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contrary, the constitutional reforms, the establishment of the Duma, the attempts to infuse a more liberal spirit into the bureaucracy, created new currents of thought throughout Russia, which were much more in sympathy with Western Europe than with Germany. Not only the most progressive parties in Russia, but even the moderate conservative parties welcomed from the first the possibility of a better understanding between Great Britain and Russia, not merely on international grounds, but because they were convinced that friendly relations between the two countries were bound to exert a favourable influence on the Russian internal situation. The reactionary parties, on the other hand, were those that persisted in the old distrust of England, and clung desperately to the time-honoured connexion with Germany.

Thus, for the first time, the Russian Government was induced to approach the question of a political understanding with Great Britain in an entirely new spirit. This country had often before, especially under Liberal administrations, made overtures to Russia for a settlement of existing differences in Asia; but until the Japanese war induced a more chastened spirit in St. Petersburg, such overtures never met with any genuine response. French influence, too, was now exerted in St. Petersburg for the removal of any further chances of conflict between her Russian ally and her British friend. In 1907, an Anglo-Russian agreement was signed for the settlement of the three principal questions concerning Central Asia, which had repeatedly threatened to embroil the two countries, and it not only removed the chief dangers of collision between them, but paved the way for more intimate relations than had existed for nearly a hundred years. To