-west.

* * *

As a member of the Viceroy's Council 1859-62, during part of which time he was Canning's confidential adviser, and Governor of Bombay 1862-1867, Frere remained the most important member of the "Bombay School" in the 1860's. A thin, soft-voiced man whose heavy, drooping moustache gave his pinched face a lugubrious appearance, Frere's

76. See J.S. Calbraith, "The 'Turbulent Frontier' as a Factor in British Expansion", Comparative Studies in Society and History, 11(1960), pp.150-68.

77. Frere to Elphinstone, Camp near Satta, 24 December 1858. MSS.EUR.F. 87/6C/8/3.

unexceptional looks belied a rock-hard core of independence, self-assurance and determined individuality of opinion. Canning, with whom he had a close relationship based on mutual respect, described his manner as "piano and modest, but I have seldom come across a man more persistent in his views, or more practical in putting them into action".⁷⁸ A devout Christian, he was nonetheless extremely tolerant of Indian religious beliefs; while in the internal politics of empire his conservatism inclined him to support for the Indian princes rather than the nascent western-educated elite. Eulogised by contemporary and present-day historians of the Anglo-Indian administration,⁷⁹ Frere is presented by them as the epitome of the practical, energetic, humanitarian administrator, devoted to India and its future and genuinely giving precedence to the interests of its people. Contemporary Indian commentators, on the other hand, while repeating some of the praises, found him, with his blind faith in the developmental powers of unrestrained English capital investment, inclined to promise more than he fulfilled.⁸⁰ Frere can be represented as the archetypal mid-19TH. century Anglo-Indian administrator.

His natural independence of mind and tendency to give precedence to the man on the spot's opinion led him to preach the virtues of the Government of India's greater independence of metropolitan control and, within India itself, a large measure of autonomy in decision-making and decentralisation of financial procedures. As Governor of Bombay, Frere gave full rein to these latter ideas in differences of opinion

78. Canning to Wood, Calcutta, 19 October 1860. MSS.EUR.F.73/55/6, f.61v. See also M. Macleagan, "Clemency" Canning - Charles John, First Earl Canning, Governor-General and Viceroy of India 1856-1862. (London, 1962), pp.268 & 307-8.

79. See P. Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India (2 Vols., London, 1953-54), Vol.2, pp.25-44 and G.B. Malleson, Recreations of an Indian Official: biographical sketches (London, 1872), pp.389 & 434-5.

80. See Sir Bartle Frere, The Speeches and Addresses of Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere: (Compiled by B.N. Pitale. With an introduction by M.G. Ranade) (Bombay, 1870), Introduction, pp. XII-XIV.

with Calcutta over budgetary rules, the pace of his province's economic development and his defence of the high-handed, precipitate actions of Colonel Lewis Pelly, British Resident in the Persian Gulf. He can be represented, while at Bombay, as a querulous governor, endlessly causing needless acrimony between his presidency and the supreme government. But such lengthy disputes between Bombay and Calcutta were often as much the fault of the bureaucratic nit-picking of such men as Colonel Strachey of the Calcutta Public Works Department as they were a consequence of Frere's wilful, prickly, unbending independence.⁸¹ Opinionated, Frere spoke his mind repeatedly on any aspect of policy-making in India and readily offered persuasive advice to his superiors on a variety of administrative and political matters. On taking up their posts as Secretary of State for India or Viceroy of India, one of the first letters men such as Wood, Cranborne, Elgin and Lawrence received was from Frere, offering to give his advice on any Indian subject which concerned them. This offer he invariably followed up with advice, which was subtly persuasive rather than trenchant, on subjects which were often, arguably, no concern of his; at least within the terms of his official duties. Personal ambition may have underlain the constant need for such self-advertisement, as much as any unshakeable belief in the necessity of following up his recommendations. Whatever his motives, his superiors might find him a difficult man to work with but they nevertheless readily acknowledged his considerable drive and talents as an administrator.⁸²

One subject in which Frere took a persistent interest, largely through his earlier experience as Commissioner in Sind, was the internal affairs of the territories on India's north-west border. He wrote

81. See Frere to Elgin, Dapooree, 10 October 1863. MSS.EUR.F.83/18, pp.209-49.

82. See Elgin to Wood, Calcutta, 9 April 1862. MSS.EUR.F.78/56/1, ff.65-6; Lawrence to Wood, Simla, 29 May 1864. MSS.EUR.F.78/113/2, ff.127-8.

frequently to Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, on Kalat affairs, relaying news he had received from Green on the Upper Sind frontier.⁸³ But Frere was temperamentally disinclined to be a mere reporter, and repeatedly, at critical moments, made recommendations to his superiors on what he considered should be a more active British interest in Afghan affairs. When, in late 1860, Captain Lewis Pelly recommended that Canning take steps to secure closer relations with Sultan Ahmed Khan, Sirdar of Herat,⁸⁴ Frere opposed his views on the advantages of a one-article treaty of friendship and on the British cession of Peshawar to the Dost in exchange for Farah's return to Herat. But, by his support for the idea of cultivating friendly relations with Herat by the provision of presents, letters of friendship and liberally endowed English envoys,⁸⁵ Frere obviously wished for Herat's continued independence of Persia and Afghanistan, and presumed that Britain, by her support for Sultan Ahmed Khan, would succeed in persuading him to accept his existing territorial limits and thus avoid exciting an attack by the Dost.⁸⁶ The maintenance of the status quo in that region would lull British apprehensions about the unsettling effect of neighbouring disturbances on their empire's security.

Following Sultan Ahmed Khan's attack on Farah in March 1862 and the Dost's retaliatory siege of Herat from July onwards, British India was assailed by a year-long spate of rumours of Herat's fall to the Amir of Kabul; until it eventually did so on 27 May 1863. Expressing to Wood his dismay at such hostilities, Frere regretted that he had not

83. See Frere to Wood, 17 & 27 March 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/5, ff.112v&128; 10 April & 23 June 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/6, ff.9v & 115v; & 21 June 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/14, f.107v.

84. See below, chapter 3, p.73.

85. Frere to Canning, Calcutta, 28 November 1860. Can/12, Letter 59.

86. Frere to Canning, 11 March 1861. Can/13, Letter 20.

pressed his views more firmly on Canning when the opportunity arose after Pelly's journey. Had Canning taken his advice, Frere believed, the present "complications" might have been avoided.⁸⁷ Frere admitted that the Afghan situation was so unstable that over-active intermeddling was most unwise, but argued that this instability only increased the necessity for Britain, by virtue of her proximity and immense power, to exercise a conservative influence of very great moral weight as a practical antidote to the general insecurity of everything Afghan. "(It) would soon be felt that the man who quietly kept and enjoyed what he had got was the friend of the British and that he who disturbed the public peace was their enemy".⁸⁸ Apprehensive that France might appear on the scene as the mediator or ally of an anxious Shah of Persia, thereby injecting a very inconvenient European element into Afghan politics, Frere assured Wood that simply giving the weight of British advice and mediation to the cause of peace need involve no arrangements or engagements of any kind.⁸⁹ By employing the "moral weight of the opinions expressed by the Governor-General of India"⁹⁰ in support of the status quo in the region of Persia and Afghanistan, Britain could best prevent any hostilities which might be used opportunistically by her rivals to reawaken her apprehensions for India's security. But neither Wood nor Elgin, Canning's viceregal successor, responded favourably to Frere's pleas.

When the quarrel over Herat had first broken out, Elgin had stated his aversion to any intervention in Afghan affairs, especially since no

87. Frere to Wood, Bombay, 26 December 1862. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/4, f.168v.

88. Frere to Wood, Bombay, 12 March 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/5, f.100.

89. See Frere to Wood, Mahabaleshwar, 22 May 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/6.

90. Frere to Wood, Bombay, 12 March 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/5, f.100r.

effective means could be employed which did not entail unwanted responsibilities. Even the token sign of disapproval which he gave the Dost by withdrawing the British Vakeel from the Amir's camp was frowned on by Wood, who considered Herat not worth one anna and wished a strict neutrality to be maintained. Both men acknowledged that any arrangements made with Afghan rulers were quite ephemeral, since the whole Afghan polity would be dramatically altered on the death of the 75 year old Dost Mahomed.⁹¹ Wood's report to Elgin of Frere's dissatisfaction with Britain's studied indifference drew the response that Frere was too much influenced by medal-hungry frontier officers, that Elgin himself was still averse to England's "prurient intermeddling" in matters which were of no vital interest to her, and that Frere was "a great deal too hasty in his judgements on such matters for my taste".⁹²

Frere continued at odds with established Afghan policy when this strict neutrality blended into Sir John Lawrence's absolute non-involvement in the six years internecine strife which followed the Dost's death in June 1863. Concerned at Russian advances on Bukharan territory and holding that the "best security against any alarm from that quarter lay in a friendly intercourse with the countries which lie between us and them",⁹³ Frere reiterated, to both Wood and Lawrence, his complete assurance in the possibility of maintaining friendly relations with the Afghans while remaining "free from entanglement" in their internal quarrels.⁹⁴ But he received no encouraging indication of support

91. Elgin to Wood, Calcutta, 15 April, 16 July, 9 August & 1 October 1862. MSS.EUR.F.78/56/1, /2 & /3, ff.68-82, 18-29, 80-101 & 112-125; Wood to Elgin, Abergeldie Castle, 25 August 1862. MSS.EUR.F.78/L.8.11, pp.88-9.

92. Wood to Elgin, 18 April 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/L.8.12, pp.210-8; Elgin to Wood, Simla, 21 May 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/56/6, p.35v.

93. Frere to Wood, Bombay, 27 January 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/13, p.22r.

94. Frere to Lawrence, Bombay, 15 June 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/47, Letter 35.

from Wood; while Lawrence revealed a deep distrust of the Afghans and doubted whether friendly, trusting relations between them and the "English Government" were possible so long as Britain held Kashmir and Peshawar, to which the Afghans laid claim.

It is notable, then, that from the early 1860's the most prominent member of the "Bombay School" did not restrict his attention to Kalat and Quetta in his search for the means of quieting British susceptibilities regarding India's security, but that he obviously saw Afghanistan as a link in the defensive chain and included Britain's Afghan policy in his cogitations. Anticipating the time when the limits of Russian and British legitimate influence in Central Asia would be contiguous, he had wished "it to be, if possible, far from our own frontier, and that we should meantime by extending our commerce and honourable influence unite our neighbours as closely as possible to us in interest and feeling".⁹⁵ Frere forgot that the Afghan polity was very different from that of a 19TH. century European state. Its only intermittent integrity, and conflicting interests between various sirdars, made it difficult to conduct a consistent foreign policy with it, especially in the absence of a ruthless ruler able to impose his authority and unite the peripheries with Kabul. Yet Frere's studied vagueness on how the British were to attain intimate relations, which yet did not involve interference in the Afghans' internal quarrels, was accompanied by an unreasoning confidence in Afghan susceptibility to an alien influence. The origins of this facile assurance are difficult to detect but important to grasp if a proper understanding of Frere's views on Indian foreign policy is to be gained.

The ill-defined "moral" influence which Frere frequently invoked was to be exerted by that rare breed, the political officer, whose

95. Frere to Canning, Calcutta, 1 December 1860. Can/12, Letter 61.

influence had been so debased by his connections with the First Afghan War. Frere had long nurtured a great admiration for these men, among whose ranks he now included Green and Pelly. "Honest, bold, adventurous gentlemen"⁹⁶ of that workaday variety far removed from enigmatic shooting stars like Burnes or Burton, they should possess those qualities of honesty, wisdom and justice which would enable them to "be dropped into any native community and ... rule it as Englishmen should always rule a weaker race".⁹⁷ In a minute of 1863 on British relations with the various ethnic groups on the Sind and Punjab borders, Frere made it plain that moral persuasion, as opposed to physical coercion, depended for its influence on: "the highest motives of human action - to the admiration, respect and indefinable awe, which even the most savage nations feel for superior natures, and for power wisely and humanely exercised - to the confidence inspired in the most faithless by strict and habitual justice tempered with mercy - in a word, in one form or another, to the human intellect and conscience, however dulled, blunted and perverted."⁹⁸

The proponent of a historicist interpretation of the past as a panorama of rising and falling civilisations, Frere saw the "half-civilised", "savage", "semi-berberian"⁹⁹ Afghans and Baluchis - and Africans also - as having degenerated in their personalities through the decadence of their cultures. Yet, though he did not attribute their supposedly inferior personal qualities to inherent, permanent racial characteristics,¹⁰⁰ he described them in language with distinctly

96. Frere to Canning Calcutta, 28 November 1860, f.4r. Can/12, Letter 59.

97. Frere to Canning, Calcutta, 11 June 1860, f.2. Can/12, Letter 13.

98. "Minute by H.E. the Governor of Bombay," 12 December 1863. L/P&S/5/18/A4, p.2.

99. Frere's correspondence with Elphinstone on Kalat affairs in 1858 contains numerous references to the peoples of Baluchistan and Afghanistan in these terms.

100. See Frere to Nightingale, Wimbledon, 5 May 1875. Nightingale Papers, B.L.ADD.MSS.45,780, f.297v.

racialist undertones which became more overt in the 1870's and 80's.¹⁰¹ On the basis of this inextricable mixture of proto-racism and historical rationalisation, Frere was convinced that the inferiority of Africans and Asians made them supremely malleable: easily subject to the elevating influence exerted by awesome members of a superior culture. The morally superior Englishman, he naively believed, could never abuse power or use it self-interestedly; his honesty must always contrast with Asiatic cunning, his justice with cruelty and his wisdom with fickleness.¹⁰² This presumption of the irresistibility of an uprighteous alien influence and the benighted Afghans' ready compliance with their superiors' suasion could have remained an unspoken prejudice which Frere shared with many other Victorians. Instead, by elaborating it articulately, he elevated his presumption to the status of a political ideology.

In the encounter of a rising with a decadent civilisation the "dominant race" had three choices: the absolute "let alone" policy, which led inevitably to conquest in any case; the extension of empire by conquest; or a "middle course". The feasibility of the latter depended on the "motives of the dominant race" being "high and noble ... something higher than lust for empire or sordid love of gain ... and if the motives of the subject race be obedience founded on a sense of the superiority of their rulers and on goodwill and respect".¹⁰³ On this basis, drawing no distinction between Indian and African examples, Frere believed that Britain could secure the compliance of neighbouring territories without the necessity of conquest. However unrealisably naive his faith in Afro-Asian malleability might prove in practice, and however

101. See H.B.E. Frere, "On the laws affecting the relations between civilised and savage life, as bearing on the dealings of colonists with aborigines", Journal of the Anthropological Institute, XI (1882), pp.313-54.

102. Frere, The Speeches and Addresses, p.XII.

103. H.B.E. Frere, "Livingstone and Africa: A Lecture to members of the Philosophical Institute delivered in the Music Hall Edinburgh," "The Times", 6 January 1874, p.12, cols 1-3.

generous might be his personal motives in seeing the end-result as their elevation to European standards, proto-racialism provided part of the basis for Frere's sense of British cultural and personal superiority. Contrary, therefore, to the stark assertion that, "the English ideology of empire is not racist",¹⁰⁴ a racist-based sense of superiority was not only a part of the ideological superstructure of late 19TH. century empire - a postscript to territorial annexation - but a dynamic element in the policy making of some imperial administrators as early as the 1860's. By elevating into a political ideology a prejudice which may have been universal among the mid-Victorians, Frere, distinguishably, elaborated a poor analytical tool into a guideline to future action. That ideology would continue, into the 1870's, to guide his thinking on British policy towards Afghanistan.

* * *

The main strength of Jacob's Quetta scheme had been that it offered a clear-cut, concise alternative to established Indian foreign policy. When the project for occupying Quetta was revived in 1866 by Colonel Sir Henry Green - now Political Superintendent and Commandant on the Sind Frontier - it was meant and taken as an implicit criticism of what Jacob's disciples saw as the Viceroy's laxity in failing to guarantee India's security. The title of the memorandum in which Green revived the project, "Suggestions for the Protection of the North-West Frontier of India with reference to the Advance of the Russians in Central Asia", is indicative of the source of their unease. Though later regarded by Frere as confidential, the memorandum was originally delivered as a lecture at the United Service Club, Pall Mall, on the 16 August 1866 and Green, realising that a public lecture was unlikely to influence

104. G. Watson, The English Ideology: Studies in the Language of Victorian Politics (London, 1973), p.216.

government policy, then sent a copy to Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, Viscount Cranborne and later, by succession, 3RD Marquis of Salisbury.¹⁰⁵ But Salisbury had only been appointed Wood's successor as Secretary of State for India on 13 July that same year and, despite a Gergantuan appetite for work, was still relatively inexperienced in Indian foreign affairs. Deferring to Lawrence, he referred Green's memorandum to the Viceroy with the assurance that, "an expression of opinion from you must necessarily precede any expression of opinion on my part"¹⁰⁶ and an indication that he considered such apprehensions as Green's alarmist.

Green had presented a somewhat modified version of Jacob's earlier plan, having first established his authority to speak on the matter by referring to his 18 year long experience of Baluchistan and its people and a reading of the Jacob letters to Canning contained in Pelly's book. The modifications necessary, in obviating the need for any sudden movement of troops to the North-West frontier in the event of a war scare, were not only costly but also, depending on the pacificatory prophylaxis of British influence, demanded a more active British involvement in Baluchistan. An increase of 50,000 rupees in the Khan of Kalat's subsidy would reinforce his tenuous authority by strengthening his influence over the dissident Marri and Bugti peoples and also bind him closer to the British. At a further cost of 60,000 rupees per annum 200 Marri would enter British employ to police Cutch and ensure British troops safe transit to the bottom of the Bolan Pass. With the pacification of Baluchistan accomplished by the provision of "peace and plenty", and communications between the Bolan and the Upper Sind Frontier

105. During his first term as Secretary of State for India, Cecil was still Viscount Cranborne, but, for convenience and in order to avoid confusion, he has been referred to as the Marquis of Salisbury throughout.

106. Salisbury to Lawrence, 27 August 1866, ff.12-14. REEL 805/*4.

secured, "a small compact force might be detached from the Sind Frontier Brigade and encamped at Quetta".¹⁰⁷ From Quetta a political officer would act as the reaper and relayer of fresh intelligence on developments in Central Asia, as well as having a civilising influence, conducive to peace, order and plenty, in the territory immediately beyond the North-West frontier. Green's intention was to establish an outpost at Quetta, not to construct a cantonment. Instead, the small British force would be supplemented by local tribes¹⁰⁸ policing the Bolan area on their behalf: at the cost of a further 60,000 rupees per annum. Facing the problem of speedy communication with Quetta in case reinforcements were urgently needed - one of the principal weaknesses of Jacob's earlier scheme¹⁰⁸ - Green talked of filling in the rail gap between Hyderabad and Multan, linking the latter with Kotri and Sukkur, and constructing a branch line from Sukkur to Dadhar with a new road thence through the Bolan to Quetta. The occupation of Quetta, even by a small force, clearly involved accumulative financial expenditure and a host of lateral commitments which a sorely depleted Indian Exchequer could hardly afford.

The need to cater for every contingency, no matter how distant or unlikely, was a continual theme in the thinking of the "Bombay School". In the 1860's in particular, their wish to guarantee India's security absolutely was a reflection of the general unease which the British had felt since the popular rebellion of 1857 and of the facility with which their fears of a repetition could be revived. In the wake of the rebellion British trust in the loyalty of their Indian subject had

107. Henry Green, "Suggestions for the Protection of the North-West Frontier of India, with reference to the Advance of the Russians in Central Asia", p.8. L/P&S/3/72, pp.331-74.

108. See W.W. Hunter's conversation in 1874 with a high ranking artillery officer of the Indian Army, Reported J.W.S. Wyllie, Essays on the External Policy of India (London, 1875), p.120.

been dissipated. Green, for instance, held that no matter how just, beneficent or peaceful their rule, they would always govern a "strange land". Britain's continued rule depended not on trust but on power, which "the native is governed by and worships..., though it grinds him to the dust". With his belief in the mass of Indian citizenry as profoundly ignorant, excitable, and easily led by demagogic priests, Green saw British security depending on the invincibility and credibility of her power. Neither material prosperity nor educational advances could ensure more than, at best, Indians' neutrality in the event of British India's involvement in any foreign war.¹⁰⁹ Green's fears, then, emanated not from the danger of a large-scale Russian invasion, but from the possibility that Russia's mere renewed activity in Central Asia, if not ostentatiously countered by a British move on Quetta, might act catalytically to disaffect her Indian population.

In luridly dramatic terms, linking the Central Asian with the Eastern Question, Green predicted that: "at a suitable point, probably in conjunction with the resurrection of the Eastern Question, England, under strain of European war with Russia, may then have a horde of Afghan and Persian Horse, led by Russian officers, pouring into Sind, and doing more harm in a few days to our prestige than years of success could make up for. ...Russia could injure us without redemption without a regular Russian soldier approaching within 500 miles of our frontier".¹¹⁰ In Green's imagination, this Asiatic horde would be supplemented in India by those "thousands under our rule who would be ready to assist them". Though he did not share his scurrilous prejudices, Frere, Green's

109. See "Russia in Central Asia", a letter to the editor of "The Times" by "A General Officer". "The Times", 6 September 1869, p.9, cols.3-4. Though the letter is anonymous, the ideas contained therein and the familiarity shown with Baluchistan make it apparent that Green, who stayed in Britain by this time, was the correspondent.

110. Green, "Suggestions for the Protection", pp.9-10.

immediate superior as Governor of Bombay, was likewise uneasy about the undependability of India's citizenry and had often expressed concern about the likelihood of internal unrest; his unease focussing on India's Muslim population.¹¹¹ Jacob's scheme had originally been envisaged as the pre-emption of an invasion attempt. Its adherents now saw the need for it, in a somewhat altered form, dictated by British vulnerability to native Indian opposition. In the imperial context, where the subject people's loyalty could not be depended on, "der primat den innenpolitik" operated; and foreign policy was, to a remarkable extent, a function of domestic considerations.

Any impression Salisbury might have had of the need to occupy Quetta must have quickly disappeared under the criticisms of the Punjab School - traditional rival to the Sind and Bombay faction. The former Lt.-Governor of the Punjab Sir Robert Montgomery, to whom Salisbury had referred Green's proposal, dismissed the encampment plan as it stood as impracticable, likely to prove increasingly costly in financing and enforcing, and liable to be seen by the Afghans as an aggressive act. The British could best defend their sub-continental empire by remaining behind the existing frontier, strengthening their hold on India by "Peace and Public Works" and ensuring Afghan sympathy in the event of any Russian aggression.¹¹² From India, Lawrence, who had received a copy of the memorandum unofficially, likewise dismissed any pre-emptive move as likely to arouse Afghan enmity. Forwarding letters on the idea by his colleagues, Sir Herbert Edwards and Colonel Reynolds Taylor, Lawrence agreed with the former that the Russian advance would be very slow and that a common Anglo-Russian frontier in Asia was 50 years

111. See Frere to Wood, Bombay, 10 February 1866. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/16, ff. 101-2; Frere to Lawrence, Bombay 13 March 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/45, Letter 29; Frere to Wood, Bombay, 11 November 1859. MSS.EUR.F.78/88/1, ff.16v & 17r.

112. Montgomery to Salisbury, Malvern Wells, 4 September 1866. REEL805/*4.

distant. He saw the project as the idle concoction of a frontier officer anxious to prove his worth and eager for military distinction.¹¹³ Salisbury thought the scheme "insane" and by January 1867 could write: "The idea of advance upon the North-West frontier is happily abandoned. There are upon that frontier none of the conditions which would make any kind of annexation permissible or practicable".¹¹⁴

In Bombay, meanwhile, with customary persistence, Frere had officially sent a copy of Green's memorandum to the Government of India with supporting minutes. Frere was convinced that Green's modified scheme for an encampment rather than a large permanent cantonment anticipated the traditional objections, on the grounds of isolation and antagonism of the Afghans, to Jacob's idea. He therefore recommended that a grant of 50,000 rupees per annum be placed at Green's disposal for the next two years so that he could introduce the preliminary arrangements in Baluchistan.¹¹⁵ Foreseeing a danger of an Afghan occupation of Quetta, he presumably suffered from Green's "Asiatic horde" phobia. But Frere's attempt to make himself and his presidency as independent of the Viceroy's authority as possible had hardly enamoured him to the exasperated Lawrence, who had borne, unvindictively, an unceasing spate of ideas, queries and quarrels from the Governor of Bombay. Though agreeing to give Green 50,000 rupees annually for the next two years to be used in the Bolan and Cutch areas for facilitating trade and encouraging agriculture, any advance to Quetta was decidedly rejected by the Governor-General in Council on the grounds that: it would cost 170,000 rupees

113. Lawrence to Salisbury, Simla, 26 October 1866. REEL805/*5; Lawrence to Salisbury, Simla, 4 November 1866. REEL806/*6.

114. Salisbury, "Memorandum on the policy of the Bombay Government", January 1867. REEL810/*65; Salisbury to Stanley, 7 December 1866. C.C.L. D/72/21, p.29.

115. See "Minute by H.C. the Governor", 26 November 1866. Despatch 15, Government of Bombay to S.S.I., 5 March 1867. Received via Marseilles, 27 March 1867. L/P&S/3/72, p.357.

annually, and domestic expenditure, especially on railways, precluded such disbursement; as a listening post Quetta would be no more accurate or speedy than other sources and in some cases less so; and the winning side in any future Anglo-Russian conflict along India's borders would be the one which refrained from entanglements in the barren mountains separating the two imperial powers. The state of affairs in Central Asia offered no grounds, at that moment, for considering Quetta's occupation. In the Viceroy's opinion, Green was being unnecessarily alarmist.¹¹⁶

Rebuffed and exasperated at the Governor-General's hopeless obduracy,¹¹⁷ Frere realised the terms of his reply precluded further discussion, and in early March, directed that copies of the whole correspondence be sent to the Secretary of State; presumably in the forlorn hope that Salisbury might prove more sympathetic. But the Government of India had anticipated^{him} by already despatching these, together with their final decision, to London¹¹⁸; where they caused some concern to Sir John W. Kaye, Secretary of the Political and Secret Department of the India Office, as to whether his opinion on the matter was sought or not.¹¹⁹ In subsequent correspondence on the subject, Lawrence, clearly haunted by the ghost of 1838-39, vented his fear that a forward movement to Quetta would terminate ultimately in Afghanistan's occupation: a move which would so incense the Afghans as to drive them straight into the arms of Russia. British rule in India could best be secured by reconciling potentially disaffected Indians to it. The British should

116. G.I. to Government of Bombay, Fort William, 17 January 1867. L/P&S/5/357, pp.362-65.

117. Frere to Salisbury, Bombay, 12 February 1867. REEL806/*20.

118. G.I. to S.S.I., Fort William, Political 15, 23 January 1867. Received, 19 February 1867. L/P&S/5/260, pp.47-70

119. J.W. Kaye, "Memorandum on the occupation of Quetta", (Secret), India Office, 22 February 1867. L/P&S/3/72, pp.327-9.

give India the best government possible, by beneficial investment of scarce resources and by keeping taxation low through their refusal to spend money on extravagant projects beyond the frontier. Any advance beyond the frontier would jeopardise India's prosperity and hence British security. The members of his Council concurred in Lawrence's conviction that security was best served by remaining behind the Indus frontier and, with fresh, easily reinforced troops, attacking Russia's invasion forces as they debouched from the passes, dispirited and disordered.¹²⁰ Such opponents as Sir William Mansfield, C-in-C India, and its earlier antagonist H.M. Durand, mistakenly and heedlessly attacked Green as if it were a full-scale invasion rather than subversive activity that he sought to guard against. Such critical misapprehension of the "Bombay School's" motives continued into the 70's. They cast Green as a Russophobist, suffering needlessly from nervous apprehensions and purely restless, visionary anticipations of an attack which might never come and could easily be dealt with as it developed.¹²¹ The new Secretary of State, Sir Stafford Northcote,¹²² likewise deprecated Russophobia as unwise and undignified,¹²³ and agreed with the Governor-General on the inexpediency of occupying Quetta; both on political and military grounds.¹²⁴

Any pre-emptive move taken to forestall an anticipated rival is adopted in much the same way as an actuary calculates an insurance premium: the greater the likelihood of an event occurring, the higher the premium demanded. In the same way the higher the credibility of the enemy threat, the greater the likelihood that active counter-measures

120. Report of India to G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, 23 October 1867. L/P&S/5/530, pp.693 & 721-57.

121. G.I. to S.S.I., Fort William, Political 28, 8 February 1867. L/P&S/5/260, pp.107-24, 24-57.

122. Salisbury, opposed to a Disraeli amendment of the Reform Bill, had resigned on 14 March 1867, and been replaced by Sir Stafford Northcote, Earl of Iddesleigh.

123. Northcote to Lawrence, 10 April 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/28, Letter 17.

124. S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 15, 26 December 1867. L/P&S/5/591, pp.767-74.

will be taken in advance. It was the task of the "Bombay School" to convince contemporary politicians that a threat to India, either from an Asiatic horde or agitative Russian military demonstrations, was real enough. A higher premium - the costly occupation of Quetta - would then be paid when the political actuaries saw the likely incidence of danger as proportionately greater. So far, neither Jacob, Frere nor Green had convinced them of this and the word "alarmist" was widely employed by their critics as a description of their stance.¹²⁵ The obfuscating use of this cant phrase apart, the "Bombay School" may have been needlessly apprehensive. Russian Central Asian advances in the 1860's were confined to a north-south axis in the Kokand, Bukhara region, whence any expeditionary force would have to traverse the Karakumy Desert to Herat. There was as yet no consequential Russian activity on the more dangerous west-east axis from well-entrenched positions on the Caspian littoral. The Quetta scheme was more appropriate to the Russian advances of the 70's than those of the 60's.

But the "School's" fears for the future are comprehensible and cannot be entirely dismissed with facility. Fully aware of the unscrupulous opportunism of international politics, they saw the value to Russian diplomacy of subversive activities and demonstrative military moves against India. In a global perspective they had ultimately realised that the Eastern Question and the Central Asian Question were not independent problems but interlinked parts of a more general "Russian Question". The approximation of two imperial territories created a situation in which one power's defensive preparations was seen by the other as needless aggression. As a result there developed an infinitely regressive

125. See F. Trench, The Russo-Indian Question historically, strategically and politically considered (London, 1869), pp.V-VI.

reaction of cause with effect in which cause became effect,¹²⁶ suspicion bred suspicion and anticipation precipitated, if it did not actually determine, the conclusion it was meant to guard against. The "Bombay School" may be criticisable as ultra-suspicious of Russian intentions, yet the need to maximise self-advantage, in the event of a conflict, by taking preventive action is a strategically respectable measure. Wisdom after the event - given that an Anglo-Russian conflict proved inevitable - must not lead to scornful dismissal of their fears.

The holding of Quetta undoubtedly offered a number of strategic and tactical advantages. It provided facilities for offensive as well as defensive operations, commanding as it did an avenue into rival country, as well as the Bolan Pass in its rear.¹²⁷ But as a defensive fortress faced with a determined invasion attempt, its capacity to delay the enemy would have been minimal unless closely linked with the highly mobile harrying of slow moving enemy columns by guerilla bands. The main value of its occupation in the 60's would have been symbolic and psychological. Whether the Russians attempted, by an armed demonstration along the frontier or by provoking unrest in Afghanistan or Baluchistan, to subvert Britain's hold on India, the forward movement would have been less a deterrent to such activity than a declaration of the British intention to act firmly against it. In this context Quetta's value as a listening post would have been high, although the presence of British political officers so far in advance of the North-West frontier, and the likelihood that they would roam about gathering their intelligence, would probably have acerbated international tensions subsequent to Russian accusations of spying activity.

126. Lawrence himself seems to have been vaguely aware of this, See Lawrence to Salisbury, 4 November 1856, f.4. REEL806/*6.

127. See Major-General E.B. Hamley, The Strategical Conditions of our Indian North-West Frontier: A Lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institution (London, 1878), pp.6-7.

By the mid-1860's Quetta, far from being an obscure geographical place name, was the readily recognisable short-hand title of a scheme to help provide for the defence of India. Revivable when appropriate but as yet unimplemented, it had entered the index of stock solutions to the perennial problem of the North-West frontier's security. Originating in the resourceful mind of John Jacob, his forceful personality had attracted a sufficient number of well-placed, articulate adherents to the scheme to ensure its survival after his death. The Quetta project can be called a forward movement insofar as it involved territorial annexation in a dependent ally's domains, 150-200 miles in advance of the British held Trans-Indus region. But Jacob cannot for this reason be called the originator of 'The "Forward Policy"',¹²⁸ for no such unitary policy existed. His most prominent disciple in the Indian administration, for example, repeatedly called for a more active British diplomatic effort in Afghanistan; and insofar as Frere's views formed a dynamic alternative to the ostrich-like postures of the 1860's Governors-General, these too could be classed as "forward". There was no single "Forward Policy" but a series of "forward" stratagems - diplomatic as well as military, informal as well as annexationist - aimed at maximising India's security. To the extent that he was progenitor of the long-lived Quetta scheme, Jacob contributed one strand to the thread of such stratagems. But his project was malleable, and adherence to it did not exclude wholehearted commitment to any additional means which might be regarded as a surety of British rule. On 30 May 1867 its most prominent adherent, Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere, entered the India Office as a member of the Council of India.

128. See Lambrick, John Jacob, p.413.

Chapter 3. Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson and "The Key to India": The West.

If, in the 1860's, there was no monogenetic, integral "Forward Policy", the supplement to the "Bombay school" angle was provided by the most knowledgeable British publicist on Central Asian affairs, Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson. His solution revolved round the shibboleth "Herat - The Key to India". Entering the Indian Army as a young officer in 1827, Rawlinson soon showed himself recklessly daring and courageous but also, despite endless socializing, displayed a considerable facility with Eastern languages, especially Persian.¹ Throughout his life, Rawlinson's ideas, like his character, partook of the unthinkingly adventurous and the rigorously scholarly. But unfortunately his scholarship was subordinated to an impetuosity in reaching conclusions which it was then called upon to substantiate or defend. His portraits reveal him, physiognomically, as a vigorous and resolutely determined person, even as an old man: the intent, penetrating gaze, the firmly set mouth, the chin rounded yet prominent. In possession of an idée fixe, he would obviously bring into play the whole apparatus of his not insignificant intellect to substantiate the position he had already adopted.

Rawlinson's espousing the causes he did in the 1860's can be largely understood by reference to his military career in the 1830's and early 1840's: to his involvement in the Great Game, as a close associate of Sir John McNeill's in Persia 1833-39 and as British Political Agent in Western Afghanistan 1840-42. A passionate student of Persian language, literature, geography and history, Lieutenant Rawlinson was seconded to the "British Detachment in Persia", from October 1833 to December 1839. In his last two years there, he was based in Teheran

1. See G. Rawlinson, A Memoir of Major-General Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson (London, 1898), pp.21-34.
2. Ibid, pp.164,245 & Frontispiece.

and was a colleague to Todd, Stoddart and McNeill. The author of the crude anti-Russian polemic of 1836, "The Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East",³ McNeill, as early as 1827, had propounded the idea that Herat was the key to India and that India's security depended on Herat's possession by a friendly power.⁴ Possibly he was the author of the "key" imagery which ever after adhered to Herat. Rawlinson worked closely with McNeill. Despatched by him in the autumn of 1837 for political duty with the Persian army, then on the first of its expeditions against Herat, Rawlinson encountered in Khorassan a group of Russians which included the subsequently mysterious Vitkovitch. Irrespective of the Russians' subsequent behaviour and the eventual revelation that Vitkovitch was on his way to Kabul to deliver presents to Dost Mahomed, Rawlinson, already disposed to suspect Russia of intrigues at Herat and her intentions in Afghanistan, reported his chance discovery to McNeill.⁵ Then, in charge of the British intelligence department in Teheran, he acquired a copy of a secret draft treaty between the Shah and Kohundil Khan, Sirdar of Kandahar, which had been guaranteed by Count Simonich, Russian Envoy at Teheran. Translated, it seemed to confirm the predisposing influence which Simonich was suspected of enjoying over the Shah, and so Rawlinson forwarded it too to McNeill,

3. John McNeill, Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East (London, 1836).
4. See John McNeill, "Invasion of India".
5. From his letter of 1 November 1837 it seems clear that Rawlinson, possibly as a result of earlier conversations with McNeill, was predisposed to suspicion of the Russians' presence. See G. Rawlinson, A Memoir, p. 67. Mystery still surrounds the exact nature of Vitkovitch's mission and the extent to which he was acting under the orders of the St. Petersburg government. It seems distinctly possible, from the testimony of Duhamel, Russian Envoy at Teheran after Count Simonich's recall, that Vitkovitch was acting under verbal instructions from Rodafikin, Director of the Asiatic Department. If Duhamel is correct, Russia did intend playing an active role in Afghan affairs in 1837-38, but was dissuaded by Britain's precipitate seizure of Karrah in the Persian Gulf and her organising the Afghan expeditionary force. See P.E. Mosely, "Russian Policy in Asia 1838-39", Slavonic and East European Review 14 (1935-36), pp.670-81.

new himself at Herat.⁶

Rawlinson's two opportune revelations helped provide the proof which an already highly suspicious McNeill needed of Russia's ulterior behaviour, and formed an important part of the background to his transmission of the influential "Meshed Despatch" to London and Calcutta.⁷

Their close association had also made it possible for McNeill to become Rawlinson's intellectual mentor. In Rawlinson's suspicions of Russian activity in Persia, Herat and Afghanistan, as well as his subsequent representation of Herat as "the key to India", this would seem to have been the case. So close was the relationship that Rawlinson, who corresponded regularly with McNeill in the 1840's, could write: "I owe everything in life to your kindness and support".⁸ In the hope that McNeill would become his political patron, he had delayed his departure for Afghanistan in February 1840, in case McNeill might become ambassador at Constantinople and secure him an appointment at Baghdad.⁹ Rawlinson was later to describe McNeill's book as: "Undoubtedly the ablest of these papers which have appeared in modern times" and thought combined

6. McNeill sent a copy of Rawlinson's translation to Lord Palmerston, expressing his grave suspicions of Russian intentions and seeing the treaty as having "for its object to unite Herat and Candahar under a chief who shall be nominally subject to Persia, but actually under the protection of Russia". McNeill to Palmerston, Camp before Herat, 11 April 1838. Quoted J.P. Ferrier, Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan and Beloochistan (London, 1856), Appendix 8, p.507.

7. Originally a private letter to Palmerston (copy to Auckland) of 25 June 1838, in it McNeill expressed his conviction that Herat, unless it was secured, would be lost to Russian influence together with Persia and Afghanistan. Far from being a passive transmitter of information, in Persia in 1838 McNeill was an influential figure whose views were closely attended to both in London and Calcutta. The "Meshed Despatch" is one of the key documents in the history of the First Afghan War. See J.A. Morris, The First Afghan War 1838-42 pp.177-79

8. See Mrs. F. MacAlister, Memoir of Sir John McNeill (London, 1910) p.276.

9. H.C. Rawlinson, Journal of 1839-40. R.G.S./H.C.R.4, ff.6r &10v.

a masterly familiarity with the subject with accurate judgement and freedom from bias.¹⁰ Carrying out his self-imposed task of publicist of the dangers of Russian activity in Central Asia in the 1860's and 70's, Rawlinson clearly did so as the ideological heir-apparent and spiritual amanuensis to McNeill.

The second seminal experience which determined Rawlinson's future ideas on Central Asian politics centred on Western Afghanistan. As a Brevet-Major in the Indian diplomatic service, at the age of thirty he was appointed British Political Agent at Kandahar with political responsibility for all Western Afghanistan. Prior to this appointment he had held himself in readiness at Kabul; under orders to proceed to Khiva as joint British commissioner with Captain Arthur Conolly, in anticipation of its occupation by Russia. But, on the failure of General Perovski's expedition, the scale of the proposed mission to the Uzbek khanate was cut and Rawlinson was denied the opportunity of accompanying Conolly to his death. Never losing sight of the wider significance of Britain's presence in Afghanistan, Rawlinson only reconciled himself with difficulty to his Kandahar post. He wished instead that he had been part of that adventurous crew of British "politicals" who were in the vanguard of the Great Game and, in July 1840, reckoned Abbot and Shakespear's handsome reception in Khiva affirmed "more obviously than ever the policy if not the necessity of our direct interference for its preservation".¹¹ From April to September 1841 Rawlinson, in competition with Todd, Abbot and Shakespear, tried to gain for himself the post of Political Agent at Herat.¹² Though unsuccessful, Rawlinson clearly belonged, by personal disposition and political inclination, among the

10. H.C. Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East (London, 1875), First Edition, p.4.

11. Rawlinson to E.B. Eastwick, Kandahar, 25 July 1840. MSS.EUR.F.18/1, p.338.

12. Rawlinson to E.B. Eastwick, Kandahar, 29 April, 5 May, 12 June, 6 July, 27 September 1841. MSS.EUR.F.18/1, pp.349-63.

ranks of Burnes, Todd, Conolly, Stoddart, Abbot, Shakespear and Pottinger.¹³
 His being sidetracked into the less individualistically adventurous post
 at Kandahar made him a Great Gamesman manque. Nevertheless he carried
 forward into the future their robust adventurism: a quality bred partly
 of a foolhardy carelessness of consequences and partly of an unthinking
 faith in individual prowess or the dramatic gesture's capacity for chang-
 ing the course of history. In Rawlinson's person these characteristics
 were carried home to the metropolitan and forward into the 60's and 70's.

While at Kandahar, Rawlinson combined his administrative duties
 with serious, wide-ranging studies of Western Afghanistan's topography
 and geography,¹⁴ providing himself with a first-hand, unique experience of
 the area, which was to be put to good use in future attempts to influence
 less knowledgeable politicians. He was very conscious of his authority
 and jealously upheld it against any suspected infringement by the mili-
 tary commander, General Nott, with whom he frequently interfered, even
 on tactical matters of which he was ignorant. He also displayed an un-
 thinking cruelty in his treatment of the Afghans: defending his expul-
 sion of 5,000 Afghans from Kandahar in the winter of early 1842 on
 the grounds that it was a harsh but necessary action. War to him was a
 glorious game for his own self-advancement, and in this or any other war
 his actions and thoughts were hardly likely to be troubled by humanitar-
 ian calculations of the cost in human life. Manifestly failing to draw
 the same conclusions from the First Afghan War as John Laurence,¹⁵

Rawlinson regarded the British retreat as ignominious and her withdrawal
 from Afghanistan in 1842 as political naivety; the consequences of which
 would be Persian domination, and ulterior Russian pre-eminence, at Herat

13. See H.W.C. Davis, "Raleigh Lecture in History: The Great Game in
 Asia (1800-1844)," Proceedings of the British Academy, XII (1926),
 pp. 227-56.

14. See Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, XI (1866-67),
 p.118. Hereafter referred to as: P.R.G.S.

15. See chapter 3, p.91, footnote 109.

and Kandahar.¹⁶

Between the British occupation of Afghanistan 1838-42, and re-activated Russian pressure on the Uzbek khanates in the 1860's, the Central Asian Question was never really closed. It was only periodically in abeyance and roused itself intermittently.¹⁷ The Great Game was not played out in 1842, for it was an episodic saga, the theme of which would be taken up by Rawlinson in different surroundings in the 1860's, intensifying mercurially in the mid-70's and reaching its climax in the Second Afghan War. Rawlinson's activities and views in the 1850's show him to have been a sentient link between the first and second dénouements. This is apparent from his several initiatives surrounding the Crimean War, and his obscure attempts to secure closer British relations with both Herat and Persia during his one year period as H.M. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of the Shah of Persia.

Stationed at Baghdad 1843-55, as British Political Agent and H.M. Consul and Consul-General in Turkish Arabia, Rawlinson was principally concerned with his work on the cuneiform inscriptions at Behistun, the deciphering of which earned him the reputation of Britain's and one of Europe's foremost assyriologists. In mid-1853 he was anxious lest Persia, persuaded or pressurised by Russia, should throw a 40,000 man army against Turkish Arabia, take Baghdad within a year and accelerate the disintegration of an Ottoman Empire whose Asiatic dominions acted as a buffer between East and West and prevented France or Russia from impinging on India. In the event of a Russo-Persian alliance against the Ottomans he suggested offensive and defensive operations to both

16. Rawlinson to Sir John Outram, Kandahar, 18 May 1842. Quoted G. Rawlinson, A Memoir, pp.120-21.

17. This is certainly suggested by the recent work of G.J. Alder. See G.J. Alder, "India and the Crimean War"; *ibid*, "The Key to India?: Britain and the Herat Problem, 1830-1863" Parts 1 & 2, Middle Eastern Studies, 10 (1974), pp.186-209 & 288-311.

the British and Indian governments. These involved the occupation of Baghdad and Pashalia by units of the Indian Army, and the invasion of Persia from the Gulf by a brigade charged with proclaiming the Shah's brother, Abbas Mirza, in his place.¹⁸ By mid-November a Persian initiative on Russia's behalf seemed a distinct possibility and Rawlinson again urged the practicability of the operations he had suggested.¹⁹ Clarendon in the Foreign Office thought this impending change in Anglo-Persian relations called for the issue of a stern warning, but by January 1854 the fears of Persian interference had diminished and finally Persia abided by the British government's advice that she maintain a strict neutrality in any Russo-Turkish conflict.²⁰

Satisfied that a Perso-Turkish conflict in Arabia was no longer likely,²¹ by April 1854 Rawlinson had turned his attention from Western to Central Asia and was credulously subscribing to reports that an advancing Russian army had taken Khiva. Anticipating a Russian counter-coup against Britain's eastern interests as a means of offsetting proceedings in the Baltic and Black Seas, he feared Russian energies would be concentrated on the occupation of Herat. Though the reports of Russian intrigues were soon proved false, he re-emphasised Herat's importance as a point from which Russia could seriously embarrass India. Perhaps, he suggested, the time was fast approaching when, Herat's immense value to India having been acknowledged, British troops would effect its occupation along with Quetta, Kandahar, Girishek and Farah.²²

18. Rawlinson to Addington, Baghdad, 13 June 1853. Enclosure 2, Despatch 75, 28 December 1853, L/P&S/5/479; Rawlinson to Sir Stratford de Redcliffe, Baghdad, 24 August 1853. L/P&S/3/39 between pp.293-5.

19. Rawlinson to Allen, Baghdad, 4 November 1853. Enclosure 1, Despatch 75, 28 December 1853, L/P&S/5/479; Rawlinson to Addington, Baghdad, 26 November 1853. L/P&S/3/39, pp.299-302.

20. Thomson to Rawlinson, Teheran, 15 November 1853. L/P&S/5/479, pp.307-310; Clarendon to Wood, 30 December 1853. L/P&S/3/39, pp.293-94; Clarendon to Thomson, 10 & 17 January 1854. L/P&S/3/40.

21. Rawlinson to Clarendon, Baghdad, 15 February 1854. L/P&S/3/40.

22. Rawlinson to Elphinstone, Baghdad, 20 April & 3 July 1854. MSS.EUR.F. 87/7a/28.

Doubting the probability of Russian encroachments but anxious nevertheless to offset any such possibility, the British and Indian governments would agree to go only as far as a defensive alliance with the Dost.²³

Rawlinson's suggestions clearly received little sympathy from his superiors, who were anxious to avoid any compromising radiation of the Crimean conflict to Central or Western Asia.²⁴

It may have been this concern over Herat which led Rawlinson, in 1855, to act as the barely acknowledged co-editor of J.P. Ferrier's "Caravan Journeys and Wanderings" in conjunction with his future brother-in-law Henry Denby Seymour.²⁵ There seems little doubt that Seymour and Rawlinson meant the translated work to be a didactic political script coinciding with a long drawn out Crimean War, rather than a mere entertaining traveller's tale.²⁶ Though at no point did he indicate that Herat might be the key to India, Ferrier did advocate an armed English advance beyond the Indus frontier in the event of a Russian attack, and the British occupation of Kabul and Kandahar.²⁷ Rawlinson probably reckoned that Ferrier, an officer whose experience of the problems involved in marching through difficult, provisionless terrain gave him an eye for

23. Board of Control to G.I., 9 August 1854. MSS.EUR.F.78/ India Board Papers. India. Bundle 38.

24. See Alder "India and the Crimean War".

25. J.P. Ferrier, Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan, and Beloochistan (London, 1856). Translated from unpublished French manuscripts by Captain W. Jesse. Edited by H.D. Seymour. For several years Seymour was Vernon Smith's Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the India Board and favoured an offensive against Russia during the Crimean War. For the intimation of Rawlinson's co-editorship, see pp.IX & X.

26. Several favourable and extensive extracts from McNeill's correspondence were reprinted in footnotes. See, for example, *ibid* p.161 and the appendix, p.507.

27. *Ibid*, p.471.

the practicability of an armed invasion of India,²⁸ would provide greater respectability and acceptability for his own long-held views on the need for a British military commitment beyond the Indus frontier in certain circumstances. In the uncompleted draft of a review, Rawlinson welcomed the book's appearance as "singularly opportune", found it possessed a certain air of authority and, in the expectation of further vexing developments in the Eastern Question, considered it of some value to the public.²⁹ But the book's political and strategic content went unremarked, and excited no critical comment, public attention or government notice.³⁰ Rawlinson's various attempts, either through official or private correspondence or as a publicist by proxy, to have his ideas attended to, had failed universally thus far.

After a four year interlude in London, Rawlinson, appointed British representative to the Shah's court in Teheran in May 1859, regained the chance of active involvement in Central Asian politics. Focussing on the still unsolved Herat problem, he wished to see Herat's continued independence, bolstered by closer British relations with it and Persia rather than with Afghanistan. But Rawlinson held the post for only nine months; resigning on its re-transfer to the Foreign Office. He had taken it in the first place because he wished to employ the freedom of manoeuvre granted by the India Office and to enjoy the emphasis

28. Originally an officer in the French Chasseurs d'Afrique, Ferrier had been part of a contingent of French officers engaged in drilling and organising the Persian Army. Expelled from Persia after several years for his opposition to Russian interests there, he had set out from Teheran in April 1845 but, failing to reach India, returned via Herat in January 1846. In 1854, while holding a government post in Pondicherry, Ferrier again met H.D. Seymour - they had first met in early 1846, shortly after the former's return to Persia - who undertook to edit the translated account of his journey.

29. See the incomplete, one-page draft of a review of Ferrier's book. R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers. Contained in the black folder with brass lock.

30. Its reviewer merely saw it as a highly readable traveller's account - another of those 19TH. century geographical works then so popular as a coffee-table volume. See Chamber's Journal of Popular Literature, VI (1856), pp. 170-74.

which, from an Indocentric viewpoint, would be placed on Persia as an adjunct of India's defence. The wherewithal he wished granted for the distribution of lavish presents he would have used in his highly personalised method of conducting Oriental diplomacy in order to obtain pro-British allies in the Shah's court. Though he found that Russia's influence over Persia was not overwhelming,³¹ his first impression was that she intended using Persia as a catspaw in the conquest of Khiva. Hoping to delay that undesirable, though admittedly inevitable, eventuality, he aimed at offsetting Russian influence at Teheran.³² To this end he held repeated, confidential conversations with Ferrukh Khan, one of the Shah's ministers, in an attempt to build up a strong, pro-British party within the Persian court.³³ Though Rawlinson was sure he was making great strides in weaning even the Shah away from Russia,³⁴ he failed to persuade his superiors in London to give material evidence of a desire to draw Persia closer to Britain. The despatch of a British contingent, he felt, would have a positive effect out of all proportion to its cost without entailing any ulterior responsibilities. The contingent would be valuable if it thoroughly committed Persia to an English alliance but, additionally, it might confirm Persian independence of Russia and constitute her an effective barrier against further Russian advances on India.³⁵ However, Rawlinson's individual initiative fell foul of Hammond, the influential Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office - where jurisdiction over Anglo-Persian relations had been re-transferred

31. Rawlinson to Clerk, Teheran, 14 April 1860. MSS.EUR.D.538/5a, ff.60-61.

32. Rawlinson to Elphinstone, Teheran, 14 December 1859. MSS.EUR.F.87/6e/10.

33. The best source on Rawlinson's methods is his own Teheran diary. Descriptions of various meetings with Ferrukh Khan are given in it. See *Private Journal - Teheran*, 1 January - 15 May 1860. R.G.S./H.C.R.17, pp.10-12 & 19.

34. *Ibid.*, p.43.

35. Rawlinson to Russell, Teheran, 27 April 1860. L/P&S/9/161.

The one initiative of Rawlinson's which was sanctioned was the despatch of Captain Lewis Pelly to Herat, "in order to gain a thorough knowledge of the state of affairs there from personal observation".⁴² Rawlinson's own cousin, whom he had attracted to Teheran with hopes of his appointment as Secretary of Legation,⁴³ Pelly, "as hard as iron, plastic, ambitious, full of talent and energy and ready for any work",⁴⁴ was to return to India via Herat and Afghanistan. In the meantime he replaced his cousin until a successor arrived.⁴⁵ Most impressed by Sultan Ahmed Khan after a meeting and conversation with him, Pelly reiterated to the home government Rawlinson's suggestions on the need for a firmer British commitment to Herat's independence.⁴⁶ Leaving Teheran on 10 September 1860, Pelly travelled, undisguised and unescorted, from Persia via Herat, Kandahar, the Bolan Pass and Baluchistan to Karachi: "the only European travelling singly who has passed through since the time of the Afghan war".⁴⁷ Following his despatches from Herat and Mastung,⁴⁸ on reaching Calcutta he had several conversations with Canning in the first half of 1861.⁴⁹ In both despatch and conversation he tried

42. Rawlinson to Russell, Teheran, 13 May 1860. F.O.60/249, Letter 83, f.3v ; Alison to Rawlinson, Camp near Teheran, 12 September 1860. L/P&S/9/161.

43. Pelly to Russell, Camp near Teheran, 5 July 1860. F.O.60/250.

44. See P.R.G.S., VII(1863-64), p.20.

45. Rawlinson, who had threatened to do so before leaving England, resigned his post when the Persian Mission's re-transfer to Foreign Office control was confirmed. See G. Rawlinson, A Memoir, pp.223-26.

46. Pelly to Russell, Teheran, 22 May 1860. L/P&S/9/161.

47. See 44 above.

48. Pelly to Canning, Herat, 27 October 1860 & Mastung, 1 December 1860. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX5.

49. The fullest and least known source of these conversations is three separate draft sections of a letter written by Pelly to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay in January 1863, while Pelly was British Resident in the Persian Gulf. The letter followed a query on Pelly's assurances to Sultan Ahmed Khan, made by E.B. Eastwick, Chargé d'Affaires in Teheran. I reconstituted these three overlapping sections and placed them in their proper sequence in order to get a full account of Pelly's recommendations to Canning in Calcutta. See Pelly to Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay, Choghadak, near Bandar E Bushehr, 25 January 1863. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX5.

in late 1859.³⁶ The Under-Secretary wished to keep Rawlinson on as short a leash as possible and to adopt a show of indifference towards Persia.³⁷

Immediately prior to the Persian mission's re-transfer, Wood in the India Office expressed his agreement with Rawlinson that Britain had badly mismanaged her affairs at Herat and expressed his "hope that you may be able to improve our position there without creating jealousy at Teheran".³⁸ Anxious because he imagined the Russian geographer Khanikov's recent visit to Herat might be the thin commercial end of a Russian political wedge, Rawlinson took Wood's injunction as his brief. Of the three options of a Herat absorbed by Persia, a Herat included in an enlarged Amirate of Kabul, or an independent Herat, he favoured the latter. Albeit, it could only be done by seeing that the Dost respected that independence, by Britain's buying him off with the cession of the Peshawur district, and by the appointment to Herat of an agent charged with dispensing a British subsidy.³⁹ When Sultan Ahmed Khan, sirdar of a still independent but very pro-Persian Herat, visited Teheran for a month, Rawlinson held several, confidential conversations with him and was sanguine of his adopting a pro-British stance.⁴⁰ But his personal initiatives on the spot were again in vain, for Hammond had already stated categorically that British policy was to allow events in the region of Persia, Afghanistan and Herat to take their natural course without British interference.⁴¹

36. Wood to Rawlinson, 31 December 1859. L/P&S/9/3, pp.52-3.

37. Hammond memorandum: "Policy to be observed by the British Minister in Persia with regard to Herat and Afghanistan". L/P&S/3/65, pp.203-8.

38. Wood to Rawlinson, 28 December 1859. R.A.S./Teheran Mission, Letter 13.

39. Rawlinson to Wood, Teheran, 2 January 1860. L/P&S/9/160.

40. Rawlinson to Russell, Teheran, 25 April 1860. F.O. 60/248, Letter 13; Rawlinson to Russell, Teheran, 17 May 1860. F.O.60/249. Letter 83.

41. Hammond to Clerk, 16 February 1860. L/P&S/3/65, pp. 183-84.

to persuade the Viceroy to sanction a one-article treaty of friendship with Herat and, if not a subsidy, at least the appointment of a British agent together with the despatch of some arms and artillery and the restoration of Farah to Herat. Canning had at least three interviews with Pelly but, having agreed at first to send a well-publicised letter of friendship, drafted by Pelly,⁵⁰ to Sultan Ahmed Khan, he later changed his mind and declared his indifference to Herat's fate. Though there is no documentary evidence of collusion between Rawlinson and Pelly, the coincidence of their views is remarkable,⁵¹ especially when Pelly's being a devotee of Jacob's ideas is taken into account. It does not seem too far-fetched to suggest that Rawlinson, having briefed Pelly on the most advisable policy towards Herat, hoped he could exploit his unique, first-hand appreciation of the situation beyond the frontier to wield an extra-persuasive influence over the Government of India. Rawlinson's rather obscure attempt, if such it was, to influence government thinking on Herat, failed.

It would be easy to see Rawlinson on the early 1860's as a spent force, an anachronism, a man repeatedly frustrated in his attempts to modify government policy. But the reality is very different. Retaining his full intellectual and physical vigour, in the early 60's he was engaged at the British Museum in editing and publishing "The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia"; and in 1862, aged 52, he married Louise Seymour siring three children by her. Brashly self-confident and with an openly declared Palmerstonian outlook in politics⁵² he had a great

50. A copy of this draft letter, which was to be no more than a formal public declaration of the Government of India's friendliness towards the sirdar of Herat, is contained in MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 5.

51. Compare, for example, Pelly to Canning, 27 October 1860, FF.4-5. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 5, with Rawlinson to Russell, Teheran, 27 February 1860. L/P&S/9/160.

52. See the parliamentary debate of 26 July 1867 on the possibility of an Abyssinian expedition, as reported in "The Times", 27 July 1867, p.8, cols. 1-2.

deal of the wild elephant about him..., rushing and trumpeting about and crashing down everything with tusk and trunk, exalting in his strength."⁵³

The East was, for Rawlinson, like an addictive drug; and after 27 years of almost uninterrupted exile his mind was totally imbued with its politics. Within one month of his return in 1860, he looked forward to returning there and even expected to be offered the British ambassadorship at Constantinople.⁵⁴ In the 1860's he seems to have consciously set out to establish himself as the British expert par excellence on Central Asia: its ancient and recent history, geography, political and ethnic divisions and the current state of affairs thereabouts. Contemporaries certainly credited him with that status,⁵⁵ and it would be quite erroneous to ignore the potential influence on public opinion and policy-making which it gave him, since contemporary knowledge of that vast region was scanty. But, though far from a loquacious non-entity, Rawlinson certainly allotted himself an exaggerated prestige in government circles, believing himself largely responsible, for example, for the Abyssinian expedition of 1867.⁵⁶ In the light of this self-ascribed importance, Rawlinson's activities in the 1860's as a publicist, prominent member of the Royal Geographical Society and Commons M.P., can be best understood. He exploited these roles for the propagation of his views on Russia's reactivated advance in Western Turkestan and what he reckoned the most appropriate British response. His self-imposed task, the salvation of British India, became his

53. Viscount Strangford, A Selection from the writings of Viscount Strangford in political, geographical and social subjects (2 Vols., London, 1868), Vol. 2, p. 337.

54. Rawlinson to Pelly, London, 2 August 1860. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 5.

55. See Strangford, "Sir H. Rawlinson at the Geographical Society", A Selection from the writings, Vol. 2, pp. 332-35; W.W. Hunter, Life of the Earl of Mayo (2 Vols., London, 1875), Vol. 1, p. 255.

56. See the report of his constituency speech of 1 September 1868 in "The Times", 3 September 1868, p. 8, col. 4.

singular concern, to the eventual exclusion of all other interests in the 1870's.

Largely through the individual initiative and autonomous activity of General M.G. Chernyaev, Russia's Central Asian conquests had been resumed in 1864 and culminated in their initial stages in the capture of Tashkent, 29 June 1865.⁵⁷ In two articles published in the "Quarterly Review" of October 1865 and October 1866, Rawlinson publicised his concern over the consequences of their renewed advance.⁵⁸ The first of these articles did not go unremarked in official circles, but precisely what the response was it is impossible to determine.⁵⁹ Denying that invasion was the danger to be apprehended from Russia, Rawlinson considered her contiguity sufficient to induce an increased restlessness and impatience of British control among lately reconquered Indians. In the absence of inter-communal trust, British rule depended above all on the maintenance of national prestige. An essential quality in the East, this prestige involved a doubtless, Asian acknowledgement of British superiority and invincibility; and without it 100,000 British soldiers could never hold 150 million Indians in subjection.⁶⁰ The emergence, with impunity, of a closely and advantageously situated rival could detract from that prestige which was the sine qua non of Britain's

57. See D. Mackenzie, "Expansion in Central Asia: St. Petersburg vs the Turkestan Generals (1863-66)", Canadian Slavic Studies, III (1969), pp.286-311.
58. H.C. Rawlinson, "The Russians in Central Asia", Quarterly Review, Vols. 118 & 119 (October 1865 & 1866) pp.529-81 & 461-502. Both articles were reprinted unaltered, but with footnotes added, in H.C. Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East, pp.136-204 & 205-62. Ignoring the footnotes added in 1875 to update the articles' contents, the pagination of the book has been employed for reference purposes.
59. There are two indexed references to the 1865 article in that year's volume of the India Office's Secret Home Correspondence, but the last 100-150 pages of the volume are missing. See L/P&S/3/70.
60. See Rawlinson's Commons speech of 26 July 1867, in Parliamentary Debates, 3.S., 189, cols.241-42.

continued rule. Apprehensions of a Russian-induced repetition of the 1857 rebellion coexisted vaguely and confusedly in the minds of men such as Rawlinson alongside the less compulsively anticipated prospect of a direct Russian attack. It was a transformation noted contemporaneously that, in the 60's, British fears of Russia in Central Asia resulted as much from the sense of insecurity they felt within India as from the possibility of a Russian invasion.⁶¹

Nevertheless, if Rawlinson's fears of Russia are incomprehensible outwith the context of the 1857 rebellion,⁶² the other basis of his elaborate warning was the intellectual detritus he had inherited from McNeill. Lacking McNeill's crude polemicism, his articles, by their scholarly tone and evidence of studious, empirical research into Russian sources,⁶³ strove towards that objectivity which Rawlinson claimed for himself. But there is no ignoring the fact that Rawlinson's representation of an existent or prospective Russian threat to India was inferred rather than proven, presupposed rather than confirmed by an objective appreciation of all available data. In the distant prospect of Russian hostility, Rawlinson was still prey to the prejudices of McNeill's time, no matter

61. See Captain F. Trench, The Central Asian Question: A Lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institution (London, 1873), pp. 8-9.
62. One macroscopic study of British rule in India following the rebellion draws attention to the all-pervasive distrust which it gave rise to and the clarity with which it highlighted the British consciousness of their status as an occupying power garrisoning a hostile land. Another such work, investigating British rule throughout the 19th. century generally, underplays the impression made on the British by the rebellion. The author's ignoring its deep-seated political and social consequences is a fundamental weakness of his a priori study. See, respectively, T.R. Metcalf, The Aftermath of Revolt: India 1857-70 (London, 1965) and F.G. Hutchins, The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India (Princeton, New Jersey, 1967).
63. By his repeated references, Rawlinson had obviously pored over the translations of little-known Russian geographical articles in J. & R. Michell, The Russians in Central Asia (London, 1865).

how impressive his intellectual construct. Despite this, a mood of complacency dominated his outlook. He doubted if any hostile intent underlay Russia's recent advances and was sure she would be long pre-occupied in securing her newly acquired territories. Only in the event of her further advance, to the Amu Darya (Oxus) incorporating Bukhara and Khiva, should serious thought be given to the British occupation of Quetta, Kandahar and even Herat. In the meantime, in 1865-66, only cautious vigilance on the part of the Government of India was required.

The second platform from which Rawlinson expressed his views was the meetings of the Royal Geographical Society. A winner of the Society's Gold Medal in 1840, he was one of its Vice-Presidents 1864-68, and de facto president when the incumbent of that office was failing through ill-health. In the 60's the Uzbek khanates and the Amu Darya and Syr Darya (Jaxartes) rivers of Central Asia were almost as little known, and therefore as fascinating to the geographical world, as the great rivers and kingdoms of Africa. At the Society's meetings, papers dealing with Khiva and Bukhara, with the exploration of the Amu Darya and with trade routes between Turkestan and India were read out. In the ensuing discussions Rawlinson figured prominently as a knowledgeable and highly respected participant. For him the study of geography was of great practical and public benefit, since exploration, the pioneer of progress, led to the introduction of European civilisation and commerce.⁶⁴ He felt the R.G.S. owed much of its influence and popularity to this combination of the practical and the scientific in its deliberations and, as early as 1868, could describe it as having "become a power in the State".⁶⁵ Political discussion was supposed to be excluded

64. See the conclusion to Rawlinson's 1874-75 Presidential Address to the R.G.S. on 24 May 1875, P.R.G.S., XIX(1874-75), p.459. Also his inaugural address as President of the Birmingham Midlands Institute, reported in "The Times", 7 October 1873, p.7, col.6.

65. P.R.G.S., XIII(1868-69), p.20.

from these deliberations; but from 1866 onwards Rawlinson steadily ignored this ruling, and his treatment of Central Asian topics became overtly political. His unwillingness to restrain himself, even as a placatory gesture, strained his relations with the President, Sir Roderick Murchison⁶⁶ who, having helped Tsar Alexander II set up the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, tended to look favourably on Russia's role in Central Asia and to scoff at fears of an Indian invasion attempt.⁶⁷ Older and in ill-health, Murchison was unable to restrain the forceful Rawlinson. An increasing number of meetings degenerated into political discussions, though reports in "The Times" and in the Society's "Proceedings" were abridged or doctored to conceal the greater part of this.⁶⁸

No matter how partial, the Society's records adequately reveal the source of Rawlinson's complacency over Russia's reactivated Central Asian presence and of his confidence that Britain had little to fear. It is clear that Rawlinson, between 1865-68, did not feel the game with Russia for a pre-eminent influence over the Uzbek khans was lost. Concerned at the lapse in British exploratory activity in the trans-Himalayan regions, he advised the Society to protest firmly to the government about this lacuna.⁶⁹ And in June 1868 the Society took the practical step of financing a Mr. Hayward for exploration of the territory between Peshawar and Yarkand. But the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Northcote, was uneasy that Hayward might be detected and treated as a British spy; while Sir John Lawrence, the Viceroy, absolutely forbade the proposed expedition.⁷⁰ To Rawlinson, geographical

66. See Strangford, A Selection from the writings, Vol.2, p.334.

67. See Murchison's 1864-65 Presidential Address, P.R.G.S., IX(1864-65), pp.238-40.

68. See Strangford, A Selection from the writings, Vol.2, pp.335-39.

69. See P.R.G.S., XI(1866-67), p.14.

70. Northcote to Lawrence, 12 June 1868, ff.3-4, MSS.EUR.F.90/29, Letter 28; Lawrence to Northcote, Simla, 7 July 1868, ff.1-2. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letter 47.

exploration was the necessary prelude to commercial exploitation. With her consuls established at Ilchi, Yarkand, Balkh and Herat, Britain could compete with Russia, freely and without acrimony or danger, for the larger share of the legitimate trade and exploitable resources of those countries intermediate between Russian territory and India. Confident of British commercial superiority, given a fair field and no favour, Rawlinson envisaged Russia's being trounced in the Central Asian markets and clearly saw closer commercial relations as having the political function of securing dependable allies.⁷¹ His message to the R.G.S. was that Britain, so long as she preserved friendly relations with Persia and Afghanistan, had little to fear from Russia and might even win a commercial and influential pre-eminence in the countries beyond her contiguous neighbours, provided she acted quickly enough.⁷² The Great Game was still playable.

By the 1860's politicians and political commentators, mindful and doubtless somewhat ashamed of the irrational hysteria of 1838-39, employed the noun "Russophobia" as a facile, denigratory appellation with which to gloss over the reasoning of men such as Rawlinson. Though he had emphasised that there was no pressing danger or need for premature alarm and unusual precautions, and explicitly rejected the epithets "Russophobia" and "alarmist",⁷³ Rawlinson was still denigrated thus by antipathetic political opponents.⁷⁴ A blanket term variously employed to denote such a wide range of emotions as "suspicion", "antipathy" and "hatred",⁷⁵ the imprecision of the epithet "Russophobia" makes it a

71. See P.R.G.S., XIII(1868-69), pp.202 & 10.

72. Rawlinson's estimate, however exaggerated, of the value of Central Asian trade and of its attractability to India was shared, for one, by A.F.P. Harcourt, an Assistant-Commissioner in the Punjab. See A.F.P. Harcourt, Our Northern Frontier (London, 1869), p.19.

73. See Rawlinson, "The Russians in Central Asia", pp.139,195, & 204; Rawlinson, "Central Asia", p.261.

74. The ginger group which gathered round Rawlinson in the Commons after 1866, and comprised most notably H.D. Seymour, was called "the Russophobists" by opponents. See G. Rawlinson, A Memoir, p.258.

75. See J.H. Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study in the Interaction of Policy and Opinion (New York, 1972), p.277.

dubious vocubular instrument for describing the tone of Rawlinson's concern in the 1860's. In January 1868, suggesting that the Anglo-Indian press and public were panicky and Russophobic, the *Pall Mall Gazette* saw Russophobia as a product of ignorance and suggested "the instant republication of all Rawlinson's articles" as the best means of countering that ignorance.⁷⁶ Again, if Rawlinson's Russophobia can be detected or gauged by the extent of his concern, he was certainly not alarmist in comparison with the general sentiment among Anglo-Indians. For example H.W. Bellew, writing in the *Calcutta "Englishman"* in February 1869, advocated the immediate annexation of the Kurram and Khost districts, incorporating all the hill tribes between Afghanistan and India under British rule.⁷⁷ One of the foremost of Rawlinson's opponents in the 70's, M.E. Grant Duff, M.P. for the Elgin Burghs and a prolific commentator on foreign politics represented him as the Briton best qualified to discuss the Russian advances, and defended Rawlinson's views as being "by no means of so alarmist a character as some persons suppose".⁷⁸ Cursory dismissal of Rawlinson's thoughts as "Russophobe" or "alarmist" would hardly seem, then, to be appropriate.

Such deprecatory accusations as his opponents levelled against Rawlinson carried their own dangers, since they stifled enquiry and public writing on the Central Asian Question, deterred the systematic accumulation of detailed information and could condemn Britons to the apathy of ignorance or the irrationality of a hasty, panic-stricken reaction to unforeseen contingencies. Rawlinson's thinking, far from being misrepresentable as the product of Russophobic sentiment or

76. See *"Pall Mall Gazette"*, 7 January 1868, pp.1-2.

77. See *Reprint of Four Articles on the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan contributed to the Calcutta "Englishman" in February 1869 by H.W. Bellew under the 'nom de plume' of 'Spectator' (Lahore, 1879).*

78. See M.E. Grant Duff, *A Political Survey* (London & Edinburgh, 1868), p.65.

alarmist fears, can be considered rational since the Russian threat he feared was politically contemptible. Circumstantially, the Moscow Gazette of 2/20 February 1869 dismissed the idea of a Russian invasion of India but pointed out that, in the event of an Anglo-Russian conflict in Europe or Asia, Russian proximity to India gave her the capacity "in an emergency (to) do England vast injury". In the event of unwelcome British support for the Ottoman Empire, for example, the appearance of a small Russian force would be sufficient to encourage India's semi-nomadic neighbours to make an unsettling attack on India.⁷⁹

The quiescent public response to Russia's intermittent but continual advance in the period 1864-68 is altogether remarkable when contrasted with the Russophobic hysteria of 1838-39. Yet it is hardly surprising when even the expert on Central Asian matters was sounding a note of warning not alarm; it being accepted that public opinion, in matters of which the public has no first hand knowledge, is externally directed rather than spontaneously generated. Besides, public energy, at least in 1866-67, was given almost exclusively to reform agitation. If Rawlinson's activities as publicist and as Vice-President of the R.G.S. did attract much attention outwith the ranks of the political cognoscenti, his ideas were hardly so flagrant as to incense a public outcry. But, in the words of one contemporary commentator: "If some experts believe in Russian impotence, others are full of apprehension; and the belief of the former is not currently set forth in propositions easily remembered and proof to the criticism of opponents. If there were no opposite view, people would, perhaps, be satisfied, but the writing on the other side is a constantly disturbing force".⁸⁰ Ostensibly,

79. See L/P&S/3/75, pp.39-43.

80. R. Giffen, "The Question of Central Asia", Fortnightly Review, 4N.S. (1868), p.2.

Rawlinson's ideas on Russia and on India's relations with her neighbours met with no favourable government response. But perhaps, in the case of Afghan policy at least, their effect was erosive: the sea against the land.

The official Indian government reaction to renewed Russian advances developed along a circuitous, uncertain route across a topography of metropolitan offices whose spheres of responsibility were ill-defined in matters where both the British government and the Government of India were concerned. To which Office, Foreign or India, belonged the initiative in deciding the tone and nature of British representations to Russia on the Central Asian Question? If the Government of India dealt with the problem through the Foreign Office, would Indian considerations be fully understood, adequately represented and properly taken into account? The Foreign Office tendency to apportion itself a dominant role in these matters and the India Office's acceptance of a submissive one are apparent embryonically in the 60's. With four different men as Secretary of State for India from 1865-68 - Wood, de Grey, Salisbury and Northcote - continuity in the Indian government's reaction was provided by the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence. Singularly unconcerned by Chernyaev's initiatives of 1865-66, Lawrence and Wood united in doubting if Russia could do India harm or if Britain could halt her expansion at the expense of Kokand, even had she wished to.⁸¹ Indeed Lawrence, who despised Islam as a bigoted, fanatical, backward force, welcomed the Russian advances for their potential civilising effect. Their debilitation of Islamic military strength in Central Asia, moreover, would have a soporific effect on India's Muslim population.⁸² Sanguine that her

81. Wood to Lawrence, 16 May & 28 August 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/L.B.21, pp.29 & 205-7; Lawrence to MacLeod, Simla, 26 August 1865. MSS.EUR.F.90/53, Letter 49, p.136.

82. Lawrence to MacLeod, Simla, 1 May 1865 & Calcutta, 26 May 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/53, Letters 30 & 57, ff. 90-99 & 152; Lawrence to Wood, Simla, 21 April 1866. MSS.EUR.F.78/113/9, p.156.

conquests in the north-east of Central Asia gave her no opportunity for an invasion, which was only possible via Herat, he calculated that these and any further conquests would long preoccupy her, draining her energy and resources to Britain's advantage.⁸³ Throughout 1866-67 he made repeated statements to successive Secretaries of State of his preference for an attitude of observant intelligence-gathering through native agencies, over one of interference in Russia's conflicts with the Uzbek khanates.⁸⁴

So as to prevent misunderstanding of each others motives and intentions, Lawrence vaguely suggested an agreement between Britain and Russia. Wood, who was to misrepresent Rawlinson as calling for the immediate occupation of Herat and Kandahar and to dismiss the move as "most unwise",⁸⁵ rejected any such agreement as likely to have no binding effect on Russia.⁸⁶ He likewise disembowelled a despatch containing similar proposals by Russell at the Foreign Office - for an exchange of notes on territorial limitations - on the grounds that the Government of India's hands would then be tied.⁸⁷ Lawrence later reiterated his proposal for an agreement to both Salisbury,⁸⁸ who agreed in seeing no necessity for premature alarm⁸⁹ and, officially, to Northcote,⁹⁰ who

83. Lawrence to Wood, Simla, 27 May 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/113/7, ff. 101-4.

84. Lawrence to Lord de Grey, Simla, 20 April 1866 and to Salisbury, Simla, 17 July 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/31, Letters 16 & 27, ff.1-2 & 1-2.

85. Wood to Lawrence, Hickleton, 16 September 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/L.B. 21, p. 235.

86. Wood to Lawrence, 12 August 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/L.B.21, p. 175.

87. Wood to Russell, 29 July 1865. L/P&S/3/71, pp.843-50. See also A.P. Thornton, "The Central Asian Question", For the File on Empire: essays and reviews (London, 1968), pp.134-49.

88. Lawrence to Salisbury, Simla, 17 July 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/31, Letter 27, f.2r.

89. Salisbury to Lawrence, 27 August & 2 October 1866. REEL 805/*2.

90. Lawrence to Northcote, Simla, 18 August 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/328, Letter 49, f.2; G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 3, 3 September 1867. L/P&S/5/260, pp.613-14.

could not have cared less.⁹¹ Northcote looked favourably on the prospect of an agreement or even diplomatic correspondence because he felt it would tranquillise any unrest in India by showing the subject population that Britain was unafraid of Russia.⁹² But at the Foreign Office, Stanley hardly thought the Government of India's correspondence worth the Cabinet's attention and agreed with Northcote's India Office subordinate, J.R. Melville, that any agreement with Russia on a halt to her India-wards advance would be valueless since it would be easily broken and would needlessly tie Britain's own hands.⁹³ An agreement was ruled out, therefore, especially since Russian proceedings afforded no ground for suspicion or alarm. Opportune correspondence to clear up any misunderstandings when they developed was all that seemed necessary.⁹⁴ With this rebuttal, Lawrence was left to ponder on what pretext Rawlinson, who had raised the matter in the Commons, imagined England could interfere in Russia's renewed hostilities with Bukhara.⁹⁵ Nevertheless Lawrence had set a trend for his viceregal successors in subscribing to a belief in the insuring potentialities of an Anglo-Russian agreement, however vague. His successors would fall back on this ploy to provide themselves with a valueless assurance, both in the Clarendon-Gorchakov agreement and in appeals for remonstrations with the St. Petersburg government, of Russia's lack of ill-intentions towards India. Thus

91. Northcote to Lawrence, 10 April 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/28, Letter 17, f.6r. Wyllie accuses Northcote of being "less communicative and explicit" than he might have been in communications with India, by sending instructions on this topic which "were unquestionably scanty and timid". See Wyllie, Essays on the External Policy, p.133.
92. Northcote to Stanley, 9 December 1867. REEL325.
93. Stanley to Northcote, 8 December 1867; J.R. Melville, "Policy to be pursued in Central Asia with references to Russian Advances", 2 December 1867. L/P&S/3/73, pp.63-4 & 43-4. Melville was Assistant Secretary in the Political and Secret Department of the India Office.
94. S.S.I. to G.I., (Secret), 26 December 1867. L/P&S/5/591, pp.767-74.
95. Lawrence to Northcote, Simla, 10 June 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letter 42, f.2.

reassured, they could imagine no further action was necessary.

As Liberal M.P. for Frome, July 1865 to September 1868, Rawlinson twice asked questions in the House of Commons about Russian hostilities against Bukhara. But, if it was his intention to initiate any consequential debate on the Central Asian Question, he was singularly unsuccessful. On both occasions he received inelaborate replies which passed unremarked in the House.⁹⁶ Having prepared a lengthy speech on Central Asian affairs, he gave notice of his intention to deliver it in the Commons in late June 1868. Placed second on the list for a Friday evening, he was prevented from speaking by the extension of an acrimonious debate on Irish university education and instead drew up his notes in the form of a confidential memorandum, which he then sent to the Secretary of State for India. Completed on 20 July 1868, the memorandum post-dated General Von Kaufman's successful May-June campaign against Bukhara: a campaign which concluded with the peace treaty of 30 June, giving Russia the strategically important districts of Samarkand and Zeravshan and making Bukhara virtually a Russian dependency.

In the memorandum⁹⁷ Rawlinson specifically identified those sections of Indian society which posed the greatest threat to British rule, laying particular stress on the disgruntlement of the Muslim population, which had been displaced as the ruling elite. The British were "living on a volcano in India which at any moment may explode and overwhelm us". Russia's approximation enabled her to exert "a disturbing influence throughout the country of a most mischievous and even dangerous tendency": "to weaken and embarrass us - to find indeed such employment

96. See Parliamentary Debates, 3.S., 182, 12 March 1866 - 26 April 1866, col. 421 and 3.S., 192, 11 May 1868 - 25 June 1868, col. 955.

97. H.C. Rawlinson, "Memorandum on the Central Asian Question" in England and Russia, pp. 263-292. Again, all references are to the memorandum as reproduced verbatim in this work, ignoring the additional, up-dating footnotes.

for our armies in the East as should prevent our active interference in Europe".⁹⁸ But he supplemented this sober, cautious warning with the spectre of an Asiatic horde of 70,000 Persians, Turkmen and Afghans descending on India, on Russia's instigation, from a base at Herat. This gave his detractors in high official positions an admirable opportunity to dismiss him as a mere Russophobic, foolish enough to revive those invasion fears of 1838-39 which were now shamefully felt to be groundless and in need of permanent interment. Rawlinson had, in fact, reaffirmed that, "the danger (from Russia) is not immediate and it is evitable".⁹⁹

According to the memorandum, however, British business surely depended on the more dynamic employment of British diplomatic energies beyond India's borders. This involved the discontinuation of Lawrence's policy of so-called "masterly inactivity" vis-a-vis Afghanistan and a closer relationship with Persia: from an Indocentric viewpoint, an active, forward policy to replace one of reticent restraint. Immediate British support in the form of a subsidy, arms, drill officers and perhaps an auxiliary contingent, should be extended to the ascendent Sher Ali, whom Rawlinson reckoned to be, at last, the unassailable ruler of Afghanistan. A British agent and perhaps a mission, if the situation permitted it, might also be despatched to Kabul. Without recourse to coercion, a dominant position in Afghanistan had to be established as soon as possible and at any price. Talking of "our quasi-protectorate of the country"¹⁰⁰ Rawlinson, by his recommendations, aimed at the extension to Afghanistan of British informal imperialism for strategic, rather than directly commercial reasons. Concomitantly, Britain must

98. Rawlinson, "Memorandum on the Central Asian Question", pp.281, 279 & 280.

99. Ibid, p.277. Rawlinson's own italics.

100. Ibid, p.284.

make every effort to recover her lost influence in Persia so as to prevent Russia using that country to facilitate her own advance towards India. Harking back to the long-established view of Persia as the bulwark of India, and to the policies he had advocated fruitlessly during his Persian sojourn of 1859-60, Rawlinson wanted British drill officers, arms, artillery, investment capital, an impressive, generously endowed mission and warships to be despatched to Persia. All these inducements, in addition to the India Office's regaining control of Anglo-Persian relations, would be sufficient to secure Persia as Britain's close ally; the outlay being adequately recovered by the security such an alliance provided for India. Complementary warm Anglo-Afghan and Anglo-Persian relations would effectively ensure that India was insulated against any close Russian approach by the most accessible route, via Herat. Optimistically, Rawlinson foresaw no difficulty in driving two such antipathetic horses simultaneously and gave little hint as to which arm of the twin diplomatic offensive should take precedence in the event of a Perso-Afghan quarrel. Impressionistically, however, the Afghan commitment seems to have come first, on balance, in Rawlinson's thoughts. Whatever, the memorandum's contents clearly represented a criticism of existing official policy, especially as it related to Afghanistan. Forwarded to the Government of India, without comment, about the 21 August,¹⁰¹ one or two authorities - Lord Roberts of Kandahar being especially notable - have ascribed to the memorandum a catalytic effect in inducing the Viceroy to alter his Afghan policy.¹⁰² The

101. Keye to Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Dept., (Secret), 21 August 1868. L/P&S/5/591, p.607.

102. W.W. Hunter, Life of the Earl of Mayo, Vol.1, p.255. Lord Roberts, Forty One Years in India (2Vols., London, 1897), Vol.2, pp.46-7. It is worth noting, however, that Roberts had failed to include this suggestion in his "Introduction" to G. Rawlinson, A Memoir, pp. XX et seq., and that H.C. Rawlinson's son was his aide-de-camp at the time of writing. Family tradition may have bequeathed the idea to Roberts.

possibility of its having an unforeseen, accidental and little appreciated impact is worth investigating, since Lawrence's Afghan policy was not as monolithic and unchanging as is often supposed.

As the Russian and British empires approximated, the territory of the Amir of Kabul - Afghanistan - acquired an inflated strategic significance. Both semantically and territorially the term Afghanistan - "the land of the Afghans" - is misleading. Afghanistan, politically and geographically, can best be described as incoherent. The Afghan polity was plagued by ethnic multiplicity and severe communications problems, as well as a political unity heavily dependent on dynastic and clan intrigues and the ruler's personal qualities.¹⁰³ Its customary ruler, the Amir of Kabul, was usually unable to ensure the uncontested succession of his favoured son and was forced to resort to ruthless palace politics or civil war in maintaining his authority or reintegrating the territories he claimed as his. He was strong enough to survive but was too weak, as a consequence of the low level of economic activity and the Doloos' jealously guarded fiscal exemptions, to establish that large standing army which would make his rule absolute and his policies free from the need to consider popular prejudice or the hostility of his sirdars. Nor could Afghanistan's 19TH. century history be said to follow any predetermined, transitionary path from barely-held personal domain to bureaucratic state, for neither Dost Mahomed nor, later, Sher Ali seem to have had such a deliberate notion. Their governmental reforms were introduced fitfully and were so short-lived and sparse as to beggar the description "reform" let alone "transition".¹⁰⁴ With fluid boundaries,

103. For a geographical description of Afghanistan, see R.S. Newell, The Politics of Afghanistan (London, 1972), pp. 1-11. For an ethnic, religious and social description, see, V. Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernisation 1880-1946 (Stanford, 1969), pp. 25-51.

104. See Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan, pp. 73-90.

an extremely personal polity, only the glimmerings of a central government and wealth in nothing but men and rocks, Afghanistan was a mere geographical expression.

The Amirate of Kabul was ruled uninterruptedly by Dost Mahomed, a Dureni prince of the Barakzai clan, after his return from exile in 1843 until his death in June 1863. By the end of his reign he had reincorporated the major provinces of Kandahar and Herat within the territories of the amirate, forced universal acceptance of his leadership and even established the temporary rudiments of a standing army. But the amirate's integrity was still a direct reflection of the Amir's individual talents, and no institutional form of government existed to ensure continuity. The Dost had named his son, Sher Ali, his rightful successor; and on the old Amir's death Sher Ali was recognised as de facto ruler of Afghanistan by the British government. But of the Dost's sixteen sons, Mohamed Afzul Khan aided by his son Abdul Rahman, Mohamed Azim Khan and Sharif Khan, apart from Sher Ali, aimed at gaining the amirate. The four years 1864-68 were occupied by a tortuously complex struggle for power and survival, an understanding of which is hardly facilitated by the simplistic British ascription of every base motive in explaining the participants' actions. The struggle was notable not only for the alacrity with which the more prominent sirdars changed sides repeatedly but also for the unpredictability of Sher Ali's fortunes. Having successfully defended himself against intrigues in early 1864 and 1865, in 1866, following the military successes of a Kabul-based confederation comprising Azim and Afzul Khan and Abdul Rahman, he lethargically lost his territory till it was reduced to the small province of Herat. A further dramatic reversal in his fortunes, attending the return of military victory and a resurgence in his popularity, witnessed his re-emergence as Amir of Kabul in late 1868, with control of much of the Dost's former

domains.¹⁰⁵ During these four years of internecine strife the one certainty was the absolute unpredictability of the outcome.

India's relations with her immediate neighbours were a matter for the Indian government and, as successive Secretaries of State were unwilling to interfere with Lawrence and agreed with all his initiatives,¹⁰⁶ British Afghan policy during his Viceroyalty was peculiarly his own. But it was never the high-minded, shrewdly foresighted, calculatedly consistent, self-assured policy of "masterly inactivity" which its principal literary advocate and demi-official apologist, drawing a red herring across the interpretative trail, presented it as being.¹⁰⁷ Far from being high-minded, Lawrence's life-long antipathy to involvement in Afghan politics resulted from an admixture of personal prejudice with rational policy. Clearly aware of the difficulty of securing a valuable alliance, free from ensnarements, with quarrelling Afghan leaders, he also realised the practical difficulties and potentially dangerous consequences of British interference in the inhospitable vortex of Kabul politics.¹⁰⁸ But, additionally, the deep shock sustained in the winter of 1840, when news reached him of his brother's capture and probable death at the hands of the Afghans, left an invisible scar.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the 60's, his correspondence contains frequent malicious references to the

105. A detailed factual account is contained in Wyllie, Essays on External Policy, pp.24-49 & 70-124.

106. Wood to Lawrence, Homburg, 28 August 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/L.B.21, p.207; Lawrence to Salisbury, 19 December & 4 January 1867. REEL 806/*6 & *7; Northcote to Lawrence, Balmoral, 1 October 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/28, Letter 41, ff.3-4; Lawrence to Northcote, Ambala, 4 November 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/32B, Letter 62, p.3.

107. J.W.S. Wyllie, "Masterly Inactivity", Fortnightly Review, 12(1869), pp.585-615.

108. Lawrence to MacLeod, Simla, 21 May 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/53, Letter 65, ff.172-3.

109. The letter he then wrote to his sister - in - law was at times incoherent and difficult to understand. Thus: "Is certainly an amount of dreadfulness which has seldom come to India certainly never in my mind". See R. Bosworth Smith, Life of Lord Lawrence (2 Vols., London, 1901), Vol 1, p.145. It is worth noting that such an astute observer as Salisbury later suspected the existence of this strong personal element in Lawrence's Afghan policy. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 20 April 1875. REEL 811/3, p.239.

Afghans, in which they appear, generically stereotyped, as perverse, untrustworthy and irredeemably given to duplicity.¹¹⁰ Rejecting several suggestions for British mediation between the quarrelling factions,¹¹¹ Lawrence held that the keystone to British policy should be the strictest non-intervention in their disputes, together with recognition of each de facto ruler of Afghanistan as he emerged.¹¹² Though privately and officially, Northcote sanctioned them,¹¹³ Lawrence adhered to neither of his own central tenets.

When Sher Ali was suspected of negotiating with the Shah for aid against the Kabul party in exchange for Herat, Lawrence hurriedly made proposals - never realised - to break off relations with him and to openly assist the opposition with a money subsidy, arms and ammunition "such as will ensure its clear and unassailable supremacy".¹¹⁴ The Vice-roy was a slave to circumstance rather than the master of events, and his Afghan "policy" a higger-mugger aggregation of expedient and inconsistent responses to the immediate situation pertaining. Far from being self-assured, Lawrence, worn out, in ill health and prematurely aged,¹¹⁵

110. See, for example, Lawrence to Macleod, Calcutta, 26 March 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/53, Letter 57, f.152r; Lawrence to Salisbury, Simla, 17 July 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/31, Letter 27, ff.1-2; Lawrence to Northcote, Calcutta, 9 March 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/32A, Letter 16, ff.5-6. In a generic appreciation, Lawrence dismissed the archetypal Afghan as "a splendid animal" who would, without scruple, "sell his Mother and Father." See Lawrence's marginal notes to Col. R. Taylor's memorandum "Regarding the expediency or otherwise of assisting Sher Ali with money", accompanying Lawrence to Salisbury, Simla, 26 October 1866. REEL805/*5.

111. Northcote to Lawrence, 3 February 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/29, Letter 4, f.1v; Lawrence to Northcote, Calcutta, 6 March 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letter 14, ff.1-2; Lawrence to Macleod, Simla, 17 August 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/54, Letter 12, f.40r.

112. Lawrence to Lord de Grey, Simla, 20 April 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/31, Letter 16, ff.1-2; Lawrence to Salisbury, Calcutta, 9 February 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/32A, Letter 12, f.1; G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 3, 3 September 1867. L/P&S/5/260, pp.611-18.

113. Northcote to Lawrence, Balmoral, 1 October 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/28, Letter 41, ff.3v & 4 r; S.S.I. to G.I., (Secret), 26 December 1867. L/P&S/5/591, pp.767-74.

114. G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 3, 3 September 1867. L/P&S/5/260, p.612.

115. See R. Temple, Lord Lawrence (London, 1889), p.188.

was highly susceptible to press and public criticism of his policy. He made several vain requests to London for permission to publish official papers in explanation and defence of his quiescent response to Afghan "intestine wars".¹¹⁶ As Sher Ali staged his recovery against a divided Kabul party in mid-1868, Lawrence, explicitly acknowledging that he was doing so in response to public pressure in England and in order to forestall demands for more active interference, suggested that he help the Dost's nominated successor with money and arms.¹¹⁷ Sher Ali was still very far from the de facto leadership of Afghanistan. His fortunes could easily be reversed again; and as late as November 1868 his rule was still so insecure that he was unable to leave Kabul and travel to Rawalpindi for his anticipated meeting with Lawrence.¹¹⁸ Even as late as January 1869, he was still preparing for a pitched battle with Abdul Rahman, the outcome of which was not a foregone conclusion in his favour.

The grant of 3,000 stand of arms and six lacs of rupees, which Lawrence fully intended Sher Ali should use against his rivals,¹¹⁹ clearly constituted a British interference in Afghan internal affairs; and that on behalf of a man who could not as yet be termed de facto ruler. Moreover, Lawrence himself doubted Sher Ali's ability to retain Kabul for long.¹²⁰ The Viceroy's initiative was not a pre-determined, foreseeable

116. Lawrence to Northcote, Simla, 8 October 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/328, Letter 58, ff.1-2; G.I. to S.S.I., Political 162, Simla, 23 October 1867. L/P&S/5/260, p.693; Lawrence to Macleod, Calcutta, 25 February 1867, MSS.EUR.F.90/53, Letter 85, f.217r.

117. Lawrence to Northcote, Simla, 17 August 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letter 60, f.1; Lawrence to Macleod, Simla, 31 August 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/54, Letter 17, ff.40-41.

118. Lawrence to Northcote, 10 October & 5 November 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letters 72 & 77, f.1 & ff.2-3; Lawrence to Macleod, Calcutta, 12 December 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/54, Letter 35, f.101.

119. Lawrence to Northcote, Simla, 16 October 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letter 73, f.1.

120. Lawrence to Macleod, Simla, 21 October 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/54, Letter 27, ff.83-4; Lawrence to Northcote, Ambala, 15 November 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letter 79, ff.2-3.

part of any policy of "masterly inactivity". It did not even represent a clear departure from it, for no such policy existed. But Lawrence, though acting under constraint, cannot have decided on this course as a result of reading Rawlinson's memorandum, for it did not leave England until 21 August at the earliest.¹²¹ Lawrence, who was considering a grant of money and arms to Sher Ali as early as 17 August, officially sought the Secretary of State's approval by telegram on 11 September.¹²² The memorandum could not have reached India by then and in fact does not seem to have reached Lawrence until about 20 September.¹²³ More broadly, however, Rawlinson's public criticisms of Lawrence's policies were "a constantly disturbing force"¹²⁴ and constituted a well-informed part of that public pressure which induced the Viceroy to intervene opportunely on Sher Ali's behalf, whether he was de facto ruler or not. The arrival of the memorandum must certainly have confirmed Lawrence in his course, convincing him that he was waylaying criticism by anticipating it and effectively diffusing any call for an even stronger British commitment to Afghanistan's ruler. While plainly anxious to ensure well-publicised evidence of amicable relations with the Amir of Kabul, he compromised only minimally with public criticism. Distrusting the Afghans as he did, and fearing that they would use any offensive or defensive alliance solely for their own benefit, the Viceroy rejected outright any engagement other than the occasional grant of money and arms.¹²⁵ Like his successors, he was caught on the horns of a dilemma, in which they tried to balance the need for Afghan friendship against the excessive

121. Kaye to Secretary, Foreign Department, Government of India, (Secret), 21 August 1868. L/P&S/5/591, p.807.

122. Northcote to Lawrence, (Telegram), 17 September 1868. L/P&S/7/259; Lawrence to MacLeod, Simla, 11 September 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/54, Letter 19, f.59.

123. Lawrence to MacLeod, Simla, 23 September 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/54, Letter 24, f.75r.

124. See 80 above.

125. Lawrence to Northcote, Simla, 10 October 1868. MSS.EUR.F.90/33, Letter 72, ff.1-2.

price which they distrustfully reckoned might need paying.

Even if the precise impact of Rawlinson's memorandum is problematic, there can be no doubt, given the sheer volume of critical minutes and memoranda which it elicited from members of the Indian government, that it produced the most explicit, even if hostile, official reaction to any of his 1860's initiatives.¹²⁶ Supposing that the principal danger Rawlinson foresaw was a Russian invasion, a number of minute writers, tilting at windmills largely of their own creation, denied the practical success, in existing circumstances, of any such attempt. Not only would the Russians have their passage through Afghanistan harassed by the fiercely independent hillsmen but, on debouching from the passes, they would be met by the well-entrenched, supplied and ammunitioned troops of the Indian Army. There was to be no advance beyond the Indus frontier. Laurence and his Calcutta associates, Temple and Norman, pinned their hopes on the establishment of friendly Anglo-Russian relations based on some mutual understanding between the two powers.¹²⁷ It was generally agreed that the best form of defence, in forestalling any Russian-induced internal unrest, was to ensure Indian contentment with British rule.¹²⁸ India's prosperous development through the maximum capital investment possible would lessen the likelihood of her peoples' favourable reaction to Russian subversion. Such a British ploy would be impossible, however, if scarce, badly needed funds were expended on illimitable subsidies and presents of arms to the Amir of Kabul.

126. There were memoranda by: Sir Donald Macleod, 10 October 1860; Col. R. Taylor, 23 November 1860; and minutes by: Laurence, 25 November 1860; Col. H.W. Norman, 8 December 1860; Sir Richard Temple, 8 December 1860. All these were forwarded with the covering note, Laurence to Argyll, 15 December 1860. REEL 321/26. These were later followed by minutes from: G.N. Taylor, 12 December 1860; Sir William Mansfield, 24 December 1860; Laurence, again, 31 December 1860. All, together with a copy of Rawlinson's memorandum, are contained in L/P&S/3/77, pp.1210-1346.

127. See Laurence's minute, p.6; Norman's minute, p.3; Temple's minute, p.4. Ibid.

128. See, for example, Temple's minute, p.3. Ibid.

Reckoning a stronger Persian commitment valueless, Lawrence and his Council, their memories fresh with the unedifying debacle of the first Afghan War, were also united on the most appropriate Afghan policy. The despatch of either a British agent or armed contingent to Kabul was opposed, since the personnels' lives would be in constant danger. Likewise the notion of an offensive or defensive alliance with the Amir was rejected because it might make the Government of India responsible for the maintenance of his authority or the integrity of his territory. But they did concede a point on the matter of a money grant and meeting with Sher Ali, induced as they were to realise that some more active commitment to the Amir was now possible, expedient and desirable. They wished to ensure that Afghan sympathies lay with Britain not Russia, while simultaneously rearing away from any inextricable engagement. Against the frankness and close involvement which Frere and Rawlinson wished to employ in British dealings with the Afghans, the distrustful Lawrence wished only for a canny friendship. He summarised his outlook, most revealingly, as follows: "The inconvenience of all engagements with an Afghan chief,..., arises from the circumstance that he will be disposed at a suitable opportunity to repudiate those engagements and to act against us, if it appeared to be in his interest to do so. ...it is desirable that our relations with him shall confer real and substantial benefits, which it is obviously in his interest to retain, while they should not be of a character to shackle us, in case we discovered that he was not acting towards us in good faith".¹²⁹ While Lawrence aimed to use the smallest bait in hooking and landing his undependable fish, from the Amir of Kabul's viewpoint the Government of India might be accused of wishing to have its cake and eat it.

Lawrence's stance may seem somewhat dismissive of the value of close Anglo-Afghan ties but, in fairness to him, he did possess a partly

129. Lawrence's minute, pp.28-1. Ibid.

implemented solution - internal rather than external - to the fundamental problem of British insecurity in India. Rather than expend scarce financial resources on a dubious alliance, he had two strings to his bow: one depending on unagitated Indian acquiescence in British rule, the other on the impregnability of the Indus frontier line. Troubled by the continued animosity between the British and Indian communities,¹³⁰ he made it the essence of his viceregal policy to ensure the contentment of the broad mass of India's population; hoping thereby to buy their support through their bellies and purses.¹³¹ Even his critics have to admit to his positive achievements in the fields of sanitation, irrigation canal building and the strengthening of tenant rights in Oudh and the Punjab.¹³² But his development programme suffered from recurring financial deficits: a consequence of his reluctance to borrow capital, inability to introduce a proper income tax and unwillingness to tax the peasant mass indirectly because it "engenders opprobrium and discontent".¹³³ Whether Lawrence's measures might have enamoured Indians of the British, inadequate means determined their introduction on a scale insufficient for that purpose. The second string to Lawrence's defensive bow, the Indus frontier's impregnability, was also made something of a hollow cliché by the lack of funds. The frontier's defensibility depended, crucially, on the provision of an adequate rail network in its hinterland. This point had been emphasised by Sir Henry Durand with particular reference to the completion of the Karachi-Lahore and Lahore-Attock lines, and his warning was reiterated by a sympathetic Northcote.¹³⁴ But Lawrence, in what amounted to a betrayal of his

130. Lawrence to Salisbury, Calcutta, 19 December 1866 & 4 January 1867, ff. 5-6 & f.4. REEL806/*6 & *7.

131. See C.U. Aitchison, Lord Lawrence (Oxford, 1892), p.193.

132. See S. Gopal, British Policy in India 1858-1905 (Cambridge, 1965), pp.60-63.

133. Lawrence to Wood, Calcutta, 4 February 1865. MSS.EUR.F.78/113/6, ff.69v. See also Temple, Lord Lawrence, pp. 168-9.

134. Durand to Lawrence, 7 March 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/36, Letter 9, ff. 62-3; Northcote to Lawrence, 10 April 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/28, Letter 17, f.6.

own prescription, squashed the proposal to fill in the Kotri-Multan and Lahore-Peshawar gaps on the grounds of excessive construction costs and commercial inviability.¹³⁵ Financial considerations heavily circumscribed the construction of strategically necessary railways but, without these, Laurence's Indus frontier line was something of a sham. These endemic financial difficulties, plus the fact that he was a stolid, unimaginative gaffer rather than a visionary statesman, prevented Laurence evolving an all-encompassing viceregal policy in which domestic and foreign needs interlinked neatly without loose ends. Even so, he did possess a critically evaluated alternative, of internal applicability, to Rawlinson's external solutions.

If sound policy is that which optimally combines the politically desirable with the financially feasible, both Rawlinson and Laurence can be faulted. Rawlinson's wilful disregard of financial considerations was possible because he selfishly felt the subject Indian population should provide the funds for the British Empire's defence.¹³⁶ Moreover, in advocating the appointment of an agent and perhaps a mission to Kabul, with true Palmerstonian disdain he chose to ignore the Afghans' still deep-seated distrust of their former invaders. This disquieting feature of his thought is compounded by his glib talk of Afghanistan as a "quasi-protectorate" of Britain's. What if the Amir of Kabul refused to accept a British agent in his territory or to forego his independence for British protection? Would Rawlinson's brash adventurism and insensitivity to another people's interests then lead him to advocate coercive measures against the Amir? Laurence's policy of holding Afghanistan at

135. Laurence to Northcote, Simla, 14 May 1867. MSS.EUR.F.90/32A, Letter 30.

136. Defending the likely high costs of an Abyssinian expedition, Rawlinson justified the expenditure on the grounds that it was essential for the security of India and that the Indian exchequer would be accountable, therefore, for the larger part of it. See G. Rawlinson, A Memoir, p.255.

arms length, while certainly quite sensible during the civil war, tended towards a distrustful conservatism which could develop into a haughty stasis. A meaningful and reciprocally beneficial alliance with the Amir of Kabul might have assured both parties of the other's trustworthiness and prevented any subsequent, precipitate action, once dubiety on the score of good faith crept in. The danger remained of the non-existent "masterly inactivity's" petrifying into "masterly imbecility".

On the matter of India's security from Russia, if Rawlinson was sanguine, Laurence was complacent. This resulted, in the former's case, from his realisation that Russian activity, located in the north-east of Central Asia and moving along a north-south axis, presented little threat to India. In the latter's case, it arose from his assurance that Russia's engorgement of Central Asia would be long drawn out and that her approximation to India would take another two generations. Bearing this distant prospect in mind, Rawlinson may seem to have been guilty of needless anxiety rather than of issuing a timely warning. His fears, if kept on a short rein, could encourage government alertness. But, if indulged excessively, his tendency to suspicion of Russian activities and intentions could harm Anglo-Russian as well as Anglo-Afghan relations. If the conduct of international relations is made doubly difficult by mutual distrust - the likely successors to which are mutual antipathy and hostility - Rawlinson was in danger of contributing magnanimously to British distrust of Russia. Only time could tell if his anxieties were ill-founded. The difference between the 60's and 70's, in terms both of Anglo-Russian relations and of the speed of Russian advances in Central Asia, might be a qualitative as well as a chronological one.

Fearing that he had been placed on the shelf politically, Rawlinson three times, in 1863, '66 and '68, attempted to obtain an appointment

to the Council of India.¹³⁷ A steady salary would solve his continual financial worries, and he could always claim that his knowledge of the Central Asian Question would make him an invaluable addition to the Council's ranks.¹³⁸ But he failed as many times to be elected or nominated, despite the patronage of Erskine Perry, one of the Council's members.¹³⁹ The Bengal service usually voted on its own former colleagues, and in late September 1868 Rawlinson failed to get either of the two elective posts.¹⁴⁰ A third vacancy existed, however, which was subject to the nomination of the Secretary of State for India. Anxious to infuse "new blood" into the Council, especially for the influential Political Committee which dealt with Indian foreign policy, Northcote nominated Rawlinson.¹⁴¹ Having resigned his parliamentary seat, on 8 October 1868 Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson entered the India Office as a member of the Council of India.

137. See Rawlinson to Wood, Berkeley Square, 1 December 1863. R.A.S. (Council of India application - 1863), Letter 1; Rawlinson to Selisbury, Athenaeum, 20 September 1866. R.A.S. (Council of India application - 1866), Letter 2; Rawlinson to Northcote, (n.d.) R.A.S. (Council of India application - 1868), Letter 1.
138. Rawlinson to Stanley, Brockham, 22 September 1866. R.A.S. (Council of India application - 1866), Letter 4.
139. Perry to Rawlinson, London, 21 September 1866. R.A.S. (Council of India application - 1866), Letter 3; Perry to Rawlinson, 3 July, 25 July & 24 August 1868. R.A.S. (Council of India application - 1868), Letters 3, 6 & 8.
140. Perry to Rawlinson, 27 & 29 September 1868. R.A.S. (Council of India application - 1868), Letters 10 & 11.
141. Northcote to Rawlinson, 29 September 1868; Northcote to E. MacNaghten, 26 September 1868; Northcote to H.P. Prinsep, 30 September 1868. B.L.ADD.MSS.50,050, Letters 26, 21 & 28, ff.18, 16 & 20.

Chapter 4. A Loosely Woven Khaddar.

Opened in the summer of 1867, the new India Office building's easily weathered Portland stone interlaced with the red and grey of solid Aberdeenshire granite, notably symbolised, though doubtless unintentionally, the true constitution of the British Raj: a friable facade upheld by thin layers of military might. Within this building, presided over by paintings of Indian scenery and portraits of renowned Anglo-Indians, there deliberated an institution unique in 19TH. century government offices - the Council of India. Established under the Government of India Act 1858, the Council was intended to be a consultative body of experienced, retired, Anglo-Indian administrators who would serve as watch dogs on Indian affairs and give advice to a less particularly knowledgeable Secretary of State for India. While it would not usurp the final authority of Parliament and the Cabinet - of which the Secretary of State was a member - the Council was to meet at least once every seven days. Apart from its members' right to peruse, evaluate and help formulate communications and orders between India and the U.K., the Council also possessed a financial sanction on loans and expenditure. Given the interpretative ambiguity of all constitutions, the Council's powers depended very heavily on the character and inclination of the current Secretary of State or on the forceful personalities and expertise of its members, and it was speedily able to alter its consultative role to a policy-making one.¹ In matters of levying war, making peace, or treating and negotiating with princes and states, however, the

1. See D. Williams, "The Council of India and the Relationship between the Home and Supreme Governments, 1858-70", English Historical Review, 81 (1966), pp.56-73; S.N. Singh, The Secretary of State for India and his Council (Delhi, 1962). For a detailed survey of the origins, structure and constitutional powers of the Council see also H. Verney Lovett, "The Home Government, 1858-1918", Cambridge History of the British Empire (Cambridge, 1932), Vol. V, Chpt. XI, pp. 208-16.

Secretary of State need not solicit the Council's views and could transmit secret despatches on these subjects to India without prior consultation. Consequently, at least one authoritative source takes the Council's influence to have been slender on decisions related to war and imperial policy.² Yet even this area of decision-making was peculiarly prone to that informality which governed Council proceedings: an informality consideration of which, one Council member claimed, was essential to an understanding of its practical as opposed to theoretical operation.³

For the more convenient transaction of business the Secretary of State constituted committees of Council members and distributed departments of business among these committees; one of which, the Political Committee, was attached to the Political and Secret Department. Of some consequence in the making of Indian foreign policy, the Secretary and head of this department, Sir John W. Kaye, submitted to the Under-Secretary of State draft replies to all secret and political letters received from India and in the Home Correspondence. Preparing explanatory minutes and running his section in addition to this, Kaye's post was of such importance that he could represent himself as the equivalent, within the India Office hierarchy, of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.⁴ The general informality of Council procedure, the high incidence and singular importance of oral exchange⁵ and the natural tendency to develop coteries and cliques: all reached their zenith in the relationship between the members of the Political Committee and the head of the Political and Secret Department, augmented as they were by

2. See Singh, The Secretary of State, p.VI.

3. See E. Perry, "On the Indian Debate in the House of Lords 19 April 1869", April 1869. MSS.EUR.D.776, ref. 16, p.23.

4. See "Report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the constitution of the Diplomatic and Consular Services,...". British Parliamentary Papers, 1870 (382. p.145) VII.279.

5. See Salisbury to Lytton, 13 July 1877. Quoted G. Cecil, Robert, Marquis of Salisbury (4 Vols., London, 1921-32), Vol. 2, p.159.

Kaye's notorious laxity in the running of departmental business.⁶ Theoretically, Kaye represented the Secretary of State on the committee and conveyed its suggestions back to the Secretary of State, who could choose to submit them or not to the Council, thereby effectively circumventing it.⁷ In practice the Council was little involved in the business of the Political and Secret Department; so the departmental secretary, and through him the members of the Political Committee, had a more or less private link with the Secretary of State. It is clear from the initialling of the department's Minute Papers that the committee's members also had privileged access to secret material frequently denied to the rest of the Council.

Exercising considerable personal initiative during Argyll's lax secretaryship, Kaye felt he had obtained the right "to consult such Members of the Political Committee as might have any knowledge of the subject treated. It was the custom of such Members of the Political Committee to meet in my room, at a given time, and to discuss all important questions so that I did not place any suggestion before the Secretary of State before I had fortified myself by obtaining the opinions of such men as Sir Henry Rawlinson, Sir George Clerk etc. etc."⁸ In this tug of war between the statutory conduct of business and the empiricism of practice resting on individual initiative, Frere, Rawlinson and Sir Robert Montgomery were well placed. For they were members of

6. He even lost two demi-official letters, on Central Asia and Burma, which were due for transmission to India. See Kaye to Aitchison, 23 October 1873. L/P&S/19, pp.43-4; also M.E. Grant Duff, Notes from a Diary 1873-1881 (2 Vols., London, 1898), Vol.1, p.41.
7. See Kaye to Merivale, Forest Hill, 17 January 1874. L/P&S/19, pp.84-6.
8. Kaye memorandum, "On the Work of the Political and Secret Department", 18 March 1874. L/P&S/19, p.103. I am greatly indebted to Martin Ian Moir, Deputy Keeper of the I.O.L.&R., for bringing this crucial point to my attention and allowing me to read his unpublished work, "A Study of the History and Organisation of the Political and Secret Departments of the East India Company, the Board of Control and the India Office, 1784-1919", Submitted in part requirement of the University of London Diploma in Archive Administration.

the Political committee more or less continuously throughout the late-60's and early to mid-70's. From Kays's cooperation with these three in making predetermined policy recommendations in Unison, it would seem to be the case that Frere and Montgomery were also included in the departmental cabal. Occupying posts which gave them privileged access to the latest secret information, Frere, Rawlinson and a sympathetic Montgomery were a potential influence on the Indian government's foreign policy; both through the submission, solicited or spontaneous, of well-informed memoranda and by informal consultation and cooperation with Kays.

In late-68 and '69, these well-placed members of the Political Committee were dissatisfied with the British Government's Persian policy, to which they first turned their attention and directed their initiatives. Persia might be "an ante-room to India, a watchtower for the security of the Raj",⁹ but British policy towards it in the 60's and 70's was bedevilled by discordant party emphasis on conflicting European and Indian perspectives and the frequent incompatibility of Foreign and India Office interests. British statesmen might consistently talk of supporting Persia's independence,¹⁰ but they could never alight on a means of doing so which was, simultaneously, cheap and potentially resultful. In June 1858 the Shah had requested the loan of British officers for the drilling and organisation of the Persian Army. Since such a British military mission had been employed previously to offset Russia's preponderant influence at Teheran, Northcote called for further details; and the Persian request soon came to revolve round the question of how liberal the instructors' allowances should be and whether the whole or only

9. A.P. Thornton, "Persia in Anglo-Russian Relations 1858-90", For the File on Empire, p. 171.

10. See F. Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, p.17.

part payment should devolve upon the British government.¹¹

During October, three pertinent memoranda were drawn up within the India Office: by Rawlinson, Kaye and Montgomery.¹² Rawlinson urged an immediate affirmative to the Persian request, recommending that the precedent of 1833 be followed whereby the officers enjoyed small additional allowances to their regular pay, supplemented by further local remuneration from the Persian government. Apart from keeping out Russian advisors, the presence of British officers, he felt, would promote an amicable community of interest between Britain and Persia and probably lead to the predominance of the former's influence there: "a matter of very considerable importance, in view of future contingencies".¹³ Rawlinson's memorandum, as well as his sense of urgency, were communicated to Northcote by Kaye, who pressed him to "decide it without further reference to the Government of India".¹⁴ Montgomery likewise affirmed his concurrence with Rawlinson's memo and urged Northcote not to decline the Persian proposition. While they indicate a decided conception of Persia as a bulwark of India, these circumstances are noteworthy as the first conjunct initiative to issue from Rawlinson and Kaye. Working in unison, they also discovered a concurrence of view, on at least one problem, with Montgomery, formerly Lt.-Governor of the Punjab 1859-63. This unity of opinion among several persons in the India Office's political section might be operative in other spheres of British interest. For the present, however, their initiative bore fruit.

Heeding the voice of Rawlinson's personal experience, Northcote favoured a mission similar to that of the 1830's. He agreed to pay the officers a consolidated allowance from the Indian treasury, and sought

11. See Hammond's F.O. memorandum, "Military Officers for Persia", 23 February 1869. F.O.60/323; Kaye memorandum, "Employment of British Officers with the Persian Army", 19 February 1869. REEL324/53.

12. See L/P&S/3/73, pp.517-32.

13. Rawlinson memorandum, "On Employment of British Officers with the forces of the Shah of Persia", 10 October 1868. L/P&S/3/73, p.528.

14. Kaye memorandum, "On Instruction of the Persian Army", 28 October 1868. L/P&S/3/73, p. 521.

only the Shah's readiness to grant a moderate supplementary local allowance.¹⁵ Granted Foreign Office approval,¹⁶ it seemed that the Persian request would prove acceptable to the Conservative government. But with a change of ministry expected, Northcote, rejecting Keye's attempt to rush the business through,¹⁷ left the final decision to his successor. Gladstone's First Ministry brought to power a Liberal party notable for paying scant attention to the Indian interest in Persia. More to the point, it presented the India Office with the lackadaisical, gouty old Whig, George Douglas, 8TH. Duke of Argyll, as Secretary of State. After Cabinet discussions, Argyll and the Foreign Secretary, Clarendon, agreed to follow up the late government's initiative, perhaps chiefly because of the embarrassment likely to result from any precipitate rejection of the Shah's offer.¹⁸ Specific monetary terms were drawn up giving the minimum local allowances required of the Shah's government,¹⁹ and it is plain that an understanding on this question of pay was still an essential pre-requisite to any despatch of instructors to Persia.²⁰

Almost one year later, however, the Foreign Office had received no communication on the matter from the India Office.²¹ Apart from the Shah's unwillingness to disburse the extra local allowance, by late 1869 Argyll felt India's security was best maximised by the establishment of a line, centred on Afghanistan, of friendly, independent states along the whole range of her Western and North-West frontiers. While this project would make any expensive commitment to Persia superfluous, it was even then being endangered, in Baluchistan, by Persian encroachments

15. I.O. to F.O., 13 November 1868. L/P&S/3/73, pp.539-45.

16. F.O. to I.O., 21 November 1868. F.O.60/316.

17. See Keye memorandum, "Employment of British Officers with the Persian Army", 19 February 1869. REEL324/53.

18. See Argyll, "Loan of Indian Officers to the Shah of Persia", February 1869. REEL324/53; Clarendon's marginal comment on Hammond's memo, "Military Officers for Persia", 23 February 1869, f.1r. F.O. 60/323.

19. See I.O. to F.O., 5 March 1869, p. 1v. F.O.60/323.

20. F.O. to I.O., 9 August 1869. F.O.60/323.

21. F.O. memorandum, "Military Assistance for Shah", 23 February 1870, f.2v. F.O.60/330.

on Kalat territory around Kedj.²² Argyll was far from anxious to strengthen the army of an inimical, seemingly pro-Russian state inclined to threaten the ring of sympathetic territories with which he foresaw India encircled. When inter-office correspondence did resume therefore, no agreement was possible on the source of the officers' remuneration. Argyll made the impossible suggestion that the money be deducted from the British diplomatic mission in Teheran, or from Imperial funds.²³ This the Foreign Office refused to accede to;²⁴ and inter-office stalemate ensued. But, whatever Argyll's reasons for conspiring to shelve the Persian project, they were hardly likely to recommend themselves to Rawlinson & Co., liable as they were to seize any further opportunity to stress the convenience of posting a military mission to Persia.

While the exact measure of continuity between the Afghan policy of Lawrence and his viceregal successors - the Earls of Mayo and of Northbrook - remains a matter for debate, during the 1870's it was a much favoured contemporary shorthand to continue referring to "masterly inactivity" or "the Lawrentian policy". Mayo, indeed, did freely admit to the continuity, initially at least, between his and Lawrence's initiatives in securing closer relations with Sher Ali.²⁵ Proceeding to Ambala for his meeting with the Amir on 27 March, Richard Southwell Bourke, 6TH. Earl of Mayo, aimed negatively at total abstention from any "meddling or interfering by subsidies and emissaries"²⁶ or the signing of any treaty. More positively, he wished to ensure the integrity of a strong, pro-British Afghanistan and to enlist the Amir's aid in maximising the

22. Argyll memorandum, (No title, no date, but apparently written in November 1869). REEL325/57 and F.O.60/323.

23. I.O. to F.O., 7 March 1860, P.2r. F.O.60/330.

24. F.O. to I.O., 26 March 1870, ff.1-2. F.O.60/330.

25. See Mayo to Lawrence, Ambala, 4 April 1869. Add 7490/35, Letter 25.

26. Mayo to Argyll, 25 March 1869. REEL311/1, p.299. The Argyll Papers are microfilmed in the I.O.L.&R. and the referencing method is somewhat difficult and confusing. Where possible, therefore, I have been as explicit as possible on the matter of page, though not volume, references.

security of Central Asian commerce.²⁷ Running a tightrope between guaranteeing Afghanistan as a line of defence, proving that Britain had no territorial ambitions, and rejecting any entangling specific engagement with Sher Ali,²⁸ Mayo successfully waylaid all Afghan demands for a concrete engagement based on treaty, annual subsidy, guarantees of the Barakzai dynasty and the unconditional supply of men and arms.

Strictly committed to non-commitment, Mayo faced the same dilemma as Lawrence in wishing for Afghan friendship while simultaneously rejecting any involvement in its internal affairs or unlimited commitment to aid the Amir against his external enemies. But Mayo so worked his Guinness-tongued blarney on Sher Ali that the Amir left Ambala the trusting admirer of a Viceroy whom he regarded as a personal friend.²⁹ The letter which he carried with him, however, was the merest nothingness of diplomatic verbiage: aimed at keeping him hanging by a thread.³⁰

None of the language used, Mayo assured Argyll, bore any ulterior significance; nor could any excessive value be placed on it.³¹ Although the Amir's subsequent compliance with Indian government counsels on his external relations with Sukhara has been taken as evidence that Mayo's assurances were concrete enough,³² crucially, no mention of Russia or of the Central Asian Question was ever made at the durbar.³³ Since this problem was the principal *raison d'être* for close Anglo-Afghan

27. See Mayo to MacLeod, Calcutta, 7 March 1869. Add 7490/34, Letter 75, pp.233-4.

28. See Mayo to Argyll, 18 April 1869, f.3. REEL311/1, pp.369-89.

29. See Sher Ali to Mayo, Ambala, 3 April 1869. L/P&S/5/262, pp.913-5.

30. See Mayo to Sher Ali, Ambala, 31 March 1869. L/P&S/5/262, pp.909-11.

31. G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, 1 July 1869. L/P&S/5/263, pp.39-40 & 28.

32. See B. Prasad, The Foundation of India's Foreign Policy, Vol.1, p. 128.

33. See Mayo to Lawrence, Simla, 3 June 1869, pp.2-3. Add 7490/35, Letter 97; Mayo to Argyll, 18 April 1869, f.7. REEL311/1, pp.377-8.

relations, Ambala and the policies stemming from it possessed at least one glaring anomaly. Nevertheless the Amir, who hoped that "the British Government will always do good and be kind to me, and keep me under its protection,"³⁴ obviously felt he now enjoyed a special relationship with the Government of India. But he need not test the precise meaning of British assurances of "warm countenance and support" until he became apprehensive, several years later, of Russia's approximation. Only then would he discover how ethereal were Mayo's tenuous assurances.

Mayo's seeming coup at Ambala was warmly greeted by Frere, and accepted, with a minor reservation, by Raulinson. But, contradictorily, both put little faith in the value of the impending Clarendon-Gorchakov pourparlers for an Anglo-Russian convention on Central Asia. Acclaiming the durbar's results as Mayo's personal triumph rather than the culmination of Lawrence's belated advances to Sher Ali,³⁵ Frere represented the achievement as a slap in the face for the Russians, who "evidently feel they have been effectively checked and that they will have now to deal with England in any aggressive move this side the Oxus (sic) and can no longer persuade us to sit quiet until they have cleared the Kyber".³⁶ The great danger lay in British ministerial ignorance on Central Asian matters - Frere especially noted that of Clarendon in the Foreign Office - and the possibility that a line was to be drawn south of Balkh demarking the limits of British and Russian conquest and diplomacy. "Such a demarcation would leave Russia absolutely free to annex up to the line and would only fetter us by rendering us responsible for every grievance, real or fictitious, which Russia chose to allege

34. Sher Ali to Mayo, Ambala, 3 April 1869. L/P&S/5/262, p.914.

35. See Frere to Mayo, 30 April 1869. Add 7490/53b/XV, Letter 52.

36. Frere to Mayo, 28 May 1869, f.3v. Add 7490/53b/XV, Letter 54.

against the people on our side of the line".³⁷ For his part Mayo felt "immense nonsense" was talked about the Russians. British commercial superiority would easily offset the Russian military presence in Central Asia, while the British would easily repulse any "demented" attack on India, with the help of the Afghans and the Trans-Himalayan peoples. "You and I will never live to see a shot fired beyond the Indus",³⁸ he assured Sir Bartle.

Chairing an April lecture on India's North-West frontier at the Royal United Service Institution, Rawlinson too iterated that there was no need to fear a Russian invasion or even a hostile demonstration so long as Russia was preoccupied in the new gubernia of Turkestan and as Britain was "really on sincere and cordial terms with our neighbours in Persia and Afghanistan".³⁹ Any delimitation of respective spheres of influence involving a convention for the neutralisation of Afghanistan was unthinkable, however. "By liberal presents of arms and money" the Afghans should be tied to British interests and their territory secured "as a sort of 'buffer' to prevent contact with powers beyond them which might, under certain circumstances, be dangerous".³⁹ While he accepted that the degree of Mayo's support of Sher Ali was "in principle a sound policy" while "in practice it will be a successful policy",⁴⁰ Rawlinson did write advising the Viceroy that, during the Ambala Durbar, he should have taken the opportunity to have a British agent placed at Herat.⁴¹

37. Ibid, ff.2-3r.

38. Mayo to Frere, Simla, 27 May 1869, p.7. Add 7490/35, Letter 88.

39. G. Campbell, The North-West Frontier of India: A talk given to the Royal United Services Institution on Wednesday, 14 April 1869

(London, 1869), pp.237-9.

40. Rawlinson, "The Central Asian Question". An undated, incomplete draft of a newspaper article perhaps, it was written just prior to the Commons debate of 9 July 1869 on that subject. R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers. Contained in black folder with brass lock.

41. Rawlinson's letters to Mayo do not seem to have survived, though a fair estimation of their purport can be gauged from the Viceroy's replies.

But Mayo was sceptical of the propriety of such a move; distrusting "European Politicals" in "Asiatic towns" as "a dangerous class and many a misfortune can be traced to their honest and misplaced activity".⁴² While he felt the Amir would not object to British "politicals" at Kandahar, Herat or Balkh, though not at Kabul, he doubted if Sher Ali wished for them anywhere, for fear of arousing popular anger against his rule.

Benefitting from the inside knowledge gained through membership of the Political Committee, Rawlinson made Mayo fully aware, for the first time, how far the Foreign Office had gone in agreeing with Russia to a Central Asian neutral zone centred on Afghanistan and free from British as well as Russian interference.⁴³ This revelation was exceedingly valuable, for Mayo's aim was to "try and fringe India with strong, independent, friendly though not altogether neutral states" so that "we shall be in a position of strength and safety we never were in before".⁴⁴ It was primarily as a result of the Indian government's opposition - emanating chiefly from Mayo in India - that the Foreign office rescinded, though never clearly or emphatically enough, the suggestion of a neutral Afghanistan.⁴⁵ Rawlinson and Frere already saw themselves as the guardians of India against H.M.G.'s misapprehension of its interests. Initially, they both supported Mayo's Afghan policy because of the promise they imagined it held for a positive, continuous British commitment to the Amir of Kabul in the form of money and arms. But their aspirations went unrealised, for Ambala was an end not a beginning. Despite their

42. Mayo to Rawlinson, Simla, 10 June 1869, pp. 10-11. Add 7490/35, Letter 103.

43. Ibid, pp. 1-2. This proposal was the trigger to the three year long Clarendon-Granville-Gorchakov negotiations, which began at Heidelberg on 3 September 1869.

44. Mayo to Frere, Simla, 27 May 1869, pp.3-4. Add 7490/35, Letter 88. Mayo's underlined emphasis.

45. See A.P. Thornton, "Afghanistan and Anglo-Russian Diplomacy 1869-73", For the File on Empire, p. 160; W. Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations concerning Afghanistan 1837-1907 (Urbana, Illinois, 1937), p.24.

initial enthusiasm, from their retrospective viewpoint one or two years later its significance was to appear all show and no substance.

The Clarendon-Gorchakov talks had quickly come to revolve round outlining the northern borders of those territories subject to the Amir of Kabul.⁴⁶ From the Indian government viewpoint, apart from aiding this activity by invoking Rawlinson's geographical knowledge,⁴⁷ the Central Asian Question was pendant throughout late 1869 and all 1870. Mayo remained certain that "the Amballa meeting commenced a new phase of the Central Asian Question and has laid the foundation for a state of safety which it is possible may last for a considerable time".⁴⁸ When a mutually acceptable Sistan arbitration between Persia and Afghanistan had been reached, and Russian recognition of the Afghanistan of Dost Mahomed obtained, the Liberal government "would have the glory of settling the Central Asian Question for some time".⁴⁹ Though the sanguine Viceroy was confident that English and Russian interests were "not absolutely antagonistic",⁵⁰ as a bonus he still reckoned British commercial superiority would easily offset Russian military settlement in Central Asia.⁵¹ He dismissed such men as Frere and Rawlinson as "Timidites" and "ultra-Russophobists",⁵² though he continually misapprehended their fears as

46. See G.J. Alder, British India's Northern Frontier 1865-1895 (London, 1963), p.166.

47. See Rawlinson to Mayo, 18 June 1869 and Rawlinson memorandum, "On the frontier of Afghanistan". L/P&S/3/75, pp.303-5 & 311-18; Mayo to Rawlinson, Simla, 15 July 1869. Add 7490/36, Letter 159.

48. Mayo to Argyll, Calcutta, 26 December 1869. REEL312/1, pp.1214-5.

49. Mayo to Argyll, Simla, 8 July 1869, ff.7v & 8r. REEL311/1, pp.647-8.

50. Mayo to Argyll, Calcutta, 26 December 1869. REEL312/1, p.1215.

51. Mayo to Frere, Simla, 27 May 1869. Add 7490/35, Letter 88, p.7. In early 1870 Mayo directed T.O. Forsyth to investigate the effect of heavy Russian duties on India's trade with Central Asia. Forsyth was sure that, by pushing the trade from Karachi harbour via Baluchistan and thereby avoiding high transit duties in Afghanistan, the British could command the Central Asian market by virtue of their goods' superior quality. Peace and the continuation of the status quo were essential if India's Central Asian commerce, especially with Bukhara, was not to be ruined. See T.O. Forsyth, "A Memorandum on Trade with Central Asia", 15 March 1870. Add 7490/7/IV.

52. Mayo to Argyll, Simla, 2 June 1870 & 26 May 1871. REEL313/1, pp.493 & 177.

being of invasion. For his part, Frere felt "Mr. Hammond & Co at the F.O. seem fully determined to do nothing but let everything drift. It is the same story at...Teheran and Bokhara. I am utterly tired of this second fit of masterly inactivity".⁵³ Rawlinson, meantime, fruitlessly predicted further menacing Russian encroachments.⁵⁴

Throughout early 1871, however, the Indian government's skin-deep complacency was scarred by repeated rumours of a proposed Russian expedition against Khiva in March or April.⁵⁵ Notably, Foreign Office channels were the sole source of this intelligence. Copies of their despatches were forwarded to the Government of India for its information; information which made Mayo very uneasy.⁵⁶ Deprecating any Russian aggression against Khiva as likely "to unsettle the confidence of the independent States of Asia", and displaying a naive faith in any Great Power's susceptibility to diplomatic pleas and protests, that Government asked that the Tsar's ministers be reminded of their avowedly peaceful intentions and earlier negation of all aggressive designs.⁵⁷ Though the rumours eventually came to appear unfounded,⁵⁸ and the sentimental status-quo-ante could be resumed within the Foreign Office and the Government of India, their effect was traumatic within the India Office's political section, where the personnel were aware of the rumours' existence through their ready access to secret information.⁵⁹ Disgruntled at Argyll's thus far rudderless navigation of the office on Central Asian matters, and considering that "the time has come for some more decided action than has

53. Frere to Pelly, 14 January 1870, f.2. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 1.

54. See Mayo to Rawlinson, Calcutta, 8 February 1871, p.1. Add 7490/42, Letter 43; Rawlinson memorandum, (No heading or date but mid-January 1870). L/P&S/3/76, pp.121-3.

55. F.O. to I.O., 6 January, 8 & 18 April 1871. L/P&S/3/78, pp.31, 381 & 425.

56. See Mayo to Argyll, Simla, 26 May & 16 June 1871. REEL313/1, pp.156-7 & 177.

57. G.I. to S.S.I., Secret 28, Simla, 26 May 1871. L/P&S/5/266, pp.1033-41.

58. F.O. to I.O., 20 June 1871. L/P&S/3/78, pp.827-33.

59. Rawlinson's initials are clearly appended to the upper right-hand corner of, F.O. to I.O., 2 June 1871. L/P&S/3/78, p.669.

yet been taken at home", Kaye presented the Secretary of State with a broadly conceived set of stratagems. These aimed "at the erection of a strong and friendly power in the countries between India and Toorkhistan", and were reckoned superior, for that purpose, to those presently in operation.⁶⁰ The document which he gave Argyll,⁶¹ drawn up in conjunction with Frere, Rawlinson and Montgomery and signed by all four men, contained an 'ends-means' schema: the outline of their current maximal policy for indubitably guaranteeing India's security.

Some policy recommendations made in their manifesto were matters of temporary and opportune expedient; the extra Kalat subsidy, for example. A seemingly innocuous insertion, it is comprehensible in terms of Article 4 of the Anglo-Kalat treaty of 1854, by which Britain was entitled to station troops anywhere in the Khan's territories - at Quetta if need be. Other proposals, such as the placement of British instructors in Persia and the despatch of an agent to Afghanistan, were persistently persuasive ends. By encompassing Persia, Afghanistan and Kalat in their suggestions, the group manifested a broad conception of India's defence needs; although, explicit in their proposals, was a more active commitment and involvement than the Indian government deemed advisable. They flagrantly failed to suggest how a reciprocal friendship was to be pursued simultaneously with two such rival powers as Afghanistan and Persia. Nor did they admit, if they realised it, that close connections with one made a costly intimacy with the other redundant.

Though related to diplomacy rather than territorial annexation, their proposals' political dynamism warrants the description "forward stratagems" and provides a temptation to describe the group as the "Forward School". Such a term was only used later contemporaneously, but

60. Kaye to Argyll, (Confidential), 6 July 1871. L/P&S/3/78, inserted between pp.833 & 835.

61. The document is reproduced in Appendix B. Unheaded, its reference is, L/P&S/3/78, pp.844c-844e.

even then very loosely and never in relation to a group within the India Office.⁶² Moreover, even though their policies tended, with time, to more rather than less forcefulness, the epithet is also unsuitable in ascribing too continuously concerted an effort and immutability of policy to a heterogeneous group. As President of the Royal Geographical Society Rawlinson continued his solo efforts as a publicist of the Central Asian Question; while, during the 1873 Russian expedition against Khiva, Frere was absent on mission to Zanzibar. The high incidence of undocumented oral exchange also makes it impossible to determine whether an apparently individual effort had been agreed on in concert earlier. Even more unfortunately, there is little extant documentation illuminating the ebb and flow of relations between the four men. Nevertheless, it is irrefutable that there existed within the India Office in the 1870's a definable body of opinion, the component personalities of which cooperated for limited practical purposes and were concurrently committed to specific means of maximally securing India's North-West frontier. To that end they met informally, pressurised the government intermittently and opportunistically and, even if unable to dictate or determine policy, were hopeful of suggesting and influencing it.

A loosely woven khaddar, a coalition rather than a team, the political and social ties between them were still remarkably close. Together with their mutually attracted wives, Frere and Rawlinson dined frequently in each other's company and were drawn especially close through their work together in the topmost echelons of the Royal Geographical Society.⁶³ Frere's interest in Afghanistan and his earlier belief in Persia as another bulwark of India⁶⁴ were probably confirmed and perhaps

62. See J. Slagg, "The true 'scientific frontier' of India", The Nineteenth Century, 18(1885), pp.153-4.

63. See Catherine Frere to Pelly, 7 January 1870, 19 June & 7 December 1871. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 1. Until May 1871, Rawlinson was a Vice-President of the R.G.S. and, from May 1871-73 and again May 1874-76, President. Frere was a Vice-President from May 1870-73 and again May 1874-75. Between May 1873-74 he was President.

64. See Frere to Canning, 28 November & 1 December 1860, ff.5r & 2-3. Can/12, Letters 59 & 61.

strengthened through contact with Rawlinson. Kaye's remarkable conversion to support for a more active Afghan policy is testimony to the persuasiveness of Rawlinson's imperious intellect. In the late 60's, having earlier expressed his moral outrage at the 1838-42 fiasco in his excellent work "The History of the War in Afghanistan",⁶⁵ Kaye was unsympathetic to the apprehensive view of Russia as a menace to India. Through the medium of the press, as well as officially, he had given his full support to Lawrence's Afghan policy.⁶⁶ But Rawlinson's outstanding background knowledge of Central Asian affairs made such an impression on Kaye that he fell completely under his suasion. He admitted Rawlinson to be his superior in knowledge and intellect and came to consider him indispensable to the running of the India Office.⁶⁷ The last of the quartet, Montgomery, is an altogether more shadowy figure who, as Lt-Governor of the Punjab, had shown a keen interest in Afghan affairs; and also possessed, according to Lord Elgin, a continual bellicose desire for "a good row" linked to a trans-frontier campaign.⁶⁸ Dating from late 1868, and their communal opinion favouring the despatch of officers to Persia, he too found much in common with Kaye, Rawlinson and, ultimately, Frere.

Faced with a decrepit Permanent Under-Secretary,⁶⁹ the principal foci of the group's attentions were Argyll and his Parliamentary Under-Secretary, M.E. Grant Duff. Though the old Whig and the young Liberal had been apprehensive of each other at first, Grant Duff remained deliberately subservient to Argyll, and between them they maintained a

65. See J.W. Kaye, The History of the War in Afghanistan (3 Vols., London, 1851).

66. See Kaye to Lawrence, 10 January 1866. MSS.EUR.F.90/63, Letter 20, f.46v; Kaye to Northcote, 13 June 1868. L/P&S/3/73, p.221.

67. Kaye to Aitchison, 5 December 1873. L/P&S/19, pp.71-3.

68. See Elgin to Wood, 19 October 1862. MSS.EUR.F.78/56/3, f.156; Elgin to Wood, Kolhui & Simla, 20 September & 4 October 1863. MSS.EUR.F.78/56/7, ff.33-6 & 97-101.

69. In 1871 Herman Merivale was 65 and had only three years left of life.

notable policy consensus.⁷⁰ Grant Duff's blotting paper capacity for absorbing pools of factual detail was an especially admirable counterpoise to Rawlinson's overwhelming intimacy with the minutiae of Central Asian politics. Regarding Frere as "an accomplished man--...very crochety and... evidently very ambitious", "an excellent councillor but a rather dangerous counsellor", and Rawlinson as "most valuable - an admirable servant, a very bad master",⁷¹ Argyll and Grant Duff between them devised the technique of employing that duo's admitted talents in as innocuous, restrained and profitable a fashion possible.⁷² For example, relying on Rawlinson's expert knowledge and special interest, Argyll had him draw up confidential memoranda on the broad implications of a British-owned Suez Canal and the practical political advantages of a British-built railway in Persia.⁷³ Frere became something of a trouble-shooter for the India Office: despatched to Zanzibar in 1872-73 for instance, to negotiate a new treaty with the Sultan.⁷⁴ In any case, in Central Asian matters the lazy Argyll, who autocratically aimed to domineer rather than be dominated by his Council or officials, had long believed any Russian threat to India would be dealt with most effectively in Europe.⁷⁵ There is every evidence, also,⁷⁶ that he referred important issues to Gladstone. The "Grand Old Flagellant" kept a close eye on the foreign policy of both the Foreign and India Offices; guided

70. See Argyll to Gladstone, 24 January & 13 February 1874. B.L. ADD. MSS.44,103, ff.116-9 & 125-8; M.E. Grant Duff, Out of the Past: some biographical essays (2 Vols., London, 1903), Vol.2, p.160.

71. Argyll to Gladstone, 15 January 1874. B.L. ADD. MSS.44,103, f.103r; M.E. Grant Duff, Notes from a Diary 1873-1881, Vol.1, p.42.

72. See M.E. Grant Duff, "British interests in the East", The Nineteenth Century, 7 (1880), p.672.

73. See L/P&S/3/78, pp.43-4, 89-91, 661-4, 669 & 883-5.

74. See R.J. Gavin, "The Bartle Frere Mission to Zanzibar 1873", The Historical Journal, V(1962), pp.122-48.

75. See Argyll to Canning, 18 December 1856. Quoted MacLagan, "Clemency" Canning, p.51.

76. See, for example, S.S.I. to G.I., (Secret), 27 August 1869. L/P&S/S/591, pp. 949-51; also "Central Asia: Sir Henry Rawlinson's memorandum". F.O.60/901. This memo was seen by Gladstone.

no doubt by his liberal principles of peace, tolerance and international amity⁷⁷ as well as the illiberal desire to save money.

Coincident with the presentation of their manifesto, the "forward" group, in a fresh attempt to exert their influence on Persian policy, reiterated the advantages of their own stratagems and implicitly criticised those of the government. Asked for his observations on E.B. Eastwick's Persian memorandum,⁷⁸ Argyll passed it for comment to Rawlinson, from whom Kaye submitted a memorandum explicitly concurred in by Frere and Montgomery.⁷⁹ Rawlinson generally agreed with Eastwick that Britain's Persian policy was inadequate and that an allied Persia would provide an additional defence work for India; having already made it clear elsewhere that his emphasis on close Anglo-Persian friendship was not the result of some sentimental personal reminiscence but of a hard-headed, somewhat cynical, evaluation of the importance of Persia's geographical position.⁸⁰ He now, more expansively, submitted that: "Placed as she is on the flank of the Debateable Land between the Caspian and the Indus, it will depend a great deal on her action how and when a contact may take place between Russia and British India... It would then be in our interest to seek her friendship and at the same time to give her strength and confidence in her own resources, any expense to which we may be put on this account being regarded as a sort of premium on the insurance of India".⁸¹ Persia's vaguely defined northern frontier lay along the only feasible line of march of a Russian column moving from the Caspian littoral on Mary (Merv) and hence, if desired, on Herat.

77. See P. Knaplund, Gladstone's Foreign Policy (Frank Cass Reprint, London, 1970), Introduction.

78. See Eastwick's memorandum, "The Policy of Great Britain towards Persia", 16 June 1871. L/P&S/3/78, pp.837-43. Eastwick was a former Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran who maintained a keen interest in Anglo-Persian relations. He submitted his memorandum privately to the Foreign Office, which circulated it for comment.

79. See Rawlinson memorandum, "On the policy of Great Britain towards Persia", 4 July 1871. L/P&S/3/78, pp.843A-844B.

80. Rawlinson memorandum, "Railways in Persia", 9 June 1871. L/P&S/3/78, p.664.

81. Rawlinson memorandum, "On the policy of Great Britain towards Persia", p. 843A.

Rawlinson was to hold that this march would be comparatively easy with Persia's cordial cooperation, still feasible with her benevolent neutrality, but impossible in the face of her decided opposition.⁸² A pro-British Persia could seriously delay Russia's approach to Herat, given that such an approximation must take place along a west-east axis.

Practically, in order to bind the Shah to British interests, Rawlinson supported Eastwick's advice on furnishing officers to the Persian Army, and emphasised that no "considerations of economy" should be allowed to interfere with this scheme, the expense of which would not be overburdensome in any case. Inclined to give precedence to the idea of a "Big Afghanistan", however, he opposed Eastwick's proposals for the Shah's territorial aggrandisement at Kabul's expense by denuding the Amirate of Sistän and Herat and encouraging the Shah to occupy Merv^(Merv). Rawlinson obviously wished these areas kept open to future British penetration via Afghanistan and held that their possession would only weaken Persia. His bald statement, "The real and essential improvement however that is required is that more care and attention should be bestowed upon the Mission at the Court of Teheran",⁸³ highlights his group's long-standing disgruntlement with the official source responsible for the conduct of Anglo-Persian relations. Not only did they regard England as being "misrepresented" by her Teheran envoy, Charles Alison,⁸⁴ but they also restated the desirability of the Persian Mission's re-transfer from the Foreign to the India Office. Rawlinson - and Kaye - had already pleaded the Foreign Office's unsuitability for this responsibility before the House of Commons Select Committee on the Diplomatic

82. See H.C. Rawlinson, "The Road to Merv", P.R.G.S., 1N.S.(1879), pp. 187-8.

83. See Rawlinson memorandum, "On the policy of Great Britain towards Persia", p.8430.

84. See *ibid*, p.8430; Frere's marginal comment, F.O. to I.O., 20 June 1871. L/P&S/3/78, p.835.

and Consular Services. Dictated as it was by the Russian advance, Britain's interest in Persia, they held, was Indocentric rather than Eurocentric; whereas the Foreign Office view was formed from the latter perspective. Furthermore, in a country where direct personal contact between court and foreign envoys counted for much, individual initiative was too closely hedged about by the ⁸⁵hierarchy of Foreign Office authority. Placed under an India Office which allowed its representatives far greater liberty of action, Anglo-Indian officers representing Britain at Teheran should have no instruction other than "Make friends with the Shah!",⁸⁵ and all could then be left to their individual character, energy and application.

Faced with this comprehensive memo, Argyll showed his preference for a "Big Afghanistan" and favour of the Persian mission's re-transfer; but he also pointed out that the Shah's earlier refusal to meet some of the expense ruled out the despatch of officers.⁸⁶ The Government of India entirely agreed with him. While the officers' presence might give offence, assuredly it would not create a predisposing British influence at Teheran. Having earlier speedily incorporated Argyll's idea of surrounding India with a ring of independent, pro-British territories,⁸⁷ the Viceroy and Council reckoned Persia entirely superfluous as a bastion of India. India's cardinal, long-term, foreign policy should be the establishment of intimate, friendly relations with - on her North-west frontier - Kalat and Afghanistan; their being assured of support, under severe circumstances, in money, arms and maybe even men. "We could thus create in them outworks of Empire".⁸⁸ From Mayo's point

85. Ibid, p.844A.

86. See Argyll's marginal note, Kaye to Argyll, (Confidential), 6 July 1871. L/P&S/3/78, inserted between pp.833 & 835; I.O. to F.O., 7 June 1872. L/P&S/3/81, pp.981-2.

87. See Mayo to Argyll, Calcutta, 26 December 1869. REEL312/1, p.1213; Mayo memorandum, 29 December 1871. Quoted O.T. Burne, *Memories*, (Lon-

88. See G.I. to S.S.I., Secret 4, 19 January 1872. L/P&S/5/269, pp.77-81.

of view, Persia's inclusion in the defensive ring was totally unnecessary. Persian representatives, backed up by Rawlinson, might continue to complain of British neglect, but the Indian government did not intend altering its Persian policy.⁸⁹

Following her north-south advance of the 60's against Bukhara and Kokand, in the early 70's a subtle change became apparent in the directional emphasis of Russian activity in Central Asia. After the establishment of military forts at Krasnovodsk and Chikishlyer in 1869 & 71 - on the eastern Caspian littoral - a new Russian trans-Caspian frontier yearly drew nearer to the Amu Darya and Khiva. Despite the vastness of territory intervening, the subsequent absorption of Khiva and command of the Amu Darya would give Russia "contiguity with Herat", according to an anxiously exaggerating Rawlinson.⁹⁰ Russia's intentions in moving forward may have been innocuously commercial,⁹¹ an involuntary, punitive rejoinder to frontier raids and caravan-looting, or ^{she may} have had the ulterior and long-term aim of conquering and perhaps occupying Khiva. Following the unease caused in early 1871 by rumours of such an expedition, Ambassador Buchanan in St. Petersburg learnt that General Von Kaufman, Governor of the Turkestan gubernia, had in fact intended to undertake it on his own initiative; being foiled only when a finance clerk inadvertently informed St. Petersburg.⁹² This should have indicated to both the Foreign and the India Offices the indifferent worth of the Clarendon-Gorchakov negotiations, since any agreement reached could be annulled by the wilful initiatives of a Russian general thousands of miles from the central government. No such conclusion was drawn in British

89. See F.O. to I.O., 8 June 1872. L/P&S/3/81, p.993; I.O. to F.O., 26 November 1872. L/P&S/3/82, pp.1089-90.

90. Rawlinson memorandum, (Unheaded and undated, but apparently mid-January 1870). L/P&S/3/76, pp.121-3.

91. See Buchanan to Grenville, St. Petersburg, 13 June 1871. L/P&S/3/78, pp.831-3.

92. See Buchanan to Grenville, St. Petersburg, 18 September 1871. L/P&S/3/79, pp.1213-20.

government circles however, though they did realistically accept that, in any attempt to dissuade Russia from a permanent occupation of Khiva, "the threat of a British occupation of Herat would be imprudent".⁹³

Despite their failure over Persian policy the "forward" group's members were not disheartened. Drawing sustenance from the assurance of acting dutifully as good patriots, they continued to press their policies on Russia and Afghanistan throughout the remainder of Gladstone's Ministry. The years 1871-73 may seem barren and abounding in unmitigated failure. But they were only narrowly so. The image later created by such men as Argyll and Northbrook of a Sphinx-like impassivity and self-assurance - assiduously cultivated retrospectively during their criticism of the Beaconsfield Afghan imbroglio - is largely mythical. A self-acclaimed sense of security is tested most severely at times of crisis and, at two critical points, first Argyll and then Northbrook showed themselves less confidently secure than they claimed to be, and more susceptible to "forward" group entreaties.

When St. Petersburg did give notice in late 1872 of an intended Khivan expedition, Rawlinson pressed Argyll, Granville and Northbrook⁹⁴ to insist on Russia's retirement after she had exacted redress, so as to placate the Amir of Kabul's fears. Seeking, and obtaining, Northbrook's support in persuading Granville,⁹⁵ Rawlinson revealed how the uneasy frontiersman perpetually reaches out, like an expanding torrent, to secure increasingly less relevant positions. The incorporation of Khiva in the Tsarist empire was of "vastly greater importance to India than

93. G.I. to S.S.I., Secret 1, Fort William, 5 January 1872. L/P&S/5/269, p. 1790; I.O. to F.O., 12 February 1872. L/P&S/381, pp.265-6.

94. Mayo had been assassinated in early 1872 while on a visit to the Andaman Islands and Northbrook had been sent hurriedly to India as his replacement. Granville had succeeded Clarendon as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

95. See Rawlinson to Northbrook, 8 November 1872; Northbrook to Rawlinson, 7 December 1872; Northbrook to Granville, Pachmar, 6 December 1872. MSS.EUR.C.144/20, pp.86-8, II-IV & 51-2.

the occupation of Samarkand for this reason that it brings Russia 1,000 miles nearer to us on the only possible line of advance".⁹⁶ Piling improbable supposition on haphazard speculation, and binding the unlikely structure with the cement of his own unease, he surmised that a Russian advance on Mary^(Merv) would soon follow, as would her steamers' navigating up a deflected Amu Darya⁹⁷ as far as Balkh and Kunduz.

It was one of the great weaknesses of the Indian government's case against the "forward" group that by far the greater part of its information on current Russian Central Asian activity came, cold, secondhand or inaccurate, from Foreign Office sources in Russia and Europe. Speculation, the prey of uneasy exaggeration, was no substitute for hard, up-to-date fact. In private conversation, Rawlinson must have successfully convinced Argyll that too little was being done from the Indian side to collect accurate information on Russian movements. For, quite unpredictably, Argyll asked Northbrook what he thought of "our having an officer as our Agent resident at Herat? just (sic) to keep a look out and report what is going on in those countries?"⁹⁸ If the officer was safe and his presence did not excite Afghan suspicions, the placement would be advantageous. Far from opposing Argyll's second-hand initiative, Northbrook promised to take the earliest opportunity of ascertaining the Amir's opinion, especially since he understood Sher Ali to have "told Lord Mayo that there was no objection to the location of a Resident at Herat or Candahar, but that he could not be responsible for the safety

96. Rawlinson to Northbrook, 8 November 1872. MSS.EUR.C.144/20, p.86.

97. Russian military, commercial and geographical circles were very interested in the phenomenon of this river's repeated deflection between the Aral and the Caspian Seas. There were hopes of re-deflecting it along its old lower bed to the Caspian, making it an admirable transport highway between Russian and her new Central Asian possessions. As late as May 1872 Rawlinson himself believed the project to be quite practicable but by March 1873 he doubted if such a stream would in fact be navigable due to constant heavy silting at the Amu Darya's mouth.

98. Argyll to Northbrook, 14 February 1873. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, p.37.

of a Resident at Cabul".⁹⁹

At his Simla conference with the Afghan envoy in mid-73, Northbrook procrastinated on this issue of a British officer to Herat. Instead, an officer should first be deputed to examine the new Sistan boundaries, "who would have it in his power to do much towards allaying any feelings of mistrust that may still linger in the minds of the people in Afghanistan, and towards preparing the way for the eventual location of permanent British representatives in that country...".¹⁰⁰ On receiving this suggestion from India, Kaye sought Argyll's permission to telegraph immediate approval for the despatch of two such officers, one an engineer. Argyll thought there was "no hurry".¹⁰¹ The Herat agent proposal, most likely originating with Rawlinson, sank in the morasses of Argyll's procrastinating lack of energy, Northbrook's personal frustration with Afghan negotiating methods, and Sher Ali's newly discovered reluctance - following his disappointment at the results of the Simla conference - to allow British officers anywhere in his territory.

An uneasy Rawlinson did not restrict the expression of his anxiety about the Khivan expedition to private exchange. He also voiced it in public, and with unlikely consequences. Having made full use of his presidency of the Royal Geographical Society to politicise most discussions on Central Asian geography,¹⁰² in February 1873, once the Russian expedition had been confirmed, Rawlinson announced his intention of delivering an address on Khiva. On 24 March, before a Society meeting chaired by the Prince of Wales, he read his "Notes on Khiva": a lecture so overtly political that the Society's "Proceedings" carried

99. Northbrook to Argyll, Calcutta, 14 March 1873. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, p.CVI. In the Northbrook Papers the "in" correspondence is paginated in Arabic numerals, the "out" correspondence in Roman numerals.

100. G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 75, 15 September 1873. L/P&S/5/273, p.1059.

101. See Kaye to Aitchison, 12 December 1873. L/P&S/19, p.77.

102. See H.C. Rawlinson, "Badakhshan and Wakhan". P.R.G.S., XVII (1872-73), pp.108-15.

only a short, abstracted account of its minute geographical content.¹⁰³ His outspoken comments were reported at length in "The Times" next morning, however.¹⁰⁴ Apart from seeing Russia's outposts at Kransnovodsk and Chikishlyer as a standing menace to Persia's northern province of Khorassan, he also represented them as the opening up of the high road to India via Herat. Their establishment, moreover, constituted an invasion of Khivan territory and Russia's subsequent excursions were classifiable as needless aggression. If Russia retreated from Khiva after a successful expedition she would lose valuable prestige; if she remained, she would expend £1 million annually and "would show the excessive value which she attached to her commercial and political rivalry with England, and... would give some colour to the opinions of those who suspected her of important ulterior designs".¹⁰⁵ He clearly implied that the expedition was yet another stage in a long-term Russian move towards India. Dissimulating for public consumption, he pretended to a calm he probably did not feel¹⁰⁶ and ended on a reassuring note. Even so, a lecture delivered in such august company was probably meant as a widely noticeable warning to both British public opinion and Russia.

Though British public opinion remained still remarkably quiescent, such was Rawlinson's status as president of an outstanding society and member of the Council of India, that his outburst evinced speedy and lengthy notice within the Russian press. His lecture was reported and commented on at length in the "Exchange Gazette" and the "Moscow Gazette" - the latter suspected of being Gorchakov's mouthpiece.¹⁰⁷ If, in the diplomatic game, the strongest hand is often held by the power whose opinions and intentions are least well known, Rawlinson was a significant

103. See P.R.C.S., XVII (1872-73), pp.162-3.

104. See "The Times", 25 March 1873, p.7, cols. 3-4.

105. Ibid, col. 4.

106. See Argyll to Lorne, 11 February 1873, f.1. REEL322/36.

107. See Loftus to Granville, St. Petersburg, 1 & 2 April 1873. L/P&S/3/84, pp. 179-83 & 191-6.

flaw in the British facade. Ignorantly believing that public opinion counted for much in British political circles, Russian politicians, press and military men came to assume that the public was decisively influenced by the prestigious President of the Royal Geographical Society. As General M.A. Terentiev remarked: "...in their discussions with us, the English Statesmen not infrequently supported their arguments with quotations from his writings, and for these reasons we cannot but attach considerable significance to his opinions regarding Central Asia".¹⁰⁸ Straddling public and political life and having intimate knowledge of British policy, Rawlinson came to serve as a Russian barometer, albeit a rough and ready one, of British statesmen's innermost susceptibilities on India. Russian political and military circles, the latter in Central Asia especially,¹⁰⁹ would continue to show a keen, recurrent interest in his public statements and published writings. By reference to these they could easily confirm what practicable diplomatic and military operations in Central Asia would create the greatest unease in the British imperial Koh-i-noor.

Undeniably, Rawlinson's personal susceptibility to the Russian danger, and India's insecurity, was peculiarly heightened. Khiva, occupied or unoccupied by Russian troops, was still 1,050 miles from India. Mary, on which he was now coming to focus his attention in addition to Herat, was 780 miles off. Even Herat itself was 580 miles from Jacobabad, one of the nearest points on the Indian frontier. But it is erroneous merely to recount distances in an attempt to scorn into myth the threat of invasion. In fairness to him, the only danger Rawlinson declaredly apprehended

108. General M.A. Terentiev, Russia and England in Central Asia (2 Vols., Calcutta, 1876. Translated from the original 1875 St. Petersburg edition by F.C. Daukes), Vol.2, pp.168-9. Terentiev had served in Central Asia under General Von Kaufman.

109. See the responses of such Central Asian officers as Skobelev, Chernyaev and Grodekov in interviews with the British newspaper correspondent, Charles Marvin. C. Marvin, The Russian Advance towards India. Conversations with Ignat'ev etc. (London, 1882).

from the Khivan expedition was "very much disturbance of the public mind in India".¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, Rawlinson himself was unconsciously confused. If he had clearly recognised Russia's approximation and her subsequently improved opportunity for intrigue and hostile demonstration as the sole source of his unease, he would have placed as much emphasis on the security of Kabul's Amu Darya frontier as on a vassal Khiva. But he stated publicly¹¹¹ that the dispute over Afghanistan's northern frontier, which he himself was playing an important part in delimiting,¹¹² was a far less significant matter than Russian progress on the east coast of the Caspian. However, for purposes of agitation, the transfer of agents provocateurs, or demonstrative sabre-rattling with small columns, Afghanistan's northern frontier was as suitable as its north-western. Despite himself then, Rawlinson was unconsciously enmeshed in the old invasion scares, and in consequence tended to concentrate on the traditional route for an army's passage. This anomaly made it easier for unsympathetic opponents to listen but half-heartedly to the warnings of one they mistook for an alarmist Russophobe and to misapprehend his fears as being solely of an invasion. The unconscious snare also trapped Rawlinson into applying old prescriptions, such as that on the key significance of Herat, to his and his colleagues' novel fears of extraneously produced internal insecurity.

Though they might be considered misplaced, the "forward" group's fears of a Russian hand on the lid of an Indian Pandora's box were not capricious. For they were part of a general debate on the loyalty or otherwise of Britain's Indian subjects, focussing in the 70's on the Muslim population. The supposedly pervasive influence of the Akhund of Swat, extensive though dubiously effective Wahabi revivalist missionary

110. Rawlinson to Northbrook, 8 November 1872. MSS.EUR.C.144/20, p.87.

111. See Rawlinson, "Badakhshan and Wakhan", p.115.

112. See below, chapter 4, p.131.

activity in the north and north-west, and the assassinations, by Muslims, of Chief Justice Norman and of Mayo, could be represented most specifically as ominous symptoms of a malignant tumour of disloyalty. Muslim, and hence in some degree Indian, disloyalty was never uncritically accepted but was subject to lengthy, contradictory debate. In publicist circles the opposition of distrust and trust was epitomised in the works of W.W. Hunter and A.C. Lyall,¹¹³ while within the administration Sir George Campbell, Lt-Governor of Bengal 1871-74, was a constant champion of Muslim loyalty.¹¹⁴ Amid a tidal ebb and flow of contradictory assertion, Anglo-Indian statesmen enquired empirically into the likelihood of a Wahabi-instigated, Islamic revivalist revolt in northern India. Mayo saw only a need for "quiet though active watchfulness"¹¹⁵ and after his predecessor's assassination Northbrook refused to be flustered by sensational, Wahabi-conspiracy theories about Mayo's death or by rumours of an impending revolt in the Bombay presidency.¹¹⁶ After a country-wide investigation he could admit that "the Indian Mussulmans ... are our most dangerous class"¹¹⁷ but equally appreciate that their discontent and that of all India was the result not of religious antagonism but of too rapid a rate of development, an onerous income tax, re-assessments in land revenue and the nature of the civil and criminal codes.¹¹⁸ In

113. See W.W. Hunter, The Indian Musalmans: Are they Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen? (London, 1871); A.C. Lyall, "Islam in India", Asiatic Studies: Religious and Social (London, 1892), pp.228-57. Lyall's article appeared originally in the Theological Review of 1872 and was principally a review and a criticism of Hunter's work.

114. See Campbell to Argyll, Darjeeling & Calcutta, 22 October & 22 November 1871, ff.3-4 & 9-10. REEL316/8; Campbell to Northbrook, Alipore, 31 March 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/15, p.161; Campbell to Salisbury, 26 December 1876, ff.1, 3 & 4. REEL821/81.

115. Mayo to Argyll, Simla, 15 October 1871. REEL314/3, p.201.

116. See Northbrook to Argyll, Bombay, 29 April 1872 & Calcutta, 10 May 1872. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, pp.V & VII-VIII.

117. Northbrook to Argyll, Calcutta, 28 March 1873. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, p.CXIV.

118. See *ibid*, p.CXIII; Northbrook to Shaftesbury, Simla, 1 July 1872. MSS.EUR.C.144/20, p.XI.

Northbrook's estimation such fiscal and administrative sources of discontent could easily be removed by government fiat.¹¹⁹

In spite of the Viceroy's guardedly optimistic outlook, Kaye, who tended to suspicion of the Muslim role in the '57 rebellion,¹²⁰ had subscribed to the Wahabi-conspiracy theory of Norman's and Mayo's deaths. By mid-73 he had a clear presentiment - derived in part perhaps from George Badger, the Muslim scholar and a close associate of Frere, Kaye and Rawlinson - of a general Muslim revival in the East.¹²¹ So strong was his belief that he persuaded Argyll to seek confirmatory or contradictory evidence via Foreign Office and Government of India sources.¹²² Though his suspicion was contradicted by the Viceroy and by consular sources as far apart as Albania and Taiwan, Trebizond and Zanzibar,¹²³ Kaye's general unease confirms that, within the cabal as a whole, its members' fears for India's internal security were easily triggered off; and certain of them displayed obvious signs of distrusting her people, especially the Muslim section of the population. Yet the "forward" group's solution to the security problem created by popular Indian discontent, and by derivation untrustworthiness, was very different from that of Northbrook. And here was highlighted one diametrical opposition between them and the Government of India in that all-important nexus where domestic and foreign policy are closely integrated. To the Viceroy, if India's security problem was, originally, internal then the solution must be an interior one. Adopting a cautious policy of minimizing government activity, expenditure and taxes,¹²⁴ Northbrook could only

119. See Northbrook to Argyll, Calcutta, 20 December 1872. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, p.LXXIX.

120. See J.W. Kaye, A History of the Sepoy War in India 1857-58 (3 Vols., London, 1876), Vol.1, pp.35-42 & Vol.2, pp.78-81.

121. See Kaye memorandum, "Alleged Mahomedan propaganda", August 1873. L/P&S/3/86, pp.123-4.

122. I.O. to F.O., 9 August 1873. L/P&S/3/86, pp.125-6.

123. See G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 85, 29 October 1873. L/P&S/5/274, p.127; also L/P&S/3/86, /87 & /88 generally.

124. See Northbrook to Argyll, Calcutta, 4 April 1873. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, p.CXVI; G.R.G. Hambly, "Unrest in Northern India during the Viceroyalty of Lord Mayo 1869-72: the Background to Lord Northbrook's Policy of Inactivity", Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, 48 (1961), pp.37-55.

hope to ameliorate the peoples' condition while simultaneously removing the very discontent which so much fostered British unease. While he treated the problem at source, the "forward" group's emphasis was still on a firmer commitment to contiguous territories. This unavoidably involved expenditure: expenditure derived from fiscal impositions guaranteed to foment that very discontent the exploitability of which they were seeking to nullify. Free from the responsibilities of power they could afford the luxury of tortuous, spendthrift solutions.

Throughout the Gladstone government's final year a studied vagueness and increasingly apparent opposition of sectional, official interest characterised British policy on the Central Asian Question. Most noticeably also, the "forward" group outspokenly but vainly attempted to induce H.M.G. to adopt a firmer tone in negotiations with Russia and a more forceful response to the threat of her further advances. In 1873 the Liberal Government's Central Asian policy climaxed in a ramshackle structure, founded on vague, distrusted British promises to Kabul and peopled by the unilluminated ghosts of mutually misapprehended Anglo-Russian negotiations. The Clarendon-Granville-Gorchakov talks, culminating in January 1873 with no final article or formal exchange of notes, were worthless. It was part of the understanding that Britain could not question or protest against Russian actions and movements north of the Afghan frontier line. But confusion over terminology and the precise limits of the Government of India's negotiating authority, possibly supplemented by the unreliability of Russian diplomacy, created immediate confusion as to whether a Central Asian neutral zone had or had not been created and, if so, whether Afghanistan was that neutral zone.¹²⁵

The Foreign Office had traded the right to remonstrate for a mere bauble which glittered silver but was in fact worthless tinsel. Rawlinson

125. See W. Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan 1837-1907, pp.34-6.

was disillusioned with the talks even before their conclusion, largely because of the Russian negotiator's "SLIPPERINESS", his seeming desire to recur to a neutral zone, and the undependability of Russian verbal assurances.¹²⁶

The talks revolved, in a haze of diffuse discussion, round Afghanistan's northern frontier and in particular Kabul's suzerainty over Badakhshan and Wakhan. No mere semantic quibble, the delineation of this border would determine the southern limit of Russia's Central Asian empire, the practicability of any contemplated threat to India and perhaps even the line of British defence.¹²⁷ Involved in helping define the frontier because of the Foreign Office's lack of geographical expertise, Kaye, Rawlinson and Montgomery, acting in collusion immediately prior to the talks' conclusion, pressed the Foreign Office for a firm, unambiguous declaration of Sher Ali's sovereignty over Badakhshan and Wakhan, especially since this was the express wish of the Government of India.¹²⁸ Ignoring these self-appointed guardians of India's interests, the Foreign Office heavily diluted their final draft to St. Petersburg by repeated use of the word "claim". The result of this, Kaye and Rawlinson expostulated, was to leave "this question of Badakhshan an open question".¹²⁹ Despite their angry outburst, the despatch had already been sent and the talks terminated. Seeing it as yet another example of the Foreign Office's pusillanimous conduct of a "feeble milk and water policy", Kaye's anger continued undiminished as he realised that the despatch's dilution had left the whole Central Asian Question unsettled. "The Foreign Office",

126. Rawlinson to Northbrook, 8 November 1872. MSS.EUR.C.144/20, p.88.

127. See G.J. Alder, British India's Northern Frontier 1865-1895, pp.172-3.

128. Kaye memoranda, "On Afghanistan's northern boundaries", 31 December 1872 & 9 January 1873. Rawlinson memorandum, "On Afghan frontiers", no date. Montgomery memorandum, "On Afghan boundaries", 9 January 1873. I.O. to F.O., 15 January 1873. L/P&S/3/83, pp.183-204, 205-7, 219-31, 233-6 & 209.

129. Kaye to Argyll, 27 January 1873. L/P&S/3/83, pp.469-73. Rawlinson's initials are at the head of this letter, so presumably he was shown it and agreed with its tone and contents.

he declared, "were as ignorant as they were weak".¹³⁰ Rawlinson and Montgomery presumably agreed. Had the Foreign Office employed the stronger, more explicit language suggested by the group and a firmer agreement been reached with St. Petersburg, the Government of India could have had fewer misgivings about subsequent Russian assurances. Sher Ali would also have had greater confidence in British promises about the integrity of his dominions.

Aggrieved by the British arbitration decision dividing Sistan equally between Persia and Afghanistan, and taken aback by the revelation of lengthy, secret Anglo-Russian negotiations on his dominions' limits, Sher Ali was even more alarmed by Russian proximity in the form of the Khivan expedition. Though Northbrook did not share his alarm he agreed to a conference at Simla in June-July 1873 with the Amir's representative. Here the contention between the two parties revealed for the first time the ambiguity of Mayo's assurances at Ambala. Sher Ali, who had declared himself under British "protection", obviously thought Mayo had committed his government to provide aid when it was sought after. The Amir believed this illusory promise would now be met with specific guarantees of British assistance in the event of Russian aggression. He was, therefore, disillusioned by Northbrook's refusal to provide, apart from arms and money, anything other than a declaration of assistance riddled with those provisory loopholes and conditional promises which in practice allowed the British to call the tune. This gave no reassurance to the Amir, but led him to believe he was being misled again with more, worthless promises.¹³¹

Sure that the Crimean War had resulted partly from the opacity of British intentions,¹³² Northbrook asked H.M.G. to provide the Russian

130. Keys to Aitchison, 12 December 1873. L/P&S/19, p.76.

131. See E.C. Moulton, Lord Northbrook's Indian Administration 1872-1876 (London, 1968), pp.231-6

132. Northbrook to Argyll, Simla, 9 & 30 June 1873. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, pp.CXXXII & CXLII.

Government with a copy of the despatch¹³³ in which his government announced its intention of supporting an Afghanistan attacked without good grounds. Paradoxically, Northbrook hoped by this ploy not, as one would expect, to provide an additional surety of Sher Ali's polity, but to let Russia know Britain must not be held responsible for all Afghan conduct.¹³⁴ The effect he envisaged would have decreased, not strengthened, the value of his recent undertakings at Simla. In any case, the Foreign Office opposed his request,¹³⁵ fearing perhaps that the despatch's communication to St. Petersburg would reveal their own earlier discussions as the piece of diplomatic decoration which they were. Faced with Granville's opposition, augmented by Gladstone's, a vacillating Argyll refused to back up the Government of India. Had he done so and the despatch ultimately been forwarded to Russia, the whole question of Anglo-Russian relations in Central Asia would have been re-opened and much confusion and uncertainty cleared up in the process. But such endless supposition and conjecture is valueless.

Concocted by an amateurish Foreign Office bent on hamstringing all efforts at clarification, and passively acquiesced in by an Indian government still practising political parsimony towards its neighbours, this tottering piece of Central Asian ineptitude was soon put to the test by the two Mary scares of late 1873. India Office reaction to the first, September, rumour of an intended Russian occupation of Mary was subdued. Aware that the negotiations had placed Russian activity in that region beyond the limits of British remonstrance, but equally aware of the serious implications for India's security of any such move, Argyll wished first to ascertain the truth of the rumour.¹³⁶ Rawlinson,

133. G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 60, 30 June 1873. L/P&S/5/273, part 3, pp. 497-505.

134. See Northbrook to Argyll, Agra, 14 November 1873. REEL318/9.

135. F.O. to I.O., 25 August 1873. L/P&S/3/86, pp.339-41.

136. See Argyll's marginal note, Melville to Argyll, 10 September 1873. L/P&S/3/86, p.915.

also aware that British hands were tied and that a Russian guarantee of non-interference was unlikely, hardly knew what to propose; though he did re-state Mary's central importance. Strategically placed on the intersection of the Persia-Bukhara, Khiva-Herat roads, and with unlimited water supplies, a Russian-occupied Mary "would completely overawe Herat and Afghan Turkestan".¹³⁷

In November the rumour was once more relayed home; this time from Ambassador Loftus in St. Petersburg. Its credibility was still doubtful. But, at Kaye's instigation, Loftus' suggestion - that guarantees be sought from Russia sufficient to counterbalance the danger to India from a Russian-occupied Mary - was forwarded for consideration to the Government of India.¹³⁸ Argyll seems to have complied with this merely to waylay Kaye's close interest, for he wrote to Gladstone and Granville that he did "not think we ought to make this any ground for quarrel - even diplomatically - but that we should keep to the spirit of the understanding come to last year which makes the outer boundaries of Afghanistan the boundary also of our jealousy".¹³⁹ Facing the recurring problem of validating these rumours, and clearly thinking in terms of spying on Russian activities under cover of boundary verification, the Kaye-Rawlinson-Montgomery cabal wanted permission granted to the Government of India for the despatch of British boundary officers to Afghanistan; as Northbrook and Council had themselves suggested, more innocuously, in September.¹⁴⁰ It was here that Argyll thought there was "no hurry".

As part of their campaign, individual members of the cabal also

137. Rawlinson memorandum, "On the Tekke Turcomans of Merv", no date, but about 9-10 September 1873. L/P&S/3/86, p.924.
138. Kaye memorandum, "Central Asia: designs of Russia on Merv", November 1873; I.O. to F.O., 27 November 1873. L/P&S/3/87, pp.525-6 & 527-8.
139. Argyll to Gladstone, Edinburgh, 3 December 1873. B.L. ADD.MSS.44, 103, p.74.
140. See Kaye to Aitchison, 12 December 1873. L/P&S/19, pp.75-7; also above, chapter 4, p.124.

tried to strengthen - by injecting into them a greater precision and more explicit criticism - different drafts of a Foreign Office despatch to the Russian Government on the proposed Mary expedition. The general tone of the draft was weak, the content vague and little mention was made of its actual instigation: the Mary expedition. Therefore, while Rawlinson was correcting the geographical misnomers in the first - 20 December - draft, he also made marginal suggestions for countering the indistinctness of its political content.¹⁴¹ Pointing out the obfuscation of the Clarendon-Granville-Gorchakov talks in designating Afghanistan an intermediary zone, he affirmed that the principle of this status had never been accepted by the Government of India and that two "buffers" - Bukhara and Afghanistan - were imagined by it to exist. Kaye likewise complained of the draft's indistinctness on the central issue. Repeating the fears expressed in Rawlinson's memo, of an Anglo-Russian clash over the inviolability of Afghanistan's Herat frontier, he suggested a stronger despatch which would forcefully point out the danger of such an eventuality.¹⁴² But the Foreign Office unexpectedly submitted a new draft, even less specific than the first, and requested an early reply.¹⁴³ Kaye now demanded a more explicit statement of British relations with Afghanistan, with the object, presumably, of forcing Russia to realise how far Britain appeared to be committed to the Amir's defence. Argyll, who insinuated that Kaye was suffering from Russophobia, approved the draft and dismissed any injection as giving Russia added grounds for rejecting all British remonstrances on her aggression.¹⁴⁴ The Secretary of State for India was well ensnared.

141. See Rawlinson's corrections and marginal comment on, "Confidential: Draft Despatch to Mr. Doria", F.O., 20 December 1873. L/P&S/3/87, pp.931-9.

142. Kaye to Argyll, 22 December 1873. L/P&S/19, pp.78-9.

143. F.O. to I.O., 29 December 1873. L/P&S/3/87, pp.997-8.

144. See Argyll to Sir John, 31 December 1873. L/P&S/3/88, pp.191-4.

In addition to this pressure Rawlinson drew up a memorandum - submitted to Argyll and Granville and despatched privately to Northbrook - on the proposed Russian expedition.¹⁴⁵ Thinking that Britain could legitimately protest, on the grounds that it was uncalled for and that it compromised Afghan frontier security, Rawlinson saw the expedition's real object as being the opening up of the road from the Caspian to Mary and ultimately to Herat. Defeated Tekke Turkmen retreating from Mary would flood into Herat province, compelling Kabul interference. And thence Britain might be drawn into the melee. Britain should therefore press on Russia the advantages of a purely territorial settlement, in which the Turkman steppe became a neutral zone or buffer between a Russian-dependent Khiva and a British dependency of Afghanistan. For, if the embryonic design for an expedition were realised, he feared the inevitability of an Anglo-Russian collision in the vicinity of Herat within two years. On the matter of the despatch, Argyll's mind remained unchanged even after reading this memo, and he returned the draft to the Foreign Office with only minor geographical alterations.¹⁴⁶ This was done quite unexpectedly and without Kaye's knowledge,¹⁴⁷ perhaps in order to prevent further wrangling from the cabal's members. At the Foreign Office, Granville found the Rawlinson memorandum interesting but felt it did not interfere with the draft.¹⁴⁸ Bound by the terms of its own, largely meaningless, negotiations with St. Petersburg, the Foreign Office did nothing but send off an insipid despatch.

Northbrook, now finding "the whole position of Central Asian affairs

145. See Rawlinson memorandum, "On Proposed Russian Expedition to Merv", 18 December 1873. L/P&S/3/88, pp.194A-194F.

146. I.O. to F.O. 17 January 1874. L/P&S/3/88, pp.195-6.

147. Grant Duff to Sir John, 19 January 1874. L/P&S/3/88, pp.187-90.

148. See Granville's comments, "Central Asia: Sir Henry Rawlinson's Memorandum", 5 January 1874. F.O.60/901.

very unsatisfactory",¹⁴⁹ expressed his shared anxiety with Rawlinson and agreement that the Russian expedition should be prevented if possible.¹⁵⁰ The Viceroy felt it might become inconsistent with British honour and interests to allow further Russian progress in the direction of Afghanistan, and deprecated H.M.C.'s refusal to tell Russia of the undertaking to lend arms to Afghanistan if she were molested directly or indirectly. "Should Russia be told that such is our determination, ... would not such a communication be more conducive to peace than to maintain silence?".¹⁵¹ At a second critical moment the "forward" group's prescriptions had found a sympathetic ear. Having scornfully dismissed Rawlinson & Co. as "Panic-mongers" in mid-73,¹⁵² Northbrook had now come to admit that there was an "amply sufficient probability" of their views on the Russian danger requiring serious consideration.¹⁵³ Indicative of the growing lack of integration, indeed increasing conflict, between the Foreign Office's primarily European concern and purely Indian interests, he was likewise very dubious of the value of Granville's despatch to St. Petersburg.¹⁵⁴ One, as yet unrealised, tap on the door and the whole slipshod, obscure structure of the Foreign Office's Central Asian policy threatened to collapse. But before an open split could emerge between that office and the Government of India, Gladstone's First Ministry had ended.

When the Gladstone Ministry fell in February 1874 it had provided no credible solution, at the level of Anglo-Russian relations, to the Central Asian Question.¹⁵⁵ It had, conjecturally, dealt with the consequences for the upper Amu Darya region of Russia's 1860's north-south

149. Northbrook to Argyll, Calcutta, 23 January 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, p. CCXXXVI.

150. See Northbrook to Argyll, Calcutta, 5 February 1874. REEL318/9.

151. Ibid, ff.7-8.

152. Northbrook to Argyll, Simla, 9 June 1873. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, p.CXXXI.

153. See Northbrook to Argyll, 5 February 1874, ff.13-14. REEL318/9.

154. See Northbrook to Argyll, Calcutta, 19 February 1874, ff.8-9. REEL 318/9.

155. See Thornton, For the File on Empire, p.169.

advance, only to discover that her movement along a west-east axis - regarded by many as the more dangerous - was now the principle object of British suspicions. Arguably, a trustworthy, well-disposed Russia created little need for an over-friendly, entangling commitment in Afghanistan. But the Anglo-Russian understanding was too vague for comfort, and in any case this was not the sole rationale which left current Afghan policy somewhat wide of the mark. In one contemporary's words, "to induce the warlike Afghans to be our frontier defenders ... the Afghans must neither be treated in a high-handed domineering fashion (as in 1839) or held at arms length (as has been done in recent years). We must try to look at the question from an Afghan point of view".¹⁵⁶ Determined, quite reasonably, to forestall any costly commitments - in an effort to balance India's finances - the Indian government under Argyll had also appropriated the distrustful Lawrentian reckoning that a firmly backed Sher Ali would only misuse British support to rule oppressively at home and act aggressively abroad.¹⁵⁷ Their vision blurred by distrust, British Liberal statesmen had failed thus far to empathise with the Amir's precarious position. There can be little doubt that it was his disappointment with British policy during the Liberal Government's tenure of office which led Sher Ali to oppose the stationing of British agents at Herat or Kandahar.

The ultimate resolution of policy depended on the relative prestige of the Foreign and India Offices, the consequent priority given to one's specific inclinations, Prime Ministerial propensities, and the initiative disinclination of the India Office and the Government of

156. Brigadier-General J.R.A. Adye, "Central Asia: A Military Sketch", p.437.

157. See H.E. Grant Duff, Afghanistan and Central Asia: A Letter to a Friend (Privately Printed, London, 1878), pp.33-4.

India. An easy-going¹⁵⁸ nonentity enthralled by a Prime Minister unsympathetic to imperial interests, Argyll easily ingested the Foreign Office belief in the value of the Clarendon-Granville-Gorchakov understanding.¹⁵⁹ But the Foreign Office's drawing the ministerial pourparlers to an ethereal, misleading conclusion, and its wilfully obscurantist attempts to prevent their subsequent clarification, showed that its domination was less than appropriate. As great a lacuna, then, as its lack of empathy with the Amir was the Indian government's being overshadowed by the Foreign Office, its acceptance of a relatively passive role and, with the exception of Northbrook's belated reservations, its inappropriate belief in the value of diplomatic assurances as well as the potential of pleas and protests. The resultant inco-ordination of official interests, irreconciled between the Eurocentric and the Indocentric view, was remarked on by several contemporaries. Speaking of the Foreign and India Offices, an anonymous correspondent in 1873 pointed out that, "a common roof is no more a guarantee for the existence of a common sentiment than is blood relationship for a state of domestic harmony".¹⁶⁰ His call for the creation of an Asiatic Bureau, responsible for appropriating all the information relevant to the Central Asian Question and helping statesmen evolve a coordinated policy, was later echoed by the Sistan arbitrator F.J. Goldsmid, who likewise deprecated the statesmen's unintegrated indecisiveness.¹⁶¹

This dichotomy of interest also had subtler, yet further reaching, implications. If Gorchakov's assurances about Russia's lack of any hostile intent towards India were credible, then there was little need for any firmer commitment to Kabul. But the assumption that policy

was determined by the diplomatic minuets which the Russian and British

158. See Argyll to Gladstone, 31 July 1873. B.L.ADD.MSS.44,103, ff.39-42.

159. See Argyll to Northbrook, 9 March 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/9, pp.119-20.

160. A General Officer, "Khiva Correspondents", "Pall Mall Gazette", 18 August 1873, p.3, col.1.

161. See F.J. Goldsmid, "Review of Rawlinson's 'England and Russia in the East'", Macmillan's Magazine, 32(1875) pp.62-3.

foreign ministries gravely danced with each other was a mistaken one; as Ambassador Loftus was at great pains to point out in late 1873. He was inclined to, "look upon the Russian Press - backed by the Military Party - as a surer indicator of future events than the mellifluous phrases which I receive at the Imperial Foreign Office".¹⁶² With military influence exceeding that of the civil power and even overriding the Tsar's authority, "however sincere the Imperial Government may be at the moment, and however anxious to conciliate the goodwill of England, it appears to have but little power to control the acts of its generals in remote provinces..... It is but too apparent that the military party both at home and abroad, relying on the good understanding existing between England and Russia and on the consequent passive attitude of Great Britain in regard to Central Asia, are thus encouraged to extend and consolidate their conquests without any deference to the engagements taken by the Imperial Government".¹⁶² These revelations robbed the Clarendon-Granville-Gorchakov understanding of still more of its dubious value, though there is no evidence that Loftus' salutary warning was given much notice in British diplomatic circles.

A second, less noticeable, deficiency was the absolute dearth of foresighted intelligence from India on Russian Central Asian movements. It is a notable feature of the Foreign Office's dominant initiative that the intelligence traffic between it and the India Office was disproportionately one-sided. A considerable volume of ambassadorial reports from St. Petersburg, Berlin and other European cities, as well as consular posts in Russia, arrived in the India Office and Calcutta from the Foreign Office. By contrast, from the mid-60's until 1874 at the earliest, the Foreign and India Office records contain little or nothing by way of

162. Loftus to Granville, St. Petersburg, 18 & 20 November 1873. L/P&S/3/87, pp.468-70 & 758-9.

concrete, first-hand information from the viceregal government in India.¹⁶³ The poverty of the Indian government's intelligence network as late as November 1874 is aptly demonstrated by its search for information about a possible Russian attack on the TekkeTurkmen in the columns of "The Times".¹⁶⁴ Lulled by the promise of the Anglo-Russian diplomatic understanding, and over-passively submissive to the Foreign Office, neither the Home nor the Supreme Governments of India felt any need for a productive intelligence network of their own, with which to survey and forecast the initiatives of wilful Russian generals in Central Asia. Apart from forearmed, forewarned is also an admirable preventative of hasty, warlike action. The Indian government was inadequately prepared in this respect. One appropriate solution, at least in the "forward" group's eyes, was the placement of British agents on Persia's and Afghanistan's northerly borders: at Meshed and Herat perhaps.

If political contrariness represents the endless gyrations of more or less knowledgeable and variously irrational men, then the "forward" group's policies were as susceptible to gaps and weaknesses as official policy. As regards the closeness of the universally demanded friendship between India and its near neighbours, it was on matters of pace, circumstance and degree that the fundamental difference appeared between the forceful confidence of the "forward" group and what they saw as the distrustful caution of the Indian government. Their overall strategy was top-heavy in that close relations with both Persia and Afghanistan were somewhat superfluous, and there was faint hope of remaining simultaneously on influential terms with two such antipathetic

163. See the appropriate volumes in the Foreign Office collection, "Proceedings in Central Asia"; gathered under F.O.65.

164. See Political Department Minute Paper, "Russia and the Turcoman Tribes". L/P&S/3/92, p.1001.

political and religious rivals. With the more subtle Frere absent in the Indian Ocean during the first half of 1873, and out of the Political Committee from mid-November 1873 until the following October, the cabal tended to be dominated by the imperious Rawlinson who, whatever his intellectual qualifications, inclined temperamentally to leap before he looked. His precipitancy is best exemplified by his advocating the despatch to Afghanistan in 1871 not only of arms and money but also of British officers to help the Amir fight his dissident son, Yakub Khan. Mayo feared such a commitment might lead to British participation in another Afghan war and assuredly would alienate from British interests a man likely to become one of the dominant Afghan leaders.¹⁶⁵ The cabal also inclined to a distrust of Russia which was based on prejudiced conjecture and its members tended in consequence to be over-ready with their suspicions. In fairness to them however, they feared not a chimerical invasion but the practicable, and from a Russian viewpoint politically alluring, disruption of India's internal security. This ploy had already been openly mentioned in Russia, which Terentiev represented in relation to India as, "the Physician from the North". But men are to be understood and judged ^{more} by the consequences of their actions rather than their powerless proposals, so that the weaknesses of the "forward" group's policies can be evaluated, up to early 1874, only unsatisfactorily by inference, imputation and forecasting. Under a new government the stratagems propounded in their comprehensive memoranda might prove more acceptable however. And, hence, more specifically criticisable.

165. See Mayo to Argyll, Simla, 7 July 1871. REEL314/2.

Chapter 5. Insemination and Dissemination.

From the contemporary cartoons of a now humorously indigestible "Punch" to the lengthy, and equally gristly, postscripts of many professional historians, Disraeli's Conservative government 1874-80 has been depicted as the harbinger of a greater British concern with imperial interests and of a more aggressive imperialising dynamic. In the latter respect, however, H.M.G.'s principal Conservative statesmen can be represented as more sinned against by wayward lieutenants than themselves sinning. The substance of any fructuous relationship between the new Secretary of State for India and the individuals comprising the "forward" group may further elucidate the accuracy of these allegations, as well as aiding a more precise definition of the Conservative imperial and imperialising ethic in the 70's. For Disraeli's most trusted colleague was Robert, 3RD. Marquis of Salisbury, Secretary of State for India from February 1874 until February 1878. Allowed the fullest initiative in Indian affairs by a Prime Minister who had "the utmost confidence in your judgement, firmness and resource", Salisbury was to be assured "that there is none of my colleagues whose opinion I more value than your own", and was often called in for private confabulations with Disraeli on Central Asian and Indian matters.¹ Specially chosen as British envoy to the Constantinople conference in 1876, and serving as Foreign Secretary 1878-80, Salisbury, as much as Disraeli, imparted his personal ideology to Conservative overseas activity in the 70's. Above all, he imprinted on British and Indian foreign policy his more practical political vision of persistently pursuable long-term aims.

If knowledge of a statesman's character and the peculiarities of

1. Disraeli to Salisbury, Hughenden, 17 October 1874 & 28 October 1875. C.C.L. D/20/54, p.68 and D/20/79, pp.101-2; see also Disraeli to Salisbury, Wimborne, 6 January 1875. C.C.L. D/20/56, pp.70-1.

his intellect is essential to an understanding of his conduct of business, Salisbury is well served by students.² The nervous child, who lost his mother at the age of ten and was the puny victim of Etonian bullying, fathered an isolated, reserved adolescent and then a cerebral adult with considerable intelligence and an austere personality. Supplementing his lack of personal warmth with the frigidity of a sceptical approach to politics, Salisbury tended to be antipathetic to the prevailing orthodoxies in politics, to shy away from their uncritical acceptance and to be acutely sensitive to their weaknesses. Impelled by a logical empiricism in his daily ruminations within the India Office, he inclined to a greater open-mindedness and objectivity than most statesmen in evolving his long-term aims. He placed a premium on accurate information and meticulous factual observation in formulating personal opinions and government policy, as well as a continuous emphasis on his own and others' critically examined experience. Unfortunately, his enigmatic solitariness and the working portrait drawn by his daughter-biographer³ have led, erroneously for the 70's at least, to too studied an ignorance of his susceptibility to influence, too exaggerated an impression of his individual originality, and a basic confusion between the role of an inaugurator and that of an exclusively self-dependent creator of novel policies.

Encased in this inscrutable, intellectual armour Salisbury suddenly found himself Secretary of State for India in late February 1874. He somewhat reluctantly accepted the unexpected offer of a post in Disraeli's Cabinet, following the backstairs mediation of Lady Derby.⁴ Crucially,

2. See M. Pinto-Duschinsky, The Political Thought of Lord Salisbury 1854-68 (London, 1967), pp.119-39; P. Smith (ed.), Lord Salisbury on Politics (Cambridge, 1972), pp.9-20 & 53-7; G.N. Uzoigwe, Britain and the Conquest of Africa: The Age of Salisbury (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1974), pp.3-11.

3. See G. Cecil, Life of Robert, Vol.2, pp.234-6.

4. See Lady Derby to Lytton, 16 February 1874, f.3. H.R.O. D.EK.030; Disraeli to Salisbury, 16 February 1874. C.O.L. D/20/27, p.33; Salisbury to Lytton, 19 March 1874. H.R.O. D.EK.030.

this implies that he had not anticipated holding office, had done little or no thinking on the Central Asian Question, and arrived in the India Office with no elaborate predilections or unalterable presuppositions. The suspicion that his mind was tabula rasa on Central Asian matters is strengthened by the absence of any visible differences of opinion between himself and Argyll during the transfer of responsibility.⁵ On entering office he immediately initiated a regimen of one lengthy, weekly letter to Northbrook; badgering a Viceroy who had grown accustomed to the less active administration of Argyll, and giving clear warning that he intended to rule rather than reign. Salisbury was pitched headlong into the Central Asian Question and the problem of British reaction to a Russian-occupied Mary by receipt of Northbrook's first February letter to Argyll,⁶ in which the Viceroy raised the question of halting Russia's further advance towards Afghanistan. Salisbury was able to placate a nervous Northbrook, following Russian assurances that no such expedition was contemplated, though he did arrange for the immediate despatch of 50,000 Snider rifles to India.⁷

As persevering as ever in heaving a more forceful policy, Kaye showed his new chief a demi-official letter from his personal correspondence with C.U. Aitchison - Foreign Secretary to the Government of India since 1869⁸ - together with two of his own earlier letters to Argyll on the need for a closer British involvement in Afghan affairs. Aitchison was a noted Laurentian⁹ who now announced that the Russian occupation of Mary was a European not merely an Asian matter and should therefore be

5. See Argyll to Northbrook, 10 March 1874. Quoted Duchess of Argyll (ed.), George Douglas, 8th Duke of Argyll, K.G.K.T. (1823-1900): autobiography and memoirs (2 Vols., London, 1906), Vol.2, pp.289-90.

6. See above, chapter 4, p.137.

7. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 8 March 1874. REEL811/3, p.4.

8. Kaye to Salisbury, 27 March 1874. C.C.L. E/Kaye to Salisbury, Letter 4.

9. See Norman to Aitchison, 25 September 1877. MSS.EUR.F.166/1; and generally Aitchison, Lord Lawrence.

made a casus belli against Russia.¹⁰ It was the essential weakness and peculiar inflexibility of the Laurentian case, whether propagated by Lawrence, Argyll, Northbrook or the merest sympathiser, that any dispute which did emerge between Britain and Russia could not be localised and settled in Asia but must immediately assume European proportions. In which case, if Anglo-Russian diplomacy failed, there was no alternative other than war. Salisbury acknowledged the gravity of Aitchison's views, yet doubted if there was any immediate danger and affirmed that, meantime, little could be done diplomatically.¹¹ Having always accepted that international relations were in an anarchic, Hobbesian state, Salisbury already believed that Russian diplomatic assurances could be negated by the activities of her Central Asian military officers.¹² Against such a possibility "information is what we want";¹³ and even a British officer accompanying a Russian geographical expedition to the upper reaches of the Amu Darya might gather useful information. After one month in office, Salisbury had perceived the fatal flaws in established policy and had gained the impression that "Central Asian affairs are serious and becoming menacing".¹⁴ Therefore, when asked by the Foreign Office what response the Indian government would make to a Russian attack on the Tekke Turkmen, he decided, in the first days of April, on an in-depth study of India Office records on the Central Asian Question.

After Kaye had speedily ordered all the relevant papers to be collected,¹⁵ it was apparent that forty volumes of documents comprised too

10. Aitchison's letter has not survived, but references to this proposal in letters by Kaye and Salisbury and a memo by Rawlinson make it the apparent gist of his recommendations.

11. See Salisbury to Disraeli, 27 March 1874. C.C.L. D/20/36, p.45; Salisbury to Northbrook, 27 March 1874. REEL811/3, p.8.

12. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 13 & 27 March 1874. REEL811/3, pp.6 & 8.

13. See Salisbury's note on "Minute Paper - Proposed Deputation of a British Officer to accompany Russian Mission up the Oxus", 30 March 1874. L/P&S/3/88, p.1299.

14. Salisbury to Northbrook, 2 April 1874. REEL811/3, p.10.

15. Kaye to Salisbury, 2 April 1874. C.C.L. E/Kaye to Salisbury, Letter 5.

extensive a study; and so Salisbury instructed Major O.T. Burne, newly appointed an Assistant Secretary in Kaye's department, "to put the question in a form which would show the principal points of it in addition to a précis of the whole of the despatches".¹⁶ The result was the first of those "Historical Summaries" of which the swaggeringly self-important, sycophantic, ambitious Burne was so proud.¹⁷ An officer in the XX Regiment, with copious Indian experience as Aide-de-Camp to Sir Hugh Rose C-in-C(India) and as Private Secretary to Mayo, Burne was being deliberately groomed as Kaye's successor,¹⁸ and soon showed signs of becoming one of those discreet, industrious, bureaucratic minions on whom the modern state so much depends.¹⁹ Completed in less than a month, his fifty-one page "Historical Summary of the Central Asian Question"²⁰ displayed a keen appreciation of the salient points of British policy to date. Burne, however, was not content to relate; he also sought to recommend.

Belliciosely anti-Russian, Burne dismissed any "friendly understanding" with that power as likely only to excite Sher Ali's distrust. The Russian Empire in any case had been "formed by withdrawal from promises and engagements". He also disparaged as "a fairy picture" the Laurentian vision of a loyal, contented Indian population defended by a well-equipped army entrenched along the Indus. Apart from the more active protection of the route to India, the Mayo-Argyll policy of a defensive ring of strong, friendly states should be given greater stress, for it was Russian intrigue from near at hand rather than an advance on India from distant bases which Britain had to fear. In practical detail, ten

16. "Minute Paper - Policy as regards Merve". L/P&S/3/88, p.1259.

17. See O.T. Burne, Memories, pp.188-90.

18. See Kaye to Colvin, Forest Hill, 7 June 1874. L/P&S/19, pp.162-9.

19. After his promotion to Secretary of the Political and Secret Department in October 1874, Burne helped reorganise the department's records.

20. See O.T. Burne, "Historical Summary of the Central Asian Question", 30 April 1874. C/137.

less secret service money should be allowed annually to enable British officers - spies, less euphemistically - to travel about Afghanistan, Persia and Baluchistan. With Herat still the key to India, its ruler the Amir of Kabul must be aided as fully as possible. He should be sent money, arms and even officers to help him punish his dissident son Yakub Khan, meantime holding Herat. Without waiting for the Amir's request, Britain should press drill officers on him and "endeavour to establish agents at Herat and Candahar". These, be it noted, were long-cherished Rawlinsonian propositions. This full-scale, unambiguous commitment in Afghanistan should be repeated in Kalat, Yarkand and other states in the defensive ring - from which Persia was excluded. Then, with the friendly compliance of Kalat and Afghanistan, a non-aggressive occupation of Quetta and the Kurram valley could be carried out. Clearly envisaging a more far-reaching commitment and involvement than Mayo or Northbrook had ever contemplated, Burne trumpeted: "There can be no playing a double game, let us play a bold one".

Burne's sequence of forceful "forward" stratagems, expounded in an abruptly assured tone reminiscent of Rawlinson, represented a pot-pourri plagiarism of the ideas of Jacob, Lumsden, Green and Rawlinson. Despite the approbatory claims on Mayo, he was effectively recommending a weighty increase in the measure of British trans-frontier commitments. Yet, as late as February of the previous year, Burne still limited himself in public discussion to support for no more than the measure of commitment practised by Mayo in pursuit of a string of outworks. He had recommended the Quetta scheme, but made absolutely no mention of British agents in Afghanistan.²¹ By his concluding admission that these

21. See Burne's post-lecture contribution of 12 February 1873, F. Trench, The Central Asian Question: A Lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institution (London, 1873), pp.23-4.

ideas were not spontaneously novel, Burne can be represented as merely one more of those Anglo-Indian officers who attended lectures on the Central Asian Question in the R.U.S.I. and were all equally afflicted by bellicose yearnings for glory and guts. More particularly, in June 1873 Burne had been designated Rawlinson's assistant in attending the Shah of Persia during his visit to England.²² If it is impossible to confirm Rawlinson's influence on Burne, it is a more than feasible suggestion at least; especially when their official connection was on a task so closely related to the Central Asian Question as the Shah's visit. Yet, anomalously, Burne never accepted Rawlinson's view of Persia as an imperial bastion, and his emphasis on working for Herat's security via Kabul, not Teheran, may have owed much to his close personal friendship with men who favoured Afghanistan as the central pivot in India's defensive outworks.²³

Encouraged by Disraeli to make full use of "the present opportunity of settling and strengthening our frontier",²⁴ Salisbury gave his continued consideration to all aspects of the Central Asian Question. Accordingly he conversed with Aitchison, then on leave, on what should be done in the event of an actual Russian advance on Mary. In the course of the conversation he came to realise that, without even unavowed agents at Herat and Kandahar, the Government of India's intelligence of events in Afghanistan and beyond was woefully inadequate. With unstinting use of secret service funds, that peripatetic pseudo-Asian, Palgrave, might be employed profitably on such an assignment, and an intelligence department also established at Lahore.²⁵ Coincidentally, Rawlinson, who was chairman of the Political Committee that year

22. Burne was very friendly with such old Anglo-Indians as Harry Lumsden, Dr. H.W. Bellew and Donald McNabb, even to the extent of being shown drafts of their lectures on the Central Asian Question. See O.T. Burne, "British Agents in Afghanistan", 30 July 1875, pp.7-10 C/138.

23. See Hammond to Burne, 4 June 1873. L/P&S/3/85, p.137.

24. Disraeli to Salisbury, 2 June 1874. C.C.I. D/20/43, p.52.

25. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 22 May 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, pp.20-22.

and must have been aware of the major re-think getting under way, presented the Secretary of State with an unsolicited memorandum on the Central Asian Question.²⁶

There are indications that Rawlinson's distrust of Russia had assumed phobic proportions by April, and that he saw all her Central Asian activity as the devious scheming of a power with ulterior designs against India and a premeditatedly aggressive intent.²⁷ Like all states of mind, Russophobia is comprehensible only in terms of the environment in which the individual operates. It is a volatile not a permanent condition, and can be defined accurately only if its periodicity is taken into account. In Rawlinson's case the tensions created by an anticipated Russian threat to Mary had induced, temporarily, a more or less phobic outlook in which his antipathy had leapt to the dimensions of absolute distrust. In this frame of mind he concerned himself with Persia's progressive slide into Russia's arms, with the renewed signs of disorder and distrust of Britain at Kabul, and with the prospect of further military advances by the Tsarist government. But in his recommendations he made no attempt to choose between Persia and Afghanistan as the crux of India's defence.

Unless remedial measures were taken in Persia, Rawlinson noted, Britain's prestige there would soon be totally eclipsed by that of Russia. A depressed Persia could be revived by the encouragement of British capital investment and the establishment of a 5,000-10,000 man force of Persian soldiery; raised, armed, clothed, fed, disciplined and commanded by British officers. This "military nucleus would give confidence to the nation"; or at least such was Rawlinson's rather improbable hope. Russia, who would never forswear her right to the Caspian Steppe occupied by the Turkmen, might be expected to occupy Mary in the next

26. See Rawlinson memorandum, "On the Central Asian Question", 22 May 1874. C/137.

27. See Rawlinson's marginal pencil comments on the correspondence of Gorchakov and Stremoukhov. L/P&S/3/88, p.93Dv.

few years. In which case he saw "no possible alternative... but to place a British garrison at Herat, in alliance with the Amir of Cabul and in defence of his interests, if possible, but if not, in defiance of him". Making Mary's occupation the object of a casus belli would be excessive. "Our legitimate course of action would be simply to meet her advance by corresponding measures of defence. The dispute would thus be localised, and if collision did occur, she would be responsible as the aggressor". With no consideration of the expense of stringing 10,000 men out between Herat, Kandahar and Quetta, Rawlinson presented this advance as an eminently feasible military proposition but concluded more soberly that it could only be a last resort if done without Kabul's consent.

Though freely admitting ~~the~~ the unpopularity in Indian government circles of a British-garrisoned Herat, Rawlinson submitted that Afghan policy should henceforth be determined by this ultimate goal. He was strongly inclined to recommend the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance with Sher Ali. Guaranteeing him against internal as well as external enemies, this would involve the actual despatch of British troops to Kandahar to help fight Yakub Khan. Dismissing British officers at Kabul or with the Afghan army as "mere palliatives", he hardly thought "any risk or responsibility too much for us to undertake in order to obtain, through the goodwill of the Amir, a full control of the resources of Afghanistan". This amounted to British protectorship, rather than an independent but allied Afghanistan. In the long-term he was recommending the prospect of territorial annexation in Asia as a preventative of a global Anglo-Russian war. But his brash exposition of these views and his tendency to anticipate events by espousing excessive preparations, where financially and diplomatically less onerous ones had not yet been tried, left him open to the charge of political "overkill". On the matter of Afghanistan, at least, Salisbury still believed it "dangerous to give the Ameer any right to

claim an unconditional guarantee",²⁸ and was hardly likely to find Rawlinson the futurologist to his taste.

From a sick-bed which necessitated frequent absences from the India Office, Kaye was also attempting to influence Salisbury's thinking. Despite his illness, the chief of the Political and Secret Department was reluctant to let fall the reins of power. Occupying a post of central importance, he believed himself able to make a deep imprint on government policies.²⁹ Therefore, though absent for lengthy periods throughout March, April and May, and relieved of all minor responsibilities, he had papers delivered continuously to his home, whence he beseeched Salisbury not to take any decisions on major questions in his absence. In May, he even began preparing a Central Asian memo.³⁰ He had meetings and conversations with Aitchison and with "different visitors from Town connected with our Government".³¹ Then, surely because he must have valued their collective experience, Salisbury called a "Conference" for the second Saturday in June. The topic was Central Asian politics and the conferees were Kaye, Rawlinson and Aitchison.³² Salisbury was showing a definite willingness to consult with members of the Cabel. Whether he heeded their counsels is hypothetical but it is a hypothesis which can be strengthened, though never proven, by substantiating evidence.

At the conference, Aitchison, whom Northbrook had assured Salisbury was "completely informed on all matters of foreign policy and in my complete confidence",³³ keenly reiterated the need to "make the next advance a casus belli, to be followed by operations on the Black Sea or the Baltic".³⁴ Salisbury still admitted the seriousness of a Russian occupation of Mary, but felt it could not be prevented by British diplomatic intermeddling and should therefore be treated as a matter of indifference

28. Salisbury to Northbrook, 15 May 1874. REEL811/3, p.30.

29. See Kaye to Colvin, Forest Hill, 7 June 1874. L/P&S/19, p.168.

30. See Kaye to Salisbury, Forest Hill, 4 March & 5 May 1874. L/P&S/19, pp.93 & 146-7.

31. Kaye to Walpole, Forest Hill, 13 May 1874. L/P&S/19, p.153.

32. See Kaye to Mallet, St. Leonards-On-Sea, 3 June 1874. L/PO/MISC/4/9A.

33. Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 3 April 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, pp.XXI-XXII.

34. Salisbury to Northbrook, 12 June 1874. REEL811/3, p.46.

in European circles. Since Russia was militarily impregnable in Europe, there was no chance of European action. Only pressure from India, the sole point from which diplomatic remonstrances could gain their necessary background of force, would have any effect on the Russian advance. Northbrook's policy must remain Asiatic, with no prospect of assistance by armies or fleets despatched from Britain. In a clarificatory letter on Aitchison's post-conference memo, Kays explained, after discussions with the Secretary of State, that Salisbury did not object to "the sending of money, arms and even armies from India by order of the Home Government. He agreed with me, and differed from Rawlinson in opinion that the occupation of Merv would be a casus belli, but that an advance on Herat would be a different matter".³⁵ The last sentence is somewhat confusing. In the light of Salisbury's subsequent correspondence with Northbrook, Kays appears to have omitted a "not" between the first "would" and "be". In which case Rawlinson's abrupt change of mind on the point of a casus belli seems barely credible. It is possible that Kays was mistaken, though no examinable account of the conference discussion seems to remain extant.³⁶ Kays was certainly very ill by this time, and his account was, notably, a copy of the last letter he wrote as Secretary of the Political and Secret Department.

Whatever, Salisbury, who must have regarded Aitchison as Northbrook's representative rather than a simple amanuensis or sole operator, assured the Viceroy that nothing could be done to halt the Russian advance on Mary. However, "Herat is a different matter";³⁷ and he accordingly pressed Northbrook for the logistical and topographical details required for an advance to Herat, against the contingency of its occupation by Russian troops. Notably, he only contemplated such a British riposte in the event of an advance to Herat itself; not, as Rawlinson would have it,

35. Kays to Aitchison, 12 June 1874. L/P&S/19, pp.186-7.

36. There is no trace in the India Office Records of Aitchison's memorandum, which he presumably took back to India and Northbrook.

37. Salisbury to Northbrook, 12 June 1874. REEL811/3, p.46.

in retaliation for Russia's occupation of Mary. The ill-prepared Viceroy did little to supply the details until Salisbury reminded him of the matter's urgency as a purely anticipatory measure; and only then did Northbrook hustle the C-in-C(India) for information which was unavailable in India itself until late December.³⁸ With his own government unprepared for any localised rejoinder to Russian moves, the Viceroy adhered to his belief in European action. But his suggestion that some "cordial intercourse" should be initiated with Russia on Central Asian policy was rejected by Salisbury and Derby on the grounds of "the incurable duplicity of Russian diplomacy".³⁹ As for Salisbury's recommendations on a fuller intelligence network, the Viceroy was reluctant to have any British agents despatched secretly to Afghanistan, and saw an intelligence department at Lahore as valueless.⁴⁰ On matters of broad strategy as well as precautionary tactics, clear divergences of opinion were emerging between the Home and Supreme Governments of India.

In June of that year, Britain's envoy at Teheran had re-sounded the note of warning about Russian designs on Mary and, as a counter-active, called for England's material as well as moral support of Persia. He proposed the immediate ministration of that age-old remedy: the despatch of British instructors, paid for entirely by H.M.G. and accompanied by arms and ammunition, to train the Persian Army. The Foreign Office waited two months before forwarding his despatch to the India Office. There Burne recounted Mayo's reaction to the same proposal in 1871. The Viceroy, then, considered his government had enough on its hands with the

38. Salisbury to Northbrook, 15 October 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, p.58; Northbrook to Napier of Magdala, Calcutta, 14 November 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/16, pp.CVII-CVIII; Napier of Magdala to Northbrook, Ambala, 23 December 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/16, p.219.
39. Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 9 June 1874. Salisbury to Northbrook, 10 July 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, pp.LXIV & 36-7.
40. Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 16 June 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, pp. LXVI-LXVII.

states immediately along India's borders. By deputing officers to Persia, Britain might incur unendurable obligations; as well as strong remonstrances, even war, from St. Petersburg. Burne thought these dangers even greater in 1874 than Mayo had in 1871.⁴¹ The new Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Louis Mallet, thought little importance attached to this latest proposal, and felt the only necessary step was to seek the conclusive opinion of the Government of India.⁴² About to holiday in France, Salisbury also thought the matter required India's attention. But in the meantime he also asked Rawlinson for his observations, despite his certainty that Northbrook would discourage the proposition.⁴³ Jotted down nine months later - a sign of the low priority which anything other than moral support to Persia enjoyed - the opinions of Northbrook and his Council were overwhelmingly discouraging.⁴⁴

The lone voice in an indifferent wilderness, Rawlinson was sure the Shah sincerely wished and absolutely required "moral and material support". The officers and guns could legitimately be provided without giving grounds for Russian objections. Thus strengthened and protected by Britain, the Shah would not wish to place Persia's "whole resources at Russia's disposal", thereby aiding her more rapid advance towards Mary and India.⁴⁵ Referring to the unwritten rule of diplomacy on the Central Asian Question - that productive friendships with Teheran and Kabul could not be pursued simultaneously - a distinctly unimpressible Salisbury gave as his opinion that the "measure would not put Persia on her legs - and would cause us much embarrassment".⁴⁶ If Persia, in

41. See Burne's note, "Officers for Persia", 22 September 1874. L/P&S/3/92, pp.353-61.

42. See Minute Paper, "England's Policy towards Persia. Question of creating establishment of British officers for service in that country", 29 September 1874. L/P&S/3/92, p.333.

43. See Salisbury to Derby, Puys, nr. Dieppe, 30 September 1874. C.C.L. D/72/30, pp.39-40.

44. See G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Political 123, 7 June 1875. L/P&S/7/4, pp.113-49.

45. Rawlinson's memorandum, "On the Persian Question", 12 October 1874. L/P&S/3/92, pp.339-42.

46. Salisbury to Derby, Puys, nr. Dieppe, 30 September 1874. C.C.L. D/72/30, p.39.

Salisbury's estimation at this point in time, was not fit enough to act as a bastion of India, what of an Afghanistan towards which he showed equal signs of antipathy?

Simultaneous with his regret at Northbrook's disinclination to discover more about internal Afghan affairs,⁴⁷ Salisbury was having grave doubts about the orthodox doctrine that, "our interest is to have a strong, independent Afghanistan".⁴⁸ Distrustfully, he reckoned that an Afghanistan strengthened by British funds was as likely as not to bite the hand that fed it. Expenditure on Kabul might prove futile, especially since no amount of it could induce the Amir to fight Britain's battles for her against Russia.⁴⁹ Operating blindly because of the crucial lack of reliable intelligence from either Kabul or Herat, he was unable to assess the likelihood of a war between Sher Ali and the son whom he had rejected as his heir, or to evaluate the truth of rumours that the Amir was inclining towards Russia and increasingly hostile to Britain. Starved, by Northbrook's reluctance to use secret service money, of the information which he craved in making decisions, Salisbury was tending to dismiss Afghanistan, along with Persia, as "empty sacks" unable to stand, and was echoed by Disraeli's estimation of them as "broken reeds".⁵⁰ Despite the many suggestions made to date, the Secretary of State was still undecided on the best policy to be pursued, either towards Afghanistan or in the event of Russia's occupying Mary.⁵¹ "Our minds are not yet made up on any positive course".⁵² His cogitations on the Central Asian Question continued into November.⁵³

47. Salisbury to Northbrook, 17 July 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, p.39.

48. Salisbury to Northbrook, 19 June 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, pp.31-2.

49. Salisbury to Derby, 1 August 1874. C.C.L. D/72/29, p.38.

50. See Salisbury to Disraeli, 13 October 1874; Disraeli to Salisbury, 15 October 1874. C.C.L. D/20/52, pp.63-6 & D/20/53, p.67.

51. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 15 October 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, pp.57-8.

52. Ibid, p.58.

53. This would seem to be the case from the number of Political and Secret Department Minute Papers relating to Central Asia and Russia which have written on them in Salisbury's red ink, "Returned to Dept. from Lord Salisbury 13 Nov 1874". See, for example, L/P&S/3/89, p.629.

At this critical juncture, on 23 October, Frere re-entered the Political Committee as its chairman. Noting Salisbury's continued indecision, by 29 October Frere could inform Florence Nightingale, to whom his relationship was that of a rabbit mesmerised by a stoat: "I am printing, for office use, a long private letter I wrote to Sir John Kaye, four months ago and will send you a copy. It relates to a subject, Central Asia, which seems to me just now of extreme gravity".⁵⁴ Back in June, Kaye had sent Frere some papers on the Central Asian Question; rather indiscreetly since Sir Bartle was not then on the Political Committee and was technically excluded from seeing documents not released to Council. In reply Frere had sent a lengthy letter⁵⁵ which he thought Kaye might profitably show to Salisbury. But Sir John was taken severely ill after receiving it. He declined so rapidly that, by September, his imminent death was feared and he was forced to resign from his post on pension.⁵⁶ Kaye, therefore, had no opportunity to refer Salisbury to the letter, as Frere himself discovered when he made enquiries in early September.⁵⁷ By 4 November Frere's printed letter/memorandum had circulated generally but confidentially among Council members, and drawn a critical reply from Lord Laurence's residence in Hertfordshire.⁵⁸ On 11 January 1875 Frere issued a swingeing rejoinder:⁵⁹ the second of his "memoranda which recently saw the light of day in a mysterious manner for the first time"⁶⁰ in "The Times" of 17 October and 14 November

54. Frere to Nightingale, Wimbledon, 29 October 1874. B.L.ADD.MSS.45,780 P.275v. It is an example of the Council members' notorious indiscretion that Frere should have sent that inquisitive hysteric a memo on so crucial and secret a topic.

55. See Frere, "Letter to Sir John Kaye", 24 Chapel Street, Belgrave Square, 12 June 1874. C/137.

56. See Frere to Salisbury, 28 September & 2 October 1874. REEL820/76; Montgomery to Salisbury, 28 September 1874. REEL821/79.

57. See Frere to Salisbury, 4 September 1874. REEL820/76.

58. See Laurence's memorandum, "On the Central Asian Question", Brockett Hall, Hertfordshire, 4 November 1874. C/137.

59. See Frere's, "Note on Lord Laurence's Memorandum on the Central Asian Question, dated 4 November 1874", 11 January 1875. C/137.

60. See introductory quotations, p.viii.

1878.⁶¹ Two days later, on 13 January 1875, Salisbury submitted for the Political Committee's consideration a draft despatch to the Government of India proposing the location of British agents at Herat and Kandahar.⁶²

In the letter/memorandum, Frere went to some length to show that the ill-appreciated danger to India was not of Russian invasion but of a Russianized Afghanistan, from which St. Petersburg could create serious unease among British residents in India by attracting the allegiance of her princes and chiefs and fomenting unrest among the broad mass of the population. They would then be able to tie down valuable British troops, much needed elsewhere in the event of a European dispute. A still more disquieting prospect was the procession of an Asiatic horde, impelled by Russian agency, through the passes onto the Hindustan plains; marauding, looting and rousing the Indians to revolt. The remedy was not to make Mary's occupation a casus belli but to "meet the danger as far as possible from our own frontier without placing any hostile power between us and our Indian bases".

To this end, dismissing Turkey and Persia as irretrievably decadent, and advising the strengthening of the Indian Army as an afterthought, Frere concentrated his attention on Kalat and Afghanistan. A British force should be established at Quetta "sufficiently strong to prevent the place being carried until reinforcements can arrive from India". Secondly, he would have a perfect intelligence department at Herat, Kandahar and Kabul, as well as a preponderating influence over Afghanistan if possible. As to the exact nature of future Anglo-Afghan relations, Frere searched for a middle course somewhere between "masterly inactivity" and "annexation, or protectorate almost equivalent to annexation, and

61. See "The Times", 17 October & 14 November 1878, p.10, cols.1-5 & p.4, cols 1-6.

62. See Minute Paper, "Appointment of British Agent at Herat", 13 January 1875. L/P&S/7/320, p.3.

supported by force". A policy of "constant neglect and distrust" and "almost active hostility" should be replaced - as Frere claimed Mayo intended doing - by "a cordial and generous policy", directed through British officers in Afghanistan. "Nothing I believe be effectual (sic) to arrest their progress towards India till we have British officers stationed on the Indian side of a well-defined frontier, exercising an effective control over the politics of the semi-civilised races on our side of such a border, and in constant diplomatic communication with Russian officers on the other side".

There were two flaws in Sir Bartle's otherwise cogent arguments. Confident these officers could remain free from entanglement in internal Afghan strife, he was drawing a purely arbitrary distinction between domestic and external affairs. One page later he himself gave the lie to this confidence by recommending the use of "extreme pressure" to force Sher Ali to a partial reconciliation with Yakub Khan so as to "save the Ameer's nominal sovereignty" over Herat. The second discrepancy was Frere's unthinking assumption of the Amir's compliant susceptibility to British suasion. While accepting that the relationship should be reciprocal, he unconsciously assumed that the weaker party would always give way to the stronger. This second presupposition was the imperceptible sine qua non of the success of his middle course, and originated in his proto-racialist thoughts on the relationship between European and Asian peoples.⁶³ "I believe if we deal candidly and frankly with the Affghans, as Metcalfe and Clark dealt with the Sikhs, we might maintain supreme influence among them as long as we can command a succession of such men". The uprighteous conduct of a true English gentleman, engrained with the superior habits of his civilisation - and to some extent race - would inevitably impress less well-endowed Asians, who

63. See above, chapter 2, pp. 49-51. "Battle of the Tropic" between the "the principal" "reluctance" or "Central Asian policy" - with "the" "policy".

must hold their recognised superiors in awe! But, just as a guarantee of compliance, "extreme pressure" and active intermeddling in internal Afghan politics formed the background to Frere's "generous and cordial policy".

Labouring under the misapprehension that Frere feared a Russian invasion, Lawrence martialled his counter-arguments accordingly, and robbed them of any impact they might have had. No amity with Afghanistan could actually halt an invasion. A Quetta cantonment would rekindle Afghan fears of British annexation, cost £½ million in annual upkeep and prove militarily useless in repelling an invasion. Without foundation he imputed to Frere the intention of following Quetta's occupation by those of Kandahar and Herat. Furthermore, an altered Afghan policy would bring a financially ruinous repetition of 1838-42, brought about by military medal-hunters and commercial opportunists. Lawrence's ostensibly pragmatic response to Russia's approximation boiled down in effect to an ostrich-like posture, in which Russia need only be made to understand that England would defend India at all costs. He compounded the absence of any more positive recommendations by restating the equal effectiveness of native with English intelligence agencies beyond the frontier. In a cutting reply, Frere recapitulated and enlarged upon his earlier claims and recommendations; making it plain that they were not "heads of instruction for immediate action" but simply the sketch of a policy which H.M.G. and the Viceroy could implement at their discretion. By the cogency and persuasiveness of his arguments, and the imperceptibility of that dubiously-founded faith in Afghan pliability, Frere easily routed a Lawrence whose misplaced scoffing at invasion fears led him to fight yesterday's war with yesterday's dialectical weapons.

This spontaneous, set-piece "Battle of the Memoranda" between two of the principal combatants on Central Asian policy - with Frere taking

the victory as the "forward" group's champion - was 1874's climax to a plethora of memos on the Central Asian Question. Some placed equal emphasis on Persia and Afghanistan as bulwarks, others thought Kalat and Afghanistan sufficient, while the most convincing pushed the idea of having British agents in Afghanistan. The common thread was the need for a more active trans-frontier policy; though remarkably different degrees of effort existed between Rawlinson's "protectorate" and Frere's middle course of informal control. In deciding on a future Central Asian policy, Salisbury, now approaching the end of his cogitations, must have benefitted from these succinct statements of the pro's and contra's by "masterly inactivity" and the "forward" group's principal spokesmen. As the burdens of office increase with the responsibilities of government, the Cabinet minister comes to lean more on the short-hand summarisation of issues by his experienced aides. This was as true of the late 19TH. century as it is of the 20TH.

In sending Frere's letter/memo and Rawlinson's Persian memorandum to India, Salisbury admitted: "I agree with Frere more than I do with Rawlinson. He is going too fast. There are many expensive proceedings which he recommends, I think unnecessarily: and the time for Quettah is not yet come. But of the two he is most on the right road. I cannot believe that anything is to be got from bolstering up Persia".⁶⁴ Despatching Lawrence's memo along with a denial of any wish to move into Afghanistan or Kelat, he could not help reflecting that "the recollection of the Affghan war biasses Lawrence's judgement and makes him paint the dangers a little too darkly".⁶⁵ In his reply Northbrook was "glad that you qualify the expression of your concurrence in Frere's opinions".⁶⁶

64. Salisbury to Northbrook, 5 November 1874. REEL811/3, p.136.

65. Salisbury to Northbrook, 20 November 1874. REEL811/3, p.144.

66. Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 2 December 1875, f.8. REEL812/10.

To his mind Lawrence's memo gave "a more accurate account of the past and ... a sounder judgement of the present than Sir Bartle Frere".⁶⁷ Putting too high a value on Lawrence's experience, Northbrook could inform the ex-Viceroy: "I do not think there is anything in your memorandum with which I differ. ... Sir Bartle Frere's letter ... seemed to me to be full of erroneous and dangerous notions and I am very glad to find that you have so completely disposed of them".⁶⁸ He reckoned the course of despatching British officers to Afghanistan, as suggested by Frere, "could not be followed without alienating Afghanistan and it is quite possible that it would involve either a war or an abortive negotiation".⁶⁸

Before he received word of Northbrook's reactions to the memoranda, Salisbury had been made fully aware of the conflict of aims within Russia over Central Asian policy. The likelihood that the bellicosity of the Turkestan generals and the military party might supersede the Tsar's peaceable intentions⁶⁹ created a dangerously unpredictable situation. Russian diplomatic assurances could, then, be positively valueless, and information garnered at St. Petersburg was definitely secondary to that collected at source in Central Asia. In the last month of 1874, therefore, Salisbury repeatedly voiced his reservations about the paucity and slowness of Northbrook's intelligence of what transpired in northern and north-western Afghanistan.⁷⁰ On 1 January 1875 he informed the Viceroy that he was seeking the opinion of his Cabinet colleagues and the Council of India on the expediency of appointing an officer to reside at Herat, either temporarily or permanently.⁷¹

67. Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 18 December 1874, ff.2-3. REEL 812/10.

68. Northbrook to Lawrence, Calcutta, 18 December 1874. MSS.EUR.F. 90/20, Letter 15.

69. Salisbury to Northbrook, 11 December 1874. REEL 811/3, p.160.

70. Ibid, p.161; Salisbury to Northbrook, 9 December 1874. REEL 811/3, p.154.

71. Salisbury to Northbrook, 1 January 1875. REEL 811/3, p.171.

The Secretary of State's draft despatch was approved by Frere, Perry, Rawlinson and Montgomery in the Political Committee on 14 January, and sent by Salisbury for comment to all the Council's members⁷² - as individuals, not in session, because of the draft's secret nature. It was also sent to the Foreign Office, where the officials were so unused to any India Office initiative that they did not know if it was supposed to "go into the Office".⁷³ The draft, to which Frere, Rawlinson and Montgomery each gave unambiguous approval,⁷⁴ made plain Salisbury's sense of the need for "timely precaution" over the Central Asian Question. The comparative scantiness of the information relayed by the Government of India on events in Afghanistan and beyond, and the unsatisfactory indirect intelligence passed on by the Foreign Office, created a need for "more exact and constant information". For this purpose a partisan, ill-informed native agent at Kabul was no substitute for "a British Agency at Herat and also if practicable at Candahar". Apart from their intelligence gathering functions, these officers would "provide an indication of English solicitude for the safety of our allies, and may so tend to discourage counsels dangerous to the peace of Asia".⁷⁵ The only excision made, at Montgomery's suggestion,⁷⁶ was of the reference to Kandahar. The Government of India was instructed to seek an agency only at Herat.

Following the receipt of this, to him, disagreeable despatch, Northbrook accused Salisbury of being over-influenced by "able men like Frere and Rawlinson".⁷⁷ In denying the accusation, the Secretary of State claimed that "neither of them has the judicial mind necessary to make

72. See REEL821/85.

73. See "Draft to India Government. Confidential", 15 January 1875. F.O.65/926.

74. See Frere, "Opinion on Draft Despatch of January 1875", 17 January 1875. REEL821/85; Rawlinson to Burns, 16 January 1875. REEL820/72; Montgomery to Salisbury, 20 January 1875. REEL821/79.

75. See Minute Paper, "Appointment of British Agent at Herat": Letter to India, Secret 2, 22 January 1875. L/P&S/7/320, pp.3-25.

76. See Montgomery to Salisbury, 20 January 1875. REEL821/79.

77. Northbrook to Salisbury, Ambala, 1 April 1875. MSS, EUR.C.144/12, p.XLVI.

a good councillor. Sir R. Montgomery is the man whose opinion on political matters I esteem most highly in this office".⁷⁸ While being technically honest in this latter admission - there was the alteration of the draft - Salisbury's emphasis on Montgomery was something of a red herring; since Frere, Rawlinson and Montgomery were of one opinion on the need for a British agency in Afghanistan. Essentially, as regards the actual decision to alter the established policy, and the anticipated consequences of the agent's presence, it was Frere's letter/memorandum which had the greatest impact on Salisbury's thinking.

The process by which one man's ideas impregnate another's thinking is not reducible to a mechanical relationship subject to linear formulae analysis: a motor to a machine. It is, rather, a chemical process dependent on the hardly discernible interaction of affinitive compounds. In this particular example Frere did not exert any overpowering intellectual dominance to produce a volatile reaction. Instead, the subtly persuasive appeal of his premises, and Salisbury's like-minded inclination, produced a barely perceptible transfer of elements. Salisbury's personal secretiveness makes it impossible to confirm this conjecture, and it remains possible that he made up his mind independently. But he certainly did not do so in a vacuum. Of the plethora of summaries and memoranda with which he was bombarded in 1874, the pleasing dulceness of Frere's convictions and, equally important, the temporal appropriateness of his ideas on the indubitable success of British agents in Afghanistan were particularly likely to appeal to a Secretary of State dissatisfied with the prevailing orthodoxy but not wishing to pursue too extreme an alternative. In political circles the established military roles, in which the field-marshal is responsible for strategy and the lieutenant for tactics, are sometimes reversed. Having been induced

78. Salisbury to Northbrook, 30 April 1875. REEL811/3, p.239.

by his counsellor into changing the broad strategy, the principal statesman's then solitary task is often to search for the tactical means of implementing it: here specifically, securing a compliant Viceroy and attempting to gain the Amir of Kabul's approval.

Salisbury's and Frere's high regard for each others' opinions are well attested.⁷⁹ Apart from his reference to Frere's being "most on the right road", it is notable that Salisbury had never specifically mentioned the idea of British agents at Herat and Kandahar prior to this; and that in spite of Burne's "Summary". In late 1875 - early 1876, he also followed Frere in subscribing to the need for a British outpost at Quetta; while during the Prince of Wales' Indian tour he discreetly employed Sir Bartle in reporting confidentially on the North-West frontier's security.⁸⁰ A secretive Salisbury was hardly likely to employ on such a weighty task a man whom he did not trust implicitly and whose views he did not share substantially. Yet it is in the closeness of their views on the influence of these agents within Afghanistan, and on its future relations with Britain, that the proximity of Frere's and Salisbury's thinking is most apparent; and with it the greater likelihood of the latter's being persuaded by the former.

Frere sought to pursue a middle course between annexation, or protection, and neglect. This depended for its success largely on the supreme virtues and resultant prestige of Britain's agents, though Frere was not averse to using underhand pressure. There are numerous hints of Salisbury's personal prospect on these issues in his correspondence with Northbrook. And these tend compellingly to suggest that the Secretary of State shared Frere's presumptions, if he had not actually borrowed them from him. Sharing Sir Bartle's wider, Eurasian

79. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 3 December 1875. REEL811/3, p.361; Frere to Nightingale, 24 June 1874 & 16 January 1875. B.L.ADD.MSS.45,780, ff.254 & 288.

80. See Martineau, The Life and Correspondence, Vol.2, p.140.

perspective,⁸¹ in which Afghanistan's future loyalty was a matter of global not merely Indian importance, Salisbury was likewise certain that: "we cannot conquer it - we cannot leave it alone".⁸² From several references, it is clear that Salisbury intended the British Herat agent not only to be an intelligence-gatherer but also the source from which would spring a preponderant British influence in Afghanistan. The statement that, "we must gradually foster our influence and power within it" was supplemented by the conjecture: "If we only have a fair start and plenty of information, we ought to be able to keep our moral hold on the Affghans".⁸³ Salisbury's confidence that the Amir would be willing to grant permission for a Herat agency again reflects Frere's emphasis on ^{the key role of} the personality of political officers. Able to converse with the Amir in his own language, a discreet envoy with "good diplomatic ability" - Salisbury had previously mentioned Pelly specifically - should have little difficulty in allaying Sher Ali's irritation, or suspicion of British hostility, at the permanent establishment of a mission.⁸⁴ Yet the crucial point at which Frere and Salisbury were closest - a proto-racialist assumption of Afghan malleability underpinning the facility of informal English dominance - was not made clear until Salisbury, several years later, fully articulated his ideas on the broader role of British agents. Writing to Sir Richard Temple in the shadow of an imminent Anglo-Afghan war, Salisbury believed that Russian domination of "a vast area from the Aegean and Mediterranean

81. "We (H.M.G.) interfere in the main point (that of British agents in Afghanistan) because it trenches on the domain of imperial policy". Salisbury to Northbrook, 19 November 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, Letter 50, p.102.
82. Salisbury to Northbrook, 5 March 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, Letter 11, pp. 25-6.
83. Salisbury to Northbrook, 30 April & 5 March 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, Letters 20 & 11, pp.26 & 42.
84. "I cannot think he (the Amir) will, if you can find a good man - a political of the old type - to send. But much will depend on him (the political), for it is clear that the end can only be obtained by personal influence". Salisbury to Northbrook, 14 January 1876. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, Letter 2, p.3; see also Salisbury to Northbrook, 2 April & 19 November 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, Letters 16 & 50, pp. 35 & 102.

seas to the Indies" was bound to make Britain's hold on India more difficult, and at least necessitate more expensive and repressive government. "The remedy which at first sight many are inclined for is partial or complete occupation - either of Mesopotamia, or of Persia or of Afghanistan. It would be an extreme remedy - pressing heavily on our expenses and with a weight almost overwhelming on our recruiting machinery. There is an intermediate course between military occupation and *laissez faire*. It is a process, of which there are already some examples, but for which there is at present no expression. I will call it the *pacific invasion* by England. ... The principle is that when you bring the English in contact with inferior races, they will rule, whatever the ostensible format of their presence. As merchants, as railway makers, as travellers, or later on as employers, like Gordon or McKillop, or as Ministers like Rivers Wilson, they assert the English domination, not by any political privilege or military power, but by right of the strongest mind. The taking of Cyprus and the acquisition of a right to reform Asia Minor and Mesopotamia will I hope give opportunities for this *pacific invasion*. If it is effective, it will furnish the best bulwarks against Russian advance. Cannot something of the same kind not be done in Afghanistan? Once obtain the unrestricted right of access and you will govern without ever drawing a sword".⁸⁵

Referred to as "*Pacific Imperialism*",⁸⁶ Salisbury's personal, imperial ethic, like Frere's, might prove less than passive in practice if Britain's aims could not be achieved by insidious penetration and gratuitous persuasion. Corresponding with Crenbrook almost simultaneous to the Temple letter, he wrote: "If we can establish a footing in the country by the admission of a mission and Consuls - or Residents - all the rest will come gradually and naturally. We shall establish an

85. Salisbury to Temple, 20 September 1878. MSS.EUR.F.86/16, f.229.

86. See Uzoigwe, Britain and the Conquest of Africa, p.16.

influence, we shall have a party: as soon as some hitch in the fortunes of the dynasty takes place - a war, or a rebellion or a disputed succession - we shall be able by making use of the favourable moment to extract what treaty stipulations we please: and then we shall dominate as completely as we do in Khelat or Zanzibar".⁸⁷ In the long run, and after a long period of what was taken to be Sher Ali's unreasonable obduracy, Salisbury might prove less idealistic than Frere as to the manner in which Kabul was to be persuaded and won, but the two men's predilections had a certain proto-racialist arrogance in common. They also held a common belief in the profitability and practicability of informal or indirect control. Crucially, Salisbury had only shown signs of appreciating its value in relation to Afghanistan after reading Frere's memorandum and, presumably, conversations with him on the same topic. This would indicate that Frere had converted Salisbury, who had "in many matters ... a great respect for his opinions",⁸⁸ to a belief in the practical possibility and value of a middle course between outright conquest and absolute inaction.

In India in early 1875, Northbrook vainly tried to kick out the sparks he feared were being struck between India and Kabul. After the receipt of the India Office despatch on a British agent at Herat, the Viceroy prevaricated - quite dishonestly⁸⁹ - by claiming that the Amir at Ambala had expressly rejected the placement of British agents within his territory.⁹⁰ Having marshalled evidence to the contrary, Salisbury telegraphed the Viceroy allowing him a three to four months discretionary period in which either to implement the policy or explain his

87. Salisbury to Crenbrook, 17 September 1878. HA 43/T501/269, ff. 3v-4r.

88. Salisbury to Northbrook, 3 December 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, Letter 54, p.110.

89. See above, chapter 4, pp.123-4.

90. See Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 18 February 1875. L/P&S/3/189, p.939.

opposition in a secret despatch.⁹¹ Meantime, in March 1875, Rawlinson's book "England and Russia in the East"⁹² was published; by John Murray of Albemarle Street near Piccadilly. By August it had run to a second edition. A collection of Rawlinson's earlier articles, his 1868 memorandum updated with footnotes, and two lengthy, augmentary chapters on recent events, it was intended as a scholarly work. But, with his perpetual money worries, the author may also have aimed to produce an opportune pot-boiler. Disappointed on this latter score, he made nothing from the first and only £10 from the second edition.⁹³ But he did have the consolation of the book's characterisation "as the leading authority and book of reference on the subject"⁹⁴ by an otherwise unsympathetic reviewer. Attracting widespread notice in the press - Russian as well as British - it was also extensively reviewed in periodical literature. Had Rawlinson published in the 1950's not the 1870's, many Cold War hacks would undoubtedly have labelled it "Book of the Year".

The second and sixth chapters up-dated events to December 1874 and also contained Rawlinson's recommendations on future Persian and Afghan policy. It is clear he still wished to complement a firm British grip on Afghanistan with a much more overt commitment to Persia. On Persia, he repeated his ideas on a British-led force and the injection of British skill and capital. His Afghan views were very garbled, most especially in his estimation of Sher Ali and of the precise path which future Anglo-Afghan relations would follow. Admitting that the Amir did have some cause for complaint against England, Rawlinson could

91. See S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegram), 23 February 1875. L/P&S/3/189, p.941; Welpole to Salisbury, 19 & 22 February 1875. REEL820/67; Burne to Salisbury, 22 February 1875. E/Burne to Salisbury, Letter 9.

92. H.C. Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East, first ed. (London, 1875).

93. See "Brief Sketch of the LIFE OF SIR H.C.R. taken down in her own hand by Lady R", (begun 31 October 1884, 21 Charles Street, finished Dec. 1884). R.A.S./Rawlinson papers.

94. See Colburn's United Service Magazine, (1875), p.317.

represent the Amir's estrangement as merely temporary and his "rudeness as the petulance of a small child rather than the deliberate provocations of an enemy".⁹⁵ But at the same time, presuming the existence of a stereotyped "Asiatic mind" or peculiarly "Oriental" outlook, he could present Sher Ali as mistaking English inactivity in the face of Russian advances as weakness and also as having corresponded advantageously with Von Kaufman in the hope of playing one power off against the other. Doubting if there was any prospect of settled government in the country as long as Sher Ali remained Amir, Rawlinson ominously outlined certain general principles to which British attention should be directed in determining future relations with Afghanistan.

Outlined, these principles pointed to the basic fact of Afghanistan's lack of political cohesion: "There is no natural or ethnic reason why Herat and Candahar should be attached to Cabul".⁹⁶ Rawlinson suggested that Britain might soon grow impatient with her established aim of a strong, friendly, independent power on the North-West frontier. It was a central tenet of Sir Henry's thinking that Herat must be occupied in retaliation for the Russian occupation of Mary; which he expected in one or two years time. Two courses of action followed from this. First, Sher Ali, once his internal difficulties were solved, would probably seek a British garrison at Herat voluntarily.⁹⁷ This inevitably meant the reduction of Afghanistan to protectorate status in everything other than name. If the Amir's aloofness continued, however, Rawlinson favoured the partition of the Amirate of Kabul, with a British occupation of its western regions around Kandahar and Herat if necessary. Though never specific about the exact form of British rule - indirect empire or military government - Rawlinson was completely assured about its

95. Rawlinson, England and Russia, p.354.

96. Ibid, p.355.

97. See *ibid*, p.359.

successful imposition. As the basis for his optimism, he made great play with the pro-British inclinations of the Kandahari merchants and agriculturists. Speaking from direct, personal experience rather than some abstract calculation of what constituted a typical, collaborative elite, Rawlinson pointed to them as the indigenous collaborators whose ready cooperation would ensure that a British occupation force was amicably received and bountifully supplied; so that no massive, overt exertion of costly military strength would be needed to occupy and hold the western sectors of a dismembered Afghanistan. Protectorate or partition - the latter with a readily accepted British occupation of Kandahar and Herat - either condition represented a drastic and much remarked departure from the received view of a strong, independent, integrated "Big Afghanistan"; and, at that, by Britain's most renowned authority on Central Asian politics.

Reviewed in "The Times" and, more extensively, in the periodical press, the book's authoritative status was universally acknowledged and its recommendations on Herat and Western Afghanistan as unanimously rejected. "The Times" saw no reason why England and Russia should not cohabit peaceably in Asia.⁹⁸ In a lengthy review a diplomatic Frere, who had first cleared his article with Salisbury,⁹⁹ barely alluded to Rawlinson's views on Herat and, when he did, contented himself with reportage rather than critical analysis.¹⁰⁰ In a contrastingly short review, Goldsmid of Sistan arbitration fame called for Quetta's immediate occupation, but thought Herat's an "excessive measure" hardly likely to attract a favourable hearing from H.M.G. in existing circumstances.¹⁰¹ A lengthy, anonymous critique¹⁰² - attributable to Lord Sandhurst,

98. See "The Times", 5 April 1875, p.4, cols.4-5.

99. See Frere to Salisbury, 1 April 1875, f.1. REEL820/77.

100. See H.B.E. Frere, "England and Russia in the East", Quarterly Review, 138 (1875), pp.568-708.

101. F.J. Goldsmid, "Review of Rawlinson's 'England and Russia in the East'", Macmillan's Magazine, 32 (1875), pp.54-63.

102. See Edinburgh Review, 142 (1875), pp.264-306.

formerly W.R. Mansfield C-inC(India) - highlighted the paradox between Rawlinson's inveighing against Russian territorial ambitions while simultaneously seeking British imperial aggrandisement.

The same reviewer picked no quarrel with Rawlinson's facts, but emphasised the political drawbacks, military dangers and financial sanctions of Herat's occupation; especially by force and against Afghan wishes. True Laurentian that he was, Mansfield rejected Herat's key significance and held that India's defence was a European, not merely an Eastern question. Any Anglo-Russian quarrel over India "would be fought out in the Western Hemisphere and on the high seas, at least as much as on the soil of Asia".¹⁰³ If Rawlinson's solution to India's defence problems was extreme, in the long term the Laurentian alternative was as unrealistic. How other than by one of those amphibious operations at which Britain was so consistently incompetent could such a self-contained state as Russia be attacked in Europe? Nevertheless, Mansfield's criticisms did sting Rawlinson into explaining that he had always presumed an Anglo-Afghan "community of action" in Herat's occupation. Reaffirming the future necessity of the move, he denied having ever considered the forcible occupation of all Western Afghanistan as a prelude to annexation or in hostility to the Afghans.¹⁰⁴ His denials were less than convincing and were made as much to save face as to be believed.

In his book Rawlinson had carefully made a prefatory affirmation that he had used personal correspondence, not official records, in its preparation, and that the opinions expressed were not those of H.M.G. Despite this, his seat on the Political Committee gave him a consciously ineradicable knowledge of events and policies, and his opinions were

103. Ibid, p.305.

104. See H.C. Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East, second ed. (London, 1875), Preface, p.VI-VII.

bound to be taken, both in Russia and Asia, as reflections of official thinking. Just as seriously, then, Rawlinson was also criticised by both Northbrook and Grant Duff for indiscretion and an undiplomatic use of official documents in writing the book.¹⁰⁵ First expounded in a constituency speech in May, Grant Duff's criticism that Rawlinson had betrayed his trust as a member of the Council of India was repeated in his autumn review of the work, and echoed by the "Pall Mall Gazette" in November.¹⁰⁶ An irascible Rawlinson demanded that the newspaper's grave imputation of official misconduct be withdrawn; having first solicited and received Salisbury's authorisation to say that chapters 5 and 6 of the work "were submitted to him by me before they were sent to press and that he saw no reason to forbid their publication".¹⁰⁷ In fact Salisbury had tried to prevent their publication as they stood, for fear that critical ejaculations on the Amir's "petulant", "rude", "perverse" nature might offend Sher Ali. After agreeing to a few initial excisions, Rawlinson had proceeded to print the edition without further expurgation.¹⁰⁸ Sir Henry's later claim that "Lord Salisbury ... approved and in fact to some extent corrected the proofs"¹⁰⁹ is only part of the truth. But then Rawlinson had always cherished an elevated sense of his own importance and could never bear to be in the wrong. The whole episode also contains a certain humourless irony in that Liberals, supposedly the 19th. century individual's guardians, should employ "raison d'état" as a justification for censoring Rawlinson. They attached an importance to the state and its interests superseding that assigned to individual liberty.

105. See Northbrook to Salisbury, Ambala, 1 April 1875, f.1v. REEL813/12; M.E. Grant Duff, "England and Russia in the East", Fortnightly Review, 18N.S.(1875), pp.600-10.

106. See "Pall Mall Gazette", 1 November 1875, p.8, cols.1-2.

107. See Rawlinson to Salisbury, 2 November 1875. Rawlinson to Editor, "Pall Mall Gazette". R.A.S./Rawlinson papers/"Autographs 1850:60:70."

108. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 5 February & 30 April 1875. REEL811/3, pp.189-90 & 239.

109. See "Brief Sketch of the LIFE OF SIR H.C.R.....". R.A.S./Rawlinson papers.

Northbrook's extreme annoyance about the book's possibly injurious effect on Anglo-Afghan relations¹¹⁰ was in fact completely justified; since its contents elicited Sher Ali's deep-seated and continuous distrust of British intentions. Staying in London at the time of the book's publication was an exiled cousin of Sher Ali's: Sekundar Khan, son of the late Sirdar of Herat Sultan Ahmed Khan. Living on a British government pension of £500 per annum and reckoned by Burne to be "one of the most intelligent Asiatics I ever met",¹¹¹ Sekundar Khan still corresponded with the cousin who had banished him, and in September 1875 sent him one in an intermittent series of lengthy, informative and very perceptive letters. "Lately", he wrote, "a great man has published a book on Russia, Afghanistan and England, in which he says that the Russians will take Merv; and for the protection of India, the English must take Kandahar and Herat from the Amir...". Failing the Amir's consent to a division of civil and military responsibility, the English "must go by force" and Sher Ali would be left only with Eastern Afghanistan and Afghan Turkestan. "Now for the English themselves", Sekundar Khan continued caustically, "the whole world is not sufficient, but for the Afghans and their Kings, Kabul and Turkistan are sufficient". "The author of this book is not one of those at whose books one laughs, but he is one of the most respected men in England. He was the man who was Governor of Kandahar in the year of the English occupation, and when my deceased father was at Herat, he was the British Ambassador at Teheran. He is now one of the twelve councillors at the India Office in London, each of whom is specially trusted in one particular branch, and his branch is everything concerning Afghanistan and Persia. No one else has the same influence in matters regarding Persia and Afghanistan.

110. See Northbrook to Salisbury, Ambala, 1 April 1875, f.2. REEL813/12.

111. Burne's notes on "Minute Paper - Translations of letters from Sirdar Sekundar Khan, found amongst the papers of the Ex-Amir Yakub Khan", 19/20 May 1880. L/P&S/7/25, p.286.

Anyhow you should be on your guard. I do not know yet whether the people and the Ministers of England will approve of this book and act according to it or not".¹¹² Continuing with his summary of the book's contents, Sekundar Khan reported Rawlinson as saying that Anglo-Afghan friendship was now only nominal, since Sher Ali had designated Abdullah Jan his heir without English consent; was in correspondence with the Russians and was dissatisfied with Northbrook's promises at the 1873 Simla conference.

The impact of this letter on the thinking of a ruler already inclined to mistrust the British, yet offered little insight into their future designs for his territory, can well be imagined. Taking the work of so well-placed an author as Rawlinson to have an "authoritative character", the Amir regarded the Government of India's decisive tone in negotiations at Simla in October 1876 as "indicative", in Lytton's words, "of some intention to carry out the dismemberment policy advocated by Rawlinson, and pick a quarrel with him, in order to find a pretext for it".¹¹³ By his unsympathetic characterisation of the Amir, and equally disdainful ignorance of Afghan interests, Rawlinson said no worse than even Salisbury in private. But the careless, Palmerstonian indiscretion of his outburst makes him partly responsible for Kabul's distrust of Britain in the second half of the 1870's.

The purport of "England and Russia in the East" was studied in St. Petersburg as well as Kabul and also reported in the Russian press. Aware of this Russian interest, Salisbury suspected the book might act as a salutary warning of Britain's determination to defend India at all costs, and dismissed Northbrook's added fears of its deleterious impact on Anglo-Russian comity. "An indiscreet friend who goes about

112. Sikander Ahmed to Sher Ali, Amir of Kabul, Shabah 1292 H. (September 1875). L/P&S/7/25, pp.303-4.

113. Lytton to Salisbury, Mushobra, 18 October 1876. MSS.EUR.C.218/518/1, p.550.

whispering that you have a very bad temper and are a dead shot, has his uses".¹¹⁴ No matter what damage it might cause in Asia, Rawlinson's blundering lack of finesse had its uses in the hands of a shrewd diplomat. Salisbury's hopes seemed to be borne out by an August article in the "Moscow Gazette", inspired by one of Gorchakov's most prominent deputies in the Imperial Foreign Ministry: Baron Jomini.¹¹⁵ Analysing Mansfield's critical review of the book, Jomini's mouthpiece hailed the analysis as indicative of a growing, popular, British sympathy for Russia, dismissed Rawlinson as an incorrigible, Palmerstonian alarmist and doubted if recent Anglo-Russian intimacy should be jeopardised by an imaginary danger in Central Asia.¹¹⁶ At the India Office, Mallet, who strongly distrusted the "forward" strategists, found the placatory, dove-like cooing of this Russian ministerial response "most satisfactory".¹¹⁷ Yet the Russian press was not so universally amicable. In a leading article which reflected the predilections of a military party still strong in government circles, the "Russki Mir" called bombastically on Russia, in the light of Rawlinson's hostile opinions, to turf the British out of India "at all hazards", in the event of a war between the two powers.¹¹⁸ Russian press reports obviously provide only a hint of the response in the innermost sanctuaries of power, but they at least indicate that an outspoken Rawlinson had retained his role in Russia as an over-sensitive barometer of British susceptibilities regarding India. A prospective opponent cannot be warned without one's own innermost fears being betrayed.

Despite Salisbury's statement that "the time for Quettah is not yet come," 1874-75 had again seen Kalat and the Quetta project achieve

114. Salisbury to Northbrook, 30 April 1875. REEL811/3, p.239.

115. See Doria to Derby, St. Petersburg, 16 August 1875. L/P&S/3/192, pp.541-2.

116. See "Journal de St. Petersburg", 3/15 Aout 1875. L/P&S/3/192, p.543.

117. See Mallet's comment, Minute Paper, "Central Asian affairs: various" 7-15 September 1875. L/P&S/3/192, p.531.

118. See L/P&S/3/195, pp.25-6.

some prominence in official calculations; in Britain as well as India. By the late 1860's Khodaded Khan, Khan of Kalat, had collected a standing army of 2,000 men and, in studiously refusing the advice of his most prominent sirdars, aimed to establish himself as a dynastic sovereign rather than the elective head of a Baluch confederation. Intermittent armed warfare between Khan and sirdars ensued, during which the trans-Baluchistan caravan trade from Afghanistan to India was disrupted by Marri and Bugti raiders. The Sind administration was seriously disquieted at the disruption, but its officials were divided in their opinion of the best means of ending it. Sir William Merewether, Commissioner in Sind and a member of the "Bombay School", favoured upholding the authority of the Khan as a sovereign ruler. His subordinate, Colonel Phayre, Political Superintendent of the Upper Sind Frontier, preferred British arbitration between the warring factions, on the basis that the sirdars should legitimately enjoy a share in the Kalat government. Phayre's views were outspokenly endorsed by a Captain Sandeman: a Punjab officer who had no official standing in the case but who dealt, around Dera Ghazi Khan, with such Kalat peoples as the Marri, Bugti and Khetrans. At the Mithankot conference in February 1871, attended by these officials as well as the Lt-Governor of the Punjab, a fresh trial was given to the standard policy of non-intervention; though Sandeman was assigned an anomalous and potentially acrimonious position under Sind orders in matters pertaining to the Baluch tribes.¹¹⁹

During this dispute, the "forward" group in the Political Committee had been in favour of strengthening the Khan's authority by an additional 50,000 rupees subsidy annually. Yet as the disturbances within Kalat continued, the Government of India decided on active mediation. Merewether

119. See T.H. Thornton, Sir Robert Sandeman (London, 1895), pp.49-54.

arbitrated in favour of the Khan, dismissing the sirdars' grievances as baseless and making little attempt to involve them in the Kalat government. Caravan raiding and disruption of trade continued unabated after such a partisan decision, and constant news of the unrest led Argyll, persuaded by Kaye, to seek the Political Committee's opinion.¹²⁰ Rawlinson thought the moment favourable for a British occupation of Quetta.¹²¹ To forestall such a necessity Montgomery again recommended that an extra 50,000 rupees should be allotted annually to the Khan to help him maintain peace in Baluchistan.¹²² Argyll repeated Sir Robert's suggestion to the Government of India,¹²³ which instead recalled the British political agent in Kalat and withdrew even the Khan's existing subsidy, on the grounds of non-fulfilment of treaty engagements through inability to secure a safe passage for trade.

Aggravated by this diminishment of the Khan's power, the unrest and caravan raiding in Baluchistan climaxed in a Brahui raid in February 1874 across the Sind frontier into British territory. Merewether's proposal for a retaliatory expedition into Kalat was rejected by Northbrook on the grounds that British objections to the Russian occupation of the Turkmen steppes would be derisory thenceforward and that an invasion of Kalat would excite Afghan suspicions just as Britain needed more sympathy from Kabul.¹²⁴ Northbrook contented himself with the hope that Khodaded Khan might soon be deposed in a coup, while Merewether, who openly regretted the previous failures of the 50's and 60's to advance beyond the Bolan, suggested the alternative of the Khan's deposition by British

120. See Kaye note, "Disturbances in Khelat", 3 February 1873. L/P&S/5/595, p.207.

121. See Rawlinson memorandum, "On Khelat", 4 March 1873. L/P&S/5/595, pp.221-3.

122. See R. Montgomery Memorandum, "On Khelat", 6 March 1873. L/P&S/5/595, pp.225-32.

123. S.S.I. to G.I., 21 March 1873. L/P&S/5/595, pp.209-11.

124. See Northbrook to Merewether, Calcutta, 21 March 1874. Aitchison to Merewether, Calcutta, 21 March 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/15, pp. 74 & 75-7; Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 27 March 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/11, p.XVII.

troops, the election of a successor and the re-allocation of an agent to Kalat with a "suitable escort" based probably at Quetta.¹²⁵ Merewether's dirge was accompanied by a Greek chorus from Sir Henry Green, off-stage in London. Embittered by his unsuccessful attempts to raise six daughters in style on a pension of £480 per annum, Green vented his spleen in declaiming the inadequate defence provisions of the North-West frontier. Whether it was congratulating Frere on the contents of his letter to Kaye, or writing leading articles for the "Morning Post", his theme remained the same: the need for Quetta's occupation.¹²⁶ But the "Bombay School's" stance was regarded as too bellicose by the Government of India; and a British expedition to Kalat, ostensibly punitive but aiming insidiously and dissimulatively at founding an outpost at Quetta, was finally and definitively rejected by the Viceroy in January 1875.¹²⁷

While Salisbury refrained from criticising Northbrook's decision, by February he obviously thought there was a case for Quetta's occupation and for keeping the Bolan Pass open. "If there had been no such person as the Ameer of Cabul, I should have thought that the object of keeping the Bolan open was the ruling consideration: but the exact proportions of humouring and terrifying which are required for the treatment of his unstable mind cannot even be conjectured except by the physician who has charge of the case".¹²⁸ But, just as he had earlier refused Frere's suggestion on Quetta, in May he again rejected the same recommendation from Frere's successor as Governor of Bombay 1867-72, Sir G.V.S. Fitzgerald.¹²⁹ This time he opposed it because St. Petersburg

125. See Northbrook to Merewether, Calcutta, 14 May 1874. Merewether to Northbrook, Karachi, 28 May 1874. MSS.EUR.C.144/15, pp.126-7 & Appendix, pp.1-5.

126. See "Extract from a letter from Sir Henry Green, C.B.K.C.S.I.", 26 October 1874. C/138; "Morning Post", 18 December 1874, p.4, cols.2-3; Napier of Magdala to Northbrook, Ambala, 10 January 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/17, pp.8-9.

127. See Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 8 January 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, p.VII.

128. Salisbury to Northbrook, 5 February 1875. REEL811/3, p.189.

129. See G.S.V. Fitzgerald memorandum, "On Khelat", 16 March 1875. C/138.

had halted all military activity in Central Asia and any British move to the Bolan might be used to justify the renewal of Russian operations.¹³⁰ The Secretary of State's reluctance to occupy Quetta was not then so much a matter of disinclination on his part, but of the project's current political inexpediency: due to the need to sweeten either the Afghans or the Russians. However, having heard rumours of a Russian agent in Baluchistan,¹³¹ both Salisbury and Northbrook had the Foreign Office mention Britain's continued right to station troops in Kalat to the Russian foreign ministry in St. Petersburg.¹³²

Allowed the fullest initiative by the India Office in conducting Anglo-Kalat affairs, the Government of India now granted Captain Sandeman permission to try out his ideas on British mediation between the rebellious Marris, Bugtis and Brahuis and the Khan. Sandeman's mid-October instructions¹³³ make it plain that the Government of India's principal concern in Kalat was not Quetta's occupation but the security of the transit trade from Western Afghanistan to Karachi and the Punjab via the Bolan and Tal Chotali Passes. But personal antipathy, the provincial jealousies of the Sind and Punjab administrations, and the difference between his own policy of strengthening Kalat's central authority and Sandeman's of balancing it with chiefly power, caused Merewether to watch the Punjab officer's successful progress invidiously. Spiced with political and ethnic conflict within Kalat itself, Anglo-Kalat relations by late 1875 were a rich broth of antipathies and conflicting views of the efficacious line to follow. There were indications that metropolitan statesmen tended to view Kalat's turbulence in a wider,

130. See Minute Paper, "Khalat Affairs", 8 May 1875. L/P&S/7/320, p.1097.

131. Salisbury to Northbrook, 19 March 1875. Northbrook to Salisbury, Simla, 15 April 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, pp.30 & LII.

132. See Minute Paper, "Right of the British Government to station troops in Khalat territory", 12 July 1875. L/P&S/3/191, pp.1623-4; Minute Paper, "Right of the British Government to station troops in Khalat territory - Proposed communication to the Russian Government", 17 August 1875. L/P&S/3/192, pp.93-4.

133. See Thornton, Sir Robert Sandeman, p.66.

global perspective and might be inclined, in favourable circumstances to take up the option on posting troops in Kalat. By mid-December 1875, from his gleanings of India Office despatches on Kalat, Aitchison in Calcutta certainly feared this was the case.¹³⁴ The only major ingredient the soup still lacked was a British outpost at Quetta.

In mid-75, as Salisbury was providing some justification to Northbrook for Rawlinson's indiscretions, he was also badgering the Viceroy for the secret despatch explaining his opposition to the placement of an agent at Herat. A change of line having been proposed from the metropolitan, discussion on the matter now entered the realms of "high" politics: extra-Cabinet conferences between Disraeli and Salisbury, and the impenetrable privacy of Salisbury's correspondence with Northbrook. Assumptions to the contrary notwithstanding, the Political Committee, though not the full Council, was allowed access and comment on the important 1875 despatches to and from India on the issue. An impatient Rawlinson meantime brought out another memo advocating a "little severity" and effective pressure, to the extent of threatening to suspend relations, in forcing Sher Ali's agreement to a Herat mission.¹³⁵

But, far from pondering the means of an agent's appointment, the Government of India wished to delay the pursuit of such an objective; chiefly because they sympathised with the quandary in which their demand would place Sher Ali.¹³⁶ They did not feel justified in making representations on the basis of an informal and confidential expression, at Ambala, of the Amir's readiness to receive agents at Herat and Kandahar. Nor should the Amir be pressurised at this time into accepting an agency,

134. See Aitchison to Northbrook, 29 Chouringhee, 17 December 1875. MSS. EUR.C.144/17, Appendix, pp. 43*-44*.

135. See Rawlinson memorandum, "On the proposed Herat Mission", 11 May 1875. C/138.

136. G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 19, 7 June 1875. L/P&S/7/4, pp.1-8.

because the continued anti-British feeling of influential sections of the Afghan community would make his acceptance dangerously unpopular. As a source of valuable intelligence and an arbitrator in Afghan disputes with Russia's allies or subjects, a British agent at Herat was a highly desirable end; but a worthless one without the Amir's cordial consent. For the present, they believed Sher Ali could only refuse the agency or accept reluctantly. Time and circumstance being unsuitable, no immediate initiative should be taken. In the event of Russian absorption of the whole Turkman country, however, a defensive treaty engagement including the establishment of a British agency at Herat should be concluded with Kabul.

Impatiently awaiting this despatch, Salisbury, in a revealing piece of projection, made it plain that he feared Russia's anticipating what he might do in Afghanistan after the location of an agent: the insidious "possession of the dominant party" so as to seat her own nominee on the throne. This would enable the Russians, in their own words, "to besiege Constantinople from the heights above Peshawur".¹³⁷ Imagining that Britain had little time left before Russia's move on Mary, and believing it would be instigated unexpectedly by an unrestrained frontier command, he accepted that there was no immediate danger; but felt that Britain ought to be fully aware of what was going on.¹³⁸ He concluded from the despatch that the difference between the Home and Supreme Governments of India was one of time and opportunity, not substance.¹³⁹ Yet he believed the appointment of an agent should precede rather than follow a renewed Russian advance, so as to guarantee the paramountcy of British influence over an Amir whom Salisbury did not rightly trust. A ruler who would easily defect to the Russians, he feared.¹⁴⁰

137. Salisbury to Northbrook, 26 March 1875. REEL811/3, pp.218-9.

138. Salisbury to Northbrook, 18 June 1875. REEL811/3, pp.264-5.

139. Salisbury to Northbrook, 8 July 1875. REEL811/3, p.276.

140. Salisbury to Northbrook, 1 September 1875. REEL811/3, p.310.

After a private, extra-Cabinet discussion with a Prime Minister who was "a little disquieted" about Central Asian affairs and "quite prepared for acting with energy and promptitude in the direction of Herat",¹⁴¹ Salisbury discovered a common cause with Disraeli in his hopes "for a measure to bring Afghanistan more within British influence and pre-empting the growth of Russian influence there".¹⁴² Amid unconfirmed rumours that Russia already had agents in Afghanistan, Salisbury prepared a draft despatch in reply to the one sent in June by the Government of India.¹⁴³ With the Eastern Question about to explode, the Central Asian Question would assume greater importance because both were inextricably a part of the far larger "Russian Question". What was feared was not so much a Russian invasion of India, as her diplomatic and material occupation of Afghanistan.¹⁴⁴ There arose three perils from such a possibility: "1. She may invade India or cause it to be invaded. 2. She may excite our own subjects to revolt. 3. She may keep in check a considerable English force in Upper India. These dangers are arranged in the direct order of their importance but in the inverse order of their probability. And anyone of them might be a serious embarrassment if there was trouble in Europe at the same time. Unfortunately the probability of troubles in Europe increases with every week".¹⁴⁵

This November draft despatch¹⁴⁶ reveals H.M.G.'s fears that postponing the agent after Russia's occupation of Mary smacked of closing the door after the horse had bolted. They feared Sher Ali would conclude that a Britain which did not respond until after Mary's seizure

141. See Disraeli to Salisbury, Hughenden, 28 October 1875. C.C.L. D/20/79, pp.101-2.

142. Salisbury to Northbrook, 19 November 1875. REEL811/3, p.355.

143. Salisbury to Disraeli, 11 November 1875. C.C.L. D/20/80, p.103.

144. Salisbury to Northbrook, 12 November 1875. REEL811/3, p.351.

145. Salisbury to Northbrook, 19 November 1875. REEL811/3, pp.355-6.

146. See, "Secret Despatch, India", Secret 34, 19 November 1875. L/P&S/7/320, pp.263-6.

was by far the weaker power and that the Amir would consequently rush to gain Russia's favour, having first refused a British agency so as not to annoy his prospective ally. A second important feature was Salisbury's optimism that the Amir, "who can only reason by his Asiatic experience and the counsels of a singularly prejudiced durbar", would prove immediately amenable to British suasion. Reflecting Frere, and proving himself guilty of gross self-deception or indefensible duplicity, Salisbury implied that a British agent "by superior intellect and force of character" would dissuade the Amir of his "more stubborn prejudices" by showing him Britain's pre-eminent concern for the integrity and independence of his dominions. Accordingly, a pretext was to be found for the despatch, without delay, of a temporary embassy to Kabul, aimed at showing him the danger from Russia, confirming British solicitude for his dominions' safety and emphasising the need for a British Herat agency. Declarations of disinterested solicitude aside, British motives were basically selfish and not as innocent as Salisbury's innocuous phrases might indicate.

Submitted to the Political Committee for study, the draft also seems to have been shown to Frere at Salisbury's request;¹⁴⁷ even though Sir Bartle was no longer a committee member. There is no extant record of Frere's reaction. Within the Political Committee, even after a euphemistically-termed "full and exhaustive discussion",¹⁴⁸ a clear division of opinion over the draft existed. On the one side were ranged the representatives of the "forward" view - Montgomery and Rawlinson - and on the other Northbrook's supporter, Sir Thomas Erskine Perry - a life-long Liberal and outspoken adherent of the belief that Britain's

147. In the India Office Records of the Political and Secret Department the draft of the despatch is immediately preceded by a slip of paper on one side of which is written, "Secretary of State's Despatch, Nov. 1875" and on the other is printed, "From Sir H.B.F. Frere, To: Political & Secret Dept." The secret draft despatch, which was not revealed to the full Council or any other of its individual members, could only have been given to Frere with the Secretary of State's approval.

148. See H.S. Maine, "Note", n.d. (but immediately following the draft despatch and obviously related to discussion of it). L/P&S/7/320, pp.271-2.

primary duty was to improve the welfare of India's people. In Perry's opinion the desire to overrule the Government of India was evidence of Russophobia on the part of Salisbury, Montgomery, Rawlinson and others.¹⁴⁹ Once excited by fears of Russian aggression and intrigue, the Afghans would meekly beseech British aid. But let Britain once go "cap in hand" and the Afghans would "be filled with exaggerated notions" of their own importance and prove "most difficult to deal with". Perry's objections were hardly more charitable to the Afghans than were his opponents' views. Despite this opposition, and under pressure from its chairman, Montgomery, ^{an allied} with Rawlinson, the committee recommended the addition of another paragraph, advising the recognition of Abdullah Jan's right of succession as the pretext for the embassy and as an enticement and concession to Sher Ali.¹⁵⁰ Salisbury did not adopt this advice for inclusion in his final despatch to India. Notably, however, he suggested to the Viceroy in a private letter that the offer "of a limited recognition to Abdullah Jan (i.e., such a recognition as would not bind you to fight for him)" might serve as a pretext for the embassy.¹⁵¹ The musky odour of ideas originating with the members of the "forward" group pervaded the India Office.

If the controversy over Indian cotton duties indicated Salisbury's ultimate willingness under pressure from Lancashire cotton manufacturers to sacrifice Indian to British economic interests,¹⁵² his disagreement with the Viceroy on Afghan policy is also representable as a clash over the precedence of metropolitan calculations; and even more broadly as a reflection of the incipient gulf between Liberals and Conservatives on European foreign policy. Ostensibly for private reasons, Northbrook's

149. See E. Perry, "Note on the Afghan question", 19 November 1875. L/P&S/7/320, pp.273-9.

150. See, "Secret. Draft Despatch: The Political Committee would recommend the alterations marginally noted", 17 November 1875. L/P&S/7/320, pp.267-70.

151. Salisbury to Northbrook, 19 November 1875. REEL811/3, p.357.

152. See P. Harnetty, Imperialism and Free Trade: Lancashire and India in the mid-nineteenth century (Manchester, 1972).

resignation is largely accountable to his disagreements with Salisbury, and to their fundamentally divergent accentuation of British and Indian interests.¹⁵³ Inclined to inertia rather than mere caution, and estimated by Salisbury to be "officially moribund",¹⁵⁴ the Viceroy tended to confuse empirical investigation of a problem with an uncritical receptivity to the solicited opinions of choice members of his Council and administration. This delegation of responsibility favoured C.U. Aitchison and Arthur Hobhouse - the Council's legal member as well as Northbrook's close friend. Thus, the Norns who spun the filaments of the Viceroy's Afghan policy were Lawrence and Gladstone: Uror and Veroandi, the Past and the Present. Gladstone exerted his fateful presence through the medium of Hobhouse: - one of his fervent admirers and a vitriolic opponent of Frere and Rawlinson's ideas.¹⁵⁵ Likewise Aitchison, in Northbrook's complete confidence, infused the Viceroy's regard for Kabul with a distrustful caution emanating from Aitchison's sympathy with Lawrence's views. The opposition, then, to a more energetic policy originated as much in generic suspicion of the Afghans and fear of the expense to the Indian exchequer as in a secure sense that a new policy was unnecessary.

Northbrook believed the Amir's assent to an agency could only be purchased with an unconditional defensive guarantee, together with funds to fortify Herat and maintain his army. But why, he wondered, should India bear the burden of supplying large sums of money for these purposes?¹⁵⁶ In a European crisis, by covering Britain's Achilles heel against Russian darts, India would essentially be subsidising Britain's freedom of diplomatic action and effectively enabling her to take a

153. See Moulton, Lord Northbrook's Indian Administration, pp.255-80.

154. Salisbury to Mallet, 4 October 1875. REEL822/102, p.231.

155. Salisbury to Lytton, 7 April 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/1A, Letter 13, p.2.

156. See Northbrook to Salisbury, 17 & 31 December 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, pp.CLVI-CLVII & CLX.

bolder anti-Russian line. The implication, made clear by Hobhouse in a later article,¹⁵⁷ was that "our dumb Indian subjects" could not afford to provide the funds for an adventurous foreign policy: funds better spent in fulfilling the primary British duty of developing India's human and material potential. Such an outlook on Northbrook's part Salisbury could only comprehend as a transfer of "his affections in a very queer and perverse way from the Queen's Government to the Government of India".¹⁵⁸ The administrator who placed loyalty to his conception of Britain's moral duties above unthinking obedience to the Beaconsfield government could only be guilty of disloyalty. But the noble Liberal statue was not entirely free from blemish. The inexorable drip of distrust of the Afghans was supplied by Aitchison and seems to have penetrated Northbrook's consciousness.¹⁵⁹

Moreover, if the rationale of best defending the crux of empire is accepted, there were deficiencies in the admirably moral, Gladstonian and distrustful, Lawrentian stance adopted by Northbrook. From a real-politik point of view, the standard demonologic portrait of Tory ogres and Liberal fairy god-mothers¹⁶⁰ further degenerates into caricature; the lines being drawn too heavily and the contrast in colours over-emphasised. Into the Stygian shadows of doubt and uncertainty, with more or less caution men direct their pessimistic prejudices and optimistic predilections; rationalising their resultant actions in the light of subsequent events. Northbrook's continued belief that "very plain

157. See A. Hobhouse, "Some Reflections on the Afghan Imbroglia", Fortnightly Review, 28 N.S. (1880), pp. 395-7.

158. Salisbury to Lytton, 19 July 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/1A, Letter 37, ff. 252-3.

159. Compare the thoughts expressed in Aitchison to Northbrook, 29 Chouringhee, 17 December 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/17, Appendix, pp. 43-44* with those contained in Northbrook to Salisbury, Calcutta, 17 & 31 December 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, pp. CLVI-CLVII & CLIX-CLXII.

160. See R. J. Moore, Liberalism and Indian Politics 1872-1922 (London, 1966), pp. 15-27.

speaking to Russia (was) the best means of preventing war"¹⁶¹ displayed a wayward blindness; both to the recently revealed danger from wilful Russian frontier commanders and to the chances of an opportunistic military sally along the Afghan border in support of a Russian diplomatic foray in Europe. A Central Asian initiative connived at by the Russian military party - with or without the Tsar's support - and involving an armed clash with Afghan troops seemed quite possible; as was Kabul's rapprochement with Russia. Northbrook chose to ignore these possibilities altogether. A suspicious, uneasy Salisbury was anxious for a means of foretelling and even forestalling them: "We have decided that it is necessary that the Government of India should enter into somewhat closer relations with the Amir to prevent chances of collision or frontier intrigue".¹⁶²

This injection of individual presumption was as true of their different approaches to the Afghan enigma as it was to the gloom surrounding Russian operations in Central Asia. Northbrook placed little reliance on the Afghans, but doubted if the Amir would ever turn to Russia.¹⁶³ He likewise feared Afghan politics as a vortex which sucked in all who ventured over-confidently too close; tripped, like dominoes, from conceited interference to unconditional engagement to intervention and, finally, to conflict and costly occupation. Salisbury, on the other hand, wished to clarify the doubts created by Sher Ali's recent coldness towards Britain. Fearing that frigidity might harden into hostility, he envisaged a race with Russia for diplomatic predominance in Afghanistan. Russia's reduction of Kabul to a dependent status like Teheran, and its employment in her "European game of Chess", was still some way off. But these perils were a critical prospect, and "the acquisition of a (British)

161. Northbrook to Salisbury, Simla, 15 April & 16 August 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, pp.LII & CX.

162. Salisbury to Mallet, 17 November 1875. REEL822/102, f.234.

163. See Northbrook to Salisbury, Simla, 30 September 1875. MSS.EUR.C.144/12, p.CXXVII.

status in Afghanistan by which they can be averted will not be a very speedy process".¹⁶⁴ If the British should not be so foolhardy as try to conquer Afghanistan, neither could they afford to leave it alone. Salisbury remained confident that British statesmen, by constant self-restraint and a shrewd grasp of the impolitic, could readily contain British interference and prevent its escalating into that repetition of the first Afghan fiasco which Northbrook saw as inevitable.¹⁶⁵ In Salisbury's opinion, estimations of the relative strengths and difficulties of the British and Russian parties to the Central Asian problem were altogether dubious so long as one "uncertain quantity ... - the disposition of Sher Ali" remained.¹⁶⁶ But he was confident of a British agent's ability to secure the Amir's goodwill and "gain an influence over his mind"; contrasting his own confidence with Northbrook's addiction to the distorting prejudices of pessimistic, Laurentian advisors.¹⁶⁶ The difference between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy was ultimately reducible to the former's confidence that Afghan malleability would ensure a restrainable British success, and the latter's supposition that the Amir would independently defend his own inalienable interests. In proving less than meekly compliant, Sher Ali might pressurise Britain into a more overt use of force.

Salisbury's faith in a containable British interference rested on the assumption that the agent, once accepted, would play more than the one innocuous role of intelligence gatherer. He was to be the vanguard of a legion of British standard bearers whose activities would permeate Afghan politics. They would help establish a pro-British party, the supremacy of which would guarantee Afghan compliance with British goals.

164. Salisbury to Northbrook, 26 February 1875. REEL811/3, pp.201-2.

165. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 5 March 1875. REEL811/3, pp.208-9;

Salisbury to Northbrook, 14 January 1876. REEL811/4, pp.11-13;

Salisbury to Mallet, 14 January 1876. REEL822/102, f.238.

166. Salisbury to Northbrook, 10 March 1876. REEL811/4, pp.46-8.

The agent was the first step as well as the primary means of securing British paramountcy over Afghanistan. Success would dispel all the confusion about its neutral, pro-British or sympathetically Russian status, and effectively, if not nominally, rob Kabul of its political sovereignty. What the ^{Secretary of State} envisaged was the unambiguous incorporation of the Amirate of Kabul in Britain's "indirect empire".

Occasionally dismissed as valueless¹⁶⁷ because they are used vaguely and pejoratively as much as definitively, the words "empire" and "imperialism" nevertheless remain an inalienable part of the historian's analytic and descriptive vocabulary. Since imperial relationships exist outwith the formal constitution of dominion or control,¹⁶⁸ in recognition the term "informal empire" has often been employed and, despite problems of definition and ambiguity,¹⁶⁹ retains considerable analytical value. But it labours under the grave disadvantage of never having been employed contemporaneously,¹⁷⁰ whereas the term "indirect empire" was used by at least one politician in the 1870's - Sir T. Erskine Perry¹⁷¹ - in deliberate, contemporary recognition of the fact that empire could be constituted informally as much as formally and control exerted through overawed collaborators as well as directly. At the risk of adding more water to the already well-trampled morass of imperial exegesis, "indirect empire" is used in preference to "informal empire".

167. See G.S.R. Kitson-Clark, An Expanding Society: Britain 1830-1900 (Melbourne, 1967), pp.61-85. Since the author's conclusions involve the denial of all consciousness of empire's existence, how is the term "British Empire" to be replicated? As the "British——"?

168. See G. Lichtheim, Imperialism (Harmondsworth, 1974), pp.9-11.

169. See K. West, "Theorising about 'Imperialism': A Methodological Note", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 1 (1972-73), pp.148-9.

170. Originating in the mid-1930's, it was resurrected in the early 1950's; but on both occasions with particular reference to economic relations. See C.R. Fay, "The Movement towards Free Trade 1820-1858", Cambridge History of the British Empire (Cambridge, 1932), Vol.2, Chpt.XI, p.399; R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, "The Imperialism of Free Trade", Economic History Review, Second Series, 6 (1953), pp.1-15.

171. See Perry, "Khetat Papers", 4 May 1877. L/P&S/7/322, p.639. Precisely, Perry enjoined, "that H.M.G. expressly deprecate the absorption direct or indirect of the Khanate into the Indian Empire".

Contemporary usage endows it with a superior definitive value, so long as it is realised that the search for a universal definition is as doomed to frustration as attempts at a monocausal explanation of imperial territorial aggrandisement itself.

The contemporary conception of "indirect empire" varied with the individual statesman's methods, the means available to him on the spot, the indigenous authorities' real or imagined susceptibility to alien management and the exact degree of control calculated to ensure compliance. This being the case, the term can then be defined by reference to the barely-indicated presumptions of contemporary statesmen and imperial administrators as they dealt with specific local situations in different periods. In the particular case of Britain's anticipated relationship with Afghanistan in the late 1870's, as envisaged by Salisbury and Frere, "indirect empire" can be defined as: An insidious, insinuating alien presence by which an indigenous polity can be self-interestedly manipulated, in an ulterior manner, towards a goal disproportionately favourable to the stronger power and to the exclusion or definite subordination of the local government's independence of action. The alien statesmen's expectations of a containable interference rested on a proto-racist sense of their own cultural superiority and their consequent delusion about the malleability of impressionable local collaborators. The unanticipated ease with which these self-deceptive foundations of "indirect empire" crumbled accounts - in the alien statesmen's uneasy awakening from delusion - for the seeming "reluctance" with which they accepted formal annexation as the only insurance of effective control.

This was the form which Salisbury anticipated Anglo-Afghan relations taking in the near future. It represented an alternative to the uncertainties of inactivity, the diplomatic responsibilities of a protectorate, or the dangers and financial burdens of annexation. Notably, it was

also the first example of Salisbury's clear-cut commitment throughout the rest of the 19TH. century to defending India and the routes to it¹⁷² by shrewd diplomacy or by preying on weaker powers. It is, therefore, tempting to suggest that the "official mind of imperialism"¹⁷³ is nothing other than the deep imprint made on British overseas strategy by Salisbury. India's defence achieved a crucial significance not only because the incidence and likelihood of danger was greater but also through the coincidence of Salisbury's consecutive occupation of the posts of Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His intention, prompted by members of the "forward" group, of having an agency at Herat and establishing an indubitable paramountcy in Afghanistan was the first halting step along that path.

During the first two years of his second term as Secretary of State for India, Salisbury was certainly not so excessively self-dependent in formulating policy as he later became. Yet it is ironic that he should have proved susceptible to the "forward" group's views just as the cabal began to break up and its members to act individually. Their alliance was one of convenience, and the fragile unity built up in opposition during Argyll's regime broke down immediately more elaborate advice was required of them. Rawlinson thought friendship with Persia worth pursuing. Frere felt Persia was defunct. Rawlinson moved over-rapidly from his earlier recommendations on a more energetic, diplomatic rapprochement with Afghanistan to favouring territorial advances with or without Kabul's consent. Frere continued to emphasise Quetta's value as a military outpost and to believe the imperceptible, diplomatic penetration of Afghanistan would be sufficient. The cabal suffered, moreover, because the bureaucratic standardisation of the India Office,

172. See D.R. Gillard, "Salisbury and the Indian Defence Problem, 1885-1902", in K. Bourne & D.C. Watt, Studies in International History: Essays presented to W. Norton Medlicott, Stevenson Professor of International History in the University of London (London, 1967), pp.236-48.

173. See R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians: the official mind of imperialism (London, 1961).

initiated by Salisbury and Mallet with Burne's aid, ended the informality of Keye's administration of the Political and Secret Department. Even had he wished to, a bureaucratically-minded Burne could not have filled Keye's vacant role as the group's lynch-pin and officious tête-de-pont in the executive.

Yet even if the cabal's initiatives did become heterogeneously individual, its members were still universally opposed to the orthodoxy of the previous twenty-five years. And they still provided the facility of a ready-made set of embryonic alternatives to which Salisbury could turn as he came to doubt the wisdom of established policy. Having compared these alternatives' political prospects with those of the Laurentian school he could then evaluate their relative individual merits. Rawlinson's dual stress on Persia as well as Afghanistan did not appeal to a Secretary of State who felt: "We have made a mistake in trying to be well at the same time with Persia and Afghanistan. The result is that we are paramount in neither".¹⁷⁴ On future Afghan policy Salisbury had to balance Rawlinson's occupation of Herat, with protectorate or partition, against Frere's middle course between hyperactivity and inactivity. Having dismissed the precipitate extremism of Rawlinson's case largely because the fiscal burden of its expense would create a dangerously high level of popular discontent within India, the Secretary of State adopted the latter strategy - minus the Quetta project for the moment - as politically feasible and financially practicable. In doubt about the value of a strong, independent Afghanistan, he sought and had found a shrewdly presented alternative. Thereafter, as he elaborated Frere's basic ideas, he imbued them with his personal predilections.

Frere believed frankness would secure Afghan malleability, though he did simultaneously advocate a blatantly selfish interference in their

174. Salisbury to Northbrook, 8 July 1875. REEL 811/3, p.277.

internal affairs. As the Afghans remained stubbornly aloof, a more misanthropic Salisbury would tend to transfer his faith in their compliance to the effects of insidious penetration. The common thread was the arrogant assumption that the Afghans must prove impressionable and, hence, that a middle course between the perils of inactivity and the burdens of protection could be pursued profitably. Political ideas are not snatched from the air intact. They originate and are elaborated in men's minds, and their transmission from one to the other is barely detectable. In this instance the basic idea of an agent at Herat was far from novel, but it was Frere's persuasive exposition of the wider significance of the officer's presence which convinced Salisbury. However, from personal inclination and for political reasons, the Secretary of State held secrecy at a premium and now became fully aware of the danger to his cherished insularity from too patent an association with men who propagated an easily recognisable set of ideas. Hereafter, he carefully stated his independence of other peoples' recommendations, even when still heeding them.¹⁷⁵ Ultimately he may have realised this intention, as he augmented his critical intellect with a well-informed expertise and the solitary conduct of affairs. But he certainly did not think and act in splendid isolation in the India Office in 1874 and 1875.

175. Salisbury assured Northbrook that the November despatch "does not emanate from any person inside this Office". Yet his suggestion, in private correspondence, that the pretext for an embassy at Kabul might be a limited recognition of Abdullah Jan, was borrowed from Montgomery and Rawlinson: as he admitted at the time. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 19 November 1875. REEL811/3, p.355.

Chapter 6. The Fallow Field and the Germinant Seed.

Searching for Northbrook's successor in the last months of 1875, Disraeli and Salisbury wanted a diplomat rather than an imperial administrator: a man suited for dealing with the Central Asian Question. After several blue-blooded members of the aristocracy had been canvassed in vain,¹ the P.M. and his Cabinet colleague tracked down, in the obscure diplomatic backwater of Portugal, the Minister of Legation at Lisbon: Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, Baron Lytton since the death in January 1873 of his father, Edward G.E.L. Bulwer Lytton, 1ST. Lord Lytton. As young men, the First Lord Lytton and Disraeli had been literary and political associates, and, on his old colleague's death, an extended correspondence with the son followed Disraeli's request for a memorial portrait.²

Salisbury was also acquainted with the son of his old colleague and near neighbour; the Lytton estate at Knebworth being less than ten undulating, Hertfordshire miles from the Cecil home at Hatfield.³ In their correspondence, both statesmen had advised the younger Lytton to persevere with the diplomatic career he detested, in the hope of future advancement and benefit to his country. Disraeli's November offer of the viceroyalty was made, then, to a fully accredited member of that conservative aristocratic coterie which felt it should rule Britain by virtue of right and from a sense of duty.

Emphasising the need for a statesman-like treatment of Central Asian affairs, Disraeli not only appealed to Lytton's patriotism but also alluded to the personal opportunity "of obtaining an enduring fame".⁴

1. See R. Blake, Disraeli (London, 1966), p.561.

2. See Lytton to Disraeli, Knebworth, 6 February, 23 March, 31 July & 28 August 1873. B.L.P.E.S. B/XX/47/215 & 216 and B/XX/104/217 & 218; Disraeli to Lytton, Hughenden, 25 August 1873. H.R.O. D/EK.030.

3. See Lytton to Morley, Knebworth, 25 July 1873. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/13, p.78; Salisbury to Lytton, 19 March, 22 October & 7 December 1874. H.R.O. D/EK.030.

4. Disraeli to Lytton, 23 November 1875. H.R.O. D/EK.C36.

On the point of retiring from a disillusioning career in the diplomatic service, Lytton protested his "absolute ignorance of all facts and questions concerning India", his administrative inexperience and, for fear of his collapse under pressure of work, "a complaint which..... is often extremely painful, enfeebling and depressing"⁵ - rheumatism and neuralgia.⁶ His self-depreciation aside, a sense of patriotic duty, Conservative inclinations and admiration for Disraeli compelled his agreement to be considered for the post. Significantly, the final decision on his suitability was taken by Salisbury, not Disraeli,⁷ and Lytton's succession to Northbrook was confidentially confirmed in late December.⁸

During his viceroyalty, Lytton's direction of Indian foreign policy was highly individualistic.⁹ Yet, despite this, no attempt has been made to analyse his motives through an extensive study of his personality. If the statesman's behaviour can often be explained other than by the political rationale of reactive relations between states and rulers, Lytton is a particularly apt example of this precept; both in the content and conduct of his foreign policy. One historian has tipped his hat in passing at Lytton's disturbed childhood,¹⁰ but something more precise than the vague slur "neurotic" is possible, given that a wealth of material on Lytton's early life makes a virtue out of

5. Lytton to Disraeli, 30 November 1875. B.L.P.E.S. B/XX/104/220.

6. See B. Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters of Robert, First Earl of Lytton (2 Vols., London, 1906), Vol. 1, p.273.

7. See Disraeli to Salisbury, 13 December 1875. C.C.L. D/20/83, pp.106-7; Disraeli to Lytton, Hatfield, 20 December 1875. H.R.O. D/EK.C37.

8. See Disraeli to Lytton, (Telegram), 20 December 1875. H.R.O. D/EK.C37.

9. See M. Cowling, "Lytton, the Cabinet and the Russians, August to November 1878", English Historical Review, LXXVI (1961), pp.59-79; B. Prasad, The Foundations of India's Foreign Policy, Vol.1, pp.145-208.

10. See Blake, Disraeli, p.561.

opportunity.¹¹ For, if statemanship is supposedly the embodiment of mature judgement, maturity itself is the apogee, not the senescence, of a host of seminal experiences and inter-personal relationships during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood.

The Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald of exactly a century earlier, Edward and Rosina Bulwer Lytton's zestful love and early married life was likewise a riotous postscript to war. But financial exigencies and the desire for fame led the young husband to a single-minded concern with churning out literary works which were also commercial and popular. His neglect of his equally wilful wife was largely responsible for her lack of maternal affection, the envenomed spite which she turned against him, the break up of their marriage in 1836 and her gradual decline into a hysterical persecution of her former spouse.¹² Prevented from nursing their first child by Bulwer Lytton's selfish concern to safeguard her beauty, Rosina perversely refused all contact with her second-born: a son. Right from the day of his birth on 8 November 1831, Edward Robert enjoyed no maternal affection whatsoever, and the most penetrating sounds of his first five years must have been the resounding crashes of a marriage collapsing. Notably, he always referred coldly and distantly to his mother as, "The Dowager". In his balked infantile expectations the child's frustrations were denied that comforting comprehensibility which only continual attention can give.

11. The following assessment of Lytton's personality is impressionistic rather than psychoanalytically systematic. It rests on the assumption that the explanation of personality is not reducible to analysis of infantile sexuality but must incorporate the individual's epigenetic development and his inter-personal relations with relatives, friends and colleagues throughout much of his life. Even so, certain of the experiences of childhood, youth and early adulthood can be seminal and long-term in their effect. As a theoretical framework - the puppeteer's barely visible strings - I have found two works particularly useful. E.H. Erikson, "Eight Ages of Man" in Childhood and Society, second ed. (Middlesex, 1973), pp.239-66; R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise (Middlesex, 1967). For the details of Lytton's childhood and youth I have depended largely on Salfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1.

12. A detailed, illuminating study of their married years is provided by M. Sadler, Bulwer: A Panorama. Edward and Rosina 1803-36 (London, 1931).

Its absence in the early months of childhood gives rise to that basic mistrust which manifests itself in the adult personality's habitual withdrawal into depressive states. Just such a condition plagued Lytton; causing recurrent psychosomatic illness and recourse to the placebos of heavy smoking and steady drinking.¹³ After his parents' separation, the already deprived infant was further unsettled by a relatively impoverished, peripatetic, puritanical upbringing in the charge of his mother's friend, Miss Mary Greene. At the age of nine, just as he began to display that sadistic cruelty towards weaker living creatures which typifies many revengeful, love-starved children,¹⁴ "Teddy" was sent to a private school, where his miserable loneliness brought on the first of his psychosomatic illnesses. How would Lytton's recurrent depression and mistrustful anxiety affect his decisions and actions as a statesman?

With his mother's absence compounded by a dearth of childhood companions, Robert's¹⁵ seminal relationship was with a distant, neglectful father, for whom he displayed an uncritical adulation throughout his life.¹⁶ Domineered by this awesome male parent, Robert was a willing

13. See Lytton's own comments in letters quoted Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, pp.188-9 & Vol.2, pp.224-5.

14. Luring a chicken into the kitchen, Lytton pursued it and finally wrung its neck. In later life he rationalised this incident as part of his desire to provide Miss Green with a chicken broth for her headache. The mystifications to which the human mind is inclined are very tortuous and it seems much more likely that Lytton was rather perversely visiting on a weaker creature his own sense of victimisation by an insensitive world.

15. Christened "Edward Robert", the child was known by the diminutive "Teddy" until his father ordered him to use his second name "Robert".

16. Approaching the age of 40, Lytton could still write to his father, "Your love and confidence are not only luxuries, they are the necessities of my being, or at least of my WELL being, the foundation of all my happiness". Balfour points out that "any resemblance in himself to that parent was fostered with pride", even in sartorial matters. See Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, pp.248 & 294. The son's adulation is apparent from his prefatory introduction to his post-mortem biography of Bulwer Lytton: "it is the story of a life in which all errors were the errors of a good man, and the picture of a character in which all the virtues were those of a great one". See Robert, First Earl of Lytton, The Life, Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton (2Vols., London, 1883), Vol.1, p.VIII.

party to the domination, for he not only craved paternal affection but was unconsciously striving to create an identity for himself by imitation of the father's literary success. As a teenager at Harrow, he had gained no scholarly distinctions but had devoured English literature, especially his father's works, and began to write poetry in imitation. The neurotic adolescent's role confusion, especially as to his future occupation, often leads him to install a lasting idol or series of gurus as the guardians of his final identity. Robert attempted to do this with his father.¹⁷ But the affections of his father-fixated childhood and adolescence were reciprocated only fitfully by Bulwer Lytton, being interspersed with periods of reprehensible neglect and harsh disussion of the boy's poetic resolve.

Barely satisfied, the father-fixation was dissipated among tutors and literary mentors;¹⁸ and Robert was even able to articulate the trait - as it applied specifically to his relationship with John Forster - in his early poem "The Wanderer".¹⁹ Lytton's need for a "a staff to stay, a star to guide" was no transient adolescent infatuation, but became an ineradicable feature of his adult personality.²⁰ Even in middle-age, it was not only their common political extremism which attracted him to the legalist, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen,²¹ but his continued need

17. Having already at Harrow composed a number of his later published poems, Lytton set for a photograph at the age of 18. Pose, dress and appearance, especially the languid, "melting moment" eyes, wispy beard and brillientined waves, all suggest he is playing at being a poet. He is imitating the imagined aspect of his father as a teenage poet; Bulwer Lytton's first volume of poetry having been published when he was not quite 17. For the photograph, see Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, Frontispiece.

18. See Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, pp.13-26.

19. See Appendix C/11, p.323.

20. After his father's death in January 1873, Lytton wrote to Forster: "There is no one left in the world except yourself, my second father and brother-friend, to advise, to warn, to scold and comfort me"; see also Lytton to Morley, 15 July 1875. Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, pp.292 & 330.

21. See L. Stephen, Life of Sir James Stephen (London, 1895), pp288-90; also B. Balfour, The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876 to 1880: Compiled from Letters and Official Papers (London, 1899), p.27.

for an assured paternal influence with which he could validate existing ideas and imbibe new ones. In India, Burne, his dutifully protective Private Secretary, complained that "he clings too much to the opinions of too many people".²² Paradoxically, this fixation breeds an egocentric, competitive ethos, with the individual not only striving to emulate but also to surpass the source from which he craves sustenance. This lust for pre-eminence is exemplified in Lytton's treatment of loyal subordinates, to whom he was exceptionally friendly so long as they served his ends but whom he denigrated and mocked covertly as soon as they outlived their usefulness.²³ Yet while Lytton manipulated everyone for his own ends, in all fields of thought he displayed a perpetual susceptibility and marked attraction for authoritative, knowledgeable personalities - imitable father-figures barely disguised as intellectual mentors. Would this parasitic dependence help determine the policy options which he took with him to India?

In adult life Lytton's compliance with paternal demands represented no mere excess of filial loyalty, but his critical dependence on a succubus which he in turn clung to. Illuminatingly, Lytton's primary sensation on the death of his father was of being "in a wilderness of wants without a guide".²⁴ Bulwer Lytton blackmailed his son into renouncing his love for a young Dutch girl he hoped to marry, and even successfully forbade him, at the age of 35, from writing for the new "Fortnightly Review". Hell is others; and in the search for an identity which incorporated a profound need for his father, Lytton was subjected to cruel mental torture. Bulwer Lytton forced the total sacrifice of

22. Burne to Pelly, Cawnpore, 28 November 1877, f.3v. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 1.

23. Contrast Lytton's care in having Burne and Pelly awarded the appropriate service distinctions, with his scathing criticisms of their abilities and merciless mocking of their pretensions, in correspondence with others.

24. Lytton to Morley, Torquay, Tuesday 1873. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/13, p.69.

his son's independence and perpetually denied him a mind of his own; this being especially true of Lytton's sole ambition, and the area where he deliberately and most apparently tried to imitate his father: the wish to be a successful poet. Bulwer Lytton criticised his son's poetry mercilessly, and coerced him into the beginnings of a diplomatic career at the age of 19.

Bound by ties of duty, affection and need to this overbearing male parent, Lytton's resentment at the distortion of his life paradoxically found sublimated expression, in public life, in a wilful rebelliousness, a headstrong stubbornness and repeated statements, in word and deed, of his self-reliance. Despising conventional mores in personal behaviour,²⁵ in formal relationships he displayed an irritable impatience with the restraints imposed on his individual initiative by political superiors.²⁶ As compensation for filial meekness at home, outside he strove to dominate rather than be domineered, to manipulate rather than be manoeuvred. Finding difficulty in acting the dutiful subordinate, he must needs be perpetually proclaiming his independence by taking the initiative. Lytton's behaviour in public life was a life-long attempt at denying his personal thralldom.

Occupying a succession of obscure continental diplomatic posts in the 50's, 60's and early 70's, Lytton's stubborn attachment to writing eventually won him his father's permission for a secondary commitment to poetry; and he published several volumes under the pseudonym "Owen Meredith". In his first published verse he has been represented as talented,²⁷ but it is hard to avoid the impression that even such well-received works as "The Wanderer" and "Lucile" were popular simply because

25. Though apparently a devoted husband and loving father, in his 50's Lytton took an American actress, Mary Johnson, as his mistress. The evidence is contained in his letters to his favourite, eldest daughter, Lady Betty Balfour. These are held in the Lytton collection at the H.R.O.

26. Witness the incident in Vienna in 1872 as retold to Morley. See Lytton to Morley, Vienna, 23 January 1872. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/13, pp.44-8.

27. See A.B. Harlan, Owen Meredith: A Critical Biography of Robert, First Earl of Lytton (New York, 1946), pp.243-65.

they coincided with a fleeting Byronic fad amongst the fashionable trend-setters of mid-century culture. In the bare nerve ends of his sensitivity there was an abundance of the raw ore from which poetry is smelted, but the forge hammer of inspiration was puny. Much as he ached for lasting fame as a poet, Lytton's reach exceeded his grasp. In form and choice of words his poetry is affected, and in content it is derivative, imitative, synthetic and even plagiaristic; charges which were made at the time by the writer and critic A.C. Swinburne and also by his father.²⁸ With the frigid reception accorded his "Chronicles and Characters" in 1868, Lytton was forced to acknowledge his failure to establish a reputation in the field where he most hungered after the acclaim of success. But if he lacked a mind of his own, and was derivative and imitative as a poet, would he not display the same qualities in his thinking as an Anglo-Indian statesman? Would his desire for fame and manipulative power - a feature of his need to state boldly his independence of his mentors - find expression in his political actions?

Man is above all an inquiring creature, whose behaviour is determined as much by his image of the present and vision of the future as by his experience of the past. In acknowledging his failings as a poet Lytton was fond of presenting himself as a frustrated idealist who desired neither personal fame nor manipulative power but merely "some good for my fellow-creatures".²⁹ However, parts of the autobiographical "Last Words of a Second Rate Sensitive Poet" indicate that fame and power were his ambitions. Only, with the failure of his poetry

28. In March 1861 the "Literary Gazette" called Lytton's poetic narrative "Lucile" an "infamous imposture", in that its plot, character, situations and even minute descriptions were borrowed from George Sand's novel, "Lavinia";^{see} also Bulwer Lytton to Forster, December 1863. Quoted Salfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, p.144.

29. See Lytton to Farrer, Cintra, 10 March 1868. Quoted Salfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, p.228.

and a stagnant diplomatic career, he hardly dared contemplate them.³⁰

By the early 70's at the latest, his frustrated idealism was of the misanthropic, elitist variety. A reactionary, aristocratic elitist who despised the emergent industrial and commercial middle classes,³¹ Lytton looked back to a pre-1832 never-never land where a high-minded aristocracy had instinctively represented the national spirit or genius: fortitude, patience and endurance combined with selfless enthusiasm and sympathy for abstract ideas which satisfied its sense of right and justice, not its profitable self-interest.³² This idealism re-emerged during the passage of the 1866 Reform Bill, when he naively envisaged England's reinvigoration as a paternalistic democracy of reanimated aristocrats and workers who had inherited their spirit. Maintaining his faith in the political potential of the working class, Lytton was a surprising believer in the aspirations of the Paris Commune³³ and, aware of his idealism, John Morley even sent him the opening address³⁴ of the First International. But his flirtation with popular democracy soon died as he realised the workers' disinclination to form a united front against the middle classes, and the spectre of international socialism blatantly militated against his aristocratic self-interest.

By the mid-70's the profound pessimism, negatory invective and frustrated idealism of Lytton's political philosophy was most striking. Doubting if the "English Monarchy can last out another generation", he

30. See Appendix C(2), p. 328.

31. See Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol. 1, pp. 214-5.

32. See Lytton to Disraeli, Knebworth, 31 July 1873, ff. 2v-3r. B.L.P.E.S. B/XX/104/217; Lytton to Morley, Vienna, 23 January 1872. MSS.EUR.E. 218/522/13, p. 49.

33. See Lytton to Morley, Vienna, 8 June 1871. MSS.EUR.E. 218/522/13, p. 9.

34. Sent the opening address^{to the 1st Congress} of the First International, Lytton "read it with great interest but no acquiescence ... I have no faith in the vitality of existing society. But because a patient is infected with an incurable disease that is no reason why his doctors should inflict upon him a violent death". Lytton to Morley, Vienna, 19 June 1871. MSS.EUR.E. 218/522/13, pp. 22-3.

considered "the whole of our Governmental machinery...detestable and the worst in Europe"; his animosity being particularly acerbated by the quiescent foreign policy of Gladstone's First Ministry.³⁵ Nevertheless, though he fatalistically saw Conservatism as a vain holding operation, his "patriotic pulse" was stirred by Disraeli's resumption of power, and he found the Conservative conduct of foreign affairs more to his taste.³⁶ By mid-75 he felt strongly the need "to take an imperial view of affairs", regardless of those considerations of expense which make "the efficient government of alien races by means of a system of parliamentary civilisation an impossibility".³⁷ This dislike of bourgeois parliamentarianism was supplemented by his view of international statesmanship as sacred territory, with as little public accountability as possible. Public opinion was "the opinion of the Public Fool" and was invariably wrong; whereas he considered himself always right.³⁸ Could Lytton again be fired with zealous idealism if the bonds of his cynical pessimism were cut by a freshly implanted ideology: a sense of mission incorporating monarchy and empire and appealing to his liking for the solitary, unhindered conduct of policy as well as his frustrated patriotism?³⁹

Such was the personality and political philosophy of the man taking over a position regarded as the greatest a British subject could aspire to; the aristocratic scion who declared that "an appointment is always what the man who holds it - makes it".⁴⁰ But, believing that the onerous conduct of Indian domestic affairs would seriously tax his health, Lytton

35. Lytton to Morley, Vienna, 22 February & 8 May 1871. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/12, pp.45 & 107.

36. See Lytton to Morley, Paris, 3 May & 25 September 1874. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/14, pp.14 & 24.

37. Lytton to Morley, Cintra, 26 July 1875. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/14, p.76.

38. See Lytton to Morley, 23 January & 29 June 1872. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/13, pp.44-8 & 59.

39. With the exception of a few months holiday, between the ages of 19 and 44 Lytton spent all his life abroad and his response to any patriotic appeal was likely to be "plus royaliste que le roi".

40. See B. Mallet, Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook G.C.S.I.: A Memoir (London, 1908), pp.52-3; quoted Butler, Life of Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, p.149.

was at first the reluctant recipient of "the crushing gift of such a white elephant".⁴¹ His fears were eased considerably by Disraeli's reassurance that domestic affairs need not over-concern him: "What we want you for is la haute politique; the external relations of India and its policy".⁴² This intimation had Lytton hastily contacting Sir Henry Layard in Madrid, "to ask you whether you can get at Madrid and send me at once Rawlinson's last book on Russia and India, because though it is on the way to me from Engld(sic) I fear it cannot reach me before I start; and Dizzy's letter of tonight makes me particularly anxious to read it before I see him".⁴³ But, before the book could have arrived from Madrid, the Viceroy-designate was precipitated homewards by Salisbury's telegrams urging his immediate presence in London.⁴⁴ Reaching the metropolis in mid-January, he hurriedly applied himself, like every prospective Viceroy, to the hectic round of reading, briefing and discussion with the P.M., Secretary of State and members of the Council of India.⁴⁵

When he left Britain for India on 1 March - three weeks ahead of schedule - Lytton took with him a set of instructions from Salisbury, an ideal from Disraeli and a copy of Rawlinson's book. All three are crucially important in explaining the conduct and content of Lytton's foreign policy. Lytton was fond of claiming sole authorship for the Kalat and Afghan policies he followed in the first twelve months of his viceroyalty, as well as unfettered freedom in implementing them.⁴⁶ It

41. Lytton to Morley, Lisbon, 9 January 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/14-15, f.20.

42. Disraeli to Lytton, 27 December 1875. H.R.O. D/EK.C36.

43. Lytton to Layard, Lisbon, 7 January 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/18, p.32.

44. See Salisbury to Lytton, (Telegram), 7 & 11 January 1876. H.R.O. D/EK.C37.

45. An idea of the activities, as well as the frenetic nature, of this intensive period of study and consultation can be gained from Burne's description of Mayo's orientation. See Burne, *Memories*, p.84.

46. See Lytton to Northbrook, Wandgaon, 10 April 1876; Lytton to Hobhouse, Narkunda, 8 August 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, pp.74 & 363-4.

is true that he had been granted a great measure of independence; but to carry out H.M.G.'s already determined policies, not his own. His schemes were in fact those outlined in the instructive February despatch written by Salisbury alone, reckoned by Disraeli to express "the whole of our(his and Salisbury's) meaning"⁴⁷ and demanded by Lytton "in order to cover my responsibility".⁴⁸ Burne, with inside knowledge of the most intimate details of policy-making, certainly regarded the strategy of the first year as Salisbury's.⁴⁹ It was a strategy dominated by that Eurocentric outlook, shared by Lytton, which saw the Central Asian Question as an adjunct to the broader "Russian Question".⁵⁰

Salisbury's despatch⁵¹ was essentially a set of instructions authorising Lytton - whose doubtful veracity is that of the man who needs to believe his own lies - to rectify India's unsatisfactory relations with Kalat and Afghanistan. In initiating this twin diplomatic offensive, Salisbury reckoned a special mission should visit Quetta and Kabul. In Kalat the mission should attempt to recover the "dominant and advantageous position" gained under the 1854 treaty, in order to ensure peace on the frontier and "unobstructed access to Quetta, in case of emergency, through the Bolan Pass". Though "unobstructed access" did not amount to Quetta's occupation, this gradual acceptance of its strategic importance owed much to Frere's frequent propaganda and was a further example of Salisbury's willingness to listen sympathetically to his ideas on trans-frontier policy. Adopting an attitude of "cordial but conscious superiority" at Kabul, the mission should try to gain Sher Ali's confidence. It was hoped this confidence would lead to British agents'

47. See Disraeli to Salisbury, 26 February 1876. C.C.B. D/20/87, p.112.

48. Lytton to Hobhouse, Narkunda, 8 August 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.363.

49. See Burne to Pelly, Simla, 30 July 1877. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 1.

50. See Lytton to Rawlinson, Simla, 5 August 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.347.

51. See S.S.I. to G.I., Secret and Separate, 3A, 28 February 1876. L/P&S/T/321, pp.7-18.

gaining access to northern Afghan frontier positions as well as to the presence of an Amir expected to pay due attention to their "friendly counsels". On matters of reciprocity Lytton was allowed considerable leeway. Granting of annual subsidies as well as the exact form of Abdullah Jen's recognition and of "a promise, not vague, but strictly guarded and clearly circumscribed, of adequate aid against actual and unprovoked attack by any foreign power": all were left to the Viceroy's "discretion". Although the latter promise was to be stronger than Northbrook's assurances of 1873, Salisbury and Disraeli still wanted a loophole, and made it quite explicit that no unconditional guarantee of Afghanistan's integrity and independence was to be granted.

If these negotiations revealed Sher Ali's irretrievable alienation from the Government of India, then no time would be lost in considering new lines of policy. But in the meantime, "H.M.G. willingly leave to the exercise of your judgement every reasonable freedom in carrying out the present instructions". Since absolute secrecy was dictated by recurrent leakages of confidential information from the Viceroy's Council and the Council of India, Lytton was to be solely responsible to Salisbury and Disraeli, and in India only his personal secretariat, comprising Burne, Pelly and Colonel George Pomeroy-Colley,⁵² was to be fully aware of his intentions. There was some danger, however, in granting such latitude and conditions of absolute secrecy to a man of Lytton's character. What if he grew so accustomed to exercising his individual initiative in tactics as to arrogate to himself an additional responsibility for fundamental decisions on strategy? His resolve, "that my foreign policy shall be my own",⁵³ sounded an early, ominous note.

52. Burne was his Private Secretary, Colonel George Pomeroy-Colley his Military Secretary and Pelly he had himself specifically chosen for the proposed dual mission to Kalat and Afghanistan.

53. Lytton to Morley, Sorrento, 14 March 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/522/14-15, f.28.

In his conferences with the new Viceroy, the Prime Minister's imperial vision, "a highly individual mixture of political opportunism and cosmopolitan romance",⁵⁴ made a forceful impact on Lytton and provided that dynamic ideal which his embittered pessimism had previously denied him. If Disraeli's essential contribution to British imperialism in the 1870's was the rhetorical image of an expanding, militant empire and the glorification of illiberal British rule overseas,⁵⁵ Lytton was his most prominent early disciple. Lytton voiced his admiration for the man who retained "not only the traditions, but the INSTINCTS, of a once Imperial policy": instincts which the Viceroy patently regarded as dictating forceful action in a crisis rather than caution.⁵⁶ For Lytton, empire was not merely an extension of Britain's material self-interest but an expression of the nation's "moral character, that is to say, the confidence of other nations in its courage, its energy, its high spirit and its unimpeachable good faith".⁵⁷ In essence, this mystical characterisation conveyed the author's desire for a combative foreign policy which would so augment Britain's international prestige as to guarantee her impunity. Thus it was more than political opportunism which led Lytton to suggest the formal announcement of Victoria's title "Queen-Empress" at a magnificent Imperial Assemblage, for in his eyes she was also the enthroned quintessence of her people's character. Opportunely aimed at aligning the Indian aristocracy with the Raj,⁵⁸ and hiding the "nakedness of the sword on which we really rely",⁵⁹ this ostentatious

54. Watson, The English Ideology, p.217.

55. See C.C. Eldridge, England's Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli 1868-1890 (London, 1973), p.232.

56. Lytton to Sir Philip Rose, Calcutta, 15 March 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, p.170.

57. Lytton to Stephen, Calcutta, 28 January 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.73-4.

58. See Lytton to Montagu Corry, Calcutta, 21 April 1876; Lytton to the Queen, Simla, 4 May, 12 August & 15 November 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, pp.104-5, 376-80 & 608-18.

59. Salisbury to Disraeli, 7 June 1876. C.C.D. D/20/98, p.124.

union of monarchy and empire - Lytton's Indian circus - also bore testimony to his personal intoxication with the imperial idea and its monarchic epitome.⁶⁰ Could service to an abstract but personified ideal, and in supplementing mere self-seeking, prove a potent force for immoderate viceregal activity?

A contrived veil of dissimulation surrounds these men, apart from Disraeli and Salisbury, whose views most impressed Lytton during his briefing sessions and discussions with interested parties. In expurgating her father's reputation of any blemish, Lytton's daughter-biographer portrays him as very circumspect and diplomatic in conversation with Lord Laurence, whereas he seems to have been rudely abrupt.⁶¹ Nor, deliberately rather than from ignorance, does she mention his "frequent communications with Sir Henry Rawlinson on Indian affairs"⁶² in private conferences. Yet so deep an impression did Rawlinson make on Lytton that the latter was "more vexed than I can say, to have left England without again seeing you. The day on which you kindly gave me a rendezvous at the India Office, I was unexpectedly and unavoidably detained, in conference with Lord Salisbury, and, when I left his room, you had left the office. I afterwards called three times at the office, in the hope of finding you there, but without success".⁶³ Having already conversed several times with him on Central Asian matters, Lytton must have been very impressed by Rawlinson's status as a knowledgeable,

60. A status-conscious sycophant, throughout his viceroyalty Lytton wrote obsequious letters to Queen Victoria and gave her name to the child his wife bore in India.

61. Compare Balfour, The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, pp.25-6 with Gosworth Smith, Life of Lord Laurence, Vol.2, p.627.

62. G. Rawlinson, A Memoir, pp.271-4. The Canon doubtless depended on his brother's rather exaggerated notions of his own importance, but he is a useful counteractive to Balfour, who mentions Rawlinson's name only once in her whole book and then only to dismiss the possibility of any viceregal sympathy for Sir Henry's ideas on Kandahar. See Balfour, The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, p.381.

63. Lytton to Rawlinson, H.P.S. Orontes, Red Sea, 28 March 1876. MSS.EUR.E. 218/518/1, p.55.

authority. Otherwise why should a man with the Viceroy's tight schedule call three times in the hope of further discussion?

No matter their failure to hold further talks, Lytton left London on 1 March with a copy of "England and Russia in the East" among his belongings. While sailing through the Red Sea he read it, together with Grant Duff's criticisms in the "Fortnightly Review", and took notes on them both as part of his continued study of the Afghan enigma.⁶⁴ Though he did not dismiss Rawlinson's idea of partition out of hand, Lytton affirmed his adherence, for the time being, to the more moderate policies contained in his instructions. He also assured the author that his "work on Central Asia powerfully impresses me with the conviction that it is by far the most statesmanlike review of the whole question that has yet been written: the most suggestive and the most far-reaching. I have studied it, with great profit, for its fullness and lucidity, as an expression of the facts, but also with the deepest admiration for its rare political insight".⁶⁵ In communication with Frere he was more forthcoming. "I am as yet wholly unconvinced by Rawlinson's arguments in favor of detaching Herat and Candahar from Cabul It may, eventually, be necessary to adopt some such plan but I regard it as a pis aller, and it is only as a pis aller, where every other plan has failed, that I would reluctantly fall back upon this one ... Afghanistan must, I think, be made POLITICALLY ours, before it can be of any use to us (or, indeed, anything but a source of great danger to us) from a MILITARY point of view. So long as there is a chance of firmly establishing our political position in Afghanistan, I would strain every

64. See Lytton to Rawlinson, Knebworth Park, Stevenage, 13 January 1881. R.A.S./ Rawlinson papers/ "Autographs 1850-60-70".

65. Lytton to Rawlinson, H.M.S. Orontes, Red Sea, 28 March 1876. MSS. EUR.E.216/518/1, p.57.

effort to keep the Ameer's dominions united, and his rule strong. If that chance fail, if it has already slipped away, then, as you say, we must reconsider our whole policy".⁶⁶

Lytton's last allusion was to the confidential letters Frere had written, at Salisbury's request, during his visit to the North-west frontier in the course of the Prince of Wales' Indian tour.⁶⁷ When the paths of the viceregal and princely parties crossed at Suez, Frere gave Lytton a copy of these letters. Linked together as a confidential report, they are a lengthy expression of the dilemma then facing Britain in its relations with Afghanistan. Frere reviewed the many imponderables raised by Sher Ali's inscrutable lukewarmness: What was the true state of the Amir's diplomatic relations with Russia and of his attitude to Britain? Did he now distrust the British irreversibly and how would he react to proposals for closer relations? Frere also envisaged much the same line of approach and political concessions as those contained in Lytton's instructions; accompanying his recommendations with the same old ambivalence of ^{talk about} frank cordiality and subtly veiled threats about the Amir's position as "an earthen vessel between two iron ones". If the Amir refused to allow Britain's emissaries free access to his northern frontier and durbar - in effect denying her the opportunity of manipulating his polity from within-- then further coaxing was useless. In which case "we must look for alliances and influences elsewhere than at Cabul - must seek them in Khelat, at Candahar, Herat, and in Persia - and I would lose no time in looking out for them".

Back in the Political Committee, Montgomery took grave exception to Frere's report; largely, one suspects, because of its harsh criticisms

66. Lytton to Frere, H.M.S. Orontes, Red Sea, 26 March 1876. MSS.EUR.E. 218/518/1, pp.45-6.

67. See Frere to Salisbury, Lahore, 23 & 24 February & 3 March 1876. REELB21/78.

of the unwieldy Punjab administrative system. He opposed Frere's proposals to force the Amir's hand, on the grounds that it would positively drive him into the Russian camp. Afghanistan's disintegration, as implied in the proposed alliances with Kandahar and Herat, involved an unacceptable reversal of established practice. Furthermore, any British officers forced on the Amir against his will would prove useless as intelligence sources, since they would be surrounded, watched and rendered ineffective.⁶⁸ As time and altered circumstance provided ample opportunity for a divergence of opinions, the khaddar became more visibly frayed.

After reading Frere's letters, Lytton remarked on the "almost exact coincidence of the opinions" which they held in common.⁶⁹ But he presented his own ideas as the spontaneous result of studious reading among the India Office records, his earlier reckoning of Russia as an expansive power dominated by a bellicose military party, and personal conversations held with Schouvalov in Lisbon. His European diplomatic experience, and talks with a Russian emissary who suggested an Anglo-Russian partition of Afghanistan,⁷⁰ may indeed have augmented his Germanophile sympathies with a stronger distrust of Russia. But they certainly could not have indicated the necessary Asian counter-measures in Kalat and Afghanistan. Lytton was an unoriginal imitator and derivative synthesiser of other peoples' ideas. Yet ^{he} could not allow any such accusations to mar his self-image of an omniscient statesman, single-handedly engineering the double diplomatic coup which would rid British diplomacy of its Achilles heel. Surely a man who had earlier protested his "absolute ignorance of all facts and questions concerning India" must needs

68. See Montgomery to Salisbury, 24 March 1876. REEL821/79 & 86.

69. Lytton to Frere, H.M.S. Orontes, Red Sea, 26 March 1876. MSS.EUR.E. 218/518/1, pp43-52.

70. See Salisbury to Beaconsfield, 13 October 1880. C.C.L. D/20/? The typescripts of these letters are unbound and the letter numbering ends at /261, with the remainder unnumbered and unpaginated.

lean heavily on the knowledge of those who were so acquainted? Why else should he need to study Rawlinson's book before meeting the P.M.? Until mid-1877 Lytton's policies were by Frere out of Salisbury; a circumstance ignored by historians, one of whom accepts the odd conjunction of Lytton's and Frere's views as mere coincidence.⁷¹ Their attention distracted by subsequent events, ^{scholars} they fail to realise that Lytton's trans-frontier diplomatic offensive was not confined to Afghanistan but also included Kalat and Quetta.

On 4 April, just four days before Lytton's arrival in India, Major Sandeman had been sent by Northbrook on a second mission to Kalat. The mission was mounted and despatched amidst a hail of critical sniping, following the furor raised during the first Sandeman mission of late-75, early-76. ^{On that occasion,} ~~There~~ in an outburst of personal jealousy as well as provincial and political antipathy, Merewether had tried to prevent Sandeman's negotiating with the Khan and sirdars by forcing his return to Dera Ghazi Khan. Under orders from the Calcutta government, Sandeman had sought and obtained their authorisation to continue beyond Quetta into Kalat; while the Commissioner in Sind had been relieved of all supervisory responsibility for relations with Kalat.⁷² Though Khodadad Khan had accepted British mediation, new trouble had followed the agent's departure; and the imminence of another general rebellion had necessitated a second Sandeman mission.

^{plan of sending}
with this disruption to his ~~his~~ Pelly as an envoy first to Kalat and then Kabul, ~~disrupted~~. Lytton vainly tried to halt a mission which was "not in harmony with the combinations I have been endeavouring to mature".⁷³ In

71. See D.K. Ghose, England and Afghanistan: A Phase in their Relations, p.44.

72. See Thornton, Sir Robert Sandeman, pp.67-75.

73. Lytton to Northbrook, Nandgaon, 10 April 1876; also Lytton to Salisbury, Allahabad, 11 April 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, pp.74-6 & 77-8.

these, Kalat initially was very much the second string to the Viceroy's bow, with Lytton tending to see the Kalat problem in local terms. Warning Sandeman not to commit the Government of India to a clear line of policy favouring either Khan or sirdars,⁷⁴ Lytton outlined proposals in early July for the 1854 treaty's renewal on terms which strongly favoured the Khan's authority. By granting him increased subsidies, encouraging the maintenance of a mercenary force and the growth of a conservative, town-dwelling, commercial community, Lytton aimed at "strengthening the power of a single responsible Ruler".⁷⁵ Sandeman's strong, military escort was to be maintained in Kalat for some time, and located as near the Bolan Pass as possible; a military post being set up at the lower end of the pass near Dadhar and patrols sent up the Bolan in the summer. Explicitly rejecting the military occupation of Quetta, Lytton was content to locate there only an assistant agent. But by September imperial considerations, much broader than the measure of British supervision needed for a permanent settlement of local Kalat disorders, were determining the exact nature of the Supplementary Treaty.⁷⁶

Lytton's approach to Afghanistan was essentially a race against time: a race arising from the European circumstance of steadily aggravated Russo-Turkish relations and the likelihood of war between them. But, despite the Viceroy's repeated assurances that Sher Ali would soon prove compliant, the Amir remained obdurately distant. News that he now communicated secretly with Von Kaufman added to his seeming undependability.⁷⁷ In any European diplomatic wrangle between Britain and Russia,

74. See Thornton, Sir Robert Sandeman, p.79.

75. Lytton's "Notes on Khelat", (Confidential), 1 July 1876. Memoranda on Miscellaneous Subjects, Vol.3, 1871-78, Memo 9. I.O.L.&R. Uncatalogued.

76. See G.I. to S.S.I., Fort William, Political 50, 23 March 1877. L/P&S/7/13, pp.235-47.

77. See Salisbury to Lytton, 19 July 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/1A, Letter 37.

the Bolan Pass could assume a crucial, strategic significance as a traverse for Russian, Russo-Afghan or British troops. Accordingly, Kalet's assured cooperation or allegiance now became "essential to our means of defence or aggression".⁷⁸ If the Government of India had so far placed all its eggs in one capricious, Afghan basket, Lytton now changed tack. "As I cannot get a firm hold on the basket, I content myself for the present with taking the eggs quietly out of it, and placing them in safer receptacles; and this is what I am now doing".⁷⁹ Prevented from annexing Kalet outright by its unhealthiness and by fear of arousing hostile public reaction in Britain,⁸⁰ Lytton instead found the means of reducing it to a British feudatory, de facto if not de jure.⁸¹

By the time it was drafted in September, therefore, the new Kalet treaty was more or less a vehicle for locating no less than three forces of the Indian Army within the Khan's territory, most significantly at Quetta. In Salisbury's estimation, "the treaty you sketch will make us substantially masters of Khelat and enable us to arm it as an outwork at our leisure".⁸² So as to forestall Russian protests, and perhaps assuage public susceptibilities at home, the "Fox of Simla" directed Sandeman to use all his "diplomacy" in ensuring "that a request should first be made by the Khan himself for the continued maintenance of British troops in his country, and that this request should be

78. See Lytton to the Queen, Camp nr. Dalhousie, 15 November 1876. Quoted Gelfour, The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, p.100.

79. Lytton to Morley, 9 September 1876. Quoted Gelfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.2, pp.28-9.

80. See Lytton to the Queen, Camp nr. Dalhousie, 15 November 1876. Quoted Gelfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.2, p.37. This is the same letter as that reproduced in her history of Lytton's Indian administration, but she includes material from the original letter which she had not indicated as omitted from the earlier reproduction.

81. After the signing of the Treaty of Jacobabad, Lytton continued to represent Kalet as an independent state rather than a British feudatory. But Khodadad Khan had few such illusions about his de facto status. See Lytton to the Queen, 23 December 1876 to 10 January 1877. Quoted Gelfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.2, p.49.

82. Salisbury to Lytton, 18 September 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/18, Letter 50, f.382.

distinctly mentioned in the Treaty The point is a capital one on which all else depends. We must not seem to be forcing the presence of British troops on the territory of a reluctant but helpless Prince. The arrangement must take and keep the form of a friendly compliance on our part, with a distinct and spontaneous expression of the Khan's wish, that British troops should remain in Khelet for the protection of his interest: and it is equally advisable that the participation of the Sirdars in this wish should also be expressed".⁸³ The Viceroy also directed that, immediately the "request" was made, troops from Sandeman's personal escort were to be sent to Quetta.

On the grounds that Lytton wished to supersede Sandeman with a member of his personal secretariat, contemporaries made much of the fact that the instructions and draft treaty were delivered by Colonel Colley in person. Initially, Lytton did display a marked dislike for Major Sandeman - for a variety of personal and political reasons -⁸⁴ but Colley really seems to have been sent up to make sure the emissary fully understood the purport of the Viceroy's instructions. For Lytton was acting in haste and was anxious to prevent delay through avoidable errors in judgement. As it transpired, Sandeman proved himself exceptionally able in negotiating the Khan's and his sirdars' compliance with Lytton's terms; a "force of a thousand men at his back to give some weight to his arbitration" being as significant as any

83. Lytton to Sandeman, Simla, 29 September 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.509.

84. See Lytton to Salisbury, Mushobra, 5 June 1876. Lytton to Sandeman, Simla, 29 September 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, pp.207 & 500-502. Also Lytton's "Notes on Khelet", 22 September 1876. Memoranda on Miscellaneous Subjects, Vol.3, 1871-78, Memo 12, pp.23-6. I.O.L.&R. Uncatalogued. Hostile to the Punjab tradition, he also thought Sandeman tended to strengthen the sirdars' power at the expense of the Khan's authority, thereby prejudging and misreading the Government of India's future line of policy. Lytton tended to project onto his hapless military servant all his frustrations at the disruption to his earlier schemes and there is a distinct note of personal spite in his first estimates of Sandeman's character.

personal magnetism he exerted.⁸⁵ Colley developed an immediate admiration for his character and negotiating skills, and deferred to him on treaty-making.⁸⁶ Instead he contented himself with what must surely have been his main tasks: reporting to Lytton on Quetta's strategic value, choosing a suitable site for the troops' camp and distributing the troops of Sandeman's escort between Quetta, Mittri near Dadhar, and Gundava.⁸⁷ The speed with which this was done, in mid-October immediately after the successful completion of negotiations, reflected the urgency underlieing Lytton's actions in late-76. Even before he personally ratified the Treaty of Jacobabad on 8 December, the Viceroy was already making plans to strengthen the sparse Quetta force of three infantry companies.⁸⁸ With his usual duplicity, Lytton calculated that the Delhi Durbar of 1 January 1877 would divert public attention from the frontier, and provide him with hostages in the shape of Khodadad Khan and his principal sirdars. Opportunistically, he used the occasion of this imperial jamboree to reinforce Quetta with the minimum fuss and greatest alacrity.⁸⁹ By mid-January the occupation force comprised one regiment of infantry, one squadron of cavalry and one mountain battery, supported by one regiment of cavalry, half an infantry regiment and another mountain battery immediately below the Bolan at Mittri.⁹⁰

Lytton and Salisbury's reasons for occupying Quetta were undoubtedly diverse, sometimes obscure and, accordingly, contentious. Anticipating Sher Ali's obduracy, in late May Lytton had outlined proposals for

85. Colley to Colonel Brackenbury, 20 November 1876. Quoted Butler, Life of Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, p.168.

86. See Colley to Lytton, Jacobabad, 28 October 1876. Quoted Butler, Life of Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, pp.166-7.

87. See Colley to Lytton, Kalat, 15 October 1876. Quoted *ibid*, p.161.

88. See Lytton to Salisbury, Lahore, 30 November 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.648.

89. See *ibid*; also Lytton to Norman, Peshawar, 22 November 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.631.

90. Lytton to Montgomery, Calcutta, 26 January 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, p.63.

turning the Amir's flanks. In the west this involved the consolidation of relations with Kalat, including the establishment of a "permanent British Mission at Quetta".⁹¹ Elaborating on this contingency, Salisbury saw Quetta as an alternative listening post to Herat, whence the British mission would spy on Afghanistan and manipulate its politics from without by bribery, political assassination and even the Amir's deposition.⁹² By September, Kalat was indeed being used to turn the Amir's western flank,⁹³ and the stationing of British troops at Quetta was also part of Lytton's campaign of concerted military demonstrations all along Sher Ali's frontier, with the aim of overawing him into an accommodation with British demands.

But the rapid move from seeing Quetta merely as a listening post to adopting it as a military station, was probably dictated by even more sweeping considerations of offence and defence. The recrudescence of the Eastern Question in the mid-70's, and the tense Anglo-Russian relations which preceded the Constantinople Conference of December 1876-January 1877, created fears of a hostile Russian or Russo-Afghan demonstration against India. If war did break out between Britain and Russia, the possibility of offensive operations in the direction of Kandahar, Herat and, fantastically, Russian-occupied Central Asia, could not be dismissed.⁹⁴ The Bolan Pass was the Indian Army's main traverse into Western Afghanistan, and the size of the force which Lytton hurriedly placed at Quetta was calculated to hold the pass against tribal attacks

91. See Lytton to Salisbury, Simla, 29 May 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.195.

92. See Salisbury to Lytton, 22 August 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/18, ff. 310-13.

93. See Lytton to Morley, 9 September 1876. Quoted Salfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.2, p.29.

94. See Lytton to Norman, Peshawar, 22 November 1876. Lytton to Salisbury, Lahore, 30 November 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, pp.631 & 648; also M. Couling, "War with Russia: A Suppressed Episode of 1876-77", "Manchester Guardian", 16 July 1954, pp.4 & 6, cols.3-4 & 6-7.

and to facilitate the unhindered passage of army units. In the event of a war with Russia or Afghanistan, to ward off any large-scale demonstration through the pass, the Mittri garrison could be speedily reinforced.⁹⁵ If Quetta's occupation completed the first section of the "sketch" which Frere had drawn in his 1875 letter/memo, Sir Bartle played no direct role in its final accomplishment. On leaving England Lytton had not anticipated the move, which was in fact determined by the exigencies of the moment. But, if Frere played no part in its tactical achievement, to him belongs the credit, or disgrace, of keeping the Quetta scheme alive in the highest sancts of government; until it ^{was} realised two decades after its conception.

While Lytton, echoed by Salisbury, crowed his exaltation that Kalat was "completely and permanently casa nostra",⁹⁶ the Council of India had been less than universally sympathetic to his aims when shown copies of the draft treaty in early November. In the Political Committee, Clause 5 of the proposed treaty was correctly divined by Montgomery as a lever for stationing British troops above the Bolan Pass. But his hostility was offset by Rawlinson and Frere's equally outspoken support.⁹⁷ Reckoning it impolitic to keep a small detachment there for too long, in case of a Marri attack and for fear of offending Sher Ali, Montgomery discussed the matter privately with Salisbury and asked him to omit the offending clause. In his estimation all that was needed beyond the pass was an assistant agent and personal bodyguard, purely for intelligence purposes. Believing that a detachment at Quetta would strengthen Lytton's hand in

95. Lytton to Norman, River Indus en route for Karachi, 12 December 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.703.

96. Lytton to Salisbury, Bombay, 18 December 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.705; also Salisbury to Lytton, 9 February 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/2A, Letter 2, f.15.

97. See Minute Paper, "Kholat Treaty", 7 November 1876. L/P&S/3/206, pp.99-105; Rawlinson to Lytton, 15 December 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/2, Letter 106; Frere to Lytton, 12 January 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/3, Letter 16.

negotiating with the Amir, Salisbury gave Sir Robert's views no sympathy, and in full Council Montgomery strongly opposed the Kalat treaty.⁹⁸ Retaining the crucial clause, Lytton dismissed Montgomery's fears as the product of "astonishing ignorance" and simultaneously tried to reassure him about the Quetta detachment's safety.⁹⁹ However, when the Government of India's official despatch arrived in April 1877,¹⁰⁰ the Political Committee's hostile response was clamorous. Within the India Office, indeed among the whole community of retired Anglo-Indians, Quetta became as emotively charged a name in the late 1870's as Munich became for a whole generation in the late 1930's.

In mid-1877, hostility within the Council to Quetta's occupation reflected an entirely novel constellation of opinion in the Political Committee, where Rawlinson was temporarily the sole voice in support of government policy. His erstwhile allies, Frere and Johnson, had moved to overseas appointments earlier in the year,¹⁰¹ and Montgomery had, surprisingly, defected to the opposition. In the stubbornly outspoken person of Rawlinson, only the denuded skeleton of the old cabal remained. Considering the British interference in Kalat affairs excessive, and hoping it was merely temporary, both Montgomery and Sir Erskine Perry feared that the government had entered on a "new path" of territorial advancement: Quetta's occupation leading inexorably to that of Kandahar and

98. See Montgomery to Salisbury, 9 November 1876; Salisbury to Lytton, 10 November 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/18, Letter 60; Rawlinson to Lytton, 10 November 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/2, Letter 88.

99. See Lytton to Salisbury, River Indus near Kotri, 10 December 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.686; Lytton to Montgomery, Calcutta, 26 January 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.63-4.

100. G.I. to S.S.I., Fort William, Political 50, 23 March 1877. L/P&S/7/13, pp.235-47.

101. Frere became Governor of Cape Colony and First High Commissioner of South Africa. Major-General E.B. Johnson, a crony of Rawlinson's on the Council, went to India as Military Member of the Viceroy's Council.

Herat, as well as proving endlessly expensive and liable to provoke Beluch antagonism or Afghan antipathy. Montgomery had always favoured more active relations with the trans-frontier states, but the approach he envisaged was always cordial, non-coercive and free from territorial ambition. As his fears grew that the occupation was a permanent measure rather than a temporary expedient, and as Perry repeatedly sounded his opposition to any absorption - direct or indirect - of Kalat or Afghanistan, Sir Robert defected to Perry's side.

Though a barrister with no military or frontier experience, Perry's active Liberalism made him a tenacious critic. Between them, he and Montgomery carried a majority of the Committee and of the less well-informed Council in a tireless though impotent harrying of Salisbury and Lytton. Feeling ran high in the India Office as this emergent opposition berated Salisbury in personal interviews. In notes and memos, they anxiously tried to discover if Quetta's occupation was permanent and, if so, whether it indicated any intention of further advances.¹⁰² In the patently antagonistic division of opinion which now rent the Political Committee, Montgomery anticipated that a new British outpost, barely eight miles from the Afghan border, could only lead to "inimical feeling" on the Amir's part. Rawlinson by contrast, shrewdly appreciating the line of Salisbury and Lytton's thought, believed hostile military demonstrations at Quetta, in Cashmir and at Rawal Pindi would "appeal to his (the Amir's) fears" and coerce him into "renewed negotiation and friendly intercourse" when persuasion had obviously failed.¹⁰³

Whatever their different views, the committee's members realised

102. See Salisbury's various letters to Lytton of June and July 1877. Quoted Cecil, *Life of Robert*, Vol.2, pp.158-60; the views of members of the Political Committee. L/P&S/7/322, pp.619-45; Perry to Salisbury, "Note on the Occupation of Quetta", 8 March 1878. MSS.EUR.O.776, pp.408-12.

103. Rawlinson, "Note about the Treaty with Kelat", 3 May 1877. L/P&S/7/322, p.630.

it had no constitutional powers to alter government policy, and that the Secretary of State, with the assured support of the Cabinet, could easily over-ride or ignore its opposition. Additionally, the confidential nature of the committee's discussions prevented its members from airing their grievances in public. This effectively precluded their becoming an open source of knowledgeable opposition to be reckoned with outside. In the periodical press, Perry might expose Frere and Rawlinson as a small but able party who had continually directed the nation's suspicions against Russia, but he admitted his inability to pursue any discussion about the North-West frontier so long as it was sub judice.¹⁰⁴ Severely restrained, the opposition shrank from an open break with the Secretary of State and all committee members signed the 1877 draft despatches to the Government of India on Kalat;¹⁰⁵ even when Perry and Rawlinson both suspected, the one bitterly the other complacently triumphant, that Quetta's occupation was more than likely to prove permanent and even to be the spring-board for future advances. Given this constitutional self-sufficiency which Salisbury and Lytton enjoyed, it may appear that individual Council members were altogether excluded from directly affecting major political decisions. Appropriated ideas may lie dormant for some time, however, before they engender in the top-flight statesmen an apparently altogether novel line of thought. It was here, in relation to the content and conduct of his Afghan policy, that Lytton's personality assumed a central importance.

Analysis of Lytton's Afghan policy is complicated by the possibility of misapprehending his real intentions, since measures appropriate to either Anglo-Afghan or Anglo-Russian relations frequently overlapped, as did matters of military expediency and long-term political preoccupations.

104. See T.E. Perry, "The Future of India", Nineteenth Century, 4 (1878), pp.1083-1104.

105. See S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 79, 13 December 1877. L/P&S/7/322, pp. 583ff.

Action taken to secure Afghanistan or part of it, politically, must not be confused with preparations made or ideas mooted against the eventuality of an Anglo-Russian war. For example, in late 1876 Lytton intensified military activity all along India's North-West frontier in anticipation of a war with Russia. Though these preparations also acted as an extra pressure on Sher Ali, they must not be taken as evidence of Lytton's intention of conquering or occupying Afghanistan militarily from the outset.¹⁰⁶ As he had already told Frere, Afghanistan must be secured politically before it could serve any military purpose, and he explicitly rejected any measures for bringing relations to a crisis point so long as a negotiated settlement seemed possible.¹⁰⁷ If war with Russia came in late 1876; the easy passage of British troops through Western Afghanistan could only be effected if Sher Ali was well-disposed. Even so, throughout the British negotiations with Afghan representatives, at Simla in October 1876 and at Peshawar in the first three months of 1877, Lytton practised autocracy not diplomacy.¹⁰⁸

In his first essential task of ascertaining if Sher Ali was irreversibly alienated from Britain, the Viceroy ^{demanded} ~~to~~ as proof of the Amir's continued trustworthiness his willingness to allow British officers free access to Afghanistan. Lytton's persistent adherence to this proviso in all negotiations, despite Sher Ali's justified fears that it would lead to his dependence on the British Empire, was in accordance with Salisbury's ideas on insidious penetration. Unhindered access was an essential prerequisite to incorporating Afghanistan in Britain's indirect empire. A

106. Prasad seems to make this error. See Prasad, The Foundations of Indian Foreign Policy, Vol.1, p.200.

107. See Lytton to Norman, Peshawar, 22 November 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, pp.630-1.

108. Detailed accounts of the negotiations of this period, and especially of the Peshawar Conference, are given in Prasad, The Foundations of Indian Foreign Policy, Vol.1, pp.145-200; D.P. Singhal, India and Afghanistan 1876-1907, pp.36-21; D.K. Ghose, India and Afghanistan, pp.29-35.

precarious ruler, trapped between Britain and Russia, Sher Ali had little room for manoeuvre, but determined to use the remaining initiative in safeguarding his person, throne and sovereign independence as long as possible.¹⁰⁹ Disappointed at the results of the 1873 Simla conference, Sher Ali no longer saw the British as open-handed, ingenuous allies. By 1876, ironically largely as a result of Rawlinson's book, he distrusted them as much if not more than Russia; viewing their intentions, in demanding a Herat agency, as the subversion of his authority or even the disintegration of his hard-won polity. Accordingly, just as he was preparing to grant British demands to locate officers in his territory on condition that a clarificatory conference was first held to discuss the difficulties, the apparent imminence of an Anglo-Russian conflict caused him to hold back. Unable or unwilling to understand the Amir's dilemma, Lytton could only see his prevarication on whether the demand for free access was granted or still negotiable¹¹⁰ as the conduct of a perverse, unreliable opportunist. The Viceroy therefore determined to force the issue at the Peshawar Conference, which, to him, was essentially a final test of Sher Ali's dependability.

Responsibility for the content, conduct and summary termination of the Peshawar Conference rests overwhelmingly with Lytton. Not trusting the diplomatic judgement of his own envoy, Sir Lewis Pelly, he dictated negotiations by telegram from Calcutta, and induced an uncompromising stalemate by refusing any concessions on the demand for British agents in Afghanistan. He then dishonestly pretended that the Afghan representative's

109. Already mistrustful of the British because he took as "authoritative" Rawlinson's literary recommendations on Afghanistan's disintegration, Sher Ali was further uneasy at the intense activity in Kelat and around Quetta, while remaining well aware of the Celocs' hostility to any British presence in Afghanistan. Ruling a Byzantine court, his personal safety and continued rule depended on not alienating the more staunchly Muslim of his courtiers, who realised resentfully that Islam was being pushed back at all points in the world by Western powers.

110. See Lytton to Rawlinson, Varanasi, 11 January 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, p.20.

death had forced the closure of discussions; even when he knew that another envoy was en route from Kabul and had himself already told Pelly to end the conference three weeks before Syed Nur Mohammed's death.¹¹¹ Having used the negotiations to test the Amir's "strength, confidence and loyalty", Lytton felt he could positively confirm that the "flirtation with Von Kaufman had gone further than we feared when I left England" and that Sher Ali's position within Afghanistan was "very weak and rickety".¹¹² There was no more sinister reason for the Viceroy's closing the conference and refusing to reconvene it than that Sher Ali's undependability as an ally seemed to have been established unquestionably. It is important to recognise that he had in mind no clear-cut, alternative policy for which he was clearing the decks.

Lytton believed Russia and Britain must eventually meet in the East, that all the "petty, semi-savage States" intervening must be absorbed, and that if Britain did not soon establish "a commanding influence in Afghanistan", Russia would obtain a diplomatic foothold there. Esconced at Kabul, she need never contemplate invasion, but could simply use the Afghan and mountain tribes to harass a "singularly weak and faulty" North-west frontier.¹¹³ Afghanistan's independence was out of the question: she could only fall into either Russian or British hands. Following the end of the Peshawar Conference, throughout April, May and into early June, a "quiescent and haughty" policy of "the most complete indifference and unbroken reserve" was adopted towards Sher Ali.¹¹⁴ Lytton

111. Contrast the contents of Lytton to Pelly, Calcutta, 3 March 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, p.173 with the fact that Syed Nur Mohammed died on 26 March and note the implication of, Lytton to the Queen, 24 April 1877. Quoted Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.2, p.60.

112. Lytton to Salisbury, Calcutta, 16 & 23 February 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.130 & 131; see also Lytton to Frere, Calcutta, 2 March 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, p.155.

113. Lytton's minute, "The Laurentian or inactivity policy", (Undated, but apparently, from the content, written after the Peshawar Conference and before the Russian capture of Kizyl Arvet), ff.34-5. MSS.EUR.E.218/8.

114. See Burne to Pelly, Simla, 4 June 1877. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 1; Lytton to Cavagnari, Simla, 19 May 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, p.296.

held aloof, in the hope that a large, unpaid army and his supposedly growing unpopularity would bring the Amir's speedy deposition or his reluctant compliance with British demands.¹¹⁵ Simultaneously, by extending British influence outwards from Quetta, the Viceroy supplemented this "wait-and-see" policy with efforts to establish "a powerful English party" in Western Afghanistan.¹¹⁶ Rawlinson's supposition that the Kandeharis were pro-British seemed to be confirmed by Sandeman's intelligence reports, and Lytton represented the "industrious and settled population" of Western Afghanistan as "naturally friendly neighbours" because of a "natural tendency to look for a strong and just government which can protect it without oppressing it".¹¹⁷

This policy, of attending on spontaneous developments in Afghanistan while simultaneously building up the capacity to exploit them, needed time to bear fruit. But Lytton had neither the patience temperamentally, nor the time politically, to abide by a relatively inactive role. In Europe the Russian front in the Russo-Turkish War was moving inexorably southwards towards Constantinople, and rumours spread that she intended exploiting the opportune moment to acquire new territory in Central Asia. Immediately after news of Lomakin's Turkmen conquests around Kizyl Arvat reached India, therefore, it set off premature fears¹¹⁸ that

115. See Lytton to Salisbury, Calcutta, 16 & 23 February 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.130 & 131; Burne to Lytton, Simla, 7 April 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/519/4, Letter 125; Lytton to Egerton, Naini Tal, 10 April 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, p.265.

116. Lytton to Sandeman, Naini Tal, 8 April 1877. Lytton to Egerton, 10 April 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.261 & 266.

117. Lytton's Minute, "The Laurentian or inactivity policy", p.37. MSS.EUR.E.218/8; see also Lytton, "Memorandum on Khelat", 1 July 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/520/1, pp.218-9.

118. On 5 June 1877 the India Office received news that Kizyl Arvat had been conquered by the Russians, and the submission of the Turkmen Khan and elders as Russian subjects accepted. Reports from Teheran seemed to indicate that the Russian general, Lomakin, had also occupied Persian territory 50 miles further south, putting the richest portions of Persian Khorassan at Russia's mercy. On 3 July, however, word was received that Lomakin and his forces had retired from Kizyl Arvat. See L/P&S/3/205, pp.605, 627-38, 709 and L/P&S/3/206, pp.215-6.

a Russian attack on Mary was imminent. Since Russia could easily dabble in Herat affairs from there, Lytton personally determined to heighten the element of British involvement in Western Afghanistan. In doing so, he recommended an altogether radical departure from established strategy. On 9 June 1877, in a letter to Cavagnari,¹¹⁹ he wrote: "In my opinion, the time is come for a complete change of policy, which should be carried out as rapidly as may be consistent with the caution and foresight essential to success. The main object of our previous policy was the maintenance on our north-west frontier of a strong, homogeneous, independent State, under British influence. ... I conceive that it is rather the gradual disintegration and weakening, rather than the consolidation and establishment, of the Afghan power, at which we must now begin to aim".¹²⁰

The Viceroy's ideas on Afghanistan's disintegration were fully developed in an official despatch¹²¹ which aimed, essentially, at stampeding H.M.G. into sanctioning his new line. In nullifying the danger to Mary from Russian gains on the Attrek river, H.M.G. should give more active support to Persia and the Tekke Turkmen and also be prepared to take "such political and military measures as the course of events may render necessary, to prevent Russia from obtaining a foothold, or even a dominant moral influence in Afghanistan".¹²² An adequately secure British influence might still be re-established peacefully in Afghanistan but, failing this, "the time may come (and at no very distant date) when, ... it will be absolutely necessary to undertake the military occupation of Western Afghanistan (whether with or without the consent of the Ruler

119. Cavagnari was then a Captain and, as Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, occupied Sir Richard Pollock's position while the Commissioner was on leave.

120. Lytton to Cavagnari, Simla, 9 June 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.465-6.

121. See G.I. to S.S.I., Simla, Secret 21, 2 July 1877. L/P&S/7/14, pp.1113-33.

122. Ibid, p.1131.

of that country), including the important fortress of Herat. The position of the present Ameer is very precarious; and it is possible that the course of events may result in the dismemberment of his kingdom, and the formation of a separate Khanate in Western Afghanistan, which it might be quite feasible to bring under British influence and protection".¹²²

During the earlier, May, rumours that Russia was again pushing forward her Central Asian frontiers, Lytton had assailed a trenchantly resistant Salisbury with the advice of the Indian military on immediate retaliatory action as far as Mary.¹²³ Bearing in mind the misleading overlap of expedient military measures against Russia and long-term political considerations concerning close Anglo-Afghan relations, Lytton's July proposals for dismemberment were not the consequence of the soldiers' initiative, despite their closeness in time and tendency to complement each other. An expedient wish for a "scientific" military frontier, centred on Herat and suited to offensive and defensive operations, was not the primary determinant of Lytton's ideas on disintegration. The primary purpose of a separate Khanate of Western Afghanistan was to establish, in the strategically vital western section of Kabul's territories, a political outwork unambiguously attached to Britain and impervious to Russian diplomatic penetration. Though the C-in-C(India) had indeed seen offensive operations, through Western Afghanistan as far as Herat, as India's best line of defence, Haines' "Notes on the Organisation of an Expeditionary Force beyond the North-West Frontier" was drawn up in accordance with a viceregal note of 10 June; after Lytton had written to Cavagneri about disintegration on 9 June.¹²⁴ Such military considerations as those voiced by Haines complemented and substantiated Lytton's primarily

123. See Cecil, Life of Robert, Vol.2, pp.150-5.

124. See H.E. C-in-C(India), "Notes on the Organisation of an Expeditionary Force beyond the North-West Frontier", Simla, 25 June 1877. L/MIL/5/690, Section VI.

political ones, but in no way determined them. In opposition to Haines, Colley's thinking on the vital base for offensive and defensive operations, outlined in his "Memorandum on Military Aspects of the Central Asian Question" of 1876, favoured Kabul rather than Herat as the strategic key to India. He specifically deprecated the building of a counterpoise to Russia around Western Afghanistan as "mistaken ... dangerous and sacrificial".¹²⁵ Despite Salisbury's suspicions that Lytton was too credulous of his military experts' opinions, the official origins of the Viceroy's ideas on a separate western khanate do not lie with his military advisors.

Lytton's July despatch, in any case, was severely dealt with by H.M.G. Having already criticised the Viceroy's indiscretion in sending out private copies of it,¹²⁶ after Cabinet discussions Salisbury dismissed his fears of an imminent Russian occupation of Mary as chimerical and rejected any precautionary military measures as "importune and possibly ... calamitous". In demanding "abstinence from aggressive action", Salisbury re-stated the "cardinal object of your foreign policy (as being) to obtain a friendly influence over the Ruler of Afghanistan". By emphasising the value of renewed negotiations, H.M.G. differed from Lytton in accepting that the Amir was not beyond the pale of friendship and, by deliberately ignoring his suggestion, rejected any thought of disintegrating the Kabul territories.¹²⁷ Lytton was still smarting from the rebuff nine months later,¹²⁸ especially since Salisbury,

125. Despite persistent, thorough searches in the I.O.L. & R., I was unable to trace a copy of this memo and have therefore relied on the lengthy summary provided in A.W. Preston, *British Military Policy and the Defence of India: A Study of British Military Policy, Plans and Preparations during the Russian Crisis, 1876-1880*, Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in London University, August 1966, pp.92-7.

126. See S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 52A, 2 August 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/28, Letter 30.

127. S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 68, 18 October 1877. L/P&S/7/322, pp.471-8.

128. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 3 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.531-4.

in rejecting his initiative out of hand, had employed the chiding tone of a schoolmaster to an errant pupil.

If the first official record of Lytton's personal Afghan policy is the 2 July despatch, its intended future course was outlined succinctly in confidential correspondence between two of his closest confidants. As Burne wrote to Pelly, in the stilted prose with which he tried to imitate his beloved "chief": "Therefore we have only two things now left.

(1) If Sher Ali comes forward for restoration of relations we must do so on different bases to the very favourable ones offered him last year: we must change our front - avoid recognition of Abdulla Jan - and be prepared to see if money will bribe him to sign away Kandahar and Herat i.e. make the getting of Western Afghanistan (and agents at Kandahar and Herat) under our immediate influence the basis of our next start, paying if necessary a good round sum to Shere Ali if he willingly consents to any arrangement putting Western Afghanistan under a ruler of our nomination.

(2) If he wont do it in a friendly way then to endeavour to extend our influence from Quetta quickly and do our best to prepare the ground for doing it if necessary by force, of course ascertaining clearly before-hand that the chiefs and people would go with us. On this point we should I think have little to fear.

In short our ideas now rather run to the importance of annulling the effect of Russian advances to the Attrek, and of quietly, or by force if necessary, make (sic) the detaching of Western Afghanistan from Cabul Proper, the object of our future policy".¹²⁹

The letter, never previously referred to because of its obscure location,

129. Burne to Pelly, Simla, 5 August 1877. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX 1. Underlining by Burne himself.

contains an elaborate scenario of Lytton's conduct of Anglo-Afghan relations. Though it was written three months before H.M.G.'s October rejection of his proposals, there is every reason to believe that the Viceroy followed its plot covertly while outwardly conforming with Home Government dictates. Not only does the letter show how early in his viceroyalty he contemplated war, but it also makes it clear that Afghanistan's dismemberment and British protection of Western Afghanistan were his ultimate war aims in 1878.

To suppose that Salisbury's summary dismissal of the idea of a West Afghanistan Khanate brought the notion's demise is to misapprehend Lytton. More and more contemptuous of a Home Government which he saw as vacillating, carelessly ignorant of India's defence needs, and unappreciative of his efforts in that direction, the Viceroy went underground in thought and, to some extent, deed. While ostensibly returning to the old policy of attempting, by friendly persuasion, to secure Sher Ali's permission for agents,¹³⁰ He underhandedly prepared the ground, as Burne had said he would, for Western Afghanistan's detachment from Kabul. Though understandably rather uninformative on the matter, the records clearly reveal that a native agent had been established secretly in Kandahar by October 1877.¹³¹ He was responsible for a regular stream of Kandahar news letters and, in all likelihood, attempts to set up "an English party" in the city. Significantly, Salisbury at the time suspected Lytton of holding back valuable, and perhaps compromising,

130. Witness his extremely reluctant agreement to H.M.G.'s despatch of a Turkish embassy to Kabul in the rather naive belief that fellow Muslims would successfully dissuade Sher Ali from his aloofness to British entreaties.

131. The Index to "Foreign Department Proceedings, October 1877" contains the following: "Cossid and other secret service charges. } Agent to
Pay of the Kandahar correspondent. } the Gov-Gen.
in Biluchistan
to disburse —".

See India Foreign Proceedings, Vol.1306, October 1877, no's.121-3, Part B.

information on events beyond Quetta.¹³² The cunning manipulator's most significant attribute is his acute sense of timing. Guided by it, he knows when to retreat from a disadvantageous confrontation with his superiors and appreciates the need to bide his time, awaiting a more conspicuous opportunity, which he is already taking steps to exploit fully. This tendency to stubborn rebelliousness¹³³ - for Lytton was essentially, even if covertly, in revolt against his superiors - was an adult over-reaction to lengthy familial servility. The scheme for setting up a separate Khanate of Western Afghanistan as part of Britain's direct or indirect empire lived on as a glint in the Viceroy's eye.

In telling off the beads in an abacus-count of the political and personal motives underlieing Lytton's mid-77 initiative, the temporary Russian occupation of Kizyl Arvat may be seen as a mere trigger mechanism. Politically, he no longer regarded Indian interests as necessarily subordinate to European, but felt that too little attention was being paid to the Raj's internal security in the formulation of British foreign policy. He therefore encouraged H.M.G. to adopt a firmer stance against Russia, not because he was a rabid Russophobe who accepted the possibility of her invading India, but because he feared her diplomatic attempts to destabilise British rule. In being too sympathetic to Russian interests in the aftermath of the Constantinople Conference, Salisbury, he reckoned, forgot that "our Indian empire is a great Mohammedan Power".¹³⁴ In 1877

132. See S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 78, 6 December 1877. L/P&S/7/322, pp.571-7.

133. The trait is well illustrated by a piece of doggerel, written about this time, in which Lytton was obviously addressing himself.

"You that walk through the crowd
Looking so like great men,
Crying, like Caesar, aloud
'Veni, vidi ...' What then?
Why break off halfway
With the phrase so nearly complete?
Yet a word is still wanting, say,
Were you really obliged to retreat?"

MSS.EUR.E.218/522/14, p.82.

134. Lytton to Stephen, Mushobra, 24 June 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, p.525.

the British Administration's recrudescence fears of internal revolt focussed still on India's Muslims, and specifically on the extent of their transcendent loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan.¹³⁵ Consequently, Lytton feared the possibility of widespread unrest and even a general Muslim uprising if Britain proved too subserviently pro-Russian or aggressively anti-Turkish in Europe.¹³⁶ After a year in office, Lytton's perspective was increasingly Indocentric rather than Eurocentric and dictated the opinion that British statesmen in 1877 were too insular in their foreign policy-making. Feeling betrayed, he resolved that the Government of India should take the lead in suggesting a policy better suited to its own needs.

Lytton's conceit and his characteristic desire for fame¹³⁷ also induced him to suggest a radical shift in political strategy. Imbued with Disraeli's ostentatious, militant view of empire, he saw himself as India's incisively far-sighted guardian, and craved the certain, personal fame of having secured for it the strongest possible defence outwork.¹³⁸ With an over-weening self-esteem which was easily piqued,¹³⁹ the Viceroy took Sher Ali's obduracy as a personal slight. As a result he tended to reduce Anglo-Afghan relations to a conflict between Viceroy and Amir, by carrying out something of a personal vendetta against the man who stood in his path to great honour. To postulate a one-to-one, reductionist relationship between the statesman's character and his political behaviour would

135. See Lt.-General C. Reid's memorandum, "The Mahomedans of India", 5 March 1877. I.O.L.&R. Memoranda on Various Subjects, Vol.2, 1871-77, Memo2. Uncatalogued.

136. See Lytton to Salisbury, 23 June 1877. Quoted Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.2, p.65; also Lytton to the Queen, Simla, 4 October 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, p.524.

137. One of his contemporary detractors, A.C. Lyall, described him as being "anxious to do something brilliant with his Viceroyalty". See Preston, British Military Policy and the Defence of India, p.91.

138. See Lytton to Mallet, Calcutta, 14 March 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/521/8; also Lytton to Grant Duff, Ambala, 27 April 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.326-31.

139. Apart from Sher Ali, Rawlinson, Salisbury and the Council of India were all at some time the objects of the Viceroy's pique.

be a gross over-simplification. Yet statesmen are not the super-human inhabitants of some rarefied stratosphere where only the unpolluted rationale of the objectively politic, necessary and practicable is inhaled. The livid stigmata of Lytton's neurotic insecurity, his frustrated ambition and his, paradoxical, dependence and rebelliousness were branded ineradicably on all his activities. Moreover, if this constant reinforcement of the political by the personal gives Lytton's conduct of Afghan policy its singularly intense, obsessive character, its content may also be explained by serious reference to his personality.

Though it has been pointed out elsewhere that the idea of disintegration was not novel - having been suggested by Rawlinson and hinted at by Frere - the author mistakenly presumes that the thought occurred to the Viceroy independent of any external authority.¹⁴⁰ In fact, Rawlinson's personal and literary influence was the seed which took deepest root in the fallow, fertile soil of Lytton's mind. Like a candle in the wind, such a propagandist work as "England and Russia in the East" casts a fleeting glow whose illumination depends on the individual reader's not being absolutely antagonistic to the book's contents, while ^{at the same time} his own ideas are still in flux. On taking notes from Rawlinson's work, Lytton did not reject the author's opinions out of hand; he merely found them temporally inappropriate. For Lytton was predisposed, by ideological conviction and personal inclination, to pay close attention to Rawlinson's completely novel recommendations on Afghanistan's dismemberment.

Ideologically, Sir Henry's Palmerstonian outlook and Lytton's political morality coincided in the two men's extreme readiness to accept military coercion as a means to an end.¹⁴¹ Fundamentally and most tellingly,

140. See Ghose, England and Afghanistan, p.44.

141. For Lytton's lack of moral scruples in the conduct of international relations, see Robert, 1ST. Earl of Lytton, National and Individual Morality Compared: Inaugural Address on his installation as Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow (Maclehose, Glasgow, 1888).

however, Rawlinson had that elevated, authoritative status to which Lytton was so susceptible. If the prominent specialist made a distinctly magisterial impression on him, as a general legacy of his father-figure complex Lytton gave extra weight to his views. In person, Rawlinson had just such an impact. His novel idea was therefore well-accredited enough to be worth imitating if need be; while its source gave the stamp of expert sanction to the imitator. This makes it a distinct probability that Lytton stored away Rawlinson's idea in case of need. Subsequently, he disinterred it when continued negotiations with Sher Ali seemed abortive, and ^{when} substantiated evidence of Sir Henry's presumption that the Kandaharis were pro-British seemed to indicate the practicability of a British protectorate over Western Afghanistan.

As circumstantial evidence that Rawlinson had made a significant impression on the Viceroy, there is Lytton's intermittent transmission to him of confidential information on the course of Anglo-Afghan relations.¹⁴² Despite Salisbury's warning that Rawlinson had "a tongue too large for his mouth" and was chief suspect as the India Office's garrulous leak, Lytton continued to do so.¹⁴³ Rawlinson was one of the men, along with Disraeli, Layard and Pelly, to whom the Viceroy sent private copies of the 2 July despatch.¹⁴⁴ The correspondence only ceased when Lytton, on the basis of information passed to India by Sir Henry, engaged in a lengthy diatribe against H.M.G. policy and earned himself the Cabinet's

142. See Lytton to Rawlinson, Simla, 5 August 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/1, pp.344-8; Lytton to Rawlinson, Varanasi, 11 January 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.20-1.

143. Salisbury to Lytton, 26 September 1876. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/18, Letter 52.

144. See Lytton to Rawlinson, Simla, 2 July 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.566-7.

unmitigated censure.¹⁴⁵ Piqued, he made Rawlinson the scapegoat for his discomfort, demanded the return of the despatch copy and stopped corresponding with the loquacious councillor for a whole year.¹⁴⁶ As negative justification for the supposition that Lytton, consciously or unconsciously, had ingested Rawlinson's thought, there is no evidence that the suggestion of Western Afghanistan's detachment came from any of the Viceroy's councillors or confidants in India.¹⁴⁷

In London, meantime, if the critical majority in Council had been uneasy about Quetta's occupation, Lytton's Afghan policy produced gloomy forebodings and cries of Russophobia.^{More} especially since the harassed,

145. In mid-77, as Lytton tried to understand the reasons for H.M.G.'s pro-Russian stance, in a letter to Johnson Rawlinson explained "the secret (as) being that we shall need her support before very long against Germany who is considered by far the most dangerous foe to England in the future". The information was passed by Johnson to the Germanophil Lytton, who despatched a seventeen sheet tirade against an anti-German alliance with Russia. Loyally handed over by Sir Henry to Salisbury, the outburst occasioned much dismay among Cabinet members, who worried about Lytton's indiscretion and affirmed that no such alliance had been mentioned, let alone contemplated. Mysteriously and confusingly, Salisbury remarked that, "He (Lytton) knows one or two little things he ought not to know". Lytton's subsequent censure by H.M.G. and Salisbury mortified him. Placing the responsibility for the incident four-square on Rawlinson, he sulkily asked for the return of his copy of the July despatch. See Rawlinson to Johnson, 28 June 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/3, Letter 93; Lytton to Rawlinson, Simla, 28 July 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.654-73; Beaconsfield to Gathorne Hardy, Hughenden, 13 September 1877. HA43.T501/266; Gathorne Hardy to Cairns, Balmoral, 6 September 1877. P.R.O. 30/51/7, Letter 47; Salisbury to Mallet, 6 September 1877. REEL822/102, f.279; Salisbury to Lytton, 4 September 1877. Quoted Cecil, Life of Robert, Vol.2, p.151.

146. See Lytton to Rawlinson, Simla, 25 October 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.959-60.

147. Despite Sir John Strachey's reputation as an eminence grise, there is no written record of his having suggested it. Of Lytton's personal confidants - Egerton, Cavagnari, Sandeman, Colley, Pelly and Burne - only Cavagnari wrote to him about Afghanistan about this time. In his letter Cavagnari did point out that the mountain tribes inhabiting the border owed no allegiance to the Amir of Kabul and might painstakingly be attached to India along with control of such traverses as the Khyber Pass, which lay within their territory. Lytton thought Cavagnari's letter an "able" one, but it certainly did not contain any remark about Afghanistan's dismemberment or specific references to Western Afghanistan. See Lytton to Cavagnari, Simla, 19 May 1877 and Cavagnari to Lytton, Peshawar, 5 June 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/2, pp.396-8, 464-73 & Letter 45.

security-conscious Salisbury was not showing them all the relevant papers and was conducting official business largely through private correspondence. Now fully aroused by the suspicion that untoward political developments were at hand, Council members took every chance of voicing their opinion on what they hoped or feared were Salisbury and Lytton's intentions towards Afghanistan. The highly charged debates on Lytton's proposed administrative re-organisation of the North-West frontier¹⁴⁸ provided just such an opportunity during the second half of 1877. Rawlinson - "I who fight all Lord Lytton's Central Asian battles"¹⁴⁹ could proclaim his ungrudging support for the Viceroy; while the opposition could dismiss them both as alarmist Russophobists.

Rawlinson saw Lytton's proposals for a separate frontier district immediately dependent on the Viceroy as an important, preparatory step to "an absorption of Afghanistan, not through conquest or intrigue but by the good will of the inhabitants and their voluntary surrender of allegiance".¹⁵⁰ But the man who so much favoured "search and destroy" missions in Western Afghanistan in 1840-42, and had evicted 1,000 Afghan families from Kandahar in mid-winter, provided no empirical evidence that "voluntary incorporation"¹⁵¹ was sought by anyone in Western Afghanistan

148. Instead of having a hierarchy of intermediate authorities between the Viceroy and his frontier officers in the Punjab and Sind, it was proposed to establish a new trans-Indus frontier district under a Frontier High Commissioner who would be directly responsible to the Viceroy. Such direct contact obviously gave the Viceroy far greater freedom in making and directing frontier policy, as well as usurping the Punjab traditions much beloved by men such as Montgomery.

149. Rawlinson to Johnson, 28 June 1877. MSS.EUR.F.218/517/3, Letter 93 (Copy).

150. H.C. Rawlinson's memorandum, "On Reorganisation of the North-West Frontier of India", 28 July 1877. L/P&S/7/322, pp.1415-6.

151. This is a term much favoured by Soviet historians, who exaggerate the importance of self-interested ploys by unrepresentative, indigenous merchants and rulers to prove that the Tsarist empire did not expand through conquest but by selflessly responding to spontaneous requests from "oppressed" or "uncivilised" peoples for beneficial inclusion in the Russian state. Rawlinson's ideas show that 20th-century Soviet historians hold no monopoly of the capacity to misrepresent minor incidents in the interests of political expediency. See D. Mackenzie, "Russian Expansion in Central Asia (1864-1885): Brutal Conquest or Voluntary Incorporation? A Review Article", Canadian Slavic Studies, IV, (1970), pp.721-35; L. Tillett, The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities (Chapel Hill, 1969).

or was more than a figment of his imagination. As for the opposition, no matter how sound Perry's case against the coercion or occupation of Afghanistan, his counter-arguments were weakened by their dependence on out-dated authority, misunderstanding of what Rawlinson et al feared, and the lack of any constructive suggestions on how to prevent Russia's opportune harassment of India in the event of war. Labouring under the misapprehended fear of armed invasion, he projected it as 50 to 100 years distant and was likewise unable to see that Russia would only seek to exploit Afghanistan diplomatically, not to hold it permanently.¹⁵² As always, the principal weakness of the Laurentians was their inability to realise how their opponents fears centred on diplomatic harassment by Russia, not armed invasion. Consequently, they often failed to play their own strongest card: that British money, in pre-empting attempts at destabilisation, would be most profitably spent within India in purchasing a secure, ungrudging contentment through relative prosperity.

Either directly or through Johnson and Burne, Rawlinson was Lytton's principal informant on Council matters,¹⁵³ and during 1877 he kept the Viceroy well acquainted with the mounting opposition to his policies. He simultaneously tried to impress on him the need for moderation in his alarms and caution in his activities, for fear of discrediting everyone who distrusted Russia. For Rawlinson was being disreputably associated by his committee colleagues with Haines's alarmed forecasts of imminent Russian advances to Mary and Herat and calls for pre-emptive British advances thence. As it was soon apparent that Russian tenure of Kizyl Arvat was temporary and that she was a much weaker military power than most Britons had imagined, Rawlinson calculated that Russia would not be able to approach Mary for at least another year. Until then, all

152. See Perry's note, attached to: Perry to Salisbury, Slough, 31 July 1877. L/P&S/7/322, pp.1417-31.

153. See Rawlinson to Lytton, 14 September 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/4, Letter 53, f.3.

the "tall talk" forecasts of a C-in-C(India) who was "alarm personified" merely discredited the plan of securing Afghanistan in India's defence.¹⁵⁴ Regarding Sher Ali, the committee was now split between those who thought him still basically friendly, and Rawlinson who regarded him as untrustworthy. Even though he favoured a last attempt at a negotiated settlement through the medium of a Turkish Mission to Kabul, Sir Henry expressly believed that reconciliation was no longer possible and that Lytton, in accordance with his July despatch, had no alternative to "fortiter in re".¹⁵⁵ The Viceroy was duty bound "in adopting all possible precautions to neutralise Russian hostility on the Oxus frontier" and, in contrast with Haines's, his proposals were "very moderate and well considered".¹⁵⁶

Quetta's occupation, the frontier re-organisation scheme, and the Viceroy's July despatch seemed to confirm the worst forebodings of the critical majority in Council that Lytton had indeed embarked on a "new path". Salisbury delayed showing Lytton's July despatch to the Political Committee until it had been discussed in Cabinet, by which time the situation was drastically altered by Lomakin's withdrawal from Kyzil Arvat. When the committee saw Salisbury's official reply, on 29 September, anxiety about an imminent Russian move against Mary had disappeared and the majority in a depleted committee dominated by Perry and Montgomery agreed entirely with the principles of Salisbury's 18 October despatch.¹⁵⁷ Though H.M.C. left open the option of a British mission to Mary, Perry and Montgomery inclined to think it should be forbidden altogether, whereas Rawlinson, irrespective of the respite in Russia's advance, felt

154. Rawlinson to Johnson, 28 June 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/3, Letter 93, (Copy).

155. Rawlinson to Lytton, 18 August 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/4, Letter 37.

156. Rawlinson to Lytton, 14 September 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/4, Letter 53, f.2.

157. See the unheaded slip of paper with Perry and Montgomery's comments. L/P&S/7/322, pp.461-2.

there could "be no harm in our backing up Persia, or in sending an Agent to the Tekkes".¹⁵⁸ For some unaccountable reason, neither faction gave any notice to Lytton's proposals on dismemberment. Perhaps Salisbury had not shown them the complete despatch, perhaps they all chose to ignore the proposals as inopportune: Perry and Montgomery because they still considered the Amir friendly, and Rawlinson because he thought the Turkish Mission to Kabul should first decide the fact of Sher Ali's hostility irrefutably.

Whatever the cause of their ignorance, in both Political Committee and Council suspicion of Lytton's intentions still ran rife. Perry, carefully scrutinising Lytton's earlier, March, despatch on Afghanistan, concluded that his aim was to annex it.¹⁵⁹ Salisbury might reassure him that Lytton confused distant forecasts with immediate practical measures,¹⁶⁰ but Perry's and his allies' gloomiest presentiments ~~felt~~ all the more justified by the web of duplicity which Salisbury appeared to be spinning. By their conservative, carping obstruction of his frontier administration reforms, such opponents as Perry and Montgomery pricked the bubble of the Viceroy's sensitive amour propre and earned themselves his envenomed animosity.¹⁶¹ Anxious about the, unspecified, private rebuffs and personal affronts the Council opposition might administer, and, later, even more afraid it would discover he was "buying" a favourable press for his foreign policy, Lytton condemned the Council as "obstructive and, in its collective capacity, stupid".¹⁶² This antagonism between Lytton and the Council,

158. See Rawlinson to Lytton, 18 August 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/4, Letter 37, f.2v.

159. See Perry to Salisbury, 9 November 1877. MSS.EUR.D.776, index ref.no. 339.

160. See Salisbury to Perry, 14 November 1877. MSS.EUR.D.776, index ref.no. 401.

161. See Lytton to Mallet, Simla, 25 October 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/521/8.

162. Lytton to Burne, Camp Rampur Mundee & Simla, 26 March & 16 June 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.189-90 & 413.

as a whole, continued throughout the rest of his viceroyalty, denying him a majority of favourable support for his political conduct and granting him instead a hot-bed of embarrassing dissent within the very India Office. With the aid, at various times, of Sir Garnet Wolseley and Sir William Merewether, Rawlinson remained the focus of support for Lytton. To him would fall the task ^{within the Council of India} of upholding the Viceroy's future conduct; and, returning to his old role of publicist, in the periodical press as well. Operating under the same initial assumptions, Rawlinson and Lytton's train of thought was broadly identical.

Chapter 7. Maturation and Nemesis.

In the first months of 1878, Rawlinson's frosty isolation within the Council of India and in his relations with the Secretary of State and Viceroy must have borne heavily on a man who, with an exaggerated sense of his own importance, liked to imagine he was no supernumerary in the India Office hierarchy: "Lord Salisbury kept all frontier information even from the Political Committee, especially Rawlinson! whom he dreaded".¹ In Salisbury's opinion, Rawlinson's needless provocation of Sher Ali in "England and Russia in the East" had aggravated Anglo-Afghan relations, and his letter to Johnson about a future Anglo-Russian alliance against Germany had, likewise, created disagreeable tension between Viceroy and Cabinet. More generally, Sir Henry's garrulous indiscretion earned him the opprobrium of a Secretary of State who thought democracy irrational and sought to ignore public opinion. Where leading statesmen arrogate themselves the right to act unaccountably, human failings such as Sir Henry's are often one of the few safeguards of open debate. Distrusted by the Secretary of State, Rawlinson was positively ostracised by the Viceroy. Lytton's lengthy invective against an anti-German pact with Russia had earned him Cabinet censure; as much for the despatch of the letter to someone not even a Privy Councillor as for its disputative content. Like a querulous child who aims to domineer its parents yet simultaneously depends heavily on their approval, Lytton had gone to elaborate lengths in late '77 to discover if H.M.G. were still annoyed with him.² Accepting the assurances of higher authority that no such alliance had been contemplated, in the mortification of embarrassment

1. Burnes to Lytton, I.O., 16 May 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/5, Letter 91.

2. See Colley to Lytton, I.O., 25 January 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/5, Letter 17.

Lytton could not fault his own impetuosity but must needs find a scapegoat: Rawlinson. A piqued Viceroy asked Sir Henry to return his private copy of the July despatch; and when Rawlinson proved unable to do so, Lytton stopped writing to him. Belonging to a committee which was kept as much in the dark as possible about government intentions, and treated with dreadful distrust or spiteful silence by his superiors, Rawlinson was out in the cold politically. Yet this was not important if his function was to plant seeds, not to oversee the harvesting of the crop.

Two coincidental developments of early April 1878 may have given Sir Henry some hope of reinstatement: the 1st. Earl of Cranbrook's³ replacement of Salisbury as Secretary of State for India, on 9 April, and Burne's return as Secretary of the Political and Secret Department, three days later.⁴ Though no record of the correspondence survives, Rawlinson had regularly communicated India Office news to Burne during his absence in India.⁵ Perhaps he presumed that Burne, a well-attested supporter of Lytton, would permit the informal collaboration and unrecorded access to secret information previously granted by Keye. But Burne, too, distrusted Rawlinson as "incautious and uncertain".⁶ Though he might admit that Sir Henry was "clever and able", he still reckoned him too blunt to be dissimulative: his "advocacy of foreign and military policy is not always wise or sufficiently guarded and moderate as to be accepted by the general Council".⁷ Burne, moreover, connived at playing the role of backstage manipulator of policy and had every reason to

3. Gathorne Hardy had first been made Earl of Cranbrook and then, on 14 May 1878, he was created Viscount Cranbrook.

4. In India Burne's wife contracted tuberculosis, forcing him to return to England. Reaching there on 2 February 1878, he stayed at Bournemouth while his wife was convalescing. In the first week of April he was advised of her imminent death, but was forced by service regulations and a sense of duty to return to work at the India Office on 12 April.

5. See Rawlinson to Lytton, 14 September 1877. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/4, Letter 53, f.3.

6. Burne to Cranbrook, 20 November (No year but obviously 1878). HA.43/T501/88.

7. Burne to Lytton, 16 May 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/5, Letter 91.

shun compromising contact with the master of indiscreet bluster and vexing bluntness. For not only did the Departmental Secretary correspond regularly with the Viceroy, by letter and telegram, but he was also a surreptitious, subservient colluder with Lytton. As Lytton's personal representative in London, and "obliged to be very cautious"⁸ by the compromising nature of his conduct, Burne must have estimated Rawlinson to be a dangerous ally. As for the new Secretary of State, Cranbrook was rather lazy and very impressionable. He came to the India Office unwilling to augment his scanty knowledge of Indian affairs and hardly likely, for that reason, to keep a tight rein on his Council. Yet Cranbrook proved no more accessible than his predecessor, even though he did, belatedly, make secret information more available to his Political Committee. Then again, just after his accession to office, events in Afghanistan and beyond precipitated all discussion of Anglo-Afghan relations back to the level of intense, Cabinet debate, where the opinions of Council members counted for little or nothing. As an influential element in government thought or action ^{during} a crisis of imperial dimensions, Rawlinson was doomed to remain out in the cold, except vicariously through Lytton.

In April, during the 1878 crisis in Anglo-Russian relations which originated with the Russo-Turkish War, reached a climax with the Treaty of San Stefano and culminated in the Congress of Berlin,⁹ Milyutin had put forward plans for a military demonstration towards Afghanistan's northern frontier. The realisation of his proposal involved an advance of 15,000-20,000 men on three lines: from the Caspian to Chardzhou on the road to Mary, and from Turkestan into Fergana and to Oxham on the

8. Burne to Lytton, 15 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 112, f.2v.

9. For a lucid summary, see K. Bourne, The Foreign Policy of Victorian England (Oxford, 1970), pp.130-6.

Afghan-Bukharan border.¹⁰ Under Von Kaufman's overall command, the expedition set out against a background of steadily aggravated Anglo-Russian relations and impending war. Despite reports, dating from mid-June, of these military movements in a sensitive area, Lytton did not telegraph London until 1 July. In the meantime, an amicable settlement of the two powers' differences had been reached. The Russian advance was halted at Dzham and no British reaction was contemplated other than informing Salisbury, now Foreign Secretary, in Berlin.¹¹

In the absence of documentary detail, it is difficult to determine whether the Russian move was a purely defensive measure to guard Turk-estan at its nearest point to India, or whether it would have escalated, in the wake of the Stolypetov Mission to Kabul, into hostile military operations along India's North-West frontier. Whatever, high-ranking Russian officers in Central Asia were subsequently very reticent about their intentions¹² and it is quite possible that, had war broken out after an abortive congress, the Russians would have opportunely used this advance guard to mount a demonstration into Afghanistan. Though it came from a northerly as well as a north-westerly direction, the nature and occasion of the Russian advance would definitely seem to vindicate the prognostications so often made by Rawlinson and Frere. Alternately, of course, it can be argued that their publicly proclaimed anxieties confirmed Russian estimates of that stratagem best calculated to unnerve British statesmen, and hence helped realise the very eventuality the "forward" school had aimed to counteract. A truly Laingian knot.

10. See Morris, Anglo-Russian Diplomacy in Central Asia 1873-1887, p.125.

11. See Cavagnari to Lytton, Peshawar, 13 & 29 June 1878. MSS.EUR.E. 218/519/8, Letters 28 & 41; Minute Paper, "Russian proceedings on or near the Oxus", 3 July 1878. L/P&S/3/212, pp.823-31.

12. Witness the reactions of the Russian officers Grodekov and Maslov when asked for details of the episode by the reporter Charles Marvin. See Marvin, The Russian Advance towards India, pp.160-1.

If the advance of a Russian force towards Mary and the Afghan frontier created little alarm in India or Britain, its diplomatic accompaniment, the despatch of a Russian mission to Kabul, set off a train of events which culminated three months later in the Second Afghan War. Despatched under the instructions of Milyutin and the Tsar in person, the Russian envoy, Stolyetov, undoubtedly exceeded his instructions in drawing up a draft treaty with Sher Ali, ^{Especially} after the whole raison d'être of his mission had evaporated with the signing of the Peace of Berlin. There must also remain some doubt as to whether the Amir received the offer of a Russian alliance enthusiastically,¹³ or whether he felt compelled to agree to it by the presence of Russian troops on his northern border. Despite later British attempts to provide it, there is no watertight evidence that the Amir intended openly avowing a Russian alliance. The fruitless Simla conference of 1873 had led to his general disillusionment with Britain as an ally, and Rawlinson's book had stimulated his active suspicion and distrust; but his primary concern, as shown in his belated reply to Britain's October '78 ultimatum,¹⁴ was to safeguard his independence of Russia as well as Britain by only allowing temporary missions into his country. For Lytton, however, Stolyetov's presence at Kabul confirmed all his suspicions of Russian duplicity, totally vindicated the warnings given in the July '77 despatch and furnished him with an opportunity to force

13. Morris accepts that the Amir actually pressed the idea of a Russo-Afghan alliance on a reluctant Stolyetov. But one wonders whether this idea arose from contemporary Russian propaganda, aimed at minimising their responsibility for what turned out to be an acutely embarrassing episode. See Morris, Anglo-Russian Diplomacy in Central Asia 1873-1887, p. 135.

14. As summarised in Lytton's telegram, Sher Ali explained his refusal to receive the Chamberlain Mission not as a hostile act but through fear of losing his independence, ^{since} there was an appearance of intimidation about the British mission. Since no enmity existed between Britain and Afghanistan, the Amir wished to resume friendly relations and stated his willingness to receive a temporary British mission, like the Russian one, of twenty to thirty members. See Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 5 December 1878. L/P&S/3/216, p. 1021.

the reopening of negotiations with Sher Ali.

Unshakeably convinced that the Hindu Kush and its spurs were India's great natural boundary, and that the really vital military position between Russian and British territory was Herat, Lytton had continued to favour the idea of Afghanistan's dismemberment. But in 1878, with Anglo-Afghan relations suspended and the Amir obdurately opposed even to the admission of British agents, there was little likelihood that financial inducements¹⁵ could persuade him to give up Kandahar and Herat. Apart from his spying activities in Western Afghanistan - "about the various political parties or persons in Afghanistan, and their relative prospects, in case of a vacancy on the throne",¹⁶ Lytton may have distributed largesse in an attempt to build up a pro-British party. Thereby accelerating the insurrection which he thought Sher Ali's heavy fiscal exactions made inevitable. But, as the Kandahar news letter steadily reported the usual calm,¹⁷ the anticipated revolt failed to materialise; offering him no prospect of the independent disintegration of Afghanistan or the imminent deposition of the enemy whom he so much distrusted. Powerless, Lytton therefore seized the excuse of the Stoloyetov Mission to advocate the despatch of a British mission to Kabul. In the knowledge that only a new round of negotiations for the old concessions on free access and control of Afghan foreign policy would gain Cabinet approval; and in the belief that the mission would positively ascertain the extent of Sher Ali's hostility.¹⁸

Subsequent events - Lytton's precipitate despatch of the Chamberlain

15. See Burne to Pelly, Simla, 5 August 1877. MSS.EUR.F.126/BOX9.

16. Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 3 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, p.546.

17. See, variously, the Kandahar news letters for the weeks ending November 1877, 20 February 1878, 22 April 1878 & 13 September 1878. India Foreign Proceedings, Vol. 1217, pp.98 & 478, no's. 126 & 89, Vol.1218, p.107, no.127 & Vol.1219, p.130, no.157.

18. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 3 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.531&52.

Mission, its rebuttal at Ali-Masjid, hasty interchanges between Lytton and the Cabinet on the need for military operations, and the eventual declaration of war on Sher Ali on 21 November - have occasioned some difference of authoritative opinion.¹⁹ ^{Both} as to the exact measure of Lytton's personal responsibility for the war, and the point at which he came to feel armed conflict was necessary. Those who assign the Viceroy sole responsibility¹⁹ are balanced by the one authority who feels the Cabinet was not altogether reluctantly "press-ganged" by a disobedient Viceroy,²⁰ and the other who assigns as much liability to Beaconsfield and Cranbrook.²¹ There is also some disagreement among the experts as to whether Lytton was intent on war before the Chamberlain Mission, whether its rejection finally convinced him war was necessary, or whether, still hoping for a negotiated settlement with Sher Ali, he reluctantly decided on a limited war only in mid-October.

Examining these various views in relation to the evidence,²² the conclusion seems inescapable that Lytton must bear the greater burden of liability for the actual outbreak of hostilities on 21 November. Having contemplated war as early as August '77,²³ Lytton's readiness to anticipate it in August/September '78 does not reflect some innocuous tendency to speculate about a range of future possibilities. Rather, it demonstrates that the Viceroy was quite prepared to resort to a military solution; which he imagined as a lightning war reaching a speedy

19. See M. Cowling, "Lytton, the Cabinet and the Russians, August to November 1878"; Prasad, The Foundations of India's Foreign Policy, Vol. 1, pp. 205-7.

20. See Singhal, India and Afghanistan, pp. 40-42.

21. See Klein, "Who Made the Second Afghan War?"

22. In illustrating the continuity between Rawlinson and Lytton's thinking, and hence the links between Rawlinson's ideas and the outbreak of the Second Afghan War, it seems an essential part of the thesis to show that liability for the war was Lytton's primarily. Demonstrating this point would take up an abnormally long section of the chapter and give it a lop-sided appearance. The case has therefore been argued in an appendix. See Appendix D, pp. 329-36.

23. See above, chapter 6, pp. 230-31.

conclusion in one, or at most two, short campaigns. For a short time, while a negotiated settlement with the Amir was still believed possible, ministerial opinion was principally divided between Salisbury's idea of gradual, "pacific invasion" and Lytton's more immediate promise, by linking stringent demands with attractive concessions, of a British-dominated Afghanistan. But after the rebuff of the Chamberlain Mission - sent forward by a deliberately disobedient Viceroy - Lytton definitely pressed for a military solution. And by his perpetual proddings, defended and supported by occasional outbursts from an amenable Secretary of State, he got the war he had all along wanted as much as not. In allocating responsibilities for the Anglo-Afghan conflict, the Cabinet's fault is principally one of omission, the Viceroy's one of commission. The London ministers were accessories after the fact, Lytton the perpetrator of war. Yet if the Second Afghan War was Lytton's war, Frere, Salisbury and Rawlinson bear a wider responsibility for the "forward" policies which led to it; Beaconsfield injected Lytton with some of his militancy in defending the empire; and Cranbrook, by the default of his amenability, provided the Viceroy with the initiative freedom which he so much wanted and abused.

The image of Lytton as an aspiring manipulator of policy, always with an alternative course of action in reserve, ever tempted to force the pace but appreciating the time for retreat from personal predilection in compliance with H.M.G. or force of circumstance, ^{may seem crude. It} is well illustrated, ^{however,} by reference to his ^{own} objectives in entering a war with Sher Ali. The Viceroy's principal war aim was neither the openly-declared punishment of the Amir, nor solely the forcible extraction of concessions; nor even the establishment of a "scientific frontier" incorporating the Kurram valley and Khyber Pass in British territory. It was the disintegration of Afghanistan. In an early-September minute²⁴ officially outlining

24. See Minute by the Viceroy, 4 September 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/10.

the demands and promises which Chamberlain would present to the Amir, Lytton anticipated the mission's failure but rejected the invasion and subjugation of Afghanistan in favour of an advance of two military columns; up to the head of the Kurram valley and from Quetta towards Kandahar. This limited military initiative, supplemented by negotiations with Sher Ali's enemies, should prove sufficient to disrupt the Amir's polity internally and, "there is little doubt his kingdom would fall to pieces of itself". From Sher Ali's successor, "we would endeavour by every means in our power, to secure the whole of Southern and Western Afghanistan, but we should decline to incur any responsibility for the northern provinces".²⁵ In an earlier section of the minute, Lytton had also outlined India's "purely military" line of defence as the crest of the Hindu Kush, along to Herat, and thence down Afghanistan and Baluchistan's western frontier to the Arabian Sea. Notably, and despite many contemporary misapprehensions, this was a military not a political line, and only meant to serve as Britain's stance in the event of an Anglo-Russian war, its ^{outline} cannot be taken as evidence that Lytton intended annexing all Afghanistan up to the Hindu Kush. It seems likely the Viceroy included the section ^{in order} to push the Cabinet towards accepting a still more radical, though less extreme, departure from established policy: a British protectorate over Southern and Western Afghanistan.

This early-September glimmer of a disintegration policy brightened to a perceptible flame in a late-October letter to Sir John Strachey;²⁶ written while the latter was on leave in London and the Cabinet was still undecided about war. Subordinating the selection and prosecution of immediate, military measures to the attainment of the Government of

25. Ibid, p.41.

26. See Lytton to Strachey, Simla, 24 October 1878. C/141, ff.228-231.

India's "ultimate and permanent object", Lytton reckoned, by the year's end, on the permanent possession of the Khyber Pass and on occupation of the Kurram valley far enough up to threaten Kabul and dominate Jalalabad. Supremely, "Kandahar and the richest provinces of Afghanistan will have fallen into our possession and we shall have established in them allied Governments chosen by the people themselves, friendly to our interests and necessarily subordinate to our control".²⁷ "What I wish to bring about is a reduced Cabul, under a ruler friendly and in a manner pledged to us, with Southern and Western Afghanistan under a ruler or rulers owing to us their independence".²⁷ Assuming "that the policy which has so signally failed ... of the creation of a strong, united, independent power at Kabul is now abandoned", one week after the war had begun Lytton informed Cranbrook of his two "cardinal principles": "first, disintegration of the present Afghan Power; and secondly abstention as much as possible from annexation and permanent military occupation".²⁸ Sure he had only to kick the door down and the whole structure of the Amirate of Kabul would collapse, the Viceroy's belief in a lightning campaign accounts for the readiness with which he had anticipated war. If it is apparent, then, that Lytton had contemplated war with Kabul as early as July '77, positively connived at military measures from at least September '78 onwards, and bears the principal liability for the outbreak of a second Anglo-Afghan conflict, it is equally clear that the Viceroy's particular objective, courtesy of Rawlinson, was the dismemberment of the Amirate of Kabul.

In the India Office in mid-78, the news of Russia's troop movements in Central Asia - given to the Political Committee a whole month after

27. Ibid, ff.230-1.

28. Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 28 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.869-70.

its receipt - elicited Perry's advice to his colleagues "not to be over-nervous" since the possibility of unsettling the North-west frontier had passed with the likelihood of an Anglo-Russian war.²⁹ Rawlinson's immediate reaction is unrecorded. Further news in that first week of August, of the Stolyetov Mission, prompted Burne to recommend an undefined "measure of so decided a character" as would speedily reincorporate Afghanistan in Britain's sphere of influence or, failing Sher Ali's compliance, the occupation of Afghanistan's strategic western half by troops and agents.³⁰ Like Lytton, Burne welcomed the Russian mission as a vindication of the Viceroy's premonitory July '77 despatch. He forthwith drew up, and presented for Cranbrook's approval, two drafts of a "strong remonstrance to the real offender - Russia".³¹ But although his "blond and thunder" draft, demanding Russia's immediate withdrawal of her agent, was accepted "in its essentials" by Cranbrook,³² it did not get past a dubious Salisbury. All remonstrances to Russia were useless, in the Foreign Secretary's estimation, unless backed by vigorous military action.³³ Therefore, though he wearily agreed to be assailed by exhortatory drafts from Burne, he nevertheless "toned down to milk and water" the Departmental Secretary's recent offering; with Cranbrook upholding his Cabinet colleague's alterations.³⁴ For his part, Burne dismissed Salisbury as a "man of big words and timid acts". He^{therefore} sought to manoeuvre the Foreign Secretary into support for the Viceroy's policies, of which Burne thought him a "powerful", "influential" and "dangerous opponent", by repeatedly depicting the present situation as a development of the new path Salisbury had himself begun to open up in 1875.³⁵

As Lytton's "faithful henchman" and "a loyal subject of yours",

29. See Minute Paper, "Central Asia. Russian movements in the direction of Afghanistan", 19 July 1878. L/P&S/3/212, pp.1099-1102.

30. See Burne to Cranbrook, 8 August 1878. HA.43/T501/88.

31. Burne to Cranbrook, 6 August 1878. HA.43/501/88.

32. Burne to Lytton, 8 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 34.

33. See Salisbury to Cranbrook, 9 August 1878. HA.43/T501/269.

34. Burne to Lytton, 18 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 39.

35. See Burne to Salisbury, 28 August 1878. C.C.L. E/Burne to Salisbury, Letter 15; Burne to Lytton, 11 October 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 84.

Burne's machinations also extended to providing the home press, especially the "Pall Mall Gazette", with partisan news items: to help create a climate of public opinion favourable to Lytton's singular exertions. He also reported direct to Lytton, in expensive, cyphered, private telegrams paid for with the Viceroy's own cash, on press and public reaction to the Afghan crisis and the likelihood of Cabinet approval for whatever action the Viceroy deemed necessary.³⁶ In none of these activities did Burne enlist Rawlinson's aid, even though Sir Henry was a staunch supporter of Lytton's. The bureaucratic standardisation introduced into the Political and Secret Department by Salisbury and Mallet had ended the informal conferences of Kaye's regime. As important, "in a situation where a certain amount of antagonism exists between Secretary of State and Council and Viceroy", Burne had to "worm my way up again with great care and caution" and was obliged to be very prudent for fear Mallet would catch him out in his press associations or intrigues.³⁷ Sir Henry, whom Burne found "incautious and uncertain", was hardly a trustworthy ally in such enterprises. There was no caballing now within the department.

Rawlinson for his bombast and lack of circumspection, and his committee colleagues for their opposition to an aggressive Afghan policy, were not consulted by Cranbrook during the critical discussions prior to the outbreak of war. However, this did not prevent their offering advice, expressing concern, or otherwise acting spontaneously. If Rawlinson could not directly affect decision-making, he could at least revert to his old role of publicist; using his vast store of factual knowledge and his prestige as a Central Asian authority to defend and justify

36. See Burne to Lytton, 18 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 39.

37. Burne to Lytton, 27 August & 15 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letters 48 & 112.

official policy. Two days after Sher Ali's rejection of the Chamberlain Mission, he sought Cranbrook's permission to write for the periodical press.³⁸ Expressly presenting his own opinions, he would "lay before the public a general view of the importance of Afghanistan to British India". Welcoming any prestigious validation of the current government attention to Afghanistan, Cranbrook presumably agreed; for Rawlinson immediately began writing the first of several articles which appeared in the course of the Second Afghan War. In seeking official permission, Rawlinson also confessed that he welcomed the prospect of hostilities with a feeling of relief: "in as much as there is less danger in dealing with an open enemy than with a false friend". He then suggested to Cranbrook that, after its easy military defeat, Afghanistan should be divided in two: the eastern and northern portions to be governed by a "native, friendly governor at Cabul to manage in confidential concert with a British Envoy", while the western and southern sections, incorporating Jalalabad, Kandahar and Herat, "we should occupy militarily and more or less directly administer". Only 10,000-15,000 men would be needed to effect this occupation successfully by the end of the year.

Whereas Rawlinson welcomed the prospect of hostilities, Montgomery advocated a delay in military operations until the following year. Sir Robert made the excuse that any partial advance, such as Lytton suggested on 26 September, would be a weak and vulnerable one. Instead he reckoned that the existing border should be strengthened, a declaration of war avoided, and an advance in strength perhaps be made in the spring.³⁹ Apparently, Montgomery's ulterior hope was that tension would have sufficiently relaxed by then to make armed conflict undesirable. If Burne

38. See Rawlinson to Cranbrook, Watford, 24 September 1878. R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers. "Autographs 1850-60-70".

39. See Montgomery to Cranbrook, 4 October 1878. Montgomery's "Memo on the latest telegrams". HA.43/T501/104.

is to be believed, members of the Council such as Perry and Norman maintained close contact with the press and with officials in Calcutta hostile to Lytton's policies; thwarting some of Burne's press arrangements by their contrary intercession during the two months preceding the declaration of war.⁴⁰ As Liberal and Lawrentian opinion became more uneasy, "The Times" of 17 October and 14 November reproduced, with minor cuts, Frere's two letter/memoranda of 1874-5 to Sir John Kaye.⁴¹ The newspaper introduced the first letter as "an important contribution towards the formation of public opinion on the present crisis in our relations with Afghanistan"; and for the second simply announced it was "enabled to publish the following important 'Note' by Sir Bartle Frere". This episode in manipulating public opinion, carried out without prior reference to a distant Frere,⁴² smacks of an initiative by Salisbury, who was fully aware of the letter/memoranda's anomalous status as confidential, India Office papers. In Burne's estimation, Frere's memos, along with the letters written to the press by Sir James Stephen, "have been admirable and have done good".⁴³ A steady correspondent of Lytton's, in his frequently published letters Stephen proved a lucid propagandist and able defender of the Viceroy's aggression. There is every reason to suppose that Lytton might have employed Rawlinson in such a role, had Sir Henry proved able to work surreptitiously or circumspectly.

As a concession to its official status, Cranbrook had allowed the Political Committee, in strictest confidence, to read Lytton's 8 September

40. See Burne to Lytton, 15 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 112.

41. See "The Times", 17 October & 14 November 1878, pp.10 & 4, cols. 1-5 & 1-4.

42. See Sir Bartle Frere, Afghanistan and South Africa: A Letter to the Rt. Hon. W.E. Gladstone regarding portions of his Midlothian Speeches (London, 1881), p.19.

43. Burne to Lytton, 15 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 112, f.1v.

minute.⁴⁴ Shown it rather belatedly, three weeks after its receipt and on the day the Cabinet decided on a final ultimatum to Sher Ali, the members made their comments, fully aware that war was now a distinct possibility and using the opportunity to record their reactions. Sir William Merewether, who had joined the Council in mid-77 and the committee in October of that same year, pointed out that "war is here absolutely forced upon us and I hope will be promptly and vigorously carried out". By repulsing a British envoy and honouring a Russian one, Sher Ali showed that he no longer sought British friendship or feared her power; while Russia had prominently displayed "her fixed intention of contesting with us supremacy in the East". Using this opportune moment to secure India more fully than before, as suggested in his minute Lytton should occupy the line of the Hindu Kush extended to Herat and, if possible, spread British influence throughout Afghan Turkestan.⁴⁵ Halliday took Lytton's minute, in the light of recent events, to mean the forcible conquest and annexation of all Afghanistan up to the Hindu Kush. He deprecated this course as "ostentatiously cynical and immoral", "disastrous to our Indian Empire" and "entirely satisfactory to hostile Russian politicians".⁴⁵ Montgomery realised that Cranbrook was little interested in their views, but briefly expressed his fear that the first Afghan fiasco would be repeated; with a permanent occupation of their country setting the Afghans in perpetual revolt and burdening Britain with grave political and financial difficulties and dangers.⁴⁵ Apart from thinking an invasion politically inexpedient, as a jurist Perry could find no just cause for war with the Amir. An independent prince under no treaty obligation to Britain, Sher Ali was sympathetically

44. See Minute Paper, "Afghan and Central Asian affairs. Minute by the Viceroy", 5 October 1878. L/P&S/7/19, p.564.

45. Merewether's, Halliday's, Montgomery's, Perry's & Rawlinson's comments, 25 & 26 October 1878. L/P&S/7/19, pp.565-8, 569-71, 573-5, 577-8 & 579-82.

portrayed as having rightly refused to accept a mission pressed intimidatingly upon him at a time when the Indian press was carrying numerous articles on Afghanistan's dismemberment or annexation. Justice lay with the Amir, and his 18 October reply to Lytton's earlier note should not be seen, not as an "insult", but as the brave response of a ruler who chose to try military conclusions rather than surrender his independence meekly.⁴⁵

Rawlinson penned his comments a day later, after reading three of his colleagues' condemnatory remarks. He crudely dismissed Perry's protests about an unjust war as "sentimental": "in the relations of the great European powers with the half-civilised Chieftains of the East", "the fine drawn distinctions of Western international law are brushed aside as mere cobwebs when substantial and imperial interests intervene". Raison d'état, together with the right of the strongest and of self-preservation, took precedence over all moral considerations. But Rawlinson easily found a casus belli in Sher Ali's "insult" to a British envoy and his "repeated acts of unfriendliness". After the "annihilation" of the Afghan army and the occupation of Kabul, Britain should dispense with a puppet-king and accept the "heavier responsibility" of annexing all Afghanistan. Governing the upper plateau around Kandahar would not be difficult, while the troublesome, independent tribes of the northern and south-eastern frontiers could be bought off with liberal allowances and offers of military service. Rejecting Lytton's suggestion of a cordon of military posts along the passes of the Hindu Kush, Rawlinson plumped instead for the Amu Darya as a "convenient line of demarcation", attending an amicable Anglo-Russian understanding on the subject of spheres of influence. Baselessly optimistic about passive Afghan acceptance of British rule, Sir Henry selfishly concluded that the "additional millions" for a British administration

should be borne by the Indian Exchequer "as a fair premium of insurance on the general revenues of India".⁴⁵ With Indians paying the cost of their imperial masters' security and well-being, it is little wonder that a politically brutal Rawlinson could anticipate the annexation of a pile of rocks with such sang-froid.

The dissenting members of the Political Committee were in something of a humiliating position, since they could express their opposition but not officially record their dissent. At the same time, their official status and the confidential nature of their work prevented the public expression of their disenchantment. Though reassured by Cranbrook that no annexation or occupation of Afghanistan was contemplated, in the first week of November Perry remained unconvinced.⁴⁶ Likewise suspicious that territorial advances were contemplated, Montgomery warned that such a course would incur permanent Afghan hostility, and necessitate the expensive maintenance of British rule at the point of the sword.⁴⁷ Only after the Second Afghan War had begun, and extra funds had to be voted, did the full Council of India have a chance of openly expressing its views. Then, several Council members legitimately recorded "Dissenting Minutes". Perry repeated that the war was unjust. If international law, whose main principles were "founded on large views of morality and justice", frowned on the invasion of a weak European state because its possession was convenient to the captor, such a proceeding was "equally forbidden to a civilised power in Asia", where that law and its principles still applied. The main argument which Perry pressed, however, was that the war was not an Indian but an imperial conflict, dependent on Cabinet policy and directed to serve imperial and European interests. The financial burdens of a military campaign and recurrent Afghan administrative

46. See Perry to Cranbrook, Slough, 6 November 1878, f.2. HA.43/T501/104.

47. See Montgomery to Cranbrook, 14 November 1878. HA.43/T501/35.

expenses "should not be thrown on the revenues of a poor country such as India". Though Perry angrily realised that "no farthing of this can ever be expected from England". Further dissenting minutes in much the same strain were written by Montgomery, Ellis, R.W.Dalyell and Sir W. Muir.⁴⁸ The injection of this moral element into discussion of its necessity made the Second Afghan War an even more emotive issue than if the differences of opinion had simply been between Conservatives and Liberals, Laurentians and proponents of the "forward" school.

In the Lords and the Commons, the war was one of the most partisan of modern British conflicts: a circumstance owing much to the long existence of two antagonistic schools of strategic thought, and the two political parties divergent association with them. Both Houses, as well as the periodical and daily press, were the setting for a perpetual, acrimonious debate over the pro's and contra's of the Laurentian and "forward" schools, and their subscribers' relative shares of liability for the war. It was not long before Rawlinson was drawn into the incipient, political sniping and personal accusation and counter-accusation of this public and parliamentary debate.

In the Commons and "The Times" in early December, the Liberal M.P. W.E. Forster, repeated a suggestion that Rawlinson's book, in "recommending the annexation of a great part of Afghanistan", had "much to do with his (Sher Ali's) suspicion of the intentions and real desires of England" arising from Lytton's 1876 proposals for British representatives.⁴⁹ Replying immediately in "The Times" letter column,⁵⁰ Rawlinson emphatically denied recommending anything of the sort. He asserted, with reference to

48. See Dissenting Minutes by Perry, Ellis, Montgomery, Dalyell & Muir, 3, 4, 5 & 6 December 1878. C/128, pp.282-92, 293-6, 297-8, 299-301 & 302-3.

49. Parliamentary Debates, 3.S., 243, 9 December 1878, col.394; see also W.E. Forster's letter "To the Editor", "The Times", 11 December 1878, p.11, col.2.

50. W.C. Rawlinson's letter "To the Editor", "The Times", 12 December 1878, p.10, col.4.

the work, that the status of the military force he had foreseen occupying Kandahar and Herat was to be one of "temporary visitors in a friendly country". As for the accusation of antagonising Sher Ali, he claimed that "the estrangement had occurred long before my book was printed". Forby, the idea of administering the districts along the line of march, "which is supposed to have produced the Ameer's irritation, was only suggested to meet the continuance of an irritation already existing - cause and effect being thus placed by my critics in an entirely false relation". Devil-may-care and smugly satisfied that his advice of the last forty years was now being heeded, Sir Henry supposed the book's steady sales had vindicated its purpose of drawing public attention to the Russian danger to India. "That it may have offended Russian susceptibilities or angered Sher Ali, already committed against us, is really of very little consequence".

Having received Cranbrook's permission to write for the press, Rawlinson's article, "The Afghan Crisis", duly appeared in the December issue of "The Nineteenth Century".⁵¹ The piece was written before the war broke out and was given with the assurance that the statements made and opinions voiced were the author's alone: he was not a government mouthpiece. Refusing to accept any British liability for the 1878 crisis in Anglo-Afghan relations, Rawlinson cited as principal contributors "the intractable character of the ruler of Afghanistan" and "the persistent advance of Russia towards the Indian border-lands".⁵² In a crude, envenomed, scurrilous and entirely unreasonable attack on Sher Ali, he drew a picture of an insane ruler intransigently mistrustful of his generous, conciliatory, ingenuous British allies, on whom he made "troublesome and tedious" demands before deciding, after the 1873 Simla conference,

51. H.C. Rawlinson, "The Afghan Crisis", The Nineteenth Century, 4(1878), pp.969-89.

52. Ibid, pp.969, 974 & 7, 980-1 & 984.

to cast in his lot with the Russians. With Sher Ali supposedly pursuing a devious course of aloofness and anti-British intrigue thereafter, Rawlinson variously and unconvincingly explained this as the result of Russian tutelage or the Amir's attempt to play Britain and Russia off against each other.⁵²

Convinced that Sher Ali was being manipulated by Von Kaufman, the real cause of Rawlinson's unfavourable misrepresentations was his deep-seated suspicion of Russian motives and intentions. Russia's conquest of Central Asia was not an end in itself but a means to an end: acquiring a point d'appui against England on her only vulnerable frontier. Basing his suppositions on Russian press reports and other, undivulged, intelligence sources, Rawlinson imagined St. Petersburg had intended a massive 70,000 man assault on Herat in the spring of 1878. But, ^{he concluded, it} had resigned itself to the more practicable scheme of advancing, with Sher Ali's permission, into Afghanistan and thence seizing Herat or, with his refusal, taking Mary. Stolyetov's Mission, then, was nothing but an attempt "to confirm Sher Ali's hostility to England and to provoke us to enter on an armed conflict with the Afghans".⁵² so that British attention was diverted from Russia's more immediate intrigues against the Ottoman Empire. He defended Lytton's action in sending the Chamberlain Mission as "the fittest and most honourable course", otherwise "Cabul would have become Russianised".⁵² The Amir's rejection of that mission was justifiably a casus belli; not merely on legal grounds but because the rebuff adequately demonstrated his long-term intention, aggravated by his alliance with Russia, of harming British interests.

Rawlinson's next article, "Russia and the Indian Frontier",⁵³ appeared in January 1879, though written the previous December. It was in much the same vein. Repeatedly accusing Russia of dissimulation, deceit and

53. H.C. Rawlinson, "Russia and the Indian Frontier", Quarterly Review, 147 (1879), pp.229-64.

disingenuity - though providing little concrete evidence - he steadily referred to his past prophecies having proved correct: in order to establish his credentials as a Cassandra and his legitimacy as an incontrovertible Central Asian expert. He then predicted Russia would direct her attention to "the recovery of her lost ground in Afghanistan".⁵⁴ In preventing this, he opposed outright an immediate occupation of Herat as premature, enormously expensive and strategically dangerous, since the post would be isolated and lacking lateral supports. Instead, he advocated complete control of Afghan foreign policy in British hands, a British Resident permanently placed at Kabul with assistants placed wherever required, and the south-eastern border tribes placed under British tutelage. Additionally, the North-West frontier should be rectified by the annexation of the Khyber Pass together with other passes and valleys such as the Kurram. There should also be ^{the} "right of placing garrisons temporarily in Jellalabad, Candahar and Herat, whenever the interests of India may require it".⁵⁴

Reaction to Rawlinson's two periodical articles was mixed, and his reputation did not remain unviolated. In India, they earned him Lytton's approval and a partial restoration to viceregal favour. Sent the author's first proof of his second piece, in February Lytton pronounced it "excellent", and congratulated Rawlinson on having "indicated very accurately the general character of the territorial arrangements we shall probably insist upon".⁵⁵ Fishing for inside information, Rawlinson expressed his anxiety to hear the exact details from Lytton.⁵⁶ But the Viceroy was unable to give him any positive news of the chances and nature of an early settlement, since Yakub Khan then seemed unwilling to

54. Ibid, pp.260 & 263.

55. Lytton to Rawlinson, Calcutta, 21 February 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.133.

56. See Rawlinson to Lytton, 31 January 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/7, Letter 14a.

negotiate. By contrast with its favourable reception in India, Rawlinson's article earned him severe censure from the New World. In an article in the New York political and literary journal "International Review", a Mr. Gustafson referred to Rawlinson's "Afghan Crisis" as "the strongest defence, on the whole, for the present British Government's Afghan policy".⁵⁷ Gustafson found it well worth examining as "an admirable specimen of the unequivocal system of half truths which has marked so strongly the conduct and declarations of Lord Beaconsfield's ministry and its supporters". Yet though he denounced the article for its clever mesh of mis-statements, omissions, and evasions, its adroit plausibility in explaining away the most important documents, and its skilful confusion of unavoidable admissions, Gustafson detracted from the force of his critique by mistakenly supposing Rawlinson to have been a member of the Viceroy's Council and chief of the "Bombay School".

Meantime, unforeseen commissariat problems and Home Government caution had combined to thwart the Viceroy's pursuit of his particular war aim. Still not absolutely certain if the Cabinet would endorse a disintegration policy,⁵⁸ Lytton had wilfully aimed to present them with a fait accompli by marching speedily to Kandahar, inducing a rising there against Kabul, and then soliciting H.M.G.'s recognition of Southern and Western Afghanistan's "spontaneous" independence.⁵⁹ Disconcertingly, a

57. A.C.F. Gustafson, "Sir Henry Rawlinson's 'Afghan Crisis'", International Review, 6 (New York, 1879), pp.443-62.

58. In his late-November letter to Cranbrook, Lytton could still only "assume" that the old policy of a strong, united, independent Afghanistan had been dispensed with. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Camp, Lahore, 28 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E. 218/518/3, pp.869-70.

59. Lytton always augmented a description of the policy for which he sought permission with scenarios of alternatives to be followed should it fail. He then, forcefully and deliberately, mistook permission for his immediate action as an admission of his freedom to follow up these alternatives in the event of initial failure. Unaware of this opportunism, in mid-December the Cabinet was surprised to hear that he intended advancing to Kandahar. Lytton then pretended to be taken aback by H.M.G.'s query since he had long assumed that permission to occupy Kandahar had been granted. See Lytton to Cranbrook, 3 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.531-52; S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegram), 19 December 1878. Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 21 December 1878. L/P&S/3/216, pp.1075 & 1077.

month after the outbreak of war, General Stewart, in charge of the Quetta/Kandahar column, was still stuck at Khojak less than half-way to Kandahar. Thereby, Lytton was robbed of: "our early occupation of Candahar or the immediately adjoining country ... an object of the utmost importance".⁶⁰ Despite three months preparation, the commissariat proved ineffective in transporting sufficient supplies from Jacobabad to Quetta/Dadhar, and by early January this supply-line "long behind-hand is now breaking down".⁶¹ As Stewart's advance ground to a halt, the Cabinet began to get very suspicious of Lytton's intentions.^{H.M.G.} pointed out that it did not want to be fettered with political promises without its previous knowledge, and demanded full information on Lytton's plans for a future settlement.⁶²

Alarmed by Lytton's September minute into believing he aimed to occupy Western Afghanistan or seize the Hindu Kush, within the Cabinet Northcote had always been uneasy about a disintegration policy.⁶³ And Cranbrook, though he had never expressly forbidden dismemberment,⁶⁴ imagined: "Upon the whole one government in Afghanistan, assuming its entire friendliness, would be better than many as I am afraid their feuds would keep the country in perpetual turmoil".⁶⁵ With "great and growing distress" in Britain itself, payment for the war by an English loan to India, or deferment of the cotton duties' removal, would prove very unpopular. In Cranbrook's words: "the Cabinet is uneasy and anxious...

60. Lytton to Cranbrook, Calcutta, 26 December 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, p.918.

61. Lytton to Cranbrook, Calcutta, 10 January 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.18.

62. See S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegram), 19 December 1878. L/P&S/3/216, p.1075.

63. See Northcote to Cranbrook, 2 & 15 October 1878. HA.43/T501/271.

64. Strachey let Cranbrook see the letter written to him by Lytton on the 24 October. The Secretary of State, though he had it printed up as an India Office paper, took no issue with the fuller statement it contained of a disintegration policy. See Cranbrook to Lytton, 21 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/3, Letter 69.

65. Cranbrook to Lytton, 2 December 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/3, Letter 72, f.284v.

and would hail peace with a safe and moderate settlement".⁶⁶ Even without the benefit of Cranbrook's letters, from his telegrams Lytton correctly gauged the signs of Cabinet unwillingness to sanction disintegration. With a good eye to political practicalities, by 21 December Lytton had changed tack and, with a view to a negotiated settlement, instructed Cavagnari to contact Yakub Khan - eldest son of the Amir Sher Ali who had fled the country.⁶⁷ By 26 December he was "assuming that the basis of our Afghan policy continues to be the bolstering up of a 'strong, independent and friendly Afghanistan'".⁶⁸ And on 10 January he wrote: "I am glad to think that, before my receipt of your letters and telegrams which reached me at Lahore, I had anticipated the wish they indicated that we should carefully avoid all action likely to promote the disintegration of the Kabul power, and that we should spare no effort to preserve the political unity of Afghanistan I see a thousand reasons for endeavouring to wind up our present quarrel with Kabul as soon as we can do so satisfactorily; and the quickest way of doing this will be to come to some understanding with the representative of a united Afghanistan if we can find him. Personally, however, I still retain the belief that the ultimate solution of the Afghan problem most favourable to our political interests will be in the disintegration of the artificial political unity of Afghanistan".⁶⁹

Authorized by H.M.G. to treat with Yakub Khan as de facto ruler of Kabul, Lytton's first approach seemed fruitless. Yakub's reply was taken to be a refusal to negotiate; and the Viceroy, angered at the thwarting of his efforts, dismissed Yakub as "utterly incompetent" and "overrated".⁷⁰

66. Cranbrook to Lytton, 19 December 1878. MSS.EUR.C.218/516/3, Letter 76, p.297.

67. See Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 22 December 1878. L/P&S/3/216, p.1081.

68. Lytton to Cranbrook, Calcutta, 26 December 1878. MSS.EUR.C.218/518/3, p.924.

69. Lytton to Cranbrook, Calcutta, 10 January 1879. MSS.EUR.C.218/518/4, pp.19-20.

70. Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegrams), 12 & 22 January 1879. S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegram), 16 January 1879. L/P&S/3/218, pp.665K, 665U & 665N.

Believing further talks with Yakub were out of the question, Lytton cast around for another indigenous collaborator and latched on to Wali Mahomed. Provided this candidate managed to establish himself unassisted at Kabul, Lytton would negotiate with him. But he doubted Wali's power to secure his rule at Herat and Kandahar, and in the period 19-21 February the Viceroy again anticipated the "ultimate disintegration of Afghanistan".⁷¹ He was "quite prepared to accept this eventuality",⁷² which he had "never regarded with the aversion shown to it by most authorities on Central Asian affairs".⁷³ As a corollary, he was willing to comply tentatively with the Shah and Salisbury's idea of allowing Persia Herat;⁷⁴ while also suggesting that Russia be allowed a controlling influence over Badakhshan and Wakhan.⁷⁵ Yet just as Lytton contemplated with equanimity this obliteration of Dost Mahomed and Sher Ali's Amirate

71. Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 19 February 1879. L/P&S/3/218, p.665SS.

72. Lytton to Rawlinson, Calcutta, 21 February 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.133.

73. Lytton to Cranbrook, Camp, Lahore, 24 March 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.210.

74. Twice in 1879 the question was raised of relying on the Shah rather than the Amir in India's defence. On both occasions the Shah demanded Herat as an award for a closer connection with Britain. Though supported by Salisbury, the first Persian initiative failed because of Lytton's opposition - to cede Herat to Persia would be to jeopardise negotiations with Yakub Khan. With Cavagnari's death, and a new Russian campaign along Persia's northern border, Salisbury persuaded the Cabinet to open negotiations with Teheran. Yet the British approach was never more than half-hearted, the secret Herat Convention drawn up by Salisbury demanded too much of Persia in return for too little, and Persia's request for a definite Anglo-Persian defensive alliance was again balked by opposition from the Government of India and a majority of the Cabinet. In the face of strong Russian opposition, the Shah rejected the Herat Convention, which would have made Persia practically a British protectorate. Despite its strong support from Salisbury and Sir Ronald Thomson, there was an air of impracticality and superfluity about the arrangement; given that Russian influence was still paramount at Teheran and that a suitable Afghan settlement would achieve the same ends. See J.G. Allen, "Sir Ronald Thomson and British policy towards Persia in 1879", Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, 22 (1935), pp.601-16.

75. See Lytton to Cranbrook, 21 February 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, pp. 138-43.

of Kabul, with Britain doubtless enjoying some special status in Western and Southern Afghanistan, Yakub Khan took up the running again.⁷⁶ Suspending action on Wali Mahomed, Lytton now turned to Yakub with preliminary negotiating conditions which precluded Afghanistan's dismemberment.⁷⁷

Though he continued to believe personally that a united Afghanistan was an artificial arrangement which was naturally centrifugal,⁷⁸ the Viceroy fully realised that Yakub was the strongest of the Afghan sirdars, and the one most likely to set himself up securely at Kabul. He was the likeliest instrument for the successful conclusion of the moderate, negotiated settlement wanted by the Cabinet, and the speedy end Lytton desired to expensive, military operations. While Yakub showed his eagerness for British friendship, he equally refused to agree to the conditions about the cession of frontier territory. But the impasse was circumvented; with Lytton, in deference to Yakub's susceptibilities, now firmly opposing Salisbury's proposed cession of Herat to Persia.⁷⁹ Diplomatic negotiations about the geographical and administrative minutiae of Britain's annexing the Khyber and Michni Passes, and holding the assigned districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi, were completed with the signing of the Treaty of Gandamak on 26 May 1879.⁸⁰ The treaty's terms

76. See Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 27 February 1879. L/P&S/3/218, p.665XX.

77. For these conditions see, Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 10 March 1879. L/P&S/3/218, p.665888.

78. See Lytton to Cranbrook, 24 March 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.211.

79. See Lytton to Cavagnari, Camps, Lahore, Dharampura & Srinaggar, 24 March & 17 & 21 April 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, pp.210-13, 279 & 300.

80. In return for absolute control of the new Amir's foreign relations, Britain conditionally guaranteed him against outside aggression and was to provide an annual 6 lacs subsidy. A permanent British Resident was to stay at Kabul, with the right to depute agents anywhere along the north-west Afghan frontier. The commercial facilities repeatedly insisted on by the Cabinet were granted the British. While Kandahar and Jalalabad were restored to the Amir, the Kurram, Pishin and Sibi districts were assigned to British protection and administration, with complete control of the Khyber and Michni Passes transferred to British hands. For the course of the negotiations, as described in official telegrams, see L/P&S/3/218, pp.665000-665666, L/P&S/3/219, pp.265-678 & 769-798.

of territorial settlement reflected Beaconsfield's deliberate red-herring or ignorant misrepresentation - in his Guildhall speech of 10 November 1878 - that the inspiration and object of the war was purely the need for a less "haphazard", rectified, "scientific frontier".⁸¹ Minor, even if strategically vital, readjustment of the Anglo-Afghan frontier was hardly the territorial settlement Lytton had envisaged when he went to war. But ^{it was} the one with which he ^{had to} content himself; given Cabinet strictures on disintegration, and the astronomical expense of keeping the army in the field.

Speculating repeatedly about Herat's future, and thinking Afghanistan's "prolonged occupation ... highly probable", in the first days of 1879 Rawlinson was very much against giving Herat to the Shah.⁸² In the past he had advocated Herat's nominal cession, under real British control, to Persia. But he now felt it might become necessary for Britain herself to occupy it, in order to offset Russia's probable "tit for tat" occupation of Mary and to encourage Persian resistance thence through Khorassan.⁸³ In early March Sir Henry, along with Napier of Magdala, was called in to discuss Herat's future status with Salisbury at the Foreign Office;⁸⁴ where he probably poured cold water on Salisbury's support for Persian claims to it. Once negotiations with Yakub Khan had begun, Rawlinson saw

81. For the appropriate section of Beaconsfield's Guildhall speech on Lord Mayer's day, see W.F. Monypenny & G.E. Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (2 Vols., London, 1929), Vol.2, pp. 1262-3. Both Cranbrook and Burne thought Beaconsfield missed the whole point of the war. Cranbrook "could not understand his Indian policy at all" and Burne expostulated: "I don't much admire Dizzy's speech. It was foolish of him to put the Afghan difficulty on a rectification of the frontier! It reduces the question to an absurdity". Burne portrayed a timid Cabinet, shirking the Russian part of the problem so as not to offend St. Petersburg, and in fact avoiding "the principal justification of a war". See Lord Cranbrook's Private Diary 1877 to 1880, 10 November 1878, p.249. HA.43/T501/297; Burne to Lytton, 15 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/6, Letter 112, f.3.
82. Rawlinson to Lytton, 3 January 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/7, Letter 2, f.2r.
83. See Rawlinson to Lytton, 31 January 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/7, Letter 14a
84. See Napier of Magdala to Rawlinson, 19 Pall Mall, 1 March 1879. R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers. "Autographs 1850-60-70".

that any British interest in Persia as a bulwark of India "must NOT be allowed to mar" the prospect of Yakub's accepting British terms. Convinced Russia's ultimate aim was "pressure against the Afghan frontier", not merely Mary's seizure, Rawlinson was pleased that the "Cabul difficulty" enabled Britain to settle the Herat question without involving Persia at all. For "Herat is the point round which the interests of the future will revolve and where the Central Asian Question will finally be settled". "Our late coquettings" with the Shah, he reckoned, would have involved an entire change in British Persian policy, entailing "enormous responsibilities" towards Teheran.⁸⁵ With this conviction that Herat's domination could best be secured, for the present, through a negotiated settlement for a united Afghanistan, Rawlinson welcomed the Treaty of Gandamak and wrote a congratulatory note to Lytton. ^{This was} forwarded by Burne, with the remarks: "The enclosed is the opinion of a distinguished man on you! I am to help him with his article in the XIXth. Rawlinson's opinion is now being generally shared in London by your enemies".⁸⁶

In his "Nineteenth Century" article, "The Results of the Afghan War",⁸⁷ published in early August, Rawlinson openly displayed his elation that "a short, inexpensive and not inglorious campaign, skilfully conducted and bravely supported, has been crowned with peace promising substantial political results".⁸⁸ Displaying a detailed, factual knowledge of current conditions in Afghanistan - doubtless a sign of Burne's aid - the author analysed the gains and losses, weaknesses and strengths of the treaty. Torn between political expediency and strategic, military advantage, he obviously regretted the return of Kandahar to Kabul. But,

85. Rawlinson to Lytton, 2 May 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/7, Letter 63.

86. Burne to Lytton, 6 June 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/7, Letter 84.

87. H.C. Rawlinson, "The Results of the Afghan War", The Nineteenth Century, 6 (1879), pp.377-400.

88. Ibid, pp.377, 389, 390, 396, 397 & 398.

in line with current government policy, ^{he} emphasised that Britain's object must continue to be the creation of a "strong, friendly and independent power on India's North-West frontier". Still, he held that a mere temporary occupation of Kandahar, "guarded from all semblance of administrative interference, and undertaken with the full approval of Cabul", ⁸⁸ might have been sought. For, he argued, the real cause of the recent war, and the one which government ministers would not mention for fear of offending Russia, was neither Sher Ali's insult, nor his hostility, nor the need for frontier rectification: it was Russia's definite intention of acquiring a "strong political influence" at Herat, Kabul and Badakhehan "for maintaining and directing an insurrectionary propaganda" against India. ⁸⁸

Against "the omnivorous capacity of the great northern octopus", ⁸⁸ now encroaching on the Akhal Tekke Turkmen west of Mary and along Persia's northern frontier, Britain should supplement the Afghan settlement by "extend(ing) to Persia the provisions of the Asia Minor Protectorate, or even ... support(ing) her actively in vindicating her rights to Khorassan". ⁸⁸ As well as the detachment of Teheran "coûte que coûte" from St. Petersburg, Russia must be made aware that Britain would oppose any moves against Mary, Serakhs or Abiverd, to the length of supporting the Turkmen with arms and money or even fomenting an Uzbek revolt in Turkestan. This was in direct conflict with the current government policy of trying to ease strained Anglo-Russian relations. With all the sanctimonious self-delusion of the short-sighted jingo, Rawlinson could only see Britain's actions and motives as defensive. He altogether failed to realise that one imperial power was as underhand as the other in its perpetual manoeuvrings for the offensive or defensive advantage.

In the light of subsequent events, there is a certain black, comic

irony in Rawlinson's assertions that the British officers newly resident at Kabul under the terms of "Gandamak" would be "regarded no doubt occasionally as troublesome interlopers, but not exposed to any special dangers"; and that "British political officers ... are as a rule soon encircled with a halo of personal affection".⁸⁸ Only a month later, on 3 September, during a mutiny by unpaid regiments of the Afghan army, Cavagnari and the other Europeans of the Kabul embassy were killed. From the wave of anti-Afghan hysteria which followed, came Lytton's bathetic call for England's retribution of the "massacre",⁸⁹ like "a lioness raging for her slaughtered whelps".⁹⁰ Then^{came} the despatch of Roberts' avenging army to Kabul. On the Political Committee, Rawlinson took the first available, though barely appropriate, opportunity to write a secret memo loosely advocating "annexation limited to the plain country of Candahar, stretching east and west from Kelat-i-Ghilzye to the Helmund, while the country west of the Helmund and east of Kelat-i-Ghilzye formed two separate governments under quasi-independent Afghan chiefs in friendly alliance with us".⁹¹ Unless Britain were prepared to appropriate all Afghanistan - "the last extremity" - she must restore its old division into three separate governments, with the Kandahar section permanently annexed. Supported by Merewether, who had always thought the Treaty of Gandamak's only fault was the restoration of Kandahar to Kabul,⁹² Rawlinson's memo drew rejoinders from Perry and Montgomery.

Montgomery could only foresee Rawlinson's Kandahar wedge surrounded by hostile Afghans in Herat, Kabul and Afghan Turkestan, with "fighting

89. In 19TH. century accounts it is a strange, parochial anomaly that any Anglo-Saxon victory over a weaker people was always hailed as a "victory", but any successful affray by Asiatics, Africans or Red Indians was always referred to as a "massacre". Cf., for example, "The Battle of Wounded Knee" and "The Massacre of the Little Big Horn".

90. Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 14 September 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.745.

91. H.C. Rawlinson's memorandum, (Untitled), 25 September 1879. L/P&S/3/221, p.770.

92. See W. Merewether's note, 2 October 1879. L/P&S/3/221, pp.779-84; Merewether to Burne, 8 August 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/517/8, Letter 33.

all round".⁹³ Forced to maintain a very strong force within the wedge and along its lines of communication to Sind, the Government of India would find the cost intolerably high. Russia would find ample scope for intrigue among a proud, independent population irritated by their country's dismemberment. Britain, even by partial annexation, would in effect be playing into Russia's hands. And as if intrigue from outside were not enough, with acute prescience Montgomery predicted that lengthy service in a distant location would prove very unpopular with the native, Indian soldiery. India, "held by the sword and the sword only" could "not be left long without a proper garrison".⁹³ Perry echoed Montgomery's fears that annexation meant more rather than less danger to British rule in India, and even voiced his terror of another Rebellion.⁹⁴ The rapidly increasing burden of the Government of India's debt would be aggravated by an annual £3 million expenditure on Afghanistan's administration, the English soldiery in India would have to be increased at still more expense, and repeated risings within Afghanistan would "be a stimulus to the ambitious, the discontented, the turbulent in India, and of these there are probably millions".⁹⁴ Perry called on Cranbrook to absolutely forbid even a partial annexation to the Government of India. Bringing up the tail-end, the indecisive, unopinionated Halliday and Maine leaned to Perry and Montgomery's side, but doubted if they had as yet sufficient information to form an opinion which in any case was unwanted by H.M.C.⁹⁵ Perhaps all the committee's members similarly realised their political impotence. But ^{by now they} wrote notes and memos as much to carry on the vindictive, personal arguments of the old, the garrulous and the opinionated as for any practical impression their ideas might make.

93. R. Montgomery's memorandum, (Untitled), 30 September 1879. L/P&S/3/221, pp.775 & 78.

94. See E. Perry's note, 3 October 1879. L/P&S/3/221, pp.785091 & 791.

95. See Halliday and Maine's notes, 6 October 1879. L/P&S/3/221, pp.793-4 & 795.

In an initial outburst of fury at the death of his much-admired Cavagnari, Lytton had recommended the permanent occupation of Afghanistan, including Kabul, Kandahar, Ghazni and Bamyán, up to the river Helmand.⁹⁶ Though he alliteratively dismissed "the Afghan" as "at best a cowardly cut-throat and sanguinary Sodomite",⁹⁷ the Viceroy soon more reasonably recurred to the disintegration policy. Assured by Cranbrook that he had "tabula rasa", though warned simultaneously to "make no new pledges hastily",⁹⁸ Lytton again focussed his attention on the Kandahar province. This, along with Pishin, the Kurram and Khost, ought to be "permanently annexed to the British Empire"; while the country up to the Hindu Kush should not be directly annexed but have British garrisons maintained there.⁹⁹ On 22 October the Cabinet felt it premature, until Lytton was in full military possession of the country, to decide what portions, if any, should be annexed and whether the administration should be direct or indirect. Hoping that a new, resourceful candidate for the Kabul throne would emerge, maintain Afghanistan's integrity and prevent the need for a radical shift in policy, H.M.G. reckoned a proclamation of military occupation, with no mention of a future settlement's contours, would be sufficient to free the Government of India from any imputation of vacillation or weakness.¹⁰⁰ Despite this procrastination, by the end of November Cabinet approval, with the earnest pleading of Cranbrook, had been granted for Afghanistan's

96. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 14 September 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.750.

97. Lytton to Stephen, Camp, Naldara, 12 October 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, p.892.

98. S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegram), 6 October 1879. L/P&S/3/222, p.929A.

99. Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), 19 October 1879. L/P&S/3/222, pp.934-5. Lytton's letters to Roberts and Cranbrook at this time show that his telegraphic proposals were not to be taken as tentative suggestions which he was toying with, but as the fruit of a definite conviction that "Gandamak" had been the last chance left of maintaining Afghanistan's integrity. Now he held that "our best present policy will be a policy of disintegration, resulting in a group of small, weak states under our own suzerainty governed by rulers named or approved by ourselves, paying us tribute and subject in varying degrees to our control".

Lytton to Roberts, Camp, Naldara, 13 October 1879. See also Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 23 October 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, pp.903 & 938-48.

100. See S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegram), 22 October 1879. L/P&S/3/222, pp.936-7; Cranbrook to Lytton, 22 October 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, Letter 86, 340-1.

reconstitution under "separate principalities". Lytton was enjoined to "carve out the domains and to find the Chiefs and beyond that to lay out the terms of tenure".¹⁰¹ The Viceroy was to submit an official despatch not later than mid-January. So that the Cabinet could consider his government's views on the general resettlement of permanent British relations with Afghanistan, and communicate them to Parliament at the end of the recess, in February.

Opportunistically treating the Gandamak settlement as annulled by subsequent events, Lytton personally sketched out the new, broad programme.¹⁰² Submitting it to his Council, he advised its members that his views on dismemberment had been endorsed by India's political and military advisors in Afghanistan and by H.M.G., which was again arranging for Herat to be occupied provisionally by Persia.¹⁰³ Firmly advised by its political and military officers in Kabul and Kandahar to make no territorial annexation beyond the new frontier line created under the Treaty of Gandamak, the Government of India, dominated by Lytton, envisaged an Afghanistan split into four, separate provinces: a Persian-dominated Herat; Kandahar under its own hereditary ruler - the sirdar Sher Ali Khan - who would limit his armed forces and subordinate his foreign relations to exclusive British control, whose position would be akin to a feudatory Indian prince and near whose capital a British garrison would be maintained; Kabul, once suitably overawed by British military might, would be minimally occupied and made over "to a native ruler in subordinate alliance to ourselves, supported and controlled by a strong British cantonment established at some suitable point"; the Amu Darya provinces of Afghan Turkestan would be "nominally subject to the Kabul Governor,

101. Cranbrook to Lytton, 30 November 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/516/4, Letter 95, f.385v.

102. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Camp, Bharatpur, 7 December 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, pp.1082-4.

103. See the "Note of His Excellency, of 14 December 1879. Most Secret and Confidential". MSS.EUR.E.218/10.

though enjoying practical independence", and would serve as buffers against a coterminous Russo-British frontier along that river.¹⁰⁴

These special arrangements with Kandahar were a means to an end: to hold the "haut du pavillon" over Herat, domination of which Lytton regarded as the strategical key to India's security; in preference to Colley's emphasis on Kabul. Therefore, when the Anglo-Persian negotiations about Herat's future lapsed, the Viceroy was not too unhappy. He had always doubted if Persia could be weaned away from Russian paramountcy, and had been equally assured that the only, real, permanent solution to the Herat problem was railway communication.¹⁰⁵ The Sukkur-Kandahar railroad, already past Sibi, should reach Kandahar by the end of the year and ought to be pushed on vigorously and uninterruptedly; even as far as Herat to facilitate any possible expedition thence.¹⁰⁶ For to Lytton's way of thinking, so long as Herat remained beyond Britain's military tether, all political, administrative or diplomatic arrangements for the maintenance or protection of British interests there were delusive.

Yet if the Viceroy was determined to fasten an iron grip on Southern and Western Afghanistan, by April he was precipitately anxious to evacuate Kabul and Northern Afghanistan before November at the latest. Faced with a high financial outlay and Roberts' alarming reports of incipient disaffection in the native army,¹⁰⁷ Lytton rejected even temporary occupation until the secure establishment of a friendly ruler, in favour of "withdrawal from the country as soon as circumstances permit".¹⁰⁸

104. G.I. to S.S.I., Secret 3, Fort William, 7 January 1880. L/P&S/7/24, pp.27-31; see also Lytton to Crenbrook, Camp, Bharatpur, 7 December 1879. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/4, pp.1085-91.

105. See Lytton to Crenbrook, Calcutta, 11 & 25 February & 25 March 1880. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/6, pp.105, 137 & 234.

106. See Lytton to Rawlinson, Calcutta, 18 February 1880. Lytton to Morcwether, Simla, 8 May 1880. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/6, pp.114-5 & 296-7.

107. See "Memorandum by Lt.Gen. Sir Frederick Roberts, on the best Permanent Line of Communication between India and Afghanistan", Kabul, 12 May 1880, paras. 38-9. G.I. to S.S.I., Secret 208, Enclosure 2, Simla, 14 September 1880. L/P&S/7/26, pp.1141-9.

108. "Minute of the Viceroy", 2 April 1880 (handwritten at the beginning), 4 February 1880 (printed at the end). MSS.EUR.E.218/8, f.30v.

Abdul Rahman Khan, his preferred candidate for the new Kabul province, would be expressly refused any discussion of the conditions of Britain's evacuation; for fear that the preliminaries to negotiation dragged out. By forbidding lengthy correspondence, Lytton wished to prevent the unrest in the native army from becoming embarrassingly unmanageable. He also aimed to forestall any possible suggestion from a new, Liberal government at home for an Anglo-Russian agreement to neutralise Afghanistan.¹⁰⁹ With an unsympathetic, metropolitan government¹¹⁰ and unrest among his own troops, Lytton was trying to impart a degree of permanence to his vision of Afghanistan's future political form and its exact relationship with India. He hoped to prevent any frustration of his singular exertions by ~~tying~~ the separated, western section of the old Amirate of Kabul to Britain's apron strings: officially recognising Sher Ali Khan as independent Wali of Kandahar, while simultaneously stationing a British garrison at or near Kandahar city to ensure the Wali's nominal rather than effective independence of British control.¹¹¹

Meanwhile, in the February issue of "The Nineteenth Century", there appeared a fourth Rawlinson article on "The Situation in Afghanistan",¹¹² in which he too reverted to the idea of Afghanistan's division into four sections. He foresaw Kandahar annexed to the rest of India, with its commerce flourishing under a popular British administration. Northern -

109. See Lytton to Lepel Griffin, Simla, 25 April 1880. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/6, pp.383-6.

110. Parliament had been dissolved on 25 March and reassembled with a large Liberal majority on 29 April 1880.

111. In a later controversy, of 1885, between Lytton and Lepel Griffin, Chief Political Officer at Kabul in 1880, Griffin maintained that Lytton intended the permanent military occupation of Kandahar and that he personally failed to see any distinction, other than a farcical, verbal one, between permanent occupation and annexation. The permanent military occupation which Lytton, then, seems to have favoured made a mere farce of Sher Ali's independence. See Griffin to Lytton, The Residency, Indore, 26 August 1885. MSS.EUR.E.218/521/9, f.46.

112. H.C. Rawlinson, "The Situation in Afghanistan", The Nineteenth Century, 7(1880), pp.197-215.

Kabul-dominated Afghanistan, with its population's intense hatred of the British, could not be annexed. Instead, it should be run like a protected Indian state, dependent on Britain but with the local sirdars levying revenue and exercising the executive functions of government. All overseen by a 2,000 strong British garrison and Resident at Kabul, as well as 20,000 other native, Afghan troops under British officers. Ghazni was to be separated from Kabul and ruled in much the same way. Writing at a time when renewed Persian requests for the tenure of Herat seemed likely to succeed, Rawlinson reckoned Herat, denuded of Girishk, Zamindawar and Farah by their inclusion in the new Kandahar province, could safely be given to Persia.

Rawlinson's "forward" inclinations were now in full, needlessly extravagant flight. To prevent Herat's falling, even indirectly through Persia, into Russian control, Britain could alter her whole Persian policy: conclude a defensive alliance with Teheran, improve riverine and railway communication in Persia and, "at no great cost succeed, if so minded, in converting Persia into a permanent and impregnable bulwark of defence to India".¹¹³ Nor would he hesitate about giving Herat to Persia, since Kandahar was "by far the most favourable standpoint from whence to observe and if necessary protect that outlying exposed position. ... So long as we are supreme at Candahar, Russia will hesitate about marching a column on Herat".¹¹³ Suspicious as ever of his omnivorous, northern octopus, Rawlinson pressed for an immediate understanding with Russia about a common frontier, preferably along the Amu Darya. Otherwise St. Petersburg would deliberately perpetuate the turmoil and disorder at Kabul, "which might even necessitate a campaign upon the Oxus".¹¹³ In his illimitable search for a non-existent, absolute security -

113. Ibid, pp.212, 209-10 & 213.

and irresponsible in his official position and policy recommendations alike - Rawlinson supported both Lytton's emphasis on Western Afghanistan and H.M.G.'s negotiations with Teheran for closer Anglo-Persian relations. Superfluously supplementing one financially and politically expensive commitment with another, as an old Persian hand Rawlinson was unable to restrict himself to the Afghan line of India's defence, as recommended by the Government of India. Even so Lytton, furnished by Burne with a proof of the Rawlinson article long before its publication, commended Sir Henry on the accuracy of his statements of fact and wished that other writers on Indian affairs were as thorough. Entirely sharing Rawlinson's "opinion of the paramount importance of Western Afghanistan and the comparative simplicity of the problem here presented to us", Lytton nevertheless felt that, since the Herat negotiations with Persia had broken down, the rail link between India and Kandahar would provide "the only complete and permanent solution to the Herat Question".¹¹⁴

As Rawlinson had been fully engaged in broadly defending or justifying Lytton's policies and exonerating Britain of all culpability for the war, throughout the conflict he and an absent Frere had come under steady Liberal and Laurentian criticism, even from Gladstone himself. In a late-'78 article, Perry had critically identified Rawlinson and Frere as the persistent propagandists of an anti-Russian policy as well as the establishment of British outworks at Quetta, Kandahar and Herat.¹¹⁵ In his January 1879 article, "The Scientific Frontier",¹¹⁶ Sir Henry Norman noted and repeated Perry's accusations; concluding succinctly and accurately that: "Of the many advocates of the anti-Russian

114. Lytton to Rawlinson, Calcutta, 18 February 1880. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/6, pp.112-5.

115. See E. Perry, "The Future of India", The Nineteenth Century, 44 (1878), pp.1092-3.

116. H. Norman, "The Scientific Frontier", Fortnightly Review, 25 N.S. (1879) pp.1-14.

policy, Sir Henry Rawlinson in his articles and Sir Bartle Frere by memoranda which recently saw the light of day in a mysterious manner for the first time, are the most distinguished. In fact the rest, however eminent, may be classed as followers of Jacob or Rawlinson".¹¹⁷ As members of the Council of India, Perry and Norman were bound by official discretion to say no more. However much they suspected, they could not even hint in writing at Rawlinson and Frere's having had a distinct influence on the thought and actions of their political superiors. Yet there was nothing to prevent their voicing these suspicions in conversations with fellow-Liberals. Alerted by them and by "The Times" publication of the Frere memos to the key position held by members of the Political Committee, a Liberal, Commons M.P. had earlier asked that the committee members' memos be released to Parliament along with Salisbury's important Afghan despatches of 1875. Rejecting this proposal, a government spokesman remonstrated that: "These notes were of a strictly confidential character and it has never been the practice to communicate their contents or, in fact, to make their existence known. If such notes were to be published, a Secret Committee would be useless".¹¹⁸ Since much of the evidence of Frere and Rawlinson's complicity was contained in private papers, not official documents, even the release of the memoranda would have signified little in the way of their involvement. And any contemporary, Liberal affirmation of the breadth of their authority and persuasiveness would have remained, as it was, conjectural.

In Parliament and in print, normal party conflict over the causes, conduct and financing of the war was aggravated ^{variously} by prominent Liberals' close association with a well-established Lawrentian line, by Conservative implications in the Afghan Blue Books that Sher Ali's estrangement was

117. Ibid, p.2.

118. Parliamentary Debates, 3.S., 243, 6 December 1878, cols.200-2.

largely Argyll and Northbrook's fault, and by the latter's defence of their personal reputations by pointing out Conservative inconsistencies, deliberate misstatements and conscious misrepresentations.¹¹⁹ In a "post-Gandamak", August 1879 debate on the funding of the war, Northbrook claimed the House was being starved of information by government reluctance to make "a statement of their objects and intentions with respect to the rectification of the North-West Frontier". Rawlinson's August article was quoted and referred to by Northbrook and the Marquess of Ripon as a valuable, substitute source of information on various, unannounced reasons - Russian Central Asian activity, for example - for the war. ^{They also represented the article} as a pointer to the Conservatives' further annexationist intentions towards Kandahar. While they disagreed about the article's support for the terms won at Gandamak, Northbrook and Ripon both suggested it was officially inspired; and hoped, in scoring a debating point, to smear the government with the taint of Rawlinson's supposed Russophobia. When Cranbrook denied responsibility for a single word, Ripon openly referred to Rawlinson, and alluded to Frere, as the real authors and teachers of the policy which H.M.G. had been pursuing towards Afghanistan.¹²⁰ In the gentlemanly correspondence which followed, despite Northbrook's denials to the contrary, Rawlinson took this as a party attack, while assuring the former Viceroy that his article was written in distinct approval of the Treaty of Gandamak.¹²¹

In late 1879, Gladstone was introducing no new note, other than his own person and rhetoric, when, in that peculiar gel of moral indignation and simple parsimony which constituted the Midlothian Speeches,

119. See Duke of Argyll, "Ministerial Misstatements on the Afghan Question", Contemporary Review, 37 (1880), pp.492-512.

120. Parliamentary Debates, 3. S., 249, 4 August 1879, cols. 30-31.

121. See Northbrook to Rawlinson, Stratton, 5 & 9 August 1879. Rawlinson to Northbrook, Athenaeum Club, 7 August 1879. MSS.EUR.C.144/7, pp. CVI-CVII, CX & 373-4.

he denounced Frere, twice, and Rawlinson, once, as the "great authorities" of some distinction but little responsibility who "supported the Indian policy of advance into Afghanistan".¹²² His mention of the pair was short but, as usual, caustically dismissive; and quite justifiable in Frere's case since Sir Bartle, in the aftermath of Cavagnari's death, had written to Cranbrook in terms suggesting a fuller subjugation of Afghanistan than that negotiated at Gandamak.¹²³ Again, in February 1880 when the Liberals were vainly trying to discover what new line H.M.G. intended pursuing in Afghanistan, and Rawlinson had just published another article, Argyll criticised the Conservatives for being too much under the influence of an uncontrollable Viceroy. "If we are dependent on the Viceroy we shall be unable to go back to anything like the Treaty of Gandamak. What about the occupation of Candahar? It is much more probable that the policy of the article in 'The Nineteenth Century' is the policy to be pursued".¹²⁴ This remark on the coincidence of Lytton and Rawlinson's views, and its clear hint at connivance between them, roused Sir Henry to reply in "The Times" that he had "not been in correspondence with the Viceroy, either directly or indirectly, for above a twelve month".¹²⁵ Even after a Liberal government had come to power in April 1880, Lawrentians and Liberals continued to voice their shrewd suspicions in the periodical press that Frere and Rawlinson had exerted a malefactor^{icent} effect on Conservative thinking, most especially over Salisbury in 1875.¹²⁶

In repeatedly implying that Rawlinson's pieces were officially

122. W.E. Gladstone, Midlothian Speeches, 1879: With an Introduction by R.R. D. Foot (Leicester, 1971), pp.49 & 205.

123. See Frere to Cranbrook, Government House, Cape Town, 5 October 1879. HA.43/T501/104.

124. Parliamentary Debates, 3.S., 250, 5 February 1880, col. 50.

125. "The Times", 7 February 1880, p.8, col.1.

126. See R.E. Grant Duff, "British Interests in the East", The Nineteenth Century, 7 (1880), pp.658-76; A. Hobhouse, "Some Reflections on the Afghan Imbrolio".

dictated, and that he had provided much of the original inspiration for an aggressive Afghan policy dating back to 1875, the Liberals were not only voicing their, justified, suspicions about Rawlinson's early role. They also hoped to score a parliamentary advantage in tainting the Conservative government by association with the man they portrayed either as a risible, cranky authority¹²⁷ or as an incorrigible Russophile. On the question of official inspiration, Cranbrook certainly denied it strenuously. And in his essays, Rawlinson espoused a disintegration policy which H.M.G. only latterly and reluctantly agreed to under viceregal persuasion. On the other hand, Sir Henry's periodic excursions into print did constitute a vigorous, knowledgeable defence and justification of the war. H.M.G. certainly could not have found his articles too much of a political embarrassment, otherwise they would have advised the author against their publication. Weighing the pro's and the contra's, Cranbrook probably calculated that Sir Henry provided an expert, pro-government opinion in favour of the war. If not officially inspired, there was at least one mundane reason for the flow of articles: Rawlinson's household accounts¹²⁸ show that the author made £45-50 from each published piece. To a budget-conscious gentleman such as Sir Henry, that was no mean figure. Whatever the financial inducements, however, Rawlinson also saw himself in his publications as deliberately "supporting Lord Lytton and his conduct of the Afghan War".¹²⁹ Seen in this light, Rawlinson's articles begin to acquire a deeper political purpose than the mere profitable ramblings of a verbose old man.

127. See Grant Duff, "British Interests in the East", pp.672-3.

128. See "Expenditure & Receipts for years 1879 & 1880". Abstract of Accounts (Personal) R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers. A black-bound, slim volume with decorative, leaf-like indentations round the edge of the cover.

129. See "Brief Sketch of the LIFE OF SIR H.C.R." R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers.

It is erroneous to imply, as Argyll did, a close association between Rawlinson in England and Lytton in India during the course of the war. Though his articles had restored Rawlinson to the Viceroy's favour, their renewed correspondence remained very intermittent and in it Lytton did little more than encourage one of his most respected, authoritative defenders. There does remain the possibility that Lytton used Burne as a mediator. Burne was in close touch with the Viceroy, had seen important Government of India despatches on disintegration which had been denied to the Political Committee,¹³⁰ and was undoubtedly helping Rawlinson with material for his later publications.¹³¹ Yet the existence of even such a simple network seems altogether unlikely. For the machinating effort required would have been out of all proportion to the likely advantages.

The rapidity with which events moved and situations altered outdated some of the articles even before they were published. And Rawlinson, who as an irresponsible advocate need pay no heed to practical constraints or extraneous considerations of expense, was often more extreme than the Viceroy in his "forward" inclinations. Sir Henry, for example, favoured Kandahar's annexation in 1880, while the Viceroy wanted an overt form of indirect control through the maintenance of a British garrison at or near the city. ^{Furthermore,} Rawlinson always valued Persia's worth as a bulwark more highly than the Viceroy. Yet if practical and particular details divided Viceroy and old Anglo-Indian, the two men were still more united than not on the main principle of disintegration and the paramount importance of Western and Southern Afghanistan as the

130. See the initialling on the Minute Paper, "Afghanistan - Views of the Government of India as to future policy", 29 January 1880. L/P&S/3/224, p.831. This despatch of 7 January only arrived in the India Office on 29 January and its contents could not have been incorporated in Rawlinson's article, which appeared in print only a few days later, in early February.

131. How else could have Burne have obtained a copy of the proof and sent it to Lytton at least two weeks before it appeared in print?

base for dominating Herat. Hence, in the absence of active collusion, the Viceroy's mild encouragement of his foremost ally in the British periodical press and the clubs of St. James's. If in a sense, then, Lytton was using Rawlinson, the Viceroy was also clearly the latter's conceptual descendant: since mid-77 remaining faithful to the novel suggestion of Afghanistan's dismemberment, and persistently returning to it at every available opportunity. Contemporaneously, Perry had written: "Some theory or other ... is always present, consciously or unconsciously, to the mind of the politician".¹³² Lytton had borrowed his central, strategic tenet from Rawlinson, and, while moulding it to meet contingent difficulties, adhered to the same initial assumption as his benefactor. Rawlinson and Lytton did not work in harness, but they did operate in parallel.

On 28 April 1880, Spencer Compton, Lord Hartington, took up office as Secretary of State for India: a poor substitute for any hopes he may have cherished of becoming P.M. To India in May, as Viceroy, went the Marquess of Ripon. Between them these two men¹³³ shared the responsibility of giving practical expression to all the Opposition's criticisms of the "forward" policy in Afghanistan. A strange combination, both were rather dull; but whereas the Secretary of State was cynical, easy-going and little interested in India, the new Viceroy was conscientiously high-principled and saw himself as the dedicated, practical exponent in India of Gladstonian idealism and its tenet that nations as well as men should abide by moral principles.¹³⁴ Soon after entering office,

132. Perry, "The Future of India", p.1083.

133. For Hartington's biography see, B. Holland, The Life of Spencer Compton, 8TH. Duke of Devonshire (2 Vols., London, 1911); the best account of Ripon's viceroyalty is, S. Gopal, The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon 1880-84 (Oxford, 1953).

134. See Ripon to Gladstone, Simla, 22 October 1881. B.L.ADD.MSS.44,286, f.249v.

Hartington wrote that "the difference between us and Lord Lytton at the present moment is this - we are more anxious to retire from the whole of Afghanistan, including Candahar, than he is, and he is more anxious to retire from Kabul and northern Afghanistan without leaving behind him any settlement, than we are".¹³⁵ Equally, Hartington was "not disposed to consider as final the policy of 'disintegration'".¹³⁶ The relative slowness with which the new, Liberal government withdrew troops first from Kabul then from Kandahar, and reinstated a united Afghanistan under one ruler, is accountable to a lack of suitable opportunity, not of desire.

Ripon was forced to balance the advantages of establishing a stable government in Northern Afghanistan against his troops' impatience with lengthy Afghan service, ^{as well as} rising metropolitan pressure from Cabinet, Parliament, press and public for a speedy withdrawal from Kabul. The prospective Amir of Kabul, Abdul Rahman, also proved "a skilful diplomat who played very difficult cards well".¹³⁷ With some patience and much persistence, however, Ripon pursued negotiations to a successful conclusion: made all the more elusive because the Liberals were unable initially to escape Lytton's obligatory commitment to the Wali of Kandahar. Eventually, with the hopeful prospect of a settled government at Kabul, Stewart's army was able to retire to Peshawar in August. Spurning the Laurentian notion of absolute non-intervention in Afghan affairs, Ripon re-established amicable Anglo-Afghan relations. With Afghanistan "a unique kind of client state",¹³⁸ whose Amir was absolutely sovereign in internal matters but whose foreign policy was on the whole under British control.

135. Hartington to Ripon, 21 May 1880. REEL794. No foliation or pagination.

136. Hartington to Fergusson, 28 May 1880. REEL794.

137. Ripon to Gladstone, Simla, 22 October 1881. B.L.ADD.MSS.44, 286, f.239r.

138. Gopal, The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, p.12.

If the withdrawal of British forces from Kabul proved relatively straightforward, Lytton's undertakings of March made it more difficult to disengage from the Wali of Kandahar. Even though he feared it might be "difficult if not impossible"¹³⁹ to retire from or modify Lytton's engagements, Hartington was not disposed to retain a permanent force at Kandahar in support of a British nominee. Officially and in private correspondence, he encouraged Ripon to find some pretext for retracting Lytton's pledges.¹⁴⁰ A like-minded Viceroy seized the first, unforeseen, chance to ditch Sher Ali rather unscrupulously. The Wali's desertion by a large part of his army, prior to the Battle of Maiwand, cast him as a man of straw; from whom Ripon wrung his abdication. Roberts' exoneration of British honour, by his march to Kandahar and defeat of Ayub Khan's Herati troops, brought a proposal from a determined Viceroy to withdraw immediately from Kandahar and reunite it with the rest of Afghanistan.¹⁴¹

The actual government decision to evacuate was taken at a Cabinet meeting of 7 September, where Ripon's proposal of the previous day was formally approved.¹⁴² But the lack of clarity with which Hartington expressed himself, and his failure to explain that Roberts and Stewart's military opinions were only required to placate the Queen's bitter opposition, led Ripon to believe the Cabinet was undecided and that he could not rely on their support against the hostile majority on his own Council.¹⁴³ By the time these problems and misapprehensions had been

139. Hartington to Fergusson, 26 May 1880. REEL794.

140. See S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 23, 21 May 1880. L/PAS/7/325, pp.110 & 112-13; Hartington to Ripon, 28 May 1880. REEL794.

141. See Viceroy to S.S.I., (Telegram), Simla, 6 September 1880. MSS.EUR.D. 604/1, f.169.

142. See S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegrams), 7 & 9 September 1880. MSS.EUR.D. 604/1, f.170.

143. For the telegrams and letters describing how the Queen steadfastly refused to sanction the withdrawal from Kandahar, how Hartington and Gladstone tried to appease her by asking Ripon for a military opinion, and how Ripon misapprehended this as indicating Cabinet indecision on the issue, see the numerous September telegrams between Viceroy and Secretary of State, the clarificatory letters from Hartington to Ripon on the same subject and Hartington's frequent correspondence with Gladstone about the Queen's opposition: MSS.EUR.D.604/1 & /2, ff.174-6 & 1-16; B.L.ADD.MSS.44,145, ff.90-177; and REELS944 & 794.

cleared up in late September, it was apparent that ultimate responsibility for the decision to evacuate must be clearly assumed by H.M.G., whose official despatch would circumvent all opposition on the Viceroy's Council. Though this despatch was not sent until 11 November,¹⁴⁴ the actual decision to withdraw had been taken two months previously. All else was tactics; with the winter months left in which to prepare for evacuation and arrange to hand over Kandahar to Abdul Rahman as Amir of a reintegrated Afghanistan. Advised by Laurentians such as Northbrook and Norman to withdraw to the "pre-Candahar" line, under Ripon's contrary pressure Hartington and Gladstone eventually agreed, albeit reluctantly, to retain meantime the assigned districts of Pishin and Sibi.¹⁴⁵ Ripon had always been convinced that the western was Afghanistan's strategically vital portion¹⁴⁶ and that the western sector of the "scientific frontier", with British troops located at Quetta and Pishin "within striking distance of Candahar",¹⁴⁷ should be kept.

Liberal policy on Afghanistan, as developed by Ripon, Hartington and Gladstone, described a course between the Scylla of the "forward" school and the Charybdis of an equally drastic Laurentian alternative;^{the latter involving} a complete return to the status quo ante, with absolute non-interference in Afghanistan and retreat to the 1849 frontier line. In all this the Political Committee played little part; even though Hartington did solicit their opinions on Herat's future and Rawlinson's on Kandahar's retention. On first entering office he had received Sir Henry Norman's¹⁴⁸ complaint

144. See S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 45, 11 November 1880. L/P&S/7/325, pp.379-86.

145. See S.S.I. to G.I., Secret 20, 29 April 1881. L/P&S/7/326, pp.231-4.

146. Ripon to Northbrook, Simla, 19 July 1880. MSS.EUR.C.144/19, p.265.

147. Ripon to Northbrook, Simla, 5 July 1880. MSS.EUR.C.144/19, p.250.

148. From 1870-77, Norman had been a member of the Viceroy's Council, on which he took a prominent part in discussing Afghan affairs and showed himself a staunch Laurentian. His views were not in harmony with Lytton's, and so he resigned his office, along with Sir W. Muir, in March 1877. In February 1878 he was appointed a member of the Council of India. Chairman of the Military Committee from 1 November 1878, he never became a member of the Political Committee.

that, even on secret matters such as the conduct of Afghan policy, the Secretary of State should take Council members more into his confidence and "avail himself of the great mass of knowledge and experience"¹⁴⁹ in private consultation with councillors. Norman's letter, with its recommendation of Montgomery's expertise and warning about Burne's implication with Lytton, reflected the aspirations of the Council's sizeable Laurentian faction to carry some weight in the new government's decision-making. On Kandahar, Pishin and Sibi, Hartington did in fact take the Laurentian side. He sought advice in the India Office, however, not from his Political Committee but from Norman - never a committee member - who was generally regarded as the best-informed, cogently persuasive Laurentian on the whole Council, and for several years was Chairman of the Military Committee. In May Hartington had asked him to advise and comment at length on the draft of his first Afghan despatch, and in June sought his written ideas on whether the new, Gandamak, line of frontier should be retained.¹⁵⁰ He also sought advice outwith the Council of India; from General Sir John Adye.¹⁵¹ Throughout the 70's and into the 80's, Adye remained a confirmed opponent of the "forward" school, though he also found Laurentian ideas on the optimum Anglo-Afghan relationship equally pernicious.¹⁵² He believed the Afghans could be made trustworthy allies, provided Britain adopted a course somewhere between high-handed domination and distant aloofness. Subscribed to by a determined Viceroy, this view also proved more attractive to Hartington and Gladstone than Northbrook and Norman's extreme Laurentian opinions.

149. Norman to Northbrook, 27 April 1880. REEL944. It is worth noting that this letter is contained in the Hartington Papers.

150. For Norman's suggestions on Hartington's May despatch, see L/P&S/7/325, pp.151-241.

151. Burne to Lytton, Bournemouth, 1 September 1880. H.R.O. C.36.

152. Sir John Adye, "The Military Position of Russia in Central Asia", Quarterly Review, 143 (1877), pp. 551-572; *ibid*, "The Military Position of England and Russia in Central Asia", Edinburgh Review, 151 (1880), pp.68-98; also above, chapter 4, p.138.

In going over his Political Committee's head for his primary source of advice, Hartington was acknowledging that Perry had never done much more than synthesise or quote directly from authoritative sources, and that Montgomery's particular, first-hand knowledge of conditions on the North-West frontier was now fifteen years out of date. As the eminence grise in standard, Liberal demonologies of their Conservative predecessors' Afghan policy, Rawlinson and his views were unlikely to attract much sympathy. Yet the same old postures were adopted in the Political and Secret Department: Burne misunderstood Hartington as "halting" on the question of Kandahar's future and was "steadily going at him" in the hope of ensuring its retention;¹⁵³ Perry and Montgomery wrote unsolicited notes favouring a return to the 1849 frontier, and lodged them with the Secretary of State and Viceroy;¹⁵⁴ Rawlinson continued to defend Afghanistan's disintegration as "the normal condition of the country and the condition moreover which is most in unison with our interests".¹⁵⁵ Hartington did receive the opinions of committee members and even sent them to India; while at the same time assuring Ripon he did "not think that you will find them of much use".¹⁵⁶ The Political Committee's individual stances were now pretty predictable.¹⁵⁷ The different arguments about moral justification, the dicta of international law, and Britain's "complete stultification" if she withdrew: all sounded banal through constant repetition. Rawlinson, for instance, dwelt on all the millions wasted to no avail if Britain now withdrew from Kandahar; ominously but baselessly he predicted "the gravest domestic trouble" from native princes

153. See Burne to Lytton, Bournemouth, 9 September 1880. H.R.O. C.36.

154. See Perry to Ripon, 10 May & 9 July 1880. B.L.ADD.MSS43,617. ff.52-61; Hartington to Ripon, 30 September 1880. REEL794.

155. Rawlinson's note, (Unheaded), May 1880. L/P&S/7/25, p.192.

156. Hartington to Ripon, 9 July 1880. REEL794.

157. For Perry's, Halliday's, Montgomery's and Merewether's opinions, see L/P&S/7/25, pp.195-209. Compare these with the Political Committee members' views on the question of Herat's future allegiance, in L/P&S/3/226, pp.1463-71.

and troops disillusioned with British power; and he also recommended the railway as a tranquillising and civilising guarantee of Kandahari loyalty, promising a hundredfold increase in Indo-Central Asian traffic with its stimulus to commercial enterprise. The acrimonious division of opinion within the India Office, over reversal of Conservative policy in Afghanistan, is of little more than intrinsic interest.

In September, while telegraphic communication between London and Calcutta moved inexorably towards confirming the decision to withdraw from Kandahar, Hartington consulted with Northbrook. He also had Norman, whom he recognised as a Lawrentian, and Rawlinson, as devil's advocate, draw up memos on Kandahar. The extraordinary memory and aptitude for hard work, for which Norman was renowned, shone through his lengthy note. Its hard logic and factual precision show how the author had carefully studied the now desperate flounderings of the "forward" school; so as to refute them all the more convincingly. By contrast, like a gambler constantly raising the stakes in an attempt to recoup his original losses, Rawlinson depended for the success of his schemes on increasingly dubious premises or unrealisable conditions, and for their acceptability, on vague, risible warnings of catastrophe. If the difference between good and bad political practice is not absolute but lies in the thinker's ability to conjoin his ideas as closely as possible to the objective situation, then Norman's note was a devastating rejoinder to the policy of maintaining a British garrison at Kandahar.

Realising the tide of government inclinations was against him, as a palliative Rawlinson¹⁵⁸ rejected disintegration in the hope that the simple retention of a British garrison might still prove acceptable. He now agreed that the civil government of Western Afghanistan could be

158. H.C. Rawlinson, "Memorandum on Candahar", 25 September 1880. L/P&S/16/A40.

159. Norman, *op. cit.* 2 & 3.

160. H.C. Rawlinson, "Note on the Antiquities of Kandahar", 12 September 1880. L/P&S/16/A40.

provided for by proffering sovereignty to Abdul Rahman. His assurance that armed military occupation involved no interference in internal Afghan affairs rested on the baseless presumption that domestic and external policies were separable and that no violent irritation between British garrison and Kandaharis would develop. Moreover, throughout his memo Rawlinson showed no principled opposition to Kandahar's eventual annexation, and at several points seemed to envisage something very akin to it.¹⁵⁹ He was adamant as ever on retention. And in the apocalyptic terms of the die-hard conservative, ^{he} warned that, by precipitate withdrawal to Pishin or Sind, "we should abdicate our position as a first class power, and must be content hereafter to play a very subordinate part in the history of the world".¹⁵⁹ It was as cheap, he argued, to maintain a force at Kandahar as build a station at Pishin; and the railway, with its promise of regular relief, would make Afghan service palatable to the native Indian troops. Chimerically, the railroad was also supposed to draw the commerce of the Uzbek khanates away from Russia and Persia down to Karachi; simultaneously so stimulating Afghan enterprise that it would "yield a fair return on the capital outlay".¹⁵⁹ Rawlinson conveniently omitted to provide the figures on which such a far-reaching calculation was based.

Norman's "Note on the Retention of Kandahar"¹⁶⁰ anticipated and steadily demolished many of Rawlinson's vague assumptions, given that the author's stance was outright Laurentian. On neither military, political nor financial grounds did he think retention advantageous. Militarily, Britain's being at Kandahar was unlikely to prevent the remote contingency of a determined Russian advance to Herat; and in any case, Russian forces intent on discomfiting the British in India were as likely to move from Tashkent towards Afghan Turkestan and Kabul as to Herat. Nor was service

159. Ibid, pp.6,2 & 6.

160. H.W. Norman, "Note on the Retention of Kandahar", 20 September 1880. L/P&S/18/A39.

at Kandahar ever likely to prove popular with Indian troops, whatever financial inducements were offered. In addition, he reluctantly admitted, a considerable portion of the Native Army was "not quite equal to standing a rush of Afghan swordsmen".¹⁶¹ Financially, the cost of keeping the 15,000 man force required above the passes would be £1½ million annually, and of completing the fortifying railway communications a further £2 million. Kandahar's revenues, on the other hand, barely realised 10 lacs net per annum. The railway, which would never be commercially viable in so sparsely populated, mountainous a region, was liable to prove inordinately expensive. In sum, Kandahar's occupation could never result "in anything other than a heavy loss".¹⁶¹ Politically, a conquered Afghan people would never be influenced in Britain's favour. No matter what the superiority of British over native Afghan government, alien rule was unwanted by other than a few Hindu merchants who had profitted from the British occupation: Its unjust imposition would create continual armed opposition among a population overwhelmingly comprising antipathetic Durani Afghans. India had passively accepted retirement from Kabul as a wise and just measure, and Kandahar's evacuation would probably elicit the same response rather than a grave loss of British prestige in Indian eyes. Cuttingly, Norman also pointed to the foolishness of holding that the heavy expenditure already incurred could only be justified by retention: Why not swallow pride, admit to having made a bad bargain and immediately cut losses which would prove interminable?

Neither Norman's nor Rawlinson's memos, completed on 20 and 25 September respectively, had any connection with the final, Cabinet decision to evacuate Kandahar - already taken on 7 September despite Ripon's misapprehensive doubts.¹⁶² But these memos did serve one useful function: as whetstones on which Hartington, in composing the despatch assuming

161. Ibid, pp.8 &4.

162. See S.S.I. to Viceroy, (Telegram), 9 September 1880. MSS.EUR.D.604/1, f.170.

H.M.G.'s responsibility for withdrawal, sharpened his own, dull, uninspired thoughts and justifications. Like many people who express themselves poorly, Hartington made avid use of other persons' written ideas in clarifying his own diffuse thoughts. He usually knew what he stood for, but could not articulate it easily or clearly.

Yet if Rawlinson and Frere, and the policy one had so long inspired and the other was soon to defend, were now consigned to the shadows of officialdom, in public controversy the ghosts of the past had one last fling. In the "Fortnightly Review"¹⁶³ that same September, Hobhouse called for a parliamentary inquiry into the question of whose professional advice had guided H.M.G. in 1875 and 1878 on the matters of forcing European agents on Sher Ali and of constructing a "scientific frontier". Heavily, indeed scornfully, critical of Rawlinson and Frere's ideas, Hobhouse voiced his "shrewd suspicion" that they were the persons who influenced Salisbury and Lytton. Dismissing the pair's hopes for an easily and cheaply governable Afghanistan as over-optimistic and baseless, their critic accused them of being "led by the excitement of a struggle for empire with Russia"¹⁶⁴ into wasting India's resources. "The same excitement ... has also distorted in their eyes the true proportions of political objects, leading them to rush into dangers that are great, certain and near, in order to avoid dangers that are small, contingent and remote. And so far as their forecasts have been tested by events, they have been falsified utterly".¹⁶⁴ Yet despite this critical assurance that the "forward" stance had been totally refuted, Hartington found it: "certainly rather remarkable that after this war, and the justification it has given of almost everything which was said by the Laurence school, the advanced policy does not seem to have been nearly so much discredited as one would have expected".¹⁶⁵

163. See Hobhouse, "Some Reflections on the Afghan Imbroglio".

164. Ibid, p.397.

165. Hartington to Ripon, 7 October 1880. REEL794.

It is hardly surprising, then, that an unrepentant Frere, recently returned from South Africa under a cloud, should contribute his farthings-worth to the vigorous spoken and written debate of early 1881; following the public announcement of the government's intention to withdraw all troops from Kandahar. Though much disgusted at the decision, Rawlinson was prevented from taking part in the public debate because Hartington, on first taking up office, had "put a veto on any more writing for the press".¹⁶⁶ In his letter to "The Times",¹⁶⁷ Frere neatly side-stepped the question of whether Britain should have advanced to Kandahar in the first place, but felt its financially onerous retention was justified by Russia's commitment to a continued advance towards India. Representing retention as a symbol of Britain's continued ability and determination to rule India - by force if necessary - Frere also voiced the standard, conservative, apocalyptic warning about evacuation seriously shaking "the general belief in our power and will to retain India". Expanding on the cliché about Kandahari friendliness, he pointed out that the Kandahar commercial community was contented with the tranquillity and freedom from fiscal oppression introduced by Britain, that most prominent merchants were in fact British Indian citizens maintaining close commercial ties with Sind and Herat, and that only the "military and fanatical" Afghans wished the British to leave. He neglected to mention that the latter comprised the overwhelming majority of Kandahar's population, provincial and urban.

Later that same year, Frere also took issue with Gladstone's Midlothian references to his leading instigation of an aggressive, immoral, ruinous Afghan policy. In a wide-ranging letter published as a pamphlet,¹⁶⁸ Sir Bartle sought to switch roles, from accused to prosecutor, by faulting

166. "Brief Sketch of the LIFE OF SIR H.C.R." R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers.

167. H.B.E. Frere, "The Retention of Candahar", "The Times", 3 March 1881, p.8, cols.2-3.

168. H.B.E. Frere, Afghanistan and South Africa: A Letter to the Rt. Hon. W.E. Gladstone regarding portions of his Midlothian Speeches (London, 1881)

the policy of "neglect and turning the cold shoulder", so long supported and presided over by Gladstone, as the "immediate and main cause of the present Afghan war".¹⁶⁹ Far from having advocated a hostile advance, Frere pointed out, he had persistently advised cordial and intimate relations, mutually beneficial to Afghans and British alike, as a preventive of hostilities. In general terms, he was summarising his faith in benevolent, long-term penetration as a means of effecting Afghan compliance with British needs. His attempt to exonerate himself from all sympathy with coercive measures would be much more convincing had he not written to Cranbrook as he did after Cavagnari's death. When it came more than a year later, Gladstone's reply unconvincingly denied any imputation in his Midlothian Speeches of a direct or indirect connection between Frere and Lytton.¹⁷⁰

Though they clung grimly under attack to their past ideas, Frere and Rawlinson's influential days were ended. Frere had been badly discredited by his conduct in South Africa; and Rawlinson, soon to be made permanent Chairman of the Political Committee, was now little more than an old man whom people still referred to but no one heeded. Though the Liberal government had retained Quetta, and Pishin and Sibi's occupation was to prove permanent, Rawlinson's vicarious presence was finally exercised from Afghan policy in April 1881. Britain's troops having evacuated the city of Kandahar on 21 April, after an uneventful march it was tersely announced six days later, from Chaman in Pishin: "Evacuation of Afghan territory completed today".¹⁷¹ With this conclusion to one of the more extreme aspects of "forward" school thinking, the curtain had been lowered

169. Ibid, p.12.

170. See Martineau, Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere, Vol.2, pp.438-9.

171. See Colonel St. John, Kandahar & Chaman, to Foreign Dept., Simla, (Telegram), 21 & 27 April 1881. G.I. to S.S.I., Secret 70, Enclosures 3 & 6, Simla, 1 May 1881. L/P&S/7/28, p.727.

on another episode in the Central Asian drama. When it was drawn again, Raulinson and Frere would be ghostly presences off-stage. "Forward" ideas would undoubtedly reappear in an altered form, reflecting the individual predilections of their new proponents and novel constellations of Russian, British, Persian and Afghan relations. And as the actors, their interpretations and their inter-actions changed, so future scenes would bear only some fragmentary resemblance to the one described here.

Chapter 8. Conclusion.

Like all other ideas, political and military stratagems are not reified objects with a life of their own. They are, rather, the nebulous end-product of an interminable concatenation of external events intricately interlaced with their subjective assessment; for all so-called objective circumstances are mediated through human consciousness. Similarly, those broad aims^{and means} finally adopted are not the creation of a solitary, competent minister, but the offspring of a collective consciousness: the amalgamation of his personal evaluation with his subordinates offerings, selected for their apparent reasonableness and immediate or future applicability, especially if existing policies no longer seem appropriate. Any study of the origins and evolution of a strategic idea must first concentrate on its human proponents; and then on mapping and charting a network of political inter-biographies as the idea is successfully propagated. Personal affinity and shared ideological conviction will complement temporal appropriateness as converts are made. And as the study expands, to incorporate the political, economic and ideological background, so it describes a succession of ever-widening, concentric circles with individuals set firmly at the centre. Far from resurrecting the "Cleopatra's nose" view of history, in taking account of chance and necessity's complex interplay the study of the particular reasserts the richness of the skein of time. Extracting one particular thread from that web does draw attention to the element of contingency and arbitrariness in human behaviour. But by the same token, reintegrating the thread with its background provides an opportunity for elaborating or testing relevant trends and general impressions of British imperialising in the mid-Victorian period.

* * *

All roads lead to India. The paraphrase appropriately summarises Britain's principal concern in her relations with Russia during the three

decades following the Crimean War: a classical education, overlaid with a strong sense of history, often led Victorian statesmen to rationalise the confused welter of immediate experience by reference to Rome's imperial past. Of little direct danger to Britain itself, Russian power appeared alarming for the threat it supposedly presented to India and to Britain's easy, Near Eastern passage thither. Taking for granted, or unconsciously assuming, that a free passage to India must be guaranteed, in the Near East and in Europe British statesmen carried out a purposive holding operation to prop up the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, or at least ensure that all its fragments did not fall under Russian control. Attending a futile Constantinople Conference in 1875-76, threatening war with Russia and pushing a protective salient into the political no man's land of the Ottoman polity in 1878;¹ for Britain, the extended Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 had its positive raison d'être in India's vital significance to her position as a world power, and the threat which Russia represented to that pre-eminence.² The Eastern Question was not some autophagous, self-sustaining problem but the European expression of that bond linking Russia to India in British calculations of Eurasian strategy.

In the Near East, both Britain and Russia lacked a sense of proportion, ^{both} in balancing political objectives against the likelihood of a credible threat, and in calculating the magnitude of their proposed counter-moves.³

Apart from the real need to protect her Black Sea coastline and to secure a commercial egress to the Mediterranean, the irrational, unpredictable,

1. See M.S. Anderson, The Eastern Question 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations (London, 1966), pp.178-219; C.J.Lowe, The Reluctant Imperialists: British Foreign Policy 1878-1902 (2 Vols., London, 1967), Vol.1, pp.1-51; D. Lee, Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878 (London, 1934).
2. Investigating the connection between trade, finance and foreign policy, D.C.M. Platt does not dispute that the British interest in Turkey in the 19TH. century remained, immediately and directly, political rather than economic. See D.C.M. Platt, Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy 1815-1914 (Oxford, 1968), pp.181-219.
3. See Anderson, The Eastern Question, pp.390-92.

exaggerating element in Russia's concern with the future of the Ottoman territories was provided by those Pan-Slavic sympathies which fired the powerful, military party in tsarist ruling circles. For their part, Britain's statesmen failed to realise how much their Russian opposites were on the defensive in the Near East from the 1850's onwards. And in the 1870's, the need to safeguard the route to India was supplemented by Disraeli's transport at his own bombastic rhetoric, and by the Germanophil sympathies of a domineering Queen. If the expenditure of much British diplomatic effort - for primarily defensive, political gains - had its own peculiar rationale, it can often appear quite irrational when compared with Russia's actual capacity to disrupt the route to India or ^{her} real desire for physical control of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. In its material and ideological origins, this Near East confrontation was an unfathomable compound of the specific and the vague, the reasonable and the extravagant, the rational and the irrational, of real fears and the magnified distrust emanating from them. But India, after all, was the conveniently inexpensive military supplement to Victorian Britain's industrial pre-eminence; and her politicians could accept few risks in guaranteeing the imperial connection.

The political-cum-military strategies of rival powers are evolved in a process compounding one part factual reality to every two parts subjective suspicion and assertion; the two elements combining with more or less validity. Therefore, from the rich, unsystematic diversity and complex intermingling of those many threads woven into the web of change, a particular thread and its diverse strands may be extracted and highlighted for its singular significance in the genesis of policy. The Central Asian Question was not connected with the Eastern Question as some minor sub-section of an essentially European difficulty; but as its Asiatic complement in a Russian problem of Eurasian dimensions. This

complementarity, arising from Russia's rapid military advances in Central Asia in the 1860's and 70's, was not some objective, self-apparent fact. But one asserted most forcibly by Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Henry Rawlinson, who both believed Russian encroachment could genuinely threaten British security in India. Appointing themselves physicians to India's strategic ills, they simultaneously provided a diagnosis, a prognosis and an antidote.

In the aftermath of the '57 Rebellion, the two men's fear was, emphatically, not of an impracticable invasion, but of Russia's destabilising a perpetually uneasy British administration; either by hostile military demonstrations beyond India's borders, or by carrying out disruptive agitation from a Russianised Afghanistan. In positing a link between Russian power and a threat to India, they were asserting nothing novel; merely relating an old-imagined Russian danger to those irrepressible, if vague, fears bequeathed by the uprising of an apparently averse Indian populace. Innenpolitik took precedence over Aussenpolitik in their calculations. Though, in part, destabilisation was simply a novel rationalisation of the older invasion fears which Rawlinson, at least, was steeped in. As Frere and Rawlinson defined it, there were two aspects to the Russian danger: the direct threat to India itself, and the possibility that Russian provocation along the North-West frontier might inconveniently reduce Britain's freedom of diplomatic or military action in protecting the Near Eastern passage to India. Either of these aspects could be stressed, depending on the Eurocentric or Indocentric outlook of the individual statesman and on whether the greater, immediate danger was reckoned as being to India itself or to British communications with it. And since both these facets reflected ineluctably on British security in India, in Frere and Rawlinson's terms the Central Asian Question was the missing link tying events in Europe and Asia together inextricably; under the broader signification of a Russian Question.

Propagating a set of solutions together with their definition of the problem, Frere and Rawlinson nevertheless provided answers which varied in accordance with the two men's different, political experience. Yet if Sir Bartle pressed Jacob's idea of a British outpost at Quetta, and if Sir Henry emphasised the practicability and benefits of a more active commitment to Persia, both were united in their assessment of Herat and Afghanistan's strategic significance. To unity of purpose and a fragile intersection of ideas, however, was added the strong ties of a common, Laurentian opposition - founded on the belief that British activity beyond the North-West frontier should be minimised. In ideological and practical terms, the interweave of the Bombay school's warp with Rawlinson's weft, manifest in the "forward" group's caballing within the India Office, was as much dependent on common opposition as on shared policy options.

As members of the Political Committee of the Council of India, the pair were in a unique position: with ready, formal and informal access to the latest, secret information, and the facilities for transmitting their own, pertinent opinions on current policy to top-ranking statesmen. On one or two occasions it did look as if renewed or rumoured Russian advances had created some sympathy for "forward" ideas in the India Office and in ^{Calcutta} during Gladstone's First Ministry. Amidst the uncertainties of Russia's next move, Argyll and Northbrook were less assured and unwaveringly Laurentian than they later, in Opposition, pretended. Overall, however, Lawrence's idea of a minimal British involvement beyond the North-West frontier predominated until early 1874. Based as much on irrational prejudice as on high ethical precepts, in practice the Laurentians' inflexible aloofness had seriously diminished British influence at Kabul, and denied her any espionage facilities along Afghanistan's northern

boundaries. And if the "forward" school itself was assidled with baseless, individual presumption and irrational predilection, Frere and Rawlinson gained credibility as prophets when their predictions of a speedy Russian approximation to India seemed justified by events. Even though Russian forces were still 1,000 miles away, when Salisbury took up his post as the new, Conservative Secretary of State for India, the practical inadequacies of a minimal involvement beyond the frontier had become apparent. Yet there was no intrinsic improvement, novelty or superiority about the "forward" school's ideas. And they would have sunk with little trace as a curious, historical aberration, had Anglo-Russian relations not deteriorated seriously in the mid-70's. Frere and Rawlinson's two-sided definition of the Central Asian Question now took on a new significance, and their recurrent predictions of a Russian danger acquired sufficient credibility to warrant pre-emptive measures.

Minus Kaye, their executive lynchpin, the members of the "forward" cabal now pressed their views individually on Salisbury. With a fuller exposition, the varying emphasis they placed on Quetta, Persia and Afghanistan became clearer. Because of its inexpediency, and despite Frere's recommendation, Salisbury temporarily put aside the Quetta project. On the other hand, he did adopt the oft-repeated suggestion that English officers were required at Herat in an intelligence role not trusted to native agents. With his political roots in European foreign policy, Salisbury shared that Eurasian perspective on the Central Asian Question which had been fully expounded in Frere's first letter/memorandum to Kaye. ^{Moreover,} from the very start, the 3RD. Marquis had been anxious to gather up-to-date, first-hand information on Russian movements in Central Asia. As unwilling as his Liberal predecessor to grant Sher Ali a defensive alliance, and as concerned as Frere to avoid that over-involvement which had led to the disastrous First Afghan War, Salisbury was casting

around for a middle course between entangling commitment and total inactivity. Frere provided him with an attractive prospect.⁴

In selecting the idea of a Herat agency from all the advice offered him, Salisbury did not choose one bare item from a list. He also adopted Frere's proto-racialist assumption that the Afghans were readily susceptible to a culturally and personally superior British influence, and that the Amirate of Kabul could ^{therefore} be easily incorporated in Britain's indirect empire. As a haughtily xenophobic Englishman, Salisbury may already have shared Frere's proto-racialism, but it is altogether unlikely that he had developed it into a primary, ideological premise for the easy penetration of a neighbouring territory. Whatever, Salisbury's adopting a more active policy towards Afghanistan can be explained primarily by his anxiety about worsening Anglo-Russian relations in Europe. On the other hand, the type of policy he adopted is largely ascribable to Frere's fruitful initiative. The space occupied by the second-grade functionary in devising the broad themes of policy covers much of the gap between the motives pertaining and the means adopted. Salisbury's political acumen lay less in his originality than in the open-minded objectivity which prevented his becoming too firmly committed to the established line of policy, or too unwilling to adopt a novel approach. The extent of his omniscient vision and critical originality can be overdrawn, and with it a disservice done in not acknowledging his political debt to Frere.

Though, admittedly, the British were seeking to impose indirect rather than direct empire on Afghanistan, it is clear that Sher Ali's

4. The details given in a letter written by Lady Catherine Frere to Salisbury in November 1878 indicate that in late-74, early-75 Sir Bartle wrote even more letters to the 3RD. Marquis on Central Asian policy than those still extant. See Lady Catherine Frere to Salisbury, Government House, Cape Town, 5 November 1878. C.C.L. E/Frere to Salisbury/10, Letter 6.

polity was undergoing no disruptive crisis of modernisation which tended to pull the British in. In the context of Frere and Salisbury's vision, at least, the ideology which propelled Britain into a closer involvement with Afghanistan was more important than any impelling, local circumstances. Yet the discovery that a particular, mid-19TH. century form of racialism was the key ideological dynamic requires a closer definition of the term "proto-racialism". Using the word "race" loosely in the 1870's, and with no dictionary definition of one people's superiority over another,⁵ mid-Victorian society was certainly not committed to that belief in inherency which marks 20TH. century, pseudo-scientific racialism. Yet the socially hierarchical mid-Victorians were still race-conscious,⁶ and did apply their rung-of-the-ladder notions of superiority to their imperial subjects.⁷ Self-consciously aware of their nation's industrial supremacy, and equating its expansion with the advance of a whole new civilisation, the mid-Victorians felt compelled to explain that supremacy.⁸ They did so by reference not to science but to history - that cornucopia of the generalising myth-maker.

Men's views are bounded but not determined by the environment which

5. See H.W. Bellew, The Races of Afghanistan: Being a Brief Account of the Principal Nations Inhabiting that Country (Calcutta, 1880); R.G. Latham, A Dictionary of the English Language (2 Vols., London, 1870), Vol.2, part 2, p.692, col.3.
6. See J. Leopold, "British Applications of the Aryan Theory of Race 1850-70", English Historical Review, LXXXIX (1974), pp.578-603.
7. This is well illustrated in the unusual insight into the workings of the mid-Victorian mind on matters of social and racial status provided by Sir John Kaye, noted historian and Secretary of the Political and Secret Dept., India Office. Cataloguing the papers of John, 13TH. Lord Elphinstone, ex-Governor of Bombay, in 1865 he arranged the correspondents in the following order: titled lords and gentry; Esquires; Reverends; Colonels; Majors; Captains; Lieutenants; officers in the Indian Navy; Doctors; British women; and, finally, in the last two categories, Indians with British titles and "Native Princes and other natives". See MSS.EUR.F.87/6A, B,C,E & 7A,D,E.
8. Witness the injunction contained in the 1851 Preface to G.R. Porter's Progress of the Nation, as quoted in A. Briggs, Victorian People (Harmondsworth, 1965), p.10.

they seek to explain. And Frere, in trying to rationalise the pre-eminence of Victorian Britain, explained its greatness not by immutable, genetic, racial qualities but by a historicist interpretation of the past as a panorama of rising and falling civilisations.⁹ Decadent civilisations produced degenerate personalities, with individual qualities inferior to the worthy characteristics of mid-19TH. century, ascendant Victorians. For Frere, however, it was historically pre-determined that the degenerate Afro-Asians, products of the passage of time and the descent of their society, would be reinvigorated by beneficial influence or conquest from an ascendant society. Expressing himself in a language of so racist a complexion that he has been distinguished as the first Briton to produce a racial interpretation of history,¹⁰ nevertheless, Frere did not believe in inherent, irredeemable, racial inferiority. He was to defend the Ilbert Bill; and his only "Dissenting Minute" on the Council of India urgently recommended a far wider employment of Indians in high, administrative office.¹¹

Yet if it is difficult to define Frere's views as strictly racist, it is equally impossible to purge them of their proto-racist content. No cultural relativist, he was convinced that the inferiority of African and Asian societies afflicted their members; who became malleable and susceptible to the influence exerted by awesome agents of a superior culture. No individual notion this, it was shared, at least, by other members of the Sind administration and, seemingly, by David Livingstone.¹² Though always taken for granted and never proclaimed in

9. See H.B.E. Frere, "On the Laws affecting the Relations between Civilised and Savage Life, as bearing on the Dealings of Colonists with Aborigines", Journal of the Anthropological Institute, XI (1882), p.313-54.

10. See C. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race (London, 1871), p.21.

11. See H.B.E. Frere, "Letter to R.Foggo and A.K. Settna on the Ilbert Bill", "The Times", 3 December 1883, p.8, col.2; H.B.E. Frere, Minute of Dissent, no.3, 18 February 1868. C/126, p.430.

12. See P. Mason, Prospero's Magic: Some Thoughts on Class and Race (London, 1962), pp.15-16 and chapter 1 generally. Mason's sympathetic view of Frere's attitude to indigenous Asian peoples ignores the fact that a belief in the current superiority of one's own civilisation can be just as powerful a dynamic of human behaviour whether it is quietly assumed or noisily propounded.

Kipling's histrionic fashion,¹³ the notion was a fundamental prelude to the overt racialism of the "White Man's Burden". Frere's basically paternalistic outlook contained the seeds of racialism within it. Comprehended within the context of Victorian culture rather than 20TH. century pseudo-science, Frere's beliefs were a mixture of Disraeli's aristocratic paternalism and an incipiently racist explanation of Britain's national elevation. With its superstructure of privilege offset by duty, equitable justice tempered with mercy, and the ultimate regeneration of benighted peoples and cultures, Frere's proto-racialism was deceptively unlike its strident, late-19TH. century descendant. Like aristocratic paternalism, it was just only so long as it dealt with compliant plebeians, yet reacted sharply to any evidence of deliberate independence by what it then took to be ungrateful children. Frere's unique contribution to the century's plethora of speculative, conservative trash was to elevate his proto-racialism into a political ideology, which served as the rationale for the gradual penetration and manipulation of Afghanistan aimed at by Salisbury.

Though he had supported the idea of a Herat agency, Rawlinson had played no part in persuading Salisbury in its favour. His emphasis on Persia as a bulwark supplementary to Afghanistan held no attractions for a Secretary of State who disliked superfluity and, for the moment, regarded Persia as irretrievably lost to Russian influence. Lacking Frere's subtle, if assumptive, brilliance, and too inclined to recur to coercive measures, Rawlinson also diverged radically from Sir Bartle's Afghan policy when he published his own thoughts on detaching Herat and Kandahar from Kabul. Despite its vagueness about when and how Western

13. See Pelly, The Views and Opinions, pp.3-4; L. Pelly, "British India", Fortnightly Review, 2 (1865), pp.31-42; T. Jeal, Livingstone (Omega, London, 1975), pp.234, 275 & 281.

Afghanistan should have military garrisons stationed in it, and about the geographical limits of the Kandahar-dominated section to be detached from the Amirate, Rawlinson's authoritative work was outstanding chiefly for its waywardness: partition or disintegration was a novelty in the context of H.M.G.'s commitment, since the early 1860's, to maintaining a strong, united "Big Afghanistan". Though the eminent authority's thinking was sometimes contradictory and obscure, two key points emerged: that the western section of Afghanistan, centring on Kandahar, would have to be controlled by Britain in order to dominate Herat; and that the more commercial-minded Kandaharis, unlike the pastoralist "Coloos" to the east, were liable to favour British rule and thus provide a suitable collaborative elite through which British direct or indirect empire could be exerted. This presumption of Kandahari support flew in the face of Rawlinson's own experience in 1842, when he had evicted 5,000 Afghans from the city. It also placed undue importance on the influence of urban merchants who were mostly alien, British Indians, not native, Durani Afghans.

However unlikely it might seem, and despite their inadequacies, Rawlinson's ideas on the political control of a strategically vital Western Afghanistan - borne in suspension in his book - supplied the germinant seed from which Lytton's later Afghan policy grew. An unimaginative plagiarist entirely ignorant of Indian affairs, Lytton was personally inclined to be over-credulous of authoritative men's opinions. It was also one of Lytton's characteristics as a statesman that he always operated with a second string to his bow. When Sher Ali proved less than compliant in providing ^{the} opening for Salisbury's "pacific invasion", Lytton had immediate recourse to the pis aller he had derived from Rawlinson. Ignoring Colley's emphasis on Kabul, Lytton chose Kandahar as the position

from which to dominate Herat and pre-empt Russian penetration of Afghanistan. And in seeking to fasten a political grip on that vital section of Afghanistan where indirect British empire seemed immediately feasible, like Rawlinson Lytton made much of the Kandaharis' suitability as a collaborative elite, inclined from self-interest to support British paramountcy. Despite Liberal accusations of steady connivance, Lytton simply used Rawlinson's ideas as a basic solution to the difficulties arising from Sher Ali's estrangement. Lytton's practice and Rawlinson's advocacy during the Second Afghan War were only tenuously linked by their shared, initial assumptions.

In employing Lytton for "la haute politique" of India's relations with its neighbours, Disraeli and Salisbury imagined they had secured as Viceroy a reliable, obedient sheep dog who would return errant neighbours to the fold and guard them against preying wolves. Instead, their intended servant proved wilfully independent in thought and deed. The mid-77 split between Salisbury and Lytton on Central Asian policy, when Lytton rejected the gradual penetration of a "Big Afghanistan" in favour of its disintegration, was the result of an appreciable shift in the Viceroy's outlook rather than any change in Salisbury's thinking. The Secretary of State for India, increasingly involved with the Eastern Question since the Constantinople Conference, had always given the European repercussions of the Russian Question precedence over the more direct danger to India. Convinced that Russia's military capacity to threaten India or the routes to it was highly exaggerated, and inclined to see the Hohenzollern not the Romanov Empire as Britain's greatest prospective rival, Salisbury was more hopeful than Disraeli of a negotiated settlement to the Eastern Crisis. Reluctant to accept an Anglo-Russian war as inevitable, in Asia he felt no imperative constraint to exchange a hitherto unsuccessful policy of diplomatic penetration for one which promised speedy

of a Russian and Afghanistan, the Russian mission appeared to vindicate

control of Afghanistan's western sector. Moreover, given the experiences of the First Afghan War and the unforeseeable repercussions of overconfident intermeddling in Afghan affairs, too deep a political commitment in Afghanistan might prove as dangerous as none at all.

Lytton, on the other hand, was now stubbornly complaining that India's security was being subordinated to British diplomatic interests in Europe. Receiving much, jaundiced information on the Eastern Question from Constantinople, where his old friend Sir Henry Layard was the Turkophil, British ambassador, Lytton sided with Disraeli's aggressive intent and feared that too unsympathetic a treatment of the Ottoman Sultan would see the green flag of jihad raised among India's Muslims. Looking north from Simla rather than coolly surveying matters from London, and imagining an Anglo-Russian war was imminent, the Viceroy feared hostile agitation against his charge from a Russianised Kabul. After only one year in India, Lytton's diplomatic outlook was profoundly Indocentric. If Kandahar's speedy subjection was low on Salisbury's list of priorities, to an insecure Viceroy it seemed a matter of the greatest urgency for India's better protection, given that high-handed, diplomatic pressure on Sher Ali had proved vain. Yet if the two major statesmen were divided by their distinct appraisals of the Russian danger, and thence by their incompatible priorities, in 1877 it was Lytton's single-minded rebelliousness which led him to act on the differences between them. Lytton's conduct, in forcefully attempting to change official policy on Afghanistan and subsequently harbouring his frustrated initiative, reflected his personal temperament as much as the strength of his political convictions.

Though he showed little apprehension at Russian troop movements in Central Asia during the Congress of Berlin, Lytton was distinctly unnerved by Stolyetov's presence at Kabul. Raising the long-disquieting spectre of a Russianised Afghanistan, the Russian mission appeared to vindicate

his earlier warnings of Russian duplicity, and provided the necessary excuse for re-establishing contact with Sher Ali. While a negotiated settlement still seemed an outside possibility, Lytton, with Disraeli with Cranbrook's backing, was willing to offer such an attractive concession to Sher Ali as a defensive alliance against Russia. But in the light of his subsequent attachment to disintegration, Lytton may merely have meant this as the carrot with which to establish a divisive British presence in Afghanistan. Even as he set up the Chamberlain Mission for preliminary negotiations, the Viceroy was contemplating the possibility of war against the Amir. Therefore, when Chamberlain was rebuffed at Ali-Masjid, Lytton's use of this "insult" to justify military action was the shallowest opportunism. By drawing attention away from the real, but now less pressing, issue of an Anglo-Russian confrontation in Central Asia, he provided himself with a more convincing appeal to British jingoism.

If the actual outbreak of war was Lytton's doing, and did represent the triumph of the periphery over the metropolitan, the long-term background to Anglo-Afghan hostilities shows how restrictive and oversimplified is the artificial division of complex human relationships by the formal, geographical terms "metropolitan" and "periphery". And even in the short-term, the war was no straightforward matter of a renegade lieutenant press-ganging entirely innocent home ministers. Allowed too much free rein from the start, if Lytton's headstrong nature was firmly restrained by the whip of Salisbury's criticism, Cranbrook proved all too slack-handed a driver, and again allowed the Viceroy his head in taking decisions. Unable to withstand the persuasiveness of Lytton's labyrinthine prose, Cranbrook defended the Viceroy's precipitancy against Cabinet strictures and, at a decisive moment, blustered his more cautious colleagues into support for a military campaign. Some part of Lytton's

militancy in defence of empire is also ascribable to the heady wine of imperialist rhetoric with which Disraeli had quenched the Viceroy's ideological thirst.

Attending too closely, in retrospect, to the war's length, it is easy to exaggerate the historical significance of the actual fighting, and to forget that the scale the war attained to was not a reflection of its initial objectives. That it was not concluded in one, short campaign was the result of Lytton's miscalculations rather than any deliberate introduction of a new, more expensive territorial imperialism. Placing proper stress, then, on those policies which fostered and permeated the war, these too reflected the intricate entanglement of people and events on the periphery with those in the metropolis. Frere and Rawlinson's estimates of Quetta's, Persia's and Afghanistan's strategic value had first been made on the frontier, but they had most success in pressing some of their ideas at home. The mid-70's impulse to commit Britain more closely to Afghanistan and to occupy Quetta came not from India, as Northbrook's confidant Hobhouse angrily noted,¹⁴ but from Salisbury, advised by Frere, in the metropolis. The germinating idea of destroying Afghanistan's fragile integrity was transported by the prospective Viceroy from London to India, and held in reserve there. From the periphery, Lytton was the prime mover only in the persistent revival of a dismemberment policy and in advocating coercion for its achievement. Furthermore, the political settlement anticipated from the war at one time reflected the Frere/Salisbury line of thought, at another the Rawlinson/Lytton theme. Though the "pacific invasion" line, with its proto-racialist overtones, was made redundant by the war, those clauses of the Treaty of Gandamak on Afghanistan's future political and commercial relationship to Britain embodied the idea of indirectly dominating a strong, united

14. See Hobhouse, "Some Reflections on the Afghan Imbroglio", pp.381-2.

Amirate through the political and commercial agents of British paramountcy. With Cavagnari's death, the absence of a strong immediate successor to Yakub Khan, and ^{British} the ~~the~~ generals' advice against annexation, Lytton successfully pressed for Afghanistan's partition: with the subjection of its western section to a form of indirect empire whose promise of practical success rested partly on the supposed existence of a local, collaborative elite, and increasingly on the overt display of British military strength at or near Kandahar. The policies running through the Second Afghan War make it, apparently, a dialogue between metropolitan and periphery rather than a simple monologue from a better informed Viceroy on the spot.

Despite their disagreement over the means to be employed, and over the future configurations of the Amirate of Kabul, the two prominent statesmen with the clearest-defined alternatives - Salisbury and Lytton - were united in seeking indirect not formal empire over Afghanistan, or part of it. Within a decade, in West Africa, the mere appearance of a rival power's envoy with treaty-making authority would be enough to set off a local scramble for formal control. The Stolytov Mission sparked off an Anglo-Afghan war but no consistent move to annex Afghanistan to the British administration in India. The vital element separating Afghanistan from the West African case a decade later was the absence of any substantial commercial interests. Trade through the Kolan Pass between Western Afghanistan and India amounted to less than ten lace per annum.¹⁵ The commercial clauses of the Treaty of Gandamak,¹⁶ so much insisted on by the Cabinet, were inserted as a mere palliative to metropolitan economic interests angry at an expensive war, and as a means of

15. See Khelat Diary, no.44, for week ending 30 November 1877. Indian Foreign Proceedings, Vol.1216, February Proceedings, p.701, no.508.

16. For Articles 6 and 7 of the treaty see C.U. Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries (13 Vols., Calcutta, 1909), Vol.XI, pp.345-6.

ensuring access for manipulative, commercial agencies over and above Britain's political officers. But if Afghanistan's poverty, underpinned by the memory of a disastrous over-commitment in 1838-42, accounts for the general British reluctance to impose direct rule, local conditions do not adequately explain British statesmen's readiness to contemplate indirect empire. The problem facing the British was their exclusion from the Amirate of Kabul, not some modernisation crisis dragging them ineluctably inwards. This being so, the move to rule Afghanistan indirectly is better explained by the forces of push rather than pull: by Salisbury's and Lytton's personal convictions that indirect empire was feasible. ^{Signally,} ~~AK~~ their belief in its feasibility rested, in turn, on the stratagems derived from the members of the "forward" school.

It will remain a matter of some contention whether Frere and Raulinson's fears of Russia, and of British insecurity in India, were justified. Their recurrent anxieties about internal revolt were vague but comprehensible, and hardly baseless; despite the contingency's dismissal by Northbrook as extremely unlikely, following his detailed investigations of 1873-4 into the state of popular feeling. After all, the '57 Rebellion had broken out, and rapidly escalated, in the face of much expert opinion to the contrary. Since then, moreover, the British administration's security had rested quite conspicuously on the strength of her military occupation, not on popular consent. Much divided among themselves, Indians did share one, potentially unifying antipathy: the British lords of human kind. In the absence of a spontaneous outburst, some external agitation by the "Physician from the North" could easily upset the friable facade of British rule.

In conjunction with the Stolypov Mission, terrorist troop concentrations along Afghanistan's frontier would seem to justify Sir Bertie and Sir Henry's apprehensions about an appropriate Russian attempt at destabilisation.

positively not an invasion of India itself - whenever an Anglo-Russian conflict seemed imminent. Yet Russia as much as Britain was ensnared by the enigmas of all confrontation politics: acting aggressively in self-defence, making war for the sake of a secure peace, acting preemptively to gain the initial advantage. Among the many knotty problems thrown up in such a situation there is the politics of excess: where perpetually anxious or opportunely aggressive figures on each side use their opposite numbers, their political doppel-gangers, as justification for their own unease or expansive inclinations. Thus Rawlinson's well-publicised apprehensions about a Russian danger to British security in India became something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Russian Central Asian officers pointed to Sir Henry's outspokenly, anti-Russian views as justification for their continued anxiety about British agitation against the Uzbek khanates; while major members of the military party, such as Milyutin, probably used Sir Henry's articles, book and speeches to confirm their suspicions about Britain's vulnerability to any agitation along or beyond India's North-West frontier.

For his part, though never temperate in his opinions about Russian intentions, Rawlinson was most unreasonable politically whenever tsarist forces made any significant advance. The practitioners of the politics of excess - the military party in Russia and men such as Rawlinson in Britain - fed on each other's deeds and words to provide even more convincing evidence of the need or justification for aggressive policies in Central Asia. Lacking much subtlety of thought, Rawlinson was unlikely to realise that he was caught in a self-imposed trap. His intemperate political views of the 60's and 70's can as well be explained by the internal logic of the conundrum he had helped set, as by glib accusations of Russophobia: a hackneyed political cliché. It would be only too

easy to dismiss Frere and Rawlinson, both, as thoughtlessly propagating a baseless fear of Russia. With some facility, they can equally well be lauded as men of vision; anticipating the precise nature of the Russian threat to India even if they did prove too impulsive in their defence measures. Yet in a political confrontation which lacks the sweating nitroglycerine of ideological fervour, time burns slowly on a long fuse. And during that long period of gestation spent in discerning rival strategies and devising the counter-moves, the members of an active, outspoken school of thought could actually help realise the very eventuality to which they simultaneously provided an attractive solution.

Balancing political objectives against the means of accomplishing them, Rawlinson's and Frere's solutions to the problem of India's vulnerability appear excessive, as well as resting on a succession of fallacies. If the boundary between adequate and exaggerated precaution is a narrow one, and often only discernible when the promise of deliverance proves a burdensome entanglement, both men transgressed it. Granted the necessity of an intelligence outpost beyond the 1849 frontier line, and even of an armed outwork from which to oversee Herat, Quetta would have served adequately. There was little need to seek agents along the northern Afghan frontier, or to yearn after Kandahar as the haut du pavillon over Herat. Rawlinson's insistence on both Persia and Afghanistan as bulwarks of India was a needless extravagance, as well as ignoring the difficulty in simultaneously satisfying two such antipathetic politics. And if Afghanistan alone was to be treated as a bulwerk, it should have been as a trusted, independent ally linked to Britain by an unconditional, defensive alliance. Since the British did not trust the Amir to that extent, however, they must needs stay out of his country altogether, or else devise various schemes, resting on dubious basic premises, for his territory's subjection or disintegration. Furthermore,

if what they feared was a Russianised Afghanistan, their steady gaze on Herat was a misplaced hangover from a past mesmerised by invasion fears.

The proto-racialism underlying Frere's and Salisbury's conception of indirect empire essentially denied the Afghans any capacity for independent thought. Apart from the fact that it rested on this fallacy, "pacific invasion" was never applied in practice, and so it is difficult to predict with certainty how it would have developed. At a guess, however, British agents would soon have depended on more or less blatant coercion when the Afghans proved less than malleable clay in the hands of men they refused to acknowledge as their personal superiors. Even if Rawlinson was correct in depicting Kandahar, not Kabul, as the most suitable Afghan military base from which to dominate Herat, he was mistaken in assuming that a viable Kandahar province, readily accepting indirect rule, could be created with little difficulty from a dismembered Amirate of Kabul. And as Lytton floundered on with a policy lacking even the foundations for its own construction, he moved by degrees towards a more overt reliance on local, British military strength rather than support from a politically powerful, commercial elite and a traditional figurehead. Until indirect rule over Western Afghanistan, nebulous in constitution and geography from the very beginning, faded into the background; and military occupation became barely distinguishable from outright annexation.

As a pointer to the near future in another continent, it proved as difficult for Britain to extricate herself from political commitments as to adopt them; and a considerable proportion of informed, political opinion outrightly opposed the withdrawal of British troops from Kandahar. Frere was an especially pertinent example of this, since he had not favoured Kandahar's occupation in the first place, but still

felt obliged, for reasons of prestige, to retain it. Eventually breaking the gordian knot which tied its retention to considerations of inflated British prestige, the Liberals presented Kandahar as an offering to their public conscience; while really practising their particular brand of cost-effective politics. In their political relationship with the new Amir of a reunited Afghanistan, the Liberals steered mid-way between distrustful, Laurentian aloofness and the "forward" school's baseless, illimitable entanglements. But in keeping Quetta as a watchtower, and retaining Pishin and Sibi for the military command they gave of the road to Kandahar, Ripon did implicitly acknowledge a vestige of reason in the "forward" school case.

Conjoint expressions of India's value to Britain, the 1875-8 Eastern Crisis and the Second Afghan War cannot be evaluated in isolation, as autonomous political activities, divorced in the minds of practitioners from economic considerations. None of the Frere/Salisbury, Rawlinson/Lytton quartet was commercially naive, thoughtless of India's economic value, or ignorant of the material element in British foreign policy. As members of the service gentry, both Frere and Rawlinson derived considerable, direct, personal benefit from the "home charges" payable by India. In addition to his pension and Council of India salary, amounting to £1,500 per annum, fully a third of Rawlinson's total income in the late-70's came from shares in Indian railway companies.¹⁷ As an ex-member of the Levantine consular service and an elevated official of the R.G.S., Rawlinson was fully aware of the connection between trade and empire, and firmly believed that commercial penetration opened the way for informal, political paramountcy.¹⁸ In the

17. See "Expenditure and Receipts for years 1879 & 1880". Abstract of Accounts(Personal). R.A.S./Rawlinson Papers.

18. See H.C. Rawlinson, "On Trade Routes between Turkestan and India", P.R.G.S., XIII(1868-69), p.10; Rawlinson's contribution to the discussion "On Trade between Calcutta, Darjeeling, Shooan and Thibet", Journal of the Society of Arts, XVII (1869), pp.558-65; also D.C.M. Platt, The Cinderella Service. British Consuls since 1825 (London, 1971).

early 70's Frere readily acknowledged that India was ruled from Westminster, not Calcutta, and often on behalf of British economic interests with some parliamentary influence.¹⁹ Firmly convinced that India's economic development depended on large, capital-intensive projects, Sir Bartle vigorously favoured the representation of "Capitalists, Manufacturers, and industrial and commercial interests of all kinds" on the Council of India.²⁰ Yet though he naively believed that British merchants were motivated as much by philanthropy as by the profit motive, by concern for India's welfare as by self-interest, ultimately Frere himself saw India as a captive source of raw material for use in times of British economic recession.²¹ Nor were Salisbury or Lytton representatives of an aloof, aristocratic, mandarin caste cut off from commercial preoccupations. The 3RD. Marquis may have been a "Sisil" of Hatfield but, while living on a meagre allowance in the 50's and 60's as the second son, he had supplemented his income by holding several well-paid directorships, investing in banking houses, and even becoming Chairman of the Great Eastern Railway.²² In Salisbury's case, there was no aristocratic reluctance to adulterate his mind with sordid commercial and financial concerns. And even Lytton, perpetually expounding on British foreign policy's moral content, acknowledged its material component as so self-evident it required no elucidation.²³

If both service gentry and major statesmen were fully aware of the material element in politics, and ^{of} the economic benefits of empire, in the mid-70's they were forced to recognise that politically powerful industrial and commercial interests, feeling the effects as the slump in

19. See Frere to Salisbury, 4 October 1875. REEL820/77.

20. Frere to Salisbury, 14 March 1874. REE.820/76.

21. See Frere to Elgin, Depours, nr. Poona, 1 July 1862. MSS.EUR.F./18, pp.35-41; Frere to Mayo, 15 & 23 July 1869. Add.7490/53b/XI Letters 55 & 56.

22. See K. Rose, The Later Cecile (London, 1975), p.23.

23. See Lytton to Layard, Calcutta, 25 January 1878. MSS.EUR.E.2' p.59.

Britain's share of world trade bit deeper, saw the Indian market as having a significant potential for cushioning the worst of the impact. Providing a useful test-case for evaluating the connection between servants of the state and economic interest groups, from the late-50's to the early-80's Lancashire cotton manufacturers repeatedly petitioned the India Office ^{sought} They ^{abolition} of those cotton import duties which afforded the native handloom weavers, and the rapidly expanding Indian mill industry, a measure of protection against British competition.²⁴ Seeing India as a manipulable market for their piece goods or yarn, and a captive source of raw material, the Lancashire cotton industry had persistently treated the sub-continental market as a handy relief on falling sales and profits. They demanded the abolition of the cotton tariffs so that India, in practice rather than theory, would become a mercantilist dependency existing for the metropolitan's benefit. With the onset of the misnamed "Great Depression", Lancashire's impressive petitions were renewed with great effect. And the ensuing battle between H.M.G. and the Government of India over the precedence of imperial or Indian interests led to a major rift between Salisbury and Northbrook.²⁵

Having long sympathised with Lancashire's interest in India as a source of raw cotton, Frere was never opposed in principle to the removal of the cotton duties; though in 1875, in an address to the Manchester Indian Association on "The Industrial and Commercial Connections between India and England",²⁶ he proved a less than whole-hearted supporter of immediate abolition. In his reckoning, political calculations of British

24. See P. Harnetty, Imperialism and Free Trade: Lancashire and India in the mid-19TH. century (Manchester, 1972); *ibid*, "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Lancashire and Indian Cotton Duties, 1859-62", Economic History Review, Second Series, XVIII (1965), pp.333-49.

25. See Moulton, Lord Northbrook's Indian Administration, pp.174-214.

26. For an account of Frere's speech, and Manchester's response, see "Manchester Guardian", 15 April 1875, pp.8&4, cols. 2-4 & 5-6.

security in India had to be balanced against the British manufacturers' search for profits: with India's finances in a delicate condition, the cotton duties could only be replaced by an income tax but recently removed because of the opposition it created within India. Asserting the precedence of imperial over Indian interests, and viewing abolition as a "reasonable request", Salisbury favoured the cotton duties' immediate or speedy removal. And, despite Northbrook's successful efforts in conceding only a limited, percentage reduction in 1875, by the late-70's Salisbury, Lytton and Crenbrook, between them, had effectively reduced India to a mercantilist dependency by removing most of the cotton tariffs. They had done so, moreover, as a result of direct, overt pressure from metropolitan economic interests who saw India as a ready relief to the squeeze on British fortunes in more competitive world markets.

Fully aware that commercial well-being was a significant part of the national interest, in the late 1870's British statesmen protected the route to India, and India itself, with a fuller appreciation of its economic value in the eyes of the staple British industry. Yet there is obviously no crude, one-to-one relationship between economics and politics: the Eastern Crisis and Second Afghan War cannot be derived directly from the downturn in Britain's hitherto flourishing commercial fortunes, or consequent British calculations of India's increased importance as a dumping ground for Britain's overstocked industries. There was ^{still} room for general disagreement among statesmen about the magnitude of the Russian threat to Britain's imperial connections, and about the most adept counter-moves in Afghanistan and the Eastern Mediterranean. Vague fears of Muslim unrest within the Raj provided an easier apprehended motive for its defence than pounds, shillings and pence calculations of the commercial benefits derived from India's possession. One of the

staunchest advocates of abolition within the India Office, the Permanent Under-Secretary and fervent Free Trader Sir Louis Mallet, was also a convinced opponent of all "forward" policies. And when an Afghan war, ostensibly in India's defence, did break out, Lancashire opposed it in case the extra burden on the Indian Exchequer meant postponing the outright abolition of the few remaining cotton duties.

If the central tenets of a whole era can be determined as much by what contemporaries could not contemplate as by the precise ideas they subscribed to, then Victorian statesmen operated on the assumption that the loss of India would be an incalculable disaster for Britain's military and commercial prepotency as a world power.²⁷ Within the parameters of this unthinkable eventuality, there was room for disagreement about the likelihood and magnitude of a threat to British connections with India, as well as the least exerting and most advantageous pre-emptive and counter-moves. In the later 1870's, when India's loss became even less conceivable with its increased economic importance, British statesmen's willingness to outface, if not outfight, Russia in the Eastern Crisis, and to pressurise Afghanistan diplomatically or militarily into a closer connection with India, can be more readily understood. Ignoring the general economic background to action taken in the defence of India²⁸ is as misrepresentative as exaggerating it out of all proportion.

If the downturn of the trade cycle provides no all-embracing explanation of imperial foreign policy, the principal justification for

27. For a succinct, relatively frank and very detailed contemporary assessment of India's central importance to Britain's status as a world power, see Anon., "The Value of India to England", Quarterly Review, 120 (1866), pp.198-220.

28. In his latest work on the relationship between economics and empire, D.K. Fieldhouse refrains from examining the relevance of events on the North-West frontier since "economic factors played virtually no part in the formulation of British policy ... Whether or not such expansion (in Sind, the Punjab and Afghanistan, twice) achieved its primary objectives, it must surely be regarded as a product of the strategic assumptions of the official minds of Calcutta and London. There is little point in searching for evidence that responsibility lay with the changing character of European capitalism, the effects of tariff protection, or even the interests of commerce in its widest sense". D.K. Fieldhouse, Economics and Empire 1830-1914 (New York, 1973), pp.174-5.

fighting the Second Afghan War, and for retaining the gains made, was always given as Britain's national interest. Yet the term "national interest" is too vague to be satisfactory. There were, after all, "Two Nations"; and had Britain's statesmen been really concerned with the needs of the nation as a whole, they would have been less interested in empire and more involved with welfare programmes. "National interest", then, was only a euphemism for the state's interests. Just as the ebullient patriotism of 19TH. century Victorians was a sentimentalised expression of a sense of duty to the state. Despite their talk of international law and of nations being bound, as individuals, by ethical principles, even the Liberal's injection of morality into politics proved an unstable adulteration; with the state's interests taking precedence in the end over all the high-minded talk of injustice.

Little inclined to abstract speculation, and with the state usefully reified in the person of the monarchy, Victorian statesmen and administrators made no effort to formulate their precise conception of the abstraction to which they gave loyalty and which provided them with the justification for their actions. For the state has no existence outside the minds of its servants, and is only the visionary notion providing the dynamic for their deeds and thoughts. This was especially true of that political and social stratum identifiable as a service gentry.²⁹ This social by-product of empire was composed of men like Rawlinson and Frere. Men whose whole life had been spent in service to the state, and whose elevated status - their relatively high salaries and socially prestigious titles and honours - was a direct grant of the state's. The multiplication of orders, ribbons, titles and medals during the Victorian era, and the

29. For the idea of a service class, I am indebted to Dr. Roy Bridges of Aberdeen University. The term "service gentry", and the broader implications I have drawn from its existence, are my own responsibility. See R. Bridges, "Europeans and East Africans in the Age of Exploration", Geographical Journal, 139 (1973), pp.220-32.

zeal with which they were pursued or seriousness with which elevation was accepted,³⁰ was no irrational fad. It was, rather, an implicit acknowledgement that the state provided many of its servants with their primary ideological sustenance.

Empire was merely an overseas extension of the British state; and when its servants sought to defend the empire they aimed, in effect, at maintaining or expanding the power of the state. A nebulous, all-pervading quality, power is the political equivalent of "time" and "energy" in science: a basic presumption, even if impossible to define adequately or more than imprecisely. Power may be a product of financial wherewithal - *nervus belli pecunia est*; power may be exerted in deliberate defence of economic interests; strategy, the manner in which power is exerted, may be defined as "metaeconomics". But power itself is not solely a function of economics, or only exerted on behalf of ongoing or anticipated commercial enterprises. Power becomes an end in itself: a cumulative phenomenon, insofar as defending what power one already possesses requires more power. On the maintenance of its power depends the state's internal security - that of the British administration in India; and its ability to withstand external rivalry - the possibility of a Russian danger to Britain's imperial connections. The political animal, then, who sees the state's vital interests as threatened, is not the simple handtool of socio-economic stratum, but a perpetual seeker after more power for the Moloch he serves. The steady growth or preservation of the power of the state, an abstraction given reality and sustained perpetually by its own servants, is a far greater dynamic of historical change than the intermittent activation of the class struggle. Though it has never received the serious scholarly attention or academic respectability accorded to marxist theories, and has never been elucidated

30. John Jacob importuned his superiors to fulfil their promise of the Order of the Bath. Rawlinson refused a Baronetcy because he was not possessed of private means adequate to support the title. He only accepted when his son, on whom the title would devolve, contracted a well-endowed marriage. See Lambrick, *John Jacob*, p.380; "In Support of a Baronetcy for Sir H. Rawlinson, G.C.B.", 25 April 1890. REEL820/72.

in any systematic way, an anarchist interpretation of imperialism, with ^{and its requirements} the emphasis on the state as the great engine of expansion, seems more appropriate than a Marxist-Leninist one.

* * *

Periodically throughout the 19TH. century, outspoken members of the Anglo-Indian service gentry had played an influential role in linking broad conceptions of imperial strategy to a more specific concern for India's safety. As conceived by the "forward" school of the 1860's and 70's, the Central Asian Question was not some figment of a panicky, Anglo-Indian imagination, arbitrarily tacked onto the Eastern Question. It was, rather, an integral part of a Eurasian problem, as much as a very real matter of India's vulnerability to Russian agitation. If Salisbury was not already aware of it, the "forward" school, and Frere in particular, convinced him of the Eurasian dimensions of what was essentially a Russian Question. Simultaneously, it also provided him with a selection of broad, long-term stratagems aimed at protecting Britain's international and India's local Achilles' heel. But in rejecting the current, Laurentian orthodoxy, Salisbury and Lytton, to whom the Eurasian perspective grew less important as he became more Indocentric, did not select some few items from a bare list of shibboleths about Quetta, Herat, Kandahar or Persia. They also half-consciously absorbed many of Frere's and Rawlinson's barely articulated, ideological presumptions about how best those "forward" stratagems could succeed. Such being the case, that "forward" school of thought epitomised by Frere and Rawlinson played a crucial, but little acknowledged, role in British attempts to resolve the Central Asian Question in the later 1870's.

The service gentry mediated between the major statesman's broader strategic concerns and their own particular understanding of pertinent, local conditions. To perform this role, they need do little more than plant hardy seeds which would come to fruition sooner or later. Beyond this fruitful congress, they played no part in the steady, practical

application of their suggestions. As is shown by the garrulous Political Committee's gradual exclusion from access to all secret information, and its redundancy as an informal counselling service on the Central Asian Question once the broad lines of policy had been determined. With the Liberal withdrawal from Kandahar, the fruits of the mid-Victorian "forward" school withered and died; apart from the territory still occupied beyond the 1849 frontier line. Given the brief realisation of some of their more ambitious schemes, Frere and Rawlinson would deserve the epitaph, "They also serve who also stand and wait", were it not for the fact that they had actively loaded the metaphoric guns, even if they had not actually fired them. ^{Since} deeds speak louder than trite summaries - or a plethora of their opponents' criticisms - the two men's banishment from the light artillery of political history is best ^{commemorated} ~~remembered~~ in "The Times" report of 2 May 1881 that: "The evacuation of Southern Afghanistan, so far as it is to be carried out for the present, is now completed. ... and the points en route were made over to the Ameer's officers".³¹

31. "The Times", 2 May 1881, p.7, col.1.

Appendix A.

Annual Appointments to Membership of the Political Committee, 1868-1880.

- 1 November 1868: Frere(Chairman), Montgomery, Currie, Clerk & Rawlinson.
- 4 November 1869: Montgomery(Chairman), Frere, Currie, Clerk & Rawlinson.
- 9 November 1870: Currie(Chairman), Clerk, Rawlinson, Frere & Montgomery.
- 1 November 1871: Rawlinson(Chairman), Currie, Clerk, Frere & Montgomery.
- 21 November 1872: Montgomery(Chairman), Frere, Clerk, Currie, Rawlinson & Perry.
- 13 November 1873: Rawlinson(Chairman), Montgomery, Currie, Perry & Clerk.
- 23 October 1874: Frere(Chairman), Currie, Perry, Clerk, Montgomery & Rawlinson.
- 19 October 1875: Montgomery(Chairman), Perry, Clerk, Halliday, Rawlinson & Maine.
- 31 October 1876: Maine(Chairman), Perry, Frere, Montgomery, Halliday, Rawlinson & Johnson.
- 30 October 1877: Halliday(Chairman), Perry, Rawlinson, Montgomery, Maine & Merewether.
- 1 November 1878: Same membership, but no information as to who was chairman.
- 4 November 1879: Rawlinson(Chairman), Halliday, Maine, Merewether, Montgomery, Perry.
- 3 November 1880: Perry(Chairman), Rawlinson, Halliday, Maine, Montgomery & Norman.

Appendix B.

The 1871 "manifesto" of the "forward" group.ENDS.MEANS.

To endeavour by all legitimate means to re-establish our waning influence in Persia.

H. Rawlinson.

H.B.E. Frere.

R. Montgomery.

J.W. Kaye.

To consolidate and strengthen Afghanistan and to secure, in any emergency, its alliance and cooperation.

That we should strengthen the government of the Khan of Khelet.

1. To place the control of the Persian Mission under the India Office.
2. To appoint as British officer at Teheran an officer of ripe, Oriental experience and high tone of principle such as were Malcolm, McNeill, Sutherland etc. in the old days.
3. To appoint British officers, upon terms favourable to the Shah, to organise and discipline the Persian army.

1. By supplying the de facto Ruler, at such intervals as we may think it fit (but under no special agreement) with money and arms.
2. By using diplomatically, the influence of the British Government to reconcile existing differences - and to persuade all parties that it is for the general benefit of the State that there should be united action among them.
3. That with this object a British officer should be despatched to Caubul if the Viceroy should think it expedient and the Amser should express his willingness to receive one.

By consenting to pay the additional subsidy of 50,000 rupees per an, before applied for more than once, and recommended by Bombay Government, but not allowed by higher authority.

1. Unheaded. Signed by Rawlinson, Frere, Montgomery and Kaye on first page, and in Kaye's handwriting. L/P&S/3/78, pp.844C-844E.

Appendix C.

Extracts from Lytton's "The Wanderer" and his "Last Words of a Second Rate Sensitive Poet".

- (1) For all youth seeks, all manhood needs,
 All youth and manhood rarely find:
 A strength more strong than codes or creeds,
 In lofty thoughts and lovely deeds
 Reveal'd to heart and mind.
 A staff to stay, a star to guide;
 A spell to soothe, a power to raise;
 A faith by fortune firmly tried;
 A judgement resolute to preside
 O'er days at strife with days.
 O large in lore, in nature sound!
 O man to me of all men, dear!
 All these in thine my life hath found,
 And force to tread the rugged ground
 Of daily toil, with cheer. 1.
- (2) But I have caught the contagion of a world that I never loved,
 Pleased myself with approval of those that I never approved,
 Palter'd with pleasures that pleased not, and fame where no fame could be,

 Yet oh! the confident spirit once mine, to dare and to do!
 Take the world into my hand, and shape it, and make it anew:
 Gather all men in my purpose, men in their darkness and dearth,
 Men in their meanness and misery, made of the dust of the earth,
 Mould them afresh and make out of them Man, with his spirit sublime,
 Man, the great heir of Eternity, dragging the conquests of Time! 2.

1. See Balfour, Personal and Literary Letters, Vol.1, p.14.
2. See Robert, First Earl of Lytton, Selected Poems (London, 1894), pp. 164-75. The poem was first published in 1868 in "Chronicles and Characters".

Appendix D.

Lytton's and the Cabinet's relative responsibilities for the outbreak of the Second Afghan War.

An appreciation of Lytton's responsibility for the Second Afghan War depends on whether he is seen as a purposeful planner, working to well-determined goals and time-limits, or a purely pragmatic politician. Much depends also on bridging the gulf between his portrayal as an innocent statesman much maligned by the "devil theory"¹ of his sole responsibility for the war, and the possibility that he was a self-willed, devious, dishonest² schemer. In his own eyes the Viceroy eschewed pedantic adherence to a political objective, regardless of fact or experience, but did work consistently within the terms of certain explicit cardinal principles which determined the aim and scope of his actions.³ Those views and principles to which he did in fact adhere, he outlined in his early August letters to Cranbrook, written just after the idea of a British mission to Kabul had been mooted. These letters' most notable feature is the prescience with which they anticipated the future course of events, and they may be taken as the blueprint of Lytton's conduct in the next four months. He foresaw the possibility of the mission's rebuff, of a limited war in which the Kurram valley and Kandahar would be occupied, Sher Ali deposed, Afghanistan disintegrated and a pro-British triumvirate established in Southern and Western Afghanistan.⁴ Yet, though the Viceroy had clear doubts about Chamberlain's chances of

1. Klein, "Who Made the Second Afghan War?", p.120.

2. The charge of dishonesty does not seem unnaturally harsh. Lytton had provided Burne with money to help him manipulate the British press. Yet Lytton, fearful that this surreptitious conduct might compromise him if discovered, affirmed to Sir John Strachey that "their (Burne and Dr. Birdwood's) action, whatever it may have been, has been in no wise inspired or controlled by me". Lytton to Strachey, Simla, 24 October 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, p.776. Burne's letters to the Viceroy make it clear that he was not acting independently but as Lytton's personal representative in London.

3. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Camp, Lahore, 28 November 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.868-9.

4. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 3 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.536 & 542-5.

success, and even anticipated the mission's possible "non-reception",⁵ he still felt "bound to take this step before we can take any other".⁶ It was political practicalities rather than individual preference which "bound" Lytton and led him to espouse the idea of a mission which he reckoned had only an even chance of successfully attaining its object. The contents of their October '77 despatch had shown that H.M.G. still stuck emphatically to the idea of a strong, independent, united Afghanistan, and must have convinced him that the Cabinet would not sanction an immediate, albeit limited, war for its dismemberment.⁷ At a time when India's finances were in a parlous condition, he was also compelled to try and obtain cheaply, by negotiation, what he might have to purchase dearly in a war; even though he did anticipate the latter possibility and readily acknowledged its necessity if negotiations failed.

Assessment of Lytton's liability centres on the despatch of the Chamberlain Mission to Kabul. Launching it on an unsuspecting Amir, arming it with stringent demands for the Stolytov Mission's ejection, and precipitating it into Afghanistan against the Cabinet's wishes: these actions have been judged innocuously as exemplify^{ing} Lytton's reluctance to temporise further. Dubious, earlier, about whether he enjoyed Cabinet support, by early September Lytton was convinced that Cranbrook had granted him a "large discretion" in dealing with the Afghan crisis. He now felt a pressing need to test the Amir's loyalty fully and with unequivocal finality. Always pursuing his objectives with two means of

5. Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 12 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, p.566.

6. Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 3 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, p.544.

7. Though determined to accept "any amount of responsibility that may be laid upon us (the Government of India)", Lytton mistrusted the Cabinet as likely to use him for a scapegoat if matters went wrong. He therefore wished to be absolutely certain, this time, that he had full Cabinet support and could not be thrown "over the parapet without a moment's hesitation", as he believed Salisbury had done with him in mid-77. See Lytton to Cranbrook, Simla, 8 September 1878. MSS.EUR.E.218/518/3, pp.631-2.

attaining them at hand - if the one failed the other was immediately operative - Lytton arrogated himself the initiative in policy-making. When he ordered the mission to proceed to Ali-Masjid, therefore, it was in the hope that it might prove successful, but fully aware of its possible abortion and already explicitly prepared, in such a circumstance, "without a moment's hesitation to upset him (the Amir) at once, by occupying the Kurram valley and Kandahar".⁸ Lytton was purposefully trying to dictate events rather than respond haphazardly to eventualities; partly through a desire for personal honours and partly from the conviction that he was the most far-sighted, protective cohort of Britain's prize imperial possession. If the Viceroy did not despatch the mission to foment war, he did so as a test, more for the Cabinet's benefit than his own, of whether or not war was necessary. For the man who tended to personalise Anglo-Afghan relations into a quarrel between Viceroy and Amir, the "insult" of the rebuff at Ali-Masjid was a personal as well as a national one.

Believing Sher Ali's pro-Russian, anti-British disposition now proven, Lytton reverted to what he had already envisaged as a distinct possibility: a cheap, convenient, limited war, sufficient to topple the Amir. Never disinclined to contemplate a military solution, the Viceroy was only slightly less reluctant to adopt one; and found his pretext in the British mission's rejection. The need for an advance into the Kurram valley and towards Kandahar, for which Lytton was preparing by late-September, seemed to be further confirmed by the Amir's "insolent" reply, received on 18 October, to Lytton's earlier note of 14 September. On 19 October the Viceroy pressed the Cabinet for immediate war with an apparently, unmitigably hostile Amir. There is no reason to suppose that he still hoped for a negotiated settlement with Sher Ali as late as mid-October. Seeing war as a means to an end rather than an end in itself,

8. Lytton to Crenbrook, Simla, 12 August 1878. MSS.EUR.E.216/516/3, p.566.

and calculating the scale of military operations in strict accordance with his political objectives, Lytton aimed to dismember Afghanistan by the judicious application of force, since disintegration had failed to materialise spontaneously. It is erroneous to imply that Lytton did not want war simply because he did not wish to conquer the whole of Afghanistan or march on Kabul.⁹ Indeed, in the first week of October, he did make one, little remarked, attempt to open hostilities by manufacturing a frontier incident. On the pretext of aiding the pro-British Jowakis, Lytton intended attacking the Afghan fort at Ali-Masjid, but called off the enterprise when he heard the garrison had been powerfully reinforced.¹⁰ To have attacked an Afghan fort at this juncture would have been to propel Sher Ali into war. Alternately, the Amir might have been deposed, in which case Lytton could have exploited the resultant confusion to aggravate Afghanistan's disintegration and establish a pro-British polity in Southern and Western Afghanistan.

Yet Lytton's actions were not free from Cabinet restraint or compliance, and some misapprehensive exaggeration of his personal responsibility for the war may exist. The Anglo-Afghan conflict which eventually broke out on 21 November 1878 has been represented as "partly Cranbrook's and Beaconsfield's war as well as Lytton's". Because they and many others, even outside the Cabinet, were "the point of a phalanx ... who believed that only a 'forward' policy would secure India".¹¹ This view reflects an altogether erroneous confusion of means with ends: support for a "forward" policy did not mean support for war. When a negotiated

9. See Klein, "Who Made the Second Afghan War?", p.114.

10. Cowling seems to assume that Lytton meant merely to drive the Afghan troops back to Ali Masjid. But the telegram in which he announced the postponement of the move makes it clear that he had contemplated a compromising attack on the Afghan fortress itself. See Cowling, "Lytton, the Cabinet and the Russians", pp.72 & 76; Viceroy to S.S.I. (Telegrams), Simla 4 & 7 October 1878. L/P&S/3/214, pp.499 & 571-72; see also Lytton to the Queen, Simla, 3 October 1878. MSS.EUR.E.210/518/3, p.718.

11. Klein, "Who Made the Second Afghan War?", pp.117 & 120-21.

settlement still seemed very possible - in mid-September, before the "insult" of the precipitate mission's rebuff - the principal division among Cabinet members was not between adherents and opponents of a "forward" policy. It was between those, such as Beaconsfield and Cranbrook, who sided with Lytton in putting severe diplomatic pressure on Sher Ali while simultaneously offering him a territorial guarantee against Russia, and the view, presented by Salisbury, that a less onerous list of demands should be accompanied by no concessions.¹² It was at this point that Salisbury fully expounded his ideas on the "pacific invasion" of Afghanistan, following the admission of British consuls and a resident mission: in Salisbury's opinion the only "wise and necessary" demand which Chamberlain should make.¹³ Though Cranbrook felt Salisbury exaggerated the dangers of entangling promises to the Amir in return for concessions,¹⁴ both men were adherents of a "forward" policy aimed at making Afghanistan a British-dominated barrier. They only differed over the exact terms by which it would be achieved.

While they still believed, then, in a negotiated conclusion to Lytton's manufactured crisis, among the competent ministers opinion was divided between support for the Viceroy's forceful negotiating conditions and Salisbury's more cautious, long-term solution to the problem of Afghan loyalty. On the one hand, Lytton's stringent demands supplemented by attractive concessions gave an apparently flawless promise of Afghanistan's immediately coming under British domination. On the other, Salisbury's rejection of all demands other than the admission of British

12. As instructed by Lytton, the Chamberlain Mission had four aims: to demand the retirement of the Russian mission; to demand a promise from the Amir never to receive another; to offer the Amir a guarantee against Russia; and to demand acceptance of a permanent British Mission at Kabul, and Consulate on the Afghan frontier.

13. See chapter 5, pp. 167-68; also Salisbury to Cranbrook, 17 September 1879. HA.43/T501/269, f.1v.

14. See Lord Cranbrook's Private Diary 1877 to 1880, 20 September 1878, p.228. HA.43/T501/297.

representatives pointed to the insidious penetration of Afghanistan, with its gradual, and for that reason less predictable, sub-ordination to British preponderance. With the qualitative change introduced in the situation by Chamberlain's rebuff, this division among home ministers over different means to the same end was blunted; whereas Cranbrook's share of responsibility for eventual hostilities became clearer.

More concerned about grouse-shooting than Afghan-bashing, Cranbrook lacked the mental application and intellectual acerbity to withstand the flood of Lytton's flamboyant, overwhelming prose. Though warned by Salisbury that Lytton's mind "tends violently to exaggerate", ¹⁵ he allowed the Viceroy the maximum leeway, and consistently defended his actions; especially at the Cabinet meeting of 5 October in which Cairns and Salisbury expressly criticised the Viceroy's disobedience in pushing the Chamberlain Mission forward to the Anglo-Afghan border without permission. As Cranbrook's private diary reveals, by 6 October he could "see no way of escape from action and if so it should be vigorous and decisive". ¹⁶ At the Cabinet meeting of 25 October, in Salisbury's estimation "the decision was taken to go to war almost wholly because of the urgings of Cranbrook". ¹⁷ Cranbrook had even been opposed to sending a final ultimatum to the Amir, and, in his own words, "urged that the insult was deliberate and complete and that the time for action had come". ¹⁸

If Cranbrook was the principal voice in the Cabinet urging endorsement of Lytton's bellicosity, Beaconsfield had certainly not been opposed to putting diplomatic pressure on Sher Ali. But the evidence that he

15. Salisbury to Cranbrook, 23 April 1878. HA.43/T501/269.

16. Lord Cranbrook's Private Diary 1877 to 1880, 6 October 1878, p.236. HA.43/T501/297.

17. Quoted Morris, Anglo-Russian Diplomacy in Central Asia 1873-1887, p.147.

18. Lord Cranbrook's Private Diary 1877 to 1880, 26 October 1878, p.243. HA.43/T501/297.

was a wholehearted supporter of military measures is highly ambiguous and imprecisely presented. Bringing off a telling, scholarly coup by proving that the P.M. was not reacting to the Chamberlain Mission's rebuff at Ali-Masjid when he rejected prudence in favour of action and sought to "control, and even create, events",¹⁹ a recent critic of the "devil theory" shows that Beaconsfield was not being impelled into war by an impatient Viceroy. But in seeking to prove that Lytton did not lead Beaconsfield willy-nilly by the nose, and thus diluting the measure of Lytton's liability for the outbreak of war, the critic forgets that the P.M.'s words referred to the level of diplomatic pressure and extent of concessions advisable in negotiation, not to military action.²⁰ As yet unaware of the mission's rebuff, Beaconsfield was still involved in the discussion with Salisbury and Cranbrook about which demands and which promises should be made to the Amir.²¹ He was not displaying a spontaneous readiness to employ military measures against Sher Ali.

In allocating the different responsibilities for the Second Afghan War, the largely unsuccessful attempt to place a greater share of the blame on certain members of the Cabinet merely detracts, by over-reaction, from apportioning the larger share to Lytton. It was Lytton, after all, who easily persuaded an admittedly slapdash Cranbrook in favour of hostilities. Lytton himself made willing recourse to the military solution he

19. Beaconsfield to Cranbrook, Hughenden, 22 September 1878, f.2. HA.43/T501/266.

20. Klein's article is notable for asking some very pertinent questions and then notably failing to answer them. The half-hearted manner in which he studies the available archival material, and presents his references, seriously detracts from the value of his work. For example, Klein quotes Beaconsfield as wishing to react with "adequate means" immediately after the Chamberlain Mission's rebuff. But he inserts the word "(military)" between "adequate" and "means", giving no justification for doing so and providing no footnote reference for this crucial quotation. See Klein, "Who Made the Second Afghan War?", p.118.

21. See Salisbury to Cranbrook, 17 September 1878. HA.43/T501/209; Lord Cranbrook's Private Diary 1877 to 1880, 20 September 1878, p.228. HA.43/T501/297.

kept in reserve. Because he thought one lightning campaign, or at most two, would easily and cheaply secure all his political objectives. The principal impulse to war came from a Viceroy who believed he was flying solo in the cockpit of British policy-making. That he was allowed to do so was partly the result of Cabinet lassitude and indecision, and partly due to Cranbrook's active support of hostilities from as early as 6 October. The Cabinet's fault was one of omission, the Viceroy's one of commission. They were accessories after the fact, Lytton the perpetrator of war.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.1. Private papers.

In forwarding and substantiating the thesis, great emphasis has been placed on the contents of private correspondence. Though their value obviously varies, the relevant sections of the following collections of private papers have been studied intensively; and material of considerable or at least notable significance found there.

Argyll Papers: correspondence of George Douglas Campbell, 8TH Duke of Argyll.

I.O.L.&R.

MICROFILM REELS 311-325.

Lord Canning Papers: correspondence of Charles John, Earl Canning and Viscount Canning of Kilbrahen.

Leeds Public Library, Sheepscar Branch, Leeds.

Can/.

Clerk Papers: correspondence of Sir George Russell Clerk.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.D.538.

Cranbrook Papers: correspondence of Gathorne Gathorne-Hardy, 1ST Earl of Cranbrook.

Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office, County Hall, Ipswich.

HA.43/T501.

Devonshire Papers: correspondence of Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8TH Duke of Devonshire, formerly Marquis of Hartington.

I.O.L.&R.

MICROFILM REELS 944, 945 & 794.

MSS.EUR.D.604.

Hughenden Papers: correspondence of Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield. British Library of Political and Economic Science.

B.L.P.E.S. MICROFILM.

Eastwick Papers: correspondence of E.B. Eastwick.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.18.

Elphinstone Papers: correspondence of John, 13TH Lord Elphinstone.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.87.

Elain Papers: correspondence of James Bruce, 8TH Earl of Elgin and 13TH Earl of Kincardine.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.83.

Frere Papers: correspondence of Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.81.

MSS.EUR.D.710.

Gladstone Papers: correspondence of the Rt.Hon. William Ewart Gladstone.
British Library.

B.L.ADD.MSS.44,086-44,835.

Jacob Papers: correspondence of General John Jacob.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.208.

MSS.EUR.F.75.

S.O.A.S.

MS.138373.

Lawrence Papers: correspondence of John, 1ST Lord Lawrence.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.90.

Lytton Papers: correspondence of Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, 1ST Earl of Lytton.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.E.218.

Hertfordshire Record Office, County Library, Hertford.

D/EK.

Mayo Papers: correspondence of Richard Southwell Bourke, 6TH Earl of Mayo.
University Library, Cambridge.

Add.7490.

Northbrook Papers: correspondence of Thomas George Baring, 1ST Earl of Northbrook.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.C.144.

Northcote Papers: correspondence of Sir Stafford Northcote, 1ST Earl of Iddesleigh.

British Library.

B.L.ADD.MSS.50,013-50,064.

Nightingale Papers: correspondence of Florence Nightingale.

British Library.

B.L.ADD.MSS.43,393-43,403.

45,750-45,849.

47,714-47,767.

Pelly Papers: correspondence of Sir Lewis Pelly.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.126.

Perry Papers: correspondence of Sir Thomas Erekin Perry.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.D.776.

Raulinson Papers: correspondence of Sir Henry Creswicke Raulinson.

Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, London.

R.G.S./H.C.R.

Royal Asiatic Society, 56 Queen Anne Street, London.

R.A.S./

Ripon Papers: correspondence of George Frederick Samuel, 1st Marquis

of Ripon, formerly Viscount Goderich and Earl de Grey and Ripon.

British Library.

B.L.ADD.MSS43,549-43,642.

Salisbury Papers: correspondence of Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil,

3rd Marquis of Salisbury, formerly Viscount Cranborne.

I.O.L.&R.

MICROFILM REELS 805-822.

Library of Christ Church College, Oxford.

C.C.L.

Temple Papers: correspondence of Sir Richard Temple.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.86.

Wood Papers: correspondence of Sir Charles Wood, 1st Viscount Halifax.

I.O.L.&R.

MSS.EUR.F.78.

II. Official papers.

(a). India Office Records.

Extensive use was made of material in the following series and their sub-categories:-

L/P&S/3:

L/P&S/3/39-/93: Secret Home Correspondence, 1854 to Dec.1874.

L/P&S/3/188-/232: Political and Secret Home Correspondence,

Jan.-Feb.1875 to Mch.-May 1881.

L/P&S/5:

L/P&S/5/62-/63: Secret letters from Bengal and India, 1856 to 1859.

L/P&S/5/228-/230: Enclosures to Secret Letters received from India, July 1858 to June 1859.

L/P&S/5/19: Secret Letters and Abstracts of Enclosures from India and Madras, 1861 to 1865.

L/P&S/5/257: Enclosures to Secret Letters from India and Madras, 1861 to 1865.

L/P&S/5/259-/260: Secret Letters from India and Madras with Enclosures, 1866 to 1867.

L/P&S/5/261-/276: Secret Letters and Enclosures from India, Jan.-Dec. 1868 to July-Sept. 1874.

L/P&S/5/479-/480: Enclosures to Secret Letters from Bombay, Oct.-Dec. 1853 to Jan.-April 1854.

L/P&S/5/353-/357: Secret Letters and Abstracts of Enclosures received from Bombay, 1856 to 1869.

L/P&S/5/495-/505: Enclosures to Secret Letters from Bombay, Jan.-April 1868 to July-Dec. 1860.

L/P&S/5/590: Board's Drafts of Secret Letters to India, 1851 to 1858.

L/P&S/5/582: Board's Drafts of Secret Letters and Despatches to India, 1855 to 1858.

L/P&S/5/591-/596: Secret Letters to India, Madras, Bombay, Aden, Muscat, Persian Gulf and Zanzibar, 1859 to 1874.

L/P&S/7:

L/P&S/7/1-/28: Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures from India, Jan. 1875 to Apr.-June 1881.

L/P&S/7/256-/257: Telegrams to and from India, 1868 to 1880.

L/P&S/7/259: One box of Secret Telegrams from the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy and others.

(Neither of the above two collections contains the more important secret, cypher telegrams passing between London and India after 1874. These are bound, in batches, in the Secret Home Correspondence.)

L/P&S/7/320-/326: Political and Secret Despatches to India, 1875 to 1881.

L/P&S/8:

L/P&S/8/1: Political and Secret Semi-official Correspondence, 1872 to 1886. (This proved of little value.)

L/P&S/9:

L/P&S/9/13,/14,/152,/153,/160 & /161: Correspondence with Areas outside India.

L/P&S/18:

L/P&S/18/A4,/A23,/A39,/A40,/A41,/A35,/C11 & /C29: Political and Secret Memoranda. (Though far from a comprehensive collection of all political and secret memoranda, this series provides ready access to a large number of memos whose originals are bound more obscurely within the series above.)

L/P&S/19:

L/P&S/19: Sir John Kaye's Confidential Letter Book. (A noteworthy volume, its concluding, unindexed section has copies of a number of very illuminating letters from Kaye to Salisbury in 1874.)

L/PG/MISC:

L/PG/MISC/4/9A & /5/5: Memos and notes by Kaye, Burne, Salisbury and Mallet which provide important insights into the workings of the Political and Secret Department of the India Office.

India Foreign Proceedings:

Vols.1036, 1216, 1217 & 1218, Sept.1877 to Aug. 1878.

C/:

C/125-/128: Minutes of Dissent by Members of Council, 1858 to 1893.

C/137-/142: Memoranda and Papers laid before Council, 1874 to 1879.

(Some of these memos and papers were never, in fact, shown to the Council because of their highly secret contents. However, they seem to have found their way into the collection because they were printed.)

L/MIL/5:

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(b). Public Records Office.

F.O.60:

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MAP OF
CENTRAL ASIA
(THIS IS LITTLE MORE THAN A ROUGH,
COMPILATION MAP, GIVING THE NAMES
OF THE PRINCIPAL LOCATIONS MENTIONED
IN THE THESIS.
THE SCALE IS, ROUGHLY, 110 MILES TO
THE INCH.)

