

CURZON, KITCHENER AND THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN ARMY  
ADMINISTRATION, 1899-1909

by

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ABSTRACT AND NOTE ON CHRONOLOGY

The thesis falls into three periods, each having roughly two sections. In the first period (1899-1902) we shall consider (I) Curzon's problem with the Indian Army and (II) The problem of Kitchener's appointment to India.

The second period (1903-1905) will consider Curzon's relationship with Kitchener over the question of Indian military administration against the background of (III) India's relations with the Home Government. We shall treat (IV and V) the struggle between Curzon and Kitchener for control of Indian army administration, leading to the abolition of the Military Member of Council in May, 1905.

The third period takes into account (VI) Curzon's resignation and (VII) attempts to estimate Kitchener's reform of Indian army administration from 1906-1909.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT.....	2
PREFACE.....	5
CHAPTER I: CURZON'S PROBLEM WITH THE INDIAN ARMY.....	10
(1) The Army and India:	
(2) 'His Excellency's Attitude Towards Sin':	
(3) The 9th Lancer's Case:	
CHAPTER II: WANTED : A COMMANDER--IN--CHIEF.....	54
(1) The Problem of Kitchener's Appointment:	
(2) Kitchener's Background and Desire for the Indian Command:	
(3) Cabinet Delays - the Conflict of Interests between India and the War Office:	
(4) Russian Railway Expansion and the Defence of India:	
CHAPTER III: INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE HOME GOVERNMENT.....	101
(1) Brodrick's Unpopularity as Minister for War:	
(2) The Extension of Curzon's Term of Office:	
(3) The Defence Committee and India:	
(4) The South African Garrison Scheme:	
(5) Brodrick Assumes the India Office:	
CHAPTER IV: THE STRUGGLE OVER ARMY ADMINISTRATION (Part I).....	167
(1) 'My New and Erratic Colleague':	
(2) Frontier Imbroglia:	
(3) Clash with Elles:	
(4) The Calm before the Storm - 'Kriegspiel':	
(5) Brodrick: 'When the cat's away...':	
(6) Tibet and Afghanistan - 'The Great Game in Asia':	

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER V: THE STRUGGLE OVER ARMY ADMINISTRATION (Part 2).....	258
(1) Curzon's Return and Plans - The Arrangement with Balfour's Ministry:	
(2) Roberts:	
(3) Brodrick's Commission:	
(4) Relations with the Commander-in- Chief:	
(5) Kitchener's Press Campaign:	
CHAPTER VI: CURZON'S RESIGNATION.....	317
(1) The Verdict of the Council:	
(2) The Committee of Seven: the Amputation of the Military Member:	
(3) Curzon's Resignation:	
(4) Kitchener's Triumph:	
(5) The Bitterness of Defeat:	
CHAPTER VII: INDIAN ARMY REFORM, 1906-1909.....	410
(1) Minto and the New System:	
(2) Morley and Kitchener and the Abolition of the Military Member for Supply, January 1909:	
(3) Retrospect:	
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	479

PREFACE

During the period when Curzon was Viceroy (1899-1905) and Kitchener Commander-in-Chief (1902-1909), a number of developments affected British policy in India and had a significant bearing on Indian army administration. The Boer War was perhaps the most decisive, bringing with it an immense interest in the military security and the vulnerability of the Empire. At the same time, the ineptitude of Curzon's military advisers in India - lacking an effective Commander-in-Chief - revealed weaknesses in India's military establishment, <sup>which</sup> ~~and~~ was accentuated by disclosures involving racial collisions between Indians and European soldiers. It was in order to reform these abuses (and in conjunction with his fear of a possible Russian invasion and for India's external security) that the Viceroy obtained, in 1902, the services of the most distinguished soldier-administrator of his day, Lord Kitchener. However, subsequent divergence between the Government of India and the Home Government over the best method of advancing British policy in India, particularly in Central Asia, produced great friction; this friction was exacerbated by Kitchener's insistence on the abolition of the Military Member of the Viceroy's Council, which led to Curzon's resignation in the summer of 1905.

The controversy between Curzon and Kitchener, and the bitter legacy which it left, form the major subject of this thesis. In 1952 Sir Harold Nicolson wrote:

"To the end of his life he [Curzon] remained convinced that the Cabinet, and especially his old friend Mr. St. John Brodrick, Secretary of State for India, had treated him shamefully. After seven years as Viceroy he returned to England an angry and embittered man."<sup>1</sup>

That controversy is significant for what it reveals about the formation of events in matters connected with Indian administration.

Curzon died in March 1925. Lord Ronaldshay, his biographer, became engaged in a scholarly three-volume work - begun in 1926 and completed in 1928 - the second volume of which carefully and impartially covered the circumstances leading to Curzon's resignation. Nevertheless the storm of controversy and ill-feeling amidst which Curzon resigned his Viceroyalty left posthumous recriminations. In 1960 Peter Fleming alluded to the fact that in 1926, while Ronaldshay was writing Curzon's biography, Brodrick (then Lord Midleton) "had reason to fear" its publication: "There was clearly a risk that this bombshell might burst..." to the detriment of Brodrick's reputation and that "If the spotlight of public interest was going to be focussed again on Curzon's Viceroyalty, Brodrick had strong motives for deflecting it from the fatal wrangle with Kitchener on to the earlier disagreements - more Imperial, more impersonal - over Tibet and Afghanistan."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Nicolson, H., King George the Fifth: His Life and Reign, p.84, n.1.
  2. Fleming, P., Bayonets to Lhasa, pp.292-3.

In June 1926, Brodrick had indeed composed a secret pamphlet in which he stated his own version of the facts. We may well ask what was Brodrick's purpose in creating "some semblance of a blast-proof shelter" for himself in this way.<sup>1</sup> His own testimony at the time gives us a clue, for it was his belief "that temper and not policy governed Curzon's attitude" towards the Home Government during the last two years of Curzon's Viceroyalty when Brodrick was Minister for India. Accordingly, he suggested to Balfour the completion of a comprehensive memorandum which he proposed to publish in the event of any misrepresentation on the part of Curzon's biographer; he also proposed to supply the memorandum to Ronaldshay "telling him that we have no desire to make any publication unless the papers left by Curzon involve disclosures which are quite at variance with the facts as we see them."<sup>2</sup>

A fortnight later he informed Balfour: "Ronaldshay is getting on with his narrative & is beginning to ask me searching questions..."<sup>3</sup> Despite Brodrick's imprecations, Ronaldshay attempted to deal with the events surrounding Curzon's resignation in a fair-minded way. Moreover it is now possible to examine Kitchener's papers as well as those of the Cabinet and Defence Committee; With the publication in 1958 of Sir Philip Magnus' admirable biography of Kitchener,

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1. Fleming, P., Bayonets to Lhasa, pp.292-3.

2. Brodrick to Balfour, 4 June 1926, Balfour MSS 49721.

3. Ibid. 16 June 1926

we are in a position to view both sides of the picture.

Magnus was obliged to give the dispute with Curzon only a brief chapter, and as seen from Kitchener's viewpoint. Hitherto no comprehensive study has been made examining the circumstances surrounding these events. Contemporary writers like L. Mosley, K. Young and the late Lord Beaverbrook all refer to Curzon's dispute with Kitchener and emphasise, not the circumstances of his Viceroyalty, but the verdict passed on him by the Home Government and by history. Therefore it seemed useful and desirable in the present study to examine in detail the issues raised by the problem of Indian army administration, which became the central theme in Curzon's struggle with the Commander-in-Chief, and in his subsequent resignation.

With the opening of the private papers of Lord Curzon, the Balfour and Brodrick (Lord Midleton) papers, as well as the recently available records of the Committee of Imperial Defence and Cabinet, much new light is thrown on affairs connected with Indian administration. In preparing this thesis many other private papers have been consulted, including the Kitchener, Ampthill, Asquith, Haldane, Minto and Morley MSS; in addition, the Journals and Letters of Viscount Esher and the biography of Kitchener by Sir Philip Magnus have proved exceptionally useful. The purchase by the British Museum of the Marker-Kitchener correspondence,

in conjunction with that of the Sydenham MSS, has made it possible to trace Kitchener's secret contacts in his struggle with Curzon for control over army administration. Besides these, the official records of the Government of India and the India Office, Parliamentary Papers and debates, newspapers and contemporary secondary sources have been consulted.

CHAPTER ICURZON'S PROBLEM WITH THE INDIAN ARMY(1) The Army and India.

It was not long after its incorporation that the East India Company of London Trading Merchants found it necessary to employ military forces to protect its possessions and interests. These forces were of two kinds: armed native Indians called Sepoys who were usually enrolled in its factories, and a small body of European soldiers used for the purpose of defence. In the early days of the Company the three centres of trade, and thus Company control, were Madras, Bombay and Calcutta and the armies of these presidencies developed independently as the Company expanded from its three bases. The Acts of 1773 and 1783 gave the Governor-General overall control of its armies but they remained separate until well after the Mutiny in 1857. The most important problem connected with India was that of defence and it became an axiom of the Company's policy that India was ruled by force of arms. The troops needed for that purpose came from several sources; Royal regiments were originally used in emergencies in aid of the Company and later became permanently garrisoned in the country. Always by far the most efficient and reliable force, they came to be regarded with some jealousy by the Company's civil and military officers who were naturally conscious of their inferior position. The Company's armies consisted of both

Europeans and Indians, but by far the larger proportion of the army was composed of Sepoy regiments, officered by Europeans. At a time when the Company's territories were rapidly expanding these forces frequently cast up men with resource and ability, adding a valuable link between the civil service on the one hand and the military on the other; and introducing a much-needed element of flexibility. Often, however, these soldiers - who were paid regularly and lived in comparatively good conditions - attached too much importance to their prestige and this created friction. With the passage of time both Royal and Company troops came to look upon 'the natives' with some contempt and in that way a gulf sprang up between the army and the civilian population.

The shock of the Mutiny left a deep and lasting impression upon military administration for it had demonstrated clearly that Britain did not rule India by consent. In 1859 the Peel Commission established principles of military policy which were to endure for more than half a century, greatly influencing matters connected with the defence of India. Although the Queen's proclamation of 1858 declared non-discrimination regarding the employment of Indians in the service of the Crown as well as the principle of racial equality, nevertheless that principle was virtually disregarded. The British element in the Indian army was increased while the Indian diminished until a rough proportion of one to two was reached. Instead of having a salutary

effect, the Queen's declaration led to a spirit of caution in British army administration. In every measure of policy affecting the Indian army the cardinal principle was the prevention of mistakes which in the past had led to catastrophe. For the moment two Indian battalions were brigaded with one European, and no important station was without its European complement of troops. As before, Indian regiments continued to be officered by Europeans but it was natural that the result tended to forego the needs of the future by remedying the failures of the past. That ratio, in addition to the practice of keeping the whole of artillery and control of all arsenals in European hands, engendered bitterness and the feeling of racial discrimination among Indians.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, during the post-Mutiny era as the tide of British moral superiority rose in India and grew, that attitude did nothing to relieve the bitterness from the emotional involvement of the past. Affront, uncertainty and the degradation of fearing those whom the army had attempted to intimidate, gave rise to insecurity, the doctrine of race superiority and often contempt on the part of British soldiers towards Indians. In this connection officials in India and London viewed with grave anxiety the problem of race hatred;

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1. Singh, H.L., Problems and Policies of the British in India 1885-98, pp.138; 166.

and in particular the Indian army,<sup>1</sup> as we shall see, presented peculiar hazards to the maintenance of British prestige.

At the close of the Mutiny, the European army numbered some 40,000 men and gradually increased until, in 1905, there were 75,000 European troops with an additional 140,000 Indian forces, to which were added 2,700 British officers attached to the latter and 1,000 staff officers. Further, there were 35,000 men in the Indian Reserve, 33,000 European and Eurasian Volunteers, and nearly 20,000 Imperial Service troops recruited from the Indian States. The annual cost of the army was borne entirely by Indian revenues and by 1905 constituted an impressive figure. The total net military expenditure amounted to 25% or roughly 20 millions sterling out of a total revenue of 82 millions. This was considerable when compared with that of Great Britain who spent only 30 millions out of a revenue of 144 millions on her military preparations.<sup>2</sup> Along with its role of defending India's borders while maintaining internal law and order, the London Government looked upon the Indian army as an Imperial reserve, available in emergencies to enforce British policy

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1. Technically the term 'Indian army' lacked legality. The official designation was the 'army of India'. Whereas Indian forces were subject to the Indian Articles of War, British officers and soldiers serving with the Indian forces were subject to the Army Act. But the term 'Indian army' was in current use and will be used in this thesis. See *ibid.*, p.158.
  2. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th Series, vol.147 (Speech by Brodrick, 21 June 1905) cols.1238-9.

in campaigns in Africa and in China. There were constant protests against this practice of denuding India's garrisons while indenting her revenues for Imperial campaigns elsewhere. This created a potentially dangerous political situation while providing much ammunition for later grievance on the part of western educated Indians; and in time we find Gandhi writing that India must possess "the power to refuse to send a single soldier outside India for the purpose of enslaving the surrounding or remote nationalities."<sup>1</sup>

Some attempt must be made to note the system of Indian military administration, as it had emerged towards the close of the 19th century. Since 1793 the position of the Commander-in-Chief was usually assured as a Member of Council, and at all events since that date, had been appointed to a seat on the Council. Up till 1861 the military as well as the civil affairs of India were not in the charge of any particular Member of the Council, but were dealt with by the Council as a whole. The appointment of a Military Member of Council appears to have first been proposed in the year 1833. In that year, on the expiry of the East India Company's Charter of 1813, a bill was introduced into Parliament depriving the Company of its commercial monopolies and providing for the better government of the Company's territories in India. One of the points taken up in the Bill

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1. Young India, 8 December 1920.

was the extension of the authority of the Governor-General over the three Presidencies, and the strengthening of his Council by the addition of three Members, one of whom was to be a military officer. In 1786 the Military Department was created, and formed the channel for the issue of the orders of the Supreme Government to the executive heads of the army. In the years following the Mutiny, the whole of Indian administration came under the control of one strong central government. As the three bases of British rule and their armies tended to diminish in importance, the separate armies and Commanders of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were accordingly abolished in 1893, to provide one unified system in the face of the proximity of Russia to the frontiers of India.<sup>1</sup> These changes came into effect in April 1895.

The Army of India had but one head - the Governor-General in Council - and the Military Member of Council was the representative of the Governor-General in Council collectively. By law, every act done by the Military Member was an act of the Governor-General in Council; similarly the Commander-in-Chief acted on the basis of authority delegated by the Viceroy. The Viceroy could at any time intervene. But during Curzon's Viceroyalty,<sup>2</sup> for purely administrative

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1. Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.158-9.

2. George Nathaniel, first Marquess of Curzon of Kedleston (1859-1925) Under-Secretary for India 1891-2; Viceroy of India 1898-1905; Lord President of the Council and Member of the War Council 1916-18; Foreign Secretary 1919-24.

reasons he found it more convenient to intervene through the Military Member; in that way the Viceroy could bring cases of abuse committed in the army within his immediate purview and control; and it was this control and interference that subsequently created friction.

Responsibility for military administration thus became divided between two officers, the Commander-in-Chief who was the first military adviser to the Viceroy and executive head of the Army, and the Military Member who (invariably) was a second and alternative adviser. As the various departments of administration in India were each in the charge of a member, both the Commander-in-Chief, and the Military Member were members of the Viceroy's Council (collectively described as the Governor-General of India in Council) in whom was vested by the Crown (under the Charter Act of 1833) 'The superintendence, direction, and control of the whole Civil and Military Government of all our territories and revenues in India'. It is important to understand that the many duties of the Commander-in-Chief were quite sufficient to occupy his time and energies, besides making frequent absences from the seat of Government inevitable. The Military Member and his department were designed to provide an expert check upon military expenditure, by far the largest single expense in the administration of British India and subsequently a major source of grievance to Indians. Political considerations also buttressed this division of

administrative responsibilities in military matters, as Lord Roberts emphasised in a debate in the House of Lords in 1905:

"I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion it is essential to the security of India that the Viceroy should not be dependent on the advice of a single soldier, however eminent and distinguished he may be. Even if he were an Indian officer and his experience had been entirely Indian, as was the case with myself, I consider it would be advantageous for the Viceroy to have at his side a second adviser not directly connected with the Army. But when the Commander-in-Chief is ... a complete stranger to India, I consider it to be a positive danger to our hold over the country that he should be the only one to advise the Viceroy on military matters ... It is essential that the Viceroy should have on his Council an officer - he need not be a great soldier - intimately acquainted with India, especially with the Native Army, its feelings and its idiosyncrasies."<sup>1</sup>

That system was based on the British soldier who was trained to be a universal policeman and in an emergency, was expected - as an armed man under severe discipline - to be capable of great initiative, independent action, a high sense of duty, morale, efficiency and a multitude of other worthy traditions. Above all he was an object lesson to, as well as a member of, the British community in India, susceptible to whatever forces moved his superiors. His task was to

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1. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 1 August 1905, 4th Series, vol.150, cols.1096-7. Roberts (1832-1914) was the greatest military authority on India of the day, and had inspired Kitchener during their time together in the South African War. Roberts had served in India during the Viceroyalties of Canning, Elgin, Lawrence, Mayo, Northbrook, Lytton, Dufferin and Lansdowne, and had been Commander-in-Chief in India for seven years, 1885-93.

obey, and yet he was supposed to lead an exemplary life on the theory that peace depended upon the traditional maintenance of a powerful navy which dominated all strategy while the army was merely maintained as a form of military police to garrison the Empire. Small wonder that in many cases and under peculiar circumstances the system failed.

The health and comfort of soldiers was always the subject of concern to authorities in India, and one of her foremost soldiers became renowned for his efforts to lighten the burden of the average soldier, which Kipling's ballad so well expressed:

Now they've made a bloomin' Lord  
 Outer Bobs,  
 Which was but 'is fair reward -  
 Weren't it, Bobs?  
 So 'e'll wear a coronet  
 Where 'is 'elmet used to set;  
 But we know you won't forget -  
 Will yer, Bobs?

Then 'ere's to Bobs Bahadur - little Bobs,  
 Bobs, Bobs,  
 Pocket-Wellington an 'arder -  
 Fightin' Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!  
 This ain't no bloomin' ode,  
 But you've 'elped the soldier's load,  
 An' for benefits bestowed,  
 Bless yer, Bobs!<sup>1</sup>

In 1887 Roberts introduced a scheme in India which aimed at providing the soldier with greater facilities for social intercourse amidst more comfortable surroundings. Instrumental in raising the moral standard of the army, he, and his

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1. James, D., Lord Roberts, pp.242-3.

successors, abolished the fixed price of beer at 4 annas a quart and scrutinised the canteen profits made by Government malt and liquor contractors. His assault on the brewers and their vested interests, collectively known as 'the Beerage', became legendary, for they had compelled the soldier to spend his money on local beer (which he disliked) while preventing him from consuming English beer (which he preferred). Venereal disease presented a chronic problem gravely impairing the efficiency of the army. In 1894-5 the ratio of admissions to hospital for V.D. was 511.4 per 1,000 per annum, and 522.3 per 1,000 per annum, subsequently reduced by Kitchener so that by 1907-8 the figures stood at 89.9 and 69.0 per 1,000.<sup>1</sup> The number of assaults of soldiers on Indians in 1903 was 72, reduced in 1905 to 24.<sup>2</sup> British officers took great pride in reforming these abuses and on one occasion, while visiting troops at a parade at Poona, Kitchener spoke rather severely on the subject of V.D. One of the officers asked a soldier "what he had understood me to say. The man replied 'His Lordship congratulated us on our efficiency in the field and our discretion in the boudoir'", and the Commander-in-Chief reported to the Viceroy "good was it not?"<sup>3</sup>

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1. Record of Lord Kitchener's Administration of the Army in India, 1902-1909. pp.244-6. Minto MSS 836.

2. Ibid.

3. Kitchener to Minto, 30 November 1906, Minto MSS 979.

Army life tended to be monotonous and insufferably dull. The regiment was the centre of cliquishness, inevitable in any ingrown and exclusive association which took pride in maintaining its prestige. Men were stationed for long periods of time in all parts of India, often where there were hardly any of their countrymen. Usually merchants or officials had little desire to associate with soldiers and seldom allowed their womenfolk to do so. The world of the soldier was therefore filled with long hours spent on parades, drills, inspections, on sentry duty; or on polishing belts, bayonets, cleaning guns, or marching, often with the temperature around 108 degrees. The routine life of the barrack-room had its effect and troops often became destructive and given to behaviour characterised by drunkenness, brawling, beer-swilling or brutal licentiousness. Banded together in compact units, soldiers were animated by a fierce antagonism of any official censure of their conduct and winked at abuses committed by their comrades, especially where these involved Indians. In 1904 the Viceroy reported that in 19 out of 20 cases involving clashes between Indians and soldiers "the cause of the mischief is that the English soldiers are either after a woman or are drunk."<sup>1</sup>

Because she was an island, England never accepted the Army with sufficient seriousness, regarding the Navy as

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 3 March 1904. Note: Unless otherwise indicated all references to Curzon are cited from the Curzon Papers at the India Office Library, Eur.MSS. F.111. See Bibliography for their corresponding arrangement.

her first line of defence. The military profession therefore, more often than not, provided a 'proper occupation' for the sons of country gentlemen pleasantly supplementing a generous private income. The association of the gentry with the officer class reflected a considerable amount of unconscious arrogance and contempt in the army (especially towards one's inferiors) and a military career was indeed preferable to such alternative occupations (with their attendant loss of social prestige) as selling bonds or insurance, entering a good law firm or perhaps the pulpit. In that way, the traditional view of the honour of the profession of arms died hard, with regrettable consequences. Successive cabinets tried to improve matters, most notably Cardwell during Gladstone's ministry of 1868-74. Nevertheless efforts at reform met with blistering opposition and the dead-hand of tradition, followed by public apathy. One of the more serious shortcomings of the British Army lay in the proliferation of factions and cliques among its officers and the disagreements of the military experts themselves on questions of strategy. Rivalry among the professional soldiers often stemmed from the past and the long and bitter struggle between Crown and Parliament for control of the army (as symbolised by the presence of the archaic 'German sausage', H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief from 1856 to 1895 who died in 1904 at the age of 84), and in part from the administrative mismanagement and inefficiency

of ministers and statesmen who seldom agreed on matters related to the conduct of military operations. The resulting chaos was demonstrated by the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny and more particularly, the Boer War when a glaring spotlight was cast on the shortcomings of the British Army.

Nowhere was there a greater divergence of military opinion than between what became known as the 'Wolseley Ring' and the 'Roberts Ring' which culminated in the fiasco of the siege of Ladysmith during the Boer War. Antagonism had sprung up from the Wolseley faction, who zealously denied promotion to men who had served with Roberts in India. Furthermore, disagreement and friction arose as to what part India should play in the event of hostilities between England and Russia. In 1888 Roberts maintained that Britain's greatest danger was her exposure to potential Russian aggression in Central Asia while Wolseley contended that meeting Russia, say in Afghanistan, would automatically forfeit Britain's enormous advantages of sea power.<sup>1</sup>

It took the shock and humiliation of defeat in three successive disasters in 1899 at Magersfontien, Stormberg and Colenso, followed by the blockade of three British garrisons in Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking to bring home to the

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1. See Greaves, R.L., Persia and the Defence of India 1884-1892 for a full analysis of Roberts' views and their impact on British policy during the 80's and 90's, p.3. See also two recent books, Symons, J., Buller's Campaign, pp.16-17, and Lehmann, J., All Sir Garnet: A Life of Lord Wolseley 1833-1913, pp.65,75,293.

country the failure of British arms. As events in South Africa disclosed fatal defects in the methods of war organization, confidence in the professional ability of soldiers waned. Insufficient maps for example led to masses of troops persistently hurled against carefully prepared positions when, if properly reconnoitred, they might easily have been taken. Breakdown in supply and transport arrangements brought troops into traps where once isolated, they were ambushed, while whole bodies of men remained out of touch from the main army and <sup>were</sup> forced to surrender from want of ammunition and support. When it is remembered that the British enjoyed a numerical superiority of four to one over the enemy, small wonder that prestige and reputations suffered, though incompetent blunders were termed 'regrettable incidents' in the official despatches home. In England, when intellectuals did focus upon military matters it was to the effect that war was too serious a matter to leave to soldiers and L.S. Amery voiced much of the outrage of the British press when he wrote:

"Regarded as an institution of society the British Army of 1899 was undoubtedly a success. The numbers on its rolls were large, the uniform of the members through all the ranks of the military hierarchy most distinctive, their traditional ceremonies, known as inspections, parades, guards, elaborate and pleasing to the eye, the regulations to which they submitted infinitely complex. As a fighting machine it was largely a sham."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Amery, L.S. (ed.) The Times' History of the War in South Africa, II, p.40.

The ensuing loss of public confidence in the capacity of soldiers and statesmen alike created a new mood in the country, with the result that the Edwardian public, ever alert for a hero, exulted in force and violence.<sup>1</sup> But the army sent to South Africa was the victim less of war than of the War Office and though subsequently the Government sought to save itself by blaming its generals, in 1903 the Elgin Commission of Inquiry laid the responsibility for failure on the British Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> Once again there were frantic efforts to overhaul the defective machinery, first by St. John Brodrick, then by H.O. Arnold-Forster and finally by R.B. Haldane. In the meantime confusion over Britain's military affairs rapidly accelerated.

In the face of mounting criticism and public outcry, the Cabinet had, on 19 January 1900, replaced General Buller, a member of the 'Wolseley Ring', by Lord Roberts as Commander-in-Chief of the forces in South Africa. The selection of Lord Kitchener<sup>3</sup> was made to act as Roberts' Chief of Staff. As we shall see, Kitchener alone emerged from the

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1. See Terraine, J., Douglas Haig, The Educated Soldier, pp.13,15,24.

2. Esher, Letters and Journals, I, p.394.

3. Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener of Khartoum (1850-1916). Served in Wolseley's expedition to relieve Gordon, 1884-5; Sirdar of the Egyptian army 1892; Victor of the battle of Omdurman in the reconquest of the Sudan, 1898; Followed Roberts as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, 1900-02; Commander-in-Chief in India, 1902-09, Field Marshall, 1909; Consul General in Egypt, 1911; Secretary of State for War 1914; drowned when the H.M.S. Hampshire sank off Orkneys en route to Russia, 1916.

Boer War with his reputation enhanced and his prestige intact. For most of Britain's commanders Africa had once more proved her curse as the graveyard of military reputations: and as the Viceroy of India wrote "What a war of miscalculations this has been! It has been marked by a positive hecatomb of reputations."<sup>1</sup> By his choice and at the express wish of the Government of India, Kitchener was then sent to India to reform her archaic system of army administration. Yet owing to a peculiar set of circumstances, a fierce struggle developed between the Viceroy and the new Commander-in-Chief over the best way of advancing the interests of the Empire, to whose service both were dedicated. This struggle was waged for control of Indian army administration. Once again the Cabinet intervened, this time less decisively whilst a bitter and protracted conflict ensued between what John Morley termed the 'Kitchenerites' and the 'Curzonians'. During a period of increasing unrest and instability that quarrel helped to obscure more fundamental issues which were to emerge, affecting British rule in India for the next generation.

In March 1900 the Secretary of State for India, Lord George Francis Hamilton illustrated the shortcomings of the army in his letters to the Viceroy and his forebodings

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1. See Curzon to Hamilton, 10 January 1901.

presaged events soon to occur in India. He characterised the military profession as "not sufficiently a serious service. A good figure, a tight waistband ... and physical proficiency are supposed to be sufficient equipment", "brainpower ... is laughed at or ridiculed by the average British officer."<sup>1</sup> Hamilton was dismayed by the spectacle of Britain's system of army administration and more especially the rivalry between military factions: "the jealousy, the dislikes, the army cliques are quite indescribable. They seem to ramify in all directions."<sup>2</sup> The Permanent Under Secretary of State for India, Sir Arthur Godley, shared that attitude: "the general character of the army, its easy life, its expensiveness, its devotion to amusements, its tendency to shield and overlook all shortcomings, will go on exactly as at present, and the British officer will remain what he has always been, an amateur, and generally a stupid amateur."<sup>3</sup>

Towards the close of the 19th century British statesmen began to realise that though the navy was the keystone of England's power, it was the army which maintained the prestige of British rule. Lord Salisbury, the aging Prime Minister, along with his nephew and successor, A.J. Balfour,

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1. George Francis Hamilton (1845-1927) was formerly 1st Lord of the Admiralty (1885-6 : 1886-92) and Secretary of State for India 1895-1903. A tolerant and sympathetic Conservative he allowed Curzon generous rein during the period of their association.
  2. Ibid., 30 May 1900. *Hamilton to Curzon*
  3. Godley to Curzon, 22 November 1900. Godley (later Lord Kilbracken, 1847-1932) served as Permanent Under Secretary at the India Office from 1883 to 1909.

recognised the seriousness of the blow which British prestige had suffered at the hands of a few thousand ill-trained farmers during the Boer War. He became acutely concerned about the problem of racialism, fearing that prestige in British arms might be so impaired that sedition and revolt would break out in India in the event of her becoming involved in hostilities. In a remarkable letter to H.S. Northcote, then Governor of Bombay, he opened his mind on several aspects of that situation:

"... It interests me to find that you are struck with the 'damned nigger' element in the British society of Bombay. It is bad enough in official and military circles here. I look upon it as not only offensive and unworthy but as representing what is now, and will be in a highly magnified proportion, a serious political danger. But I preach in the wilderness. It belongs to that phase of British temper which in the last few months has led detachment after detachment of British troops into the most obvious ambushes - mere arrogance ... Compare our treatment of the native races with that of Russia. We have in vain tried here - with the Queen to back us - to obtain some portion of military honours and grades for the native princes. It is not conceivable that they should bear for two more generations this ostentatious mark of contempt: that those of their race are not allowed to fill any high command. It is the fashion in which Turkey treats her Christian subjects. But we in India are a good deal less numerous than the Turks: and the Indian populations are infinitely more numerous than the Rajahs. It is painful to see the dominant race deliberately going over into the Abyss."

Salisbury went on to emphasise the tactical disadvantages which would ensue when and if Russia should apply the

leverage of her Central Asian rail-roads in Afghanistan:

"There is another Indian policy or rather Indian neglect which greatly afflicts me and on which I have preached in vain both to Lansdowne and Curzon, I mean the want of<sup>1</sup> the military railway from Quetta to Seistan ... I acknowledge that Curzon is exonerated by the terrible financial problems he has had to meet. But our delay in making this railway may cause us great embarrassment. It means that when Russia advances we shall have to fight her on the Indian frontier. The strain of doing so will be enormous: our defence will be a frontal attack on a mountain barrier, which is not held by ourselves. Occasionally the defence will fail for a time - and a spasm of sedition will start from one end of India to the other. On the other hand, if you had a railhead at Seistan - connected with Quetta - or better still with the sea - Russia could not advance Eastward without masking your force at Seistan: an enormous effort. I am not so bent on this because I believe Russia has any definite view of conquering India. But when her Siberian railway is ready, she will want to be mistress of the greater part of China: and if Afghanistan is unprotected she can force us to give way in China by advancing upon India. She won't try to conquer it. It will be enough for her if she can shatter our Government and reduce India to anarchy. These things will not concern me - but my successors of I know not what degree. But nevertheless the forecast is not pleasant..."<sup>2</sup>

Though that problem and the fears which it created were largely insoluble, there remained for the Cabinet one

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1. Seistan was the eastern-most province of Persia and was contiguous to India. The Government of India under Curzon were obsessed by the fear of Russian influence and penetration in Seistan. See Nicolson, H., Lord Carnock, p.240.
  2. Salisbury to Northcote, 8 June 1900; Grenville, J.A.S., Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: the Close of the Nineteenth Century, pp.295-6. Grenville provides a useful background of the role of India in British foreign policy during the period 1895-1902.

alternative; the discovery of some effective instrument for the restoration of prestige in British arms. <sup>Moreover,</sup> ~~as~~ emphasis on the rightness of Britain's Imperial responsibilities grew and so too did the doctrines of paternalism, trusteeship and benevolent despotism. Curzon's Viceroyalty marked the flood tide of Imperial rule in India, but the doctrines which he espoused turned out to be false ones - he found himself stumbling on the very ground where he thought himself most firmly footed. Furthermore the Cabinet was coming round to view with undisguised approval rule by the strong arm and here again they saw in Kitchener the most effective instrument to achieve that aim.

In India in the meantime Curzon considered himself a supreme bureaucrat served by his departments, with the civil service on his right hand and the army on his left. As Viceroy he believed he could exercise a salutary influence throughout British Government in India.

Curzon's brand of Imperialism rested on the hypothesis that were it not for the British Raj India would lapse into chaos: "I am an Imperialist heart and soul", he told the Liberal John Morley in 1900. He professed that in the long run the Imperial ideal "made for good government, righteousness and freedom; I do not see how any Englishman, contrasting India as it is now with what it was, and would certainly have been, under any other conditions than British rule, can fail to see that we came and have stayed here under no

blind or capricious impulse but ... for the lasting benefit of millions of the human race."<sup>1</sup>

Regarding it as his personal duty to see that British Government in India rested securely on a moral basis, Curzon set about righting abuse as well as carrying forward an exhaustive programme of reform. Determined to make his administration efficient as well as memorable, Curzon was the new type of public engineer who devoted his vigorous ability to the operation of an administrative machinery capable of reacting sensitively to the needs of the Indian people. In constructing his edifice, Curzon so designed matters as to be able to get to the bottom of every case, to the heart of every detail, to the root of every defect. Curzon's intellectual temper had been sharpened at Balliol College, Oxford where he had learned to judge issues strictly on their merit, with a ruthless detachment from all emotion. So conscious of detail was he that in any dispute he was apt to emphasise a small point as a great one and few Viceroy's were least <sup>is</sup> loved as Curzon. Nevertheless dislike of Curzon was accompanied by respect and the heat which he generated must not obscure the light which resulted. His chief business was to set up his machine and get it to work effectively as soon as possible, regardless of the resentment of change it brought to a Civil Service enmeshed in

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1. Curzon to Morley, 17 June 1900.

comfortable routine and few of his changes did not turn out to be ~~best~~ improvements. As he himself said, the Viceroy "must be very courageous ... all around are great problems to be taken up, which have been shirked for years, almost for generations, because they are more likely to ruin than to make reputations."<sup>1</sup> Nowhere was the Viceroy's energetic activity more resented than in cases of abuses committed by European soldiers in the Indian army.

Hitherto few historians have cared to dwell on Curzon's crusade for social justice in India. Yet no consideration of his Viceroyalty would be complete which failed to take into account his strong sense of moral duty to ensure integrity and fair play in Indian administration. Curzon embarked on a campaign to end collisions between soldiers and Indians and to prevent the racial estrangement which he knew they involved. Like Ripon before him<sup>2</sup> he became unpopular with his own community and the target for much abuse. Undeterred he risked unpopularity in order to vindicate British rule from the charge of iniquity and went out of his way to investigate collisions between the races. This brought resentment and in that way Curzon opened a potential feud with the Indian army.

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1. Curzon to Morley, 17 June 1900.
  2. Lord Ripon (1827-1909) was Viceroy of India from 1880 to 1884. In 1883 he had attempted in the Ilbert Bill to enable Indian judges to try Europeans and thus remove juridical disqualifications based on race in India. His action aroused much ill-feeling and was vigorously opposed by the European community and the bill had to be withdrawn.

(2) "His Excellency's Attitude Towards Sin"

Realising the harm caused by the potent factor of racialism in the Indian army Curzon embarked on a series of close investigations culminating in the discovery of an ugly disclosure, greatly prejudicing his mind against India's system of military justice as well as the civilian administration when it concerned the conduct of European soldiers towards Indians. Early in 1899 soldiers of the West Kent Regiment stationed at Rangoon had assaulted and raped a Burmese woman. A trial had been held at which conflicting evidence tended only to shield the culprits. They were acquitted and for a time the affair was hushed up. When the Viceroy accidentally heard of the matter his resolute sense of moral righteousness was deeply stirred and he became particularly irritated when he discovered "the extraordinary apathy displayed by the local military authorities" in seeing justice done.<sup>1</sup> Two principle issues were involved; military discipline and civilian administration of justice. On 28 June Curzon informed Hamilton that he intended to inflict severe punishment on the guilty parties, "... so important do I feel it for the sake of the reputation, both of the Army, and of British justice, that we should get to the bottom of this case." On 5 July, after closer examination he described what had occurred to the Secretary of State:

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 14 June 1899.

"The woman was lying naked and covered with filth, and one of the male witnesses testified his belief that as many as 40 men had had connection with her."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon's own moral code was outraged and contributed to the personal feeling with which he now pursued the case. No consideration of personal abuse, risk of unpopularity, or public disapproval would deter him. It is worthwhile, therefore, to ascertain how Curzon visualised the problem of race hatred in India; for no aspect of that question was allowed to escape his eye as he indefatigably pursued the civil and military authorities who had thus so lamentably failed to discharge their moral obligations to British justice.

Accordingly, the West Kent regiment was banished for two years to Aden and the culprits dismissed while one General was relieved from his command. The civilian authorities were severely censured for their part in what Curzon termed a gross miscarriage of justice.<sup>2</sup> Finally, he issued an official statement, an Order in Council, in which he placed on public record the repugnance with which the Government of India viewed the negligence and apathy displayed by the responsible authorities. That action was tantamount to a declaration of war on the Indian army and inevitably there were strong reactions. His vigorous and forthright measures were lauded in the English press both in

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 5 July 1899.

2. Ibid., 25 January 1900.

India and in England and the Indian National Congress passed a resolution expressing gratitude for his determination "to uphold the interests of order and justice" by the subsequent issue of regulations on the conduct of soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless the peremptory manner in which he served notice to the European community in India of his resolute desire for social justice might well have been more beneficial had it been less calculated to put up the backs of the Indian army and the Civil service. The resentment<sup>of</sup> Curzon's methods aroused was expressed in an anonymous article in The Contemporary Review in August 1900. In particular the severity of the sentence was singled out for criticism:

"the banishment of the whole regiment to Aden, the compulsory retirement of its colonel and sergeant-major, the resignation of its adjutant and the summary discharge of the offenders from the army" constituted "a disproportionate retribution." In addition, the Order-in-Council became the target of abuse: "The spectator stands amazed at the apparent lack of sense of proportion implied in this official order", for in the Viceroy's belligerent action was revealed "the unmistakable imprint of His Excellency's attitude towards Sin."<sup>2</sup>

The 'Rangoon Outrage', as the case became known, opened a fatal breach between Curzon and the army.<sup>3</sup> In

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1. Report of the Indian National Congress 1900, Resolution VII, p.70.
  2. Contemporary Review, August 1900, 'A Progressive Viceroy' by 'Civillis'.
  3. See Curzon to Hamilton, 16 May 1900, for his hostility to the army.

addition Curzon found that his efforts to prevent racial feeling produced a reaction against him among the European community as it gradually became known throughout the country that the Viceroy disapproved of European attitudes towards Indians, and their tacit approval of abuses and evasion of justice. Curzon told Hamilton:

"I grieve to say that, since I came to India, I have not found a single man among 'the better class', to whose feelings you think that we might safely appeal, who either share my views, or could be relied upon to back them, at the cost of clamour or unpopularity. They all admit privately that the occurrence of these incidents is regrettable, and that any failure of justice is shocking. But they think the collisions inevitable and normal; they, almost to a man, contend that the blame rests with the Natives (which I certainly in my experience, have not found to be the case); and as for the judicial scandals - well, they shrug their shoulders and smile."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon's disposition moreover to approach the problems of public administration from a personal point of view has been examined by Harold Nicolson,<sup>2</sup> but it is important to note that while Curzon received much credit for his popular reforms, correspondingly he also received the odium for anything done that was unpopular. Curzon then has been criticised for having created his own personal problems with the Indian army. That judgement is not entirely fair to him, as we shall see.

In the summer following the Rangoon Outrage a number

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 25 September 1900.

2. See Nicolson, H., Curzon: The Last Phase 1919-1925, p.38.

of incidents further exasperated the Viceroy; he detailed his increasing anxiety and mounting indignation in his letters home, particularly over the cynical conduct of army administration in India. On 13 June he wrote:

"... Four British soldiers went out shooting - as usual without passes, without an interpreter, and in ignorance or in violation of the rules - shot, as usual, a peacock, had the usual row with the villagers, in the course of which their guns went off, as usual by accident, and as usual killed two natives. ... these soldiers ... were, as usual acquitted and released."

Curzon's indignation then grew warm:

"these cases eat into my very soul. That such gross outrages should occur in the first place in a country under British rule; and then that everybody, commanding officers, officials, juries, departments, should conspire to screen the guilty, is, in my judgment, a black and permanent blot upon the British name."

Vehemently he condemned this travesty of justice which he feared would create a standing sore and thus materially weaken the bonds of rule in India. In the last resort he would use intimidation:

"My object is to purge away the stain; and if in five years I can terrify the British Army in India into conduct more becoming Christians and gentlemen, (and it will only be done by making them afraid), I shall have rendered a lasting service to British rule in this country."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon once told Francis Younghusband that one of his main objects in India was the lessening of the gulf

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 June 1900.

between Indians and Englishmen.<sup>1</sup> As an Imperialist Curzon hoped to strengthen the roots of British rule by removing just such abuses by setting an example of justice and fair play in granting necessary administrative reforms, thereby making British rule popular with the Indian people.

Yet his campaign against racial estrangement became more unpopular with his own countrymen as he continued to exercise his authority against the pleasures and pastimes of the soldier in India. In September 1900 Curzon appointed a special committee to revise the shooting pass regulations and his actions met with discouragement and latent antagonism. A spate of incidents now occurred. At Dinapore, one of the Munsters stabbed a washerman. At Fort William a soldier shot an Indian tailor, confessed, and then pleaded insanity and was remitted to jail. Curzon blamed their officers for the actions of the "poor, clumsy, stupid, tactless Tommy..."<sup>2</sup> and determined to push ahead his unpopular crusade. "I worry all these cases to the last gasp: and I usually succeed in finding somewhere some almost criminal evasion of responsibility, or conspiracy to screen" he informed Hamilton, "I mean to hunt down the guilty parties."<sup>3</sup> With remorseless scrutiny Curzon soon became a kind of inspector general of the conduct of the Indian army. Characteristically

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1. See The Nineteenth Century, May 1925, 'Lord Curzon, A Personal Recollection' by Younghusband.

2. Curzon to Hamilton, 17 September 1900.

3. Ibid., 25 September 1900.

a year later, he was able to pinpoint exactly what his experience with soldiers had taught him: "if I were asked to sum up in a single observation the most remarkable discovery that I have made since I came to India, I should unhesitatingly reply, the Frailty of Man."<sup>1</sup> As the Viceroy increasingly uncovered lapses in the conduct of his military colleagues, his alarm grew. In an attempt to dramatise "the startling slackness of system that prevails in Military Administration in this country"<sup>2</sup> he continued to bombard the India Office with acid references. But he had reached the point where he understood the true nature of the problem of the army, race. "The fact is there is no justice in this country in cases where Europeans and Natives are concerned, and the fault lies not in our institutions, but in the racial spirit that is deeper than any institution."<sup>3</sup>

On one occasion he stumbled upon the fact that soldiers were still being flogged in India. He closely questioned the authorities on the point:

"Oh no! there was no truth in it. Then I pushed the Military Department further. Yes, soldiers were still flogged, but only in prisons, which was analogous to the English practice. Still not satisfied I sent for a full statement of the exact practice, (a) in England, (b) in Indian military prisons; and this is what I found. Corporal punishment was for many years inflicted on military prisoners belonging to the British

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 25 September 1901.
  2. Ibid., 28 February 1901.
  3. Curzon to Godley, 15 August 1900.

Army under the Prisons Acts of 1865 and 1877. But in 1898 these Acts were amended; and the number of offences for which flogging was permitted was reduced to two; (1) mutiny or incitement thereto; (2) gross personal violence to an officer or servant of the prison."

Curzon was aghast to discover the fact that for three years illegal flogging had been countenanced by the military authorities simply because they were in total ignorance of the change of law. He commented: "Good Lord, the things that the soldiers do in this country nearly turn my hair grey."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon's desire to secure sound principles in his administration and dispense justice with an even hand, often blinded him in his appreciation of the true temper of the community to which he was temporarily attached. Sections of that community were deeply entrenched and hotly resented any tampering with their prerogatives. They took great care to preserve old and indolent traditions, such as regimental honour and the prestige of custom - they looked upon the office of Viceroy as purely ornamental, that he should perhaps have passable brains, a firm seat on a horse and good behaviour. Above all he should be profoundly impressed with the idea of the inadequacy of his own qualifications and therefore rely on the good sense of his subordinates, who knew the ropes as well as the prevailing social etiquette and that sufficient administration resided in the fact that maximum superintendence lay in the minimum of interference.

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 16 October 1901.

They therefore invariably blamed Curzon personally for provoking the insolence of the natives and found his attitude towards themselves, insufferable.

At the same time Curzon took great care to find a genuine basis from which to improve outstanding grievances in order to promote better racial feeling. He spent an infinite amount of labour in removing obstacles in the path of the army. For example he recognised that a great source of friction between European soldiers and Indians concerned assaults made upon punkah coolies. He intervened and installed electrically operated punkahs in Government barracks, a benefit of no small importance during India's hot weather. Any brief survey of Curzon's early Budget speeches reveals the valuable time he devoted to reviewing reduction of useless military expenditure, a constant source of grievance to the Indian National Congress: "I venture to say that no sterner critic, and no more uncompromising foe of extravagance, or of levity in military expenditure, has ever entered the offices of the Government of India than myself."<sup>1</sup> In addition he asserted:

"My greatest ambition is to have a peaceful time in India, and to devote all my energies to the work of administrative and material development, in which there are so many reforms that cry aloud to be undertaken."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Curzon's Budget Speech, 28 March 1900, quoted in Raleigh, T., ed. Lord Curzon in India, Speeches 1898-1905, p.463. A complete set of Curzon's speeches was published in four volumes in Calcutta, 1900-1906.
  2. Ibid.

Moreover, Curzon was concerned not to provoke friction with the Congress when the Indian Government despatched contingents to South Africa and China. Anxious to reduce financial costs he told Hamilton:

"I am inclined to doubt the wisdom of too frequently or regularly indenting upon the military resources of India for service in other parts of the Empire, even at the expense of the Imperial Exchequer; since it undoubtedly does place a formidable weapon in the hands of the Congress party, and of those who argue that India is already bled to an unnecessary extent for the maintenance of her military forces."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon also sought to provide a military outlet for the aspirations of Indians of noble or gentlemanly birth and was convinced that it was unwise "to slam the door of a military career in the face of those whose pride or birth or surrounding prevents them from embracing a civil profession, whose interests lie naturally on the side of the British Government, but whose sympathies are in danger of being alienated, and their energies dulled by the absence of any field for their natural ambitions."<sup>2</sup> He accordingly put forward a scheme for the creation of an Imperial Cadet Corps to be recruited from members of the Indian aristocracy. When either these forces or for that matter any other of India's representatives came under criticism, Curzon rushed

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 20 June 1900. It is perhaps worth recalling that one of the primary grievances in the revolt of the American colonies concerned the burden of defence costs.
  2. Curzon's Memorandum of Commissions for Indians, 4 June 1900, enc. Curzon to Hamilton, n.d. July 1900.

to their defence using an astonishing array of facts and statistics warmly defending their conduct and services while invariably demonstrating the humanitarian tasks to which they were subject, such as helping to alleviate plague and famine conditions throughout India.<sup>1</sup> Zealously interested in the smallest details down to the private morality of individual officers and soldiers, Curzon spent a ludicrous amount of time in such projects as the selection of the Indian orderlies who were to attend the Coronation of King Edward VII and in seeing that they would not disgrace their uniform and thus India by "contracting relations with English women of the housemaid class" who might be attracted and enamoured of their "physique, and with a sort of idea that the warrior is also an oriental prince."<sup>2</sup>

Thus engaged in one of the most sustained efforts ever made in reforming India's archaic system of administration, Curzon often lacked discretion in judgement, the knack of getting along with other people; and above all, the ability to delegate responsibility. He confessed to Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary:

"I am handicapped in being surrounded by what I suppose is the weakest body of men that ever administered the Indian Empire. Quite apart from my own disposition, this throws a terrible lot of work on to my shoulders: and I am in truth the member for every department as well as my own."<sup>3</sup>

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1. See Curzon to Major-General Sir John Hills, 24 July 1901.  
 2. Curzon to Hamilton, 15 November 1901.  
 3. Curzon to Lansdowne, 16 March 1902.

In 1902, Curzon became aware of a fatal collision between British soldiers and an Indian cook which damaged irreparably his relations with the Indian army.

(3) The 9th Lancer's Case

On 9 April 1902 members of a crack British regiment, the 9th Lancers, had arrived at Sialkot where they had a general carouse with a good deal of drinking. That evening Atu, an Indian who had been engaged to cook for the regiment, was brutally beaten outside the barracks by two soldiers, and was found the next morning lying on the ground some distance away in a badly bruised condition. He was carried to hospital, where, on 17 April he died from the effects of his injuries. Meanwhile, on 9 June, a trooper of the 9th Lancers kicked an Indian punkha-coolie and the latter died of a ruptured spleen. The trooper was tried in a civil court and merely fined. Curzon thought the whole affair profoundly discreditable, especially when he learned that the Commander of the 9th Lancers had attempted to hush up the scandal and two months had lapsed before it reached his ears. He issued a public communiqué to the press stating:

"The 9th Lancers lie under the stigma of concealing a criminal assault leading to the death of a defenceless Native, committed by a man or men of the regiment. In the opinion of the Government of India it is considered impossible to pass over the conduct of a regiment which lies under the stigma of concealing in its ranks one or more criminals, and such disciplinary action will be taken

as will bring home to the men of the 9th Lancers that the Government of India are determined that brutal assaults by our soldiers on defenceless Natives must be put down with a strong hand."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon, extremely indignant, vented his inner feelings to Godley:

"I have let them [the Indian military authorities] know that I do not mean to have another Rangoon Outrage case; that the matter must be sifted to the bottom; and that the regiment, no matter whether it is a crack British regiment or not, shall be punished. I will not have these things go on while I am in India. Though I stand almost alone, I persist in saying that it is scandalous and wicked: and the conduct of all the officers, from the highest downwards, who conspire to hush the matter up, and who say - 'Don't for Heaven's sake, wash our dirty linen in public' - is to my mind scarcely less scandalous and wicked than that of the actual culprits. These things give me sleepless nights and days of misery. But I will not desist from my duty."

Significantly he asserted:

"These soldiers, with their violence and their lust, are pulling the fabric of our dominion down about our ears: and I for one will not sacrifice what I regard as the most solemn obligation imposed upon the British race to the license of even the finest regiment of the British Army."<sup>2</sup>

With the concurrence of his Government and Sir Power Palmer, the acting Commander-in-Chief, Curzon decided on the idea of collective punishment for the regiment. Accordingly, the leave of all officers was cancelled for a

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1. Communiqué to press (by State Telegram), 20 November 1902, Curzon MSS. Eur. F.111/401.
  2. Curzon to Godley, 18 June 1902.

year and drastic regimental drills and duties for the soldiers were imposed. Curzon informed the public and the press of his action and like the West Kent Regiment, the 9th Lancers became publicly humiliated. In England, the 9th Lancers was regarded as a particularly gallant and heroic body of men. The idea of collective punishments was anathema to Parliament and the press and Curzon's action seriously damaged his reputation. Hamilton informed him: "Representations have been made to the King from certain quarters that you interfered with the Military, and inflicted punishments upon soldiers on your own initiative"; although the King was against bringing forward a censure proposal in Parliament on ethical grounds, he did protest at the infliction of collective punishments.<sup>1</sup> The general impression which Curzon's action created raised this question: "Why does the Viceroy, who is a civilian, interfere in questions of military discipline? Can he not trust the military authorities to perform the duties allotted to them?"<sup>2</sup>

Curzon's hostility was merely reinforced by the response which he had provoked. He recorded his deepening despair in an observation to Godley:

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 20 November 1902.

2. Ibid. Six years later, at a time of political unrest, Morley told Minto that he could not "but honour Curzon for his famous affair with the 9th Lancers ... If we are not strong enough to prevent Murder, then our pharisaic glorification of the stern justice of the British Raj is nonsense."  
Morley to Minto, 26 August 1908, Morley MSS 573/3.

"Here in India we have ... the pick of our British officers. Many are keen soldiers and still more are charming and agreeable men. But their intelligence, their methods, and to some extent their standards of conduct, are such as to fill me sometimes with dismay: and the higher they get, the stupider and narrower as a rule do they become."<sup>1</sup>

The willingness of military authorities to condone collisions between the races appalled him and when one of Lord Ampthill's A.D.C.s kicked a coolie and he died, "Of course he had a big liver or a big spleen: and equally of course, the kick was represented as a 'push with the foot' - the phrase is now an Indian classic."<sup>2</sup>

In his insistence on social justice, Curzon, who was extremely sensitive, felt himself the victim of ill-usage and resented his unpopularity with the Indian army; in that way his feelings became hardened and he became increasingly vindictive in his sentiments concerning military administration in India. Though his personality was flawed by many defects and though his methods often lacked a sense of proportion, his struggle to deal with the problem of racialism in India, with which he became personally identified, can be regarded as exemplifying his devotion to an unsparing sense of duty. These were high virtues, but his zeal in championing Indians stirred unappreciative public servants to comment that they "had their time wasted, as they saw it, in sending urgent telegrams announcing that

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1. Curzon to Godley, 22 October 1902.  
2. Curzon to Hamilton, 5 November 1902.

Private Blank had kicked cook Ramaswamy on the leg",<sup>1</sup> and had Curzon been able to subordinate to such virtues the egoistic impulses of his own impatient temperament, his efforts today might be venerated as noble. Yet Curzon was unable to achieve that subordination and British officers felt they were "constantly exposed to provocative insult from the scum of the bazaars."<sup>2</sup> In 1904 Ampthill reported to Godley that:

"The soldiers say that they are now 'cheeked' by even the lowest class of Natives in an intolerable way, and as they no longer dare to use or to threaten a good thrashing they are quite helpless. It is said that when a European raises his stick to chastise an insolent Native the latter frequently threatens to 'tell the Lord Sahib'! When Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was in India the thing which struck him most was the growing 'cheek' of the Native, and if this is apparent to the casual globe-trotter it is pretty certain that the change of attitude is a considerable one."<sup>3</sup>

Curzon's attitude, in the case of one distinguished officer, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, produced unfortunate consequences. He found Curzon's campaign so objectionable that he threatened to tender his resignation. He recorded the deep-seated feeling of grievance which had permeated the army, though he asserted that Curzon was probably unaware of the harm his attitude was causing, for a "masterful, self-centred man with no one to say him 'Nay' would not pause to reflect that any attitude of his could be open to criticism,

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1. Maconochie, E., Life in the Indian Civil Service, p.116.

2. Ibid.

3. Ampthill to Godley, 27 July 1904, Ampthill MSS. 233/37.

or that cutting and disparaging remarks and minutes from the head of a great Government cannot be answered, but do all the more harm on that account, for the iron enters far deeper into the soul of the people reflected on when no reply is possible."<sup>1</sup> For his vigorous efforts to enquire into cases of collisions between Indians and soldiers, Curzon became detested by the army, and his action in the 'Rangoon Outrage' and in the 9th Lancers case opened a fatal breach when Curzon discovered their officers had attempted to hush up the misconduct of their men. An observer of this spectacle informed Campbell Bannerman: "... it is an old story, the readiness of the military in India to hate the Civil Power."<sup>2</sup>

Having done all he could by direct intervention to prevent further racial estrangement, the Viceroy now took steps which would enable him to direct and control supervisory authority over the affairs of Indian army administration and thereafter friction and confusion rapidly spread. Force of circumstances had deprived the Viceroy of an effective agent to oversee the details of military affairs, for General Sir W.S.A. Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief (1898-1900) fell ill and died on 18 March 1900. In his place Curzon appointed a provisional officer, General Sir A.P. Palmer to act until such time as he could secure the

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1. Smith-Dorrien, H., Memories of Forty-eight Years Service, p.307.

2. See G.T. MacKenzie to Campbell-Bannerman, 4 July 1905. Campbell-Bannerman MSS 41238.

services of General Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum as the new Commander-in-Chief for India. The prolongation of the war in South Africa however, frustrated Curzon's designs, and he was thus forced to rely upon the competent but aging Military Member, Maj.-General Sir E.H.H. Collen (1896-1901) for the advice and direction he and his Council desired. Collen soon retired, in April 1901 and it fell to the new Military Member, Maj.-General Sir E.R. Elles to provide Curzon with the instrument he needed in the supervision of army administration. Elles was extremely able and soon won Curzon's confidence, while Palmer, the acting Commander-in-Chief was largely ineffective. Elles acquired an accretion of power and authority from Curzon which in time tended to encroach upon the preserve of the subjects dealt with by the Commander-in-Chief. In these circumstances, as we shall see, difficulties arose and friction sprang up between two departments, that of the Military Department under Elles as Military Member, and Army Headquarters under Palmer, the Commander-in-Chief. Further, as Elles reflected the Viceroy's views in matters of policy and economy, Curzon unwittingly created an awkward situation for himself as events subsequently showed, for Elles conducted military affairs along lines of strict scrutiny and economy, as Curzon preferred to manage things himself until such time as Kitchener's services should be available. In effect, Elles and the Military Department were utilized by Curzon

as an instrument to examine and investigate army affairs generally.

The legitimate function of the Military Department was purely administrative, viz. control over the various departments of transport and supply, ordnance, remounts, clothing, medical stores, military works and finance and above all, the preparation of the Military Budget. The function of the Commander-in-Chief was as executive head of the army; he was charged with its organisation and training, mobilisation and direction in the event of war, and with promotions. His office was known as Army Headquarters. This executive - administrative arrangement was simply a way of doing business and the working of the system really depended upon the personality of the men holding the two offices.

Curzon's use of the Military Department as his instrument for investigating army affairs, naturally brought resentment between the Military Department and Army Headquarters. The system was really devised to serve two main purposes; as a check upon expenditure and as an independent military authority to advise the Viceroy on military affairs when the Commander-in-Chief happened to be an officer with little Indian experience, thus ensuring continuity of administration. Significantly, during Curzon's tenure the duties of the Military Member and the activities of the Military Department became the targets for criticism which might otherwise have been directed towards the Viceroy.

By 1902 the Senior Staff Officer at Army Headquarters in India, Smith-Dorrien, resolved to warn Kitchener of that situation. His opinion reflected the contemporary military thinking of many high-ranking British officers, and is therefore important. He was particularly annoyed at Curzon's condescending attitude towards the Army as an inferior profession, his low opinion of the intellect of its officers, and his view of the rank and file as a rowdy and licentious body prone to drunkenness and the bullying of Indians.<sup>1</sup> Smith-Dorrien singled out the Military Department as the intolerable instrument obstructing the efficiency of the army.<sup>2</sup> After threatening resignation, <sup>he</sup> received permission from Palmer to explain these conditions to Kitchener personally, and to cite a number of cases illustrating the interference and opposition of the Military Department. "I reached London in August and sought out Lord Kitchener. I shall never forget that masterful man's face as I read and explained to him case after case. He fairly gasped out, 'Is that the sort of thing I have got to compete with?'"<sup>3</sup> William Birdwood, who became Kitchener's Adjutant-General in South Africa also records hearing Palmer's detailed grievances in his experience with the Military Department of the Government of India.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Smith-Dorrien, op.cit., p.307.

2. Ibid., p.298.

3. Ibid., p.314.

4. Birdwood, Lord, Khaki and Gown, p.137.

In these circumstances Curzon's desire to put an end to the feud between himself and the Army was reinforced. Accordingly he sought in the appointment of Kitchener, a possible bridge between his civil and his military administration, his strongest and his weakest sides. By the end of the summer of 1902, he fully recognised his failure to reform either India's intractable military machinery, or the problem of racialism. He felt that Kitchener alone would be able to provide the initiative and necessary collaboration in handling the difficult problem of relations between the races, rendered so intolerable as a result of the antagonism of soldiers. Whilst not specifically admitting his personal failure, Curzon privately acknowledged that, "a great deal will depend on Kitchener. Hitherto I have not met one soldier in India who is on my side. The majority of them openly denounce me, and unblushingly proclaim the law of licence. I do not suppose that any Viceroy has ever had to bear the brunt of such a campaign of malice and slander ... as I have done at the hands of the army and its officers ever since the Rangoon affair ... the majority of them look upon me as anathema."<sup>1</sup> He confided in Hamilton ~~of~~ his intention to secure Kitchener's services and that he would inform the new Commander-in-Chief, on arrival, of the state of Indian army affairs and his views on them:

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1. Curzon to Godley, 30 July 1902.

"As soon as I meet Kitchener, I shall have a very frank interchange of opinion with him... The way in which I have been made the scapegoat of the sins and blunders of the Army in India is a crying scandal. I have borne it without a word: though at any moment I have had it in my power by simply stating the facts to hold up the Army and its officers to public opprobrium. But their honour has been dearer to me than it has been to themselves; and for nearly four years I have borne a weight of calumny and misrepresentation such as no one - not in the inner life out here - can imagine, and which, if the facts were at any time made public, would redound to the lasting disgrace of the military service."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 November 1902.

CHAPTER IIWANTED : A COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF(1) The Problem of Kitchener's Appointment

As Curzon's anxieties with the problem on Indian army administration increased, fresh difficulties presented themselves. The problem of Kitchener's appointment arose from the unexpected prolongation of the South African war. Together these circumstances caused friction and constant irritation while making demands on the Viceroy's patience, and the situation was rendered especially complex resulting from the absence of an effective Commander-in-Chief. Curzon was aware that Kitchener greatly desired to come to India. In December 1898, Kitchener wrote to congratulate the Viceroy-designate on his Indian appointment and concluded his letter with a significant message: "I enclose a photo for Lady Curzon, to remind her of the man who means to take her down to dinner some day in India."<sup>1</sup> At that time both Curzon and Kitchener were held high in public esteem and The Times singled out the future Viceroy and the victor of Omdurman as "the most remarkable and conspicuous figures in public life."<sup>2</sup> But Curzon had to establish precedence for Kitchener's claims in India. He did so by deciding the question of Collen's successor with the appointment of Elles and by filling the vacancy caused by the death of Lockhart

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1. Kitchener to Curzon, 16 December 1898. Metcalfe MSS.  
2. The Times, 15 November 1898.

with Palmer, who was to act provisionally. In that way he left open a vacancy for Kitchener and above all for the competent authority which he so needed. Kitchener, for his part, pressed on his own appointment, somewhat rashly, from London. In August 1899 he had casually dropped in at the India Office and informed an astonished private secretary that he wished to be regarded as a candidate for the Military Membership and would be glad to know what chance he stood of being appointed. Godley informed Curzon:

"His appearance at this office was most unexpected and, I should suppose, very characteristic: he came in, like Dick, Tom, or Harry, and asked to see Onslow. Onslow had gone abroad; so his Private Secretary came forward to ask if he could be of use. Kitchener then said very openly that he had come as a candidate for the Military Membership of Council, and wanted to find out 'whether he had any chance'. The Private Secretary rather taken aback, urged him to see me (I was in my room); but he would not, saying that as he did not know me personally he did not like to trouble me about a vacancy still so distant; and so he departed."<sup>1</sup>

But it was not in that capacity that Curzon desired Kitchener's services.

Curzon wrote to Hamilton:

"... as regards Kitchener, while I have a personal regard for him and an admiration for his inflexibility of purpose, and while I should like to see him in India, ... I feel that it is not as Military Member that he would help us most, or render best

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1. Godley to Curzon, 18 August 1899.

service to the Indian Army. In the first place, Lockhart and he would find it extremely difficult to get on; and I doubt if the former would stay. Reform is prodigiously needed in our military administration; but it will only be successfully applied by an experienced intelligence cooperating with a conciliatory hand. Kitchener is the man to drive through a campaign with relentless energy. You have only to go to Lord Cromer or to the Foreign Office to ascertain what is the effect that he produces, when let loose in administration. Moreover, if my views in this respect be exaggerated or mistaken, it yet remains, I think, indisputable that it is more important to us to get a first-rate financier in succession to Dawkins [Finance Member 1899-1900] now, than a first-rate organizer of victory in succession to Collen [Military Member] later on ... we must decide by the exigencies of the present moment, not of a future contingency."<sup>1</sup>

He confided to Godley his apprehensions as to the possible consequences of Kitchener in India:

"I am already somewhat of a disturbing element in the placid economy of Indian administration. The appearance of another and even more seismic factor might produce unforeseen results."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon needed above all a subordinate who was a competent administrator,

"There would seem [he wrote in October 1899] to be some mysterious law that makes it impossible for soldiers to be decent administrators... I imagine that, either for government or for administration, some previous training in the principles by which both are regulated is required, and that this is why you cannot take even the most capable soldier from his tent and expect of him even moderate abilities in Office."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 6 September 1899.
  2. Curzon to Godley, 6 September 1899.
  3. Curzon to Hamilton, 4 October 1899.

Curzon demonstrated, in good-humoured terms his predicament:

"I hear that a novel and local storm is slowly brewing in the arcana of the military bureaux themselves. The Commander-in-Chief is said to be evolving a scheme for the abolition of the Military Department; and meanwhile I hear that the Military Member, all unconscious of his impending doom, is elaborating a counter-scheme for the extinction of the Commander-in-Chief. It looks as if I, who am a consistent though amicable antagonist of both, would ultimately have to step in to save them from mutual destruction at each other's hands."<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton wisely suggested caution before plunging into the appointment of a new Commander-in-Chief for India:

"The change from Collen to Kitchener would be startling, and produce startling consequences. If there is a chance of a vacant Command a year or two hence ... we could test his qualifications for the Commander-in-Chief; but he is too much of a bull to turn into such a china shop as India without previous training and civilizing;"

he foresaw the heat that might be generated when reform was undertaken.

"Soldiers, when they become officials, are red tapists of the deepest dye; yet a soldier, distinguished by active service alone, rarely submits to the tiresome routine and drudgery which military reforms require before they can be launched with effect. From what you ~~say~~ say I gather you think the military system is very costly, and also ineffective. Financial reform in military matters rarely associates itself with improved efficiency, and I think you will have to consider which of the two defects you would wish to remedy first. In an autocratically governed country there is no weight behind military reforms except

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 27 September 1899.

the force of character of the reformed, and the army, like all other professions, opposes desperately reforms which affect its comfort or power."<sup>1</sup>

Opposition came from other quarters, notably the Crown, for Queen Victoria took a lively interest in military appointments being careful to overlook no possibility of preferment and promotion for members of her own family. In particular she had attempted to exercise her prerogative in the selection of the Duke of Connaught to command the troops in South Africa, but he was passed over in favour of Roberts, much to her dismay. Lord Salisbury informed Lansdowne that therefore the Queen was much annoyed at the thought that Kitchener, in going to India, would thereby be placed over the heads of many more senior generals who had much more experience:

"Her Majesty takes a very strong line against Kitchener for India and swears nothing shall induce her to consent to it, because she thinks his manners are too ferocious. This is her 'riposte' to my objection to Connaught excluding Roberts, for she knows I value Kitchener."<sup>2</sup>

But Curzon, following Lockhart's death informed the Queen:

"It is now above all things essential that a strong man in the prime of life should be appointed to succeed: since the Viceroy would not be doing his duty did he not confess to Your Majesty that there is grave need for reform in many branches of

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 28 September 1899.
  2. Salisbury to Lansdowne, 28 September 1900; Newton, Lord Lansdowne, p.175.

the military service in India. The machine has become clogged with tradition and routine, and calls for urgent overhauling, if we are ever to defend the Indian frontiers with assured success."<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton confirmed, that as a result of Kitchener's force or character he was "very/<sup>un-</sup>popular; his manner is most ungracious, and he is very inconsiderate in his treatment of his subordinates", and that in consequence it would require a very "strong Military Member to hold him."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon was thinking about that very problem and when Collen retired in 1901 he commended the services of Sir Edmund Elles who was competent as well as being extremely popular. In his recommendation he characterised Elles as "a man of dignity of manner, and quietness of bearing ... loyal and agreeable ... he would work well with Palmer ... and would be ... a useful and steadying check upon Kitchener."<sup>3</sup> Curzon then, saw in Elles a temporary way out of the difficulties he had encountered with the Indian army. He had in despair written that he wished to be relieved of having to be the final arbiter on every military question:

"It is not my place. I ought to be able to trust my colleagues ... it is not my business. I ought not to be a sort of Civilian Commander-in-Chief. I am ready to drop it tomorrow, provided I can get men whom I can trust. But I can honestly say that while the soldiers may have hated it, the result so far has been nothing but good. I have saved the Government of India

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1. Curzon to Queen Victoria, 22 March 1900.
  2. Hamilton to Curzon, 5 April 1900.
  3. Curzon to Hamilton, 14 February 1901.

lakhs of rupees, and score of absurd and doctrinaire experiments. But it breaks me, in the midst of all my work, to have to pronounce upon plans of forts, making of roads, location of troops, discipline of regiments, construction of defences, and all the thousand and one details of military administration."<sup>1</sup>

While Curzon chafed with anxiety caused him by the conduct of army administration in India, Kitchener was having difficulties of his own in rounding up the Boers in a series of great drives, and it will be well to examine his background and his desire for appointment to the Indian command.

(2) Kitchener's Background and Desire for the Indian Command.

Horatio Herbert Kitchener was born in 1850, the third child of Lieutenant-Colonel H.H. Kitchener, a proud and fearless man who was as well an eccentric martinet, running his home as if it were part of an army along lines of strict discipline. Detesting blankets, his father accordingly slept under layers of newspapers sewn together which may well have contributed to the rapid deterioration of his wife's lungs and she died when Kitchener was 14.<sup>2</sup> Disliking school, Kitchener was shy, independent and sensitive. At an early age he resolved upon a career in the army, entering the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in 1868 where he

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 27 June 1900.

2. Magnus, P., Kitchener: Portrait of an Imperialist, pp.1-12, hereafter cited as Magnus, Kitchener.

impressed his superiors with his dedication to hard work, force of character, and exceptional good looks.<sup>1</sup> He left the School of Military Engineering in 1873 and devoted his energies to the Palestine Survey and the Cyprus Survey from 1872-82. Egypt then provided a chance for promotion as well as an outlet for Kitchener's consuming ambition and when, in 1882 a mutiny occurred in the Egyptian army, he secured provisional employment in the formation of a new Egyptian army, becoming a Major in that army and a Captain in the British army in 1883. By 1884 Britain became seriously involved in the conquest of Egypt with Gordon's expedition to Khartoum. Gordon's influence on Kitchener, a fellow sapper, was great and it gave him the opportunity to utilise his knowledge of Arabic and his experience in the desert to thus enhance his reputation. Becoming Gordon's channel of communication with the tribes and his chief source of intelligence, when the failure of Gordon's rescue and the subsequent fall of Khartoum occurred, Kitchener became an important figure and for his gallant and intrepid efforts he was famous at the age of 34. He proceeded to the Sudan as Governor of Suakim from 1886-8; was on the Sudan frontier in 1889, and Adjutant-General of the Egyptian army from 1888-92. In 1892 he became Sirdar in Egypt and commanded the Dongola Expeditionary Force in 1896, after which he was

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1. Esher, Lord, The Tragedy of Lord Kitchener, p.10.

promoted Governor-General of the Sudan in 1899. In 1898 he won fame and the thanks of Parliament in command of the Khartoum Expedition avenging Gordon's death. Following the outbreak and initial disasters of the Boer War, he was sent to South Africa as Chief of Staff under Lord Roberts, and became Commander-in-Chief of the Forces from 1900-2.

Long years of isolation and solitude had their effect on Kitchener's character. To most people he seemed shy, aloof, or distant - the outcome of a slow process of environment under the influence of the desert. To Churchill he seemed stern and un pitying; a man who treated all men as machines, but who never spared himself.<sup>1</sup> Lord Edward Cecil characterised him as cynical and inclined to "disbelieve that any action sprang from motives other than those of self-interest",<sup>2</sup> while Ian Hamilton described him as secretive, a law unto himself; being all-powerful he hated ready-made institutions and smashed organisations.<sup>3</sup> Though difficult to work with, Kitchener had worked hard during the early years of his career, being handicapped in youth by what Dr. Johnson described as, 'the most contemptible of all stations, that of a soldier in time of peace'. Steady application and preparation coupled with patience and thoroughness paid rich dividends, and his concentration on making desert railways

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1. Churchill, W.S., The River War, II, p.377.

2. Cecil, Lord Edward, The Leisure of an Egyptian Official, pp.187-8.

3. Hamilton, Ian, The Commander, pp.98-131.

in Egypt and his systematic precision in constructing block-houses in South Africa demonstrated his success. Kitchener's instinct for boldness and pluck, so unusual in an engineer, resulted in his calm assurance that, having decided to take great risks, he would never hesitate or falter. His reputation for the conquest of the Sudan was secure, and he was the first General since the Duke of Wellington to restore lustre to British arms and to catch and hold the imagination of the man in the street.<sup>1</sup> His cool instincts and his pride in his ability to see things in a truer light from a distance, often misled his colleagues, overburdened with official responsibilities and traditional viewpoints. Lloyd George found him obscure and difficult to understand; he likened him to a "great revolving lighthouse. Sometimes the beam of his mind would shoot out and uncover the heart of reality - then the shutter would turn and for weeks there would be nothing but a blank darkness."<sup>2</sup> Lord Beaverbrook observed that as he refused to reveal himself, the press was compelled constantly to talk about him, if only in sheer annoyance at his silence, with the result that he was the best advertised man in the Empire.<sup>3</sup> But Kitchener realised that distance was in his favour and when he was asked to take up War Office reform in England he explained his refusal

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1. 'The Kitchener Legend', The Times Literary Supplement, 31 October 1958.

2. Beaverbrook, Lord, Politicians and the War, I, pp.177-8.

3. Ibid., p.181.

by asserting:

"Why? Because I should fail! I think I know what I can do as well as my limitations. I can I believe impress to a certain extent my personality on men working under me, I am vain enough to think that I can lead them, but I have no silver tongue to persuade..."<sup>1</sup>

Detesting tradition and the water-tight compartments of convention, he informed his confidante Lady Salisbury of his views on the Government of India which he regarded as "very curious ... and in some points seems to resemble the Khalifa in Omdurman."<sup>2</sup> But Milner described Kitchener's unorthodox methods in his struggle with that Government by asserting:

"I do not think he has ever distinguished between fighting, shall we say, the Mahdi, and fighting his own colleagues and countrymen."<sup>3</sup>

Kitchener's background and experience had taught him the value of camouflage and introduced an element of furtiveness in his character, for he always feared some premature discovery: "The tendency to hide his objective" wrote St. John Brodrick, afterwards Lord Middleton, "never left him in later life. He rarely gave anyone his whole mind, lest he should spoil a good hand."<sup>4</sup> His independence of mind as well as action, made him extremely impatient of checks and he utterly despised routine and red tape:

"He was a difficult man to convince that he was wrong; that a project of his was

1. Esher, Lord, Journals and Letters, II, p.98. Hereafter cited as Esher, Journals.

2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 21 May 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.

3. Milner to Curzon, 9 November 1905.

4. Middleton, Records and Reactions 1856-1939, p. 217

impossible he would never admit... If a subordinate were incapable of executing his directions, rather than abandon them he was inclined to carry them out himself. Thus it came about that he bore sometimes a heavier burden of work than any one man could carry. He had no skill in argument, and had no respect for it: it seemed to him beside the point. Like other men of action, but in a special degree, his conclusions were instinctive, and the important thing in his eyes was that a decision should be right, not that it could be defended."<sup>1</sup>

To most soldiers of Kitchener's day, an appointment to an Indian command meant employment in a warm sunny post, very well paid, with an opportunity of seeing active service in the intermittent frontier wars, and they "invariably tumbled over one another in their frantic efforts to have themselves seconded for service."<sup>2</sup> India presented problems which greatly interested Kitchener, with vast opportunities to carry out an integrated plan of military reorganisation, railroad construction and the chance, not possible in Great Britain, of carrying through root and branch reform on a grand scale. He perceived in India and in the Indian command, the large numbers of troops at his disposal and the responsibilities of their training and preparation for war, that he would have a larger voice in settling lines of military policy than would be the case in England where the War

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1. See Arthur, G., Life of Lord Kitchener, I, p.xiii. The preface was written by the 4th Marquis of Salisbury (1861-1947), and the three volume work published in 1920.
  2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.32.

Office would dictate these policies officially, through the hands of the Secretary of State as it emanated from the Cabinet. In India Kitchener knew he would be in a powerful position ~~for~~, as executive head of the army and the first military adviser to the Viceroy, and have access to him at all times relatively unhindered as extraordinary member of the Viceroy's Council, ranking second only to the Viceroy himself while having precedence over the Lieutenant-Governors. In these circumstances Kitchener felt India offered much scope both for his ambition and his profound sense of duty; his aim was to preserve the peace and security of the Empire and maintain unbroken confidence in Britain's power and mission. Above all, as an Imperialist, Kitchener "believed in the reality of the white man's burden."<sup>1</sup> He conceived it to be his duty to embark on a programme of military reform and, having achieved exceptional eminence in the sphere of his previous activities, he undertook what he felt was a national mandate in putting his plans into immediate effect. This duty he placed before all else: "He felt he was defrauding the Almighty if he did not carry out his task",<sup>2</sup> and he looked forward to preparing Indian defences, with something of a 'free hand', for the storms which he predicted lay ahead for the British Empire.

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1. Magnus, Kitchener, p.24.

2. Cecil, op.cit., p.184.

Significantly, he regarded India as the key factor of Imperial strategy.<sup>1</sup>

In the period prior to Kitchener's arrival in India (1898-1902) the Indian army and its administration was in a state of transition. As we have seen the position of the Commander-in-Chief had only recently been unified by the abolition of the Presidency commands and the new powers of the Commander-in-Chief were not always clearly defined.<sup>2</sup> In having the whole of India's military establishment unified under one head, the organisation and distribution of the army were still based on obsolete lines. Concepts which dominated military policy immediately after the Mutiny were only just being abandoned and India's network of railroads had not been properly utilised for purposes of supply and transport. In such a state of flux, the question of re-arranging internal garrisons to adjust to external dangers was largely ignored, while troop disbursements lay scattered about the country in isolated cantonments and detachments, often used for plague and famine work, rarely drilled either with their regiments or with battalions. Plans for mobilisation were sketchy and though the army was able to wage war with distinction against frontier tribes, its organisation was hardly prepared to resist the advance of a modern European foe.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Arthur, op.cit., II, p.116.

2. See especially Singh, op.cit., Chap.III.

3. Fraser, L., India Under Curzon and After, pp.398-9.

Kitchener visualised an integrated system of Imperial defence and constantly asked his staff to explain to him how the Indian army was supposed to function properly:

"I found him completely puzzled by the many and varied 'blocks' into which the Indian Army was divided. He had visualized an Indian Army organized on much the same lines as the Egyptian Army; and when I spoke to him, say, of the 1st Bengal Infantry - the 1st Madras - 1st Bombay - 1st Hyderabad - 1st Sikhs - or the 1st Punjabis, and explained to him the differences between them, he turned to me and said: 'I see. You really have no Indian Army with esprit de corps as such. You have a large number of small armies - some very small - all jealous of one another, and each probably thinking itself superior to the rest. I want to see a real Indian Army. This can never be the case while your Army is divided into water-tight compartments'."<sup>1</sup>

The presence of Russia on the outskirts of India greatly added to the urgency of reform in Indian army administration and imposed a tremendous financial strain upon her revenue. One of the most attractive features of Kitchener's early career was his passion for cheese-paring economy; there can be ~~not~~ little doubt that Curzon saw in Kitchener what Cromer detected in the Sudan, namely: "one extremely rare quality ... he was convinced that military efficiency and military economy were not necessarily opposing forces."<sup>2</sup> Politicians in London as well as Curzon in India greatly valued that asset and were eager to obtain his services for that reason quite apart from his proven reputation as a fighting soldier.

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1. Birdwood, Lord, Khaki and Gown, p.141.  
 2. Ronaldshay, Life of Cromer, p.242.

For his part Kitchener was anxious to end the war in South Africa so that he would be free for India and he "regarded the Indian command with a feeling akin to the enthusiasm with which Lord Curzon had entered upon the Viceroyalty."<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime other men were interested in securing the services of the foremost soldier in the Empire and this involved the traditional conflict of interests between rival departments of the British Government, notably the India and War Offices. But the Cabinet, after some delay resolved this conflict,

(3) Cabinet Delays - The Conflict of Interests Between India and the War Office

Following the Khaki election of October 1900, St. John Brodrick (1856-1942) succeeded Lord Lansdowne (1845-1932) as Secretary for War. In congratulating Brodrick on that appointment Kitchener telegraphed: "Best congratulations. Am anxious to get to India. Can you help?"<sup>2</sup> Brodrick was extremely reluctant to part with the one effective instrument for military reform in England and indicated the pressing need of the Cabinet:

"There is a very strong feeling, not only in the Cabinet, but outside of it, that your presence at the War Office, as soon as you can be spared from South Africa, would give

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1. Fraser, op.cit., p.398.

2. Kitchener to Brodrick, Telegram, 3 November 1900, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

much confidence ... The occasion is almost unique. The chance of reorganizing the Army is not likely to recur in your lifetime, or mine, under similar conditions. You have the most recent and extended experience of any General in our service, or indeed in the world, of campaigns, since you have been at the centre both of the Egyptian and the South African expeditions. If you go to India, we should scarcely be able to avail ourselves of your experience at all... If it influences you at all, I may say I have not taken the War Office with a view to half-measures... You may not perhaps always have a Secretary of State who feels as strongly as I do the necessities of the case."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener was well aware of the gross defects of the War Office, so glaringly exposed in the Boer War. But he recognised his own limitations in working in harness with party politicians and would-be reformers and was extremely reluctant to compromise his outstanding reputation as a fighting soldier by becoming harnessed to a machine whose defects he conceived to be incorrigible. He wrote: "I could do no good there, and would sooner sweep a crossing."<sup>2</sup> Brodrick at that time was generally supported by the Cabinet and in particular Lord Roberts and he repeatedly reminded Kitchener that he had little experience of India: "Are you sure", he asked, "that the Indian command is as good an avenue to other high military positions as the War Office?"<sup>3</sup> Kitchener remained adamant and was determined to avoid contact with the War Office at all costs:

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1. Brodrick to Kitchener, 9 November 1900, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.
  2. See Magnus, Kitchener, p.174.
  3. Brodrick to Kitchener, 15 December 1900, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

"I fully recognize that my lack of experience of India renders it difficult to place me at the head of military affairs there. Still ... it would be an excellent thing for the Indian Army to have some one in command who was not used to Indian routine, and could look at military matters from a larger standpoint than that of India alone. Also it is not unlikely that before long serious trouble may occur in India, which is really our heel of Achilles, and I had therefore hoped to have the opportunity of gaining sufficient experience to be of use if war broke out... I feel sure that I am not the man for the War Office, that I should be of little use, and that I should be a certain failure. This is my personal conviction."<sup>1</sup>

Thereafter the Cabinet vacillated over the issue of sending Kitchener to India, causing Curzon infinite anxiety in India and Kitchener some perturbation lest his ambition to get there be frustrated by the Cabinet.

The unexpected prolongation of hostilities jeopardised Kitchener's chances and he despairingly wrote: "I hear Palmer, the acting C.-in-C., is to get India, so I shall have to look out for civil work, which I rather prefer. The army is quite terrible, and I am afraid, incurable."<sup>2</sup> H.O. Arnold-Forster (1855-1909) who later succeeded Brodrick as Secretary for War, recorded Kitchener's attitude <sup>towards</sup> ~~at~~ the War Office in a letter to his wife from Johannesburg dated 4 November 1900:

"I lunched with Lord Kitchener ... He was very friendly, and talked freely with me about

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1. Kitchener to Brodrick, 13 December 1900, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.
  2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.175.

Army matters generally. He, like most other soldiers, takes the lowest view of our W.O. organization, and spoke to me of the horror with which he first discovered the kind of machine he was expected to work with in South Africa, coming to it as he did after such a long experience of the Egyptian Army..."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon too became increasingly critical of his military advisers in India and wrote:

"The fact is - you must have gathered it from my letters throughout the year - that our Generals here are a very inferior body of men. You may judge of their intelligence by that displayed by their seniors and superiors now serving in South Africa: and I shudder to think of what might happen to the Indian Army if it were engaged with a European foe."

In fact he was crippled by the incapacity of his military colleagues whom he described as "almost useless... The junior officers of the Department are occupied in writing monumental notes and circulating files; and things are generally very much at sixes and sevens. If I had the same trouble with the other Departments, or even with any of them, that I have with the Military Department, I could not conduct the Government of India for a month." He bitterly continued:

"... the whole system is utterly vicious. These soldiers play into each others' hands: they connive at each others' irregularities: and there is neither check, nor supervision, nor responsibility, nor control. God forbid that we should ever have a war with such men at the head of affairs. I can see no hope until we clear them all off and get fresh

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1. Arnold-Forster, M., H.O. Arnold-Forster, A Memoir, p.162.

brains to advise, and more virile energies to act ... We want new blood ... we want a Kitchener to pull things together ... When in your letters you confess your incurable distrust of military men in high places at home, believe me that it cannot be greater than that which less than 14 months have inspired in me of the great panjandrums out here."<sup>1</sup>

What so annoyed Curzon was that the delay in settling the appointment of Kitchener to India was costing Indian taxpayers large sums in futile armaments. By accident in the spring of 1900 Curzon had visited a fortified pass at Kohat, which he described as "fantastic and superfluous ... I find that all these wonderful forts, with steel shutters, and machicoulis galleries, and impregnable keeps, which the military engineers are always thrusting upon me, are ridiculed by all the local population."<sup>2</sup> In addition, India's revenues were being indented in order to supply troops for the war in South Africa where there were almost 10,000 men from British regiments and as well some 13,000 more scattered about the outposts of Empire in Ceylon, Singapore, Mauritius and in China during the Boxer Rebellion. Curzon viewed that denudation with alarm as it constituted "a very serious subtraction from our Indian garrison."<sup>3</sup> Curzon found himself between two fires in confronting the subject of army administration. On the one hand were Indian nationalists who

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 15 February 1900.
  2. Ibid., 23 April 1900.
  3. Ibid., 18 July 1900.

assumed that military expenditure was excessive and a waste of money, while on the other were the demands of professional British soldiers bent on improving military efficiency. He faced his critics defending his position in his 1900 Budget Debate when he attested:

"The first result of the Transvaal war will, I believe, be an increase to the budget of every military nation in the world... are we to stint the annual expenditure that may be required to protect the vast Empire of India, as large as the whole of Europe without Russia, against the infinitely more formidable dangers by which it may one day be threatened? ... as head of that Government, I know my responsibilities, and, if my colleagues and I are convinced that the military protection of India against the perils by which she may be menaced absolutely require that this or that expenditure should be incurred, we shall not flinch from undertaking it."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon was tireless in his efforts to prepare India against danger and felt justification in providing one million sterling to rearm the entire Indian army with the latest weapons while establishing factories to turn out India's own war materials:

"I am not in the least disturbed by the argument that all this military expenditure is a waste, and that the money had much better be spent upon projects of economic development. I would gladly spend the whole of our revenues in the latter way, but I say frankly that I dare not. The Army is required to make India safe; and it cannot be said that India is safe. In the event of an invasion or a campaign, those very theorists who are so fond of the phrase

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1. Budget Speech, 28 March 1900; Raleigh, op.cit., pp.463-4.

'bloated expenditure', and who denounce any attempt to make the Army more efficient that costs money, would be the first to run round and take shelter under the armaments whose expansion they had resisted."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon's subsequent policy was <sup>moreover</sup> greatly affected by two major developments in Asia, first by the expansion of Russian railways against the frontiers of Afghanistan and second, by the impact of Japanese victories over Russia in the Far East. "The lesson of the Russo-Japanese War" he asserted in 1905 "is surely the most supreme vindication of preparation for war" and having ample surplus available for military expenditure Curzon awaited the man to put them to effect and thus secure the Indian people "from the future horrors of war" by steadily preparing India's defences. "Until universal peace reigns, which will not be in our day, the best custodian of his own house will still be the strong man armed."<sup>2</sup>

With Lockhart's death in 1900 the matter of a Commander-in-Chief became urgent for India and the Cabinet decided to leave the question of Kitchener's appointment open, to be decided when the situation in South Africa became more clear. The Home Government in fact, were having great difficulties of their own with an aging Prime Minister who waited on events while often "immuring himself at Hatfield", his country home.<sup>3</sup> In these circumstances Hamilton informed

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1. Budget Speech, 27 March 1901; Raleigh, op.cit., p.467.  
 2. Ibid., 29 March 1905, pp.472-3.  
 3. Grenville, op.cit., p.308.

Curzon that there was little he could do to expedite matters and that the Cabinet was "collectively a most effete organization,"<sup>1</sup> incapable of pressing home decisions. In one sense their absorption with the war left Curzon in India relatively free to dictate his own policy, but in the sphere of India's external relations as we shall see, the Cabinet subsequently became very much interested in the control of Indian affairs. In the meantime Ministers were loth to part with the one instrument, Kitchener, which they conceived could effectively produce reform. Nevertheless in the face of Kitchener's absolute refusal to comply they weakened and accordingly, on 9 March 1901 Brodrick telegraphed:

"I have arranged with India Office that Palmer's appointment should be confirmed for one year only from now. I earnestly trust, on conclusion of war, you will give us your assistance here until India is vacant. Above arrangement is made in your interest."<sup>2</sup>

In India in the meantime, Palmer, having pointed out the unfairness of an indefinite appointment, was confirmed temporarily in the post until November 1902.

However, even though as early as August 1900 the Cabinet attempted to resolve the dilemma of a new Commander-in-Chief for India,

"After having duly settled that Kitchener was to be the next Commander-in-Chief in India, the Cabinet at a subsequent meeting decided

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 12 September 1900.  
2. Brodrick to Kitchener, Telegram, 9 March 1901; Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

to annul that decision, and leave the whole question in abeyance... I am afraid this hanging up of the highest military appointment in India will inconvenience you, but much as I should like to settle the matter, the general feeling of the Cabinet is too strong the other way."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon was much distraught over the indecision of the Cabinet and wrote:

"What very funny people the Cabinet are. I had received your intimation of the selection of Kitchener, I had settled contentedly down to the prospect of working with him as a colleague, I had written to him (but fortunately had not despatched) my congratulatory letter - and now comes your further letter saying that the Government have cancelled their previous decision, and that the whole question is again in suspense."<sup>2</sup>

In actual fact the Cabinet faced strong press and Parliamentary agitation against what were termed Kitchener's brutal methods in herding women and children into concentration camps, but Kitchener, impenitent, characterized this agitation as a specious and defeatist propaganda. Nevertheless, he was compared by Lloyd-George to Herod whose methods also "tried to crush a little race by killing its young sons and daughters."<sup>3</sup> In these circumstances the Cabinet, ever mindful of the lesson of the Mutiny, were alive to the danger of sending Kitchener to India and Hamilton wrote:

"I look with some apprehension upon his appointment, as I fear the effect of his rough unsympathetic manner, and strong

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 2 August 1900.  
 2. Curzon to Hamilton, 22 August 1900.  
 3. Magnus, Kitchener, p.180.

economic hand upon the Native Army, You will have carefully to watch him...".<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener justified his actions by objecting that in war victory could only be achieved by firmness and force and resolved the issues by threatening to retire in November 1901<sup>2</sup> and the Cabinet reluctantly dropped the matter, as Kitchener's reputation commanded the greatest measure of public confidence. But the Viceroy would have done well to heed that warning.

As Curzon's term of office was to expire in March 1903, he was concerned to obtain Kitchener's services well before that time in order to work with the Commander-in-Chief in reforming Indian army administration. That object became instrumental in Curzon's desire to extend his Viceroyalty by an additional period of two years. In the meantime he repeatedly pressed Kitchener's claims from India, constantly reminding the Home Government of his difficulties. In March 1901 Curzon forwarded to Kitchener two letters he had written, one previously on 21 August 1900, the other dated 31 March 1901. In the latter he explained that as March 1903 would find him in the fifth and last year of his administration time was running out in which reform could be initiated in co-operation with Kitchener. In his original letter Curzon explained his great interest in all military questions, particularly in frontier affairs and the problem of India's

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 27 July 1900.

2. See Lee, S., Life of Edward VII, II, pp.81-2.

external relations, which he managed exclusively. Considering himself something of an expert on questions of frontier policy he informed Kitchener:

"I hope not to give you much scope for military activity there (though with so ticklish a problem one never dares prophesy); but the main guarantee for peace is a close and cordial cooperation between the Civil and Military authorities."

The Viceroy indicated where Kitchener's help was most needed:

"I see absurd and uncontrolled expenditure, I observe a lack of method and system. I detect slackness and jobbery. And in some respects I lament a want of fibre and tone. Upon all these matters I shall have many opportunities of speaking to you, and of suggesting abundant openings for your industry and force."

He concluded that letter by proffering his hearty support to the prospective Commander-in-Chief, assuring him that he would be able to overcome the traditional jealousy between the Indian and the Home services which every selection for the supreme command was liable to revive, and he took credit as well for pressing Kitchener's appointment:

"I know well, from our conversation before I left England, how greatly set your heart has been upon Indian service; and I can say that, as the results show, I have not myself been backward in assisting you to realize your ambition."<sup>1</sup>

In Curzon's second letter he took especial care to note the anxiety which military administration was causing:

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1. Curzon to Kitchener, 21 August 1900, enc. in same to same, 31 March 1901.

"... the tendency of which I see much, but say nothing, is that of the military authorities if anything unpopular is done to which they have themselves consented or which may even have emanated from them in the first place, to shrug their shoulders and shift the burden on to those of the masterful Viceroy. I have been very unlucky, for I have had during over two years no Commander-in-Chief as poor Lockhart was dying all through my first year and lost all personality and vigour. Sir Power Palmer has only been acting and has therefore lacked power and influence. The co-operation of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, is the only preventative of the evils that I have already described, and I can honestly say that I shall look forward with keen anticipation with bright hopes to your appearance."<sup>1</sup>

What Curzon wanted was a subordinate authority who would be able to bridge the gulf between himself and the Indian army.

Kitchener wrote to thank the Viceroy for his help and assured him of his cordial support:

"... I did not write to you before, as I wished to leave you an absolutely free hand in dealing with the question of my appointment. I cannot thank you sufficiently for the action you have taken. Considerable pressure was brought upon me to go to the War Office, and, had the Indian appointment been postponed to 1903, I doubt very much whether I should have been able to take it. You may be quite sure when I come to India I will serve you loyally and do my utmost for the Indian Army. I have no fear regarding the personal feelings of officers, which, owing to my want of experience of India, I can well understand. I am not so black as I am painted, and I feel sure that personal contact will do away with the doubts that may exist in the minds of any officers who are really working at their

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1. Curzon to Kitchener, 31 March 1901.

profession and are keen soldiers at heart; such officers will soon find out that to me they are the salt of the earth."<sup>1</sup>

But the idea of Kitchener as Commander-in-Chief in India was not popular in the Indian army and it was feared that he would create more problems than he solved. Curzon mentioned this fact to the Secretary of State:

"The news will be received here with weeping and gnashing of teeth. The Indian soldiers generally will alternate ... between rage and alarm, and a good many of the harmless expletives that, I have no doubt, are now vented upon me, will be transferred to another quarter."<sup>2</sup>

Four months later he wrote:

"The possible appointment of Kitchener is exciting the liveliest dread in the Army in India. I have had a letter from Sir P. Palmer, who implores me, if I cannot prevent it, at least to ensure that, before Kitchener assumes the Chief Command, he shall have been tried in a Provisional Command. He calls him 'Kitchener of Chaos'; and predicts general disaster."<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime Brodrick at the War Office brought pressure to bear on the Viceroy, in an effort to prevent Kitchener from going to India. Brodrick was extremely sensitive to criticism regarding the failure of the War Office in the conduct of the operations during the campaign in South Africa; he needed an effective instrument to carry out his projected reforms and he warned Curzon against Kitchener:

1. Kitchener to Curzon, 8 May 1901.
2. Curzon to Hamilton, 15 August 1900.
3. Ibid., 13 December 1900.

"There has been a good deal of Cabinet ~~discuss-~~<sup>discuss-</sup> sion this week about the new C.-in-C. ... I am told you are now for Kitchener. If this be so, I should have sent you copies of some of Cromer's recent letters which would throw light on his eligibility for India. I can only say that there is no precedent ... for appointing a C.-in-C. quite unversed in India, and there are special dangers in K's case."<sup>1</sup>

But six months later, following the Cabinet's decision in principle to send Kitchener to India when the war in South Africa was finished, Brodrick reversed his ground and wrote:

"... I tore my vitals out for you about Kitchener. It will probably go far to wrecking my period of office ... it would be everything to have K. to appeal to ... I have literally no one to depend on in reorganization..."

But with the Cabinet's decision Brodrick had weakened and he explained to Curzon: "I think the Empire is a whole & your need is greater than mine. So I gave in and told the Cabinet the reason. I had meant to make him Chief of the Staff."<sup>2</sup> In his memoirs, Brodrick asserted that he had in fact taken his and Curzon's rival claims to Kitchener's services, with the tacit approval of the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, to Lansdowne and Roberts and that they had unhesitatingly decided that Kitchener must go to India: "The appointment lay with the War Office, and although

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 2 August 1900: This letter is no longer to be found in the Curzon Mss (Eur. F.111/10) at the India Office Library. Consequently we are forced to rely on Mosley, L., Curzon: The End of an Epoch, p.98.
  2. Brodrick to Curzon, 22 March 1901, Curzon MSS Eur. F.111/10.

Curzon did not know it, I had, on strong public grounds, done all in my power to prevent Kitchener going till Curzon had left India." Brodrick's testimony is somewhat flawed with defects as his subsequent actions reveal.<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's personal fortunes had suffered when, in August 1901, his wife died. In January 1903 he remarried, this time to a warm admirer of Kitchener, Madeleine Stanley. Throughout the duration of the Boer War Brodrick had regularly corresponded with Kitchener in South Africa and with Curzon in India. That bond of friendship, in the case of Kitchener became reinforced by marriage whereas in the case of Curzon increasingly produced estrangement, as we shall examine in the next chapter.<sup>2</sup> In spite of these personal misfortunes, in the face of Curzon's consistent demand for Kitchener in India, Brodrick acceded, perhaps viewing with interest that two such men with so strong temperamental characteristics should be brought together in India. Curzon knew Kitchener more by reputation as the soldier who had avenged Gordon, slain the Mahdi and restored a measure of prestige upon British arms in South Africa; Brodrick understood the operational tactician whose rough and ready methods,

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1. Middleton, Records and Reactions 1856-1939, pp.201-2. For different interpretations on Brodrick's position regarding Kitchener's appointment, see especially Fleming, P., Bayonets to Lhasa, p.290 and the less balanced account in Mosley, *supra*.
  2. See Brodrick to Kitchener, 19 December 1902; Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

power of brute force as well as expediency, privately earned Kitchener a reputation as an autocrat though it inspired confidence in his official superiors in the Cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time while the Cabinet deliberated, the presence of Russia on the outskirts of India seriously added to the problem of the defence of India and Curzon's dilemma was not mitigated by assistance from his military advisers. In February 1901 he commented bitterly:

"Last week we had our opening field-day upon the military estimates. I can only say that I look forward to these discussions with horror and back upon them with mingled annoyance and regret. No proportion, no system, no thought out plan of military reform ... a lot of petty, rubbishy proposals ... If we go on with the present system of what the Military Department here calls 'Army Reform' we are just paving the way to as big a smash someday as the heart of the bitterest enemy of England could desire."<sup>2</sup>

(4) Russian Railway Expansion and the Defence of India

While Great Britain was distracted by the Boer War, Russia had taken the opportunity to bring renewed pressure to bear against India by the construction and development of a network of railways in Central Asia. One of the main problems underlying British policy in Europe was the difficulty of interpreting the motives of Russia in Asia. The

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1. Middleton, op.cit., pp.216-7.

2. Curzon to Hamilton, 21 February 1901.

threat of a Russian invasion of India had a long-standing history and now Witte, the ambitious finance minister, was building between Orenburg and Tashkent a connecting line linking the Persian-Afghan frontier with European Russia.<sup>1</sup> The rapid extension of that system posed a formidable threat to the security of India and greatly alarmed the Viceroy.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly it became evident to those responsible for Britain's Imperial defence and European diplomatic posture, that the strategic advantages conferred by England's sea power were now diminished by the expansion of Russian railroads in Asia.

During the winter of 1899-1900 the whole question of the Defence of India was reopened by the India Office. It was decided that in the event of hostilities by a Russian attack upon Afghanistan, at least 30,000 British troops would be sent to India at once, with an additional 70,000, should prolonged hostilities require that number.<sup>3</sup> By December 1902, an India Office Committee reported that "the military position of Russia grows stronger every day and the completion of the Orenburg-Tashkent railway in or about 1905 will add immensely to the danger to which India may be exposed."<sup>4</sup> That situation produced great anxiety in India.

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1. Monger, G., The End of Isolation, p.4.

2. Ronaldshay, Curzon, II, p.101 ff.

3. Despatch No.5, 23 February 1900, Curzon MSS F.111/414.

4. Monger, op.cit., p.4.

Though the distances to be traversed between Russia and India were vast and the intervening country desolate, India's long land frontier left her exposed and in a position where Russia could apply leverage in an area totally removed from British naval superiority, a classic reversal of strategy in Russia's favour. The British in India now faced an extremely difficult problem - the dilemma of having to meet an aggressor along her frontiers whilst maintaining her internal control, always with the possibility of rebellion from within India.<sup>1</sup>

Because Curzon had long kept up a lively interest in Russian policy in Central Asia he considered himself an expert on Asian affairs there. He published his views in his first important work, Russia in Central Asia in 1889, which established his reputation, and in which he described the sum and substance of Russia's policy, as "to keep England quiet in Europe by keeping her employed in Asia."<sup>2</sup> With the possibility of a Russian advance Curzon as Viceroy carefully reviewed British policy with the intelligence reports he received from officials along India's frontiers and in Europe, and he was determined to be prepared to face any eventuality.

British policy towards a Russian invasion may be roughly summarised in the following five principles: (1) Indian forces could not alone deal with Russia and must

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1. See Greaves, R.L., Persia and the Defence of India 1884-1892, p.3.

2. Curzon, G.N., Russia in Central Asia in 1889, p.321.

depend as we have seen upon reinforcements from home. (2) Ultimate decisions concerning Russian policy in Asia rested with the Foreign Office and not the Government of India. (3) The incident most likely to cause a rupture between England and Russia would be violation by Russia of Afghan territory. (4) Should war break out the main theatre of operations would be somewhere in Central Asia; simultaneously measures against Russia would be taken in the Baltic, the Black Sea, and in the Far East. (5) In the event of hostilities, England's aim would not only be decisive military victories, but also the financial exhaustion of Russia, thus forcing a favourable peace.<sup>1</sup> Curzon was at great pains to revise that policy in order, among other considerations, to prevent increasing financial strain which war would inevitably place upon Indian revenues. He assumed that the defence burden would be borne largely, if not wholly, by the Imperial exchequer,<sup>2</sup> and in consequence his views clashed with those entertained by the Home Government.

The problems of Indian defence involved not only the north-west frontier, but also the integrity of Afghanistan, Persia and Tibet. Russian activities in Central Asia led Curzon to an increasing interest in these territories as potential buffer states. But agreement on this subject

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1. See Greaves, op.cit., p.40.

2. Despatch No.85, 13 June 1901, Curzon MSS Eur. F.111/414.

was difficult between the Government of India, the India Office and the British Cabinet under the auspices of the Defence Committee. Though we are not concerned with Britain's diplomatic policy in Europe, suffice it to say that the wide divergence of opinion which arose between London and Calcutta regarding the best way to advance the interests of a mighty Empire, became acute. As the problems of India's external affairs gained in importance, they increased the complexity of reconciling India's policy with that of Cabinet strategy. Moreover the age-old conflict between civilian control and military strategy once again produced friction, only partly resolved by the decisions of the Defence Committee.<sup>1</sup> Though direct negotiation in Europe ultimately culminated with the Anglo-Russian Convention in 1907, the intervening years were rife with tension.<sup>2</sup>

The unexpected failure of British arms in South Africa exploded like a bomb amidst the smooth surface of contemporary political affairs in England. For that reason Salisbury had deferred his resignation until July 1902 to avoid incurring the risk of giving a false impression to the Boers as to the harmony of English counsels. Salisbury/therefore found comfort in the fact that there were new and younger men capable of managing the administration of Imperial affairs:

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1. See Charteris, J., Field-Marshal Earl Haig, [1929], p.30.  
 2. Greaves, op.cit., p.43.

"It is fortunate for us that the satraps of the Empire were never more conspicuous for intelligence and force than they are now - yourself, Cromer, Milner, Kitchener."<sup>1</sup> The shock of the Boer War did little however to help British prestige in India; and was felt all over the Empire as a howl of glee arose at the humiliation of the British by a few thousand untrained farmers, whose habit of taking away the trousers of their prisoners only added to the more comic aspects of that prestige.<sup>2</sup> As conflicts between soldiers and statesmen now became primarily administrative ones, they were embittered by personal animus even more than by disagreement about the best method of achieving success. In these circumstances Curzon once again became exceedingly impatient with the administration of the Indian Army, and as rumours of Russia's intention to take advantage of England's difficulties spread, Curzon determined to set his house in order and overhaul the Indian military machine, illustrating in 1900 one of the problems which delay of Kitchener's appointment was causing him:

"We are once again going to have that most distressing of experiences, a full field day in Council, in which all his [the Military Member's] fresh military proposals, some of them individually excellent, but collectively impossible from the point of view either of expediency or finance, will have to be threshed out by a body of civilians who will be told at each turn that if they do not give this or that they will

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1. Salisbury to Curzon, 9 August 1902.

2. For the impact of the Boer War on the British Army, see Terraine, J., Douglas Haig, The Educated Soldier, p.24.

be responsible for the future discomfiture of British arms."<sup>1</sup>

The successive postponement of Kitchener's appointment, (although having been decided on in principle by the Cabinet in March 1901), left Curzon in a somewhat exposed position and he was forced to place control of military administration in the hands of Elles, to the extent that, according to Magnus, he took "the ambitious military member under his wing."<sup>2</sup> In that way he had hoped to provide some kind of stop gap for the problem of India's military security.

India's external defence involved vast logistical dimensions for her strategic boundaries covered in theory an area extending from the waters of the Cape of Good Hope on the West to the Straits of Magellan on the East. Her long land frontier stretching from Tibet and Chinese Turkestan in the East to Afghanistan and Persia in the West, was, of course, partially insulated by the geography of the highest mountain barrier in the world. The intervening terrain, characterised by mountains and deserts, made any invasion logistically difficult. Only along the North-West frontier was India really vulnerable, and there Persia and Afghanistan separated the Russian Empire, and British India. Nevertheless the Great European powers, Russia, France and Germany were becoming increasingly interested in Asia. The fact that

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 1 February 1900.

2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.201.

India's huge land frontiers touched Turkey, many parts of the Arabian peninsula, Russia on the Pamirs, China along the entire border of Turkestan and Yunnan, and France on the Upper Mekong, prompted Curzon to observe: "in Asia a great deal is still in flux and solution, and there must, and there ... will be, great changes."<sup>1</sup> In 1885 the Russians had succeeded in pushing their frontiers southwards until they were coterminous with Persia and Afghanistan; the Penjdeh crisis in which the Russians suddenly attacked the Afghans, marked the beginning of a large increase of military expenditure in India, and demonstrated to Britain that the last safeguards between India and Russia were now threatened. These circumstances combined to produce a tremendous expansion of the military budget of the Indian Government; in 1893 the value of the rupee fell, and increased financial embarrassment, forcing the reduction of military estimates at a time when a series of frontier wars coupled with the famine of 1896, necessitated the greatest financial stringency. Consequently by 1900 Curzon feared that the burden of defence would ruin Indian finance and so reduce the Government to chaos.<sup>2</sup>

The Home Government too was extremely anxious; by 1903 Roberts reported to the Committee of Imperial Defence:

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1. Summary of Curzon's Administration in the Military Dept., 1906, Curzon MSS, III/414, p.91.
  2. Ibid., p.5.

"... as regards Russia, there is undoubted evidence that she has designs upon Afghanistan and India. Twice during the last century we were dragged into war with Afghanistan in consequence of the presence of Russian Emissaries at Cabul ... Russian possessions in Central Asia have now been brought into direct railway communication with St. Petersburg via the Caspian. Russia's frontier is absolutely coterminous with that of Afghanistan along its whole length ... it is only reasonable to conclude ... she will take advantage of some plausible pretext to repudiate her existing engagements, and continue her policy of aggression and absorption... To sum up, I would urge that Russia be informed, on the earliest possible opportunity, that any interference with Afghan affairs or any other violation of the Afghan frontier would lead to a declaration of war by England."<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime Balfour the new Prime Minister, informed his Foreign Secretary, Lansdowne:

"The fundamental principle which should govern us in discussing a forward policy is quite simple: until Russia moves we remain still; as soon as Russia moves in the north we move in the south."<sup>2</sup>

The application of that principle, particularly in the Persian Gulf, was not so simple, but it reveals to what extent Great Britain was prepared to go in the event of further Russian encroachment against the buffer states surrounding India.

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1. Memorandum, 24 March 1903, by Roberts on Military Defence of India, Cabinet records of the Committee of Imperial Defence, 6/1/8D Paper 8D (Papers on the Defence of India, P.R.O.: This collection contains over 50 papers dealing with related issues on the defence of India from 1901-1904. See 'List of Papers of the Committee of Imperial Defence to 1914', HMSO 1964, pp.1-18.
  2. Ibid., Paper 38D, Balfour to Lansdowne, 6 September 1902.

Curzon however was not prepared to stand idly by while Russia gradually consolidated her position in Central Asia. He was convinced that Britain could win the great struggle with Russia in Asia and vigorously rejected what appeared to him to be the spineless attitude of the Home Government. Having little use for a 'buffer policy', he advocated a more militant forward policy in Afghanistan, Persia and Tibet, and preached that Britain must be ready to defend India by restoring the dominating influence of British prestige in those territories vital to her interest.<sup>1</sup> Broadly speaking, Curzon's external policies were characterised by his tendency to gain by force what could not be achieved by negotiation, and that policy brought him into direct conflict with the Cabinet. Brodrick reminded him that the South African War was making serious drains on Britain's military forces and that the times were particularly unfavourable to a forward policy:

"You may say that inaction spells future trouble; but, if you were here, I doubt if you would give France, Germany and Russia a chance of coming together on anything; ... Don't resent my saying this; I am, as you know, of the forward school and am oppressed by the sometimes needless inertia; but your views, which are well known, rather perturb Arthur [Balfour] and others who are as keen as yourself, because times are so difficult."<sup>2</sup>

These differences came to a head, as we shall see, over the defence of Asia, and Curzon felt the Home Government

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1. Grenville, op.cit., pp.292 & 298.

2. Brodrick to Curzon, 8 August 1901, Curzon MSS 111/10.  
(See also Ronaldshay, Curzon, II, p.207).

were inept in handling affairs there. Furthermore, Kitchener's appointment was greatly to complicate the question of Indian defence which Curzon so hoped it would resolve: "Kitchener's foundations had been laid deep in public opinion, and he did not intend to be any man's tool. He intended to do his duty in the autocratic way which had answered in the Sudan and South Africa."<sup>1</sup> Fundamental differences between India and the Home Government over foreign and defence policies were to be strikingly illustrated when they became related to the problem of military administration in India, and it will be convenient to examine these in Chapter III.

In the meantime Curzon's crusade against racialism and social injustice in the army and his concern for the administrative arrangements of India's external as well as internal policies, epitomised both the strength and the weakness of his Viceroyalty. In his position of relative isolation, no one was better placed than he to analyse such problems, hitherto notably mismanaged. He was able therefore to relieve the worst of the abuses by forthright action prior to Kitchener's arrival. But his successes were purchased at considerable cost and although by 1902 he could write that he had assured India's internal security through improved

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1. Magnus, Kitchener, p.196.

communications and the permeation of the "pacifying influence of the civil administration", "Provision for external defence alone remained unsatisfactory."<sup>1</sup>

Peace was made with the Boers on 31 May 1902, and Kitchener sailed from Cape Town for England in June. After receiving the honours that were showered upon him, he took up the question of his future which had occupied his mind for so long, with members of the Imperial Cabinet. He discussed the date on which he would assume the Indian command with Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, and with officials at the India Office. Godley, the Permanent Under-Secretary had expected a "silent man of action", and was accordingly dismayed when Kitchener "talked incessantly for about 55 minutes". Godley was greatly impressed:

"He had not sat down for three minutes before I felt that I perfectly understood what I had heard of his strength and his influence; and one appreciated from the first his extraordinary gift of complete want of self-consciousness - the mind fixed on the object, and absolutely regardless of you or of itself, or of the effect that it may be producing on you."

Kitchener was at some pains to secure for himself a much-needed holiday:

"In talking to me he made a great point to not taking his work up until the end of November. He said he had been not only in command of armies, but virtually at war,

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1. Summary of Curzon's 'Administration in the Military Department', p.15. Curzon MSS 111/414.

for seven years without intermission, and that he must have a spell of rest."<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy however was extremely anxious that Kitchener should arrive in India as soon as possible, pointed out that the preparations for the great forthcoming Delhi Durbar imposed some hardship and inconvenience on Palmer, the provisional Commander-in-Chief, who was thus forced to arrange for the details for the entire military part of the programme, involving some 30,000 to 40,000 troops. Moreover, he urgently needed Kitchener's services by the middle of October if he was to take command <sup>of</sup> ~~of the responsibility for~~ <sup>with</sup> "men whom he has never seen in a country he does not know,"<sup>2</sup> and predicted that in the meantime his own relations with the Indian army would make his position at Delhi "most difficult and trying". How would Kitchener handle that situation? Curzon was not sanguine:

"... for with the army of 40,000 soldiers there, the society will be almost exclusively military; there will be 1,200 officers alone, all of them probably cursing me in their cups: and I doubt not that I shall receive many a curt answer and sullen glance. No doubt too they will get a hold of the Duke of Connaught, who will send home woeful messages to the King. This is the price that a man has to pay in this country who dares to stand up against the crimes of his fellow countrymen or to hold the scales with even hand..."<sup>3</sup>

But the Home Government were determined that Kitchener must

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1. Godley to Curzon, 18 July 1902.
2. Curzon to Godley, 23 July 1902.
3. Curzon to Hamilton, 27 November 1902.

have a holiday and Hamilton telegraphed (16 July 1902) that Kitchener would reach Bombay on 28 November.

While in England Kitchener paid a series of visits to prominent members of the ruling class. In July of 1902 Lord Salisbury retired from the Premiership and A.J. Balfour, a warm admirer of Kitchener, succeeded his uncle as Prime Minister. Kitchener took the precaution of making Lady Cranborne<sup>1</sup> his secret contact with the leadership of Balfour's new government. Her husband was first cousin to Balfour, and succeeded as Lord Salisbury in August, 1903. Kitchener had "enjoyed a long friendship with the Cecil family, and its influence was considerable. Its members acted always from a sense of disinterested duty and from motives of the highest patriotism."<sup>2</sup> Arrangements were made for Hubert Hamilton, Kitchener's military secretary to send documents which Kitchener felt would be of interest to his friends, and thereby keep them independently informed of events in India.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the motives, the existence of this secret channel of communication was to become a major source of erosion, undermining confidence in the relations between India and the Home Government and culminating in the steady deterioration of personal as well as official friendship between Curzon and the India Office.

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1. Lady Cicely Alice Gore (1867-1955); m. (1887) Viscount Cranborne (4th Marquis of Salisbury).

2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.197.

3. Ibid.

Balfour's Government was not strong, but he managed to push through three important measures of reform in the field of education, defence and foreign policy. With the appointment of Kitchener to India, two of these reforms, in imperial defence and foreign policy, were to seriously affect the policy of the Government of India and the Viceroyalty of Curzon. Moreover, just as the war in South Africa had overshadowed all other events and allowed policy in India to run along fairly autonomous lines, after 1902 under Balfour's initiative, the question of Imperial strategy took on new importance with the result of increasing the power of the Prime Minister over Britain's foreign and defence affairs.<sup>1</sup> It was Balfour's intention to utilise Kitchener's talents to help co-ordinate Imperial policy.

Kitchener left England en route for India on 17 October 1902, and landed in Egypt to inspect the Asswan Dam and visit the Sudan where he opened Gordon College at Khartoum on 8 November. In Cairo, he discussed his future plans for the reorganisation of the Indian army with Lord Cromer. Dubious of Kitchener's expectations before he had the opportunity for a thorough investigation of the conditions on the spot, Cromer suggested that Kitchener go to India with only an open mind and not a plan of campaign, and that he should form his opinions only after long and patient

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1. See Young, K., Arthur James Balfour, pp.199-200, and Monger, op.cit., pp.93-4.

examination of the obstacles in the path of Indian reform.

Brodrick wrote:

"Unfortunately, Kitchener sowed the seeds of discord on his way out to India by telling Lord Cromer that he intended to abolish the Military Member of Council...",<sup>1</sup>

and Lord George Hamilton, (in his memoirs), mentioned that a few days before Kitchener left England to take up his new duties, he had called upon him at Deal Castle:

"In conversation he said quite casually, 'what are the functions and status of the Military Member of Council in India?' I described them as shortly as I could and he then said, 'I ought to be Military Member.' I did not attach much importance to this remark but the news reached me that almost immediately upon his arrival in India he fell foul of General Elles, who was then Military Member."<sup>2</sup>

The stage was now set for the first act of a Homeric combat.

It was four years since Kitchener had first entertained the idea of his appointment to India with Curzon, (in 1898), and by 1902 he was convinced that it was now time for thorough reform of the Indian army. Kitchener arrived in India "with a fixed obsession that a Russian invasion was being prepared", and "landed, accordingly, with an urgent sense of mission, and with the firm resolve to take drastic and immediate steps to prepare the Indian Army to meet the Russian threat."<sup>3</sup> Supported by his friends in England,

1. Middleton, op.cit., p.202.

2. Hamilton, G.F., Parliamentary Reminiscences and Reflections, 1886-1905, pp.302-3.

3. Magnus, Kitchener, p.196.

Kitchener believed that he possessed something of a national mandate for reorganising the defences of India, and that nothing and no one would be allowed to stand in his way. At his first meeting with Curzon, Kitchener rather disingenuously asked whether in fact, it would be easier for him to accomplish his mission if he had come to India as the Military Member instead of as the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup> But to this problem the Viceroy for the moment turned a deaf ear, being at the time preoccupied by the growing estrangement not only with Russia but with the Imperial Cabinet over India's external affairs.

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1. Magnus, Kitchener, pp.201-2.

CHAPTER IIIINDIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE HOME GOVERNMENT(1) Brodrick's Unpopularity as Minister for War

Throughout the duration of the war in South Africa, Curzon, absent from the seat of control of the Imperial Cabinet, carried on the task of administrative reform in India relatively unhindered. Because Ministers in London were almost exclusively absorbed in the conduct and prosecution of military operations there, circumstances tended to limit the sphere of their intervention in Indian affairs. But in the aftermath of the Boer War, which left a deep and lasting impression upon members of the Cabinet, the attitude of ministers towards India became radically altered. British statesmen might be blind in their own choice of a policy for India but they were more than aware of their own disinclinations. In effect, being uncertain as to what course should be pursued and adopted in India, they realised quite clearly those directions which they did not want to follow. It was this negative quality, increasingly grasped and proclaimed by the Cabinet in order to avoid fresh entanglements abroad, which so exasperated Curzon. Conflict arose when Curzon embarked upon a course of independent action, often in defiance of ministers collectively responsible for Imperial policy in London. And as India's external policy more and more threatened to encroach upon the Cabinet's conduct of

Imperial affairs, the ensuing confusion spread very rapidly. Moreover, the source of much of the friction and grievance between the Government of India and that in Whitehall concerned the issue of finance.

One incident in the summer of 1902 serves to illustrate this difficulty: Curzon had become concerned over the burden of the cost of the Indian representatives at the Coronation of King Edward VII held in London, and subsequently, the question of a remission of taxation for the Indian people at a Durbar in India that winter. The Viceroy refused to assent to the provision of funds from Indian revenues to defray the costs of India's guests on the tacit assumption that to demand payment from India was a travesty of the elementary laws of hospitality. When, however, in August 1902, Curzon suggested the announcement of a reduction of taxation at the Coronation Durbar to be held in India,<sup>1</sup> his proposal met with stiff opposition. He then appealed over the heads of ministers directly to the King, and that action was deeply resented by the Cabinet. Hamilton wrote:

"The two telegrams that you sent to the King were transmitted by him to the Cabinet, and there read. They excited strong comment. It was alleged that it was the first time that any appeal had been made to the King to influence a Cabinet whilst it had under its consideration a question affecting the person who had so appealed. It was, moreover, felt and said that the question at issue was of

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1. Curzon to Godley, 27 August 1902.

the very class in which an appeal to the Sovereign ought not to have been made."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon then threatened resignation, and defended a position from which he declined to withdraw. He replied:

"Now I look forward with utter sickness of heart to another dispute with your Council. In my view - and it is shared by all my Colleagues - they are as wrong in advising you as they have done - as they were over the Coronation expenses, Berar, the Police Commission, and the various other matters in which they have shown themselves to be false judges of the Indian situation. I am accountable for this Durbar, its success or its failure... By a happy accident the King can associate his Coronation with boons, long promised and urgently needed, to his people ... I would sooner not hold the Durbar at all than hold it under the conditions which you desire to prescribe for me; ... I say, therefore, with the utmost respect, but with emphasis, that I cannot accept the position which you desire to assign me; and I urge you once again to accept my advice (which has not so far, on a single important occasion, led you astray) in preference to that of the counsellors who have been wrong before, and are now wrong again."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon then informed A.J. Balfour, the Prime Minister, of the great personal sacrifice he was making in order to perform his duties in India.

"If the Government are fixed in their views, I feel disposed to say that it will be fairer upon me, and fairer upon yourselves, that you should get some one else to carry them out. Do not make me the instrument of this great failure ... if a public servant

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 20 November 1902.  
2. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 November 1902.

has lost the confidence of his masters, they have the right to recall him, and you can exercise that right in the present case."<sup>1</sup>

But the Viceroy was informed by Brodrick that the Cabinet were prepared to sack him if he persisted in pushing his policy in the teeth of their hostility:

"I hate writing this - but I telegraphed because I feared you might think if you threatened resignation, the Cabinet might give way ... but in this instance there has been unanimity of opinion in the India Office & Cabinet..."<sup>2</sup>

The Coronation Durbar episode became the subject of heated controversy between India and the Home Government and revealed the growing divergence between the Viceroy and his colleagues in London. In particular it opened a breach with Brodrick, and Curzon told his wife:

"Observe the amicable way in which he informs me that all the Cabinet, including himself (a humble participator), were quite prepared to throw me overboard ... I need not comment on it all ... but what a light it throws upon human nature and upon friendship."<sup>3</sup>

That rift in the personal relations between two former friends added significantly to the difficulties which were to beset the conduct of India's affairs in other matters.

The gulf was noticeably widened partly as a result of other events following the Boer War. <sup>Because</sup> Balfour's Cabinet

1. Curzon to Balfour, 20 November 1902.
2. Brodrick to Curzon, 21 November 1902. Curzon MSS III/10.
3. Ronaldshay, Curzon, II, p.244.

was not strong they hoped to win popularity by a reduction of expenditure, particularly in Army estimates, and this involved the use of Indian revenues to defray the costs of Imperial obligations. In that way Curzon's friendship towards Brodrick, was subject to considerable strain. St. John Brodrick was industrious and conscientious as well as being profoundly determined to carry through at all costs what he conceived to be his duty - root and branch reform at the War Office. Nevertheless, if Brodrick was forceful he was also tactless and he became extremely unpopular in his own party as well as in the eyes of the country,<sup>1</sup> for the mismanagement of the War Office. Lord George Hamilton informed Curzon of these circumstances while conveying his personal observations reaffirming Brodrick's unpopularity.<sup>2</sup> In addition both Hamilton and Curzon were not happy with the way in which Indian interests were treated in the hands of the War Office, resulting from a traditional conflict of interests. At the time Hamilton wrote: "I dislike the idea of the military expenditure of India being run up by £800,000" to suit the needs of the War Office and he rejected the position that

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1. See Dunlop, J.K., The Development of the British Army 1899-1914, p.152.

2. Hamilton to Curzon, 13 February 1902: Hamilton as a former 1st Lord of the Admiralty was, as an expert naval administrator, critical of the organisation of the War Office. His son had been involved in the seige of Ladysmith and had almost died, prejudicing his mind against the War Office.

India and the War Office should be that of provider and user.<sup>1</sup>

In their efforts to obtain more equitable terms for the India Office and the Government of India, both Hamilton and Curzon found as often as not they were not consulted until decisions regarding Indian revenues had been taken, and Curzon later, in 1909, ~~wrote~~ <sup>remarked</sup>:

"It might surprise some of the more embittered critics of British rule in that country if they knew how bold a struggle had often been waged for the defence of the Indian tax-payer by its much-abused rulers."<sup>2</sup>

Though personally sympathetic to Brodrick, Hamilton explained that the War Minister's difficulties stemmed not only from his personal limitations but from defects in his administration and that:

"The British public are now on the rampage ... the press want some scapegoats ... therefore, the War Office is marked down in advance as their prey."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, Brodrick imperfectly understood the position of the Government of India regarding military expenditure:

"Brodrick has ... obtained the idea that you and I starve military expenditure in India, and that a huge increase is absolutely necessary to bring the equipment and armament of the Indian Army up to date."<sup>4</sup>

Hamilton assured Curzon that as far as he was concerned,

1. Hamilton to Curzon, 13 February 1902. See also Singh, op.cit., who cites instances of the often arbitrary demands made on India by the War Office, pp.197; 208.
2. Curzon, G.N., The Place of India in the Empire, p.22.
3. Hamilton to Curzon, 6 March 1902.
4. Ibid., 19 December 1902.

"the Indian Army is far more efficient and better equipped for mobilisation than it has ever been, and that, although there is no prospect of a reduction of expenditure, yet with the savings which we hope Kitchener may effect in the reduction of the Engineer's bill, we may be able to go on improving our army with comparatively little additional cost. But just now he has so many troubles inside his office, and the pressure on him for an increase of expenditure is so great, that I think his ordinary level-headedness is somewhat upset, and that he takes a very exaggerated view of what is really necessary to achieve military efficiency."

In addition, Brodrick was often extremely tactless in his personal relations with his colleagues:

"He somehow or other contrives to rub up all the officials with whom he has to deal, both civilian and military, inside as well as outside his Department, and he has undoubtedly committed a series of gaucheries which, though small in themselves, give his opponents an opportunity of holding him up to ridicule, and prejudicing the public mind against him. I am afraid the War Office internally is from an administrative point of view in a worse position than it has been for many years past."<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton attributed Brodrick's declining popularity to his increasing deafness which may well have unconsciously annoyed his colleagues:

"... his deafness has greatly grown upon him, and that, combined with a certain tactlessness, prevents him from understanding the gist of personal conversations, and to this physical failing rather than anything else may be attributed the very unjust opinion which, I fear, almost universally prevails concerning him."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 28 January 1903.  
2. Ibid., 13 February 1903.

On 27 February 1903 Hamilton once again took up that theme.

"I think his failing is that his power of logical exposition greatly exceeds his powers as a practical reformer or organiser. He is so deaf that he does not hear other people's opinions, and he is, in addition, very self-opinionated himself."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's career at the War Office was a regrettable failure and he was a liability as well to the Government;<sup>2</sup> Hamilton moreover predicted a ministerial collapse upon Army estimates.

A good deal of the opposition attack in Parliament came from Winston Churchill, fresh from his adventures in South Africa, and the new Member for Oldham. His repeated remarks on the prodigious Army estimates which brought dis-sension over Army reform, and neither increased efficiency nor reform, revealed the weakness of Balfour's Parliamentary position and threatened to bring the Government down. As a strong advocate of the Admiralty's 'blue-water' school Churchill bedevilled Balfour's efforts to increase expenditure on the army in preference to expanding the fleet in preparation for a European war.<sup>3</sup> But both Hamilton and Curzon generally agreed that financially the policy of the

1. Hamilton to Curzon, 27 February 1903.

2. Ibid. In the bitterness of defeat Curzon two years later wrote of his treatment "by a man who has failed in every office that he has filled ... and who would never have had the chance of being a failure as Secretary of State for India if he had not already been a failure as Secretary of State for War." Curzon to Ampthill, 23 July 1905.

3. See Johnson, F.A., Defence by Committee, p.42; and Dunlop, op.cit., pp.152, 157-8.

Home Government sacrificed Indian interests and Hamilton wrote:

"In order to justify the vast increase in expenditure, both Brodrick and Balfour have made free use of Indian requirements and of the large reinforcements which India would require in the event of an assault upon our North-West Frontier."<sup>1</sup>

The Government in fact was under tremendous pressure for an increase in military efficiency, the natural reaction of the country to its colonial obligations; but it was also partly due "to the ambition aroused in the military mind of being able to take some part in a big continental war." Nevertheless such evidence foreshadowed the discontent which was to lead to the Liberal landslide ahead, and Hamilton foreboded: "... our popularity is steadily on the wane. People are tired of us", and sceptical of the Government's capacity to "manage the affairs of the Empire, except by an expenditure which is ... steadily gaining."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon was thus dismayed to learn that Balfour's Government though under the threat of being turned out, (resulting from the unpopularity of the War Minister), was considering the prospect of utilising and providing funds for increased military expenditure by the use of Indian revenues.<sup>3</sup> The War Minister's efforts to obtain this

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 13 March 1903.

2. Ibid.

3. See Brodrick to Curzon, 16 September 1902. Curzon MSS III/10

additional finance and so prove himself worthy of his post in the eyes of his colleagues and countrymen, produced unfortunate consequences with the Government of India. As we have shown Brodrick as well had been disappointed in losing Kitchener's services for the War Office;<sup>1</sup> and had openly asserted that if Curzon elected to resign over the Durbar episode, the Cabinet would accept the fact with equanimity.<sup>2</sup> Now Brodrick's suggestion that Indian revenues be used to defray the costs of increased military expenditure in the Army estimates of the War Office, created a crisis of confidence in his friendship with Brodrick which received a severe blow. Added to this came a private intimation that the Cabinet were thinking of Brodrick as a possible candidate to succeed Curzon as Viceroy.<sup>3</sup> In these circumstances the Viceroy had just cause to fear a change of Government at home.

(2) The Extension of Curzon's Term of Office.

The question of an extension of the Viceroy's term of office now brought Curzon into conflict with the Home Government. Normally, his five years' period of office would have terminated in December 1903. For reasons which we shall examine, Curzon desired to extend his tenure by two years on the condition that he should be granted leave of absence

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1. Midleton, *op.cit.*, p.201; see also Brodrick to Curzon, 22 March 1901.
  2. *Supra*, p.104. Brodrick to Curzon, 21 November 1902; and 27 January 1903. Curzon MSS III/10.
  3. See Dawkins to Curzon, 25 July 1902.

early in 1904. In discussing his reasons for a prolongation of his term with the Prime Minister, Curzon noted in addition to the necessity for continued co-operation with Kitchener for the prosecution of successful military reforms (1) his desire personally to conduct the forthcoming Royal tour (1905); (2) his duty to stay and complete the administrative reforms which he had initiated; and (3) his wish to maintain on a sure footing India's delicate relations with Afghanistan:

"... it would be an abnegation of public duty on my part to take my hand off the plough for a little while longer ... I should be willing to stay on in India, if required, until the end of 1905, i.e., until I have been here for 7 years. Within that time I think that I could have completed my task, and laid the foundations secure."<sup>1</sup>

But he was secretly anxious about Brodrick's ambitions in India.

At home the pressure in Parliament for fresh men to undertake the task of reform remained. When it was mentioned that the Liberal opposition (notably Rosebery) wanted to replace the unpopular Brodrick with Kitchener for Secretary of State for War,<sup>2</sup> Curzon wrote:

"Our 'Hercules from the Himalayas', as Rosebery persists in calling Kitchener, greatly to the fury of the latter, has an opinion about the War Office and its chief, which it would be hardly wise to repeat on paper, and I can

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1. Curzon to Balfour, 5 February 1903, no.7.  
2. See James, R.R., Rosebery, p.446.

assure you that the very last thing that he desires is to be recalled from the Himalayas and employed in any capacity in Pall Mall."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Curzon supported his contention that Brodrick's appointment as Viceroy would not be well received in India. He corroborated that view with extracts from Indian newspapers which he sent Hamilton on 5 March. The Secretary of State conceded that there were risks involved in the possibility of sending out Brodrick and he therefore encouraged Curzon to remain, expressing his view that Brodrick

"has ridden his horses to a standstill... I do not believe it would be politically safe to put him in a position of such unique authority as the Viceroy of India exercises, and where his discretion would be so unfettered. Therefore, from every point of view, I consider it would be for the advantage of India that you should stop on."<sup>2</sup>

But Curzon was indignant when he heard "from an authoritative quarter in England ... that the idea has been seriously entertained of sending Brodrick out as my successor to India next year because he is thought to have failed at home, and of bringing me back to clear up the mess that he is supposed to have left at the War Office ... No consideration in the world would induce me to take part in the administration of the War Office, I believe it to be utterly bad from top to bottom ... if I were asked to undertake the task, my answer would be No, No, and a thousand times No. There is no reason

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 19 February 1903.  
2. Hamilton to Curzon, 27 March 1903.

why one should sacrifice the whole of the best of one's life for work which you get no gratitude, and are, on the contrary, overwhelmed with ignorant calumny and malignant scorn."<sup>1</sup> The suggestion merely reinforced Curzon's determination to remain in India and complete his work.

But the question of Curzon's future was inextricably bound with that of the Government, and further complicated by the King's dislike of the idea of a Viceroy taking a prolonged absence from India, while on holiday in England, before resuming his Viceroyalty. As a result of the Government's vulnerability, Balfour could not guarantee Curzon any extension of office, and that fact created a charged atmosphere between the two Governments. Balfour reviewed that delicate situation in an undated letter to Curzon in March, 1903. The Prime Minister maintained that though it would be of great advantage to Indian Administration that Curzon's work should be continued, "the future of the Government cannot be regarded as in all respects assured. We have been in office a very long time; we have carried much legislation; and we have been responsible for the conduct of a prolonged and very costly war." A difficult Parliamentary situation had "been occasioned as much by matters personal to St. John [Brodrick] as by the merits or

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 12 March 1903.

demerits of his military policy." Balfour pointed out that if Curzon were re-appointed and came home for a holiday, a ministerial collapse might completely frustrate his plans and, that as well "objection might be felt to your re-appointment on the eve of a General Election which turned against us."<sup>1</sup> In a postscript Balfour took exception to some acid references to his Government which Curzon had made:

"George Hamilton, by-the-way, has shown me a private letter of yours in which quite a surprising number of pungent adjectives are applied to the Asiatic policy of the Government... I suppose I could find some not less pungent method of describing the alternatives proposed for India."

Curzon was extremely pained by that letter and once again hinted at resignation:

"I only offered, in what I conceived to be the public interest, to stay on, should the Government desire me to do so. Otherwise I would strongly prefer to consult my own health and interests by returning home."<sup>2</sup>

On the same day, Curzon informed Hamilton:

"I have been somewhat pained at the tone of Balfour's letter ... I wish you clearly to understand that, except from the point of view of public duty, I have not the slightest desire to exceed my five years' term, and His Majesty's Government may retire me whenever they please."

The one condition to which the Viceroy attached the greatest importance was a holiday in England. Accordingly he informed

1. Balfour to Curzon, n.d. March 1903.
2. Curzon to Balfour, 30 April 1903.

Hamilton:

"It is not for me, after five years of the work that I have gone through, to ask the Government for a favour. I am much too proud to do so. It is for them, if they conceive my staying on here to be in the public interest, to ask me to remain. The only other point at issue is that of my holiday. Everyone tells me that I have nothing whatever to gain by remaining in India, and you know perfectly well that it is only a sense of duty that impels me to consider the step. But whether I gain or lose in reputation by staying, there is one loss to which I do not want to submit as the consequence, and that is the permanent loss of my health."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon had other and more personal reasons for desiring to remain in office. He had been privately warned moreover that Kitchener intended coming out to India with ambitions of his own and "that he has got a year with you which he will need to look round, and he won't collide with you. After that, he will use the whole of his popularity and prestige to dominate the next Viceroy. Consequently, it is your successor he is already occupied with."<sup>2</sup> That tip was not lost on the Viceroy, especially when he learned of a tactless remark which Brodrick had inadvertently mentioned to Hamilton as to possible candidates succeeding him; Hamilton had never wholly trusted the appointment of Kitchener to India and reaffirmed that view when he intimated (on 5 June 1903) Kitchener's desire to mould men to suit his

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 28 May 1902.  
2. Dawkins to Curzon, 25 July 1902, no.131.

own ideas. According to Hamilton, Kitchener had attempted

"to influence those in authority into believing that Eddie Stanley [17th Earl of Derby] or Cranborne [later 4th Marquis of Salisbury] would either of them be efficient Viceroys. Brodrick told me this with great glee, as Kitchener was certain that he could manage either of them, and then added St. John [Brodrick], with his usual naiveté: 'But he [Kitchener] does not think that of me'."<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton then went on to make an extraordinary suggestion; he asked for Curzon's views on the possibility of Kitchener succeeding him as Viceroy, and pointed out further that "so long as you are there, you will not only be able to pull together, but be able to do some excellent work in combination, though I can quite understand he would like to have a weaker man whom he could mould and influence as he chose."<sup>2</sup> Without hesitation, Curzon replied that Kitchener would not do as Viceroy of India.

"In the first place, his whole heart is in the Army, and he thinks and talks about nothing else. No man could now be both Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief. If he were Viceroy I should be extremely sorry for his Commander-in-Chief, who would be reduced to a cipher ... Moreover, Kitchener has not any ... grasp of administration. He rather prides himself on his financial capacities; but - in my view he confuses finance with arithmetic, and thinks that the only thing in finance is to frame an estimate and to keep inside it ... Then he is no speaker..."<sup>3</sup>

But Hamilton was as well aware of these limitations as was

1. Hamilton to Curzon, 5 June 1903.
2. Ibid.
3. Curzon to Hamilton, 24 June 1903.

Curzon; he was as convinced as Curzon as to the unsuitability of Kitchener. But nonetheless, his question accurately reflected the current of thought of Cabinet members who regarded Kitchener highly. Hamilton, moreover, pointed out "... it must not be forgotten that it was mainly due to his manner and hasty changes that the serious mutiny at Omdurman originated."<sup>1</sup> In warning the Viceroy of the dangers ahead, he especially cautioned Curzon against converting a difficult situation into one of deadlock by being involved in any collision with Kitchener: he predicted/<sup>moreover</sup>"constant friction and trouble" in the future with regard to Kitchener's proceedings.<sup>2</sup> The seeds of distrust were effectively sown; Curzon now regulated his conduct in the light of the information he received and suspicion of Kitchener's ambitions remained indelibly stamped on his mind. He was told that "Lord Salisbury is so impressed by Kitchener's determination to run the show that he says the best way out of it is for Kitchener himself to succeed you!"<sup>3</sup> Anxious lest the instability of Balfour's Government adversely affect India and her interests, Curzon now felt just cause for alarm at the motives of Brodrick and Kitchener, particularly when

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1. On 28 January 1900, a battallion of Sudanese men and officers seized the British officers' quarters and guard room, and 300 rounds of ammunition per man as a result of the harsh rule of Kitchener. They were provoked by a reduction of their field allowance and the fear that they were shortly to be sent to their doom against the Boers. Magnus, Kitchener, p.153.
  2. Hamilton to Curzon, 5 June 1903.
  3. Dawkins to Curzon, 25 July 1902.

rumours of their candidacy to succeed him reached his ear. He felt even less assured when notified in the spring of 1903:

"... a change of Government must seriously affect your plans for the future. I think you may safely rely, if you accept an extension of time, that the greater part of it will be spent under the direction of another Government."<sup>1</sup>

Those developments added to Curzon's consternation and he therefore /resolved to remain in India by obtaining his two years' extension of his normal term of office. That decision was to be an enduring one, profoundly affecting his career.

In the meantime, during the autumn of 1903, Balfour's Government became engaged in one of the most far-reaching reviews of British foreign and defence policies ever undertaken.<sup>2</sup> That review profoundly affected matters connected with Indian administration.

### (3) The Committee of Imperial Defence and India.

Throughout the latter part of the 19th Century and particularly in the days following the outbreak of the Boer war, Britain was plagued by the fear of Russian aggression against India. That threat, as we have seen, affected

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 19 June 1903.
  2. Esher, National Strategy (1904); The Committee of Imperial Defence (1912); Hankey, The Supreme Command 1914-1918, I, pp.45-59; Monger, G., The End of Isolation, p.93 ff.; Young, Arthur James Balfour, pp.228-9; and Johnson, F.A., Defence by Committee, p.33.

seriously the conduct of the Government of India. Conversely, the extent to which India's external affairs affected the conduct of British foreign policy cannot be underrated. Indian affairs were often moulded by considerations which had little or nothing to do with Indian conditions or interests. But Cabinet policy was greatly influenced by European power-politics and the broader problems of Imperial strategy. These problems often produced much confusion between the Home Government and India, and in some cases friction. Their result, during Curzon's Viceroyalty, was to strain the in some respects already strained relations between India and the Cabinet.

The expansion of Russia in Central Asia revolutionised Britain's posture everywhere in the world. India represented Great Britain's most vulnerable point - a sensitive nerve on which pressure could perhaps induce British Governments to alter hostile policies directed against Russia, and therefore of great use when applied on all those questions where mutual interests of Russia and Britain were in collision. It was this leverage which Russia was thus able to apply against Britain in India that produced so profound an effect upon the thinking of statesmen in England and it was the need to resist Russian ~~that~~ threat which produced in turn so severe a strain on Britain's finances and manpower. That situation

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1. Alder, G.J., British India's Northern Frontier 1865-1895, p.304.

triggered off a great desire on the part of the Home Government to seek some means of providing a co-ordinating body to integrate the problems of imperial security and defence planning. A central authority was drastically called for in order to direct military and naval programmes, and it was this authority which was to have such an intimate bearing upon the problem of Indian army administration and the struggle between Kitchener and Curzon over administrative control of army affairs.

Balfour's judicial mind, sharpened by dialectics and tempered by philosophical enquiry, was peculiarly fitted to the task of sifting the often conflicting opinions of military and naval experts. Accordingly, he exhibited a strong interest in the absorbing problems of defence and Imperial strategy resulting in the rapid growth and development of the Committee of Imperial Defence which met under Balfour for the first time on 18 December 1902. Balfour was convinced of the absolute importance of his achievement in undertaking to evolve the office of Prime Minister as the supreme agent responsible for directing and co-ordinating the defence of the Empire.<sup>1</sup> His study of the problems of defence convinced him that Central Asia was the sphere of most potential danger and that Russia was Britain's

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1. Monger, G., The End of Isolation, p.93 ff.

most dangerous enemy.<sup>1</sup>

The objects for which the C.I.D. was established were fourfold. (1) To ensure full discussion on matters connected with Imperial defence and falling within the purview of more than one department of state. (2) To circulate questions affecting more than one department before the notice of all other related departments, thus establishing communication between mutual or conflicting interests. (3) To bring about the settlement of questions in dispute between two or more departments of state. (4) To bring naval and military experts into direct contact with ministers, who could then fully and freely question them, thus avoiding many of the misunderstandings arising from official minutes and memoranda. The C.I.D. was to be purely a consultative body having no executive powers or administrative functions. As an advisory body it could only make recommendations to the Cabinet. In reality it lent great weight and force to Cabinet decisions.

It followed that, in place of short-term improvisation and the spasmodic efforts which had so strikingly characterised the disasters of the Boer war and had produced so much wasteful expenditure, decisions henceforward would be based on consistent and reasoned principles. Ill-regulated

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1. Monger, G., The End of Isolation, p.97.

policies of the past were disregarded while new schemes and suggestions were considered on the basis of accurate information and long-range planning. The creation and transformation of the C.I.D. as an instrument of British Foreign policy was of fundamental importance to India. Nowhere was the force of this body felt more strongly than in affairs connected with Indian army administration: "It will be necessary in future for the Government of this country" wrote Sir George Sydenham Clarke, secretary to the C.I.D., "to pay much more careful attention to these problems than in the past. It is not safe to permit the military questions of India to be settled in that country without much more full consideration than has, at some periods, been accorded to them by the Home Government, which is responsible for the security and for the well-being of that country."<sup>1</sup> This shift in the emphasis of British foreign policy played an extremely significant role in the affairs of the Indian Government profoundly affecting relations between India and the Cabinet. In fact at the conclusion of Curzon's tenure of office, questions involving military administration overshadowed all other Indian issues.

If Balfour exhibited a strong tendency in his attempts to discover the truth for himself, he was challenged by Curzon who considered himself an expert in matters connected

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1. Note on the Imperial Defence Committee, Sir G. Clarke, n.d. (ca.1905), Sydenham MSS 50836.

with the affairs of Central Asia. Balfour had borrowed a leaf from Salisbury's notebook. He echoed in particular the latter's advice to Lytton when he warned that:

"You listen too much to the soldiers... You should never trust experts. If you believe the doctors, nothing is wholesome: if you believe the theologians, nothing is innocent: if you believe the soldiers, nothing is safe."<sup>1</sup>

Balfour was at pains to guarantee that Britain's European diplomatic relations were not damaged by non-European issues. He was, significantly, determined not to venture on a course of foreign policy independent of public opinion in Britain, and in that way was most reluctant to countenance fresh involvement overseas. Nevertheless his reappraisal of British responsibilities and commitments forced him to dictate his policies in the teeth of Curzon's opposition from India. But this occurred in singularly unorthodox and interesting ways. For almost all these matters, as we shall see, were closely linked with immediate political events.

As Balfour preferred to reject the dictates of experts, his independence of mind led him to scrap the time-honoured policy of splendid isolation and in 1902 in conjunction with Lansdowne he formed an alliance with Japan for the security of the Far East to face the potential threat of Russian pressure in Central Asia. Balfour clearly realised that Britain's power was being overtaken by newer rivals who

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1. See Adler, op.cit., p.309.

challenged her supremacy. He pondered and prepared. He engineered the Anglo-French Entente in 1904. He recognised the incipient German naval threat although it was not until July of 1907 that he suggested the need for reconsideration of the plans to counter a German invasion of the British Isles.<sup>1</sup> In formulating his ideas he, above all, was most reluctant to provide any provocation whatever to Russia anywhere in Central Asia and it was here that friction between Curzon and the Home Government was generated. (See IV, 6).

While Balfour deliberated, Curzon acted. Curzon possessed outstanding executive ability particularly as an administrator. As a great savant on the problems of Central Asia Curzon was actively suspicious of the motives of the men behind the C.I.D.. He described Balfour as being "led by the nose by the Defence Committee, which I consider one of the most dangerous inventions of recent years. It assumes an authority unknown to the constitution: and it is dominated by a man, Sir George Clarke, whom I profoundly distrust."<sup>2</sup> But there was one more important aspect underlying these suspicions: India, more often than not, paid for her own way in Imperial affairs. Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, for example, was always ready to listen to Curzon's advice on matters connected with Persia and British policy in

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1. Young, op.cit., pp.228-9. See also Id. Esher's National Strategy,  
 2. Curzon to Lamington, Governor of Bombay, 24 July 1905.

Persia was often contingent upon funds from India revenues (as the only possible source of income for supporting resistance to commercial penetration on the part of Russia in the Persian Gulf). If India were to defray expenses it was only right that she had some say in calling the tune of policy there. That held valid in other matters, matters more intricate and complex such as in Tibet, Afghanistan, and India's internal army organisation. It was in these spheres that Curzon resented his views being ignored, or when registered, discarded. It was particularly in the last mentioned category, Indian army administration, that cause for grievance became accentuated when the suggestion was put forward by Brodrick that Indian revenues should be taxed to cover the expenses of a new scheme to defend India from South Africa.

One of the first questions which the Defence Committee attempted to answer was that of the manpower needed to throw back an invasion in India. As early as 12 December 1901 Balfour had written Lansdowne:

"The weakest spot in the Empire is probably the Indian frontier. In a war with Russia our military resources would be strained to the utmost to protect it, and while the progress of events strengthens the position of Russia for aggressive purposes in this part of the world, no corresponding gain is possible on the side of defence. A quarrel with Russia anywhere, about anything, means the invasion of India and, if England were without allies, I doubt whether it would be possible for the French to resist joining in the fray."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Balfour to Lansdowne, 12 December 1901, Balfour MSS 49978.

We have seen that the extension of Russian railways against the Indian frontiers was a classic reversal of strategy for Britain, cancelling out her naval superiority completely. In these circumstances Balfour considered as his only hope that Kitchener would be able to meet that threat with enough men and material to hold India; indeed the defence of India necessitated a whole new policy. In a significant Memorandum in 1903, Balfour declared:

"the investigations we have undertaken on the subject of Imperial Defence seem to me to point unmistakably to the conclusion that the chief military problem which this country has to face is that of Indian, rather than of Home, Defence."<sup>1</sup>

The moment had arrived for the necessity of providing some scheme for the men and expenditure needed to support the maintenance of a standing expeditionary force held in reserve for the defence of India.<sup>2</sup>

#### (4) The South African Garrison Scheme

The defence of India in 1903 became the "central element" in Imperial defence.<sup>3</sup> In the drastic necessity of her requirements all other military problems were judged.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Memo by Balfour, 30 November 1903. C.I.D. Records, 6/1/34D.
  2. See Godley to Minto, 30 March 1906, corroborating the fact that Balfour's policy from the autumn of 1903 attempted to reconcile any conflict of interests in Imperial affairs. Minto MSS 1005.
  3. Balfour to Hamilton, 11 September 1903, Balfour MSS 49978.
  4. Memo by Esher, n.d. 1903, Balfour MSS 49718.

Ministers were uneasy about the numbers of troops required for the security of India, particularly Sir John Fisher who felt Balfour was "stupefied by the Indian Frontier Bogey", and attributed this mainly to the evil influence of Brodrick.<sup>1</sup> Brodrick had, in the summer of 1903, put forth a scheme for supplying the necessary troops for India in the event of a Russian invasion. His proposal became the subject of an angry correspondence between the authorities in India and in Whitehall and lead to much personal friction between Brodrick and Curzon, permanently damaging their friendship.

There were two closely related problems. Curzon considered that he could actively check Russian aggression along India's frontiers by a policy of direct negotiation, that is, in the buffer zones of Tibet and Afghanistan. Kitchener, on the other hand, thought that it was essential to have emergency reinforcements, numbering upwards of 135,000 men, available in order to make India's frontiers defensible.<sup>2</sup> Brodrick, as War Minister was concerned to try and supply these men as cheaply as possible to meet Kitchener's demand. In attempting to do so he clashed head-on with Curzon.

Brodrick suggested that a British garrison (of 12,500 men) should be stationed in South Africa reserved for

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1. Marder, A.J., ed. Fear God and Dread Nought, vol.I, pp.320-1, 323.

2. Telegram from Kitchener, 27 July 1904, C.I.D. Records, 6/2/64D.

use in India, one third of the costs of which should be borne by India. At a later date he defended this position in a Commons Debate over the Indian Budget, 13 August 1903, by asserting that it was the Government of India which imposed so great a strain on Britain's finances and consequently kept Army Estimates so high. He further stated:

"it would be more to our advantage that India should have a separate army ... [and] relieve us [the War Office] from those fluctuating demands which we cannot control, but which the Indian Government make upon us ... If the Indian Army is to be increased, and if you could draw a distinction between British policy and Indian policy, the increase is not due to trouble forced upon India by our Imperial position, but is due to the actual needs of India itself, and the policy pursued in her behalf by her rulers ... it is not our difficulties in Europe which cause the increase of Indian armaments. It is the need of her own protection which make it necessary for India to make further demands on the War Office."<sup>1</sup>

That speech, and Brodrick's attitude generally, Curzon bitterly resented.

Curzon was extremely indignant at what he felt were disparaging remarks aimed at his Government:

"India renders conspicuous services to Great Britain [he informed Hamilton], without which for many Imperial purposes the latter would be absolutely crippled. When Brodrick is always trying to make out that an army of a certain size is to be kept up by the Home Government for the sake of India, he forgets to mention that the obligation is more than repaid by the many services on

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1. Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, v.127. Commons, 13 August 1903, Cols.1252-3. Speech by Brodrick.

behalf of the Empire which that Army is called upon to render. Not a word is said on these occasions about South Africa, or China, or Somaliland, and the impression is left that Great Britain is a generous mother who is being bled by a prodigal offspring. That is not at all our view here, nor do I think it is consistent with the facts."<sup>1</sup>

There were, in addition, other considerations which poisoned the atmosphere between India and the Home Government evolving from Brodrick's proposal.

Again, the problem of reinforcements for India had been the subject of prolonged discussions between officials in London and in India for many years. In the main that question too boiled down to the issue of money. When the Government of India estimated that it would require 100,000 men as reinforcements from Britain in the event of war with Russia,<sup>2</sup> Curzon pointed out that he was not trying to starve Indian military expenditure but was attempting to remove any additional increase to the amount which taxed Indian revenues. He told Hamilton in 1902: "We never laid down that our armaments in India, for which India pays, ought to be limited to the satisfaction of our internal needs; on the contrary we expressly admitted as an obligation devolving upon us, not merely the maintenance of internal order, but the defence of our border" as a legitimate charge upon Indian revenues. "Russia will not send a fleet into the English

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 2 September 1903.

2. Report of Committee on the Military Defence of India, 24 December 1901, C.I.D. Records, Cab.6/1, Paper 1.

Channel or attempt an attack upon London; neither will Russia invade our Colonies or bombard our coaling stations; she will throw her whole force against the frontiers of India..." The essential point in this case however was not the efficiency of Indian military organisation, but India's financial capacity to pay for any increase for Imperial purposes:

"... if you ask me whether I will go further, I say emphatically No, and if this is a further case of an addition to our military charges being pressed upon us by the Government at home, in the interests, as I maintain, not exclusively or mainly of India, but of the Empire, then during my time at least I do not think that it will be accepted."<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that one of the primary reasons for Curzon's reluctance to sanction additional military expenditure lay in his desire, as we shall see, to prevent the Congress from hurling the charge of 'economic drain' at the military policies of the British in India.

The Cabinet however, was prepared to accept Brod- rick's scheme and had all but adopted the proposal that 30,000 men should be sent to India at the outbreak of hostilities with an additional 70,000 to be sent afterwards.<sup>2</sup> But Curzon was unwilling to accept those figures nor did he feel that India should pay for their cost:

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 15 October 1902.  
2. Hamilton to Curzon, 3 July 1903.

"I think ... that the Government have not been altogether ... fair to India, in the course they have adopted ... I submit that the announcement of your intentions looked very much like an attempt to force our hands ... You first make an announcement ... and then you say that you are going to consult us afterwards."

He proceeded to denounce the recommendation on the grounds that Brodrick had publicly announced the project in the House of Commons before the Government of India had had the opportunity of giving any opinion about it. Curzon concluded:

"This is the way ... that the Government of India is always treated about military affairs... We [are] only informed when the decision had already been arrived at..."<sup>1</sup>

What particularly annoyed Curzon was the idea that if a garrison was equipped and maintained by Indian funds in South Africa it would also be used as an Imperial reserve capable of being withdrawn elsewhere in the event of an emergency. In other words, Curzon argued, India was to subsidise British Imperial interests not only in South Africa but anywhere else the Cabinet chose. This, he submitted, was not a fair burden to lay upon the shoulders of the already burdened taxpayer. Curzon cited an article which appeared in the Pioneer which asserted:

"... either the War Minister or his project must be abandoned... There are some luxuries for which it is possible to pay too high a price: Mr. Brodrick seems to be one of them."

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 3 July 1903.

"It is not fear for India but for their own position that occasions this sudden anxiety to improve the military resources of the Dependency."<sup>1</sup>

Though it was true that the Conservative Government hoped to win popularity by reducing Army Estimates Brodrick saw in Indian revenues a possible way out of his difficulties. But Curzon was adamant. He cited not only press opinion in India, but asserted that Brodrick's procedure was materially weakening the prestige of Great Britain, and that his scheme was shaking "the moral bases of our dominion in India ... There is not a paper in the country ... that is not aflame with anger at the way in which they think that India is about once more to be treated."<sup>2</sup>

In rejecting the Government's defence policy as far as it involved Indian revenues, Curzon now clashed with the Cabinet. It was precisely for just this type of problem that Balfour had set up the Defence Committee and discussions as to the best method of meeting the requirements of Indian defence were given top priority. Hamilton took the precaution to warn Curzon in advance that he and Kitchener must make up their minds as to the exact number of troops necessary so that the Cabinet could get on with the business of supplying them. Unfortunately that issue turned

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1. The Pioneer, 24 July 1903.

2. Curzon to Hamilton, 22 July 1903: H.L.Singh also cites the strong objection which Indians took towards the Home Government's attitude in regard to the payment of troops for Imperial purposes, indented from Indian revenues. Op.cit., pp.197, 208.

on the principle of who should bear the full burden of the costs. Hamilton tactfully but obliquely suggested that the Defence Committee should handle this question. By way of introduction he pointed to the need for co-operation between the rival interests in the Empire:

"The Committee is an innovation, and will require to be worked into the existing practice and official institutions of the Empire. His [i.e. Balfour's] idea, in which I most thoroughly concur, is that this committee should be the means of obtaining the views not only of the highest military and naval experts in Great Britain, but also of those who are holding high positions in other parts of the Empire ... We are fortunate in having two such high authorities as yourself and Kitchener simultaneously holding high positions in India; and it, therefore, would be very advantageous if you could draw up between you a joint report which you could both sign. Two conflicting or antagonistic Memoranda signed by two such high authorities would ... add greatly to its difficulties as an advisory Committee."<sup>1</sup>

But Hamilton's explanation did not touch upon the main point in contention; who was to pay for these troops?

Curzon in July had prepared to mount his own assault against the Home Government's proposals. He did so in several ways, including leakages to the Indian press about what was occurring. He enlisted Kitchener's support by asking him to become associated with the Viceroy in an official protest against these measures. This had the effect of delaying the necessary figures. But these tactics also exacerbated

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 3 July 1903.

friction with the Home Government while tending to diminish confidence in Curzon's conduct of Indian administration. Specifically, he rejected the scheme on two points; the ~~the~~ <sup>of the troops</sup> transport to India, and their availability in the event of an emergency. Curzon wrote:

"Brodrick ... talked lightly about guaranteeing us the possession of these men, but Kitchener says straight that if you are only going to keep 25,000 men in South Africa, there is not the remotest chance for the 12,500, or even half that number, will be available for use when we have a war in Afghanistan."<sup>1</sup>

A week later he wrote:

"Kitchener was himself the strongest opponent of your scheme ... He laughed at the idea ... I submit that his views cannot be underrated or ignored. He has come here with the most consuming desire to place the defences of India upon a footing of the highest efficiency."<sup>2</sup>

But earlier in July Curzon was dismayed to learn that Brodrick had made a further statement in the House of Commons about the intentions of the Government, and that "India were going to be called upon to pay for a portion of the charge" of maintaining a garrison in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> He considered that demand as an outright raid on Indian revenues; he strongly pressed against "the inequality of the arrangement under which you are almost every day drawing freely upon our troops for your wars in every part of the Empire without

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 22 July 1903.  
 2. Ibid., 29 July 1903.  
 3. Ibid., 22 July 1903.

paying us a penny in advance"; he warned the Home Government:

"It will be much better now ... to recognise that a mistake has been made, and to recede from it in good time instead of persisting in what will be regarded as an unwise and despotic course."

He was upset by "the persistency of the Home Government in attempting to undertake these proceedings without prior consultation with the Government of India." He described Kitchener's reaction to the announcement without prior consultation as "the most startling discovery he has made since he came to this country."<sup>1</sup> But Curzon did not know that Kitchener had secretly been tipped off by Brodrick as to the probable course of decisions made by the Defence Committee, and that they would largely depend on Kitchener's rather than Curzon's views.<sup>2</sup>

By mid-summer of 1903, the atmosphere between the two Governments was sulphuric. Though Curzon perhaps grossly misjudged his colleagues in London and underestimated the determination and achievement of the Prime Minister, he was aware of the fact that he was becoming regarded as a dangerous factor hindering the smooth harmony between the two Governments and he therefore flippantly suggested to

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 29 July 1903.

2. Brodrick to Kitchener, 19 December 1902, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

Hamilton that the Cabinet might select some more "safe and sturdy pillar of the Empire ... who will mildly say 'yes' to the Professors of Downing Street."<sup>1</sup> These cutting remarks did not go unnoticed. Hamilton revealed the impact of Curzon's attitude on the relations between India and the Home Government on 6 August 1903:

"The blunt refusal of your Government of the proposal to locate troops in South Africa has very much annoyed the Cabinet ... Brodrick certainly ... has a legitimate cause of complaint. It is quite true that he alluded in a tactless way to the correspondence which was passing between you and me, and he contrived to convey to the public that what he was asking India to do was to contribute to an object which ought to have been met by Imperial revenues, and Imperial revenues alone. But this clumsy method of dealing with a difficult question is one peculiar to Brodrick. Since, however, your telegram (rejecting Brodrick's scheme) has been published, he has been the subject in a number of papers to a series of gross attacks, and just in proportion as he is abused, so are you eulogised. An incident such as this does disturb ... the relations between the two Governments..."<sup>2</sup>

But eighteen months later Brodrick, now in the capacity of Secretary of State for India, was to repeat those bungling methods in an effort to reconcile Curzon and Kitchener over the question of Indian army administration; and the distaste which the storm over the South African Garrison Scheme left had its effect on the outcome of that issue.

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 29 July 1903.  
2. Hamilton to Curzon, 6 August 1903.

Moreover, Curzon's peremptory dismissal of the War Minister's scheme drew a sharp protest from Brodrick who proceeded to explain his position in an extremely significant and revealing letter. Brodrick bitterly denied that he was responsible for the wide divergence of views over the matter. Sensitive about the leakage to the press condemning his conduct and criticising his actions, he used the weight of the Defence Committee to reveal to Curzon his authority in making the decision to supply troops to India from South Africa. He asked Curzon: 'In such a case is the Cabinet master or not?' Brodrick had in fact been threatened with the resignation of the Colonial Secretary, Chamberlain, if the Colonies were not adequately supplied with troops, and now Curzon's refusal to help pay for India's share of the burden of defence added to his problems. That caused Brodrick to suffer "very heavily at the hands of the Indian press, and made the difficulty of harmonious working greater than ever." Brodrick continued:

"Briefly what is felt ... is this - you are pressing for a most vigorous policy in Persia, Afghanistan & Tibet - your army even in normal circumstances has been pronounced inadequate by one Committee after another. We are the first Government who has not ignored these representations which strain our recruiting ... to the uttermost. Lord Salisbury said to me more than once 'Curzon always wants me to negotiate as if I had 500,000 men at my back, and I have not.'"

"Honestly we thought I especially, that while teaching us the benefit of a vigorous policy, you would endeavour to teach India the necessity of adequately supporting it. Instead we surely have a right to say you have done the reverse, & we feel it hardly fair that the oppressed India whose champion you are & whom you defend from exactions, knows nothing of the strong measures which you call upon us to adopt ... My position is very difficult. I have fought a heavy battle this year to keep the troops necessary to maintain your drafts; I have written you confidentially well in advance; my administration has received a severe blow just when it least wanted it, & all who are round me, political or military, are vexed with India's attitude ..."<sup>1</sup>

But as far as Curzon was concerned Brodrick's argument was inescapably linked to his attitude over the ill-fated Coronation guests scheme and his proposal for garrisoning troops in South Africa to be subsidised by Indian revenues. Those proposals would have produced unnecessary hardship on the already overburdened Indian taxpayer and in 1909 Curzon wrote:

"Cases of this have occurred ... both in respect of military charges and of the entertainment in England of Indian guests, and the utmost vigilance is required on the part of those who are charged with the custody of India's interests to see that they suffer no injury."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Brodrick's protest gives us the key to Balfour's strategy: The Viceroy's refusal to allow Indian revenues to be indented confirmed the Cabinet view that

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 19 August 1903, Curzon MSS 111/10.  
2. Curzon, The Place of India in the Empire, p.21.

India's relations with the Home Government were growing intolerable. It was to face this problem that, in the autumn of 1903, Balfour directed attention in the ensuing Cabinet reshuffle in an effort to end, once and for all, fundamental differences between the two Governments.

(5) Brodrick Assumes the India Office

The autumn of 1903 marks an important turning point in the struggle between Curzon and Kitchener in India. During September-October the Cabinet broke up over the growing disagreement about tariff reform as Chamberlain resigned and launched his policy of Colonial preference. His resignation was followed in September by Hamilton, who was a convinced free-trader. With Hamilton's loss Curzon's policy increasingly became dependent on the diplomacy of the Home Government, handled exclusively by the Cabinet as advised by the Defence Committee. On the day of his resignation (16 September) Hamilton offered the Viceroy the following advice: "Try and suffer fools more gladly; they constitute the majority of mankind."<sup>1</sup> For almost five years Hamilton had been able to "facilitate the progress of the machine by pouring in a little oil"<sup>2</sup> and his departure, in addition to the retirement of W.R. Lawrence, Curzon's private secretary

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1. Hamilton to Curzon, 16 September 1903.  
2. Curzon to Hamilton, 29 July 1903.

and valued friend, seriously affected Curzon's official relations, both with the India Office and in the Government of India.<sup>1</sup>

In his reconstruction Balfour gave special attention to the problem of bringing together the various departments of the government with the view to integrating Imperial problems, notably defence. Arnold-Forster became the new War Secretary and significantly Brodrick was moved to a department directly connected with Imperial affairs, the India Office. The Government in the meantime was living on borrowed time. There was scarcely a month from the beginning of 1903 until his resignation late in 1905 that Balfour's Cabinet did not threaten to dissolve.<sup>2</sup> By 1903 however, the Prime Minister was able to achieve several important advances in addition to the Defence Committee in the field of defence planning with the War Office Reconstruction Committee under Lord Esher in November 1903 and the planning for the establishment of a permanent Secretariat with official minuting of Defence papers, set up on 4 May 1904.<sup>3</sup> Using these instruments as an effective part of his governmental machinery, Balfour now turned to the task of consolidating the various ministries of the Empire in a final effort to reconcile their defence problems. Accordingly, he surrounded himself with the Exchequer, First Lord of the Treasury, War, Admiralty,

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1. See Lawrence, W.R., The India We Served, pp.221-52.

2. Young, K., Arthur James Balfour, p.209.

3. Ibid., p.224.

Colonies and India Office, and as he later told George Wyndham, "This Government must stand or fall together!"<sup>1</sup> In that way Balfour hoped to be in a position to reconcile the interests of India within the Imperial framework.<sup>2</sup> Brodrick's particular task was to get Curzon and Kitchener to work together in harmony, or so it would seem from what ensued.

In his memoirs Brodrick wrote: "I accepted the India Office with no axe to grind" and had "hoped my personal influence with Curzon, which he recognized by appeals on important occasions earlier in life, might help to a better understanding between him and the Cabinet."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless he "realised with dismay that Curzon ... looked upon the Secretary of State as the Viceroy's representative at the Court of St. James's"<sup>4</sup> and asserted that "The two Governments were, in fact, running on lines which could only end in a collision" regarding the Viceroy's policy towards the Amir and in Tibet.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see in Chapter VI, Brodrick had strong motives for focusing criticism upon Curzon's policy in Central Asia in order to deflect it from his conflict with Kitchener, in which Brodrick plays a central role. It will therefore be essential to keep these points in mind as we examine the following correspondence between

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1. Balfour to Wyndham, 31 January 1905, Balfour MSS 49805.

2. See Hankey, The Supreme Command 1914-1918, I, pp.45-59.

3. Midleton, op.cit., p.210.

4. Ibid., p.200.

5. Ibid., p.198.

the Home Government and the Government of India over issues related to India's political and military security. Furthermore, during Brodrick's tenure at the India Office two developments had very definite consequences for the Government of India concerning the burden of defence. Traditionally, the use of Indian revenues was regarded as the price which the Government of India had to pay for its security; but by the early 20th century while the Navy defended Great Britain it was the Army that was needed to defend India.<sup>1</sup> Moreover Curzon contended that Indian revenues should not be used to subsidise the War Office, and thus have her interests sacrificed to the Mother Country; in contending for that principle the Viceroy introduced an important corollary to the principles of Imperial security. He laid great emphasis on Indian public opinion in determining India's needs.<sup>2</sup> Therefore when Brodrick entered office intent upon discharging the obligations of the Home Government in defending India's land frontiers, he faced considerable financial opposition from India and we may assume that past War Office failures to provide enough troops in the early days of the Boer War<sup>3</sup> may well have been in the back of his mind as he now turned to the task of meeting the requirements, in men and money, for Kitchener's reforms in India. The ensuing friction simply

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1. See Maurice and Taya Zinkin, Britain and India : Requiem for Empire, p.33.
  2. See Curzon to Godley, 27 January 1904.
  3. Midleton, op.cit., pp.119-120.

accelerated the deterioration of relations between the two Governments.

On 29 September 1903 Brodrick telegraphed to Curzon that he was to be the new Secretary of State for India. (It will be remembered that Brodrick had worked in harness with Kitchener in the South African War, and had been a close personal friend of Curzon). In his telegram he pointed out that it was under Balfour's direction that he would now act to try and bring relations with India into closer harmony with the Home Government. His telegram stated:

"Owing to constitutional changes in the War Office the Prime Minister desires me to take the India Office. Judging from the past that I am likely to be in sympathy with you, I trust this arrangement will commend itself to you. Apart from personal affection, no Member of the Cabinet more fully realises the greatness of your work in India and his own inexperience. Be sure of all possible support from me."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick took office on 10 October 1903, and reiterated that "no efforts on my part will be wanting to maintain the cordial relations existing between my predecessors, yourself, and your Government. My best exertions will be at your service."<sup>2</sup> Although both Balfour and Brodrick were sincere in their recognition of the need for agreement between the two Governments, a brief comment made by Curzon in a previous letter to Hamilton (23 September 1903) indicates his suspicion

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 29 September 1903.  
2. Ibid., 10 October 1903.

that Brodrick would attempt to retrieve his reputation, and redeem himself in the eyes of the public in his new capacity at the India Office:

"Brodrick ... as you know, is one of my oldest and closest personal friends, and I think that we should find no difficulty in working together. At the same time loyalty to India would require him to surrender many points of view which he has acquired in the War Office, and I am afraid, in view of recent events (notably the demands made upon the Indian establishment in connection with the South African Garrison Scheme), his appointment would be extremely unpopular in India itself. If he is transferred from the War Office, it will be because he is not thought to have succeeded there, and no Department is particularly overjoyed at receiving the failures of another."<sup>1</sup>

During the interim between Hamilton and Brodrick, Sir Arthur Godley, the Permanent Head of the India Office, acted as Secretary of State. To him Curzon confided:

"I must honestly confess that I think there will have to be some change of clothes before he can be generally recognised as the whole-hearted champion of Indian interests. The War Office point of view is not the India Office point of view, and even if it is that, it is most certainly not the point of view of the Government of India."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon took considerable care to explain to Brodrick the extent to which the interests of India could be sacrificed before trouble came. In his first semi-official communication

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 23 September 1903.  
2. Curzon to Godley, 23 September 1903.

to Brodrick (on 2 October 1903) he advanced his belief that the India Council and the Secretary of State should avoid "overruling the unanimous opinion of the Viceroy and his Colleagues on any purely Indian matter which did not present an Imperial aspect - in which case of course the Home Government must be supreme." He attempted to explain how Indians regarded the Viceroy and, more important, the Secretary of State:

"India looks to her official representative to be her champion, and to fight her battles in the Cabinet. She expects him to be the Secretary of State for India in the strictest sense of the word."

Curzon then adopted a minatory tone which could not have been very flattering to Brodrick's new position:

"... the number of things that can be done at the expense of India (and that were done in the old days) is diminishing year by year. The recent experience of the South African Garrison is a case in point. I do not hesitate to warn all public men at home that India will become more and not less claimant in the future ... let me warn you, therefore, in advance of the cases where I think that the Home Government of your own advisors are going wrong."<sup>1</sup>

For his part, Brodrick firmly expressed his own ideas as to the future relations of the two Governments and returned to the charge that the defence of India was of the

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 2 October 1903. In this letter Curzon wrote that 'the private correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy is really the means by which the Government of India is carried on.'

utmost concern to the C.I.D. as well as of the Cabinet. He noted Curzon's anxiety over the fact that he had become the new Secretary of State:

"I am not astonished at this, because you have never worked with me, and I have never felt that on the subjects which I understood, such as those connected with the Army, you felt the same regard for my views as I had for yours."

Upon military issues Brodrick felt his authority would be supreme, especially when it came to handling Kitchener:

"This, as we go on, will, I hope, become apparent to you. I shall never differ from you if I can possibly help it, and I have perhaps an exaggerated view of the necessity of trusting the man on the spot. In proof of this I think I may point to the fact that with all the troubles and anxieties of the War, with a strong man working at very high pressure in South Africa so far removed from all our Parliamentary troubles, I never had a word of difference with Kitchener during 18 months' campaign."<sup>1</sup>

It was, however, on the Defence Committee that Brodrick laid particular stress, exhorting Curzon to pay close attention to its proposals and advice upon the pressing problems of imperial strategy:

"As I am writing about the Defence Committee, do let me urge privately that you will give these decisions all the consideration you can. It is, so far as I have seen, the best conducted business body and the most representative of all parties, which has yet been established. The Members know infinitely more of their subject than the Members of the Cabinet do on most subjects brought before them. The points are closely reasoned,

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 15 October 1903.

and the members are in a position to take a thorough all-round view of Defence. The Prime Minister has given an immense amount of time and thought to it, and any summary dismissal of its conclusions would entail a good deal of friction."<sup>1</sup>

Not entirely happy with that view, Curzon asserted that as far as India was concerned, "... the Defence Committee is not a tribunal which, in my opinion, can be regarded as absolutely final, and that if we claim the liberty to dissent from its views, it is not from any contentious spirit, but because we think that information and knowledge of the facts are sometimes in our possession out here which are not equally available at home ... the fact that the Defence Committee knows more than the Members of the Cabinet, does not necessarily imply that, on a particular range of subjects, they know more than we..."<sup>2</sup> Curzon's attitude towards the Home Government reveals the divergence of opinion that had grown up between India and the Cabinet, and which Brodrick was attempting to alleviate. Earlier Curzon had written to Balfour (on 8 July 1903) and in thanking him for supplementing his term of office, pointed out:

"I think it the duty of Ambassadors, Pro-consuls, Governors, etc. to be a little ahead of the Governments whom they advise. The inclination of the latter is always to go slow, sometimes unnecessarily slow. The

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 15 October 1903.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick, 4 November 1903; see also Curzon to Brodrick, 20 April 1905.

way has to be shown to them, even if they decide perhaps quite rightly not to take it ... Some of the things that I have put forward and that you have rejected - eg. Tibet - will of a surety come; and my only discredit will have been to be a little previous."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick nevertheless remained apprehensive lest Curzon's policy attempt to lead British foreign policy, and thus create a difficult situation. Whereas the British Cabinet shared Curzon's anxiety and distrust of Russian expansion and penetration in Asia, they were persuaded that Britain's imperial security could only be achieved by the avoidance of provoking Russia. Repeatedly it seemed as though Curzon advocated a policy of vigorous and immediate penetration in the buffer zones along the glacis of the Indian frontier, (by placing a permanent British Resident at Lhasa in Tibet and by entreating the Amir of Afghanistan to make direct contact with the British Government in India through an agent in Kabul.)

Balfour's study of imperial strategy led him to believe otherwise and that the fullest co-operation of ministerial departments was needed, in view of the potential

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1. Curzon to Balfour, 8 July 1903.

threat of Russia. Clearly the Cabinet was collectively responsible for the safety of the Empire. Nevertheless, while pressing his proposals for imperial defence upon his subordinates, Balfour was most reluctant to introduce personal animosities into the arena of public affairs. Above all he desired to remain aloof from distasteful controversies eschewing friction caused by personal distress. "Arthur could never bring himself to dip his hands into dirty or troubled waters," (wrote his niece, Mrs. Dugdale).<sup>1</sup> Confident now that Brodrick would be in a position to facilitate agreement between the two Governments, Balfour proceeded to discuss the problem of Indian defence always keeping in view the Army Estimates to be debated in Parliament early in December 1903. Once again this was to prove difficult. The last letter Balfour wrote while Hamilton was still in office reveals the significance of the role the Committee of Imperial Defence was to play in the affairs of Indian administration. Balfour asserted that the question of the number of reinforcements which India would require in the event of a war with Russia "is so urgent that, although the Committee will not meet till November ... this all-important information should be at once supplied us." Balfour attached a Memorandum<sup>m</sup>, dated 11 September, which clearly frames the need

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1. Dugdale, B.E.C. Arthur James Balfour, I, p.393. The author, Balfour's niece, explains the personal element in the relations between Balfour, Brodrick, Curzon and Kitchener, pp.392-408.

for agreement between the two Governments. In that document he begged Hamilton to impress upon Curzon and Kitchener the utmost necessity of forwarding the necessary information.

"The number of troops required by India is in my view the central element in the whole problem on Imperial Defence so far as this depends upon the Army; and it is quite impossible to form any rational estimate of the military needs of the country, or the burden which should be thrown on the taxpayer in respect of Army Estimates, until we have in some authoritative shape the conclusions of the Indian Military Authorities."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick took up that issue towards the end of October:

"Nothing would please me better than to know that India had got enough troops at present, and was not likely to need more in an emergency";

he felt ~~however~~ that Curzon was holding things up, and stressed the urgency of the issue:

"This is an immediate question: the estimates will probably be discussed early in December, and I think we ought to have very full guidance from yourself and Kitchener on the points and numbers which the Defence Committee has sent you.<sup>2</sup> I shall be surprised if you find, on going into it, that you can dispense with a single man which the Defence Committee proposed. On the main point I imagine that Lord Kitchener practically agrees with Lord Roberts, namely, that the attempt to check Russia's advance must be made on the Kandahar-Kabul line, and could not be confined to holding passes into India."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Balfour to Hamilton, 10 September 1903, enc. memo by Balfour, 11 September, Balfour MSS 49778.
  2. C.I.D. Records 6/1/28D, 3 July 1903.
  3. Brodrick to Curzon, 23 October 1903.

But far from agreeing with anyone, Kitchener wanted to see for himself the conditions which existed along the entire northern frontier of India.<sup>1</sup> His absence during the months of August–November, coupled with the fact that Curzon was occupied by a trip to the Persian Gulf inevitably caused delay, and this gave great irritation and inconvenience to the Home Government, who held Curzon personally responsible. Indeed for his part, Curzon clearly regarded the issue as inextricably bound up with Brodrick's South African Garrison Scheme. When Brodrick stated "I have not come to the India Office to press any military views of my own",<sup>2</sup> Curzon questioned whether it was his intention that India pay the burden of the costs involved in the defence deliberations of the Committee, and now resented Brodrick's attempts (or those of any other member of the Home Government) to encroach upon Indian revenues. Moreover, he had been particularly offended when Brodrick had found it necessary to authorise an additional pay to soldiers serving in Indian and Colonial garrisons; when the substance of the matter was conceded to the War Office after the issue had been submitted for arbitration to the Lord Chief Justice of England; his award rendered India liable to charges amounting up to some £750,000 per year.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 21 October 1903.
  2. Brodrick to Curzon, 15 October 1903.
  3. Ronaldshay, Curzon, II, p.287.

Thus part of the problem overshadowing the Government of India was a hang-over from the past. In contending for the principle that the interests of India ought not to be sacrificed to the Mother Country, Curzon became champion of India's cause, and his efforts to secure his ideal (that of Indian autonomy in financial matters) merely exacerbated friction between the two Governments. He stressed Indian public and press opinion which "has been growing all the while, is articulate, is daily becoming more powerful, cannot be ignored."<sup>1</sup> He sought to enlist the authority of Kitchener in support of his crusade to prevent the Home Government from dictating his policy. In particular he declined to co-operate on the particular question of Indian reinforcements, as he thought their payment was against the best interests of India. In so doing, he pitted his strength with dogged determination against formidable odds. While these discussions continued, Curzon demurred answering Brodrick's urgent request for information by explaining that Kitchener wished to avoid committing himself prematurely.

"He wants, in the first place, to pursue the investigation which he is now conducting into the actual number of troops which may be available in India, and which he hopes, by a number of reforms, largely to increase; and, in the second place, he requires fuller information ... he declines to put his name to any report which, in the event of war hereafter, might be quoted against him, if it turned out to be based upon inadequate

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1. Curzon to Godley, 27 January 1904.

or unreliable data. In this, I think he is entirely right."<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime Curzon's relations with Kitchener markedly declined and while the latter was visiting India's borders, Curzon pointed out

"the fact is that we have suffered in a good many ways by Kitchener's prolonged absence from Head-quarters during the past year ... I shall hope in future years to restrain him from wandering so freely and so far, but he has an intense dislike of office work, or sedentary life of any description, and is never so happy as when surrounded by a band of A.-D.-C.'s, he is scouring some remote or inaccessible part of the frontier."<sup>2</sup>

That situation however was but a symptom of the growing estrangement between Curzon and the Home Government and Brodrick wrote impatiently on 11 November explaining that the Home Authorities had waited long enough:

"... your opinion ... adds to the gravity of the considerations which must influence the Home Government in their estimate of the force, and in the meantime you have rejected the proposal of the late Secretary of State and his Council to contribute towards the maintenance of reinforcements in South Africa. As this subject has now been nearly four years before the Indian Government, and the conclusions of the Defence Committee will have been before your Government for seven months before the next estimates are introduced, the Prime Minister feels that we must have before us your opinion and Lord Kitchener's before we decide what number of troops to ask Parliament to vote. January would, as you know, not enable us to frame estimates, nor can we adjourn the Defence Committee for two months

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 28 October 1903.  
2. Ibid., 7 November 1903.

more on so vital a matter, I am sorry to press you, but I hardly think that you realise how much importance is attached to the decision at home."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon promptly replied stating:

"Kitchener declines to commit himself to any calculations without further examination ... you are asking me for a physical impossibility."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon's Council had not, in fact, examined the issue because they were unalterably opposed to the principle involved; the problem was further complicated by the fact that information as to the extent of the Russian railway building programme was scanty. Curzon attempted to defend his position (15 November):

"You said in your telegram that the subject had been nearly four years before the Indian Government ... I cannot recollect that we have ever been asked to examine the problem of the Russian railways and their powers of transporting men to the frontier, or to devise a joint scheme for England and India, in opposition."<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, Brodrick pressed for a decision and on 13 November emphatically reiterated his earlier warning:

"... the more consideration you can show to the decisions of the Defence Committee, the easier will working be between the Indian Government and the Home Government... I do not know what considerations have made you and Kitchener ask us to put off till January any decision as to the number of troops which it may be necessary to employ in Afghanistan; but I fear you do not realize the irritation to which this decision will give rise."

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 11 November 1903.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 12 November 1903.
  3. Curzon to Brodrick, 15 November 1903.

"Of all the urgent questions which have been allowed to fall into arrear, the Prime Minister considers the defence of the Indian frontier the most urgent. The Defence Committee took it up the moment it was established. It sat continuously debating this subject for weeks together, carefully analysing all previous decisions and recommendations, and all changes which could be made by railway or other variations of transport. It postponed the question of home defence, and indeed all other questions, except some of the most pressing ones in the near East, in order to accomplish its work in time to get your opinion and Kitchener's before the new estimates. Your reply, which was dated the 3rd August,<sup>1</sup> is regarded and I think legitimately, as something of a put-off ... You will, therefore, realise that, when it comes to your asking us to propose fresh estimates on an assumption which, if it does not coincide with your ultimate opinion, you would be the first to declare that the Government of India had not accepted, is a very serious difficulty to lay upon us at a time when all eyes are upon the army estimates with the view to reduction, and when the maintenance of the number of men necessary to sustain us in Afghanistan is the main item which governs the estimates of the force to be sent abroad.

I am really reluctant to have had to write as much as this about this matter, but the strongest possible views were expressed about it in the Cabinet, and I have literally no defence to offer, seeing that the Committee reported nearly four years ago, and that you and Kitchener have had Balfour's Memorandum (dated 11 September 1903) for three months in your hands."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon also received a warning from Godley (on 13 November) that

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1. See C.I.D. Records 6/1/30D, 3 August 1903; "Memorandum ... on the Provisional Report of the Defence Committee on Indian Defence".
  2. Brodrick to Curzon, 13 November 1903.

"on two subjects - Defence of the Frontier and Coolie Labour for South Africa<sup>1</sup> - a pistol has been put to your head from this side. On the former subject I gather that we are to hear something in your private letter by this next mail; but that something will not be what His Majesty's Government want, viz., a statement of your view as to the number of men required ... I trust that the decision, whatever it is, will be followed by prompt action, and not by a wrangle between the two Governments."<sup>2</sup>

The requirements of India were the master key to Britain's imperial defence; but the fundamental obstacle to solving that problem lay in relating India's revenues to the burden of imperial defence costs and Brodrick wrote (on 20 November):

"... I am unduly insistent in this matter, but it is part of a much larger subject, which, if I could only get you to see it in my light, would alter the whole working between this Government and yours about a great many questions."

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1. Arising from the post-war shortage of amenable Kaffir labour to work the gold and diamond mines, the Transvaal mine-owners agitated for the importation of cheap Asiatic labour; the Home Government then suggested using Indian labour. This was implacably opposed by Curzon: "The name of South Africa stinks in the nostrils of India. The most bitter feeling exists over the treatment meted out to Indians in the Transvaal and Natal. Any attempt to ignore or to override this feeling would produce a commotion greater even than that over the South African garrison, while the recollection of the latter would tend to inflame it." Curzon to Brodrick, 15 November 1903. A year later the Government were denounced by the radical opposition over the issue of 'Chinese slavery' after their failure to import Indian labour for use in the mines. See Gollin, A.M., Proconsul in Politics (a biography of Milner), pp.53-75.
  2. Godley to Curzon, 13 November 1903.

As Brodrick greatly feared creating a deadlock he ignored the principle of money, and repeatedly appealed for Curzon's assistance.

"When I came here six weeks ago, I undertook to back you as far as I possibly could. I have found myself beset with difficulties in that respect ... I hardly think you can realise the friction caused by the tone of your reply, which was practically an intimation that, unless the view you took, that this was a favourable moment for turning the screw on the South African Government, an outcry would be produced in India which would have serious effects."<sup>1</sup>

As Balfour's Government had experienced the greatest difficulty over reducing the Army estimates after the war in South Africa, and were, as we have seen, now appealing to the country on the basis of lowering them, Brodrick naturally hoped to regain popularity by devising a scheme which would effectively curb a swingeing burden of defence costs in Britain, while maintaining an efficient army in accordance with Cabinet policy. Kitchener's views were of signal importance in these deliberations and Brodrick, ever sensitive to the charge that he was the main stumbling block to reduction (see Brodrick to Curzon, 26 November 1903), was determined to co-operate with Kitchener; this however entailed negotiating via Curzon.

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 20 November 1903.

Moreover, as a reaction to opposition, the Government had, in fact, shifted its policies to face the increasingly heavy financial demands made on it at home; and the newly reconstructed Cabinet, highly critical of any further involvement requiring additional expenditure abroad, had on their hands a costly reconstruction in South Africa, an expedition in Somaliland, troubles in Morocco and Macedonia, in Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet, while at the same time at home, the tariff question and national defence were pressing for settlement.<sup>1</sup> Britain was discovering it increasingly difficult to find, under the existing voluntary system, the number of reserves required for the Colonial and Indian garrisons, and the necessary funds for their upkeep. Because the Government had previously experienced sharp disagreement on the question of the charges to be imposed upon ~~the~~ India in connection with the army, in that way the estrangement between Brodrick and Curzon had deepened. Believing that the Home Government were ~~was~~ largely ignorant of Indian army affairs Curzon felt that the divergence of attitudes between the two Governments, were irreconcilable, evident in a letter he sent to Brodrick on 4 November 1903:

"... in respect of the Army, about which you know so much and I know so little, I have during the past five years, entirely because of my ignorance, as I think I told you in a former letter, refrained from uttering any opinions at all. The only army that I know

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 4 December 1903.

anything about, or am at all qualified to speak upon, is the Indian Army, and if my views upon that do not coincide with those of the War Office at home, it is because I think that the two parties approach the question from entirely different standpoints, and that a complete reconciliation of their attitudes is impossible."<sup>1</sup>

Once more Godley attempted to heal the deepening gulf between Curzon and Brodrick by explaining the circumstances as he saw them:

"... I have given you ... very plain hints as to the position of affairs, about which I do not feel happy ... You have another and a different hand upon the reins ... and his relations with everyone in this office are, so far, most cordial ... this by no means must be taken to imply that he is going to do what we want him to do in all matters. Nor is he at all more likely to be inclined to take his cue from India ... I am quite sure that you would be wrong if you were to count on his being either ductile or malleable."

Godley went on to point out quite frankly that the new Cabinet were hostile to Curzon's policy; he urged Curzon to

"remove the impression, which certainly exists, that you are inclined, when there is a difference of opinion, to carry your protest beyond the recognised official limits, to bring pressure to bear, to force the hand of the Government at home."

He advised him to acquiesce in this case, and do "your best to conceal all differences of opinion, and to carry out the policy of the Government 'as if you liked it' ... If you

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 4 November 1903. See also 27 February 1905.

could do this, I am quite sure that it would not only make things easier and pleasanter, but would, in the long run, strengthen your hands and increase your influence."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon wrote on 1 December that "... if the Home Government had wanted our views, it could have asked for them at any time during the past four years, but it has not done so. Moreover, the entire situation has been changed by the construction of the Orenburg-Tashkent Railway," although both Brodrick and Godley warned Curzon that he was holding things up; the real reason for the delay stemmed from the fact that Kitchener had wired to Lord Roberts for his views and as Roberts was ill, received no reply. Curzon only became aware of this shortly before he left for a trip to the Persian Gulf, from where he wrote to Brodrick that

"... it now turns out that he [Kitchener] had written to Lord Roberts and was waiting for a reply from him. Believe me, therefore, that, if there is any idea at home that we are playing a game with the Defence Committee, it is an absolute mare's nest."

He added:

"You seem to think that I am unduly placing myself athwart the wishes of the Home Government. Of course if on any occasion I feel it my duty to stand up for the interests of India, I am suspected of disloyalty (I know of a Cabinet Minister who said that my refusal to accept the South African Scheme was 'an act of gross disloyalty to the Ministry') - there will be no getting on";<sup>2</sup>

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1. Godley to Curzon, 27 November 1903.

2. Curzon to Brodrick, 1 December 1903, included with letter dated 8 December 1903.

thereafter the atmosphere between the two Governments became increasingly charged with tension.

The next occasion for discussion of the topic occurred on 17 December when Curzon informed Godley that he felt it was the India Council who misunderstood the position of the new Secretary of State, and that friction between the two Governments - especially in sanctioning his schemes - was the fault of that minister as opposed to the Viceroy:

"... it is more like an admonition addressed to a new Viceroy under an old Secretary of State than to the reverse conditions. For it is surely a contradiction of every law, both of reason and experience, than an old hand should require to be more sat upon than a young one; or, to take a concrete case, that a Viceroy who has just been extended, should be less trusted than a novice."

To the charge that he was at fault for applying pressure to gain his own ends, he justified his position on the grounds that he was personally responsible for the policies of the Government to the Indian people.<sup>1</sup>

"Whatever my faults, I have never tried to put anyone, least of all the Government at home, into a hole. On the contrary, as you know in the Indian Coronation guests case, and in the Delhi Durbar case, I never said a word here, though I might have been a popular hero here many times over. Of course if at any time that I do not fall in with all the Cabinet's views, I am suspected of unworthy motives, there is no good going on, and no one would more gladly surrender

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1. That attitude was to count heavily against him later, once the agitation over the partition of Bengal raised his relations with educated Indian public opinion in the summer and autumn of 1905.

the task than myself. But my first duty lies, in my judgement, to my constituents, and they are the people of India. I would sooner retire from my post than sacrifice their interests; and if I see anything unfair being done or contemplated, I fear it is too much to ask me to stifle my protest."<sup>1</sup>

On 24 December Curzon indignantly pronounced on the question of the number of reinforcements for India, and said that even Kitchener was irritated "at the suspicions that seem to prevail at home and for which he declines to accept any responsibility ... he said that he was so uncertain of the reliability of his figures, and so confident that if they turned out to be wrong, he might be leading the Government of India into a serious quagmire, and might expose himself to well-deserved criticism at a later period at home, that before proceeding any further he sent home his figures to Lord Roberts with a request that they might be compared in the War Office with the calculations that form the basis of the conclusions of the Defence Committee at home."<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime Brodrick was disturbed at the way in which Curzon interpreted the needs of India in determining her policy, especially in the sphere of external affairs. Incensed at what he felt constituted an injustice to the Cabinet, namely Curzon's allegation that they "would

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1. Curzon to Godley, 17 December 1903.  
2. Curzon to Brodrick, 24 December 1903.

sacrifice almost anything..." in Central Asia "in order to have a quiet time", as Curzon suggested,<sup>1</sup> he emphasised that it was Curzon who misunderstood the fundamental relationship of the Indian and Home Governments as manifest in the control of the Cabinet in the affairs of the Empire. He made his reasons abundantly clear on 11 December:

"You take so absolutely divergent a view from the Cabinet of the attitude of India ... You constantly speak of the Indian Army having saved Natal, and write rather as if the Empire owed India a debt in consequence. You also think, because your foreign policy in India has not hitherto created any demand on the Empire for men or money, that therefore India owes no debt in return. But surely it must be realised that the whole question of the upkeep of our Army is with the view to supporting Indian policy";

according to Brodrick it was Curzon who was responsible for the policy for which the Home Government paid, and he asserted that

"This difficulty of feeding a great Indian force in time of peace, and of providing a still greater one in time of war, is what is embarrassing our finance, wrecking one Secretary of State after another and one Commander-in-Chief after another, and forms an abiding factor of Parliamentary trouble."<sup>2</sup>

Balfour at the time put the position of his Government before the King, and explained the policy he was forced to pursue if he was to remain in office:

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 4 December 1903.  
2. Ibid., 11 December 1903.

"What are, in Mr. Balfour's opinion, the objects to be aimed at may be roughly summarised as follows: we want an army which shall give us sufficient force for at least any immediate needs of Indian defence; and, in conjunction with the auxiliary forces, for Home defence, which shall be capable of expansion in times of national emergency - which shall if possible be less dependent on men in civil employment (i.e. the Reservists) for filling up the ranks on mobilisation - and which shall throw a smaller burden on the taxpayer. This last is of particular importance, not merely because of the present conditions of our finances, but because the demands of the navy are so great and so inevitable that the total cost of imperial defence threatens to become prohibitive."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed the Government's financial outlook was extremely black. The fiscal question dominated all others in Parliament, and because of heavy expenditure, an unstable political situation in England affected Curzon's plans for the future and Brodrick informed the Viceroy on 17 December: "I expect there will be an election before or soon after you reach England."<sup>2</sup>

In the third week of November, ill and fatigued, Curzon had departed for his trip to the Persian Gulf. While Curzon was absent, Balfour had undertaken to write directly to Kitchener expressing his gratitude that "we have got you, in this critical and in some respects transitional period" in dealing with the problems of Indian defence. Balfour carefully made the distinction that matters involving purely

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1. Balfour to Edward VII, 14 December 1903, Balfour MSS 49684.

2. Brodrick to Curzon, 17 December 1903.

Indian military organisation were "quite outside the broader problems with which at present the Committee of Imperial Defence is endeavouring to deal." He was however perturbed "at the relations between India and this country ... I see problems coming up for consideration which will certainly strain the already in some respects strained relations between the two Governments."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon was by now, grudging in the manner of his treatment by the Home Government, and in his correspondence he increasingly adopted a querulous tone, particularly after he had been informed that India would be invited to pay some £400,000 a year towards Brodrick's proposed defence facilities in South Africa.<sup>2</sup> Referring to that scheme he wrote:

"Here was a sudden and far-reaching proposal sprung upon me at a moment's notice ... I was told that the Cabinet was to consider the matter within a week; and I was given 3 days in which to commit the Government of India one way or the other. I was further not obscurely warned that if my views did not coincide with those of the Home Government, 'Great Britain would be forced to override the Indian Government ... It seemed to me that the Cabinet at their next meeting were in danger of coming to a decision that would very likely lead to serious friction with the Government of India, if not to public agitation in this country ... public opinion in India resents the idea of being thrown over by the Secretary of State."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Balfour to Kitchener, 3 December 1903, Balfour MSS 49726; Curzon returned from the Gulf on 7 December 1903.
  2. Ronaldshay, Curzon, II, p.287.
  3. Curzon to Brodrick, 8 December 1903, included with letter dated 1 December 1903.

By January 1904, Curzon had been five years in India, and his relations with the Home Government had reached serious proportions. (In addition, the Viceroy's health was in a state of collapse, the result of a riding accident in which a pony kicked him in the right leg, caused him acute pain and neuritis, and threatening his breakdown. Moreover, Lady Curzon, due to leave for England on 10 January 1904 where she would await the birth of her third child, was suffering from acute sleeplessness.) The outstanding questions between the two Governments were in consequence postponed until the Viceroy arrived in England for a holiday in May 1904. Nevertheless confusion over India's military affairs on the eve of Curzon's departure was merely the prelude of graver conflicts which were to emerge between India and the Home Government in the struggle for control of Indian army administration. That question (Indian military administration) was gradually assuming a wider importance in Imperial affairs, and the Cabinet increasingly welcomed the talents of the Commander-in-Chief whose presence in India inspired rather more confidence in ministerial circles than did the Viceroy.

Before taking up the narrative of events during Curzon's absence in England however, (which we shall do in Chapter IV(5), when dealing with Brodrick's secret correspondence with Kitchener), we must go back for a moment to the year 1902, at the time of Kitchener's arrival in India and examine his relations with Curzon.

## CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE OVER INDIAN ARMY ADMINISTRATION, Part I(1) "My new and erratic Colleague..."

Kitchener had taken little trouble to learn anything about the administrative machine he was expected to reform following his arrival in November 1902. Having little knowledge and no taste for Parliamentary or constitutional methods of public administration, he set about to improvise his own techniques rather than study the existing set-up confronting him in India. After a life of comparative isolation and individual responsibility, Kitchener was unused to acting in concert with others and it was therefore perhaps inevitable that he was disinclined or incapable of providing the much-needed link between the Government of India's civil and military arms - between the Viceroy and the Army. Having no use for the watertight compartments of tradition and making no attempt to assimilate the functions of collective responsibility, he assailed the Government of India as "narrow and conservative ... whatever <sup>is</sup> is/right, and everything that is not Indian is wrong and to be avoided."<sup>1</sup> In that frame of mind and either unwilling or unable to provide the necessary link for Curzon, Kitchener rapidly began to create more problems than he solved. He knew his autocratic methods had answered well in the Sudan and in South Africa;

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 10 June 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.

in consequence his friends in England felt sure that "nothing and no one" would be allowed "to stand in his way."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener's connection with the Cecil family who "were prominent in a ruling class which felt that it possessed a direct personal responsibility for the safety of the Empire" was significant, for "many of those friends distrusted the forward policy which the vigorous Viceroy was pursuing in Afghanistan and Tibet."<sup>2</sup> We have seen that during the conduct of the war in South Africa the Cabinet, preoccupied with the recurring difficulties and disasters, exercised but little control on the conduct of Indian affairs, and that such restraint from London as there was, was limited to the India Office. Following the Boer War, however, confidence in Curzon waned as the suspicion grew that the Viceroy was becoming less heedful of advice from England. In 1903 Balfour wrote to the King:

"The Cabinet are apprehensive that the Viceroy entertains schemes of territorial expansion, or at least of extending responsibilities which would be equally detrimental to Indian interests and to international relations of the Empire."<sup>3</sup>

In these circumstances the Cabinet were rather more persuaded

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1. Magnus, Kitchener, p.196.

2. Ibid., p.197.

3. Balfour to Edward VII, 6 November 1903, Balfour MSS 49684.

by the Commander-in-Chief's talents than by those of the Viceroy, and it will therefore be necessary to examine the relations between Kitchener and Curzon before proceeding with the divergence of opinion which they raised.

Initially Kitchener entertained a cordial liking for the Viceroy. In his first letter to Lady Salisbury, however, he asserted that the system of Indian military administration was faulty.

"I had a long talk with Curzon with which he was pleased and I hope to improve matters in the Army in which he is most unpopular at present. It is not so much due to the 9th Lancers case as that the Army consider he has taken every opportunity of slighting them ... I believe Curzon means all right and things will now get right but by the system of having two military advisers the C.-in-C. and the Military Member of Council, the Viceroy has received on several occasions disloyal advice, for each of these Officials have only given the advice they think the Viceroy would like as they know that all their plans and projects would be upset at once if the Viceroy went over to the other side."<sup>1</sup>

He characterised the system as 'most extraordinary':

"... I asked Curzon why he liked to keep up such a farce and his answer was 'if the C.-in-C. had anything to do with the machinery he would become too powerful, so to keep him down we take his power away and run another man as well; between the two the civil elements get control'. He assured me that, though perhaps not logical, the system worked very well, and he was satisfied with the results. Lord Dufferin said just the

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 10 December 1902, Balfour MSS 49757.

same when he was Viceroy. When one sees however the deplorable state of the organization of the Army, I am astonished at the satisfaction expressed ... As to power, I do not want more power outside the Army, but I do want power to do good in the Army; if I am incapable why appoint me; if I fail get rid of me; but why keep on a dead level of inefficiency or drift backwards because you won't trust the person you appoint to do good?"

In that letter Kitchener raised the issue of India's lack of preparedness in the event of a Russian invasion, and he intended to convince his correspondent of the urgency for reform. He pointed out that though India had an Army on paper amounting to some 250,000 men, only 60,000 could be put into the field on short notice, and this he deemed unsatisfactory.<sup>1</sup> Kitchener found himself unable to work a system in which he felt his initiative was stifled by India's administrative machinery. In November 1903 he informed Lady Salisbury:

"The system of putting the really important parts of the army under a separate administration is simply monstrous, and full of the utmost danger in war time. I have an army without any means of feeding, mounting or supplying it. For this I have to trust to a totally distinct and separate Dept. of Govt., which is, I firmly believe, very inefficient, and certainly knows nothing of the requirements of war. When war comes disaster must follow, and then I suppose the soldiers will be blamed..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 25 January 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.
  2. Ibid., 11 November 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.

When Curzon met Kitchener in India (1 December 1902) he was greatly impressed "by his honesty, directness, frank common sense, and combination of energy with power." Kitchener informed him that he was nervous about his position and powers and that Elles, the Military Member was "too big for his boots." Kitchener then proceeded to explain his attitude towards the system of military administration in India expressing his regret that he had made a mistake in coming to India as Commander-in-Chief rather than as the Military Member. Kitchener believed that the sole adviser to the Viceroy on military affairs should be the man with the most knowledge and experience, namely himself. He desired particulars of the relative functions and powers of the Commander-in-Chief and Military Member and asked Curzon for his views and advice.

"I asked him to wait a little and see the system in practice, when I thought paper rules or situations would be found to yield to force of character and circumstances. I assured him that the power and influence of the Commander-in-Chief depended not upon the constitutional definition of his prerogatives, but upon his own personality; and I said that it was not likely that we should get in India the inestimable advantage of the presence and counsels of the first soldier of the day, and then commit the unpardonable error of not profiting by them."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 3 December 1902.

Curzon was soon to learn that Kitchener entertained his own ideas and meant to see them carried out by root and branch reform of the whole administrative system. In his letters to the Secretary of State, he expressed his dismay at the manner in which the Commander-in-Chief pursued his ambitions:

"Kitchener ... is proceeding in the most unconventional way. He seems to think that the Military Government of India is to be conducted by concordat between him and me. Accordingly he comes and pours out to me all sorts of schemes to which he asks my consent. It is all so frank and honest and good-tempered that one cannot meet these advances with a rebuff. Here and there I head him off, or steer him into more orthodox channels. But of course as yet he does not know the ropes."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon found it necessary in fact to impose certain conditions upon Kitchener's methods of procedure, creating friction when it became necessary for him to protect and later champion the Military Member, Elles, whose office was anathema to Kitchener.

Curzon suspected that Kitchener was conspiring through Brodrick, to rid himself of Elles by 'kicking' the latter 'upstairs', promoting him to the post of Quarter-Master-General in England.

"I found that Elles was reluctant to go - though evidently seriously afraid of rows with Kitchener - but that he could hardly

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 January 1903.

resist the bait of an office that would make him a Lieutenant-General at once, and lead to other things beyond. At the same time he [Elles] asked that ... he might be with us to keep Kitchener straight in the opening heats."<sup>1</sup>

As Kitchener had little knowledge or experience of Indian affairs, Curzon regarded it as his own personal duty to intervene and retain the services of the more experienced Elles, who would be in an awkward position in having continually to stand up to Kitchener's more unreasonable proposals.

Curzon moreover was a good deal disquieted by what he had heard privately from England with reference to Kitchener's ambition either to succeed him as Viceroy, or pressure the Government into naming a candidate whom Kitchener could manipulate. He was aware that Lord Salisbury, before he died, had been impressed by Kitchener's determination to dominate Imperial affairs, and of his suggestion that Kitchener should succeed him as Viceroy. Curzon had been informed by his former Finance Member, Sir Clinton Dawkins (1859-1905), that Kitchener was "going out to India with one idea only, that of running 'the whole show' ... that he has got a year with you which he will need to look around, and he won't collide with you. After that, he will use the whole of his popularity and prestige to dominate the next Viceroy. Consequently it is

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 January 1903.

your successor he is already occupied with."<sup>1</sup> Dawkins mentioned Selborne and Brodrick as possible candidates for the Viceroyalty should Curzon retire, and reported that Kitchener was "advancing 1000 reasons in all quarters against them. His candidates are Eddy Stanley (Lord Derby), lazy and subordinate to him in Africa, or Cranborne." Although Kitchener was, in his opinion, "a great organiser in the sense that he can hold 100 threads in his hands and 1000 details in his head," he was "a great centraliser, and has very little appreciation of the proper organisation of a great administration. He will obliterate any distinction between the Commander-in-Chief and Military Member, and insist on doing the Military Member's work himself." Curzon then had just cause for misgivings when he reconsidered the problem of his successor, as we have shown in Chapter III (2).

Shortly after Kitchener arrived in India he discovered several irregularities in the functioning of the Military Department, in reference to the publication of general orders for the army. In one particular instance, he informed Lady Salisbury,

"luckily I was just in time and as I intimated to Curzon I should be inclined to resign if it was issued it naturally got hung up and now they are asking me my opinion on it."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Dawkins to Curzon, 25 July 1902.

2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 12 February 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.

By that act of calculated impetuosity Kitchener gained an important advantage over Curzon in India's external relations. Curzon had previously informed Kitchener (on 21 August 1900) that he had "perhaps a greater excuse than some of his predecessors for interesting himself in military questions: seeing that I know something of the Frontier, ... and that I take its management exclusively into my own charge."<sup>1</sup> By threatening to resign over a matter cognate to the defence of India, Kitchener in that way wrung a crucial concession from Curzon in matters dealing with foreign affairs, and hence defence and he wrote:

"I think there need be no fear that the Indian Gov't. will commit themselves to anything about defence without full discussion at home."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener hoped for two things in threatening to resign; first that military efficiency would be improved if the Home Government, acting through Balfour's Committee of Imperial Defence, intervened to make him supreme in the military administration of India. Secondly, he hoped to bring about the appointment of a new Viceroy more amenable to his own schemes. In his confidential and highly secret correspondence with Lady Salisbury he continually harped upon the fact that he was unable to do anything while Curzon remained Viceroy. He was willing to wait for one year, but

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1. Curzon to Kitchener, 21 August 1900.

2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 3 April 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.

after that period "I shall then resign on a very similar proposition so if Curzon gets a years' extension as everyone here seems to think probable you may see me again in London about this time next year. I am sure I could not stand the position I am placed in for more than another year."<sup>1</sup> And again, "The Curzons talk of being at home next March but whether they are coming back again on reappointment or not I cannot make out. I am afraid I shall never get this system of block in all Army matters altered during his tenure."<sup>2</sup>

When Kitchener learned in the summer of 1903 that Curzon was to remain in India, he shifted the base of his attack, reverting to his original argument that

"Under the present Military Dept. system it is almost impossible to get anything done and as the Viceroy supports that system I feel perfectly hopeless about the future - Is it therefore waste of time to stop here? and can I afford to go on taking the responsibility for an effete service which when war comes must be shown up?"<sup>3</sup>

Curzon, he said, was extremely reluctant to quit India, and when the announcement of his extension was made suggested:

"C.-in-C.'s can be provided, I have no doubt, for the pay, who will shut their eyes tight and let things go on, but I cannot, and as the Viceroy likes the present system there is no doubt I ought to clear out."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 21 May 1903. Balfour MSS 49757.
  2. Ibid., 10 June 1903.
  3. Ibid., 29 July 1903.
  4. Ibid., 6 August 1903.

Curzon was anxious to take into careful consideration Kitchener's point of view, which he retailed in extremely long and vivid accounts which he sent to Hamilton. Nevertheless though capable of brilliant diagnosis and a superb grasp of Kitchener's attitude, Curzon was almost wholly unable to provide any cure in circumstances where the final verdict rested with the Ministers at Westminster and he reported:

"He has come out to India after holding a position of almost uncontrolled authority, first in the relatively petty sphere of Egypt, secondly in the larger sphere, though still incapable of being compared with India, or South Africa. In both cases his authority was supreme, because it was military authority exercised at a time of war. From these two enterprises he returns to England, crowned with a glory and prestige that have had no parallel for many years. He then comes out to India to occupy what he regards, and I think rightly, as the greatest post in the military service of the Empire. He knows nothing of India, or its peoples, or its army, or its conditions, or of the vast and complex system of administration which has here grown up. He thinks that, as in Egypt or in Africa, he has only to signify a wish in military matters for it to be carried out; he thinks he is at liberty to go anywhere and do anything that he pleases. He regards the Military Department as an insufferable and odious obstruction, which must be temporarily tolerated, but which is to be swept away as soon as he is firm upon his legs."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon made it sufficiently clear that he was aware of Kitchener's desire that he should go, an attitude which naturally introduced an element of personal antagonism,

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 14 May 1903.

which Curzon was careful to avoid mentioning.

"I suspect that he is one of the keenest wishers for my retirement in December next, and that nothing would cause him greater disappointment (though unaccompanied by the smallest personal feelings against myself) than the news, that I am likely to be here for another year and a half, or two years. He thinks that when I go, he will get rid of the Military Member, and with a new Viceroy, ignorant of India, and probably less strong-willed than himself, that he will be the ruler of the country in everything but the name."

Curzon mentioned Kitchener's threat of resignation should his desire to see a new Viceroy be unrealised, and opened his mind as to the tactics he would pursue in order to maintain a semblance of amicability.

"Now, you will agree with me that this situation is fraught with great difficulty. It can only be successfully handled during the remainder of the present year by the continuance of the cordial relations that fortunately prevail between us at the present time, and by the most open interchange of opinion upon all the subjects of difference that may crop up."

Astute enough to realise that Kitchener's isolation from India's social world was a defect of his social background and a factor he would have to consider he commented:

"Kitchener is an extraordinarily lonely man; being unmarried, he has nobody in his house except young officers greatly his inferiors in age and standing; he takes no advice from anybody; he spends his whole day in thinking over his own subjects and formulating great and daring schemes; he will not go and talk them over with the Military Department, because he looks upon the latter as his sworn foe; he will not make friends with other Members of the Government, some of

whom he cordially despises and openly criticises; he stands aloof and alone, a molten mass of devouring energy and burning ambitions, without anybody to control or guide it in the right direction."

He was quite prepared to work in harmony with Kitchener in assisting him in his more practical schemes for reform.

"Now the Viceroy, as long as he is the personal friend of this remarkable phenomenon, is the only man who can supply the want; and therefore it is that, during the remainder of my time here, I shall endeavour, as far as possible, by the frankest intercourse and interchange of opinion, to avoid the dangers that otherwise lie ahead."

Disturbed at the way Kitchener proceeded in ignorance of the conditions of Indian service Curzon feared that his advisers would lead him astray. This uneasiness was confirmed by an incident over a proposal to send a military expedition to Tibet. Kitchener's Adjutant-General, Smith-Dorrien, recommended an absurdly large military force which, because of its size, would have encountered the greatest difficulty in crossing the terrain of the Tibetan frontier. Similarly, Kitchener subsequently "put forward certain proposals subverting the time-honoured principle that our Field Artillery in India shall remain in the hands of the British soldier. His proposal was adversely criticised, but with perfect courtesy, by Elles. The case then came to me, and I noted upon it also in the most civil terms, but strongly supporting Elles' view. Kitchener was wise enough to see that it would never do to take the case to Council, since he

would get no support. He therefore at once withdrew it, and told me that he had done so. There is no feeling whatsoever between us about it, but you may be sure that it will not make him more friendly towards the Military Department, who will thus have scored for the second time." Curzon was anxious to smooth over the difficulties and keep any dissension well in check. Above all he wished to avoid an open clash with Kitchener, and in doing so he was content merely to chronicle the weekly proceedings of Kitchener in his letters to the Secretary of State.

"Please keep all that I tell you about Kitchener private, because there are plenty of people only too anxious to create dissension between him and me, a wish which I intend to the best of my ability to disappoint."<sup>1</sup>

The following week (21 May 1903) Curzon continued his account describing "the movements of my new and erratic Colleague", whose precipitate actions had exposed himself to new humiliations at the hands of the Military Department. Curzon then recorded Kitchener's scheme for abolishing the Military Department and thereby concentrating all military authority, both executive and administrative, in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief. Aware for some time of the ideas that were floating in Kitchener's mind Curzon discovered that Kitchener had gone so far as to have them published in an article in the February 1903 issue of the Fortnightly Review;<sup>2</sup>

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 14 May 1903.

2. Fortnightly Review, 'Lord Kitchener and the Indian Army', February 1903.

after that Curzon suggested that he had better wait until he had acquired further experience before proceeding, and Kitchener appeared to accept that advice.<sup>1</sup>

For the next few months Kitchener spent the greater part of his time in touring along the frontier in an effort to acquire the much-needed experience. "From those expeditions he only returned to Simla ten days ago. You may judge of my surprise when I suddenly heard from my wife, to whom the Commander-in-Chief had let it out in conversation, that he had rewritten and expanded his Memorandum<sup>2</sup> and launched it upon its official career." Once again Curzon urged him to withdraw his proposals in the certainty they would not be acceptable to the Council. In addition he was "anxious to spare him the mortification of a third bad rebuff" from the Military Department. Curzon described these new proposals as "most startling and revolutionary".<sup>3</sup>

The principle for which Kitchener contended involved the transfer of the Departments of Supply, Transport, Equipment, and Ordnance from the Military Department to himself. Thus he would be in the position to combine responsibility with power.<sup>But</sup> Curzon raised several objections to these proposals which could hardly have excited Kitchener's

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 26 February 1903.
  2. Memorandum in Kitchener MSS 30/57/28, later emerging on 26 April 1904 as 'Administration of the Army in India' in C.I.D. Records 6/2/56D. See infra, p.194; p.214.
  3. Curzon to Hamilton, 21 May 1903.

satisfaction with the machinery of the Indian army. He informed Hamilton that

"these drastic and revolutionary proposals are put forward by a Commander-in-Chief who has not yet been six months in India, who has spent the greater part of that time in touring along the frontier, who knows nothing whatever of the Departmental working of the machine, and who admits that, except on one or two trivial points, he has not himself personally experienced the evils or abuses against which his Memorandum, obviously written by somebody else, declaims."

Curzon discussed the matter with the Commander-in-Chief over dinner on 20 May. He told Kitchener that he felt Elles had been within his rights in criticising and opposing his proposals "on every point";<sup>1</sup> he doubted whether Kitchener could get any support from the Council and suggested he drop the whole case. Writing to Hamilton the next day, he lamented the fact that for want of judgement Kitchener "deliberately and gratuitously runs his head in this way against a brick wall. My life is becoming a perfect burden to me with the controversies that are being aroused on all sides, and with the effort day after day to keep things going without an explosion and to preserve the peace."<sup>2</sup>

Far from accepting Curzon's suggestion that the case

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 21 May 1903.

2. Ibid.

be dropped, Kitchener promptly sent in his resignation. He told Curzon the next day:

"your advocacy of the present system remaining as it is, is such a powerful factor in any attempted solution of the points raised, that it appears to me quite hopeless on my part to expect any success."<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly he informed Curzon (25 May),

"I feel there is no course open to me but to resign my present command. I need not say I shall greatly regret to leave India, as I was in great hopes of being able to do some good in the Indian Army; but I am sure you will agree with me that where a point of fundamental difference is reached, no personal feelings should be allowed to interfere in coming to a decision on a question of principle."<sup>2</sup>

In trying to reconcile Kitchener with Elles, in order to avoid a clash with himself, Curzon accidentally stumbled on the crux of Kitchener's discontent. He put to Kitchener the question at issue:

"What is at the bottom of it all - what do you object to? You admit that you have no case against the Military Department, from your own experience, and yet you want to destroy it; where does the grievance come in?"

Kitchener had at once replied that what he could not stand was that his proposals should be criticised or rejected by any subordinate authority. He explained to Curzon,

"You may be unable ... to understand it, for it is all a question of military feeling and military discipline. Civilians do not have the same sensitiveness, but as Commander-

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1. Kitchener to Curzon, 21 May 1903.  
2. Ibid., 25 May 1903.

in-Chief I cannot afford to have my opinions criticized, and possibly overturned, by Military officers of lower rank than myself."<sup>1</sup>

moreover  
Curzon/considered Kitchener's objection to Elles

unacceptable:

"Of course this is a claim to absolute dictatorship in all military matters for the Commander-in-Chief, and it is drawing a razor across the throat of the Military Department and cutting it from ear to ear. That is undoubtedly what Kitchener came out here to do; what he has had in his mind ever since; what he may desist from attempting for the present under pressure from me; but what he will bring up again either during my time or the moment that I have gone."

That prophecy was honoured by events, so uncannily forecast; Curzon delighted in marshalling facts and/arranging yet evidence leading up to a particular situation, and was strangely deficient when it came to acting in the circumstances of the advice he had given.<sup>2</sup>

Curzon ~~however~~, felt that the structure of India's military administrative machine was essentially sound and that the Military Department "performs very useful and necessary functions. I do not think that the presence of a Major-General at its head [Elles] detracts in the smallest degree from the prestige, the authority, or the power of the Commander-in-Chief. I believe that the relations between the two, with a little good feeling and accommodation on both sides, can be maintained on a perfectly harmonious basis. I

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1. See Curzon to Hamilton, 21 May 1903.  
2. See Ronaldshay, Curzon, III, p.366.

have seen them so maintained, and I have assisted in the task for four and a half years."<sup>1</sup> The position of the Commander-in-Chief entirely depended he thought on that officer's own personality: "no check placed upon him by our constitution can prevent him, if he is a man of character and capacity, from becoming by far the most prominent military personage in the land." What was wanted in order for the system to function properly was harmony and a more charitable attitude on the part of Kitchener.

"If only he will observe a little discretion in his relations with the Military Department, he will find them eager to work for him instead of against him; for after all, to look at it from the lowest point of view, the ulterior promotion of all of them is in his hands."

Curzon concluded:

"There is not the slightest necessity for him to expose himself to any rebuff or to receive any humiliation. If only he will take counsel in advance, and not rush madly at his fences, he will carry through the bulk of what he desires, and need not assuredly come to grief."<sup>2</sup>

He did however, advance two suggestions which he submitted for Kitchener's acceptance. The first was that, before making any large proposals he should consult the Military Department as to their own views. In that way "the officers of the latter ... will only be too glad to help, and the schemes of the Commander-in-Chief, instead of being

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 21 May 190<sup>3</sup>.

2. Ibid.

put forward in their present inchoate and ignorant form, will be co-ordinated with Indian experience and fact." Curzon's second suggestion related to the permanent record of the Commander-in-Chief's proposal; he was willing to allow Kitchener the right to withdraw his schemes for further discussion should they be vetoed, thus avoiding embarrassing Kitchener by having his mistakes printed in the Departmental files and circulated to the other Departments for information. That patronising note must surely have been distasteful to Kitchener, who now was being treated as an offending school-boy, continually checked by higher authority. Curzon in fact, was not certain what the result of his suggestions would be, though he expressed his belief that these incidents revealed strong defects in Kitchener's character.

"I am sure I do not know [he wrote at the end of his letter on 21 May], whether he will accept these suggestions, or, even if he does, whether they will be helpful in keeping the peace. What troubles me about the whole matter is the incessant vexation and worry that I see are likely to be imposed upon myself in keeping things going in the future; but what shocks me much more is the disappointing light that is thrown by these incidents upon the personality of a man whom I have constantly seen described in the papers as a diplomatist and a statesman, but who seems to me, in so far as I have yet been brought into contact with him, to be strangely deficient in some, at any rate, of the essential attributes of both."

Curzon's attitude at this point must be further examined in the light of a series of small but significant episodes which had occurred earlier in the spring as a result of Kitchener's frontier tours.

(2) Frontier Imbroglia

Early in April 1903, Colonel Yate, the British officer in command of a frontier post at Chaman, had been arrested by Afghan soldiers while riding just inside the Afghan border. His captors confined him to Spin Baldak, a fortress some five miles from Chaman inside the Afghan frontier and refused his release until satisfaction had been obtained from the Indian Government. Simultaneously, another British officer had been fired upon by an Afghan sentinel while touring along the Indian side of the frontier. Curzon was extremely annoyed by that imbroglia which he considered an act of gross discourtesy on the part of the Amir's troops. Moreover he felt that the incident was a direct result of Kitchener's tours along the Indian frontier and he accordingly wired Kitchener to desist from exacerbating further a potentially explosive situation.

Curzon informed Hamilton (13 April 1903):

"For 'pot-shot' relations to prevail between Afghan sentinels and British officers on the frontier is an intolerable situation, and cannot be patched up by a mere apology. The curious and rather vexatious aspect of the whole case is that these incidents are the direct consequence of Kitchener's vigorous dashes here, there, and everywhere along the frontier. With the admirable desire to make himself personally acquainted with the frontier that he is called upon to defend, he is scouring every mile of the border ... with a posse of generals and officers behind him. Everywhere a trail of excitement, rumours, and apprehension follows upon his track: and the Baluchistan people tell me that Yate's capture was without a doubt the Afghan reply to what the latter looked upon as the menace

of Kitchener's appearance upon the scene."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon was particularly irritated as he had not been consulted about the details of Kitchener's proposed trip.

"He does not in the least understand the Indian ropes. As Commander-in-Chief he thinks that it is in his power to go anywhere at any time without reference to anybody. Beyond telling me that he was going to the frontier he never let me know to what particular places he was going; he never gave me a plan of his tour, as has hitherto been the invariable custom, and did not acquaint me with its duration. He issues no plan or programme to anybody, but disappears into space and is heard of one week at Nushki, another at Datta Khel. This morning I got a telegram from Parachinar at the top of the Kurrum Valley to say that he was just going to Peshawar. His arrival there while the present ferment is going on would only tend to confirm the worst suspicions of the tribes, and might produce serious results."

The Viceroy then cabled Kitchener:

"there is great ferment on Khyber border, and arrival of Commander-in-Chief will be interpreted by tribes as meaning something serious. They are already very much alarmed at our apparent activity all along the frontier, and<sup>2</sup> I want very much to let things quieten down."

Kitchener replied immediately that he would cancel his visit to Peshawar.<sup>3</sup> Curzon foresaw that the sequence of small, but irritating, explosions, would be followed by "a whirlpool of excitement and suspicions."<sup>4</sup> "A Commander-in-Chief, particularly of his prestige and name, cannot go scouring

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 April 1903.
  2. Curzon to Kitchener, Telegram, 6 May 1903.
  3. Kitchener to Curzon, Telegram, 6 May 1903.
  4. Curzon to Hamilton, 7 May 1903.

about our advanced frontier as if he were taking a gallop on Salisbury Plain. A train of incidents follow upon his progress for which I am held responsible, and which may involve the Government of India in serious trouble." In asking Kitchener to abstain from his energetic examination of the frontier, Curzon hoped to avoid further trouble with Afghanistan.

"I have not a doubt that the outrages committed by the Afghans at Smatzai and Shinpokh are their answer to Kitchener's recent visit to that region, just as the incident of Colonel Yate was the local response to his arrival at Chaman."

As to the conduct of the latter, he informed the Lt. Governor of Burma, Sir Hugh Barnes:

"That ass, Colonel A.C. Yate, involved us in a fine trouble with the Amir, by getting arrested at Chaman."<sup>1</sup>

It had been Curzon's ardent desire by the removal of such small incidents to establish the rule of law and order for misrule and tyranny in the tribal districts of the frontier.<sup>2</sup> That policy was now threatened by Kitchener's energetic activity. Curzon was determined, in an effort to pursue his policy, to maintain or at least restore Afghan confidence in the Government of India. By such salutary restraint the Viceroy hoped to frustrate Russian designs and counter-actions by avoiding direct interference in Afghan affairs.

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1. Curzon to Barnes, 16 June 1903.  
 2. Davies, C.C., The Problem of the North-West Frontier 1890-1908, pp.12-13.

Curzon was becoming increasingly nervous about Kitchener's presence in India and he informed Hamilton on 7 May:

"... I foresee quite clearly, however, that when he comes back I must have a very frank, though I hope friendly, talk with him about his movements in the future."

Because Kitchener had hitherto "been in a position of undisputed command and in circumstances such as those of active warfare, where his voice was supreme, and where military dominated political considerations, he expects to find the same conditions revived here." Kitchener had replied to Curzon's rebuff by informing him that he had obtained the tacit approval of ministers in London before coming out to India:

"I was very much surprised last night to hear that you did not know that both Balfour and Brodrick told me before I started, that it was most essential that I should examine our positions on the frontier as soon as possible after my arrival in India, so as to be able to report upon them from a military point of view. When I was at Whittingehame discussing this matter with Balfour, I particularly asked him to write to you on the subject of my going round the frontier without delay, and it never occurred to me that he had not done so."<sup>1</sup>

Balfour indeed had made no reference to the matter in his correspondence to Curzon. In these circumstances Curzon now became anxious about Kitchener's designs and we must investigate their substance.

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1. Kitchener to Curzon, 15 May 1903.

Balfour, working through the reconstructed Committee of Imperial Defence, via Roberts, greatly desired that Kitchener familiarise himself with the problems of the Indian frontier. In that way the Cabinet sought to obtain independent information regarding India's defence.<sup>1</sup> Kitchener outlined his views in his private correspondence with Roberts - including proposals for the reform of India's system of army administration - a purely internal issue at that time.<sup>2</sup> Roberts had informed the Secretary of State, Hamilton, of that correspondence and Hamilton had casually referred to that communication in his letters to Curzon. Curzon now took the opportunity to ensure that in future Kitchener should use only official channels in any correspondence involving the internal administration of India, and was careful to quote the official procedure governing private communications to Kitchener:

"In his letter which came by yesterday's mail [he informed Kitchener on 12 May,] the Secretary of State mentioned that he had heard from members of the Imperial Defence Committee at home of 'schemes of wide reform and great alteration' being put forward by you, as he assumed, in private letters to the War Office or the Commander-in-Chief, and he asked me to warn you that 'although communications between the two Commanders-in-Chief are always recognised, any changes of an important character in the organisation of the Indian Army must be referred through the Indian Government to the India Office here. Otherwise we shall have a double set of communications which will be the source

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1. See Roberts' letters to Kitchener, in Kitchener MSS 30/57/28.
  2. Ibid., Kitchener to Roberts, 30/57/29.

of great embarrassment and personal friction'..."<sup>1</sup>

This proved to be the case. Kitchener admitted his offence with good grace, explaining to Lady Salisbury, of whose secret correspondence Curzon was wholly unaware:

"I have just had a wiggling from the S. of S. for writing home too much ... You, Ld. R., and Ian Hamilton are the only people I have written to; as you know, I am not a great letter-writer. I enclose a copy of the wiggling, and of my reply. It seems rather petty..."<sup>2</sup>

The result of Kitchener's frontier tours and the misunderstanding over his correspondence with Roberts about them created friction. Curzon made it clear "that in cases where your ideas or proposals have not yet been submitted to or received the consent of the Government of India", the Commander-in-Chief would in future speak solely for himself.<sup>3</sup> But Curzon was a good deal troubled by the concatenation of events which had so nearly precipitated the disaster he had anticipated as early as 1899.<sup>4</sup> Now a further incident

1. Curzon to Kitchener, 12 May 1903.
2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 13 May 1903; Magnus, Kitchener, p.206. The correspondence of the 4th Marquis of Salisbury and his wife (1867-1955) is not yet available. Some copies of Kitchener's letters to the Salisbury family are in the Balfour Papers at the British Museum. For the remaining letters Magnus may be relied upon.
3. Curzon to Kitchener, 13 May 1903.
4. See Curzon to Godley, 6 September 1899. He had written to Godley: "I am already somewhat of a disturbing element in the placid economy of Indian administration. The appearance of another and even more seismic factor might produce unforeseen results."

seriously complicated the increasing divergence in the relations between Curzon and Kitchener. Reluctantly intervening in a dispute between Elles and Kitchener, Curzon was forced to come down strongly in favour of the former, thus prejudicing Kitchener irreparably against the Military Member.

### (3) The Clash with Elles

Elles had committed a minor usurpation of Kitchener's powers by issuing a correction to an order while Kitchener was away on tour. Elles had rightly argued that one of the principal functions of the Military Department was to see that the orders of the Secretary of State or Government of India, as the case might be, were properly carried out. One of the instruments by which this was done was a 'G.G.O.', i.e. a Governor-General's Order. These were invariably drafted at Army Headquarters by the Adjutant-General or his staff, and came down with the sanction of the Commander-in-Chief to the Military Department for issue. The latter were responsible for seeing that the phraseology was in strict accordance with the standing orders, and for final publication. In practice, most of the orders were of a routine and purely administrative character. In this particular case, a draft G.G.O. had been drawn up in the usual way, and sent down to the Military Department for issue. Unfortunately it was carelessly expressed and gave rise to some misapprehension

when received at the other end. News of that misunderstanding was telegraphed to Elles, and he assumed responsibility for correcting the mistake, without consultation and further delay. It was upon the trivial re-issue of this amendment that Kitchener declared war.

Kitchener sent in a long Memorandum, in which he proposed the suppression of the Military Department on that solitary charge. He then withdrew the Memorandum when Curzon judged that Elles had acted entirely within his right. Curzon thought the matter was at an end asserting:

"The whole thing was so utterly petty and childish that when I wrote to Kitchener urging the withdrawal of his big Memorandum, I said I thought that the reference to this particular incident was of too insignificant a character to find a place in an important State paper."<sup>1</sup>

Contrary to his hopes Kitchener returned to the charge: "he meant to have Elles' blood at any cost" and threatened to resign. That threat "fairly took away my breath. For I found myself in the ludicrous position of being apparently involved in a first-class row with him ... over a matter in its origin of almost puerile insignificance, in no way concerning me at all, and in so far as it touched a question of principle, raising one in which all my sympathies are strongly on the side of, and not against, Kitchener's conception of his own authority."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 28 May 1903. See also *supra*, p.181,n.2.

2. Ibid.

For his efforts Curzon was now faced with a direct confrontation with Kitchener. He was not clear about what he should do, and advanced a number of reasons for Kitchener's threatened action. He was certain of Kitchener's enthusiasm for his work, and of reform in the Indian Army. Others doubted that hypothesis and suggested Kitchener meant, "in any case, to shake off the dust of India, and that he is merely seeking for a plea that will enable him to retire without discredit."<sup>1</sup> He insisted he had done all he could to help Kitchener:

"I have striven my hardest to steer him into the path where his vast opportunities really lie and to head him off from all the side-tracks which are bestrewn with obstacles."

Asserting how he sought to avoid any unfriendliness and misunderstanding in his relations with Kitchener, he pointed out how patient and tolerant he was:

"I have in a few weeks spent more hours in listening to his torrential expositions than I have in the company of my two previous Commanders-in-Chief in four years; and I have allowed him to interfere in matters exclusively under my charge, such as Frontier Militia and the like, in a manner which I would never have tolerated from one of his predecessors."

Curzon demonstrated the stages by which Kitchener reached the point of resignation in his letter to the Secretary of State on 28 May.

"Kitchener is manifestly and intensely disappointed with his position and surroundings

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 28 May 1903.

in India. He came from being the autocrat of South Africa and the darling of England to find himself here a greatly inferior force. Starting by thinking that he could do whatever he pleased, trample upon all opposition, destroy the Military Department, reconstitute the Army, overturn and recreate everything by a nod, he finds himself for the first time in his recent life the servant of a highly systematised Government whose functions and parts are strictly defined, and which cannot be swept aside as a tiresome obstruction."

The imbroglio on the Afghan frontier raised the whole principle of the necessity of maintaining good communications between the civil and military heads of Government: "He thought he could travel anywhere along the frontiers without telling anybody a word. He found himself warned that higher permission was required." Earlier Curzon had indeed objected to Kitchener's absence from the headquarters of the Government. He feared that a dangerous precedent would be established should the excuse of a stern tour of duty easily become a three-months holiday in some remote part of the frontier with a good deal of shooting thrown in. He asserted that "not even a Commander-in-Chief can dash off to the uttermost corners of the Empire as the humour seizes him."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon then singled out Kitchener's proceedings in relation to the Military Department:

"He thought he could revolutionise the entire organization of the artillery in India literally by a stroke of the pen - a telegram to you and a telegraphic 'yes' from you in reply.

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 1 April 1903.

He found that not a single one of his Colleagues agreed with him, and he had to withdraw his schemes in face of their unanimous disapproval."

Having robbed the Military Department of its prospective best men, Kitchener then attempted to emasculate its power by issuing an abortive Memorandum, which "had to be withdrawn within 12 hours of its issue in order to save its author from an even worse rebuff." In his effort to punish Elles, Kitchener had next cited the case of the fatal 'G.G.O.' and found once again that he had missed fire. Yet now it became evident that Curzon was faced by that very collision which he most hoped to avoid "... he has forced me by his clumsy tactics into the position of championing the Military Department (which I had never thought possible), and of everywhere putting the brake on to his plungings."

One source of Kitchener's discontent was, Curzon was convinced, in dislike of his surroundings: "He cannot understand why the Viceroy should be splendidly housed and equipped while he is accommodated in what by comparison is a bungalow." Moreover he felt Kitchener was annoyed generally by the Government of India: "He frankly dislikes Anglo-Indian society ... He is bored with Simla. He abominates our files and departmental method of working. In fact, he is just like a caged lion, stalking to and fro and dashing its bruised and lacerated head against the bars."

Curzon attempted to put himself in Kitchener's shoes

in order to comprehend his annoyance and mortification:

"... at the bottom of all is the fact that, having been first and almost uncontrolled in his different spheres for the last four years, he is now not only second, but in the organisation of society and Government out here, a second who is scarcely in it ... It is a novel and painful experience for a man of imperious temper who is already over 50. He thought to be ruler of India straight away: and as he has said 'When Curzon has gone, and we have a weak Viceroy in his place, I shall be dictator.' But meanwhile I have not gone, and there is a good chance of my staying; so where is the dictatorship for which he came out?"

He hinted that the dénouement might come at any moment, and that the Home Government might have to choose between retaining Kitchener's services as Commander-in-Chief and the extension of his term of office as Viceroy, realising that public opinion in England would side with Kitchener, "and say he had been driven out by me, or by the bureaucracy, or by anything but the real cause." He asserted that "no effort on my part shall be wanting to prevent such a stupid disaster as the loss of Kitchener's services," whatever the pretext Kitchener might use or however trumped up the issue on which he might elect to go. Curzon was anxious that the Home Government should understand that he was "regarding it from the point of view of the advantage of the Empire. If only we can tide over his first year, by the end of which he must to some extent have learned the ropes, all may yet be well."

The essential feature of these proceedings was that

they left the Viceroy in an exposed position. Hitherto, in exclusively managing India's administrative policies, Curzon sought in his subordinates a responsibility for carrying out his instructions. He needed colleagues capable of functioning smoothly within the framework of India's vast administrative machine, thus introducing an element of flexibility. But in Kitchener he found an authority equal to his own - that even challenged his direction of its affairs. Threatening resignation, Kitchener had now compelled the Viceroy to admit him into the heretofore exclusive management of these affairs. For his part, Kitchener loyally promised to work in harness with the administrative machinery and allow it, as it were, a year's grace, and "on that understanding they shook hands."<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy confided he was willing to do anything to "escape these weekly fiascoes." Above all he wanted Kitchener to get on with his task of military reform while he pursued his own tasks:

"It is all, as you may imagine, intensely wearing and vexatious to me, and the absurdity of the thing lies in the fact that, whereas all my a priori sympathies are on his side, and I love to smoothe away the obstacles from the strong man who means business ..."

Curzon now found himself in a direct collision with Kitchener. "The only safeguard" he concluded in his long letter of 28 May to Hamilton, "... and the only possible preventive of disaster, is that I should remain his friend. The moment that we are estranged, or that public opinion begins to

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1. Magnus, Kitchener, p.208.

think seriously that we are quarrelling - the crash is certain to come."<sup>1</sup>

(4) The Calm before the Storm ... Kriegspiel.

The atmosphere thereafter calmed down considerably, but the difficulty was of a much more fundamental nature. India's internal administration was based on the model of the Cabinet system at home in that the Military Member and the Commander-in-Chief corresponded roughly, in so far as their functions were concerned, with the Secretary of State for War and the Commander-in-Chief in England. The major relevant difference was that the Secretary of State for War was not a serving officer, junior in rank to the Commander-in-Chief as the Military Member necessarily was. In other important respects, however, the system differed from the home analogy. India's system was designed so that Parliament as far as possible could maintain its financial control over Indian expenditure, especially military expenditure.

But there was not any close resemblance between the principles which applied in Britain, governed as it was under democratic parliamentary institutions, and the conditions that obtained in India, where the government remained bureaucratic, with such parliamentary checks as were found necessary by the India Office. Moreover, control of the Army

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 28 May 1903.

in India was in fact vested in the hands of the Governor-General in Council.<sup>1</sup> Therefore it was essential, in order for that system to work, that Members of the Governor-General's Council work together as a closely knit team. But Kitchener was far too proud and disdainful to discuss his various proposals informally with other members of the Indian Government, and least of all with the Viceroy and Military Member. Having found a modus operandi with Curzon, Kitchener was content warily to await the decision of the Home Government and the confidential advice of its members before acting.

Kitchener's relations with the Military Member and his department in the meantime remained cool, and now Curzon feared that Elles would abandon his post:

"... ever since, I have been expecting the resignation of Elles, which would have been an appropriate balance to that of Kitchener the week before. I must say I feel my position most deeply ... I provide a Tom Tidler's ground on which these two turkey-cocks fight out their weekly contests each clamouring to get me on his side, and threatening me with resignation if I take the other. Moreover it is all so unnecessary and so stupid. If only Kitchener would show a little grace and tact things would go better. As it is I am the focus of a perpetual turmoil which I have done nothing to provoke, and of which I am a mortified but helpless spectator. I am told too, that all sorts of fresh combats are ahead to which I look forward with an almost sickening apprehension."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Report of the Army in India Committee, 1919-1920, Cd.943,

p.7.

2. Curzon to Hamilton, 4 June 1903.

Early in the summer of 1903, Kitchener suggested the creation of a number of batteries of Indian field artillery, and thereby exposed his ignorance of one of India's great shibboleths. He subsequently proposed that a combatent force of some 6,000 troops, accompanied by 900 men and 3,000 followers should be despatched in the event of a British mission to Tibet. It fell to the Military Department to point out the utter impracticability of that proposal in view of the high altitudes and geography of Tibet. In both cases, the importance of the Military Department was vindicated. Kitchener for the moment appreciated that he had met his match in Curzon, who was content to observe:

"During the past week the volcanic energies of 'snowdon' have slumbered; only a thin cloud has hovered about the cone; and ... the lava-streams have ceased to flow."<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the next two months relations between Curzon and Kitchener improved considerably, and Kitchener was able to inform Lady Salisbury:

"The Curzons, both of them, have been very kind and nice to me. When you write to them you might say how much I appreciate it all. He is really a first-rate Viceroy and we work together much better now - quite cordially in fact."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon, in fact, was delighted in the marked change in Kitchener's attitude and made a determined effort to work in

1. Curzon to Hamilton, 4 June 1903.
2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 1 July 1903; Magnus, Kitchener, pp.208-9.

harmony with him:

"He [Kitchener] is out with me here in camp at this moment and not a cloud flecks the sky ... Though he must surely have known that I pressed for his appointment to India and did everything to smooth his advent, he confesses to having started with the idea that I was opposed to him and was bent on wrecking his schemes. He now realizes his mistake and is aware that I am his best friend. The latter frame of mind is as sensible as the earlier was unjust, and if it can be maintained I can see no reason why there should be any trouble in the future."<sup>1</sup>

In his first official letter to Brodrick who had succeeded Hamilton in October 1903 as Secretary of State, Curzon felt able to report that Kitchener had exhibited a conduct more becoming his position:

"Kitchener you know. He commenced by trying to destroy the Military Department and to concentrate the administrative and financial, as well as the executive, work of the Indian army in his own hands. This I declined to allow, and he has now settled down to his work, in which he is introducing a great deal of timely zeal and efficiency."<sup>2</sup>

It must be made clear that Curzon had no desire to thwart or hamper Kitchener in his task of placing the defences of India upon a sound basis, and so utilise the experience he had gained in warfare during the course of his campaigning in South Africa. Upon a number of important questions Curzon and Kitchener were in close agreement, and Curzon attached supreme importance to Kitchener's scheme of

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 9 July 1903.  
2. Curzon to Brodrick, 2 October 1903.

army redistribution and reorganisation. In addition the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief were agreed on the need for a more articulate and definite military understanding with the Amir of Afghanistan; on the necessity for the Nushki-Seistan railway; on the problem involving clashes between Indians and European soldiers; on the impracticability of garrisoning reserves for India in South Africa in the event of a war against Russia; and finally on the desirability of instituting a Staff College in India:

"Only last night I noted with approval on his scheme for establishing a Staff College in India ... Kitchener is, I think, quite right. The great desideratum of modern warfare is a trained and competent staff; you cannot get it except by a special and technical system of instruction; and it is much better that it should be available in this country, where the bulk of staff officers should go through it, than that a limited number only should be able at a considerable outlay to themselves to proceed to a not altogether suitable Institution at home."<sup>1</sup>

For Kitchener however, that halcyon period ended when he learned that Curzon's term of office was being extended and that the Home Government were permitting him to return to England for a holiday and rest.

Accordingly, Kitchener sent a copy of his Kriegspiel or plan of campaign for the defence of India in the event of Russian aggression, suggesting to Lady Salisbury that she pass it along to A.J. Balfour.<sup>2</sup> Balfour, in fact, had

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 9 September 1903.

2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 6 August 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.

communicated earlier with Kitchener as we have seen, through Roberts and Roberts wrote: "I shall be very anxious to hear your views on the subject of 'the Defence of India'."<sup>1</sup>

Despite his promise to Curzon to allow a year's grace on the question of dual control, Kitchener prefaced his Kriegspiel with a sustained indictment of Indian military administration, which he characterised as the greatest obstacle in the path of military victory in an Anglo-Russian war. That attack drew a long and extremely anxious reply from the Prime Minister.

Balfour thanked Kitchener for his Kriegspiel and for the trouble he had taken in investigating the problem of Indian Military organisation. He suggested that: "The remedy is with the Indian Government", and therefore "quite outside the broader problems" of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Nevertheless Balfour was "profoundly perturbed" from the point of view of defence, "at the relations between India and this country. For many purposes we seem to be, not so much integral elements in one Empire, as allied States, one of which though no doubt more or less subordinate to the other has yet sufficient independence to make effective common action a great difficulty. I fear this will be more and more felt as common action becomes more and more necessary, and I see problems coming up for consideration which

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1. Roberts to Kitchener, 30 June 1903; Kitchener MSS 30/57/28.

will certainly strain the already in some respects strained relations between the two Governments."

Balfour was careful to point out that deliberations in the arcana imperii, the Defence Committee and Cabinet, concluded that:

"Our Regular Army does not exist principally for the defence of Great Britain, but almost entirely for the defence of India."

The gravaman of Balfour's view was that Indian defence placed an intolerable financial strain upon the Mother Country; "and I think the military relations of the two Governments, especially in the matter of finance, may have to be very carefully considered." As for the increasing gulf between the Government of India and the views of the Home Government, Balfour clearly reveals that underlying the whole question was the burden of defence costs involved in military administration:

"I know George Curzon thinks that we are always trying to rob him, and the Press and Public here are ever ready to take up the cry that this powerful and wealthy country is bleeding a poor and subordinate Dependency with cynical selfishness. My impression is that the wrongs are all the other way, - for India pays nothing for the Navy, without which Indian reinforcements could not be sent, and but little for an Army which exists chiefly on her behalf."

Balfour was willing to concede that India doubtless was "the 'brightest jewel' in the Imperial crown, as well as being an excellent customer for British manufactures." But from a strictly military point of view, India was nothing

but a liability:

"Were India successfully invaded the moral loss would be incalculable, the material loss would be important, - but the burden of British taxation would undergo a most notable diminution!"

The Prime Minister concluded his letter with a significant message to Kitchener:

"I have not touched on questions of Indian Army organization; but my own personal conviction is (at least as at present advised) that the existing division of attributes between the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Member of the Council is quite indefensible ... I cannot say how thankful I am that we have got you, in this critical and in some respects transitional period, as our military adviser and guide on the problems of Indian Defence."<sup>1</sup>

Thus encouraged Kitchener made no further reference to the matter of the dual control of the army before the Viceroy sailed for England, being preoccupied with the results of his serious riding accident which occurred on 15 November 1903. Thereafter however Kitchener began composing fresh schemes for the abolition of dual control. In the meantime the breach between India and the Home Government came to a head over the state of affairs of India in Tibet and Afghanistan. In the six months intervening between the appointment of Brodrick as Secretary of State for India (October 1903) and the time Curzon left Calcutta in April

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1. Balfour to Kitchener, 3 December 1903, Balfour MSS 49726.

1904, relations between the two Governments steadily deteriorated.

Curzon illustrated his grievances and considered that the interests of India were being sacrificed by the Home Government:

"I think perhaps, that I have suffered ... for having felt it my duty strongly to oppose H.M.G. in some of their attempts to score off India - and for having, during the last six months, had a new Secretary of State, who launches upon me weekly the most extraordinary schemes and proposals ... wholly divorced from Indian knowledge or experience, and then complains bitterly if I do not accept them, and even thinks I am disloyal to H.M.G. for not helping them over these stiles. His Council are delighted to have got a new man, who does not know anything of India, and they knock spots off us with the keenest satisfaction."

He was dismayed that Brodrick, though his personal friend, would not also champion his policy:

"I think he rather enjoys spreading the impression that I am a very difficult person to handle, and that it is a good thing for the Cabinet to sit upon me from time to time."

Confident in his hope that his personal appearance in London would dispel most of the anxiety between the Government of India and the Home Government, Curzon jestingly predicted:

"All this will disappear when I get home, and meet these suspicious gentry at a table. I think I can soon blow away the atmospheric conditions that have transformed me into a sort of Spectre of the Brocken of exaggerated and inhuman proportions."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Curzon to Clinton Dawkins, 9 March 1904.

Before handing over charge of the Indian Government to Lord Ampthill, Curzon restated the policy and principles of his Government in a Budget speech (30 March) which was to become famous:

"India is like a fortress with the vast moat of the sea on two of her faces, and with mountains for her walls on the remainder. But beyond those walls extends a glacis of varying breadth and dimensions. We do not want to occupy it; but we also cannot afford to see it occupied by our foes. . . . He would be a short-sighted commander who merely manned his ramparts in India and did not look out beyond; and the whole of our policy during the past five years has been directed towards maintaining our predominant influence and to preventing the expansion of hostile agencies on this area which I have described."<sup>1</sup>

For his part Brodrick was fully convinced that Curzon's arrival in London would help facilitate agreement over many of the issues outstanding between them: "I feel sure that a great number of these questions could be settled orally without the slightest difficulty."<sup>2</sup> Brodrick however, recorded the general fear among his Councillors and colleagues "lest they should be sledge-hammered on questions on which they feel acutely, and I cannot help thinking that, just as I personally have never been able to come to an arrangement with the Prime Minister when writing, although I can always do so in half an hour's conversation, the distance of many thousand miles and the different way things look when they are explained by letter, counts for much." Once again

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1. Budget Speech, 30 March 1904, in Raleigh, op.cit., p.408.  
2. Brodrick to Curzon, 19 February 1904.

Brodrick reiterated the significance of the Defence Committee:

"Arthur Balfour is the first Prime Minister who had given any real consideration to national defence, and had India been attacked any time in the last thirty years, preparations would have been as vague as they were at the time of the Crimean War."<sup>1</sup>

The problem of defending India was, he continued, "assuming very wide importance," and he emphasised the desirability of coming to some definite conclusions. In a subsequent telegram, he indicated the anxiety of the Home Government over Indian military affairs generally:

"As soon as you arrive in England the Defence Committee desire to confer with you on all defence questions which have recently been discussed between us. Lord Kitchener's recent memorandum<sup>2</sup> as to the carrying powers of the Russian Railway and the probable Russian forces in Afghanistan raises the most important questions. As by statute Lord Kitchener cannot join you in the deliberations here, could he nominate some officer in his confidence, who has been working with him on this subject, who could be present with you and save much correspondence..."<sup>3</sup>

Curzon was markedly troubled about the number of problems he faced, particularly those related to Indian army administration and the dissension between Kitchener and Elles; he feared Ampthill would be placed in a difficult position should an open conflict arise. Some months before his departure, Curzon wrote to Brodrick:

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 18 March 1904, Midleton MSS 50075.
  2. cf. C.I.D. Records 6/1/36D, 20 January 1904.
  3. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 30 March 1904.

"... I want you to know in strictest confidence that I have great difficulty in keeping the peace between K. and Elles. The former most unreasonably and unjustly dislikes and despises the latter ... He wants to break & destroy the Mily. Dept. and thinks I fancy that the best way to do it is to force Elles to resign."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon was even more dismayed at the "flimsy and hypothetical" character of the calculation of the Defence Committee, directly attributable to the delay of Roberts, a prominent member of the C.I.D.<sup>2</sup>

Confusion however between India and London regarding defence estimates was probably the result of Kitchener's secret channels of communication with the Home Government. Lady Salisbury early in 1904, sent to Kitchener marked 'Very Private', a letter written to her by her husband which in part explains the dilemma which such secret communications caused:

"A.J.B. is very much concerned about the situation in India. He is much hampered because the information K. sends is secret, and he therefore can't use it. He is doing his best to act through Roberts in order that the Govt. of India may be approached, officially or semi-officially, and an opportunity afforded for that Govt. to give, officially or semi-officially, this information which K. has given secretly to you. A.J.B. earnestly hopes that K. will do his best to make the effort successful."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 14 January 1904, Midleton MSS 50075.
  2. Ibid., 11 February 1904.
  3. Lord Salisbury to Lady Salisbury, n.d. 1904; Magnus, Kitchener, p.207.

In reply to Brodrick's request of 30 March Curzon telegraphed on 1 April that he had given Kitchener permission to depute Colonel Hubert Mullaly, who had worked with Kitchener on his schemes for reorganising the Indian army, as his agent at the meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence. As yet unaware that Kitchener was in such intimate contact with members of the Home Government, Curzon was nonetheless upset about Kitchener's implacable hostility and contempt for the Military Department:

"The unauthorised procedure of my Commander-in-Chief, not only in this but in many other respects, is a source of great annoyance to me, and I have frequently conversed with him on the matter. He cannot resist however, having his little scores off the Military Department or some other traditional foe, and I am afraid he will go on committing these irregularities to the end of the chapter."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the Viceroy overtly reaffirmed his hearty support in Kitchener's task of improving preparations for the defence of India:

"... I have the warmest admiration for your single-hearted plans and ideas for the reform of the Indian Army and the strengthening of the defences of the country ... I should consider it a national asset to retain you here. While I am at home you may rely upon me to do all that I can to push forward your schemes: and in the meantime I wish you all success at this end."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener replied by strongly hinting at the views he was expressing in his letters to England. He uncompromisingly asserted that, should war come, disaster must follow

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 14 April 1904, Midleton MSS 50076.  
2. Curzon to Kitchener, 26 April 1904.

under India's existing system of divided responsibility:

"...I think I ought to tell you that in writing home privately I have not hidden my firm conviction that the system under which the Army in India is now administered is very faulty. Under it, as you know, I do not consider myself responsible for those essential Army services that are not under my control, and in case of a serious war I have the gravest doubts as regards our state of preparation and efficiency. I cannot help thinking, if no change is made in the present system, war with Russia must assuredly lead to disaster, and it will be too late when war is at our doors to obtain much advantage by altering the present system."<sup>1</sup>

In London, Kitchener's Kriegspiel contained a hard thread of military and political logic and corresponded with some exactitude to the utterances he voiced in India. War between Russia and Japan had broken out in February 1904 and British policy had to be skilfully managed as the result of the Japanese Alliance of 1902. Kitchener had no scruples whatever in exploiting that situation to promote his objectives with the Defence Committee and the production of that document triggered off strong emotions. This helps to explain the vindictive mood which the Viceroy adopted in response during the summer of 1904. In addition that mood was related to a number of other issues concerning Britain's policy in Central Asia. For Curzon this was but the beginning of the storm which lay ahead.

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1. Kitchener to Curzon, 27 April 1904.

(5) Brodrick : "When the cat's away..."

Curzon sailed from India on 30 April 1904 landing in England in mid-May. While on holiday in London the Viceroy was invited to attend several meetings of the Defence Committee by which it was hoped agreement between the two governments would be facilitated. On 15 June 1904, to his intense surprise, Curzon discovered that a memorandum sent by Kitchener had been circulated by Brodrick among the members of the Committee, categorically condemning Indian army administration.<sup>1</sup> Curzon challenged its production as ultra vires and strongly objected to the document on the grounds that rather than dealing with Indian defence, it proposed a variety of changes within the Indian government, notably on the position of the Military Member. Curzon, greatly disturbed by that incident, described his reaction in a letter to Ampthill:

"To my amazement (this is very confidential) I found Kitchener's Memorandum proposing to abolish the Military Department - which I induced him to withdraw in India a year ago - among the agenda papers ... entered for early discussion! I at once wrote to Balfour protesting against the go-by being given to the Government of India in this way..."

Curzon claimed that the C.I.D., as only an advisory Committee, had no place in the Constitution and foresaw

"that the Defence Committee, with its undefined powers and unscientific method of conducting business, may be a source of some

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1. Supra, p. 181 f.n.2.

anxiety to the Government of India. Indian affairs are freely discussed there by a body of men barely one of whom has ever been in India, among whom the sailors are very strong, and where the only representative of our interests is the Secretary of State who knows nothing about India at all."<sup>1</sup>

Balfour promptly withdrew the memorandum, but the incident dramatised the fact that Kitchener was intriguing behind his back.

Brodrick had indeed raised the whole question of Indian defence privately to Kitchener shortly after Curzon left India in April 1904. Though it was true that Brodrick was inexperienced in matters connected with Indian affairs, we have seen that he felt a special responsibility, entrusted to him by Balfour, for bringing such questions that presented an imperial aspect squarely before India and the Home Government. Brodrick now also addressed himself to a more thorough study of army reform in India than had been attempted at any time since the days following the Mutiny. He was convinced that among India's great requirements, leaving aside for the moment the question of army administration, was the creation of a force that could effectively serve to bolster the Indian army in the event of hostilities in Asia. Unfortunately by maladroit handling he once again provoked Curzon over the use of Indian revenues (as in his South African garrison scheme) and his efforts caused more friction (cf. III, (4-6)) between the two Governments.

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1. Curzon to Ampthill, 23 June 1904.

Nevertheless he was determined to clear the way of obstacles in the path of the Cabinet, first by supplying Kitchener with the necessary materials for reform in India and secondly to halt what was considered to be Curzon's adventurous policy in Tibet and Afghanistan. In discussing the first of these problems Brodrick had warned Curzon that his Council at the India Office were definite in their unanimous feeling in being "very much disinclined to overrule Lord Kitchener" when it came to supplying him with men and money.<sup>1</sup> One of his first steps therefore was to communicate directly with Kitchener for advice as to how to proceed to set about supplying requirements for the security of India. Here again confusion resulted, for Curzon, not always informed of the details of these discussions, was in fact kept in the dark.

Significantly the former War Minister raised the whole question of Indian defence with Kitchener, in camera, during Curzon's absence from India:

"I have not written ... because I believe it is forbidden by practice for me to communicate with anyone except the Viceroy ... But I want to break the rule for once on the principle that 'when the cat's away the mice will play'."

Brodrick informed Kitchener that they had arrived at "a point where it is absolutely essential that you and the Home Government should understand each other." He insisted that Kitchener keep their correspondence secret, "and not to let

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 4 July 1904; Midleton MSS 50076.

it be known to others I have written...", and explained his concern at the way in which Curzon's financial stringency placed army reform in serious jeopardy, particularly in view of pressure of the Liberal opposition in Parliament for a reduction in the army estimates. In that letter, Brodrick reiterating his earlier advice to Curzon, told Kitchener:

"At present we have a Prime Minister who is convinced that the military plans for the defence of India are sound, and that the reinforcements they demand must be provided",

at a cost of some £30 million to the British taxpayer. The problem was to get Kitchener to provide the necessary figures, in men and money in order to establish the basis for the new army estimates. Brodrick felt that the psychological moment had arrived to act: "I have had more experience of War Office administration than any man now in Parliament, and I am convinced that you cannot reduce the military charge to £25,000,000" in order to meet the necessity of obtaining adequate reinforcements for India in the event of Russian aggression. Brodrick summarised the predicament of the Government:

"if all this is put off and quietly debated, another Government will be just as much forced as we are to meet the Indian demand reasonably. . . . Your main experience of Government in the last eighteen years has been of Conservative Governments possessing a strong majority in both Houses, annually increasing estimates, and much assisted in doing it by a rapidly growing revenue. The revenue is now halting, taxation is much higher, the political outlook, although for

the moment more quiet, is uncertain, and the radical party, which comes in pledged to re-trenchment, will have a very strong backing with a people satiated by the fresh territory we have acquired and the wars which we have carried through in the last fifteen years."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick demonstrated to Kitchener why the Indian Commander-in-Chief was an asset to the Government:

"... confidence in military opinion has received heavy blows in the last few years. The continual attacks on the army by the Times and other parties ... have gone far to destroy the belief in the infallibility of any military chief. The 'désillusionment' of the public of successive military chiefs [notably Wolseley, Buller, Wood, and subsequently in Roberts] with the exception of yourself, will probably be accentuated."

Brodrick reflected his bitter experience in office during the Boer War. He predicted that the newly appointed Esher Committee, in attempting to remodel and reconstruct the British army, would largely fail and the reformers would be "unable to make the new heaven and the new earth that is expected. ... the sharper the razor the greater inducement to use it..." He was determined that, in his new capacity, he and Kitchener would not be blamed for unpreparedness in India should the Russians begin building railroads in Askhabad through to Seistan. Confident in Kitchener's presence in India, he explained that the deliberations of the Defence Committee pointed to taking diplomatic action in case the Russians attempted to consolidate their existing expansion

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1. Brodrick to Kitchener, 29 April 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

by laying rails in Khorassan, thus threatening Persia. In that event, "we should occupy Chabbar as a 'quid pro quo'." In concluding, Brodrick emphasised that he would treat Kitchener's views on British policy in Asia in the strictest confidence:

"I hope you will reply to this letter fully, although 'sub rosa'. I shall keep our communications entirely to myself, but they will be of the greatest use to me in our discussions this summer."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick, fresh from an inept tenure at the War Office, has been well described by a recent historian as:

"... one of those figures who recur throughout the history of British party-politics: a man who, although remarkable neither for his talents nor his principles, is tacitly, perhaps even reluctantly, regarded as an indispensable pillar of his party's fortunes and, when it is in power, is automatically given a portfolio."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener was concerned less about the position of the Government than about his own position in India. He agreed that chaos would result from an armed clash with Russia:

"There is no doubt if we had a big war on the frontier there would be a frightful crash and 'show-up' out here. A system under which

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1. Brodrick to Kitchener, 29 April 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.
  2. Fleming, P., Bayonets to Lhasa, p.92: Though Colonel Fleming's account of the Tibetan Mission is partial to Younghusband, it accurately reveals the extent to which the Home Government attempted to undermine Curzon's Tibetan policy, and in doing so, enlisted the help of Kitchener.

Transport, Supply, Remounts, Ordnance, are entirely divorced from the executive command of the Army, and placed under an independent authority, is one which must cause an entire re-organization as soon as war is declared - rather late to begin."

In his indictment of India's cumbrous departmental system, Kitchener credited Curzon with having at least tried to improve and reform the Indian army:

"... efficiency is about the last thing that appeals to anyone, except the Viceroy ... what has been done in the past is right, and nothing must on any account be altered by horrid innovators coming from benighted England - be they Viceroys or C.-in-C.'s. Curzon has done a great deal, but there is still so much to do."

Kitchener deprecated the fact that the Military Department was out of touch with the needs of the troops who must depend upon supplies in time of war:

"... what will be the good of having well-trained and organized troops if they have not got ammunition, guns, horses, & transport ... these are our great wants, and during the breathing time we have before Russia can be prepared, these, and strategic railways on our frontiers, should be our main considerations."<sup>1</sup>

In his letters to Brodrick before he left South Africa, Kitchener expressed his admiration of the great German manoeuvres of 1902, and had strongly recommended British army organisation along German lines, setting up a corps and divisional basis upon standard units roughly equal

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1. Kitchener to Brodrick, 15 July 1904; Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

in size and strength. It is just possible that Kitchener was influenced by the publication early in 1904, of an English translation of the German history of the Boer War. In the preface of that work, the one principle which the German General Staff firmly advocated and stressed was that the Commander-in-Chief must have absolute executive control, and his decisions <sup>remain</sup> uncontested by Cabinets and Ministers for War.<sup>1</sup> Kitchener planned to put into immediate effect the principles of continental practice, and accordingly resolved to reduce India's internal garrisons to the barest possible minimum and thereby release enough troops to form nine field divisions instead of four. As no one was sure just how units would be brigaded in an emergency, Kitchener gave explicit orders that the nine divisions with their general officers (each division consisting of ten thousand bayonets) would be divided into two groups: a northern army composed of five divisions to guard the frontier along a line from Peshawar to Lucknow, while a southern army of four divisions was to debouch southwards, the leading division to be stationed at Quetta, facing Afghanistan. For the first time, the divisional basis was effectively applied in India, an immense improvement which established the foundation for the modern Indian army. Roberts, to whom Kitchener submitted his proposals, told him to proceed without delay in organising all

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1. Waters, W.H.H. (translator), The German Official Account of the War in South Africa, vol.I (February 1904).

available forces for the anticipated campaign with Russia:

"We are at present in a transition state in military affairs, and until our forces are adequately reorganized, we should ... resort to ... improvisation."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in the course of bringing the new divisions up to a uniform standard of efficiency, Kitchener incurred criticism from those who desired to maintain former traditions and preserve old names that had won past distinction in the Indian army. His drastic re-naming and re-numbering cut across lines of sentiment in his attempt to create a highly trained, consistently organised modern army, and his disregard for any obstacles made him unpopular with many British officers. In that way the Indian Commander-in-Chief soon established his authority, particularly in the 'Kitchener test' by which every battalion in India was subjected to severe examination under extreme conditions in an effort to simulate active service in time of war. Officers who were prejudiced against Kitchener frankly acknowledged his capacity for increasing the efficiency of the Army and, respected and feared by all,<sup>2</sup> Kitchener's vigorous tours to the frontier, along with his influence and personal courage soon became widely spread among the

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1. Kitchener to Roberts, 31 March 1904, enc. scheme for re-organising and redistributing Indian army, with a Memorandum on Indian preparedness; and Roberts to Kitchener, 17 June 1904, Paper 54-D, Memorandum by Roberts on Preparedness etc., Kitchener MSS 30/57/28.
  2. Fraser, op.cit., p.408.

tribes, and his reputation became legendary.

While Kitchener was working out the details of his scheme to mobilise nine divisions, - confident that Brodrick and Colonel Mullaly would convey his views effectively at meetings of the Defence Committee - Brodrick informed him of the progress of those schemes and reported on Britain's diplomatic situation with Russia. Obsessed that the Home Government would be unable to send out the required men or provide sufficient funds to meet their cost, Brodrick intimated that this gave the Defence Committee "cause for very great anxiety as Russia's communications improve every day. Even if we could improve ours, we may find ourselves hard pressed for men after we have sent 100,000 men from here." Nonetheless, he was able to reassure Kitchener that his views were given great weight in Committee:

"Your present conclusion is entirely in accord with that of the members of the Defence Committee, and I hope it is the view which will be adopted by all parties."

Significantly Brodrick championed Kitchener's views over other matters notably Tibet, despite the fact that it had been Curzon who had taken the initiative for the expedition in the first place, forcefully guiding its policy. He told Kitchener:

"I am sure you will realise that we are depending entirely on your judgment as to what is done. It would be impossible for us to take responsibility from here, and, little as we desire to incur further expense, the expedition has gone so far

that we must see it through at all hazards."<sup>1</sup>

It was not, however, only the fact that the Secretary of State was engaged in corresponding privately with the Commander-in-Chief on military subjects. In addition Brodrick had widened the discussion beyond the purview of Kitchener's responsibility, on political matters affecting Imperial interests and Curzon's Central Asia diplomacy.

(6) Tibet and Afghanistan - The Great Game in Asia.<sup>2</sup>

In 1901 Hamilton wrote that

"... the Tibetans are but the smallest of pawns on the political chessboard, but castles, knights and bishops may all be involved in trying to take that pawn."<sup>3</sup>

In 1909 Curzon suggested that India, no mere pawn among the other Asiatic powers was "a royal piece on the chessboard of international politics"<sup>4</sup> and in the years intervening between 1901 and 1905 Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, though long standing, became focused on Tibet and Afghanistan. The climax of that struggle came to a head in the summer of 1904 and thereafter, and had an intimate bearing upon Curzon's relations with Kitchener as well as with the Home Government. Curzon's policy in Central Asia had one essential object, the restoration of British influence and diplomatic credit in Tibet and Afghanistan; to that object all other considerations were subordinated. In his view it was crucial to

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1. Brodrick to Kitchener, 9 June 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22

2. For details of the 'Great Game' see Fleming, op.cit., pp.19-31.

3. Hamilton to Curzon, 22 August 1901.

4. Curzon, The Place of India in the Empire, p.13.

achieve success (rightly or wrongly) on these two main issues between Great Britain and Russia. If Curzon could capture these two strategic positions, he would win the 'Great Game' in Asia against Russia; if he failed, it would take many years before British prestige could be restored. In these circumstances Curzon maintained that far from the charge that his was a dangerous "or impulsive policy on any part of the Indian frontier", he had no desire whatever for a policy of aggression, but wished to pursue one of "consolidation and restraint."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly he sought some brilliant and paralysing coup which would at once restore British prestige while at the same time re-establish her position in Central Asia and with consummate skill he managed to employ the tradition symbol of British power by playing his King.<sup>2</sup>

As we have seen Curzon defined India's position as

"a fortress with the vast moat of the sea on two of her faces, and with mountains for her walls on the remainder. But beyond those walls ... extends a glacis of varying breadth and dimensions. We do not want to occupy it, but we also cannot afford to see it occupied by our foes ... if rival and unfriendly influences creep up to it, and lodge themselves right under our walls, we are compelled to intervene ... This is the secret of the whole position in Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet,

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1. Budget Speech, 30 March 1904, Speeches, III, p.403.
  2. See Curzon to King Edward VII, 9 March 1904; 11 January 1905. In July 1905, to the chagrin of Brodrick, Curzon asserted to the Monarch that "The instruments of Your Majesty's rule in India cannot be openly humiliated without weakening the foundations of that rule itself." Ibid.

and as far eastwards as Siam... and the whole of our policy during the past five years has been directed towards maintaining our predominant influence and to preventing the expansion of hostile agencies in this area ... I would suffer any imputation sooner than ... allow the future peace of this country to be compromised by encroachment..."<sup>1</sup>

Although Curzon's foreign policy lies outside the scope of this thesis, had matters been left where they were, little excuse would have been found for the Home Government to overrule the Viceroy. As it turned out these issues were to count heavily (and, perhaps, unjustly) against him in his subsequent misfortunes with the Commander-in-Chief. It was Curzon's superb direction of India's external affairs during his last years of office which not only attempted to restore British prestige in Tibet<sup>2</sup> and Afghanistan, but renders him one of the most interesting as well as complex of Indian Viceroys. His handling of Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia will always remain among the classic examples of diplomacy under conditions of exasperating and peculiar difficulty; his attempt against formidable forces, to end Russian expansion in the 'roof of the World' became legendary.<sup>3</sup>

The impact of these developments had far reaching effects, revealing not only the motives behind Curzon's

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1. Budget Speech, 30 March 1904, Raleigh, Speeches, pp.402-3.
  2. Lamb, A., Britain and Chinese Central Asia, pp.334-5.
  3. See Fleming, op.cit., pp.19-31.

policy, but those of Ministers in London. The ability of the Indian Government to carry out its policy effectively was therefore to a very great extent determined by the deterioration of confidence in the relations of the two Governments previously. The result subjected Curzon to suspicion and discredit.<sup>1</sup> Repeated friction and frustration with Kitchener in India over army administration only added to a situation which was to have unfortunate repercussions. But in spite of these drawbacks, the Viceroy had formidable assets: his own personality - a commanding presence, immense experience, unsurpassed knowledge and a complete mastery of debate. The lucidity of the correspondence in which he discussed India's affairs with the Home Government bears witness to his indefatigable energy. Though the odds against him were tremendous, Curzon doggedly pitted his strength against his obstinate opponents in the Cabinet. He knew he would receive little support and suspected that at any moment he might have to face open hostility, recall or resignation. He had, however, consolation in the knowledge that, torn by internal dissension, the worn Conservative Cabinet was equally uncertain in its Parliamentary position; but they were entrenched behind a new and powerful instrument - the Defence Committee;

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1. One example belonging to a later period will suffice to illustrate these suspicions: "in no case would the Cabinet assent to a fight with Afghanistan, [nor had they] the means of waging such a war with success, if the Russians joined in, as they assuredly would." Godley to Curzon, 3 March 1905.

Curzon knew therefore that he would have to fight his battle in spite of his allies, for even more disturbing to him was the fact that he could rely on but small encouragement from home.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection the summer of 1904 marked the climax of Curzon's Indian career. Matters concerning imperial strategy and defence reached an extreme state of urgency as his policy touched off strong emotions in London. Once again he was brought into open conflict with the Cabinet who above all, desired to avoid rupture with Russia.<sup>2</sup> Curzon's external aims met with the implacable hostility of the Liberal opposition as well as of the members of the Cabinet and of the India Council. Even in 1903, Godley had written succinctly:

"I am afraid that you will find that the obstacles to an advance to Lhasa which exist in this country are much more formidable than those in Tibet."<sup>3</sup>

Within a month of taking up his new duties as Secretary of State for India, Brodrick had written:

"So far as I can see, there is a direct conflict between your opinion and that of your advisers and the view held here... I find the same view most strongly reflected in the Indian Council... They all of them object to advancing; they would only now go to Gyantse to save our face ... in short, they would be quit of the whole business, the more so as they think you will make a road

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1. Curzon to Ampthill, 4 August 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/37.  
 2. Ronaldshay, Curzon, II, pp.206-7.  
 3. Godley to Curzon, 29 October 1903.

into India for an enemy on a frontier which has been hitherto a natural barrier."

The crucial passage in that letter, however, was related to British foreign policy in Asia:

"The Prime Minister has also a strong opinion about the effect that an advance to Lhasa would have on our diplomatic relations in the Far East."<sup>1</sup>

The Cabinet were unanimous against any avoidable advance in Tibet for two reasons; first because they foresaw political difficulties in occupying allegedly Chinese territory, thereby giving Russia a handle for encroaching on other portions of Chinese territory, thus applying leverage on British policy elsewhere, and secondly, because of the weakness of the Government resulting from the Boer War and the Chamberlain schism in the Conservative Party.<sup>2</sup> The Home Government were also fearful lest Curzon "landed us in a war", in which case the Government would be responsible and would, of necessity, have to defend Curzon's policy in Parliament:

"... they are free either to support you ... or to censure or recall you. But in any case the point is that the House of Commons may and will rightly come down upon you - and, if they repudiate you, you must resign."

Godley challenged, in good-humoured terms, Curzon's version of the ideal that India and the Indian Government should be largely independent: "if you mean that we are to send out a

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 6 November 1903.

2. Ibid., 13 November 1903.

series of carefully selected autocrats, and then let them do what they please..." there was no chance at all for success, and he added: "where are we to get our autocrats? ... Curzons I assure you, don't grow on every gooseberry bush."<sup>1</sup>

But Curzon's external policy particularly in Tibet, Persia and Afghanistan, was the product of his conviction that the Cabinet must actively recognise the need to restore British prestige in Central Asia. The Viceroy claimed Indian public opinion in his support:

"To you in England it seems so clear that there is no difference between the end of Lord Dufferin's regime and the end of mine. To me in India it is transparent that there is all the difference in the world. What is the great difference at this end? It is that public opinion has been growing all the while, is articulate, is daily becoming more powerful, cannot be ignored. What is the origin of the mistakes sometimes made at the other end? It is that men are standing still with their eyes shut and do not see the movement here."

Reserving for himself the right to decide when public opinion was an accurate expression of Indian feeling he recorded:

"... to contend that it does not exist, that it has not advanced in the last fifteen years, or that it may be treated with general indifference is, in my view, to ignore the great change which is passing over this country, and which I believe history will recognise myself as having done much (whether

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1. Godley to Curzon, 26 February 1904. At this time many of Curzon's letters were passed on by Godley to Brodrick and the Prime Minister, and copies are in the Balfour collection (Balfour MSS 49721).

wisely or unwisely) to accelerate; viz. the lifting of India from the level of a Dependency to the position which is bound one day to be hers, if it is not so already, namely,<sup>1</sup> that of the greatest partner in the Empire."<sup>1</sup>

Now it was Curzon whose actions were threatening to bring Balfour's Government crashing down. Most Cabinet ministers feared the Tibetan mission would ultimately involve a clash with Russia, and they wished to avert that contingency at all costs by applying diplomatic pressure at St. Petersburg.<sup>2</sup> Brodrick moreover warned Curzon of the dangerous political liability which the Indian Government provided the opposition:

"Parliament is beginning to take more interest in Tibet, and the greatest suspicion is evinced on the other side of any further advance."<sup>3</sup>

He pointed out:

"The Opposition had been seeking occasion against the Government, and have found a good many different outlets ... The Tibetan business was just one."<sup>4</sup>

In March 1904, Godley confessed that Brodrick was expecting a change of Government before the end of the summer, and that military affairs were high in the list of the differences of party politics:

"Never, I suppose, since the Reform Bill of 1832, has there been a time when the division of opinion on the great questions of the day -

1. Curzon to Godley, 27 January 1904.
2. Brodrick to Curzon, 12 February 1904.
3. Ibid., 25 March 1904.
4. Ibid., 15 April 1904. Middleton MSS 50076.

Fiscal Policy, Army Reform, Home Rule - was so much at variance with the recognised distribution of political parties. From what I hear there seems to be a fine row going on inside the Government about the Report of the Esher Committee..."<sup>1</sup>

All these considerations tended to discredit Curzon while enhancing Kitchener's position in India. Esher had in fact blamed the Government for the failure of the Boer War as "a deliberate political act, for which the Cabinet as a whole, and the Cabinet only, can be held responsible."<sup>2</sup> In the Report of the Esher Committee, composed of 'the dauntless three' (Esher, Fisher and Clarke), military co-ordination was given a high priority:

"The British Empire is pre-eminently a great Naval, Indian and Colonial Power. There are, nevertheless, no means for co-ordinating defence problems, or for dealing with them as a whole, for defining the proper functions of the various elements, and for ensuring that, on the one hand, peace preparations are carried out upon a consistent plan, and, on the other hand that, in times of emergency, a definite war policy, based upon solid data, can be formulated."<sup>3</sup>

In view of the rupture between the Viceroy and the Cabinet over the question of Tibet Balfour privately considered the replacement of Curzon. The Cabinet found themselves in unalterable disagreement over Curzon's conception of India's external policy, and they were naturally anxious to avoid

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1. Godley to Curzon, 11 March 1904.

2. Esher, Journals, I, p.394.

3. Johnson, F.A., Defence by Committee, p.68.

complications on any point of the glacis along the perimeter of India's frontier. At the time Esher recorded Balfour's comment "that Curzon was very 'difficult', and that he quarrels with his old friend Brodrick and is at sixes and sevens with K. Arthur hopes that he will not return to India, and in that case (only this is a profound secret) he will send out Selborne..."<sup>1</sup>

But if in the spring of 1904 the Prime Minister entertained doubts as to Curzon's remaining in office, he refrained from acting upon them. By mid-June 1904, Curzon's health was in a state of collapse; his wife, Mary Curzon, had just given birth to a third daughter in March, and lost her father, Mr. Leiter, in June. By October she was suffering from a further miscarriage complicated by peritonitis. Walter Lawrence (1857-1940), Curzon's ex-private secretary and confidante who supported his policy in a series of letters to The Times, confided to Amptill:

"I ... am afraid that ... [Curzon] ... is not having much of a holiday. His leg gives him great pain and he is worried by the Defence Committee and by others. He frets too at the appalling ignorance of India which prevails in London ... the end will be that he will break down."<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the latter part of June Curzon lay ill in bed, unable to attend the frequent meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Brodrick nonetheless, lost no opportunity

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1. Esher, Journals, II, pp.55-6, 20 June 1904.  
 2. Lawrence to Amptill, 13 June 1904, Amptill MSS 233/40.

to hound the Viceroy, and on one occasion, mentioned that a Major Gough had neglected to consult the War Office in a mission he had embarked upon to enquire about horses for India from South Africa and explained that Balfour was furious "that such an obvious precaution for the joint working of the two Governments should have been neglected." He complained that as the incident was causing great indignation; the Prime Minister "took it seriously to heart", and that it had raised "a great deal of feeling ... at the Defence Committee."<sup>1</sup> Such tactics did little to restore Curzon's confidence or the state of his health and he wearily replied: "I am in bed and have not the spirit or strength to continue a controversy..."<sup>2</sup>

In these trying circumstances Curzon as we shall see, became embittered. His efforts to regain what he conceived to be Britain's deteriorating position in Central Asia were consistently hampered by a Cabinet satiated with responsibilities for governing the fresh territories they had acquired at the close of the Boer War. His struggle with the Commander-in-Chief in India culminated in his own loss of authority in speaking for the Government of India on the management of its affairs; and that struggle was an added element of dispute undermining the relations between the two

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 7 April 1904, and ca. 3 June 1904; Midleton MSS 50076.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick, 13 June 1904, Ibid.

Governments. In July 1904, Curzon thus described his feelings to Ampthill about Brodrick, the India Office, and the problem Kitchener was creating in Indian army administration:

"As for the India Office, under a Secretary of State who knows little or nothing about India, and does not seem concerned to learn, things move more slowly than I have ever known. I write write and worry worry. But I cannot get things done ... the object of the India Office seems to be to apply the drag everywhere. When you get telegrams asking you to consult Kitchener, you must not attribute them to any idea that you two disagree. They are merely the reflex of the chaotic conditions existing in military administration here, and still more to the existence of the Defence Committee. A discussion is, we will say, going on. Suddenly a fundamental disagreement presents itself on the military aspect of the problem. The English soldiers state their view. What is the Indian? Send a telegram and ask Kitchener, says the Prime Minister. That is almost always the explanation."<sup>1</sup>

Ampthill, in the meantime, on 4 June 1904, cabled the following message to Brodrick:

"... informant telegraphs through Meshed that Orenburg-Tashkend railway will be finished in three months and in full running order in six. Belief at Tashkend is that Anglo-Afghan war is imminent and Russians claim to have understanding with the Amir and Indian Princes..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Curzon to Ampthill, 19 July 1904, enclosed in 28 July 1904. Brodrick later reported Buller's observation on the wide divergence of military opinion during the Boer War: "'In Pretoria,' he said, 'I found Roberts sitting in one building with his Hindoo Staff; Kitchener in another with his Egyptian Staff; and Kelly Kenny in a third with an English Staff, all pulling against each other.'" Middleton, op.cit., p.120.
  2. Ampthill to Brodrick, Telegram, 4 June 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/37.

In these circumstances, Ampthill's position as Viceroy became severely strained. As locum tenens for Curzon, Ampthill attempted loyally to carry out Curzon's policy while maintaining strict neutrality in an effort to judge administrative measures on their merit. Kitchener, on the other hand, found the excuse to take the opportunity of pressing his demand for a change in the system of organisation within the Army by consolidating the various departments of Supply and Transport under his personal executive authority. Accordingly he constantly bombarded Ampthill with proposals to achieve that aim. Unable to concur or agree with the Military Member, he hinted at resignation should his views not be upheld in Council, thus creating an extremely difficult situation for the acting Viceroy. Kitchener's efforts to bring the matter to the formal attention of the Indian Government, included the opinion of his Generals and the officers on his Headquarters Staff as well as the senior officials in the Supply and Transport services themselves. He asserted:

"I look on the matter as one of such vital importance to the fighting efficiency of the Army that personally I feel with the present system I would not willingly accept the responsibility of command in a serious war. In these circumstances if the changes I advocate are not entertained I think you will agree with me that my position here becomes a false one."<sup>1</sup>

Ampthill tactfully conceded the point by allowing Kitchener's

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1. Kitchener to Ampthill, 10 June 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/34/1.

proposals to be threshed out in Council, but he warned Kitchener against importing "a personal element into the question. We must argue it out on its merits alone." Ampthill was aware that his Council would decide against any change, and in addition he felt "pretty sure that the Secretary of State would not assent to the change."<sup>1</sup>

The great issue now confronting Ampthill was posed by Major-General Sir E.R. Elles, Military Member of the Viceroy's Council, who found himself in the midst of the problem of Indian army administration. He questioned whether it was advisable for him to resign and thus allow Kitchener complete control, or wait for some final decision from the Home Government. In either case, he expressed his desire that some permanent rather than ad interim solution would be made, and he told Ampthill:

"The controversy is none of my seeking, but in view of the notes recorded ... I felt that I had no option but to deal with the whole question ... Personally it would make very little difference to me whether I gave up office in a few months' time or completed my five years, but I am convinced that it would be a gigantic mistake to place the whole administrative as well as executive power in the hands of either a powerful Commander-in-Chief or a weak one. I would wish to add that there is no question of any personal difference between myself and the Commander-in-Chief. We have also always recognized his great prestige and that he had a work to perform out here on behalf of His Majesty's Government."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ampthill to Kitchener, 11 June 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/34/1.  
 2. Elles to Ampthill, 9 June 1904, Ibid.

But Ampthill, perceiving the difficulty of Elles' position, refused to allow Kitchener's designs for the abolition of the Military Member to proceed, and thus forced the Commander-in-Chief to seek support from other quarters.

Ampthill's resolute integrity, however, became a source of embarrassment for the Home Government. Ampthill forthrightly presented his situation in a letter to Brodrick:

"I see in Lord Kitchener's present proposal another means of attaining the same end. It is in fact the thin end of the wedge. The transfer of the Supply and Transport to the Commander-in-Chief would merely be a first step in the direction of transferring all the remaining functions of the Military Member to the Executive head of the Army. If I were to acquiesce in the present proposal we should have no logical reason for refusing to make over to the Commander-in-Chief control of the whole administrative Department."

Ampthill assumed that it was an axiomatic principle in army affairs that "the Executive and Administrative should be sharply divided...", and having no knowledge of Brodrick and Kitchener's secret communications, he stuck to that principle. He further pointed out that Kitchener was so desperately keen on the subject, that he referred to it on every possible occasion, "and he even dragged it in the other day on some papers relating to the diseases of camels."<sup>1</sup> But the crisis which Ampthill sought most to avert, that of Kitchener's resignation, occurred four months later over a minor infringement of discipline.

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1. Ampthill to Brodrick, 9 June 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/37.

Kitchener had, for the moment, more serious problems. His immediate preoccupation was to obtain information regarding Russian railroad building in Afghanistan. In 1903 he had predicted that it would take approximately three years for the Russians to construct a double line of railway, by which they would then "be rapping at our door ... and if in the meantime we have done nothing we shall deservedly go to the wall."<sup>1</sup> Less than a year later he received reports that construction had been considerably speeded up, and that the Russians were making provision to feed their troops along the way: "The Orenburg-Tashkent line will be open in June and they are constructing sidings and places reported to give 2000 men a hot meal at certain intervals."<sup>2</sup> Kitchener was convinced that an Anglo-Afghan war was imminent, and fearing an outbreak of hostilities at any moment, he accordingly made frantic efforts to convince both the Indian Government and the Home Government of the risks involved should the administration of the Indian army break down. Kitchener's determination to see through his duty led to a desperate situation in England and in India, and Ampthill confided in Brodrick that he was wholly unable to keep the peace between Kitchener and Elles:

"I have failed completely ... I rather dread what may happen ... Kitchener ... hints that the question is one on which he might have to make his resignation depend."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 29 July 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.

2. Kitchener to Roberts, 30 March 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/29.

3. Ampthill to Brodrick, 16 June 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/37/1.

The extent of Kitchener's obsession with the question of dual control is shewn by a letter to Roberts dated 30 June 1904, in which he strongly hinted that if the Home Government did not act, and thereby intervene in the internal affairs of the Indian army, he would resign.<sup>1</sup> Roberts conveyed that message in a letter to the Prime Minister in which he urged Balfour at once to induce Curzon to accept the necessary changes in Indian army administration; else Curzon delay acting indefinitely, Roberts suggested that the Defence Committee should collectively apply pressure on the Viceroy in England.<sup>2</sup>

Amphill in the meantime, in response to Brodrick's repeated requests for an official estimate of Kitchener's situation, stoutly rejected the idea that Kitchener had just cause to resign. Amphill characterised Kitchener as: "scheming at the great constitutional change which will abolish the Military Member and make the Commander-in-Chief supreme ... without the knowledge of the Secretary of State and the Government of India and behind the back of the Viceroy." He too questioned Kitchener's motives: "I am afraid that from the first I distrusted his sincerity in this matter and it is clear ... that he is bent on the design of abolishing the Military Member."<sup>3</sup> In an effort to meet

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1. Kitchener to Roberts, 30 June 1904. enc. in Roberts to Balfour, 19 July 1904, Balfour MSS 49725.
  2. Roberts to Balfour, 19 July 1904, Ibid.
  3. Amphill to Brodrick, 7 July 1904, Amphill MSS 233/37/1.

Kitchener half way, Ampthill suggested two alternatives, short of dropping the matter altogether. He asked that either Kitchener would wait for a decision to be made by Curzon on his return to India, or alternately accept the compromise proposed by the Military Member that the departments of Supply and Transport should be transferred from the Military Member to the Commander-in-Chief. He informed Kitchener of the difficulty he faced:

"... It is sufficiently evident that our Colleagues are not prepared to accept the radical change which you propose although they have considered it with a good deal of sympathy with your views ... even if we were to recommend your proposal to the Home Government it would be seriously prejudiced by the fact that such a momentous question had been raised during my temporary tenure of office ..."

Ampthill pointedly gave consideration to the position of the Military Member, Elles:

"His long Indian experience and familiarity with the administrative side of the question oblige me to attach very great weight to his opinion ... I am unable to resist the conclusion that there is no justification for the great constitutional change which you propose."<sup>1</sup>

On 26 July Kitchener spent two hours discussing the matter with Ampthill. At that meeting he told Ampthill that he was unable to modify his views and unwilling to agree to any postponement, with the result that both parties, Ampthill and Elles in seeking some sort of a compromise, were now

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1. Ampthill to Kitchener, 24 July 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/37/1

disappointed.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile fresh difficulties arose over the appointment of General J.R.L. Macdonald as escort to Younghusband's Mission to Tibet and this situation served to illustrate one of the problems which plagued Britain's Imperial administration throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Curzon had written:

"On the one hand, the Mission is a political Mission, and Younghusband, not without reason, claims supreme control. On the other hand, the advance is in a sense a military operation, or, at any rate, may become so at any moment, if the Tibetans attack."

Younghusband and Curzon were attached by strong bonds of friendship, while Macdonald, Kitchener's appointee and fellow-Sapper, had been personally selected by the Indian Commander-in-Chief.

"Younghusband is a little sensitive about his personal prerogative, and thinks that Macdonald imperfectly recognises the diplomatic character and object of the entire proceedings ... the situation is one that presents itself in almost every frontier war in India ..."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that Macdonald lacked courage and was not fit to command the small force sent to Lhasa, "and had to be kicked along all the way", grievously embarrassed Kitchener, especially when Elles and Amphill suggested that he be immediately recalled,<sup>3</sup> to which Kitchener reluctantly agreed. In

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1. See Amphill to Elles, 27 July 1904, Amphill MSS 233/34/1.  
 2. Curzon to Brodrick, 31 March 1904, Midleton MSS 50075.  
 3. Amphill to Elles, 4 September 1904, Amphill MSS 233/34/2.

describing his dilemma in a letter to Brodrick, extracts of which were sent to Curzon, Amthill wrote: "Kitchener ... [and] Elles rise up in arms and deliver a violent counter-attack on Younghusband", and it fell to Amthill to attempt to protect Younghusband and "resist their schemes for 'breaking' him."<sup>1</sup> These circumstances moreover produced friction, for "Kitchener ... strongly resents any aspersions cast on General Macdonald, who is the man of his own choice, and he has tried more than once to get the supreme command of the Mission for him..."<sup>2</sup>

While Amthill struggled to achieve some kind of compromise between Kitchener and Elles over the question of Supply and Transport, Kitchener had embarked upon a three weeks' tour in August-September. He had received additional information regarding the Russian railroad build-up along the borders of Afghanistan and the Russian colossus, with its visions of inexhaustible hordes of Cossacks pouring in overwhelming numbers upon Afghanistan exercised the greatest dread in Kitchener's mind. Before he went on tour, he had prepared his 'Redistribution Scheme',<sup>3</sup> and telegraphed in

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1. Amthill to Curzon, 23 August 1904.
  2. Ibid., 6 September 1904, extract enc. Amthill to Brodrick, 5 September 1904. See also Fleming, op.cit., for the best account of Macdonald's early career and the subsequent problem which he created for Younghusband and the Indian Government, pp.105-112.
  3. 'Redistribution Scheme' subsequently emerging as "Scheme for the re-distribution of the Army in India, and preparation of the Army in India for war", n.d. December 1904. C.I.D. Records 6/2/58D.

advance to the Government of India claiming that such an arrangement provided the only possible means to resist the gigantic resources of Russian armies soon to be set in motion, once the railways in Central Asia were completed. Kitchener cut short his holiday and returned to Simla on 6 September where he learned that his proposals were being discussed. Because pressure from the local Governments in India was brought to bear upon Amthill to reduce Kitchener's Reorganisation Scheme to 8 Divisions, the remaining 3 extra battalions needed to form the ninth, had to be provided from Britain, causing delay. Amthill did everything in his power to facilitate progress of Kitchener's scheme, but inevitably it was subject to some criticism and further delay on its way through India's administrative machinery. Thanking Kitchener for his trouble in sending along a copy urging the immediate adoption of the Scheme, Amthill incautiously observed:

"I must wait to hear what the Military Department have to say..."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener thereupon composed a private letter to the Secretary of State (which he despatched a week later) reiterating his discontent:

"... I fear you fail to realise that under the existing system of dual control ... we are both powerless ... though ... Amthill is most anxious to push things forward, the

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1. Amthill to Kitchener, 15 September 1904.

'baboo dept.' will not and cannot be made to move ... The dual control of the Army out here is fatal to efficiency or economy ... life is hardly worth living with all the worries caused by the M.D."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Kitchener had given his agent in London, Colonel Mullaly (1860-1932), specific orders to apply pressure upon Roberts, Brodrick, Balfour and Lady Salisbury with regard to his position in India and what he termed the "~~international~~<sup>entirely</sup> procrastination" of the Military Department. Mullaly described Kitchener as "heartily disgusted with his powerlessness", and told Lady Salisbury that he would resign, "unless some pressure can be brought from home to settle the matter..."<sup>2</sup> With Curzon off the scene, events in India which had been rapidly approaching a crisis, came to a head in September.

On 23 September Ampthill received a letter from Kitchener tendering his resignation. It was occasioned by an incident quite out of proportion to the other issues confronting the Home and the Indian Governments. The Military Department had cancelled an order regarding a Volunteer Adjutant, Captain Swan of the Nilgiri Volunteers. Kitchener

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1. Kitchener to Brodrick, 21 September 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.
  2. Mullaly to Lady Salisbury, 25 August 1904, Balfour MSS 49757, Mullaly, later Major-General Sir Herbert Mullaly, was Secretary of Military Department (1902-3); Quarter-master-General (1903-6); and a strong partisan of Kitchener's cause.

considered that this seriously impaired his authority:

"In these circumstances feeling I can no longer be responsible for discipline in the Army I have the honour to place this my resignation of the post of Commander-in-Chief in Your Excellency's hands. I am informing the Secretary of State for War of my action in this matter."<sup>1</sup>

That momentous decision, coupled with the announcement of the postponement of Curzon's return to India, constituted for Ampthill "a serious public crisis".<sup>2</sup> He implored Kitchener to withdraw his resignation promising him a full hearing. Ampthill of course was fully aware that the real motive lay in the system of Indian military administration to which Kitchener was so implacably opposed. In begging Kitchener to reconsider his resignation, Ampthill telegraphed Brodrick that:

"He evidently wrote the letter tendering his resignation in a fit of childish temper because we did not accept his opinion in Council on a point in the Re-Organisation Scheme, for in all matters which concern the Army he claims to be regarded as infallible."<sup>3</sup>

The real difficulty lay, in Kitchener's words, in the organisation of the Army:

"Under the present system of dual control of the Army in India, the Military Department, and not the Commander-in-Chief, is practically

1. Kitchener to Ampthill, 23 September 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/34/2.
2. Ampthill to Kitchener, 23 September 1904, Ibid.
3. Ampthill to Brodrick, Telegram, 24 September 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/44

the principal military advisor to the Viceroy as well as the authority that transmits the Viceroy's personal orders or issues orders in his name to the Commander-in-Chief ... Thus it is quite evident that the Military Department can themselves at any time render the position of any Commander-in-Chief an impossible one."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener agreed however not to take any further "hasty action and will not allow my resignation to become public in any way ... I want a short time to consider my position..."<sup>2</sup> He arranged to meet Amphill on the afternoon of 26 September to discuss what he might reasonably expect in the way of a compromise from the Government at home. In the meantime Brodrick telegraphed a significant message to be conveyed to Kitchener:

"... inform Lord Kitchener from me as Secretary of State that the fullest consideration will be given to any cause of complaint he may have against any other Department; that this is the first official intimation I have had from him of his finding any difficulty in his position as Commander-in-Chief and that I appeal to him most earnestly not to allow his proposed action to become public before full time has been given for consideration of the difficulty which has arisen and of his relations with the Military Department [particularly] in view of the reorganization of the Indian Army on which we are engaged on his initiative and the state of our relations with Russia."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Kitchener to Amphill, 24 September 1904, Amphill MSS 233/34/2.
  2. Ibid., 25 September 1904.
  3. Brodrick to Amphill, 25 September 1904, Telegram, Amphill MSS 233/44

These latter considerations were of crucial importance to the Home Government as we shall see. Amthill promptly let Kitchener know his views:

"I know that you wished to urge the abolition of the office of Military Member when you first came out to India but I understood that you had since given up that idea and had resolved at least to complete your own term of office under the present system even if you decided to press for a change later on."

He pointed out the discrepancy between Kitchener's original reason for resigning, a disciplinary case in which his authority was superseded by that of the Military Member, and his later contention that the existing system of Indian army administration rendered his position impossible:

"... you have not yet put your opinions as to the constitutional position of the Commander-in-Chief to the test. If, as it now appears, you intend to make your objections to that which you call the 'dual control' of the Army the real reason for your resignation, surely you ought first of all to state your convictions and insist on their being fully discussed both here and at home. Then if your proposals were not likely to be accepted, but then only, would be the occasion for making the issue depend upon your resignation..."<sup>1</sup>

At that meeting Amthill explained his dismay at the lack of consideration with which Kitchener had chosen his time to resign. As Lady Curzon's illness forced the postponement of Curzon's return to India Amthill felt that the Government of India should stick together and help one

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1. Amthill to Kitchener, 25 September 1904, Amthill MSS 233/34/2.

another: The Commander-in-Chief recognised that difficulty but insisted that the Military Department required a thorough overhaul and complete re-organisation. Ampthill cabled that Kitchener stated he regretted his inability to get along with Elles, and considered moreover "that General Elles is not a very suitable adviser to the Government of India on military matters and hopes that the dual control of the Army at present existing in India may be considered by a Commission from home or otherwise as Government may decide."<sup>1</sup> Kitchener then informed Ampthill that in deference to Brodrick's wishes he had withdrawn his resignation, but that he hoped that if nothing could be done to improve the situation in India, he might be allowed to retire as soon as the Home Government could spare him. Ampthill shrank from the idea of Kitchener's resigning while he temporarily filled the post of Viceroy for Curzon, accordingly he surrendered unconditionally to Kitchener and agreed to make every effort to examine fully the question of the "dual control" of army administration as soon as possible, telegraphing Brodrick in that sense on 27 September.<sup>2</sup> Finally he wrote to Kitchener on 28 September:

"I have just received a private telegram from the Secretary of State in which he acknowledges with very evident relief the receipt of the telegram which we agreed upon together

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1. Ampthill to Brodrick, Telegram, 27 September 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/44.
  2. Ibid.

in regard to the withdrawal of your resignation. He says - 'Assure Kitchener that I will carefully consider his communication with the Prime Minister without undue delay.'"<sup>1</sup>

In threatening resignation, Kitchener rightly guessed his cause would be advanced, for that act of "calculated impetuosity ... helped to convince Brodrick that the Commander-in-Chief was indispensable."<sup>2</sup> His peremptory action forced the issue of Indian army administration upon the Cabinet, triggering discontent within Balfour's Government against what was considered Curzon's arbitrary policy in Afghanistan and Tibet. Brodrick informed Balfour that "... if Kitchener resigns and tells his tale, the 'if's & but's of even such a Viceroy as George will not satisfy the public."<sup>3</sup> Brodrick now strongly questioned the advisability of Curzon's returning to India, pointing out the fact that as the Viceroy's health was broken and Lady Curzon seriously ill, Curzon "had lost all keenness about returning to India."<sup>4</sup> He suggested that matters for the moment rest "in solution", for Elles, the Military Member, was soon to retire, at the end of his normal term of office.<sup>5</sup> But one incident decisively changed the course of events precipitating close investigation on the part of the Home Government in matters connected with Indian army administration.

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1. Ampthill to Kitchener, 28 September 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/34/2.
  2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.214.
  3. Brodrick to Balfour, 5 October 1904, Balfour MSS 49721.
  4. Ibid., 22 September 1904.
  5. Brodrick to Balfour, 5 October, Ibid.

On the night of 21 October 1904, the Russian Baltic fleet steaming past the Dogger Bank on its way to the Far East mistook a Hull trawling fleet for Japanese torpedo boats. Using rapid-firing guns their Admiral, Rozhdestvensky, sank a British trawler killing the captain and third hand and made no attempt to proffer assistance to the survivors. Feeling in England was greatly inflamed and the incident brought Britain and Russia perilously close to war.<sup>1</sup> In India Kitchener feared the worst. He fully expected that the Russians would throw an army of half-a-million men against the Afghan frontier.<sup>2</sup> Ampthill informed Curzon:

"There can be no doubt that the Russians mean to fight us as soon as they can get a convenient opportunity, for the great military preparations in Trans-Caspia can have no other object."<sup>3</sup>

While the Government of India were told to make ready for mobilisation, discussions were opened in the Cabinet and Defence Committee in London, and the Home, Channel and Mediterranean fleets were given orders to prepare for action. Admiral Fisher, the First Sea Lord, was dismayed to learn that the Russians might invade India from Afghanistan, thus cancelling out Britain's naval superiority: "That N-W Frontier of India is the bugbear which has possessed the whole lot of our present rulers! and there is no 'advocate

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1. Dugdale, B., Arthur James Balfour, vol.I, pp.384-5.
  2. Minute by Kitchener, 7 October 1904, enc. Ampthill to Curzon, 19 October 1904.
  3. Ampthill to Curzon, 3 November 1904.

of the Devil' to plead the other side."<sup>1</sup> Fisher told his wife (1 November 1904):

"I have been with the P.M. all day. It has nearly been war again. Very near indeed, but the Russians have climbed down..."<sup>2</sup>

At a time when such large-scale military preparation was in progress it was virtually impossible for the Home Government to contemplate Kitchener's resignation. British public opinion remained greatly inflamed by the Russian outrage, and soldiers in England and in India never averted their eyes from Russian movements in Central Asia. It was obvious that the protection of the Indian frontier was predominantly a question of supply and transport; Victory could be achieved, it was felt, by whichever <sup>of</sup> the two armies was better able to mass troops at the decisive spot at the critical moment, and then keep them supplied; success moreover turned on rapidity of transport. England was on the threshold of hostilities with her traditional enemy and even Curzon conceded:

"We are on the brink of war with Russia. We all hope it may be avoided, but the national honour is at stake."<sup>3</sup>

The Dogger Bank incident acted on nerves already badly frayed in a Cabinet preoccupied with intestine strife

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1. Fisher to Esher, 17 June 1904; Marder, A.J., Fear God and Dread Nought, vol.I, p.319.
  2. Fisher to Lady Fisher, 1 November 1904; Marder, Ibid., II, p.47.
  3. Curzon to Ampthill, 28 October 1904.

and deep concern over the outcome of the Russo-Japanese conflict. Though the dispute was referred to arbitration and public indignation allayed, confidence in Curzon waned while the position of the Commander-in-Chief was enhanced. Brodrick now moved in active support for Kitchener's schemes in the influential quarters of the Cabinet and informed him:

"I will see that all which is possible is done to smoothe the working of the Departments at Simla",

promising that forthwith the matter would be fully discussed by the Cabinet and that they would rely solely upon Kitchener's judgement in matters connected with Indian defence. That was to undermine the Viceroy's position.<sup>1</sup>

'The Great Game' in Asia was now shattered by a crisis which very nearly precipitated open hostilities. Mention has been made in an earlier Chapter<sup>2</sup> that in the aftermath of the Boer War though ministers might be blind in their choice of a policy for India they realised quite clearly their disinclinations. Moreover both Balfour and Brodrick in their efforts to try and bring about greater cohesion and harmony in the conduct of Imperial councils, did so with the Indian Government in singularly unorthodox ways.

1. See Brodrick to Kitchener, 23 October 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

2. Chapter III, A.

Always hinting and hedging at the formulation of Curzon's policy in India, the Home Government could never bring itself to check it at its source. They were merely content to apply hampering tactics once events were set in motion. As the Viceroy had himself earlier remarked, in place of a policy of drift the man with forthright ideas was "regarded with much suspicion, not to say alarm; the hands of most men are against him and there is a general struggle to reduce him to impotence."<sup>1</sup> The autumn of 1904 marked the flood of Cabinet opposition and we find Brodrick excusing himself by referring to a most distasteful subject, namely "... what you consider is the growing tendency to dictate India's foreign policy from home. Is it not true that what India does in Afghanistan, Persia, Tibet, or on the Chinese Frontier, has become greatly more the concern of the Foreign Office than it was 10 or 20 years ago? Russia's railways, Persia's difficulties, China's decrepitude, all seem to me to have contributed to this."<sup>2</sup> But Brodrick's anxiety was fear, less of Russia than <sup>of</sup> the impact of Curzon's policy in India on Balfour's parliamentary position. This anxiety was further deepened by Kitchener's relations with the Government of India.

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1. Curzon to G.J. Goschen, 11 October 1900.

2. Brodrick to Curzon, 24 October 1904.

In forming his opinions Brodrick openly misapprehended the motives underlying Curzon's conduct of India's external relations, evident in the following letter to Ampthill:

"For your private eye, and not for transmission to Curzon ... the truth is that Curzon's whole attitude about [the Tibetan Mission] and about Afghanistan frightened the Cabinet to death... I believe that Curzon would have declared a protectorate over Tibet without a moment's hesitation."<sup>1</sup>

Anxious to assist Kitchener in his schemes for the defence of India Brodrick thus read the worst in the Viceroy's political motives. Had Brodrick taken the trouble to examine more closely Curzon's correspondence with his predecessor he might have avoided that conclusion with its condemnation and censure. In 1901 Curzon had written:

"As a student of Russian aspirations and methods for fifteen years, I assert with confidence - what I do not think any of her statesmen would deny - that her ultimate ambition is the domination of Asia."

In the absence of any initiative from London in the intervening years Curzon accordingly felt compelled to resist Russian ambitions by defending India from these "minor encroachments which are only a part of the larger plan."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Brodrick to Ampthill, 3 February 1905, Ampthill MSS 233/11.
  2. Minute on Russian ambitions in East Persia, 28 October 1901; see Lamb, op.cit., p.240.

But he remained emphatically opposed to the idea of annexation of Tibet, and he told Hamilton:

"It would be madness for us to cross the Himalayas and occupy it. But it is important that no one else should seize it; and that it should be turned into a sort of buffer between the Indian and Russian Empires. If Russia were to come down to the big mountains she would at once begin intriguing with Nepal; and we should have a second Afghanistan on the north."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's qualifications for pronouncing on Curzon's policy remain obscure; his previous experience was limited to the War Office and he merely dismissed Curzon as a bellicose autocrat, comparing his Viceroyalty "to that of Louis XIV - 'L'etat c'est moi'."<sup>2</sup> Yet Curzon's diagnosis of the expansion of Imperial Russia is worthy of more careful consideration. He had in fact spent a third of his life "endeavouring to understand Russia and her policy ... I have gone through the phase, through which everyone else has passed, of wondering why we could not make friends with Russia and ... I have come to the conclusion that it is impracticable for two reasons: (a) Russia has all the cards in her hand (geographical, strategical and political), and we have none: (b) the Russian Statesmen are such incurable liars. I have now followed the careers of at least four: Griens, Lobanoff, Mouravieff, Lamsdorff. They all lied, and

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1. Curzon to Hamilton, 11 June 1901.

2. Brodrick to Ampthill, 8 December 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/11.

lied shamelessly. No bargain was sacred to them; they held by no compact. The Emperor is no check at all. He is a well-meaning figurehead in the background, sometimes brought in when really wanted, more frequently ignored."<sup>1</sup> By 1904 the Cabinet had successfully overthrown Curzon's policy in their censure of Younghusband's actions in Tibet. Brodrick was now on the brink of precipitating the final crisis with Curzon over a more personal and less Imperial question - intervention in the question of Indian army administration. He told Ampthill:

"the trouble between him and Kitchener must now come to a head ... My Council here will go with Kitchener as against Curzon: Lord Roberts on the other hand, supports Curzon: the Prime Minister is for Kitchener. My mind is still open..."<sup>2</sup>

The latter part of that statement however must be qualified by evidence belonging to a subsequent part of this thesis.

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1. Curzon to Selborne, First Lord of the Admiralty, 29 May 1901.
  2. Brodrick to Ampthill, 17 March 1905, Ampthill MSS 233/11.

CHAPTER VTHE STRUGGLE OVER ARMY ADMINISTRATION, Part II(1) The Arrangement with Balfour's Ministry

In early August, 1904, Curzon's attention was drawn to the question of Kitchener's position in India, which excited warm controversy in the coming months. On 4 August, at Balfour's room in the House of Commons, Curzon was challenged by Godley, Lee-Warner, Brodrick and the Prime Minister on the need for changes in India's system of military administration; Roberts, who was also present, defended that system. Brodrick's subsequent action, revived, in its acutest form, the controversy between the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief over the best method of achieving these changes.

Curzon's temperament was not, by nature, adaptable. His unbending pride, his rebelliousness, his impatience at checks and his uncompromising spirit merely imported personal distress into a difficult situation. Moreover the intrusion of such personal emotions created much tension, without facilitating agreement, for in fact it was impossible for Curzon to view the question with detachment. The whole human episode struck him as slightly disreputable. It would never have occurred to him to concede the point; on the contrary his view was that his friends had committed the unforgivable

sin of going over to the other side. On the other hand Curzon's friends, especially Balfour and Brodrick and to some extent Godley, felt committed to the Viceroy by affection and ties of a life-long intimacy and a mutual knowledge of his weaknesses and strength. In that connection they felt that a special part had to be performed. But in that capacity, their role became increasingly distasteful and it was played half-heartedly.<sup>1</sup>

While appreciative of Curzon's talents it was not unnatural for ministers to resent feeling that the Viceroy's policies were so decided as hardly to admit opposite opinion. But they were most reluctant to show that they meant what they said or to express what they felt. That ambience<sup>was</sup> was born of distaste in interfering in matters of purely internal Indian administration and legitimate divergence arose over whether the composition of the Viceroy's Council was an Indian or Imperial issue. Thus in the subsequent arrangement with Balfour's ministry what was said was often the opposite of what was intended - the Home Government subordinating most issues to Kitchener's main purpose in India, dismissing the Viceroy's criticisms as irrelevant. That object had unforeseen consequences for ministers collectively responsible to the Indian Empire, though it was intended to stave off schism and internal dissension<sup>s</sup> in India. In the meantime

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1. See Dugdale, op.cit., I, pp.392-3.

as part of its policy of placating the protagonists and in order to hasten some working compromise (though Brodrick had effected the transfer of the departments of supply and transport to the Commander-in-Chief to avoid further rupture between Amthill and Kitchener) Curzon was asked to compose a statement explaining his position until such time as the Government could take action.

The stage was now set for the second act of an epic struggle. The Viceroy recorded his views in a memorandum submitted to the Home Government on 2 November. In that document, Curzon opposed making Kitchener the sole representative of Indian military administration for seven reasons: (1) no one man could possibly combine the executive and administrative functions of the Indian army; (2) the Viceroy needed immediate and experienced advice from the Commander-in-Chief at all times; (3) as there was no public outcry whatever demanding a change in India, any alteration would have to be imposed from without in default of local Indian opinion and authority; (4) past investigations had pronounced against the concentration of powers under the exclusive control of the Commander-in-Chief; (5) the Commander-in-Chief was claiming immunity from criticism; (6) in a state of emergency such as during war, the system would come to a standstill and break down, as the functioning of the Government under a civilian head could not be constantly advised

by the Commander-in-Chief; (7) finally, Curzon warned against tampering with Indian military administration stating his conviction that "any such change will be both uncalled for and unwise ... and ... break down, and we should find that we had thrown our Indian administration into the crucible and re-constituted it, only to have to melt it down once more, and effect some fresh combination."<sup>1</sup> In sum, Curzon unhesitatingly condemned experimentation with the Indian army.

Balfour's response was immediate; he was determined to decide the issue once and for all. The next day, 3 November, he informed Curzon:

"...if no step be taken; if no commission be appointed to reconsider the military organisation in relation to the changed circumstances of India; if Kitchener thereupon resigns; and if, to crown all, we became involved in the serious hostilities with Russia, I believe that both at home and in India an impossible situation would be created."<sup>2</sup>

In those circumstances the Home Government now decided to bring matters to a head and Curzon was asked to dine alone with the Prime Minister on 9 November 1904, at which time they "threshed out the various knotty problems lying before us."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Note on the Military Administration of the Government of India, 2 November 1904, Cabinet Records, 37/72/133, 1904.
  2. Balfour to Curzon, 3 November 1904.
  3. Curzon to Ampthill, 10 November 1904.

At this meeting, Curzon proposed two courses of action. The Government might enquire over the heads of his Council and send out a Commission of investigation, or Curzon could undertake that responsibility from India. In either case he was willing to give Kitchener's arguments a hearing, once Balfour decided which procedure was to be adopted. Balfour asked Curzon for his own opinion and on the next day informed Brodrick:

"... he suggested and I gladly accepted the suggestion - that the best course would be for us to send out, very shortly, a Despatch to the Indian Government, saying that we understood that Lord Kitchener was dissatisfied with the existing organisation of the Headquarters staff of the Indian Army, and especially with the position of the Commander-in-Chief, and begging the Indian Government to look into it ... They would then embody their views in a Despatch, which would then be sent home, and would be considered by the British Government; after which it would be proper, and constitutional, that the latter, if dissatisfied, should appoint a Commission of Investigation."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon had promised to investigate Kitchener's position in India in a constitutional and official way, and he assumed that Kitchener would put his case to the Viceroy's Council and accordingly abide by the verdict of that body. For their part, the Government were under the impression that the Viceroy would only remain in India for six months, (until the annual Indian Budget Debate in March 1905) and

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1. Balfour to Brodrick, 10 November 1904, Balfour MSS 49721.

Balfour wrote:

"My hope now is that he will give up his appointment in April, and that the new Viceroy will take Indian War Office Reform in hand."<sup>1</sup>

There for the moment the matter rested.

Curzon sailed for India on 24 November, and arrived in Bombay on 9 December. His decision to return was a mistake. Before reaching Calcutta on 15 December, where he resumed his Viceroyalty after an absence of seven months, he addressed the Bombay Municipality: "The question may, perhaps, be asked why in these circumstances I should have come back at all?". He explained: "India to me is 'Duty' ... All servants of Government ... are also the servants of duty. The Viceroy himself is the slave of duty as well as its captain."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, his future very much depended on Mary Curzon's health and before he left England he deposited two code words with her doctors: one word, which eventually was sent, meant that Lady Curzon could safely go back to India; the other indicated the inadvisability of doing so. Much hung on the choice between them. "Had the code word deprecating Lady Curzon's journey been sent", he later told Sir George Arthur, "I should have come home at the earliest moment without fulfilling my term of office, Selborne would have succeeded

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1. Balfour to Lady Salsibury, 4 October 1904, Balfour MSS 49757.

2. Raleigh, op.cit., pp.62-3.

me, I should have had no controversy with Kitchener ... and above all my wife would, humanly speaking, be still alive."<sup>1</sup> Had Curzon relinquished office it is just possible that his Government would have avoided the deeply resented partition of Bengal with its bitter aftermath of Swadeshi and resurgent nationalism. Furthermore, the struggle with Kitchener would have been averted, and Curzon's reforms might well have ranked him as one of India's most constructive statesmen.<sup>2</sup>

On 25 January 1905, Curzon received information stating that the doctors not only permitted Lady Curzon to travel, but considered that the voyage to India would be beneficial for her. From that date Curzon determined to remain on in India. Accordingly, the next day he explained his reasons to the Prime Minister (in a letter which for some reason took nearly eight weeks to reach London), namely, that he no longer felt the necessity to resign owing to Mary's poor health.<sup>3</sup>

The Despatch of 2 December from the Secretary of State to the Government of India reached India by the same mailship as the Viceroy. In it the Home Government requested the views of Curzon's Government on the present system of control over the affairs of the Army in India, and stated

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1. Arthur, G., A Septuagenarian's Scrap Book, p.107.  
 2. See Reed, S., The India I Knew, 1897-1947, pp.91-2.  
 3. Curzon to Balfour, 26 January 1905.

a number of facts in addition to raising several questions. Was the system capable of dealing with general mobilisation for war? Could it supply the requirements of the army in the actual conduct of operations? Was it efficient? Brodrick laid particular emphasis on the danger of complications arising from the completion of Russia's strategic railways in Central Asia directed towards India's north-west frontier along the boundary of Afghanistan. If the Indian army were to be effectively mobilised, the business of providing equipment and supplies, along with proper transport, was vital, "and any conditions which might hamper efficiency or cause duplication of work and delay, or create a conflict of authority as to whether expenditure deemed necessary by one Department and not equally necessary by another, should be incurred or not, would react most prejudicially on the conduct of the campaign..."<sup>1</sup> Brodrick concluded his Despatch by asserting:

"These facts ... constitute a prima facie case for a review of the present system. It is desirable to ascertain whether the two Departments existing side by side are working harmoniously, and are fully in touch with each other..."

Before recording the official views on the Despatch, several incidents during Curzon's holiday must be mentioned which reveal that Kitchener had no intention of being deterred from

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1. See Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India, Cd. 2572, No.1. Brodrick to Curzon, 2 December 1904.

prosecuting his plans by any adverse vote in Council, for although he concurred in adopting the official procedure, he was covertly intriguing to forestall any verdict in India by action from London. Kitchener had solicited support and encouragement from home, especially through Sir Douglas Haig (1861-1928), Inspector-General of Cavalry in India from 1903 to 1906. Haig was as well a good friend of Esher, and the latter's advice was known to be favourably received in the highest military circles in England. We are able to catch glimpses of the way in which the course of events at home regarding Indian army reform was moulded in the following letter to Haig from Esher:

"... you need not suppose that I have slackened in the interest which I have always taken in the efforts which Lord K. and you are taking to get things into shape in India. I have seen many of Lord K.'s admirable memoranda, and I think I know fairly well the merits of the case, which I hope he will fight to the finish. The 'dual' system has received a death blow in London, and there is no reason why at Simla it should not meet with a similar fate ... In India, you will have great changes, for I doubt George Curzon returning. He is such an uncertain subject for prophecy that one cannot be sure, but as in any case he would not have remained beyond April [1905] it seems hardly worth your while to return in December or January. Anyway, his successor has already been designated. One thing seems clear to everyone here, including the Prime Minister, which is that the days of the Government will not be prolonged beyond the General Election."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Esher to Haig, 7 October 1904; Esher, Journals, II, pp.69-70.

At that time Esher, knowing nothing of Curzon's arrangement with Balfour, actively enlisted support for Kitchener in London.

While Curzon was absent in England Ampthill had the greatest difficulty in persuading Kitchener to co-operate with him in India. In September Ampthill prepared to make over the executive control of Supply and Transport to Kitchener's Army Department,<sup>1</sup> but laboured under no misapprehensions as to Kitchener's real purpose. Firmly believing that he was not in a position to make a lasting solution to the problem Ampthill advised Kitchener to present his own case to Curzon when he returned.<sup>2</sup> Ampthill told Curzon that in the future Kitchener would be much more difficult to deal with, knowing as he did that he had considerable support from influential circles at home, and that his views on army administration were thought to be reasonable and were therefore received with wide sympathy.<sup>3</sup> Ampthill's anxiety was further heightened by the crisis with Russia over the incident at the Dogger Bank in October and when he despatched a messenger with the news of the outrage to try and stop Kitchener's train at Summer Hill Station, Kitchener merely disregarded the man while "the engine-driver would take no notice of his signals in spite of his red livery and

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1. Ampthill to Curzon, 6 September 1904.

2. Ampthill to Kitchener, 12 November 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/34/2.

3. Ampthill to Curzon, 6 September 1904.

brandished letter!"<sup>1</sup> When he asked Kitchener to be on hand to meet the Viceroy in Calcutta on 12 December, Kitchener demurred, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that he persuaded him to come, after pointing out "that people may attribute your absence to disagreement with Lord Curzon about the Reorganisation Scheme which would be very unfortunate."<sup>2</sup>

On 22 November acting on Brodrick's instructions, Ampthill informed Kitchener that the Indian Government would undertake an investigation of army administration. Brodrick's telegram stated:

"In pursuance of the promise conveyed in the telegram of 27 September, I am sending after consultation with the Prime Minister, a Despatch by this mail calling the attention of the Indian Government to the relations between the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Department and to the dual control of the Army involved and requesting the immediate consideration of the position by the Viceroy's Council."<sup>3</sup>

Balfour had demanded complete surrender to Kitchener's request for the transference of supply and transport, to be carried out before Curzon's return.<sup>4</sup> Though Brodrick kept Curzon informed generally of these proceedings and the situation Kitchener was creating in India, he did not ~~however~~ produce the details, owing to Lady Curzon's illness and the

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1. Ampthill to Kitchener, 29 October 1904, Ampthill MSS 233/34/2.
  2. Ampthill to Kitchener, 12 November 1904, Ibid.
  3. Ampthill to Kitchener, 22 November 1904, enc. copy of Telegram, Ibid., Ampthill MSS 233/34/2.
  4. See Balfour to Brodrick, 3 October 1904, Balfour MSS 49721.

sickening anxiety which overshadowed the Viceroy.<sup>1</sup> In short, Brodrick deferred matters for Balfour to resolve, without actually showing Curzon the telegrams which had passed between London and India on the question of Kitchener's resignation in September. That omission gave rise to confusion. Brodrick telegraphed to Ampthill:

"To show Lord Curzon now private telegrams ... would be an admission that he might have seen them while he was in England which he much desired, but which, for reasons connected with our correspondence, I refused. Unless necessary on public grounds, it is undesirable. Misunderstanding and friction would certainly arise ... I deprecate the proposed action."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener kept up the pressure on the Home Government from India. He chafed constantly at delays and complained of the danger in continuing what he conceived to be a thoroughly defective system of military administration; he regretted that the Home Government were dragging their feet and complained to Brodrick:

"I had rather hoped that you would send out a Commission to inquire into the whole subject on the spot, but I suppose ... that nothing will be done;"

he reiterated his wish to retire:

"If we go to war under the present system I can see nothing but disaster ahead ... My judgement in the matter may be entirely wrong; but if it is, all I ask is that you

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1. See Brodrick to Curzon, 3 and 21 October 1904.  
 2. Brodrick to Ampthill, 6 December 1904, Telegram, Ampthill MSS 233/44

should spare me and let me go; my health will not stand the strain much longer..."<sup>1</sup>

In reply to Brodrick's assurances, Kitchener informed Amphill that the matter of Indian army administration was far too complex for the Viceroy's Council to consider:

"... I feel the majority in the Viceroy and Governor-General's Council are most unlikely to advocate any change in the existing system of Army Administration. I therefore trust that the Despatch it is proposed to send in pursuance of the previous promise, may be withheld. The question of Army Administration in India is one of such a technical nature that I had hoped it might have been investigated by a Commission."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener, in fact, had not the slightest intention of allowing his proposals to be officially suppressed by a vote in Council. While he was successful in completely stampeding Brodrick and the Cabinet, Roberts remained the great obstacle in his path and Kitchener now concentrated his fire to bring Roberts into line; this was not easily accomplished.

Brodrick had tipped Kitchener off regarding Roberts' opposition:

"The difficulty lies in the fact that officials of almost every degree ... adhere to ... the 'dual control'. They are fortified by what most people regard as the failure of successive attempts to improvise a better system ... Those who favour the present Indian system say: 'Save

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1. Kitchener to Brodrick, 9 November 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.
  2. Kitchener to Amphill, Telegram, 22 November 1904, Amphill MSS 233/34/2.

us from these changes.' I have shewn your letter in confidence to the Prime Minister, but said nothing to anyone else, and he wishes the whole situation discussed in the Cabinet...".<sup>1</sup>

The opposition of Roberts was extremely significant. Roberts was the greatest living authority on Indian military affairs. He had been Commander-in-Chief in India and in South Africa as well as in Britain itself. That experience was a fact which in itself exceeded in importance the views of other men and militated against tampering with army administration in India. He told Kitchener:

"My reasons for not concurring in the abolition of the Military Member are that I do not think any one man could carry on both duties in a thoroughly satisfactory manner ... Another very important point is the desirability of the Viceroy having on his Council a soldier on whom he could depend for advice on all Indian matters."

Roberts proceeded to explain that most Viceroys sent out to India were invariably inexperienced with the Indian army. Similarly, should the case arise of a new Commander-in-Chief, equally unversed in army administration, a serious situation might be created, as any such combination would necessarily deprive the Council of a member with intimate knowledge both of India and of the army who could tender expert advice. There was also grave political danger arising from race. When Kitchener suggested a scheme for establishing class brigades along exclusive lines of race Roberts asserted:

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1. Brodrick to Kitchener, 13 October 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.

"... it would be a serious error. The two races are essential to each other, and each possesses qualities which the other lacks... It must always be remembered that India is not our own country, and that the Natives only fight for us because they have faith in us and believe in our supremacy."

Ultimately it would be folly to have inexperienced administrators meddling with matters which constituted a delicate religious balance, for "it would be most unwise to employ Brigades composed solely of Mahomedans especially Pathans, amongst a fanatical population of co-religionists like that of Afghanistan."<sup>1</sup>

Though Roberts was under considerable pressure from both Brodrick and Kitchener, he reported to Balfour that he lamented the fact that Kitchener's attitude was so hostile to India's system of army administration:

"His acquaintance with India is very slight, he knows little or nothing at all about the feelings of the Natives, and does not appear to be very well up in the history of the Indian army."<sup>2</sup>

Roberts was against changing India's system to suit Kitchener, though he was more than willing that some kind of immediate investigation should be made in order to prevent Kitchener from leaving India, for at the bottom of the issue lay Kitchener's threat to resign.

Kitchener constantly admonished Roberts for not giving him more support:

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1. Roberts to Kitchener, 28 December 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/28.
  2. Roberts to Balfour, 26 December 1904, Balfour MSS 49725.

"Brodrick writes to me privately that you do not consider any change in the relations between the Military Department and the Commander-in-Chief should take place ... I consider with the Military Department as it is, my time is being wasted out here, I can practically do nothing."

Thereupon he played on the Russian scare to emphasise that point:

"... I must say I do not like to think of the number of soldier's lives that would be needlessly thrown away if we went to war with Russia with our present organization at Head Quarters. My opinion is that the dual control should be abolished and the Military Department with a Chief of Staff should alone rule the Army."

Kitchener then concluded with a strong hint that the Home Government must act:

"I feel that time is going on and as I do not intend to be one of the old officers about the clubs in London and as you know have no wish to go to the War Office, I shall have to start some other work outside the Army when I leave India."<sup>1</sup>

Roberts remained unconvinced. He refused to be stampeded. He admitted that India's system was one of dual responsibility and in earlier letters to Kitchener explained that in practice he never found that he had been prevented from settling matters pretty much as he desired:

"I found, [he wrote], I had plenty to do without having control of what I called the 'spending departments', and my fear is that future Commanders-in-Chief, who may not have had your unique experience, might be unable

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1. Kitchener to Roberts, 27 November 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/29.

to cope with the amount of office work they would have to deal with, and, at the same time, carry on their inspections in the thorough manner that is so essential for the efficiency of the Army in India."<sup>1</sup>

That view was subsequently confirmed by Kitchener's colleague and friend, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien who later maintained: "the personal inspection of troops by the Commander-in-Chief diminished, and his magnetic influence grew small by degrees, and dangerously less."<sup>2</sup> Roberts predicted that it would be impossible for Kitchener to fill the two offices simultaneously; that he would fail and that his successor would have an extremely difficult task.<sup>3</sup> Events proved that Roberts was tragically correct in his prophesy, and the Report of the Royal Commission investigating the ill-starred campaign in Mesopotamia asserted that "the combination of the duties of Commander-in-Chief in India and Military Member of Council cannot adequately be performed by any one man in time of war."<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless Kitchener had successfully compelled the home authorities to take up the issue of Indian army administration from London and though reluctant to sanction change, Roberts agreed to use his position on the Defence Committee to ensure Kitchener a hearing. It now remained to

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1. Roberts to Kitchener, 19 May 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/28.
  2. Smith-Dorrien, *op.cit.*, p.329.
  3. Roberts to Balfour, 26 December 1904, Balfour MSS 49725.
  4. Report of the Mesopotamia Commission, Cd. 8610 (July 1917), See Part XI, entitled 'Faulty Organisation of Indian Military Administration'.

find some agreeable solution to the difficulty. The uncertainty of Curzon's duration of office in India (owing to the delay of Curzon's letter mentioned on p.264) was finally dispelled only when Balfour cabled Curzon asking him (30 January 1905) to state "whether you propose to return in April"; Curzon thereupon replied that to resign would be a "desertion of public duty."<sup>1</sup> In those circumstances Brodrick proposed an ill-conceived plan which he claimed was a 'master-stroke' from Curzon's point of view. In point of fact the Commission of enquiry which Brodrick espoused widened the gulf separating the Government of India and the Cabinet.

### (3) Brodrick's Commission.

On 12 January 1905, to his intense surprise, Curzon received the news that although Brodrick had previously agreed that Curzon's Council should take up the enquiry, he now proposed to send out a Commission to investigate the differences between Kitchener and Elles. The motive of this change of front seemed to be Brodrick's intense anxiety to avoid Kitchener's resignation. Brodrick in seeking some more immediate solution to Kitchener's dilemma, had attempted to induce Roberts, Godley and Hamilton to go out to India and examine the question. Moreover, it was transparent that

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1. Balfour to Curzon, Telegram, 30 January 1905, and Curzon to Brodrick, 31 January 1905.

it was not for India's sake but for Balfour's tottering government that Brodrick made his proposal and he told Curzon:

"Their report will carry great weight here, and also in Parliament, and, if Kitchener is unreasonable, it will be a great stand-by for us. You have hardly mixed ... enough with people, owing to your illness and mourning ... to realise that, while the public has chosen to entirely forget Lord Roberts' services and authority, and mostly ignore the fact that Wolseley is alive, ... they are ready to swear to almost anything Kitchener says."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick was extremely anxious about the effect that Kitchener's resignation would have on his own reputation, though that burden was shared collectively by the whole Cabinet:

"I most urgently hope ... that you will see your way to accept the solution I suggest, and help us to find a way out of our difficulty without losing a man who is in many ways at this moment essential to the Indian army."<sup>2</sup>

An animated telegraphic correspondence ensued.

Not a little of Curzon's increasingly bitter remarks derived from the fact that Brodrick was attempting to impose a hasty and great administrative change in the internal affairs of the Indian government. Satisfied with his agreement with Balfour that the question of army administration would be examined by the Viceroy's Council, Curzon strongly objected to Brodrick's new proposal, and to any exceptional haste. On 14 January Curzon cabled:

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 12 January 1905.  
2. Brodrick to Curzon, 12 January 1905.

"Kitchener only handed in his proposal to Military Department on 5th January. That Department, whose existence is at stake, must at least be allowed equal time to state its case."

Curzon added that it was virtually impossible for his Council to pronounce upon a proposal which would revolutionise the Indian government without giving them an opportunity of thoroughly examining the matter first and that he could not expect a decision before the middle of February, at the earliest.<sup>1</sup> Brodrick pressed the issue:

"Please understand that my only wish is to avoid question standing over till autumn. Lord George Hamilton [who was sixty years old and unaccustomed to the Indian climate] ... must be allowed to begin early in March, and I am of the opinion that political prospects at home are not favourable to delay. If we had two months more cold weather it would save us both trouble."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon jibbed at the suggestion of the Commission:

"It was in order to avoid all such difficulties that I suggested to the Prime Minister the present procedure ... if they now desire to appoint a Committee without awaiting our views, they should do so exclusively on their own responsibility. We will loyally obey whatever orders you may issue..."<sup>3</sup>;

Brodrick then explained to the Viceroy what he had not earlier revealed, namely that during Curzon's illness the Home authorities had pledged themselves to Kitchener. As Curzon's return to India had been postponed until November,

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 14 January 1905.  
 2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 16 January 1905.  
 3. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 17 January 1905.

the question had remained untouched during the interim:

"... [the] procedure you propose will make it impossible for me to send out the Committee this spring ... The Prime Minister's pledges as to enquiry ... were given to Lord Kitchener in September, but in order that you might be able to deal with the Despatch, it was delayed as you know, for two months."<sup>1</sup>

That delay was as unfortunate as it was unavoidable, but it was clearly not Curzon's fault. Brodrick resigned himself to the failure of his proposal and now informed Curzon that Hamilton declined to go to India.<sup>2</sup> He then sat down and composed a long explanation to Curzon attempting to explain (and justify) the position that the Government were in. He mentioned the meeting held in Balfour's room in the House of Commons on 4 August 1904, at which Curzon and Roberts contended with Godley, Lee-Warner, Brodrick and Balfour against any change in India's administrative system. Brodrick asserted:

"Balfour spoke to me most seriously after that meeting ... he spent a long time in trying to devise some means by which the Army might not be paralysed ... by the continuance of the divided administration at Simla ... It was agreed in consequence that the Supply and Transport changes should be made over ..."

Brodrick proceeded to expatiate on the merits of Kitchener's grievance, pointing out that he and Balfour were pledged to the decision to hold an enquiry if they were to avoid Kitchener's resignation. But purely from a personal regard

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 18 January 1905.  
2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 20 January 1905.

for the Viceroy the Government had deferred the question until such time (9 November) as Curzon was in a position to discuss it. There the matter stood; but it was the concluding portion of Brodrick's letter which suggests how crucially the Home Government had allowed themselves to be ~~pushed~~<sup>stamped</sup> ~~into~~ ~~a corner~~ by the threat of Kitchener's resignation:

"What I have been endeavouring to do in the last three days is to release myself from a position of great difficulty. The Prime Minister has declared more than once that he is not prepared to go to war with Russia with the present divided system of control at Simla."<sup>1</sup>

But Curzon legitimately repudiated the proposal for a Commission on two grounds. First, it was inconsistent with the agreement made between the Viceroy and Prime Minister on 9 November 1904, and secondly he was actively engaged in investigating the issue at the time, having duly undertaken that responsibility for the Government of India.

Few agreements could have been more tactlessly disregarded. Why, for instance, had the Viceroy been allowed to leave England if His Majesty's Government were not fully prepared to accept the fact that he "disagreed wholly with proposals to change our military administration, and it was with that knowledge in their possession that I was permitted to return?"<sup>2</sup> What was meant by "pledges" to Kitchener? The

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 20 January 1905.

2. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 18 August 1905.

investigation was, at that date, (January 1905) being undertaken. What, again, was implied by Brodrick's statement concerning the position the Home Government were in? No declaration had been indicated to the Viceroy. Moreover advantage had been taken of his illness to justify keeping him in the dark. But Brodrick's action was not merely open to criticism; its significance lay in its revelation of his lack of impartiality in judging the issue. (Six months later we find him writing to Ampthill in June 1905, regarding Kitchener:

"I want to back him in every way ... and I hope the establishment of the new system will have an excellent effect."<sup>1</sup>

We must now return to the events surrounding the progress of Brodrick's despatch.

(4) Relations with the Commander-in-Chief.

After Curzon's return from England, Kitchener had several informal meetings with him. During a long conversation at Barrackpore at Christmas Kitchener, according to Curzon, did not once allude to the subject of army administration. Previously, Kitchener had informed the Viceroy that he was by no means confident of having formulated any viable scheme to replace the Military Department, but was turning over several alternatives which he might soon suggest.<sup>2</sup> On 3 January Curzon took Kitchener for a drive and "asked him how

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1. Brodrick to Ampthill, 9 June 1905, Ampthill MSS 233/1.  
2. Curzon to Brodrick, 29 December 1904.

he was getting on with his constructive proposals." Kitchener played his hand extremely well: "He did not exhibit the faintest symptoms either of being in a hurry or of being annoyed at delay." The Viceroy reported that the Commander-in-Chief had just completed his new scheme, the third he had submitted in less than two years and entirely different from any which had preceded it. Curzon described Kitchener as saying it was "of merit so overpowering that he believed the whole of his critics and opponents, including the Military Department, would lay down their arms at once and not attempt to argue the case. I said I thought this was somewhat sanguine, but would wait to see this miracle-working production."<sup>1</sup> On 1 January, in response to Brodrick's despatch, Kitchener had completed his Note on Indian Army Administration. He considered that the moment had come to make himself felt:

"I feel that it is my imperative duty [he wrote], to state my conviction that the present system is faulty, inefficient and incapable of the expansion necessary for a great war in which the armed might of the Empire would be engaged in a life and death struggle."

The fate of the Empire rested on the abolition of the Military Department.

"Can we then hesitate any longer to break the chains of custom and the tolerance of admitted defects which are so strong in India, and shall we not reform, while yet we have time and opportunity, our ancient and defective system of army administration?"<sup>2</sup>

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 5 January 1905.
  2. Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India, Enclosure 1 in No.2. Kitchener's Note on Indian Army Administration, 1 January 1905, Cd.2572.

Curzon was not in the least impressed.

"I do not know [he wrote], if you are aware ... that the papers which emanate from Kitchener are not composed by himself ... he has a great gift for collecting round him the few smart writers that there are in the army and then making them do his work."

He was at the time greatly annoyed at Kitchener's methods of doing business, particularly his ability to wheel his subordinates into line:

"The fact is, of course, that in the army and with the prodigious sense of discipline that there prevails, no officer of lower rank can stand up against the Indian Commander-in-Chief";

Curzon was dismayed to learn how Kitchener "drilled them all into shape" when two general officers appeared at Calcutta, "wearing a very docile and sheep-like manner, indicating the final stage of the process by which this victory has been achieved."<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime Brodrick pressed for a reply to his Despatch of 2 December in order to forestall Kitchener from resigning: "I ask because it appears, from indications that have reached me from various quarters, that Lord Kitchener is becoming increasingly restless";<sup>2</sup> that his resignation "will certainly be tendered".<sup>3</sup> He had received strong warnings "that we were treading on most dangerous ground if we wanted to keep Kitchener. I know you think he flies these kites for the purpose of scaring us..."; Indeed, that was

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 5 January 1905.

2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 28 December 1904.

3. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 12 January 1905.

precisely what Curzon was thinking. Brodrick confided:

"If I thought he would rest satisfied till November next, I should be only too glad to have an inquiry then. My impression is that, whether you stay at Simla through the summer ... or whether a new Viceroy takes your place, Kitchener will not wait till 1906 to have affairs placed ... on a different footing."<sup>1</sup>

It was clear that the Home Government were frozen or at least numbed by Kitchener's threats, but Curzon, unmoved merely disregarded them by asserting:

"I am not aware that Kitchener is fretting in the manner you describe ... You cannot hustle the Government of India more than a certain degree with a great question of this character; neither, if I may venture to say so, would any undue haste be beneficial to the side to which I understand you to incline."<sup>2</sup>

Eight months later Curzon informed Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary:

"Would you, in my position, desire to stay in India if Home Government took sides so consistently with your Commander-in-Chief against your Colleagues and yourself...?"<sup>3</sup>

The time had come for a showdown and on 12 January Kitchener and Curzon met to discuss officially how to proceed.

Curzon deluded himself into thinking that Kitchener was willing to abide the verdict of his Council: following their meeting on 12 January he explained:

"Lord Kitchener agrees that it would be unfair to expect any decision from our Government at the earliest before the middle of February. We will telegraph its nature, but it is surely

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 20 January 1905.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick, 29 December 1904.
  3. Curzon to Lansdowne, Telegram, 8 August 1905.

not contemplated that Government will send out a Commission before it has even seen Lord Kitchener's new proposal, which differs from any that has yet been put forward, or Sir E. Elles' reply, or the opinions of Viceroy and his Colleagues..."<sup>1</sup>

Pointedly refusing to pronounce upon Kitchener's scheme until the members of his Council were in a position to study it carefully, Curzon wrote:

"What I am standing up for the whole time are not my views as against Kitchener's, but the right of the Government of India to enjoy the prerogative of the most ordinary criminal by being fully heard in the constitutional way before sentence is passed."

Pressure from Brodrick in London did not facilitate agreement in India and Curzon wrote:

"I really do not quite understand what the dispute is all about, nor can I make out why the Government, if they want to send out a Commission, will not do it off their own bat... I told the Prime Minister plainly in England that there were two ways of doing the thing: one by consulting us, the other by enquiring over our heads. He decided to adopt the former but you now appear to desire to combine the features of both procedures, whereas they seem to me to be irreconcilable."<sup>2</sup>

This was the crux of the opposition to the Home Government's proposal to send out a Commission. But the reasoning behind the Government's decision is tacitly clear from a letter which Balfour sent to Brodrick:

"Lord Roberts backed by several letters I have seen from Kitchener says this last [delay]

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 14 January 1905.  
2. Curzon to Brodrick, 19 January 1905.

will certainly bring about his resignation."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's action then was a reaction on the part of Balfour's unstable Government. To them, Kitchener's resignation in September overshadowed all other Indian issues. It was a slow-fused time bomb likely to explode at any moment, and produce disastrous consequences.

Tension in India mounted with the added uncertainty of the Home Government's future. If the Government altered India's administrative system, fell from power, and then if Kitchener left India after the Indian Government had adopted his proposals, a dangerous situation would be created. "My own belief" Curzon wrote, "is that should the Government fall and the other party take your place, and Kitchener be offered the place of Secretary of State for War, he would, under certain conditions, most decidedly accept."<sup>2</sup> While Curzon was alarmed by these thoughts Kitchener, for his part was indeed flirting with the idea of becoming Minister for War under a Liberal Government,<sup>3</sup> and that prospect excited the liveliest dread among Balfour's personal advisers in London. J.S. Sandars, his private secretary, on 17 January wrote:

"St. John [Brodrick] says, according to Godley, that K. would not be satisfied with the Commission coming next cold weather, and that he would not tolerate the delay."

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1. Balfour to Brodrick, 18 January 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick, 19 January 1905.
  3. See Kitchener to Marker, 15 February 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

"However, as I think I told you, the popular opinion is that if we meet with a disaster in the next few months, K. would instantly find an opportunity of getting out of India, and would come home to realise his fond ambition of being Secretary of State."<sup>1</sup>

In these circumstances Brodrick in desperation pressed Curzon to act in order to forestall yet another 'blow-up' with Kitchener. Unfortunately he did this tactlessly, intimating that the Conservative Party's Parliamentary crisis took precedence over Indian affairs, and that Kitchener's resignation would thus have an intimate bearing on the Government's existence.<sup>2</sup> Curzon, in the third week of January, informed Kitchener that he would support the Military Department in India, whereupon Kitchener dutifully replied that in that case he would resign immediately. Kitchener wrote to his confidante Marker:

"... he [Curzon] accepted this as the natural consequence so I am preparing to pack up - he asked me if I would accept the position of Secretary of State under the Liberals. I said that unless they gave me some guarantee that Indian army administration was put on a sound footing..." "it was useless to prepare for war."<sup>3</sup>

Brodrick, by his intervention had now jabbed at a wound which was to slowly fester and thus poison communications

1. Sandars to Balfour, 17 January 1905, Balfour MSS 49763.
2. See Brodrick to Curzon, 20 January 1905.
3. Kitchener to Marker, 19 January 1905, Marker MSS 52276; Col.R.J. Marker, (1867-1914) was a former A.D.C. to Curzon, 1899-1900, who 'went over to the other side' becoming A.D.C. to Kitchener during the Boer War 1901-2 and in India 1902-4. As Private Secretary to H.O. Arnold-Forster at the War Office, he served a useful emissary for Kitchener's propaganda. See also Kitchener to Lady Curzon, 19 January 1905, Metcalfe MSS.

between the Indian and Home Governments for the next eight months. Kitchener, in the meantime, knowing he had the support of authorities at home was content to hold his hand in India, while Curzon, for his part, remained alarmed about the possibility of changes of Government, resolving to maintain his office as Viceroy. But the sequence of these events is revealing.

A month earlier in London, during the third week of December 1904, Brodrick had persuaded Sir Arthur Godley to arrange a meeting with Balfour's private secretary, J.S. Sandars. Sandars made a long memorandum of their conversation, in which Godley had also strongly pressed for a Commission of Inquiry.<sup>1</sup> In reply Balfour recalled that the procedure had been already arranged and that "it was not until we had seen the despatch" of the Indian Government "and found it unsatisfactory, that we were to impose the Commission upon them."<sup>2</sup> We have seen that Brodrick chose to ignore that procedure. Now, a month later on 20 January Hamilton was summoned and came to the India Office, and in the course of a conversation with Lansdowne, (who happened to be there) was informed that if he went to India taking along his wife, the weather might prove inimical to his health. That fact, coupled with the certain delay of a despatch from the

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1. Memo. of conversation with Sir A. Godley, by J.S.Sandars, 21 December 1904, Balfour MSS 49762.
  2. Balfour to Sandars, 30 December 1904, Balfour MSS 49762.

Government of India, decided Hamilton against participation in Brodrick's proposal.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless it had its effect on the issue, for Hamilton then wrote to Curzon and explained his view of what the Government were contriving:

"When Brodrick asked me to go out [wrote Hamilton], I asked two questions: 1st, How long would the proposed enquiry last? 2nd, Did the Prime Minister and the Viceroy approve of my going out?"

Hamilton then saw the telegrams between Brodrick and Curzon and declined the offer stating:

"I am glad to know now that I am in accord with you ... The Government are utterly discredited in the constituencies, and a smash may come at any moment. Balfour's success in keeping his majority together has been purchased by the loss of character and reputation. He is looked upon as a clever verbal conjuror without conviction or principle."

Hamilton predicted that the longer Balfour's Government remained in office, the worse would be their defeat.<sup>2</sup> That observation tended to diminish the confidence of Curzon in his colleagues at Whitehall. He was genuinely concerned about the possibility of finding himself at the tail of a kite whose string was in unfirm hands. And that prospect was even less attractive when he considered that any sudden change in Indian army administration would bring breakdown and disaster, for which he would be held responsible.<sup>3</sup>

Two points must be made in respect to Curzon's position. Administration was his applied religion. There is

1. Sandars to Balfour, ca. 21 January 1905, Balfour MSS 49763.  
 2. Hamilton to Curzon, 10 February 1905.  
 3. See Curzon to Ampthill, 10 June 1904.

every reason to believe that he was alive to the inherent dangers in British administration in India, firstly from political misrule by an alien race and secondly, from any neglect on the part of India's rulers in discharging their duties and obligations. Curzon had intervened in the affairs of the army for reasons connected with social justice. He was only able to do so through the man in whom he had confidence; in other words he could exercise control of the army through the Military Member. That interference was now threatened by the proposed amputation of the Military Department and its Member. That Kitchener saw this only too clearly is evident from a letter which justified Curzon's worst fears:

"I can quite see Curzon's views of the matter [he wrote]. He could under the proposed system find it more difficult to interfere in small Army matters & get his way, as he did in the 9th Lancers case & many others, & he thinks that the Viceregal prerogative would thus be touched - Perish the Empire sooner than allow such sacrilege!"<sup>1</sup>

But the problem went deeper. Kitchener had already caused one mutiny at Omdurman; he now wanted unfettered control in India. In 1903 Curzon had informed Brodrick that the two great dangers which British rule in India had to face arose firstly from the problem of racial pride - "and the undisciplined passions of the inferior class of Englishmen in this country" - and, secondly, from the impression, should it ever

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 19 January 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

gain substantial foothold in India, that injustice, neglect, or indifference, are shown to her cause by those who are governing her in London."<sup>1</sup> Some consideration of these points is essential if one is to understand Curzon's position. He declined to tolerate a military autocracy in India. He told this to Esher who wrote:

"Some day there will be a row. George [Curzon] will not allow K. to remodel the Army on his own lines. As he very truly says, K.'s idea of rule is K., and you cannot rely on a succession of K.'s. Of course this was the principle at the base of my original proposal for the Army here. You must legislate for the average man and not for the exception."<sup>2</sup>

In these circumstances it is just possible that Curzon deliberately chose to delay proceedings in the hope of not having to act at all. If this was so, he underestimated his by now political opponents who were more attuned to the traditional party politics of threat and bluff, thrust and counter-thrust. Moreover, in taking up what he conceived to be an unassailable constitutional position, he dismayed his critics even more by the manner than the matter of his high assertions. By January 1905, Brodrick informed Balfour of his failure to reconcile Curzon with Kitchener by the timely appointment of a commission of enquiry:

"Nothing will shake him ... and therefore we should be put into the position of having ignored the Indian Government and intervened in the squabble before the time was ripe."

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 2 October 1903.

2. Esher, Journals, II, p.49 (22 July 1904.)

"Curzon will not understand Kitchener's position, and thinks it quite sufficient to say that ... there can be no hurry."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Commander-in-Chief had recourse to means other than the official channels of the Government of India.

(5) Kitchener's Press Campaign.

Kitchener wanted to remove the controversy over the Military Member from the Government of India to the Cabinet; with this object in mind he utilised the press in addition to his secret contacts at home. On 26 January 1905 he wrote to Sir George Clarke, the secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, to explain how his position had been impaired by the fact that Curzon had persuaded Balfour to accept the verdict of the Government of India on the issue. Kitchener reported:

"This entailed certain delay. It placed the Military Department with their back to the wall and ranged the Government of India on one side of the question ... Now, I agree with the Viceroy that, as the case has been referred, the Council will have to see and discuss it. Their decision is of course a foregone conclusion as they cannot go against the Viceroy, and he has told me he is going to oppose my proposals."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Brodrick to Balfour, 20 January 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.
  2. Kitchener to Clarke, 26 January 1905. Clarke (1848-1933) later became Lord Sydenham; his autobiography, My Working Life, appeared in 1927 and contains an account of Kitchener's correspondence, cf. p.179. See also the Sydenham MSS 50835 at the British Museum for Kitchener's original letters to Clarke.

We must consider, against the background of Kitchener's overt conduct with Curzon in India, his concealed efforts, and those of his agents in London, to undermine the Viceroy.

During the summer of 1904 Kitchener attempted through his former A.D.C., Marker, to enlist the columns of The Times in support of his programme of reform in India. He was largely unsuccessful with L.S. Amery (1873-1955), but found much support from Colonel Charles A Court Repington (1858-1925), then military correspondent of The Times.<sup>1</sup> Repington was in turn able to canvass support from Buckle (1854-1935), editor of the paper, and to a lesser degree, Moberly Bell (1847-1911), its manager.<sup>2</sup> Curzon, however, had been stoutly defended in the columns of The Times by the director of its foreign department, Valentine Chirol (1852-1929). Chirol asserts:

"Colonel Repington, who was then the military expert at Printing House Square, was, however, generally a week ahead of me with even fuller materials for pressing Kitchener's case, regularly supplied to him from Indian army headquarters."

Chirol reproached Kitchener for this:

"I told him so frankly when I was again not long afterwards in Calcutta and he began to reprove me for having backed Curzon against him. He replied equally frankly that when he was driven to fight he could not afford to be 'too squeamish' as to the instruments he used,

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1. L.S. Amery, My Political Life, I, pp.207-8 and Repington, C., Vestigia, pp.253-4.
  2. Moberly Bell, E.H.C., The Life and Letters of C.F. Moberly Bell, pp.231-2.

and then went on to render a handsome tribute to Curzon, whom he had fought all the more reluctantly 'as it was he who, as Viceroy, brought me to India as Commander-in-Chief'."<sup>1</sup>

In response to Marker's plea for support for Kitchener (against Curzon), Repington promised to write "... a fairly warm article ... careful not to implicate anyone in the criticism";<sup>2</sup> "I am only awaiting a favourable opportunity & more evidence, to have a fling at this question..."<sup>3</sup>

Repington suggested he should go out to India to write a series of articles on behalf of Kitchener for The Times, asserting: "I don't fancy we shall do much good until the Mily. Dept. is knocked on the head."<sup>4</sup> Repington was considering the possibility of contacting members of the Liberal party (such as Campbell-Bannerman) as to Kitchener's prospects of becoming Secretary of State for War, should Balfour's Government collapse. Alternately he questioned whether Kitchener could afford to repudiate not only Curzon but also the Conservative Government, and he asked: "If the Gov't. were overthrown would K. have gained or lost?" as Commander-in-Chief in India.<sup>5</sup>

In October 1904 Repington discussed Kitchener's position with Buckle, a man of great newspaper experience;

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1. Chirol, V., Fifty Years in a Changing World, p.228.
  2. Repington to Marker, 18 July 1904, Marker MSS 52278.
  3. Ibid., 19 August 1904.
  4. Ibid., 25 August 1904.
  5. Ibid., 8 November 1904.

it was Buckle's view that Curzon would only remain in India for six months and that Balfour would then appoint a successor. He therefore suggested delay in order to avoid unnecessary criticism, and to this suggestion Repington agreed.

In an extremely significant letter dated 11 October 1904 in which Repington discussed the tactics of an attack on Curzon, he wrote:

"... we must be armed at all points to defeat the onset of the Indian warriors & their sisters, cousins & aunts. Again it will be improper to deal with this subject during Lady Curzon's illness, so there is time for consideration. I presume that K. would in no case act while a mere locum tenens [Amphill] is in power in India."

(Marker, in a marginal note commented: 'This is entirely dependent on what action the Milv. Dept. may take'.)

Repington continued,

"If Clarke<sup>1</sup> was right about Curzon and his six months, Buckle thinks that it implies that this Gov't. wish to have the appointment of his successor. If I were K. I would await this appointment before acting, as Curzon has rather a strong following & there is no object in arousing unnecessary opposition."

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1. Clarke was closely in touch with Balfour. On 23 July 1904, Kitchener's agent, Colonel Mullaly informed Clarke that Kitchener was being hampered by India's system of administration. Clarke immediately wrote Balfour as follows: "Clearly there is friction, and perfectly useless inter-departmental correspondence ... completely fetters progress." Clarke to Balfour, 23 July 1904, Balfour MSS 49700.

But Marker was impatient. His marginal annotations reveal the extent to which Kitchener's partisans were willing to go to achieve their end: 'Time does not admit of any delay' noted Marker, 'if Indian army is to be efficient when it may be called upon ... Curzon is the real obstacle to the removal of present dual control, & I am for going for the key to the position, as soon as may be.'<sup>1</sup>

Repington however was in favour of waiting for Curzon to retire before attempting to bring matters to a head, thus avoiding a direct clash with the Viceroy who alone he felt, kept the Government in London straight:

"This moribund government have grown so feeble that they surrender at discretion to any strong man who comes along and says Hi! loud enough, & until they go out they will always depend on Curzon whether he is at home or in India. He rules them. Cannot K. convince him?

"If we have to open fire in the press the thing must be done properly. All the Rajah's are red-hot in favour of preserving the Mil. Member whom they consider, no doubt rightly, the palladium of all their monopolies & interests...

"The old guard die hard & we shall want a lot of ammunition to keep up the fire ... The great thing is to get a series of letters in the papers about the appearance of an article, supporting the views put forward. You can manufacture a public opinion if you go

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1. Repington to Marker, 11 October 1904, with Marker's annotations. Marker MSS 52278.

the right way to work."<sup>1</sup>

Balfour's Government was indeed so weak that Kitchener seriously turned over in his mind the possibility of working in harness with a Liberal administration. But there was one major flaw in that plan. On 31 May 1901 Campbell-Bannerman had denounced Kitchener's actions in South Africa, which he termed "methods of barbarism";<sup>2</sup> consequently Kitchener had no great belief in his chances of becoming Minister for War under a Liberal administration.<sup>3</sup>

In his secret correspondence with Brodrick, Kitchener had been kept well informed of the Government's position; Brodrick moreover was careful to remind Kitchener how lucky he was to have in Balfour a leader so conscious of the problems of Imperial defence, particularly the defence of India:

1. Ibid., 23 October 1904. The following illustrates the suspicion of the Rajahs for Kitchener's designs upon their armies, maintained with zealous pride but nevertheless subjected to various schemes for Imperial defence. On one occasion at a small dinner party held by Minto Kitchener rashly remarked that he should have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for bringing peace to the Sudan and to South Africa. A visiting Maharajah commented: 'Nobel wanted the reconciliation of people through contact and negotiation, not by conquest!', to which Kitchener retorted 'Nobel was a dreamer. He was no realist, but a weaver of fantasies. How could such a man understand what our Empire means for the future of the whole of mankind!' Magnus, Kitchener, pp.231-2. See also Butt, I.A., Lord Curzon and the Indian States, 1899-1905, Chap. III, Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1963.
2. Lee, S., King Edward VII, II, p.78.
3. Kitchener to Marker, 22 December 1904, Marker MSS 52276.

"Your main experience of Governments in the last eighteen years has been of Conservative Governments possessing a strong majority in both Houses, annually increasing estimates, and much assisted in doing it by a rapidly growing revenue. The revenue is now halting, taxation is much higher, the political outlook, although for the moment more quiet, is uncertain, and the radical party, which comes in pledged to retrenchment, will have a very strong backing with a people satiated by the fresh territory we have acquired and the wars which we have carried through in the last fifteen years."

There was much weight in what Brodrick said. Out of a total revenue of £144,000,000 Brodrick estimated in 1905 that Great Britain would spend £29,800,000 on military preparations to provide for a field army of from 80,000 to 140,000 men. As Kitchener had deemed necessary some 9 Divisions or 120,000 men to defend the Indian frontier in the event of a Russian invasion, Brodrick wrestled with these figures at the meetings of the Defence Committee.<sup>1</sup> In the event Brodrick's prophesy was confirmed, and in 1909 after three years' experience of Liberal Ministers Kitchener told Lady Salisbury that he ached to see them "kicked out - the harm they do is great", explaining that "with this Government, military or naval efficiency are looked on with disgust, and, whenever they can, they act accordingly, notwithstanding fine words to the contrary."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Brodrick to Kitchener, 29 April 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.
  2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 6 April 1909; Many of Kitchener's plans were scrapped by Morley, 'a ruthless anti-militarist in the Gladstonian tradition' who succeeded Brodrick as Secretary of State. Magnus, Kitchener, p.232.

Kitchener's agents therefore cast about for other means to influence the Government to make a decision. On 25 September 1904 Mullaly wrote directly to Balfour<sup>1</sup> explaining that Kitchener's resignation was imminent; to Lady Salisbury he described the system of army administration in India in such terms as 'preposterous', 'a monstrous absurdity', entailing 'rivalry', 'duplication of work', 'inefficiency', a 'waste of money', 'delay', and 'always preventing any settled military policy'. Mullaly enclosed in his letter an extract from Kitchener: "I think either Elles or myself will have to go; & if the latter I retire from the Army."<sup>2</sup> Mullaly, accompanied by General Sir Beauchamp Duff, (1855-1918), had made the rounds in London visiting Roberts, Brodrick, the Salisburys, Clarke of the Committee of Imperial Defence, H.O. Arnold-Forster at the War Office, and his private secretary Marker, in an effort to obtain further support for Kitchener. In so doing Kitchener's partisans accepted the fact that part of their working conditions was considerable manipulation of the truth. Propaganda was passed on from Lady Salisbury to Balfour and contained much misconstrued evidence. The transmission of information in that way amounted to lying for a good cause, and Curzon rightly guessed its dishonesty, holding Brodrick personally, though perhaps unfairly, responsible.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Mullaly to Balfour, 25 September 1904, Balfour MSS 49726.
  2. Mullaly to Lady Salisbury, 26 September 1904, Balfour MSS 49757.
  3. See especially Curzon to Brodrick, 29 December 1904; and 19 January 1905.

But it was the Prime Minister who spoke out against these tactics in the autumn of 1904. He reported to Lady Salisbury his dismay over the issue of Indian army administration: "K's resignation, and all the circumstances connected therewith, are extremely characteristic of the principal actors in the scene." Balfour explained the difficulty of deciding whether the supply and transport of the Indian army should reside with Elles or Kitchener, and whether or not Indian military administration should be unified under one head.

"Consider, first, George Curzon: ... [who] would not be responsible for the change, though under great pressure from me, he promised to look into it on his return. This is an excellent illustration of what George Hamilton used to say of George Curzon, - that he would never work any plan but one that he himself had originated."

"Now, consider K: Ever since he arrived in India & found what the system was, he has been fighting against it by every means in his power, legitimate and illegitimate. On the main question I am entirely with him, and could I have foreseen the development of events and the attitude which George Curzon has taken up, I should have made it a condition of any renewal of the tenure of his office that he should make a genuine attempt to reform the system..."

"But though I am quite at one with K. as to his ends, I cannot express unqualified admiration of the means he employs to get them.

"His first plan was to tide quietly over the remainder of George Curzon's term of office by agreeing to some of his most preposterous strategic suggestions; and I do not think Mullaly denies that K. by no means holds some of the opinions to which he has solemnly put his hand. His second plan is to try and force

everybody's hand by an absurd resignation: And, again, Mullaly frankly admits that, while the alleged excuse for resigning was some trifling affair connected with discipline, the real motive was to compel us to adopt his policy at the point of the bayonet. There is an element of slimness in our only General which slightly diminishes my respect, though in no sense my liking, for that great man."<sup>1</sup>

The weight of the press had also been brought to bear against Curzon's Tibetan policy as over army administration. It was only natural that Curzon had corresponded with Younghusband during his Tibetan mission, and this Brodrick deeply resented,<sup>2</sup> as he felt Curzon's actions would embarrass the Government and reflect his management of its affairs. Knowing at the time that the editorial policy of The Times supported the Government of India - and hence Curzon - Brodrick had distributed a circular letter to several editors of the English press with a covering note explaining the viewpoint of the Home Government in regard to publication of the Tibetan bluebooks. Chirol pointed out, however, (3 February 1905) that no such note had been sent to The Times, but that Brodrick had, in his letters, referred to specific passages in despatches "to which attention might specially be called in order to show how gravely the Government of India and the British Commissioner [Younghusband] had ignored the deliberate instructions of the Imperial Government, and

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1. Balfour to Lady Salisbury, 4 October 1904, Balfour MSS 49757.
  2. Brodrick to Lord Salisbury, 15 September 1904, Balfour MSS 49757.

how necessary it therefore was for the Imperial Government to affirm its control over insubordinate agents,"<sup>1</sup> Because Brodrick wanted the press on his side when it came to the point of censuring Younghusband, he declined to recommend that any honour should be bestowed on the courageous Younghusband,<sup>2</sup> intending in fact, making him a scapegoat. He asked Balfour to address the King's Private Secretary, Lord Knollys, in that vein, and Balfour accordingly prefaced his remarks by referring to Brodrick's position "with regard to whose affairs I am making the present communication." Brodrick, in Colonel Fleming's words, was taking no chances.<sup>3</sup>

The effect of these press disclosures, when Curzon indirectly learned of them, is significant; they completely destroyed his confidence in Brodrick's motives and though the latter professed to strive mightily with his conscience to uphold and defend the Viceroy, the extremely sensitive Secretary of State was deeply wounded at the thought that once again he had failed miserably in his attempt to reconcile the protagonists, who now overshadowed almost all other Indian problems:

"I cannot tell you, my dear George, [wrote Brodrick], how hurt and distressed I am,

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1. Chirol to Curzon, 3 February 1905. See also Younghusband to Curzon, 2 February 1905.
  2. Brodrick to Lord Knollys, 5 October 1904; Lee, op.cit., II, p.371.
  3. Balfour to Lord Knollys, 6 October 1904; Fleming, op.cit., pp.272-3.

that an office to which I had so much looked forward to bring us closer together has involved me in trouble with you, and the withdrawal of your friendship which you made clear in the summer is accentuated by the feeling that you think I am wanting even in official consideration."<sup>1</sup>

But two weeks before he informed Kitchener that he would press the Commander-in-Chief's case before the Cabinet asserting: "Curzon is too anxious and too seedy to be troubled with so serious a decision",<sup>2</sup> in view of the misfortunes of Mary Curzon's health. Small wonder that relations between India and the Home Government now became stricken with uncertainty and confusion, while Kitchener and his partisans plunged ahead, in an atmosphere of conspiracy, to bring about the change they desired.

In these circumstances it is also not surprising that on 22 February, when Curzon read that The Standard had published an article stating that Kitchener's schemes were being confronted by obstruction "at every turn owing to the pernicious dual system" in India, he was enraged and immediately called together his Council to issue an official contradiction. He telegraphed to the Secretary of State:

"There is not a vestige of foundation for this statement, and I am sure you will agree with me in deprecating these interested attempts to prejudice the discussion of a grave constitutional question."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 31 October 1904.
  2. Brodrick to Kitchener, 13 October 1904, Kitchener MSS 30/57/22.
  3. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 24 February 1905.

Kitchener in fact had sent a confidential copy of his paper on Indian military administration to H.A. Gwynne (1866-1950), foreign director of Reuter's Agency, and editor of The Standard, and Marker had followed it up to ensure its publication. On 12 January Kitchener informed Marker:

"Gwynne has written me a very nice letter promising the support of the Standard - I fancy he thinks I should like to go to the W.O. You can disabuse him of any such desire on my part - It is the last thing I should like though of course it might be necessary."<sup>1</sup>

But though Brodrick agreed that article was "mischievous" he was unwilling to do anything about it:

"No one here has any knowledge of the source whence the Standard got the inspiration and the articles have attracted no further attention up to now in Parliament and press. Hence I should deprecate official contradiction here, which would certainly arouse attention and force a premature discussion of the differences in your Council, which must before long become public..."<sup>2</sup>

But the damage had been done. Having carried his press campaign this far, Kitchener now decided upon a bold move. He would invest the fortress of the India Office itself and attempt to convert individual members of the India Council to his views, and thus set up a political lobby. This plan met with much success. Kitchener had carefully prepared the ground, first by undertaking to obtain unofficially, through his military secretary, Colonel H.I.W.

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 12 January 1905, Marker MSS 52276.  
2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 24 February 1905.

Hamilton, the opinions of all high-ranking officers in India. He then secretly sent these opinions to Sir Edward Stedman, the Military Secretary at the India Office.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, Stedman enlisted the strong support of a number of the members of the India Council, including Sir James Mackay (1852-1932), Commercial Member of Council, Sir John Gordon (1832-1908), Military Secretary at the India Office, and Lt. General A.R. Badcock (1844-1907), Secretary of the Military Department and a member of the India Council from 1902-7. Kitchener knew that in addition he could count on support from Lee Warner (1846-1914), Political Member of the India Council, Godley and Brodrick as well as his many friends inside the Cabinet and Committee of Imperial Defence. He told Marker he was utterly fearless of Curzon in India as long as he had this strong backing with the Government in England.<sup>2</sup>

When Curzon learned in January 1905 that Kitchener had sent, en bloc, the letters of various Lt.-Generals agreeing with the Commander-in-Chief that the composition of Brigades in future should be of purely British and purely Indian origin, he became indignant. Some of those letters were abusive, and contained slurs upon the character of Indian soldiers which Curzon refused to countenance. For example Major-General Duff wrote (29 September 1904):

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1. See Kitchener MSS 30/57/33.

2. Kitchener to Marker, 15 February 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

"... that Sepoys must never be allowed to compete against British soldiers in any capacity in which the former could possibly prove themselves superior to the latter... Native troops should never be allowed to fight an important action without the presence of British troops and this not with a view to any stiffening effect but simply to make the Native soldier believe himself incapable of winning victories on his own account."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon sent Kitchener a strongly worded rebuke on 31 January 1905 in which he referred to Kitchener's private correspondence as "unconstitutional" and therefore irregular. He candidly explained that he would not tolerate such outside interference:

"The question of the future military administration in India has not been referred to you individually, but to the Government of India as a whole... and you and Elles have been asked for your opinions about it as Members of that Government... This is not a purely military question. It is a constitutional question, affecting the entire structure of the Government of India."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon, only imperfectly aware of the network of Kitchener's communications with the Home Government, thought Kitchener

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1. This letter is enclosed in Kitchener to Amptill, 29 September 1904, Amptill MSS 233/34/2. See also Brodrick to Curzon, 26 January 1905, regarding Kitchener's private correspondence to Stedman on the opinions of the Lt.-Generals and the abolition of mixed brigades. Three years later Kitchener wrote a 17-page memorandum (dated 9 September 1908) which he enclosed in a letter to Morley, attesting the Army's "dislike of change" and the existence of a "deep-seated racial repugnance to any step which brings nearer the day when Englishmen in the Army may have to take orders from Indians." Kitchener to Morley, 10 September 1908, in Minto MSS 983.
  2. Curzon to Kitchener, 31 January 1905.

had only been corresponding with Roberts in order to obtain points of information regarding Indian army affairs. The next day he again explained to Kitchener why he objected:

"On the one side is the Government of India discussing an important constitutional question in the constitutional way. On the other side, and simultaneously, is the Commander-in-Chief, i.e., one of ourselves, conducting an independent and private correspondence on the same subject with the greatest military authority at home, and procuring for him confidentially the opinion of Indian Generals, who have nothing to do with Lord Roberts but are under the orders of the Government of India; the object of the correspondence being to influence the mind of Lord Roberts, and through him indirectly the Home Government."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener deftly attempted to persuade Curzon that he was merely trying to induce Roberts to withdraw his opposition to the abolition of the existing system, adding that the Indian army had changed greatly since Roberts' day. On 2 February he told Curzon:

"As you evidently do not wish me to write privately to Lord Roberts I will not do so until after this question is over;"<sup>2</sup>

that assertion misled Curzon and put him, as it were, on the wrong track. When it came to Kitchener's plea that it was only to ask for Roberts' opinion as to the expressed and unofficial views of the Generals, Curzon surrendered stating:

"I had no idea that the authority for whom you were procuring the opinions of the Generals was Lord Roberts."

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1. Curzon to Kitchener, 1 February 1905.
  2. Kitchener to Curzon, 2 February 1905.

Nevertheless he asked his Commander-in-Chief to desist from corresponding behind his back and mentioned he would suggest in the future that Roberts and Kitchener communicate officially through Brodrick.<sup>1</sup> This was done and Roberts was asked to write to Curzon and apologise, which he did on 2 March 1905, explaining:

"I wrote to Kitchener, as Brodrick will no doubt explain to you, by desire of the Prime Minister, and as a Member of the Defence Committee. Mr. Balfour has asked me to explain this to you, and to say he considers it very desirable that the correspondence should continue."

In that letter Roberts enclosed a copy of a previous letter to Kitchener dated 2 December 1904 which revealed that far from supporting Kitchener's plans to abolish the Military Department and establish the formation of Class Brigades in India, Roberts had in fact steadily opposed Kitchener's views from the outset. Curzon had in Roberts a staunch defender of the status quo.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile in the first week of February Curzon proceeded to draw up a Minute in which he explained the position of the Government of India in relation to the question of army administration:

"This is the problem which we are now invited to discuss. Lord Kitchener's Minute is a sustained indictment of the military administration of the Government of India during the

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1. Curzon to Kitchener, 1 February 1905.
  2. Roberts to Curzon, 2 March 1905, enc. Roberts to Kitchener, 2 December 1904.

last 40 years, and it culminates in a proposal to abolish that system, and to replace it by a new and wholly different organization."

He pointed out that under Kitchener's scheme the Military Member and the Military Department would disappear, and the Commander-in-Chief would emerge as the sole adviser to the Indian government in military matters as well as the sole Military Member of Council and the single head of the executive and administrative offices. It was not the first time that similar proposals had been heard. In 1879 the Army Organization Commission had investigated the best method of conducting Indian military administration, enquiring into the military and civilian relations involved in the system of Indian army administration. That review had produced a mass of evidence by Viceroys such as Lord Lytton and Lord Dufferin, by Commanders-in-Chief such as Sir Donald Stewart and Lord Roberts, by Military Members such as Sir H. Brackenbury and Sir E. Collen. The result had been to confirm the existing system.<sup>1</sup> But there were far larger issues at stake. When Kitchener proposed to destroy the Military Member, that proposal was in reality one not so much to disestablish an individual or even a department, but "to subvert the military authority of the Government of India as a whole, and to substitute for it a military autocracy in the person of the Commander-in-Chief." The issue turned not so much on the

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1. Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India. Minute by Curzon, 6 February 1905, Enclosure 3 in No.2, Cd.2572.

system as on the men working it as Curzon rightly pointed out in his conclusion:

"With a sufficiency of tact and conciliation I believe that the present system can be worked both efficaciously and harmoniously."

Kitchener however was out to smash that system; and the one man who saw this most clearly was Ampthill who had described himself as "between the fires of Army Headquarters and of the Military Department for nearly eight months". He understood Kitchener's tactics:

"His is a mind which is not open to argument whether the discussion is based on abstract principles or practical matters of fact. The thing that rankles in his mind and which he will never get over is that Elles, a soldier junior in military rank and far lesser military prestige, can get his schemes upset."<sup>1</sup>

Magnus throws much light on this attitude:

"Kitchener, in fact, found it impossible any longer even to attempt to make the best of a system which required the military member to digest and criticize every plan which the Commander-in-Chief prepared and every suggestion which he made before they could be given effect. Kitchener had based his case on the argument that the system was unworkable, and if he had succeeded in making it work that argument would have fallen to the ground. He therefore sulked like Achilles, and was constantly described by his staff, as well as by his friends, as a Hercules chained to the Himalayas. He dismayed the British Government, which was already torn by internal discussions about tariff reform, by announcing unequivocally that he would resign if he were overruled."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ampthill to Curzon, 19 February 1905. See also Curzon to Hamilton, 14 May 1903.
  2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.211.

Amphill was not far from the truth when he stated:

"I have no doubt that the present system could be worked harmoniously and efficaciously with tact and conciliation on both sides, but this is a thing which you rarely get when soldiers are concerned. They are brought up in a system in which the senior in rank commands, and everybody junior to him obeys without question, and they do not understand any other system."<sup>1</sup>

While the Government of India was in the process of preparing its papers and circulating the file on army administration to members of the Council, Kitchener felt content that Brodrick's proposed Commission of enquiry had failed. He feared that in any case Curzon would have induced them to secure some unsatisfactory compromise. In the meantime he was confident that his campaign in the English press would ultimately determine the issue in his favour observing:

"... as long as I am backed at home I have no fear of the ultimate result - I am very glad the Gov't. is all right."<sup>2</sup>

During this interim period however, Kitchener grumbled:

"All this is Hanky Panky & very irritating and quite contrary to precedent, I think the Viceroy wants to put off the case ... but I am going to protest very strongly and if necessary resign if he attempts this."<sup>3</sup>

When Kitchener at last saw the notes which Elles and Curzon had written and circulated on his paper, he wrote:

"I do not think much of them - in fact I think I could have made a better case myself against myself..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Amphill to Curzon, 19 February 1905. See also Curzon to Hamilton, 14 May 1903.
  2. Kitchener to Marker, 15 February 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  3. Kitchener to Marker, 23 February 1905, Ibid.
  4. Ibid., 2 March 1905.

In utilising the English press, Kitchener hoped to drive Curzon to resign; but these tactics involved the utmost secrecy and he had to play his hand carefully. He told Marker:

"Curzon is very touchy about the press comments and I think a little doubtful as to whether his reputation may not suffer in consequence by the line he has taken. As far as I can gather he knows nothing of what is going on<sub>1</sub> at home and rather hopes for a compromise."<sup>1</sup>

Encouraging reports were sent to Kitchener during this period from many quarters, on the progress of the question of army administration in London. Although H.O. Arnold-Forster told (3 April 1905) Kitchener that he felt he was "not playing the game",<sup>2</sup> Kitchener heard encouraging reports from members of the staff of the India Office itself, who had been canvassed by Sir Edward Stedman, and reported: "all is still going well - I get good news from Stedman..."<sup>3</sup> In privately using Stedman for the dissemination of his views, Kitchener hoped to forestall the verdict of the Indian Government by that of the Home Government. Accordingly, on 8 March 1905 he sent an extremely important and critical account of what was occurring in India during the course of the official

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 17 May 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  2. H.O. Arnold-Forster to Kitchener, 3 April 1905, Kitchener MSS 30/57/33.
  3. Kitchener to Marker, 15 April 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

procedure of his schemes.<sup>1</sup>

In that most highly confidential and secret document to Stedman (dated 8 March), the Commander-in-Chief made a sustained indictment of Elles and Curzon. He claimed that he had responsibility without power and that the final authority for India's military affairs rested in practice with the Military Member who was then ultimately charged with responsibility for the efficiency of the Army.

"What is really meant is that the system will not work unless the Commander-in-Chief admits himself to be the subordinate of the Military Member."

"Herein lies the fatal defect of the existing system. On the one side we have power without responsibility, and on the other responsibility without power. Herein lies the dualism of which I complain, the point of my whole indictment of the system, and yet that point is simply ignored. There is not even an attempt to defend the system in this respect but merely an effort to obscure the real issue under a cloud of verbiage."

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1. Kitchener to Stedman, 8 March 1905. The original is not found in the Kitchener MSS at the P.R.O., but there are two copies in the Curzon MSS at the I.O., 111/400. Brodrick later, on 5 May 1905, printed and privately circulated three of Kitchener's letters to Stedman (8, 14, 23 March 1905) "for the confidential information of the Committee" he was secretly preparing. Copies of these received wide distribution (though never of course seen by Curzon or the Government of India) and appear in the Minto Papers in Edinburgh, Minto MSS 895. - Brodrick had directed that Kitchener's correspondence with Stedman be "destroyed and not shown to our Council" except those letters he intended for use by his Committee. For some strange reason however, Kitchener neglected to destroy the letters he received from Stedman, and six months later Stedman wrote: "these letters certainly had their full weight in bringing about the decision ... I hope Curzon when he returns full of wrath does not get hold of them." See Stedman to Kitchener, 23 August 1905, Kitchener MSS 30/57/33.

Kitchener took exception to the way in which his proposals were being considered in Council and submitted that the Viceroy, instead of adopting the usual role of judge by placing both sides of the case before the Council, had taken up the position of advocate for the defence of the Indian system:

"With his views so forcibly put before them, I am not surprised that they have unanimously agreed with him, which I always thought would be the case in Civil Members who have no experience of military technical matters."<sup>1</sup>

Once again Kitchener justified his actions on the grounds that the issue of army administration was far too complex to be handled by the Government of India. In expressing that opinion he felt that if the Viceroy took a position of open hostility, it was most unlikely that many, if any, members of Council would take a substantially different one.

The Standard of 22 February had further asserted:

"If there is any risk that Lord Kitchener's urgent scheme of defence may be vetoed or even postponed ... that danger must be

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1. Kitchener to Stedman, 8 March 1905, Curzon MSS 111/400. The Kitchener Collection at the P.R.O. contains Stedman's letters, some 17 in all, written to Kitchener from the India Office. These convey information regarding the circulation of Kitchener's views, transmitted by Stedman in turn to Brodrick, Godley and Esher; Stedman then reported the 'pulse' of the India Office to Marker at the War Office, who thereupon communicated with Kitchener in India. See Kitchener MSS 30/57/33. The Marker papers at the British Museum help to complete the picture of how the Commander-in-Chief was able to subvert the Viceroy's position and lobby in England for the destruction of the Military Department.

removed by the intervention of the Home Government. As between Lord Kitchener and the Military Member of Council the nation will prefer the deliberate and considered views of the former, particularly as they are understood to be endorsed by the Imperial Cabinet. Mr. Brodrick has never lacked moral courage and we shall be surprised and disappointed if he fails to enforce the approval he had already given to the scheme, and to make it known that the Imperial Government intend that Lord Kitchener shall be supported in carrying to a successful conclusion the supremely important task that was entrusted to him by something like a national mandate."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener's private letter to Stedman held up the Military Member and the Viceroy to ridicule as we shall see. His covert correspondence with the India Office was intended to make his arguments available for use by the Cabinet and influence the decision of the Home Government. The letter to Stedman, dated 8 March, reached England on 25 March, two weeks before Curzon's Despatch embodying the opinion of the Government of India, which arrived on 8 April. It can hardly be doubted that the impact of that document prejudiced consideration of the issue on its merits. Curzon, later, was able to verify these facts which he termed "low and corrupt" and "inconsistent with the fundamental principles upon which the Government of India" should be conducted.<sup>2</sup> His reaction to the disclosures in the press was painful; he knew if Kitchener resigned the British masses would interpret that act as striking proof of the Government's inability to take

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1. The Standard, 22 February 1905.

2. See Curzon to Morley, 28 December 1905, Morley MSS 555.

the steps necessary to insure against deficiencies in the army - so glaringly exposed in the Boer War. Bitter at these misrepresentations, Curzon wrote to Balfour:

"The impression has been conveyed to the public at home that our foremost soldier, after prolonged and patient experience, has found intolerable flaws in the system of our Military administration and has written a powerful indictment against it";

whereas the truth was that

"He has steadily laboured to render the system unworkable by his own attitude, and from time to time he had emphasised this by threats of resignation. By these means he forced the subject upon the attention of His Majesty's Government."

"I asked you not to force the question forward in my time. Nevertheless you allowed me to come back to India, and you directed the question to be pursued."

He added that while the matter was being discussed in India, deliberate efforts were made to capture public opinion in England by showing that Kitchener was being "thwarted by his colleagues and trammelled by red tape in his efforts to raise the Army to proper efficiency and to provide for the defence of India."<sup>1</sup> But intervention on the part of the Home Government could not, in any case, proceed until the receipt of the official views of the Governor-General's Council.

However one reads Kitchener's correspondence with his friends in England, and however one assesses his political

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1. Curzon to Balfour, 19 July 1905.

lobbying and press campaign, the conclusion seems irresistible: this was a calculated military intervention in the affairs of the state, deliberately timed and phrased to apply maximum pressure on ministers during the vital period when policy regarding India was being formulated. Little attempt was made by Kitchener to clear his schemes with the Government of India officially; he merely gave them advance warning of his intentions. That message was unmistakable: unless both the Indian and Home Governments adopted his plan for the abolition of the Military Member, and granted him unfettered control over Indian army administration, they could not expect him to remain in India. Alternatively, the Cabinet asked themselves whether they could at that time afford to repudiate not only a Viceroy who had hitherto achieved brilliant administrative success, but also abandon many of his specific proposals for internal reform in India. But if, by March 1905, Curzon no longer enjoyed the confidence of Balfour's Government, clearly they should have asked him to resign. This they did not do.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Dugdale, op.cit., I, pp.400-1.

CHAPTER VICURZON'S RESIGNATION(1) The Verdict of the Council.

Kitchener's Minute, dated 1 January,<sup>1</sup> was submitted to the Military Member who replied in detail on 24 January to the charges brought against the system by the Commander-in-Chief. Elles denied that the system was one of dual control. The army had but one head, namely the Governor-General in Council, as established by statute under the Charter Act of 1833. That act provided that the Government of India was to be supreme over all military affairs in India, and maintained that such supremacy must remain intact; hence Elles argued that the Viceroy's constitutional position as head of Indian army administration was now threatened. Elles further pointed out that the function of the Commander-in-Chief was to command the army according to the rules of conduct and practice, while the Military Member represented the Governor-General in Council in respect of all business not of sufficient importance to be brought before the Council collectively. In concluding, he asserted his conviction that no one man, however able, could properly run Indian army administration.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India, Enclosure 1 in No.2 Minute by Kitchener, 1 January 1905, Cd. 2572.

2. Ibid., Enclosure 2 in No.2 Minute by Elles, 24 January 1905.

Curzon next proceeded to draw up his own Minute (dated 6 February 1905)<sup>1</sup> recording his views on the two sides of the question before him. He based his argument on the fact that India's system had worked well in the past; that repeated examination had resulted in the confirmation of the existing system. Nevertheless, those conclusions were now disputed by "one of the foremost living masters of the science of military government as well as of the art of war." In these circumstances the civilian members of Council were called upon to decide between two sets of opinions irreconcilable with each other and involving the fundamental principles which governed Indian administration. Basing himself on six years' experience of the actual working of the system, he was unable to concede to Kitchener's case for change, declaring that such a proposal for altering the system would subvert the military authority of the Indian Government, and substitute for it a military autocracy in the person of the Commander-in-Chief:

"The Commander-in-Chief will not only be the source of all initiative, but the sole instrument of execution. No curb of any sort will exist upon his authority..."

In concluding, he asserted that he was more than willing to consider any reasonable reform or readjustment of the system:

"But no such proposals are before us; and the Commander-in-Chief in designing his new

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1. Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India, Enclosure 3 in No.2 Minute by Curzon, 6 February 1905.

edifice is not satisfied until he has completely demolished the old. I cannot recommend that it should be swept away on this single and unsupported indictment, or that there should be substituted for it an organisation which will, in my opinion, be injurious to military continuity, efficiency and control in time of peace, and will expose us to even greater risks in time of war."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's Despatch<sup>2</sup> and the three Minutes were then circulated to the Members of the Viceroy's Council. One after another they gave their reasons for dissenting from Kitchen-er's proposals. Curzon in the meantime commented to Ampthill that "The Kitchener-Elles row is in full swing and makes life a burden" and that Elles, on the merits of the case, had come out on top.<sup>3</sup> He explained to Brodrick that he expected his support as constitutional defender of India's rights in the matter: "You are bound to see that, if our constitution is impugned or subverted, it is only done in the proper way"; even though he was fully aware of the desire of the Prime Minister and the Home Government not to have a row with Kitchener, or to be forced to contemplate his resignation: "No one recognises more clearly than myself the sort of artificial prestige that attaches to a great soldier, or the degree of the pressure that he is in a position to

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1. Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India Enclosure 3 in No.2. Minute by Curzon, 6 February 1905, Cd.2572.
  2. Ibid., No.1. Despatch by Brodrick, 2 December 1904.
  3. Curzon to Ampthill, 25 January 1905.

apply." He begged Brodrick not to view the matter so much as bearing upon one individual, but to consider "the future military administration of this country long after the present Commander-in-Chief has disappeared, and when other figures dominate the scene."<sup>1</sup>

The question came up in Council for debate on 10 March. In describing the scene in the Council Chamber, Curzon wrote that "Kitchener read a brief statement expressing his regret that his colleagues unanimously disagreed with him."<sup>2</sup> The evening before however, Curzon and Kitchener had held a long conversation (lasting one and a half hours), on the probable outcome of the Commander-in-Chief's proposals, Curzon making it clear that Kitchener would have no support from the Viceroy's Council. He then informed the Home Government that should they "attempt to overrule us in a matter affecting the daily discharge of the business of Government, and to force upon us a change which the Viceroy and everyone of his colleagues pronounce to be disastrous...", it would not be impossible that the Home Government might suddenly "find themselves with no Government of India at all, and only a Commander-in-Chief..."<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to expectation, Kitchener made no effort to

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 2 February 1905.
  2. Ibid., 16 March 1905.
  3. Ibid.

refute the arguments and criticisms of his colleagues. He sat brooding and silent, unwilling to discuss the matter and regretting that he was in a minority of one. He concluded his brief statement amidst bewilderment. That scene was dramatic, for a painful silence fell upon the assembly. The one man present at the Council table who was taken aback by this abrupt dismissal of the matter was Elles. Serious charges had been made against his conduct as Head of the Military Department. He now rose and "made a most effective and dignified appeal to his colleagues to tell him whether he had their support" in reply to the charges against him, and desired to know how each Member felt. Thereupon every Member of Council in turn asserted that the charges against the Military Department had wholly broken down, that Elles' vindication was complete, and that the Council ought to associate with him unhesitatingly.

"It must have been a painful moment for Kitchener, who was practically told to his face that he had hurled a number of reckless and unsupported charges against a colleague, which he had wholly failed to sustain."<sup>1</sup>

The Council had then pronounced their verdict, overwhelmingly siding with the Viceroy.

In a letter to the Prime Minister Curzon summed up Kitchener's position as he saw it:

"He came out to destroy the Military Department: he has been compelled, from time to time, to

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 16 March 1905.

hold his hand; but he has never abandoned his purpose, and whoever the Military Member had been, and whatever the Military Department had done, he would not have spared them. You would find difficulty in believing the persistency and even pettiness with which he has conducted his campaign. He has scarcely treated Elles (who has shown a quite remarkable temper and self-control) with common courtesy. He has constantly written notes on the file that revealed the temper almost of a school-boy. He has brought absurd charges of obstruction against the Military Department when it was merely doing its duty (as the Government of India in its military capacity), and, whenever he has been especially angry, he has sent in his resignation."<sup>1</sup>

Following the decision of 10 March, and before drafting the Despatch embodying the almost unanimous opinion of the Government of India, Curzon made a final attempt to arrange some kind of truce - by way of a private understanding - with Kitchener, in the hope that "you may see your way to modify the expression of opinion" in the draft Minute of Dissent which he was writing.<sup>2</sup> During the course of their conversation of 9 March, Curzon suggested making over a number of additional functions of the Military Department to Kitchener, and, as Elles was soon to retire, appointing a new Military Member more amenable to him. To these informal suggestions Kitchener turned a deaf ear.<sup>3</sup> Kitchener felt that unless some radical change were made nothing could succeed and

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1. Curzon to Balfour, 30 March 1905.
  2. Curzon to Kitchener, 17 March 1905, enclosing corrected draft of Minute by the Commander-in-Chief, 14 March 1905.
  3. Kitchener to Curzon, 19 March 1905.

"... we should have the same duplication of work going on in the offices, and you would have a system of Army administration being carried out by two men neither of whom believed in it. That I should personally have a happier time goes without saying; but that would not give us a satisfactory office."

Kitchener thereupon declared that he would await the decision of the Home Government until May, and that "if the decision ... is against my proposals, I will not resign without the most careful consideration of all the circumstances."<sup>1</sup> That, it must be pointed out, was precisely the situation which His Majesty's Government desired most to avoid.

By intimidation the Commander-in-Chief sought what he could not gain by negotiation. At his best in action, Kitchener was at his worst in discussion as was shown ten years later, when he was Minister for War. Strikingly unable to play a rational or coherent part in the Councils charged with the conduct of World War I, Kitchener's presence among Ministers eager and fluent in discussion had a nugatory effect, and Lord Esher wrote:

"His form of speech was Cromwellian in its obscurity and incoherence. He would seem to be thinking aloud, his mind tossing in a flood of difficulties. The dialecticians and lawyers who sat round him could make nothing of it or him."<sup>2</sup>

Following the failure of his attempt to work out some kind of modus operandi in India, Curzon drafted and

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1. Kitchener to Curzon, 19 March 1905.

2. Esher, The Tragedy of Lord Kitchener, p.150.

issued on 23 March a Despatch embodying the decision of the Indian Government. Two main points were stressed - the danger, implicit in Kitchener's scheme, that civil control in India over the army and military policy would be undermined by the control of a single individual; and secondly, the practical impossibility of one individual taking upon himself the tasks of an office, which would in time prove to be too great a burden for one man to bear.<sup>1</sup> A week later Curzon described to Balfour his efforts to retain Kitchener's services in India, and indicated his suggested solution. In view of the expiration of Elles' term of office, he outlined the possibility of a subsequent selection of a successor with whom Kitchener could work and who would be imbued with his own ideas: "Could you work with him?" he asked, to which, according to Curzon, Kitchener had replied "Oh certainly". The Viceroy then realised that in so saying Kitchener had given away his entire case against India's system by reducing it to a question against one individual.<sup>2</sup> Curzon therefore suggested he might work out some solution with Balfour whereby Kitchener would be persuaded to remain in India:

"I think that he is less keen about resigning than he was, because he does not like the idea of the papers coming out, ... and still more because ... [he] has very much become chilled [in] his desire to go home and serve as War Minister under a Radical Ministry, should such come into power."

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1. Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India, No.2, 23 March 1905, Cd.2572.
  2. Curzon to Balfour, 30 March 1905.

Moreover both Balfour and Curzon were aware that no military post was left for Kitchener outside India (save that of War Minister in England, at that time not vacant). Curzon therefore conjectured that Kitchener would probably be willing to stay on in India, and remarked that he was indeed planning large alterations to his house and had made arrangements for the coming winter.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Kitchener had appended a brief Minute of Dissent to the Despatch of 23 March. Some attempt, he wrote, had been made to dispute his facts, but in his opinion, without success.

"My assertions have been contradicted, but not, I think, disproved. My arguments remain uncontroverted, and are, I believe, incontrovertible. I adhere, therefore, to everything that is contained in my Memorandum and it follows that I entirely dissent from the accompanying Despatch."<sup>2</sup>

But Kitchener's refusal to attempt any rebuttal of the arguments of his opponents, became the subject of debate in the House of Lords on 1 August. His declaration was criticised by Ripon, an ex-Viceroy, who had closely followed the controversy. Ripon became excited at Kitchener's pontifical manner, expressing astonishment at Kitchener's assertions after reading Elles' defence:

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1. Curzon to Balfour, 30 March 1905.
  2. See Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India, Enclosure 4 in No.2. Minute of Dissent by Kitchener, 18 March 1905, Cd. 2572.

"When I turned to Lord Kitchener's Minute I found no reply at all. I found nothing but a lofty declaration that he would not reply and that he knew he was quite right."

Ripon thought Elles' Minute had dealt fairly with the Commander-in-Chief's original criticisms, and that Kitchener, in his peremptory dismissal of those arguments, weakened his case.

"In a controversy of this description I am always a little inclined to think that a person who takes that line and refuses to reply in that tone does so because he cannot reply, because he has no answer to what his opponent has said."<sup>1</sup>

Ripon, however, as well as Curzon and his Council, was wholly unaware of Kitchener's secret correspondence with Stedman, for the Commander-in-Chief's refusal to reply either in Council or in any other public document was the result of his confidence that he had already secured the support of the Home Government through his secret contacts at home. These circumstances consequently seriously confused issues publicly debated in the House of Lords, although Kitchener's case was thoroughly known to Members of the Home Government and press.

The confusion of these proceedings led increasingly to vindictive and provocative expressions<sup>2</sup> in Curzon's

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1. Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, Lords, vol.150, Ripon's Speech, 1 August 1905, cols. 1090-1.
  2. See especially Curzon to Brodrick, 21 February 1905, and 2 March 1905.

correspondence with Brodrick. Brodrick, for his part, became sorely pained by these "heated remonstrances" and reproaches, and was dismayed that he should have to bear more injury from Curzon's words "than from all those with whom I have been associated in office during 18 years."<sup>1</sup> But Curzon denounced his friend as having a parti pris in his share of these negotiations as the two Governments reached a climax in the spring of 1905.

(2) The Committee of Seven and the Amputation of the Military Member.

The Despatch of the Government of India containing the four Minutes arrived in England on 8 April. Upon its receipt Brodrick convened a secret Committee at the India Office to advise him on the issues which it raised. It was upon the recommendations of that Committee that the scheme devised by the India Office and subsequently communicated to the Government of India in a Despatch dated 31 May 1905<sup>2</sup> was based.

The terms of reference of the Committee on Indian army administration were: to consider the 23 March Despatch and four Minutes of the Government of India and to report

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 13 March 1905, Midleton MSS 50077.  
 2. Correspondence regarding the Administration of the Army in India, No. 3, 31 May 1905, Cd. 2572.

(1) whether it was advisable for Indian army administration to be conducted under two separate Military heads of department; (2) whether it was advisable to have more than one member to provide expert military advice on the Viceroy's Council; (3) what modifications of the system should be adopted, and particularly (4) if a single Member of Council be henceforward made responsible for army administration, whether that Member should be the Commander-in-Chief; finally (5) whether it was advisable to provide that proposals for army administration should be subject to independent criticism for the benefit of the Viceroy in Council, and, if so, how this could best be accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee appointed by Brodrick contained, in addition to himself, six men. Originally he intended that it should include a Member of the Cabinet (Lord Salisbury), two ex-Commanders-in-Chief (Sir George White and Lord Roberts), two Members of the India Office Council (Sir John Gordon and Sir James Mackay), and a representative of the Opposition front-bench, either Lord Elgin or Sir Henry Fowler. Fowler was however persuaded by Campbell-Bannerman to decline to participate as the latter feared he might in some way be made responsible for whatever decision was arrived at and thus compromise the position of the Opposition in regard to the

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1. See Further Papers regarding the Administration of the Army in India, 'Terms of reference to a Committee on Indian Army administration appointed in May, 1905', No.1, Cd. 2718.

Committee's recommendation. Instead Sir Edward Law, who had just returned from India as Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council, agreed to supply information of how the system was at that time being worked. Sir Arthur Godley, Permanent Head of the India Office, was appointed Secretary as well as Chairman of a small sub-committee and <sup>to</sup> act as "honest broker" on points of difficulty, though his prejudices were in favour of Kitchener's scheme;<sup>1</sup> General Stedman was to act as Secretary with him. In effect, Brodrick's Committee was 'packed' with a number of Kitchener's partisans.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee of Seven had great difficulty in resolving one issue; whether or not the Viceroy should have a second expert opinion on his Council for consultation in military affairs. In the Report of Godley's sub-committee, appointed on 8 May, it was stressed that "The Member of Council in charge of the Military Department should be the adviser of the Governor-General in Council on questions of general policy, as distinct from purely military questions."<sup>3</sup>

One former Military Member, General Sir Henry Brackenbury, was consulted but did not sit on Brodrick's Committee owing to a weak heart. In his testimony he considered that

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1. See Godley to Curzon, 26 May 1905.
  2. Barrow to Curzon, 5 August 1905.
  3. Further Papers regarding the Administration of the Army in India, Enclosure to No.2. Report of the sub-committee appointed 8 May 1905. Cd.2718.

India's best interests lay in retaining the Military Department, not under the Commander-in-Chief, but under the control of an ordinary Member of Council. He added:

"I am satisfied from my own experience that it is not within the power of any ordinary man to carry on all the duties which are now performed by the Commander-in-Chief and Military Member respectively."<sup>1</sup>

That view, in one way or another, was corroborated in the testimony obtained from other experts familiar with Indian army administration, who were consulted by Brodrick's Committee. These included, in addition to Brackenbury, Lord Elgin, Lord Cromer, Sir E. Collen (Elles' predecessor), and Sir D. Barbour. Though their opinions were quoted in the subsequent report laid before Parliament, their evidence, significantly, was withheld. That action had the effect of eliminating all opposition in Parliament and these facts did not become publicly known until 1909.<sup>2</sup>

The Report of the Committee was issued on 26 May 1905, and recommended that the Commander-in-Chief should have exclusive control over all strictly military portions of army administration; that he should be the only expert on military problems, and that junior officers should not criticise proposals emanating from him, though the Viceroy could consult

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1. Memorandum by Brackenbury, 10 May 1905.
  2. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, Vol. II, 4th session, Curzon's Speech, 29 June 1909; Godley later admitted as much in a letter to Minto, 9 March 1906, Minto MSS 1005.

whom he wished for criticism on military proposals.<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick, basing himself on these recommendations composed, within five days, the Despatch embracing their views. He sought a compromise that would reconcile Curzon with Kitchener, and not excite too much opposition in Parliament. Under its provisions the future Military Member would confine his work to the quasi-civil and administrative side of army administration - contracts, stores, ordnance, remounts and military works - in short, all matters related to supply. His office was to be termed the Department of Military Supply, and he was to wear civilian clothes to emphasise the civilian character of his post. All matters of a strictly executive military character - appointments, promotion, discipline, training, organisation, preparation and defence - were to be the direct responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief, who was to be furnished with a secretariat for the purpose. He was empowered to submit his schemes direct to the Viceroy's Council without having to go through the channels of the Member for Supply.

That Despatch, along with a second Despatch (No.67 recommending that in order to carry out the proposed changes, Elles should be relieved of his duties as soon as this could be done without financial loss on his part) was communicated

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1. Further Papers regarding the Administration of the Army in India, No.2. 26 May 1905, Cd.2718.

to the Government of India as the decision of His Majesty's Government, arriving in India on 18 June. At the same time the Government of India were requested to submit any modifications for the approval of the Secretary of State before its implementation on 1 October.

Brodrick's scheme, and the spirit in which it was conveyed, also came under criticism in the House of Lords. It fell to Lord Lansdowne, the most respected and able Minister in Balfour's Cabinet, to defend it by explaining that the Government had had to choose whether or not the Viceroy should have on his Council a second military expert to render advice:

"We found ourselves in the position of having to decide between the demand of Lord Kitchener that the Office of Military Member should be absolutely put an end to, and the view of the Government of India that it should be preserved and that he should remain very much in the position which he had always occupied, and we decided against Lord Kitchener."<sup>1</sup>

The great question at issue now became whether the Government intended that the Viceroy's Council should have a second opinion to act as a check upon the proposals of a Commander-in-Chief. Lord Roberts, who served on Brodrick's Committee, asserted:

"I have no hesitation in saying that, in my opinion, it is essential to the security of

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1. Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, Lords, vol.150, Lansdowne's Speech, 1 August 1905, Col.1117.  
There is no evidence to suggest if in fact the Cabinet ever saw the actual despatch before it was sent.

India that the Viceroy should not be dependent on the advice of a single soldier, however eminent and distinguished he may be."<sup>1</sup>

It was particularly important to have a second adviser in case the Commander-in-Chief was, as in the present case, a complete stranger to India. But the day before the Lords debate, Roberts had been sent a strongly-worded letter by Brodrick, attempting to dissuade him from mentioning the subject.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from confusion about the precise role of the second Military Adviser, doubts were raised about the tone of Brodrick's Despatch, for Brodrick had alluded to the "startling discrepancy" between Kitchener and the Viceroy's Council, and his opening remarks were couched in the language of reproach, at the lack of co-ordination between the Departments of the Indian Government. Because of their unwillingness to admit to any fault in that system, the Government of India was ordered to put an end to the conflict of authority and give the Commander-in-Chief greater freedom. That represented a stinging rebuke to the Viceroy and Lord Ripon now came to his defence:

"... if there is one point on which the Secretary of State ought to be very cautious about interfering with the Viceroy it is in the management of the business of the

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1. Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, Lords, vol.150, Roberts' Speech, 1 August 1905, cols. 1096-7.
  2. Brodrick to Roberts, 31 July 1905; James, D.R., Life of Lord Roberts, p.421.

Viceroy's own Council. The final despatch of Mr. Brodrick says - 'This has been decided, and that has been decided, and your arrangements made by October 1st.' I venture respectfully to say that that is not the tone in which the Viceroy of India ought to be addressed. I do not believe, my Lords, that since the days of Lord Ellenborough's famous despatch to Lord Canning about the affairs of Oudh, any Government of India has received such a rebuff in the face of India and in the face of the world. Recollect this, that the order issued to Lord Curzon in regard to the distribution of business in his Council deprives him of a discretion which has been given to him by Act of Parliament; and I think that even if that can be justified, which I greatly doubt, it ought at least to have been indicated in gentler terms and in more civil phrases, and that the document in which it was sent to the Viceroy ought not to have been published. Many a Viceroy would have given a very short shrift to a proceeding of that description."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's Despatch would indeed have benefitted had it been drawn up by the more tactful Godley. On its receipt, according to Godley, Curzon completely severed his friendship with Brodrick and 'declared war'<sup>2</sup> on the India Office. Curzon, who took no part in the compromise, soon realised that on the fundamental question of principle he had been overruled and found he was left with a mutilated Supply Member, which he dubbed the 'Director of the Indian Army and Navy Stores (Limited)'. He was prepared to resign at once after he had studied the Despatch (which reached Simla on

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1. Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, Lords, vol.150, Ripon's Speech, 1 August 1905, Cols.1091 ff.
  2. Kilbracken, Reminiscences, p.181.

18 June and was published in a special Gazette of India on 23 June). He refrained from so doing on being implored by his colleagues not to desert them and "to stay and mould the new organisation into something workable: so that the control of the Government of India may not go altogether by the board, and the whole Military Administration pass, when I go, into Kitchener's hands."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Roberts had been asked by Brodrick's Committee to inform Kitchener of the nature of the new proposals, and he explained that Elles was to be retired and that the new Supply Member would be powerless to interfere with the Commander-in-Chief and would only advise the Viceroy's Council on the financial and political aspects of military questions. Roberts mentioned that everyone in London had agreed that it would be unwise to deprive the Council of the advice of a second military expert.<sup>2</sup> But Kitchener had been privately informed of this news before Roberts' letter arrived.<sup>3</sup> Lord Esher who had previously suggested to Balfour that the new Supply member should be merely a consultative Member of Council and that he should have no administrative function whatever, indicated that "this, coupled with a change in personnel, might possibly be accepted by Lord

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1. Curzon to Clinton Dawkins, 21 June 1905.

2. Roberts to Kitchener, 1 June 1905, Kitchener MSS 30/57/28.

3. See Kitchener to Marker, 1 June 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

Kitchener."<sup>1</sup> For his part Kitchener was rather surprised at the outcome:

"I suppose a compromise can never be quite satisfactory. I shall try my very best to make the system work so that when I hand it over to my successor it may be thoroughly established and have given confidence to those who doubt all Military administration."<sup>2</sup>

The Government, however, was considerably disturbed during this period by the turn of events. Balfour confided to Esher that the "Kitchener business in India" was one of "three rocks ahead of the Government" and that in the event of failure at compromise "I think the P.M. will let the Government go. George Curzon writes that if he is overruled, both he and his Council resign, but that he is sure K. does not mean resignation. K. writes that if he is overruled he resigns, but that there is no fear of George Curzon quitting India under any circumstances."<sup>3</sup>

The Cabinet, according to Curzon's friend Clinton Dawkins, was "in a state of great perplexity and no little trepidation" at the possibility of Kitchener's resignation. In any case, Balfour's Parliamentary existence was at stake and the Cabinet felt that if it had to break with either the Viceroy or with the Commander-in-Chief, that action would be misrepresented and attacked, not only by the Opposition but

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1. Esher to Balfour, 19 May 1905, Balfour MSS 49718.
  2. Kitchener to George Clarke, 22 June 1905, Sydenham MSS 50835.
  3. Esher, Journals, II (18 April 1905), pp.83-4.

by discontented Members of its own party. According to Dawkins, if the Cabinet broke with Curzon,

"the Opposition will say 'Here is the Government allowing a Military Dictatorship'. If it breaks with Kitchener, then the cry will be 'Here is the Government breaking with our one military expert - here is more civilian interference with military questions which has resulted in such a chaos at the War Office and in the Army'."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, although Esher told Sandars (on 4 May) that "there again there is room for compromise" he also contended that the fact which stood out "with absolute clearness amid all this controversy" was that the Cabinet could not possibly "allow Lord K. to leave India at this moment when great military changes are in progress, only half-completed." It was a question of choosing the lesser evil. "Even if Kitchener were wrong, which I don't think he is, to allow him now to throw up his task would be to choose the greater evil."<sup>2</sup> The broad fact remained that military reform in India was long overdue and that Kitchener, "whose talents are generally admitted to be primarily administrative, condemns as thoroughly unsound the present system of army administration."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Clinton Dawkins to Curzon, 18 April 1905. Balfour may have been additionally deterred from recalling Curzon because he could not afford to antagonise the Imperialist wing of the Tory party at the time.
  2. Esher to Sandars, 4 May 1905. Esher, Journals, II, pp.84-5.
  3. Ibid., p.87.

Kitchener, in the meantime, had been privately disturbed by the crushing defeat he had suffered at the hands of Curzon's Council, who he described as the slaves of the Viceroy and fully expected their opposition: "I do not blame them" he wrote to Marker, "They would never be Lt. Governors or anything else if they did not come in to the whip and that is all they think and care for."<sup>1</sup> He explained that if he won the principle for which he contended, "I shall not be difficult in coming to an arrangement so that he may save his face - of course I am supposing it goes my way ... Curzon and his pocket Council will be the difficulty to get over for the Government at home."<sup>2</sup> But Kitchener was not unduly sanguine as to the result, and grumbled at the composition of Brodrick's Committee, that there were "too many on it" and that it was "very unfair to put such a partisan as Id. Bobs [Roberts] on it. He has already written his views officially against my proposals and is not likely to change. They might almost as well have put Curzon on. I do not think this is treating me quite fairly."<sup>3</sup>

Curzon, however, was under no illusion about the effect produced by the Committee of Seven: Kitchener had triumphed. He predicted that, unless it was found possible to remodel the scheme by modification, two possible results

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 9 March 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  2. Ibid., 17 May 1905.
  3. Ibid., 25 May 1905.

would occur.

"Either the new Military Member will be found to be so useless, such a fifth wheel in the coach (while still acting as a Military drag in the Council) that there will be before long (very likely from Kitchener himself if he stays long enough) a demand that he should be replaced by a civilian: or the independence and autocracy of the Commander-in-Chief, particularly with a new Viceroy, will be so soon established that the new organisation will break down irretrievably, like most of Brodrick's creations..."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, Curzon was convinced that the civil authority of the Government of India was being subordinated to military control and accordingly, he drew up his forces to wage a monumental battle for the sound principles of administration to which he had consistently adhered.

### (3) Curzon's Resignation.

"I resigned for ... two great principles, firstly, the hitherto uncontested, the essential, and in the long run indestructible subordination of military to civil authority in the administration of all well-conducted states, and secondly, the payment of due and becoming regard to Indian authority in determining India's needs."<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult, even with the documents before us, and taking full account of the Government's dilemma at the time, to be certain how far the Commander-in-Chief was responsible for what proved to be a most humiliating episode.

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1. Curzon to Clinton Dawkins, 21 June 1905.

2. Curzon's Byculla Speech, 16 November 1905, in T. Raleigh, op.cit., p.587.

On the one hand, Brodrick had long decided to render unto Kitchener the things that Kitchener claimed; on the other, he attempted to reconcile Curzon and Kitchener and thus prevent a resignation which would only damage the already internally torn Government, as well as India.

Brodrick claimed that his scheme provided a "genuine solution" to the problem of Indian army administration, one which would "stand any amount of hammering".<sup>1</sup> He further explained that his real intention lay in "making it clear that we really desired to do what we could to smooth matters down" between Kitchener and Elles. Yet because he had foreseen the difficulty "about conveying to you a decision with which you might not agree" he had proposed a Commission of Enquiry, as we have shown in Chapter V (3), and when this had proved abortive, he professed that now the Government had sought a system for India "which would work for all time" and not one "which is a sort of patched-up truce between Kitchener and yourself, and which does not even satisfy either of you."<sup>2</sup>

In that letter he emphasised "No one here wishes you to resign", and conceded that when he came to judge the case on its merits he was irresistibly forced by his experience of

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1. Correspondence Regarding the Administration of the Army in India, No. 3, 31 May 1905, Cd. 2572.
  2. Brodrick to Curzon, 30 June 1905.

military administration to agree that some change was necessary "though I supported you as vigorously as a man could ... as to the inadvisability of entirely merging the Military Department in the Commander-in-Chief." He also said: "I am very sanguine that we shall get through this crisis, as we have many others."<sup>1</sup> That confession revealed the inherent weakness of Brodrick's compromise. Though persuasive, it lacked conviction; it encouraged the belief that a genuine solution had been found between conflicting parties. It did not take Curzon long to discover the fallacy underlying the Government's compromise; it lay in the question of the Viceroy's access to a second military adviser. Brodrick's real intentions on that issue were obscure. Both Roberts and Lansdowne had stressed the unwisdom of depriving the Viceroy's Council of expert military advice;<sup>2</sup> and the confusion may well have emanated from the fact that though Brodrick had circulated the Report of his Committee of Seven, dated 26 May, to the Cabinet, the Despatch of 31 May, which was sent to Curzon and subsequently published in mid-June, was not seen or approved by them. Brodrick's Despatch brushed aside Elles' and Curzon's objections and that of the Viceroy's Council; and it was perhaps inevitable that it should lack impartiality. Brodrick in fact had no scruples in exploiting

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, 30 June 1905.

2. See Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, Lords, 1 August 1905. c.f. supra, pp. 332-3.

the evidence in favour of abolition, while suppressing that which was unfavourable. Finally, although unable to mention that Kitchener had made his resignation a potent weapon to promote his objective, Brodrick urged that in the face of Kitchener's statement that his schemes were subject to "enormous delay and endless discussion" and of "vexatious" and "unnecessary criticism", in future "The Commander-in-Chief will wield powers and possess machinery adequate for the furtherance of his schemes."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it was asserted that the new Military Supply Member was specifically to advise the Viceroy's Council "on questions of general policy as distinct from purely military questions." The impact of that document on the Government of India was significant.

The success of Brodrick's Despatch and its compromise was no real criterion of the failure of Curzon to convince Ministers in London; for that is to be judged rather by the evidence of Kitchener's press campaign, as we have seen in Chapter V (5). Moreover the official records of these proceedings are notable for what they do not tell us - and consequently we must fill in the circumstances as best we can. Curzon's discomfiture was extreme. It was thus, in a mood of mortification that he now dealt the Home Government a bold blow. On 26 June Curzon cabled that unless certain

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1. Correspondence Regarding the Administration of the Army in India, No.3, 31 May 1905, Cd. 2572.

modifications were made to Brodrick's scheme, both he and Kitchener would resign.<sup>1</sup> It will be convenient to retrace and examine the causes which led to that action, and it is essential to explain that Curzon and his Council had been kept in the dark during Brodrick's secret proceedings, prejudicing them against the Despatch from the start. On 24 June, Curzon had consulted his colleagues in the preparation of papers and in the course they should follow; at their request he agreed to meet Kitchener on the next day to consider modifying Brodrick's scheme.

The discussion was held on the afternoon of Sunday, 25 June, and lasted one-and-a-half hours. Curzon informed Kitchener that he could not understand how the new Supply Member was to advise on 'general policy' as distinct from 'purely military questions'. Moreover, he threatened to resign unless Kitchener signified assent to the modifications which he now suggested. There were five in number and included that the designation of the name 'Military Member' be retained and that he should be available for consultation by the Viceroy's Council. Thereupon Kitchener, realising the gravity of the situation which would thereby be created, impulsively offered to place his resignation in Curzon's hands and agreed to associate himself with whatever action the Viceroy might take. These modifications, according to

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1. Curzon to Balfour, Telegram, 26 June 1905.

Curzon, were embodied in a draft-telegram and submitted for inspection to Elles, Duff and Kitchener. On the next day, Monday 26 June, Kitchener replied accepting them:

"Duff has explained to me the points about which you intend to telegraph to the Secretary of State. Though I cannot say that I consider some of them to be improvements on the proposals in the Despatch, there are none which I am not willing to accept in deference to your wishes."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon then cabled those modifications to the Prime Minister. His proposals were intended to safeguard "the practical efficiency" of the new Member of Council, "who will thus be available for consultations by the Government, with full knowledge of all that is passing."<sup>2</sup>

This news stunned the Government and produced a sensation in the Cabinet. Balfour was so astonished at this concurrence that he immediately sent a cable requesting a full statement of Kitchener's "reasons for apparent change of view" as this new version appeared "quite inconsistent with his Minute already laid before Parliament."<sup>3</sup> Thereupon, with Kitchener's approval,<sup>4</sup> Curzon cabled: "Lord Kitchener and I are in absolute agreement, and this telegram is sent and signed by both of us" and that if His Majesty's Government refused to accept these joint proposals, "Lord Kitchener

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1. Kitchener to Curzon, 26 June 1905.
  2. Curzon to Balfour, Telegram, 26 June 1905.
  3. Balfour to Curzon, Telegram, 29 June 1905.
  4. See Curzon to Kitchener, 29 June 1905.

desires to associate himself with any action that I may take in the matter."<sup>1</sup>

Fully conscious of the obstructions against which he would have to contend, Curzon nevertheless took that calculated risk in order to make it clear to the Government that he would refuse to enter into any agreement unless a formal and explicit understanding were reached in advance as to the position of the new Member. However much Curzon's formalist proposition may have been resented at the time, his insistence on guarantees for the sound principles which he advocated reveals that in his dealings with Kitchener he was no amateur diplomatist. Brodrick buffeted the Viceroy's position by refusing to tolerate the status quo and what he termed Curzon's 'splendid isolation'; he was reluctant to recede from his own position on the grounds that "anyone who holds the limited power which is incidental to public service" must be "willing to accept advice."<sup>2</sup> ~~But~~ Curzon however was merely unwilling to accept Brodrick's advice given to meet Kitchener's requirements.

Meanwhile in London, Balfour expressed his satisfaction that Curzon and Kitchener agreed: "I am delighted that what seems to Brodrick and myself a satisfactory arrangement can now be come to." He happily concluded that the modifications met with general approval and all parties were, after

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1. Curzon to Balfour, Telegram, 30 June 1905.

2. Brodrick to Curzon, 30 June 1905.

all, in harmony with the intention of the original Despatch.<sup>1</sup> That view was reinforced by Brodrick two weeks later, who also deemed "it a matter of satisfaction" that, although Curzon was adverse to change, the points which he raised appeared to leave the scheme's "general principles untouched", and that Kitchener, "whose decided preference for more drastic changes had great weight with His Majesty's Government, is now in accord with the rest of your Government."<sup>2</sup> Finally, following a painful exchange of strongly worded telegrams, Brodrick professed his desire to settle the question once and for all upon the lines to which Curzon and Kitchener had agreed:

"His Majesty's Government desire to avoid a prolongation of the controversy, and they are content to regard it as closed by your declaration of the utmost desire to carry out loyally a policy decided upon by His Majesty's Government, which they accept unreservedly."<sup>3</sup>

But Balfour complained to the King that the accounts given by the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief were at wide variance with one another:

"Neither of these eminent men can be said to emerge from the controversy with any credit whatever. But as they have come to a working agreement and as this agreement leaves untouched the essence of the proposals which, largely in consequence of Lord Kitchener's views, the Government have pressed on the Viceroy, it seemed to the Cabinet that 'least said soonest mended' and they therefore

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1. Balfour to Curzon, Telegram, 1 July 1905.  
 2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 14 July 1905.  
 3. Ibid., 25 July 1905.

resolved not to make more bad blood even by the most legitimate condemnation of the tone which the Viceroy has thought fit to adopt in his recent utterances."<sup>1</sup>

There for the moment the matter rested. However Brodrick's Despatch could hardly have been calculated to pour oil on troubled waters in India.<sup>2</sup> The Times had pointedly commented that its tone was "unnecessarily harsh" and that the Secretary of State had displayed tactlessness and lack of consideration in his treatment of the Indian Government.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless Brodrick had described its tone as "excellent".<sup>4</sup>

It was now Curzon's misfortune to feel surprise at the turn of events. Apparently, considerable misunderstanding had arisen regarding the underlying principle of the modifications he sought, and the alterations for which he had asked. On 3 July he telegraphed:

"Kitchener and I distinctly contemplate that Military Member shall be available for consultation by Viceroy at his discretion upon all questions..."<sup>5</sup>

In order that these proposals would not be valueless, a week later he reiterated his desire to secure an effective working

1. Balfour to Edward VII, 25 July 1905, Balfour MSS 49685.
2. Minto later reported to Morley that "I do not think that I have ever met anyone who approved of the Despatch of the 31st May. Kitchener himself says that it was disastrous, that it put everybody's back up, and that if it had not been written he believes the new organisation could have been introduced without much difficulty, and that indeed Curzon himself had once proposed to him something very similar to it." Minto to Morley, 10 January 1906, Minto MSS 1006.
3. The Times, 29 June 1905.
4. Brodrick to Curzon, 30 June 1905.
5. Curzon to Balfour, Telegram, 3 July 1905.

scheme by attempting "to provide Viceroy and Council with alternative military advice."<sup>1</sup>

That, however, was not the intention of the Home Government, and Brodrick replied that Curzon appeared "to show that you have misapprehended the intention and the practical effect" of his orders and that he therefore could not allow the new Member to "have any special claim to be consulted" or to note on the proposals of the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>2</sup> The receipt of that telegram shattered any illusions as to the real purpose of Brodrick's decision. He desired to make Kitchener's voice supreme in the affairs of Indian army administration. On 16 July Curzon learned<sup>3</sup> of Brodrick's intention to nominate an officer from England to the newly formed Department of Military Supply. He immediately telegraphed back that he was about to recommend Major-General Sir Edmund Barrow (1852-1934) for the post of Military Supply Member, as one of the ablest soldiers in India and acceptable to both Kitchener and himself.<sup>4</sup> Barrow, moreover, was an officer well qualified to undertake the difficult task of introducing the new military organisation. Curzon asked only for the support of the Home Government in his selection of the Military Supply Member:

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 10 July 1905.
  2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 14 July 1905.
  3. See Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 16 July 1905.
  4. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 17 July 1905.

"It must be evident that I can only satisfactorily inaugurate new system with aid of Military Colleague in whose experience, judgment, and ability I have fullest confidence..."<sup>1</sup>

He reasonably expected first that Barrow would be empowered to give general military advice to his Council, and second that his suggestion as to the person best qualified for this purpose should be favourably entertained.

On 1 August Brodrick telegraphed that Barrow was not acceptable to the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> Curzon was greatly disappointed by that refusal: "You refuse to grant me the assistance of the officer whom I hold to be preeminently suited for the task, and whom I selected with the knowledge that he could and would loyally co-operate in carrying out" the wishes of of the Home Government. Curzon appealed for re-consideration of his views; he protested that Barrow was the most competent person to advise on military affairs and that Kitchener had himself agreed to Barrow's name. Finally, he was dismayed to learn he was to have no say whatever in the nomination of the new officer to be selected by Brodrick.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously he asked that Brodrick modify his attitude, and thus enable him to accept a responsibility which he inferred the Home Government still desired him to assume.

Brodrick replied on 4 August refusing to appoint

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, 2 August 1905.
  2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 1 August 1905.
  3. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 2 August 1905.

Barrow, as he "can hardly be expected to inaugurate the new system with an open mind." He then directed Curzon to "consult Kitchener as to who in his opinion is the best qualified man for the post, and let me have his views."<sup>1</sup> That request merely added insult to injury, and Curzon retorted that Kitchener "did not and does not consider it any part of the duty of Commander-in-Chief to recommend to Secretary of State ... a Member of Viceroy's Council - an appointment for making which you have asserted sole responsibility."<sup>2</sup> Curzon informed Brodrick that he realised that the Home Government differed fundamentally in their interpretation of the meaning they attached to the modifications of their scheme, and which they had accepted and on which alone he had consented to remain in office.<sup>3</sup> His position was undermined and therefore, in principle, "almost exactly where it was when I telegraphed my resignation on 26 June; and the main conditions which caused me to resign on that occasion have again been called into being."<sup>4</sup> Since he felt unable to discharge his public duty conscientiously, and was not prepared to assist in the introduction of a system of military administration which he regarded as unworkable and calculated to imperil the control of the Government of India over military affairs, he requested that a new Viceroy should be asked to attempt it; and he begged that Balfour "place my resignation at once

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 4 August 1905.

2. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 5 August 1905.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., Telegram, 12 August 1905.

in the hands of His Majesty the King."<sup>1</sup>

Having thus committed himself to the principle of a second military adviser, it remained for the India Office, in order to restore the peace between Curzon and Kitchener, to bring forward a nominee mutually acceptable to both, or to accept Curzon's resignation. The Home Government did neither, and an intricate situation, in this connection, arose. Curzon was incensed by what he considered a new affront when the India Office informed him they would appoint the new 'Supply Member' without consulting the Viceroy, to which he replied:

"I have failed to receive either the information or the assurance which I sought, and I am reluctantly driven to the conclusion that the policy of His Majesty's Government differs fundamentally from what I thought had been agreed upon with the Government of India, and is based on principles which I could not conscientiously carry into execution."<sup>2</sup>

In these circumstances it might perhaps be asked, why did Curzon not resign outright at the announcement imposing the decision? Dominating Curzon's conscience was his sense of 'responsibility' with its associated virtues or defects of duty, sacrifice and justice. Curzon had told Balfour that his colleagues "pressed upon me most emphatically that it was a higher duty on my part to stay, in order to

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 12 August 1905.

2. Ibid.

give the new organisation a chance of vitality, and that to desert the helm at such a moment would merely involve the ship in worse disaster."<sup>1</sup> Curzon yielded to their advice on condition that Brodrick's scheme would be modified. His action at first sight might appear unedifying, but on closer inspection this sequence is less cynical than one would imagine, for the central core of Curzon's philosophy was the ideal of integrity in the conduct of all public administration.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Curzon's insistence that he be given his own man to work the scheme robbed him of what must have otherwise proved to be unqualified success, for Kitchener had verbally assented to the selection of Barrow.<sup>3</sup> Curzon's position had in fact been sabotaged.

In urging Barrow's appointment, Curzon argued that it was not a question of persons but of principle, "to assist me in carrying out their policy with the greatest chance of success."<sup>4</sup> As Kitchener had agreed to Barrow, he could not understand the Cabinet's reluctance to appoint him. The Government however were only awaiting an opportunity of striking the Viceroy down. Curzon then claimed that the Government had destroyed "a system which worked to the general satisfaction until Kitchener appeared upon the scene," and then had thrown "our military constitution into a crucible

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1. Curzon to Balfour, 27 July 1905.

2. Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, p.16.

3. See *infra*, p.

4. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 12 August 1905.

from which, if English precedents are followed, it will not emerge until after years of controversy and chaos."<sup>1</sup> Kitchen-er had come to India in order to destroy the Military Department and had virtually set himself up as Military Dictator - in fact had triumphed - and the Viceroy resigned on that issue alone.

The bitterness of these proceedings was further heightened by two incidents which dramatised the complete breach between the Government of India and the Cabinet over the question of army reform. On 18 July Curzon explained to the Legislative Council the nature of the modifications which he and Kitchener had agreed to demand before accepting the Government's scheme. Extracts of that speech, which contained several passages to which Brodrick took exception, were cabled to London by Reuters and created a false impression. Curzon stated that the Government of India "learned to their regret" that their advice was refused and claimed that "They may be pardoned if they were somewhat surprised at the manner in which it was thought necessary to convey these orders." He justified this public statement on the grounds that the Indian public had a right to be kept informed of the nature of the settlement.<sup>2</sup> Curzon then received a curt

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1. Curzon to Balfour, 19 July 1905.

2. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 20 July 1905; see also The Times, 19 July 1905.

telegram from Brodrick,<sup>1</sup> and learned that the Opposition front bench had made an attack on the Government's policy and were planning to move a vote of censure on the Viceroy's conduct. Curzon's indignation was boundless when he heard that Sir Henry Fowler referred to his speech as a "severe and offensive criticism" of the Government,<sup>2</sup> and that Fowler wanted to force a debate on the issue. (But Lord George Hamilton was prepared to defend Curzon's position against Opposition attack and hoped that "the subject will die a natural death..." and that he would not resign).<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, Curzon told Ampthill that Fowler's attack was "outrageous" and asserted that "It is commonly believed here that Brodrick must have put Fowler up to ask the question - in order to get the Opposition committed to his side." He termed Brodrick's treatment "spiteful" and <sup>asserted</sup> that he was a man "who has failed in every office that he has filled" and would "never have had the chance of being a failure as Secretary for India if he had not already been a failure as Secretary for War."<sup>4</sup> The full text of his speech appeared in The Times on 21 July,<sup>5</sup> but the damage was done. It is just possible that Brodrick delayed giving any notice of the settlement in Parliament for the express purpose of giving Kitchener

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 19 July 1905; The Times, 19 July 1905. See also Balfour to Edward VII, 19 July 1905, Balfour MSS 49685.
  2. See The Times, 20 July 1905.
  3. Hamilton to Curzon, 26 July 1905.
  4. Curzon to Ampthill, 23 July 1905.
  5. The Times, 21 July 1905.

sufficient time to reply, secretly, as to what was transpiring in India, and by thus keeping the India Office informed of his plans, enabling the Government to prepare their case against Curzon, as we shall see.<sup>1</sup>

The Viceroy now became the victim of further misunderstanding. On 19 August Kitchener<sup>2</sup> repudiated the description of his proposals as contained in the summary which Curzon had earlier sent home on 10 August.<sup>3</sup> In that telegram the Viceroy estimated that the new Supply Member would not have "two hours' work a day" and that the creation of the post would "involve an unpardonable waste of public money."<sup>4</sup> Kitchener, to whom Curzon showed this telegram, promptly claimed that the Viceroy had misrepresented his intentions and produced a memorandum criticising in detail Curzon's view of the facts, in the meantime communicating, on 14 August, a statement intended to correct misunderstanding of his views to The Times.<sup>5</sup> Curzon replied in turn by

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1. It is important to bear in mind that during this period of acute crisis Curzon's irritability was enhanced by much compounded illness and suffering. Confined to his bed, experiencing "diarrhoea and dysentery" and constantly wracked by spinal paralysis, the Viceroy had a waning capacity to cope with the many worries confronting him and he wrote of the Secretary of State: "My official existence has long ceased, under Brodrick's treatment, to be anything but a source of pain and distress." This helps to explain the bitterness which surrounded his resignation. See Curzon to Ampthill, 23 July 1905.
  2. Kitchener to Curzon, 19 August 1905.
  3. See Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 10 August 1905.
  4. Ibid.
  5. The Times, 14 August 1905.

substantiating in every particular his previous summary maintaining his original view that Kitchener at that time had made no objection to them.<sup>1</sup> Since the telegram of 10 August was about to be published in connection with Curzon's resignation, Kitchener demanded the publication of his memorandum, thereupon Curzon warned that he would be compelled to issue with it his own rejoinder.<sup>2</sup>

That sequence of events rapidly converted a public controversy into a personal quarrel, hopelessly confusing matters in London as reflected in the following note by Balfour to his private secretary:

"It is a wretched world and I really cannot get to the bottom of the Kitchener-Curzon squabble. K. distinctly declares that G.C. is a liar: G.C. with very little circumlocution indicates that his opinion of K. may be similarly expressed. Barrow's evidence [see Barrow to Curzon, 19 September 1905]<sup>3</sup> certainly goes to show that K. did not behave straightforwardly about the appointment of the new Military Member, and G.C. writes to me in the most positive manner that in no single particular has he misrepresented K.! I do not easily think ill of mankind but, upon my word, these two old friends of mine are gradually compelling me to take a very dark view of our poor fallen nature."<sup>4</sup>

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1. See Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 18 August 1905.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Barrow maintained that Kitchener "did virtually acquiesce in my appointment" and "that there was an intrigue against you going on ... in the hopes of bringing on a crisis" by which Curzon would be driven to resign. See Barrow to Curzon, 19 September 1905.
  4. Balfour to Sandars, 20 October 1905, Balfour MSS 49764.

Unfortunately for the Viceroy the conduct of The Times had been carefully managed by the India Office owing to their fear of his retaliation and Curzon did not dis-appoint them. Sandars in mid-August informed Balfour that he had forfeited "your half-crown" for Curzon had, at last, resigned. Because Sandars expected "that G.C. [Curzon] will pull all the wires at his end" he had proposed seeing Buckle of The Times about preparing the Government's case.<sup>1</sup> The next day Sandars, in consultation with Godley at the India Office, suggested that Curzon should not be left in India any longer than necessary as he would cause much "mischief", and <sup>reported</sup> that Godley suggested having Ampthill act temporarily until such time as Minto could take over.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, on 17 August, with Brodrick's permission, all Curzon's telegrams were shown by Godley to Buckle<sup>3</sup> with the result that, on the merits of the military administration issue, the Government were placed in the right and Curzon in the wrong. These events, in conjunction with Curzon's resignation, caused Godley to comment that the whole thing had gone off "better than might have been expected."<sup>4</sup>

Godley passed the gravest censure on Curzon's proceedings which he attributed to physical "paralysis". He

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1. Sandars to Balfour, 14 August 1905, Balfour MSS 49763.
  2. Ibid., 15 August 1905.
  3. Ibid., 17 August 1905.
  4. Godley to Sandars, 22 August 1905, Balfour MSS 49857.

believed however that the English press were generally inclined to view the Viceroy as a 'coming man'. Godley asked:

"But is he? As a subordinate, he is henceforward impossible; as Prime Minister, can he ever form a Gov't? As I have said more than once, I think his mission now is to form and lead the Grand Ducal Party in this country."<sup>1</sup>

By the end of August the Government had thoroughly prepared its case, and Lansdowne, who heartily approved of the appointment of Minto, told Balfour: "Curzon and Kitchener are making things warm for one another, whereas our temperature need not rise."<sup>2</sup> Curzon protested against the way in which he was being treated by his colleagues in London. Against him official standards of conduct were waived in favour of Kitchener's schemes, and that action, he believed, was incompatible either with sound public administration or the principles of constitutional Government.<sup>3</sup>

A month later Curzon turned to face his critics. The press attack in The Times of 28 August deeply wounded his pride as it virtually accused him of misrepresenting the facts of the controversy. He vehemently replied by asking Buckle to "relieve me from a particularly unjust and undeserved reproach" in the charges brought against him. He assured him that Brodrick's compromise "by no means solved

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1. Godley to Sandars, 22 August 1905, Balfour MSS 49857.  
2. Lansdowne to Balfour, 28 August 1905, Balfour MSS 49729.  
3. See Curzon to Haldane, 11 October 1905.

the question, and I look forward at no distant date to a great awakening of public opinion at home. No Government can dictate an unwelcome and unworkable constitution to India, and expect success."<sup>1</sup> In the event the truth of Curzon's prophesy proved to be only partially correct. Within two years Brodrick's scheme was abandoned, within four abolished; while within a decade the new system of Indian army administration tragically collapsed in Mesopotamia.

Inasmuch as a public attack on the Government involved the prestige of the Monarch's representative in India, King Edward intervened to prevent further publicity. In the meantime, Brodrick had lost no opportunity to try and prevent public recognition for Curzon's services and this necessitated persuading the King of the rectitude of the Government's position in upholding Kitchener and cancelling any mark of royal approval on Curzon's Viceroyalty. On 25 July, Brodrick had informed King Edward that Curzon and Kitchener were "irreconcilable", carefully pointing out that as he was really Curzon's best friend he hoped that he might yet bring about some working agreement. When Curzon's resignation had been laid before the King, who was at Marienbad, on 13 August, and the announcement made on 21 August, King Edward at once sent, on 22 August, a handsome tribute

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1. Curzon to G.E. Buckle, editor of The Times, 21 September 1905.

acknowledging Curzon's services while consoling him upon his enforced resignation.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime Curzon wrote to Knollys, the King's private secretary, that the Home Government had completely "plumped" for Kitchener and that he had obtained "the complete military supremacy which he has all along desired."<sup>2</sup>

From the tangle of those events several facts emerge: Curzon had pressed for the publication of his telegraphic correspondence only in so far as it related to the circumstances surrounding his resignation.<sup>3</sup> On public grounds however, he deprecated the publication of anything in the nature of papers which must give rise to the appearance of an acrimonious and personal wrangle between himself and Kitchener.<sup>4</sup> Kitchener however persisted in the matter, pressing for publication and Brodrick did not see how this was to be avoided "if Kitchener thinks that his proposals have been misrepresented" and that the "sooner it takes place the better."<sup>5</sup>

The immediate result of these incidents was to bring down a storm of abuse attacking the Viceroy for the publication of papers, from personal motives of revenge in the dispute with Kitchener. That incorrect version of the facts was reflected in The Times which commented that "this lamentable

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- See also
1. See Edward VII to Curzon, 22 August 1905; /Lee, Edward VII, II, p.378.
  2. Curzon to Knollys, 16 August 1905.
  3. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 21 August 1905.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 22 August 1905.

spectacle ought to have been impossible" and that it constituted "an offence against the public interest."<sup>1</sup> While Curzon strove to correct what he believed to be an unmerited public condemnation, he was ~~informed~~<sup>re-requested</sup> by Brodrick to desist from further reference to past incidents lest such cause renewed recriminations and the re-opening of an "acute controversy."<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless once again the handling of the controversy in the press was criticised by Ripon who complained: "Did Brodrick sanction that publication? [referring to the minutes of Curzon and Kitchener]. If he did, he is quite unfit to be Secretary for India ... it is all very sad and discreditable and will do serious mischief in India."<sup>3</sup> In order to complete the picture surrounding Curzon's resignation however it is necessary to return to the point (Chap. V, (5)) where Kitchener's tactics were last examined, and to the ~~proceedings of certain~~ events prior to the Viceroy's resignation.

#### (4) Kitchener's Triumph.

It is perhaps inevitable that in examining Kitchener's proceedings some repetition of previous events is necessary.

Kitchener had carefully concealed his hand and well knew how to play a waiting game. Having spent ten laborious

1. The Times, 28 August 1905.

2. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 31 August 1905.

3. Ripon to Sandhurst, 30 August 1905, Ripon MSS 43639.

years in preparing for Gordon's revenge, endured the recurring disappointments of the Boer War, the obstacles which so hampered and protracted his campaigns had only stiffened his determination for victory. Now his three years' hammering at the Government of India and the Home Government was to bear fruit. Pledged to reform, he knew his fame and reputation had preceded him - he was temperamentally unsuited to the task of working in harmony with Elles and the Viceroy, and he conceived it to be his duty to place the Indian army 'on sound business principles of efficiency', by abolishing a separate Military Department (on the tacit assumption that an efficient army was ample insurance against national disaster). In fact his intense dislike of institutions and departments amounted to hatred; he smashed organisations:

"I find I have hardly a moment here in this awful system of doing nothing but write Minutes, which apparently makes up the Government of India! To get anything done, however small, under the present system is the work of a lifetime; and, as soldiers only hold their billets for five years, the result is evident, and is apparently exactly what the Government of India like. Some of my Minutes are, I fear, getting me disliked, as I cannot help pointing out how absurd the system is."<sup>1</sup>

As the Viceroy once ruefully reflected, Kitchener "thought to be a ruler of India straight away: and as he has said 'When Curzon has gone, and we have a weak Viceroy in his place, I shall be dictator'."<sup>2</sup> But Curzon neglected to

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 3 March 1903, Balfour MSS 49757.  
2. See Curzon to Hamilton, 28 May 1903.

weigh the prestige and confidence which Kitchener inspired in Government circles at home, and because he had no knowledge of Balfour's secret correspondence with Kitchener he could not know of the Prime Minister's grave concern "that we have got you, in this critical and in some respects transitional period as our Military Adviser and guide on the problems of Indian Defence."<sup>1</sup> Correspondingly, Curzon did not realise that his presence in India constituted a boulder which once dislodged set everything in motion, as Godley told Sandars: "I am sure that, with the new Governor General [Minto] we shall be on a bed of roses."<sup>2</sup> Kitchener had successfully campaigned for Curzon's dismissal.

In the spring of 1905, while the Home Government in Whitehall had debated the merits of whether or not the Commander-in-Chief should be the sole military adviser to the Government of India, Kitchener remained extremely impatient. He constantly chafed over the repeated delays, and grumbled at his treatment by Curzon's Council. Moreover he knew that to be decisive in any conflict, he must apply pressure at the correct psychological moment and at a definite goal; thus he was uncompromising in his efforts to destroy Elles and the Military Department, using his Cabinet friends as a restraining influence on Curzon's policy. Curzon did

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1. See Balfour to Kitchener, 3 December 1903, Balfour MSS 49726.  
2. Godley to Sandars, 22 August 1905, Balfour MSS 49857.

not perceive this, and thought only that Kitchener should be a lion in action and a dog in obedience. As Kitchener emphatically stated: "It is quite impossible for Elles and I to remain - so one must go, I don't care very much which - it is a dog's life as it is."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless with the passage of time Kitchener sensed that the Cabinet strongly desired to avoid Curzon's resignation, and he accordingly regulated his conduct in the light of that inference. But he had "very grave doubts"<sup>2</sup> that the case would go in his favour, though in the meantime, work in the Military Departments had come to a "standstill".<sup>3</sup>

News of the Cabinet decision however was secretly telegraphed by R.J. Marker who had left India after being jilted by Mary Curzon's sister. Marker had been appointed Private Secretary to H.O. Arnold-Forster, and Kitchener described that appointment as "very lucky - as through him anything can be safely transmitted to me. I pay for all telegrams, so they are private and absolutely safe." He did not know that Curzon was empowered through his security regulations to have inspection copies produced of all private or secret telegrams<sup>4</sup> and that he was therefore roughly aware of Kitchener's intrigues. When, in March, Kitchener had

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 9 March 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  2. Ibid., 17 May 1905.
  3. Ibid., 25 May 1905.
  4. Magnus, Kitchener, p.215.

facetiously reported to Lady Salisbury (14 March 1905) the course of action Brodrick should adopt, he suggested, significantly, that Elles should disappear with a G.C.I.E.; and Brodrick acted accordingly in his secret Despatch (no.67 of 31 May) proposing Elles' premature retirement, and recommending that he would get a G.C.I.E. in acknowledgement of his services.<sup>1</sup> Both Elles and Curzon termed that Despatch an "unmerited indignity" especially as it proffered a "money compensation for premature retirement."<sup>2</sup> But at that point both Curzon and Elles were helpless.

On 29 June Elles took the trouble to write to Brodrick<sup>3</sup> saying that he was prepared to resign at any time in the public interest, but protesting that he thought he might well have been spared Despatch no.67. Brodrick replied that although it was impossible to cancel that Despatch, he had no intention "to give you pain"; and that the pecuniary provisions were necessary, as his resignation was to be submitted to the King on 30 September, and the King had already sanctioned the G.C.I.E. on his retirement from office. Ordinarily, this information, apart from its personal content, would not be important. In this case, however, it was disclosed to the press, emphasising the fact that Brodrick had required Elles to resign by a certain date.

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 19 June and 16 July 1905.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 17 July 1905.
  3. Enclosed in Elles to Curzon, 13 August 1905.

(That information was alluded to and commented on in precise terms by the Times of India (30 June 1905) and the Pioneer Mail (2 July 1905) and was noticed in telegrams to England by Reuter on 22 June and 27 July.) These disclosures became an additional topic for the heated exchange of telegrams between Brodrick and Curzon, and produced unfortunate subsequent effects on the controversy, for they served to deepen the affront to Elles' services.

Kitchener had next suggested that Curzon's face would be saved and his mind eased if the Commander-in-Chief were given a deputy whose principal duty would be to stay out of harm's way on the outbreak of war, and to hold and stroke Curzon's hand, adding that the post could be abolished when Curzon relinquished his Viceroyalty.<sup>1</sup> When Brodrick had supplied Curzon with General Scott, whom Curzon termed "a disembowelled Military Member" given him "to prevent me from resigning",<sup>2</sup> Curzon predicted that the new Member "will be found to be so useless", "a fifth wheel in the coach" that the new organisation would break down irretrievably "like most of Brodrick's creations."<sup>3</sup>

Following the receipt of Brodrick's Despatch in India on 18 June, Kitchener was relieved to find that Curzon

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 14 March 1905; Magnus, Kitchener, p.217.
  2. Curzon to Clinton Dawkins, 21 June 1905.
  3. Ibid.

regarded the Cabinet's decision as a resounding defeat. But Lady Salisbury chided Hubert Hamilton, Kitchener's Military Secretary, that Kitchener should be well satisfied in having obtained all the he required: "They all say, 'K. is so sensible; he will see he has got what he wanted, and will go ahead in comfort',"<sup>1</sup> and that his friends at home were, in consequence, well pleased. But after digesting Brodrick's Despatch, Kitchener told Lady Salisbury (22 June 1905) that the decision was less favourable than he had anticipated.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he was at great pains to obtain copies of what had transpired in the proceedings of Brodrick's secret Committee, though he was willing to look for the best in the 31 May decision, and "make it a success in spite of all Curzon can do to wreck it."<sup>3</sup>

Kitchener's interpretation of events led him as we have seen to believe that though willing to throw over Elles, the Cabinet were reluctant to disrupt things further and to recall the Viceroy. According to Kitchener, Curzon opened the interview on 25 June (see supra. p.375) by threatening to resign at once unless Kitchener would recommend that Brodrick accept certain modifications in the new arrangement. As Curzon enumerated his points, Kitchener saw that they were matters of trivial detail and realised "the puerile and

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1. Lady Salisbury to Hubert Hamilton, 1 June 1905, Magnus, Kitchener, p.219.
  2. Ibid., 22 June 1905, Magnus, Kitchener, p.219.
  3. Kitchener to Marker, 22 June 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

quite unimportant nature of the Viceroy's demands..."<sup>1</sup>  
 Kitchener thereupon agreed to associate himself with Curzon. The discussion then grew warm and, finally, heated on the subject of the title of the new Member. Curzon contended that the Military Supply Member should revert to his former title of Military Member and he threatened to resign within the hour unless Kitchener promised to ask Brodrick's assent to this. He then flopped into a sofa and appeared to burst into tears.<sup>2</sup>

"I was rather upset ... after over an hour of very straight talking ... he suddenly gave in & collapsed & in the excitement of the moment I said I would associate myself with him ... afterwards I regretted what I had said but I could not get back in it without another row & he would certainly have gone back on the title question had I done so, so I left it alone. I hope it was not misunderstood at home but it made me anxious."<sup>3</sup>

Kitchener had in fact given way: "I hope," he wrote to Sir Edward Stedman (26 June 1905) "Mr. Brodrick will approve of my attitude in this matter. I have done everything possible (perhaps too much) to conciliate the Viceroy and prevent a crisis. I have had a pistol held to my head which I really believe was loaded, as he is very much upset at the terms of the despatch and his loss of prestige."<sup>4</sup> He confessed to Marker:

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 6 July 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.219.
  3. Kitchener to Marker, 6 July 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  4. Kitchener to Stedman, 26 June 1905, India Office Records, Private Office File, MSS 374.

"I think I have been right in keeping Curzon from resigning on this question at the present stage; it would have done the Government a good deal of harm & however much a change of Viceroy would be advantageous, I do not think that it was advisable in the papers as they stand ..."<sup>1</sup>

To Lady Salisbury, Kitchener wrote (6 July 1905):

"I wonder whether I have done what Mr. Balfour would have wished in keeping Curzon from resigning? ... I can well understand that there are several matters in connection with Afghanistan which would have made a change of Viceroy advantageous; but looking at the whole position of affairs, I could not help coming to the conclusion that Curzon's resignation at this juncture would do the Government harm... I made one slip of the tongue in these negotiations, which I much regretted afterwards, as I was afraid it might be misunderstood by my friends at home. After an hour and a half storming at Curzon about the title of Military Dept., which he insisted on and I strongly objected to, he suddenly gave way and collapsed. I was so surprised that I said in that case I would associate myself with him in obtaining his puerile requests ... I could not go back on what I had said without upsetting everything again ... and I therefore left it alone, trusting my friends would not dream for a moment that I had been disloyal to them in any way ... I could have bitten my tongue out for making such a stupid remark. I suppose I was rather excited by the discussion. I was prancing up and down his room, talking to him very straight on the subject. I told him if he insisted on the title, everyone would know what he meant by it, and that he did not intend to loyally carry out the decision of the Govt.; and when he collapsed I rather lost my head. Mea culpa! I hope, however, I am forgiven. Please let me know if I am. It has been a trying time..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 6 July 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 6 July 1905. Magnus, Kitchener, pp.220-21.

Kitchener was much troubled about that incident; he wrote to Lord Stanley (1865-1948), Financial Secretary to the War Office:

"The only tip I had was yours, to let him down easy ... Even before I got downstairs I felt I had made a mistake, but has no one ever said more than he intended? ... Had he gone, on the dispatch, he would have had much sympathy, both here and at home, and might have done a good deal of harm. No retort about his conduct in Tibet and Afghanistan would have been possible, as these had been condoned, and it would have widened the discussion to a considerable extent. He would have appeared as a martyr to the cause of constitutional government."<sup>1</sup>

Following that meeting, at which Kitchener's tactical mistake encouraged Curzon in the belief that he had won significant concessions, Curzon consulted Elles and General Duff informing them as we have seen that Kitchener had signified his assent to all the modifications of the scheme which the Viceroy placed before him. These were embodied in a draft and re-submitted to Kitchener on the following day, and he replied that though he could not say he considered them improvements on Brodrick's original despatch "there are none which I am not willing to accept in deference to your wishes."<sup>2</sup> But the evidence in the Curzon papers clearly reveals that Kitchener openly deluded the Viceroy whilst privately enlisting support at home.<sup>3</sup> That concealment had

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1. Kitchener to Lord Stanley, undated, ca. July 1905, Kitchener MSS 30/57/32. Magnus, Kitchener, p.220.
  2. Kitchener to Curzon, 26 June 1905.
  3. See Curzon's letters to Amphyll, especially 12 August 1905.

its effect, for in masking his real intention, Kitchener placed Curzon in a false position. Skilfully adapting himself to the circumstances Kitchener secretly waited for Curzon to 'put his foot in it': "it will be all the worse for him when it all comes out - as it must."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon however made no attempt to conceal that he would insist upon a second Military Adviser to the Government Of India, or resign.<sup>2</sup> It was upon that point that Kitchener's subterfuge, promising the Viceroy one thing whilst privately telegraphing another, undermined the Viceroy's position. That however was only to be expected.

On 1 July Balfour announced his Government's decision accepting the joint modifications; this was confirmed by Brodrick on 5 July, subject only to an official announcement 'in the press whereby the Government would comment on the precise terms of the modifications. But Brodrick delayed that announcement and the whole settlement of the question lingered, causing acute anxiety. As head of the Indian Government, Curzon felt his "public position" was left "in suspense" and that he was under some obligation to explain the situation and what was happening at a meeting of the Legislative Council to be held in Simla on 13 July.<sup>3</sup> That meeting, owing to

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 24 August 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
  2. Curzon to Balfour, Telegram, 26 June 1905.
  3. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 13 July 1905.

Brodrick's delay in announcing the settlement in Parliament, was postponed until 18 July. Curzon at that time restated the situation "to inform the Indian public of that which they had a right and were equally anxious to know."<sup>1</sup> In his speech on the 18th Curzon deliberately announced that he had succeeded in obtaining a number of important modifications;

"We have converted the position of the Military Supply Member into one of greater efficacy and utility. We have very considerably strengthened the guarantees for civil supervision and control."<sup>2</sup>

The astonished India Office promptly cabled a request for Curzon to telegraph, en clair, the full text of that speech home;<sup>3</sup> Kitchener, who was extremely sensitive to the charge of military autocracy wrote to Lady Salisbury:

"Curzon has, I think, given himself away by his very improper speech. I wonder what action the Government will take - he is evidently at their mercy."<sup>4</sup>

But Curzon's speech was, in fact, regarded in India as a simple explanation of what had taken place and of the nature of the modifications of Brodrick's scheme. The Times of India the following day characterised it as "a restrained and almost colourless statement" setting forth the proposals which the Cabinet had accepted. It added that Curzon was "studiously moderate" in handling the exceedingly thorny

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 20 July 1905.
  2. Speech at Legislative Council, Simla, 18 July 1905. Speeches, op.cit., IV, pp.129-136.
  3. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 19 July 1905.
  4. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 20 July 1905. Magnus, Kitchener, p.221.

question, and rejoiced that the controversy had been so far satisfactorily settled and that there were to be no resignations.<sup>1</sup> Curzon then claimed the right to nominate, according to custom, the new Military Member of Council in succession to Elles. Because strong representations had been made by Kitchener's partisans that Curzon was trying to wreck Brodrick's scheme and revive the old system,<sup>2</sup> Brodrick refused to admit Curzon's claim, or to accept his interpretation of the so-called modifications. The Secretary of State in fact refused to appoint Major-General Sir Edmund Barrow because he knew that Kitchener would object. But he informed the King that there were three grounds for Barrow's rejection; first that he was holding an important military command at that moment; second that his services might thereafter be required in a still more important one; and finally that as he had served for eight years in the Military Department, the natural result of his appointment would be to re-establish the old system. Moreover on 12 July he told the King that Curzon had made the appointment of Barrow a personal matter in forcing his views on the Cabinet.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Times of India, 19 July 1905.

2. See Balfour MSS 49857 for extracts of two unsigned letters marked 'strictly private' dated Simla, 13 and 20 July 1905. In all probability these letters were written by Kitchener's private secretary, Col. Hubert Hamilton, to Major R.J. Marker at the War Office - see Kitchener to Marker, 24 August 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

3. Brodrick to Edward VII, 12 July 1905; Lee, Edward VII, II, p.378.

On 14 July Brodrick reversed his ground and cabled that Curzon had "misapprehended" the Cabinet's orders and intention,<sup>1</sup> and meanwhile insisted that the term 'Supply', which Kitchener had agreed to drop, should be restored to the title of Elles' successor. Curzon, in the light of these proceedings and now in a state of health bordering on collapse, was goaded to desperation. He was told by Brodrick that the sole responsibility of making the appointment rested with the India Office; that Barrow was unacceptable to the Cabinet as he could "hardly be expected to inaugurate the new system with an open mind"; and that he must now "consult Kitchener as to who in his opinion" was the man best qualified for the post and to "let me have his views". Finally, Brodrick imparted his extreme reluctance in "having greatly against our will been forced to deal with this vexed question of Army Administration."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener, in the meantime, well aware of Curzon's desire for Barrow to fill the new post, had told Marker: "I think highly of Barrow but ..." his appointment as Supply Member would be "unwise".<sup>3</sup> He reported (on 10 August 1905) to Lady Salisbury a second painful interview which he had had with Curzon five days earlier:

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1. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 14 July 1905.

2. Ibid., 4 August 1905.

3. Kitchener to Marker, 13 July 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

"He said he would resign, and I said he must do what he thought right, and so I left him. Next day I got a letter from Eddy Stanley telling me what misrepresentations the Viceroy has been making in secret telegrams about my views. I was angry. I always thought his misrepresentations were about the so-called modifications, and it never occurred to me that he could have told such unwarrantable lies about my views of the whole scheme... I do not now believe a word he says, and I hope neither you nor any of my friends will do so in the future; and to think that, out of pity for the man when he was down, I could be fool enough to make such a gross mistake - it makes me wild.

"I am so glad it is understood at home that I have not been disloyal to my friends. If I only had not made that one mistake I should feel quite happy."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon did not in fact misrepresent Kitchener's views when the Commander-in-Chief said that Barrow was acceptable to him.<sup>2</sup> This is proved by independent evidence, for although Kitchener desired to nominate General Duff, "he could not object" to Barrow and 'twigged' the Viceroy into believing he accepted Barrow. Kitchener, in deceiving Curzon, saw this advantage: it prevented any new appointment being actually made in a hurry, and thus "would give time to our friends at home to realise what is going on, and if needs be step in and defeat Curzon's schemes."<sup>3</sup> But Kitchener compounded the bitterness of the Viceroy's defeat by being caught out by Curzon at his own game. In their second

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 10 August 1905, in Magnus, Kitchener, p.222.
  2. See Curzon to Balfour, 21 September 1905.
  3. See Balfour MSS 49857, for extract of letter dated 13 July 1905, and above, p.373 n.2.

interview, on 5 August, Kitchener abused Barrow and threatened resignation "if the Military Supply Member ever ventured to criticise him." Then, according to Curzon, Kitchener "lost all command of himself, raged and blustered, and eventually stalked out of the room, not however before he had mentioned as his ideal Military Supply Member a dear, placid old dummy named General Scott, Director-General of Ordnance..."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the dispute with Kitchener was made bitterly personal when Kitchener represented that Curzon deliberately misconstrued his views about the new role of the Military Supply Member. Curzon maintained that, if His Majesty's Government wished him to remain in India in order to undertake the difficult task of introducing a new military system, he was entitled to inaugurate that system with the aid of a satisfactory colleague "in whose experience, judgement, and ability I have fullest confidence". Furthermore, Brodrick's refusal to grant Curzon the assistance of "the officer whom I hold to be preeminently suited for the task" denied him the support from the Home Government which "in these circumstances I may reasonably expect."<sup>2</sup> His expectations were sadly disappointed when Kitchener repudiated the fact that he had initially agreed to Barrow's selection.

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1. Curzon to Amptill, 12 August 1905.

2. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 2 August 1905; see also Ibid., 10 August 1905.

An angry correspondence ensued in the course of which Curzon alleged that the Commander-in-Chief had seen and accepted a Minute signed by the head of the Ordnance Department, regarding the numbers of men who would, in future, be directly under the Commander-in-Chief's office. On 26 August, for the second time, Kitchener denied ever seeing that Minute:

"I beg to reiterate my assertion that I never saw these numbers, and I have carefully inquired from my staff who state they have never had any knowledge of them. In these circumstances I must leave it to you to say whether you adhere to your statement that I did see these figures..."<sup>1</sup>

To Kitchener's intense surprise, Curzon refused to accept that denial, and wrote that he had found that the note containing the figures "was included in the file sent to you, and was marked with a green strip, to which your attention was specially drawn ... in the margin of the same page on which you noted in ink."<sup>2</sup>

That assertion virtually accused the Commander-in-Chief of lying and Kitchener told Lady Salisbury:

"Curzon has rather surpassed himself, I think, by writing me the last letter of the enclosed correspondence. In old days I suppose I should have called him out on it and shot him like a dog for his grossly insulting letter. All I can do now is to have nothing more to do with

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1. Kitchener to Curzon, 26 August 1905.
  2. Curzon to Kitchener, 26 August 1905. There appears to be a slight error as to the date of Curzon's letter to Kitchener; Magnus tells us 28 August; see Kitchener, p.223.

him ... Everyone knows I never saw the paper in question - not through any carelessness of mine, but because it was hid away in a big file which was referred to me on a different question (which I answered), without any reference to this paper having been placed at the bottom of the file. I am going away on tour, to be clear of the whole thing. It all seems to be so low and disgusting."<sup>1</sup>

In the same letter he asked that Balfour should be informed of this insult to him. Magnus writes: "Never at home among files", Kitchener "had been let down on that occasion by his staff."<sup>2</sup>

Though Kitchener superficially signified that he was "deeply grieved at the news of Curzon's resignation",<sup>3</sup> he insisted against Curzon's protest, that their correspondence be published in the press, in association with a White Paper containing the telegrams which had passed between Curzon and Brodrick.<sup>4</sup>

The India Office, as we have seen, had carefully gone over the papers it wished to publish with Buckle of The Times and on Monday, 21 August that paper published (for the first time) the complete contents of a Parliamentary bluebook,<sup>5</sup> portions of which the Government of India had

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 30 August 1905, in Magnus, Kitchener, p.223.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Kitchener to Curzon, 21 August 1905.
  4. Magnus, Kitchener, p.223. See Parliamentary Papers Cd. 2615, (published in July 1905).
  5. The Times, 21 August 1905, published the further correspondence contained in Cd. 2718 (published in August 1905) - a skilful feat of journalism.

never before seen, viz. (1) The terms of reference of Brodrick's Secret Committee of Seven; (2) The Report of 26 May; (3) The Report of Godley's Sub-Committee of 8 May, as well as sixteen of the crucial telegrams which Brodrick and Curzon exchanged on the question of modifications.<sup>1</sup> The India Office acted with a notable promptitude that was not the least tragic touch in this most controversial question, unjustly blaming Curzon for the publication of the official papers.

Thereupon The Times fell upon Curzon for his share in the deplorable and "unedifying spectacle of two of our most distinguished public servants ... openly engaged in heated personal altercation" asserting that the "paramount consideration of the welfare of India ought to have dictated a cessation of public controversy and repressed the promptings of personal indignation... necessarily injurious to the interests of India."<sup>2</sup> But as Chirol remarked, (24 August 1905) the India Office firmly supported by The Times, had "already committed itself so deeply on the question of Army Administration that ... they were able to secure the tactical advantages of position." "How galling it must be to you that such scurvy treatment has been dealt out to you by men who claim to be your own personal and political friends."<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Times, 21 August 1905, published the further correspondence contained in Cd. 2718 (published in August 1905) - a skilful feat of journalism.
  2. The Times, 28 August 1905.
  3. Chirol to Curzon, 24 August 1905.

The announcement of Curzon's resignation and the appointment of Lord Minto as Viceroy were both made on 21 August 1905.<sup>1</sup>

Curzon has been mistakenly accused of sacrificing principle to expediency and then "characteristically, resigning on a personal issue."<sup>2</sup> The question may be asked 'did Curzon compromise over the question of principle and then resign on a purely personal issue?' He did not. We have seen that when the change was forced on his Government in the 31 May Despatch he agreed to it on condition that a second military adviser would be appointed. On 5 August Kitchener verbally assented to the appointment of Barrow. At the same time however, Kitchener privately cabled (6 August) to the War Office saying that Barrow was quite unfit. That information was confidentially circulated by Brodrick to the Cabinet on 7 August behind Curzon's back.<sup>3</sup> A month later Curzon asserted that Kitchener "did accept Barrow, absolutely frankly, and without demur. Ask Barrow, whom he sent for and talked to for an hour about the new billet ... Kitchener subsequently lied about this as he did about the other points ... one of my difficulties has been that I have been dealing with a man who has not a regard for truth, and who

1. The Times, 21 August 1905.

2. See Magnus, Kitchener, p.222; Chirol, V., Fifty Years in a Changing World, p.228 and Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, p.18.

3. See Cabinet Records 37/79/144.

has been pursuing in the background a campaign of which I am only gradually beginning to learn the ramifications."<sup>1</sup>

Clearly a plot against Curzon was going on and ~~that~~ Army Headquarters in India hoped he would be driven to resign. Rather than resign immediately, in which case he would have had strong support in India and at home, Curzon merely played his cards badly, as Winston Churchill later explained to W.S.Blunt:

"Curzon ought then to have called on Kitchener to explain himself, accused him of being the liar and intriguer he was, and reported the whole thing to the India Office, when it would have been Kitchener who would have had to resign."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon then, had played the game straight - that was always his greatest strength - and had lost. But these circumstances explain why in 1952 Harold Nicolson wrote:

"To the end of his life he remained convinced that the Cabinet, and especially his old friend ... had treated him shamefully. After seven years as Viceroy he returned to England an angry and embittered man."<sup>3</sup>

#### (5) The Bitterness of Defeat.

Curzon's administration, and his desperate struggle with Kitchener, left the public in England and India a little breathless; the press of both countries wisely recognised

1. Curzon to Chirol, 14 September 1905.
2. Churchill to W.S.Blunt, 2 October 1909; Blunt, W.S., My Diaries, Part II, pp.286-7.
3. Nicolson, H., King George the Fifth: His Life and Reign, p.84, n.1.

that further discussion would only prolong a bitter and unprofitable controversy. This is not to say that, following Curzon's resignation, the trouble between the Viceroy and the Cabinet on the one hand, and the educated Bengali community on the other was without its after-effects. Curzon's personality and political attitude were such that he became a natural target for repeated criticism. As Dr. McLane suggests,<sup>1</sup> grievances in India against the Viceroy had been brewing for many months. Probably the fact was that the Nationalists set themselves impossible goals, and when they failed to achieve them they had to blame someone. It was not unlike Curzon in these circumstances to indulge in some self-pity and his correspondence bears witness to his sensitivity - his troubles, trials and sacrifices. He spoke as though having to work with the Home Government was the worst burden that could ever be imposed on a man and referred to the India Council as "... that body, who for years have truly strewn my path with thorns."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, apart from these circumstances the immediate source of Curzon's bitterness stemmed from Kitchener's tactics. Indeed following the Viceroy's resignation, Kitchener became extremely anxious lest his secret telegrams to the Cabinet, via Marker at the War Office, be published.

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1. J.R.McLane, The Development of Nationalist Ideas and Tactics and the Policies of the Government of India, 1899-1905, Ph.D. thesis, 1961, London. pp.136-54; 345-51.
  2. Curzon to Sir David Barr, 7 September 1905. See also Edwardes, M., High Noon of Empire: India Under Curzon, pp.165-6; 205-15.

He informed Lady Salisbury his

"position was that I had told the Viceroy, if no change in army administration was allowed, that I wished to resign my command. Under these circumstances I think it was only natural that I should keep my friends informed of how things went on, and of my views; and I looked upon these telegrams exactly the same as private letters."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener feared that Curzon might use those telegrams against him and urged Lady Salisbury to curry Royal intervention as:

"this would be very unpleasant and should be stopped:... The only person I know of who would be likely to influence him would be the King, and if Curzon is desperate it might be as well to invoke his aid; as if I have to justify my action in public it will do no possible good, but will, I fear, only tend to lower our public life at home and abroad."<sup>2</sup>

Lowering the tone of English public life was not an action for which Kitchener had just cause to reproach Curzon for. Moreover the King, under strong pressure from Brodrick and Balfour, was forced to withhold an honour for the Viceroy's services, awaiting Curzon's attack; but in the absence of papers, and while misfortunes were heaped upon Curzon's head, the public were kept in the dark as to what had happened. The telegrams were never published.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, Kitchener's employment of the press and his political lobbying at home paid off in rich dividends,

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1. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 2 November 1905, in Magnus, Kitchener, p.224.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

securing for him the object he sought in his struggle over Indian army administration. In congratulating his conspirators in England "for all you have done so well",<sup>1</sup> he laid particular stress that his secret correspondence with Stedman be destroyed, telling Marker to "see that anything I have told him privately is not left on record - Curzon is excited..."<sup>2</sup> He characterised Curzon as an "unscrupulous" person and further asked Marker to "explain to the press that I hope they will not believe any statements he [Curzon] may make about me and my views or intentions for he is quite sure to misrepresent them. I shall certainly not answer anything he says - If he takes this line I hope you will arrange for a douche of cold water coming on him from all round..."<sup>3</sup> (Kitchener despatched, among others, letters to L.S. Amery in an attempt to prepare against what he believed would be Curzon's public onslaught, and asserted that it would "take some time" before the Viceroy would "find his level after ruling out here as a potentate.")<sup>4</sup>

Curzon was not content however, to allow the matter to rest. His spirit was deeply wounded by the blows it had received, He, like Kitchener, was temperamentally unsuited to brook any limitation of his powers or authority.<sup>5</sup> Was the

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1. Kitchener to Marker, 22 June 1905, Marker MSS 52276.

2. Ibid., 1 June 1905.

3. Ibid., 21 September 1905; see also L.S. Amery, op.cit., pp. 208-9.

4. Ibid.

5. See Edwardes, M., op.cit., pp. 223-5.

assumption of this attitude one of vanity or the result of circumstances? Perhaps it would be well to examine the irritants which contributed their share to the malaise which followed the bitterness of his defeat. The weakness of the Viceroy's case was that he attached too great an importance on autonomy for the Government of India - on the 'functional' composition of his Council, and too little to the 'structural' anomalies of India's system and thus the Commander-in-Chief's position in it. Functional diseases have subjective, pathological causes while structural disease is often characterised by objective, material causes. The etiology or derivation of the irritants which caused this state are not hard to discover, and include the paralysis of the Home Government created by the Russian scare; the threat of military dictatorship in India; the quest for some recognition of Curzon's services and, significantly the potent epidemic of unrest occasioned by the partition of Bengal.

The first factor was the Russian bogey, the cause of British imperialism in Central Asia. By the early spring of 1905 it was evident that Russian defeats in the Far East had greatly allayed the threat of invasion to India. Inasmuch as the Viceroy and his Council objected to altering India's administration, the broad fact remains that the Commander-in-Chief's scheme for redistributing the Indian army was dealt with by the Government of India, and passed within a matter of a few months, refuting per se the

suggestion of deliberate obstruction on the part of the Military Department. Why then had the Secretary of State forced this change on an unwilling Viceroy and his Council? The answer lies in the way in which Kitchener's threats shaped events. The primary aim of the Home Government in these circumstances should have been diagnosis rather than therapy. Obviously diagnosis must precede therapy. But since the diagnosticians who approached the problem differed in their background and experience it was only to be expected that they would also disagree in their evaluation of the symptoms. Part of the evidence suppressed by Brodrick contains two significant documents which he chose to ignore, but which throw some light on these proceedings. On 11 May 1905, Roberts had written: "If friction exists ... the remedy seems to me to lie in a clear definition and apportionment" of the respective duties of Commander-in-Chief and Military Member, "rather than in the amputation of the Military Membership of Council."<sup>1</sup> But by far the most trenchant document was put forward by Sir George White, Commander-in-Chief in India from 1893-1898. He argued that Indian army administration had been altered by Kitchener with a view to the likelihood of a serious Russian menace. But in consequence this was not the case:

"Russia, in her present condition, will scarcely court ... war with England by sea and land. I

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1. Roberts, Note on Indian Army Administration, 11 May 1905, copy in Minto MSS 895.

bring forward these considerations to show that the advance of Russia is not of increased imminence, and that, therefore, an argument based on it does not, at the present time, seem to justify a hasty rush into violent and untried remedies. Indeed, I go so far as to state that the immediate crisis has been created by a servant of the State, though, I am confident, he believes his action to be in the interests of that State."<sup>1</sup>

So upset was Ripon by the surrender to Kitchener over the 'Russian scare' that he told Campbell-Bannerman ~~that~~ Brodrick's handling of India's affairs "shows once more his unfitness to be Secretary of State ... he has got the whole thing into such a muddle that it will be very difficult to get it right again", with the result that "the military element is triumphant; the civil element discredited. This is a great misfortune", for no doubt the Viceroy had made mistakes, and the two masterful men were thinking only of themselves, "Brodrick was totally unfitted to deal with such people and India will suffer."<sup>2</sup> A fierce feud now took place between what the India Office termed the 'Curzonians' and what Morley called the 'Kitchenerites'; The Curzonians

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1. Sir George White, 17 May 1905, *Ibid.* It is interesting to note that a week later, on 25 May, White's former Military Secretary from 1895-9, Sir B. Duff (1855-1918), then Adjutant General in India (1903-6), implored White to help abolish the Military Department and thus support Kitchener in his struggle against Curzon. Ironically, when Duff later became Commander-in-Chief of India (1913-6), the system he advocated in 1905 collapsed in 1915-6 under his command. See Duff to White, White MSS 108/109/68.
  2. Ripon to Campbell-Bannerman, 3 September 1905, Ripon MSS 43518.

believed that the position of the Commander-in-Chief would be over-centralised and thus over-burdened with work, while the Kitchenerites felt that the Commander-in-Chief alone must be the absolute adviser and military head of the Government of India. Divergence over cure soon became crystallised along party lines.

The new Liberal Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, addressed a large meeting in the Albert Hall on the evening of 21 December 1905. There he declared that though it was wise not to violate the rule of keeping questions of the internal administration of India outside the arena of party politics, it was the late Viceroy himself who was the most unsparing critic of the late Government's decision "so tactlessly handled, so recklessly published", and that the country "may be assured that we shall make ourselves party to no steps that involve any invasion of the sacred principle - for it is a principle recognised by each party throughout the realm of the King - the sacred principle of the subordination of the military to the civil authority."<sup>1</sup> Campbell-Bannerman's views were shared by many of the rank and file of the Liberal Party, particularly by Ripon, the

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1. Reported in The Times on 22 December 1905, speech by Campbell-Bannerman in the Albert Hall, 21 December 1905.

distinguished ex-Viceroy.<sup>1</sup> That view reflected a classic statement made by John Morley in a speech at Arbroath on 23 October 1905; he asserted that the Viceroy had been "chased out of power" by a military conspiracy, and hastened to add:

"If there is one principle more than another which has been accepted in this country since the day when Charles I lost his head, it is this - that the civil power shall be supreme over the military power. That is what you will find in the India Office - they have been guilty of this great dereliction, this great departure from these standard maxims of public administration which have been practically sacred in this island ever since the days of the Civil War."<sup>2</sup>

Curzon now had found support for his constitutional claim, provided by statute - namely, the Charter Act of 1833 - that the Government of India shall keep intact control over all military affairs in India; Kitchener's triumph had established a military autocracy in the person of the

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1. Curzon had taken the trouble to acquaint Ripon with his views; see Curzon to Ripon, 30 August 1905. Ripon assured him that his own views were "entertained generally by the Liberal Party", Ripon to Curzon, 20 September 1905. In addition Curzon wrote to R.B. Haldane on 12 July and 11 October 1905 and Lord Sandhurst, 24 August in whom he found some support, though only temporary. Ripon always remained Kitchener's most hostile critic; see Ripon to Morley, 17 & 25 October 1907, Ripon MSS 43541.
  2. See The Times, 24 October 1905, and Morley, J., Recollections, II, p.138.

Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup> Balfour's Government dismissed those charges and condemned Curzon's actions as arising from personal pique. They rightly saw that after seven years of

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1. Possibly it is worth while to recall the problem of civil-military relations in India, for the subordination of civil authority to military control has been somewhat neglected by historians. Once the boulder of civil control has been overthrown, and military authority established, many other events are set in motion. Traditionally Great Britain is an example where civil power controls military: considered sound and right. While, theoretically, Imperial Germany became the tragic example where military policy ran away with civil control: considered wrong. Why are these traditional views significant? Three suggestions present themselves: (1) Civil authority alone must be responsible to the state for the conduct of its affairs (i.e. in India, the Viceroy as the King Emperor's representative, and his Council, supported by the Secretary of State in Council and by Parliament, must face Indian and British public opinion, not their Generals). (2) Proportion and perspective in handling defence (frontier and external) policies must weigh more heavily on statesmen concerned with reconciling national interests than on soldiers exclusively concerned with preparing for the threat of aggression. (Kitchener subsequently created a momentous precedent by attempting to revolutionise Indian policy by his allegation that the Government of India was neither qualified to handle questions of India's external policy, nor Parliament knowledgeable enough to manage military affairs.) Conceding such questions solely to a Commander-in-Chief could precipitate national disaster. (3) Only a civil authority can direct and integrate all the moral and economic resources of a nation where possibly a military authority might prove helpless. (Moreover it was only later, when he filled the supreme post, that Kitchener's unsuitability for it became apparent when on 5 August 1914, he became Minister for War. See 'The Kitchener Legend', Times Literary Supplement, 31 October 1958; also Jenkins, R., Asquith, p.383).

constant toil, his strength and health were in a state of collapse. Nevertheless they witnessed, because of his willing sacrifice of what he conceived his public duty, his free abuse in the English press; finally they markedly added to his sense of isolation and despair by withholding any official recognition of his services.

Curzon was well aware that it was the usual practice for the Sovereign to honour a returning Viceroy for his services, either by a step in the Peerage, or by the Knighthood of the Garter or otherwise. Notable exceptions to this custom had occurred, and several Governors-General and Viceroy had become the victims of Parliamentary Enquiry; Clive consequently taking his own life, while Warren Hastings returned after 13 years in India to endure impeachment proceedings. In fact King Edward made strong representations to his ministers on Curzon's retirement, and on 1 September Knollys cabled to Balfour that

"The King desires me to inform you that he thinks Viceroy of India should be offered an Earldom at once. He hopes that considering Viceroy of India's character such an offer made immediately might soothe his feelings."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Curzon did not receive his Earldom until 1911, and he was to wait another five years before being offered a Knighthood of the Garter in the New Year's Honours List of 1916.<sup>2</sup> In that way the bitterness of Curzon's defeat was

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1. Knollys to Balfour, Telegram, 1 September 1905, Balfour MSS 49685.  
2. Ronaldshay, Curzon, III, p.137.

augmented by the Government's pointed neglect of his services in India.

At the same time Brodrick was exceedingly active in countering opposition from Curzon. This was indirectly related to the question of the Partition of Bengal, as we shall see. In August he laid before his Cabinet colleagues several of Kitchener's secret communications which had "reached a Member of the Cabinet from a private source."<sup>1</sup> In these, Kitchener repudiated the statements he had openly made to Curzon and pleaded "In meantime please ask friends not to believe anything Viceroy says regarding me or my views."<sup>2</sup> Brodrick followed up this information by asking Curzon to "please say at what date you would like Ampthill to replace you pending Lord Minto's arrival?"<sup>3</sup> In conference with Minto and Balfour in London, Brodrick decided on the infeasibility of attempting to introduce the proposed changes in military organisation while Curzon remained in India, and to adjourn their introduction pending Minto's arrival.<sup>4</sup>

In view of the impending visit of the Prince of Wales to India, however, the King desired that Minto and Curzon

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1. It is quite probable that these telegrams were sent by Kitchener to Marker who in turn gave them to Lord Stanly (17th Earl of Derby, 1865-1948, the Financial Secretary of the War Office 1900 - October 1903, Post-Master General with a seat in the Cabinet October 1903 - November 1905), and then given to Brodrick.
  2. Cabinet Records, 7 August 1905, 37/79/144.
  3. Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 19 August 1905.
  4. Ibid., 11 September 1905.

would confer in person regarding those changes, and Sir W.R. Lawrence, Curzon's ex-private secretary and friend, helped facilitate that end at Balmoral.<sup>1</sup> Though Brodrick did his best to prevent these arrangements, the King pushed them through, and Curzon wrote to Minto that "conversations between an incoming and an outgoing Viceroy is absolutely indispensable to continuity of administration ... Brodrick's one desire seems to have been to prevent us from meeting and to hustle me out."<sup>2</sup> He told Lawrence:

"That splendid King intervened and pulled everything out of the fire. Brodrick fought as he has done all through to humiliate me. He did not want me to receive their Royal Highnesses as Viceroy. He did not want me to receive Minto ... This was his last spiteful kick."<sup>3</sup>

The action of the Home Government led to some unpleasantness between the King and his Ministers, or so one gathers from Esher's letters to Knollys concerning the Government's publication of the Curzon correspondence printed in The Times on 21 August. In trying to defend their position, the authority of the King was not obtained before action was taken, and Esher wrote:

"I cannot imagine how the Government permitted this correspondence, and also the Curzon-Brodrick correspondence to be printed. Especially without the leave of the Sovereign..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. See Brodrick to Curzon, Telegrams, 11,14,19,22,23,26,29, and 30 September 1905).
  2. Curzon to Minto, 5 October 1905.
  3. Curzon to Lawrence, 5 October 1905.
  4. See Esher to Knollys, 28 August 1905, Esher, Journals, II, p.103.

The King indeed opposed prolongation of controversy and wrote to Brodrick:

"I am most anxious to avoid doing anything which might tend to further hurt Lord Curzon's feelings, and would welcome any means which would gratify him and soften the circumstances under which he is leaving India."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's hostility to Curzon was by now indefatigable and he told Balfour that Indian affairs were falling into helpless arrears whilst the Viceroy conducted the "show business" of the Royal Tour.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly Balfour replied to Knollys (7 October 1905) that it was not a question of cancelling Curzon's claim for an honour so much as its political expediency and timing:

"It would never do so to time this public recognition of his services as to suggest that it was in the remotest degree connected with his action in the Curzon-Kitchener dispute."

Balfour felt that it would be unfair both to Brodrick and Kitchener, "whose feelings I am bound to consider as well as Curzon's or my own", suggesting a postponement of any decision until the following year, in order to forestall the possibility of a public attack by Curzon on his return from India. Curzon had in fact prepared a statement of his case, but, taking the King's advice, declined to publish it; Brodrick a year later informed Kitchener

"our best assistant has been Curzon who ... came back home thinking he would ride down

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1. Copy, Edward VII to Brodrick, n.d. September 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.
  2. Brodrick to Balfour, 21 September 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.

everyone ... and the main result of nearly 12 months fighting was that he has not got a seat in the House of Commons and has been refused promotion into the House of Lords. The pamphlet he wrote against you and me, has been suppressed and the type broken up!"<sup>1</sup>

In 1907 he told Minto:

"G.C. sees that England is getting on without him; he is unnerved by incessant illness, and the doctors think badly of his nervous collapses. The Government absolutely decline to give him the Earldom"

but it was desirable to give him some kind of recognition in order to satisfy "many who are inclined to listen to Curzon because they think an effort is being made to keep him out of political life ... He has enemies everywhere."<sup>2</sup>

The Monarch, however, was not so easily put off by his Ministers' appeal to the question of political expediency as is reflected in a letter from the King's Secretary to Sandars, regarding Curzon's 'dismissal'; he commented:

"the Government condoned Curzon's shortcomings respecting Tibet and Afghanistan by sending him back to India, and on the other points by declining to accept his resignation in June (I think) and that they knew before he returned that they and he disagreed on the question of the Military Member of the Council ... I confess I cannot admit that he was, as you say, 'practically dismissed'. Surely if there has been any question of that, Brodrick would not have telegraphed to him on August 16, that he had received his telegram of resignation with the 'deepest regret'..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Brodrick to Kitchener, 30 August 1906, Kitchener MSS 30/57/32.
  2. Brodrick to Minto, 22 December 1907, Minto MSS 995.
  3. See Knollys to Sandars, 9 September 1905, Balfour MSS 49685.

In the meantime the King had given his royal assent (on 28 August) to the issue of the Proclamation regarding the reconstitution of Bengal and Assam, and the so-called Partition of Bengal now became an additional element of dispute between Curzon and the Home Government. In Bengal it was generally believed that Brodrick had conceded Curzon's partition scheme in order to propitiate the Viceroy,<sup>1</sup> and that it was "a sop to Cerberus over the project of military administration" in which he was overruled.<sup>2</sup> It appears that were it not for the dispute with Kitchener partition would have been examined more closely if not postponed altogether. On the same day (26 May 1905) that Brodrick circulated the Report of the Committee of Seven, he also circulated a Telegram from Curzon, dated 24 May, asking that the Government of India's recommendations be adopted on the partition question.<sup>3</sup> Several members of the India Council however opposed the scheme, and while the Committee of Seven examined the question of military administration, a second special India Office Committee, composed of Lee-Warner, Lyall, Fitzpatrick, Hutchins and Bayley - a sizeable remainder of Brodrick's Council - studied the proposed plan for partition received from the Government of India. On 11 May they had

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1. See The Bengalee, 29 June 1905; The Charu Mihir, 11 July 1905; The Indian Nation, 28 August 1905.
  2. The Bengalee, 29 August 1905. See Zaidi, The Partition of Bengal and its Annulments: A Survey of the Schemes of Territorial Redistribution of Bengal, 1902-1911, Ph.D. thesis, London 1964, pp.161-2.
  3. See Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 24 May 1905.

prepared a draft opposing some of the details of that scheme, but on receipt of Curzon's 24 May cable, Brodrick persuaded them to accept Curzon's view and made "a personal appeal" to them to drop their opposition; the partition scheme was officially approved on 9 June 1905.<sup>1</sup> However, seven years later Godley excoriated Curzon's partition scheme as "a complete blunder" and reported the unusual circumstances in which it took place. The experts in the India Council, he wrote, were rather weak and though they did not like the plan, "they were not the men to stand up against it and make their voices heard." Moreover Brodrick "who had no strong opinion one way or another on the merits, made no secret of the fact that he was very anxious not to veto the proposal or refer it back, for the simple reason that he was already having a deadly struggle with Curzon over the Military Member question, and intended to overrule him on that. When the time came, he was therefore all the more desirous of avoiding another great row, and I remember his giving me definite instructions to do all I could to get the Council to accept Curzon's scheme."<sup>2</sup> Godley's view is supported by a marginal annotation pencilled in at the time in a letter from Curzon, dated 19 July 1905, to Balfour.<sup>3</sup> Curzon alleged the "despatch about the Partition of Bengal, which he [Brodrick] has since

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1. See Brodrick to Amptill, 9 June 1905, Amptill MSS 233/11.
  2. Kilbracken to Hardinge, 10 February 1912; see Zaidi, op.cit., p.162, for this letter and an explanation of these proceedings.
  3. See Curzon to Balfour, 19 July 1905, Balfour MSS 49733 (page 5, f.35).

proposed to publish ... similarly contains remarks calculated to depreciate the Government of India and to injure their credit in this country..." The comment, probably made by Godley, reads: "Modified proposal to meet G.'s views by S.J." [St. John Brodrick]. This evidence tends to suggest that something in the nature of a quid pro quo was engineered by Brodrick and the India Office in dealing with two issues intimately related in their timing during the spring of 1905.

Furthermore Brodrick asserted that it was only because of Curzon's vigorous insistence on pushing the scheme ahead that the Government avoided making some concession to the agitation, and informed Balfour accordingly on 27 September: "So long as Curzon is there he must and will press on the change whatever the agitation..." "Under these circumstances which I mentioned to the King and to Minto the successive postponement of the new Viceroy's arrival ... are serious."<sup>1</sup> Brodrick, however, appears actuated by more personal motives; he wanted to justify his position and avoid further concealment by the publication of papers, in order to forestall an Opposition attack in Parliament.<sup>2</sup> It was this desire for avoiding issues threatening the Government's Parliamentary existence which forms so striking a factor in these events, as in the Curzon-Kitchener controversy. Brodrick seemed unwilling to brook censure over his management

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1. Brodrick to Balfour, 27 September 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.  
2. Ibid., 4 October 1905.

of Indian affairs. In July he prepared a dossier against Curzon's external administration, challenging it in toto.<sup>1</sup> Though Curzon may be rightly condemned for his efforts to dictate his policies in the teeth of the Home Government's opposition, it was not upon these issues which Brodrick focussed, so much as on their connection with the Conservative Ministry's political future. His extreme sensitivity to criticism of his conduct led him to overlook no possibility of protecting himself and the Home Government. Irritated by Fowler's motion of censure in the House of Commons, he alleged that "Lord Curzon has been counting for months on the fall of H.M.G. and the advent of a Government who may recall Lord Kitchener for work at home."<sup>2</sup>

But what finally must have goaded Curzon to desperation were Brodrick's continued assertions, in such patronising phrases as "with every desire to meet your wishes" and "The Gov't are most desirous of working cordially with you and we see no obstacle in the way...", and, the ultimate indignity, when he cabled on 16 August: "Throughout your administration ... I have endeavoured to give you constant support ... including the partition of Bengal" and that he was always "anxious to defer to your judgment" in matters connected with India's internal administration.<sup>3</sup> Curzon's

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1. Brodrick's Note to Cabinet, 24 July 1905, Cabinet Records 37/79/132.

2. Ibid.

3. See Brodrick to Curzon, Telegram, 16 August 1905.

laconic reply was: "... looking back upon more recent events I reflect with sorrow how little justification there has been for the claim which you make of having rendered me constant support."<sup>1</sup>

As both Brodrick and Godley were vigorously opposed to granting Curzon a peerage, they represented to Balfour the inexpediency of allowing the Viceroy any official recognition, if he continued to struggle against the Home Government.<sup>2</sup> Brodrick wrote: "if George is elevated before all this has blown over, it will be regarded as a pretty severe snub to the Ministry apart from myself..." "The whole official world would", he continued, "I think, condemn us, if you do not prevail as to deferring the honour."<sup>3</sup> In order to confound possible detractors, code words were employed between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the principal actors in the drama,<sup>4</sup> and Brodrick confessed that "he whom his Sovereign delights to honour, will be the aggrieved party, and that I on behalf of the Government, or you, will have to open a number of rather dark doors as to his conduct during the last twelve months."<sup>5</sup> Balfour somewhat calmly stepped forward and with Olympian detachment wrote a definitive memorandum on the termination of Curzon's Viceroyalty,

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1. Curzon to Brodrick, Telegram, 18 August 1905.
  2. See Godley to Brodrick, 14 August 1905 & 12 September 1905, Midleton MSS 50072.
  3. Brodrick to Balfour, 12 September 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.
  4. See Balfour to Brodrick, 19 September 1905, Ibid.
  5. Brodrick to Balfour, 15 October 1905, Ibid.

entitled "A Peerage for Lord Curzon".<sup>1</sup> In that able document he argued that misconception would arise were the Government to honour Curzon's services in any way. Thereupon followed a brilliant analysis of the outstanding conflicts which Curzon's administration and his relations with the Home Government had produced. Perhaps it is significant that Balfour placed the struggle with Kitchener first in his catalogue of the differences under discussion. It will be profitable to quote what Balfour wrote in some detail:

"... the train of circumstances which have led to his resignation has produced a situation far more complicated than need have resulted from a mere difference of opinion. He has really been engaged for many months past in fighting inch by inch against the effective execution of a policy which he has never pretended to approve, but which he declared himself ready to accept. The various incidents, both public and private, of this long contest have been painful in the extreme. It has brought much bitterness between old friends. It has involved a dispute, not merely on questions of principle, but on matters of fact, between the Commander-in-Chief in India and the Indian Viceroy. The Indian public have been made parties to the quarrel; the Indian press has somehow or another, learned the contents of documents which ought never to have been made public; and a situation generally has been created which more than once made me regret that the Viceroy ever returned to India last November, or, having returned, did not give up the post as he originally proposed in November."

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1. See 'A Peerage for Lord Curzon', 6 September 1905, Cabinet Records, 37/79/154.

Balfour struck out against the idea of autonomy for the Indian Government and what he believed to be the dangerous conviction that India was free to direct her own external policy, regardless of "the control of Parliament and of the Cabinet, and that the Viceroy, if only he possesses sufficient resolution and capacity, may fearlessly pursue a policy of his own, sure that success and failure, co-operation and obstruction, will, at the termination of his office, be equally rewarded." He continued:

"There are, however, three great subjects outside purely Indian administration in the narrow sense, all of which the Home Government have had most carefully to consider, on all of which they have had to overrule Lord Curzon. The three subjects are: (1) the position of the Commander-in-Chief, which has been the occasion of Lord Curzon's resignation; (2) the Tibetan policy and (3) the Afghan policy. With regard to the first and third of these, the public know much, but not all, that has passed; and it may certainly be said that, irrespective of party, public opinion in this country has sided with the Home Government and the Indian Council against the Viceroy. Of the differences between the Indian and Imperial Governments in connection with the recent negotiations with the Amir much less has been published. But I am certain that here again the Home Government would be thought to be right by the majority of impartial critics. It must be recollected that the foreign policy of India is now an inseparable and integral part of the foreign policy of the Empire to a degree which has not been the case in times gone by.<sup>1</sup> Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, and China is the storm-centre of international politics. Afghanistan touches Russia and Persia, and is the weak spot in Imperial defence. To allow a Viceroy to run

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1. See Chapter III, pp. 118-126

his own foreign policy in those regions, irrespective of the foreign policy of the Home Government, would be to copy the blunder which has brought Russia to disaster and humiliation - the blunder, namely, of having one Foreign Minister in the Far East and another at home, not necessarily acting in accord."

In concluding his reasons for the postponement of an honour, Balfour sought to avoid further misunderstanding:

"It only means that so long as the Kitchener-Curzon controversy is the incident of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty uppermost in the people's mind, it would be wise that no steps should be taken which would give an entirely erroneous impression as to the view taken of it by His Majesty's Government's adviser."<sup>1</sup>

The King had, in the meantime, stoutly defended Curzon's right to a peerage and called in his Ministers for consultation. His intervention was intended to heal the breach and to prevent further controversy. He dwelt, moreover, on the injury inflicted on the Crown if the position of the Viceroy was lowered in the eyes of the 'native mind' in his public struggle with the Commander-in-Chief. He considered the Commander-in-Chief's position of much inferior dignity to the Viceroy's, and deprecated the fact that Curzon had to return to England without having any mark of royal approval for his long years of service. Finally, he quoted from Sir Dighton Probyn, Keeper of the Privy Purse, that the Viceroy was "regarded by the natives as a demi-god" and that their

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1. Memorandum by Balfour, 6 September 1905, 'A Peerage for Lord Curzon', Cabinet Records 37/79/132.

faith would be shaken in the Monarchy if Curzon departed from India under a cloud. In a pathetic but sincere appeal, King Edward suggested that he personally should deal with the case and thus avoid continued animosity and political resentment. He summoned Brodrick for an audience on 11 September and after discussing his own views, lamented the fact that Brodrick "was the particular Minister who had been concerned with the crisis."<sup>1</sup>

Once again Brodrick had been caught out mismanaging British Imperial affairs, and once again his colleagues were forced to defend their hapless Minister. Sandars felt, however, that though the King was pro-Curzon, his mind could be influenced and "his attitude can, I think, be easily modified under adroit management."<sup>2</sup> That was accomplished through Knollys, the King's private secretary who now became increasingly hostile to Curzon, and who held up the decision on the question of a Peerage.<sup>3</sup> Balfour, in thanking Knollys for his support asserted: "it would never do so to time the public recognition of his services as to suggest that it was in the remotest degree connected with his action in the Curzon-Kitchener dispute." The question of Curzon's honour now became the subject of a ludicrous controversy, and while the

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1. See Sandars to Balfour, 11 September 1905, for King Edward's attitude towards the Curzon-Kitchener dispute. Balfour MSS 49763.

2. Sandars to Balfour, *Ibid.*

3. Knollys to Sandars, 12 September 1905, Balfour MSS 49763.

Government deliberated, Curzon was in effect swindled out of an honour. Balfour wrote:

"I am however disposed to think that this particular difficulty would be adequately met if any overt action were deferred till January or February. By that time the country will probably be thinking of other things than India, and in so far as they are thinking of India it will be the partition of Bengal rather than the status of the Military Member which will be occupying their attention."<sup>1</sup>

Balfour then shrank from the distasteful task of dipping into a personal squabble. He was content to avoid taking any step which might further aggravate an already precarious political position or take any action which would further alienate his colleagues. He particularly sought to avoid giving the Opposition an opportunity to take up the question from a party standpoint, and concluded:

"I cannot resolve on the proper course to pursue till I know what lines George means to take when he returns, and I cannot find out his intentions without putting both himself and me in a false position. This is very unlucky. I am convinced that any further washing of dirty linen in public would do much harm and no good..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Balfour to Knollys, 7 October 1905, Balfour MSS 49685. That prediction was correct, for as Brodrick reported: "Curzon's anathemas will have to compete with a political crisis here for public interest and a man with a grievance never scores very heavily in the long run." Brodrick to Ampthill, 1 December 1905, Ampthill MSS 233/12.
  2. Balfour to Knollys, Ibid. The question was to drag on for many years, and Balfour met Curzon on 22 March 1906 to try and persuade Campbell-Bannerman to grant Curzon some reward - but this was refused on political grounds.

Curzon was consigned to a position of political exile.

Why is the question of Curzon's peerage significant? First, the Government abstained from granting him recognition fearing his public attack on their policy; secondly, they shrank from the suggestion of anything in the nature of a bargain with Curzon, which would give him a peerage at the price of silence, a proposition they felt he would decline. In sum, they would "wait and see what happens."<sup>1</sup> The fact that Curzon did not then receive a peerage, marked the disapproval with which the Home Government viewed his administration. Brodrick's efforts to justify that position appeared as recently as 1939 with the publication of his memoirs: Balfour had "emphatically" informed his Minister stating:

"I will not go down to posterity as having removed a Viceroy whom I had just re-appointed merely because he quarrelled with a soldier."<sup>2</sup>

The pro-Kitchener faction among Balfour's colleagues presently hoped that Curzon would be driven to publish the "squalid details" in the columns of The Times,<sup>3</sup> and Lord Salisbury termed his conduct "impossible", stating that he was "guilty of gross misbehaviour".<sup>4</sup> Uncharitably Salisbury

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1. Balfour to Brodrick, 15 October 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.
  2. Middleton, op.cit., pp. ix-x. Memoirs are notorious for their tendency to bias, inaccuracy and self-justification; and Brodrick's were based upon a secret pamphlet, now to be found in the India Office Library, entitled 'Relations of Lord Curzon as Viceroy of India with the British Government, 1902-05'; see Fleming, op.cit., p.289.
  3. Lord Salisbury to Balfour, 19 September 1906, Balfour MSS 49721.
  4. Lord Salisbury to Sandars, 5 October 1905, Balfour MSS 49758.

suggested to Sandars that the Government should "... offer him something - something small perhaps."<sup>1</sup>

Curzon then was openly 'snubbed', (as Younghusband over Tibet), by the Home Government, and that action was calculated to lower the political temperature over his resignation. Moreover, Brodrick's attitude - apart from Kitchener - was perhaps the decisive factor in bringing that about. Nevertheless, Curzon's friend, W.R. Lawrence characterised the Secretary of State's conduct of Indian affairs as largely ineffectual, adding:

"He is a poor creature and not worth your powder and shot. No one has a good word for him, and he goes about bleating out his sorrow and his friendship for you ... I do not trust him."<sup>2</sup>

Some months earlier Curzon confessed to Ampthill:

"My time in India since I returned has been rendered a painful one, by the outrageous publication of the Tibetan Blue Book which was certainly intended by the Home Government as a snub to myself ... by the Afghan mission ... and by the Kitchener dispute."

Overruled in each case, Curzon felt "the work of the past six months has been entirely thrown away." "I should have resigned over this" had it not been "for a not less momentous affray, namely that raised by the Commander-in-Chief. ... It seems to me inconceivable that even the present Government should decide to trample on the Government of India in a matter

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1. Lord Salisbury to Sandars, 5 October 1905, Balfour MSS 49758.

2. W.R. Lawrence to Curzon, 12 September 1905.

affecting their own constitution ... For in the hands of a military autocracy [the] one main sphere of the Government's responsibility would have been ... destroyed."<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick's conduct appears symptomatic of the inherent instability of Balfour's Government; hyper-sensitive to criticism he lashed out at Curzon in self-justification defending his actions, particularly over Curzon's Tibetan policy. Four months after Kitchener had threatened to resign, Balfour pointedly commented how astonished he was at Brodrick's behaviour:

"St. John is really very odd just now. I cannot imagine why he has washed all our and Young-husband's dirty linen in public by giving the whole correspondence to the world in the new Blue Book.<sup>2</sup> The view we took of Younghusband's behaviour was sufficiently emphasised to the Indian Government and the Indian official world by the character of the decoration which Young-husband received. Why we should go further I am quite unable to understand."<sup>3</sup>

Brodrick's malignity found its final manifestation when he implored Balfour not to receive the returning Viceroy at Charing Cross railway station on his arrival in England. Brodrick thought at the time that Curzon would attempt to overthrow "the new military administration in India" if the Government fell and the Liberals took office: "After all we have gone through about this, to have it suspended at the

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1. Curzon to Amptill, 2 April 1905.

2. Parliamentary Papers, Cd. 1920: 2054; 2370; see Fleming, *op.cit.*, pp.263-293.

3. Balfour to Wyndham, 31 January 1905, Balfour MSS 49805.

last ... would be a heavy blow."<sup>1</sup> But Balfour, driven to his decision, had admitted his mistakes, and he told Curzon:

"Having failed lamentably in my hope that we could work together until either the Government or your term of office came to an end, I have now no desire but to save from the political wreck all that is possible of private friendship and mutual esteem."<sup>2</sup>

For the moment the Kitchenerites had won the day,

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1. Brodrick to Balfour, 21 November 1905, Balfour MSS 49721.  
2. Balfour to Curzon, 23 August 1905.

CHAPTER VIIINDIAN ARMY REFORM 1906-1909(1) Minto and the New System

The change of Viceroys in India synchronised very nearly with the change of Government in England. Minto arrived in India in November 1905 and in December the Balfour administration tottered to its fall. Campbell-Bannerman, the new Prime Minister, offered the portfolios for India and War to Morley and Haldane. The association of Morley with India, and of Kitchener with Minto, marked a new phase in Indian Army Reform. Political alignments strikingly changed. Instead of a hostile Viceroy, Kitchener now found in Minto, himself a former professional soldier, a staunch supporter, while the new Secretary of State, Morley, was antipathetic to militarism of any kind. The incoming Liberal Government was deeply pledged to the traditional policy of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform. They considered Indian army administration a stale legacy of the late Ministry and resolved to consider that problem in the light of sound Radical philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Minto, the new Viceroy, was a soldier-administrator who had seen active service under Roberts in India during the Afghan War of 1878-9 and served successfully as Governor-General of Canada. A shrewd politician, endowed with a

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1. See Morley, Recollections, II, pp.149-150.

soldier's practical good sense, his philosophy was sympathy tempered by rule by the strong arm. Minto found that he quite liked Kitchener <sup>1</sup> and was soon convinced that it was useless for him to be Commander-in-Chief unless he could do what he wanted with the Indian army.

But following the change of Government in England, the battle raging between the Kitchenerites and the Curzonians threatened Kitchener's ambitions, and infused much bitterness into the conduct of Indian administration. Kitchener greatly feared that Brodrick's compromise decision would be altered against his favour, and reported to Sir George Clark that Minto "has taken the necessary steps to put the new machinery in motion" but that with the change of Government the "whole question is hung up and will again, I suppose, be put in the melting pot."<sup>2</sup> Kitchener was well aware that pressure would be exerted on Morley by the Curzonians to reverse Brodrick's decision and he told Minto to inform Morley that he would resign within the hour if such action were taken.<sup>3</sup>

Kitchener hoped that his friends, particularly Marker, Esher, and Clarke, might persuade Morley and other Liberal Ministers to come round to his views and additionally that they would put in a good word for him with the new

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1. See Minto to Morley, 1 February 1906, Minto MSS 1005.
  2. Kitchener to Clarke, 21 December 1905, Sydenham MSS 50835.
  3. See Minto to Morley, 13 December 1905, Minto MSS 1005.

Viceroy.<sup>1</sup> But Kitchener was strongly urged by Esher to proceed with great caution. Esher wrote:

"The battle rages ... All the patriotic and decent-minded people will endeavour to limit the controversy to the political issue ... Luckily you have a strong supporter in Godley."<sup>2</sup>

Esher made two shrewd suggestions: (1) "Keep profound silence yourself, whatever be the nature of the attack" and (2) "keep on intimate and friendly terms with Minto";

"the main point in the whole controversy ... is that the late Viceroy and you agreed upon a compromise and upon an amendment of the Brodrick Despatch. This is the crucial point, because the worst of all compromise is, that the compromiser cannot go back upon his action, and Lord Curzon and his school will find it impossible to contend that your proposals are essentially fatal to good government in India, since he himself agreed - upon certain conditions - to try them. The moment that - in a great controversy - a politician finds himself struggling, not for a principle, but for an expedient, his battle is lost."<sup>3</sup>

That wise advice was not lost on Kitchener and he reported to Lady Salisbury that "the Viceroy and I get on first rate" and that it was of much greater importance for him to keep in well with Minto than with Morley.<sup>4</sup> On 11 January 1906 he wrote to Clarke: "Lord Minto and I are working thoroughly well together. He took a little time to

1. Kitchener to Marker, 27 September 1905, Marker MSS 52276.
2. Esher to Kitchener, 21 December 1905, Kitchener MSS 30/57/33.
3. Ibid.
4. Magnus, Kitchener, p.231.

investigate the whole case, and is now convinced I was right", and two months later asserted: "At last! I really think that next Monday we shall make a start with the new system."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener went to considerable trouble to cultivate Minto's respect and sent him letters which he hoped would be transmitted, through him, to Morley. Acutely sensitive to criticism of his actions by Liberal Ministers in the Cabinet, particularly Ripon, he found their views "and the opinions of other deluded ex-Indian officials..." intolerable.<sup>2</sup> His intransigence, after all he had done to defeat Curzon and to bring about his resignation, was surprising: "I fully realise that a large proportion of the Cabinet would have viewed with composure my overthrow 'twixt cup and lip". Moreover, Kitchener felt that he was being "completely misrepresented" at home by Curzon and that in consequence his "case has been entirely lost sight of or become hidden under the mass of lies that now surround and envelope my personality." Proud of his staunch friends at home, he explained to Esher that "the end has justified my action."<sup>3</sup> Kitchener quickly discovered that in persuading the indolent Minto, then in his sixty-first year, and his Council of the

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1. Kitchener to Clarke, 11 January & 15 March 1906, Sydenham MSS 50835.
  2. Kitchener to Esher, 11 January 1906; Esher, Journals II, p.134.
  3. Kitchener to Esher, 1 March 1906, Ibid., pp.145-6.

validity of his views on Indian army administration, he had only won the first round; he would now have to convince the new Liberal Home Government. With Curzon removed from the scene, Kitchener's dynamic energy and force soon dominated in India. On that point, the King's private secretary, Lord Knollys (1837-1924), had confided to Curzon (with some indiscretion):

"I certainly have no wish to disparage Minto, but there is no doubt that during Lord Kitchener's tenure of office in India he [Lord Kitchener] will be the real Viceroy."<sup>1</sup>

By March 1907 Kitchener had won the confidence of his colleagues and obtained from Minto's Council a unanimous vote in favour of the new organisation. He described his latest triumph by asserting that the "new system was a complete success and an immense improvement upon the old ... I think I must have the three despatches bound up - Curzon's original, signed by all the Council, except myself; then the despatch establishing the new system; and this last one, signed by everyone. Poor Curzon! How angry he would be!"<sup>2</sup> In June 1907 he assured Lady Salisbury that the new system had "more than justified my wildest hopes."<sup>3</sup> A few months

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1. Knollys to Curzon, 21 September 1905. Knollys told Sandars, 9 September 1905: "As regards" Minto and Curzon "one cannot really put the 2 men in any way on the same level. It would be like coupling Pitt with Percival." Balfour MSS 49763.
  2. Kitchener to Lady Salisbury, 24 April 1907, Magnus, Kitchener, p.225.
  3. Ibid.

earlier he had confided in Minto: "Curzon will, I am sure, greatly dislike this proof that his estimate of me was not quite correct",<sup>1</sup> and confidently informed the Viceroy that his work was happily less than it used to be and that he was able to occupy his time by shooting "tiger and bear".<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless throughout the remainder of his term as Commander-in-Chief in India Kitchener was troubled with the repercussions of his struggle with Curzon. That psychological battle indeed often obscured, particularly in the English press, the more fundamental issues underlying Indian administration. Following Kitchener's militant press campaign Curzon recruited a strong fraternity of supporters, including Sir A.C. Lyall, J. St. Loe Strachey, and Valentine Chirol. Deploring the circumstances in which Curzon had been forced to leave India, these men pointed to Curzon's administration as representing the epitome of Imperial rule until hindered by active interference from the Home Government. No one was more influential than Chirol and his appearance in the columns of The Times gave rise to the comment from Morley, about to push ahead with his reforms, "This is bad news for me, for active unfriendliness and opposition from The Times will make a vast deal of difference."<sup>3</sup> Curzon never lost an opportunity of pointing to the Commander-in-Chief as the

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1. Kitchener to Minto, 4 April 1907, Minto MSS 980.

2. Ibid.

3. Morley to Minto, 13 January 1909, Morley MSS 573/4.

cause of political unrest in India. He assailed both Kitchener and Minto for attempting to introduce a policy of reform while at the same time carrying out one of repression,<sup>1</sup> and it was only natural that this attitude brought with it much resentment in India. In 1906 Kitchener had written: "I see the pen of Chirol and the hand of Curzon" in the columns of The Times<sup>2</sup> and Minto, who blamed his misfortunes on his predecessor wrote: "If a true history of Curzon's rule is ever written, it will make the world wonder. Few people at home know the legacy of bitter discontent he left for his successor ... a knowledge of his life as seen from behind the scenes here would make people's hair stand on end. His promotion to the House of Lords would in my opinion only give him further opportunities for mischief."<sup>3</sup> During Minto's administration, Curzon viewed all Indian issues from a subjective point of view and, systematically frustrated by both parties in his struggle for some recognition of his services, progressively attempted to embarrass Conservative and Radical Ministers alike in their handling of Indian affairs. It is just possible that had either Balfour's Government or the Liberal Administration conferred an honour on the ex-Proconsul as a mark of distinction for his administrative work, his public opposition might have

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1. See The Times, 15 June 1907.

2. Kitchener to Minto, 8 September 1906, Minto MSS 971.

3. Minto to Morley, 12 September 1907, Minto MSS 1007.

been mollified. As it happened those attacks in the press usually generated heat rather than spread light and Curzon appeared in the guise of a foiled reformer in exile.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless Kitchener remained extremely touchy about the press comments and sent Minto frequent letters discounting them.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, strenuous efforts were being made to reform Britain's military organisation, and Esher had written (26 July 1905) suggesting Kitchener return to London in order to serve as Chief of the General Staff at the War Office.<sup>3</sup> In his reply (14 August 1905) Kitchener derided that idea, stating:

"Patriotic convictions, my dear Lord Esher, have led many men to commit great follies, and will, I presume, continue to do so in the future."<sup>4</sup>

In his letter Kitchener enclosed an extremely important document entitled 'A Note on the Military Policy of India', dated 19 July 1905. In that paper Kitchener advocated a vigorous policy of absorption of the border tribes along India's frontiers. In order to prevent Russian encroachment and guarantee the integrity of the Government of India's control over them, he urged the Cabinet to "show that you intend to be masters in your own house."<sup>5</sup> Further, he argued

1. See The Times, 15 June 1907.
2. See especially Kitchener to Minto, 29 April 1906, re the Soudanese Mutiny at Khartoum following Kitchener's departure from Egypt.
3. Esher to Kitchener, 26 July 1905, Kitchener MSS 30/57/20.
4. Kitchener to Esher, 14 August 1905; Esher, Journals, II, p.98.
5. 'A Note on the Military Policy of India' (19 July 1905); see Kitchener MSS 30/57/30.

that no consistent policy had hitherto been followed, and that policy had been apt to change according to the conviction and personality of every succeeding Viceroy or Secretary of State. Finally he asserted that in future India's military policy should be controlled by the Commander-in-Chief, (acting through the Committee of Imperial Defence) instead of the Viceroy and Government of India.<sup>1</sup> At the time Balfour and the Cabinet were greatly impressed by that document - which had been privately circulated by Lord Esher.<sup>2</sup> Esher informed Balfour:

"Could anything be more clear, as is shown by his [Kitchener's] historical survey of the past and his synopsis of recent events, than that the Government of India is not qualified to deal with questions of external policy?"<sup>3</sup>

Esher was convinced that Indian frontier policy could be settled more satisfactorily by the Defence Committee than by the Government of India; and with the change from Curzon to Minto he sensed that Kitchener would be given unfettered control adding:

"Lord K. [Kitchener] ... will be enchanted. It is a victory for him all along the line, and he can do pretty well what he likes. Luckily he has shown himself to be a canny sort of customer, otherwise there might be fears for the future. A Liberal Government will accept Minto, and take him on..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. 'A Note on the Military Policy of India' (19 July 1905); see Kitchener MSS 30/57/30.
  2. See Esher to Balfour, 10 September 1905, Balfour MSS 49719.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Esher, Journals, II, 21 August 1905, pp.99-100.

Kitchener had won his case, but Esher later cautiously observed that there were political dangers involved, were Kitchener - acting through the Defence Committee - to tamper with the external policy of India. He speculated whether it was wise for Sepoys to fight against/tribal co-religionists, especially during a possible outbreak of hostilities elsewhere: "Do you think it would be prudent" he asked Balfour "... in view of the uncertainty of the circumstances in Europe or elsewhere, which might co-exist with a war on the N.W. Frontier, or an Indian rising?"<sup>1</sup>

Curzon had implacably opposed any military meddling in India's external policy, and he informed Morley:

"... one of the main reasons for which Kitchener desired my departure & for which his predominance in India may be such an onus and danger, is that he desires to substitute for my cautious frontier policy, a policy of vigorous and aggressive initiative against the tribes."<sup>2</sup>

Though Morley largely attributed Curzon's warning to a desire to sow discord between himself and Kitchener, he nevertheless became deeply suspicious of Kitchener's motives.<sup>3</sup>

When, in 1906, Kitchener attempted to translate his views into action,<sup>4</sup> Morley responded with the question: "Is

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1. Esher to Balfour, 3 October 1906, Balfour MSS 49719.

2. Curzon to Morley, 24 December 1905, Morley MSS 555.

3. See especially Morley to Haldane, 9 June 1906, Haldane MSS 5907.

4. See Kitchener to Minto, 1 May 1906, Minto MSS 978. Kitchener had sent Duff to England in October 1906 in the hope of persuading Morley to accept his views on frontier policy; see Duff to Kitchener, 14 December 1906, Minto MSS 979, and also Minto to Kitchener, 28 October 1906, Ibid.

it more than the old story - hammer the tribes & bully the Amir?"<sup>1</sup> In 1907 both Kitchener and Minto proposed that in view of the Government of India's inaction and loss of prestige during the period of unrest, a frontier campaign might offset what appeared as weakness on the part of the Government of India, and "the chance of active service may have a good effect in drawing away the attention of the Native Army from the mischievous attractions that surround them." Minto discussed the possibility of occupying various tribal territories and mentioned the fact that Kitchener must keep an eye on the loyalty of his troops were they to become engaged against Mahsuds, Waziries and Afridi sympathies. He proposed to furnish evidence to Morley to suggest that such action would "save money" as well as have a beneficial effect on "the safety of British subjects and the peace of the frontier" and in that way the Liberal Secretary of State "may see his way to support us."<sup>2</sup> By February 1908 both Minto and Kitchener had been able to justify a punitive expedition against the Zakka Khels in the Bazar Valley. But Minto chaffed that Morley "keeps on pressing upon us that there is to be no occupation on any grounds whatever" of their territories,<sup>3</sup> to which Kitchener retorted: "post Morley with some of Curzon's own statements on the subject."<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, on

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1. Morley to Minto, 5 October 1906, Morley MSS 573/1.

2. Minto to Kitchener, 14 October 1907, Minto MSS 980.

3. See Minto to Kitchener, 7 February 1908, Minto MSS 982.

4. Kitchener to Minto, 14 February 1908, Ibid.

19 February, Minto informed Morley "Curzon himself, very shortly before he left India, noted that 'the present system is a scandal and strong measures are required to remedy it'."<sup>1</sup> The campaign was a success and Lady Minto reported from London (13 March) that Morley was "chuckling with joy over the Zakka Khel Expedition having terminated" and that he had exclaimed: "'I am daily appearing in a new light: to-day I am a great War Minister, and to-morrow I have to make a Bishop!'" (the news of the death of the Bishop of Bombay having just arrived.)<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener would have liked to have seen "that extraordinary man the Secretary of State"<sup>3</sup> and his unpalatable obstructions "hampering all progress",<sup>4</sup> relegated to the limbo of oblivion: "Morley's evident determination to stop everything [military] shows that it would be futile to submit proposals" to him on matters of military policy, in particular schemes on redistributing the army.<sup>5</sup> He knew however that any such action on his part would arouse great suspicion at home and he therefore urged "careful wording" in replying to Morley's efforts to reduce India's military establishment.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless the King found it a "comfort

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1. Minto to Morley, 19 February 1908, Minto MSS 1008.

2. Lady Minto to her husband, 13 March 1908, Mary Minto, India, Minto and Morley 1905-1910, p.200.

3. Kitchener to Minto, 5 February 1908, Minto MSS 982.

4. Ibid., 7 May 1908.

5. Ibid., 17 March 1908.

6. Ibid., 18 April 1908.

to learn that the Indian Army is in a far more satisfactory state than it was" and that "the employment of the troops on active service has proved most beneficial." As for sedition: "If we are to retain our hold on the country, we must endeavour to crush the present disloyalty with a high hand - or else we may have similar troubles as we had 50 years ago!"<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1906 Kitchener had called Minto's attention to the possibility of disaffection among his troops by political agents. He was unwilling however to believe that a state of unrest, unknown since the days of the Mutiny, prevailed in the Indian army and characterised the statements regarding the possibility of sedition (such as occurred in the Spectator on 10 December 1905)<sup>2</sup> as merely "another of the many baseless fabrications that are now being concocted at home to influence the Government" against him. He argued that "there was no unrest in the Indian Army",<sup>3</sup> although he became increasingly disturbed as secret reports revealed that the "shoe pinches in the Native Army" owing to a rise in the cost of living which left the Sepoy in an unsatisfactory financial position.<sup>4</sup> By 1907 the situation had been radically altered.

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1. Edward VII to Minto, 17 July 1907, Minto MSS 997.

2. The Spectator, 10 December 1905.

3. Kitchener to Minto, 10 January 1906, Minto MSS 978.

4. See Sir B. Blood to Kitchener, 17 January 1906, Ibid.

A more sinister form of political agitation broke out in the spring of 1907 and political unrest gave rise to serious fears of sedition in the army. So anxious was Minto about the attempts made to corrupt the loyalty of "Native officers and soldiers" that he told Morley "we were entirely taken by surprise, and the more we got to know, the worse things seemed."<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy was so alarmed that he informed his wife (15 May) "The whole place is like a powder magazine"<sup>2</sup>; and he called upon Kitchener to provide vigorous measures to crush potential rebellion in the army.<sup>3</sup> A stream of outrages had occurred, including bomb-throwing, terrorist propaganda and assassination. On 6 December 1907 an attempt was made to blow up the train of Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, at Midnapur. On 23 December, B.C. Allen, a former Magistrate of Dacca, was unsuccessfully shot at. On 30 April 1908 the murder of Mrs. and Miss Kennedy at Muzzafarpur ultimately resulted in the discovery of hidden bombs, dynamite and inflammable literature.<sup>4</sup> Rumours became current that the Government used flesh and bones in the manufacture of salt; that wells were being poisoned so as to spread plague and destroy unborn children.<sup>5</sup> According to

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1. Minto to Morley, 29 August 1907, Minto MSS 1007.
  2. Minto to his wife, 15 May 1907, Mary, Countess of Minto, *Ibid.*, p.136.
  3. See Minto to Kitchener, 5,24,30 May; 8,22 June 1907, Minto MSS 980.
  4. See Report of the Indian Seditious Committee, (1918), pp.22-50.
  5. See Zaidi, *op.cit.*, pp.194ff. These slanders appear to have been propagated exclusively to embarrass the Government over Partition in the aftermath of Swadeshi.

Kitchener, agitators had made persistent attempts to tamper with the loyalty of his forces and thus undermine the allegiance of the "Native Army ... and persuade the Sepoys to throw in their lot" with the disaffected agitators. He asserted that "every possible attempt was being made to corrupt the Army which must sooner or later be influenced by prevailing ideas" and that grievances were permeating the "Native regiments" to the extent that a "well known sedition-monger" had remarked "that it was recognised by the leaders that nothing could be done until the Native troops had been won over."<sup>1</sup> Kitchener was determined to take strong action in dealing with agencies fostering sedition, including stern measures of repression. As protection against the seduction of the allegiance of his troops, he advocated a stringent press law. He pointed to the Arya Samaj as the disloyal party which sponsored agitation in order to gain "something for their personal advantage ... Remember - Indians, like all Orientals, are extremely excitable and led away by lies."<sup>2</sup> On 5 June 1907, Kitchener urged immediate and uncompromising action against the growing audacity of the agitators. Treason, he argued, could go no further before shaking "to its very foundation the confidence of the Native soldier in the efficiency of our power and the stability of

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1. Minute entitled 'The Harmful Influences of the Native Press' (5 June 1907), enc. Kitchener to Minto, 6 June 1907, Minto MSS 980.

2. Ibid.

our rule"; he looked upon the Indian press as a "canker which is slowly but surely eating into the loyalty and good feeling of our Native troops."<sup>1</sup> The Commander-in-Chief confided:

"We shall have to walk warily for some time to get things right. The prestige of the Sahib has suffered and the result is a want of discipline. People who never thought of criticising the British Raj do so now more freely. The native Press is responsible for a great deal; they recommend bombs and a combination to turn us out, openly and with impunity. We must stop all this."<sup>2</sup>

Constrained to take firm action against the supposed chief agitators, the Government of India deported Laj-Pat Rai and Ajit Singh.<sup>3</sup> On 1 November 1907, the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act was passed and between June 1906 and July 1907, prosecutions instituted against nine newspapers or journals.<sup>4</sup> The liberty of the

1. Minute entitled 'The Harmful Influences of the Native Press' (5 June 1907), enc. Kitchener to Minto, 6 June 1907, Minto MSS 980.
2. Arthur, op.cit., II, p.254. Kitchener discounted the idea that the discontent of his troops was in any way connected with his rash and unsympathetic rule, attributing such accusations to Curzon. Indeed, Lawrence had written to Curzon on 5 June 1905, "I feel that it would be a calamity if you left India to the mercies of Lord Kitchener and a new Viceroy," contrasting Curzon with Dalhousie who "suffered for the Mutiny".
3. See Minto to Morley, 8 May 1907, Minto MSS 1007. Dr. S.R. Wasti gives us an insight into the confusion between Minto's and Ibbetson's views as to whether Lajpat Rai was guilty of tampering "with the loyalty of the army" in Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1905 to 1910, pp.104-5, 110.
4. See Minto to Morley, 7 August 1907, Minto MSS 1007.

press was curtailed on 8 June 1908 with the passing of the Indian Press Act and, under strong pressure from Kitchener, on 11 December 1908 the Government passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act to expedite the trial of anarchical offences and the suppression of conspiratorial societies.<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener's demand for repressive retribution did nothing to increase confidence in his ability in London, though he held the respect of the European community in India.<sup>2</sup> When he hit upon the expedient of sending a trusted Mohammedan officer to enquire into regimental feelings as to the loyalty of the army to British rule, his action was reported in England and Lansdowne commented:

"... all over the country the natives have 'got their beards up' as they never had them before. As to the army ... I heard an ugly story the other day ... to the effect that K. had introduced spies into the native's regiments & that they had been at once detected - a dreadful gaucherie!"<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless Kitchener played upon the worst fears of the Government of India by telling Minto who reminded Morley that "the regimental officers of the old Indian Army believed implicitly in the loyalty of their regiments till they rose in arms against them" in the night and cut them to pieces.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Home Proceedings, Public/Political, July-December 1908, IOL Records 7592.
  2. See Morley to Minto, 8 August 1907, Morley MSS 573/3.
  3. Lansdowne to Balfour, 24 December 1908, Balfour MSS 49729.
  4. Minto to Morley, 10 July 1907, Minto MSS 1007.

Marker even went so far as to tell George Arthur, later Kitchener's biographer, that perhaps it was a good idea to show the Liberal Government in power the dangers that lay ahead by providing stories of sedition and unrest<sup>1</sup> in the army.

Kitchener informed Lady Salisbury (6 June 1907) that sedition was "pretty strong underneath the surface. The principal agitators are the more or less educated lawyer class. They ... are doing all they can to get at the loyalty of the Army. They preach another mutiny, to drive us out of the country. It will require careful handling..."<sup>2</sup> Though the question at issue, the loyalty of his soldiers, was never at any period in serious doubt, he told Minto that it was "unrealistic" to worry about outrages committed in Bengal, as he drew no soldiers from that unwarlike country where he could easily suppress rebellion. He was much more concerned with unrest in the Punjab as he felt Sikhs "have a grievance in connection with the Punjab Colonisation Act, and the agitators seem to have succeeded in producing a certain amount of unrest among them."<sup>3</sup> Unrest in the Punjab was

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1. Marker to Arthur, 25 June 1907, Kitchener MSS 30/57/31.
  2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.234.
  3. See Kitchener to Minto, 5,7,8,12 May 1907; enc.Kitchener's Note 'The Effects of the Present Unrest in the Native Army' (12 May 1907) Minto MSS 980. The American Consular Records also reveal that the danger of a 'rising' was exaggerated owing to Kitchener's fear of unrest in the Punjab. Here, Kitchener may well have been observing his customary practice of when in doubt magnifying the possibility of serious unrest in order to keep as many reserves as possible in the country. United States Department of State, Consular Records, Calcutta, reports by Consul-General W.H. Michael, Diplomatic Despatches MSS 6971/1-22 (May-June 1907), Archives of the U.S.A., Washington, D.C.

somewhat over-exaggerated owing to Kitchener's fear of outrages committed by Punjabis because "they are the fighting classes from which we draw our Army"; he feared sedition gaining a foothold amongst his troops and more especially, the tampering of their loyalty by propaganda, speeches or attacks in the press by Swadeshi lecturers such as Gokhale. In pressing for a vigorous prohibition of obnoxious public meetings and seditious pamphlets as well as advocating the death penalty for anyone attempting to meddle with the army, he pointed with stubborn pride to the fact that his troops "laughed on finding copies of the 'American' seditious leaflet in their lines, whilst the Mohammedan community throughout the Punjab appear to view the whole agitation with disapprobation and disgust."<sup>1</sup>

Making no effort to conceal his view that Britain held India by the sword, Kitchener drew up comprehensive plans to suppress rebellion in three ways. First by utilising railroads in making arrangements for Regular British troops to be despatched immediately to trouble spots; secondly by establishing mobile columns and garrisons at 18 key strategic 'Defence Areas', or 23 if Burma, Aden and Kohat were added. These areas corresponded roughly with the Brigading of troops with their garrisons throughout India. Finally, Kitchener,

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1. See Kitchener to Minto, 12 May 1907, enc. Kitchener's Note 'The Effects of the Present Unrest in the Native Army' (12 May 1907), Minto MSS 980.

planned to act according to a pre-arranged scheme, in concert with civil authorities whose European populations could be collected and armed for their own security, in districts of safety. They were expected to defend themselves and provision was made to store arms and ammunition at the security depots where refugees collected. In addition, a force of 8,500 sabres, 41,000 rifles and 72 guns had been specially allotted for internal defence. These troops were charged with responsibility for holding magazines and stores whilst keeping an eye upon the Native army (roughly 400,000 sepoys), the Police, and the armed forces of the Native States. Thus Kitchener planned down to the last gun, sabre and bayonet to maintain rail and road communications, repress acts of rebellion and provide for the security of <sup>the</sup> European civil population. He laid out his scheme in an Army Order, No.512 dated 8 October 1907.<sup>1</sup> That plan was to act as a counterpoise to the formidable number of Indian troops under arms, and Kitchener argued that, far from excessive, his European contingent (roughly 71,000 men) was only adequate to meet any internal threat. Kitchener was careful to distinguish European enemies as opposed to 'Asiatics', and in the event of a war with Russia was prepared to throw 9 Field Divisions against any invasion of India's frontiers. With the tacit approval of the Committee of Imperial Defence under Balfour's

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1. See 'Record of Kitchener's Indian Army Administration', 1902-9, Minto MSS 836.

Government, and that of Campbell-Bannerman, Kitchener assumed that he would alone defend India using his own resources until after naval warfare on a global scale achieved victory for British seapower. After nine months, naval supremacy restored, the despatch of reinforcements and supplies from England would assist operations in India.<sup>1</sup>

But in fact being preoccupied with organising his forces to prepare for a great external conflict, Kitchener was caught off balance by the possibility of having to face internal disaffection. His great weakness in this respect lay in his scant regard for the effects which his reforms of Indian army administration would have on India. Though one Sikh soldier was actually tried under the Indian Articles of War for sedition, Kitchener wrote:

"Notwithstanding the agitation which has recently been going on in the Punjab, and attempts made to influence the Army, I am glad to say the loyalty of the Sepoys has not been affected."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener, concerned only with relating India's forces with those of Great Britain in preparation for a general European war, in those circumstances almost had to tell Morley that the loyalty of his sepoy was not affected, though he used

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1. See especially Balfour's Speech (published in 1905) on the Defence of India (11 May 1905), also 'Record of Kitchener's Indian Army Administration', 1902-9, Minto MSS 836.
  2. Kitchener to Morley, 23 May 1907, enc. Minto to Morley 23 May 1907, Minto MSS 1007. Kitchener tried to maintain an outward calm, but caught off balance both he and Minto were extremely fearful; see Minto to Kitchener, 5 May 1907, Ibid.

~~that~~ <sup>the contrary</sup> argument later as an excuse for preserving intact his large military establishment.<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener's massing of troops along India's frontiers provoked serious criticism, for it laid him open to the charge that in deploying his forces in great cantonments he disregarded (1) the requirements of internal defence as well as (2) the health and comfort of his soldiers, who were locked up in camps far away from their homes and thereby subjected to agencies of unrest within their ranks. It must be admitted that Kitchener never averted his eyes from what he conceived to be the primary enemy, Russia. He maintained his belief in her indomitable determination to move against India's buffer state, Afghanistan, a contingency always closely considered by the Defence Committee. Shortly before the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention (31 August 1907) Kitchener had requested up to 100,000 reinforcements in the event of a Russian invasion of Afghanistan, even though he reported that he did "not regard a direct attempt by Russia to invade India as at all likely."<sup>2</sup>

Kitchener divided and grouped his Divisions according to the dictates of his strategic concept of a war on the North-West Frontier. In the event of hostilities and in order

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1. See especially article in The Observer, 24 April 1910.
  2. Report of the Sub-Committee Enquiring into the Military Requirements of India, 1 May 1907, Cabinet Records 6/3/98.

to support the Amir of Afghanistan, his Divisions were to advance along two principal routes: first from Peshawar to Kabul, and second from Quetta to Kandahar. Operating as two main but independent bodies with Kabul and Kandahar as their strategic pivots his forces were conveniently distributed along main lines of railways, whereby Kitchener planned rapidly to concentrate and transport troops to the two main objectives. The Northern army, constituting the five Divisions lying at the foot of the Himalayas and pointing towards Kabul, were the Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Meerut, and Lucknow Divisions; these were in charge of a Lieutenant-General, while each Division had its own Divisional and Brigade Commanders responsible for settling details relative to their commands. On a lower line were the four Divisions pointing towards Kandahar - the Quetta, Mhow, Poona and Secunderabad Divisions - which, with the garrisons of Burma and Aden, made up the Southern Army. In the result, Kitchener's 'Redistribution and Reorganisation Scheme' enabled him to concentrate his troops all along the North-West frontier and await without alarm any difficulties arising beyond the frontier. Because, Kitchener argued, each Division was lodged in a strategic plan of campaign near its own line of railway, it was available to meet any contingency, external or internal; and each Divisional Commander could make his own arrangements to meet either emergency within his own area or in response to an alarm

from the North. In any case troops could be despatched at short notice to vital points and thus make contact with the enemy, or stand ready for at least a twelvemonth, until Imperial reinforcements from overseas arrived.<sup>1</sup> Fully equipped, these nine Divisions, each consisting of three Brigades, were estimated to provide approximately 120,000 men in all, as compared with the former four-division system which had furnished only 70,000 troops. Kitchener's system, along with a number of other useful but unspectacular reforms, must be accounted greatly superior to the one which it displaced.

"It was better adapted to needs and conditions which, together with the highly personal machine which Kitchener devised to meet them, have passed, like a dissolving view, into history."<sup>2</sup>

(2) Morley and Kitchener and the Abolition of the Military Member for Supply.

The association of Morley and Kitchener marked the culminating phase in the struggle over Indian army reform. No two men were more diverse in character, temperament,

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1. See Kitchener's Memorandum 'The Preparation of the Army in India for War' (30 January 1904), as amended in 1906, emerging in mature form in 1907, marking a great stride in the decentralisation of the Indian army, Minto MSS 836. Haldane was greatly impressed by Kitchener's achievement, as tested in the field by operations in the Bazar Valley - in 1907-8, and congratulated him on his success. Haldane to Kitchener, 3 June 1908, Kitchener MSS 30/57/31; also Haldane MSS 5708.
  2. Magnus, Kitchener, p.226.

social background or political outlook. Morley was a polished intellectual who once told Esher that he found Kitchener "a most uninteresting type".<sup>1</sup> Nicknamed 'Priscilla' by Campbell-Bannerman because he seemed over-imbued with his own self-importance, Morley found militarism and the business of war so abhorrent that in 1914 he resigned office rather than be party to it. Kitchener lived by the sword and always held himself ready for arbitrament by it and his career bore witness to his ability to adopt measures of repression and subjugation when the situation called for them. Although both Morley and Kitchener strove hard to break down the intellectual barriers between them (their correspondence reveals their efforts to achieve sympathetic understanding where agreement was unattainable) and though Kitchener tried hard to work loyally with Morley and thus rally Liberal support for his schemes (he found common cause with Morley in an overriding preoccupation with cheese-paring economy), he nevertheless described Morley as "pig-headed and dangerous", "sand-paperish" and a man who "positively hates military efficiency."<sup>2</sup>

Morley soon discovered the difficulties he would face at the India Office as the result of the Curzon-Kitchener question, which he termed a "delicate" imperial problem. He wrote:

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1. Esher, Journals, II, p.275.  
2. See Magnus, Kitchener, p.232.

"discussion had followed resignation and the publication of minutes and correspondence and scandal over a scene where heat and something like political scandal were most sedulously to be avoided. These stormy transactions left a heavy surge behind them, and India watched."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time these proceedings coincided with the ascendancy of the Liberal Party, least inclined to quarrel with the political aspirations of a people who claimed an increased share of authority in their own government. Correspondingly, deeper currents of political unrest, some moderate, some revolutionary, constituted a fundamental stir in the Indian atmosphere and all parties came to agree in the general need for reform.<sup>2</sup> But the main issue confronting Morley was how to deal with the problem of Indian army administration and its intimate relationship on the demands of the military resources of the Empire, for the requirements of India were the "master key" of Imperial policy.<sup>3</sup>

Morley found that circumstances in India had changed rapidly, for Minto had taken office with a Conservative mandate accepting Brodrick's scheme and was actively engaged to give it effect with a minimum of fuss. Accordingly, Minto had drawn up the necessary rules for the new Supply Department, and his draft of them had actually reached Morley<sup>4</sup> in

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1. Morley, *Recollections*, II, p.149.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.149-150. Within two years following Curzon's departure Minto witnessed the emergence of the most formidable nationalist sentiment since the Mutiny, culminating in the open split of the Congress at Surat in 1907.

3. *Ibid.*, p.150.

4. See Morley to Minto, 28 December 1905, Morley MSS 573/1.

the midst of his election campaign when he was too occupied to give much thought to it. The new Secretary of State for India referred the matter to a Committee at the India Office pending his return to London, and during this interim matters had a chance to cool down to some extent. Although Morley had openly professed his strong adherence to the principle of civil supremacy in India, he found on taking charge of the India Office that it was one thing to make such utterances, and quite another to reverse the policy of his predecessor, and so translate words into action. But he was more than willing, before taking up the question, to give both Minto and Kitchener a fair hearing on the question of dual control and the merits of Brodrick's Despatch.<sup>1</sup>

Once settled down at the India Office, Morley found himself confronted by a formidable combination of authorities: in India Minto and Kitchener were in accord, along with his own Council in Whitehall, on the question at issue. Could he, as a new Minister of a few days' standing, overrule this array of unified opinion? Morley mastered the papers which he discussed individually with Balfour, Godley, Roberts, Brodrick and Curzon, he also held long conversations with Ian Hamilton and H. Smith-Dorrien, all except Curzon, took Kitchener's view. Morley then rightly claimed that the importance of the issue had been enormously exaggerated on

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1. See Morley to Minto, 9 February 1906, Morley MSS 573/1.

both sides, and deliberately avoiding past controversy, echoed Esher's advice to Kitchener<sup>1</sup> arguing that Curzon had accepted change in principle when he accepted Brodrick's scheme subject to modifications: "This was to come a long way forward." On the other hand Kitchener had loyally agreed to make the best of the new system, and Morley wrote:

"It ought to be possible with care and goodwill, and oblivion of a fierce quarrel that need never have taken place, to build a golden bridge."<sup>2</sup>

However, Morley did not altogether believe that he could satisfy his own party as well as the "Curzonians"; but he was able to avoid further harm to imperial interests: "We must, in any case, get temper down before anything else."<sup>3</sup> Reluctantly acknowledging Brodrick's Despatch, Morley quickly came to the conclusion that he could not overrule the powerful combination of authorities in India and in Whitehall. Shrewdly he picked his way between the two factions. On the question of the position and powers of the Secretary in the new Army Department, the Government of India were themselves divided; Morley sided with the dissentients, Curzon's ex-counsellors, against Minto and Kitchener, who were supported by Major-General Scott, the new Supply Member, and Baker, the Finance Member. Morley, as well as Minto's civilian

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1. See supra, p. 412.

2. See Morley to Minto, 28 December 1905, Morley MSS 573/1.

3. Ibid., 1 February 1905.

colleagues, recoiled from the prospect of losing any safeguard for the constitutional control of the army by the Government of India. Bent on strengthening the constitutional check on the Commander-in-Chief which only the position of Army Secretary could provide, Morley accordingly placed the new Secretary in as independent a position as possible on the tacit assumption that this measure once adopted - even though tentative - was infinitely better than indefinite prolongation of controversy.<sup>1</sup> In that way Morley hoped all parties would see the firmness of his position as final arbiter.

Curzon, who feared Morley's hand was being forced by circumstances, informed him on 24 January that he had prepared a manifesto stating the entire case,<sup>2</sup> which he felt it his duty to publish, and reveal, if necessary, the impracticability of Brodrick's scheme, especially if Morley tolerated any inferior status for the Army Secretary under the new Department. He concentrated on two issues: (1) that Kitchener's case against dual control as such had no foundation but was personal to one individual, Elles, and (2) that "Scott is, as we all know him to be, an absolute cipher." Curzon characterised these proceedings as "being a veritable

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1. Morley to Curzon, 7 February 1906.

2. 'Private and Confidential Pamphlet on Indian Military Administration', 2nd version, 1906, Curzon MSS 111/416. The substance of which appeared in The Times on 1 March 1906.

scandal - viz. that this docile nonentity [Scott] after a life devoted to the ... manufacture of shot and shell, should by Brodrick's action, taken upon Kitchener's advice, be sitting and voting upon the foreign policy, frontier policy and internal administration of every branch of the Government of India."<sup>1</sup> The position of the new Army Secretary to the Government of India was, for all purposes, an academic one. Conscious of this but debarred from calling attention to the matter in Parliament, Curzon had little hope of drawing public interest to his arid crusade, and was indeed forced to set forth his case in a series of letters in the columns of The Times.<sup>2</sup> Strong though Morley's position was, Curzon's anathemas weighed heavily on his conscience, and the memory of them had a salutary effect on his subsequent outlook on the question of Indian army reform.

In his correspondence to India, Morley was careful to draw particular attention to the prevailing mood of Parliament and the Cabinet towards imperial affairs. He informed Minto that

"The new Parliament and the new Cabinet will be, in the highest degree, jealous both of anything that looks like expansion, extended protectorates, spheres of influence, and so forth: and of anything with the savour of

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1. Curzon to Morley, 24 January 1906, Morley MSS 555.
  2. See The Times, 1 March 1906. Morley later abolished Scott (and his Department) who unnecessarily duplicated the military vote in Council; see Morley to Minto, 22 February & 7 March 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.

militarism about it."<sup>1</sup>

Morley professed himself "incurably suspicious" of a policy dictated in the face of the House of Commons; moreover he emphatically rejected Kitchener's tactics in threatening to resign should his cause not win favour with the authorities at home. He adamantly told Minto:

"You say that Lord K. told you he would resign, if what he calls dual control were restored. I have also seen a letter to one in this Office, in which he uses the same language about resigning."

"I do not want Lord K. to resign; if he resigns, I should look on my efforts as to the controversy as a failure. At the same time, if I have done my best to master the arguments and to grasp the points, with my utmost diligence and impartiality, I am not at all afraid of facing the House of Commons or the public, even if he does resign. Nor shall I be moved by a hairsbreadth from what may seem the best course, by any threats of this sort. They are exactly the attempt of the military authority to over-rule the civil which public opinion here is least inclined to tolerate. It is a pity that he should be so undiplomatic as to begin by using language, which may or may not be needed to influence and affect me at the end of the discussions."<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime Kitchener relied upon Esher to bring Morley to a favourable decision over the changes he desired to introduce in the Indian army. Kitchener told Esher (1 March 1906) that he had been "so completely misrepresented at home" that his case had been "entirely lost sight of

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1. Morley to Minto, 2 January 1906, Morley MSS 573/1.

2. Ibid.

or become hidden under the mass of lies that now surround and envelop my personality." "It has been a trying time, but thank God it is now over. It is a lesson to me to have nothing further to do with Army reforms."<sup>1</sup> Kitchener had good reason to believe that the Liberals would be disinclined to take up his schemes favourably in Parliament. His reputation and such incidents as the desecration of the Madhi's tomb and the production of his skull, and his unpopular methods of rounding up Boer prisoners in South Africa into concentration camps, caused serious criticism in Radical circles. One example will illustrate the misgivings aroused by Kitchener's autocratic personality.

In 1898 Winston Churchill (1874-1965) had been personally snubbed by Kitchener at Omdurman and subsequently criticised his actions, particularly in his book, The River War.<sup>2</sup> As a warm admirer of Curzon's administration in India (he had in 1898 proposed himself as an aide-de-camp to the Viceroy), Churchill wrote on hearing of Curzon's resignation:

"Unless the civil power is possessed of expert military information drawn from an independent and authoritative source, I do not see how a Viceroy can control finance or frontier policy... I am quite certain that no Liberal Government ... could possibly acquiesce in the position demanded by Lord Kitchener."

Churchill asserted that he had in fact been an "unrelenting" opponent of the Conservative party ever since 1898, and

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1. Kitchener to Esher, 1 March 1906, in Esher, Journals, II, pp.145-6.
  2. Churchill, W.S., The River War, II, p.377. See also Lady Violet Bonham Carter's Winston Churchill As I Knew Him, pp.41-2.

rejoiced "over the melancholy and miserable aspect of the Government today."<sup>1</sup> In reply Curzon welcomed the idea that "the opinions which you entertain and for which I have fought ... are shared by an almost unanimous public opinion in India, and not least strongly in the Army itself where the coming dictatorship is viewed not only with apprehension but with hearty disgust." Curzon considered it "inconceivable that so great and disastrous a change should be thrust upon India against her will, and behind the back of the House of Commons"; and found "The silence of that House ... one of the most inexplicable phenomena of recent history."<sup>2</sup> Churchill had then informed Campbell-Bannerman:

"I am convinced that the new arrangement of duties in India gives excessive and improper powers to the Commander-in-Chief: considering what has happened it seems to me that Kitchener is something very like a military dictator in India ... I should propose to move an amendment to the address condemning the new arrangement, and asserting the paramount importance of the civil power in India."

Churchill went on to tell the Prime Minister elect that he planned to have dinner with Morley on the night of 28 October 1905, concluding: "I abhor military tyrants!"<sup>3</sup>

Morley clearly had no illusions about the Commander-in-Chief's ambitions in India and Kitchener in consequence

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1. Churchill to Curzon, 22 August 1905.
  2. Curzon to Churchill, 5 October 1905.
  3. Churchill to Campbell-Bannerman, 28 October 1905, Campbell-Bannerman MSS 41238.

was prepared to "expect the worst"<sup>1</sup> from the Secretary of State. But in the meantime Morley came under considerable pressure from Esher, whom he respected and liked, and he was persuaded to hold his hand before coming to any decision connected with Indian army administration. Esher pointed to Curzon's limitations:

"There has been hitherto far too much parochialism in dealing with these matters, tempered by the temporary whim of the proconsular autocrat."<sup>2</sup>

Esher bombarded Morley with a constant stream of visitors including military experts, and such partisans as Hubert Hamilton and Douglas Haig and, later, Duff, each individually suggesting strategic points on India for Morley's consideration.<sup>3</sup> Esher moreover forwarded copies of Kitchener's letters directly to the King, expressing his private satisfaction "that Mr. Morley will show the same spirit of conciliation and fairness to these proposals as to those with which he has already dealt" and that Morley "has consented to write privately to both Lord Kitchener and Lord Minto, before he arrives at any decision."<sup>4</sup> Esher secured Kitchener access to Morley on two conditions: (1) "That you are always ready to discuss frankly any scheme of yours, provided that you know that a serious attempt is being made to arrive at

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1. Kitchener to Esher, 1 March 1906; Esher, Journals, II, pp.145-6.

2. Esher to Morley, 13 March 1906; Ibid., pp.150-1.

3. See Esher to Morley, 23 January 1906; Ibid., p.139.

4. Esher to Edward VII, 22 March 1906; Ibid., pp.151-2.

a just and fair decision" and (2) "That he will always find you amenable to reason and open to conviction, provided that discussion is above board, and that there is no attempt at intrigue."<sup>1</sup>

Despite Esher's flair for mediation, he held power without responsibility and his intervention often produced unfortunate consequences. Part of the friction between Minto and Morley in 1907 occurred when Minto learned that Morley had asked Kitchener to correspond regularly with him,<sup>2</sup> which he resented as another instance of Morley's autocratic meddling in Indian affairs. What Minto probably did not know was that it was Esher, not Morley who originally and independently proposed the correspondence - first to Kitchener (21 December 1905) and then to Morley (13 March 1906).<sup>3</sup> In 1910 Minto incorrectly reported that Morley's dislike of Kitchener "was largely due to Kitchener's refusal to correspond with him behind my back" and that Morley resented this: "how biassed he [Morley] is."<sup>4</sup>

In the meantime Morley came to grips with the Government of India by explaining his firm intention to make the position and function of the new Army Secretary sufficiently independent to guarantee constitutional control of the army

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1. Esher to Kitchener, 6 April 1906, Esher, Journals, II, pp.157-8.
  2. See Minto to Morley, 14 March 1907, Minto MSS 1007.
  3. See Esher, Journals, II, pp.131-2, 150-1.
  4. Minto to Arthur Bigge, 5 July 1910, Minto MSS 998.

by a civilian colleague. Accordingly, on 9 February 1906, Morley drew up a powerful despatch ordering an end to any alleged conflict between civil and military authorities and any further "prolongation of fruitless and injurious controversy."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless Minto's Council were themselves divided, four to three, over Morley's proposed alterations to the Army and Supply Departments, which Arundel, Ibbetson, Hewett and Richards opposed Kitchener, <sup>with</sup> Scott and Baker supported <sup>ing</sup> Minto. [The proceedings were then published in a special Gazette of India on 17 March 1906.]

After a year's trial however, Morley was convinced that the practical working of the new scheme sufficiently justified raising the question of whether the Supply Department, which did little work and contributed nothing whatever to the Government of India, could safely be abolished. Morley argued that if this were possible, and the Supply Office were transferred to the Army Department and disposed of, great financial savings would accrue.<sup>2</sup> Within eighteen months the Department of Military Supply had proved otiose; and within three years, Brodrick's rickety compromise which had annually cost Indian taxpayers 1,150,000 rupees, came to its peaceful demise. Kitchener, least willing to disturb or

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1. See 'Further Papers Regarding the Administration of the Army in India' No.3, Cd. 2842 (published February 1906).
  2. India Office to Government of India, 28 June 1907, Despatch No.105, Minto MSS 836.

cause a recrudescence of heated controversy, had mixed feelings. He advised Minto to make no change, unequivocally asserting:

"I never advocated its creation and cannot oppose its abolition; but I greatly fear raking up the ashes of the old controversy."<sup>1</sup>

Because the system was working so well, and because personal relations with the docile Supply Member, Scott, were so cordial, Minto and Kitchener opposed making any alterations whatever.<sup>2</sup> But Morley saw no reason to continue to pay a salary to an official who, though regarded by Minto's Government as popular and efficient, was in reality - according to Morley - "K.'s mumbling shadow" who merely duplicated the military vote in Council: "Scott and his Dept. must vanish. No time should be lost in putting this expensive abuse right."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the post of Military Supply Member was abolished on 22 January 1909,<sup>4</sup> and thereafter Kitchener assumed personal control over Indian army administration.

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1. Kitchener to Minto, 14 March 1907, Minto MSS 980.
  2. Minto to Morley, 14 March 1907, Minto MSS 1007.
  3. Morley to Minto, 28 March 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.
  4. India Office to Government of India, 22 January 1909, Despatch No.10. Minto MSS 836. For a reason unknown to me, Magnus gives the date as 1 April 1909; see Kitchener, p.225. See also Morley to Minto, Telegram, 23 January 1909, Minto MSS 984. Minto had tried to suggest that it was Curzon who was after all responsible for the Department of Military Supply and even went so far as to blame him for its existence; see Minto to Morley, 9 October 1907, Minto MSS 1007.

As a measure of economy, Morley's abolition of the post of Military Supply met with little opposition except from Curzon, who asserted in a Lords' Debate on 28-29 June 1909, "The fear I have is that if you leave things as they are now, at some date which we cannot anticipate, and which may be a date most inconvenient and most dangerous for us" disaster would overtake Indian army administration.<sup>1</sup> Brod-rick's compromise had proved expensive as well as ineffective, and the abolition of the Supply Member in January 1909 created problems which Curzon foresaw in 1905; for the Commander-in-Chief, in his additional capacity as Military Member, now performed administrative as well as executive military duties. This chain of dual functions and responsibilities became chaotic in the hands of his successors, and confusion inevitably resulted. In the report of Sir William Nicholson's Committee<sup>2</sup> the procedures resulting from the new arrangement were described as "complicated and perplexing" with the result that cases were "not unknown of the Comman-der-in-Chief disagreeing with himself as Army Member."<sup>3</sup>

The task of organising Army Headquarters in India and working that system in 1909 fell to Douglas Haig (Chief

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1. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 4th Session, Vol.II (Speech by Curzon 29 June 1909), col.106.
  2. See Nicholson to Haldane, 11 July 1912, Haldane MSS 5909. Nicholson (1845-1918) was C.I.G.S. from 1908-1912.
  3. See Charteris, op.cit., pp.48-50. Charteris was Haig's Assistant Military Secretary at the time.

of Staff from 1909-12). He characterised Indian army administration on his arrival by recalling the comment once made by Curzon: "I rise from the perusal of these papers filled with the sense of the ineptitude of my military advisers."<sup>1</sup> The pendulum had swung as Curzon had predicted. But it was a greater blow to the Government of India when in 1915-16 more than 30% of its force was destroyed in Mesopotamia, casting, in Lloyd George's words "a baleful light upon the mismanagement, stupidity, criminal neglect and amazing incompetence of the military authorities who were responsible for the organisation of the expedition, and on the horrible and unnecessary suffering of the gallant men who were sent to failure and defeat through the blunders of those in charge."<sup>2</sup> The Report of Royal Commission stated unequivocally that "This astounding system has only to be described to be condemned."<sup>3</sup>

Morley in the meantime looked with a penetrating eye upon Kitchener's projects for strategic railways, barracks and increased pay for the troops under his command. He explained his intention of cutting down military expenditure and running the army along lines of strict economy.<sup>4</sup> When

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1. See Charteris, *op.cit.*, p.57.

2. Lloyd George, D., *War Memories*, I (2 volume ed.) p.483.

3. The Report of Royal Commission, July 1917, Cd. 8610. Mesopotamia Commission, Part XI, 'Faulty Organisation of Indian Military Administration', p.99.

4. Morley to Kitchener, 6 April 1906, Minto MSS 1006.

Kitchener arbitrarily demanded an increase of the forces at his disposal in India, Morley suggested that, in view of what he termed the 'Russian lull' India's military establishment was ample to secure her from the threat of a Russian invasion. He deprecated the idea that military efficiency depended upon increased military expenditure and recorded:

"It is my place, as the honest broker, to help to reconcile the general necessities of His Majesty's Government with the legitimate requirements of the Indian department of that Government."

Morley, like Curzon before him, had become the stern champion of Indian revenues: "The War Office wants more money from India, I want India to pay, not more, but less, in military expenditure."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener attempted to parry that argument by pointing to the effects of Japanese success on Asiatic opinion which, he believed engendered the confidence "that they are capable of obtaining similar results ... In India itself, the victory of Asiatics over Europeans has proved a stimulus and encouragement to those who, for various reasons, are discontented and disloyal. The lesson which they believe that victory to hold for them, is now the ordinary text of the speeches made by the party of sedition. That party, however, is noisy rather than important, and its strength, such that it is, lies at present among the less warlike races, and not

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1. Morley to Kitchener, 6 April 1906, Minto MSS 1006.

among those from which we draw our Native soldiers." Nonetheless, Kitchener pointed to the disparity between armed white soldiers in India and the civilian Indian population, presenting the following ratios: Russian Central Asia, 1:92; Caucasus, 1:101; India, 1:3,800. He concluded that to reduce his internal forces was to run the risk of internal disorder, and though conceding that the destruction of the Russian fleet had materially weakened her at sea, pointed out that her railway communications remained intact and thus her strength in Central Asia was materially unchanged.<sup>1</sup> Morley was not wholly convinced by these arguments, as we shall see; moreover, it is probable that during the period 1906-9 there was no danger whatever of a war between Great Britain and Russia along India's frontiers.

At the same time it appears highly likely that Kitchener had other reasons for wishing to maintain (at India's expense) a numerically large force. Here Kitchener merely pursued his customary practice, namely to keep as many troops as possible in India as reserves. His assessment of the increased danger of internal revolt was a patent fraud. He told Morley: "India should bear her due share of the burden..." of the costs of Imperial defence. "The more, therefore, that you should reduce the forces out here, the greater will be the possible demand which England may have

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1. Minute by Kitchener on the Anglo-Japanese Treaty (9 May 1906), Minto MSS 836 (Probably written by Duff and signed by Kitchener).

to meet in case of emergency, and the less help will India be able to give to the Empire in case of need ... elsewhere."<sup>1</sup> Kitchener persistently argued that the Indian army was not just concerned with the affairs of the sub-continent but must be systematically prepared for utilisation outside the frontiers of India, in conjunction with Great Britain's other forces in the event of a world war. Morley declined to admit either the validity or the justice of that argument:

"I know you may say that India has a right to frame military schemes for which India pays. Yes - but the India that frames the schemes is not the India that pays: just the contrary. The India that frames is not India at all, but a body of Englishmen at Simla. And it is the business of us Englishmen at Whitehall to criticise and control expenditure on behalf of the India on whom the other Englishmen lay the burden."<sup>2</sup>

Yet Kitchener had one more card to play: Douglas Haig, upon leaving India in 1906, was determined to prepare for war. He had been appointed director of military training in England (1906-7) and subsequently transferred as Haldane's Director of Staff at Army Headquarters (1907-9) with the task of co-ordinating military strategy in order to place British armies on a war organisation. Duff Cooper wrote that "Haig's mind was busy during these years" working out in detail schemes for military operations utilising the Indian

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1. Kitchener to Morley, 30 April 1906, enc. Kitchener to Minto, Minto MSS 1005.
  2. Morley to Kitchener, 25 May 1906, enc. Morley to Minto, Minto MSS 1005.

army "outside the frontiers of India in the emergency of a world war" and that when these were discovered by Morley, "orders were peremptorily sent out from home that not only were all studies of this nature to be abandoned forthwith, but that also, incredible as it may seem, any plans of this nature that had been drawn up were to be destroyed." These orders were tacitly disobeyed and the plans carefully preserved so that, with the advent of World War I, troops were conveyed from India to Europe according to Haig's scheme, including the details for the subsequent disastrous military operations directed from India in Mesopotamia.<sup>1</sup> Kitchener was at his old game again. Moreover his desire for a strong political lobby at home may well have arisen from the uncertainty of the financial support he could expect from the Liberal party in London, deeply pledged as it was to Retrenchment.

Indeed, following the fall of Balfour's Government at the close of 1905, a crisis sprang up concerning the future of the Defence Committee, for Campbell-Bannerman - as well as Morley and others of his colleagues - distrusted that organisation. But as the result of the subsequent efforts of Esher and Haldane, the Committee was "granted a probationary period."<sup>2</sup> In the meantime several important

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1. Cooper, D., Haig, pp.29-30; see also Terraine, op.cit., pp.48-49; also Charteris, J., op.cit., pp.56-58.  
2. Lord Hankey, The Supreme Command 1914-1918, I, p.51.

developments occurred, affecting Britain and India equally. Two of these, the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance on 12 August 1905 and the results of the Anglo-French Entente of 8 April 1904, had greatly modified the strategic and political concepts upon which Kitchener originally framed his reorganisation of the Indian army. Additionally, Russia's defeat by Japan checked the power of her possible offensive against India, and paved the way for the Anglo-Russian Convention (31 August 1907), obliging Kitchener to expound a new doctrine regarding the defence of India. Besides elaborating the cardinal principle of safe-guarding India from external attack whilst ensuring security against internal rebellion (in addition to preserving peace amongst the border tribes of the frontier and discharging the obligation of defending Afghanistan) Kitchener in a Memorandum on 21 October 1907 held that the Indian army was now liable for service overseas for the purpose of imperial defence. But he had to manage Morley carefully. He proceeded to discuss the possibility of complications arising from a Russian attack upon Afghanistan (with repercussions on tribal fanaticism, and on the bonds of religion which might well threaten the internal stability of India.) Kitchener observed that the consolidation of a Mohammedan Pan-Islamic movement coupled with the rise of Asian Nationalism would produce serious consequences, and stated that "Any reduction in our forces in India" would, amongst other things, "induce the

Amir to pay less attention to our advice."<sup>1</sup> He committed his authority to exploiting every pretext of military discontent amongst his army, the police and the forces of the Native States, in order as we have seen, to keep his military estimates and army reserves intact. He reported to Lord Salisbury that

"Japan's jump has fired the imagination of the Indians, and opened up to their minds possibilities previously unheard of. They cannot see how different they are in every way to the Japanese, and feel convinced that, if given the chance, they would do as well or better."<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless Kitchener in a crisis wanted the Government of India to act in order to crush discontent by methods of subjugation and repression; Morley wanted not coercion, but a policy of co-operation and conciliation in India, with the army playing a minimum role.

Much has been made of the agitation and unrest following Curzon's partition of Bengal with its aftermath of sustained boycott and Swadeshi movements, culminating in the outbreak of sedition. After 1907, Kitchener never wearied in reporting and, as the Minto Papers now show, in exaggerating unrest in India. Yet like so many people, the Government of India often failed to appreciate the very great loyalty of the Indian masses and particularly the army who at the time

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1. Memorandum of 21 October 1907, Minto MSS 978.

2. Arthur, G., op.cit., II, p.238.

were still uneducated, largely illiterate and wholly inexperienced in political activity, despite the glowing optimism of the Indian National Congress.<sup>1</sup> However, in order to prevent undue attention being paid to unrest, Morley reported (3 May 1907): "If there be a scintilla of real evidence that seditious rags are infecting the Native Army, nobody would refuse their suppression" but he ascribed the danger more to "your law and order people, who are responsible for at least as many of the fooleries of history as revolutionists are" adding, "You won't forget that in moments of excitement ... people are uncommonly liable to confuse suspicions and possibilities with uncertainty and reality."<sup>2</sup>

As Dr. Mehrotra has suggested,<sup>3</sup> Morley felt that it was India's cast-iron bureaucracy which constituted the greatest menace to the Empire; and that the British Demos must maintain a strict vigil over the 'Tchinovniks', his term for civil servants in India whose methods and outmoded ideas of rule by the sword must be diluted and tempered by wider liberal sympathies. But he also was unwilling to commit the grand folly of acting wholly on principle, without regard to practicalities or circumstances - hence his assertion that it was neither "desirable or even conceivable, to

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1. See especially Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress, 1904, p.37.

2. Morley to Minto, 3 May 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.

3. Mehrotra, S.R., India and the Commonwealth 1885-1929, p.47.

adopt English political institutions to the nations who inhabit India. Assuredly not in your day or mine. But the spirit of English institutions is a different thing..."<sup>1</sup> In these circumstances, acting through Esher, Kitchener employed the techniques he had so successfully applied against Curzon; for he had learned that it was essential to manipulate the Home Government in order to carry forward his schemes in India. Hitherto, Kitchener had referred those schemes direct to the Defence Committee, either through Clark, Haig or Esher himself. By converting that body and thus ranging behind him an important segment of expert military opinion, including strong support from Haldane in the Cabinet, he would be placed in a powerful position with Morley. In the meantime Esher would effectively prepare the ground by writing directly to Morley espousing Cabinet and Defence Committee strategic doctrine.<sup>2</sup> Esher rightly guessed that the public in India and in Britain neither knew nor cared about the details of army administration in India so long as a definite policy was laid down; and he considered that Parliament was rather inclined to favour Kitchener's schemes once they had been adopted by the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Cabinet.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime Kitchener

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1. Morley to Minto, 6 June 1906, Morley MSS 573/1.

2. See Esher to Morley, 3 October 1906 & 9 February 1907, Journals, II, pp.187-8, 220-1; also Esher to Edward VII, 21 January 1907, pp.217-8.

3. Ibid.

got Duff to suggest to Morley that sedition had spread, how perilous it would be to yield to it, and that if there was going to be any extension of native rights, it would be necessary to increase India's military forces.<sup>1</sup> Though Duff reported "Morley is, as you know, very suspicious..."<sup>2</sup>, Kitchener informed Lady Salisbury that "Duff has done a lot of good at home with Mr. Morley". Nevertheless he explained "Curzon's agents do all they can to poison the S. of S.'s mind with most unwarrantable and baseless reports. I wonder he listens to them."<sup>3</sup> Here again such tactics repeated those employed in Kitchener's triumphant struggle against Curzon over Elles; and his demand that Indian army reserves be enlarged not only to cope with sedition, but to take part in a Continental conflict,<sup>4</sup> formed part of a familiar pattern.

These proceedings taxed Morley and it was inevitable that the Secretary of State was extremely reluctant to consent to any part of their execution, even though the Defence Committee formally approved of the military policy of the Commander-in-Chief, supported as always by Minto's Council. At the time, however, both Kitchener and Minto were furious with Morley for proposing the reduction of British

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1. See Minto to Morley, 3 July 1907, Minto MSS 1007. See also Kitchener to Minto, 14 May 1907, Minto MSS 980 and 18 May 1908, Minto MSS 982.
  2. Duff to Kitchener, 22 February 1907, Minto MSS 980.
  3. Magnus, Kitchener, p.231.
  4. See Minto MSS 978, and *supra*, p. 450.

troops in India, despite efforts at keeping the Home Government well supplied with rumours of "unrest" should further attempts be made at reduction.<sup>1</sup> Such tactics, suppressio veri and suggestio falsi, coupled with Kitchener's desire for the suppression of sedition once more reveals the divergence of outlook between the Government of India and Morley over Indian administration; and Morley lost no time in asserting his view that when Kitchener demanded more stringent powers he would in future "have to give us facts ... people will want chapter and verse for further measures of repression."<sup>2</sup> He characterised Kitchener's description of the perils of sedition (and of the necessity for a Press Act and increased subsidiary military garrisons)<sup>3</sup> as a piece of "vague" and "solemn trumpery": "What more is it than the sort of thing that is talked in any service club any day of the year?"<sup>4</sup> According to Morley Kitchener was becoming an alarmist by threatening general disaster should the army not receive more men and money; he expostulated: "Considering the difficulties and even dangers that surround us, it would be monstrous if there were the least departure from absolute straightness on his part."<sup>5</sup> He pronounced: "if

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1. See Minto to Morley, 31 July 1907, Minto MSS 1007; also 8 April 1908, Minto MSS 1008.

2. Morley to Minto, 11 July 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.

3. See Minto to Morley, 10 July 1907, Minto MSS 1007.

4. Morley to Minto, 2 August 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.

5. Ibid., 4 September 1907.

half the attention had been given during the last four years by certain military authorities to the Native Army that has been given to fear of Russia" the Government of India might well have escaped its present difficulties. Returning to a predominant theme, distrust of Kitchener's intrigues, Morley wrote:

"I am rather struck by the immense quantity of underhand, crafty, and slightly disloyal correspondence constantly going on. Certainly the embers of the old [Curzon] quarrels are still smouldering..."<sup>1</sup>

When these suspicions appeared confirmed he pointed out bluntly:

"We have to work with a man whom we now know to be working against us behind our backs."<sup>2</sup>

Morley feared that Kitchener was translating the Government of India into a "military autocracy with a vengeance" and seemed at one point prepared to maintain Kitchener in India only for "preventing European panic."<sup>3</sup>

When in 1908 Minto professed that Kitchener "is the very essence of caution as regards the frontier",<sup>4</sup> Morley reminded him that it was Curzon who had "planted" the Commander-in-Chief in India and that there was never a "whisper of frontier trouble in his peace-making days."<sup>5</sup>

1. Morley to Minto, 5 July 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.
2. Ibid., 3 October 1907.
3. Ibid., 29 November 1907.
4. Minto to Morley, 23 March 1908, Minto MSS 1008.
5. Morley to Minto, 15 April 1908, Morley MSS 573/3.

Morley felt, in fact, that reforms in India were in much greater demand than increase in men and military expenditure; in any case, a reduction of India's military forces would be "worth a hundred press laws" which the Commander-in-Chief advocated to curb sedition.<sup>1</sup> These differences of political outlook came to a head following a two years' extension of Kitchener's term, and to a climax when the Commander-in-Chief pressed his ambition to achieve the coveted Viceregal gaddi. On 15 March 1907 Morley had offered to prolong Kitchener's post as Commander-in-Chief as his period of office was to expire in November 1907 and this Kitchener accepted on 7 April. He/<sup>then</sup> followed up his letter by intimating his desire for a holiday and he wrote to Morley on 24 September 1907 to ask permission to leave India early in 1908 as after "years of incessant work" his health was failing and he needed a rest. He had "ascertained that there will be no objection on the Viceroy's part". Thereupon he outlined a holiday in the form of a long sea voyage to Singapore, China and Japan, knowing he was debarred by law from re-visiting Europe during his tenure of command. He represented that his visit was for the purpose of gaining the opportunity of "making myself acquainted with the conditions under which those regiments of native infantry serve which India lends to the War Office for garrison duty."<sup>2</sup> But his real reason,

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1. Morley to Minto, 15 May 1908, Morley MSS 573/3.

2. Kitchener to Morley, 24 September 1907, Minto MSS 1007.

as he informed Lady Salisbury (29 August 1907) was because he felt himself "a prisoner in India" and longed "to be out of it all", because Morley was being so "nasty", and allowing him "no consideration."<sup>1</sup>

Only six months prior to that request Kitchener had told Morley of his tours of shooting along the frontier lamenting that he had "only got three tigers and three bears"<sup>2</sup>. More concerned with the state of unrest than with bags of game the Liberal Minister curtly informed Minto on 31 October 1907:

"If the state of things warrants exceptional repressive laws, people might reasonably think that the Commander-in-Chief should be on the ground."<sup>3</sup>

To Kitchener, Morley wrote:

"It is only, I think, three or four months ago since I received, as the foundation of the case for sundry measures of repressive legislation, a strong memorandum of yours depicting the dangers of disaffection in the Indian Army as real and of imminent, if not even actual, urgency. In the state of things so emphatically pressed on my close attention, you won't think it unnatural that I should feel uneasy at the idea of your being off the scene even for a week. Then there is another difficulty. You represent military things upon the Executive Council of the Governor-General. What is to become of them in your absence? You will not, I think, refer me to the head of the Military Supply Department? Even if you did, I cherish the hope that this

1. Magnus, Kitchener, p.235.
2. Kitchener to Morley, 7 April 1907, enc. Minto to Morley, 10 April 1907, Minto MSS 1007.
3. Morley to Minto, 31 October 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.

department may vanish into limbo almost before you could start."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Morley added that "Indian military policy, in all its aspects" was to be a major topic of interest and importance for some months to come. "Are we to hang it all up?", and thus leave military questions in the Council of the Governor-General "in a state of suspended animation" during his absence. "Again, is it safe to leave the Army Department in an experimental stage ... how would the coach travel without you?"<sup>2</sup>

Magnus comments that in Morley

"Kitchener appreciated that he had met his match, and he withdrew his application for leave; the prompt award of a G.C.I.E. may have been intended as a kind of consolation. Nevertheless, for the first time in his life, Kitchener reacted by relapsing into idleness... shooting tigers, exhibiting his orchids, arranging his porcelain, caring for his poodle, raising the ceilings of his suites of reception rooms and playing with his investments helped to solace Kitchener's leisure during his last two years in India."<sup>3</sup>

But this period of inanition came to a close as the time drew near for decision on a successor to Minto and Kitchener had carefully to establish his claims. The Liberal Government were trying hard to place Kitchener in the relatively minor post of Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean at Malta, which Kitchener accepted provisionally on

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1. Morley to Kitchener, 7 November 1907, Minto MSS 981.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Magnus, Kitchener, pp.236-7.

the tacit assumption that it would lead to the Indian Viceroyalty. In the meantime his friends, abetted by King Edward pressed those claims from London. Kitchener wanted Sir Beauchamp Duff to succeed him in India but the India Office selected instead General O'Moore Creagh and his appointment was announced, along with the news that Kitchener was to become a Field Marshal on 10 September 1909 when he relinquished his post as Commander-in-Chief in India and took up the holiday he had proposed earlier. In effect he timed his trip to coincide roughly with the time when Minto would leave India.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime Kitchener was extremely confident that he could freely advise Minto on Indian affairs and amiably suggested that Scott might replace Creagh on Morley's Council.<sup>2</sup> He told Minto that it was a "pity Lord Morley is so entirely in the hands of those who surround him and so entirely ignores the man on the spot"<sup>3</sup> and that Morley's "predatory attitude" towards military administration in India were causing great harm.<sup>4</sup> When, in 1908 Curzon was elevated to the House of Lords where he intended to attack Morley's proposal to abolish the Department of Military Supply, Kitchener wrote that he would provide the necessary "notes on Curzon's projected attack ... but that Duff would write

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1. Magnus, Kitchener, p.242.

2. Kitchener to Minto, 26 February 1909, Minto MSS 984.

3. Ibid., 19 October 1908, 983.

4. Ibid., Telegram, 19 February 1909, 984.

the ammunition for the Secretary of State" for consumption in London.<sup>1</sup> Kitchener had consulted Minto as to how he should proceed to obtain his final ambition, the Indian Viceroyalty. But those preparations were shattered when, on 20 August 1909 Kitchener attended a farewell banquet at Simla in the course of which he unwittingly read out, almost verbatim, phrases which Curzon had delivered at the Byculla Club on 16 November 1905. That speech was symptomatic of the way in which Kitchener conducted his affairs for in composing his notes he had directed that Duff draft it for him, never for a moment thinking that Duff would crib it wholesale from Curzon himself. Minto was lamely forced to make excuses for a very unpleasant dilemma and when Lady Duff confessed that it was one of her husband's choicest pieces of work he confided: "she of course is a raving mad ... lunatic" and that he was sorry, "it is such an intensely stupid thing to happen at the end of his time" for in his period of "indolence" he did little of his own work and "scarcely ever wrote his own notes on files", with the consequence that at times he [Minto] was forced to withdraw "a lot of nonsense that had been written for him over his name."<sup>2</sup> Prior to this Morley's confidence in Kitchener waned as he acidly commented that if Kitchener was idle what was to become of British rule

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1. Kitchener to Minto, 28 January 1909, 984; Duff did this in a long memorandum dated 5 February 1909. See Kitchener MSS 30/57/32.

2. Minto to Sir Arthur Bigge, 14 October 1909, Minto MSS 996.

in India?: "Kitchener has been indolent in these days - indolent both in mind and body, and cares more for cultivating his garden than for tending the prickly cactus, Homo, especially Homo Indicus".<sup>1</sup>

Minto moreover had naively confessed to Brodrick, now Lord Middleton, regarding the demise of his ill-conceived system:

"None of us wanted the abolition of the Supply Department, but we couldn't deny that, on public grounds, there was no excuse for continuing its existence. Being human, we only wanted to be spared the revival of old bitterness and Morley was on perfectly sound ground when he said that, in the public interest, he could not accept such reasoning. As regards carrying out of military work, there was no reason for General Scott's continuance in office. His presence on Council simply duplicated the military vote. Kitchener has supported me most loyally in all our discussions here, and as Scott has always followed Kitchener the position was most welcome to me! But one could not support it conscientiously. The increase in work thrown on the Commander-in-Chief is mere imagination. It would be most unfair to say that Kitchener is idle, but yet it is a fact that he has had extremely little to do for a long time. I believe he never works after 2 P.M. - some people say never after noon! But I can vouch for his work being most easy."<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless Kitchener now took up the line that Indian army administration was in a state of critical transition, requiring a strong hand to put down sedition whilst preparing India for its role within the systematic organization of the

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1. Morley to Minto, 22 September 1909, Minto MSS 1009.  
2. Minto to Brodrick, 29 July 1909, Minto MSS 996.

defences of the Empire. He intimated, through Minto that a dangerous conspiracy within India was being directed at the British Government; Minto had in fact told Grey, the Foreign Secretary that "India is in such an inflammable condition that the agitators never lose an opportunity of jumping at anything which may set the place in a blaze again" and that at any moment someone might set "another spark to the powder magazine."<sup>1</sup> So frightened was Minto by rumours of revolution that in desperation he wrote in 1908 to Kitchener stating that there was "undoubtedly a murderous conspiracy in existence" and suggested that he arrange a military display of force in Calcutta by "a march through the bazaars", attributing the evil influence to "a Curzonian combination."<sup>2</sup>

As the question of Minto's successor began to grow warm the legacy of the Curzon-Kitchener controversy played an important part as key factions became aligned behind one or the other of the candidates proposed for the gaddi: Col. Arthur Bigge, the private secretary of the Prince of Wales wrote:

"A large party headed by the King and Prince of Wales want Kitchener: Morley seems to be undecided, but I imagine the Cabinet will never agree to Kitchener unless things get worse in India [especially] if there is to be a row."<sup>3</sup>

Kitchener intrigued constantly to prey on the fears of the

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1. Minto to Grey, 3 February 1908, Minto MSS 995.
  2. Minto to Kitchener, 6 December 1908. Minto MSS 983.
  3. Bigge to Minto, 8 February 1910, Minto MSS 996.

and  
 Home Government/to provide sufficient alarm to suit his  
 cause. He calculated that those fears would support his  
 candidature.<sup>1</sup> Following several important meetings after his  
 arrival in England on 26 April 1910, Kitchener discovered  
 that Morley was actively against him and that Sir Charles  
 Hardinge, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office  
 was strongly favoured. Hardinge later wrote that during the  
 discussions (which lasted over three months) Kitchener had  
 openly campaigned in his own favour and that it was only when  
 the King died unexpectedly on 6 May 1910, that the way was  
 cleared for Hardinge's own appointment: "Most people consid-  
 ered Kitchener's appointment to be almost a certainty"  
 Hardinge recorded, adding that Sir Walter Lawrence had  
 visited him at the Foreign Office to report the fact that he  
 "had met Kitchener in Belgrave Square, who stopped him ...  
 and asked him to tell me that it was impossible for anybody  
 to fill properly the post of Viceroy unless he had private  
 means of at least £8000 a year". So sure was Kitchener that  
 he would get the appointment "that he had actually appointed  
 his personal staff, whose names I knew."<sup>2</sup>

It fell to Morley to uphold the work of the Indian  
 Councils Act of 1909 and to point out that Kitchener's  
 appointment would destroy the goodwill created by that reform.

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1. See Kitchener to Haldane, 26 February 1910, Haldane MSS 5909.
  2. Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, pp.187-9. See also Hardinge to Minto, 8 July 1910, Minto MSS 996.

He asked Haldane, "would his name strike the people in India favourably and hopefully; or would it be the symbol of rule by the sword; of reaction from the policy of the last few years?"<sup>1</sup> Four years earlier Morley had felt impelled to re-iterate his stern adherence to the sacred maxim that military power must be subordinated to civil control. That philosophy was reflected in a delightful passage written while visiting Windsor Castle when he cautioned against further intrigues on Kitchener's part; he told Haldane:

"I warn you that I write this under the very roof where Charles I was carried away to have <sup>Cromwell</sup> his head cut off for trying the same tricks in army affairs and that ~~his~~ spirit ... lives, so long as there is breath in the body of John Morley - Let tyrants and their minions tremble!"<sup>2</sup>

Morley told Minto that if Kitchener were appointed he would feel inclined to resign, "for such an appointment would be to plant an Indian system on a military basis."<sup>3</sup> Even Minto reported hearing from Gokhale that his appointment "would look like punishing a naughty school-boy!" and that there certainly would be much of this feeling in India.<sup>4</sup> Minto in fact was not privately certain of the advisability (on public grounds) of sending Kitchener although it "would satisfy the people at home who think that in him they would secure a 'blood and thunder' soldier, who would stand no

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1. Morley to Haldane, 5 May 1910, Haldane MSS 5909.

2. Ibid., 9 June 1906, 5907.

3. Morley to Minto, 17 March 1910, Morley MSS 573/5.

4. Minto to Dunlop-Smith, 29 March 1910, Minto MSS 996.

damned nonsense."<sup>1</sup> Finally as opinion hardened, Minto reported:

"Haldane wants him to succeed me to get him away from the War Office. Morley says nothing will induce him to send him to India and Curzon says he won't serve in a Conservative Cabinet if he does go to India! and the Royalties insist on his coming here."<sup>2</sup>

It was clear that a military dictatorship in India would set the clock of reform back. The dregs of the old Curzon-Kitchener quarrel had been stirred and Morley moved to resolve the issue once and for all.

Morley informed the Cabinet that if they insisted on sending Kitchener to India they must expect his resignation<sup>3</sup> and Asquith, who strongly pressed Kitchener's claims, was unwilling to permit Morley to resign on that issue alone.<sup>4</sup> In these circumstances it was decided that Hardinge should be appointed to succeed Minto and on 9 June 1910 Morley sent Kitchener this message:

"At last, after some delay, for which I am not responsible, a decision has been reached about the Indian Viceroyalty ... We are not going to invite you to go back in a new capacity ... The sole difficulty arises from misgivings as to the impressions which would be likely to arise in India from a military appointment."<sup>5</sup>

That letter conveyed to Kitchener "the most bitter

1. Minto to Dunlop-Smith, 6 April 1910, Minto MSS 996.
2. Minto to Arthur Elliot, 17 May 1910, Minto MSS 996.
3. See Morley to Asquith, 5 June 1910, Asquith MSS 23.
4. See Roberts to Minto, 16 June 1910, Minto MSS 996.
5. Morley to Kitchener, 9 June 1910, Kitchener MSS 30/57/31.

disappointment"<sup>1</sup> of his life. But the meanest historian owes something to truth; Morley had watched the downfall of one Viceroy and refused to witness his own demise as Secretary of State under pressure from Kitchener. His decision was eminently sound and, together with Curzon's prophecy, was vindicated by the process of historical events.

### (3) Retrospect

Any adverse judgement passed on Curzon's Viceroyalty after 1902, because it appeared unpopular and wrong-headed, must be tempered in the light of his struggle with Kitchener over Indian army administration. His crusade against racialism and for the principle of social justice led the masterful Viceroy to incur the wrath of the army as well as his own European community; moreover the feud with the Indian army in the last resort was symptomatic of our judgement of his conduct - he did the right thing in the wrong way. As an enemy of military pretensions he appeared to have fallen victim to them in his own defeat.

His dispute with the Commander-in-Chief merely exacerbated friction in India's relations with the Home Government and the Cabinet, preoccupied with responsibilities acquired in the aftermath of the Boer War, were determined

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1. Magnus, Kitchener, p.251.

to avoid fresh commitments especially in Central Asia. That relationship and the fact that the Home Government had more confidence in Kitchener's ability than in Curzon's policy, produced unfortunate consequences in India's external relations with Tibet and Afghanistan, and had its bearing on the problem of Indian army administration.

Curzon resigned when Kitchener insisted on doing away with the Military Member in August 1905, and one of the most disfiguring after-effects of their quarrel was its legacy of bitterness which obscured more fundamental issues in Indian administration, notably the Partition of Bengal. Yet the verdict which Curzon passed on the conduct of the Home Government in these proceedings was neither as harsh nor unjust as the one they passed on him. Inspired by a profound sense of duty, Curzon was a proud, self-willed man of outstanding ability who pursued high ambition by none but worthy means; his quarrel involved therefore not only a clash of temperament, but a genuine divergence of opinion about the best method of advancing the interests of India and of an Empire to whose service his life was dedicated. Indeed the controversy over Indian army administration reveals wider differences in the political outlook of British statesmen generally, in their control of India's destinies.

It is perhaps worth noting that though British statesmen professed to agree to the abstract idea that India

should be independent of the shifts of politics in England, Indian army administration was in many respects an exception. The army (at least theoretically) was the servant of the Indian nation rather than its master, as Gokhale rashly remarked to Kitchener at a debate during the Legislative Council at Calcutta (28 March 1906).<sup>1</sup> The debate of these questions during Curzon's administration and in the aftermath of his resignation inevitably pulled India and the army into the arena of English party politics. Kitchener's secret contacts played here a key role, for they had no scruples whatever in plunging into the world of journalism and politics to put across his schemes, and the view that disaster would follow if they did not prevail. At the time, the hapless Minister for War, H.O. Arnold-Forster, remarked (in another context) in Parliament:

"I find I am dealing with at least six armies. I am dealing with the Army in India, the Indian Army, the Army at Home, the Militia, the Volunteers, and the great army of those who have left the colours and are now entrenched in the clubs of this city."

Curzon retired from public life for ten years, while Kitchener with Minto's help made the role of the army much too important in India's internal affairs, to the dismay of Indian taxpayers. With the outbreak of war in 1914, the subsequent campaign in Mesopotamia raised a series of

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1. Parliamentary Papers, Session 1906, vol.81, Proceedings of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, Calcutta, 28 March 1906, p.165.

critical problems concerning Kitchener's administrative arrangements; and, as Curzon had predicted, (as late as 1913),<sup>1</sup> they ended in disaster.

Personality and not administration was one of the central themes in the dispute between Curzon and Kitchener. Curzon occupied an extremely precarious position after the renewal of his Viceroyalty - for he depended for his support upon two factors: opinion in India (including the army) and that of the Conservative party in power. In addition, although Curzon may be likened to Haldane at the War Office, pledged to his policy of administrative reforms, he was forced to resign not because he lacked vigour, but because he was deemed to have pushed his policies too vigorously. Profoundly distrusting the motives of his official superiors in Whitehall and their designs on India, his solution was no solution at all; he placed too much emphasis on the dignity of his office, spending too much time stating his case, and too little facilitating agreement, as his letter to The Times of 1 March 1906 so well illustrates:

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1. Speech at the Eelventh Annual Calcutta Dinner, 11 June 1913, Curzon of Kedleston, Subjects of the Day, p.73. "When I left India I prophesied that the system of military administration which had been set up by the Government at home against the advice of the Government of India, and over which I resigned, must result in confusion, if not in chaos, and that the attempt to combine in one person the positions of Commander-in-Chief and War Member in one office&the functions of Headquarters Staff and War Office must inevitably break down."

"To me it seems a most serious and ominous thing that a home Government should lightly assume the responsibility of overruling, and contemptuously overruling, a united Government of India on matters not of external Imperial policy, but of its own internal Constitution; and still more ominous that the decision should have been so against the civil and in favour of the military power."<sup>1</sup>

Morley was more perceptive. He was determined to alter the machinery of the Indian Government to suit changed circumstances in India and the growing democratic opinion at home. In his view, sympathy was more important than efficiency, and reform as opposed to repression, must be implemented. "Reforms" he wrote to Minto in 1908, "may not save the Raj, but if they don't, nothing else will."<sup>2</sup> Nowhere was there a more marked divergence of political outlook than in the soldier-administrator's reply to the Liberal statesman; "You say" Minto wrote back, "that reforms may not 'save the Raj'; they certainly will not, though if they are thoughtfully introduced they may help to render its administration happy. But when you say that 'if reforms do not save the Raj nothing else will' I am afraid I must utterly disagree. The Raj will not disappear in India as long as the British race remains what it is, because we shall fight for the Raj as hard as we have ever fought, if it comes to fighting, and we shall win as we have always won."<sup>3</sup> That was also Kitchener's

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1. The Times, 1 March 1906.
  2. Morley to Minto, 7 May 1908, Morley MSS 573/3.
  3. Minto to Morley, 28 May 1908, Minto MSS 1008.

philosophy. In the fundamental difference between ends and means, lies the friction created by Kitchener in his manoeuvring to place Indian administration under 'rule by the strong hand'.

Morley's conduct of Indian army affairs marked but a stage of the larger struggle foreshadowed by the election of 1906 which began in earnest in India with the Reforms of 1909: "the main objective of our proposals was to give ..." Indians "a new and widened share" in the administration of their affairs: "these changes entitled us to claim that they would place the representatives of various classes in more effective positions both in policy and administration, and so would in effective principle go some way to a new chapter in Indian government ... the port to which tide, winds, and seamanship destined us."<sup>1</sup>

Morley's philosophy gives us the key to the struggle over Indian army administration from 1899 to 1909, for during that time three patterns of thought emerge: the Imperial Thesis propounded by Curzon; the Military Antithesis advocated by Kitchener, and the Liberal Synthesis of Morley. The result of that struggle reveals that Indian interests often became secondary to an exaggerated emphasis on the role of the army. As both soldiers and statesmen became sedulously involved in the dubious warfare of press and political

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1. Morley, Recollections, II, pp.160-1.

propaganda, secret correspondence and backstairs intrigue in order to gain their ends, and as each indulged in new techniques of mass media and political lobbying - threatening imminent resignation unless their views prevailed - India watched. When Gokhale learned that Kitchener's reorganisation scheme was to cost the Indian taxpayer over 10 million<sup>on</sup> sterling, he blurted out:

"I fear that a protest in this country against the military policy of the Government and the ceaseless and alarming growth of our military burdens is almost like a cry in the wilderness..."<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener's defeat of Curzon over the question of the Military Member could ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> scarcely a more blatant example of military interference in the internal politics of India. Conservative Ministers in London were not adverse to exploiting that situation to the full; and the India Office justified its procedure in overruling Curzon, on the grounds that there were times perhaps when it was right to act unconstitutionally. Yet it is the only instance in modern times when an acting Commander-in-Chief has been, in conjunction with the Cabinet, brought in to defeat a Viceroy on what was essentially a non-military issue, concerning the composition of his own Government. With the exception of Morley, no one wished to risk interfering with the new arrangement, all the more delicate because of the prestige

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1. Parliamentary Papers, Session 1906, vol.81, Proceedings of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, Calcutta, 20 March 1906, p.157.

attached to Kitchener's reputation. That situation - and the one it created - was indefensible.

In the meantime, circumstances in India were changing rapidly. Japan emerged victorious from her combat with Russia and as Gokhale noted, a new spirit hammered away at British rule "the whole East is today throbbing with a new impulse - vibrating with a new passion and it is not to be expected that India alone should continue unaffected by changes that are in the very air around us ... What this country needs at this moment above everything else is a Government national in spirit, even though it may be foreign in personnel, - a Government that will enable us to feel that our interests are the first consideration with it and that our wishes and opinions are to it a matter of some account."<sup>1</sup>

In the struggle for Indian army reform these impulses were disregarded. Improvisation came about as the result of differences in British political outlook: in Curzon, Kitchener and Morley we see outlined the principles of imperialism, absolutism and Liberalism, and their ramifications had a powerful impact in India afterwards. Though we are not yet ready to assess the levelling or far-reaching effects of

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1. Parliamentary Papers, Session 1906, vol.81, Proceedings of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, Calcutta, 28 March 1906, p.225.

these patterns of thought, all three helped mould events.

There was Curzon:

"If our Empire were to end tomorrow, I do not think that we need be ashamed of its epitaph, it would have done its duty to India, and justified its mission to mankind ... I am not one of those who think that we have built a mere fragile plank between East and West which the roaring tides of Asia will presently sweep away. That is not the true reading of history ... To me the message is carved in granite, it is hewn out of the rock of doom - that our work is righteous and that it shall endure."<sup>1</sup>

There was Kitchener telling Gokhale:

"Owing to recent events, we have a breathing space in which to complete the precautionary measures which have been recognised to be indispensable" for the Indian army. Military expenditure "is a simple, rudimentary obligation in the relations between master and servant" "to secure efficiency and economy in all matters - particularly military."<sup>2</sup>

There was Morley:

"... how intensely artificial and unnatural is our mighty Raj. And it sets one wondering whether it can possibly last. It surely cannot, and our only business is to do what we can to make the next transition, whatever it may turn out to be, something of an improvement."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Speech at Guildhall, 20 July 1904, Raleigh, op.cit., p.47.
  2. Parliamentary Papers, Session 1906, vol.81, Proceedings of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, Calcutta, 28 March 1906, p.165ff.
  3. Morley to Minto, 15 August 1907, Morley MSS 573/2.

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