

by Great Britain to the subjugation of these three khanates, though envoys from their rulers appealed to the Indian government for assistance.

As soon as Sher Ali in 1868 had firmly established his power, Lawrence made him a present of arms and £60,000 in money, but he frowned on any suggestion that he should commit himself further. Sir Henry Rawlinson, when member of the Secretary of State's Council, penned a famous minute dated July 20, 1868, in which he advised a more 'forward' policy, though one that was still moderate compared with later developments. He advocated the occupation of Quetta in northern Baluchistan commanding the Bolan Pass—a suggestion first put forward by General Jolin Jacob in 1856—a close alliance with the Amir of Afghanistan, and the grant to him of an annual subsidy. To these suggestions Lawrence was altogether opposed, and he was supported by the ablest of his advisers in India, Maine, Temple, and Strachey. Apart from the fact that there was a direct conflict of military opinion as to whether the Bolan Pass could best be defended from the western or eastern end, Lawrence was convinced that any interference in Afghan affairs would lead to a rupture, and he had no belief in the policy of attempting to check Russia on the Oxus by quarrelling with Sher Ali. He declared it would be impolitic and unwise to lessen the difficulties of Russia, if she seriously thought of invading India, by meeting her half-way in a country notoriously unsuited to military operations and in the midst of a hostile or exasperated population. He believed our real security to lie in abstinence from entanglements in Afghanistan, in a compact and highly disciplined army stationed on our own border, in a careful management of our finances, and 'in the sense of security of title and possession which is gradually imbuing the principal chiefs and the native aristocracy'. Elsewhere he said truly enough that the first invaders of Afghanistan, whether British