SIR JOHN MALCOLM AND BRITISH POLICY
TOWARDS THE INDIAN STATES
1798 - 1818

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PREFACE

The early nineteenth century is generally regarded as the period of the establishment of British paramountcy in India, a process put into motion under the aegis of Lord Wellesley. This thesis attempts to bring into perspective the part played by one of the men subordinate to the Governor-General and yet, by virtue of being appointed to posts far from Calcutta, independent of him to some extent. Sir John Malcolm played an important part in diplomatic events which removed the final obstacles to British paramountcy—the Maratha states of central India.

Indeed, Malcolm took part in so many events that I have found it expedient to confine myself, as far as possible, to his diplomatic, as distinct from his administrative work. There is, for instance, almost enough material for separate theses on Malcolm's work with the Madras army, his term as Governor of Bombay and his various missions to Persia.

This thesis is unavoidably one-sided, in that whilst Malcolm and his British contemporaries were copious writers (a good deal of Malcolm's correspondence has been preserved by his biographer Sir John Kaye, and Malcolm himself wrote two political histories of India and a more generally descriptive book on central India) there are few contemporary Indian accounts available in English.

The staff of the University of Canterbury Library have been most helpful in obtaining useful material. I am also grateful to Dr. I. J. Catonach who has supervised the writing of this thesis and has given me valuable criticism, advice and encouragement.

F. C. A.
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CHAPTER I

Sir John Malcolm has been called "the acknowledged King of 'Politicals.'"¹ During the early decades of the nineteenth century, when the British greatly extended their power in India, he built up such a reputation that Bishop Heber, in 1824, found Malcolm one of two men "whom all parties agree in commending."² Malcolm's biographer, Sir John Kaye, speaking of great historical events in India, declared that "Malcolm was not merely in them but of them—pars magna."³ Yet to some he was something of an enigma. Henry Lawrence "one of the very few whose opinions are always evidence,"⁴ told Kaye, in 1854:

"I hope you will turn out Malcolm a proper fellow, but I have been accustomed to consider him a clever, fortunate humbug. He must have been more, or he would not have half the place he did with Wellesley, Wellington, Munro and other great men."⁵

Lawrence was right; Malcolm was not a charlatan. From

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2. The other was Sir David Ochterlony, Agent to the Governor-General. Reginald Heber, Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, ii. pp.363-364.
5. Ibid.
his earliest days in India, "his overflowing spirits made him riotous, and he was generally known by the name of 'Boy Malcolm.'"1 This reputation, which remained with him throughout his life, perhaps accounts for Lawrence's feeling that Malcolm was not really to be taken seriously. Yet successive Governors-General employed him on important missions to "almost all the principal courts in India",2 he led embassies to Persia, was in charge of the settlement of central India, and ended his career as Governor of Bombay. This could not have been achieved by a mere opportunist. Malcolm was ambitious, but he was also seriously concerned with the problems of the British in India.

Ambition, however, appeared very early. In 1781, the twelve year old John Malcolm was taken to India House to be interviewed by the Directors. He hoped to be taken into the service of the East India Company. According to Kaye, one lucky answer won him his commission:

"when one of the Directors said to him, 'Why my little man, what would you do if you were to meet Hyder Ali?' 'Do, Sir,' said the young aspirant, in prompt reply, 'I would cut out with my sword and cut off his head.'"3

This episode revealed Malcolm's enthusiasm as well as

his ambition. Malcolm's enthusiasm explains much of his general popularity. Although some, such as Elphinstone, might think he was too catholic in his tastes, all liked him and he made many life-long friendships. Even Elphinstone, looking back on his times with Malcolm, wrote:

"We shall doubtless often miss his spirits and good humour, while we forget his noise and egotism. I have all along reproached myself for my want of tolerance for the single defect of one of the first and best men I know." 1

Most of the other people who knew Malcolm were more impressed with his virtues. In 1783, he was described as, "a very old ensign, though a very young lad ... one of the finest and best tempered young lads I ever saw, and very much liked by everybody." 2 This, written by a woman to Malcolm's mother, might be biased; but it was echoed by men in official circles. Graeme Mercer, a British representative at Hyderabad, said that when he first met Malcolm at Hyderabad in 1791, "He soon became a favorite with us all, and particularly with Sir John Kennaway, the Resident. He was then a careless, good-humored fellow." 3 Sir Alured Clarke, Commander-in-Chief at Madras 1795-1798, was even more impressed:

"sincere, long acquaintance has satisfied me that the rectitude of your head and heart entitle you to expect and receive from me all those good offices which the partiality of your other friends wished me to show you when we first met."1

Malcolm's popularity extended beyond military and political circles. When the orientalist John Leyden was in India, Malcolm

"hearing I was a border man instantly came and called without ceremony and we were perfectly acquainted in the course of five minutes. He has always acted as a true and steady friend."2

Many Indians also considered Malcolm their friend, a circumstance which led even Elphinstone to write that

"Malcolm certainly has wise and enlarged views of policy, and, among them, the kind and indulgent manner in which he regards the natives (though perhaps originating in his heart as much as in his head) is by no means the least."3

This quality was very valuable in early nineteenth century India, where personality played a large part in politics and diplomacy.

Popularity, however, was not enough. When Malcolm arrived in India, he was "illiterate, but with pregnant ability."4 Realising that his ignorance was a great disability, he taught himself Persian, and some Indian

1. Sir Alured Clarke to Malcolm, soon after Clarke’s transfer to Bengal, Ibid., p.52.
languages. Many years later he revealed his high standards in this connection:

"An officer who desires distinction (and he must have a mean and wretched soul who does not) must be alike active in body and mind. He must devote every moment he can spare from duty to the improvement of his education, in the conviction that increased knowledge, if it should not even promote his advancement, must promote his happiness."

That Malcolm practised what he preached is confirmed by Elphinstone: "Malcolm's other qualities were accompanied by "a sound judgement and a great store of knowledge".2

Malcolm himself found the accumulation of knowledge relatively easy: he had a good memory. His favourite reading was history: "It pleasest upon reflection, and the impressions it makes are more lasting".3 He learned Indian languages "more with the hope of their being useful than entertaining, as their knowledge is very confined, and nothing new to be met with among them."4 Malcolm did not confine himself to the study of languages; he also liked observing and commenting on Indian states and governments. His comments were probably influenced by his background. He came from a country which had an

1. Malcolm's advice to a young relative appointed to India, Iibid., ii. p.65.
2. quoted by Goodruff, The Men Who Ruled India, i. p.216;
4. Iibid. This unfavourable opinion of their languages did not, however, extend to the Indian people themselves: "I do not know the example of any great population, in similar circumstances, preserving ... so much of virtue and so many good qualities as are to be found in a great proportion of the inhabitants of this country." Malcolm, "Notes of Instructions to Assistants and Officers." 28 July, 1821, A Memoir of Central India, ii. Appx.xviii, p.440.
imperial tradition. At the same time, he belonged to the age of the eighteenth century, a man whose favourite authors were the poet Burns, and the conservative politician, Burke. This perhaps accounts for the fact that "Malcolm liked Indians as people, while at the same time the rather turbulent domestic and foreign politics of the Indian states did not impress him favourably.

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This was the man who, in 1826, wrote: "The great empire which England has established in the East will be the theme of wonder to succeeding ages." Malcolm was proud of his contribution to the establishment of British paramountcy in India. Malcolm and men like him—Wellesley, Munro, Edmonstone, Elphinstone—were more than mere tools of the various Governors-General. Even had they not been the strongly individual personalities they were, the physical facts of Indian politics would have made them important in their own right. Problems of distance and communication made a wide delegation of power to them necessary. Moreover, men such as Malcolm were important in another respect: they provided political continuity. Governors-General came and went but the small group of men, familiar with and experienced in Indian politics, remained.

1. K. C. Kenrick, 

We shall see that Malcolm's career illustrates a comparison between India in the first twenty years of the nineteenth century and Africa at the end of the century. An explanation of the motives governing statesmen in the acquisition and partition of Africa has been put forward by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher in *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, (1961). Some of the notions of Robinson and Gallagher about the European expansion in Africa appear to apply also to India. Both India and Africa were tropical countries whose climate made them unsuitable for European colonization. Yet both rapidly became incorporated into European empires. Robinson and Gallagher's theory appears to place the explanation for this, so far as Africa is concerned, in the "official mind" of European statesmen, who saw Africa in terms of European diplomacy and, above all, national security. To a certain extent this also applies to India.

Another factor in European expansion in both cases is that of the attitude of the commercial men. The situations in Africa and in India were slightly different, but the result was essentially the same. In Africa, the areas which interested merchants least were those which interested politicians most, and, in Africa, it was the views of the politicians which generally prevailed when it ultimately came to annexing parts of
Africa. Throughout most of the time of British expansion in India, the controlling authorities of the East India Company were trying to halt or prevent that expansion altogether. It was, therefore, the politicians — but in this case those in India, in Calcutta, rather than those in London — who took the decisions to extend the British frontiers.

This argument can be taken a step further. In his study of West Africa, Colin Newbury has suggested that the extension of European power and influence was often the work of local officials, rather than the result of any clear policy in European capitals.¹ It is logical, therefore, to ask whether the British empire in India, like that of Africa, arose out of considerations of national security, or whether in India there were other additional, and perhaps irrational, motives in the minds of men such as Malcolm — men "on the spot," cut in the rural areas, hundreds of miles from Calcutta. Malcolm, although employed by the East India Company, was primarily a soldier-politician. When he advocated the extension of British power, he was not motivated by prospects of material gain. One possible explanation has been given by John Galbraith, who has suggested that British expansion in India was part of a continuous process: as the British frontier advanced to quell one

area of disorder and to secure the Company's territories from marauders, another area of disorder would be found beyond. In turn, this required a further extension of British influence: the "turbulent frontier" was thus an ever-present phenomenon.¹

This theory can be related to the ideas of Robinson and Gallagher about "formal" and "informal" empire. In the mid-nineteenth century, they have argued, the British policy consisted of "extending control informally if possible and formally if necessary".² It can be argued that the subsidiary treaty system of alliances in India, not invented but considerably extended by Lord Mornington, is an example of informal empire which led to formal empire when these treaties with Indian rulers did not appear to secure British interests. As we shall see, Malcolm felt that the British were partly responsible for this change from informal to formal control in India, in that the weakening of Mornington's system of influence by Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow, gave Indian powers the opportunity to intrigue against the British, leading to stricter British measures regarding them.

Apart from all the theories, however, the British

experience in these years can be seen simply in terms of a power struggle between various states, including the British, for the empire left by the Mughals. The East India Company had become, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, a relatively strong power in India. Events within the Maratha sphere of influence left a power vacuum which the British felt compelled to fill for the sake of their own security. This in turn created a situation where the weaker powers, the Maratha states, attempted to regain their lost position. In response, the British, in order to safeguard their position, advanced their power further. Here was a movement which could be halted only by the coming into being of a balance of power.¹ But this balance could not be created in early nineteenth century India.

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When Malcolm first met Lord Mornington at Madras in 1798, there were three distinct power groups in India: the British, the Indian states, and the French. On the map the British power was not extensive. The East India Company held Bengal, Bihar, part of Orissa, and Chittagong in the north-east. In the south-east, the British ruled an area around the city of Madras and the Baronahal, and in the west Malabar and the two islands of Bombay and Salsette. But in addition to these

territorial possessions the British had extended their influence into Cudah, Rohilkand, and the Carnatic, although in terms of power the Carnatic had disadvantages. The scandal of the Nawab of Arcot's debts had brought the whole Madras establishment into disrepute. Already then the British had an informal empire, exemplifying Robinson and Gallagher's contention that refusal to annex is no proof of reluctance to control.

During Lord Mornington's term of office British control in India was greatly extended by means of the subsidiary treaty system of alliances. When an Indian state concluded such an alliance with the British it became, to a great extent, militarily dependent upon the Company. The essential provisions of a subsidiary treaty were that the Indian ruler would pay the British an annual subsidy, or cede to the British part of his territory, to pay for the raising and upkeep of a British army. This army would then be stationed within the frontiers of the Indian state concerned. Thus the British could "throw forward their military, considerably in advance of their political, frontier."¹ Other provisions of the subsidiary treaties as developed by Lord Mornington ensured, however, that the British did have some influence in the affairs of the protected state. Although the British usually guaranteed that there would be no interference in the internal affairs of the Indian

state the subsidiary treaty generally provided for the establishment of a British Residency at the Indian ruler's durbar. Moreover, the Indian ruler would be required to take no Europeans into his service unless he had the consent of the British, and he was to consult the Governor-General before entering into negotiations with any other Indian power. Therefore, in return for adequate defence, the Indian ruler, if he adhered to the terms of the subsidiary treaty, gave to the British a wide control over his foreign policy. This system was to be used to carry British influence into central India.

The British India Malcolm first knew, however, consisted mainly of coastal districts, with the Presidencies linked only by sea. British shipping was subjected to both the hazards of the weather and attacks from privateers. Therefore, it is at least feasible that the desire for better communications may have been a secondary, unstated motive behind the British extension of influence into southern and central India. Malcolm personally had experienced the uncertainty, and even danger, of travelling between the Presidencies in India. On separate occasions he was kidnapped and held for ransom and detained by the guards of a prince supposed to be friendly towards the British. Obviously, as things stood in 1798, the problem of concerted action, military, political and diplomatic, was greatly
hampered by the dispersal of the Company's territories. Therefore, in 1798 the Company's power was not overwhelming, and it was not, as yet, the inevitable heir to the Mughal empire. The explanation of the relative ease of the Company's subsequent expansion lies in the condition of the Indian states at this time.

In the south, the greater part of Mysore was ruled by Tipu Sultan. The Peace of Seringapatam in 1792 had merely increased the hatred of the English which Tipu had inherited from his father Haider Ali. In 1798, Malcolm described Tipu as possessing,

"those feelings which are allowed not only to be natural, but honourable in a humbled monarch (viz. a spirit of revenge against the State that has humbled him)."

Moreover, he pursued his aims with "unremitting activity and zealous warmth".1 Tipu's rule, although often cruel and tyrannical, was relatively stable, and he was, therefore, able to mobilize his resources against the British fairly effectively. Alone, however, his strength was not enough to prevail against the greater efficiency and discipline of the British armies.

On Tipu's northern frontier was a potential British ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad. In 1798 the Nizam was still vacillating between the British and his Indian neighbours, the Marathas. Weakened and humiliated by

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his defeat at the hands of the Marathas at Kurda in March, 1795, he inclined towards the British. As a friend, however, the Nizam Ali was not too attractive. Malcolm described his court as "venal and weak"—and believed this condition to be typical of Indian governments.\(^1\) Moreover, the British disliked the French influence at his court. Clearly, if the Nizam chose the British alliance, he was practically inviting criticism of his government, and probably pressure from the British to make changes. This, however, he might feel was a better proposition than domination by the Marathas.

By far the greater part of Malcolm's diplomatic work concerned the Marathas. Geographically, they were in a stronger position than the British. They occupied the whole of central India, and reached north as far as Delhi, Agra, and Bundelkand. But this appearance of strength was deceptive, for the various Maratha powers were not united. In theory, the four most powerful princes, Sindia of Ujjain and Gwalior, Holkar of Indore, the Raja of Berar, and the Gaikwad of Baroda, were subject to the authority of a central power, the Peshwa at Poona. By the end of the eighteenth century this semi-feudal relationship was breaking down, and weakening the structure of the Maratha empire. To some extent,

\(^1\) Malcolm to General Ross, 10 August, 1799, Kays, Life, i. p.88.
this was a matter of personalities. As men such as the Wellesley brothers, Munro, Elphinstone, and Malcolm were coming to the fore in British Indian politics, the Marathas lost their most able statesmen. In 1794, the great Mahadji Sindhia died and was succeeded by Daulat Rao Sindhia, a boy of thirteen. Malcolm, who knew him as well as any other European, described him as able but indolent. ¹ He was, therefore, unlikely to prove the leader which the Maratha empire needed.

At Poona, events were even more disastrous to the Marathas. The death of the Peshwa in 1796 caused a crisis in Maratha affairs, resolved only by the succession of Baji Rao II, the son of the extremely unpopular Ragunath Rao. The new Peshwa soon revealed himself to be inept and weak. Finally, the Peshwa's most skilful adviser, Nana Padsavis, died in 1798, the year of Lord Mornington's arrival in India. After Nana Padsavis' death Baji Rao was only nominally independent, for it was Sindhia who managed the Peshwa's administration.²

Therefore, Maratha strength was depleted by the lack of a strong, united leadership. It was not, however, as completely decayed and disorganised as men such as Malcolm would have liked to believe.³ For the

¹ Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 1 May, 1804, Poona Residency Correspondence, xi. pp.2-3. (hereafter P.R.C.)
² Pratul Chandra Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, 1796-1818, p.22.
³ Malcolm tended to exaggerate the chaos of Indian governments. At the courts of the Marathas and other Indian rulers there was some indication of effective government. See, for example, Satish Chandra, Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740.
first eighteen years of the nineteenth century the Marathas managed to cause trouble for the British on a fairly large scale. Much of their earlier power remained. Sindia and Holkar, the "generals" of the Marathas, were likely to be the most troublesome to the British, particularly after the destruction of Tippa in 1799, and the subsidiary alliance with Oudh in 1801, brought the Company's frontiers up to those of the Marathas. Sindia was the most powerful. From Mahadji Sindhia, Daulat Rao inherited a position which made him, "the nominal slave but the rigid master, of the unfortunate Shah Allum, Emperor of Delhi; the pretended friend, but the designing rival of the house of Holkar; the professed inferior in all matters of form, but the real superior and oppressor of the Rajput princes of Central India; and the proclaimed soldier, but the actual plunderer, of the family of the Paishwah."2

This strength, however, was undermined by internal rivalries and jealousies which precluded any lasting, concerted action against the British intruders. Particularly fatal to the Maratha cause was the struggle between Sindia and Holkar for control of Poona, a quarrel which ultimately led to the Peshwa's flight to Bassein, near Bombay, his alliance with the British, and two Maratha wars.

Administratively also, the Marathas were weaker than the British. A loose, decentralised form of

government was unlikely to prevail against the highly organised structure of the East India Company. This was significant in both the political and military fields. When the Marathas were confronted by British armies, it meant a divided command. In 1803, for instance, Holkar stood aside from the conflict between the British and his fellow Marathas until it was too late to help. Despite the fact that "every one saw the necessity of uniting for a common purpose," most tried to save their "own skin at the sacrifice of others."¹

The third power in India, which very much concerned the British at the time, was that of the French. Lord Mornington, when he arrived in India, already felt strongly that the French were a great menace to the British in India, as well as in Europe. Just before his appointment to India, he had made a speech in the House of Lords against Jacobinism.² His mind was, therefore, predisposed to take alarm at any questionable moves on the part of the French. Malcolm, too, particularly in the early years of his political career, shared the Governor-General's fear of the French. In 1802 he wrote, "I by no means think that there is any immediate cause of apprehension from the Mahrattas; but the French! — the French!"³ Malcolm's missions to

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¹ Govind Sakharam Girdessai, *The Main Currents of Maratha History*, p. 204.
Persia in 1799-1801 and 1810 were largely aimed at preventing a French attack on British India through Persia. For instance, Napoleon's mission to the Persian Emperor in 1808 was taken to indicate a potential French menace from the north.¹ Actions taken by the British in India which were governed by this fear of the French could be compared with later events in Africa, similarly governed as they were by considerations of national security. But men such as Malcolm in fact took the French threat too seriously. Napoleon's ever-increasing commitments in Europe occupied most of his energies. Looking back with all the advantages of historical hindsight, it is difficult to see the man who soon became involved in the Peninsula War and the 1812 Russian expedition as a western Gengis Khan sweeping through Asia with his armies to the frontiers of India. More direct menaces to British power in India were felt to lie in the French settlements in the Isle de France (Mauritius) and the Isle de Bourbon in the Indian Ocean, which were all that remained of French Indian territory after 1793, and in the strength of French-trained troops in the service of Indian princes. Malcolm wrote that in 1798 the French constituted "a rising danger of perhaps the most serious magnitude that ever threatened

our dominions in India.\textsuperscript{1} This was an extreme statement and an examination of Malcolm's early political work reveals that he had underestimated the hostility of the Marathas and had taken too serious a view of the French threat to British India.

Because Malcolm's early political work was carried out under Lord Mornington, he shared much of the criticism from England of the Governor-General's policies. The years 1798 to 1805 were those in which the Directors of the East India Company, through the City and Shipping interests, became all-powerful. They tried to block Mornington's plans and in the end forced him to resign. Therefore, although there were some in England, notably David Scott, Director and Chairman of the Company, who even in the war against the Marathas "marched with Wellesley,"\textsuperscript{2} the Governor-General had to rely mainly on support from those of the Company's servants who were actually in India.

Because of his championship of Lord Mornington, Malcolm has sometimes been considered solely as one of his lieutenants. It is true that as an agent of the government Malcolm was bound to carry out the Governor-General's instructions. But there were times when

\textsuperscript{1} Malcolm, Political History, i. p.309.
\textsuperscript{2} C.H. Philips, ed., The Correspondence of David Scott, i. Introduction, p.xx.
Malcolm tried to act more as a free agent, and his turn of mind was certainly independent. When Lord Mornington arrived in India, Malcolm was twenty-nine, he had been in India for years, and had formed very decided opinions upon several political questions. These included the problem posed by European officers in the service of Indian rulers; the attitude of Tipu Sultan towards the British; and the policy which the British should adopt in these matters. He was soon to be able to see if his opinions were shared by the Governor-General. Apparently they were, because, looking back on Lord Mornington's Governor-Generalship, Malcolm never doubted that he had been the right man for the time: "a nobleman, whose rank and talents enabled him to enter upon the great duties committed to his charge with every advantage."¹

Early in his Indian career Lord Mornington faced the problem posed by the officering and training of the forces of Indian princes by Europeans. These mercenaries were of all nationalities, but the French dominated. It had, in a sense, become fashionable during the eighteenth century for Indian princes to employ European officers to introduce more modern methods of warfare to their armies. Tipu had a French contingent; Raymond built up a force of 14,000 at Hyderabad; de Boigue, a Savoyard, built up a force for

¹ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India, 1784-1811*, p. 229
Mahadji Sindia, and was succeeded by the Frenchman, Perron. British politicians in India believed these men were fostering, at the Indian courts, revolutionary and anti-British ideas. Englishmen, for example, did not feel that the court of Hyderabad itself was hostile to them; but the attitude of the Frenchmen at that court, who were originally intended by the Nizam to act against the Marathas, was not in doubt. The officers were said to be "Frenchmen of the most virulent and notorious principles of Jacobinism";¹ they hoisted their own national flag, and their lapels and epauletts were embroidered with the words liberté and constitution.² Englishmen in India were convinced that

"the efforts of this party are continually directed to the object of magnifying the power, resources, and success of France in the eyes of the Court of Hyderabad, and of deprecating the character, force and credit of Great Britain by every possible means."³

So wrote Major William Kirkpatrick, former Resident at Hyderabad, to the Governor-General. The activities of Raymond's corps ought to be prevented by "every means

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1. Mornington to Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, Cape of Good Hope, 23 February, 1798, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, i. p.3.
3. Mornington to Dundas, 23 February, 1798, Ibid., p.3. Major William Kirkpatrick (1754-1812) met Lord Mornington at the Cape in 1798. He finally left India in 1801, and it was his brother, Captain James Achilles Kirkpatrick (1764-1805) who later became Resident at Hyderabad with Malcolm as his Assistant.
within our power" consistent with the "general principles of moderation and justice, which ought to form the rule of our conduct in India."¹

Mornington based his policies towards Hyderabad on this information, and Malcolm agreed with him wholeheartedly. But Malcolm had reached similar conclusions quite independently. Even before he embarked on his diplomatic career he had revealed that he already had some understanding of general principles for dealing with Indian states, and for governing an empire. Before Lord Mornington's views were known Malcolm had given his opinions on these subjects. After he heard of the death of Raymond on 25 March, 1798, he wrote to Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras, that the time had come "when a Governor-General of energy might give the fatal blow to that alarming power which the French have gained in the Deccan."² Malcolm felt that with the Nizam's adviser, Mushir-ul-Mulk, ready to allow the British to dictate their own terms, an unparalleled opportunity was presented to the British to secure their position in that part of India.³ As yet, however, he did not know Lord Mornington's mind. Indeed, he doubted whether the new Governor-General would act at all: "But an effectual

¹ Ibid., p.4.
² Malcolm to Hobart, April, 1798, Kaye, Life, i., p.69.
³ Mushir-ul-Mulk held sway at Hyderabad until the Nizam Ali's death on 6 August, 1803.
interference is a step of too much responsibility for a new Governor-General to take, unless he possesses uncommon nerve". 1 For the policy of the late Governor-General Sir John Shore, Malcolm had little sympathy. He felt that it was Shore's timid policies which had allowed the French to gain their great influence unchecked. Shore, he felt, had created the current dangers simply because he allowed the growth of an enemy's power "rather than incur the remote risk of the peace being disturbed during his placid reign". 2 The same principles upon which Malcolm urged a strong action against the Nizam's French troops governed his behaviour in subsequent dealings, years later, with other Indian states. As Malcolm put it: "risk or not, the necessity of the attempt appears to me to be paramount". 3 Clearly, Malcolm thought of the Frenchmen as a very real threat to British national security in India as well as in Europe.

Moreover, at this particular time, it was not just a case of stabilizing British relations with the Nizam. Unless the Deccan was friendly to the English it would be dangerous to launch a war against Tipu of Mysore. On Tipu's affairs Malcolm had also formed an opinion.

1. Malcolm to Hobart, April, 1798, Kaye, Life, i. p.69.
3. Ibid.
Realising Tipu's importance as a potential threat to the Company, Malcolm had studied the subject so thoroughly that in July, 1798 he was able to submit to the Governor-General a detailed description of the politics of Mysore. He had concluded that, although Tipu's efforts were directed ultimately against the English, "on the principle that it is their declared and invariable policy to check his aggrandizement," the Indian ruler would not act until he was absolutely sure of success. The French might provide him with the means for this success. There can be little doubt that Malcolm felt that in the end Tipu would have to be subdued by the British.

Malcolm was soon to find that in Lord Mornington's eyes this was the right viewpoint to take. Mornington's actions against Tipu were precipitated by his hearing within a short space of time of Tipu's intrigues with the French and of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which brought him one step nearer to British India. In his subsequent accounts of this Malcolm claims that a letter from Napoleon to Tipu dated 7 Fluviose, 7th year of the Republic, promising to relieve Tipu of the yoke of the English, was "conclusive evidence" of France's hostile

2. Ibid., pp.659-660.
intentions. ¹

This, however, was not quite accurate. The first five chapters of the Political History of India were written in 1811, while England was still at war with France. ² Indeed, when Mornington first heard of the letter he did not take it at all seriously until he heard of the Egyptian venture. A modern historian of the French in India dates the last serious proposal of a French project for diplomatic alliances and military operations in India to Lescallier's Report to the National Convention, 15 October, 1794. Subsequent ideas of this nature were only "feebly revived" during the days of the Consulate. ³ As far as the danger from the French soldiers at Hyderabad and Mysore was concerned, Malcolm once again had taken too exaggerated a view. Remnants of Tipu's French contingent did have Jacobin sympathies, but in actual fact their military strength was weak: since the English had captured the French territories in India in 1793, they had been deprived of regular reinforcements. ⁴ The Frenchmen at Hyderabad were at first glance stronger. Raymond's successor Piron did arouse English suspicions by sending French revolutionary symbols to Sindia's general Perron, at the time of the disclosure of Tipu's

² Malcolm wrote the Sketch of the Political History of India in 1811. In 1826 five of the six chapters of this book were incorporated into the Political History of India (2 vols.). The sixth, on the government of India, was greatly expanded in volume ii. of the Political History.
³ S.P.Sen, The French in India, 1763-1816, pp.531-532.
⁴ Ibid., p.540.
inquiries. Yet neither Raymond nor Piron had any deep-laid political project or connection with the Revolutionary government. 1 Napoleon apparently knew very little about these men. 2 Therefore, we can now see that Malcolm erred in taking Frenchmen in search of personal fortunes, as hostile French politicians. Malcolm's analysis of the motives behind the first expansionist moves of Mornington's Governor-Generalship must, therefore be modified. He wrote that the great rise to political power of the British in India "is to be ascribed to the hostility of the French, more than to all other causes combined." But he was not strictly correct when he added that on this occasion the East India Company was fighting for its very existence. 3 A more accurate assessment of the situation would be that men such as Malcolm were too credulous where French threats were concerned; that the fear of France, existing largely in their own minds, kept them constantly on the alert; and that it was on the basis of these misconceptions that they acted towards Hyderabad and Mysore. In this way "the French by their potential threat, more imaginary than real, helped the expansion and consolidation of the British power in India." 4

1. Ibid., p.541.
2. Ibid., p.547.
It is obvious, therefore, that although he shared Mornington's misconceptions about the relative strength of France and Britain in the East, Malcolm had his own views on specific Indian problems. He did not merely adopt Mornington's ideas, but saw in the new Governor-General a man, as events were to show, who had practically the same principles and beliefs regarding the continuance and extension of British power.

In his biography of Malcolm, Kaye pinpoints the influence of Sir John Kennaway, Resident at Hyderabad, whom Malcolm met in 1791, as providing the greatest turning point in Malcolm's life. During his stay at Hyderabad Malcolm had admired Kennaway's work and position. This influenced him so much that he turned his own ambitions towards a career in diplomacy. We shall see that Kennaway's influence, although important, would have been fruitless had Malcolm not found himself serving under a Governor-General with whom he was, in general, in complete agreement. It was Mornington who advanced Malcolm's career by appointing him Assistant to the Resident at Hyderabad, sending him on an important diplomatic mission to Persia, and involving him in Maratha affairs.

CHAPTER II

Malcolm's diplomatic career, after Lord Mornington's arrival in 1798, advanced rapidly. From the very beginning of his term of office, the Governor-General was made aware of Malcolm's abilities. Since he had not the advantage of influential relatives, Malcolm was forced to advance on his own merits. In a note to Dundas, Mornington indicated that Malcolm did exactly this:

"I have annexed to this letter two papers drawn up by Captain Malcolm, one on the state of Tipoo's army and resources, the other a general view of our political situation. The latter is curious as Captain Malcolm had not seen any of my letters or minutes on the same subject, ... I had no knowledge of Captain Malcolm, nor was he recommended to me before I met him at Fort St. George; he is a very promising young man."1

Thus Malcolm had caught the attention of a man with enough authority to put their common policies into effect.

Malcolm's first appointment under Lord Mornington was as Assistant to the Resident at Hyderabad.2 He had

1. Mornington to Dundas, 11 October, 1798, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, i. pp.298-299.
2. Malcolm received the appointment on 10 September, 1798.
visited Indian courts before, and had been impressed with neither their efficiency nor their government. Naturally, he judged only by European standards: he described as "shocking" the manner in which ransom money was collected by an Indian prince from a conquered village, and the starvation of many of its inhabitants.¹ This was the impression of an army officer. His duties at Hyderabad gave him a closer view of Indian politics and diplomacy but merely confirmed his earlier opinion. Within a year Malcolm was recommending the solution which was fast becoming the British panacea for disturbances in India. British power must bolster up the Nizam's government and so ensure that it would remain friendly towards the British. For the "inconceivable weakness and shameful corruption of the Government" would soon cause it to dissolve "if unsupported by our aid".² Malcolm saw British interference as necessitated by self-interest, for the sake of safety, even though involvement in Hyderabad's domestic affairs could be undesirable. It would make the court "literally dependent—a situation from which they are at present only one stage removed."³ Malcolm

¹ M.S. Memoir by Malcolm, Kaye, Life, i. p.17.
² Malcolm to Ross, 10 August, 1799, Ibid., p.68.
³ Ibid.
willingly helped in ordering Hyderabad's affairs. On 1 September, 1798 the first subsidiary treaty with Hyderabad was signed. The treaty was the result of the Governor-General's determination to repair the defensive alliance against Tipu, which had been jeopardised by the possibility that the Nizam's French troops would come to Tipu's aid. ¹ In August, Malcolm had concluded, and hoped that he was right, that a detachment collected in Guntur was "meant for the expulsion of this nest of democrats". ² By September, it was obvious that Malcolm himself was to help in the disbandment of the French corps. He heard of his appointment to Hyderabad. In his choice Mornington had been influenced by the "zeal, activity and diligence which you have pursued in the study of the native languages, and of the political system of India." ³

Malcolm, therefore, joined the new Resident at Hyderabad, Captain James Kirkpatrick. Under strong pressure from them, and the British force, the Nizam proclaimed the disbandment of the French corps on 21 October, 1798. This was not effected without difficulty: at first the Nizam's ministers obstructed the stationing.

¹ Minute of the Governor-General in the Secret Department, 12 August, 1798, Owen, ed., Selection from the Despatches of Wellesley, pp.35-36.
² Malcolm to Hobart, August, 1798, Kaye, Life, i. p.69.
³ Mornington to Malcolm, 20 September, 1798, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, i. p.264.
of the British battalion where it could overawe the French.\(^1\) Then the men mutinied, and Malcolm's life was saved only by deserters from his old regiment. But in the end the troops were disarmed and dispersed without bloodshed. Malcolm's report after this event details only the revolutionary aspects of the corps, and the well-stocked condition of its supplies. In fact, a force of 14,000 had been dispersed relatively quickly by a small British detachment. Most of the difficulty had been in dealing with the Nizam. Obviously, however, the British in India at this time had regarded Pátron's troops as a great menace. General Harris, who later commanded a British army in the war against Tipu Sultan, described the news of the dispersal of the force as "great and important",\(^2\) and Mornington congratulated Captain Kirkpatrick on the "firmness and discretion" with which he had carried out his work.\(^3\)

From these events Malcolm could not fail to learn much about the practical mechanics of diplomacy at Indian courts. He learned that any calculations in diplomacy must take account of the tendency of some Indian rulers to prevaricate and deceive. Here also

1. Kays, Life, i. p.73.
2. General Harris to Mornington, 29 October, 1796, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, i. p.318.
appears a conviction which remained with him throughout his career—a conviction shared by others of the soldier-political class, such as Munro. This was, that British diplomacy in India must be conducted on different lines from that in Europe, and that it could be successful only when backed by a display of armed force.¹ Malcolm was, therefore, basically unsympathetic to Indian governments, convinced of the relative superiority of British rule, and willing to support the extension of British influence with British armies.

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Malcolm found himself involved once more in army duties with the outbreak of the war with Tipu Sultan. He was "happy to find his Lordship fully determined to act in the most spirited manner towards the Sultan".² He accompanied the Nizam's troops to aid their co-operation with the British army and to act as a channel of communication with the Governor-General. Malcolm's success in this matter was apparently due to his ability to co-operate with the Nizam's agent, Mir Alam.³

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1. Referring to the diplomacy of Colonel Barry Close, Resident at Poona, in negotiating the Treaty of Bassein (1802) Malcolm said: "we must depend on the able application of our force, ... the more formidable our preparations for war, the more chance we have of effecting our object in peace." Malcolm to Josiah Webbe, Secretary to the Government, (undated), Kaye, Life, i. p.203.


3. Harris to Warkington, 5 April, 1799, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, i. p.517.
Following the battle of Seringapatam, Malcolm was appointed one of the secretaries to the Commissioners empowered to settle the affairs of Mysore.\(^1\) Malcolm later claimed that the responsibility for the domestic and foreign affairs of that state, which the British now assumed, led to the Company's involvement in Maratha affairs, and consequently to the establishment of British paramountcy.

After this work at Mysore, Malcolm's career in diplomacy made a big step forward: he was sent at the head of an embassy to Persia, and fulfilled his mission to Lord Wellesley's satisfaction, if not that of the Court of Directors'.\(^2\) Malcolm felt that tangible displays of British power were necessary and his expense accounts tended, therefore, to be large. On his return to India in May, 1801, Malcolm became Lord Wellesley's temporary Private Secretary. Malcolm's importance to the Governor-General in this capacity is shown by the fact that it was he who was sent on a secret mission to Madras to counteract the intentions of the Court of Directors with respect to appointments at that Presidency. Malcolm was able to persuade Lord Clive, who had

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1. The Commissioners were General Harris, Arthur and Henry Wellesley, William Kirkpatrick and Barry Close. Thomas Munro was the other secretary.
2. Lord Wellesley to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, 28 September, 1801, Martin, ed., *Correspondence of Wellesley*, ii. pp. 667-668. In December, 1799 Lord Mornington had been created Marquess Wellesley.
succeeded Lord Hobart as Governor of Madras, to delay his sailing for England so that the new Regulations for an improved revenue and judicial system could be put into operation.¹

Then, when in July, 1802, the Persian ambassador to the East India Company was accidentally killed in a disturbance at Bombay, it was Malcolm who was sent there to conciliate the Persians.² Malcolm had by now become an influential and powerful man. He was described as "Lord Wellesley's factotum, and the greatest man in Calcutta"³ and the Governor-General himself described Malcolm as the man "who now occupies the most confidential station in my family."⁴ When, therefore, the crisis in Maratha affairs resulting from the conclusion of the Treaty of Bassein arose, Malcolm was the logical person for Wellesley to send to the British army to deal with any political questions which might arise.

Malcolm's career was greatly affected by the crisis in Maratha affairs. In February, 1803, Malcolm was appointed Resident at Mysore. But although officially he held this post for nearly nine years, he in fact

². Lord Wellesley to Chairman of Court of Directors, 12 August, 1802, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, ii. pp. 667-668.
⁴. Lord Wellesley to Court of Directors, 12 August, 1802, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, ii. p. 671.
resided there only a matter of months. The British involvement in central Indian politics meant that, instead of settling down to more routine business, Malcolm became a type of roving agent on Maratha affairs for various Governors-General until the Marathas were finally subdued in 1818. His work during these years is important, for it was from the events of the Second Maratha War that the British Raj grew. The impetus to the expansion of British influence has often been attributed to Lord Wellesley's ambitions alone. But Malcolm's career shows that men in the lower echelons of government gave the Governor-General vital support, without which he could not have acted as he did.

The more immediate background to the war lay in the confused relationships between the Maratha princes. When war broke out in 1801 between Holkar and Sindia, the latter lost control of Poona. Until December, 1802, Baji Rao, the Peshwa, had refused Wellesley's offer of an alliance. Late in that year, however, feeling that he was threatened by Holkar, the Peshwa fled to Bassein, where he concluded a subsidiary alliance with the British. This left the Company in a very strong position, with subsidiary forces at Mysore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, and Poona.¹ It was the reaction of the other Maratha princes to this treaty

which involved the British in another war.

Malcolm, as Lord Wellesley's former secretary, was very interested in these events. Some years later he analysed Wellesley's reaction to the situation:

"the distraction, which this event \[i.e. the Peshwa's flight to Bassein\] had created among the Mahratta States, appeared to Lord Wellesley to constitute a most favourable crisis, for effecting the complete establishment of the British interests at the Court of Poonah."\(^1\)

Wellesley's rather complicated aim was to extend the British power by assisting the Peshwa to set up a stable and efficient administration. Yet at the same time he claimed that he did not want to interfere with the legitimate rights or possessions of the great Maratha rulers. Consequently, they would then be able to oppose the British arrangement only on the grounds that it defeated their own plans for

"encroachment and aggrandizement, which it had become the imperious policy of the British Government to check, as their prosecution was altogether incompatible with the maintenance of that system, which it had been compelled to adopt, for its own safety, and that of its Allies."\(^2\)

The maintenance of a defensive system was not, however, the sole explanation of British involvement in Maratha affairs. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Malcolm's defence of the Treaty of Bassein. Like the British in late nineteenth century Africa, the Company's

\(^1\) Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History*, p.267.
\(^2\) Ibid.
officers were drawn more deeply into the affairs of their neighbours in response to events beyond their control, but unlike some of the late Victorians the men in India were by no means reluctant to remain in control.

When Lord Castlereagh criticised the wisdom of the alliance with the Peshwa, Malcolm strongly defended the treaty. He seems to have indulged in some self-deception when he stated that the treaty, by freeing the Peshwa from Sindia and Holkar, "gave him a degree of real power and importance as a ruler which he never before possessed", and that "It never was the intention of the policy which directed the alliance to govern ... the Maratha empire through the means of the Peishwa." By accepting the British alliance and subsidiary force the Peshwa had in reality merely exchanged domination by Sindia or Holkar, who were at least his fellow Marathas, for that of a foreign power. Baji Rao's subsequent actions were to demonstrate how much he regretted the move. Lord Wellesley was concentrating on the extension of British influence; but Malcolm, closer to actual events, was prepared to go even further. He looked beyond this to a time when a system of influence would not be enough, for "moderation and forbearance are equivocal qualities unless exercised

by those who have paramount and undisputed powers."¹

Thinking in terms of power politics he elaborated this theme:

"It appears to my mind certain that both the measures of preventive policy which the intrigues and ambition of the native powers must continually lead the English government to adopt, and the wars into which the latter must occasionally be forced by the rapacity and violence of the former will not only gradually tend to the increase of the British dominions, but ultimately to the paramount establishment of the influence and power of that nation over all the continent of India. This ultimate effect will I conceive be operated by causes which we have not the power to control. It is in fact the natural progressive growth of civilisation."²

Malcolm here was more frank than the Governor-General who, before he arrived in India talked of restoring the balance of power as it was established by the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1793.³ In the circumstances of 1802 such a policy was plainly unrealistic. The British could not turn back the clock; their very presence in India had upset the internal balance of power, and invited attack from Indian rulers.

When writing his history of India, Malcolm recognised the part played by circumstance in British expansion; and at the time he defended the Governor-

¹. Ibid., p.206.
². Ibid.
³. Lord Mornington to Dundas, Cape of Good Hope, 28 February, 1798, Martin, ed., Correspondence of Wellesley, i. p.28.
General's forward policy on this ground. As Malcolm saw it, the extension of British influence into Hyderabad and Mysore had, in effect, removed two buffer states between the Maratha and Company territory. Therefore, the British could not avoid contact with the states of central India, because

"the fulfilment of our engagements with good faith towards the Nizam, led to the subsidiary alliance with him being maintained and extended, for the purpose of protecting him against a combination of the Mahrattas."2

Furthermore, the alteration in political relations with the Marathas produced by British influence in Hyderabad and Mysore meant

"that it was evident we must either retract the engagement which we had formed, and abandon the territories we had acquired, or endeavour, by negotiation, to make the principal Mahratta chiefs so to modify their policy and habits of rule as to render them compatible with the altered political state of the peninsula."3

Such a policy augured ill for any Marathas who refused to conform to the ideas of these nineteenth century Englishmen as to what constituted good government. And while it is true that the British had succeeded to the direction of the political relationships of Hyderabad and Mysore, it is also true that the Maratha

2. Malcolm, Minutes of Evidence, Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, P.P., 1831/1832 (735-VI), xliv. p. 27.
states had remained neutral since the Treaty of Salbai in 1782.

In defending Lord Wellesley's policies, Malcolm usually made use of arguments relating to the security of the British frontier, claiming that it was in danger from disorderly governments beyond it. Yet he hinted at what may have been of fundamental concern. The British in India, cut off by thousands of miles from their main source of reinforcements, felt that they had to make their position, both militarily and politically, unassailable. Therefore, Malcolm later claimed that Sindia's policy in not attacking his neighbour Oudh, which was under British protection, was not really pacific. It was, Malcolm argued, potentially hostile to the British because Mahadji and Daulat Rao Sindia, by concentrating on building up their power in Hindustan, were "generating a more serious evil to the British power."¹

Malcolm's fears regarding Sindia were well-founded. He was looked on as the strongest of the Maratha princes, and was described as a man of some sophistication:

"Born and educated at a distance from the Deccan, surrounded by Europeans, Muhammadans and Rajputs, and despising the irregular and predatory hordes, whose activity and enterprise had established the fame of his ancestors, Daulat Rao Sindia was more the principal sovereign of India, than a member of the Maratha confederacy."²

1. Ibid., p. 313.
His control over Poona was thought to add to his means of disturbing his neighbours. 1 Malcolm, however, although always confident that British rule would be more orderly than that of Indian governments, was more concerned with international factors. Malcolm believed that if Sindia regained his ascendancy over the Peshwa by defeating Holkar, the subsequent enlargement of his power would be fatal. The recent Peace of Amiens had left the way open for French intrigue. This accounts for Malcolm's strong defence of the Treaty of Bassein. British policy-makers felt that if Sindia's resentment of the treaty led to war the campaign against him would be part of the preparation for a renewal of the war with France. 2 Malcolm's explanation that the British had to intervene because of disorder on the frontier was given as it became obvious that Wellesley would have to act to sustain the British position. Had the British not supported their allies, one Maratha ruler might have been able to establish his power along the whole line of the British frontier and so challenge the Company's dominant position. 3

From late in 1802 until early 1803 Malcolm's views appear to have undergone a slight change. In September

1. W. Kirkpatrick to H. T. Colebrooke, Resident at Nagpur, 16 April, 1800, BR.C., v. p.5.
1802 although feeling that something must be done about the disturbed state of the Peshwa's territories, he seems to have had little serious anxiety that the Company's frontier needed immediate defence against the Maratha freebooters. If any action was needed on the part of the British against the Marathas, it would be, he felt, easily accomplished. He therefore advocated the strengthening of the Hyderabad subsidiary force by the replacement of the two Indian battalions with a European regiment. He thought that this force could then, if necessary, overthrow the Poona or Berar branch of the Marathas within three months. At this time, Malcolm appears to have regarded the Marathas as more in the nature of an irritant than a serious danger. Yet by New Year's Day, 1803, he had moved a step towards accepting the idea that nothing but British paramountcy over the Marathas could ensure the establishment of peace and tranquillity in the peninsula. This was not surprising: already Malcolm had expressed his disapproval of systems of rule which existed.

"on the insecure basis of individual honour and individual ability, and which acknowledged no principles but those of expediency, and knew no laws but those of necessity."  

When, therefore, it seemed likely that as a result of

1. Malcolm to Edmonstone, 26 September, 1802, Kaye, Life, i. p.181.  
the Treaty of Bassein a Maratha confederacy might be formed against the British, Malcolm could claim that the British would bring order to India. By implication he felt that British negotiators, supported by armies, should try to maintain the peace not only within, but also beyond the Company's frontiers.

This justification was not, however, supported only by self-interest. Some Indians did not prefer Maratha domination to that of the British, and in any conflict with Sindia the British had at least some moral support from this quarter. For instance, the British Resident at Sindia's court from 1795 to 1803, John Collins, reported that one group of Indians, the Bhils, wanted Sindia removed as he had tried to destroy them. It was also reported that there was discontent in Sindia's territories over his employment of the French, which indicated a hostility to Europeans in general, not only to the British.

Within a few months of writing that the Marathas as plunderers could easily be taught a lesson, Malcolm had come to believe that the Company's frontiers and

1. Collins to Lord Wellesley, 11 August, 1801, Extract from Bengal Secret Consultations, 15 August, 1802, P.P., 1803/1804, xii. p.3. The protests of the Bhils against Sindia were probably part of a long-standing rivalry between the more sophisticated Hindus, represented by Sindia, and the aboriginal population which was, at the most, only quasi-Hindu.

2. Ibid., p.5.
its allies' frontiers were seriously threatened by Maratha plunderers. He was confident in the strength of the British army and diplomats; but the methods he called for were significant:

"nothing but the terror of British arms will ever cause [Sindia and Holkar] to desist from their ruinous excursions into the countries which lie to the south of the Nerbuddah." 1

Taken to its logical conclusion, this policy meant that the British must deliberately extend their political influence and military strength until there was no single power great enough to challenge their authority.

At this point, however, Malcolm still said (using words rather reminiscent of those used just before World War I) that

"one short campaign would for ever dissipate the terror with which the Indian politicians in England are accustomed to contemplate the power of the Mahratta nation." 2

As it happened, Malcolm's predictions, and the similar predictions of Lord Wellesley, 3 were too optimistic and the English politicians a little more accurate in their judgment.

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The terms of the Treaty of Bassein provided that

1. Malcolm to J. Kirkpatrick, 1 January, 1803, Kaye, Life, i. p. 201.
the British should secure the Peshwa's restoration to Poona. A detachment of the army of Fort St. George, under Arthur Wellesley, advanced, in co-operation with the subsidiary force in the Deccan, under Colonel Stevenson, through the southern part of the Peshwa's territories to effect this object. On 19 March, 1803, Malcolm joined Arthur Wellesley's camp at Hubli. He was to be employed in the camp "on such affairs of a political nature as may arise." Primarily, this referred to negotiations with the southern Maratha jagirdars who were presumed to be in favour of the Peshwa's restoration. Malcolm was also involved in the plans for the Peshwa's return to Poona, and the conclusion of a peace with Sindhia and the Raja of Berar.

It is sometimes difficult, however, to discern where Malcolm's influence on events begins and ends during 1803, since most of the official business was done in Arthur Wellesley's name. On the other hand, the General was occupied with military affairs and it is probable that Malcolm had a fairly free hand in much of the political business of the areas which the army transversed. Malcolm had worked before with Arthur Wellesley on the Mysore Commission, and the two men were personal friends. As soon as Malcolm arrived

in camp, he entered into "the fullest and most satisfactory communications with General Wellesley."\(^1\)

Malcolm's work with the jagirdars demonstrated a fundamental misconception of the British about the Peshwa's power. It soon became obvious that British power alone could keep the Peshwa on his manadar; the expected support of his subordinates was not forthcoming on the scale anticipated. Those who did join the British march to Poona, although "professedly warm in their attachment to the Peshwah," viewed the "general cause as a means of advancing their particular interest."\(^2\)

Some of the Marathas in the area, such as the Raja of Kolhapur, were under Sindhia's influence.\(^3\) The most important Indian who joined the British, Appa Sahib, was deterred only by threats of British hostility from allowing personal feuds to jeopardise the Peshwa's restoration.\(^4\) Moreover, the Peshwa was not co-operating in the conciliation of his adherents.\(^5\) The British effected the Peshwa's restoration, but it was clear that his authority in his own territory was not going to be strong enough for the British to rely merely on influence to secure their interests. Baji Rao,

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2. Malcolm to Clive, 3 April, 1803, P.R.C., x. p.91.
3. Ibid.
5. R. Wellesley to Colonel Stevenson, 10 April, 1803, Ibid., p.463.
Malcolm wrote, was "slow, jealous, and indecisive," making it "impossible to carry such a character along with us in a course of wise, strong, and decisive measures."\(^1\) Malcolm had already decided that the British must "devise means of directing his councils, or of rendering ourselves independent of their operation."\(^2\)

Once the Peshwa was restored Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley were concerned "to bring Scindiah to a declaration."\(^3\) By 5 September Malcolm reported to Henry Wellesley that war had broken out.\(^4\) Malcolm himself was ill, and to his sorrow missed the battles. He returned to camp in time to help Arthur Wellesley negotiate peace treaties with Sindia and the Raja of Berar. On some minor points the Treaty of Surji Arjungaon between the British and Sindia was modified in accordance with Malcolm's suggestions.\(^5\)

Of more personal interest to Malcolm was the agreement made by Sindia to negotiate for a subsidiary force. Malcolm was dispatched by Arthur Wellesley to Sindia's camp to conclude the necessary treaty.

1. Malcolm to Major Merrick Shawe, Secretary to the Government, 13 June, 1803, Kaye, Life, i. p.221.
CHAPTER III

The Treaty of Surji Arjungaon was, however, not meant to be the last of the negotiations with Sindia. By the provisions of the Fifteenth Article of this treaty, the ground was laid for a more complete alliance with Sindia's government. It was hoped that he would take advantage of the terms offered him, and ally himself more closely with the English. But should he fail to do so, he would still find it very difficult ever again to direct his efforts against the British: British influence in the affairs of his state was already considerable.¹ Given this state of affairs, there were three reasons for sending a British representative to Sindia's durbar at once: to negotiate a treaty of general defensive alliance if Sindia requested it; to try to lessen Sindia's humiliation and to smooth out any difficulties about effecting the various clauses of the recent treaty of peace; and, not the least important, to acquire information about the domestic situation at Sindia's court, the state of his remaining military

¹ A. Wellesley to Lord Wellesley, 30 December, 1803, Gurwood, Dispatches of Wellington, ii. pp.616-621.
resources, and his probable future policies and actions. Clearly, it was necessary to send someone of tact, knowledge and political ability. Because he was Arthur Wellesley's friend and assistant, Malcolm was the obvious choice. He was, however, in such poor health that Arthur Wellesley and the medical officers would have preferred to send Malcolm to England to recover. Therefore, it was a man who was described as being "entirely incapable of doing business," who arrived at Sindia's camp. In other respects, the situation was promising. On 12 January, Sindia received the Acting Resident in a manner in "every way consistent with those sentiments of peace and friendship which this court has lately professed." Malcolm's work was not, however, going to be as free from problems as this seemed to indicate.

The few months that Malcolm spent in the camp at Burhanpur are significant for a number of reasons. His work there illustrates the objectives of British policy in the Indian states in general, the extension of British influence by means of the subsidiary treaty system, and the similarities and differences in attitude between the

3. Ibid.
men in Fort William and those actually in the field.

Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley both felt that with the British interest in mind, the less tangible task of soothing Sindia's injured pride and vanity was no less important than the negotiation of a general defensive alliance. The former, as much as the latter, was necessary for the maintenance of order. Order, Malcolm felt, was vital for the continued existence and prosperity of the East India Company's territories. His mission to Sindia, he regarded as part of a necessary, almost inevitable process. His remarks on the policy which resulted in the Treaty of Bassein showed his conviction that the British must play an increasingly important part in Indian affairs.

The situation Malcolm now had to deal with was one where one Indian ruler was driven to seek an alliance with the Company to protect himself from the depredations of another. Sindia was not only a defeated enemy; he was a vital element in the British policy towards Holkar. For those whom he felt were comparatively legitimate rulers, such as the Peshwa, Malcolm often had sympathy, but Jeswant Rao Holkar he never regarded as anything but a freebooter. This seems to have been a general opinion among Lord Wellesley's young officers. The nineteen year old Charles Metcalfe, wrote a paper on the "Proposed Subsidiary Force in Sindiah's Dominions";¹ it

was sent to Malcolm by Lord Wellesley early in 1804, as it was relevant to his activities. In it Metcalfe, after detailing the recent arrangements calculated to prevent disturbances of the peace, went on:

"but the tranquillity of a great extent of country, and the happiness of vast numbers of its inhabitants, are still exposed to destruction, from the oppressive ambition and diabolical ravages of disaffected chieftains and restless and unprincipled freebooters."

The only person this could refer to was Holkar whose reported invasions and depredations merely added to what was believed to be the general disorder of government in the Indian states. And this was the very thing that Malcolm, as a British representative, was aiming to eliminate, specifically at this time, in Sindia's government. Here lay one motive for inviting Sindia to join the general defensive alliance. His power, reputation and military resources had been greatly diminished in the recent war, from which Holkar had stood aloof, maintaining his strength. Both the British and Sindia had something to gain from an alliance, although the ultimate benefits went more to the former. Malcolm was fully awake to Sindia's dilemma and consequently to the strength of his own position during the negotiations. Of Sindia's unenviable position Malcolm wrote:

1. Ibid., p.105.
"if he returns to Ujjain without having formed that connection, [i.e. an alliance with the British] he must either fall under the power of his rival or admit his influence to an extent that will oblige him to adopt every measure that Wolker may dictate".1

Neither the British nor Sindia could afford "the magnitude of the evils which might result from the occurrence of either of these events".2 For Wolker to take over Sindia's government would mean the recurrence of a situation similar to that created by Tipu Sultan, a situation in which an Indian prince would be strong enough to challenge the rapidly emerging British paramountcy. The British could well afford to give Sindia favourable terms, for Lord Wellesley was expecting much from the negotiations with him. He felt that the British, once they had established friendly relations with this state, would display such circumstances of glory and power as would be an insurmountable barrier to any Indian opposition.3 Malcolm's task, therefore, was of the highest political importance to Wellesley's policy. For their own reasons the British representatives wished to bolster up Sindia's shaky government. On the other hand, since Sindia's main aim in consenting to the new alliance was to strengthen his defences against Wolker, Malcolm had

1. Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 6 February, 1804, P.R.C., x. p.204.
2. Ibid.
3. Lord Wellesley to Lake, 17 January, 1804, P.R., 1805 (19), x. p.637(3)
to be careful that he did not allow Sindia an opportunity
to draw the British into an offensive or preventative
war. He was to try to curb Sindia's independence in
the conduct of his foreign affairs while retaining for
the English an independent hand. Considering these
policies, and the fact that, despite Holkar's professed
friendship for the British government, "his conduct at
this period indicated other designs", Malcolm had a
difficult path to tread; he had to try to preserve the
situation in favour of the British whilst attempting
not to injure the susceptibilities of Daulat Rao Sindia.

Temperamentally Malcolm was suitable for his task.
He had not changed a great deal from the "Boy Malcolm"
of earlier years; his sense of humour considerably
lightened the atmosphere of Sindia's durbar. Malcolm
himself was fully aware of the beneficial effects of
friendly treatment; it was the reason for the separation
of the two treaties, the Treaty of Peace, and the Treaty

1. A. Wellesley, "Memorandum for Major Malcolm on his
Mission to the Durbar of Dowlut Rao Scindiah." Gurwood,
Dispatches of Wellington, ii. p.636.
2. Malcolm, Sketch of the Political History of India,
p.313.
3. "Malcolm writes from Scindiah's camp, that at the
first meeting Scindiah received him with great
gravity, which he had intended to preserve through-
out the visit. It rained violently; and an officer
of the escort, Mr. Pepper, ... sat under a flat part
of the tent which received a great part of the rain
that fell. At length it burst through the tent
upon the head of Mr. Pepper, ... Scindiah laughed
violently, as did all the others present; and the
gravity and dignity of the durbar degenerated into a
Malcolm riot—after which they all parted upon the
best terms." A. Wellesley to Lord Wellesley, 21
January, 1804, Gurwood, Dispatches of Wellington, ii.
p.701.
of Durhanpur which was the result of Malcolm's negotiations. From the point of view of expediency and Malcolm's health it might have appeared easier to negotiate the two treaties at the same time. Malcolm explained why this was not done in a letter to Shawe:

"This separation of the two engagements appears to me highly politic. The treaty of peace is one which must be pressed upon his acceptance at the point of the bayonet. The subsidiary arrangement should be the result of persuasion; and to secure its beneficial effects, it is, perhaps, necessary that it should not be forced."1

Thus Sindia was to be wooed into putting himself under British protection with which he would find it very difficult to dispense.

Apart from the subsidiary treaty he was to negotiate, Malcolm had other plans which were to make it very difficult indeed for Sindia to evade British surveillance. By the provisions of the Seventh Article of the treaty of peace, the Company promised to pay pensions, or grant lands, to individuals who might suffer material losses when the peace terms were carried out. Despite its compensatory tone, Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley had, in this clause, provided an opportunity for the extension of British power. As Acting Resident Malcolm was required to negotiate the details of this

clause. In effect, despite assurances given to Sindia that interference in his domestic affairs would not occur, Malcolm's proposals gave the British government a peculiar kind of patronage in Sindia's territories. The sanads to Sindia's old retainers were to be for an individual's lifetime, and to be forfeit if the party concerned rebelled against Sindia or acted in a hostile way towards the British government. Malcolm certainly realised the implications of this rather subtle form of bribery:

"The moment ... the Sindars of this Court have tasted its sweets (which I mean they shall do by anticipation), the British Government will have the most powerful tie upon this State, the Chief offices of which will always form a considerable and the most certain part of their revenue, depending on the continuance of the friendship between the two Governments."

Moreover, the same principle applied to Sindia himself: part of the sum set aside for pensions would go to him because it would "not be a bad plan to bribe the prince, as well as his ministers." In addition to establishing their influence in Sindia's durbar in this manner, the British would benefit by the fact that such methods would retain in Sindia's service people who would otherwise have been compelled to join Holkar. This is not to say that Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley were intent on

buying for the Company greater power merely for expansion's sake. Both believed that Lord Wellesley was doing his best to avoid war with Holkar. 1 Both felt their measures to be essentially pacific, helping in "the preservation of that tranquillity which has been so recently established." 2 Yet neither had much confidence in Maratha governments and Arthur Wellesley, writing to Malcolm, apparently felt that the Marathas' inability to establish governments which were sound by British standards endangered the peace. 3

Within a few days of receiving this letter Malcolm had sent off an important dispatch to the Governor-General informing him of the internal situation at Sindia's court, the characters of ministers both in and out of their ruler's favour, and the state of his existing military resources. 4 It was written in the knowledge that the English might have to interfere further in Sindia's affairs. Naturally enough, Malcolm saw the situation in political, rather than in military, terms. This was because the complicated political relations with the Marathas which the Company had inherited from Hyderabad and Mysore constituted the raison d'être of Malcolm's presence

1. A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 10 February, 1804, Ibid., p.53.
2. Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 6 February, 1804, P.R.C., x. p.204.
in Sindia's camp. Here most of his time was devoted to bringing Sindia's ministers to the negotiation of a subsidiary treaty. Neither Malcolm nor Arthur Wellesley had foreseen any great difficulties. Conscious of the strength of the British position vis-à-vis Sindia, and of Sindia's fears regarding Holkar, Malcolm did not anticipate a long stay at Burhanpur.¹ The negotiations seemed to begin fairly well when Sindia welcomed Malcolm to the camp.² Despite this, however, Malcolm's optimism regarding the progress of his work proved to be unfounded. His difficulties throw light on the problems faced by the British in dealings with Maratha governments in which one faction was striving against another for power and profit.³ There were, however, good reasons also for the delay in negotiations, besides the habitual prevarication of the Marathas. Sindia's somewhat intermittent attention was taken up with the problem of subduing the Pindaris in the north, then he became very ill, and a month later the arrival of a vakil from Jeswant Rao Holkar's camp did not augur well for a swift conclusion of the treaty. Malcolm, however, felt that delay was all Holkar could cause: it was

¹ Malcolm to Shawe, 1 January, 1804, Kaye, Life, i. p.243.
² Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 12 January, 1804, P.R.C., x. p.196.
³ Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 20 February, 1804, Kaye, Life, i. pp.249-250.
unlikely that Sindia would trust him enough to join him in another alliance against the Company. But the arrival of Holkar's representative did have one effect on Malcolm; he became more determined to negotiate as intimate a connection between Sindia and the British as he could. Both Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley felt Sindia would agree to the basic stipulations they proposed. In addition, to facilitate matters, Arthur Wellesley delegated wide powers to Malcolm, asking Sindia "to consider what Major Malcolm will say to you as coming from me." Here lay the seeds of Lord Wellesley's disapproval of some of Malcolm's conduct. Arthur Wellesley, and now, indirectly, Malcolm, actually in the field and far from the seat of the Supreme Government, had, in the Governor-General's instructions to his brother, been vested with extremely wide powers. These powers included freedom to decide on questions of peace and war, and to negotiate treaties with other powers. Correspondence was no substitute for personal instructions; misunderstandings were almost certain to occur, especially when such an independently-minded man such as Malcolm was involved. Malcolm, feeling

2. Ibid.
that

"removing every doubt and apprehension with respect to the future intention of the English Government from the mind of the Maharaja and his ministers was of more consequence than even the conclusion of the subsidiary alliance,"1 was inclined in his anxiety to give Sindia favourable terms and to depart from the model of the treaties of Hyderabad and Bassein in some particulars. To gratify Sindia, Malcolm tried to incorporate parts of a treaty Sindia's advisers had concocted themselves into his own treaty. He restrained his impatience with such tactics but privately wrote of the ministers' treaty that "so great a jumble of nonsense was never collected into a regular form."2 With the same motive of honouring Sindia when he objected to the proposed subsidiary force being stationed within his territories, Malcolm tried to persuade him to cede the districts of Champaner, Dohad and Godree. If the troops were stationed here they would be within seven or eight days march of Sindia's capital.3 The alternative would be to increase the subsidiary force. Malcolm learned just in time, before he actually executed the treaty, that Lord Wellesley could not accede to the former proposal because he was unwilling to cede British districts to

1. Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 28 February, 1804, P.R.C., x. p.219.
3. Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 28 February, 1804, P.R.C., x. pp.221-222.
Sindia in exchange. The latter was admissible only if sufficient funds were available to pay for it. Otherwise, "his Lordship thinks it would have the effect of manifesting a design on our part to establish a complete control over Scindiah's Government." In this instance Malcolm and Lord Wellesley reached a compromise. The treaty which Malcolm ultimately submitted for ratification omitted the offending provisions, and Sindia was satisfied with having the force stationed, not within his territories, but on the frontier. Dependent as he was upon the Governor-General's approval for the promotion he desired, Malcolm virtually begged for Wellesley's forgiveness:

"the exclusive blame of this proceeding must attach to the agent employed to negotiate it, of whom it will be charitable to remark, that he was distinguished for boldness and zeal than for prudence and judgement."

With the later controversy over the possession of Gohad and Gwalior the outcome was to be rather different.

Malcolm's experience at this time merely illustrates the importance of communications to political and diplomatic moves in the formation of the British Raj. It was a situation which made it difficult for the Court of Directors in England to control the policies of their Governor-General in India. It also operated

within India on a smaller scale. A great deal of authority necessarily devolved upon a government's agent when continual reference to his superior was not possible. Malcolm, at Burhanpur, was by no means isolated. He managed to maintain a somewhat irregular correspondence with Arthur Wellesley, but it took at least twenty-seven days for his dispatches to reach the Governor-General. As circumstances presented themselves, therefore, Malcolm had had to rely to a great extent on his own initiative—in the latter stages of his negotiations even his lines of communication with Arthur Wellesley had been broken.

This difficulty in communications, however, affected only details; in terms of general policy Malcolm still agreed with Wellesley. The Treaty of Burhanpur which Malcolm concluded was part of a subsidiary treaty system designed to guard against foreign hostility. By the establishment of a subsidiary force with Sindia an army 22,000 men strong was placed within or near to "foreign" states. If necessary it could be used against an enemy without ever disturbing the peace of the Company's lands. In a wider context, Sindia was required to employ no Europeans, other than the British. The imagined menace of the French was still playing a large part in the formation of British policy towards India.
Throughout his career Malcolm's attitude towards the wisdom of the subsidiary treaties did not waver. Although aware of the tendency subsidiary forces had to destroy the independent means of Indian allies because the

"princes either lost their crowns in an effort to regain their independence, or sunk into a sloth and luxury which deteriorated every branch of their government", 1

Malcolm undoubtedly felt that these disadvantages were outweighed by the advantages of the system. He felt that by means of the subsidiary treaties, the British, besides strengthening their own security, brought peace and order to the Indian states. Yet to some extent this was only a rationalisation of a political necessity. At the time it was impossible for the British to assume direct rule over Sindia's territories; to withdraw to the Company's frontiers and expect the Marathas to leave the British in peace was equally impossible. Indeed twenty-five years later Malcolm still felt that if the system of subsidiary alliances established by Lord Wellesley had been extended instead of contracted by his successors, the British would have avoided another conflict. 2 Malcolm, in trying to make a reliable ally

of Sindia, was attempting to create a buffer state between the British and the other Maratha states. Once Sindia's affairs had been settled the British had Holkar's activities to deal with, and beyond him lay the Pindaris and the intrigues of the Peshwa. Here, as in the Africa of the nineties, it was the seemingly chaotic situation in the territories beyond the "frontiers" of British influence, more than the grandiose schemes of statesmen, which guided men such as Malcolm.

Malcolm's tendency to judge a case on its own merits was, however, to cause another conflict between the Governor-General and his agent, this time revealing an important difference in attitude towards an Indian ally.
CHAPTER IV

In his Sketch of the Political History of India Malcolm gives only passing references to Gohad and Gwalior. He mentions that

"Dowlut Row Scindiah ... continued discontented at the alienation of Gohad and Gwalior, which he continued to hope he might regain through the liberality of that State by which he had been vanquished".1

These few words give little indication of the furore which arose over the disposition of these places.

The origin of the disagreement between Malcolm and Lord Wellesley over Gohad and Gwalior lay in a very complicated situation. In addition to negotiating the subsidiary treaty, Malcolm was to work out in detail with Sindia the terms of the treaty of peace. The difficulty over Gohad and Gwalior arose out of the peace treaties negotiated by Arthur Wellesley and Malcolm to the south of the Maratha territories, and the Commander-in-Chief, General Lake, to the north of these territories, with minor Indian rulers. Malcolm's

1. Malcolm, Sketch of the Political History, p.382.
negotiations with Sindia were affected by those made with the Rana of Gohad and another ruler, Ambaji Ingle. In 1784 the Rana's territories had been captured by Sindia, who had put his lieutenant Ambaji in charge of them. But Ambaji had later rebelled against Sindia and had become an independent ruler. Naturally, when the peace treaties concluded in 1803 demanded a territorial settlement, claims and counter-claims arose over the former Rana's lands. Arthur Wellesley and Malcolm thought that they had solved the problem by dividing the disputed territories between the Rana of Gohad and Ambaji Ingle, with the exception of the fortress of Gwalior, which was kept by the Company. But Sindia was anxious to regain possession of Gohad and Gwalior, basing his claim on the conquests of 1784. Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley, when they negotiated the peace treaty with Sindia, had been ignorant of the Rana of Gohad's position, and thus the rightful possession of a valuable and prestigious territory remained in doubt.  

Throughout Malcolm's residency Sindia persisted in

1. "The fact is that we now feel the consequences of my ignorance of the real state of affairs in Hindustan. ... I thought that the state of the Ranah of Gohad existed; but a dispatch from the Governor-General for the first time informed me, that it was a state to be restored, and not one to be supported in independence, for which I was to provide. There was the error". A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 17 March, 1804, Gurwood, Dispatches of Wellington, p.167.
bringing up his wish to have Gwalior, Malcolm could not ignore this as it affected Sindia's attitude towards all his dealings with the British. Aware that the question was a delicate one, Malcolm consulted his immediate superior Arthur Wellesley, who advised him to avoid discussions concerning Gwalior. If this could be done the Governor-General would have time to read Arthur Wellesley's dispatches and make a decision which the latter hoped would be "satisfactory to us all."¹ In spite of this Sindia's ministers became more persistent on the question of the possession of Gwalior and Gohad.

At first, in accordance with what he guessed Lord Wellesley's attitude would be, Malcolm did his best to keep Sindia quiet on this point. But as time went on he felt this was made virtually impossible for him by the "conduct and temper" of the court.² Contrary to Arthur Wellesley's advice, Malcolm, in a private conversation with Kamal Nayan, Sindia's chief minister, told him that when he received a list of the Indian rulers with whom treaties had been made, including the Rana of Gohad, it would be his duty to demand its

¹. Ibid., p.166.
². Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 3 April, 1804, F.R.C., x, p.234.
recognition by the Maharaja. Malcolm himself brought the question of Gwalior to the fore by this action. If Sindia did not accept the list of treaties, he told Kamal Nayan, any discussions regarding Gwalior would not be favourable to Sindia.¹ In reply, and with more subtlety than Malcolm would give him credit for, Kamal Nayan appealed primarily to the generosity of the English government. Malcolm did his duty as the Governor-General's agent and repudiated the arguments brought forward by Sindia's ministers. But he also gave them hope by declaring that the British government was most sincerely disposed "to cultivate the friendship and promote the interest of the Maharaja."² By the beginning of April Malcolm had received the lists of treaties between Indian rulers and the Company. He therefore demanded from the Maharaja a recognition of the independence of these rulers, and an explicit renunciation of all claims upon them. Fearing that to agree to this might be taken to mean that Sindia abandoned his claims on Gwalior, Sindia's ministers would not comply with Malcolm's request.³ Malcolm did not doubt that in the end Sindia would accept the treaties, but meanwhile on the question of Gwalior and Gohad Sindia's court became "daily more obstinate and

1. Ibid., p.230.
2. Ibid., p.232.
discontented.  

This was what angered Lord Wellesley: the question of the right to rule over Gohad and Gwalior was becoming public property. He felt that the treaties concluded with Ambaji Ingle and the Rana of Gohad, together with his instructions to the Commander-in-Chief, should have clearly indicated to Malcolm that he had no intention of giving Gwalior to Sindia.  

Moreover, he did not accept Malcolm's explanation that he had kept the situation fluid so that Lord Wellesley could adopt whatever measures he thought best.  

Until it became obvious, however, that Malcolm was likely to oppose the Governor-General's intentions, Wellesley approved of his handling of the situation. He felt that Malcolm had competently defended the Company's rights under the Treaty of Surji Arjungaon. But in the same dispatch there were passages suggesting a difference of opinion between Malcolm and Lord Wellesley. The Governor-General revealed his determination to assert the Company's right to Gwalior; if Malcolm found that his arguments for the Company were insufficient, Wellesley pointed out that he could always claim Gwalior for the British by right of conquest.  

Malcolm, on the other hand, while as

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1. Ibid., p.250.
2. Edmonstone to Malcolm, 8 April, 1804, Ibid., pp.236-237.
anxious as Wellesley to "assert the full rights of the British Government under the 9th Article, when these rights have been brought into discussion," felt there was more to be gained from a lenient interpretation of the treaty than a literal one.

The fact that Sindia's possession of Gohad and Gwalior had been confirmed by a grant from the Mughal Emperor, together with the vague nature of the Rana's claim, strengthened Sindia's case. Both Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley thought that if they had insisted on Sindia's giving up Gohad and Gwalior the treaty of peace might never have been concluded:

"As to the fort of Gwalior, I am persuaded one of the chief causes of the peace was to save it; and such is the importance they attach to that place, that I sincerely believe our having insisted upon its surrender would have protracted the conclusion of the peace." 2

Relying upon General Wellesley's declaration when the relevant articles were formed that

"it was merely to enable the Company to preserve its engagements, and made neither with a view of adding to the strength of the English Government of to that of any of its allies," 3

Sindia's advisers had obviously assured the Maharaja,

2. Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 6 March, 1804, Kaye, Life, i. p.266. And A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 22 May, 1804, "Although I am convinced that I should not have made the peace if I had insisted upon Gwalior, I wish I had had that point clearly explained before the treaty was signed." Gurwood, Dispatches of Wellington, iii. p.299.
when they obtained his consent to the treaty, that there was no risk of Gwalior being alienated.¹

For these reasons Malcolm was inclined to support Sindia's point of view. His knowledge of India enabled Malcolm to appreciate more keenly than the Governor-General the emotional significance of these places to Sindia. He wrote that

"the loss of Gwalior is conceived to affect the dignity of the state and I have the best grounds for believing that the personal pride of the Maharaja is so much implicated in the retention of this fortress that it will be difficult if not impossible ever to reconcile him to its alienation."²

Subsequent events proved that Malcolm was right. He thought that the Governor-General was very unwise in insisting on too strict an interpretation of the treaty terms. Whilst discounting the possibility of any immediate renewal of the war, Malcolm knew that Sindia would always continue to listen to any scheme, however preposterous, to recover Gwalior.³ A discontented ally would, he felt, be of no use at all to the Company. The other man on the spot, Arthur Wellesley, agreed with Malcolm; he thought the question of the legal possession of Gwalior too complicated to be decided. But he had no doubts about the wisest policy for the British to

². Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 3 April, 1804, Ibid., p.235.
³. Ibid.
follow. Sindia was the more important ally and whether or not Gwalior belonged legally to him he "should be inclined to give it to him."¹ On the other hand, he warned Malcolm that the Governor-General was bound to "bring forward an ingenious argument on which he will claim the fort, but I am afraid that it will be too ingenious, and too much abstracted from all the circumstances of the case to elicit the other parts of the proceeding."²

This would lead to the impression "that the moderation of the British Government in India has a strong resemblance to the ambition of other governments."³ Knowing from this that Arthur Wellesley at least felt the same way as he did about Sindia, Malcolm decided to use his own judgement. In his opinion Sindia had a moral, if not a technical right, to Gwalior. This was why he took the responsibility of reassuring Sindia with respect to the Governor-General's intentions.⁴

Malcolm's position in Sindia's camp did not, as Lord Wellesley thought, make Malcolm too susceptible to the persuasions of Sindia's ministers. He was only too well aware that these ministers, in order to keep their own power and position, had acted in a way which was one of the primary causes of the whole

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⁴ Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 6 March, 1804, Kaye, *Life*, i. p.266.
involved situation. Malcolm based his views on grounds very different from those of Sindia's advisers. He was concerned with the security of the Company's newly established position. Malcolm saw two reasons for giving Gwalior to Sindia: first, because there was doubt on the subject and he felt it politic to give Sindia the benefit of that doubt; secondly, because

"if we determine a case of disputable nature in our own favour because we have power, we shall give a blow to our faith that will, in my opinion, be more injurious to our interests than the loss of fifty provinces."1

Malcolm felt that his practical knowledge of India justified his independent stand. Lord Wellesley brought forward legal arguments to support his viewpoint but, wrote Malcolm,

"these people do not understand the laws of nations, and it is impossible to make them comprehend a thousand refinements which are understood and practised in Europe."2

Malcolm felt that there were important principles regarding the character of British rule in India involved here. Therefore, he did not hesitate to make known his views both in private letters and public dispatches. To Arthur Wellesley he wrote that

"there is one evil in this world which I dread more than the Marquis's displeasure—the loss of my own esteem, which I must have incurred had I acted contrary to what I have done on this occasion."3

2. Ibid., p.268.
3. Ibid., p.267.
Personally, Malcolm felt that he was right, but he knew from the beginning that his attitude would seem "hostile to a system which the Governor-General thinks it wise to pursue."¹ Moreover, there was "no person about the Governor-General to take an enlarged view of the state of our affairs, and to resist the importunities of the local authorities to force on the treaties a construction which will tend to the increase of their own petty power and authority."²

This underlines the difficulties of Malcolm's position. He could be almost certain that his stand over Gwalior would be unpopular in Calcutta; in the absence of both Henry Wellesley and Malcolm there was no-one close to the Governor-General with the influence, inclination or knowledge to oppose Lord Wellesley when he was wrong.³ The problem of communications, therefore, was critical in this instance: it meant that British policy lacked cohesion, and that the British in India presented a divided front to India and England.

It was the opinion in England which mainly concerned Lord Wellesley. He felt that any open disagreement between himself and Malcolm might be used against him by the Court of Directors.⁴ Malcolm had also made the Governor-General face an unpalatable fact:

1. Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 6 March, 1804, Ibid., p.266.
2. A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 11 February, 1804, Gurwood, Dispatches of Wellington, iii. p.64.
that he could not personally direct policy when he was miles away from the scene of action. The same conditions which made him a powerful Governor-General vis-à-vis the Home authorities also operated to curtail his control over men such as Malcolm. That Wellesley did not wish to accept this is shown in his reaction to Malcolm's remark that "throughout the whole of this troubled scene my attention has been exclusively directed to one object—the promotion of the public interests". Lord Wellesley underscored the last two words and added that "Mr Malcolm's duty is to obey my orders and to enforce my instructions. I will look after the public interests."¹ This was despite the fact that men in a position to judge, Arthur Wellesley, Lake, Mercer, Webbe, and, above all, Malcolm himself, felt Gwalior should have gone to Sindia.

Lord Wellesley would not change his mind on the question and Sindia's claim to Gohad and Gwalior was disallowed. In time, however, Malcolm's view prevailed and in order to conciliate Sindia, Gohad and Gwalior were restored to him. This move, however, was suggested by Lord Cornwallis, and was associated with a repudiation of Lord Wellesley's general policy.

¹. Ibid., p.276.
Therefore, Malcolm could feel no sense of triumph. His disagreement with Lord Wellesley over Gohad and Gwalior was only an aberration of his belief in the wisdom of the Governor-General's policy towards the Indian states. Malcolm's part in the controversy did, however, illustrate three things: the relative strength of the Governor-General and his agents; a difference of attitude towards the Indian states between Lord Wellesley and Malcolm, the man in the field; and the importance of the delegation of powers forced on the Governor-General by the problem of communication. This was not just a problem of distance, but one of the changing and unreliable politics of Indian courts, whose reactions could be gauged with any degree of accuracy only by the man on the spot. In this instance, Malcolm had found himself trying to please Wellesley without offending Sindia, and had discovered that it was impossible. Yet it was Malcolm who, a year later, was once again sent on a mission to Sindia, who, resentful of his loss of Gohad and Gwalior, had joined forces with Holkar in hostilities against the British.
CHAPTER V

Malcolm left Sindia's camp at the end of April, 1804, when he handed over the residency to Josiah Webbe. Malcolm was now able to assume in person his position as Resident at Mysore. But the situation of the Company in relation to the Indian states soon made the appointment of a political officer to General Lake's camp necessary. Once again Lord Wellesley sent Malcolm to the British army to deal with any political matters which might arise. Malcolm's task was, however, complicated by changes in personnel at Calcutta which materially affected the conduct of his negotiations.

From both a personal and a public point of view, Malcolm was interested in the attacks made upon Lord Wellesley in England. The English authorities, both in Parliament and in the Court of Directors, felt they had ample cause for complaint. The Governor-General had involved the Company in an expensive war against the Marathas, and he was felt to have kept the Directors

1. Webbe, however, died soon afterwards. The new Resident with Sindia was Richard Jenkins.
inadequately informed of his actions. The war with Nolkar, which involved such disasters for the British armies as the abortive seige of Bharatpur and Monson's retreat, gave Lord Wellesley's enemies in England an additional weapon. As criticism of his policies grew, it became obvious that Lord Wellesley must either resign or be recalled to England. If the Governor-General left India, his policy towards the Indian states, in general so enthusiastically supported by Malcolm, would almost certainly be jeopardised. Malcolm, because of his views, might even find his own career in danger.

To Arthur Wellesley, Malcolm wrote that he felt that unless there was a change in the Ministry, Lord Wellesley should return to England in the following January.1 This might seem surprising in one who, in spite of the disagreement over Gohad and Gwalior, was such a staunch supporter of Wellesley's policies. But Malcolm gave his reasons for this opinion: "The risks incurred by his [Wellesley's] departure are serious but not half so much so, ... as those incurred by his stay."2 Malcolm did not, however, envisage retirement for the Governor-General; there was work

1. Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 4 September, 1804, Kaye, Life, i. p.290.
2. Ibid.
for him to do in England. The coalition formed "between weak and designing men," must be "stifled in the birth" by Lord Wellesley, or else it "may subvert our empire in India." 1

Malcolm here displayed a point of view typical of the soldier-politician class to which he belonged. The men in India formed their policies on their knowledge of the Indian situation. To Malcolm the Company's Directors and the politicians in England seemed to be interfering and criticising when they were ignorant of the real state of affairs. This was the situation, Malcolm thought, not only with regard to Lord Wellesley's administration, but also to the formation of a policy in India in general. It was hardly surprising, he wrote in 1811, that the Court of Directors

"which always acts in a great degree under the check and control of its constituents, the proprietors of India stock, should often take a very limited and partial view of large political questions". 2

In 1804, Malcolm wanted to see Wellesley in England because it was there that he saw the greatest threat to the Governor-General's policies. Malcolm rather exaggerated, however, when he declared that "the fate

1. Ibid.
2. Malcolm, Sketch of the Political History, p.446.
of India" rested "upon Lord Wellesley's personal efforts".1 The "turbulent frontier" arguments now took second place in discussions about the security of the Indian empire. At times it seemed that Malcolm was defending not Wellesley's policies but rather the right of the Government of India to make those policies independent of the Home authorities. Later, he clarified this point by arguing that when a principle of the British constitution was to leave the executive free to choose its principal officers and to form its own policies, it was unwise to fetter the Administration in India. The delays caused by the English based authorities, he wrote, destroyed confidence in the local Government of India and made the British rule there "weak, wavering, and distracted."2 Therefore, at a time when Sindia and Holkar seemed likely to act against the British, Malcolm considered the danger from the ruling powers in England "to be much more imminent than any other".3 Neither "the desultory invasion of Jeswunt Rao Holkar" nor "the ravages of a Mahmoud Shah" were so dangerous.4 Malcolm's opinion was that Wellesley's agents were capable of dealing with these. In his eyes, the great villain of the piece was the

1. Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 4 September, 1804, Kaye, Life, i. p.291.
"presumptuous and ignorant President of the Board of Control, or an illiberal and prejudiced Chairman of the Court of Directors."¹ To deal with them Lord Wellesley had to be in London in person. Malcolm aptly summed up what has been called the "significance of government by correspondence"² when he wrote that "the action which is to decide the destiny of our Indian Empire must be fought upon the banks of the Thames, not on the banks of the Ganges."³

More specifically, Malcolm was exasperated by the opposition of the Home authorities to the war with Holkar. As Malcolm saw it, "A death, a desertion, or a battle may in a moment change the whole course of policy,"⁴ and he saw no reason why such distant authorities should have the power to circumscribe the freedom of action of those in India. "What in the name of God," he wrote,

"can tempt men who profess their desire for peace, to take such pains to prevent its conclusion by circumscribing the means which the local authorities may possess of effecting it."⁵

His friend Arthur Wellesley agreed. Arthur Wellesley hoped that he, too, could soon return to England, and

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¹ Ibid.
² Jemalie Thomas Embree, Charles Grant and the British Rule in India, p. 268.
³ Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 4 September, 1804, Waye, Life, i. p. 292.
⁴ Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 20 May, 1805, Ibid., p. 317.
⁵ Ibid.
wrote thus to Malcolm:

"I don't exactly see the necessity that I should stay several years in India in order to settle affairs which, if I had been permitted, I should have settled long ago".1

Yet despite Malcolm's impatience with what he considered to be the unnecessary obstruction of Wellesley's measures, he did not really want to be too precipitate. He knew, even after his experience of Wellesley's rapid expansion of British influence, that it would "require years to bring to maturity a system which has for its ultimate object the complete tranquillisation of India."2 And he knew also that this would bring with it its own problems. As the British possessions grew so did the danger from domestic insurrection or revolt.3 To deal with this would be costly. Here lies the real basis of Malcolm's complaints against the Directors. He felt they opposed Wellesley's measures, often unreasonably, on purely financial grounds, and further, that they thought in terms of unnecessary parsimony. Malcolm could only "shudder for the existence of the British empire in India, which appears foredoomed to fall upon a question of two per cent."4 While easily able to see the point of view of

the other side when dealing with the Indian states, Malcolm simply could not understand the viewpoint of the Directors. Charles Grant, for example, felt that to attempt to increase Clive's conquests would be both unjust and impolitic. He felt that further expansion, by straining British resources, might jeopardise what the Company already possessed. ¹

Part of this lack of understanding sprang from Malcolm's tendency to make economics merely a side-product of political and diplomatic events. He feared that too much would be sacrificed

"to what is called the maintenance of our financial credit, by which is meant 'not raising the present interest'—for as to our credit it never was higher; and money can be had in any quantity, provided it is paid for, which it must be whenever extraordinary supplies are required."²

But the financing of the Indian government was more complicated than that. Malcolm opposed the Directors on the ground that primarily "the prosperity of our finance must after all depend upon our political state, and when the latter is insecure, how can the former be prosperous?"³ And Malcolm was unjust when he declared that "the controlling authorities look more to temporary than permanent objects"⁴ and in his resentment of the

¹. Babree, Charles Grant, p. 209.
². Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 26 May, 1805, Kaye, Life, i. p. 318.
³. Ibid.
⁴. Ibid.
treatment of Lord Wellesley he ignored the true state of the Company's finances.

The cost of administering India was exceeding the revenues, and the Indian trade monopoly ran at a loss. In order to regain financial and political equilibrium the Company had sent bullion to India to be used for commercial purposes. This Wellesley had used for his own political aims which promised to commit the Company to still further responsibility and expense. To the men of India House (who may or may not have been correct in their analysis) it seemed that Wellesley and his agents were driving the Company towards bankruptcy. Naturally enough, they acted upon these conclusions. Malcolm, however, was not concerned with balance sheets, but only with the consequences of the Directors' actions felt in India.

Malcolm was more justified in another charge he made against the Directors. This was that in their opposition to Wellesley they were more influenced by "personal than public feeling". Malcolm was referring to the fact that the internal politics of India House had brought the Shipping Interest to the fore. Lord Wellesley had attacked this Interest by his support of

private trade. Therefore,

"In future dealings with Wellesley the Directors always held it against him that he had attacked the monopoly of British trade with India, and the extent to which his general policy affected the Company's position as a merchant became their criterion of all his measures." 1

Malcolm was correct in claiming that the opposition to Wellesley sprang from personal interest on the private trade question. 2

These were Malcolm's feelings when he joined Lord Lake's camp at Mathura. For him the outlook did not seem very bright; the appointment of a new Governor-General was in the offing, and Malcolm feared that "the desire of preserving the temper of the Directors [would] supersede that of destroying our enemies." 3

* * *

The situation which Wellesley sent Malcolm to cope with arose in the first place with Jeswant Rao Holkar. Holkar's conduct during the Second Maratha War had been equivocal. He had made a treaty with Sindia to join the confederacy against the British but in fact had failed to give Sindia and the Raja of Berar any tangible help. This was probably due to his jealousy of Sindia's

1. C.H. Philips, The East India Company, p.120.
power. He did not, however, wish to see the British replace Sindia, and therefore, even before the treaties of peace had been concluded he had advanced towards Hindustan, as far as the Raja of Jaipur's frontier. This territory was then under British protection.

Lord Lake was then instructed to communicate with Holkar, to clarify that prince's position, and to "relieve the Company of the alarm and expense of freebooters on the frontier." 1 Malcolm always classified Holkar as nothing more than "the leader of an army of plunderers," and in doing so probably underestimated him. 2 As much as, if not more than Sindia, Holkar resented the intrusions of Europeans into India. His power depended on his being able to move freely; he could not afford to be restricted by strictly defined boundaries. The East India Company had established itself as the most prominent European power in India and, moreover, had constantly defended its own frontiers and those of its allies. Naturally, the Company's territories became Holkar's targets. Holkar's attacks on the Company were not in the nature of indiscriminate plundering as the British wished to believe. Holkar did make efforts to mobilize other Indian powers against

1. Malcolm, Sketch of the Political History, p.313.
2. Malcolm, Central India, i. p.255.
the British. Although Malcolm emphasized more the predatory nature of Holkar's troops, he did give an account of Holkar's efforts to make the tributaries and dependents of the British in Hindustan revolt, telling them that he meant to "ravage and destroy" British territory. Even when to all intents and purposes his cause was lost Holkar was still trying to gain the alliance of the Sikhs against the English in order to "recover the lost position." Holkar's activities can perhaps be seen as being somewhat similar to certain episodes connected with a later era of "imperialism", such as the dervishes who met Kitchener at Omdurman and the resentment against European intrusion in China which manifested itself in the Boxer rebellion.

Malcolm, perhaps influenced by Lord Lake, slightly altered his views on how Holkar should be disposed of. During his residency with Sindia, he wished to avoid a war between Sindia and Holkar caused solely by Sindia's grievances against Holkar. Malcolm apparently hoped that, if Sindia could be calmed, Holkar's army might disperse "from the want of means in that Chief to pay them". Thus the British might avoid a costly war.

But Malcolm here was indulging in self-deception. Lake saw matters more from a military point of view. He realised that, as Holkar's army subsisted on plunder, so long as he could continue to advance into fertile country he could probably hold his army together for a considerable time. Moreover, Lake saw an added danger in that Holkar could stir up unrest against the British in the upper part of the Doab. ¹

Malcolm, once the war with Holkar was a fact, concurred enthusiastically with Lake's plans for action. Holkar had provoked the British and Malcolm felt justified in effecting a previously expressed opinion that "it would be advisable to destroy altogether the power and independence of the Holkar family". ² In Malcolm's opinion, "such an event would ... tend to simplify the politics and to consolidate the peace of India." ³ Malcolm's work, and Lake's, in 1805 was to go a long way towards destroying Holkar's power. By April of that year Holkar was in retreat across the Chambal. He eventually negotiated a settlement with Malcolm in December. Daulat Rao Sindia, who was really Malcolm's chief concern at this stage, provided more difficult problems.

¹ Ibid.
² Malcolm to Edmonstone, (undated, from Sindia's camp, 1804), Kaye, Life, i. p.307.
³ Ibid.
Sindia's involvement with Holkar had begun even when Malcolm was at Durbanpur. At first, however, he reported Holkar's overtures to Malcolm, and made Malcolm believe in his good faith by moving troops towards Jaipur to join the British army. This was before the British had decided on any move against Holkar. When Malcolm, just before he left Sindia, informed him of the Governor-General's intention to attack Holkar the news was received with "much apparent satisfaction". Events soon demonstrated that "apparent" was the right word for Malcolm to choose. As Malcolm had predicted, Sindia had not forgiven the British for what he regarded as their injustice in keeping Gwalior. He had, in addition, a natural resentment of his conquerors. By the time Malcolm joined Lake it was clear that Sindia inclined towards Holkar. Holkar's valil remained in Sindia's camp and in October, 1804, Sindia had fallen under the influence of a new adviser. This was Surji Rao Ghatke whom Malcolm preferred to believe was an "arch-scoundrel". A historian, who is

1. Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, 28 February, 1804, Encl. in a letter from the Governor-General to the Secret Committee, 22 March, 1804, Bengal Secret Consultations, 11 April, 1804, F.P., 1805(19), x. p.257.
possibly more impartial, sees him as a man who "combined in his person the double offices of a diplomat and a soldier, of a politician and a strategist." ¹ Ghaute's advice to Sindia, however, did ultimately lead the prince to his downfall. While Malcolm was at Calcutta receiving his instructions Ghaute succeeded in reconciling Sindia and Holkar. ²

Malcolm knew that Lord Wellesley had now decided to leave the Indian princes to themselves as much as possible and to remain upon the defensive.³ This was despite the fact that Sindia was holding the British Resident Jenkins a virtual prisoner in his camp. Discouraged by the criticism of his policy from England, Lord Wellesley was anxious to avoid an open rupture with Sindia. The Governor-General's policy towards Sindia sprang also from the knowledge of British military weakness in India.⁴ Malcolm himself did not think Wellesley's new attitude was practicable "unless some speedy revolution in Sindia's councils occurs, as the conduct observed to Mr. Jenkins will oblige us to take some strong measures."⁵ In Malcolm's mind, Ghaute, not

² Sindia and Holkar met, 15 April, 1805.
³ Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 20 May, 1805, Kaye, Life, i. p.316.
⁴ British troops were needed in Europe; 1805 was the year of Ulm.
⁵ Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 20 May, 1805, Kaye, Life, i. p.317.
Sindia, was really to blame for what was virtually treachery: Sindia could hardly be said to have adhered faithfully to the Defensive Alliance negotiated by Malcolm in February, 1804.\(^1\) Malcolm's real aim, therefore, was to induce Sindia to dismiss Ghauteke and to detach him from Holkar's cause. Malcolm waited in Lake's camp, ready to go to Sindia to arrange a settlement when the circumstances were right. In the meantime he dealt with the political correspondence, mainly concerned with the situation at Jaipur and Sindia's camp. Jenkins soon had good news for Malcolm. In mid-July he reported Ghauteke's fall from favour and his replacement with Ambaji Ingle;\(^2\) the uneasy alliance between Holkar and Sindia broke up when the former welcomed the dismissed Ghauteke to his camp;\(^3\) Sindia's renewed hope of recovering Gohad and Gwalior made him inclined to seek a settlement with the British;\(^4\) and on 13 September Jenkins wrote that he was free to leave Sindia's camp.\(^5\) This was the opportunity Malcolm had been waiting for; he felt he could make his own terms with Sindia.

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1. Lake to Daulat Rao Sindia, 18 July, 1805, P.P., 1844 (259), xxxvi. p.477\(^3/4\).  
4. Malcolm to Edmonstone, 29 August, 1805, Ibid., pp. 204-205.  
At approximately the same time, however, Malcolm learned of changes in the Government of India which were almost certain to mean a change of policy towards the Indian states.

* * *

The new Governor-General of India was Lord Cornwallis. He was not inexperienced in Indian affairs; he had been Governor-General before, from 1786 to 1793. Malcolm liked and respected him personally but felt that the news of his appointment was not good. He felt Cornwallis might meet an attack similar to that which had been mounted against Lord Wellesley, and feared "that he will not prove equal to the crisis."¹ Still full of bitterness against the men in Leadenhall Street, Malcolm wrote that they would oppose any Governor-General "unless he is base enough to sacrifice the national interests at the shrine of those of the East India Company".² These doubts were reciprocated. Cornwallis, who had been sent to India to counteract the effects of Lord Wellesley's policy, expressed his anxiety that the "almost universal opinion prevailing among the gentlemen in the political line, that a system of power was preferable to one of consolidation,"³ would also be held by Lake's chief adviser, Malcolm.

3. Cornwallis to Lake, 1 September, 1805, Charles Ross, ed., Correspondence of Charles, First Marquess Cornwallis, iii. pp.545-546.
He went so far as to tell Lake to take no decisive action without Cornwallis' own specific instructions.¹

On the other hand, when "at a very early period Lord Cornwallis expressed a doubt whether Malcolm would cordially act upon political principles entirely different from those which he himself entertained," Malcolm's high sense of duty made him express his willingness to serve under Cornwallis. Recognising Malcolm's wide knowledge of India and his experience in dealing with the Indian states, Cornwallis took a great deal of trouble to explain, at length, his policies and the reasons for them. To Malcolm this policy was all too plain: the war with Holkar which offered no possible advantages to the British must be formally ended; the British possession of Delhi and the protection of the old Mughal Emperor was an unnecessary burden; and the extension of the Company's dominion had necessitated armies for its defence which were too great a drain on the treasury.² Cornwallis concluded:

"I deplore the effects of the almost universal frenzy, which has seized even some of the heads which I thought the soundest in the country, for conquest and victory, as opposite to the interests, as it is to the honour of our country."³

As one of the architects of British expansion, Malcolm

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1. Cornwallis to Lake, 4 August, 1805, Ibid., p. 534.
3. Ibid., p. 541.
could hardly be expected to agree with this.

Malcolm simply could not believe that Cornwallis could "persist in a course in which every opinion that can merit weight is against him."¹ In Malcolm's opinion only "the most spirited and decided policy" would succeed, and

"under any other course, particularly one that includes a relaxation in the state of our military preparation, we shall run a risk of a very serious reverse of fortune."²

Never at any period of his work in India did Malcolm show so clearly his belief in Clive's dictum on the British empire in India, - "To stop is dangerous; to recede ruin."

Subsequent letters from Cornwallis revealed to Malcolm that, far from changing his mind, the Governor-General intended to take his reversal of Wellesley's policy even further than Malcolm had imagined. Aware of pressures on Cornwallis to halt British expansion, Malcolm had been prepared to accept the abandonment of the subsidiary alliance with Sindh, a less close connection with other states, and the dropping of "any of our petty allies that behaved ill."³ But the Governor-General with the declared aim of

"removing the impressions at present universally entertained of a systematic design on the part of the British Government to establish its control over every power in India," wanted to get rid of all the alliances with the states on the west of the Jumna, and of the territory to the west and south of Delhi. 1 Malcolm felt that to do this would create "a general impression of weakness" as well as being a breach of British good faith. He argued that by taking over the rule of this area under the terms of the peace treaties of December, 1803, the British had in effect "given a pledge of general protection to all its inhabitants." 2 Malcolm here was being realistic for he realised that the British had made themselves responsible for large areas of India, and that in the circumstances the British could not exist in India on the same terms as the Indian states had existed before the arrival of Wellesley. If the British evaded their responsibilities as the most powerful force in India, Malcolm wrote, all kinds of old claims to territories and power would be brought forward, compliance with which "though it may purchase a short and delusive truce, will be the certain forerunner of a long and ruinous war." 3

Eventually, Malcolm was proved to be correct: there was a Third Maratha War. He later maintained that this was partly a result of the reversal of Wellesley’s policies.\textsuperscript{1} But considerations of the Company’s financial state, together with the fact that the Indian army could not be enlarged while Napoleon was still at large in Europe, meant that Malcolm’s advice did not prevail. And Malcolm himself admitted that on the financial details of the government’s difficulties he could claim only a “correct general idea of the subject.”\textsuperscript{2}

The effect of this difference of opinion between Malcolm and the Governor-General is shown clearly in letters to his friend Edmonstone. As an agent of the government, necessarily given large discretionary powers, Malcolm felt his position was full of difficulty. To be given a free hand was sometimes an advantage, but in other circumstances it could be almost disastrous:

“Look at my situation. Placed at a great distance from the Governor-General, and acting upon instructions of a general nature—obliged constantly to determine points upon my own judgment, as there is no time for reference—liable to be called upon by extraordinary exigencies

\textsuperscript{1} “Had our subsidiary system been extended, we should have, I believe, avoided those subsequent horrors to the inhabitants of the greater part of India, and our subsequent expensive measures of defence, as well as the War of 1817 and 1818. These events in my opinion resulted from an attempt to adopt an impracticable system of neutral policy, which allowed the great herds of freebooters to become formidable”. Malcolm, Minutes of Evidence, Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, P.P., 1831/1832 (735-VI), xvi. p.28.

\textsuperscript{2} Malcolm to Edmonstone, 19 September, 1805, Kaye, Life, i. p.334.
to act in a most decided manner to save the public interests from injury, it is indispensable that the sentiments of my mind should be in some unison with the dictates of my duty, and if they unfortunately are contrary to it, I am not fit to be employed".1

Therefore, Malcolm relied on Edmonstone's exertions to save him

"from the misery of being an unwilling instrument in the accomplishment of a measure which (whether right or wrong in my opinion) I most conscientiously believe will be equally disgraceful and ruinous".2

This referred to Cornwallis' intentions towards the minor rulers to the west of the Juana; Malcolm still looked forward to negotiating with Sindia.3

* * *

In his work with Sindia Malcolm was able to take advantage of his personal liking for Indians. His old friend Kamal Nayan was staying in Lake's camp and, as he was in favour with both Sindia and Ambaji Ingle, he proved to be a useful channel of communication.4 To facilitate matters Cornwallis proposed the cession of Gwalior and Gohad to Sindia.5 By mid-September Malcolm gave a proposed settlement to Kamal Nayan, and on 23 November the treaty was concluded. The main provisions

2. Malcolm to Edmonstone, 19 September, 1805, Ibid., p.337.
3. Ibid.
5. Cornwallis to Lake, 1 September, 1805, Ross, ed., Correspondence of Cornwallis, iii. pp.545ff.
of the Treaty of Surji Arjungon were confirmed. In addition, the British engaged to return Gwalior to Sindhia and to negotiate with the Rana of Gohad for the return of Gohad. Malcolm was naturally anxious to maintain the British position but he tried to do his duty and obey Cornwallis's instructions. The result was a treaty which Kaye describes as "necessarily based more or less on the instructions received from the Governor-General—but the less rather predominated."¹

A treaty with Holkar soon followed. From Captain William Sturrock, Acting Resident at Jaipur, Malcolm had heard of Holkar's movements through the Raja's territory,² and Lake had decided to pursue him.³ As Malcolm wrote to Barlow, who assumed charge of the government after Cornwallis's death on 5 October, 1805:

"If we give Holkar breath he will revive. And by pushing him we secure an early termination to the campaign".⁴

When the Sikhs would not help him, Holkar sued for peace. In accordance with the new policy Malcolm offered him very favourable terms, and the treaty concluded on 7 January, 1806, restored most of his territory to Holkar. But Malcolm could not bring himself to abandon

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¹ Kaye, Life, i. p.352.
² Sturrock to Malcolm, 16 September, 1805, and 24 September, 1805, P.R.C., xi. pp.210-211 and 214-216.
³ Lake to Cornwallis, 7 October, 1805, P.P., 1806(99), xvi. p.511/197.
⁴ Malcolm to Barlow, (undated), Kaye, Life, i. p.351.
his own convictions entirely. He would not, for instance comply with Holkar’s demands for the restitution of the fort and province of Tonk and Rampura, or for the withdrawal of the British prohibition on Holkar’s exacting tribute from the Raja of Jaipur.\(^1\) Both Malcolm and Lake did their best to retain British protection over minor states.

The two treaties were sent for approval to Sir George Barlow. Malcolm’s hope that Barlow, as a former right-hand man of Wellesley, might modify the new policy, proved to be unfounded. Barlow, apparently converted to the new policy, took the measure of reversal one step further. He ratified the treaties but then added “declaratory articles” which effectively withdrew British protection from the small states on the west of the Juana. Tonk and Rampura were thus practically handed to Holkar, and the Rajput states were left open to Maratha attack. Barlow’s action was, by implication, a reflection on Malcolm’s work. While entertaining a “high sense” of Malcolm’s “zealous exertions,” Edmonstone reported that Barlow lamented “that they should occasionally have been directed by principles of policy in which he could not conscientiously

\(^1\) Kaye, Life, i. p.355.
concur. I

As a man who was inevitably linked with Lord Wellesley's name and policies Malcolm found himself ill-at-ease with Barlow. He felt that his advice was either ignored or remodelled to fit in with the designs of the Directors. Urged by Malcolm, Barlow did "depart in some instances, from his declared former intentions." 2 For example, Barlow would not modify the Treaty of Bassein or dissolve the alliance with Hyderabad, a course which the Court of Directors wished him to follow. 3 In addition, some of Malcolm's work which was more in the administrative field, such as his dispersal of the too-expensive irregular troops of the Company's army, was highly commended. Despite this Malcolm, on the whole, felt that he was completely out of sympathy with Barlow's attitude towards the Indian states. Moreover, there seems to have been a clash of personality between the two men, and Malcolm was not above allowing his dislike to lead him to exaggerate Barlow's defects. 4

Perhaps as a result of these disagreements, Malcolm, during the next few years, had little to do in the diplomatic field in India. The revolt of the Madras

1. Edmonstone to Malcolm, 4 April, 1806, Ibid., p.359.

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army in 1809 occupied a great deal of his time. In his handling of this situation, which had arisen out of the government's desire to reduce expenditure, Malcolm once again differed from Barlow. It was, therefore, a relief when Lord Minto, the new Governor-General, decided to send another mission to Persia in 1810 and appointed Malcolm as its leader. In 1811 he returned to England for the first time since 1795. When he returned to India in 1817 the Pindari menace posed problems which offered new work for him in the diplomatic field.
CHAPTER VI

Malcolm returned to India in March, 1817. On his arrival at Madras he sent a letter to Lord Minto's successor as Governor-General, Lord Hastings, asking him if he had any instructions.\(^1\) Hastings' reply was reassuring:

"Let me assure you that I justly appreciate your talents and energy, and I shall rejoice if I find a fit field for their employment."

In the same letter the Governor-General expressed his admiration of Lord Wellesley's administration.\(^2\) This, of course, appealed to Malcolm.

Malcolm had been away from India for nearly six years but he had not lost touch with its affairs. Lord Hobart, now Earl of Buckinghamshire, had become President of the Board of Control and had consulted Malcolm on proposed changes in the charter of the East India Company. Malcolm had also spoken on the grievances of the Company's army and in 1812 had given evidence before

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1. Kaye, Life, ii. p.149. Lord Hastings arrived in India as Earl of Moira. He was created a Marquess after his success in the Nepal War, 1814-1816.
an important Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company. In his evidence, Malcolm revealed his conservatism; he spoke against the free admission of Europeans into India because they might, from ignorance, antagonise the Indians, and he warned that as the Company's influence increased, so did the danger from insurrection.¹

While he was in Europe, Malcolm visited the battle-field of Waterloo, and rejoiced at the overthrow of the power he had imagined was such a threat to British India. So, according to Kaye, Malcolm returned to India with increased knowledge and enlarged experience, having studied the constitutions of European states, the organisation of European armies, and the actions of European statesmen and soldiers. Kaye adds that at this period of his career, Malcolm "was in the very zenith of his intellectual strength and efficiency."²

When Malcolm arrived in India the situation was uncertain. The Maratha powers were again becoming openly restless, a consequence, Malcolm always maintained, of the summary winding up of Lord Wellesley's policy under Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow.

¹ Malcolm, Minutes of Evidence, Committee of the Whole House on the Affairs of the East India Company, P.R., 1812/1813(122), vii. pp.53ff.
² Kaye, Life, ii. p.143.
Yet the situation in 1817 was not identical to that faced by Lord Wellesley. Wellesley was concerned with the French designs and their connections with the Maratha and other Indian powers, and the maintenance of order on the British frontier was probably secondary to this matter. Moreover, by the time Malcolm returned to India the British had already established themselves as the de facto sovereigns of India in European eyes: the treaties of 1814 and 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic wars, stipulated that the French were not to fortify any of their settlements in India, or to maintain troops except for police duties. In addition, the French were to recognise British sovereignty over the Indian possessions of the East India Company.\(^1\) Lord Minto's operations against the French islands in the western Indian Ocean, completed by 1811, had destroyed "the fancied strength of the Isle of France."\(^2\)

Attitudes in England had also changed since Malcolm's early days in India. In 1813 the Company's commercial monopoly had ended, so that arguments for stability in India now tended to be supported by the mercantile community as a whole. This doubtless helped Hastings

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to obtain the consent of the Home authorities to
decisive moves against disorderly powers beyond the
Company's frontiers.

Specifically, these powers were the Pindaris. The
Pindaris, although they consisted of many races and
religions, were predominately Muslim. Their leaders,
and most of their rank and file, were Pathan by origin.¹
These people had originally been useful auxiliaries of
the Maratha armies. The Maratha campaigns against
Wellesley, however, changed the Pindaris; both their
numbers and their military tactics were strengthened
and they could act more as independent powers.² This
gave them a political, as distinct from a military,
importance. Malcolm described them as predators par-
excellence. He gave an account of the operations of
a typical party of Pindaris which

"usually consisted of two or three thousand
good horse, with a proportion of mounted
followers, advanced at the rapid rate of
forty or fifty miles a-day, neither turning
to the right nor left till they arrived at
their place of destination. They then
divided, and made a sweep of all the cattle
and property they could find. ... They
trusted to the secrecy and suddenness of the
irruption for avoiding those who guarded the
frontiers of the countries they invaded;
and before a force could be brought against
them, they were on their return."³

1. Biswanath Ghosh, British Policy towards the Pathans
   and the Pindaris in Central India, 1805-1818, p.4.
2. Ibid., p.26
It was the speed of the Pindari operations which was their most effective weapon against the British. References to Pindari outrages were more specific in these years than earlier, when the British frontier was described, in general and vague terms, as being in danger from freebooters. In 1816 the Pindaris, led by two brothers, Dost Muhammad and Wasi Muhammad raided the Mirzapur district of British India, near Benares; 1814-1815 saw them crossing the Nizam's dominions twice to plunder part of the Madras presidency; in March 1816 they entered the south Indian district of Cuntur where all attempts to stop them failed. During Malcolm's absence from India a section of the Pindaris, under Amir Khan, became so powerful that Lord Minto feared the rise of a rival to the British. He therefore helped the Bhonsale Raja, the Maratha ruler of Nagpur, against Amir Khan. The British had begun to move from the defensive to the offensive.

Malcolm's views were in keeping with the situation. Previously he had erred in thinking of Holkar merely as a freebooter, but the inroads of the Pindaris left no doubt as to the nature of their power. It is

1. See, for instance, Extract from a Dispatch from Mr. Ross, Collector of Cuddapah, to the Board of Revenue at Madras, 23 March, 1816 and 24 March, 1816, P.E., 1816(370), xi. p.260/427.
2. Ghosh, Pathans and Pindaris, p.95.
these years, more than those at the beginning of the century, which really exemplify the "turbulent frontier" theory. British action against the Pindaris was a true case of a power reacting to a force which continually threatened the peace and security of a frontier. Once the British had decided to exterminate the Pindaris the Company's frontier was almost bound to expand. Some Indian states, such as Rewa and Jaipur, were too weak to resist the Pindaris by themselves. Others might give the Pindaris shelter and so extend the pursuit. The British in India had been authorised to pursue the Pindaris into neighbouring states if necessary. Therefore, once the Pindaris had been driven out of the Company's immediate neighbourhood, they would be creating disorder elsewhere, and would remain a potential threat. Those of Wellesley's men still in India used practically the same arguments against the Pindaris that they had used to justify the late Governor-General's policies, but this time with more validity. Edmonstone was particularly emphatic in urging a strong line, because

"a defensive system indeed is but a palliative and in its operation a temporary expedient, for we can scarcely expect to keep within the bounds formed by the long line of the Dei'han and by our own frontier the predatory hordes

1. Ibid., p.173.
composed of the Pindarries and the forces of Ameer Khan and his associates. 1

Malcolm agreed with this and took the opportunity to defend and advocate a continuance of Lord Wellesley's system. 2 Malcolm remained convinced of the uselessness of a neutral policy in India. In his opinion, the facts indicated that the defensive system had failed. The Pindaris had been repeatedly successful in eluding a strong force posted on the frontier. Afterwards, Malcolm wrote that Lord Minto's government had

"had no result more important than the impression it conveyed to the authorities at home of the utter impracticability of perseverance in that neutral policy they had desired to pursue". 3

To Hastings Malcolm wrote that even if the Governor-General should feel that Wellesley's policies were misguided, it did not alter the situation they now had to face. Yet to deal with the Pindari menace Malcolm advocated Wellesley's old policy of alliance with various Indian states. He felt the British should be guided by circumstances in India, and act, if necessary, contrary, to the wishes of the Home authorities. This, however, was not necessary. Malcolm was not the only one who felt that, since "the sphere of disorder has

3. Ibid., i. p.440.
gradually enlarged", and the Indian states apparently unable to deal with it themselves, the British must undertake a settlement.¹

Hastings respected Malcolm's opinions. Malcolm had once again discovered a Governor-General who, although he did not want expansion for expansion's sake, did not shrink from advancing if he felt it was necessary. On the eve of the establishment of British paramountcy in India Hastings still believed, however, that "it is the extension of influence, not of possessions, that is the solid policy for us".² Malcolm too, would have preferred this to preserve order in India by promoting the stability of existing Indian states was exactly the argument used by Malcolm in 1804 with reference to Sindia's government.³ But his remarks on the Treaty of Bassein had revealed that, as early as 1803, Malcolm had an inkling of the fact that it was the British presence itself which had undermined the permanence and authority of some Indian governments, and that if the British wished to preserve order they would have to advance their power further than mere influence.

² Hastings to Malcolm, 6 May, 1817, Kaye, Life, ii. p. 155.
³ "I do not think we could have a better frontier than the Jumna, nor a better neighbour in India than Dowlat Row, if we act with a liberal and conciliating policy towards him." Malcolm to Mercer, 30 March, 1804, Ibid., i. p. 268.
Therefore Malcolm agreed when Hastings wrote that if Sindia and Holkar associated themselves with the Pindaris either openly or covertly,

"they would forfeit their character as rulers of states, and must be dealt with as predatory aggressors."  

Malcolm stated the matter more bluntly: Sindia must either be made into a friend on whom the British could depend, or an enemy whom they must fight. Holkar's case was slightly different. Jeswant Rao became insane in 1808, and he died in 1811. The years following his death were ones of "unparalleled anarchy". Since this meant that there was no tangible authority in the Holkar state, Malcolm felt that the British would have to step in and fill the vacuum. Clearly, despite the support given by merchants in England, it was primarily the politicos, governed by circumstances, who made the decisions which finally established British paramountcy. Moreover, what support there was in England for the British action against the Pindaris was given in the belief that the war would not become a general one. But the policy of the Company's servants in India towards the Pindaris was

"to drive them from the territories they possessed, to identify with them all who gave them aid or protection," a policy which threatened to involve perhaps some of the more "legitimate" Maratha princes, Sindia, Holkar or the Peshwa. Malcolm's attitude indicated that if these rulers did not co-operate it was likely that operations against the Pindaris, the true freebooters, would be extended to include any anti-British movements, whether or not they disturbed the Company's frontier.


With the object, therefore, of learning the attitude of the Indian courts towards the Pindaris and the British determination to defeat them, Malcolm was sent as the Governor-General's Political Agent to confer with the various British Residents. From what he saw Malcolm could be fairly sure that if there was a general war the British could be almost sure of victory. Malcolm was in an important position: "all political work connected with our operations is in my hands." His opinions, therefore, carried weight. When he found at Hyderabed "a moody, melancholy sovereign, degraded and dejected nobles; and the impoverished retainers of a fallen Court," he decided that the British "must speak plainly and act decidedly. ... our power to dictate

1. Malcolm, Central India, i. p.461.
3. Malcolm to John Adam, Political Secretary to the Government, 26 July, 1817, Ibid., p.166.
is complete. It will be weakened by any show of reluctance to use it". In reality, what Malcolm desired here was not just the exercise of influence but a form of direct control over the Nizam's government. On the other hand, Malcolm was not blind to the nature of the power of the British in their allies' courts. When he first visited Hyderabad he deplored the dependence on the British; in 1817 this feeling was even stronger. He attributed the fact that "no country was ever more miserably governed" to a situation where the leading minister, Chandu Lal, owed his power to the support of the British government, and paid the "price of subservience to our Resident for continuance in office". When told that this was the only basis on which the British connection could be retained, Malcolm thought that it was "impossible there can be a worse", because "where there is power without pride there can be no motive for good government." But even in his dissatisfaction he felt that an unsatisfactory British influence was better than none at all: "after all it is right that we should form our judgment on this point by a view of comparative evils."  

2. Malcolm to his wife, (undated), Ibid., p.175.
last Maratha war had begun men of Malcolm's generation were assuring themselves of certain victory.\(^1\)

This confidence, however, had its drawbacks, as Malcolm soon discovered. From Hyderabad he went on to meet Elphinstone, Resident at Poona. Here occurred one of those episodes which made Elphinstone feel that Malcolm tended to be rather naive in some of his dealings with Indians. Hearing that Malcolm was at Poona, Peshwa Baji Rao asked if Malcolm would see him, and Malcolm, ascribing Baji Rao's recent intrigues against the British to "evil counsellors", did so. His aim was to give the Peshwa "what good advice I can", and to prove to him that the Governor-General "is as forward to reward and to elevate as to chastise and depress." This was because Malcolm believed in the importance of "raising our allies" as well as in "destroying our enemies".\(^2\)

At his meeting with Baji Rao Malcolm found a "care-worn" prince, humiliated by the imposition of the new Treaty of Poona in June, 1817. The Peshwa promised Malcolm that he would remain neutral in the coming conflict. Malcolm believed him, and as the chief political officer was able to override Elphinstone's

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1. The superiority of the British government was so great, "that the event of any struggle is no longer doubtful." Munro to Hastings, 12 August, 1817, G.R. Cleig, The Life of Thomas Munro, ii. p.462.
belief that the Peshwa could not be trusted. Elphinstone was right and Malcolm wrong. There are indications that as early as 1814 Baji Rao had been trying to form a confederacy of Indian states against the British.¹ The efficient secret service run by Elphinstone had kept him informed of this.² As a result of Malcolm's visit to Baji Rao, British troops were taken from Poona to fight the Pindaris (thus making Baji Rao's subsequent attack on the British residency possible) and the Peshwa was able to build up an army using the excuse that Malcolm had advised this as a precaution against the Pindaris. As Kaye writes: "Baji Rao say have been sincere at the time" but he had little "steadfastness of character".³ Malcolm, with his wide experience of Indian diplomacy, either did not realise this fact or did not take it into account. It would be practically impossible to refute Gupta's statement that "if anybody was completely deceived by the flattering tongue of Bajirao it was Malcolm."⁴

* * *

After this somewhat disastrous visit, Malcolm, to his great delight, was given the command of the army.

¹ Gupta, Bajirao II and the East India Company, pp.168-171.
² Ibid., p.171.
⁴ Gupta, Bajirao II and the East India Company, p.168.
pursuing the Pindaris. On 6 November, 1817 Daulat Rao Sindia, surrounded by British armies, was forced to abandon the Pindaris. He signed a treaty with the British promising his co-operation. This left Holkar who, with the Marathas of Poona and Nagpur, preferred to attack the British rather than submit to their domination. Malcolm was diverted from his pursuit of the Pindari Chitu into negotiations with Holkar. He could not persuade Holkar to make a settlement, and war commenced. Malcolm demanded that Holkar should act against the Pindaris and refrain from helping the Peshwa. Holkar did not comply with Malcolm's demands; there followed the Battle of Nehidpur, 21 December, 1817.¹

Malcolm won the battle with tactics which could hardly be called subtle. He had not been active in the field for over twenty years; this was his first big military command.² He destroyed Holkar's resistance by "waving his sword at the head of his troops and charging home".³ Whatever its military drawbacks, Malcolm's action had finally broken Holkar's power. The terms offered by Malcolm to Holkar effectively ruined any chance of that prince's acting against the British, involving as they did huge cessions of

¹ Newsletter from Gwalior, 2 January, 1818, P.R.C., iv. p.405.
² Malcolm had missed Arthur Wellesley's victories in the Second Maratha War through ill-health.
territory. The remaining Holkar territory would be protected by the British, who would station a force there to keep order. In the face of protests Malcolm remained adamant, and the treaty was signed on 6 January, 1818.

Malcolm's dealings with Holkar in 1817 were a logical conclusion to his long-held attitude towards Holkar's government. In 1805 he had felt that the extinction of the power of the house of Holkar was the best policy for the British to follow. In 1818 he personally accomplished this.

After the treaty had been signed, Malcolm enjoyed bringing order to Holkar's territories. Numerous Pindaris surrendered to Malcolm and he treated them with "extraordinary but polite clemency and generosity". Any leaders or heads of villages who helped the Pindaris were punished for "the dread of us must be stronger than that of the Pindarries to give us the full benefit of its operation"; although these measures seemed harsh they worked. Soon Malcolm wrote: "the fellows that I was hunting like wild beasts are all now tame", and attributed this to his personal influence: "it is the result of good arrangement, and of a general impression, which even the lawless own, of my being neither

3. Ibid.
unmerciful nor unjust."

But before Malcolm could concentrate entirely on the pacification of central India, he had to make one last major diplomatic effort. It concerned the Peshwa and was to involve Malcolm in controversy once more.

By May, 1818, Baji Rao was fleeing from British troops and had no hope of escape or of regaining his lost authority. General Doveton barred his way to the south, and in the north Malcolm was waiting. Therefore, the Peshwa had no choice; on 17 May, 1818, he sent his agents to the British camp with a personal appeal to Malcolm's generosity and friendship.

Malcolm was now placed in a very difficult situation. The problems of communication, and the necessity for the delegation of large powers to the government's agents had caused trouble for Malcolm before. Essentially the trouble over Gohad and Gwalior had arisen from Malcolm's ignorance of affairs in other parts of India, and from the necessity of his having to act on his own initiative as circumstances dictated. His situation in 1818 was similar. Baji Rao's application to Malcolm had not been anticipated by

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2. Gupta, Bajirao III and the East India Company, p.199.
3. Ibid., p.200.
either the Governor-General or by Malcolm himself.\(^1\)

Therefore, Malcolm had no specific instructions to act upon. He had seen only Elphinstone's instructions of 15 December, 1817, which said that intercourse with Baji Rao was inadmissible.\(^2\) By May Malcolm felt that the change in Baji Rao's circumstances justified his actions in negotiating with the Peshwa, and he was not, as he wrote later, "deterred by a fear of responsibility from an effort to finish the war".\(^3\) He therefore opened negotiations with Baji Rao.

Malcolm had learned from his earlier mistake at Poona. This time he did not allow his sympathies to override his judgment. To appeals to his personal friendship Malcolm replied "I was prepared to do the duty of a real friend but that forbade me to soothe his feelings or flatter his hopes."\(^4\) Malcolm insisted that the

"British Government had passed a final judgment that he [Baji Rao] should be deprived of sovereign power and not be allowed to reside on any terms in the Deccan."\(^5\)

Taking a strong line, Malcolm threatened renewed hostilities if the Peshwa did not comply with the terms offered.\(^6\) During and after the Second Maratha War

\(^{1}\) Malcolm, Political History, i. p.519.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p.532.

\(^{3}\) Ibid., p.519.

\(^{4}\) Malcolm to Adam, 3 June, 1618, Choksey, ed., Last Phase, p.200.

\(^{5}\) Ibid.

\(^{6}\) Malcolm to Adam, 27 May, 1818, Ibid., pp.198-199.
Malcolm had concentrated upon trying to make those Indian princes he regarded as legitimate into strong and stable rulers. But in 1818 he had realised that his original opinion of Baji Rao's position had been a misconception. Even in 1803 the Peshwa's authority in the Maratha empire was really very weak. The only semblance of power Baji Rao had was as a rallying point for those dissatisfied with the expanding British power. As for establishing order and good government Baji Rao was, even then, ineffectual. Malcolm had already noted that the system of maintaining British influence by means of a Resident at an Indian court was neither morally desirable nor politically effective. By 1816 Malcolm felt that it was not enough to have Baji Rao only half-dependent on the British; since the Peshwa had abused his position, central India could be settled only by the Peshwa's "voluntary abdication of his power". This would destroy his influence with other Marathas and make a recurrence of revolt impossible.\(^1\) Malcolm achieved his aim, but it is hard to see how he could convince himself that Baji Rao's abdication of power was "voluntary". Nothing could hide the fact that negotiating at the head of a victorious army Malcolm forced the Peshwa's submission, and substituted for his

authority that of the British, against whose power any opposition would be useless.

Malcolm knew the strength of his position. Although the Peshwa was still at the head of eight thousand men and could prolong the war, "neither his habits of body nor mind are adapted" to the "life of a common freebooter". The alternative Malcolm offered Baji Rao was unlikely to be rejected. In exchange for the sacrifice of "a power which he did not possess and could never hope to regain" Malcolm promised that the Peshwa would "enjoy comfort and affluence, and as much liberty as can be granted consistent either with his good or our safety." Moreover, events in Baji Rao's camp gave Malcolm another advantage: the Peshwa had lost control over his troops and was afraid for his "liberty and life" should Malcolm leave him. Obviously his liberty was already forfeit to the British, but it was Malcolm, not his fellow Marathas, who held out to Baji Rao the promise of protection for himself and his family, and a pension which Malcolm "took upon himself to engage, that it shall be not less than 8 lacs of Rupees per annum." Malcolm also used his skill as a

2. Ibid.
diplomat to assert his own influence by separating Baji Rao and "the few respectable persons that remained" from the "more disreputable." And further, to reconcile Baji Rao to the terms of the settlement Malcolm told those of the Peshwa's adherents who thanked Malcolm for the liberal provision made for them, that "their thanks were alone due to Baji Rao who by the present and future conduct I saw was determined to sacrifice any personal considerations to the hope of promoting the future welfare of those who had been the victims of their attachment to him".

Malcolm saw the value of a humane treatment of the Peshwa. In his own opinion, Malcolm had brought to fruition Lord Wellesley's plans for India. During the negotiations he wrote that

"If I can reconcile this Prince to his fate and terminate the war, I shall be the most fortunate of men. All that I have seen in my dreams will have occurred within a short twelve-month."

But Malcolm had acted without instructions and was, therefore, anxious to hear from Lord Hastings.

Malcolm was right to be apprehensive. As before, over Gohad and Gwalior in 1804, Malcolm was judged in Calcutta to have been too generous towards Indian rulers.

1. Malcolm to Adam, 4 June, 1816, Ibid., p. 206.
2. Ibid., p. 209.
Hastings, however, was more tolerant than Wellesley or Barlow. Although disapproving of Malcolm's assumption of authority, Hastings accepted Malcolm's account of his reasons, and ratified the treaty sent to him. Hastings felt that the pension Malcolm had guaranteed to the Peshwa was too much for a prince who had engaged in open hostilities against the British. 1 Malcolm countered this criticism with powerful arguments: although defeated, Baji Rao could have retreated into the fortress of Asirghar, near Burhanpur, thereby prolonging the war until the next fair season. In that case many hopes would have been revived and much of India would have remained unsettled. This too affected the size of the pension for Baji Rao. Malcolm felt that the guarantee of a large sum would bring Baji Rao into submission whereas to leave the point unsettled might have encouraged the Peshwa to resist. 2 Malcolm added another justification of his conduct, one which probably weighed most with him. He gave Baji Rao a large pension to give an impression of the magnanimity and justice of the British government. 3 This was the same motive which had directed him in the controversy of 1804. Moreover,

as in 1804, Malcolm found that men not working in Calcutta, but in Indian courts, approved of his settlement. Elphinstone at Poona, Jenkins at Nagpur and Russel at Hyderabad did not think Malcolm had acted unwisely. Unanimously they felt the ending of the war had been worth the eight lacs promised to Baji Rao.¹

The Governor-General feared that the Peshwa would use the money to intrigue against the British, but four years later admitted that none of the ill consequences he had feared had occurred except the unnecessary expense.²

This was hardly Malcolm's fault; in giving the Peshwa a life-pension he could have no idea of how long Baji Rao would live. But Malcolm's biographer Kaye heard of Baji Rao's longevity spoken of as one of Malcolm's offences.³

But the important thing was that Malcolm's view in this case prevailed. Once before, when his judgment was overruled the British had created more resentment against themselves. Probably in 1818 Malcolm could have imposed harsher terms, but at the expense of British-Indian relations. When under a Governor-General who was not dogmatic in his views, Malcolm proved that when there was a disagreement over the

1. Letters to Malcolm from Elphinstone, 12 June, 1818; Jenkins, 16 June, 1818; Russel, (undated), Ibid., i. pp.527-528.
amount of discretion to be assumed, the opinion of the man on the spot could prevail.

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In these years the British were really advancing the frontiers of empire. The negotiations of 1818 had involved huge cessions of territory to the British, and the Rajputs and other minor rulers came under the immediate protection of the British. The greater part of India was, therefore, under direct British administration; the remainder came under the influence of the paramount power. The "turbulent frontier" was still to be a factor, however: the British had extended their power to encompass the Marathas but to the north-east of the Company's frontier the Burmese were advancing into Assam, and in the north-west Ranjit Singh had built up the independent power of the Sikhs.¹

Malcolm justified British expansion at the beginning of the century in terms of the French threat to Britain's international position. In 1817-1818 a similar fear no longer existed in India, and men such as Malcolm justified their wiping out all opposition to the British, which was basically a matter of convenience, as necessary action against predatory hordes. This policy

¹. Iyall, Rise and Expansion, pp.301-303.
was sound enough when applied to the Pindaris, but the Marathas were a different matter. The extinction of their power was not merely a case of maintaining order: it left the way open for British paramountcy.

Writing of this period some years later, Malcolm revealed the fundamental reason for British-Maratha hostility:

"The Marathas, from their feeling and policy as well as from those habits of predatory warfare on which the whole construction of their government is grounded, were the natural enemies of the British power"

and

"There could be no lasting peace between states whose objects and principles of government were always in collision."\footnote{Malcolm, \textit{Political History}, i. p.592.}
CONCLUSION

Malcolm's career did not end with the establishment of British paramountcy in 1818. He turned more to administrative work, being put in charge of the post-war settlement of parts of central India. In this position, and later as Governor of Bombay, he was able to put into practice humanitarian principles which had often had to take second place to considerations of power and security in his diplomatic work. This work, in southern Malwa particularly, was an unqualified success. Bishop Heber, who travelled through this area a few years later, had nothing but praise for Malcolm:

"No difficulties could be greater than those he met with in Southern Malwa, and yet that country, from a mere wilderness, is now ... a garden;" 2

and Holkar's territories ruled by ministers chosen by Malcolm, and administered under revenue and judicial systems recommended by him, had been brought into a state of peace and prosperity. Bishop Heber found

1. "I have had occasion to put all my theories of settling troubled waters, and of bringing order out of anarchy, into full practice," Malcolm to A. Wellesley, end of October, 1818, Kaye, Life, ii. p.280.
3. Ibid., pp.500-501.
that Indians asked after Malcolm with an "anxiety and regard" which they did not "pretend anything equal to" when "speaking of other great men."¹

This was the result of Malcolm's personal influence. Perhaps from Edmund Burke, he had acquired the notion of trusteeship; that political power brought with it a moral responsibility for the welfare of subject peoples. Revolutionary changes were, however, anathema to him; he preferred to see abuses die a natural death.² Moreover, he was very pessimistic about the future of the Indian empire he had helped to create. From past experience he realised that the British would always be foreigners in India, and that sooner or later would come a reaction to their rule.³ He now realised that "the period may arise when the whole peninsula will be under our rule" but wanted to delay the process since "territory is coming too fast upon us."⁴ But this sense of insecurity did not prevent Malcolm from wanting to involve Indians in the British administration. Indeed, he felt that the loyalty of the Hindu population would be a chief source of security.⁵ Eventually, however, the love of independence and pride in self-government

¹ Ibid., iii. p.340.
² Malcolm, "Notes to Assistants and Officers", Central India, ii. pp.461-462.
³ Malcolm to Major Stewart, (undated), Haye, Life, ii. p.372.
⁴ Ibid., p.374.
would, he felt, override any feelings of gratitude towards the British. Yet Malcolm wrote, in the best tradition of the "Guardians", that this outlook on the future would not deter him "from being the advocate for their [the Indians'] instruction in all the arts of civil life."\(^2\)

Malcolm's innate conservatism, however, still predominated. He wanted to associate Indians with the administration, but these Indians were to be an élite, the upper ranks of Indian society.\(^3\) Moreover, like a benevolent despot he believed, with the best of intentions, that Indians would not, for a very long time, be capable of ruling themselves. This meant that the British must retain supreme power even though the ultimate prospect was "the dissolution of our authority in India."\(^4\)

These were strong words from a man who played so prominent a part in British expansion in India. Yet he explained the paradox himself, contending that the British had "no option" and that if he had not been convinced of this, "I should hold myself guilty for every step in advance that I have ever recommended".\(^5\)

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2. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
With Malcolm, philanthropic actions came after conquest, as its justification. When faced with events as they arose, Malcolm thought not primarily in humanitarian terms but in terms of security and power. As in Africa later in the century, the areas of India taken over by the British were unsuitable for colonisation; the Indian administration was certainly not pressed into territorial acquisitions by the commercial interests of the East India Company in England. For these interests empire would be too expensive a burden. The motive behind the expansion was not, therefore, the economic imperialism about which Hobson writes. It is necessary to look elsewhere for the reasons why Britain acquired a formal empire in India in the early nineteenth century.

The explanation must lie with the men in India itself, such as Malcolm, and in their reactions to internal crises. Lord Wellesley, supported by a group of men with the same general principles as his, took advantage of crises in Indian affairs and extended British influence, through subsidiary treaties where possible. His opportunity for intervention usually came because of internal quarrels among the Maratha states; if these states had been able to present a united front to the British they might have succeeded in at least containing them behind the Company's
frontiers. As it was the British could use the excuse of disorder beyond their ever-extending frontiers for intervention in Maratha affairs.

Undoubtedly, the eagerness of Lord Wellesley and Malcolm to extend British influence sprang partly from an unfounded fear of French intentions. From the desire to keep another power out of India came the belief that it was necessary to ensure that Indian states acted as the Company wished. The subsidiary system was successful enough when it involved a state such as Hyderabad, relatively eager for the British alliance. But the Treaty of Bassein aroused resentment among the Maratha princes which the British did not take into account even as a possibility. Subsequent subsidiary treaties with the Marathas, such as that negotiated with Sindia by Malcolm, were the result of compulsion, and as such produced more intrigues against the British than co-operation with them. This was evident in British relations with Sindia. Within months of concluding the Treaty of Durhampur Malcolm, because Sindia had involved himself in Holkar's intrigues against the British, had to negotiate another settlement. The other channel of British influence, the system of British Residencies at Indian courts, proved to be too weak to control anti-British plots. Influence as a means of securing British interests and safety broke down fairly rapidly.
in India. As this became obvious, so too did the fact that a policy of withdrawal was impracticable, a point of view from which John Malcolm and his friends had never deviated. Wellesley's Governor-Generalship had established the British as the foremost military power in India, a responsibility from which they could not safely withdraw. Apart from the fact that the Pindaris became an increasingly greater nuisance to the British, there was always the possibility that India might produce a strong leader to challenge the British power.

Therefore, although Hastings still insisted that influence was the best method for securing British interests, it was his Governor-Generalship which saw the indisputable establishment of British paramountcy. For the explanation of why formal control was finally accepted as the solution to Indian affairs, it is necessary to look beyond Calcutta to the men who served in the British Residencies, and with the British armies in India. Of these, Malcolm is a good example. Beginning his diplomatic career under Lord Wellesley, he took a prominent part in the operations of 1818, as did many of Lord Wellesley's former lieutenants. His work, therefore, illustrates the stages of British expansion in India, and also the importance of the men on the spot.

Usually the policies followed in India are associated with the Governor-General of the time. There
were, however, men beyond Calcutta acting as agents of
the government whose influence with the Governors-General
could be considerable. The degree of influence depended,
of course, upon the receptibility of the Governor-
General concerned; but, without exception, the Governors-
General, on their arrival in India, relied upon men
such as Malcolm for information and advice as to the
current state of affairs.

The controversy over Gohad and Gwalior demonstrated
that a strong-willed Governor-General could block an
agent's plans, however right he might think himself to
be. But in 1805 Wellesley resigned; Malcolm, and
others of Wellesley's agents who remained, did not
lose their faith in his general policies, however, and
they were ready, when the time came, to put them into
effect. Malcolm strongly urged the necessity of the
Third Maratha War upon Hastings, who, although reluctant,
followed the course which Malcolm advocated. Malcolm
at this time still thought of himself as Lord Wellesley's
man:

"I recall with delight those lessons I learnt
under your Lordship. Every day shows
practically the wisdom of the principles
which you laid down for the management of
this great empire".1

Malcolm never doubted that Wellesley's was the only
course and he followed it through to the end. The

1. Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, September, 1818, Kaye,
Life, ii. p.276.
tendency to see Malcolm merely as Lord Wellesley's subordinate is a false one. Had he been lacking in independent thought he would hardly have had any influence with Wellesley himself, as well as with others such as Arthur Wellesley, Lake and Hastings. The men who were British representatives on and beyond the Company's frontiers and who had a wide experience of Indian affairs, must take a great share of the responsibility for the establishment of British paramountcy.

The modern historian, of course, gives Malcolm credit for attempting to lessen the impact of British power. Many Indians trusted him. One Maratha leader, Jeswant Rao Bal, had, he claimed, given orders that in battle his troops were not to fire upon Malcolm in case "that evil day might come, and that we should have no friend in India so likely to serve us as yourself."¹ His desire to conciliate new subjects led him into disputes and often recriminations. But this does not detract from Arthur Wellesley's tribute to Malcolm in 1824:

"I can answer for it that from the year 1796 no great transaction has taken place in the East in which you have not played a principal, most useful, conspicuous, and honourable part; and you have in many services, diplomatic as well as military, been distinguished by successes, any one of which in ordinary circumstances would have been deemed sufficient for the life of a man, and would have recommend-ed him to the notice of his superiors."²

¹ Told to Kaye by Malcolm's brother, the Rev. Gilbert Malcolm, Kaye, Life, ii. p.295.
² Quoted, Ibid, i. p.199.
Glossary

Amir       A Muhammadan of high rank.
Durbar     A court, an audience or executive government of an Indian state.
Jagir      A village or district assigned to any person for the internal government and enjoyment of the revenue thereof.
Jagirdar   The holder of a jagir.
Khan        A prince, a chief. Also a common adjunct to Afghan or Pathan names.
Lac         One hundred thousand.
Mashad     A cushion or any padded seat against which a person reclines. The seat of rank or royalty. Malcolm used the word in the latter sense of a throne.
Mir         A chief, a head or leader.
Nawab       A title of rank conferred on Muhammadan gentlemen.
Raj         A kingdom, a rule, sovereignty.
Raja        A king, prince.
Sanad       A grant, a charter. A document conveying to an individual emoluments, titles, privileges, offices, or the rights to revenue from land.
Sirdar      Chief or head of a military band.
Vakil       Originally a first minister under the Mughals. Malcolm, however, used the term simply as meaning an agent of an Indian state.
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