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BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY AND

INDIAN AFFAIRS

1783-1815

*by*

G. S. Misra, M.A., PH.D.

*Professor of Western History,  
Lucknow University, Lucknow*



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To

THE LATE DR. SHAIENDRANATH DAS GUPTA

*My revered teacher and colleague  
to whose noble example and inspiration  
I owe everything*



THE PRESENT work is the outcome of investigation into the prolific mass of materials in the form of original manuscripts in the London archives, such as, the British Museum, the Public Record Office, and the India Office Library. It has been my privilege to investigate a fraction of the voluminous records in the India Office Library. Apart from the invaluable volumes in the Home Miscellaneous Series, the Minutes of the different authorities of the East India Company, and the secret dispatches from and to the several governments in India, I was able to derive the benefit of the rare volumes called the 'European Manuscripts', the Dutch records, the French in India, and the secret letters received from Persia, Bagdad, Bussora, and the two French Islands in the Indian Ocean. Among some of the additional manuscripts in the British Museum that proved indispensable to me, a specific mention may be made of the Wellesley Papers, Warren Hastings' Papers, and the Melville Papers. The manuscripts in the Public Record Office from which I have mainly drawn incorporate the Cornwallis Papers, the Manchester Papers, and the Chatham Manuscripts.

The object of this volume is to place before the student of Empire History the vital connection and interaction between the political affairs of Europe and India during the years 1783 and 1815. It is to indicate that the destiny of India throughout the period of the English Company, and particularly during the years of my survey, has depended upon the issue of changing circumstances in Europe, a fact which has not received adequate recognition and exposition from the writers of Indian history. No conscious and systematic effort has yet been made by Indian scholars to treat the infiltration of foreign powers in India in its international context. The Indian policy, however, did not rest solely upon the local Indian situation. By inevitable force of circumstances, India was drawn into the vortex of European politics and the European antagonism of British influenced the home

government to define its India policy which provided the motive force for the forward policy of the Proconsuls and was responsible for English conquests and annexations. India has been too strongly affiliated with the drift of contemporary trends of European events to allow us to adopt an insular, isolated and parochial attitude.

The treatment of the evidence as a connected and comprehensive whole is, however, not free from certain formidable difficulties owing to its special character. In the first place, the available materials are enormous in bulk and it is clearly impossible in one and the same volume to do justice to all the private papers of the personages connected with the theme, in addition to the official papers of the East India Company. Secondly, the subject matter is diverse and global in scope and it is not feasible, for instance, to pay equal and adequate attention to British policy in the Middle East and in the East Indies. The author, being fully conscious of the difficulties inherent in the task, cannot claim to have entirely overcome them.

I owe special acknowledgements to Professor C. H. Philips of the London University whose able and generous guidance during the course of my investigations rendered the completion of the work possible, and to the late Dr. S. N. Das Gupta, my revered teacher and colleague, under whose inspiration I have throughout laboured, and to whose memory this humble work is being reverently dedicated.

G.S.M.

*Lucknow University,  
Lucknow.  
January, 1963*

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THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES in 1783, while it altered the basis of British colonial policy, hardly affected the character of British foreign policy. The foreign policy of Great Britain was still regulated by considerations affecting the balance of power, the same vigilance to prevent the domination of any single power in Europe. It was only after Waterloo that the doctrine of non-intervention gradually superseded the old theory and Great Britain, instead of plunging in every European contest, abstained from intervening in the affairs of western Europe. It was the maintenance of that old principle that had prompted her in the War of the Austrian Succession and in the Seven Years' War, and was to guide her in the subsequent wars. One new factor had, however, arisen in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The maintenance of British supremacy in the east had become the chief, and often the exclusive, concern of British statesmen. This impression was so strong that it was for over forty years the dominating influence in British foreign policy. From 1772 onwards, Indian affairs were constantly before the Parliament, and the attention of British statesmen was primarily devoted to Indian debates.<sup>1</sup>

It was as a result of this linking up of the Indian situation with the British policy in Europe that the events on the continent kept reacting upon the affairs in India. Towards the close of the eighteenth century and in the early years of the nineteenth, Indian politics was throughout prompted, and even dictated, by the needs of the situation in Europe. In fact, the trend of events in India had their source in the general role played by Great Britain on the European continent. Thus any analysis of Indian affairs during these four decades without reference to British foreign policy would not merely be an imperfect representation of facts, but is likely to lead to a complete misrepresentation of it. The

<sup>1</sup> Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England*, XVI, p. 402.

old doctrine of balance of power in Europe had to be readjusted in the light of the new emphasis on India.

Great Britain and France were traditional enemies on the continent of Europe. Thrice already, in the course of the eighteenth century, they had been arrayed against each other. Pitt's own criticism of the Treaty of Paris, which closed the Seven Years' War, had been that it left the possibility of Bourbon revenge. The issue between the two maritime powers, therefore, did not depend upon the petty fighting that ensued along the Coromandel Coast, nor upon the success and failure of their rival alliances and intrigues with oriental powers. It was determined in reality by the result of the struggle between these two nations for superiority on all the seas. The story of the Indian contest is but an episode of that grand international drama which was played out during the eighteenth century in different theatres.

- This Anglo-French rivalry was destined to last, with short intervals of peace, for nearly a century and embraced the four corners of the world. The great questions concerning it were the control of the sea, the possession of colonies, and the increase of wealth. The hostility that ensued outside Europe was on all occasions inherited from the mother country. No doubt, in India the rival nations were represented by their East India Companies which directly administered both government and commerce. But, back of them were the mother countries who dictated policy and inspired their course of action. The struggle between the two nations had been carried through four distinct phases before 1783. The first was concerned with the War of the Spanish Succession and brought to a close by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713; the second ended with the peace of Aix-la-chapelle in 1748; the third war which was truly international started with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War and ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763; the fourth and last phase constituted by the war of 1778, and associated with the American Revolution and the struggle on the Indian continent, was terminated by the treaty of Versailles on 20th January 1783.

Thus when a new era opened in 1783, the three English

presidencies in India were already fully established and were, at the time, mutually independent, responsible only to the Court of Directors in London. France was established at Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Mahé, Karikal and Yanaon. The principal possessions of the Portuguese were Goa, Daman and Diu. The last two had become insignificant roadsteads, the one known for the building of ships, and the other for harbouring pirates. Goa, two hundred miles south of Bombay, was far larger where the Portuguese Governor-General lived, supported by a small garrison of mercenaries, and ruled over the shattered remnants of the empire founded by Albuquerque. The Dutch possessions were Cochin, Surat, Chinsura and Pulicat, all being mere marketing points. The Danish settlements were confined to Tranquebar, south of Madras, and Serampore, almost opposite Calcutta. Such was the Indian stage on which the principal European actors stood on the eve of the opening of another international drama.

The French also enjoyed a great advantage in the possession of intermediate stations in the Indian Ocean, the neighbouring islands of Mauritius (Isle de France) and Reunion (Isle de Bourbon). It thus came to pass that, after the peace of 1783, French influence was wider than was apparent from the terms of the treaty. It is true that of all their possessions, Pondicherry alone was of any importance. But the Indian possessions were not the true measure of French potential strength which actually lay in their control of these two strategically placed islands. As early as 1762, the advantage which the French could derive from these islands, and the danger to which the British possessions in India were consequently exposed, had been emphasised by the Secret Committee of the East India Company.<sup>2</sup> Dundas (later first Viscount Melville), who subsequently came to control and direct the politics of the East India Company, also expressed the view that the French had concentrated their entire Indian strength on Mauritius.<sup>3</sup> The Portuguese possessions outside

<sup>2</sup> Chatham papers, 30/8, 99; Public Record Office, London.

<sup>3</sup> Dundas to Pitt, no date; Chatham papers, 30/8, 157, Public Record Office, London.

India comprised of Macao in China and half the island of Timor in the Spice Islands. The solitary Dutch settlement beyond the limits of India was Batavia in the East Indies.

Although it had been the intent of the Versailles treaty to confine the French to purely commercial activity, Warren Hastings could not rid himself of the fear that French ambitions would once again revive and become a source of trouble to him and to his successors. He found it comforting to think of the Portuguese who had lost an empire they never hoped to regain. It was even more consolatory to think of the Dutch who were satisfied with their island empire, and of the Danes who had no thoughts of an empire at all. The Swedish East India Company traded only with China. Of all the European nations, the French alone possessed the desire, the ability and the resources to repeat their exploits.

The last phase of European antagonism between these two nations covers the years from 1783 to 1815, and is carried through the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. It witnessed the final and yet closer wrestle between the two maritime nations of Europe. During this period, therefore, Anglo-Indian diplomacy embarked upon a much wider and extended sphere of action than ever before. In this period also the interaction between the political affairs in Europe and in Asia became predominant as never before, and came to exercise an important influence on the expansion of British dominions in India. It proved to be in a real sense the most formative epoch of British Indian history. This phase, which ended with Napoleon's overthrow at Waterloo, left the British in undisputed possession of India and the Indian seas. With that ended the long-stretched Anglo-French antagonism which had dominated British foreign policy for centuries, and though the forebodings of a new apprehension from Russia arose after 1815 to assume predominance as the century rolled on, the tranquillity of the British possessions in India was never again to be molested or disturbed.

*THE ERA OF ARMED PEACE*

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES inaugurated a period of temporary peace in Europe, and of comparative quiescence, in the relations between Great Britain and France. The issue of changed circumstances on the continent was to affect almost instantaneously the situation in India. The definitive treaty with France signed on 3rd September 1783, stipulated the restoration of all the French establishments in India that had been annexed during the war of 1778-1783, and Great Britain promised to secure to the French subjects in India a free and independent trade as was carried on by them before the late war. On the basis of the preliminary articles of peace, directions had already been issued to the several English governments in India to adopt measures that might prevent all further hostilities between the two nations.<sup>1</sup> The event of the conclusion of the definitive treaties was further communicated to the different presidencies with instructions to afford every possible assistance in carrying out its stipulations. The British naval commander in the eastern seas was authorized to deliver back to the French commissary the entire French possessions in India.

According to Article XVI of the definitive treaty, the allies of both the nations in India were to be invited to accede to the pacification. In order to enable such allies to make their decision, a limit of four months was fixed to be computed from the day on which the proposal was made to them. Bussy, the French representative in India, had declared Tipu Sultan of Mysore to be an ally of France. The British Commissioners, who had been appointed by the Madras Government to direct the execution of the treaty, consequently invited Tipu to accede to the pacification made

<sup>1</sup> Circular to the several presidencies respecting the preliminary articles from the Chairman of the Court of Directors, 4th March 1783: Home Misc. Series, V. 169; India Office Library.

in Europe, announcing at the same time their resolution to cease hostilities against him. The treaty with Tipu was signed on 11th March 1784.

The negotiations with the Dutch on the subject of restoration, particularly of Negapatam, came to involve difficulties, and even dispute. The Dutch considered the transfer of Negapatam to the British to be fraught with disastrous consequences. Situated as it was within the kingdom of Tanjore on the Coromandel coast where the English exercised great influence, its cession would further establish them as a formidable power on that coast from where they could become dangerous neighbours to Ceylon. The Directors of the Dutch East India Company consequently urged the adoption of all possible means to make Great Britain renounce her pretensions to that settlement. The Dutch even proposed an equivalent in money or in lieu the cession of the Dutch settlements on the Western coast of Sumatra, together with Surat.<sup>2</sup> But the British government considered the offer of such alternative equivalents to be wholly inadmissible.

The preliminary articles of peace between Great Britain and the United Provinces were ratified on 29th September 1783. While the British were restored the town of Negapatam and its dependencies, Great Britain agreed to the restitution of Trincomalé in Ceylon, along with all other settlements, forts and harbours captured from the Dutch in the course of the late war. The British government, thereupon, transmitted orders to India for the execution of the treaty by delivering the Dutch possessions to the authorized commissary of that government. In regard to the cession of Trincomalé a curious situation had, however, arisen. The capture of that possession by the French in the late war was not known in Europe at the time of the signing of the preliminary articles, while its cession naturally fell under the terms of the treaty with France. The government of Madras was consequently

<sup>2</sup> Letters from the Dutch ambassadors to the Duke of Manchester, 12th July, 1783; Manchester Papers, 30/15, 1121 and 1125; Public Record Office, London.

directed not to yield possession to France of any of the settlements until it was so arranged that the restoration of Trincomalé by the French took place simultaneously with the English restitutions to France. The French government, on the other hand, instructed Bussy that while he was to deliver Trincomalé to the English commissary, who in turn was to make immediate restoration to the Dutch commissary, care was to be exercised that the French troops did not completely evacuate from that settlement until the arrival of Dutch troops.

The conclusion of peace in Europe diverted the attention of the English Company to the subject of retrenchment of English troops in India. With the termination of the war, the need for reduction in the number of European as well as native regiments in India became pressing. The government of Bombay, especially, was facing acute financial embarrassment. The enormous and still accumulating debt of that presidency pointed to the immediate necessity of lessening the expense under every head, particularly the military charges, and it was pointed out that in the proposed regulations that government would be saving at least six lacs of rupees per annum.<sup>3</sup> The Directors of the East India Company repeatedly represented before the government and stressed that the importunity of the Court arose principally from the reduced state of the Company's finances. The government finally conceded and the European regiments were reduced to a peace establishment.

The termination of hostilities with France, however, did not altogether put a stop to French intrigues in India. In the period intervening between the cessation of hostilities and the signing of the definitive treaty, Bussy's intrigues against the English were active. A dispatch received by the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors from the Company's agent at Bussora, containing two French Papers of intelligence, revealed active designs of the French against

<sup>3</sup> Extract of Bombay General Consultations, 4th May 1784; Home Miscellaneous Series; V. 84; India Office Library.

the British interests in India.<sup>4</sup> The Court of Directors fully realized the gravity of the situation and took immediate steps to ward off the danger. They advised the several presidencies in India that, notwithstanding the peace lately concluded with France which may have caused a temporary suspension of their designs, the strong possibility of their renewal was still there. They were, therefore, instructed to guard against the machinations of the French and to keep a watchful eye on the conduct of those who were likely to assist them. The governments in India were quick in taking the instructions. The Governor-General undertook to adopt measures that would frustrate any designs the French may have formed inimical to British interests in India.

With the commencement of the year 1784, French intrigues with the Indian princes became active, and certain dispatches received by the government of Bengal revealed the designs of France for the complete overthrow of the British power in India. The Court of Directors once again emphasised the urgency of defeating French projects. The Council at Fort William promptly suggested measures for baffling French intrigues at the different Courts of India. They proposed the setting up of means for ascertaining the disposition of the Indian rulers towards the English and the French nations and for procuring timely information in regard to the intrigues of Bussy, the establishment of Residencies at the Courts of Poona and Mysore, and the fixing of the army establishment at a level not below the peace establishment.<sup>5</sup> The several governments were accordingly instructed to establish secret channels of intelligence devoted to that purpose. The British Resident at the Court of the Nizam was advised to obtain and transmit information regarding the influence exercised by the French at that Court, and the views cherished by their agents in that part of the country.

<sup>4</sup> The two Papers were: (i) Copy of Instructions given to M. de Bussy; (ii) Copy of a Project given by M. de Bussy; Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 4, 28th July 1783; India Office Library.

<sup>5</sup> Copy of Propositions enclosed in the Board's letter to the Governor-General, 16th March 1784; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 555; India Office Library.



This alert situation of affairs once again pointed to the need for reinforcement, especially in Bombay. It was suggested that there ought to be as much military force stationed there as would, at all times, not only render Bombay impregnable to any attack of an enemy, European or Indian, but also make it possible to carry on offensive war, if necessary. Its vicinity to Poona, the capital of the Mahrattas, rendered it a very important station. It had become highly important at the same time that the British force in India was regulated by the numbers of the force kept up by her European rivals at the Mauritius, Pondicherry, Ceylon and other places. Such view superseded the earlier recommendations of the Bombay government and of the Court of Directors for reducing the military establishment in that presidency. The expediency of opening a speedy communication between Great Britain and India by way of the Red Sea and Suez was also pointed out. Apart from its political significance that it would serve as an expeditious channel of intelligence at all critical periods, its utility in regard to the commercial interests of the Company was also considerable.

It cannot be doubted that the French could ever have turned their thoughts again towards the eastern world after 1783, with pretensions to dominion, if the situation in Europe had not favoured them. In fact, they were now encouraged to it by their opinion of the strength of their new ally in Europe, Holland. The benefit of eastern possessions was decidedly problematical in the French Cabinet until their alliance with Holland brought their attention back to it. The situation of France in Europe at this time was unquestionably favourable to that end. In September 1785, Frederick the Great of Prussia gave to a special envoy from Great Britain a survey of the state of Europe as he saw it. The balance of power in Europe, he said, was lost. France, Spain, Austria and Russia "were in alliance", and Holland had been dragged in their wake.<sup>6</sup> His reference to an "alliance" was, however,

<sup>6</sup> Heads of what the king of Prussia said to Cornwallis at Sans Souci, 17th Sept. 1785; *Correspondence of Lord Cornwallis*. Ross: V. 1; p. 201.

incorrect in as much as these powers did not form a compact mass. But they were no doubt linked together. The Family Compact between France and Spain was a reality. The alliance between France and Austria seemed to have tightened ever since an Austrian princess had shared the throne of France. There was also a good understanding between Petrograd and Versailles. Thus Pitt's desire not to get involved in the quarrels of any continental power was most natural. British statesmen at the time were fully conscious of Britain's isolation in European politics and Fox already thought that the circumstances afforded an opportunity of forming a league to balance the Family Compact.<sup>7</sup> This explains why the French turned their thoughts to India after 1783.

Throughout the year 1785 French intrigues in India were active. Their agents at the several Courts occasionally transmitted information regarding the views and dispositions of those powers. One of their most active agents was Monsieur Montigny, the agent at Poona, who was carrying on a secret correspondence with Europe, and whose intrigues were brought to light by the interception of a packet destined for France. It dealt with the French transactions at the Mahratta Court and at Delhi. Montigny urged upon the Mahratta Government that the Treaty of Versailles was a measure of temporary expediency which the French government was determined to violate as soon as it found itself prepared to do so. The secret orders of the Court of Directors persistently stressed a steady and vigilant opposition to the intrigues of the French in particular, and the closest observation of the designs of all other European nations at the different Indian Courts, in general. The French already had a Resident at Poona engaged in political intrigues, and a demand for men was made by the Poona government to the Portuguese. The Vicomte de Souillac, the French Governor-

<sup>7</sup> Fox to the Duke of Manchester, 12th Sept. 1783; "In this article of a continental alliance as a balance to the House of Bourbon consists the whole of my foreign politics". (Fox); Manchester Papers, 30/15, 1200; Public Record Office, London.

General, who came from Mauritius in September 1785, to survey the situation advised a policy of persistent intrigue at the Courts of the Mahrattas, the Nizam, and Tipu, together with an effort to refortify Pondicherry.

In such a situation, the English government again turned its thoughts towards Egypt. The importance of its situation, politically and commercially, was emphasised upon Dundas who at that time dominated the politics of the East India Company. The control of Egypt would not only afford a channel of expeditious correspondence which, at that time especially, was the nerve of government between England and India, but would also be indispensable in the event of a sudden war. Egypt had become a necessary link in the chain of British connection with India. Its importance to France and the apprehension of its falling into French hands was pointed out in an elaborate treatise as early as 1785, long before Napoleon's Egyptian venture came about.<sup>5</sup> It was suggested that a Consul-General be established in Egypt, residing at Cairo, with a view to guard British interests and to forward dispatches to and from the East Indies. Sir Robert Ainslie, the British ambassador at Constantinople, exerted every means to discover the pursuits of the French towards Egypt, especially after the recent French mission to Cairo in consequence of a plan devised by the late French ambassador to ruin the English East India Company by an illicit trade under the protection of France.<sup>9</sup> Ainslie furnished important information from time to time regarding the communication of European nations with the Port of Suez. He was particularly instructed to watch if any military persons of rank in the French service passed to India overland.

On the whole, the period following the Treaty of Versailles may be described, so far as the relations between the two rival nations in the east were concerned, as one of armed

<sup>5</sup> 'Speculations on the Situation, Government and Resources of Egypt' by George Baldwin, 3rd May, 1785; Chatham Papers, 30/8. 361; Public Record Office, London.

<sup>9</sup> Extract of letter from Sir Robert Ainslie to the Marquis of Carmarthen, 23rd July 1795; Chatham Papers, 30/8, 337; Public Record Office, London.

peace. When Warren Hastings relinquished office in 1785, the British possessions in India were in a comparatively safe position. The need for some regular continental link between the growing eastern empire and the British Crown had resulted in Pitt's India Act of 1784. The French intrigues were no doubt in operation, but the English had no rivals of any importance in the political or military field. By the middle of 1785 the full and final accomplishment of the various stipulations contained in the treaties of peace with the European powers had taken place. Hastings' successor, Sir John Macpherson, pursued a policy of moderation in his dealings with the European powers in India. Considering the superiority of the British power, and the jealousy it might excite among her European rivals, he was careful to treat the representatives and claims of foreign nations with attention and respect. He had every reason to believe that the representatives of both France and Holland were highly satisfied with the liberal manner in which the English had fulfilled the late engagements with them, while conceding no improper concessions.

Proposals from the French East India Company for a commercial treaty with the English Company were at this stage put forward. The Court of Directors held the view that, while such a commercial agreement might be advisable, they were not in a position at that time to enter into any specific treaty. When the matter came up for consideration before the government in the following year, the opinion was expressed that it was a good opportunity to ingraft upon such a treaty some arrangements that might effectually tend to prevent future wars at least for a considerable time.<sup>10</sup> If France and England understood each other the world might be kept in peace from one end to the other. It was, therefore, suggested that if it could be impressed upon the French that every object of their intrigue would be better assured by good faith and understanding with the English, there stood good prospects of peaceful relations between the two nations.

<sup>10</sup> William Pulteney to Pitt, 14th September, 1786; Chatham Papers 30/8. 169: Public Record Office, London.

But the French policy in India went exactly the other way. The activities of French adventurers playing the part of *agents provocateurs* continued. Indian princes were encouraged by their sanguine estimates of French cooperation to entertain designs against the English, and their Courts started gradually being filled in by French officers, commanding small or large bodies of sepoy, with promises of personal gain and national aggrandisement. It was, however, difficult for them in the beginning to convince the Indian powers of the great successes they claimed in America when they still continued in their position of inferiority in India. Bussy, who viewed the position with great truth, had written to the French Minister, de Castries, that the terms of the peace had produced an unfavourable impression, and that possible hopes of cooperation had been raised in France by the fables sent home inspired by vanity and self-interest.

Meanwhile, French intrigues with the Indian powers were carried on with usual vigour. When the relations between the French and Tipu Sultan broke off temporarily late in the year 1785, the former started hunting for new allies. The French Governor-General, Souillac, made overtures to the Nizam and their attention was also diverted to the Mahratta camp. There is ample evidence to show that the attitude sponsored by the French officers in India had the entire approbation of the French government at home. No other minister in the French Cabinet looked with so jealous an eye on the British superiority in India as de Castries who was prepared to go to any extent to raise the French interests from the state of subjection in which it then languished.

The Governor-General in his dispatches to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors repeatedly referred to the aggressive attitude of French agents in India, and he was of the definite opinion that they were resolved on seeking pretences for a rupture. He clearly indicated that the conduct of the French in Bengal, and their machinations in other parts of India, required his strictest vigilance and guarding against all possible effects. He apprehended the

worst if, in the event of a European war, the English in India were not assisted by a strong naval force. The French had ships stationed at Mauritius, and they possessed cruisers in the Persian Gulf and frigates on the Coromandel coast. The Dutch too were in possession of a fleet in the Indian seas. But the English were without any naval fleet worth the name. The attention of the Secret Committee was drawn to this subject of naval deficiency for immediate consideration.<sup>11</sup>

At the conclusion of Sir John Macpherson's administration, however, there was peace between the English and other powers, European or Indian. He had throughout endeavoured to maintain peace and to avoid scrupulously the enmity of European rivals. He had realized that on a good understanding between the two rival nations alone rested the bonds of future peace, which would put an extinguisher upon the continually rising sparks for kindling future wars in Europe and in India.

The Governor-General-in-Council raised before the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors the particular question that in case France not only united by treaty but sent actual force to the aid of any one of the Indian powers, were the English to assist the opposite power or not. The Secret Committee was disposed to take a wider view of the general politics in India as connected with, or influenced by, their own situation and that of other nations of Europe. They put forth the fundamental principle, never to be departed from, viz., complete satisfaction with the possessions they already enjoyed. The next leading principle on which the British administration was to concentrate was to keep a constant watch upon the conduct of all European rivals, particularly the French. Since their intervention in the disputes of any of the Indian powers could not but intend prejudice to the English, it followed as a natural consequence that if any of them came to accept European aid, the English should "feel themselves warranted to throw the aid into the

<sup>11</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee, 10th January 1786; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 555; India Office Library.

opposite scale.”<sup>12</sup> The intervention from any European nation, whatsoever, which might either disturb the peace of India, or introduce its arms, or attempt to sow distractions amongst the princes and inhabitants was not to be tolerated. This policy was emphatically explained and defined for all time under a situation in which the English were confronted by jealous rivals, and at a time when the jealousies subsisting between the Indian powers induced the contending parties to look to the European nations for support.

<sup>12</sup> Secret Dispatches to Bengal, V. 1; 19th July 1786; India Office Library.

## APPROACHING HOSTILITIES AND WAR

LORD CORNWALLIS, the first of the parliamentary Governor-Generals, assumed office in 1786, supported by the strongest ministry that had so far governed England and backed by his close intimacy with Pitt and Dundas. Above all, he was materially aided by the political situation in Europe. The unfortunate and miscondacted wars of Lord North's government had ceased and were succeeded by a period of comparative peace for England. It was an interlude of calm, though cloudy stillness before the explosion of the great revolutionary cyclone in Europe. Such a breathing time was well suited for carrying out wide internal reforms in India, consolidating the British position, and concluding peaceful alliances with the Indian powers. Although there was as yet no formal assertion of superiority, the English had definitely taken an undisguised rank among the first-rate powers of India. At home, everything bore a prosperous appearance with advantageous commercial treaties, and every appearance of a disposition on the part of France and of the minister, Vergennes, to continue in peace.<sup>1</sup>

Cornwallis realized at the outset that the depression of all European nations in India should be made the principle of British policy. He was not disposed to concede any political rights or privileges to the French whom he considered to be residing in India for the purpose of trade only. In his foreign policy Cornwallis was anxious to maintain peace and neutrality which were consonant with the declaration of Parliament made in Pitt's Act of 1784. Thus when in 1786 the Mahrattas joined hands with the Nizam in an attack on Tipu, Cornwallis did not countenance any measure of support and announced his attitude of neutrality. At the same time, he was equally determined not to allow insults or injuries

<sup>1</sup> Dundas to Cornwallis, 21st Sept. 1786; Cornwallis Papers, 30/11, 111; Public Record Office.



either to the English or their allies to pass unresented. The Board at Calcutta consequently resolved to maintain a strict adherence to existing treaties, at the same time explicitly stating that any danger arising from the interference of any European power against their allies would lead to the adoption of vigorous and effectual measures for their protection and support.

Meanwhile, the attention of France towards India was getting more and more fixed. Sir James Harris, the British ambassador at Paris, endeavoured his utmost to discover everything that was connected with the operations of the French in the East Indies. Towards the middle of the year 1787, intelligence was received from a British correspondent at Pondicherry that five hundred men had arrived on the Malabar coast from France; that three thousand more were expected; that the Governor of the French islands, in conjunction with Tipu, had written to the Court of France about the harassments they experienced from the English; and that Tipu had written to the Governor of Pondicherry to keep ready for using the first opportunity for revenge against the English.<sup>2</sup> The news aroused the apprehensions of Sir Archibald Campbell, the President at Fort St. George, who in consequence stressed the necessity of paying a particular attention to the army at Bombay, and of securing the alliance of the Mahrattas. Although Cornwallis did not think it probable that the French would commit open hostilities at a time when everything at home bore a pacific appearance, he did not eliminate the possibility of their playing an indirect role. Concurring with the views of Campbell, he realized the importance of proposing an agreement to the Mahrattas by which the English should promise their assistance in case the French were to join Tipu against them, provided they engaged in a similar promise to support if Tipu conjoined with the French against the English. Notwithstanding the pacific disposition which subsisted between the Courts of London and Versailles, the probability

<sup>2</sup> A. Campbell to Cornwallis, 9th June 1787; Cornwallis Papers, 30/11, 118; Public Record Office.

of French interference in some shape in the event of a rupture between the English and the Nizam could hardly be doubted. Although the French might not appear as principals in this contest, they would be no less dangerous enemies as allies of Tipu or the Nizam.

The French at this time were also anxious to acquire a commercial establishment in China. They already possessed three settlements in Cochin-China and were planning another on the island of Formosa, so that in a future war there was every danger of their inflicting a serious damage upon the English trade in China. To counteract this danger, and also with a view to improve the unsatisfactory state of their China trade, Dundas suggested the despatch of a mission directly from the King of England to the Emperor of China.<sup>3</sup> Colonel Cathcart, who was selected for this important mission, and who sailed towards the close of 1787, was instructed to impress upon the Chinese Emperor that their views were purely commercial, not political or territorial. In case the embassy was to have a favourable issue, he was asked to propose to the Emperor for the exchange of a permanent or an occasional Minister between the two Courts. The ill-fated mission, however, was not destined to reach its destination. Cathcart found eternal rest in the waters of Banka in January 1788, and the expedition returned home.

It happened at this time that Holland came to be sharply split into factions and France took the opportunity of plunging into their internal conflict. The measures pursued at her instigation to curtail the rights of the Stadtholder, and to change in many essential parts the constitution, had excited a spirit of resistance in the majority of the Provinces, and it seemed probable that the contest would be decided by the sword. The situation was all the more alarming as France gave open encouragement to her friends in Holland. It is to be doubted whether at a time when her finances were in extreme disorder and her government in an unsettled state, France would have hazarded a step that might have

<sup>3</sup> Dundas to Cornwallis, 21st July 1787; Cornwallis Papers, 30/11, 112; Public Record Office.

involved her with other powers. In any case, the object of the British government at that time was to prevent France from taking steps to carry her point in Holland by force. If a contest with France came about, it was very likely that she would have the support of the Province of Holland, while the English would have on their side the remaining Provinces, making the majority of the States-General. In that situation the first struggle would naturally be for the foreign dependencies of the Republic. Thus if, at the outset of the war, England could take possession of Trincomalé and the Cape of Good Hope, it would go a long way in deciding the fate of the contest. The expediency of such a measure was impressed upon Cornwallis who was instructed, in the event of the outbreak of a war, to strike a blow at Trincomalé. Any attack against the Cape would of course have to be directed from England.

Late in the year 1787 the project for a treaty between Great Britain and Holland was put forward. A treaty with the Dutch would lend important political assistance to British interests. The objects of the two countries did not clash in the smallest degree since Great Britain was devoted to preserving her empire, while Holland wanted to secure the monopoly of the Spice Islands and extension of her general trade. It was further pointed out that Negapatam, which was of no value to the English, might be safely returned to the Dutch in exchange for Trincomalé which was of significance to British interests.<sup>4</sup> The eyes of the French were also fixed upon that important settlement and de Castries had issued orders that, in the event of a war with England, Pondicherry was to be evacuated and all French troops to be shifted to Trincomalé. Neither the treaty between Great Britain and Holland nor between France and Holland, however, came off.

Although, towards the close of the year 1787, everything at home bore a peaceful prospect, the French in India were

<sup>4</sup>'Observations on some articles in the project for an Indian Treaty between Great Britain and Holland', Lord Mulgrave: Dutch Records, V. 26; India Office Library.

still inclined to use every means in their power to create jealousies against the English and to occasion embarrassment to their affairs. Cornwallis had no reason to believe that these measures were authorized by the French government, or that in case of an immediate rupture with Tipu they would take an open part. When Tipu announced his intention of invading the territories of the Raja of Travancore, who was an ally of the English under the last treaty of peace, the French held him back because the commencement of another war did not from the state of affairs in Europe accord with their interests at this juncture, and Tipu was forced to suspend the measure until the French were ready to join him. Both General Conway, the Governor of Pondicherry, and Tipu gave unequivocal assurances of their pacific intentions towards the English in India.

Early in 1788 the apprehensions of a rupture with France rose high. Intelligence was received that a fleet was being fitted out at Toulon, to be commanded by Suffren, with probable destination for India. France had also prepared schemes for augmenting her army as well as her navy. In the meantime, differences had already developed between Great Britain and France in regard to the attitude of the latter towards the Dutch. The determined interference of the French in the affairs of the Dutch was proved by their sending a body of seven hundred European troops and five hundred natives to Trincomalé, without seeking the concurrence of the Dutch government.<sup>5</sup> The matter was, however, finally adjusted between the English and the French after bringing the two nations on the brink of hostilities. The subsequent separation of Holland from the interests and intrigues of France deprived the latter of all the advantages that the island of Ceylon offered to her. Cornwallis was careful to exercise every means to cultivate a friendly intercourse with the Dutch in India and to pave the way for a final settlement with them.

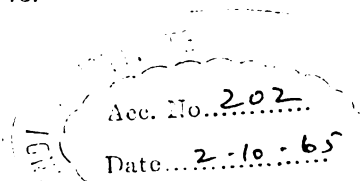
It was also at this time that Tipu sent to France the first of

<sup>5</sup> A. Campbell to James Buchanan, 10th March 1788; European Mss., V. 2, Part 2, E. 56; India Office Library.

his embassies to Louis XVI in an endeavour to court his support and alliance with the ultimate object of overthrowing the British power in India. This necessitated the immediate adoption of measures on the part of the home government to defeat the object of that mission. The Court of France, however, gave the most explicit assurances that, while they were treating the ambassadors with every mark of respect and courtesy, no negotiation hostile to the British was intended on their part. In India, Cornwallis took precautions to guard against the importation of French troops or military stores. The Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's ships and vessels in the East Indies was particularly instructed that in case he came across on the coast of Malabar any French vessels carrying a considerable number of troops, or a large quantity of military stores, they were under no circumstances to be allowed to land. Lord Cornwallis was convinced that such troops or stores must be intended for the use of their enemy, Tipu of Mysore.

The European situation at the close of the year 1788 was decidedly favourable to the English. Great amity subsisted between Great Britain and the new King of Prussia. Russia and Austria were engaged in a war with the Turks. France was torn to pieces by internal dissensions. In India, the Mahrattas were favourably disposed towards the English, while the establishment of peace in Europe had convinced the Nizam that no assistance could now be derived from the French. The final settlement of the disputes with the Dutch had been effected and Cornwallis had received assurances of a friendly disposition from the Governor of Batavia. The French government at home had also come to realize that any assertion of military power in India was henceforth futile, and that the time had come when they should frankly recognize that they had no other interests in India but trading. A policy of the evacuation of the French Indian settlements was already in contemplation, and in September 1788 the Minister of the Navy, Luzerne, laid a plan before Louis XVI for a military withdrawal from India.<sup>6</sup> He could

<sup>6</sup> H. Furber, *John Company at Work*, p. 73.



clearly foresee the complete surrender of all the French settlements in the immediate future. Such a policy was advocated at a time when Tipu's ambassadors were still in France, and it naturally caused the French government great embarrassment. Early in the summer of 1789, orders were transmitted for the evacuation of French forces from India. The French garrison at Pondicherry was to withdraw to the Isle of France, and in future no military force was to be stationed there except what would be necessary for purpose of self-defence. It was recognized once and for all that the Islands of France and Bourbon were now the only means by which France would be enabled, in any degree, to preserve its power in the eastern world.

The conduct of the French in withdrawing their troops from Pondicherry, and the distracted state of their government at home, rendered it highly improbable that they could now have entertained any designs of disturbing the English in India. But Cornwallis was convinced that in case of a rupture in Europe, the French would not give up the contest for the Indian seas. To provide against this contingency, Cornwallis instructed the naval commander to keep a watchful eye upon the activities of the French in the eastern seas, and he made a similar solicitation to the Dutch Governor of Ceylon. He also proposed that a negotiation for the possession of the Nicobars be made with the Danish government with a view to avoid the fear of the Danes making it over to the French in the event of any turn of European politics. Cornwallis was also impressed with the importance of the Andaman Islands for purposes of refitting, watering and securing ships of war.

Towards the middle of 1790, certain circumstances developed which brought about hostilities between Great Britain and Spain. The so-called 'Nootka Sound Affair' was circumstanced by the capture of some British vessels by the Spaniards at Nootka Sound on the north-west coast of America. It was doubtful whether the dispute would be amicably adjusted or would end in actual war. The probability of war with Spain was communicated to the supreme

government in India with directions to adopt the necessary measures for the safety of the Company's possessions and ships against any surprise.<sup>7</sup> In case orders were given to send an expedition against the Spanish possessions from India, the supreme government was instructed to adopt all possible measures to facilitate the execution of such a project. The possibility of a rupture with Spain had come about at a period when the entire strength of the English was required to be employed in reducing the power of Tipu. Cornwallis thought that this would render it impracticable to launch an attack on the Spanish possessions, either in Asia or the western coast of America. He did not consider himself to be in a position to spare a sufficient body of troops for the projected expedition against Manilla. In case, however, he obtained a decided advantage over Tipu and was able to terminate the war with him triumphantly, he was quite willing to co-operate whole-heartedly in the proposed venture. A Convention between Great Britain and Spain was at length signed on 28th October 1790, which brought to an end this phase of suspense and hostility.

French intrigues in India were to some extent interrupted by the outbreak of the French Revolution. In the French Indian settlements it produced more confusion and disturbance than anything else. The feelings of the violent party in France came to extend to her Indian settlements as well. In May 1790, the inhabitants of Chandernagore formed themselves into a Committee and practically deposed the legally appointed Governor, the Chevalier de Montigny. The supreme government in India did not choose to recognize this usurped authority and refused to transact any business with this self-constituted body. The Comte de Conway and Monsieur Dupuis, to whom respectively as Governor and 'Intendant du Roi', the management of the affairs of France east of the Cape of Good Hope was committed, represented to Montigny that without a supply of money from Bengal it was highly improbable that they could maintain their authority

<sup>7</sup> Board to the Governor-General and Council, 8th May 1790, Secret Dispatches to Bengal, V. 2; India Office Library.

over the troops in the Isle of France. Montigny failed in raising any money, but Cornwallis agreed to lend him, out of his private resources, forty thousand Indian rupees.<sup>8</sup> This sum proved insufficient and the Supreme Council agreed to advance one hundred and ten thousand rupees, including the forty thousand already paid. Cornwallis felt justified that the violent and unauthorised conduct of the Committee of the inhabitants at Chandernagore had forced him to interfere in their internal dissensions which otherwise he was very desirous to avoid.

With the commencement of the year 1791, the European situation became once again uncertain. Although appearances were still pacific, dispatches from home pointed to an unsettled state of relations with Spain and to the fact that, in the event of war, the National Assembly of France had agreed to support the Family Compact. Cornwallis, who had never relaxed his exercise of vigilance, promptly took measures of precaution at a time when the war with Tipu was in full progress. In such an unsettled situation of political affairs in Europe, the anxiety of the Court of Directors to bring the Mysore War to a speedy end was naturally considerable. They were prepared to forego some portion of the advantages than risk the continuance of the war. This war was at length terminated and peace with Tipu was concluded on conditions which secured solid advantages to the English. The war, notwithstanding all that was said in parliament against it, was in Cornwallis's opinion not only most just but absolutely necessary for the future security of the British nation.

As the year 1793 opened, the possibility of approaching hostilities with France came into prominence, and the Secret Committee took into serious consideration the adoption of effectual measures for the protection and preservation of the Company's trade and settlements in the eastern world. Both these considerations induced the Committee to request the Government for the immediate despatch of a sufficient force to cruise in the eastern seas. The Committee also

<sup>8</sup> Ross, *Correspondence of Lord Cornwallis*, V. 2, p. 53.



suggested to the Government the adoption of measures for securing the French Islands of Bourbon and Mauritius, and thus deprive their cruisers and privateers of all protection and the means of refitting in the Indian seas. The necessity of seizing the Indian settlements of France was, of course, a natural corollary. In consequence of this probability of an immediate rupture with France, the Secret Committee directed the several governments in India to keep in readiness not only to repel any sudden attack, but also for capturing the French settlements in case actual hostilities occurred.

It has sometimes been stated that a conflict between Great Britain and the French Republic was inevitable as the one represented the old order and the other new, so that between them there was a fixed and underlying antagonism. The statement is beyond all doubt overstrained. There was no irreconcilable opposition between the British statesmen and the French leaders until the latter, amidst the exaltation produced by the conquest of Belgium, came to adopt an aggressive policy. Great Britain's commercial supremacy was threatened by the opening of the river Scheldt and the violation of the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1788. On 2nd February 1793, the National Assembly of France declared war against Great Britain and Holland. Thus Great Britain, Holland, Spain and the Italian States formed a coalition against France—the first coalition that lasted until the Treaties of 1795.

The outbreak of the Revolutionary War promptly influenced the situation in India. Early in June 1793, dispatches received from Baldwin, Consul at Alexandria, conveyed the intelligence of the declaration of war on Great Britain by France. The Governor-General-in-Council considered the news sufficiently authentic to warrant the adoption of such measures as might have followed a regular official communication of the war. They consequently issued instructions, which were effected without resistance, for taking possession of Chandernagore and the several French factories in India, and for seizing the vessels carrying the French flag. The Government of Madras immediately commenced preparations for the siege

of Pondicherry, while the French factories at Karikal and Yanaon were taken possession of by the officers of that government. The Government of Bombay was ordered to occupy the French settlements within that presidency, along with Mahé. The event of the outbreak of the war was further notified to Fort Marlborough, the Andamans and Prince of Wales' Island, with directions to put those places in the best state of defence.

The Dutch at Chinsura were, likewise, informed of the declaration of war by France against their nation. Although it was not likely that the people at Chandernagore, before the English could take possession of that settlement, would molest the Dutch, they were assured that the friendship and alliance then subsisting between the two governments would secure to them every assistance from the English. The Dutch Governor at Cochin, apprehending an attack by French forces in their defenceless situation, solicited British assistance. Cornwallis considered it very improbable that the French at the Mauritius would venture, or be in a position, to make an attempt on Cochin or any other settlement of either nation. But with a view to guard against all possible contingencies, he sent instructions to the Bombay Government and to the Commanding Officer of the troops in the Malabar coast to reinforce the garrison at Cochin whenever a request for it was made.

The Governor-in-Council at Fort St. George, similarly, did not think themselves justified in delaying the necessary measures till a more formal declaration was received, as it would enable the French to make such arrangements for the protection of their settlements as might prolong the siege of Pondicherry. On August 23, after a few days' siege, Pondicherry surrendered and Cornwallis ordered the demolition of its entire fortifications. Mahé was taken possession of by Colonel Hartley under orders of the Bombay Government. By September 1793, Cornwallis had the satisfaction of congratulating the Court of Directors on the reduction of all the French settlements and factories on the continent of India. The supreme government further ordered that all

natives of France residing in Calcutta were to have their names, places of abode, and respective occupations duly registered forthwith.<sup>9</sup>

It had been one of the last achievements of Cornwallis before he sailed for England in October, 1793, to dispossess the French of all their possessions on the Indian sea-board. Of the possible allies of France, Tipu was crippled and the Mahrattas were looking forward to conquer their weaker neighbours in the north and south rather than to attack the powerful East India Company. Thus the outbreak of the Revolutionary War brought no troubles to the English on Indian soil. At sea, indeed, French privateers fitted out at the Isle of France captured many prizes. But these losses weighed heavily on private merchants and hardly touched the position and preponderance of the English Company. The address of congratulations from the House of Lords to His Majesty presented on 11th December 1793, on the success of the British arms in India, was thus aptly bestowed.

<sup>9</sup> Selections from *Calcutta Gazettes*. V. 2, p. 102: 13th June 1793.

## AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

THE PERIOD following the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in Europe was one of uneasy peace in India, amid portents of a general outbreak, during which the war in Europe extended its scope towards the east, bringing the unsettled question of Indian supremacy once more to the forefront. Although all the French settlements in India had been occupied before October 1793, the outbreak of the war revived the hopes of all anti-British elements on the sub-continent. The various rulers of India were still keeping considerable forces under French control, and they retained French officers into their service who had attempted to reorganize their armies on the European model. Although these armies were in the pay of Indian princes, there was always the fear that at some opportune time they might be marched against the English Company's possessions, while it was almost certain that the appearance of a French squadron would at once set them in movement.

After the surrender of all the French settlements on the Indian mainland, the attention of the Home Government was drawn to the capture of the two French islands in the Indian Ocean. The resolution of the government to launch an expedition against the Islands of Mauritius and Bourbon was communicated to the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India.<sup>1</sup> The Board consequently sent directions to the Governor-General and Council at Fort William that measures should expeditiously be taken for the reduction of the two islands, and that the necessary land forces be collected at Madras and kept in readiness to join the ships from Europe. The position in India, however, was too uncertain to launch the proposed expedition. Sir John Shore did not consider the project against the French islands as either

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Board of Control, V. 10; 16th Sept. 1793; India Office Library.

practicable or desirable. After a full consideration of the subject, he became impressed with the fact that no part of the European troops could be shifted from India without endangering the security of the British possessions. Although there was a fair prospect of the continuance of peace in India as well as of the stability of British alliance with the leading Indian powers, the security of the Company's possessions depended upon the actual strength to maintain it, and a large proportion of European soldiers was an indispensable requisite constituting that strength. The prosecution of the expedition was, therefore, deferred. Early in 1795, the Governor-General received information that the French islands were in a fully prepared state, and that Mauritius had been put in a state of complete defence and was guarded by a body of ten thousand troops. This made him relinquish finally all ideas of prosecuting the long-projected expedition against the French islands.

At the opening of the year 1795, a turn of affairs in Europe affected, as usual, the situation in India. The French interference in Holland which led to her falling into the clutches of France once again reopened the question of securing the Dutch settlements in the East Indies. It was almost certain that after the French conquest of Holland all the Dutch possessions abroad must soon fall into French hands. A project for the reduction of the Cape of Good Hope, Batavia, Ceylon, Malacca, Amboyna and Macassar was brought forth for the consideration of the government.<sup>2</sup> The importance of the issue led the Home Government to concert with the Prince Stadtholder, who at that time had retired to England, to adopt measures to prevent the capture of the Dutch settlements in the eastern seas by France. The Stadtholder consequently ordered the several Dutch Governors in the east to admit British troops and ships in order to protect them against the common enemy. The Board also directed the several governments in India to co-operate in the enterprise, to detach on any expedition in that connection whatever

<sup>2</sup> Isacc Byers to Pitt, 31st Jan. 1795; Chatham Papers, 30/8, 118: Public Record Office.

troops could be safely spared, and to advance money on that account, if necessary. The Madras Government solicited the co-operation of the Governor-General of Batavia, Vander Graff, in putting all the Dutch settlements under the protection of British forces. Effective measures were, at the same time, taken from England to send an expedition to the Cape of Good Hope with a view to prevent that settlement from falling into the hands of France.

The secret instructions from Dundas explicitly directed that the Indian government should first of all turn its attention to Trincomalé, and afterwards progressively towards Malacca and the Spice Islands, so as to incorporate gradually all the Dutch possessions in the east. In consequence, the Governor-General resolved that immediate measures be adopted to secure the possession of Trincomalé, Cochin, the Dutch factory at Surat, and Malacca. The Madras Government, anticipating the resolution of the Governor-General, had already taken measures for obtaining possession of Trincomalé. On 26th August 1795, Trincomalé surrendered without any opposition and British troops took possession of the fort. Five days later, the surrender of Fort Ostenburg to British arms was effected. In September, Baticaloo and Jaffnapatam also surrendered. The capitulation of Cochin took place on 19th October. At the beginning of 1796, the other Dutch settlements in the East Indies also fell into English hands. The capitulation of Amboyna and Banda immediately followed. The Cape had already surrendered at the close of the year 1795.

At this critical juncture, the probable designs of the French on Goa and the danger arising from the weakness of the Portuguese power in the east, also occupied the attention of the Home Government. The Governments of Bengal and Madras were warned of the French projects in regard to that possession and the danger eventually arising from it. The Government of Bombay was particularly directed to adopt such measures for the security of Goa, in conjunction with the Government of that possession and subject to any orders from the Governor-General-in-Council,

as a due regard to their own safety should permit. The expediency of communicating with the Goa Government on the subject without any delay was impressed upon the Indian Government.

By the beginning of 1796, the Dutch possessions in the eastern world had fallen into English hands. In spite of their anxiety to carry into full execution the orders for taking possession of all the Dutch settlements, the supreme government in India did not consider an expedition against Java as practicable at that time. They did not find it possible to furnish a sufficient force for that expedition without any reinforcement from Europe. The surrender of Colombo and other places in the island of Ceylon was, however, effected. A plan for employing part of the naval force in blocking up Batavia was also set forth, but its operation was not found practicable owing to its distant situation. In consequence of the directions from the Home Government, the capture of certain Dutch ships also took place. The authorities of the East India Company expressed their entire approbation of the promptitude which was observed on the part of the Indian Government in carrying the orders of the government into execution for taking complete possession of the Dutch settlements in the East Indies.

French activities against the British power in India were not confined to Indian soil. The French had also made it their object to discipline the Persians, and to furnish them with artillery and other equipment, with a view to prepare them for some future attack upon the British possessions in the east. The danger arising from such activities was by no means immediate, but, in the opinion of Dundas, it demanded some attention<sup>3</sup> on their part. There were also rumours at this time relating to the intentions of Zemaun Shah, the Mongol chief, to invade India. Sir John Shore was fully alive to the danger arising from this threatened invasion and his correspondence, especially with Dundas, gives an accurate insight into the broad aspects of his imperial policy.

<sup>3</sup> Dundas to Sir Stephen Lushington, Chairman of the East India Company, 3rd March 1796; *Persia*, V. 21: India Office Library.

French activities also extended to the Court of the Imam of Muscat with the general object of promoting their colonial commerce, but particularly for improving their overland communication with India. The Governor-General took prompt action by communicating with the Imam on the subject and warning him of the consequences in case he admitted any French agent at his Court. The Imam, however, gave full assurances of his good understanding and friendship with the British Government.

The general measures of precaution exercised by the British administration in India at this critical period included a strict control and vigilance over the publication of such news and observations in the newspapers as were likely to prejudice their case against that of the enemy. Towards the close of 1795, the Madras Government had already imposed certain restrictions on the publication of its General Orders in newspapers without proper scrutiny. A similar vigilance was exercised by the Bengal Government in the following year. The *Calcutta Gazette*, in its edition of the 22nd September 1796, had published a very exceptional paragraph on the late communication between the Court of London and the French Republic on the subject of peace, and had referred to the battles in favour of the Republican forces in a manner most discouraging to the cause of the allies. The Governor-General, realizing the impropriety of inserting such observations in a paper published under the sanction of the government, warned the Editor against such publications in the future. The Editor, Mr. Horseley, while expressing his unconditional regret, asserted\* that the insertion of such remarks was wholly unintentional.

Towards the close of 1796 another complication arose in Europe with the commencement of hostilities between Great Britain and Spain. This situation was brought about by the alliance of Spain with the French Republic. The several governments in India were, in consequence, apprised of the actual commencement of hostilities between the two nations, and were directed to take necessary precautions for the defence of the Philippine Islands. They were also in-



structed to direct an expedition against Manilla, if it could be done without endangering the safety of the Company's possessions in India, or of the conquests lately made from the Dutch. The Secret Committee's instructions for the expedition were received at Bengal on 23rd March 1797. Judging from the political state of affairs in India, the Governor-General and Council apprehended no disturbance in the tranquillity of the country, and were of the opinion that an adequate force could be safely spared for the proposed expedition against Manilla. Preparations for the enterprise were set in progress, and the troops were expected to sail out in July of that year. But, as the year progressed, a change came about in the situation in India, marked particularly by Tipu's ambitious movements, which made the Governor-General realize that such a venture would not be desirable. This led to a reversal of the earlier policy and the final relinquishment of the project.

The rising tide in Europe, and the growing apprehensions of an attack from the French, had for some time past impressed the Bombay Government with the supreme need of putting the Dutch possession of Surat in a respectable state of defence. The inadequacy of the garrison at Surat for repelling any attack of the enemy prepared an additional ground for its immediate security. Instructions were, therefore, issued to the chief at Surat for the admission of British troops at that station. The importance of acquiring the Portuguese possession of Diu, situated at the entrance of the Gulf of Cambay, was also pointed out. Its strategic importance in commanding the entire coast of Malabar, and for maintaining intercourse with the Arabian sea and the Persian Gulf, had already attracted the notice of the French.<sup>4</sup> Sir Charles Malet, the English Resident at Poona, called the attention of the Governor-General to the expediency of acquiring that station by an arrangement with the Portuguese Government, or with the Court of Lisbon, particularly as the Portuguese derived no political or commercial advantages

<sup>4</sup> Extract letter from Sir Charles Malet to the Chairman, 28th October 1797; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 60; India Office Library.

from it. The acquisition of Diu would be helpful to the English not only in checking any designs of the French, but also in the promotion of communication with Europe, via Bussora.

An interesting discovery relating to the activities of a Jacobin Club formed at Seringapatam was also made during this period. It recorded the proceedings of an association of fifty-nine persons who were generally discribed as "les citoyens qui composent le party francais commandé par le citoyen Dompard."<sup>5</sup> It mentions five meetings held under the auspices of that association between 5th May and 4th June 1797. The President of this body was citizen Francis Ripaud known to be a lieutenant in the French army. They formulated twenty-two Articles relating to their conduct and discipline, and in their speeches usually abused the English in phrases such as "la ferocité anglais" and "perfide et cruelle (sic) anglais".

During 1796 and 1798 the French machinations at the Courts of the Indian powers became more active than ever. Their influence in the Court of the Nizam considerably increased and aroused the apprehensions of Sir John Shore. Likewise, their intrigues with Tipu also gained force and in March 1797, reports were received of the arrival of two French ships at Mangalore with presents for Tipu.<sup>6</sup> By the close of 1797, Tipu's hostile preparations against the English became well-known. At the same time, the influence exercised by mercenary French military adventurers of the type of Raymond at the Nizam's Court, De Boigne and Perron in the service of Scindia, and Dudrenec in Holkar's army, was a potential danger to the English. Apart from the complex political problems in India, Sir John Shore had also to face a perilous situation born out of the activities of enemy privateers.

Early in 1798, the Governor-General approved the plan set forth by the government of Bombay for sending a monthly

<sup>5</sup> European Mss. V. 2, Part 2, D. 99; India Office Library (The discovery was in the form of a manuscript, dated 1797, and was found at Seringapatam after its capture in 1799.)

<sup>6</sup> Notes on Tipu and the French, Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 611; India Office Library.

overland packet to Europe and establishing a regular communication with home via Bussora. The Bombay Government lost no time in giving it immediate effect. It is a testimony to the prudence of Sir John Shore that he could foresee the gathering storm in Europe and, throughout his administration, endeavoured to suppress the evil effects which the European situation had brought to bear upon the Indian soil. In this attempt he was promptly supported by the government at home. When Great Britain became involved in the war with Revolutionary France in 1793, Dundas was appointed Minister-in-Charge of the War Department. During 1794 and 1801, Dundas was completely engrossed in the war with France, and committed himself whole-heartedly to the adoption of measures to preserve British power and trade in the east. To achieve that end he took advantage of his connection with the Company. The Government and the Company exhibited a most remarkable co-operation throughout these years. One of the most serious difficulties facing the Cabinet during the war was the provision and manning of a strong navy. In 1795, Dundas requisitioned six newly floated East-India-men, along with eight others, as ships-of-the-line. To man them, the Company at its own expense raised three thousand sailors.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the Revolutionary war, the Company showed its readiness to allow its ships to be used on expeditions and for the transport of troops.

The opening of the year 1798 witnessed Tipu's secret mission across the Indian Ocean to the Isle of France, with letters for the Directory in Paris proposing an offensive and defensive alliance with the French Republic for overthrowing the English power in India. Malartic, the Commander-in-Chief and Governor-General of the French Islands, gave the envoys a public reception and on 30th January 1798, issued a Proclamation calling for volunteers to enrol themselves under the Mysore banner for a war to expel the English from India. The Mauritius Proclamation marked the beginning of a new phase in the contest between the two maritime nations of Europe. Now that Great Britain had fully recognized the

<sup>7</sup> Auber, *Constitution of the East India Company*, p. 664.

immense value of her Asiatic possessions, the traditional jealousy of, and the mischievous interference by, the only European nation that had repeatedly challenged her ascendancy naturally reached its acutest stage in a desperate war between the two nations. The period during 1793 and 1798 had been merely one of uneasy peace in India amid every signs of a coming outbreak. After 1798, the great question of Indian supremacy ripened towards an explosion.

## THE ACUTEST STAGE

LORD WELLESLEY who took charge of the Indian administration in May 1798, received the first regular authentication of the Mauritius Proclamation through Lord Macartney, the Governor of Madras, exactly a month later. With a view to obtain the most accurate information in respect to the circumstances attending the reception of Tipu's embassy to the Isle of France and the publication of the Proclamation, Wellesley examined the evidence of some persons who were present in that island during the residence of the ambassadors. From the concurred testimony of these persons he discovered that Tipu had despatched two ambassadors who were received at the Island towards the close of January of that year with every mark of respect; and that two days after their arrival the Proclamation was fixed up in public places. Tipu had also addressed to the executive Directory of France with the object of forming an offensive and defensive alliance with the French, and had offered to maintain at his expense, during the continuance of the war in India, whatever troops were furnished by the French.<sup>1</sup> The ambassadors, together with the force collected at the island, estimated to be about two hundred, landed back at Mangalore on April 26. Although Tipu had not been able to derive any effectual assistance, it was clear that the designs announced in the Proclamation demanded serious and immediate attention on the part of the British administration in India.

The Governor-General, after procuring the details of the Proclamation, directed the Madras Government to assemble the army on that coast for the purpose of frustrating the avowed designs of Tipu and of France. Lord Wellesley's policy in that regard concurred with the orders of the Court

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Governor-General, 12th August 1798; Wellesley Papers, 13, 448; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

of Directors which specified that "the landing of any considerable French force in Tipu's country must be the signal for an attack upon him."<sup>2</sup> In Wellesley's estimation, the landing of any French force, great or small, was a sufficient justification for war upon every principle both of justice and of policy. He also sent instructions to the Bombay Government to hold the troops on the coast of Malabar in readiness to cooperate with the army from Madras.

In the meantime, the news of the sailing of a French armament under Bonaparte was transmitted to India, and the secret dispatch to the Governor-General expressed a possibility of its being destined for the East Indies. Dundas was already of the opinion that the possession of Egypt by any great European power would be fatal to British interests, and he proceeded upon the supposition that the French army had successfully reached Alexandria of which the conquest of Egypt would be a natural corollary. He also did not see any reason why the French object of reaching India should not be accomplished.<sup>3</sup> The pernicious consequences attending the French conquest of Egypt were impressed upon the Governor-General who was advised to deal with Tipu as soon as the opportune moment for doing so had arrived. It became necessary, hereafter, to detail the measures for the better security of the Indian possessions. Under the possibility that the French might penetrate into India, either by the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf, the Board of Commissioners thought it desirable to establish a Resident at the Court of the Pasha of Bagdad, and appointed Harford Jones to that post. The Pasha gave expression to his friendly disposition towards the British, and his determination to exert himself in opposing the designs of the French for passing to India. The Governments of Fort St. George and Bombay were asked to keep a watchful eye upon every possible mode adopted by the French to reach India. It was also stressed

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Dundas, 28th Feb. 1798; Wellesley Papers, 13, 456; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

<sup>3</sup> Dundas to Lord Grenville, 13th June 1798; Wellesley Papers, 37, 274; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

upon the Government at home that it was not possible for the East India Company to stand alone in such a contest, and that it had become imperative on the part of the Government to advance a substantial sum to the Company. Pitt finally agreed to make an advance of five hundred thousand pounds from the Government in the form of specie and warlike stores.

Lord Wellesley realized the supreme importance of securing early, regular, and authentic information on the political situation in Europe, and of timely appraisals of the opinions held by the Government with regard to the designs of the enemy. The system of overland dispatches to India, recently established, afforded an excellent opportunity of monthly communication between the two Governments. Wellesley further suggested the expediency of his being furnished every month with a short statement, in cypher, of all events and movements of the enemy, and that copies of a weekly newspaper published in London be despatched to the three presidencies in India by the same monthly overland packet.

The first intimation of the French descent upon Egypt was received by Lord Wellesley on 11th October, 1798, through a native of Bengal who had arrived at Calcutta in an Arab vessel from Port Juddah in the Red Sea. Although, the news was unauthoritative, the Governor-General deemed it sufficiently credible to claim their earliest attention. He transmitted the intelligence to Admiral Rainier who was advised to take immediate measures for establishing a vigilant cruise off the Straits of Babelmandel. On the 18th of the same month, the Governor-General received from the Government of Bombay intelligence brought by one of the Company's cruisers, confirming the accounts of the landing of the French in Egypt. Wellesley felt convinced that the invasion of Egypt was connected with the designs which the French had so long mediated against the British possessions in India, and that they had based their hopes on the cooperation they expected from Tipu. This led him to the determination to strike an immediate blow at Tipu.

The Governor-General-in-Council, at first, directed the Governments of Fort St. George and Bombay to put their garrisons in a state of defence, and adopted adequate measures for the due security of the port of Calcutta and the province of Bengal against any possible attempt of the enemy. The Commander-in-Chief was called upon to furnish a plan for the augmentation of troops in Bengal and for operations against Tipu. The Governor of the British possessions at the Cape of Good Hope was requested to cooperate by despatching, for the defence of the Malabar Coast, such part of their force as they could safely spare.<sup>4</sup> Wellesley next turned his gaze towards Tipu. The instructions to the Governor-General undeniably warranted him in treating Tipu's dealings with the French as an act of hostility and war on his part. Unfortunately, neither the state of the British army nor the condition of the allies allowed immediate operations. Wellesley, therefore, first effected the revival of the tripartite treaty and the disbandment of Nizam's formidable French force. Then followed his correspondence with Tipu, but the latter encouraged by the apparent approach of the French gave evasive replies to demands of submission. The Governor-General, thereupon, took the effectual step of blockading the coast of Tipu's dominions in Malabar in order to preclude him from deriving any succour whatsoever from the French. The Governor-General was apprised by unquestionable authority that, while Tipu had given evasive replies to his communications, three of his ambassadors were upon the point of embarking at Tranquebar with an avowed mission from the Sultan to the executive Directory of France.<sup>5</sup> In order to defeat Tipu's object of effecting any junction with the French, hostilities were commenced without any further delay and the last Mysore War began.

The apprehension of an invasion of the British territories in India by Zemaun Shah also became considerable at this

<sup>4</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee, 30th October 1798; Bengal Secret Letters, V. 3; India Office Library.

<sup>5</sup> Wellesley to the Secret Committee, 13th Feb. 1799; Wellesley papers, 13, 451; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.



juncture and impelled Wellesley to realize the need for improving relations with Persia to the utmost degree. The great political object to him came to be the exclusion of the French from that country and the adoption of such effectual measures as would preclude Zemaun Shah from his designs of advancing towards India. Lord Wellesley also suggested to His Majesty's ministers at Constantinople and St. Petersburg, the expediency of their endeavouring to engage those Courts in exciting the King of Persia to such measures as may alarm Zemaun Shah for the safety of his hereditary dominions and recall him from the prosecution of his designs. The Bombay Government was authorised to furnish the reigning sovereign of Persia with money and military stores with a view to help him in causing such a diversion. Wellesley also approved of a suggestion made by Mehdi Ali Khan, the British agent at Bushire, that he should negotiate on behalf of the British administration in India with the Persian king. The conduct of the Khan, and his success in achieving the main object of his negotiation, received the Governor-General's high commendation. The subsequent retrograde movements of Zemaun Shah were largely attributed to the success of the measures adopted in Persia by the Khan. In the meantime, the Mysore War had ended in the overthrow of Tipu and the conquest of his country. Measures were, in consequence, taken by an overland dispatch from Muscat to Mocha to communicate this important news to the British detachment in the Red Sea, as well as to the native agents of these two places. In this way there was every possibility of the news speedily reaching the French in Egypt, and there was a chance that it may contribute to divert their attention from India.

It was evident from the tenor of a letter written by Bonaparte to Tipu, and entrusted for transmission to the Shereef of Mecca, that an attempt to penetrate into India constituted a part of their original design since, after his arrival in Egypt, Bonaparte had intimated his strong desire to "free the Sultan from the thralldom of the English yoke."<sup>6</sup> Thus action against

<sup>6</sup> J. Duncan to the Secret Committee, 21st June 1799; Bombay Secret Letters, V. I; India Office Library.

Tipu had not been taken a little too soon. Towards the middle of 1799, it was learnt from concurrent accounts that Bonaparte had withdrawn the main body of his army from Egypt with a view to advance towards the frontiers of Persia. The Bombay Government consequently instructed Mehdi Ali Khan, then at the Court of Baba Khan of Persia, to ascertain the disposition of that prince in opposing the enemy in case they attempted to penetrate through his dominions. Lord Wellesley did not consider it likely, especially after the overthrow of Tipu, that France would make any efforts to disturb the tranquillity of India without the cooperation of any eastern power. Impressed, therefore, with the expediency of strengthening the bonds of union with Persia, he despatched an embassy to that Court in the person of Captain Malcolm. The Bombay Government also despatched a mission to Senna, the capital of Arabia Felix, with a view to secure the cooperation of the Imam in strengthening British influence in the Arabian Gulf.

At a time when the entire energies of the Government at home were bent on combating the ambitions of Bonaparte, Wellesley came to share their cares in his distant outpost of empire, and his survey ranged far beyond the wide limits of his immediate charge. He even proposed that an expedition may be fitted out from India to cooperate by way of the Red Sea with any attempt that might be undertaken from the side of the Mediterranean, although he would not undertake its preparation without express orders from England. The danger arising from the inadequate defence of Goa suggested itself as an object of importance to the Governor-General. At a time when the French were already established in Egypt, he was alarmed by the danger that would arise from its falling, along with the possession of Diu, into the hands of France. He, therefore, opened negotiations with the Government of Goa which resulted in a detachment of British troops, under the command of Sir William Clarke, being admitted there with every demonstration of cordiality on the part of the Governor and Captain-General of that Portuguese possession.

Among the manifold tasks to which Wellesley directed himself at this critical juncture also came in the suppression of newspaper activity, particularly in Calcutta. He suspected the existence of a systematic design of mischief among the Editors of several newspapers including the *Asiatic Mirror*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Post*.<sup>7</sup> In these papers reports continually appeared tending to magnify the character and power of the French and exposing every existing weakness in the English. The Editor of *The Post*, who was understood to be a desperate Jacobin, was ordered to embark for Europe by the very first ship that was to sail out. The Governor-General-in-Council further directed that the newspapers in the presidency of Fort St. George should be submitted for inspection before publication. Directions were consequently given to the Editor of the *Madras Courier*, and the proprietors of the *Madras Monthly Journal*, the *Indian Magazine*, and the *European Miscellany*.

Towards the close of 1799, doubts arose regarding the Imam of Muscat's fidelity to the agreement with the British. Malcolm, already on his way to Persia, was, in consequence, directed to touch at Muscat with the object of improving the existing relations. The agreement concluded by Malcolm on 18th January 1800, secured to the English a promise of amity and cooperation from the Imam, who also agreed to the establishment of an English Resident at his Court. The Sultan of Aden, by a direct communication to the Government of Bombay, had already made overtures for a closer connection with the English administration in India.

The formation of the Second Coalition in Europe in October 1799, consisting of Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Naples, Portugal and Turkey against the Directory of France gave a fresh impetus to the Anglo-French tussle of the period. Although the French were incapable of exercising any action in India, it was from the Isle of France that they preyed upon the shipping of the Indian Ocean and inflicted heavy losses upon the trade of English merchants in the Bay of Bengal.

<sup>7</sup> Wellesley to Sir Alured Clarke, 26th April 1799; Wellesley Papers 13, 724; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

Hence, the necessity of obliging all ships to sail with convoy was pointed out. A petition from the principal merchants of Calcutta solicited convoy for certain ships bound eastward and to China.<sup>6</sup> Prompt measures were, thereupon, taken to provide, as effectually as possible, for the protection of those vessels. It was also proposed, for the general protection of the Indian trade, to have a frigate stationed on the coast of Sumatra, another in the straits of Malacca, and a line of battle-ships to protect the Malabar coast and Ceylon. Lord Wellesley also contemplated the capture of Batavia, but the possibility that the military and naval forces in India may be called upon to cooperate in the destruction of the French army in Egypt made him postpone, for the time being, the proposed expedition. In the meantime, however, the port of Batavia, together with all the ports in the island of Java, were put in a state of blockade, and any ships or vessels attempting to leave or enter those ports were ordered to be seized. Wellesley also took into serious consideration the capture of the Islands of France and Bourbon as the only effective means of counteracting the activities of the privateers. It was also probable that with a view to attain her objects in Egypt and India, France may attempt to throw a strong reinforcement into the Isle of France. But His Majesty's naval commander in the eastern seas, Admiral Rainier, objected to the enterprise on the ground that it could not with propriety be undertaken without express orders from home.

The Governor-General, realizing the magnitude of the danger he may be called upon to expel, was impressed with the necessity of placing the forces in India in such a state, and in such a situation, as would enable him to act with promptitude whenever the expected contingency should arrive. With that end in view, he ordered a force to assemble at Trincomalé by the middle of December 1800. This force was to be kept in readiness either for proceeding to the Red

<sup>6</sup> The ships were 'Carmo Cargo' valued at 10,00,000; 'Diligente' valued at 3,00,000; 'Diana' valued at 6,00,000; and 'Transfer' valued at 6,00,000. Wellesley Papers, 13, 761; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

Sea to cooperate with the British forces employed in the Mediterranean, or for being despatched to any part in India which the French may menace, or may be employed in striking a blow against the Isle of France. Preparations for the probable contingency of sending out an expedition to the Red Sea were also set in progress in Bombay, and the force was kept in readiness to act at the shortest notice according to the instructions that may be received from the Governor-General.

It was at this juncture that the Home Government resolved to despatch a squadron to the Red Sea under Sir Home Popham with a view to negotiate and conclude commercial and political engagements with the Arabian States. The several governments in India were, in consequence, directed to give him such aid and guidance as would tend towards the accomplishment of the object.<sup>9</sup> The friendly disposition of some of the Arabian states had already been secured before the despatch of Popham. The Pasha of Bagdad had given promises of good understanding and co-operation with the English.<sup>10</sup> A direct communication had also been opened with the Pasha of Aleppo. An attempt had also been made to secure the support of the Shereef of Mecca, and to obtain his promise for co-operation in repelling the French invasion of Egypt and for exerting his influence with the Arab chiefs in binding them to the common cause of resisting French aggression. The Shereef gave the most favourable assurances of his amity with the English. The alliance between Great Britain and the Sublime Porte against French aggression had already been concluded. On 1st January 1801, Malcolm succeeded in concluding a treaty of defensive alliance with the King of Persia by which the two powers contracted to expel and extirpate the French should they attempt to settle on any of the islands or coasts of Persia.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 4; 2nd Dec. 1800; India Office Library.

<sup>10</sup> From the translation of a letter from the Pasha of Bagdad to Hon. J. Duncan, Governor of Bombay, without date, and received on 7th June 1880. Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 474; India Office Library.

Early in 1801, Russia, Denmark and Sweden formed a confederacy against Great Britain known as the 'Armed Neutrality' to resist against British search of neutral vessels for French goods in this Anglo-French War. This complication in European politics promptly affected the situation in India. The several presidencies were directed to seize the Danish settlements in India and capture their ships and property, along with the ships and property belonging to the Swedes and the Russians. Instructions were also sent to the supra cargoes at Canton to direct the commanders of all the British ships in that part of the world to detain all ships and vessels belonging to these three nations. In consequence, possession was taken of Serampore in May 1801, and of all the Danish ships lying in the Hoogly. All the Danish settlements and factories within the charge of the Governor-General were seized, together with all ships, stores and public property belonging to Denmark, Russia and Sweden. The surrender of the Danish settlement of Fredericksnagore was also effected. In view of the doubtful issue of depending circumstances in Europe, Lord Wellesley deemed it proper not to enter into any specific engagement with regard to Danish possessions or property captured in the East Indies.

The Governor-General at this stage received overland dispatches apprising him that the Home Government had determined to adopt the most vigorous measures for the expulsion of the French from Egypt. He was also informed that a force under Sir Ralph Abercromby had been ordered to proceed up the Mediterranean Sea for cooperating with the Turkish army, and that another force was to assemble in the Red Sea with a view to dispossess the French in that quarter. The naval branch of this armament had been entrusted to Sir Home Popham, who was directed to proceed directly from the Cape of Good Hope to Mocha. It was signified that the remainder of the military force be provided from India, comprising of about one thousand European and two thousand Indian infantry. Lord Wellesley's early preparations made at Ceylon, Madras and Bombay enabled him to dispatch a force to the Red Sea without delay under the com-

mand of Major General Baird. Wellesley gave specific instructions that the departure of troops from Ceylon for Mocha was not to be delayed for additional supplies which would follow with all possible expedition. The Company's agent at Mocha was directed to furnish all necessary supplies of money and provisions. The cooperation of the Governor of Goa was also solicited in raising the supplies of stores and provisions for the Red Sea expedition.<sup>11</sup> The Governor of the Cape of Good Hope was, likewise, requested to cooperate with all exertion in the venture. The British Resident at Bussora was directed to give his special attention to the practicability of opening a direct and speedy communication with the British army acting in Egypt.

Before the departure of General Baird, Wellesley stressed upon him the importance of securing the support of the Arab chiefs against the French. He addressed letters to the principal Arab chieftains which were to be delivered with suitable presents.<sup>12</sup> The need for conciliating the Imam of Senna was particularly emphasised with the object of securing the free use of the Port of Mocha as a place of general depot, and attention was drawn to the doubtful attitude of the Shereef of Mecca towards British interests. Under Wellesley's orders, a Proclamation was framed for distribution among the inhabitants of Arabia and of Egypt, inviting them to make a common cause against the French. Copies of the Proclamation were also prepared in the Arabic language, and the time and manner of their distribution was to be determined by Baird himself.

Towards the middle of 1801, France invaded Portugal and placed herself in a situation in which she could dictate her own terms. It was, therefore, taken for granted that Goa, along with other Portuguese possessions in the east, would be ceded to the French either openly or secretly. There were strong grounds for suspecting the Portuguese settlements at

<sup>11</sup> Wellesley to the Governor of Goa 23rd February, 1801. (The Governor of Goa at that time was Antonio Francisco Da Viega Cabral); Wellesley Papers, 13, 710; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

<sup>12</sup> The list of chieftains included the Imam of Senna, the Shereef of Mecca, the Sultan of Aden, and the Governors of Judda and Mocha; Wellesley Papers, 13, 708; Mr. Mus. Add. Mss.

Goa to have been already ceded to the French under the late peace concluded between France, Spain and Portugal. As the Portuguese Government was from inclination decidedly friendly towards England, and whatever cessions it might make to the French must arise from compulsion, the Governor-General was directed to "avoid studiously any act of aggression without necessity."<sup>13</sup> It was, however, considered necessary for the preservation of peace in India that the Governor-General should station a commanding force in Goa so as to be able not only to defend it against any attack of the enemy, but also to prevent any augmentation to its garrison. The several governments in India were directed to provide for the security of the Portuguese settlements in India and China against any possible views of the French. It was apprehended that the French, or rather the Spaniards acting with their assistance, might attack the British trade at Canton. To ward off this danger, all endeavours were to be exercised to obtain from the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa an order to the Portuguese Governor of Macao to consult the British *supra* cargoes on the measures to be pursued in this direction.

Lord Wellesley also took the precaution of giving due warning to British ships in the several Indian ports of the probability of French ships-of-war appearing in these seas under the mark of Portuguese colours. The Secret Committee further directed the garrisoning of Daman and Diu, along with other Portuguese possessions, without loss of time. The disinclination manifested by the Viceroy of Goa to the admission of an adequate British force into the garrisons of Daman and Diu aroused considerable doubts about his cooperation and led Wellesley to direct, in conformity to the instructions of the Secret Committee, the exclusive establishment of British authority in those settlements. But the Viceroy's subsequent compliance in ordering the Governors of Daman and Diu to admit into their ports a reinforcement of British troops, and his disposition to cooperate with the

<sup>13</sup> Secret Committee to the Governor-General-in-Council, 8th July 1801, Wellesley Papers, 13, 761; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.



British Government in the protection of the settlements subject to his authority, dispelled all doubts in that regard.

In May 1801, Malcolm had returned from Persia having established a connection with that Government which promised political and commercial advantages to the interests of the British nation in India. To Lord Wellesley it had always appeared to be an object of considerable importance to secure the attachment of that power for safeguarding against any attack by a European power on the British possessions in India. Now that the entire command of the Persian coast had been obtained, it was bound to facilitate the means of defeating any attempt on the part of the French to establish themselves in that quarter. Malcolm's mission was of a political nature and was, in fact, the first of its kind the East India Company had ever sent to that Court.

In August 1801, dispatches received from the Red Sea conveyed the intelligence of the Convention for the evacuation of Egypt by the French. Lord Wellesley, therefore, considering that there was no further employment for the force then in Egypt under Baird, ordered its return. The favourable turn of affairs also brought the attention of the Court of Directors to the subject of retrenchment which, in view of the mounting debt of the Company, was peremptory. Wellesley, however, found it wholly impracticable, considering the unsettled situation in India, to meet the wishes of the Court in regard to the reductions proposed to be made at Bombay and Madras. He was of the firm opinion that the exigency of the situation demanded the suspension of the execution of the Court's orders for the time being, although he was prepared to avail himself of every practicable occasion to carry out their orders as far as the safety of the British possessions in India would permit.<sup>14</sup>

In October 1801, the conclusion of peace between Great Britain and the French Republic was notified to the Chairman of the East India Company. In consequence, the several presidencies in India were apprised of that event, along with

<sup>14</sup> Wellesley to Lord Lewisham, 30th Sep. 1801; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 87; India Office Library.

the ratification of the preliminary articles of peace with France.<sup>15</sup> As all the places in India taken from the enemy during the late war would now have to be restored, it came to be an object of supreme importance to the Company to attend to the settlement of the definitive treaty in order to ensure that the French did not come to enjoy greater privileges than before. It was extremely fortunate for the English Company that Lord Cornwallis had been marked out as the negotiator. He was fully conversant with all the leading points respecting British interests in India and stood very little in need of any hints or observations in the adjustment of the cessions now to be made. The discussions over the definitive articles of the treaty occupied the months during November 1801, and March 1802.

Having received intelligence of the ratification of the preliminary articles of peace, Lord Wellesley now carried into execution reductions in the military establishment under the presidency of Fort William. He issued instructions to the Commander-in-Chief to proceed with the task of immediate reduction of all the native battalions on the Bengal establishment. Now that the danger of invasion from Zemaun Shah had been successfully counteracted, he also thought it safe to reduce the two regiments then serving within the reserved dominions of the Nawab Vizier of Oude. The conclusion of the peace also prompted the Governor-General to propose the reduction of such corps of volunteers as had been raised during the exigency of the war, the discharge of the sepoy supernumerary to the peace establishment of each native battalion, and the retrenchment of various establishments and contingent charges connected with the movement of troops. Lord Wellesley, however, was not prepared to order any reductions which were not consonant with the safety of the British possessions in India.

The definitive treaty of Amiens between Great Britain, France, Portugal and the Batavian Republic was signed on 27th March 1802, and was signified to the Governor-General

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 4; 16th October 1801: India Office Library.

for notification to all the presidencies and possessions of the Crown and the Company. Directions were also sent to him from His Majesty's Government to restore to the French and the Dutch, conformably to the stipulations of Articles 3, 12 and 13 of the treaty, all the territories, possessions or factories belonging to the two nations, with the exception of the Dutch possessions in the island of Ceylon.<sup>16</sup> In case any doubts or questions arose with respect to the situation of the French in India, the Governor-General was advised to regard the provisions of the Convention of 1787 between Great Britain and France as constituting the rule for guiding his conduct. It can hardly be doubted that the treaty of Amiens once again gave latitude to the French in India. Although they were granted merely a restitution of their former privileges, it involved prospects of a renewal of their intrigues and designs. Warren Hastings foresaw the danger arising from the peace and, in an address to the Honourable Court, exposed the embarrassments and hazards to which the administration of the Company's affairs may be subjected.<sup>17</sup> He also suggested the means by which the evil consequences of such a situation may be avoided. The French nation may be allowed to repossess their former settlements and factories, but should not be given the liberty to erect new ones; they should not be allowed to depute their agents into any part of the country, or to bring ships-of-war into the Hoogly river beyond the batteries of Fort William.

The Governor-General also received news that the Court of Denmark had acceded to a Convention concluded at St. Petersburg in June, 1801, under which it had consented to renew the former treaties with Great Britain. In consequence of this turn of affairs, instructions were received for the restoration of the colonial possessions of the Danes in India, as far as possible, in the same state in which they were

<sup>16</sup> The Second Earl of Liverpool to Wellesley, 6th May 1802; Liverpool Papers, 38, 237; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

<sup>17</sup> Address from Warren Hastings to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Court of Directors, 20th May 1802; Wellesley Papers, 29, 178; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

surrendered to the British Government. Lord Wellesley issued the requisite orders for the formal restoration of the settlements of Serampore and its dependencies, together with all the ships, merchant-vessels, public stores and property. Similar instructions were transmitted to the Madras Government concerning the restitutions under the authority of that presidency. The Danish settlement of Fredericksnagore was restored on 19th July, 1802. The Bombay Government was, likewise, directed to make similar restitution of the colonial possessions of Denmark.

The events that occurred on the continent of Europe subsequent to the conclusion of the treaty, particularly the First Consul's proclamation to the Swiss nation, commanding them to receive back those rulers whom they had by unanimous impulse set aside, induced the British government to remonstrate in the strongest manner for the protection of their independence. A note of protest was, thereupon, forwarded to the French Government. The affair involved once again the prospect of a renewal of hostilities and the Home Government thought it advisable not to allow any foreign possessions to pass out from its hands. Advices were sent to the Governor-General for the retention, until further orders, of such French and Dutch possessions in the East Indies as had not until then been restored in consequence of the definite treaty of peace.<sup>18</sup>

But the subsequent easing of the situation in Europe led to a recall of such orders, and the Governor-General was directed to proceed with the immediate execution of the earlier instructions for the restitution of the several possessions to the Governments of France and Holland. There were reasons to apprehend that France may, either by intimidation or otherwise, endeavour to obtain possession of the Portuguese settlements in the East Indies, or of Macao in China, which might endanger the security of the possessions and commerce of the Company. The Governor-General was, therefore, advised to adopt measures, in concert with the

<sup>18</sup> Lord Hobart to Wellesley, 16th October, 1802; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 505; India Office Library.

naval commander in the East Indies, for preventing the Portuguese settlements from falling into the hands of France.<sup>19</sup> The Revolutionary War thus ended in 1802 with a marked advantage to the English in the east, and with it the tension ceased for a while. The Anglo-French rivalry had just passed through its acutest stage. The failure of the Egyptian expedition had ruined Napoleon's dreams of a French empire in the east.

<sup>19</sup> Lord Hobart to Wellesley, 16th November, 1802; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 479; India Office Library.

## THE BREAK-UP OF THE TREATY OF AMIENS

THE SHORT breathing space which followed the treaty of Amiens did not last long enough to permit the French to regain a positive foothold in India. Hardly was the ink on the treaty dry when portents of a fresh rupture began to appear on the western horizon. The prophecy of the critics that the treaty would prove a temporary and delusive truce was fully borne out by the sequel which in fifteen months brought about its rupture and a renewal of the war. The considerable military preparations that were set afoot in the ports of France and Holland induced Great Britain to adopt measures of precaution for the security of her dominions. The Governor-General in India was consequently informed of the situation which involved the probability of an imminent rupture with France. It was quite unlikely that, in the event of a renewal of war in Europe, France would be in a situation to direct her efforts against the British possessions in India. But the news that a small squadron with troops was being fitted out at Brest, with probable destination for India, necessitated the adoption of precautionary measures. Measures of security were, therefore, recommended to the several Indian Governments, although they were cautioned to avoid, as far as possible, an increase of expense or an augmentation of their forces.<sup>1</sup> It was also considered probable that the Government of Batavia, on the receipt of information of the actual renewal of hostilities in Europe, may undertake an expedition against the Dutch settlements at that time occupied by British troops before the news of the rupture in Europe could be communicated by the British Government to its authorities in the eastern islands. The British senior naval officers in the eastern seas were consequently instructed to keep themselves in readiness for affording the aid of their

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 4: 17th March 1803; India Office Library.

naval force in the protection of the enemy's settlements then subject to British authority.<sup>2</sup>

The Governor-General was also directed that such of the possessions of France and Holland as were at the time under the occupation of British forces should not be evacuated until further orders, and that such reasons were to be assigned for the delay as were likely to excite the least suspicion. As it was, no possessions of France or Holland had till then been evacuated by the British troops which still retained their occupation, nor had any person with authority arrived in India to receive any of the restitutions stipulated by the treaty of Amiens. Lord Wellesley was himself quite anxious to avoid hostilities as far as possible but, in case any armed French force was to arrive to carry through the restitutions, he resolved to resist it by force if that extremity should become necessary.

Early in May 1803, the expectations of a speedy renewal of hostilities suddenly bounded up and it became certain that the discussions between the British and the French governments yielded no prospect of a favourable termination. Later in that month, the discussions between the two governments ended in a failure and Lord Whitworth, the British ambassador, was recalled from Paris, relieving all suspense on the question of peace or war. On 16th May the King's message announced the rupture with France. The recommencement of hostilities with France was notified to the several Indian presidencies, which were directed to capture all the French settlements in India, along with French ships and vessels. They were also authorised to take possession of the Dutch settlements on the Indian mainland, and to detain their ships, under an explanation that they would be restored in case the Batavian Republic was to remain neutral in the war.<sup>3</sup> In the event of a war with Holland, however, the fortifications of Cochin were to be destroyed, and measures were to be

<sup>2</sup> Instructions to the Senior Naval Officers in the Eastern Seas, 18th March 1803; Wellesley Papers, 13, 870; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 4, 16th May 1803; India Office Library.

adopted for the recapture of the Dutch settlements in the east. But no extended expeditions were advised at that stage either against the Mauritius or Batavia, without express orders from home.

It was considered unlikely that Portugal would long escape the rapacity and influence of France. But the Governor-General was advised to abstain from any act which might afford a pretext to France for hostilities against the Portuguese Government, unless the French endeavoured to capture their settlements to justify an attack. Lord Wellesley, thereupon, entered into pacific negotiations with the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa for the defence and protection of the Portuguese settlements in India, and at Macao, against any attempt of France to seize or occupy those settlements. He was fully aware of the difficulty in securing the acquiescence of the Viceroy at a time when France was at peace with Portugal, and when the Portuguese rupture with Great Britain was not formally announced. Sir William Clarke was despatched with instructions to explain that the British entertained no other object than the defence of the Portuguese settlements against any unwarrantable violation of the principles of the treaty of Amiens.<sup>4</sup> In case the Viceroy refused the admission of British troops, it was Lord Wellesley's resolution to assemble a body of troops at Mangalore, or at some other favourable station in the district of Canara, from where they would protect Goa. The refusal of the Viceroy to admit a British force was given in the most positive terms.

In June 1803, the event of the recall of the British Minister from Hague and the commencement of hostilities with the Batavian Republic were announced. The several Indian governments were consequently directed to seize all the Dutch settlements and ships in India. It was also suggested that the Dutch possession of Cochin be occupied with all possible expedition and its fortifications be completely demolished.

Even before the receipt of the several dispatches in India communicating the event of the outbreak of hostilities, Lord

<sup>4</sup> Bengal Government to Sir William Clarke, 18th May 1803; Wellesley Papers, 13, 474; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.



Wellesley had resolved not to restore the French and Dutch possessions and he had boldly ordered Lord Clive, the Governor of Madras, to regulate his conduct by this determination. Lord Clive was particularly instructed to withhold the surrender of Pondicherry and other southern French settlements, an action subsequently approved by the Home Government when the Governor-General was declared justified by the speedy renewal of the war. Thus when Binot, the French Captain-General's Chief of Staff, arrived at Pondicherry in June 1803, to take over the place, no restitution was made. Lord Wellesley, at the same time, deferred replying to the dispatches from Decaen, the newly-appointed Captain-General of French India, until he should himself arrive in India. Decaen's arrival on 11th July did not become known at Calcutta until the 23rd of the month by which date the news of the war had broken out. Decaen's squadron had, in the meantime, quitted Pondicherry, while Binot and his party who were left behind were obliged to surrender. Lord Wellesley had also instructed the Governments of Fort St. George and Bombay to refuse compliance of any claims being made to them on behalf of the Batavian Republic for the restoration of any of the Dutch possessions in accordance with the terms of the treaty of Amiens, and to state that they were being retained in trust and would be restored only if the Republic maintained a strict neutrality during the fresh war with France.<sup>5</sup>

The advantageous situation that had temporarily been brought about by the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens had led the French to entertain political and military projects in India. When the restoration of Pondicherry was stipulated by that treaty, Bonaparte had used the opportunity for sending out to the French settlements in India a considerable military staff whose mission was to communicate with the shadowy emperor of Delhi through the French officers in Scindia's service. It was also part of a wild project submitted

<sup>5</sup> Extracts from letters from the Governor-General-in-Council to the Governors-in-Council at Fort St. George and Bombay, 14th Sept. 1803: Wellesley Papers, 13, 761; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

to Napoleon at this time that an expedition be sent overland to India, by way of Persia and Afghanistan, "with the ostensible object of rescuing the imperial house from its enemies."<sup>6</sup> A few months ago, Napoleon had already sold Louisiana, the vast French territory in North America, to the United States of America possibly with a view to concentrate on his oriental schemes that were nearer his heart. Lord Wellesley had obtained two papers which related to the designs cherished by the French who had arrived in India in consequence of the peace. The first of these was obtained at Pondicherry by Lieut. Colonel Cullen, the officer appointed to conduct the restitution on the coast of Coromandel, and was in the form of a Memoir presented to the First Consul of the French Republic. The second was addressed to Lord Wellesley himself by Muller, who held the rank of a *Chef-de-Brigade* in the French army, which disclosed information respecting the designs of France.<sup>7</sup> Although the papers contained propositions in many respects absurd and chimerical, they were significant as indicating the spirit of the Frenchmen who had composed them.

The renewal of war between Great Britain and France impressed upon Lord Wellesley the need for further improving the machinery for forwarding dispatches from India to Europe by way of Egypt. During his mission to the Arab states, Sir Home Popham had appointed Mr. Rossetti as the agent of the Company in Egypt subject to his confirmation by the Supreme Government in India. Although this appointment had appeared to Lord Wellesley to be unnecessary at the time when it was made, the changed state of affairs in Europe and in India convinced him that British interests in India might eventually be promoted by this arrangement. He now deemed it proper to recognize Rossetti as the Company's official agent in Egypt. Among the early measures

<sup>6</sup> Loustaunau's Plan for a French invasion of India submitted to Bonaparte, First Consul of the French Republic, Thermidor 15, Year II (3rd August 1803); European Mss. V. 2; F/18/11; India Office Library.

<sup>7</sup> Wellesley to Lord Hobart, 20th November 1803; Home Miscellaneous Series. V. 623; India Office Library.

of precaution adopted by the Governor-General soon after the recommencement of hostilities also came the issuing of special prohibitory orders to the Editors of the leading newspapers of the several presidencies. They were forbidden from publishing, during the continuance of the war, any articles of intelligence respecting the departure of ships from any port in India, or any information about the situation or strength of the British naval force in the Indian seas, from which the enemy might derive any knowledge or advantage.<sup>8</sup>

The fact, however, remained that the French at this time, as during the Revolutionary War, could not get within reach of India, and Decaen's agents in the peninsula did not secure any material support. His own military forces were barely enough to garrison the French islands. The only serious means of attack in Decaen's power was the encouragement of the privateers who scourged the Indian seas in all directions and succeeded in capturing a few of the Company's ships. Conflicts occurred on many occasions between French frigates and British vessels.<sup>9</sup> But all these efforts did nothing beyond inflicting heavy private losses, and left the Company's position in India unimpaired. At the same time, the Company's ships were quick in retaliating. On several occasions they captured French privateers and inflicted heavy damage upon their shipping.

Lord Wellesley's attention was also called to the weak state of artillery in Bengal. The attention of the Court of Directors had already been drawn to that subject even before the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, and Dundas himself was fully conscious of the dangers arising from the deficient state of the European force for India. The question of supplying a European force for India also occupied the mind of Lord Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary, who corresponded with the Governor-General on the subject during August and Novem-

<sup>8</sup> Extract, Bengal Public Consultations, 20th October 1803; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 537; India Office Library.

<sup>9</sup> The Company's ship 'Althea' was captured by two French frigates and the French brig privateer engaged the Company's cruiser 'Princess Royal'; Selections from *Calcutta Gazettes*, V. 3; p. 395; 26th January 1804.

ber, 1804. At the same time, the attention of the Home Government was drawn to the subject of reinforcing His Majesty's squadron in the East Indies. It finally determined the Government to adopt measures for augmenting the naval strength as would afford ample protection to their eastern trade, at the same time keeping a squadron superior to that of the enemy.<sup>10</sup>

The importance of building ships-of-war in the East Indies and making the Prince of Wales' Island a naval arsenal also became, at this juncture, an object of serious attention. Since the acquisition of that island (formerly known as Penang) in 1786, its government had been of a temporary nature, while its situation, climate and produce had long pointed it out as an acquisition of great value as a commanding station for the refitting and supply of the navy for the protection of the British possessions in east Asia. Dundas (now Lord Melville), who was fully impressed with the importance of that possession, privately corresponded with Lord Wellesley on the subject.<sup>11</sup> The attention of the Court of Directors was also called to that subject not only by the general advantages to be derived from it, but also by the necessity which the renewal of war had brought about. The Court, therefore, approved the plan of a new government for that island and appointed Philip Dundas, a nephew of Lord Melville, who had just returned from India, as Governor of that possession.

The month of May 1804, which saw the return of Pitt to office was marked also by the proclamation of the French Empire. When the Empire succeeded to the Consulate, it also inherited the international situation created by its predecessor. Towards the close of the year, Spain fell under the military depotism of Napoleon and arrayed herself against Great Britain. She laid an embargo on all British ships in the Spanish ports and His Majesty's *Charge d'Affaires* was ordered to leave the Court of Madrid. The Admiralty,

<sup>10</sup> The enemy's force in the Indian seas was at this time supposed to be 6 or 7 sail-of-the line and 10 frigates.

<sup>11</sup> Castlereagh to the Chairman of the East India Company, 9th Sept. 1804; Parliamentary Papers relating to the East Indies, V. 10 of 1805; India Office Library.

thereupon, transmitted the event to all commanders of ships in the eastern seas, with instructions to detain and secure all Spanish ships and vessels.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, an embargo had been laid in the ports of France on Swedish ships which prompted the Swedish Government to solicit the aid of the British navy for their protection and security. The several governments in India were, in consequence, directed to afford such protection to Swedish ships against France as may be deemed consistent with the convenience and rules of the Company's service. Early in 1805, the Governor-General received information of the actual declaration of war by Spain against Great Britain, along with instructions not only to adopt measures of self-defence, but also to do his utmost in distressing and annoying the Spaniards by capturing their ships and destroying their commerce.

At the opening of the year 1805, news was also transmitted of the despatch of a French squadron with its probable destination for the West Indies. Unless more definite information was received indicating the East Indies as its object, Lord Wellesley was advised not to disturb the system of naval distribution, though it was suggested that such measures should be adopted in advance as would enable him to collect the squadron on the first notice of the enemy's approach. There is also evidence to show that the attention of the French Government at this juncture was assiduously directed to the interception of overland dispatches to and from India. At the same time, the establishment of French Consuls throughout the Turkish dominions in Europe left no doubt that the dispatches by that route would be exposed to a considerable hazard. Lord Wellesley, realizing the seriousness of the situation arising from this activity of the French, directed the attention of the Secret Committee to the adoption of adequate measures for maintaining the communication with Constantinople.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Lord Camden to J. Duncan, Governor of Bombay, 14th December 1804; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 479; India Office Library.

<sup>13</sup> Secretary Lumsden, Fort William, to Ramsay, Secretary to the Secret Committee, 23rd March 1805; Bengal Secret Letters, V. 6; India Office Library.

Towards the middle of 1805, further intelligence regarding the destination of the combined French and Spanish fleets, and the preparations that were ahead at Mauritius for its reception, was communicated to India. Although there appeared to be a just and reasonable ground for launching an expedition from India against the French and Spanish possessions in the eastern seas, Lord Wellesley was not disposed to undertake any such venture without express orders from home. He, however, took prompt measures for affording protection to British trade in the eastern seas and in China. The instructions from the Admiralty at this stage announced the possibility that the enemy's force was destined for the East Indies, and the naval commander in the eastern seas was directed to take proper measures for the protection of the possessions of the Crown and the Company in that quarter.<sup>14</sup> Sir Edward Pellew, thereupon, proceeded with all the force of a line of battleships under his command to take a position on the eastern coast from where he could receive the earliest information of the enemy's approach. The Government of Bombay took prompt measures for the protection of that settlement and the strengthening of its garrison against the probable designs of the enemy. But subsequent advices received at Bengal gave reason to suppose that the destination of the combined enemy's fleets was the West Indies, which removed all apprehensions of its appearing in the eastern seas.

In the meantime, Napoleon had given ample provocation in Europe. The execution of the Duc d'Enghein had roused the new idealist Tsar, Alexander I, and the assumption of the imperial title by Napoleon had challenged the prestige of the Holy Roman Emperor. In June 1805, Napoleon, having annexed Genoa to France and abolished the Cisalpine Republic, crowned himself king of Lombardy and of Italy. Russia and Austria, thereupon, on the promise of English subsidies, declared war against France. Thus was formed

<sup>14</sup> Sir Edward Pellew, Rear Admiral, to Lord Bentinck, 1st November 1805; Enclosures to Secret Letters from Madras, V. I; India Office Library.

in Europe the Third Coalition' against France consisting of Great Britain, Russia and Austria and, in the second line, Sweden and Naples. A fresh and renewed impetus was now added to the deep antagonism between Great Britain and France, opening a new chapter in the Anglo-French struggle of the period and commencing England's another and still closer wrestle with Bonaparte.

The circumstances that had given scope and encouragement to Lord Wellesley's ardent and spirited statesmanship had been extraordinary. He had arrived in India in the darkest hour of the fierce Anglo-French struggle, when Napoleon's star was in the ascendance over Europe, when he was invading Egypt and contemplating Asiatic conquests, and when, at home, a powerful Tory ministry was governing by measures that would be described as arbitrary coercion. At such a period, the intrigues of the French in India had naturally reached their high watermark and the opposition from the Indian powers reached an unprecedented level, which had forced upon him the necessity of disarming or dethroning them. Lord Wellesley never lost sight of the interdependence of India and the other parts of the British Empire. The effect of his policy was to interdict any hostilities between state and state, to fix down their rulers within their territorial limits, and to cast aside all avenues of their future combination and communication with any foreign power. In all his measures Lord Wellesley had carried with him the full support of Pitt's ministry, though he had completely alienated the sympathies of the Court of Directors who had frowned at the constant extension of the Company's dominions, and revealed their uneasiness at the mounting Indian debt.<sup>15</sup> Dundas, however, consistently encouraged Wellesley's forward policy in India. The policy pursued by the sagacious Governor-General did not rest solely upon the local Indian situation. He had fully realized that India had been drawn into the vortex of European politics and, as such, Indian

<sup>15</sup> D. Scott to Wellesley, 9th August 1801; Philips, C. H. *Correspondence of David Scott*; V. 2, p. 334.

politics must imperatively be dictated by the needs of the situation in Europe. To Lord Wellesley's statesmanship must be attributed the triumphant emergence of the British from a crucial struggle at the most critical stage in the whole period of Anglo-French rivalry.



## THE PHASE OF THE THIRD COALITION

FOILED in his attempts to reduce the power of Great Britain in Europe, Napoleon, soon after the formation of the Third Coalition, concentrated his intrigues and designs in another quarter. The establishment of a political intercourse between France and Persia, with the ultimate object of turning it against England, became the central object of his policy. In September 1805, a French agent by the name of Romieu proceeded to Persia and was received very favourably by the Persian King to whom he made some presents.<sup>1</sup> The objects of his mission were reported to be to obtain permission for the French to make an establishment in Persia, to land their forces at Gombroon, and to induce the King of Persia to shake off his alliance with the English. But the Persian sovereign, at this stage, was not willing to form any close alliance with the French, and Romieu did not get sufficient time to carry his intrigues into effect.

Towards the beginning of 1806, another French mission to Persia was led by a person whom the Persians called George. He was honoured with private audiences of the King, and it was during his stay that the first mention of a Franco-Persian combination against Russia appears.<sup>2</sup> Before the departure of George, the affairs of the French in Persia had taken a more favourable turn. The French had made it appear that it was at the instigation of Great Britain that Persia had been attacked by Russia during the late war. It, therefore, happened that the Persian King suddenly became anxious for an alliance with the French against the

<sup>1</sup> Romieu had formerly held a political situation under the French at Corfu, and was said to bear the rank of a Lieut. Colonel; *Memoir on political intercourse between France and Persia, 1805-7*; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 737; India Office Library.

<sup>2</sup> (Russia and Persia had entered into a war during 1804-5); Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 737; India Office Library.

Russians, and took the opportunity of the departure of this mission to have his sentiments communicated to Napoleon. In April of the same year, another French agent, Elctse, arrived in Persia.<sup>3</sup> The French became more and more predominant at the Persian Court and gradually started eclipsing the English. The Court of Tehran, already alarmed by the progress of the Russians, turned with eagerness to a nation which gave them every promise of friendship and assistance. The close of the year witnessed the Persian agent, Meerza Reza's mission to Paris which brought further promises of help and assistance to Persia.

The fact remains that the Supreme Government in India during the early stage was not fully alive to the danger to which the British possessions in India were exposed from this new quarter. That French intrigues were being carried on in the Court of Persia to some extent, they deemed highly probable, but of their alleged success they entertained great doubts. In fact, they were of the opinion that the reports received from Sir Harford Jones, the British ambassador at Tehran, were highly exaggerated, and they stood firm in the conviction that the interests of Persia were essentially concerned in maintaining an amicable connection with the British Government than with France. It was only towards the close of 1806 that the progress of the connection between the French and Persia attracted their notice, and the despatch of an ambassador from the Court of Persia to France made them sensible to the alarming state of affairs.

The French had also come to cherish designs in the Red Sea by attempting to establish themselves in the island of Cameran. A certain trader named Syed Mohammad Akil, engaged in commercial intercourse between Mauritius and the Red Sea, had been negotiating for the purchase of that island from the Shereef of Abu-Arish.<sup>4</sup> There was a strong suspicion for believing that the Syed was an agent of the

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> (From the information furnished by Mr. Pringle, the acting Resident at Mocha); Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee. 10th May 1806: Bombay Secret Letters, V. 3; India Office Library.

French Government. Pringle, the acting British Resident at Mocha, was consequently directed to interview the Shereef and caution him against the consequences of selling that island. The Shereef, thereafter, relinquished all thoughts of disposing it off and the bargain did not come off. But the circumstances gave rise to the apprehension of a strong design on the part of the French to establish themselves in that quarter. The Bengal and Bombay Governments were, thereupon, directed to adopt the necessary measures for defeating the views of the enemy in the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf.

While the war of the Third Coalition was in full progress in Europe, a temporary rupture between Great Britain and Prussia came about towards the middle of 1806. For ten years Prussia had remained neutral in the struggles against Napoleon and, although she had been pressed to join the Third Coalition she had, after much vacillation, still refused. Napoleon, who was bent upon securing Prussia's complicity in his economic war against England, offered her as a bait the Electorate of Hanover which was partially in French occupation. After some hesitation, Prussia accepted it and despatched her troops into the Electorate, whereupon, Great Britain announced the rupture which was to last only for a while. The several governments in India were informed of the event, and they were directed to seize Prussian ships, vessels, goods and property, as well as those belonging to the town of Papenburgh.<sup>5</sup> The capture of Batavian ships, in the meantime, continued. On 26th July the Batavian frigate 'Pallas' and two Dutch Indiamen, richly laden with the annual consignment of spices from the Moluccas to Batavia, were captured by British ships.

With the commencement of the year 1807, events once again moved to the Persian quarter where Napoleon, who still projected eastern expeditions, got his opportunity. The Persian King, who had suffered heavily from the war with

<sup>5</sup> Board to the Governments of Bengal, Fort St. George, Bombay and Prince of Wales' Island, 26th May 1806; Secret dispatches to Bengal, V. I; India Office, Library.

Russia during 1804-5, and who was already in close alliance with the French, desperately clung to Napoleon for support against Russia. Almost simultaneously, a Persian ambassador arrived in India and submitted to the Supreme Government a declaration on the part of the King of Persia that ambassadors from France had been received by him, but that he was willing to dismiss them provided the British Government engaged in waging war against Russia.<sup>6</sup> From India, however, no promise or encouragement was forthcoming. Napoleon, who was then busy fighting the Third Coalition and was already in the midst of a war with Russia, readily responded to the call of Persia by despatching an embassy for concluding an offensive alliance against the common foe. He had just defeated the Russians in the battle of Eylau on 8th February 1807, and thought it to be an excellent opportunity for harassing the Russians in Asia and also for materializing his dreams of an Asiatic conquest. The objects of this special mission, which was led by Monsieur Johanni, were to obtain the Persian King's consent in allowing the transit of French troops through Persia; to secure the exclusion of all Englishmen from that country; the permanent establishment of an ambassador on the part of the French emperor; and the cession of Gombroon.<sup>7</sup> Although the full objects of this mission were not realized, the treaty of Finckenstein was signed on 4th May 1807, by which Napoleon guaranteed the integrity of Persia and promised supply of small arms and field guns, while the King of Persia engaged to break off all relations with the English and to afford every assistance to the French on their way to attack the British power in India.

Advices received at this time from the British ambassador at Constantinople, through the Resident at Bussora and the acting Resident at Bagdad, also revealed a strong probability of a war between Great Britain and the Porte, in consequence

<sup>6</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Court of Directors, 4th January 1807; Political Letters received from Bengal, V. 2; India Office Library.

<sup>7</sup> Memoir on political intercourse between France and Persia: 1805-7; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 737; India Office Library.

of which directions were given for the retention of Turkish property and the destruction of the Turkish fleet in this part of the world. Thereupon followed the defeat of the Turkish fleet by British ships under Admiral Louis, and the retention of Turkish property valued at eight lacs of rupees.<sup>8</sup>

In June 1807, Napoleon inflicted another crushing defeat upon the Russians at Friedland which was followed, in the next month, by the treaty of Tilsit, converting the Russian Emperor from an enemy into an ally of France. Napoleon now set about organizing with Tsar Alexander I, a fresh and much more formidable confederation against the English in India. He was no longer disposed to support the Persians against his new ally. Russia was already an Asiatic power with distinct designs to move eastward. This conjunction of France, at that time supreme in western Europe, with the formidable European power that already cherished ambitions of eastward advance, roused and substantiated the alarms of an invasion of India by land. Thus the treaty of Tilsit changed the entire situation.

The French intrigues at this time were also active in forming an establishment on the port of Muscat. A dispatch received from the Government of Bombay revealed a disposition on the part of the Imam of Muscat to connect his interests with those of the French, and to allow them to establish themselves in his dominion.<sup>9</sup> The injury which had lately been caused to the trade of Muscat by the depredations of the French led the Imam to decide to conciliate his interests with those of France. The Supreme Government in India consequently proposed that the measures formerly adopted for affording protection to the annual trade of Muscat should be recontinued in order to divert the Imam from his projected connection with the French. The Government of Bengal once again realized the necessity of imposing restrictions and putting an effectual check upon the publication of

<sup>8</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee 12th June 1807; Bengal Secret Letters, V. 10; India Office Library.

<sup>9</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee, 26th February 1807; Bengal Secret Letters, V. 10; India Office Library.

certain intelligence in the Calcutta newspapers. The Editors of the leading newspapers were forbidden from engrafting in their news, without authority from the Government, any information respecting the movement of British ships in India, or of His Majesty's fleet in the East Indies.

The inevitable effect of the situation in Persia was to fix the attention of British statesmen upon the north-west corner of India. From the day the two emperors struck a bargain at Tilsit, Napoleon incessantly pressed upon Tsar Alexander his grand scheme of a joint expedition, through Turkey and Persia, against the British power in India. In 1807, the preponderance of France in Europe reached its zenith. Napoleon had defeated every army against him, vanquished every enemy, and dissolved every league. Thus British diplomacy was constrained to assume a much wider sphere. The Franco-Russian coalition was regarded by the British Ministers as a great and imminent danger to the frontiers of India. It became abundantly clear that Cornwallis's policy of neutrality and defensive attitude could no longer be pursued. It is a testimony to the prudence of Sir George Barlow that he had been fully sensible to the rising danger from the north-west. Under his successor, the policy of counteracting the French demonstrations, and of providing barriers against the threatened Franco-Russian expedition from the Black Sea, was further developed.

## *Chapter VII*

### *THE COLLAPSE OF NAPOLEON'S EASTERN PROJECTS*

THE NEW Governor-General, Lord Minto, landed at Calcutta on 3rd July 1807, at a time when the apprehension of an attack on the British possessions in India from the north-west was at its highest. The French influence in Persia was already established, and Sir Harford Jones had been despatched as special British envoy to that Court to cope with the desperate needs of the moment. News had also been received of the arrival of a Russian as well as a Turkish ambassador at the Persian Court. At the same time, communications received from the British Resident at Bushire confirmed the reported cession of the port of Gombroon in the Persian Gulf to the French by the King of Persia, along with the news that a Man-of-War was expected from the Isle of France to take possession of it.<sup>1</sup> Immediately on receipt of the news, steps were taken to despatch a ship to cruise off the entrance to the Persian Gulf for preventing access into that strait to any ships of the enemy. A squadron under Captain Ferrier was also despatched to Gombroon with the same objective.

It was an established fact that the eastern possessions of Great Britain were an object of envy and jealousy to every great European power. The acknowledged superiority of England over the seas rendered it impossible to strike a blow at her by sea. At the same time, the result of the recent campaigns in Europe rendered it likely that either France or Russia may make an attempt against them by land. There can be no doubt that at that moment France was to be more dreaded, but the progress of Russia towards the east could never be a matter of indifference to England, and the exigency of the situation required the adoption of every possible step to avert the danger from any future designs of Russia. It naturally followed that, as Persia and Turkey

<sup>1</sup> Governor-in-Council, Bombay, to the Court of Directors, 31st July 1807; Bombay Political Letters received, V. 2: India Office Library.

stood as barrier powers to British India, the destruction of either by a European power would seriously endanger India. Consequently, British policy at this juncture became concentrated on both these states. The tottering state of the Porte at that time was also an indirect source of danger to the British power in India. It was, therefore, suggested that an expedition be fitted out from India for launching an attack on the Turkish empire.<sup>2</sup> But the Supreme Government deemed it unadvisable to undertake any such expedition without authorization from the Court of Directors.

The project of an expedition against Java for destroying the remains of the Dutch naval force at that island was also brought forth. Lord Minto was in full concurrence with the project and suggested the expediency of fitting out the expedition at Fort St. George in preference to Fort William.<sup>3</sup> Sir Edward Pellew, the British naval commander in the eastern seas, was directed to communicate with the Bombay Government regarding the details of the projected undertaking and the nature and extent of the requisite armament. The Admiral emphasised the importance of obtaining possession of the port and fortifications of Crissey on the east end of Java with the object of destroying the Dutch naval force stationed there, while its subsequent retention as a British settlement was to be reserved for the consideration of the Governor-General, Lord Minto, fully approved of the attempt on Crissey, but did not countenance any project to form an establishment on the island of Java. Pellew persisted in recommending a more extended scale of operations along with the conquest of Batavia. But Minto stood firm by the opinion that the orders of the Court of Directors precluded them from any extensive system of offensive measures against the enemy in the eastern islands.<sup>4</sup> Early

<sup>2</sup> J. Malcolm to Edmonstone, Secretary at Fort William, 12th August 1807, Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 737; India Office Library.

<sup>3</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to Rear Admiral Pellew, 26th August 1807; Enclosures to Secret Letters from Madras, V. I; India Office Library.

<sup>4</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee, 26th October 1807; Bengal Secret Letters V. 10; India Office Library.



in 1808, the expedition against Crissey was launched, followed by the complete destruction of the Dutch ships-of-war at that station.

Another complication in European politics occurred at this time when the Court of Denmark declared war against Great Britain and refused to receive any mission from the British Government for an amicable settlement of the differences between the two countries. The several governments in India were, in consequence, directed to adopt immediate measures for the occupation of Danish settlements and factories in India, along with all public property.<sup>5</sup> Instructions were also sent to the naval commanders in the eastern seas for capturing all Danish ships and vessels. Even before the receipt of the official communication announcing the rupture between Great Britain and Denmark, the Governor-General had received information to that effect from the British Resident at Bushire which induced him to adopt measures for taking possession of Danish settlements, factories, ships and property. Lord Minto had realized that the expediency of awaiting official confirmation might afford the Danes the opportunity of placing a large proportion of public property beyond reach. He also took the effectual step of communicating the news to the Government of Prince of Wales' Island, the Select Committee of supra cargoes in China, and to Sir Edward Pellew for the adoption of necessary measures.

Towards the close of the year 1807, the European situation also recoiled on the Portuguese settlements in India. Napoleon's attempt to coerce Portugal into his comprehensive economic system had led the Regent of Portugal, under pressure, to close its ports to Great Britain. The Government of Bengal was, thereupon, instructed to obtain possession of the Portuguese settlements and territories in India, and of Macao, as far as possible by peaceful negotiation.<sup>6</sup> In

<sup>5</sup> Board to the three presidencies and Prince of Wales' Island, 12th November 1807; Board's Secret drafts, V. 3; India Office Library.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 5: 11th December 1807; India Office Library.

case an amicable settlement could be made with the Captain-General of Goa, all public and private property was to be respected and secured. If, however, he refused to enter into an engagement, the Supreme Government was authorized to take possession by force of arms. But the subsequent turn of affairs in Europe, and the flight of the royal family of Portugal to the Brazils, led to a revocal of the order for taking possession of the Portuguese settlements, and the Supreme Government was merely cautioned against any attempt of the French to obtain possession of them by expeditions fitted out from Lisbon, or by any pretended orders from the legitimate Government of Portugal.<sup>7</sup>

The earlier instructions regarding the occupation of the Portuguese settlements were received at Bengal on 23rd April 1808. It was also about the same time that the Supreme Government came to learn about the departure of the Prince Regent and the royal family of Portugal from the country. It, therefore, deemed itself justified in departing from those orders to the extent of merely demanding that the military dispositions for the defence of Goa be entrusted to the British officers but not to assume the government of that place, unless the Portuguese should resist the first proposition. Corresponding instructions were issued to Captain Schuyler, who was despatched to Goa to achieve that objective. Soon after, the Supreme Government received the subsequent instructions intimating a revocal of the earlier order which induced them to modify their own instructions to Schuyler by directing him to abstain from the establishment of British authority at Goa, unless the Portuguese should manifest such hostility as to warrant the adoption of that measure. Schuyler, who in the meantime had proposed a Convention with the Viceroy of Goa, was further directed to deal with the matter very carefully and to make the arrangement appear as a defensive measure in which the interests of the two governments were equally concerned.

Early in 1808, the Secret Committee judged it expedient,

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 5; 22nd December 1807; India Office Library.

in the interests of the Company, to appoint a confidential agent in the Ottoman territory for the purpose of acquiring knowledge of the proceedings and intrigues of the French in that quarter with reference to any designs on the British possessions in India. A native of Turkey, Peter Paul Joseph Zohrab, was appointed to that situation with a salary of £ 500 per annum, and an additional £ 500 for travelling expenses.<sup>8</sup> The agent was ordered to proceed to Constantinople where he was to endeavour, either by associating with the individuals of the French nation or by a careful observation of the conduct of its agents, to gain information in regard to any correspondence that might be afoot between the French and the Persians, and also to ascertain whether they entertained any immediate designs of marching towards India.

The measures adopted by France with a view to launch an invasion of India now gained progress. News was received of the actual arrival of three hundred French troops on the Caspian Sea, with a further expectation for twelve hundred more.<sup>9</sup> The Supreme Government, thereupon, resolved to despatch an officer on a mission to the Persian Gulf and the Turkish dominions in Arabia to negotiate with such states as might appear disposed to support France. Colonel Malcolm, who had already distinguished himself as a diplomat, was entrusted with this important mission and was to act as a special envoy from the Governor-General. It was also thought desirable to suspend the powers of a separate political agency possessed by the Residents at Bagdad, Bussora and Bushire, and to vest them in the special envoy who was to assume the powers of Resident at all those stations. Besides acting as political agent on behalf of the Governor-General in the Gulf of Arabia and in Turkish Arabia, Malcolm was also to act as an envoy to the Court of Persia and to the Pasha of Bagdad.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 5; 11th January 1808, India Office Library. (Zohrab's services were continued till 20th February 1810, when peace was established between Great Britain and Turkey.)

<sup>9</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee, 9th February 1808; Bengal Secret Letters, V. 10; India Office Library.

It was an established fact that the practicability of an overland invasion of India by France depended entirely upon the assistance of the Governments of Persia and Turkey. It was also certain that the opposition of Persia to a French army would effectively obstruct its progress, while it was probable that the project would never be attempted till the support of that power had been secured. The inevitable effect of this was to fix the attention of the English administration in India upon the north-west corner of India. Both Persia and Turkey were, therefore, to be warned against the evils of a connection with France and the injury to which they would be exposed from the consequent hostility of the British Government.<sup>10</sup> Malcolm was particularly directed to discover the exact nature and extent of the engagement concluded between France and Persia; to detect the plan of operation and the route by which the French projected the invasion of India; to discover the measures adopted by the French for the prosecution of intrigues in the countries situated between Persia and India; and to ascertain whether any peace had been concluded between Russia and Persia.

In the meantime, the Board of Directors also advised the Supreme Government in India to adopt preliminary precautionary measures for counteracting the apprehended invasion. It was suggested that defensive connections with the various Indian powers should be formed, and the friendship of the states east of the Indus, of the Afghan states, and the Tartar tribes east of the Caspian be cultivated.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the army, the fortifications, and magazines were to be placed in a respectable state of defence and preparation with as much expedition as possible. The urgency of the situation once again prompted the proposal for using the Prince of Wales' Island as a naval arsenal for building and repairing ships. The proposal had already been accepted at the

<sup>10</sup> Lord Minto to Malcolm, 30th January 1808; Letters and Papers relating to Persia; Wellesley Papers, 37, 285; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

<sup>11</sup> Board to the Governor-General-in-Council, 2nd March 1808; Board's Secret Drafts, V. 3; India Office Library.

suggestion of Lord Melville in 1804, and the necessary orders had consequently been communicated to the Government of that island. But the death of the Governor of that settlement, and of two members of the Council, had thrown the administration of the island into some confusion. The exigency of the matter was, therefore, once again pointed out and the attention of the Home Government once again drawn to that subject.<sup>12</sup>

Early in 1808, General Gardane arrived in Tehran as special ambassador from Bonaparte and was reported to have presented to the King of Persia ten thousand stand-of-arms.<sup>13</sup> Lord Minto resolved at this juncture to undertake an expedition on a small scale with a view to prevent the French from occupying a maritime station on the coast of Persia, or of dispossessing them, in case they should have already obtained possession of such a post. He also proposed the despatch of an expedition to Persia on a scale of such magnitude as would be capable of meeting a French army in the field, if required to do so. The larger expedition was to comprise of from twenty to twenty-five thousand men, while the smaller one was to comprise of four to five thousand men, to be employed at the discretion of General Malcolm. The Secret Committee's dispatches of the 12th November 1807, further transmitted the intelligence of the reported march of a body of French troops under General Menou towards India. The Governor-General, on receipt of the intelligence, planned the assembling of a large force at Bombay to oppose its progress, while Sir Edward Pellew ordered three frigates to be despatched to the Persian Gulf.

Meanwhile, Malcolm had reached Muscat on 30th April 1808, on his way to Persia, and had met the Imam whose behaviour revealed that the friendly disposition of that state towards the English was well established. Malcolm arrived in

<sup>12</sup> Edward Parry and Grant (Chairman and Dy. Chairman of the Board of Directors) to R. H. Robert Dundas, 3rd March 1808; Additions to Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 816; India Office Library.

<sup>13</sup> Governor-in-Council Bombay, to the Court of Directors, 5th March 1808; Bombay Political Letters received, V. 2; India Office Library.

Tehran early in June 1808, at a time when French predominance in Persia was at its highest. Malcolm discovered that Gardane, on his arrival in Tehran, had entered into negotiations which terminated in the draft of an agreement, a copy of which was sent to Paris for the approval of Napoleon. Under the terms of this agreement the King of Persia undertook not only to give the French permission to march an army through his territories but to join them with his forces and afford them every aid, to cede the island of Kharrack in sole right to the French, and to expel all English agents from Persia should the French so require.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the French were to compel the Russians, by war or mediation, to evacuate Georgia and help Persia in the restoration of her lost dominions.

The appearance of the English mission aroused great excitement in Persia, and in all probability even caused great embarrassment. On the one hand, Persia could not dissolve her connection with France without giving up all hopes of recovering her lost dominions. On the other, England had in her hands the power of destroying all the commerce that Persia carried on by the sea. It was quite likely that when Bonaparte continued to send agents of inferior reputation, his object was merely to disturb any future alliance between Persia and Great Britain. Under these circumstances, Malcolm resolved to make every effort to effect the expulsion of the French embassy from Persia. In order to achieve that object he thought it necessary to express to the King of Persia the resentment with which the English viewed the past conduct of that Court. He went to the extent of declaring that should Persia join with the French, it would become a necessary fact of British policy to overturn the King's sovereignty. Lord Minto, however, for a variety of reasons, considered it to be the height of impolity to precipitate hostilities with that monarch while they could be avoided without a positive sacrifice of security which, he thought, would be immediately affected if the Persian King ever

<sup>14</sup> Malcolm to Minto, 8th June 1808; Papers relating to Persia; Wellesley Papers, 37, 285; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

allowed either the French or the Russians to establish themselves in Persia, or allowed them to pass an army through that country on their way to India.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the Indian Government was restricted by orders from England which directed that no engagement should be contracted with Persia which could in any way interfere with a future settlement of the existing differences between Russia and England. Malcolm was, therefore, advised that the proposal for an aid to the King of Persia was "incompatible with any plan of permanent defensive alliance with that monarch."<sup>16</sup> Malcolm, thereupon, in a declaration to the Persian ministers, merely expressed his dissatisfaction over the conduct of that Court in treating the ambassadors of the French nation with every honour and distinction, and emphasised the policy and wisdom which demanded that Persia should ally herself with the English. Lord Minto's instructions to Malcolm subsequently received the full approbation of the Court of Directors.

Lord Minto also anticipated the instructions of the Secret Committee by sending an envoy to Sind to counteract French intrigues in that quarter. The envoy, Captain David Seton, landed at Cutch on 10th May 1808, and was received with every mark of courtesy. Exactly at that time, Fateh Ali Khan, the agent from the Persian Court, also arrived in Sind and professed to treat jointly for the Persians and the French against the English whom he denounced as "usurpers in Hindostan."<sup>17</sup> Seton, however, succeeded in concluding an agreement with the Hakim of Sind under which the two states bound themselves to support each other in all eventualities, and the friends or enemies of the one were to be treated as such by the other. Although the primary object of Seton's mission had been to secure an influence in Sind that might aid in repelling the advance of a French army, he had gone too far in proposing the closest combination

<sup>15</sup> Notes on instructions from Lord Minto to Malcolm, no date; Wellesley Papers, 37, 285; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Seton to Malcolm, 21st August 1808: Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 591, India Office Library.

with that state on the basis of defensive engagement, the conclusion of which formed no part of the original instructions, and which imposed upon either party an obligation to furnish military aid without any limitation. Seton had failed to perceive the fact that the agreement effected by him constituted a treaty of defensive alliance against the paramount power of Kabul whose relations with Sind at the time were hostile. Lord Minto, therefore, deemed it highly expedient to instruct the British envoy at Kabul to inform that Court that Seton's treaty with Sind was unauthorized, that it would not be ratified by the Supreme Government in India, and that the sole object of that mission had been merely to counteract French intrigues in Sind in concert with the Persians.<sup>18</sup> Smith, the Resident at Abusheher, was simultaneously despatched to Sind to annul the treaty concluded by Seton.

At a time when the French were despatching emissaries in every direction with the motive of persuading the different states of Asia to aid them in their hostile projects, Lord Minto regarded it his obvious duty to adopt similar methods for counteracting them. There can be no doubt that if the French were able to establish their forces in Persia, the first and the most important step towards the invasion of India would have been accomplished. But there would still remain much to be done, and the hostility of the adjacent states like Kabul and Lahore might still be expected to frustrate their design. It was also probable that the French would endeavour to obtain a free passage by negotiation and intrigue rather than by conquest. Minto, therefore, realized the importance of establishing a direct communication with those states before the French took a lead in that direction. He had already adopted measures applicable to a possible southern route of invasion, but the northern route still remained open uninterruptedly to the French.

<sup>18</sup> Extract from the instructions to the envoy to Kabul, 5th December 1808; Enclosures to Secret Letters from Bombay, V. 1; India Office Library.



The Supreme Government in India, not knowing the disposition of the states of Kabul and Lahore, thought it imprudent to enter immediately upon a direct mission to either state, and instructed Seton, the Resident at Delhi, to furnish such information as would enable them to take some decision. Seton pointed out the practical difficulties that stood in the way of even the preliminary measure of despatching an embassy to Kabul which arose from a recent revolution in that government, as well as from the jealousy that subsisted between the King of Kabul and the ruler of Lahore. Lord Minto himself was fully aware of these difficulties, but he did not consider them to be so formidable as to preclude the attempt. He consequently resolved to take immediate steps without awaiting the results of a previous intimation to both these Courts. He was confident that the pride of both the states "would be highly gratified by an embassy on the part of a power high in the scale of political ascendancy and so celebrated as that of the British Government in India."<sup>19</sup> Elphinstone and Metcalfe were appointed as emissaries to Kabul and Lahore respectively.

Thereupon, Lord Minto entered into negotiations with the chiefs of the two states. Ranjeet Singh's friendly disposition towards the English was conveyed to the Governor-General, although, the Sikh Chief referred to certain reports which had brought about his dissatisfaction towards them.<sup>20</sup> On the whole, Minto felt satisfied with the attitude and disposition displayed by that Chief and expected a happy termination to negotiations with him. The Governor-General also entered into communication with the King of Kabul, and recalled the spirit of amity and harmony that had throughout subsisted between the two governments. He also expressed his desire to improve the connection by the despatch of a special envoy to his Court. At the same time, with a view to have a firmer grip over the affairs in the Arabian states, the Supreme

<sup>19</sup> Minute of the Governor-General, 17th June 1808; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 592; India Office Library.

<sup>20</sup> Ranjeet Singh to Minto, 6th July 1808; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 592; India Office Library.

Government judged it expedient to direct that the Residents at Bagdad and Bussora be placed under the immediate control of the Bombay Government and should correspond exclusively with that Government, a measure which received the full concurrence of the Board of Directors.<sup>21</sup>

Towards the close of 1808, the European situation had taken a favourable turn for the English when the tide of events began to turn westward. In a brief campaign snatched at the end of that year, Napoleon had routed the Spanish forces and installed his brother in Madrid. It was characteristic of Napoleon that he should dally with schemes of eastern and overseas enterprise while he was still engaged in subduing the Pope and the Kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. Although proposals for the partition of Turkey and a joint expedition to India had already been made to the Tsar, they were probably little more than political devices to hold his wavering allegiance. In spite of the Erfurt interview between the two Emperors in September 1808, it was certain that the harmony established at Tilsit was growing weak, and all Europe became conscious that the Spanish rising had caused a profound change in the political situation. Early in 1809, the Governor-General received intelligence of this favourable turn of affairs on the European continent which convinced him that the situation required a revision of the policy and arrangements adopted with reference to the early designs of France.<sup>22</sup>

On receipt of the latest news, therefore, Minto issued fresh instructions to Malcolm, advising him to treat the proposed establishment in the Persian Gulf with lesser urgency and to effect the occupation of Kharrack by means of peaceful negotiation.<sup>23</sup> He felt confident that the lessening of hopes entertained by Persia of being relieved from the pressure of Russian arms by the influence of France would produce a radical change in the conduct of that Court. The com-

<sup>21</sup> Political letters sent to Bengal; 6th July 1808; V. I; India Office Library.

<sup>22</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee, 20th January 1809; Bengal Secret Letters, V. II; India Office Library.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

mencement of the year 1809 thus brought about a change in the relations between Great Britain and Persia. So long as the Persians had hoped for French support, they remained willing to exclude the English from Persia. But when they perceived that Napoleon had withdrawn his promise, not even Gardane's threat of departure could prevent the reception of the new English mission under Sir Harford Jones. On 12th March 1809, Jones succeeded in concluding a preliminary treaty with the King of Persia under which the latter declared all treaties concluded with the European powers to be null and void, and promised not to permit any European force to pass through Persia, either towards India or any of its ports.<sup>24</sup> Soon after the conclusion of this treaty the complete and final dismissal of the French legation and Frenchmen from Persia was achieved, along with the extinction of French interests and intrigues at that Court.

The turn of affairs in Europe also necessitated, in the estimation of Lord Minto, a revision of the policy towards Kabul. The earlier instructions to Elphinstone were founded upon the hostility of Persia to the British Government which naturally left them at liberty to form an offensive alliance against her. But it could now be clearly observed that such an alliance would not serve British interests under the changed situation. Elphinstone felt convinced that a subsidy would induce the Afghan King to ally himself to British interests, and he was consequently authorized by the Supreme Government to advance a sum for this purpose, not exceeding three lacs of rupees, should he find it necessary. The envoy was instructed to accede to an engagement of a purely defensive nature against Persia. A treaty was at length concluded under which the Afghan King engaged to oppose the progress of the French and the Persians in case they attempted to pass through his dominions into British India, while the British Government promised to provide the necessary expenses for the same.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 638; India Office Library.

<sup>25</sup> Notes relative to the mission to Kabul, 1808-9; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 512; India Office Library.

The favourable change in the European situation also rendered it practicable, in the estimation of Minto, without any sacrifice of interest, to bring about an amicable adjustment of their differences with the ruler of Lahore. Lord Minto now regarded it as still less an object of necessity to extirpate the power of Ranjeet Singh. He considered it necessary to maintain that power not only with a view to counteract any possible future resumption of the projects of France, but also on considerations of local interest and security, with the modification to confine the Sikh dominion within the limits of the Sutlej river.<sup>26</sup> A treaty with Lahore was, after protracted negotiations, concluded on 25th April 1809. In regard to Sind, it was still considered a necessary object to establish such a connection with that state as would afford the means of counteracting the influence of the enemy in the future. But it was no longer regarded as necessary to adopt the more extended scale of measures which related to the neighbouring territories with a view to discover the progress of any intrigues instituted by the agents of France. In 1809, a treaty with the state of Cutch was, however, concluded by which that power engaged not to permit any establishment whatever by any European or American power, or to allow individuals of those nations to remain within that state.<sup>27</sup>

The Home Government at this stage realized the expediency of blockading the two French islands of Mauritius and Bourbon, and Lord Castlereagh sent instructions to the Admiralty for carrying the project into effect. The several governments in India were, in consequence, apprised of this decision and instructed to afford every aid in the venture. Towards the close of 1808, the Secret Committee had already directed the Bombay Government to adopt measures for the occupation of the island of Roderigues with the ultimate object of enabling British ships from the Cape of Good Hope

<sup>26</sup> Governor-General-in-Council to the Secret Committee, 15th April 1809; Bengal Secret Letters, V. II; India Office Library.

<sup>27</sup> European Mss., V. 2, Part 2, D. 167, India Office Library (Copies of treaties ..... ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 27th May 1818).

to maintain an unbroken blockade of the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon.<sup>28</sup> An expedition was, thereupon, despatched to that island, and it served as a preliminary to the blockade of the two French islands.

At the commencement of the year 1810, information was received that an agent of the French Government was on a clandestine mission to the Court of Ava, which had for its object the establishment of an alliance with the Burma Government for the ultimate subversion of the British power in India. On receipt of the news, Lord Minto despatched an envoy to Ava with a view to ascertain whether any agents of France resided at Rangoon or any other part of the Burma dominions, and to employ every means to defeat any intrigues which might be in progress. Minto also directed the envoy to explain to the Burma Government the real motive which had prompted the blockade of the French islands since the trade of Burma was likely to be affected thereby.<sup>29</sup> Lieut. Canning, the envoy, was accorded a very satisfactory reception at that Court and succeeded in accomplishing the objects of his mission.

Early in 1810, dispatches received from Sir Harford Jones communicated the important news of the conclusion of an armistice between Russia and Persia, and the project on the part of Persia to send an ambassador to the Court of St. Petersburg. The restoration of peace between Persia and a power that stood in opposition to Great Britain naturally jeopardized the security of the British interests in India. The King of Persia, however, gave assurances that in the definitive treaty to be signed between Persia and Great Britain, a stipulation shall be provided for the maintenance of the alliance between the British Government and Persia,

<sup>28</sup> Governor-in-Council Bombay, to the Court of Directors, 14th June 1809; Bombay Political letters received; V. 3; India Office Library.

<sup>29</sup> Vice-President-in-Council, Fort William, to the Court of Directors, 11th January, 1810; Bengal Political Letters received; V. 6; India Office Library.

and also against the march of foreign troops through the Persian territory for an invasion of India.<sup>30</sup>

In view of the fact that the concessions to be conceded to Persia under the definitive treaty were to be fulfilled by the Company itself, the Court of Directors thought it incumbent upon them to make such observations upon it as they considered to be necessary. They agreed to the payment of an annual subsidy of rupees sixteen lacs demanded by Persia and to furnish military officers to serve in the Persian army, but stressed the importance of obtaining a settlement in one of the islands in the Persian Gulf, preferably Kharrack, and the expediency of establishing a British naval force in the Caspian Sea to repress any Russian encroachments in that quarter.<sup>31</sup> The Company also resolved to award a monthly pension of one thousand rupees to the Persian envoy in London, Mirza Abdul Hasan, so long as he continued to lend his assistance in maintaining friendly relations between the Courts of Great Britain and Persia.<sup>32</sup>

In this manner it came to pass that Napoleon's projects of a second eastern expedition also collapsed. The Spanish insurrection and the weakening of the Franco-Russian alliance provided Napoleon with ample occupation in Europe, and forced him to turn his thoughts away finally from an overland invasion of the British possessions in India. All apprehensions of French armies marching across Asia, through Persia, ceased and the restoration of amicable relations between Great Britain and Persia changed the entire course of the policy of the East India Company towards the establishments of the enemy in the eastern world.

<sup>30</sup> Lord Minto to the Secret Committee, 26th January 1810; Bengal Secret Letters, V. 12; India Office Library.

<sup>31</sup> Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Court of Directors to R. H. Robert Dundas, 22nd Feb. 1810; Additions to Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 817, India Office Library.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee of Correspondence, 27th June 1810, India Office Library.

## THE CURTAIN DRAWS

THE TIME had now come for the complete subversion of the enemy's power in the east. Lord Minto was determined to take advantage of the favourable turn of affairs in Europe by launching a wholesale onslaught on all the foreign possessions east of the Cape of Good Hope. He did not consider the establishment of the enemy at the French islands, in spite of its affording the means of the most injurious annoyance to British commerce, to be a source of material danger to the British possessions in India. The small extent of their territory, their deficient resources, and their distant situation from India imposed a limit upon their activities. In Minto's estimation, the Dutch island of Java was the point where the power of the enemy could become formidable and he, therefore, proposed the adoption of a prompt and vigorous effort for the subversion of that island.<sup>1</sup> He hoped that the authorities of the East India Company would approve a deviation from their earlier prohibitory orders on the subject of undertaking an expedition against the Dutch possessions. The Governor-General also communicated his intention of prosecuting, as a measure preliminary to the capture of that Dutch island, the less arduous enterprise of an attack upon the French Isle de Bourbon (now renamed Isle de Buona-partie).

Minto, thereupon, in concert with Admiral Drury, resolved to launch an enterprise against the French island. Measures were accordingly set in progress for the proposed expedition which was to be launched by the beginning of April 1810, and the Governor-General himself moved to Fort St. George to guide and conduct the expedition. Admiral Drury proposed to combine this expedition with an attack on the Isle de France as well, but Minto decided to limit the object of

<sup>1</sup>Lord Minto to the Secret Committee, 23rd January 1810; Bengal Secret Letters. V. 12, India Office Library.

the present expedition to the occupation of the Isle de Buonaparte alone. The Governor-General was fully conscious of the prohibitory orders relating to an expedition against the French islands, and he would never have deviated from them during the continuance of the circumstances under which they were issued. But in view of the information he had lately received relative to the facility and benefit of occupying the whole of that island, he entertained no doubts that the Secret Committee's approbation of the measures pursued against the Isle de Buonaparte would be secured. The same considerations, in his opinion, suggested the obligatory policy of taking advantage of the facilities which the success against the Isle de Buonaparte may afford for the complete subversion of the enemy's power in the Indian Ocean, if no obstacles were found to impede that object.<sup>2</sup> It is thus evident that Minto had no intentions of precipitating any unnecessary measures but, at the same time, he was not prepared to forego any favourable opportunity for the reduction of the enemy's power in the east.

The preparations for the expedition against the Isle de Buonaparte, thereafter, continued. The Governor-General appointed Farquhar as the Governor of that island subsequent to its surrender, and eventually of the Isle de France and its dependencies. On July 8, 1810, the Isle de Buonaparte surrendered to the British squadron under Commodore Rowley and the Company's troops under Colonel Keating. The capitulation of the island was signed on the same day between the French commander, Susanne, and Rowley, Keating and Farquhar on the part of the English. The following day a Proclamation was issued in the name of His Majesty King George III which recounted the manner in which the administration of the government of that island would be subsequently conducted.<sup>3</sup> Farquhar took over as the Governor of that island.

It was now the turn of the Isle de France. Lord Minto

<sup>2</sup> Minto to the Secret Committee, 30th April 1810; Bengal Secret Letters, V. 12; India Office Library.

<sup>3</sup> Wellesley Papers, 37, 291; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.



had already signified that the conquest of the Isle de France had from the very beginning been directly contemplated in the meditated attack upon Isle de Buonaparte. The political and commercial importance of that island had long ago been realized. There did not exist a more advantageous military port east of the Cape of Good Hope for assembling and equipping an armament without its being discovered, and for directing it to any point in Asia, Africa or South America. This valuable possession was very strategically situated on the route between Europe and India. As early as 1770, the Duke of Choiseul, then a minister of France, had poured into that island ten thousand of the best French troops with a view to attack secretly the English settlements in the East Indies, but under his successor the project was not executed.<sup>4</sup>

The Governor-General's decision regarding the expedition against the Isle de France was communicated to the Bombay Government, with instructions to furnish two regiments which were to proceed directly to Rodrigues which was to be the base for operations. General Abercromby, who was to direct the command, had left earlier to await the arrival of different contingents from the three presidencies which were expected to rendezvous at Roderigues by the end of October, 1810. In the meantime, the Governor-General received instructions from the Secret Committee for the prosecution of an expedition against the French islands at the opening of the following year by means of troops to be drawn from India, Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope, and intimating the appointment of Sir Samuel Auchmuty to the command of the expedition.<sup>5</sup> Minto, however, was fixed in his resolution to reduce the Isle de France in the same year, notwithstanding the lateness of the season. On 3rd December 1810, the articles of capitulation for that island were signed and the colony with its dependencies was ceded unconditionally to the English. Farquhar also took over as Governor

<sup>4</sup> Farquhar to the Earl of Liverpool, 15th Feb. 1811; Secret Letters from Bourbon and Mauritius, V. I; India Office Library.

<sup>5</sup> Minto to Farquhar, 22nd Oct. 1810; Home Miscellaneous Series, V. 701; India Office Library.

of the Isle de France, having been invested with the title by the Governor-General of India.

Lord Minto had already pointed out the expediency of subverting the entire power of the enemy in the eastern seas, and the outbreak of an insurrection in Java early in 1810 provided a favourable opportunity of a speedy action against that settlement. Towards the middle of that year Stamford Raffles had visited Malacca with a view to secure the cooperation of the Java chiefs in the overthrow of the Dutch power in Java.<sup>6</sup> Raffles advised the Governor-General in regard to the proper season for operations and the mode of attack, and suggested the propriety of entering into treaties with the native powers of that settlement. He particularly alluded to the utter decline of the Dutch power in the east into a mere semblance of authority. The greater part of Java was already independent of the Dutch power, while the discontent among the native inhabitants had not only rendered the authority of the Dutch very weak but had also tended to create a favourable disposition towards the English. Apart from the immediate objective, the general advantages of the acquisition of Java were considerable. The capture of the two French islands followed by the annexation of Java would constitute an unparalleled achievement in the politics of the East India Company.<sup>7</sup> France had assumed universal dominion over the continent of Europe. To counteract this, England had been compelled, as a measure of self-defence, to acquire control of all the foreign colonies. Such a consideration had arisen from the unprecedented state of affairs in Europe.

At the same time, it was an acknowledged fact that so long as the Dutch were independent of France it could never be their policy to cause any annoyance from any of their settlements. But in view of the changed European

<sup>6</sup> Raffles to Minto, 11th July 1810; European Mss., V. 2, Part 2, C. 34; Raffles Collection; India Office Library (Sir Stamford Raffles later became the Governor of the British settlement of Java.)

<sup>7</sup> Memoir on the value, political and financial, of the Dutch possessions in the east written before the expedition of Java; European Mss. V. 2, E. 104; Raffles collection: India Office Library.

situation, the most active and inveterate hostility was to be expected from them. Therefore, ever since the establishment of the French influence in Holland, the Supreme Government in India had come to regard the expulsion of the Dutch power from Java and the eastern seas as an essential object of national policy. In Minto's own estimation, it required no argument to prove that the recent happenings in Europe as they had come to affect the United Provinces alone necessitated the extinguishing of a power which was now formally as well as substantially under the heels of France. It was, however, not the intention of the authorities of the East India Company or of the Home Government that the Dutch settlements should be permanently occupied as British colonies.<sup>8</sup> They merely wished to expel the enemy from the Indian seas, to destroy all their batteries, forts and defences, and to explain to the natives that their sole object was to prevent those settlements from falling into the hands of France. The Dutch settlement of Amboyna, notorious for the massacre of 1623, along with Banda had already been captured early in 1810.

Raffles was despatched in advance on a deputation to the Malaya states to procure the necessary information in regard to the state of the enemy's forces and the disposition of the native chiefs. On his arrival at Prince of Wales' Island, Raffles urged the importance of an early start for the expedition and observed that a force of ten thousand men would be sufficient to ensure the success of the enterprise.<sup>9</sup> Lieut. General Auchmuty was required to give the necessary orders for holding the troops in readiness, and to make such movements as he may consider necessary, preparatory to their embarkation. Requisitions for provisions were made from the Government of Bombay, and for European infantry from the Governor of Ceylon. The expedition was composed of four thousand European infantry with a suitable proportion

<sup>8</sup> Extract from a letter from the Secret Committee, 31st August 1810: Enclosures to Secret letters from Madras, V. 2; India Office Library.

<sup>9</sup> Raffles to Minto, 25th November 1810; European Mss., V. 2, Part 2, C. 35; Raffles collection; India Office Library.

of artillery, and four thousand native Bengal infantry with about five hundred cavalry. Lord Minto resolved to proceed in person to Malacca, and eventually to Java.

Certain intercepted dispatches from the ministers in France and Holland to the Governor-Generals of the Isle de France and of Batavia revealed the settled designs of France in respect of the Dutch East India possessions, and proved that action against Java had not been taken a little too soon. In September 1811, the final operations of the expedition were completed and the island of Java was taken possession of in the name of the Company. Raffles had already issued a Proclamation inviting the native population to seek the protection of the English, and placing before them the example of the inhabitants of the Malaccas who had recently come to enjoy that protection.<sup>10</sup> The terms of the capitulation, by putting the whole of the island of Java in the possession of the English, brought to an end the last vestiges of the French power in the east. It cannot be doubted that Minto had departed from the tenor of the Secret Committee's instructions by keeping possession of that island, instead of dismantling and evacuating it. But he had found it necessary for affording protection to the inhabitants against disorder, outrage and crime. The wisdom of the capture of Java was subsequently realized by all civil and military authorities in India who were, at first, inclined to look with comparative indifference upon such an addition to the British Crown, but who now felt equally satisfied at its vital importance to British interests.

The attention of the Home Government on the Persian quarter never relaxed throughout this period. They continued to exercise their best endeavours in maintaining a friendly intercourse with that state and cementing the alliance already concluded. Early in 1811, the Bombay Government was advised of the despatch of the consignment of six packages of china and was instructed to forward it

<sup>10</sup> Enclosed in Minto's letter to the Chairman of the East India Company, 17th April 1811, Bengal Secret Letters, V. 13; India Office Library.

to Sir Gore Ouseley, the British ambassador in Persia, who was to make a present of them to the King of Persia.<sup>11</sup> The Shah himself was fully devoted to British interests and was impatient to conclude the definitive treaty under the fear that the English may refuse to pay up the arrears and the sum lately added to the subsidy. The definitive treaty was at last concluded by Sir Gore Ouseley on 14th March 1812. The Persian Government agreed to renounce all alliances formerly concluded with the European powers, and bound itself not to allow a European army to pass through Persia towards India or any of its ports, while the English promised to assist the Persians with troops or an annual subsidy of two hundred thousand *tomauns* during the continuance of the war.<sup>12</sup>

It is interesting to note how Lord Wellesley differed from the British Cabinet on the mode of operations against France and throughout remained a critic of the policy pursued by the Government. He felt convinced, even at an earlier period after his return from India, that the method of warfare adopted by England was erroneous. According to him no solid or permanent advantage could be expected from the desultory attacks upon the detached and remote points of the enemy's possessions, even though those operations had been a complete success.<sup>13</sup> In order to maintain the war with any hope of ultimate success, he considered it desirable that some point should be selected on the continent at which the entire strength of England may be employed in a well-combined and continued course of action against the power of France. In short, a theatre of war should be found upon which the arms of Great Britain may be brought in direct contact with the military strength of France. Wellesley's estimation of the situation may have been applicable so far as the general war against France and the

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee, V. 5, 11th January 1811; India Office Library.

<sup>12</sup> Ouseley to Sir George Barlow, 26th March 1812; Enclosures to Secret Letters from Madras, V. 3; India Office Library.

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum of 20th March 1812, Wellesley Papers, 37, 286; Br. Mus. Add. Mss.

continental operations in Europe were concerned. But, taking into view the interests and politics of the East India Company, the wisdom of extirminating the last European influences in the eastern seas can hardly be doubted.

Towards the middle of 1812, a complication in international affairs was brought about by the declaration of war against Great Britain by the United States of America. This war, which was primarily a by-product of the Anglo-French tussle, had its origin in the economic pressure to which the neutral countries had been subjected. The several governments in India were consequently directed to adopt immediate measures for detaining all ships and vessels belonging to the United States or to its inhabitants.<sup>14</sup> Such instructions were received by the Supreme Government in India early in 1813, whereupon, the necessary directions were transmitted to the several subordinate governments, including the Prince of Wales' Island and Batavia, and the Residents of Fort Marlborough and the Moluccas. The information was also communicated to the owners and commanders of all neutral ships and vessels in the eastern seas with a view to enable them to regulate their conduct accordingly.

Thus it was the French rivalry which accelerated the process of British conquests in the eastern world. Commercially also, Napoleon's economic war with England involuntarily built up, instead of destroying, the British possessions on the continent of India. When Napoleon launched his economic warfare in an attempt to exclude European ports to British goods, the British Government retaliated by issuing the *Orders-in-council* which prohibited the neutrals from trading with ports from where the British goods were excluded. The effect was merely to provide England with a temporary monopoly of all sea-borne commerce, especially of the invaluable trade with Asia. The impetus for British expansion in India, therefore, came from the metropolis where the force of national interests drove forward the course of events. It had been the glory of Lord

<sup>14</sup> Board to the three presidencies and Prince of Wales' Island, 31st July 1812: Board's Secret Drafts, V. 4; India Office Library.

Minto's administration that, whereas, at its commencement, dread of the French invasion of India haunted the imagination of British statesmen, at its close the enemy had come to lose all its acquisitions east of the Cape.

The possibility of the termination of war in the near future led the authorities of the East India Company, towards the close of 1813, to consider the significant points relating to the restitutions to be made in India. In case the Home Government deemed it advisable to make any restoration of possessions conquered from European nations in India, it was found necessary to mark out the places which could, conveniently and agreeably to the true interests of the Company, be restored. If any restitutions were to be made to France, it was suggested that the French islands should be restored in preference to their former possessions on the continent of India.<sup>15</sup> But, if the complete exclusion of the French from the Indian soil could not be obtained, they should at least be restricted to their settlements on the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar, and be excluded completely from Bengal. But again, if it should be found necessary to admit them into Bengal, they must be forbidden from rendering any of their settlements a free port for other European nations. In regard to the restitutions to be made to the Dutch, it was suggested that the island of Java and the Moluccas should be restored in preference to any other acquisitions made from them.<sup>16</sup> The restoration of the Dutch possessions on the continent of India was to be preferred to that of either Ceylon or the Cape, with the exception of Cochin. On the subject of Danish restitutions, it was proposed that Serampore should be retained, while Tranquebar may be restored. The exclusion of foreign nations from possessing settlements on the Indian continent was considered necessary on political grounds, but not on principles of colonial policy, because the English were still disposed to

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Secret Committee of Correspondence, V. 6; 31st December 1813; India Office Library.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

admit the European nations to trade freely under reasonable conditions.

In the meantime, final and decisive events were taking place in Europe. The allied army entered Paris on 31st March 1814, and there followed the abdication of Bonaparte and the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France in the person of Louis XVIII. On 23rd April, a Convention was signed at Paris for a suspension of hostilities with France by sea and land. The definitive treaty of peace with France was signed on 30th May, 1814. Conformably to the stipulations of articles 8, 11, 12 and 14 of the treaty, all the factories and establishments of every kind which were possessed by France on the continent of India on 1st January 1792 were to be restored, and the Supreme Government in India was authorized and directed to make such restitutions.<sup>17</sup> Under article 12 of the treaty, the subjects of France were restored all the facilities, privileges and protection in regard to commerce, and were guaranteed the security of their person and property within the limits of English sovereignty in India, while France engaged not to erect any fortifications in its establishments, and to place in them only such number of troops as would be necessary for their protection.<sup>18</sup> The French were debarred from establishing new factories or houses of trade, nor could they indulge in any interchanges of territory with the Indian states or other European nations.

The treaty between Great Britain and Holland was signed on 13th August 1814. Under the terms of the treaty, Great Britain agreed to restore all the colonies, factories and establishments which were possessed by Holland on 1st January 1803, in the seas and on the continents of Asia, America and Africa, with the exception of the Cape of Good Hope and the settlements of Demerary, Essequibo and Berbice.<sup>19</sup> Great Britain also agreed to cede in full sovereignty the island of Banca in the eastern seas in exchange for Cochin and its

<sup>17</sup> Board to the Governor-General-in-Council, 4th November 1814, Board's Secret drafts, V. 4; India Office Library.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> (Article I of the treaty) Board's Secret Drafts, V. 5; India Office Library.



dependencies on the coast of Malabar.<sup>20</sup> It was further stipulated that all places and forts in the colonies and settlements were to be restituted in the same state in which they happened to be at the time of the signing of the treaty.

Towards the close of 1814, the final treaty with Persia was also concluded. The treaty negotiated by Sir Gore Ouseley on 14th March 1812, was submitted to the Home Government which found it necessary to make certain modifications in its provisions. The treaty was, thereafter, confirmed on 25th November 1814. Most of the clauses of the original treaty were retained but it was stipulated that the object of the treaty was strictly defensive for repelling the aggression of enemies of either state.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, the Persian Government was given the liberty of employing European officers who did not belong to a nation hostile to Great Britain. The close of the year was also marked by a cessation of hostilities between Great Britain and the United States of America when the War of 1812 was brought to an end by the treaty concluded at Ghent on 24th December 1814. The several Governments in India were directed to regulate their conduct as warranted by that event.<sup>22</sup> The Americans were also subsequently confirmed in the enjoyment of their former commercial privileges in the eastern seas by a Convention of Commerce signed at London on 3rd July 1815.<sup>23</sup>

The last Napoleonic flicker, however, was still to follow. In March 1815, Napoleon, having escaped from Elba, landed back in France, and another war broke out under the star of Napoleon. Bonaparte's return and his resumption of the sovereign power naturally placed the Government of Madras in a doubt in regard to the expediency of restoring the French possessions and factories under the jurisdiction of that Government, in conformity with the stipulations of the treaty of Paris. It, therefore, looked up to the Supreme Government for instructions as to the course of action to be pursued

<sup>20</sup> (Article II of the treaty), *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Secret Letters from Persia, V. 2; India Office Library.

<sup>22</sup> Board's Secret Drafts, V. 5; India Office Library.

<sup>23</sup> Bombay political letters sent, V. 1: 23rd February 1816, India Office Library.

subsequent to the developments in Europe. In view of the uncertainty with regard to the ultimate issue of the war in Europe, Lord Moira found it difficult to transmit any precise instructions. He, however, suggested it as the best policy under the circumstances that the French Governor be informed frankly, and in terms of cordiality, of the embarrassments which were likely to arise if the cessions were to be made immediately.<sup>24</sup> The Governor-General also directed the Bombay Government that, in case any French Commissioner was to arrive at that presidency on behalf of Louis XVIII, all the factories within the jurisdiction of that government be placed under the possession of the French under an explanation that such cessions were being made to them "on sufferance" until definite information was received whether the late events have terminated in the sovereignty of Louis or Bonaparte.<sup>25</sup> But the victory at Waterloo on 18th June 1815, finally removed all suspense, and Napoleon's second abdication four days later brought the episode to an end. The news of the final victory was publicly announced in India on 11th November 1815.<sup>26</sup>

In the settlement of 1814-15, Great Britain made considerable colonial sacrifices in the interest of future European peace. She restored Java, Malacca and the Moluccas to the Dutch, while Bourbon was given back to France. The fact that the captors willingly resigned these settlements shows that the rigid mercantilism of the eighteenth century was already passing out and was yielding place to newer ideas. But, at the same time, Great Britain had secured the undisturbed possession of her enormously valuable conquests in the Indian seas, the Cape, Ceylon and Mauritius. The French, the Dutch, and other European nations recognized once and for all time the sovereignty of the English on the Indian continent. All the foreign settlements

<sup>24</sup> Moira to Governor-in-Council, Fort St. George, 18th Aug. 1815; Enclosures to Secret letters from Madras, V. 4; India Office Library.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Selections from *Calcutta Gazettes*, V. 4; p. 150 (Copy of the *Ceylon Gazette Extraordinary* of 13th October 1815).

were disarmed and, from 1815 onwards, the British possessions in India enjoyed complete immunity from foreign invasions. The Company was at last freed from all European menace just at the moment when it was about to establish an unquestioned predominance in India under Lord Moira. The policy of non-intervention which Great Britain evolved in Europe after Waterloo further came to exercise a powerful influence in maintaining the tranquillity, and the complete immunity from any external menace, of the British possessions on the continent of India.



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