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AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH.

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DECISION-MAKING IN THE DISRAELI GOVERNMENT IN
REGARD TO ARMED INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN:
AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH

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DECISION-MAKING IN THE DISRAELI GOVERNMENT IN
REGARD TO ARMED INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN:
AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the decade of the 1870s Britain was faced with the problem of what policy to pursue towards her neighbor, Afghanistan, on British India's Northwest frontier. The problem arose as a result of Russian expansion in Central Asia, and was further aggravated by Russia's war with Turkey which for a time threatened to precipitate war between England and Russia.

The question of what type of policy to have towards a neutral country in danger of going under the domination of an opposing power faced Britain in her relations with Afghanistan at this period. However, this question is still a very pertinent one today. In fact it is such situations that pose a threat to world peace, rather than the possibility of a direct confrontation between the major powers. There are enough similarities between the position in which Britain found herself in relation to Afghanistan, and the situation in which the United States now finds herself in relation to small neutral countries threatened by political and/or military

aggression, that it is hoped some of the points brought out by this study may be of some use in analyzing the current situation.

The decision of the British Government to enter upon a war with Afghanistan had far-reaching effects, for it not only contributed to financial difficulties in India, but it led to such a protestation on moral grounds that the support of the Conservative Government was greatly undermined. Gladstone made much of what was termed, by supposedly impartial reporters in the Annual Register, "a very wanton and a very wicked war."¹ The defeat of the Conservative Government in the general election of 1880 was due in no small degree to the disastrous results of the Afghan policy.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to discover just how the decision to declare war upon Afghanistan in November of 1878 was arrived at by the British Government. In doing this, the study hopes to answer such questions as: who was responsible for the formulation of British policy towards Afghanistan? What motivated that policy? Was sufficient information available for making a sound

¹Annual Register, 1878 (London: Longmans and Co., 1879), CXX, 194.

decision? Where was the decision made, and who was responsible for it?

In addition, it is hoped that certain hypotheses may be drawn concerning the decision-making process in general which may be of some value when applied to the study of other foreign policy decisions. Establishing the validity of such hypotheses will depend on many more research projects of this type being undertaken which utilize the decision-making approach, but perhaps the present study may make some contribution in the direction of helping establish certain data regarding the nature of decisions and decision-making.

Approach

The approach being used in this study is basically the decision-making approach as set forth by Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, in their book, Foreign Policy Decision-Making.² Glenn D. Paige's The Korean Decision,³ has also been used as a further guideline. This approach has been modified somewhat, and combined with certain aspects of the historical approach, such as

²Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, Foreign Policy Decision-Making (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

³Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision (New York: The Free Press, 1968).

providing historical background of the decision in order to better suit the case at hand. The mere fact that the decision was made almost ninety-three years ago necessitates providing some information pertaining to the background and environment in which the decision took place, in order to make it comprehensible.

The Snyder-Bruck-Sapin approach is essentially an ordering device. In developing their approach these three gentlemen believe that an understanding of all States is to be founded on an understanding of any one State through the use of a scheme which will permit the analytical construction of properties of action which are shared in common by all specific States. They reject the assumption that two different analytical schemes are required simply because two States behave differently. They approach State action from an Actor-Situation point of view, the Actors being those whose action is the action of the State, otherwise called decision-makers.

The scheme is intended to provide certain advantages. The frame of reference is designed to be more inclusive. The system provides for a limited number of categories for the phenomena of international relations, as well as for the identification of key variables which may explain State behavior. The focal point is shifted to the decision-maker, thus avoiding some of the problems of the objective-subjective dilemma. This focus also provides a way of

organizing the determinants of action around those officials who act for the political society. This aids in relating domestic factors to international politics.

This approach attempts to find out why one particular decision is made instead of another. This involves a look at alternatives and an attempt to discover what factors contributed to the particular selection. In doing this, emphasis is placed on three main variables: spheres of competence, information and communication, and motivation. These categories are further subdivided, with the idea being to take each bit of information and place it in the proper category. The format of this study, though based largely on the concepts of the Snyder-Bruck-Sapin approach, and encompassing their main topics, has been organized in a slightly different pattern.

Historical Setting

A background is given of the history of Anglo-Afghan relations, in order to establish a better understanding of the development of British policy towards Afghanistan. This serves to orient both the researcher and the reader, and inasmuch as the decision under consideration involves a change in policy, that change can only be understood on the basis of comparison with the preceding policy. Also, the past experiences of the British Government in dealing with Afghanistan provides

some sort of yardstick for measuring capability and competence in understanding and evaluating the past relationship, and its effect on the present.

Organizational Setting

Since decision-making behavior takes place within a complex organizational setting, it is necessary to be familiar with this setting in order to judge authority (competence) to act, as well as the decision-maker's role, actual and constitutional. The organizational structure, the chain of command, the various duties and functions of the offices concerned, are carefully analyzed, also the limitations of the various offices.

The Actors

This scheme focuses its main attention on the decision-makers. Therefore, it is important to study all phases of the various Actors which pertain to the decision. Each Actor is viewed from the standpoint of his office and role, including his role expectations. Also viewed are the Actor's background, experience, qualifications, value system, and personality.

Some of the specific points to be noted for this study include the Actors' views of imperialism, their stand on the Eastern Question, their attitude toward war and peace, and their feelings regarding the conduct of

foreign affairs.

Decision

The decision itself takes place within the organizational setting, and may be described as an input-output function, with the aggregation of the variables serving as the input, and the resultant decision as the output. This approach serves to point up the fact that decisions are not isolated events, but structured and determined by the variables. The final decision is generally the result of a sequence of events and factors, and also of intermediary decisions which set the stage for the final action.

Determinants of Decision

Under this category are considered the three basic variables pertaining to decisions, as outlined by Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, with a slight change in terminology, for the term "capability" has been substituted for "spheres of competence."

Communication and Information

The communication network closely parallels the authority relationship of the Actors. It is important for circulating orders and directives, and for supplying information from one department to another, or from one

Actor to another. In this particular decision the communication network was a vital link between the Home Government in London and the Government of India in Calcutta. The flow of information between these two points was essential for cohesive action, and when any inadequacies appeared in the transmittal of vital information, the results were apt to be serious.

Information must be viewed from both the standpoint of accuracy and interpretation. Thus the decision-maker's perception of information may be affected to varying degrees by both his motivation and his competence. Action is necessarily based in part on information, and thus the more accurate the information, and the freer the decision-maker from subjectivity in interpreting the information, the better the quality of the decision.

Motivation

Motivation has been described very simply by James Olds, who said, "Some quality in the system of things is presented, perceived; some other quality in the system of things is wanted, motivated; some path of behavior connects the presented quality to the wanted one, and the behavior is thereby motivated. . . . It is based on the present prediction of a specific outcome over this behavior

pathway, and the want for the specific outcome."⁴ Motives are not inherent but acquired, and possess the characteristic of durability and persistence. They have been described by Snyder, Bruck and Sapin as "acceptable justifications for present, past, and future programs of action."⁵

The motivation of foreign policy decision-makers tends to make them respond in specific, often predictable, ways to certain stimuli--rather like a conditioned stimulus-response situation. Motivation is extremely important to foreign-policy decisions, and thus a knowledge of the Actors' motivations is a key to the understanding of those decisions. Motivation, as viewed in this study, consists of national objectives, influences of social values and the needs and values of society on the Actors, and the significance of personality.

Capability

The third determinant of decision used in this study is capability. This factor necessarily enters into any foreign-policy decision in several aspects. First of all, the capability of the Actor to implement his decision, or his authority to act, must be considered. Secondly, as this decision involved war, military capability was important.

⁴James Olds, The Growth and Structure of Motives (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956), p. 197.

⁵Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, p. 146.

Another aspect of capability investigated is that of financial capability, for a decision involving full-scale hostilities must include a consideration of financial ability. Perhaps the most important aspect of capability in this particular instance, that of political capability, will also be considered.

Situation

The situation is the point at which the determinants of decision converge. After isolating each of the three variables for analytical purposes, they must then be connected, and in the process of the interrelationship become more comprehensible. Thus the decision-maker's view of the situation is a combination of his information plus motivation plus capability.

Scope

The present study is concerned with the specific decision of the British Government to declare war on Afghanistan in November of 1878. This particular decision presents several complications, such as the problem of long-distance decision-making versus on-the-spot decision-making; an overlapping of command; and a difference in perspectives. The change in British policy towards Afghanistan in March of 1876 is investigated, for it was this change that was eventually to lead to the decision. The

important intermediary decisions are also viewed due to their contribution to the final resolution.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The decisions that led to the Second Afghan War (1878-1880) had some of their roots in the past. Thus an understanding of the policy of the Disraeli Government toward Afghanistan necessarily entails a comprehension of Anglo-Afghan relations up to that time. In surveying the development of Anglo-Afghan relations, a certain pattern emerges. The "Forward Policy" as developed in the mid-nineteenth century actually was the same policy that dominated the scene from the very beginning of their relations. In Britain's successive attempts to establish her influence over Afghanistan, one primary motive stands out--that of the defense of India from foreign aggression, or more precisely from Russian aggression. Each time Russia began stretching out towards the south, the British reacted with a "forward policy," while as long as the situation was calm and without ostensible threats, a "stationary policy" prevailed.

The first British contact with Afghanistan was in 1808 when Mountstuart Elphinstone was sent by the British Government on a "magnificent embassy." Elphinstone's

mission was a result of the British fear of Russian and French designs on India, and had for its purpose an alliance between Britain and Afghanistan against those two powers.¹

Elphinstone and his suite were received by the Afghan Amir, Shah Shuja, in Peshawar. The mission was successful, and a formal treaty was drawn up which guaranteed British assistance to the Afghan ruler only in case of joint attack by France and Russia.

The second formal contact of the British with the Afghans was made by Alexander Burns, who belonged to the Bombay Army. With the approval of Lord Bentinck, then Governor-General of India, Burns started early in 1832 on a long journey through Peshawar, the Khyber Pass to Kabul and Bukhara. His mission was one of exploration, both geographic and political. He was well received by the Amir Dost Mohammed, and upon his return to India he brought with him optimistic reports about the development of good trade in the markets of Central Asia. In 1833 Burns was sent by Bentinck to England to give to the home government the results of his travels.²

¹Halford Lancaster Hoskins, British Routes to India (Philadelphia: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), p. 67.

²L. J. Trotter, Earl of Auckland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), pp. 40-41; Sir Kerr Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 88-89.

When the Whig Ministry of Lord Melbourne took over the reigns of government, Lord Auckland was appointed Viceroy of India. The ministry felt that "India was entering on a period of internal tranquility and prosperity."³ With this in mind, the Whig Ministry thought that Lord Auckland "could hardly make any very serious errors."⁴

While still in England, Lord Auckland shared the idea of Russophobia with Lord Palmerston who was then the head of the Foreign Office. Palmerston stated that "Russia must be forestalled" in her designs and intrigues against "the lands bordering India," and that "Afghanistan held the key position on the land route to India."⁵ Auckland brought with him from England a feeling of uneasiness in regard to Russian designs. Thus, afraid of the approach of Russian intrigue and its influence in Afghanistan, he ordered Alexander Burns in September 1836 to pay a visit to Kabul, nominally on a commercial mission.⁶ Actually, it soon turned into a political mission. Burns was very successful in his early negotiations with the Amir, and the

³Fraser-Tytler, pp. 83-84.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Paul Knaplund, The British Empire 1815-1939 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), p. 45.

⁶Archibald Forbes, The Afgan Wars, 1839-1842 & 1878-1880 (London: Seeley and Co., Ltd., 1896), p. 11.

Amir himself "was eager for a British alliance. . . ." ⁷

In the middle of November, 1837 a Russian agent arrived in Kabul and while Dost Mohammed was inclined toward the British, provided they would help him restore Peshawar under his authority (it had been annexed by the Sikh, Ranjit Singh in 1833 by force), the Amir "made no concealment of his approaches to Persia and Russia in despair of British good offices." ⁸

On January 20, 1838 Auckland wrote to Burns telling him that Dost Mohammed must give up all hope of obtaining Peshawar, that in keeping the peace between Lahore and Kabul the Government of India was really doing him (Dost Mohammed) a service of the highest value, and that consequently, Dost Mohammed must conclude no treaties with foreign powers on pain of British displeasure. ⁹ He wrote the same things to Dost Mohammed in a separate letter which offended the Amir because it was written "in a dictatorial and supercilious manner." ¹⁰

Burns was placed in a difficult position, and as a

⁷G. T. Garrett and Edward Thompson, Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 335.

⁸Forbes, p. 8.

⁹G. P. Moriarity, "India and the Far East 1833-1849," The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1815-1866 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1923), p. 206.

¹⁰Forbes, p. 9.

consequence his mission failed. With its failure, the Russian mission began to rise in importance. Thus Auckland resolved to replace Dost Mohammed with the restoration of Shah Shuja, who had been dethroned in 1809 and was a British prisoner in Ludianah, India.

While all this was going on, the Persian army, led by Mohammed Shah, had laid seige to Herat, an important city in northwestern Afghanistan. The Russians were also intriguing in the Persian Court, and this development seemed a further threat to British India.

On October 1, 1838 Lord Auckland issued the Simla Manifesto which set forth his policy and included the following points: (1) Denunciation of Dost Mohammed on the grounds that he had made a sudden unprovoked attack on Ranjit Singh, (2) that in the siege of Herat by the Persian Army Dost Mohammed was giving support to Persia, and (3) that his brothers, the chiefs of Kandahar, had "given their adherence to the plan of Persia."¹¹ Thus it was decided to send a British expedition into Afghanistan to establish Shah Shuja on the throne. Perhaps the prime motive for the whole expedition is contained in the following sentence from the Simla Manifesto:

The welfare of our possessions in the East requires that we should have on our western frontier an ally who is interested in the resisting of aggression and

¹¹Justin McCarthy, A History of Our Own Times (New York: International Book Co., 1894), I, 182.

establishing tranquility, in the place of chiefs ranging themselves in subservience to a hostile power, and seeking to promote schemes of conquest and aggrandizement.¹²

The siege of Herat was raised on September 8, 1838. "Hardly had the Manifesto of October 1, 1838 appeared, when news arrived from Persia which put the Government of India in a dilemma."¹³ But Auckland still wanted to prosecute his policy of the invasion of Afghanistan and the dethronement of Dost Mohammed, replacing him with an English "puppet" supported by British bayonets.

The British were successful in placing Shah Shuja on the throne, but not in maintaining him there. Archibald Forbes points out that under Shah Shuja's administration, "oppression and corruption were rampant in every department of internal administration. Both the nobles and people alike were resentful."¹⁴ The people were not contented, and "it soon became abundantly clear that the Shah had not even a small measure of Afghan support."¹⁵

By the Spring of 1841 the cost of continued occupation of Afghanistan was causing much anxiety both in Calcutta and London. Therefore, the British authorities

¹²Fraser-Tytler, p. 110.

¹³Moriarity, p. 207.

¹⁴Forbes, p. 35.

¹⁵Howard Robinson, The Development of the British Empire (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922), p. 202.

in India decided to reduce the number of troops in Kabul and to cut the subsidies paid to the chiefs to keep the passes open.¹⁶ When the allowances of the Chiefs were cut, the Eastern Ghilzais revolted. Though at first they seemed like isolated local outbreaks, the insurrections continued until they reached Kabul, finally precipitating the First Afghan War.

The British Commander at Kabul was General Elphinstone, who was ill, incompetent and desirous of being relieved of his post. He attempted to withdraw British troops, after the massacre of Sir Alexander Burns and his household and the murder of the British envoy, Sir William Macnaghten. "Disorganization and panic marked the departure of the army; deceit and treachery followed the army to its destruction in the passes beyond the city."¹⁷ Out of sixteen thousand soldiers only one man lived to reach Jellalabad. Thus the first British attempt to establish control over Afghanistan ended in disaster. "Though our military success, and apparently our political success, was complete for a time, the result was, as everyone knows, most disastrous in every point of view, and no one of any authority is now found

¹⁶E. L. Woodward, The Age of Reform (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 204.

¹⁷George D. Bearce, British Attitudes Towards India (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 269.

to defend either the justice or the wisdom of our measures."¹⁸

Following the British defeat, Dost Mohammed was released from prison and subsequently returned to Afghanistan to resume his throne. He was naturally hostile to the British for some years following, but in 1855 he agreed to enter into a treaty with the East India Company. By the terms of this treaty, the East India Company agreed to respect the Afghan territories held by the Amir, and in return the Amir agreed to respect the territories of the East India Company.¹⁹

Anglo-Afghan relations were further strengthened by another treaty made between the Company and Dost Mohammed on January 26, 1857. At this time Britain was at war with Persia, and a great deal of the treaty has to do with the war, but some points of future importance were contained in it. For one thing, the Company agreed to pay the Amir a subsidy of a lakh (10,000 L.) of rupees a month for military purposes, providing at the same time for British officers to reside in Afghanistan to see that funds were properly spent. The subsidy was to be discontinued upon the cessation of hostilities between Britain and

¹⁸Causes of the Afghan War: Being a Selection of Papers Laid before Parliament (London: Chatto and Windus, 1879), p. 1. Cited hereafter as C.A.W.

¹⁹Treaty between the East India Co. and Ameer Dost Mohammed, May 1, 1855, C.A.W., p. 2.

Persia, and the British officers to be withdrawn. However, there was one further provision which was to become an important issue in years to come:

Whenever the subsidy shall cease, the British officers shall be withdrawn from the Ameer's country; but at the pleasure of the British Government a Vakeel, not a European officer, shall remain at Cabul on the part of the Government, and one at Peshawar on the part of the Government of Cabul.²⁰

On June 9, 1863, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Elgin, Dost Mohammed died. He had acknowledged his son, Sher Ali, as his successor. However, his other sons disputed Sher Ali's claim to the throne and a civil war ensued during which the British Government maintained a "hands-off" policy. Lord Elgin thought it more prudent to await the outcome and then recognize whoever could establish his rule.

The civil strife continued for several years, and Britain was able to maintain her avowed policy, which was reiterated by Lord Lawrence, then Viceroy, on June 20, 1867 in a report to Sir Stafford Northcote, Secretary of State:

Whatever happens, we contemplate no divergence from our settled policy of neutrality; unless indeed Shere Ali or any other party should throw themselves into the hands of Persia and obtain assistance from the Shah. . . . Thus whether the brothers Afzul Khan and Azum Khan maintain their hold on the Bala Hissar, or whether Shere Ali, with Fyz Mahomed's aid, regain the throne of his inheritance, our relations with

²⁰Treaty between the East India Company and Ameer Dost Mohammed, January 26, 1857, Article 7, C.A.W., p. 2.

Afghanistan remain on their first footing of friendship towards the actual Rulers, combined with rigid abstention from interference in domestic affairs.²¹

During the year 1868, Sher Ali was able to establish his supremacy over his rivals, and to become in effect, Amir of Afghanistan. While Sher Ali may have been vexed by the lack of British support during the war with his brothers, he did not display any public hostility, and on the contrary, shortly after assuming power he told the British agent in Kabul that he would go to Calcutta, or send envoys for "the purpose of a meeting, and to show my sincerity and firm attachment to the British Government, and make known my real wants."²²

While the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan was followed after 1842 by six Governors-General, from Dalhousie to Northbrook, the seeds of the "Forward Policy" were at the same time being sown. After 1842 first Sind and then the territories of the Sikhs were occupied by the British. This conquest of the Punjab in 1849 was precipitated by the steady advance of Russia into Central Asia. The effect of this was to greatly extend the British Northwest frontier.

However, no further movement was officially considered until 1865 when Sir Stafford Northcote forwarded

²¹Report from Lord Lawrence, Viceroy of India to Sir Stafford Northcote, Secretary of State, June 20, 1867, C.A.W., pp. 5-6.

²²C.A.W., p. 9.

to the Government of India a memorandum written by Sir Henry Rawlinson, a member of the Secretary of State's Council. Rawlinson had served at Kandahar during the First Afghan War, and though he had been away from the area for almost twenty-five years, he was still looked upon as somewhat of an expert. In this memorandum Sir Henry cited the dangers from Russia, and advised an attempt to extend British authority. This he proposed to do by subsidizing and strengthening Sher Ali at Kabul; by recovering the British position in Persia; and by completion and improvement of communications with the Afghan frontier. He also proposed consideration of the establishment of fortifications at Quetta above the Bolan Pass, a matter already suggested by others. But here he recognized that there might be repercussions which would negate the unquestionable military advantage of such a project, ". . . but if, as is more probable, the tribes in general regarded this erection of a fortress--above the passes, although not on Afghan soil--as a menace, or as a preliminary to a further hostile advance, then we should not be justified, for so small an object, in risking the rupture of our friendly intercourse."²³

Rawlinson's argument for interfering in Kabul was that it would be of definite advantage to keep good order

²³Confidential memorandum from Sir Henry Rawlinson to Sir Stafford Northcote, 1865, C.A.W., p. 13.

in a country adjoining the Indian frontier, and he also suggested the formation by British agents of a confederacy of Mohammedan States to counter Russia. His argument for interfering in Persia was that Russia might otherwise seize Herat.²⁴

At the time, Rawlinson's opinions were not shared by the major Indian officers, such as Lord Sandhurst, then Commander-in-Chief, R. H. Davies, Lord Lawrence, Sir Richard Temple, H. S. Maine, and John Strachey. These gentlemen delivered the joint opinion of the Government of India to the Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, in a dispatch dated January 4, 1869. Herein they avowed their belief that it would be unwise, both politically and financially, to depart from the already established principles of non-interference. They particularly pointed to the formidable difficulties involved in any attempt to establish, support, and supply troops in necessarily isolated positions at a great distance from British territories. Such an undertaking would be so costly in money as to place a great burden on India. They felt that these factors should be considered equally with those of Russia's advance in Central Asia and her military occupation of Samar and Bokhara.²⁵

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Dispatch from the Government of India to the Duke of Argyll, Sec. of State for India, January 4, 1869, C.A.W., pp. 19-20.

The Indian officials felt strongly that the best defense against any possible Russian aggression in Afghanistan was still the policy of non-interference. This would aid in developing friendship among the natives both in Afghanistan and India, while permitting the build-up of a strong defensive system on India's Northwest frontier as a deterrent to aggression.

The only new proposal they had to make was that of attempting to reach some sort of understanding with the Russian government as to its projects and designs in Central Asia, and of giving the Russians to understand that they would not be permitted to interfere in Afghanistan. These gentlemen were also of the opinion that the Russian threat was greatly over-emphasized:

. . . The truth appears to us to be, that the advances of Russia, coupled with the constant allusions made in the newspapers to her progress as compared with what is called the inaction of the British Government, have produced in the minds of Europeans and Natives, what we believe to be an exaggerated opinion of her resources and power. A mutual good understanding between the two Powers, though difficult of attainment would enable us to take means to counteract unfounded rumours and to prevent unnecessary alarms.²⁶

This dispatch also contains a prediction as to a future change in policy when they state that "some writers possibly imagine that a change in the Head of the administration may be a fit occasion for a change in our foreign or

²⁶Ibid., pp. 21-22.

domestic policy."²⁷

Thus the first inklings of possible policy change were in the air. Rawlinson and Sir Bartle Frere became active supporters of a "forward policy," and their ideas were made more acceptable in view of the supposed threat of Russian aggression. Even so, it was not until the new Conservative Government of Disraeli sent Lord Lytton as Viceroy to India in 1877 with instructions to press European Residents on the Afghan Amir that the policy actually changed. Up until then, no responsible officer in India had advised any extension of the Indian frontier or any extension of British political influence, except by "peaceful and gentle means."²⁸

The following March (1869) the Conference of Umballa took place between Lord Mayo and Sher Ali. By this time the Amir had firmly established his rule and stabilized the government. Thus the British felt it was now time to assist him, monetarily and militarily, and by so doing strengthen their friendship as a guard against Russian designs. The Home Government, while in sympathy to the general idea of a conference and the development of better understanding between Britain and Afghanistan, had some reservations, and the Secretary of State for India wrote

²⁷Ibid., p. 21.

²⁸C.A.W., p. 26.

Lord Mayo on May 14, 1869 telling him that he ought not to bind the Government too tightly to any promises, and that any assistance should be at the discretion of the Indian Government under direction of the Home Government. "It ought to depend not only upon the conduct of the Ruler of Afghanistan in his relations with the Government of India, but to some extent also upon his conduct in his relations with his own people."²⁹ Thus if Sher Ali were to show himself as "cruel and oppressive" to his own subjects, the British Government should have the option to withhold all assistance from him.

The Viceroy replied to Argyll by sending him on July 1, a complete resume of the conference, which held some surprises for the British Government. Sher Ali came to the Conference expecting a great deal more than the British were prepared to give. First of all, he desired a treaty supplementary to that of 1857 with his father; secondly, he wanted the British to declare themselves friends of any friends of the Amir's, and enemies of any of his enemies; third, he wanted a declaration that the British Government would never recognize any ruler of Afghanistan except the Amir and his descendants. Further, he desired the promise of a fixed subsidy. And finally, he did not want the British Government to be the sole judge

²⁹Letter from the Duke of Argyll to Lord Mayo, May 14, 1869, C.A.W., p. 32.

of when and how future assistance would be given, but rather it should be dependent on the needs of the Amir, "as his welfare should require."³⁰

It is necessary to note that the wishes of the Home Government in this matter were not expressed to the Viceroy before the Conference took place. However, the Viceroy's actions were generally in keeping with the tardy expressions of the Home Government's desires. Thus the promises made to the Amir did not exceed former promises or extend British liabilities. The Viceroy refused to make a treaty with Sher Ali, to send any European troops to assist the Amir, to grant any fixed subsidy, or to give any pledges of dynastic recognition. On the other hand, he did promise the Amir his recognition and support, such material assistance as the Government of India felt necessary, friendly communications, and non-interference in his affairs.³¹ The one other important pledge was that the British would not force European officers upon him. Sher Ali was adamant on this last point, as he felt that the residence of any European officers in his dominions "would do him harm in the eyes of the people."³²

³⁰Dispatch to Duke of Argyll by Government of India, July 1, 1869, C.A.W., p. 34.

³¹Ibid., p. 37.

³²Letter from Mr. Seton Karr, Foreign Secretary of the Indian Government to Lord Lawrence, April 5, 1869, C.A.W., p. 39.

Sher Ali soon had an occasion to be dissatisfied with the British Government. For a long time the Afghans and the Persians had been quarrelling over the border country of Seistan. Finally, both parties agreed to let the British Government arbitrate the quarrel, and accordingly in the autumn of 1872 General Goldsmid awarded a portion of the disputed territory to each. Neither was satisfied, and Sher Ali, in particular, felt that as a supposed British ally he should have been treated better.

About the same time another and more ominous controversy was brewing, this time involving Russia. It involved a border dispute over the districts of Wakhan and Badakhshan, which Sher Ali claimed as a part of Afghanistan. This time the British persuaded Russia to recognize Sher Ali's title over the disputed territory. However, the dispute had the greater effect of bringing Afghanistan and Russia into closer political contact.

As a result of the Afghan-Russian border dispute, the Simla Conference was arranged, as the British wished to advise Sher Ali as to the settlement. Sher Ali also wished some clarification of the British position, and in a letter to the then Viceroy, Lord Northbrook he stated his anxieties:

As for the recently defined boundary of Northern Afghanistan, whatever views the British Government may have entertained about it, great anxiety weighs on me day and night, and I am not in any moment relieved from it, that the juxtaposition of boundaries

with Russia will involve difficulty in making provision for the security of the borders in the interests of both Governments.³³

And he also expressed his desire to have one of his representatives meet with the British Government to find their views on the matter and to express his.

The Simla Conference which took place in July, 1873, revealed the Amir's alarm at Russian progress, and his desire to know just how far the British were prepared to go in helping him, should Afghanistan be invaded by Russia. Northbrook cabled the Secretary of State for instructions and was told that the Cabinet wished him to inform Sher Ali that it did not share his alarm and moreover that they felt there was no cause for it, "but you may assure him we shall maintain our settled policy in favour of Afghanistan, if he abides by our advice in external affairs."³⁴

Accordingly, Northbrook advised Noor Mahomed, Sher Ali's representative that the British Government was prepared to assure the Amir that they would give him assistance in arms and money, and if the necessity should arise, aid him with troops, but that the British Government would maintain the right to decide when and to what extent such assistance would be given. Moreover, any assistance

³³Letter from Sher Ali to Lord Northbrook, April, 1873, C.A.W., p. 42.

³⁴Telegram from Secretary of State to the Viceroy, July 26, 1873, C.A.W., p. 43.

would be conditional upon the abstinence of the Amir himself from aggression, and upon his "unreserved acceptance of the advice of the British Government in regard to external relations."³⁵

The Viceroy also suggested at this conference that it would be a good idea to send a British officer to examine the western and northern boundaries of Afghanistan. He felt that the presence of accredited British officers at Kabul, Herat and Kandahar might be desirable, but he was fully aware of the difficulties of accomplishing this. He hoped that sending an officer to examine the boundaries might help break down some of the obstacles to having British agents in Afghanistan as "a judicious officer would have it in his power to do much towards allaying any feelings of mistrust that may still linger in the minds of some classes of the people in Afghanistan, and towards preparing the way for the eventual location of permanent British representatives in that country, if such a measure should at any time be considered desirable or necessary."³⁶

From the Simla Conference to January, 1875 the British policy towards Afghanistan remained essentially the same as before, although from time to time each side did something the other did not like. During this period

³⁵C.A.W., pp. 44-45.

³⁶Report to the Duke of Argyll from the Government of India, September 15, 1873, C.A.W., pp. 49-50.

Sher Ali did receive letters from the Russian General Kaufman, all of which, with the Amir's replies, were shown to the Nawab Atta Mahomed Khan, the British Vakeel at Kabul. This correspondence apparently gave the Viceroy no cause for alarm.

However, in January, 1875 Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State, set forth his desire for a new policy in a letter to the Secret Department of the Council of India. Salisbury's main stated objective was the establishment of a British Agency at Herat, to be followed by one at Kandahar. His desire for this, according to his statements, was prompted by a need for more accurate intelligence and information than was presently being supplied:

Her Majesty's Government are of the opinion that more exact and constant information is necessary to the conduct of a circumspect policy at the present juncture. The disposition of the people in various parts of Afghanistan, the designs and intrigues of its chiefs, the movement of nomad tribes upon its frontier, the influence which foreign Powers may possibly be exerting within and without its borders, are matters of which a proper account can only be rendered to you by an English agent residing in the country.³⁷

Salisbury also stated that at one time Sher Ali had expressed his willingness to receive a European officer, and thus if he were truly a friend of the British he should now have no objection to it. This appears to have been a misinterpretation on Salisbury's part, as

³⁷Letter from Lord Salisbury to the Governor-General of India, January 22, 1875, C.A.W., p. 55.

Sher Ali had always been most adamant in his refusal to admit any British Residents.

After hearing Salisbury's request, the Council of India undertook to ascertain certain pertinent information from the Government of the Punjab, the local government which was primarily responsible for the proper conduct of Afghan affairs. They requested information as to whether the Amir of Afghanistan would consent to European British Residents, and whether such Residents would be advantageous to the British Government. The Council also requested an evaluation of the quality of the present information being received from the Vakeel.

The Punjab officials, represented by R. H. Davies, replied that it was their opinion that under the present circumstances the Amir would not willingly consent to the establishment of European British officers as Residents anywhere in Afghanistan, and that the presence of such Residents would be of no advantage to the British, particularly if they were there against the wishes of the Amir. Mr. Davies also noted the dangers of intrigues and involvement in incidents which could lead to recriminations and from bad to worse. He was also doubtful that such Residents would serve any useful purpose informationwise that could not be obtained by some more acceptable means, and at the same time he praised the quality and accuracy of the information then being conveyed by the native agent at

Kabul. He concluded, "I do not think that any innovations on the existing system would, at the present time be of any advantage, and I consider that the Ameer having now got Herat into his own hands, will probably be himself sensitive of any menace to it, and will not be slow to apprise the British Government thereof."³⁸

Despite the views and the recommendations of the Council of India to the contrary, Lord Salisbury sent orders to the Governor-General in Council to proceed "without any delay that you can reasonably avoid," to send a Mission to Kabul and to press for the reception of this mission. He again stressed the inadequacy of information then being received from Afghanistan, and showed his real concern to be that of fear of a Russian advance in that direction, be it a military advance, an advance by sedition and insurrection, or an advance by obtaining a direct influence over the Amir.³⁹

The Council's response was not very enthusiastic, and pointed out that from their vantage point they could see no imminent threat from Russia, nor any valid reason for imposing British Agents, for even if the latter were

³⁸Minute by Lt. Governor of the Punjab, R. H. Davies, to the Sec. of the Government of India in the Foreign Dept., No. 48 C. P. March 25, 1875, C.A.W., pp. 60-61.

³⁹Dispatch from Lord Salisbury to the Governor-General in Council, No. 33, Secret No. 34, Nov. 19, 1875, C.A.W., p. 69.

accepted, they would be so closely watched as to make their usefulness as informers very slight indeed.

Thus it was to take a new Viceroy before the new policy could be initiated.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

Creation of British India

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the making and carrying out of foreign policy regarding India was a rather complex, and at times dualistic, process. At first glance it is not apparent where the actual decision-making authority rested. In order to clarify this point it is necessary to examine the structure of the bodies involved in this decision-making process. The administration of India differed vastly from that of the other British colonies due to the fact that for almost three hundred years it had been under the rule of the East India Company. However, the Crown had gradually exercised control over the Company, and beginning with the Regulatory Act of 1773, the first of a long series of statutes, it had reduced the effective powers of the Board of Directors.¹

This came about when the British people and Parliament awoke to the fact that the East India Company

¹Ramsay Muir, The Making of British India (London: Longman's Green and Co., 1915), p. 380.

had possession of an immense territory in India, where it was exercising sovereign rights, such as raising armies, declaring war, negotiating peace, and conducting other affairs which would normally be beyond the scope of a trading association.

The Company claimed to hold this territory as its own private property, and for a time Parliament had gone along with this, exacting an annual tribute of L400,000.² However, the Company's debts and the confusion of its affairs in India led the nation and Parliament to initiate reforms which gradually extended governmental control over the Company and its affairs in India. While the Company's governmental functions theoretically continued, in practice they were greatly curtailed. All important dispatches were still addressed to the Board of Directors, but they were immediately passed on to the British Government, and the Board of Directors could take no action upon them without the Government's consent. Moreover, while the Directors nominally appointed and paid their officers in India, the chief officers were in reality the nominees of the Government. From the Governor-General on down, the servants of the Company knew that the authorities to whom they really had to answer were the British Cabinet and the Indian Minister, and behind them, the British Parliament.³

²Sir T. W. Holderness, Peoples and Problems of India (New York: Henry Holt and Co., n.d.), p. 159.

³Muir, p. 380.

By the time the Crown decided to officially take over the government of India, a dual system of government had developed, and this duality, in essence at least, was to continue. Since the Crown had been steadily increasing its control over the Company's affairs, the transfer involved less change than might appear at first sight. The transfer was effected by the Government of India Act of 1858, wherein the Queen proclaimed the change to the princes, chiefs and people of India. This Act transferred all the powers and properties of the Company to the Crown, and set up a Secretary of State with an Indian Council of fifteen members to take the place of the Board of Control and of the Board of Directors. "This is, in effect, the only change which the Act made. It is a change of form rather than of substance."⁴

The Crown

Walter Bagehot, in his essay on the English Constitution states that "it would very much surprise people if they were only told how many things the Queen could do without consulting Parliament. . . ."⁵ Among those possibilities he mentions her power to disband the army, make peace, declare war, pardon all offenders, make

⁴Ibid., p. 381.

⁵Walter Bagehot, The English Constitution and Other Political Essays (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1897), pp. 31-32.

every citizen a peer, etc. "In a word, the Queen could by prerogative upset all the action of civil government within the government, could disgrace the nation by a bad war or peace, and could, by disbanding our forces . . . leave us defenceless against foreign nations."⁶ This essay, written at the height of Victoria's reign, serves to point out the position of the monarch at this point in time. It might appear that the Queen would therefore be supreme in matters of foreign affairs and foreign policy. However, there existed two powerful checks on the monarch which served to diminish her power. The first was the check of impeachment for high treason which could be brought against any minister who advised the Queen to use her prerogative in a way that might endanger the safety of the country. The second, and most commonly used check, is the change of ministry, which in general causes ministers to look long and carefully before taking action. However, this check has its weaknesses, as the removal from office does not solve the problem or remedy the predicament.⁷

By the time of Queen Victoria the British Monarchy had lost much of its power. The oldest form of the English Constitution considered the monarch as an "Estate of the Realm," a separate coordinate authority, together

⁶Ibid., p. 32.

⁷Ibid., p. 34.

with the House of Lords and the House of Commons. But such authority could only be exercised by a monarch with a legislative veto, which the Queen did not possess. Any legislative power was a fiction of the past, and she had long ceased to have any. As Bagehot points out, "She must sign her own death warrant if the two Houses unanimously send it up to her."⁸

Despite the limitations on royal authority, the real royal power lay in the use of royal influence. The strength and importance of such influence is a variable that is difficult to measure. It is a factor determined to a great extent by the forcefulness and personality of the monarch. As Laski points out, "It is clear enough that a monarch who takes his duties seriously is a force to be reckoned with in our system . . . the immense social prestige of the Monarchy gives to the King's views a weight and an authority it is impossible to ignore."⁹ Thus the wise Prime Minister must take the opinion of the Monarch into account in making his decisions.

The Prime Minister

Although the monarch was somewhat of a force to be reckoned with, the real power in foreign affairs rested

⁸Ibid., p. 25.

⁹Frank Hardie, The Political Influence of Queen Victoria (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1963), pp. 14-15.

(and rests) with the Prime Minister and his cabinet. The nature and extent of this power has been described by Bagehot as follows:

Now, beforehand, no one would have ventured to suggest that a committee of Parliament on Foreign relations should be able to commit the country to the greatest international obligations without consulting either Parliament or the country. No other select committee has any comparable power; and considering how carefully we have fettered and limited the powers of all other subordinate authorities, our allowing so much discretionary power on matters peculiarly dangerous and peculiarly delicate to rest in the sole charge on one secret committee is exceedingly strange.¹⁰

During the nineteenth century, the majority of political crises were over questions of foreign policy or new laws. However, in the case of foreign policy the crises were after the fact. In other words, the policy was inaugurated and then it was criticized, and the Prime Minister and his cabinet stood or fell on the basis of a committed policy, not of a proposed one.

During this period the strength of the Prime Minister in relation to the other members of his cabinet depended a great deal upon his abilities, external circumstances, and the attitudes and abilities of his colleagues. The rise of Gladstone and Disraeli did much to increase the power of the Prime Minister because of their dynamic personalities. This increase in power was further aided by the Suffrage Act of 1867 and the centralization

¹⁰Bagehot, pp. 35-36.

of party organization.¹¹

The extension of suffrage stimulated the growth of political parties and gave them more of a basis for power as public opinion began to have a greater force than before. The parties, in turn, became more highly disciplined. The Prime Minister stood at the apex of the party organization and was recognized as the party leader. As such he could draw upon the organized power of the party in the House of Commons, where its members were pledged to a general acceptance of the party program. Thus the Prime Minister could depend on his party's support in Parliament for his policies.¹²

The Prime Minister's position was further strengthened by the fact that the electorate tended to equivocate the party with its head figure. This made disagreement with a successful Prime Minister a rather hazardous undertaking, and tended to discourage such disagreement within the party.

Although the fiction that the Prime Minister was the King's Minister was maintained by means of formal selection by the monarch, the choice of Prime Minister was in reality that of the predominant party in Parliament. This was assured by the fact that the monarch's appointment

¹¹Byrum Carter, The Office of the Prime Minister (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1955), p. 35.

¹²Ibid., p. 39.

had to be given to a member of the House of Commons who was able to command the support of a majority of that House.

During the nineteenth century the power of appointment of cabinet members, as well as subordinate ministerial posts, was shifted from the monarch to the Prime Minister. However, the prerogative of cabinet appointment had several limitations. All ministers had to be selected from members of Parliament. The position of many members of Parliament forbade their being appointed to the cabinet, while the position of others almost insured their invitation.

"Between the compulsory list whom he must take, and the impossible list whom he cannot take, a prime minister's independent choice in the selection of a cabinet is not very large; it extends rather to the division of the cabinet offices than to the choice of cabinet ministers."¹³

In addition to appointing his fellow ministers, the Prime Minister also had charge of appointing ambassadors, bishops, the highest judges, and all the higher officials in the various departments. Moreover, he directed the general policy of the whole government, and had to be consulted on every matter of importance which arose in any department. Thus he had to be well acquainted with the conditions and tasks of each department in order

¹³Bagehot, p. 80.

to carry out his responsibilities.¹⁴ These varied duties of guiding legislation in Parliament, gathering together party forces, and conducting the administration of the government, called for character and ability of the highest order in a Prime Minister.

While the power of the Prime Minister is obvious, as is his supremacy over the cabinet, the need for the delegation of authority is also apparent. No doubt general policy was formulated to a considerable degree by the Prime Minister, with the backing of his ministers and party. However, he necessarily relied in a great part upon his appointees to carry out his policy as they saw fit. Although the Prime Minister doubtless made every effort to keep informed on all matters of grave importance, day to day details of administration were left in charge of those whom he felt shared his objectives and viewpoint.

A word might be said about the Cabinet during this period. The meetings of the Cabinet were in both theory and practice held in secret. In most instances no official minutes were kept of the Cabinet meetings. "The House of Commons, even in its most inquisitive and turbulent moments, would scarcely permit a note of a cabinet meeting to be

¹⁴David Duncan Wallace, The Government of England; National, Local, and Imperial (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), p. 136.

read."¹⁵ Thus the innermost workings of government were not public property, nor even necessarily party property.

Then as now, foreign affairs were conducted under the prerogative of the Crown and consequently treaties, agreements, and other international relationships could be entered into by the British Government without the necessity of previous authorization by Parliament, or even the necessity of ratification.¹⁶ The chief responsibility for foreign policy rested with the Prime Minister who supervised the work of the Foreign Secretary. The Prime Minister had the task of harmonizing foreign policy with domestic and general policies of the government, as well as making decisions which he feels are too important to be left to the discretion of the Foreign Secretary. Thus the Prime Minister must see all the important correspondence of the Foreign Office and be kept informed of all important developments.

The same rights and duties of the Prime Minister in the matter of foreign affairs pertained also in the case of India, where his relationship with the Secretary of State for India was like that with the Foreign Secretary. Of course both were members of the Cabinet.

¹⁵Bagehot, p. 82.

¹⁶Carter, p. 295.

Secretary of State for India

In theory the Indian government was responsible to the English Parliament, but in practice it was primarily the responsibility of the Secretary of State for India. The Secretary of State for India was in a position which differed constitutionally from the other Secretaries of State. In the first place his salary was not paid from British revenues, but rather from Indian revenues. Thus his policy could not be reviewed in Parliament, as in the case of other departments, when Supply was being considered. And secondly, he had to act with a council. Both of these differences were survivals of Company rule.¹⁷

These differences served to diminish Parliamentary control over the actions of the Secretary of State for India. Although Parliament legally had the same unlimited sovereignty over India as over other parts of the Empire, or over England itself, it chose for the most part to leave the government of India in the hands of experienced men. Throughout the years of British control of India, Parliament rarely interfered beyond the point of controlling general policy, or the relations of India toward the rest of the Empire or the outside world. Parliament passed few laws for India, and when it did, it used "wide and

¹⁷J. Ramsay MacDonald, The Government of India (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., n.d.), p. 45.

general terms, leaving all details and some important matters of principle to be determined by regulations and rules made by the authorities in India."¹⁸

The rank and file of the members of Parliament were either ignorant of or indifferent to questions regarding India. J. Ramsay MacDonald claimed that British opinion on Indian affairs did not exist, "except on odd events at odd times" and that as a result very few subjects in Parliament took a continuous interest in Indian affairs, or had any real knowledge of them.¹⁹ This fact is pointed up by the notable lack of interest in the Indian budget. For whereas months were spent considering the British budget, only a few hours were spent on the Indian budget, and at that, the sessions were poorly attended. This was probably due to the fact that in the case of the British budget, members of Parliament had a responsibility to their constituents, which did not exist in the case of the India budget.²⁰

William E. Gladstone made this observation on the administration of India:

[The administration of India] depends upon a cabinet, which dreads nothing so much as the mention of an Indian question at its meetings; on a minister, who knows that the less his colleagues hear of his proceedings, the better they will be pleased; on a

¹⁸Wallace, p. 311.

¹⁹MacDonald, p. 51.

²⁰Sudhindra Bose, Some Aspects of British Rule in India (Iowa City, Iowa: The Chesnutt Printing Co., 1916), p. 44.

Council, which is not allowed to enter into his highest deliberations; and on a Parliament, supreme over them all, which cannot in its two Houses jointly muster one single score of persons who have either practical experience in the government of India or tolerable knowledge of its people, or its history.²¹

The Secretary of State for India was generally selected for his qualifications of information and judgment. Since at least one of the five Secretaries of State had to be selected from the House of Lords, often this was the Indian Secretary. Of course this was a Cabinet position which necessitated the Secretary being a staunch party member, and as such to have certain party biases. This in turn affected his Indian policies in the areas of finances, reforms, and frontier wars, which were for the most part conducted according to the "known predilections of his political creed."²²

The Secretary of State for India and his Council

As the Secretary of State for India replaced the President of the Board of Control of the East India Company, so the Court of Directors was replaced by the Council of India. The Government of India Act, 1858, set the number of the Council members at fifteen, and provided that the major part of them should be persons who had either served or lived in India for a minimum of ten years, and not less

²¹Ibid., p. 44.

²²MacDonald, p. 44.

recently than ten years previous to their appointment. Members were to hold office during good behavior, and no member was allowed to sit or vote in Parliament.²³ Thus, whereas the Secretary of State was more or less a political official, changing with the political majorities in the House of Commons, and consequently attempting to exert his influence to support party policies, his Council was more in the nature of a body of civil servants. It was non-representative and non-responsible to Parliament, and therefore able to act very much as the members saw fit. This constitutional anomaly was able to exist because of the indifference of Parliament to Indian affairs.²⁴

Except when secrecy was required, all orders and communications regarding India had to be submitted to the Council. The Council had the final say in financial matters, such as the expenditures of Indian revenues, and the disposal of property. In all other matters the Secretary of State had the power of veto, as well as the power to cast the deciding vote in Council in case of a tie vote. Thus the legal framework seems to have given decidedly more power to the Secretary of State than to the Council, and it would even appear that the Council was little more than an advisory body. In fact, an article in

²³Muir, p. 385.

²⁴MacDonald, p. 48.

Blackwood's Magazine in November 1860 criticizes the Government of India Act for making possible the creation of a virtual dictatorship by the Secretary of State:

Wavering between the two policies and timidly shrinking from both, Parliament took refuge in a sham--a Council, to be advised with, or not, at the discretion of the Minister himself;--a body that might act as a blind, but could never presume to be a check.²⁵

The article goes on to relate how Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India between 1859 and 1866, took the initiative upon himself and his undersecretaries, referring any points he thought fit to a committee, which he had himself appointed. The reports of such committees, instead of going to the Council were sent in private to the Secretary of State, who then presented them to the Council, if he saw fit.

The members of the Council complain that they are reduced to the position of simply offering an opinion, when the Secretary of State may think fit to ask for it. When he has decided the question, they are made acquainted with the result and may record their dissents if they please; but their collective vote, whether in committee or in council, has become absolutely powerless, save in the few cases where the Act has made the consent of the Council indispensable.²⁶

In matters involving peace and war, foreign affairs, relations with native states, and those requiring secrecy and dispatch, the Secretary of State was empowered to act

²⁵"The Administration of India," Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. 88 (November, 1860), 543.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 546-547.

without consulting the Council. This of course served to reduce the Council to the position of supplying advice and of being a "sort of prudential body of opinion,"²⁷ while maintaining the freedom of action of the Secretary of State.

The tremendous potential power of the Secretary of State can be seen from the fact that he could by-pass his Council on questions that concerned Imperial policy rather than Indian policy. As the Secretary of State is the one who interpreted the category of the matters, it was not beyond the realm of possibility, as the author of the article in Blackwood's suggested, that since "the Government of India is, in all its parts, the Government of the Crown; every question may be declared of imperial more than local interest."²⁸ The Council also had little recourse to Parliament, to make their opinions known, since they could not hold office in that body.

Despite the apparent power, based on constitutional authority, of the Secretary of State to work his will, even in the face of opposition from his Council, in practice this authority was limited. Most secretaries of state were hesitant to force their wishes upon a council adamant in its opposition, because of the awkward situation

²⁷Wallace, p. 312.

²⁸"The Administration of India," p. 549.

this would create.²⁹

One other point worth noting in regard to the Council is that it had no initiative power. Its members could not bring matters before the Council, but rather they were limited to acting upon measures submitted to it by the Secretary of State.

While Parliament had the final authority in Indian affairs, it is obvious that this authority was delegated to the Secretary of State and his Council. Of course, the Secretary of State was responsible to his party, and owed his appointment to the Prime Minister. This meant that the actions and policies of the Secretary of State were generally in keeping with those of the ruling party. But before we assume that the Secretary of State was the actual ruling office for India, we must consider the other most powerful office--that of the Viceroy. In fact, the Indian Executive may be considered to have consisted of the Secretary of State for India and his Council, together with the Viceroy and his Council.³⁰

The Viceroy

The office of the Viceroy was derived from that of the Governor-General of the old East India Company.

²⁹MacDonald, p. 47.

³⁰Ibid., p. 44.

During Company rule, the Governor-General had supreme executive authority, which he retained under Pitt's Act of 1784, from which date the Company began to administer India as a trustee for the Crown. This Act also gave the Governor-General the right to overrule his Council, and with his Council, the power to make laws, eventually developing the formalities of a legislature.³¹ The Governor-General was a Parliamentary Governor-General, responsible to Parliament through the medium of the ministry, which thus became virtually responsible for the policy pursued in India. But while the ministry was accountable to Parliament for action in India, it left the detailed administration to the Company, reserving a final voice in the selection of the Governor-General to ensure that the policies of the ministry would be carried out.

The transfer of India to the Crown did little to alter the position of the Governor-General, or the Viceroy as he was now to be called. The highest administrative authority in India continued to be vested in the Viceroy, who was in theory the representative and an appointee of the Crown. However, as before, his appointment rested with the party in power, or more particularly, with the Prime Minister, who made the appointment with the

³¹Holderness, pp. 162-163.

consultation and advice of the Secretary of State for India.

The Viceroy performed three major functions. He personified the Crown, represented the Home Government, and headed the administration of India.³² Although he was selected by the ruling party, the fact that his appointment was for five years sometimes produced an interesting situation, as it was possible for a political upheaval to occur at Home before his term was up. Thus the Viceroy could find himself representing the opposition party, as Lord Minto did when the Liberals came into power in 1905. Of course he then had the option to carry out opposition policy, or resign.

The Government of India consisted of the Viceroy and his Council. Together they formed the supreme executive authority in India. The Government of India Act of 1858 stated that the Viceroy's Council should consist of four ordinary or full-time members, with a fifth or extraordinary member in the person of the Commander-in-Chief.³³ The members of the Viceroy's Executive Council were appointed in actuality by the Secretary of State.

Although generally the Viceroy acted in accordance with the advice of his Council, he had the power to disregard

³²MacDonald, p. 57.

³³Holderness, p. 164.

them and to follow his own opinion, if he so chose. However, this was a rash and dangerous course to pursue, for as a rule the Viceroy was a novice in Indian affairs, whereas the members of his Council were veterans, and as D. D. Wallace points out, "The responsibility assumed by a Governor-General in India for only a few years even if reappointed after his five-year term, who chooses to act on his own opinions in defiance of those who have grown old in the service, is so overwhelming that only a man of great courage or great rashness will assume it."³⁴

The duties of the Government of India (Viceroy in Council) were very wide. There was no constitutional instrument to determine the relation of the Government of India and the local governments. Thus the Government of India had supreme and undivided authority, subject to the Home Government, being a unitary and not a federal system. The Government of India, as the supreme executive authority, exercised its powers in two ways. First of all, it kept certain departments of the state in its own hands and administered them directly. These included the army, defense, political relations with foreign states, the management of finances, currency and debt, the railways, and the postal and telegraph systems. Secondly, it handed over functions dealing with the general internal

³⁴Wallace, p. 313.

administration of the country to the local governments, while retaining supervision and general control.³⁵

To facilitate the administration of India, the business of the Council was divided into ten departments: finance, foreign, home, legislative, revenue and agriculture, public works, army, commerce and industry, railway, and education. Each of these departments was placed under a secretary acting under the direction of a member of the Council.

The Council had no stated time to meet, but rather convened at the pleasure of the Viceroy who was not bound to consult his Council on every matter. In fact, in times of emergency, he could issue ordinances and regulations, which had the effect of law for six months, without calling the council together.³⁶

In 1861 Parliament began to lay the foundations in India for a deliberative assembly to which the law-making function could be entrusted. It created a legislative council by adding twelve purely legislative members to the Viceroy's Council. Six of these members were to be persons not in public service. By 1916 this council, which came to be known as the Imperial Council, had grown in number to sixty-eight, of which about half

³⁵Holderness, p. 168.

³⁶Bose, p. 37.

were elected and the other half appointed.³⁷

The enlarged council served to bring the executive government closer to the people and to interpret the actions of the government to them. However, the Imperial Council was not a Parliament, and it had its powers greatly restricted by the British Parliament. While it could propose new laws, it had no power to enforce the resolutions that it passed. Thus its resolutions mainly had the effect of a recommendation to the Viceroy. Neither did it have the power to turn out the executive government.³⁸ The Imperial Council also was not free to discuss certain subjects, such as interest on debt; ecclesiastical, political, and territorial matters; political pensions; state railways; military works; nor defense.³⁹

The members of the Imperial Council were allowed to put questions to the executive government by giving notice in writing to the secretary ten days in advance, and submitting a copy of the question. However, the Viceroy could disallow any question, or part of a question, if, in his opinion, it could not be answered.⁴⁰

In spite of the existence of an Imperial Council

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Holderness, p. 167.

³⁹Bose, p. 38.

⁴⁰Ibid.

and an Executive Council, it was still, in the final analysis, the Viceroy who had the final say. How much he followed the advice of this Executive Council depended on his own inclinations and personality. For he was free to listen to them or not. In India the Viceroy was unquestionably the supreme head of the Government. However, the Viceroyalty was still subject to the limits of constitutional government. He was appointed "by the warrant under the Royal Sign Manual" and was required "to pay due obedience to all such orders as he may receive from the Secretary of State."⁴¹

Nevertheless, the Viceroy had real power as well as title and prestige. He could make himself responsible for the foreign affairs of India--chiefly frontier matters and relations with the Native States. His authority was derived from being in Council, and generally he had to carry a majority of his Council with him. But while that was a real check, it was not an absolute one. As Ramsay MacDonald points out, "Saving in certain directions, each Viceroy makes his own power."⁴²

The relationship between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India needs to be carefully examined since together they constituted the Indian executive. The

⁴¹MacDonald, p. 54.

⁴²Ibid.

important question is, with whom did the power of decision-making really lie, with the Viceroy or with the Secretary of State? The intention of Parliament in the Government of India Act of 1858 was apparently to give the power of initiative to the Government of India, and that of examination and revision to the Secretary of State and his Council, reserving the right of veto to the Secretary of State. However, the Home Government soon developed different views, particularly when economic concerns were involved. In 1870 the Duke of Argyll, who was then Secretary of State for India, issued an order to the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, that the Government of India should take instructions from the Home Government, as it was a part of the Home Executive and therefore subordinate to the Cabinet.⁴³

This point was raised again by Lord Salisbury in 1874 when he, as Secretary of State for India, claimed the right of previous sanction before the introduction of important measures in the legislative council. In a dispatch to the Viceroy, Salisbury wrote:

I see no sufficient reason why the circumstances, often quite accidental, that your Excellency's orders take a legislative form should deprive me of all official information concerning them until a period of time at which it becomes peculiarly difficult to deal with them. . . . Whenever the Governor-General in Council has affirmed the policy and expediency of a particular measure, and has decided on submitting

⁴³Ibid., p. 50.

it to the Council for making laws and regulations, I desire that a dispatch may be addressed to me, stating at length the reasons which are thought to justify the step intended to be taken, and the mode in which the introduction is to be carried out.⁴⁴

From that time on it became customary for the Viceroy to telegraph the Secretary of State and inform him of every important measure before it was presented to the Council. This served to limit the initiative on the part of the Government of India, and furthermore, when a policy was laid down by the Secretary of State, the Viceroy had practically no alternative but to follow it or resign. Such was the case in 1875 when the Government of India passed a Tariff Bill imposing duties upon cotton. Angry correspondence followed between the Viceroy and Lord Salisbury, who finally issued an order to remove the duty as quickly as possible. Upon this issue the Viceroy resigned.⁴⁵ This serves to show that while the administrative initiative was with the Government of India, the Secretary of State had gradually taken upon himself the legislative initiative. Since presumably this was not the intention of the Act of 1858, the basis for the extension of the Secretary of State's power was personal rather than constitutional. The precedent of supremacy of the Secretary over the Viceroy had been established by the time Lord

⁴⁴Bose, p. 38.

⁴⁵MacDonald, p. 52.

Lytton received his appointment. However, the potential power of the Viceroy still existed, and whether the Home Government or the Government of India would be supreme would depend on the forcefulness of the personalities involved.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACTORS

The Queen

Victoria became Queen of England in 1837. At the time of her accession the role of the monarch had diminished considerably in popular esteem due to the character of her predecessors, George IV and William IV. In the early part of her reign it was believed by many that the institution of monarchy was on its way out--especially as it seemed to be incompatible with democracy. In 1854 the Crown was so bitterly attacked in the press that Victoria threatened to abdicate. Anti-monarchism again flourished during the period following Prince Albert's death in 1861, when Victoria secluded herself and seemed to have little interest in affairs of state. Walter Bagehot in his study of the English Constitution in 1867 suggested that the real value of the monarchy now consisted of its symbolic and emotional appeal, rather than any political function. He remarked, "it is nice to trace how the actions of a retired widow and an unemployed youth

become of such importance."¹

In 1870-71 an English republican movement reached its height, but it was at this juncture that the monarchy regained its position and public sympathy. This was brought about partly by the serious illness and recovery of the Prince of Wales, and partly by an assassination attempt on the Queen. The Queen's new popularity was sustained, however, by her own actions. For now she took a more active part in government. Thus the monarch who ruled during the period of the Eastern Question and the Second Afghan War was a far different one from the one who ruled from 1861 to 1871.

The Victoria of 1871 onward was a strong-willed monarch and an active one. It was not that her character changed overnight, but she regained her spirit and will which she had temporarily lost with the death of her husband. Victoria was "a woman most womanly, who as a child had loved her dolls, and as a wife was able to worship her husband."² When she became Queen she wrote in her diary that she was "very young, and perhaps in many things, not in all things, inexperienced, but . . . sure that very few had more goodwill and more real desire to do what is fit and right than she had."³

¹Bagehot, p. 36.

²Algernon Cecil, Queen Victoria and Her Prime Ministers (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953), p. 53.

³Ibid.

While Victoria was not an intellectual giant, she had great capability and a knowledge of things a Queen of England needed to know. Her first teacher was the Reverend George Davys, a young Evangelical clergyman. He taught her to avoid bigotry and to revere tolerance. She was taught letters by Hanoverian governess, Baroness Louise Lehzen, and other subjects by visiting tutors. Politics and worldly wisdom were taught her by her prime minister, Lord Melbourne. Her character was "singularly straight, dutiful, and resolute."⁴ Victoria had to work with ten different prime ministers during her sixty year reign. The fact that she was able to work well with all but two or three, is a tribute to her ability. Even Gladstone praised her "integrity of mind."⁵

In 1874 when Disraeli became Prime Minister, after five years of Liberal rule, the Queen's political sympathies were definitely on his side. Gladstone's legislative program had seemed to her intended to reduce the prestige of the Crown. She disliked his impetuosity, and was also disturbed by his hold over the forces of militant democracy. Thus she regarded the election of 1874 as "a wholesome sign that the nation had recovered its senses."⁶ While she

⁴Ibid., p. 52.

⁵John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone (London: Macmillan and Co., 1904), II, p. 192.

⁶Robert Blake, Disraeli (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), p. 545.

always observed the constitutional limitations on her power, she nevertheless maintained a steady and persistent influence over the actions of her ministers. As Salisbury observed, "No Minister in her long reign ever disregarded her advice or pressed her to disregard it without afterwards feeling that he had incurred a dangerous responsibility."⁷

The more one studies this period in depth, the more apparent it is that Queen Victoria did have considerable political influence, and that she did not hesitate to use it. Her sympathies were Tory and Conservative. She wanted to preserve the position of the monarch, and was therefore against republicanism. In foreign affairs she was imperially inclined, and especially felt attracted by the glamour of the East. She went so far as to take lessons in Hindustani, and as early as 1873 she conceived the idea of styling herself Empress of India.⁸

On questions of war and peace, she was neither a pacifist nor a militarist. Her policy was practical--to avoid war when possible, "but in common with the great mass of her contemporaries, she believed that there were occasions on which the only honourable course was to take

⁷Speech by Salisbury in the House of Lords, January 25, 1901, quoted by Cecil, Queen Victoria, p. 52.

⁸Frank Hardie, The Political Influence of Queen Victoria (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 174.

up arms."⁹ On imperial questions she shared the prevailing opinions of her time, adhering to two main principles of imperial policy. First, she accepted the doctrine of imperial compensation, wherein annexation of territory by one Power is justification for counter-annexations by other Powers. Secondly, she adopted the principle of "the White man's burden," as indicated in her letter to Lord Derby (then Colonial Secretary) regarding the annexation of New Guinea in 1884: "It is no doubt a serious step, but she rejoices at it as it will enable us to protect the poor natives and to advance civilization, which she considers the mission of Great Britain."¹⁰

On the Eastern Question, which so influenced British attitudes towards India and its northwest frontier, the Queen was strongly pro-Turk, so much so that at one point Disraeli reminded her that he was not her "Grand Vizier."¹¹ Her Turkish partisanship was a result of her strong anti-Russian feelings. The policy of upholding the Turkish Empire was for the most part to prevent Russia from having Constantinople. Thus her favoritism was not dictated by love of Turkey, but rather by hatred of Russia. During the Eastern crisis she remarked, "Oh if

⁹Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁰G. E. Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, 2nd series 1862-85 (London: John Murray, 1926), VI, p. 525.

¹¹Blake, p. 548.

the Queen were a man, she would like to go and give those horrid Russians whose word one cannot trust such a beating."¹² Even in the face of the Bulgarian atrocities she managed to rationalize to the point of placing the blame on Russia for its role in instigating the insurrection "which caused the cruelty of the Turks, it ought to be brought home to Russia, and the world ought to know that on their shoulders and not on ours rests the blood of the murdered Bulgarians!"¹³ She firmly believed that there would be no permanent peace until the Russians had been beaten.

Her feelings against Russia were so strong that on four different occasions during the Eastern crisis she threatened abdication. On one occasion she stated that "she cannot, as she before said, remain the Sovereign of a country that is letting itself down to kiss the feet of the great barbarians,"¹⁴ and on another occasion, ". . . her first impulse would be to throw everything up, and to lay down the thorny crown. . . ."¹⁵ Blake claims that the Queen had no real intention of abdicating,¹⁶ but her threats do serve to show how strong her feelings were.

¹²Ibid., p. 637.

¹³Buckle, V, p. 437.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 1089.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 1117.

¹⁶Blake, p. 549.

On most questions of foreign policy, Queen Victoria had such decided views that it was difficult for her not to be biased, and she usually made her views crystal clear. She took a much greater interest in foreign affairs than in domestic politics. Since she was related to most of the ruling families of Europe, her interest was in part a family interest. This also gave her the advantage of inside information.

Queen Victoria was conservative by nature. She viewed the role of the monarchy as being within the proper constitutional framework. And while she did not endeavor to step beyond the limit of constitutionalism, she was strongly opposed to republicanism or anything else that threatened to diminish the role of the Crown or the aristocracy. She had definite opinions on foreign affairs, and in matters where she felt strongly, she exerted all her influence to the end that her policies might prevail. Although she was not always successful, at least she made herself heard and her presence felt. And of course there were many times when her influence did prevail. It is rather difficult to state exactly who influenced whom during the Disraeli administration. Certainly there was much pressure brought to bear on both sides. But the question of personal influence in this case is rather irrelevant since both Queen Victoria and Disraeli basically had the same goals. What differences they did have stemmed from

ways and means rather than from objectives.

The Prime Minister

Benjamin Disraeli was born into a distinguished, well-known, and well-to-do family. His father, Isaac Disraeli, was Jewish, but had left the Congregation in 1817, and from that time on Benjamin, then thirteen years old, was a practicing member of the Church of England. This was an extremely important event, for his later political career would not have been possible if he had remained a member of the Jewish religion, as the law prohibited non-Christians from entering Parliament. Until 1829 Jews, as well as Roman Catholics and Dissenters, were excluded by the Test Acts, which preserved the higher positions in public life for members of the Church of England. While the barrier for Christians was removed in 1829, Jews were still barred until 1858.

He received his formal education at Higham Hall, a private school attended by middle class sons of prosperous, but unaristocratic fathers. At sixteen he left the school and continued his education on his own, studying at home where his father had a large library.¹⁷ He firmly believed that his origins were highly aristocratic. In his day the notion prevailed that the Shepardi Jews, particularly that branch descended from the Spanish or Portugese Jews, were

¹⁷Ibid., p. 17.

more aristocratic than those from Central and Eastern Europe. Disraeli believed that he came from the most aristocratic branch, and while there is no proof of this, his belief greatly influenced his political outlook.¹⁸ Disraeli once defined the task of the Conservative leader as being "to uphold the aristocratic settlement of this country. That is the only question at stake however manifold may be the forms which it assumes. . . ."¹⁹ This idea was Disraeli's guiding purpose. However, he did not equate aristocracy with oligarchy, as did the Whigs, but rather the whole ordered hierarchy of rural England. Blake puts it very well when he says:

Disraeli believed in a territorial aristocracy partly because he was at heart a romantic, partly because he had a genuine hatred of centralization, bureaucracy and every manifestation of the Benthamite state. He felt the sort of reverence that Burke had had for the many independent corporations and institutions which, however odd and anomalous, however contrary to abstract symmetry, to what Burke called "geometrical" theories, were the true bulwarks of English liberty.²⁰

The fact that Disraeli was involved with some of the great reform measures, such as the extension of the franchise in 1867 and the labor and sanitary legislation of the 1870s, was not incompatible with his feelings regarding the aristocracy, for he felt that the masses

¹⁸Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 278.

²⁰Ibid., p. 278.

could well be supporters of an aristocracy which legislated in their behalf. In his life of Bentinck he wrote:

England is the only important European Community that is still governed by traditionary influences, and amid the shameless wreck of nations she alone has maintained her honour, her liberty, her order, her authority, and her wealth. . . . It is not true that England is governed by an aristocracy in the common acceptation of the term. The aristocracy of England absorbs all aristocracies, and receives every man in every order and every class who defers to the principle of our society, which is to aspire and to excel.²¹

In his earlier years Disraeli was a novelist, and he used his novels for social criticism, denouncing the dreadful conditions of the "hungry forties." These conditions he blamed on the manufacturers. "'The middle class,' said Disraeli, were 'a miserable minority,' who had seized power 'in the specious name of the people' and used it for their own selfish ends, causing misery for the people as a result: 'The proper leaders of the people,' he wrote, 'are the gentlemen of England. If they are not the leaders of the people, I do not see why there should be gentlemen.'"²² With such words and convictions Disraeli helped to revitalize the Tory party which was at low ebb in the mid-nineteenth century. So it was that the Conservative party, under Disraeli's leadership, was

²¹Benjamin Disraeli, Lord George Bentinck, a Political Biography (London: Longmans, 1872), pp. 555-557.

²²John Thorn, Roger Lockyer, and David Smith, A History of England (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1963), p. 499.

responsible for the extension of the franchise to the working people, a measure of which the Liberals did not approve.

Disraeli was undoubtedly a great parliamentarian. He was a master of the rules of procedure and debate. For years he stood alone, answering the great orators of the day who were members of the opposition. In the early days of his leadership, his own party members, for the most part, were not good at oratory and thus could give him only their moral support. When he first entered Parliament (1837) he was looked upon as an eccentric and audacious adventurer. In the words of Justin McCarthy, one of his contemporaries:

He dressed in the extremest style of preposterous foppery; he talked a blending of cynicism and sentiment; he had made the most reckless statements; his boasting was almost outrageous; his rhetoric of abuse was, even in that free-spoken time, astonishingly vigorous and unrestrained.²³

His first speech in Parliament was a disaster, partly because of the reputation which preceded him there. Also, "he had failed to discover that the House of Commons had adopted itself to a manner of address to which it demanded a degree of conformity and Disraeli in his first speech was hauled down in such a way that many an auditor must have doubted the truth of his last sentence: 'the time will come

²³Justin McCarthy, A History of Our Own Times (Chicago: Belford, Clarke and Co., 1880), I, p. 297.

when you will hear me.'"²⁴ However, the fiasco was not repeated, and he won the admiration of his colleagues, both friends and enemies, for his oratorical skill.

During Disraeli's second ministry the policy of empire took shape. The road to India became a preoccupation of the British mind and this feeling culminated in the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India. Moreover, his acquisition of the Suez Canal, a feat which showed the swiftness and daring action of Disraeli, added a great plum to the British Empire. In his earlier years he had been anti-imperialistic along with the rest of his countrymen. In fact in 1852 he had referred to the colonies as millstones around the neck of England, and again in 1866 he called Canada and South Africa deadweights and advocated the withdrawal of British troops from those areas.²⁵ However, in his Crystal Palace Speech of June 24, 1872 he adopted imperialism as a plank in the Conservative platform when he proclaimed the three great objectives of the party to be the maintenance of British institutions, social reform, and the preservation of the Empire.

[The working classes] are proud of belonging to a great country and wish to maintain its greatness--that

²⁴Joseph Hendershot Park, British Prime Ministers of the Nineteenth Century (New York: New York University Press, 1950), p. 194.

²⁵William L. Strauss, Joseph Chamberlain and the Theory of Imperialism (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1942), p. 11.

they are proud of belonging to an Imperial country, and are resolved to maintain, if they can, their empire--that they believe on the whole that the greatness and the empire of England are to be attributed to the ancient institutions of the land.²⁶

Disraeli's concept of empire resulted in an aversion to all forms of nationalism, except English nationalism. He perceived nationalism in Ireland, the Balkans, and elsewhere, as a threat to British imperialism. To him, English interests took precedence over the so-called "moral struggle" of the nations to be free.²⁷

His belief in imperialism greatly influenced Disraeli's foreign policy. While at times his policy seemed erratic and changeable, it could best be described as opportunistic. His policy was naturally dictated by British interests as he saw them. For example, in the Eastern Question he was pro-Turk, whereas many of his fellow countrymen were greatly distressed by stories of Turkish atrocities against the Christian minority. Disraeli's political feelings in this instance were dictated by his fear of Russian aggression. In October 1876 Lord Barrington inquired of the Prime Minister why Britain did not forget about Constantinople and rather secure the route to India by annexing Egypt. Disraeli's

²⁶Crystal Palace Speech, June 24, 1872, quoted in Blake, p. 523.

²⁷Blake, p. 760.

reply was,

. . . If the Russians had Constantinople, they could at any time march their army through Syria to the mouth of the Nile, and then what would be the use of our holding Egypt. Not even the command of the sea could help us under such circumstances. People who talk in this manner must be utterly ignorant of geography. Our strength is in the sea. Constantinople is the Key of India, and not Egypt and the Suez Canal. . . .²⁸

He distrusted Russia, and believed that Moscow Pan-Slavists were pressing Russia to start a war of Balkan conquest under the pretext of philanthropy.²⁹ It was during the Eastern Crisis that Disraeli developed into a Russophobe, much apace to Gladstone's increasing Turcophobia.

Disraeli's hand in foreign affairs reached its height during the Eastern Crisis and the ensuing Berlin Congress. The Congress was the pinnacle of his success in foreign affairs, for at that moment he "possessed a prestige unsurpassed by any statesman of his time."³⁰ Foreign policy from the purchase of the Suez Canal through the Berlin Congress was dominated by the Prime Minister. Even so, his Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, raises important doubts as to his competency in foreign affairs

²⁸W. F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (London: John Murray, 1910-20), p. 84.

²⁹R. C. K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, The Oxford History of England, ed. by G. N. Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), XIV, p. 45.

³⁰Blake, p. 655.

when he says, "The Eastern policy of the Government suffered much through having at the head of affairs a man who, with all his great qualities, was unable to decide a general principle of action, or to ensure when decided on it should be carried out by his subordinates."³¹

This is probably a reference to Lord Derby, whose actions shall be discussed further on. But it is a noteworthy fact that on various occasions Disraeli did not know what his subordinates were doing. Salisbury also charged that his chief was "exceedingly short-sighted, though very clear-sighted . . . he neither could nor would look far ahead."³²

After the Berlin Congress, Disraeli left foreign affairs more and more to others. This probably had two main causes. First, was his failing health. He was far from well in 1876, and in October 1878 he wrote to Lady Bradford, "If I could only face the scene which would occur at headquarters if I resigned I would do so at once; but I never could bear scenes and have no pluck for the occasion." And two days later he wrote: "I can't head a House of Parliament, even a H. of L. without a voice without health. . . ."³³ Dr. Joseph Kidd, Disraeli's personal

³¹Arthur Balfour, Chapters of Autobiography (1930), pp. 113-114.

³²Ibid., p. 115.

³³Monypenny and Buckle, p. 190.

physician, diagnosed his condition as Bright's disease, bronchitis and asthma.³⁴

The second factor that led to his diminished role in foreign affairs was his appointment of Salisbury as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His great confidence in Salisbury allowed him to shift this burden on to younger and more energetic shoulders.

Disraeli was a strong prime minister, but was not dictatorial. He always held steadfast to his purpose, and once he decided on a policy, he usually had his way. He never harassed his departmental ministers, but he was available for consultation. He came to the Prime Ministry late in his career. Once before he had formed a government in February 1868, but it was dissolved in November of the same year. Prior to assuming the premiership in 1874 he had served as leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons for over twenty-five years, the longest continuous leadership on record to that time. Obviously, Disraeli had a great deal of experience in government, but he received the Premiership in his seventieth year, when his physical powers were beginning to ebb.

Disraeli's competence in matters of legislation and other government functions was very good due to his

³⁴Joseph Kidd, "The Last Illness of Lord Beaconsfield," The Nineteenth Century, XXVI (July, 1889), 65-71.

long experience in politics. However, his knowledge of foreign affairs was not quite up to that of domestic affairs, even though he was greatly interested in them. He toured the Middle East in 1830-31, a trip that lasted long enough for him to gain certain knowledge and opinions of the area, but far enough removed in time for the information to be either irrelevant or false. While the danger of the Russian threat was rather remote by the "seventies," Disraeli's policy on the Eastern Question was rather dominated by it, a fact which tends to show his ignorance of geography. In Blake's opinion, the "British obsession with the Eastern Question stemmed from ancient habit rather than clear thought."³⁵

Some of Disraeli's contemporaries view the beginning of his second administration as somewhat of a failure. Bagehot's view tends to support the notion of deterioration when he says:

In 1867 he made a minority achieve wonderful things but in 1876 when he had the best majority--the most numerous and obedient since Mr. Pitt, he did nothing with it. So far from being able to pass great enactments, he could not even despatch ordinary business at decent hours. The gravest and sincerest of Tory members--men who hardly murmur at anything--have been heard to complain that it was hard that after voting so well and doing so little, they should be kept up so very late. The session just closed will be known in Parliamentary annals as one of the

³⁵Blake, p. 538.

least effective or memorable on record, and yet one of the most fatiguing.³⁶

Bagehot's view must not be considered as wholly objective, as he was a Liberal, and also rather distrusting of Disraeli's showmanship. However, a very similar view was expressed in the same year by Sir William Heathcote, a high Tory, writing to Salisbury:

The aspect of the Government in the House of Commons distresses me most seriously and I can hardly imagine how you are to keep the machine going if you are not somehow relieved of the incubus of your present Chief.

Cold and lukewarm in all that might serve the Church or Religious Education and thus (to place it on its lowest ground) real conservatism, he is earnest only in sensational clap trap in which he is continually compromising himself by contradictory utterances. . . .

In the ordinary conduct of business Disraeli shows himself at every turn quite incompetent to guide the house.³⁷

It must be remembered that Disraeli was in poor health at this time which accounts for his lack of leadership in Parliament. It was because of this that he desired and agreed to enter the House of Lords.

The relationship between Disraeli and the Queen was extremely amiable. "She lavished upon him an abundance of confidence, esteem, and affection such as Lord Melbourne

³⁶William Bagehot, Bagehot's Historical Essays, ed. by Norman St. John-Stevas (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1965), p. 294.

³⁷Salisbury Papers, April 15, 1876, quoted in Blake, p. 564.

himself had hardly known."³⁸ He treated the Queen with deference, consideration, and flattery which she thoroughly enjoyed. He was thus able for the most part to persuade the Queen to do what he wanted, although there were a few occasions on which she persuaded him. Their relationship was cordial, and for the most part they presented a united front, being basically in agreement on the majority of points.

Disraeli's political beliefs can be summed up as devotion to the Crown, support of the territorial constitution, belief in the maintenance and expansion of the Empire, desire for an influential position in international affairs, and advocacy of social reform. Disraeli had a Cabinet of very able men to aid him in carrying out his programs. When the Queen heard his choices for the cabinet posts, she wrote to her daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia, "You will see that instead of being a Govt. of Dukes as you imagine it will contain only 1 & he a very sensible, honest and highly respected one. The others are all able and distinguished men, not at all retrograde."³⁹ The Cabinet was small, consisting of twelve members, six peers and six commoners, the smallest since 1832. The Cabinet was a strong one and a harmonious

³⁸Lytton Strachey, Queen Victoria (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1921), p. 328.

³⁹Blake, p. 540.

one until the Eastern Question caused some striking differences of opinion. Disraeli tended to consult a small inner circle of the Cabinet whom he treated with a special confidence. This group included Cairns, Hardy, Northcote, and Derby, who was later replaced by Salisbury, both in office and inner circle.

The Foreign Secretary

Lord Derby

Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby, was the son of Edward George Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby who was Prime Minister three times. Disraeli's relations with Derby were of a long standing personal friendship, which seemed to lessen as time went on. When forming his Cabinet, Disraeli appointed Derby to the important post of Foreign Secretary. The relationship between the two men was described thus by Sir Stafford Northcote:

How he (Lord Derby) stood with Lord Beaconsfield was very difficult to say. They had long been personal friends and respected each other's merits, though each in turn would say sharp things of the other. Lord Beaconsfield had great influence over him and often brought him to do what he very much disliked.⁴⁰

Derby has been described as "the most isolationist foreign secretary that Great Britain has ever known."⁴¹

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 544.

⁴¹A. J. P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918 (1954), p. 233.

Of course, when he took office he found Britain already in an isolated position, and since he had a natural aversion for positive action, he favored prudence, caution, and a minimum of intervention. The fact that his chief was of the opposite disposition put a strain upon the relationship. Disraeli had close ties with the Stanley family, having served in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the three administrations of Lord Derby's father. He was therefore reluctant to recognize these differences.

Derby's opinions on the franchise, on church questions, and many other matters were more those of a middle-class Liberal than those of a Tory aristocrat. Even his demeanor was rather plebian.⁴² But the real parting of the way came over the Eastern Question. Derby was often accused of sloth and procrastination in dealing with matters that came under his office. Salisbury wrote of him in October, 1876, "Making a feather-bed walk is nothing to the difficulty of making an irresolute man look two inches into the future."⁴³

Derby managed to exasperate his chief and some of his associates by his procrastination in dealing with the Eastern Question. However, in this case, his inaction

⁴²Blake, p. 544.

⁴³Lady Gwendolen Cecil, Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury (London: Hadder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1921), II, p. 89.

was due to a deep conviction that intervention was unnecessary because the Russian government meant what it said--that the object of the war with Turkey was only to gain reforms for the Christians. The motive for peace was so strong in Derby that he took the unprecedented action of disclosing cabinet secrets to the Russian ambassador in order to thwart Disraeli, and with the hope of securing the peace. This did not come to light until the publication of the Shuvalov correspondence in 1924, thus the leakage of information appeared to the Prime Minister and the Queen as an indiscretion, while his obstructionism was attributed to his odd character.⁴⁴

In January 1878 Derby resigned his post in protest over Disraeli's proposal to send British warships through the Dardanelles. When this order was revoked, Disraeli, under great pressure, brought Derby back into the Cabinet. But from this point on his role in foreign affairs disintegrated rapidly. The strain had been too much for him, and he had taken to heavy drinking, lapsing into a state of apathy. Foreign policy passed out of his hands and fell to the trio of Disraeli, Cairns, and Salisbury. The trio conducted the business, while Derby signed the papers, in a detached manner. At the end of March, Derby again resigned his post with much bitterness on both sides.

⁴⁴Blake, p. 623.

The rupture was so deep that just before the election of 1880 Derby withdrew from the Conservative party and supported Gladstone.

Lord Salisbury

Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, Third Marquess of Salisbury was appointed by Disraeli first as Secretary of State for India in 1874, and later as Foreign Secretary upon Lord Derby's resignation. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. He first entered Parliament in 1853 at the age of twenty-three. However, during his earlier years he was known more for his political writings than for his political activities. The latter, however, began to come to the forefront about 1864, and in July of 1866 he was appointed Secretary of State for India. He held this position for less than a year, resigning in March, 1867 over differences with the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, and Disraeli over the second Reform Bill.

Salisbury spent the first fifteen years of his political career in the House of Commons, moving to the House of Lords in 1868 upon the death of his father. His political views were conservative and old-fashioned. He was deeply suspicious of democracy and regarded Disraeli's espousal of Parliamentary reform as a betrayal. He believed that man was innately selfish, and thus in an unlimited democracy the poor would dominate the rich,

making class struggles inevitable, and resulting in a tyranny of the majority over the minority. He therefore viewed Parliamentary reform as the beginning of a movement that would eventually attack all English institutions and traditions. His view of the best type of government was paternalistic, looking to a progressive and enlightened oligarchy.⁴⁵

Politics was viewed by Salisbury as a necessary evil, a duty. He once remarked, "Politics brutalize and degrade the mind," and again, "politics stand alone among human pursuits in this characteristic--that no one is conscious of liking them--and no one is able to leave them."⁴⁶

Salisbury should be considered a political realist in the field of foreign affairs. He felt that policies should be adopted and adjusted to fit the situation, and, as he once wrote to Lord Lytton:

The commonest error in politics is sticking to the carcasses of dead policies. When a mast falls overboard you do not try to save a rope here and a spar there in memory of their former utility; you cut away the hamper altogether. And it should be the same with a policy. But it is not so. We cling to the shred of an old policy after it has been torn to pieces; and to the shadow of the shred after the rag itself has been torn away.⁴⁷

⁴⁵J. A. S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy, the Close of the Nineteenth Century (London: The Athlone Press, 1964), p. 9.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁷Lady Cecil, p. 145.

Salisbury strongly supported British imperial interests, and pursued a policy aimed at forestalling rival powers. He felt that defense of the British Empire was the most important task facing British statesmen during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ But here too he tended toward practicality and expediency. He subscribed to no specific doctrine, rather adopting whatever policy seemed to him to best suit the situation. He wrote to Lord Northbrook (January 14, 1876):

We cannot shape our national policy by an ascetic rule, and shun temptation on the side where we believe our moral nature is weak. We must do what is politic, trusting that our successors will have the sense not to draw from it a motive for doing what is impolitic.⁴⁹

In regard to the peoples of the Empire, he was opposed to all forms of racial arrogance, and was convinced that racial animosities would lead to ruin of the Empire if not overcome. In 1876 he wrote to the Viceroy of India urging him to work with the Indian princes.⁵⁰

Disraeli selected Salisbury for his cabinet, not only for his political qualifications, but also because he might have posed a threat outside the cabinet. Salisbury's appointment helped to bridge the gap with the right wing of the Conservative party. Salisbury was not

⁴⁸Grenville, p. 19.

⁴⁹Lady Cecil, p. 72.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 20.

too anxious to accept the appointment, for at the time he did not particularly care for Disraeli. However, he was persuaded to accept by such anti-Disraeli figures as Carnarvon, Sir William Heathcote, and the Duke of Northumberland.⁵¹

Salisbury began to come to the forefront in foreign affairs when he was sent as the British representative to a conference of the great powers held at Constantinople to discuss the Eastern Question. His appointment was welcomed by all. Even Gladstone was pleased, remarking that Salisbury "has no Disraelite prejudices, keeps a conscience and has plenty of manhood and character."⁵² Disraeli felt that as Secretary of State for India, Salisbury would be anti-Russian. However, he soon changed his opinion, writing to Derby on December 28, 1876:

Sal seems most prejudiced and not to be aware that his principal object in being sent to Const. is to keep the Russians out of Turkey, not to create an ideal existence for Turkish Xtians. He is more Russian than Ignatyev: plus Arabe que l'Arabie!⁵³

For his part, Salisbury regarded the old Crimean policy as out-of-date. He felt that it was futile to preserve Turkey's territorial integrity, and at the same time he was skeptical of the alleged Russian threat

⁵¹Blake, p. 538.

⁵²Lady Cecil, p. 95.

⁵³Monypenny and Buckle, p. 71.

via Central Asia. He observed that "much of the trouble came from British statesmen using maps on too small a scale."⁵⁴ So Salisbury's actions were not dictated by any pro-Russian sentiment, but rather by his view of what was best for Britain.

Upon Derby's resignation from the Foreign Office in March, 1878, Disraeli appointed Salisbury to take his place. The very next day Salisbury issued his famous "circular" to all the great powers. This dispatch claimed that the position of Turkey in Europe was a matter of concern to all the powers, and could not be determined by Russia alone. Thus it called for a European congress to decide the future of the Balkans. This laid the foundation for the Congress of Berlin which was held in June, 1878. The swiftness of Lord Salisbury in issuing this circular, even before he had been formally installed as Foreign Secretary, is significant, for it shows that he was a man of action. Disraeli found his new Foreign Secretary energetic, clear-thinking, and responsible. While Salisbury was not always in agreement with Disraeli, circumstances, together with loyalty, forced him for the most part to conform to his views.⁵⁵ Disraeli more and more left the conduct of diplomacy to Salisbury, although

⁵⁴Blake, p. 577.

⁵⁵H. W. V. Temperly and L. M. Penson, Foundations of British Foreign Policy 1792-1902 (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1966), p. 363.

he continued to keep in close contact with him.

In the conduct of foreign affairs, Salisbury has often been charged with secrecy. His daughter supports this view, but clarifies it somewhat by stating, "He believed in frankness between the parties to a negotiation, but publicity, except on rare occasions, he looked upon as fruitful of mischief."⁵⁶

Salisbury criticized both Disraeli and Gladstone for their dictatorial attitude toward their cabinet members. He tended to the other extreme, and as Prime Minister, he avoided interfering in the policies of departmental ministers, as he felt it was "unsafe to jog the elbow of the man who held the reigns . . . [and] on certain important occasions he even allowed the cabinet to override his own views on foreign policy."⁵⁷ This tendency may explain his lack of control over the actions of his subordinates during the Afghan crisis when he was serving as Foreign Secretary.

Lord Lytton, who served as Viceroy of India under Salisbury, had nothing but praise for his chief. He characterized Salisbury as strong, intelligent, prudent, and courageous. On receipt of the news of Salisbury's appointment as Foreign Secretary, he wrote to him:

⁵⁶Lady Cecil, p. 346.

⁵⁷Grenville, p. 10.

It is with a real pang that I read your telegram informing me of the change which deprives me of the chief to whom I am indebted for great forbearance, generous support, and considerate guidance. I shall ever recall with grateful feelings the support you have given me in every principle episode of the time during which I have had the honour to serve under you. The cessation of our direct official relations is a sad event in my life, nor are my regrets wholly selfish, for the withdrawal from the India Office, especially at this moment, of your long experience of Indian administration and intimate knowledge of the character of the men engaged in it will be a real loss to India. . . .⁵⁸

Thus there appears to be a paradox in regard to Salisbury's role, for at times he appears as the brilliant man of action, making decisions, implementing policy, and conducting foreign relations pretty much as he saw fit. As Secretary of State for India he inaugurated the policy of having all information submitted to him for approval before any decisions were made. As Prime Minister he kept the Foreign Office in his own hands. And yet in contrast to this, he allowed his cabinet to override his decisions on foreign policy, and while serving as Foreign Secretary, he allowed Cranbrook, Secretary of State for India, a great deal of freedom from supervision. His attitude is more clearly visible in his relations with Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India, when he still held the India office. In dealing with the Afghan question, he

⁵⁸Lady Betty Balfour, The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876 to 1880 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899), I, p. 240. (Letter from Lytton to Salisbury, April 3, 1878).

counseled Lytton to use prudence and to avoid all menace, but otherwise he left the Viceroy a free hand in negotiation. He wrote Lytton along these lines on July 7, 1876, stating, "We settled the main lines of policy in March. As long as you do not step outside them, I should only embarrass you by interposing."⁵⁹ Thus Salisbury's weakness lay in his trust of others to act as he would.

Certainly Salisbury was not wanting in scholarship, diplomatic or political ability. In fact he has been characterized as one of the cleverest men to hold the Foreign Office in the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Salisbury was a strong Secretary of State for India and a strong Foreign Secretary for the most part.

The Secretary of State for India

Gathorne Gathorne-Hardy, Viscount Cranbrook, did not enter political life until the age of forty-two. He had graduated from Oriel College, Oxford in 1836, passed the bar in 1840, and from then until 1856 he practiced law on the northern circuit. With his election as M.P. for Leominster he entered politics, and soon became known as a staunch supporter of the Conservative party and an able debater. From 1858-1859 he served as undersecretary for the Home Office. He was again elected to Parliament

⁵⁹Lady Cecil, p. 73.

⁶⁰Blake, p. 642.

in 1865 as representative from Oxford University, defeating Gladstone. The following year he became a member of Lord Derby's Cabinet, serving as President of the Poor Law Board. He became Home Secretary again in 1867.

Because of his ability to debate, he acted as Disraeli's deputy in the House of Commons for several years, and with Disraeli's appointment to the Premiership, he became Secretary of War. He held this post from 1874 until March 1878, when he was transferred to the India Office.

When Disraeli retired from the House of Commons, Hardy had wanted to become the House Leader, but the position went to Sir Stafford Northcote instead. Although disappointed, Hardy continued to serve his party in the House. When Salisbury succeeded Derby as Foreign Minister, Hardy was asked to take the India Office. He was not very anxious to do so, for he considered it not only one of the largest, but one of the most difficult offices of state. Besides, he felt that he knew little about Indian affairs, and was much too old to learn.⁶¹ Disraeli finally persuaded him by offering to raise him to the House of Lords in return.

Hardy, or Cranbrook as he was now to be known,

⁶¹Maurice Cowling, "Lytton, the Cabinet, and the Russians, August to November 1878," English Historical Review, LXXVL (1961), 60.

was noted for a quick temper, and Salisbury once remarked of him, "considering his somewhat peppery disposition, I fear he may 'flare up in the inside' as our friend Bismark phrases it."⁶² However, he was not a strong Secretary of State, as his heart was no longer in politics. He had neither knowledge nor interest in Indian affairs, and as a result was rather lax in managing the office. One of his India Office officials wrote of him that "'Old Granny' was 'slapdash' and 'lazy' 'not a bad fellow but rather dense.'"⁶³ At the time when the Afghan crisis was mounting, Cranbrook was vacationing in Scotland (from mid-August to mid-September, 1878). The difficulties finally forced him back to London. Cranbrook's letters to the Viceroy during the month of August "were not those of a strong secretary of state riding and controlling an exuberant and extraordinary viceroy."⁶⁴ Nothing in any of his letters to Lytton during that time imposed any restraint upon the Viceroy. Salisbury had been able to effectively control Lytton, but Cranbrook made no attempt to do so. Perhaps this neglect is partially explained by his confidence in Lytton. On December 18, 1878 he wrote in his diary, "Much of the distrust of Lytton is unreasonable;

⁶²Lady Cecil, p. 339.

⁶³Cowling, p. 66.

⁶⁴Ibid.

he has once acted quicker than was ordered, but has since done all our behests."⁶⁵ However, even though Cranbrook made allowances for the difficulties of the man-on-the-spot, he was disturbed by the Viceroy's actions and wrote him, "Your telegram announcing the departure of the Mission has rather taken me by surprise, as, at the desire of the Prime Minister and Lord Salisbury, I sent the message of the 13th 'to await orders.'"⁶⁶ This message also serves to show that Cranbrook had not taken the initiative in the matter, but rather had been prodded into action by his superiors.

Cranbrook was a staunch supporter of Disraeli, who once described him to the Queen as the leader of the war party. Salisbury shared this view and complained to the Prime Minister that "Cranbrook's views on Afghanistan were inclined to be bellicose."⁶⁷ Cranbrook bore out that view during a Cabinet meeting in October, when, as Disraeli puts it, "Suddenly Lord Cranbrook startled us all by saying that . . . his opinion was for war, immediate and complete . . . the material guarantee project was a half measure which he looked upon as an act of timidity . . . he would

⁶⁵Alfred E. Gathorne-Hardy, ed., Gathorne Hardy, First Earl of Cranbrook, A Memoir (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910), II, p. 100.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Sarvepalli Gopal, British Policy in India 1858-1905 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1965), p. 85.

frankly confess that he was not altogether satisfied with the preparations of the viceroy. . . ."68 Cranbrook's speech was surprising, not only because of its warlike stance, but also because heretofore, Cranbrook had seemed to be more or less passive. As Cowling points out, Cranbrook had been attacked from all sides for several months previously. Disraeli had "urged him to work harder. Lytton had bombarded him with angry letters advocating policies of which Cranbrook instinctively approved but which, because he was overshadowed by the sarcastic authority of Salisbury, he could not, or did not care to, make sufficient effort to carry."69 He was further disturbed by Lytton's refusal to take advice from the professional soldiers in India on military matters. Thus these pressures together with his "peppery" disposition led to the remarkable statement by the Secretary of State for India.

Cranbrook's competence in Indian affairs was slight, and he viewed his office as a burden, hurrying off to vacation whenever possible. He had been a good parliamentary leader, so his inefficiency in the India Office was not due to lack of ability, but rather to his lack of interest and application. He appears as a man with

⁶⁸Cowling, p. 78.

⁶⁹Ibid.

definite ideas, rather stubborn and staunch in that when he did take a stand he held to it tenaciously. Cowling suggests that he was easily led, "sometimes by Salisbury, at others by the last person with whom he came in contact,"⁷⁰ but the facts do not bear this out completely. Undoubtedly he was "led," so to speak in matters which concerned him little, but on certain points he stood out against those who wished to influence him and went his own way, as in the case of advocating increased military forces which Lytton strongly opposed. Cranbrook was also prone to disregard cabinet decisions, and on one occasion wrote the Viceroy that the Cabinet's instructions in a certain matter were objectionable and suggested that they might be modified. "I cannot help feeling, much as I deplore it, that the knot can only be cut and that in spite of European and Parliamentary obstacles we shall be compelled to cut it--if so the sooner the better."⁷¹

In general he was in agreement with Lytton's policy, supporting him even after the fall of the Conservative government in 1880. However, he did not keep a close check on the Viceroy, allowing him to have his own way. Cranbrook was not a strong Secretary of State, although he could have been if he had set his mind to

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 65.

⁷¹Cranbrook to Lytton October 28, 1878, Lytton Papers, vol. 51813, p. 855, quoted in Gopal, p. 87.

it, as demonstrated on the few occasions when he did assert himself.

The Viceroy

Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, first Earl of Lytton, was the son of Edward Bulwer, first Baron Lytton, a well-known novelist and politician. Lord Lytton was educated at Harrow and Bonn, and from 1849 to 1874 he filled minor diplomatic appointments, beginning his career as an unpaid attache to his uncle, Sir Henry Bulwer, the minister at Washington, D.C. By 1865 he was minister at Lisbon, Portugal. Besides being a diplomat, Lytton was also a poet, writing under the pseudonym of Owen Meredith. His daughter says that "in mind Lord Lytton was essentially a poet gifted with a romantic and creative imagination."⁷² In 1876, upon Lord Northbrook's resignation, he was appointed Viceroy of India by Disraeli and Salisbury.

Although the moment chosen by Northbrook to resign was inconvenient, both Disraeli and Salisbury welcomed the opportunity to place their own man in that position, and thereby alter the government's policy in that area. Lytton was not the first choice for the office. It was offered to the third Earl of Powis and then to John Manners, both of whom declined on the grounds of poor health. Finally, Disraeli turned to Lytton, who

⁷²Lady Balfour, p. 28.

was the son of his old friend and colleague. Lytton probably had a greater reason than the others to decline because of poor health, but he didn't, for as Derby cheerfully observed, "he would die in India, but to die Viceroy was something."⁷³

At the time of his appointment Lytton was forty-four years old, totally lacking in administrative experience,⁷⁴ and unfamiliar with Indian affairs. He embarked on his new career, as he said, "knowing nothing of India except its myths."⁷⁵ Upon his appointment, he returned to England from Portugal, and spent the time from then to his departure for India trying to familiarize himself with India and Indian affairs. He studied books and papers supplied by the India Office, as well as conversing with persons, such as Lord Lawrence, who were familiar with the subject. As he sailed for India on March 1, this gave him less than two months to study the many aspects of the post.

Lytton was not left in the dark as to what was expected of him, nor as to what policy he was to carry out. Salisbury carefully outlined his instructions in a

⁷³Monypenny and Buckle, p. 717.

⁷⁴Vincent A. Smith, The Oxford History of India (London: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 747.

⁷⁵Lady Balfour, p. 4.

long minute dated February 28, 1876. He was directed to "find an early occasion for sending to Cabul a temporary mission," the purpose of which would be to secure the reception of a European Resident. If no satisfactory results were obtained by the mission, then the Amir of Afghanistan "should be distinctly reminded that he is isolating himself, at his own peril, from the friendship and protection it is in his interest to seek and deserve."⁷⁶ The Viceroy concurred with the ministry's policy of forcing the Afghan Amir to declare himself to be either a friend or an enemy, and to prevent Afghanistan from falling under the control of Russia.

It is generally agreed that Lytton was an imaginative and brilliant man, "perhaps the only intellectual ever to become Viceroy of India."⁷⁷ But there were flaws in his personality that were to prove disastrous. Blake declares that he was "seriously unbalanced in judgement."⁷⁸ In the fall of 1877 Lytton circulated a pamphlet denouncing the Government for seeking an alliance with Russia. Since England and Russia were at that moment on the verge of war, his concern seemed irrelevant. On this occasion Derby remarked "this production is

⁷⁶Minute from Salisbury to Lytton, February 28, 1876, C.A.W., pp. 88-90.

⁷⁷Gopal, p. 125.

⁷⁸Blake, p. 657.

either the result of insanity or intrigue. In the latter point of view I fail to see what he had to get by it; in the former the look out for India is unpleasant."⁷⁹

Salisbury was later to become skeptical, writing of Lytton to Disraeli, he said, "He [Cranbrook] does not realize sufficiently the gaudy and theatrical ambition which is the Viceroy's leading passion."⁸⁰

It was Lytton's opinion that the government of India should have as much autonomy as possible. "I do feel strongly that, in the ordinary current details of its administration, a great Government, such as the Government of India, ought not to be, and cannot safely be, subjected to the uncontrolled interference, and inevitable veto, of a distant, and practically irresponsible, body sitting in England."⁸¹ He distrusted democracy and had little use for Parliament. He felt that the Cabinet was in agreement with his policy but that it was "hampered by all the stupidities of 'democratic' England, and wrestling in the clutches of 'that deformed and abortive offspring of perennial political fornication, the present British constitution.'"⁸² To Lytton, despotic

⁷⁹Hughenden Papers, October 8, 1877, quoted in Blake, p. 658.

⁸⁰Blake, p. 655.

⁸¹Lytton to Cranbrook, April 30, 1878, quoted in C. H. Philips, The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858 to 1847, Select Documents (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 17.

⁸²Cowling, p. 70.

government in India was a desirable necessity.

Having established for himself the principle of an autonomous Indian government, he also established the idea of strong personal government with the Viceroy as virtual sole ruler. He had little use for the India Office Council, complaining to Cranbrook that the "disposition of that Council is to reject summarily every proposal, however important, or however trivial, which emanates from the Government of India. . . ." ⁸³ In dealing with his own council, he usually had his way. John Strachey, the ablest member of Lytton's council, and a personal friend, always gave the Viceroy his strong support; while some of the other members of the council occasionally disagreed and recorded minutes of dissent; Lytton could afford to ignore them. ⁸⁴ The Duke of Argyll was of the opinion that Lytton had difficulties with his council, referring specifically to Sir William Muir, Sir Henry Norman, and Sir Arthur Hobhouse, as being definitely opposed to the new policy. ⁸⁵ This opinion is borne out by the Reverent T. P. Hughes, head missionary at Peshawar during that period, when he wrote to Sir Bartle Frere:

⁸³Philips, p. 16.

⁸⁴Gopal, p. 126.

⁸⁵George D. Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll, The Eastern Question from the Treaty of Paris 1856 to the Treaty of Berlin 1878, and the Second Afghan War (London: Strahan and Co., 1879), p. 417.

"It was a most unfortunate thing for your policy . . . that it was entrusted to a viceroy who failed to secure the confidence of a single man . . . Lord Lytton's greatest opponents were his own officials."⁸⁶ Lytton himself verifies this opinion, and shows that there was dissent from the moment of his arrival in India, of which he says, "From day to day and hour to hour I found as I approached Calcutta that the spirit of anticipative antagonism to the new Viceroy was so strong on the part of the Council here that any appearance of scolding or lecturing them at starting would have been fatal to our future relations."⁸⁷

Few Viceroys were able to act as freely as Lytton, some critics claim even to the point of determining policy and forcing the Home Government's hand. However, it must be stated that from all of Lytton's correspondence it is apparent that he felt he was carrying out the policy of his party, and the instructions given him by Salisbury. The discrepancy occurred in his interpretation of that policy and the means employed for its implementation, rather than in his intentions. For as Disraeli says of him:

. . . I have no doubt whatever, as to our course; we must, completely and unflinchingly, support Lytton. We chose him for this very kind of business. Had it been a routine age, we might have made what might be called, a more prudent selection, but we foresaw what

⁸⁶John Martineau, The Life of Sir Bartle Frere (London: John Murray, 1895), II, p. 157.

⁸⁷Lady Balfour, p. 49.

would occur, and indeed saw what was occurring, and we wanted a man of ambition, imagination, some vanity, and much will--and we have got him. . . .⁸⁸

The policy of the Conservative Government towards Afghanistan was that of extending British influence. It was a "forward policy" replacing the old "stationary policy." It had been initiated by Salisbury while Northbrook was still Viceroy, but with no results, mainly because Northbrook and his council opposed it. Lytton's appointment was looked upon as an opportunity for initiating the new policy. Before Lytton left England, Salisbury strongly impressed upon him that frontier relations with Afghanistan were a part of a larger Imperial question--namely the Eastern Question and the Russian threat.⁸⁹ Lytton was duly impressed by the Russian "menace" and became a staunch Russophobe, displaying a tendency from then on to "Mervousness."⁹⁰ He expressed his conviction of ultimate Russian aggression in a letter to Lord Cranbrook in which he contended that Russia's weak position necessitated extending her territory in order to increase her military strength and financial

⁸⁸Disraeli to Salisbury, April 1, 1877, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, II, p. 1251.

⁸⁹Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Biluchistan II, No. 194, 1877, p. 356.

⁹⁰The Duke of Argyll coined the term "Mervousness" to characterize the Russophobes for their obsession with the Russian advance towards Merv, a city in Turkestan in Central Asia.

resources. Such an extension would sooner or later bring her into contact with British India. He rejected diplomacy as a weapon for "the diplomacy of Parliamentary Governments is always heavily handicapped." Instead, he recommended the sword, "so long as peace lasts, we cannot use the sword and our diplomacy is impotent. The declaration of war, therefore, would be an opportunity which may never recur if we neglect it, for India to make safe all those outworks of her empire which must otherwise fall, sooner or later, into the hands or under the influence of Russia."⁹¹ He is not referring here to war with Russia, but with Afghanistan, but the casus belli is the fear of Russian aggression.

Lytton was an able and energetic person who worked hard at his job, despite his reputation for heavy drinking.⁹² He was faced with problems of growing Indian nationalism, a trade recession, famine and agrarian rioting, and did an adequate job of solving them. He felt that it was important to secure the support of at least one segment of the Indian society, and being a strong conservative, he selected the Indian aristocracy. He believed in the strict administration of justice, and believed it necessary to improve the condition of the

⁹¹Lytton to Cranbrook, April 8, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 246.

⁹²Gopal, p. 126.

masses. But when Lytton is recalled, it is not his domestic policy that is remembered so much as his foreign policy. Here he "took the ball and ran with it," so to speak. He felt that the man-on-the-spot was much better able to judge the situation and act upon that judgment. He was impatient with government red-tape, disdainful of Parliament, and heedless of the Cabinet. He believed that the Government of India, and he as the Government, should be left alone to run things, and he saw the Secretary of State for India as a "buffer" between himself and the Home Government. It must be apparent that he had an over-abundance of self-confidence, always believing that he was acting in the right.

However, Lytton had little knowledge or understanding of the Afghan situation. He was unable to judge the circumstances from any other point of view than that of an Englishman. For example, he felt that the establishment of a British mission in Afghanistan would be a great asset because "the presence and everyday acts in their midst of earnest, upright English gentlemen was the one thing required to civilize the Afghans." These words by the Viceroy, "to those who know the Afghans from the habit of daily intercourse with them . . . denote an ingenuous simplicity, and tend to provoke an involuntary

smile."⁹³

A very important clue to Lytton's actions is to be found in his attitude of racial (or national) superiority. He was thoroughly convinced that the British were far superior to the Asiatics in intelligence and morality, and that it was their destiny to rule and to civilize the barbarians. On his way to India, Lytton stopped at Suez, where he met the Prince of Wales and his entourage returning from India. Among the party were a Sikh officer, an Afghan officer, and the British General, Probyn. Lytton's comment sums up his feelings, when speaking of the Asiatic officers he said, "They are fine soldier-like fellows, who look as if they might have been born sword in hand and cradled in a military saddle. I had a pleasant thrill of patriotic pride however, in comparing their appearance with that of their General, Probyn, as he stood before them in full uniform. You felt that the Englishman was the finest man of the three fitted in all respects to command these stalwart men, not only par droit de conquete, but also par droit de naissance."⁹⁴ He again expressed his arrogance in his Minute on Frontier Organization, April 22, 1877, when he assumed English civilization and

⁹³Captain W. J. Eastwick, Lord Lytton and the Afghan War (London: R. J. Mitchell and Sons, 1879), p. 43.

⁹⁴Lady Balfour, p. 43. Par droit de conquete, by right of conquest; par droit de naissance, by right of birth.

rule to be better than that of the Sikh or Persian kingdoms, and English officers to be higher types of character than the servants of an Eastern king.⁹⁵ In his dealings with the Amir of Afghanistan (whom he referred to as "not only a savage, but . . . a savage with a touch of insanity")⁹⁶ these feelings of superiority played an important role, coloring his attitude and his actions.

The Actors involved in the decision on the Afghan situation had some things in common. All were members of the Conservative Party, with the exception of the Queen, and her sympathies were in that direction. All of them believed in the maintenance of the Empire, and to a degree, in its expansion. They were all, with the possible exception of Disraeli, members of the aristocracy. And as Disraeli believed himself to be of aristocratic origins, he shared the view of aristocracy with his colleagues. All were, or had been, happily married, the Queen and Disraeli having lost their spouses shared a common bond which brought them closer together.

Disraeli and Lytton were known to be ill. Disraeli was also up in years, being seventy-four in 1878. Cranbrook was about ten years younger, but still felt himself to be old. Lytton and Salisbury were relatively young. In 1878 Salisbury was forty-eight and Lytton was forty-six.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 174.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 244.

Queen Victoria was mid-way between the oldest and the youngest of the Actors. It is notable that the most decisive action was taken by the two younger members of the group.

Disraeli and Lytton also shared a literary background and an artistic temperament. Both have been criticized for their "theatrics," but Disraeli appreciated and applauded Lytton's talent. Salisbury, the most conservative of the group, was not as appreciative of Lytton's personality, nor indeed had he been of Disraeli's in earlier years.

The Actors all shared the habit of circumventing bureaucratic red-tape whenever possible, even though they tended to complain when the others did it. At the outset of Lytton's Viceroyalty, the views and the motives of the Actors were basically the same, but as circumstances changed, so did views. The failure to communicate these changes in attitude was to have a definite bearing on the course of events and the decision to enter upon a Second Afghan War, as will be seen later.

CHAPTER V

THE DECISION

The making of a final decision, which commits a nation to a specific action in the field of international relations, is not an isolated event. Rather it is the culmination of a sequence of activities, including actions of other nations and response to these actions. This would tend to indicate that other decisions were involved before the decision was arrived at. What then sets the final decision apart from other decisions? Snyder, Bruck and Sapin have observed that while some choices are necessarily made at various stages of the decisions-making process "the point of final decision is that stage in the sequence at which decisions-makers having the authority to choose a specific course of action to be implemented assume or are assigned responsibility for it. At this point the decision becomes official and thus binding on all decision-makers whether they participate or not."¹

A final decision is therefore characterized by a choice of action and by the presence of authority to carry

¹Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, p. 91.

out that action. There is a certain degree of finality involved that does not characterize intermediary decisions, for anywhere along the line up to the point of the final decision, the direction of policy may be changed. However, intermediary decisions do lead step by step to the final decision. In order to better understand how the final decision to declare war on the Amir of Afghanistan was reached by the British Government, an endeavor will be made to trace the steps leading up to it. As the stimulus was provided by the Russian Mission to Kabul in the summer of 1878, this process will be traced from the beginning of the Mission on to the beginning of hostilities against Afghanistan.

May (First Part)

It was early in May when the Amir, Sher Ali, received the letter from the Governor of Afghan Turkistan, Shahghassi Sherdil Khan, advising him that the Russians intended to use the threat of supporting his nephew, Abdur Rahman, a pensioner of Russia, in a claim to the Afghan throne, if Sher Ali did not cooperate with Russia's plans regarding British India. This threat preceded any news of a proposed Russian mission, but was evidently put forth to help prepare the way for the acceptance of such a mission.

May 13

Information regarding the Russian threat made to Sher Ali was forwarded to the Government of India in a confidential news-letter from the Government agent stationed at Peshawar.² Thus the Viceroy was well aware of the position in which Sher Ali now found himself in regard to the Russians.

May 21

M. Weinburg, the Russian Diplomatic Agent attached to General Kaufman, accompanied by Captain Shlikter, arrived at Karsh for the purpose of negotiating with the Amir of Bokhara concerning the passage of Russian troops along the upper course of the Amu-Darya River. Kaufman knew of the intended Anglo-Indian expedition against the Asiatic possessions of Russia, and presumed that the British intended to use Afghanistan as a base of operations.³

May 22

M. Weinburg and Captain Shlikter were presented to the Amir of Bokhara, who agreed to allow the passage of Russian troops, and to aid them in any way possible. At

²Parliamentary Papers, V.LXXX (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, p. 136.

³C.A.W., p. 294.

the same time he questioned the Russians as to their intentions regarding Afghanistan. M. Weinburg replied that the Governor-General (Kaufman) was contemplating sending a mission to Sher Ali "by which means our relations with the latter would in all probability become defined one way or the other, either in an amicable or hostile sense; everything would depend on the straightforwardness and good sense displayed by the Ameer."⁴

While there was no direct threat in this statement, it was implied when Weinburg stated that relations might be defined in a hostile sense. The purpose of the tentative mission to Kabul thus appeared to be to determine relations between Russia and Afghanistan. This indicates that in the Spring of 1878 no understanding existed between Sher Ali and the Russians, for the avowed purpose of the mission was to attempt to reach some sort of understanding.

June 7

The earliest rumor of the advent of a Russian Mission to Kabul reached the Government of India, and the news was speedily telegraphed to England. However, at this time no details were known, and the rumors could not be immediately verified.

On the same day Major Cavagnari in Peshawar heard of Sher Ali's alarm at the news of the Russian mission,

⁴Lady Balfour, p. 248.

and his attempt to halt it. The Amir had received word from Shahghassi Sherdil Khan that the Russians had begun building a road between Badkoya (near Khiva) and the banks of the Oxus and then to Ukeba. He also informed the Amir that the Khan of Khiva, with eight hundred horsemen, had been directed to protect the working groups, and also to accompany the Russian Envoy who would soon visit Kabul. The Russian Agent at Kabul also informed the Amir that an Envoy, with power equal to that of the Governor-General at Tashkend, would shortly visit Kabul.

Upon hearing this, Sher Ali wrote a letter to Shahghassi Sherdil telling him to inform Kaufman that it was not advisable for a Russian Mission to visit Kabul, and suggested instead that "if the Russian Government had anything important to say to him, rather than receive a Russian (European) Envoy at Kabul, he would at once send one of his ministers to Tashkend, to receive the communication on his behalf."⁵ The reply from General Kaufman advised him that a Russian Envoy, by orders of the Emperor, was being sent and could not be detained. He further stated that the Amir would be held responsible for the Envoy's safety, as well as his honorable reception. In response to Sher Ali's proposal to send an Afghan envoy to Tashkend, Kaufman added that he would be glad to

⁵The Moscow Gazette, July 18, 1878, quoted in C.A.W., p. 295.

accept the proposal to accredit such a permanent Afghan representative, and furthermore he advised that the Amir's offer could not now be withdrawn without offending Russia. Nevertheless, he emphasized that the stationing of a permanent Afghan representative at Tashkend could not supersede the special Russian Mission. "On this the Ameer got very angry, and in a petulant manner exclaimed that it was useless for him to depute an Afghan Agent nor could he do anything to prevent the Envoy's coming to Cabul."⁶ The Amir decided to summon the important chiefs to Kabul to consult with the Kabul Durbar and to advise him what to do.

June 11

A letter of this date from the Taskend correspondent of the Moscow Gazette (published July 9th) described the military arrangements which had been made by General Kaufman against the anticipated attack by the British through Afghanistan from India. By this date both the military and diplomatic arrangements were fairly well completed.⁷

June 13

The Russian Mission, headed by General Stolietoff,

⁶Parliamentary Papers, V. LXXX (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, p. 138.

⁷C.A.W., p. 299.

left Tashkend. The Kabul correspondent of the Russian newspaper Golos, described the mission in these terms:

The Russian Mission, consisting of seven officers (among whom was one general), twenty-two cossacks, four servants, and fifteen Kirghes horsemen, left Samarkand on the ^{12th}₁₄ June.

The road selected for reaching the Oxus was through Hazer, Shirabad, and Chushkogosar, which, though presenting some difficulties, running as it does along a rocky ridge of hills, was traversed in five days. On this route the Mission passed through the famous defile known in ancient times under the name of the "Iron Gates," and now called Burghasse Khana.⁸

The day the Russian Mission left Tashkend was also the day when the Berlin Congress had its first meeting.

June 16

Major Cavagnari, in his Peshawar Diary of this date, portrayed the Amir's frame of mind at the impending approach of the Russian Mission. He noted that the Amir had expressed the opinion that the Russian proposals were adverse to British interests, and that "it would remain to be seen how the British authorities, when they heard of them, would act in their own interests with regard to the Indian Empire." His resolution at this time was not to make enemies of either power, but whichever Government "approached him in a friendly manner, he would make similar advances."⁹

⁸Golos, November ¹⁴₂₆, 1878, quoted in C.A.W., p. 301.

⁹Parliamentary Papers, V. LIII (Afghanistan, No. 1), 1878, p. 139.

June 26

The attention of the Foreign Office was called to the Russian Mission.

July 2

The British Ambassador to Russia, Sir Augustus Loftus, questioned M. de Giers about the coming of a Russian mission to Kabul. M. de Giers denied that any mission had been sent to Kabul, or that there was any intention of sending one. When Ambassador Loftus referred to intrigues which had been carried on by a Russian resident agent in Kabul, with a view to creating dissension between the Amir and the British Government, M. de Giers observed that when war with Britain had appeared imminent, "no doubt the military commanders conceived it to be their duty to take such measures as might be necessary and serviceable to their country."¹⁰

Since it was known that a Russian Mission was at Kabul at the time the denial was given Lord Loftus, it was assumed that either M. de Giers was uninformed of the actions of the Governor-General of Turkestan, or he was deliberately hiding the truth.

¹⁰Parliamentary Papers, V. LXXX (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, p. 132.

July 13

The Treaty of Berlin was formally signed, removing the threat of war between Russia and England. The settlement was a defeat for Panslavism, and showed that the British were still dominant in the Eastern Mediterranean. Britain obtained Cyprus, and this, along with the other terms, pointed to a bolstering up of Turkey. Russia suffered diplomatically, and the Tsar, Alexander II, described the Congress as a "European coalition against Russia led by Bismark."¹¹

Disraeli's diplomatic success lay in checking Russian ambitions. Russia was prevented from occupying Constantinople. Also, by impeding the creation of a "Big Bulgaria," which would have consisted of a polyglot population in which the Bulgars would have been a minority, the threat of Russian penetration was greatly diminished. Besides, the agreement left much less of the world to be governed by the Turks.

The avoidance of war with Russia, together with the positive accomplishments of the Berlin Congress, gave Disraeli a prestige "unsurpassed by any statesman of his time."¹² Disraeli was now at the pinnacle of his

¹¹Anthony Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain 1815-1914 (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1960), p. 304.

¹²Blake, p. 655.

success. This event marked a change in the attitude of the Home Government towards Central Asia due to the removal of the danger of war with Russia.

July 22

The Russian Mission arrived in Kabul. Its reception was described by the Russian correspondent for the Golos:

At a distance of seven versts from Cabul we were met by Prince Abdullah Khan, Shere Ali's nephew. He rode on an enormous elephant of ashy-grey colour, and with long gilded tusks. The Prince himself was seated in a basket profusely ornamented with gold. He invited General Stoletoff to seat himself on his elephant, and they entered the town together. We followed also on elephants, the sowdas of which were ornamented with silver. A brilliant body of cavalry followed in rear of the Prince. Crowds lined both sides of the road, and even neighbouring rocks and trees were covered with people. . . .

Entering on a large plain, we found it filled with regular troops. On the left flank stood the cavalry, and twelve brass and steel guns, which glistened in the sun, were placed in front. As soon as the elephant on which the Envoy was seated was in line with the troops a salute of thirty-six guns was fired. The mournful though very original air of the Afghan National March was struck up.¹³

The Russian Mission was received with all due honors, a fact which upset the Viceroy a great deal, in view of the Amir's steadfast refusal to receive a British Envoy.

¹³Golos, November 14-26, 1878, quoted in C.A.W., pp. 303-304.

July 26

The Russian Envoy was received in Durbar by the Amir. He told Sher Ali that the Russian authorities wished to strengthen and perpetuate the friendship with Afghanistan by means of a treaty of amity. The Amir responded that such a matter would necessarily require "consideration and consultation with his Ministers and the Grandees of his State, and that a proper reply would be given after this had been done. . . ."14

July 30

Lytton telegraphed Cranbrook to inquire whether the Russian Mission was to be treated as an Imperial question with Russia, or a local matter between the Amir and the Government of India. In the latter case, he proposed, with the approval of the Home Government "to insist on immediate suitable reception of a European Mission. . . . The alternative would be continued policy of complete inaction, difficult to maintain, and very injurious to our position in India."15

At this time Lytton had very few facts regarding the Russian Mission. He did not know how large it was,

¹⁴Parliamentary Papers, V. LXXX (Central Asia, No. 2), 1878, p. 1.

¹⁵Parliamentary Papers, V. LIII (Afghanistan, No. 1), 1878, p. 227.

or what its purpose was. Nevertheless, he viewed it as a serious threat, serious enough to demand immediate action.

August 1

In response to Lytton's telegram regarding the Russian Mission, Cranbrook wanted to make an immediate protest to Russia, but was talked out of it by Salisbury. Instead, he wired the Viceroy as follows:

Make yourself certain of the facts before insisting on the reception of British Envoy. Perhaps you might send a native to ascertain whether Russians are really there, and telegraph to me when the truth is known.¹⁶

August 2

Twice on this date Lytton telegraphed Cranbrook urging immediate action be taken. In one telegram he said:

To remain inactive now will, we respectfully submit, be to allow Afghanistan to fall as certainly and as completely under Russian power and influence as the Khanates. We believe we could correct this situation if allowed to treat it as question between us and the Ameer, and probably could do so without recourse to force. But we must speak plainly and decidedly, and be sure of your support.¹⁷

In this same telegram, Lytton informed Cranbrook that the Russian Envoy was General Abramoff, a piece of misinformation. In the other telegram, he again suggested

¹⁶Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁷Lytton to Cranbrook, August 2, 1878, C.A.W., p. 173.

that the Government of India be allowed to insist on the reception of a British Mission at Kabul, and after such reception to attempt to make arrangements with the Amir as outlined in Salisbury's instructions to Lytton in 1876, but avoiding all dynastic guarantees.

The Viceroy felt that it was necessary for the protection of India to reestablish the preponderance of British influence in Afghanistan. If such arrangements could not be made with Sher Ali, then it would be necessary to "consider what measures are necessary for the protection and permanent tranquility of the North-West Frontier. . . ." ¹⁸ Lytton preferred to view the Afghan situation as a local matter, rather than considering it in the larger context of European affairs. The threat to British India was utmost in his mind at this time.

August 3

Cranbrook accepted the general outline of Lytton's ideas, and telegraphed permission to send a British mission to Kabul. On the same day Lytton wrote a detailed letter to the Secretary of State, setting forth his views on frontier policy, together with his proposals for what action should be taken.

He first noted his belief that eventually all

¹⁸Ibid., p. 174.

intermediate states lying between British India and Russia would be absorbed by one or the other power, resulting in a conterminous boundary with Russia on the Northwest frontier. Thus, the British should decide, while they still had the opportunity, just where that boundary should be. In making this decision, they must take into account the most advantageous position, especially from the standpoint of affording a strong military line. He also pointed out that the present frontier line was militarily disadvantageous, that to stand behind a mountain range was outdated. In securing a better frontier, he particularly stressed the importance of Herat and the necessity of keeping it from falling to any other power, be it Persian or Russian.

In order to secure a suitable frontier, Lytton saw only three possible courses of action:

1. To secure an alliance with the Amir of Kabul which would permanently exclude Russian influence from Afghanistan.
2. If this failed, to withdraw promptly and publicly all support from the Amir, to disintegrate the Afghan kingdom, and to replace the present ruler with one more friendly to the British and dependent upon them for support.
3. If the above failed, to conquer and hold as much of Afghanistan as necessary for the maintenance of the Northwest frontier.¹⁹

¹⁹Lytton to Cranbrook, August 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 255.

The Viceroy did not believe the last alternative to be as formidable as had often been represented. He was convinced that British India's military might was far superior to any of the small neighboring countries, including Afghanistan.

In accordance with the suggestions and priorities listed, Lytton proposed first to send a British Mission to the Amir. The Mission was to be headed by Sir Neville Chamberlain. It was to be a rather formidable mission, for Lytton proposed that the British Envoy would be instructed to use "every endeavour to conciliate and convince the Amir," but at the same time he would "be armed with a formidable bill of indictment against His Highness; setting forth all his inimical and hitherto unpunished acts towards us, his attempts to stir up a holy war against us, his systematic maltreatment of our subjects, etc., and the culminating insult of his reception of Russian officers at his capital after his flat refusal to receive there our own officers. . . ."20

The terms that Lytton proposed to be offered the Amir by the British Envoy were a treaty binding the Amir not to enter into negotiations or receive agents from any other State without the consent of the British; the right to send special British missions to Kabul; and the permanent location of a British Agent at Herat. He also

²⁰Ibid., p. 256.

wanted the right to have agents at Balkh and Kandahar, but he would not insist upon it. The Amir was to be advised that if he rejected the terms, the British would openly break with him, and it was to be intimated to him that the British would then occupy the Kurram Valley and Kandahar.

Lytton further suggested to Cranbrook that, should the Mission fail, the second course of action should be put into action immediately. "That is to say, we must upset Sher Ali or pare his claws."²¹ While these were merely proposals, the Viceroy was already setting the plans in action, for he was having the proposed military operations planned and preparations made at the time he was writing to the Secretary of State.

Lytton's attitude toward Sher Ali is made apparent in his letter. His bill of indictment against the Amir was made up in reaction to his resentment at not being treated as a superior, and to the misinformation he possessed. The only thing Sher Ali had done to the British was to refuse to receive an Envoy in 1876. The Viceroy had closed the Peshawar Conference at a time when the Amir seemingly was in a mood to cooperate. It was also the Viceroy who withdrew the Native British Agent from Kabul, thus severing relations with Afghanistan; and it was the Government of India which had ordered a military

²¹Ibid., p. 260.

build-up on the Northwest frontier. The Russian Mission was not wanted by Sher Ali, but under pressure of threats he had received it. Lytton revealed his belief that the British had been greatly insulted and mistreated by the Amir, but the basis he had for this belief was misinformation and bias.

This letter also shows the Viceroy's objective of obtaining dominance in Afghanistan, be it through peaceful means or by war, in order to protect India from a future Russian menace. He revealed his conviction that there would eventually be problems with Russia in that area, and a consequential need for a strong military position on the Northwest frontier. This position was to be secured with or without Sher Ali's cooperation.

The Peshawar newsletter of the same date contained information which recounted how the Amir had received a petition stating that Russia, England, and Persia were planning to partition Afghanistan, and suggesting that the Amir should declare war against the three nations. The report stated that Sher Ali was very angry upon hearing this, and tore up the letter.²² Sher Ali was well aware of the threat to his country from both sides, but he was not in favor of war, except as a defensive measure.

²²C.A.W., p. 308.

August 6 or 7

Owen Tudor Burne, head of the political department of the India Office, learned that it had been decided not to send a formal protest to Russia. He believed this to be due to Salisbury's influence, and he "was furious and took a blood and thunder draft to Lord Cranbrook which . . . he adopted in its essential parts."²³

August 8

Cranbrook instructed Sir L. Mallett to address the Foreign Office regarding the Russian Mission. He told Mallett that he did not consider the sending of the proposed British Mission as adequate in itself, but that it was also necessary that the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg should address the Russian Cabinet concerning the activities of the Russian authorities in Turkestan. He went on to say,

It is the Russian Cabinet alone which is responsible for the acts of its Agent; and it is the Russian Governor-General of Turkistan, rather than the Ameer Shere Ali, who, with or without authority, is at this moment pursuing a policy of which the effect must be to seriously agitate the minds of Her Majesty's subjects throughout India.²⁴

At this time Cranbrook did not place the blame on the

²³Cowling, p. 65.

²⁴Cranbrook to Mallett, August 8, 1878, quoted in C.A.W., p. 309.

Afghan Amir, but instead saw him as victim of Russian intrigues. While he had led Lytton to believe that the matter would be treated as a local issue, at this point he changed his mind, and it became an imperial issue instead.

Burne's draft was forwarded at this time to the Foreign Office for approval, and Cranbrook also telegraphed Lytton, giving permission to send a British mission to Sher Ali, but neglecting to inform him of the protest being prepared for transmittal to St. Petersburg.

August 13

Lytton telegraphed to Cranbrook further details pertaining to the organization of the mission, and stated, "I cannot propose it [the mission] unless I have authority to insist on it."²⁵ This was an indication of the Viceroy's intentions, but it went unnoticed at the time by the Home Government. To Lytton, once the project was set in motion, it must be carried to the end. Thus, once he had the sanction from the Home Government to send the mission, he construed it to mean carrying through the plans regardless of intervening circumstances.

²⁵Lady Balfour, p. 270.

August 14

M. de Giers assured the British Charge d'Affairs at St. Petersburg that the political and military preparations in Central Asia had been stopped. He also intimated that the preparations, including the Russian Mission, had been made as a precaution against the importation of Indian troops to Malta.²⁶

These statements of M. de Giers are important for several reasons. First, they help to verify the fact that the Russian Mission was sent as a reaction to British interference in the Russo-Turkish affair. Second, they assert that the military and political actions had been stopped. Thus Russia no longer intended to pursue those activities in regard to Afghanistan which the British Government had so deplored. Any motivation for military aggression in Afghanistan as a necessity to the defense of India from Russia thereby should have been removed, and indeed, in the eyes of the Actors in London, it had been.

August 17

Lytton wrote to Cranbrook, giving his considered views on the Afghan situation. The letter was very detailed, consisting of some seventeen typewritten pages. In this letter the Viceroy stated that Sher Ali preferred

²⁶C.A.W., p. 310.

Russian protection to British, and moreover, he had been alienated from the British for a long time "by the systematic stupidity and insincerity of our policy."²⁷ This policy was not that pursued by Lytton, but the one followed by his predecessors. He expressed the opinion that if Sher Ali were not with the British for all practical purposes, he should be treated as against them.

Lytton expressed his theory relating to the maintenance of the Indian Empire when he said, "Our present Empire, and the long repose it has enjoyed of late years, are the results of measures taken in time to crush the power, not of actively inimical, but of undoubtedly ill-disposed and untrustworthy neighbours, before it could gather to a head. The dangers averted by these measures were only apparent to the statesmen who were closely watching the situation on the spot; they were incipient dangers, rarely realised in time by the home public."²⁸ In this statement he showed his belief that the man-on-the-spot was the most competent to judge the situation, and implied that as a result he should take action whenever it appeared necessary.

Lytton saw the Afghan situation as a parallel to past situations in India, and concluded that the same

²⁷Lytton to Cranbrook, August 17, 1878, quoted in Hardy, p. 85.

²⁸Ibid., p. 87.

policy should be followed as in those cases. But his use of parallels was inconsistent, for the circumstances more closely resembled those preceding the First Afghan War, which ended in disaster for the British. However, he never compared those events. His selectivity in drawing parallels was a tool used to reinforce his beliefs. Here his lack of knowledge of Afghanistan helped to cloud his vision. The Afghan people were entirely different from the Indian subjects with whom he was familiar, but he failed to understand this. Sir G. Campbell emphasized the differences, and described the Afghan character thus:

I have always thought and said that if the mountains of Afghanistan had been occupied by a people in any degree resembling those of the Himalayas,--if the Afghans had in any degree resembled in character the people of Cashmere or of the hill country of the Kangra, Simla, or Kumoan districts, or even those of Nepaul--I should have thought it extremely desirable that we should in some shape occupy that country and so complete our defences; but we know by painful experience that the Afghans are a people of a totally different character--turbulent--bred from infancy to the use of arms--and with a passion for independence in which they are exceeded by no people in this world. This love of independence is such as to make them intolerant, not only of foreign rule, but almost of any national, tribal or family rule. Experience has shown, too, that these traits are not of a passing kind; the Afghans are not to be tamed by subjection and peace; nothing induces them to surrender that love of independence which seems to be the essence of their nature.²⁹

The Viceroy went on in his letter to state that the objective in Afghanistan was to effect "the permanent

²⁹Sir G. Campbell, M. P., The Afghan Frontier (London: Edward Stanford, 1879), pp. 1-2.

settlement of the Afghan question on a basis of our own selection, thus ensuring the stable tranquility of our Central Asian frontiers."³⁰ To attain this goal he saw two alternatives. The first was to come to an immediate and definite understanding with Afghanistan, a course which could best be carried out by the Government of India. The second was to reach an agreement with the Russian Government, and this task would best fall to the Home Government. Lytton strongly favored the first course of action. He had several strong objections to the second course. He felt that any peaceful settlement with Russia would result in British abandonment of northern Afghanistan to Russian influence, and the adoption of the Hindu Kush and the Helmund as the ultimate limits of British influence. The result would be a conterminous boundary with Russia from the Oxus River almost to the Persian Gulf, and moreover, "to surrender without a struggle either to Russia or Persia, Herat and all the neighbouring towns and territory of Northern Afghanistan would be a serious blow to our prestige."³¹

Lytton believed that the present situation presented Britain with a "golden opportunity" to gain supremacy over Russia in that area, if the first course of action, that

³⁰Lytton to Cranbrook, August 17, 1878, quoted in Hardy, p. 88.

³¹Ibid., p. 91.

of direct arrangements with Afghanistan, were followed. Such an arrangement would, at the very least, involve a pledge by the British to defend the Amir's dominions against unprovoked aggression on the part of any other power. This course would unavoidably increase Britain's future liabilities, but it would "not only be the most efficacious as regards our present prestige and permanent interests, but also the most pacific, the least violent, and on the whole the most justifiable."³²

Lytton was convinced that his proposed course of action could be carried out with the full support of the Government, for he had confidence in Lord Beaconsfield's support of a "spirited" foreign policy, and he believed the Cabinet was united behind him, and that the Government was in command of a large majority. Furthermore, "his [Beaconsfield's] insight, patriotism, ingenuity, and energy, gratefully recognised by the common-sense of the whole country, and the most high-spirited and straightforward of his chief colleagues at the India Office. For this is the best guarantee that the opportunity now offered us will not be lost or misused."³³ Thus the Viceroy was confident in the strength of the Government, and in its support of a policy of action.

³²Ibid., p. 94.

³³Ibid., p. 95.

This was also the day when Abdullah Jan, the son and heir of Sher Ali, died. This was a great personal loss to the Amir. A forty day period of mourning was declared in Afghanistan, and all business was suspended for that period.

August 19

Salisbury had revised the protest to Russia, drawn up by Burne, to a routine demand for the withdrawal of the Russian Mission from Kabul, and sent it back to Cranbrook for approval. Although Burne "minuted against the reduction of the original protest to 'milk and water by the combined Cranbrook and Salisbury process,' . . . his modification . . . [was] scratched out by Cranbrook."³⁴ The draft was again sent to the Foreign Office which dispatched it to St. Petersburg on the above date. The Home Government's action on this was very slow, which seems to indicate that they did not consider the matter of great importance.

August 21

The news of the death of Abdullah Jan reached the Viceroy. In view of this development, Lytton delayed the departure of the native emissary (the Nawab Ghulam Hasan

³⁴Cowling, p. 65.

Khan), who was to have left Peshawar on August 23rd. The Nawab was to carry word to the Amir concerning the coming of the Chamberlain Mission to Kabul.

August 23

The Amir sent word by messenger to General Kaufman of the impending return of General Stolietoff and other members of his mission.

August 25

The Russian Envoy and a party left Kabul. Some of the subordinate members of the mission remained behind, due to illness.

August 30

The native emissary, the Nawab Ghulam Hasan Khan, departed for Kabul to announce the arrival of the British Mission. The Nawab carried with him two letters, one, dated August 14th, announcing the Mission and requesting safe conduct, and the other a letter of condolence. The emissary was stopped at Jellalabad and told to wait, as the Amir was "unfit to attend to business, and that the matter must be deferred until after . . . the month of mourning."³⁵

The Viceroy believed this to be a delaying tactic

³⁵Lady Balfour, p. 265.

on the part of the Amir to give him time to consult the Russians as to what to do.³⁶ However, the Amir changed his mind, and the envoy was allowed to proceed to Kabul.

September 8

M. de Giers wrote from Livadia to Mr. Plunkett that the Russian Mission to Kabul, which had been sent in prospect of war, was now, due to the results of the Congress of Berlin, "of a provisional nature, and one of simple courtesy."³⁷

At Calcutta, Lytton telegraphed Cranbrook that the Mission would leave Peshawar on September 16th. He also announced that Chamberlain would be dispatched, together with 1,000 men, through the Khyber Pass on his way to Kabul.³⁸

September 9

A copy of Lytton's instructions to Chamberlain arrived in London. In these instructions the Viceroy insisted that before any negotiations were begun in Kabul, the Russian Mission must be withdrawn. If the Russians were still in Kabul when Chamberlain arrived, he

³⁶Ibid., p. 266.

³⁷Parliamentary Papers, V. LXXX (Central Asia No. 1), 1878, p. 147.

³⁸Lady Cecil, p. 338.

was to ignore them, but at the same time to refuse to make any terms with Sher Ali until they had left the city.

The receipt of this information concerning the Viceroy's intentions caused a great deal of consternation in the Home Government. It was alarming, for if Sher Ali attempted to dismiss the Russians, it might provoke hostilities between Afghanistan and Russia, and such hostilities would conceivably involve Britain at a time when peace with Russia had just been established. When the telegram containing the instructions arrived at the India Office in London, Cranbrook was in the northern part of Scotland. His private secretary, Horace Walpole, thought it serious enough to call for immediate action, and therefore sent a copy of the telegram to Cranbrook, one to Beaconsfield at Hughenden, and one to Salisbury at the Foreign Office.

Salisbury, receiving his copy the same day, wrote to Disraeli, "Lytton's telegram has gone to you tonight and will give you matter to sleep and dream over."³⁹

September 10

Salisbury went to Hugheden to dine, sleep and talk Indian policy with Disraeli. The two considered that Lytton's proposal involved war as the immediate alternative

³⁹Ibid.

to surrender. To avoid such a collision, they felt quick action was needed.

This was also the day when the Nawab Ghulam Hasan Khan arrived in Kabul with the Viceroy's letter announcing the advent of the Chamberlain Mission.

September 11

Salisbury returned to London and took the initiative by officially requesting the India Office "to prevent any action being taken in India until we have received and communicated a letter from de Giers on this subject which we are advised left Livadia on Sunday."⁴⁰

Cranbrook forwarded Lytton's correspondence with the India Office, regarding Afghanistan, to Disraeli.

September 12

Chamberlain and the other officers in his party reached Peshawar in preparation for the Mission.

Disraeli wrote to Cranbrook expressing his alarm at Lytton's telegram of the 8th. For the first time he realized that perhaps Lytton did not know of the communications with Russia. He also informed Cranbrook that it appeared that the explanations of the Russian Government were satisfactory. He went on to express concern in

⁴⁰Salisbury to Beaconsfield, September 11, 1878, quoted in Lady Cecil, p. 338.

regard to Lytton's policy:

What injurious effect Lytton's policy, ostentatiously, indiscreetly, but, evidently, officially announced, in the Calcutta correspondence of The Times of yesterday, may produce, I cannot presume to say. But I am alarmed, and affairs require, in my opinion, your gravest attention.⁴¹

By this time Cranbrook had received word from Salisbury advising him that the Foreign Secretary was officially requesting the India Office to hold the Mission until the reply from Russia was received. Salisbury was not sure how Cranbrook would react to his interference, but on this date the Secretary of State replied favorably, saying, "Pray let me know your feelings without scruple about mine--in such grave affairs frankness ought never to do harm."⁴²

September 13

Cranbrook telegraphed Lytton to delay the Mission until a reply had been received from the Home Government's protest to Russia. This was the first that Lytton had heard of the remonstrance. The Secretary of State sent another telegram stating that he would not send detailed approval and modification of Chamberlain's instructions until the Russian reply arrived in London.

⁴¹Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 12, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1253.

⁴²Lady Cecil, p. 339.

Upon sending the telegram to the Viceroy, Cranbrook wrote Disraeli to inform him that Lytton had been told to delay the mission. In this letter he also set forth his views on the Afghan situation. He felt that it was necessary to send the mission, but not under the instructions as set forth by Lytton. These needed modification. The terms which Cranbrook proposed to offer the Amir involved four points. First, he believed it would be beneficial to have a British resident on the frontier as a means for obtaining more accurate information. Second, he proposed to offer the Amir a subsidy to secure his good-will. Third, he advocated a "very qualified" recognition of Sher Ali's successor. Fourth, in regard to the defense of Afghan territory, he felt that such defense must be strictly limited, and must be contingent upon the Amir acting upon the advice of the British, "for we could not be responsible for what he may bring upon himself by independent action."⁴³

Disraeli also wrote to Cranbrook, acknowledging receipt of the Lytton papers which had been forwarded to him by the Secretary of State. Referring to Lytton's letter to Cranbrook of August 17th, the Prime Minister wrote:

Lord Lytton grapples with his subject, and grasps it like a man. I always thought very highly of his

⁴³Cranbrook to Disraeli, September 13, 1878, quoted in Hardy, p. 84.

abilities, but this specimen of them elevates my estimate. With his general policy I agree in great measure, but the all important question which disturbs me immediately arises, Is he acquainted with the negotiations now going on with Russia?⁴⁴

Of course Lytton did not know of the negotiations at the time he wrote the letter referred to by Disraeli. In fact, he had just been informed of them on the very day when the Prime Minister wrote to Cranbrook. Thus, up until this time, which was just three days before the Chamberlain Mission was to depart, all plans had been made by the Government of India without the knowledge of the Home Government's actions. The Viceroy had been acting under an entirely different assumption. He was under the impression that the matter was being dealt with as a local concern, and the Mission had been planned on that assumption. At the eleventh hour the circumstances were suddenly altered, but Lytton had committed himself too far, in his own opinion, to change course. The lack of communication between the Home Government and the Government of India was in great measure responsible for the creation of a potentially dangerous situation.

September 14

The Commandant of the fort at Ali Musjid sent to Peshawar to summon back to the Khyber Pass all the

⁴⁴Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 13, 1878, quoted in Hardy, p. 96.

Khyberi headmen, who were afraid to disobey for fear their allowances from the Amir would be cut off. This presented a serious situation, for Major Cavagnari had been negotiating with the tribesmen for the safe conduct of the Mission. Accordingly, Sir Neville Chamberlain wrote to the Commandant, Faiz Mohammed, explaining that the negotiations with the tribesmen had been for the sole purpose of obtaining safe passage through the Khyber Pass, and were not intended in any way to be prejudicial to the Amir. He also asked for assurance that the Mission would be safely conducted to Dakka.⁴⁵

September 16

The Mission was to have left for Kabul on this date, but in accordance with Cranbrook's instructions, Lytton telegraphed Chamberlain at Peshawar to delay the start for five days.

Chamberlain also received a reply to his letter from Faiz Mohammed, who advised him that the Mission would not be allowed to pass without the Amir's consent, and so far he had received no orders concerning it. He also advised that Mir Akhor was expected to arrive any day from Kabul, and perhaps he would bring some word about the Mission.

⁴⁵Lady Balfour, p. 269.

September 17

Disraeli wrote to Cranbrook that he had not yet seen the answer from Livadia, but that Mr. Plunkett had sent a summary of its contents by telegraph, and the reply was not satisfactory. Five days earlier he had expressed his belief that the Russian explanations were satisfactory. He went on to express his opinion that the situation called for action and firmness, and his belief that there should be no delay in the Mission. The instructions to Chamberlain he left up to Cranbrook for modification.⁴⁶

In Calcutta, Lytton heard that an abstract of the Russian reply had been received by Mr. Plunkett, and that it was unsatisfactory. This information helped to reinforce the Viceroy's determination to proceed with the Mission.

September 19

Chamberlain received letters in Peshawar from the British Emissary at Kabul. The Nawab stated that the Amir was very upset by the "harsh words" of the Viceroy, and was still very afflicted with grief over the loss of his son. The Amir had intimated to him that he would receive the Mission if the British would just be patient

⁴⁶Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 17, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1253; Hardy, pp. 96-97.

and wait until he was able to make the necessary arrangements and send permission for the Mission to advance. The Emissary further remarked:

He [the Amir] denies that the Russians came for any other purpose than to exchange civilities in consequence of their having a common boundary with Afghanistan. He believes that a personal interview with British Mission will adjust misunderstandings. He has no wish to give Russians a right of way through his country. He says that there has been sickness in Cabul, and that some of the Russian servants are lying ill; but that, as soon as they recover, he hopes to give them their congé in a suitable manner, after which he will send a confidential messenger to escort the British Mission. He undertakes to be responsible for the safety of the Mission and its good treatment, if he invites it . . . in two or three days he will send for the Nawab, and . . . will fix a date and make all arrangements for the coming of the Mission; that the Nawab should write and say that the sending of the Mission without Ameer's consent will be a slight on the Ameer. Nawab thinks that the Russian Envoy will be dismissed after the Eed, that the Ameer will then send for the British Mission.⁴⁷

The Amir's position was made clear. He was willing to receive a British Mission, but it must be on his invitation and not forced upon him. The Amir's pride was at stake, not so much his personal vanity as the necessity to save face before his subjects. However, Lytton had received word from a dubious source, that the Amir "was so disgusted with the British Government that he could not bear to see anyone connected with it, not even this mission."⁴⁸ As Lytton had all along believed that

⁴⁷The Nawab Ghulam Hasan Khan to Chamberlain, C.A.W., pp. 176-177.

⁴⁸Lytton to Cranbrook, October 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 267.

the Amir was hostile to the British, this served to further confirm that opinion.

Chamberlain was convinced that if the Mission proceeded before the Amir sent for it, it would be stopped, by force if necessary. Therefore, he telegraphed Lytton that the Amir was intent on asserting his claims to total independence of action with regard to the Mission, but at the same time he held out the hope that if his wishes were complied with, he would receive the Mission honorably. He then advised the Viceroy that "Unless your Lordship accepts this position, all chance of a peaceful solution seems to me gone."⁴⁹

Lytton replied by wire that the information did not change the situation and that the plans for the Mission already made should not be delayed. Lytton did not believe in the Amir's sincerity, and interpreted his move as a delaying tactic to allow time for the return of the Russian Envoy to Kabul.

September 20

Salisbury forwarded M. de Giers' note of September 8th to Lord Cranbrook, remarking that he inferred from the note that "his Excellency acknowledges that all the formal assurances of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan

⁴⁹Chamberlain to Lytton, September 21, 1878, C.A.W., p. 178.

have now resumed their former validity."⁵⁰ Here again Salisbury displayed his belief that the Russian threat had been neutralized.

September 21

The Chamberlain Mission was advanced to Jamrud, against the orders of the Home Government. Major Cavagnari and a small party proceeded to the fort at Ali Musjid to ask for passage through the pass. The Commandant of the fort, Faiz Mohammed, advised them that he had not received any word from the Amir to allow the Mission to pass, and therefore, he could not permit them passage. However, if they wished to wait, he would send word to the Amir, requesting permission. The British party was further advised that if they attempted to pass, they would be stopped by force. Chamberlain decided to withdraw and return to Peshawar.

September 22

Major Cavagnari issued a report on the incident at Ali Musjid. The Mission was formally dissolved, with full aid and protection being guaranteed to the Khyberi tribes who had given passage and had escorted the Mission. At the same time a letter was sent to Faiz Mohammed

⁵⁰Salisbury to Cranbrook, September 20, 1878, C.A.W., p. 310.

intimating that his reply to the mission was understood to be dictated by the Amir of Kabul, and instructions were sent to the Nawab Ghulam Hasan to leave Kabul immediately.

The Viceroy, interpreting the incident at Ali Musjid as a hostile action on the part of the Amir, ordered the Punjab Government to instruct the frontier officers "to lose no time and spare no efforts to detach from all political connection with the Afghan Government those independent tribes lying outside the northern portion of the border, whom it was most important, either upon political or military grounds, to bring permanently under our influence, to the exclusion of that of the Amir."⁵¹

The repulse of the British Mission had the desired result of convincing many, who were opposed to the "forward policy," of the hostility of the Amir. The head of the Mission, Sir Neville Chamberlain, who had been carefully selected by Lytton because of his advocacy of the Lawrentian policy of "masterly inactivity," was of the opinion that British prestige had been damaged. Writing to Lytton he declared,

No man was ever more anxious than I to preserve peace and secure friendly relations, and it was only when I plainly saw the Amir's fixed intention to drive us into a corner that I told you we must either sink into the position of merely obeying his behests on

⁵¹Lady Balfour, p. 281.

all points or stand on our rights and risk a rupture. Nothing could have been more distinct, nothing more humiliating to the dignity of the British Crown and nation. . . .⁵²

At this particular moment the Actors in the Home Government were scattered. Salisbury was at Dieppe, and Cranbrook was at Balmoral in Scotland. Disraeli, not yet aware of the events at Ali Musjid, wrote to Cranbrook stating his view that the Afghan matter must be handled by himself, Cranbrook, and Salisbury, as it was not the time for a Cabinet meeting. He expressed the opinion that Salisbury was too cautious, and that the situation called for action, saying, "we must control and even create events." He further observed, "when you and the V-Roy agree, I shall, as a general rule, always wish to support you."⁵³

In this letter the Prime Minister showed his desire for action, and his confidence in Cranbrook and Lytton. He wanted the Afghan matter settled in a manner advantageous to Britain, and he displayed no doubts that this could be readily accomplished, without placing England in a position which could lead to hostilities. From the signing of the Treaty of Berlin up to the time of the incident at Ali Musjid, the members of the Home

⁵²Chamberlain to Lytton, September 22, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 281.

⁵³Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 22, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1254.

Government expressed no thoughts of the possible necessity of war with either Russia or Afghanistan. In their minds, this possibility had been eliminated. Disraeli's desire for action was in the political arena. He wrote Cranbrook that he was certain that Chamberlain would make the best terms he could. The objective of the Mission, in Disraeli's mind, was, "to prove our ascendancy in Afghanistan," and in order to accomplish this, he emphasized that "we must not stick at trifles."⁵⁴ This would tend to indicate that the Prime Minister was prepared to make a reasonable political settlement with Sher Ali, and that his intentions towards Afghanistan were political and not military. His whole career had been based upon the principle of action, and in this matter he too wanted action and was not content to sit back and wait indefinitely, but the action alluded to did not include war.

September 23

Cranbrook received news of the repulsion of the British Mission. His first reaction was to wire Lytton, advising him to make certain that the rejection was ordered by the Amir himself, and was not merely Faiz Mohammed acting without authority. He also told the Viceroy to avoid coercive action until he heard from the Nawab Ghulam Hasan. Cranbrook was not prepared to rush

⁵⁴Ibid.

into war until he was certain that the affront was the Amir's doing. If the facts showed that the Amir had no part in the incident, then hostilities could be avoided.

At the same time Lytton wrote to Cranbrook giving his motives regarding the Mission. Herein he clearly showed that he had anticipated an affront, but regarded it as necessary to unite public opinion at home behind whatever action the Government might feel necessary. He stated that Chamberlain, who was also expecting an affront, wished to break off negotiations with the Amir without leaving Peshawar. The Viceroy would not hear of this because it would place the Government of India in an embarrassing position, since if "Relations with the Amir [had] been broken off without any overt act of hostility on his part, our public would never have understood the cause of the rupture. . . ." ⁵⁵ He concluded that diplomatic action had been exhausted and other measures were now necessary.

Lytton revealed in this letter that his real quarrel with the Amir was not over the affront at Ali Musjid. In fact, this incident had been deliberately precipitated by the Viceroy himself, as the means for obtaining public support for the more aggressive measures he wished to take to bring the Amir to his knees. It is

⁵⁵Lytton to Cranbrook, September 23, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 285.

also obvious that Lytton's purpose in organizing the Mission was not to seek a reasonable and pacific settlement with the Amir, but to provide a motive for more direct action.

September 24

Salisbury wrote to Beaconsfield, strongly protesting the Viceroy's independent action. He also expressed the hope of avoiding the necessity for an advance on Kabul. He recognized that in view of such a public affront, hostilities had become necessary, but he hoped they would be minimal.⁵⁶

September 26

Salisbury again reiterated his position against any attempt to take Kabul, in a letter to Cranbrook, saying, "If we go up the Bolan and take Candahar, we can keep it, and shall not be bound to meddle with the fanatical tribes who inhabit the Cabul-Khyber country."⁵⁷

By now Disraeli had had time to learn of the results of the Chamberlain Mission, and wrote to Cranbrook complaining of Lytton's action in sending the Mission against orders. This letter shows a significant change

⁵⁶Lady Cecil, p. 341.

⁵⁷Salisbury to Cranbrook, September 26, 1878, quoted in Lady Cecil, p. 341.

in attitude on the part of the Prime Minister, who just nine days earlier had advocated action, and stressed the necessity to advance the Mission without delay. Undoubtedly he wanted action, but not of the sort that compelled hostilities. He did not want his success at the Congress of Berlin to be offset by a needless war in Afghanistan. What he did want was a political settlement with Afghanistan favorable to British interests. The action he was seeking and the action he got were two quite different things. This accounts for his irritation at Lytton's actions.

Lytton telegraphed Cranbrook, proposing measures which would result either in the unconditional submission of the Amir, or his disposition and subsequent disintegration of his kingdom. To accomplish this he proposed within a month to reinforce Quetta with 6,300 men and twenty-seven guns. This would threaten Kandahar. At the same time, he would assemble 4,000 men and twelve guns at Thull. From there they would advance to the Kurrum Valley, posing a threat to Kabul and Jellalabad. He also advised the Secretary of State that arrangements were being made with the various frontier tribes to gain their support, and he further proposed opening up communications with the influential Sirdars at Kabul for the purpose of winning their support away from the Amir.

He was intent on gaining control over Afghanistan. This was the golden opportunity he had been waiting for,

and which he had worked to create. He was now ready for immediate action, and impatient of delay.

September 27

Again harping on the same subject, Salisbury wrote to Sir Stafford Northcote, "I am urging Beaconsfield and Cranbrook to be satisfied with taking--and keeping--Candahar as a material guarantee."⁵⁸ The Foreign Secretary wanted to minimize any hostilities, and thus avoid an all-out and full-scale war. He felt that the situation did not call for such drastic action.

October 1

Cranbrook, after consultation with the Prime Minister, telegraphed approval of measures proposed by Lytton in his telegram of September 26th. The Viceroy promptly set the measures in action. Troops were dispatched to Quetta and Thull. In order to aid the Khyberi tribesmen, who had escorted the Mission, Lytton decided to place a regiment of guides and a mountain battery from Kohat at Major Cavagnari's and Colonel Jenkin's disposal, to undertake the task of storming the fort at Ali Musjid and expelling the Afghans. Sir Neville Chamberlain, who was in Simla, suffering from an attack of Peshawar fever,

⁵⁸Salisbury to Northcote, September 27, 1878, quoted in Lady Cecil, p. 341.

opposed the scheme, but it had already been sanctioned by the Government of India. When the Home Government learned of it, "a somewhat alarmed and reluctant assent"⁵⁹ was telegraphed. However, the project was abandoned when it was discovered that the fort had been reinforced by the Amir's troops.

October 3

Lytton wrote to Cranbrook, justifying his action in advancing the Mission before he had received permission to do so. He offered as his main defense the negotiations which had been completed with the Khyberi tribesmen to escort the Mission. When the call came to the Khyberis to return to the pass, it meant that the Mission must go too, or lose, not only the escort, but the respect of the frontier tribesmen as well. The Viceroy further justified his move by stating his belief that the Russian reply could not have affected the necessity for the mission, and by again emphasizing the hostility of the Amir and his attempts to evade and delay contact with the British, "while the British Government remained with all India and Central Asia the spectators of its ludicrous and discreditable performance, dancing attendance on the will

⁵⁹Lady Balfour, p. 289.

and pleasure of a weak and insolent barbarian prince."⁶⁰

The Viceroy also made much of the fact that the Amir had neglected to answer his letter of condolence, telling Cranbrook that some native notables at Peshawar, when asked by Chamberlain what they thought about the repulse of his mission, replied, "It is doubtless a studied and great affront to the British Government, but not greater than the Amir's omission to answer the Viceroy's letter of condolence, for amongst us (natives) such an omission is one of the greatest insults one man can offer another."⁶¹ The "insult" was not as great as intimated by Lytton. Moreover, he neglected to mention the strong letters he was continually sending the Amir during the mourning period, with one even accompanying the letter of condolence. But the Viceroy was motivated to constantly present the Amir in the worst possible light.

October 5

The Cabinet met in London. The members were annoyed at Lytton's action in sending the Mission before the Russian answer was received. The results of this action were particularly displeasing to the Cabinet members as it might necessitate calling a special session

⁶⁰Lytton to Cranbrook, October 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 282.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 283.

of Parliament, which they preferred to avoid because of uncertain conditions of English finance and the prospect of trade. It was also felt that "the case to be presented though reasonably justified in Beaconsfield's eyes, was not one that could without great embarrassment be presented to the country."⁶²

The Cabinet decided to reprimand Lytton for disobeying orders on September 21st. Some of the Cabinet members also voiced suspicions of the Viceroy's recklessness. Their position was that no act of open hostility should be undertaken as long as it was possible to delay matters until a more opportune time as far as English politics were concerned, or until the Amir had time to change his mind. The reprimand, along with the Cabinet's opinion, were telegraphed to Lytton the day of the Cabinet meeting.

October 6

Sher Ali wrote a reply to Lord Lytton's letter of August 14th. In this letter he pointed out that before he had had an interview with the Nawab and seen the Viceroy's letter of the 14th, one of his officials arrived in Kabul with a letter he had received from Major Waterfield, Commissioner of Peshawar. Of this communication

⁶²Cowling, p. 75.

Sher Ali said, "what can be the result, meaning and advantage of such a vehement communication to an ally and friend, and of advancing by force a friendly Mission in this manner?"⁶³ He also mentioned seeing three other letters, "in the same tone and style" addressed to officials of his government, plus several others in the course of a few days, which "were not free from harsh and rough words and expression, which are inconsistent with the forms of courtesy and civility, and contrary to the mode of friendship and courtesy."⁶⁴

The Amir further commented on his great sorrow and his opinion that the British Government should have been patient with him on this account. Although all through the letter he stressed his disturbance over the correspondence from the Viceroy and his officials, he also observed that his functionaries, "notwithstanding the threatening communications of the officials of the British Government . . . will not evince any hostility or opposition to the British Government."⁶⁵

October 19

The Nawab Ghulam Hasan Khan returned from Kabul

⁶³Sher Ali to Lytton, October 6, 1878, C.A.W., p. 179.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

bringing the Amir's reply to the Viceroy. Lytton telegraphed the Home Government announcing the receipt of the Amir's "insolent" letter, and at the same time stating that he wished to begin moving troops across the frontier at once. He also stated that he would issue a proclamation disclaiming any intentions to interfere in Afghanistan, and stating that the British Government's quarrel was with the Amir, not the people.⁶⁶

In the opinion of the officials of the Indian Government, the tone of the Amir's letter was intentionally rude and conveyed a direct challenge. Lytton's interpretation of the letter, as presented to the Home Government, was to have a great impact on the Cabinet, removing any hope for a peaceful settlement. The text of the letter was not immediately released to the Cabinet, and was not made public until November 29th, after war had been declared.

October 25

In view of the developments concerning Afghanistan, a Cabinet meeting was held, and it was at this meeting that the final decision was reached. All the Cabinet members were in agreement that some form of action must be taken, and their common reason for this agreement was their belief that the British nation had been insulted by the Amir, and

⁶⁶Cowling, p. 73.

consequently, Britain's prestige was at stake. One of their main concerns was the possibility of obtaining Parliamentary approval should they decide upon war. Some of the members felt that they did not have a casus belli that would stand up in Parliament, and without Parliamentary approval, funds could not be allocated for a war.

Lord Cairns and Mr. Secretary Cross, the Leader of the House of Commons, declared that they saw no cause for war. Lord Salisbury followed, condemning the actions of the Viceroy, particularly Lytton's disobedience in sending the Mission by way of the Khyber Pass, and advancing the Mission contrary to explicit instructions to await orders. According to Disraeli's account of the Cabinet meeting, Salisbury spoke with "great bitterness of the conduct of the Viceroy, and said that, unless curbed, he would bring about some terrible disaster."⁶⁷

Lord Cranbrook responded to the statements of his colleagues, taking the strong Indian view of the situation, and asserting that the casus belli consisted of the sum total of the hostile acts of the Amir towards the British. At this point Disraeli proposed an alternative to a declaration of war. This alternative was to take a material guarantee by sending a force to occupy the Kurram Valley. Such an action would be in the nature

⁶⁷Disraeli to the Queen, October 26, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1259.

of a reprisal which was sanctioned by public law and not considered as active hostility. In this way British power would be demonstrated, her prestige restored, and best of all, there would be no need to call Parliament.⁶⁸

Disraeli's proposal was supported, first by the Duke of Richmond, and then by Salisbury, who declared that "such a course would content him--in demonstrating power, and not necessarily leading to any disaster."⁶⁹ The Lord Chancellor and Mr. Cross also approved the suggestion.

It was at this point that Cranbrook startled the Cabinet by asserting that he would not take the responsibility for such a course; "that his own opinion was for war, immediate and complete; that he believed it inevitable sooner or later, and very soon."⁷⁰ In his estimation the taking of a material guarantee was only a half-way measure, and he feared it would be looked upon as an act of timidity.

The decision had to be based on two considerations--that of how best to restore British prestige, and how best to gain the support of Parliament. All the members of the Cabinet were in agreement that these two ends must be obtained. They finally concluded that Cranbrook's opinion for full-scale military preparations, with impending operations, would best restore and maintain

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 1260.

British prestige. For, in Disraeli's words, "after this extraordinary statement by the Secretary of India, in addition to the fact that none of the forces had as yet arrived at their stations, and that all was a matter of calculation and estimate, there seemed only one course to take. The military preparations were ordered to be continued and completed, and even on a greater scale. . . ."71 But in order to have a good case to present to Parliament, it was decided to give the Amir one more chance by sending him an ultimatum. Thus it would seem that if the Amir wanted peace, it was up to him to reply favorably to the ultimatum. If he did not, then the British Government would be justified in declaring war upon him.

The time limit set by the Cabinet for receipt of a reply from the Amir was actually determined by the Viceroy, who had earlier pointed out that if any action were to be taken before spring, it would have to be done before the winter snows began. His military advisers had fixed November 21st as the latest possible date such operations could be begun. The Cabinet adopted this date for two reasons, the first being to delay as long as possible in order to satisfy public opinion, while the second was not to delay so long that military operations

71Ibid.

would be hampered.⁷²

In the minds of the decision-makers there were no alternatives to some sort of aggressive action. The idea of the ultimatum offered slight chance for a peaceful solution, due to the time allotted for a reply and the prejudicial attitude of the Viceroy. It was not seriously considered by any of the decision-makers that the ultimatum would have any effect beyond that of strengthening the Government's position in Parliament. The alternative of leaving the Amir in peace for the time being, and later attempting to reestablish friendly relations was never considered by any of the Actors, for there was no question in any of their minds that Britain could not afford to lose face. The affront at Ali Musjid, though it could have been avoided if the Viceroy had not disobeyed orders, coupled with the Amir's insolent letter, had been a blow to British prestige which demanded rectification.

British military capability was barely mentioned, as there was no doubt in anyone's mind of the superiority of British forces in both numbers and weapons.

Although the Cabinet meeting revealed disagreements among the Cabinet members, as well as a certain degree of resentment on the part of some members towards the Viceroy's actions, they were finally convinced that

⁷²Cowling, p. 79.

Lytton's policy must be supported. The Queen urged upon Disraeli the necessity of the Cabinet's support of the policy "with as much cordiality as if there had been no initial difference of opinion."⁷³ Disraeli agreed with the Queen, and the Cabinet presented a united front.

October 26

The Cabinet decision reached Lytton, who was unhappy about the delay which would be caused by sending an ultimatum. Accordingly, he summoned the Viceregal Council. The Council reached a unanimous agreement to urge reconsideration of the matter by the Home Government. The members favored declaring war at once. The Council reflected the general feeling among the British in India who feared that any sign of weakness could lead to new uprisings in India, and were highly sensitive to frontier matters. Consequently, they were impatient with the maneuverings of the Home Government.

October 27

Lytton sent the draft of the ultimatum he had composed to Cranbrook by telegraph. He still considered such a message useless and unnecessary.

⁷³Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1260.

October 28

The draft of the ultimatum was modified in London, and returned to Calcutta. The contents of the ultimatum stressed Sher Ali's hostility to the British, and the fact that he had received a Russian Mission when he had steadfastly refused to permit a British Mission to cross his borders. The Viceroy demanded a suitable apology from the Amir, and his consent to receive a permanent British Mission. He also demanded protection for the tribes who had escorted the Chamberlain Mission. If these conditions were not met by sundown on November 20th, the Viceroy declared, "I shall be compelled to consider your intentions as hostile, and to treat you as a declared enemy of the British Government."⁷⁴

October 31

The Viceregal Council met to give effect to the final resolve of the Home Cabinet.

November 2

The ultimatum was sent to the Amir. One copy was given to the Commandant of Ali Musjid, Faiz Mohammed, and another copy placed in the Amir's mailbox in Peshawar.

⁷⁴Ultimatum to Sher Ali, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 299; C.A.W., p. 181.

November 4

Lord Beaconsfield made a speech at the Lord Mayor's dinner in which he spoke of rectifying the North-west frontier of India. He was not considering declaring war in order to secure a better frontier, but since he was almost certain that war would be declared, such an advantage was not to be overlooked, and it might help to win support for the war. However, the Opposition made much of this statement, holding it up as proof that the Prime Minister was deliberately involving the country in war to obtain a more advantageous frontier.

November 18

An Afghan Committee had been formed to oppose going to war against Afghanistan. It was headed by Lord Lawrence, and had such prominent members as the Duke of Westminster, Earl Grey, the Right Honorable W. E. Forster, Lt. General Beecher, Lt. Colonel Colin Mackenzie, and Mr. Fawcett. On this date Lord Lawrence sent a letter on behalf of the Committee, asking Lord Beaconsfield to receive a deputation on or before the next day. The object of the deputation was to try to induce the Government to "at once telegraph to Lord Lytton instructing him not to commence hostilities until the reply of the Ameer to the ultimatum has been made public in England, and until the promised papers on the Central Asian and Afghan questions have been

produced. . . ."75 However, the Prime Minister refused to receive the deputation from the Afghan Committee, and "it became evident, if indeed such had not been recognised from the beginning, that such efforts would have no influence on the immediate result, whatever might be their value as a protest and as influencing Public Opinion with a view to the future."76

November 20

At 10:00 p.m. the Viceroy received a telegram from Peshawar stating that a message had been received from Jamrud that no communication from the Amir had arrived at any of the British outposts. Accordingly, Lytton issued orders for the British troops to advance at daybreak.

November 21

British troops crossed the frontier, General Browne at the Khyber, General Roberts at Kurrum, and General Biddulph at Quetta. At the same time the Viceroy issued a proclamation to the Sirdars and the people of Afghanistan. This proclamation again set forth the grievances against Sher Ali, stressing the reception of the Russian Mission.

⁷⁵The Times, November 19, 1878.

⁷⁶George Carslake Thompson, Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield (London: Macmillan Co., 1886), V. 2, p. 502.

It was designed to place the blame solely on the Amir, thereby encouraging the Afghan people to abandon him and support the British. In the Viceroy's words, "With the Sirdars and people of Afghanistan this Government has still no quarrel, and desires none. . . . Upon the Ameer Shere Ali Khan alone rests the responsibility of having exchanged the friendship for the hostility of the Empress of India."⁷⁷

From the information he had received, and his interpretation of it, the Viceroy was convinced that Sher Ali would lose the support of the Afghan people, and that the British would be well received. In this respect his information was erroneous.

Lytton wrote to Cranbrook announcing almost gleefully that no word had been received from the Amir, and that consequently, the troops had been advanced. Lytton had no qualms as to the success of the military operations. They had been carefully planned, and he had used the month's delay to build up the military forces and to detach the Khyber tribes from the Amir's authority. Everything was going according to plan.

The decision to embark upon a Second Afghan War was not an isolated decision, but the direct result of

⁷⁷Proclamation issued by the Viceroy to the Sirdars and People of Afghanistan, November 21, 1878, C.A.W., p. 184.

the change in policy towards Afghanistan, inaugurated with the appointment of Lord Lytton as Viceroy of India. From the time when the Amir first refused the Viceroy's request to receive a British Mission (in the summer of 1876), Lytton was convinced of the Amir's hostility and of the necessity to bring him under British domination, one way or the other. His actions from that point on were all aimed in this direction, and following the Peshawar Conference, he confided to one of his friends his intention of embarrassing Sher Ali by all possible means. He desired either to gain the Amir's complete submission to the British will, or to depose him and disintegrate his kingdom. The necessity of such action was determined by the Russian threat to British India which in the eyes of the Viceroy was very serious.

The Home Government, unaware of the Viceroy's deep-seated plans, took a more practical view of the situation, but unwittingly played into Lytton's hands by accepting his biased opinion of Sher Ali, his view of the incident at Ali Musjid, etc. The one single event which almost made war inevitable, was the affront at Ali Musjid. This was the result of Lytton's carefully planned strategy, as revealed in his letter to Cranbrook of September 26th. His exaggerations regarding the details of the incident, and his implication that the Mission was rejected on orders of the Amir, greatly helped to achieve the results he so

ferverently desired. When it was apparent that the Cabinet was still doubtful of the Amir's implication, Lytton removed that doubt by his interpretation to the Home Government of the Amir's letter pertaining to the reception of the Mission. What factual information Lytton supplied the Home Government during this crucial period was slanted by adding his own comments and interpretations. He knew if he could convince the Cabinet members that the British nation had been insulted, they would have no alternative but to declare war against the Amir, and on this point he was right. The Cabinet decision of October 25th could thus be considered as predetermined. It was the logical response to the stimulus created by Lytton.

CHAPTER VI

DETERMINANTS OF DECISION: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Many factors enter into decision-making. Thus in viewing even a single decision, the researcher is faced with a mountain of data. To facilitate the utilization of these data, it is helpful to break it down into various categories. While each piece of information is in some way connected with others, it is beneficial in clarifying many points to view a particular piece of evidence as it contributes to one of the major determinants. For the purpose of this study the determinants of decision have been divided into three categories: Communication and Information, Motivation, and Capability. Accordingly, data have been collected, sifted, and arranged in each category with the purpose of obtaining a more accurate picture of the role of each in the decision-making process.

The communication network closely parallels the organizational system and its chain of command. The efficiency with which information is transmitted through the network may have a direct bearing on certain decisions. The quality of information is of singular importance, and

is affected by many factors, including reliability of sources, interpretation, motivation, and competence, among others. It is useful to look at all the information available to the Actors--not just that information which was utilized--for the reasons behind non-utilization of certain information can be of extreme importance in analyzing the decision. Communication becomes an important focal point in the present study, for here the Actors were separated by a great distance, and thus the communication of information, as well as instructions, became a serious matter. Weaknesses or inadequacies in the communication network, in such circumstances, have the potential for producing grave results.

The communication network of the British Empire, relating to foreign affairs, in the 1870s was not as efficient as might have been desired. Some of the inefficiency was due to physical conditions, such as long distances, lack of telegraphic equipment, etc., but an even greater cause lay in the human element. The line of communications between India and the Home Government generally followed the same line as the chain of command. Thus information from the Government of India was sent directly to the Secretary of State for India. The India mail might then remain in the India Office forever, unless the Secretary of State for India deemed the correspondence of sufficient importance to pass it on to the

Foreign Office. Here the Foreign Secretary would either handle the matter, or again, if the situation was of great importance, he would transmit it to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, in most cases, would take care of the matter, but of course if the situation was grave, he would then consult with the Queen.

Communications from the Home Government to the Government of India followed a like sequence in reverse. Here, however, for the most part, in the conduct of ordinary business communication was initiated by the Indian Secretary. However, in important matters communications were initiated, sometimes by the Foreign Secretary, the Prime Minister, or even by the Queen. Nevertheless, the communication was almost never sent directly from one of these officials to the Indian Government, but went through the proper channels, i.e., Queen→Prime Minister→Foreign Minister→Secretary of State for India--Government of India. This naturally involved extra time; especially if one or more of the members of the chain happened to be out of London.

The Foreign Office was the direct recipient of communications and information from parts of the world other than India. So, while information might reach the Foreign Office that had some bearing on Indian affairs, it was not as a matter of course channeled to the India Office. A good example of this was the case of the

Llamakin Circular. On June 23, 1874, General Llamakin, the newly appointed Governor of the Russian provinces on the Caspian Sea, issued a circular letter to the Turkoman tribes of the Attrek and Goorgan Rivers, giving them warnings and advice. The British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Lord Augustus Loftus, learned of the circular on June 23rd. The same day he sent a dispatch to the Foreign Office in London, reporting on the explanation given him by the Russian Government. This dispatch was received in London June 29th, but no action was taken. A little over a month later (August 2) a copy of the circular was sent to the Foreign Office by the British Envoy at the Court of Persia. It was accompanied by further information, noting that the circular implied the assertion of the supremacy of Russia in that region, and her power and will to enforce obedience. Again, nothing was done.

Finally, news of the circular turned up in India, and the Indian Government, taking alarm, dispatched a letter to Lord Salisbury, the Indian Secretary, pointing out the dangers. This letter reached London October 30th, and was then referred to the Foreign Office for consideration. Of course by this time the Foreign Office had had the information for three months. On November 6th, Lord Derby directed the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg to discuss the matter with the Russian Chancellor. These instructions reached St. Petersburg on December 14, 1874,

almost six months after the initial information had been received.¹

Salisbury, who at that time was Secretary of State for India, commented, "For knowledge of what passes in Afghanistan, and upon its frontiers, they (her Majesty's advisors) are compelled to rely mainly upon the indirect intelligence which reaches them through the Foreign Office."² The Duke of Argyll interpreted this as an indication of a rivalry between the India Office and the Foreign Office. Salisbury was not alone in criticizing the Foreign Office for the handling of information. During the Eastern Crisis Disraeli had cause to complain of information being withheld from him, and wrote to Lord Derby, then Foreign Secretary, "I must again complain of the management of your office. . . . It is impossible to represent the F. O. in the House of Commons in these critical times without sufficient information."³ On another occasion he remarked: "The 'Intelligence Dept.' must change its name. . . . It is the department of Ignorance."⁴

On the other hand, the India Office did not consistently communicate information regarding India,

¹George D. Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll, The Eastern Question (London: Strahan and Co., 1879), I, pp. 350-355.

²Ibid., p. 367.

³Monypenny and Buckle, VI, p. 593.

⁴Blake, p. 613.

which might be of an imperial nature, to the Foreign Office. During the years 1877 and 1878 the problems connected with the Northwest Frontier of India formed part of the larger Eastern Question, as Russia's moves in Central Asia were designed to counteract Britain's moves in Turkey.⁵ However, since the India Office had jurisdiction over affairs in Afghanistan rather than the Foreign Minister, the Foreign Office generally kept hands off, assuming that the Indian Secretary would handle matters and relate anything of importance.

One other weak link in the chain of communication was that between the Government of India and the India Office. As long as Salisbury was Secretary of State for India, he maintained close communication with the Viceroy, but when Cranbrook assumed that role, the close contact was not sustained. The lack of communication was on both sides. The crisis that was precipitated by the arrival of a Russian Mission in Afghanistan, and subsequently led the Viceroy to take action that could lead to hostilities, was being handled in London by dispatching a protest to St. Petersburg. This very important fact was not conveyed to the Viceroy for a month, the protest having been sent on August 12th, and the Viceroy finally being told to wait for an answer on September 13th. But the Viceroy had been

⁵The Times (London), October 27, 1878.

making his own plans without the knowledge of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, and as it turned out, the Indian Secretary. The telegrams which the Viceroy sent to London during July and August of 1878, were vague and sketchy. A letter outlining his plans for sending a British Mission in answer to the Russian one arrived in London on September 9th. And it was not until this date that his views were known by the Home Government. Salisbury, by this time Foreign Secretary, assumed that Cranbrook was in constant touch with Lytton. It wasn't until the full details of Lytton's instruction to the head of the mission arrived in London that he realized that contact had not been maintained.⁶

The fact that Lytton did not keep the Home Government fully informed of his actions and intentions was partly a result of his belief that he knew better than those in London what action was called for by the situation. While he believed that Cranbrook and Disraeli would concur in his proposals, he was not as sure of Salisbury's agreement. His friend Burne, who was in the India Office, kept him informed of the situation in London, and confirmed Lytton's belief that Cranbrook was too much under Salisbury's thumb, and that Salisbury was not altogether

⁶Cowling, p. 67.

friendly towards Lytton and his ideas.⁷

It is apparent that the communication system between London and India, and also between the various offices within the Home Government, was far from perfect. Telegraphic communication existed between Calcutta and London, making it possible to relay information in the matter of one or two days. Letters, of course, took somewhat longer, but in a crisis situation communication between the two points could be fairly rapid. It seems that it took communications and information longer to pass from one department to the other than it did to transmit it from one country to the other.

In considering the decision on Afghanistan, it is also important to take a look at the communication system between the government of that country and the Government of India. No railways existed in Afghanistan and no telegraph line to the Indian border. Communications were carried from the border by messengers, usually on horseback. It took an average of eleven days for a message to reach Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, from the British border town of Peshawar. As a general rule, communications from the Viceroy, whose official residence was Calcutta, went first to the Commissioner of Peshawar, and thence to Afghanistan. Sometimes the Commissioner sent his own

⁷Ibid., p. 70.

messenger direct to the Amir. At other times the messages were given to the British Native Agent to present to the Amir.

The question of information was an extremely pertinent one in the Afghan situation, not merely because of the importance of information to the making of any decision, but because of the importance given by the Actors to the procurement of accurate information from Afghanistan, which they felt necessary to achieve their goals in Central Asia. Thus the acquisition of information from Afghanistan became a prime motive of the Conservative Government, leading first to a request for the reception of a British Mission, and finally to a demand.

The first question that arises is that of the need for more accurate information from Afghanistan. While serving as Secretary of State for India, Salisbury first expressed his doubts as to the adequacy of information in a dispatch to Northbrook, then Viceroy of India, dated January 22, 1875. Up until this time he had been content with the situation, but the Eastern Crisis which created the possibility of a confrontation with Russia, made the British Government more apprehensive of Russian movements in the direction of Afghanistan.

For many years previous, Afghanistan had been closed to European residents, but the British were allowed to have a Native Agent stationed in Kabul. In his dispatch,

Salisbury stated his belief that the Native Agent was not allowed to supply any information without the approval of the Amir, thus negating its value in his eyes. Even if this were not the case, and even though the information submitted was accurate, in Salisbury's opinion a Native Agent could not possibly have "sufficient insight into the policy of Western nations to collect the information you require."⁸ This could only be accomplished by a European.

This brought forth the question as to the competency of the British Native Agent, or Vakeel, as he was called, who at that time was Nawab Atta Mohammed, who had held that position for eight years, together with the question of the adequacy of information then being obtained. The Government of India's reply to Salisbury's question as to the quality of the information, was misinterpreted by him, and he, as well as others in the Home Government, continued to labor under these misconceptions long after the error in his interpretation had been pointed out.

Salisbury chose to believe that the Viceroy and his Council, supported by such frontier officers as Captain Cavagnari and Sir Richard Pollock, concurred that the information obtained from Afghanistan was insufficient and unreliable. The Government of India responded, pointing out that, as stated in their previous dispatch, their

⁸Dispatch from Salisbury to Northbrook, January 22, 1875, C.A.W., p. 55.

opinion was:

. . . that though there might be doubts as to the sufficiency of the intelligence given by our Agent at Cabul, the value of the information was not destroyed by such defects; that while the position of the Agent compelled him to be cautious in communicating news to the British Government, we had no reason to believe that information of importance was withheld; that on the contrary, the information supplied was fairly full and accurate and that the diaries contained internal evidence that the intelligence reported in them was not submitted to the Ameer for approval.⁹

The British Native Agent, Nawab Atta Mohammed, a "Mohammedan gentleman of rank and character, had been appointed to that post by Lord Lawrence in 1867, as one in 'whose fidelity and discretion' he had 'full confidence.'"¹⁰ Atta Mohammed enjoyed the confidence of the Amir, who allowed him to be present at durbars. It was unlikely that a Britisher would have been permitted to attend a durbar, and, as Northbrook and his Council pointed out to Salisbury, it was also unlikely that a Britisher could obtain trustworthy information, as he would be constantly guarded and spied upon. Moreover, it was highly unlikely that the Amir would consent to having a British Agent stationed anywhere within his borders.

All of this had no effect on Salisbury's opinion, and while he was temporarily blocked by the obstinacy of

⁹Secret dispatch from the Government of India to Salisbury, January 28, 1876, C.A.W., p. 74.

¹⁰Argyll, p. 375.

the Indian Government, the stationing of a British Agent in Afghanistan for the purpose of gathering adequate information, remained a primary goal. Thus with Northbrook's resignation and the appointment of Lytton as Viceroy, plans were inaugurated to achieve this objective. Lytton fully agreed with Salisbury's attitude, and became almost fanatical on the subject. During the short time he was in London, before sailing for India, he visited with the Russian Ambassador, Count Shouvalov. During this interview Lytton asked the Count what means Russia had of communicating with the Afghan Amir. The Count replied, "I suppose that we must have, just as you have, safe and easy means of private communication with Sher Ali."¹¹ Lytton's interpretation of this statement was written in a confidential paper following the interview.

The Russian Government has established those means of direct, convenient, and safe communication which Sher Ali refuses to us, and which we are afraid of proposing to him, although we openly subsidise His Highness.¹²

Lytton thus led himself to believe that Russia had been permitted direct communication with the Amir, but there was no Russian Agent stationed in Kabul, and Shouvalov did not say there was. In fact, the British were fully able to communicate with Sher Ali through their Native Agent,

¹¹Lady Balfour, p. 37.

¹²Ibid., p. 39.

and as both governments employed secret agents for intelligence purposes, there is every reason to believe that both governments had equal access to information and communication. But the facts were not important to Lytton's actions, for they were not dictated by the facts, but by his interpretation of them.

On his way to India, Lytton met Sir Bartle Frere in Egypt. Frere, a member of the Indian Council and an acknowledged authority on Indian affairs, was just returning from India after visiting the Punjab and Peshawar. He helped to confirm Lytton's convictions by relating that he had been particularly impressed with the fact that the officers through whom all diplomatic correspondence with the Amir was conducted, "were completely ignorant of his feelings and wishes and intentions, and had no means of obtaining information on which reliance could be placed."¹³

The visit with Frere was important for another reason. For the discourse that Lytton received from Frere was to form the basis of his understanding and beliefs regarding the Afghan question. The main ideas which he took from Frere were: that the Amir was bitterly hostile to the British; that Russian influence in Afghanistan must be prevented; that relations with the Amir should be improved, if possible, but if the Amir seemed disinclined

¹³Ibid., p. 44.

to better relations, it should be taken as proof of hostile influence (presumably that of Russia), and the Indian Government should look elsewhere for alliances.

Once in India, the sources of information from Afghanistan available to Lytton and his Council were of four main kinds. First, news supplied by the Native British Agent; second, the information obtained from paid intelligence sources; third, rumors brought by travelers, or the "grapevine"; and fourth, information received from British agents and government officials in other countries. Lytton consistently gave greater credence to the information supplied by, what to all appearances seems, the least reliable sources. When Lytton first arrived in India he received information regarding the Amir's attitude from a pensioner of the British Government, who in the time of Dost Mohammed (Sher Ali's father), had taken a prominent part in Afghan politics. This information, which he accepted and believed, confirmed the opinion of Sir Bartle Frere and had now become Lytton's opinion.

Another significant example of the type of information received and the credibility given it by the Viceroy, concerns information regarding communications between the Amir and the Russian General Kaufman. Atta Mohammed, the British Agent at Kabul, told the British authorities in Simla (October 7, 1877) that the Amir "regarded the

Russian agents as sources of embarrassment."¹⁴ On the other hand, Lytton was convinced that permanent diplomatic contact had been established between General Kaufman and the Amir, that messages from Kaufman had been incessant, and that a Russian agent was almost constantly in Kabul.¹⁵ In a dispatch to the Secretary of State, dated September 18, 1876, Lytton related that there had been secret nightly conferences between a Russian agent and the Amir, and he referred to his information as having come from an unofficial source which the Government of India was "of course, unable to verify."¹⁶ Argyll refers to this information as the "baggage-animal story," because the source was a letter from a native newswriter at Kandahar, who stated that he received the news from a man who hired baggage-animals in Turkestan, Bokhara, and Kabul. This man said that he had heard the story from a certain Sirdar, now deceased, who had secretly escorted a Russian to Kabul.¹⁷ It is obvious that such information was subject to question, but the Viceroy chose to accept it.

One other example is probably sufficient to show the predilection of the Viceroy for accepting information that corresponded to his beliefs, although from dubious sources, rather than information that might be expected

¹⁴Argyll, p. 441.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 442; Lady Balfour, p. 79.

¹⁶Argyll, p. 445.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 443.

to be more reliable. In September 1878 the Commissioner of Peshawar sent his agent, Nawab Ghulam Hassan Khan, to deliver a letter to the Amir from the Viceroy, requesting the reception of a British Mission. The Nawab sent back letters on the 17th, 18th, and 19th, intimating that the Amir would consent to the reception of a British Mission under certain circumstances--"if conciliatory letters were sent to the Amir and his dignity studied, all might be arranged."¹⁸ However, at the same time other information was received from the Mustaufi, Bukhtiar Khan, who had just returned from a meeting with Sher Ali, indicating that the Amir would not receive the British Mission, and that he was anxiously awaiting the return of the Russian Envoy. Lord Lytton commented upon this, "I cannot, of course, vouch for the complete accuracy of the above information, but I think it was given our messenger by the Mustaufi himself, who is obviously unwilling to pull and sink in the same boat with the Amir."¹⁹

Although both the Home Government and the Government of India felt that their sources of information in Afghanistan were inadequate, the Viceroy withdrew the British Agent, Atta Mohammed, from Kabul following the Peshawar Conference, so that from March 1877 on, there was no official source of information in that country. The

¹⁸Lady Balfour, pp. 266-267.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 268.

London Times commented on the quality of information coming from Afghanistan in such remarks as:

The reported mutiny of the Ameer's troops at Kurram is not well authenticated.²⁰

The Lahore paper, in a leading article states that advices from Cabul are still harping upon war and warlike preparations; that at Jellalabad, Lalloora, and Ali Musjed the troops are represented as waiting eagerly for orders. . . . These statements are unconfirmed officially. I am informed moreover that the Ameer has, on the contrary, been actually putting pressure to deter Afreedis from allying themselves with the Jowaki tribe in the present contest with our people.²¹

A rather sinister rumour of doubtful authority, transmitted through official channels, reports that the Ameer of Cabul is massing troops at Candahar. . . . Russian envoys are represented as constantly passing to and from Cabul. . . .²²

Little or no accurate intelligence is received from Afghanistan. News stated as authentic today is, as a general rule, flatly contradicted tomorrow.²³

Lord Cranbrook also held the view that information coming out of Afghanistan was inadequate when he wrote to Disraeli September 13, 1878 that a British resident on the Afghan frontier would be helpful as far as obtaining information was concerned, for, "we get the most unreliable information at present when we get any at all."²⁴

Lytton himself felt that the withdrawal of the

²⁰The Times, June 5, 1877.

²¹Ibid., December 3, 1877.

²²Ibid., January 28, 1878.

²³Ibid., November 18, 1878.

²⁴Hardy, II, p. 83.

British Agent had not diminished the quality of information obtained from Afghanistan. Instead, he insisted in a letter to Major Cavagnari that "our intelligence from Afghanistan has been more constant, complete, and trustworthy since the withdrawal of the native agent than it was before." He attributed this to two factors, the completion of the Khelat telegraph, and the operations opened up with Kandahar by Major Sandeman, the British representative at Khelat.²⁵ Lytton proposed to further improve the quality of information through a reorganization of the frontier, which included the establishment of an intelligence department in Peshawar to be directed by Major Cavagnari.

The quality and veracity of the information the Government of India received from its secret agents is open to question. The Viceroy, as well as members of the Home Government, had expressed the opinion that natives were, in the first place, not to be completely trusted, and secondly, that even if they were, they would not be able to interpret events like a European. As no Britishers were permitted to enter Afghanistan, those secret agents were necessarily natives, and thus, in the eyes of the Actors, untrustworthy. But whereas Lytton had not trusted

²⁵Lady Balfour, p. 161.

his own native agent, he gave credence to the information from native spies. The improvement of intelligence under the new frontier system is made further doubtful when considering the case of news regarding the Russian Mission to Kabul. The first rumors of the approach of the Russian Mission reached India on June 7, 1878, but it was not until the end of July that the information could be verified.

While the quality of information received from Afghanistan by the Government of India left much to be desired, and its validity could well be questioned, the Viceroy was willing to accept the veracity of much of it, and to base his decisions upon it. Thus, whether the information was true or not, the important fact remains that he regarded it as such, and took what action he felt necessary according to the situation as he saw it. The main points derived from the information from Afghanistan which most affected Lytton were: (1) That Sher Ali was hostile to the British and was unlikely to accept a British Mission on his own volition. (2) That Russia was attempting to gain political ascendancy in Afghanistan with a view to a possible war with England in that area. (3) That Sher Ali had for a long time been dealing with Russia, and was on the verge of an alliance with her. And (4) That the Amir was unpopular in his country, and that the Afghan people would support the British against him.

The question arises as to whether the Home

Government had the same information, and whether they interpreted it in the same way. The Viceroy was much more conscientious about furnishing the India Office with data on the information he had received, than he was on furnishing information on his own actions. Thus, for the most part, the information available to Lytton was made available to the India Office, and thence to the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister when deemed necessary. However, the Actors in London did not completely accept the information or interpret it in the same way, particularly in regard to Russia, for events were taking place in Europe about which the Home Government knew but that the Indian Government did not know. Whereas Britain and Russia had been on the verge of war, this had been averted by the Congress of Berlin, which held its first meeting at approximately the same time that the Russian Mission under General Stoletoff started from Tashkent for Kabul. The Mission had been in Kabul for several weeks before the peace was known in Asia.²⁶

Thus Lytton's great alarm at news of the Russian Mission was caused, in part, by his lack of knowledge of the peace, and he interpreted it as a direct threat to British India. The Home Government was not nearly so

²⁶p. E. Roberts, The British Empire in India, XII of Cambridge Modern History, ed. by A. W. Ward (New York: Macmillan Co., 1916), p. 469.

alarmed, assuming that the mission had been ordered before the conclusion of the peace. However, the Government issued a protest to St. Petersburg on August 13th. Unfortunately, they neglected to inform Lytton of the protest or the communications going on between the Foreign Office and the Russian Minister, M. de Giers.²⁷ The Viceroy did not receive this information until September 13th.

In the meantime, the information available to the Home Government indicated that there was no threat from Russia as can be seen in the following extract from a letter to Cranbrook from Disraeli:

As far as they have proceeded [communications between the British and Russian governments] and as far as I can now judge, the explanations of the Russian Govt. are satisfactory, and the whole matter would have quietly disappeared, the Russian projects having been intended for a contemplated war with this country, which I trust is now out of the question.²⁸

While the Actors in London had access to information on foreign relations with countries other than Afghanistan, which gave them a broader view of the situation, they were in the dark as to the Viceroy's intentions during this critical period. As Blake points out, "For whether or not Cranbrook was keeping Lytton properly

²⁷Hardy, p. 82.

²⁸Letter from Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 12, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, VI, pp. 1252-1253.

informed, it seems clear that Disraeli, along with Salisbury and Cranbrook, did not appreciate the nature of the Viceroy's plans until very late in the day."²⁹ The Viceroy had proposed to send a British Mission to the Amir in response to the Russian Mission, a proposal which the Home Government had approved the first part of August. But, as previously mentioned, his real intentions were not known in London until his instructions to the head of the mission, Sir Neville Chamberlain, arrived in London on September 9th. Both the Government of India and the Home Government had been acting in the dark, each unaware of the other's intentions and actions.

One other important point regarding information is the kind and quality given to Parliament and to the public. Members of the opposition party point to many instances when Parliament was uninformed or misinformed. The incident which they made the most of occurred in the House of Lords, June 15, 1877, when the Duke of Argyll asked Lord Salisbury about the Peshawar Conference. He was told that the Conference had been arranged at the Amir's own request; that there had been no attempt to force an envoy on the Amir at Kabul; and that British relations with the Amir had undergone no material change from the preceding year.³⁰ All of these statements proved to be

²⁹Blake, p. 661.

³⁰Argyll, p. 490.

untrue, but as the Conference took place in March 1877, and an account of it was not printed until November 6, 1878 by the Globe,³¹ a false impression was given to Parliament.

The opposition again complained of the lack of information when Parliament was called in December, 1878. In the House of Lords the Marquis of Hartington complained of the long delay in publishing correspondence relating to Afghanistan, which made it impossible to pronounce a judgment on the ministerial policy.³² Gladstone, in the House of Commons, noted the "extraordinary confusion and inconsistencies of the evidence on which the government have based their case for this unjust and disastrous war; . . ." and also the "extraordinary and prolonged secrecy in which a policy had been enveloped, the earlier disclosure of which would have put Parliament on its guard, and elicited remonstrances which must in all probability have stopped the war."³³

Information given the Press by the Government was slanted to elicit public support for the anticipated war. When the British Mission was refused passage at Ali Musjid, the Times commented:

³¹Annual Register, 1878 (London: Longmans and Co., 1879), v. 120, p. 178.

³²Ibid., p. 214.

³³Ibid., p. 229.

In view of the long continued ungracious and hostile conduct of the existing ruler of Afghanistan, aggravated as it is by the contemptuous slight offered to our national dignity, all possibility of renewing friendly relations with this uncompromising and morose barbarian is utterly hopeless; and even if the prospects were still hopeful, their realization could only be accomplished at the complete sacrifice of proper self-respect, and at the grave risk of very considerable loss of prestige. . . .³⁴

And again:

The Commandant of Ali Musjid Fort threatened Major Cavagnari, saying that for his personal friendship he would be shot on the spot.³⁵

Major Cavagnari's report to the Indian Government of the incident throws a different light on the matter. He stated that the Commandant of the Fort, Faiz Mohammed, told him that he had not received any orders from the Amir to allow the mission to pass, and "that without such orders, he could not let it proceed; but that if the mission would only wait a few days he would communicate with Kabul and ask for orders." He further noted that Faiz Mohammed pointed out to him that if they were not friendly to the group, he would not have consented to the interview, nor would he have "restrained his levies from firing on my party."³⁶ Cavagnari took care to show that Faiz Mohammed was extremely courteous to them. In

³⁴The Times, September 23, 1878.

³⁵Ibid., September 26, 1878.

³⁶Report of Major Cavagnari to the Government of India, September 22, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 277.

elaborating on his first report in a letter to the Government of India the following January, the Major emphasized the hostility of the Afghans and the insult, but he still did not mention a threat to shoot him, other than to say that he was told that "if the Mission advanced, it would be opposed by force."³⁷ Major Cavagnari, the Government of India, and the Home Government all chose to interpret this incident as an affront to the British nation, and consequently, the information given to the press emphasized this aspect.

The Amir's reply to the request to send the mission was finally received after the mission had been stopped at Ali Musjid. The newspaper accounts stated that the reply was "discourteous and hostile."³⁸ This information was officially announced by Lytton, but the text of the letter was not made public until November 29th, nine days after the war had begun. It is noteworthy that the Daily News was informed "that the Ameer bade us 'do our worst and let God decide the issue.'"³⁹ What the Amir actually said was that he and his officials had not wished to show any enmity to the British Government, nor did they desire any strife, "but when any other Power without cause or reason, shows animosity towards this Government, the

³⁷Parliamentary Papers, LVI (1878-1879), p. 687.

³⁸The Times, November 5, 1878.

³⁹Annual Register, 1878, p. 170.

matter is left in the hands of God and to his will."⁴⁰

On the whole the British Press was more balanced than the Indian Press. The anti-Afghan news items came from information provided by the Government and were naturally slanted towards the Government's opinion. Following the repulsion of the Chamberlain Mission, a rash of letters and articles began appearing in the papers, both advocating and opposing the Government's actions in regard to Afghanistan. Some of the leading contributors to the running battle in the newspapers were Lord Lawrence, Earl Grey, and the Marquis of Hartington for the Opposition, with Sir James Stephens and Sir Henry Rawlinson supporting the Government's position.

The Indian press tended to be more belligerent. As the Standard noted, "The Indian newspapers universally consider that the affront to the mission demands an apology or the occupation of Afghanistan. A war feeling is prevalent among the Europeans. . . ." ⁴¹ There was a well-known connection between at least one Indian journal, the Pioneer, and the Government of India. ⁴² Lytton on various occasions used this organ to announce official policy. At other times information was given to the press unofficially. Argyll contended, in the face of data

⁴⁰The Times, November 29, 1878.

⁴¹Annual Register, 1878, p. 137.

⁴²Argyll, p. 494.

published by these papers, that the Viceroy communicated certain messages to the press with the idea of appealing to the popular opinion of the Indian services.⁴³

Perhaps the most important single fact having to do with communication and the final decision reached in regard to Afghanistan, is the time-limit given Sher Ali to respond to the Ultimatum issued him by the British Government following the affront to the Chamberlain Mission. Instructions were sent from England at the end of October to issue the Ultimatum. Operations were to be commenced on November 21st if no reply was received by then.⁴⁴

There is some doubt as to whether the Ultimatum reached Ali Musjid on November 2nd or November 5th. Lytton states that the Ultimatum was handed to Faiz Mohammed at Ali Musjid on the 2nd, but goes on to say that confirmation of the Ultimatum was received from London on the 5th.⁴⁵ An editorial in the London Times, dated November 5th stated:

From the telegrams we publish this morning it appears that Lord Lytton has officially announced that the text of the Ameer's reply to the missives handed to him by Nawab Tholam Hussein Khan is

⁴³Ibid., p. 510.

⁴⁴Lady Balfour, p. 303.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 294.

discourteous, even hostile. Nevertheless, a further ultimatum will be forwarded to him.⁴⁶

This would tend to indicate that the Ultimatum had not been delivered prior to the 5th, or if it had, there was no report of it given to the press. Authors, such as Blake and Cowling accept the November 2nd date without question. Whether the Ultimatum was delivered on the 2nd or the 5th, the fact remains that, generally speaking, it took an average of eleven days for a letter from Peshawar to reach Kabul. As Ali Musjid was only some hours distance from Peshawar the length of time would be approximately the same. It was not uncommon for correspondence between those points to take twelve or thirteen days, although on a few occasions messages were received in nine or ten days. If the Ultimatum was delivered at Ali Musjid on the 2nd this allowed nineteen days for it to reach the Amir, to be answered, and to be returned to Peshawar. If it was delivered on November 5th, the time would be cut to sixteen days. Either way, twenty-two days would ordinarily have been required just in transit, not allowing any time for consideration or consultation. It is known that the Amir was in the habit of summoning a Durbar when any decision regarding the British was to be taken. He was not in the habit of making such decisions without first seeking the advice of the prominent men in his country.

⁴⁶The Times, November 5, 1878.

The method of transmittal of the Ultimatum was related in the Times.

Instead, as would ordinarily have been done, of sending a messenger to Cabul and giving directions to hand to the Ameer in person the Viceroy's letter, so great a dread was entertained for the messenger's safety . . . that the ultimatum was hurriedly placed in the hands of the commandant at Ali Musjid and a copy put in the Ameer's private post office at Peshawur.⁴⁷

Doubtless, this method of conveyance did not lessen the time required for the message to be delivered.

The Amir's reply was received on November 30th, just twenty-five days after the Ultimatum had been ordered sent. Thus, if the dispatch had reached Kabul in the average time of eleven days, it would have been in Sher Ali's hands three days, as his reply was dated November 19th. The fact that the reply reached Ali Musjid on the 30th, helps confirm the eleven day time-table. The opinion was held by Major Cavagnari and others in official circles was that the Amir's reply was rewritten after receipt of the news of the fall of Ali Musjid.⁴⁸ Lytton claimed that the messenger delivering the reply got as far as Bosawal, and upon hearing the news, returned with the letter to Kabul and that the Amir had to redispach the letter.⁴⁹ This seems unlikely since, according to Lytton, the message

⁴⁷The Times, November 11, 1878.

⁴⁸Ibid., December 7, 1878.

⁴⁹Lady Balfour, p. 303.

supposedly arrived at Bosawal on the 22nd.⁵⁰ As the Amir's reply was dated the 19th, the messenger would have been on the road at least two days before he reached Bosawal. If he returned to Kabul, an additional two days' journey, four days would have been added to the time necessary for the message to reach Ali Musjid. The letter arrived there November 30th, eleven days after the date on the correspondence, and the average time necessary for a message to be transmitted that distance. A four day delay would normally have resulted in the letter arriving on December 4th.

But assuming the letter could have arrived in less time, if we subtract the four days required for returning to Kabul from Bosawal from the eleven we know it actually took the Amir's reply to arrive, we come up with seven days, less time than any previous correspondence had taken. While it is not completely impossible that the reply could have been carried to Ali Musjid in seven days, it would have been exceptional.

In either event, it would have been most difficult for the Amir to have responded to the Ultimatum before the deadline. He had at the maximum nineteen days, and under the best conditions he would have been sorely pushed to

⁵⁰Parliamentary Papers, LVI (1878-1879), No. 154 of 1878, Government of India Foreign Department to Viscount Cranbrook, December 12, 1878.

meet that deadline. It is possible that the Home Government was not aware of the actual time required for the transmittal of a communication to Afghanistan, but the Indian Government, having over the years had intermittent correspondence with Kabul, could not have been ignorant of the length of time needed. Why then did Lytton allow the deadline to be set at the 21st? Why wasn't more time allowed for a reply to be received which might possibly have averted war? For an answer to these questions it is necessary to consider another determinant of decision--motivation.

CHAPTER VII

DETERMINANTS OF DECISION: MOTIVATION

In order to pursue the question of the why of state behavior, it is necessary to probe into the motivations of the decision-makers. The areas under investigation for this purpose are national objectives, influence of the Actors' social values, influence of the needs and values of society on the Actors, and the role played by the Actors' personalities. Motivation is not an observable entity, but an inference drawn from behavior which is goal directed. The path of behavior which connects a presented quality to a desired one, is motivated. "It is based on the present prediction of a specific outcome over this behavior pathway, and the want for the specific outcome."¹

National Objectives

When the Disraeli Government came into office in 1874 it had several overall national objectives in regard

¹Olds, p. 197.

to India and its Northwest frontier. The overriding objective was the security of India from outside aggression. In connection with this was the goal of halting Russia's progress in Central Asia, which in particular meant the prevention of Russian aggression or political influence in Afghanistan. As the Russian advance continued, both in Europe and Asia, anxieties increased and the objectives became more fixed. In Asia, despite repeated assurances from the Tsar and his officials, Russia continued advancing her frontier by annexing the decadent Tarter and Turkoman states, which lay between Afghanistan and Russia. General Kaufman, the Governor of Turkestan, captured Samarkand and Bokhara in 1868, subdued Khiva in 1873, and captured Khoknad in 1875. If this in itself had not been cause for alarm, further reason was given when Kaufman opened friendly communications with the Amir of Afghanistan in 1870.

These events had not particularly upset the Liberal Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, and his Council, who treated the matter lightly, accepting the assurances of the Russian government that it regarded Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence. But the Conservative Government was not as confident of Russia's good intentions. The annexation of Khiva had occurred just before the Disraeli Government came to office, and it was generally believed in Conservative quarters that

Russia's next move was Merv.² For its own sake, Merv was of minor importance. It was a small Turcoman town on the edge of a vast wilderness. Such commerce as existed in that region, was by camel between Merv and Herat.³ But its proximity to Herat, the westernmost point of Afghanistan, gave cause for concern, not because a military invasion was feared at that time, but because of the possibility of extending Russian political influence from that direction. Salisbury wrote to Northbrook in the summer of 1874, "Russia must advance to Merv ultimately . . . and we have no power or interest to prevent it. Herat is quite another matter."⁴

The fear of the extension of Russian influence in Afghanistan, which was viewed by all the Actors as a threat to India, motivated them to desire another, more precise, objective, that was to obtain more adequate information from Afghanistan. Salisbury's opinion, which was supported by Disraeli, was that the best means to accomplish this was to station a British European Agent in that country. From the time of the appointment of Lord Lytton as Viceroy (January, 1876) to the close of the Peshawar Conference (March 26, 1877), the policy of

²Lady Cecil, II, p. 70.

³"The Military Position of Russia and England in Central Asia," Edinburgh Review, V, 151 (January, 1880), 86.

⁴Lady Cecil, p. 70.

the British and Indian Governments towards Afghanistan was dominated by this objective. The stationing of a British agent was intended as the first step in opening Afghanistan to more direct contact with the Indian Government, so that in case of Russian aggression, the British would be in a more favorable position to counteract it.

The secret instructions from the Secretary of State which Lytton carried with him to India, stated the overall objective of British policy towards Afghanistan:

The maintenance in Afghanistan of a strong and friendly power has at all times been the object of British policy. The attainment of this object is now to be considered with due reference to the situation created by the recent and rapid advance of the Russian army in Central Asia towards the northern frontiers of British India.⁵

The same memorandum stated the objectives which were given to the Russian Ambassador, and prime among these was to secure Afghanistan against aggression.⁶ Salisbury advised Lytton to impress upon the Amir that the British Government would assist him in repelling any invasion by a foreign power, but in order to do this, precautionary measures would be necessary. He was careful to point out that this did not mean the establishment of British garrisons in that country, but that the British,

. . . must have for their own agents undisputed access to its frontier positions. They must also

⁵Salisbury's instructions to Lytton, February, 1876, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 89.

⁶Ibid., p. 90.

have adequate means of confidentially conferring with the Amir upon all matters . . . [where there existed] a community of interests. They must be entitled to expect becoming attention to their counsels; and the Amir must be made to understand . . . territories ultimately dependent upon British power for their defence must not be closed to those of the Queen's officers or subjects who may be duly authorised to enter them.⁷

The unanimity of opinion among the Actors was short-lived. Salisbury altered his objectives somewhat after Lytton was able to effect a treaty to control the Bolan Pass, which was the most practical gateway to India, and to station a garrison at the fort of Quetta, which guarded the eastern approach to the pass. Thus, as far as Salisbury was concerned, the importance of the Amir's cooperation was diminished. He wrote along these lines to Lytton in the summer of 1876, suggesting to him for consideration, "whether--if the Cabul mission fails--it would not be wise to give great prominence and emphasis to the Khelat mission . . . the agent would reside nominally with the Khan--but chiefly at Quettah. . . ."⁸

Negotiations with the Amir were getting nowhere until finally the Amir consented to send his Minister, Syud Noor Mohammed Shah, to a conference to be held on the border with the British Envoy, Sir Lewis Pelly. The Peshawar Conference began on January 30, 1877, but before

⁷Ibid., pp. 92-93.

⁸Salisbury to Lytton, August 22, 1876, quoted in Lady Cecil, p. 74.

anything had been settled upon, on March 26th Syud Noor Mohammed died. Although the Amir dispatched another envoy to take his place, Lytton closed the conference, an event which marked the end of the policy to improve relations with the Amir and to establish British agents in Afghanistan. Salisbury welcomed the suspension of negotiations which followed because the crisis that was taking place in European affairs made the Afghan question a part of a far wider and more dangerous one.⁹

While from this point on the overall goal of all the Actors remained the same as regarded the protection of India and the preserving of Afghanistan from Russian influence, either political or military, their actions from this point on to the final decision stemmed from different motivations. Lytton's statement of June 23, 1877, proved to be a correct prophesy, when protesting the indifference of the Cabinet to the Russian advance in Central Asia, he referred to the policy as "dictated by the heart of a hen to the head of a pin. . . . I have lost confidence in my own capacity to understand what it (your Indian policy) now is, and am haunted by a horrible fear that, for want of a common signal code, we may be acting at cross purposes."¹⁰

⁹Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁰Lytton to Salisbury, June 23, 1877, quoted in Gopal, p. 80.

The decision to send a British Mission to Kabul in September of 1878 had an entirely different motivation than the original idea of a British mission. Diplomatic contact had been broken with the Amir since the termination of the Peshawar Conference, and no further solicitations were made for the reception of a mission. The sudden appearance of a Russian Mission in Kabul in July, 1878 provided the new stimulus for sending a British mission. While both the Indian Government and the Home Government agreed to the necessity of sending a mission in response to the Russians, again they differed in their real objectives.

The final Cabinet decision to send troops into Afghanistan had as its main objective the restoration of the prestige of the British and Indian Governments. The Cabinet reached the decision with great reluctance, as some of the members felt that Lytton had needlessly gotten them into a situation from which it was difficult to extricate themselves. Disraeli summarized the predicament well when he described what he had said during the crucial Cabinet meeting of October 25, 1878:

It would doubtless be dangerous to summon Parliament to sanction a war, if our casus belli was not unimpeachable; but he was of the opinion that a demonstration of the power and determination of England was at this moment necessary.¹¹

And also in his letter to Queen Victoria of the 26th, he

¹¹Monypenny and Buckle, VI, p. 1259.

lamented, "It is certainly unfortunate that the Afghan business should have been precipitated, which was quite unnecessary. . . ."12

Thus despite disagreements, the Cabinet was finally able to unite itself behind the national objective of maintaining British interests and prestige.

Influence of the Actors' Social Values

In trying to analyze the split in motivations which occurred at the end of the Peshawar Conference (March 1877), it is necessary to look first at the influences of the Actors' social values. It was during this period that the Russian threat was emerging in the form of a Russo-Turkish War, and there was a great deal of Russophobia afoot in England. This was not something new, but a revival of the sentiments of the thirties. Gleason finds the seeds of Anglo-Russian hostility, first, in "competitive imperial ambitions, which in the nineteenth century transformed into neighbors in the colonial world two powers hitherto remote."13 Secondly, in the absence of common interests which caused minor incidents to assume exaggerated importance. Thus "differences with regard to method appeared to reveal divergence of aim. Lack of sympathy induced

12Ibid., p. 1260.

13John H. Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 1.

distrust, suspicion fostered jealousy, alliance transformed into rivalry."¹⁴

The extent to which the Actors accepted Russophobia as an intrinsic part of their beliefs, influenced their motivations. The Queen, herself, was a great Russophobe, and Disraeli tended toward that direction too, though his was tempered by political considerations. The Colonial Secretary, Carnarvon wrote to Salisbury, December 25, 1876,

I see pretty plainly . . . that Lord B. [Beaconsfield] contemplates and as far as it depends on him, intends us to take part in the war and on behalf of Turkey. . . . I may do him wrong but his mind is full of strange projects and I feel uneasy as to what he intends and what he may be able to do before there is time or knowledge enough to stop him. . . .¹⁵

And he wrote again on March 25th, 1877, "She [the Queen] is ready for war--says that rather than submit to Russian insult she would lay down her crown. . . . Unlike Derby, he [Disraeli] has plenty of courage and I am not sure that it is not all things considered the best game for him to play."¹⁶

In the spring of 1877 Disraeli's Cabinet was split on the Russo-Turkish question. The group opposing war with Russia, known as the three Lords, consisted of Carnarvon,

¹⁴Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁵Carnarvon to Salisbury, December 25, 1876, quoted in Blake, p. 622.

¹⁶Carnarvon to Salisbury, March 25, 1877, quoted in Blake, p. 622.

Derby, and Salisbury. Derby probably made the greatest effort to preserve the peace, even to the point of giving Cabinet secrets to the Russian Ambassador Shouvalov. Derby, convinced that Russia did not want war with England, was certain that the greatest threat to peace was the "bellicose pronouncements by the British Government likely to provoke the Tsar into doing the very things which Britain least wanted him to do."¹⁷

Salisbury advocated moderation. His disinclination to be pro-Turk or anti-Russian stemmed in part from his religious sympathies. As the Turks had been committing atrocities on the Bulgarian Christians, which was Russia's avowed motive for declaring war on Turkey, Salisbury's sympathies were certainly not with the Turks. He would have been inclined to oppose Russia only in the event she became a direct threat to British interests. Although he supported the unanimous Cabinet decision of July 22, 1877 to advise Russia that if she occupied Constantinople, Britain was prepared to declare war against her, he did not really consider that she was a great threat. During the summer he cautioned Lytton to avoid warlike incidents and to "resist military seducers, if they are besetting your virtue."¹⁸ Again in September he wrote, "The period

¹⁷Blake, p. 625.

¹⁸Salisbury to Lytton, quoted in Gopal, p. 83.

when Russia was an object of apprehension seems centuries ago."¹⁹

The Queen was upset by the seemingly pro-Russian actions of Lord Derby. She was so pro-war that it was embarrassing to her Prime Minister. She wrote to Disraeli that she would not submit to a "miserable cotton-spinning milk and water, peace-at-any-price policy. . . ." ²⁰ Disraeli for his part, was suspicious of Russian intentions, but he did not actively seek war, although he believed that Britain should always be in a position of strength. Thus he did not flinch from threatening war, nor from backing up words with action, if necessary. While he could not get the Cabinet to agree upon sending Russia a threat to declare war should she enter upon a second campaign, he, with only the Queen's knowledge, sent such a secret message to the Tsar in the fall of 1877.

The Actors in the Home Government during 1877 had differences of opinion on the Russo-Turkish War, as already noted. However, all, except the Queen, had the same objective, that of maintaining neutrality--at least up to a point--but for different reasons. Derby's actions were motivated, not by a fear of Russia, but by a fear of British Russophobes dragging Britain into an unnecessary

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Queen Victoria to Disraeli, September 22, 1877, quoted in Blake, p. 626.

war. Salisbury was motivated by a sympathy for the Christians and by a disbelief in any real Russian threat to Britain. Disraeli was motivated by his belief that Russia did pose a real threat. Nevertheless, for whatever reasons, they were trying by various means to avert war.

Their concern with Afghanistan at this time was minor, since there seemed to be more important things to consider, but it was not completely overshadowed for at least two of the Actors, Disraeli and Salisbury. Disraeli was of the opinion that in the event of a war with Russia, "Russia must be attacked from Asia, that troops should be sent to the Persian Gulf, and that the Empress of India should order her armies to clear Central Asia of the Muscovites, and drive them into the Caspian. We have a good instrument for this purpose in Lord Lytton, and indeed he was placed there with that view."²¹

Salisbury, on the other hand, was attempting to restrain Lytton from creating any military provocation. His only public pronouncement on Afghan policy came in response to questions put before him by Liberal members of Parliament, June 15, 1877. At that time he stated that nothing of any significance had occurred with regard to Afghanistan, that there had been a conference at Peshawar, held at the Amir's own request, that there had been no

²¹Disraeli to Queen Victoria, July 22, 1877, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, VI, p. 155.

attempt to force an Envoy on the Amir at Kabul, and that relations with the Amir had undergone no material change since the preceding year.²² While subsequent events and information seemed to negate the truth of these affirmations, they may well accurately state what Salisbury believed the situation to be, or what he hoped it to be.

Did the Actors in the Home Government have a cultural bias? Probably everyone does to a certain extent, but in the case of these individuals was that bias strong enough to serve as a motivation in their decisions? They were all inclined to support imperialism as a part of England's right, and they all thought England was at the top of the heap. They felt a certain sense of superiority over peoples of underdeveloped nations, but not in any exaggerated form. Salisbury, on the contrary, often expressed a strong condemnation of race-arrogance. He advocated making the Indian aristocracy a sort of partner in governing India, and he once wrote to Lytton on this subject:

Cooperation for the common prosperity and security is a pleasanter idea, a more grateful subject of contemplation, than consultation for the better ordering of mutual chastisement. Eton schoolboys might like to place constitutional checks on the Headmaster, yet a meeting for devising the best means of beating Harrow at Cricket would be more popular than a meeting for drawing up a code of regulations under which boys should be flogged.²³

²²Argyll, p. 490.

²³Lady Cecil, p. 69.

Some of Disraeli's critics charged that his actions, particularly in regard to the Eastern Question, were motivated by his racial background. They made much of the fact that he was Jewish, which to them meant that he was oriental. These criticisms were not limited to the opposition. As Justin McCarthy points out, "Every discontented Conservative was ready to whisper something about his chief's Jewish descent. But although there was an inexcusable want of generosity in thus making Mr. Disraeli's extraction and ancestral faith a source of objection, it must be owned that as a matter of historical fact his foreign extraction has had a very distinct influence on his political tendencies and his ministerial career."²⁴

Mr. McCarthy's statement may be considered fairly accurate if taken moderately. Certainly in his novels Disraeli shows his admiration for the Jewish race, to the point of a feeling of superiority which is perhaps a vindication. In his novel Tancred he speaks of the English aristocracy as having "sprung from a horde of Baltic pirates. . . ." And in speaking of the Christian Church he says, "That Church was founded by a Hebrew, and the magnetic influence still lingers."²⁵ The mere fact

²⁴McCarthy, IV, p. 351.

²⁵Blake, p. 203.

that his background was often used as a point against him served to heighten Disraeli's awareness of it, and also to make it necessary for him to strive harder to arrive at that position which he felt rightfully belonged to him. His conscious knowledge and interest in his background also helped to create his extreme interest in foreign affairs and far away places.

Disraeli's ambition was very keen. He wanted to increase the glory of England, thereby increasing his own light. For this reason he favored abandoning the old policy of "masterly inactivity," and in its place to substitute a "spirited" foreign policy. He once commented on a question of foreign policy, "the situation at present allows and demands, bold action. Every Power is too embarrassed to act except England. It is a moment when what is called prudence is not wise. We must control, and we must create events."²⁶ This feeling, of course, applied to Afghanistan as well as to other regions, and helps to account for the change in Indian frontier policy.

When the Cabinet had virtually decided upon war with Afghanistan, subject to the issuance of an ultimatum to Sher Ali, the Prime Minister, in a speech at the Lord Mayor's dinner, drew attention to the situation and the impending war. His justification for such action harks

²⁶Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1248.

back to his belief in British superiority, and rather suggests that Afghanistan had not been living up to the norms expected of her from the British.

Our north-western frontier is a haphazard and not a scientific frontier. It is in the power of any foe so to embarrass and disturb our dominion that we should be obliged to maintain the presence of a great military force in that quarter, entailing in the country a proportionate expenditure. These are unquestionably great evils, and former Viceroys have had their attention called with anxiety to the state of our frontier. Recently, however, some peculiar circumstances have occurred in that part of the world, which have convinced Her Majesty's Government that the time has arrived when we must terminate all this inconvenience and prevent all this possible injury. . . .²⁷

The Liberals pounced on the phrase "scientific frontier," and accused Disraeli of seeking war to rectify the frontier. The true significance of this passage does not lie in the desire for a rectified frontier, but in the reasons given for such a desire. It was necessary to prevent "embarrassment" and to "terminate inconvenience." To a person or a nation with strong national arrogance this might seem like a justifiable reason for initiating a war. Certainly Disraeli must have thought so, and he must have assumed that the bulk of the British population would think likewise.

Did Russophobia enter into Disraeli's motives? Of course it did, but it was not because Disraeli perceived Russia as an imminent danger, nor would he have gone to

²⁷Ibid., pp. 1262-1263.

war solely for that reason. But he did present the Russian threat to Parliament as a justification for rectifying the Northwest frontier, quoting Lord Napier that "Afghanistan in the hands of a hostile power, may, at any time deal a fatal blow to our Empire."²⁸ But here again it was the Empire that was of primary importance. He had previously emphasized to both Salisbury and Cranbrook that Russia was no longer a threat in Central Asia. His use of this non-existent threat to justify the Government's policy was from long habit. Then, as now, a Russian threat was apt to elicit public sympathy for an adventuresome foreign policy.

It was Lord Cranbrook who moved the Cabinet to decide on full-scale war against Afghanistan instead of material guarantees. His motivation in this decision, as with intermediate ones, was not prompted so much by Russophobia as by national pride. He was as aware as Disraeli and Salisbury that the Russian menace had been nullified by the Treaty of Berlin, and he had attempted to stop Lytton's precipitous action. He had supported Lytton's policy of sending a mission to Afghanistan for reasons of British prestige, and when the mission was advanced against orders, he wrote in his diary, October 6, 1878,

²⁸The Annual Register, 1878, p. 195.

They [the Cabinet] were naturally annoyed at Lytton's action before the Russian answer. . . . I hope the Ameer by his own advance will show plainly his intentions. I see no escape from action, and if so it should be vigorous and effective.²⁹

Cranbrook wrote the first official manifesto of the Government in relation to the war with Afghanistan the day after the commencement of hostilities. The Russian threat was not given as a cause for hostilities, rather it is a denunciation of Sher Ali for not cooperating with the Viceroy in "putting his empire under the surveillance of the British Empire."³⁰ In his speech to Parliament in December he added two more motives: an attempt by Russia to "turn our watch-dog, the Ameer, into a bloodhound against us," and to obtain a safe frontier. He ended his speech with an appeal to support the motion to permit the revenues of India to be used to support the war for "the sake of the honour and safety of the Queen's Indian possessions."³¹

It is an interesting sidelight that during this debate Lord Derby spoke on the question, defending the Afghan policy up to 1877, and strongly condemning it after that date, which was approximately the time he left the Foreign Office, and which closely coincided with the

²⁹Gathorne-Hardy, II, p. 100.

³⁰Annual Register, 1878, p. 195.

³¹Ibid., p. 218.

beginning of the Peshawar Conference. While in the Cabinet, Derby had acted as a modifying influence, and the change in Afghan policy can be dated from the end of the Peshawar Conference.

A very important consideration is how the cultural values affected the motivations of the catalyst of this situation, the Viceroy, Lord Lytton. Lytton shared many of his values with his fellow-actors, particularly Russophobia and national pride, but in his person they assumed an exaggerated form. From the time of his appointment on, he was distrustful of Russia and Russian intentions. While others were too, and at times it seemed that England and Russia might be on the verge of war, he became obsessed with the idea to the point of seeing Russian intrigues everywhere. This naturally colored his thinking and his judgment. From the time of the Peshawar Conference he expressed the opinion that the Amir was intriguing with Russia, and upon hearing that a Russian mission had arrived at Kabul, he was certain that his worst fears were now verified.

In a letter to Cranbrook, April 8, 1878, he expressed his ideas on the situation in Central Asia. Herein he noted that India was permanently threatened by Russia's presence in that area. He felt that India could best be safeguarded if an occasion should arise for war with Afghanistan. He went on to say,

. . . I am persuaded that the policy of building up in Afghanistan a strong independent State over which we can exercise absolutely no control, has been proved by experience to be a mistake. If by war, or the death of the present Amir . . . we should hereafter have the opportunity (and it is one which may at any moment occur suddenly) of disintegrating and breaking up the Kabul Power, I sincerely hope that opportunity will not be lost by us. . . .³²

Upon confirmation of the news of the Russian mission, Lytton again wrote to Cranbrook, advocating a policy definitely motivated by Russophobia. His agitation is apparent, when he says, "Now the Russian outposts are actually 150 miles nearer than they were then. Now the Russian officers and troops have been received with honour at Kabul, within 150 miles of our frontier and our largest military garrison. And this is a distance which, even on the large scale maps recommended to us, looks very small indeed. . . ."³³ In this letter he put forth the "vacuum theory," that "all intermediate States between our own Asiatic Empire and that of Russia must ere long be absorbed by one or other of the two rival Powers."³⁴ Thus, for military reasons of defense, he felt that they could not remain behind the Hindu-Kush mountain range. His fear of Russian aggression prompted him to advocate a military occupation of Afghanistan in

³²Lytton to Cranbrook, April 8, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, pp. 246-247.

³³Ibid., p. 250.

³⁴Ibid., p. 251.

the event the British were unable to persuade Sher Ali to permanently exclude Russian influence from Afghanistan. He then advocated the sending of a British Mission to the Amir as a counter to the Russian Mission, and with the purpose of once more attempting a political settlement with Sher Ali.

The fact that Lytton was unduly disturbed over the appearance of the Russian Mission at Kabul, a Mission that was small in number and certainly not of a military nature, is perhaps understandable in a time when the two powers were on the verge of hostilities. But when Lytton finally knew that peace had been established, and that a diplomatic protest had been sent to Russia, and that in reality no threat existed any longer, he acted as if it hadn't happened or if it had, he for one didn't believe it. Russia might claim to be at peace, but to his mind this didn't prevent her from continuing her expansion in the direction of India. The threat had become so real to him that he still saw it long after it had ceased to exist.

Lytton's extreme Russophobia, combined with his excessive national arrogance, was bound to lead to trouble in his dealings with Afghanistan. He considered that country and its inhabitants as barbaric. When the Amir refused the Viceroy's first overture to send a British mission, Lytton's pride was stung, and from then on he was distrustful of him. In his subsequent dealings with

Sher Ali, Lytton assumed the attitude of a superior treating with an obstreperous inferior, who didn't seem to realize that he was supposed to be the humble servant of the master. Lytton was constantly infuriated by Sher Ali's aloofness. His reply to Sher Ali's first refusal shows something of this feeling.

Your Highness has indeed suggested that it would answer all purposes were you to depute a confidential agent to learn from the Viceroy the views of the British Government. My friend, the Viceroy cannot receive an agent from Your Highness when you have declined to receive His Excellency's trusted friend and Enroy.³⁵

The Viceroy felt it was beneath his dignity to receive an agent from the Amir after the Amir had the affront to refuse to receive a British Envoy. Lytton gave no consideration to Sher Ali's reasons for this, dismissing them as mere excuses.

When the Amir finally agreed to send his representative to the Peshawar Conference for the purpose of making some sort of a settlement with the British, it seemed that the prospects for an agreement were good. However, the Amir's envoy died suddenly, and Lytton closed the Conference, even though another envoy was on his way from Sher Ali. The Viceroy justified his action, stating:

In return for all this generosity and forbearance, the British Government has received from the Amir

³⁵Lytton to Sher Ali, July 8, 1876, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 62.

nothing but discourtesies, only rendered insignificant by his absolute impuissance. Our latest offers to protect his dominions and his dynasty, with much expense and trouble to ourselves but with no interference in his authority, have been answered by an attempt to stir up open hostility against us.³⁶

This "open hostility" referred to by Lytton was a holy war (jehad) against the English, which he claimed was being stirred up by the Amir while the negotiations were going on. This account was first published in the Indian Pioneer, and then in the London Times, and it alleged that "this sudden change of policy [closing the Conference] is due to the fact that the Ameer is trying to stir up a religious war in Candahar with a view to the expulsion of the British troops from Khelat."³⁷ The validity of this report was denied in the April 18th issue of the Times, which attributed the story to rumors, and the real cause for the closing of the Conference was claimed to be the death of the Afghan Envoy. A further clarification appeared in a story in the Times on October 19th, which told of an attempt to raise a jehad, not by Sher Ali, but by the fanatical Akhood of Swat, and not during the Peshawar Conference, but after the British had closed it.³⁸ The significance is not in the true facts, but in Lytton's view of them. It clearly shows that he was

³⁶Viceroy's Minute on the Close of the Peshawar Conference, March, 1877, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 155.

³⁷The Times, April 16, 1877.

³⁸The Times, October 19, 1877.

ready to believe the worst of the Amir.

The Viceroy also considered that since Britain was a great power and Afghanistan a weak one, she should bend her knee to the British. In his estimation it was beneath the dignity of a great Empire to treat a small nation on equal terms. As he once wrote to Cavagnari, ". . . the radical defect in the conduct of our past relations with Sher Ali is that the tone of it has never been in wholesome accordance with the realities of our relative positions--the weakness of his position and strength of our own."³⁹ Lytton tried to correct this defect. After the Peshawar Conference, he expressed what his future policy towards the Amir was going to be, when he said in a letter to Sir Robert Egerton, Lt. Governor of the Punjab, "My present objective is to weaken and embarrass the position of the Amir by all the indirect means in my power."⁴⁰

Lytton's demand for the reception of the British Mission to be headed by Sir Neville Chamberlain, was not particularly courteous. Three days after it was written, the Amir's son and heir apparent died. A forty-day mourning period followed. Lytton, in a letter to

³⁹Lytton to Cavagnari, May 19, 1877, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 162.

⁴⁰G. J. Alder, British India's Northern Frontier 1865-95, A Study in Imperial Policy, Imperial Studies, XXV (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1963), p. 117.

Cranbrook, tells that the letter requesting the reception of the mission was "accompanied by a friendly letter of condolence on the death of the heir apparent."⁴¹ It would seem that Lytton did not consider it a breach of etiquette to send such a demand and a condolence together, but it was an unpardonable affront that Sher Ali did not answer at once the letter of condolence. Moreover, Lytton did not comply with customary etiquette in his observation of the mourning period, for he continued to send a barrage of messages, which the Amir himself later characterized as "harsh," not only to Sher Ali, but "moreover these fiery messages were repeated to the subordinate officers of Sher Ali at the forts and citadels on the road. . . ."⁴² Sir Neville Chamberlain's report to the Viceroy stated that Sher Ali's Minister told him the Amir was very annoyed "by the various unbecoming communications, some to his own address, some to his officers. Communications should not be written in an authoritative tone, nor should any be addressed to his officials, as they are servants of the Cabul Government, and not of the British."⁴³

Lytton did not wait until the end of the forty-day

⁴¹Lytton to Cranbrook, October, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 272.

⁴²Afghan Correspondence II, 1878, Nos. 16 and 17, quoted in Argyll, p. 504.

⁴³Chamberlain to Lytton, September 19, 1878, C.A.W., p. 178.

mourning period to advance the mission. Chamberlain had informed him that reports of the Native British Envoy in Kabul indicated a willingness on the part of the Amir to receive the Mission in proper time.⁴⁴ Besides, Lytton had been ordered by Cranbrook to await orders before advancing the mission, and also not to go by way of the Khyber Pass. The Viceroy's motive for disobeying orders, and for ignoring the sensitivities of the Afghan ruler, were clearly dictated by his arrogance which had prejudiced him against the Amir. It is not going too far to declare that Lytton's haste was deliberate, that the whole project of the mission was designed to secure an affront so that the Government of India would have a casus belli that would stand up in England. It cannot be doubted that Lytton wanted war with Afghanistan after he had failed to bring Sher Ali into submission to the Indian Government. British pride was at stake, and it is difficult to say which motive was stronger, that or the Russian threat, but put together they made war an object to be greatly desired, as far as Lytton was concerned. In a letter to Cranbrook, justifying his actions, Lytton stated three facts of importance. First, that he deliberately selected Sir Neville Chamberlain to head the Mission because he was a member of the Lawrentian

⁴⁴Ibid.

School,⁴⁵ and thus failure could not be ascribed to the Viceroy's rash action in departing from the old policy. Second, that he felt certain an affront would take place if the Mission proceeded. Third, that he sent the Mission anyway to prove to the British Public that the Amir was hostile, and to do it in such a way as to "make the public a partner with the Government in the duty of counter-acting it."⁴⁶

The Proclamation of War against Sher Ali, written by Lytton, clearly combined the two motives, for much to Cranbrook's distress, he implied that the invasion was designed not only to punish Sher Ali, but also to expel the Russians from Afghanistan.⁴⁷

Influence of the Needs and Values of Society

Decision-makers cannot help but be influenced in their decisions by the needs and values of the society in which they live. This influence may be quite subtle or

⁴⁵Those who concurred in the ideas of Lord Lawrence, who served as Viceroy of India from November 1863 to January 1869. His frontier policy was one of cautious maintenance of the status quo. To stand on the defensive, to wait and watch, to make the peoples within his own frontier prosperous and contented, and to leave the peoples beyond it independent without interference, was in his opinion, the only safe way of meeting the advance of Russia in Central Asia.

⁴⁶Lytton To Cranbrook, September 23, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, pp. 284-285.

⁴⁷Cowling, p. 79; The Times, November 23, 1878.

very obvious. Since a decision-maker is a product of his culture, there is the question of whether this influence is not the same as that of the Actor's social values. The distinction made here is in regard to those needs and values which are external to the Actors, but which nevertheless influence him. For example, all Britishers must share a certain cultural background, and to an extent, a certain cultural bias. But within the country are varying opinions. Times change, so do ideas, so do needs. Thus this section will deal with those needs and ideas outside the sphere of the decision-maker's basic make-up, which either acted upon him to change his ideas and values, or caused him to act against his basic orientation for some practical necessity.

A good illustration of this is seen over and over again in Disraeli's actions during the Eastern crisis, when he bowed to public opinion. On one occasion he made light of the stories of the Bulgarian atrocities, which released such a storm of protest that he had to think carefully in regard to his Turkish policy. Disraeli and the Queen feared that the atrocity stories would supply Russia with an excuse for invading Turkey, and that any such movement would surely end in the Russian occupation of that country. While they were inclined to support Turkey militarily, in the event of such an invasion on Russia's part, they felt

that public opinion would not permit such a move.⁴⁸ It was therefore the moral indignation of the British public which countermanded the Prime Minister's inclination to enter the war.

With the signing of the Treaty of Berlin, Disraeli reached the pinnacle of his success in foreign affairs. He had obtained for England, "peace with honor." This altered his position on Afghanistan. Whereas before he was inclined to support the Viceroy in a military build-up on the Northwest frontier, with an object to be prepared for a war with Russia in that area, now that peace had been obtained, he was desirous of cooling off that situation. He did not want his accomplishment of peace with Russia marred. For this reason, when Lytton was ready to send the Chamberlain Mission, Disraeli, as well as Salisbury and Cranbrook, wanted the Mission postponed until the Foreign Office could receive an answer to the protest sent to Russia.

After the British Mission was repulsed at Ali Musjid, the Cabinet insisted upon an ultimatum being sent to Sher Ali, to give him another chance to vindicate himself through an apology for the affront and an agreement to receive a British agent. The Cabinet's motivation was not the real hope that an acceptable reply would be

⁴⁸Blake, p. 608.

received, for there was hardly sufficient time allowed for that contingency, but it was to strengthen the casus belli, as many of the Cabinet members had expressed their doubts that a real cause for war existed, at least not one sufficient to convince the public. Here again, while their inclination was for war, considering the predicament they were in, there had to be a better justification for public acceptance.

Disraeli's position before and after the incident at Ali Jusjid, reveals a contradiction which can best be explained by his desire for public acceptance of his policy. He made much of Lytton's disobedience after the affront occurred, and wrote in this vein to Cranbrook,

He [Lytton] was told to wait until we had received the answer from Russia to our remonstrances. I was very strong on this, having good reasons for my opinion. He disobeyed us. . . .⁴⁹

And to Salisbury he wrote:

His [Lytton's] policy is perfectly fitted to a state of affairs in which Russia was our assailant; but Russia is not our assailant. She has sneaked out of our hostile position . . . and if Lytton had only been quiet and obeyed my orders, I have no doubt that, under the advice of Russia, Sher Ali would have been equally prudent.⁵⁰

Disraeli's anger at Lytton's disobedience in sending the Mission ahead before being given permission

⁴⁹Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 26, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1254.

⁵⁰Disraeli to Salisbury, October 3, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1255.

by the Home Government, is rendered a little incredulous by his note to Cranbrook of September 17th, three days before the mission set out, wherein he stated that he had learned of the contents of the Russian reply, although it had not been formally received, and that it was unsatisfactory. He also stated that he agreed entirely with Lytton's general policy, and expressed his belief that it was necessary to act with firmness on the Afghan question because, "the feeling is strong, and rising, in the country." But most significant of all was his statement that he thought, "there is no doubt that there shd. be no delay in the Mission. . . ."⁵¹ It appears that his criticism of Lytton was not based on the action so much as the results, for he complained to Cranbrook, "When V-Roys and Comms.-in-chief disobey orders, they ought to be sure of success in their mutiny. Lytton, by disobeying orders, has only secured insult and failure. . . ."⁵²

From the time of the appearance of the Russian Mission, Salisbury had advised restraint. He was much put out with the Viceroy's impetuous actions. Even a year before he had deprecated military preparations being made by the Government of India.⁵³ Salisbury was not in favor

⁵¹Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 17, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1253.

⁵²Disraeli to Cranbrook, September 26, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1254.

⁵³Lady Cecil, p. 340.

of war because he thought it unnecessary, and he was afraid that the military build-up might trigger hostilities. He wanted to avoid such a public affront as that which occurred, because he knew that it would make war inevitable. He was concerned with the connection of Afghanistan with European foreign affairs, and his motive for keeping the peace with the Amir was to strengthen Britain's hand with Russia. As he told Beaconsfield,

That a breach with the Amir was inevitable sooner or later, I quite believe, but the time has been chosen with singular infelicity. It would have strengthened us much in our struggle to get Russia out of the Balkan Peninsula if we could have deferred this affair for a year.⁵⁴

Throughout his association with Afghan affairs, first as Secretary of State for India, and then as Foreign Secretary, Salisbury viewed the situation in the total perspective of foreign affairs. Thus his motivations stemmed in part from the external conditions of the international scene. His objectives in foreign policy were influenced by his belief that "in the last resort, the English people and not the Cabinet were the arbiters of foreign policy."⁵⁵ Therefore, if a policy could not command a large degree of public support, he was against it. Where Russia was concerned, he was cautious, for,

⁵⁴Salisbury to Disraeli, October 22, 1878, quoted in Lady Cecil, pp. 341-342.

⁵⁵Grenville, p. 17.

as he said of negotiations with Russia, "[they] have this peculiarity about them;--that the mere mention of them, however innocent they may be, drives a considerable number of people in this country immediately insane."⁵⁶

The Actor least affected by the external forces of society was Lord Cranbrook. His views on Afghanistan were fairly consistent, and he, unlike Disraeli, supported Lytton even after his disobedience. In Parliament Cranbrook stated that Lytton had "strictly carried out the policy of the Government, which held itself responsible for all that had been done."⁵⁷ He did not form his policy because of the pressures or fear of public opinion, but he appealed to public opinion to support his views. An example of this is found in the same speech to Parliament, when, answering the Liberal contention that there was room for both England and Russia in Central Asia, he replied that this might be true but "there was not room for both in Afghanistan,"⁵⁸ and he appealed to British pride by citing the justice of the cause.

In the case of Lytton, it is evident that his attitudes and opinions were affected by his close contact with the Indian society, and by this is meant the British

⁵⁶Salisbury to Sir Henry Elliot, April 16, 1879, quoted in Lady Cecil, p. 347.

⁵⁷Annual Register, 1878, p. 218.

⁵⁸Ibid.

element of that society, who, for the most part, were highly susceptible to any threat of danger from the direction of the Northwest frontier. The military preparations taken by Lytton following the close of the Peshawar Conference, were influenced by the military class of the Indian society. Salisbury had warned Lytton against succumbing to their counsels.

The decision to advance the Chamberlain Mission before permission was received from the Home Government, and indeed the sending of it through the Khyber Pass instead of Kandahar, as had been directed by London, was due to the actions of the military authorities. As Lytton explained to Cranbrook, the officers had made arrangements with the Khyberi tribesmen for safe conduct of the Mission. However, on September 14 a summons from the Amir reached Peshawar ordering all the Khyberi headmen back to the Pass. They had to return or lose their allowances from the Amir. The Viceroy delayed as long as possible, but felt he had to act when he did, or he would lose both the escort and the respect of the Khyberi tribes.⁵⁹

The affront to the British Mission at Ali Musjid led Lytton to desire immediate military intervention in Afghanistan. To the motives already mentioned can be

⁵⁹Lytton to Cranbrook, October 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 273.

added the pressures of public sentiment in India. As a reporter for the London Times observed:

We gather that in India an absolute concurrence of opinion that a vigorous policy and determined action are urgently needed, but we know full well that the predominant class there is the military. They naturally are enthusiastic at the prospect of war. This enthusiasm has evidently affected the civilian element, always foremost in time of danger in the East. Hence the delay is unpalatable to all but the most thoughtful of our fellow-countrymen in India.⁶⁰

The reason the affront seemed to them to demand immediate action, was their fear that if left unanswered it might give ideas to the discontented elements of the native Indian society. They feared such groups might interpret the delay as weakness on the part of the British Government, and such an interpretation could lead to mutinies and insurrections. Lytton pointed out that if prompt action were not taken, the Amir would be able to strengthen his position, and that "the apparent want of courage, power and policy on the part of Britain would seriously undermine both external prestige and internal security. To accept apologies would be to run a risk of losing India."⁶¹

The final influence of the military officers on Lytton is seen in the time allowance given the Amir to

⁶⁰The Times, November 5, 1878.

⁶¹Lytton to Cranbrook, October 11, 1878, quoted in Gopal, p. 87.

respond to the British Ultimatum. The November 21st deadline was dictated, not by hopes of receiving a reply, but by the military necessity of entering Afghanistan before the winter snows blocked the passes, which usually occurred by the end of November. Failure to move in time would cause a considerable delay which would be to the Amir's advantage in preparing for war, for the passes would be blocked for six months.⁶²

The Role of Personality

In considering the influence of personality on motivation, Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin suggest limiting this observation to the sociological conception of personality.⁶³ Thus the personality of the individual decision-maker is viewed as it relates to his role in the decision-making system. Since a decision-making unit requires an inter-play among its members, it is important to see how the individual members view their relationships to one another in the decision-making process.

Disraeli, as the Chief-of-State, liked to keep a large degree of control on foreign policy. He did not think it either desirable or necessary to call Parliament to decide questions of foreign policy. During the years

⁶²Lady Balfour, p. 291.

⁶³Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, p. 161.

1876-1878, he made the bulk of decisions relating to India in private consultation with Cranbrook and Salisbury. He did not make a practice of calling the Cabinet together, except on what he considered to be extremely important issues. After the repulsion of the Chamberlain Mission, he was loathe to call the Cabinet together, for he feared such a move would "agitate all Europe."⁶⁴ But on October 3rd he was "obliged to summon the Cabinet. I found they were talking all sorts of nonsense over the country; especially some in whose prudence I still had some lingering trust; and there were already 'two parties in the Cabinet,' and 'all that.'"⁶⁵

Disraeli was always opposed to "masterly inactivity." He himself was a man of action, and he admired others for those same qualities of boldness and action. Lytton seemed to be a counterpart of Disraeli. He was brilliant, witty, theatrical, and prone to quick, daring action. Thus for a long time the Viceroy enjoyed Disraeli's confidence and support, to the degree that he was left pretty much to his own devices.

Salisbury was a different story. Disraeli had perceived in him the same qualities of boldness and action as he had in Lytton, but unlike Lytton, Salisbury

⁶⁴Disraeli to the Duke of Richmond, September 24, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1254.

⁶⁵Disraeli to Salisbury, October 3, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1255.

was to turn out to be more of a traditionalist. He was by far the most conservative of the group. He deprecated quick action which was taken without going through the proper channels of authority. He approved of Lytton as long as he was Secretary of State for India and could exercise proper control over him. But he later came to distrust the Viceroy, and even to say of him that he had been "'forcing the hand of the Government,' and had been doing it from the very first; he thought only of India, and was dictating by its means, the foreign policy of the Government in Europe and Turkey."⁶⁶ Salisbury's bitterness stemmed from a conflict of role interpretation. He felt that Lytton was overstepping the bounds of his office into that of the Foreign Secretary.

Salisbury was inclined to be cautious. He always took into account the possible ramifications of any action under consideration. Some of his colleagues were not as prone to do this, and were impatient with his deliberations. In fact, while he, Disraeli, and Cranbrook were considering what should be done in regard to the British Mission, Lytton was acting.

Cranbrook was to a degree responsible for Lytton's actions, first, by agreement with the Viceroy's general policy, and second, by his lack of control over him. His

⁶⁶Disraeli to Queen Victoria, October 26, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, p. 1259.

paucity of knowledge and interest in Indian affairs led him to rely on the opinions and judgments of others. Lytton, an expressive writer, convinced Cranbrook for the most part, of the soundness of his ideas. As the Indian Secretary's previous post had been as head of the War Department, it is not too surprising to find him inclined to use military force in settling the Afghan problem. He was even more prepared to use full-scale military intervention than even Lytton. While Cranbrook was noted for his rather haphazard handling of the India Office, once he set his mind on something, he was quite resolute. So, while he appeared to be the weakest of the Actors, it was he who moved the Cabinet to undertake full-scale military action in Afghanistan.

In Lytton the personality factor is most notable. Although he went to India knowing little of Indian affairs, he soon came to consider himself an expert. Anyone who doubts this has only to read his long letters to Cranbrook, telling the Secretary of State what action should be taken in various situations. In many instances he took the initiative upon himself, such as in ordering a military build-up on the Northwest frontier in 1877, following the Peshawar Conference; in withdrawing the Native Agent from Kabul; in the change of frontier policy and the reorganization of the frontier as regarded both administration and demarcation of boundaries; and of course, his disobedience

in sending the Chamberlain Mission contrary to orders. He always had what he considered good reasons for his actions. However, throughout all of his justifications runs the thread of the idea that he knew best what to do under the circumstances.

Lytton may be considered an innovator, not that he was responsible for the change in British policy towards Afghanistan, for he had taken such instructions with him to India, but rather because he presumed to know the Government's intentions better than the Government itself, and was not hesitant in taking some risks. Still, he operated within certain limitations. He felt it necessary to ask for permission to send the British Mission, and although he later violated instructions, he rationalized that he was not exceeding his bounds by advancing the Mission, because the Government had ordered the delay for the purpose of receiving a reply from their protest to Russia. He felt that such a reply could be forwarded to the Mission on its journey.⁶⁷ This advisory, along with the news that the Mission was being advanced, was telegraphed to Cranbrook on September 21st. Although Lytton desired immediate action after the affront, he was again limited and had to wait upon the decision of the Cabinet, which was to send an ultimatum to allow more

⁶⁷Lytton to Cranbrook, October 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 274.

time. While Lytton issued the ultimatum, as well as the subsequent declaration of war, he did so only on the orders of the Cabinet. Whatever his feelings in the matter, he did recognize that his role as Viceroy demanded the sanction of the Cabinet for the measures he now proposed, and though he strongly expressed his views to them, he did not act until he obtained their permission.

In his dealings with the Afghans, Lytton demonstrated his acceptance of an Afghan stereotype, for whether referring to Sher Ali, his Minister Syud Noor Mohammed, or other high Afghan officials, he tended to view them in the same light--that of barbarians, hostile to the British Government. He also appeared to have a set view of the situation as well as what should be done regarding British policy in that area. Many of his views he took from Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Henry Rawlinson, both opponents of the Lawrentian School of "masterly inactivity." The Viceroy's judgments were colored by preconceived notions, both about the Afghans and the frontier problem. Nothing else can account for his unreal interpretation of facts. Some of the Home Government's decisions were based in great part on information supplied them by Lytton. Thus, when he asserted to the Government that the Amir's reply to his letter requesting the acceptance of the British Mission was "discourteous and hostile," and entirely unsatisfactory, it was bound to have an influence

on the attitude of the Home Government. A careful perusal of the letter does not reveal hostility to the degree intimated by Lytton. Instead, the Amir appears to have been complaining of the discourtesy and hostility of the British Government towards him. But Lytton in his telegram of October 18th announced the arrival of the Amir's insolent letter, and demanded immediate war. At that point it seemed to the Cabinet that there was no longer any question that Sher Ali was determined to keep the British out of Afghanistan, and as Cowling points out, "Lytton by forcing the emir's and the Cabinet's hands, had established his first point. The discussion thereafter assumes the things he wants to be assumed."⁶⁸

The same was true in the case of the Amir's response to the British ultimatum. Even though hostilities had begun before receipt of that reply, had it been considered satisfactory, the military operations could have been halted. In this letter the Amir stated that his government "cherishes no feelings of hostility and opposition towards the British Government," and that if they wished to send "a purely friendly and temporary Mission to this country, with a small escort not exceeding 20 or 30 men, similar to that which attended the Russian Mission,

⁶⁸Cowling, p. 76.

this Servant of God will not oppose its progress."⁶⁹ By this time the Cabinet members had been conditioned by Lytton to think the worst of the Amir, and to accept the Viceroy's verdict of insolence and deception on Sher Ali's part.

Lytton's personality did not leave room for error in his judgment. Whenever conflicting information reached him, he had no problem reconciling it; he merely chose to accept that information which confirmed his personal views and beliefs, rejecting all other. This was also true in the case of advice, for he accepted only that advice from members of his Council with which he agreed. The same even holds true in his relations with the Home Government. For here too, he followed instructions with which he agreed, altered those that were open to interpretation to correspond with his own thinking, and ignored those which seemed in direct opposition to his considered judgment.

While the personality of any one actor contributes to decision-making, some to a much greater degree than others, still where a group decision is made, the interaction of these personalities tends to modify and to synthesize the decision. The Cabinet decision of October 25, 1878 clearly demonstrates this. Lytton had asked the Cabinet for a declaration of war. Cairns, Northcote and

⁶⁹Parliamentary Papers, Vol. LVI (1878-79), Letter from Sher Ali to Lytton, November 19, 1878, p. 700.

Cross could not see that they had a sufficient cause for war, at least not one that would stand up in Parliament. Disraeli was opposed to declaring war because of the danger involved in summoning Parliament to sanction it. At the same time he felt that British prestige required England to make some sort of declaration of power. Here Disraeli was motivated by political considerations in not wishing to summon Parliament, and by national pride, in not wanting England to appear weak. He attempted a compromise of those two points by suggesting a material guarantee project which would not necessitate calling Parliament, and would be a show of British strength. Salisbury supported the idea, for to him it was more realistic than becoming involved in what might be a disaster. But Cranbrook, who was much more in sympathy with the Indian view, demanded war. He did not believe in half-way measures, and he could see no advantage in postponing the inevitable.⁷⁰ To Cranbrook, who had little real interest in Indian affairs, preferring to be off hunting in Scotland, the pressures that had been brought to bear on him from all sides were distasteful. The best and quickest way to eliminate them was to declare war and get the whole business over with as soon as possible.

The more decision-makers involved in a decision,

⁷⁰Disraeli to Queen Victoria, October 26, 1878, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, pp. 1259-1260.

the more numerous are the alternatives, due to differences of opinion. Thus the Cabinet could have refused to declare war or take material guarantees, and just leave things up in the air, reverting to the old stationary policy. It could have, although it was not suggested, recalled the Viceroy. It could have gone along with Disraeli's proposal for a material guarantee, or it could have declared immediate war.

The decision reached once again united the major decision-makers in agreement on the national objective of upholding and preserving British interests, which in this case was national prestige. The decision to order an increased military build-up for the occupation of Afghanistan was taken to accomplish this goal. The motivation for the decision to send another message to the Amir, to give him one more chance, was, in Disraeli's words, "to strengthen our case for Parliament."⁷¹ This latter motivation was strictly on the part of the Actors in the Home Government, for they, and particularly Disraeli, felt the limitations of the Cabinet's role. The Cabinet could declare war, but in doing so it would have to summon Parliament to approve of using Indian revenues for expenditures. It was therefore important to have a strong case to present to Parliament.

Lytton, off in India, and having little use for

⁷¹Ibid., p. 1260.

Parliament in the first place, considered the decision to send an ultimatum a useless waste of time. But the Cabinet view prevailed on this point. So, the decision combined aggression with a waiting policy, thereby giving weight to both the "war" and "peace" elements by holding out the chance for peace, while preparing for war if the peace overture failed.

CHAPTER VIII

DETERMINANTS OF DECISION: CAPABILITY

The making of decisions must necessarily go beyond the formulation of desired objectives. Before any course of action can be taken, the decision-maker must take into consideration what the chances are for success of the proposed measure. The chances of success may be termed capability. Thus in considering a plan of action to implement a strongly motivated objective, capability becomes an important consideration. The likelihood of a decision being made to take a specific action is increased in proportion to the available capability as perceived by the decision-makers. We must distinguish between actual capability and perceived capability, for it is the latter which affects the Actors in their decisions, and the lack of knowledge of the former which sometimes leads to miscalculations. The Actors must deal with the question of capability through the information available to them at the particular time when the decision is being made, and through their own specific knowledge or understanding of the situation.

We are herein concerned with two types of capability. The first is the capability of authority, which views the limits within which the Actors operate--their formal organization authority. The second is material capability, or the substance necessary to carry out and implement a decision. This may encompass several areas, such as military capability, where a decision involves war or the possibility of war; financial capability, for any projects requiring expenditures; and political capability, involving the means available for effecting a desired political settlement, or obtaining political goals.

Capability of Authority

The final authority to declare war rested with the Cabinet, and the decision to commence hostilities with Afghanistan was properly made in that body. However, this final decision was an inevitable result of other decisions made elsewhere. It is therefore necessary to look into the authority of those most important decisions which practically necessitated the final one. Many of those decisions were made by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, so we must carefully look at his authority in this area.

The Viceroy of India, as previously noted, was the highest administrative authority in India. He, together with his Council, had complete control over

the army, defense, foreign relations, and finances. We thus find Lytton engaging in frontier skirmishes with native tribesmen, sending punitive expeditions, making treaties with local chieftains, all on his own authority, and completely within his constitutional rights. While the Government of India Act of 1858 intended to give the power of initiative to the Viceroy, the Secretary of State for India, beginning with Argyll and followed by Salisbury, took steps to bring the Viceroy's actions under his direct control. From then on it became the habit for Viceroys to secure permission from the India Office before undertaking any major action. Lytton adhered to this policy for a while, but when Cranbrook became Secretary of State, the Viceroy reverted to the role of former days by initiating policy himself. We thus find Cranbrook in the role of accepting and agreeing to policies and proposals suggested to him by Lytton. Cranbrook seldom, if ever, took the initiative, and while Lytton was not theoretically acting outside the limits of his office, he was acting beyond the bounds set by the precedent of several preceding Viceroys.

Lytton's letter to Cranbrook of August 3, 1878 set forth the Viceroy's views of the situation in light of the reception of the Russian Mission at Kabul. In it he also proposed what action should be taken and the alternatives possible. He told Cranbrook about the

mission he proposed to send, which Cranbrook had previously sanctioned, and his selection of Sir Neville Chamberlain to head it. Although Cranbrook's approval had been secured to send a mission, it was Lytton who suggested it, and worked out all the details, including policy. In reading Lytton's letters to Cranbrook, one is impressed by his attitude. It is not one of a subordinate to a superior, asking permission to take certain action, but rather it smacks of a teacher instructing a rather dull student, telling him what he ought to do. Nowhere do we find the Viceroy asking advice from the Secretary of State, rather he is always handing it out.

Whether in ordering the Chamberlain Mission to advance to Ali Musjid, in strict disobedience of his orders, Lytton overstepped the bounds of his authority, is open to question. For while there might be a constitutional point giving the Viceroy the power to disregard orders from the Secretary of State for India, the orders regarding the delay of the Chamberlain Mission, though transmitted by Cranbrook, came from the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. Disraeli and Salisbury certainly felt that they had been disobeyed. However, the telegram sent to Lytton by the India Office merely stated:

Official reply to remonstrance from St. Petersburg on way London. Important to receive this before Chamberlain starts.¹

The telegram does not indicate any higher source of authority for these instructions, and also, as Lytton later pointed out, he received it at a time when he knew from Cranbrook's correspondence that the Secretary of State was not in London.

Probably Lytton's greatest justification for his action, as far as authority goes, is contained in the following passage from his explanation to Cranbrook:

. . . Again on the 13th of the same month, when telegraphing to you further details about the organisation and movements of the mission, I took special occasion to repeat "I cannot propose it unless I have authority to insist on it." To this reiteration of the understanding on which I was acting no objection was made or suggested by Her Majesty's government. . . .²

Since Lytton had already proposed the mission and set in operation the necessary preliminaries, he felt that the circumstances demanded carrying through the proposed project without further delay. As he had not been contradicted as to the necessity of having authority to insist on the mission, he interpreted this rather broadly to also give him the authority to advance the mission, for in his opinion it was a "now or never" situation,

¹Telegram from India Office to Lytton, September 13, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 271.

²Lytton to Cranbrook, October 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 270.

and to abandon it would be costly in prestige. Thus, "authority to insist" became the same to him as authority to advance.

Several days after the repulsion of the British Mission, Lytton wired Cranbrook for permission to make certain political and military preparations. The measures were approved by the Secretary of State after consultation with the Prime Minister, but instructions were sent that any further proposals should be telegraphed to London before any action was taken.

Although Lytton was anxious to begin military operations against Afghanistan, the Home Government insisted upon first sending an ultimatum to the Amir. Here Lytton was bound by the limitations of his office, and though he composed the ultimatum, its terms were first approved by the Home Government.³ Upon the expiration of the time limit set for receiving a reply to the ultimatum, Lytton ordered the advance of troops into Afghanistan, and issued the proclamation of war. Both of these actions had been previously sanctioned by the Home Government and were thus within the Viceroy's realm of authority.

Lytton is depicted by most historians as having disregarded the Home Government and having gone his own

³Lady Balfour, p. 292.

way to the point that he deliberately, and personally, involved Britain in a war with Afghanistan. Viewing the situation from the standpoint of constitutional authority, Lytton could have exercised greater freedom than he did. What makes Lytton stand out from other Viceroys in this area, is that he reversed custom, not law. The existence of a strong Secretary of State generally controlled the initiative of the Viceroy, but when the reverse was true, the potential for a very independent Viceroy existed.

Salisbury, having been a strong Secretary of State, held the initiative of Indian policy in his own hands, although he allowed Lytton a certain degree of latitude in implementing the policy. However, he kept a close enough check on that implementation to be sure it was in the right direction. When Cranbrook succeeded him, Salisbury assumed that he would carry on in the same tradition, but this was a miscalculation. Cranbrook, having no definite policy of his own, adopted Lytton's, and the initiative shifted from London to Calcutta. In keeping with the authority of his office, Cranbrook gave approval to many of Lytton's proposals without referring them to either Salisbury or Disraeli. However, from the receipt of word regarding the Russian Mission, together with Lytton's request to send a British one, he did consult them, though it was not until the second week in September that he forwarded the India Office's file containing

Lytton's correspondence on the Afghan situation, to Disraeli. From that point on, Cranbrook, Salisbury, and Disraeli were in frequent touch. The decision to delay the Mission seems to have occurred to all three almost simultaneously. Salisbury took the initiative and with Disraeli's approval wrote Cranbrook to order the delay of the mission,⁴ which was within the normal chain of command. Cranbrook, who was of the same mind, sent the orders the next day.

While the decision to delay the mission lay entirely within the scope of the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for India, the decision to send the mission in the first place was made by the Cabinet as a whole. Major decisions on foreign policy were to be submitted to the Cabinet for approval, and this procedure was carefully followed by Disraeli. When the situation became serious, due to the repulsion of the British mission, he found it necessary to call the Cabinet together. The Cabinet had the capability to order hostilities, but it had no power to allocate Indian revenues to pay for such an operation. This was strictly in the realm of Parliament. Thus, the Cabinet in making a decision of this nature had to consider the chances of getting Parliament to approve the action by voting the

⁴Lady Cecil, p. 339.

use of the necessary funds.

When the matter reached the floors of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, the issue of the constitutionality of the declaration of war arose. Some of the Opposition members contended that Parliament should have some say in such a move. Earl Grey, in particular, "moved an amendment to the effect that when war was probable Parliament ought to have been summoned, to provide for the expenses and to consider the grounds upon which war might be declared."⁵ Another member of the Opposition, the Marquis of Hartington, admitted the right of the Government to enter the war, "having, unfortunately, as he thought, received many proofs of the confidence of Parliament. . . ." but at the same time he claimed the right to censure the Government for undertaking the war, for the policy leading to it was unjustifiable.⁶ Thus, while some of the members of the Opposition were willing to concede the constitutional right of the Cabinet to enter the war, they felt that the Government had pushed its authority to the limit through misrepresentations to Parliament regarding the true state of affairs in Afghanistan, and the real intentions of the Government, the knowledge of which might have caused a reaction in the

⁵The Annual Register, 1878, p. 213.

⁶Ibid., pp. 214-215.

Houses that would have modified the Government's policy and thereby have averted the situation which necessitated war.

The Duke of Argyll, one of the greatest critics of the Government's Afghan policy, took the realistic view of the Cabinet's rights in the matter, for although he disagreed with the ministry's policy, he still felt that the Cabinet, not only had the constitutional authority, but that it was the best suited agency to exercise it.

It is always in the power of any Executive Government to get the country into a position out of which it cannot escape without fighting. This is the terrible privilege of what, in the language of the Constitution, is called prerogative. It is, in reality, the privilege of every Executive, whether of monarchical or of popular origin. I am not one of those who are of opinion that it could be lodged elsewhere with any advantage, or even with any safety. The majorities which support a strong Government in power are invariably more reckless than the Ministry. . . .⁷

The Disraeli Government and the individual Actors, in making their decisions regarding Afghanistan, were subject to certain limitations of their offices, but for the most part they interpreted their roles broadly, which gave them much more freedom of action. They did not consider taking any action beyond the bounds of their authority, but neither did they hesitate to stretch those bounds to a questionable limit.

⁷Argyll, p. 519.

Material CapabilityMilitary

When Lytton began seriously considering the possibility of hostilities with Afghanistan in the summer of 1878, the Indian army consisted of about 200,000 armed men.⁸ The Indian army was well-trained and well-disciplined, and had the distinct advantage of modern weapons, such as precision arms, mountain guns, and field artillery. Estimates as to the number of soldiers required for such an invasion varied from 10,000, according to Rawlinson, to a more realistic figure of 31,000, proposed by Lord Sandhurst.

An article in the Edinburgh Review in July, 1875, disputed Rawlinson's estimate and came up with an estimate of 31,000, broken down as follows:

British Cavalry	1,400	
Horses & Field Artillery, 10 Batteries	1,800	
Garrison Batteries, say 4	<u>400</u>	3,600
British Infantry, 8 Batteries	7,000	
Sappers & Miners, 4 Companies	499	7,400
Native Cavalry	4,000	
Native Infantry	<u>16,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
		31,000

⁸Tall Tactics (London: G. Phipps, 1879), p. 49.

To this figure of fighting men would be added the officers and artisans for the materiel of the park of artillery including siege train, for the engineer's park, and the ordnance and commissariat stores. . . .⁹

When considering the sending of a British Mission to the Amir, Lytton took into account the possible consequences of failure which would necessitate some sort of military action. He considered conquering and holding as much Afghan territory as necessary to protect the Northwest frontier. As to capability, he said, "As a military operation, this will not, I think, be so formidable as it has often been represented. . . ." ¹⁰

There was little, if any, doubt entertained by anyone as to the possibility of success of a British military campaign in Afghanistan. The campaign by Generals Pollock and Nott in 1842 had shown that a British army could readily advance on the Afghan capital and occupy it without too much difficulty. Even such opponents of the "forward policy" as Lord Lawrence, Lord Northbrook, and Lord Sandhurst, conceded that much.

Rawlinson maintained that Sher Ali had been building his army for the preceding five years, and had "prepared a most formidable armament; he had collected sixty-eight regiments of regular infantry armed for the

⁹"England and Russia in the East," Edinburgh Review, V. 142 (July, 1875), 300.

¹⁰Lytton to Cranbrook, August 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 255.

most part with serviceable rifles, and 16 regiments of cavalry; he had at his disposal 300 guns and an enormous amount of powder, ammunition and material of war."¹¹

An article appearing in the Times in the fall of 1877, told of a military build-up going on in Afghanistan, but it is doubtful that it caused any serious concern in official circles, or that it in any way made the Indian Government question its own military capability. The article told of a scrap iron drive, with the iron being melted down and recast into guns--at the rate of three or four guns a month. On the other hand, the number of troops was represented as increasing rapidly, with an army of 66,000 men having been raised at that time.¹² But Lytton was not impressed, referring to the Amir's troops as "badly armed, badly drilled, and badly disciplined. . . ."¹³

The independent tribes of the Northwest frontier were another consideration. Dr. Bellew, writing in 1868, calculated the number of independent fighting men on the frontier at 83,000, spread over a six hundred mile border. They were kept in order by a chain of about twenty-five forts, interspersed with between eighty and ninety smaller

¹¹Henry C. Rawlinson, "The Situation in Afghanistan," The Nineteenth Century, VII, No. 36 (February, 1880), 199.

¹²The Times, October 19, 1877.

¹³Lady Balfour, p. 258.

military posts. "They are garrisoned and held by a force of 25,000 troops, regular and irregular; and about half that number of police, both district and village."¹⁴ Lytton had reason to believe that the frontier tribes would not support the Amir in a war. He based his opinion on two facts. First, the tribes were disenchanted with Sher Ali because of his abortive attempts to raise a religious war, "which they now thoroughly understand to have been only a political experiment"; second, the British expedition against the Jowakis had demonstrated the deadly effects of the breech-loaders, which would "make its inhabitants very careful henceforth how they expose themselves."¹⁵

The main difficulty that would accompany the military advance into Afghanistan was that of supply and transport. This was a particularly difficult task because of the high mountainous terrain of the country. The Times pointed out the problems that had to be considered:

. . . Taking into consideration the inhospitable nature of the country, the very doubtful reception our troops will meet with from the Afghans, the absolute necessity of providing defensible works for the men with abundance of provisions, forage and firewood for the army in winter quarters, and the present advanced season of the year, it is a

¹⁴Henry W. Bellew, Our Punjab Frontier (Calcutta: Wyman Bros. Publishers, 1868), p. 14.

¹⁵Lady Balfour, p. 258.

very open matter as to whether Lord Lytton will risk an immediate advance into Afghanistan.¹⁶

In order to reach Kabul it was necessary to go through the Shuturgarden Pass, some 12,000 feet high. The rugged, steep roads were unfit for wheeled vehicles, necessitating the use of pack animals. However, the Viceroy seemed to have little concern over this aspect. The only thing that appears to have worried him was the closing of the passes by snow. Thus he was anxious to move the troops in before the winter snows began.

It was also important to consider the contingency of Russian assistance to Afghanistan. Since peace now existed between England and Russia, there was little likelihood of armed intervention by Russia. But even considering such a possibility, it presented no serious threat. The fighting army of Russia in Central Asia, which could be mobilized and directed by General Kaufman, numbered scarcely more than 20,000 men.¹⁷ Lytton was well aware of Russia's military weakness, and while he feared Russian intrigue, he did not seriously believe that Russia had either the desire or the capability to assist the Amir.

The Government of India gathered together an army of 35,000 men, including 12,000 European infantry.¹⁸

¹⁶The Times, September 26, 1878.

¹⁷"The Military Position of Russia and England in Central Asia," Edinburgh Review, January, 1880, pp. 73-74.

¹⁸The Annual Register, 1878, p. 170.

In addition, two reserve brigades were sanctioned to be formed out of the Madras and Bombay troops, and 60,000 camels were authorized for the Khyber Pass alone.¹⁹

Financial

In the House of Lords, Lord Northbrook remarked that the last Afghan War cost 17,000,000 pounds, and that India was too poor to bear the cost of another such war. But Lord Cranbrook maintained that the cost of the war for the current financial year would not exceed 1,250,000 pounds, which would be met by the surplus of current revenues, and there would still remain a balance of 500,000 pounds.²⁰ He added, "It must be perfectly obvious that the Indian Government could pay the whole cost of the war during the present year without adding a shilling to the taxation or the debt of the country."²¹ The Indian Secretary's statement was challenged in the House of Commons when Mr. Fawcett asserted that there was no real surplus of Indian revenue, but that the money was coming from a famine fund.²²

India had been subjected to four famines in the

¹⁹Ibid., p. 178.

²⁰Ibid., p. 217.

²¹Eastwick, p. 79.

²²The Annual Register, 1878, p. 24.

preceding ten years. A famine fund was created by raising the salt tax forty per cent, and by taxing incomes of ten pounds a year.²³ These taxes fell mainly on the Indian people, as official persons and merchants were not subject to the taxes. Sir John Strachey, the Financial member of Lytton's Council, once remarked of Indian revenues that they possessed "no true surplus over expenditures to cover the many contingencies to which a great country is exposed."²⁴ Even Salisbury had once remarked, "The difference between England and India in matters of finance is this, that in England you can raise a large increase in taxation without in the least degree endangering our institutions, whereas you cannot do so in India."²⁵

From the public statements of the Indian Secretary, it appears that the Home Government felt confident that the Indian revenues would be more than sufficient to cover the costs of the war. The Government of India was equally confident, for the war estimates prepared by the Military Department and "confidently recommended by it to the Financial Department, and adopted by the latter without misgiving,"²⁶ fell within the resources of India.

²³Tall Tactics, p. 32.

²⁴Eastwick, p. 83.

²⁵Ibid., p. 79.

²⁶Lytton to Cranbrook, May 11, 1880, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 501.

Lytton exerted every effort to keep military expenditures down, but he necessarily depended upon the Military Department to prepare the estimates, for as he said,

I have always carefully refrained from questioning or interfering with the final estimates framed and passed by the responsible departments for sanctioned charges. Any other course would have involved tampering with the public accounts by the head of the Government, and been destructive of that established sense of personal and departmental responsibility which is the best, and indeed, the only, guarantee for the conscientious preparation and verification of estimates by the authorities properly charged with the task. . . .²⁷

Consequently, neither the Government of India nor the Home Government anticipated a costly war and as late as February, 1880 Sir John Strachey estimated the total expenditure in the war to be as low as 10,000,000 pounds. However, it was to come to light later that the estimates of the Government of India were very much in error. But of course capability was viewed in the light of the estimates, right or wrong.

In 1881 the total war expenditures were set down at 23,412,000 pounds, of which 5,000,000 pounds were paid by England.²⁸ The deficits in the yearly budgets amounted to about a million pounds in 1879-80, and four million in 1880-81.²⁹ The war ended up by costing over twice as much

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸The Annual Register, 1881, p. 173.

²⁹Lady Balfour, p. 500.

as had been anticipated. This had also been the case in the First Afghan War.

Political Capability

The strongest argument by opponents against military involvement in Afghanistan was not based on military capability, for they, along with everyone else, had little doubt that the British army could easily conquer Afghanistan, but it was stated over and over again that the real difficulties would begin at the moment the military difficulties ended. These arguments were based on the British experience in the First Afghan War, 1838-41.

Lytton recounted that he had been warned of these dangers, that several high authorities had told him that,

having once crossed the frontier, we could not safely arrest our progress till we had completed the entire conquest of Afghanistan, that such a conquest could not be abandoned without the risk of renewing, and perhaps aggravating, our political dangers, nor yet maintained without heavily augmenting our financial and administrative burdens, and in either case our utmost military success would bequeath to the Afghan people, whether as neighbours or as subjects, memories and sentiments of inextinguishable animosity, leaving to ourselves no practical alternative between the helpless contemplation of the confusion and anarchy created by our own action and the wholesale annexation of a barren country and a turbulent people.³⁰

These warnings did not seem valid to Lytton, for he believed that "the Amir could not live a week in Kabul

³⁰Parliamentary Papers, Despatch, July 7, 1879, LVI (1878-1879), No. 7.

in known hostility to us."³¹ Hints at discontent of the Afghan people with the Amir are to be found in various news items from Indian sources throughout 1877. To Lytton it appeared that the Afghans might welcome the British as a means to rid themselves of Sher Ali, and indeed, he carefully chose the words of the declaration of war with this in mind. He felt that political pressure might be of even more value than military pressure, and he considered that "we should spare no effort to convince the Afghan people that our quarrel was with the Amir, who had deliberately forced it on us, and not with them; thus, if possible, isolating the Amir from his people, instead of uniting his people with him in a national opposition to our movements."³²

Other political considerations were to secure the support of the frontier tribes, detaching them from the Amir. Lytton felt confident, in the view of recent negotiations with the Afridis, and the recent success of the Jowaki expedition, that these tribes would support the British.

The capacity to hold Afghanistan once the military action had ceased, which the critics felt to be an impossible task, appeared simple enough to Lytton. He assumed

³¹Lytton to Cranbrook, August 3, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 258.

³²Lytton to Cranbrook, September 23, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 286.

that either Sher Ali would be forced into submission, or he would be deposed and his kingdom broken up. In the first instance, a chastened Sher Ali would have to cooperate with the British and do their bidding. In the second instance, part of the territory would be annexed to British India, and the rest would be divided among friendly chieftains. Neither course would involve the protracted occupation so fiercely deprecated by the Opposition.

To the Government of India, as well as to the Home Government, there seemed no question that Britain had the capability to carry out any military action against Afghanistan she felt necessary. In this area, based on factual knowledge, they proved to be correct in assessing capability, for a military victory was accomplished with relative ease.

While financial capability had been viewed from the standpoint of extremely low estimates, India, with some help from England, was able to meet them. However, she could not bear the continuing cost of a military occupation. Such a contingency had not been considered in assessing India's financial capability. So India had the financial capability to carry out the Government's plans, but not to sustain a long occupation, which was not part of the plan. This error in calculation was a result of a greater error in estimating capability in the political sphere. Here there were no hard facts to go

by, and personal value judgments prevailed, based on some rather nebulous rumors.

As in the case of the First Afghan War, the British found it impossible and costly to hold the country. Loyalty was maintained only as long as the British troops were present, making perpetual military occupation a requisite of any annexation. Sher Ali fled the country, and shortly afterwards died, making any settlement with him impossible. The solution for a time seemed to be in placing Sher Ali's son, Yakub, on the Afghan throne. In the signing of the Treaty of Gandamak, Yakub agreed to everything the British had wanted from his father. But the Treaty was shortly abrogated by the murder of Major Cavagnari and his staff who had taken up residence in Kabul, where Cavagnari was serving as British Envoy. As there were some implications that Yakub himself might have been in on the plot, the Amir was mistrustful of regaining the confidence of the British Government, and decided to resist the advance of British troops,³³ and later he abdicated.

The country was in a turmoil, and no political solution seemed in sight. The difficulties of armed occupation had become all too evident to the Indian Government, which soon found itself in a dilemma. "It

³³Parliamentary Papers, Viceroy in Council to Secretary of State, September 15, 1879, LIII (1880), p. 441.

was ineffective occupation of only a small part of Afghanistan. To subdue and hold the whole country with the forces at its disposal was utterly beyond its power. To withdraw without establishing some form of government, was to abandon Afghanistan to anarchy."³⁴

The solution of the political problem was not accomplished by the Disraeli Government, for it suffered defeat at the polls in April, 1880, partly as a result of its Afghan policy. Lytton resigned as Viceroy, leaving the Afghan settlement to the Liberal Government of William Gladstone.

³⁴Roberts, p. 471.

CHAPTER IX

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

The term situation has been defined as "an analytical concept pointing to a pattern of relationships among events, objects, conditions, and other actors organized around a focus which is the center of interest for the decision-makers."¹ The situation as perceived by the decision-makers is extremely important because their action is based upon their definition of the situation. The individual Actor's viewpoint is dependent upon his "belief system," which "may or may not be an accurate representation of reality."² A look at the unrealities of an Actor's view of the situation may be helpful in focusing attention on his biases, misinformation, and incompetency, among other things.

The situation serves as a focal point, wherein the many facets of the determinants of decision are drawn together. Figure 2 depicts the way in which the various

¹Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, pp. 30-31.

²Ole R. Holsti, "The Belief System and National Images: A Case Study," International Politics and Foreign Policy, ed. by James N. Rosenau (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 544.

components contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the Actor's view of the situation. Thus the situation as seen by the Actor is the sum total of many factors, and when viewed in its composite form, it can be quite unfathomable. Most of these factors have already been discussed. Therefore, the present chapter is concerned with showing this composite relationship (situation) as well as how the individual factors contributed to it. In order to discover the inaccuracies in viewpoint, it is helpful to review the situation as it actually was, insofar as we are able to reconstruct it.

The Actual Situation

When the Disraeli Government came into office in 1874, Afghanistan was maintaining a position of isolated neutrality, with a minimum of contact, though congenial, with British India. The Amir, Sher Ali, had been engaged in civil war for a number of years before finally gaining sufficient strength and support to rule the country. His success in gaining the throne had not blinded him to the necessity of employing skillful politics to maintain it, for he was well aware that there were still factions which would readily seize upon any opportunity to depose him. Because of these enemies within his country, he was very reluctant to admit a British European Agent, for as he related to the members of the Turkish Mission to

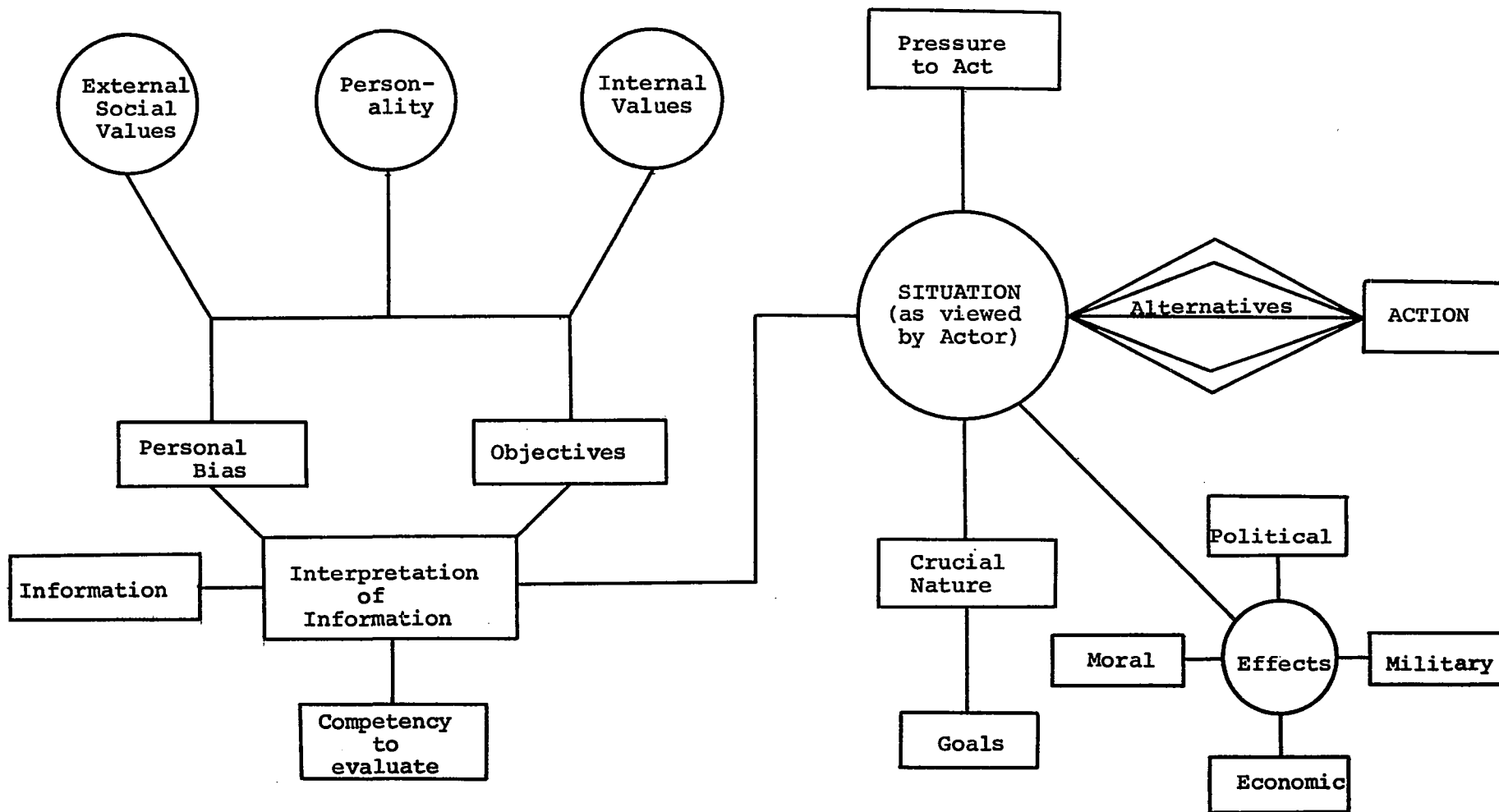


Figure 2

Afghanistan in the fall of 1877:

. . . I tell them [the British] that for their agents to reside within my territories was not desirable, owing to the extreme bigotry of my subjects. God forbid, if any of their agents were assassinated, they would at once come down upon me, and charge me with being the instigator. In this country of Afghans I am myself surrounded with enemies who desire nothing better than my ruin, and would designedly be guilty of acts of violence for which I would be held responsible. . . .³

Sher Ali's prediction proved to be true, not in his own case, for he never admitted the British to his country, but in the case of his son Yakub; for after the Cavagnari Massacre, September 3, 1879, Lord Cranbrook remarked, "Scarcely less obscure . . . is the further question of the complicity of the Amir Yakub Khan, who cannot, however, even if wholly innocent of participation in the crime, be acquitted of discreditable timidity and want of resource in the presence of grave emergency."⁴

Thus Sher Ali's refusal to permit a British European agent to be stationed in Afghanistan was based on the Amir's knowledge of his subjects, and his desire to avoid trouble with the British. As far as his relations with the Government of India were concerned, the Amir desired two important things. First, that the British would recognize the succession of his son, Abdullah Jan,

³Philips, p. 452.

⁴Parliamentary Papers, LIII, 1880, Cranbrook to Viceroy in Council, December 11, 1879, p. 574.

and second, that they would agree to come to Afghanistan's assistance in case of foreign aggression. These concessions the British Government was not willing to give unless certain conditions were met by the Amir, namely:

1. The Amir should conduct no external relations without the knowledge of the British.
2. The Amir should refrain from provoking his neighbors.
3. All communications with Russia should be declined and her agents should be referred to the Government of India.
4. British agents should be allowed to reside at Herat or at other points on the frontier.
5. The Amir's frontier should be demarcated by a team of British and Afghan officers.
6. Arrangements should be made for free trade.
7. The Amir should send an envoy to the Viceroy's headquarters.
8. The Amir should agree to receive special missions from the Viceroy whenever requested.⁵

Sher Ali was adamant on the point of British envoys, and steadily refused to agree to having any stationed within his borders. The Prime Minister, Syud Noor Mohammed, expressed himself on the point of British agents to Dr. Bellew, saying, "We mistrust you, and fear you will write all sorts of reports about us, which will some day be brought forward against us and lead to your taking the control of our affairs out of our hands."⁶

Sher Ali and his officials were very touchy where Afghan independence was concerned. They tended to overreact to the British, and were highly suspicious of them. They

⁵Lady Balfour, pp. 84-85.

⁶Conversation between Dr. Bellew and Noor Mohammed, February 7, 1877, C.A.W., p. 117.

were just as much opposed to Russian encroachment, and also wished to have as little contact with them as possible. However, the Russians had an advantage, for they had never invaded Afghanistan, while the memories of the Afghan War of 1838-41 were still in the minds of the people.

The question of the Russian threat to Afghanistan and India is an important one, along with that of Sher Ali's supposed dealings with Russia, for it was this threat that helped determine British policy. The possibility of an armed clash between the British and the Russians in Central Asia was often brought to the attention of the Russian General Staff. Colonel Matveev even went so far as to say in 1877,

Pretended fears for India constantly have been and will be the fundamental reason for England's hostile policy toward us in Europe and this policy will assuredly lead, sooner or later, to armed clashes between the English and ourselves in Asia, clashes capable of having fateful consequences for British might in India.⁷

A study by Warren B. Walsh of the Collection of Geographical, Topographical and Statistical Materials on Asia, published by and for the Russian General Staff, have led him to conclude that while the possibility of an armed conflict between Russia and England in Central Asia was constantly under review by the military, no

⁷Warren B. Walsh, "The Imperial Russian General Staff and India: A Footnote to Diplomatic History," The Russian Review, XVI, No. 2 (April, 1957), 55.

plans for an attack on India ever got to a crisis stage. Moreover, he maintains that while preliminary planning and preliminary studies were made, "This degree of activity, at the very least, made the threat of attack a usable instrument for Russian diplomacy. It is the tentative conclusion that this, politically speaking, was its main purpose."⁸

While Russia contemplated the possibility of a Central Asian war, so did Britain, and this was the main reason for the change in the British policy towards Afghanistan. During the summer of 1877, the Viceroy began a military build-up on the Northwest frontier. To the Afghans, this appeared as a threat to them, and they assumed that the Government of India was planning an attack on Afghanistan, rather than preparing a force against the Russians. This led to further distrust of the British on the part of the Amir, and coupled with the Viceroy's high-handed methods in dealing with the Afghan Government, succeeded in further alienating Sher Ali.

In 1877 it had been Disraeli's idea to attack Russia in Central Asia in the event she was able to occupy Constantinople.⁹ However, England checked Russian ambitions by issuing a circular to all the European

⁸Ibid., p. 58.

⁹Disraeli to Queen Victoria, July 22, 1877, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, VI, p. 155.

States demanding that Russia should submit the treaty with Turkey to a Congress, and at the same time summoning Indian troops to Malta. Russia, being thwarted in Europe, decided to strike at England in Asia. The subsequent Russian Mission to Kabul was a political counter-stroke. As the Russian Foreign Office once pointed out:

The fundamental meaning of India to us is that she represents Great Britain's most vulnerable point, a sensitive nerve on which one touch may perhaps easily induce Her Majesty's Government to alter its hostile policy toward us, and to show the desired compliance on all those questions where our . . . interests may collide.¹⁰

Sher Ali's dealings with the Russians were much of the same nature as those with the British, at least up to the crucial time of the appearance of the Russian Mission. Communications between Sher Ali and General Kaufman began in March 1870. The messages from the Russian general were, as a rule, read to the British Native Agent, and copies sent to the Government of India. At first the Amir consulted the Viceroy directly for advice in answering Kaufman's letters, but as Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook repeatedly advised him as to the general character of the answers to be sent, he began answering them on his own.¹¹

No objection was made to the Russian correspondence until September 16, 1876, and then a protest was sent to

¹⁰Walsh, p. 57.

¹¹C.A.W., p. 269.

St. Petersburg in regard to a specific letter. Later complaints to Russia on the nature of General Kaufman's correspondence with Sher Ali elicited a denial by the Russian Government that the correspondence was in any way a breach of the understanding between Russia and England, and the Russian ambassador, M. de Giers, wrote to the British ambassador giving assurance that "Russia had not endeavoured to conclude any arrangement, commercial or political, with the Ameer of Cabul and that the rare relations of our authorities in Central Asia with the latter had never borne any other character than one of pure courtesy, in conformity with local usages in the East."¹² But the Russian Government did not promise that General Kaufman's correspondence with Sher Ali would not continue, and indeed it did, but no further protests were made to Russia, although the Viceroy complained of it to the India Office.

Sher Ali's attitude toward Russia was expressed to the Turkish Mission which visited Afghanistan in the fall of 1877. He told the envoy that he had shown no special favor to Russia, that he had recently received Russian envoys (though not Russians) because of the close proximity of the Russian frontiers and his need to know Russian intentions. In answer to the Turkish Envoy's

¹²Parliamentary Papers, LVI (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, p. 105.

question regarding a Russian force of 5,000 men which had approached the boundaries of Afghanistan in the vicinity of Balkh, the Amir replied that they had come without his invitation, and he wanted to know the reason for their coming and had consequently sent a messenger to Tashkend with a letter for General Kaufman asking for an explanation.¹³

During the interview of October 12th with the Turkish Envoy, Sher Ali stated his grievances against the British, which were mainly British encroachment upon the Amir's territory (the British had seized Quetta), and their incitement of his son, Yakub, to rebellion. His feelings were that he had done nothing against the British to break the friendship; it had been the other way around. He advised the envoy that, ". . . if the Government of the Sultan, in truth, desires me to continue friendship with the English, let it enquire of the English why they have encroached upon Afghanistan, and let it advise them to return to their own limits, and to respect their treaty. . . ."¹⁴ He further pointed out that the Russians had not, up until then, encroached on his territory, but, nevertheless, "if the English desire the Russians to be restrained, let them rest assured that, until I have

¹³C.A.W., pp. 291-292.

¹⁴Interview of the Turkish Mission with the Amir of Kabul, October 12, 1877, quoted in Philips, p. 452.

exhausted all my resources, and risked my very existence, I shall never give them passage to Hindustan. . . ."15

Sher Ali was no more desirous of receiving a Russian Mission than he was of receiving a British one. But he was, as Lytton so aptly put it, "an earthen pipkin between two iron pots."¹⁶ When the British dispatched Indian troops to Malta, Kaufman began to put pressure on the Amir, for a pretender to the Afghan throne, Sher Ali's nephew, Abdur Rahman, was residing in Russia, where he had been given political asylum. In May 1878 the Governor of Afghan Turkestan, Shahghassi Sherdil Khan, wrote to Sher Ali, informing him that the Russians intended to induce Abdur Rahman to submit to them a petition to the effect that if the Amir of Kabul did not allow the Russians passage of troops through Afghanistan en route to India, he, Abdur Rahman, would offer his services "to capture Balkh with a small assistance from the Czar, and then subdue the whole of Afghanistan." Shahghassi Sherdil Khan further indicated that if the Amir refused the request of the Russian Government, the Russian officer Ibramoff had asserted that "the petition of the Sirdar [Abdul Rahman Khan] will be forwarded to His Highness to terrify

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Parliamentary Papers, LVI (Afghanistan, No. 1), 1878, p. 183.

him."¹⁷

In setting up the Russian Mission, Kaufman was acting very much upon his own authority. He did not keep the Government of St. Petersburg accurately informed of his movements.¹⁸ The motive for the mission was to prevent the use of Afghanistan as a base of operation for an Anglo-Indian army operating against Russia. Sher Ali did not want to receive the mission and gave much the same reason as in the case of British missions, advising Shahghassi Sherdil to inform Kaufman that "it was not advisable to send a European Agent, as the Afghans are an uncivilised and ignorant race, and might do the European some injury."¹⁹

A letter from the Governor-General Kaufman to the Amir, stated that the envoy was coming by orders of the Emperor, and that the mission was already on its way. Sher Ali was in a dilemma, for he had received the implied threat that Russia was prepared to support Abdur Rahman in a bid for the Afghan throne, if affairs did not go her way. His hopes of assistance from the British were slim, as relations had been severed since the end of the Peshawar

¹⁷Parliamentary Papers, LXXX (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, Shahghassi Sherdil Khan to Sher Ali, p. 136.

¹⁸C.A.W., p. 298.

¹⁹Major Cavagnari's Peshawar Diary, June 7, 1878, C.A.W., p. 300.

Conference. Nevertheless, information contained in the Peshawar diary shows that the Amir did not wish to enter into any engagement with Russia that would impose Russian interference in his country, and furthermore, "the Ameer asserts that he would like an English officer of excellence, learning, and acquainted with the affairs of Afghanistan, to come to Cabul for a few days, in the capacity of Envoy from the British Government."²⁰

When the Indian Government received news of the Russian Mission, the response of the Viceroy was to bombard the Amir with threatening letters and demands to receive a British Mission, rather than any assurance of aid against the Russians. Lytton was well aware of the threat of Abdur Rahman held by the Russians over Sher Ali, but he took no steps to reassure the Amir.

There is no doubt that the purpose of the Russian Mission was to effect a treaty with Sher Ali. But presumably Stolietoff the Russian envoy, received word from Kaufman of the Berlin Treaty, and as a result, was directed to refrain from arranging any distinct measures, or making any positive promises, and "not go generally as far as would have been advisable if war with England had been threatened."²¹ After the British occupation of

²⁰Parliamentary Papers, LXXX (Central Asia, No. 2), 1878, p. 1.

²¹Lord Frederick Sleigh Roberts, Forty-One Years in India (London: Macmillan Co., 1898), p. 111.

Afghanistan, two versions of a draft treaty turned up, but both were written from memory, one by the British Agent at Peshawar who received his information from an "authentic" source, and one by Mirza Mahomed Nabbi, who had copied it for Sher Ali.²² The authenticity of these treaties is open to question, but the fact that the two agree, for the most part, would make it appear that there was such a treaty. However, there is no evidence that it was concluded, but rather it was brought for Sher Ali's attention and consideration.

Apparently, Sher Ali was given many promises by General Stolietoff, and encouraged in the belief that Russia was ready to assist him in case of a British attack. Even after the mission was hastily withdrawn, and after the British attack, Sher Ali still felt confident that Russia would come to his aid. This is evident from a Firman issued by him to the authorities of Herat on December 22, 1878. In this Firman he stated his intention to proceed to St. Petersburg, upon the advice of his Ministers and of the Russian representatives, to appeal his case. He also told of having received a letter from Stolietoff, promising that the Russian Government would convene a Congress to settle the matter and "We will then

²²William Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan 1837-1907 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1937), p. 44.

open an official discussion with the English Government, and, either by force of words and diplomatic action, we will entirely cut off all English communication and interference with Afghanistan for ever, or else events will end in a mighty and important war."²³

Sher Ali's hopes were raised by Stolietoff, but he was acting contrary to the wishes of the Russian Government. M. de Giers made it quite clear to the British ambassador, Augustus Loftus, that Russia had no intention of aiding Sher Ali, or even of permitting him to come to St. Petersburg. M. de Giers further stated that Sher Ali "had been already informed that no mediation could be undertaken by Russia in his behalf; and that General Kaufman had been instructed in regard to the reception of the Afghan Mission, and to any proposals which they might submit." While the nature of these instructions was not disclosed, it was noted that General Kaufman "was ordered to get rid of them courteously."²⁴

It is evident that Russia was playing politics in Afghanistan. The Russian Mission was contemplated as a counter-stroke to British intervention in Turkey. As Russian military strength in Central Asia was weak, it is

²³Great Britain, Foreign and State Papers, V. 71, No. 57, 1879-1880, Firman issued by Sher Ali, p. 1222.

²⁴Great Britain, Foreign and State Papers, V. 71, No. 40, 1879-1880, Loftus to Salisbury, February 26, 1879, p.1220.

doubtful that she seriously entertained any notions of aggression on British India. Rather, she set out to nettle the British, and by so doing, perhaps, to gain some advantages. But even these plans were abandoned with the signing of the Berlin Treaty. The results of this policy were disastrous for Sher Ali. He had jealously maintained his independence from both countries, but it now seemed to him that the two giants were going to collide, and he would have to choose sides. If his inclination had been toward the British, the insolent treatment he had received from the Viceroy had served to negate that tendency. On the other hand, the Russians came promising recognition of the heir-apparent chosen by the Amir, as well as Russian assistance in the event of external aggression.²⁵ Coupled with these promises was the threat of supporting Abdur Rahman's claim to the throne.

Even so, Sher Ali might still have listened to the British, as his letters regarding the reception of the British Mission indicated, had they given him a chance. The Amir was not anxious for war with the British, and neither was he anxious to enter into negotiations with the Russians, but he could not afford to cut himself off from both. He had been disturbed by the military build-up

²⁵Parliamentary Papers, LXXX (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, Provisions of Draft Treaty, p. 132.

on the frontier, and the British Mission, which numbered about 1,000 men, mostly armed,²⁶ looked more like an army than a friendly mission. The Russian Mission had contained an escort of not over thirty men.²⁷

Sher Ali was in a predicament not of his own making. He found himself caught in a power struggle between two large nations. The war might have been averted if, after the signing of the Treaty of Berlin, the representatives of the two powers had been willing to draw back. But Stolietoff continued to hold out promises to Sher Ali, promises which he had neither the power nor the authority to fulfill; while Lytton continued badgering and threatening the Amir. Whatever inclination the Amir had to receive the British Mission was offset by Lytton's haste to act. Thus, when Sher Ali agreed to receive a mission, it was too late. Once hostilities began, he turned to the Russians, who had promised aid in such an eventuality, only to find that such promises were now embarrassing to the Russian Government.

In viewing the situation from the vantage point of time, it does not appear that there was any cause for war due to a Russian threat. There was never any real military danger from Russia's activities, and even if there had

²⁶The Times, September 16, 1878.

²⁷Parliamentary Papers, LVI (No. 154 of 1878), 1878-1879, Sher Ali to Lytton, November 19, 1878, p. 700.

been, they were removed by the signing of the Treaty of Berlin. It is also evident that any hostility the Amir may have felt towards the British occurred late in the day and as a result of the Viceroy's conduct towards him. Sher Ali was no more pro-Russian than he was pro-British; in fact, it would be more accurate to say that he was pro-Afghan.

The Situation as Viewed by the Home Government

The Actors in the Home Government were far enough removed from the scene to have a more dispassionate view of the situation than those Actors in India. Their concern with Afghanistan was more or less indirect, for Afghanistan came to their attention as it related to Russia. The aim of British policy towards Afghanistan was well stated by Lord Cranbrook:

. . . The consistent aim of the British Government during a series of years has been to establish on its north-western border a strong, friendly and independent State, with interests in unison with those of the Indian Government, and ready to act, in certain eventualities, as an auxiliary in the protection of the frontier from foreign intrigue or aggression.²⁸

For many years the attitude of the British Government was that Afghanistan was beyond the sphere of influence of Russia, and that Russia should maintain a "hands-off"

²⁸Cranbrook to the Government of India, November 18, 1878, quoted in C.A.W., p. 186.

policy in relation to Afghanistan. By the Granville-Gortchakoff agreement of 1873, Russia recognized British ascendancy in Afghanistan. This was indicated by Prince Gortchakoff's request that the British control Sher Ali's incursions into territory bordering Russia. Gortchakoff wrote to Count Brunnow, for communication to Lord Granville, the following request:

. Nous sommes d'autant plus portés à cet acte de courtoisie que le Gouvernement Anglais s'engage à user de toute son influence sur Shir Ali pour le maintenir dans une attitude pacifique et insister sur l'abandon de sa part de toute agression ou conquête ultérieure. Cette influence est incontestable. Elle repose non seulement sur l'ascendant matériel et moral de l'Angleterre, mais aussi sur les subsides dont Shir Ali lui à l'obligation. Nous pouvons, dès lors, y voir une garantie réelle pour la conservation de la paix.²⁹

These negotiations with Russia led to a relaxation of tensions for a time, but they created a situation whereby Britain was made responsible for restraining Afghanistan from attacking her neighbors.³⁰ As Russia had nominally recognized Britain's rights in Afghanistan, the Conservative Government in 1874 began to feel that Russia was breaking the 1873 agreement through the correspondence being conducted by General Kaufman with Sher Ali. Also, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby, expressed his fears to Russia of the possible consequences of

²⁹Prince Gortchakoff to Count Brunnow, January 31, 1873, Argyll Papers, 1873, LXXV, c. 699, p. 15.

³⁰Alder, p. 180.

continued Russian advances in Central Asia. Such advances, he felt, definitely threatened to upset the peace, for if Russia were to advance to the Afghan frontier, it would be difficult to restrain Sher Ali from joining the Turkoman tribes in a defensive action against the Russians, and "Under such circumstances it is unnecessary to observe how difficult it might be for the Imperial Government to maintain a policy of strict abstention in accordance with its present assurances, or how impossible it might be for Her Majesty's Government to exert any effectual control over the actions of the Ameer, without undertaking responsibilities which they would most reluctantly assume, and which would virtually involve . . . the contact of the two Powers in Central Asia."³¹

The British Government viewed the advance of Russia in Central Asia as inevitable, but however natural or justifiable, such an advance was not regarded by the Government with indifference. It was not that Britain apprehended any danger from Russian hostility or designs, but rather she feared the effect on such countries as Afghanistan which were not ready for such proximity. The possibility of armed conflict between Afghanistan and Russia would most likely necessitate British intervention. Thus the British Government wished to "continue pursuance

³¹Lord Derby's Memorandum of October 25, 1875, C.A.W., p. 245.

of the policy which has hitherto guided both Powers alike to maintain the integrity of Afghan territory."³²

In a speech to the House of Commons in the summer of 1876, Disraeli expressed himself on the progress of Russia in Central Asia, declaring, "so far from being alarmed at the progress of Russian power in Central Asia, he sees no reason why Russia should not conquer Tartary as England had conquered India," and that "he only wished that the people of Tartary should derive no less advantage from their conquest by Russia than the people of Hindustan had derived from their conquest by England."³³ At this time Disraeli showed no apprehension because of the Russian advance, but by "Tartary" he apparently meant the territories north of the Oxus River.

The change in the attitude of the British Government was not a direct result of Russian actions in Central Asia, but rather of Russian action in Turkey. Central Asia became an extension of the Russo-Turkish conflict. The British Government being pro-Turk, considered the possibility of attacking Russia in Central Asia, should Russia seize Constantinople. Salisbury desired to have more direct contact with Sher Ali in order to obtain more accurate information regarding Russian movements, and also to

³²Ibid.

³³Parliamentary Papers, LXXX (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, p. 79.

establish relations which would enable the movement of British troops across Afghanistan, should it ever become necessary.

When the Viceroy called the attention of the Home Government to the objectionable nature of the Kaufman correspondence, a protest was sent to St. Petersburg, but the protest was not made against the correspondence in general, but instead against a specific letter, of which Lord Derby said, "Although the tone and insinuation of General Kaufman's letter appear to Her Majesty's Government to be undesirable, the letter itself does not contain any statement of a distinctly objectionable character."³⁴ On June 12, 1877, Lord Salisbury again received a complaint from the Viceroy of continuing correspondence between Kaufman and Sher Ali. This complaint he forwarded to the Foreign Office without comment, and no further remonstrance was sent to Russia regarding the correspondence.

While the British Government had anticipated taking measures against Russia in Central Asia, the plan was to counteract the Russian enterprises in Turkey. Such measures were mentioned by the Simla correspondent of the official Pioneer journal of Calcutta in a letter dated August 28, 1878:

I believe it is no longer a secret that, had war broken out, we should not have remained on the

³⁴Derby to Loftus, October 2, 1876, C.A.W., p. 252.

defensive in India. A force of 30,000 men, having purchased its way through Afghanistan, thrown rapidly into Samarcand and Bokhara, would have had little difficulty in beating the scattered Russian troops back to the Caspian, for, coming thus as deliverers, the whole population would have risen in our favour. In the feasibility of such a programme the Russians fully believed.³⁵

A letter published in the October 5, 1878 Times also mentioned such a possibility. The letter was written by a Colonel Brackenbury, who told of being in Bulgaria and meeting General Skobeloff, who asked him what news he had from India. Brackenbury replied that he had none, thanks to the Russian postal authorities, whereupon Skobeloff replied, "I cannot find out what has become of that column of 10,000 men that has been organized by your people against us." Brackenbury did not know if there was such an idea or not, but he observed that "at any rate General Skobeloff believed it, which means that the Russian Government had information to that effect."³⁶

The Home Government's view of the Central Asian situation changed suddenly and radically with the signing of the Berlin Treaty. Russia was no longer a threat, and thus the need for any military action in that region became unnecessary. The appearance of a Russian Mission at Kabul was not particularly alarming, for it was assumed that the mission had started before the conclusion of the

³⁵C.A.W., p. 275.

³⁶The Times, October 5, 1878.

peace, and therefore, it would be speedily recalled. Nevertheless, a formal protest was sent to the Russian Government, and Cranbrook stated his opinion that, "It is the Russian Cabinet alone which is responsible for the acts of its Agent; and it is the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan, rather than the Ameer Shere Ali, who, with or without authority, is at this moment pursuing a policy of which the effect must be to seriously agitate the minds of Her Majesty's subjects throughout India."³⁷

The Home Government acquiesced in the Viceroy's proposal to send a British Mission to Kabul in answer to the Russian Mission. They wished to avoid the possibility of a rebuff, and therefore ordered the Mission to go by way of Kandahar rather than the Khyber Pass. It was believed that the residents of the Kandahar region were much friendlier than those of the Khyber region. Furthermore, it was decided to wait until a reply to the protest had been received from Russia, before advancing the Mission. The Actors in the Home Government became concerned at Lytton's apparent ignorance of the negotiations with Russia, when it became evident that the Viceroy was still laboring under the assumption of a Russian threat. From the viewpoint of the Home Government, the reception of the British Mission was desirable to maintain British

³⁷Parliamentary Papers, LXXX (Central Asia, No. 1), 1878, Cranbrook to Sir L. Mallet, August 8, 1878, p. 112.

prestige, in the face of the acceptance of a Russian Mission, but it was not felt that there was now anything sinister or dangerous about the Russian Mission.

The affront to the British at Ali Musjid threw the Home Government into consternation. To them the issue turned on British prestige, and their quarrel was with the Amir over an insult. In their thinking, Russia had been removed from the arena by the signing of the Treaty of Berlin.

The Situation as Viewed in India

India was far more susceptible to alarmism than England. The Sepoy Mutiny of 1856 had shown what could happen when the discontented elements saw an opportunity. That mutiny, which had begun when the Indian Army voiced its grievances, had spread quickly among the conservative and feudal elements in Bengal, Bihar, the Northwest Provinces, and Central India. The upheaval had been so great that it resulted in the assumption of the government of India by the Crown. Disraeli, who at the time was the opposition leader in the Commons, had placed the blame for the revolt on the conduct of the British in India, and had declared that British policy "had originally been founded on principles of respecting princely states and nationalities, on protecting private property, on conserving the customs, religion, and institutions of India. In the

ten previous years, he declared, this traditional policy had been altered, a Machiavellian standard of divide and rule had followed, and a national revolt against British power thus occurred."³⁸

Whatever the reasons for the revolt, the British residing in India were henceforth uneasy when any disturbances or threats of disturbance, occurred on India's Northwest frontier. A writer in Blackwood's Magazine expressed it thus:

. . . The Indian empire is ruled by an alien race and lacks that internal support which is drawn from patriotism or national feeling. Its stability very largely depends on its external relations. The rumoured ascendancy of influences hostile to us in Kabul or in Beluchistan, would send a thrill through the bazaars of India, and excite the fanaticism of the dangerous classes in many parts of the country. . . .³⁹

Lord Lytton, placed in this environment, came to share this view, and thereby became sensitive to any activities in Afghanistan which might have been considered not in the best interests of British India. As far as Russian movements in Central Asia were concerned, he adopted Lord Palmerston's view that eventually the borders of British India and Russia would be conterminous, and that the danger of a Russian force in occupation of Afghanistan,

³⁸George D. Bearce, British Attitudes Towards India (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 237.

³⁹"Our Indian Frontier Policy: Past and Present," Blackwood's Magazine, V. 122 (August, 1877), 220.

would not be from a direct Russian attack on Calcutta, but from the fact that Afghanistan might be converted into an advanced post of Russia. This would unleash a restlessness in the unincorporated states around India. Palmerston described the policy of the Russian Government as being, "to push forward its encroachments as fast and as far as the apathy or want of firmness of other Governments would allow it to go, but always to stop and retire when it was met with decided resistance, and then to wait for the next favourable opportunity to make another spring."⁴⁰

The advance of Russia in Central Asia was viewed by Lytton as ominous. Lytton had also been influenced to an extent by the opinions of Sir Bartle Frere, but he adjusted Frere's ideas to suit his own. Frere's Minute on Afghanistan, addressed to Salisbury, contained the following paragraph:

If the Amir showed signs of disinclination to improve relations, I would take it as clear proof that hostile influences had worked more effectually than we now suppose; that it was useless to coax or cajole him into a better frame of mind; that we must look for alliance and influence elsewhere than at Kabul. . . .⁴¹

Lytton did interpret Sher Ali's disinclination to receive a British Envoy as due to hostile influences. Nevertheless, he did attempt to change his mind, though by use of threats

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 233.

⁴¹Frere to Salisbury, 1876, quoted in Lady Balfour, pp. 47-48.

rather than promises.

Lytton had high hopes of being able to negotiate with Sher Ali, but the Amir was reluctant to receive a British Envoy. Lytton's resentment of the Amir's attitude was increased by his belief that Sher Ali was affording courtesies to the Russians that he was refusing the British. The Viceroy objected to the correspondence between Sher Ali and General Kaufman, and complained that the bearers of the letters "are regarded and treated by the Amir as agents of the Russian Government, and, on one pretext or another some person recognized by the Afghan Government as a Russian Agent is now almost constantly at Kabul."⁴² The Viceroy believed that Kaufman's object was to impress the Amir, and to make him desire an alliance with Russia. The information regarding Russian agents had come from dubious sources, but was accepted at face value by the Viceroy. (See Chapter VI)

A conference was finally arranged between the Amir's representative, Syud Noor Mohammed, and the Commissioner of Peshawar, Sir Lewis Pelly. While the Amir was ready, and even anxious, to negotiate, Lytton believed otherwise, and when the Amir's representative suddenly died, the Viceroy quickly closed the Conference, although a new envoy was on the way. Lytton justified this action

⁴²Lady Balfour, p. 79.

by stating that the Amir was attempting to raise a jehad against the British, "Whilst his representative was carrying on friendly negotiations with the British Envoy at Peshawar, the Amir himself was publicly and falsely informing his subjects that the British Government had broken its engagements, and threatened the independence of his kingdom. On this mendacious pretext His Highness proclaimed a religious war against the British Government."⁴³ Again, his information was erroneous.

Lytton saw Sher Ali as being hostile towards the British, and assumed that this hostility was increased by Russian activities in Afghanistan. He was extremely skeptical of the Amir's good intentions towards the British, choosing to disbelieve any reports that the Amir was favorably disposed towards them. Instead, he adopted the view that any such indications, either direct or indirect, were merely for the purpose of deceiving the British, and thus buying time for an Afghan military build-up. He was convinced that Sher Ali was trying to stir up the border tribes against India, and that he was preparing for a full-scale war at the prodding of the Russians.

As the Viceroy had pointed out to Cranbrook on April 9, 1878, Russia, herself, was too weak in Central Asia to resort to military aggression, and "Diplomacy

⁴³Minute on the Peshawar Conference, March 1877, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 246.

is the natural weapon of weak Powers, and it is the diplomacy, rather than the arms of Russia we have to fear in Central Asia."⁴⁴ Thus the fear created by the presence of a Russian Mission in Kabul, was not that of a direct Russian Military attack on India, but the ascendancy of Russian influence which could lead to an attack on India by the Afghans, or at least harassment of the frontier posts. Such actions would certainly stir-up the discontented elements in Indian society. Moreover, while at the moment Russia was not strong enough to pose a military threat to India, this did not mean that she would not be able to gain that strength later on. Accordingly, it seemed a matter of grave consequence that Sher Ali had received a Russian mission, and Lytton felt that the situation called for a counter-move by the British. His attitude toward Russia was greatly affected by his personal bias. (See Chapter VII.)

Lytton had no background in Indian affairs before becoming Viceroy. Consequently, he was unable to accurately interpret the information he received. His proclivity to Russophobia, combined with his national arrogance, contributed a great deal to a personal bias which led him to make personal value judgments, rather than to evaluate information on the basis of facts and reliability of the

⁴⁴Lytton to Cranbrook, April 8, 1879, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 246.

source. His goals also entered the picture by contributing to the crucial nature of the situation. For example, the goal of British ascendancy in Afghanistan caused the reception of a Russian Mission to be viewed as a crucial matter, for, if left unchecked, Russia would gain a hold over that country. Thus the situation, in the eyes of the Viceroy, assumed a crucial nature, calling for action. Pressure to act was also exerted by the effects that would be produced if the situation were allowed to continue, for he was certain there would be undesirable repercussions in India.

The situation, which led to the sending of a British Mission, was conceived by the Viceroy to be as follows. The Afghan Amir had been irretrievably alienated from the British, and all attempts to reestablish friendly relations with him had failed. He not only distrusted the British, but he was openly hostile to them, to the point of attempting to stir up wars against them. The Russians, in their attempt to extend their territories and influence in Central Asia, had begun correspondence with the Amir in an effort to bring him under Russian influence, in contradiction of the agreement between England and Russia regarding Afghanistan. The appearance of the Russian Mission in Kabul meant that Russia was attempting to negotiate an alliance with Afghanistan. As Lytton believed that Afghanistan could not "stand alone and aloof from the

influence of the two great European Empires," he concluded that she must fall under the influence of one or the other. And as he later pointed out to the House of Lords, "And now let us suppose, for a moment, that Afghanistan falls under the control of Russia. Can any one of Your Lordships doubt for a moment that the establishment of Russian influence in Afghanistan would be practically incompatible with the untroubled maintenance of the British Power in India?"⁴⁵ Thus, to the Viceroy, the situation demanded action to prevent Afghanistan from falling under the domination of Russia, for such an occurrence would be a direct threat to British India.

Lytton had little confidence in the success of diplomacy in solving the crisis created by the appearance of the Russian Mission in Kabul. But the danger of the situation was so acute that action was necessary to prevent a Russian take-over. The request was sent to Sher Ali for the reception of a British Mission, but although the Amir's son and heir died at that moment, Lytton was not content to wait until the end of the forty-day mourning period for a reply to the request. To Lytton it made no difference, because he was convinced that Sher Ali was already in Russia's hands, and was using delaying tactics. An item in the Times expressed the Viceroy's view:

⁴⁵Great Britain, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd. series, CCLVII (1881), p. 291.

The reasons which actuated the Viceroy in pushing forward the mission without waiting longer for the Ameer's leave to pass were that information had been received that the Ameer had no intention of ever receiving it, but was merely playing in a derisive and insolent manner with the expectation of the Government. The tenour of his language was:--"If I choose to receive a mission, I will myself invite it; but meanwhile it must await my pleasure at Peshawur." This tone of course the Viceroy could not brook.⁴⁶

The affront at Ali Musjid, in Lytton's opinion, served to verify his belief of the Amir's hostility. As he wrote to Cranbrook, ". . . ever since the Peshawur Conference, I have been convinced that, even long previous to that date, the Amir (thanks to the uncorrected prosecution of the Lawrence-Gladstone policy) was irretrievably alienated from us. But no one else shared that conviction, nor was I permitted to act on it. . . . The only difference is that this particular affront is the first of a series which it has been impossible to conceal from the British public."⁴⁷

The affront at Ali Musjid united the opinion of the British in India that immediate military action against Afghanistan was necessary. The Foreign Secretary for the Government of India, Alfred Lyall, summarized the feelings of the Government of India, when he wrote to the Viceroy,

⁴⁶The Times, September 30, 1878.

⁴⁷Lytton to Cranbrook, September 23, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 284.

The strongest motives for immediate action appear to be political, and these I think irresistible, so irresistible that I can hardly believe any natural impediments could possibly justify our deferring action until spring. To sit idle on the threshold of Afghanistan until next spring would in my opinion be almost too ruinous a policy to be even mentioned. . . .⁴⁸

Public opinion in India also strongly supported the necessity of action, as allowing such an affront to go unanswered would seem an admission of weakness to the native populace, and such an opinion could undermine British control. Feelings were running high in India, and as the Darjeeling correspondent wrote,

. . . Unless the public determination of England to resent the gross and contemptuous indignity offered so conspicuously, with every nation and India as spectators, be expressed in a tone of emphatic decision, it is felt here that the Indian Government will be rendered contemptible and British prestige in India will be degraded.⁴⁹

To the British in India, whether Government officials or others, there was no question of Russian intentions, nor the effect on the Afghan situation of the signing of the Treaty of Berlin. They merely saw an incident which appeared as a direct insult to the Indian Government by Sher Ali. Such an insult, in their opinion, regardless of other extraneous circumstances, had to be redressed if serious repercussions were not to be felt in

⁴⁸Lyall to Lytton, November, 1878, quoted in Lady Balfour, p. 291.

⁴⁹The Times, November 5, 1878.

India.

It is apparent that the viewpoint of those in India was narrower than that of those in England. The Russian advance was viewed as it related to a direct threat to India. The same was true of the so-called Russian intrigues in Kabul. Lytton did not see the Russian activities as a counter-move designed to distract attention from Constantinople and to act as an irritant to the British.

In London, the Actors had a wider view of the situation, seeing Afghanistan as it tied in with the whole Eastern Question. Thus, to the Home Government, the importance of Russian activity in Afghanistan decreased tremendously with the signing of the Berlin Treaty. This event to their mind, negated the significance of the Russian Mission. Their view was much more realistic than that of the Viceroy, mainly due to the advantage of distance and the larger all-over view which gave them greater perspective. On the other hand, they were less sensitive to the psychological impact on India of Russian activities beyond the Northwest frontier.

Comparing Lytton's view of Sher Ali and of the Russian intrigues with the facts, shows that he formed a value judgment of the Amir early in his Indian career, which prejudiced his thinking in regard to Sher Ali. He repeatedly chose to disbelieve the Amir's professions of

good faith, and to think the worst of him. As far as the Russians were concerned, his mistrust of them and their intentions, which was justified to a point, led him to overreact to their movements, so that even after the teeth were removed from the Russian Mission, and the Russians had drawn back, he refused to believe that the threat had diminished.

Despite the differences in the views of London and Calcutta, after the affront at Ali Musjid, the situation appeared to both circles to call for some sort of face-saving action. Actually the insult was blown-up by the press to such proportions that it created a situation which threatened British prestige, whereas a little restraint might have altered matters. As mentioned previously, the account of the incident at Ali Musjid does not show any direct insult; the insult was inferred from the circumstances, namely that the Amir had ordered the Mission to be stopped. However, the Commandant had maintained that he had not received any instructions from the Amir. Furthermore, if the Mission had not been ordered so hastily, it is quite possible that a favorable reply would have been received from Sher Ali. But since Lytton was convinced that no such reply would come, he advanced the Mission in expectation of the results which occurred.

While the Home Government viewed the situation

leading up to the incident at Ali Musjid differently, they could not allow an affront to the British Government to go unanswered. Even many of the Liberals agreed on this point as can be seen in a letter from Lord Granville to Lord Grey:

I am one of those who agree entirely with you and Lord Lawrence. I do not know any political friend of any weight who does not do so, condemning the policy of Beaconsfield, Salisbury, and Lytton, but many are shaky on the point whether being in the mess it is possible to avoid war in case the Ameer does not give way.

Halifax has never completely retracted his first opinion, that notwithstanding the folly of the policy, our prestige prevents our withdrawal.

Hartington was when I last saw him of that opinion. It was the conclusion to which Argyll and Northbrook came a few days ago, notwithstanding their complete condemnation of what had been done.⁵⁰

The distorted viewpoint of the Viceroy had led him to take action which resulted in bringing together widely divergent points of view in a general consensus of opinion. The situation up until the repulsion of the Mission was looked at entirely differently from the vantage points of London and Calcutta, and was certainly viewed differently by the opposition. The situation created by the incident at Ali Musjid was unique in being viewed in the same way by those whose ideas had varied so greatly up until that moment.

⁵⁰Granville to Grey, November 10, 1878, quoted in Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, The Life of Lord Granville (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1905), II, p. 180.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

The preceding analysis has been a modest attempt to bring some order out of a hodge-podge of data and information concerning the decision of Britain to embark upon the Second Afghan War in November of 1878. The ordering of this data has led to many conclusions of various types. For convenience, these conclusions have been divided into three categories: those concerning the characteristics of this decision, those giving rise to general hypotheses regarding decision-making in general, and those concerning the use of the Snyder-Bruck-Sapin methodology.

The Decision to Enter the Second Afghan War

Characteristics

1. This decision was the result of a sequence of decisions. While the final decision may be viewed as a single decision, various decisions along the way led up to it. Each of these decisions tended to be reinforced by events occurring between them. Each decision also was

a response to the actions of other States. The following table shows the action-response sequence.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>
News of Russian Mission to Kabul	Decision to send a British Mission. (India and England) Decision to send protest to Russia. (England)
Khyberi headmen summoned back to the Pass	Decision to send Mission before reply received from protest to Russia. (India)
Refusal by Afghans to allow British Mission to pass	Decision to build up troop concentrations and detach frontier tribes from the Amir. (India) Decision to wait for verification that affront ordered by Amir before taking any action. (England)
Receipt of "insolent" letter from Sher Ali	Decision to send ultimatum to the Amir, and to begin hostilities if no reply received by deadline. (England)
Word received that no answer had arrived by deadline	Troops ordered to cross the frontier. (India)

2. The decision was a high-level decision. It was made by the British Cabinet. The Viceroy did not participate directly in the decision, although he was responsible for some of the intermediary decisions, and his opinions strongly influenced the Secretary of State for India. However, he was also a high-ranking official, being the chief-executive of the Indian Government.

3. This was an action decision, not a policy decision. It was the result of the change in policy

toward Afghanistan, initiated in March of 1876, and also of the Viceroy's personal policy, but the decision itself called for action.

4. The decision was not the result of long-range planning, involving long-range objectives. The British policy towards Afghanistan was the result of long-range planning and objectives, but the contingency that arose which made the action necessary was not a part of that plan. Rather it was the result of a situation created by the affront at Ali Musjid.

5. The decision was a compromise between two points of view. One point of view wanted immediate war, the other, only a material guarantee. The latter measure was proposed in order to avoid the necessity of summoning Parliament. The compromise was to delay aggression and issue an ultimatum to the Amir. This compromise provided for full-scale war, in place of a limited material guarantee, but delayed action to strengthen the case to be presented to Parliament.

6. The decision was made necessary by a sudden and unexpected development. This characteristic is true as far as the Actors in the Home Government were concerned. The decision was not a result of the Home Government's foreign policy, and as it had not been anticipated by the Home Government, its members had no definite plan for dealing with it.

7. The development leading to the decision was not unexpected by the Viceroy. This characteristic and the preceding one are opposite sides of the same coin. For here the two governments were acting in opposition to one another. Thus the situation came as a complete surprise to the Home Government, but the Viceroy had not only anticipated the development, he had done his best to bring it about, and consequently had his own plans and ideas of what action to take.

8. This decision was unique in that it involved two sets of Actors operating at two different points. The Actors in London had different motives and information from those in Calcutta, and each was unaware of the other's intentions. This fact makes it difficult to generalize, for what applies to the Home Government's role, does not necessarily apply to the Viceroy's role in the decision.

9. This decision could be considered a crisis decision. Glenn D. Paige defines a crisis decision as one that is a "response to a high threat to values, either immediate or long range, where there is little time for decision under conditions of surprise."¹

The Actors in London were certainly surprised by the incident at Ali Musjid. It did not become an immediate threat to their values (due to distance and lack of information) until they were certain that the affront had

¹Paige, p. 276.

been ordered by the Amir. Lytton's announcement of the receipt of the "insolent" letter from Sher Ali, and his conclusion that the Amir was responsible for the rejection of the Mission, necessitated action. The value at stake was British prestige. Word was received from Lytton on October 19th, and the Cabinet was summoned on the 25th, at which time the decision was made.

The decision might also be considered a crisis decision because it was the result of an action outside of British territory, and taken by people not under British control.

Conclusions

In considering this particular decision, and all the factors involved in it, some important conclusions may be drawn. This was a particularly complicated decision because of the almost parallel circumstances surrounding the two locations of the Actors. By parallel, it is not meant identical, but two separate systems, acting simultaneously. Thus the Actors in London, who had certain objectives, motives, and information, were taking actions at the same time as the Actors in Calcutta, who possessed their own distinctive objectives, motives, and information, were involved in carrying out their own action. But like parallel lines, these two actions did not converge, at least not until the crisis arose.

This decision-making framework has helped to unravel some of the confusion surrounding the decision, and has helped to reveal certain important points concerning motivation, responsibility, causes, and validity. Accordingly, the following conclusions are offered:

1. At the time of the crisis, Russia was in no way a threat to British India.

2. The information upon which the Viceroy based his beliefs and decisions was unreliable.

3. The Viceroy accepted information which corresponded to his belief system, and rejected that which did not, regardless of validity.

4. The Viceroy was an extreme Russophobe.

5. The Viceroy, due to an innate sense of superiority, was offended by Sher Ali's attitude of equality.

6. The Viceroy's feelings towards the Amir greatly affected his actions.

7. From the time of the Peshawar Conference, the Viceroy was determined to pull down the Amir and plotted accordingly.

8. The Home Government had wanted to establish closer relations with Afghanistan in order to be able to use that country as a base of operation in case of a war with Russia in Central Asia.

9. The above motive was removed with the signing

of the Treaty of Berlin.

10. The Home Government was unaware of the Viceroy's intentions.

11. The Viceroy was not kept informed of the Home Government's actions or wishes.

12. The Viceroy felt himself more competent to make decisions than those in the Home Government.

13. The Viceroy deliberately precipitated the incident at Ali Musjid in order to gain public support for his proposed action in Afghanistan.

14. The Amir of Afghanistan at no time aggressed against the British.

15. The Amir wanted neither British nor Russian interference in his country.

16. The Amir did not want to accept the Russian Mission, but was threatened with the loss of his throne if he refused.

17. Sher Ali did not openly refuse to receive a British Mission. The stipulation he made was that it must come at his invitation and not by force.

18. The sole motive for the decision was to uphold British prestige. Sher Ali was no threat to British India, as the country was poor and the Russian threat had been removed. But British pride had been hurt.

19. In assessing capability, little attention was given as to how the political settlement would be

handled.

20. The disastrous results of the attempted occupation of Afghanistan during the First Afghan War were ignored.

21. Because of the principle in British Government of Cabinet Responsibility, the Cabinet was responsible for the decision, but the circumstances which necessitated that decision had been forced upon it by the Viceroy's actions.

22. Neither the Viceroy nor the other Actors understood the true temperament of the Afghan people, and thus they built their policy on unrealities.

It might be well at this point to consider for a moment the results of this decision, for in judging its validity, the final results are helpful. The British easily conquered the country, but they could not hold it without pouring a large amount of money and troops into the country. The Afghans had not done too well on the battlefield, against modern weapons, but in a war of attrition they were quite skillful. Sher Ali died and his son, Yakub, concluded a treaty with the British (the Treaty of Gandamak). If the story had ended here, it would have been a success. However, after the massacre of Cavagnari, Yakub abdicated and fled the country. At this point the British accomplishments consisted of destroying Sher Ali's kingdom, and plunging the whole country into anarchy.

At this juncture even Lytton wanted out, and he saw clearly, for once, that the best hope for unifying the country lay in finding a strong ruler who could win the support of the people. The only one around who could possibly qualify was Sher Ali's cousin, Abdur Rahman, whom the Russians had used to threaten the old Amir. Consequently, Lytton put out feelers to Abdur Rahman. Before anything could be accomplished, the Conservative Government fell, and Lytton resigned. His successor, Lord Ripon, concluded an agreement with Abdur Rahman who took over the country. Abdur Rahman turned out to be a very strong ruler. He succeeded in extracting a great amount of subsidy from the British Government, but ironically he did not allow any British European resident to be stationed in his country, although he did receive a native envoy. Thus the British were right back where they started, having gained neither territory, domination, or even a European resident, but having spent a great deal of money, and having incurred a more fervent dislike of themselves by the Afghans.

Another significant result of this decision was its contribution to the defeat of the Conservative Government in 1880. During the election campaign Gladstone denounced the Conservatives on many scores, but the disaster in Afghanistan was one of the main issues. He denounced "the policy of denying to others the rights

that we claim ourselves,' as untrue, arrogant and dangerous."² He campaigned on moral issues and recalled men to moral forces they had forgotten. Gradually, what had been a vague misgiving among the British people about Disraeli and the Conservative Government grew into certainty. What at first had been only shadows of doubt about foreign policy, including that in Afghanistan, became substantial condemnation in the election campaign. The following is a sample of Gladstone's oratory concerning Afghanistan:

Remember that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan, among the winter snows, is as inviolable in the eyes of Almighty God as can be your own. Remember that He who has united you as human beings in the same flesh and blood, has bound you by the law of mutual love; that that mutual love is not limited by the shores of this island, is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilization; that it passes over the whole surface of the earth and embraces the meanest along with the greatest in its unmeasured scope.³

When the election took place, Gladstone had the nation behind him, and, as Morley puts it, "the people of this realm, who are a people of rather more than their share of conscience at bottom, were led to consider whether when all is said, there is not still a difference between right and wrong, even in the relations of state

²John Morley, Life of William Ewart Gladstone (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1904), II, p. 595.

³Ibid.

and the problems of empire."⁴

General Hypotheses Concerning Decision-Making
Derived from this Study

While the validity of a generalization, based on one particular case study, may be questionable, such hypotheses may be helpful when compared with similar hypotheses drawn from other individual case studies. When a sufficient number of studies has been completed, some valid assumptions may well be arrived at through the process of comparison. These hypotheses are presented in that spirit, with the realization that all of them may not be applicable to every decision, but that some of them may. Also decisions made under similar circumstances may have similar characteristics. It is thus hoped that some of these hypotheses may be useful to others doing similar studies.

The framework for these hypotheses is drawn from Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, Foreign Policy Decision-Making, and from Paige's The Korean Decision. The hypotheses themselves have been derived from the foregoing study of the Afghan decision.

Information and Communication

1.1 A faulty system of communicating information

⁴Ibid., p. 594.

between the branches of government which have authority to take independent action, can result in faulty action being taken. The Government of India did not keep the Home Government properly informed, and conversely, the Home Government did not keep the Government of India informed. At times the India Office did not inform the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office neglected to supply information to the India Office. This resulted in no one knowing what anyone else was doing, a dangerous situation which helped produce the crisis.

1.2 In a crisis situation the decision-makers feel a strong necessity for accurate information before formulating a decision. Thus Cranbrook wired Lytton to be sure of the facts when he first heard of a Russian Mission, and again when the British Mission was stopped, he told the Viceroy to find out definitely if the Amir had issued the orders. Furthermore, the Cabinet was not ready to act until it felt certain it had the facts concerning the Amir's intentions.

1.3 Decisions made on the basis of out-dated information are very apt to result in miscalculations. Lytton's decision to advance the Mission was based on information regarding a Russian threat which no longer existed. Besides, he had been led to believe that the Afghan matter was to be handled as a local affair, and had not been informed of the Home Government's change

of opinion nor of the protest to St. Petersburg. His action was based on out-dated information, and on the basis of a motive (that of preparing for a war with Russia in Central Asia) which no longer existed.

1.4 The greater the motive, the less the importance of information. The decision-maker may ignore the facts and act the way he sees fit. Lytton's desire to gain British ascendancy in Afghanistan led him to ignore certain information, and to give little weight to that information which conflicted with his goals.

1.5 The greater the crisis, the greater the inclination for the decision-makers to supplement objective information with information or interpretations based on their own experiences or proclivities. As the crisis called for action, information was interpreted in a way which would justify the desired response. Lytton's interpretation of the Amir's letter, and of the incident at Ali Musjid are an example of this, as they were far from objective. The Home Government's justification of its action also was based on other than objective information, and the interpretation of information was motivated by its goals.

1.6 The greater the crisis, the less information pertinent to the decision is made public. The Amir's letter was not made public until well after war had been declared. Neither was information released concerning

the tone of the Viceroy's letters to the Amir. These were just a few of the instances where information was withheld from the public.

1.7 The greater the crisis, the more the tendency to release information of a propaganda nature. This is done in order to secure public support for the decision-makers' actions. Much information was released concerning the "insult" at Ali Musjid, the Amir's hostility towards the British, his cordial reception of the Russians, and his "insolent" letter to the Viceroy.

1.8 The greater the crisis, the greater the demand for information by those outside the decision-making circle. Members of the Opposition demanded information which was withheld from them, and maintained that they could not accurately judge the situation and vote intelligently in Parliament without more information. They strongly criticized Disraeli's government for what they considered suppressing information.

Motivation

2.1 In a crisis situation an attempt is usually made to limit the scope of the situation, and thus not to involve other factions. In this particular situation, the Proclamation of War was directed solely against the Amir, thus attempting to limit the quarrel. The Actors in London were particularly concerned with avoiding any involvement

with Russia over the situation. Another step taken in this direction was the detachment of the frontier tribes from the Amir, again narrowing the protagonists.

2.2 A crisis tends to evoke a goal-means value complex that is strongly conditioned emotionally.⁵ The Viceroy was certainly emotionally involved as evidenced by his attitude towards the Amir. The Cabinet members' emotions became an important factor in the decision for war, for it was definitely emotionalism that made them feel that any insult must be avenged.

2.3 Crisis tends to evoke the gradual proliferation of associated values around a dominant value core.⁶ The original value that created the crisis, which called for action, was that of the Nation's prestige. But when the Cabinet members came to make public statements in support of their actions, they extended it to include the Russian threat, need for a scientific frontier, hostility of the Amir in waging religious wars against British India, and danger to India's internal security from disruptive forces.

2.4 The greater the crisis, the greater the sensitivity to external response expectations.⁷ The Home

⁵Paige, p. 298.

⁶Ibid., p. 299.

⁷Ibid., p. 310.

Government wanted to avoid creating any problem which would involve Russia. The Actors in London were particularly keen on this point due to having just established peace with Russia. The Prime Minister, in particular, didn't want the fruits of his labor destroyed.

2.5 The man-on-the-spot might be more aware of the situation at hand, but he is hampered in seeing it in its proper perspective. He is only concerned with the immediate issue, not with the long-range, overall outlook. Thus, as was true with Lytton, the man-on-the-spot is not as capable of impartial judgment as someone further removed from the scene.

2.6 The stronger the decision-maker's personal bias, the more rigid is his motivation. Thus his motivation does not readily change with changing circumstances. Lytton was so wrapped up in his ideas of Russian intrigues and Sher Ali's hostility, that when the Russian threat was removed, it still remained in his mind, and the motivation to keep Sher Ali from going under Russian dominance remained as fixed as ever.

2.7 The likelihood of an actor's personal impact affecting a decision varies with the actor's location in the environment.⁸ For personal impact to have any importance, the government must not only be unstable, but the Actor must be in a position where he has authority to act. Actors in

⁸Fred I. Greenstein, Personality and Politics (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1969), p. 44.

a position where they are inhibited or restrained by others, are unable to accomplish much by themselves. Lytton, however, was not sufficiently restrained by Cranbrook, so that even though he was ordered to hold the Mission, there was no one in India over him to prevent him from acting on his own initiative.

2.8 The likelihood of the personal impact of an actor is increased to the degree that the environment may be restructured.⁹ A situation may be considered unstable "if modest interventions can produce disproportionately large results,"¹⁰ and thus subject it to restructuring. A stable situation does not allow restructuring, and the final outcome cannot be changed by eliminating some of the contributing factors.

The situation regarding Afghanistan was unstable in the above sense. Lytton was able, through his action in advancing the Chamberlain Mission, to precipitate a crisis, which restructured the environment and made an entirely different response necessary from what had been anticipated by the Home Government.

2.9 The personal effect of the Actor varies proportionately with his strengths and weaknesses. Lytton was able to make such an impact on policy because he had

⁹Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁰Ibid.

a strong, determined, and willful nature. He did not hesitate to take the initiative. On the other hand, Cranbrook's weakness tended to increase the Viceroy's strength and ability to act single-handed.

2.10 A sure way to win support for an otherwise unpopular course of action, is to bring forth the question of the necessity of maintaining or restoring the Nation's prestige. A great nation, such as England, with its principal Actors believing in imperialism, cannot bear to lose face, regardless of the consequences. To the imperialist-minded nation, prestige is all important, for if the country's prestige suffers, other nations will think less of it. Moreover, as in the case of Britain, loss of face among subjected peoples was too humiliating, and might lead to internal disturbances, if the subjugated people somehow got the notion that the "masters" were losing their grip.

Capability

3.1 In a crisis situation the leader as a rule must accept responsibility for the action taken. Disraeli accepted the responsibility for the decision, along with his Cabinet, for in Britain Cabinet responsibility was, and is, a characteristic of the government. Once the situation had been created, the Prime Minister steadfastly supported the Viceroy, despite his anger at the latter's

disobedience. Disraeli, along with the other Cabinet members, did not hesitate to assume responsibility for their policy, nor to support that policy and their actions in Parliament.

3.2 The greater the crisis, the greater the need for personal, face-to-face contact among the decision-makers. When news of the incident at Ali Musjid first arrived in England, the main Actors were scattered. The Prime Minister felt the need to get together with Salisbury and Cranbrook, and finally persuaded Cranbrook to return to London, as he himself had done earlier. Again, when word was received of the Amir's response to the Viceroy's letter, it was felt necessary to call the Cabinet together for a face-to-face discussion of what action should be taken.

3.3 Decision-makers contemplating war are likely to be conservative in their estimates of the financial costs. Public support is more apt to be gained by underestimating cost than by overestimating it. If it were known in advance what the actual cost of a war would be, in both money and lives, it would be difficult to gain public support. In this case the war estimates were extremely low, as compared with the actual cost, and even though the same had been true in the case of the First Afghan War, the Government displayed confidence in the estimates.

3.4 In dealing with underdeveloped countries,
a major power needs to consider its ability to hold the
countryside more than its ability to win a conventional-
type war. A large major power easily has the military
capability to defeat a small, disorganized power, but this
is not the main problem. Large, well-equipped armies
have an advantage on the battlefield, but are ineffective
in guerrilla warfare.

Britain in this case made the mistake, often made
by such major powers, of viewing her capability in terms
of military might. With all her wealth and power, she
was unable to hold Afghanistan after the initial military
victory. This was the case in the Second Afghan War just
as it had been the case in the First Afghan War. Neither
was this difficulty unknown, for the example of the
First Afghan War was often held up to the Conservative
Government by the Opposition as reason for avoiding any
military intrusion into Afghanistan.

3.5 Faulty perception of the nature of a people
(or nation) is likely to result in a miscalculation of
capability. Lytton certainly did not understand the
psychology of the Afghan people. He took many of his
notions on policy towards that country from Lord Palmerston,
who was the Prime Minister during the disastrous First
Afghan War. The results of Palmerston's policy should
have been a warning, but they were not. He also relied

on the opinions of Sir Bartle Frere, but although Frere had had vast experience in Asiatic politics and war, and had been associated with the Government of India, and was a member of the Secretary of State's Council, he had never had any connection with Afghanistan, so that his ideas were based on his knowledge of other Asiatics. Lytton, along with the other Actors, made the mistake of assuming the Afghan character to be the same as that of the Asiatic peoples with whom they had come in contact, particularly the Indians.

3.6 The greater the difference in the cultures of two countries, the greater the chance for lack of competence in understanding the other people. Lytton often made the mistake of judging Sher Ali's actions by British standards. What he considered a lack of courtesy by the Amir was actually not discourtesy, but national pride. The Amir's letters to the Viceroy were not nearly as "insolent" as those of the Viceroy to the Amir. But Lytton believed that all such "barbaric" countries should recognize the superiority of the British and write in humble terms, not as equals. He was used to dealing with the Indians who had been subjugated and humbled for a number of years, and he did not recognize that this attitude did not extend beyond the frontier.

Another example is the Viceroy's (and also Salisbury's) belief that it would be very advantageous to

have a British European agent stationed in Afghanistan. They could see no good reason for the Amir to refuse this request, and thought his protestation on the grounds of the envoy's safety, were pretexts. Here again they did not understand the Afghan nature nor their hostility towards the British as a result of the occupation during the First Afghan War. The British were not safe in Afghanistan at that time, nor for many, many years after. When Abdur Rahman became Amir, he still did not permit a European agent in his country, and the British native envoy was treated as a virtual prisoner for his own protection.

3.7 The greater the crisis, the greater the concern of the decision-makers for the acceptance of their response. This includes both public acceptance and acceptance by any body that may have authority to check that response. Lytton, in meeting the crisis by forwarding the Chamberlain Mission against orders, felt certain of public support for his policy in the event of an affront, and also of the Home Government's support--particularly that of Disraeli and Cranbrook.

The Cabinet in making the final decision was very much concerned about winning the support of Parliament, which was a necessity. For, unless Parliament voted to allow the Government of India to use its revenues to support the war, it could not be carried on. Thus they debated the best way to secure the support of Parliament,

and accordingly decided on sending an Ultimatum to the Amir, in an attempt to shift the responsibility for war onto his shoulders.

3.8 The tolerance for faulty decisional execution is greater if favorable results are obtained, and decreases proportionately with less favorable results. Thus if Lytton's decision to forward the Mission ahead of time and against orders, had met with a favorable reception, his action would have been applauded. Since instead the action incurred an "insult" to the nation, the Prime Minister and other Cabinet members were quite annoyed.

3.9 Public opinion has an ex post facto effect on foreign policy. Public opinion does not prevent decisions or influence them to any great extent. If the policy is successful, public opinion is favorable. But if the policy fails, then public opinion may become sufficiently incensed to cause changes in the government. Although public opinion was not altogether in favor of embarking upon the Second Afghan War, it was powerless as a deterrent to that action. Lord Derby expressed the general feeling at that time in Parliamentary session on December 9, 1878, saying, "We are discussing, an issue upon which we have no real or practical influence."¹¹ However, when the policy resulted in disaster the public

¹¹Thompson, II, p. 502.

reacted by defeating the Conservatives in the General Election of 1880.

Thus conclusions may be drawn concerning the various determinant of decision, but it is obvious that the determinants are interacting and not isolated. Capability may be viewed in light of motivation. Motivation may be stimulated by information. Information may be interpreted according to motivation. These are just a few examples of the interactions and complexities. While one may attempt to isolate the various determinants, in order to better understand them, they do not operate in isolation.

Observations concerning Methodology

Historians ascribe various reasons for actions taken by decision-makers, but generally without a clear-cut basis for their assumptions. In reading many historical sources concerning the advent of the Second Afghan War, many questions arise which are not satisfactorily answered. Most historians have attributed the blame for the Second Afghan War to Lytton, leaving the impression that he alone had anything to do with it. This study has revealed that while in the final instance he precipitated the necessity for action, the other Actors anticipated such action up until the Berlin Congress changed the situation. Even at this point had Lytton

been properly informed and controlled, the necessity for hostilities would have been avoided.

Another point which has been clarified, by using this approach, is that regarding the Chamberlain Mission. Dilip Kumar Ghose, in his work, England and Afghanistan, raises the question as to why Lytton disobeyed orders, both in sending the Chamberlain Mission before permission was received, and why he sent it through the Khyber Pass instead of by way of Kandahar. The mystery presented by Mr. Ghose is no great mystery when the question is analyzed using the decision-making framework.

This framework is extremely valuable in dissecting the various components which lead to a decision, thus enabling the researcher to more clearly identify the contributing factors, and thereby better understand the nature of the decision in question. This also leads to discovery of important points which would otherwise be overlooked. The basic understanding of a decision, which this process affords the researcher, is much greater than that afforded by the historical approach alone.

This method is also helpful in affording a better understanding of the organizational framework and channels involved in decision-making, for no decision-maker operates in isolation from the governmental structure. This structure may either hamper or aid the actors in making decisions, and it is important to understand the

organizational setting in which decision-makers function.

The main drawback which has been encountered in the use of this method is the necessary repetition, for in viewing the same events, even though from different angles, repetition is unavoidable. However, this may not bother the investigator as much as the reader.

While the conclusions drawn regarding this particular decision are felt to be valid, the validity of the general conclusions must await comparison with many more studies of this type. It is hoped that the future studies of such conclusions, en masse, may contribute some helpful suggestions for future decision-makers.

GLOSSARY

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Bala Hissar. The citadel or fort of Kabul, located in the southeastern section of old Kabul. It served as the residence of the kings in the days of Shah Shuja. It is a strategic military position, being located on high ground which overlooks the city. It is used as a munitions depot even today.

darbar. (Also written darbar). An audience, levy, or state reception held by the governor or sovereign.

Eed. A Moslem religious holy day which occurs at the end of the thirty day fast period known as Ramadan. A second Eed (Eed Al-adha) occurs seventy days after the first Eed (Eed Al-fiter).

firman. A Persian term meaning a mandate, order, or decree of an oriental sovereign. Also a grant, a passport, license, grant of privileges. Issued for various special purposes, such as to insure protection and assistance to a traveler.

Ghilzai. One of the major Afghan tribes. They were located principally in the northeastern part of Afghanistan. They are engaged for the most part in commerce and the military.

Nawab. An Indian title for a nobleman. Also called nabob. The title came originally from the Arabic naib which meant governor.

Sirdar. A Persian title for a headman or chieftain. The term is also used in India.

Vakeel. An Arabic term widely used in India meaning an ambassador or agent sent on a special commission, or residing at a court. Also a native agent pleading in a law suit.

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1878	LVIII	1898	Reorganization of Northwestern frontier.
1878	LXXX	2164	Correspondence respecting Central Asia.
1878-9	LVI	2190	Correspondence respecting relations between the British Government and Afghanistan since the accession of the Ameer Shere Ali Khan.
		2191	Further papers relating to affairs in Afghanistan.
		2250	Further papers relating to Afghanistan.
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