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About this record

This file relates to the situation in East Persia and the Malleson Mission (1918-21). It includes papers on the following subjects:

A collection of papers titled 'Expenditure on [the] Malleson Mission and Troops in East Persia', including: a memorandum from the India Office Political Department on planned politico-military missions to Kashgar [Qashqar] and Meshed [Mashhad] to 'work in allied interests [,] and combat German and Turkish propaganda' on the model of General Lionel Dunsterville's organisation Dunsterforce, previously deployed to the North Caucasus; a memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on which government department should bear the expenses for Malleson's Mission in countering 'German-Bolshevik developments in Central Asia', with reflections on the German promotion of Pan-Turanism and Pan-Islamism which, together with Bolshevism were perceived as posing a 'direct menace' to the security of India, since they could conceivably 'enlist the forces of religion in the armies of political and social discontent'; correspondence to date between the India Office, HM Treasury and the War Office (including from Secretary of State for War, Winston S Churchill) concerning the Chancellor's memorandum, together with thirty-two appendices on expenditures preceding the Chancellor's memorandum and the military and political telegrams referred to in the collection on 'Expenditures' (January 1921); the lack of financial resources to continue the Malleson Mission in Trans-Caspia (December 1918); the criticism by Lovat Fraser of expenditures on the Mission in the *Daily Mail* (July 1920); the assumption of the Mission's current roles to 'encourage resistance in Persia to Pan-Islamic and Bolshevik influences' and offer 'moral support to Transcaspians by threatening [the] flank and rear of [the] Bolshevik advance towards Krasnovodsk [Turkmenbashi]' by a 'Persian Force to be raised under the terms of the recent agreement', together with the existing Seistan Levy Corps and Khorasan Levy Corps, and the 'intelligence work' to be carried out by a 'small organisation' based at Meshed (September 1919).



SECRET.

Expenditure on Malleeson Mission and Troops in East Persia, 1918 to 1921.

NOTE.—This collection of papers starts with (1) an India Office Political Department Memorandum, dated 23rd April 1918, which summarises the history of the inception of the Malleeson Mission, and (2) a memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, dated 11th November 1919, which (besides making certain proposals at its close) summarises the controversy up to that date regarding incidence of expenditure.

The correspondence regarding expenditure which follows the Chancellor's memorandum is given up to date.

There are two appendices. Appendix I. gives correspondence regarding expenditure which precedes the Chancellor's memorandum and is summarised in it. Appendix II. gives the main military or political telegrams which are referred to in memoranda (1) and (2) or in the later correspondence regarding expenditure.

(N.B.—This collection of papers is printed from India Office files only.)

INDIA OFFICE,
January 1921.

1.—Note by Political Department, India Office, for Eastern Committee.

THE TURKESTAN MISSION.

1. The project of sending a British Mission to Turkestan appears to have originated in an informal suggestion made to the War Office by Sir Arthur Hirtzel in December 1917. The first official document on the subject is a telegram from the Secretary of State to the Government of India, Army Department, dated the 4th January 1918, to the following effect:—

“Do you think it practicable to set up British organisation in Turkestan like Dunsterville's in Caucasus, to support anti-Maximalist movement, and have you suitable officers? War Office would be glad if anything of the kind could be done, but have not sufficient information to form opinion.”

2. The Government of India (Army Department) replied on the 8th January 1918. They drew attention to the absence of any Government in Turkestan “to which a Mission would be helpful as well as useful to us”; and to the impossibility, owing to difficulty of communications, of affording effective military support to such a Mission in case of need. On the information at their disposal, they did not regard the proposal as a practical one, but considered that “it would be advisable to make all preparations in regard to personnel, &c., so that, in case a demand should arise, we should be able to proceed without delay.” They added that, before any such Mission actually started, it would be for consideration whether the Amir of Afghanistan should not be taken into our confidence.

3. After consultation with the War Office and Foreign Office, the Secretary of State telegraphed as follows to the Government of India on the 25th January 1918:—

“War Office consider that, in view of proposed intimate connection between Turkestan and Caucasus,¹ preparation and despatch of suitable Mission to former should be undertaken without delay. Absence of regular Government regarded as argument for, rather than against, Mission, and effective military support not considered essential provided officers chosen are men of initiative and enterprise and are plentifully supplied with funds. Officers should be accompanied, if possible, by persons qualified to conduct Muhammadan propaganda in favour of Allies, and every endeavour should be made to exploit anti-Bolshevist and pro-autonomous sentiments.”

¹ The British Consul-General at Meshed telegraphed to the Foreign Office on the 6th January that a meeting of Muhammadans and non-Maximalists, held at Khokand in the preceding month, had decided to declare the autonomy of Turkestan and to take steps to create a provisional administration. It was proposed to enter into intimate relations with the Cossacks and the Caucasus, with a view to concerted action.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [1v] (2/71)



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The Government of India were asked to submit definite proposals without delay, and in the meantime to put in hand the preliminary arrangements at once.

4. They replied (Army Department telegram of 2nd February 1918) as follows:—

“To deal with the problem proposed by the War Office, it is considered by us that the best results would be obtained by establishing two centres from which, as opportunity offered, missions or emissaries could be sent into Russian Turkestan: the one at Meshed, dealing with all the country west of the Oxus and the plain country of Bokhara; and the other based on Kashgar, dealing with Ferghana and Samarkand, in which provinces autonomy appears to be commenced.”

They proposed to place General Malleeson in charge of the Meshed Mission and Colonel Dew in charge of that based on Kashgar.

5. Before orders had been passed on the above recommendations, a telegram was received from the Government of India in the Foreign Department representing that the object of the proposed Mission appeared “hopelessly vague,” that its chances of success were “extremely problematical,” and that the “entry of British emissaries into Russian Turkestan would certainly excite liveliest suspicions of the Amir and in Afghanistan generally, whatever excuse we might give.” They therefore urged that the project should be held in abeyance pending the receipt from the Amir of a reply to a personal letter addressed to him by the Viceroy on the 10th January inviting his views on the whole situation in Central Asia as affected by the collapse of Russia.

6. It was decided to suspend action in regard to the Mission accordingly, and the Government of India were so informed on the 7th March 1918. Meanwhile, with a view to meeting the Government of India's complaint of the “vagueness” of the project, the India Office (letter to War Office and Foreign Office, 16th February 1918) made the following tentative suggestions as to the instructions to be furnished to the British officers in the event of the Mission ultimately taking shape:—

“It is presumed that the main energies of the Mission should be devoted to propaganda among the local Muhammadan population, tending to counteract the anti-British influences believed to be at work in the country, and to check enemy intrigues and attempts at penetration. With this object in view, it would be their endeavour, as opportunity served, to strengthen and encourage any elements in the population making for stability in local affairs or likely to provide an effective barrier against Turco-German schemes of political or commercial expansion based upon ‘Pan-Turanian’ or other ideals. Local recruitment for military service should presumably form no part of the Mission's programme, though the officers would not be debarred from engaging men as personal guards or for such other special purpose as might be found desirable.”

The letter added that these suggestions were necessarily somewhat vague, but that it did not seem possible, on the information available, to do more than indicate the general lines on which the Mission should work. “The officers selected should have full discretion to avail themselves of all opportunities that local conditions may provide for countering enemy propaganda and promoting and stimulating pro-British sympathies among the inhabitants.” Both the Foreign Office and War Office expressed their general concurrence in the India Office suggestions.

7. On the 21st March 1918, the Government of India (Foreign Department) telegraphed as follows:—

“We have had no reply from the Amir as yet, but as selected officers are now here awaiting orders, and weeks must elapse before they could reach Meshed and Kashgar, we do not propose to defer their despatch further. Though we are still without evidence of any pro-Ally elements in Russian Turkestan with whom they could co-operate, it seems desirable that they should move at once to centres where they can acquaint themselves with local notables and conditions, and take advantage of any favourable opportunity.”

This proposal was approved by His Majesty's Government on the 30th March 1918.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [2r] (3/71)



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8. On the 9th March 1918, the Government of India (Foreign Department) reported—

(1) that a Political Mission consisting of Major F. M. Bailey, Captain Blacker and Captain Etherton, with some 10 assistants, was about to start for Kashgar "to enquire into local conditions and report on possibility of getting into touch with elements in Russian Turkestan, with whom they could work in allied interests and combat German and Turkish propaganda."

(N.B.—We have since learned that this Mission has actually started for Kashgar; on arrival there, it will place itself under the orders of the British Consul-General.)

(2) that four officers, viz., Captain Bingham, Captain Bray, Captain Samad Shah and Subadar-Major Mala Khan, were being sent to Meshed to work under the Military Attaché (Colonel Redl) as military intelligence officers, "with a view to investigate possibilities of despatch of military Mission into Russian Turkestan."

9. As regards the Meshed Mission, the Commander-in-Chief in India reported to the War Office on the 12th April, that the following instructions had been sent to the Military Attaché at Meshed:—

"Under your orders these officers will collect all possible information regarding the situation in Turkestan and get into touch with notables and other elements who could assist in such a Mission. Active propaganda not to be undertaken without orders from here, and Turkestan is not to be entered. . . . You should work in consultation with Consul-General."

The Commander-in-Chief explained that the Mission would be a military one, but that, until it became evident that its prospects were such as to justify the employment of a General officer, it was not intended to warn General Malleeson (*see* para. 4).

10. Mission to Kashgar. The primary objects of this Mission are as stated in para. 8. But it is also hoped that the presence of British officers at Kashgar will tend to strengthen the hands of the civil and military authorities of Chinese Turkestan, and to encourage them to deal effectively with local disturbances or with hostile activities from outside the province. In this connection it may be recorded that the British Consul-General at Kashgar (Sir G. Macartney), in a despatch dated the 20th December 1917, drew attention to the danger of outbreaks of lawlessness in the province, with which the local administration would be powerless to cope, and advocated the creation of a force of local military police, nominally under the Chinese, but actually controlled by British officers. As a preliminary step, he recommended that a body of 30 Indian infantry, with three or four British and some Indian officers, should be sent to Kashgar, ostensibly for the protection of the British Consulate, but "in reality to form the nucleus out of which the military police would be evolved." Both the British Minister at Peking and the War Office have supported Sir G. Macartney's proposal. The Government of India, who were consulted on the subject quite recently, have replied (20th April) that they are in communication with Sir G. Macartney and will report further in due course. They state that Major Bailey's Mission has an escort of six Indian regulars as orderlies; difficulties of transport made it desirable to keep down numbers.

11. No reply has yet been received from the Amir to the Viceroy's letter of the 10th January (*see* para. 5).

J. E. S.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, INDIA OFFICE,
23rd April 1918.

2.—Memorandum by Chancellor of the Exchequer, dated 11th November 1919.

Incidence of the Cost of General Malleeson's Military Mission now at Meshed.

(i) On 14th August 1918 the India Office informed the Treasury that the Viceroy had, at General Malleeson's request, authorised him to draw on His Majesty's Minister at Tehran for such funds as might be required for Secret Service expenditure, to be debited to the War Office.

The Secretary of State presumed that the Treasury would agree that such expenditure, with all other charges incurred by General Malleeson's Mission at

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Meshed or by the troops under his command, should be debited to Imperial revenues as part of the extraordinary expenses of the war, and asked for the wishes of the Treasury on the point whether the charge should fall on Army Votes or the Foreign Office Vote (31769/18).⁶

The Foreign Office view (semi-official) was that this was entirely a military question to be settled by the India Office, the War Office and the Treasury.

The War Office view (also semi-official) was as follows:—

The Mission was under the control of the Indian Government, subject to the general direction of the Eastern Committee.

Its main objects were to check enemy intrigue and penetration from Turkestan and anti-British propaganda among the local Mussulman populations, and to encourage the stable element of the populations of Turkestan [and Persia] against Pan-Turanian schemes supported by Germany.

¹ These words are incorrect according to the India Office view. (See (v) below.)

The War Office had no knowledge of the amount of the expenditure, but regarded its nature as similar to that of the subsidies to the Persian Government and the maintenance of the South Persia Rifles (both shared equally by the Imperial Government (Foreign Office Vote) and the Indian Government).

Their view was that the onus of proof of dissimilarity lay on the India Office, but that in any case the Imperial share should be charged against the Foreign Office and not against Army Votes.

The essence of the War Office case may be summed up in Mr. Widdows' words:—"The Mission is described as a Military Mission, but though the agency is military the expenditure is political, and, as in the case of the Caucasus Military Agent, the Foreign Office should be responsible for it on behalf of the Imperial Government."

This view was qualified by the admission that the War Office would doubtless have to bear the cost of the small Indian force supporting the Mission, which had been in action to support the Transcaspian (anti-Bolshevik) Government, and that in respect of this action (outside the neutral territory, be it noted, of Persia) the position was similar to that of troops of the Persian cordon generally, *i.e.*, the cost should be regarded as part of extraordinary military operations outside India.

(ii) On 14th November 1918 the Treasury replied to the India Office in the sense of the War Office view quoted above, supporting the argument by the following citation from a memorandum by Sir H. Cox:—"We should not only continue and increase our present efforts to block the routes through Persia effectively, but we must make a determined attempt to organise resistance to an invading force from the west along the railway from the Caspian to the Afghan border between now and next winter. This can only be done by utilising any nucleus there may be in that part of the world which is inclined to stand for us and for law and order, and by supplying any such nucleus with money, arms, and, possibly, instructors."

The Treasury added:—

"In so far as the Mission aims at influencing or organising the population of a part of Persia,† expenditure thereon would seem properly to be divisible between Indian and Imperial funds in the same way as the expenditure on the South Persia Rifles, and on subsidising the Persian Government tribal chieftains, &c., which likewise was occasioned by the existence of a state of war outside Persia," and expressed the hope that on reconsideration of the nature of the Mission the Secretary of State for India would accept this conclusion, which was in accordance with the general principle that, in view of the interests of India in Persian affairs, expenditure in that country (other than expenditure upon troops from the Indian establishments employed there during the war) is divisible equally between India and Great Britain (31769/18).

(iii) In January 1919 small detachments of British troops under General Malleeson had reached Askabad, Krasnovodsk and Merv, in addition to those stationed at Meshed.

General Malleeson, *i.e.*, had advanced from his base into Transcaspia, and had tried (though without success) to set up and maintain a mixed Russian and Tartar Government at Askabad; but the Foreign Office and India Office had become convinced of the hopelessness of the undertaking and had desired to withdraw the

* The numbers in this Memorandum presumably refer to Treasury files.

† This was not so, according to India Office view. See (v) below.



Mission to Meshed, but had refrained from sending instructions to withdraw in deference to opposition from the War Office.

On 7th January 1919 an inter-Departmental Conference was held at the Foreign Office to consider the position of the Mission.

At this Conference the Director of Military Intelligence described the object of maintaining General Malleeson's force as follows :—

- (1) To prevent the Bolsheviks from penetrating into Persia.
- (2) To protect Krasnovodsk from the east (including hold on the Transcaspian Railway).
- (3) To contain a large Bolshevik force which would otherwise be free to attack the Orenburg Cossacks, to which should be added
- (4) The collection and evacuation of released Austro-German prisoners of war.

The Conference decided to consult the Government of India.

Pending a meeting between Generals Milne and Malleeson, the Viceroy authorised General Malleeson to give further financial assistance to the Transcaspian Government.

This action was said to have been approved by an inter-departmental conference and by the Treasury representative thereon (4086/19).

(iv) On 22nd January 1919 the Treasury wrote to the India Office referring to the decision of His Majesty's Government to limit to 100,000*l.* the expenditure to be incurred in connection with the expedition, stated that the Treasury would not be responsible for any excess, and asked that General Malleeson should cable an exact statement of the expenditure up to the date when General Milne assumed command (1822/19).

(v) The answer from the India Office to the letter quoted above (ii) (31769/18) was received on 20th February 1919.

The Secretary of State for India was unable to accept the Treasury view, and wrote :—

“It was no part of this Mission's aim to influence or organise the population of Persia. It was designed to establish an intelligence centre for watching events in Russian Central Asia with the ultimate object of intervention in that region if circumstances required or permitted. It definitely assumed after a time the form of a Military Mission, but throughout its object was to counteract German-Bolshevik developments in Central Asia.”

Accordingly the Secretary of State asked the Treasury to accept as a charge upon Imperial revenues all expenditure on the Mission other than ordinary charges of officers or men of the Indian Army employed on it, which would be chargeable to India under the terms of the Parliamentary Resolutions.

(vi) The answer of the War Office was a request (addressed to the India Office, 15th January 1919) that the only charges to be brought against Army Funds in connection with the Mission should be those in connection with the troops actually engaged in military operations.

(vii) The Treasury, in reply to the India Office (8th March 1919), merely asked for an account of expenditure incurred before considering the question further. (8013/19).

(viii) The Foreign Office view of the question of the incidence of charge was sent to the Treasury on 4th March, and was entirely opposed to the India Office view.

In Lord Curzon's opinion the Mission was Indian, both in its inception and in its composition. It was, moreover, intended in the main to serve Indian ends, viz., to prevent enemy agents from penetrating into Central Asia and causing trouble in Afghanistan.

Lord Curzon accordingly considered that the cost of the expenditure should not fall upon Foreign Office Votes. (9911/19).

(ix) On 8th February 1919 the Middle Eastern Committee resumed discussion of the proposal to withdraw General Malleeson's Mission from Transcaspia, having now before them General Milne's report of his visit to General Malleeson, Askabad and Merv.

The gist of the report was :—“Either he must help (the Transcaspian) Government, both financially and with troops, arms and ammunition, or clear out altogether.”



The Conference decided unanimously that a telegram should be sent to the Government of India proposing that General Malleeson's Mission should be withdrawn to Meshed, with a possible outpost at Kuchan; that the withdrawal should be slow enough to enable friendly elements of the population to leave, and that on hearing from the Government of India the War Office should reply to General Milne. (11413/19.)

(x) On 26th February 1919 General Malleeson cabled to the General Officer Commanding, Constantinople, asking for 5,000,000 roubles for the purpose of (1) paying railway workmen; (2) giving assistance to inhabitants wishing to leave the country on the withdrawal of the British troops from Transcaspia.

The General Officer Commanding cabled this request to the War Office, who strongly supported it, and asked the Foreign Office to obtain Treasury sanction. (10575/19.)

(xi) On 13th March 1919 the Foreign Office wrote to the Treasury supporting this proposal as a matter of urgency, and observing that it was covered by the recommendations of the Eastern Committee made 8th February.

It was suggested that as the proper incidence of cost was in dispute, this question should be settled later. (11413/19.)

(xii) On 14th March 1919 the Treasury sanctioned this proposal, the funds to be placed at the disposal of General Malleeson at Meshed by His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, but it was subsequently arranged that instead the Government of India would supply Persian currency at Meshed through the Imperial Bank of Persia. (11963/19.)

The question of incidence of cost was left to a further inter-departmental meeting. (11413/19.)

(xiii) On 15th March 1919 the Indian Government cabled details of the expenditure of General Malleeson to date, which was as follows:—

	£
Pay charges - - - - -	15,000
Secret Service, Turkestan - - - - -	37,000
Other Secret Service - - - - -	13,000
"Other charges" - - - - -	5,000
Charges of military forces - - - - -	?
Road making - - - - -	9,000
Payment to Askabad Government for rations supplied -	100,000
Subsidy in December - - - - -	100,000
Maintenance of railway service - - - - -	80,000
Payment to Askabad Government in December - - -	17,000
Expenses of withdrawal (estimate) - - - - -	100,000
	£476,000

(xiv) On 27th March 1919 the Treasury wrote to the India Office that they concurred in the view of the War Office that "the only charges brought against Army Funds in connection with the Mission should be those in connection with the troops "actually engaged in military operations," and suggested that as regards the other expenditure, "which appears to be of a quasi-political character," the India Office should communicate with the Foreign Office. (12729/19, 13060/19.)

(xv) On 30th May 1919 the Government of India cabled to the India Office that the Consul-General, Meshed, who had suspended payments from Secret Service on 15th February, asked for replacement of funds at his disposal from 1st June, in view of the Bolshevik and Afghan menace, and that the Government of India were authorising this in anticipation of India Office approval.

The India Office (on 16th July) wrote to the Foreign Office proposing, subject to their concurrence, to approve.

The Foreign Office (on 28th July) wrote to the Treasury transmitting this correspondence without comment.

No action has been taken on this correspondence. (33112/19.)

(xvi) On 29th August 1919 the Foreign Office (who agreed with the War Office and the Treasury as to the part liability of India, but differed from both only on the incidence of the charge as between Foreign Office and Army Votes) challenged the



implication of Treasury Letter 13060/19, produced evidence in support of their view that the expenditure in question was not properly chargeable to Foreign Office Votes, and asked for the opinion of the Treasury.

The India Office view was recapitulated on 9th August 1919 (in a letter to the Foreign Office) and was to the following effect :—

“ The Mission was organised at the desire of the War Office ; its object was to combat German-Turkish propaganda ; it had a definite military objective connected with the Transcaspian Railway.

“ It must be regarded as primarily military in character, and as the Treasury have agreed that the military expenditure should be charged on Army Funds, the other expenditure, which should be regarded as ancillary to the military expenditure, should be accepted as a charge on Foreign Office Votes.”

The Government of India were even more uncompromising :—

“ The Mission was wholly military, and it formed part of troops despatched from India for service in the European War. Its charge should be adjusted accordingly with reference to Parliamentary Resolution of 1914, governing incidence of charge of such troops.”

The evidence submitted by the India Office to support their view, and interpreted by the Foreign Office as lending support to their view, is contained in the telegrams exchanged between the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy from the 4th January to 31st July 1918, which are filed in 37843/19.

The important passages in these telegrams have been marked, and deserve the notice of Ministers.

It seems doubtful if anything is to be gained by an attempt to quote or summarise them. The large question at issue as to the incidence of the cost of the Mission, as well as the smaller question as to the source from which Secret Service funds are to be provided, remains undecided.

It has been revived by the cable sent by the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy on 20th ultimo ordering an increase in the forces under General Malleeson's control (without reference to the Treasury) and the correspondence arising therefrom between the Secretary of State and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The conclusions which I draw from these communications and the whole of the correspondence, which I have attempted to review, are as follows :—

(1) The Pan-Turanian movement became a political force from the date of the Young Turk Revolution, and the Pan-Islamic movement, which has been used by the Pan-Turanians for their own ends, existed even earlier, and German propaganda, which seeks to utilise both movements, existed before the war, and will continue after its close, and will be reinforced by the revolutionary forces now classed as Bolshevism, which are in part at least due to hunger, want and social and political discomfort. These forces also existed before the war, but they have been increased in intensity as a consequence of the war, and have found freer opportunities of self-expression in the dissolution of existing politics which the war has brought about.

All these forces are a direct menace to the Indian Government as they are to all established Governments, but more particularly to the Indian Government because they enlist the forces of religion in the armies of political and social discontent.

Further, the contagion has threatened and still threatens both Persia and Afghanistan, States of India, and closely connected with important portions of the Indian community through the brotherhood of Islam.

On a broad view, therefore, India had and has a special interest in combating these forces of disruption, which was part of General Malleeson's duties.

(2) On the other hand, General Malleeson's Mission had, without question, objects which, while linked up with Indian policy on the north-east and east, were also linked with the general purposes of the war on the west.

The position of the British troops in Transcaspia and that of the British troops in the Caucasus were so intimately related that a withdrawal from the Caucasus made a withdrawal from Transcaspia inevitable, and both forces were engaged in fighting as well as observing the Bolsheviks, who may perhaps be described as *de facto* enemies of the Allied and Associated Powers, though they are in fact at war both with the friends and the enemies of these Powers.

(3) Further, General Malleeson's Mission in its inception was one of observation and intelligence ; it then became transformed by force of circumstances into one of action, the action being of a mixed political and military nature ; and it was only



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when it became obvious that without vigorous whole-hearted military support (which was not forthcoming) all political activities were not only useless but harmful, that it was withdrawn from belligerent to neutral territory.

(4) The Mission is now withdrawn within the frontiers of Persian territory, and it has become once more a mission of observation and intelligence, with a view to military action later if and when circumstances render such action inevitable.

But whatever may have been its character and objects whilst it was operating in Transcaspia, its object now is clearly to prevent the invasion by hostile elements of Persia and Afghanistan, an object of admitted interest to the Government of India, and its connection with the operations of the war in the Caucasus and the Middle East generally has clearly ceased.

(5) Though particular terms of the expenditure incurred by General Malleeson in Transcaspia can only be identified as clearly of a military character (*e.g.*, pay of troops) and others as clearly of a political character (*e.g.*, subventions to the quasi-Government of Askabad, &c.), and others again of an intermediate character (*e.g.*, payment to the railway employees of the Transcaspian Railway, essential both to the maintenance and to the withdrawal of the force), I doubt whether the utmost skill in political accountancy could arrive at a balance-sheet which would separate the charges effectively.

(6) Control over the expenditure of the Mission has been exercised by the Government of India (both Political and Military Departments) and the India Office, and by the War Office. Inasmuch as the instrument employed was a military instrument, the intervention of the latter department was both proper and inevitable, but it was not sufficiently pronounced to have a direct bearing on the question of the incidence of charge.

(7) The only recognised principles dividing the responsibility of the British and Indian Governments with respect to (a) the ordinary charges for military and political activities in the East, and (b) the extraordinary charges arising out of the war, are to be found (a) in the understanding that expenditure arising in Persia and thereabouts which interests India shall be shared equally between the two exchequers, and (b) in the Resolutions of the House of Commons of September 1914.

The interpretation of the facts and perhaps also of the principles must be a matter of difficulty, since divergent views are held by three great Government Departments.

India regards the whole Mission as part of the war; the Foreign Office regards the whole thing as primarily of Indian interest; the War Office regards the cost of military operations alone as a suitable charge against Army Votes; the Treasury has hitherto leaned to the War Office view.

(8) In the circumstances, and in order to help towards the solution of a difficulty which has already consumed a great deal of valuable time, I venture to suggest the conclusion that neither the Indian nor the Foreign Office view is consistent with all the facts; that the Mission was designed to achieve an end both military and political (the political end being of vital interest to India); that at the time of its farthest penetration northwards the military aspect of the object in view was perhaps predominant, and that at any rate since the withdrawal to Meshed the political aspect has been predominant; that the degree of control exercised by the Government of India and the Commander-in-Chief in India throughout at least justifies the expectation that the Indian Government should share that expense, and that, since the withdrawal the functions of the Mission clearly establish a claim on the part of His Majesty's Government to relief under the half-and-half principle.

(Initialed.) A. C.

11th November 1919.

3.—*India Office to Treasury.*

No. 29865.

Sir,

India Office,

9th January 1920.

With reference to Sir George Barstow's letter of the 25th November, No. 49012, I am directed to refer to the note by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the incidence of cost of General Malleeson's Military Mission now at Meshed, semi-officially forwarded by Mr. Bewley on 12th November, and to say that the Secretary of State for India in Council is prepared to accept generally the conclusion arrived at in para. 8 of the Chancellor's note, and that he assumes that the Lords



Commissioners of the Treasury will agree to the following statement of the resultant disposal of the cost of this Mission :—

(1) Expenditure on the Mission up to the date of the withdrawal to Meshed to be a military charge debitable to Imperial revenues (subject of course to a contribution from Indian revenues of the normal cost of officers and men of the Indian Establishment employed in the Mission).

(2) As regards the date to be taken as that of withdrawal to Meshed, the facts are :—

- (a) The Mission has always been at Meshed, though General Malleon and his officers visited Transcaspia where most of his troops were.
- (b) The last of these troops crossed the border into Persia on 6th April 1919, though all of them did not return to Meshed, and some still are on the frontier,
- (c) From mid-day of 16th April 1919 the force under General Malleon was transferred from the command of the General Officer Commanding, Constantinople, to that of the Commander-in-Chief, India.

From these facts two possible dates emerge, viz., 6th and 16th April 1919, and Mr. Montagu suggests that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury should accept the 16th April 1919 as being the more suitable date.

(3) From the 16th April 1919 subsequent non-military expenditure would accordingly be divisible between Imperial and Indian revenues on the half-and-half principle, subject to the proviso that purely military charges after 16th April 1919 should, as before, be dealt with by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury as agreed to in their letters of 21st August 1916, No. 19988, and 27th March 1919, No. 13060.

The Secretary, Treasury.

I am, &c.,
A. HIRTZEL.

4.—*Treasury to India Office.*

No. 1636.

Treasury Chambers,
21st February 1920.

Sir,

The Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury have had before Them your letter of the 9th ultimo (M. 29865) respecting the incidence of cost of General Malleon's Mission at Meshed.

In reply I am to state that the Secretary of State for India in Council has apparently misapprehended the intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as regards the division of cost between India and the Imperial Exchequer as set forth in the memorandum forwarded semi-officially on the 12th November last. The proposal in the concluding paragraph of that memorandum was that in view of the impossibility of making an accurate division of cost between the military and the political side of the Mission, a compromise should be arrived at under which the cost up to the date of the withdrawal to Meshed, which My Lords are prepared to accept as the 16th April 1919, will be borne by Imperial funds subject to the usual deduction in respect of normal military charges which fall on Indian funds, and that as from that date the excess cost of the Mission over the normal charges which fall on India should be borne as to one moiety by the Imperial Exchequer and as regards the remaining moiety by Indian funds.

If My Lords rightly understand the intention of Sir A. Hirtzel's letter, Mr. Montagu proposes that the charges subsequent to the 16th April 1919 should be divided into (a) political and (b) military, and that the Indian revenue should bear only half the cost of the political charges. The whole argument of the Treasury memorandum was that it is not possible to make an accurate division between political and military charges, and that in consideration of the acceptance by Imperial funds of charges prior to the 16th April 1919, half the total charges for the period subsequent to that date should be borne by the Government of India.

My Lords hope to learn that on reconsideration the Secretary of State for India in Council is prepared to accept this compromise.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

I am, &c.,
G. L. BARSTOW.



5.—*Treasury to India Office.*

No. 12609.

Treasury Chambers,
17th March 1920.

Sir,

With reference to the letter from this Department of the 21st February (1636) respecting the incidence of cost of General Malleeson's Mission at Meshed, I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to state that in their view the same principles of division of cost between the British Exchequer and the Government of India should be applied to the other troops in East Persia. These would comprise the lines of communication troops with the Malleeson Mission, the Seistan Levies, the Garrisons at Duzdap and Kvasht, &c.

My Lords hope to learn that the Secretary of State for India in Council agrees that the charges in respect of General Malleeson's Mission as well as of these troops may be divided accordingly.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

I am, &c.,
G. L. BARSTOW.

6.—*War Office to India Office.*

No. 0162/384. (M.O. 2.)

War Office,
April 1920.

Sir,

In reply to your letter No. M. 3420, dated 26th March 1920, regarding the withdrawal of Major-General Malleeson's force from Meshed, I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that they are of opinion that the withdrawal should commence forthwith, and that orders should be issued to this effect.

The Council agree to the proposals in the first part of para. 7 of the Viceroy's telegram, No. 204 S., of the 21st February last. They cannot, however, accept against Army Funds any portion of the cost of the Consular escorts which it is proposed to leave at Meshed and Seistan after the withdrawal of the other troops in East Persia. The retention of these escorts appears to be contemplated as a permanent measure, quite unconnected with any Expeditionary Force or Army of Occupation, and therefore the escorts are on the same footing as troops formerly employed in Persia in peace time with which Army Funds were in no way concerned. If it is urged that Imperial revenues should bear any portion of the cost of these troops, the matter should be taken up with the Foreign Office and the Treasury, to each of which Departments a copy of this letter has been sent.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

I am, &c.,
H. J. CREEDY.

7.—MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.
(Circulated to the Cabinet.)

When I presented the Army Estimates to the Cabinet, a decision was taken that General Malleeson's force should be "immediately and entirely withdrawn" from Meshed. My Estimates have been framed upon this basis, and I have no funds available, without going again to Parliament, to meet the heavy charge entailed in maintaining this force. I am strongly opposed to its retention, which is regarded both by the War Office and the India Office as unnecessary. I enquired a few days ago what progress had been made in the evacuation of this force. I am informed that no progress whatever has been made, as Lord Curzon had requested Mr. Montagu to postpone the withdrawal, and has stated that the "withdrawal had not been definitely decided upon."

In these circumstances, I do not think the responsibility for asking for further credits from Parliament ought to fall upon me, and I consider also that the subject is one which requires early Cabinet attention.

War Office,
19th April 1920.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

8.—MEMORANDUM BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA, DATED 23RD APRIL 1920.
(Circulated to the Cabinet.)

In view of the memorandum by the Secretary of State for War, I wish to explain the position of my Office in the matter.

In pursuance of what were understood to be the orders of the Finance Committee of the Cabinet, a telegram was sent to the Government of India (with the approval



of Mr. Fisher, in my absence) on 10th February informing them that the Cabinet were of opinion that all troops should be withdrawn from East Persia. At the same time they were asked for their observations, but it was explained that if the troops were retained for Indian reasons, the whole cost would probably be thrown on India. The Government of India replied on 21st February in favour of withdrawal of the force as such, but my Office, which had agreed with the Foreign Office in strongly deprecating withdrawal, on military and political grounds, were not convinced by their arguments, and approached Lord Curzon with a view to submitting the question again to the Cabinet. Lord Curzon asked that a memorandum should be prepared for his approval, and this necessitated further reference to India to clear up some financial points. Finally, as Lord Curzon was not satisfied with the financial proposals made in India's behalf, he summoned a meeting of the Inter-Departmental Conference on Eastern Affairs to discuss the whole question on 17th March. At this meeting Lord Curzon said that "it would assist him very much in putting the case before the Cabinet if he could say that the Government of India were interested to the extent of 50 per cent." A telegram had, in fact, been sent to the Government of India on 15th March asking them what was the maximum reduction in cost which they could effect and to what extent were they prepared to face it. Their answer, dated 19th March, was felt to make it impossible for the India Office to approach the Cabinet again, and official letters were accordingly sent to the Foreign Office and War Office on 26th March asking if they concurred that orders should be issued for the immediate commencement of withdrawal. The War Office concurred, but the Foreign Office on 3rd April stated that Lord Curzon could not concur, but wished the matter to be discussed again by the Inter-Departmental Conference. A meeting was therefore held on the eve of Lord Curzon's departure for San Remo, as the result of which the letters printed below were exchanged between him and me. On receipt of his, I explained the position to Mr. Bonar Law, who decided that no action should be taken until Lord Curzon returned from San Remo and could put the case before the Cabinet himself.

The Right Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P., to the Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

India Office,
14th April 1920.

My dear Curzon,

Since the meeting yesterday, I have referred to the Minutes of the Finance Committee of the Cabinet of the 9th February. They are quite explicit and clear, and there appears to be nothing contrary to them in the Cabinet Minutes of the 11th February. In accordance with them the India Office telegram announced the decision, while leaving the door open for the Government of India to object, if they chose.

The present position, therefore, is that the Cabinet ordered withdrawal on 9th February; that on the strength of that order the War Office have made no further provision in their estimates for the cost of retaining the force; that the Government of India (with whom I agree) are unwilling to bear it; and that the force has not, in fact, been withdrawn. I think you will agree that this is a position that must be regularised at once, and the only way I see of regularising it, consistently with the views I hold, is to order the withdrawal to be begun at once—it will take five months—and this I propose to do, unless you are prepared to take full responsibility (financial and other) for further delay in giving effect to the decision of the Cabinet.

I have considered very carefully the possibility of merely reducing the force, as you suggested. But this has been proposed to the Government of India, who maintain that neither from the military nor from the political point of view is its retention an Indian interest. I have told the Foreign Office repeatedly that I find it increasingly difficult to persuade my Council to sanction the expenditure of Indian revenues in Persia; it will be impossible for me to do so when the Government of India themselves disclaim interest in it.

You referred to military expenditure before the war, and it is quite true that India paid half the cost of the Consular guards and half the cost of the troops sent to Shiraz in 1911. But these troops were not engaged in military operations. Had they been, it would have been necessary for us, under the Government of India Act, to obtain the consent of Parliament. That, I submit, is what differentiates the present case from pre-war precedents. The point is, in fact, under discussion with the Treasury now as regards the cost of Malleison's force since it withdrew from



Transcaspia in April 1919. The general consent of Parliament to the expenditure of Indian revenues during the war on military operations outside India was obtained by the Resolutions of 1914, but Indian liability was limited to the so-called "normal cost." We accordingly maintain—and I think it is incontrovertible—that the Government of India is debarred by Statute from bearing any part of the cost of Malleeson's military force beyond the "normal cost"; the political expenditure we are prepared to halve. You may like to refer in this connection to India Office letter F. 3044, dated 27th July 1916, to the Treasury (copy enclosed).¹

The Government of India's recommendation, in which I hope that you, on further consideration, will concur, is as follows :—

The retention of the Consular escort, one and a half cavalry squadrons at Meshed and half squadron at Seistan, some light armoured cars at Meshed and possibly Ford van transport. Persia to take over Khorasan levies in present strength and Seistan levies in reduced strength, both under British officers; small regular mobile detachment at Duzdap; reduced garrison at Khwas and maintenance of present tribal and levy payments in Sarhad. Of foregoing, cost of Consular escort at Meshed and Seistan, including all contingent charges, will be borne half and half by His Majesty's Government and India, cost of Khorasan and Seistan levies with their officers by Persia. Conditionally on these arrangements we are prepared to meet the cost of Duzdap and Khwas detachments, and payments for this redistribution of cost might have effect when withdrawal of the forces is complete.

The cost of the enlarged Consular escorts, being political, will be equally shared with the Foreign Office; that of the Khorasan and Seistan levies (which is at present being entirely borne by British revenues, except as regards the "normal cost" of the Indian personnel) will be taken over by the Persian Government. I am doubtful whether the cost of the detachments at Duzdap and Khwas can be brought within the spirit of the Resolutions. If I am able, on further enquiry, to satisfy myself that I can, I am willing to ask my Council to bear it.

Yours sincerely,
E. S. MONTAGU.

*The Right Hon. the Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
to the Right Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P.*

Dear Montagu,

Foreign Office,
15th April 1920.

As I am leaving England in a few hours, I cannot refer to a Cabinet, as I should otherwise certainly do, the question that you have raised about Khorasan.

The decision of the Cabinet to which you refer was recorded by the Prime Minister after I had left the room and did not represent the facts as I had heard them. I was not present on the second occasion. If you order the withdrawal of the force from Khorasan you must accept the full responsibility for any consequences that may occur in that quarter. I can accept none.

When I alluded to military expenditure in Persia before the war I was not referring to Shiraz but to the cost of frontier levies. Nor can I admit that Malleeson's men are now engaged in military operations. Since they retired from Transcaspia they have not fired a shot.

If India disinterests herself in East Persia (to which she and not we insisted on despatching Malleeson's Mission) the Foreign Office will feel no disposition to recognise, as they have hitherto done, the predominant interest of India in these regions.

Yours sincerely,
CURZON.

9.—EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING AT 10, DOWNING STREET,
ON 5TH MAY 1920.

With reference to Cabinet 10 (20), conclusion 1, the Cabinet had before them the following documents relating to the withdrawal of British troops from Persia :—

A Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (Paper C.P. 1101).

A Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India (Paper C.P. 1200), covering a series of telegrams² exchanged between the Secretary of State and the Indian Government.

¹ Not printed.

² See Appendix II, Nos. 27-30.



It was recalled that on 9th February the Cabinet Committee on Finance had decided, on financial grounds, on the immediate and entire withdrawal of the force of approximately 1,700 men at Meshed, under General Malleeson, together with the troops on the lines of communication of this force (Cabinet Finance Committee, 19th Minutes, conclusion 3).

Both the Foreign Office and India Office had doubted the wisdom of this withdrawal, on military and political grounds, and a series of telegrams had been exchanged with the Indian Government to ascertain whether they were prepared to share the cost of the retention of some force in North Persia. The result of these telegrams had been that the Indian Government favoured withdrawal and could not make any substantial contribution to the maintenance of this force.

On the eve of Lord Curzon's departure for San Remo the subject had been further considered by the Inter-departmental Conference on Eastern Affairs, as the result of which correspondence had been exchanged between the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. This correspondence had been taken to indicate that the latter was still doubtful as to the expediency of the withdrawal. The issue of final instructions had, therefore, been held over until Lord Curzon's return.

It was explained that the War Office estimates did not provide any funds for the maintenance of the force, and that the Indian Government was unwilling to contribute. The statement of the Indian Government that five months would be required for the withdrawal was severely criticised, particularly in view of the fact that the cost in the meantime would fall on War Office funds.

The Cabinet agreed—

- (a) That the Secretary of State for India should inform the Indian Government that the Cabinet had re-affirmed the previous decision that the forces should be withdrawn from Meshed, and should instruct them to withdraw the force as soon as possible, stating that the Cabinet could not accept five months as a reasonable estimate of the time required;
- (b) To approve the Government of India's recommendation as regards the retention of the Consular escorts, namely, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cavalry squadrons at Meshed, and $\frac{1}{2}$ squadron at Seistan, some light armoured cars at Meshed, and possibly Ford van transport.

(For action taken on this Cabinet decision, see Nos. 31 and 32, Appendix II.)

10.—*The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill to the Right Hon. E. S. Montagu.*

War Office,
26th May 1920.

My dear Secretary of State for India,

I have seen the Viceroy's telegram No. 6066 of the 13th instant, saying he can give no guarantee to reduce the period of five months estimated to be required to withdraw the troops from East Persia. As I believe you are aware, I have only taken a sum of 2,000,000*l.* in Army Estimates for the current year to cover all charges for troops in South and East Persia. Of course, I hold with the Treasury view that the cost of the troops in East Persia is properly one for division between the Indian and Imperial revenues in equal shares, the Imperial share falling on Foreign Office votes, and I understand that this matter is still under official discussion between your office and the Treasury; but, in case this view is not upheld, I must warn you that I cannot agree to bear any additional charge on Army funds in excess of the provision made in my estimates, and I must stipulate that any excess due to the time taken in the withdrawal of these troops from East Persia must fall on Indian revenues.

I am circulating a copy of this letter to the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

The Right Hon. the Secretary of State
for India.

11.—*The Right Hon. E. S. Montagu to the Right Hon. W. S. Churchill.*

India Office,
1st June 1920.

My dear Winston,

Your letter of 26th May regarding cost of troops in East Persia. As I explained in my letter of 14th April to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which was among the papers circulated by me to the Cabinet on 23rd April, I am debarred by Statute from accepting as a charge against Indian revenues the cost of military operations beyond the frontier of India (other than "normal" charges during



the war), and cannot therefore be responsible for the military cost of the Malleson Mission and the troops ancillary to it. The Cabinet did not dissent from this view, as is, I think, made plain by the paragraph in the minutes of 5th May immediately preceding the recorded "decision" regarding the withdrawal.

In any case it is clear that the fact that insufficient funds have been provided in the Army Estimates cannot be a reason for asking my Council to agree to accepting as a charge against Indian revenues expenditure which under Statute cannot be borne thereby, and expenditure for a force which was not used in Persia for Indian requirements at all.

I will ask the Government of India to telegraph a revised estimate of the expenditure which will fall on the Imperial Government during 1920-21 for troops in South and East Persia. In the meantime I can only guess what the figure will be, but I expect it will be in the neighbourhood of 4,000,000*l.* rather than 2,000,000*l.* sterling, apart from the expenditure (to be shared between Foreign Office and India Office) on "Consular guards" at Meshed and Seistan after completion of the withdrawal. Can your military advisers suggest any steps which could be taken to expedite withdrawal at this season of the year?

I hope to send an official letter to the Treasury shortly on the whole question and will communicate a copy to the War Office.

As your letter has been sent to the Cabinet, I am circulating a copy of this also.

The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P. Yours sincerely,
E. S. MONTAGU.

12.—*The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill to the Right Hon. E. S. Montagu.*

My dear Secretary of State for India, War Office,
2nd July 1920.
You wrote to me on the 1st June, in reply to a letter of mine, about the incidence of the charge for troops in East Persia, and the correspondence is before the Cabinet.

In the hope that we may arrive at a final settlement of this vexed question, I have had an official letter (of which a copy is enclosed) sent to the Treasury, which Department, I understand, will bring the matter up for decision. You will see that we do not admit at all that you are debarred by Statute from bearing part of the charges in question.

I am afraid that my military advisers are not in a position to share the responsibility of saying how the troops in question should be withdrawn.

The Right Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P. Yours, &c.,
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

13.—*War Office to Treasury.*

No. 0162/346. (F. 1.) War Office,
18th June 1920.
Sir,
The Army Council have before them a letter of the 1st instant (copy enclosed), addressed by the Secretary of State for India to the Secretary of State for War, and circulated by the former to the Cabinet, on the subject of the charge for the troops in South and East Persia, including General Malleson's Mission.

The Government of India Act lays down that "the revenues of India shall not, without the consent of both Houses of Parliament, be applicable to defraying the expenses of any military operation carried on beyond the external frontiers of India." But no military operations are now in question, and in the opinion of the Army Council it would be as proper to charge the whole or a part of the cost of these troops to Indian revenues as it was before the war, when the cost of troops in Persia was shared equally between the Government of India and the Foreign Office. This view was placed before the Treasury in War Office letter 0162/315 (F. 1) of 27th September last, and is supported in Lord Curzon's letter of the 15th April last to Mr. Montagu (also circulated to the Cabinet).

The Council wish, therefore, to record their dissent from the India Office view and to express their hope that that Department may be pressed to accept the proposal placed before them in Treasury letters of 21st February (1636) and 17th March (12609).

The Secretary, Treasury. I am, &c.,
B. B. CURRITT.



14.—India Office to Treasury.

India Office,
10th November 1920.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letters of 21st February, 1936, and 17th March, 12609, regarding expenditure on the Malleeson Mission.

It is understood from these letters that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury do not dispute the contention of this Office that the Secretary of State for India in Council is debarred by Statute from defraying the expenses of military operations outside India, subject to the permission given by the Parliamentary Resolution of 26th November 1914, for the "normal" cost of troops sent from India during the war to be borne by Indian revenues (*see*, for example, India Office letter to Treasury, F. 3044, of 27th July 1916, copy enclosed),¹ but that in view of the difficulty of differentiating between the military and non-military charges of the Mission, they would propose that, with effect from the 16th April 1919, half the total cost of General Malleeson's Mission and of the other troops in East Persia should be borne by India.

Some portion of the cost is clearly military.

Their Lordships will remember that the most important object served by General Malleeson's force was the protection of North-East Persia from Bolshevik incursion, and the fact that this object was attained without actual fighting was due to the strength of his force and its supporting troops and does not remove its proceedings from the category of "military operations."

The admitted difficulty of deciding precisely how much of the cost is military cannot release the Secretary of State from his statutory obligation not to share the military expenditure in excess of the normal, and accordingly, after consulting the Government of India, he will submit definite proposals framed on broad lines for dividing into military and non-military the expenditure on the Mission and the other troops in East Persia, from 16th April 1919 until completion of withdrawal of the Mission. As already stated, half the non-military expenditure will be admitted as a charge against Indian revenues. As the Lords Commissioners are no doubt aware it has been necessary in various cases to assess on broad lines the portions of military expenditure incurred in the Indian Expeditionary Forces that are chargeable to the Imperial and Indian Governments, respectively.

Mr. Montagu presumes that the classification of the expenditure is now the only outstanding question regarding the Malleeson Mission, as he understands that the Cabinet on the 5th May did not dissent from the view that the Government of India could not share the extraordinary military charges.

As regards the incidence of charges after the withdrawal from Meshed has been completed, Mr. Montagu has submitted the following proposals to the Cabinet :—

- (1) The cost of the enlarged Consular escorts at Meshed and Seistan, being political, to be shared between the Government of India and the Foreign Office.
- (2) The cost of the Khorasan and Seistan levies (including officers) to be borne by the Persian Government.
- (3) The cost of the detachments at Duzdap and Khwas to be borne by the Government of India provided that, on examination, this proposal did not prove contrary to the Statute.

The final decision as regards (2) must depend on the recommendations of the Persian Military Commission and the agreement reached with the Persian Government.

As regards (3) the Secretary of State for India in Council is now satisfied that as the detachments at Duzdap and Khwas are proposed as a semi-permanent measure they need not be regarded as stationed there for the purpose of military operations, and that he is not debarred from accepting their cost as a charge against Indian revenues. It would, however, be in accordance with usual practice that the cost of these detachments should be shared on the half-and-half principle, and Mr. Montagu would now prefer that this modification should be made in the proposals laid before the Cabinet.

He presumes from Treasury letter of 17th March, 12609/20, that the Lords Commissioners would have no objection.

The Government of India have been asked to telegraph a provisional rough estimate of the cost of troops in South and East Persia, which will, in accordance with

¹ Not printed.



the above principles, fall on the Imperial Government for the years 1919-20 and 1920-21.

A copy of this letter is being sent to the Foreign Office and War Office.

The Secretary, Treasury.

Yours, &c.,
A. HIRTZEL.

15.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 3rd December 1920.*

3814. My telegram of 4th November, No. 3054. Cost of Malleeson Mission. Please telegraph as early as possible rough estimate of total cost from beginning until completion of withdrawal, also substance of your proposals for division of cost and estimates asked for in last paragraph. Do your estimates of recoverable war expenditure in your telegram in the Finance Department of 13th November, 60200 C.W.C., make any allowance for contribution by India towards cost of Mission? Matter is very urgent.

16.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 3rd December 1920.*

The London newspapers to-day are full of what appears to be a telegraphed version of an account from the *Times of India* of the Meshed Expedition. Please telegraph at once your answer. It will do you a tremendous amount of harm in the present economy feeling, and it will be pointed out that you were spending without control the British taxpayers' money. The writer estimates the cost of the Expedition at 100,000,000*l.*, the word "economy" being absolutely ruled out; talks of 600 miles of derelict barracks, ice-houses, temples and swimming baths; of miles of road which were never used. If this not true, have any steps been taken to contradict it in India?

17.—*Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State, Army Department, dated 13th December 1920.*

526. Your telegram dated 3rd December, No. 3814, and 3982, dated 11th December. Following are approximate figures of cost of Malleeson Mission proper in thousands of £ sterling; 1918-19, 500; 1919-20, 100; and 1920-21, 50. Figures are only approximate, as no separate accounts of Mission proper are available at headquarters. Total cost of troops in South and East Persia is 11,304 in 1919-20 and 5,100 in 1920-21. These figures include approximately for cost of troops in East Persia, inclusive of Malleeson Mission proper, 8,000 in 1919-20 and 4,500 in 1920-21. Here, too, actual figures cannot be given as accounts received at headquarters are for East and South Persia together. It is not possible to give readily similar figures before 1919-20, as separate accounts by theatres were not compiled before that year.

2. Our estimates of recoverable war expenditure, as telegraphed to you on 13th November last, make no allowance for contribution of India towards cost of Malleeson Mission proper.

3. We hope to telegraph to you our views on question of incidence, shortly.

18.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 14th December 1920.*

4038. Your telegram of 13th December, 526. Question in Parliament. What has been total cost, including works, of troops in East Persia since establishment of East Persian cordon? Please give separately expenditure on the road from railhead in Baluchistan to Meshed. Were estimates prepared and sanctioned before work was undertaken?

19.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State, dated 19th December 1920.*

568. 18th December. Your telegrams 1539 (*sic*) (? 3814) dated 3rd December, and that of 9th December. Meshed Expedition.

1. We characterise the article as a malicious exaggeration. Though described as a wild venture and a gigantic piece of bluff, force in North-East Persia acquitted itself successfully, and proved adequate for the purpose for which it was intended.



2. From figures supplied to you in my telegram 526, dated 13th December, it is evident that figures of annual and total cost of troops in East Persia have been greatly exaggerated by writer of the article.

3. As regards financial aspect, Financial Advisers to General Officer Commanding were posted to Birjand and Meshed early in 1919, though General Officers exercised, under Field Service Regulations, full powers of sanctioning expenditure in field. A Financial Officer was also specially sent by us to Birjand and Meshed in November 1919 to examine and report on expenditure on roads and buildings during preceding 12 months. His report was generally satisfactory, and a summary of it is being (? telegraphed) separately.

4. As regards certain statements in detail—

(a) In Turbat-i-Haidari troops were originally quartered in town, but owing to outbreak of cholera it became necessary to build cantonments outside. As the ground was covered with many feet of snow, mud buildings could not then be undertaken. Building was (? commenced) in stone, but when weather permitted remaining buildings were made in mud.

All other buildings along lines of communication were of a temporary nature only. It must be remembered that temperature in this country varies from 120 in the shade to 10 degrees below zero; adequate accommodation was therefore essential.

(b) Dixon Avenue consists of a half mile diversion of road necessitated by fact that the original road passing through town was unsuitable and impossible of improvement. The trees planted along this road were free gift from a Persian gentleman and cost nothing.

(c) It is untrue that majority of (? cantonments) were looted after their evacuation. Owing to failure of Persian police to guard them as promised, some buildings in Meshed were looted when our troops left, but very little damage was done, and buildings are now guarded by levies.

(d) Statement about (? Ford) cars is a gross exaggeration. All derelict cars of slightest value were towed into railhead.

5. In view of comment raised here and at home, we propose to put out above aspect of the case unofficially in various newspapers.

20.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Finance Department, dated 4th January 1921.*

66. Meshed Mission and East Persian cordon. Without delaying information asked for in my telegram of 14th December, 4038, please let me have by telegram expenditure on roads and works separately, including best rough estimate you can make of expenditure on same in India. How does type of accommodation provided compare with that of lines of Indian troops in India or on frontier? What are facts that have given occasion to reference to swimming baths, temples, &c., &c., in *Times of India* article? His Majesty's Government anxious to be in position to give effective reply to charges made in Press and Parliament of extravagance in Middle East. They therefore wish to get at the facts.

21.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State, dated 15th January 1921.*

75. (? Your telegram) dated 14th December and 4th January, Nos. 4038 and 66. Total cost, including works, of troops in East Persia from 1915-16 to end 1920-21 is calculated roundly at 16,500,000L., of which approximately 650,000L. represents expenditure on works, that is to say, roads and accommodation, including about 100,000L. for expenditure in India. It is impossible to give (? separately) expenditure on road from railhead in Baluchistan to Meshed.

2. An estimate of cost of total programme of building was called for by us in July 1919 and the result (? was) reported to you in telegram No. 13891, dated 13th October 1919, in which we informed you that the total estimated cost of



hutting under construction was Rs. 56 lakhs, of which about 19 lakhs had been expended by 1st August 1919. Estimates were not strict estimates of ordinary peace time procedure. They were estimates of the character which it was possible to (? obtain) under field service conditions and on which it was found necessary to rely in other field service areas beside East Persia.

3. In the same telegram, 13th October 1919, we asked for orders which would enable us to avoid as far as possible unnecessary expenditure on hutting, and in my telegram No. 12655 dated 16th September 1919, we had also asked for orders on the subject of accommodation to be provided. We received no specific answer to these telegrams; but in your telegram No. 4118, dated 20th October 1919, you authorised certain arrangements to be made for winter accommodation, clothing and supplies. You will see that expenditure as now reported corresponds fairly closely to estimate for 1919.

4. The scale of accommodation for Indian troops provided in East Persia was only about two-thirds of that allowed in plains in India. One bedroom was provided for each officer, (? magnitude) 15 feet by 14 to 12 feet by 12 feet, and a Bengal bathroom and generally a small mess house with only sufficient room to seat the officers in the station was provided. The reference to the swimming baths can, as far as we can judge on the information available here, only be a grotesque and malicious exaggeration of certain arrangements made at Korin and Shusp. At the former place water was let into an existing excavation in the ground, which was then used for bathing. At Shusp, which was the sanatorium of the lines of communications, a small reservoir was formed by damming a stream primarily to increase water available for growing vegetables for the troops. This reservoir was incidentally used for bathing.

5. The accusation regarding temples is equally untrue. At Birjand the men themselves constructed a small masjid and a Sikh gurdwara in their leisure hours. The buildings were of the most rudimentary description and no Government materials were used. Similar structures may have been built elsewhere on the line, but they were not built at the expense of Government.

6. The statement regarding ice houses has no foundation in fact of which we are aware. It is possible in the northern part of the line, where snow falls in winter, underground storage in pits for snow may have been constructed similar to those which are used in certain parts of India. Any expenditure incurred in construction of such pits could only be negligible, but we have no knowledge that any such was actually incurred.

7. The provision of buildings for accommodation of troops was necessary for the maintenance of efficiency. The maximum temperature ranges from 125° in hot weather to many degrees below freezing point in the cold weather. The prevalence of dust storms makes some form of protection necessary, as it is impossible to cook and eat in the open, and tents are insufficient against heat stroke as was proved by the number of cases prior to the erection of buildings. Owing to severe cold in the winter it was essential to provide some reasonably comfortable accommodation for (? troops) to prevent their entering the Persian villages for sake of warmth. These villages are incredibly filthy, and tick fever, (? baltic) fever and typhus are (? prevalent). The incidence of disease would have been extremely heavy had these buildings not been provided, whereas percentage of serious sick cases during the (withdrawal) was under 2 per cent. of the whole of the personnel in (? East) (? Persia). We have in our possession photographs of certain of the buildings erected on the East Persian Line, which effectively dispose the idea that the scale or form of buildings was extravagant, and we propose to forward these to you by Secretary's letter.

8. We are also sending you by post the relevant portions of financial officer's report referred to in para. 3 of my telegram No. 568 of 19th December, in lieu of telegraphic summary there promised.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [10r] (19/71)



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APPENDIX I.

1.—*India Office to Treasury.*

India Office,
14th August 1918.

Sir, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to forward for the information of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, copy of a telegram¹ from the Government of India, Army Department, No. 10383, 3rd August 1918, regarding the provision of funds, for purposes of secret service expenditure, to the British Military Mission at Meshed under General Malleeson.

Mr. Secretary Montagu presumes that the Lords Commissioners will agree that expenditure such as that contemplated in the Viceroy's telegram, together with all other charges incurred by General Malleeson's Mission or by the troops under his command, should be debited to Imperial revenues as part of the extraordinary expenses of the war. But it appears to him open to question whether such charges are properly recoverable from Army Funds, or whether application for the amounts expended should be made through the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs or direct to your Department. He would be glad to learn Their Lordships' wishes on this point.

Copies of this letter are being communicated to the Foreign Office and War Office.

I am, &c.,

The Secretary, Treasury.

J. E. SHUCKBURGH.

Enclosure in above.

Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 3rd August 1918.

10383. We have authorised Malleeson at his request to draw on Minister, Tehran, for such funds as he may require for secret service expenditure. Such expenditure will be debited to War Office in war accounts along with other charges of Malleeson, and troops under him.

2.—*Treasury to India Office.*

Treasury Chambers,
14th November 1918.

Sir, I have laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury Mr. Shuckburgh's letter of the 14th August last (P. 3354), respecting the incidence of cost of the Military Mission at Meshed.

Their Lordships' authority has not been sought for this expenditure, the amount of which They would be glad to learn, but They understand that, although the Mission is described as "Military," its activities are in the main political. The general policy of the Mission is summed up in a memorandum by Sir H. Cox, dated the 23rd April last (E.C. 182) in these words:—

"We should not only continue and increase our present efforts to block the routes through Persia effectively, but we must make a determined attempt to organise resistance to an invading force from the west, along the railway from the Caspian to the Afghan border, between now and next winter. This can only be done by utilising any nucleus there may be in that part of the world which is inclined to stand for us and for law and order, and by supplying any such nucleus with money, arms, and possibly instructors."

In so far as the Mission aims at influencing or organising the population of a part of Persia, expenditure thereon would seem properly to be divisible between Indian and Imperial funds in the same way as the expenditure on the South Persia Rifles, and on subsidising the Persian Government, tribal chieftains, &c., which likewise was occasioned by the existence of a state of war outside Persia.

My Lords trust that, on reconsideration of the nature of the Mission, the Secretary of State for India in Council will accept this view, which is in accordance with the general principle that, in view of the interest of India in Persian affairs, expenditure in that country, other than expenditure upon troops from the Indian establishment employed there during the war, is divided equally between India and Great Britain.

I am, &c.,

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

T. L. HEATH

2a.—*War Office to India Office.*

War Office,
15th January 1919.

Sir, I am commanded by the Army Council to refer to Treasury letter 31769 of the 14th November last, a copy of which was forwarded to this Office, relative to the cost of the Military Mission at Meshed, and to say that they would be glad to learn that the necessary instructions have been given to secure that the only charges brought against Army funds in connection with this Mission shall be those in connection with the troops actually engaged in military operations.

I am, &c.,

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

B. B. CURRIE.

3.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 19th February 1919.*

Your telegram dated 3rd August, 10383. Please telegraph for information of Treasury as soon as possible cost of Mission at Meshed.

4.—*Treasury to India Office.*

Treasury Chambers,
22nd January 1919.

Sir, I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to request you to inform the Secretary of State for India in Council that They have had before Them a copy of telegram No. 430 of the 10th instant from the Indian Government with reference to General Malleeson's force in Transcaasia.

C 2



My Lords note that in view of the urgency of the situation the Indian Government have authorised General Malleison to grant to the Transcaspia Government such financial assistance as is absolutely necessary.

In view of the fact that, as Mr. Secretary Montagu is aware, His Majesty's Government has decided to place a limit of 100,000*l.* upon the expenditure to be incurred in connection with this expedition, My Lords presume that the financial assistance referred to is covered by this amount, and I am to point out that Their Lordships have not undertaken to be responsible for any excess beyond this sum. I am, therefore, to suggest that General Malleison should be asked to furnish by telegraph an exact statement of his expenditure under all heads up to the date on which General Milne assumed command of the expedition.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

I am, &c.,
JOHN BRADBURY.

5.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 29th January 1919.*

434. Please obtain from Malleison approximate statement of expenditure incurred by him under all heads from the date instructions contained in my telegram dated 7th December, 3330, were received up to the date when Milne assumed command.

6.—*India Office to Treasury.*

Sir,

India Office,
20th February 1919.

In reply to Sir T. Heath's letter of the 14th November, 31769/18, I am directed to inform you that the Secretary of State for India in Council regrets that he is unable to accept the view of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury that expenditure on the Military Mission at Meshed should be divided between Imperial and Indian funds.

It was no part of the Mission's aim to influence or organise the population of Persia. It was designed to establish an intelligence centre for watching events in Russian Central Asia with the ultimate object of intervention in that region if circumstances required or permitted. It definitely assumed after a time the form of a military mission, but, throughout, its object was to counteract Germano-Bolshevik developments in Central Asia.

In the light of the explanation now furnished of the object of the Mission, Mr. Montagu trusts that the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury will accept as a charge upon Imperial revenues all expenditure on the Mission other than ordinary charges of officers or men of the Indian Army employed on it, which would be chargeable to India under the terms of the Parliamentary Resolution.

The Government of India are being asked to furnish an account of expenditure on the Mission. In this connection I am to enclose a copy of a letter¹ received from the War Office.

¹ Dated 15th January.

Copies of this letter are being communicated to the Foreign Office and War Office.

I have, &c.,
J. H. SEARROOKE,
Joint Secretary, Military Department.

The Secretary, Treasury.

7.—*Foreign Office to Treasury.*

Sir,

Foreign Office,
4th March 1919.

I am directed by Earl Curzon of Kedleston to refer to the letter addressed by the India Office to your Department on 20th February, relating to the incidence of the expenditure on the Mission of Meshed.

2. Lord Curzon regrets that he is unable to agree with the account of the objects of the expenditure contained in the letter under reference. In His Lordship's opinion the Mission was Indian both in its inception and in its composition. It was, moreover, intended in the main to serve Indian ends, viz., to prevent enemy agents from penetrating into Central Asia and causing trouble in Afghanistan.

3. In these circumstances Lord Curzon considers that the expenditure incurred on the Expedition should not fall upon this Office.

4. A copy of this letter is being sent to the India Office and the War Office.

The Secretary, Treasury.

I am, &c.,
G. S. SPICER.

8.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 15th March 1919.*

3667. Your telegram of the 19th ultimo, 785: Estimated cost of Meshed Mission during 1918-19 is 70,000*l.*, made up of (1) 15,000*l.* for pay charges; (2) 50,000*l.* for secret service expenditure, of which 37,000*l.* represents payment to Turkestan Union in July; and (3) 5,000*l.* for other charges. Figures do not include (a) charges of military forces employed with Mission; (b) expenditure on roadmaking amounting to 9,000*l.*; and (c) expenditure referred to in succeeding paragraph.

2. Your telegram No 434, dated 28th January. Expenditure incurred by Malleison at Askabad up to 15th February is as follows, in thousands of roubles:—(1) Payment to Askabad Government on account of rations supplied, 5,000; (2) subsidy in December, 5,000; (3) keeping railway going in January, 4,000; (4) payment to Askabad Government in December, 880; total, 14,880. As regards the first item, Malleison has reported it will not be possible to get detailed accounts, but that the value of the supplies is considered to be fully equal to 5,000,000 roubles. We are asking Malleison for further details about last item of 880,000 roubles, and will inform you when we get his reply.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [11r] (21/71)



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9.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 20th March 1919.*

3909. Continuation of para. 2 of our telegram No. 3667, dated 15th March. Malleeson reports that 880,000 roubles were paid to Askabad Government as part of financial assistance promised.

2. We understand from a recent telegram from Malleeson that further sum of 3,204,000 roubles was paid by him to Askabad Government in second half of January after control had been transferred to General Milne.

10.—*Treasury to India Office.*

Treasury Chambers,
27th March 1919.

Sir,
I have laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury Mr. Seabrooke's letter of the 21st instant (M. 18202)* relative to the expenditure incurred in connection with the Meshed Mission.

With regard to the question of incidence raised in the India Office letter M. 48220 of the 20th ultimo, I am to request you to inform the Secretary of State for India in Council that Their Lordships concur in the view of the Army Council as expressed in War Office letter 0162/261 F. 1 of the 15th January last that the only charges brought against Army funds in connection with the Mission should be those in connection with the troops actually engaged in military operations.

As regards the other expenditure incurred, which appears to be of a quasi-political character, I am to suggest that the India Office should communicate with the Foreign Office in the matter.

I am, &c.,
JOHN BRADBURY.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

* Forwarded copy of No. 8.

11.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Finance Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 13th June 1919.*

597 G.W.C. Your telegram dated 30th April, 1918. Meshed Mission. We are unable to accept the Treasury view that Mission was quasi-political in character or the Foreign Office view that it was Indian in its inception and was intended in the main to serve Indian ends. We would in this connection invite a reference to the following telegrams connected with the Mission:—(1) Your telegram dated 4th January 1918, No. 33883, to Viceroy, Army Department. (2) Your telegram dated 5th January 1918 to Viceroy, Foreign Department. (3) Your telegram dated 25th January 1918 to Viceroy, Foreign Department. (4) Telegram from Commander-in-Chief in India dated 12th April 1918, No. 25774, to Secretary, War Office. (5) Telegram from Director, Military Intelligence, London, to Commander-in-Chief in India, No. 57382, dated 29th April 1918. (6) Your telegram dated 6th May 1918 to Viceroy, Foreign Department. (7) Telegram from Commander-in-Chief in India dated 13th May 1918, No. 37452, to Secretary, War Office. (8) Telegram from Secretary, War Office, to Commander-in-Chief in India, No. 58535, dated 17th May 1918. (9) Telegram from Commander-in-Chief in India dated 18th June 1918 to Secretary, War Office, No. 47347. Also later telegrams on the same subject. It will be seen that Mission was organised at desire of War Office. Its object was to combat German-Turkish propaganda in Russian Turkestan and attempts to organise men, railways, and resources towards assisting hostile enterprises, aggression or active operations against us or our Allies, and it had definite military objective connected with Transcasian Railway, &c. As stated in our Foreign Department telegram dated 30th July 1918, No. 8738, Mission was wholly military, and it formed, in our opinion, part of troops despatched from India for service in connection with the European war. Its charges should be adjusted accordingly with reference to Parliamentary Resolution of 1914 governing incidence of charge of such troops.

12.—*India Office to Foreign Office.*

India Office,
9th August 1919.

Sir,
I am directed by Mr. Secretary Montagu to address you in regard to the incidence of expenditure incurred on the Military Mission at Meshed other than that on troops actually engaged in military operations.

The Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury have agreed that the cost of the troops actually engaged in operations should be charged on Army Funds and have suggested that your Department should be addressed direct in regard to the incidence of the other expenditure incurred.

Mr. Montagu has consulted the Government of India in regard to the incidence of expenditure connected with the Mission other than that incurred on the troops, and he is in entire agreement with their view that it was organised at the desire of the War Office, that its object was to combat German-Turkish propaganda; and, finally, that it had a definite military objective connected with the Transcasian Railway. Copies of the relevant telegrams in support of this view are attached.

As the Mission must be regarded as primarily military in character, and as His Majesty's Treasury have agreed that the military expenditure should be charged on Army Funds, Mr. Montagu trusts that expenditure other than military which has been incurred, and which, he is advised, must be regarded as ancillary to the military expenditure, will be accepted as a charge on the Foreign Office votes.

I am, &c.,
A. HIRTZEL.

The Under Secretary of State,
Foreign Office.

13.—*Foreign Office to Treasury.*

Foreign Office,
29th August 1919.

Sir,
With reference to your letter of 27th March last, 13060, I am directed by Earl Curzon of Kedleston to transmit to you herein to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, a copy of a letter from the India Office relating to the incidence of expenditure on the Military Mission at Meshed other than that on troops actually engaged in military operations.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [11v] (22/71)



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2. I am to say that it is not clear from a perusal of the enclosures in the letter from the India Office that the expenditure in question is properly chargeable to Foreign Office funds, and I am to request you to furnish Lord Curzon with Their Lordships' observations on this point.

The Secretary, Treasury.

I am, &c.,
G. S. SPICER.

14.—*Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain to Right Hon. E. S. Montagu.*

My dear Montagu,

Please refer to your telegram No. 4118 of 20th October, to Viceroy, Army Department. As you are ordering an increase of the force, I presume that you take all responsibility for payment on India. I shall be glad of confirmation of my assumption.

The Right Hon. E. S. Montagu.

Treasury Chambers,
27th October 1919.
Yours sincerely,
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

15.—*Right Hon. E. S. Montagu to Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain.*

My dear Chamberlain,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th October regarding the incidence of the cost of reinforcing Malleeson's Mission.

It was agreed, in Treasury letter of 27th March, 1906, that the cost of the troops actually engaged in military operations should be charged to Army funds. The measures sanctioned in the telegram to which you refer are of that nature, and are therefore so chargeable.

I much regret that your department was not consulted, if that course was necessary. You will see, from the correspondence which I enclose, that the proposal to reinforce Malleeson was communicated to the War Office and the Foreign Office, and received their approval. It is not usual, as you are aware, for the India Office to correspond direct with the Treasury regarding expenditure, military or political, in Persia, and I am afraid that in the present case we took it for granted that the War Office had taken whatever steps might be necessary, seeing that the expenditure was chargeable to Army funds before they concurred.

The correspondence enclosed will, I hope, convince you that the measure was absolutely necessary, and, in order to prevent misunderstandings in future, I am sending a copy of this letter to Churchill.

The Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

India Office,
5th November 1919.
Yours sincerely,
E. S. MONTAGU.

APPENDIX II.

1.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Government of India, Army Department, dated 4th January 1918.*

33883. Telegram from Chief of General Staff, India, to Director of Military Intelligence, 89049, dated 31st December. Do you think it practicable to set up British organisation in Turkestan like Dunsterville's in Caucasus to support anti-Maximalist movement, and have you suitable officers? War Office would be glad if anything of the kind could be done, but have not sufficient information to form opinion. Please report. Foreign Office approval will be necessary before anything is done.

2.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 5th January 1918.*

P. 41. Foreign Secret. Your telegram of 2nd January. Following is appreciation of situation in Russian Turkestan:—

"Owing to collapse of Central Government in Russia and complete breakdown of discipline in Russian Army, all effective control over native population in Turkestan has been removed. His Majesty's Ambassador has reported strong anti-British feeling among Russian Moslems generally, and enemy known to be making determined efforts to arouse fanaticism of local Muhammadans and to excite hostility to Great Britain. These efforts, reinforced by Bolshevik policy, have already considerable success. Turco-German Mission with Hentig believed to be on its way to Turkestan, if not already arrived. Movement is spreading to Persia, where democratic party, already bitterly hostile to us, is likely to be greatly strengthened and encouraged. There is serious danger that Turkestan may fall entirely under Turco-German influence, and may be made base for despatch of enemy agents in large numbers or even organised bodies of armed enemy prisoners across frontier into Persia and Afghanistan. Amir has sufficient experiences of German emissaries to realise danger of serious increase in their activities, which could only be directed towards embroiling him with British Government and compelling him to abandon attitude of strict neutrality which he has maintained so wisely and honourably throughout war. It will be in his own interests no less than ours to prevent such unwelcome intruders from entering his country."

3.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 8th January 1918.*

310. Your telegram of the 4th instant, No. 33883.

1. Our present information regarding situation in Turkestan is not sufficient for a considered opinion, but there does not appear to be any sort of Government to which a mission would be helpful as well as useful to us, particularly as mission should be in answer to a definite request.

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2. Difficulty of communications precludes maintenance and also effective military support, should this become necessary.

3. With the knowledge at our disposal, therefore, it would not seem a practical proposition to despatch the organisation you suggest. But we think it would be advisable to make all preparations in regard to personnel, &c., so that, in case a demand should arise, we should be able to proceed without delay.

Have you any suggestions as to suitable officers?

4. Finally, before such mission was actually embarked on, it would probably be for consideration whether the Amir should not be taken into our confidence.

4.—*Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 25th January 1918.*

Foreign Secret. Your Army Department telegram No. 310, dated 8th January. Turkestan. War Office consider that in view of proposed intimate connection between Turkestan and Causasus, *see* Meshed telegram No. 6, dated 10th January, preparations and despatch of suitable Mission to former should be undertaken without delay. Absence of regular Government regarded as argument for, rather than against, Mission, and effective military support not considered essential provided officers chosen are men of initiative and enterprise, and are plentifully supplied with funds. Officers should be accompanied, if possible, by persons qualified to conduct Muhammadan propaganda in favour of Allies, and every endeavour should be made to exploit anti-Bolshevik and pro-autonomous sentiments disclosed in telegrams Nos. 1734 and 2719, from Chief of General Staff, India, to Director of Military Intelligence, War Office. As regards personnel, I suggest Marshall, 28th Light Cavalry, Blacker, the Guides, and Etherton, 39th Garhwalis. But you are in position to select most suitable officers, and, perhaps, some Mussalmans. War Office would specially welcome Etherton.

Please submit definite proposals with least possible delay. Preliminary arrangements should be made at once as proposed in your telegram.

5.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 2nd February 1918.*

1257. Reference to your unnumbered telegram dated 25th January.

To deal with the problem proposed by the War Office, it is considered by us that the best results would be attained by establishing two centres from which, as opportunity offered, missions or emissaries could be sent into Russian Turkestan; the one at Meshed dealing with all the country west of Oxus and the plain country of Bokhara, the other based on Kashgar dealing with Ferghana and Samarcand, in which provinces autonomy appears to be commenced. A double base of operations has the obvious advantage that if one line is to be abandoned, work on the other can still proceed.

Secondly, the following considerations have induced us to deal with this problem from two directions. Meshed is more accessible from India by road and telegraph; lies close to the west portion of area it is desired to influence, and the presence there of our Consul and Military Attaché should facilitate the organisation of an expanded system and movement of our agents where it may be considered desirable. On the other hand, without entering Afghanistan, which is not now expedient, move across Transcaspia to the Oxus and Bokhara is practically restricted to the railways, and these, so far as we know, are in hands of the Maximalists, *vide* Redl's telegram repeated M.I. under C.G.S., No. 7102, dated 27th January.

Kashgar is less accessible than Meshed, but the well-established consulate there under Macartney should prove very valuable for enabling us to establish touch through agencies with representatives of the provinces which concern us, and also as a convenient centre from which to provide agents and funds if this suggestion commends itself to the Government. We do not conceive that any opposition would be offered by Chinese Government.

Thirdly, to take charge of Meshed Mission, we propose to send General Malleeson, who is on leave in this country. He has a wide theoretical knowledge of Central Asia from having served for several years in the Intelligence Branch at Army Headquarters, and has special qualifications as an organiser of secret service. Steps can be taken to define his position *vis-à-vis* Grey and Redl, whose headquarters are now at Meshed.

Fourthly, we are considering Lieutenant-Colonel Dew for charge Kashgar Mission. He has previous knowledge of the Gilgit Agency, which should be helpful and is otherwise well qualified for work in front of him.

Fifthly, we cannot provide subordinates as fully qualified in languages as we would wish, but are selecting officers otherwise fitted for the duties to be performed, and will officially provide suitable travelling companions to assist these officers in their journeys and work.

Sixthly, the possibility of obtaining persons qualified for Mohamedan propaganda is being examined. Was doubtful utility of natives of India for the work, and will probably have to draw our agents from close to the area of operations.

Sevently, preliminary action on the above lines is in progress pending your concurrence.

6.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 7th March 1918.*

My telegram of 15th February. Turkestan mission. His Majesty's Government agree that decision as to mission should be deferred pending receipt of Amir's reply to your personal letter, and that whole question should then be reconsidered. Please telegraph summary of letter as soon as received. With regard to final sentences of your telegram of 12th February, His Majesty's Government would not protest or intervene if Amir reoccupied Panjdeh or other territory formerly Afghan, but consider such action should be taken entirely on his own initiative and without British instigation.

7.—*Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, Foreign Department, dated 21st March 1918.*

Secret. Your telegram of the 16th ultimo. Russian Turkestan. We have had no reply as yet from Amir. But as selected officers are now here awaiting orders and weeks must elapse before they could



reach Meshed and Kashgar, we do not propose to defer their despatch further. Though we are still without evidence of existence of any pro-Ally elements in Russian Turkestan with whom they could co-operate, it seems desirable that they should move at once to centres where they can acquaint themselves with local notables and conditions and take advantage of any favourable opportunity. Do you approve?

8.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 30th March 1918.*

Foreign Secret. Your telegram of 21st March. Russian Turkestan. Your proposals are approved.

9.—*Telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, to War Office, dated 12th April 1918.*

28774. 12th April. Operations. Continuation of my 28031, 10th April. It is proposed, in view of your 5424 cipher, 14th March, that the Meshed Mission be military, but until we have clear indications that the prospect of the Mission justify the employment of a General Officer it is not intended to warn Malleeson. In the meantime have you any instructions? Following are my orders to Redl regarding officers named in my 28031, 19th April:—"Under your orders these officers will collect all possible information regarding the situation in Turkestan and get into touch with notables and other elements who could assist in such a mission. Active propaganda not to be undertaken without orders from here and Turkestan is not to be entered. A senior officer will be sent to command if subsequently Mission is definitely ordered to proceed. Utilise officers as you see fit until then, and you should work in (?) consultation with Consul-General. You will report progress to me frequently (with summary of information obtained). A similar party of officers under Major Bailey, Political Department, who will work at present under orders of Consul-General, Kashgar, is to proceed to Kashgar."

10.—*Telegram from War Office to Commander-in-Chief, India, dated 29th April 1918.*

1. Your 28774, 12th April. Approval has been given to your proposal that Mission should be regarded as military.

2. Because of uncertainty of situation in Turkestan and our present relations with Bolshevik Government, His Majesty's Government has not approved our suggestion that the officers now en route for Meshed should enter Turkestan and get into personal touch with Amir of Bokhara or other Mahomedan elements. Your orders to Redl as regards immediate employment of officers are therefore approved.

3. At our suggestion, King of Hejaz has agreed to send a delegation to Central Asia to influence Central Asian Mahomedans. Names of delegates are Ahmed Azar and Ibrahim and Mahomed Said Pasha. Delegates are in touch with Turkestan pilgrims. Delegates are expected about 1st May in Egypt. Wingate has been instructed to send them to Bombay at first opportunity and to notify Government of India date of arrival. Please make all arrangements for their reception and despatch at Meshed. Suggest Bray, if he has not started, or other well-qualified officer, should accompany them.

4. I consider that Malleeson should be sent as soon as possible to take charge of organisation and advise us as to any further measures which can be taken in view of importance of utilising our position at Meshed to utmost as regards intelligence and fact that situation may later render more active measures possible, such as propaganda or actual despatch of officers, whether British or native, to Turkestan.

11.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 6th May 1918.*

Foreign Secret. Your telegram of 20th April and previous correspondence. Turkestan Mission. Please report approximate dates by which parties may be expected to arrive at Meshed and Kashgar respectively. Has Meshed party yet started? War Office urge that Meshed party should, if possible, take early steps to secure means in case of necessity of blocking enemy advance from Caspian by Transcaspian Railway. For this purpose it would be necessary to authorise beforehand Indian officers accompanying party to enter Russian territory at their discretion, if a favourable opportunity should offer, with a view to getting into touch with elements likely to be helpful to us.

If such authority were given officers on crossing frontier should probably proceed in a northerly or north-westerly or even a north-easterly direction, provided always that their movements were not in neighbourhood of Afghan frontier or calculated to arouse susceptibilities of Amir. Please telegraph your views on War Office proposal and on any other point on which you may think it desirable to supplement instructions to Mission as already sanctioned; see your telegram of 9th April and War Office telegram to Commander-in-Chief, India, No. 57382, dated 29th April.

12.—*Telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, to War Office, dated 13th May 1918.*

37452. 13th May. Operations. Please (? group omitted) Secretary of State's telegram nil, dated 6th May, to Viceroy as regards Meshed Mission, and conveying a (?) request from you, a procedure which may cause confusion as regards this Military Mission, vide your 56382 M.I. of 29th April. On all questions of policy the Foreign Department of the Government of India and General Staff are in closest communication.

2. Situation at present is:—

- (a) Between 5th April and 26th April Meshed party left Quetta, except Bray, now reported on voyage out.
- (b) Instructions prepare for interruption by demolition of Transcaspian went Redl by hand of Captain Teague Jones, who left Quetta on 26th April.



3. Regarding para. 2 of your telegram 57382 M.L., 29th April, I now understand His Majesty's Government approves of Indian officers entering Russian territory for any purpose whatever connected with propaganda or the organisation of armed resistance directed against the Turks. Is this advisable at present juncture when Bolshevik movements to Khoshk and Termez reported by Redl, *vide* my telegram 37354, dated 13th May, a development likely to result largely to our advantage in solidifying the Afghanistan behind the Amir: would it not be preferable to maintain our waiting attitude until our officers satisfy us that moment for action has arrived? In the meantime our officers will arrive and we can prepare our measures.

13.—*Telegram from War Office to Commander-in-Chief, India, dated 17th May 1918.*

58535. 17th May. Your 37452 dated 13th May. Meshed Mission. After the Government decided not to allow officers of Mission to enter Turkestan, which decision was communicated to you in my 57382, we represented at meeting of Eastern Committee that it was important to take preparatory measures for destroying railway, and that these measures might entail officers entering Russian territory for necessary preparatory reconnaissance and relations with elements which might assist. Secretary of State's telegram dated 6th May was sent after meeting of Committee merely to enquire Viceroy's views. In the meanwhile policy as detailed in the second paragraph of my 57382 remains unaltered. I note you have instructed Redl regarding preparatory measures for demolition. This appears all that is required for present, as Redl should advise directly further steps are necessary or desirable.

14.—*Telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, to War Office, dated 18th June 1918.*

47347. 18th June. Operations. Reference D.M.I. 60388, dated 17th June, and continuation my wire 28774 of 12th April. I had already decided that the time has now come to send Malleson to Meshed to take charge of Mission, and had ordered him here to obtain orders, substance of which is as follows. Telegraph if approved.

First two paragraphs refer to origin of present organisation of Mission and appointment of Malleson. Third paragraph: Object of Mission is to combat German and Turkish propaganda and efforts to organise men, resources, and railways towards helping hostile enterprises, active operations or aggression against either ourselves or our allies. Fourth paragraph: Area that he will deal with extends from eastern shores of Caspian to west bank of Oxus at Karki, thence to Tashkend and towards Orenburg along Tashkend-Orenburg railway. Draws attention to His Majesty's Government orders concerning entry of British and employment of Indian officers in Russian Turkestan (*see* D.M.I.'s No. 57382 of 29th April and your 58535 of 17th May). Fifth paragraph: Places Redl and his organisations under Malleson's orders. General Officer Commanding, Eastern Persian Cordon, will not be under his orders. Malleson's relation to General Officer Commanding, Eastern Persian Cordon, will be as in F.S.R., part 2, section 10, para. 8. Consul-General at Meshed is to be consulted on all questions which affect the area for which he is responsible politically. Sixth paragraph: Pay is Brigade Commander's pay at Indian rates. Seventh and eighth paragraphs concerning expenditure, reports, &c. Ninth paragraph: Malmiss is telegraphic address. Instructions end. For Government of India's views see Viceroy (Foreign) secret telegram to Secretary of State for India of 17th June, *re* Russian Turkestan.

Will send later report concerning present position of Meshed and Kashgar Missions.

15.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 24th June 1918.*

Foreign Secret. See Commander-in-Chief's telegram to War Office, No. 47347, dated 18th June. Meshed Mission. Proposed action and instructions to Malleson approved.

16.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 25th June 1918.*

Foreign Secret. Your telegram of 17th June. Turkestan. Enemy advance in Caucasus and possibility of its further extension east of Caspian have made it necessary to consider carefully whole military situation in Central Asia and delimitation of spheres of control as between Government of India and War Office. After full consideration His Majesty's Government have decided to allot to Government of India sphere comprising South and East Persia, Transcaspia, and Turkestan. Dunster-ville's operations in North-West Persia will remain under General Officer Commanding, Mesopotamia, who will also be responsible for Dizful, Shuster, oilfields and Bakhtiari. You have already been informed of decision to separate command of British troops in South Persia from that of South Persia Rifles, and to place former under General Officer responsible to India. Meshed and Kashgar Missions will remain under control of Your Excellency's Government and not of War Office.

17.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Foreign Department, dated 25th June 1918.*

Foreign Secret. My telegram of to-day. Turkestan. His Majesty's Government are strongly impressed with necessity of securing improved intelligence system in Central Asia. Specially important in present circumstances that we should be accurately informed regarding local political conditions as well as such questions as disposal of cotton and other crops, movements of enemy prisoners of war, &c. His Majesty's Government would for this reason welcome immediate removal of embargo on British agents entering Turkestan, and hope that it may not be necessary to await result of overtures to Amir, as suggested in my telegram of to-day, before taking action. It may, perhaps, be thought inadvisable to enter or communicate with Bokhara, though we are not clear as to this; but you will recognise the great importance of obtaining without delay full and authentic information as to conditions and possibilities in Trans-Caspia and Russian Turkestan. Please telegraph your views.

18.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 16th July 1918.*

Your telegram of 10th July, 9188. Meshed Mission. His Majesty's Government have decided that all officers operating east of Caspian shall come under Malleson's orders as proposed by you. Control of Caspian itself will be under General Officer Commanding, Baghdad.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [13v] (26/71)



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Instructions regarding affairs of Meshed Mission will be addressed by Secretary of State for India to Government of India, Army Department, except on purely General Staff matters, as to which War Office will address Commander-in-Chief. Same applies to Kashgar Mission, which it seems impracticable to separate from Meshed Mission for purposes of general supervision, &c., both being primarily concerned with same object, viz., intelligence work in Central Asia.

19.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Foreign Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 31st July 1918.*

Secret. Meshed Mission. Reference to your telegram of 16th July to Army Department. Meshed Mission was constituted as Military Mission because it was extension of already existing military intelligence organisation, and had definite military objective connected with Transcaspien Railway, &c. On the other hand, Kashgar Mission was made political because it is merely extension of Consul-General at Kashgar's intelligence arrangements, is under general direction of Consul-General, and touches questions affecting Chinese Turkestan, involving correspondence with Minister at Peking. Unless you see serious objection, we prefer for the present to retain Kashgar Mission as political, and that telegrams regarding it should be addressed to me in Foreign and Political Department, not Army Department.

20.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Government of India, Army Department, dated 7th December 1918.*

3330. Your telegram 16065, dated 30th November. Malleeson. His Majesty's Government doubt practicability of loan amount of which, moreover, is not stated, and they are hampered in dealing with situation by absence of your reply to first paragraph of my telegram 3205 of 29th November, and last sentence of my telegram of 26th November. Financial position appears to be that you have sent Malleeson 5 lakhs of rupees, and that Ashkhabad Government have obtained 2,000,000 roubles from Baku. The 5 lakhs will apparently cover 5,000,000 roubles referred to in your telegram 16107 of 3rd December. In addition to these sums His Majesty's Government are prepared to fix at 100,000*l.* in loans to be obtained from Imperial Bank of Persia lump sum mentioned in my telegram of 26th November, but they cannot undertake to go beyond that, and they must press for your views as to importance from Indian point of view of maintaining Malleeson's force in Transcaspia and as to tenability of his position if Ashkhabad Government collapses.

Your telegram 16184 of 4th December is first intimation of scheme of using Russian War Loan as legal tender. Malleeson should report result as to possibility of using it further. Also as to possibility of further using three months' rouble bills mentioned in your telegram 16107 of 3rd December.

21.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 8th January 1919.*

109. Your telegrams dated 31st December, 1st January, 201 dated 6th January, and 261 dated 7th January. As a matter of policy His Majesty's Government is desirous of withdrawing Malleeson to Meshed. His telegrams M.D. 01280 of 1st January, 01288 of 2nd January, M.D. 01286 of 3rd January, and M.D. 01301 of 6th January indicate that successive local Governments formed cannot stand without financial assistance, which, as you are aware, it is very difficult to find a means of providing, and His Majesty's Government are not prepared to provide this indefinitely. But the following military reasons for retention of Malleeson's force in present position are urged:—

- (1) Prevention of incursion of Bolsheviks into Persian territory.
- (2) The containing of the Bolshevik force opposite him and neutralising their possible action against rear of Orenburg Cossacks.
- (3) Collection and evacuation of Austro-German released prisoners of war.
- (4) Protection of Krasnovodsk from East, including hold on Transcaspien Railway.
- (5) General Milne is proceeding to confer with Malleeson on situation; and it is considered desirable to await full report which he has been ordered by War Office to submit. He may not arrive for two or three weeks.

Please let me have your views on these arguments.

Also please ascertain and report how much cash may be expected to reach Malleeson as result of arrangements mentioned in your telegram dated 3rd January.

22.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 10th January 1919.*

430. 10th January. Your telegram of 8th instant, 109. 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the military reasons for retention of Malleeson's force in present position have been answered in our 82, 6th January, para. 3, and we still adhere to those views, which are based on opinion of Commander-in-Chief.

2. Reason 2, however, has received additional weight from recent successes of Bolsheviks north of Orenburg, and we agree that it would be advantageous for Malleeson to contain the Bolshevik forces opposite him. In this connection please see our 16538, 10th December.

3. Milne's visit to Malleeson is a new factor and we agree that it is desirable that no withdrawal should take place until Milne and Malleeson have had their conference.

4. We welcome Milne's proposed visit as we feel that a second opinion from such a high authority will enable us to advise His Majesty's Government with greater confidence as to future policy. This involves Malleeson remaining where he is for another month. In view of situation as disclosed in Malleeson's recent telegrams, it is obvious that he cannot remain there unless he is authorised to give further temporary financial assistance to the Transcaspien Government. In view of these considerations and extreme gravity and urgency of the situation, we have taken responsibility of authorising Malleeson to grant them such assistance as is absolutely necessary. We anticipate that he will have no difficulty in doing so by utilising currency now in his hands or *en route* from Tehran and the five lakhs of rupees which we have sent to Meshed, as well as by the issue of further promissory notes repayable in six or twelve months' time.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [14r] (27/71)



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23.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 9th February 1919.*

- (1) His Majesty's Government have had before them Milne's report on Transcaspien situation and considered opinion on it by General Staff. It is quite clear that after prolonged trial and much financial and military assistance from us the local Government is as helpless as ever, while the military situation has become less favourable to them and us by the fall of Orenburg. This last will shortly open direct rail communication between Moscow and Tashkent, which will not only permit of Bolshevik reinforcement, but will capture the trade by which alone Government had any hope of revenue.
- (2) His Majesty's Government are not prepared to sanction the military reinforcements necessary to keep Malleeson's force where it is or to admit of advance to line of Oxus. They consider present situation impossible, especially as since comp d'état Malleeson appears to be virtually in charge of Government, a position which it is most undesirable to prolong.
- (3) His Majesty's Government have therefore decided that unless you see grave reasons against it, War Office shall direct Milne to order commencement withdrawal as soon as possible.
- (4) They consider this withdrawal must be conducted deliberately in order to afford any of our friends who would find it dangerous to remain, ample opportunity to get away.
- (5) They are of opinion that withdrawal should be to Meshed, from which place Malleeson's force can protect North-East Persia from Bolshevik incursion. It is suggested that a detachment at Bujnurd or Kuchan might assist in this.
- (6) Malleeson and his force will come under you for supply and all other purposes on arrival Meshed.
- (7) His Majesty's Government have decided that it is necessary to pay the railway establishment till withdrawal from rail is complete, including arrears. Method of effecting payment is under consideration.
- (8) His Majesty's Government approve Milne's suggestion as to handing over arms and ammunition to friendly Turkomans.
- (9) Instructions to Milne await your reply, which please send earliest possible moment.

24.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 17th September 1919.*

12655. Reference to our 11762 dated 28th August. To enable us to make the necessary arrangements for winter in matters of accommodation, clothing, supplies, &c., we should be glad of as early decision as possible as to future policy in East Persia.

25.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 13th October 1919.*

13891. Our telegram of 28th August, 11762, and our telegram of the 16th ultimo, 12,655. Total estimated cost of hutting under construction in East and the North-East Persia is 56 lakhs, of which 19 lakhs had been expended by 1st August. Programme provides for accommodation for six squadrons and five battalions at and between railhead and Meshed, together with necessary hospitals, offices, workshops, &c. If any reduction in garrison is contemplated in near future, it is most desirable that we should receive early intimation to enable us to avoid expenditure on unnecessary hutting.

26.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 20th October 1919.*

4118. Your telegrams of 28th August, 11762, of 10th September, 12358, and of 17th September, 12655. Role of Malleeson's force is correctly described by you in third paragraph of your telegram.

Although touch with events in Central Asia could possibly be adequately kept by small intelligence organisation, it is certain that new Persian force cannot be ready for several months to perform duties of protecting Persia against Pan-Islamic and Bolshevik influence and affording support to Transcaspiens. Withdrawal of Malleeson's force from Meshed would leave North-East Persia at mercy of Bolsheviks next spring and might render pressure on Afghanistan more feasible. The difficulty and expense of expelling Bolsheviks from these regions would be infinitely greater than of preventing their ingress.

I consider measures should now be taken by you to enable Malleeson's force to be increased to one regiment cavalry, one battery artillery, and two battalions infantry. Above striking force to be mobile and irrespective of lines of communication formations.

Arrangements for winter for accommodation, clothing supplies, should be made accordingly.

In addition aeroplanes will be necessary. The Duzdap-Meshed road would have to be kept fit for continuous light motor traffic.

I agree that there is no necessity for Malleeson to visit Teheran.

27.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 10th February 1920.*

My telegram of 4th February, 428. Eastern Military Policy. Cabinet have had under consideration the military position in South and East Persia. They are of opinion that all troops in these areas should be recalled. This would involve total withdrawal of Malleeson not merely to Birjand but altogether, and also of all troops on his lines of communication in Persia.

Grounds of Cabinet view are that cost is altogether too excessive, see your telegram, Finance 1801 C.W.C. of 30th December,* in view of the fact that Malleeson would be quite unable to resist any serious attack in force. Have you any observations? If you consider the retention of a force anywhere in Eastern Persia essential in view of the Afghan situation or other Indian political interests, please make recommendations, but you must understand that if troops are retained on any such grounds, question will be treated as purely an Indian one, and the whole cost probably thrown on India.

* No. 27A.



27a.—Extract from telegram from Viceroy, Finance Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 30th December 1919.

III.—As regards South and East Persia, on the assumption that the present strength of troops, namely, one half unit of Cavalry, one unit of Mountain Artillery, and four units of Infantry in South Persia, and one-and-a-half units of Cavalry, one unit of Mountain Artillery, two units of Sappers, and six units of Infantry in East Persia, is maintained during the whole of 1920-21, we estimate field expenditure in that year at 650 lakhs, that is, about double the estimated expenditure in the last six months of the current year. Following are rough details of estimate of 650 lakhs:—Pay and allowances of troops and ancillary services 218 lakhs; rations 225 lakhs; forage 30 lakhs; stores for mechanical transport, fuel and light, including petrol, 16 lakhs; land transport, 150 lakhs; works and buildings, 10 lakhs. Total, 650 lakhs.

28.—Telegram from Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 21st February 1920.

204 S. We have considered in Council your telegram, Army Department, of 10th February, regarding military position in South and East Persia. In South we desire earliest possible withdrawal.

2. *East Persia*.—General Officer Commanding, Quetta Division, estimates that withdrawal will take five months to complete as length of route and lack of water necessitate withdrawal in small echelons. If it began in March when snow has melted, it might thus not be complete until August.

3. *Khorasan*.—From purely military standpoint dangers to be apprehended to Khorasan are either Bolshevik attack in force or Afghan attack. As you point out, Malleeson's force could not resist serious Bolshevik attack, and though its withdrawal as far as Birjand only would enable it to remain menace to Bolsheviks, its maintenance there would become excessively inconvenient, as it would be deprived of local supplies now obtainable round Meshed. Regarding Afghan attack on Khorasan, this, if it were to constitute *casus belli* between British Government and Afghanistan, could be best met by attacking Afghanistan from side of India, although immediate power to ward off Afghan attacks on Persian side would be lessened by withdrawal. Malleeson considers main military value of present position at Meshed is as outpost bridge over Central Asia. Maintenance of our present military intelligence system could be secured by leaving Military Attaché in Khorasan with small escort to Consulate and two or three British officers. Thus, so far as military considerations are concerned, withdrawal is unobjectionable.

4. From political standpoint we offer following observations:—(1) Although we recognise that Anglo-Persian agreement does not technically commit British Government to defence of present Persian régime, public opinion in the East almost certainly hold that His Majesty's Government are morally committed, as was foretold in our telegram of 480 S., dated 24th April 1919. Bolsheviks may not contemplate early military attack on Persia, but there is undoubtedly in Persian eyes distinct threat of such attack, and for His Majesty's Government to withdraw all forces in the face of this threat, may expose them to charges of breach of faith, and react on position not only in Persia but in Afghanistan, making our relations with latter more difficult. While pointing this out we do not wish to base any recommendation on it, since maintenance of British reputation in Persia is not mainly Indian interest and effect on our relations with Afghanistan, though possibly important, can only be indirect. (2) More imminent and real danger is that Bolsheviks, while abstaining from military attack, will flood Khorasan with emissaries and propagandas, with object of causing armed risings against local Persian Administration which they represent to be under British domination. This danger has so far been averted by presence of British forces at Khorasan, though Malleeson now reports signs of fraternisation of Persian Customs officials and gendarmes with Bolsheviks. Rebellion of Khorasan at Bolshevik instigation would probably affect the British position at Teheran, reacting on Afghanistan almost as much as Bolshevik military attack. We believe that danger of such risings would be lessened if fairly strong escorts were left for Meshed Consulate, and if Khorasan levies were to remain under British officers, but to be paid for by Persian Government (? and if so) incorporated in new uniform force. There would, of course, be danger that levies might become infected with Bolshevism and attack their British officers, but if we are to make any attempt to put drags on Bolshevism of Khorasan, we fear this risk must be faced. This measure, coupled with fact that withdrawal of British regular forces cannot be complete till August, may tide over dangerous period of next spring and summer.

5. Tract between Birjand and Duzdap. There are 1,750 Seistan levies under British officers in this tract. Many of them former noted raiders, and their sudden disbandment would encourage Afghan raiding on British trade caravans and produce disorder in country. Consul at Seistan recommends retention of fairly strong Seistan Consular cavalry escort and gradual disbandment of such of Seistan levies (corrupt group) as cannot be absorbed into new uniform force payable by Persia. We propose to retain small mobile detachment at Duzdap to protect the railhead and dumps of goods there.

6. Sarhad and (corrupt group) Baluchistan Sarhad tribes are kept in order by small garrison at Khwas* and by tribal subsidies and Sarhad levy payments. Khwas Garrison also dominates Bampur, and its withdrawal without substitution of Persian authority which does not exist might encourage Bahram Khan to repeat his raid upon British cantonment. We wish for the present to maintain reduced regular garrison at Khwas and continue tribal subsidies and levy payments.

7. Exact wording of the summary. We recommend the retention of the Consular escort, one-and-a-half Cavalry Squadrons at Meshed and half Squadron at Seistan, some light armoured cars at Meshed and possibly Ford van transport. Persia to take over Khorasan levies in present strength and Seistan levies in reduced strength, both under British officers; small regular mobile detachment at Duzdap; reduced garrison at Khwas and maintenance of present tribal and levy payments in Sarhad. Of foregoing, cost of Consular escort at Meshed and Seistan, including all contingent charges, will be borne half and

* Note.—Spelt Vashit on map.

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleson Mission [15r] (29/71)



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half by His Majesty's Government and India, cost of Khorasan and Seistan levies with their officers by Persia. Conditionally on these arrangements we are prepared to meet the cost of Duzdap and Khwas detachments, and payments for this redistribution of cost might have effect when withdrawal of the forces is complete.

29.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 15th March 1920.*

999. Your telegram of 21st February, 204 S. Malleson's force. We regard with grave misgiving reduction to the extent you contemplate, which will be interpreted by all parties as equivalent to withdrawal and therefore will have evil consequences of withdrawal. Evidence from all sources seem to indicate that if existing situation can be maintained a little longer Bolshevick-Afghan relations are likely to be strained to breaking-point. On the other hand, the Cabinet evidently regard the present cost as prohibitive, and unless it can be substantially reduced their decision, which still holds the field, will certainly be maintained.

I suggest that as policy in event of organised Bolshevick attack on Persia is for our military force not to involve themselves, Malleson's force might still play its rôle if it were again reduced to size prior to recent reinforcements or even below it. Similarly, might not strength on line of communications be considerably reduced? If this is so, what is maximum reduction in cost that you can effect, and to what extent are you prepared to share it in view of your interest in maintaining stable situation in Persia and Afghanistan.

Please reply with least possible delay. Clear the line as matter is most urgent.

30.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to the Secretary of State for India, dated 19th March 1920.*

3721. Your telegram of the 15th instant.

East Persia. In view of your statement in previous telegram that Cabinet consider all forces should be withdrawn, we do not fully understand misgiving with which you now contemplate withdrawal, as no new factors have arisen. Nor are we able to follow contention that if existing situation can be maintained a little longer, Bolshevick-Afghan relations are likely to be strained to breaking point. We do not see why retention of force should accelerate rupture, but on contrary it could be argued with equal reason that our withdrawal would tend to promote friction by removing one of chief causes which at present serves to unite Bolshevicks and Afghans. We adhere to view expressed in our Foreign Department telegram No. 204 S., 21st February, that, so far as India is concerned, retention of Malleson's force is unnecessary from strictly military standpoint, since it is incapable of resisting serious Bolshevick attack. Force has maintained its position hitherto mainly by bluff, and in our opinion any half-measure such as you suggest would merely serve to invite attack and would greatly increase difficulty of withdrawal in face of opposition. We consider latter operation would be more damaging to our prestige than voluntary withdrawal now.

2. In para. II of your telegram you suggest that force might still play its rôle if it were again reduced to size prior to recent reinforcements or even below. We need not emphasise the fact that rôle which force can play is almost entirely contingent on action taken by enemy, but even if maintained at present strength it cannot now fulfil rôle for which it was originally intended, namely, to prevent Bolshevick invasion of Khorasan. Most it can hope to accomplish is to intercept small parties entering Khorasan from north-east and to counteract effects of enemy propaganda within limited radius of Meshed. We consider this could be accomplished with equal effect and less obtrusively after reduction of force to small mobile escort in support of Mission. In these circumstances retention of force at extremely exposed line of communication which, though unable to maintain itself against serious attack, is still accompanied (? very often) by the impediments inseparable from body of troops of any size, is clearly open to criticism.

3. Nor is it certain that reduction in size of the force and line of communication troops would effect any material reduction in cost. Chief item in present heavy expenditure is cost of hired camel transport on difficult gap of 172 miles between the Duzdap Toi and Neh, and charges are likely to rise in the future owing to the gradual exhaustion of the sources of camel supply. In any case reduction of the forces at Meshed would not permit of any reduction of line of communication troops.

4. As regards the extent to which we are prepared to share cost of the force maintained in East Persia, you are aware of our present financial situation, inability to provide (? needful) fund for military expenditure and the various demands being made on us. In these circumstances we are not prepared to contribute for the purpose named in your telegram more than a moiety of the cost of the escorts and detachments mentioned in our Foreign Department telegram No. 204 S. of 21st February.

5. We believe that Bolshevicks are genuinely alarmed (as recently reported by Malleson) at rumours of our intention to invade Trans-Caspia and raise Mussulman against them, and that their alarm is not simulated to furnish protest for aggression on their part. It should be realised that in such a populated country like East Persia movement of quite small bodies of troops, accompanied by large quantity of transport, gives rise to most exaggerated rumours. We have some 40,000 camels moving to and fro, on lines of communication, and we have (? further information) that Bolshevicks have received from their spies grossly exaggerated estimates of our strength. Our reinforcements have certainly added to these estimates, and similar exaggeration of Bolshevick forces is doubtless employed by our own informers.

We believe it is to this cause that Bolshevick activity on Khorasan border is mainly due, and if so, we were to inform them clearly that we have no aggressive intention and simultaneously to withdraw bulk of our force, we believe danger to Northern Persia would be reduced to that arising from Bolshevick propaganda and not from military attack. As already stated, we believe that Consular escort at Meshed, together with the local levies, would be sufficient to cope with this aggression. It is true that Persia might regard withdrawal as sign of her abandonment to Bolshevicks; but if it had result which we anticipate making Bolshevicks desist warlike preparation on her frontier, this effect would be only transitory.

6. We would again point out if it is seriously contemplated that force of size approaching present is to be maintained in Khorasan prolongation of railway to Neh would effect great saving. Cost of camels



maintained over this portion has already since armistice equalled estimated capital cost of this extension and conditions which are fatal to camels are rapidly depleting whole of camel stock of (? Western) India, reacting upon our frontier requirements and constantly forcing up hire charges in Eastern Persia, so that maintenance of force there is continually becoming more expensive and may shortly prove absolutely prohibitive.

31.—*Telegram from Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, Army Department, dated 5th May 1920.*

1651. Your telegram of 1st May, 5494. Force at Meshed is to be withdrawn forthwith, only Consular escorts being retained, one-and-half cavalry squadrons at Meshed, and half a squadron at Seistan, with some light armoured cars and possibly Ford van transport at Meshed. Small regular mobile detachment to be kept at Duzdap and reduced garrison at Kwash. Khorasan and Seistan levies will be taken over by Persia. Strong objection by His Majesty's Government has been taken to the estimate of five months in which to effect withdrawal from Meshed, and I request that every effort be made to carry it out in less time and that it be expedited to greatest possible extent. Please telegraph after consideration your revised estimate of quickest withdrawal possible. I will address you again regarding incidence of expenditure.

32.—*Telegram from Viceroy, Army Department, to Secretary of State for India, dated 13th May 1920.*

6066. 13th May. Reference to telegram No. 1651, dated 5th May. The present is by far the most difficult time of the year in which to carry out the withdrawal of troops from East Persia, owing to lack of water and to hot wind of 120 days, which is due to begin about end of May and renders all movement extremely arduous south of (? Neh). It may be possible to reduce estimate of five months, but for reasons given above, no such guarantee can be given. Withdrawal has been ordered to begin at once.



20 Dec. 1918

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SECRET.

NOTE ON THE MALLESON MISSION.

16A

I circulate to the Eastern Committee a note on the Malleeson Mission prepared in this Office.

I confess to feeling grave uneasiness about this matter. It does not seem to me that it is likely from Treasury accounts of the situation that we shall at any time be able to give more money to Trans-Caspia. I am appalled already at the extent of our commitments in Persia and I do not want either to increase them or to be crippled in discharging them by expenditure across the Caspian. Nor do I think this country is prepared to continue fighting unknown enemies when the enemies against which they were prepared to fight have collapsed.

It may be true that there are reasons, as is so forcibly argued by my Military Secretary, for keeping Malleeson and his men there for the present, but I think the Eastern Committee should watch the situation with a view to withdrawing him at the earliest possible moment.

E. S. M.

20th December 1918.

Telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, No. 29076, dated 13th April 1918.

Telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, No. 47347, dated 18th June 1918.

Telegrams from Commander-in-Chief, India, No. 60543, dated 2nd August 1918; and No. 60489, dated 3rd August 1918.

Telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, No. 63117, dated 10th August 1918.

...serving with the Bolshevik forces there. Intelligence was also received that the Germans and Turks were contemplating the despatch of troops from the Caucasus across the Caspian to operate along the Central Asia Railway. In consequence of this, the British Mission at Meshed was strengthened, and Major-General Malleeson was sent from India to take charge.

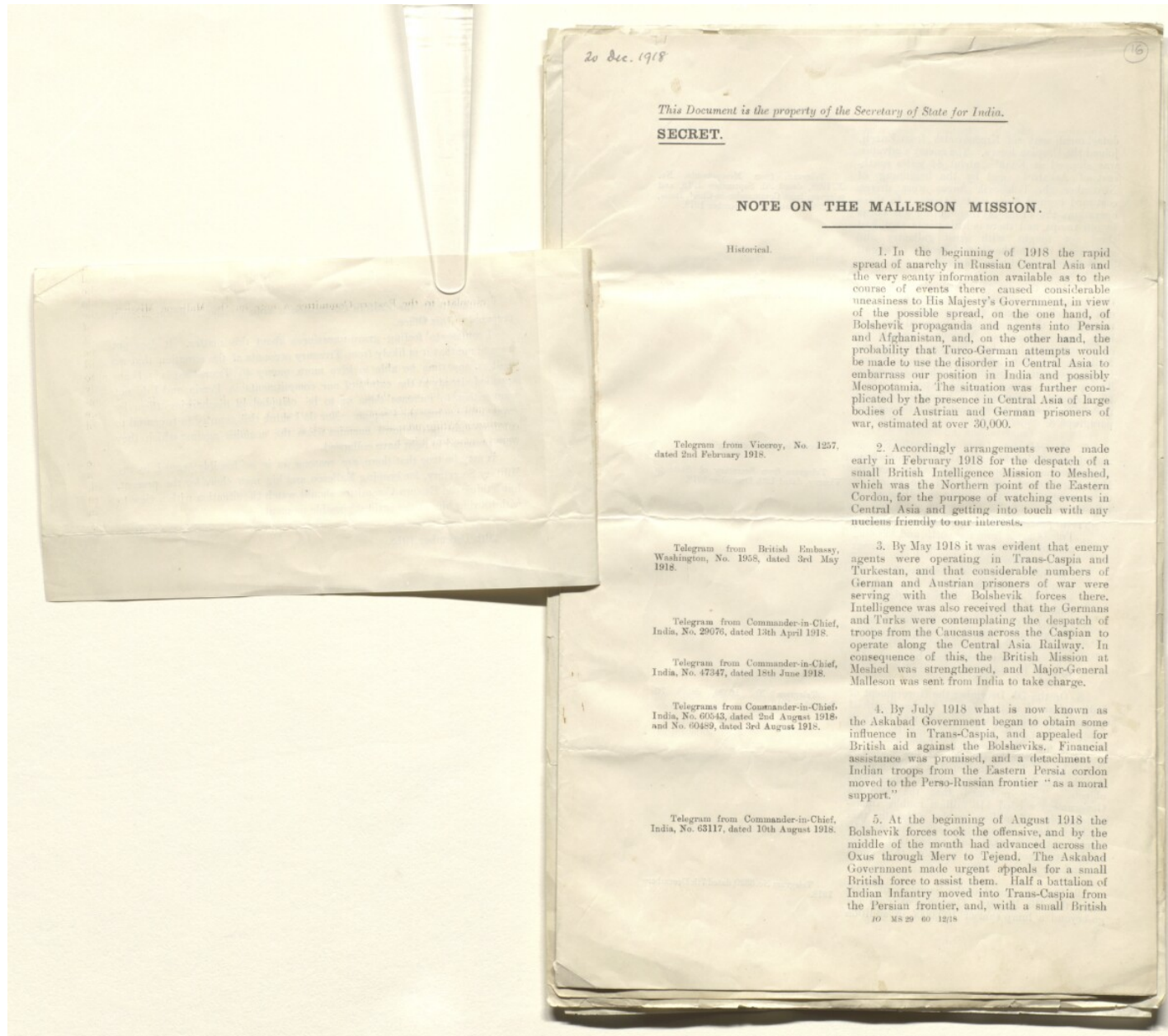
4. By July 1918 what is now known as the Askabad Government began to obtain some influence in Trans-Caspia, and appealed for British aid against the Bolsheviks. Financial assistance was promised, and a detachment of Indian troops from the Eastern Persia cordon moved to the Perso-Russian frontier "as a moral support."

5. At the beginning of August 1918 the Bolshevik forces took the offensive, and by the middle of the month had advanced across the Oxus through Merv to Tejend. The Askabad Government made urgent appeals for a small British force to assist them. Half a battalion of Indian Infantry moved into Trans-Caspia from the Persian frontier, and, with a small British

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Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleson Mission [16av] (32/71)



Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleeson Mission [16v] (33/71)



detachment, sent *via* Krasnovodsk from Enzeli, joined the Caspian forces. The enemy's advance was stopped at Kaakha, about 84 miles south-east of Askabad; and by the beginning of November the Bolshevik forces were driven eastward beyond Merv to the Oxus. In these operations the brunt of the fighting was borne by our troops, and there is little doubt that, had they not fought with great gallantry and endurance, the Bolshevik endeavours to engulf Trans-Caspia would have succeeded.

Telegram from Mesopotamia, No. X. 1988, dated 9th September 1918, and telegram from Commander-in-Chief, India, No. 89032, dated 5th November 1918.

6. About this period it became evident that the Askabad Government were coming to the end of their financial arrangements, and from that time to the present their financial demands have been continuous. Various proposals for obtaining money have been suggested by General Malleeson, including the issue of a loan in Trans-Caspia guaranteed by the British Government. The present position and the extent to which His Majesty's Government is prepared to assist the Trans-Caspian Government will be seen in paragraph 8.

Telegram from Viceroy, No. 15664, dated 20th November 1918.

7. The collapse of our enemies in Europe and the armistice brought about an immediate change in the situation in Trans-Caspia, and His Majesty's Government redefined the object of the retention of the Malleeson Mission as follows:—

Change in object of Mission.

Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, dated 12th December 1918.

- (1) to prevent Bolshevism from over-running Trans-Caspia from the north, and so being able to overturn the Askabad Government and penetrate Khorassan;
- (2) to retain hold on the railway from the Caspian until it is evident that the presence of our troops in that region is no longer necessary;
- (3) the early evacuation of the Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, who form the mainstay of the enemy's resistance, as soon as arrangements can be made for this *via* Baku-Batum.

8. On the 7th December the Government of India informed us that, failing further financial support, the Askabad Government was likely to collapse, their only hope of paying their way being to oust the Bolsheviks from Turkestan to obtain revenue by the sale of raw materials at Tashkent. They considered it problematical that the Askabad Government could effect these objects. They reckoned that the Askabad Government needed 118 million roubles immediately, *plus* 16 million roubles a month, that to keep them solvent for, say, five months would cost 1,330,000*l.*, and added that, owing to the stringent financial position, they could not find any of the funds.

Telegram No. 16392, dated 7th December 1918.

9. On the same date the Secretary of State wired that His Majesty's Government could not go beyond a lump sum of 100,000*l.* in addition

Telegram No. 3330, dated 7th December 1918.



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to the five lakhs of rupees that the Government of India had sent Malleson, and the 2,000,000 roubles that the Askabad Government obtained from Baku; and he pressed for the Government of India's views as to the importance, from the Indian point of view, of maintaining Malleson's force in Trans-Caspia and as to the tenability of his position if the Askabad Government collapsed.

Telegram No. 16538, dated 10th December 1918.

10. The Government of India replied to this on the 10th December. They considered that there were two alternatives—

- (1) To continue to finance the Askabad Government for an indefinite period, or
- (2) To withdraw altogether from Askabad, informing the Trans-Caspian Government that His Majesty's Government were not prepared to accept indefinitely the burden of financing them, and offering them a lump sum in payment.

They considered that with alternative (2) the Askabad Government might collapse or become merged in Bolshevism, and so come into conflict with the Turcomans, with what result it was difficult to foretell. They stated, however, that they preferred alternative (2), and that it appeared to them unnecessary, from the Indian point of view, to retain our forces in Trans-Caspia; that they did not consider the objects and results likely to be secured by remaining there would justify either the increasing of a heavy and indefinite financial liability or the financial disturbance and dislocation of our policy in Persia. They advised the maintenance of our troops in sufficient strength to operate from the Birjand area, which they considered to be well suited as an avenue of approach and to dominate the position *vis-à-vis* Khorassan and Western Afghanistan in case of trouble from Russian Turkestan or Trans-Caspia. They did not consider withdrawal would be a very dangerous, though possibly a difficult, military operation.

Telegram from Mesopotamia, No. X. 4328, dated 8th December 1918.

11. In their paragraph 7 it is to be noted that they refer to possible danger from the direction of Orenburg, and add that they have not sufficient information to estimate its significance. From our latest information this menace will be a serious one should the Bolshevik forces operating from Samara succeed in taking Orenburg and linking up their troops (about 10,000 strong) now about 150 miles south-east of Orenburg on the railway from Tashkent. The latest report from Russian sources is that the Bolshevik forces north-west of Orenburg number about 18,000, with 500 (? 50) guns; to the south-east about 11,000, with 36 guns; and to the north about 11,000, with 27 guns. It is also reported that Bolshevism is gaining ground among the Orenburg Cossacks and that an attempt has been made on the life of General Dutov.

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12. To sum up, it would seem that we are at present in the unsatisfactory position of retaining a Major-General and a small force in a remote part of the world, one of our objects being to prop up a Government which seems unlikely to be able to pay its way, to hold its own, or to perform any of the ordinary functions of government for some time to come, and which will probably collapse if we disappear. We are not able to satisfy the financial demands which our representative on the spot recommends. The Government of India, who control the operations and who are very directly concerned, advise withdrawal. On the other hand, it is evident that if we withdraw even to Meshed, and the Askabad Government collapses in consequence, there is nothing to prevent Bolshevik elements from overflowing Trans-Caspia from the north and from penetrating Khorassan. Their intentions, in the former respect at all events, are proved by their offensive last August. We shall lose our hold on the Trans-Caspian Railway, and it will be within the power of a Bolshevik force to threaten Krasnovodsk from the East, or to prevent our taking any effective part in affairs between the Caspian and the northern border of Afghanistan for the future by destroying the railway.

13. It is also to be remembered that if our only agency in Trans-Caspia is withdrawn the collection and repatriation of the Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war will be impossible, and they constitute a serious danger to British interests in Central Asia.

14. Thus we shall be withdrawing before any of the aims which were affirmed by His Majesty's Government to be the object of Malleeson's efforts only 10 days ago, *i.e.*, on 12th December, have been fulfilled.

15. Further, we shall be taking this retrograde step at a moment when for the first time we are about to be in a position, owing to the establishment of our forces on the Batoum-Baku line, to really assert our power (if necessary) east of Krasnovodsk, and to carry out the purposes laid down in the telegram of the 12th December. The leading troops of General Milne's force are expected at Batoum on 24th December. We have also heard in the last few days that the Amir of Bokhara is intervening effectively, and that there is a possibility of an Afghan move on Khusk and Panjdeh. Thus it would seem that apart from the difficulty of making further advances to the Askabad Government, there is good reason to believe that it is in our interests to keep Malleeson and his force where they are for the present and even to reinforce him if necessary.

16. The affairs at stake have more than a local importance. The (temporary) eclipse of Russia and the course of war, have placed us in

Constantinople G.C. 70, dated 18th December 1918. To Mesopotamia.

From Commander-in-Chief, India, No 98821, dated 11th December 1918.



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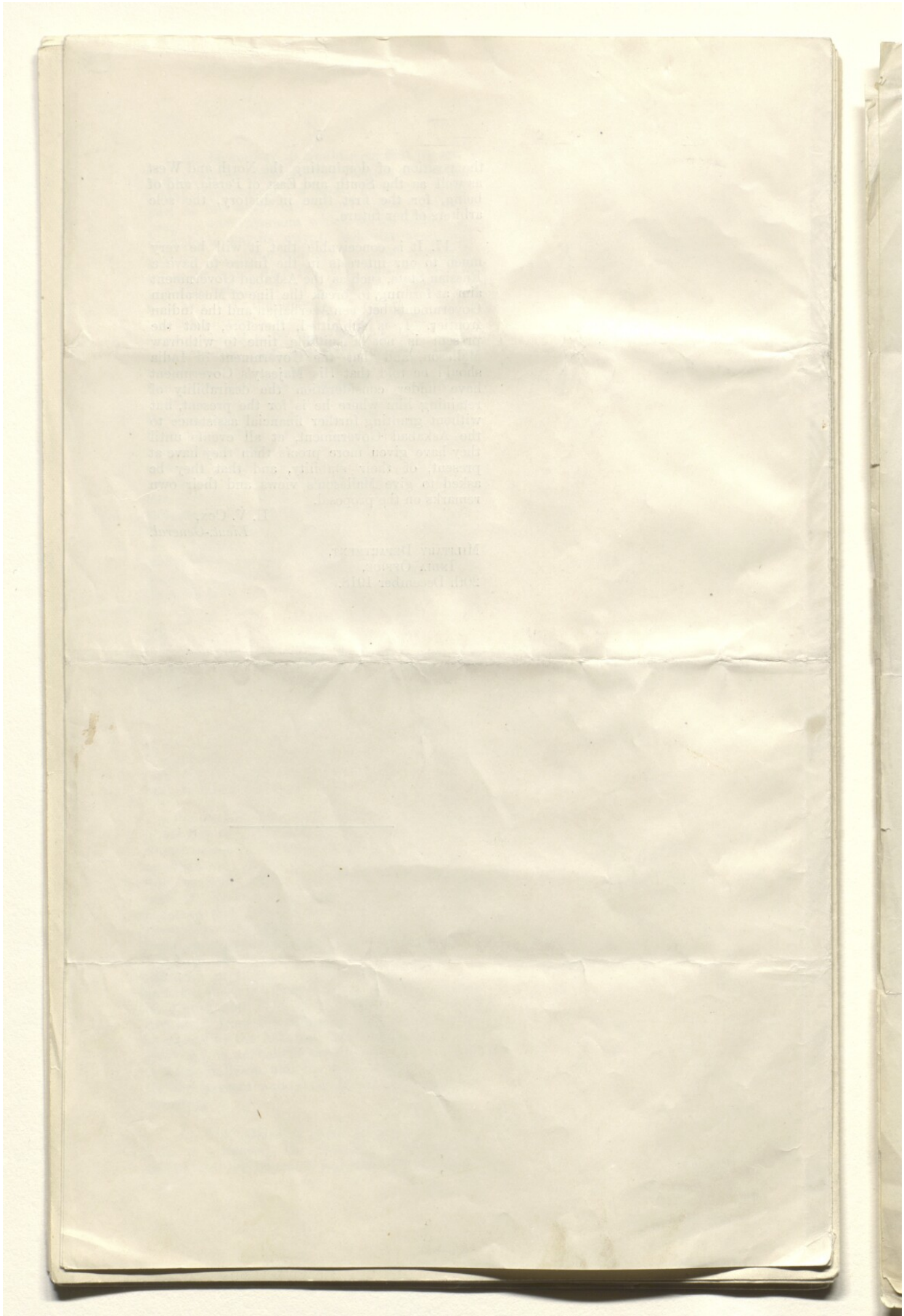
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the position of dominating the North and West as well as the South and East of Persia, and of being, for the first time in history, the sole arbiters of her future.

17. It is conceivable that it will be very much to our interests in the future to have a Russian State, such as the Askabad Government aim at forming, to break the line of Mussalman Governments between Azerbaijan and the Indian frontier. It is submitted, therefore, that the present is not a suitable time to withdraw Malleeson, and that the Government of India should be told that His Majesty's Government have under consideration the desirability of retaining him where he is for the present, but without granting further financial assistance to the Askabad Government, at all events until they have given more proofs than they have at present, of their stability, and that they be asked to give Malleeson's views and their own remarks on the proposal.

H. V. Cox,
Lieut.-General.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT,
INDIA OFFICE,
20th December 1918.





Comments on Mr Lovat Fraser's article in the Daily Mail of 19th July, 1920, criticizing British expenditure in eastern Persia, 1918-20, and entitled:

SEMI-SECRET WASTE.

Mr Lovat Fraser maintains that the strength of the British-Indian forces employed in north-east Persia from 1918 to 1920 was insufficient for the task of countering the Bolshevik movement in Russian Central Asia, and that they were ineffective, even after their withdrawal, in April, 1919, within the Persian frontier, either for the purpose of watching the Bolsheviks, or for stopping Bolshevik agents from entering Afghanistan across the Oxus, or for preventing the Afghans from attempting to invade India in 1919.

Mr Lovat Fraser estimates the cost of the employment of these forces-employment for futile reasons relating to the Russian Bolsheviks- at close upon £50,000,000, and stigmatizes the expedition as probably the worst example of semi-secret waste discoverable in the whole war.

The points to which Mr Lovat Fraser takes objection are extravagance, unnecessary secrecy, and lack of judgement resulting in futile waste. He cites the extension of the Quetta-Nushki-Nirjawa railway to Dozdap and the commencement of construction on a further section to Neh, the loss of thousands of camels in the early, hasty advance, the bill of ten shillings a day per head for the feed of 40,000 camels, the loss of motor-cars on the bad roads, the construction of a great military road, since the armistice, for motor traffic from railhead to Meshed, the huddled encampments along this road, the silence of our Ministers and the exclusion from Army Estimates of details which would have attracted public criticism, and the uselessness of the expedition after Prince Henry of Reuss and the rest of the Germans in Persia had been checkmated.

The charge of evasion, on the part of Ministers, of the criticism of the House of Commons and by the British taxpayer in the matter of the Army Estimates, is outside the scope of this commentary, which deals only with the military and political expediency for the employment of the forces under reference and to some extent with the matter of their strength and cost.

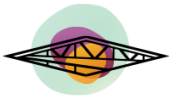
Meshed, the capital of the Persian province of Khorassan, has for many years been an outpost of the Indian Empire. It is the principal town within a radius of several hundred miles and, owing to its being the burial place of Imam Riza, one of the principal saints in the Mahomedan Calendar, possesses considerable sanctity in the eyes of the Shiah Mahomedan world.

Situated in the north-east corner of Persia, equi-distant from the frontiers of Russian Turkestan and of the buffer state of Afghanistan, Meshed was long ago found to be the most convenient centre in that remote part from which it was possible for the Foreign Department of the Government of India to obtain information as to political developments and for the General Staff to collect military intelligence in regard to matters relating to possible disturbance of peace in Russian Turkestan and Afghanistan, which might threaten the peace of our Indian borders.

Since the spring of 1912, Meshed had been occupied by Russian troops; there had been much bad blood between these troops and the Persians; the Russians had bombarded the Shrine of Imam Riza, and at the outbreak of the war still had a garrison in the town. The reason for a Russian occupation is extraneous to the present discussion; it is enough to record that Khorassan was gradually being Russianized.

The presence of a Russian force in Meshed and the surrounding district was of great use to the allied cause when Turkey entered the war. It was not easy at the time to calculate the effect which Turkish agitation might produce on their brother-Sunni Mahomedans in Afghanistan. It was probable too that bad characters would begin to cause trouble.

To assist in policing the Meshed-Seistan road, the only channel of communication between the outpost and India, a small irregular force was therefore raised in 1918 under British officers. These irregulars were not Persians but Hazaras, Persian-speaking Mongols, inhabiting the south-western districts of Afghanistan.



It is doubtful whether Hazaras would accept military service under any but British officers. They have a profound contempt for the Persians. The point is worth notice in connection with the question of recruiting for a purely Persian military force for the defence of Persian territory.

The Hazaras cooperated for a time with the Russian Cossack troops in Khorassan, intercepting Austrian and German prisoners who escaped into Persia and Afghanistan from the large prison-camps in Russian Turkestan.

But as German and Turkish emissaries began to come through Persia in greater numbers and better supplied with funds, and as the quality of the Russian troops that could be spared for these duties deteriorated, it was found necessary to send regular Indian troops to draw a closer cordon round the western frontier of Afghanistan.

Mr Lovat Fraser considers that so far our action was justified, but ~~that~~ that our activity should have stopped there, especially after the frustration of Prince Henry of Reuss.

The situation must be appreciated as our General Staff must have seen it at the time. At the end of 1916 it was becoming more and more evident that the Turks were being pressed to the limit of their capacity by their German masters so as to embarrass us in the Middle East.

During the summer the British colony had evacuated Teheran under fear of Turkish invasion; British prestige in the East had suffered seriously from the reverse at Kut; only a Russian cavalry force prevented a Turkish invasion of Persia and coped with the sabotage and brigandage which enemy agents had found an easy matter to initiate throughout Persia.

It was time for British forces, and Indian forces, to help to bear the strain. British-Persian forces were raised in the south and gradually asserted themselves, but the 400 miles of Perso-Afghan frontier remained guarded by something like one ~~man~~ man a mile. Few troops could stand the test of distant, monotonous, thankless work of that kind for long.

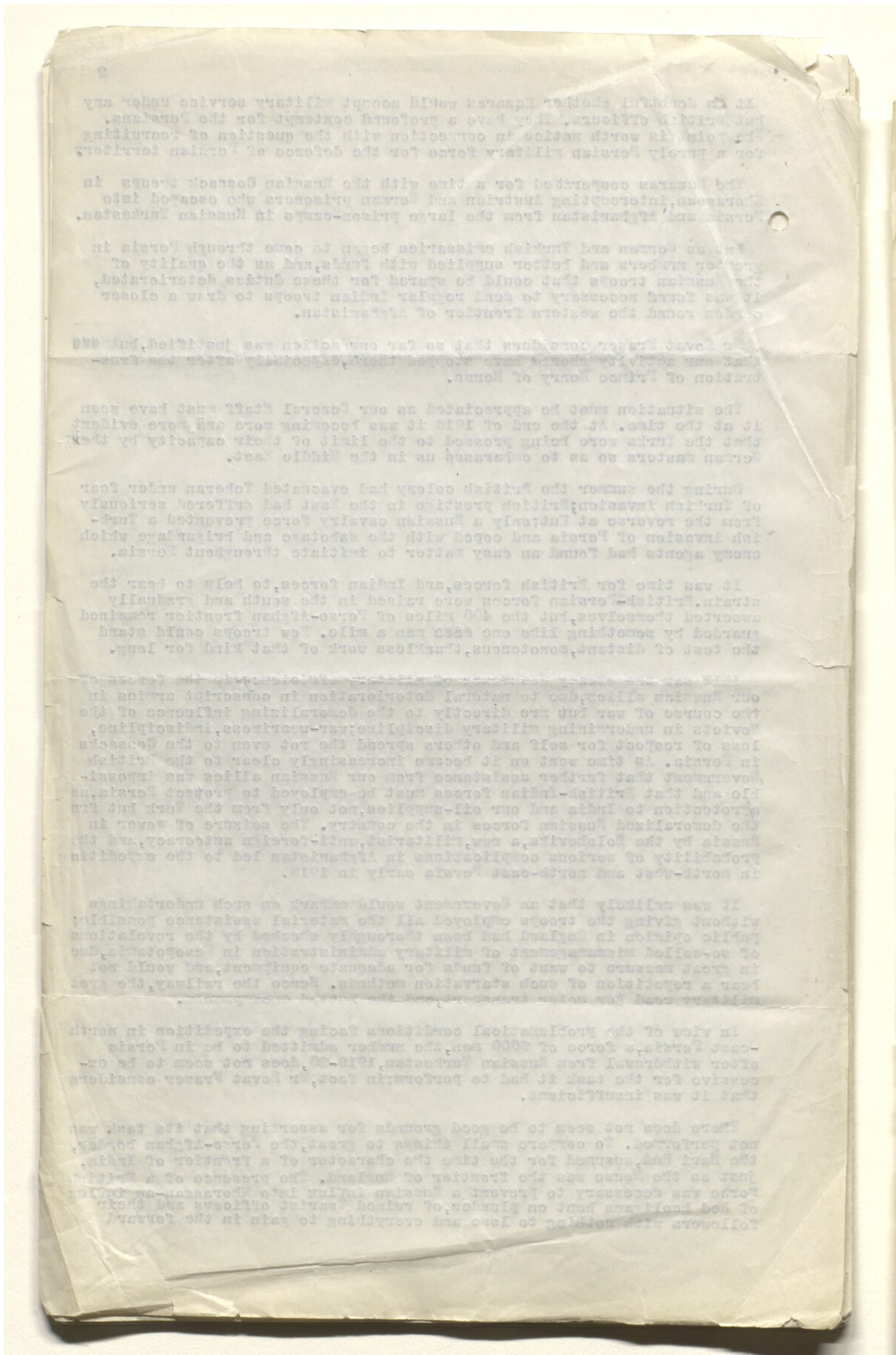
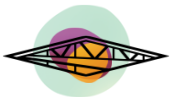
1917 saw the steady decadence of military efficiency in the forces of our Russian allies, due to natural deterioration in conscript armies in the course of war but more directly to the demoralizing influence of the Soviets in undermining military discipline; war-weariness, indiscipline, loss of respect for self and others spread the rot even to the Cossacks in Persia. As time went on it became increasingly clear to the British Government that further assistance from our Russian allies was impossible and that British-Indian forces must be employed to protect Persia, as protection to India and our oil-supplies, not only from the Turk but from the demoralized Russian forces in the country. The seizure of power in Russia by the Bolsheviks, a new, militarist, anti-foreign autocracy, and the probability of serious complications in Afghanistan led to the expeditions in north-west and north-east Persia early in 1918.

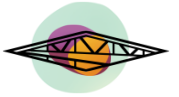
It was unlikely that an Government would embark on such undertakings without giving the troops employed all the material assistance possible; public opinion in England had been thoroughly shocked by the revelations of so-called mismanagement of military administration in Mesopotamia, due in great measure to want of funds for adequate equipment, and would not bear a repetition of such starvation methods. Hence the railway, the great military road for motor transport, and the hatted encampments.

In view of the problematical conditions facing the expedition in north-east Persia, a force of 9000 men, the number admitted to be in Persia after withdrawal from Russian Turkestan, 1919-20, does not seem to be excessive for the task it had to perform; in fact, Mr Lovat Fraser considers that it was insufficient.

There does not seem to be good grounds for asserting that its task was not performed. To compare small things to great, the Perso-Afghan border, the Hari Rud, assumed for the time the character of a frontier of India, just as the Meuse was the frontier of England. The presence of a British force was necessary to prevent a Russian influx into Khorassan—an influx of Red hooligans bent on plunder, of ruined Tsarist officers and their followers with nothing to lose and everything to gain in the forward

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleson Mission [20v] (41/71)





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...ranks of military adventure, and of genuine Bolsheviki fanatics obsessed with the desire to spread their propaganda and proselytize Persia. General Malleson's division at Meshed performed the duties of an outpost of the Indian Empire, the war counterpart of the peace-time outpost, -the Operations counterpart in war of the Intelligence outpost in peace.

Little has been written in the press concerning the force and its work. But time has shown the danger from Bolsheviki adventure in Persia; an effort was actually made to invade India from Afghanistan and to bring about revolution in India. These movements failed. It is not too much to believe that the strength of our Meshed outpost had the effect of checking a Bolsheviki invasion of Khorassan and the Afghan movement on India. No Persian Soviet Republic has been proclaimed in north-east Persia and no Kutchik Khan disturbs the Meshed-Seistan caravan route.

The cost of feeding, and in other ways supplying the needs of, and replenishing the wastage of a force of 9000 men, with the regulation number of say 4000 followers, with line of communications troops, followers and animals, over a distance of more than 1000 miles from its Indian base, must necessarily have been great. Before the construction of the great military road, camels were the only means of transport in the desert and hills,

Every pound of grain and hay, rations, fuel, etc. (there is practically no local fuel) had to traverse enormous distances on transport which alone would nearly consume its load before the end of the journey, however ingenious the method of convoys.

Before the war the transport on imports in Meshed, exclusive of duty, roughly doubled the cost, and took 90 days to come from the Indian frontier. Ten shillings per ration of 6 lbs of grain and 25 lbs of hay, even after a journey of 1000 miles, seems a high price and was possibly calculated at a time when the rupee stood as high as 2s/8d.

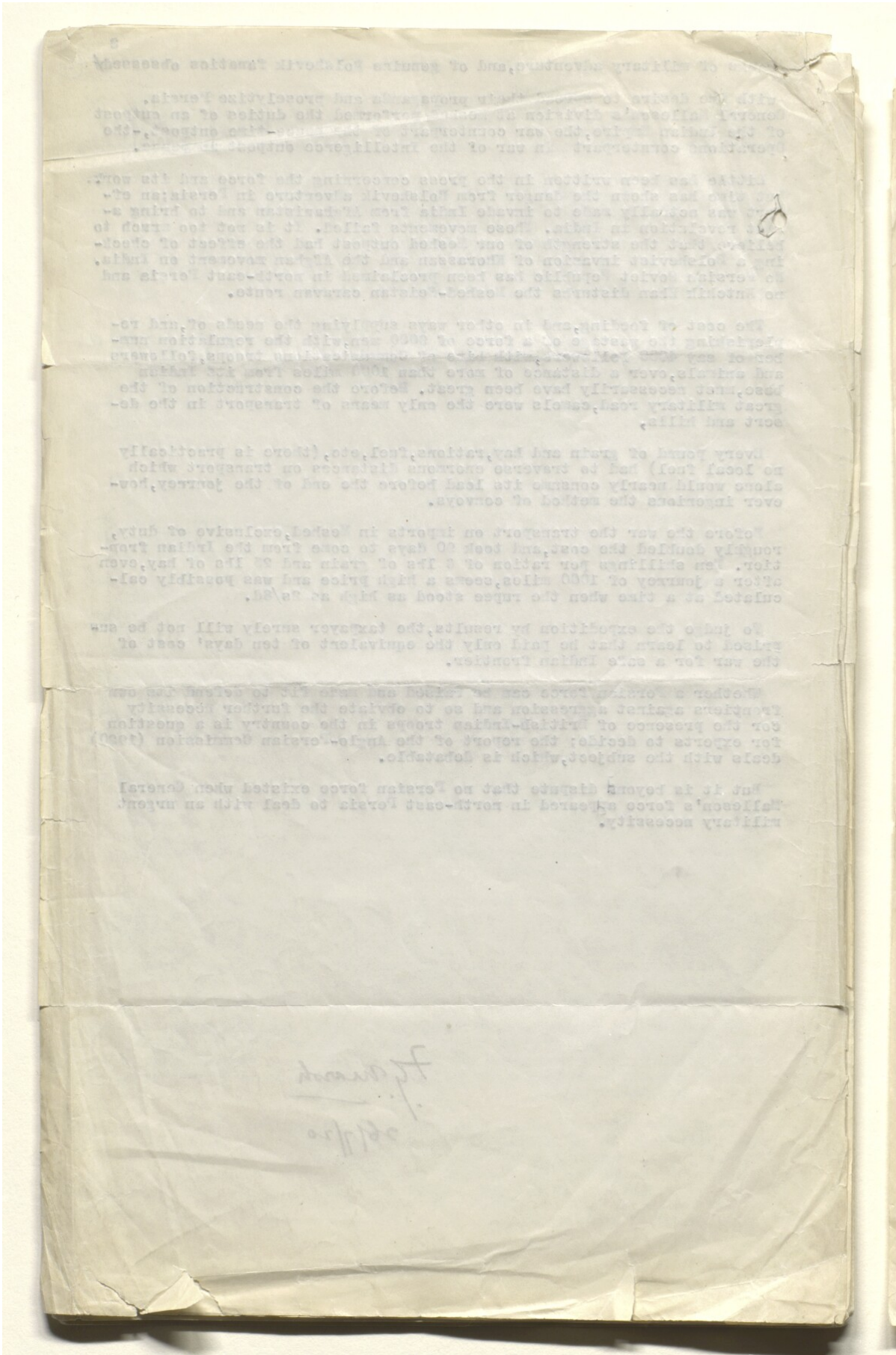
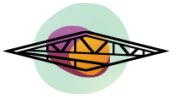
To judge the expedition by results, the taxpayer surely will not be surprised to learn that he paid only the equivalent of ten days' cost of the war for a safe Indian frontier.

Whether a Persian force can be raised and made fit to defend its own frontiers against aggression and so to obviate the further necessity for the presence of British-Indian troops in the country is a question for experts to decide; the report of the Anglo-Persian Commission (1920) deals with the subject, which is debatable.

But it is beyond dispute that no Persian force existed when General Malleson's force appeared in north-east Persia to deal with an urgent military necessity.

F. G. March
26/7/20

Notes and correspondence on the situation in East Persia and the Malleson Mission [21v] (43/71)





IOR: L/MIL/5/807

SECRET.

MINUTE.

1. In their telegram of August 28th the Government of India ask for an indication of future policy as regards the objects and work of the Malleeson Mission and force.

Malleeson's present role is correctly described in paragraph 3 of the same telegram, viz. to protect N.E. Persia from Bolshevik incursions, also (a) to encourage resistance in Persia to Pan-Islamic and Bolshevik influences, (b) intelligence work and (c) moral support to Transcaspians by threatening flank and rear of Bolshevik advance towards Krasnovodsk.

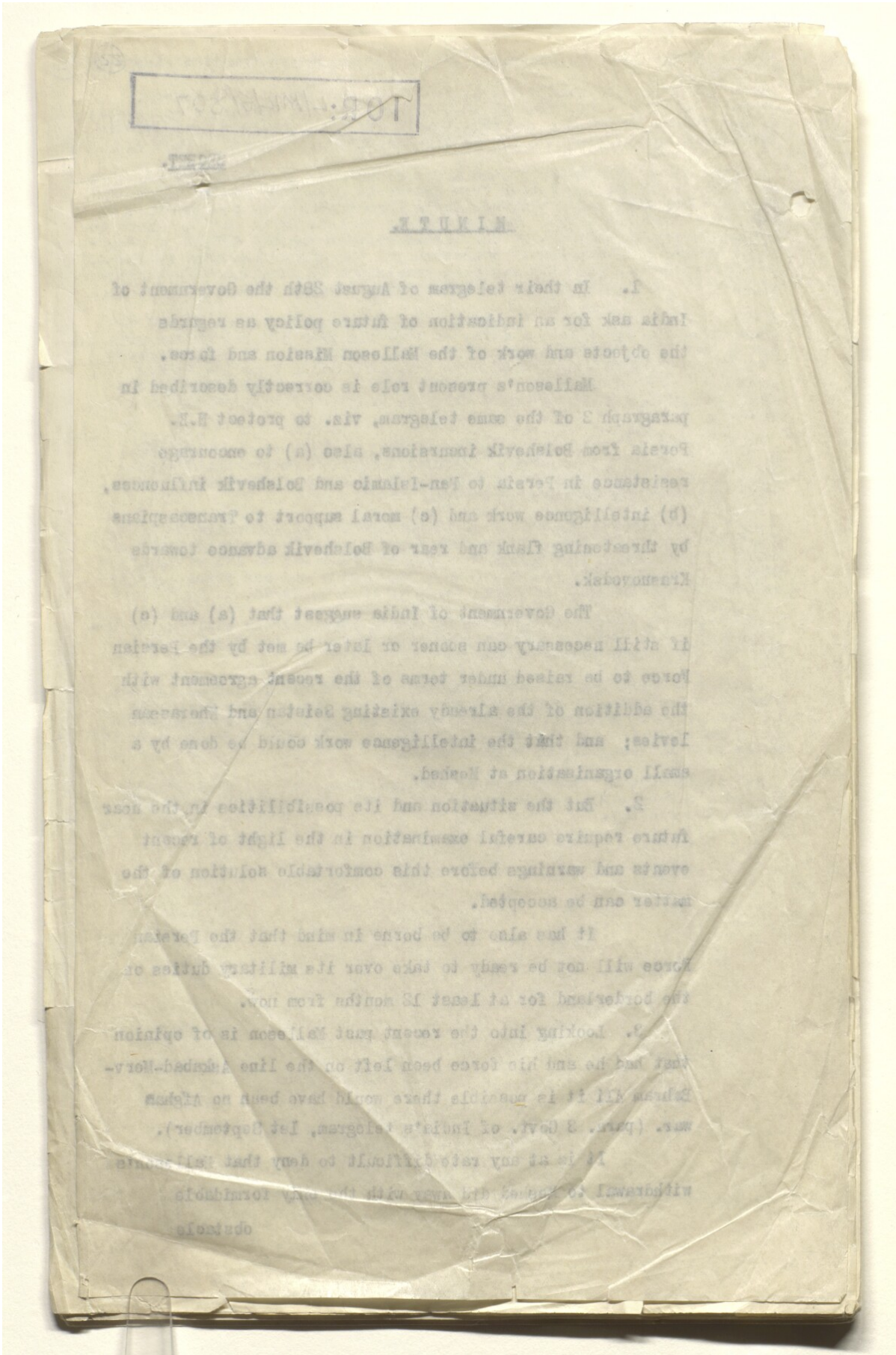
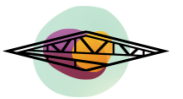
The Government of India suggest that (a) and (c) if still necessary can sooner or later be met by the Persian Force to be raised under terms of the recent agreement with the addition of the already existing Seistan and Khorassan levies; and that the intelligence work could be done by a small organisation at Meshed.

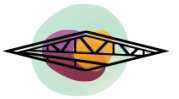
2. But the situation and its possibilities in the near future require careful examination in the light of recent events and warnings before this comfortable solution of the matter can be accepted.

It has also to be borne in mind that the Persian Force will not be ready to take over its military duties on the borderland for at least 12 months from now.

3. Looking into the recent past Malleeson is of opinion that had he and his force been left on the line Askabad-Merv-Bahram Ali it is possible there would have been no Afghan war. (para. 3 Govt. of India's telegram, 1st September).

It is at any rate difficult to deny that Malleeson's withdrawal to Meshed did away with the only formidable
obstacle





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obstacle to complete anarchy in Transcaspia and gave ingress to Bolshevism, like a flood, along the Northern borders of Afghanistan and Persia.

For the moment the situation is undoubtedly more encouraging. We have peace with Afghanistan, and the Bolsheviks have suffered a set-back on the Transcaspian railway at Keliata, and their front is now at Geok Tepe, about 40 miles West of Askabad. Our relations with Persia have steadily improved and are now probably more satisfactory than they have been for many years.

Looking to the future: We have information from many sources, some of which are known to be reliable, that the Bolsheviks intend to concentrate upon the borders of Afghanistan and Khorassan as soon as they feel strong enough to do so.

I quote some of the latest warnings we have received of this.

Viceroy's telegram 1st Aug. 1919 repeating Malleeson's of:-
" " " 2nd Aug. " " " 31st July.
" " " 7th Aug. " " " 1st Aug.
" " " 25th " " " " 6th Aug.
" " " 27th " " " " 22nd "
" " " 1st Sept. " " " 25th "
" " " 1st " " " " 29th "
" " " " " " " 31st "

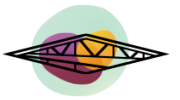
Memorandum from the Admiralty, No.N.I.D/O.L.1825 dated 26th August 1919.

Viceroy telegram 6th Sept - 5th Sept

All this is not surprising. These borders are now the line of least resistance. There is nothing to stop the advance of Bolshevik forces but the small and isolated Emirate of Bokhara and the vacillating and disordered government of Afghanistan.

In no other place in the world can they hope to bring such direct trouble upon their chief enemy, Great Britain.

Behind these borders their hungry soldiers will find fruitful and undevastated country (see Viceroy's telegram No. 11823 of 27th Aug. 4.



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4. But while there is sufficient evidence to prove the malevolent intentions of the Bolshevik leaders it is by no means so certain that they are in a position to give practical effect to them now or for some little time to come.

Their present strength West of Merv is about 3,000 men. Latest reports shew their morale to be indifferent and they have just been repulsed near Askabad.

Further East ^{West} of Ferghana, Semirechia and Tashkent they are estimated to have 7,000 men.

They are certainly not in a position to invade Afghanistan, Bokhara or Khorassan without considerable reinforcements, and these can only come from the Orenburg direction. Therefore the situation there seems to be the deciding factor. South of Orenburg the Bolshevik eastern fronts, consisting of the 4th, 1st, 5th, 2nd and 3rd armies, with a total of roughly 142,000 men, runs across the Orenburg-Tashkend railway, and is opposed by about 140,000 Russians, Siberians and Cossacks. Further to the South, a force of about 5,000 Cossacks lie astride the railway facing southwards, to the North of Kazalinsk. These Cossacks are opposed by about 3,000 Bolsheviks. Thus it will be seen that only the left flank of the Siberian Army, and the small force of Cossacks to the North of Kazalinsk stand in the way of an advance by the Bolsheviks down the Orenburg-Tashkend railway, in a strength only limited by the capacity of the railway.

The latest news we have received bearing on the situation on this front is General Knox's telegram of the 4th September, which refers to a retirement by General Belov's forces down the railway, and we have sufficient evidence from the events of the last few months of the extreme lack of stability of the whole of the Siberian army. The size of the force which could be maintained with the help of the
Orenburg-



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Gorbunov-



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Orenburg-Tashkend line once it had been opened up, is difficult to estimate in view of the many disturbing factors such as deterioration and damage to the line and rolling stock, and the defective organisation of the Bolsheviks, but it appears only prudent to reckon that they could bring and maintain a force of 25,000 men by this railway. On the other hand climatic conditions will soon be very much against operations on a large scale in these regions. The summer season is well advanced- in 3 months time rigorous winter conditions will have set in. It is said that want of food for their armies is as likely to kill Bolshevism as anything else, and that this winter will try them very highly. This is possible, but they cannot reach the rich country of Khorassan or the Valley of the Oxus before winter while Malleeson's force remains where it is. But if we reduce our representatives on this borderland now to a small "intelligence organisation" it does not seem to me to require much imagination to envisage Bolshevik incursions into both these regions by April if not sooner.

Before that time we hope to confirm our present treaty with Afghanistan. The Afghans would inevitably first appeal to us for help and then failing to receive it, would make losing terms (for themselves and us) with Bolshevism. Persia would be defenceless without assistance from us.

The difficulties and expense of ousting the Bolsheviks from these places once they got in would be enormous.

5. Therefore I am as sure that we should do well to keep Malleeson and his force where they are till next spring, as I was (and am) certain that we were wrong to withdraw them from Askabad-Merv seven months ago.

More



Greenwich-Isfahan line case it had been opened up. It
difficult to estimate in view of the many disturbing factors
such as deterioration and damage to the line and rolling
stock, and the defective organization of the Bolsheviks, but
it appears only prudent to reckon that they could bring and
maintain a force of 25,000 men by the railway. On the other
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operations on a large scale in these regions. The winter
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or the Valley of the Gams before winter sets in. Malleon's
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enormous.

5. Therefore I am sure that we should do well to
keep Malleon and his force where they are till next spring,
as I was (and am) certain that we were wrong to withdraw
them from Ashbad-Kerv seven months ago.

Note



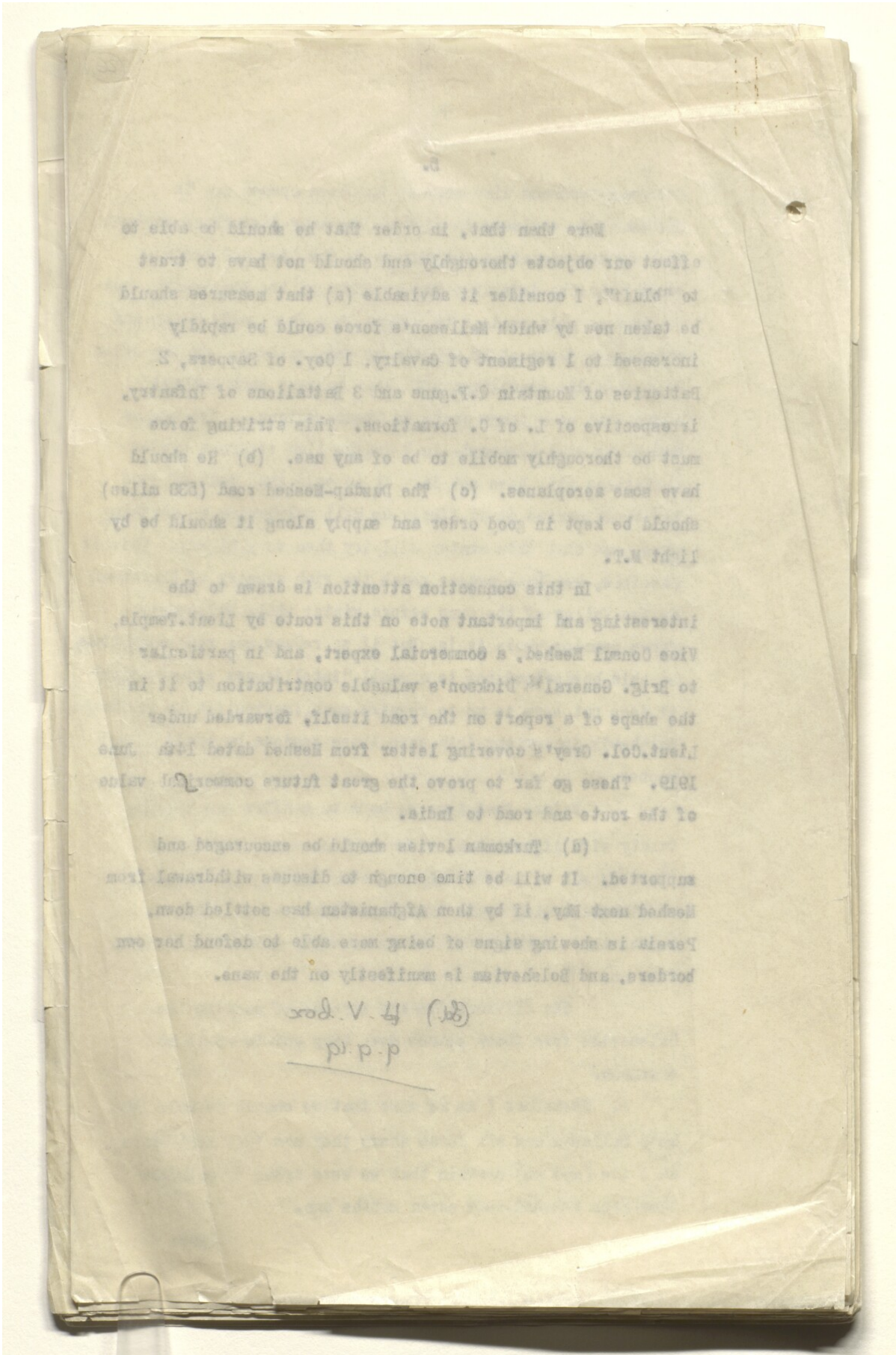
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5.

More than that, in order that he should be able to effect our objects thoroughly and should not have to trust to "bluff", I consider it advisable (a) that measures should be taken now by which Malleeson's force could be rapidly increased to 1 regiment of Cavalry, 1 Coy. of Sappers, 2 Batteries of Mountain Q.F.guns and 3 Battalions of Infantry, irrespective of L. of C. formations. This striking force must be thoroughly mobile to be of any use. (b) He should have some aeroplanes. (c) The Duzdap-Meshed road (538 miles) should be kept in good order and supply along it should be by light M.T.

In this connection attention is drawn to the interesting and important note on this route by Lieut. Temple, Vice Consul Meshed, a Commercial expert, and in particular to Brig. General's Dickson's valuable contribution to it in the shape of a report on the road itself, forwarded under Lieut.Col. Grey's covering letter from Meshed dated 14th June 1919. These go far to prove the great future commercial value of the route and road to India.

(d) Turkoman levies should be encouraged and supported. It will be time enough to discuss withdrawal from Meshed next May, if by then Afghanistan has settled down, Persia is shewing signs of being more able to defend her own borders, and Bolshevism is manifestly on the wane.

(Ed.) H. V. Box
9.9.19





(27)

In the early part of the War, the activities of German and Turkish agents in the spread of enemy propaganda in Turkestan, Persia and towards Afghanistan and India necessitated the inception of measures to counteract enemy influence, and during the latter half of 1915 it was found necessary to strengthen our outposts on the borders of Sistan and to co-operate with our allies the Russians in certain undertakings in Eastern Persia. For this purpose the Sistan Field force held a line from Rohat, in British Baluchistan, to a point about 35 miles North of Birjand where they were in touch with a Russian Force holding a line of posts of which the Head Quarters were at Meshed. At this time the British force consisted of -

2 Squadrons of Cavalry
1 Battalion of Infantry
The Sistan Levy Corps
The Sarhad Levy Corps.

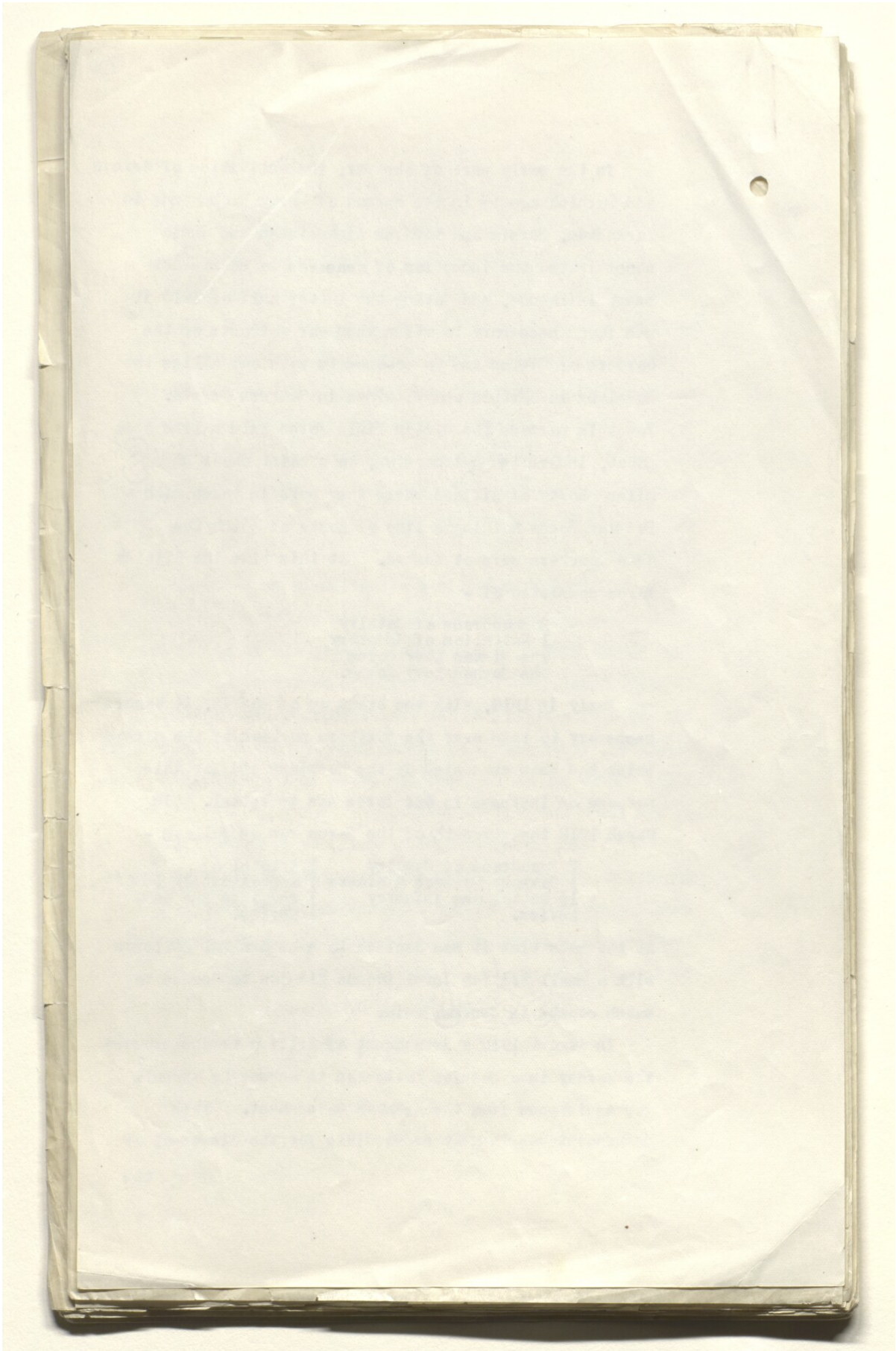
Early in 1918, with the break up of Russia, it became necessary to take over the Northern portion of the cordon which had been evacuated by the Russians and for this purpose an increase in our force was essential. In March 1918 the strength of the Force was as follows -

2 Squadrons of Cavalry	} A total of approximately 1600 regulars and 1400 Levies.
1 Company Sappers & Miners	
1 Battalion Infantry	
Levies.	

At the same time it was decided to send General Malleon with a small British Intelligence Mission to Meshed to watch events in Central Asia.

In August 1918 a detachment of British troops crossed the border into Russian Turkestan in answer to appeals for assistance from the Askabad Government. This detachment was largely responsible for the dispersal of

the





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the Bolshevik forces then threatening. In December 1918 with the collapse of our enemies in Europe a change occurred in the situation in Central Asia and question of the withdrawal of the force in North East Persia was considered but its retention was considered expedient with the following objects in view -

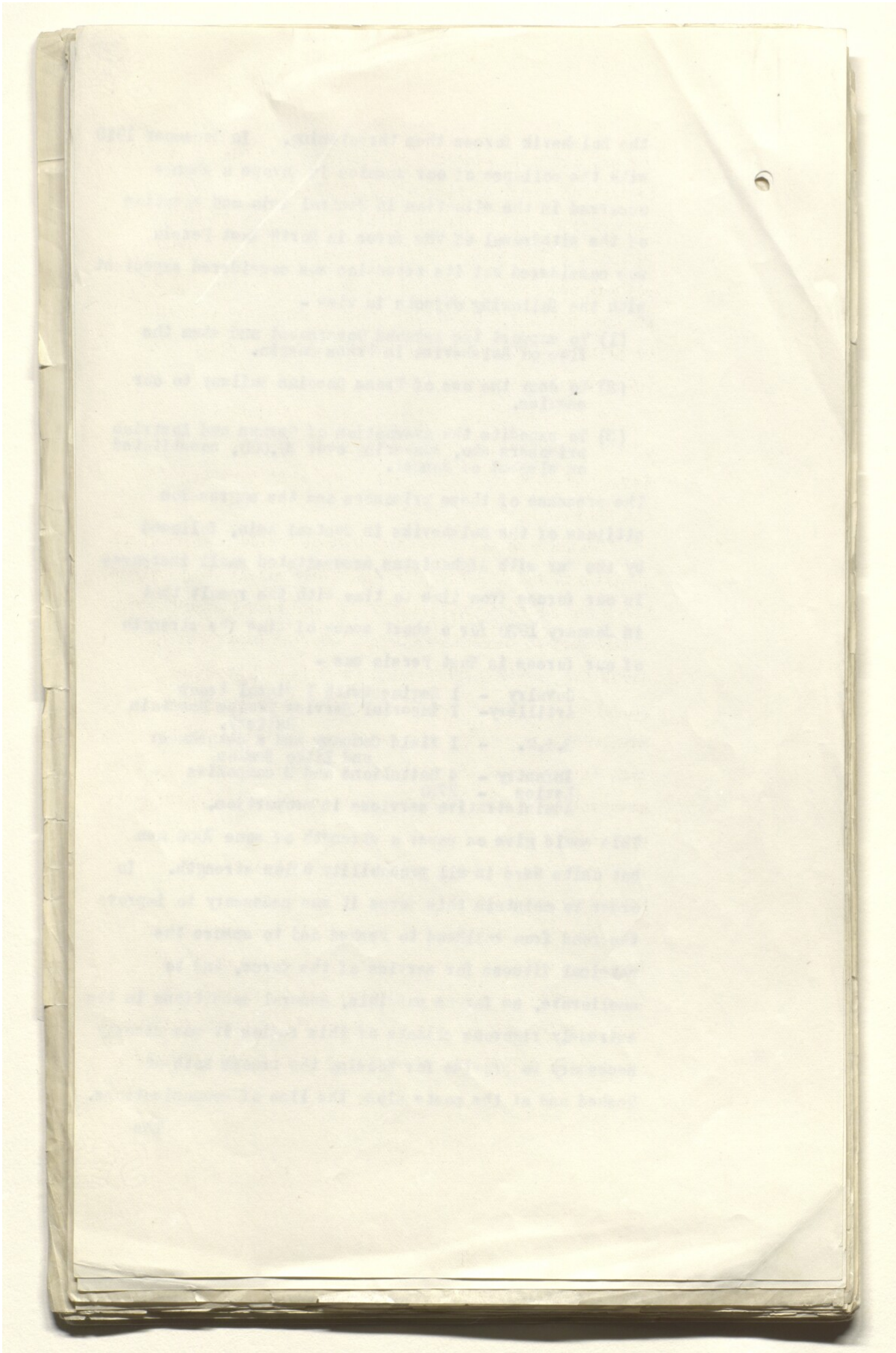
- (1) To support the Askabad Government and stem the flow of Bolshevism in Trans Caspia.
- (2) To deny the use of Trans Caspian Railway to our enemies.
- (3) To expedite the avacuation of German and Austrian prisoners who, numbering over 30,000, constituted an element of danger.

The presence of these prisoners and the aggression attitude of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia, followed by the War with Afghanistan, necessitated small increases in our forces from time to time with the result that in January 1920 for a short space of time the strength of our forces in East Persia was -

Cavalry - 1 Regiment with 1 Signal troop
Artillery - 1 Imperial Service Troops Mountain Battery.
S.A.M. - 1 Field Company and a detachment and Litho Section
Infantry - 4 Battalions and 3 companies
Levies - 2750
Administrative services in proportion.

This would give on paper a strength of some 7000 men but units were in all probability below strength. In order to maintain this force it was necessary to improve the road from railhead to Meshed and to ensure the physical fitness for service of the force, and to ameliorate, as far as possible, general conditions in the extremely rigorous climate of this region it was clearly necessary to provide for housing the troops both at Meshed and at the posts along the line of communications.

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The provision of adequate washing and sanitary facilities is part of the most elementary duty of a military Commander in the field, and there is no reason whatever to believe that undue lavishness was shown in providing shelter and ordinary amenities for the troops. It is in fact difficult to believe that it would be possible to provide anything in the nature of luxuries in that inhospitable country.

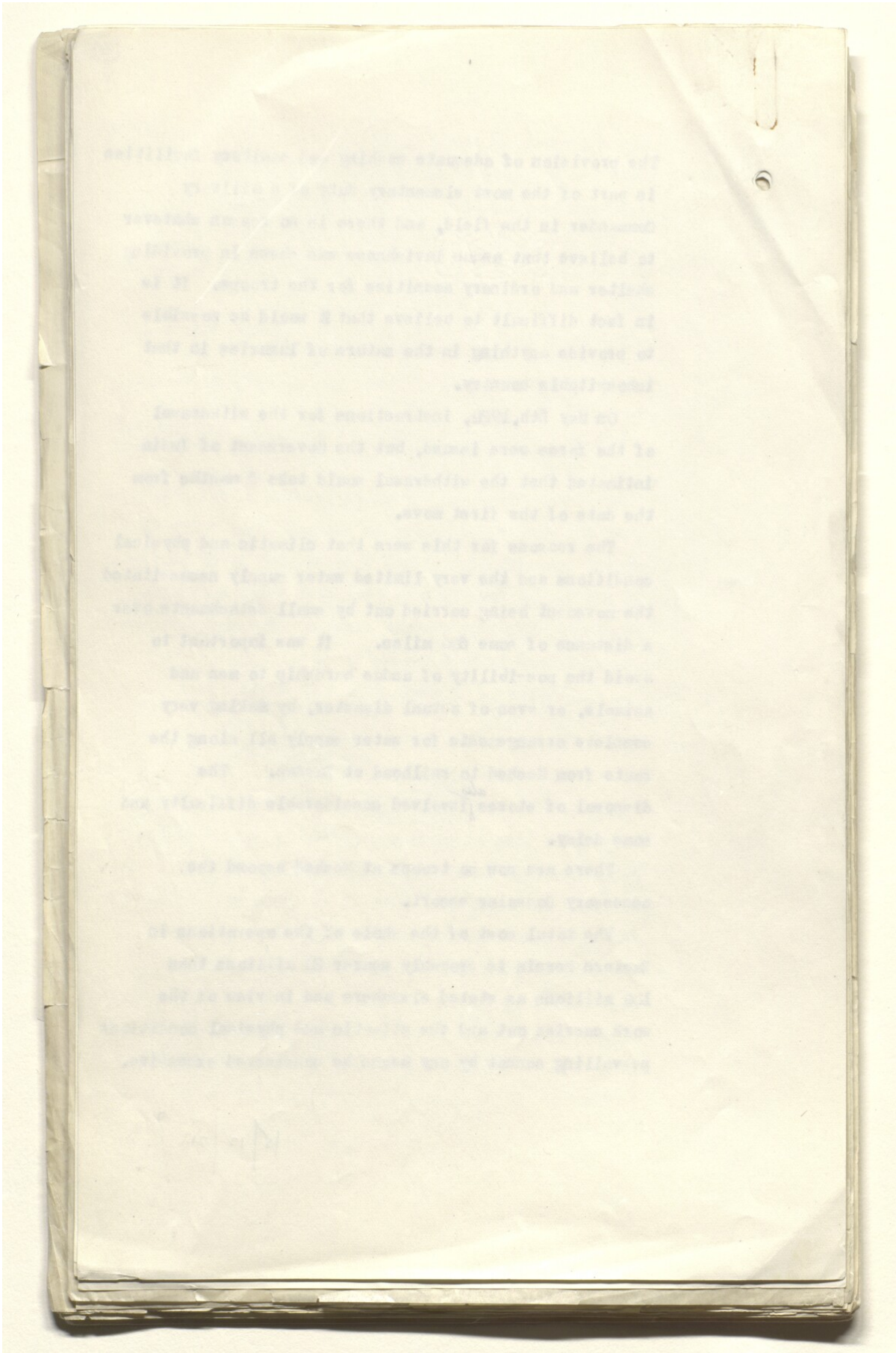
On May 5th, 1920, instructions for the withdrawal of the force were issued, but the Government of India intimated that the withdrawal would take 5 months from the date of the first move.

The reasons for this were that climatic and physical conditions and the very limited water supply necessitated the movement being carried out by small detachments over a distance of some 600 miles. It was important to avoid the possibility of undue hardship to men and animals, or even of actual disaster, by making very complete arrangements for water supply all along the route from Meshed to railhead at Dasdap. The disposal of stores ^{also} involved considerable difficulty and some delay.

There are now no troops at Meshed beyond the necessary Consular escort.

The total cost of the whole of the operations in Eastern Persia is probably nearer 20 millions than 100 millions as stated elsewhere and in view of the work carried out and the climatic and physical conditions prevailing cannot by any means be considered excessive.

15/12/21 ?





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The War Office suggest that arbitration should take place with regard to the conduct of the East Persian operations, the two main points for settlement being -

- (a) Was the force throughout its history engaged in Military Operations within the meaning of the Govt. of India Act.
- (b) If so were such operations part of the Great War & subject to the Resolutions of Parliament 1914.

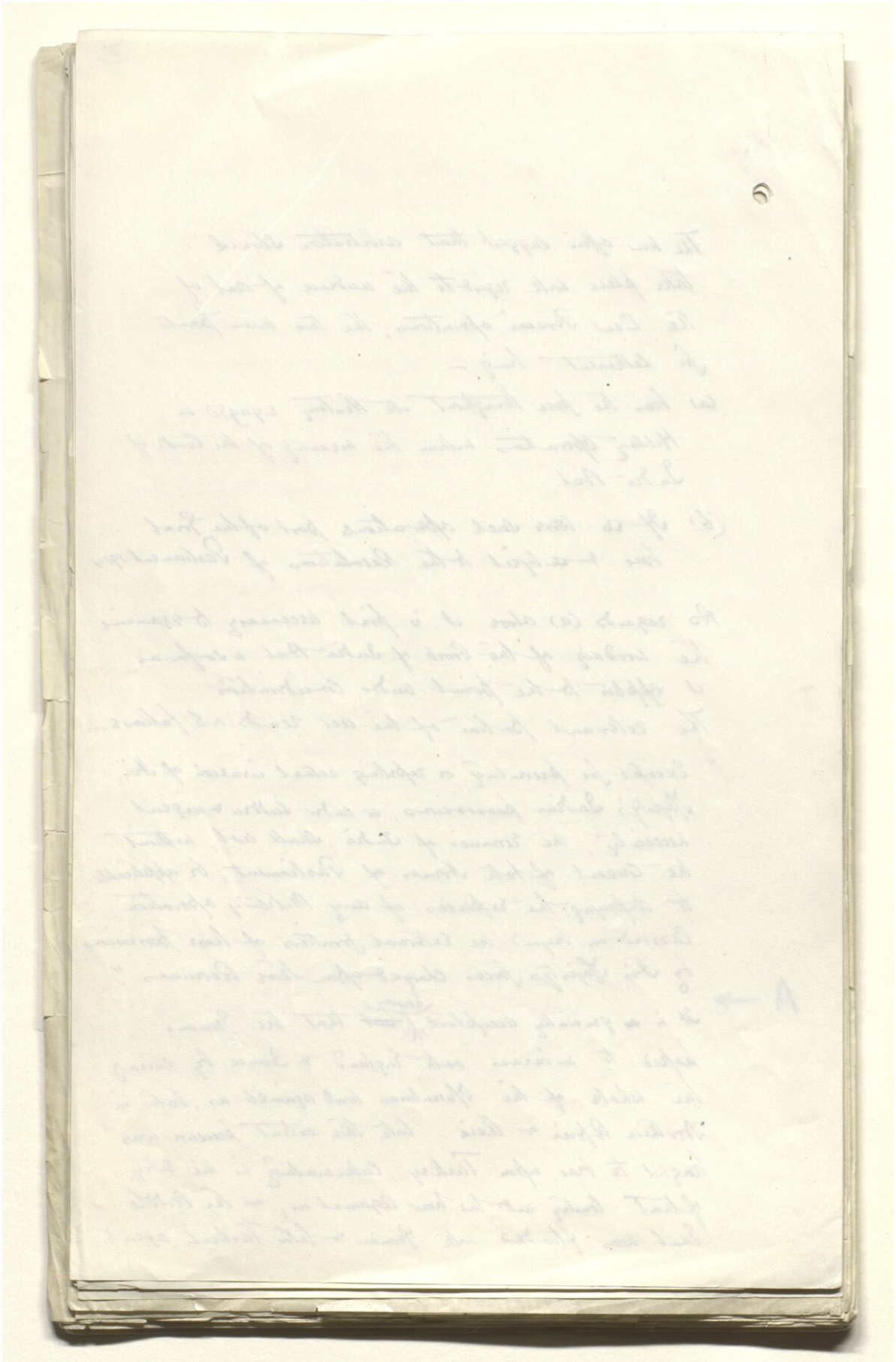
As regards (a) above it is first necessary to examine the wording of the Govt. of India Act in so far as it applies to the point under consideration.

The relevant portion of the Act reads as follows -

" Except for preventing or repelling actual invasion of His Majesty's Indian possessions, or under sudden & urgent necessity, the revenues of India shall not, without the consent of both Houses of Parliament, be applicable to defraying the expenses of any Military operation carried on beyond the external frontiers of those possessions by His Majesty's forces charged upon those Revenues "

A →

It is generally accepted ^{history} that the Romans hoped to embarrass both England & France by raising the whole of the Musulman world against us, both in Northern Africa & Asia. With this intent pressure was brought to bear upon Turkey, culminating in the entry of that country into the war against us, & the Middle East was flooded with Roman & later Turkish agents





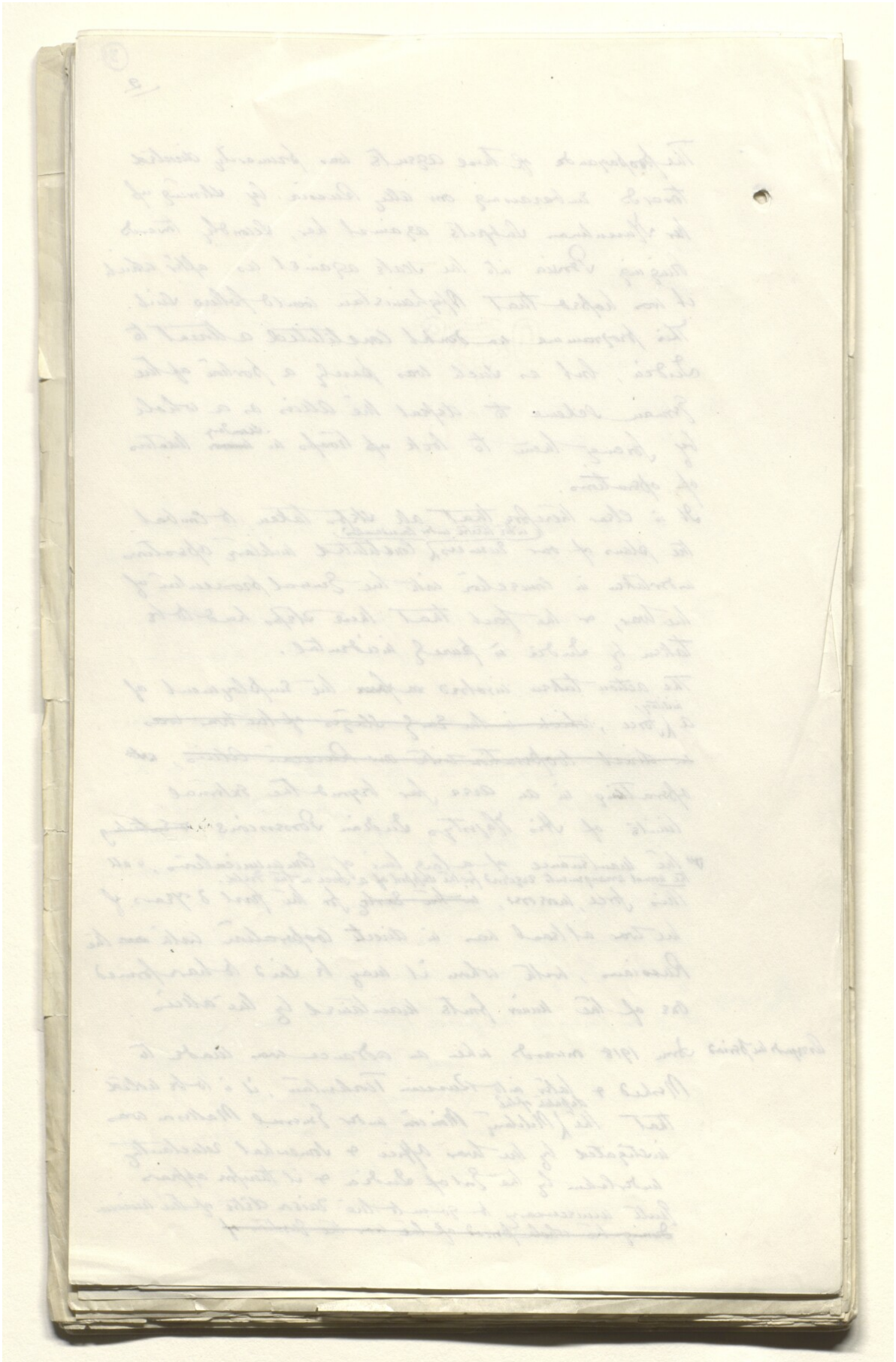
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The propaganda of these agents was primarily directed towards embarrassing our ally Russia by stirring up her Muselman subjects against her, secondly towards bringing Persia into the scale against us, after which it was hoped that Afghanistan would follow suit. This programme no doubt constituted a threat to India, but as such was purely a portion of the German scheme to defeat the allies as a whole by forcing them to lock up troops in ^{secondary} theatres of operations.

It is clear therefore that all steps taken to combat the plans of our enemies ^(in the theatre under consideration) constituted military operations undertaken in connection with the general prosecution of the war, or the fact that these steps had to be taken by India is purely incidental.

The action taken involved ~~the~~ the employment of a ^{military} force, which ~~in the early stages of the war was in direct cooperation with our Russian allies, and operating in an area far beyond the external limits of His Majesty's Indian Possessions, and the maintenance of a long line of communications, & all the normal arrangements required for the support of a force in the field.~~ This force, moreover, ~~in the early~~ for the first 3 years of the war at least was in direct cooperation with ~~our~~ the Russians, with whom it may be said to have formed one of the main fronts maintained by the allies.

As regards the period from 1918 onwards when an advance was made to Meshed & later into Russian Turkestan, it is to be noted that ^{the} Military Mission under General Malleson was investigated by the War Office & somewhat reluctantly undertaken by the Govt of India & it therefore appears quite unnecessary to go into the *raison d'être* of the mission. During the whole period of the war the function of



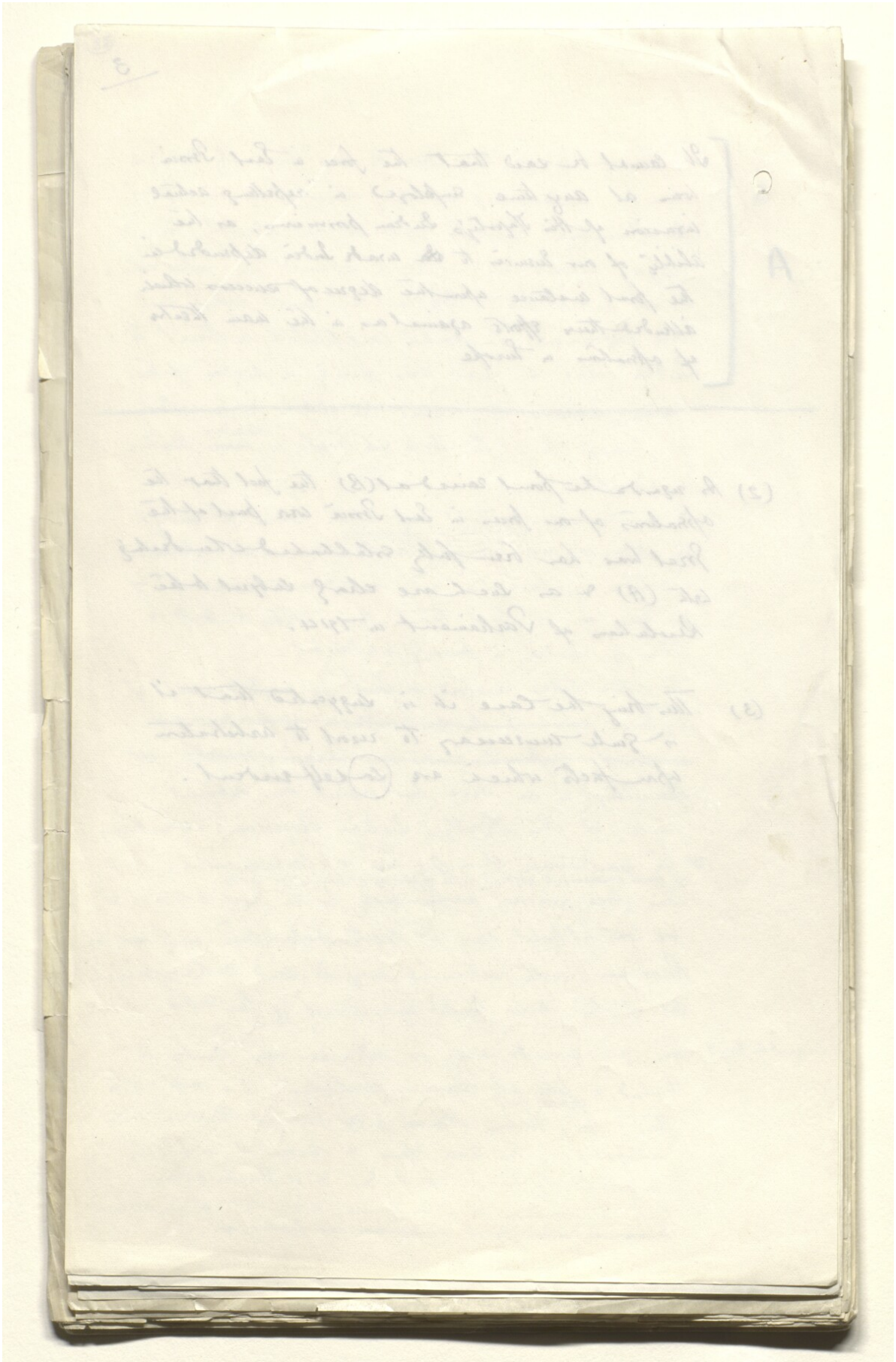


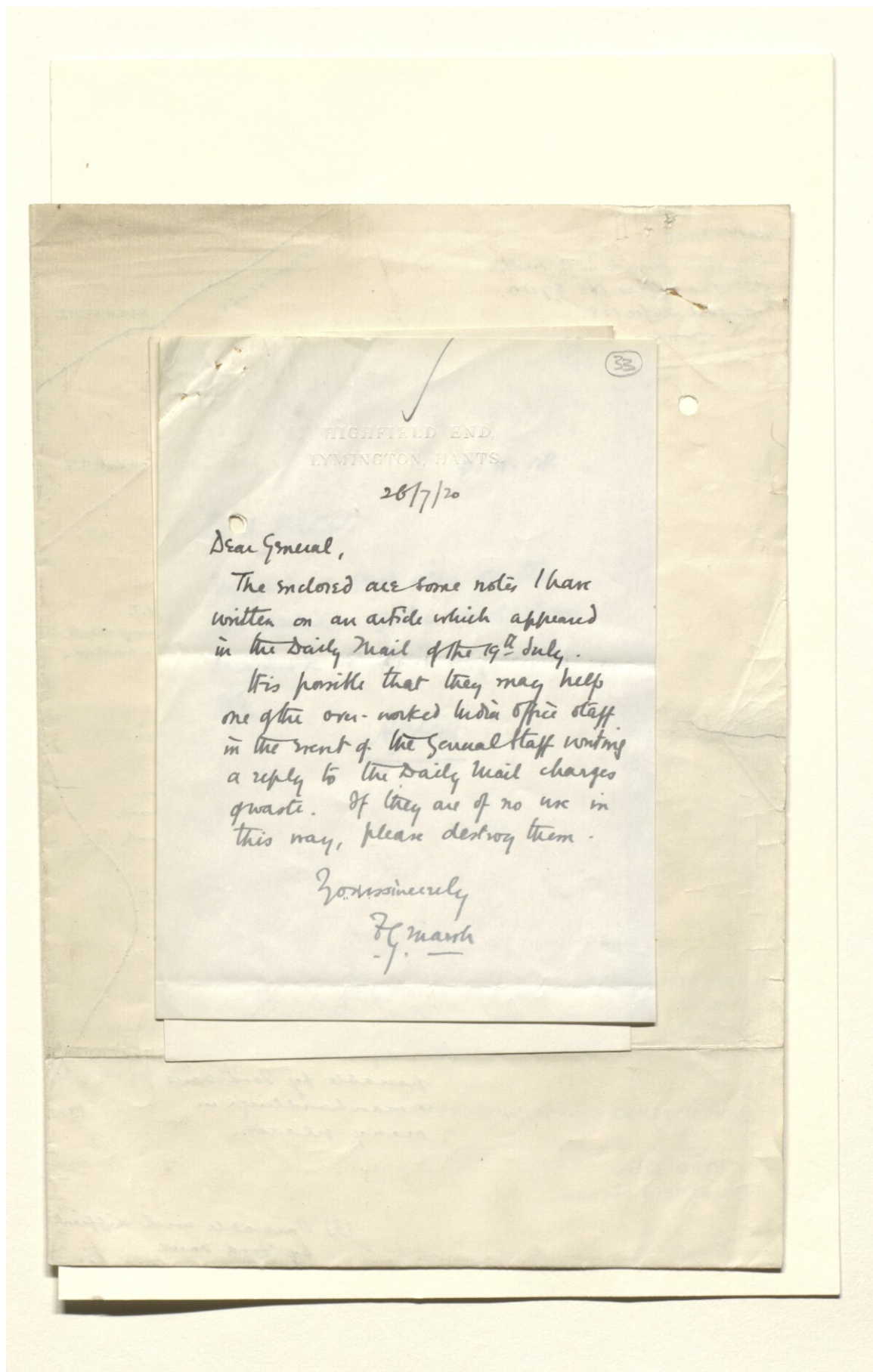
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A [It cannot be said that the force in East Persia was at any time employed in "repelling actual invasion of His Majesty's Indian possessions, as the ability of our armies to ~~be~~ invade India depended in the first instance upon the degree of success which attended their efforts against us in the main theatre of operations in Europe

(2) As regards the point raised at (B) the fact that the operations of our forces in East Persia were part of the Great War has been fully established when dealing with (A) & as such are clearly subject to the Resolutions of Parliament in 1914.

(3) Thus being the case it is suggested that it is quite unnecessary to resort to arbitration upon facts which are so self-evident.





HIGHFIELD END,
LYMINGTON, HANTS.

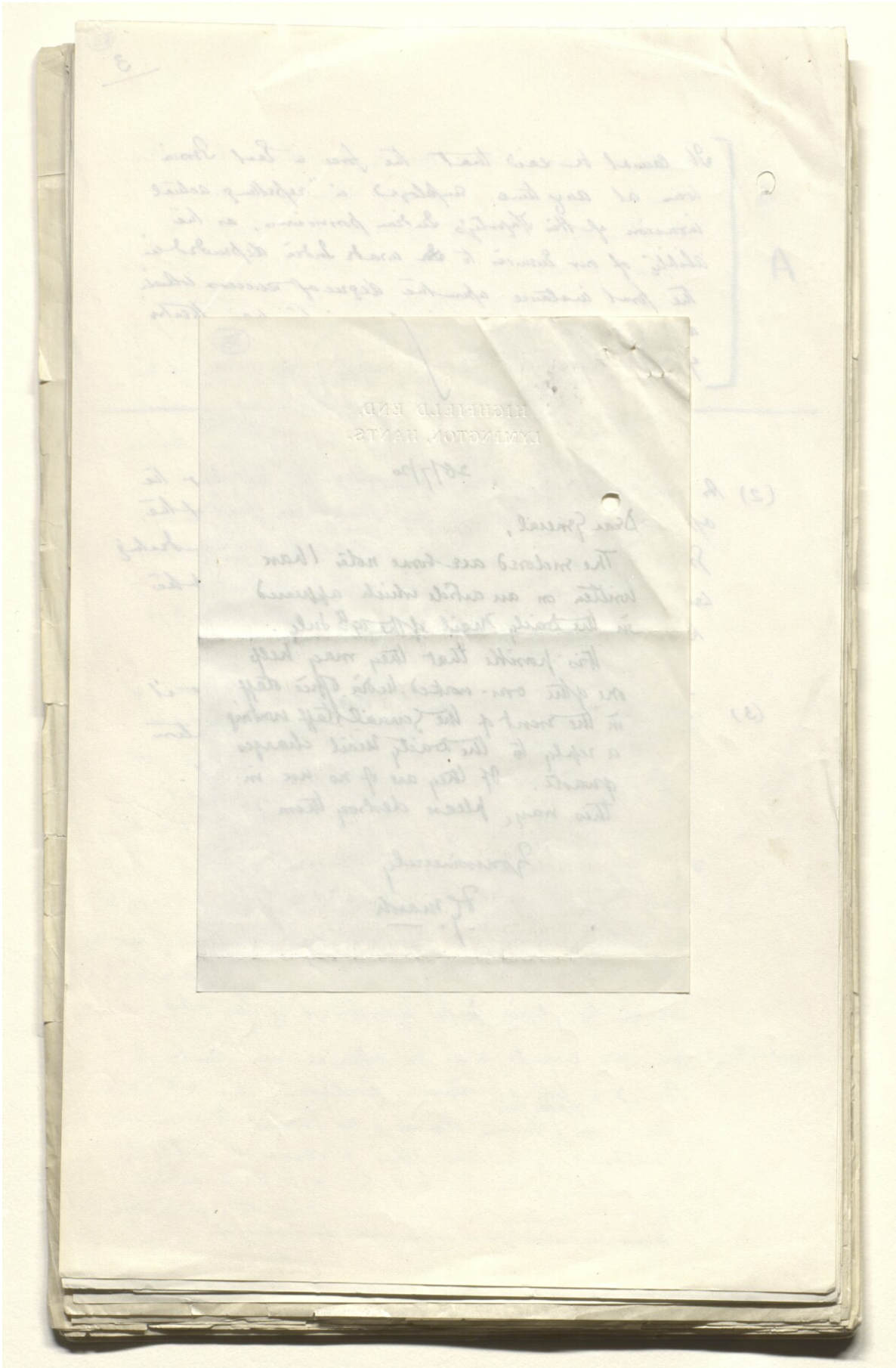
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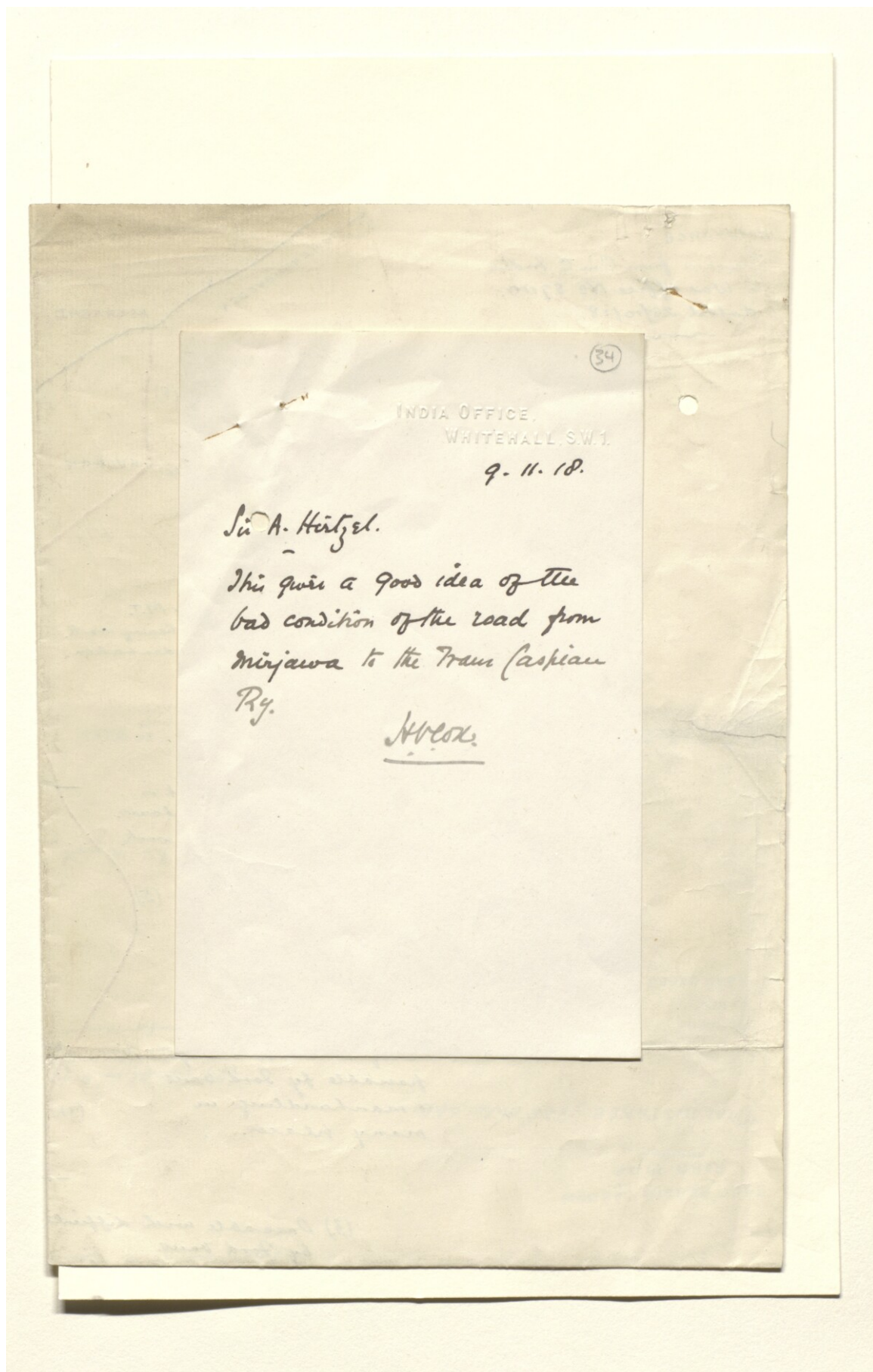
Dear General,

The enclosed are some notes I have written on an article which appeared in the Daily Mail of the 19th July.

It is possible that they may help one of the over-worked India Office staff in the event of the General Staff writing a reply to the Daily Mail charges of waste. If they are of no use in this way, please destroy them.

Yours sincerely
J.C. Marsh





INDIA OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, S.W. 1.

9. 11. 18.

Sir A. Hützel.

This gives a good idea of the
bad condition of the road from
Mirjawa to the Trans Caspian
Ry.

W. Cox.

