

of Britain, owing to her overwhelming strength at sea, are powerless to attack her territories or her commerce elsewhere upon the globe. Yet, should they attempt—alone or by an alliance—to attack Britain in her one vulnerable part—through India—they immediately bring into the field against them another great world-power; they double her strength; they reinforce and make her strong in the one part where she was weak.

But the Anglo-Japanese Agreement is incidentally, not primarily, an instrument of force. It is truly a factor of peace. In regard to its effects upon world-polity, its true importance and value lies in the possibility of agreement and mutual understanding—through a more perfect balance of power—between human forces, the rivalry and conflict of which constitute both a peril to peace and civilisation, and a hindrance to the progress of mankind. Moreover, the efficacy of this agreement as an instrument of peace equals its efficacy as an instrument of force. For it cuts at the cancer which is the cause of all peril and political unrest in Asia—as elsewhere. This peril is involved in the existence of rich and fertile lands that lie defenceless in the hands of weak, decadent peoples, and attract strong, strenuous races to conquer and despoil them as surely as a magnet attracts steel. To guarantee the peace of Asia this treaty has substituted for the weakness of Persia, Central Asia, and the Chinese Empire the strength of Britain and Japan. It applies to Asia the same political principle which secures the peace of Europe, through the strength of the powers in consensus of agreement, with respect to the weakness of Turkey. Yet though the cancer of rivalry and unrest in Asia is for the moment arrested, the mischief is not cured. Britain and Japan are not alone the arbiters of Asia. The third, and—in the future—perhaps the greatest of all Asiatic Powers, confronts them across the path of its ambitions and its destiny. It lies with Russia to decide whether the Anglo-Japanese Agreement shall secure the peace of Asia or plunge it—at some future time—into a terrible war.