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INDIA IN IMPERIAL DEFENCE

BY

CAPTAIN D. I. MACAULAY

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## INDIA IN IMPERIAL DEFENCE

IN the absence of Lord Ronaldshay, M.P., GENERAL SIR EDWIN COLLEN took the chair, and, in introducing Captain Macaulay, said that for several years he had carefully studied the subject on which he was to speak. His father, a personal friend of his own, was Mr. Colman Macaulay, of the Bengal Civil Service, who headed the Tibet Mission in 1884, and was thus the means of bringing together the representatives of Tibet and of the Government of India for the first time, he believed, since the days of Warren Hastings. The large map of the globe they saw before them was prepared two or three years ago by Captain Macaulay at his own expense. He had had a very short time to prepare the paper for them, as he was leaving for India on the following day. This added to their obligation to him for dealing with what must be to all of them a most interesting subject. (Cheers.)

The subject I propose to deal with this afternoon is India in Imperial Defence. I fear this question does not strictly come within the purview of the subjects which attract the special interest of the Central Asian Society. I am aware that, since its foundation, the Society has very considerably extended its original field of research. In fact, as sketched by Lord Curzon at the Society's Annual Dinner last year, your field now includes the whole of Asia. My subject, however, extends beyond the limits of Asia itself, and I therefore feel that it needs some apology. My main object this evening will be to show that the military policy necessary to India for her own local defence is precisely similar to that best suited to her as a unit in British Imperial Defence. Indian local defence is almost entirely—though not absolutely entirely—dependent on Asiatic influences, which will therefore be my starting-point. If I afterwards look outwards from Asia, I will do so from an Asiatic standpoint. My object will be to show that India is the pivot of world strategy east of Suez, and that Indian defence is the key to the defence of all our territory touching the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

I will begin my subject by a survey of Indian military policy with regard to the great Asiatic Powers.

## RUSSIA.

First we may take Russia. Russia has been for many decades the darkest and largest cloud on the Indian military horizon. Her gradual and almost unceasing approach has been watched with deepest interest and apprehension by generations of British and Indian statesmen and soldiers. But of late we have, fortunately, been permitted to see that even this cloud has a silver lining. Our Agreement with Russia has certainly had some effect in lightening pressure on India's North-West Frontier. As regards Russia, India's military policy has always been a purely defensive one, but it requires her to maintain, if she had no other need of it, a large army of the highest efficiency. Her policy against possible Russian aggression is to maintain a buffer State, and, in the event of hostilities, a strategic defensive on an advanced line. The Indian North-West Frontier is, generally speaking, a defensive one.

## AFGHANISTAN.

We now come to the buffer State Afghanistan, which in the past has been the source from which many a flood of invasion has burst over the plains of India. Whether the future will ever bring a repetition of history in this respect no one can tell. We devoutly hope it will not. For present purposes it is sufficient to say that we have always to be prepared for disturbances beyond our North-West Frontier, and that, in certain eventualities, our policy would be one of correction, by means of military forces, combined with offensive strategy, though after the application of the required correction, our policy of the buffer State might be resumed without annexation of territory. Afghanistan demands the same efficient land forces as does Russia. And though I dismiss it in a few lines to-night, I do not wish in any way to incur a charge of under-appreciating the difficulties with which we might be faced in a war in Afghanistan under modern conditions. I would, indeed, point out that, large and efficient as the Indian Army is, a war with either Russia or Afghanistan would certainly demand a large reinforcement from oversea of the Indian garrison, and this necessity for reinforcement is one that must be constantly kept in view.

## CHINA.

Next, I will move to the North-East Frontier, which will not delay us long. Here we have China, another colossus, who, if she is awaking, has not yet succeeded in shaking off her lethargy

of ages. The future of China is still in the lap of the gods, and the question of the possible defence of the North-East Frontier need not yet be considered as within the sphere of practical politics, to the extent of gravely influencing the military policy of India. Looking into the future, it is fairly safe to say that even if China does become a great world-Power, we, aided by the great natural barrier which our North-East Frontier presents to a hostile advance, would treat it as a defensive one, and use offensive strategy against China by sea forces against sea forces, and with expeditionary forces strike at one or more of the many exposed points of her immense sea-line. The main point to be noticed with regard to China's possible influence on India's war policy in the future is that she may make sea forces as well as land forces necessary for India's defence. We may, I think, safely neglect for our present purpose France in Indo-China and Siam.

#### PERSIA.

Returning now to the west, we have Persia. Persia is in the melting-pot, and no human mind can foretell how she will issue from it. As a menace to Indian territory, she may be considered a negligible quantity. At the same time, her future and her present is a subject of the deepest interest to India and Great Britain. We cannot help sympathizing with her in her hour of trouble. As things are at present, she has two great and powerful nations standing by to render assistance in her hour of distress. Our agreement with Russia has so far had this happy result for her. India's interest in Persia centres mainly in the future of the northern littoral of the Persian Gulf and of Khorassan.

#### TURKEY.

Leaving Persia, we come to Turkey. India's peculiar interest in the Turkey of to-day is threefold—interest in her new political life, in the Bagdad Railway, and in the future of Egypt. To the first of these I only allude in passing. The rise under democratic institutions of a great Mohammedan power, which under its old and discarded form of government was known as the Sick Man of Europe, must be, of course, an event of supreme importance in the future problems of Central Asia and Northern Africa. The influence on India of the recent movement may be far-reaching.

The Asiatic-Turkish railway system will consist of a trunk from the European head, with two strong limbs stretching south

and south-east, and affecting Egypt with the Suez Canal on the one hand, and the Persian Gulf on the other. Both the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf are objects of the deepest interest to the whole Empire east of Suez, and in a special degree to India, and anything affecting them must certainly affect her military policy in the future in common with that of the Empire in general. Heretofore the defence of Egypt was merely a matter of sea power in the Mediterranean. The question of the Persian Gulf has ever been one of anxiety to India. Our agreement with Russia dealt partially with one of its acutest phases: But the Bagdad Railway keeps the question in evidence. Personally, I think that the best solution to both these problems, as far as India is concerned, is to be found in a railway joining Egypt to India, traversing Northern Arabia, and touching the head of the Gulf. I find that this very railway has been discussed already before the Central Asian Society by Mr. Drummond Black, whose paper I have had the privilege of reading. I will not, therefore, reopen the subject further than to say that this line seems to me to kill three birds with one stone. It would give us decisive influence in Southern Persia, and flank the Euphrates Valley and Mecca lines.

The Asiatic railway system of Turkey is a matter of special military interest to us at present. Only the other day it was announced that the section of the Bagdad Railway to Aleppo was sanctioned, and about to be commenced. At Aleppo it will join up with the Damascus-Mecca line.

#### JAPAN.

I now turn to Japan. The rise of Japan as a great world Power is not a question of the future. It is already an accomplished fact. It has violently and suddenly altered world strategy. It has had an extraordinary disturbing effect on almost the whole of Asia. Turkey owes to it her rejuvenation. Persia, in her age and inherent weakness, has taken her inoculation almost as a disease—whether as a fatal disease or a prelude to new life the future can alone decide. India, with her millions, has been stirred by it. Even China has shown signs of waking up. What is of more interest to us now is the effect on Indian strategy of the rise of a great foreign Power in the Pacific. The strategical influence of Japan on India has been somewhat obscured by the Japanese Alliance. But alliances, I submit, are the most fleeting and the most changeable of influences on

strategy. They may affect strategical dispositions, but they should never be permitted to alter the fundamental basis of strategic policy and future proper strategic organization. Alliances, moreover, are founded on interest, not on sentiment. They are apt to be more lasting when based on equitable provision of strength than if they result in the neglect of ordinary military precaution in organization and armaments. The maintenance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is of great practical interest to India.

In considering the rise of Japan as an influence on Indian defensive policy, we are only considering a part of a much larger whole. The development of Japan may be considered as a present-day manifestation—or, at least, the acutest symptom of the development of the Pacific—and it is as a manifestation of the latter that we should regard it for our present purpose. It is not by any means the only manifestation of this new influence on the Indian Defence System. The foreshadowed awakening of China, the establishment in the Philippines of the great Power from the Eastern Pacific, the rapidly approaching completion of the Panama Canal, the question of the future of the Dutch East Indies, are all more or less important parts of the same problem. No part of the British Empire—and we may say no part of the world—is more interested in the development of the Pacific than is India. Its first effect on her is this : It has made Colombo and Singapore as essential parts of the Indian Defence System as are Quetta and Peshawar, because the former are the natural defences of India against the Pacific. In the event of a naval war in the Western Pacific, a hold on Hong-Kong and Labuan would be as necessary to India as might be Kabul and Kandahar in other circumstances. The safety of all these places depends fundamentally on sea-power. It is India's first interest that in the future there should be somewhere between Colombo and Hong-Kong British naval forces, whose strength should be commensurate with that of foreign naval Powers in the Pacific. That seems to me by far the most important requirement for Indian defence which we have to consider in connection with modern world strategy.

#### GERMAN NAVY.

I now turn for a moment to an influence on Indian defence which is not Asiatic—the rise of the German Navy. The rise of the German Navy, combined with the disappearance of Russian naval forces from the Pacific, has had the effect of concentrating

in European waters the whole of our two-Power standard navy. The two-Power standard, as we know, was originally designed as a strategic generalization to cover the problems arising out of developments of naval power in Europe, or, at least, of the distribution of European fleets in various parts of the world. The distribution of our two-Power standard navy is, therefore, mainly dependent on the distribution of European fleets. The disappearance of a large European fleet from the Pacific and the rise of another in the North Sea, has resulted in the transfer of the main part of our naval forces in the Pacific to home waters. Now, so long as we had naval forces in the Pacific capable of dealing with European fleets there, and so long as we had the command of the Mediterranean, it is clear that India had nothing to fear from the sea.

But India is now left denuded of naval protection from the East; and I would suggest that naval protection from the East is becoming more important for her than it ever was before. The rise of *Pacific* naval Powers is a very different thing from European naval forces located in the Pacific. European naval forces, based in the Pacific, had the inherent weakness that they were fundamentally based in Europe. While we had absolute command of all the routes from the West they could not be reinforced. If all other things were equal, it would be much more difficult to deal with a Chinese fleet in the Western Pacific than it would be with a French or a German one, or even a Russian. This is an important point to be remembered.

Now, if the distribution of the two-Power standard navy is—as it evidently is—dependent on the distribution of European navies, it is clear that it can in no sense be considered a generalization covering all the modern problems of world strategy, including that of the naval defence of India under modern conditions. When it was laid down as a strategic generalization there was no truly Pacific foreign Power worth considering. The two-Power standard stands at present merely on sufferance. It could not exist for another day if the Japanese Alliance came to an end, or if there arose a potentially hostile modern Chinese fleet.

You will remember Mr. Asquith's theory about an Extra-European naval Power. He maintained that there was no necessity for us to build against them ship to ship, because their aggressive power against us was clearly diminished in proportion to their distance from the British Isles. He took an awakened China as an example to illustrate this theory, and endeavoured to show



that, because China is 10,000 miles distant from the United Kingdom, we need not consider her aggressive power as measured by her strength in battleships.

Now, an Extra-European Power would certainly not attack the British Isles, any more than Japan would send an armada to the Gulf of Finland, but would attack that part of British territory in which she had special interest. With the exception of South American States in the Pacific, there is no Extra-European Power which is not much nearer to those parts of British territory in which it has special interest than are the British Isles—*e.g.*, the United States to Canada ; China and Japan to Hong-Kong, Singapore, India, Canada, and Australia. It is clear that it would be on these points that the attack of an Extra-European Power would be made. In the seas in their vicinity naval supremacy would be decided. The factor of distance is therefore against us, and not in our favour, and the greater the distance, the greater would be our disadvantage.

Besides this, the navy is an offensive force. The strength of purely defensive forces, such as our Territorial Army or the Swiss Army, is calculated on the aggressive power of possible enemies. The strength of offensive forces such as the British Navy or the German Army is calculated on the aggressive force necessary to overcome possible enemies. The distance of an Extra-European Power from the British Isles is a factor against us, and diminishes our aggressive power against them. It is, therefore, a reason for increase in our comparative standard of our offensive forces, not for decrease. And the greater the distance, the greater the comparative increase required. So true is this that there is a point (which we may take roughly as 4,500 miles) where geographical distance becomes so great that it can no longer be considered as a mere magnifying influence on our naval standard. It requires not merely a higher standard, but an entirely new naval system *in addition to* the two-Power standard, so placed as to eliminate as far as possible the factor of distance altogether. That this line of thought is correct is proved by the Defence Conference and the organization of a Pacific fleet. No part of the Empire is more vitally interested in the establishment of this Eastern naval system than is India. And it is manifestly her interest, from the point of view of her own defence and the defence of her fast-growing sea-borne trade, to do what she can to assist in the development of the new naval system. This seems to me to be a consideration which

should have considerable influence on India's policy in the future.

Before proceeding to consider the measures which India might take in the future in support of our Eastern naval system, I would wish to indicate some reasons why India's policy to this end in her own interest may justly be considered as her best contribution to Imperial defence. I will endeavour to show that a fleet so placed as to directly protect India herself is also so placed as to best defend Imperial interests east of Suez in general. It is clear that if this is so, it must be essentially due to the actual strategic position and value of India, which I now proceed to examine. I would first draw your attention to a rather curious comparison between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, and their respective influence on the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. You will find that, taking everything on a much larger scale, there is a very significant geographical, and therefore strategical, resemblance between the North Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. We have, first, the narrow waters of Aden corresponding—shall we say?—with the Suez Canal. We have in each a central peninsula—India here, Italy there. We have Ceylon corresponding—in its relation to the central peninsula—to Sicily or Malta in the Mediterranean. We have Singapore corresponding to Gibraltar—these places commanding the exit from the smaller to the larger expanses of water in each case. We might continue the comparison by contrasting the Himalayas with the Alps, and indicating the lines of invasion of either peninsula from north-west to north-east. We could also call the Persian Gulf our Black Sea. The comparison, of course, ceases to be anything like exact towards the south, but if we consider our possessions on the east and south of Africa and Australia, and our numerous strategic possessions in the Indian Ocean, and the general absence of foreign naval bases, we may consider the Indian Ocean a *mare clausum* to a certain extent. For the purpose of our comparison we may take Africa as roughly corresponding with Egypt and the Soudan, and Australia as our West African possessions, with the Dutch East Indies as Morocco. It will be admitted that in geographical structure there is a very considerable resemblance between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, especially as regards their northern shores. But the resemblance is confined to geographical structure alone. In political structure they are entirely different. The Indian Ocean is practically a British Mediterranean.

Now let us examine the Mediterranean politically constituted,

as is the Indian Ocean of to-day, and see what effect it would have on the Atlantic, and the Atlantic on it. Suppose Italy possessed not only Sicily, but the south coast of France (Burma), Gibraltar (Singapore), Bordeaux (Hong-Kong), our West African possessions (Australasia), and Canada. Suppose that the Black Sea contained no foreign naval Power, and that Italy merely wished to prevent the development of a foreign naval power there. With these as data, how would Italy place her naval forces to protect her possessions against possible hostilities with England (Japan), France (China), and the United States? First, where would she place them to protect herself? and, secondly, where would she place them to protect West Africa (Australia) and Canada? Let us give the United States Vigo to correspond to Manila.

Would Italy divide her forces between Bordeaux (Hong-Kong), Freetown (Sydney), and Salonica (Bombay)? I do not think so. If she did either, England or France could crush the Bordeaux unit, seize Gibraltar, and attack either Italy or West Africa, with only one unit to deal with. For her own direct defence I do not think there is any doubt whatever that, though she might keep advanced guards at Bordeaux and Freetown, she would concentrate her main forces between Gibraltar (Singapore) and Sicily (Ceylon). And would she change these dispositions to protect West Africa and Canada? I do not think so. At Gibraltar she is directly on the flank of any attack by England, France, or the United States or West Africa. And what about Canada? From Gibraltar, with Bordeaux as an advanced base, she is nearer to England or to France than either of these countries are to Canada. They can, therefore, make no attack in force on Canada until they have dealt with her main fleet. Sicily and Gibraltar are the key to the Atlantic problem, as well as to the defence of Italy.

If, then, we look back to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, we find that in precisely a similar manner, Colombo and Singapore are the key to the Pacific problem, as well as to the defence of India. An Indian Ocean Fleet based on Colombo and Singapore would also directly protect South Africa both from the Pacific and the Atlantic, because Colombo is nearer South Africa than any foreign fleet. The Aden-Colombo line, with a destroyer and small cruiser base at Bombay, is amply sufficient to look after the Persian Gulf. And, finally, a fleet based on Colombo and Singapore could either reinforce, or be reinforced from, the Mediterranean so long as the Suez Canal was passable. I think, then, that it is evident that in the North Indian Ocean we have a

position whose strategic value is exceptional for the solution of modern problems of world strategy, both as regards the territories we have to defend and the Powers against whom, in the future, we may be called upon to defend them (Mahan).

That there should be eventually a strong fleet in the position I have indicated is obviously to the interest of India for her own defence, and to the interest of the whole Empire. I therefore submit that it should be the aim of India's policy to secure the existence of that fleet in her own immediate interests, and that in doing so she is carrying out her most appropriate task as a unit of the British Empire for British Imperial Defence.

The question now remains : What can India do towards this end from the practical point of view of her own interests, and what can she be fairly called upon to do as a unit of the British Empire ? Upon what principle should the creation of this fleet be based, and what steps towards it are practical at the present moment ? I may say at once that I am not going to propose to you that India should at once start building and maintaining a fleet of her own. I do not think that this would be a practical policy from the point of view of her own resources, financial or otherwise, from the point of view of the strength which such a fleet should attain, and from the point of view of political expediency. As a purely personal opinion I would suggest that the principles governing the Indian Ocean Fleet of the future should be that *India should maintain the fleet*, which should be given to her and *owned by* the self-governing parts of the Empire in partnership. The maintenance of the fleet by India would be analogous to her maintenance of British land forces. The joint ownership of the fleet by the ruling race would make it our first truly Imperial asset, and thereby supply a centripetal force to counteract the possible centrifugal tendencies which may lie in local navies.

Our present Pacific Fleet, consisting of three fleet units, is probably the most extraordinary strategic organism in history. It is, indeed, not an organism, but an embryo, without head, or trunk, or vital organ. As definite successive steps towards the creation of our Eastern naval system I suggest—

1. That India should take over complete responsibility for the defence of Colombo and Singapore, which, as I have said, have become essential parts of her Defence System. This would cost her next to nothing, as the Crown colonies concerned practically pay for their garrisons and defences. Armaments have lately been supplied by the Imperial Government. The money now

being expended in Bombay should be spent on Colombo—India's best defensive base. A fully equipped dockyard should be established at Singapore by the Imperial Government, and handed over to India.

2. That the East India and China Squadrons should be definitely incorporated as one fleet under a Commander-in-Chief appointed in peace. The headquarters base of the fleet should be Singapore, with alternative bases at Colombo and Hong-Kong (each about 1,500 miles from Singapore) for the cruiser units respectively. This would be a very different thing to two independent squadrons based on Bombay and Hong-Kong (4,000 miles apart).

3. That Port Darwin should be fortified and (with a strengthening link at Thursday Island) made an alternative base to Sydney for the Australian fleet unit. This would bring the Australian naval forces into touch with the Singapore system, and would facilitate co-operation in war and combined training in peace without interfering with local control. Port Darwin is about 1,700 miles from Singapore; Sydney is over 4,000. The fortification of Port Darwin will, in any case, be rendered necessary by the building of the Australian Trans-continental Railway, which has at last been determined on. With Port Darwin as a fortified naval base and terminus of a Trans-continental Railway, the value of Australia as a unit in world strategy would be entirely revolutionized. The north coast of Australia is her only offensive-defensive sea base. Even from a domestic point of view Port Darwin will be her park gate, not her back-door, as Australians seem to think. From a military point of view it will be her portcullis gate, and not her postern.

4. That India should take over the maintenance of the East India and China Fleet units, as soon as the new vessels agreed on in the Defence Conference are built. Australia would be well advised to send her *Invincible* to this fleet, and by doing so would increase the strategic value of her three *Bristols*. A South African *Dreadnought* is, of course, a matter for the future. With it a complete *Dreadnought* unit could be organized. Even with these two projected *Dreadnoughts* the naval burden of India would not be great. The maintenance of these fleets would cost about £600,000 a year. Her own £100,000 contribution and New Zealand's contribution (£200,000) would be available towards it.

5. That the self-governing parts of the Empire would consider the question of constructing at least four *Dreadnought* battleships to be eventually handed over to the Indian Fleet.

6. That expenditure for this purpose should be met by a loan, the sinking fund and interest charges to be met by the self-governing nations on a fixed basis. This would be an opportunity for initiating Imperial finance on a basis of white population. The fleet, owned by the ruling races in partnership, would be our first truly Imperial asset. As such, it would have political as well as strategical value.

To show what this expenditure would mean, let us suppose that £10,000,000 were required for four *Dreadnoughts* and perhaps other details for the Indian Fleet. The annual charges on this Imperial debt would for the first five years be in the neighbourhood of £800,000, and after that period considerably less than this sum. The initial shares, on the estimated white population of 1908, would be approximately : United Kingdom, £625,000 ; Canada, £87,000 ; Australia, £58,000 ; South Africa, £17,500 ; New Zealand, £12,500. Newfoundland's share, if she wished to subscribe, would be about £1,500.

It will be seen that the share of the United Kingdom would be covered by relief from maintenance of the China and East India Squadrons. It would therefore involve no increase in our naval estimates, which will be large enough if we maintain the two-Power standard against Europe, as we undoubtedly should. It will also be conceded that the expenditure of Australia and Canada would not place any serious financial drag on the development of their local naval forces. New Zealand's share would be included in her present contribution, the balance of which would be available to assist India in maintaining the fleet. As regards South Africa, if we suppose that, after the Union, she would expend on naval defence twice the amount hitherto given by Cape Colony and Natal alone (a not unreasonable supposition), she could evidently not only defray the construction charges above calculated, but provide a "nucleus" *Dreadnought* by capitalizing the remainder of her annual outlay.

As regards India's expenditure in maintaining the fleet, I have discussed its expediency for her own as well as Imperial defence. If India in the future upholds her old tradition of responsibility for her own defence, she must maintain offensive sea forces as well as a defensive land force.

I would, therefore, deny with special stress that I make any suggestion for wringing a squadron out of India for Imperial defence. My proposal is that a squadron should be given to her, and maintained by her, for her *own* defence, in a properly balanced

system of Imperial defence. If India's strategical position is such that her own defence by sea also comprises the defence of other portions of the Empire, so much the better for the Empire, and for India herself, because she can justly claim some aid in return from the parts which her naval system would directly protect. At present this aid could most usefully be given through the medium of expeditionary forces, and it is thus India's first interest to secure the safe passage of such forces. It is evidently to India's interest that there should be available for her assistance expeditionary forces independent of European complications and the Suez Canal. I may add that the 11,000 bluejackets of the Indian Fleet will always be within a few days' steam of the great ports of Bombay or Calcutta, in the event of reinforcements being immediately required.

India's total naval expenditure would not exceed £2,000,000 to £2,500,000, allowing for maintenance of dockyards at Singapore and Colombo. This would not be incurred for some years. It must be remembered that India's sea-borne trade is already well over £200,000,000, and that the above expenditure would represent only about 1 per cent. insurance on that trade.

A glance at the map will show that with these changes our Pacific Fleet would become an Eastern Cerberus, with head and eyes in all directions, and a body of considerable strength. It would be very different (even without the four *Dreadnoughts*) to our so-called Pacific Fleet of to-day.

These are successive steps, which could be commenced now, and completed by, if necessary, 1912. If they can be, we may yet be in time. What is wanted is an Imperial Defence System that will be of effective value in the near, as well as the distant, future. Lord Roberts and Mr. Haldane are agreed that the dangerous time for the British Empire is *between* "twenty months" and "twenty years" hence.

#### DEFENCE CONFERENCE.

I now turn for a moment to the Defence Conference. Of the actual results, the military have been more valuable. The definite acceptance of an Imperial General Staff implies that the land forces of the different parts of the Empire will not be considered as local defence forces pure and simple, but will be available, by previous organization and predetermined plan, for extra-local—*e.g.*, mobile and offensive—strategical employment. That is a matter of great significance from an Indian point of view, because reinforcements

from oversea may always be necessary for her, either in a great frontier war or in widespread internal disturbances, and it is essential that these reinforcements should be independent of threatening European complications or of any interception in the Suez Canal.

As regards naval results, it is difficult to speak with as much satisfaction. They may be summed up as political strategy, which sometimes means bad politics, and almost invariably bad strategy. I am not going to enter here into a long discussion of the relative value of local navies and a united navy. Geographically, and therefore strategically, one navy is sound because the sea is one. Moreover, the self-governing provinces are not strategically well placed for strategic naval action. They are on the circumference, and not at the centre of the circle.

At the same time I would not have you think that I can see no good in local navies. I see a great deal of good in them. They will, of course, interest the Colonies in navies, and will increase our supply of naval personnel. Local navies and the Imperial General Staff will turn the thoughts of the Colonies to strategy. Hitherto they have thought only of development, and have had no time to think of strategy. Hence they think politically rather than strategically. New Zealand is a brilliant exception. This, perhaps, is due to her being an island. I think, then, that local navies will be of great instructional value. The more the Colonies learn of naval strategy, the more they will want a united navy, on whatever principle the unification may be founded. They may even discern that what they wanted is not all they thought it to be. The Canadian Parliament voted *unanimously* for a local navy before the Conference. There is now a strong body of opinion both in the Parliament and through the country in favour of contribution to the Imperial Navy. And this from Canada, who, up to a few months ago, steadily refused to have anything to do with a navy at all.

My chief objection to local navies is that they must be weak for a long time, and do not give us what we want. The question is, Have we time to get ready to meet the crisis before us? However, the local navy principle is accepted. But that is all the more reason for establishing a pivot on which the navies could work.

And now I come to what, to my mind, was the chief defect of the Defence Conference. India was not represented. The defence of India—the core of Imperial defence east of Suez—was not specially considered. As Lord Curzon said in his great



speech on India the other day at Edinburgh with reference to the omission of India from Imperial Conferences, "Even the problem of Imperial defence has often been discussed without relation to what is, in a sense, its pivot—viz., the defence of India." If in a strategical problem you omit the central strategical factor, you will certainly have faulty results. At the same time, I do not for a moment mean to imply that in this case the omission of India was avoidable. In fact, I think there is every reason to suppose that it was unavoidable. It certainly was considered, and was publicly advocated by Sir Edward Chapman in the *Times* before the Conference took place. Nor can we put it down to want of opportunity. It is seldom that a Commander-in-Chief-Elect of India can be in London at the time of an Imperial Conference, as was Sir O'Moore Creagh on this occasion. The presence at the Conference of Sir O'Moore Creagh, who will direct the military policy of India for the next term of years, would have been of great value to the delegates, and would have had a tightening effect on our Imperial strategy east of Suez. I do not say that Sir O'Moore Creagh would have advocated an Indian Ocean Fleet. But I do say that his presence would have made the delegates reflect on Indian defence. Had they done that, they would have found the key to their own defence, because the defence of India means the defence of all our territory touching the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

We can, however, console ourselves with the thought that the Conference of 1909 is not the end of all things. The inclusion of the Indian General Staff in the Imperial General Staff is an important step forward since the Conference itself. Lord Kitchener's visit to Australasia will probably produce important results on our Defence System east of Suez, particularly as regards expeditionary forces. And I think we may take for granted that India will be represented, and Indian defence specially considered, at the Conference of 1911. The question is, Have we got time? If we are to be in time, we must keep pushing on, and I think the first thing we have to try for is a central fleet for our Eastern naval system.

## DISCUSSION

GENERAL SIR EDWARD CHAPMAN said the paper they had heard was of first-rate importance because it was a distinct acknowledgement that India was a sea Power. That acknowledgment had not before been publicly made, or, at least, it had not been put forward so clearly and in such detail. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that they would carefully consider the calculations Captain Macaulay had put before them. A redistribution of the British fleets was made about three years ago, in consequence of certain European complications, and of our alliance with Japan, and one outcome was to weaken our naval forces towards the Pacific. Such weakening would not have been permitted had it been recognized that India was to be regarded as a sea Power. At the recent Imperial Defence Conference there was no mention of India as a sea Power, and she was allowed no share whatever in the deliberations. It was very important, therefore, that those of them who took a sustained interest in India should bring to public notice clearly and distinctly the reasons why India should be regarded as a sea Power. If she was so regarded, all the rest would follow. Reinforcements for her assistance could be looked for from Australia and from South Africa, saving us in some measure the difficult and hampering task of trying to send reinforcements through the Mediterranean or round by the Cape at a time of international complication. Australia or South Africa might thus be able to save India in the same way as India saved South Africa. If ten years ago India had not had a force of 10,000 men thoroughly equipped and ready to go to the front at a moment's notice, we should have sustained crushing reverses, and should have lost Natal. The Boers would then have assumed the offensive towards Cape Colony. The more they could think out the details Captain Macaulay had laid before them the better; but they must first and foremost assert the principle that India's position as a sea Power must be acknowledged. Further, he would only say that the people of India needed to share in our Imperial thoughts. If we did not give them opportunities of expending their enthusiasm by becoming conscious of the partnership of Empire, they would be led to take part in Asiatic movements of a purely native character, and we should find it difficult to control them. (Cheers.)

DR. MILLER MAGUIRE : I quite agree with the gallant General that in all probability the Boers would have poured right through Natal at the beginning of the South African War had it not been for the timely assistance of the Indian contingent. I was soon after in correspondence with an official of the Boers, who told me that when the Boers

were considering their plans in the first instance, the possibility of such a thing as immediate reinforcements from India did not once occur to them. The General also referred to the extraordinary fact that India was not included in the recent Defence Conference. I would remind him that at the Imperial Press Conference a little earlier the situation in respect to the defences of the Empire was discussed for a long time, but all through the main consideration—that of the defence of India—remained undiscussed. This was an astonishing display of helpless incapacity by our pastors and teachers, and I essayed to call attention to it at the time, but it is scarcely necessary to say that no remarks of mine were permitted to reach the public. India has been the key-note of strategy in all ages, from Alexander the great to Napoleon. The great idea of the latter was to take Egypt and get control of India. The Pacific has become what the Mediterranean once was—the centre of naval strategy. It would be madness on our part not to most carefully consider the naval as well as the military requirements of the British possessions watered by the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Everything has been changed since 1894-5, when Japan's victory over China altered the situation in the Far East, and when, a little later, the United States became supreme in the Philippines; and when, more recently, Japan beat Russia, Australia saw for the first time that possible danger to her was from the Far East. . . .

This afternoon, at the Royal United Service Institution, we have been considering the question of the food-supply of our Empire in time of war. It was clearly shown that there were possibilities of starvation for the people of these islands within three months of the outbreak of war. In this possibility we have another ground for making our position in the Pacific supreme, for our food-supplies are largely drawn from Pacific lands.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. C. YATE said that Lord Curzon recently delivered an important address, in which he spoke of the strategic importance of India to the British Empire; but he did not recollect that the ex-Viceroy said anything of India as a naval base. This aspect, however, of the question was bound to arise now that the self-governing portions of the Empire were carefully considering the formation of an Imperial Navy. Captain Macaulay had not said very much about Canada as one of those parts of the Empire touched by the waters of the Pacific, but he thought that Canada was as important in this connection as South Africa. He had fresh in his memory a very curious German pamphlet dealing with the future of the British Empire, and it contained a prophecy that Australia would be handed over to a yellow race—he did not know whether it was China or Japan. (A voice: "Both.") That was a curious prophecy, but it ought to serve as a warning to us that there were possible dangers which obliged us and our Colonies to maintain adequate protection for ourselves in the Pacific; and, moreover, that to the maintenance thereof the self-governing dominions should, in their own interest, contribute. The greater our naval forces in those waters, the better should we be able to

frustrate any ambitions inimical to our interests to which these yellow races might be incited. It was, no doubt, a far cry to the time when such ambitions might take shape ; but in statesmanship they must take the long view, and it was well to consider even distant possibilities.

At the discussion at the Royal United Service Institution to which Dr. Miller Maguire had referred, he ventured to say a few words as to the value of India in connection with the food-supplies of this country. India was, in fact, one of the largest and most important of our granaries. In conclusion, Colonel Yate mentioned that General Sir O'Moore Creagh, the new Commander-in-Chief in India, when appealed to to support, as Lord Kitchener had done, the work of the St. John Ambulance Association in India, replied that he did so readily, because he believed that a great ambulance corps maintained in and by India would benefit, not only India, but the Empire. Colonel Yate recognized with pleasure in the Chairman that day (Sir Edwin Collen) one who had given him most valuable help when he commenced his St. John Ambulance campaign at Calcutta in March, 1901.

MR. HART DAVIES, M.P., said : As you are all well aware, Australia is going to have, ultimately, a couple of *Dreadnoughts* of her own, and they are to patrol chiefly on the China seas. It must be remembered that the great dread of Australia lies in that direction. The Colonies are very touchy on questions affecting their independence, and although the fleet Australia is providing will be under the control of the British Admiralty in a way, it will be mainly under the orders of the Australian Government. . . . Such control the Colonies would be very reluctant to give up. In considering a plan for a united fleet maintained by India, it is to be remembered that the Australians do not regard the defence of India as one of the chief things coming within their purview. This difficulty would have to be overcome before we could get a real working unification such as has been suggested. Nor can it be forgotten that the fleet in European waters must be maintained in strong force. Even if trouble arose in the Pacific, we should have to keep the main body of the British naval forces in European waters. . . . But there can be no doubt of the strategic importance to us of the Pacific, and there is no doubt that ultimately, with the assistance of the Colonies, there will be evolved some such scheme for a united fleet as Captain Macaulay has adumbrated this evening in his instructive and valuable paper.

MR. C. E. DRUMMOND BLACK said that he noted with satisfaction the lecturer's support of the scheme for a trans-Arabian railway which it was his honour to submit to the Society some months ago. In connection with the scheme, he desired to ask Captain Macaulay whether he did not think it would be possible to establish a military base in the Sinai Peninsula for the location of British soldiers, so that, in case of anything happening in India or in Egypt, it would be possible to move troops to the point desired. If such a scheme were feasible,

it would provide an additional argument in favour of the projected railway.

THE CHAIRMAN : It is the function of the Chairman to sum up these discussions, and to allude to certain leading points in the lecture. All I can say is that I find it extremely difficult to deal, in the course of a few minutes, with a discussion which has ranged geographically from Thursday Island to the Sinai Peninsula. As, however, I have been connected a long time with India, I should like to say that many of us have, officially and unofficially, put forward our view in times past that India should be regarded as the great Eastern base of the British power.

The lecturer did not dwell very much upon the assistance which India might receive from the self-governing dominions. That was a point we always had in view. Both Australia and New Zealand will be able to render us great assistance in the event of any internal trouble or of an external enemy attacking India. If I say that the naval problem bristles with difficulties, I am far from attempting to belittle the strategical principles which have been laid before you this evening. Indeed, I entirely agree with nearly everything the lecturer has said with regard to the strategical position of India, Colombo, and Singapore. The plan he has sketched involves the creation of what may be called an Indian Navy. Now, I am one of those who have always regretted the disappearance of the Indian Navy. I believe it would have given great auxiliary services to the Royal Navy without entrenching upon the Imperial authority in that navy. I exerted my humble efforts for many years, in conjunction with various colleagues, to try to save from the remains of that navy a marine service which should be of real assistance to India. It has become more especially a transport service, although it has other most useful functions ; but, as showing the difficulty there is in carrying through any project which is not centred in London, I may mention that we had armaments for the ships of the Royal Indian Marine, but that the Admiralty would never allow us to put them on board. (Laughter.)

I believe that the Marine Service of India possesses a body of officers who would certainly become the nucleus of the personnel of the Indian Fleet ; and I am entirely with the lecturer in thinking that India should possess a naval force of its own. But I confess I see great difficulties in the proposed co-operation of Australia. The Australians naturally desire that the section of the fleet they contribute should belong to them. Although that is not opposed to the principle which the lecturer laid down, I do think that they would absolutely veto any proposition that they should give up their ships to form an Indian Ocean Fleet. Still, the lecture, in my opinion, is based upon sound views of Imperial strategy. We are all indebted to its author for the pains and labour he has taken in preparing it, and I know I shall only be expressing your sentiments in offering him our very hearty thanks. (Cheers.)

CAPTAIN MACAULAY said his critics had been so kind that he found



himself with very little to answer. As to the non-inclusion of India in the Defence Conference, it was quite obvious that this was to a certain extent the cause of the loose results that accrued. It could hardly be otherwise with a central strategic feature of the Imperial problem omitted. The mistake was pointed out beforehand by Sir Edward Chapman in a letter to the *Times*, and it could easily have been rectified by the inclusion of Sir O'Moore Creagh, who was then in London. There was a growing belief that a united naval force in the Pacific was required, and meanwhile the locally-controlled navies would have a great instructional value. They would teach the colonists to interest themselves in strategy. At present New Zealand was the only colony which had any idea of naval strategy. Canada proposed to divide its sea forces, just as Russia had done with results so disastrous to herself. Having got what they wanted, the Colonies would find, on studying the problem, that they wanted something else. Until lately Canadian opinion was unanimous for a local navy, but now there was a strong party in the Dominion against the principle. So far as India was concerned, no less than Australia, the whole problem of the Yellow Peril was one of sea power. The North-East Frontier of India had not been the scene of great historical invasions, because of the great natural barriers it provided.

A conversation here ensued between the lecturer and Colonel Yate as to the opinion of the former against Esquimalt as a naval base in the Pacific. The lecturer said that to give assistance to India vessels from Esquimalt would have to travel 6,000 miles, and it was only large battleships that could get across that distance without fresh coal-supplies. The United States and Japan were the only two Powers that could possibly attack Canada. Japan was 4,000 miles away. The United States would never dream of attacking the west coast of Canada. She would first fight the English Navy, and her next objective would be Winnipeg.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL YATE said he was not thinking of war with the United States or Japan. The latter was our ally, and our relations with the former were most friendly. He was thinking that if we had trouble in India, Canada could detach the west coast navy to assist us in the Indian seas. He believed that ultimately Canada would maintain a navy on both ocean borders.

THE LECTURER said that Russia maintained a fleet on three coasts, and was severely beaten.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL YATE said the difference was that Canada would have the co-operation of the British fleet. Russia had no friends and no base in the Pacific.

THE LECTURER said that the best preparation we could have in the Pacific was a disposition of naval forces that would secure immunity from what was called the Yellow Peril. For his own part, however, he was not greatly alarmed about the Yellow Peril, because Japan had made the great mistake of putting its foot on the mainland. It was a commonplace of history that when an island Power put its foot on the

mainland it was kept occupied for centuries. This was our own experience in respect to France. In the position in which Japan now found herself it would be to her interest to wake up China, or the day might come when China would fight her again for Manchuria. Indeed, the desire of China to get back her own would probably stand in the way of any effective combination between them. Replying to Dr. Miller Maguire, he said he was not apprehensive of the Yellow Peril by way of Yunan. It would be a long while before railways were constructed in Western China that would be capable of throwing large forces into Burma. Replying to another question, he said he quite agreed that the most effective safeguard of Australia was that of industrial occupation of the northern territories. The geographical basis of strategy could seldom be changed, except by such great engineering undertakings as the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal. But strategy was largely conditional upon development by railways and population. The effective occupation of the northern territories would entirely revolutionize Australia as a strategic issue. At present, with a base at Sydney, she could not take the offensive. In conclusion, he thanked the audience for the way in which they had received his lecture, which he consented to give with considerable apprehension, as he was not accustomed to addressing learned societies.

