

proach of his chiefs to me, entreaties for protection, and offers of submission to the British Government, have reached me from chiefs on the banks of the Indus, as well as those on the Jumna.

I have considered this question exclusively as it relates to the policy of forming a connexion with Runjeet Singh as a barrier against the designs of France. I am aware that it is before government in a more general view, for the Resident at Dihlee has done me the honor of communicating to me copies of his late despatches to you on this subject.

I now beg leave to advert to the conduct which I have pursued during the agitation of this question on the negotiation with Runjeet Singh. From the tenor of my instructions, and of your despatch to the Resident at Dihlee of the 21st March last, I have conceived it to be the wish of government to refrain from making any declaration expressive of a determination either to support the independent Sikh chiefs against Runjeet Singh, or to permit the subjugation of them by him. I have, therefore, endeavoured, since the first mention of the question, to induce the Rajah to refrain from agitating it, and I have used every argument that appeared to me likely to prevent the reference on this subject.

My advice, however, has always been supposed to come from myself, and I have invariably declared that I had not received any instructions further than to ascertain distinctly the Rajah's views.

If, therefore, it should be thought expedient to grant required concession, it may be made in any way that may be preferred. It may be made without condition, the Rajah being informed that the British Government has never had any concern in the disputes between the Sikh chiefs, and never has intended to interfere; or it may be granted to him as a cession of great importance, which can only be made on such conditions as government may be pleased to annex to it. Government is not committed in any way by my negotiation here to prefer either this or that mode, but can adopt any line of conduct