

STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY IN BRITISH INDIA UNDER MARQUIS WELLESLEY:
THE SECOND MARATHA WAR, 1802-1806

by

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Strategy and Diplomacy in British India Under

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ABSTRACT

The Second Maratha War, 1803-1806, led to a dramatic increase in British territory and influence in India. The traditional explanation of the cause of the war accepts that the Marathas posed an increasing military threat to the British Indian empire and that the Marquis Wellesley went to war when his negotiations for a peaceful settlement failed. It is also agreed that war against the Marathas was inevitable, if the British were to remain in India, because the costs of continually defending their position against the Marathas would exceed the benefits.

This thesis analyses British Indian diplomacy and strategy before and during the war to show that the war was not a response to a Maratha threat and that Wellesley wanted an opportunity for war to further his plan of empire-building. Particular attention is paid to the influence on British Indian policies of the private interests of Wellesley and the Anglo-Indians who backed him and how their false interpretations of the circumstances, made to justify their policies, have influenced historians' opinions of the cause and objectives of the war. In addition, an examination of the changes Wellesley made shortly before his departure from India in 1805 will show that, contrary to the accepted view that his policies were reversed by his successors, he had begun to abandon some of the policies he had claimed were necessary to protect the British from a Maratha threat. Wellesley's shift of policy was motivated, as his expansionist plan had been, by a desire for recognition in England for achievements in India.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my senior supervisor,
Professor Edward Ingram.

I consider the opportunity of studying under such
a scholar as the greatest privilege ever granted
to me.

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Abbreviations

Add. MSS	Additional Manuscripts, British Library
cd	court of directors of the East India Company
ggic	governor-general in council
gicB	governor in council at Bombay
IO	India Office Records, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections
MSS Eur.	European Manuscripts, India Office Library
NAM	National Army Museum, London
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
<u>PRC</u>	<u>English Records of Maratha History: Poona Residency Correspondence</u>
PRO	Public Record Office Manuscripts
Rylands	John Rylands University Library, Manchester
sc	secret committee of the East India Company
<u>Wellesley</u>	<u>The Despatches, Minutes, and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley, K.G., during his Administration in India</u>
<u>WD</u>	<u>The Dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington during his Various Campaigns from 1799-1818</u>
<u>WSD</u>	<u>Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington, K.G.</u>
WO	War Office Records, Public Record Office

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Chapter One

Introduction

Our wars have been almost always for the purpose of extending social improvement and good government...[and] the blessings of tranquillity and security of life and property...[and these] more than compensate for the rudeness of the process by which amelioration is usually affected.

J. H. Stocqueler¹

In the history of British empire-building in India, one name stands out--Richard, Marquis Wellesley,² governor-general of Bengal from 1798 to 1805. After military victory over Tipu Sultan in 1799 and political victories over the nizam of Hyderabad in 1800, and the nawab of Awadh and the nawab of the Carnatic in 1801, his most significant and difficult challenge came from the Maratha states. Their subjection was the final aggressive action he planned, bringing to an end the aggressive and acquisitive phase of his empire-building. Thereafter, he planned to conciliate the Indians, to persuade them to accept British paramountcy. The Second Maratha War was fought to an inconclusive end, however, and forced Wellesley to abandon his empire-building to save his career-building.

Wellesley justified the Second Maratha War on two grounds.

¹ J.H. Stocqueler, quoted in Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour, An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men 1974, Paperback, (London, 1986), pp. 166-7.

² Richard Colley Wellesley was the second earl of Mornington until 1799, but he will be referred to as Wellesley throughout this thesis.

The first--that the Marathas posed a threat to the British position in India--was made to forestall charges of aggrandizement. The second was his true reason: that the war would result in British paramountcy over the Indian states and stability could then be imposed on them. Few in Britain accepted his arguments for war, but those in India who stood to gain from it were happy to echo them.

In his volume of the New Cambridge History of India on Indian society and empire-building, C. A. Bayly points out that the stages and motivation of the British expansion in India are still unclear and that new studies are needed of the administrations of Wellesley and Earl Cornwallis, governor-general of Bengal and commander-in-chief in India from 1786 to 1793 and in 1805.³ This dissertation fills a gap in the historiography of British expansion by explaining the origins, course and results of the Second Maratha War. Why Wellesley was in India and what caused him to pursue the policies that he did, however, are explained by circumstances in the metropolis. Increasingly, military and imperial service provided opportunities for the aristocracy and gentry to maintain property and privilege at home and for them to make money in a manner compatible with the gentlemanly ideal.⁴ Wellesley took

³ C. A. Bayly, Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire, The New Cambridge History of India 2,1, paperback ed., (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 215, 217.

⁴ P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914 (Harlow, 1993), pp. 45-6.

advantage of the opportunity for career-building offered by service in India. This analysis of the strategy and diplomacy of the war, therefore, explains how far the war was a response to a Maratha threat and how far a vehicle for personal ambition.

Economic and strategic arguments dominate the historiography of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British territorial expansion in India.⁵ Bayly, in arguing against a commercial explanation of British expansion under Wellesley and the Marquis of Hastings, governor-general of Bengal 1813-1823, states that there was no dramatic shift in the composition of British exports or imports before the later 1820's. He suggests, on the other hand, that there was a continuity in the interests of the British "moneyocracy", as gentlemanly-capitalists remained concerned about the stability of the East India Company and the profits of world-wide commerce.⁶ Similarly, a recent study of British imperialism by P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins places British expansion in the context of metropolitan issues. They argue that imperialism is

⁵ Pamela Nightingale, Trade and Empire in Western India 1784-1806 (London, 1970); P.J. Marshall, "Economic and Political Expansion: The Case of Oudh," Modern Asian Studies 9 (1975): 465-82; Rudrangshu Mukherjee, "Trade and Empire in Awadh, 1765-1804," Past and Present 94 (1982): 85-102; J.S. Galbraith, "The 'Turbulent Frontier' as a Factor in British Expansion," Comparative Studies in Society and History 2 (1959-60): 150-68; G.J. Alder, "Britain and the Defence of India: The Origins of the Problem 1798-1815," Journal of Asian History 6 (1972): 14-44.

⁶ C.A. Bayly, Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830, paperback ed., (Harlow, 1989), pp. 106-7.

"an integral part of the configuration of British society," and that an examination of British expansion should consider the influences emanating from Britain. They emphasize the role of finance and services in British imperial expansion, arguing that the placing and security of investments played a more important role than the opening of markets for British goods. They suggest that the gentlemanly-capitalists in the City exerted political power.⁷

The aristocracy increasingly turned to the City to top off their income. By 1816, the second Marquis of Stafford held stocks worth £411,534. This rose to £1.1 million by 1833, which was probably greater than the income obtained from the family's landed estates.⁸ Some of the gentlemanly-capitalists held East India Company stock and were, therefore, concerned about the Company's affairs. The gentlemanly-capitalists, the Company officials and the King's ministers, were worried by 1797 about the position of the Company in a politically unstable India. All agreed that a firm but conciliatory man should go to India to succeed Sir John Shore and to impose stability on the Indian states. Cornwallis was asked but was reluctant to go. Henry Dundas, the secretary for war and the president of the board of control, was willing but he was unable to persuade the prime minister, William Pitt, to agree. Dundas was needed in London.

⁷ Cain and Hopkins, British Imperialism, p. 46, passim.

⁸ J. V. Beckett, The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914 (Oxford, 1986), pp. 86-7.

Pitt arranged with the Company officials for Cornwallis to go and appointed Wellesley as governor of Madras, with reversion to the governor-generalship, in case Cornwallis decided not to go. Lord Grenville, foreign secretary and Wellesley's friend, told Wellesley in July 1797 that Pitt's arrangement was "only another way of naming you to the Government General,"⁹ which succeeded when Cornwallis went to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant. Neither the gentlemanly-capitalists, the Company officials nor the King's ministers, however, determined Wellesley's plan of expansion. His empire-building was his own initiative.

Other studies suggest that actors at the periphery were behind the British expansion in India. Arguing that the man-on-the-spot influenced the decisions for expansion, M. E. Yapp, in his study of British Indian foreign policy, claims that the politicals, meaning the ministers, envoys, residents and political agents, selected and interpreted information for their superiors to suggest expansionist policies that were of benefit to the politicals' personal interests.¹⁰ Douglas M. Peers, in his work on the relationship between the army and the state in India, argues that security in British India depended on military prestige, which enabled the army to obtain first call

⁹ Grenville to Wellesley, 4 July 1797, Add. MSS 70927: fol. 3.

¹⁰ M.E. Yapp, Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850 (Oxford, 1980), pp. 9-10.

on the revenues.¹¹ Stig Förster supports this view. He argues that Wellesley, prior to his arrival in India, decided to extend indirect British control through diplomatic means and that Wellesley was simply the catalyst for expansion. Army officers, for personal advantage, were the driving force behind it.¹² A. S. Bennell, too, argues that Wellesley wanted a peaceful settlement with the Marathas and that the failure of diplomacy led to the war.¹³

A revisionist interpretation of the impetus behind Wellesley's expansion is provided by Edward Ingram, who suggests that Wellesley's empire-building was motivated by a desire for the fame that he thought was necessary for political advancement at home. To succeed, he had to persuade the Marathas to accept British paramountcy by one of three means. The first was to negotiate separate agreements with the principal states. The

¹¹ Douglas Mark Peers, "Between Mars and Mammon; The Military and the Political Economy of British India at the Time of the First Burma War, 1824-1826." Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1988. Peers, "Between Mars and Mammon; the East India Company and Efforts to Reform its Army, 1796-1832," Historical Journal 33 (1990): 385-401.

¹² Stig Förster, Die Mächtigen Diener der East India Company: Ursachen und Hintergründe der britischen Expansionspolitik in Südasiens, 1793-1819 (Stuttgart, 1992), pp. 132, 251. I thank Alexander Freund for translating Förster.

¹³ A. S. Bennell, "The Anglo-Maratha Confrontation of June and July 1803," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1962): 109; "The Anglo-Maratha War of 1803-5," Journal for the Society for Army Historical Research 63 (1985): 144; "The Road to Poonah," In East India Company Studies: Papers Presented to Professor Sir Cyril Philips, eds. Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison, (Hong Kong, 1986), p. 185; "Arthur Wellesley as Political Agent: 1803," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1987): 276.

second was to place troops on the southern frontier of Awadh and the northern frontier of Hyderabad to intimidate them. The third, preferred by Wellesley, was to bring all of the powers, Tipu Sultan excepted, into a general alliance. Ingram argues that Wellesley created challenges to the British in India to justify his empire-building.¹⁴ This study checks Ingram's argument, using the Second Maratha War as a test case. The roles of the politicals and the army are studied to determine the extent of their influence and the diplomatic negotiations with the Marathas are examined to test the widely-held assumption that Wellesley wanted a diplomatic settlement with them, not war.

During the expansionist phase of Wellesley's empire-building, the military and the politicals were pulling in the same direction as he was. When he suffered from one of his "strange spells of idleness and lethargy,"¹⁵ they continued to apply his policies. It was the Home officials that needed to be convinced. Cornwallis commented in December 1803 that:

Whatever ideas Lord Wellesley may entertain of the extension of our territories, or of those under our influence and protection, ... I think he could not easily have found a more convenient neighbour on his northern frontier than the Maratha State...which by good management we might easily keep in order, by

¹⁴ Edward Ingram, Commitment to Empire: Prophecies of the Great Game in Asia 1797-1800 (Oxford, 1981), p. 121; Edward Ingram, Britain's Persian Connection, 1798-1828: Prelude to the Great Game in Asia (Oxford, 1992), p. 29.

¹⁵ C. H. Philips, The Young Wellington in India, The Creighton Lecture in History, 1972, (London, 1973).

making a prudent use of their intestine jealousies and quarrels.¹⁶

Wellesley, however, had more ambitious plans for the Marathas. He obtained subsidiary alliances with two of the five principal Maratha chieftains. Then, confident that the remaining three would not confederate, he planned to go to war with two of them, Daulat Rao Sindhia and the raja of Berar, to obtain the large cessions of territory necessary for his empire-building.

Wellesley achieved a number of successes in his empire-building during the first four years of his administration. The conquest of Mysore in 1799 cut it off from the sea and gave the Company territories that supplied the British army in the Deccan during the Second Maratha War. He obtained subsidiary alliances with the nizam of Hyderabad in 1798 and 1800 that removed the French officers from the nizam's army and gave Wellesley the use of his subsidiary force. In 1801 Wellesley negotiated a new subsidiary alliance with the nawab of Awadh which provided for a cession of fertile territory, that was also of strategic value, to pay for the subsidiary force.

A new ideology of imperialism provided Wellesley with the moral justification for a policy of expansion. P. J. Marshall argues that a new ideology of empire was developing in Britain during the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries, which reinterpreted the British role in Asia. The view that the

¹⁶ Cornwallis to Ross, 18 Dec. 1803, Marquis Cornwallis, Correspondence of First Marquis Cornwallis, ed. Charles Ross, 3 vols. (London, 1859), III: 508-10.

acquisition of empire in India led to corruption and the decline of the mother country changed to the belief that the influence of a progressive European civilization would prove beneficial to stagnant Asian despotisms.¹⁷

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century political thought assumed that cultures attained civilization by stages.¹⁸ The British considered European society to be at a higher level than Indian society, which led them to the notion that British rule in India was progressive. Vincent Harlow defines the new ideology as liberal imperialism, the result of an increasing concern for the welfare of the subjects of the British empire. Bayly disagrees, stating that the new imperial ideology was less liberalism than pragmatic conservatism designed to maintain the British position. Bayly sees the creation of despotic governments throughout the British empire as a trend, arguing that "the British empire from 1780 to 1830...represented...a series of attempts to establish overseas despotisms" which were "characterised by a form of aristocratic military government supporting a viceregal autocracy...." Bayly suggests this was accomplished in the Indian empire during Wellesley's

¹⁷ P.J. Marshall, "British Assessments of the Dutch in Asia in the Age of Raffles," in P.J. Marshall et al eds. India and Indonesia During the Ancien Regime (Leiden, 1988), p. 1; P.J. Marshall, "A Free Though Conquering People: Britain and Asia in the Eighteenth Century." Inaugural lecture, Rhodes Chair of Imperial History, King's College, London, 5 Mar. 1981.

¹⁸ J.W. Burrow, Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought (Oxford, 1988), p. 116; Bayly, Imperial Meridian, p. 7.

administration with his creation of a paternalistic despotism.¹⁹

Wellesley claimed that an all-India paternalistic despotism was necessary to impose stability on the Indian states. The resulting improvement of Indian society, by securing the rights of property, would attach the Indian people to the British government and provide an alternative to rule by the sword. Wellesley thought that the Indians would accept British paramountcy after a period of progressive British rule, whereas relying indefinitely on military prestige would fail owing to the cost. Wellesley's plan of empire-building, therefore, consisted of two phases. The first was aggressive and acquisitive. In the second, by the conciliation of Indians and the settlement of the conquered territories, he tried to form his empire into an all-India benevolent despotism.

Although Wellesley intended his conquests and annexations to bring peace to India through British paramountcy, his ultimate aim was an English marquissate. Wellesley, like all Anglo-Indians,²⁰ went to India to improve his personal

¹⁹ Vincent Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-1793 (London, 1952), "The New Imperial System, 1783-1815," Cambridge History of the British Empire, ed. J. Holland Rose et al., II, The Growth of the New Empire; Bayly, Imperial Meridian, pp. 8, 106, 209, 236. See also, Martha McLaren, "From Analysis to Prescription: Scottish Concepts of Asian Despotism in Early Nineteenth-Century British India," International History Review 15 (1993), pp. 469-501.

²⁰ Anglo-Indian here means a Briton in India. Those of mixed British and Indian parentage will be termed Anglo-Eurasian throughout this study.

circumstances. The Wellesleys, who were newly ennobled Anglo-Irish, lacked both influence and wealth; Richard Wellesley's pursuit of both depended on his school friend, Lord Grenville, and Grenville's cousin, William Pitt. Through their patronage he received one of the most lucrative postings in the British empire at £25,000 per annum.²¹ Arthur Wellesley, the future duke of Wellington, was already serving with the King's army in India, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, when Richard arrived in 1798. Henry, their youngest brother, accompanied Richard as his private secretary, although he returned to Britain in 1802 before the outbreak of the Second Maratha War. The opportunity given to Richard would improve the finances and advance the careers of all three brothers, although Richard received only an Irish marquissate for his services after the defeat of Tipu Sultan and not the English title he hoped for. He never gave up hope of further recognition. By 1840 he had raised his goal to a dukedom.

The civil servants and the army backed Wellesley because his wars and annexations of territory opened opportunities for career advancement²² and prize money, although they faced perils

²¹ John Cannon argues against Harold Perkins' claim of an open aristocracy, stating that opportunities were obtained through opportune marriages or a network of school friends. John Cannon, Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge, 1984); Peers, "British India," p. 28.

²² See Martha McLaren, "Writing and Making History, Thomas Munro, John Malcolm and Mountstuart Elphinstone: Three Scotsmen in the History and Historiography of British India," Ph.D. dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1992.

as well as opportunities. Some were made scapegoats for failure. Lieutenant-General Gerard Lake, the commander-in-chief in India, was nearing the end of his military career when he was appointed in October 1800 and given the chance of a fortune through the commander-in-chief's large share of any prize money. The financial and career advancements of the Anglo-Indians during the Second Maratha War, however, were planned at the expense of Indian independence.

The Marathas, Hindus of the western Deccan in central India, were the last strong Indian states that Wellesley intended to bring under British control. The expansion of the Maratha state began under Shivaji and, at his death in 1680, he left an extensive empire. The British described the Maratha empire as different things at different times: sometimes as a union of chieftains, possessing territory and power, who acknowledged the peshwa of Poona as their nominal head; sometimes they portrayed the peshwa as the real head of government, and the others as powerful officers. At times it suited Wellesley's purpose to use the second definition for the benefit of the Home officials, either to stress the danger to the British of the confederated armies, or to describe Sindhia and the raja of Berar as rebels disturbing the tranquillity of India. Lastly, he sometimes treated the leading Maratha chieftains as heads of independent states to enable him to negotiate separate treaties with each of them.

The political affairs of the Indian states were in a

constant state of flux,²³ and authority within the Maratha empire passed first to the raja of Satara, and then to his chief minister, the peshwa, who resided at Poona. The peshwa's power gradually declined, due to the state-building efforts of his chieftains and his inability to obtain the military services owing to him under the terms of his revenue assignments. The decline of the peshwa's power was apparent when Mahadji Sindhia of Gwalior and Ujjain was appointed guarantor of the 1782 treaty of Salbye that ended the First Maratha War between the Company and the Marathas during Warren Hastings' administration. Upon Mahadji's death, his nephew Daulat Rao Sindhia assumed this role. He was residing at Poona, trying to dominate the peshwa, when Wellesley arrived in India. Jaswant Rao Holkar of Indore, another of the Maratha chieftains, had increased his status in the Maratha empire and was attempting to replace Sindhia as the foremost influence on the peshwa, who was acknowledged by the Marathas as the nominal head of their empire. The raja of Berar was also ambitious to increase his influence at Poona, but stood aside when Holkar fought the peshwa and Sindhia in 1802. The gaekwar of Baroda, the fifth major Maratha chieftain, sought British aid in a succession dispute and accepted a subsidiary treaty in July 1802.

Wellesley planned to take advantage of the disunity in the

²³ Dirk H.A. Kolff, "The End of an Ancien Regime: Colonial War in India, 1798-1818," in Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asian and Africa, eds. J.A. deMoor and H.L. Wesseling, (Leiden, 1989), pp. 22-49.

Maratha empire to bring all the major Indian states into his system of subsidiary alliances. Under these alliances the Company provided its allies with troops in return for cessions of territory or subsidies to pay for them. Wellesley did not originate the idea of the subsidiary alliance, but he developed it into "a potent system for the infiltration of British supremacy."²⁴ As he intended to obtain control over the Indian states' external relations, he hoped that the British resident, backed by the subsidiary force stationed nearby, would provide an effective symbol and, if necessary, instrument of power. Wellesley's Maratha policy was criticized, however, by the Home officials, who predicted that increased British interference in Maratha affairs, rather than providing tranquillity, would draw the British deeper into the Marathas' local disputes.

Wellesley was subject to the orders of the East India Company's court of directors, as the government of India was under the Company's jurisdiction. In turn, Pitt's India Act of 1784 provided for the supervision of the court of directors by a board of commissioners, appointed by the Crown. Under the act, the court of directors retained control of the patronage and the commercial affairs of the Company and the authority to appoint the governor-general of Bengal, the governors of Madras and Bombay and the commanders-in-chief of the Company's three presidency armies. Both the King's ministers and the court of directors held the right of recall.

²⁴ P. E. Roberts, India Under Wellesley, (London, 1929), p. 34.

The strong support of at least one party at home was necessary for a successful governor-generalship. Wellesley initially received the support of Dundas and persisted in following policies contrary to his instructions from the court of directors under the assumption that the King's ministers would continue to support him.²⁵ When they ceased to do so, he reversed some of his earlier decisions and, at the same time, moved into the second conciliatory phase of his empire-building, in a final bid to gain fame.

In addition, the act of 1784 gave the governor-general of Bengal increased authority over the subordinate presidencies.²⁶ On his arrival in India, Wellesley attempted to remove from government all those who opposed him, sending critical comments to Dundas about the senior officials. Wellesley complained extensively about Josiah Webbe, secretary to government at Madras, and, to a lesser extent, about Lieutenant-Colonel Barry Close, adjutant-general at Madras, who, although able, were obstructing his views. As proficient men were scarce and Webbe was considered "one of the best informed, most able, most quick in business, and most honest" of men in India and Close was thought to be "by far the ablest man in the army of Madras" and

²⁵ C.H. Philips, The East India Company 1784-1834 1940, rpt. (Manchester, 1968), p. 300.

²⁶ The government of Bengal is known as the Supreme government.

"a man of extraordinary general knowledge and talents,"²⁷ Wellesley used their services once they realized that it was in their best interests to cooperate with him. Wellesley was aware that he was "being toad eaten by all India from Cabul to Assam"²⁸ for the patronage he dispensed, which delighted him, but the choice postings went to those who were not only willing but were most able to achieve his goals.

Once Wellesley knew that his subordinates were capable, he told them his objectives and allowed them considerable freedom of action. His delegation of military and political authority to Arthur Wellesley and General Lake in 1803, however, went beyond the limits set by the constitution of the government of India. Also unconstitutional was his habit of conducting the government outside of the Bengal council, done partly because the meetings bored him and partly to keep the discussions out of the minutes. Therefore, the court of directors would not receive a copy. A further means Wellesley used to withhold information was to conduct official business through private correspondence. Much important official business, during the Second Maratha War, was carried on through private correspondence between Wellesley's private secretary, Major Merrick Shawe, and those in the field. In addition, Wellesley

²⁷ Wellesley to Dundas, secret and confidential, 1, 6 Oct. 1798, 31 July 1799, Two Views of British India, The Private Correspondence of Mr. Dundas and Lord Wellesley: 1798-1801, ed. Edward Ingram, (Bath, 1970), pp. 67, 86, 167.

²⁸ Wellesley to Pitt, private, 8 Aug. 1799, PRO 30/8/188/1: 87.

used the lengthy communication time between Britain and India, at least five months by sea or three and a half months by the more costly land route, as an excuse to avoid compliance with orders from home he disliked. He claimed that they were outdated by the time they arrived.

Wellesley spent large sums of the Company's money without authorization. Beatrice L. Frazer suggests that he was an actor who believed in a show of power.²⁹ He built a new government house at Calcutta costing £170,000, and its impressive grandeur has been explained as a conscious undertaking with a view to its political effect.³⁰ Wellesley's "grande manière,"³¹ however, went beyond the usual display of pomp that the British supposed Indians expected of their rulers. His ostentation was a product of his vanity and, at great expense to the Company, he indulged in a show of grandeur that was considered excessive by both his detractors and his supporters. The earl of Liverpool recognized that: [Lord Wellesley] is a great compound, and if one is to have the use of him it must be by making as little as possible of some of his absurdities...a man may be wise in some things

²⁹ Beatrice L. Frazer, "The Constitutional Relations of the Marquess Wellesley with the Home Authorities," M.A. dissertation, Liverpool University, 1917, Appendix: "Alleges Increase of Expense in carrying on the Government," p. 1.

³⁰ Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, British Government in India: The Story of the Viceroys and Government Houses, 2 vols. (London, 1925), I: 47; Thomas R. Metcalf, An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj (Berkeley, 1989), p. 13.

³¹ Eric Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India (Oxford, 1963), p. 10.

and most foolish in others."³²

Wellesley's vanity led him to strengthen the authority of the Supreme government and turn it into an autocracy. He enforced his authority over the governors of the subordinate presidencies and asked for an extension of this power to include the King's forces in India. Wellesley did not receive a naval commission, but obtained an appointment as captain-general of the army.³³

These British forces in India consisted of the King's army and the Company armies, one at each of the three presidencies.³⁴ Each presidency had its own commander-in-chief, with the Bengal commander-in-chief holding overall authority. The Company armies consisted of both European and Indian troops (sepoys), with a ratio in 1804 of one European to seven Indians. The British claimed the ratio was too low because they did not trust the sepoys fully and thought they needed Europeans to set an example of disciplined combat. During the Second Maratha War the British had a larger cavalry force than in any previous Indian war as they adapted to the need for greater mobility to pursue the Indian cavalry.

The British often had to devise plans to overcome a shortage of British troops. The subsidiary alliances provided

³² Liverpool to Arbuthnot, 2 Oct. 1823, The Correspondence of Charles Arbuthnot, ed. A. Aspinall, (London, 1941), p. 45.

³³ Commission, 7 Aug. 1800, Wellesley, II: 466.

³⁴ In this work, the term "British troops" will refer to both armies or a combination of the two.

extra troops at the Indian states' expense, while diplomatic efforts and bribes were used to obtain either the support or neutrality of various Indian chieftains or their ministers. In 1803 the number of British troops in India was approximately 102,513³⁵ and about 60,000 of them could take to the field. As the casualty and sickness rate was high during campaigns, this was a small force to cover its duties during the Second Maratha War. It was necessary, therefore, for the British to present an image of power that exceeded their actual force. They frequently played a role with the intention of influencing Indian perceptions of their power.

This preoccupation with the image of power prevented Wellesley's successors, Lord Cornwallis and, after his death in 1805, Sir George Barlow, from returning the Company to its prewar position. It was always important to the British that they send Indians the correct signals and the army, in particular, argued that retrenchment would be seen as weakness, not moderation. One Bengal army officer, Lieutenant James Young, rightfully noted that Wellesley's ambition was "to immortalize by conquest the period of his administration in India," but added that, whatever the reason for expansion, the British were unlikely to relinquish any territory.³⁶

³⁵ Military statements, 1803, IO L/MIL/8/13; L/MIL/8/76; L/MIL/8/160.

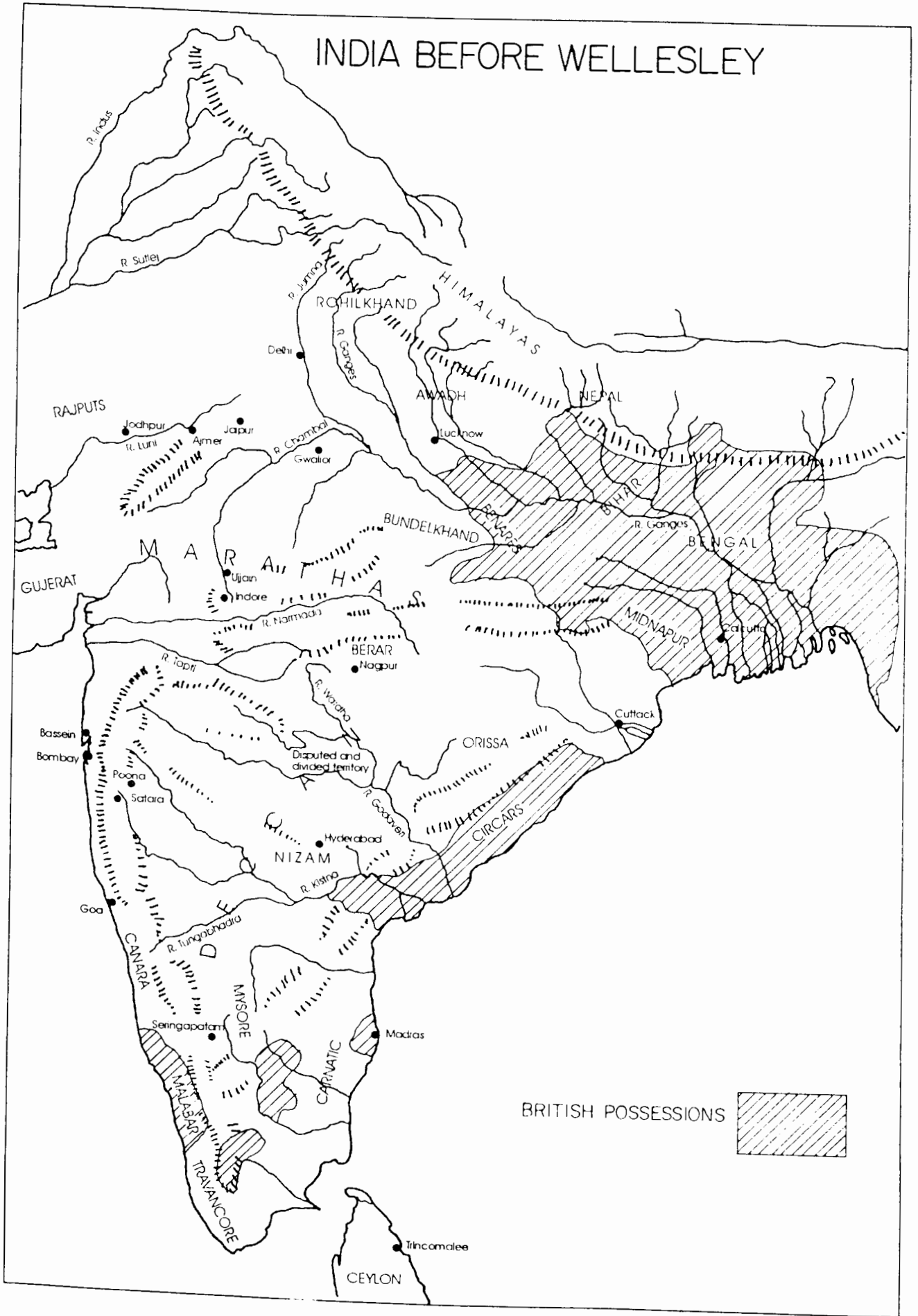
³⁶ James Young, The Second Maratha War: The Diaries of James Young An Officer in the Bengal Artillery, ed. D.D. Khanna, (New Delhi, 1990), p. 113.

Contemporary accounts of the Second Maratha War stressed the new regularity of the Europeanized Maratha armies and claimed they posed a threat to the British. The war, therefore, is presented as a response to a threat that Wellesley first attempted to overcome by diplomatic means. Wellesley's bid for fame rested on the success of his empire-building and the Maratha states' acceptance of British paramountcy was essential for him to achieve success. A main aspect of this study, therefore, will be to determine if personal interests influenced the decision for war.

James Young had no doubt that Wellesley was driven by ambition. "Everything has been disregarded by him...to serve one single object," he remarked as Wellesley prepared to leave India in 1805, "his ambition--his personal ambition."³⁷

³⁷ Young, Diary, 3 June 1805, p. 182.

INDIA BEFORE WELLESLEY



Chapter Two

From the Treaty of Bassein to the Outbreak of War, 1802-1803

War may be made by one party only and best, when the other is averse to it. Peace must be the work of both.

Warren Hastings¹

This chapter examines Marquis Wellesley's initial efforts to regulate the affairs of the Maratha empire in order to illustrate the way in which the Anglo-Indians' pursuit of fame and fortune influenced British policy. It will show how the British portrayed the Marathas as instigators, not victims, of the Second Maratha War. The rivalries within the Maratha empire opened the way for British intervention and resulted in the treaty of Bassein, made with Peshwa Bajji Rao II in 1802.

The success of Wellesley's empire-building depended on the ceaseless rivalries within the Maratha empire after the death of Peshwa Madhavrao I in 1772. His weak successors were unable to stop the state-building of their subordinates, who became more powerful than their titular overlord. Burton Stein shows the importance of military fiscalism--the willingness of a centralizing state to give the army first claim on the revenues--to the Indian state-building, as it increased the revenues available for enlarging and modernizing the army. The British

¹ Warren Hastings to Scott, 7 Dec. 1782, quoted in Sailendra Nath Sen, Anglo-Maratha Relations During the Administration of Warren Hastings, 1772-1785 (Calcutta, 1961), p. 212.

claimed that this Mughal-style state-building was anarchy.² Before Wellesley could impose stability by creating a British despotism, he had to weaken the stronger Maratha rulers, Sindhia and the raja of Berar, by taking substantial territory from them. This could be done only by defeating them in war. But first, Wellesley had to bring the peshwa, Baji Rao II, into his subsidiary alliance system. C. A. Bayly argues that the Maratha states, which were "adapting their fiscal and military organisation to confront the power of the Company," posed an increasing military threat. He claims that Wellesley negotiated the treaty of Bassein with the peshwa to eliminate this threat, as he thought that the peshwa was the head of the Maratha empire and his subordinate chieftains would follow him into Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system.³

This assessment of Wellesley's view of the Maratha empire is mistaken. Wellesley and his subordinates thought the Marathas would not overcome their differences and present a united challenge to the growing Company power. In Wellesley's opinion, the Maratha empire had no cohesive authority that was capable of "wielding the united force of the whole body."⁴ Captain Thomas Munro argued in 1796 that the Marathas were not a threat to the Company, because "the interests of their leaders

² Burton Stein, "State Formation and Economy Reconsidered," Modern Asian Studies 19 (1985): 392-3; Bayly, Indian Society, p. 99.

³ Ibid., pp. 80, 98, 101.

⁴ Wellesley to Dundas, 28 Feb. 1798, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 33.

are so various, that we should never find much difficulty in creating a division among them." In 1800 the Persian translator, later political secretary to the Supreme government, Neil Edmonstone, expressed his view that, with Mysore's defeat, "the only power capable of molesting us exists no more....From the Marathas we have nothing to fear."⁵ When the Marathas claimed that they had formed a confederation in 1803, Arthur Wellesley doubted that they would ever unite to challenge the Company, a fact "well known to every body."⁶ Nevertheless, to strengthen his argument that the Marathas were a threat, Wellesley told the Home officials that the peshwa was the head of the government and the other chieftains were merely his powerful officers in order to portray the power of the Maratha empire as the sum total of all their forces.

The British, however, never doubted the superiority of their own forces. The strength of the Maratha armies, in the mid-1700's, rested on their numerous cavalry and their ability to avoid pitched-battles, which prevented decisive blows being directed against them.⁷ By the time Wellesley arrived in India, the Marathas were Europeanizing their armies, emphasizing artillery and infantry instead of cavalry. The British thought

⁵ Munro to father, 30 Sept. 1796, The Life of Maj-Gen. Sir Thomas Munro, ed. Rev. G.R. Gleig, 3 vols. (London, 1830), III: 103; N.B. Edmonstone to C. Edmonstone, 19 Jan. 1800, Elmore MSS Add. 7616.

⁶ A. Wellesley to Collins, 29 June 1803, WSD, IV: 124-5.

⁷ J. Talboys Wheeler, Summary of the Affairs of the Mahratta States 1627 to 1856 (Calcutta, 1878), p. 12.

that their artillery and infantry were superior to the Marathas' and, because the Marathas had neglected their cavalry, they would be unequal to the British forces in a pitched-battle.

Nevertheless, it was necessary for Wellesley to invent a danger from the Marathas to justify his empire-building. He could then claim that the treaty of Bassein was defensive as it was necessary to meet a French threat and anticipate a hostile Maratha confederacy. The alliance with the peshwa, however, served Wellesley's expansionist policy as it extended the Company's territories and influence and offered a means of achieving further gains. Wellesley expected the Marathas to challenge the alliance and, to justify attacking them, he planned to claim their protest revealed their hostile intentions. The terms of peace would give extensive cessions of territories to the Company that could only be obtained by war.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PESHWA

Wellesley took more than four years to obtain a subsidiary alliance with the peshwa, who drew out the negotiations in typical Maratha style. The peshwa responded to Wellesley's offers with counter-offers that he knew Wellesley would refuse, prolonging the negotiations to keep open the option of British military aid while, at the same time, avoiding a commitment. The peshwa was weakened by the independence of the chieftains in his southern territories north of the frontier with Mysore,

including the strong Patwardan family who favoured Amrut Rao, the peshwa's brother. The peshwa would not conciliate them by bringing Amrut Rao into his government because he was jealous of Amrut Rao's popularity and defensive of his own position.

Wellesley made his first overture in July 1798 when he offered the peshwa a force from Bombay, provided that he paid it and excluded all Frenchmen from his state.⁸ One objective of this offer was to alarm Sindhia so he would leave Poona. The Company could then fill the vacuum and control the peshwa, and his subsidiary force would be available for Company use at his expense. Wellesley insisted that the peshwa agree to the Company's arbitration of his external affairs, prior to his obtaining the force, to prevent him from involving it in the internal quarrels of the Maratha empire, while leaving Wellesley with the option of doing so.

Although the peshwa wanted to be free of Sindhia's domination, he refused Wellesley's offer, as he knew that he would come under the Company's control. Colonel William Palmer, the British resident at Poona, told Wellesley that the peshwa's minister, Govinda Krishna Kale, was responsible for the peshwa's refusal and that an alliance could not be obtained until Nana Fadnavis, his former minister, was reinstated.⁹ Nana had been confined since December 1797, at Sindhia's urging, who claimed

⁸ Wellesley to Palmer, 8 July 1798, Wellesley, I: 118.

⁹ Pranjal Kumar Bhattacharyya, British Residents at Poona 1786-1818 (Calcutta, 1984), pp. 124, 127.

that Nana was supporting an uprising by some of Mahadji Sindhia's widows. Palmer's true opinion was that Wellesley was pursuing objectives which "everyone informed of the character of the Maratha [Government] would have known to be unattainable."¹⁰

Nana was released to replace Kale as the peshwa's chief minister in October 1798. During the Third Mysore War, Nana had obtained "a maximum of reward" from a "minimum of assistance" by joining Cornwallis against Tipu Sultan,¹¹ and the peshwa hoped Nana would repeat his success. When Wellesley forced Tipu Sultan into war in February 1799, claiming that Tipu was planning an alliance with the French hostile to the Company, Nana urged the peshwa not to delay in sending troops. The peshwa procrastinated, however, and therefore denied himself an automatic share of Tipu's territories when the war ended in May 1799, following Tipu's death in battle. This gave Wellesley the opportunity to bargain. Wellesley installed a puppet government over a rump state of Mysore and divided the remainder between the Company and the nizam. He told the peshwa that, although he was not entitled to any of the conquered territories, he would receive a share if he accepted an alliance.¹² He was not to be "solicited as a matter of favour to receive the Bombay detachment [but] on the contrary," he was to acknowledge it as

¹⁰ Palmer to Hastings, 10 July 1801, Add. MSS 29178: fol. 61.

¹¹ Roberts, India Under Wellesley, p. 187.

¹² Wellesley to Palmer, 23 May 1799, Wellesley, II: 14.

a favour granted by Wellesley.¹³ The subsidiary alliance was not a bargain between equals, but a benefit bestowed by a benevolent patron upon a client.

As the peshwa did not need British protection and the share of Mysore offered to him was in disorder, he thought the territories not worth Wellesley's price. He made a counter proposal on 1 July. Aware that Wellesley wanted him to acknowledge that he was not entitled to a share in the partition, he stipulated that he was to receive an equal share. As he expected, Wellesley would not negotiate "under any admission of his right to an equal, or any, share."¹⁴ Negotiations continued, with the peshwa insisting on his right to an equal share while also refusing to exclude the French from his territories, terms he knew Wellesley would refuse.¹⁵ His procrastination allowed him to avoid an alliance without having to refuse Wellesley's offer outright.

Although Nana was adept at manipulating the British, his position at Poona was tenuous. The peshwa resented his power. To bolster his position, Nana wooed Palmer by convincing him that he was trying to persuade the peshwa of the advantages of an alliance with the Company.¹⁶ In fact, he opposed the

¹³ Wellesley to Palmer, 19 Feb. 1799, Add. MSS 13596: fol. 41.

¹⁴ Wellesley to Palmer, 4 July 1799, Wellesley, II: 69.

¹⁵ Palmer to Wellesley, 17 Aug. 1799, IO H/575: fol. 201; R. D. Choksey, A History of British Diplomacy at the Court of the Peshwas (1786-1818) (Poona, 1951), p. 263.

¹⁶ Palmer to Hastings, 10 July 1801, Add. MSS 29178: fol. 61.

admission of a subsidiary force to Poona as he viewed the Company with alarm.¹⁷ He placed the blame for the peshwa's refusal on Sindhia.¹⁸ Palmer passed on Nana's explanation, telling Wellesley that although the negotiations had broken down because the peshwa, under Sindhia's influence, had "never been sincere in his negotiations," Nana was not implicated.¹⁹

When Nana died in March 1800, Palmer claimed that "with him departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government."²⁰ As Wellesley accepted Palmer's attribution of responsibility to Sindhia, he thought that Nana's death would increase Sindhia's influence at Poona. Negotiations were reopened in April 1800 in an attempt to place a Company force in the peshwa's territories and to ensure, by force if necessary, Sindhia's return to Malwa.²¹ Wellesley thought that the obstacles that stood in the way of an agreement could be overcome "with firmness, activity, address and prudent management."²² In spite of Wellesley's optimism, however, Palmer again failed to obtain a treaty, telling Wellesley that

¹⁷ James Grant Duff, A History of the Mahrattas 3 vols. (Calcutta, 1912), III: 188.

¹⁸ Palmer to Wellesley, 17 Aug. 1799, IO H/575: fol. 201.

¹⁹ Choksey, British Diplomacy, pp. 263-4.

²⁰ Quoted in Roberts, India Under Wellesley, p. 187.

²¹ Wellesley to Duncan, 12 Apr. 1800, secret, Add. MSS 13693: fol. 48.

²² W. Kirkpatrick to Palmer, 12 Apr. 1800, Add. MSS 13596: fol. 80.

the peshwa would not accept the Company's protection until faced with "unavoidable and imminent destruction."²³

Although Palmer failed at Poona, Captain James Kirkpatrick, the resident at Hyderabad, succeeded in obtaining a preliminary revision of the subsidiary treaty negotiated with the nizam in 1798. Wellesley, who sought a triple alliance with the nizam and the peshwa, now decided to approach the peshwa through the nizam,²⁴ partly to use the nizam as an Indian counterweight to Sindhia and partly because he had lost confidence in Palmer. Arthur, too, questioned Palmer's ability, but wondered in August 1800, whether Sindhia's influence at Poona "was too great for us."²⁵

The success of the negotiations at Hyderabad should not be attributed to Kirkpatrick's greater skill as a negotiator. The nizam and his ministers merely wished to increase the gains they had made in 1798. Ingram argues that the nizam saw the treaty of 1798 as an opportunity to use British power for his own purposes at the expense of Tipu Sultan.²⁶ The new treaty brought him protection from the Marathas.

In August 1800 the peshwa, fearful of Sindhia, offered to accept the subsidiary force temporarily, but Wellesley insisted that:

²³ Palmer to Wellesley, 16 June 1800, IO H/576: fol. 176.

²⁴ ggcic to sc, 9 June 1800, Wellesley, II: 272.

²⁵ A. Wellesley to Munro, 20 Aug. 1800, WD, I: 209.

²⁶ Ingram, Commitment to Empire, p. 149.

The permanency of the subsidiary force is...a point of the utmost importance to the interests of the British Government and constitutes the fundamental article of the Governor-General's plan of policy with regard to the Maratha State. A temporary arrangement...might answer his [the peshwa's] purposes, but would rather embarrass than promote the views of the British Government.²⁷

The peshwa wanted only temporary help against Sindhia, which Wellesley was unwilling to give. When the peshwa refused the counter-offer of a triple alliance, negotiations were broken off in October. Sindhia left Poona the following month, as Jaswant Rao Holkar was plundering his territories in Malwa and defeated a detachment of his army near Ujjain, his capital. Sindhia's departure from Poona weakened, rather than strengthened the peshwa. The peshwa reopened negotiations at the end of November 1801. He feared political isolation, as Sindhia and the raja of Berar had offered the nizam a coalition.²⁸ The peshwa offered territories in northern India to pay for a Company force of six battalions, provided it was stationed in Company territory and available when the peshwa needed it.²⁹

Wellesley thought the peshwa was engaged in "illusory" negotiations, trying to intimidate Sindhia and Holkar without sacrificing his independence by admitting a Company force permanently to his territory. In addition, the peshwa did not

²⁷ W. Kirkpatrick to Palmer, 7 Sept. 1800, Add. MSS 13596: fol. 171.

²⁸ Bhattacharyya, Residents at Poona, p. 166.

²⁹ Pratul Chandra Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company 1796-1818, 2nd ed., (Bombay, 1964), p. 68.

specify the territories he intended to cede in lieu of a subsidy. As Indian states had no defined borders, frequently the revenue rights to the territories adjacent to the frontiers were held by both states, or one would hold the revenue rights to territory encircled by the other's. Wellesley suspected that the peshwa planned to cede territories that were intermingled with Holkar's and Sindhia's. They would likely cause disputes with them and cost more than they produced in revenue.³⁰ He, therefore, delayed responding to the peshwa's offer until June 1802.

In November 1801 Wellesley replaced Palmer, whom Ingram describes as guilty of not being able to "make the facts fit Wellesley's vision,"³¹ with Lieutenant-Colonel Barry Close, whom he considered as one of his best men. Close was more fortunate than Palmer. Whereas circumstances changed in 1802 to suit Wellesley's plans, Palmer, in an effort to maintain his diplomatic career, had to offer excuses to justify his failure to obtain a treaty. First, he blamed Kale, the peshwa's minister. When Kale was removed from office, he blamed Sindhia. Upon Sindhia's departure from Poona, Palmer was forced to admit, what he had known all along: the peshwa would not agree to an alliance until he was faced with deposal. Palmer's failure did cost him his career in the diplomatic service. He was sent to command an out-of-the-way station at Monghyr in the Upper

³⁰ Edmonstone to Close, 23 June 1802, Wellesley, III: 16.

³¹ Ingram, Commitment to Empire, p. 148.

Provinces.

When Wellesley eventually responded, on 23 June 1802, to the peshwa's proposals of November 1801, he offered to station the subsidiary force in Company territory, provided the peshwa ceded territories subject solely to his authority and producing enough revenue to cover its cost.³² Although Close told the peshwa of Wellesley's counter-offer, he, too, thought the negotiations were pointless. Like Palmer, he was convinced that the peshwa would only accept an alliance as a last resort.³³

Despite his failure with the peshwa, Wellesley did make an important gain when the Maratha state of Baroda accepted a subsidiary alliance with the Company in July 1802. The weak gaekwar, Anund Rao, overwhelmed with family quarrels and unable to control his army, accepted the restrictions on his independence inherent in a subsidiary alliance in exchange for British backing against his rivals.³⁴ By detaching the gaekwar from the other Maratha states, Wellesley reduced their combined military power and obtained the use of a subsidiary force and a unit of the gaekwar's cavalry in Gujerat, where the Company was militarily weakest. In addition, Baroda was strategically important as a base for an attack on Ujjain.

³² Edmonstone to Close, 23 June 1802, Wellesley, III: 12.

³³ ggic to sc, 12 Apr. 1804, Wellesley, V: "Mahratta War Supplement," p. 5.

³⁴ Sir Robert Wallace, The Guicowar and his Relations with the British Government (Bombay, 1910), pp. 76-7. Pamela Nightingale, Trade and Empire in Western India 1784-1806 (London, 1970).

Pamela Nightingale argues that the subsidiary alliance with the gaekwar was a Bombay initiative to which Wellesley merely gave a belated approval in June 1802.³⁵ She quotes part of a letter, dated 29 June, from Jonathan Duncan, the governor of Bombay, to David Scott, chairman of the East India Company (1796 and 1801),³⁶ but omits sentences which indicate that Duncan had received, through Wellesley's political secretary, instructions to pursue the treaty.

Lord Wellesley has hitherto highly approved of my progress on this Gujerat expedition....He has never however yet written to me one line officially on the business unless his private secretary's letters may be esteemed so--of which I have such numbers to produce desiring and exciting me to push the business to the 'topping off the Gujerat branch from the Maratha tree.'

Wellesley frequently sent instructions through his secretaries. He encouraged the business lobby at Bombay despite their different motives, as expansion suited them both.

The gaekwar accepted Wellesley's subsidiary alliance because he needed British aid to maintain his government. The peshwa, however, who needed only the indirect aid of being seen to be negotiating with the British, continued to procrastinate, neither accepting nor rejecting Wellesley's offer. The peshwa's minister, Ragonaut Rao, claimed that the peshwa wished to ally with the Company, but was hesitant owing to the pressure from

³⁵ Nightingale, Trade and Empire, p. 195.

³⁶ Duncan to Scott, 29 June 1802, David Scott, The Correspondence of David Scott Director and Chairman of the East India Company Relating to Indian Affairs 1787-1805 ed. C. H. Philips (London, 1951), pp. 398-9.

Sindhia and the raja of Berar to refuse. He assured Close that this obstacle would soon be surmounted.³⁷ Although Sindhia and the raja of Berar were trying to restrain the peshwa from reaching an agreement with the Company, Holkar's actions pushed him into one.

Holkar was advancing southward toward Poona and was urging the peshwa to mediate a Holkar family succession dispute between himself and Sindhia. Sindhia favoured the weaker claimant, Kashi Rao, whom he could keep under his influence. He had the other disputant, Khandi Rao, who was Holkar's nephew and favoured by him, in confinement. Holkar asked the peshwa to order Sindhia to release Khandi Rao. He also wanted the peshwa to acknowledge Khandi Rao as the head of the Holkar family, give him possession of the ancient family lands and appoint Holkar as his finance minister. Even if the peshwa had wanted to, he lacked the means to compel Sindhia to meet Holkar's demands, but he tried to conciliate him by promising that he would intervene on Holkar's behalf.³⁸

Holkar continued toward Poona, intending to pressure the peshwa into settling the affair in his favour. When the peshwa's army tried, on 8 October, to stop his advance at Baramati, only forty miles from Poona, it was easily defeated. As a result, the peshwa on 14 October gave a proposal to Close for an alliance that allowed the Company to station a subsidiary

³⁷ Close to Wellesley, 10 Oct. 1802, PRC, X: 25.

³⁸ Close to Wellesley, 27 June 1802, PRC, X: 14.

force in his territories and to arbitrate his disputes with the nizam. As he continued to negotiate with Holkar's agents at the same time, however, on 22 October Close threatened to break off the negotiations.³⁹ Another of the peshwa's ministers, Balaji Kunjar, who favoured Sindhia, recommended that the peshwa reject Holkar's demands. The peshwa took Kunjar's advice and, as a result, on 25 October Holkar again defeated the peshwa's army and a detachment from Sindhia.

Before the peshwa moved out with his troops on the morning of the battle, he sent a document to Close agreeing in principle to subsidize a Company force of six battalions and to cede territories yielding £250,000 in Gujerat and the Carnatic, or the whole from either of these areas. No specific details were set out, but Ragonaut Rao assured Close that the peshwa intended to conclude a general defensive alliance as soon as possible.⁴⁰

While the Marathas intended the peshwa's written offer and Ragonaut Rao's verbal assurance as only a negotiating tool to keep all their options open, Wellesley considered them a commitment. He told Close to push the advantage and obtain a preliminary agreement as a basis for a definitive treaty.⁴¹ Considering the peshwa's alliance near completion, Major Merrick Shawe, Wellesley's private secretary, thought that Wellesley's

³⁹ Close to Wellesley, 24 Oct. 1802, PRC, X: 29-30.

⁴⁰ Close to Wellesley, 25 Oct. 1802, PRC, X: 32.

⁴¹ Edmonstone to Close, 16 Nov. 1802, PRC, X: 46.

"conquest of Hindustan" was well on its way.⁴² If, as Wellesley expected, Sindhia should pressure the peshwa to overturn the treaty, Wellesley planned to claim that this indicated Sindhia's hostility toward the British and justified an attack on him.

Wellesley wanted to delay the occupation of Poona, by the Company's force, to avoid provoking hostilities with Holkar. Also, if the Company assumed control in Poona too quickly, an important source of contention between Holkar and Sindhia would be removed and he wanted them to continue to fight and weaken each other. A delay of the troop movement would also allow time for further negotiations to obtain more favourable terms from the peshwa.⁴³

In an attempt to deter the peshwa from seeking British support, a number of Maratha chieftains pleaded with him to conciliate Holkar and, together with Amrut Rao, revitalize his administration. Although the peshwa preferred an agreement with Holkar, it could only be obtained by siding with him against Sindhia, which his minister discouraged him from doing. Baji Rao made a last attempt to avoid British intervention by appealing to Mohummud Amir Khan, a Pathan chief in Holkar's service, to guarantee his safety, saying he would then return to Poona. Mohummud Amir Khan refused to intervene as he was annoyed with Holkar because of a disagreement over the terms of

⁴² Shawe to H. Wellesley, 23 Nov. 1802, MSS Eur. E/176: fol. 675.

⁴³ Edmonstone to Close, most secret, 22 Nov. 1802, IO H/620: fol. 157.

his service under him.⁴⁴

Failing to enlist Mohummud Amir Khan's support, the peshwa requested asylum from Jonathan Duncan, the governor of Bombay. Duncan sought advice from Major John Malcolm, who would play a leading role in Wellesley's Maratha diplomacy, whom Wellesley had sent to Bombay to settle a crisis arising from the shooting of an Iranian envoy.⁴⁵ Malcolm first attracted Wellesley's attention in 1798 through the patronage of the acting-governor and commander-in-chief at Madras, Lieutenant-General George Harris. Malcolm's two reports, one on the political system of India and the other on the state of Tipu Sultan's army and resources, were sent to Wellesley and these papers, along with his knowledge of the Indian languages, led Wellesley to view Malcolm as "a very promising young man."⁴⁶ He was surprised that Malcolm's views matched his own. Malcolm, at the time, was town major and Persian secretary at Fort St. George and lived in Harris' home. Malcolm, therefore, had access daily to information on Wellesley's views and tailored his memorandums to suit them. Malcolm subsequently wrote to Arthur, who arrived in

⁴⁴ Mohummud Ameer Khan, Memoirs of Mohummud Ameer Khan, transl. H.T. Prinsep (Calcutta, 1832), p. 174.

⁴⁵ Edward Ingram, "How and How Not to Negotiate with Iran: Postures of Power in 1802," in Edward Ingram, ed. National and International Politics in the Middle East: Essays in Honour of Elie Kedourie (London, 1986), pp. 31-53.

⁴⁶ Wellesley to Malcolm, 20 Sept. 1798; Wellesley to Dundas, 11 Oct. 1798, Wellesley, I: 264, 298. See also McLaren, "Writing and Making History," for Malcolm's self-promotion through his writings.

Madras in August, that he was interested in the vacant position of assistant-resident at Hyderabad. Arthur passed this on to Wellesley, who appointed Malcolm to the position, one of a number of appointments Malcolm received before being sent to Bombay. His contribution at Hyderabad was not as great as was credited to him. Malcolm habitually took "credit upon himself" that was undeserved and he "frequently boasted of the great share he had in bringing the French business to a speedy issue which was far from being the case."⁴⁷

One of Malcolm's fellow political agents, Mountstuart Elphinstone, mockingly described him as "a perfect Wicquefort or the complete ambassador."⁴⁸ Malcolm's self-built reputation as a successful negotiator gained him several important political assignments during the Second Maratha War, but he had to buy agreements to live-up to the reputation he had fostered. Malcolm gave his opinions freely and at length, although they were not always appreciated. When Malcolm's constant lobbying wore thin, Charles Wynn, president of the board of control from 1822 to 1828, referred to him as "my indefatigable and unsilenceable friend."⁴⁹

Malcolm, as was his custom, answered Duncan in great

⁴⁷ J. A. Kirkpatrick to Petrie, 16 Aug. 1803, MSS Eur. F228/59.

⁴⁸ Elphinstone to Strachey, 22 Oct. 1803, MSS Eur. F128/163: fol. 113. Abraham de Wicquefort was a Dutch diplomat who wrote The Ambassador [sic] and his Functions, published in England in 1716.

⁴⁹ Wynn to Southey, 27 Oct. 1823, quoted in Peers, "British India," pp. 120-1.

detail, although he believed the peshwa had no intention of coming to Bombay and that his aim in writing to Duncan was to alarm Holkar so he would accept a settlement and leave Poona. Malcolm knew that Duncan passed on information to the court of directors and he intended his explanation to justify a subsidiary treaty with the peshwa. Malcolm never let an opportunity pass by to advance himself,⁵⁰ and he intended to forward a copy of his letter to Shawe, whom Malcolm used as a pipeline to draw Wellesley's attention. Wellesley subsequently approved the statements in Malcolm's letter.⁵¹

As the court of directors placed great emphasis on the reduction of military expenses, to reduce the Company's debt, Malcolm stated that the alliance was needed to ensure tranquillity in the peshwa's territories. This would remove the cost to the Company of ensuring that the continual turbulence in the Deccan did not spill over into the Company's and its allies' territories. Malcolm revised Wellesley's tactic of playing on the Home officials' concern of a French threat to India during wartime, as a different justification was needed in peacetime. Malcolm claimed that, since peace in Europe earlier in the year, an alliance was especially necessary because now the only way the British could prevent the French from obtaining an alliance with the peshwa was by forestalling it. Malcolm stated there was a possibility the other Maratha powers would challenge the

⁵⁰ Yapp, Strategies of British India, p. 53.

⁵¹ Edmonstone to Close, secret, 29 Nov. 1803, IO H/620: fol. 169.

Company's paramountcy at Poona but argued that the pressing need of the subsidiary alliance justified the risk.⁵²

As Malcolm had predicted, the peshwa never came to Bombay. At Close's suggestion, he went to Bassein where Close reopened negotiations with him, on 16 December, to improve the terms suggested by the peshwa on 14 October. When he hesitated to agree to Close's demands for the cession of territories in Gujerat and Savanur, Close threatened to accept an offer received from Holkar and Amrut Rao, who had sent an agent to Bombay to persuade the Company to remain neutral during the crisis.⁵³ As Holkar and Amrut Rao had placed the latter's son on the throne at Poona, Baji Rao saw no hope of regaining his position without Company support and, under this pressure, he reluctantly signed the treaty of Bassein on 31 December 1802.

Although Kunjar accompanied the peshwa to Bassein and was instrumental in settling the terms of the treaty, Govind Sakharam Sardesai believes that he "soon realized the suicidal character of that step." Kunjar, however, looked upon the treaty as a temporary expedient to rid Poona of Holkar and, in 1817, was still involved in attempts to organize a Maratha confederacy against the Company.⁵⁴ Wellesley, too, considered the treaties he made as permanent only as long as they suited

⁵² Malcolm to Duncan, 5 Nov. 1802, Hobart MSS D/MH-M E214.

⁵³ gicB to sc, 11 Dec. 1802, IO L/PS/5/322: fol. 197; Sardesai, History of the Marathas, p. 383.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 380, 471-2.

his purpose. Before he left India, he was preparing to renounce some of them as they no longer served his personal interest. He considered the treaty of Bassein to be essential to his plan of empire and, therefore, permanent.

The peshwa procrastinated, during the four years it took Wellesley to obtain the treaty, to increase his power by having the option of calling on British aid. As he accepted the treaty of Bassein under duress, he hoped to back out of it when an alternative became feasible. The peshwa, as a result, was not keen to provide the aid called for in the treaty when Wellesley launched an offensive war against Sindhia and the raja of Berar.

THE TREATY OF BASSEIN

The preamble to the treaty of Bassein claimed that it was a general defensive treaty against unprovoked aggression, which belied its offensive role in Wellesley's plans. In addition to giving Wellesley a potential opportunity for war with Sindhia and the raja of Berar, the treaty provided for military assistance and the provision of supplies. A main benefit to the British was the attainment of a strategic position favourable for a war against Sindhia and the raja of Berar.

Under the treaty's terms, the Company was to provide a subsidiary force to be stationed in the peshwa's territories and, as Wellesley preferred, it was paid for by a cession of territory. In the event of war, both governments were to

furnish troops in addition to the subsidiary force and the peshwa was to store grain in his frontier garrisons. These terms were included in the treaty in anticipation of a war with Sindhia and the raja of Berar, to allow the Company the use of the peshwa's resources. The peshwa's external relations came under British control as the Company was granted the right to arbitrate his disputes with all other states, an extensive intrusion into Indian affairs as the Indians' governments were in a constant state of flux. The loss of his claims on the nizam for tribute weakened the peshwa economically.

As the defensive alliance covered not only the territories of the East India Company and the peshwa, but also "those of their several allies and dependents,"⁵⁵ all of the first-rate powers of India were now, in theory, brought within Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system. In fact, as Roberts suggests, this was true only if the other Maratha powers accepted that the peshwa had the authority to act on their behalf.⁵⁶ Although the other Maratha chieftains recognized the peshwa as the representative authority of the raja of Satara, he no longer possessed any power; the various branches of the Maratha empire considered themselves as independent states and gave only nominal recognition of his sovereignty. As guarantor of the treaty of Salbye, 1782, which Sindhia claimed had hitherto governed Anglo-Maratha relations, he stated that the peshwa

⁵⁵ "The Treaty of Bassein," Wellesley, III: 627-31.

⁵⁶ Roberts, India Under Wellesley, pp. 193-4.

should have consulted him before he concluded the treaty of Bassein. Sindhia considered that the authority vested in him as guarantor took precedence over the peshwa's authority when changes were made in the relations between the Company and the states within the Maratha empire. Wellesley knew that the peshwa's authority was undermined to such an extent that the other Maratha states would not allow him to commit them to an agreement with an outside state.

Although the authority of the peshwa existed in form rather than substance, the other Maratha chieftains sought to increase their status by obtaining control over him. In placing the peshwa under Company control, the treaty of Bassein, as Arthur observed, deprived the Maratha chieftains of "the bone for which they have been contending for some years, [and] not one of them is very well pleased."⁵⁷ Wellesley expected them to pressure the peshwa to overturn the alliance. Whatever means they used, whether it was an attempted march on Poona or exaggerated threats, Wellesley intended to claim that they were hostile. Then, after a token attempt at negotiating a pacific settlement, he planned to go to war against Sindhia and the raja of Berar to obtain the extensive territorial cessions he needed to complete his Indian empire.

Immediately after the signing of the treaty of Bassein, Wellesley sent a dispatch to the secret committee that contained few details, as he said that he had instructed Duncan to provide

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 209.

them with information about the treaty. One of the complaints the Home officials were to make against Wellesley was of his neglect to send Home information regularly. A full justification of his Maratha policy was not sent until he asked Arthur, in November 1804, to write a response to a critical dispatch from Viscount Castlereagh, president of the board of control from 1802 to 1806. In February 1803, Wellesley told the secret committee that the treaty would help to establish lasting tranquillity in India and bring prosperity to the British territories. He then qualified this claim, stating that it was well known that the principal branches of the Maratha empire were adverse to an alliance between the British and the peshwa and that the peshwa had only accepted the treaty because he had no alternative at the time. Wellesley claimed he would abandon the treaty if there was widespread opposition to it, rather than risk a war, but would proceed with it if the majority agreed and if the peshwa was prepared to meet its terms. He assured the secret committee that there was little likelihood of either Sindhia, Holkar or the raja of Berar offering any opposition.⁵⁸ Wellesley, in this instance, was giving his true opinion but, as usual, he was attempting to cover himself. He wanted to forestall future criticism that he was aware, when he negotiated the treaty, that it would lead to war.

Later in the year he prepared, at great expense to the Company, a printed summary of events entitled Notes Relative to

⁵⁸ ggic to sc, 10 Feb. 1803, Wellesley, III: 49.

the Late Transactions in the Maratha Empire, which he distributed widely both in India and in Britain. In this account he claimed that the treaty of Bassein's purpose was to prevent a hostile confederation of the Maratha powers and to exclude the French from establishing their authority in the Maratha empire.⁵⁹ Wellesley justified the treaty as a defensive measure against both a Maratha and a French threat and because it restored the peshwa's authority within the Maratha empire that had been usurped by his subordinate chieftains.

C. A. Bayly suggests that the Company was drawn into conquest in the western Deccan and central India because the subsidiary alliance system was incompatible with the fluid indigenous political systems with their uncertain revenues. The pressures on Indian society caused by the British demands for a regular subsidy caused revolts, which the British viewed as anarchy. This was the case in Awadh.⁶⁰ To avoid this upheaval, Wellesley preferred a cession of territory, rather than cash subsidies, to pay for a subsidiary force and he coerced the nawab of Awadh in 1801 to cede territory in lieu of the disruptive cash subsidy payment. Although Wellesley's preferred form of subsidiary alliance did not commit the Indians to pay the British a cash subsidy, it was the restrictions imposed by the subsidiary alliances on the collection of tribute and areas

⁵⁹ Richard C. Wellesley, Notes Relative to the Late Transactions in the Maratha Empire (Calcutta, 1803).

⁶⁰ Bayly, Indian Society, pp. 89-92.

of plunder that upset their finance system. Further, as Bayly points out, the subsidiary alliances removed opportunities for military employment with the Indian states, releasing bands of irregular cavalry who obtained their subsistence by plundering. In 1802 there was thought to be about 100,000 such freebooters in Rohilkhand, territory ceded to the British by the nawab of Awadh.⁶¹ Wellesley's system, instead of settling Indian society, therefore, caused upheaval. He imposed European standards that disrupted the Maratha economic system before its transition to a trading economy developed sufficiently to allow the removal of the opportunities for chauth and plunder without serious consequences.

A further fault of the subsidiary alliance system was that British intervention blocked the changes in the fluid political systems of the Indian states.⁶² Munro observed that the introduction of a subsidiary force into an Indian state tended to make its government weak and oppressive, while preventing its overthrow through revolution or foreign conquest.⁶³ Wellesley's system maintained decaying despotisms, that lacked popular support, with British military backing. As the ruler and the subsidiary alliance with the British were unpopular, many of the minor Indian chieftains and officials withheld aid to the

⁶¹ Bayly, Indian Society, p. 80; Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870 (Cambridge, 1983), p. 219.

⁶² Bayly, Indian Society, p. 103.

⁶³ Munro to Hastings, 12 Aug. 1817, Gleig, Munro, I: 460.

British during the Second Maratha War. Arthur's immediate concern during the war was that the subsidiary treaties completely destroyed the military power of the governments within the system, placing the responsibility for their defence upon the British.⁶⁴

Although Wellesley claimed that his subsidiary alliance system would stabilize and strengthen the Indian states, the effect was to destabilize and weaken them, pulling the British into a more extensive military commitment. This effect was counter to his instructions to provide stability through a balance of power that would allow a reduction in the British military force.

THE DEBATE OVER THE TREATY

The increase in the Company's military responsibilities, undertaken in the treaty of Bassein, was criticized by the Home officials. Castlereagh was their spokesman and the main thrust of his criticism was that the treaty would not provide the stability that Wellesley was sent to India to establish. Arthur Wellesley, as Wellesley's chosen respondent, wrote a rebuttal to Castlereagh's criticism, although his actual views were closer to Castlereagh's than Wellesley's.

When William Pitt and the King had disagreed over the issue of Catholic relief and Pitt had resigned on 5 February 1801, Henry Addington succeeded him. His administration lasted until

⁶⁴ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 20 June 1803, WD, II: 20.

May 1804, when Pitt returned to head the government until his death in 1806. Castlereagh was president of the board of control in both administrations. A protege of Marquis Cornwallis in Ireland, on his recommendation Castlereagh had obtained the position of chief secretary in 1798, in spite of the rule that the post should not be given to an Irishman. When Castlereagh went to the board of control he frequently turned to Cornwallis for advice on Indian affairs. Castlereagh was ambitious and hoped to move up in cabinet and his criticism reflected the opinions of those with influence, but he also attempted to conciliate Wellesley, as he was Pitt's and Grenville's friend.

Castlereagh initially approved of the treaty, hoping that he would soon be able to congratulate Wellesley "on having perfected the only great work [imposing tranquillity on the Maratha empire] remaining incomplete towards the pacification of India and the solid establishment of the British dominion in that part of the globe."⁶⁵ Castlereagh initially thought that the treaty with the peshwa would provide the stability Wellesley was sent to India to establish. At this time he had not studied the documents sufficiently to give a knowledgeable opinion. Subsequently, he reversed his view. After learning from Bombay that war with the Marathas was a possibility, he studied the

⁶⁵ Castlereagh to Wellesley, 14 May 1803, most secret, Wellesley, III: 302.

pertinent papers⁶⁶ and consulted Cornwallis and Henry Dundas, since 1803 Viscount Melville, who advised him that stationing a subsidiary force at Poona would tend to involve the Company in the unsettled affairs of the Maratha states.⁶⁷

B. J. Carnduff examines Melville's view of the treaty of Bassein in his attempt to disprove Ingram's thesis that Melville and Wellesley had "two views" regarding British relations with the Indian states. Carnduff argues that Melville and Wellesley both desired an alliance with the Marathas and that Melville "understood the implications of Wellesley's interventionist policy."⁶⁸ As Ingram points out, however, Melville looked upon Wellesley's earlier policies as defensive measures and, therefore, they appeared to agree. Melville's letter of 18 March 1799 to Wellesley, which Carnduff argues specifically granted Wellesley permission to intervene in the internal affairs of the Maratha empire, indicates that Melville authorized a connection between the Marathas, the nizam and the Company "upon the principles of a common interest of defensive alliance against Tipu, and every power in alliance with France."⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Castlereagh to Wellesley, 4 Mar. 1804, most secret, Wellesley, V: "Maratha War Supplement," p. 302.

⁶⁷ Castlereagh to Melville, 7 Jan. 1804, IO H/504: fol. 52.

⁶⁸ Brendan John Carnduff, "One Vision: Dundas, Wellesley and the Marathas, 1798-1805," M.A. dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1992, p. 99.

⁶⁹ Dundas to Wellesley, private, 18 Mar. 1799, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 125.

By 1802, the danger from Tipu and the French no longer existed and Melville then became aware of the implications of Wellesley's policy--the attainment of a controlling influence over the external affairs of the members of the Maratha empire. This policy would lead to war against the combined Maratha states, Melville forecast, and although the British would win, the Marathas would hold a grudge toward them, which would be costly to guard against. Melville's chief concern in India shifted, after the defeat of the French in Egypt in 1801, from the danger of a French attack to the need to reduce the increasing debt, requiring in turn, a reduction in military expenses. He was opposed, therefore, to a treaty that would force the British to maintain high military expenditures.

In addition to Cornwallis' and Melville's criticisms, a letter from Wellesley in which he claimed that the Company's "duties of sovereignty must be deemed paramount to its mercantile interests, prejudices and profits,"⁷⁰ turned Castlereagh's opinion against the treaty. Due to the threat from France and the French-officered army of Sindhia, Wellesley argued, it was the duty of the Supreme government to maintain its present military power in order to bring security to the Company's mercantile and financial interests and tranquillity and welfare to its Indian subjects. Wellesley's insistence on maintaining the high level of military expense, contrary to his

⁷⁰ Wellesley to Castlereagh, quoted in Peter Auber, Rise and Progress of the British Power in India 2 vols. (London, 1837), II: 302-3. Philips, East India Company, pp. 138-9.

instructions, prevented the attainment of the Home officials' aim--a reduction of the debt. Castlereagh was now aware that the treaty had led to war and this, too, affected his view. In addition, Castlereagh did not receive the backing from the prime minister, Henry Addington, that he needed to defend Wellesley's policies, as Addington had already lost the support of part of the Indian interest in Parliament and feared losing the rest.⁷¹ For these reasons, Castlereagh's opinion shifted and, no longer approving of the treaty, he set out his criticisms of it in a paper entitled "Observations on the Treaty of Bassein," sent to Wellesley on 4 March 1804.⁷²

Castlereagh based his analysis of the treaty on Wellesley's claim that it would form a triple alliance of the Marathas, the nizam and the Company and thus preserve the peace of India. Castlereagh argued that if the treaty was defensive, then it was unsatisfactory, as the dangers it was designed to meet were remote. The original connection with the Marathas was a defensive arrangement against Tipu Sultan and the French and, as these threats no longer existed, it was no longer needed. In his opinion, the Marathas posed no danger, as they always respected Company territory and seldom disturbed the nizam's.

Castlereagh feared that instead of leading to tranquillity, the treaty would involve the Company in the endless internal

⁷¹ Philips, East India Company, p. 137.

⁷² Castlereagh to Wellesley, 4 Mar. 1804, Wellesley, V: 'Maratha War Supplement,' pp. 302-18.

disputes of the Maratha empire. He preferred a treaty with both the peshwa and Sindhia, with the subsidiary force stationed in the Company's territory, where it would be available if needed to defend their territories against any outside attack. This would have strengthened their governments without subjecting them to the Company's unsolicited interference. It was not Wellesley's intention, however, to strengthen the Maratha governments so that they would remain independent, nor did he wish to avoid meddling in their affairs. What Castlereagh saw as disadvantages, therefore, were seen by Wellesley as favourable, and intended, developments toward his goal of Company paramountcy over the Maratha states. Castlereagh viewed the Company's territories as the British Empire in India, while Wellesley's aim was to build the Empire of India. This difference accounts for the difference in their views of the treaty of Bassein.

Castlereagh pointed out the implications of Wellesley's plan to introduce peace into the Maratha empire. He noted that to offer tranquil conditions to the Marathas, as an advantage, implied that Maratha society was "industrious and pacific, instead of being predatory and warlike." Castlereagh, in making this point, implies that to obtain the main objective of the treaty, establishing tranquillity in the Maratha empire, major social change would be needed throughout the Maratha territories that would involve further intervention by the Company. Recent works argue that this change was already underway. Bayly states

that the British emphasis on Maratha looting campaigns has overlooked the significance of local traders and money lenders and points out the long-term growth of credit and markets. Other scholars have shown the trend toward centralization of revenue collection and revenue farming as a means of increasing the revenues to cover the rising military costs involved in Europeanizing Indian armies.⁷³ This trend was shifting the cost of the Indian states' armies from indirect taxation on their neighbours, through the collection of chauth and plunder by cavalry, to direct taxation on their own subjects to finance artillery and infantry. The process, however, was not yet complete. The former system was still essential to the Maratha economy.

Indian society was not based on the European concept of ownership of land but on the right to collect the revenue from land. The Marathas, in the peace treaty with the nizam following the battle of Kharda in 1795, obtained the right to collect chauth in territories which the British considered belonged to the nizam. Nana had agreed in 1796, in the treaty of Mahr, to relinquish these rights, but as this treaty was never ratified,⁷⁴ the Marathas' collection of chauth was a legitimate claim on these lands until they were given up at the

⁷³ Bayly, Indian Society, pp. 34-8; Stein, "State Formation and Economy," pp. 387-413; Iqbal Ghani Khan, "Revenue, Agriculture and Warfare in North India," passim.

⁷⁴ Gupta, Baji Rao, p. 59; John Malcolm, The Political History of India (1784 to 1823) 2 vols., ed. K.N. Panikkar, (rpt. New Delhi, 1970), I: 83, 89.

end of the Second Maratha War. The elimination of the collection of chauth was part of Wellesley's effort to establish definite boundaries to create the European-style territorial states that he claimed were necessary for tranquillity.

Castlereagh suggested that a more suitable solution would have been to place a force on the Company's frontier that would allow both Holkar and the peshwa to compete for Company backing. Castlereagh, here, has overlooked the fact that both Holkar and the peshwa did negotiate with the Company prior to the signing of the treaty. The peshwa desired military assistance, while Holkar merely wanted the Company to stand aside and let them settle the matter between themselves. Wellesley chose to back the peshwa as this was the opportunity he needed to obtain the subsidiary treaty that the peshwa had managed to avoid for so long.

Castlereagh next examined the constitutional implications of the treaty, arguing that Wellesley had over-stepped his authority by guaranteeing the territories of a state that had not undertaken a reciprocal obligation to support the Company in wartime. Castlereagh stated, however, that a review of the orders sent out to India concerning a subsidiary alliance with the peshwa, led him to conclude that there was reason for Wellesley to believe that he was acting within his instructions. This was true in so far as the secret committee's letter to the governor-general in council, dated 10 September 1800, approves of Wellesley's plan for a subsidiary force at Poona. Their

decision was based on Wellesley's claim that it was the final action needed to complete his plan for the exclusion of all hostile European influence from India and for the establishment of the British power that would lead to peace. But the instructions in this letter, and a further letter of 4 December 1800, emphasize that care should be taken that any arrangements made with the peshwa would not lead to war.⁷⁵ In concluding his argument by stating that Wellesley could reasonably consider that he had been authorized to undertake the policy that he did, Castlereagh's intention was to soften his criticism and conciliate Wellesley.

Wellesley, anxious to defend his policy because he still hoped to obtain an English marquissate for his accomplishments in India, asked Arthur to respond. Roberts suggests that Arthur constructed a theoretical defence for his brother's policy, although he did not completely believe in his own argument.⁷⁶ Arthur's rebuttal was intended to overturn Castlereagh's main argument that there was no Maratha danger and that the treaty, rather than leading to tranquillity as claimed by Wellesley, would pull the Company into the internal disputes of the Maratha empire.

Arthur stated⁷⁷ that the criticisms were based on an

⁷⁵ Abstract of sc to ggic, 10 Sept. 1800; 4 Dec. 1800, IO H/620: fols. 5; 13.

⁷⁶ Roberts, India Under Wellesley, p. 202.

⁷⁷ A. Wellesley, "Observations on the Criticisms," Nov. 1804, V: "Maratha War Supplement," pp. 318-37.

erroneous view of the political state of India at the time the treaty was made--the political instability in India presented opportunities to the French and the need to guard against French influence was one of the principal reasons for seeking the treaty of Bassein. C. H. Philips argues that Arthur was correct in stating that Castlereagh under-estimated the threat from the French officers in the Maratha forces as, so positioned, they were capable of promoting French aims in North India.⁷⁸ This follows Herbert Compton's argument that the main objective of Pierre Perron, the French commander of Sindhia's forces in Hindustan, was to re-establish French influence in India. Compton takes literally Wellesley's claim, in his letters to the King's ministers, of the possibility of the French attempting, with Maratha help, to re-establish their power in India. According to Compton, Perron intended to co-operate with any attack on the British that Napoleon might order, but Wellesley "anticipated them and the Treaty of Bassein was one of the countermoves in this game of politics."⁷⁹ Perron was a mercenary, however, whose main interest was to accumulate a fortune. He held considerable stock in the East India Company and Wellesley was aware that an offer of safe conduct for him

⁷⁸ Philips, East India Company, p. 138.

⁷⁹ Herbert Compton, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan from 1784 to 1803 (London, 1892), pp. 249, 285, 298.

and his wealth would remove him from Hindustan.⁸⁰ Arthur was following Wellesley's lead by exaggerating the French threat to justify the treaty of Bassein, because this was the argument that Dundas had accepted between 1798 and 1801.

Arthur was not expressing his true judgement as, the previous year, he had expressed his opinion that

the more I see of the Marathas, the more convinced I am that they never could have any alliance with the French. The French, on their arrival, would want equipments, which would cost money, ...and there is not a Maratha in the whole country, from the peshwa down to the lowest horseman, who has a shilling,....⁸¹

Arthur next turned to an internal threat, arguing that if the Company had not supported the peshwa, he would have been pushed out by Holkar and replaced by Amrut Rao, backed by Holkar's formidable army that would have no means of support except by plundering the nizam's or the Company's territories. This would have led to war. Amrut Rao was "the ablest Maratha in the civil affairs of the empire,"⁸² and capable of strengthening the government of Poona so no outside power would be needed to prop it up. But, as Wellesley wanted to maintain the weak Baji Rao II on the throne so the British could fill the vacuum of power, Arthur pointed out a negative consequence of

⁸⁰ Lake to Wellesley, private, 21 July, 3 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fols. 71, 103; S. P. Sen, The French in India 1763-1816 (Calcutta, 1958), p. 545.

⁸¹ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 20 June 1803, WD, III: 22.

⁸² A. Wellesley, "Observations on the Criticisms," Nov. 1804, V: "Maratha War Supplement," pp. 318-37.

Amrut Rao taking over the office.

Arthur then moved to the relationship between the Marathas and Hyderabad, arguing that the nizam was too weak to stand up to the Marathas. In 1798, Wellesley was faced with the choice of letting Hyderabad be swallowed up by the Marathas, fall under the influence of French adventurers, or be taken into a defensive alliance by the Company. The consequence of having assumed the responsibility of propping up the weak nizam through a defensive alliance, Arthur argued, was the probability of a war with the Marathas. They would continue to press upon the nizam what Arthur called "unjust claims," although they were legalized by the terms of the treaty of Kharda. The British preferred to recognize the unratified treaty of Mahr which released the nizam from them. The treaty of Bassein, Arthur reasoned, was a start toward easing this threat of war because the peshwa's claims against the nizam would come under Company arbitration.

Arthur defended the provision for the Company's arbitration of the peshwa's external disputes on the basis that it allowed responsibility for the outbreak of war to rest with the governor-general, rather than with the peshwa. After arguing that the Company would not be pulled into "unjust" wars by the peshwa, he stated that the British would not stand by while the peshwa's government was destroyed if he entered into a war unaided--an admission that the British would be pulled in. Arthur questioned the wisdom of stationing an army of

observation on the Company's borders as suggested by Castlereagh, as the "most expensive article in India is an army in the field; and the most useless is one destined to act upon the defensive." Arthur contradicts his statement, that the treaty of Bassein was a defensive alliance, by arguing that, in India, defensive armies are useless, indicating the true nature of the alliance. Wellesley wanted the subsidiary forces to increase the troops available for his own use, at his allies' expense, and he planned to use them for offensive purposes.

Although Arthur defended the treaty of Bassein against Castlereagh's criticisms, he had foreseen the disadvantages of a treaty with the peshwa prior to its completion, telling Webbe that "we must take up a ruined cause if we interfere at all in favour of Baji Rao."⁸³ Wellesley and his subordinates claimed that, under the constitution of the Maratha empire, the peshwas held "exclusive power in the state," "power" in this case meaning authority, but the peshwa could exercise this authority only if he had the power to enforce it. They based their argument on the fact that, up to that time, all treaties were negotiated under the authority of the peshwa and concluded in his name. In June 1803, Arthur argued that, in fact, the peshwas had never held an exclusive authority, even when they had power, but were able to conclude the treaties because the other Maratha chieftains had consented to them. The peshwa's minor subordinate chieftains, who were acting under the terms of

⁸³ A. Wellesley to Webbe, 15 Dec. 1802, WSD, III: 471.

the treaty of Bassein, were doing so because they hoped to gain by the Company's intervention in their affairs with the peshwa. Even with the backing of the Company, Sindhia, the raja of Berar and Holkar would remain as independent powers and Arthur, in a shift of opinion, worried that they might form a hostile union to obstruct the treaty. He acknowledged that the treaty with the peshwa gave the British "a good military position," but wondered if the gains were not outweighed by "the risk of having all the powerful Marathas against us."⁸⁴ Arthur, only nine days later, again reversed his opinion, stating that the Marathas would not form a confederacy against the Company. But in June 1803 he was faced with an imminent war and the expected aid of the Company's allies was not forthcoming. His confidence that the Marathas would fail to reconcile their differences had momentarily wavered.

None of these doubts was mentioned in Arthur's November 1804 written defence of the treaty. Arthur disapproved of Wellesley's policy because he thought British intervention in the Maratha empire was unnecessary, as the Marathas were unlikely to attack either the British or the nizam's territories. He justified the treaty by presenting false arguments, however, because his opportunities for advancement were dependent on Wellesley's patronage.

⁸⁴ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 20 June 1803, WD, II: 20.

THE RESTORATION OF THE PESHWA

These false justifications have deceived historians. A. S. Bennell argues that, following the signing of the treaty, Wellesley had three objectives--to obtain Jaswant Rao Holkar's withdrawal from Poona, to reinstate the peshwa, and to obtain Sindhia's and the raja of Berar's adherence to the alliance system.⁸⁵ Bennell assumes that Wellesley's aim was to negotiate a pacific settlement. This is what Wellesley wanted the Home officials to believe. Wellesley, in fact, wanted a war with Sindhia and the raja of Berar because only a war would give him what he wanted, an extensive expansion of British territories and influence and the consequent weakening of Sindhia and the raja of Berar.

In early 1803, Wellesley claimed that he wanted to avoid war but, in the event Sindhia did "endeavour to obstruct our views," the main military effort against him would take place in Hindustan.⁸⁶ A considerable force of the Madras army was assembled on the frontier of Mysore and at Hurrayhur and Wellesley claimed this deployment of troops was intended to protect the frontier, assist in the restoration of the peshwa's authority and to establish a subsidiary force at Poona. Bennell takes him at his word, stating that Wellesley's intention in assembling the troops on the frontier was to intimidate Sindhia and the raja of Berar into accepting a pacific settlement. But

⁸⁵ Bennell, "Road to Poona," p. 196.

⁸⁶ Wellesley to Lake, 7 Jan. 1803, Wellesley, III: 28.

when the Marathas protracted the negotiations, as Wellesley knew his "political mandate from London" was running out, he transferred political authority to Arthur, knowing he would probably transfer the contest from the "negotiating tent to the battlefield."⁸⁷ As Ingram suggests, however, Wellesley's dispatches do not explain "what was happening in India, only what he wanted the government and the Company to believe."⁸⁸ Although Wellesley claimed he could accomplish his objectives peaceably, he wanted war. He first intended to make a show of negotiating, for the benefit of the Home officials, Sindhia's acceptance of British interference in the affairs of the Maratha empire and his adherence to Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system. Wellesley, however, knew that Sindhia would not give up his independence unless, like the peshwa, he could not survive without British aid.

As it was the Marathas' custom to resort to bluff during negotiations, Wellesley assumed that Sindhia would soon make hostile threats in an effort to intimidate the British into abandoning their position at Poona. He intended to use these threats as evidence of the Marathas' hostility and justification for attacking them. As Wellesley did not want a peaceful settlement with Sindhia, instead of sending Close or Webbe, whom he considered were his best negotiators, in February 1803 he told the resident with Sindhia, Lieutenant-Colonel John Collins,

⁸⁷ Bennell, "Road to Poona," p. 204.

⁸⁸ Ingram, Commitment to Empire, pp. 117-8.

to rejoin Sindhia at Burhanpur, a position south of the Narmada River that Sindhia had originally taken with the intention of confronting Holkar during his occupation of Poona. Collins, derisively called "King Collins" by his fellow Anglo-Indians, was the laughing-stock of the diplomatic corps in India and considered "a very unfit man" to act as the resident with Sindhia because he was "always surrounded by an army of spies from the Maharajah."⁸⁹ Wellesley expected the Marathas to hold Collins in their usual drawn-out negotiations and that he would not get an agreement before Wellesley was given an opportunity to attack. After serving as Wellesley's dupe, Collins was brought to Calcutta as his honorary aide-de-camp and then sent to Lucknow in 1804.

At the same time as Collins was sent to open negotiations with Sindhia, the Madras army was ordered to send a detachment to Poona to prepare the way for the peshwa's return and, although not explicitly stated, to place them in a position to attack the Maratha forces. Because Wellesley presented his move as a defensive measure against Holkar, the Madras army was reluctant to send a detachment into Maratha territories. Lieutenant-General James Stuart, who had replaced Harris as the commander-in-chief at Madras, feared that Holkar's combined forces would attack before his detachment could be supported by the commander-in-chief of the Bengal army, Lieutenant-General

⁸⁹ Jac Weller, Wellington in India, (London, 1972), p. 164. Elphinstone to Strachey, 22 Oct. 1803, MSS Eur. F128/163: fol. 113.

Gerard Lake. He favoured a combined operation by the Madras army, the peshwa's troops and the nizam's subsidiary force, rather than the dispersal of their forces.⁹⁰ The plan to separate the main Madras army drew criticism because few people understood "the entire scale of the Governor-General's policy."⁹¹ They also complained of supply difficulties and of a lack of money.⁹²

Arthur's appointment to the command of the detachment, with the extensive military and political authority subsequently granted to him, not only gave him an opportunity for career advancement, but also provided Wellesley with someone who was willing and capable of overcoming the obstacles faced by the army in a war with the Marathas. Arthur set up a system to move supplies from Mysore and the Ceded Districts to his advanced position in the Deccan and, along with the aid promised by the peshwa in the treaty of Bassein and supplies from Hyderabad and Bombay, he thought he would be adequately supplied.

Arthur arrived in Hurrayhur on 7 March from Seringapatam, formerly Tipu Sultan's capital, where he was supervising the settlement of Mysore, bringing with him the force from Mysore. The following day he marched out to show that Wellesley's stated

⁹⁰ Stuart to Stevenson, private, 30 Jan. 1803, Add. MSS 13632: fol. 27.

⁹¹ Webbe to H. Wellesley, 17 Mar. 1803, Sidmouth MSS 152M/C1803/OZ 227.

⁹² Webbe to Shawe, private, 15, 27 Feb. 1803, Add. MSS 13632: fols. 19, 25.

desire to avoid war was not caused by a lack of power.⁹³ Wellesley wanted to ensure that his pacific declarations, made for the benefit of the Home officials, were not seen as weakness, as his success in a war with Sindhia and the raja of Berar would depend on the assistance or, at the least, the neutrality of the peshwa's southern jagirdars--chieftains who held jagirs or revenue grants from him--as their territories straddled the important supply line from Mysore and the Ceded Districts. Arthur's march to Poona, therefore, was undertaken as a demonstration of power for the southern chieftains, as well as to return the peshwa and establish the British presence in Poona and to place the army in a position to attack the Marathas.

Wellesley wanted a peaceful settlement with Holkar, but agreed with the peshwa that Kashi Rao was the rightful heir and that Holkar's demand for his surrender and for the investiture of Khandi Rao was unacceptable. Close was instructed on 11 February to persuade the peshwa to conciliate Holkar by giving him a sum of money and perhaps a fort with a revenue grant, so he would leave Poona.⁹⁴ Wellesley wanted to deny Holkar the authority he would gain by assuming the position of finance minister if the infant, Khandi Rao, was installed as head of the Holkar family. At the same time, the terms Wellesley suggested were not designed to give the Company any hold over Holkar.

⁹³ Malcolm, Memo, 15 May 1803, IO H/621: fol. 218.

⁹⁴ Edmonstone to Close, 11 Feb. 1803, PRC, X: 79.

Wellesley considered him a freebooter, who would lose his followers when the collection of chauth and plunder was denied him in an India under Company supremacy. The peshwa refused to negotiate with Holkar,⁹⁵ however, and he left Poona in March when he learned that Arthur was on his way. Close, too, was unsuccessful when he tried to persuade the peshwa to conciliate Amrut Rao.⁹⁶

Arthur encountered no resistance on his march to Poona and was joined by limited forces from several of the peshwa's southern chieftains at the beginning of April. Close passed on the rumour that Amrut Rao intended to burn Poona on the approach of the British forces and, as Amrut Rao had moved the peshwa's family from the city, Arthur thought the report was true. He made a forced march on Poona and Amrut Rao fled without burning the city. Colonel James Welsh, who accompanied Arthur, claims in his memoir that the display of merchandise and the crowds in the city upon their arrival appeared to contradict Close's report.⁹⁷ Arthur would not admit that his impetuous dash toward Poona was unnecessary and he informed Stuart that general opinion agreed that his arrival saved Poona from destruction.⁹⁸ Arthur reached Poona on 20 April but was unable to leave until

⁹⁵ Close to Wellesley, 16 Mar. 1803, PRC, VII: 53.

⁹⁶ Close to Wellesley, 25 June 1803, PRC, X: 104.

⁹⁷ Colonel James Welsh, Military Reminiscences...of nearly Forty Years' Active Service in the East Indies 2 vols. (London, 1830), I: 152.

⁹⁸ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 21 Apr. 1803, WD, I: 510.

the peshwa arrived. The peshwa was on his way back from Bassein, accompanied by Close, who was unable to get him to travel quickly.

The peshwa's aim of using the British to rid Poona of Holkar and Amrut Rao was accomplished and he was in no hurry to further British interests. Arthur, therefore, was held hostage at Poona until it suited the peshwa to arrive.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH SINDHIA AND THE RAJA OF BERAR

With Arthur in an advanced position, Wellesley needed a show of negotiations for a peaceful settlement while he waited for Sindhia and the raja of Berar to give him an opening to attack them. Prior to Arthur's arrival at Poona, Collins opened negotiations with Sindhia. On 11 March, his offer to mediate Sindhia's dispute with Holkar was refused and throughout March and April he tried to persuade Sindhia to accept a subsidiary alliance with the Company. As Sindhia assured Collins that he had no desire to oppose the treaty of Bassein, Collins thought that he favoured an agreement but was opposed by his ministers.⁹⁹ To overcome this deadlock, Malcolm, who had joined Arthur during his march to Poona, recommended that Wellesley should "apply what Colonel Close calls a screw."¹⁰⁰

On 4 May, Sindhia moved southward from Burhanpur to meet the raja of Berar. Both Malcolm and Arthur thought that the

⁹⁹ Collins to Wellesley, 25 Mar. 1803, MSS Eur. F228/77.

¹⁰⁰ Malcolm to Shawe, 25 Apr. 1803, Add. MSS 13746: fol. 148.

Maratha chieftains' move toward the nizam's frontier and the circulation of reports of their hostile intentions were intended to intimidate the Company and its allies. The Marathas thought the British would fear a war with a Maratha confederacy and hoped their bluff would cause them to leave Poona. On the other hand, as they did not trust each other enough to undertake an "operation in which their mutual safety depends upon their mutual assistance,"¹⁰¹ they would not risk a declaration of war.

On 28 May, Collins brought a copy of the treaty of Bassein to Sindhia, fully explained its terms and asked him to deny any intention of forming a confederation hostile to the Company, emphasizing that, if he did, the Company would attack on all of his frontiers. As he thought the British were bluffing, Sindhia responded in a like tone, saying that he would tell Collins, after meeting with the raja on 8 June, "whether it would be peace or war." Collins accepted this as bluff and waited until the following day to write and tell Wellesley of the threat.¹⁰² The Marathas' campaign season ended with the onset of the monsoons in June,¹⁰³ therefore, if Sindhia intended to attack, he would have done so sooner. He was attempting to intimidate Wellesley, by the threat of a confederation of the Maratha

¹⁰¹ Malcolm to Shawe, 5 May 1803, Add. MSS 13746: fol. 152; A. Wellesley to Hobart, 10 May 1803, WD, I: 563; A. Wellesley to Collins, 29 June 1803, WSD, IV: 125.

¹⁰² Collins to Wellesley, 29 May 1803, Wellesley, III: 159.

¹⁰³ Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Military History of India (Calcutta, 1960), p. 2.

armies, into withdrawing from interference in Maratha affairs.

Arthur, meanwhile, was detained at Poona. The peshwa arrived on 13 May and, after waiting to ensure there would be no opposition to his return, Arthur left on 3 June to march toward Sindhia and the raja of Berar, who were situated about eighteen miles from the Ajanta Ghaut on the nizam's north-western frontier. Stevenson, with the Hyderabad subsidiary force and two contingents of the nizam's troops, was stationed at Aurangabad, to the southwest of the Ajanta Ghaut.

Acting in accordance with Malcolm's advice to apply pressure on Sindhia, but for a different reason, Wellesley wrote a strong letter to him on 3 June, emphasizing that any attempt to interfere with the operation of the treaty of Bassein by Sindhia returning to Poona, or any attack on the nizam's territories, would be considered a hostile act against the Company. Wellesley stated that he expected to hear that Sindhia had returned north of the Narmada because his presence south of it, with a large force, raised questions as to his intentions. He again offered to negotiate with Sindhia for a defensive alliance, an offer he knew Sindhia would refuse because he would lose by it far more than he would gain. In an accompanying dispatch, Wellesley instructed Collins to demand that Sindhia return northward, and to warn him that if he did not, "active measures" would be taken to make him.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Wellesley to Sindhia, 3 June 1803; Edmonstone to Collins, 3 June 1803, Wellesley, III: 132, 120.

Wellesley neither expected, nor wished, Sindhia to submit to this demand. Wellesley's instructions of 3 June were intended to build-up an argument for the necessity of the war he intended against Sindhia and the raja of Berar. Sindhia's insistence on maintaining his position close to the nizam's frontier would be interpreted, to the Home officials, as evidence that he intended to go to war against the Company and its allies in October after the monsoon season, and that as war was inevitable, the British should fight while they held the advantage.

It was essential for success that adequate arrangements were made to supply the army in the field. During the last week of June, Arthur experienced severe supply problems, partly due to the heavy rains taking a toll on his bullocks and partly because the peshwa was not giving any assistance. Philip Mason points out that bullocks were the key to everything in the Deccan campaign, and no word occurs more frequently in Arthur's correspondence.¹⁰⁵ His army could not function so far from Company territories without bullocks to transport his supplies. During the Deccan campaign, Arthur's civilian political assistant, Mountstuart Elphinstone, who was expecting a convoy of 9,000 bullocks loaded with rice, grain and money, commented that "the enemy have to dread the loss of their towns and the defeat of their troops, we have to fear the stopping of our

¹⁰⁵ Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour (London, 1986), p. 155.

supplies which will be as bad as defeat...."¹⁰⁶

On 4 June, Arthur complained to Close of the poor condition of the bullocks belonging to the banjaras--the travelling grain merchants who had contracted to accompany his detachment--which prevented his force from crossing the Godaverri. Without healthy bullocks to transport his supplies, he could not advance. Several weeks later, he urged Close to send banjaras and bullocks, otherwise he would have to retreat. After consulting Malcolm, who was at Poona, Close told the peshwa that unless he provided bullocks quickly, Arthur might have to fall back upon Poona because of a lack of supplies.¹⁰⁷

Wellesley subsequently criticized Malcolm and Close for "informing the Peshwa that the British army was at his mercy."¹⁰⁸ In defending their decision, Malcolm explained that Arthur had lost 6,000 bullocks in six days, owing to illness, and was down to several days supply of rice, and that the surrounding area could not supply his needs as it was barren from past Maratha plundering. Malcolm and Close decided that, as the peshwa had failed to respond to Close's previous requests for bullocks, they would jolt him into action. If this did not work, they planned to use military force to seize all the nearby bullocks. This proved unnecessary. The peshwa did give limited

¹⁰⁶ Elphinstone to Strachey, 21 Oct. 1803, MSS Eur. F128/163: fol. 111.

¹⁰⁷ A. Wellesley to Close, 4 June 1803, WD, I: 618; 20 June 1803, WD, II: 24. Close to Wellesley, 25 June 1803, PRC, X: 104.

¹⁰⁸ Shawe to Malcolm, 15 July 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 21.

aid which, along with the bullocks obtained from the nizam's territories and an improvement in the weather, eased Arthur's difficulties.¹⁰⁹

In their anxiety to improve Arthur's situation, Malcolm and Close broke a cardinal rule governing Anglo-Indian behaviour. As the Company's position in India depended upon its military prestige, the British forces could never be represented as incapable. As the peshwa's adherence to the treaty of Bassein was obtained under duress, it was unlikely that he would give the aid stipulated if he thought the Company might lose a contest with Sindhia and the raja of Berar. Malcolm recognized this, as only five days after he and Close had decided to tell the peshwa of Arthur's critical circumstances, he warned Shawe that:

numbers about him [the peshwa] still doubt our ability to stand the storm which appears... to be threatening the late arrangement and until they have full confidence in our power to protect them we can never expect the full benefit of their friendship [the promised aid].¹¹⁰

Close and Malcolm were caught between the need to ensure that Arthur would not have to retreat, which would break an even more important rule, and telling the peshwa that Arthur needed help to maintain his position. They chose the latter as the lesser of two evils as, by providing Arthur with the means to continue his advance toward Sindhia's fort of Ahmadnager, he

⁰⁹ Malcolm to Shawe, 6 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13746: fol. 225.

¹⁰ Malcolm to Shawe, 26 June 1803, Add. MSS 13746: fol. 188.

would have the opportunity to restore British prestige by capturing it. British military prestige rested to a great extent on their persistence in pursuing their objectives.

The peshwa's tardy response to British requests for aid caused Arthur to question Wellesley's policies. Collins' negotiations with Sindhia were guided by instructions from Wellesley that were based on the premise that the peshwa would give the aid stipulated by the treaty. The peshwa was not doing so, was corresponding with Sindhia's court and had refused to conciliate his southern jagirdars, which made their support of the Company, in the event of war, undecided.¹¹¹ Supply problems were aggravated by, what Arthur thought was, a lack of co-operation by Jonathan Duncan, the governor of Bombay,¹¹² who was having difficulty supplying Arthur's needs. Arthur, in frustration, told Close on 25 June that he thought the war should be avoided as his supply problems would make it more complicated than originally expected. He thought Collins should stall the negotiations until Wellesley sent revised instructions after he was told the actual circumstances. The Company should abandon the treaty of Bassein, leaving the Marathas to "fight out their own quarrels," while the Company defended the nizam's and its own territories, which the Marathas were unlikely to

¹¹¹ A. Wellesley to Close, 25 June 1803, WD, II: 42.

¹¹² J.W. Fortescue, A History of the British Army 13 vols. 1920, 2nd ed. (London, 1921), V: 11-2.

attack.¹¹³

Arthur was concerned that he would have to commence hostilities under the handicap of inadequate aid and supplies and, perhaps, the hostility of the peshwa's southern jagirdars. By 29 June he was in better spirits because his supply situation had improved. He changed his mind and wrote to Collins urging him to accelerate the negotiations with Sindhia.¹¹⁴

Toward the end of June, Wellesley was handed a casus belli to justify war with Sindhia and the raja of Berar when he received Collins' letter of 29 May reporting Sindhia's "peace or war" statement, which Wellesley termed "insulting and hostile."¹¹⁵ Immediately after Sindhia's and the raja of Berar's conference on 8 June, they raised money from the local people and were said to have sent a detachment of 8,000 horse toward the nizam's territories.¹¹⁶ Collins subsequently denied the report, saying that the detachment of horse seen by Arthur's spys close to the Ajunta Ghaut belonged to the raja of Berar and that he had ordered them back. Collins said that Sindhia had never posted a brigade at the Ajunta Ghaut.¹¹⁷ The unsubstantiated report suited Wellesley's purpose, however, and he claimed their actions were preparations for war. On 26 June

¹¹³ A. Wellesley to Close, 25 June 1803, WD, II: 42.

¹¹⁴ A. Wellesley to Collins, 29 June 1803, WSD, IV: 123.

¹¹⁵ Wellesley to Lake, 28 June 1803, WD, III: 165.

¹¹⁶ Shawe to Lake, 29 June 1803, Add. MSS 13739: fol. 118.

¹¹⁷ Collins to A. Wellesley, 24 July 1803, WD, II: 132.

he granted Arthur extraordinary powers to permit him to conclude, without the delay of referral to Fort William, the necessary arrangements "either for the final settlement of peace or for the active prosecution of war."¹¹⁸

Wellesley appointed Arthur to the chief command of all the British troops and the forces of the Company's allies serving in the territories of the peshwa, the nizam, or of any of the Maratha states or chiefs. But, in recognition of Stuart's and Lake's senior rank, he stipulated that Arthur was subject to their orders. Political authority was given to Arthur to conclude treaties with any of the Maratha chieftains unless Stuart should decide to take over the general command in the Deccan.¹¹⁹ Clive ordered Stuart to Fort St. George in June and, because he was in declining health, he remained there throughout the campaign, leaving the command with Arthur. Two days later, on 28 June, Wellesley sent Lake a plan of military operations to be carried out in the event of a war with Sindhia.¹²⁰

Sindhia's peace or war statement and the report that the Marathas had sent a detachment of cavalry toward the nizam's territories played into Wellesley's hands. He could describe these threats as proof that the Marathas were hostile. Having received the opening he was waiting for, Wellesley was ready to

¹¹⁸ Wellesley to A. Wellesley, secret, 26 June 1803, Wellesley, III: 149.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Wellesley to Lake, most secret and confidential, 28 June 1803, Wellesley, III: 164.

make the final moves toward war.

PROVOKING A CRISIS

Wellesley's first move was to set-out the peace terms he wanted from Sindhia and the raja of Berar following their defeat. They were sent to Arthur on 27 June and Lake on 27 July.¹²¹ As a copy would be sent home, the wording of the instructions was intended to create the illusion that his objectives were entirely defensive. In the south, Sindhia was to cede Broach and his seaports to block him off from the sea, ostensibly to prevent him from co-operating with a French invasion. To help to create a ring-fence around the Maratha states, Sindhia was also to give up his possessions in Gujerat and those south of the Narmada. In Hindustan, Wellesley sought cessions of territory which extended the Company's frontier to the Jumna, including Agra and Delhi, and a chain of posts on the western and southern banks of the river, that he claimed were necessary to secure the Company's north-western frontier. The annexation of Bundelkhand was stated to be necessary to improve the security of Benares and to secure the navigation of the Jumna.

A further objective was the destruction of, what Wellesley termed, "Perron's French state" in Hindustan, situated on the Jumna River contiguous to the Company's territories in Bengal.

¹²¹ Wellesley to A. Wellesley, most secret, 27 June 1803; Wellesley to Lake, secret, 27 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 153, 208.

In fact, this territory was not a state but a jagir granted to Perron on the same terms as any other jagir: he maintained an army, on the revenues from his grant, that served at Sindhia's request. Unlike the Indians who planned to turn their jagirs into independent states, Perron hoped to obtain a fortune and then leave India. To keep Sindhia and Holkar out of northern Hindustan after Sindhia's army under Perron was destroyed, Wellesley wanted alliances with the petty states south and west of the Jumna.

The main demands to be made on the raja of Berar were that he should cede the province of Cuttack, in order to give the Company a continual line of the eastern seacoast from the northern Circars to Bengal and accept the Warda river as a definite border between his territories and those of the nizam.

As Sindhia and the raja of Berar would be weakened by the terms of the peace settlement, Wellesley expected that they would turn to the Company for protection and enter his subsidiary alliance system, which would give the British control over their external relations. Holkar was also to be weakened in Wellesley's planned settlement of the Holkar family dispute, but he was to have some provision made for him. In addition to the acquisition of territory and the political arrangements with the Maratha states, an important part of Wellesley's plan was a generous financial arrangement for the Mughal emperor to live in dignity under British protection. The emperor was to be a symbol of the improvement of life in an India under British

paramountcy.

When British paramountcy was established in India, Wellesley planned to use this power in such a way that the Indians would perceive the British government as a benevolent patron. The governor-general was to be the supreme authority of this paternalistic despotism and under his direction the enlarged British empire would be accepted by the Indians and the heavy military outlays, which were the root cause of the debt, would no longer be necessary. Following the completion of his plan, Wellesley intended that the British power in India would rest on its paternalistic image rather than its military prestige. First, Wellesley needed to weaken Sindhia and the raja of Berar through large cessions of territory, and he now stipulated that the Maratha chiefs' withdrawal from the immediate vicinity of the nizam's frontier was no longer sufficient evidence of their pacific intentions.¹²² As this had previously been stated as the only means by which the two Maratha chiefs could avoid war with the Company, Arthur knew that he was expected to attack.

On 5 July, Wellesley received a dispatch from Collins, written on 12 June, stating that Sindhia and the rajah of Berar met for several hours on the evening of 8 June. Sindhia continued to put off giving Collins an answer to the question he asked on 28 May--were the negotiations between Sindhia, the raja

¹²² Wellesley to A. Wellesley, most secret, 27 June 1803, Wellesley, III: 157.

of Berar and Holkar conducted with a view to obstruct the treaty of Bassein? Collins thought this procrastination was to gain time, as he had learned that Sindhia and Holkar had reached an agreement and was told that Holkar was marching to join Sindhia. Taken in by Sindhia's bluff, Collins told him that he planned to leave for Aurangabad. Food prices were high in Sindhia's camp and there was also a severe shortage of money as he was unable to borrow any because he had failed to repay previous loans.¹²³ Arthur received a copy of Collins' dispatch and questioned his statement that Holkar was joining Sindhia, because he had information that Holkar had moved northward across the Tapti river with his whole army. Collins was deceived by Sindhia's ministers, accepting their claim as true, although there was no evidence to prove it.¹²⁴ Arthur thought that Sindhia would have given Collins a hostile answer to his question of 28 May if war was decided on and claimed that "they are all shaking."¹²⁵

Wellesley, however, was pleased with Collins' information as, even though it was false, his letter could be used as further evidence of the Marathas' hostile intentions. Wellesley decided to carry out the plan of war he had sent to Lake on 28 June.¹²⁶ The information of the high cost of provisions and

¹²³ Collins to Wellesley, 12 June 1803, Wellesley, III: 170.

¹²⁴ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 8 July 1803, WD, II: 74.

¹²⁵ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 20 June 1803, WD, II: 20.

¹²⁶ Wellesley to Lake, 5 July 1803, private and most secret, Wellesley, III: 174.

Sindhia's lack of funds convinced Wellesley that the war would be short.

Wellesley's posture now changed. The pretence of negotiating a peaceful settlement ended and the need for war was set-out for the Home officials' benefit. The procrastination of the two Maratha chiefs was interpreted as having a hostile motive--to gain time until conditions became more favourable for them after the monsoon season when the rivers were fordable. Therefore, as war was unavoidable, it should start before the Marathas were ready.

With war looming, Wellesley considered the conciliation of both Holkar and Amrut Rao important, to make sure they did not take advantage of the unprotected state of the Company's territories while the British troops were distracted. If the peshwa would not act, Arthur was instructed to act for him and open negotiations to reach an agreement with them.¹²⁷ Arthur had already sent Holkar a copy of the treaty of Bassein¹²⁸ and on 14 August he again proposed a settlement of Holkar's claims.¹²⁹

Throughout the war, Arthur's letters reflect a concern that Holkar might enter the hostilities against the Company if he thought it would benefit him. In the early stages of the war, Arthur was apprehensive that he would threaten his supply lines.

¹²⁷ Shawe to Malcolm, 26 July 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 25.

¹²⁸ A. Wellesley to Holkar, 16 July 1803, WD, II: 94.

¹²⁹ Malcolm to Shawe, 15 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13746: fol. 245.

After Holkar moved further north into Malwa, Arthur worried that he would take advantage of the preoccupation of the British forces with Sindhia and the raja of Berar to plunder the unprotected territories of the Company and its allies.

On 10 July, prior to receiving word of the change in Wellesley's pose, Close wrote to Arthur to suggest that he give Sindhia and the raja of Berar a deadline. Close believed this was the best way to move Sindhia without having to resort to war.¹³⁰ The idea of ending the traditional Indian procrastination during negotiations, by setting a fixed time by which a response was expected to a Company demand, was introduced in 1792 by Cornwallis, at Close's suggestion, in his peace negotiations with Tipu Sultan.¹³¹ This procedure became a customary British negotiating tool to signal that their patience had run out and they considered negotiations at an end. Although Wellesley had sent instructions to Arthur that the withdrawal of the two Maratha chiefs was no longer sufficient to prove their pacific intentions, he approved of Close's recommendation as he thought that a war commenced by Arthur, under such circumstances, would be considered "politic and just" by the Home officials.¹³²

By 14 July, Arthur had overcome his supply problems. He

¹³⁰ Close to A. Wellesley, 10 July 1803, IO H/622: fol. 615.

¹³¹ "Characters," The Asiatic Annual Register, XI, 1809, (London, 1811), p. 457.

¹³² Shawe to Malcolm, 5 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 37.

was, therefore, in a position to follow Close's advice and give Sindhia an ultimatum to return to his usual stations north of the Narmada or he would be attacked. Arthur's motive in doing so, however, was not to avoid a war as Close intended, but to bring on a war quickly. The strategical advantages lay with the Company during the monsoon season, when the Maratha cavalry was hampered by the fullness of the rivers.¹³³ Arthur explained to Close that he had not given a fixed time for Sindhia's withdrawal as he wished "to keep in my own breast the period at which hostilities will be commenced; by which advantage it becomes more probable that I shall strike the first blow, if I should find hostile operations to be necessary."¹³⁴ Upon learning of this, Close "retorted by denouncing [to Webbe] Arthur's lack of his usual spirit and confidence."¹³⁵ In fact, Arthur was aware that Sindhia would not consider his ultimatum as final as he had not set a fixed time by which he expected Sindhia's compliance. Sindhia, therefore, would think that the negotiations were ongoing and would continue to procrastinate, giving Arthur the opportunity to attack him, while claiming that the hostilities were justified as Sindhia's non-compliance showed that his intentions were hostile.

When Arthur received notification on 18 July of the

¹³³ A. Wellesley, Memo, n.d. [1801], "Upon Operations in the Maratha Territory," WD, I: 357.

¹³⁴ A. Wellesley to Close, 17 July 1803, WD, II: 98.

¹³⁵ Longford, Wellington, The Years of the Sword, p. 88.

extraordinary powers granted to him, he instructed Collins to urge Sindhia to return to Ujjain. If Sindhia remained obstinate, Collins was instructed to inform him that he had orders to withdraw from his camp and Collins should leave the following day.¹³⁶ Collins was anxious to reach an agreement as he was aware that Palmer's career had suffered because he had failed to reach a settlement with the peshwa and, on 17 July, he told Wellesley that Sindhia's court's attitude had changed owing to Wellesley's letter of 3 June.¹³⁷ In spite of learning that Sindhia was inclined now to respond favourably to the British demands for his withdrawal from the nizam's frontier, Arthur stated that the Maratha chiefs' intentions should not be judged pacific unless they returned to their usual stations in Malwa and Berar. Therefore, he had no intention of altering Collins' instructions of 18 July.¹³⁸ As Arthur did not expect Sindhia to comply with his ultimatum when it was not enforced by a time limit, he expected to receive word shortly that Collins, according to his orders of 18 July, had left Sindhia's camp leaving the way open for Arthur to attack.

Thinking that war was imminent, on 27 July Wellesley granted Lake extraordinary powers similar to those granted to Arthur the previous month. Wellesley was in "high spirits" and

¹³⁶ A. Wellesley to Collins, 18 July 1803, WD, II: 99.

¹³⁷ Collins to Wellesley, 17 July 1802 [recte 1803], IO H/622: fol. 6.

¹³⁸ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 24 July 1803, WD, II: 121.

"if things turned out right" he planned to move up river as this would make a difference of twenty days in his communications with Arthur in the Deccan.¹³⁹ At Calcutta there was optimism that the "French faction in Hindostan" would be "annihilated in 2 months if Collins doesn't continue blundering."¹⁴⁰ Collins had accepted the part assigned to him by the Maratha chieftains in their delaying tactics and was remaining in Sindhia's camp. As Collins thought that Wellesley was sincere when he stated he wanted peace, he continued trying to reach a pacific settlement. On 25 July, Collins told Arthur that Sindhia's minister was annoyed but thought that Sindhia should retreat from his position rather than risk war with the Company.¹⁴¹ By 28 July, "great apprehension" existed at Calcutta. The reason for alarm was stated to be the fear that Collins would obtain peace without acquiring any security against war when the Marathas were more prepared.¹⁴² As Wellesley was convinced that Sindhia had no intention of opposing the Company,¹⁴³ he actually was worried that he would be deprived of an opportunity for war.

Wellesley also worried that Arthur was tending to favour a peaceful settlement as he received a copy of Arthur's letter to

¹³⁹ Shawe to Malcolm, 30 July 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 31.

¹⁴⁰ Shawe to Malcolm, 28 July 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 29.

¹⁴¹ Collins to A. Wellesley, 25 July 1803, IO H/622: fol. 758. A. S. Bennell, "The Anglo-Maratha Confrontation of June and July 1803," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1962), p. 120.

¹⁴² Shawe to Malcolm, 28 July 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 29.

¹⁴³ Shawe to Malcolm, 17 May 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 6.

Collins of 29 June in which he wrote that the Marathas were not united, feared each other more than the Company and, therefore, peace could be maintained by causing them to fear the Company by threatening war if they did not retire from the nizam's frontier.¹⁴⁴ A letter from Arthur on 24 July to Wellesley stated the difficulties the British forces faced due to the weakness of the peshwa's government, the waivering of the southern jagirdars, and the unsettled and ruinous state of the country,¹⁴⁵ although he stated these difficulties were not insurmountable. When Wellesley received Arthur's 24 July letter, he was no longer confident that Arthur intended to transfer negotiations to the battlefield and on 15 August he ordered Lake to attack Perron's forces at the first favourable opportunity.¹⁴⁶

The draft of a letter written on 16 August by Shawe to Malcolm, telling him of the order for Lake to attack, indicates that several sentences were edited from it. The cancelled section states that "the proof of the superiority of the British power through intimidation rather than the successful use of arms would produce the same beneficial effects in establishing the Company's influence at Poona."¹⁴⁷ Wellesley no longer needed references to a peaceful outcome to the crisis as he

¹⁴⁴ A. Wellesley to Collins, 29 June 1803, WSD, IV: 123.

¹⁴⁵ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 24 July 1803, WD, II: 121.

¹⁴⁶ Shawe to Malcolm, 16 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 41.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

considered that sufficient time had been spent on a show of negotiations. He wanted an immediate end to them because he worried that Collins might sign an agreement with Sindhia that would remove his justification for attacking the Marathas on the basis of their hostility.

Arthur, contrary to Wellesley's nervous apprehension, was continuing his preparations for war. On 26 July he wrote to Major Alexander Walker, the resident at Baroda, informing him that as soon as Collins left Sindhia's camp he intended to attack, and he instructed Walker to tell Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Woodington to attack Broach as soon as he learned that hostilities had begun.¹⁴⁸ By 3 August, Arthur was camped within six miles of Ahmadnager, prepared to attack as soon as Collins left Sindhia's camp. Collins finally left on 3 August after sending to Arthur a proposal from the Marathas that on the same day as the Company's armies reached their usual stations at Madras, Seringapatam and Bombay, the two Maratha chieftains would reach Burhanpur.¹⁴⁹ Sindhia's ministers later argued that he wanted to remain at peace with the Company and if Collins had not left his camp "without taking leave," the war would never have started.¹⁵⁰ The Marathas considered that the negotiations

¹⁴⁸ A. Wellesley to Walker, 26 July 1803, WD, II: 133.

¹⁴⁹ Raja of Berar to A. Wellesley, received on 6 Aug., (recte 5 Aug.), Selections from the Letters, Despatches and Other State Papers Preserved in the Bombay Secretariat Maratha Series ed. George W. Forrest, (Bombay, 1885), p. 605.

¹⁵⁰ A. Wellesley, Memo to Wellesley, 10 Nov. 1803, WSD, IV: 221.

were still on-going and the letter to Arthur was the opening offer to negotiate for the removal of Arthur's force from its menacing position near Sindhia's territories.

Arthur received the Marathas' proposal on 5 August and wrote letters to both of them on 6 August, stating that he had offered peace while they had chosen war. Historians have assumed that the letters to the Marathas were sent to them on the same day as they were written and, therefore, write that Arthur declared war on 6 August. This was not the case. As these letters were tantamount to a declaration of war, the receipt of them would be the first indication to the Marathas that Arthur was not bluffing, as they were, and that he actually intended to go to war. As the roads to Ahmadnager were impassable for heavy guns and supplies, due to the wet weather, Arthur wanted to make sure that the Marathas had no chance of responding to these letters by immediately withdrawing their forces, which would remove the justification for attacking them, before the weather cleared and he could carry out his planned attack. He, therefore, held back the letters written to them. He moved to Ahmadnager on 8 August, when the weather cleared, and took the walled city by storm the same day. Following this successful attack he wrote to Collins, telling him of the action and enclosed the letters addressed to Sindhia and the raja of Berar dated 6 August, asking him to forward the letters to them.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ A. Wellesley to Collins, 8 Aug. 1803, IO P/BEN/SEC/117: 8

It was necessary for the British to call the Marathas' bluff and attack them in order to start the war, as they thought Sindhia and the raja of Berar would not attack them. The Maratha chieftains offered no resistance to Arthur's march to Poona and did not carry their bluff so far as to place their troops on the Company's frontier in Hindustan. Wellesley upped the terms in his negotiations with them to ensure they could not avoid war by withdrawing their force. Although he was authorized to attack even if Sindhia and the raja of Berar moved away from the nizam's frontier, Arthur thought Wellesley's argument, that the war was a response to a Maratha threat, would be unacceptable if he attacked Ahmadnager while the two Maratha leaders were retreating from the nizam's frontier. He, therefore, misled them into thinking the negotiations were still on-going so they would remain in their forward position. Wellesley had gotten the war that he wanted, and he was now dependent on the British forces to gain decisive victories so that substantial cessions of territory could be received from the Marathas as the price of peace.

Chapter 3

The War in the Deccan in 1803

Some of Wellington's operations were daring even to extravagance, some cautious to the verge of timidity, all founded as much upon keen and nice perceptions of the political measures of his adversaries as upon pure military considerations.

Sir William Napier¹

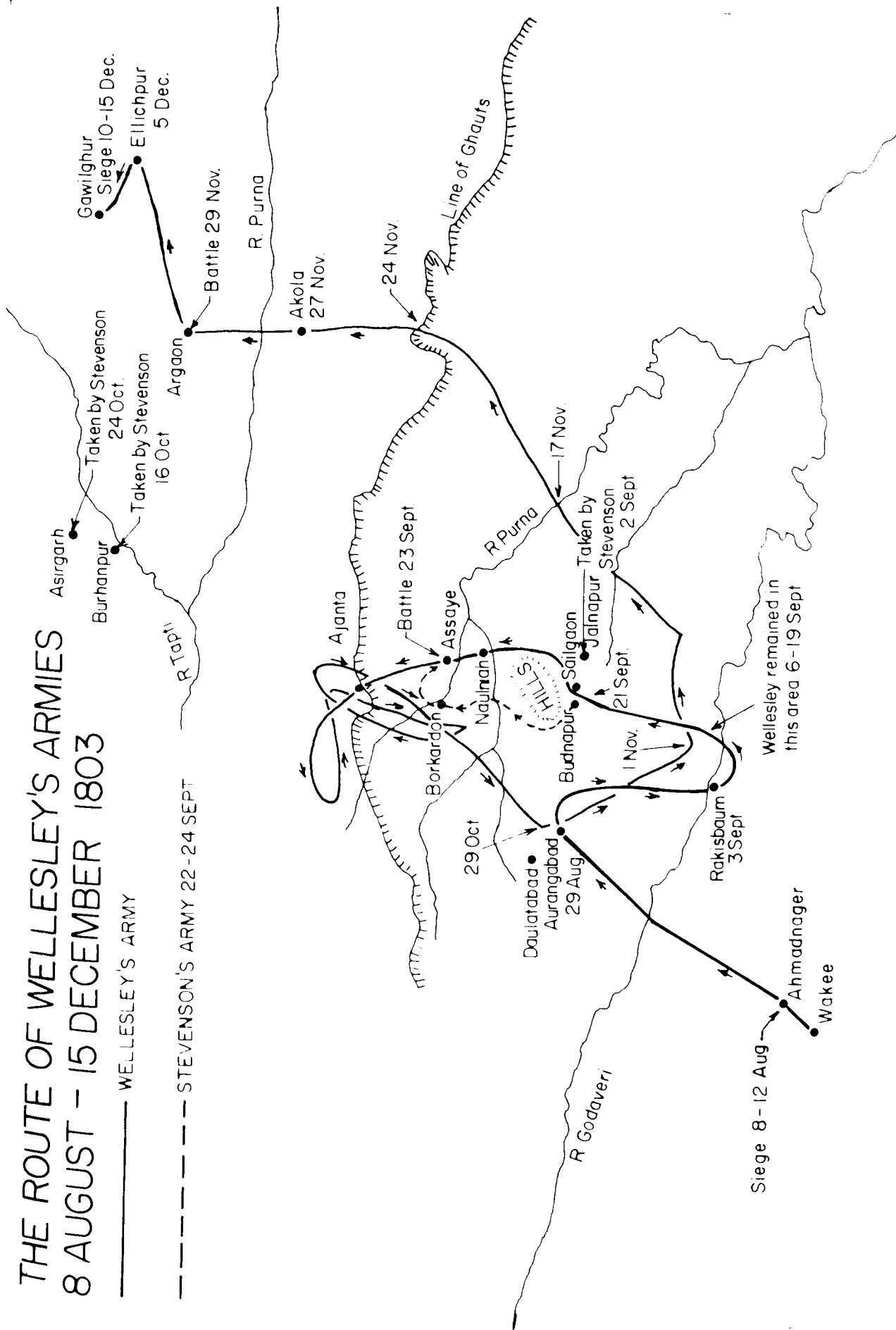
This is the first of two chapters on the war in 1803 against Sindhia and the raja of Berar. It focuses on the three campaigns in the Deccan in which British forces obtained the victories that Lord Wellesley needed in the south. The Cuttack campaign exemplifies the conciliatory military policy favoured by Wellesley which reduced resistance to the British forces and acquired collaborators. It also was a long-term political policy to conciliate the Indians to British paramountcy. The Gujerat-Surat campaign demonstrates the conflict between the civil and military authorities in the Bombay presidency and how this conflict hampered the army's efforts in Gujerat. The main campaign in the Deccan, under Arthur Wellesley's personal command, is covered in greater detail and establishes the importance of a well-planned system for supplying the army in the field. The battle of Assaye is given particular attention to show that the steadiness of Maratha resistance has been

¹ Quoted in The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860, eds. Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford (London, 1938), 11 Feb. 1838, p. 22.

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exaggerated, and that Arthur's strategic failure and tactical errors had to be remedied by decisive leadership. The assistance given by their subsidiary allies did not meet British expectations; on the contrary, as this chapter will show, the British were encumbered by their obligations to defend their allies' territories. They did make important strategical gains through their subsidiary alliances, and this chapter will begin with a comprehensive view of the British forces' positions to show the advantageous strategic positions that were acquired under Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system.

MOBILIZATION AND DEPLOYMENT

Previous to the outbreak of the Second Maratha War, Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system had created what C. A. Bayly terms Wellesley's cordon sanitaire of buffer states around the Marathas.² The encirclement, however, was not merely the defensive measure pictured by Bayly, but was intended to provide strategic positions from which the British forces could launch attacks on Maratha territories. The cession of Rohilkhand and the Lower Doab, obtained through the subsidiary alliance with Awadh in 1801, gave the East India Company territory alongside Sindhia's northern possessions that provided bases at Kanpur and Fatehgarh for the commander-in-chief, Lieutenant-General Gerard Lake's forces to attack Sindhia's main army under Pierre Perron

² Bayly, Indian Society, p. 94.

in Hindustan. Lieutenant-Colonel George Powell would command a detachment to take Bundelkhand. The subsidiary alliance with the gaekwar of Baroda provided a base for a Bombay force, ultimately placed under Lieutenant-Colonel John Murray, to offer protection to the gaekwar's territories and well situated for a march on Sindhia's capital of Ujjain. Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Woodington, commander of the gaekwar's subsidiary force, would be sent to capture Sindhia's seaport of Broach.

Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Campbell assembled a force at Ganjam in the Northern Circars, a district ceded to the Company by the nizam of Hyderabad in 1766, ready to invade the raja of Berar's western province of Cuttack, which the Company had long attempted to obtain through diplomatic negotiations.¹ Another force was to proceed from Calcutta to take the raja's port of Balasore in Orissa. Arthur's forces in the south, consisting of 9,098 of the Madras army, 9,408 of the Hyderabad subsidiary force under Colonel James Stevenson and 2,127 of the nizam's cavalry, owed their strategic position to the subsidiary alliances with the nizam and the peshwa, and were prepared to protect their territories, take Sindhia's strongholds in the south, invade the raja of Berar's southern territories and attack their combined forces with the aim of destroying them.

The commander-in-chief of the Madras army, Lieutenant-

¹ For an account of British efforts to obtain possession of western Orissa see Bhabani Charan Ray, Orissa Under Marathas, 1751-1803 (Allahabad, 1960).

General James Stuart, was at Moodgul with 7,601 out of the total Madras force of 16,699, until Lord Clive, the governor of Madras, ordered him back to the coast in June. Madras was worried about its defenceless state because London had recently advised that an extensive French force was thought to be destined for India.⁴ Arthur considered Stuart's position at Moodgul, in the southwest of the nizam's territories, "the mainstay of all our operations": it ensured tranquillity in the territories of the nizam, the peshwa, the Company and Mysore and kept the peshwa's southern chieftains in check.⁵ His recrossing of the Tungabhadra river, therefore, considerably weakened the Company's position.⁶ The question was settled by Stuart remaining in Madras with a small force, while sending Major-General Dugald Campbell to Moodgul.

Few of the Bombay force of 21,262 were stationed in Bombay. Because of the unsettled state of the southern provinces of Malabar and Canara, there were approximately 10,000 Bombay troops in thirty-two stations scattered throughout that area to check insurrection.⁷ The defence of Bombay and Goa was left to

⁴ Adjutant general's office, Fort St. George, 30 May 1803, IO P/BEN/SEC/121; Stuart to Close, 17 June 1803, PRC, VII: 95.

⁵ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 7 July 1803, WD, II: 73.

⁶ A. Wellesley to Murray, 7 July 1803; A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 8 July 1803, WD, II: 72, 74.

⁷ "State of the Forces Serving Under Colonel Montresor in the Provinces of Malabar and Canara," Wellesley, III: 666.

the Royal navy. Shortly after the outbreak of war with the Marathas, Wellesley told Vice-Admiral Peter Rainier, commander of the British fleet, that the Bombay presidency had limited military resources available against a French attack and the defence of the coast would be left to him. Rainier arrived at Bombay on 7 November, after arranging for his smaller ships to protect Goa and the Malabar coast.*

This deployment of the British forces was carefully planned as a common complaint of the army in India was the inadequate number of troops for the duties Wellesley expected of it. In August 1800, Arthur thought that Wellesley was expanding the Company's territory and influence beyond its means. The Company increased its enemies by disbanding the Indian states' armies which deprived their troops of employment. Arthur thought the Company should employ the discharged men, rather than risk having them plunder the Company's or its allies' territories. He admitted that this policy would be expensive "but if you are determined to conquer all India at the same moment you must pay for it."⁹ Lake, also, was concerned that Wellesley's expansionist policies were over-extending the military resources of British India. When the Company acquired Rohilkhand and the

* Wellesley to Rainier, 14 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 13752: fol. 115; C. Northcote Parkinson, War in the Eastern Seas (London, 1954), p. 207.

⁹ A. Wellesley to Munro, 20 Aug. 1800, WD, I: 209-10; A. Wellesley to Munro, 10 Oct. 1800, Add. MSS 29239: fol. 14.

Lower Doab from the nawab of Awadh in 1801, Lake claimed that the Company's force was hardly adequate for its duties.¹⁰

The King's ministers and the court of directors, who were concerned about the increasing debt and the large percentage of the Company's revenue being consumed by military expenses, wanted to reduce the number of troops in India. In July 1800 Wellesley tried to persuade Dundas to increase the number of European troops, arguing that the expansion of the Company's territories required a proportionate increase in the European force. The total number of Europeans in both the King's and the Company's armies, plus a Swiss corps, was 14,000. Wellesley claimed that a reduction of one-quarter, to allow for the sick, would leave only 10,500 fit for action. He proposed that the European infantry be fixed at twenty-five regiments with 1,200 rank and file, a total of 30,000, which would place 18,000 men in the field.¹¹

Dundas found Wellesley's proposal as unacceptable as his arithmetic. He pointed out that a sick rate of one-eighth was more realistic than one-quarter, but even allowing for one-quarter of 30,000, 22,500 would be fit instead of 18,000 as calculated by Wellesley. Dundas did not think that 18,000 Europeans were needed, or that the British troops should

¹⁰ Lake to Wellesley, private, 3 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 13741: fol. 49.

¹¹ Wellesley to Dundas, private, 13 July 1800, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 273.

proportionately increase as the Company's territories expanded. A better criterion was "the relative power of our supposed enemies." The heavy load of Indian debt was the "only mortal foe," in Dundas' opinion, and he could only recommend seventeen European regiments instead of the twenty-five suggested by Wellesley.¹² This amount of European force was adequate, in Dundas' opinion, for the task required of it, the defence of the British possessions in India. Wellesley, however, had more ambitious plans for the troops. He wanted a force capable of attacking the Marathas.

The Company's armies were also short of European officers. Arthur thought that success was unlikely when a sepoy corps was short of officers, as the sepoy's efforts were largely dependent on their European officers' leadership and example. A possible source of supply was the young European men in India who had failed in other endeavours. They would make satisfactory officers, but Arthur thought the court of directors would object, although they were not making full use of their patronage.¹³ Arthur blamed the court of directors, but a new recruitment system had been introduced in 1799 and the King's recruitment officers provided the Company with officers.¹⁴

¹² Dundas to Wellesley, private, 30 Dec. 1800, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 313.

¹³ A. Wellesley to Braithwaite, 7 May 1800, Add. MSS 29238: fol. 3.

¹⁴ Stephen P. Cohen, The Indian Army (Berkeley, 1971), p. 18.

Arthur N. Gilbert suggests that "the supply of available men in wartime was less dependent upon tinkering with the machinery of recruitment than upon the demands of the regular army." The duke of York, commander-in-chief of the British army, gave preference to the King's army. Gilbert shows that only 1,637, twenty-two per cent of British recruits sent to India in the years 1798-1802, were obtained by the Company.¹⁵

Castlereagh, in early 1803, worried that the Company's artillery was understrength. He told the duke of York that, owing to the cost, it had shrunk in comparison with the infantry and cavalry and there was a deficiency of over one-fourth of the establishment.¹⁶ Nothing was done, and by 1805 the deficiency had increased to thirty-six per cent, as the artillery had only 2,393 of the 3,780 men fixed by the secret committee.¹⁷

As Wellesley failed to obtain more European troops, he ignored an order, in 1801, to reduce the size of the Company army and to send home several of the King's regiments, arguing that it was his duty to disobey orders that might endanger the British position in India. In February 1802, however, he knew

¹⁵ Arthur N. Gilbert, "Recruitment and Reform in the East India Company Army, 1760-1800," Journal of British Studies 15 (1975): 110.

¹⁶ Castlereagh to duke of York, 11 Jan. 1803, IO H/504: fol. 29.

¹⁷ Return of the effective strength of the Company's forces, 1 Apr. 1805, Wellesley, IV: 670.

he would have to reduce the number of sepoy's in the Indian army¹⁸ because, with peace, he could no longer justify the cost as necessary to meet an imminent French threat. He told the court of directors in March 1802 that he had ordered reductions and by June he was able to advise the secret committee that he expected to save £160,000.¹⁹

As the total military expenditures for the fiscal year 1802-3 were £6,061,169,²⁰ this reduction would be less than three per cent. It was achieved by reducing the number of sepoy's, who could be replaced when needed because the Indian labour market provided an almost limitless supply of troops, both horse and foot,²¹ and the Company could rehire many of the discharged sepoy's. Wellesley's preparations for a war with the Marathas, therefore, were not harmed by this token cut.

Wellesley was unable to obtain the extra European troops he wanted for his empire-building, as his request to the Home government for an increase was necessarily stated as a defensive, instead of an offensive, need and it was rejected as

¹⁸ Wellesley to Clive, 19 Dec. 1801, 8 Feb. 1802, Add. MSS 13625: fols. 97, 103.

¹⁹ ggic to cd, 13 Mar. 1802, Add. MSS 13446: fol. 57; ggic to sc, 5 June 1802, Add. MSS 13415: fol. 77.

²⁰ Statement of Revenues and Charges, India laid before Parliament 1808, MSS Eur. F/204.

²¹ Dirk H.A. Kolff, "The End of an Ancien Regime: Colonial War in India 1798-1818," in Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa, eds. J.A. deMoor & H.L. Wesseling (Leiden, 1989), p. 23.

unnecessary. He, therefore, carefully arranged the available troops in the favourable strategic positions obtained through his subsidiary alliance system. To increase the troops available for offensive duty, he stinted on the number protecting the British territories. He also followed conciliatory policies to obtain collaborators to reduce the resistance to the British invasion forces.

THE CUTTACK CAMPAIGN

Ronald Robinson has shown the British used collaborators to sustain their imperial regimes in lieu of a heavy commitment of metropolitan men and money.²² The use of conciliation in lieu of military force is particularly evident in the policies followed by the British in the Cuttack campaign. Wellesley's long-term aim was to conciliate the Indian people, to persuade them to accept British paramountcy. His short-term aim was to reduce the local opposition, as there were insufficient troops to cope with large-scale resistance.

On 3 August, before he learned of the final break-down of the negotiations with the Marathas, Wellesley ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Campbell to invade Cuttack and to gain the goodwill of the people. Campbell was instructed to

²² Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism," in Studies in the Theory of Imperialism eds. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (Harlow Essex, 1972).

promise protection to life and property and to make a particular effort to conciliate the brahmins in charge of the pagoda of Jagganath, an important destination of religious pilgrims, as Wellesley wanted the Indians to perceive the British as the protectors of their persons, property and religion. Wellesley told George Barlow, the senior member of the Bengal council, that he

considered the respect shown by the government to the religious observances and ceremonies of the Natives as one of the primary causes of the confidence of the Natives in the Government and that if the time should ever arrive when a different system of policy should be pursued...we should lose India.²³

C. A. Bayly suggests that the importance of the British religious policies should not be underestimated as, even if it cannot be assumed that the Indian people were manipulated by them, they did prevent trouble. In the 1840's, serious riots broke out and mass petitions were circulated protesting the government's abandonment of its religious duties when the Company responded to evangelical Christian pressure and began to relinquish direct administration of Hindu places of worship.²⁴

The British used bribes as another means to obtain collaborators. Pensions were paid to Indian ministers to influence an Indian state's policies or, at the least, to obtain

²³ Unsigned note, n/d, [Barlow, 1806], Add. MSS 37281: fol. 176.

²⁴ Bayly, Indian Society, p. 114.

information of its plans. Minor chieftains were offered employment for their armies or grants of land revenue to bring them over to the British side.

In Cuttack, Wellesley wanted collaborators to reduce the number of British troops needed to occupy the territory. He, therefore, authorized payments to the influential chieftains for not opposing the Company's occupation.²⁵ He conciliated the rajas and minor chieftains, who possessed the passes leading into the Company's provinces from the raja of Berar's northern territories in Orissa, by paying them for their services.²⁶ The British suspended one rani's revenue payment and, in lieu of it, she was asked to help their troops by guarding the local passes and warning them of an enemy approach.²⁷ Campbell, owing to illness, gave up the command to Lieutenant-Colonel George Harcourt, who tried to obtain the fort of Baripati by offering a bribe. He received no response and, in this case, had to use force.²⁸

In some instances the British eroded the military power of the raja of Berar by bringing Indians over to their side. A

²⁵ Edmonstone to Melville and Campbell, 3 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 13608: fol. 13.

²⁶ Lumsden to Broughton, 25 Aug. 1803, IO P/BEN/SEC/120: 12 Nov. 1803, no. 12.

²⁷ K.M. Panikkar, "The Ring Fence System' and the Marathas," Journal of Indian History 8 (1929): 344.

²⁸ Ray, Orissa Under Marathas, p. 115.

British force travelled by sea from Calcutta to occupy the port of Balasore, with instructions to bring into the Company's service a corps of about 500 irregular cavalry to assist them, while depriving the raja of Berar of their services. Wellesley thought the Pathan adventurers and former inhabitants of Awadh and the Company's territories, who were in the raja of Berar's service, would change sides if offered a sufficient incentive.²⁹

The British troops available to defend the British territories contiguous to Berar from Maratha raids were also limited. Just before the outbreak of war, Courtney Smith, the magistrate of Midnapore, wrote to John Lumsden, chief secretary to the Supreme government, arguing against the removal of the force stationed in his district. He complained that while the government was acknowledging the probability of a war with Berar, it was moving "all its force to the Upper Provinces and this most vulnerable part of its dominions is left naked and defenceless to the enemy."³⁰ Although Wellesley replaced Smith for insubordination, he had already ordered the force at Midnapore to be increased.³¹

In the meantime, priority for the use of the Bengal army

²⁹ Edmonstone to Morgan, 6 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 13608: fol. 105.

³⁰ Smith to Lumsden, 5, 13 Aug. 1803, IO P/BEN/SEC/120: 12 Nov. 1803, nos. 64, 65.

³¹ Lumsden to Smith, 20 Aug. 1803, IO P/BEN/SEC/120: 12 Nov. 1803, no. 66. Wellesley to Lake, 18 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 191.

was given to Lake's campaign in Hindustan and bribes and conciliatory policies were used to reduce the number of troops needed in Cuttack. This conciliatory policy, by obtaining collaborators to control the passes into Cuttack, undermined the raja of Berar's defensive base. With the raja's main force tied down by Arthur's forces in the south, he was prevented from sending reinforcements. The British forces, therefore, met little resistance in Cuttack. As Wellesley's aim was to establish a benevolent despotism acceptable to Indians, his instructions to the officers in command of the British forces in Cuttack show a greater concern with the conciliation of the people than the military orders issued in the other campaigns of the war. His conciliatory policies were also intended to lessen the amount of resistance, as the number of Bengal troops available for the campaign was limited.

THE GUJERAT-SURAT CAMPAIGN

The Bombay presidency also was short of troops in August 1803, and the problem was exacerbated by conflict between the civil and military authorities. Duncan resented the authority delegated by Wellesley to Arthur because he thought the Bombay army should come under the control of the government of Bombay.

Sir Patrick Cadell, in his study of the Bombay army, concludes that it was too small for the demands made upon it

during the Second Maratha War.³² Arthur complained that in spite of the subsidiary treaty with Baroda, the increase of territory, the detachment at Poona and the war with the Marathas, the Bombay army remained the same size. But he thought it adequate to obtain Wellesley's objectives in Gujerat given "organization, equipment, and regular sources of supplies"³³ to increase its efficiency.

Arthur's calculation of the size of the Bombay army was incorrect, as it was twenty-one per cent larger in April 1803 than in April 1801, having increased from 17,569 to 21,262.³⁴ With approximately 10,000 Bombay troops in Canara and Malabar and a battalion in Poona, there were 2488 Europeans and 8013 sepoys available for an offensive force in Gujerat.³⁵ The British also had the use of the gaekwar's subsidiary force.

Prior to the Second Maratha War the troops in Gujerat and Surat were under separate commands. Major Alexander Walker, the British resident at Baroda, commanded the detachment at Baroda. Walker, although an army officer, held a civil position under

³² Sir Patrick Cadell, History of the Bombay Army (London, 1938), p. 138.

³³ A. Wellesley to Close, 19 Aug. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/46, folder 5.

³⁴ Bombay Military Statements, 30 Apr. 1801, IO L/MIL/8/159, 1 Apr. 1803; 30 Apr. 1803, L/MIL/8/160, 6 Feb. 1805.

³⁵ "Military Returns," Wellesley, III: 665.

the government of Bombay. The detachment at Surat was under the command of the committee of Surat, comprised of a collector, a judge and an army officer, set-up by Duncan in 1800 to ensure civil authority over the military. Two of the three members of the committee were civilians. Duncan thought no change was necessary because he took Wellesley at his word when he said that the war was the result of Maratha aggression and thought that "a mere system of defence was contemplated."³⁶ He told the committee and Walker to consult Arthur on a common defence of their respective territories.³⁷ Arthur, however, complained that Duncan and Walker had "their troops scattered in companies in ten thousand different directions."³⁸ He preferred to supervise a single command and recommended the consolidation of the troops and the military command in Gujerat under one officer, independent of the committee of Surat. He suggested Murray for this post.

Arthur, who complained that the committee of Surat discussed, considered and referred a subject, but did nothing, was convinced that his suggestion would not be carried out unless Wellesley pressured Duncan, because "it interferes with all his [Duncan's] little prejudices," a reference to Duncan's

³⁶ Duncan to A. Wellesley, 23 Aug. 1803, PRC, X: 130.

³⁷ Duncan to A. Wellesley, 23 July 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/18, folder 6.

³⁸ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 24 Aug. 1803, WD, II: 231.

worry that the Bombay government would lose control over the army. Arthur decided to persevere with the overall command of the Gujerat-Surat campaign, as he was certain that Wellesley would back him.³⁹

Duncan disagreed with Arthur's plan, arguing that the military action against Canajee, a rebel opposing the gaekwar's authority, should be directed by Walker.⁴⁰ Depriving him of the local command would lessen his image of authority and jeopardize the Company's position in Baroda. He questioned Arthur's proposal to displace the committee of Surat, for he wished to ensure "the superiority of the civil over the military authority." He particularly disliked the independence given to Arthur by Wellesley which allowed Arthur to spend freely without supervision from Bombay.⁴¹ Duncan's system was intended to keep the army under government control, which he thought Wellesley expected him to do owing to Bombay's dependence on Bengal for a cash subsidy. He was unaware that Wellesley now wanted authority delegated and priority given to the army's financial needs to ensure a swift victory over the Marathas. Duncan agreed on 17 August to place Murray in command of a combined force, as suggested by Arthur, if Arthur assumed responsibility

³⁹ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 24 Aug. 1803, WD, II: 231.

⁴⁰ Duncan to A. Wellesley, 17 Aug. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/18, folder 5.

⁴¹ Duncan to Scott, 30 Dec. 1803, Scott, II: 434-5.

for it.⁴²

Although Duncan, on 28 August, appointed Murray to the command of the entire force as suggested by Arthur, he persisted in his defence of the civil authority, telling Wellesley that he yielded because of the powers Wellesley had vested in Arthur but he thought that he did not intend this power to change the Bombay presidency's constitution and allow Arthur to impose officers of his own choice on its army.⁴³

Duncan drew up Murray's orders after consulting Malcolm, who was in Bombay for health reasons, which Malcolm thought gave Murray all the necessary power, and all he believed Arthur meant Murray to have.⁴⁴ Duncan's instructions to Murray⁴⁵ reflect Arthur's view of the arrangement of the command, but Duncan instructed Murray to comply, if possible, with the requisitions of Walker and the civil authorities at Surat and in the Attavesy. All Murray's communications with the gaekwar's government were to be made through Walker, and Woodington, although under Murray's command, was to correspond directly with Walker. The intent of Duncan's instructions was to ensure that Murray did not erode Walker's civil authority. On 14 September,

⁴² Duncan to A. Wellesley, 23 Aug. 1803, PRC, X: 128-30.

⁴³ Duncan to Wellesley, private, 29 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13701: fol. 149.

⁴⁴ Malcolm to Shawe, 7 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 13746: fol. 260.

⁴⁵ J.A. Grant, "Instructions to the officer in general command of the troops in Gujerat," 6 Sept. 1803, PRC, X: 141-5.

Arthur agreed to superintend Murray's combined command, as he received a copy of Duncan's instructions to Murray and found them acceptable. Arthur explained to Murray that Walker had to have nominal authority over the Gujerat troops as

In this part of the world there is no power excepting that of the sword; and it follows that if these political agents have no authority over the military, they have no power whatever.

If the Indians perceived the resident as weak because he lacked this authority, he would have no influence over them.⁴⁶

Prior to his disagreement with Duncan, Arthur, under the authority of his overall command, ordered Woodington to proceed against Broach with the gaekwar's subsidiary force. Woodington took the city on 25 August and four days later its fort. Murray's force in Gujerat continued to be undermanned and poorly supplied and, therefore, Murray was unable to take any offensive action during the campaign. Murray complained in January 1804 that he had not received a single cartridge in response to an order he had sent to Bombay in early September 1803.⁴⁷ His force was incomplete, and what troops he had were sickly because they were inadequately provided for by Bombay. He had no British cavalry and was dependent on the gaekwar's, which did

⁴⁶ A. Wellesley to Murray, 13 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 411.

⁴⁷ Murray to Walker, private, 5 Jan. 1804, Walker MSS 13633.

not join him until 7 November⁴⁸ as its troops had been plundering the Bhils.

This delay was necessary because the gaekwar's cavalry, by tradition, obtained their supplies through plunder. Because the gaekwar lacked the means to supply them, and the Bombay government did not give Murray the money, the only way they could remain in the field was by plundering. Murray was caught between following Arthur's orders to conciliate the people by paying for everything and the Indian cavalry's custom of taking their forage and firewood without payment. This caused friction between Murray, a King's officer, and his subordinate Company officers, who sided with the gaekwar's cavalry because they knew that Wellesley's conciliatory policy could not be imposed on the gaekwar's cavalry without giving them money to pay for their supplies.⁴⁹ Walker initially thought that Murray was complaining about the gaekwar's cavalry because he wished to raise his own unit, but he subsequently changed his opinion, agreeing that the gaekwar's cavalry was a rabble, scarcely fit for collecting revenue and not suitable for war.⁵⁰

Without an adequate cavalry force, Murray could not obtain his objective--to move through Gujerat into Malwa and apply

⁴⁸ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 24 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 446; Murray to Walker, private, 7 Nov. 1803, Walker MSS 13633.

⁴⁹ Carnac to Walker, extract, 12 Dec. 1803, enclosure in Walker to Duncan, 28 Dec. 1803, Walker MSS 13631.

⁵⁰ Walker to Duncan, private, 30 Dec. 1803, Walker MSS 13631.

pressure to Sindhia by opening a third front by attacking his capital of Ujjain. It was impossible for Murray to march on Ujjain while Canajee remained in his rear as, without cavalry protection, Canajee could cut his supply line. Murray intended to attack Canajee if he caught up with him or if Canajee invaded Gujerat. He did neither, and kept several marches ahead of Murray. Although Arthur considered freeing Murray to march on Ujjain by offering Canajee a pension⁵¹ he abandoned the idea when he was told that Holkar might have allied with Canajee, who would likely refuse the offer.⁵²

Holkar also pinned Murray down, as he entered Malwa in early October with a large force. Because of Holkar's numerous cavalry, Arthur considered him "the most formidable of the three supposed confederates."⁵³ The British were confident that their armies were superior to the Marathas' Europeanized armies if they met in pitched-battle. They were nervous, however, of Holkar's army because they thought he retained the traditional Maratha emphasis on cavalry. Murray, therefore, was prevented from following Canajee when he moved into Malwa or from marching on Ujjain because he was nervous that Holkar's cavalry would

⁵¹ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 15 Sept. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/71, folder 2.

⁵² A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 16 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 309.

⁵³ A. Wellesley to Duncan, 22 June 1803, WSD, IV: 118.

attack him.⁵⁴

In addition to his shortage of fit troops and dependable cavalry, Murray was also hampered by inadequate supplies and money. Bombay was suffering from financial strain as the demands made upon it for Arthur's army and the forces in Malabar and Gujerat could only be met by subsidies from Bengal, which were inadequate. Arthur, in November, complained that he had written to Bengal three months previously requesting that money be sent to Bombay for his use, but received no reply. Bombay was habitually dependent on Bengal for financial aid. In the financial year 1802-3, the Bombay revenues were £317,570, with civil charges of £290,437 and military charges of £722,648, leaving a short-fall of £695,515.⁵⁵ In the year 1806-7, the Bombay revenues were £655,000, with civil charges of £390,000 and military charges of £700,000, with a short-fall of £435,000, even before the interest on the debt, extraordinary charges, and other expenses are taken into account.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Murray to Walker, private, 12 Nov., 20 Nov., 6 Dec. 1803, Walker MSS 13633; Walker to Duncan, private, 2 Jan. 1804, Walker MSS 13631.

⁵⁵ Statement of the Revenues and Subsidies, and of Charges upon the Revenues of the Three Presidencies, from 1798-1799 to 1802-1803. Wellesley, V: "Supplement, Financial," p. 116. 10 rupees=£1.

⁵⁶ A General Abstract of the Estimated Receipts and Disbursements at the Three Presidencies of Fort William, Fort St. George and Bombay, in the year 1806-7. Wellesley, V: "Supplement, Financial," pp. 14-5.

In addition to the financial difficulties of the Bombay presidency, there were divisions between the King's and the Company's armies and the civil and military authorities. These factions, as well as a shortage of money, prevented adequate arrangements being made for Murray's force. In addition, he was nervous of Holkar and lacked sufficient cavalry to protect his supply line so he was unable to open an additional front against Sindhia by marching on Ujjain. The pressure on Sindhia in the south, therefore, was dependent on Arthur's efforts.

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE DECCAN

Arthur's aim was to bring Sindhia and the raja of Berar's armies to a pitched-battle so he could prove himself commanding the British forces in an important and decisive battle, as he was confident he would win. Arthur was a considerable distance from his supply sources and throughout the campaign the protection of his supply lines was a top priority for him, as he could not remain in his forward position if his supplies were cut off.

Arthur's first military objective was Sindhia's fortress of Ahmadnager because it would yield important strategic and political advantages. The fort was strategically important because it covered the line of communication with Poona and Bombay, protected the nizam's western frontier and provided a

depot for supplies.⁵⁷ Arthur took the city of Ahmadnager after a short fight on 8 August and the fort, after continuous fire from a British battery, capitulated four days later eliminating the need for an assault. He appointed a military officer as the collector at Ahmadnager and told him that tranquillity and maintaining communications with Poona and Bombay were more important than the collection of a large revenue.

Although the fort surrendered, instead of falling under an assault, Arthur claimed that his success enhanced British prestige, as he had taken possession of "a place of great note...frequently attacked, but never taken." Ahmadnager was considered "the Gibraltar of the Deccan," and the British considered its capture would impress the peshwa and his southern chieftains and if Holkar was equally impressed he would, at the least, remain neutral.⁵⁸ It was customary for the Marathas to stand aside until they were sure who would win, and Arthur hoped that the capture of Ahmadnager would influence Holkar's perception of British power so his cavalry would not attack the British supply convoys.

Arthur also hoped that Amrut Rao would be impressed and an effort was made to bring him over to the British side. An agreement was reached in mid-August that gave Amrut Rao an

⁵⁷ A. Wellesley to H. Wellesley, 17 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 311.

⁵⁸ A. Wellesley to H. Wellesley, 17 Sept. 1803; A. Wellesley to Stuart, 19 Aug. 1803, WD, II: 311, 216; Shawe to H. Wellesley, 13 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 41.

annual revenue of £70,000 from the peshwa, guaranteed by the Supreme government. Amrut Rao was required to join Arthur within nineteen days. But, the capitulation of Ahmadnager was not sufficient to convince him that the British would ultimately win and he procrastinated until November, when he was sure he was going over to the winning side. Arthur hoped to conciliate the southern chieftains by bringing Amrut Rao over to the British side so they would not threaten the flow of supplies from Mysore.

Arthur's comprehensive system for supplying his army in the field was an important development which enabled the army to move far ahead of its source of supplies. His system reduced the risk of having to retreat, because the supplies ran out, as Cornwallis had done before Seringapatam in 1791.⁵⁹ Much of the responsibility for shipping Arthur's supplies fell upon the collector in the Ceded Districts of Mysore, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Munro. At the outbreak of the war Munro told his assistant, Peter Bruce, that "military operations are at present of more consequence than revenue" because, unless supplies were sent quickly, both of them would be blamed.⁶⁰ Malcolm later stated that "throughout the whole Maratha war no part of the Company's territories of the same extent afforded such resources

⁵⁹ See "Memorandum...Detailing the System for Regulating the Supplies of an Army in the Deccan," A. Wellesley, 3 Nov. 1804, WD, III: 535.

⁶⁰ Munro to Bruce, 16 Aug. 1803, MSS Eur. F/151/11: fol. 57.

in men, money and grain as Mysore."⁶¹ From the end of 1802 until March 1805, Munro provided approximately 25,000 carriage bullocks used to transport grain to the army in the field.⁶² He also arranged for the building of basket boats, hired boatmen, and sent sums of money monthly to the army, although the basket boats were not as consistently useful as is usually claimed, as the monsoon failed in August and the rivers became fordable much earlier than usual. Munro continued shipments of grain to the army even when drought struck the Ceded Districts and he had to curtail commercial exports.⁶³

Martha McLaren shows that Munro, Malcolm and Mountstuart Elphinstone took advantage of the career-building opportunities available during the Second Maratha War,⁶⁴ but Munro's efforts were also intended as added protection against a threatened career setback. He was anxious to satisfy Arthur because Webbe had warned him, in November 1802, that the court of directors wanted soldiers removed from civil appointments and that his own

⁶¹ Malcolm to Minto, private, 8 Oct. 1807, MSS Eur. F/228/89.

⁶² T.H. Beaglehole, Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras, 1792-1818; The Origins of the Munro System (Cambridge, 1966), p. 68.

⁶³ Burton Stein, Thomas Munro The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire (Delhi, 1989), p. 120; A. Wellesley to Munro, 8 Apr. 1803, WD, I: 479-80; Munro to Bruce, 7 June 1803, MSS Eur. F/151/11: fol. 80.

⁶⁴ McLaren, "Writing and Making History," Part I, Chapter 3.

position would be in danger if the court persisted.⁶⁵ Webbe repeated his warning in April 1803. Although Munro knew that the government experienced "more difficulty in finding able men than appointments," and he had received the court of directors' confirmation of his appointment,⁶⁶ he wanted the reinsurance of Arthur's and Wellesley's approval and backing. Munro's position was still perceived as shaky a year later when the government of Madras received orders to remove Munro unless he could justify the hard-line he proposed against the turbulent poligars in his district. As the court of directors preferred a conciliatory policy, they again ordered that no army officers be appointed as collectors if qualified civil servants were available, inferring that they thought civilians less likely to use force to curb unrest.⁶⁷

Although the supplies Munro sent were vital to Arthur, he also wanted to obtain supplies locally, so he tried to secure the local peoples' trust and co-operation by deterring his troops from plundering private property. His motive was different from his brother's. Wellesley's motive was political, to persuade the people to accept his benevolent despotism. Arthur, in this instance, considered the conciliation of the

⁶⁵ Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov. 1802, MSS Eur. F/151/2: fol. 16.

⁶⁶ Munro to Bruce, 4 Feb. 1803, MSS Eur. F/151/11: fol. 109; Stein, Munro, p. 98.

⁶⁷ J. Grant to Malcolm, 13 Sept. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fol. 299.

people of military value: he was concerned with procuring supplies for his army. By obtaining the peoples' trust, he expected goods to be available for purchase by the army en route instead of being hidden. His general orders of 12 August 1803 stated that he would severely punish anyone found plundering in the fort of Ahmadnager.⁶⁸ When plundering by the troops continued, Arthur hanged two sepoys as a warning to the others.

Until November 1803, any British soldier caught plundering was flogged rather than hanged. One reason for this difference was to conserve a scarce resource as, when the British soldier recovered from the flogging, he could return to his duties. Also, the British thought that it would demean their army in the eyes of Indians if British soldiers were hanged. Flogging was a military punishment and acceptable; whereas, hanging was a punishment for common thieves, cowards and traitors. As the British soldiers persisted in plundering, Arthur issued a general order on 7 November stating that, hereafter, plundering was punishable by death.⁶⁹ As flogging had not proven a sufficient deterrent, Arthur resorted to hanging in the belief that any damage to British prestige would be less harmful to the war effort than the continual plundering, which could deprive the army of needed supplies. Douglas M. Peers' research on

⁶⁸ A. Wellesley, G.O., 12 Aug. 1803, WSD, IV: 151.

⁶⁹ A. Wellesley, G.O., 7 Nov. 1803, WSD, IV: 218.

punishment in the Indian army from 1815 to 1850 indicates that the sepoys, during that period, were still more likely to be hanged than Europeans, and he suggests that this policy was followed to maintain the image of the British army.⁷⁰

Having obtained his first objective, the capture of Ahmadnager, Arthur moved northward with his force, crossing the Godaverri river on 24 August. He reached Aurangabad on 29 August and there learned that Sindhia and the raja of Berar, after making a move eastward toward the Badowly Pass and drawing Stevenson there to check them, returned to the Ajanta Pass and passed through unopposed with a force of light cavalry. Information received from harkaras--the Indian intelligence agents--suggested that the Marathas planned a predatory campaign and intended to cross the Godaverri and proceed toward Hyderabad. The Marathas moved south-eastward as if to cross the Godaverri, which was now fordable due to the failure of the monsoon. Arthur reached the Godaverri, near Rakisbaum, on 2 September, crossing to the south bank the following day. This position enabled him to cover his supply convoys, while checking any attempt by the Maratha cavalry to advance toward Hyderabad. The low level of the Godaverri removed a natural barrier that Arthur counted on when he planned his campaign. This act of nature and

⁷⁰ Douglas M. Peers, "Contrasting Crimes and Punishments in the Indian Army: Sepoys and Soldiers Compared, c. 1815-50," unpublished paper read to the Imperial Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 18 May 1992.

the Marathas' success in evading the British forces allowed them to move southward, confining Arthur to the south, where the allies were not providing for their own defence.

Arthur complained that the greatest difficulty the British had to contend with, throughout the war, was the lack of authority held by the peshwa and the nizam. They had no control over their subjects and the commanders of their forts and most of their village headmen acted according to their own interests. If Holkar returned to Malwa, a sufficient British force was at Poona to protect it, but the surrounding areas would be vulnerable as long as Arthur was occupied with Sindhia and the raja of Berar. Arthur took this risk instead of moving Campbell's detachment from Moodgul toward Hyderabad because this would leave the Ceded Districts and Mysore exposed to the peshwa's southern chieftains. In spite of his claim that the capture of Ahmadnager made a great impression on them, Arthur still thought that Campbell's force needed to watch them to make sure they remained quiet.⁷¹

Arthur's victory at Ahmadnager did not impress the peshwa as much as Arthur thought it should. The peshwa was still not giving the aid stipulated by the treaty of Bassein and was said to be corresponding with the enemy. Arthur advised Close to pay the peshwa's chief minister, Ragonaut Rao, a stipend, as the

⁷¹ A. Wellesley to Campbell, 20 Sept. 1803; A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 6 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 317, 273.

bribery of the Indian ministers was a common practice and he was surprised that Close was able to conduct any business at the peshwa's court without resorting to it. In Arthur's opinion, none of the peshwa's ministers held any influence over him, so paying them would not promote British interests but would obtain reliable information of what went on at Poona.⁷² Wellesley's view differed from Arthur's, as he believed the ministers did influence the peshwa and, if Close and Arthur thought the policy worthwhile, he authorized payments to all of them so they would advance British interests.⁷³

Close thought that the peshwa's lack of co-operation was due to weakness as Ragonaut Rao told him that the peshwa was unable to supply the troops stipulated by the treaty because his subordinate chieftains refused to serve. They also withheld revenues so his poverty prevented him from supporting the alliance.⁷⁴ S. G. Vaidya argues that the peshwa was not weak, but only played that role to frustrate British plans.⁷⁵ In his recent volume of The New Cambridge History of India, Stewart Gordon suggests that the centre of the Maratha empire remained fairly strong. He claims that the British were able to conquer

⁷² A. Wellesley to Close, 1 Aug., 5 Aug., 28 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 159, 175, 351.

⁷³ Edmonstone to Close, 2 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 13597: fol. 80.

⁷⁴ Close to Wellesley, 6 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13599: fol. 31.

⁷⁵ S.G. Vaidya, Peshwa Bajirao II and the Downfall of the Maratha Power (Nagpur, 1976).

the Maratha states by subverting the centre and that this was only possible because a strong, centralized bureaucracy existed.⁷⁶ After the introduction of British influence over the peshwa, however, the British still had no control over, and had to weaken, Sindhia, the raja of Berar and Holkar. Also, the peshwa had no control over his powerful southern chieftains and the loss of their military services was a main cause of his weakness. Those who were helping the British were doing so, not out of loyalty to the peshwa, but in their own interest.

While Arthur was tied down to the defence of the allies' territories, Stevenson returned westward and took Sindhia's fort of Jalnapur on 2 September. The enemy kept at a distance from Arthur, but were not as cautious with Stevenson.⁷⁷ Stevenson sent troops out to guard his supply convoys and Arthur was against this policy, urging him to aggressively

dash at the first party that comes into your neighbourhood...you will provide more effectually for the security of your convoys, than by detaching your troops to bring them in.⁷⁸

Arthur's tactic was to obtain the initiative, through offensive action, against the enemy's cavalry attacks on the British supply convoys. The Maratha cavalry was motivated by the lure

⁷⁶ Stewart Gordon, The Marathas, 1600-1818, The New Cambridge History of India 2,4 (Cambridge, 1993), p. 185.

⁷⁷ A. Wellesley to Murray, 14 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 299.

⁷⁸ A. Wellesley to Stevenson, 17 Aug. 1803, WD, II: 210.

of loot and, if they were attacked before they approached the convoy, they would run off.

Sindhia and the raja of Berar left a body of cavalry to annoy Stevenson and headed northward on 5 September. Arthur took credit for stopping the Marathas' march on Hyderabad claiming that, by "a few rapid and well-contrived movements," he caused them to return northward and bring up their infantry.⁷⁹ But the Marathas never intended to engage in a predatory war. In circulating reports that they planned to march on Hyderabad and by sending their cavalry southward, their aim was to divert Arthur's and Stevenson's attention from the Ajanta Pass, by forcing them to protect Hyderabad and Poona, which allowed their infantry and artillery to pass through. As soon as the main force completed its move southward, the Marathas withdrew the cavalry which acted as a decoy.⁸⁰

Arthur's plan to counter the Marathas' tactic was to send Stevenson into Berar to draw the raja back to defend his own territories. This would save the nizam's territories⁸¹ from the Marathas' plundering as Sindhia, unsupported, would be unlikely to send cavalry to Hyderabad. A body of light cavalry would be incapable of carrying out a predatory war, without the backing

⁷⁹ A. Wellesley to Munro, 1 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 361.

⁸⁰ Close to Webbe, 6 Oct. 1803, PRC, X: 153.

⁸¹ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 6 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 273; A. Wellesley to Close, 4 Sept. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/46, folder 5.

of its main army, if the allies protected their own interests by cooperating with the British and defended their own territory.⁸² The nizam's officers, in Arthur's view, were not doing so. Arthur's opinion of what were the best interests of the nizam's officers differed from their own. The nizam's subsidiary alliance with the Company was unpopular with many of his subjects because British support of the nizam's weak government prevented them from placing their own candidate on the throne. They had no interest, therefore, in aiding the British. In addition, Stevenson doubted his ability to move into Berar because he thought the nizam's cavalry was useless, so Arthur began to have reservations about his plan, especially as the enemy seemed to hold little fear of Stevenson. Arthur decided that, as the Marathas were bringing up their infantry, he could engage and totally defeat them. It then would be unnecessary for Stevenson to advance into Berar.⁸³

Arthur waited for his supplies to come up and then met Stevenson at Budnapur on 21 September. They advanced separately. Arthur by a route directly south of Assaye and Stevenson by a more direct route toward Borkardan, where the Maratha forces were reported to be camped, with the intention of linking up on 24 September and attacking them. Arthur later

⁸² A. Wellesley to Collins, 15 Aug. 1803, WD, II: 202.

⁸³ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 15 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 302. A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 15 Sept. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/71, folder 2.

answered Thomas Munro's criticism of his decision to detach Stevenson by claiming that the passes were narrow and both corps, travelling together, would have been slowed down. Also, if he left one road open, the enemy might have slipped through and delayed or avoided a pitched-battle.⁸⁴ Major John Blakiston, who served in Arthur's detachment, thought that Arthur ignored the danger of a divided army because he discounted Collins' prediction that the Maratha "infantry and guns will astonish you."⁸⁵

As Arthur was confident that he would win a pitched-battle against the Marathas, he was impatient to attack them and took the quickest, rather than the safest, means of approach, exposing the individual detachments to attack by the whole Maratha force. As a result, he came up to the Marathas before Stevenson arrived and was faced with the choice of fighting with his own limited force or losing the opportunity of engaging the Marathas in a pitched-battle.

THE BATTLE OF ASSAYE

Arthur was anxious to engage the Marathas in a pitched-battle as he was sure he would defeat them and obtain the fame he needed to advance his career in Britain. He received

⁸⁴ A. Wellesley to Munro, 1 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 338.

⁸⁵ John Blakiston, Twelve Years' Military Adventure in Three Quarters of the Globe 2 vols. (London, 1829), II: 154-5.

information on 22 September that the enemy had moved westward but, when he reached Naulniah, south of Assaye, on 23 September, he learned that they were close by. Their camp extended from the right of Borkardan to Assaye, a distance of over six miles and, because of this extension of their line to the eastward, he was within six miles of them instead of the twelve or fourteen miles he had earlier expected when he thought the enemy was at Borkardan. Shortly after, he received incorrect information from passing banjaras that the Marathas had sent off all their cavalry and their infantry was about to follow.⁸⁶ As this would leave only their artillery and infantry, which Arthur considered inferior to his own, and would catch them in the disorder of decamping, he decided to attack immediately with his own limited force. He sent word to Stevenson, moved forward to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and found the combined army of Sindiah and the raja of Berar, including their cavalry, between the Kaitna and the Juah rivers. The Marathas held a formidable position, greatly outnumbered Arthur's force and had a large number of cannon.⁸⁷ The Maratha forces numbered approximately 40,000-50,000 while Arthur had about 7000 actually engaged. Sindhia and the raja of Berar left just before the battle, leaving Sindhia's German officer, Colonel Pohlman, in command. Arthur considered withdrawing and attacking the following day with

⁸⁶ A. Wellesley to Munro, 1 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 338.

⁸⁷ A. Wellesley to Shawe, memo, 24 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 329.

Stevenson's assistance, as planned, but later claimed that the Maratha cavalry would have harrassed him and taken part of his baggage if he withdrew. But more important to Arthur, who was anxious to engage them, he thought they would likely withdraw their infantry and guns during the night, depriving him of the opportunity to attack them.⁸⁸

The Marathas' position was protected by the steep bank of the Kaitna river, in their front, and the Juah in their rear. The Maratha artillery covered the direct ford and the local harkaras told Arthur that there was no other fordable section of the river close by. He surmised correctly that a ford likely existed further downstream between two villages on opposite banks to each other. He intended, after crossing, to attack the enemy's unprotected left flank because he thought the Maratha armies lacked the skill to change their front to face him.

After Arthur's troops crossed the river, the Marathas did change their front to face him without falling into disarray and, as he considered them incapable of such a manoeuvre, he had already formed his troops in conformity with the Marathas' original alignment. While the British troops were re-forming, they suffered heavy casualties from the Maratha artillery. The picquets lost close to a third of their number and most of the gun bullocks were killed.⁸⁹ As a result of their loss, the

⁸⁸ A. Wellesley to Shawe, memo, 24 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 329.

⁸⁹ Campbell to n/n, n/d [24 Sept. 1803], WSD, IV: n. 184.

British guns could not be brought up to provide support, so the remaining British picquets hesitated when ordered to advance. Arthur rode up to the front and succeeded in getting his troops to charge, in spite of having no artillery cover to knock off the Maratha artillery which was inflicting heavy casualties, and the Maratha line gave way. An error on the part of Lieutenant-Colonel William Orrock, the British officer leading the picquets, brought the British right flank under the fire of the Maratha guns situated at Assaye, causing heavy casualties among the 74th Highlanders. The Maratha cavalry, seeing the thinning of the 74th's line, charged them. The thinned ranks of the 74th were unable to stop them and the sepoys broke and ran. Efforts to reform the sepoys failed, and Elphinstone, Arthur's secretary, claimed this was the "critical moment" of the battle and the Maratha initiative was only broken by Arthur's arrival.⁹⁰ Arthur called in his cavalry which succeeded in driving the Maratha cavalry across the Juah river, relieving him from the danger on his right.

When the British cavalry returned, Arthur ordered it to charge Pohlman's force but, when the British cavalry's commanding officer was fatally injured, his men swerved and galloped off, giving Pohlman and his troops the opportunity to retreat, which left the Marathas with no senior commander.

⁹⁰ Elphinstone to Strachey, 27 Sept. 1803, MSS Eur. F/ 128/227: fol. 1.

Meanwhile, Arthur was forced to backtrack across ground already taken and re-capture Maratha guns being fired upon the British rear by some of the Maratha gunners who had earlier played dead when the British forces dashed past them. By late afternoon, the remaining leaderless Maratha troops retreated but Arthur's cavalry, having been called into action earlier to rescue the 74th, was too exhausted to pursue them.

Arthur claimed the Maratha infantry fought well and defended their guns to the last.⁹¹ Contemporary opinion contradicts his claim. Munro, in a letter to his brother, points out that:

More credit has been given to the firmness of their infantry than it deserved. They seemed to have made but little opposition, except during the short time our army was forming and to have relied more upon their artillery than their musketry.⁹²

Munro based his opinion on the fact that few of the killed or wounded British officers suffered from a musket ball or a bayonet. Elphinstone, who was present at the action, confirms Munro's opinion, having observed that the Maratha infantry gave way whenever the British charged them.⁹³ Arthur, also, when making arrangements for his wounded, said that nearly all of

⁹¹ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 24 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 327.

⁹² Munro to brother, 12 Feb. 1804, Gleig, Munro, I: 354.

⁹³ Colebrooke, Elphinstone, I: 69; Munro to Read, 6 Mar. 1804, Gleig, Munro, III: 193.

them were struck by cannon shot.⁹⁴

Arthur exaggerated the resistance of the Maratha infantry to create the impression that the British were faced with a determined opponent, both to justify the heavy casualties his force suffered, because he did not want to admit they were chiefly the result of tactical errors, and to influence British opinion at home, where a battle against an Indian army was considered an easy victory because it was thought that the Indians put up little sustained resistance. George III held the opinion that a "military reputation was easily acquired in India."⁹⁵ To dispel this notion, Major William Thorn wrote a book on the military campaigns of the Second Maratha War, Memoir of the War in India, which was published in London in 1818. His intention was to familiarize the people at home with the changes in the Indian states' armies as the result of the introduction of European tactics and French discipline. His account stresses the desperate bravery of the Maratha troops, particularly at Assaye and Laswari, and that the battles against them were hard won.⁹⁶

Arthur acknowledged that the fire from the Maratha cannon

⁹⁴ A. Wellesley to Duncan, 27 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 348.

⁹⁵ Right Hon. George Rose, 29 Oct. 1804, The Diaries and Correspondence of the Right Hon. George Rose, ed. Rev. Leveson Vernon Harcourt, 2 vols. (London, 1860), II: 180.

⁹⁶ Major William Thorn, Memoir of the War in India (London, 1818), p. ix.

"was the hottest that has been known in this country," and stated that "we lost a great number of officers and men in advancing to the attack...."⁹⁷ The British losses were heavy, totalling 1584.⁹⁸ Arthur attributed approximately half of the British casualties to Orrock's error in moving into the range of the Maratha guns at Assaye. The 74th Highlanders, who followed the picquets into the range of the Maratha fire, accounted for 124 of those killed and 277 of the wounded, compared to the 78th's 24 killed and 77 wounded.⁹⁹ Later, in speaking of Orrock's error to Elphinstone, Arthur said: "I do not blame the man. He did what he could but from habits of dissipation and idleness he has become incapable of giving attention to an order to find out its meaning."¹⁰⁰ Although Arthur was aware that Orrock was incapable, he was so short of officers that he left him in command of the 1st battalion, 8th Madras Native Infantry; however, at Argaum he assigned Orrock's unit to guard the baggage.

⁹⁷ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 24 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 327.

⁹⁸ Return of the Killed, Wounded and Missing, 23 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 669; the return WD, II: 325 places the casualties much higher at 2057 but this would appear to be an early estimate.

⁹⁹ A. Wellesley to Munro, 1 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 338; W.H. Springer, "The Military Apprenticeship of Arthur Wellesley in India, 1797-1805," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1966), p. 137; Thorn, Memoir of the War, p. 280.

¹⁰⁰ Elphinstone to Strachey, 14 Oct. 1803, Mss Eur. F128/163: 103.

Arthur told Malcolm that the enemy fire was so fierce at one point during the battle that he doubted whether he would be able to bring the troops to advance, but they "behaved admirably: the sepoy's astonished me."¹⁰¹ The rallying of Arthur's troops during the battle can be attributed to the prior training they had received, but also to leadership. Arthur remained in the thick of battle, driving his troops on. Having walked into a battle against the entire Maratha army and botched the opening attack, Arthur's exertion was an act of desperation. His strategic failure and tactical errors had to be remedied by decisive leadership, because his military career rested on turning a disaster of his own making into a victory.

Arthur was also worried that, in the event of a British loss, the southern Maratha chieftains, who had remained neutral waiting to see who would win, would join Sindhia against the British. Arthur's ability to keep his forces in the field was dependent upon his southern supply lines and, as they were vulnerable to attack, it was necessary for the Company's armies to be seen as strong to ensure that the southern chieftains respected Campbell's force at Moodgul and left Arthur's supply convoys alone.

Although the battle of Assaye is considered Arthur's greatest Indian victory, it was a Pyrrhic victory; more than

¹⁰¹ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 28 Sept. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/71, folder 2.

twenty-two per cent of the total force under his command were killed, wounded or missing, of which 53 officers and 585 troops were British. As Elphinstone pointed out, the "enemy's loss in men is almost equal to our own in numbers, but very different in value."¹⁰² British troops and officers were considered essential to set an example to the sepoys of disciplined combat and the loss of such a large number was a severe blow. They were not easily replaced. Arthur told Malcolm that he had "ordered the 1st [battalion] of the 3rd [Madras Native Infantry] to join the army, which will make up my losses of native infantry. I wish I could say as much for my Europeans...."¹⁰³ The supply of British recruits for the East India Company's armies and the dispatch of King's troops to India were hampered by the pressing need of troops in Europe. Castlereagh was aware that the number of British troops in India was inadequate, but told Wellesley that, under the circumstances, the best he could expect would be to bring the existing establishment of approximately 14,000 up to the full strength of 16,000.¹⁰⁴

The Marathas lost 1,200 dead and about 4,800 wounded,¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Elphinstone to Adam, 25 Sept. 1803, Selections from the Letters and Other State Papers Preserved in the Bombay Secretariat, Maratha Series, ed. George W. Forrest, (Bombay, 1885), p. 16.

¹⁰³ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 29 Sept. 1803, WD, II: 355.

¹⁰⁴ Castlereagh to Wellesley, most secret, 9 Sept., 28 Nov. 1803, IO H/505: fols. 83, 94.

¹⁰⁵ A. Wellesley to H. Wellesley, 3 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 371.

and left 102 guns on the battle field. This represented about twenty-eight per cent of the total number of guns available to Sindhia, that John Pemble estimates at 360.¹⁰⁶ The Marathas' military resources were, therefore, damaged but not destroyed as the raja of Berar's main infantry force remained in Berar.

The battle of Assaye caused Arthur to reconsider his tactics toward the Marathas, as their artillery proved more formidable than expected. He thought now that they should not be attacked if they were very strong in guns, in an entrenched position or had a much larger force. As they still had several brigades undefeated, he intended to remain near any British force sent into Berar, so that both detachments could unite if the Marathas brought down another corps of infantry.¹⁰⁷

James Mill acknowledges the bravery of Arthur and his troops, but questions the wisdom of sacrificing so many lives for so indecisive a result.¹⁰⁸ After the loss of twenty-two per cent of Arthur's force, the Marathas remained undefeated. Munro is also critical of the heavy loss of life in his letter to Arthur of 14 October, stating that he should have waited for

¹⁰⁶ John Pemble, "Resources and Techniques in the Second Maratha War," Historical Journal 19 (1976): 382.

¹⁰⁷ A. Wellesley to Stevenson, 8 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 391. A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 28 Sept. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/71, folder 2.

¹⁰⁸ Mill, History of British India, IV: 431.

Stevenson before attacking.¹⁰⁹ Arthur's reply to this letter¹¹⁰ presents a defence against Munro's criticisms point by point, and Munro, responding on 28 November, accepted that Arthur's conduct of the action was correct, but still criticized his decision to attack without waiting for Stevenson.

In his second letter, Munro states that Arthur could not have expected to defeat the Marathas without heavy fatalities. Also, Arthur's cavalry was not strong enough, even if it had remained in reserve, to have inflicted sufficient casualties to have counterbalanced his own losses. In addition, Arthur might have been repulsed and the Maratha cavalry, with greater superiority in numbers and buoyed by success, could have ensured that there was no hope of retreat. Munro thought that if Arthur had not attacked, the Marathas, knowing Stevenson would soon join him, would have left during the night. As they would have reason to believe Arthur would shortly pursue them, they would have abandoned their guns so as not to be slowed down by them.¹¹¹

In a letter written to his father the following year, Munro comments that the Maratha infantry lacked the advantage of being commanded "by a body of officers anxious to maintain their own

¹⁰⁹ Munro to A. Wellesley, 14 Oct. 1803, Gleig, Munro, III: 177.

¹¹⁰ A. Wellesley to Munro, 1 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 338.

¹¹¹ Munro to A. Wellesley, 28 Nov. 1803, Gleig, Munro, III: 182-3.

reputation and that of their country."¹¹² This statement suggests that an underlying and unstated criticism in Munro's letters to Arthur was Arthur's sacrifice of a large number of lives in his eagerness to attack the combined forces of the two Maratha chiefs in a bid for fame.

Arthur was sensitive of what was said about him at headquarters,¹¹³ for he wanted to receive recognition for a complete victory against overwhelming odds. As the criticism of the heavy loss of life was based on his decision to attack immediately, Arthur defended his action as necessary because he had received, and acted upon, incorrect information regarding the enemy's position, which, at the time, he thought was true.

C. A. Bayly has recently argued that: "It was the very penetration of British intelligence-gathering systems and the effectiveness of the harkara establishment which helped the British to gain the military upper hand in the first place."¹¹⁴ Historians have always praised Arthur's intelligence system.¹¹⁵ At Assaye, however, the system seriously failed him at a crucial

¹¹² Munro to father, n/d, Gleig, Munro, III: 199.

¹¹³ Colebrooke, Elphinstone, I: 86.

¹¹⁴ C.A. Bayly, "Knowing the Country: Empire and Information in India," Modern Asian Studies 27 (1993): 32.

¹¹⁵ See Jac Weller, "Wellington's Asset: A Remarkably Successful System of Intelligence," Military Review (1962): 10-7.

moment in the campaign. Arthur compared and evaluated for accuracy the information brought in by all the harkaras. In case, all of them reported that the enemy forces were at Borkardan, but the Maratha line was in the district, rather than the village of Borkardan, which caused the mistake.

Elphinstone, who complained of the inaccuracy of the intelligence received from the harkaras, acknowledged that the enemy was vigilantly looking out for spys and had kept one of his and probably hanged him. As a result, the harkaras were fearful and only remained in the enemy's camp for a few hours.¹¹⁶ But Elphinstone was shortly to discover that none of the British spies went into the enemies' camp; instead, they got information from the nearby villages.¹¹⁷

In his eagerness to attack the Marathas, whom he thought were busy preparing to move out and without cavalry support, Arthur accepted as correct the information received from the banjaras. This decision resulted in his entering into a contest, without Stevenson, with an enemy possessing great superiority in numbers and extensive cavalry and artillery.

TOWARD THE BATTLE OF ARGAUM

Sindhia's and the raja of Berar's military resources were

¹¹⁶ Elphinstone to Strachey, 16 Sept. 1803, Colebrooke, Elphinstone, I: 61.

¹¹⁷ Elphinstone to Strachey, 8 Nov. 1803, MSS Eur. F/128/163: fol. 120.

damaged but not crippled by their defeat at Assaye. It was necessary, therefore, for Arthur to seek another pitched-battle, because a further defeat was necessary before the Marathas would accept Wellesley's peace terms.

Following the battle of Assaye, the remaining regular Maratha infantry retired across the Narmada river, followed by Stevenson on 26 September. Sindhia and the raja of Berar obtained guns from the fort at Burhanpur and then proceeded westward, with their cavalry, along the Tapti river. Arthur was occupied until 3 October obtaining a secure position for his sick and wounded. The nizam's commander at Daulatabad refused to admit them into the fort. The alliance with the Company continued unpopular in Hyderabad and the nizam was being influenced against the treaty by his mother and other advisers.¹¹⁸ Also, the nizam's officers, from past experience, were apprehensive of any conflict with the Marathas and did not want to be seen to be aiding the British.

In addition to the delay in arranging for his wounded troops, the weakness of the allies' governments and their dependence on the Company for their defence tied Arthur down. The nizam's forts were inadequately garrisoned and he had no troops in the area, except for the Company's, because his

¹¹⁸ Kirkpatrick to A. Wellesley, 8 Oct. 1803, IO P/BEN/SEC/119: 10 Nov. 1803, no. 90.

chieftains would not join a defensive force.¹¹⁹ Arthur, therefore, was unable to launch an offensive operation with his whole force against Asirgarh, Gawilghur and Nagpur, to end the war. He was worried that, if he moved northward, the Marathas might seize or levy contributions on an important place in Hyderabad or would march on Poona. This would damage the British army's image as the allies' territories were under British protection. In addition, the Marathas could disrupt his supply line, which would prove fatal to his campaign. He was forced, therefore, to return southward, while sending Stevenson to lay siege to Burhanpur.

Jac Weller takes Arthur at his word when he repeats Arthur's claim that the Maratha cavalry could accomplish little.¹²⁰ The Maratha chiefs, at this time, were effectively making use of their cavalry, as they were able to take advantage of Arthur's need to defend the nizam's and the Peshwa's territories by again moving southward to draw Arthur away from their own territories. In this way, they used a potentially offensive movement to defend their territories at a distance, while also avoiding further conflict with Arthur's forces. Rather than pushing the Marathas, as he claimed he was doing, Arthur was being pulled by them away from their own territories.

¹¹⁹ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 8 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 387.

¹²⁰ Weller, Wellington in India, p. 199.

Campbell's force continued to be tied down in its defensive position at Moodgul, as October was the traditional month for the Maratha armies to take the field owing to the favourable weather. Arthur wanted to see the effect of the victory at Assaye on the southern chieftains and Holkar before assigning any active duty to Campbell's force.¹²¹ Holkar was said to be moving northward from the area of Ujjain to Kota on the Chambal River and Arthur continued to watch him closely as he thought that Holkar would enter the war if he considered it would be of advantage to him. He thought Holkar would not cross the Jumna or the Ganges, to avoid being on the same side of the river as Lake, but was concerned that the Company's province of Bihar had insufficient troops for its defence. Arthur remained uncertain about Holkar's intentions, thinking he was moving northward either to collect money from the Rajputs, upon whom he had a claim, or to co-operate with the Maratha chieftains by acting in Hindustan.¹²²

Arthur's victory at Assaye, however, brought over Amrut Rao. On 2 October his envoy informed Arthur that Amrut Rao had consented to the treaty arranged with Arthur in August. The envoy gave numerous excuses for Amrut Rao's failure to join Arthur sooner, but Arthur attributed his delay "to the usual

¹²¹ A. Wellesley to Close, 3 Oct. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/46, folder 5.

¹²² A. Wellesley to Shawe, 14 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 413; A. Wellesley to Stuart, 16 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 424.

shuffling and timid conduct of a Maratha, in every important transaction of his life."¹²³ Arthur considered that the addition of Amrut Rao's force to his detachment would be seen by the Indians as evidence of Arthur's growing strength and might influence the majority of the peshwa's southern chieftains, who had remained neutral, to join him. Also, Amrut Rao's allying with the Company would show that he was no longer associated with Holkar, a step toward his reconciliation with the peshwa. Arthur was anxious for the peshwa to reconcile his differences with Amrut Rao as, until this was done, the peshwa's government would continue unsettled because of the factions within his state.¹²⁴ Close's further efforts to obtain a settlement failed, however, because the peshwa was considering subduing Amrut Rao by force.¹²⁵

An additional result of the British victory at Assaye was that, on 5 October, Arthur received a request from Sindhia and the raja of Berar for him to send a British officer to their camp. Arthur thought the Marathas wanted to open peace negotiations, but a further motivation was the desire to raise their troops' spirits by claiming that a British officer had come to their camp to sue for peace. He declined to send an

¹²³ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 5 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 377.

¹²⁴ A. Wellesley to Close, 3 Oct. 1803, Wellington MSS 3/3/46, folder 5.

¹²⁵ Close to Wellesley, 13 Oct. 1803, PRC, X: 159.

officer but said he was willing to receive any negotiator they sent and would consider any proposal.¹²⁶ Wellesley approved of Arthur's response as he thought the Marathas would "require another lesson before they acquiesce in all our demands."¹²⁷ A further defeat was necessary before the Marathas would accept the heavy demands Wellesley intended to make as the price of peace.

A side effect of the victory at Assaye was its psychological benefit to Wellesley's health. Prior to the outbreak of the war, Wellesley spent the hot months at Barrackpur in "good spirits," and his staff complained of being reduced to skeletons from the lengthy morning horseback rides and the long walks in the evening that Wellesley subjected them to. His health declined, however, under the strain of the war and he took to his couch suffering from rheumatism and toothache. Shawe was alarmed by the extent of Wellesley's depression, claiming that "the only thing that could rouse him was something going wrong, when all his activity returned until it was corrected."¹²⁸ By the third week of October, "the wonderful and splendid tide of success" restored Wellesley's health and strength and he emerged from the deep melancholy into

¹²⁶ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 6 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 380.

¹²⁷ Shawe to A. Wellesley, 2 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 13778: fol. 33.

¹²⁸ Shawe to H. Wellesley, 13 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 41.

which he had fallen.¹²⁹ In the meanwhile, Lake and Arthur continued to pursue the objectives Wellesley had given them earlier.

Arthur, after responding to the Marathas' peace feeler and arranging for his wounded to be moved to Ajanta, moved westward to forestall a rumoured Maratha cavalry advance on Poona or the nizam's territories, returning to Ajanta when he learned that the Maratha chieftains had no intention of making such a move. He travelled toward Aurangabad when they again appeared to be moving southward but, during the night of 15 October, he received information that led him to believe that they planned to attack Stevenson at Asirgarh. Consequently, he moved northward the following day to support Stevenson as he thought him capable of resisting an attack by one, but not a combined, Maratha force. Sindhia and the raja of Berar did not interfere with Stevenson, however, who took Burhanpur on 16 October and Asirgarh, the last of Sindhia's important military bases in the Deccan, on the 21st. Wellesley thought these victories would influence the Marathas toward peace but he also believed that their pride would cause them "to make the most desperate...efforts to avoid the conditions which must be demanded of them as the price of peace."¹³⁰

When Munro learned of the possibility of peace talks, he

¹²⁹ Shawe to H. Wellesley, 5 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 1.

¹³⁰ Shawe to A. Wellesley, 20 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 13778: fol. 37.

advised Arthur to wait until the Marathas' situation had deteriorated further, so they would be forced to accept whatever terms the Company offered. There would never be "such an opportunity again for establishing our control over all the Maratha States and we ought not to stop until we have accomplished all we can wish."¹³¹ Arthur, in expectation of imminent peace negotiations, instructed Harcourt to occupy any territories necessary to complete the Company's boundary in Cuttack.¹³² This would also bring him closer to Nagpur, which would apply further pressure on the raja to seek peace.

Prior to Stevenson's taking Burhanpur, Arthur told him to collect tribute from Burhanpur and Nagpur if the opportunity arose and to put the money into the treasury. Arthur said he would recommend that it be given to the troops as prize money.¹³³ Stevenson collected tribute from Burhanpur; however, Arthur had to apply this money toward the troops' December pay.

As the levying of contributions was against Wellesley's conciliatory policy, Calcutta asked for details of the transaction. Although Arthur's instructions to Stevenson in October stated that the money was to be collected for the sole purpose of increasing the amount of prize money, Arthur attempted to conceal his real intention from Wellesley by

¹³¹ Munro to A. Wellesley, 16 Nov. 1803, Gleig, Munro, III: 180.

¹³² A. Wellesley to Harcourt, 19 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 522.

¹³³ A. Wellesley to Stevenson, 8 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 391.

telling him that the levy was intended to deprive the enemy of the money if they reoccupied the city after he left and, although he was not in need of the money at the time, he was faced with the prospect of a shortage of money in the future.¹³⁴ To conciliate the Indian people, it was Wellesley's policy that money not be taken from them for prize money. Arthur, however, placed the army's interests above Wellesley's ambitions when he ignored his policy and ordered a contribution collected from the people of Burhanpur.

At this time sixteen of Sindhia's mercenary European officers came over to Stevenson in response to a proclamation issued earlier by Wellesley. He offered a provision for the duration of the war, equal to the usual pay and allowances from Sindhia, to any European, including the French, who left his service.¹³⁵ A Maratha, trusted by Collins with the circulation of the proclamation throughout Sindhia's Deccan force, held it back and Sindhia's European officers were not aware of it until late in the campaign.¹³⁶ Randolph G. S. Cooper argues that this offer, rather than patriotism, was the main incentive for the

¹³⁴ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 13 Jan. 1804, WD, II: 660.

¹³⁵ Proclamation by ggic, 29 Aug. 1803, IO P/BEN/SEC/117: 8 Sept. 1803, no. 13; A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 24 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 446.

¹³⁶ Elphinstone to Strachey, 22 Oct. 1803, MSS Eur. F/128/163: fol. 113.

British mercenaries to abandon Sindhia.¹³⁷

Although the desertion of these European officers and the heavy losses at Assaye weakened the Marathas' main force, the Marathas' actions continued to determine Arthur's movements. Sindhia halted at Akola when he learned that Arthur had returned northward. The raja of Berar was said to have moved southward toward Chandur, but Arthur was suspicious that this information was spread to draw him southward again. The survivors of Assaye from Sindhia's infantry were still disorganized and a large number of his cavalry had deserted, so Arthur now considered Stevenson capable of defending himself against any force that Sindhia and the raja of Berar could send against him. He left Stevenson to obtain supplies from Asirgarh and to keep an eye on Sindhia, and proceeded southward in pursuit of the raja of Berar. Sindhia and the raja of Berar, therefore, were able to hold the initiative as long as they kept a body of cavalry in the south that constantly threatened the peshwa's and the nizam's territories and Arthur's supply line.

Arthur tracked the raja of Berar with the hope of attacking him but he moved camp five times, keeping out of Arthur's reach. On 31 October a detachment of the raja's horse attacked a British supply convoy but was beaten off. Arthur claimed, that if it were not for the necessity of protecting the convoy, he

¹³⁷ Randolph G.S. Cooper, "Wellington and the Marathas in 1803," International History Review 11 (1989): 37.

would have destroyed the raja's force between 29 and 31 October. But the success of his operations depended on the army receiving its supplies, so the safety of the convoy took preference.

The campaign also depended on an adequate supply of money. Burton Stein claims that there was no shortage of money for the war due to Wellesley's liberality.¹³⁸ Arthur, however, had reason to complain that Wellesley did not provide sufficient funds to cover the costs of the policies he wanted followed. Arthur complained of the inconsistency of Wellesley's instructions as, on the one hand, he sent no money, instructed Duncan not to make a loan and asked Madras to increase its investment, which would decrease the funds available for the army. On the other hand, he ordered money spent "to draw off sirdars and horse; to pay Amrut Rao; to entertain 5000 horse...[and] to take Mohummud Amir Khan into the service of the Company and the Nizam."¹³⁹

The financial problems intensified. Stuart submitted a memorandum to the Madras Military Board, in December 1803, that pointed out that the revenue of the territories allotted to cover the expenses of the army in the field was inadequate. No money could be expected from Bombay or by issuing bills upon Bengal and, therefore, the entire amount had to be obtained from

¹³⁸ Stein, Munro, p. 121.

¹³⁹ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 11 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 494.

Madras.¹⁴⁰

The cost of the war necessitated as early an end to hostilities as would be compatible with attaining Wellesley's goals. Arthur's efforts, however successful, could not produce the desired result without concurrent successes in Lake's northern campaign against Sindhia.¹⁴¹ Sindhia had more to lose in Hindustan and Malwa than he did in the Deccan and, as Murray was unable to advance into Malwa, it was up to Lake to put the greatest pressure on Sindhia. Lake opened the campaign in Hindustan on 29 August when he took Sindhia's city of Koel. He then took the fort of Allyghur on 4 September, Delhi on 11 September and the fort of Agra on 18 October. On 10 November an envoy from Sindhia arrived in Arthur's camp to discuss peace terms. Arthur thought this overture was sincere as Sindhia was financially distressed and his desire for peace had probably been increased by word of Lake's victories.

The British victories also spurred Amrut Rao, with a force of between 3,000 and 4,000, to join Arthur on 12 November. A further important result of the victories was Sindhia's and the raja of Berar's decision to abandon their diversionary tactics in the south and move into a defensive position. On 13 November the raja of Berar was moving toward the Raim Pass on the road to

¹⁴⁰ Stuart to Board, minute, 27 Dec. 1803, IO P/SEC/MAD/15: fol. 867.

¹⁴¹ Colonel G.B. Malleon, The Decisive Battles of India, New ed. reprint, (New Delhi, 1969), p. 279.

Nagpur and Sindhia was east of Malkapur, travelling toward Berar. As Arthur was no longer confined in the south by the Marathas, he was hopeful that he could move the war into Berar and have Stevenson carry out a siege of Gawilghur.¹⁴²

During his journey northward, Arthur continued his negotiations with Sindhia's envoy. He refused the envoy's proposal for a suspension of hostilities with both the Maratha chieftains, but agreed to an armistice with Sindhia alone. He consented to this armistice because he had no further means of pressuring Sindhia, as he had destroyed his southern infantry and taken his possessions in the Deccan and was unable to extend the war into Hindustan until he had defeated the raja of Berar, whose main body of infantry had remained in Berar under his brother's command. The British forces in Gujerat were too weak to do any harm to Sindhia on that side of India, but Arthur conceded that Sindhia's strength at Ujjain was a potential threat to Gujerat. In addition, Sindhia's cavalry was capable of assisting the raja of Berar directly or by creating a diversion in the nizam's or peshwa's territories, but the consequence of an armistice solely with Sindhia would be the break-up of their alliance, leaving the raja of Berar to stand alone against Arthur's and Stevenson's forces.¹⁴³ Under the armistice, Sindhia would move eastward of Ellichpur and, in

¹⁴² A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 13 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 506.

¹⁴³ A. Wellesley to H. Wellesley, 24 Jan. 1804, WD, III: 1.

Gujerat, his troops would not come within thirty-five miles of Dohud.¹⁴⁴ Wellesley's instructions to Arthur of 27 June stressed that hostilities should continue until peace terms were agreed upon, to ensure that his excessive demands would be accepted and to prevent Sindhia from taking advantage of an armistice to build-up his strength. Arthur was prepared, however, to resume hostilities against Sindhia, if necessary, and thought the advantages of the armistice justified his deviation from his instructions.

On 24 November, Arthur told Murray that he should remain on guard as Sindhia had sent some cavalry to Ujjain under his uncle, Bappu Sindhia, that might be joined by infantry. Bappu Sindhia would soon learn of the inadequacy of the British defences and, in the event of a renewal of hostilities, he would be encouraged by this weakness to move into Gujerat.¹⁴⁵

Sindhia did not comply with the armistice terms negotiated by his envoy, as he was camped within four miles of the raja's force on 28 November. When Arthur and Stevenson arrived at Parterly, southwest of Argaum, on the afternoon of 29 November, the two Maratha forces were in the process of marching off. Shortly after, Arthur saw that they had stopped and were drawn up in battle formation on the plains near Argaum. He hastily decided to attack them, despite his decision after Assaye that

¹⁴⁴ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 23 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 530.

¹⁴⁵ A. Wellesley to Murray, 24 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 542.

the Marathas should not be attacked when they were in a settled position.

The Maratha guns were trained on the only access to the plains and they opened fire when the British troops came into sight. The sepoy, including several battalions who were veterans of Assaye, broke and ran, and Arthur later told Stuart that if he had not been nearby to rally them, "we should have lost the day."¹⁴⁶ After they resumed their position, Arthur told them to lie down until ordered to advance, as this offered protection from the Maratha artillery and also made it difficult for them to run away.¹⁴⁷ They then advanced in good order and the Marathas, after a short engagement, fled leaving behind 38 guns and all their ammunition. The Marthas suffered heavy casualties, especially during their disorganized retreat. British losses were comparatively light, numbering 359, with fifteen European and thirty-one sepoy killed.¹⁴⁸ The Marathas' defeat left the raja's fort of Gawilghur exposed to a British advance.

The raja of Berar was alarmed about the threat to Gawilghur and on 30 November his envoy arrived in Arthur's camp for peace talks. Arthur refused an armistice, insisting that the envoy

¹⁴⁶ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 3 Dec. 1803, WD, II: 564.

¹⁴⁷ Weller, Wellington in India, n., p. 205.

¹⁴⁸ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 30 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 556; Return of killed and wounded, WD, II: 559.

obtain authorization to negotiate on the basis of a British entitlement to compensation.¹⁴⁹ This was intended to prove to the Home officials that the Marathas accepted responsibility for the outbreak of the war.

On 3 December Sindhia ratified the armistice treaty and his envoys informed Arthur that he was moving to the east of Ellichpur, as stipulated in the agreement, and that they were authorized to negotiate compensation to the Company.¹⁵⁰ Arthur's and Stevenson's forces took Gawilghur on 15 December and, on 17 December, a treaty of peace was signed with the raja of Berar's envoy. This was followed by a peace treaty with Sindhia on the 31st. The peace treaties will be discussed in the next chapter, following an examination of Lake's campaign against Sindhia in Hindustan.

Arthur obtained the victories in the Deccan that, in conjunction with Lake's in Hindustan, were needed to obtain the Marathas' agreement to Wellesley's heavy peace terms. The loss of life at Assaye was caused more by British tactical errors than by the steadfastness of the Maratha infantry and cavalry. It was essential to Arthur's career, however, that he claim the large number of casualties were the result of determined opposition by the Maratha forces rather than British blunders.

¹⁴⁹ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 2 Dec. 1803, WD, II: 560; A. Wellesley to Stuart, 4 Dec. 1803, WD, II: 566.

¹⁵⁰ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 3 Dec. 1803, WD, II: 564.

As expected by the British, the Marathas did not confederate. Arthur's Achilles' heel was his supply lines and throughout the campaign he worried that Holkar would join and attack his supply convoys or plunder the British or their allies' territories. The subsidiary allies hampered the British war effort as their governments were weak and they depended on the British to defend them. The army in Cuttack benefited from Wellesley's supervision, as he was willing to pay to obtain Indian collaborators. The force in Gujerat, on the other hand, suffered as a result of the Bombay government's poverty. Wellesley, having told Arthur his objectives, gave him considerable latitude in determining how to obtain them. Initially, Wellesley appeared to exercise closer control over Lake; however, Wellesley's empire-building and the army's interests were both served by the same policies.

Chapter 4

The War in Hindustan in 1803

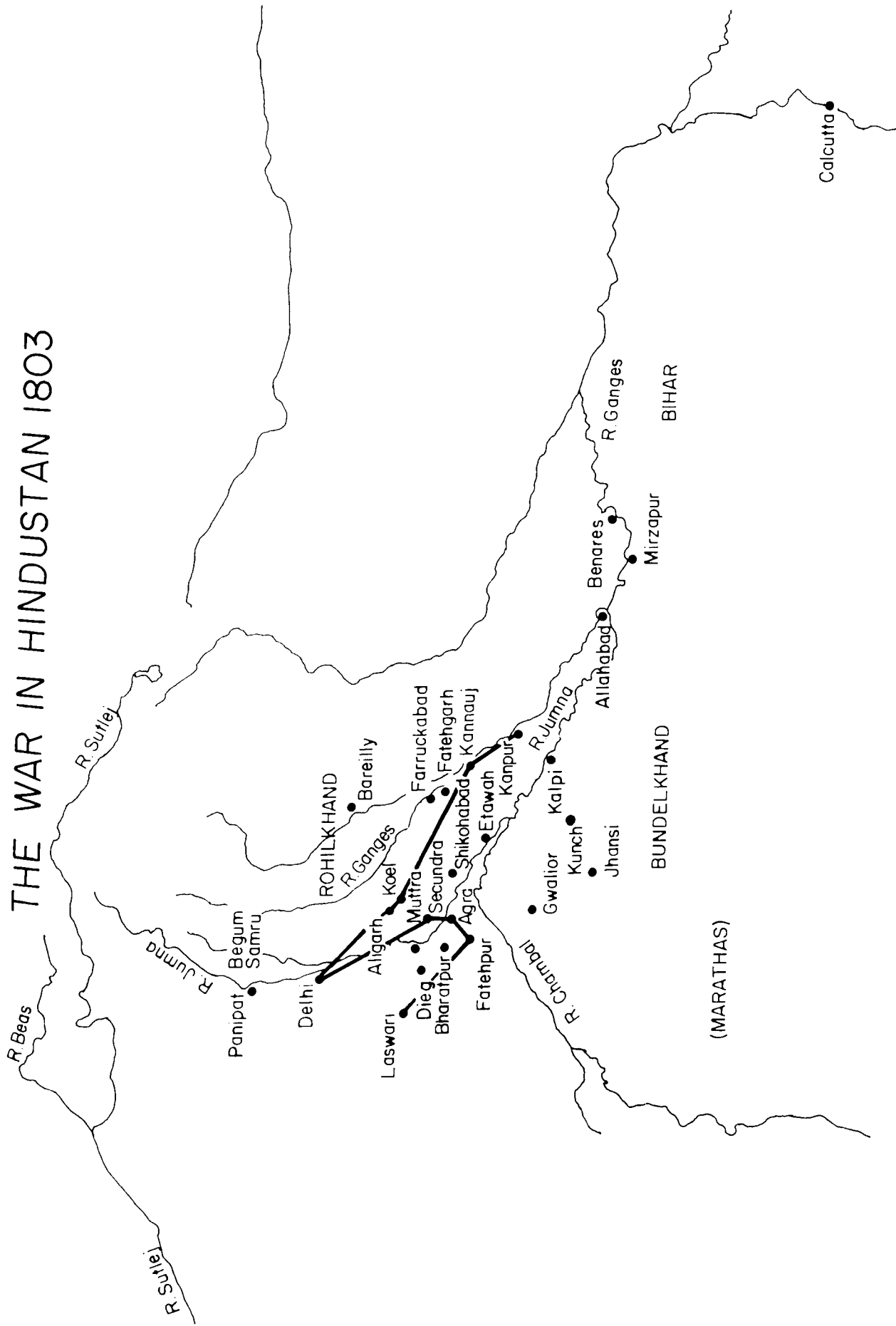
The history of every battle in the war was nearly the same; a heavy fire of cannon while our troops were advancing to the charge, the Maratha infantry giving way when they approached near, and their cavalry leaving the infantry to its fate.

Thomas Munro¹

Initially, Wellesley appears to have guided Lake's campaign more than he did Arthur's if a comparison is made of the number of instructions sent to the two men. This is misleading, however, as Lake toad-eated but acted independently whenever Wellesley's instructions conflicted with his own views. The following two chapters illustrate a different style of generalship from Arthur Wellesley's, as Lake was cavalier in his attitude toward supply. While Anglo-Indian generals were required to show an offensive, no retreat, spirit such as Arthur and Lake displayed, this posture had to rest on careful preparation. Unlike Arthur, who put considerable effort into planning his campaign, Lake was a careless administrator whose arrangements for supplying his army in the field were inadequate. Lake was less cautious than Arthur and put offensive action before security despite the fact that the Hindustan campaign was fought closer to the British territories. This chapter covers Lake's first campaign, against Sindhia's forces, which was simpler than his second campaign against

¹ Munro to father, n/d, Gleig, Munro, III: 200.

THE WAR IN HINDUSTAN 1803



Holkar the following year. He was successful in spite of his inadequate planning. In addition to Lake's Hindustan campaign, this chapter examines the current debate over the reasons for the British victories in the Second Maratha War that reveals the importance of a strong command and the lure of prize money. A discussion of the peace treaties shows that the British made the Marathas acknowledge that the extensive cessions of territory were compensation to the Company for Maratha aggression. Wellesley wanted this point conceded to convince the Home officials that the war was a response to a Maratha threat. Wellesley also attempted to humour the Home officials, who were worried about the increasing debt, by trying to keep down the army's expenses.

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

To help reduce the cost of the campaign in Hindustan, Wellesley delayed putting Lake's forces on a war footing.² This delay, aggravated by the inefficient organization of Lake's supply system, did not allow him sufficient time to obtain supplies for his army. He was confident, however, that he could obtain them en route. As the crisis deepened, Lake became concerned that Wellesley would declare war before he could assemble his forces.

On 28 June Lake learned that Collins intended to leave Sindhia's camp as soon as he obtained enough supplies to travel,

² Shawe to H. Wellesley, 13 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 41.

as he thought Sindhia was stalling for time until Holkar joined him. Although Lake ordered the 8th Light Dragoons to Kanpur, Wellesley had not authorized him to do so or to put the army on a war footing and he told Wellesley that, because of the tenor of Collins' letter, he was waiting anxiously for instructions.³ Lake's letter crossed one from Wellesley authorizing him to assemble a force at Kanpur and Fatehgarh with "a view to active operations against Sindhia" if hostilities became inevitable.⁴

Wellesley's major aim was the destruction of Sindhia's army in Hindustan under Pierre Perron's command. Roberts argues that the Hindustan campaign was directed less against Sindhia than against the French adventurers who, nominally commanding his armies, had really carved out principalities for themselves.⁵ This is how Wellesley described Perron's status to the Home officials. H. C. Batra, however, points out that Wellesley greatly exaggerated the danger to north-western India in order to justify his policy of expansion.⁶ Perron succeeded to the command in 1796 when his predecessor, count de Boigne, retired. Wellesley claimed that Perron formed an independent state from the territory assigned to him for the support of Sindhia's

³ Lake to Wellesley, private, 28 June 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 33.

⁴ Wellesley to Lake, most secret and confidential, 28 June 1803, Wellesley, III: 164.

⁵ Roberts, Wellesley in India, p. 219.

⁶ H.C. Batra, Relations of Jaipur State with the East India Company (Delhi, 1958), p. 15.

northern army and that this "independent French state," with Sindhia's infantry as its "national army," posed a danger to the British because of the ambitions of the French adventurers and Napoleon.⁷ Although Wellesley claimed that Sindhia's local authority in Hindustan had declined, Sindhia was strong enough to maintain control over his northern army. He had become dissatisfied with Perron and appointed Ambaji Inglija to replace him, who was on his way to relieve Perron when Lake attacked.⁸

Wellesley's second aim was to stop any of Sindhia's Deccan troops from entering Hindustan. Lake was told to take the forts and passes south of the Jumna, and particularly Gwalior, to create a barrier that would divide Sindhia's forces in two and contain him in the Deccan. With the possession of Gwalior, the Company could support the rana of Gohud who, along with the Jat chieftains in the north and mid-west, was said to be anxious to come under Company protection. With Company aid, they were expected to oppose any attempt by Sindhia to send troops into Hindustan. Agreements with the rana of Gohud and the Rajput chieftains of Jaipur and Jodhpur would keep Sindhia from resuming political influence in Hindustan. The occupation of Bundelkhand would establish a barrier between the Marathas and the Company's province of Benares and Wellesley stressed that,

⁷ Wellesley to Lake, secret, 27 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 208.

⁸ Louis Bourquien, "An Autobiographical Memoir of Louis Bourquien," transl. J.P. Thompson, Panjab Historical Society Journal 9 (1923): 59.

in the meantime, he wanted Benares protected,⁹ because it provided revenue necessary for the war.

Wellesley's further instructions to Lake of 27 July, setting out the objectives of the Hindustan campaign, again indicated that the principal aim was to destroy Perron's force.¹⁰ Lake was told to negotiate Perron's departure from India in exchange for the safe conduct of his person and property. Wellesley also wanted a proclamation circulated that offered Perron's European officers, and those of his troops who had formerly served in the Company's or the nawab of Awadh's armies, compensation equal to their pay from Sindhia, to entice them to quit his service. Lake held the proclamation back until he approached Koel in August, claiming that the Europeans would not leave until he was close enough to offer them protection. His main reason for waiting was that he wanted to continue to receive information from the European officers in Sindhia's service at Agra and Koel.¹¹ Lake issued the proclamation on 29 August,¹² and it was still having the desired effect in Hindustan three months later when Colonel Shepherd, who was serving under Ambaji Ingliia, offered, on hearing of Wellesley's

⁹ Wellesley to Lake, most secret and confidential, 28 June 1803, Wellesley, III: 164.

¹⁰ Wellesley to Lake, secret, 27 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 208.

¹¹ Lake to Wellesley, private, 23 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 73.

¹² Proclamation by ggic, IO P/BEN/SEC/117: 8 Sept. 1803, no. 13.

offer, to bring his brigade over to the British.¹³

Fortescue takes exception to Wellesley's instructions for Lake to furnish an elaborate plan of campaign, on which Wellesley wrote "pompous comments of approval." He views Wellesley's part in planning the campaign as harmless amusement, inferring that such supervision over an experienced general was unnecessary.¹⁴ Wellesley, however, was initially fearful that Lake was unequal to the command. Lake's generalship was criticized in Britain in 1797 during the Irish insurrection as he had failed to conciliate the peasants and drove them to resistance. He also failed to reconnoitre the situation before dashing into battle and in one case attacked before closing all routes of escape. In 1798 Grenville wrote to Wellesley that Lake had failed "to do more than head a column in a day of battle,"¹⁵ implying that Lake was a fighter who lacked administrative ability. Lake's approach to war is aptly summed up in an often quoted remark attributed to him: "Damn your writing, mind your fighting." Wellesley, therefore, lacked confidence in Lake's ability to plan the campaign and his apprehension is evident from the number of instructions, both official and private, he sent to Lake compared with the few sent

¹³ C. W. Brooke to T. Brooke, 25 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 45906: fol. 31.

¹⁴ Fortescue, History of the British Army, p. 46.

¹⁵ Grenville to Wellesley, 16 July 1798, Add. MSS 70927: fol. 21; Franklin and Mary Wickwire, Cornwallis: The Imperial Years (Chapel Hill, 1980), pp. 221-2.

to Arthur, whom Wellesley had confidence in.

Lake, as a young officer, served in the prince of Wales' household and the royal family continued to hold feelings of affection and esteem toward him.¹⁶ This explains Wellesley's uncharacteristic silence about his assessment of Lake's ability to discipline the Bengal army. Wellesley usually sent scathing reports to Britain of the inadequacies of his senior officers and officials. In 1798 he complained to Dundas that discipline in the Bengal army had deteriorated under Sir John Shore's lax administration and that Sir Alured Clarke, the commander-in-chief, did not possess the necessary "activity and zeal" required to correct the army's deficiencies.¹⁷ Wellesley held the same opinion of Lake until he changed his mind in July 1803, as Shawe explained to Malcolm:

A knowledge of the instruments he has, occasioned great apprehension in Lord W's mind that the General could not begin to act until too late, but the instant he was apprized of the grandeur of the Governor-General's plans, he seems to have caught fire instantly and everything was in motion.¹⁸

The state of the Bengal army worried Wellesley. In March 1802 Lake complained that the troops were "entirely useless" and "totally without system of any kind," and in January of the following year he was still commenting on "the badness of [his]

¹⁶ Anonymous, The East Indian United Service Journal 3 (1834): 54.

¹⁷ Wellesley to Dundas, secret and confidential, 1 Oct. 1798, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 79.

¹⁸ Shawe to Malcolm, 26 July 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 25.

material." Lake complained equally about the Irish militia in Ireland in 1798, when he lost the battle of Castlebar, stating that it was impossible to manage them and their conduct was "shameful" in action. In India, also, Lake always found a scapegoat on whom to place the blame for disasters resulting from his own lack of careful preparation.

Lake considered the Company's officers to be undisciplined and guided by self-interest, and he complained that a request by one of them to move his battalion from Awadh into the Company's territory was based on the fact that he had "an exceedingly good bungalow" in the station he wished to move to, but ignored the reality that the post was not "sufficiently central to answer every purpose."¹⁹ Lake, a King's officer, was prejudiced against the Bengal army. In his dispatches to the duke of York, commander-in-chief of the British army, he noted the example of "distinguished gallantry" exhibited by the 76th Regiment and its British officers when faced with vigorous resistance.²⁰ It was true, however, as Ingram suggests, that "going into battle was not conceived by the officers of the Indian army to be part of their regular duties."²¹ The Bengal army had recently been assigned largely to policing and revenue collection, at the call of the civil authorities, and most of the men had never fought

¹⁹ Lake to H. Wellesley, 7 Mar., 16 Mar. 1802, 20 Jan. 1803, MSS Eur. E/175: fols. 45, 53, 257.

²⁰ Lake to duke of York, 20 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, V, "Maratha War Supplement," p. 272.

²¹ Ingram, In Defence of British India, p. 52.

in battle.

The efficiency of the East India Company's army was the subject of a long-standing debate. When Cornwallis went out to India as governor-general in 1786, he was instructed to improve the discipline and effectiveness of the Company's army and turn it into the King's East Indian Army. Cornwallis abandoned the latter aim shortly after his arrival, as he thought it might be even more difficult for the Company's government to control the officers if they held commissions from the King. Cornwallis was "agreeably surprised at the good condition of the native troops" and thought they would soon attain a high level of discipline, but the Company's Europeans were "wretched objects."²² He suggested that the Company should either raise its own recruits or send out King's regiments.

In 1798 Wellesley thought the Bengal army was undisciplined and that an able and firm, but moderate, commander-in-chief was needed to improve its efficiency. He suggested that it would be of benefit to the Company's army to abolish its European force.²³ When Lord William Bentinck was governor-general of India, 1828-1835, he thought the Indian army was the least efficient and the most expensive in the world and he, also,

²² Cornwallis to Dundas, 16 Nov. 1787, Cornwallis, I: 311.

²³ Wellesley to Dundas, 1 Oct. 1798, secret and confidential, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 67.

recommended the abolition of the Company's European regiments.²⁴ Throughout the years of this debate, the idea persisted that Europeans possessed more strength of character than Indians and, therefore, a mixture of both British and Indian troops was necessary to encourage, by example, the Indians to take part in dangerous endeavours. It was also thought that the Company's British troops were inferior to the King's troops and not capable of showing the same degree of courage.

As Raymond Callahan points out, prize money was one of the great attractions of eighteenth-century military service, particularly in India where hoarding of precious metals was common.²⁵ Although Lake thought the British troops superior, he realized that prize money was a strong incentive and, previous to the outbreak of hostilities, he informed Wellesley that if the 76th Regiment knew that a successful assault of a fort would give them prize money, "they would enter the hottest place upon earth or even under the earth."²⁶ He pointed out that they were used to receiving prize money when stationed at Madras and he hoped they would be allowed to receive it in the Hindustan campaign.

Because he doubted Lake's ability, Wellesley delayed, until

²⁴ Bentinck, "Minute on the future of the Company's European Army," 9 Sept. 1834; "Minute on military policy," 13 Mar. 1835, Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, The Correspondence of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, Governor-General of India 1828-1835, ed. C.H. Philips, (Oxford, 1977), II: pp. 1372, 1440.

²⁵ Callahan, The East India Company and Army Reform, p. 223.

²⁶ Lake to Wellesley, 21 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 67.

27 July, giving plenipotentiary powers to Lake to conduct the political negotiations in Hindustan, although he had delegated these powers to Arthur on 26 June.²⁷ On 9 July Lake sent Wellesley details of the preparations under way for putting the Bengal army on a war footing,²⁸ and this dispatch convinced Wellesley of the "extraordinary degree of activity" Lake was displaying in preparing the Bengal army for war. A further dispatch from Lake the following week on political matters satisfied Wellesley that Lake was "an able man," competent to undertake the task assigned him.²⁹ In the latter dispatch, Lake argued against Wellesley's intention to withdraw the Company's troops from Awadh and put them into cantonments. Lake wanted only the 4th Bengal Native Infantry and five companies of the 16th Bengal Native Infantry withdrawn for use in Hindustan because, if the whole of the Company's forces were withdrawn from revenue collection duties, the Awadh amirs would demand that the nawab allow them to form their own units from the turbulent corps which the Company had discharged. The disadvantages would out-weigh the advantages gained from the use of the force for active service in Hindustan.³⁰ The troops that Wellesley thought could be taken from Awadh for active service,

²⁷ Wellesley to Lake, secret, 27 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 234.

²⁸ Lake to Wellesley, secret, 9 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 46.

²⁹ Shawe to Malcolm, 26 July 1803, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 25.

³⁰ Shawe to Lake, 10 June 1803, Add. MSS 13739: fol. 106; Lake to Wellesley, private, 17 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 53.

therefore, were not as numerous as he had expected.

Lake had a larger force than Arthur's, but he had only one King's regiment of infantry, the 76th, to thirteen battalions from the Bengal army; whereas, Arthur had two King's regiments to six battalions from the Madras army. Lake had more European cavalry regiments than had ever been assigned to an army in India,³¹ three King's, the 8th, 27th and 29th Light Dragoons, and five Bengal, compared with Arthur's one King's and three Madras regiments. Lake had 65 guns, almost double Arthur's 34. Small detachments from Lake's main army were stationed in Rohilkhand, Benares, Kanpur and Etawah which, along with three regiments of cavalry at Fatehgarh, were to protect the Company's territories. A further detachment of three battalions of Bengal Native Infantry was sent to Allahabad under Lieutenant-Colonel George Powell, for the purpose of occupying Bundelkhand.

Lake had approximately 10,000 men under his personal command. In May 1803 he calculated that his total force for the campaign consisted of 2,058 cavalry and 13,051 infantry. At that time, however, there were 273 cavalry and 1371 infantry unfit for duty, due to illness, a rate close to eleven per cent. This Bengal force had to fight Perron's army, estimated to have 39,050 infantry, numerous cavalry and 464 guns.³²

To stretch the limited military resources, as was done in

³¹ Pearse, Lake, p. 143; C. W. Brooke to T. Brooke, 3 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 45906: fol. 7.

³² Lake to Shawe, 16 May 1803, Add. MSS 15741: fol. 139; Thorn, "Memoir of the War," p. 78.

Cuttack, Wellesley wanted Lake to conciliate the local rajas. Iqbal G. Khan suggests that diplomacy should be considered as a military tactic in India because the British neutralized the indigenous elites by diplomatic means.³³ During the Second Maratha War, the main diplomatic focus was in the Deccan as Sindhia, the raja of Berar and the peshwa were there. In Hindustan, Wellesley wanted treaties with a number of the chieftains and, just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, he appointed Graeme Mercer to negotiate defensive alliances with the states on the western border of the Bengal provinces. Lake assured Wellesley that the "chiefs of Bundelkhand are so divided and torn into factions, that it will be easy to secure one party."³⁴ Mercer was told to take advantage of the rivalry between the sons of the late Ali Bahadur of Bundelkhand to negotiate an agreement with the younger son, Himmudt Bahadur. This would usurp the authority of the elder son, Shumshere Bahadur, who held authority over Bundelkhand under a grant from Amrut Rao and was supported by a force that Wellesley claimed was in Holkar's service. The rana of Gohud and the Jat chiefs were dissatisfied with Sindhia's authority and Wellesley intended to offer them alliances that provided for mutual security while promising non-interference in their internal affairs. Wellesley also wanted alliances with the Rajput chiefs of Jaipur and Jodhpur and other minor states. Once the

³³ Khan, "Revenue, Agriculture and Warfare," pp. 127-8.

³⁴ Lake to Wellesley, memo, 9 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 192.

negotiations reached an advanced state, the administration in Bundelkhand was to be turned over to the collector at Allahabad.³⁵

It was essential to the war effort that an efficient administrator follow the army into Bundelkhand to arrange the collection of revenues to support the army. In October Wellesley was concerned to learn that the collector of Allahabad had left his post in Bundelkhand following an attack on a British garrison by Perron's cavalry and, because his return date was uncertain, he wanted a substitute appointed immediately. In Wellesley's opinion, "the complete success of the war in the Northwestern Provinces of Hindustan must be materially affected by any defect in the management of the affairs of Bundelkhand."³⁶

In addition to money, the army could not move without supplies. As no advance arrangements were made for Lake's army, he had to obtain supplies and a large number of carriage bullocks quickly and at a time of the year when the bullocks were needed in the fields. Lake received Wellesley's orders of 5 July on the 14th, and on the 23rd he told Wellesley that his army could move out on very short notice and in two or three

³⁵ Edmonstone to Mercer, most secret, 22 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 224.

³⁶ Wellesley to Lake, official and secret, 12 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 13737: fol. 41.

days would be equal to an attack on Perron.³⁷ This was not a correct assessment, however, as Charles William Brooke, a junior officer under Powell, told his father as late as 23 August that the villagers were reluctant to provide them with supplies, even for cash and "not a single Brinjar will accompany us, as they dread crossing the Jumna."³⁸ Lake, therefore, counted on taking Perron's supplies at Aligarh.

Wellesley suggested, but left to Lake's discretion, that the first military objective should be the capture of Agra, considered "the key to Hindustan," to stop Sindhia from sending reinforcements from the Deccan.³⁹ Lake, on the other hand, was willing to take a chance that he would have time to defeat Perron's forces before the detachment from Sindhia's southern force moved into Hindustan, when he could engage it. If the passes into Hindustan remained under Maratha control, Sindhia's detachment could enter Hindustan which would make it easier for Lake to catch it when he was ready to engage it in a pitched-battle. There was only a small garrison at Agra and no stores, and Lake thought that he should take Aligarh first and bring Perron's main force into a pitched-battle and destroy it. This would bring all the chieftains in that area over to the

³⁷ Lake to Wellesley, private, 23 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 73.

³⁸ C. W. Brooke to T. Brooke, 23 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 45906: fol. 4.

³⁹ Wellesley to Lake, private and most secret, 5 July 1803, Wellesley, III: 174; Fortescue, British Army, p. 58.

Company's side as, out of fear of Perron's army, they would hesitate to support the Company until his force was destroyed. Further reasons were that Aligarh fort was "the grand depot" of Perron's military stores and that Lake was told that "all the treasure had been sent into the fort at Aligarh," which promised a good sum of prize money.⁴⁰ Wellesley accepted Lake's plan, which subsequently left the lower Doab exposed, when Lake moved northward, to both Maratha predatory attacks and Perron's army, as there was only a small force at Shikohabad to provide for its defence.

Lake's attitude to command differed from Arthur's in that he had no organized system for supplying his army in the field. He intended to procure supplies from the captured forts and from brinjarries, as he was closer to his source of supply than Arthur was. Also, his plan of campaign rested the defence of the Company's territories on British military prestige rather than the presence of a sizeable force.

THE CAPTURE OF ALIGARH AND DELHI

Lake was confident that he would quickly defeat Perron's force. It had no European troops, aside from the European officers, whom he thought would soon abandon Sindhia's service. This would weaken Perron's army, in Lake's opinion, because he

⁴⁰ Lake to Wellesley, secret, 14 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 50; Lake to Wellesley, private, 17 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: 53; Lake to Wellesley, private, 21 July 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 67; Lake to duke of York, 20 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, V, "Maratha War Supplement," p. 272.

thought that Europeans fought better than Indians.

Lake left Kanpur on 7 August and was joined on the march by his troops from Fatehgarh. The army moved in a square formation, with the baggage protected in the centre, accompanied by followers, who numbered ten times the size of the force. As the numerous enemy cavalry would take advantage of any break in or thinning of the line, Lake emphasized that the troops must never "break their ranks [and put] themselves on an equality with an irregular and undisciplined enemy."⁴¹ On 29 August Lake's force entered Maratha territory and on the same day his cavalry, supported by a line of infantry and guns, attacked a large force of Perron's cavalry near Koel. The Marathas were in a strong position, but the determined advance of Lake's cavalry, who dashed at them with their galloper guns, caused the Maratha cavalry to retreat quickly.⁴² The training of Lake's cavalry at Kannauj during the winter of 1802-1803, had paid particular attention to the use of galloper guns and two of them were assigned to each regiment of cavalry. This innovation gave the cavalry a limited use of fire power. Perron retreated toward Agra immediately the attack began,⁴³ leaving Colonel Pedron in command of Aligarh.

Louis Bourquien, one of Perron's officers, wrote a memoir

⁴¹ Call's Journal, 27 Aug. 1803, NAM MS MM150(A).

⁴² Journal - Written by an officer who accompanied Lord Lake to Delhi, 29 Aug. 1803, MSS Eur. D/117: fol. 7.

⁴³ Turton to Lord Valentia, 30 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 19346: fol. 47.

shortly after leaving Sindhia's service to prove that he "had no share in the disgrace of a catastrophe which was brought about by intrigue and treason alone." He accuses Perron of being a traitor to Sindhia, France and his army. Bourquien claims that Perron could easily have gathered an army of 336,000 men, as the Indian princes offered Perron troops and money for use against the British. This would have been unlikely, as the majority of the Indian leaders, by custom, would have made profuse promises but procrastinated until they could determine who would win, and the Indian cavalry that had joined Perron quickly abandoned his army at Lake's approach. Bourquien complains that, from the time Perron learned he had been replaced as commander of Sindhia's northern force, his sole concern was for the safety of himself and his fortune.⁴⁴ It was unfortunate for Sindhia that the British attacked before Ambaji Inglia arrived to take over the command.

Shortly after Perron left, six European officers from his second brigade arrived at Koel. One of the six, George Carnegie, said that he had received permission from Perron to resign, a privilege available to all British subjects as they entered Sindhia's service on this condition.⁴⁵ Sindhia, therefore, must have considered a war with the Company unlikely, if he took them into his officer corps on terms that he knew

⁴⁴ Bourquien, "Autobiographical Memoir," pp. 36, 56-9, 69.

⁴⁵ George Carnegie to brother, 25 Nov. 1803, George Carnegie, The Mahratta Wars 1797-1805: Letters from the Front, ed. Alexander Allan Cormack (Banff, 1971), pp. 48-9.

would weaken his army in the event of a war against the British. Carnegie later wrote that Lake paid "flattering attention" to them, as he expected to obtain useful information, but Carnegie feigned stupidity. He considered that he "had done his duty to my Country in leaving poor Daulat Rao when he most wanted my services."⁴⁶ Other Britons leaving Sindhia's service were more self-serving and advanced their own interests by providing first-hand information regarding Sindhia's army and forts. Following the assault of Aligarh, Lake recommended that James Lucan be rewarded for his valuable service to the British army in accompanying Colonel George Monson of the 76th Regiment and giving advice based on his personal knowledge of the fort's structure.

The turn-coat officers justified their action by claiming that the army in Hindustan was no longer Sindhia's, Perron having usurped authority over it, and that the Supreme government had clear evidence of "this formidable Army being at the devotion of France."⁴⁷ Carnegie agreed that Perron had usurped power, as earlier Sindhia had conciliated him, but he firmly believed that Perron never carried on a correspondence with the French government. According to Carnegie, Lucan and some others experienced unfair treatment while serving under Bourquien and this would account for the different attitude

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Carnegie to brother, 1 Mar. 1805, Carnegie, Mahratta Wars, p. 65.

toward the Marathas held by Lucan and Carnegie.

The defection of these officers, the report that some of Perron's Indian allies had left him when they heard of the approach of the British troops and the quick retreat of the Maratha cavalry when fired upon, caused Lake to under-estimate the resistance that he would face from the remaining Maratha forces. He was confident that the Marathas would accept his offer of a large sum of money for the peaceful surrender of Aligarh fort. He justified the expense to Wellesley by arguing that, owing to the strength of the fort, a siege would take at least a month and delay his completion of Wellesley's plans, while a coup de main would involve a considerable loss of life that he was anxious to avoid.

Lake failed to obtain the fort by bribery and he took it by assault on 4 September. The fortress of Aligarh was considered impregnable, as it was surrounded by a large water-filled ditch that could only be crossed in front of the gateway, an approach heavily defended by cannon. Monson was the brash type of leader suited to Lake's system of aggressively throwing his force against the enemy, so he was appointed commander of the storming party, composed of four companies of the 76th Regiment and Indian infantry from the 1st brigade. Lake claimed that the Marathas fought with "the utmost obstinacy" and only British soldiers could have effectively carried out the operation. The advance party, composed of two companies from the 76th, suffered heavy casualties from gunfire before they succeeded in blowing

the outer gate. The British troops continued to be exposed to heavy musket fire as the garrison resisted their advance by firing down on them from each bastion they passed on their way into the inner fort.⁴⁸ But, once the storming party managed to enter the inner fort, giving it access to the stairs leading up to the top of the walls and bastions where the Marathas were posted, the resistance collapsed as the Marathas attempted to escape. They suffered over 2,000 casualties, either by bayonet or through drowning in the moat. The British casualties totalled 260 and, although the numbers were not excessive, a particular concern to Lake was the loss of "a great many valuable officers."⁴⁹ Of the 55 killed, 6 were officers and of the 205 wounded, 11 were officers, and 9 of the 17 were from the 76th Regiment.⁵⁰

Lake claimed the successful storming of the fort would "strike terror into the natives."⁵¹ In addition to military considerations, his tactics were determined by what he thought the Indians would expect from a strong military power. The Indians would attack the British forces if they perceived weakness, but a successful assault of a strong fortress would increase the stature of the British forces in their eyes. In

⁴⁸ Journal - Written by an officer who accompanied Lord Lake to Delhi, 4 Sept. 1803, MSS Eur. D/117: fol. 9.

⁴⁹ Lake to Wellesley, 4 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 293.

⁵⁰ Return of the killed and wounded, Aligarh, 4 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 666.

⁵¹ Lake to Wellesley, 4 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 293.

Lake's opinion, the fear of his military power would check the Indians in his rear while he advanced to Delhi.

Lake believed that the British presence in India rested on its military prestige and gave military expediency precedence over Wellesley's instructions to conciliate the people so they would accept British paramountcy. Lake assured Wellesley that he was maintaining control over his army and had stopped the customary plundering of villages as the army passed through.⁵² As he had made no arrangement for providing the followers and servants with supplies, however, he turned a blind eye to the fact that after his army passed by, they plundered the villages.⁵³ The Indian people, therefore, were plundered by both sides, contrary to Wellesley's policy of conciliation.

A blow was dealt to the British image of power when a body of Perron's cavalry attacked the British cantonment at Shikohabad on 2 September. Lake sent reinforcements, but his inadequate supply system had left the garrison without sufficient ammunition to defend it. They had already surrendered, after accepting an offer that they could leave if they pledged not to act against Sindhia for the duration of the war.⁵⁴

⁵² Lake to Wellesley, private, 8 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 296.

⁵³ James Young, The Second Maratha Campaign 1804-1805: Diary of James Young, ed. D.D. Khanna (New Delhi, 1990), p. 128; C. W. Brooke to T. Brooke, 14 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 45906: fol. 19.

⁵⁴ C. W. Brooke to T. Brooke, 12 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 45906: fol. 13.

The attack on Shikohabad caused the judge and collector of Etawah province to flee to Fatehgarh. Their arrival caused alarm among the inhabitants, who shut up their houses and began removing their possessions with the intention of leaving the city. The collector of Fatehgarh, Lieutenant Claud Russell, and his assistant rode through the streets to restore confidence. He issued a proclamation encouraging the people to remain and trust in the power and protection of the British government, and pointed out that Lieutenant-Colonel John Vandeleur's detachment would prevent the enemy from reaching the city. Their show of confidence in the British army was successful. By the following morning all the houses and shops were reopened.⁵⁵

The flight of the civil servants reinforced the military's opinion that the court of director's prejudice against the appointment of soldiers as collectors was ill-founded. The soldiers believed that civilians were unfit for the management of unsettled territories, as they thought they were not expected to risk their lives and fled at the first sign of danger. Whenever the Indians saw the British officials abandoning their posts, they concluded that the British situation was desperate and the whole province was thrown into confusion.⁵⁶

Wellesley hoped that Lake's recent successes would recoup the loss of prestige and restore confidence throughout the newly

⁵⁵ Russell to Valentia, 30 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 19346: fol. 58.

⁵⁶ Shawe to H. Wellesley, 5 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 1.

acquired territories.⁵⁷ The British could never rest on their carefully fashioned image of power, as they thought that any defeat or retreat cancelled out past achievements and had to be followed by a spectacular victory.

When Arthur heard of the attack on Shikohabad and Lake's intention to march on Delhi before taking Agra, he thought that the Company's Doab was left too exposed. Lake's plan also delayed agreements with the Rajputs, who would provide a barrier against the Marathas. Arthur thought a better policy would be to send a detachment northward to reinforce the force covering Rampur, which would then be strong enough to move on Delhi. This would free Lake to march on Agra, having first taken care of the cavalry that attacked Shikohabad. Arthur was concerned because he had lost track of Holkar, who was rumoured to have gone far to the north. He worried that Holkar would plunder the lower Doab, as he would know from the successful attack on Shikohabad that "there are but few soldiers there besides the Commander in Chief."⁵⁸

Perron ordered the attack on Shikohabad to increase his bargaining position with Lake, but he wanted no further involvement in the war. On 7 September Lake received a letter from him requesting permission to leave through the Company's territories. On 15 September he and several of his officers

⁵⁷ Edmonstone to A. Wellesley, 16 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 13773: fol. 156.

⁵⁸ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 11 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 402.

gave themselves up and Bourquien took over the command, as Ambaji Ingliia was still on his way north.

Lake sent a detachment to deal with the cavalry that attacked Shikohabad. He persisted, however, in his original plan to march on Delhi as he thought that the troops now under Bourquien could do more harm in the upper Doab than the troops remaining in the lower Doab could do there.⁵⁹ He intended to take Delhi and bring the Mughal Emperor under the Company's protection. Wellesley wanted this done to weaken Sindhia's political influence and, at the same time, to increase the Company's prestige. Lake arrived near Delhi on 11 September and found a large force, under Bourquien, in battle formation. Lake ordered an advance upon the Maratha lines, and the British suffered numerous casualties from heavy cannon fire. Nevertheless, the British troops persisted in their advance and charged the Maratha line with bayonets. An officer commented in his journal: "This bold and gallant advance struck such a panic into the enemy that they instantly fled, leaving their guns behind them."⁶⁰ A second British officer noted that the "sepoys to the left followed the example of the 76th and were equally fortunate in the result."⁶¹ Many of those fleeing were cut-up by Lake's cavalry or drowned when attempting to cross the

⁵⁹ Lake to Wellesley, 12 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 310.

⁶⁰ Journal - Written by an officer who accompanied Lord Lake to Delhi, 11 Sept. 1803, MSS Eur. D/117: fol. 11.

⁶¹ Macleod to Shawe, 13 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 13857: fol. 68.

Jumna. Of Lake's force, 197 Europeans and 288 natives were killed, wounded or missing, a total of 485, of whom 138 were from the 76th Regiment.⁶² As a consequence of this British victory, the Marathas evacuated Delhi and several days later Bourquien and his French officers asked for British protection. When Lake visited the Emperor, the whole court expressed satisfaction at coming under British protection and a title was conferred on him. A higher title was held by Sindhia, as in 1784 the Mughal Emperor had invested Mahadji Sindhia as plenipotentiary regent to manage the Emperor's affairs. The Emperor gave Lake a second-rank title⁶³ which in effect gave Sindhia precedence over him in the Emperor's court, continuing Sindhia's right of interference in the Emperor's affairs. This right was subsequently removed by Article XII of the December 1803 peace treaty between Sindhia and the Company, that prohibited Sindhia from interfering in the emperor's affairs. Sindhia only gave limited financial support to the Emperor's court, so the British takeover was welcomed because Wellesley was perceived as generous when he tried to buy collaborators.

Before leaving Delhi, Lake had to provide a force to garrison Delhi, maintain order and collect the revenues. His force was too small to detach any troops for revenue duties, so

⁶² Return of the killed, wounded and missing, Delhi, 11 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 667.

⁶³ Lake to duke of York, 20 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, V, "Maratha War Supplement," p. 272.

he engaged some irregulars, who had recently left Perron's service, that he thought could "be depended upon at least as much, if not more, than any we can get."⁶⁴ Unlike Arthur, Lake had no confidence in the worth of sebundy corps--locally raised Indian troops used for revenue collection and maintaining order--as, in his opinion, they became too familiar with the local people and tended to be lax in their duties. He argued against Wellesley's plan to replace the sebundy corps with provincial battalions,⁶⁵ formed from the discharged troops from Indian states' armies, as he thought they, too, would be inadequate. Although it was possible they "may prove much more useful from being under martial law," they would also become too intimate with the people. Lake undervalued Indian troops and did not accept that the sebundy corps, although not a disciplined military force, was adequate for the purpose assigned to it--the collection of revenue and policing the local population. In Lake's view, only a regular battalion from the Bengal army could keep order and he complained that it would not be on a par with the King's troops.

As he believed this effort arose in part from the lure of prize money, Lake frequently over-rode Wellesley's policy that it was to be distributed by the state. Lake allowed his troops to plunder, as he wanted to encourage them with the prospect of

⁶⁴ Lake to Wellesley, 17 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 319.

⁶⁵ Nandalal Chatterji, "Lord Wellesley and the Provincial Battalions," Journal of Indian History 31 (1953): 107-10.

an instant and generous reward, instead of waiting for the government to allocate shares that increased with each step in rank. At Aligarh two carts of treasure were found in the fort and each man took what he could get.⁶⁶ During an attack on the fort of Shamlee, gunfire from houses near the fort killed some of Lake's sepoys and, after its fall, he used this as an excuse to give the town up to plunder.⁶⁷ Arthur, on the other hand, while also recognizing the importance of prize money as an incentive to his troops, preferred the disciplined arrangement of the prize being distributed through the authority of the governor-general, with the set shares reinforcing the hierarchy of military command. Although Arthur made his troops wait for their share of prize money, he placed greater importance on the regularity of pay for his troops than Lake did. As McLaren suggests, much credit must be given to Munro for his efforts in collecting revenue for Arthur's campaign.⁶⁸ Lake did not have a similar source of regular revenue and his forces in Bundelkhand were almost four months in arrear at the beginning of November 1803 and in Hindustan by December 1805 the army's pay was seven months in arrear.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Journal - Written by an officer who accompanied Lord Lake to Delhi, 4 Sept. 1803, MSS Eur. D/117: fol. 9.

⁶⁷ John Shipp, The Path of Glory: Being the Memoirs of the Extraordinary Military Career of John Shipp, ed. C.J. Stranks (London, 1969), p. 47.

⁶⁸ McLaren, "Writing and Making History," p. 71.

⁶⁹ C. W. Brooke to T. Brooke, 1 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 45906: fol. 23; Captain Philip LeFevre, Diary, 10 Dec. 1805, NAM MS 8106-10.

At Delhi the Marathas deposited five lacs of rupees with the Emperor's treasurer when they evacuated Delhi and the Emperor offered this money to Lake. Wellesley declared this lawful prize money as it was originally intended as pay for Sindhia's troops. He told Lake to accept this money from the Emperor and distribute it to the army. In a general order, enclosed with his letter, Wellesley stated that it was his intention to continue to reward the army's efforts by distributing all prize captured by the British troops during the war.⁷⁰ However, Amiya Barat points out that it was not until 1829 that the official prize money from the Second Maratha War was finally distributed to the survivors.⁷¹ Wellesley gave the Emperor an equal amount of money as he had given up, as he wanted the Indians to think of the British as generous patrons. The amount paid to the Emperor was to be obtained either by persuading the British troops to give back all the prize money on loan to the Company at eight per cent or borrowed at Lucknow or Delhi from Indian bankers.⁷²

The victory at Delhi convinced the raja of Bharatpur, Ranjit Singh, to enter into a defensive, but not a subsidiary, treaty with the Company on 29 September. The Company agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the raja's state or to

⁷⁰ Wellesley to Lake, 8 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, III: 390.

⁷¹ Amiya Barat, The Bengal Native Infantry: Its Organization and Discipline 1796-1852 (Calcutta, 1962), p. 193.

⁷² Shawe to Capt. Lake, 8 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 13745: fol. 28.

demand any tribute from him.⁷³ As a result of the treaty, the raja sent 1200 cavalry to co-operate with Lake's army. Wellesley expected the Rajput and other minor chieftains would be influenced by the raja of Bharatpur's decision and that they would also accept alliances with the Company. Another result of Lake's success at Delhi was that the rest of Sindhia's French officers in Hindustan gave themselves up.

Having succeeded in taking Aligarh by a determined assault and Delhi by an aggressive bayonet charge, Lake was confident that aggressive efforts in southern Hindustan would soon successfully conclude his campaign.

TOWARD THE BATTLE OF LASWARI

Having completed his objectives in northern Hindustan, Lake now moved southward with the intention of taking Agra, which he thought would be easily taken, but when he arrived he found seven or eight battalions of enemy troops strongly positioned in the town and surrounding ravines. In an attempt to avoid heavy casualties, he tried to obtain possession of the fort by negotiation. He also knew that fifteen of Sindhia's battalions had recently arrived in Hindustan from the Deccan and that they had been joined by two of the battalions that had escaped from Delhi, making a total force of approximately 9,000,⁷⁴ and he was

⁷³ Treaty with the raja of Bhurtpur, 29 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, III: 636.

⁷⁴ Thorn's figures suggest that Sindhia's battalions had about 525 men each. Thorn, Memoir of the War, p. 78.

worried that they would join those at Agra. After several days of negotiations proved fruitless, on 10 October he decided to attack the enemy troops stationed outside the fort. As they were in strong, protected positions he sent in sepoy battalions only, to conserve his British troops. He reported to Wellesley that the sepoys "behaved excessively well" but again stressed that "it is impossible to do great things in a gallant and quick style without Europeans" as everything hinged on the "example and exertions" of the sepoys' British officers. He cited the heavy casualties among the Bengal army officers leading the assault as proof of the need for them to take an exposed position when leading an advance to encourage the sepoys to continue in the face of heavy fire.⁷⁵ The Company's sepoys had confidence in their British officers and followed them into battle. Barat states that when this bond of mutual trust, respect and attachment between the sepoy and his European officer was lost, owing to the changing social environment in India in the nineteenth-century, it proved disastrous in the mercenary Bengal army and the revolt of 1857 shows the result.⁷⁶

The resistance from the Marathas was strong as they were in sheltered positions that made it difficult for the British

⁷⁵ Lake to Wellesley, private and most confidential, 10 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, III: 395.

⁷⁶ Amiya Barat, "The European Officers of the Bengal Native Infantry (1796-1852)," Bengal Past and Present 80 (1961): 123.

troops to get at them. At a cost of 229 casualties,⁷⁷ the Maratha troops were driven from the town and the ravines and several days later 2,500 of them came over to the British side. On 17 October Lake opened fire on the fort and the garrison surrendered the following day when it became evident that a few more hours of British fire would produce a breach. Lake distributed twenty-four lacs of prize money to his troops and told Wellesley of it after the fact, stating that the "army certainly expected the money, or I would not have given it to them."⁷⁸

A British victory was also obtained in Bundelkhand when the British detachment under Powell, with the assistance of Himmut Bahadur's cavalry, attacked Shumshere Bahadur's force on 13 October and it retreated out of the province.⁷⁹ This placed the British candidate in authority in Bundelkhand. The Marathas' revenue rights were widespread and intermingled, and negotiations between the peshwa and Close resulted in supplemental articles to the Treaty of Bassein that restored territory in the Carnatic and Gujerat to the peshwa in exchange for territory in Bundelkhand contiguous to the Company's

⁷⁷ Return of the killed, wounded and missing, Agra, 10 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, III: 670.

⁷⁸ Lake to Wellesley, private, 22 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, III: 414. For a description of the construction of Agra and other Indian strongholds see Sidney Toy, The Strongholds of India (London, 1957).

⁷⁹ Powell to Gerard, 13 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, III: 398.

possessions.⁸⁰ This removed the peshwa's influence from the areas between the British territories and Himmud Bahadur's territories in Bundelkhand, an arrangement that made it easier for the British to retain control over him.

Meanwhile Lake, after taking Agra, intended to proceed southward toward Gwalior and, on the way, destroy the force Sindhia had sent north from the Deccan on 18 July to plunder the Rajput chiefs.⁸¹ He learned that this force had turned towards Delhi or Jaipur and, failing to intercept it, he changed his plan to march on Gwalior to chase after it. He assured Wellesley that it was a small force without a commander, as Dudrenec, its commanding officer, had come in to the British, and its troops were almost out of ammunition. There was no need to be uneasy about it.⁸²

On arriving near Fatehpur on 29 October, Lake learned that the Maratha force was moving northward rapidly, trying to evade him, as it was sent north by Sindhia to raise tribute from the Rajputs, not to fight. He decided to leave his slow-moving heavy artillery behind, with a detachment of infantry to protect it, and pursue the Marathas by forced marches. On 31 October

⁸⁰ Edmonstone to Close, 1 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 13597: fol. 74; Supplemental to the Treaty of Bassein, 16 Dec. 1803, Wellesley, III: 631.

⁸¹ Collins to Wellesley, 17 July 1803, Selections from the Letters, Despatches and Other State Papers Preserved in the Bombay Secretariat, Maratha Papers, ed. George W. Forrest (Bombay, 1885), p. 603.

⁸² Lake to Wellesley, private, 28 Oct. 1803, Wellesley, III: 418.

Lake reached a site vacated by the Marathas that morning. Overconfident that he would encounter little opposition, he moved ahead with his three brigades of cavalry with the intention of delaying the enemy by a "light engagement" until his infantry came up. After a twenty-five mile, six-hour ride, Lake caught up with the Marathas near the village of Laswari shortly after dawn on 1 November. They were in the process of moving out and Lake decided to attack immediately to take advantage of their disorder. The Marathas cut the embankment of a large water reservoir which slowed Lake's cavalry's advance. Contrary to Lake's assumption that the Maratha force lacked leadership because it had lost its European commander, a Maratha commander had replaced Dudrenec, and he used the time gained to position his men in a strong line with their front covered by their guns. Dense clouds of dust obscured Lake's view so he was unaware of the Marathas' new deployment and he assumed that they were still in a state of confusion while attempting to retreat. Like Arthur at Assaye, Lake thought the Maratha troops were too undisciplined to reposition themselves while threatened by an enemy force.

The advance unit of cavalry charged and forced the Maratha line, captured some of the guns and penetrated into the village of Laswari. They continued to be exposed to heavy Maratha fire and, as Lake had no infantry to follow-up their advance, he ordered all of them to withdraw. The majority of the captured guns could not be brought away as there were no bullocks to pull

them. Fortescue suggests that the attack was unnecessary and Lake only undertook it as he thought the Marathas were still retreating and, when he realized his mistake, he recalled all three brigades.⁸³ Characteristically, Lake acted hastily with his decision based on assumption rather than fact.

The infantry arrived shortly after and the Marathas sent word that they would surrender their guns if certain terms were granted. Lake accepted their proposal, giving them one hour to surrender, but continued forming his line for an attack. Lake's force, through casualties and detachments, was now down to about 8,000, slightly larger than Arthur's force at Assaye. The Marathas, however, had 40,000 to 50,000 troops at Assaye, but only 9,000 at Laswari. As no reply was received within the hour, Lake ordered an advance. The Maratha commander had used the one hour armistice to redeploy his troops and, as the 76th Regiment advanced, he changed his lines with the result that, instead of coming up to the Marathas' right flank, the British troops were exposed to heavy frontal fire. Lake claimed the 76th Regiment, heading the attack, was delayed at the point from which he planned to make the charge, waiting for the rear corps to come up. But "this handful of heroes," as he called them, had actually held up the rear Bengal army corps by halting and squatting down just before the brink of the water course in order to shelter from the heavy Maratha artillery fire. As Major-General Frederick St. John, the commanding officer of the

⁸³ Fortescue, History of the British Army, p. 61.

rear corps, had received no information of Lake's plan of attack, he thought the halt was an intentional move by Lake and stopped, thinking that any move on his part would interfere with Lake's manoeuvre. He subsequently came under severe criticism for not continuing his advance and the duke of York refused to offer him an appointment when he returned to Britain.⁸⁴ In his general orders of 4 November, Lake stated that he "beheld with admiration, the heroic behaviour of the 76th Regiment."⁸⁵ In covering up for his highly praised 76th Regiment, Lake allowed the blame for the halt to fall on the corps of the Bengal army.

To encourage the 76th to move out, Lake personally took to the field and ordered the incomplete column to attack immediately. The Maratha commander sent his cavalry to charge them and Pearce argues that had they obeyed this order with spirit they would have destroyed the 76th Regiment, and "Laswari would not have been a British victory."⁸⁶ In his estimation, the Maratha cavalry was the weak element in their army and their charge was feeble and easily repulsed. As they rallied and were preparing for a second charge, Lake sent in the 29th Dragoons who quickly forced them to retreat. Lake's remaining infantry joined the action and the Marathas vigorously resisted while

⁸⁴ Lake to Wellesley, 2 Nov. 1803, Wellesley, III: 441; Calvert to Windham, 20 Mar. 1806, WO 40/25; Shawe to H. Wellesley, 29 Dec. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 101; Officers' Statements, 1804, Add. MSS 43688: fol. 14.

⁸⁵ "General Orders by the Commander-in-Chief," 4 Nov. 1803, Wellesley, III: 662-3.

⁸⁶ Pearce, Lake, p. 237.

they were covered by their guns but when the guns were lost, they retreated and were cut up by Lake's cavalry. 2,000 prisoners were taken along with 86 guns. Lake's own force suffered 824 casualties and later that day Lake wrote to Wellesley that he "never was in so severe a business in my life."⁸⁷ He was concerned that the 76th Regiment had experienced heavy casualties leading the attack, after having been held in reserve since the battle of Delhi, and declared that "the remains of them I shall take the greatest care of, for what I should do without them, God only knows."⁸⁸

The battle of Laswari completed the defeat of Sindhia's forces in Hindustan which, in conjunction with Arthur's victories in the Deccan and Harcourts' in Cuttack, gave Wellesley the decisive victories he needed to complete the first phase of his empire-building.

AN ANATOMY OF VICTORY

Two points are emphasized by Lake throughout the various accounts of the campaign he wrote for Wellesley and the duke of York: first, that the Maratha troops put up stiff resistance to his attacks and second, that victory was obtained because he had European troops and officers. Arthur also claimed that his

⁸⁷ C.T. Atkinson, "A Cavalry Regiment of the Mahratta Wars," Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research 33 (1955): 80-7; Lake to Wellesley, secret, 2 Nov. 1803, Wellesley, III: 445; Return of killed, wounded and missing, Laswari, 1 Nov. 1803, Wellesley, III: 672.

⁸⁸ Lake to Wellesley, private, 3 Nov. 1803, Wellesley, III: 449.

troops met with heavy opposition, but Elphinstone claimed it was Arthur's leadership that obtained the victory at Assaye and Arthur gave himself credit for the victory at Argaum. Recent scholarship has advanced several arguments explaining why Lake's and Arthur's armies were able to defeat the Marathas, in spite of their superiority in numbers and better equipment.

Randolf G. S. Cooper, basing his analysis on the battles of Assaye and Argaum, argues that the Maratha artillery possessed numerous good quality guns, operated by well-trained personnel. The main cause of their defeat was Sindhia's hollow command structure and the desertion or banishment of his European officers prior to the battle of Assaye. He states that this problem was exacerbated by the lack of a strong commitment of the troops to the officers filling the vacant leadership ranks, as the wages of Sindhia's mercenary troops were in arrears. He then points out a third handicap, the inability of the Maratha states to unite, arguing that "politics undid what technology had achieved."⁸⁹

While it is true that the departure of many of Sindhia's European officers from his service should be considered when determining the cause of the Marathas' defeat at Assaye and Argaum, some of the European officers with Sindhia's first

⁸⁹ Randolph G.S. Cooper, "Wellington and the Marathas in 1803," International History Review 21 (1989): 31-8.

brigade did fight at Assaye,⁹⁰ Pohlman retained his command and the raja of Berar's officer corps was never Europeanized. On the British side, two newly-formed units of the Company's Indian cavalry took shelter from the enemy artillery fire by hiding out in a ravine in spite of the presence of their British officers on the field who, unable to locate their men, joined another regiment's charge.⁹¹ Due to their recent recruitment, the units lacked sufficient training and discipline to follow their British officers when the fighting became severe. At Argaum, the sepoys initially balked at following their British officers' advance under the heavy Maratha fire. In this case the sepoys were veterans of the slaughter at Assaye and this horrific experience caused their instinct for self-survival to over-ride their European-style military training. Here, and at Assaye, it was Arthur's leadership that saved the day for the British, but it is necessary to examine both Arthur's Deccan campaign and Lake's campaign in Hindustan to determine the reasons for Sindhia's and the raja of Berar's defeat in the Second Maratha War.

In John Pemble's comprehensive examination of the causes of the Marathas' defeat he argues against the traditional view that it was due to their abandonment of their ancestral cavalry

⁹⁰ John Pemble, "Resources and Techniques in the Second Maratha War," Historical Journal 19 (1976): 393; A. Wellesley to Collins, 3 Oct. 1803, encl., WSD, IV: 190.

⁹¹ Elphinstone to Strachey, 9 Oct. 1803, MSS Eur. F128/163: fol. 97.

warfare, stating that this argument under-estimates the Marathas' competence in their new form of combat. He states that the British were now too well protected by anti-cavalry devices and the Marathas only chance of defeating the British was to fight them with artillery and infantry. As part of his evidence, he quotes Arthur's statement in a letter to Murray "that the Maratha cavalry are not very formidable when opposed by our infantry" and his remark to Munro that "a predatory war [was] not to be carried on now as it was formerly."⁹² Arthur was referring, however, to the Maratha cavalry as it was during the Second Maratha War, as he thought it had lost its spirit since the Maratha army had made the artillery and infantry its principal strength. But Arthur thought that

if there were no infantry in a Maratha army, their cavalry would commence those predatory operations for which they were formerly so famous; and although I am aware of the greater difficulties they would now have to encounter than their ancestors formerly had, from the practice...of fortifying every village,...I should still consider these operations to be more formidable to the British Government, than any that they can ever carry on by means of the best body of infantry that they can form.

The Maratha infantry and artillery had become the principal strength of their army, and "therefore, when they are lost, the cavalry, as is the case in this war, will not act."⁹³ The Maratha cavalry lost its motivation when it was acting in a pitched-battle where there was little opportunity to obtain

⁹² Pemble, "Second Maratha War," pp. 403, 378-9.

⁹³ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 18 Nov. 1803, WD, II: 517.

loot.

Although V. V. Joshi believes that several factors led to the Marathas' defeat, including British diplomatic successes and inferior Maratha leadership, he supports the traditional view that the Marathas were mistaken in neglecting their predatory style of warfare. He argues that their greatest military error was their failure to use their cavalry to attack the British supply convoys.⁹⁴ Arthur knew that an interruption of his supply lines would be fatal to his campaign and he gave priority to their protection. Although the Marathas made several unsuccessful attacks on his convoys, no sustained effort was made to cut the vital British supply lines. If the British had been forced to continually defend them, they would have been pulled into a defensive war, and Arthur thought that a "long defensive war will ruin us."⁹⁵ It would encourage many of the neutral Maratha leaders to join in the predatory attacks against the Company in order to obtain loot, prolonging the war and the expense would require peace.

Pemble believes, as Cooper does, that Sindhia's officer corps was the weakest spot in the Maratha military system, as Sindhia could not rely on his officers' loyalty: the majority of his European officers were British or Anglo-Eurasian.⁹⁶ This

⁹⁴ V.V. Joshi, Clash of Three Empires: A Study of British Conquest of India with Special Reference to the Maratha People (Allahabad, 1941), p. 192.

⁹⁵ A. Wellesley to Stevenson, 17 Aug. 1803, WD, II: 210.

⁹⁶ Pemble, "Second Maratha War," pp. 393-4.

was true as, prior to the outbreak of hostilities, George Carnegie wrote to Ochterlony that

There are 8 battalions in this brigade, all commanded by Britons or sons of Britons I have succeeded in convincing most if not all of the shame they would bring on themselves and families and I am now confident the whole will resign when I do but we must stick to our posts until all hopes of accommodation is fled. I am confident the Brigades would fight to the last man if their officers stay by them but when deserted by two-thirds of their officers, I am of opinion they will be disheartened and make a poor stand.⁹⁷

Although Sindhia's army was strengthened against other Indian states' armies by Europeanizing his officer corps, it was weakened by the lack of commitment of his officer corps when they were expected to fight the British.

James Skinner, an Anglo-Eurasian who came away with Carnegie, claims in his memoirs that he had no intention of going over to the British but when Carnegie and one other Anglo-Eurasian officer announced their intention to leave Sindhia's service rather than serve against the British, all the other Britons and "country-born" who served in the same unit as Carnegie were paid their outstanding wages and ordered to leave Maratha territory.⁹⁸ Skinner also claims that he came across Perron on his way to Agra following his defeat at Koel and attempted to convince him to make a stand against the British,

⁹⁷ Carnegie to Ochterlony, 18 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 149.

⁹⁸ James Skinner, Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner, ed. J. Baillie Fraser, 2 vols., (London, 1851), I: 250-1.

assuring him that he could depend upon many to fight for him. He states Perron refused as he was convinced all his British and Anglo-Eurasian officers would leave.⁹⁹ In Carnegie's case, his mother was the cousin of the former chairman of the East India Company, David Scott, and it was unlikely that Carnegie would fight against his fellow Britons. Skinner's initial conduct was influenced by his belief that he had no chance of employment with a Company army, and he subsequently accepted Lake's offer of a cavalry command with the provision that he would not be required to act against Sindhia.¹⁰⁰

The majority of British and Anglo-Eurasian officers in Sindhia's service never fought for him in the Second Maratha War, but other European and French officers did. These European officers exhibited little enthusiasm for continuing in a war against the Company that they thought the Marathas would not win. The British were thought of as the paramount power in India by the French mercenaries, as they were aware that political differences would prevent the Marathas from making a united effort in a war against them. De Boigne, before retiring from Sindhia's service, had warned him to disband his infantry corps rather than go to war with the British,¹⁰¹ and Perron and the other senior French officers in Sindhia's service quickly

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 252.

¹⁰⁰ Skinner, Memoir, pp. 232, 277.

¹⁰¹ Herbert Compton, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan From 1784 to 1803 (London, 1892), p. 99.

gave themselves up in return for a guarantee of safe passage through the Company's territories to enable them to leave India. Hessing and Sutherland, two of the European officers in Sindhia's northern army, were imprisoned by the Marathas at Agra for advising that the garrison accept Lake's offer and surrender the fort. Most of the European officers in Sindhia's service who were not British or Anglo-Eurasian left Sindhia's service after they were defeated and turned themselves in to the British.

Ingram suggests that the British were able to conquer "much of India, partly because they could rely upon the Indian princes to quarrel with one another, partly because they could rely upon their troops to run away." The British never doubted the importance of European discipline and leadership. In explaining Arthur's victory over the Marathas at Assaye and Argaum, Ingram assigns the Maratha defeat, in spite of their having better weapons and as good training, to a lack of commitment on the part of the Maratha chieftains and their officer corps, due to political conditions, which resulted in a poor command structure. He notes also that, due to the fluidity of the Indian military labour market, neither the Marathas' cavalry or the whole of their infantry were ever fully committed, while Arthur held an advantage in his regular cavalry and the steadiness of the British troops. The end result was that the Maratha army "melt[ed] away at the first sign of determined opposition," manifested in the British troops bayonet and sabre

attacks.¹⁰² An extension of this analysis to Lake's campaign indicates that Lake's victory over Sindhia's forces in Hindustan was due to the same lack of commitment which adversely affected the Maratha opposition.

The Maratha infantry, deprived of strong leadership by the defection of many of its officers and the lack of commitment of its remaining European officers, fought only so long as it was behind the line of its strong artillery, concealed by long grass or buildings, or was firing down from battlements when protected by stone hoods. Once the British broke through the Maratha line of artillery or forced their way into the inner fort, the resistance of the Maratha infantry soon caved in and it retreated. These "mercenary soldiers looked upon a lost battle as at worst a temporary loss of employment."¹⁰³ In order to break through the Maratha artillery, the British troops had to advance under heavy fire, while suffering heavy casualties, and attack with bayonets. British, or sepoy regiments led by resolute British officers, could usually be counted on to advance under heavy fire if they had seen sufficient service. When they did not, the British commanders stepped in. At Assaye and Argaum Arthur's determined urging saved the day when the troops hesitated to advance under heavy fire or were about to

¹⁰² Ingram, In Defence of British India, p. 49; Edward Ingram, "Wellington and India," in Wellington: Studies in the Military and Political Career of the First Duke of Wellington, ed. Norman Gash (Manchester, 1990), pp. 11-33.

¹⁰³ Joshi, Clash of Three Empires, p. 206.

break when exposed to a Maratha cavalry charge. At Laswari Lake led his troops in order to encourage them to advance in the face of heavy Maratha fire.

Lake and Arthur took different approaches to the problem of ensuring their troops would remain steadfast in battle. Arthur was seen by his contemporaries as a hard man and his command was authoritarian. Lake's biographer, on the other hand, concludes that Lake's "whole history shows him to have been humane and kind-hearted" and he built-up a reputation as a benevolent commander who "was always the soldier's friend."¹⁰⁴ William Hickey, a lawyer whose diaries provide much insight into Calcutta's Anglo-Indian society, commented that: "There never was a commander who engaged the love and confidence of his troops so much as does General Lake,"¹⁰⁵ and his men followed him from a sense of esteem. An officer serving with Lake wrote in his journal after the battle of Delhi "who would not follow the example of such a general as we had?"¹⁰⁶

Lake's benevolent leadership was discredited, however, by his adjutant-general, Henry Clinton's predecessor, Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Murray, who claimed that Lake despised the practice of the discipline necessary "to maintain ourselves in

¹⁰⁴ Charles Greville, Leaves from the Greville Diary, ed. Philip Morrell (London, 1929), p. 667; Neville Thompson, Wellington After Waterloo (London, 1986), p. 15; Pearce, Lake, p. 112; Shipp, Memoirs of Military Career, p. 74.

¹⁰⁵ William Hickey, Memoirs of William Hickey, ed. Alfred Spencer, 5th ed., (London, 1948), IV: 308.

¹⁰⁶ Call's Journals, 11 Sept. 1803, NAM MS 150(A).

this country" and that the credit for the introduction of discipline into the Bengal army rested with Sir James Craig,¹⁰⁷ who was commander at Kanpur previous to Lake's arrival in India. Craig considered himself "a soldier of the old-school" and was an advocate, like Arthur, of authoritarian command.¹⁰⁸ Murray, however, was "loathed" by the men and when he came into their quarters they all started to shout, "kick him out, and he narrowly escaped with his life."¹⁰⁹ Arthur thought that the troops should be prevented from "getting intoxicating liquors, which tend to their destruction." Lake took a different view, as he thought that his men needed the occasional break. But, after three days of drinking and dancing, "everybody was back to order and discipline again."¹¹⁰

At Calcutta, it was thought that if the troops of the Bengal army had been led by "Craig or by almost any other man than General Lake" they "would have had a good thrashing at the outset," as the officers and men were "all raw."¹¹¹ Having earlier worried that Lake was incapable of moving the Bengal army, Wellesley and Shawe now believed that he was particularly suited for the task. As many of the Bengal army were raw, not

¹⁰⁷ Clinton to brother, 15 Feb. 1804, Clinton MSS.

¹⁰⁸ Craig to Wellesley, 25 Sept. 1799, Wellesley, II: 122.

¹⁰⁹ Shipp, Memoirs of Military Career, p. 43.

¹¹⁰ A. Wellesley to Murray, 21 Aug. 1803, WD, II: 221; Shipp, Memoirs of Military Career, pp. 41-4.

¹¹¹ Shawe to H. Wellesley, 29 Dec. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 101.

having "smelt gunpowder," they thought that Lake's style of command, that encouraged the British troops to persevere under heavy fire out of devotion to their commander and by the lure of a quick reward of prize money, was required to stir the Bengal army from its accustomed sloth.

Both Sindhia and the raja of Berar neglected to display leadership on the field of battle. Sindhia was not completely committed to fighting the British at Assaye and Argaum as these battles were not as important to his interests as they were to the raja of Berar. Holkar remained aloof and did not provide any direct aid, although indirectly he pinned the British troops in Gujerat down because of Murray's fear that he would attack.

Throughout the war, Arthur kept an eye on Holkar's movements, as he was nervous that Holkar would enter the conflict if he thought he could benefit by doing so. In particular, Arthur feared that, in the south, he would attack his supply lines and, in the north, he would invade Bengal which was left unprotected while Lake campaigned in northern Hindustan. Lake was not as apprehensive of Holkar as Arthur was, and he left the lower Doab exposed while he moved to take Delhi. In November Lake confidently informed the duke of York that Holkar would no longer find the necessary support for any northern incursions as the native princes, "by the removal of their fears [of Holkar], or overawed by our power," would now

seek alliances with the Company.¹¹² The inability of the Maratha chieftains to present a united front allowed the British to achieve victories with their limited forces which would have been critically over-strained if Holkar had entered the war.

To increase the divisions between the Indians, the British offered treaties which guaranteed non-interference in the internal affairs of the states and released them from the payment of tribute, although the customary flux in the political arrangements in India meant that, in spite of a treaty, the Indians would change sides if circumstances changed and it appeared beneficial for them to do so. The alliances were dependent on maintaining the British image of power.

The British, therefore, were able to obtain military victories over the more numerous and better equipped Maratha troops for a number of reasons. First, the Marathas were unable to settle their internal quarrels and co-ordinate their military efforts against the British and the success of the British diplomatic efforts further divided them. Second, their troops lacked a committed leadership and the Maratha infantry would retreat once their cover, whether an artillery line or a physical structure, was penetrated. Third, the British troops and officers were given a monetary incentive to persevere under extreme fire, setting an example for the Company sepoy, while the Maratha troops lacked a similar stimulus as their efforts

¹¹² Lake to the duke of York, 6 Nov. 1803, Wellesley, V, "Maratha War Supplement," p. 282.

were largely defensive. Fourth, the Marathas failed to use their cavalry to cut-off the flow of supplies to the British troops in the field which allowed the British to launch offensive action far from their supply sources. In Hindustan, the Marathas' lack of commitment and their failure to cut the British supply lines resulted in a relatively simple campaign for Lake and, therefore, his administrative weaknesses did not prevent the ultimate achievement of his military objectives.

DIPLOMATIC SETTLEMENTS AND PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

With the achievement of the military objectives desired by Wellesley in Hindustan, Lake now turned his attention to completing the diplomatic objectives. He was confident that the victory at Laswari would influence Ambaji Inglia, who held the revenue rights over Gwalior and its surrounding territories under a grant from Sindhia, and the other rajas to come to terms, and that Gwalior could be obtained through negotiations with Ambaji. Although Wellesley and Lake thought that an arrangement would quickly be made with Ambaji, Claud Russell saw the situation more clearly when he wrote that Ambaji had sent a vakil to negotiate with Lake "but a negotiation with a native chieftain is merely to produce, what the Sec[retary] of the Board of Revenue emphatically expressed in a letter to me lately, 'the augmentation of delay.'"¹¹³ Ambaji's proposals

¹¹³ Russell to Valentia, 30 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 19346: fol. 58.

conflicted with those under negotiation with the rana of Gohud, as a large percentage of the former possessions of the rana, that had been conquered by Mahadji Sindhia, were now under the authority of Ambaji. Wellesley told Lake to give Ambaji some of the territory conquered from Sindhia as a substitute for the rana's territories. Wellesley stressed that the fortress of Gwalior and the nearby passes from the Deccan into Hindustan should be garrisoned by British troops. He was later to maintain this position against the inclination of Arthur and Malcolm, who argued that this was an obstacle to maintaining peaceful relations with Sindhia.

Lake was over-optimistic in his belief that his destruction of Sindhia's remaining battalions in Hindustan had impressed Ambaji and the raja of Jaipur and that they would immediately accept an alliance with the Company. As foreseen by Russell, it proved necessary to advance to intimidate both chieftains and bring the negotiations to a conclusion. Lake's advance had the desired effect and a defensive, but not a subsidiary, treaty was signed with Raja Juggut Singh of Jaipur on 12 December 1803 stipulating that the Company would not interfere with his internal affairs nor demand tribute. The raja gave the Company the right of arbitration in his disputes with other states. On 22 December a similar alliance was concluded with the raja of Jodhpur. The treaty concluded with the rana of Gohud on 17 January 1804 called for a cash subsidy payment for a subsidiary force and the rana's agreement to the Company's possession of

Gwalior. A treaty was concluded with Ambaji Inglia on 22 December. All Ambaji's territory north of Gwalior, inclusive of the fort, was ceded to the Company and he was guaranteed possession of the remainder.¹¹⁴ These agreements were strategically important as they formed part of a barrier to confine Sindhia to the south and keep him out of Hindustan. They were politically important as they removed Sindhia's influence from Hindustan and the area around the passes leading into it. After obtaining the agreement with Ambaji, Lake sent a detachment to take possession of Gwalior but the commander of the fort refused to surrender it and, after reinforcements were sent, the fort was taken by force on 5 February 1804.

Lake's victories, in conjunction with those obtained simultaneously in the south, were sufficient cause for Sindhia and the raja of Berar to accept Wellesley's extensive demands as the price of peace. Munro told Arthur that he did "not wish to see an honourable peace, like that of Amiens, but a successful one," as the treaty of Amiens was "a very good lesson to all negotiators who affect to relinquish advantages for the sake of conciliation."¹¹⁵

As a result of the British victories, Sindhia's and the raja of Berar's military forces were damaged and their financial

¹¹⁴ ggic to sc, 12 Apr. 1803, Wellesley, V, "Maratha War Supplement," p. 81; Wellesley, III: 637, 674; Wellesley, IV: 640.

¹¹⁵ Munro to A. Wellesley, 16 Nov. 1803, 6 Feb. 1804, Gleig, Munro, III: 181, 185.

bases were weakened by the loss of revenues from their own territories taken by the British, and also from being squeezed out of the collection of tribute from the British allies' territories. The raja of Berar, with his important fort of Gwalighur taken on 15 December, was the first to accept peace on Wellesley's terms and a peace treaty was concluded on 17 December 1803. Article II ceded the long-sought province of Cuttack to the Company, which provided a land link between Calcutta and Fort St. George. By Article III, the raja agreed to cede any of his territories that were intermingled with the nizam's, establishing the Wardha river as the nizam's boundary. This article imposed a European-style defined border between the raja and the nizam, that was contrary to the usual Indian custom of intermingled rights to land revenue. The British claimed that this jumbled arrangement caused friction between the two states. John S. Galbraith argues that much of the expansion of the British empire was the result of British governors attempting to eliminate disorderly frontiers by annexations, which led to new frontier problems and further expansion.¹¹⁶ In this case, however, Wellesley's solution increased the territories of the nizam, not the Company's. The vakils readily accepted the requirement that the raja exclude from his service any Briton, American, or European, as the raja had none in his service and he had no intention of employing any. The raja

¹¹⁶ John S. Galbraith, "The 'Turbulent Frontier' as a Factor in British Expansion," Comparative Studies in Society and History 2 (1959-60): 150-68.

continued to hold this view after the peace, declining Wellesley's offer of a subsidiary alliance. The Company acquired the right to mediate any disputes between the raja and the peshwa or the nizam. This article helped Wellesley's efforts to build a paternalistic despotism by placing the relations between the three states under Company control by obligating them to accept the Company's arbitration of their disputes. A further Company inroad into Maratha affairs was achieved by the provision for an exchange of ministers between the two governments, as Wellesley thought that the British resident would influence the raja's affairs. The raja agreed to confirm any treaties the Company had made with his feudatories during the war. This stipulation was vague, however, because Arthur lacked details of the treaties made by the Company's political agents. By Article XI the raja agreed that he would not give assistance to Sindhia or any other Maratha chieftain if the war continued.

The agreement was immediately sent to the raja who was allowed eight days to accept it. Malcolm stated that "the moment it is signed Sindhia is at our mercy" and that the greatest benefit of the treaty would be the defined border between the raja and the nizam. It would put an end to the disputes that continually arose due to the mixed authority over the area.¹¹⁷

The separation of the raja of Berar from Sindhia increased

¹¹⁷ Malcolm to Shawe, 17 Dec. 1803, Add. MSS 13746: fol. 424.

the pressure on him to come to terms with the Company and, faced with the prospect of carrying on the war alone, Sindhia's vakils agreed to a treaty of peace on 30 December. In the initial discussions, they tried to ensure that he would retain his position of influence in Hindustan by asking that the territories intended to provide revenue for the Emperor and the others remain under Sindhia's authority, who would pay the amount determined by the Company.¹¹⁸ Arthur refused to agree to this proposal and Article XII of the peace treaty required that Sindhia not interfere in the Emperor's affairs, which deprived Sindhia of the status he obtained from his position as the Emperor's regent.

The treaty also required Sindhia to cede territory in Hindustan, Gujerat and the Deccan to an extent that could only have been obtained through war. Article VII stated that British pensions would be paid to a number of Sindhia's subjects in lieu of the revenues they had formerly collected from territories taken from Sindhia by the Company. As the raja of Berar had done, Sindhia, by Article IX, agreed to confirm the treaties made by the Company with his feudatories during the war. This caused contention later, because of its vagueness, when Sindhia challenged his loss of Gwalior and Gohud under this article. Sindhia accepted articles similar to the raja's regarding the exchange of ministers and the prohibition of foreigners in his

¹¹⁸ Conferences with the vakils of Daulat Rao Sindhia, 1 Dec. 1803, WSD, IV: 246.

service. As Sindhia made extensive cessions of territory under the peace terms, the Company agreed to provide him with a subsidiary force, at no additional cost, if he elected to adhere to the general defensive alliance between the Company, the peshwa and the nizam.

Arthur hoped that Wellesley would approve the terms of the treaty with Sindhia, explaining that the only doubt he held was about Ambaji.¹¹⁹ Wellesley had sent Arthur, on 11 December, three plans for a peace with Sindhia covering various exigencies, that Arthur had not received when he drew up the peace treaty signed on 30 December. Article IV of all three of Wellesley's suggested plans stipulated that: "All territories now held by Ambaji to be ceded to the British Government. Ambaji to be independent of Sindhia, and to be included in the treaty of peace as an ally of the British Government."¹²⁰ As Wellesley's dispatch was received after the signing of the treaty, it did not include this separate article covering Ambaji. This omission caused the ambiguity in Article IX which left an opening for Sindhia to later challenge the British retention of Gwalior and Gohud.

Reporting on the peace to the secret committee on 13 July 1804, Wellesley repeatedly refers to Sindhia and the raja of Berar as the "confederated Maratha chieftains", emphasizing the

¹¹⁹ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 16 Jan. 1804, WSD, IV: 317.

¹²⁰ Wellesley to A. Wellesley, secret and official, encl., 11 Dec. 1803, Wellesley, III: 509.

danger to the Company and its allies from the "union of the confederate forces," their menacing position on the nizam's border, and the means they possessed to carry out their "hostile designs."¹²¹ In the negotiations for peace, Arthur insisted that both Sindhia and the raja of Berar acknowledge that the Company was entitled to compensation,¹²² in order to prove that the war was the result of Maratha aggression. As their aggression caused the war, Wellesley argued, the primary objectives of the war were to deprive them of the means of "prosecuting their unwarrantable designs" and to remove "the sources of that military and political power which they had employed to disturb the security of our alliances, dependencies, and dominions."¹²³

The objectives of the war were accomplished by the reduction of both Sindhia's and the raja of Berar's military power and of their territorial resources necessary for the rebuilding of these forces, the complete destruction of Perron's army in Hindustan and the removal of the opportunities for French aggrandizement in India. Wellesley claimed the peace terms improved and consolidated the Company's territorial strength and general resources and benefited its system of political relations through the treaties of subsidy and

¹²¹ ggc to sc, 13 July 1804, Wellesley, IV: 132.

¹²² Conferences with the vakils of Dowlut Rao Sindhia, 1 Dec. 1803, WSD, IV: 240.

¹²³ ggc to sc, 13 July 1804, Wellesley, IV: 134.

alliance. The Indians would also benefit, he claimed, as the terms of the treaty would produce a favourable effect on the tranquillity and welfare of the Indian states in Hindustan and the Deccan.¹²⁴

The intent of the dispatch was to justify the war and the peace terms by arguing that the Marathas posed a threat to the security of the Company and its allies, and that the extensive cessions of territory were necessary to remove the means of support for the Marathas' military establishments that backed their aggression. He argued that:

Public duty required the employment of every effort to reduce the strength of the enemy within the bounds prescribed by the just interests of the British Government and of its allies; but we should have deemed it equally injurious to the glory and power of the British Government in India, as well as contrary to our duty, to the commands of the honourable Company, and to the laws of our country, to have prosecuted war for the purposes of vengeance, aggrandizement, or ambition, or to have urged the fall of a vanquished enemy beyond the just limits of national security and public faith.¹²⁵

Wellesley also mentioned the increased revenues and the produce that could be expected from the territories ceded to the Company and the attainment of the free navigation of the Jumna, but these gains are not given the same emphasis as the strategic benefits, as the war with the Marathas had to be presented as a response to a threat to the Company's and its allies' security in order to justify the war.


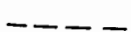
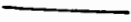
The British victories allowed Wellesley to achieve his

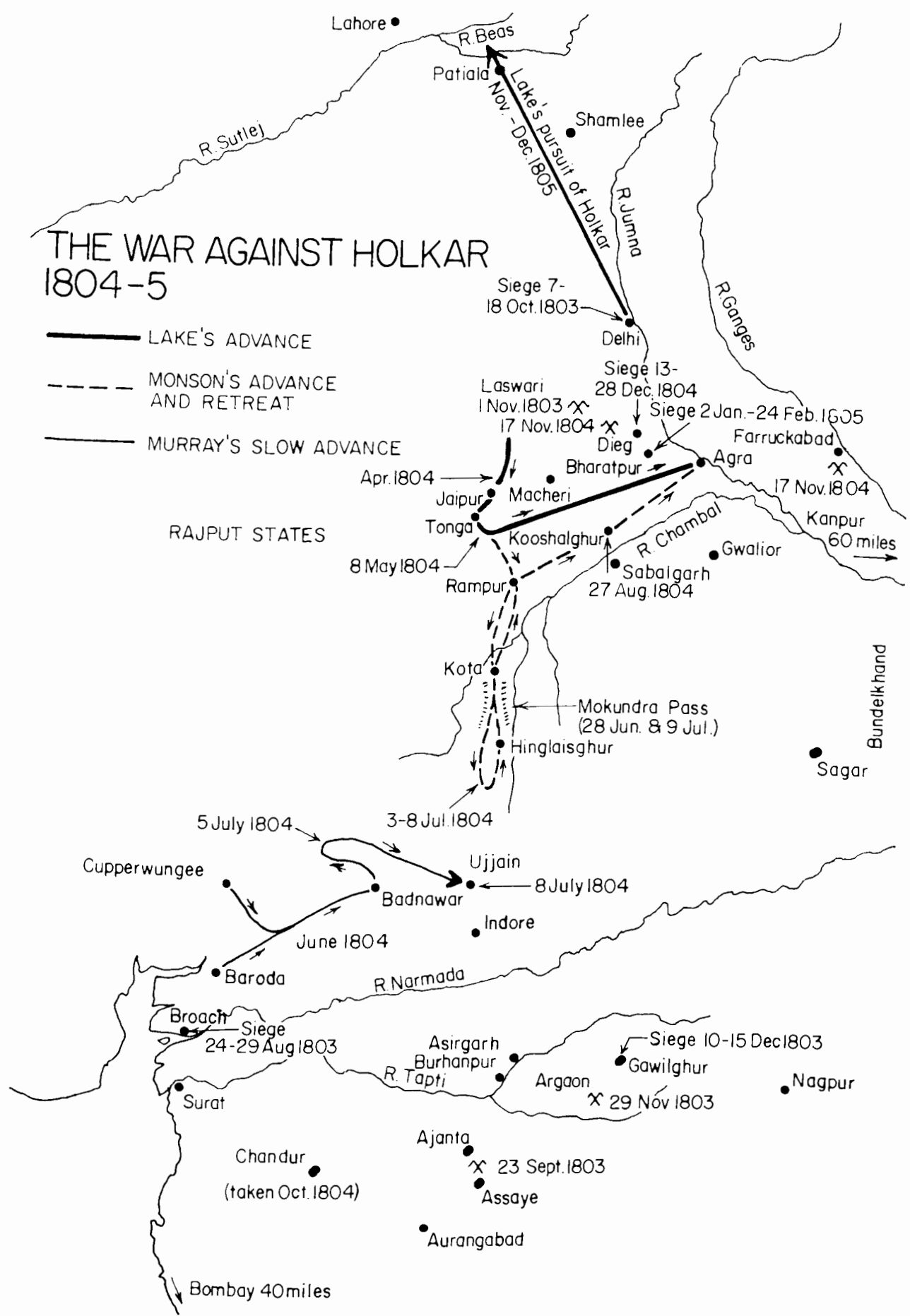
¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 133.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 142.

objective of obtaining large cessions of territory from the two Maratha chieftains. He justified the war by claiming that it was a response to a Maratha threat and that the peace terms were designed to deprive the two Maratha chieftains of the resources needed to rebuild their power to an extent that would endanger the British Indian empire. Wellesley hoped that this weakening of the military and political power of the two Maratha states would bring them into his subsidiary alliance system. Having settled the terms for peace, Wellesley now wanted the arrangements made for a permanent settlement of the political relations between the Indian states and the East India Company that he thought would ensure the continuation of peace in an India under British paramountcy. He found, however, that the war was not at an end. Less than four months later he authorized hostilities against Holkar.

THE WAR AGAINST HOLKAR 1804-5

-  LAKE'S ADVANCE
-  MONSON'S ADVANCE AND RETREAT
-  MURRAY'S SLOW ADVANCE



Chapter 5

The War Against Holkar, 1804-1805

Here ends our second Maratha campaign, in which we gained little honour, less profit, and many of us a fever.

James Welsh¹

This chapter describes Wellesley's attempt to obtain the permanent settlement of his political system. His two most important objectives were to bring Sindhia into the subsidiary alliance system and to obtain an agreement with Holkar. An examination of the negotiations in Hindustan, under Lake's direction, and the simultaneous negotiations in the Deccan, under Arthur Wellesley, shows how their diplomacy toward Holkar had conflicting aims. Arthur attempted to avoid hostilities, while Lake succeeded in pulling Wellesley into war.

Douglas M. Peers, in his examination of the relationship between the army and the British Indian state, claims that a school of thought he labels "Anglo-Indian militarism," was dominant in British India. It assumed that, as the survival of the state rested on its military prestige, the army should have first call on the revenues. Peers also claims that the governors-general, including Wellesley, were captives of their subordinates, owing to their limited knowledge of Indian conditions and the uncertainty of their support from the board of control and the court of directors. Militarism forced the

¹ Welsh, Memoirs, p. 251.

decision for the First Burma War, in 1824, on the governor-general, Lord Amherst.² The same may be said of Wellesley in 1804.

In a dispatch to the secretary of state for war and the colonies, Lord Hobart--a classic example of the Anglo-Indian militarist argument that the security of the state rested on its military prestige--Lieutenant-General James Stuart stated that the British victories over the Marathas "give a new character to the British power and promote that superiority of strength which will be the best means of securing the tranquillity of India." He admitted, however, that much remained to be done, citing rebellion in Malabar, freebooters in the Deccan and the need for an agreement with Holkar. With these problems overcome, tranquillity in India would "depend upon the extent and efficiency of our military strength."³

NEGOTIATIONS WITH SINDHIA FOR A DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE

Arthur had to deal with two problems after making peace with Sindhia and the raja of Berar. The first was to avoid being drawn by Sindhia into a war with Holkar. The second was to restrict the activities of the pindaris who, by custom, depended on plunder for subsistence. They were unofficially sanctioned by Sindhia, as the levy he imposed on their spoils was a traditional source of his income.

² Peers, "British India," pp. 11, 16, 93.

³ Stuart to Hobart, private, 5 Mar. 1804, WO 1/357: fol. 381.

When Sindhia's vakil, Eitel Punt, delivered the ratified treaty of peace on 5 January 1804, he asked Arthur what the Company's intentions were regarding Holkar. Holkar was plundering Ajmer, in Sindhia's northern territories, and the vakil claimed that Sindhia was unable to defend himself without Company support because much of his army was destroyed. Arthur replied that the Company would not aid Sindhia in an aggressive war against Holkar. If Sindhia joined Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system, however, one of the benefits would be protection from Holkar.

As Eitel Punt said that Sindhia wanted an alliance with the Company, Arthur sent Malcolm to his camp at Burhanpur to open negotiations. Arthur suggested, however, that Malcolm's request to go to England with Wellesley's dispatches should be granted, as his health was "entirely gone," and Webbe should replace him.⁴ Although Malcolm was in poor health, Arthur sent him to open immediate discussions with Sindhia rather than wait for Webbe's arrival, as Wellesley was anxious to obtain a permanent settlement quickly with Sindhia to encourage the other chieftains to accept British paramountcy. He could then leave India, having imposed the political stability that he was sent to achieve.

Although a quick settlement was sought, Arthur also wanted to make sure that the British received a maximum benefit from a minimum of commitment. He, therefore, gave Malcolm a memorandum

⁴ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 14 Jan. 1804, WD, II: 665.

of instructions to guide him in his negotiations. He wanted to repeat the warning given to Eitel Punt on 5 January,⁵ that the war would be renewed unless Sindhia withdrew the pindaris who were plundering the nizam's territories. The peace treaty imposed a defined border for the nizam's territories and the British, under the terms of the Hyderabad subsidiary alliance, had to defend it. If Sindhia denied his responsibility for the pindaris, then Arthur intended to pursue them and, if he caught them, hang their leader as a common criminal. Cooper suggests that Arthur's biographers have down-played his support of summary execution based on a British distinction between criminal activity and acts of war.⁶ In wartime, the pindaris became a part of Sindhia's irregular force; in peace time, they paid him a levy on their loot. Sindhia, however, subsequently denied any connection with the pindaris and, when they ignored Arthur's warning, he pursued and destroyed them.

Arthur's second major concern was to avoid being drawn by Sindhia into his dispute with Holkar. He told Malcolm that:

It is absolutely necessary to insist upon Sindhia's agreeing to all the stipulations by which the allies are bound to have no intercourse with foreign states, excepting with our consent; and to follow our advice in all their relations with such states. The object which he has in view, in this alliance, is to gain support against Holkar; not so much for his own

⁵ A. Wellesley, "Notes of a conference with Sindhia's vakils," 5 Jan. 1804, WSD, IV: 267.

⁶ Randolph G.S. Cooper, "New Light on Arthur Wellesley's Command-Apprenticeship in India: The Dhondiah Waugh Campaign of 1800 Remembered," In The Road to Waterloo, ed. Alan Guy (London, 1990), p. 84.

defence as in his plans of aggression against that Chief. We must, therefore, take care that we are not drawn into an offensive war by these engagements.

A decision was needed whether the Company would support or "disavow" Sindhia's treaty with Holkar, in which Sindhia gave up the Holkar family lands. Arthur, in assuming that the British had a right to "disavow" a treaty to which the Company was not a party, was making a claim to British paramountcy. If the Company disavowed the treaty, Holkar would have to be considered a usurper and, if Sindhia questioned his right of possession, the Company would be drawn into the dispute. Acceptance of the treaty, on the other hand, would be consistent with the assurances given to Holkar that the Company would not interfere with him if he did not attack the Company or its allies. The Company, therefore, had the choice of accepting the treaty or risking an immediate war with Holkar. Although Arthur subsequently defended the treaty of Bassein against Castlereagh's charge that it would tend to draw the Company into the endless disputes of the Marathas, he knew that the danger existed.

One of Wellesley's aims was to exert an influence over Sindhia by getting him to station a subsidiary force in his territories. Arthur thought that Sindhia would not accept a force in his territories, but the resident with Sindhia could stop an anti-British party from forming. It was also necessary to prevent Sindhia from becoming dependent on the British for his defence, so the treaty should require him to maintain his

army and, if asked, to provide the British with a set number of troops at his expense.⁷

Arthur thought Malcolm could conciliate Sindhia, who was immature and preferred "the pursuit of amusements to the cares of government." During his first meeting with Sindhia, on 12 January, water on the flap of the tent suddenly poured down on one of Malcolm's assistants, much to everyone's amusement, and the incident developed into a "Malcolm riot," as Arthur called it.⁸ Malcolm was willing to "play hooley" to celebrate the Hindu festival of Holi, that involved throwing coloured water. He told Arthur that "Sindhia is furnished with an engine of great power by which he can play upon a fellow fifty yards distance...so I expect to be well squirted."⁹

Turning to more serious business, on 20 January Sindhia tried to obtain agreement that the Company would give him the money to pay the pensions, agreed to in the peace terms, to his feudatories. Arthur refused. As the Company's direct involvement was "one of the main stays of the peace,"¹⁰ by paying the pensions directly, the Company's influence would extend beyond Sindhia, and the beneficiaries would refrain from

⁷ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, "Memorandum for Major Malcolm on his Mission to the Durbar of Daulat Rao Sindhia," 7 Jan. 1804, WD, II: 631.

⁸ Malcolm to Wellesley, 6 Feb. 1804, PRC, X: 200; Malcolm to A. Wellesley, 12 Jan. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fol. 20.

⁹ Butler, Marquis Wellesley, p. 323.

¹⁰ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 27 Jan. 1804; 30 Jan. 1804, WD, III: 20, 30.

anti-Company behaviour under the threat of losing their pensions. In order to satisfy Sindhia, however, it would be a good policy "to bribe the prince, as well as his ministers."¹¹

A. S. Bennell argues that the only result of these pensions was to encourage Sindhia to adopt an equivocal attitude which benefited the Company's enemies and provided him with Company money to pay his armies.¹² Bennell infers that Sindhia's ministers' procrastination was the result of their wanting to continue to receive pensions, while not committing themselves. It was, however, the Marathas' custom to procrastinate while they waited the outcome of events. The opportunity for personal gain enticed Sindhia's ministers to adhere quickly to the defensive alliance. It was insufficient, however, to discourage them from engaging in, what Arthur termed, "shuffling" behaviour.¹³

Malcolm warned Wellesley that Sindhia's ministers were only temporary. As they possessed neither influence nor power, they were unable to resolve his financial problems. Sindhia's only immediate danger came from Holkar but, without money, his army could not march into Malwa to meet it. Malcolm was convinced a defensive alliance with Sindhia was essential to keep the peace

¹¹ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 31 Jan. 1804, WD, III: 38.

¹² A.S. Bennell, 'Factors in the Marquis Wellesley's Failure Against Holkar, 1804', Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 28, 1965: 553-81.

¹³ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 5 Oct. 1803, WD, II: 377.

as, without a British subsidiary force behind him, Sindhia could not stand up to Holkar and would fall under his power or influence.¹⁴ This could prove dangerous to the Company. Although Sindhia was unable to pay the arrears of his army, and would probably lose much of his cavalry, he would have no difficulty in re-establishing it in the future. He could satisfy his chieftains by granting them jagirs and the men could be collected easily when needed.

Malcolm continued the negotiations during February, emphasizing to Merrick Shawe that conciliation and moderation were the best means of gaining Sindhia as an ally.¹⁵ On 27 February he told Shawe that Sindhia had signed a subsidiary alliance and the only significant point of difference between it and the treaties of Hyderabad and Bassein was the location of the subsidiary force's station.¹⁶ The following day he sent copies of the treaty of Burhanpur to Wellesley for ratification, explaining why he had not followed exactly the terms of previous subsidiary treaties.¹⁷ To strengthen his argument that concessions were necessary, he stressed the difficulties he faced because of the unsettled state of Sindhia's government.

¹⁴ Malcolm to Wellesley, 6 Feb. 1804, PRC, X: 199.

¹⁵ Malcolm to Shawe, 15, 18 Feb. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fols. 58; 68.

¹⁶ Malcolm to Shawe, private, 27 Feb. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fol. 98.

¹⁷ Malcolm to Wellesley, 28 Feb. 1804, PRC, X: 219. The treaty of Burhanpur is printed in WD, III: 156.

In addition, Malcolm suspected that a vakil from Holkar tried to influence Sindhia against an alliance with the Company. Malcolm suggested that the preservation of peace rested largely on removing Sindhia's apprehension of the Company's ambitions and claimed that he was successful in eliminating much, if not all, of this distrust. This was done by accepting some of Sindhia's demands that Malcolm considered superfluous, but harmless. Malcolm considered that none of his deviations from the form of the Hyderabad treaty would "affect any of those essential principles, which it appears indispensable to maintain in engagements of this nature."¹⁸ This was true regarding the effects of the treaty, but he was mistaken in his assessment that no harm was done by these concessions.

M. E. Yapp argues that Malcolm was a poor diplomatist, who tried to buy agreements with presents and concessions.¹⁹ Malcolm was criticized for the cost of his embassy to Tehran in 1800, and again in 1818 when he promised a pension of eight lacs of rupees to the peshwa for his resignation of sovereignty which, in effect, ended the Third Maratha War. Yapp's assessment of Malcolm's negotiating abilities also applies to his negotiations with Sindhia in 1804. A comparison of the nizam's and the peshwa's subsidiary treaties with Sindhia's shows that Malcolm made a number of concessions to obtain it.

¹⁸ Malcolm to Wellesley, 28 Feb. 1804, PRC, X: 220.

¹⁹ Yapp, British India, p. 53.

Malcolm conceded that Sindhia's subsidiary force would not be stationed in his territories, as Arthur said this was not essential. He incorporated in Article XII the terms of the third secret and separate article of the treaty of Hyderabad that covered the division of conquests. This entitled Sindhia to an equal share with the Company. Malcolm thought that this was the main incentive for him to conclude the treaty. Malcolm also conceded that the British would provide military assistance only at Sindhia's request, which he insisted on to ensure the Company could not send its troops into his territories at will. A further article obligated the Company to use its influence to ensure that Sindhia received the respect and consideration due his rank, especially at the peshwa's court. Malcolm also agreed that several minor terms, that were not reciprocal in the nizam's and peshwa's treaties, would be reciprocal in Sindhia's treaty.

Although some of the concessions were, in Malcolm's judgement, trivial, it was the gaining of the concession, not its substance, that was considered a point of honour by Sindhia and his ministers. A memorandum in the Kirkpatrick papers, circa 1794, entitled "Hints received from Mr. Johnstone," sets out the pitfalls faced by British residents when negotiating with Indian states. Johnstone advises that when the British reduced a state's power, it placed greater importance on forms and ceremonies to try to make the British resident unwittingly acknowledge inferiority. A ruler would attempt to demean the

resident by asking him to bow at the spot where servants usually bowed, or by having him walk to the audience hall without an umbrella and separated from his suite. The Indians were

determined to take all advantages and to grant none but what are forced from them....to contend for what they hold a point of honor and of great importance raises the Resident in their opinion and thereby facilitates future negotiations....all negotiations with any native independent power must be conducted with a high hand to ensure any reasonable degree of success.²⁰

When Malcolm conceded many of Sindhia's proposals, to obtain the treaty, each concession correspondingly lowered the Indians' respect for him. This adversely affected his bargaining position when the diplomatic discussions centred on Sindhia's right to Gwalior and Gohud, as the Indians thought that, if they persisted in their claim, Malcolm would appease them.

Malcolm told Shawe that the conciliatory terms of the treaty of defensive alliance and the pensions paid to Sindhia's ministers would establish the Company's influence. If a war with Holkar broke out, which he considered likely, Sindhia's government would cooperate quickly.²¹ Bennell argues that the Company's attempt to use the unproven alliance with Sindhia as a counter in the dispute with Holkar placed undue confidence in it. He claims that Malcolm's statement, that he doubted "whether there was another darbar 'in all India more disposed to

²⁰ George Johnstone, "Hints received from Mr. Johnstone," (c. 1794), MSS Eur. F228/33.

²¹ Malcolm to Shawe, private and confidential, 28 Feb. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fol. 108.

improve the connection with the British Government," was unfounded enthusiasm when one considers that the friction between the Company and the Marathas in the years 1798 to 1801 had been caused more by Sindhia than by the peshwa.²² Malcolm, however, made the statement quoted by Bennell while he was still negotiating the treaty. His intention was to impress Wellesley. In the same letter, he qualified the remark by saying that he was aware "the ignorance and prejudice which they have in common with all other native durbars may throw serious, though I trust not unsurmountable obstacles, in the way of my conclusion of the subsidiary alliance." Although he subsequently told Shawe that he had removed much of the prejudice toward the Company, he contradicted this claim by saying "there is no persuading these Gentlemen that we are destitute of ambition."²³

Two days later, Malcolm warned Shawe that Sindhia could always collect followers and would soon consider taking action to improve "the very low state to which he is likely to be reduced."²⁴ It was important to encourage Sindhia as an ally, to avoid having him as an enemy. Malcolm recommended that care be taken when selecting his replacement as: "The progress of our connection with this Court will chiefly turn upon the character that is selected for its management." Collins was unsuitable

²² Bennell, "Failure against Holkar," pp. 554, 561.

²³ Malcolm to Shawe, 15 Feb. 1804, 1 Mar. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fols. 58, 104.

²⁴ Malcolm to Shawe, 3 Mar. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fol. 118.

because of his violent temper and offensive manners. Colonel William Scott, the British resident at Lucknow, would have been a likely candidate "if his manners were less severe and his habits more accommodating."²⁵ Malcolm thought that the resident with Sindhia could exert influence only if he conciliated Sindhia and his ministers, and neither Collins nor Scott would do so. Malcolm, therefore, cannot be accused of having blind faith in the alliance. He admitted that it could only work if the Company continued to conciliate Sindhia and his ministers through friendly behaviour and incentives, to convince them that they had more to gain from the alliance than from any other policy. Malcolm recommended further concessions to ensure that Sindhia fulfilled his obligations. He was worried that Sindhia's ministers had led him to believe that he would retain Gohud and Gwalior under the terms of the peace treaty. He warned Wellesley that a contrary policy would cause resentment, as the present minister could then maintain his office only by claiming that the Company had reneged on its agreement.²⁶

Like Malcolm, Arthur thought that Wellesley should relinquish Gwalior and Gohud. Discussing the issue in a letter to Wellesley on 15 March,²⁷ Arthur took credit for his

²⁵ Malcolm to Shawe, 28 Feb. 1804, private, Add. MSS 13747: fol. 102.

²⁶ Malcolm to Wellesley, 7 Mar. 1804, PRC, X: 226.

²⁷ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 15 Mar. 1804, WSD, IV: 355.

peacemaking, claiming the liberality of the peace terms gratified Sindhia; but, if he lost considerable territory under Article IX of the peace treaty that he understood he would retain, he would be resentful. If he chose to renew the war, Sindhia could soon gather a large body of horse despite his lack of money, as pay was not as important to Maratha horsemen as plunder.

Arthur thought that the Company would be successful in the case of renewed war, but warned Wellesley that it would be fought under more difficult circumstances than the previous one. A critical supply problem would interfere with troop movements, as famine was widespread owing to the lack of rain and the devastation caused in the past by the Maratha armies. As well, neither the peshwa nor the nizam would fully support the war and the raja of Berar would renew hostilities if circumstances allowed.

The benefits of keeping Gohud and Gwalior were not worth the risk of a renewal of war. Gwalior was useful for offensive operations in Malwa and the protection of Gohud, but of no use for general defensive purposes. Arthur suggested that Sindhia should be told that, under the terms of the peace treaty, he had forfeited his claim to Gohud and Gwalior; but, if he would allow the Company free navigation of the Jumna and appoint a person approved by the Company to command the fort, Wellesley would return them.

U. N. Chakravorty points out that Arthur expressed three

different opinions in his letters to Sindhia, Wellesley and Malcolm. To Sindhia, he justified the Company's refusal to return Gwalior and Gohud on the grounds that it would violate their treaty with the rana of Gohud. In his letter to Wellesley, Arthur "proceeded on the assumption" that the British were legally correct in asserting their claim to Gwalior and Gohud, but recommended their restoration to Sindhia for the sake of peace. In his letter to Malcolm, he admitted that the Company's legal claim to Gwalior was doubtful.²⁸

In his letter to Wellesley, contrary to Chakravorty's claim, Arthur does not discuss the Company's claim to Gwalior, touching on Gohud only. At the time, he thought that Wellesley would accept his advice, as he usually did, so did not analyse the problem further. In his letter to Malcolm, Arthur states that as Ambaji had broken his treaty with the Company, it should be considered as if it had never been made, leaving Gwalior in the hands of Sindhia. Arthur stated that he "would sacrifice Gwalior, or every frontier of India, ten times over, in order to Preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith."²⁹

In Arthur's opinion, if Wellesley wanted the Indian states to accept British paramountcy, it was essential to assure them of British moderation by showing them that, although the British were capable of taking more territory, there would be no further expansion. A reputation of "British good faith" involved, in

²⁸ Chakravorty, Anglo-Maratha Relations and Malcolm, p. 51.

²⁹ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 17 Mar. 1804, WD, III: 168.

this case, allowing Sindhia's minister to get away with the deliberate deception of telling Sindhia that he would retain Gwalior and Gohud. Otherwise, Sindhia would believe that the British acted in bad faith by reneging on the terms of peace and that there would be no limit to their ambition.

Although Arthur thought that Wellesley's policy was wrong, his duty lay in following his instructions. In his 20 May letter to Sindhia, therefore, he stated that the Company had the right to retain Gwalior and to place Gohud under the rana. His arguments are actually Wellesley's arguments: the Company's gains through the treaty with Ambaji remained valid, despite Ambaji's breach of the treaty, and the intention of the peace treaty was to make the disposition of Gohud and Gwalior dependent on the treaties negotiated by Lake.³⁰

As Arthur had told him that he thought the peace treaties with Sindhia and the raja of Berar should be interpreted liberally, Malcolm continued to urge Wellesley, in private letters to Shawe, to conciliate Sindhia. On 8 April Wellesley sent Malcolm instructions that conflicted with those Arthur had given him. Wellesley was unconvinced that "any concessions would reconcile Sindhia cordially to an alliance which he has been compelled to accept exclusively by the exigency of his affairs."³¹ Therefore, the Company's claim was to be based on the treaties and Malcolm was to emphasize that if the Company

³⁰ A. Wellesley to Sindhia, 20 May 1804, WD, III: 303.

³¹ Edmonstone to Malcolm, 8 Apr. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 568.

had not acquired the right to Gwalior and Gohud by treaty, it would have obtained them by right of conquest.

Wellesley changed his usual policy of offering incentives to collaborators because he was annoyed with Malcolm for persisting in arguing that Sindhia should be conciliated. In the margin of one of Malcolm's private letters to Shawe, Wellesley scribbled in the margin: "shameful imbecility of mind," "scandalous ignorance," "impertinent and false insinuation," "absurd and false," "the sooner he quits Sindhia and Amir Wittall the better for his country."³² In the draft of Shawe's reply, Wellesley crossed out "Dear Malcolm" and wrote an abrupt "Sir." He claimed that Malcolm's arguments against retaining Gwalior and Gohud had placed him in "a very embarrassing situation." He would be criticized by "his enemies in Leadenhall Street" for retaining them against the resident's advice.³³ Malcolm's arguments for the return of Gwalior, however, were made in private letters to Shawe, of which no copies were sent to Leadenhall Street. In his official letters, Malcolm stated that it would be difficult to reconcile Sindhia to the loss of Gwalior, but that he met the complaints of his ministers by asserting the British right to them.

Wellesley's stubbornness is explained by his insistence on toadyism. In his draft letter to Malcolm of 23 April, Shawe

³² Malcolm to Shawe, 4 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 13747: fol. 187.

³³ Shawe to Malcolm, 16 Apr. 1804; Shawe to Malcolm, private and confidential, 1 May 1804, Add. MSS 13602: fols. 90, 121.

wrote, then marked to be omitted, the following lines:

You know well that Lord Wellesley does not like to be taken by the horns and dragged into a system...and above all he does not like the appearance of being led by anybody. Your letters His Lordship thought betrayed that expectation and he immediately revolted from it.³⁴

Malcolm, a skilled toad-eater, knew that Wellesley's vanity required sycophants. In this instance, however, Malcolm was caught between two of his superiors and, in trying to satisfy Arthur, offended Wellesley. Arthur had the sense to state his opinion to Wellesley once and then leave it. Malcolm persisted and, although Wellesley was on the point of giving way, when a further letter was received from Malcolm on the subject, he stubbornly refused to.³⁵

In April, however, when Wellesley determined on a war with Holkar, he decided to conciliate Sindhia, offering to forego the Company's share of Holkar's territories. When it became evident that Sindhia remained unreconciled to the loss of Gwalior and Gohud, despite this offer, Wellesley blamed Malcolm. He was told that the "indications of the revival of hostile designs are all attributed to hopes founded upon your concessions."³⁶ But, when he learned that Malcolm had acted upon his instructions of 8 April, Wellesley approved and thought the issue would soon be

³⁴ Shawe to Malcolm, 23 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 96.

³⁵ Shawe to Malcolm, 20 Mar. 1804; 4 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 13602: fols. 82, 88.

³⁶ Shawe to Malcolm, 21 May 1804, Add. MSS 13602: fol. 131.

resolved.³⁷

Iris Butler suggests that if Wellesley had "received support from the government at home, had he been stronger in health, happier in heart, he might not have been so wilful."³⁸ Wellesley's unhappiness resulted from his disappointment at having received only an Irish marquissate, which he scornfully called his "gilt potato," for his efforts against Tipu Sultan, and his deteriorating relations with his wife, who bombarded him with nagging letters. These letters, the blow to his ego and the problems connected to the war, caused Wellesley to suffer from depression, aggravated by rheumatism and toothache, and he took to his couch for days on end when the strain became too much for him.

Wellesley suffered further anxiety because he could no longer expect the support of the Home officials. In January 1804 he received a letter from his brother Henry telling him that the King's ministers had withdrawn their support of his administration. Arthur warned him that he was now "at the mercy of the Court of Directors": "there is nothing so bad that you may not expect from that body...even...dismissal from your office."³⁹

The court had consistently criticized his administration,

³⁷ Shawe to A. Wellesley, 25 May 1804, Add. MSS 13778: fol. 98.

³⁸ Butler, Marquis Wellesley, p. 326.

³⁹ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 24 Feb., WSD, IV: 347.

according to C. H. Philips, in an attempt to make him resign.⁴⁰ Several weeks after receiving Henry's letter, Wellesley received one from Castlereagh telling him that he and Addington would back Wellesley, but could not assure him of the court of directors' support. Therefore, they could not ask him to remain in India. Castlereagh left the decision with Wellesley how best to reconcile his "own feelings" with the public interest.⁴¹

Wellesley was eager, therefore, to finalize his plans of empire-building before his political mandate ran out. An agreement with Holkar was needed and Wellesley trusted Lake to obtain it.

THE RENEWAL OF WAR

Wellesley thought that the British victories over Sindhia and the raja of Berar would persuade Holkar to accept the Company's arbitration of the Holkar family dispute. A. S. Bennell, who says the same of the war against Sindhia and the raja of Berar, attributes the war against Holkar to unsuccessful British diplomacy. Lake, however, did not intend his negotiations with Holkar to succeed. He was determined to fight.

Wellesley told Lake in January 1804 to follow a pacific policy toward Holkar, in order to avoid war with him, so that

⁴⁰ Philips, East Indian Company, p. 131.

⁴¹ Castlereagh to Wellesley, most secret, 9 Sept. 1803, Wellesley, IV: 28.

the expense of keeping the Bengal army in the field could be discontinued. Holkar was near Ajmer, close to the raja of Jaipur's frontier in northern Hindustan. Wellesley wanted him to withdraw his troops, as he denied Holkar's hereditary right to collect tribute from the Company's allies. He was prepared, however, to arbitrate the disputes between the branches of the Holkar family.⁴² He refused to acknowledge that Holkar had any claim to authority within the Holkar family, as he was its ablest and strongest member and Wellesley wanted to see a weaker candidate at its head.

Lake told Wellesley that he was convinced that Holkar's arrogant attitude was intended to impress the British with his power, and his letters to local chieftains, expressing threats against the Company, were written to ease his collection of tribute.⁴³ Arthur, on the other hand, received a civil letter from Holkar. He thought that Holkar would soon alter his tone as his power depended on avoiding a clash with British troops. Holkar would probably move northward into the Punjab to evade the British forces as, on the seal of his letter to Arthur, he called himself "the slave of Shah Mahmoud, the king of kings," who was a disputant for the throne of Kabul.⁴⁴

On 18 March two of Holkar's vakils gave his demands to Lake. A number of territories formerly in the Holkar family's

⁴² Wellesley to Lake, secret, 17 Jan. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 3.

⁴³ Lake to Wellesley, 19 Dec. 1803, IO H/491: fol. 121.

⁴⁴ A. Wellesley to Stuart, 17 Mar. 1804, WD, III: 163.

possession were to be guaranteed to him; a treaty was to be offered him on the same terms as Sindhia's; and he was to be allowed to continue to collect the family's traditional tribute, that included claims on both the Company's and its allies' possessions. Lake refused these demands as excessive and sent the vakils away. They then sent Lake a message that Holkar would accept any offer by the Company of a pension or lands.

Although Lake was under Wellesley's orders to avoid hostilities, if possible, he ignored this opportunity to negotiate a peaceful settlement. Lake viewed Holkar as a bandit, who could easily be destroyed. Instead of continuing the negotiations, he insisted that Holkar first prove his friendly intentions by returning to his own country, a repeat of the demand made on Sindhia and the raja of Berar in 1803 and the tactic used to justify a war against them. Lake's correspondence with Wellesley over the following two weeks shows that he was intent on persuading Wellesley to turn to a military rather than a diplomatic solution. On 22 March he emphasized that the upper Doab would remain unsettled as long as Holkar's army existed, as many of the chieftains would join him if he invaded the Company's territories. In addition, the Company would be forced to keep its army in the field at enormous expense to prevent him from moving northward to collect tribute from Jaipur.

On 29 March Lake argued against Malcolm's suggestion that the negotiations be prolonged to allow time for the troops, whom

Holkar could not pay, to disperse, for if Holkar advanced from Ajmer into a more fertile area, he could remain in northern Hindustan for some time. As Lake knew Wellesley was anxious to settle the newly acquired territories and remove the expense of keeping the army in the field, he again emphasized that Holkar's presence in Hindustan prevented Wellesley from obtaining both these objectives. Lake urged that, with Sindhia's cooperation, Holkar should be attacked as, without the destruction of his force, the Company's and its allies' possessions would never be secure.⁴⁵

On 4 April Lake again urged hostilities against Holkar,⁴⁶ arguing that the forbearance shown to him had produced no change in his conduct. He now claimed that the exaggerated demands and threats made by Holkar earlier were evidence of Holkar's hostile intentions, rather than posturing, as he had stated in December. To encourage Wellesley to abandon his pacific policy toward Holkar, Lake suggested that a three-pronged attack by his own, Arthur's and Sindhia's forces, would ensure that Holkar could not avoid a decisive battle. This offensive action would be less costly than the present defensive policy that kept the British forces in the field.

Wellesley was eager to settle the political affairs and reduce the Company's military costs to complete his grand plan of empire before he left India. He accepted Lake's argument

⁴⁵ Lake to Wellesley, 29 Mar. 1804, IO H/491: fol. 237.

⁴⁶ Lake to Wellesley, 4 Apr. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 48.

that Holkar stood in the way of finalizing the second phase of his empire-building and that a war with Holkar would be quicker and cheaper than continually maintaining a defensive stance. Lake's letters had the desired effect and Wellesley authorized him on 16 April to commence hostilities against Holkar.⁴⁷

Wellesley's decision was pushed on him by Lake. In this case, Lake tailored the usual rhetoric of Anglo-Indian militarism to convince Wellesley that the completion of his plan of empire was endangered by Holkar. Although Wellesley's administration was autocratic, he depended on the information and advice he received from those whom he thought capable and agreed, or outwardly agreed, with him. Lake's quick success in the Hindustan campaign had gained Wellesley's confidence and, in his eagerness to leave India in a settled condition, he allowed Lake to take control of the Company's policy toward Holkar.

Prior to receiving Wellesley's authorization for war, Lake sent a detachment under Colonel George Monson to Jaipur, in advance of his main force, which pushed Holkar southward out of the raja's territory on 23 April. Lake had previously insisted that Holkar's return to his own territories in Malwa was an essential preliminary to negotiations. When Holkar arrived in his own territories, therefore, he suggested to Lake that he would send a wakil to negotiate. Lake passed up the opportunity again for a peaceful settlement, saying that he could not "now enter into any bonds of amity with you, without consulting the

⁴⁷ Wellesley to Lake, secret, 16 Apr. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 57.

allies of the British government."⁴⁸ As Lake wanted a war, when Holkar met his demand, he changed it. This was the same tactic used by Wellesley in his negotiations with Sindhia and the raja of Berar in June 1803.

On 28 April Lake was at Tonga, southwest of Jaipur, where he received Wellesley's 16 April dispatch. Wellesley knew by 6 April that Arthur was unable to march the main body of his troops from the Deccan into Hindustan, because the unsettled state of the peshwa's and the nizam's governments would encourage freebooters if his force moved northward. Wellesley made no mention of this to Lake, but told him that he was sending orders the same day to Arthur to cooperate with him from the Deccan. In addition, Wellesley was unaware of the extent of the famine in the Deccan until the latter part of May, although Arthur warned him on 15 March that the famine was widespread.⁴⁹ Lake, therefore, depended on squeezing Holkar between Monson's force at Jaipur, aided by two detachments of irregular forces, and Arthur's advance to Indore in Malwa. Bennell claims that Lake remained optimistic concerning his military prospects because he told Wellesley that "we may be able to disperse or destroy the army of Holkar on this side."⁵⁰ Lake was actually pessimistic as to his own chances of defeating Holkar. The same

⁴⁸ Mill, History of British India, VI: 472.

⁴⁹ Shawe to A. Wellesley, 23 May 1804, Add. MSS 13778: fol. 90.

⁵⁰ Bennell, "Failure Against Holkar", p. 570; Lake to Wellesley, private, 29 Apr. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 58.

day, he complained to Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Clinton, his adjutant-general that: "I cannot think this army can ever encounter Holkar unless he chooses and which appears very improbable....I fear it will be impossible for us to touch this fellow."⁵¹ Lake knowingly sent Wellesley an optimistic report as he thought that Holkar would soon be defeated by Arthur.

Lake decided on 29 April to pull his main army back to positions on the Jumna, leaving two or three battalions at Jaipur, but earlier had advised Clinton that "this idea [is] entirely between ourselves."⁵² He was anxious to move his main force into Kanpur before June, when the rains set in, because it would be difficult to move supplies and the season was unhealthy to remain in the field.

Lake's plan was for Arthur's force to move from Poona into Malwa and take Holkar's forts and his capital of Indore. Monson was to remain stationary near Jaipur, unless Holkar attempted to move northward again. As Lake looked upon Holkar as a bandit, he was convinced that his cavalry would leave him when he was pinned down between the two British armies.

By 12 May, Lake knew that Arthur's force could not move into Hindustan because of the drought. Arthur suggested, as an alternative, that Colonel Murray should move northward from Gujerat and Sindhia's army should be reinforced with the

⁵¹ Lake to Clinton, private and secret, 29 Apr. 1804, Clinton MSS.

⁵² Lake to Clinton, private, 12 Apr. 1804, Clinton MSS.

subsidiary force promised to him in the treaty of Burhanpur. The two forces should then threaten Holkar's rear while Lake's force pushed him from the front. Arthur thought: "If the General should vigorously push Holkar the war will not last a fortnight, if he should not, God knows when it will be over."⁵³

In an accompanying dispatch, Arthur asked Lake's permission to return to England because his appointment by Stuart, to the staff of the Madras presidency, had never been confirmed by the duke of York and an officer appointed from home could supersede him. In fact, he was "very certain" that when it was known in England that he had reached Poona with the army, his appointment to the staff would come through.⁵⁴ India, however, had done all it could for him and he decided it was time to leave. He later told Shawe that his career would benefit more from service in Europe. On 24 June he relinquished the military and political powers delegated to him by Wellesley the previous year. This placed Murray's force back under Bombay's authority.⁵⁵

After pushing for immediate hostilities against Holkar with the intention that Arthur's force should attack him, Lake was now forced to admit that Arthur could not act until after the

⁵³ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 20 Apr. 1804, WD, III: 231; A. Wellesley to Lake, 23 Apr. 1804, WD, III: 235.

⁵⁴ A. Wellesley to Lake, 23 Apr. 1804, WSD, IV: 376; A. Wellesley to Shawe, 8 June 1804, WD, III: 339.

⁵⁵ A. Wellesley to Close and Kirkpatrick, 24 June 1804; A. Wellesley to Duncan, 24 June 1804, WD, III: 361, 365.

rains, and Murray could do very little.

If it was possible for the Gujerat army to do anything before the rains set in, great advantage might be derived from it, but I think that will be impossible from General Wellesley's account.... Should that army advance, and be stopped by the rains the consequence would be most unpleasant. I therefore fear we must desist from any active operations during that season.

An exception was that on 15 May a British force captured the walled-city of Rampur, Holkar's only stronghold north of the Chambal. As Holkar was now in his own territories in Malwa, Lake thought him incapable of much action.⁵⁶ Unable to obtain accurate information, Lake chose to believe the reports that Holkar's troops were deserting him in great numbers.⁵⁷

Holkar's retreat into his own territories, Lake's assurances that Holkar's forces were leaving him and Arthur's inability to move against him, convinced Wellesley to abandon immediate operations against Holkar. He wanted to reduce military costs by putting the troops into cantonments because troops in the field received extra allowances. This would allow the finances to be put in a state that would "satisfy the most rapacious Director in Leadenhall Street--such a state of prosperity after such a war will afford a cause of triumph which cannot be denied."⁵⁸ On 25 May Wellesley ordered all the

⁵⁶ Lake to Wellesley, private, 12 May 1804, Wellesley, IV: 63.

⁵⁷ Lake to Wellesley, 1 July 1805, Wellesley, V: 285.

⁵⁸ Shawe to A. Wellesley, 23, 25 May 1804, Add. MSS 13778: fol. 90.

British troops returned to the territories of their respective presidencies, with the exception of the four subsidiary forces for the peshwa, Sindhia, the gaekwar and the rana of Gohud. Monson's detachment of five and a half sepoy battalions and irregular cavalry, in an advanced position at the Bundi Pass, northwest of the Chambal River, was to be either withdrawn to Agra or strengthened with Europeans and cavalry. He preferred Monson to withdraw if he could not act against Holkar that season.

Prior to receiving Wellesley's 25 May instructions to withdraw his troops, Lake was already moving his main force toward the cantonments at Agra, Muttra and Kanpur, leaving Monson to cover the western mountain passes from Malwa into Hindustan. Lake's force suffered from the extreme heat and, over one stretch of eighteen miles, approximately 250 sepoys and thirty British troops died. Fortescue suggests that Lake's losses would probably not have been greater if he had vigorously pressed Holkar as Arthur advised him to do.⁵⁹

From 7 May, when Arthur first knew of the war with Holkar, until 18 June, when he learned that hostilities were to be deferred, Arthur sent Murray stop and go instructions, as he tried to coordinate Murray's efforts with decisions made by Lake and Wellesley approximately three weeks earlier. On 7 May, Arthur told Murray to move into Malwa. On 13 May, he reversed his instructions, owing to Lake's decision to delay hostilities

⁵⁹ Fortescue, British Army, V: 77.

until the rains came. Arthur expected Lake's plans for the war to arrive shortly and then intended to send Murray definite instructions. In the meantime, Murray was not to cross the frontier into Malwa "lest you should be exposed singly to Holkar's operations."⁶⁰ On 22 May, however, Arthur told Murray that, as Lake had marched at the beginning of May to take Rampur, he should now advance into Malwa and, if possible, join Bapu Sindhia, Sindhia's commander, who was near Ujjain.⁶¹ At the time, Arthur thought that Lake was planning to squeeze Holkar between his own, Murray's and Sindhia's forces and, therefore, Murray might advance to Ujjain in safety. When Wellesley's 25 May instructions arrived on 18 June, Arthur countermanded Wellesley's order for Murray's troops to remain on the border of Gujerat as, unknown to Wellesley, Murray had already moved into Malwa.⁶² A withdrawal could be perceived as weakness and encourage Holkar to move on Ujjain. This would cause Sindhia to lose faith in the defensive alliance, particularly as Bapu Sindhia had left Ujjain to join Monson.

Wellesley, however, cancelled his orders of 25 May when he heard that a body of Maratha cavalry had come into Bundelkhand to plunder. This gave him justification for the renewal of war. On 22 May the Maratha horse, rumoured to be under Mohummud Amir

⁶⁰ A. Wellesley to Murray, 13 May 1804, WD, III: 270.

⁶¹ A. Wellesley to Murray, 22 May 1804, WD, III: 297.

⁶² A. Wellesley to Duncan, 18 June 1804; A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 27 June 1804, WD, III: 352, 376.

Khan, were within three miles of Kunch, a British station in Bundelkhand. The command of the detachment had fallen on Lieutenant-Colonel W. D. Fawcett, a Company officer, owing to the illness of his commanding officer and the death of the next senior officer. The Maratha horse wiped out part of a detachment that was outside a fort that Fawcett had sent it to capture. The others, who remained at a distance from the action, retreated back to camp. Although it was learned later that the Maratha horse was not led by Mohummud Amir Khan, Fawcett thought it was and believed that Holkar would soon join him. As he had insufficient cavalry to protect his supply line, Fawcett decided to retreat. His departure left Bundelkhand open to the Marathas and they moved eastward and attempted to cross the Jumna at Kalpi, but were driven back by a small British force. Another British force defeated them near Kunch on 30 May and they left Bundelkhand.

Lake ordered Fawcett to relinquish the command, telling Wellesley that if it had "devolved to any other man in the army, this dreadful event [retreat] could not have happened." Lake claimed there were sufficient troops in the area for its defence and criticized Fawcett for attacking the fort for no reason, although Fawcett stated clearly that it was necessary to take the fort to obtain control over the only supplies of forage in the area. Because Lake neglected his supply system, he failed to realize that obtaining forage was "a question of serious import...in the calculation for an Indian army's taking the

field."⁶³ Fawcett was dependent on the local supply, which was being withheld by the local chieftains who resented British interference in Bundelkhand. Lake assured Wellesley that his army's return to the Doab would prevent any serious consequences and that Holkar "will very easily be hunted down after the rains, by two or three light armies."⁶⁴ Lake looked upon the Marathas' move into Bundelkhand as what it actually was, an attempt to collect booty from their traditional plundering grounds, and he was annoyed that Fawcett's detachment had not chased them off immediately.

Wellesley accepted Lake's explanation that the blame lay with Fawcett, but was determined to make more of the incident. Lake looked at the affair from a European, instead of an Anglo-Indian, viewpoint and dismissed it as a minor event. Wellesley, as Ingram has shown he did on the occasion of an Iranian envoy's death in 1802 in a brawl in Bombay, turned it into a question of principle, a blot on the British self-image.⁶⁵ He said Fawcett's "shameful failure" would, at the least, encourage further incursions by Mohummud Amir Khan, Holkar and "the whole horde of freebooters" from Hindustan and the Deccan. He wanted an example made of the horse that invaded Bundelkhand and a proclamation issued announcing that all plunderers, including Holkar and Mohummud Amir Khan, would be treated as "common

⁶³ Young, Diary, 23 Dec. 1804, p. 85.

⁶⁴ Lake to Wellesley, 28 May 1804, Wellesley, IV: 74.

⁶⁵ Ingram, National and International Politics, p. 44.

robbers and felons."⁶⁶ This distinguished them from legitimate troops engaged in an act of war, permitting the British to hang them as a deterrent to others.

According to Wellesley, who was eager to shift the blame for the renewal of war away from himself, the most serious result of Fawcett's "misconduct" would be the renewal of war. The blame for "the revival of hostile designs" of Sindhia and the raja of Berar, foisted on Malcolm on 21 May and forgiven on 25 May, was transferred to Fawcett on 8 June. Wellesley "felt that God, and everyone else in declining seniority, owed him success. If success did not come, then it was their fault, unthinkable that it should be his."⁶⁷

Although Lake thought that his army's return to Kanpur would deter further Maratha incursions into Bundelkhand, Wellesley cancelled his instructions to withdraw the army from the field. To ensure that the Bundelkhand incident did not tarnish the image of the Indian army in the eyes of "all India", Wellesley decreed that "this disgrace is to be ascribed exclusively to the misbehaviour of a few incapable officers," and an immediate blow was to be struck against the enemy. Fawcett, as the scapegoat, would be brought before a court martial.

Lake's and Wellesley's allegations of Fawcett's incompetence have gone unchallenged. Blame is placed on Fawcett

⁶⁶ Wellesley to Lake, 8 June 1804, Wellesley, IV: 81.

⁶⁷ Butler, Marquis Wellesley, p. 101.

for his "wretched mismanagement,"⁶⁸ while Fortescue writes that, based on Lake's description, Fawcett was "an officer of unique incapacity."⁶⁹ No mention is made of Fawcett's court martial that opened on 7 September. James Young, a lieutenant in the Bengal Horse Artillery, thought that Fawcett's written defence was good. Young attributed the disaster to the "penuriousness of Gov't. in not affording him the means of obtaining any information whatever" and also to the carelessness of the officers in charge of the detachment from Fawcett's force. On 17 September Fawcett was acquitted of all the charges brought against him, including the charge of "shamefully misbehaving before an enemy."⁷⁰ The underlying cause for Fawcett's defeat, like the surrender of the British at Shikohabad, was the inadequacy of Lake's arrangements to supply his army with both its necessities and information.

COLONEL MONSON'S RETREAT

By the time of Fawcett's trial, a disaster of much greater consequence had befallen Lake's army. Lake intended Monson's detachment, consisting of 3,500 infantry, artillery and about 4,000 irregular cavalry, to remain in a defensive position south of Jaipur to cover the western passes leading into Hindustan

⁶⁸ Francis W. Stubbs, History of the Organization, Equipment and War Services of the Regiment of Bengal Artillery, (London, 1877), p. 206.

⁶⁹ Fortescue, British Army, V: 78.

⁷⁰ Young, Diary, 7 Sept. 1804; 17 Sept. 1804, pp. 6, 17.

from Malwa. Holkar had rejoined his force of cavalry, infantry and artillery, left behind in Malwa when he first moved northward to collect tribute from the Rajputs. Lake did not know the size and composition of Holkar's main army. He thought, therefore, that Monson's force was adequate both to prevent Holkar from returning northward and to defeat him in a pitched-battle.

Monson, encouraged by the raja of Kota's promise of aid, advanced toward Kota, south of the Chambal river. Monson's advance was contrary to his orders, but when Lake learned that he had set out he decided to allow him considerable freedom of action. He placed confidence in Monson because of his courage the previous year and, as Monson was on the spot, he thought him capable of accurately assessing the situation. Lake claimed later that he made arrangements to support Monson in his advanced position and that he continually stressed to Monson the importance of ensuring the availability of supplies, obtaining intelligence of the enemy's movements, conciliating the local chieftains and maintaining contact with Murray, who was advancing toward Ujjain.⁷¹

On 2 July Monson's force captured the fort of Hinglasgarh, then moved southward and camped on the opposite side of the Chambal from Holkar. On 7 July Monson heard that Holkar was crossing the river and he moved forward to attack him. He

⁷¹ Lake to Wellesley, 1 July 1805, Wellesley, V, "Maratha War Supplement," p. 287.

learned that Holkar was already across the river at the same time as information reached him that Murray, who advanced almost to Ujjain, had turned back and recrossed the Mahi River.⁷² Murray was later to justify his retreat as conforming with Arthur's instructions of 13 May to avoid a sole engagement with Holkar's army. On 30 June he learned that Lake's main army had gone into cantonments and that Monson had abandoned the idea of advancing past the Mokundra Pass, south of Kota, until he received further instructions from Lake. There was no hope of Murray being reinforced by any of Sindhia's troops, he had no supply depot and had insufficient cavalry to protect his supply line, so he withdrew to a more secure position approximately 100 miles west of Ujjain behind the Mahi River.⁷³

Although Fortescue accepts that if Murray's decision is "reviewed from a strictly theoretic standpoint, it seems difficult to quarrel with it," he is influenced by Lake's and Arthur's opinions of Murray's capabilities and judges him "incapable and unenterprising."⁷⁴ Arthur, however, had given Murray the impression that his force was too weak to engage Holkar's main force. As Arthur thought Lake would follow his plan to squeeze Holkar between Lake, Murray and Bapu Sindhia, he did not give Murray alternative instructions should he find himself in an advanced position and unsupported.

⁷² Monson to Lake, 22 Aug. 1804, IO L/PS/5/28: fol. 99.

⁷³ Murray to Bentinck, 11 Sept. 1804, Portland MSS PwJb28.

⁷⁴ Fortescue, British Army, p. 82.

The problem arose as the combined operation was under two commanders, with communications taking at least three weeks, and with a further time lapse before their orders reached their detachments in the field. Although Arthur had by then given up the command of Murray's force, Murray was still acting on Arthur's 22 May orders. As Murray lacked cavalry to protect his supply lines and had only three days' supplies, his caution is not without justification. In September, when Holkar was well to the north again, Arthur advised Wellesley that Murray, who by then had reached Ujjain, should not advance any further before Lake began pressing Holkar. Murray's supplies could be at risk, owing to his lack of cavalry, and, if he advanced, he could be forced to follow Monson's example.⁷⁵

Monson, too, had a supply problem, having only two days' supplies left when he decided on 8 July to retreat to the Mokundra Pass. Shortly after beginning his march, he learned that Bapu Sindhia, part of the rear guard, had fled with his whole force when Holkar attacked, and the irregular horse of the rear guard was destroyed. Monson was left with no cavalry to act as a rear guard and, harrassed by Holkar, after much hardship due to a lack of supplies, he eventually reached Rampur on 27 July. Here he was reinforced by 1,400 troops and 1,000 irregular horse sent from Agra by Lake. Taken by the British forces in May, Rampur had been intended as a base for the detachment left to watch Holkar, but no arrangements were made

⁷⁵ Wellesley to Lake, 11 Sept. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 206.

to fill it with supplies. Monson, therefore, had to collect his own. He was still at Rampur, over three weeks later, when Holkar's force appeared nearby on 20 August. Monson's orders were to make a stand there or, if necessary, fall back to the Company's frontier. He was worried about his supplies in the event of a prolonged seige and decided to withdraw to Agra. Lacking boats, he was delayed for one day by the fullness of the Banas River. This delay gave Holkar time to catch up and the rear guard was overwhelmed by superior numbers. Four hundred of the irregular horse, who had joined Monson at Rampur, along with a number of sepoy of the 14th Regiment, defected. More would have left, but when one Indian officer told his British officer that he was going over to the enemy, the British officer shot him and this stopped the rest of them from leaving.⁷⁶ Then, a British officer complained, "to crown all Colonel Monson himself, mounting his elephant, set off as fast as the animal could go for Agra."⁷⁷ Several of his officers followed him and everyone was left to shift for himself. The remnants of the British force straggled into Agra on 30 and 31 August. The disaster took a high toll. Twenty-one of the British officers were either killed, wounded or missing and only slightly more

⁷⁶ "Account of Monson's Retreat Extracted from a Letter from Agra dated 30 Aug. 1804," in Malcolm to Bentinck, private, 23 Sept. 1804, Portland MSS PwJb32.

⁷⁷ Narrative of Monson's Retreat by an Anonymous Officer, Add. MSS 35918: fol. 223.

than half of the five and a half battalions remained.⁷⁸

Fortescue and Roberts suggest that Lake is to be commended for telling Wellesley that "all blame ought to fall upon me for detaching the force in the first instance," as, in their opinion, Lake was sincere when he accepted all responsibility for the disaster.⁷⁹ Lake, in fact, placed the blame on others. When he first told Wellesley of Monson's retreat, he subtly hinted that Wellesley was at fault for insisting on negotiating with Holkar instead of attacking him immediately.⁸⁰ In Lake's explanation to Wellesley in July 1805 he placed the main blame on Murray, while assigning some degree of responsibility to Monson. He claimed the original cause of the disaster was Murray's retreat across the Mahi River, as this removed the threat to Holkar's rear and left him free to concentrate on Monson's detachment. Lake claimed that the reasons for Murray's retreat were never satisfactorily explained to him,⁸¹ although, in initially telling Wellesley about the disaster on 21 July 1804, he said that no blame could be attached to Murray because he lacked provisions and cavalry and was unaware that Monson was

⁷⁸ "List of Casualties with Honourable Colonel Monson's Detachment," Wellesley, IV: 661; Fortescue, British Army, V: 88; Monson to Lake, 22 Aug., 2 Sept. 1804, IO L/PS/5/28: fols. 99, 129.

⁷⁹ Fortescue, British Army, V: 90; Roberts, India Under Wellesley, p. 251.

⁸⁰ Lake to Wellesley, 21 July 1804, Wellesley, IV: 178.

⁸¹ Lake to Wellesley, 1 July 1805, Wellesley, V: "Maratha War Supplement," p. 288.

within a few days march of him.⁸² Lake then criticized Monson-- initially for not attacking Holkar while he was crossing the Chambal River, and then for retreating instead of taking a strong position and making a stand.

Arthur suggested that a lack of preparation on Lake's part was the cause of the disaster.

Monson's disasters are really the greatest and the most disgraceful to our military character of any that have ever occurred. The detachment had not two days' provisions; was cut off from its resources by many rivers, on which we had neither bridge nor boat; and all measures to supply with provisions the only fort (Rampur) to which, in case of emergency, he might have recourse, were omitted. To employ the detachment at all was an error; but the common modes of securing its safety have been omitted.⁸³

In an analysis of the causes of the disaster, Arthur concluded that, because of a lack of proper planning, the detachment would have been lost even if Holkar had not attacked it.⁸⁴ Arthur had asked earlier: "What could have induced the General to press for the commencement of the war with Holkar, being entirely unprepared to follow him or to carry the war beyond the Company's frontier?"⁸⁵

The principal responsibility for Monson's disaster, therefore, rests with Lake. He underestimated Holkar's military power, viewing him as a bandit who had no artillery. He thought

⁸² Lake to Wellesley, private, 21 July 1804, Wellesley, IV: 178.

⁸³ A. Wellesley to Webbe, 11 Sept. 1804, WSD, IV: 464.

⁸⁴ A. Wellesley to Wallace, 12 Sept. 1804, WD, III: 456.

⁸⁵ A. Wellesley to Webbe, 26 May 1804, WSD, IV: 395.

Holkar retreated into Malwa because much of his force deserted and he remarked: "How he succeeded in so great a degree as to be enabled to make these exertions...my deficiency of information prevents me from explaining."⁸⁶ Lake's belief that Holkar's force was in a weakened state led him to make his greatest error--taking a defensive position rather than tracking him with his main force.

D. D. Khanna argues that Arthur should be assigned some responsibility for the disaster as he neglected to take sufficient interest in Murray. Arthur knew that Murray considered his force inadequate but he failed to tell Lake.⁸⁷ Although Arthur knew that Murray's force was too weak to engage Holkar's force on his own, he never considered that Murray would have to do so, as he was sure Lake would follow his plan and act in unison with Murray. After Monson's disaster, Murray's constant complaints of the inadequacy of his force caused Arthur to ask that Murray be relieved of his command. He was superseded in November by Colonel Richard Jones, who was ordered to reinforce Lake at Bharatpur. Monson was more fortunate. He was given a new command.

Mountstuart Elphinstone, the acting-resident at Nagpur since December 1803, was told to downplay Monson's retreat. The raja of Berar remained dissatisfied with the vague terms of the

⁸⁶ Lake to Wellesley, 1 July 1804, Wellesley, V: 289.

⁸⁷ D. D. Khanna, "Monson's Retreat in the Anglo-Maratha War," Defence Studies Paper No. 5, University of Allahabad, 1981, p. 17.

article covering the Company's treaties with some of his feudatories. Wellesley worried that he might be encouraged by Holkar's success and attempt to regain the territories he lost under this article. Elphinstone was later criticized for telling the raja that "Holkar had gone through such unexpected exertions as must surprise all India."⁸⁸

A consequence of Monson's retreat was that it caused Lake and Wellesley to realize that the war against Holkar would not be concluded as quickly as the war against Sindhia. Wellesley thought Lake should vigorously attack Holkar. After consulting Arthur, who was now at Fort William, Wellesley prepared a memorandum based on Arthur's 23 April plan and sent it to Lake on 17 August. A second memorandum was enclosed that stressed the importance of Lake's "particular and early attention" to the supply system of his army.⁸⁹ Lake continued to neglect his supply arrangements, however, much to the detriment of his campaign against Holkar.

THE PURSUIT OF HOLKAR

When Lake returned to the field on 3 September, his principal aim was to destroy Holkar's force by engaging him in a pitched-battle. He concentrated his force, which left the Company's provinces defenceless, as he thought some risk should

⁸⁸ Edmonstone to Elphinstone, 22 Dec. 1804, Add. MSS 13590: fol. 43.

⁸⁹ Wellesley to Lake, private, 17 Aug. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 189.

be taken to give him the means to accomplish his main objective.⁹⁰ He again took the risk that he could obtain supplies en route, which resulted in delays while he waited to obtain them.

In spite of Wellesley's emphasis on the importance of supplies, Lake moved his army out of Kanpur before it was provisioned and slowly marched toward Secundra. James Young noted the slow movement of the British force, considering the urgency of the situation, and thought that as the troops lacked grain, bazaars and other necessities, Lake was moving slowly to allow their supplies to overtake them, while at the same time Holkar would know that he had marched--"a circumstance of much consequence."⁹¹ A show of power was necessary, not only to impress Holkar, but to keep the local chieftains quiet. In addition to the lack of supplies, Young complained that his unit of horse artillery had received additional guns and horses but no men to work them and this "augmentation by inversion" weakened the corps. Instead of the usual six horses per carriage, they could only use four because of the shortage of drivers. Although they had the "reputation of great strength," every addition of a gun or horse actually added to their weakness. Nothing was done, during the two and a half months spent at Kanpur, to train additional men and horses. Now, when their original sixty men were reduced by a third through

⁹⁰ Lake to Wellesley, private, 2 Sept. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 197.

⁹¹ Young, Diary, 5 Sept. 1804, p. 4.

sickness, they were given unbroken horses and men from the Indian cavalry who were unfamiliar with driving or gun exercises.⁹²

In this state of unpreparedness, Lake arrived at Secundra on 25 September, where he was joined by the rest of his main army, bringing the number of his troops to approximately 10,000.⁹³ Here a week was lost waiting for supplies but finally, on 1 October, Lake marched toward Muttra, which was occupied by Holkar. Muttra had been hurriedly evacuated by its British detachment on 15 September upon Holkar's approach, but Holkar, on hearing of it, thought they were coming to attack him and moved off toward Bharatpur. Skinner observed that: "The best of the business was, that Holkar was running off one way, while we were going another."⁹⁴ The British detachment made its way to Agra and marched from there to Secundra to join the main army. Meanwhile, Holkar reversed his march and occupied Muttra. He sent his infantry and artillery to attack Delhi while he remained at Muttra enjoying the claret and brandy left behind by the British detachment. This "had such an effect upon his health that he could not move from his bed."⁹⁵

Lake was harassed by Holkar's cavalry on his march to Muttra, and some baggage was lost, but the town was taken

⁹² Young, Diary, 27 Sept. 1804, p. 26.

⁹³ Thorn, Narrative of the War, p. 469.

⁹⁴ Skinner, Memoirs, II: 41-2.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

without opposition on 4 October. Although David Ochterlony, the acting resident at Delhi, sent a message urging Lake to come to their assistance quickly, Lake was delayed at Muttra for eight days because he lacked supplies. Food for both men and animals was scarce and a general order on 6 October cut the camels' and horses' rations. Again ignoring Wellesley's "no plundering" decree, Lake ordered Skinner and his men to plunder the local villages each morning but usually they could obtain only one day's supply. As a result, the cost of the sepoy's coarse flour rose and desertions from the troopers on duty became so common that Lake placed a guard over them, with orders to shoot if they moved toward the enemy. Young complained that the enemy, as numerous as flies, always retired as the British troops approached, "but never leave us, always tormenting us, always infesting us, who cut off our supplies and thus by starving us prevent us from taking any measures of effect, towards concluding the war."⁹⁶

Brinjaries, bringing grain from Kanpur, were bribed by a local raja to take their loads to his fort. Lake sent Skinner to intercept them before they reached the fort and he brought them into camp with a seven days' supply. Lake was then able to march to the relief of Delhi on 12 October. Holkar's army abandoned the siege on Lake's approach and the British force arrived at Delhi on 18 October.

Prior to Lake's arrival, Ochterlony and Lieutenant-Colonel

⁹⁶ Young, Diary, 6 Oct. 1804, p. 33.

William Burns held out for nine days, under heavy enemy fire, with a force that was too small to provide relief to the men at their posts. Burns quelled a mutiny of some of his Indian irregular infantry, who refused to obey his orders unless they received their two months' pay arrears and a further two months' in advance. It was customary for Indian troops to withhold their services when their employer urgently needed them. Burns had fourteen of the mutineers seized and two of the most senior were blown from guns, while the other twelve were sentenced to 1,000 lashes. This severe punishment ensured the obedience of the others.⁹⁷

The punishment of blowing from guns was a common Mughal practice that the British assumed because of the deterrent effect it had on the sepoys who were forced to witness it.⁹⁸ During the Second Maratha War, the European practice of hanging had replaced being blown from a gun as the usual form of punishment when an effective example was needed. Burns' choice of punishment for the two senior ringleaders was unusual for the time, but considered justified by the army in view of the crisis.

After relieving Delhi, Lake was unable to overtake and engage Holkar's force and deprive him of his guns because he lacked supplies. He told Wellesley that, if he had sufficient

⁹⁷ Young, Diary, 20 Oct. 1804, p. 42.

⁹⁸ Mason, Matter of Honour, p. 108.

supplies, he could have ended the war quickly.⁹⁹ When Wellesley received Lake's letter telling him that the war was being prolonged because he lacked supplies, he turned the problem over to Arthur, who was still at Calcutta. Arthur, after considerable inquiry, was unable to learn how Lake's supply system operated, but thought that it was entirely under the Superintendent of Supplies. Arthur prepared a memorandum outlining the system used by the army in the Deccan.¹⁰⁰ A copy was sent to Lake. In a letter to Shawe enclosing the memorandum, Arthur commented that: "In truth, no person here knows how General Lake is supplied, any more than if his army was in Japan."¹⁰¹

The upper Doab was one of Lake's sources of supplies and, on 26 October, Lake sent Burns to prevent the Sikhs from plundering the area. Burns was surrounded by Holkar's cavalry and he took shelter in a ruined fort at Shamlee. When Lake received supplies on 27 October he divided his force, sending a detachment under Major-General John Fraser to cover Holkar's infantry at Dieg, while he left Delhi with a light force on 31 October to pursue Holkar and his cavalry. On his way, Lake relieved Burns. The town of Shamlee was deserted, with the exception of old men, cripples, women and children who had been

⁹⁹ Lake to Wellesley, private, 19 Oct. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 220.

¹⁰⁰ A. Wellesley, "Memorandum submitted to the Governor-General...detailing the system for regulating the Supplies of an Army in the Deccan," 3 Nov. 1804, WD, III: 535.

¹⁰¹ A. Wellesley to Shawe, 3 Nov. 1804, WD, III: 534.

plundered by Holkar's cavalry. Lake claimed the chieftain at Shamlee had refused to give Burns any supplies and that some of the townspeople had fired upon Burns' troops. He used this as an excuse to throw the town open to plunder, reserving the grain for public use. Young commented that the "distress and lamentations" of the women, "robbed probably of their all and deserted by their fathers, husbands and sons, were truly dreadful."¹⁰² As he had no regular system of supply, Lake assumed, when necessary, the Indian custom of supporting his army through plunder. But shortly after, when he travelled through the territories of Begum Samru, the widow of one of Sindhia's European officers, and wanted to conciliate her, he placed a guard over the villages until the army and baggage had passed by to prevent the followers from sacking them.¹⁰³ The begum was a feudatory of Sindhia and some of her troops fought against the British at Assaye and Argaum, but she did not join Holkar in 1804.

Meanwhile, Fraser's force defeated Holkar's infantry and artillery outside the fort of Dieg on 13 November, and 87 guns were taken, including 13 that Monson had lost on his retreat from Malwa. British casualties were high. The Marathas knew their mercenary troops would run off as soon as the British troops passed their protective line of cannon and, in an attempt to overcome this disadvantage, they arranged their cannon in

¹⁰² Young, Diary, 4 Nov. 1804, p. 52.

¹⁰³ Young, Diary, 6 Nov. 1804, p. 52.

several rows. When the British gained one row, further rows continued to fire on them until they had taken all of them. The Marathas' tactic failed as the disciplined British troops, with committed officers, persevered in spite of their heavy casualties.

Monson took over the command when Fraser was mortally wounded and successfully led his men. He then annoyed Lake and Wellesley by falling back toward Agra to obtain supplies, instead of sending a detachment to fetch them. Wellesley told Lake to relieve Monson of the command, as he was "not fit, however brave and zealous, for such a command."¹⁰⁴ Monson was the victim of Lake's inadequate planning and the insufficient number of troops available for the campaign. He had neither a large enough force, a battering train or sufficient stores to allow him to attack the fort of Dieg. If he sent a detachment from his small force he would endanger both parties. It was necessary, therefore, for the entire force to escort the captured guns and wounded to a safe place, rather than have all of it remain idle at Dieg.¹⁰⁵ Lake worried that Monson's move would be looked upon as a retreat. This would encourage the local people to join the raja of Bharatpur, who was paying Holkar his usual tribute, which would prolong the war.

The raja of Bharatpur was entitled to British aid to defend his territories under the terms of his defensive alliance with

¹⁰⁴ Wellesley to Lake, private, 26 Nov. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 248.

¹⁰⁵ Young, Diary, 29 Nov. 1804, p. 71.

the Company. Arthur gave the defence of the allies' territories a priority over offensive action. Lake's policy, however, was to depend on military prestige to deter attacks on the Company's or its allies' territories and, if this failed, then he would send a force to attack the enemy after they had plundered. As Lake did not position a British force to protect the raja of Bharatpur's territories from Holkar, the raja paid his usual tribute as insurance against plundering.

While his detachment was engaged with Holkar's infantry and artillery, Lake relentlessly pursued Holkar and his cavalry through the Doab. By making a night march of thirty-six miles, after covering twenty-two miles during the day, he finally caught up with him at Farruckabad at dawn on 17 November. The Marathas were taken by surprise and offered little resistance, although Holkar escaped at the beginning of the attack. Young commented that the British had "taught the enemy that distance is no security against antagonists who can march with guns 60 miles in 24 hours."¹⁰⁶ Rapidity of movement was essential to the defeat of Holkar who, until Farruckabad, had avoided an attack by Lake's main force. Like Sindhia and the raja of Berar had done to Arthur, Holkar forced Lake to dash about Hindustan in an attempt to catch up with him. This tactic could defeat the British over time through the effects of the climate on the Europeans and the heavy cost of keeping the British troops in the field.

¹⁰⁶ Young, Diary, 17 Nov. 1804, pp. 61-2.

In addition to Lake's victory at Farruckabad, Holkar's fortress of Chandur in the Deccan was taken at the end of September. Lake was confident that the British victories would convince the Indians of the invincibility of British power and that neither Sindhia nor the raja of Berar would join a chieftain as ruined as Holkar. Lake, therefore, turned his attention to the raja of Bharatpur. In addition to the large supply of food and military stores in the fort of Bharatpur, which Lake needed for his army, the raja possessed immense wealth and, as the Indian princes' treasure was traditionally stored in their forts, the capture of the raja's held out the promise of a generous prize fund.¹⁰⁷ Lake moved toward the raja's fortress of Dieg. Monson joined him at Muttra, where he had stopped when he learned Lake was heading there. Holkar's force was near Dieg and, contrary to Lake's optimism that his defeat would cause his followers to leave him, he had recruited new cavalry since leaving Farruckabad, which enabled him to collect tribute from the raja of Bharatpur. Lake wanted to build-up a case for attacking the raja's forts to obtain prize money and, in his letter to Wellesley, he claimed the raja's payment was a hostile act against the British.

THE SIEGE OF BHARATPUR

Wellesley was again pulled into a war by Lake, another

¹⁰⁷ Pearse, Lake, p. 362; Ingram, The Defence of British India, p. 51.

example of how, when Wellesley's personal interests were best served by peace and the army's were best served by war, the army won out.

Lake first told Wellesley in October that the raja of Bharatpur was aiding Holkar. Again Wellesley preferred a pacific policy, unless considerations of security required action against the raja.¹⁰⁸ One of Lake's Bengal army officers was dismayed when Wellesley's instructions to conciliate the raja arrived, as there would be no opportunity for prize money.¹⁰⁹ The officer's concern was unwarranted, however, as Lake soon manipulated Wellesley into war.

Lake continued to impress upon Wellesley that the raja of Bharatpur was untrustworthy and guilty of "ingratitude," "treachery" and "villainous behaviour."¹¹⁰ He thought the raja would probably extend overtures for peace but told Wellesley that he was disinclined to enter into a treaty with him, as no dependence could be placed on anything he said or signed. After reviewing Lake's entire correspondence regarding the raja, on 20 December Wellesley authorized him to take possession of all the forts, territories and possessions belonging to him. Wellesley wanted an example made of him to forestall any further

¹⁰⁸ Edmonstone to Lieutenant-Colonel George Lake, 13 Nov. 1804, IO H/626: fol. 215.

¹⁰⁹ Journal of an Officer of the 2nd Battalion, The East Indian United Service Journal 3 (1834), 7 Nov. 1804, p. 99.

¹¹⁰ Lake to Wellesley, private, 30 Nov. 1804; 8 Dec. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 250, 258.

challenges to the British ascendancy in Hindustan. He wanted the pursuit of Holkar, however, to continue as Lake's primary task.¹¹¹ In an effort to speed up his second phase of empire-building, Wellesley wanted Lake to establish a temporary civil authority for the administration of revenues and justice as soon as territory was conquered. Colonel William Palmer, now watching from Monghyr, complained that Lake had insufficient troops to settle the territories he conquered, yet "a host of civil servants are appointed to the revenue and judicial departments without being even able to repair to their respective destinations much less to exercise any authority in them."¹¹²

Lake, anticipating Wellesley's permission, commenced operations against the raja by attacking Dieg on 17 December. When it was taken on 24 December, the prize agents immediately began to locate and sell the confiscated property for the prize fund. Pearse argues that Lake now had two choices--either to leave the raja of Bharatpur to be dealt with later, while Lake pursued Holkar, or to attack the fortress of Bharatpur.¹¹³ But a third choice was available. On 29 December, a vakil from the raja of Bharatpur arrived in camp and was ordered out without being heard, although he pleaded "to be allowed to say but two

¹¹¹ Wellesley to Lake, secret and official, 20 Dec. 1804, Wellesley, IV: 261.

¹¹² Palmer to Hastings, 29 Dec. 1804, Add. MSS 29180: fol. 76.

¹¹³ Pearse, Lake, p. 354.

words to His Excellency." A ranking chieftain, residing at Bharatpur, came to pay a courtesy visit to Lake and he, also, was turned away.¹¹⁴ Lake, as he had done with Holkar's vakils, passed up the opportunity for a negotiated settlement and chose to fight instead.

When Lake arrived at Bharatpur on 2 January, the raja's troops were under orders not to fire on the British, and possession was taken of a grove less than one thousand yards from the fort without opposition from the five to six thousand men stationed there. The garrison also failed to take advantage of a British error when, at daybreak, it was discovered that one of the main trenches was perpendicular to the fort, rather than horizontal, and was exposed to the fire of the fort along its whole length. They were forced to begin, in daylight, another trench correctly positioned which they completed unmolested.¹¹⁵

Lake ignored the raja's efforts to avoid hostilities and a breaching battery opened fire on the fort's wall on 7 January 1805 and by 9 January a practicable breach was formed. An assault was launched that evening and the few that managed to reach the foot of the breach found that a stockade had been added by the Marathas which prevented them from reaching the top. A retreat was carried out under heavy Maratha fire, which the defenders were able to direct while remaining unexposed themselves. Further efforts to effect a breach were forestalled

¹¹⁴ Young, Diary, 29 Dec. 1804, pp. 92-3.

¹¹⁵ Young, Diary, 4, 5 Jan. 1805, p. 94.

for twelve days as the Marathas built a stockade during the night in the opening made by the British guns during the day.¹¹⁶

A suitable breach having been made by firing night and day, on 20 January three Indian troopers posed as deserters and, chased by others firing blanks, raced up to the wall of the fort and asked where the ditch was fordable. After the soldiers on the wall pointed out the spot, the troopers came back to the British camp, where all were delighted at the trick. The Marathas guessed the purpose of it, however, and dammed the ditch lower down from the ford which increased the depth and width of the ditch. As a consequence, the portable bridge built to span the ditch was too short and the ford was too deep so the following day the British troops failed in their attempt to cross and had to withdraw.¹¹⁷ A Company officer complained that during the assault the enemy "behaved in a most contemptible manner, not daring to show their heads above the walls, but sniping off our people through loop holes."¹¹⁸ The British thought the Indians should fight them in pitched-battles where the troops advanced in formation, rather than firing from behind battlements where they could not be engaged in hand to hand fighting.

¹¹⁶ Young, Diary, 10-11 Jan. 1805, pp. 97-102; Journal of an officer of the 2nd battalion, The East Indian United Service Journal 3 (1834), 17-18 Jan. 1805, p. 106.

¹¹⁷ Thorn, War in India, pp. 422-3.

¹¹⁸ Journal of an officer of the 2nd battalion, The East Indian United Service Journal 3 (1834), 22 Jan. 1805, p. 107.

Two days after the failure of this second attempt, a supply convoy heading to Lake's camp at Bharatpur was attacked by enemy horse. The detachment assigned to its protection was inadequate and, at the sound of gun fire, Lake sent a small force consisting of H.M. 27th Light Dragoons and the 2nd Bengal Cavalry. He did not set out with the main body of cavalry for some time, possibly delayed by dressing for the occasion, as he always marched "in full uniform, buttoned to the chin, powdered, and peruked."¹¹⁹ By the time he did arrive, the Marathas had spent three or four hours plundering and more than half the convoy was lost.¹²⁰ In his account to Wellesley of the affair, however, Lake covered up his carelessness and does not admit that he was slow in moving out with the main body of cavalry and neglects to state that the greater part of the convoy was lost.¹²¹ Lake moved more promptly to ensure the safety of a much larger convoy six days later. It arrived safely because the large body of enemy horse made little effort to attack when Lake's detachment moved out to guard it.

Also arriving safely, the Bombay force from Gujerat, under Jones' command, reinforced Lake's army on 11 February. With these reinforcements and a new breach formed, a third unsuccessful attempt was made against the fortress on 20 February. When the surviving members of the 76th Regiment, who

¹¹⁹ Pearse, Lake, p. 416.

¹²⁰ Young, Diary, 23 Jan. 1805, p. 111.

¹²¹ Lake to Wellesley, 23 Jan. 1805, Wellesley, IV: 265.

were at the front of the storming party, refused to obey the order to advance, the sepoys followed their British officer and marched past them.¹²² It was generally believed that the breach was practicable that day if the Europeans had taken part. But the units that did make the attempt suffered heavy losses and, as they had insufficient support, they were withdrawn.

A fourth and last unsuccessful attempt was made on 21 February. The 76th Regiment agreed to take part in the storming party if they were led by their former commander, Monson, whom they continued to have confidence in, and allowed to advance out on the plain, rather than through the trench which extended almost to the ditch. A number of intoxicated enemy troops had attacked the previous day's storming party from above, while they were advancing in the trench, and they had been unable to defend themselves. Lake was determined to launch a further assault to recover his blemished military reputation, as his supplies were so low that he had to capture the fort or lift the siege. He, therefore, allowed the men to set their own terms and Monson led them. The breach was made in a different location, although Lake was warned that the new location was too steep, and this last effort proved futile. The total number of British troops killed and wounded from the four unsuccessful assaults exceeded 3,000.¹²³

¹²² Anonymous note, [1806], WO 1/902: fol. 174.

¹²³ Young, Diary, 1 Mar. 1805, pp. 145-6. Thorn, War in India, p. 458.

Fortescue argues that the main cause of Lake's failure was his own impatience.¹²⁴ Arthur, who had left India in March 1805, previous to learning of the final attempts on Bharatpur, thought that:

They must have blundered that siege terribly ... Lord Lake having been so long before the place, adequate means must have been provided, or in his power. The fault lies therefore in the misapplication of them, or, most probably, in the omission to employ all those which were necessary to accomplish the object in view, either through the ignorance of the engineers, or the impetuosity of Lord Lake's temper, which could not brook the necessary delay.¹²⁵

Lake was over-confident from his past successes, although his resources in guns, men and supplies were insufficient to take a fort with an eight-mile circumference, a high rampart with frequent bastions and a deep water-filled ditch.

Wellesley, too, thought that Lake was too impatient, but attributed it to a mistaken interpretation of his instructions. Upon receiving word of the fourth failed attempt, he told Lake that he believed, after looking over his correspondence with him, that he had given Lake the impression that he wanted a quick end to the war on any terms. He stressed that he did not want to forego the steady operations of the war in an attempt to end it quickly. Lake was instructed:

not to attempt to accelerate operations at Bharatpur...in any manner which can expose us to the risk of failure. Time and regular

¹²⁴ Fortescue, British Army, p. 127.

¹²⁵ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 3 July 1805, WSD, IV: 509.

proceeding must ensure the fall of the place....¹²⁶

As he had earlier told Lake that his first priority should be the defeat of Holkar, Wellesley wanted Lake to consider if the reduction of Bharatpur was absolutely necessary before he resumed the pursuit of him.

Owing to his failure to take Bharatpur, Lake was now willing to negotiate an agreement with the raja. A treaty was signed on 17 April in which the raja agreed to pay an indemnity in instalments and give up Dieg, which would be returned later if his behaviour was acceptable to the British. Lake was able to impose his terms on the raja, an indication that the Indians' perception of British power was not affected by his failure to take Bharatpur after four attempts. It was long-remembered by the British, however, as a blow to their prestige, which ultimately required vindication by a further siege in 1825.¹²⁷

Wellesley's reaction to Lake's defeat at Bharatpur was the reverse of his policy toward Fawcett's defeat in Bundelkhand. Ochterlony was reprimanded by Wellesley for writing to several friends that the failures at Bharatpur had led to an increase in Mohummud Amir Khan's followers and that he expected an increased spirit of disaffection in Rohilkhand. Lake's failures could be seen as more of a blow to British prestige than Fawcett's retreat, that Wellesley had escalated to a major occurrence requiring drastic measures to offset. Wellesley, however,

¹²⁶ Wellesley to Lake, 9 Mar. 1805, Wellesley, IV: 301.

¹²⁷ Malleson, Decisive Battles of India, p. 293.

claimed the failures at Bharatpur were "subjects of serious regret" but their "immediate effect or probable consequences" were not of a nature to warrant alarm. Ochterlony was informed that:

It is the duty of every public officer to encourage and maintain by his language and example a just confidence in the power, resources and stability of the British Empire in India, and to resist by every means in his power the progress of public opinion, which may have received a contrary bias from the contagious weakness of unfounded apprehension or from the active malice of treachery and hostility.¹²⁸

As Wellesley wanted the Company's political relations in India settled quickly, he abandoned the usual Anglo-Indian line that the set-back must be actively met, and attempted to downplay rather than dramatize the British failure at Bharatpur.

At the same time as Lake was concentrating on his military operations at Bharatpur, Sindhia was marching northward toward Hindustan with his army. Sindhia's father-in-law, Sarji Rao Ghautky, whom the British considered as anti-British rather than pro-Sindhia, replaced Eitel Punt as Sindhia's main advisor in August 1804. Wellesley thought that Sindhia's policies would change if Ghautky's influence was removed. He was uncertain of Sindhia's intentions, but thought that he did not intend to advance to the Company's frontier nor did he want war. Sindhia's pindaris, on 27 December and again on 25 January 1805 attacked and plundered the camp of Richard Jenkins, the acting-

¹²⁸ Edmonstone to Ochterlony, 1 Apr. 1805, Add. MSS 13578: fol. 57.

resident with Sindhia.¹²⁹ Wellesley thought that neither Sindhia or Ghautky instigated the attacks, but demanded an explanation from Sindhia and full compensation for Jenkins' losses. At the end of February Sindhia plundered Sagar, about 55 miles north of the Narmada River, then continued northward until he reached Sabalgarh, about fifty miles to the west of Gwalior. Although Sindhia was in a more threatening position than he occupied in 1803, Wellesley wrote him a conciliatory letter, assuring him that the British had no intention of demanding any further concessions from him and he expected that Sindhia would punish Jenkins' attackers.¹³⁰ N. B. Ray suggests that Wellesley's conciliatory attitude to Sindhia was due to weakness;¹³¹ however, Wellesley told Lake that he wanted the detachment watching Sindhia reinforced and, if Sindhia moved toward the Company frontier, British troops were to attack him.¹³² Wellesley had already obtained all that he wanted from Sindhia and was anxious to settle the Company's new possessions quickly, so he preferred not to renew the war with him, but was prepared to do so if necessary.

As Sindhia was merely on a plundering expedition, Arthur

¹²⁹ Jenkins to Edmonstone, 17 Jan. 1805; 26 Jan. 1805, PRC, XI: 126-8, 132; Wellesley to Lake, private, 12 Mar. 1805, Wellesley, IV: 309.

¹³⁰ Wellesley to Sindhia, 23 Feb. 1805, Wellesley, IV: 295.

¹³¹ N. B. Ray, "Marquess Wellesley's Policy towards Sindhia in the War with Holkar (1804-05)," 80-90, Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings 16, 1939.

¹³² Wellesley to Lake, private, 12 Mar. 1805, Wellesley, IV: 309.

thought that neither Ghautky or Sindhia intended to attack the Company:

Sindhia's object is, I think, to get together a little money, and to be guided by events; and Ghautky appears to have no object at all, excepting to keep together an army of plunderers, which will give him the power over Sindhia.

A paragraph has been deleted from Arthur's printed dispatch in which he places some of the blame on Jenkins. Jenkins threatened to leave Sindhia's camp unless he complied with his ultimatum that he go to Ujjain. Jenkins, however, remained when Sindhia promised to do so but continued to move further northward to Sabalgarh. The result was that Sindhia and Ghautky perceived Jenkins as weak and indecisive. Jenkins later doubted the wisdom of making the demand and used Sindhia's promises as an excuse to remain in camp.¹³³

Wellesley, by this time, had lost confidence in Lake's diplomatic abilities as it was obvious, as Young comments, that "the old General [would] rather fight than make peace. The political interests of British India are matters of no moment to a Bird of Passage as he is, who means to go home as soon as he can."¹³⁴ Wellesley, therefore, told Malcolm, who was at Mysore, to come to Calcutta to advise him on Sindhia's affairs.

The settlement with the raja of Bharatpur freed Lake to threaten Sindhia and Holkar. Holkar had moved southward to camp near Sindhia and Lake marched on 21 April in their direction.

¹³³ A. Wellesley to Close, 4 Mar. 1805, MSS Eur. F228/79.

¹³⁴ Young, Diary, 25 Mar. 1805, p. 161.

Upon learning of Lake's approach, they both retreated southward toward Kota. Wellesley told Lake not to pursue Sindhia as he wanted the British troops put into cantonments to reduce the expense.¹³⁵

In May, Holkar and Sindhia continued their march toward Kota but Sindhia evaded giving Jenkins permission to leave, which he had requested in mid-February. Sindhia was against Jenkins' departure although he considered him "a boy whose representations are not entitled to any attention."¹³⁶ Sindhia was eager to keep him in his camp as, when Collins had departed from his camp in 1803, Arthur had immediately opened hostilities and Sindhia feared that this would happen again. Sindhia was confused, as the British had changed the rules. Previously, the departure of a resident was the preliminary to war, now Jenkins' departure was stated as the only means for peace.

In July, Ghautky was dismissed as minister but Sindhia continued to retain Jenkins. In a bid to end Sindhia's procrastination, Wellesley on 25 July wrote him a letter, and asked Lake to forward it. He gave Sindhia fourteen days, from the time he received the letter, to give Jenkins safe conduct to the nearest British station. This was Wellesley's last ultimatum to Sindhia as Cornwallis replaced him five days later.

Bennell argues that Lake saved Wellesley's Maratha policy

¹³⁵ Wellesley to Lake, official and secret, 17 May 1805, *Wellesley*, IV: 535.

¹³⁶ Shawe to A. Wellesley, 7 June 1805, Add. MSS 13778: fol. 200.

by sheer exertion.¹³⁷ He assumes that Lake's efforts were all that prevented a Maratha confederation against the British that would have regained the territory lost in the peace treaties of 1803. Lake's endeavours, however, were the cause of, rather than the solution to, Wellesley's difficulties. Lake turned down the chance of a diplomatic solution and pushed for war against Holkar. Having successfully done so, he then failed in his attempt to turn the task of winning it over to Arthur, while his army enjoyed the social life of the cantonments. Failing this, he ignored Arthur's advice to pursue Holkar relentlessly, which would have brought the war to an end. Then, when forced to take to the field after Monson's retreat, he was consistently delayed because of a lack of supplies. He pushed for hostilities with the raja of Bharatpur and refused the opportunity for a negotiated settlement, preferring to try to take the fortress of Bharatpur. He then bungled four attempts to take the fort by assault, at the cost of over 3,000 casualties. As the raja was reported to possess great wealth, Lake and his men stood to gain financially from a successful capture of his forts while the pursuit of Holkar paid no personal dividend, with the exception of the articles taken from his abandoned camp at Farruckabad. As a consequence of Lake's failure, no prize money was obtained from Bharatpur. Nevertheless, a contemporary article claims that Lake returned

¹³⁷ Bennell, "The Anglo-Maratha War," pp. 159-61.

to England with £50,000 in prize money.¹³⁸ Once word of the war with Holkar and the increasing debt reached Britain, Wellesley lost the remaining limited support he held among the Home officials and Lord Cornwallis was appointed to replace him. Rather than having saved Wellesley's Maratha policy, Lake's efforts were responsible for the unnecessary, disastrous and costly second campaign of the war.

Wellesley was no closer to attaining the peace he sought to satisfy the Home officials than he was before the war with Holkar. As Young regretfully observed:

the war, unfortunately, seems scarce nearer to a conclusion than it was...five months ago. Every fresh action, whether victory it be or defeat, only seems to raise to us fresh enemies. To subdue the hydra-headed Marathas, will I fear, be found a task requiring more exertion of strength than that little Hercules--our ambitious and quarrelsome Lord and Governor possesses....¹³⁹

The completion of Wellesley's plan of empire-building remained unfulfilled. In his eagerness to settle Hindustan before he left India, Wellesley allowed Lake to control his policy toward Holkar. Wellesley knew his political mandate was running out, so he accepted Lake's argument that a war against Holkar was the quickest and cheapest means of establishing the tranquillity in Hindustan. The war, however, provided Wellesley's opponents in Britain with a strong argument for demanding his immediate removal from office.

¹³⁸ "Characters," Asiatic Annual Register 8, 1806, p. 9.

¹³⁹ Young, Diary, 26 Dec. 1804, p. 112.

Chapter Six

The Reversal of Policy, 1805-1806

Everything that he [Cornwallis] had done, was doing and intended to do, reflects the highest credit on his wisdom.

William Palmer¹

As far as I have been able to see, all the acts of Lord Cornwallis since his arrival have been deficient in wisdom.

Charles Metcalfe²

This chapter argues that the traditional view, that Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow reversed Wellesley's policy, is a misconception, as Wellesley altered his plan of empire before he left India. The commonly held opinion that Barlow was a weak administrator is also challenged, as a study of his peacemaking shows that, unlike Wellesley, he blocked Lake's efforts to impose his own militarist views. An examination of the Home officials' criticism of Wellesley's governor-generalship indicates that it was motivated by self-interest, not a concern for the rights of the Indians.

CRITICISM AND RECALL OF WELLESLEY

In September 1804, news from Bombay of the war with Holkar brought the debate in Britain over Wellesley's empire-building

¹ Palmer to Hastings, 12 Oct. 1805, Add. MSS 29180: fol. 329.

² Metcalfe to Sherer, 31 Aug. 1805, quoted in Edward Thompson, The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe (London, 1937), p. 54.

to a head. C. H. Philips argues that Castlereagh's attitude toward Wellesley's Maratha policy shifted between approval and disapproval, first owing to the court of directors' influence, then owing to the change of administration from Addington to Pitt in May 1804 and finally owing to the war with Holkar.³ Castlereagh was not as indecisive, however, as Philips suggests. His apparent wavering was political expediency to serve his own interests. Ambitious to move up in cabinet, he tried to strike a balance between satisfying the prime minister and the court of directors.

Castlereagh had considered the Maratha question solely as a question of an alliance. He assumed that the Maratha empire would remain relatively unchanged but, after he received copies of Wellesley's instructions of 27 June to Arthur and 27 July 1803 to Lake, the subject appeared in a "new and enlarged shape."⁴ Now he found it was necessary to consider the effects of Wellesley's expansion of territory and influence and whether it contravened parliamentary legislation prohibiting aggrandizement.

Castlereagh argued that the increased security resulting from the defeat of the Maratha army would not benefit the Company's finances, because its army would need to increase proportionately to the increase in its territories and

³ Philips, East India Company, pp. 137-41.

⁴ Castlereagh to Wellesley, 21 May 1804, Wellesley, IV: 222.

obligations. Thirty thousand Europeans were governing fifty million subjects, the ratio of Europeans to sepoys in the army was one to seven, and even it would be reduced in an extended empire, when it would prove impossible to raise sufficient men in Britain for service in India.⁵ In 1800 Melville had argued that Wellesley, having decreased the number of the Company's enemies, did not need additional European troops.⁶ Castlereagh, on the other hand, thought that Wellesley's latest expansion would require more troops. The Marathas, who had formerly left the British territories alone, would resent British paramountcy and require watching. Given the limited number of European troops, Wellesley's empire-building spread the British presence too thin.

When he became aware of the scope of Wellesley's plan, Castlereagh disapproved. He supported it because he thought he should not interfere with a policy determined by the government on the spot which had the information needed for a decision. He told Wellesley, however, that the ministry could not comply with his request to Addington, of 1 March 1804, for an invitation from the government and the court of directors to remain in India: "It would be fruitless to ask the Court to express such

⁵ Castlereagh to Wellesley, 21 May 1804, Wellesley, IV: 222.

⁶ Dundas to Wellesley, private, 30 Dec. 1800, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 313.

a wish."⁷

Wellesley continually provoked the court of directors by introducing policies without their prior consent. His establishment of the College of Fort William for the training of newly appointed civil servants and his recommendation of an increase in private trade between India and Britain were particular causes of contention and led to systematic criticism.⁸ Wellesley responded by attacking the directors in letters Home, referring to them on one occasion as "the most odious and mean faction ever engendered by the collision of the foulest passions."⁹ Castlereagh was caught between Wellesley and the court. He expected, however, that the knowledge that Wellesley would leave India the following year and a quick end to the war with the Marathas would end the acrimonious debate.¹⁰ Instead, a dispatch arrived from Bombay on 9 September telling the court of directors of the war with Holkar.

As no word came directly from Bengal, the court of directors complained that here was another example of Wellesley's habit of withholding information until long after

⁷ Castlereagh to Wellesley, most secret, 30 Aug. 1804, IO H/505: fol. 234.

⁸ Philips, East India Company, p. 131.

⁹ Wellesley to Melville, 13 Feb. 1803, quoted in Philips, East India Company, p. 141.

¹⁰ Castlereagh to Wellesley, most secret, 20 Nov. 1804, IO H/505: fol. 240.

the event, which precluded any control by them. Pitt told Wellesley that his opponents had effectively used his lack of communication, particularly of the war with Holkar, to bring matters to a head. As a result, Arthur, Melville, Castlereagh and Pitt thought that Wellesley could no longer creditably carry on the government.¹¹ Castlereagh consulted Pitt and they decided to appoint Cornwallis and announce his nomination as quickly as possible to conciliate the court and dampen their hostility.¹² Although Cornwallis thought Wellesley's "comprehensive and complicated" policy regarding the Maratha states was wrong, there was no choice now but to take control with an authoritative but pacific hand.¹³ A reversal would be seen by the Indians as weakness not moderation.

A draft dispatch for Bengal, written by Charles Grant, the chairman of the court of directors, criticizing Wellesley's administration, was sent to the board of control for approval in April 1805. Ainslie T. Embree suggests that the issue, in the clash between Wellesley and the court of directors, was the expansion of territory initiated by Wellesley. Embree argues that Grant's views on territorial expansion coloured his whole

¹¹ Pitt to Wellesley, 21 Dec. 1804, quoted in Lord Roseberry, Pitt (New York, 1968), p. 219.

¹² Cornwallis to Ross, 6 Dec. 1804, Marquis Cornwallis, Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis, ed. Charles Ross, 3 vols. (London, 1859), III: 522.

¹³ Castlereagh to Cornwallis, secret, Dec. 1804, IO H/504: fol. 130.

attitude toward the British position in India, as he thought that the existing empire would be threatened by further expansion. When Grant became deputy chairman in April 1804, he gained access to the documents in the secret committee's files and sufficient power to enable him to press an attack on Wellesley.¹⁴ In Embree's opinion, this later developed into a defence of the Company when, in 1806, he responded to Philip Francis' latest attack on the Company in Parliament. Francis pointed out how difficult it was for parliament to check Wellesley.

An act done ten or twelve months ago...falls under the consideration of the House....long before it is possible for the act or resolution here to reach its destination, a brilliant victory has put an end not only to the original question, but to all the adverse parties concerned in it.¹⁵

Grant's intention was to show that Wellesley's policies were not "a necessary corollary of the Company's government but were actually a direct contradiction of its spirit."¹⁶

Grant's attack on Wellesley's governor-generalship in 1805 was also a defence of the Company. Castlereagh, in a conversation with Arthur in September 1805, told him that one reason for the court's antagonism toward Wellesley was its

¹⁴ Ainslie Thomas Embree, Charles Grant and British Rule in India (New York, 1962), pp. 209-12.

¹⁵ Francis, Mar. 1806, quoted in Roberts, Wellesley in India, p. 257.

¹⁶ Embree, Charles Grant, p. 218.

belief, founded on information given by some of those returning from India, that when Wellesley returned, he was going to try to overturn its authority.¹⁷ Although Wellesley later denied this,¹⁸ Grant thought that he intended to mount a campaign for a Crown government in India. He, therefore, tried to destroy Wellesley's credibility.

This was the aim of Grant's dispatch, which Thomas Metcalfe, a member of the court of directors, complained undertook "the unprecedented task of raking from the records everything that could make against the government without taking notice of any meritorious act."¹⁹ Twenty-nine of the thirty directors supported the draft dispatch.²⁰ Wellesley's only supporter, Thomas Metcalfe, later alleged that he lost the chance of the deputy-chair because of it.²¹ Embree accuses Metcalfe of supporting Wellesley because his son, Charles, was a civil servant in Bengal and dependent on Wellesley's patronage for promotion.²² As Thomas Metcalfe knew that Wellesley would

¹⁷ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 21 Dec. 1805, WSD, IV: 533.

¹⁸ Wellesley to Grenville, 22 May 1805, Add. MSS 58912: fol. 112.

¹⁹ Embree, Charles Grant, p. 216.

²⁰ Philips, East India Company, p. 141. Six of the twenty-nine were not elected to the court until after the draft was sent to the board of control on 3 April 1805, but they subsequently supported it.

²¹ Edward Thompson, The Making of the Indian Princes (London, 1943), p. 133.

²² Embree, Charles Grant, p. 130.

have left India by the time word reached Calcutta that he had disagreed with the dispatch, he stood to lose more by opposing an otherwise unanimous decision of the court than he would gain by supporting Wellesley. Metcalfe was still defending Wellesley a year later when he was back in London.

Grant admitted that the dispatch listed only Wellesley's faults, but stated that he was "writing an indictment...not a history" of his administration.²³ In response to Castlereagh's complaint that the draft offered no solutions,²⁴ the court claimed that it had two objectives in transmitting its views to India--to check acts of misgovernment while they were in process and to censure them after the fact. The court preferred the first, but if this was no longer possible, then the second was needed.²⁵ Although Grant completed the draft in March 1805, the amended version was not sent to India until November.²⁶ Grant's main intention was to discredit Wellesley in London and this object was obtained once the board of control received the draft dispatch and the debate, over its contents, opened.

²³ Ibid., p. 216.

²⁴ bc to cd, 19 Oct. 1805, IO E/2/30: fol. 264.

²⁵ cd to bc, 6 Nov. 1805, IO E/2/56: fol. 271.

²⁶ Draft and amended dispatch are in IO H/486 and discussed in Roberts, India Under Wellesley, pp. 265-88. The 1806 printed copy is in the British Library, "A Copy of a Proposed Dispatch to the Bengal Government, approved by Twenty-three Directors, dated 3 Apr. 1805, But Rejected by the Board of Control," (London, 1806). The correspondence concerning the dispatch is in IO E/2/30, E/2/56.

The draft dispatch was a broad censure of Wellesley's administration, covering his controversial foreign policy and "everything that seemed to prove the illegality and irregularity of his administration."²⁷ The substance of the court's case is explained in its letter to the board during the debate over the alterations. The court claimed that

the government-general has in Lord Wellesley's hands, become very much a government of discretion. For he appears to have absorbed in his own person the powers of the supreme council and of the subordinate governments, as well as to have widely departed from the principles of foreign policy and from the subjection and obedience to the authority at home enjoined by law.

The examination of Wellesley's conduct was all the court had in mind and the "question fairly at issue is whether the government of Bengal will obey the orders from Home or not."²⁸ In condemning Wellesley's policies, it was essential to argue that he undertook them without the sanction of the court of directors.

Castlereagh refused to accept the draft as written, stating that it would be unwise to condemn publicly the government of India's political system during the last few years.²⁹ While it was Grant's aim to disparage Wellesley's policies, it was Castlereagh's aim to avoid a public debate which might reflect

²⁷ Embree, Charles Grant, p. 216.

²⁸ cd to bc, 6 Nov. 1805, IO E/2/56: fol. 271.

²⁹ bc to cd, 30 Nov. 1805, IO E/2/30: 271.

on his own management of India while president of the board of control in both Addington's and Pitt's governments.

Although Castlereagh wanted to avoid criticism of Wellesley's empire-building, he was willing to allow condemnation of the autocratic nature of his administration. Castlereagh thought the best method of maintaining control over the presidency governments in India was for their affairs to be daily recorded in council and promptly sent Home.³⁰ He agreed with the court's criticism of Wellesley for by-passing his council. A particular complaint was Wellesley's habit of corresponding privately with the subordinate presidencies on important official matters. This kept the discussion from appearing in council minutes sent Home for the court's information. Wellesley also held back information until he could send detailed accounts of the entire affair, but frequent concise reports should have preceded these detailed documents.

Roberts states that the wording of the revised dispatch differs from that of the court of directors' original draft, as the criticisms censure mildly and end with words intended to encourage amendment.³¹ The chairman and deputy chairman signed the revised dispatch ministerially only, which signified that they were unable to agree with several of the opinions expressed or implied in it. They continued to argue that Wellesley's

³⁰ bc to cd, 22 Apr. 1805, IO E/2/30: fol. 248.

³¹ Roberts, Wellesley in India, pp. 278, 282.

system was unwise and that the treaty of Bassein was unconstitutional because, although it was called a defensive treaty, the "inevitable and intended effect of it, was instant offensive war against Jaswant Rao Holkar, who had neither committed nor threatened any aggression against the British Government."³²

Grant's draft was privately printed in 1806 and a summary was published the following year in the Asiatic Annual Register, making his criticism public. The court of directors wanted it publicized because, in 1806, a debate opened in Parliament on the affairs of the East India Company, which centred on the cause of its increasing debt. Castlereagh argued that the Company had prospered during the 1802-1803 fiscal year, with a clear surplus of £1,150,000 after payment of all charges in India.³³ The decline of the Company's prosperity could, therefore, be attributed to the Second Maratha War, a temporary setback. In response, Philip Francis, a long-standing critic of the Company, asked how, as the Company's debt already stood at £19,800,000 on 30 April 1803, the Maratha war could be blamed for it.³⁴

John Hudleston, a Company director, countered Francis'

³² Minutes of the Secret Committee, 30 Oct. 1805, IO L/PS/1/9: fol. 251.

³³ Castlereagh, 25 Feb. 1806, Cobbett, Parl. Debs., 1806, VI: 199, 207.

³⁴ Francis, 25 Feb. 1806, Cobbett, Parl. Debs., 1806, VI: 206-7.

statement that the Second Maratha War was not responsible for the Company's financial difficulties. He conceded that the war was not the sole cause, for

the same system which gave birth to the war, gave birth to the system of finance and expenditure which would nearly have absorbed the whole revenue, even on a peace-establishment. But when war was added to the scale, it was impossible for the finances to bear up under the accumulated weight.³⁵

Arthur came to the defence of his eldest brother "with kicks, cuffs, and buffeting" delivered "with a zest once savoured in the pursuit of Maratha Chieftains."³⁶ He attempted to deflect the criticism onto the court of directors by blaming the increased debt on the Company's policy of funding the Investments by borrowing in India.³⁷ Wellesley had, however, diverted bullion, sent out from Britain to reduce the debt, to cover the costs of the war.

The debt rose during Wellesley's administration from eleven million to thirty-one million pounds. In the years 1798-9 to 1804-5, military charges rose from £5,473,587 to £8,459,263, a rise of sixty per cent, while civil charges rose from £2,624,277 to £3,763,466, an increase of thirty per cent. Interest on the

³⁵ Hudleston, 10 Mar. 1806, Cobbett, Parl. Debs., 1806, VI: 385-6.

³⁶ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 23 Feb. 1807, WSD, IV: 591. Guedella, The Duke, p. 130.

³⁷ Financial Notes for Arthur Wellesley's Parliamentary Defence of Wellesley, [1806], WSD, IV: 603-6.

debt rose from £721,550 to £1,566,750, a rise of 116 per cent. In the same period, gross revenues rose from £8,652,033 to £14,949,395, a rise of seventy-two per cent.³⁸ Peers concludes that the Company's financial difficulties cannot be attributed solely to the army because the costs of the civil administration were growing faster than the military spending.³⁹ The figures for the financial years 1798-9 to 1804-5, during Wellesley's administration, show that the military's share of the revenues, although still greater, dropped from sixty-three per cent to fifty-seven per cent of the gross revenues.

The Home officials, who were concerned about the increase in the debt during Wellesley's administration, thought that Cornwallis would reduce it. Wellesley

was regarded as a very expensive and ambitious ruler....[but] the popular voice...ascribed a character of moderation and sageness to the Marquis Cornwallis, and to those who longed for peace and an overflowing exchequer in India it appeared, that the return of this nobleman would afford a remedy for every disorder.⁴⁰

Joseph Bosanquet, a former chairman of the court of directors, was glad that Wellesley's "reign had ended" as he had "squandered" all the money Bosanquet had raised to reduce the debt on "idle parade and useless wars." His expectations of

³⁸ Statement of Revenues laid before Parliament, 1808, MSS Eur. F/204: fol. 267.

³⁹ Peers, "British India," p. 13.

⁴⁰ Mill, History of British India, VI: 517.

Cornwallis, "if he lived," were that he would do everything that could be done, and appear moderate to both the Indians and the British Parliament.⁴¹ Retreat might be seen as weakness, not moderation, but the Company did expect both the number of Wellesley's defensive alliances and the debt to be reduced.

Prior to Cornwallis' arrival, however, Wellesley had already begun a policy of political and financial retrenchment. This shift was noticeable to Charles Metcalfe, a young civil servant, formerly in the secretariat at Calcutta but sent in August 1804 to join Lake as a political agent. He remarked in June 1805:

It is with regret that I have perceived the last six months of Lord Wellesley's administration marked by an indecision and weakness (caused, I imagine, by his dread of people at home) unworthy of the rest of his wise and dignified government.⁴²

Wellesley knew that he would soon have to return to England and, as his empire-building had not received the approbation of the King's ministers that he had expected, he decided to "narrow his system."⁴³ Castlereagh had led him to believe that Pitt would recommend that the King recognize Wellesley's services when he had completed his plans, inferring that he had been sent to

⁴¹ Bosanquet to Bentinck, 26 Apr. 1805, Portland MSS PwJb121.

⁴² Metcalfe to Sherer, June 1805, quoted in Kaye, Metcalfe, p. 158.

⁴³ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 21 Dec. 1805, WSD, IV: 535.

India to establish tranquillity, which he had not done yet.⁴⁴ Wellesley was anxious, therefore, to settle the Company's political affairs and place the finances on a sound basis before he left India. Having thus completed a modified plan for a British empire of India, he expected to receive the English marquisate he thought his services deserved.

B. N. Mehta argues that Wellesley's about-turn was the result of the failure of his subsidiary alliance system to earn the goodwill he expected. He could maintain it only by force and that was shrinking during the final days of his administration. Wellesley, according to Mehta, knew "the grand game could no longer be played" and had changed tack to obtain peace and prosperity.⁴⁵ Mehta's explanation of the change is incorrect, however. It should be attributed, not to a weakening of British power, but to Wellesley's desire to leave India in a settled state that would meet with the King's ministers' approval. Wellesley depended on their patronage for his advancement in the peerage and in the government.

To reach a settlement with Sindhia he decided, in September 1804, to follow Arthur's advice to return Gwalior to him and to

⁴⁴ Castlereagh to Wellesley, most secret, 22 May 1804, Add. MSS 37283: fol. 199.

⁴⁵ B.N. Mehta, "Lord Wellesley's Policy and its Reversal," Journal of Indian History 32 (1954): 171-190.

abandon the treaties with the rajas of Bharatpur and Jaipur.⁴⁶ He claimed they were not reliable allies; therefore, he intended to keep "nothing beyond the Jumna excepting what was absolutely necessary to secure the navigation of that river, and our possessions in Bundelkhand."⁴⁷ In January 1805 Wellesley turned down David Ochterlony's suggestion of an increased influence over the Sikhs in the Punjab. He was anxious for the Indian states to recognize that the British had no plans for further expansion; therefore, the territories taken from their opponents were to be given to their allies.⁴⁸

In May 1805 Wellesley was making plans to return home in August. During the final weeks of his administration, he increased his efforts to settle the Company's political and economic affairs. He accepted Sindhia's apology for the attack on Jenkins' camp and told Lake not to pursue him any further. Wellesley wanted peace made with Holkar so the army could be placed in cantonments. He thought the entire force of irregular cavalry could be distributed between the Mughal Emperor, the rana of Gohud and other chieftains, to shift the cost of them onto the Indian states. In addition, this would ensure that

⁴⁶ A. Wellesley to Webbe, 11 Sept. 1804, WSD, IV: 464. Wellesley also intended to cancel the treaties with the rajas of Jodhpur, Kota, Bundi, Macheri and many of the lesser chieftains.

⁴⁷ A. Wellesley to Wellesley, 21 Dec. 1805, WSD, IV: 535.

⁴⁸ Edmonstone to Ochterlony, 13 Jan. 1805, Add. MSS 13578: fol. 31.

they did not turn to plundering. He directed that all the political charges should be audited, and told the residencies to reduce their expenses. Final instructions were sent to Ochterlony for the permanent settlement of the Emperor's affairs.⁴⁹ Wellesley also changed the tone of his letters home, causing Melville to comment on "the wonderful temperance and moderation with which they are wrote, [sic] so different from the state of many former letters."⁵⁰ Wellesley, therefore, intended to narrow his system, but not dismantle it entirely.

Wellesley, however, was unable to complete his revised plan before he left India. Partly because he accepted Lake's recommendation for a military instead of a diplomatic solution with regard to Holkar, partly because Sindhia, the peshwa and the raja of Berar would not accept that an India under British paramountcy would best serve their interests.

THE RETURN OF CORNWALLIS

Arriving at Fort William with the blessings of the court of directors and the King's ministers, Cornwallis was sworn in as governor-general and commander-in-chief on 30 July 1805. The immediate changes expected of him were to bring down expenses

⁴⁹ Wellesley to Lake, official and secret, 17 May 1805; Edmonstone to Ochterlony, 23 May 1805, Wellesley, IV: 535, 542. Frazer, "Constitutional Relations of Wellesley," Appendix: Alleges Increase of Expense, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Melville to Pitt, 14 Nov. 1805, PRO 30/8/157, part 2: fol. 280.

and to make any alterations to Wellesley's political system that would not damage the British image of power.

Cornwallis came from an old Suffolk landed family and had had a varied career, beginning in Germany during the Seven Years War, then in America during the Revolutionary War. He had been commander-in-chief and governor-general of Bengal in 1786-93. Sworn in again in 1797, he had not gone to India but to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant (1798-1801), replacing Lake as commander-in-chief. He held a seat in the cabinet as master-general of the ordnance (1795-7), and negotiated the treaty of Amiens in 1801-2.

J. W. Fortescue comments that the faith shown in Cornwallis' abilities by the Home officials is remarkable, as neither his abilities nor his past accomplishments justified such confidence. His chief merit, his moderation, "bore a dangerous resemblance to mediocrity."⁵¹ Ingram suggests that "Cornwallis had made his reputation by being defeated at Yorktown. In the British army it has always been wiser to lose the right battle than to win the wrong one."⁵²

Similarly, Callahan, referring to the unrest in the Indian army following from Cornwallis' abortive efforts to reform it, notes that:

It is ironic that Cornwallis, whose mistakes

⁵¹ Fortescue, British Army, V: 131-2.

⁵² Ingram, In Defence of British India, p. 56.

paved the way for the debacle of 1795-1796, has escaped any blame for it and is, in fact, remembered as a great governor-general. As in the case of Yorktown, Cornwallis walked away unscathed from a disaster of his own making.⁵³

On 1 August Cornwallis claimed that "we are still at war with Holkar, and that we can hardly be said to be at peace with Sindhia."⁵⁴ He planned to go to the Upper Provinces to try and reach an honourable settlement, as no benefit would result from the war and the finances were in a critical state. Malcolm complained that: "Those about the Governor-General seem employed in circulating statements of our distresses, of the state of our finances and the impossibility of carrying on the war."⁵⁵

Edward Strachey, a Bengal civil servant, commented on the new austerity, noting that Cornwallis was going up country with a fleet of forty boats, compared with Wellesley's four hundred on his last trip. Strachey expected that Calcutta society would emulate Cornwallis' "moderation and simplicity": "the squinting Miss Erskine will be in fashion."⁵⁶

Cornwallis' main concern was whether there would be sufficient funds to carry on operations effectively, if there was a renewal of war with Sindhia. The pay of the regular

⁵³ Callahan, East India Company and Army Reform, p. 210.

⁵⁴ Cornwallis to sc, 1 Aug. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 533.

⁵⁵ Malcolm to Wellesley, private, 15 Sept. 1805, Add. MSS 13748: fol. 26.

⁵⁶ E. Strachey to H. Strachey, 3 Aug. 1805, MSS Eur. F128/171: fol. 7.

troops and many of the public departments that handled military affairs were almost five months in arrears. The irregular troops were a heavy expenditure, but there was no money to pay their arrears so they could be discharged. Cornwallis believed they might join the enemy, but he thought this would be a lesser evil than continuing the drain on the treasury for their wages, that he claimed was £60,000 per month. This sum is incorrect as Wellesley had reduced the figure to £40,000 before he left India.⁵⁷ Much to Malcolm's annoyance, this extraordinary expense was being presented as an annual outlay under Wellesley's administration, although it would be on the books only for a few months. A number of the irregular troops had come over from Sindhia's service in May when he retreated southward. Malcolm thought this was done to gain credit at Home for reductions that were already underway under Wellesley's orders.⁵⁸ Cornwallis intended to detain the bullion destined for China and apply it to the arrears, and to replace it by bills on Bengal. The large increase in the export of opium and cotton to Canton would provide sufficient funds to cover them.⁵⁹

Cornwallis expected that even a limited change in the system would meet with opposition. Lake and Malcolm did not share his

⁵⁷ Mill, History of British India, VI: 519.

⁵⁸ Malcolm to Wellesley, private, 15 Sept. 1805, Add. MSS 13748: fol. 26.

⁵⁹ ggic to cd, 9 Aug. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 537.

views, and he knew that Lake was inclined to act independently. He told Lake not to take any important step without consulting him, as Lake was not pacifically inclined and might begin military operations without authorization. Cornwallis wondered if Malcolm would follow orders that he disliked and asked Edmonstone whether he should replace him as political agent with Lake. Edmonstone assured him that Malcolm would follow his instructions, so he wrote a private letter to Malcolm outlining his policies.⁶⁰ Cornwallis noted that there was a preference for a system of power, instead of conciliation, among those engaged in political duties and he did not want Malcolm to encourage Lake's tendency to settle political problems through war.⁶¹

Cornwallis thought that unprofitable territory and burdensome allies and dependents, including the rana of Gohud, were acquired under the treaties negotiated by Lake. As Wellesley had told him that the raja of Jaipur, because of his habit of changing sides, had forfeited his claim to Company protection,⁶² Cornwallis planned to withdraw from the defensive treaty with him and the other rajas, as Wellesley had

⁶⁰ Edmonstone to Lumsden, 20 Sept. 1801 [recte 1805], quoted in Kaye, Malcolm, I: 329n.

⁶¹ Cornwallis to Lake, 1 Sept. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 546.

⁶² Cornwallis to Lake, 4 Aug. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 535.

intended,⁶³ but when he learned that the raja had started aiding the British troops, he deferred cancelling his treaty. He intended to give the chieftains who had aided Lake the unwanted territories west of the Jumna, but not a guarantee of protection, as this would draw the Company into their quarrels. He considered the Company's possession of the Emperor and the town of Delhi was unfortunate. The Emperor's protection required stationing a force outside the Company's territories, that collected field allowances, an expense that the Company's resources could not sustain.⁶⁴ A solution would be to convince the Emperor to move nearer to the Company's territories.

Cornwallis disliked the subsidiary alliances with the peshwa and the nizam, having declined to enter into one with the peshwa during his first governor-generalship. He said that they tended to involve the Company in Indian quarrels. Cornwallis had inherited the subsidiary alliances with the nizam and the nawab of Awadh during his first administration. He had refused, however, to relieve the nawab's finances from the cost of the "temporary brigade" assigned to him in 1777, claiming that it was needed to preserve internal order. The subsidy payment accounted for a large part of the nawab's revenues and, as Bayly suggests, the increased pressure for the collection of revenues led to disorder and eventually pulled the British into

⁶³ Cornwallis to Castlereagh, 9 Aug. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 539.

⁶⁴ Cornwallis to Malcolm, 14 Aug. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 541.

intervention in the internal affairs of his state.⁶⁵

Although the treaties with the nizam and the peshwa provided for their internal independence, they caused an increasing dependence on the resident's support to maintain the two weak rulers in office. If the resident adhered strictly to the terms of the alliance and avoided interference in the internal affairs of the state, it was likely that the government would fall. It was necessary, therefore, to continue to interfere. The residents urged the peshwa and the nizam to take a more active role in government and Cornwallis hoped that the Company could gradually withdraw. Eventually, he intended to give up the subsidiary alliances with the peshwa and Sindhia when their governments were strong enough to stand on their own.⁶⁶

Although it was Cornwallis' aim to withdraw from the commitments made by Wellesley to a greater extent than Wellesley intended, he was limited in what he could accomplish by the self-imposed standards that the British thought they had to maintain for the Indians' benefit. They believed that to pull back immediately from Wellesley's expansion of territory and influence to any significant extent would be seen by the Indians as a sign of weakness.

⁶⁵ Cornwallis to A. Wellesley, 16 Aug. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 542-3; Bayly, Indian Society, p. 90.

⁶⁶ ggic to sc, 28 Aug. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 543; Robinson to Grant, Sept. [Oct.?] 1805, PRO 30/11/210: fol. 1.

If necessary to obtain an agreement with Sindhia, Cornwallis intended to abandon Wellesley's demand for Jenkins' immediate release, but he first intended to offer Sindhia an incentive to release him. He would restore Gwalior and Gohud. In return, Sindhia must relinquish the pensions and jagirs in the Doab granted by the peace treaty. He would receive the districts of Dholpur, Baree and Raja Keree and the revenue the Company had collected from them. Sindhia was to provide for the rana of Gohud and pay compensation for the plunder of Jenkins' camp. Cornwallis thought this would give Sindhia nothing that was of advantage to the Company. He also planned to rescind Wellesley's offer to Sindhia of Holkar's territories and, upon peace with Holkar, return all of them. As Sindhia had not given any assistance against Holkar, under Wellesley's terms he was not entitled to territory in any case. Bundelkhand and sufficient territory around Agra, necessary for its support, would be kept by the Company and the Jumna river would be the Company's frontier to the north of Bundelkhand. Cornwallis sent a letter to Lake, to forward to Sindhia, that assured him possession of Gwalior and Gohud after he separated from Holkar and freed Jenkins. He said, also, that nothing would be gained by procrastinating.⁶⁷ Cornwallis, therefore, intended to take a moderate, but firm, approach to the problem of Sindhia's retention of Jenkins, offering an incentive for compliance.

⁶⁷ Cornwallis to Lake, 19 Sept. 1805, Cornwallis, III: 547.

Wellesley, on the other hand, was also willing to conciliate Sindhia, but only after he had complied to his ultimatum, as he believed that offering Sindhia an incentive for Jenkin's release would be seen as weakness.

Before he received Cornwallis' 19 September instructions, Lake sent Sindhia a proposal that differed from Cornwallis' more generous offer. Lake held back Cornwallis' letter and told him he had already sent an offer that Sindhia would probably find acceptable. He did not tell Cornwallis that his letter warned Sindhia that his refusal to release Jenkins would lead to war.⁶⁸ In spite of Cornwallis' intention to conciliate Sindhia, the letter actually sent to him continued the aggressiveness that Lake had pushed onto Wellesley. Lake argued against Cornwallis' plan to allow the Marathas to regain influence throughout the Upper Provinces, and said that abandoning the agreements with the rajas and minor chieftains was inconsistent with British honour. When Lake wanted to convince Wellesley to continue an aggressive policy in Hindustan, he had argued that his proposals would lead to a quick settlement and peace. He switched his argument for Cornwallis and tried to entice him by the lure of increased revenues. Lake sent Cornwallis a memorandum that stressed the value of the revenue of the conquered territories west of the Jumna, although he admitted that it would be some time before they were obtained, as frequent plundering had

⁶⁸ Kaye, Malcolm, I: 346.

stripped the territory. From a military point of view, he argued that the Jumna, as a northern boundary, would give little security from predatory raids as it was fordable most of the year.⁶⁹

Cornwallis was unable to respond to Lake's insubordination in not sending his letter as instructed to do, or to Lake's arguments against his instructions, as his health steadily deteriorated. He died on 5 October after only two months in office. Cornwallis, therefore, died before he was able to achieve even his short term plans.

Although Cornwallis thought that it was physically impracticable for Britain to maintain Wellesley's enlarged empire, he intended to move slowly in dismantling it. Much of what he planned to give up immediately was what Wellesley had also planned to abandon. His attempt to take a more conciliatory approach to Sindhia than Wellesley had taken, regarding Jenkin's release, was obstructed by Lake. Sir George Barlow, the senior member of the Supreme council, who had received his title in 1803, succeeded Cornwallis as provisional governor-general. As a civil servant, Barlow wanted to obtain the good will of the court of directors. He knew that the court approved of Cornwallis' views and, therefore, he assured Grant that he intended to follow the plan in Cornwallis' letter to Lake of 19 September.

⁶⁹ Lake to Cornwallis, 25 Sept. 1805, Add. MSS 13742: fol. 207.

SIR GEORGE BARLOW'S RETRENCHMENT

Although, as the senior member of the Supreme council, Barlow was involved in Wellesley's empire-building, his takeover of the government brought little satisfaction to those who had gained during Wellesley's administration.

Shawe, in October 1803, thought that Wellesley had more confidence in Barlow than anyone else had. Shawe believed the decorum of office would decline, as Barlow's greatest difficulty would be the management of Lady Barlow. "He will find it an arduous task to maintain an appearance of dignity while she is swiping about the Government House.... Whoever beholds the next administration in India will have some amusement."⁷⁰ Shawe thought her social rank was unequal to the station of governor-general's wife. Wellesley's recommendation of Barlow, despite his belief in aristocratic rule, was based on his assumption that Barlow would continue his policies. In a letter to his wife in January 1804, he expressed doubts about Barlow's ability that are not stated in his official correspondence, saying that if he left India before he settled affairs, nothing would get done, as the Marathas would not fear Barlow.⁷¹ Wellesley favoured Barlow to take over the government, but only after his plan was completed, because he thought Barlow would settle for

⁷⁰ Shawe to H. Wellesley, 13 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 13781: fol. 41.

⁷¹ Butler, Wellesley, p. 351.

the role of caretaker and continue what he had set in place.

Sir John D'Oyly who, along with his family members, had come to India to make money and depended on the patronage dispensed by the Supreme government, in May 1805 was apprehensive of what would follow Wellesley's departure from India. In a letter to Warren Hastings, he stated: "I...tremble at the chance of anyone of inferior abilities, or with less firmness of mind being appointed his successor: his name alone is a host."⁷² Edward Strachey thought that Barlow had scarcely any weight of character in the service and his influence would be weak.⁷³ Edward Thompson argues that Barlow possessed no personal opinions: when Wellesley urged running ahead, he ran ahead; when the court directed him to halt, he halted.⁷⁴

As Peers has argued, governors-general depended on those around them for information and advice. Owing to Wellesley's declining health and spirits following his disappointment over the Irish marquissate, his subordinates' influence on his empire-building increased. George Udny, second in seniority in the Supreme council, made the suggestions on which Wellesley's commercial policies were based. Similarly, a number of Wellesley's most important political dispatches were based on

⁷² D'Oyly to W. Hastings, 13, 16 May 1805, Add. MSS 29180: fol. 200.

⁷³ E. Strachey to H. Strachey, [1805], MSS Eur. F128/171: fol. 17.

⁷⁴ Thompson, Metcalf, p. 59.

Barlow's minutes. A collection of these can be found in the Wellesley papers, containing comments in the margins by Wellesley that either enlarge on Barlow's point or simply say, "approved, W." On occasion, when Wellesley decided, after the fact, that Barlow's and Edmonstone's advice was faulty, he blamed them, in one instance complaining that he had been "delayed by temporizers."⁷⁵ Barlow, therefore, had a much greater influence on Wellesley's policies than he is credited with.

As well, Barlow's actions during his governor-generalship indicate that he was not weak and did not always fall into line with the court of directors, although he tried to convince them that he did. His strength lay in appearing to conform, while unobtrusively pushing his own policies.

It was the perception that Barlow would obey orders that appealed to the court of directors, who complained that Wellesley failed to do so. After initially fearing that Barlow would continue Wellesley's plan,⁷⁶ they were reassured when he told them that he intended to carry on Cornwallis'. The court worried, however, that Barlow might appear weak, rather than authoritative, when conciliating the Marathas. They hastened to tell him that:

⁷⁵ Embree, Charles Grant, p. 163; Kaye, Malcolm, I: 340; Barlow's Minutes, Add. MSS 13721-2; Shawe to A. Wellesley, 26 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 13778: fol. 42.

⁷⁶ Philips, East India Company, p. 141.

As on one hand justice is the most solid foundation, and moderation the best security, for the preservation of Empire, so on the other hand, weakness and feeble Councils, are amongst the most powerful provocations to hostility and the most certain sources of danger and ruin.

Barlow was told to impress upon the Marathas that if they abused the Company's goodwill the Company would "exert the heavy weight of our resentment."⁷⁷ The court thought that the security of the Company's position rested on its image of power, but wanted the Marathas to know that British power would be used for defence, not for aggrandizement. This was the policy that Wellesley followed in the second phase of his empire-building, when he attempted to conciliate the Indians by assuring them that there would be no further expansion of British territories.

In assuring the court that he would follow Cornwallis' plan, Barlow satisfied them, but the ministry considered his appointment as temporary. In 1806, in the ministry of "all the talents", Lord Minto succeeded Castlereagh at the board of control. He told Grant that the government intended to appoint a new governor-general, Charles James Fox's close friend, the earl of Lauderdale, a known enemy of the Company. This was an arrangement made between Fox and Lord Grenville in exchange for Fox's promise not to support an attack on Wellesley in parliament.⁷⁸ Grant, however, vetoed Lauderdale's appointment.

⁷⁷ cd to ggic, 25 Feb. 1806, IO L/PS/6/404: fol. 135.

⁷⁸ Philips, East India Company, p. 145.

A compromise resulted in Minto's appointment to the governor-generalship and he replaced Barlow in July 1807, after Barlow had been in office less than two years.

In an attempt to increase his chance of being appointed permanently, Barlow sent the court copies of the official correspondence promptly. He told them of his conciliatory policies toward the Marathas and frequently assured the court that peace appeared durable. He stressed that he was cutting expenses, and particularly those of the army.

Just as Lord William Bentinck was to discover during his governor-generalship, 1828-35, reforms that made a favourable impression in London did not necessarily bring popularity in India.⁷⁹ Barlow's dispatches, describing his conciliatory policies and the reduction of expenses, were favourably received in Britain. His cut-backs, however, caused resentment in India. Metcalfe, who noticed Wellesley's shift of policy with disfavour, disapproved also of Barlow. He expressed the typical expansionist's view two months after Barlow took office:

a character...which promises weakness and indecision, disgrace without recompense, treaties without security, the name of peace without tranquillity, and imaginary economy without saving...in a word, the speedy renewal of universal disturbance and extensive war.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ John Rosselli, Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774-1839 (London, 1974), pp. 314-5.

⁸⁰ Metcalfe to Sherer, 18 Dec. 1805, quoted in Thompson, Metcalfe, p. 60.

Everyone who favoured an expansionist policy thought that the Marathas would think Barlow's policies were based on weakness, not moderation. The Marathas, perceiving weakness, would return to their customary habit of plundering the Company's allies' territories. As the Company was bound to protect them, Barlow's policies, instead of producing lasting peace, would result in a renewal of war on an extensive scale. His conciliatory efforts would prove more costly than if a quick campaign against Holkar completed Wellesley's scheme of hegemony. All those who gained by Wellesley's empire-building were quick to argue that expansion meant peace, but retrenchment would lead to widespread hostilities. It was necessary "to make views of economy and retrenchment secondary to those of safety and power."⁸¹

Henry St. George Tucker, the accountant-general, held an opposite view, as he stood to gain from Barlow's obvious eagerness to please the court. He told Barlow on 19 October that the Company's finances "may be scrutinised in England", and "if any accident should happen during your administration, the blame and the responsibility would fall on you." He hoped to persuade Barlow to follow the policies he recommended, so he would gain credit from the court of directors for improving the Company's finances.⁸² The loan Tucker floated in October at

⁸¹ Metcalfe quoted in Peers, "British India," p. 13.

⁸² Tucker to Barlow, 19, 20 Oct. 1805, quoted in Kaye, Tucker, pp. 178-82.

eight per cent failed to raise the amount needed for solvency and he offered an additional loan at ten per cent, hoping it would be more productive. The need for money for the army, the increased opportunities for indigo and cotton speculation and the rise in prices, owing to the severe drought, increased the demand for money and raised the interest rates. In May 1804, it was necessary to pay twelve per cent interest at Lucknow;⁸³ therefore, Tucker's eight and ten per cent rates were unrealistic. Malcolm thought the attempt to keep the interest charges down was false economy, when it deprived the army of the funds needed to maintain it in the field. He commented: "I tremble for the existence of the British empire in India, which appears fore-doomed to fall upon a question of two per cent." Malcolm challenged the view that the Company's credit was impaired and money unobtainable:

As to our credit, it never was higher; and money can be had in any quantity, provided it is paid for, which it must be whenever extraordinary supplies are required. In my opinion, this desire of keeping down the interest, when doing so evidently prevents our obtaining the necessary supplies, will be found on examination to be more connected with personal than with public feeling--for assuredly the prosperity of our finance must after all depend on our political state, and when the latter is insecure, how can the former be prosperous?⁸⁴

Tucker continued his pressure on Barlow and, near the end

⁸³ William Scott to Shawe, 9 May 1804, Add. MSS 13530: fol. 61.

⁸⁴ Malcolm to A. Wellesley, May 1805, quoted in Kaye, Malcolm, I: 318.

of November, he again stressed the precarious state of the finances: the pay of the troops in Bundelkhand was six months in arrears, there were deficiencies in every principal treasury in India, the general treasury was bankrupt, the currency was debased and the means of borrowing were nearly exhausted. "We have been going on very heedlessly towards a precipice," he warned, "and it will require a good strong arm and a skilful horseman to pull up without a tumble." The following month Tucker cautioned Barlow that the military and political expenditures would "become the subject of inquiry; and this is one motive for my urging on you so strongly the necessity of making every practicable reform with the least possible delay."⁸⁵

Barlow was willing to go along with Tucker's suggestions as he, too, wanted to impress the court of directors. By December 1805, Barlow had adopted a number of Tucker's recommendations, including reducing the size of the body guard, eliminating the militia and the secretary in the public department, and cutting the number of positions in the governor-general's office and the College of Fort William. Strachey commented that "all Lord Wellesley's playthings have been done away" with.⁸⁶ Kaye points out that:

⁸⁵ Tucker to Barlow, Nov. 1805, 12 Dec. 1805, quoted in Kaye, Tucker, pp. 186, 191.

⁸⁶ E. Strachey to H. Strachey, [1805], MSS Eur. F128/171: fol. 17.

These measures, indeed, were of a character which...seems to be so steeped in unpopularity, that if they had been designed for the express purpose of goading into hostility many of the ablest and influential men in the country, could not have achieved that object with more entire success.⁸⁷

Because the militia released the regular European troops for other duties, disbanding it brought criticism,⁸⁸ but the attack on Wellesley's college caused little regret as it was not highly rated. Strachey wrote:

The art of giving medals seems to be a joke well understood at the College....The prize essays are generally only a few pages copied from some good book....If the College is not abolished soon, or some discipline established, the country must be ruined, for by the time these young men become Collectors and Judges they must be utterly ruined.... Lord Wellesley...was too indolent to apply a remedy... indeed he never took much trouble to guard against the progress of dishonesty in the service.⁸⁹

Those who had an interest in maintaining the lucrative positions and the perquisites of office argued that the removal of them would cause the Company servants to look to other, and perhaps less honourable, means to accumulate a moderate fortune.⁹⁰ When Wellesley first came to India, he decided to abolish some unnecessary and highly paid positions through

⁸⁷ Kaye, Tucker, p. 197.

⁸⁸ D'Oyly to Warren Hastings, 28 Dec. 1805-26 Jan. 1806, Add. MSS 29180: fol. 419.

⁸⁹ E. Strachey to H. Strachey, [1805], MSS Eur. F128/171: fol. 17.

⁹⁰ D'Oyly to Warren Hastings, 3-9 Aug. 1805, Add. MSS 29180: fol. 268.

attrition. He was advised that, although these sinecures were not necessary, they were the "reward of merit and exertion and integrity in the lower departments of the service."⁹¹ Cornwallis, during his first governor-generalship, increased civil service salaries to elevate the integrity of the service by discouraging civil servants from making money from outside ventures.

Under Barlow's retrenchments, many of the generous allowances of the residents were reduced, but this was a continuation of a policy started by Wellesley. Tucker recommended that they should be given a fixed salary to defray all their personal expenses; £70 was adequate for a resident and would eliminate the necessity of auditing his expense sheets.⁹² William Bayley, while in Bundelkhand, had had all his expenses, "even to table linen," paid by the government, while still receiving the pay for his position at Calcutta.⁹³ Metcalfe, while assigned to political duties with Lake's force, had been considered present at Calcutta and paid twice. With Barlow's economic reform he was cut back to one wage and it shrank from £80 to £40 with the dismantling of the secretariat.⁹⁴

⁹¹ N. Edmonstone to W. Edmonstone, 26 Aug. 1799, Elmore MSS, Add. 7616.

⁹² Kaye, Tucker, p. 188.

⁹³ C.W. Brooke to T. Brooke, 9 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 45906: fol. 26.

⁹⁴ Thompson, Metcalfe, p. 60.

In December 1805 every member of D'Oyly's family, including his son-in-law, was unemployed. Officials displaced by the abolition of the assistant judgeships had first claim to other vacancies, so the prospects for his family were very poor. He thought that, under the reformed system, it would probably be ten or twelve years before civil servants had any hope of a senior position. The following month, however, he noted that Barlow had given up the idea of eliminating the positions of the registers to the courts of appeal. He considered this "a good omen" with respect to other reforms in the civil service.⁹⁵

In the fiscal year 1806-7, Barlow reduced the civil charges to £3,856,331 from the previous year's total of £3,859,381, a reduction of only £3,050. By the following year he had cut the civil charges by a further £385,138. To offset this, the interest on the debt, largely run-up by Wellesley, rose between 1805 and 1807 by £365,570.⁹⁶

The civil servants claimed that the fault lay with the army. The savings made by the cutbacks in the civil departments were inconsiderable in the total outlay of government, as the "military expenditure is the great point."⁹⁷ Although military

⁹⁵ D'Oyly to Warren Hastings, 28 Dec. 1805-26 Jan. 1806, Add. MSS 29180: fol. 419.

⁹⁶ Statement of Revenues laid before Parliament, 1808, MSS Eur. F/204: fol. 267.

⁹⁷ E. Strachey to H. Strachey, [1805], MSS Eur. F128/171: fol. 17.

staff allowances, the irregular force and sebundy corps in the Upper Provinces were reduced, Barlow hoped to cut expenses without reducing the regular military force at any of the presidencies.⁹⁸ In March 1806, however, Tucker complained that, "although Sir G[eorge] Barlow has with heart and soul urged on this reform, little has yet been accomplished."⁹⁹ The irregulars were still a great expense in spite of the efforts made to raise the large sums needed for their discharge. Lake was discharging the irregular troops and providing them with pensions and jagirs, but he retained 1,200 of Skinner's irregular cavalry.¹⁰⁰ Barlow decided not to disband all of the irregular troops, as he thought this would weaken the Company's security.¹⁰¹ The permanent addition to the Bengal cavalry, from Skinner's horse alone, was 1,200, plus the expense of the pensions for those discharged. Skinner's Horse, as the 1st Bengal Irregular Cavalry, remained loyal during the Mutiny and in 1861 became a regular regiment.¹⁰²

In spite of Barlow's attempts to make substantial reductions in the military expenditures, for the fiscal year

⁹⁸ Barlow to Wellesley, private, 15 Mar. 1806, Add. MSS 37281: fol. 178.

⁹⁹ Tucker to Robinson, 12 Mar. 1806, quoted in Kaye, Tucker, p. 195.

¹⁰⁰ Skinner, Memoirs, II: 91-2.

¹⁰¹ ggic to sc, secret, 23 Oct. 1805, IO L/PS/5/29: fol. 9.

¹⁰² Mason, Matter of Honour, pp. 316-7, 326.

1806-1807 they totalled £8,654,342, a reduction of £378,256 from a high of £9,032,598 the previous year. But compared with charges of £7,777,793 for 1803-1804, the year in which the main campaigns of the Second Maratha War were fought, this was an increase of £876,549.¹⁰³ In the Bengal presidency, the military establishment in May 1803 numbered 53,017 Europeans and Indians. By April 1806 it numbered 75,557, an increase of 22,540.¹⁰⁴ By 1823 the Bengal army had swollen to 129,473, Madras to 71,423 and Bombay to 36,475.¹⁰⁵

In spite of Barlow's economic retrenchment, the army remained a heavy charge on the Company's finances, as the argument for a strong British military presence continued to influence the Supreme government's distribution of the revenues. The same argument also governed plans for political change.

MAKING PEACE WITH SINDHIA

The Home officials expected cutbacks in Wellesley's extravagant expenditures but, in the short term, no drastic dismantling of his political system. A consensus of opinion existed between the Home officials and those in India that the Indians would perceive a substantial reversal of Wellesley's

¹⁰³ Statement of Revenues laid before Parliament, 1808, MSS Eur. F/204: fol. 267.

¹⁰⁴ Bengal military statements, 15 Aug. 1803, IO L/MIL/8/13; 20 Sept. 1806, IO L/MIL/8/16.

¹⁰⁵ Peers, "British India," p. 263.

empire-building as a sign of weakness.

Shortly before Cornwallis' death, Edmonstone told Malcolm that the Home officials disapproved of Wellesley's empire-building; that they had appointed Cornwallis because of his reputation for "a system of forbearance and moderation."¹⁰⁶ When Malcolm replied on 19 September, he expected Cornwallis to be dead before his letter arrived and that Barlow would have succeeded him. His words were written, therefore, for Barlow's benefit, as he expected him to favour a strong stand. Malcolm recommended cutting back on the Investment and borrowing whatever sum was necessary to move the army, which had an opportunity to establish the Company's political interests upon "a secure and permanent basis." He emphasized that he:

would certainly never abandon real power in the speculative hope of gaining more strength by the favorable impression which my moderation or generosity might make upon the native powers.... only two considerations occur to their minds when considering the policy they should pursue towards the British Government: the first, their own means; the second, those of the British nation; and in proportion as the latter are thought small or great, so is the chance of peace or war.

Malcolm argued against allowing Sindhia a foothold in Hindustan, claiming that he would then attempt to regain his possessions in the Doab and an attack on Behar and Bengal would follow. To abandon the pledges of protection to the various rajas and jagirdars west of the Jumna would damage the British reputation

¹⁰⁶ Edmonstone to Malcolm, Sept. 1805, quoted in Kaye, Malcolm, I: 332.

for good faith. It would be seen as a sign of weakness, ultimately resulting in "disgrace and ruin."¹⁰⁷ Having previously voiced Arthur's argument for the conciliation of Sindhia to avoid war, Malcolm now reversed his position, claiming that "moderation or generosity" should not replace force. Peace depended solely on the size of the British army in India. Malcolm's shift of opinion resulted from his belief that his new argument would gain Lake's and Barlow's approval.

Meanwhile Sindhia had returned to Ujjain and Holkar was moving northward from Kota to Ajmer. Malcolm, throughout the month of September, unsuccessfully attempted to obtain sufficient funds to move the army. He opened negotiations with the raja of Bharatpur, as Cornwallis had suggested, for the restoration of Dieg in exchange for the immediate payment of the balance owing to the Company. On 5 October, the day Cornwallis died, Malcolm received £30,000, with a promise of a further £10,000 on the following day, and the army began its pursuit of Holkar. A settlement with Sindhia, however, remained Malcolm's foremost concern.

Malcolm remained with Lake, conducting negotiations with Sindhia's envoy while on the march. On 21 November he reached an agreement which was forwarded to Sindhia for ratification.

¹⁰⁷ Malcolm to Edmonstone, most secret, 19 Sept. 1805, quoted in Kaye, Malcolm, I: 334-8.

Kaye states that the treaty was "based more or less on the instructions received from the governor-general--but the less rather predominated."¹⁰⁸ The defensive alliance was not renewed. Although the Company did not acknowledge Sindhia's right to Gwalior and Gohud, they were returned to him as an act of friendship. This was the plan Arthur had recommended and Wellesley had decided to follow. Sindhia gave up the pensions required under the former treaty, as Cornwallis wanted, but Malcolm bought his agreement by giving him a pension of £40,000 per annum and jagirs to his wife and daughter. The river Chambal was to be Sindhia's northern boundary, but this stipulation was worded to imply that the petty states on the northern bank of the Chambal would be protected by the Company from Sindhia's claims for tribute.

Barlow blocked Malcolm's attempt to impose Lake's view of the policy the Company should follow toward the petty states by attaching declaratory articles. These changed the requirement that Sindhia should relinquish all claim to tribute from the states on the north bank of the Chambal--which implied an obligation on the Company to enforce Sindhia's compliance--to a simple declaration that Sindhia agreed to cede territories north of the Chambal.¹⁰⁹ Barlow attached the declaratory articles, instead of refusing to ratify the treaty, to obtain the final

¹⁰⁸ Kaye, Malcolm, I: 352.

¹⁰⁹ Declaratory Articles, Add. MSS 13605: fol. 251.

settlement quickly and to avoid discrediting Lake.¹¹⁰

Similarly, on his own and Lake's initiative, Malcolm required Sindhia to pledge never to take Sarji Rao Ghautky into his service. Malcolm, in The Political History of India, states that this clause was "a complete vindication of our insulted honour."¹¹¹ James Mill criticizes Malcolm for inserting the clause because he thinks that Ghautky paid for his master's error.¹¹² Kaye, in defending Malcolm against Mill's charge, argues that Sindhia was "a mere boy" and Ghautky was responsible for the attack on the residency in December 1804 and January 1805.¹¹³ Malcolm inserted the clause, which Wellesley said should be a sine qua non in any new agreement with Sindhia, not to assign blame, but to have Sindhia seen as making a concession. Barlow annulled this clause several months later, to avoid having to enforce it, when he heard that Ghautky would soon join Holkar.¹¹⁴ Lake and Malcolm's major concern was to avoid an impression of weakness. They claimed it was necessary to continue to guarantee protection to the petty states and to obtain the article regarding Ghautky to show the Indians that

¹¹⁰ Barlow to Udny, 5 Dec. 1805, IO P/BEN/SEC/180: 19 Dec. 1805, no. 5.

¹¹¹ Malcolm, Political History of India I: 365n.

¹¹² Mill, History of British India, VI: 538.

¹¹³ Kaye, Malcolm, I: 352.

¹¹⁴ Mill, History of British India, VI: 539.

the British possessed the power to do so.

Ingram suggests that Barlow, in conforming with instructions from Home, intended not to intervene, while Wellesley had wanted to exercise control over the independent Indian states. Ingram bases his argument on Barlow's letter to Lake of 20 October, written shortly after Barlow took office, in which he explains the difference between his system and Wellesley's. Barlow, however, was comparing his instructions to Lake with Wellesley's initial policy toward the states west of the Jumna, as he was anxious to disassociate himself from Wellesley's policies. He sent a copy of the letter he wrote to Lake to Charles Grant, and stressed that his own policy was based on Cornwallis' plan. In fact, Barlow was following the policy that Wellesley had intended to introduce when the war with Holkar was over.¹¹⁵

In an attempt to push his own view on Barlow, Lake continued to argue that the Indians would perceive the abandoning of the defensive treaties with the petty rajas as weakness. This would encourage Maratha ambitions that would renew the war.¹¹⁶ Lake delayed delivering the declaratory articles to Sindhia's envoy, and Barlow had to write to Lake a

¹¹⁵ Barlow to Grant, private, 20 Oct. 1805, MSS Eur. F176/29: fol. 1; Ingram, Persian Connection, p. 68.

¹¹⁶ Lake to Barlow, 28 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS 13606: fol. 90.

second time to confirm his instructions.¹¹⁷ Lake also withheld Barlow's letter to the raja of Tyenegur dissolving his alliance with the Company and Barlow overcame this obstruction by sending an officer to deliver it.¹¹⁸ Barlow, therefore, was more firm with Lake than Wellesley had been, and countered his attempts to ignore his instructions.

Leonard John Siegel accepts the traditional view that Barlow blindly followed the orders sent by the court of directors.¹¹⁹ Barlow, however, altered Cornwallis' plan to abandon all connection with the territory to the west of the Jumna and followed the arrangement decided on by Wellesley. He authorized a chain of military posts on the west bank and gave jagirs to loyal chieftains on this strip of land.¹²⁰ The secret committee expressed doubts about this deviation from Cornwallis' policy, pointing out that the retention of land on the west bank of the Jumna would commit the Company to protect the jagirdars. This would open the way for clashes with the Marathas and other turbulent chieftains in that part of Hindustan, which Cornwallis' plan was designed to avoid. They preferred posts to

¹¹⁷ ggic to sc, secret, 2 Feb., 14 Mar. 1806, IO L/PS/5/29: fols. 105, 161.

¹¹⁸ ggic to sc, secret, 14 Mar. 1806, IO L/PS/5/29: fol. 161.

¹¹⁹ Leonard John Siegel, "The Problems Facing the British East India Company from 1805 to 1813," Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1960, p. 85.

¹²⁰ ggic to sc, secret, 24 Dec. 1805, IO L/PS/5/29: fol. 65.

be situated on the east bank of the Jumna, but admitted that they lacked the topographical knowledge needed to make a decision.¹²¹

The traditional view of Barlow is that he was a weak governor-general. He blocked Lake's attempt to disregard his instructions, however, and altered Cornwallis' plan concerning the west bank of the Jumna. Barlow's policy brought the political system in Hindustan in line with Wellesley's modified plan, which he had helped to draw-up.

MAKING PEACE WITH HOLKAR

Barlow also wanted to reach the settlement with Holkar that Wellesley thought he could obtain easily through diplomacy, before Lake convinced him that only war would secure a permanent peace. Lake continued his pursuit of Holkar, who left his 3000 infantry with 1000 cavalry and 30 guns near Delhi, while he travelled with 8000 horse northward toward the Punjab.¹²² Lake sent a detachment to protect the Doab, and moved with a light force, arriving at Patiala, in the Punjab, on 24 November. Here he learned that Holkar had unsuccessfully attempted to obtain the assistance of the Sikhs. The raja of Patiala had wanted an

¹²¹ sc to ggic, 27 Feb. 1806, IO L/PS/5/583.

¹²² Pearse states that Holkar at this point had approximately 11,000 horse, but Malcolm put the number at 8,000. Pearse, Lake, p. 402; Malcolm to Jones, 19 Oct. 1805, MSS Eur. C234/6.

alliance with the Company since June 1802,¹²³ and Lake thought that the raja and the other Sikhs would be unable to chase Holkar out of the Punjab without British help. Lake had no difficulty obtaining supplies in the area and, if he could obtain the assistance of Ranjit Singh of Lahore, he intended to destroy Holkar's force. He assured Barlow that his plan would not harm the arrangements for reducing expenses. Jones had already been ordered to return to Gujerat and Lake expected that the other troops could soon go into cantonments. A reduction of £17,000 per month in the cost of the irregular troops brought the estimated monthly expense down to £22,000 per month. He expected further decreases by 1 February 1806, that would bring the cost down to £7,000 per month.¹²⁴

Lake hoped to catch Holkar while he was crossing the Beas river, a northern tributary of the Sutlej. But Holkar, hearing that Lake's army had crossed the Sutlej, crossed the Beas on 8 December and moved to Amritsar. Holkar was waiting for a convoy of brinjarries to bring him supplies, but Skinner intercepted it and brought it into Lake's camp.¹²⁵ Lake now had Holkar trapped north of the Beas river and without supplies.

¹²³ B.J. Hasrat, 'Anglo-Sikh Relations: British Political Missions to the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1800-1838,' Research Bulletin of the University of the Punjab 48 (1965), p. 16.

¹²⁴ Lake to Barlow, 22, 26 Nov., 12 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS 13605: fols. 193, 201, 207.

¹²⁵ Skinner, Memoirs, II: 89.

Lake remained on the south bank of the Beas, opposite Amritsar. Barlow's instructions were that if Holkar crossed the Sutlej, Lake should withdraw the British troops and put them into cantonments because the Home officials would not approve of him crossing the river into Ranjit Singh's territories. Lake wrote to Barlow, after disobeying his orders, saying that he hoped Barlow would approve his advance into the Punjab. He claimed that, if the British did not press Holkar, he might establish a foothold in the Punjab, returning to Hindustan strong enough to attack.¹²⁶

As Skinner had intercepted Holkar's supplies, his forces were in distress, and on 19 December his envoys arrived in Lake's camp to negotiate a peace settlement. Barlow's instructions to Lake, for negotiating peace with Holkar, were based on the principle of a "balance of power" between Holkar and Sindhia. Unlike Cornwallis, Barlow considered it unwise to return all of Holkar's possessions, because he wanted to ensure that Holkar did not hold a "decided superiority" over Sindhia. Holkar was to be excluded from all his former possessions south of the Tapti, which he intended to cede to the peshwa, but he was willing to be flexible on this point. Barlow wanted to keep Tonk Rampura so he could offer it to Sindhia in exchange for the pension Malcolm gave him in the November agreement. He intended to dissolve the defensive alliance with the raja of Jaipur, so

¹²⁶ Lake to Barlow, 14 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS 13605: fol. 215.

Holkar could collect his accustomed tribute from the raja. Lake was told not to acknowledge Holkar as the head of the Holkar family.¹²⁷ Barlow, like Wellesley, wanted a weaker candidate at its head.

When Holkar's envoys received the draft treaty, they argued for additional benefits. They particularly wanted Tonk Rampura, claiming it as an ancient Holkar family possession, and Holkar's right to collect tribute from Jaipur. Malcolm rejected both demands. To increase their bargaining position, the envoys emphasized the threat that Holkar presented to the Company, saying Holkar had intended to join Sindhia and the raja of Berar against the Company if the war had continued and, following the peace, his intention was to carry out hostilities against the Company on his own. Malcolm tried to turn this boasting to good advantage and passed the threat on to Barlow as a reason for more punitive terms. He argued that if Holkar resumed the collection of tribute from the petty chiefs he would have increased resources for a renewed attack on the Company. Barlow, however, did not respond to Malcolm's argument.

An agreement was reached on 24 December and sent to Holkar for ratification. He attempted to improve the terms. When Lake threatened to break off negotiations,¹²⁸ however, Holkar ratified it. The terms of the agreement restricted Holkar to a

¹²⁷ Barlow to Lake, 26 Nov. 1805, Add. MSS 13605: fol. 235.

¹²⁸ Lake to Holkar, 2 Jan. 1806, Add. MSS 13606: fol. 46.

prescribed route for his return to his territories in Malwa, to prevent him from plundering chieftains friendly to the Company. After eighteen months, and dependent on Holkar's pacific conduct, the British would return the Holkar family possessions south of the Tapti and Godaveri rivers.¹²⁹ By then, Sindhia would have recovered sufficiently to balance Holkar's power. Arthur Wellesley later commented to Malcolm that he would have preferred the permanent retention of part of Holkar's possessions, as they

might have been held out as a perpetual signal and memorandum to all India that he had been defeated by us; for I am apprehensive that the opinion, ...that Holkar's system of warfare was the same with the old Maratha system, that it was the best against us... may occasion another war with a confederacy.¹³⁰

Upon receiving the ratified treaty, Barlow again attached declaratory articles that returned Tonk Rampura to Holkar and withdrew the Company's protection from the petty states. Sindhia refused Barlow's offer of Tonk Rampura in place of his pension. Barlow wanted no commitments in the area and no other chieftain would take it without a guarantee of Company protection. Barlow argued that the raja of Jaipur withheld aid to the Company, during the war with Holkar, until he was certain the Company would be the victor and this was sufficient justification for abandoning the treaty with him. He wanted to

¹²⁹ ggic to sc, secret, 5 Feb. 1806, IO L/PS/5/29: fol. 121.

¹³⁰ A. Wellesley to Malcolm, 10 Dec. 1806, WSD, IV: 588.

cancel the treaty immediately to make sure that the Company would not have to defend the raja's territories from Holkar while he moved to his own territories.

Lake thought the restoration of Tonk Rampura weakened the security of the Company. The concessions would generate further demands and, by giving up the best approach to Hindustan, the Company would have to maintain a large military force west of the Jumna. He told Barlow that he would have withheld the declaratory articles "but after the publicity you have been pleased to give to this bit of favour, by inserting it in the Public papers (which early must have reached Holkar) I had no alternative." Lake voiced the typical Anglo-Indian militarist view when he argued that the permanence of the peace depended entirely on the image of "the power and superiority of the British Nation."¹³¹ Lake's annoyance is evident in the insubordinate tone of his letter. He had successfully foisted his own policies on Wellesley and expected that Barlow, too, would accept policies introduced on the spot, for, to do otherwise, would undermine British authority. Barlow, contrary to Lake's expectations, countered his militant initiatives.

Barlow, shortly after taking office in October, stressed to Charles Grant that he intended to take a firm stand against Lake. Lake was still following the interventionist policy that Wellesley had introduced in Hindustan but had decided to abandon

¹³¹ Lake to Barlow, 22 Feb. 1806, Add. MSS 13606: fol. 138.

when his system did not meet the King's ministers' approval. By July 1806 the copies of the official correspondence between Barlow and Lake had reached London, which showed their disagreement over policy. Grenville, who was now prime minister, thought that "the increased distance in opinion between Sir G[eorge] Barlow and L[or]d Lake will not long leave any question of L[or]d Lake remaining." Grenville, however, was experiencing difficulty in obtaining a suitable replacement.¹³²

Lake stayed in Hindustan for several months, while he discharged some of the irregular troops and kept an eye on Holkar. He then placed the army in cantonments and returned to England in February 1807. His departure caused concern, as it was widely believed that an insurrection would break out in northern India when he left as there was no one suitable to replace him.¹³³ His successor, Lieutenant-General George Hewett, did not arrive in India until eight months later, in October 1807.

Barlow's expectations for tranquillity were more hopeful. He told Grant that a permanent peace appeared likely and the finances would probably be restored shortly. He expected a surplus of £472,300 in 1806-7 and, if the peace continued, there

¹³² Barlow to Grant, private, 20 Oct. 1805, MSS Eur. F176/29: fol. 1; Grenville to Wellesley, 29 July 1806, Add. MSS 70928: fol. 15.

¹³³ James Munro McNabb to parents, 1 Sept. 1806, MSS Eur. F206/1.

would be a surplus of one million pounds.¹³⁴ Barlow continued his optimistic reports to the Home officials, saying that the conduct of the Company's allies, Sindhia, Holkar and the raja of Berar promised a lasting peace.¹³⁵ Barlow saw the powerful body of pindaris near the Narmada as a distraction for the raja of Berar, that would divert him from taking any hostile action against the Company.¹³⁶ The pindari problem was more serious than Barlow thought, however, and by 1817 the British were forced to take military action against them.¹³⁷

In the twenty years between the governor-generalships of Sir John Shore, 1793-1798, and the Marquis Hastings, 1813-1823, there were shifting views of the policy that the British should follow toward the independent Indian states. The issue was related to the problem of how to assure the stability of the Company and thus reduce the military expenses. Sir John Shore took a neutral stand, refusing to be pulled into the Indians' quarrels. John Malcolm, in The Political History of India, suggested that Shore's administration offered an important

¹³⁴ Barlow to Grant, private, 15 Mar. 1806, MSS Eur. F176/29: fol. 26.

¹³⁵ Barlow to Castlereagh, private, 15 Mar. 1806; Barlow to Grant, private, 9 June 1806, MSS Eur. F176/29: fol. 28, 35; Barlow to Grant, 16 Oct. 1806, IO L/PS/6/17: fol. 239.

¹³⁶ Barlow to Castlereagh, private, 9 June 1806, MSS Eur. F176/29: fol. 35.

¹³⁷ Biswanath Ghosh, British Policy Towards the Pathans and the Pindaris in Central India, 1805-1818 (Calcutta, 1966), p. 282.

lesson to those who governed India: "that no ground of political advantage could be abandoned without being instantly occupied by an enemy."¹³⁸ Malcolm argued that the Indians perceived Shore's non-intervention as weakness, not moderation, and that the Company lost ground to the French influence. A shift of view occurred with Wellesley's arrival in 1798. Wellesley wanted to control the independent Indian states to impose stability on them. When his empire-building did not meet with the King's ministers' approval, however, he planned to limit his system by withdrawing from the defensive alliances with all the states west of the Jumna, maintaining only a chain of military posts along the west bank. He did not, however, intend to give up his subsidiary alliances.

When Cornwallis replaced Wellesley in 1805, he thought that Wellesley's empire-building, rather than imposing stability, would pull the Company into the Indians' disputes. An immediate dismantling of Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system would be unwise, however, as the peshwa's and the nizam's weak governments would fall if the Company withdrew its support. He stated that he would abandon all of the alliances west of the Jumna, but not, as Wellesley had intended, to have any posts on the west bank, to prevent the Company from becoming involved in the quarrels of the local chieftains. Cornwallis died before he was able to put his plan for change into effect.

¹³⁸ Malcolm, Political History, I: 109.

When Barlow took office, he told the court of directors that he would follow Cornwallis' plan, but did not. He carried out Wellesley's intended policy of abandoning the alliances with the rajas west of the Jumna and maintaining stations on the west bank. He maintained the defensive treaties with the rajas of Macheri and Bharatpur, however, thus continuing interference in an area that Wellesley had intended to abandon. Barlow decided not to dissolve the subsidiary alliance with Hyderabad and refused to modify the treaty of Bassein as the court of directors suggested.¹³⁹ The pindari problem was inherited from Wellesley, aggravated by his subsidiary alliance system. The Marquis of Hastings, while governor-general 1813-1823, decided that the Company's intervention was required, as the disorder caused by the predatory system of the pindaris and the Marathas in central India was spilling over into the Company's territories. Hastings, in the Third Maratha War, undertook to complete what Wellesley had started--impose control over the independent Indian states in central India and Hindustan.

The Anglo-Indian militarist view continued to colour comments on Barlow's administration. Jones, writing to Lake in 1807, asked what beneficial results resulted from the Supreme government's forbearance with the Marathas. He believed that the Indians thought it stemmed from weakness and that Sindhia and Holkar would challenge the Company's control when they had

¹³⁹ Malcolm, Political History, I: 207, 211.

sufficient resources. "India cannot be assured of tranquillity while they [Sindhia and Holkar] possess the power to disturb it."¹⁴⁰ Thomas Maitland, in the same year, wrote to London to say that Wellesley's policies raised the Company so high that the necessity of bringing it down had "perhaps brought us for a time too low" which the Indians thought stemmed from timidity.¹⁴¹ Barlow's optimism over the Company's finances proved unfounded, also, as the Company's debt increased from £31,638,827 in 1805 to £41,233,876 in 1809.¹⁴² The military expenditures remained at a consistently high ratio of the revenues, approximately forty-seven per cent in 1808-9,¹⁴³ a decline, however, from sixty-three per cent in 1798. The Company's dependence on the sword for its security persisted.

Self-interest motivated the court of directors' criticism of Wellesley's governor-generalship as they tried to defend the Company against his efforts to increase private trade, deprive them of their patronage and the Company's sovereignty. Wellesley had already decided to narrow his system in a final attempt to receive recognition from the King's ministers for his empire-building, and most of the short term changes intended by

¹⁴⁰ Jones to Lake, 26 Aug. 1807, MSS Eur. C234/5.

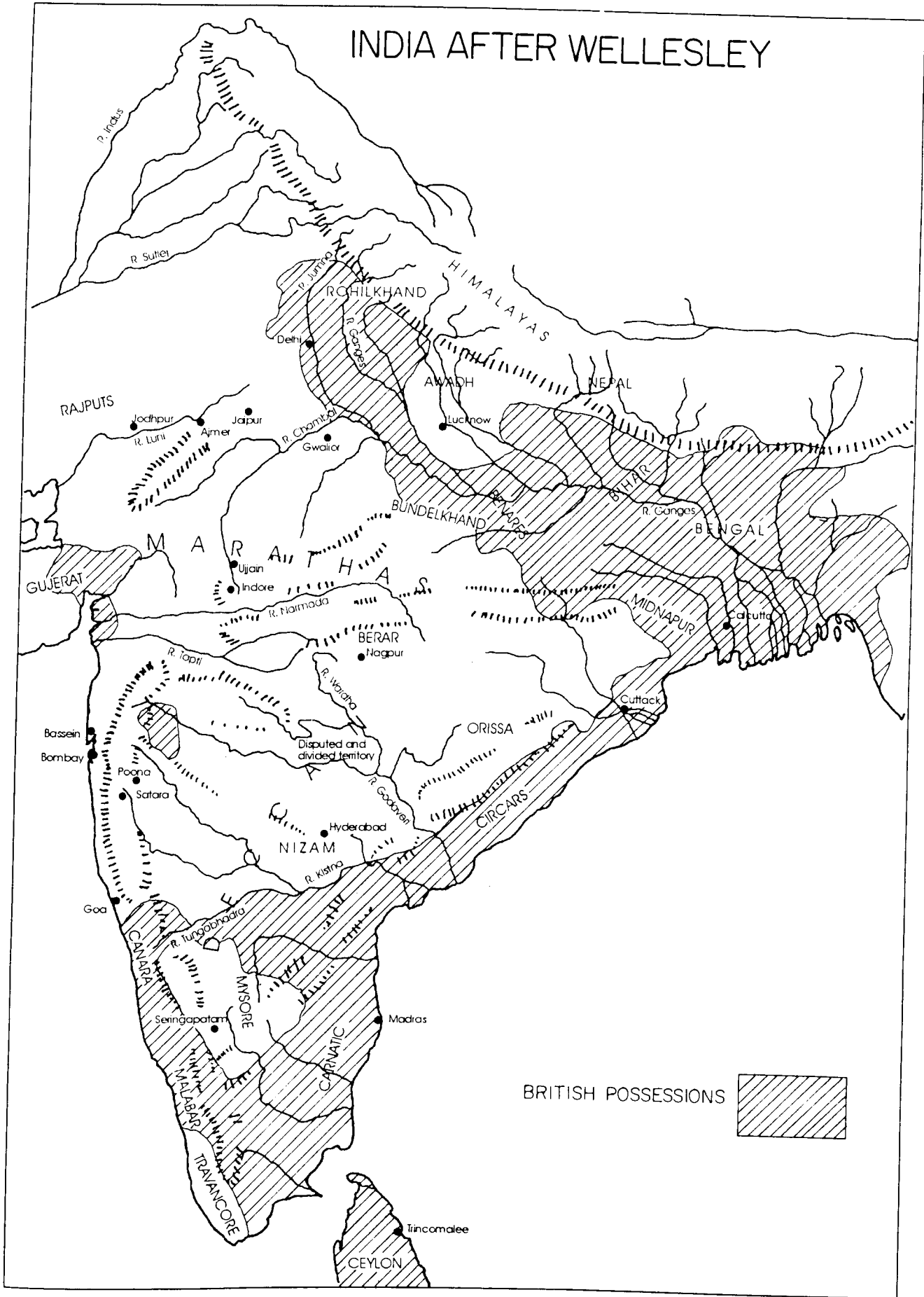
¹⁴¹ Maitland to Tierney, 20 Mar. 1807, Tierney MSS 31M70/50b.

¹⁴² Mill, History of British India, VI: 548.

¹⁴³ William J. Barber, British Economic Thought and India 1600-1858 (Oxford, 1975), p. 116n.

Cornwallis and introduced by Barlow were intended or started by him. Cornwallis' immediate plan, therefore, varied little from Wellesley's revised plan of empire. Cornwallis did intend to alter Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system when the allied governments were strong enough to stand on their own. The widely held view, in both India and Britain, was that a precipitant withdrawal from Wellesley's system would be interpreted by the Indians as stemming from weakness and would encourage them to attack the Company's or its allies' territories. This outlook prevented a return of political affairs to their pre-war state.

INDIA AFTER WELLESLEY



BRITISH POSSESSIONS 

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

How little are the great! vide Gray. Altho' it may be thought by some to savour of Jacobinism to suppose that any great man can be little, yet I shall be acquitted of this imputation...in the present instance.

James Young¹

The Second Maratha War is usually viewed as a reaction to events at the periphery but, although the Home officials disapproved of Marquis Wellesley's Maratha policy, the motivating force for the war and the expansion of the East India Company's territory and influence during his governor-generalship was metropolitan in origin. The explanation of the war and Wellesley's expansion must consider the socio-political environment in Britain and the fact that the Company provided opportunities for the British elite.

Wellesley's friends in government gave him the chance to improve his personal circumstances when they sent him out to India with instructions to obtain political stability by arranging a balance of power between the Indian states. Wellesley's expansionist plan, however, went beyond his instructions. His intention was to establish British paramountcy in India, and impose stability on the independent

¹ Young, Diary, 9 Sept. 1804, p. 8.

Indian states, to allow a reduction in military expenses and solve the problem of the Company's increasing debt. His underlying aim, however, was to advance his personal interests. He expected his reward to be an advancement in the English peerage and increased opportunities in the government at home. Service in India also would improve his finances and advance the careers of his brothers, Henry and Arthur Wellesley.

The opportunity for all who went out to India to accumulate a fortune was inherent in the arrangement of both the civil and military in India. The Indian army was organized to provide equal opportunities for all to make a fortune and the officers' perquisites and opportunities for prize money were recognized sources of wealth. During the expansionist phase of his empire-building, Wellesley argued that it would "be impossible to carry on government here in great emergencies"² if the Home officials ordered the generous allowances of the army officers assigned to important administrative positions to be reduced. Wellesley's policy was to pay skilled men well to encourage them to assist his empire-building.

The civil service also provided generous compensation to the Company's servants in India. Wellesley agreed with Cornwallis' idea that the civil servants' wages should be high enough to discourage them from engaging in disreputable

² Wellesley to Dundas, private, 7 June 1799, Ingram, Two Views of British India, p. 156. Ingram, In Defence of British India, p. 51.

enterprises. Wellesley thought that those who occupied "the laborious and responsible stations" in India should be able to acquire a fortune within a reasonable time. He considered this principle was "the foundation of the present system of government in India" and should remain unchanged.³

Although the Anglo-Indian system was set-up for all to make money, it was not as easy to return home with a fortune as those at home thought. James Young was sent out by his father to serve in the Indian army, and he commented that:

My father, the most sensible and the best of men has, like most other fathers of families in Europe, a great prepossession in favour of India, founded on the splendour of the very few who return, from peculiar circumstances, with great fortunes to England and strengthened, if I may use the expression, by ignorance of the far greater number, who perish miserably here from inability to return home.⁴

To obtain a fortune, it was necessary to move up the ladder in either the military or the civil establishment. There were both winners and losers among those seeking career advancement during Wellesley's governor-generalship. When an Anglo-Indian fell out of favour with Wellesley, he could change his attitude and experience no career set-back, provided Wellesley needed his services, as was the case with Barry Close, Josiah Webbe and John Malcolm. William Palmer, John Collins and Courtenay Smith

³ Wellesley, "Extract from a Minute of the Governor General, [Financial]," 12 June 1798, Wellesley, I: 54.

⁴ Young, Diary, 21 Dec. 1804, p. 84.

were replaceable and, therefore, demoted. The ability to aid Wellesley's empire-building was an important factor in career advancement, exceeding toad-eating.

In his bid for fame, Wellesley planned a new type of British Indian Empire. He suggested that the Home officials view the Company's possessions as a great empire, and treat it as a sacred trust and a permanent possession to avoid governing it by the wrong principles of policy.⁵ In The Life of Charles Grant, written in 1904, Henry Morris argues that Wellesley "was right in his principles of government and the India of the present day is indebted to him for its stability and consolidation." Morris expresses surprise that Grant, whose ideas he considers far-seeing, failed "to grasp the idea of the supremacy of the British Government in India being really for the benefit of the people of that country."⁶ Wellesley's plan of empire was based on a hierarchical system, similar to aristocratic rule with its inherent duties to the lower ranks, and was a forerunner of the imperial ideology of Victorian times. The Victorians claimed that the sword won the British Indian Empire, but opinion held it, because the Indians appreciated British protection from external enemies and the

⁵ ggic to cd, 9 July 1800; Wellesley, "Notes on the Foundation of the College at Fort William," 10 July 1800, Wellesley, II: 312, 325.

⁶ Henry Morris, The Life of Charles Grant, (London, 1904), pp. 254-5.

maintenance of law and order in India.⁷

Wellesley's concept of empire precluded the political liberty of the people of India; therefore, he thought the government of India should remain with the Company, as "the nearer we bring classes of people to political equality, the less patiently will they submit to still subsisting differences."⁸ The empire, as it stood, was based on military prestige and, therefore, dependent on heavy military expense. Wellesley wanted to replace this form of empire with a paternalistic despotism. All the governments in India, both Indian and British, with the exception of Bengal's, needed their armies to collect the revenues and maintain order and had no power beyond the sword. Bengal's settled state was credited to Cornwallis' introduction of a civil government with a system of law. Wellesley thought he could extend this tranquillity by introducing Cornwallis' system to the rest of the formal British empire and imposing British arbitration over the independent Indian states by bringing them into his subsidiary alliance system.

Wellesley claimed that British paramountcy, resulting from his subsidiary alliance system, would bring permanent tranquillity and the prosperity of the British possessions in

⁷ Malleson, Decisive Battles in India, p. 294.

⁸ Wellesley, "Memorandum on Indian Affairs," 1831, Add. MSS 37278: fol. 195.

India. In addition, the Company would have the use of the subsidiary forces, an efficient army of 22,000, paid for by the Indian states.⁹ Wellesley's subsidiary treaties, however, did not provide all the advantages that he claimed they would. Indian rulers accepted a subsidiary alliance only when they were unable to maintain their government without British support. The subsidiary alliances, therefore, interfered with the usual flux of Indian politics by preventing the overthrow of weak rulers. Because of their weak governments, the Indian allies did not give the British the support they expected. The peshwa's and the nizam's lack of authority over their subordinate chiefs hindered Arthur's campaign. Sindhia's weak authority in Malwa disrupted Murray's efforts. In Hindustan, the British allies accepted alliances to avoid paying tribute to the Marathas. The British failure to provide the rajas of Bharatpur and Jaipur with the protection promised them caused the break-down of their alliances. The raja of Jaipur's defensive treaty was considered "one of the bulwarks of Bengal,"¹⁰ yet Holkar moved easily through the raja's territories. The raja of Bharatpur paid Holkar tribute, also, to avoid having his territories plundered when the British failed to stop Holkar's advance. Although the subsidiary treaties stated there would be no British interference in the

⁹ ggcic to sc, 13 July 1804, Wellesley, IV: 132.

¹⁰ A. Wellesley to Duncan, 14 Jan. 1805, WSD, IV: 482.

internal affairs of the allied states, the need for reform to strengthen the allied governments required British interference. Wellesley's subsidiary alliances, therefore, pulled the British into the Indian states' internal affairs.

A further problem caused by Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system was the increase in the number of freebooters. The British tried to provide either alternate employment, grants of land or pensions for the irregular forces discharged from the Company's service. Those discharged from the Indian states' armies, however, were dependent on plunder for their subsistence and Wellesley's alliance system compounded the problem by squeezing them out of their usual plundering grounds. The freebooters formerly had left the Company's territories alone, but by 1806 they were raiding small villages within British territories.¹¹ The British inability to control the freebooters was a serious flaw in Wellesley's system to impose tranquillity.

Important gains made by Wellesley through his subsidiary alliance system, were the strategical positions needed for the war he planned against the Marathas. Although Wellesley wanted war with Sindhia and the raja of Berar, he had to provide evidence to the Home officials that it was the result of Maratha aggression, not deliberate aggrandizement on his part. Arthur, who needed victories in India to open career opportunities in

¹¹ Siegel, "Problems Facing the East India Company," p. 58.

Britain, changed the conventional form of British diplomacy to deceive Sindhia and the raja of Berar into thinking that the negotiations were still ongoing. He then waited to declare war on them until after he attacked because he did not want them to retreat and remove the justification for war. Wellesley claimed that their failure to comply with Arthur's demand to withdraw from their advanced position and Sindhia's "peace or war" statement, were proof of their hostile intentions. The Marathas customarily opened their diplomatic negotiations with threatening bluff and in this case, and again when the war with Holkar started, Wellesley claimed that their aggressive posturing illustrated the threat they posed to the Company and its allies. As the British thought the Marathas would not attack them unless they all combined, and that there was little likelihood that they would settle their differences, Wellesley responded quickly when the Marathas gave him an opening to claim that they were intending to attack.

Although the British adjusted their armies, by increasing their cavalry and adding rapid-moving galloper guns, to meet the Marathas predatory warfare, their main objective was to engage the Maratha armies in pitched-battles to destroy them quickly. Contemporary accounts of the war stressed the steadiness of the Maratha armies to show that the British troops did not obtain their victories easily, in a bid to obtain credit in Britain for achievements in India. The Marathas' mercenary troops, however,

continued their custom of fleeing from battle once they lost their protective cover. The heavy British casualties were the result of cannon fire during their advance, not increased resistance by the Maratha infantry. To obtain victories, the British depended on training and strong leadership to ensure their troops maintained steadiness when advancing under heavy cannon fire. In addition, the British were fighting an offensive war that promised prize money as an incentive for all ranks.

A British aim was to maintain their forces' military prestige. The Anglo-Indians claimed that the security of the British possessions in India was dependent on an image of power or the perceived ability of the British forces to defend British interests. As the security provided by deterrence would fluctuate according to changes in the Indians' opinion of British ability, the Anglo-Indians followed a self-imposed standard of behaviour that they considered would favourably influence the Indians' perception of British power. This role-playing caused the Anglo-Indians to turn minor defeats, such as Fawcett's retreat, into major problems. Lake's four attempts to take Bharatpur were failures and, according to the Anglo-Indians' understanding of Indian reaction, should have tarnished the British image of power. But the raja of Bharatpur accepted the terms for peace the British dictated as if they were victors, and Sindhia and Holkar retreated southward when they

learned that Lake was moving in their direction after he left Bharatpur. Thomas Munro stated that the Bengal army's perseverance in returning to the assault of Bharatpur, after the discouraging repulses, gave him a higher opinion of the Bengal troops than all their victories.¹² The foundation of the British forces' military prestige was their steadiness and perseverance. They maintained their reputation by returning to the assault of Bharatpur after being repulsed with heavy casualties. The Company troops advanced behind their officers during the third attempt, but if they had followed the example of the King's 76th Regiment in refusing to move out, they would have tarnished the British army's reputation for perseverance. Reputation alone, however, was insufficient, as the British military prestige needed a force backing it. As this force was expensive, Wellesley intended to shift British security based on military prestige to security based on good government.

The court of directors criticized Wellesley's plan, and pointed out that he had gone beyond his instructions because they wanted to protect the Company from any charges of aggrandizement. The King's ministers also were against Wellesley's plan as they accepted Cornwallis' view that Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system would pull the British into an increased involvement in the Indian states' affairs, which would prevent reductions in the Company's military

¹² T. Munro to A. Munro, 29 Mar. 1805, Gleig, Munro, III: 208.

expense. When Wellesley learned that the King's ministers did not approve of his empire-building, he revised his plan. He intended to give up the defensive alliances with the states west of the Jumna and to give Gwalior and Gohud to Sindhia. Also, he started to reduce the Company's military and civil expenses. Much of the retrenchment Cornwallis planned for the short-term was already either planned or in process under Wellesley's guidance.

Wellesley also wanted to reach a quick diplomatic agreement with Holkar. In his eagerness to complete the settlement of Hindustan before he left India, Wellesley took Lake's advice that a war against Holkar was the quickest and cheapest means of obtaining an agreement with him. The expansionist and aggressive phase of Wellesley's empire-building coincided with the interests of the military, who profited from the opportunities presented by Wellesley's aggression. When Wellesley moved to the final phase of his empire-building, his shift from aggression to conciliation ran counter to the army's interests. Lake then had to persuade Wellesley that war, not diplomacy, was the quickest and cheapest means of obtaining tranquillity in Hindustan. Lake obtained the initiative, not through using the Anglo-Indian militarist argument that the security of the state depended on the army's efforts, but by convincing Wellesley that his own interest would be served best by war. Wellesley's time was running out, as he had lost his

essential support at home. He, therefore, wanted the quickest and cheapest solution to settling the turbulence in Hindustan in a last bid to receive recognition for his efforts. When Wellesley's and the army's personal interests coincided, they all pulled together. It was when Wellesley's interests diverged from the army's, that everything fell apart for him.

Although the short-term policies intended by Cornwallis and introduced by Barlow were similar to Wellesley's revised policies, the principle of their long-term policies was different from his. Wellesley intended the Company to control the independent Indian states, while Cornwallis and Barlow wanted to reduce the Company's commitments to prop up weak Indian governments. They realized that this could not be done immediately because the weak governments of the peshwa and the nizam would fall. They thought, also, that the Indians would see this policy as stemming from British weakness rather than moderation. Barlow did give up the subsidiary alliance with Sindhia but believed that the peshwa lacked sufficient authority for his government to stand on its own.

Although Barlow is accused of carrying out a "policy of surrender," that is considered a reversal of Wellesley's policy of "acquisition and aggression,"¹³ Wellesley had already obtained all the territories he wanted. Before he left India he had moved to the final phase of his empire-building, the

¹³ Philips, East India Company, p. 292.

settlement of the conquered territories and a permanent arrangement with the Marathas. This required a policy of conciliation and the introduction of good government into all of the formal empire, so the Indians would accept British paramountcy in India.

Wellesley knew he could complete his subsidiary alliance system only by weakening the Marathas through war, but he did not get the control over the Indians that he expected. Although the peace terms weakened Sindhia and the raja of Berar, the latter did not accept Wellesley's offer of a subsidiary alliance and neither of them fell under the influence of the British resident at their court. The imposition of European standards, through defined borders and eliminating the collection of tribute and booty from areas across these borders, interfered with the Maratha society's economic base. Wellesley removed, but did not provide a replacement for, the collection of tribute and booty that was incorporated into the Marathas' economic system. As a result, those discharged from the Indian states' armies were forced to plunder to obtain their subsistence. Wellesley's successors had to cope with the increase of wandering plunderers who operated under Sindhia's "half-willing consent."¹⁴ Wellesley, therefore, did not succeed in establishing the all-India British despotism he intended, nor did the tranquillity he expected materialize. After Wellesley's

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 213.

departure, the Company continued to rely on military prestige for its security.

The foundations of a great empire were, however, laid by Wellesley to gratify his vanity and ambition. This opportunity originated in Britain, due to the concern of the gentlemanly capitalists and the Home officials for the stability of the East India Company and its profitability. Although Wellesley's empire-building went beyond his instructions, he was sent out by the Home officials to interfere in the political affairs of the Indian states with the aim of providing stability. Wellesley intended his despotism to be benevolent, but this was a pragmatic decision made to permanently secure the British presence in India. The Anglo-Indian system was set-up to provide opportunities for personal gain for all those who went out to India, and Wellesley's new-type empire was not intended to change this underlying assumption of British rule. Wellesley, however, never received the recognition from the Crown that he thought his service in India deserved. Lord Curzon, himself a conservative viceroy, considered that "Wellesley was at the same time both great and small a man...a man who was nearly, though not quite, in the first rank of those who have governed the Indian Empire."¹⁵

¹⁵ Curzon, British Government in India, II: 173, 181.

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