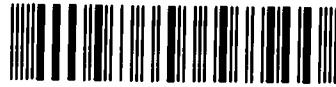


Diss. A3. B17/5

BU 2502348 9



3165942

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN

AND RUSSIA.

1870 - 1899.

---

"Sentimentality has no influence over the interests of nations, and from start to finish the interests of Russia and of England are opposed... Politically and commercially Russia and England are rivals who must ever strive for the mastery; and if this country seeks to hold her own and avoid the debacle which is being prepared for her, she must profit by the lessons of the past and consider her position" - Alexis Krausse. "Russia in Asia." pp.308-9

---

Rambures: "That island of England breeds very valiant creatures; their mastiffs are of unmatched courage."

Orleans: "Foolish curs! that run winking into the mouth of a Russian bear and have their heads crushed like rotten apples. You may well say that's a valiant flea that dare eat his breakfast on the lip of a lion."

-  
Shakespeare. King Henry V.  
Act.III. Sc.VII.

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**University of Birmingham Research Archive**

**e-theses repository**

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

## CONTENTS.

---

	Page.
Introduction .....	1.
Turkey and the Near Eastern Question.....	4.
The Middle Eastern Question of Central Asia..	127.
The Far Eastern Question.....	217.
Epilogue.....	250.
Bibliography.....	256.

## Maps.

---

Map illustrating the San Stefano and Berlin Treaties.....opp.	69.
The Russian Advance in Central Asia..."	131.
Afghanistan and the Pamirs..... "	177.
Britain and Russia in the Far East.. "	232.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN  
AND RUSSIA. 1870 - 1899.

-----

INTRODUCTION.

-----

The three last decades of the Nineteenth Century found the relations between Britain and Russia based on far less felicitous foundations than those underlying the entente which exists between the two countries today. The Crimean War had left a lingering hatred and mutual mistrust between Britisher and Slav, which persisted throughout the rest of the century, and even beyond. Thus the moves of each Power on the political chessboard between 1870 and the opening of the Twentieth Century were viewed by the other with a suspicious eye and nervous vigilant apprehensions.

British and Russian interests came into conflict in three distinct spheres, respectively embracing Europe and the Near Eastern Question; secondly, the Central Asian Question and the encroachments on India; and lastly, the Far Eastern Question, and the scramble for "a place in the sun" in China. As each forms a distinct storm-centre in the story of the unhappy



relations between Britain and Russia, they will be treated separately; and conveniently so, for it is noticeable that Russia, being thwarted after pushing matters as far as possible in one centre, often turned her attention vigorously to another.

Extremes meet; and the Briton forms a strikingly interesting contrast with the Russian. The Briton hails from a land of mild insular climate, essentially adapted for maritime enterprise. He holds oversea possessions, and is governed by democratic institutions. The Russian, on the other hand, is born to endure the rigours of a continental climate, of a land stinted by Nature of sufficient sea-coast to allow of any great oversea activity. His dominions form one vast land Empire, stretching from the Baltic to the Bering Seas, and he is taught to give obeisance to a strong autocratic government. Parallels have been formed between Russia and Britain in the modern world, and Rome and the Hellenic States - especially Athens - in the ancient world. Rome and Russia used soldiers, road makers and proconsuls as expansive agents, while the expansion of Athens and Britain followed in the wake of sailors and traders.

Although mutual opposition forms the key-note of the dealings between the two Powers during the period under consideration, Russia and Britain never actually crossed swords;

nevertheless relations were more than once almost strained to that point.

The reversal of their relationship, which began in 1907 and has hitherto continued, forms a happy contrast and felicitous sequel to the story of strife, which marks Anglo-Russian dealings from 1870 to 1899.

## EUROPE AND THE NEAR EASTERN QUESTION.

-----

"A reciprocally sincere understanding between Russia and Britain will be always possible if - and for as long as - Russia does not strive to gain possession of Constantinople." (1)

Europe has never been without an "Eastern Question" of some kind or other. For its eastern regions, being near the junction of three continents, and thereby affected by the ebb and flow of racial migrations, form the most inflammable part of Europe. "East is East and West is West," but wherever a division exists between the two, there must of necessity be a wide debatable piece of land in which there will be interaction or conflict, political, social, and religious. As long as this land is indubitably held by a great Power, the Eastern Question of Europe is temporarily solved. But when the hold of such a Power on this land is weakened either by internal decay or external pressure, or both, the Eastern Question is re-opened. The problem also arises, when the land becomes a bone of contention between two expansive Powers.

The "Eastern Question" of Ancient Greece constituted

(1) Bismarck, Reflections. Vol.1, p.390.

a search for a settlement of Greek and Persian claims in Iona. That of Rome had to do with the Parthian inroads on the eastern confines of her Empire. Mediaeval Europe too, had her "Eastern Question" concerning the encroachments upon the tottering Empire of the East. This was fought out on precisely the same terrain as that which concerned the "Eastern Question" of Modern Europe.

On the final overthrow of the Eastern Empire in 1453, a race was established in South-Eastern Europe which temporarily settled the Eastern Question in the main, by sheer predominance in military power. But the Turkish Empire itself was also destined to become the disturbing factor and apple of discord in the Eastern Question of the Nineteenth Century. While Turkey held a strong hand on the south-eastern corner of Europe, affairs in the Balkans, on the surface, demanded little or no interference from external Powers. Nor is it likely that such a risky experiment which offered little hope of any compensation, would have appeared sufficiently palatable and inviting to them. The Ottoman occupation of South-Eastern Europe has, however, almost entirely been a military one, and Turkey, even at her worst, has displayed no negligible prowess in the science of war, which the siege of Plevna, for example, will attest.

By the end of the Eighteenth Century, visible signs of decay showed that the Turkish Empire would become the "sick man

of Europe," and, it was hoped, would finally come to an end to give place to a worthier. "Where the carcass is, there are the eagles gathered together;" and already the Russian and Austrian eagles were hovering above, eager to seize upon those parts which the Turk could no longer hold. Already towards the end of the Eighteenth Century, Catherine II of Russia and Joseph II of Austria, formed a projected partition of Turkey. But the "sick man" was destined yet to live and perplex the European Powers with the Eastern Question for over a century and a half. Scientific men inform us that the sun is only able to maintain its heat and light giving powers, because it contracts. As with our great luminary, so it appears with Turkey, who has only maintained some measure of her military strength, by entering narrower limits. But as her territory in Europe has diminished, so have the entanglements of the Eastern Question become proportionally more complex by the introduction of further disturbing questions, concerning the aspirations of the various Balkan peoples within the Peninsula itself. Especially during the latter part of the period under consideration, does this play an increasingly important part.

The Eastern Question of the Nineteenth Century mainly involved the search for a suitable "modus vivendi" between the Turks, their Christian subjects, and the States around them. The Turks had never "westernised" like their mighty Scythian

neighbour of the north, and with a faithful adherence to the worst Islamic traditions, had oppressed her Christian subjects often with unutterable cruelty and fanatic ferocity. Taxation was "farmed," being nothing more than a system of organised robbery. Magistrates, judges, and government servants of every degree plundered at will for their own personal benefit. Every post, high or low, had been purchased by its holder, whose single aim in discharging its duties was to enrich himself at the expense of those over whom he had gained authority. Christianity too was a discount to a subject of the Porte, for the evidence of a Christian against a Turk was not received in a court of law. An excellent reason was thereby furnished to justify any external aggression upon the Porte in the interests of Christianity. The utter incapacity of the Turks to govern, coupled with the fact that they neither improve nor allow others to improve, have alone rightly justified interference from without.

Naturally, to her nearest neighbours, Russia and Austria, as being more vitally affected by a right solution of the Eastern Question, has fallen the duty of interference. But it is in this connection that other factors, namely, the respective aspirations of Russia and Austria in the Balkans, have added to the complexity of the Eastern Question; and especially those of the former. Austria, apart from a desire

for a little territorial extension on the Balkan littoral of the Adriatic and a wish to checkmate Russian influence in the Peninsula, is well occupied with the troubles of her own conglomerate Empire, without venturing much further afield. Russia, on the other hand, has special aspirations in the Balkans both from a racial point of view and from a more narrowly national standpoint, in addition to the religious aspect as stated above.

As the head of the great Slav family of nations, Russia took upon herself the task of emancipating her weaker brethren from the Turkish yoke, in order to take them under her own immediate care. This racial aspiration in itself was quite a worthy duty to undertake, but it was at the same time accompanied and fired by another national aspiration of Russia. This was to obtain a port washed by warm waters, which was suitable for greater commercial activities than those she already possessed. It has been the geographical misfortune of Russia that she has lacked, in proportion with her size, much coastline that is ice-free throughout the year. Hence is seen the desire of her rapidly growing population to gain greater access to warmer waters. Such seas attainable by Russia, are the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and the Pacific, of which the first only concerns the present section of this survey.

To one port par excellence, has Russia for ages

looked with an eye of desire, namely, Constantinople and the Turkish sea-board. A prophecy of extreme antiquity foretells the ultimate accomplishment of her purposes; but when, or by whom it was first uttered, no man knows. Eight centuries ago it might be read upon an equestrian statue, then very old, which had been brought to Constantinople from Antioch. In Russia a powerful national sentiment regards the possession of Constantinople as a manifest destiny, and consequently every measure is urged forward which tends to accomplish it. Since the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, attempts have been made by Russia to that end. Years later, after she had embraced Christianity, she urged pretensions to becoming heir to the Byzantine Empire, on its fall to the infidels. Till the Eighteenth Century, Turkey was too strong, but as the collapse of the latter grew imminent, so did Russian feeling grow. The apocryphal will of Peter the Great urged Russia to seek this southern "window of Europe," but this document has since been exposed to be but an impudent piece of French fabrication. It was a sign of the future, however, that Peter sent the first Russian man-of-war to the Bosphorus, though nevertheless on a pacific mission. It is also worthy of note that the influence of England at the Porte was used against Russia for the first time in Peter's reign. For the formation of a Russian navy and the rivalry of Russian merchants had alarmed the English Levant Company which then had all the trade



of the near East in its hands. Catherine II almost had a chance of realising Russian ambitions for Constantinople. Alexander I even attempted to negotiate for that coveted prize with Napoleon I at Tilsit in return for a recognition of French claims in Syria and Egypt. "Constantinople! Constantinople! Never! For it is the empire of the world," indignantly replied the French Emperor, placing his finger on the spot on the map which represented the Turkish capital. Although subsequent events have perhaps diminished the strategic value of that marvellous site, few will be prepared to deny that it is still the goal of Russian ambition. The Emperor Nicholas I actually stated that he did not wish Russia to possess Constantinople, but it was inevitable. "As well," he said, "strive to arrest a stream in its descent from the mountains." No opportunity in the Nineteenth Century has Russia omitted of aggravating the disorders of the Turkish Empire and thus of silently hastening its overthrow. Long ago would she have fulfilled the ancient prediction, had not the jealousies of the other European powers and particularly Britain peremptorily forbidden this aggrandisement.

Until late years, a high value had been given to the maintenance of what was called a balance of power among European states. It is not generally recognised that any such arrangement is fanciful, and that any attempt to frame and

uphold an artificial equipoise of forces is vain. But England fought many wars and shed oceans of human blood in this visionary enterprise. On her principles it was clear that the possession of Turkey would endow Russia with an undue and dangerous ascendancy among European nations. Later on she entertained the belief that her own interests were specially involved. It was desirable that a weak power rather than a strong one should possess the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, otherwise free communication with India would be put in danger. Under the influence of these motives, it became the traditional aim of English foreign policy to preserve the Turkish government, and England laboured, often by diplomacy, and sometimes even by arms, to uphold the most unjustifiable despotism which modern Europe ever endured. In maintaining the Turks, she has prolonged the misery of a nation, and the desolation of vast tracts of fertile land capable of great utility to man. It is, beyond dispute, a singular infelicity that a great Christian state should have felt herself impelled by any consideration of her own advantage, to the performance of a task which involved consequences so lamentable. Yet it is remarkable that Britain did nothing to develop Turkey.

The climax of British policy in its continued support of the Sultan against the aggression of Russia was reached in the Crimean War of 1854-5. This was, in the main, due to the

persistent efforts of Tsar Nicholas I to extend his protection over the Orthodox Greek Christians in the Sultan's dominions. England, whose Government and people resented the encroachments of Russia in the East, opposed the Tsar in the war, with the sincere belief, for the most part, that the Porte was about to reform and become a civilised State. The "integrity of the Ottoman Empire" was the key-note of British policy in the Near East, and a willing ally was found in France, whose ruler Napoleon III wished to win military renown. Few benefits - if indeed there really proved to be any - resulted from this war. Though successful in the issue to Britain, it revealed marked misgivings and signs of gross mismanagement in the British military machine. It was a war which, especially viewed in the light cast by the history of recent years, is to be greatly regretted, not only on account of the useless waste of human life, but also on account of the ultimate futility of the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1856) which ended hostilities.<sup>(1)</sup> Under this treaty, the Powers bound themselves not to intervene singly in the administration of Turkey; to respect her independence and territorial status; and to treat disputes between any of them and the Porte as matters of general interest. Turkey was made gracefully to issue a firman<sup>(2)</sup> granting

(1)Hertslet II. no. 264.

(2)Hertslet II. no 263.

religious liberty to her Christian subjects, which England had obtained from the Sultan before the Congress. It was then embodied in the terms of the Treaty, but at the same time it was carefully declared that no power was entitled to exact fulfilment of the worthless pledge! Russia had to surrender the southern portion of Bessarabia to Moldavia, but perhaps the most futile of all the clauses was one through which Russia drew her pen as soon as an opportunity presented itself. This stipulated that the Black Sea should be neutral and closed to men-of-war of all nations, "in perpetuity," while no arsenals were to be erected on its littoral. Undoubtedly this was specially aimed at Russian hopes for naval power in the chief warm sea which washed her shores. Russia however, through the astuteness of her diplomacy scored a decided success against Britain in securing the insertion of articles which limited the scope of naval warfare. Privateering was abolished and provisions were made whereby a neutral flag was to protect an enemy's goods, while neutral property, even under a hostile flag, was exempted from capture. Such were the main points of the Treaty of Paris whereby Russia suffered pangs of wounded pride. They only proved transitory, however, for in less than half a century she obliterated every humiliating condition imposed on her. Thus a friendship dating back to the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth between Russia and England was destroyed by the Crimean War, which left behind it a legacy of suspicion

and unreasoning hatred. If that war was a blunder then the Treaty which terminated it was equally so. Mean advantage was taken of Russia in her weakness, which naturally only could result in the tearing asunder of her bonds which cruelly bound her at the first occasion. But in 1870 came Russia's opportunity.

The year 1870 was truly an "annus mirabilis," which proved a turning point and an epoch-making date in the history of modern Europe. It had both a retrospective and a prospective significance. On the one hand, its last few months witnessed the grand finale of the struggles for German and Italian unities, which had been inevitable since the close of the Napoleonic Era. It also saw the states of Western and Central Europe settled or settling in the form which they continued to assume till August 1914. In this sense, the year 1870 turned its back, as it were, to the main problems of Western and Central Europe, which were destined not to be seriously re-opened for forty-four years. On the other hand, so violent was the political earthquake that shook the foundations of Western Europe, that its tremours were felt in Eastern Europe. These were, moreover, sufficiently great to lessen severely the influence of France, one of the guaranteeing Powers of the status quo in that quarter, and thereby to prepare a re-opening of the Eastern Question with an ominous and storm-clouded appearance.

The unlooked-for defeat of France, hitherto the friend of national unity, ridded Russia of a powerful opponent in Eastern Europe. The crisis gave birth to a new Power in European affairs. From the ashes of the French Empire, sprang the new German Empire which was friendly, for several reasons, to Russia. Now indeed, appeared Russia's chance to cast off the bonds of the Treaty of Paris which had cramped her ambitions southward since 1856.

The only difficulty for Russia was in regard to what attitude the other Powers would take of her action. France was already hopelessly pinned by the tenacious grip of Moltke's strategy, and utterly unable to give any attention to Eastern matters. Austria hesitated about joining France, seeing that Power prostrate and herself still suffering from the effects of Königsgrätz. Besides, she remembered Prussia's clemency in the hour of her defeat and saw Russia ready to hurl her Cossack hordes towards the Carpathians at the first sign of Austrian activity. The Austrian Government therefore chose to keep a discreet and silent attitude towards Russia. Deprived of her former French comrade in arms and seeing the disinclination of the Government of Vienna of taking any initiative, Great Britain was not likely to open hostilities alone with Russia. The bitterest opposition, however, was only to be expected of her. Italy was far too engrossed with Rome and the completion and consolidation of her unity to offer opposition. Besides, it

was Sardinia who joined the Western Powers in the Crimean War in 1855, whereas 1870 saw that kingdom merged in the newly unified Italy. Turkey was not likely to loudly protest against the repudiation of the Black Sea clauses of 1856, for by then her own hands had been similarly bound, and with Russia, would be likewise freed if they were rescinded. Even then, Turkey had an advantage over Russia in the field of naval activity, for she had warships in the Aegean which she could easily transfer to the Euxine, while Russia had none at all in those waters. In any serious eventuality the Sultan could count upon British naval assistance against Russia. The Porte, therefore, was likely to gain as much, if not more than Russia by the latter's projected action. In Prussia, the St. Petersburg Government had at least a friend who was willing to make with her a sporting diplomatic bargain. The valued relationship of the Tsar and the Prussian king, Bismarck's timely aid in quelling the Poles in 1863, and the pleasure experienced three years later in seeing her Balkan rival crushed at Sadowa, all excited Russia's gratitude for Prussia. Russia thus observed an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards her in 1870 and promised to keep Austria quiet. In return for this, Prussia, who had little interest at that time in the Eastern Question, readily gave her acquiescence to Russia's intention of abrogating the clauses of the Treaty of Paris concerning naval activity in the Black Sea. In his "Reflections," Bismarck takes credit for coming to this understanding with Russia at the outbreak of the Franco-German

War, as to the disavowal of "the most inept conclusions of the Peace of Paris."<sup>(1)</sup>

That Russia was occupied with the thought of improving her position in the Black Sea even before she officially announced that intention, is shown by an article which appeared in the "Moscow Gazette" about July 8th, 1870. At the time it roused vigorous comments on the part of the English press, but in the rapid accumulation of more important events, it was allowed to drop out of sight. As time went on, rumours were rife of a prospective abandonment of neutrality by Russia on behalf of France. But these were soon proved to be erroneous by the lavishment of rewards and decorations by the Tsar on the German leaders. Immediately after the intelligence of the bestowal of these honours, the British Cabinet was startled by the communication of a circular<sup>(2)</sup> written by Prince Gorchakov, the Russian Chancellor. He abruptly announced his Government's intention to repudiate that article of the Paris Treaty which referred to the neutrality of the Black Sea. This provision was declared to be insupportable to Russia herself, and to have been violated by the other contracting parties. Though the Tsar, he declared, had no wish to re-open the Eastern

(1) Vide Bismarck's Reflections, vol.II, p.114.  
(2) Oct. 31st, 1870. Hertslet III, No.429.



Question, he had deemed it a right and a duty on his part to notify the Porte that the Supplementary Convention of 1856, which limited the action of littoral powers, had lost its force. By this questionable stroke of policy, great enthusiasm was excited throughout Russia. Provincial assemblies and local boards joined in assuring the Tsar of their resolve to support him, if necessary, with both treasure and blood.

The Black Sea restrictions of 1856 could not seriously have been believed to last, any more than the restrictions laid by Napoleon on Prussian military power in 1808 lasted. Lord Palmerston, in reply to an observation of General Ignatiev at the time of the Paris Treaty, is reported - if this can be believed - to have given the aforesaid clauses only ten years to hold good. Mr Gladstone too had declared in 1856 that despite the popularity of the Black Sea limitations in England at that moment, such formed a far from satisfactory arrangement. "Should the time come," said he, "when Russia may resume aggressive schemes on Turkey, I believe that neutralisation would mean nothing but a series of pitfalls much deeper than people expect." (1)

Treitschke makes use of this move by Russia, to illustrate his principle that the validity of treaties and

(1) Morley. Life of Gladstone, vol.II, p.266.

conventions between nations only holds good, so long as the conditions under which they were primarily made remain constant. "All the limitations," he says, "which States lay on themselves in treaties are merely voluntary; all treaties are concluded with a mental reservation - *rebus sic stantibus* - so long as circumstances remain unchanged. If conditions have been imposed on it which cripple it or which it cannot observe, the nation honours itself in breaking them. When a State has been wounded in its honour, the breach of treaty is but a matter of time. England and France had to admit thus in 1870. In their arrogant pride at the end of the Crimean War they had compelled their exhausted enemy to agree to remove all her warships from the Black Sea. Russia seized the opportunity offered by the Franco-German War to break the agreement, and she was fully within her rights. The Ancient Athenians were therefore obeying a right instinct when they decided to limit the time during which their treaties with other nations held good."<sup>(1)</sup> Bismarck too, perhaps had the same thing in mind when he wrote, "International policy is a fluid element which under certain conditions will solidify, but on a change of atmosphere, reverts to its original diffuse condition. The clause "*rebus sic stantibus*" is tacitly understood to all treaties that involve performance."<sup>(2)</sup>

{ 1 } Mugge. "H. von Treitschke." p.87.  
{ 2 } Reflections, vol.II, p.280.

As soon as the news of Gorchakov's circular was made known in Britain, the public excitement was intense, and consols dropped heavily. It was felt that the Eastern Question was once more alive. "Everybody at a time like this looks for booty; it will be hard to convince Central Europe that Turkey is not a fair prize," said Mr. Gladstone.<sup>(1)</sup> At the same time, Lord Lyons<sup>(2)</sup> wrote from France that the Russian declaration was regarded with complacency, because a Congress was thereby expected which might check both Prussia as well as Russia. Rumours about immediate war with Russia were widespread in England, and were fostered by certain sections of the press. But Mr Gladstone openly expressed his disgust with such extreme suggestions. An offensive war, on the other hand, against a nation having peculiar advantages for defence, and for an object which almost every other signatory Power thought in itself a bad one, was not desirable nor self-recommendatory at the time. Mr Gladstone further, did not dissent from the substance of the Russian claim, but was outraged by the form. "The question" wrote he in a memorandum, "is not whether any desire expressed by Russia ought to be carefully examined in a friendly spirit by the co-signatory Powers, but whether they are to accept from her an announcement that by her own act, without any consent

(1) Conversation between Gladstone, then Premier, and Lord Granville, the Foreign Minister. Vide Morley

op. cit. vol. II, p. 267.  
(2) British Ambassador to France.

from them, she has released herself from a solemn covenant."

Gorchakov hastened to assure Great Britain that he shared her anxiety to maintain the Ottoman Empire intact.<sup>(1)</sup> Nevertheless the impatient action whereby he circulated his Note, took many of the leading European statesmen by surprise. Bismarck even, feigned great surprise before Mr Odo Russell, but his foreknowledge of the event is undoubted. In view of the great excitement in England, Bismarck counselled Russia to be patient and moderate. At the same time he proposed a Conference as the most likely means of achieving without offence the full concurrence of the signatory Powers. The British Cabinet accepted this proposal on condition that the Conference should not open with any previous assumption of Gorchakov's declaration. They also objected to St. Petersburg being the scene of negotiations. Russia made difficulties, but Bismarck's influence prevailed to convene the representatives of the Powers at London, and under the terms required by the British Government. Lord Granville thereupon issued invitations to the participants of the Conference, which first met on January 17th, 1871. Of all the countries concerned, only the representative of France, M. Jules Favre, was absent, whom

(1) Hertzske III. No. 430.

(2) " " No. p. 1900.

Bismarck took good care to prevent coming from the invested city of Paris.

On the first day of meeting, all the Powers represented signed a Note<sup>(1)</sup> expressly denying the right of any single Power to retreat from a Treaty without the previous consent of the other signatories or a majority of them. On this point, Gladstone may be considered to have successfully established his contention from the point of view he regarded the Russian Note; and rightly so, for the original Treaty, concluded thus:- "It (the Convention) cannot be either annulled or modified without the assent of the Powers signing the present Treaty." Prince Gorchakov's circular distinctly intimated the Tsar's intention to violate this clause. On the other hand Gorchakov justly complained that while Russia was effectually weakened in the Black Sea, Turkey was not restricted, <sup>with regard</sup> in her navy in the Aegean and the Straits, nor Britain and France in the Mediterranean. As the Straits further were only closed, by Treaty, in time of peace, Russia was always exposed in the event of declaration of war to ~~be~~ attacked on her coast-line by a weaker State. This disadvantage was made more oppressive by the introduction since 1858, of ironclad vessels of war. He did not consider Russia should be disadvantageously bound any longer by a Treaty, which,

(1) Hertslet. III. No. 433.

as in the case of the union of Moldavia and Wallachia under a foreign prince, had already been openly violated in important particulars, and the terms of which hitherto Russia had strictly observed.

In recapitulating Gorchakov's remarks, Lord Granville replied that the question was not whether Russia's claims to be released were reasonable, but whether one party to a treaty could of its own accord and without discussion, announce its immunity from some or all of its provisions. He further maintained that the right of releasing one party belonged not to one, but to all parties, and that Gorchakov's doctrine would lead to "the entire destruction of treaties in their essence." While taking his stand on the faith of treaties, Lord Granville carefully declined to enter into any argument respecting the actual Russian grounds of complaint. He likewise passed over the subject of the union of Rumania, against which the Russian representative had in 1866 duly protested.

The results of the London Conference were a foregone conclusion. For, that assembly was little more than a diplomatic duel between Britain and Russia, over matters of form of abrogation, rather than over the realities of the situation resulting from the Treaty of Paris. In the main, the actual Russian complaints were quite just, and the restitution of Russian naval rights in the Euxine equally ameliorated the position of Turkey.

On March 13th, 1871, a Treaty<sup>(1)</sup> was executed by all the Powers, expunging the clauses of 1856, limiting Russian and Turkish naval activity in the Black Sea.<sup>(2)</sup> But it affirmed the Sultan's right to close the Straits to war-ships except those of friendly and allied Powers, should the Porte think it necessary to do so, to ensure the execution of the rest of the Treaty of Paris. A Convention of March 18th of the same year was signed by Russia and Turkey,<sup>(3)</sup> declaring that each Power had regained the right of maintaining fleets of any dimensions in the Black Sea. In connection with this Treaty, a certain change in spirit of Turkish policy was noticeable towards Russia which appears to confirm the belief that the Porte was not at all averse to the new arrangements. The "Turquie," a semi-official organ at Constantinople, said Turkey had made friends with her traditional enemy Russia "far more because she fears a conflict in which she would be without allies than because she trusts in the friendly intentions of the Russian Government." The Porte too had been anxious that only the Black Sea Question should be discussed at the London Conference. In England, people viewed with suspicion the displacement of the "balance of power" which Russia had caused, and the breach

(1) Hertslet. III. No.439.

(2) Vide Hertslet. Vol.III. No.439.

(3) Ibid. Vol.III. No.440.

between the two countries was thereby widened as subsequent events proved.

The years between 1870 and 1875 were marked by the rapid growth of Pan-slavism, mainly consequent upon Russia's diplomatic success of 1871. An enthusiastic desire, too, was felt by Russia to annul the other limitations imposed by the Treaty of Paris on her action in South-Eastern Europe. Military preparations now were well pushed forward, and Russia began seriously to set her household in order. The restoration of Sevastopol as a naval and military emporium was busily prosecuted, while the year 1872, the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Peter the Great, was appropriately distinguished by an increase instead of a deficit, for the first time in the Russian budget.

At the Court of the Sublime Porte, General Ignatiev had succeeded, apparently, in establishing an influence as great as that which Lord Stratford de Redcliffe formerly wielded there, on behalf of Britain. For some time Ignatiev had secretly encouraged the Bulgarian subjects of the Sultan in their refusal of religious allegiance to the Greek Patriarch, and in their claim for an independent Church. Both Bulgarians and Greeks appealed to him regarding their dispute. But after a pretence to impartiality, Ignatiev finally sided entirely with the Bulgarians, who in 1872 obtained by firman an Exarch of their own. This interest of Russia in Bulgarian affairs was an



earnest of her future attempts, during the next decade or so, to establish her influence in Balkan politics.

In January 1874, Princess Marie Alexandrovna, the Tsar's only daughter, married the Duke of Edinburgh, but Anglo-Russian relations were not improved thereby. A very cold reception moreover was afforded Alexander II by the British public, on his visit to the wedded couple in London during the following May. The Tsar's refusal to receive Disraeli was further greatly resented. Despite the surface "friendliness" which appeared in the marriage, Russia still further hastened her military preparations in the eventuality of any breach of the peace. For, in the same year the Russian Emperor issued an ukaz establishing a system of army conscription.

At the same time, as if the possibility of new conflicts was indeed the prevailing idea at St. Petersburg, a conference of the Powers was called by Russia to Brussels in July, to consider the expediency of introducing certain new rules into the usages of war. But England, characteristically opposed to Russia, refused to appoint a delegate, until the other Governments taking part in the Conference disclaimed intentions of interfering in any way with belligerent rights at sea. Russia readily gave acquiescence and Lord Derby replied as follows through the British ambassador at St. Petersburg on

July 25th, 1874.<sup>(1)</sup> "Her Majesty's Government have accepted the assurance of the Russian and other Governments that the Conference will not entertain any question relating to maritime operations or naval warfare..... They are glad to learn .... that there is no intention of enlarging the scope of the Conference so as to include the discussion of general principles of international law..... Her Majesty's Government accordingly reserve to themselves full liberty of action as to the manner in which they will deal with any proposals in the Conference." The English representative was not furnished with any plenipotentiary powers, as the Conference was regarded as assembled "only for the purpose of deliberations." The results of the Brussels Conference were of little permanent value, amounting to no more than recommendations of a committee of inquiry.<sup>(2)</sup>

Nothing daunted, however, the Russian Government proposed to follow up this first attempt by a formal Conference at St. Petersburg in the next year. A decided refusal came from England, and Lord Derby the Foreign Minister declined to enter into an agreement which, it was considered, might facilitate aggressive wars. It was further thought that the great military Powers, which as a rule would be the aggressors,

(1) Vide Ann. Reg. 1875. Appendix.

(2) Hertslet III. No.450.

wished to weaken the defensive forces of the smaller States by the projected agreement.<sup>(1)</sup> Britain too, feared lest the subject of naval warfare, which was expressly excluded at Brussels, should be discussed at St. Petersburg, and be regulated in a manner disagreeable to herself. At the same time, Lord Derby expressed his appreciation for the "considerations of humanity," which had inspired the Tsar. Nevertheless, the position England took up in the face of Russia, caused no little hesitation in St. Petersburg, and was viewed as a sign of ill-will. In reply, the Russian Government expressed its regret of "the resolution of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, to no longer take part in this deliberation..... It would have been desirable that the voice of a great nation like that of England, had made itself heard in an inquiry, the object of which appeared to have met with its sympathies."<sup>(2)</sup> Hence the scheme for the St. Petersburg Conference had to be postponed.

Russia, however, was soon to be attracted by alarming events in the Balkan Peninsula and moved to warlike measures. With the great impetus that was given to the racial feeling of Pan-slavism, Russia remembered that she had weaker brethren in South-Eastern Europe, who were still subject to the tender

{ 1 } Hertlet. III. No.451.

{ 2 } Vide Ann. Reg. 1875. Appendix.

mercies of her Ottoman neighbour. Promises of toleration to Christians and of a general amelioration of conditions of living, which had been given in the past, were still ignored by the Sultan. But in the autumn of 1875, matters came to a climax in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These and the adjoining provinces formed the most inflammable parts of Turkey, and nowhere else did the animosity between Christian and Moslem burn more fiercely. Despite the disastrous results of the previous year's harvest, the tax-farmers and Muhammedan land-lords still demanded their full dues, and owing to the harshness and cruelty of their exactions the Christians rose in revolt. Slavophil committees eagerly fomented the rising, and their propaganda was carried on with restless zeal. The flame spread to Serbia and Montenegro whence many insurgents had fled to aid the rebels of Bosnia. As an antidote to this manifestation of Pan-slavism Turkey preached Pan-islamism, but utterly failed to quell the insurrection. It was soon clear that the Eastern Question had once more entered on an acute phase. On October 2nd an irade<sup>1</sup> declaring that "all the subjects of His Imperial Highness the Sultan without distinction are the constant object of his especial care, and of his never-ceasing kindness"(1) was issued by the Turkish monarch. He further promised all his Christian

(1) Turkey No. 2. (1876) No. 29.  
(Also Hertslet IV. No. 454.)

subjects some remission of taxation and rights for choosing delegates to supervise their privileges at Constantinople. This produced little effect, however, on the Bosnian revolt, although more definite offers followed on December 12th, 1875, giving religious authority throughout the empire and assigning seats for Christians on the elective councils.<sup>(1)</sup> The Russian Ignatiev had been mainly instrumental in procuring the latter, by threatening Sultan Abdul Aziz with his bugbear, European intervention.

Meanwhile Austria had been anxious to prevent the Balkan disaffection from spreading to her own Slav subjects. Her Chancellor, Count Andrassy, together with the other Chancellors of the members of the Holy Alliance, Bismarck and Gorshakov, had prepared a scheme of reforms which was to be forced on Turkey to conciliate the Bosnian insurgents.<sup>(2)</sup> This was known as the "Andrassy Note." Complete religious liberty, the abolition of tax-farming, the appointment of a half Christian half Moslem joint committee and an attempt to adapt taxation to suit local needs, formed the main part of the project. These proposals would probably have been forwarded to the Porte earlier in 1875, but for the diplomatic intervention of the British Cabinet and of Disraeli in particular. With the latter's

(1) Ibid. No. 59. (Also Hertslet. IV. No. 455.)  
(2) Ibid. No. 55. (Also Hertslet. IV. No. 456.)

Jewish descent came a consequent hatred of Russia as the oppressor of his race. Disraeli's policy of Imperialism also, regarded Muscovite expansion as the chief danger to British communications with India. The British Prime Minister had put forward that he believed sufficient time should have been allowed the Sultan to carry his recent programme of reforms into execution. For these reasons, he had warned the Holy Alliance to withhold the Andrassy Note which he considered inopportune.

Although the Holy Alliance collectively supported the Andrassy Note,<sup>(1)</sup> the attitude of its three members differed respectively. Germany was least affected and most likely was glad that Russian and Austrian attentions were attracted from the west. The Dual Monarchy was striving to localise the rising, both for the safety of her own frontiers, and to prevent Russian interference in the Balkans. While Russia was attempting to cope with the trouble, she wished at the same time to see Pan Slavism come to the fore. For although she endeavoured to force the Andrassy scheme of reforms on the Porte, Russia, on the other hand, had her agents throughout the Turkish Empire secretly encouraging Pan Slavist movements. In Sir Henry Elliott's despatch of February 14th, 1876, for example, the following was stated. "At Ragusa, the Russian consulate is the

(1) Hertslet. IV. No. 456.

open resort of the insurgent chiefs; their correspondence is sent to the Consul, who is a party to all their projects and associates himself intimately with them. He does not appear to make any attempt to conceal the part he is playing."<sup>(1)</sup> In reply to British representations, Gorchakov later stated that he could not remove the consul for kindness of heart! All this time, too, a Russian general was at the head of the Serbian forces.

In his reliance on the Sultan's promised reforms, and the consequent delay of the Andrassy Note, Disraeli stood almost alone. He regarded the whole Eastern Question from the sole standpoint of British interests, as evinced by his speech at the Guildhall Banquet on November 9th, 1875.

But Russia was becoming impatient and her relations with England were made worse by Disraeli's masterly coup in the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. Hostile comments appeared in the Muscovite press, and the spirited trend of foreign affairs appeared to indicate a possible war between the two Powers. The "Moscow Gazette" remarked as follows, early in December, 1875.<sup>(2)</sup> "England, who has so long kept watch and ward over the property of the Porte, all at once adopts a

(1) Ann. Reg. 1876. Appendix, p.209.

(2) See Ann. Reg. 1875. p.291.

different course and pockets her coveted share of the spoil (i.e. Suez Canal). So the conclusions we drew from the enigmatical declaration of British ministers about the important English "interests" in the East, are borne out by fact..... But there are indeed no "interests" to defend in the present instance (i.e. Bosnia)."

Throughout the winter, the Balkan troubles continued unchecked, for the insurgents were fully roused. Despite the liberal appearance of the Sultan's promises of December 12th, they remained unheeded. In view of the seriousness of the situation, the Russian ambassador on January 13th, 1876, expressed to Lord Derby his Government's strong desire that "England should not hold aloof from joining in the other Powers (1) remonstrances to the Porte." Further, he assured the British Cabinet that in supporting the Andrassy Note they "would not in the slightest degree pledge themselves to ulterior steps." (1) After due consideration, Disraeli and Lord Derby, (the Foreign Secretary), were forced to give a cautious and cool assent to the Note, (2) which was presented to the Porte on January 31st. The British acceptance was reported by Lord Loftus (3) from St. Petersburg on February 2nd, to have given "great satisfaction" in Russian circles.

(1) Parl. Reports. Turkey. No. 2. (1876). No 62.  
(2) Hertslet. IV. No. 457.  
(3) Parl. Reports. Turkey No. 2. (1876) No. 63.



To the astonishment of the world, the Porte astutely accepted the Andrassy Note with one reservation,<sup>(1)</sup> on February 10th. But the characteristic activity of the Sultan ended with that acceptance, and no attempt whatever was made to carry the promised reforms into execution. Previous experience of the worthlessness of Turkish promises especially when unsupported by the pressure of the Powers, of which the Andrassy Note gave no indication, caused the disturbances to continue unabated. Fuel was added to the conflagration by the fomentations of Slavophil committees.

On April 12th, the Russian Government indicated to Lord Derby through the British Ambassador, Lord Loftus, a desire to secure peace. Prince Gorchakov further expressed his anxiety that the insurgents' demands should not be summarily rejected. Later, on April 20th, he told Lord Loftus that he strongly hoped the existing European Concert would be maintained. "La parole est aux canons," said Gorchakov.<sup>(2)</sup> The British Government, however, still maintained an awkward attitude of non-intervention.

Matters grew worse in the Balkans, and developed into a religious war. In Bulgaria, where revolt had been smouldering

(1) Hertslet. IV. No. 458.

(2) See Ann. Reg. 1876. Appendix, p. 209.

a flame of insurrection broke out against the intolerable Moslem rule about May 9th. This was put down by Bashi-bazuks and other Turkish irregulars with relentless fury. Three days previously at Salonica, the French and German consuls - the latter a Britisher - were murdered in an outbreak of Panislamic fanaticism. This convinced the Powers of the necessity of adopting sterner measures towards Turkey.

In Russia, a roar of execration was raised and Alexander II saw that armed intervention would ultimately be necessitated. The Tsar was as yet, not free to act singly on behalf of his co-religionists and brother Slavs. For the Holy Alliance still held good, and concerted action with Austria and Germany had to be considered. But having decided "to draw closer their intimacy," the three Emperors on May 13th agreed upon an instrument imposing reforms on the Porte, to be executed under joint European supervision. This was known as the Berlin Memorandum,<sup>(1)</sup> and was mainly identical with the Andrassy Note. The relief of Christian refugees and the reconstruction of damaged buildings were stipulated, together with consular supervision of the Powers over reforms. Further, in order to overcome the Sultan's excuse that reform could not

(1) See Hertslet IV. No.461.

be effected in districts in open revolt, a combined naval demonstration of the Concert of Powers was recommended. Lastly, a two months' armistice was to be enforced, and if on the expiration of that time no settlement had been reached, "further action" was to be taken.

Although the measure bore the name of Berlin, and originated from former Austrian proposals, the spirit behind it was the spirit of Russia. For Germany had little to do with Turkey till after 1878, and the Austrian Andrassy is known to have given but a doubtful consent to the Memorandum. It was accepted by France and Italy, but was finally rejected on May 19th by Disraeli and Lord Derby.(1) The whole ostensible object of the Berlin Memorandum was shown by Lord Derby to be defeated by the final clause, threatening "further action" if no definite settlement were reached in two months. For if the insurgents only held out for that time, they were sure to provoke the Powers' intervention in their favour! Further "the mere fact of the insurrection remaining unsuppressed, would be likely to give it additional vitality; and the result of an armistice might therefore lead to a rejection of any demands which the Porte might fairly be expected to concede, and thus hinder rather than advance the prospects of pacification ....

(1) Hertslet IV. No. 462.

Regarded in this light, the proposal of an armistice seems to Her Majesty's Government, to be illusory."<sup>(1)</sup> Thus in Britain's eyes, Russia, undoubtedly the chief instigator to the instrument, was seeking to burn the candle at both ends. For she not only secretly encouraged the Balkan insurgents through Pan Slavist agencies, but sought to procure international legal sanction to a measure promising them active support after two months! Britain's withdrawal from the Concert of Europe was fatal to the policy of the Berlin Memorandum. Together with more positive acts on the part of England, this proceeding was taken both by Russia and the Porte, to assure the moral support of Britain to the Sultan, and probably to threaten military measures against Russia.

A more serious step was now taken by the British Cabinet. For in response to the entreaties<sup>(2)</sup> of Sir Henry Elliott, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, a British squadron was despatched, and took up its position on May 26th at Besika Bay. This measure was requested nominally for the protection of life and property of English subjects in Turkey. But the tardiness with which the fleet was finally sent and the length of time it was kept in great strength, tend to show that its presence was meant by Britain to encourage Turkey

(1) Hertslet. IV. p. 2465.  
(2) Ann. Reg. 1876. p. 210.

against any possible Russian aggression. This belief was later strengthened by the unfortunate utterance of Disraeli on July 30th, to the effect that the warships were stationed at Besika Bay solely in defence of "British interests." A similar statement was repeated by the Premier in the Commons on August 11th. But both Russia and Turkey knew well what "British interests" were in the Near East. This act ended all hopes of immediately forcing Turkey to grant the much-needed reforms.

Meanwhile, Serbia and Montenegro had declared war on their bullying overlords on June 30th and July 2nd respectively. Their troops were led by the Russian General Cherbaiev, and undoubtedly received secret Muscovite support. Mainly through the expositions of the "Daily News" reliable tidings of the Bulgarian massacres at Batak and elsewhere, now began to be more fully known in England. Despite the efforts of the Government leaders and of the Turcophil press to minimise these reports, a storm of indignation was raised throughout the whole country. In vain Disraeli sought to dismiss the terrible news as mere "Coffee-house babble." Gladstone was fired to write his famous pamphlet on "The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East." He advocated the expulsion of the Turks "bag and baggage" from the provinces they had desolated and profaned. Lord Derby even, felt constrained to telegraph to the Porte that

"any renewal of such outrages would prove more didastrous to Turkey than the loss of a battle." Further, "any sympathy which was previously felt" by Britain for the Porte, was "completely destroyed by the lamentable occurrences in Bulgaria. Even if Russia were to declare war against the Porte, Her Majesty's Government would find it practically impossible to intervene."

Thus the ugly results of British policy, which was not without deserved censure, were revealed in their ghastly nakedness. The "moral support" afforded by the presence of the British squadron at Besika Bay, had had the effect of indirectly encouraging the Turks to commit nameless barbarities. Sir Henry Elliott's despatches too, show that the Porte had been pressed to take active measures in the disaffected districts,(2) although that official later protested against them;- but too late. "We have been upholding what we know to be a semi-civilised nation," confessed Elliott, with reluctance. Britain's prestige in Eastern Europe greatly paled before these happenings, while the righteousness of Russia's cause appeared to increase proportionately in the eyes of Europe. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe thought the crisis would not have arisen, had Britain, from the first instance, upheld the European

(1) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.6. (1877).

(2) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.3. (1876) p.173.

Concert; not that Russia was always and fully trustworthy, but because her circumstances then made her open to the full bearing of British moral influence. She would have best counteracted Russia's alleged designs, by joining Austria, the other rival of Muscovite influence in the Balkans. For most likely Russia would never have faced an Austro-British combination. But the opposition of England to the Andrassy Note and the Berlin Memorandum, had caused Britain to drift away from the Dual Monarchy, and left Russia with a freer hand. "It seems to me," said Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, "that Russia has been drawn into a position from which she can hardly retreat with credit."<sup>(1)</sup>

But Russia had been straining for a suitable occasion for intervention on behalf of the Bulgarians, while her Serbian brethren were now hard-pressed by the Turks. Therefore, she eagerly seized the opportunity, which Britain had missed, in coming to an understanding with Austria. However inclined Russia might have been to act alone, she dared not risk trouble with the Central Powers in view of Bismarck's frank warning in the event of an Austro-Russian war. In order, therefore, not to infringe upon the understanding underlying the Holy Alliance, but at the same time to prepare the way for an honourable intervention in the crisis, a happy means was devised for allaying Austrian apprehensions. On July 8th, the Emperors

(1) Merley. Life of Gladstone. Vol.II, p.421.

Alexander II and Franz-Josef concluded a secret compact at Reichstadt. A policy of non-intervention was, for the time being, arranged by both Powers. But if a forced entrance into Bulgaria were necessitated, Russia agreed to recognise an Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the same extent as, and for as long as, a Russian occupation of Bulgaria proved necessary. The insular attitude of British politicians thus threw Austria into the arms of Russia.

During this time, despite the Tsar's previous assurance to Lord Derby on June 10th<sup>(1)</sup> that if the Prince of Serbia attacked Turkey he would receive neither "national assistance from Russia," nor "moral support and sympathy," Russian volunteers were attracted in large numbers to the Serbian colours. Although they were led by the Russian Chernaiev, the Balkan allies were severely worsted by the Turks, and in September the Slavs sought the mediation of the Powers.<sup>(2)</sup> Even England, owing to the revulsion of public sentiment against Turkey, lent her good offices in persuading the Sultan to propose terms of amity.<sup>(3)</sup> But these were so severe, that Serbia rejected them, and hostilities were resumed.

The stars in their courses still fought against the

(1) Ann. Reg. 1876. Appendix, p.211.

(2) Hertslet.IV. p.2488.

(3) Ibid. p.2489.



Slavs, and it was soon seen that unless Turkey modified her claims, Russia could be restrained no longer. Undoubtedly, that Power had displayed considerable patience and moderation, mainly due to the influence of the peaceful Alexander II. But racial feeling and, possibly, a fear lest the stability of his dynasty might be otherwise threatened by Pan-slavist revolutionaries, urged the Tsar to make more drastic efforts. On September 26th, Count Shuvalov, the Russian plenipotentiary, proposed to Lord Derby the occupation of Bosnia and Bulgaria by Austrian and Russian troops respectively, and a joint naval demonstration of the Powers in the Bosphorus, if Turkey refused the terms of peace which Serbia had since offered.<sup>(1)</sup> On October 3rd Derby informed Count Shuvalov that Britain was "unable to concur in the measures of occupation and the entry of the united fleets into the Bosphorus," as suggested by Russia, but would "give support to.... an armistice of not less than a month." Accordingly, Sir Henry Elliott was instructed, on October 5th, to press a month's armistice on the Porte, on the expiration of which, a Conference was to be held in order to thoroughly consider Balkan matters. But if this were not accepted by the Sultan, Elliott was "to leave Constantinople, as it would be evident that all further exertions on the part

(1) Hertslet. IV. p.2493.

of Her Majesty's Government to save the Porte from ruin would have become useless." (1)

On October 11th, Lord Derby complained to Russia of the continued influx of Russian volunteers into Serbia, where their presence "had assumed proportions little short of national assistance." (2) He wished to press upon the "serious attention" of the Tsar, "the difficulties thus thrown in the way of a settlement." Next day the Sultan offered a regular armistice of six months and cleverly promised the early publication of an elaborate scheme of reforms. (3) This was calculated to secure the wavering friendship of Britain once more. It proved acceptable to Lord Derby, who essayed to press a similar acceptance on Russia. He further warned Russia that however great was "the feeling of national indignation against Turkish cruelties, it would be superseded by a very different sentiment if it were believed by the English nation that Constantinople was threatened. Rightly or wrongly..... the rejection by Russia of the Turkish proposal indicated a fixed purpose of going to war." (4)

On October 12th ~~and~~ the Russian chargé d'affaires at Constantinople replied that his Government was averse to a long

(1) Hertslet. IV. p.2494. (Also Ann. Reg.1876.p.215).  
(2) Hertslet. IV. p.2496.  
(3) and (4) Hertslet.IV. pp.2496-7.

armistice. But when Sir Henry Elliott reminded him that Russia had previously asked for one of three months duration, the former made the excuse that "circumstances had changed," and that "his Government would not be satisfied with the proposal." Prince Gorchakov defined Russia's attitude more fully on October 14th, by saying that the financial position of Europe would suffer greatly by the delay. "We must insist ('devons insister')" said he, "on an armistice of a month or six weeks, the original proposal of England." (1) Lord Derby informed Prince Gorchakov, therefore, on October 30th of Britain's "regret that other counsels have prevailed" in Russia to reject the armistice which "meant peace." Notwithstanding, however, "they cannot consider... any fresh propositions, and, while most anxious to co-operate with the other Powers in any measures of pacification.... Must refrain from pledging themselves to anything which may impede their liberty of action hereafter, should the rights and interests of this country be affected." (2)

While Turkey persisted in her languid procrastinations, Alexander II determined at once to cut the Gordian knot. Accordingly on October 31st, he despatched General Ignatiev to

{ 1 } Hertslet. IV. p.2498.  
{ 2 } Hertslet. IV. pp.2500-1.

the Porte summarily demanding an armistice of six weeks for the Balkan Christians, who were "united.... by many bonds and secular traditions" to the Russian people.(1) This brought Turkey quickly to her senses and the Ottoman Government immediately yielded on November 1st.(2)

While striving to prevent Russia from being embroiled in the horrors of war, the Tsar, nevertheless showed he would not shrink therefrom, if he found it to be his incumbent duty. For he had a heart to heart conversation with Lord Loftus at St. Petersburg on November 2nd. Alexander endeavoured to define and justify the attitude of Russia and appeal to the good sense of Britain. Regarding the Turkish rebuffs, "he was not anxious to separate from the European Concert, but the present state of things was intolerable and could no longer be allowed to continue. Unless Europe was prepared to act with firmness and energy he should be obliged to act alone." He also had "not the smallest wish or intention to be possessed of Constantinople... (which) would be a misfortune for Russia." As for the will of Peter the Great and the aims of Catherine II such were "illusions and phantoms." Further, the desire of Russia for a joint naval display of the Powers before Constantinople, "where Her Majesty's fleet would have been the

(1) Hertslet.IV. No.469.  
(2) " " " 469.

dominant power.... ought to be a sufficient proof that Russia entertained no intention of occupying that capital." Finally, Alexander saw no reason "why there should not be a perfect understanding between England and Russia.... based on a policy of peace" in rescuing their fellow Christians from the Turk, and thus help to "dispel the cloud of suspicion and distrust of Russia."<sup>(1)</sup> Next day, these pacific assurances of the Tsar were embodied in an official despatch to the British Cabinet.<sup>(2)</sup>

Proposals for a Conference of the Powers at Constantinople to discuss the Eastern Question had already been suggested in many quarters. Therefore, as Lord Derby thought Alexander II's attitude agreeable and the opportunity fitting, he issued a circular invitation to the Powers on November 4th to meet at the Porte.<sup>(3)</sup> A programme was set forth, but Britain insisted on the assertion of two special clauses, as a basis of negotiation. According to these, the Powers were to undertake to respect the "territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire," and "not to seek for any territorial advantages, any exclusive influence, or any concession... for commerce.... which every other nation may not equally obtain."<sup>(4)</sup>

- (1) Hertslet. IV. No.470.
- (2) Hertslet. IV. No.471.
- (3) Hertslet. IV. No.472.
- (4) Hertslet.IV. p.2516.

The next few days, however, were marked by unfortunate and threatening indiscretions on both sides. Every superior officer in the Tsar's army and the Russian War Minister clamoured for prompt intervention. Katkov, the editor of the "Moscow Gazette," sounded the alarm-bell in the press, and Ignatiev's intrigues at the Porte aimed at making a peaceful solution impossible. In England, at the Lord Mayor's Banquet at the Guildhall, Disraeli, (now created Lord Beaconsfield), on November 9th, used menacing language towards Russia. "If England enters into a conflict in a righteous cause, her resources are practically inexhaustible. She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. She enters into campaign which she will not terminate till right is done." (1) Beaconsfield thereby not only showed his ill-faith in the Tsar's assurances, but sent a scarcely veiled threat to Russia. It was, moreover, an encouragement to Turkey, and an incitement to the war party in England.

On the following day, November 10th, however, Alexander replied in equally determined words at the Slavophil Mecca - Moscow. Although he strongly deprecated the effusion of Russian blood at almost any sacrifice, he declared he was

(1) Ann. Reg. 1876.

"firmly determined to act alone.... should it be necessary, and should the honour of the country demand it," unless a common agreement was reached by the coming conference.(1) The suspicions of Russophobes in England were further roused by the mobilisation of some 160,000 Russian troops, which Gorchakov's despatch to London on November 13th showed to be necessary.(2) A Russian loan of 100,000,000 roubles was also floated. But finally a despatch from Prince Gorchakov on November 19th announced Russia's intention of "most willingly" accepting the proposed conference. "If certain differences have manifested themselves between the two Cabinets in the different .... negotiations, they are due to circumstances, and not to their intentions.... The London Cabinet may depend on our assistance ... in a pacific solution of the present crisis."(3)

All the Powers similarly agreed to the Conference which was to meet early in December, and all truly desired peace although they differed individually as to the nature of their guarantees. In the meantime, a letter from Prince Gorchakov to the Russian Ambassador in London, dated November 25th, appeared in the "Journal de St. Petersburg." This revealed the opinion of the veteran statesman on the current situation, as follows. "The only rational combination for Russian interests is to leave the keys of the Black Sea in hands feeble enough not to close to Russia that commercial outlet, or

(1) Hertslet. IV. No.473.

(2) Hertslet. IV. p.2519.

(3) Hertslet. IV. No.474. (Also Ann. Reg. 1876.

Appendix. n.219.)

menace her security. Turkish domination answers to this programme. Is it our fault if the Turks have abused it by rendering their sway intolerable to their Christian subjects? Has not British policy contributed to the abuse, by exciting the suspicions of the Porte against Russia through her own rivalry, and in assisting to make force the sole basis of its power?"(1) This, of course, referred to the presence of the English warships at Besika Bay.

Lord Salisbury, who was to represent England at the forthcoming Conference, made a diplomatic tour round the chief European capitals to sound foreign opinion on Balkan affairs, before proceeding to Constantinople. The German Emperor told him he believed "the course taken by the Emperor Alexander had been imposed upon him by circumstances," and that "the promises of the Porte could no longer be accepted." As for Count Andrassy, Salisbury reported that his views "were in many respects identical with those entertained by Her Majesty's Government..... His excellency was also much opposed to the idea of a Russian occupation, and expressed a hope that England would not sanction it."<sup>(2)</sup> Most interesting of all, was Lord Salisbury's interview with the redoubtable Ignatiev himself at Constantinople. For the two statesmen not only became

{1} Ann. Reg. 1876. p.253.  
{2} Ann. Reg. 1876. p.287.



cordially intimate at once, but special correspondents even described them as walking about the streets of Pera, arm in arm! The Russian general's remarks concerning an armed occupation, seemed very satisfactory. "His Excellency," wrote Salisbury, "took an early opportunity of stating that the occupation of Turkish territory was not put forward as a "sine qua non" by the Russian Government. But they merely suggested it as the only measure that appeared to them calculated to meet the pressing necessity which they foresaw. He.... had no doubt that the Conference would be able to arrange institutions that would furnish a sufficient guarantee for the reforms which the Porte had promised or might be asked to enact." (1) Although Ignatiev still urged an armed occupation as the only practical and effectual guarantee, Lord Salisbury replied that his instructions were "to refuse assent to all schemes of military occupation." (2)

By the second week of December 1876, all the representatives of the Powers reached Constantinople. In order to obviate the inexpediency of exhibiting their disagreements, before the Porte, the Powers held a preliminary meetings, to the exclusion of the Turkish representatives, from December 11th to 22nd. These resulted in the agreement, more or less, of the Powers in granting administrative autonomy under Christian

(1) Ann. Reg. 1876. p.237.  
(2) "State Papers." Vol.68, p.1064.



governors, to Bosnia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria. Serbia and Montenegro were to receive slight territorial increase, and the Ottoman garrisons were to be confined to the fortresses. Finally an International Commission backed by a force of 6,000 Swiss and Belgian gendarmes, was to watch over the execution of reforms.<sup>(1)</sup> The latter was a compromise to avoid a Russian occupation of Turkish territory. Meanwhile, Abdul Hamid had been busy in scheming the overthrow of these specious projects. For, on December 19th, he resorted to the ruse of making Midhat Pasha the Liberal reformer, his Grand Vizier. His accession signified that while the Sultan was willing to grant reforms of his own will, he would allow none to be imposed by the dictation of foreign States. The damaging results thereof were soon to be revealed.

On December 23rd, the full Conference<sup>(2)</sup> of the Powers first met under the presidency of Safvet Pasha. Through the French representative, the proposals resulting from the preliminary Conference were laid before the full assembly. But the delegates of the Porte were more offended by the far-reaching character of the proposals, than impressed by the unexpected unanimity of the Powers. Suddenly great salvos of artillery from outside, interrupted the proceedings of the

(1) Hertslet.IV, pp.2526-30. (Also Parl. Reports.  
Turkey No. 2. (1877).  
(3) Hertslet.IV. p.477.

Conference. Saivet Pasha, however, calmly explained this as the proclamation of a new and most democratic constitution for the whole Ottoman Empire.<sup>(1)</sup> "A great act is accomplished at this very hour, which changes a form of government which has endured for six hundred years. The Constitution which His Majesty the Sultan has bestowed upon his Empire is promulgated. It inaugurates a new era for the happiness and prosperity of his people."<sup>(2)</sup> With due solemnity, Saivet thus ushered in this unexpected sign of vitality, which was the work of Midhat Pasha. The Powers were taken aback, but to all their warnings and proposals, the delegates of the Porte assumed an attitude of injured rectitude. All reforms proposed by the Powers, they argued, were now quite superfluous in view of the superior benefits conferred by the new constitution. Before long, Lord Salisbury, who was less Turcophil than Beaconsfield, indicated his disgust and resentment by ordering the withdrawal of the British fleet from Besika Bay. The Conference of Constantinople thus became a complete fiasco, which had fooled Europe; and on January 20th, 1877, it came to a close. Before leaving the Turkish capital, Salisbury remarked that he and his colleagues had "all tried to save Turkey," but she "would not let them save her." From that moment, he regarded war as

(1) Hertslet. IV. No.476.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1876, p.289.

certain. According to Midhat Pasha, however, Lord Derby congratulated the Sublime Porte on the breakdown of the Conference, which he thought "a success for Turkey."

The failure of the Concert by no means improved the temper of Russia. Especially in view of the Tsar's declarations of November 2nd and 10th, 1876, separate action on the part of Russia now appeared inevitable, and of which Turkey had had full warning. On January 15th, 1877, Russia and Austria are said to have secretly confirmed the Reichstadt agreement of the previous July in the form of a definite treaty. Further, a circular despatch was received on February 5th from Prince Gorchakov by Lord Derby. This recapitulated the previous efforts of the Powers to restrain Turkey and preserve the peace. But "as the refusals of the Turkish Government threaten both the dignity and tranquillity of Europe," the Tsar in a last resort was "desirous of knowing the limits within which the Cabinet is willing to act."<sup>(1)</sup> To this, the English Foreign Secretary replied that "circumstances had changed, and Her Majesty's Government had determined it would be better to defer their reply.... until events should have developed themselves." Derby also advised Russia to see "the effect of the recent change of Government at Constantinople in reference to the promised reforms, and of the negotiations of peace... between

(1) Ann. Reg. 1877. Appendix, p.208.

the Porte and Serbia and Montenegro.\*(1)

One further effort was now made by the British Government to prevent war. Through its influence, the Porte was induced, on February 28th, to sign a treaty of peace with Serbia on the basis of existing conditions.(2) But the first and last Turkish Parliament which met later on March 19th still stubbornly voted the continuance of hostilities with Montenegro. Undoubtedly the Porte here committed an unreasonable error, for otherwise war might have been averted. Nevertheless, Alexander II, still unwilling to break the peace of Europe unnecessarily, sent Ignatiev on a diplomatic mission to the European capitals early in March, with a view to bringing "pacific pressure," if possible, on the Porte. On March 13th, the Russian envoy visited Lord Derby, and delivered the following message. "After the sacrifices Russia had imposed upon herself.. .. and by the mobilisation of 500,000 men, she could not retire nor send back her troops without having obtained some tangible result as regards the improvement of the Christian populations of Turkey... The Emperor was sincerely desirous of peace, but not of peace at any price... The agreement of the Powers... might be broken,... (but that would be) a determining cause to induce Russia to seek for a solution either by means of a

{1} Ann. Reg. 1877. Appendix, p.208.  
{2} Hertslet. IV. Nos.480-81-82.

direct understanding with the Porte, or by force of arms."

The Russian Government therefore proposed "the signature by the Powers of a Protocol in London as "the most practical solution."

The London Cabinet unfavourably received the proposal to adopt coercive measures against Turkey, which Ignatiev announced.

But they agreed to the assembly of a Conference at London,<sup>(2)</sup> most probably with a view to postponing the Russian attack which now seemed inevitable, and favourable in the eyes of the rest of Europe.

At London, on March 31st, the Conference duly met. Cognisance of the Turco-Serbian Treaty was taken, but the new Ottoman "Constitution" was astutely ignored by the Powers. For they rightly read the virtual end of that unnatural founding with the dismissal and flight of its creator, Midhat Pasha, during the previous month. Only a feeble Protocol resulted from the London Conference,<sup>(3)</sup> expressing the Powers' conviction of the incompatibility of the state of affairs in Turkey, with the happiness of the Sultan's Christian subjects. The execution of the Turkish promises of reform of February 13th, 1876, and the reduction of the Ottoman army to a peace footing were also demanded. Finally, should no amelioration result in

- (1) Ann. Reg. 1877. Appendix, pp.210-11.
- (2) Ann. Reg. 1877. p.208.
- (3) Kertslet. IV. No.483.

the lot of the Christians, the Porte was threatened by the European Concert with - only further deliberation!<sup>(1)</sup> Russia, however, showed herself much more determined than all the other participating Powers to bring the procrastinating methods of the Porte to a definite end. For she appended to the London Protocol a declaration signifying her intention of no longer holding her hand, unless the Porte made peace with Montenegro.<sup>(2)</sup> Britain too, declared the Protocol "null and void... in the event of the object proposed not being attained, - namely, reciprocal disarmament on the part of Russia and Turkey, and peace between them."<sup>(3)</sup>

The Porte voiced on April 8th her protests against the London Protocol,<sup>(4)</sup> which was finally rejected by the Sultan three days later.<sup>(5)</sup> It was declared "devoid of all equity, and consequently of all binding character." "Deep regret" was expressed by Lord Derby at Turkey's decision, for he "saw no further steps Her Majesty's Government could take to avert a war which appeared to have become inevitable."<sup>(6)</sup> The Porte's rejection of the Protocol and refusal to come to terms with Montenegro, were taken by the West as the abdication of

(1) Hertslet IV. p.2565.

(2) Hertslet IV. p.2566.

(3) Hertslet IV. p.2567.

(4) Hertslet IV. No.484.

(5) Ann. Reg. 1877. Appendix, p.312.

(6) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.15 (1877) p.354.

diplomacy. Accordingly, he ordered his armies to cross the Turkish frontiers on April 19th, broke off diplomatic relations on the 23rd, and formally declared war on the Sultan, the next day in the name of humanity, good government and Christian emancipation.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Russian declaration of war provoked the emphatic disapproval of Great Britain. On May 1st, in reply to Gorchakov's circular explaining Russia's motive, he declared the "deep regret" of the British Government. The latter, he wrote, "have not concealed their feeling that the presence of large Russian forces on the frontiers of Turkey, menacing its safety, rendering disarmament impossible, and exciting the feeling of apprehension and fanaticism among the Mussulman populations, constituted a material obstacle to internal pacification and reform... In taking action against Turkey on his own part.... the Emperor of Russia has separated himself from the European Concert." Further, "as Prince Gorchakov assumes.... that Russia is acting in the interests of Great Britain and the other Powers... they (the British Government) feel bound to state.... that the decision of the Russian Government is not one which can have their concurrence or approval."<sup>(2)</sup>

A definition of Britain's specific "interests" in the

(1) Hertslet IV Nos. 487-495. (Also Ann. Reg. 1877. Appendix, p. 216.

(2) Hertslet IV. No. 496. Also Ann. Reg. 1877. Appendix, p. 217.



East was asked by Russia on May 6th, which was given by Lord Derby's note to Count Shuvalov two days later.<sup>(1)</sup> He demanded that Russia should respect the neutrality of Egypt and the Suez Canal, and give a pledge excluding Constantinople and the Persian Gulf from military operations. Further "if necessity should oblige him (the Tsar) to occupy a portion of Bulgaria," it was to be "only provisionally, and until the peace and safety of the Christian population were secured."

The views of the Russian Foreign Office were recorded on May 31st in a despatch to Earl Derby. They were on the whole conciliatory, and the British demands regarding Egypt, the Suez Canal, and the Persian Gulf were respected, subject to Britain's continued neutrality. Russia also recognised that "the future of Constantinople is a question of common interest which cannot be settled otherwise than by a general understanding; and that if the possession of that city were to be put in question, it could not be allowed to belong to any of the European Powers." The question of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles was also to be "settled by a common agreement on equitable and efficiently guaranteed bases."<sup>(2)</sup> But a memorandum to the British Foreign Minister from Count Shuvalov on June 8th, 1877, showed a revision, to some extent, of Russian sentiments, as

(1) Hertslet IV. No. 499.

(2) Hertslet IV. No. 501.

follows. "With regard to Constantinople, our assurances can only refer to taking possession of the town, or occupying it permanently. It would be singular... if at the outset of war, one of the belligerents undertook beforehand not to pursue its military operations up to the walls of the capital.... It will depend upon England and the other Powers to relieve us of this necessity, (and)... to use their influence with the Turks, with a view to making peace possible before this extreme step is taken. On our side, we shall readily fall into this view."<sup>(1)</sup> Regarding India, Russia declared, "It is not at all to our interest to trouble England in her Indian possessions, or consequently, in her communications with them,... but Russia has a right on her part to expect England to take no hostile action against her."<sup>(2)</sup> The previous assurances of Russia touching the other spheres of Egypt, the Persian Gulf and the Straits were repeated, and an outline of conditional terms of peace acceptable to Russia was given.<sup>(3)</sup> An understanding respecting neutral trade in contraband of war was later reached between the two Powers on July 11th.<sup>(4)</sup>

In the meantime, war was being vigorously prosecuted on both sides, and events at first proved favourable to Russia both in Europe and the Caucasus. This was followed by a sudden

(1) and (2) Hertslet IV. No.503. Also Ann. Reg. 1878.  
 Appendix, p.236.  
 (3) Hertslet IV. pp.2636-8.  
 (4) Hertslet IV. No.506.

victorious rally of the Turks in Asia and Europe, especially at the Plevna and Shipka passes. But ultimately an equally sudden period of Muscovite successes ensued. British opinion on the whole, was decidedly Turcophil, and as the Russians became more successful, the British public became more warlike. Both press and stage pandered to the popular desire for intervention on behalf of the Porte. On December 10th, the fate of Plevna was sealed after a brilliant defence under Osman Pasha, and Generals Gurko and Skobelev continued their victorious march southwards, towards the Turkish capital. In the eyes of England, Russia appeared to be seeking satisfaction for her material desires to further the cause of Pan Slavism and to possess Constantinople, under the outer cloak of philanthropy. Bismarck even, declared that Alexander II waged the war "under stress of Pan Slavist influence."<sup>(1)</sup> The crusading reputation with which Russia entered the campaign, appeared to pale, as the Tsar's troops neared Constantinople, and the uneasiness of the British Government increased proportionally. England, too, was now no longer able to restrain Serbia from attacking Turkey, and her apprehensions were thereby roused as to the integrity of the Ottoman dominions.

(1) Bismarck. Reflections and Reminiscences, vol.II, p.259.

Accordingly on December 13th, 1877, Lord Derby again approached Russia, through Count Shuvalov, as to further assurances. "With the view of avoiding what might endanger seriously the good relations... between the two countries," the British Government expressed their "earnest hope" that "no attempt will be made to occupy Constantinople or the Dardanelles." Otherwise, "Her Majesty's Government must hold themselves free to take whatever course may appear.... necessary for the protection of British interests."<sup>(1)</sup> Three days later, Gorchakov, ever wary in his dealings with England, repeated his master's pledges regarding the future of Constantinople. Desiring, further, "to maintain the good relations between the two countries, he asked for a clearer definition of British interests "with a view to seeking in common the means of reconciling those interests with those of Russia, which it is the duty of His Majesty the Emperor to protect."<sup>(2)</sup>

These were defined by a despatch to Gorchakov through Lord Loftus on January 13th, 1878. England thereby indicated her disapprobation of "any operations tending to place the passage of the Dardanelles under Russian control," and of the occupation of Gallipoli by Russian forces.<sup>(3)</sup> This assurance

- (1) Hertslet IV. No.507. Also Ann. Reg. 1878.  
Appendix p.232.  
(2) Hertslet IV. No.510. Also Ann. Reg. 1878.  
Appendix pp.232-3.  
(3) Hertslet IV. No. 511.

was readily given by the Tsar's Government, on the understanding that Britain and Turkey would likewise refrain from making Gallipoli a military base.(1)

Everything thus far, seemed satisfactory and sufficient to prevent actual warfare between Britain and Russia. But the return of the Tsar to his capital, and the bestowal of power on the Grand Duke Nicholas made it probable that the latter might entertain fewer scruples in seizing Constantinople. The consequent likelihood of Russia seeking to separately enforce her own conditions of peace, elicited a memorandum from the British Government to Russia on January 15th. This indicated that no separate conclusion of peace affecting the treaties of 1856 and 1871, between the two belligerents, would be considered valid without the collective consent of all the signatory Powers to those Treaties.(2) Queen Victoria's speech at the opening of Parliament on January 17th further indicated that she had offered her "good offices" of mediation, on the direct appeal of the Sultan. But if the conditions of British neutrality should be infringed and should "hostilities be unfortunately prolonged, some unexpected occurrence may render it necessary... to adopt measures of precaution."(3) Although this cautiously worded statement scarcely amounted to a threat of war, it clearly

- (1) Hertslet IV. No. 512.
- (2) Hertslet IV. No. 513.
- (3) Ann. Reg. 1878. p.4.

indicated the determined attitude of the Beaconsfield Cabinet.

On January 23rd, 1878, they took such a "measure of precaution." For hearing of the Russian occupation of Adrianople on the 20th inst., they ordered the British fleet to enter the Dardanelles and proceed to Constantinople. Lord Carnarvon thereupon resigned office. For he maintained that so long as Russia did not violate any of the conditions whereby Britain promised neutrality, such demonstration of force was not only unnecessary, but impolitic and provocative. Lord Derby only withdrew a similar resignation by the rescinding of the orders to the fleet, the day following. This was done because news of Russia's conditions of peace were then first to hand, and such a step would have been inopportune.

The Russian terms comprised the creation of a Big Bulgaria according to racial limits; the complete independence of Montenegro, Serbia and Rumania; and territorial additions to Russia together with an indemnity. Finally, "an ulterior understanding for safeguarding the rights and interests of Russia in the Straits" was to be reached.<sup>(1)</sup> Naturally, the Turcophil British Cabinet received this news with great disfavour. For it was felt that a Big Bulgaria would mean too great an extension of Russian influence in the Balkans. It also appeared to spell danger to British communications with

(1) Hertslet IV. pp.2658-60.

India, seeing a footing in Egypt had not yet been secured.

Indeed, the whole affair "amounted to the destruction of the Turkish Empire in Europe," as Mr Layard wrote from Constantinople. Accordingly, the Beaconsfield Government signified its intention of not even shrinking from war, if necessary, and on January 28th an extra £6,000,000 was voted in Parliament for an increase in armaments.

Preliminaries of peace, and an armistice were at last signed by the belligerents at Adrianople on January 31st. They contained similar terms to those outlined above, with the significant exception that the offending clause regarding the Straits was withdrawn, probably in view of Britain's menacing attitude.<sup>(1)</sup> On February 8th, the Grand Duke Nicholas advanced his headquarters to the lines of Chatalja, the chief neutral defence of Constantinople, whose minarets now came into the Russian view. This was in accordance with the armistice of Adrianople, and perfectly in harmony with the usual practices of war. Though technically constituting no breach of Russia's promises to England, however, this movement had a far from conciliatory effect on Britain, despite Gorchakov's assurances. Russia's attitude now appeared ambitious and grasping, for while her statesmen kept to the letter of her agreement, her

(1) Hertslet. IV. Nos. 514-5.

commanders by no means appeared to fulfil its spirit. Although Russia refrained from actually seizing Constantinople, she took good care to hold its keys. Besides, the Russian commanders' powers of resistance to the temptation before them was truly indeterminable, and the situation was alarming for the British Ministry.

Consequently, a portion of the British fleet was sent on February 7th, through the Sea of Marmora, "for the protection of Christian life and property" at Constantinople. Gorchakov thereupon telegraphed to the Russian ambassadors at the various European capitals that the movement of the British squadron "obliges us... to take into the consideration the proper means of protecting those Christians whose life and property might be threatened, and... to attain this result, to contemplate the entry of a portion of our troops into Constantinople." Such a measure would indubitably have precipitated war with England, for peace depended solely upon the observance or otherwise of this condition. Britain on the other hand had to consider the effect that the fall of Constantinople would have on her Muhammadan subjects. As Lord Derby said, the last word of the Eastern Question concerned the possession of that city. "No great Power would be willing to see it in the hands of any other great Power; no small Power could hold it at all; and as for a joint occupation, all such expedients are both dangerous and doubtful."



The despatch of the English ironclads was to a large extent due to a disquieting telegram sent from Constantinople on February 7th. This stated that the capital was practically in Russian hands, and Muscovite officers were walking about Pera and Stambul without any escort! Happily, this falsehood was denied the next day by a reassuring message from the German Embassy at the Porte, announcing that the terms of the armistice were duly being observed. As the Porte moreover protested against the action of the British fleet as an infraction of the Treaty of Paris, the English vessels stopped short of the Bosphorus.

A vigilant eye was nevertheless kept on the Russian lines, and England's precautionary but stern display of power warned Gorchakov against carrying out his threat. Besides Austria was now uneasy, and a Russian occupation of the Turkish capital might conceivably have provoked an Austrian attack from the rear. But the words of Gorchakov were not followed by the threatened fulfilment. For on February 19th, an agreement was reached between the two Powers, whereby Russia undertook not to occupy the defensive lines of Bulair before Constantinople, the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles, nor the Gallipoli Peninsula. Britain similarly bound herself not to land troops at these points.(1)

(1) Hertslet IV No.517.

Nevertheless, the Russian and British forces continued to face each other in a state of sullen preparedness and hesitant expectancy. But such a dangerous situation could certainly not last long. In England, the idea was formed that the Russians had arranged conditions of peace with the Porte, and were being allowed to occupy Constantinople. Demands for war against Russia were therefore made in some quarters. A counterpart to this British feeling, however, prevailed in Russia. The "Golos" demanded the occupation of the Dardanelles, while the "Moscow Gazette" suggested the immediate possession of the Bosphorus by Russia, unless the British vessels immediately returned to Besika Bay. Indeed, so great was the tension that prevailed on the banks of the Thames and the Neva, that every credit is due to the statesmen at the helms of the British and Russian ships of State, that they kept their heads so well. For the slightest sign of an indiscretion on the part of either Government or of their respective forces, might easily have precipitated war.

It soon became evident that the only means of escape from the situation, from which both Russia and Britain showed an unwillingness to retreat, lay in a European Conference. Already on February 5th, Andrassy had proposed a meeting of the Powers at Vienna.<sup>(1)</sup> Britain and the other Powers readily assented,

(1) Hertlet IV No.516.

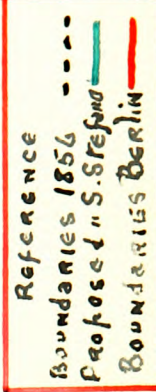
but Russia was reluctant to consent to a course which probably tended to deprive her of the coveted prize already within her grip. But the cost of her success, the exhaustion of her war-worn armies and the restiveness of her Rumanian ally were cogent factors for her to consider. Besides, a refusal would most likely have been regarded as a desire to continue the war. These reasons, and the consequent possibility of a joint Austro-British attack ultimately decided Russia's consent to the Conference. A Congress was proposed on March 7th, instead of a Conference, thus including the Chief Ministers of the Powers in addition to their ambassadors, and the rendezvous was fixed at Berlin.<sup>(1)</sup> Meanwhile, Bismarck the Oracle of Europe, had offered his good offices of mediation as an "honest broker," between the disputants.

But before that great meeting took place, disquieting events were destined to happen, which strained Anglo-Russian relations almost to the breaking-point. After a display of military force, the Russians moved their head-quarters to the maritime village of San Stefano, a western suburb of Constantinople. Here, on March 3rd, 1878, in order to forestall any possible decision of the Powers which might prove disappointing to her, Russia sought to impose a binding treaty on Turkey.

(1) Hertslet IV No. 518.



ENGLISH MILES  $\frac{1}{2}$  20 40 60 80 100





Besides she could the more easily overawe the Porte singly before they very gates of the capital, than before the Concert of Europe. Even if the Powers uttered protests and threats, Russia might still have averted any outbreak of war, by pointing forward to the coming Congress, and reminding them of her assent to submit thereto. Further, by the Treaty of San Stefano, an opportunity was afforded of testing European feeling, and of initiating a persuasive preliminary to the Berlin deliberations.

While the drastic terms of the Treaty would have opened up new problems, they certainly would have prevented Turkey from doing much more mischief in Europe. A new autonomous, but tributary Bulgaria was to be formed, bounded by the Danube on the north, the Black Sea on the east, the Aegean on the south, and the Albanian mountains on the west. The creation of this Big Bulgaria would thus have left only three isolated pieces of European Turkey under direct Ottoman control (1) Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania were to be independent, the first two receiving territorial acquisitions, and the last named exchanging Bessarabia with Russia for the Dobruja, as a "point of honour." Russia was also to receive the districts of Kars, Batum, Ardahan and Bayazid in Asia Minor together with a war

(1) viz. The district of Constantinople, Adrianople and the Straits; the Chalkidike Peninsula, and the district of Albania, Epirus and Thessaly. See map.

indemnity. Her troops were moreover to occupy the chief strategic points, in order to watch over the execution of promised reforms both in European and Asiatic Turkey.<sup>(1)</sup>

On affixing his signature to this document, Sarvet Pasha is reported to have broken out into convulsive sobs. Ignatiev however, rose to the occasion and proved a Job's comforter. "You see," he said, "I have always told you that England would leave you in the lurch; the English do not know how to keep their word; everything has happened precisely as I foretold."<sup>(2)</sup> The Sultan, however, was astute enough to know that Britain and Austria would never allow Russia to obtain such immense advantages. Indeed, the Treaty of San Stefano was only signed under Ignatiev's threat of the immediate seizure of Constantinople unless this were done.

This wholly Slavonic settlement of a question which concerned all Europe, met with no acceptance from the Powers, and its object was defeated by the stringency of its terms. The British Ministers of the time feared an undue extension of Russian influence towards Constantinople and Asia Minor. For the notion that true British policy in the East lay in the formation of strong independent Balkan states to serve as a

(1) Hertslet IV pp.2672-96. Also Parl Reports No.22.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1878. p.333. (1878)

barrier between Russia and the Porte, and possibly even as allied outposts of Turkey, had not yet gained decisive acceptance in England. However "correct" ethnographically, a Big Bulgaria might have been, appearances at that moment justified British suspicions of Russia's intentions. The latter's previous relations with Greece proved that she did not desire to see a really strong Christian state on the ruins of Turkey. The proposed administrative organisation of Big Bulgaria "under the superintendence of an Imperial Russian Commissioner"(1) for the next two years, aroused British suspicions. Appeals were, moreover, made to Queen Victoria against the Treaty by the dissatisfied Greeks, Rumanians, Mussulmans, and Lazos.

A further difficulty arose as to whether the forthcoming Congress was to be competent to discuss the Treaty of San Stefano as a whole. Britain claimed it must be so submitted,(2) while Russia strongly resisted this demand, as interfering with her just right as conqueror. While disclaiming any intention of such interference, Lord Derby maintained that European sanction must be given to the new settlement which superseded that of 1856, and insisted upon the submission of the

(1) Hertslet IV p.3681.  
(2) Hertslet IV p.2700.

entire Treaty to the Congress.<sup>(1)</sup> To this, Russia replied on March 26th that every Power had full "liberty of appreciation and action" relating to any article which, it might think, concerned all Europe. Hence the Russian Government "leaves to the other Powers, the liberty of raising such questions at the Congress as they think fit to discuss, and reserves to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of these questions."<sup>(2)</sup>

This curt and high-handed reply meant that the Berlin Congress would have been practically under the dictation of Russia. Once more, the London and St. Petersburg Governments were brought to the verge of war. With the sole exception of Lord Derby, who maintained his earlier attitude, the Beaconsfield Cabinet determined to prepare for war. Lord Derby resigned on March 28th, and was succeeded in the Foreign Office by Lord Salisbury. Derby stated the reason of his resignation in the following July. The Ministry, he alleged, had secretly proposed to fit out an expedition from India to seize Cyprus and a point on the Syrian coast, with or without the Sultan's consent. These were to form bases for military operations against Russia, but undoubtedly that Power would have entered Constantinople as a counter-move. Salisbury staunchly denied this allegation, but information of the whole matter is too vague and scanty to allow

{1} Hertslet IV p.2701.  
{2} Hertslet p.2702. Also Parl. Reports. Turkey No.15 (1878) p.7.



of any authentic determination.(1)

On May 1st, Beaconsfield called out the reserves and ordered Indian troops with artillery to proceed to Malta. The same day, Salisbury issued a circular to the courts of the Powers, summing up Britain's objections to the Treaty of San Stefano.(2) He reminded the Powers of the force underlying the London Protocol of 1871, to which Russia was signatory, and stated that the crushing preponderance of that Power in the East, would prove fatal to British interests. Gorchakov's reply to the Salisbury circular on April 9th, fortunately proved pacific in the highest degree. He asked for a clearer statement of the views of the British Government, and reasserted that the Treaty of San Stefano had been communicated to the Powers in its entirety. Further, if the Congress were to meet, the Russian Chancellor reaffirmed the "full liberty of appreciation and action" of each Power, and only claimed the same rights for Russia.(3)

Immediate advantage was taken of this offer by Lord Salisbury, who dexterously applied himself towards the interests of peace. It was singularly fortunate that the Russian ambassador at London, Count Shuvalov, was an equally persevering and tactful worker to the same end. Through a heart to heart conversation with Salisbury, he ascertained the true objections of Britain to the Treaty of San Stefano. Further, he

(1) Ann. Reg. 1878. p.92.

(2) Hertslet IV No.520.

(3) Hertslet IV No.521. pp. 2707-18

suggestingly negotiated how these could be met or modified, in order to secure as far as possible, the preservation of most of the essential Russian gains. A suggested agreement was reached and Shuvalov set out on a mission to St. Petersburg, to obtain the Tsar's assent. This development, together with the replacement of Ignatiev by Prince Lobanov at the Porte, pointed towards a more pacific state of affairs. Shuvalov hastened to London via Berlin, where he interviewed the German Emperor, and also visited Bismarck at Friedrichruhe. It was remarked by the "North German Gazette" at the time, that it was not correct to assume that Shuvalov was the bearer of any proposals from the British Government. His task was rather to make proposals at St. Petersburg based upon his knowledge of British intentions, to obtain instructions, and then to act upon them on his return to London. (1)

Thus judgment was afterwards shown to be correct. After <sup>Conversing with</sup> ~~interviewing~~ Gorchakov, the Russian ambassador interviewed the Tsar on May 13th. As he left the Imperial Palace, Shuvalov told some members of the Tsar's suite, that they might well hope for peace. The mission proved a success, and Shuvalov was fully authorised by his Government to conclude a secret understanding with Lord Salisbury at London. This was accordingly

(1) Ann. Reg. 1878. p.235.

done in secret on May 30th, 1878. Although the full text was published later on July 14th, the British Ministers stoutly repudiated the existence of the treaty at the time.

The object of the understanding was indicated in its full title:- "Project for a Memorandum determining the points upon which an understanding has been established between the Governments of Russia and Great Britain, and which will serve as a mutual engagement for the Russian and English Plenipotentiaries at the Congress."<sup>(1)</sup> It did not absolutely bind both parties ~~&~~ concerned by hard and fast rules. But it defined certain limits of conditions, within the range of which, Russia and Britain could each endeavour to obtain the acquiescence of the Congress, to best suit their respective requirements and aspirations. Britain objected to the wide extension of the Big Bulgaria of San Stefano. But nevertheless the Russian representative reserved the right "to point out the advantages to the Congress, promising nevertheless not to insist upon it against the definite opinion of England." Further, the Bulgarian district south of the Balkans was to be partly under Turkish control, and to "receive a large measure of administrative self-government,.... with a Christian governor."<sup>(2)</sup> Russia conditionally assented thereto. "The right of the Sultan....

(1) See Annual Register 1878. Appendix p.245 for full Treaty.

(2) Ibid. clauses 1-4.

to canton troops on the frontiers of Southern Bulgaria," was also maintained by Salisbury. Further, the officers of the militia of that province were to be "named by the Porte with the consent of Europe."<sup>(1)</sup> "The promises concerning Armenia" in the Treaty of San Stefano were also "not to be made exclusive to Russia, but to England also."<sup>(2)</sup> England also stated her intention of accompanying Russia in recommending the Greek claims in Epirus and Thessaly to the consideration of the Powers.<sup>(3)</sup> In view of the Rumanian complaints, she also expressed "profound regret in the event of Russia insisting definitely upon the retrocession of Bessarabia." But Britain however, did not "find herself sufficiently interested in this question.... to incur alone, the responsibility of opposing... the change proposed."<sup>(4)</sup> Russia agreed to restore the Bayazid district to the Sultan, as it was on "the great transit route to Persia," and had "an immense value in the eyes of the Turks."<sup>(5)</sup> Ardahan, Kars and Batum were however to be retained by the Tsar. Finally, "Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the duty of protecting the Ottoman Empire... henceforth will rest

- (1) Ibid. clauses 5-6
- (2) Ibid. clause 7.
- (3) Ibid clause 8.
- (4) Ibid clause 11.
- (5) Ibid clause 10.

largely (d'une mesure speciale) upon England." (1) This hinted at an Anglo-Turkish agreement, which was soon to be concluded.

Although denied at the time, the secret Anglo-Russian agreement was noised abroad, and was considered by the continental press as a decided success for Britain. The Viennese "Eastern Budget" considered it "a most brilliant diplomatic triumph for England, as there is no case recorded in history where a nation has obtained so great a result with so small a display of force." (2) But the "Moscow Gazette," the Pan-Slavist organ edited by M. Katkov, viewed Shuvalov's action with displeasure, and <sup>fearing</sup> the Count might displace Gorshakov, did its utmost to oppose him. According to the correspondent of the "Daily News" at St. Petersburg "Count Shuvalov's acceptableness to the Emperor Alexander (was) regarded as a sure proof of the pacific disposition of that monarch, and of his equitable intentions with reference to the future settlement of the East." (3)

No disguise was made by England throughout her understanding with Russia, of her intention of defending Turkey against Muscovite aggression. While Russia was allowed to hold the keys of Armenia, Britain at the same time feared a

(1) Ibid p. 247.

(2) and (3) Ann. Reg. 1878. pp. 62-63.

Russian advance over the Caucasus. This was a weak spot, where Russia alone appeared to be unchecked in menacing India. With a view, therefore, to make up for this patent vulnerability, the British Government entered into a similar secret engagement with Turkey. This was known as the Convention of Constantinople or the Convention of Cyprus, regarding the conclusion of which, the British Cabinet had secretly been negotiating with the Porte. On May 30th, final arrangements between England and Turkey<sup>(1)</sup> were made by Salisbury's despatch to Mr Layard, the British plenipotentiary at the Porte. Accordingly, this Convention of defensive alliance was signed at Constantinople on June 4th, as follows.

"If Batum, Ardahan, Kars, or any of them shall be retained by Russia, and if any attempt shall be made at any future time by Russia to take possession of any further territories of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in Asia, as fixed by the Definitive Treaty of Peace, England agrees to join His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, in defending them by force of arms. In return. His Imperial Majesty the Sultan promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the Government, and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories

And in order to enable England to make necessary

(1) Hertslet IV No.522. Also Parl. R ports. Turkey No. 36. (1878).

(2) Hertslet IV. Nos.524-5.

provision for executing her engagement, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan further consents to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England." (1)

Any surplus of revenue over expenditure in its administration was to be given to the Sultan, and the island was to be restored, if Russia renounced her acquisitions.

Such were the ambiguous terms of the Cyprus Convention. At the time, the Porte was evidently unaware that the possibility of a renewal of hostilities was so remote, on account of the secret Anglo-Russian agreement of May 30th. Similarly the Tsar's Government was not yet cognisant of the Anglo-Turkish defensive alliance. In his famous speech of July 18th after the Congress, Beaconsfield thus expressed his reasons for concluding the Cyprus Convention. "We... entered into a defensive alliance with Turkey, to guard her against any further attack from Russia... We have a substantial interest in the East; it is a commanding interest and its behest must be obeyed. ... Our Indian Empire is on every occasion on which these (Russo-Turkish) troubles occur, ... a source of grave anxiety, and the time appeared to have arrived when, if possible, we should terminate that anxiety... In taking Cyprus, the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian. We have taken a step there which we think necessary for the maintenance of our Empire, and

(1) Hertslet IV Nos. 524-5.

for its preservation in peace,... our first consideration."<sup>(1)</sup>

A weak point of the Cyprus Convention was that its very terms enabled Russia to select her own time for attack. For had she so wished, undoubtedly the occasion would have been one when England was embarrassed with other complications.

Much criticism has been directed against the action of the British Government in separately concluding, somewhat privily, these two arrangements.<sup>(2)</sup> Indeed, both Russia and Turkey considered themselves tricked by the British Ministers when these facts came to light. Britain, it was said, had warned Russia that she alone would not be allowed to settle Eastern affairs, which were the common interest of Europe. She was guilty therefore, of secretly bargaining with Russia in contempt of those very interests. But Russia, as party to that transaction was equally culpable, for she too, had declared the future of the Porte to be entirely a matter of European interest. Further, that Power had exhibited indecent haste in forcing the San Stefano Treaty on Turkey and moving her forces nearer Constantinople, when a European Congress had already been agreed upon. Russia thereby had betrayed her fears lest her cause should not receive due consideration at the hands of the Powers.

(1) Speeches on British Foreign Policy pp.495, 497, and 498 ed. E.R.Jones, M.P.

(2) Speeches on British Foreign Policy. Gladstone. p.396.seq.



With a fairly clear definition, within certain limits, of an understanding regarding the points at issue, Russia and Britain attended the Berlin Congress. Britain especially displayed equanimity, for her interests were covered by a double guarantee. All the Powers were represented at Berlin, and not since the Treaty of Paris in 1856, had such an important gathering of statesmen assembled to discuss the liquidation of the Eastern Question. Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury were the spokesmen of Britain, while Prince Gorchakov and Count Shuvalov pleaded the cause of Russia. On June 13th 1878, the first meeting was held under the presidency of Bismarck.

Of the inner happenings of the Congress, little is known, but affairs did not appear to go along smoothly at first. In the main, the proceedings assumed the rôle of a diplomatic duel between Britain and Russia before the other Powers as umpires, while Turkey added, now her entreaties, and now her protests. Beaconsfield is said to have demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Russian forces, but to have declined assent to a corresponding retirement of the British fleet. Another report stated that both Gorchakov and the British delegates threatened departure at a critical stage of negotiations, but such stories must be accepted with due reserve. On the whole, Austria supported Britain against Russia, while Waddington, who

represented France and had been educated at Rugby and Cambridge, also had British predilections. After twenty sittings of heated discussion over the Eastern Imbroglio, a definitive settlement was reached on July 13th, 1878.<sup>(1)</sup>

Instead of the Big Bulgaria of San Stefano, the Berlin Treaty fixed the Danube, the Black Sea, the Balkans and the Serbo-Montenegrin frontiers as the boundaries of the new Bulgaria proper. This was constituted an "autonomous and tributary principality under the suzerainty of.. the Sultan, (with) a Christian Government."<sup>(2)</sup> To the south of this was formed a province with "administrative autonomy," diplomatically known as Eastern Rumelia. This more or less artificial province was to be "under the direct political and military authority of the Sultan," but administered by "a Christian Governor-General... nominated by the Sublime Porte with the assent of the Powers, for a period of five years."<sup>(3)</sup> The period of Russian occupation of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia was restricted to nine months after the exchange of ratifications of the Berlin Treaty.<sup>(4)</sup> By the end of that time, the Bulgarians were to "freely" elect a Prince; and the Sultan, "with the assent of the Powers," was to confirm their choice.

- (1) Hertzslet IV No.528-30. Also Ann.Reg. 1878. App.p.22
- (2) Arts. 1-12.
- (3) Arts. 12-21.
- (4) Arts. 22-23.

For the moment, the division of Bulgaria into two sections was regarded as a triumph for British statesmanship and a diminution of Russian influence. On July 18th in the House of Lords, Beaconsfield later remarked on the subject of Eastern Rumelia as follows. "At one time it was proposed to call it South Bulgaria, but it was manifest that with such a name, between it and North Bulgaria there would be constant intriguing to bring about a union. We therefore thought that the Province of Eastern Rumelia should be formed.. (with) a government somewhat different from that of the contiguous provinces, where the authority of the Sultan might be more unlimited." (1) But reflection might have suggested that national feeling would sooner or later join together what diplomacy had severed, as in the case of Moldavia and Wallachia. But the irony of history is that when the union of the two Bulgarias was effected in 1885, the British Government actually approved, while the Russian Government condemned it!

The Berlin Treaty awarded Montenegro and Serbia, with their independence, but gave them less territorial acquisitions than allotted by the Treaty of San Stefano. (2) Further, in assigning the port of Antivari to Montenegro, its waters were to

(1) Speeches on British Foreign Policy. p.476.  
(2) Arts. 26-42. See Map.

"remain closed to ships of war of all nations." (1) including Montenegro itself. This frustrated any future Russian attempt to establish a naval base on the Mediterranean. Although Rumania still lost Bessarabia to Russia, she gained her full independence and a little more territory in the Dobruja than at San Stefano. (2) Mainly at the instance of Salisbury, Greece was promised sympathetic support for the future, although she gained no territory at Berlin. (3) To Austria-Hungary were given the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina for occupation and administration. Further, "the rights of keeping garrisons and having military and commercial roads" in the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar between Serbia and Montenegro were also entrusted to the Dual Monarchy. Nevertheless, "the Ottoman Administration" was to "continue to exercise its functions there." (4) Beaconsfield and Salisbury warmly supported the Austrian occupation as the best means of preventing a chain of Slav states from stretching across the whole Balkan Peninsula.

Russia's direct gains in Asia Minor differed only from those awarded at San Stefano in that the Bayazid district was restored to Turkey in accordance with the secret Anglo-

- (1) Art. 29.
- (2) Arts. 43-51.
- (3) Art. 24.
- (4) Art. 25.

Russian agreement of May 30th. Kars, Ardahan and Batum were ceded to Russia, but the Tsar declared his intention to constitute the last-named "a free port, essentially commercial."<sup>(1)</sup> Russia, however, disregarded this condition, in closing and fortifying Batum a few years later. In consideration of the commercial character given to Batum, the status quo ante bellum was restored to the Dardanelles.

In the same speech quoted above, Lord Beaconsfield thus justified Russia's gains in Asia. "Russia has acquired in Europe, nothing but a very small portion of territory occupied by 130,000 inhabitants. She naturally expected to find some reward in her conquests in Armenia for the sacrifices which she had made... Consider what these conquests are... Take the great fortress of Kars. Three times has Russia taken Kars.<sup>(2)</sup> Three times either by our influence or by other influences, it has been restored to Turkey. Were we to go to war for Kars and restore it to Turkey, and then wait till the next misunderstanding between Russia and Turkey, when Kars would have been taken again? ... Then look at Batum... It is generally spoken of in society as if it were a sort of Portsmouth, whereas in reality, it should rather be compared with Genoa. It will hold

(1) Arts. 58-59.

(2) In 1839, 1854, and 1877 respectively.

(only) three considerable ships... Now is that a question for which England would be justified in going to war with Russia?... We have, therefore, thought it advisable not to grudge Russia those conquests,... especially after obtaining the restoration of the town of Bayazid and its important district."<sup>(1)</sup>

Although officially announced on July 9th as a counter-blast to Russia's Asiatic gains, the full terms of the Cyprus Convention were not embodied in the Berlin Treaty. The latter document, however, expressly stipulated that Turkey should "without further delay" carry out reforms in the Armenian provinces.<sup>(2)</sup> But unfortunately, no stringent steps were threatened by the Powers in the Treaty, for their enforcement. Nevertheless, these clauses did not relieve Britain from her special responsibility for reform in Armenia by the terms of the Cyprus Convention. This fact Russia took good care not to forget.

Such in the main was the Treaty of Berlin. On his return home, Lord Beaconsfield informed the London populace he had brought "peace with honour." The motives which guided his policy at Berlin were indicated in his speech to the Upper House on July 18th, to which reference has been made above. The Premier stated that the Treaty of San Stefano had reduced the

(1) Speeches on British Foreign Policy pp.490-492.  
(2) Arts. 61-62.

Sultan "to a state of subjection to the Great Power which had defeated his armies." British policy at the Congress therefore was "to re-establish the Sultan as a real and substantial authority," and "to retain him as part of the acknowledged political system of Europe." England, he thought, had no "right to complain of the decisions of the Congress. . so far as European Turkey was concerned." For these results had been "obtained without shedding the blood of a single Englishman."<sup>(1)</sup> So far as English "interests" were concerned, this appeared to be true enough at the time. For despite the "Narc-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity" ascribed by Beaconsfield to his critics, the Treaty forboded future trouble by its very nature of a compromise.

In its discernment of future difficulties which the Berlin Treaty left, the St. Petersburg official newspaper of August 7th, was almost prophetic. It contained the following words. "The work had many weak points. One of those most to be regretted is the arbitrary settlement of boundaries by geographical and political considerations without regard to nationalities. The Imperial Cabinet (of Russia) had porposed a more rational and equitable plan,<sup>(2)</sup> which would have left

(1) Speeches on British Foreign Policy. pp.470-499 incl

(2) i.e. Treaty of San Stefano.

all the Eastern races free to develop themselves, each in its natural limits. This it was with regret obliged to abandon. But everything depends on the way in which the decisions of the Congress are carried out. It cannot be too often repeated that the difficulties of the Eastern Question lie not in Turkey, but in Europe."<sup>(1)</sup>

On the other hand, Russia can hardly be said to have been richly recompensed by the Treaty, in view of her enormous losses in the war. Nevertheless she had the satisfaction of seeing the Balkan Christians to a great extent relieved from an intolerable yoke. Russia soon gave proof, however, that this was not the cause nearest her heart, in her dealings with Bulgaria. The acquirement of Cyprus by England, and of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria, which Powers had claimed to respect the integrity of the Ottoman dominions and who had not fired a shot, only added to the Russian chagrin. Her demands at San Stefano appeared exorbitant and rapacious, but ethnographically they were not so very unjust. Hence the Berlin Treaty proved the very abnegation of Russia's hopes, and the universal discontentment of her people was soon shown in the Nihilist reign of terror.

On the whole, the European press thought the results of the Berlin Congress favourable to British policy. But the

(1) Ann. Reg. 1876. p.339.



French newspaper, "L'Union," considered that "England, being a nation of shopkeepers and indisposed to fight Russia single-handed, conceded everything to Russia on condition of taking compensation,(1) the Sultan paying the piper."(2)

In August 1878, Russia began to evacuate the Balkans, although peace was not yet signed with the Porte, despite the Berlin Treaty. Dissatisfaction was shown by various risings in the Balkan States, and reports were received by the British Embassy at Constantinople of the inundation of Eastern Rumelia by Russophil Bulgarians. The Sultan, too, refused to sign a special treaty of peace with Russia, and the Muscovite forced momentarily returned to the lines of Chatalja. Rumours were rife about Russian desires to revive the Treaty of San Stefano, for the separation of the two Bulgarians was unpalatable to Russians and Bulgarians alike. Indeed, up till the last moment, an influential section of the Russian Government entertained hopes that the Powers would agree to some compromise, which would virtually surrender the point stipulating that separation. The following significant statement too, appeared in the "Berlin Post" in November. "Russia means to remain in Bulgaria and Southern Bulgaria... What she had already obtained..

(1) i.e. Cyprus.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1878. p.77.

by San Stefano, but was obliged to give up by the Berlin Treaty, she has now a fair prospect to acquire, since the Indo-British troops can no longer take part in the struggle in the Balkans, thanks to Russian policy in Afghanistan."<sup>(1)</sup> England, however, was the only Power who reminded Russia of her obligations in the execution of the Berlin Treaty.

Meanwhile many obstacles had been put in the way of the European International Commission, which the Berlin Treaty had appointed to organise the new administration of Eastern Rumelia.<sup>(2)</sup> It first met on September 30th, 1878, but after three months' negotiations as specified at Berlin, its task was by no means ended. Much vexatious delay also took place in Bulgaria in calling the assembly for the election of a Prince. As the administration in both countries was conducted by Russian officials until the new governments were installed, Russia was naturally regarded as responsible for those delays. In a despatch to St' Petersburg on January 26th, 1879, Lord Salisbury gave vent to these complaints.<sup>(3)</sup> He maintained that the Russian delegates of the Commission persistently opposed those of the other Powers. Further their conduct tended to promote agitation in favour of a union of Eastern Rumelia with Bulgaria, while a combined militia from the two provinces had

(1) Ann. Reg. 1878. p.345.

(2) Berlin Treaty Arts. 18 and 19.

(3) Parl. Reports. Turkey 1879. No.9. Pt.1.

been formed under Russian officers, as directed by the Russian-Governor-General at Sofia. To this indictment Prince Gorchakov replied a few days afterwards<sup>(1)</sup> that Russia would strictly adhere to the Berlin Treaty, but no practical result seems to have followed the British representations. Prince Dondukov-Korsakov the Governor of Bulgaria, continued to encourage the Bulgarians in the hope that the division of their country, as prescribed at Berlin, would not be carried out.

Accordingly, the Tsar sent Count Shuvalov on a diplomatic tour to the chief European capitals, to sound foreign opinion on that subject. On his return he reported that an unfavourable impression had been produced in Europe. For, the repeated declarations of the Tsar's intentions to strictly adhere to the Berlin Treaty were apparently contradicted by the attempts of some of his officials to make the most of existing difficulties and even to create new ones. No signatory Power, therefore, was at that time likely to tolerate, and still less consent to, any departure from the Treaty respecting the two Bulgarias. Britain and the Powers, further, stated they would hold Russia responsible for any complications arising from her equivocal conduct.

Meanwhile after many negotiations, peace was finally signed between Russia and the Porte on the basis of the Berlin

(1) Parl Reports. Turkey 1879. No.9. Pt.1.

Treaty on February 8th, 1879.<sup>(1)</sup> Prince Lobanov for Russia also promised an early evacuation of all Turkish territory exclusive of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, provided the Porte ceded to Montenegro the districts awarded her at Berlin.<sup>(2)</sup> The Russian withdrawal was duly carried out. At the beginning of May 1879, however, the question of the Russian evacuation of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia as required by the Berlin Treaty was discussed by Russia on the one hand, and Britain and Austria on the other.<sup>(3)</sup> This was interpreted by England and Austria to have been completed by May 3rd, while Russia held that withdrawal was only to be commenced on that date, but completed by August 3rd. But it was obviously too late to insist upon what was now an impossibility, and therefore it was agreed that no Russian soldier should remain in those territories by August 3rd at the latest. By the first day of that month, Eastern Rumelia was duly evacuated, and at the same time the British fleet left the Sea of Marmora.

While these things were going on, the Commissioners of the Powers had drawn up an "organic statute" for Eastern Rumelia on April 26th, which the Sultan confirmed the next

- (1) Hertslet IV. 542.
- (2) Hertslet IV. p.2861.
- (3) Hertslet IV. Berlin Treaty, Art.22, p.2778.

month.<sup>(1)</sup> Further, a constitution was on April 28th proclaimed for Bulgaria,<sup>(2)</sup> and next day Alexander of Batteberg was elected Prince of that country. He was related to the ruling families of both England and Russia, but had received his education and military training at Berlin. Alexander's occupation of the Bulgarian throne and his troubles with Russian influences were destined to form the subject of future negotiations between the London and St Petersburg Governments. Meanwhile by the end of November 1879, the Commission of the Powers, in which Russia and England worked side by side, had completed the delimitations of all the Balkan boundaries as directed at Berlin.<sup>(3)</sup>

The years between 1880 and 1899, as far as Europe and its Eastern Question are concerned, formed on the whole a period of comparative calm between the British and Russian Governments. The latter regarded <sup>any</sup> crusade<sub>^</sub> to free oppressed people as a delusion and a snare,<sup>(4)</sup> for little reward had resulted from recent exploits in the Balkans. The Austro-German rapprochement of 1879 did much to dam up Russia's European aspirations. Further, the internal troubles which followed the war of 1877-8 caused her to sullenly keep at a respectful distance from Balkan affairs, alone excepting the

(1) Hertslet IV. No.546.

(2) Hertslet IV. No.547.

(3) Hertslet IV. Nos.536-9, 543, 545-56, 558, 577. Also Parl. Reports. Turkey 1879. No.9. Pts.I and II.

(4) Bismarck. Reflections and Reminiscences. Vol.II, p.292.

case of Bulgaria. Hence the attention of Russian politicians was directed towards internal re-organisation, and Central Asia where they sought to regain Russian military prestige.

Bismarck, too, encouraged Muscovite expansion in those fields, which for some years now formed the chief storm-centre between England and Russia.

With the accession of Mr. Gladstone to the leadership of the British Government in April 1880, came a reversal to some extent of British policy in the Near East. Gladstone thought this should have been to befriend the Balkan Christians, and expel the Turks "bag and baggage" from Europe. Forestalling Russia in this way, Britain might have become the recognised protectress of the Balkan peoples and have kept that Power from working southwards towards Constantinople. Beaconsfield's policy from 1875 to 1878, thought Mr Gladstone, had had the effect of encouraging the Porte. It had also caused Britain to appear an accomplice of the Sultan in the eyes of the Balkan races, who were thus forced to regard Russia as their champion. In this sense, England had indirectly aided the aggrandisement of Russia.(1)

These principles were immediately put into practice by the new Premier, and Anglo-Russian relations were thereby ameliorated for a time. On June 11th, mainly through Mr

(1) See Gladstone's speech of Nov. 27th, 1879. *Speeches on English Foreign Policy*, pp. 371-389.

Gladstone and Mr Goschen, an identic note was<sup>s</sup>ent to the Porte in the name of the signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty.<sup>(1)</sup> This complained of the non-executio<sup>n</sup> by Turkey of reforms in Armenia, and affairs concerning the Montenegrin and Greek frontiers. For it had been decided since the Berlin Treaty, that Greek claims to certain districts in Thessaly and Epirus should be granted at Turkey's expense. An evasive reply came from the Sultan on June 24th, but on July 15th the Powers recommended the adoption of new frontier lines for Greece and Montenegro. On Gladstone's initiative, a Conference met the same month and also later in March 1881 at Berlin, whereby the Porte had to surrender the disputed districts, with the full approval of Russia.<sup>(2)</sup> The Sultan too, countenanced the attempt of the Albanian League to prevent Montenegro from taking possession of the part of Dulcigno and the districts assigned her at Berlin. To enforce this, the Powers held a naval demonstration before Dulcigno against the Albanians. But as they were not anxious to bombard the town, the display proved a farce and the Porte held out. Gladstone soon turned the tables however, by suggest<sup>e</sup>ing a joint seizure of Smyrna by the Powers. This had the desired effect on the Porte, who

(1) Hertslet IV. No.566.

(2) Hertslet IV. Nos.567-71, 582-4, 586-90.

immediately gave instructions for the surrender of Dulcigno to Montenegro.<sup>(1)</sup> These two episodes resulted in the gratitude of Greece and Montenegro towards England, and went far to restore British prestige in the Balkans, which had hitherto been lost to Russia. In addition to the above, full agreement was reached on August 11th, 1880, between Britain and Russia regarding the Russo-Turkish frontier in Asia Minor.<sup>(2)</sup> For, a mixed Commission of British, Russian and Turkish officers had been working since May of that year to fix the boundary as required by the Treaty of Berlin.

During the next few years, Russia's dealings with her protégé Bulgaria, once more roused British apprehensions. At first, England feared lest Russia should seek to make Bulgaria little more than a Muscovite outpost in the Balkans. For, up till 1885, the most important posts in the administration of the Principality were occupied by Russian agents, while the native Bulgarians were passed over. Alexander of Bulgaria was naturally Russophil for the first two years of his reign. But finding himself unable to work with his Parliament, he suddenly threatened resignation early in 1881, unless absolute authority were given him for seven years. He further suspended the constitution of Bulgaria and set the Russian

(1) Hertslet IV. Nos. 563-4, 578-80. Also Morey's Life of Gladstone, vol. III, pp. 7-9.

(2) Hertslet IV. Nos. 565, 572-4.



General Ernroth at the head of a provisional administration.<sup>(1)</sup>  
On May 11th, 1881, the Russian ambassador at London, Prince Lobnov sought to allay English apprehensions by informing Lord Granville that Russia had not advised Prince Alexander to take that step. Granville replied, however, that the British Government could not be indifferent to such happenings.<sup>(2)</sup> Four days later, Sir Frank Lascelles the British representative at Sofia reported that the Russian Government had supported Alexander despite Lobanov's assurances.<sup>(3)</sup> Meanwhile Russian officers continued to be appointed as military commissioners throughout Bulgaria. But Lascelles informed General Ernroth at Sofia on May 30th that this "would produce an unfavourable effect upon public opinion in England."<sup>(4)</sup> The Liberal Opposition of the Bulgarian Sobranje were nevertheless opposed strongly to the influx of Russian influence. They complained to the British, Russian and Italian Governments against the "illegalities committed in Bulgaria against the Berlin Treaty." But on June 14th Lobanov again denied Russian complicity in Bulgarian affairs, and further told Granville that "any support given by Her Majesty's Government to the Bulgarian Opposition would tend to create the crisis of anarchy. In reply,

(1) Hertslet IV. p.2869.

(2) Parl. Reports Bulgaria No.1.(1881) No.3.

(3) Ibid. No.4.

(4) Ibid. No 29.

Granville said that "anything of a nature of a coup d'état directed against existing constitutions" was unpalatable to England. Nevertheless, considering the difficulties of the inexperienced Bulgarian Ministers, he did not object to Alexander's action, as that ruler had promised Lascelles early in May, that he would follow a strictly legal course.<sup>(1)</sup>

Later on June 27th, Lobanov approached Granville proposing the joint presentation of a note by the Powers to Bulgaria "to produce, in a conciliatory spirit, a salutary and pacifying effect." This was to record their intention "to fully respect the independence of the Prince and people of Bulgaria regarding internal affairs within the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty."<sup>(2)</sup> In reply, the English Foreign Secretary complained of its vagueness of purpose, but after similarly rejecting an amended note, finally accepted it on July 8th as M. de Giers the Russian Foreign Minister begged him to maintain the European Concert.<sup>(3)</sup> Three days later de Giers expressed his satisfaction with Granville's decision, as he understood that "any question affecting constitutionalism was a most delicate one to touch upon with England."<sup>(4)</sup> Lobanov however, withdrew his note on July 18th, owing to the recent

(1) Parl. Reports. Bulgaria No. 1. (1881) Nos. 4 to 37.

(2) Ibid. No. 67.

(3) Ibid. Nos. 74, 76, 84, 86, 88.

(4) Ibid. No. 94,

elections in Bulgaria still favouring Prince Alexander.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus matters remained for some time, while Muscovite officers and munitions continued to pour into Bulgaria. In vain the Liberal Opposition had wired to the Tsar - "A knife is placed at our throats; we request the Russian officers be withdrawn... and pray your Majesty<sup>(2)</sup> to continue the benefits which your august father bestowed upon us after five centuries of slavery." The completeness of the Russian control over Bulgarians is shown by a letter in the "Moscow Gazette" of December 1882. This was written by a Russian staff officer at Sofia, who said that the Bulgarian army would soon become the vanguard of the Russian army.<sup>(3)</sup>

By degrees, however, Prince Alexander began to resent this haughty Russian tutelage, which was rendered all the more overbearing by the personal hatred of Tsar Alexander III. He leaned more and more towards the Bulgarian Liberals and restored the constitution in 1883.<sup>(4)</sup> The gulf between Russia and Bulgaria deepened, and with the vigorous aid of Stambolov a Pan-Bulgarian movement was begun which awoke the old national instincts and memories of Tsar's Simeon and Samuel. Aspirations for political union with Eastern Rumania were fostered, and

(1) Ibid. No. 107.

(2) Alexander III.

(3) Ann. Reg. 1882. p. 260.

(4) Hertslet IV. p. 2869.

"Bulgaria for the Bulgarians" was the watchword. It was not desired that Bulgaria should merely become a Muscovite satrapy and after 1883, Prince Alexander began to dismiss his Russian ministers. A decisive divorce from St. Petersburg, however, was not just yet destined to happen.

Meanwhile an incident occurred between the British and Russian Governments in November 1884, which still revealed the existence of mutual distrust between them. By the Treaty of London 1871, Russian warships were forbidden egress from the Black Sea through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Nevertheless, with the Sultan's permission, Russia had been in the habit of sending ships laden with criminals and army recruits through the Straits for Siberia. She now requested the Porte for a standing authority for the passage of such ships at stated intervals. The British Ambassador at Constantinople objected to this, alleging that these so-called criminals and recruits were very often effective troops. In this way, he argued, Russian soldiers would be able to reach India through the Suez Canal in the event of war, more quickly than English troops. Russia made objections, but finally a compromise was reached. The proposed authority was granted by the Sultan on the condition that no more than 1,500 men should be sent through the Straits each year.<sup>(1)</sup> Considering Russia had as yet no efficient

(1) Ann. Reg. 1884. pp.309-10.

means of transportation across Asia, the English objections seem to be somewhat petty.

By the autumn of 1885, affairs in Bulgaria had come to a climax, and on September 18th the Russophil Governor of Eastern Rumelia, Gavril Pasha, was expelled from that province. By the bloodless revolution of Philippopolis, the union of the two Bulgarias was declared, and Prince Alexander accepted the crown of the new Big Bulgaria. The hostility of the Tsar, now knew no bounds, for the union frustrated his hopes of possibly becoming Grand Duke of Greater Bulgaria. How greatly Russian attitude towards Bulgaria had changed since 1878, can be judged by the fact that in 1880, the Russian Government would brook no extraneous Commission of Inquiry into Eastern Rumelian affairs.<sup>(1)</sup> But a corresponding reversal of policy took place at London while the marriage of Prince Henry of Battenburg to Princess Beatrice only added another personal interest favourable towards Bulgaria and its ruler. For Lord Salisbury now realised that Bulgaria was not merely a Russian advance-guard as had been feared in 1878, and warmly approved of the union.

While he dared not alone attack Bulgaria, owing to the difficulties of the situation,<sup>(2)</sup> the Tsar bade Nelidov, his

(1) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.9. (1880) Nos.45, 47, 87.

(2) The Holy Alliance was still binding, and Russia was not free to take single action in the Balkans.

representative at the Porte, urge the Sultan to do so and restore "legal order" in Eastern Rumelia. But considering this as merely a treacherous device of Russia, the Sultan listened to the good advice of Britain. For, Sir William White, the British plenipotentiary at the Porte, acting on Salisbury's instructions, pointed out that the accomplished union of Bulgaria would act as an effective bulwark against Russia. Further, as Alexander still acknowledged the Sultan's suzerainty, Turkish interests would be best served by refraining from taking action.<sup>(1)</sup> The Sultan wisely followed this counsel.

Although the Powers formally disapproved of the revolution and fully admitted the right of the Porte to send troops to Eastern Rumelia,<sup>(2)</sup> none except Russia displayed open hostility. Tsar Alexander III withdrew his officers from Bulgaria, and struck the Battenburg's name from his own list of commission-holders. He further proposed a Conference of the Powers to meet at Constantinople. This was according to the "Journal de St. Petersburg," for the purpose of discovering "a solution ... more in conformity with the interests of Turkey and Bulgaria, and also more in harmony with the balance of power in the East and consequently with the general peace."<sup>(3)</sup>

- (1) Parl. Reports. Turkey. (1886) No.1. p.424.
- (2) See Berlin Treaty. Art.16.
- (3) Ann. Reg. 1885. p.

After expressing a very mild disapproval of the violation of the Berlin Treaty at a preliminary meeting, the formal conference met on November 5th, 1885. In the teeth of all Europe, Sir William White, representing Britain, warmly championed the Bulgarians cause. Russia especially favoured a restoration of the status quo in Eastern Rumelia by the Sultan's troops, but Britain supported by France, proposed an alternative. This was to institute an inquiry in Eastern Rumelia, with a view to the adoption of a plan whereby a return to the status quo might be reconciled with the wishes of the Bulgarians. But the Russian representative emphatically declared that his Government would never subscribe to such an arrangement. Sir William White, however, persistently opposed the suggested return to the old state of affairs in Eastern Rumelia, and the conference came temporarily to an end.(1)

But any resultant action therefrom, was forestalled by Serbia's sudden attack on Bulgaria,(2) which, if not actually instigated by Russia, at least had her approbation. After a few minor reverses, the field of Slévnitzza assured the moral, if not material, success of Bulgaria. But Austria intervened, and an armistice followed by peace was signed on March 3rd, 1886,

(1) Hertslet IV. No.608. Also Parl. Reports Turkey (1888) Nos. 1 and 2. also No.1 (1886).

(2) Hertslet IV. Nos.606-7.

on a basis of the status quo ante bellum.<sup>(1)</sup> But previously on February 1st, a Turco-Bulgarian Convention was signed forming a defensive and offensive alliance between the two countries, and recognising Prince Alexander as Governor of Eastern Rumelia for five years.<sup>(2)</sup> This did not satisfy the Powers, but although Salisbury resigned and Gladstone resumed office, British policy in Eastern Europe did not change. Russia chiefly objected to the stipulation promising mutual military aid and also to the naming of Prince Alexander in the Turco-Bulgarian Convention. This was cancelled on England's advice, in deference to Russian views, and the Conference of the previous November was resumed. Finally on April 5th, 1886, a compromise was reached and signed. "The Prince of Bulgaria," and not "Prince Alexander" was recognised as Governor of Eastern Rumelia for five years. Britain also reserved the right to renominate Alexander at the end of that time. A Commission was also appointed under the sanction of the Powers, to revise the "organic statute" of Eastern Rumelia.<sup>(3)</sup>

Despite this arrangement, the Tsar soon showed he had not forgotten the Battenburgs' audacity in achieving for himself in Bulgaria, what Tsar Alexander II had failed to

(1) Hertslet IV. Nos. 609-10.

(2) Parl. Reports. (1886) No. 2.

(3) Hertslet IV. Nos. 611 and 613.



accomplish at San Stefano. Although he joined Britain and the Powers in coercing Greece in May to fulfil her obligations,<sup>(1)</sup> he was obviously annoyed at the opposition of England in recent Bulgarian matters. Further, being by nature unable to conceal his feelings, Alexander III caused great consternation at London in his proclamation of May 19th at Sevastopol to the Black Sea fleet. He stated he had endeavoured to "promote the pacific development of the welfare of the Russian people," but circumstances might compel him "to defend by arms the dignity of the Empire." The mayor of Moscow later said on the Tsar's return to that city that he had "restored life to the Black Sea" which strengthened the Muscovites' hope that "the cross of Christ will soon shine upon St. Sofia."<sup>(2)</sup>

These warlike manifestations were followed by the Russian repudiation, on July 3rd, of the article of the Berlin Treaty constituting Batum a free port.<sup>(3)</sup> The Tsar further issued an ukaz two days later, announcing that port to be henceforth closed.<sup>(4)</sup> A letter of Lord Dufferin dated December 17th, 1879 proved that Russia had been meditating this alteration for some time. For, relating an interview with Bismarck about that time, Dufferin stated that the Russians had

(1) Hertslet IV. No.612. Also Parl. Reports. Greece (1886) Nos. 1 and 4.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1886. p.366.

(3) Hertslet IV. No.615.

(4) Lyall's "Life of Lord Dufferin." p.277.

already asked the Iron Chancellor if he would allow them the annex Batum. "He answered them that he did not care twopence about Batum. Indeed it was evident that he would have been glad had they entered Constantinople and celebrated Mass in St. Sofia - provided, of course, they had marched out again."<sup>(1)</sup>

Russia's action was strikingly similar to her former repudiation of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris in 1871. But it was fortunate for the St. Petersburg Government that Mr. Gladstone was Premier at this time. For, in a speech given as far back as November 27th, 1879, that statesman had indicated Russia's right to fortify Batum if she so wished. On that occasion, he used the following words. "The Treaty of Berlin... states that Batum shall be essentially a commercial port, but not that it shall be only a commercial port... Leith is essentially a commercial port, but there is nothing to prevent the people of this country, if they should think fit, from constituting Leith as a great naval arsenal or fortifications. And there is nothing to prevent the Emperor of Russia while leaving to Batum a character... essentially commercial from joining with that, another character that is not in the slightest degree excluded by the Treaty, and making it as much as he pleases, a port of military defence."<sup>(2)</sup>

{1} Lyall's "Life of Lord Dufferin," p.277.  
{2} Speeches on British Foreign Policy. p.377.

The Russian excuse, however, was that owing to the conditions stipulated by the Berlin Treaty concerning Batum, local commerce was "condemned to compulsory stagnation instead of undergoing progressive expansion."<sup>(1)</sup> and travellers were unduly inconvenienced. But Lord Rosebery told the Russian ambassador at London the matter was "most grave" as it concerned all the signatory Powers to the Berlin Treaty. He reminded Russia of the words of Gorchakov at the Congress on 6th July, 1878, "My august master.... will declare Batum a free port. This meets the material interests of all commercial nations, and more particularly, perhaps, those of Great Britain, whose commerce employs the largest number of vessels."<sup>(2)</sup> Rosebery, finally intimated his disapproval of the Russian disregard for the London Protocol of January 17th, 1871, which discountenanced the self-liberation of any Power from the engagements of a treaty without the consent of the other contracting Powers.<sup>(3)</sup>

On July 13th, Lord Rosebery more fully enunciated his complaints in a despatch to St. Petersburg. "Her Majesty's Government cannot recognise any amount of commercial inconvenience as furnishing a justification for a peremptory declaration of the Russian Government, on its whole sole authority, that this

(1) Hertslet IV. p.3176.

(2) Hertslet IV pp.2750 and 3173.

(3) Hertslet III. No.433.

portion of the (Berlin) Treaty is... no longer valid." He denied that Britain did the greatest trade at Batum, but intimated that England's "one direct, supreme and perpetual interest" was "that of the binding force and sanctity of international engagements... at all times and in all seasons." (1) In reply on July 22nd 1886, M. de Giers expressed his "painful surprise" at the "accusation made against a Great Power of violating the faith of treaties." This he said "with all the strength of his convictions." Besides "the spontaneous declaration of the intention of the Emperor to make Batum a free port, did not constitute an obligation; and consequently, the modification of that intention, which circumstances require, could not be considered as a departure from engagements which did not exist." This despatch concluded with a hint that the Berlin Treaty had already been violated in the case of Bulgaria, by the moral aid of England, despite Russia's efforts to observe its execution. The Imperial Government, were, nevertheless, "anxious to contribute to the consolidation of the general peace." (2) Lord Rosebery could hardly protest very much against what his chief Mr. Gladstone, had declared in 1879 to be perfectly valid. Besides, the interest of Europe was not sufficiently roused by the question, and Britain had no option

(1) Hertslet IV. No.616. Also Parl.Reports Russia No.1. (1886) No.2.

(2) Hertslet IV. No.617. Also Parl. Reports Russia No.1 (1886) No.3.

but to acquiesce in the Russian occupation of Batum.

Meanwhile on June 24th, a further instance was afforded of the Tsar's suspicions of British moral support for Prince Alexander of Bulgaria. For M. Onu the Russian ambassador at the Porte declared at the Turkish Foreign Office that his Government possessed proofs that England and Turkey had intrigued with Prince Alexander against Russia. M. Onu expressed the dissatisfaction thereby shown to Russia and requested Turkey to ensure that the arrangements as established by international treaty in her vassal state, should be respected. Part payment of the indemnity of the 1877-8 war, then due, was immediately demanded. M. Onu further intimated that Russia would hold the Porte responsible for any further disturbances on the part of the Prince or Sobranje of Bulgaria(1) These charges were not denied, but being taken as veiled threats, Turkey in alarm hastened to conciliate the Russian Government. This led to the Russo-Turkish rapprochement, which later caused so much uneasiness to Britain.

Startling events now happened in Bulgaria. For on August 21st, 1886, Prince Alexander was kidnapped by some Russian officers, forced at the muzzle of the pistol to sign his abdication, and hurried into Austrian territory. He was

(1) Ann. Reg. 1886, p.367-8.

released at Lemberg, whence he returned to Bulgaria, thoroughly shattered and brow-beaten by the treatment he received.

Although it has never been proved that the Tsar actually ordered the Prince's seizure, he obviously did not discountenance it, for the Russian conspirators were left unpunished. British apprehensions were much roused, but she was too hampered with Irish and colonial troubles to take action against Russia. Finally the resignation of the Austrophil Lord Randolph Churchill from the Salisbury Government, ended all hopes of Britain seconding any Austrian support on behalf of Bulgaria. Thoroughly unstrung, and receiving no foreign aid, Prince Alexander left Bulgaria for ever on September 7th, 1886.

Nevertheless, Lord Salisbury's speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on November 9th, revealed England's irritation towards Russia in this matter. Although Russia was not even named, he utterly condemned Muscovite complicity in Alexander's betrayal by officers "debauched by foreign gold." This had been followed by "encroachment after encroachment upon the rights of a free and independent people... fortunately hitherto limited within the bounds of diplomatic menace." Salisbury further stated that Britain had an interest in the East and would perform her part, if "the Powers of Europe or any considerable portion of them," performed theirs. "If England were directly assailed in her interest or honour, she would act at once and alone, but the duty of defending Bulgaria fell to

her only as one Power in Europe." Finally, the Prime Minister hoped that peace would be maintained and that the infant liberties of Bulgaria would not be destroyed.<sup>(1)</sup> In the continental press, Russian writers abstained from comment, but the French journalists craftily observed that Russia's conduct in Bulgaria was justified by that of England in Egypt.

Despite these unfriendly utterances, Anglo-Russian dealings in Bulgaria became more tolerable on the whole. For much of the Russian hostility was due to Alexander III's personal <sup>enmity</sup> ~~hostility~~ towards the Battenburger, and on his removal the Tsar's anger greatly subsided. After attempting to regain her lost influence in a way equally clumsy as unsuccessful according to the "Nord" of February 20th, 1887, Russia intended to "let things take their own course in the Balkans. Henceforth Russia will watch the events on the Rhine, and relegates the Eastern Question to the second place."<sup>(2)</sup> This probably referred to Russia's desire to be free to watch Germany, who, it was thought, contemplated an attack on France, the Tsar's new friend. With the sole protestation of Tsar Alexander III, Prince Ferdinand of Saxe Coburg Gotha was elected to the Bulgarian throne on August 12th.<sup>(3)</sup> But Russia displayed no

(1) Ann. Reg. 1886, p.295-6.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1887, p.262.

(3) Hertslet IV. No.622, and p.3278. Also Parl. Reports Turkey (1888) No.1.

hostility calling for British remonstrations, although she refused to recognise Ferdinand until the so-called conversion of his son Prince Boris to the Greek Church in 1896. At first, Lord Salisbury adopted an attitude of reserve, but soon acquiesced in the rule of the Coburgers. For Ferdinand was a relative of Queen Victoria.

Thus Russia succeeded in uniting the liberated Balkan nations against their liberator <sup>through</sup> ~~her~~ mistaken policy since 1878. This remarkable negative result of Russian policy was accompanied nevertheless by a correspondingly happy result through British policy. For England regained the prestige in the Balkan Peninsula which she had lost since 1878. This was mainly due to the skilful and sympathetic diplomacy of Lord Salisbury and Sir William White.

From 1889 till the opening of the Twentieth Century, events in Armenia formed the main subject of negotiations between England and Russia, as far as the Near Eastern Question is concerned. Of all the Christian races of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians held a position different from the rest. For, while Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs could look to Sofia, Athens and Belgrade for support the Armenians had no state of their own to which they could look for protection. Possessing marked proclivities for commerce, and a nature generally pacific, the Armenians suffered periodic persecution and pillage, at the



hands of the untutored Moslem Kurds. Massacre often resulted, accompanied by every barbarity conceivable to the savage mind. But the Sultan naturally sided with his co-religionists, and often gave his tacit approval to their deeds. The Berlin Congress had considered the Armenian Question, but had been content with merely obtaining vague promises of security and reform from the Porte.<sup>(1)</sup> Unfortunately enough the enforcement of these conditions had not been backed by the force of the Powers. Nevertheless, each signatory Power to the Berlin settlement, ipso facto, shared in the responsibility for good government in Armenia. Undoubtedly Britain had in addition, taken upon herself a special although not exclusive, share in that responsibility by the terms of the Cyprus Convention.

News of fresh Kurdish outrages in Armenia first reached Europe about the middle of 1889, but the question as yet attracted little attention. Indeed, Lord Salisbury, although expressing Britain's interest in the conditions of Armenia, stated at that time, that the engagement with the Porte with respect to its Christian subjects, did not lay any special obligations on England.<sup>(2)</sup> A Commission of Inquiry was nevertheless sent to Armenia but nothing resulted beyond the prosecution and subsequent acquittal of Mussa Bey, a notorious

(1) Berlin Treaty Art. 61.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1889. pp.146-7.

chief of the Kurds. As the Turkish ambassador denied the outrages, little notice was taken in England of the matter. The Tsar's Government similarly discountenanced the reports, and professed to see an "Armenian peril" before them. For the Caucasian provinces of Russia were largely inhabited by Armenians, who still dreamed of the restoration of this ancient empire. But Europe was to be roused later on.

Meanwhile in September 1891 Europe was startled by the reports that the British fleet had occupied Sigri, an islet off the coast of Mitylene, commanding the mouth of the Dardanelles. This was considered a British retort to a recent Russian success in obtaining a right from the Porte for the passage of the "Russian voluntary fleet," through the Straits. This was explained, however, to be only the "routine practice with torpedoes" which the fleet was accustomed to perform in its annual cruise to the Archipelago. Although the scare was finally dispelled it nevertheless conveyed a hint of how Britain might be prepared to act if her eastern interests were seriously endangered.

In 1892 Russia repeated the attempt to obtain further concessions regarding the passage of her ships through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. For, in autumn Brialmont the famous Belgian engineer began to strengthen the Turkish fortifications of the Straits. Russia was naturally anxious,

and took advantage of existing negotiations for a commercial treaty with the Porte. She proposed the free passage of all ships flying the Tsar's commercial flag, proceeding from one Russian port to another. Objections were made by the Porte to this, which she considered contrary to the international treaties regulating the navigation of the Straits. Britain supported the Sultan's action, and demanded equal rights for English ships, if these proposals were conceded to Russia. Accordingly the matter dropped.<sup>(1)</sup>

But, further, in October 1893 a Russian squadron visited French waters at Toulon, thus sealing the new Franco-Russian alliance. It seemed as if the Tsar intended keeping his ships in the Mediterranean for some time. Evil designs for taking possession of a Montenegrin port to form a Russian naval base were suspected by England. For in 1889, the Tsar had publicly toasted to his "only sincere and faithful friend Montenegro." A British fleet therefore was despatched to visit Italian ports, in case of emergency. However the situation was cleared up, by the departure of the Russian vessels from the Mediterranean.

In 1894 disquieting reports were again received of further excesses in the Sassun district of Armenia. The

(1) Ann. Reg. 1891.p.174.  
Ann. Reg. 1892. p.270.

Christians had pleaded inability to pay their taxes, owing to impoverishment resulting from Kurdish depredations. To enforce payment Turkish irregular cavalry had been despatched, but were repulsed by the Christian mountaineers. A powerful contingent was thereupon sent by the Sultan to punish the "Armenian brigands" as his Government termed them. The "rebellion" was put down with a savagery characteristically Turkish. But the Sultan, as he was wont, issued a report giving quite a different colour to the whole story from those of the consuls of the Powers.<sup>1</sup> On learning the true and lamentable state of Armenia, the British public boiled with indignation, and a powerful section favoured the granting of Armenian autonomy.

But in pretending to defend the Armenian Christians by the Cyprus Convention, and superseding Russia's stipulations at San Stefano, England had obviously undertaken an obligation she could not discharge. For the provinces of Armenia were far too inaccessible for any effective means of protection by Britain, as a large and well-equipped army would have been necessitated. But Russia on the contrary was geographically in a favourable position to do with comparative ease, what England was not able to fulfil. For while the scenes of outrage were not within easy striking distance of British armies and fleets, Russia had large forces which she could immediately send

(1) For full and later reports see Parl. Reports, (1895-8)

through the Caucasian door of Armenia. She had regained her naval and military strength on the Euxine, and redoubled her facilities of railway communication. The stronghold of Kars and the newly fortified port of Batum were in Russia's possession and her physical superiority over Turkey was more overwhelming than ever. Russia stood in an unique position in this respect of all the European Powers, who were nearly all pre-occupied in other fields at that time. Again, the Northern Power almost alone possessed the hereditary instincts to coerce the Porte. For it had been said in effect at the time of the Crimean War, that every Armenian was a protege and agent of Russia.

The best policy for England, therefore, appeared to call for very effort to secure the friendly co-operation and intervention of Russia. But by the Cyprus Convention, Britain had made Russia fear lest any Muscovite invasion of Turkish Armenia should be considered an act demanding English intervention on behalf of the Sultan. Further, it was doubtful whether England considered herself absolved from her obligation or not, through Turkey's non-fulfilment of her promises. Besides Russia felt that the peace of her Caucasian provinces might be endangered if the Armenians were liberated.

Nevertheless, despite the uselessness of the Cyprus Convention, Britain made an effort to rally the Powers in the discharge of their common obligations. For on December 8th, 1894, a circular was sent to all the English Plenipotentiaries

at foreign courts, inviting the Powers to join in an inquiry into Armenian affairs.<sup>(1)</sup> Six days afterwards, Prince Lobanov replied coldly that Russia "did not wish to see an independent province of Armenia. Neither did she desire to create a second Bulgaria, nor re-open the whole Eastern question."<sup>(2)</sup> Russia's attitude was further explained on December 18th. For Count Kapnist said there was a movement "by no means confined to the Armenians living in Turkey for the purpose of establishing an independent Armenia." Further, it was a "question which could not be indifferent to the Russian Government considering the large number of Armenians living in Russian territory." Finally the Russian Government had no "arrière pensée politique" on the subject, but were "averse to raising any political question."<sup>(3)</sup> But England, as yet failed to assure Russia that she had no intention of proposing changes so naturally objectionable to her, for otherwise she might have secured considerable Russian aid.

More inquiries were made by the British Government on December 27th,<sup>(4)</sup> and Lobanov's reply appeared more hopeful. He admitted that evidently "something must be done," and hinted that Russia might take action if only she were assured of

(1) Parl Reports Turkey No.1. (1895). Pt.I.No.73.  
(2) Ibid. No.91.  
(3) Ibid. No.119.  
(4) Ibid No 122

limited demands in Armenia. The Rosebery Government, however, appear to have let slip this opportunity of coming to a confidential arrangement with St. Petersburg. For although Lobanov's confidences were repeated in March 1895,<sup>(1)</sup> no further determined attempt was made till Salisbury returned to power in July. In view of England's persistent hostility to Russia during the past forty years, the continued silence of the British Government naturally went to confirm Muscovite suspicions. For, when Sir Frank Lascelles, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg called on Prince Lobanov on July 3rd, he was informed that a difference of opinion between Russia and England in the Armenian Question, had occurred. Lobanov recapitulated more clearly his Government's fears lest the London Cabinet contemplated changes in Armenia, to which he had already indicated his objections. Lascelles, however, having no further instructions could only reply that he had done his best to explain Russia's view to his Government.<sup>(2)</sup>

But Salisbury hastened to make up for lost time on his accession to the premiership. He told the Turkish ambassador in London on July 10th that he staunchly repudiated all designs for an autonomous Armenia as "absurd," and only desired security

(1) Parl. Reports. No.1. Turkey (1895) Pt.I.No.179.  
(2) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.1. (1896) No.110.

for the Christians. To this end, Salisbury proposed the appointment of a Governor for Armenia "in whom Europe could confide."<sup>(1)</sup> This suggestion was immediately communicated to Sir Frank Lascelles, who in return telegraphed the Russian view on July 25th.<sup>(2)</sup> This was to the effect that such exceptional political reforms for Armenia could not be entertained at St. Petersburg. The following day, the British Premier informed the Tsar's Government that England was only "anxious to obtain for the Armenian population, merely justice and security of life and property; and that the bestowal upon them of any exceptional privilege is neither pressed, nor is it desired by Her Majesty's Government."<sup>(3)</sup>

Europe was now in a condition entirely the reverse of that which existed before the Russo-Turkish war. All the Powers especially Russia, were then begging Britain to maintain their concert which she refused to do. But in 1895, Salisbury was trying hard to secure Russian co-operation. Further dreadful tidings reached Europe from the Ottoman provinces, and on August 5th, Salisbury, again wired Lascelles. He immediately inquired to what extent Russia would be prepared to "put pressure upon the Porte," as the British Government "did not consider that diplomatic means would be of much further avail." He further

(1) Parl. Reports. Turkey. No.1. (1896) No.112.

(2) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.1. (1896) No.120.

(3) Ibid. No.123.



was of the opinion that "the Powers cannot withdraw from the enterprise without loss of credit," and there existed "the possibility of being driven to more energetic measures." (1)

The Russian charge d'affaires in London assured Lord Salisbury in reply that Russia would certainly co-operate with England provided that "nothing in the shape of an autonomous state in Armenia should be attempted." (2) The London Government immediately assented, but all hopes of combined action were soon dashed to the ground. For Russia took fresh alarm as regards armed co-operation, since Lobanov informed Sir Frank Lascelles that "both the Emperor and himself were strongly against force being used by any or all of the Powers." Forceful methods were said to be "personally repugnant to the Emperor." (3) But the real reason of the Russian refusal was more probably because she feared revolutionary trouble in the East, which might be beyond control.

Meanwhile the Sultan quickly realising Russia's changed attitude, and the dissensions of the Powers, disregarded their mild remonstrances. Hideously false reports of Armenian "revolutionary movements" as being at the bottom of the whole trouble were prepared at the Porte for Russian consumption. Ever dreading revolts within their frontiers, the St. Petersburg

(1) Ibid. No.129.

(2) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.1. (1896) No.133.

(3) Ibid. No.139.

Government readily accepted these "explanations." Simultaneously Turkey threatened England with throwing herself into the arms of Russia, and meanwhile revelled in her unutterable atrocities, which even spread to Constantinople itself. "I see in my mind that wretched Sultan, whom God has given as a curse to mankind, waving his flag in triumph and the adversaries at his feet are Russia, France, and England," wrote Gladstone to Mme. Novikov.(1)

All this proved the futility of the Cyprus Convention, and much blame is to be placed upon the shoulders of Russia. A complete departure was made from her crusading traditions of 1878, in her refusal to uphold the European Concert. The fear of revolt in the Caucasus and the "personal repugnance" of the Tsar formed bad excuses for non-intervention when viewed in Lebanov's very words that "something must be done." But the supineness of the St. Petersburg Government paled greatly before the hideous slackness or failure of the German Government to check the Armenian massacres. For since 1878, their influence over Turkey had greatly increased, while that of England and Russia steadily declined. Further excesses ensued, but more determined pressure of the Powers immediately prompted the issue of an irade by the Sultan on October 17th. This formally

(1) Oct. 22nd, 1895.

approved of a scheme of reforms which the Powers had previously drawn up in May. In promising to carry out these faithfully, the Sultan informed the British ambassador at Constantinople, he considered "the question was now finally closed."<sup>(1)</sup>

His slowness to take more vigorous action in Armenian matters was explained by Lord Salisbury at the Guildhall on November 9th, 1895. For he feared showing partiality towards the Christians against the Moslems. "The Queen is mistress of more Muhammadans than the Sultan of Turkey and we should have been neglecting our duty if we had allowed ourselves to appear as the partisans of the one religion against the other."<sup>(2)</sup> The British Government was believed in Russia to have been actuated by motives of self interest in advocating intervention on behalf of the Armenians. Hostile vapourings had exuded from the official Russian "Messenger" of October 29th, but these were later denied by the Tsar's Government as being without their inspiration.

In 1896, Russia at first continued her policy of steadfast refusal to interfere in Armenia. But towards the end of the year she joined the Powers in demanding reform for the Christians. Nevertheless certain sections of the Russian newspaper world continued to attack England. "The St. Peters-

(1) Parl. Reports. Turkey No.1. (1896) No.203.  
(2) Ann. Reg. 1895, p.190.

burg Gazette" for example, wrote as follows:- "The troubles produced by Englishmen in the Armenian provinces... had the future object of the establishment of direct communication between India and the Mediterranean by land."<sup>(1)</sup> The friendly visit of the Tsar and Tsarina to Queen Victoria at Balmoral, however, proved that little misunderstanding existed between the two Governments. At the Lord Mayor's Banquet at the Guildhall on November 9th of this year Salisbury's speech indicated the same sentiment. "The discussions we have had with Russia are... the most concise of all (foreign relations) in which we have engaged. It is therefore, I think, a superstition of an antiquated diplomacy that there is any necessary antagonism between Russia and Britain."<sup>(2)</sup>

In the same month, however, hints were expressed in Russia whereby an Anglo-Russian rapprochement might be effected in granting the right of free egress for the Tsar's warships from the Black Sea. The following statement made its appearance. "The Russian Government still adheres resolutely to... the clause relating to the Black Sea. This clause, far from being disadvantageous, is a valuable guarantee to the Muscovite Empire. For, though it is an obstacle to the egress

(1) Ann. Reg. 1896, p.292.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1896, p.201.

of Russian men of war from the Euxine, it constitutes an equivalent obstacle to the entrance of foreign ships, and consequently an indirect safeguard for Russia's southern coast as well as for the weak Black Sea Fleet. On the other hand.... in time of peace, vessels with Russian soldiers or munitions of war are at perfect liberty to pass the Dardanelles, and Russian ironclads in time of war would.... have little difficulty in forcing a passage.... if required."<sup>(1)</sup> But the insincerity of this declaration is shown in the concluding passage. "The Russian Government no more desires the abrogation of the clause relating to the Black Sea, than the occurrence of such events as the deposition of the Sultan, or the fall and partition of the Ottoman Empire."<sup>(2)</sup> It is interesting, especially in view of recent similar attempts, to note the boast that the "weak Black Sea Fleet" would "have little difficulty in forcing a passage "through the Dardanelles. But nothing resulted from these hints.

Finally, regarding Armenia, it is sufficient to say that Russia joined Britain and the Powers in October 1890, in steps taken to redress grievances. For by an irade ~~of~~ the Sultan promised pardon and due compensation for Armenian officials

(1) and (2) Ann. Reg. 1896, p.293.

and the repairing of buildings damaged during the recent troubles. Pacific advances were also made by the Tsar, not only towards Britain, but to the whole world. Such, however, form a fitting epilogue to the story of Anglo-Russian relations, but meanwhile the attention of both Powers had been attracted by events in other parts of the world.

THE MIDDLE EASTERN QUESTION  
OF CENTRAL ASIA.

---

"The more powerful Russia becomes in Central Asia,  
the weaker does England become in India, and consequently  
the more amenable in Europe." - General A. Sobolev.

---

The reasons which guided British politicians in their persistent opposition to Russia in the Near Eastern Question may be summed up in the single word "India." Each successive move southwards of Muscovite expansion was regarded as an additional menace to England's Indian possessions or to her communications with them. On the other hand, each counter-measure taken by Britain in the Levant was calculated to safeguard them from possible Russian aggression. In taking Cyprus, for example, Lord Beaconsfield considered that movement not Mediterranean, but Indian.<sup>I</sup> But while attempts were made to "defend India in London", as that statesman said in effect, Russia became no less formidable in the lands to

<sup>I</sup> See above p.79  
(Before Berlin Congress).

the north of that Empire itself.

Until the last few years of the Nineteenth Century, Britain and Russia alone of all the European countries, could be described as world Powers. For it must be understood that before her position in Europe even had been definitely consolidated, Russia was a great Asiatic Power. Before 1463, the Russian princes were little more than tax-gatherers, who paid homage to the Mogul Khans of the Golden Horde. In that year Ivan III repudiated his vassalage to the Mogul chiefs, while his grandson Ivan the Terrible subdued Astrakhan and annexed parts of Siberia to the Russian dominions. Further conquest in Asiatic fields was rendered possible in the Sixteenth Century, when the Tsar freely pardoned the Cossacks in return for their assistance against the wild tribes across the Urals. Only through the services rendered by these hardy free-booters, was Russia able to make such difficult and extensive conquests in Asia. Completely carried away by wonderful tales of riches in the Khivan oasis the Cossacks were emboldened early in the Seventeenth Century to explore that region and seek booty. Their lust of conquest however, brought them to failure and subsequent expeditions ended equally disastrously.

During this time, England attempted to trade with the khanates of Central Asia through Russian territory, by



the agency of the English Muscovy Company. For owing to their ignorance of the true facts of geography, Englishmen then thought a good way to the Indian Empire of the Great Mogul lay overland through Russian dominions. It is thus strangely interesting to think, that Russia who was once looked upon to afford a means of communication with India, came later to be regarded by Britain when she had established her Empire there, as her envious and most dangerous opponent.

Further stories of Khivan wealth induced Peter the Great in the Eighteenth Century, to continue the policy of Asiatic expansion. But the failure of his expeditions taught him the necessity of consolidating efficient bases in the Trans-Caspian regions for further operations. The spurious "Will of Peter the Great" set forth a policy for the conquest of India. "Extend the power of Russia to the Indies..... Bear in mind that the commerce of India is the commerce of the world, and he who can exclusively command it is the dictator of Europe."<sup>I</sup> Although this document is undoubtedly a forgery, its principles strangely enough, appear later to have been followed by Russian commanders.

<sup>I</sup>Ann. Reg. 1877. p I.

A scheme for the invasion of India through the Central Asian khanates is said to have been considered in Catherine II's reign. No serious attempt was carried out however, excepting a few predatory raids against Tartar tribes in order to replenish the drained purses of Catherine's extravagant court. Thoroughly fascinated by Napoleon, Tsar Paul in 1801 actually projected a joint invasion of India with that conqueror. Paul's death ended the scheme but Alexander I after the Peace of Tilsit, revived these plans for an expedition through Persia. But the French had overreached themselves, and Sir Harford Jones the British agent persuaded the Persians that Russia was their true enemy. This scheme therefore was not carried into effect.

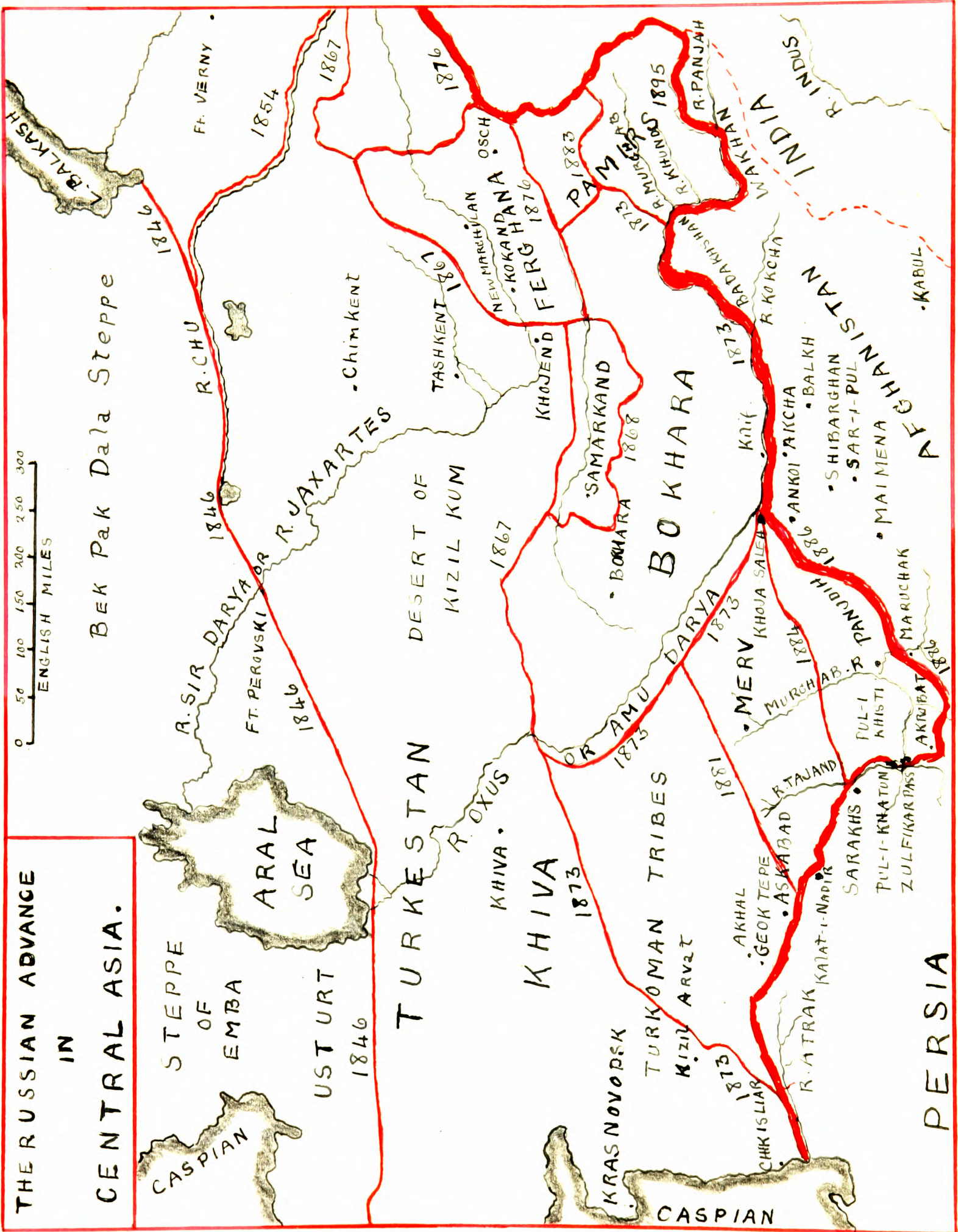
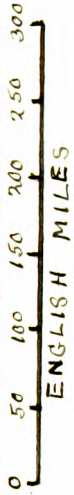
Such plans, however plausible and grandiose could scarcely have been expected to be brought to a successful issue, in view of the repeated failures to storm Khiva. But the humiliating defeat of Russia in the Crimean War brought no good to England with respect to India. For, thwarted in Europe, Russia sought to regain her military prestige across the Urals. Here she resumed her career of conquest, in applying a counter-irritant to Britain. Her eastward path was smoothed by the subjugation of the Caucasus<sup>1</sup> before 1859, while thirteen years previously Russia had secured control of the

1 Advance was also made in the steppes of Central Asia.

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE

IN

CENTRAL ASIA.





lower Jaxartes.<sup>1</sup> But the territory between Fort Perovskiy on that river, and Fort Verny on the extreme east was continually raided by the marauding ~~Turkoman~~ tribes of Tashkent and Kokand. It was naturally incumbent upon the Russians to peremptorily terminate the ferment on the frontier by attempting the subjugation of these districts.

In 1864 the stronghold of Chirchik was successfully stormed by the Russian arms, but the alarm of English Russophobes was excited. Hitherto, Britain had been busy with the Sepoy Mutiny and Governor General Lawrence had inculcated the doctrine that "Russia might prove a safer neighbour than the wild tribes of Central Asia." But in November of that year Gorchakov sought to allay British apprehensions and explain Russian policy in Asia, by issuing his famous circular. He declared that Russia could not endure the depredations of the <sup>tribes</sup> ~~Turkoman~~ on her frontiers any longer. Hence she was obliged unwillingly to pursue her conquest southwards till her boundaries became contiguous with those of a civilised Power," whose authority would guarantee order and tranquillity."<sup>2</sup> These were reasonable arguments to justify Muscovite expansion. For Russia could hardly be expected to fix a formal limit to her own line of

1. Sir Darya.

2. Parl. Reports. reprinted 12th May 1885.

advance into lands mainly desert or overrun by wild nomads.

"Neither in physics nor in politics is the theory of a vacuum admissible; and the vacant spaces on the world's map are gradually filled up by the gravitation towards each other of the solid political bodies. It was vain and even unreasonable to suppose that diplomatic protests would retard the subjugation by Russia of the wild Turkomans..... Between lawless barbarians and a regular government, no frontier is tenable or durable."<sup>I</sup> Besides these punitive expeditions were often accompanied by great risks and hardships. Retreat therefrom would only have been regarded as weakness, and probably have necessitated a re-entry. For the Asiatic races on the whole only respected visible force and the law of club and fang. Indeed Russia's position in Central Asia was similar to that of Britain in the Sudan some years later.

The thirst for renown of the Russian generals and the religious fanaticism of the <sup>tribesmen</sup> ~~Turkoman~~ however, still sought satisfaction despite the conciliatory circular of Prince Gorchakov. For following the fall of Chirchik, General Chernaiev took Tashkent, the capital of the Turkomans in 1865, contrary to the orders of Alexander II. The proclamation of a sacred war of vengeance by the Amir of Bokhara necessitated

<sup>I</sup>Lyall's Life of Lord Dufferin pp 381 and 389.

further conquest, resulting in the capture of Kojend in June 1866. A wedge was thus forced between Bokhara and Kokand. The Russophobe Sir Henry Rawlinson, in the following month indicated in his famous Memorandum to the British Government, the nature of this new menace to India. Next year General Kaufmann was appointed Governor-General of Turkestan. But failing to come to terms with the Amir of Bokhara, he marched on Samarkand,<sup>2</sup> which capitulated after an indiscriminate slaughter. By a treaty of peace, the Amir became the Tsar's vassal, although he remained still nominally independent. This was done despite the assurances of the Russian ambassador that the Tsar would not retain his conquest.

Great alarm now possessed many people in England lest the Russian tide of conquest should be carried into Afghanistan. For with Russia's southern march, that country assumed more and more the nature of a buffer state between British and Russian territory. British relations with Afghanistan therefore now became of vital importance, since the security of the Indian north-west frontier seemed at stake.

British statesmen formed two distinct schools of political opinion, whose frontier policies differed accordingly.

1. Parl. Reports No I Afghanistan (1878) No 12 p.31.

2. The old capital of Timur.

Those who viewed the Muscovite advance as a direct menace to British India, maintained that Britain should occupy the Afghan fortresses of Kabul and Kandahar. In this way, a Russian invasion could be checked by a comparatively small force holding the narrow mountain passes. The exponents of this "forward policy," while not advocating the entire conquest of Afghanistan, wished to enlist the Afghans as supporters of Britain. This was to be done by promising them the more popular form of tribal government instead of the overbearing rule of their Amir. On the whole, they believed in the possibility of a Russian invasion of India in view of the exploits of Alexander the Great, Timur and Nadir Shar. This view<sup>was</sup> strengthened with the development of the Russian railways of Asia.<sup>I</sup>

A much calmer view was taken by the other school, of the Russian advance. This was believed to be a political necessity to check ~~Turkoman~~ marauders without any desire for the possession of India. For the supporters of this policy held that the poverty, pestilence and famine to which that country is susceptible, had no attraction for Russia. For if, in her folly or otherwise, she attacked India they believed

I. See Bruce. "The "Forward Policy" and its results" and Colquhoun. "Russia against India," for the views of this school.

the triple barrier of mountain wall, parched desert and almost unfordable river would give sufficient protection. They advocated a policy of "masterly inactivity,"<sup>1</sup> by refraining from any advance into the Amir's country. For it was thought that such a movement would replace Afghan friendship by enmity, while the already onerous finance of India would be unnecessarily strained. At the same time, the interval between the advanced posts and an effective Indian base would be dangerously increased, while the distance Russia would have to traverse would be correspondingly decreased. Additional English garrisons would be necessitated,<sup>2</sup> and the decreased proportion of European to native troops in India itself would be more conducive to revolt. The followers of this school preferred an independent Afghanistan bound to Britain by ties of self interest and benevolent guarantees for aid in case of unprovoked attack. In this way they thought Afghanistan would serve as an outlying bulwark of India.<sup>3</sup>

1. This phrase was invented by Lord Lawrence the chief exponent of this policy.

2. Sikhs and Hindustanis would object to service in Afghanistan.

3. See Col. Hanna's books:-1. "Can Russia invade India?"  
2. "India's "Scientific Frontier," where is it, and what is it?"  
3. "Backwards or forwards?" for views of "masterly inactivity."



After some correspondence with the Tsar's Government, an understanding was reached on November 1st 1869, between the two Powers. It was agreed that the territory then actually held by the Amir Shere Ali, should constitute the limits of Afghanistan. The British Government promised to restrain that ruler from attempts of aggression beyond the limits of his dominions. Similarly the Russian Government promised to prevent the Amir of Bokhara from attacking Afghanistan. For the Tsar's Cabinet considered Afghanistan entirely beyond its sphere of action."<sup>1</sup>

But between 1869 and 1872 difficulties arose as to what constituted the northern limits of Afghanistan. For Russia stoutly contested Shere Ali's claims to the lands bordering the Upper Oxus.<sup>2</sup> England however championed the Amir's cause and negotiations continued between the two Governments. Finally General Kaufmann was instructed to investigate the disputed claims. The results of this research were to be forwarded to the London Foreign Office, but reliable information was lacking. For difficulties had been increased by the civil war which had transpired before the final establishment of Shere Ali's rival claimants to the throne.

1. Parl. Reports No 2. Russia (1874) No 2.

2. Or Amu Darya.

By October 17th 1872, Granville could wait no longer. "In consideration" both for the maintenance of peace and for the removing of all causes of misunderstanding", he requested a speedy settlement. "After carefully examining all the evidence before them," the British Government thought "the right of the Amir....to the territories up to the Oxus as far as Khoja Saleh .....were fully established." These regions included Wakhan, Badakshan, Afghan. Turkestan, and the districts around Akcha, Ankoï, Shibarghan, Sar-i-pul, and Maimana. Further, the English Cabinet considered the Amir "would have the right to defend these territories if attacked." On the other hand they declared "their determination to remonstrate strongly with the Amir should he....overstep these limits." Finally Granville requested "an explicit recognition of the rights of the Amir... which Bokhara herself admits to be his," and "an assurance that the territorial integrity of Afghanistan will be respected by those states....which are amenable to the influence of Russia."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Gorchakov received Kaufmann's report, and accordingly sent a reply based on its conclusions to Granville on December 19th. He considered the northern Afghan boundary extended from the confluence of the Oxus with the tributary Kokcha, to Khoja Saleh. But he thought the northeastern regions of Badakshan and Wakhan, independent and outside the limits of

1. Parl. Reports No I. Afghanistan (1878) No 20A, p 101, and inclosures for whole negotiations. (reprint).

Shere Ali's sovereignty. Kaufmann considered it unwise to incorporate these territories with Afghanistan, but advocated their formation into a barrier interposed between the northern and southern states of Central Asia." "This, strengthened by the combined action which Britain and Russia are able to bear upon... such states as are accessible to their influence, would effectually prevent any dangerous contact and ...secure...the peace of those countries." Doubts were cast by Kaufmann on the de facto possession of the Amir, of Akcha, Ankoï, Shibarghan, Sar-i-pul and Maimana. Nevertheless if the British Government insisted upon Shere Ali's claims, "the Imperial Cabinet would be disposed to accept the line laid down in Lord Granville's despatch."

In addition, Count Shuvalov "a statesman enjoying the confidence of the Emperor of Russia," was sent to England on January 8th 1873 to explain Russian policy in Central Asia. Regarding the Afghan boundaries, Shuvalov considered "the question ought not...to ruffle the good relations between the two countries." The Tsar complied with Britain's requests, excepting "the point regarding the provinces of Badakshan and Wakhan." However Alexander II was "determined that such... should not be a cause of difference between the two countries."-- But the Count, as will be seen later, had really come to London to discuss a more important matter from the Russian point of view.

Since Russia still contested the claims to Badakshan and Wakhan, Granville sent a further despatch to St Petersburg dated January 24th 1873. He more vigorously pressed Shere Ali's case, and promised his Government would "impress on the Amir in the strongest terms, the advantages given him" if Russia acquiesced in his claims, "and the consequent obligation to abstain from any aggression on his part." Lastly, the Russian Government was advised to "weigh these considerations dispassionately" and help in "putting an end to the wild speculations... that there is some marked disagreement between England and Russia."<sup>1</sup>

A most conciliatory reply came from Prince Gorchakov on January 31st. "Considering the difficulty experienced in establishing the facts" concerning Badakshan and Wakhan, "and the greater facilities the British Government possesses for collecting precise data... we accept the line of boundary laid by England." Russia moreover was "the more inclined" to give way, as England engaged "to use her influence with Shere Ali... to maintain a peaceful attitude, (and) insist on his giving up all measures of aggression." Gorchakov recognised this as "a real guarantee for the maintenance of peace," and repeatedly declared the Amir to be "under the protection of the Indian Government."<sup>2</sup> Little value was placed by Shere Ali however,

I&2. Parl. Reports. NoI. Afghanistan 1878. No 21 22 and p 101.  
Also Annual Register 1873. Appendix. State papers. p.221.

upon these great services rendered by British diplomacy on his behalf. For England had persistently withheld a guarantee for the continuance of his line on the Afghan throne.<sup>I</sup> For the Gladstone Government then in power evinced no desire of meddling with the internal complexities of Afghanistan. From this time forth, the Amir entertained overtures of Russian commanders, for the guarantee of his succession. Lord Northbrook had reproached the Amir for imprisoning his son Yakub Khan to whom he owed his throne. But the Russian general then on the Kabul frontier had congratulated him upon having under lock and key so dangerous a rival. "You are not a kind and grateful father" said the one. "You are a wise ruler" said the other. Comparing the two letters which had arrived in Kabul within a few hours of each other, Sher Ali found the Russian congratulation more to his taste than the English admonition. Nevertheless his agent tried to frighten Lord Northbrook the Indian Viceroy into concluding a treaty, by pointing towards a projected Russian attack on Khiva.

But the British Ministers were already aware of this intended movement, for which Shuvalov had been sent by the Tsar to prepare and reassure them. It was also in anticipation of a Khivan campaign that Gorchakov soon afterwards humoured the British Cabinet by conceding to their demands respecting the

I. Parl. Reports. Afghanistan No I. (1873) p.4.

northern Afghan frontier. On the occasion of his mission in January 1873, Shuvalov stated the full reasons for the intended expedition against Khiva. These were "to punish acts of brigandage, to recover fifty Russian prisoners, and to teach the Khan that such conduct on his part could not be continued with the impunity in which the moderation of Russia had led him to believe." It was further, "not only far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it, and directions given that the conditions imposed should ... not in any way lead to a prolonged occupancy." Shuvalov then expressed the Tsar's surprise at the uneasiness in England and hoped Granville would give "positive assurances" to Parliament on the matter. That minister informed the Count of Lord Northbrook's advice to the Khan of Khiva to comply with the Tsar's reasonable demands. Nevertheless, "if the expedition were undertaken... with the object and within the limits described,... it would meet with no remonstrance from Her Majesty's Government, but would undoubtedly excite public attention."<sup>1</sup>

For some time Russia had been preparing to settle old scores with Khiva, for in 1869 the port of Krasnovodsk on the Caspian had been occupied to serve as a base for subsequent

1. Parl. Reports Afghanistan No I. (1878) p.101.  
also Ann. Reg 1873. Appendix State Papers. p.221.

operations. In 1871 the Khivan oasis had been successfully penetrated by the intrepid Skobelev and three Cossacks disguised as merchants. General Markasov reached the same spot the following year, and obtained valuable information. Besides its very situation between Samarkand and Bokhara on the east, and the Trans-Caspian provinces on the west, rendered Khiva a coveted entrance for all commercial routes to Central Asia.

In the early spring of 1873 therefore, Russia entered upon her Khivan expedition with the equanimity afforded by Granville's assurances. Under General Kaufmann's directions five converging columns marched from Orenburg, Fort Perovsky, Tashkent, Krasnovodsk and another point on the Caspian. Disaster overtook the two last-named, but the others simultaneously met and carried Khiva by storm on June 10th. Peace was made with the Khan by a treaty whereby he declared himself "the obedient servant of the Emperor of all the Russians." All rights of making war or peace without Russian consent were renounced and Khiva became practically a Muscovite protectorate.<sup>I</sup>

As Lord Granville had warned Shuvalov, the Russian success caused some uneasiness in Britain, especially in view of the prolonged occupation of the Tsar's troops. Apprehensions lest the tide of conquest should pass through Merv into Afghanistan, were entertained by Sher Ali. But the Viceroy

assured him on June 27th with these words. "We have abstained from entering any treaty engagement to give support by British troops in the event of Afghanistan being attacked. Yet the complete independence of Afghanistan is so important to the interests of British India that the Government...could not look upon an attack... with indifference."<sup>1</sup> Although the St Petersburg "Messenger Officiel" of November 30th gave further reasons for the Russian stay at Khiva, Granville thought it expedient to again approach the Russian Government on January 7th 1874. He was "not disposed to share in the exaggerated apprehensions... as to the danger to India which may arise from the extension of Russian influence." But he thought it desirable to arrive at "a clear and frank understanding... as to the relative points of British and Russian interests in Asia." Granville then related the uneasiness of Shere Ali as rumours of a Russian expedition to Merv in the near future were then current. For the Amir feared lest his dominions would be open to the demands of Russian officers, if the Turkomans sought refuge in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

On January 19th, Prince Gorchakov informed Lord Loftus the British ambassador, that "the Imperial commander had

1. Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1878) p. 105.

2. Parl. Reports No 2. Russia (1874). No 2.



strictly abstained from remaining in occupation of Khiva, although requested to do so by the Khan for his own protection." Nevertheless he was "obliged to occupy such a position... to maintain peace and order."<sup>1</sup> With regard to Shere Ali's fears, Prince Gorchakov repeated, two days later, Russia's pledge that Afghanistan was "entirely beyond her sphere of action." The Tsar moreover, had "no intention of undertaking an expedition against the Turkomans" of Merv.<sup>2</sup> Additional assurances were afforded on January 28th,<sup>3</sup> while Kaufman himself promised Shere Ali that "no Russian officer would interfere with the affairs of Afghanistan."<sup>4</sup> How long this condition held good will be seen later.

But these statements by no means soothed the English Russophobes. For tidings came in May that a Russian expedition from Krasnovodsk had set out to explore the old bed of the Oxus in the regions of Khiva.<sup>5</sup> Its alleged object was to ascertain whether a waterway could be made joining the Caspian and Aral Seas, which would help to secure Merv in the future. Although the adventure proved a failure, reports reached the British

1. Parl.Reports No I. Central Asia (1878) Nos 1 & 3.
2. Parl.Reports No 2. Russia (1874) No 2.
3. Parl.Reports No I. Central Asia (1878) No 4.
4. Parl.Reports No I. Central Asia (1878) Nos 5&6.
5. Parl.Reports No I. Central Asia (1878) Nos 17,18,&23.

Foreign Office that General Lomakin had demanded the submission of the Atrak tribes on the Persian frontier. Lord Loftus the British chargé d'affaires at St Petersburg however, was informed of the inaccuracy of this news in November 1874.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of that year, General Kaufmann issued a warning to the Turkoman nomads against harrying the borderlands of Russian territory. This was regarded by the new anti-Russian Cabinet of Disraeli as only a new pretext for further Muscovite encroachments. Great alarm was raised by the supporters of the "forward policy" under the leadership of Sir Bartle Frere. At his instance the famous "Bartle Frere Note" advising precautionary measures in Afghanistan was presented to the Government on January 11th 1875.<sup>2</sup> It was proposed to send British military agents to Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. In addition the occupation of Quetta by British forces to overawe the chief communications between Central Asia and India was recommended. Fascinated by these proposals, the Government urged Lord Northbrook to make overtures to Sher Ali to these ends, on January 22nd. The Amir flatly refused, for owing to the non-guarantee of his line of succession, he had gradually leaned towards Russia.

1. Parl. Reports No I. Central Asia (1878) Nos 17, 18, & 23.

2. Parl. Reports No I. Afghanistan 1878 p. 107.

But the Russian Government had meanwhile been watching these proceedings, and on March 19th, Shuvalov called upon Lord Derby. The Russian ambassador sounded the Foreign Secretary as to whether England would advance through Afghanistan "in the direction of the Russian possessions." Lord Derby deprecated such a movement as bringing "only increased cost and trouble without advantage." It was only probable "in the event of any Russian movement tending to the occupation of Merv." England, he further asserted, only desired "the maintenance of the status quo, and certainly would not be the first to take aggressive steps." Finally, Lord Derby conclusively denied the rumoured exportation of British firearms to the Chinese provinces of Kashgar and Yarkand<sup>(1)</sup> for use against Russia, to the satisfaction of Count Shuvalov.<sup>(2)</sup>

Reports of more expeditions by Russian scientists to Kokand near the Afghan frontier again caused the British Foreign Minister to negotiate with St Petersburg. But Gorchakov hastened to reassure him by a despatch dated April 5th. "His Imperial Majesty has no intention of extending the frontiers of Russia either on the side of Bokhara or Kresnovodsk and the Atrak.... On the contrary the Emperor deems any extension.... in those parts to be opposed to our interests. But we shall

(1) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) Nos 12, 14, 16.  
 (2) Ibid No 26.

cause these frontiers to be respected.... and punish any acts of violence in such a manner as to prevent their re-occurrence.<sup>(1)</sup> But rather<sup>h</sup> suggestive hints were uttered by Baron Jomini in St Petersburg to a British official in June. Regarding the possibility of the English and Russian dominions becoming contiguous, he spoke to this effect. "If Russia lived at peace with her frontiers reaching to Austria and Germany, why should the fact of her territory touching....India be a reason for warfare?"<sup>(2)</sup> Again he expressed a month later these sentiments. "If England found it to her interest to annex Afghanistan,... the Russian Government would not regard it as a menace to them, nor would they endeavour to prevent it. Therefore they cannot comprehend why the future absorption of Bokhara and Kokand should raise such alarm in the minds of Englishmen."<sup>(3)</sup>

These statements were intended to prepare the British Government for a Russian punitive expedition to Kokand, of which the "Invalide Russe" of August 27th gave notice.<sup>(4)</sup> Baron Jomini confirmed its assertions early in September and a Russian force was despatched under Skobelev and Kaufmann. Successful results ensued, whereby all except the southern portion of Kokand was annexed to Russia. In October General Kaufmann made

(1)	Ibid	No 28.
(2&3)	Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1878)	Nos 33 & 34.
(4)	ditto	No 39.

the following proclamation to the inhabitants. "A war against the White Tsar, the dispenser of peace and prosperity of all his subjects is a sin, and God will always be against those who take up arms against the Russians." (1)

Meanwhile the concealed correspondence between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali which began three years previously became very amicable. "The friendship of Russia and Afghanistan will increase and become firm" wrote the Russian to the Amir in September 1875. (2) The alienation of Shere Ali from England for reasons previously stated, moreover helped Russia in her Central Asian policy, because that ruler no longer complained to the Indian Government. British opposition to Russia in European affairs further caused that Power to seek revenge elsewhere. To this end, and in order to impress the Amir of the invincibility of the Great White Tsar, an opportunity was found by Muscovite officers in Kokand.

For in January 1876, a significant despatch foreboding future operations was published. This stated that the Russians "apprehending another attack from the unannexed portion of Kokand are preparing to cross the Jaxartes.... The campaign will probably commence about the middle of January and .... is likely to result in the annexation of Southern Kokand after

(1) Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1878) No. 52.

(2) Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1878) no 53. inclosure 5. p.64.

which Russia and Afghanistan will be neighbours."<sup>(1)</sup> This campaign was brought to a successful issue by General Kaufmann, and achieved the ostensible object of reinstating the Khan of Bokhara after a "revolt." Immediately this was done however, a convenient deputation of natives arrived announcing they "preferred the rule of the Tsar." Accordingly all Kokand was annexed to the Russian Empire under its ancient name of Farghana on February 15th 1876.<sup>(2)</sup> Most significant is Kaufmann's self-laudatory report of the campaign in a letter to Shere Ali, which was found in 1881.<sup>(3)</sup>

Excepting those parts south of Khiva, all Central Asia north of Afghanistan up to the Chinese frontier was now under the power of the Russian Emperor. Russia held the pivoted position of Asia, and the necessity for a definite arrangement with Afghanistan became more evident to the British Government. On February 28th, Lord Lytton the new Viceroy offered the Amir an increased yearly subsidy of money and arms. and a recognition of a de facto but not de jure order of succession. Military aid was also promised against foreign invaders in a clear case of unprovoked attack." In return, "undisputed access" was demanded to certain strategic points in Afghanistan for English officers.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Ann. Reg. 1876. pp 239 - 40.

(2) Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1878) Nos 62, 64, 65.  
(3) Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1881) pp 13 - 14

inclosures.  
(4) Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1881) p 156.

This one-sided offer was scornfully rejected by Shere Ali. Meanwhile, Kaufmann's intimacy increased as the gulf between the Amir and the British Government widened. On October 12th, Lord Derby remonstrated with Shuvalov regarding Kaufmann's negotiations with Shere Ali and objected to the reported presence of the Russian agents at Kabul. Shuvalov was further reminded of Russia's previous assurances that Afghanistan was not within her political sphere. Such reports were repudiated strongly by Count Shuvalov<sup>(1)</sup> for it subsequently appeared that Kaufmann's overtures to Shere Ali were not officially known at St Petersburg. Later on November 17th however, when questioned by the British ambassador at St Petersburg, M. de Giers made the following semi-admission. There was "no question of General Kaufmann entering into political communication with the Amir of Afghanistan, nor... the remotest idea of any treaty engagements" in that general's letters. These were "simply a matter of courtesy.". Further reports of a similar nature were likewise denied.<sup>(2)</sup>

But in December, Shere Ali's chagrin and irritation were further increased. For on December 8th Lytton concluded the Treaty of Jacobabad with the Khan of Khelat in Balukistan.

(1) Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1873) Nos 71 - 74, 76.  
 (2) Parl. Reports Central Asia No 1. (1873) Nos 87, 91 - 93.

Suffice it to say that Britain thereby obtained military access to various strategic points, including Quetta<sup>(1)</sup> which out-flanked the Amir's dominions. More reports came to hand of the presence of Russian envoys at Kabul, and on February 7th 1877 the India Office rejected the previous "explanations" of M. de Giers.<sup>(2)</sup> Lord Lytton in addition brought matters to a crisis by refusing any further subsidies unless Shere Ali immediately acquiesced in the demands made twelve months previously. That ruler's rejoinder came in the precipitation of a small rising of the tribes on the north-west frontier of India; but it was easily suppressed.

Meanwhile in Europe English politicians were still opposing Russia's policy with regard to the Ottoman dominions. To provide a counter-provocation, General Lomakin was despatched in the early spring of 1877 against the Akhal Tekkes near the Persian boundary. Already by March 22nd their submission to the Russian leader was reported,<sup>(3)</sup> but their conquest was not quite completed. Rumours that Merv was endangered, necessitated a despatch from Lord Derby to the St Petersburg Government on June 13th. He hoped that Lomakin would not unnecessarily menace that region, nor the state of Afghanistan. "Whatever

(1) Parl. Reports. Afghanistan No 1. (1878) No 58 p.225 and Central Asia and Quetta No 2. (1879).

(2) Parl. Reports. Central Asia No 1. (1878) Nos 95, 97, 99.

(3) Parl. Reports. Central Asia (No 1) 1878 No 106.



may be the ultimate destiny of Russia in Central Asia, it is impossible not to see... that each successive advance of the Russian frontier towards Afghanistan may involve complications which it is equally that interest of both England and Russia to avoid. This is an object to which Her Majesty's Government attach the highest importance and reserve... complete liberty of action under all future contingencies... to secure it."<sup>(1)</sup> The Russian forces however, kept within short distance of the Caspian Sea, and on July 19th, Mr Thomson the British agent in Persia reported their capture of Kizil Arvad.<sup>(2)</sup>

The year 1878 was truly "a tumultuous year" as Mr Gladstone called it; and events in Central Asia were almost as critical as those which took place in Europe. Russians and British were at this time facing each other in battle-array on either side the Golden Horn with hesitant expectancy. War appeared imminent and the crafty Kaufmann and the discontented Shere Ali were not slow in taking mutual advantage of the situation. For the Amir wholly threw himself into the arms of Russia, and on March 8th,<sup>(3)</sup> the first definite reports of a Russian mission to Kabul were received in London. Next month came Beaconsfield's momentous stroke in ordering the Indian regiments to proceed to Malta. But while Britain thus

(1)	ibid	No 112.
(2)	ibid	No 117.
(3)	Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) No 129.	

brandished India in the face of Russia as a means of offence, it was natural for Russia in anticipation of further complications in Europe, to endeavour to procure their return. On May 29th, the Russian journal "Mir" suggested the occupation of Merv and Herat the "key of India," in the event of war with England. Again on June 24th, the presence of Muscovite officials in the Amir's dominions was reported to the British Foreign Office.<sup>(1)</sup> During the same month a letter, of which the following formed part, was sent by Kaufmann to Shere Ali. "In these days the relations between the British Government and ours with regard to your kingdom require your deep consideration.... I have deputed my agent Major-General Stolietev.... to inform you of all that is hidden in my mind.... The advantages of a close alliance with the Russian Government will be permanently evident."<sup>(2)</sup>

In response to the British ambassador's inquiries at St Petersburg, M. de Giers on July 3rd denied that any "mission had been or was intended to be sent to Kabul either by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann."<sup>(3)</sup> Nevertheless, on June 13th previously, while the Berlin Congress was first meeting to restore peace to Europe, Stolietev had left Samarkand at the head of a Russian mission to the Amir. It appears

(1)

ibid.

No. 136.

(2) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) No 1 inclosure

30 p 16.

(3) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1873) No 140.

moreover that it was supported by three columns of Muscovite troops who were to make a military demonstration against India in accordance with Shobelev's plans which appeared in the "Journal de St Petersburg" the same month. Each column was to march respectively from Tashkent to Kabul, Kojend to the Punjab, and Bokhara to Merv and Herat.<sup>(1)</sup> on July 22nd Stolietev and his escort arrived at Kabul,<sup>(2)</sup> where they remained till the end of August. Although nothing is officially known, nevertheless there are very good grounds for believing that a treaty was signed between Shere Ali and the Russian envoy.<sup>(3)</sup> Its chief terms comprised the "permanent and perpetual friendship" of Russia for the Amir, who was guaranteed the Tsar's recognition of any heir apparent he chose, Russia promised to assist Shere Ali in repelling any foreign invader, while he in return undertook to inform Kaufmann of all important matters and not make war without his consent. But as the Berlin Treaty had since been signed, the scheme for invading India was frustrated, and Stolietev was warned to "abstain from any proceeding unfriendly to England."<sup>(4)</sup>

In reply to British inquiries, M. de Giers told the English ambassador on August 13th as follows. "Everything has

(1) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) No 142 and 144.

(2) Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1878) Nos 39 - 44.

(3) See Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) pp 17 - 18. also Ann. Reg. 1881 pp 163 - 4.

(4) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) No 5.

been stopped - the political as well as the military precautions which we thought ourselves justified in taking against you."<sup>(1)</sup> Comparing these words with his "assurances" given the previous month, the duplicity of M. de Giers was revealed. This was rendered all the more glaring, as telegraphic communications were already open between St Petersburg and Samarkand. It is difficult to understand why definite orders were not sent to Kaufmann to prevent Stolietev's departure, and cancel the proposed Russo-Afghan alliance. The "Golos" on August 13th contained the following significant passage. "It is thought that the first object (of the mission) is to elucidate the question whether the Amir will or will not give his adhesion to Russian policy. In the first case, the Russians will steadily advance on the gates of India; in the second case, General Kaufmann will proceed to subdue Afghanistan."<sup>(2)</sup>

Great consternation was felt at London on the receipt of this news, for Kaufmann's advance towards Afghanistan as a friend or otherwise was in itself most serious. Lord Salisbury in a despatch to St Petersburg on August 19th recapitulated in strong terms Russia's assurances previously given as to Afghanistan being outside her sphere. He stated that Britain could not look with indifference upon recent Muscovite activity

(1)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) No 150.  
 (2)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) No 151.

in Central Asia and demanded the withdrawal of the Russian envoy from Kabul.<sup>(1)</sup> It now became a question of British friction with either Russia or Afghanistan, but in view of the recent "peace with honour" the latter seemed preferable. But a further attempt to regain Shere Ali's confidence in Britain was made. His feelings were tested by sending a British mission to Kabul as a retort to that of Stolietev.<sup>(2)</sup>

Meanwhile early in September, further news of a mere official nature reached England, concerning Stolietev's mission.<sup>(3)</sup> But a more reasonable view was now entertained by Lord Salisbury, as his despatch of September 13th to the Russian capital shows. He recognised that "the dispositions of the Imperial Government in Central Asia were affected by the political conditions in which Russia was placed by....England during the late crisis in the East." But Salisbury also held that the former Russian pledges touching Afghanistan were still valid.<sup>(4)</sup> This was later admitted by the Russian ambassador in London, but he denied allegations that the Tsar himself corresponded with Shere Ali.<sup>(5)</sup> An interesting conversation

- (1) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) No 152 also Ann. Reg.
- (2) Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1878) Nos 45 - 47. (1878 p. 117.
- (3) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) Nos 160 - 1. and No 2. Central Asia (1878) Nos 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15. also Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1879) Nos 1, 5 & 11.
- (4) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) No 164.
- (5) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) No 167.

took place at Baden on September 27th between Gorchakov and Lord Loftus who was on his way to St. Petersburg. The Russian Chancellor professed ignorance of current events and stated that Stolbetev's errand was "purely one of courtesy and of a provisional nature, which the Tsar was unwilling to forego. "Do not forget," said he, "that the Emperor is independent Sovereign Ruler over eighty million subjects." "Our Gracious Sovereign the Queen," replied Loftus, "is ruler over more than two hundred million subjects." "Yes" retorted Gorchakov, "but they are dispersed and scattered - the Russian Empire is one and united." The Russian statesman nevertheless, admitted military preparations had been made in view of a possible Anglo-Russian war.

Meanwhile the British Government learned the true attitude of Shere Ali, for the British mission under Sir Neville Chamberlain was turned back from the Khyber Pass on September 22nd by the Amir's officers.<sup>(1)</sup> Shere Ali's son had meanwhile died, and a month's mourning was observed in which all Afghan affairs of state were suspended.<sup>(2)</sup> Although the Russian emissaries were received within that time, those of Britain were refused even when the days of mourning were over.<sup>(3)</sup> This deliberate rebuff left no other alternative but the recall of Lord Lytton or the invasion of Afghanistan. The Calcutta

(1) Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1878) Nos 49, 52, & 54.

(2) Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1878) No 50.

(3) Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1878) Nos 55, 58, & 59.

correspondent of the "Times" wrote as follows. "War would be an evil of infinitely less gravity than Russian influence in Kabul.... The Amir is but the puppet, while Russia stands behind as the *deus ex machina*..... To do nothing would be to surrender Afghanistan to Russia,... and to allow the gateway of India to pass into the hands of a rival, and possibly unfriendly Power..... Russia may extend herself as she pleases in another direction, but she must leave Afghanistan alone. If the Amir is not sensible of the danger which he is courting by his intimacy with Russia, we must be wise for him and for ourselves." (1)

Reports meanwhile were abroad that England wished to come to amicable terms with the Moslem Amir of Afghanistan through the mediation of the friendly Porte. Kaufmann extended the following advice to Sher Ali regarding this subject on October 8th. "The enemy of your famous religion wants to make peace with you through the Sultan.... Be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove... Make peace openly and in secret prepare for war, and when God reveals His order to you, declare yourself. When the envoy of your enemy wants to enter the country,... send an able emissary... full of deceit ... to perplex the enemy's mind and induce him to give up the intention of fighting with you." (2) Truly the very Devil can

(1) Ann. Reg. 1878 p.136 - 8.

(2) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) No 1. inclosure  
34 p. 18.

quote Scripture for his purpose! At once Shere Ali wrote to Kaufmann telling him to expect before long a war between Britain and Afghanistan, and asked for Russian assistance in that eventuality. Later in October, the Russian general advised the Amir to immediately come to terms with Britain, but this counsel was unheeded.<sup>(1)</sup>

Different views on the Afghan crisis appeared in both British and Russian newspapers. The "St Petersburg News" believed Russia would not be involved in the war that was now imminent. "Our Government will probably not interfere in the struggle between Shere Ali and England. An alliance between Afghanistan and Russia is indispensable to Shere Ali who desires to feel secure as regards Russia in his war with England. Such an alliance by no means compromises the relations between Britain and Russia."<sup>(2)</sup> A letter from St Petersburg to the Berlin "Kreuzzeitung" denied that Russian officers were periodically "commissioned to set Afghanistan against England." Their object was solely in the interests of "friendship and commerce." Moreover the Russian mission was "too small to inspire fear," while that of Britain was "far too numerous for friendly purposes." In the event of war, Russia's attitude was further defined. "As England supplied Turkey in the last

(1) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) No 1. inclosure 35  
 (2) Ann. Reg. 1878 p.140. pages 18 - 19.



Eastern war, so Russia will throw no obstacles in the way of Russian foreign traders who may wish to sell rifles or cannons to the Afghans. Russia will do nothing against England unless indeed, she should be attacked by her, when energetic reprisals may be expected."<sup>(1)</sup> In a letter to the "Daily News" Lord Lawrence refuted the idea of Russia's purely commercial dealings at Kabul, and explained Muscovite policy thus. "Doubtless in contracting the alliance with Turkey, in occupying Cyprus, and in telling the whole world that we were ready to bar the way of Russia to the Armenian border, we did a good deal to aggravate the Russians, They are now paying us off... by irritating us in Afghanistan."<sup>(2)</sup>

An ultimatum was sent to Shere Ali, and war was declared on November 20th as no satisfactory reply was returned.<sup>(3)</sup> Meanwhile Lord Beaconsfield at the Guildhall Banquet of November 9th had asserted that the Government entertained no apprehensions as to a possible invasion of the north-west frontier of India. Nevertheless it was a "hap-hazard and not a scientific frontier." But the Government had made "arrangements by which when completed,... all anxiety of the north-west frontier of India will be removed."<sup>(4)</sup> The Premier's critics eagerly seized upon the phrase "scientific frontier."

(1) Ann. Reg. 1878 page 140.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1878 page 164.

(3) Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1878) Nos 65, 66 & 88.

(4) Ann. Reg. 1878 page 186.

Mr Gladstone especially expressed himself puzzled - as to how a frontier could be "hap-hazard and not scientific" if an invasion therefrom were not practicable. Besides the necessity of "a scientific frontier" was not of exceptional importance until the possibility of a Russianafghan invasion was conceivable. For when Shere Ali was England's friend, and showed no inclinations towards Russia, the question was of far less importance. Had the Gladstone Government given a de jure and not merely a de facto recognition of Shere Ali's succession, Afghanistan might still have been a bulwark instead of an enemy, against Russian encroachments. If the Beaconsfield Ministry on the other hand, had credited Russia with better intentions in Eastern Europe, the situation which precipitated the Afghan war need not have arisen.

Mr Gladstone strongly criticised the Government's action in declaring war on the Amir. This was due, he asserted, to Russia's desire for revenge on England while Afghanistan was merely the whipping boy. "The Amir was under no covenant not to receive a Russian mission; we were under a covenant not to force on him a British mission. Russia was under a covenant with us to exercise no influence in Afghanistan.... The offence if any, was committed by the great and powerful Emperor of the North with his eighty millions of people."<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Ann. Register 1878. page 229.

Strangely enough, Lord Beaconsfield on the contrary did not condemn Russian policy in Afghanistan, as his speech of December 10th in the Upper House indicated. "Eight months ago, war was more than probable between this country and Russia. ...The expeditions which Russia was preparing in Central Asia at the time... were justifiable... Had we been in the position of Russia... we might have undertaken some enterprise of a similar kind."<sup>(1)</sup>

In the actual campaign the British forces were successful,<sup>(2)</sup> while Sher Ali fled from Kabul on December 13th to Russian Turkestan hoping to receive aid from the Tsar. On that same day, Count Shuvalov the Russian ambassador visited Lord Salisbury. The latter expressed great surprise on learning that although Stolietev had returned to Tashkent,<sup>(3)</sup> the rest of the Russian mission tarried at Kabul. Salisbury asserted that their "continued presence... was entirely at variance with the engagements... still in force between England and Russia." These he declared, were still binding but he "could not admit... the maintenance of the independence of Afghanistan a matter of engagement on our part towards Russia."<sup>(4)</sup> Six days later Shuvalov offered to withdraw the entire mission

(1)Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1881) No 6.

(2)See Parl. Reports No 8. Afghanistan 1879.

No 3. Afghanistan 1880.

No 3. Afghanistan 1881.

(3)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) page 22.

{4}Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1879) No 7.

which Salisbury stated was "the sole obstacle to a full revival of an understanding between the two Powers." This was accordingly done.<sup>(1)</sup>

Shere Ali was soon undeceived, after he left Kabul, for he had been nothing but a tool in the hands of Kaufmann. Nevertheless the latter still plied him with vain promises of a European Congress to check England."or else events will end in a mighty and important war."<sup>(2)</sup> The "Journal de St Petersburg"described this as a "generous illusion". Finally Kaufmann advised the Amir to make peace, but death overtook him in February 1879 before he could do so.<sup>(3)</sup> Immediately, Yakub Khan his successor to the Afghan throne made peace with Britain, which was signed at Gand<sup>a</sup>mak in May.<sup>(4)</sup> This authorised a British resident at Kabul, the construction of communications from India to that city and the cession of the frontier districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi to England. An increased annual subsidy, and a guarantee for protection against foreign aggression were granted in return to the new Amir. Although Kaufmann attempted to make overtures to Yakub Khan whom he recognised as "lawful heir," that ruler entirely disregarded them.<sup>(5)</sup>

(1)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1879) Nos 8,9,10.

(2&3)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) pp.24 - 25.  
and No 1. Central Asia (1879) No 14.

(4)Parl. Reports No 6. Afghanistan (1879)

(5)Parl. Reports No 9.(Afghanistan)1879. also Parl. Reports  
No 1. Central Asia (1881) pp. 26 - 28. And No 1.Afghanistan  
(1880) pp.10,12,169.

But the murder of the British agent at Kabul in September necessitated the entry of Sir Frederick Roberts in the following month. Conclusive evidence met his eyes, of the extensive influence the Russians had obtained in Afghanistan. Russian coinage was current, - Russian wares were displayed at the bazaars, while the Afghan officers wore Russian tunics. A teapot too, belonging to Shere Ali's brother was found with this inscription. "Given to Sirdar Nek Muhamad by the Russian Government for Services Rendered 1879."<sup>(1)</sup> Copious correspondence and other documentary evidence was found which revealed the persistence of Russian intrigue with Kabul since 1873.<sup>(2)</sup> During the next two years, these papers were brought under the notice of the Tsar and M. de Giers. Their genuineness was however strongly denied on the score that they did not tally with the official duplicates of General Kaufmann's correspondence.<sup>(3)</sup> No doubt notwithstanding, can be entertained as to the authenticity of these discoveries which was not without the confirmation of Yakub Khan.

The holy war consequent upon the latter's abdication, the British disaster at Maiwand, and Robert's march from Kabul to Kandahar followed in succession.<sup>(4)</sup> These events culminated in the accession of Abdurrahman to the Afghan throne. Despite

(1) Ann. Register 1879 page 278.

(2) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1878) Appendix II alleged correspondence confirmed by No 1. Central Asia (1881) Nos 1, 3, 5, (6 & inclosures.

(3) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) No 2. also No 2. Central

(4) Parl. Reports No 1. Afghanistan (1881) Nos 1-5. (Asia (1881) Nos 1 & 5.

his previous Russian training, the new Amir distrusted the Tsar's officers because of their desertion of Shere Ali. The British evacuation of the occupied parts of Afghanistan further strengthened Abdurrahman's leanings toward England. His country too, became a far more reliable bulwark to British India and much less pervious to Russian intrigue. The results of the war dealt a severe blow to Russian prestige. For the Tsar strongly reprimanded Kaufmann, forbidding him to hold any further intercourse with the Afghan ruler<sup>(1)</sup> But for Alexander II's restraint on his Asiatic commanders on the Russian side and the timely change of frontier policy on the British side, Afghanistan might conceivably have become a Muscovite province.

Russia in the meantime had been preparing for fresh activity in Central Asia. By the agreement with Britain in 1873, the Tsar had been left to deal with the Turkoman tribes as occasion demanded. For their country was acknowledged to be within the Russian sphere of influence. But by the abolition of the slave trade after the reduction of Khiva and Bokhara, the Tekke Turkomans of the Akhal and Merv oases had been deprived of lucrative markets. Their activities therefore were mainly directed to raiding the Trans-Caspian provinces of Russia; and their suppression became a political necessity. Lomakin as was seen above had punished them in 1877 and 1878, but not with

(1)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1881) Nos 3&4 page 29.

permanent results. A third expedition in August 1879 under that general again failed before the Akhal Tekke stronghold of Danjil Tepe. Reparation was naturally demanded by the Russians for their country's prestige was considerably lowered in Asia.

Accordingly M. de Giers informed Lord Dufferin the British ambassador to the Tsar on December 31st 1879 that "with the greatest repugnance" Russia was forced to resume the offensive.<sup>(1)</sup> Skobelev was appointed commander of the Russian forces which set out from Krasnovodsk in the early summer of 1880.<sup>(2)</sup> After a preliminary repulse, the Russian commander facilitated operations by using a railway from the Caspian.<sup>(3)</sup> In response to the inquiries of Lord Dufferin on August 21st, M. de Giers denied all rumours that Skobelev would march on Merv.<sup>(4)</sup> But Skobelev reached Geok Tepe, the Tekke stronghold which fell after an indiscriminate slaughter on January 13th 1881.<sup>(5)</sup>

Some years later at the end of 1885, a remarkable letter appeared in the "Nord" the Russian semi-official organ at Brussels. It alleged aid had been afforded by English officers to the Turkomans. "These pioneers of English policy rendered a great service to Russia by teaching the Turkomans the art of

(1) Parl. Reports No 3. Central Asia (1881) No 1.

(2) Parl. Reports No 3. Central Asia (1881) Nos 3 - 10.

(3) Ibid Nos 12 - 16.

(4) Ibid No 11.

(5) Ibid Nos 18 - 30 and 33 - 35.

fortification. If they had not concentrated and entrenched themselves at Geok Tepe, the Russian troops would have been obliged to carry on incessant and fruitless campaigns against these enemies who can disperse in the desert like birds."<sup>(1)</sup>

Another outbreak of "Mervousness" in England caused Lord Dufferin to seek assurances at St Petersburg. But on February 1st he could write home no more encouraging words than these. "The future movements of the Russian army in the Turkestan country are more in the hands of General Skobelev than in those of the Government at St Petersburg."<sup>(2)</sup> Prince Lobanov a week later told Lord Granville at London that "the importance of Merv was much exaggerated." The Russian Government, he said had "no desire to push as far as Merv," but they "could not pledge themselves as to the exact limits within which their military operations would be confined."<sup>(3)</sup> The extension of the Trans-Caspian Railway beyond Geok Tepe and the Russian occupation of Askabad<sup>(4)</sup> again required explanations. Continued assurances were afforded by M. de Giers on March 8th as to the exclusion of Merv from operations, but he claimed that "English intrigue... had complicated the situation" there. Immediately Dufferin said he hoped these

(1) Ann. Register 1885 page 262.

(2) Ibid No. 32.

(3) Parl. Reports No 3 Central Asia (1881) No 31.

(4) Ibid Nos 36 - 38.



observations were not intended "to pave the way for the announcement that Skobelev was about to march on Merv."

Although the Russian answered that previous assurances "merely applied at the time given," he was authorised three days later by the Tsar to say these words. "Not only do we not want to go there, but happily there is nothing which can require us to go there."<sup>(1)</sup>

Tidings reached London however next month of the submission of the Turkoman chiefs to Russian officers who had arrived at Merv. But happily this was soon explained to imply "nothing more than an undertaking to abstain from harassing ... districts under Russian domination."<sup>(2)</sup> A little while afterwards the "Novoe Vremya" of St Petersburg announced the annexation of the lands occupied by the Akhal Tekkes. These tribes it remarked, "will no longer come under the baneful influence of English emissaries."<sup>(3)</sup> But the St Petersburg "Herald" in the following August proved prophetic in a significant manner. "The annexation of the Akhal Tekke races has been accomplished without the leave of England or any other Power. Similarly the annexation of a protectorate over Merv will be a matter only concerning Russia and the Turkomans."

(1)

Ibid No 47.

(2) Parl. Reports No 4. Central Asia (1881) Nos 1 - 4.

(3) Parl. Reports No 4. Central Asia (1881) Nos 6, 7. & 8.

It will be announced to the world as a fait accompli...

Nevertheless Russia will not now refuse England's wishes, but will merely postpone the question until she considers it ripe for solution."<sup>(1)</sup> Consequent upon these acquisitions was the need for fixing afresh the Russo-Persian frontier. The St Petersburg Government refused to allow English interference but the boundary was finally fixed south of Askabad and the Kopet Dagh range.<sup>(2)</sup>

On the death of Alexander II in 1881, a much freer hand in Central Asian affairs was afforded Russian commanders. A strong forward policy was now employed in these regions. In the following year recourse was again taken to the favourite expedient of sending scientific expeditions as a prelude to further annexations. For early in 1882, Alikhanov<sup>(3)</sup> a Russified Muhammadan soldier, actually reached Merv under disguise and obtained valuable information regarding its defences. A second expedition under M. Lessar a Russian engineer soon followed.<sup>(4)</sup> This was nominally sent for scientific purposes, but actually, it was afterwards admitted, for considering the practicability of continuing a railway from Askabad.<sup>(5)</sup> Hints were given by de Giers to Sir Edward

(1) Ibid No 36.

(2) Parl. Reports No 4. Central Asia (1881) Nos 15 - - 34.  
also No 1. Central Asia (1882)  
and No 1. Central Asia (1884) No 6.

(3) i.e. Ali-Khan-(ov).

(4) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1883) and No 1. Cen. Asia (1884)  
(Nos 55-59, 64.

(5) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1884) pp. 26, 36, 39.

Thornton the new British ambassador at St Petersburg in April 1882, which indicated Russia's ambitions. He did not object to "a British occupation of Kandahar or even to the control of Herat." But he wanted the right "to expect Russian influence to prevail in the countries north of Persia and Afghanistan."<sup>(1)</sup> The appointment of General Chernaiev to succeed Kaufmann in June, and the Tsar's acceptance of the title "Sovereign of Turkestan" in December, were of further significance as to Russian intentions.<sup>(2)</sup> An excellent opportunity for the furtherance of her influence was also afforded by England's preoccupation in Egyptian affairs. In the commercial field besides, Russia succeeded largely in extruding the British merchant from the territories of the Oxus and Jaxartes. This was done by the imposition of prohibitive duties on imported English goods.

But events of the next three years speedily falsified the assurances given to Lord Dufferin regarding Merv. For the movements of Russian forces near the river Tajand in that country occasioned an interview between Sir Edward Thornton and M. de Giers in October. All Russian control to the east of the Tajand was disclaimed. But the Tsar's minister admitted General Chernaiev had "a certain moral influence in the

(1) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1884) No 29.

(2) Ibid Nos 36 and 62.

interests of peace," and had advised them "to submit to the Khan of Khiva to prevent quarrels."<sup>(1)</sup> But these happenings were closely watched by O'Donovan a British adventurer and correspondent to the "Daily News." He had reached Merv, and sent home warnings of Muscovite intrigue; but owing to his unofficial capacity they remained unheeded.<sup>(2)</sup> The "Novoe Vremya" of November 20th, accusing him of exciting the Merv Turkomans against Russia made these comments. "If O'Donovan incited the Mervis against Russia, he did so from motives of his own and not by authority.... England's prestige in Central Asia has not gained therefrom.... If the English consider the occupation of Merv by Russia detrimental to their interests, they should... stave off such an occupation as long as possible."<sup>(3)</sup>

In October, Afghan forces occupied the district of Shignan in Badakshan, which Russia had previously claimed, But the Tsar on December 31st hoped "Her Majesty's Government would exercise their influence over the Amir... to induce him to withdraw... from Shignan." Otherwise General Chernaiev would find it necessary to "invite their withdrawal."<sup>(4)</sup> This threat however was not taken into effect, as Granville held Shignan as part of Afghanistan. But in December, Alikhanov reappeared in the Merv district at the head of a Russian

(1)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1884) No 143.

(2)See O'Donovan's "The Merv Oasis."

(3)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1884) No 156.

(4)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1884) Nos 1 and 22.

military expedition.<sup>(1)</sup> Its ostensible object was the protection of Persia against the raids of the Tekkes. But in the light of the political theory of compensation, this was a retaliatory movement on the part of Russia to the continued British occupation of Egypt. Then the startling news reached the London Foreign Office in February 1884 of the submission of the Merv chieftains to the Tsar.<sup>(2)</sup> The "Journal de St Petersburg" of February 15th explained the submission of Merv in the following manner. "The Mervis... being conscious of their inability to govern themselves, are convinced that the powerful Imperial Government alone is capable of establishing... order and prosperity in Merv."<sup>(3)</sup> More impartial information however, states that Alikhanov overawed the Khans of Merv at Askabad into an unconditional surrender under threat of invasion. In this way the Russian frontier in Asia was extended some 185 miles nearer Herat, "the key of India." In the opinion of the newspaper "Karkaz" of Tiflis, this new Muscovite acquisition allowed Russia "at any time to strike a blow at England. The most advantageous policy for us to pursue in regard to India, is not that of conquest, but of freeing the Hindoos from the British yoke.... It is now easier for us to invade Afghanistan by way of Herat, than for the English to do so by way of Quetta.

(1) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1884) No 163.

(2) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1884) Nos 170 - 174.

(3) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1885) Nos 2 and 3.

...The subsidies therefore paid by the English to the Afghans are merely so much money thrown away. Owing to its natural position, Afghanistan must now inevitably take sides with a powerful army advancing upon India."<sup>(1)</sup> Such an invasion however was far from Tsar Alexander III's intentions, for General Chernaiev was dismissed almost immediately after communicating to him plans to that end.

Although public attention in England was mainly directed towards Egypt, the annexation of Merv produced some excitement. Lord Granville told the Russian ambassador at London on February 28th that the news was "not received with indifference" considering previous assurances given to Lord Dufferin. But the Tsar's representative asserted there was "no hostile combination against England, nor any intention to take advantage of the present embarrassments of Her Majesty's Government elsewhere." Granville fully admitted there were qualifications to Russia's previous assurances and that she "did not give up her liberty of action in regard to Merv for all time and under all circumstances." Nevertheless there was some occasion for surprise "when two Governments had long been exchanging explanations, if one of them suddenly acted in a sense opposite to its assurances without any previous communication to the other." Next day he warned M. de Giers to

(1) Ann. Register 1884 page 308.

"provide against the complications to which this further extension of Russian sovereignty towards...Afghanistan may give rise." (1)

To these mild protests, the Russian Foreign Minister replied as follows on April 1st. "The Imperial Cabinet ... have abstained from any observation on... the transactions concluded by England with neighbouring states along her Indian frontier. They...expect the same consideration for the freedom of the decisions demanded by the interests of Russia. The resolution of the Merv chiefs to prefer submission to fighting ...is certainly the most...that could have been desired, both for us, for them, and all their neighbours. It was impossible for us to refuse... If the two Governments are sincerely inspired with the desire of maintaining their friendly connection, they may easily avoid all complications." M. de Giers finally proposed the delimitation of the Afghan frontier from Khoja Saleh to Sarakhs. (2) This was to be settled by a Joint Commission of Russian and British officers, assisted by a special Afghan envoy on the Amir's behalf. In accepting these proposals, Lord Granville expressed a hope that current rumours of Russian agents being sent to Maimana and Pandyk were not true. (3) On April 28th M. de Giers informed Sir Edward Thornton at St Petersburg that no agent had visited Maimana, but admitted

(1) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) Nos 5 & 6.

(2) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) No 13.

(3) Ibid. Nos 20 - 23.

the presence of one at Panjdih "solely for establishing peaceful relations between the different neighbouring tribes and Merv."<sup>(1)</sup>

Soon afterwards however, Mr Thomson the British agent in Persia, reported the return of the Russian agent to Merv from Panjdih, whose inhabitants had informed him they were "subject to Herat"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Meanwhile Russia took advantage of the vague definition of the frontier laid down in the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873, to further extend her dominions. For the official map at St Petersburg indicated the position of the Russo-Afghan frontier very unfavourably to Afghanistan near Herat.

Accordingly, Lord Granville informed the Russian Foreign Office that if such a map were held valid, "the success of the negotiations about to be entered upon by the two Governments," would be endangered.<sup>(3)</sup> But the authenticity of the map was repudiated by the Russian Government. Further, in compliance with their wishes, Granville agreed that the Afghan officer accompanying the proposed Commission for delimiting the frontier should have only advisory and not judicative powers.<sup>(4)</sup>

Disquieting reports reached London in June, of the submission of the Sarik Turkomans north of Panjdih to the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan. Lieutenant Alikhanov

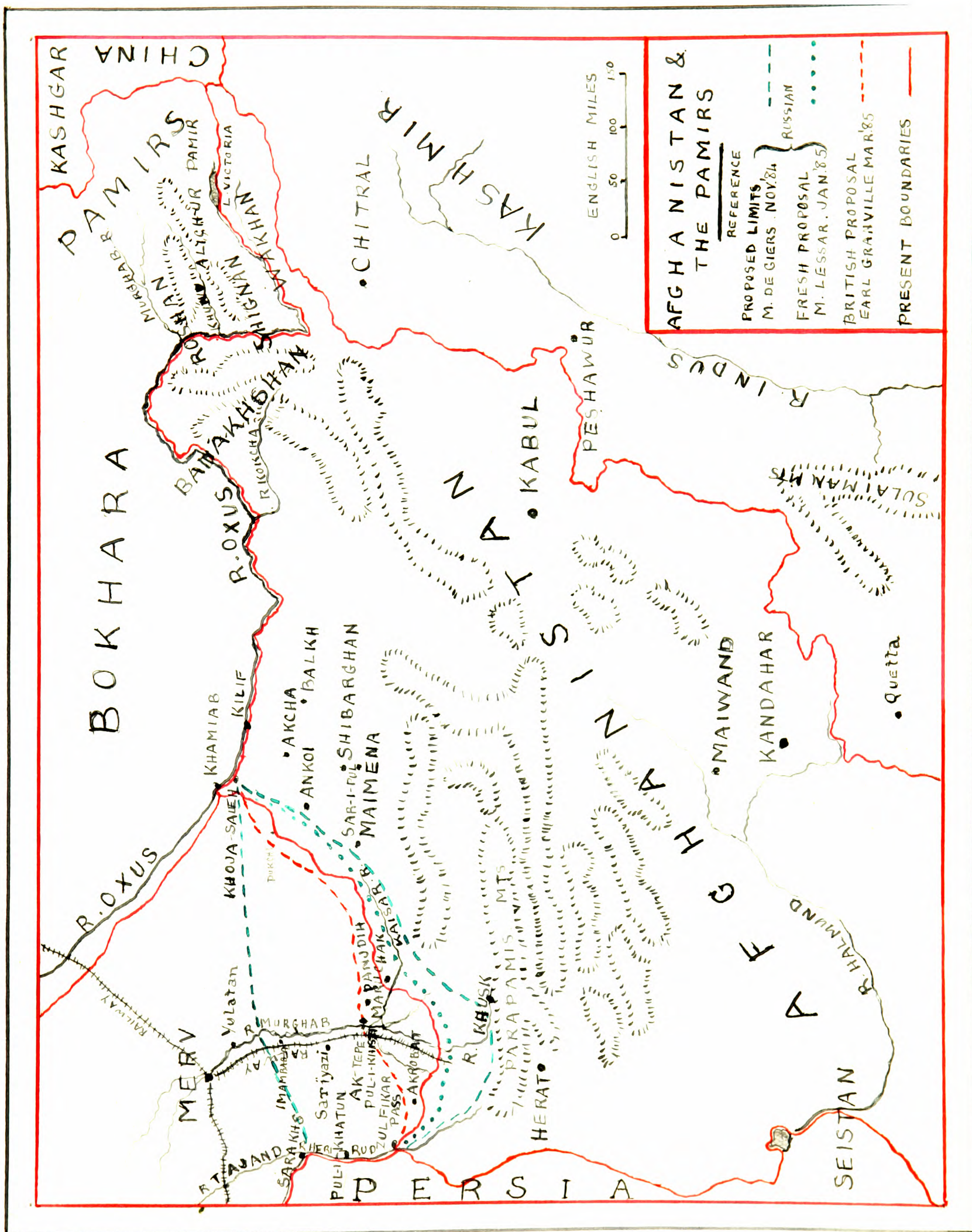
(1)	Ibid	No 25.
(2)	Parl. Reports No 2.	Central Asia (1885) No 37 inclosure 2.
(3)	Ibid	Nos 39 - 42.
(4)	Ibid	No 46.



was also said to be leading a small expedition to Panjdih, which was inhabited by the Salor Turkomans.<sup>(1)</sup> "It rests with these... either to join Afghanistan or follow the example of their (Sarik) compatriots by coming under Russian rule," said the "Karkaz" of Tiflis on June 13th.<sup>(2)</sup> The Amir Aburrahman immediately sent troops to hold Panjdih, whereupon the Russian Government threatened to challenge his rights to Shignan before the Joint Commission. Sir Edward Thornton however informed M. de Giers his Government's opinion on June 24th. They believed Abdurrahman was within his rights in despatching a force to Panjdih which they considered within Afghan territory. Shignan as a part of Badakshan, they similarly held as part of the Amir's dominions as laid down in 1873. Nevertheless, the British Cabinet were willing to refer the question of Shignan to the Commission.<sup>(3)</sup>

Prolongued correspondence now took place as to whether the Commission should begin the process of delimitation from near Sarakhs towards Khoja-Saleh or vice versa. But it was finally decided in deference to British sentiments to start from Sarakhs.<sup>(4)</sup> On August 11th, the Russian Government signified its claims to the territories of both the Sarik and

(1)	Ibid	Nos 45 & 47.
(2)	Ibid	No 49.
(3)	Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885)	Nos 51 & 52.
(4)	Ibid	Nos 56 - 59, 64, 70 - 74.



Salor Turkomans. Nine days later however, Granville replied that Britain could not "anticipate the decisions of the Commission with regard to the exact line of frontier." Neither could she "alienate from the Amir without his consent, territories to which he has laid claim."<sup>(1)</sup> Meanwhile Sir Peter Lumsden and General Zelenoi were appointed to represent the interests of England and Russia respectively on the Commission. Originally their first meeting was fixed for October, but Zelenoi delayed his arrival on the score of sickness.

On November 4th, M. de Staal the Tsar's ambassador in London proposed the definition of zone within which the Commission were to prosecute their enquires and exploration regarding the Afghan frontier. This was considered "most material to the success of the negotiations and to avoid delay." The northern limit of the zone was to be nearly a straight line from the river Heri-Rud a little south of Sarakhs to Khoja Saleh. Its southern boundary was to begin from the Heri-Rud, follow the mountains between Panjdih and Herat and continue past Bala Murghab to Khoja Saleh.<sup>(2)</sup> Meanwhile Cossack forces had pressed on to Pul-i-Khatun ten miles nearer Herat, while the Afghans replied by advancing to Sari-Yazi past Panjdih. Alikhanov objected strongly to this movement of the Amir's troops. But Lumsden pointed out that they had not overstepped

(1) Ibid Nos 78 and 81.  
 (2) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) Nos 123 and 125 (see Map). The frontier from Khoja-Saleh to Wakhan had already been vaguely fixed in 1873.

the Sarakhs-Khoja-Saleh boundary hitherto accepted, whereas the Russians did so in occupying Pul-i-Khatun.<sup>(1)</sup> A compromise was suggested by Granville offering to persuade the Afghans to withdraw from Sari-Yazi, if Russia would similarly retire from Pul-i-Khatun.<sup>(2)</sup> This arrangement was successively refused by M. de Giers on December 9th and 17th, on the grounds that the Cossack advance to Pul-i-Khatun was "to take steps against disorder." Further "in consequence of considerable military preparations in Afghanistan," Russia was "bound in honour not to abandon the Sarik Turkomans."<sup>(3)</sup>

After duly considering the "zone" suggestion of the Russian Government, Granville accepted the proposed northern boundary, but rejected the southern one. For he considered Panjdih and Pul-i-Khatun within the limits of Afghanistan.<sup>(4)</sup> Russia's opinion regarding the matter appeared in the "Novoe Vremja" on the same day (December 23rd). "The annexation of the Sarik Turkoman territory from which Russia cannot abstain... would not possess any threatening character... against Afghanistan and India. The English attach undue importance to Herat... It is very possible that the impressionable Asiatic will now look at it in the English light... Russia cannot admit

(1)	Ibid	Nos 120, 127, 128.
(2)	Ibid	No 132.
(3)	Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885)	Nos 148, 152.
(4)	Ibid	No 153.



any other boundary than that based on ethnography."<sup>(1)</sup>

Owing to the continued delay of the Russian representative on the Commission, Sir Peter Lumsden and his staff had to wait in the bleak regions of Northern Afghanistan. Russian troops also moved further south along the Murghab River.<sup>(2)</sup> Accordingly the Russian Foreign Office learned from London on January 12th 1885 of the "urgent importance... of hastening General Zelenoi's departure." M.de Giers was further urged to "absolutely prohibit any further military movements" on the part of the Russian soldiers.<sup>(3)</sup> Regretting Zelenoi's delay, the Russian Foreign Minister considered it "absolutely indispensable that a definite zone should be decided upon before the Commissioners could begin their operations." In view of Granville's objections to the one previously proposed, he sent M. Lessar to London on January 28th to fix another in conjunction with the British Ministers.<sup>(4)</sup> The latter were further informed that Russia was "compelled to demand the inclusion of the whole tribes of the Sarik and Salor Turkomans "within her sphere. With regard to Panjshir, "the quite recent occupation by the Afghans would not constitute a title to possession in their favour."<sup>(4)</sup>

(1)

Ibid

No 155.

(2) The Afghan Murghab. There is another river of the same name in the Pamirs.

(3) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) Nos 169, 170.

(4)

Ibid

Nos 173 and 181.

On his arrival in February, M. Lessar suggested a new Afghan boundary from the Heri-Rud south of Zulfikar and Panjdih, and continuing north of the Kaisor stream to Kheja Saleh.<sup>(1)</sup> For the Russian envoy maintained that such a frontier besides being "drawn on economical grounds," would give Afghanistan "all the strategic points required for its defence." But this line allowed the Amir little more territory than the southern boundary of the zone suggested by M. de Giers. Besides in Granville's eyes the whole matter was not a question of defence but of Abdurrahman's actual possession. At the same time it must be taken into account that hitherto ownership and jurisdiction had been incessantly shifting in this part of the world. For while every man had been intent on moving his neighbour's landmark, no Asiatic ruler had willingly consented to a permanent limitation of his frontier. The British Government therefore was unwilling to fully agree with Lessar's suggestion, which practically implied their acquiescence in the Russian appropriation of Panjdih without inquiry on the spot.

Events now came rapidly to a crisis near Panjdih. Hearing of unusual activity in the Russian camp at Pul-i-Khatun, Colonel Ridgeway a member of the British staff asked Alikhanov on February 18th to come to some arrangement. But a haughty reply came from the Russian commander. "If you will recall

the (Afghan) outposts...no difficulty will arise; if not, I have been ordered to make them retire." Next day Sir Peter Lumaden expressed his surprise in a letter to Alikhanov in which he wrote these words. "I have exhausted all means of restraining the Afghans any longer from adopting measures they may deem necessary for the defence of their rights... It will be impossible for them... to make any further concessions... I trust you will hesitate before entering on a course which, besides embroiling Russia with Afghanistan, may cause a rupture between the present friendly Powers of England and Russia."<sup>(1)</sup> Heedless of this warning, the Russian troops the same day pushed forward three miles to the Zulfikar Pass, thus cutting off the Afghans at Sari-Yazi. Again Lord Granville interceded with M. de Giers proposing a mutual retirement of both Russian and Afghan armies.<sup>(2)</sup> But while he admitted the occupation of the Zulfikar Pass, the Russian statesman on February 24th stolidly refused to withdraw the Tsar's troops even if those of the Amir retired! At the same time he promised to keep the Muscovites from crossing the frontier suggested by M. Lessar in London<sup>(3)</sup>

Four days later Akrobat was seized by the Russian forces, and Colonel Ridgeway again forwarded a protest and

(1) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) No 264 (report).  
 (2) Ibid No 190.  
 (3) Ibid Nos 192 and 194.

warning to Alikhanov. A reply equally overbearing as on previous remonstrations reached the British camp. "Whether you approve of it or not, my orders are that Russian troops should occupy country as far as Pal-i-Khisti; once established there, they should neither go nor fight; I must carry out my orders."<sup>(1)</sup> On March 2nd Sir Edward Thornton indicated at St Petersburg the "very great danger... in provoking a conflict which might lead to the most disastrous consequences," through the new Russian advance. Without denying the danger, M. de Giers said "most stringent orders" had been issued to the Russian officers to avoid a conflict with the Amir's forces. "None would take place unless the Afghans actually attack the Russians, and thus oblige them to defend themselves."<sup>(2)</sup> Meanwhile rumours of a far from complimentary nature to Russia were broadcast in England, to which the "Moscow Gazette" replied. "There is no truth in the accusation of the English that the Russian Government is only looking for an excellent pretext for refusing the delimitation, and at the same time makes advance towards Afghanistan... Russia has more essential problems to solve.... It will be very important for her... to finish once and for all with the conquests in Central Asia, and create a permanently solid frontier there."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1)	Ibid	Nos 202 and 205.
(2)	Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885)	No 205.
(3)	Ibid	No 206.



Events now rapidly tended towards a crisis which Lord Northbrook had even in February 1880 feared might arise from the increased proximity of Russia and Britain in Asia. With regard to the future, he said in February of that year. "We shall be so placed some day, that the indiscretion of some officer or the caprice of some Asiatic chief may produce a situation in which one of two high-spirited nations may have either to submit to ...a rebuff... or appeal to arms... There is something appalling in the position of the British and Russian Empires with regard to India. These two gigantic forces ...appear to be impelled by some fatal attraction to meet in deadly conflict. It is the privilege of statesmen at the head of affairs to foresee and avert such calamities."<sup>(1)</sup> Distinct instructions were now sent on March 3rd to Kabul from <sup>the</sup> London Foreign Office. "Her Majesty's Government cannot advise the Afghans to attack the Russian troops in order to dislodge them from the positions they now occupy. But Her Majesty's Government consider that the further advance of the Russians, should, subject to military considerations, be resisted by the Afghans."<sup>(2)</sup> But notwithstanding the protests of the Afghans and the members of the British Commission, the Muscovites continued their march to Pul-i-Khisti the next day.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Ann. Register 1880 page 19.

(2) Parl. Reports No 24 Central Asia(1885)No 212. also Colquhoun "Russia against India" page 47.

(3) Ibid

Nos 218 and 219.

Public indignation in England rose to a very high pitch on the receipt of this news. Nevertheless M. de Staal the Tsar's ambassador told Lord Granville on March 9th he "could not believe the present dispute would cause war between the two Empires. If England made it a national question, it was the same in Russia, but that did not exclude the possibility of a friendly understanding."<sup>(1)</sup> Further disquieting news reached London on March 13th of General Komarov who had now superseded Colonel Alikhonov. He was alleged to have sent this message to St Petersburg. "For the safety of the Russian troops on the Afghan border, it is absolutely necessary that Panjdih should be taken."<sup>(2)</sup> The same day, Granville urged the St Petersburg Government "in the strongest manner" that "orders should be...immediately given to prevent the proposed attack."<sup>(3)</sup> He also interviewed M. de Staal later in the day, and finally rejected the line proposed by M. Lessar for the Afghan frontier on January 28th. For thereby Panjdih was excluded from the Amir's dominions. This district Granville declared, "formed a part of Afghanistan ever since it became a kingdom." It had further formed a part of Sher Ali's possessions and paid tribute to Herat. Besides Abdurrahman's claims thereto could not be "vitiated<sup>a</sup> by the presence within his frontier of a tribe,"<sup>(4)</sup> the other part of

(1) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) No 220.  
 (2) Ibid Nos 223 - 4.  
 (3) Ibid No 225.  
 (4) i.e. Sarik Turkomans.

which is in territory claimed by Russia." In place of the frontier proposed by Lessar however, he proposed an alternative. This began from the south of Zulfikar on the Heri-Rud, followed the right bank of the Kushk, and continued to the north of Panjdih, Meruchak and the Kaisor stream to Khoja-Saleh.<sup>(1)</sup> Granville further suggested that the Commission's inquiries should be restricted to the smaller zone between this line and that proposed by M. Lessar in January.

On March 14th M. de Giers refuted the idea of Komarov seeking to attack Panjdih, while the previous day Mr Gladstone had informed the House of Commons of an understanding between the English and Russian Governments. Thereby Russia pledged herself not to advance her troops, and England likewise promised not to sanction an Afghan advance.<sup>(2)</sup> But three days afterwards, M. de Giers added this condition; "provided the Afghans do not advance or attack, or unless there should be some extraordinary reason for (Russia's) advancing, such as a disturbance at Panjdih."<sup>(3)</sup> Assurances were given again and again by the Russian Foreign Minister, but reports were twice received in London from Sir Peter Lumsden of Muscovite attempts to aggravate the Afghans.<sup>(4)</sup> But the Russian Cabinet in turn

(1) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) No 226.

(2) Ibid No 230.

(3) Ibid No 235.

(4) Ibid Nos 240 - 247.

on March 24th, complained of the presence of English officers across the Oxus at Khoja-Saleh. Granville denied this, but admitted they had inspected the Afghan defences and given advice, which they had "a perfect right" to do.

But while the Russian Foreign Office was profuse in its conciliatory pledges, the Russian War Office was suspiciously active. For troops were massed at Merv, while attempts were recorded on March 27th to cut off the Afghans left at Yukatan and Kizil Tepe. There were indications too of an intended advance on Ak Tepe and Panjdih.<sup>(2)</sup> Military preparations were by no means neglected however, on the part of Britain. Unusual activity was shown in the English arsenals and dockyards, while three days previously the mobilisation of two Indian army corps under Sir Frederick Roberts had been ordered after a hasty Cabinet meeting. An announcement too had been read on March 26th in Parliament, stating that "a time of emergency had arrived," and the Queen intended calling out the reserves for service with the colours. Another warning notwithstanding, was sent to the Russian capital on March 27th by Earl Granville. "Her Majesty's Government are strongly impressed with the desirability of putting an end to the excitement with regard to the Afghan frontier, consequent upon the rumours... increasing

(1) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) Nos 253 - 4 and No 5.  
Central Asia (1885) No 25.

(2) Ibid Nos 255, 258-261, 265-6.

both in this country and in Russia, some true and some unfounded as to preparations on either side. The importance of coming... to a speedy as well as a friendly settlement cannot be over-rated. Nothing savouring of a menace from either Power would be worthy or judicious on the part of two great and spirited nations.... Her Majesty's Government regard as a hostile act, any aggression upon Afghan territory of which Herat is a salient point." More explicit assurances against advancing towards or attacking the Amir's forces were asked in conclusion.<sup>(1)</sup> The same day M. de Giers rejected Granville's frontier counter-proposals of March 13th, but expressed a willingness to refer the matter on the spot to the Commission. But on March 28th, he acquiesced entirely in the demands of Granville's despatch<sup>(2)</sup> of the previous day.

While Ministers and ambassadors were exchanging despatches in Europe, British, Russian, and Afghan officers kept up an incessant cross-fire of acrimonious messages on the disputed territory. Arguments became especially heated in situations of the kind in which Cossack now faced Afghan. Such people could split heads more neatly than hairs and both sides were soon handling their muskets. Provocations and counter-provocations were committed by Russians and Afghans, but the latter refused to be drawn into a fight. Finally

(1) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) Nos 256 - 7.

(2) Ibid Nos 262 and 267.

General Komarov issued an ultimatum on March 29th to the Amir's forces, ordering them to retire beyond Panjdih. Despite the request of a British staff-officer Captain Yate, the Russian commander refused to reconsider it. Meeting with refusal, he led his twelve hundred men against the mob of 40,000 Afghans and completely routed them at Ak-Tepe in a battle that recalls Plassey.<sup>(1)</sup> Panjdih fell into the hands of the Tsar's troops, who, after organising a "temporary administration to prevent anarchy" returned to their ~~former~~ position. Abdurrahman's forces thereupon retired towards Herat and Lumsden's escort withdrew in the same direction.

Russian conduct in the Panjdih affair constituted a flagrant disregard of the common law of nations. Mean advantage was taken of the pacific temperament of the Gladstone Administration to magnify the prestige of the Great White Tsar. This was done in a manner impressionable upon orientals, at the expense of Britain's reputation. It had the effect however, of establishing the "Forward Policy" more firmly than ever. The constant discussion of plans for the invasion of India by Muscovite officers, although unauthorised by the St Petersburg Government was also conducive to the adoption of such views. Further, the construction of the Quetta

(1)Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1885).

railway was hastened as an immediate result of the episode.

News of the Panjdih incident reached Lord Dufferin the Viceroy soon after the Amir Abdurrahman had joined him at the Rawal Pindi Durbar. The Afghan ruler received the report of this affair which almost kindled a great war, with astonishing equanimity. He merely regarded it as one of those not intolerable irregularities which occasionally happen on an unsettled frontier. For little store was set on Panjdih as an outpost by Abdurrahman, who was far more bent on recovering the Zulfikar Pass. A British offer of military aid was as indifferently refused by the Amir, on the ground that an English army of occupation was hardly less distasteful than a Muscovite invasion. He was determined, he said that Afghanistan should not become a battlefield of several nations<sup>(1)</sup>

A week elapsed before the British public learned the story of the Afghan rout, but in the meantime negotiations continued at London. M. de Staal assured Lord Granville on April 3rd that no intention was entertained by his Government of threatening Herat at any time. He further deplored the feverish increase of war-preparations in England.<sup>(2)</sup> But the following day, the English Foreign Minister reproached the

(1) Parl. Reports No 4. Central Asia (1885) Nos 3 and 9.  
also Lyall's "Life of Lord Dufferin" pages 375 - 382.

(2) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) No 270.

Russian ambassador. Russia he said in effect, stubbornly held to the proposed southern limits of the zone, but persistently refused to consider the northern bounds placed by Britain. Hence the British Government could not possibly "proceed on a basis which substantially denied the equal footing of the two Powers." (1)

Intense indignation was felt in England when intelligence of the Russian outrage arrived on April 7th. War with Russia seemed inevitable and the hopes of those who believed in a speedy settlement through German mediation, were rudely dispelled. For the most part, the press believed the long-deferred conflict would only be averted by Russia's "disavowal of her agents, their condign disgrace, and the recall of her troops." (2) Consols and Russian stocks fell heavily, and the worst rumours soon obtained credence. Fortunately the House of Commons met the next afternoon after their vacation, and Mr Gladstone made an official statement on the general situation. He thought events pointed to a breach of faith on the part of Russia, in spite of her repeated pledges. For according to Sir Peter Lumsden's despatch of March 29th, General Komarov denied having orders

(1)

Ibid

No 271.

(2) Daily Telegraph. 8th April 1885.



not to advance and moreover refused to give any assurances to that effect.<sup>(1)</sup> As to the actual seizure of Panjdih, Mr Gladstone said the St Petersburg Government expressed a hope to Sir Edward Thornton, that "the regrettable incident would not interrupt negotiations." Finally, with measured words of gravity he added, "This attack bears the appearance of an unprovoked aggression."<sup>(2)</sup> Although distinctly warlike, the tone of public opinion showed on the whole a willingness to await Russian explanations.

But the excitement in both countries was not yet abated, for M. de Giers on April 9th angrily alleged the Afghans at Ak Tepe were led by English officers. The Russian account in the "Official Gazette" of the following day however, greatly modified this assertion. For while it laid emphasis upon their presence, it did not charge the British officers with taking any part in the actual engagement.<sup>(3)</sup> Both Russian and British Governments called for an explanation of the incident, and on April 13th General Komarov's account reached England. The Russian leader accused the Afghans of beginning the struggle by advancing in violation of the mutual pledges of the two Powers, whereupon his troops only acted in self-

(1)Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1885) No 263.

(2)Ann. Register 1885 page 69.

(3)Parl. Reports No 5. Central Asia (1885) Nos 23,25 and 30.

defence. British opinion failed to be convinced of this, because Sir Peter Lumsden's notes on Komarov's excuses wholly supported the Afghans, who did everything possible to avoid collision.<sup>(1)</sup> No improvement in Anglo-Russian relations came from the news of Russian reinforcements at Zulfikar, although M. de Giers promised no further advance.<sup>(2)</sup> Four days later the Tsar's Foreign Minister declared the military character of the British section of the Commission. was the actual cause of the fight. Lord Granville however, replied on April 19th that the escort was "not larger than.... strictly necessary to a Commission travelling long distances through uncivilized districts. If the Russian Commission had been present according to the agreement, any such risk would have been obviated."<sup>(3)</sup> Explanations were further demanded at St Petersburg of ugly rumours accusing Alikhanov of setting a price on the heads of certain English officers at Banjdi. This imputation the Imperial Cabinet regretted "with indignation."<sup>(4)</sup> But English patience was once more aggravated by tidings of the Muscovite occupation of Maruchak on April 23rd.<sup>(5)</sup>

- |     |   |                |
|-----|---|----------------|
| (1) | Parl. Reports No 5. Central Asia (1885) | Nos 16 and 27. |
| (2) | Ibid                                    | Nos 15 and 31. |
| (3) | Ibid                                    | Nos 50 and 55. |
| (4) | Ibid                                    | No 56.         |
| (5) | Ibid                                    | No 70.         |

War preparations were feverishly hastened both in Britain and India consequent upon this new aggression. Transatlantic lines and other ships from the merchant service were chartered by the Government. These were filled out as auxiliary cruisers in readiness for attacking Russian convoys. Troops destined for the Sudan were stopped on the main route to India, and munitions of war were speeded up in all military factories. On April 27th Mr Gladstone moved a vote of credit for £11,000,000 in Parliament; "It is not a case for war, ... it is a case for preparation" said the Premier who still put forth every effort to honourably preserve the peace. At the same time, his method of procedure was determined, cautious and clear, as his speech indicated. "I will have no foregone conclusion and I will not anticipate that we are in the right. Although I have perfect confidence in the honour and intelligence of our officers, I will not now assume they may not have been misled.... I will not say that we are even now in possession of all the facts of the case. But I will prepare myself for the issue and will abide by it as far as I can, in the spirit of impartiality."<sup>(2)</sup> Fortunately war was ultimately averted, but it is very doubtful whether any other statesman but Mr Gladstone could have steered the

English ship of State past the danger zone.

Although M. de Giers denied the Russian advance on Maruchak, Sir Peter Lumsden confirmed the truth of the report on April 29th.<sup>(1)</sup> Nevertheless in accordance with his chief's views, Lord Granville again approached the Government at St Petersburg. In the presence of the Russian ambassador, the English Foreign Minister at the Royal Academy dinner on May 2nd, expressed his belief that the peace of Europe and Asia would yet be preserved. The same day the Tsar held an Imperial Council at the Winter Palace and decided to continue negotiations in London. An official statement came from the lips of Mr Gladstone on May 4th. "The British Government agree with the Government of Russia.... to refer to the judgment of the sovereign of a friendly Power, any difference... in regard to the interpretation of the agreement between the two Cabinets of March 17th."<sup>(2)</sup> (They) are prepared... to resume at once their communications in London on the main points of the line for the delimitation of the Afghan frontier - the details to be examined and traced by a Joint Commission on the spot."<sup>(3)</sup> But gradually the <sup>attitude</sup> ~~firmness~~ of the Gladstone Cabinet became weaker, and Sir Peter Lumsden was recalled to England. This fact together with the Russian occupation of the disputed

(1) Parl. Reports No 5. Central Asia (1885) Nos 73 - 75.

(2) See above p. (187) No 2. Central Asia (1885) Nos 230 and 235

(3) Ann. Register 1885 page 78.

districts pending final settlement somewhat disturbed the public satisfaction which the Premier's statement might otherwise have given. This "surrender" of the British Ministry to Russia was strongly opposed by dissentient politicians and particularly by Lord Randolph Churchill. It mattered little to Lord Salisbury whether Russia understood the agreement of March 17th rightly or not. But he objected to the Russian "right to attack our allies or hunt our officers like hares." He cynically added these words "I do not attribute to the Russian Government an intention to deceive.... But if a man does not keep his promise in commercial matters, and does it intentionally, you say he is a swindler; if he fails to keep his promise because he cannot keep it, you say he is a bankrupt. But whether swindler or bankrupt, you are very careful about trusting him next time." (1)

Although negotiations were resumed in London for the forthcoming demarcation of the Afghan frontier, the Tsar showed no intention of relinquishing Panjdih. He angrily declared he would brook no further enquiry into the conduct of General Komarov. On the contrary, Alexander III presented that contentious leader with a golden sword studded with diamonds. This was "in recognition of the excellent measures taken... and of the equal foresight and decision exhibited...

(1) Ann. Register 1885 page 80.

in the action of Ak Tepe against the Afghans."<sup>(1)</sup> This in itself set a dangerous example for future Russian commanders in Asia, as it tended to encourage them in setting international law at naught.

Despite a rumour that the King of Denmark had been appointed to supervise the promised arbitration in the Anglo-Russian dispute, that idea was never carried out. Besides, the greater part of the Tsar's attention was too absorbed in his desire for revenge upon the unfortunate Prince Alexander of Bulgaria. Meanwhile the Russian and British Governments endeavoured to come to some understanding in the main, regarding the future boundary of Northern Afghanistan. As Abdurrahman had no great objection, Panjdih was surrendered to Russia. But in deference to the Amir's wishes, the Afghans were to retain the Zulfikar Pass.<sup>(2)</sup> Mutual exchanges of territory between Russia and Afghanistan were also agreed upon regarding the districts of Ankoï and Maruchak.<sup>(3)</sup> A difficulty however arose on May 29th, for M. Lessar announced an objection to the Afghan possession of Zulfikar. Russia, he declared, could not thereby sacrifice her communications with Akrobat to Afghan interests. Granville however reminded the Russian Government that they had already renounced that position in exchange for Panjdih. Nevertheless he expressed a willingness to refer the whole

(1) Ann. Register 1885 page 80.

(2&3) Parl. Reports No 4. Central Asia (1885) Nos 11, 16, 29, 34.

affair before the Commission.<sup>(1)</sup>

But on June 9th the Gladstone Ministry resigned after defeat over the Budget question. Lord Dufferin urgently requested the new Salisbury Government not to countenance any concession whatever to Russia regarding Zulfikar. Such an act of complaisance, he thought, would "discredit our character of constancy and good faith in the eyes of the Amir." Further "the surrender of Panjdih entitles us to vindicate at all hazards the line already accorded."<sup>(2)</sup> Lord Salisbury vigorously contested Russia's claims, pointing out that without the possession of certain tracts overawing it, the Zulfikar Pass would be strategically worthless to the Afghans.<sup>(3)</sup> M. de Staal wished to refer the question to the Commission, but the British statesman remained obdurate. He contended that unless the two Governments could agree upon a "formula of reference" with regard to the frontier, the joint Commission was equally sure to fail. Such a state of things, Salisbury maintained would cause another Panjdih episode by the contact of the escorts of the Commission.<sup>(4)</sup> The annoyance caused by Salisbury's obstinacy in Russian circles was seen in the following extract from the "Moscow Gazette" of July 25th.

(1)	Ibid	Nos 43, 44, 53 - 59.
(2)	Parl. Reports No 4. Central Asia (1885) No 63.	
(3)	Ibid	No 67.
(4)	Ibid	Nos 78 and 79.

"Zulfikar for Panjdih! What does this mean? Is it trade or barter? Bargaining may perhaps be natural to England, which is a country engaged principally in trade. Russia is an agricultural country, and it must not be forgotten that it is a military one too. The Zulfikar Pass is the gate to the territories of the Sarik Turkomans and others annexed by Russia. No one acquires a house in a notoriously unsafe locality on condition of keeping its door open. Moreover the principle of right is more applicable to the present case than the principle of commerce. The rights of Russia to the Turkoman territory were fully acknowledged by the London press. The right of England to interfere in the Afghan boundary question was always, and still is subject to much doubt."<sup>(1)</sup>

Negotiations were wearily prolonged throughout August 1885 with great stubbornness on both sides. But the difficulty was finally settled by a compromise on the suggestion of M. de Giers. On September 10th a protocol was signed by the two Governments. The southern outlet of Zulfikar Pass was given to Afghanistan, while the northern outlet went into the hands of Russia.<sup>(2)</sup> An agreement was also reached with regard to the main points of the Afghan frontier from north of Zulfikar to Khoja-Saleh. This line differed only slightly from that

(1) Parl. Reports No 4. Central Asia (1885) No 85.

(2) Ibid Nos 86, 94, 102.



ultimately settled by the Commission. Certain reservations were however made by the Russian Government.<sup>(1)</sup>

Commissioners were duly appointed to actually fix the boundary between Afghanistan and the Russian Empire. These included Colonel Kuhlberg and M. Lessar for the Tsar's Government, while Colonel Sir West Ridgeway represented Britain.<sup>(2)</sup> In deference to the wishes of M. de Giers, the escort of each party was limited to a hundred. After holding a preliminary meeting at Sarakhs, the first formal meeting of the Commissioners took place on November 12th at the mouth of the Zulfikar Pass.<sup>(3)</sup> Here the first boundary pillars were set up, and the process of delimitation went on smoothly until the cultivated districts of Maruchak were reached. Discussions now began as to the possession and control of the head-waters of the various canals by which alone these tracts are fertilised. Mutual concessions were made between the Russians and Afghans, but on the whole the former proved the gainers.<sup>(4)</sup> For they thus obtained a continuous chain of habitable stations across an otherwise impassable desert. When these matters were settled the Commission retired into winter-quarters.

In the spring of 1886 however, they resumed their labours. Little strife resulted until the Commission arrived at the regions of Dukchi. Here the heads of the water-courses

(1)	Ibid	Nos 105 - 107.
(2)	Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1887)	Nos 1 and 4.
(3)	Ibid	Nos 16 and 17.
(4)	Ibid	Nos 25 - 34.

again came into dispute, but as a rule were settled this time in favour of Afghanistan<sup>(1)</sup> For the Amir's subjects could prove uninterrupted usage and possession. But between Dukohi and the Oxus the British and Russian representatives could come to no agreement. According to the protocol under which the Commission was originally appointed, the frontier was to be drawn as far as "Khoja Saleh on the Oxus." But untrustworthy maps had been used at London and St Petersburg, and the members of the Commission found no place of that name. The appellation "Khoja-Saleh," however was assigned by the Afghans to a considerable tract lying up the Oxus. This fertile land had been for many years in the undisputed possession of the Amir, and had been thus recognised by the agreement of 1873. But although the Bokharan officials concurred in this view, the Russian envoys claimed that the frontier should be drawn to Kilif, the south-eastern extremity of the district.<sup>(2)</sup> This region would thereby have been totally removed from Afghanistan, and the British representatives urged the termination of the frontier at Khamiab on the north-western limit of the region.<sup>(3)</sup> As the direct route from Russian territory to Balkh was commanded "by the Khoja-Saleh district, it was naturally of some importance to the

(1)	Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1887)	No 61.
(2)	Ibid	No 123.
(3)	Ibid	Nos 154 and 162.

Afghans. Owing to the disagreement of the Russian and British members therefore, the final boundary pillars were erected as far as Dukohi only<sup>(1)</sup> The question was submitted in detail for the decision of the two Cabinets, and the Anglo-Russian Commission came to an end on September 28th 1886.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the course of the delimitation, an attempt seems to have been made to further extend the process in the direction of Wakhan and Badakshan. For the Russian Government raised doubts regarding the Amir's possession of lands near the upper waters of the Oxus.<sup>(3)</sup> But the British authorities refused to continue the demarcation beyond the originally prescribed limits<sup>(4)</sup>

Negotiations continued between London and St Petersburg regarding the Khoja-Saleh question, but the British Government proposed a joint-conference to consider its difficulties.<sup>(5)</sup> Objection was made by M. de Giers to its meeting at London, but he invited the disputants to meet at the Russian capital.<sup>(6)</sup> His plea for this course of action, was the inability of the Russian officials to travel to England owing to indisposition. This was accepted and the first meeting accordingly was held ~~met~~ at St Petersburg on April 23rd 1887. The differences on the point seemed unsurmountable, but after some months a

- |     |   |                     |
|-----|---|---------------------|
| (1) | Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1887) | No 113.             |
| (2) | Ibid                                    | No 207.             |
| (3) | Ibid                                    | No 147 and 158.     |
| (4) | Ibid                                    | Nos 160, 161 - 167. |
| (5) | Ibid                                    | No 220.             |
| (6) | Ibid                                    | No 230.             |

compromise was finally reached. Russia thereby acknowledged the Khoja-Saleh district as part of Afghanistan, but she received a favourable modification of the boundary near Khusk. For Russia's subjects, the Sarik Turkomans, had been forced through drought to drive their flocks to this region for water and pasturage. Future strife between these tribes and the Afghans was thereby obviated. But although the territory of Khusk had belonged to the Amir by the protocols of September 1885, its acquisition by Russia brought Muscovite influence nearer Herat. The final settlement of this section of the Afghan frontier was recorded in a protocol signed on July 22nd 1887 by the British and Russian Governments.<sup>(1)</sup> Abdurrahman accepted the decision in the following month.<sup>(2)</sup> The remarks of Colonel Yate, a member of Sir West Ridgeway's staff on the net results of the delimitation are significant. "It has been supposed that we lost territory for the Amir in giving up Panjdih, but the tribesmen took a very different view. According to them, miles and miles of land along the Herat frontier which none of them had ever seen or heard of before, had been recovered for them by the Commission."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Parl. Reports No 2. Central Asia (1887) Nos 263 - 267.  
also Ann. Register pages 262 - 3. 1887.  
and Central Asia No 1. (1887) No 1.

(2) Parl. Reports No 1. Central Asia (1888) Nos 3, 4, 12. also maps.

(3) Drago. "Russian Affairs" page 514.

In the meantime General Annenkov had since 1885 been busy constructing a railway from the Caspian to Merv. A further section of the Trans-Caspian Railway from that place to Samarkand was opened in May 1888. This formed the occasion for some striking articles respecting Anglo-Russian relations in Central Asia, which appeared in the Russian press. Among them the following significant observations were made by M. Vetzlik, a personal acquaintance of General Annenkov.

"No one knows better than the English do, that the Russian Colossus at present encircling Central Asia with one arm, if he wished to stretch that arm a little further, could reach the historical routes to India - namely the Bamian and Bolan Passes; and with the other arm, encircle the whole of Eastern Asia..... This enterprise seizes upon the vital threads of the power of England..... (and being) called into existence... by military requirements.... secures for Russia supremacy in Asia. It also affords the means of rapidly transporting Russian troops into the heart of Central Asia, in case our vital interests are menaced. Russia must..... bring about its connection with the Indian railway lines. If this is not done, England will exert every muscle to paralyse the execution of the project. Its existence will in the future exercise a beneficial influence on the political

condition of Bokhara, Afghanistan, Persia and India. There is henceforth no reason to fear any attempt at hostilities from that side..... It ~~is~~ however, necessary that the Russian Government should take energetic measures to protect the railway from the pretensions of the English. They are doing all in their power to extend their commercial relations in the possessions of the Shah under pretext of exploiting the mineral wealth of Iran. But the real object is to obtain the concession for the construction of an extensive railway system in Persia. They wish ultimately to establish a powerful competition against the Trans-Caspian Railway and draw to the English side, the inhabitants of Khorassan."<sup>(1)</sup>

At the same time in the "Russkaya Starina," General Sobolev suggested the possibility of a "Russo-Indian Empire." He foretold the Hindu Kush as being the future frontier of Russia's Central Asian possessions, while Herat would also be in Muscovite hands. A corresponding British seizure of Kabul and Kandahar culminating in the fatal collision of the two rivals was also prophesied. Under such possible future circumstances, Sobolev advised as the best solution to the difficulty a definite Anglo-

(1) Ann. Register 1888 pages 300 - 301.

Russian understanding. Russia would pledge not to attack England in India, if she were in turn allowed a free hand in Eastern Europe.<sup>(1)</sup>

A counter-move to Russia's railway policy in Central Asia was secured by British diplomacy in Persia. during 1888 - 9. Anglo-Russian antagonism in Persia however, did not become acute till the early years of the Twentieth Century. Early in 1888, Sir H. Drummond Wolff was appointed British ambassador to the Shah. In the Russian journals this was regarded as evidence on the part of the English Government to obtain predominant influence in Persia to the detriment of Russia. Lord Salisbury however in a despatch dated February 21st, gave "strongest assurances" to the Russian Government of Britain's "continued desire.... to respect and promote the integrity and independence of Persia."<sup>(2)</sup> On March 12th, the Russian Foreign Office gave a guarded and cool acceptance of these pledges. But Wolff soon succeeded in persuading the Shah to open the Karun river in the Persian gulf to British merchantmen only and to refuse admittance to a Russian consul at Meshed. All Persia, it was confessed in

(1)Ann. Register 1888 page 302.

(2 & 3)Drage "Russian Affairs" State Papers Appendix page 691.

St Petersburg circles had succumbed to the British minister's power.

Russian pride and prestige were greatly touched by this stroke. Nevertheless M.de Giers took vigorous measures at Teheran to retrieve this diplomatic defeat. For early in 1899, he sent Prince Dolgoruki to Persia, who soon prevailed upon the Shah to grant admittance to the Russian consul. At his instance, the Karum river was further opened to merchant ships of all nationalities. The construction of a number of high roads between the various towns of strategic importance in Persia was at the same time demanded by Dolgoruki. Russia's political aim thereby was undoubtedly to push her influence nearer the Persian Gulf, which more recent history has proved to be correct. More important still perhaps, was the following stipulation which Russia laid down. "All contracts made with foreigners for the construction of railways in Persia during the next five years, shall be communicated to the Russian Government before they are concluded; and if any Russian contractors should be disposed to contract on favourable terms, they should be given the priority."<sup>(1)</sup> The Russians failed nevertheless, to obtain the fortress of Kelat-i-Nadir the key of Persia, which is said to have been the chief object of their negotiations.

(1) Ann. Register 1889. page 324. also Stuart "The Struggle for Persia."



In consequence of his acceptance of the Muscovite demands, the Shah visited the Tsar at St Petersburg at the end of May 1889. Alexander III is said to have warned the Persian monarch on his departure, against allowing himself to be persuaded by English agents. Were concessions made to Britain which were unfavourable to Russia, the Tsar reminded him a single telegram would easily set 100,000 Russian bayonets in motion on the Persian frontier.

In an address at Hull on October 29th 1889, Mr Goschen the Finance Minister of Britain referred to events in Persia.<sup>(1)</sup> British trade, he declared, had been opened up there by no "drifty policy." There was no fear moreover, of offending the susceptibilities of "some foreign Power" even if the Government struck for their own interests. But Mr Goschen was persuaded that a policy of conciliation with Russia was the best to pursue in Persia. For the interests of both countries could not be best served by jealous competition. The extension of the Trans-Caspian Railway from Samarkand to Tashkent was completed in 1890. But in the following year a British rejoinder as it were, came by the cutting of the Khojak tunnel near the Afghan frontier in

(1) Ann. Register 1889 page 219.

advance of Quetta. This was supported by an armed camp. It was freely rumoured that Abdurrahman was irritated by this action and contemplated sending an envoy to the Tsar to conclude a commercial treaty. But nothing came of this sensation, and no occasion was experienced for doubting the Amir's good faith.

Nevertheless troubles between Russia and Britain now began in the Pamir regions, where the boundaries were but vaguely defined. For a Russian exploring expedition led by Colonel Yonov in 1889 crossed the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush into British Indian territory. In the neighbourhood a British officer, Captain Younghusband, was on special duty, who was at first courteously treated by the Russian leader. But subsequently Yonov informed Younghusband that he had orders from the Governor-General of Turkestan to arrest him, unless he immediately quitted the "newly acquired Russian territory." Accordingly that British officer left the Little Pamir, and his colleague Lieutenant Davidson whom Yonov had similarly apprehended on the Alichur Pamir, was also released. Both were well entertained by the Tsar's officials and were escorted to the limits of the disputed district. A report was duly furnished to the British Government but no determined

measures were yet taken.

A second expedition under Colonel Yonov left Marghilan the capital of the Russian capital of Farghana for the Pamirs in June 1892. Although this was ostensibly scientific in nature, its real object undoubtedly was annexation. For the capital of Farghana was moved from Marghilan to Osoh within striking distance of the Pamirs. According to the "Turkestan Gazette" however, Yonov's expedition was conducted for the sole purpose of forestalling the division of the country between China and Afghanistan. This was alleged to be "in accordance with the plan of Indian defence, or rather attack against Russia framed by General Macgregor in 1884."<sup>(1)</sup> Colonel Yonov encountered the Afghans at Soma Tash, which the same newspaper declared was "beyond doubt on Russian territory." After a short skirmish, the Amir's troops retired. Again Colonel Younghusband and Lieutenant Davidson were ordered to retire when met by the Russians. Throughout the year the matter was the subject of negotiations between the Russian and British Cabinets, but no definite conclusion was even yet reached. At the same time, assurances were given at St Petersburg that no thoughts were entertained of aggressive measures against British interests, in sending Yonov to the

(1) Ann. Register 1892 page 244.

Pamirs. Abdurrahman too, declared his readiness to abide by any measures taken by Britain against Russian encroachments.

Nevertheless in 1893, English policy in Central Asia was still the object of attack in the Russian journals, among which the "Moscow Gazette" in July expressed these sentiments. "Russia in the future will never bind herself by treaties to any Power, and will thus retain the proud position she holds as the leading Power of the world..... The English undoubtedly dream of the hegemony of the world,.. favoured by underhand intrigues to which Russia is offering an unceremonious opposition. It is precisely this firmness of Russia which is causing exceeding alarm to Englishmen smarting under their ill success in..... the Pamirs and trembling for India. Not that Russia covets India,.... but while England pursues a policy calculated to injure Russian interests, Russia will avail herself of the first convenient opportunity to assist India in throwing off the English yoke."<sup>(1)</sup> Repeating his visit of the previous year, Yonov for the fourth time entered the Pamir district in August 1894. After crossing the Murghab River,<sup>(2)</sup> he demanded the evacuation of all the territory north of the Panjah River. Shots were

(1) Ann. Register 1893 page 372.  
 (2) i.e. the Pamir Murghab.

exchanged with the Amir's advance guards, but Abdurrrhman recalled his troops in a conciliatory manner beyond that river. Unwilling to impede negotiations with England as to the boundary settlement, the Russian Government likewise withdrew Yonov's forces to the right bank of the Murghab.

Negotiations between London and St Petersburg were now more vigorously resumed for a speedy settlement of the question. Britain considered the Afghan boundary at the Murghab, a tributary of the Upper Oxus, while the Tsar's Government claimed possession of Roshan, Shignan and Wakkan to the south of that river. For it was contended that these districts were tributary to Kokand before its annexation. Notwithstanding these differences, Lord Rosebery forecasted their early termination in his speech at the Guildhall Banquet on November 9th 1894. If the two Powers could act together in Asia with cordiality, the Premier felt sure that "a great step would have been taken towards the general peace of the world."<sup>(1)</sup>

Finally an agreement was reached between Britain and Russia on March 11th 1895, which fixed the boundary between Afghanistan and Bokhara in the main. It also provided for the appointment of an Anglo-Russian Commission assisted

(1) Ann. Register 1894 page 165.

by Afghan delegates to actually fix the frontier in detail. The two Powers also undertook to abstain by exercising any political influence on their respective sides of the line of demarcation.<sup>(1)</sup> Negotiations were commenced at the appointed rendezvous Lake Victoria, and were satisfactorily completed by July. A small dispute<sup>however</sup> arose over a few miles of unimportant territory, and the matter was referred to London. Fortunately the views of the British Government coincided with those of the St Petersburg Cabinet. Finally Afghanistan received a strip of Wakhan which separated the Russian and British spheres. This was strangely reminiscent of the "buffer principle" which had been so characteristic of Gorchakov's Asiatic policy. Thus since 1885, the northern frontier of Afghanistan was now finally determined from Zulfikar to the Pamirs. In the main, the line followed the course adopted by the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873. Mention must be made of the banquet of the delegates of the two Powers, on the completion of their labours, for a noteworthy friendship sprang up between them. Hopes were expressed by the chief Russian envoy that "the agreement just concluded would be the

(1) Drage "Russian Affairs" appendix page 686.  
 also Krausse. "Russia in Asia" appendix page 373.  
 and Ann Register 1895 page 280.

beginning of more cordial relations between the two countries, and of a better understanding of their national aims and desires."<sup>(1)</sup>

Between 1895 and 1897 criticisms in the Muscovite newspapers world were provoked by the frontier disturbances near Chitral, Peshawur, and the north west provinces of India. But on the whole, far from being of a hostile character they tended towards conciliation. Especially encouraging were the remarks of the official "Turkestan Gazette" during 1897. "The creation of the buffer state of Afghanistan obscured the plain issue especially to the English press and people. On the other hand it is time for the Russian press to abandon entirely its unreserved, and for the most part wholly unfounded criticism of English policy. It should consider seriously what line of demarcation in Asia.... would best satisfy the patriotic aims of the two nations. Such a treatment... would be readily appreciated by Englishmen... and would remove the grounds for irritation at the abuse.... poured upon them by certain periodicals to the prejudice of friendly relations."<sup>(2)</sup>

The complaisance which now grew up between Britain and Russia in Central Asia was reflected in the conciliatory

(1) Skrine "Expansion of Russia" page 333.

(2) Ann. Register 1897. page 304.

statements which General Kuropatkin made to a party of English travellers at Askabad in November 1897. "The policy of our Government in Central Asia.... has been eminently one of peace, and recourse has never been made to arms until every other means of attaining a given object had failed.... Generals Chernaiev and Skobelev undertook expeditions into foreign territory without reference to St Petersburg..... No operations likely to produce serious consequences can now be taken without the specific sanction of His Majesty (the Tsar)..... Efforts are made to prevent the mischief resulting from the powers of evil which lurk in populations so lately admitted within the pale of civilization. The natives have been disarmed and no pains have been spared to induce them to adopt peaceful pursuits. The fruits of this action are already visible. Profound tranquillity reigns in Central Asia... Between 1835 and 1888 we established an inviolable frontier with the aid of Great Britain. In the twelve years which have since elapsed there have been no expeditions throughout the length of the 600 miles bordering on Persia and the 400 on Afghanistan. The latter country contains much inflammable material, but the explicit orders of the Tsar... are that there shall be no disturbances on the Afghan frontier..... I am led



to be explicit on these points by a sincere wish that the public may be convinced that we have a settled Asiatic policy which is in no way inimical to Great Britain; and that we are perfectly satisfied with our present boundaries."<sup>(1)</sup>

These friendly assurances were reciprocated on February 8th 1898 by Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords during a debate on Indian frontier affairs. The Government he declared, had no wish to occupy a single position which was not "absolutely necessary in the judgment of the most expert authorities for the security of the Indian Empire, and the fulfilment of Britain's treaty obligations."<sup>(2)</sup> In short, both Governments had learned the truth of Beaconsfield's declaration;- "there is room for both Russia and England in Asia."<sup>(3)</sup> Meanwhile the Far Eastern Question was claiming the attention of both Russian and British Governments.

(1) Ann. Register 1897 pages 304 - 6. also "Historians' History of the World" Russia page 620.

(2) Ann. Register 1898 page 16.

(3) Speeches on British Foreign Policy page 497.

## THE FAR EASTERN QUESTION.

---

"Every port, every town, and every village that passes into Russian hands, is an outlet lost to Manchester, Bradford or Bombay" - Lord Curzon. "Problems of the Far East." p.416.

Especially in the closing years of the Nineteenth Century, the Far East formed the third great storm-centre in Anglo-Russian relations. For in the break-up of an Empire of some four-hundred millions of people, the modern world witnessed an event without a parallel in history. In many respects similar to the decline of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, China had become the "sick man of Asia." As the weakening of the former led to the Eastern Question of Europe, so the decay of the Celestial Empire gave rise to the Eastern Question of Asia. Being the greatest Powers in that continent and also neighbours of China, both Russia and Britain were naturally concerned. Considerable trade was transacted in China by both Powers, and by Britain in particular. But while Russia's commerce was for the most part carried on by means of overland communications, that of Britain was almost exclusively prosecuted by sea. As an Asiatic race the Russians had a particular interest in the Far Eastern Question, and the more so as their intercourse with the lands bordering

the Pacific Ocean increased. British interests in these regions were almost purely commercial, and surpassed those of all other Powers. In the year 1892 for example, 65 per cent of the Chinese foreign trade was carried by British shipping. Naturally, with the growth of Russian power in the Far East, British trade tended to be diminished and displaced by Muscovite commerce. Hence by opposing Russian aggrandisement in the Pacific regions, Britain sought to protect her Chinese trade.

To better appreciate the significance of the Anglo-Russian struggle, it is well to rapidly recapitulate the relations in the main, of both Powers with China. Russian overland expansion in Northern Asia began at a comparatively early date, although it was not actively prosecuted till some sixty or seventy years ago. The exploits of the Cossack Jermak against the Tartars in the Sixteenth Century marks its beginning, when Russian influence was pushed towards the Pacific. About the same time, it is interesting to note, the Elizabethan seamen were laying the foundations for future British dominions in the New World, and Drake even reached the Pacific. The ultimate meeting of these simultaneous expansive movements was destined to take place in Alaska about the middle of the Eighteenth Century. But the sale of Alaska to the United

States in 1567 ended the contiguity of the two Empires.

Meanwhile like other nations, Russia sought to open up trade in Kathay and Zipanyu. To this end two Cossacks Petrov and Yallyshev reached Peking in 1567, and fifty years later another Russian found his way there, but both visits were without result. By 1630, the Russians had conquered the Tartar tribes as far as the River Lena, while six years later a few invading Cossacks descended the Amur and reached the Pacific. The following year, hearing of the wealth of Chinese trade, a fleet of five English ships set sail for the Celestial Empire. After a successful skirmish with the Chinese at Canton, the English adventurers were allowed to embark cargoes and return home. But after such experience, a further attempt to barter with this exclusive nation was not made till 1664. For nearly two centuries afterward, English commerce with China was wholly undertaken by the East India Company.

Meanwhile Russia, after further futile attempts to open diplomatic and commercial relations at Peking, expended all her energies in quietly pushing eastwards. Russian influence had extended to the Amur River by 1684, where hostile contact with the Chinese began. After a five years' war, the Russians were checked and forced to sign the Treaty of

Nerohinsk.<sup>(1)</sup> This was the first treaty China ever concluded with a European Power and the precursor of many conventions which were subsequently concluded between the two Empires. The boundary was thereby fixed between China and Russian Siberia at the Amur. Russian influence was thus kept north of that river, and not for a century and a half was the Muscovite march resumed south of its valley.

The first British war with China in 1840-2 resulted in the cession of Hong-Kong and the opening of five "treaty ports" to English trade. In this way, Britain championed the "open door policy" in China; for where her commerce was supreme, foreign intercourse could be easily tolerated. This policy was opposed to that of exclusive "spheres of influence" which England did not wish Russia or France to adopt. For thereby British trade would have been excluded from foreign spheres, whereas it was desirable for open trade to apply throughout the Chinese Empire. Territorial acquisitions other than commercial factories, were also considered burdensome to England! But the British concessions following the war of 1840-2 roused Russia's Far Eastern aspirations which had been

(1) Drage. "Russian Affairs." Appendix, p.656.

practically dormant since 1689. These were rendered more keen by the growth of English <sup>o</sup>pposition to Muscovite policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The visit of Commodore Perry to Japan also forced Russia to seek a corresponding compensation. Russia therefore took advantage of China's injured feelings by posing as the protectress of the Celestial Empire. But this served merely as a cloak for the furtherance of her own interests, and for having revenge upon England.

Accordingly in 1846, a forward policy of gradual encroachment was begun in the Far East under the competent Muraviev, the Governor General of Siberia. Employment was made of a process of land expansion by means of settlements known as "stanitzas." These differed from the fortress and factory installations of the colonial systems of the Western wartime Powers. The superiority of the "stanitzas" is revealed by the Circasian simile, "A fort is like a stone cast upon the field; rain and wind may carry it away or cover it with earth; but a "stanitzas" resembles a plant which, firmly rooted in the soil, gradually spreads over the whole field."<sup>(1)</sup> In 1854 Russia established the station of Nikolaevsk at the mouth of the Amur, while during the Crimean War of the same year a joint Anglo-French attack on the Pacific ports was frustrated.

(1) Colquhoun "China in Transformation," p.40.

The second Anglo-Chinese war of 1856 gave Russia another opportunity of further advancing in Northern Asia. Taking advantage of her absorption in the conflict, Muraviev persuaded China to sign the Treaty of Aigun on May 15th, 1858. Possession was thereby taken of the Amur province, while in addition the rivers Amur and Ussuri were exclusively to be navigated by Russian and Chinese vessels. More Russian concessions were obtained from China in 1860 on the renewal of hostilities with Britain and France. For Count Ignatiev succeeded in obtaining from the terrified Government at Peking the Primorsk province east of the Ussuri, containing the important harbour of Vladivostok. Valuable concessions were thus easily and cleverly won, and Russian influence reached the Tumen River and the confines of Korea. The following year a Russian warship, the "Pessadnik" occupied the Tsushima Isles between Korea and Japan. But on the protest of Admiral Sir J. Hope, in charge of a neighbouring British squadron, the Russian commander withdrew. In the same year (1861) a body known as the Tsungli Yamen was established by Imperial decree at Peking. This was a board composed of eight Chinese and Manchu members who solely dealt with foreign affairs in China.

The year 1870 found Russia disputing with the Government of China over the cession of the Kulja district in

Chinese Turkestan. Eleven years later, this was restored to the Celestial Empire but Russia soon sought revenge and compensation elsewhere. For designs were soon afterwards revealed for the Russian seizure of Port Lazarev on Wonsan, in Korea. This was employed as a diplomatic menace to China and plans for carrying it into effect were freely rumoured in 1882. Two years later, the probability of war with Japan caused Herr von Möllendorff, the Vice-Minister of Korean Foreign Affairs, to advocate Russian help. He drew up a secret treaty with that Power giving her practically a protectorate over Korea and providing her with Port Lazarev. Fortunately when Li Hung Chang, the Chief Foreign Minister of Korea, learned these designs in 1885, they were immediately checked and Möllendorff was dismissed.(1)

But Britain did not immediately lose her suspicions of Russia, for her interests in Korea were considerable in view of a recent commercial treaty with its Government.(2) Russia stationed at Port Lazarev would have proved a formidable rival in the Far East, while the reports of Consul-General Aston at Seoul were by no means of a reassuring character. On April 14th, 1885, therefore, Vice-Admiral Dowell was ordered

(1) Ann. Reg. 1882, p.345.

(2) Parl. Reports. No.2. Korea. (1884).



to occupy a group of islands known as Port Hamilton, off  
 the southern coast of Korea. <sup>(1)</sup> This was a precautionary  
 measure against Russia's schemes on Port Lazarev, and also  
 a reply to her aggression at Panjdih. However the British  
 ensign was not to be hoisted unless Russian warships  
 attempted to enter the harbour. Two days later, Lord  
 Granville informed the Chinese Legation at London that his  
 Government had "deemed it necessary".... to occupy  
 temporarily Port Hamilton, in view of the probable occupatio-  
 of these islands by another Power" <sup>(2)</sup> On the visit of the  
 Russian cruiser "Vladivostok" on May 13th., Admiral Dowell  
 unfurled the Union Jack. <sup>(3)</sup> In reply to Chinese and Korean  
 protests, Lord Salisbury, the new Foreign Secretary, on <sup>(4)</sup>  
 July 7th. pledged Britain to respect the integrity of Korea.  
 At the same time Dowell repeatedly warned the British  
 Government of the unsuitability of Port Hamilton as an  
 efficient naval base against Russia without great expenditure  
 on fortifications. <sup>(5)</sup>

Meanwhile, Russian designs on Korea disappeared  
 for the time being and Li Hung Chang on October 14th.  
 demanded Britain's future intentions. For if Britain  
 remained much longer at Port Hamilton on any terms, he felt

(1) Parl. Reports No. 1 China (1881) Nos. 3 & 4. (2) Ibid  
 No. 5. (3) Ibid No. 14. (4) Ibid No. 32. (5) Ibid  
 Nos. 15, 33, 42, & 54.

sure " a demand would be presented from another (Russian) quarter within ten days, for the cession of other territory on the same terms (1)

But despite Salisbury's offers to withdraw if the integrity of Port Hamilton against foreign occupation were guaranteed, the Tsungli Yamen refused compliance on January 7th., 1886 (2) A report that "the Russian ambassador at Peking often urged the Chinese Government to obtain the withdrawal of England" was received at the Foreign Office in April. To this the threat was added that if the British occupation continued, "Russia would feel obliged to occupy some place in Korea" (3) In reply Lord Rosebery, who had since succeeded Salisbury, denied all intentions of prolonging the British occupation of Port Hamilton. Nevertheless it seemed "against the interests both of China and England if it were occupied by another European Power" Britain however, was willing to withdraw from Port Hamilton "if any suitable arrangement could be made which would ensure that neither it nor Port Lazarev should pass into hostile (i.e. Russian) hands." (4)

While negotiations lingered on during the summer of 1886, an interesting event took place in the North Pacific. For on August 21st. a British squadron on its summer cruise reached Vladivostok while all the Russian ships were away.

(1) Parl. Reports No. 1 China (1887) No. 46. (2) Ibid Nos. 47 & 52. (3) Ibid No. 55. (4) Ibid No. 56.

Eight English warships entered the port in a thick fog and were not discovered by the Russians on shore until anchor was dropped in faultless order, within the inner harbour. This brilliant but equally indiscreet piece of British seamanship would never have been attempted by the Russians. But the Tsar's authorities fearing Russia's position on the Pacific would be at the mercy of a naval enemy, took panic. A regulation was therefore formed, which only allowed two foreign vessels at a time to anchor in Vladivostok harbour. (1)

Meanwhile, after considerable delay, the Chinese Government had obtained a definite promise from Russia to respect Korean integrity. On November 9th., therefore, assent was given to Lord Rosebery's demands, together with the necessary guarantees (2). Russia was the more willing to furnish these as the Trans-Siberian Railway was as yet uncompleted. Besides, Korea was too densely populated to allow of an easy Russian assimilation and in Japan the Muscovite Empire had a very pugnacious neighbour. On the receipt of these assurances and after due arrangements, Vice-Admiral Dowell entirely withdrew his forces from Port Hamilton on February 27th. 1877. (3) This action showed China that while Britain wished to keep Russia from this

(1) See Norman's "Peoples and Politics of the Far East" p. 155. (2) Parl Reports, No. 1 China (1887) Nos. 67 & 74. (3) Ibid Nos. 69 - 82.

Naboth's vineyard, she did not wish to make encroachments herself. But nevertheless the Russian Government succeeded in persuading China during the same year to allow the Taimen river to be navigated under no other flags but those of China, Korea, or Russia.<sup>(1)</sup>

During the ensuing years till 1895, circumstances in Eastern Asia tended to make Russia the natural enemy of China, and Britain her natural friend. For the Northern Power coveted the Korean ports and also Yarkund, Kashgar and the Pamirs. Russia too set her eyes on Tibet on which China laid some value. Britain, on the other hand, endeavoured to avoid contiguity with Muscovite influence at the Hindu Kush and Karakorum. The growth of Russia's great railway system too menaced Chinese territorial integrity and generated competition with Britain's Asiatic trade. There was room, therefore, for a Chino-British friendship against Russian encroachments.

But before the great conflict between the two European Powers took place, a few minor incidents occurred requiring the attention of both. For during 1893, the Russian *chargé d'affaires* at Peking persuaded the Director of the Chinese Bureau of telegraphs to sign a mutual convention. This provided for the junction of Russian and Chinese telegraphs, thus giving the St. Petersburg Government an

(1) Ann. Reg. 1857 p. 320

additional and convenient grasp in Far Eastern affairs. In spite of the protests of the British consul at Tientsin, the Tsungli Yamen permitted the ratification of the agreement and further acquiesced in the introduction of more Russian consulates.<sup>(1)</sup> Following Russia's example, the British Government entered into an agreement with China in September 1894, to connect the telegraphs of both countries at the Burmese frontier. This arrangement however proved of little advantage.

In 1893, complaints of the seizure by Russia of Canadian sealing-vessels without the three-mile limit in the Bering Sea were received in London.<sup>(2)</sup> In reply to Lord Rosebery's remonstrations the St. Petersburg Government explained that this was done owing to the increased destruction of seals off the Russian coast through the disturbing movements of British sealers.<sup>(3)</sup> A sympathetic reply was sent from the London Foreign Office on March 17th, and two months later Rosebery forwarded a draft agreement concerning the question.<sup>(4)</sup> On the completion of the labours of a Commission representing the two Governments in December, a final settlement was reached in January 1894. This forbade any ship, unless specially

(1) Ann. Rev. 1893. p.322.

(2) Parl. Reports. No.1. Russia. (1893) Nos. 1, 2.

(3) Ibid No. 10.

(4) Ibid. No. 18.

authorised, to hunt seals within ten miles of the Russian <sup>Asiatic</sup> coast, and the terms of the settlement were more fully extended in 1895.

The accession of Nicholas II to the Russian throne in 1894 marked the beginning of a policy of great railway expansion in the Far East. The ambitions of the new Tsar corresponded with the words of Puck -

"I'll put a girdle round about the earth

In forty minutes -(2)

For many years the idea of a Trans-Siberian Railway had been discussed in Russian circles. Even in 1858 the construction of a horse-tramway from Perm to the Pacific was proposed by a British engineer, while an American made a similar offer for a steam railway from Irkutsk to the Amur. A line from Perm to a tributary of the Ob was finally begun by the Russian Government in 1875, but by 1880 this was extended no farther than Tiumen on the Tobol. Lack of funds had temporarily suppressed the enterprise but the floating of French loans consequent upon the Franco-Russian rapprochement in the later eighties, supplied Russia's needs. In spring 1891, an Imperial Ukaz granted the construction of the Trans-Siberian line joining Europe with the Pacific. Nicholas II, then heir-apparent, was appointed

(1) Parl. Reports No.1. Russia. 1895.

(2) A Midsummer Night's Dream. Act.II. Sc.II.

president of a commission carrying this into effect. During a tour in the Far East he inaugurated the construction of the railway at Vladivostok, its intended terminus on the Pacific.

But in the possession of Vladivostok, Russian ambitions were only half realised, because that port is ice-bound during four months of the year.<sup>(1)</sup> It was unlikely therefore that Russia would build the longest railway in the world some five thousand miles long and costing some £50,000,000, to end in such a harbour. Nevertheless the precipitation of the Sino-Japanese war in 1894 provided the Russian Government with excellent possibilities. The utter defeat of the Chinese forces was followed by the Treaty of Shimonoseki signed on April 17th, 1895. Its terms included the surrender of the Liaotung Peninsula with the ice-free harbour of Port Arthur, to Japan.<sup>(2)</sup> But the ink of the treaty was hardly dry, when Russia supported by France and Germany ordered her to renounce her claims to the Peninsula. For the St. Petersburg Government considered the Japanese at Port Arthur would unnecessarily threaten Peking and thus be "a perpetual obstacle to the peace of the Far East." Accordingly Japan gave way, but received an increased war indemnity. Britain's refusal to check Japan offended Russia, who in revenge declined to comply with England's entreaties to coerce the Sultan in Armenia.

Sir H. Norman however makes mention of an American

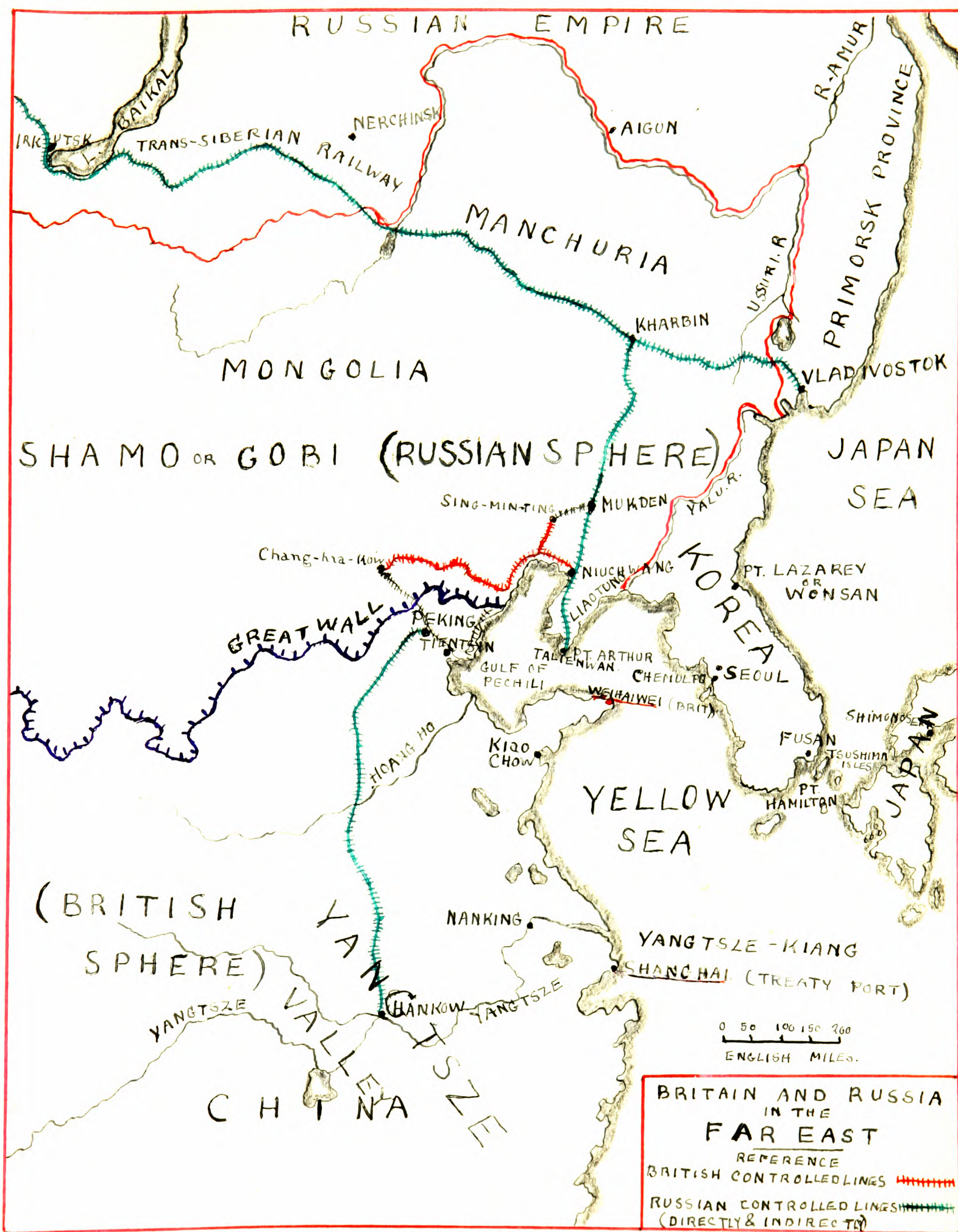
(1) ice-breaker which cleared the port in a few days.

\*People and Politics of the Far East. p.158.

(2) Drage "Russian Affairs" Appendix pp.657-661.

But the insincerity of the Powers in forbidding Japanese spoliation was soon to be revealed. Russia was able to point out to China that British non-intervention practically meant a concealed Anglo-Japanese understanding. Under the pretext therefore of preserving China from further designs of these Powers, Russia soon secured her pound of flesh. For although the facts are not yet definitely known, concealed negotiations appear to have been carried on for some time between Li Hung Chang the Chinese Foreign Minister and the Russian Government. Rumours as to a Russo-Chinese understanding respecting the continuation of the Siberian line across Manchuria and the future status of Port Arthur were broadcast. But with the Russian embassy's denial of any such arrangement on November 1895, Lord Salisbury remained satisfied. Nevertheless the Russian Government guaranteed to China a loan of 400,000,000 francs mainly subscribed in Paris. In order to pay off half her war indemnity to Japan. In return for this financial assistance, Russia demanded the establishment of a Russo-Chinese Bank. This was to superintend the collection of taxes, the control of finances and the construction of any railways and telegraphs which the Chinese authorities might concede. The commercial predominance of Britain in the Celestial Empire was thus rudely menaced and henceforth Russian influence was greatly in the ascendant. For British engineers and





occupants of other important posts in Northern China were now liable to displacement by the Russian authorities.

But Russian influence was further extended in China in March 1896. For Li Hung Chang appears to have secretly concluded what amounted to a defensive alliance with China's northern neighbour. Russia was thereby allowed to use any Chinese port and raise Chinese troops in the event of war with any Asiatic power. Port Arthur in particular was to be at Russia's disposal in time of peace, and under certain conditions the harbour of Kiao-Chau. Free access to Manchuria was further granted Russian officers and the completion of the Trans-Siberian railway to the Liao-tung Peninsula was generally agreed upon.

More liberal and detailed concessions still, were alleged to have been granted by the Cassini Convention of September 1896.<sup>(1)</sup> This agreement was named after the Russian Minister at Peking who was said to have been instrumental in concluding it. The terms and very existence even of the Cassini Convention have been brought into much dispute, and nothing official as to its nature is absolutely known yet. Notwithstanding, some agreement was evidently reached whereby the Siberian railway was to be definitely continued across Manchuria to Vladivostok. This avoided the long and difficult

(1) Ann. Reg. 1896, pp. 289 and 347. Also Drage  
"Russian Affairs" appendix, p. 963.

northern route down the Amur valley, while a branch line was to run through Kharbin to Port Arthur or Talienwan. An association called the "Eastern Chinese Railway Company" composed exclusively of Russian and Chinese shareholders was to construct and work the railway.<sup>(1)</sup> Further, as it was "difficult for the Russian Fleets.... to move about freely and at pleasure" in the Pacific in time of war, Kiao-Chau harbour was to be "leased" to Russia for fifteen years. But "in order to obviate.... the jealousy and suspicion of the other Powers," immediate possession was not to be taken.<sup>(2)</sup> Port Arthur and Talienwan were declared "important strategic points," which China engaged to "properly fortify... and repair with all haste." Russia also promised to assist in protecting them and refused to "permit any foreign Power to encroach upon them." On the other hand China undertook "never to cede them to another Power, but to allow Russia in time of war to temporarily concentrate her sea and land forces" in them.<sup>(3)</sup> Under such secret terms Manchuria virtually became a Russian province and was filled with Muscovite soldiers. But the British Government seem to have discredited all reports of the Cassini Convention and exhibited remarkable equanimity.

- (1) Clauses 1-5. Also Parl Reports Russia No.1 (1898) for full agreement of the Eastern Chinese Rly.Co.
- (2) Clause 9.
- (3) Clause 10.

But the completeness of Russian influence in Northern China was later manifested in several ways disagreeable to Great Britain. On October 19th, 1897, M. Pavlov the Russian Minister at Peking objected to the employment of an English engineer on the railways north of Tientsin, "not for being an Englishman, but because he was not a Russian." Pavlov further stated his Government's anxiety that "the provinces bordering on the Russian frontier must not come under the influence of any nation except Russia."<sup>(1)</sup> The German occupation of Kiao-Chau in November consequent upon the murder of two missionaries called for the following remarks of the journal "Novisti" of St. Petersburg. "Russia especially can learn a lesson by the occupation of Kiao-Chau,... as she stands greatly in need of a port free from ice... If Germany declines to evacuate Kiao-Chau, Russia... will have every right to occupy in retaliation some portion of Chinese territory."<sup>(2)</sup>

This suggestion was soon fulfilled, for on December 18th, H.M.S. "Daphne" reported the entry of three Russian warships into Port Arthur.<sup>(3)</sup> Three days later, Count Muraviev the Tsar's Foreign Minister, explained this movement to Mr. Goschen, as merely to give the ships hospitality and convenience during the winter season. Notwithstanding this assurance, Vice

(1) Parl. Reports No.1. China (1898) No.13.  
(2) Ibid. No.15.  
(3) Ibid. Nos. 22 and 23.



Admiral Buller proceeded with a British squadron to the Yellow Sea while H.M. Ships "Iphigenia" and "Immortalité" repaired to Port Arthur on December 29th, (1) to watch events.

The Russian Government had meanwhile offered China a further loan to pay off the other half of the indemnity to Japan. Not to be outdone, Lord Salisbury on December 30th, offered a direct and guaranteed loan of £12,000,000 to the Peking Government on the fulfilment of certain conditions. These stipulated Talienwan to be a "treaty-port" and required a guarantee of the non-cession of the Yangtse territory where British commerce was all-important, to any other foreign Power.(2) Although the Tsungli Yamen indicated their approval of these terms on January 16th, 1898, they feared the Russian Minister's protest that the opening of Talienwan as a treaty port "would incur the hostility of Russia." (3) With remarkable deference to these sentiments, Lord Salisbury withdrew his insistence with regard to Talienwan on the following day. Two days later M. de Staal the Tsar's ambassador at London repeated his Government's objections. The opening of Talienwan, he said, would be the equivalent of "encroaching on the Russian sphere of influence, and denying her in future that right to use Port Arthur, to which the progress of events had given her a claim." (4) Salisbury replied however, that Russia had officially no more

(1) No. 31.

(2) Parl. Reports No. 1. China (1898) Nos. 30 and 32.

(3) Ibid. No. 31.

(4) Ibid. No. 39.

favourable claims to Port Arthur than any other treaty Power. But on January 25th. M.Pavlov at Peking finally denounced the terms of the British loan which would "disturb the balance of influence in China."<sup>(1)</sup> Although the Tsungli Yamen assured Britain of the non-cession of the Yangtze valley to any other Power, they decided in their dilemma to refuse both Russian and British loans.<sup>(2)</sup> But later an Anglo-German loan was finally adopted and an assurance was given that the Inspector-General of Chinese Customs should be an Englishman so long as British trade predominated.<sup>(3)</sup>

On January 19th Muraviev informed the British ambassador at St. Petersburg that the presence of the English warships at Port Arthur was "so unfriendly as to set afloat rumours of war with Britain."<sup>(4)</sup> Eight days later the Russian Authorities requested the British vessels to quit Port Arthur.<sup>(5)</sup> To the great astonishment of the English public and of the Russian officials themselves. the war vessels steamed away. Not a word of protest was lodged by the Salisbury Government, whose attitude at this stage was inexplicably feeble. For officially at least, British ships had as much right at Port Arthur as those of Russia. However on February 2nd, M.de Staal

(1) Ibid. No.65.

(2) Parl. Reports No.1. China (1898) Nos.62,75,85.

(3) Ibid. No.88.

(4) Ibid. No.61.

(5) Ibid. No.67.

informed Lord Salisbury that if his Government secured any port on the Pacific, it should be "open to the commerce of all the world... and England would share in the advantages."<sup>(1)</sup> On March 7th, Sir Claude Macdonald reported rumours from Peking of a Russian understanding with China, to acquire Port Arthur and Talienwan on the same terms as Germany held Kiao-Chau. He further urged it was "desirable for us to make some counter-move at Weihaiwai after the Japanese evacuation of that position.<sup>(2)</sup> Such a movement was not immediately favoured by Lord Salisbury, as "the existing position was not yet materially altered by the action of other Powers."

The Tsungli Yamen officially informed Macdonald on March 9th of the Russian overtures for the cession of Port Arthur and Talienwan. This was intended by the Russian Government "to assist in protect<sup>ct</sup>ing Manchuria against the aggression of other Powers."<sup>(3)</sup> Next day, Salisbury hastened to assure Russia through the Tsungli Yamen that Britain had no designs on Manchuria.<sup>(4)</sup> But if he hoped thereby to prevent the Tsar's Government from seizing their prey, he was greatly mistaken. For Maraviev still insisted on the necessity of holding the Liaotung ports, but promised on March 16th free access to

(1) Ibid No.76.

(2) Ibid. Nos.90 and 95.

(3) Ibid Nos.100-101.

(4) Ibid. No.103.

Talienwan for foreign countries. Six days later Salisbury more explicitly stated his views on the matter. He did not object at all to Russia obtaining a purely commercial port on the Pacific to form a suitable terminus for the Trans-Siberian Railway. But he viewed a military occupation of Port Arthur or any other port on the Gulf of Pechili as a standing menace to Peking.(1) Muraviev in reply resolutely declared that his Government could not under any circumstances modify their claims.(2)

More serious news reached the Foreign Office on March 24th. For the Tsungli Yamen reported Russia's insistence on obtaining Talienwan and Port Arthur by the 27th of the same month, failing which hostile measures were threatened.(3) Mr. Balfour, temporarily replacing Lord Salisbury who was taken ill, saw M. de Staal at the Russian embassy the same day. He reproached the St. Petersburg Government with aiding in the dismemberment of China and setting a bad example to the Powers. But M. de Staal asserted Talienwan to be most essential for Russian commerce. As Port Arthur further overshadowed that port, it could not be left in the hands of another Power.(4)

(1) Ibid. No.123.

(2) Ibid. No.125.

(3) Parl. Reports No.1. China (1898) No.126.

(4) Ibid. No.128.



The persistence of the Muscovite claims in the Gulf of Pechili forced Britain to make a departure from her usual policy in China and seek a similar acquisition. Accordingly Sir Claude Macdonald was instructed on March 25th at Peking to obtain "in a manner most efficacious and speedy the refusal of Weihaihai" on the departure of the Japanese forces. For "the balance of power in the Gulf of Pechili" was "materially altered by the surrender of Port Arthur," and a British fleet was despatched to those waters.(1)

The Russian Government took formal lease of Port Arthur and the Liaotung Peninsula on March 27th. The period of control was fixed at twenty-five years, subject to renewal "by mutual agreement." Port Arthur was reserved for the use of Russian and Chinese warships only, while if she thought fit, Russia was enabled to erect fortifications. A part of Talienwan was also set apart for the sole use of the naval forces of both Empires, but the other part was to be "a commercial port freely open to the merchant vessels of all countries." (2) Indubitably the acquisition of Port Arthur was a diplomatic triumph for Russia. For China to all intents and purposes really bought back the Liaotung Peninsula, in order to present it to that

(1) Ibid. No.129.

(2) Parl. Reports No.1. China (1899) No.186.

(3) Parl Reports No.1. China (1898) Nos.133-4.

Power. On March 28th Lord Salisbury repeated his objections to the Russian occupation, which he thought "most unfortunate." M. de Staal presented him the same day with a detailed note respecting the territories ceded to Russia "en usufruct" by the Chinese Government.(1) But as "assurances of a more comprehensive character" regarding the Liaotung ports had been already given by Russia, Salisbury accepted the note as "not intended in any way to derogate from or restrict them."(2) Two days afterwards he telegraphed to St. Petersburg that he viewed "without jealousy" the demands for the Siberian railway concession and Tzlienwan." But in protesting against the occupation of Port Arthur he reserved "full liberty of action... for the protection of British interests."(3) However M. de Staal stated on April 4th that "British ships of war and commerce would be admitted to Port Arthur" on certain conditions. But Russia "could not abuse the right of use accorded her by China for.... arbitrarily transforming a closed military port into an ordinary commercial harbour."(4)

The remarks of the Russian journal "Novisti" early in April 1898 upon Anglo-Russian rivalry in the Far East are significant. "England, who has always opposed Russia's lawful

- (1) Parl. Reports No.1. China (1898) Nos.133-4.
- (2) Parl. Reports No.1. China.(1898) Nos.135-4.
- (3) Ibid. No.138.
- (4) Parl. Reports No.1. China (1898) No.149.

aspirations would obstruct her now, were she not happily isolated. It does not follow that because Russia has taken Port Arthur and Talienwan British trade must suffer. Russia is a continental Power and cannot compete with England, who has the ~~right~~ largest commerce fleet in the world.... The respective spheres of rivalry should be defined... without any military collision."<sup>(1)</sup> In the course of a debate on April 5th in Parliament, Mr. Balfour attempted to vindicate British diplomacy. He admitted the Government "felt almost a shock" when Russia "changed her assurances" in taking Port Arthur. But he considered the balance of power somewhat restored by the guaranteed non-alienation of the Yangtze valley and the coming occupation of Weihaiwei which China had granted. The House was further reminded that "railways were not made, nor millions of people absorbed in a day even by a Power with such powers of assimilation as Russia." In reply Messrs. Harcourt and Courtney deprecated the occupation of Weihaiwei as "a pis aller" and an "experimental Cyprus" which tended to violate the "open-door" policy. Remembering "Merv Bokhara, Khiva and Batum," Lord Charles Beresford justified the acquisition of Weihaiwei. As for the "open door," it was very nearly "a blind brick wall, already, and might soon become an ironclad one."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Parl. Reports. No.1. China (1899) No.14.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1898. pp.76-78.

Speaking later in the House, Mr Balfour pointed out that British diplomacy in the Far East was essentially "compelled to move in fetters" on account of the position of Russia. At the Albert Hall on May 4th Salisbury even declared Russia had made a great mistake at Port Arthur! But Mr Chamberlain perhaps estimated Far Eastern matters better than his colleagues in a speech at Birmingham nine days later. He thought war without allies was the only alternative to the Russian occupation of Port Arthur. Nevertheless Russia should be checkmated, for "who sups with the devil must have a long spoon." (1)

Although the final agreement with China was not signed till July 1st the British flag was hoisted at Weihaiwei on May 24th when the Mikado's forces withdrew. (2) In considering the respective claims of Britain, Japan and Germany to that station the "Moscow Gazette" showed an unusual preference for England. For Germany would have been a more formidable rival of Russia if she held both Kiao-Chau and Weihaiwei, while Japan was already very near and practically commanded the Yellow Sea. England was thought to be least offensive to Russia as Weihaiwei had no commercial future, being without a hinterland. "If the English cry quite we quite agree and hope a new era will begin

(1) Ann. Reg. 1898 pp.90-93.

(2) Parl. Reports No.1. China (1899) Nos.131 and 211.

for the East with the peaceful labours of civilization acting side by side... The English occupation of Weihaiwei marks the termination of our strained relations since the Shimonoseki Treaty. We are now fully warranted in hoping the amour propre of the English is satisfied in the Gulf of Pechili."<sup>(1)</sup>

But a rather serious struggle now took place between the two Powers over certain railway concessions in China. In 1897 a Belgian syndicate had obtained a provisional concession for the great trunk line from Peking to Hankow. This ran through the heart of the Yangtsze region which the Tsungli Yamen had promised Britain in January 1898 not to cede to any other Power. But owing to excessive burdens, the Belgian scheme threatened to fail. "The Times" of May 24th, 1898, however reported attempts of the Russian Government to continue the scheme by means of loans.<sup>(2)</sup> Alarm was naturally felt in Britain lest the Belgian syndicate were merely a Russian agency aiming at the control of the Yangtsze communications. For a Russo-Chinese bank was allowed to finance the southern section of the Peking-Hankow railway. On July 9th therefore the British Government informed the Tsungli Yamen that "a concession of this nature... becomes a political movement against British interests in the region of the Yangtsze."<sup>(3)</sup> At St. Petersburg

(1) Ann. Reg. 1898. p.278.

(2) Parl. Reports No.1. China. (1899) Nos.135 and 139.

(3) Ibid. No.175.

Count Muraviev declined to give any statement <sup>as to</sup> ~~and~~ "The Times" <sup>report</sup> ~~statement~~ of Russian negotiations for the Peking-Hankow line. (1)

But while the Tsungli Yamen denied all knowledge of the affair the scheme was provisionally rushed through on June 27th. (2)

Singular tardiness was exhibited by the British Government in attempting to counteract these measures. For it was not till July 16th that Salisbury instructed the British minister at Peking to similarly compete for a British concession for the Peking-Hankow line. (3) However this was now impossible; but Mr Balfour sought to outweigh the Russo-Belgian concessions in the Yangtze basin. For he demanded the Tsungli Yamen in August to immediately grant <sup>proposals for</sup> all British concessions throughout the Chinese Empire. Otherwise China's breach of faith would be considered "an act of deliberate hostility against this country." (4) which would then "act accordingly". After finally ratifying the Russo-Belgian concessions for the Peking-Hankow railway, the Tsungli Yamen submitted in September to Mr Balfour's demands. (5)

But in the meantime British financiers had not been idle in Northern China in the matter of railway extension. The Imperial railways in that region had been constructed as far as

- (1) Parl Reports No.1. China (1899) Nos.189-192.
- (2) Ibid. Nos. 207-210.
- (3) Ibid. No.233.
- (4) Ibid. No. 300.
- (5) Ibid. No. 314.

the Great Wall in 1894, and extensions northward were commenced. Mukden was meant to have been the terminus, but the lack of funds had arrested the progress of the line. The necessary finance however was offered by a British Syndicate, the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. A preliminary agreement was concluded with the Chinese Administrator - General of Railways on July 7th, 1898, whereby a loan was floated for making a line from Chang-kia-kow in Pechili to Sing-mingting in Manchuria. An extension from Shan-hai-Kwan to Niuchwang was also to be made. The actual line and rolling stock were to form the security of the loan, and in default of payment the concern was to be handed over and managed by the syndicate's representatives till such payment could be made.<sup>(1)</sup> This new British influence in Manchuria was naturally intolerable to Russia and M. Pavlov at Peking therefore interfered. On August 12th he protested before Tsungli Yamen against the pledging of the line to foreign creditors and opposed its subjection to foreign control in case of default.<sup>(2)</sup>

Correspondence was prolonged between the British and Russian Governments, but a fresh agreement was reached on October 10th. The responsibility for the payment of both principal and interest was laid on the Chinese Government. But

(1) Parl Reports No.1. China. (1899) Nos.220-221.

Also Ann. Reg. 1898. p.279.

(2) Ibid. Nos. 276-277.

until their aid had been requested in vain, the validity of the mortgage was not to be recognised. The clause of the original agreement whereby the chief engineer was to be a Britisher, was however retained. This agreement was later ratified on December 11th.<sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile suggestions had been mooted for a definite agreement defining the limits of Russian and British railway concessions in China. For on the one hand, British interests in the Niuchwang extension clashed with Russian aspirations in Manchuria. On the other hand, the scarcely concealed Russian influence over the Belgian syndicate running the Peking-Hankow railway tended to be injurious to British trade in the Yangtze valley. As Mr Chamberlain said, "An agreement... if possible, is a desirable thing... But after the experience we have had, we must remember no agreement between England and Russia can be perfectly valid unless... both parties willingly maintain that agreement, or unless one party is strong enough to enforce it!"<sup>(2)</sup>

Again in March 1899, M. Pavlov made mention of the undesirability of British railway encroachments upon Russian claims in Manchuria north of the Great Wall. He further advocated a better understanding on the matter between the two

(1) Parl. Reports. No. 1. China. (1899) No. 418.

(2) Ann. Reg. 1898. p. 180.



European Powers.<sup>(1)</sup> This sentiment was reciprocated by Sir Edward Grey a few days later, at Reading. For "a distrust was written large and very unpleasantly all over the last Blue-Book<sup>(2)</sup> on Chinese affairs. We created that distrust in the minds of the Russian Government in past years, and to discover the cause we ought to go back even to the time of the Crimean War."<sup>(3)</sup> The final result of negotiations between London and St. Petersburg was the exchange of identic notes of agreement on April 28th, 1899.

For, "animated by a sincere desire to avoid in China all cause of conflict on questions where their interests meet and taking into consideration the economic and geographical gravitation of certain parts of that Empire," Great Britain and Russia came to this understanding. England in future engaged "not to seek for her own account or on behalf of British subjects or others, any railway concessions to the north of the Great Wall of China." She undertook in addition "not to obstruct, directly or indirectly applications for railway concessions in that region supported by the Russian Government." On her part, Russia bound herself to observe exactly the same conditions with

(1) Parl. Reports.No.1. China. (1900) No.52.  
(2) i.e. Parl. Report No1. China (1898).  
(3) Ann. Reg. 1899 p.54.

With regard to British interests in the Yangtze basin. An "Additional Note" was appended to this agreement regarding the existing contract of the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation with the Chinese Government for the construction of the Shan-hai-Kwan - Niuchwang extension. Such was not to constitute a right of property or foreign control. But the line was to remain Chinese under the control of the Peking Government, and not alienable to a non-Chinese company. The Russian right for constructing railways traversing the same region however, was not to be affected by this special agreement<sup>(1)</sup>

In announcing at Westminster the conclusion of the new understanding, Lord Salisbury was anxious not to attach an exaggerated importance to its particular stipulations. He was notwithstanding assured of the great importance of the agreement itself, as a sign of good feeling between England and Russia.<sup>(2)</sup>

On the whole the part Britain played in Far Eastern matters was not fortunate in its results. Her commerce on the Asiatic coasts of the Pacific was considerably weakened by the expansion of Muscovite influence. Before the Chino-Japanese conflict for example, Russia bought all her tea in London. But

(1) Parl. Papers. Treaty Series No.11. (1899).  
(2) Ann. Reg. 1899. p.102.

since that time, she has obtained it direct from Hankow carrying it exclusively by means of the Russian Volunteer Fleet. China herself was not slow to recognise the decline of British prestige before that of Russia. The Admiral of the Yantsze told Lord Charles Beresford during his famous Chinese tour that his country "had been given away to Russia." General Li also made the following observation to the British sailor. "England is like an old man with plenty of money, who risks nothing to provoke a disturbance, knowing he has neither the energy nor power to protect his riches"<sup>(1)</sup> It was not till after the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 that Russian influence in the Far East was severely checked.

(1) Beresford. "The Break-up of China." pp.144-5.

### EPILOGUE.

---

"Come, Brotherhood of Nations, greet  
A Soul new found, with welcome meet;  
For Russia breaks her ancient chain."

- "Russia," by "A Teacher."

---

In the beginning of our story, the political sky of 1870 was overcast with ominous war-clouds and foreboded mistrust and strife between Britain and Russia. But the horizon of 1898 - 9 was suddenly flushed with a hue which promised the possibility of universal peace.

Particularly in the last four decades of the Nineteenth Century, the European Powers had feverishly increased their stock of armaments. But in Tsar Nicholas II, Russia had a ruler to whom an armed peace was abhorrent. On August 24th 1898, Europe was startled by the Tsar's proposal to the Powers for the universal reduction of armaments, contained in a circular to their several capitals. "The maintenance of universal peace and a possible reduction of the excessive

armaments which weigh upon all nations, represent..... the ideal aims towards which the efforts of all Governments should be directed. Being convinced (of) this high aim,... the Imperial Government considers the present moment a very favourable one for seeking by way of international discussion the most effective means of assuring for all peoples, the blessings of a real and lasting peace..... Hundreds of millions are spent to obtain frightful weapons of destruction....while national culture, economical progress and the production of wealth are either paralysed or turned into false channels of development..... The accumulation of war material renders the armed peace of today a crushing burden..... If this situation be prolonged, it will certainly lead to that very disaster which it is desired to avoid..... It is the supreme duty therefore,... of all States to put some limit to these <sup>unceasing</sup> ~~increasing~~ armaments,... and His Majesty the Emperor has been pleased to propose...the meeting of a conference to discuss this grave problem. Such a conference with God's help, would be a happy augury for the opening century."<sup>(1)</sup>

This extraordinary document was entirely unexpected of a monarch who only a few months before had ordered considerable additions to his navy. Besides he had presented every Montenegrin soldier with a rifle and his ministers were

(1)Parl. Reports.Russia No 1. (1899) No 1. and Ann. Register 1899 page 309.

pursuing a policy of continual aggression in China. Nevertheless Mr Balfour warmly endorsed the Tsar's sentiments on August 30th, but Lord Salisbury sent a more formal reply in October. British sympathy, he said was not confined to the Government, but was equally shared by popular opinion. "Her Majesty's Government will gladly co-operate in the proposed effort... and if in any degree it succeeds, they feel that the Sovereign at whose suggestion it is due, will have richly earned the gratitude of the world at large."<sup>(2)</sup> Nevertheless as time went on, there was a decreasing inclination in England to be sanguine with regard to any practical results from the conference. For while crediting the Tsar with the best possible motives, any general reduction of armaments was considered impracticable so long as Russia threatened Britain in India and China. The greatest unwillingness was also evinced to jeopardise the supremacy of the British navy.

Invitations were accordingly issued by Count Muraviev for the delegates of the Powers to assemble in conference. This took place at the Hague on May 20th 1899 under the presidency of M.de Staal the Russian plenipotentiary at London.<sup>(2)</sup> The despatch of the business was greatly facilitated by the resolution of the assembly into three committees. These respectively considered the limitation of armaments, the

(1) Ibid Nos 2 and 3.  
 (2) Parl. Reports No 1. Miscellaneous (1899) Nos 3, 8 and 12.

introduction of humanitarian methods into warfare, and the principle of international diplomacy and arbitration. Mainly owing to the dissension of the German representative and the difficulties inherent to varying conditions in different countries, the proposition for reducing armaments failed. Lord Fisher too successfully opposed the Russian delegate's proposal for the limitation in calibre of naval guns.<sup>(1)</sup>

But more successful results were achieved<sup>e</sup> by the second committee, for the propositions tending to lessen the cruelties of war were for the most part accepted. The application of the Geneva Convention to rules of naval warfare and the interdiction of dum-dum explosive bullets were approved.<sup>(2)</sup>

~~Most~~ Most valuable perhaps of all, were the results yielded by the third committee. It was a noteworthy felicity that while the Russian Emperor initiated the Hague Conference, the creation of a machinery for the harmonious application of international arbitration was proposed by Sir Julian Pauncefote the British delegate.<sup>(3)</sup> This was to be administered by a permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, composed of judges selected from representatives of each nation. To this body, all cases of international dispute were to be referred in the hope of possibly avoiding "the last resort of kings."

On July 29th 1899, the Peace Conference finally

(1)  
(2)  
(3)

Ibid  
Ibid  
Ibid

Nos 20, 31 and 40.  
Nos 38 and 47.  
No 59.

brought its sittings to a close<sup>(1)</sup> Its proceedings had been conducted in a spirit which on the whole revealed an earnest desire on the part of the delegates to give practical effect to the dreams of its promoter. Although no intrigues or quarrels had marked its assembly, nevertheless it effected less than the Tsar desired, but more than his critics expected. The time had not yet come for men to "beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks." A series of conventions embodying the decisions of the Hague Conference were finally signed by the great Powers on December 31st 1899.

During the same year M. Witte the Russian Finance Minister expressed his anxiety to see better economic and financial relations between Russia and Britain. He explained that England was practically the only market in which Russia could find relief for her existing agricultural depression. Nevertheless he recognised the dependence of commercial relations on public opinion "which is guided much more by political than by economic reasons." For when Englishmen "feel sympathy for any particular country, they are quite willing to purchase its products and place their money in its funds." Witte also recognised that resources could not be obtained from England while Russian diplomacy assumed an attitude of hostility to Britain. Accordingly he advocated



a policy of commercial and diplomatic intimacy between the two nations. "We can certainly assign sums of money, appoint commercial agents and establish commercial museums in London. But these measures will only be palliatives unless at the same time Russian and British merchants enter into direct and personal relations. Russian firms should send to England their agents to study the commercial customs of that country. Englishmen should come oftener to Russia in order to understand Russian ways and commercial habits. In this way public opinion in England would undoubtedly undergo the change which is so necessary for Russia, and then the great English market would be open to her products."<sup>(1)</sup>

+ + + + +

Fifteen years later, an Englishman was able to pen these words. "The two races are very different, but strangely complementary, and in Russia the value of English influences is realised. Her nascent constitutionalism looks to ours as its mother and its model; her people admire our characteristics and read our literature; her most carefully trained children are put into English hands and taught our language and our ways. We have something in our spirit that Russia needs. And she has something that will be good for us."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Ann. Register 1899 page 305.

(2) Oxford Pamphlets 1914 - 15. "Russia and Britain" by Percy Dearmer. also "The Nineteenth Century and After." January 1915

# BIBLIOGRAPHY.

## (A). General.

The Annual Register. 1870-1899.

The Cambridge Modern History. Vol.XII.

The Historians' History of the World. Vols. XVII, XXI,  
and XXIV.

Geoffrey Drage. Russian Affairs.

"O.K." (Madame Novikov.) Is Russia Wrong? England and  
Russia. 1876-1880.

J. Holland Rose. The Development of the European  
Nations. 1870-1914.

F. H. Skrine. The Expansion of Russia.

S. Stepniak. The Russian War-cloud.

## (B). Turkey and the Near Eastern Question.

Parliamentary Reports. Russia.

Parliamentary Reports. Turkey.

Sir E. Hertslet. The Map of Europe by Treaty, Vols.III,  
and IV.

W. Miller. The Ottoman Empire. 1801-1913.

The Duke of Argyll. Our Responsibilities for Turkey.

F. D. Greene. The Armenian Crisis in Turkey.

"Odysseus." (Sir E. Elliot.) Turkey in Europe.

M. E. Durham. The Burden of the Balkans.

(C). The Middle Eastern Question of Central Asia.

Parliamentary Reports. Afghanistan.

Parliamentary Reports. Central Asia.

Lord Curzon. Russia in Central Asia.

Sir H. Rawlinson. England and Russia in the East.

Alexis Krausse. Russia in Asia.

A Rodenburgh. Afghanistan and the Anglo-Russian Dispute.

E. O'Donovan. The Merv Oasis.

R. Marvin. The Russian Advance towards India.

A. R. Colquhoun. Russia against India.

R. I. Bruce. The Forward Policy and its Results.

Colonel Hanna. Can Russia invade India?

India's Scientific Frontier, what is it, where  
is it?

Backwards or Forwards?

D. Stuart. The Struggle for Persia.

(D). The Far Eastern Question.

Parliamentary Reports. China.

Lord Charles Beresford. The Break-up of China.

A. R. Colquhoun. China in Transformation.

The Problem of China and British Policy.

Lord Curzon. Problems of the Far East.

Sir R. K. Douglas. Europe and the Far East.

Sir H. Norman. Peoples and Politics of the Far East.

A. J. Sargent. Anglo-Chinese Commerce and Diplomacy.

J. Welton. China and the Present Crisis.

(E). Supplementary.

Sir J. Morley. Life of Gladstone. Bk.VI.ch.6.  
 Bk.VII. ch. 4, 5.  
 Bk.VIII. ch.1 and 10.

Sir A. Lyall. Life of Lord Dufferin. Chs. 8, 9, and 11.

Speeches on English Foreign Policy (ed. E. R. Jones).