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THE EASTERN QUESTION IN BRITISH STRATEGIC POLICY DURING THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

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I

The purpose of this paper is to give some account of the impact of the Russian repudiation of the Black Sea Clauses, and the German defeat of France which prompted it, upon the development of British strategic policy in the defence of India. The European, Balkan and Asian components of Indo-British policy towards Russia had always interpenetrated in an uneasy dialectic; and in 1870 — indeed since the Mutiny and the War Scare of 1859 — official British strategic thought shifted irresolutely between two seemingly incompatible and introspective poles: in England, maritime command of coastal waters to frustrate a French invasion and in India the development of a whole infrastructure of counter-insurgency to make impossible a second mutiny. This mischievous apartheid in Indo-British political and strategic relations was being rapidly eroded by developing communications and by more holistic conceptions of the objectives and resources of Imperial military power and the administrative machinery required to regulate it. But it was the events of 1870 which by revolutionising the balance of Continental military power and shifting the threat of imminent and unescapable invasion from the Channel to the North-West Frontier decisively altered the strategic framework in which British policy would henceforth have to be made. By 1900, the spreading web of interior railroads had conferred upon Continental land-powers capacities for defensive concentration and manoeuvre greater than those traditionally enjoyed by seapowers. The Admiralty's consistent refusal throughout successive Eastern crises to guarantee the forcing or seizure of the Dardenelles by ships alone and the subsequent annexations of Cyprus and Egypt to establish direct naval control of the Mediterranean corridor reflected the general indecisiveness of seapower and diplomacy in themselves to prevent a Russian occupation of Constantinople and Merv, to recruit allies, coerce neutrals, overawe rebellious satellites or to deter Russian advances towards India. Moreover, with the Swiss and Italian Civil Wars and the

Prussian defeats of Austria and France which had deprived Britain of reliable sources of foreign mercenary contingents and of the effective military allies she had always needed to supplement her manpower, it seemed that only India could provide the resources and the base of operations — the centre of strategic gravity — which could turn British seapower to decisive advantage in a war against Russia or which in less critical circumstances could cover, support or salvage British colonial expeditions comprised abroad. It is my contention that all of these factors — but especially the example and threat which Russian landpower in the systematic consolidation of its Central Asian Empire presented to India and the clear ascendency through administrative expertise which the India Office and Army attained over the War Office when they were reconstituted as fully-accountable Ministries after the Crimean and Sepoy Wars — conduced to what I have described elsewhere as the 'Indianisation' of Imperial defence and war policy.[1]

Such a process implied acceptance of the argument that Central Asia and not the Baltic or Black Sea coasts of Europe would be the true centre of strategic gravity in any Anglo-Russian war; that only there could the British Empire without allies inflict upon Russia by decisive battle those alternatives of unconditional destruction or surrender called for by contemporary Continental doctrine; that the massed resources of the Indian "Nation-in-arms" beyond Parliamentary scrutiny and Treasury control and reorganised and poised along the North West Frontier according to classical principles of strategy, rather than the eclectic and indecisive pressures of amphibious or naval forces directed and controlled from Whitehall, was the principal instrument of Imperial power. In its turn, however, such an argument implied outright rejection of those ancillary Turkish and Persian alliances which alone would have made the peripheral strategy of seapower both possible and effective, virtual abdication of political control (see Campbell-Bannerman's dissenting minute to the Hartington Commission Report) and a degree of professional subordination to the high command and strategic requirements of fortress India which orthodox War Office strategists such as Wolseley and Maurice found unacceptable, unworkable and unthinkable. In essence it meant converting the British Army and the Colonial militias into one gigantic Reserve for the Indian Army which alone would define its use. The process of Indianisation was therefore neither smooth nor simple, and at its climax in the 1880's it clouded and embittered every level of Indo-British military politics.[2]

To the suspect and shady assortment of professional reformers, explorers, war correspondents and freelance strategists who since the

Crimea had seen at first hand in various European and American conflicts the naked use of war and revolution as instruments of national consolidation or imperial expansion, the impetus towards the continental Indianisation of British strategic policy seemed not only unanswerable but irreversible. It was they who first recognised that the survival of British dominion in India was not so much a matter of utilitarian indoctrination and public works as one of the correct application of strategic principles and armed force. It was they who first perceived that the Anglo-Russian struggle for hegemony in West and Central Asia had begun to assume the features of ideological rivalry whose effective basis could only be measured in terms of military power, and the ability and readiness to use it. The threat of invasion, against which it is the first duty of government to provide, had with the fall of France and the rise of Russia shifted dramatically from Britain to India and the strategic defence of that Empire now assumed a pivotal and determinant importance in the maintenance and extension of British power. Only in India, with its limitless resources and extended frontiers, could that power be roughly organised and deployed according to Continental doctrines of strategy to redress in Asia the balance of influence which Britain had lost in Europe and America. Conversely, its loss through invasion, intrigue or insurrection — or, in moments of sheer nightmare, all three combined — would have all the international repercussions usually associated with the collapse of a great military empire. The Indian commitment therefore became a classical expression of the deterrent and coercive functions of Continental landpower, much as home and colonial defence had been an exercise in seapower. It was the Indian Army and not the British and its auxiliary Colonial militias which organised itself according to Continental theory and practice; and the debate over Indianisation became at its crux a debate over the extent to which exclusively strategic Continental models and techniques should be allowed to dominate or distort the traditionally maritime and commercial nature of British warfare. Indeed, in spite of some recent attempts to "reinterpret" the role of the self-governing colonies in the ordering of imperial military power,[3] Cardwell could take it for granted that colonial defence was a strategic liability and irrelevant to the central issues of British military policy. In its essential form, "imperial defence" meant, not the voluntary military cooperation of the self-governing Dominions, but the physical defence of Continental India, the marshalling and launching of its resources against the Russian heartland, and the systematic acquisition and development of such war anchorages and military bases as were strategically integral to it. It was the Russian threat to India, complex, protean and conjectural as that was, and not the German threat to the Low Countries, which accounted for the late 19th

Century renaissance of official British strategic thought and policy.

But in 1870 — and indeed for some years afterwards — the forces which would make the drift towards Indianisation an issue of quite vicious inter-service politics in the 1880's seemed too rapid, elemental and complex to be instantly grasped, much less paraded, dressed and drilled into a neat and manageable policy. The historian's account of these events must therefore necessarily depict the strategic situation as it appeared to those both on the ground and at headquarters whose job it was to think about such problems, what appreciations they made of it, what relevance their solutions had to political and diplomatic reality and what handicaps their interpretation and handling of the crisis conferred upon the future management and direction of Imperial military policy. It will give us a clearer idea of the obscure but influencial role played by consols-general, military attaches and staff colonels in the day-to-day manufacturing of policy, how far they were led to review and be guided by the lessons of Crimean war policy, the degree to which the great wars of the sixties had modified these lessons and the manner in which their conclusions might govern their approach to the greater Crimean conflict six years later. Incidentally it reveals the continuing impact of the American factor in Anglo-Russian relations and the extent to which British strategists and politicians, transfixed by the Alabama bogey, still felt bound by the traditions and circumstances of British maritime rather than Indian military power. Lastly it reveals a grudging official awareness that if strategic policy was to be realistic in an age of rapid technical and political change, then intelligence must be acquired and interpreted on a regular and systematic basis. But it also raised contingent questions as to how and by what means that was to be done, i.e., by professional attaches or by casual travellers, and to what extent this activity by official experts should be allowed to influence governmental decision.

II

The collapse of the French Empire momentarily diverted British attention from the central problem of defending India against the corrosive techniques of Russian revolutionary warfare to that of defending the home base and its continental outworks against direct invasion by massed conventional armies whose unprecedented power and precision had already compelled the submission of two of the greatest military nations — and potential allies — in Europe. In circumstances that suggested an overwhelming disparity of demographic and military power, many observers and responsible statesmen, particularly those familiar with Asian affairs, were apt to strike confused but comforting analogies between the strategic conditions

of home and Indian defence[4] and to argue, perhaps a trifle too earnestly, that, for reasons that will be discussed later, since it was neither prudent nor possible to attempt to alter the balance of military power in Europe, it was best to accept the general principle of non-intervention and strategic disengagement as the basis of British defence policy as practised in the earlier Prussian and American wars. But the maintenance of land buffers separating the coasts of and approaches to the Channel from a Continental leviathan had been an instinctive and legitimate concern of every man of spirit since the declining years of the Elizabethan age, and to some extent was a vested interest as well as an obligation of the defence bureaucracy. The attempts of professional reformers, military publicists and unofficial advisers such as Colonel Archibald Alison, Colonel George Chesney, Colonel Robert Home and Colonel John Adye to focus national attention upon the invasion issue and to force government action were therefore traditional, often imaginative and necessarily sensational.[5] But in Captain J.C.R. Colomb's jaundiced accusation, they were unscrupulously exploited by *Blackwood's* to create a morbid and misleading obsession, neglectful of other, equally serious dangers such as the "defence of Imperial strategic points" and the "strategy of the sea".[6] Their views and fears were definitely not shared to the same degree within the other departments of state, especially the Admiralty which could not be brought to acknowledge the idea of its fallibility as a shield or deterrent to invasion.[7] They were largely inspired by an acute consciousness of the inadequacy of military reform, and to some extent were irrelevant to the extraneous political circumstances and mechanical facilities which rendered invasion less probable or feasible than they supposed.

Official anxiety was largely registered in the weekly sessions of the War Office Council, a forerunner of the Army Council, recently inaugurated by Cardwell as a consequence of the War Office Act of 1870. The specific and declared object of this Council was to bring politicians and their permanent officials and professional advisers into more intimate and constant contact in the making of military policy and in the management of the affairs of the Army. But it also had a less overt — and to the courtier generals a somewhat sinister — purpose: namely, to reassert a stiffening of parliamentary scrutiny and control and to redress the balance of political, royal and bureaucratic power which the revolution in warfare over the past thirty years had done much to erode and derange. It was presided over by the Secretary for War, attended by the permanent and parliamentary under-secretaries and the military departmental heads, and summoned other specialists and interested heads as circumstances prescribed.[8]

By means of this Council and its delegated sub-committees, by means of independent directives and the technical Defence Committee chaired by the Duke of Cambridge, Cardwell initiated a comprehensive series of studies and plans for the direct defence of England. These included projects for the concentration of mobile strike forces for home and abroad, surveys of the defences of the great military and commercial harbours and of likely landing places on the Eastern and Southern coasts, secret reconnaissances of the Belgian frontier and their effective dispositions for defence, and manoeuvres comprising 30,000 mixed regulars, militia, volunteers and yeomanry based on Aldershot and Salisbury whose object it was, as it had been in the annual Staff College staff exercises, to contain and defeat a hypothetical landing at Plymouth or Portsmouth.[9] The Admiralty was invited to cooperate in combined operations manoeuvres that the effectiveness of counter-invasion plans might be tested and the problems of landing on a hostile shore be explored.[10] From time to time since the Crimean War, manoeuvres of this kind had been proposed to improve the quality of offensive sea-borne landings and attempts made to introduce their study into the Sandhurst curriculum;[11] but the Admiralty stubbornly declined to parade a scheme of doubtful and even alarmist value before the public since it was predicated on the unacceptable and improbable premise that the fleet had been destroyed or decoyed elsewhere. Following the practice adopted during the Austro-Italian, Austro-Prussian and American Civil Wars, extra attaches and technical military missions were hastily despatched abroad to determine the root causes of Prussian successes and to investigate developments in gunnery, fortification, surgery, intelligence systems, staff organisations, mobilisation procedures, doctrine and education so that Britain's defence posture — and the whole orientation of reform — might be shifted and re-shaped accordingly.[12] It was a direct and deliberate consequence of these official reports and the deluge of comparative military analysis and criticism which emerged from countless professional observers who flocked independently to the seat of war that a climate of intellectual ferment was generated in which it became urgent and even imperative to introduce measures such as short-service, localised reserves and an embryonic general staff that were not so much concerned, as were Cardwell's earlier reforms of garrison recall and War Office reorganisation, with the strategic and constitutional redistribution of Britain's military power, but with improving the tactical efficiency and immediate war readiness of its field armies; innovations which were more or less adopted over the next generation by most of the armies of Europe and America.

Despite this ready and welcome professional concern for the

military defence of England and its Continental ramparts, it was not to be transformed into any specific political initiative: for the possibility of British military intervention in a major European war — or indeed in any conflict which might precipitate such a war — was remote and unthinkable. It was not thought expedient, since it might be construed by domestic and foreign critics alike as a needlessly provocative act, to revive the War Committee of the Cabinet which had served to manage the higher direction of the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the French invasion scare, the China War and the Trent Crisis,[13] and which the Duke of Cambridge in 1877[14] and the Hartington Commission in 1890 recommended should be placed on a permanent and continuous footing. In a memorandum on military organisation Cardwell stated the Cabinet's decision not "to send a force to fight on the Continent", except under the most exceptional circumstances. And the priorities he instinctively formulated in his own mind of the functions and purposes for which the Armed Forces of the Crown were maintained exactly matched those enunciated twenty years later by Stanhope as the official basis of British military policy; firstly, to render any attempted invasion hopeless; secondly, to furnish contingents for India and the Colonies; and lastly, to mount such moderate expeditions "as exceptional circumstances required."[15]

This political reasoning was founded on the realistic appreciation that Britain possessed none of the elements or accoutrements of modern military power. After a decade or so of pseudo-isolationism there existed no official strategic policy nor the formal and permanent machinery within the Cabinet to formulate one: one in which Indian, colonial and home defence considerations — and the continental, guerrilla or maritime forms of war required to sustain them — would be conjointly and continuously regulated by soldiers and statesmen in the light of changing conditions and needs. It followed that there could be no professional planning staffs, analogous to the Great General Staff, within, between or among the War Office, Admiralty, Foreign Office and India Office responsible for drawing up war establishment tables, defence and mobilisation schemes, and contingency war plans; nor were there intelligence branches and military archives adequately equipped to provide a basis for and continuity in defence policy, or to develop and disseminate through the Staff College a common tactical doctrine of offensive warfare. There was no disposable strike force earmarked for expeditionary service, and no established naval policy with which it might be integrated. There was no official perception of rising German, American and Russian naval challenges and no concern for the protection of key imperial fortresses and strategic points — especially those studding the route to India —

as pivots of naval power and global influence.[16] Excepting some colonial or Indian entanglements, no British commander had fought in a major war since the Crimean; nor British generalship survived that war's appalling humiliations.

This obvious imbalance of military expertise, organisation and experience, the strained and inelastic condition of Gladstone's finances, the recent defeats of Austria and France and the disbandment to military colonies in South Africa and Argentina of foreign mercenary contingents which deprived Britain of invaluable allies or auxiliaries, the strategic and logistical difficulties of organising an effective counter-invasion system out of mixed irregular and temporary forces, the need to maintain garrisons in North America, the Mediterranean and India — all combined to make it impossible to spare armies, even if they could have been afforded and manned, capable of meeting the Prussians on roughly equal terms and of compelling their submission in offensive and protracted operations on the Continent. But there were other, equally persuasive arguments against armed intervention, even had that been practicable. Besides the obvious dynastic connections and ideological sympathies between Britain and Prussia, there were sound strategic and political reasons why France's defeat could be greeted, as it for the most part was by British public opinion, with varying degrees of philosophic regret, indifference or outright satisfaction.[17] A strong, consolidated Germany interposed between France and Russia would make more difficult the realities of an alliance and act as a counterpoise to check their separate and independent ambitions to control Belgium and the Straits. Of course, no one could then tell that Bismarck might prove less trustworthy in a crisis than Frederick the Great had been, or that the eventual Anglo-German rivalry of Disraeli and Bismarck[18] for the mastery of Europe would be perhaps as inevitable a reaction to German militarism as the Franco-Russian alliance of 1893. Most important of all, intervention against Prussia might well provoke, as it undoubtedly would have done in 1861, 1864 and 1866, a general war which would leave Canada at the mercy of America and India at the mercy of Russia.

III

The interaction of European complications and Indian defence was made all the more pronounced by a sudden and sinister shift in Russia's Turkish policy; a shift which, exploiting Britain's preoccupations and Gladstone's inclination to resort to arbitration rather than force in the settlement of international disputes, could only destroy the "Crimean system", precipitate the internal disintegration of the

Ottoman Empire, and culminate as it had done in 1828 and 1854 in a Russo-Turkish war, with all that that entailed for the security of Constantinople and Egypt — points that in the eyes of some British defence experts had overnight become more vulnerable and vital with the opening of the Suez Canal and the rise of pan-Islamism. The concentration of troops in the newly created military districts of Bessarabia and Transcaspia, the building of monitor and transport fleets on the land-locked Black and Caspian Seas, the network of strategic railways that stretched to the Pruth and the Vistula, the liberation of a reckless professional military spirit that affected not only the tactical conduct of warfare but the whole character of Russian Central Asian politics, and, perhaps most significant of all, the repudiation of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris — all seemed terrifyingly yet justifiably consistent with the contemporary doctrine, exemplified by the blood and iron wars of consolidation, that military power was the criterion of national greatness and the sole final arbiter of international politics, that the strength of Russian diplomacy and of her position in European affairs would be determined not so much by the mere acquisition or reformation of large armies and fleets but by the readiness and capacity to use them, and that war on a great scale was the inevitable prerequisite for any great nation with a mission to fulfill. The most insidious — because least susceptible to isolation and control by conventional diplomatic means — aspect of this doctrine was its alliance with militant pan-Slavism; an alliance that was found best expressed in Fadeef's critiques of Russian military power and war policy published in *Russki Westnik* in 1867 and which sought through intrigue and subversion to stir revolt in the Balkan and Egyptian provinces as a precondition and even pretext for war and the eventual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Since 1864, when Khedive Ismael had become Viceroy of Egypt and he himself Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, Ignatieff had worked unceasingly through an underground network of consular cells to promote the possibility of a pan-Slavic insurrection in the Balkans simultaneously with a pan-Arab rising along the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates Valleys, and at the height of the Franco-Prussian War had pressed Ismael for a definite offensive-defensive alliance both to consolidate and to ignite the projected Arab-Slav revolt.[19]

From the peculiar angles of view of the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, the British Embassy at Constantinople and the British Consulate at Alexandria, these developments seemed particularly ominous since they affected the future control of the recently opened Suez Canal — the military implications of which were already being investigated on the spot by a War Office-Admiralty Commission and

which became the subject of a secret and exhaustive report by the Intelligence Branch following the war scare of 1875.[20] There could be no doubt that the Suez Canal had introduced more liabilities than assets into Britain's strategic calculations. The Cape route, though longer and slightly more hazardous, was relatively untouched by the convulsions of European and Middle Eastern politics: it was secure simply because Britain exercised unfettered control of the seas and because the bottled-up fleets of the Mediterranean naval powers — France, Italy, Austria and Russia — could pose no direct or significant threat to India without feeling the lash of the Royal Navy. With the opening of the Suez Canal, however, the loose African necklace of British-Indian sea communications was drawn tightly against the throat of Eurasia and into the cockpit of its politics in a way that Britain could no longer avoid or prevent and which she would be ultimately bound out of the most naked self-interest to exploit and control. Indian experts and officials, especially those such as Sir Bartle Frere and Lord Napier of Magdala, respectively Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bombay, responsible for the protection of the western seaboard, were the first to appreciate that so long as Britain had no naval base in the Mediterranean further east than Malta the fleets of France, Austria, Russia or even America were in strategic terms relatively closer to India than the Royal Navy; that they could blockade the Suez Canal and bombard and harass India's coasts and ports — perhaps even in time of crisis effect lodgements to incite revolt — before large British naval forces could arrive.[21] Such disadvantageous strategic conditions could only be rectified by acquiring in the Mediterranean some additional naval base or war anchorage such as Crete or Cyprus closer than Malta to the Suez Canal, by strengthening the fortifications at Aden ("the Gilbraltar of the East") and the naval squadron in the Persian Gulf, and by assuming greater control over the administration of Egyptian affairs, either financially or by conquest and occupation.[22]

The urgency of these measures had been heightened by the arrival in Egypt in 1869 of unofficial American military and naval missions composed of Civil War veterans who intended, it seemed, by establishing staff colleges, creating a general staff and providing technical advice, to reorganise and revitalise the basis of Egyptian military power and expertise as a prelude to and a means of their achieving greater political autonomy under American republican guidance.[23] At the same time the British were acutely conscious of the fact that ever since the Armed Neutrality of 1781 the Russians and Americans had displayed an unfailing proclivity for combining to embarrass British diplomacy whenever their own individual interests

seemed likely to be compromised. It was a form of mutual cooperation that found expression in subtle but significant ways; in the favoured treatment accorded to American military attaches, in the pro-Russian accounts by American war correspondents of Russian wars in Europe and Central Asia, and, more materially, as in the case of the Crimean War, the American Civil War and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877,[24] in the secret visits of Russian purchasing missions, shadow crews or commissioned squadrons to the United States to buy or borrow armed privateers which could operate from neutral American bases against British commerce upon the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans. It was the American trained and officered Egyptian armies that Ignatieff hoped would spearhead the Arab revolt against Turkish rule; and it was probable that Americans were intended to organise and command the nascent Egyptian and Russian Black Sea fleets, much as the British themselves trained, administered, equipped and commanded the Turkish.[25] Such a combination of American and Russian interests — should they materialise and develop — astride the Empire's most vital strategic link would be disastrous; it constituted perhaps the single most important strategic problem posed by the Franco-Prussian War.[26]

For a number of reasons — the unofficial and tentative character of the Ignatieff-Ismael liaison, the incompleteness of Egyptian military reform, the complications of pan-Islamism and direct British influence — the particular achievement of a Russo-American-Egyptian alliance and revolt did not eventuate.[27] By 1875, despite the occasional furtive visit by some maverick pan-Slav leader such as Chernieff, Britain's military and financial presence in Egypt was well on its way towards supplanting the Russo-American. But the essential thrust of Russian policy — the Balkanisation of the Ottoman Empire — with all that that entailed for Indian defence was implacable and it provoked among British defence specialists, for the first time since the Crimean War, some serious discussion about how best this thrust could be parried and in what ways war could most effectively be carried against Russia.

IV

As early as July 1870, the Duke of Cambridge, in his proprietary anxiety for the military condition of the Empire he was powerless to improve, implored Cardwell, Granville and Napier not to allow cross-channel events to obscure the significance of mounting Russian military preparations for the stability of the Ottoman Empire — and the British communications through it — and of the East generally. It was essential to the survival of the British Empire in India that her armed forces be properly equipped to back up her diplomacy; and there was now a need, greater beyond all precedent, for detailed and continuous infor-

mation about Russian strengths and intentions that might serve as a basis for strategic planning.[28] At the direction of Sir Richard Airey and Sir Henry Storks, Quarter Master General and Surveyor General respectively,[29] both of whom had had extensive experience in the Near East, the Intelligence Branch, although heavily committed to matters of home and Continental defence, managed to produce by late November several memoranda on the comparative military resources of Russia and Turkey, accounts of the Russian and Turkish Armies, extracts from Moltke's history of the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-9 and, perhaps most important of all, suggestions for British strategic policy in a war against Russia — memoranda which were revived and used during the greater crisis of 1875-80[30] The general apprehensions of the Commander-in-Chief and the more specific reports of the Intelligence Branch were grounded exclusively upon statistics and assessments contained in the private letters and official despatches of the British Consul-General at Belgrade, Colonel W.R. Mansfield. As a source of strategic intelligence and shrewd comment, Mansfield's despatches were markedly superior to those of Beauchamp Walker at Berlin,[31] and as the only British military attache in Eastern Europe responsible for Russian affairs — there was no military attache at either St. Petersburg or Constantinople — his interpretation of events would have a singular effect upon the conception of a British war policy.

Mansfield's task in attempting to determine with sufficient accuracy the immediate war preparedness and effectiveness of the Russian Army was complicated by the existence of opposing camps of opinion into which Milyutin's liberal reforms, as most reform movements seem to, had divided the Russian officer corps. While there had been definite improvements since the Crimean War im mobilisation procedures, professional education, tactical doctrines and the construction of strategic railways, these were for the most part defective or incomplete; staff and technical officers in whom education had been invested were apt as in the Indian Army to seek more lucrative or challenging "political" service; the best generals were foreigners; and the railway system while strategically sound east to west had not yet connected the Black to the Baltic Sea.[32] Mansfield calculated with ominous prophecy that it would take the Russian Army another five or six years before it could consider itself on an equal footing with other European armies. Paper establishments bore no relationship to actual ground strengths. Of the 1,200,000 troops that obligatory short-service could theoretically make available, after garrison, occupation and lines-of-communication detachments had been provided for the security of the White, Baltic and Black Sea coasts, fourteen major

fortresses and numerous lesser ones along the vast frontier perimeter from St. Petersburg, Sweaburg and Riga in the north-west and Odessa, Tiflis and Baku in the south-east, the Russian Army could barely dispose of 400,000 troops capable of immediate offensive operations on or against foreign soil at the outbreak of war. For all these reasons, Russian military policy would seek to delay resolving the Turkish question by actual warlike operations as in 1828-9 and 1854-6 until the Russian army reforms were more complete, while at the same time maintaining a posture of constant menace towards Central Europe and subverting the political structure of the Ottoman Empire.

If Russia's capacity for formal offensive military operations was doubtful, she herself was strategically invulnerable to land invasion by a single power, especially by a maritime power such as Britain which might have hoped to exercise a crippling commercial blockade and destroy the non-existent Russian naval forces in decisive action. Only in the Baltic, the nursery of Russian seapower where her military resources and protection were most strained, could Britain expect to meet Russia on roughly equal terms: but as for further and perhaps decisive operations inland, railroads had conferred upon Russia's geostrategic position a new power of concentrated self-defence and mobile aggression the value of which it was impossible to overestimate. A coalition of land powers would have the best chance of decisive result but in the present condition of Europe it could hardly be raised. It would remain to an amphibious, as distinct from an exclusively maritime or Continental policy, delivering a succession of combined blows at the "three central points of Russian strategic policy" — Poland, the Pruth and Caucasia — and other exposed coasts at the extremities, much like dogs baiting a bear, to bring Russia to negotiate acceptable terms through the kind of internal revolutionary pressures and third power intervention that had so far characterised all her wars. These were the ideas incorporated by the Intelligence Branch in their "secret memorandum on war with Russia". They suggested invading Russia through Varna and Odessa, while a Swedish Army landed near Riga and threatened St. Petersburg and the Russian right rear and agents incited insurrection in Poland, the North Baltic provinces and Caucasia.

V

In early December 1870, Cardwell forwarded all the Intelligence Branch papers for comment to Lieutenant General Sir John Arabin Lintorn Simmons, a former Consul-General at Warsaw, British liaison officer — the forerunner of military attache — with the Ottoman Armies during the Crimean War and British representative on the

post-war international Armenian boundary commission. In these capacities his performance had earned him a solid reputation within official circles as a sound, hard-thinking practical strategist — one who as an engineer could be expected to interpret strategic policy in terms of topography and fortifications. As Inspector General of Fortifications during the Eastern crisis between 1875 and 1880 he became the Conservative government's principal technical adviser on military and strategic policy (much as his predecessor, Sir John Adye, had performed and continued to perform that function for the Liberals) and in 1876 he was provisionally appointed Commander-in-Chief designate of a Balkan Expeditionary Force should that ever be needed to protect Constantinople against Russian occupation. In 1878 he accompanied Disraeli to the Berlin Congress as the Prime Minister's personal strategic adviser and in 1882 was put up by Ponsonby as the chief rival to Wolseley for the Adjutant Generalship.[33]

Simmons' analysis of the options open to British strategic policy in "carrying on war against Russia"[34] was founded on the unqualified premise that Russia was invulnerable at any vital point — that centre of gravity within the adversary's social, political or military organism whether his main armies or capital cities — which if dislocated or destroyed would bring about his immediate collapse and submission. It was impossible to effect amphibious landings in the Baltic or Black Sea capable of long-range decisive injury or of compelling unconditional surrender since conscription, logistics and rail communications had placed at the disposal of the Russian armies, as it had of the German, the means, mobility and flexibility for crushing such raids in detail before they could consolidate bridgeheads or penetrate inland. Likewise, it was impossible to subject Russia to a repetition of the harrowing and decisive attrition of Sebastopol. Such amphibious assaults and sea-sustained sieges were to be avoided since they "could only harass and embitter a war, without being of a nature to lead to any decisive results."[35]

What, in such a situation, were the British to do? The motives behind Russia's forward policy in the Balkans were not so much strategic — though that element could not be ignored — but psychological: to redress the humiliation of Sebastopol and recover her former prestige in Asia. The problem was therefore how to neutralise or minimize such Russian advances or pressures as were likely to magnify this influence; and this could best be done in Armenia and the Caucasus — the historic homeland of the Ottoman and the area that Simmons knew best. The development of any British-inspired counter-resistance in Caucasia depended upon three essential pre-conditions: firstly, the security of sea communications to and on the Black Sea;

secondly, the security of Turkey against a land invasion across the Danube; and finally, a well-organised Turkish regular force to provide stability and refuge to the guerrilla movement. The particular theatre and character of British overseas military operations had always been determined by the degree of naval superiority that could be exercised at any given time; and the fact that the two greatest maritime powers, Britain and France, had been allied during the Crimean War had alone made it possible for unarmed transports to carry supplies, provisions, warlike stores and reinforcements across the Mediterranean without interruption or unnecessary precautions. But in a crisis situation without allies, the presence of foreign naval powers in the Mediterranean made it questionable policy to commit to barren and inaccessible theatres large conventional forces which could only survive, let alone operate effectively, if their supply-routes were rendered indisputable by strengthening the Mediterranean squadron, outfitting Malta as a major base and acquiring fresh war anchorages or logistic harbours in the Aegean or Black Seas. At the same time, the security of Roumelia against land invasion from the north could best be found in a flanking Austrian alliance. But if, and this was more than probable, Prussia sided with Russia, thereby neutralising Austrian assistance, then Turkey would be left to her own devices, supported by such moral, material and military comfort as Britain was prepared to give. It would be necessary to secure the Black Sea ports, through which any inland Russian advance would have to be supplied, against pre-emptive seizure as recommended by Moltke. The Quadrilateral and Armenian fortresses, and the roads connecting them, were in a pre-Crimean state of disrepair. The Turks' legendary durability in defensive warfare had yet to be tested under the new conditions of rifled artillery and massed tactics; they were poorly armed and instructed and suffered from all the delays and confusion inherent in a conciliar system of command.

In these circumstances, British strategic policy should aim at securing naval supremacy on the Black Sea and patrolling the Danube, despatching a few carefully-selected officers to organise and direct the Turkish resistance, and providing the necessary cash, guns and warlike stores to put the fortifications and roads in order. Such a policy, though incapable of decisive result, would at least preserve Turkish integrity without recourse to massed warfare, while deterring the aggrandisement of Russian prestige in the East. It was similar to that which Rawlinson felt most appropriate for Persia and in the circumstances was the most that Britain could hope to achieve. But in order to establish precisely what auxiliary role the British troops should play, and the degree of their commitment, whether with or

without an Austrian alliance, it would be necessary to calculate exactly the strength and condition of the Turkish armies and fortresses, and their dispositions for defence.

VI

Though there were significant differences of emphasis in the intended form and location of pressure, with perhaps Simmons being the most cautious and realistic, all three suggested strategic policies were agreed on the difficulties of conducting war against Russia without the assistance of a powerful Continental ally. Regarded as a general proposition, it was clear that such a strategy of erosion and harassment as they proposed must necessarily play an auxiliary and diffuse role, often resulting from compromise and opportunism and contributing little in the way of decision and permanence. Such behaviour in strategic thinking was typical of, and indeed inherent in, Whitehall's insular approach to problems of global warfare in an era of strategic isolationism; and it indicated the fundamental dilemma confronting British strategists so long as they chose to ignore India as a potential Continental military power. If Britain acquired a Continental ally, thereby dissolving her isolationism and the diplomatic flexibility it conferred, she would possess the means of pursuing a sound strategy; but if she maintained an unfettered isolationism she would retain her manoeuvrability merely to conduct an indecisive one.

This particular kind of thought — and the paradox on which it was grounded — conformed consciously or unconsciously to the traditional pattern of Baltic, Mediterranean and Baltic strategies that had been used with debatable effectiveness in every Continental war against France since William III. It had received a peculiar legitimacy and a degree of official sanction as a result of the narrative histories of Napier and Bunbury; and although the geopolitical and strategic conditions were altogether different, it had been extended uncritically to the war against Russia in 1854. During the successive Russian crises of 1876, 1885-6 and 1896, it continued to determine British strategic policy in Whitehall, as distinct from that in Simla,[36] even though the Russian advances which precipitated those very crises, in directly menacing the Indian base rather than the communications to it and in compelling recognition of that base as the true theatre from which Russia could be destroyed in Central Asia, had wholly transformed the scope and character of the Russo-Indian question and extended the global framework wherein defence planning would henceforth have to be done.[37] Indeed one of the most significant omissions in all three memoranda was any reference to or discussion of India's being a possible reservoir of available military power and a

potential base from which it could be launched. Any Continental strategy against Russia, to be effective, presupposed what had always been possible in the balancing of European power — an ally more or less contiguous with the main adversary which could deploy its manpower to the best advantage without needing to rely, as in the case of the French Armies in the Crimea, upon British seapower to transport it to some exposed extremity, there ponderously to concentrate a sufficient and highly vulnerable force whose target and operations had usually to be determined at the last moment, whose assembly and movements were such as to eliminate surprise, and whose call on allied resources would be so great as virtually to rule out all alternative or secondary operations. In such circumstances, Prussia and Austria rather than the uncomfortable France, were the obvious potential allies: but if these, as the events of the late 1870s showed, could not be persuaded that it was in their best interests to join such a coalition and provide the necessary resources and facilities then India, supported by such assistance as could be extracted from Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan, would have to fill the gap. Increasing recognition of this fact after the Second Afghan War automatically widened the dimensions of the Russian problem within British strategic policy, and, especially with the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1893, made the interaction of Asian and European affairs and the definition of appropriate defence priorities its most intractable element.

For the reasons which precluded British military intervention elsewhere, the discussions within the War Office of a strategic policy in the event of a fresh Russo-Turkish War, or of Russia's rejection of the Black Sea provisions, remained very much of an academic exercise. But the crisis did result in one important decision that would have a significant bearing upon the subsequent formulation of British strategic policy in the defence of India — the establishment of more adequate means of acquiring first-hand intelligence about Russian military reforms and policies, especially with respect to Central Asia. Both the Duke of Cambridge and General Simmons had argued that only through such intelligence, regularly acquired from a variety of reliable sources and scientifically collated and interpreted, could a realistic appreciation of Russian intentions and preparations be made, panicky — or apathetic — responses be avoided, and some continuity in defence thinking be initiated. In its memorandum on war policy, the Intelligence Branch had further declared that its own limitations in not having intelligence agencies at St. Petersburg, Warsaw and Moscow had been crippling and should be repaired.

VII

The practice of attaching professional military observers to diplomatic embassies for the special purpose of reporting upon foreign military developments was a direct consequence of the scope and complexity of the revolution in military expertise and international politics that had broken forth with the Crimean War and it reflected the primacy that was now accorded to military power in the making of national policy and the shaping of world order. To isolationist powers such as Britain and America the role of such professional attaches could be particularly crucial, not only in keeping abreast of technical military improvements, but in adding a fresh dimension to the diplomatic interpretation of European crises and in possibly precipitating, but more probably deterring, intervention. As maritime states properly jealous of civil supremacy to military authority, they could not allow some impetuous attache armed with a vague and independent mandate to embroil them in military adventures, or, as in the case of the Anglo-French military conversations of 1904-5, to commit them to unacceptable obligations: they required that Foreign Office rather than War Office considerations weigh most in his selection and conduct and that reports dealing with general military policy be transmitted to the Foreign Office through normal diplomatic channels. These devices probably emasculated the quality — and therefore the impact — of much military reportage (though other factors contributed to the same end) and left the State unprovided with intelligence when it was most needed — once war broke out and the embassies were recalled; but, whether intentionally deprived or not, the attaches' reports seem usually to have reinforced isolationist convictions not to be drawn into the incessant manoeuvrings of Europe's armed camps. Certainly, the British attaches successively accredited to St. Petersburg after 1871 were unanimously less alarmist than their professional colleagues in Whitehall and Simla about the aggressive character of Russian military policy and the offensive capabilities of the armed forces at its disposal;[38] and this may well have had some palliative effect upon British political thinking.

The earliest British attaches — the regular peacetime successors to the temporary Commissioners who had functioned during the Peninsular and Crimean Wars — had been appointed during the Franco-Italian war at the request of the belligerent powers, officially to observe the course of operations as professional soldiers not amateur reporters and without seeking to advise or influence, which had been the function of the wartime Commissioners. During the American Civil War, no British representative was officially attached to either the Confederate or the Union forces, although numerous official technical missions

and even more private observers visited both sides. But with Beauchamp Walker's retention in Berlin after the Danish crisis of 1864, a precedent was set and it became practice to accredit regular attaches to the major military and naval powers of the world, namely Prussia, France, Austria and America, the rank of the individual attache being determined by the relative importance of the power to which he was accredited.[39]

The selection, role and usefulness of the earliest attaches reflected the unscientific outlook of the mid-Victorian Army and the unsystematic conduct of British military policy and diplomacy. They were usually chosen because of social or family connections, without concern for professional merit and sometimes without knowing the language of the nation to which they were posted. They neither required nor received preliminary technical training in the observation and interpretation of significant facts and, in the absence of official handbooks for recording and classifying military statistics and in default of any established protocol governing their conduct, they could only be given such broad and vague instructions as would be always susceptible to evasion or misconstruction. Prolonged seclusion in expensive foreign capitals often dampened their shrewdness and perseverence and since it also harmed their chances of regular promotion and field service it deterred officers of real ability and ambition and induced those who had overstayed their time to go permanently into the diplomatic service. In short, the attache was no more than a uniformed amateur spy whose effectiveness was highly individual, local and occasional depending on how much of his private purse he was prepared to put into bribes.

The recommendations of the Northbrook Committee to enlarge the scope and functions of the Intelligence Branch, to establish a military archives, to increase the fund of secret service money and to clarify the respective jurisdictions of the War Office and the Foreign Office in the selection and duties of the military attaches, were intended to professionalise the machinery of intelligence and to bring it more into line with the conditions and needs of modern defence planning.[40] But with the sudden re-emergence of Russia as a major military power in Europe as well as in Central Asia and as a potential naval power in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf, it became immediately necessary to do two things.[41] Firstly, the naval attache at Paris in his assessment of comparative naval strengths and intentions was to be given a roving commission to include not only France and Germany but also Russia. Secondly, a regular military attache, however ill-equipped, was needed at the Court of St. Petersburg to keep an eye on the pan-Slavic tendencies of the Russian officer corps and if possible to

accompany Russian expeditions to Central Asia. Between May and July of 1871, the post was offered to and for the various reasons declined by eleven officers including Colonel Chesney, Major General Sir Patrick MacDougall and Colonel Sir William Lennox, being finally accepted by Captain the Hon. Fred Wellesley, an obscure and inexperienced officer who happened to be a son of Lord Cowley, formerly British Ambassador to France, and a nephew of Lord Augustus Loftus, the incumbent Ambassador to St. Petersburg. It was a choice that Granville and the Duke of Cambridge had difficulty defending before Parliament and only managed to do so by neglecting to divulge certain facts about the appointment which would have given their critics even stronger grounds for objection.[42]

In the event, Wellesley proved an enterprising and resourceful attache, providing the War Office with a remarkably complete picture of Russian military reforms and intentions and Central Asian politics and developments. So much so that the Duke of Cambridge in 1875 considered him a suitable successor to Captain Evelyn Baring as Military Secretary to the new Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton. Yet until October 1876, when Lennox was appointed to Constantinople, Wellesley remained the only military attache at any Eastern capital where Russian-inspired aggressions and insurrections were likely to be spawned; and at a crucial period in the Russo-Turkish war, during the Russian advance from the outbreak of war in April to their temporary check at Plevna in July, when information would have been vital to the formulation of British military policy, Wellesley was officially ostracised by the Russian Imperial headquarters for having disclosed the breakdown in the trial mobilisation the previous November. Mansfield once again became the prime source of information. In these circumstances, it was remarkable that Whitehall did not agree to the appointment of Indian military attaches at either St. Petersburg, Cabul or Tehran, although Captain Napier, on special duty in Northern Persia, fulfilled a vital intelligence function in reporting the character and significance of Russian expeditions towards Merv.

Nevertheless, it was the astonishing rush to dispel the enigmas, ignorance and confusion surrounding Russian policy that was the central and most significant consequence of the war crisis of 1870. For the next twenty years strategic intelligence became and remained the accepted but unsystematic province of a variety of amateurs, the strategic value of whose reports could not always be trusted or verified even had there been adequate central machinery for collating it. Such amateurs included the commercial consuls scattered throughout Southern Russia and the Ottoman Empire; resident British engineers,

surgeons, teachers and missionaries who maintained the Indo-European telegraph, and built or managed the banks and railways of Persia and Turkey, and independent militia officers who were especially interested in the auxiliary forces and institutions of the Turkish and Russian armies. Because they might become, wittingly or unwittingly, sources of embarrassment or retaliation in regions against the Russian claims for which the Foreign Office and Government of India felt unwilling and powerless to do more than mildly remonstrate, British military officers, whether attaches or adventurers, were expressly forbidden to accompany Russian expeditions into Central Asia, to reconnoitre disputed strategic points such as Merv along the approaches to India, or to visit regions where Russian troops might need to mobilise in strength before advancing into Turkey, Armenia or Transcaspia. Not until the early 1890s, when the conditions of Indian defence had radically changed, was the British military attache at St. Petersburg officially allowed to travel through Central Asia.[43]

At the same time, although Northbrook and Baring upon their arrival in India in 1872 kept informally in touch with the Intelligence Department they had done so much to revive,[44] it was not until 1878, as a result of the creation of the Indian Army Intelligence Department, that attempts were made officially to coordinate the intelligence activities of the Home and Indian Governments.[45] But the demands of the Afghan, Zulu and Boer Wars upon so small, untrained and experimental a staff; the deaths of its chief initiators, Colonels Robert Home, Sir George Pomeroy Colley and Sir Charles MacGregor, between 1879 and 1885; and the new liberal Government's neglect of Indian defence matters while embroiled in the pacification of Egypt and the Sudan — all combined to prevent any real progress until the Merv Crisis of 1883, the publication of MacGregor's *Defence of India* in 1884 and the Penjdeh Crisis and return of Salisbury's Government in 1885 once again reopened the whole question of Imperial military policy in the defence of India, a problem that fell largely into the hands of an entirely new kind of defence specialist: politicians and military bureaucrats such as Sir Charles Dilke, Spencer Wilkinson, Colonel George Syndenham Clarke, Lord Curzon, Joseph Chamberlain, Randolph Churchill and General Sir Henry Brackenbury who had made themselves experts in the strategic realities of Imperial defence.

Yet in 1870, there was no Central Asian bureau as in the Russian Foreign Ministry within, between or among the War Office, India Office, Foreign Office and Government of India, with ministerial and professional representation, especially responsible for formulating and advising upon a comprehensive Asian foreign and military policy.

The Russian occupation of Khiva (1873), like their repudiation of the Black Sea clauses three years earlier, provoked a fierce public outcry; but neither resulted in the creation of a separate Central Asian desk. Sir Henry Rawlinson's Political and Secret Committee of the Home Council would seem to have been the most appropriate instrument for conversion, but since it was largely composed of retired Indian generals such as Rawlinson himself who might happen strongly to disagree with official policy, it could be, and indeed often was, bypassed as an effective organ in the making of Indo-British strategic policy in the private and demi-official correspondence between the Indian Secretary and the Viceroy. Hence Persian, Afghan, Turkish and Chinese policies came to be managed independently by separate departments, or, as in the case of Persia which occupied a pivotal strategic position between Turkey and Afghanistan and between Russia and India, jointly by the Foreign Office and the Government of India, with all the unnecessary friction, delay and cross-purposes that that entailed and without military considerations, especially those relating to the local defence of India, being given their due and proper weight.

VIII

All this showed, at least until the Khivan crisis of 1873, how much Indian interests and military requirements, so far from being considered fundamental to any definition of Imperial military policy, were wilfully neglected and how ill-equipped was British-Indian military administration, remodelled in the aftermath of the Crimean and Sepoy Wars, to cope with the kind of problems that Russian expansionism and the revolution in military technology and expertise posed for the continuing tranquility of India and its role in a global war against Russia. The inertia of the Mediterranean, mercantile and maritime traditions of war policy, reinforced by a self-conscious posturing of neo-isolationism and strategic detachment that was a central consequence of having drifted into the Crimean, Persian and Sepoy Wars, by the lack of any systematic procedure whereby military intelligence and analysis of Asian military affairs could be implanted or transformed into official policy, and by the absence of any powerful Indian military bureaucracy or sufficiently eminent protagonist, such as later emerged in the persons of Roberts and Kitchener, with which Indian defence policy could be identified and enforced — all combined to obscure from Whitehall's vision the fact that an authoritative and adequate military policy, if it was to have any meaning and relevance at all, must regard India not as a domestic policing problem unconnected with and uninfluenced by the course of European politics and requiring merely an enfeebled and chequered diplomacy and an untested naval supremacy to preserve

its trade communications with Britain, but as a vast Imperial fortress capable of decisive intervention in European affairs and deserving all the strategic expertise, military resources and scientific analysis normally associated with Continental military powers. Indeed, it was ultimate recognition, gradual and laboured though it was, of the unique and central position of the defence of India problem within the colonial framework of British defence policy that gave that policy such concreteness and resiliance as it came to possess.

The immediate issue of 1870 was that the Prussian, Balkan and Egyptian difficulties, in threatening the home base and its Mediterranean communications with invasion, intrigue or insurrection, had momentarily diverted attention from the post-Crimean renaissance of concern for the direct or local defence of India. For the next fifteen years, from 1870 to 1885, British foreign and strategic policy was largely concerned with composing these difficulties so that the continuing and enveloping problem of local Indian defence, as manifested by the Khivan, Merv and Penjdeh crises, could be tackled single-mindedly. These issues of adequate buffer protection and secure sea lanes — at least so far as they involved the Ottoman Empire, the most European and Mediterranean aspect of the Indian defence problem — were largely resolved by the Berlin Congress and Cyprus Convention of 1878 and by the occupation of Egypt and Sudan between 1882 and 1885: measures against which the Russians retaliated with parallel precautions, in order to secure their land communications towards India, by establishing a firmer and more military ascendency over Persian affairs and by occupying Merv and Penjdeh. Paradoxically, the very neglect and isolation to which Indian defence considerations had been reduced in the making of Imperial military policy between the Crimean War and the Penjdeh crisis served to reinforce a kind of political separatism and professional apartheid, a tendency to allow India independently to shape its own defence policy, when the very problem of Indian defence had become the most important factor in the formulation of British foreign and military policy. Between 1885 and 1907, the "defence of India" problem, as seen from and interpreted by Simla, dominated British strategic policy and significantly determined its foreign policy quite as much as between 1856 and 1885 it had been ignored. In his classic work, *Soldiers and Statesmen,* Field Marshal Sir William Robertson testified to the unshakeable persistence of Indian defence as the prime factor in British strategic policy long after the German menace had become more than evident.[46]

NOTES

[1] Adrian Preston, "The Role of the Indian Army in Indo-British and Strategic Relations, 1745-1947", *Journal of the United Service Institute of India,* Centennial Issue, October-December, 1970.

[2] Adrian Preston, "War Office Politics and the 'Defence of India' Question, 1882-1892", unpublished paper read to Department of War Studies Seminar, King's College, London.

[3] See, for instance, R.A. Preston, *Canada and "Imperial Defence", 1867-1919*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1967.

[4] Perhaps the most prominent and important of these was Colonel Sir George Chesney, author of the celebrated *Battle of Dorking*, an influential polemic which earned him some clandestine power as Cardwell's chief technical adviser on the defence scheme which was finally produced in 1875. Less well-known but of equal importance as critiques of British and Indian military policy were his other futuristic novels, *The True Reformer, The Dilemma* and *The Ordeal.* Yet Chesney soon discovered that the notoriety of his books and the secret political favours they attracted brought their own special complications. Within the War Office he became persona non grata to his professional colleagues who blocked all his efforts at effective reform. In consequence, he was careful to preserve and cultivate his anonymity and refused to associate his name with articles dealing with British Army reform. "There is an awkwardness," he wrote Blackwood, "in a military man being identified with politico-military opinions." Both Hamley and MacDougall had compromised themselves within the profession for urging the public study and political application of their views on strategy. Moreover, there was "extreme jealousy on the part of War Office officials against a Minister's secret advisers" and he utterly disbelieved in any sensible and durable result being achieved by isolated articles. "To do any good with the Army," he wrote, "you must have your legs firmly under the War Office mahogany." Under the incoming Conservative administration he despaired of the prospects of Army reform. The Duke of Cambridge alone was "a fatal obstacle to real improvement... and a dreadful incubus on the military machine at present." Hardy was "extremely feeble, much worse indeed than Cardwell." "Nothing real will be done by this or any government," he complained, "till some man of real genius comes to the front." As Military Member of the Indian Council in the 1880s Chesney himself was given this opportunity and did a great deal to engineer and implement the Simla Commission reforms which for five years Gladstones' second administration had consistently subordinated to Egyptian, South African and Irish affairs. As early as 1881 he had written to Blackwood asking him to commission "somebody to write you an article urging reform of this army, which hangs fire sadly. Proposals made by the Commission of the ablest men in India, and supported by men of such opposite minds as Lords Lytton and Rippon, are quietly pidgeon-holed by the old gentlemen at the India Office. Lord Hartington is too busy or too indifferent to go into the matter and half a dozen venerable... but obstructive and stupid old men... on that wretched Home Council... who really govern India stand in the way of the most obvious reforms." The whole process of conversion of India into a Continental military power between 1885 and 1890 was due more to Chesney than to Roberts who felt, like the Duke of Cambridge, that too much reform too fast was a dangerous thing. There is much evidence that Roberts scotched many of the more enlightened of Chesney's proposals such as that to create an Indian Sandhurst as contributing to the rise of Indian political and military nationalism. See Chesney to Blackwood, 3 April and 27 June 1874, 16 and 18 December 1875, 5 January 1876, 31 August and 17 September 1878, 17 April, 17 July, 19 August and 16 September 1881, *Blackwood Papers*, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

[5] A. Alison, "On Army Organisation," *Blackwood's*, vol 105, Feb. 1869, pp.152-74; "On the Reorganisation of the Armies of the Continental Powers," *ibid*, vol 105, April 1869, pp.466-79; "On the Government Scheme of Army Reform," *ibid*, vol 107, April 1870, pp.489-98; J. Adye, "National Defence and Army Organisation," *ibid*, vol 110, Aug. 1871, pp.206-14; R. Home, "Army Organisation," *MacMillan's*, vol 23, Nov. 1870, pp.73-9; "The Invasion of England," *Cornhill Magazine*, vol 26, Jul. 1872, pp.21-32; "Are We Ready?" *MacMillan's*, vol 22, Oct. 1870, pp.401-9.

[6] The curious role played by *Blackwood's* in promoting the issue of Home as distinct from "imperial" defence is best illustrated in the case of Captain J.C.R. Colomb. On 6 November 1876, Colomb submitted an article to *Blackwood's* entitled "Out of Invasion into Investment" — investment meaning that a foreign maritime power could hold the British Empire to ransom, not by assaulting the South East coasts and London, but by seizing or destroying its colonies and coaling stations abroad. He argued that there was need "to prepare for a far greater danger than a 'Battle of Dorking' ", greater because it was "more probable" and would have "practically the same effect." *Blackwood's*, he believed, had "done overmuch towards attracting attention and creating excitement about 'invasion' " and he hoped that MAGA "might guide the national mind from a morbid dwelling on the 'horrors of Invasion' to taking serious measures to guard against the forgotten or misunderstood dangers of 'Investment' ". This article Blackwood rejected. Fresh point was given to Colomb's argument when at the height of the Bulgarian crisis in late November it was rumoured that Russian privateers had sailed secretly from Baltic ports to operate against British commerce from neutral American harbours should Britain intervene in the Russo-Turkish dispute. On 30 November 1876, Colomb resubmitted his article on "the strategy of the sea". It was a subject, he assured Blackwood, of vast importance but too generally neglected and he was particularly anxious to get his views across, not merely to professional military or naval audiences, but to the intelligent reading public before their anxiety "as to the prevention of war has entirely evaporated". He had been studying the subject for ten years and lecturing upon it at the RUSI and the RCI for six. The more deeply he studied it, the more impressed he had become by the danger of neglecting the defence of the Imperial strategic points. The Russian Mediterranean Fleet had now suddenly and unexpectedly sailed for the Atlantic, probably America "where they will lay up in a neutral port till war breaks up" and then commence raiding the undefended islands of the West Indies. Blackwood refused to be moved and once again declined the article. Undismayed, Colomb returned it imploring publication because he felt "that the Government sadly needs the support of public attention to enable them to get money to deal with the protection of coal depots and naval bases abroad." He appealed to Blackwood "to use his influence to bring abler minds and pens to bear on this vital problem".

Colomb was one of many in and out of the War Office and Admiralty who saw that the rise of Russia now made it necessary to turn official attention away from the local problems of home defence to the more global ones of imperial defence. By the late 1870s and early 1880s, largely as a result of the Eastern crisis (1875-8), the turning point had been reached, the Carnarvon, Airey and Eden Commission reports providing a framework for the future implementation of policy. Colomb to Blackwood, 18 Oct., 6 and 30 Nov. and 18 Dec. 1876 and 18 May 1877, *Blackwood Papers*, NLS. This incident suggests that more research needs to be done into the role of the periodical press in the shaping of British strategic policy in the 19th century.

[7] Cambridge to W.H. Smith, 9 May 1877, *Hambleden MSS*, Portugal Street, London.

[8] The minutes of the War Office Council meetings are to be found in *PRO/WO 163/1-2*. The first meeting was held on Saturday, 9 April 1870 and thereafter roughly once a month. For the Duke's objections, see Cambridge to Cardwell, pte, 10 and 17

Apr. 1870; Cardwell to Cambridge, pte, 12 Apr. 1870, *Cardwell Papers, PRO 30/48/3/13.*

[9] See Minutes of WO Council meetings for 16 July, 6 and 13 August, 19 October 1870; 11 March, 10 June, 24 July 1871; 14 and 16 March 1873. The technical experts consulted during these meetings included Storks, Jervois, Chapman and Adye for coastal defence; Storks, Vivian, Airey, Lindsay, Chapman, Wilson, Ellice, Home, Lysons and MacDougall for manoeuvres. Cardwell himself personally inspected some of the coastal fortifications and was particularly anxious that British Commissioners attached to the Prussian Armies, being technical officers, should report fully on the conduct of siege and counter-siege warfare, especially at Metz and Strasbourg. Cardwell to Cambridge, 22 Sep. and 8 Oct. 1870, *Cambridge Papers*, Royal Archives, Windsor. As early as 16 July, Gladstone had sought assurances from Cardwell that if the despatch of an expeditionary force became absolutely necessary in the defence of British interests, then Cardwell could manage it without the vast increase in military establishment called for by the Commander-in-Chief and without bringing the matter before Parliament. "What answer would the military authorities render to this question," he wrote, "those of them especially who have brains rather than mere position.... What I should like is to ready the means of sending 20,000 men to Antwerp with as much promptitude as at the time of the Trent Affair we sent 10,000 to B.N. America." But Cardwell refused to speak for the Cabinet as a whole, nor would he accept responsibility for mounting any expedition abroad unless strong enough to accomplish its objectives. Gladstone retorted that Cardwell had misunderstood his intentions; that he did not wish to do anything which would compromise the "real and entire neutrality of our position" or distort and misdirect the mind of Parliament and the public; that he was speaking only of a distant contingency, but one which, if it occurred at all would occur suddenly and perhaps drag Britain over the brink of war. In such a crisis he did not wish to be constrained by the more scrupulous members of the Cabinet who might feel it necessary to put the case for war or continued neutrality to Parliament (Gladstone to Cardwell, pte, 16 and 18 and 24 July 1870; Cardwell to Gladstone, 24 July 1870, *Cardwell Papers, PRO 30/48/2/6*). Despite this exchange of views, the War Office was already preparing to send officers secretly to reconnoitre Belgium and one, Colonel Fielding, before he went, set out his views in a memorandum for the Duke of Cambridge. Like Gladstone, Fielding believed that regardless of her neutral posture Britain needed to be in a position to take the field in the shortest possible time. It was of the utmost importance that the Southern, South-Western and Eastern parts of Belgium be minutely inspected and reported on by military men competent to judge their capabilities for defence. This should be conducted secretly, though with the knowledge of the Belgian Government. The beneficial effects of such reconnaissances would be considerable. They would show the Belgians that Britain was determined to defend her neutrality. They would convince the belligerent powers that Britain meant to go to war if duly provoked. And they would stimulate Holland and Belgium to fresh efforts in their own self-defence (Fielding to Cambridge, 31 June 1870, *Cambridge Papers*, RAW). Obviously nothing came of these missions, which were again repeated during the war scare of 1875, except that the information acquired was published in one of the handbooks on the armed strengths of the great military powers then being compiled by the Intelligence Branch.

[10] See footnote 5.

[11] See for instance Hardinge to Prince Albert, 19 June 1856, "Rough draft on Memorandum on Military Education by the late Field Marshal Viscount Hardinge, in the course of preparation when his Lordship gave up the Command of the Army, in July 1856, and unfinished July 1856". The burden of Hardinge's argument was that

military history, especially the history of combined operations, should be introduced as a "principal" subject at Sandhurst. Since amphibious expeditions were the means of projecting British military power abroad, their study should be automatic and accepted by all British officers. A study of Aboukir, the Peninsula, New Orleans and the Crimea would be indispensable to British Armies "who in most cases of active service abroad have to land on an open beach after a long voyage at sea". In this way it would be possible to discover "all the difficulties and the ways in which they have been overcome by an army landing on an enemy's shore" (*Army Papers, E/8*, RAW). In 1875, a joint Admiralty-War Office Committee examined and reported upon five hypothetical cases of British combined operations under the new conditions of warfare. It recommended that a permanent Secretariat be set up to work out contingency plans for such operations — plans which might well be lodged in the Intelligence Branch and touched up in the event of war (Preliminary Report of Committee appointed to Consider Movement of Organised Bodies of Troops by Sea, 1875, War Office Library).

[12] I must confess that this is a very generous interpretation of what was by any standards a very confused intelligence picture. Every level of British and Indian political and military society had been astonished and bewildered by the over-whelming decisiveness of the Prussian victories. The Commander-in-Chief in India, Lord Napier, anxious to repair the deficiencies in the Indian Armies exposed by his own campaign in Abyssinia, regretted that Britain had had "no competent military correspondents on both sides to tell us how it was done" and he wondered whether it had been entirely owing "to the Emperor being no general, to the new Prussian tactics, to their superiority of numbers or to their heavier artillery" (Napier to Cambridge, 20 Sep. 1870, *Cambridge Papers*, RAW). In London, Gladstone, Cardwell, and Granville were all agreed that "we ought if we can to obtain the fullest and the most accurate accounts of the whole of the Prussian military system, both at rest and in action", that a digest should be prepared for the Cabinet, and that the regular British military attache at Berlin, Colonel Beauchamp Walker, "ought to be sedulously employed in preparing a perfect account of the system in action, in all its various departments" (Gladstone to Cardwell, 21 Sep. 1870, *Cardwell Papers, PRO 30/48/16;* Cardwell to Granville, 5 Nov. 1870, *Granville Papers, PRO 30/29/53*).

But this was easier said than done. In London, the rush of officers on unofficial leave to visit the Franco-Prussian battlefields had reduced the Intelligence Branch to a single caretaker — Captain Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer — to collate and interpret such professional and newspaper reportage as was being transmitted from the seat of war (War Office Strictly Confidential Paper 0721, Report on the Intelligence Branch. A paragraph in the Report describes the conditions prevailing within the Branch during the War. "Besides the want of information about foreign armies, the library and map collection were deficient; reports of the Military Attaches were seldom received; officers were not sent officially to the continent; there was no information about the colonies; and neither the parliamentary nor the confidential papers relating to army matters were always sent to the department."). In France at the outbreak of war the Emperor had forbidden foreign war correspondents and unattached officers to accompany the French Armies in the field (Granville to Lyons, 18 July 1870, *Cambridge Papers*, RAW), but when Colonel Claremont, the official British military attache, found himself invested in Paris, the British Ambassador sent an urgent appeal to Granville requesting additional attaches "to visit the French Headquarters and apprise H.M.G. of the French means of resistance". Colonels Fielding, Colville and Reilly were accordingly sent to Tours and Colonel Lennox to the actual battlegrounds (Lyons to Granville, no. 648, 10 Oct. 1870, Lugard to Hammond, immed. 19 Oct. 1870, 'Franco-German War: Correspondence and Expences of British Officers attached to Headquarters", *PRO/FO 66 398*; Cardwell to Granville, 12 Oct. 1870, *Granville Papers, PRO/30/29/53*).

But it was the question of military representation at Prussian headquarters which created the worst headaches. The regular British military attache at Berlin, Colonel Beauchamp Walker, a Court favourite now in his 70s, had long been pining to give up his post and with the outbreak of war found himself unable to cope with the dynamic events taking place about him. Since 1864 his power for influence and therefore the technical and political quality of his reports had diminished proportionately with every Prussian triumph; for the Prussians had much to lose and nothing to gain from the free exchange of military knowledge which had now become vital to the maintenance of their position as a great military power. On the outbreak of the French war, therefore, Beauchamp Walker found himself forbidden to accompany the Prussian Imperial field headquarters and confined to Paris (Loftus to Cambridge, 23 July 1870, *Cambridge Papers*, RAW). At one of the most critical points of European history, therefore, when every detail about the Prussian military system was needed as a basis for future British foreign and military power, the British government was being denied the instant and authoritative intelligence it was the object of its military attaches to provide. Neither Gladstone, Cardwell, Granville — nor even the Queen — were satisfied with Walker's despatches to the Foreign Office. They struck the Queen's Whiggish and puckish Private Secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby, as "meagre... and too painfully idiotic twaddle" giving "but little information on professional questions... such as the use of cavalry, the armament of the artillery, and the organisation of the troops, their transport and commissariat" (Ponsonby to Cambridge, 11 Sep. 1870, *Army Papers, E/59*, RAW; Ponsonby to his wife, 27 Oct. and 7 Nov. 1870, *Ponsonby Papers*, Shulbrede Priory). But it was no joke to the Foreign Secretary. "We have now a banker looking after the Embassy, three amateurs looking after the poor English in Paris and a septuagenarian general sending us information by balloon. We have military men clamouring for employment in France and doing all sorts of foolish things there without leave" (Granville to Cardwell, pte, 6 Jan. 1871, *Granville Papers, PRO/30/29*). Gladstone was not amused. All turned to the Duke of Cambridge in justifiable expectation that Walker might at least have sent fuller reports to his Commander-in-Chief. But to no avail. It was therefore agreed that Captain H.M. Hozier, a former British Commissioner to the Prussian headquarters during the Austro-Prussian War and the official historian of the Abyssinian War, who was well known at Court and who was later to write an account of the French war, should assist Walker (Gladstone to Cardwell, 21 Sep. 1870; Cardwell to Gladstone, 22 Sep. 1870, *Cardwell Papers, PRO/30/48/2*). The result was a vast and immediate improvement in the quality and flow of intelligence.

Yet for all this Cardwell thought with the Indian High Command that the German system, whatever that proved by common consent to be, could only be adapted to British conditions and needs up to a point. In matters of the Reserve, officer education and the abolition of patronage, doubtless much could be learned and applied; but the basic conditions and needs which shaped the character and objectives of Prussian military power differed radically from those which shaped Britain's in four cardinal respects: Germany had universal conscription, no foreign service such as India or the colonies, powerful and dangerous neighbours on her immediate frontiers, and less mobility among industrial labour. Gladstone agreed: "it is not slavish copying that we want but real study.... a full and careful study of the whole Prussian system" (Cardwell to Granville, pte, 23 Sep. 1870; Gladstone to Cardwell, 23 Sep. 1870, *Cardwell Papers, PRO/30/48/2*). Over the next decade or so, this detailed study of the Prussian system was duly tackled from many angles: but the degree to which it influenced British military policy and organisation has yet to be authoritatively established. Nevertheless, official attitudes towards intelligence did not immediately change. Five years later, Ponsonby, Elphinstone and Walker were complaining to the Duke of Cambridge that the Intelligence Branch was "in a very unsatisfactory state" (Ponsonby to Queen Victoria, 7 Apr. 1875, *Army Papers, E/61*, RAW).

[13] See for instance O. Anderson, "Cabinet Government and the Crimean War," *English Historical Review*, LXXIX, pp.548-51; "The Constitutional Position of the Secretary at War, 1642-1855," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol 36, 1958, pp.165-9; *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*, London: MacMillan, 1967; see also Sir G. Douglas and Sir G.D. Ramsay (eds.), *The Panmure Papers*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2 vols, 1908, II, pp.316-7. For the subsequent existence and influence of the Cabinet War Committee, see Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 15 July 1857, 6 and 9 Dec. 1861; Derby to Queen Victoria, 5 May 1858; Cambridge to Peel, 9 July 1858, *Army Papers, E/91*, RAW; K. Bourne, "British Preparations for War with the North, 1861-1862," *E.H.R.*, October 1961, p.606.

[14] Cambridge to Hardy, pte, 5 Dec. 1876, *Cranbrook Papers, T501/268/4*; Hardy to Disraeli, pte, 6 Dec. 1876, *Hughenden MSS, B/XX/Ha/134*; Disraeli to Hardy, confdl, 8 Dec. 1876, *Cranbrook Papers, T501/266*. Disraeli rejected the idea on the grounds that it was premature and provocative, that such a Committee could do nothing that he was not already doing in private discussions with his principal Ministers and that to include the Commander-in-Chief in Cabinet consultation was unconstitutional and would needlessly and dangerously widen the circle of official secrecy.

[15] Most Confidential Memorandum on Military Organisation, undated, *Granville Papers, PRO/30/29/68*.

[16] Cyprian Bridge to Blackwood, 27 June 1874, *Blackwood Papers*, NLS; "Ocean Warfare," *Edinburgh Review*, vol 140, July 1874, pp.1-31; "The Growth of German Naval Power," *ibid.* vol 144, July 1876, pp.1-32.

[17] W.E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question, 1848-71*, Cambridge: C.U.P., 1958, pp.359-68. For a much less satisfactory treatment see R. Millman, *British Foreign Policy and the Coming of the Franco-Prussian War*, Clarendon: Oxford, 1966.

[18] W.N. Medlicott, "Bismark and Beaconsfield," in A.O. Sarkissian (ed.), *Studies in Diplomatic History and Historiography*, London: Longmans, 1961, pp.225-51.

[19] The best and fullest analysis of the character and extent of Russia's military preparations and political designs in the Balkans, their connection with and exploitation of the Franco-Prussian War, pan-Slavism and Egyptian nationalism, and the implications of all these things for British strategic policy is to be found in the despatches of Colonels Mansfield and Stanton, consuls-general at Belgrade and Cairo respectively, *PRO/FO 78/2138-40* and *FO 65/809,825,841*. See also Consul Abbot (Odessa) to Clarendon, no 19, confdl, 30 Oct. 1869, *PRO/FO 65/779*; Abbot to Granville, nos 29 and 32, 14 and 30 Aug. 1870, *ibid*; Consul Zohrab (Kertsh) to Granville, 8 Oct. 1870, *ibid*; Consul Green (Bucharest) to Granville, 18 July 1870, *ibid*. See also F.J. Cox, "Khedive Ismael and Panslavism," *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol 30, December 1951, pp.185-206. For an orthodox diplomatic treatment see W.E. Mosse, *The Downfall of the Crimean System*, London: Oxford, 1965 and many articles by him in the *Journal of Modern History*, the *Historical Journal* and the *Slavonic and East European Review*.

[20] Report on the Maritime Canal connecting the Mediterranean at Port Said with the Red Sea at Suez, Captain Richards and Lt. Colonel A. Clarke, *Accounts and Papers*, XLIV, 1870, Cmd 42.

[21] As Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bombay respectively, Frere and Napier had a particular interest in the naval defence of the West Indian Ocean and in the coastal fortifications of Aden and India. During the American Civil War, Frere had been worried lest American marauding cruisers of the Alabama class might surprise

him and he had argued strongly for the retention or reconstruction of the Indian Navy which had been abolished in 1862 as a combatant force (Frere to Wood, 13 Jan., 28 Feb. and 28 Apr. 1864, *Wood Papers, Eur.MSS.F78/88/9*, India Office Library). See also Frere's celebrated open letter to Sir John Kaye, 12 July 1874, in which he argued that because the Suez Canal has put German, Russian and American warships in more rapid touch with India than British warships, then H.M.G. should create a major naval presence in the Indian Ocean. These views were shared by Napier, his Commander-in-Chief and Commander-in-Chief in India from 1870 to 1875 (Napier to Cambridge, 26 Dec. 1868, *Army Papers, E/91,* RAW). General W.G. Hamley, brother of the great strategist, had covered the opening of the Suez Canal for *Blackwood's* and thereafter became their most prolific commentator on Eastern affairs in the 70s. See "Egypt and the Story of the Suez Canal," *Blackwood's*, vol 106, December 1869, pp.730-45; "The Opening of the Suez Canal," *ibid*, vol 107, January 1870, pp.85-104.

[22] On 25 November, a week after Russia's repudiation of the Black Sea clauses and at the height of the press scare, Childers had raised the question of the neutralisation of the Suez Canal before the Cabinet as a matter of "immediate and vital concern" (Childers to Granville, 25 Nov. 1870, S. Childers, *The Life and Correspondence of the Rt. Hon. Hugh C.E. Childers, 1827-96,* London: Murray, 1901, 2 vols, I, p. 247; Cabinet Minute, 25 Nov. 1870, *Gladstone Papers, Add.MSS.44638*, British Museum; E. Drus (ed.), A Journal of Events during the Gladstone Ministry, 1868-74, *Camden Miscellany*, XXI, London: Royal Historical Society, 1958, p. 14: "1870 May 29. We have had curious discussions on the Suez canal, and the question how we shd. keep open our communications with India in time of war. Childers is hot for neutralization of the canal on the condition that the passage shd. be free at all times for troops & ships of war. To this it was acutely objected that such an arrangement wd. be held by foreign nations to mean that England was to secure a passage for her armaments under the guise of general freedom. It is obvious indeed that as long as we were masters of the sea on the other side, the canal would be a mere trap for our enemies. There may perhaps be no harm in proposing neutralization on Childers' plan, but I expect the answer of foreign Governments wd. be, 'dont you wish you may get it'. In case of a war between England & France, still more if France & the U.S. are combined against us, it will be a race to get possession of Egypt. If we manage well, we ought to get there first, from the Indian side. But we ought not in my opinion to trust entirely to the canal, but to keep our stations on the Cape route secure from sudden attack. In spite of all our efforts we might lose the command of the Mediterranean, wh. wd. render the Suez route useless — What a blunder Palmerston made in opposing the Suez canal!").

The defence of Aden became a perennial problem. General Neville Chamberlain, Napier's successor in the Bombay Command, stopped off to inspect them on his way to India in 1870. At the request of the Government of India, Colonel W. Jervois, who had lead similar missions to Canada during the American Civil War, was sent out "to report on the proper mode of protecting the more important Indian ports and Aden." Over the winter of 1871-2, he examined the chief ports and recommended measures to improve their defence — measures which would have involved a large capital outlay and which became the subject of prolonged discussion. Things lapsed until 1875-6, when Captain J. Bythesea, RN, an associate of Jervois in Canada, was commissioned as naval advisor to the Government of India with special responsibility for coastal defence. At the height of the Eastern crisis in 1877 a temporary defence committee was set up which became permanent two years later. But it was not until after the Penjdeh crisis that Indian coastal defence was taken firmly in hand (Goschen to Northbrook, 8 July 1874; Jervois to Northbrook, 23 Apr. 1873, *Northbrook Papers, Eur.MSS.C144,* IOL; "Report of the Defence Committee on the General Scheme of Coast Defence for

India," Military Department to S.S.I., no 244, 8 July 1881, *India Military Proceedings*, National Archives of India).

[23] The British official attitudes to the American Missions, and the question of American-Egyptian-Russian cooperation in arms purchasing, military education and naval bases are to be found in the despatches of Stanton to Clarendon and Granville in PRO/FO 2138-40. Stanton was less alarmed at and suspicious of American interests in the Eastern Mediterranean than Granville. See also F.J. Cox, "The American Naval Mission in Egypt," *Journal of Modern History*, XXVI December 1954, pp.171-8; *The Blue and the Grey on the Nile*, New York, 1966.

[24] E.A. Adamov, "Russia and the United States at the time of the Civil War," *JMH*, II, 1930, pp.586-602; F.A. Golder, "The Russian Fleet and the Civil War," American Historical Review, XX, 1915, pp.801-12; "Russian-American Relations during the Crimean War," *AHR*, XXXI, 1926, pp.462-77; L.I. Strakhovsky, "Russia's Privateering Projects of 1878," *JMH*, VIII, 1935, pp.22-40; for the British Admiralty's reaction see Codrington to Hornby, 1 May 1877, *Hornby Papers, PHI/118b*, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

[25] Elliot had suggested to Granville that some "active young officers" might be seconded from the Royal to the Turkish Navy. The most notorious of these became Hobart Pasha. Royal Naval instructors lectured at the Turkish staff college and also ran their dockyards. Elliot to Granville, no.242, confdl, 17 Oct. 1870, *PRO/FO 78/2125*.

[26] At the height of the war scare November to December 1870, these ideas were pooh-poohed by Gladstone. In June he had been assured by Childers that the Royal Navy was in better working order than it had been for a long time, that it had adequate Reserves without drawing upon the Coastguard, Pensioners or Marines, and that it had at the ready a full complement of warlike stores, ammunition and equipment (Childers to Gladstone, 21 July 1870 and 9 Jan. and 21 Sep. 1871, *Gladstone Papers, BM.Add. MSS.44128*). He therefore felt confident that Russia's repudiation of the Black Sea Conventions and her building of a Black Sea fleet posed no immediate threat to the Suez Canal and resisted attempts of the part of Granville and Childers to increase the British naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean as premature, provocative and without just cause (Granville to Gladstone, 18 and 21 Nov. 1870; Gladstone to Granville, 19 and 22 Nov. 1870, A. Ramm (ed.), The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1868-1876, vol I (1868-71), *Camden Series*, LXXXI, London: Royal Historical Society, 1952, I, nos 160, 161, 370 and 374. See also W.E. Mosse, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The British Public and the War Scare of November 1870," *Historical Journal*, VI, 1963, pp.38-58.

[27] Fox, "Khedive Ismael and Panslavism," *op. cit.*, pp.151-68.

[28] Cambridge to Granville, pte, 28 June, 7 and 16 Dec. 1870, *Granville Papers*, PRO/30/29/72; see also Cambridge to Napier, pte, 29 Sep. 1870, *Napier Papers*. The Duke feared "that all this destruction of France will bring up again the Eastern Question, that Russia will begin to move in the East, and then our time of difficulty will be certain to come." He warned Napier to relax nothing in his efforts to put the Indian Army on a proper war footing; to look to the defences of Aden, to arm the Native Army with modern breechloaders and to resist the reduction of a single European soldier.

[29] Airey of course had been Quarter-Master General throughout and since the Crimean War and Storks had lately been Governor of the Ionian Islands. It might also be noted that Northbrook, then Cardwell's under-secretary at the War Office chairing a committee to look into the operation of the Intelligence Branch manned by his nephew Evelyn Baring, had in 1854 studied the question of war policy against Russia and come to the conclusion, as did Salisbury later, that Britain and Russia, being naval and military powers respectively, were mutually indestructable. Northbrook to Baring, 15 July 1872, *Northbrook Papers, Eur.MSS.C.144*.

[30] WO Confdl Paper 555, Extracts from "The Russians in Bulgaria and Roumelia in 1828 and 1829," written by Baron von Moltke, and translated into English in 1854. It gives an account of the theatre of war and especially of the Roads leading across the Balkan and may be found interesting at the present moment. E. Baring, 24 Nov. 1870; WO Confdl Paper 557, An Account of the Russian Army, 25 Nov. 1870; WO Confdl Paper 556, The Military Resources of Turkey, 27 Nov. 1870, *Granville Papers, PRO/30/29/109*; Secret Memorandum on War with Russia, H.M. Hozier, n.d., *PRO/WO 106*.

What the Cabinet made of Baring's reports it is difficult to say. They were highly statistical, based on Mansfield's earlier non-alarmist despatches of Russian military activities and submitted in late November after Gladstone had defused the immediate crisis. Throughout the 1870s Baring developed considerable reputation as a practical and realistic strategist. In 1869 he had published a book on *Staff College Exercises*; in 1872 he accompanied Northbrook to India as his Military Secretary (a post which Wolseley had been offered but declined) and there attempted a neo-Cardwellian sort of reform of the Indian Army. He returned to the Intelligence Branch in 1876 and through his memoranda on the defence of Constantinople, a Tigris-Euphrates Valley Expedition and the withdrawal from Candahar he was instrumental in devising the deflatory strategic policy which Disraeli more or less pursued throughout the Eastern Crisis. Baring felt that the study of strategy was inclined to make men go mad.

[31] The Consulates-General at Warsaw, Bucharest, Belgrade and other East European capitals had always been regarded as military observation posts encircling Russia. Since early 1870 Mansfield, brother of the Commander-in-Chief in India, had undertaken on his own initiative to study, and forward to the Foreign Office detailed reports on, every aspect of Milyutin's reforms of the Russian military service. These were welcomed and encouraged by Granville and from March onwards Mansfield kept up a steady flow of memoranda. See for instance Mansfield to Granville, 31 Mar. 1870, enclosing Memorandum no I on the Strength and Composition of the Russian Army, *PRO/FO 65/809*. Mansfield assumed that his reports would supplement the more "copious and exact" despatches of Colonel Blane who had been military attache at St. Petersburg since 1865. But Blane's reports, like Walker's from Berlin, were trivial and useless, and when the Franco-Prussian War broke out he found himself stranded in London negociating his release.

[32] This and the following paragraph is based on Mansfield's military memoranda noted above and also upon his review of Fadeef's book on Russian war policy and military resources entitled "The Military Policy of Russia," *Edinburgh Review*, CCLXXIII, July 1871, pp.1-44. This article is commonly attributed to his brother Sir William Mansfield, later Lord Sandhurst, Commander-in-Chief in India (1865-70) and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland (1870-75); but the wording suggests that it was written by the Consul-General.

[33] Both Cardwell and Childers at this time took surprisingly little interest, outside the day to day administration of their departments, in the higher question of devising a practical strategic policy against Russia. Both were demoralised by the time-consuming resistance to the reforms they had inaugurated and both were on the point of resigning. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that it was Granville, the Foreign Secretary, fully in touch with Near Eastern developments as reported by Mansfield and Stanton, and not the War Minister and First Lord of the Admiralty, who pushed vigorous measures upon the Cabinet — i.e. the strengthening of the Mediterranean fleet.

[34] The fullest account of Simmons' role in the making of British strategic policy during the Eastern Question is to be found in the present writer's unpublished doctoral dissertation, *British Military Policy and the Defence of India, 1875-81*, London, 1966.

[35] Memorandum on Certain Papers given to him for perusal by Mr. Cardwell, J.L.A. Simmons, 15 Dec. 1870, *Simmons Papers, PRO/FO 519/1.*

[36] With the notable exception of Wolseley who in 1877, as military representative on the Political Committee of the Home Council and with ambitions for the Indian Command, sponsored a plan calling for a defensive posture in Europe and an offensive Red Riverlike thrust into Russian Central Asia from India — ideas which he promptly dropped when the Indian Command denied him in the 1880s and when as Adjutant General he felt responsible for formulating a strategic policy that could at once appeal to the Government's maritime instincts and discredit the Indocentric views of his great rival Roberts. Memorandum on the Eastern Question, G.J., Wolseley, 10 Nov. 1876; Memorandum on Preparing for War with Russia, G.J. Wolseley, 30 Mar. 1878. *Wolseley Papers*, War Office Library; Preston, *Defence of India*, pp.145-6, 287-360.

[37] The whole question of Indocentric versus Eurocentric conceptions of Imperial strategic policy has been discussed by the present writer in the article cited in footnote 1.

[38] Brig.-General W.H-H. Waters, *"Secret and Confidential": The Experiences of a Military Attache*, London: Murray, 1926, pp.146-7; Sir Victor Wellesley (ed.), *Recollections of a Soldier-Diplomat*, London: Hutchinson, 1925; Colonel F.A. Wellesley, *With the Russians in War and Peace*, London: Nash, 1905.

[39] For this and the next paragraph, see Cadogan (military attache to the Sardinian Army) to Cambridge, 19 May 1859; Cambridge to Cadogan, 26 May 1859; Cambridge to DeGrey, pte, 8 Mar. 1864; Loftus to Clarendon, 2 June 1866, *Cambridge Papers*, RAW. A thorough study of the origins, role and development of the military attache service in Britain has still to be tackled by some historian. But see also L.W. Hilbert, "The Early Years of the Military Attache Service in British Diplomacy," *JSAHR*, vol 57, 1959, pp.164-71; "The Origins of the Military Attache Service in Great Britain," *Parliamentary Affairs*, no. 3, 1960; A. Vagts, *The Military Attache*, Princeton, 1965. General commentary upon the value of military attaches is to be found in Charles A'C. Repington, *Vestigia*, London: Constable, 1919, pp.248-9 and in Sir W. Robertson, *From Private to Field-Marshal*, London: Cassell, 1921, p.84.

[40] WO Confdl Paper 0457, Report of a Committee on the Topographical and Statistical Department, 24 Jan. 1871, WOL.

[41] See Ponsonby to Queen Victoria, 17 July 1871, *Navy Papers, E/52*, RAW; Buchanan to Granville, no 251, 16 Oct. 1871 and no 273, 9 Nov. 1871, enclosing reports by Cdr. Goodenough on (a) Russian naval dockyards and arsenals and (b) the Russian system of naval education and training. For Wellesley's appointment, see Cambridge to Granville, pte, 16 Dec. 1870; Granville to Cambridge, 22 May 1871, *Granville Papers, PRO/30/29/72.*

[42] Rylands had raised the question about Wellesley's qualifications for such an important post. The suppressed facts were that Wellesley was not a Staff College graduate and indeed had failed the Staff College entrance examinations, and that other, better qualified candidates such as Burnaby had been turned down. The Duke tended in Wellesley's case, as with most of his favourites, to look for extenuating circumstances: he argued therefore that Wellesley had been an excellent Regimental officer and A.D.C. to Lord Strathnairn in Ireland for which an examination had been required, that the Staff College examination had been unfair and that Wellesley had anyway been too young to sit for it.

[43] Waters, *op. cit.*, pp.91-4.

[44] Cardwell to Northbrook, 6 Nov. and 7 Dec. 1872, 23 Apr. 1873; Northbrook to Cardwell, 3 Oct. 1872, *Northbrook Papers, Eur.MSS.C.144.*

[45] WO Strictly Confdl Paper 0721, Report on the Intelligence Branch, Capt. E.H.H. Collen, October 1878, pp.103-12, WOL.

[46] Robertson, *op. cit.*; *Soldiers and Statesmen*, London: Cassell, 2 vols, 1928; R.L. Greaves, *Persia and the Defence of India*, 1884-1892, London: Athlone Press, 1959, pp.39-41, 196-9; J.A.S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy, the Close of the 19th Century*, London: Athlone Press, 1964, pp.292-4; C.J.Lowe, *Salisbury and the Mediterranean, 1886-1896*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965; D.R. Gillard, "Salisbury and the Indian Defence Problem, 1885-1902," in K. Bourne and D.C. Watt (eds.) *Studies in International History*, London: Longmans, 1967, pp.236-49.